

From: [redacted]@gov.scot On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands

Sent: 28 August 2023 13:36

To: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: Combatting Overtourism

OR please.

Thank you,

(he/him) | Private Secretary

CabSecRALRI@gov.scot | [REDACTED]

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From: Gougeon M (Mairi), MSP <Mairi.Gougeon.msp@parliament.scot>

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 12:50 PM

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands <CabSecRALRI@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: Combatting Overtourism

From: [redacted]@clara.co.uk

Sent: 28 August 2023 12:49

To: Gougeon M (Mairi), MSP <Mairi.Gougeon.msp@parliament.scot>

Subject: Combatting Overtourism

Dear Ms Gougeon

I am writing to you because you are the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands. I live in the remote rural northwest corner of mainland Sutherland just off the North Coast 500 route.

You may have already seen this document that I attach for your information. It was written by Robin Pettigrew of Lochcarron who lives directly on the North Coast 500. His report explores many of the issues faced by local communities that have experienced growth in tourist numbers and makes a number of constructive suggestions.

In 2019 a group called STAG (Scottish Tourism Action Group) prepared an excellent report entitled Combatting Overtourism in Scotland. Its author was Anne Widdop of Arisaig. This report set out many positive suggestions to address the problems of

overtourism which by 2019 had become very apparent. Although the report was very well thought out, it failed to find an audience in government.

Robin's report, also called *Combatting Overtourism in Scotland*, builds upon the 2019 STAG report.

The purpose of Robin's report is two-fold:

1. Initiate a serious discussion about overtourism.

The report highlights the need for infrastructure development, education, legislation and policing, visitor management strategies and taking a proactive approach to communication. Constructive recommendations are made as to how the problems could be addressed.

2. Present a model of tax strategies in order to raise money to combat the effects of overtourism.

The report analyses and compares several tourist tax strategies and supports the implementation of a vehicle-based visitor levy. Accommodation-based taxation alone is often viewed as unfair because it doesn't include the many thousands of visitors who don't stay in paid accommodation. Further, many of the suggested improvements that could be undertaken with visitor levy income often involves facilities such as waste disposal points which will benefit most those who won't be paying the tax. The report finds that a vehicle-based tax levy will produce a comparable amount of income but will be fairer.

Although there is no doubt that tourism has brought financial benefit to rural communities, the impact of the growth in tourist numbers has often brought many negative impacts. In my own area the North Coast 500 has been a disaster for many communities. Yet local residents have never been consulted and there have been no impact assessments or cost-benefit analyses of the route. Surely successful tourism requires the support of the communities upon which it depends.

I hope that you will read Robin's report. It makes positive suggestions on a way forward that would address the issues and concerns of local communities. It is local communities that are most affected by overtourism, and I hope that Robin's report will mark the beginning of a new approach where local communities are an integral part of any effort to create successful tourism.

REPLY

Thank you from your email to Mairi Gougeon, MSP, Cabinet secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands concerning Robin Pettigrew's report on overtourism. It has been passed to the Tourism team for a reply.

Firstly apologies for the delay in replying – as you will be aware the report is very detailed and covers many other policy areas than the ones covered by the tourism team so I had to reach out to colleagues around the Scottish Government for the relevant information.

If I may I'd like to concentrate on the main problem areas which seem to be:

- Infrastructure – Motorhome facilities, toilet provision, Infrastructure development as detailed in the report
- and the behaviour of visitors again as detailed in the report

The Scottish Government recognises that the popularity of some rural 'hotspots' are creating pressure on some local communities and services. This has been a growing trend in recent years, leading to the establishment of our Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund in 2018. This was further exacerbated by the Pandemic in 2020 and 2021 with reduced opportunities for international travel. A Visitor Management Group was therefore established in 2020 by the then Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism to seek a cross Government approach to addressing issues caused at rural pinch points in scenic countryside areas. This includes addressing such issues as managing visitor dispersal, littering, environmental damage, public toileting and antisocial behaviour. Ministers were supportive of this group and agreed to lend their portfolio resources to collectively meet the challenges of Visitor Management. This work is now led by the Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade.

Members of the Group and its sub-groups include a range of public bodies including VisitScotland, NatureScot, the National Parks, local authorities, and owner and community interests and Police Scotland. It addresses such issues as managing visitor dispersal, littering, environmental damage, public toileting and antisocial behaviour. A Visitor Management Strategy for Scotland was published last year.

<https://www.visitscotland.org/about-us/what-we-do/working-in-partnership/visitor-management-plan>

The group has now been tasked with developing a multiyear strategy from 2023 onwards. £3.9m was secured in 2022-23 to support the interim strategy in 2022-23. This is primarily for the recruitment of over 200 ranger posts: [Investing in rural tourism - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/investing-in-rural-tourism-2022-23/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx). This includes direct support to public bodies and another round of the Better Places Fund which was open to local authorities and communities to apply for funding for rangers. Going forward, partners will utilise their core resources to develop and implement the strategy. This will include countryside ranger posts. Public bodies took cognisance of this when submitting their requests for the Resource Spending Review.

The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) was established by the Scottish Government and is managed by VisitScotland to support strategic infrastructure projects in our more remote areas. Since its inception, across six rounds of RTIF £20.1m of grant funding has been awarded to 77 projects across 17 local authorities and both national park authorities investing in facilities such as car parks, waste disposal and toilet provision. [Rural Development Fund - Funding | VisitScotland.org](https://www.visitscotland.org/rural-development-fund)

RTIF is designed to support collaborative projects that focus on improving the visitor experience in rural parts of Scotland that are facing immediate and damaging pressures on their infrastructure, or negative impacts on communities due to significant increases in visitor numbers as you described in your email. The fund is open to local authorities and National Parks. These bodies work with communities and submit applications on their behalf. A level of match funding is required either by the authority itself or the community, or a mixture of both

The report mentions a review of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) and while we recognise that some stakeholders are keen to see the Code reviewed, Scottish Ministers are satisfied that modification is not required at present. The balance of rights of those working in the countryside with those wishing to access the countryside was extensively debated in the Scottish Parliament at the time the legislation was passed, and is reflected in the SOAC. The SOAC succeeds in fulfilling its statutory purpose of setting out the rights and responsibilities of land managers and access takers. The SOAC has not been modified since its introduction in 2004.

