

From: [redacted]
Sent: 26 September 2018 14:37:53
To: Public Engagement Unit
Cc: Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning
Subject: FW: Planning Issues Carrbridge Highland

AO - [redacted] - OR

Hi,

For MACCS please.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

[redacted] | Assistant Private Secretary

Office of Mr Stewart, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning
Ministerial Preferences can be accessed here<<http://saltire/my-workplace/ministerial-preferences-and-support/Social-Security-and-Older-People/Pages/Minister-for-Older-People-and-Equalities.aspx>>

Scottish Government, [redacted], St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

[redacted] | MinisterLGHP@gov.scot<<mailto:MinisterLGHP@gov.scot>> | www.gov.scot<<http://www.gov.scot>> |

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From: [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2018 3:21 pm
To: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP
Cc: Stewart K (Kevin), MSP
Subject: Planning Issues Carrbridge Highland

Dear Mr Ewing

CARRBRIDGE PLANNING ISSUES

I write regarding the planning system and to express my concern that you chose to criticise the CNPA for following the Development Plan procedures in a photo opportunity, newspaper article and at the same time give your support to the owner of the Carrbridge Hotel in respect of his desire to develop an area of land off the north side of the Inverness Road in Carrbridge.

As I understand it, we have a plan led Planning System in this country, it is there so that all can participate in the process and give assurances to the whole community that

the process is open, fair and most of all above board. Pressure should not be applied to any planning authority from a Scottish Member of Parliament to disregard this process in favour of one constituent.

Unfortunately, Mr Watt saw fit to fell an area of woodland, without gaining the felling licence required. In his response to the main issues report, of the Cairngorm National Park Authorities Local Development Plan, he states the he wants the felled area allocated for a temporary coach/car parking area with a future use for car parking and valeting service and affordable housing.

I am one of the 151 Carrbridge residents who have engaged in the planning process for the CNPA local Development Plan and also commented on the Main Issues report, including the need for housing and development needs within the village. To openly criticise the CNPA for following the planning procedure and showing support for someone who acts, before gaining the correct permission shows total disrespect for the forestry licensing procedures, the planning system and the community of Carrbridge.

For a bit of background, Mr Watt has gained planning consent for the erection of a detached annexe to the Carrbridge Hotel. In that application he successfully argued that there is sufficient space for the additional building and for the coaches and cars that the additional rooms will generate within the existing hotel site. It seems he is now saying that this area is not sufficient, adding insult to injury for those who argued that there is not enough space!

I personally objected to the application for a number of reasons, but I did have the opportunity to comment and be part of the process.

As for the need for a short term parking area while the building works take place, there is a large area of ground off the Station Road allocated for business use that would more than adequately accommodate the coaches (I believe this area is owned by Highland Council). There is also the area which was once a wood yard and unfortunately is now vacant. As the road and site coped with large timber lorries, I'm sure it could cope with coaches and cars in the short to medium term. All subject to any procedures and permissions being gained prior to commencement.

Regards
[redacted]

*

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From: [redacted]
Sent: 12 July 2018 10:43:30
To: Public Engagement Unit
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs
Subject: FW: carrbridge Hotel

Attachments: plans.pdf

PEU,

Can this go on the MACCS system today as a fast track?

Ms Hyslop would like to see what can be done constructively and timeously.

I would be grateful if you can provide the reference once it's on the MACCS system.

Regards,

[redacted]
Assistant Private Secretary (Correspondence)
Office of Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs
Scottish Government, [redacted], St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1
3DG 1 www.gov.scot<<http://www.gov.scot/>>

From: [redacted] On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs
Sent: 05 July 2018 13:29
To: Public Engagement Unit
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs
Subject: FW: carrbridge Hotel

MR please.

From: [redacted]

Sent: 03 July 2018 15:05
To: Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs
Cc: enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com<<mailto:enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com>>
Subject: Re: carrbridge Hotel

Dear Fiona,

Please see below the enquiry received from my constituent Colin Watt, Managing Director of Carrbridge Hotel.

I would be very grateful you could consider this matter and advise if there are any ways that the Scottish Government can assist with the aim of promoting tourism development in the CNPA area.

It appears to me as constituency MSP ? in which capacity I write ? that the CNPA leadership, namely the CEO and Chair, need to provide leadership which enables tourism to develop, unfortunately this does not appear to be happening in this particular case of an important hotel.

I suggest that the CNPA could be urged to act proactively to seek outcomes rather than just be reactive and concentrate on process.

I await hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Fergus Ewing MSP,
Inverness and Nairn Constituency.

[redacted]

Administration Officer to Fergus Ewing MSP for Inverness and Nairn
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE:	PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE:
112 Church Street	T 3. 25
Inverness	The Scottish Parliament
Highland	Edinburgh
IV1 1EP	EH99 1SP

Phone: [redacted] | Email:
[redacted] [face]<<https://www.facebook.com/FergusEwingSNP/?fref=ts>>[twit]<<https://twitter.com/FergusEwingMSP>>[website]<<http://www.fergusewing.com/>>
[cid:image001.png@01D3F389.4550D1F0]

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From: enquiries
<enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com><<mailto:enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com>>>
Date: 29 June 2018 at 18:47:27 BST
To:

"Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk<mailto:Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk>"
<Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk<mailto:Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk>>
Subject: carrbridge Hotel
Good Afternoon Fergus,

Please see attached plan.

I write to ask If you can contact the Minister for Tourism, Fion Hyslop for help with our ongoing issue regarding extra parking provision, primarily for the Carrbridge Hotel Conference and Event trade during the low season winter months.

We have some major low season events booked for the hotel and without a parking solution, it will be difficult, to say the least in the Carrbridge village.

The other option going forward is to close down the hotel operations from November to March and layoff most of the staff, which will also thwart a multi-million pound re investment program.

We have access to a small parcel of land, circa 38 meters by 65 meters just on the Carrbridge village boundary and critically within very short walking distance of the Carrbridge Hotel.

We have asked the CNPA for a small amendment to the draft local development plan [which is currently at the consultation stage] to re-zone the land for use as parking. This LDP will be the guidance for the CNPA staff to construct a document for further consultation in November 2018.

Our application was half heard, with limited information at the CNPA planning board meeting today. No information was given to the board members as to our situation regarding, out of season work for the hotel staff and parking requirements to support conference and events during the low season. Also no mention was made of the extensive alternate search for sites that had taken place nor our pre-application which did not find favour.

The CNPA planning recommendation is, for us to process a full application via the Highland Council planning procedure for the extra parking provision rather than re-zone land on the CNPA LDP at this stage, and this was what was agreed by the board who were not made aware of our full circumstance.

As said we had already processed a Highland Council provisional planning application to use the site for parking ? The advice was returned, that any full application would be called in by CNPA and would not be supported by CNPA due to it currently being outside the village boundary.

We have support for the parking solution from the local Community Council and also elected local member, Bill Lobban.

On the site plan, the area highlighted in green has been proposed by us as a protected reserve in perpetuity with adjacent parking.

We would welcome further advice

Best wishes

Colin Watt
MD Carrbridge Hotel

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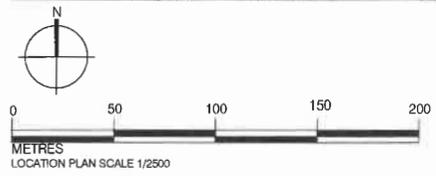
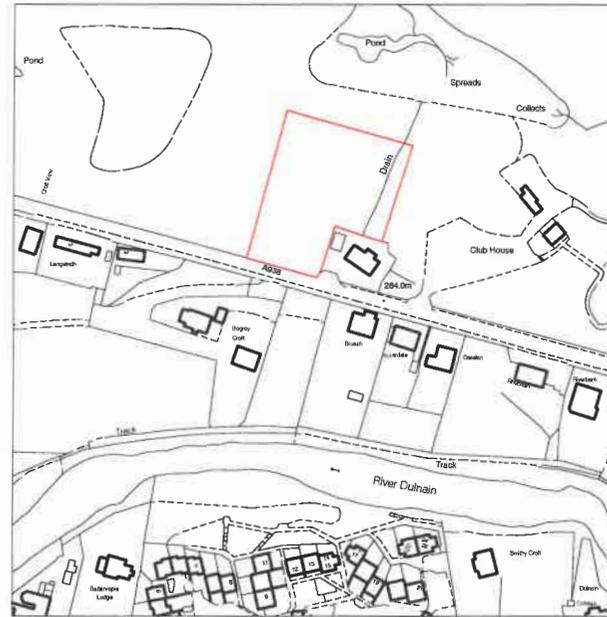
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Verify all dimensions and levels scale from this drawing. Do not scale from this drawing. This drawing is to be used for the consultants drawings and the specifications and shall be referred to the Architect.

Fig No	Rev
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1/500&1/2500@A3	APR 18
JB	Head ed

Leslie Hutt Architect
 3 View Place Inverness IV2 4SA
 Tel: 01463-235596 Fax: 01463-234370
 e-mail: les@lesht.co.uk
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PS Minute for case: 2018/0023205

Background

Colin Watt, Managing Director of the Carrbridge Hotel has written to Mr Ewing about the difficulties he is experiencing in pursuing with Cairngorms National Park Authority proposals for additional parking provision in Carrbridge. He considers this is putting at risk plans for expansion of his business to allow it to operate (supporting 40 whole time jobs) during the low season for which development plans have already been granted planning permission. This also risks potential wider benefits for the local community and economy.

Mr Watt applied for and was granted planning permission for a hotel extension in 2017 from the Highland Council. Whilst the existing hotel and new planning application did not meet the Highland Council's normal parking standards, planning permission was granted on the basis of the applicant's case that the business was coach-based and that lower parking provision than normal was therefore adequate.

The site that Mr Watt now wishes to be zoned for car parking is a small area of semi-natural woodland outside the village boundary and as such unallocated for development under the current Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan. The woodland was felled in January 2018 without a licence and deforested. Mr Watt has indicated that it is the intention to replant significantly more trees than were felled as part of the parking proposals for the site.

Cairngorms National Park Authority position and advice

The Park Authority understands that the need for additional parking has arisen because there has been a change to the original business model that was the basis on which planning permission for the hotel extension was granted. Mr Watt is concerned that the area proposed for parking should be allocated for development within the proposed Local Development Plan (LDP) which the Park Authority is working on for public consultation in November 2018. However, the next LDP which takes full effect from 2020, would have no bearing on any current planning application for the proposed car park site as it would only become a material planning consideration at a later stage.

Grant Moir, Chief Executive of the Cairngorms National Park Authority, has indicated that he, Eleanor Mackintosh, (Planning Committee Convener) and Peter Argyle (Board Convener) would be willing to meet Mr Ewing in his capacity as constituency MSP to discuss the issues around the parking provision for the hotel and other wider matters relating to rural development in the National Park.

Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) action

[redacted]

[redacted]



T: 0300 244 4000

E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Mr Fergus Ewing MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Our ref: 2018/0023205
July 2018

Thank you for your email of 3 July about the promotion of tourism development in the Cairngorms National Park.

As you are aware, the particular issue highlighted by your constituent, Mr Watt, is currently the subject of a report to the Procurator Fiscal and a separate Environmental Impact Assessment Enforcement Notice so it is not appropriate for me to comment on the specifics of that case.

More generally, VisitScotland and our other economic development agencies work with the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), the Cairngorms Business Partnership and individual businesses in order to help ensure continued sustainable growth in the tourism sector.

For example, the Cairngorms Business Partnership is eligible to apply to the VisitScotland Growth Fund, and have received several awards in recent years. VisitScotland also include the Cairngorms National Park in a lot of VisitScotland marketing. For example, VisitScotland ran a £16.7k digital marketing campaign in autumn 2017 to promote the Cairngorms National Park. This year VisitScotland is running a media campaign promoting the Snow Roads, including social media advertising via Facebook and video advertising. Additional budget will also be invested to promote the Cairngorms in autumn 2018 and spring 2019.

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The CNPA itself has also established the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership (CTP) which brings together the key businesses and agencies, including VisitScotland. The CTP has published an action plan that sets out the priority actions over the next five years to deliver sustainable tourism in the Cairngorms National Park, "*Tourism: Action + Change*" which can be viewed at <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/170406TourismActionPlanSingleWeb.pdf>

The Cairngorms National Park is also promoted internationally by VisitScotland and is regularly featured in VisitScotland owned and earned channels. This includes e-newsletters reaching 900,000 prospects across the world, Twitter which has 179,000 followers, and Instagram which has 88,000 followers.

While I cannot comment on the particular case you mention, I hope this reassures you that VisitScotland and the CNPA are prioritising the promotion of tourism in the Cairngorms area.

FIONA HYSLOP

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From: [redacted]
Sent: 19 June 2018 15:30:03
To: Public Engagement Unit
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy
Subject: FW: Carrbridge Hotel

PEU

Please add to MACCS as an MR.

Thanks

[redacted]
Assistant Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity
CabsecREC@gov.scot<mailto:CabsecREC@gov.scot>
[redacted]

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From: enquiries
<enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com<<mailto:enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com>>>
Date: 19 June 2018 at 10:44:17 BST
To: "Ewing F (Fergus), MSP"
<Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot<<mailto:Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>>>
Subject: Re: Carrbridge Hotel
Good morning Fergus, we have just received a letter from FC which has just added another tier of complexity on our current situation, we will have to give a considered response within 28 days.

Can I ask if you have any further advice since your meeting with the Minister for Tourism Fiona Hyslop and others.

Currently our expansion plans for the Carrbridge Hotel business is in mortal danger of having to be withdrawn due to CNPA constraints.

Thank you for your continued support

Best wishes

Colin Watt

From: enquiries
<enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com<mailto:enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com>>
Date: Monday, 18 June 2018 16:48
To: "Ewing F (Fergus), MSP"
<Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot<mailto:Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>>
Subject: Re: Carrbridge Hotel

Good afternoon Fergus, just a quick email following on from last week's email and my meeting with Grant Moir of the CNPA.

There would appear to be a disconnect between the CNPA and the sustainability needs of our business and employees who live and work in the park.

The Scottish Office for National Statistics are projecting that, the 65 year old and over demographic within the CNPA will increase by a staggering 75 percent by the year 2031. See attached graph

The demographic time bomb, will then lead to high value housing being eventually re-sold, which in turn will be bought by high net worth individuals as retirement homes or second and holiday homes. It will also lead to chaos within the park for employers who need a balance of youth within their work force.

A further multi-million pound investment which is planned by our good selves, has been put at risk by CNPA over a piece of land measuring 65 meters by 38 meters for key parking infrastructure requirements, to allow us to ease the construction phase pressure during a planned extension and also target off season conference and events markets.

Unless there is clear direction or intervention then the development to create further job security and much needed infrastructure and amenity along with an uplift in economic activity will be put at serious risk.

Any advice or update after speaking with the minister for tourism would be welcome, we thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes

Colin Watt, MD, Carrbridge Hotel

From: "Ewing F (Fergus), MSP"
<Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot<mailto:Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>>
Date: Thursday, 14 June 2018 20:47
To: enquiries
<enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com<mailto:enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com>>
Subject: Re: Carrbridge Hotel

Colin

Leave it with me - I am meeting Fiona Hyslop Tourism minister tomorrow in Edinburgh at a meeting so can mention it to her then. I have also sought advice from others.

It is a shocking indictment of the approach the UKG take - very anti Scotland

F

Sent from my iPad

On 14 Jun 2018, at 19:10, enquiries
<enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com<mailto:enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com>> wrote:
Yes Fergus you can make our staffing issue public. We are not alone, it effects the
whole service sector.

The Westminster government are sleepwalking the country into a disaster in terms of
staffing shortage. I keep thinking they have a plan B but to be honest I don't even
think there is a plan A.

As I say once the tax take drops due to low productivity and lack of staffing then
Westminster may realize the issue. The fiscal quarter VAT returns should tell the tail
after Brexit if nothing is done.

Also did you have a chance to review my meeting with CNPA. We just seem to be
getting hit from all angles just now, any help or advice you can offer will be greatly
received

Best wishes

Colin

From: "Ewing F (Fergus), MSP"
<Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot<mailto:Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>>
Date: Thursday, 14 June 2018 18:33
To: enquiries
<enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com<mailto:enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com>>
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Carrbridge Hotel

Dear Colin

Thanks for sending me this. I wonder if you are willing to make this public or allow
us to do that. It is a quite shocking position we are in and we have raised this in
Holyrood just this week on more than one occasion.

Fergus.

Sent from my iPad

On 14 Jun 2018, at 16:46, enquiries
<enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com<mailto:enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com>> wrote:
Nicola, please note the start of the service sector staffing crisis due to EU BREXIT.
Our agents are reporting no EU students for the first time in 18 years. The Company
is Twin International and Twin UK, they are based in London and we have used them
for the past 18 years.

Bring on Independence and EU membership! We do not want to leave the EU so
Westminster can plunder Scotlands wealth.

Westminster may start to listen once the Tax take starts to drop off dramatically as a
direct result of national staffing issues in the service sector, but it may be too late for
some businesses.

Best wishes

Colin Watt

From: enquiries

<enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com<mailto:enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com>>

Date: Thursday, 14 June 2018 16:12

To:

"Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk<mailto:Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk>"

<Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk<mailto:Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk>>,"

"drew.hendry.mp@parliament.uk<mailto:drew.hendry.mp@parliament.uk>"

<drew.hendry.mp@parliament.uk<mailto:drew.hendry.mp@parliament.uk>>

Cc: "Sturgeon N (Nicola), MSP"

<Nicola.Sturgeon.msp@parliament.scot<mailto:Nicola.Sturgeon.msp@parliament.scot>>

Subject: Carrbridge Hotel

Hi Fergus and Drew, I know you have a lot of important matters on going just now ?
The sooner Scotland has Independence the better!