Responsible behaviour is central to the concept of exercising access rights. The vast majority of people who visit the outdoors behave responsibly. It is important that we do not allow the irresponsible behaviour of a minority to diminish the hard-won rights that are exercised responsibly by the majority. A range of legal provisions exist for tackling illegal activity which is outside access rights including off road parking and road traffic offences. The recent Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2021 came into force on 5 November 2021 to tackle the issue of out of controls dogs attacking and worrying livestock. On 28 June 2023, the Scottish Government published a National Litter and Flytipping Strategy. The Strategy has been developed in partnership with Zero Waste Scotland, Keep Scotland Beautiful and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. It aims to drive litter and flytipping prevention over the course of its six-year lifespan through strengthened enforcement, increased fines and coordinated work to address the antisocial behaviour that results in littering and flytipping.

NatureScot is charged with keeping the SOAC under constant review and is working with the National Access Forum (NAF) to address access issues that do arise through providing new guidance, resources and advice. Discussion in the NAF is the best way to identify any perceived concerns which may exist and consider how best to address them quickly, through changes to public messaging or new guidance for land managers. As an example of this, NAF has recently revised its guidance on managing camping with tents and has developed new guidance on the use of local SOAC measures and disturbance of wildlife.

<https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/managing-camping-tents-scotland>

<https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/guidance-managing-public-access-areas-wildlife-sensitivity-scotland>

Rather than modification of the SOAC, most issues instead relate to implementation and resourcing. Failure to comply with the SOAC is often the product of a lack of detailed understanding of its application in specific circumstances or the lack of easy

opportunities to behave differently. Communicating the key messages therefore depends on developing concise, targeted resources which distil, interpret and expand on the key messages for different audiences and different situations. These include web pages, social media resources, videos, blogs, leaflets, posters and on-site communication through signs, and face to face by rangers.

Over the years, NatureScot has developed a wealth of online resources and promotional materials for disseminating messaging around safe and responsible access to the outdoors. It has also recently refreshed its resources for schools and young people. A range of other organisations are helping promote the SOAC, including the National Parks, local authorities, ranger services, VisitScotland, Police Scotland, Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and Water Safety Scotland, by way of example Cairngorms National Park Authority, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

<https://cairngorms.co.uk/discover-explore/enjoying-the-park/outdoor-access-advice/>

<https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/leisure-sport-and-culture/community-life-and-leisure/countryside-access/land-reform-act/>

<https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/outdoors/>

As mentioned above we established a Visitor Management Group to seek a cross-Government approach to addressing issues caused by the significant increase in visits to the outdoors we first saw during the pandemic, both close to urban areas and also at rural pinch points in scenic or otherwise popular countryside areas.

As part of its contribution to the Visitor Management Strategy, NatureScot has stepped up its efforts to promote the SOAC through national, local and social media campaigns in conjunction with VisitScotland and other national partners. Its radio campaign in August last year reached 1.3 million listeners in Scotland, and contributed to a 28% increase in web traffic to the SOAC website from the previous month and the highest monthly result for 2022.

This spring has seen NatureScot's strongest SOAC social media campaign to date, with 1.7 million social media impressions. There have also been 128,000 plays of wild camping guidance videos.

Modification of the original version of the SOAC would need to follow the statutory process in section 10 of the Act, including extensive consultation with stakeholders and approval by the Scottish Parliament. If there are specific areas of the SOAC that you or stakeholders believe are unclear or causing confusion, I would encourage you to communicate this directly to NatureScot who can consider the specifics. There is a review form you can use for this purpose. The lead contact in NatureScot is alan.macpherson@nature.scot

<https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/scottish-outdoor-access-code-review-form>

Issues of implementation on the ground should be raised with the local access officer at the local authority or National Park Authority ("access authorities") who may be able to assist, for example by liaising with those involved or by putting up advisory

signage. Where an access authority considers there is non-compliance with the SOAC on the part of land managers or those exercising access rights, this may be raised with the local access forum. Consisting of land manager and recreation interests, local access forums have been established by all access authorities for the purpose of helping resolve problems and disputes.

The report also mentions pressures from excessive numbers of responsible campers who nevertheless comply with the SOAC. *The “Managing camping with tents in Scotland” guidance document referenced above contains a wealth of information for access authorities, land managers and those with visitor management roles, and provides clarification on the issue on which you write, stating the following for example.*

On page 5: *“The [Access] Code ... indicates that people can camp responsibly with tents wherever access rights apply and encourages “lightweight” camping “well away from” roads. As with other guidance in the Code, this is intentionally worded in a sufficiently open way to accommodate the wide range of circumstances that apply in different places, rather than prescriptively specifying hard limits on, for example, the size of tent or distance from the road. If camping exceeds acceptable thresholds in particular locations, for example because of the collective impact of large numbers, the Code encourages local management, guided by local circumstances, to address these impacts: ... **Responsible behaviour by land managers:** If you are experiencing large numbers of roadside campers or have well-used wild camping areas, you could work with your local authority and with recreational bodies to assist the management of such camping.”*

On page 11: *“It may be appropriate to reinforce the guidance in the Code that refers to “small numbers” and/or stays of “two or three nights”. In places that are subject to very high demand, it might be appropriate to ask users to voluntarily follow a more restrictive approach in order to prevent cumulative impacts, for example by limiting their stays to a single night. If considering requests of this type which go beyond the norm in the Code, advice and support should be sought from the local access forum – and such requests should be promoted in conjunction with wider local messaging as noted above.”*

We encourage stakeholders to keep working with NatureScot and other partners in tackling the issues faced in managing access rights and responsibilities.