BREXIT is a disaster zone, our agent are reporting for the first time in 18 years they
have no EU students looking to work in the UK.

Westminster may start to listen once the Tax take starts to drop off dramatically as a
direct result of national staffing issues.

Anyhow, please see the attached report on our meeting with the CNPA, I have
highlighted the main point in red for easy reading.

Matters did not go well, any advice or help you can offer will be greatly received

Best wishes

Colin Watt

Carrbridge Hotel

<mime-attachment>

<Fergus and Drew.docx>

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PS Minute for case: 2018/0021707

CORRESPONDENCE FROM COLIN WATT, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CARRBRIDGE HOTEL: ADDITIONAL PARKING PROVISION IN CARRBRIDGE

Background

Colin Watt, Managing Director of the Carrbridge Hotel has written to Mr Ewing about the difficulties he is experiencing in pursuing with Cairngorms National Park Authority proposals for additional parking provision in Carrbridge. He considers this is putting at risk plans for expansion of his business to allow it to operate (supporting 40 whole time jobs) during the low season for which development plans have already been granted planning permission. This also risks potential wider benefits for the local community and economy.

Mr Watt applied for and was granted planning permission for a hotel extension in 2017 from the Highland Council. Whilst the existing hotel and new planning application did not meet the Highland Council's normal parking standards, planning permission was granted on the basis of the applicant's case that the business was coach-based and that lower parking provision than normal was therefore adequate.

The site that Mr Watt wishes to be zoned for car parking is a small area of semi-natural woodland outside the village boundary and as such unallocated for development under the current Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan. The woodland was felled in January 2018 without a licence and deforested. Mr Watt has indicated that it is the intention to replant significantly more trees than were felled as part of the parking proposals for the site.

Cairngorms National Park Authority position and advice

The Park Authority understands that the need for additional parking has arisen because there has been a change to the original business model that was the basis on which planning permission for the hotel extension was granted. Mr Watt is concerned that the area proposed for parking should be allocated for development within the proposed Local Development Plan (LDP) which the Park Authority is working on for public consultation in November 2018. However, the next LDP which takes full effect from 2020, would have no bearing on any current planning application for the proposed car park site as it would only become a material planning consideration at a later stage.

As conveyed to Mr Watt at his meeting with the Park Authority's Chief Executive, Grant Moir, and Planning Director, Murray Ferguson, on 13 June, the Park Authority advises that it would therefore be quicker to submit a planning application under the current LDP rather than wait up to two years for the next one to be adopted. Whilst the application would need to be considered under current LDP policies, the Park Authority has indicated that may not necessarily preclude the Planning Committee from supporting it, particularly if Mr Watt is able to present a strong case to the Committee and address the issues identified in the Park Authority's pre-application advice.

Grant Moir and Murray Ferguson also agreed at the meeting to consult the local estate and the Highland Council on alternative sites for parking or other ways that help could be provided. Information has been subsequently passed on to Mr Watt.

Grant Moir has also indicated that he, Eleanor Mackintosh, (Planning Committee Convener) and Peter Argyle (Board Convener) would be willing to meet Mr Ewing in his capacity as

constituency MSP to discuss the issues around the parking provision for the hotel and other wider matters relating to rural development in the National Park.

Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) action

[redacted]

[redacted]

**Environment and Forestry Directorate
Sponsorship Hub**

16 July 2018

Secretary for the Rural Economy
Planning MSP



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gov.scot

0300 244 4000
.. scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Mr Colin Watt
Carrbridge Hotel
enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com

Our ref: 2018/0021707
July 2018

Thank you for your recent e-mail correspondence about your on-going discussions with Cairngorms National Park Authority about your proposals for a parking site as part of the expansion plans for Carrbridge Hotel's business, and for sharing with me and the First Minister a report of your meeting with the Park Authority's Chief Executive, Grant Moir, on 13 June 2018.

As you know, I am aware of the action taken by Forestry Commission Scotland in relation to the felling of trees at Carrbridge, namely a report to the Procurator Fiscal and separate Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Enforcement Notice. I understand you have appealed the notice to the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division. As there is a case under consideration by the Procurator Fiscal and there is an active appeal with Scottish Ministers, I trust you will understand that I cannot comment further on the case at this time.

In my capacity as constituency MSP, I have written separately to Fiona Hyslop, the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, following your further e-mail of 29 June, for advice on any ways in which the Scottish Government can assist with the aim of promoting tourism development in Cairngorms National Park and I will keep you informed of progress.

FERGUS EWING

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



From: First Minister
Sent: 14 June 2018 16:52:13
To: Public Engagement Unit
Subject: FW: Carrbridge Hotel

Attachments: Fergus and Drew.pdf, SCopier18061318260.pdf

MACCS case please for OR

[redacted]
Office of the First Minister
Scottish Government
5TH floor/St Andrews House/Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG
Tel [redacted]

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From: enquiries [mailto:enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com]
Sent: 14 June 2018 16:47
To: First Minister
Cc: Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk; drew.hendry.mp@parliament.uk
Subject: FW: Carrbridge Hotel

Nicola, please note the start of the service sector staffing crisis due to EU BREXIT. Our agents are reporting no EU students for the first time in 18 years. The Company is Twin International and Twin UK, they are based in London and we have used them for the past 18 years.

Bring on Independence and EU membership! We do not want to leave the EU so Westminster can plunder Scotlands wealth.

Westminster may start to listen once the Tax take starts to drop off dramatically as a direct result of national staffing issues in the service sector, but it may be too late for some businesses.

Best wishes

Colin Watt
From: enquiries
<enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com<mailto:enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com>>
Date: Thursday, 14 June 2018 16:12
To:
"Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk<mailto:Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parl

liament.uk>"
<Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk<mailto:Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk>>,"
"drew.hendry.mp@parliament.uk<mailto:drew.hendry.mp@parliament.uk>"
<drew.hendry.mp@parliament.uk<mailto:drew.hendry.mp@parliament.uk>>
Cc: "Sturgeon N (Nicola), MSP"
<Nicola.Sturgeon.msp@parliament.scot<mailto:Nicola.Sturgeon.msp@parliament.scot>>
Subject: Carrbridge Hotel

Hi Fergus and Drew, I know you have a lot of important matters on going just now ?
The sooner Scotland has Independence the better!

BREXIT is a disaster zone, our agent are reporting for the first time in 18 years they
have no EU students looking to work in the UK.

Westminster may start to listen once the Tax take starts to drop off dramatically as a
direct result of national staffing issues.

Anyhow, please see the attached report on our meeting with the CNPA, I have
highlighted the main point in red for easy reading.

Matters did not go well, any advice or help you can offer will be greatly received

Best wishes

Colin Watt
Carrbridge Hotel

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For more information please visit <http://www.symanteccloud.com>

-

Strictly private and confidential
13th June 2018

Good afternoon Fergus and Drew, Just a quick update re our Development plans here at the Carrbridge Hotel.

I met with Grant Moir from CNPA yesterday, I suspect we were correct in the assumption that there is a bit of retribution for the tree felling at the proposed parking site.

The CNPA ecological officer wrote a report around 20th February for Forestry regarding the matter, critically before our pre-application and our representation to the Draft Local Plan consultation. The report in turn was then used partly for the pre-app response, which we applied for on 23rd April 2018.

There report missed out several critical points such as our intent to replant excessively more trees than were cut down, with between 350 to 450 trees planned for October.

Also, the site is not clearly visible when entering Carrbridge from the West or East on Inverness road and the proposed extended parking solution is to further support 40 whole time jobs during low season and allow the hotel to fully expand marketing to the conference and events sectors, whilst also assisting during the complex 22 bedroom development, which already has full planning.

Grant made reference to the forestry commission several times and suggested that the forestry commission would possibly be reporting the tree felling matter to the procurator fiscal, which of course would be superseded if a planning application was to be processed successfully.

The CNPA are largely unsupportive of the site for parking at this time and Grant has said he will review this with his team and write back in less than a week.

Our representation to have the Draft Local Plan boundary slightly re-aligned, has also been recommended for rejection at this time by CNPA.

So unless something changes, the 40 wholtime jobs at Carrbridge Hotel will be placed at seasonal risk and further multi million pound development and expansion will be thwarted, due to a proposed parking area 38 meters by 65 meters, on the village boundary being seen as undesirable for development purposes by CNPA.

I enclose a report from the Scottish office for statistical information that is projecting a 75% increase in the over 65 year old population in the CNP by year 2031. The projection, if true will be a natural demographic man-made disaster and to the true detriment of the CNPs health and wellbeing.

We are doing our level best to secure seamless whole-time employment for all our team and provide housing solutions for our younger team member, but we can only achieve this with full support from all.