The most recent piece of enabling legislation for byelaws is section 12 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. This gives a power to make byelaws for various purposes, including preservation of public order, prevention of damage, and prevention of nuisance, and restrictions on activities such as leaving rubbish or litter and the lighting of fires.

Scottish Government involvement comes under section 202 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 where before application for confirmation of the byelaws is made, notice of the intention to apply for confirmation and of the authority to whom objections may be notified (Scottish Government) shall be given. Before confirming byelaws the confirming authority shall take into consideration any objections received by them and may hold a local inquiry.

Any application for confirmation of byelaws by Scottish Ministers will be considered on its own merits. Ministers cannot comment until we have seen the details of any application.

Finally you mentioned in your email a Vehicle Levy (as well as being mentioned in the report). The Visitor Levy Bill will, if passed by Parliament, allow a local authority to apply a levy on overnight accommodation in their area. Funds raised by a levy will be able to be spent on visitor facilities and services, providing councils with a new fiscal power to improve their local visitor economy. It will be for local authorities to decide how best to allocate these funds, in consultation with local businesses and communities. We share an ambitious vision with the tourism industry, set out in the national tourism strategy Scotland Outlook 2030. Giving local councils the power to introduce a visitor levy is one tool that can provide resources to meet that vision. Motorhomes and campervans that stay overnight in eligible types of accommodation, such as campsites and caravan parks, will be liable for the levy. Motorhomes and campervans that stay outwith designated sites will not be liable for the levy. This aspect was discussed in our 2019 consultation on proposals for the visitor levy, with a majority of respondents opposed to extending the levy to 'wild or rough camping, including motorhomes'. Two thirds of local authorities were also against this. Discussions with council and land management stakeholders highlighted significant issues with a proposed levy on motorhomes, citing potential difficulties in application, administration and compliance.

The Scottish Government remains open to engagement and discussion with stakeholders on this issue, and will consider any developed proposals that will work to support and strengthen the visitor economy.

I hope this is helpful.

Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland – August 2023

Tourism: But not at any price

Report Summary (Direct quotes from the report are in italics)

Report is a follow up of previous report by Anne Widdop Titled "Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland"

Introduction

Scottish Tourism has seen an increase in recent years and while large population centres can cope with it, smaller and rural communities are struggling.

"The national focus has been almost entirely on marketing and very little reciprocal infrastructure investment has been targeted to ensure our smaller and rural communities can cope with this influx"

This has not been recognised and Central Govt, needs to focus on the issue.

Summary and Recommendations

Success of delivering increased visitor numbers has not been matched with sufficient infrastructure investment to accommodate them or any operational review process to monitor and improve the experience for visitors and residents alike

Because of visitor behaviour (some examples listed in report are: damage to flora and fauna, erosion of road verges, litter and human waste pollution) the report says it is *“essential that a full Strategic Environmental Impact assessment is carried out in line with Environmental Impact Assessment Scotland Act 2005”*.

Proposed Solutions (pg. 1 – 3)

“Single-issue, localised solutions just displace the problem from one area to the next”

The Report recommends:

1. Infrastructure Development

“A multi-year tourism infrastructure deliver programme to the tune of tens of millions of pounds per annum”

Ongoing commitment to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund

2. Education

Targeted public education/social media marketing on responsibilities as defined in Outdoor access Code

3. Legislation and Policing

Review Land Reform Act (2003). In Particular

- Review Outdoor Access Code in relation to roadside camping
- Use of existing powers to enact local bylaws to protect worst affected areas.
- Review policing policy
- Ban on non-local overnight parking

4. Management and Control

Additional measures to manage access:

- Motorhome and Camping Certification
- Wild camping licencing scheme
- Campfire control measures
- Additional Full Time Rangers with enforcement powers

5. Technology

Social media to be used to provide real time information to allow visitors to better plan their visit and go to less busy areas

Detail of problems

VisitScotland etc have done a good job of attracting visitors but the Scottish Government has failed to provide sufficient funds for infrastructure to accommodate the increase.

SOAC did not *“anticipate the explosion of casual vehicle-based tourism”* we are experiencing.

Lack of infrastructure investment

Key Problem Areas (pg. 4 – 6)

- **Facilities for Motorhomes/Campervans** – no infrastructure to cope with those who choose to park out with official sites leading to issues such as inappropriate parking, toilet waste
- **Facilities for Wild camping** – SOAC needs to be reviewed in relation to roadside camping. Some areas cannot cope with the numbers even if the SOAC guidelines are being followed. Exacerbated by irresponsible wild camping
- **Car parking** – insufficient parking places results in damage to verges and obstruction. Signage, barriers, cones etc are often ignored.
- **Public Toilets** – lack of public toilets because of local authorities closing them to save money
- **Litter and waste Collection** – emptying bottle banks, bins etc does not increase during summer months around beauty spots.

Solutions (pg. 6 & 7)

- Have to hold a Highland Council licence
- Campfires – campfires should be managed: fire pits installed in appropriate places with suitable bins for ash disposal. Only to be used with fuel brought by the camper or purchased from Ranger.
- Control of anti-social behaviour; Rangers should have powers to issue fines etc (possibly becoming self-funding) and should be full-time not just for summer.
- Management of Numbers – a permit system similar to the one in Loch Lomond to be introduced
- Technology – create a tourist hotspot map of Scotland to allow visitors to avoid the crowded areas.

Funding, Benefits and Implementation (pg. 10)

- Nationally benefits of tourism are huge so spending to protect benefits is to be encouraged.
- Larger proportion of spending to major population areas but rural and remote areas are a larger draw. If experience in rural areas is disappointing then entire visit to Scotland will be diminished impacting all areas.
- Motorhomes owners spend little – arrive with provisions, do not pay anywhere to stay etc – local spending is minimal. Communities need help to cope with these visitors who contribute little to local economy.
- Intention of paper to start a dialogue to get a programme of improvements defined and an agreement on funding and implementation.
- To date focus has been on attracting visitors not managing them.