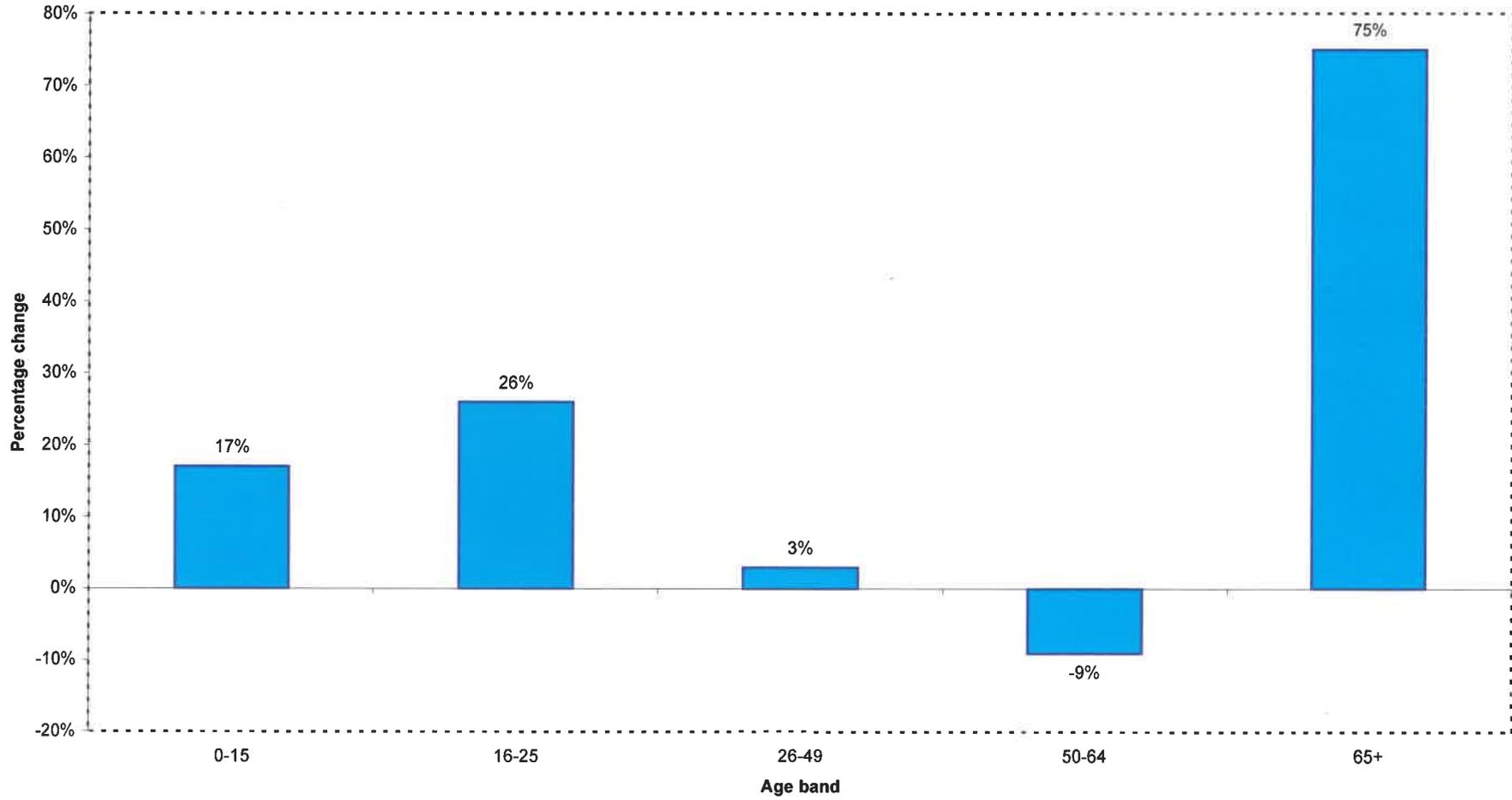
We thank you for your continued backing, any advice or support you can offer will be clearly welcome

The Draft local plan is due to go to the CNPA board at the end of this month

Best wishes

Colin Watt
MD Carrbridge Hotel

Figure 1.3: The projected percentage change in CNP's population by age, 2006-2031



[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 21 March 2019 15:26
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: FMQ Fergus Ewing Carrbridge
Attachments: FMQ Fergus Ewing Carrbridge KH.docx

Many thanks
[redacted]

[redacted]
Special Advisers' Office
St Andrews House
[redacted]

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From: Higgins K (Kate) [redacted]
Sent: 07 March 2019 11:01
To: [redacted]
Cc: Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [redacted]; Hynd JS (James) [redacted]
Subject: RE: FMQ Fergus Ewing Carrbridge

James has seen and is happy

This can now go in the folder

Kate Higgins
Special Advisor to the First Minister
Rural Economy and Connectivity
[redacted]/[redacted]

My working hours are:
Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30 – 4.30; Wed 8.30 -4.30
Fri 9 – 5 and working from home, contactable on [redacted]

Scottish Government
St Andrew's House, 2 Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG
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From: Higgins K (Kate)
Sent: 07 March 2019 10:56
To: [redacted]
Cc: Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [redacted]; [Hynd JS](#)
(James) [redacted] **Subject:** RE: FMQ
Fergus Ewing Carrbridge

Tweaks from [redacted] and the appropriate para from the code added (I think this is the right one?)

Kate Higgins
Special Advisor to the First Minister
Rural Economy and Connectivity
[redacted]/[redacted]

My working hours are:
Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30 – 4.30; Wed 8.30 -4.30
Fri 9 – 5 and working from home, contactable on [redacted]

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From: [redacted]
Sent: 07 March 2019 10:50
To: Higgins K (Kate)[redacted]
Subject: FMQ Fergus Ewing Carrbridge

The Ferret story on Fergus Ewing – alleged conflict of interest

ISSUE: Article in the Ferret today by Rob Edwards on Rural Economy Secretary, Fergus Ewing's dealings on behalf of a constituent, Colin Watt (owner of Carrbridge hotel) who has alleged to have illegally felled trees. FCS referred the matter to the PF who declined to prosecute. An enforcement order was also applied which Mr Watt has appealed and which may come to Scottish Ministers for a determination.

18 June 2018 - Mr Ewing raised the matter and was given background and advice by Forestry Commission officials which concluded *"that in these circumstances ministers should take into account the live enforcement actions before engaging with Mr Watt at this time."*

5 July 2018 - Mr Ewing appeared in a photo with Mr Watt in the Strathspey and Badenoch Herald on 5 July and commented on the case, including criticism of the leadership of Cairngorms National Park Authority. He was quoted as "Strathspey MSP". The Ferret report carries comments from the Chief Executive of the CNPA and also Rhoda Grant, Labour's opposition spokesperson:

Scottish Labour's rural economy spokesperson, [Rhoda Grant MSP](#), accused Ewing of a "clear conflict of interest" in backing Watt. "These are extremely serious allegations and must be thoroughly investigated," she told The Ferret. "Fergus Ewing as constituency MSP is supporting a constituent in a matter likely to come before him in his capacity as cabinet secretary responsible for the Forestry Commission."

Grant highlighted [section 8.7 \(c\) of the Scottish Government's code of conduct governing behaviour by all ministers](#). "They should make no comment of their own where the determination of a planning application will lead to, or will implicitly involve, other decisions in which the minister making representations on behalf of a particular constituency or region is involved in his or her own ministerial capacity," it says. She added: "Therefore, Fergus Ewing must be investigated under the code. He must also come to the parliament and provide full transparency on his role in this process and the degree of his intervention."

Top Lines

- Mr Ewing, as Rural Economy Minister, has played and would never play any part in deciding this case, because he is the constituency MSP.
- Mr Ewing's contact with Mr Watt last year was in his role as constituency MSP, not as a Minister.
- The Ministerial Code provides that a Minister may represent the views of their constituents, as long as it is clear that he or she is doing so as the constituency MSP.

The Ferret story on Fergus Ewing – alleged conflict of interest

- The enforcement notice appeal by Mr Watt is being currently being considered by the Reporter appointed independently of Ministers by the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) of the Scottish Government.
- Mr Ewing has maintained the proper separation of his constituency and Ministerial responsibilities. There are no grounds to suggest that he has breached the Ministerial Code.

Para 8.6 of the Ministerial Code says:

The general guidance at 7.5 to 7.10 above also applies to planning matters, including energy consents. It is entirely legitimate for Ministers, in their capacity as a constituency or regional MSP, to make representations on behalf of their electorate on planning matters, but they must take particular care to ensure they follow this due process when doing so. Where Ministers find it unavoidable to express a view on a planning case, they should be aware of the potential sensitivities in doing so, should make it clear that they are not involved in the decision making process on the planning case, and must make it clear that the views they put forward are ones expressed in their capacity as the MSP representing a particular electorate.

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 21 March 2019 15:22
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: carrbridge Hotel
Attachments: image001.png

Many thanks
[redacted]

[redacted]
Special Advisers' Office
St Andrews House
[redacted]

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-----Original Message-----

From: Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [redacted]
Sent: 12 March 2019 16:23
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: carrbridge Hotel

FYI - FE's original full statement below

Elizabeth Lloyd
Chief of Staff to the First Minister
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG
Tel: [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]
[redacted]

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-----Original Message-----

From: Higgins K (Kate) [redacted]
Sent: 12 March 2019 15:50
To: Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [redacted]
Subject: FW: carrbridge Hotel

I'll update the FMQs brief with lines from here

Kate Higgins
Special Advisor to the First Minister
Rural Economy and Connectivity
[redacted]/[redacted]

My working hours are:
Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30 – 4.30; Wed 8.30 -4.30 Fri 9 – 5 and working from home, contactable on
[redacted]

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-----Original Message-----

From: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP <Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>
Sent: 08 March 2019 16:51
To: [redacted]
Cc: Higgins K (Kate) [redacted]
Subject: Re: carrbridge Hotel

Thanks [redacted]

The full statement to the local paper is useful

It did not endorse the tree felled area as the parking solution at all but asked that one be sought
by CNPA

I asked that they be proactive in funding a solution. Obviously that is one that would be
satisfactory from all perspectives including planning

There was no planning app live when I wrote to the Strathy

Nor did I make any reps re the app once it was submitted later on.

I told Moir and Myles at meeting which I think was in August that I would not be making reps re
the application that was submitted after that meeting took place

I did not engage with Colin watt re the felling issue but played no part at all in it I deliberately kept
out of it

My public statement was entirely different. Call on CNPA to fulfil its wider statutory role of
promoting economic and social development

The Ferret assumes that my comment endorsed the felled area but it did not. That was I can
now see quite deliberate on my part

I am copying to Kate

F

Sent from my iPhone

> On 8 Mar 2019, at 16:00, [redacted] wrote: >

> Please see below email for the statement you did for the Strathy on 2nd July last year. We have had a good search and strangely we can't find the exact email sent to Strathy but below were your comments that were sent on to [redacted] as they were carried in the article as per below:

> B

>

> [<http://parkswatchscotland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Carr-bridg>

> e-2.png]

>

> From: [redacted]

> Sent: 08 March 2019 13:32

> To: [redacted]

> Subject: FW: carrbridge Hotel

>

>

>

> From: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP

> Sent: 02 July 2018 11:42

> To: [redacted]

> Subject: Re: carrbridge Hotel

>

> I have shortened it.

>

> Please send off to [redacted]

> Sent from my iPhone

>

> On 2 Jul 2018, at 11:33, [redacted]

wrote: >

> Statement by Fergus Ewing MSP for Inverness and Nairn regarding the need to help local businesses and with reference to Carrbridge Hotel.

> " As the local constituency MSP I am concerned and disappointed that the reasonable requirements of the Carrbridge Hotel have not found favour with the CNPA last Friday.

> The National Park has a statutory duty in section one (d) of the National Parks Scotland Act 2000 to advance economic and social development. There need be no conflict between helping business operate and fulfilling their conservation role. The Carr-bridge hotel, which I have been advised, enjoys the support of the local Community Council for their plans, have practical needs for parking space linked to their plans for trading throughout the year. With a bit of common sense, goodwill and positive, proactive effort surely these can be accommodated?

> I have no issue with the good work that the staff of the CNPA carry out. However the leadership of the Park, must in my view, as the local constituency MSP, be more proactive in and focussed on delivering outcomes for people and businesses locally.

> In the case of the Carr-bridge Hotel surely the Park leadership, working with the business, can come up with an answer which helps this business avoid closure during the winter because of lack of parking and other facilities? This obviously impacts on many in Carrbridge including the staff at the hotel.

- > I therefore would urge the CEO and the Chair of the organisation, as well as the Board to review their approach to pursuit of the aims of the park to promote people and business in the area.
 - > National Parks in Scotland are very populous places. They are not like
 - > those in other parts of the world where there are hardly any residents
 - > far less businesses. People and business should be able to thrive -
 - > and not be constrained and impaired by process and delay
 - >
 - > I am keen to engage with the Park on these matters and shall seek a
 - > meeting to discuss
 - >
 - > <image001.png>
- *****

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Minister backs hotel boss in call for more village parking

By Tom Ramage
t.amage@strathspey.co.uk

SCOTLAND'S rural economy minister has given his backing to a Strathspey hotel in its bid to zone a corner of a field for car parking to enable the business to expand.

Colin Watt, owner of the Carrbridge Hotel, claimed he has been frustrated by the Cairngorms National Park Authority in moving things on with developing the conference and events side of the operation.

He had applied for a section of land measuring 38 metres by 65 metres by the village's golf course to be rezoned in the Local Development Plan (LDP), due to be adopted in 2020 near to the hotel, to allow for car parking at Carrbridge on the Local Development Plan.

He said: "The CNPA declined the request, recommending that the hotel proceeds with a full planning application - even though they had already rejected a pre-application.

"We're very disappointed with the

outcome of Friday's planning meeting on the LDP in Nethy Bridge and feel that the board members had not been fully briefed as to our circumstances here.

"We are raising the matter with the Scottish Government, the CNPA and our local elected members to see if any flexibility can be found because this no-go approach is unhelpful to sustainability and development and may well thwart what in effect would be a multi-million pound investment in the hotel's amenity and facilities."

Mr Watt wants the hotel to build on recent success: "To do so we need more parking spaces. This would allow us to operate throughout the year and combat the shoulder season problem. We need practical help to do that so why won't the park leadership help?"

Strathspey MSP Fergus Ewing said: "I am concerned and disappointed that the reasonable requirements of the Carrbridge Hotel have not found favour with the CNPA. The park authority has a statutory duty to advance



IN THE ZONE: Rural Economy Minister Fergus Ewing (left) and Mr Watt have seen eye to eye on the question of re-zoning a small patch of land for a car park which the hotelier says would help increase the village's earning potential.

economic and social development. There need be no conflict between helping business operate and fulfilling their conservation role.

"The hotel has practical needs for parking space and with a bit of

common sense, goodwill and positive, proactive effort surely these can be accommodated."

"I have no issue with the good work that the staff of the CNPA carry out. However the leadership of the park

must be more proactive in and focussed on delivering outcomes for people and businesses locally."

Murray Ferguson, the CNPA's director of planning and rural development, said: "We're aware of the recent felling of trees at a site connected to the Carrbridge Hotel and that this matter is currently being investigated by Forestry Commission Scotland.

"The hotel already has planning permission to extend the hotel and the provision of car-parking was very carefully considered in granting that approval.

"We met the owner recently and have advised that if they now require additional parking, the best way forward is to submit a planning application which can then be considered by either ourselves or Highland Council. We have already given pre-application advice on the site concerned so the owner is fully aware of the issues that need to be addressed."

A Forestry Commission Scotland spokesman confirmed they were investigating an alleged illegal felling.

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 21 March 2019 15:22
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: Query on Fergus Ewing and Carrbridge tree felling

Many thanks
[redacted]

[redacted]
Special Advisers' Office
St Andrews House
[redacted]

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From: Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [redacted]
Sent: 07 March 2019 09:04
To: Higgins K (Kate) [redacted]; Hynd JS (James) [redacted]
Subject: RE: Query on Fergus Ewing and Carrbridge tree felling

Yes – just the lines and the ministerial code quotes

Elizabeth Lloyd
Chief of Staff to the First Minister
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG
Tel: [redacted]

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From: Higgins K (Kate) [redacted]
Sent: 07 March 2019 08:55
To: Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [redacted]; Hynd JS (James) [redacted]
Subject: RE: [Query on Fergus Ewing and Carrbridge tree felling](#)

Does it need an fmq brief?

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [redacted]
Date: Thursday, 07 Mar 2019, 8:46 am
To: Higgins K (Kate) [redacted], Hynd JS (James) [redacted]
Subject: [RE: Query on Fergus Ewing and Carrbridge tree felling](#)

To note – now live

<https://theferret.scot/fergus-ewing-carrbridge-pinewood/>

Elizabeth Lloyd
Chief of Staff to the First Minister
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG
Tel: [redacted]

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From: Higgins K (Kate) [redacted]
Sent: 06 March 2019 19:07
To: [redacted]; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [redacted]; Hynd JS (James) [redacted]
Subject: [RE: Query on Fergus Ewing and Carrbridge tree felling](#)

[redacted] will you update FCS comms tomorrow and suggest there is nothing for them to usefully add

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: [redacted]
Date: Wednesday, 06 Mar 2019, 7:04 pm
To: Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [redacted], Hynd JS (James) [redacted], Higgins K (Kate) [redacted]
Subject: RE: Query on [Fergus Ewing and Carrbridge tree felling](#)

Thanks Liz, will issue now

From: Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [redacted]
Sent: 06 March 2019 19:01
To: [redacted]; Hynd JS (James) [redacted]; Higgins K (Kate) [redacted]
Subject: [RE: Query on Fergus Ewing and Carrbridge tree felling](#)

[redacted]

If James is happy, no need for clearance from us. Happy to issue

Liz

Elizabeth Lloyd
Chief of Staff to the First Minister
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG
Tel: [redacted]

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From: [redacted]
Sent: 06 March 2019 18:45
To: Hynd JS (James) [redacted]; Higgins K (Kate) [redacted]; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [redacted]
Subject: RE: Query on Fergus Ewing and Carrbridge tree felling

[redacted], Kate and Liz,

[redacted]

Just checking: Would you be content for these to issue?