Conclusion (pg. 9)

- Report Purpose
 - Initiate a serious discussion
 - Present a model of tax strategies
- Highlight the need for Infrastructure, Education legislation etc
- Need for Full time Rangers.
- Ban overnight sleeping in vehicles in residential areas
- Full review of SOAC

- Review of designated camping areas
- Open Fires and sale of disposable Bar B Q's should be banned
- Encourage local land owners to set up Aires
- Implementation of a vehicle based visitor levy

From: Redacted@visitscotland.com

Sent: 22 September 2023 10:27

To: [redacted]@gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot **Subject:** RE: Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland Report

Hi,

Apologies for the delay with this. See attached info from our perspective.

We did get asked about this report from a couple of media enquires (National & Scotsman) and in a Scotsman interview with Malcolm. The lines we used are pretty much what's covered in the attached.

I'm going to use this opportunity to e-introduce our new corporate communications graduate [Redacted] who has joined VS this week. [redacted] will be with us in Government & Parliamentary affairs for 6 months, before going to the other departments in our comms team for the remainder of her 2-year spell with us. Please feel free to cc' her into requests for information as she will be helping out with some of this on our side. I'll also circulate our regular meeting invites to [Redacted] so she can get a chance to meet everyone virtually – and hopefully we can have a face-to-face meeting in the near future.

Have a good weekend when it comes.

Thanks

Government & Parliamentary Affairs Manager, Corporate Communications

S: @VisitScotNews

From: [redacted]@gov.scot
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 3:51 PM
To: [redacted]@VisitScotland.scot
Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot
Subject: Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland Report

This email originated from outside of VisitScotland. Please do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hi folks

I hope you are well.

I have had a couple of micases through about this report "Tourism: But not at any price, Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland" by R J Pettigrew. Is it something VS are aware of? I don't know if it has been sent separately to you – I think it has been to NatureScot

A copy of the report was sent by the author for some reason to the Minister for Transport but has been forwarded on to Mr Lochhead so I am expecting that to come through soon to answer also.

I particularly like this line in the report about the need for "*a multi-year tourism infrastructure deliver programme to the tune of tens of millions of pounds per annum*"- would that we had the money.

It is quite a long report so I have done a summary of the main points for ease.

Could you provide me with some lines etc from a VS point of view I could use in my reply?

I am on leave from Wed for the rest of the week so Tues/Wed next week would be fine.

Thanks as always

Tourism Policy and Strategy | Directorate for Economic Development | Area 2G - South | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ



Combatting Overtourism Report: background information

Background

- Scotland Outlook 2030 is the national tourism strategy which puts our communities, our people, our visitors, our businesses, and our environment at the heart of everything we do: <https://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/scotland-outlook-2030-overview/>
- VisitScotland Strategic Framework 2021 – 2024 includes rebuilding the visitor economy in a responsible way and putting responsible tourism at the heart of our marketing activity: <https://www.visitscotland.org/about-us/what-we-do/our-plans/strategic-framework>

Marketing

- VisitScotland marketing activity is designed to encourage regional and seasonal spread with clear messaging explaining what it means to be a responsible visitor supported by our consumer facing website visitscotland.com and network of iCentres.
- In addition to our own marketing activity, promoting seasonal and regional spread we leverage partnerships to drive awareness, consideration, and bookings for Scotland. For more information: [VisitScotland's Partner Marketing Strategy | VisitScotland.org](#)

Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund

- The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) was established by the Scottish Government and the Fund is managed by VisitScotland on its behalf.
- RTIF is designed to support collaborative projects which focus on improving the visitor experience in rural parts of Scotland that are facing pressure on their infrastructure and communities as a result of visitor numbers.
- To date, £18 million of grant funding has been awarded to 74 projects across rural Scotland. £12.4 million (66%) of this within Highlands and Islands. List of projects can be found via the link below.
- To enable a more strategic approach to visitor infrastructure development and greater alignment with the objectives of Scotland Outlook 2030 RTIF

has supported the development of 24 Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plans in rural areas across Scotland.

- For more information: <https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding/rural-tourism-infrastructure-fund>

Visitor Management

- Established in 2021, VisitScotland chairs Scotland's Visitor Management Strategy Steering Group. Together, partners deliver a collaborative approach to visitor management.
- We work with organisations including NatureScot, Police Scotland and National Parks on a Scotland-wide and coordinated approach to challenges facing certain destinations. Workstreams include education and marketing, operation and coordination.
- Funding from the Scottish Government has helped support the employment of additional seasonal rangers, research projects and a targeted marketing campaign delivered by VisitScotland in 2022.
- Our coordinated Scotland-wide strategic approach educates key audiences to enjoy our countryside responsibly.
- For more information: <https://www.visitscotland.org/about-us/what-we-do/working-in-partnership/visitor-management-plan>

Prepared by VisitScotland
September 2022

From: [redacted]@gov.scot

Sent: 09 October 2023 15:08

To: Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade <MinisterSBITT@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Report on Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland

Hi [Redacted]

I'm happy with that approach.

[Redacted]

Tourism Policy and Strategy | Directorate for Economic Development | Area 2G - South | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ



From: [redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade

Sent: 05 October 2023 14:41

To: [redacted]@gov.scot Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade
<MinisterSBITT@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Report on Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland

Hi [redacted]

I've had a look and I believe we went back to Ms Hyslop's office to ask what they wanted us to do with the report, we haven't had a response.

Does this need responded to as there doesn't seem to be a cover letter/email, just the report?

[Redacted]

Private Secretary

Office of Richard Lochhead MSP, Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade

MinisterSBITT@gov.scot

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | T: 0131 244 1577 | [redacted]
[redacted]

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From: [redacted] @gov.scot

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 4:15 PM

To: Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade <MinisterSBITT@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Report on Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland

Hi folks

This was sent through from Ms Hyslops office a wee while ago. I don't recall seeing a reply and nothing has come up on micase.