Best wishes,

[redacted]

SG spokesperson said: "Mr Ewing's contact with Mr Watt last year was in his role as the constituency MSP, not as a Minister.

The Ministerial Code provides that a Minister may represent the views of their constituents, as long as it is clear that he or she is doing so as the constituency MSP.

The enforcement notice appeal by Mr Watt is being currently being considered by the Reporter appointed independently of Ministers by the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) of the Scottish Government.

Mr Ewing, as Rural Economy Minister, will play no part in deciding the outcome of the appeal.

Mr Ewing has maintained the proper separation of his constituency and Ministerial responsibilities. There are no grounds to suggest that he has breached the Ministerial Code.

Background:

The newspaper article featuring Mr Ewing's remarks on this issue clearly quotes him as "Strathspey MSP Fergus Ewing".

From: Hynd JS (James) [redacted]
Sent: 06 March 2019 17:49
To: [redacted]; [Higgins K \(Kate\) \[redacted\]](#)
Subject: RE: Query on Fergus Ewing and Carrbridge tree felling

[redacted]

James

James Hynd
Head of Cabinet, Parliament and Governance Division
Room 4N:03
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
Internal [redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 06 March 2019 17:28
To: [redacted]; [Higgins K \(Kate\) \[redacted\]](#); [Hynd JS \(James\) \[redacted\]](#)
Subject: RE: Query on Fergus Ewing and Carrbridge tree felling

Thanks [redacted],

James: just checking .. would you have any views on this?

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 06 March 2019 17:09
To: [redacted]; [Higgins K \(Kate\) \[redacted\]](#); [Hynd JS \(James\) \[redacted\]](#)
Subject: RE: Query on Fergus Ewing and Carrbridge tree felling

Happy

Regards

[redacted]

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From: [redacted]

Sent: 06 March 2019 16:34

To: Higgins K (Kate) [redacted]; Hynd JS (James) [redacted]

Subject: RE: Query on Fergus Ewing and Carrbridge tree felling

[redacted], James & [redacted],

Here is the line I'd suggest for The Ferret on this.

Grateful for views please.

We should issue tonight just in case the Ferret publish this evening – we wouldn't want to be empty-chaired.

Best wishes

[redacted]

[redacted - all information from this point onwards is released as part of documents 3 and 14]

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 21 March 2019 15:02
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: Carrbridge Hotel, tree felling.

Many thanks
[redacted]

[redacted]
Special Advisers' Office
St Andrews House
[redacted]

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From: Higgins K (Kate)
Sent: 18 March 2019 09:52
To: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP <Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>
Subject: RE: Carrbridge Hotel, tree felling.

I think you should meet with concerned residents locally, as the constituency MSP

Kate Higgins
Special Advisor to the First Minister
Rural Economy and Connectivity
[redacted]

My working hours are:
Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30 – 4.30; Wed 8.30 -4.30
Fri 9 – 5 and working from home, contactable on [redacted]

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St Andrew's House, 2 Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG
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From: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP <Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>
Sent: 17 March 2019 17:25
To: Higgins K (Kate) <[\[redacted\]](#)>
Subject: Fwd: Carrbridge Hotel, tree felling.

Have not replied.
F
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: [redacted]
Date: 17 March 2019 at 17:13:15 GMT
To: "Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot" <Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>
Subject: Fwd: Carrbridge Hotel, tree felling.

Dear Mr. Ewing,

I write further to my email of 8th March, to which I have yet to receive an acknowledgement or a reply.

As a property owner in the near vicinity of the land on which the illegal tree felling has taken place, I would appreciate your response at your earliest convenience. As I am sure you are aware, this matter is attracting considerable attention in a number of quarters, and public forums. Your direct response to the situation would, therefore, be most valuable.

A copy of my email is attached for your ease of reference.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted].

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From: [redacted]
Sent: Friday, March 8, 2019 11:48:33 AM
To: Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot
Subject: Carrbridge Hotel, tree felling.

Dear Mr. Ewing,

I am writing to you regarding your support for development activities by a Mr. Watt, at Carrbridge.

I am a member of the SNP, and joined the party having seen it as a positive example of leadership and integrity. It was with some dismay, therefore, that I read the report by the Ferret, in connection with your involvement in a planning and environmental matter in Carrbridge.

You have publicly spoken out in favour of development activity, by Mr. Watt, of Carrbridge Hotel. The execution of his development activity has resulted in his illegal felling of a large number of mature trees in the national park, to build a car park. These activities were undertaken, he claims, in conjunction with and as a necessary adjunct to a planned extension to his hotel. Adequate parking should have been a part of his planning application to extend the hotel. Destruction of the mature trees mentioned above was not included in the application. The Forestry Commission have objected to this illegal felling in clear terms, and with good reason.

Whilst it is entirely acceptable for a local businessman to wish to develop his business; you of all people should know that developments should show sensitivity to the amenity and character of the local area. If you have visited the site, you will be aware that it is located in the Cairngorms National Park, an area of importance to local wildlife (including capercaillie) and ecology. Had you consulted more widely, you would also be aware that the activity resulting in the destruction of this area of woodland have failed to have regard to these factors, and are extremely unpopular with others living in the

immediate vicinity of the site. A brief look at the objections to a planning application made on behalf of Mr. Watt to build a car park on the site of the illegal felling, held by Highlands and Islands Planning Department, would show this, should you care to look. The plans and illegal action by Mr. Watt have had no regard to any of these concerns.

You have argued you are supporting a constituent in developing his business. I need not remind you, you are elected to support all your constituents, not just those who vote for and support your party. Your lack of consultation with constituents in the immediate vicinity has demonstrated a failure by you to do this. In addition, you have ignored the advice and guidance of the CNPA, and the Forestry Commission who expressly advised you against supporting Mr. Watt in this way. I had thought such lack of transparency and disregard of expert advice was the domain of another party, not the one of which I am currently a member.

In addition to failing to consult your constituents in a fair and balanced way, there is a strong case to argue you have blurred ministerial guidelines to such an extent that you could be accused of breaching them. You claim ministers are entitled to represent their constituents' interests. I agree, but it must be highly questionable in a case where the matter in hand falls squarely within the remit and authority of the minister concerned. I would suggest this would be seen as a most inappropriate case for you to comment on. Balance, transparency and leadership are in short supply in these times. You need not add to the diminution of belief by the public in the political system.

My trust in the SNP, its integrity and leadership has been severely dented by your actions. Trust hard won, is easily lost. I would strongly urge you to step aside from all dealings with this matter, in the interests of transparency and integrity.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Sent from my iPad

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[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 21 March 2019 15:01
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: Carrbridge Hotel, tree felling.

Many thanks
[redacted]

[redacted]
Special Advisers' Office
St Andrews House
[redacted]

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From: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP <Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>
Sent: 18 March 2019 10:45
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Carrbridge Hotel, tree felling.

Dear [redacted],

Thank you for both emails.

I do not believe that my role has been accurately or fairly represented in reportage , but understand your concern as expressed in your notes. Therefore I would be happy to meet to explain my role here in relation to the issues , and in doing so hopefully set the record straight.

I made no representation on the planning application, nor comment on the forestry notice ,and had no role in any ministerial decision - nor would I something I can discuss

I have a duty to listen to all constituents - a point you rightly and fairly make and therefore I felt it right to offer a meeting to hear your views

I am happy to explain all matters to you , if you wish , and I hope by doing so , clarify the position

You also refer to neighbours views and of course am happy and willing to meet them too either with you or separately.

I would be keen to hear your own views as well if you wish to discuss them

If this is of interest please let me know

Brexit is keeping me busy right now as Cabinet Secretary but I could suggest a couple of dates in the next few weeks if you wish to meet.

Kind regards

Your sincerely

Fergus Ewing

Sent from my iPhone

On 17 Mar 2019, at 17:13, [redacted] wrote:

Dear Mr. Ewing,

I write further to my email of 8th March, to which I have yet to receive an acknowledgement or a reply.

As a property owner in the near vicinity of the land on which the illegal tree felling has taken place, I would appreciate your response at your earliest convenience. As I am sure you are aware, this matter is attracting considerable attention in a number of quarters, and public forums. Your direct response to the situation would, therefore, be most valuable.

A copy of my email is attached for your ease of reference.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted].

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From: Hotmail <[\[redacted\]](#)>
Sent: Friday, March 8, 2019 11:48:33 AM
To: Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot
Subject: Carrbridge Hotel, tree felling.

Dear Mr. Ewing,

I am writing to you regarding your support for development activities by a Mr. Watt, at Carrbridge.

I am a member of the SNP, and joined the party having seen it as a positive example of leadership and integrity. It was with some dismay, therefore, that I read the report by the Ferret, in connection with your involvement in a planning and environmental matter in Carrbridge.

You have publicly spoken out in favour of development activity, by Mr. Watt, of Carrbridge Hotel. The execution of his development activity has resulted in his illegal felling of a large number of mature trees in the national park, to build a car park. These activities were undertaken, he claims, in conjunction with and as a necessary adjunct to a planned extension to his hotel. Adequate parking should have been a part of his planning application to extend the hotel. Destruction of the mature trees mentioned above was not included in the application. The Forestry Commission have objected to this illegal felling in clear terms, and with good reason.

Whilst it is entirely acceptable for a local businessman to wish to develop his business; you of all people should know that developments should show sensitivity to the amenity and character of the local area. If you have visited the site, you will be aware that it is located in the Cairngorms National Park, an area of importance to local wildlife (including capercaillie) and ecology. Had you consulted more widely, you would also be aware that the activity resulting in the destruction of this area of woodland have failed to have regard to these factors, and are extremely unpopular with others living in the immediate vicinity of the site. A brief look at the objections to a planning application made on behalf, of Mr. Watt to build a car park on the site of the illegal felling, held by Highlands and Islands Planning Department, would show this, should you care to look. The plans and illegal action by Mr. Watt have had no regard to any of these concerns.

You have argued you are supporting a constituent in developing his business. I need not remind you, you are elected to support all your constituents, not just those who vote for and support your party. Your lack of consultation with constituents in the immediate vicinity has demonstrated a failure by you to do this. In addition, you have ignored the advice and guidance of the CNPA, and the Forestry Commission who expressly advised you against supporting Mr. Watt in this way. I had thought such lack of transparency and disregard of expert advice was the domain of another party, not the one of which I am currently a member.

In addition to failing to consult your constituents in a fair and balanced way, there is a strong case to argue you have blurred ministerial guidelines to such an extent that you could be accused of breaching them. You claim ministers are entitled to represent their constituents' interests. I agree, but it must be highly questionable in a case where the matter in hand falls squarely within the remit and authority of the minister concerned. I would suggest this would be seen as a most inappropriate case for you to comment on. Balance, transparency and leadership are in short supply in these times. You need not add to the diminution of belief by the public in the political system.

My trust in the SNP, its integrity and leadership has been severely dented by your actions. Trust hard won, is easily lost. I would strongly urge you to step aside from all, dealings with this matter, in the interests of transparency and integrity.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

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[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 21 March 2019 14:45
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: FAO urgent attention Mr Colin Watt: media query about Fergus Ewing and tree felling at Carrbridge

Many thanks
[redacted]

[redacted]
Special Advisers' Office
St Andrews House
[redacted]

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From: [redacted]
Sent: 12 March 2019 17:03
To: Higgins K (Kate)[redacted]
Subject: RE: FAO urgent attention Mr Colin Watt: media query about Fergus Ewing and tree felling at Carrbridge

Yes, I'll get it to you tomorrow if that's okay. [redacted - out of scope].

The meeting at Carrbridge Hotel was on the 24th August last year with Colin Watt and the CNPA Grant Moir, Gavin Miles (Head of Planning) and Eleanor Mackintosh (Convenor of Planning Committee)

[redacted]

From: Kate.Higgins[redacted]
Sent: 12 March 2019 15:53
To: [redacted]
Subject: RE: FAO urgent attention Mr Colin Watt: media query about Fergus Ewing and tree felling at Carrbridge

Have you still got that correspondence? If so, I will pick up this afternoon

Kate Higgins
Special Advisor to the First Minister
Rural Economy and Connectivity
[redacted]/[redacted]

My working hours are:
Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30 – 4.30; Wed 8.30 -4.30
Fri 9 – 5 and working from home, contactable on [redacted]

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From: Higgins K (Kate)
Sent: 06 March 2019 18:20
To: '[redacted]'
Subject: RE: FAO urgent attention Mr Colin Watt: media query about Fergus Ewing and tree felling at Carrbridge

Just keep hold for now, I'll shout if I need it! Thanks

Kate Higgins
Special Advisor to the First Minister
Rural Economy and Connectivity
[redacted]/[redacted]

My working hours are:
Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30 – 4.30; Wed 8.30 -4.30
Fri 9 – 5 and working from home, contactable on [redacted]

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From: [redacted]
Sent: 06 March 2019 16:21
To: Higgins K (Kate) [redacted]
Subject: RE: FAO urgent attention Mr Colin Watt: media query about Fergus Ewing and tree felling at Carrbridge

Kate,

I have printed off correspondence on this matter, would you like me to scan it and send to you or can provide you with hard copies in a folder?

[redacted]

From: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP <Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>
Sent: 06 March 2019 15:24
To: Kate.Higgins[redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Re: FAO urgent attention Mr Colin Watt: media query about Fergus Ewing and tree felling at Carrbridge

I'll get all correspondence etc from my office.

F

Sent from my iPhone

On 6 Mar 2019, at 12:55, "Kate.Higgins [redacted]" wrote:

[redacted]

So just park it for now and I'll update you later.

[redacted - out of scope]

Kate Higgins
Special Advisor to the First Minister
Rural Economy and Connectivity
[redacted]/[redacted]

My working hours are:
Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30 – 4.30; Wed 8.30 -4.30
Fri 9 – 5 and working from home, contactable on [redacted]

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From: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP <Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>
Sent: 06 March 2019 11:59
To: Higgins K [redacted]
Subject: Fwd: FAO urgent attention Mr Colin Watt: media query about Fergus Ewing and tree felling at Carrbridge

Re the Ferret.

I will look out all the correspondence, but in my work as constituency MSP I was supportive of local business that is providing employment to many people and who has the support of local organisations and business bodies.

I met with CNPA CEO and Planning official with Colin Watt and I made it clear that the planning issue was one for Colin and them to pursue, but argued that the CNPA does have a wide duty to promote social and economic development as one of its four aims, and I encouraged them to be proactive in trying to help one of the most important local businesses in the area I represent.

F

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: enquiries <enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com>
Date: 6 March 2019 at 11:29:00 GMT
To: "Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk"
<Fergus.Ewing.msp@scottish.parliament.uk>
Subject: FW: FAO urgent attention Mr Colin Watt: media query about Fergus Ewing and tree felling at Carrbridge

Hi Fergus just a quick heads up please see the email thread below
– we will be making no comment, for info

I was personally reported to the procurator fiscals office by FCS and accused of felling trees, the matter was not perused by procurators office and is now at an end. There is an active enforcement notice to plant 250 number trees on the land, which the ltd company that owns the land has excepted liability for and will comply with regardless of the current live planning application for a carpark.

I suspect negative collusion within the CNPA office stirring matters as I have seen highly detailed written documentation written by individuals for forums. I have also seen email via Murry Ferguson encouraging dissemination of sensitive and private information via the Carrbridge Community Council.

We are considering to put the planning application to appeal as the 8 week consultation process is almost at an end due to non-determination and our advisors tell us we stand a much fairer chance of consideration via the appeal process than at the CNPN.

In the last few days [even though the application has been live for almost 8 weeks, CNPA have consulted RSPB, SNH, core pathes and SEPA, there is also a document via BADENOCH AND STRATHSPEY CONSERVATION GROUP [Gus Jones] who work closely with CNPA on applications they wish to try and kill.

Meantime I am personally being vilified via published comments on the CNPA planning web site which are not true.

The planning application has received a lot of support from individuals and companies along with the local Carrbridge Tourist Association and Aviemore Business Partnership and the Carrbridge Community Council via LDP and consultation letter. We expect Carrbridge Golf Club to also support us having now spoken with them directly.

There are about 30 negative comments which net to about 16 or 17 because of Husband Wife son daughter type entry's

The whole process seems to be a set up by CNPA having advised us to process an application in the first place and refusing our application to amend the local development plan which again was supported by the community council.

We have the option to also pull the application as the winter season Function Conference and Events traffic pay legal road tax and could park on roads and the village public car park – but this would be to the village detriment

Best wishes

Colin

From: Rob Edwards [redacted]
Reply-To: Rob Edwards [redacted]
Date: Wednesday, 6 March 2019 09:12
To: enquiries <enquiries@carrbridgehotel.com>
Subject: FAO urgent attention Mr Colin Watt: media query about Fergus Ewing and tree felling at Carrbridge

Dear Mr Watt,

Can you please help with a query for an article I am writing for [The Ferret](#)? I would be grateful if you could get back to me as soon as possible before 5pm today (Wednesday), and I would appreciate an acknowledgement of this email.