For ease I have attached a summary of the report I made so I could go out to SG colleagues for contributions to help me reply following a micase from a member of the public referencing the report.

[redacted]

Tourism Policy and Strategy| Directorate for Economic Development | Area 2G - South | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ



From: [redacted]@gov.scot **On Behalf Of** Minister for Transport

Sent: 30 August 2023 15:00

To: Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade <MinisterSBITT@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot

Subject: Report on Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland

Good afternoon,

Grateful if you can confirm please that you are content to clear.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

|Assistant Private Secretary to the Minister for Transport | Scottish Government | Tel: 00 44 (0) [redacted] | Email: [redacted]@gov.scot



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



From: [redacted]@gov.scot **On Behalf Of** TS Corporate Correspondence Support Team
Sent: 29 August 2023 09:15
To: Minister for Transport <MinisterFT@gov.scot>; TS Corporate Correspondence Support Team <TSS@transport.gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Report on Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland

Good morning

Just to advise, this query is not for TS. It is for Tourism.

Many thanks,

[redacted]

From[redacted]@gov.scot **On Behalf Of** Minister for Transport
Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 9:45 AM
To: TS Corporate Correspondence Support Team <TSS@transport.gov.scot>
Subject: FW: Report on Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland

OR, please,

Kind regards,

[redacted]

|Assistant Private Secretary to the Minister for Transport |Scottish Government |Tel: 00 44
(0) [redacted] |Email: [redacted]@gov.scot



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



From: [redacted]@gmail.com
Sent: 25 August 2023 16:38
To: Minister for Transport <MinisterFT@gov.scot>
Subject: Report on Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland



From: [redacted]@gov.scot **On Behalf Of** Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade
Sent: 28 August 2023 14:05
To: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>
Cc: Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade <MinisterSBITT@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: Locals before Tourism? What's your plan? Is there one?

For OR please

Thanks,
[redacted]

| **Private Secretary**

Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade – Richard Lochhead

ministersbitt@gov.scot | Telephone: 01312 446669 | Mobile: [REDACTED]

From: [redacted]@gmail.com
Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 12:07 PM
To: Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade
<MinisterSBITT@gov.scot>
Subject: Locals before Tourism? What's your plan? Is there one?

Quotes from article, letters in The National. Tourism is out of control in Scotland. Where is the plan? We are cut off from many areas of our own country now because of eye watering prices - NC500 etc.

We managed a week near Lochinver last September. Even the famous Lochinver Larder was operating as a takeaway because of lack of staff.

“Short-termism is already nipping at our heels. The organisations which purport to manage our tourism need to take a far more holistic view.”

“Tourism is an industry and like any other has pollutants and needs management controls, respect for workers, fair pay and regulated management on its waste. Its emissions can be very unpleasant,.. rabbit holes are not even safe from stuffing with broon stuff and loo roll and I kid you not. Us that live in beautiful places and quaint' villages are no better now than our grandparents that had to leave the croft and go into service in the big hooses. That those have been replaced by air bnbs, second homes and corporate holiday companies is just more of the same with a veneer of economic' legitimacy.”

To begin with we need a visitor levy. This is long overdue. The problem is that the cost of all the infrastructure needed for the influx of tourism is largely down to the people who live in these places, or there is no infrastructure and no money to put it in. Tourists can use the roads, parking, toilet facilities, water, etc. and we pick up their trash for free and that is simply not fair for those who do not directly benefit from the tourism industry. And when the winter comes we still need those facilities and those who live here will still need to pay for them. With regards to second homes, solutions can be found in countries all around us. In the Netherlands, they changed the planning system and introduced new definitions for houses that were for permanent occupation and those used as recreational homes. This way it becomes possible to set quotas for the types of houses that can exist in a specific area. This effectively stopped certain communities from becoming complete ghost towns in the winter with all the economic downturn that you would expect from that. And I am glad to see I am not the only person who is abhorred by the absolutely hideous designs of many of the houses that are popping up like mushrooms everywhere. In the Western Isles there are guidelines, but they are rarely followed. Rather than guidelines, there should be actual rules what is and what is not allowed. Again this is not an alien concept, There are plenty of places in Scotland already that are protected from developments that are not in keeping with the character of a place”

REPLY

Thank you for your correspondence of 27th August concerning over tourism. It has been passed to the Tourism team for a reply.

The Scottish Government recognises that the popularity of some rural 'hotspots' are creating pressure on some local communities and services. This has been a growing trend in recent years, leading to the establishment of our Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund in 2018. This was further exacerbated by the Pandemic in 2020 and 2021 with reduced opportunities for international travel. A Visitor Management Group was therefore established in 2020 by the then Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism to seek a cross Government approach to addressing issues caused at rural pinch points in scenic countryside areas. This includes addressing such issues as managing visitor dispersal, littering, environmental damage, public toileting and antisocial behaviour.

Cabinet Secretaries were supportive of this group and agreed to lend their portfolio resources to collectively meet the challenges of Visitor Management. This work is now led by the Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade.

Members of the Group and its sub groups include a range of public bodies (including NatureScot and National Parks), local authorities, community interests and Police Scotland. An interim strategy can be found here: [Visitor Management: Scotland's Plan & Objectives | VisitScotland.org](#).

The group has now been tasked with developing a multiyear strategy from 2023 onwards. £3.9m was secured in 2022-23 to support the interim strategy in 2022-23. This is primarily for the recruitment of over 200 ranger posts: [Investing in rural tourism - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#). This includes direct support to public bodies and another round of the Better Places Fund which was open to local authorities and communities to apply for funding for rangers. Going forward, partners will utilise their core resources to develop and implement the strategy. This will include countryside ranger posts. Public bodies took cognisance of this when submitting their requests for the Resource Spending Review.