On 20 June 2018 [redacted], head of delivery and regions at Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), wrote to the rural economy secretary, Fergus Ewing, warning about “engaging” with you as the owner of Carrbridge Hotel. He was responding to a request for urgent advice from the minister in relation to complaints you had made about authorities blocking your plans for a new car park near the hotel.

[redacted] pointed out that an ancient pinewood, including a 140-year-old Scots pine, had been felled without a licence at the site of the proposed car park on Sunday 14 January 2018. This had resulted in FCS sending a report to the procurator fiscal, and serving you with an Environmental Impact Assessment enforcement notice requiring trees to be replanted.

[redacted] pointed out that the enforcement notice could be appealed to Scottish ministers. Because there were live enforcement actions, he recommended that Ewing should take these into consideration before engaging with you.

Two weeks later on 5 July 2018 [a story appeared](#) in the Strathspey and Badenoch Herald under the headline ‘Minister backs hotel boss in call for more village parking’. Ewing was quoted as saying that he was “concerned and disappointed” that your “reasonable requirements” were being opposed by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA).

Emails released under freedom of information law show that Ewing’s intervention in support of you upset CNPA. It would have been “courteous” of the minister to have contacted the authority directly, said CNPA chief executive, Grant Moir.

Opposition parties and environmental campaigners have accused Ewing of a conflict of interest that could prejudice the planning process and his neutrality as a minister. They also allege that he has breached the ministerial code by blurring his roles as a constituency MSP and as a minister, and are calling for a statement to parliament and an investigation.

What comments would you like to make? Comments by email as soon as possible before 5pm today would be much appreciated.

Thank you for your help.

Rob Edwards

--
Rob Edwards
theferret.scot
[\[redacted\]](#)
twitter.com/robedwards53
[redacted]

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Dh'fhaodadh gum bi teachdaireachd sam bith bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba air a chlàradh neo air a sgrùdadh airson dearbhadh gu bheil an siostam ag obair gu h-èifeachdach neo airson adhbhar laghail eile. Dh'fhaodadh nach eil beachdan anns a' phost-d seo co-ionann ri beachdan Riaghaltas na h-Alba.

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[redacted]

From: Grant Moir <[redacted]>
Sent: 03 July 2018 20:44
To: Connal K (Keith)
Cc: Campbell B (Bridget)
Subject: Re: Carrbridge zoning

Keith

The LDP thing is a bit of a red herring which is what makes this all so frustrating. Any planning application for the next 2 years will be on the basis of the current LDP where it is not an allocated site. The next LDP becomes a material consideration but not for quite a while.

Mr Watts can put in a planning application. That would need to be treated as any normal application. It would be assessed, a recommendation made and the committee would decide.

However, I agree that it would be best if Mr Watts waited to see the outcome of the PF and FCS investigation. However, he has refused to speak to FCS at the moment.

If he resolved the issue with FCS we would consider an application based on current LDP policies.

For info Mr Watts got planning permission for his hotel extension by assuring highland council roads (who objected) that he did not need any extra parking because of his business model. They withdrew their objection on that basis. He has now changed his business model but had no room for extra parking on site and has yet to build the extension.

Fundamentally the CNPA and FCS have done nothing wrong and it is frustrating that there is no balanced approach to this from the local MSP.

All the best
Grant

Sent from my iPhone

On 3 Jul 2018, at 20:15, "[Keith.Connal](#)[redacted] wrote:

Grant

FCS had made us aware, in general terms, of the action being taken in relation to the felling and I am aware that they have briefed Mr Ewing.

Do you have an up to date position from FCS?

I note the suggestion of a planning application being submitted but is that a feasible option while the case is being considered by the PF? Indeed, should any comment be made assuming that CNPA may be required to give evidence to the PF?

And if an application were submitted, am I correct in thinking that it might be less likely to succeed if it does not feature in the LDP?

[redacted]

Keith

Sent with BlackBerry Work (www.blackberry.com)

From: Grant Moir <[\[redacted\]](#)>
Sent: 3 Jul 2018 17:26
To: "Connal K (Keith)" [\[redacted\]](#); "[Campbell B \(Bridget\)](#)"
[\[redacted\]](#)
Subject: Fwd: Carrbridge zoning

Keith, Bridget

There is quite a lot of background to the below but you will see a fairly inflammatory comment from Mr Ewing. As per form he hasn't actually contacted us to ask about the situation.

For info the site that the hotel owner wants allocated in the Local Development Plan 2020 was illegally felled and is subject of an EIA order to restock from FCS and has also been reported to the Fiscal. This action has been carried out by FCS and Mr Ewing knows this as the Cab Sec for that area.

The board position is that we are not at present minded to allocate this site for a car park as part of the 2020 LDP but there is a consultation on the draft later this year. Mr Watt can ask for it to be included at that point. We have also said to Mr Watt that if he wants to put in a planning application he can do so and present his case to the committee. That is his quickest and best route.

I am going to write to Mr Ewing on this tomorrow in his constituency role as I am not best pleased.

All the best
Grant

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: [\[redacted\]](#)
Date: 3 July 2018 at 16:21:49 BST
To: [\[redacted\]](#), [\[redacted\]](#), Grant Moir <[\[redacted\]@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:[redacted]@cairngorms.co.uk)>
Subject: **FW: Carrbridge zoning**

[Agreed statement duly sent](#) "We are aware of the recent felling of trees at a site in Carr-Bridge connected to the Carr-Bridge Hotel and that this matter is being investigated by Forestry Commission Scotland. We have advised the owner of the site that should they wish to progress with plans for a car park in this location, the best way forward is to submit a planning application which can then be considered by either ourselves or The Highland Council."

If there is anything else you would wish to add after reading the comments below let me know ASAP. I have advised the Strathy that they had best contact the Press Office at FCS.

K

From: [\[redacted\]sbherald.co.uk](#) [\[\[redacted\]\]](#)

Sent: 03 July 2018 16:10

To: [redacted]

Subject: Carrbridge zoning

Hi [redacted],

We're putting together a piece on Carrbridge Hotel and its plans for the future which entail the development of a small piece of land for a car park. It's fallen foul of the national park and I'd be grateful if you could organise some comments in reply to those made to us by the hotelier and Fergus Ewing, as attached.

As you know, we go to press tomorrow just after noon.

Grateful for anything.

Thanks,

[redacted]

Colin Watt: "We are very disappointed with the outcome from the CNPA local development planning meeting, which was held on Friday the 29th June 2018.

We felt the elected board members had not been fully briefed as to our circumstance here at the Carrbridge Hotel, so they could not make a fully informed decision based on all the issues.

We will raise the matter with The Scottish Government, CNPA and our local Elected Members to see if any flexibility can be found.

The no go approach is un-helpful to sustainability, development and investment and may well thwart what in effect was to be a multi-million pound investment in the hotels amenity and facilities

We seek to build on recent success by expanding our appeal to the conference and events market. To do so we need more parking spaces. This would allow us to operate throughout the year and combat the shoulder season problem.

To do so is a major challenge not just for us but for the whole sector. We need help - practical help - to do that!

By working together, the business gains, our workforce gain and the community gain.

So why won't the Park leadership help? They can of course be proactive. We also want to find a solution that works for all."

Fergus Ewing on 'the need to help local businesses and with reference to Carrbridge Hotel':

"As the local constituency MSP I am concerned and disappointed that the reasonable requirements of the Carrbridge Hotel have not found favour with the CNPA.

The National Park has a statutory duty in section one (d) of the National Parks Scotland Act 2000 to advance economic and social development. There need be no conflict between helping business operate

and fulfilling their conservation role. The Carr-bridge hotel, which I have been advised, enjoys the support of the local Community Council for their plans, have practical needs for parking space linked to their plans for trading throughout the year. With a bit of common sense, goodwill and positive, proactive effort surely these can be accommodated?

I have no issue with the good work that the staff of the CNPA carry out. However the leadership of the Park, must in my view, as the local constituency MSP, be more proactive in and focussed on delivering outcomes for people and businesses locally.

In the case of the Carrbridge Hotel surely the Park leadership, working with the business, can come up with an answer which helps this business avoid closure during the winter because of lack of parking and other facilities? This obviously impacts on many in Carrbridge including the staff at the hotel.

I therefore would urge the CEO and the Chair of the organisation, as well as the Board to review their approach to pursuit of the aims of the park to promote people and business in the area.

National Parks in Scotland are very populous places. They are not like those in other parts of the world where there are hardly any residents far less businesses. People and business should be able to thrive - and not be constrained and impaired by process and delay.

I am keen to engage with the Park on these matters and shall seek a meeting to discuss.”

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