The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) was established by the Scottish Government and is managed by VisitScotland to support strategic infrastructure projects in our more remote areas. Since its inception, across six rounds of RTIF £20.1m of grant funding has been awarded to 77 projects across 17 local authorities and both national park authorities investing in facilities such as car parks, waste disposal and toilet provision. [Rural Development Fund - Funding | VisitScotland.org](#)

RTIF is designed to support collaborative projects that focus on improving the visitor experience in rural parts of Scotland that are facing immediate and damaging pressures on their infrastructure, or negative impacts on communities due to significant increases in visitor numbers as you described in your email. The fund is open to local authorities and National Parks. These bodies work with communities and submit applications on their behalf. A level of match funding is required either by the authority itself or the community, or a mixture of both.

You also mention second homes and design of houses in the area that would be a matter for the local Planning Authority.

We know that second homes bring benefits to those who own them and the businesses they support. However, in some communities these kinds of ownership patterns impact on the availability of homes to meet local needs. Nationally, we want to encourage more residential accommodation to be used as homes for living in and for these to be occupied for more of the time. The Scottish Government feels that locally, councils should decide how to achieve the right balance in the use of housing to meet local needs and to support thriving communities. Our consultation proposals aim to give councils more tools to help them to do so. This is also about fairness - that is why we have sought peoples' views on the potential changes that we believe will contribute to a fairer housing and taxation system. Further information about the consultation is available from the website: [Council tax on second and empty homes/ Non-domestic rates: consultation - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#)

The primary responsibility for dealing with planning applications rests with the planning authority for the area. It is for the planning authority to interpret and implement planning legislation and guidance as it deems appropriate given the circumstances of each case and to ensure that the provisions of the planning system are applied properly. Planning legislation requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and in reaching a decision on a planning application, the planning authority is expected to have regard to all material factors. Scottish Ministers are involved in only limited circumstances. [National Planning Framework 4](#) (NPF4) was

adopted on 13 February 2023 and following commencement of section 13 of the 2019 Planning Act, NPF4 took on development plan status alongside local development plans. NPF4 should be read and applied as a whole and provides updated national planning policies, including Policy 17 on Rural homes, which sets out a supportive framework for development for new homes in rural areas. NPF4 has required to be treated as part of the development plan in all planning decisions from 13 February and an assessment of development plan conformity must be included in all decision notices.

Finally I understand your point about lack of staff in your recent visit to Lochinver Larder. While labour shortages and recruitment difficulties remain problematic for businesses across many sectors, the issue is particularly acute in tourism and hospitality. Staff shortages were an issue prior to the Covid pandemic, but the disruption caused by both Brexit and the pandemic have exacerbated the problem. However, in recognition of the importance of the sector to the economy, and the acute nature of the challenges posed by the skills and labour shortages, a range of measures have been taken to address the problem, these include the National Transition Training fund, a Scottish Government funded recruitment campaign as well as industry-led initiatives and ongoing work by the Tourism and Hospitality Skills Group. There is also recognition that by adopting Fair Work practices, the sector will be better placed to recruit and retain employees.

I hope this information has proved useful

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Sent: 15 September 2023 08:56

To: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: MiCase 202300373678 OR, [redacted], Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland report

All – attached is the correspondence with report, [redacted]'s helpful summary of the report, and a draft contribution from Nature Division to Tourism.

[Redacted] – the contribution is attached, addressing calls to review the SOAC, how to tackle irresponsible behaviour, addressing excessive numbers exercising access rights responsibly, and byelaws. Happy to discuss. One other thing, on the technology points, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority were a couple of years back involved in development of a web facility to let people know of

any tourism hotspots on the particular day – not sure what happened, although you may wish to enquire to them – sorry I don't know who the contact is.

[Redacted] – all off the stocks for the OR, please just look at the last four paragraphs of the draft reply on byelaws, to meet a Wednesday 20 September deadline.

[redacted] – not sure if it is you or Sara Fletcher, please just check the last three sentences of paragraph 2 of the draft reply for up-to-dateness, to meet a Wednesday 20 September deadline.

Thanks everyone,

Landscape and Outdoor Access policy officer

ENFOR:ND

SG

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 3:44 PM

To: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland Report

Hi [Redacted]

I hope you are well.

I have had a couple of micasas through about this report “Tourism: But not at any price, Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland” by R J Pettigrew. Is it something you are aware of?


I particularly like this line in the report about the need for “*a multi-year tourism infrastructure deliver programme to the tune of tens of millions of pounds per annum*”- would that we had the money.

The micasas (so far – have a feeling there will be more) are:

[MiCase - View Case 373628](#)

[MiCase - View Case 373678](#) – the sender [redacted] is mentioned on the front page of the report so I assume she had a hand in writing it

A copy of the report was sent by the author for some reason to the Minister for Transport but has been forwarded on to Mr Lochhead so I am expecting that to come through soon.

It is quite a long report so I have done a summary of the main points for ease ( [Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland – August 2023.docx](#)). I have highlighted the areas that I think will fit with Outdoor Access/Wild camping etc. Hopefully you can access it.

Could you provide me with some lines etc on those sections that I could use in my reply?

I am on leave from Wed for the rest of the week so Tues/Wed next week would be fine.

Thanks as always

Tourism Policy and Strategy | Directorate for Economic Development | Area 2G - South | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ



From: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Sent: 15 September 2023 13:43

To: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: RE: Media query (Scotsman) - Land Reform Bill and overtourism

I recommend sticking to the core lines on the Land Reform Bill provided by Nye, and not offering further information.

This is mainly about matters that will not be in the Bill. They might be in scope for non-SG amendments at stage 2, but that is a different issue.

[Redacted]

Have you read [Right First Time: a practical guide for public authorities to decision-making and the law - second edition - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)?

Team Leader | Land and Rural Support | Rural Affairs | Scottish Government Legal Directorate |
Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ | 0131 244 1483 | Personal mobile [REDACTED]

This correspondence is from the Scottish Government Legal Directorate. To the extent that it contains legal advice, it is legally privileged and may be exempt from disclosure under freedom of information legislation. Unless expressly stated any such legal advice is intended solely for the purposes of the Scottish Government, and should not be relied upon by any other persons, or used for any other purpose.

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 12:31 PM
To: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Subject: RE: Media query (Scotsman) - Land Reform Bill and overtourism

Hi [redacted]

Line redacted under 30(b)(ii)(the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation).

Other than that we're content with the lines below from a Sponsorship pov, but will defer to Policy colleagues for any further comment.

Best regards

[redacted]

My pronouns: He/Him

Team Leader | Visit Scotland Sponsorship

Regional Economic Development Division | Directorate for Economic Development

Victoria Quay | Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

In the service _____
of Scotland

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Sent: 15 September 2023 12:24

To: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: RE: Media query (Scotsman) - Land Reform Bill and overtourism

Thanks [redacted]. Think that should suffice on the timing. Can I safely infer from that that there's no other vehicle that would be suitable for the kinds of issues that these communities are trying to address?

With thanks to [Redacted], also bringing in tourism policy colleagues. We have recently-cleared lines addressing overtourism so suggest we add these – grateful if colleagues could confirm these are still good to use.

So that would leave us with the following. If no further views/contributions I will get this up for clearance to Cab Sec RALRI, copying other ministers as required. Shout if there are other SpAds who might need to be sighted on this

Thanks

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“We remain committed to the introduction of a further land reform Bill by the end of 2023 as set out in the Bute House Agreement and Policy Prospectus. The Bill is also included in the Programme for Government 2023-24.

“The Scottish Government is working to ensure tourism across Scotland – a vital part of the economy – remains sustainable. Since the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund’s introduction, £18.9 million grant funding has been awarded to 75 projects across 17 local authorities and both national park authorities, investing in facilities such as car parks, waste disposal and toilet provision.

“We also work with partner organisations including VisitScotland to deliver coordinated approaches to responsible tourism marketing, education and awareness activity. This includes developing and delivering public-facing communications across a wide range of channels.”

Background

Scotland’s national tourism strategy - Scotland Outlook 2030 – outlines our ambition to become a world leader in 21st century tourism. It balances economic growth and protection of the environment by encouraging extension of the visitor season so numbers are less concentrated, directing tourists towards lesser-known areas and attracting higher value visitors who stay longer and spend more.

The Visitor Levy Bill would give local councils the power to put in place a levy on overnight visitor stays in accommodation such as hotels in their area if they wish. Any money raised locally would have to be reinvested locally and specifically used to fund activities and services which develop, support or sustain the visitor economy. The Scottish Parliament is currently taking views on the Bill, and the Scottish Government will consider the points raised by stakeholders as part of that scrutiny process

[Scotland Outlook 2030 - Scotland's tourism strategy \(scottishtourismalliance.co.uk\)](https://www.scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/scotland-outlook-2030-scotland-tourism-strategy)

[Visitor Management: Scotland's Action Plan](#)

Land Reform Bill

We are committed to introducing Land Reform legislation to further improve transparency of land ownership, help ensure large scale land holdings deliver in the public interest, and empower communities by providing more opportunities to own land and have more say in how land in their area is used.

We are proposing that the Bill should include three key measures that will apply to large-scale landholdings:

The strengthening of obligations on owners to comply with the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (LRRS);

The introduction of compulsory land management plans;

New measures to regulate the market in large-scale landholdings, including the introduction of a Public Interest Test, and requirements for community bodies to receive prior notification of impending sales or transfers.

Agricultural holdings proposals, which had originally been identified for the Agriculture Bill, will now be included in the Bill along with proposals for a Land Use Tenancy and small landholdings.

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 12:06 PM

To: [[redacted]@ gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: RE: Media query (Scotsman) - Land Reform Bill and overtourism

Hi,

For Land Reform the core line we have for these kinds of queries on timing is –

- We remain committed to the introduction of a further land reform Bill by the end of 2023 as set out in the Bute House Agreement and Policy Prospectus. The Bill is also included in the Programme for Government 2023-24.

If you would like to include further lines on the planned content of the Bill, could use the following as the base–

We are committed to introducing Land Reform legislation to further improve transparency of land ownership, help ensure large scale land holdings deliver in the public interest, and empower communities by providing more opportunities to own land and have more say in how land in their area is used.

- We are proposing that the Bill should include three key measures that will apply to large-scale landholdings:
 - The strengthening of obligations on owners to comply with the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (LRRS);

- The introduction of compulsory land management plans;
- New measures to regulate the market in large-scale landholdings, including the introduction of a Public Interest Test, and requirements for community bodies to receive prior notification of impending sales or transfers.
- Agricultural holdings proposals, which had originally been identified for the Agriculture Bill, will now be included in the Bill along with proposals for a Land Use Tenancy and small landholdings.

Hope this is helpful and happy to discuss,

[Redacted]

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 12:01 PM
To: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Subject: RE: Media query (Scotsman) - Land Reform Bill and overtourism

[redacted]

Thanks – we can provide our standard lines on the LR bill. The references to the 2003 act relate to access, and I have looped access colleagues in for awareness however, I would advise against taking on the premise of the question as to what will be in the LR bill beyond previously used media lines on the bill – albeit colleagues might have an alternative view .

FT

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 11:57 AM
To: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Subject: Media query (Scotsman) - Land Reform Bill and overtourism

Hi all

Picking up this query on behalf of rural colleagues. Two questions, first of which is presumably fairly straightforward – is the answer still that the Bill will be published

before the end of the year please? Or – “*Our Programme for Government sets out our commitment to introducing a Land Reform Bill over the coming year.*”?

On the wider point – what can be done in legislative terms to support tackling problems around overtourism - my understanding is that the Bill is unlikely to address concerns about overtourism. Assuming that's the case, can we offer anything in regards to what would be the appropriate vehicle to address these concerns please?

Copying in colleagues on other newsroom teams who have an interest in this area but please bring in others who might be able to help.

Many thanks

Query

I am looking into a story which relates to the Land Reform Act 2003 and wanted to check a couple of things

Could you let me know when the new Land Reform Bill is due to be published please?

Also, I want to clarify if the bill will address concerns relating to responsible tourism and breaches of Scotland Outdoor Access Code or if it is solely related to concentration of land ownership and associated issues

There have been calls from residents living around the North Coast 500 for a review of the Land Reform Act 2003 to examine whether the legislation is sufficient to deal with concerns re responsible tourism, particularly in relation to motorhome use and wild camping

I have attached the report from residents below and here is the relevant paragraphe here:

The LandReformAct(2003), needs a review on its effect since implementation and whether some of the existing powers within it can be used to address the issues born out of increased visitor numbers.

In particular:

- a) A review of the Outdoor AccessCodein relation to roadside camping.
- b) Use of the existing powers granted to LocalAuthorities and SNHwithin the Land Reform Act to

enact local bylaws to protect the worst affected areas. This should not be to restrict access, but purely to prohibit damaging activities such as camping and lighting fires in environmentally sensitive areas (as already implemented for heritage sites) and to protect local communities from the negative impacts of over tourism.

c) A review of the policing policy in light of any changes from a) and b) above, and also in regard to traffic offences caused by inappropriate parking.

d) A ban on non-local overnight parking particularly by vehicles adapted for sleeping in.

I am keen to understand, from the Scottish Government's point of view, if the Land Reform Act 2003 is the right legislation to deal with issues surrounding responsible tourism and whether any review of the law is proposed to deal with the issues raised in the above

Would it be possible to get a line on this please?

| Communications: News (Net Zero & Rural Affairs)

Scottish Government, St Andrew's House

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Sent: 15 September 2023 16:02

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands <CabSecRALRI@gov.scot>

Cc: Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade <MinisterSBITT@gov.scot>;

[redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: Media query (Scotsman) - Land Reform Bill and overtourism

PO Cab Sec RALRI

(Cc Minister for Tourism)

We've received a media query from the Scotsman around Land Reform bill – timing, but also communities with concerns about overtourism calling for more legislative protection and asking if this will be covered in the bill. Full query below and see attached paper.

Comms/policy propose the following response combining land reform and tourism content. SpAds have commented. Grateful if you could let us know if the Cab Sec is content for us to issue

Thanks

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“We are committed to introducing Land Reform legislation this year to further improve transparency of land ownership, help ensure large scale land holdings deliver in the public interest, and empower communities by providing more opportunities to own land and have more say in how land in their area is used.

“The Scottish Government is working to ensure tourism across Scotland – a vital part of the economy – remains sustainable. Since the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund’s introduction, £18.9 million grant funding has been awarded to 75 projects across 17 local authorities and both national park authorities, investing in facilities such as car parks, waste disposal and toilet provision.

“We also work with partner organisations including VisitScotland to deliver coordinated approaches to responsible tourism marketing, education and awareness activity. This includes developing and delivering public-facing communications across a wide range of channels.”

Background

Scotland’s national tourism strategy - Scotland Outlook 2030 – outlines our ambition to become a world leader in 21st century tourism. It balances economic growth and protection of the environment by encouraging extension of the visitor season so numbers are less concentrated, directing tourists towards lesser-known areas and attracting higher value visitors who stay longer and spend more.

The Visitor Levy Bill would give local councils the power to put in place a levy on overnight visitor stays in accommodation such as hotels in their area if they wish. Any money raised locally would have to be reinvested locally and specifically used to fund activities and services which develop, support or sustain the visitor economy. The Scottish Parliament is currently taking views on the Bill, and the Scottish Government will consider the points raised by stakeholders as part of that scrutiny process

[Scotland Outlook 2030 - Scotland's tourism strategy \(scottishtourismalliance.co.uk\)](https://www.scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/scotland-outlook-2030-scotland-s-tourism-strategy)

[Visitor Management: Scotland's Action Plan](#)

Land Reform Bill

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We are proposing that the Bill should include three key measures that will apply to large-scale landholdings:

The strengthening of obligations on owners to comply with the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (LRRS);

The introduction of compulsory land management plans;

New measures to regulate the market in large-scale landholdings, including the introduction of a Public Interest Test, and requirements for community bodies to receive prior notification of impending sales or transfers.

Agricultural holdings proposals, which had originally been identified for the Agriculture Bill, will now be included in the Bill along with proposals for a Land Use Tenancy and small landholdings.

Query

I am looking into a story which relates to the Land Reform Act 2003 and wanted to check a couple of things

Could you let me know when the new Land Reform Bill is due to be published please?

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The Land Reform Act (2003), needs a review on its effect since implementation and whether some of the existing powers within it can be used to address the issues born out of increased visitor numbers.

In particular:

- a) A review of the Outdoor Access Code in relation to roadside camping.
- b) Use of the existing powers granted to Local Authorities and SNH within the Land Reform Act to enact local bylaws to protect the worst affected areas. This should not be to restrict access, but purely to prohibit damaging activities such as camping and lighting fires in environmentally sensitive areas (as already implemented for heritage sites) and to protect local communities from the negative impacts of over tourism.
- c) A review of the policing policy in light of any changes from a) and b) above, and also in regard to traffic offences caused by inappropriate parking.
- d) A ban on non-local overnight parking particularly by vehicles adapted for sleeping in.

I am keen to understand, from the Scottish Government's point of view, if the Land Reform Act 2003 is the right legislation to deal with issues surrounding responsible tourism and whether any review of the law is proposed to deal with the issues raised in the above

Would it be possible to get a line on this please?

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Sent: 28 August 2023 15:45

To: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: RE: For policy views - MEDIA QUERY - Combatting overtourism in Scotland report - The Scotsman

Hi

The lines are fine from a tourism point of view

[redacted]

Tourism Policy and Strategy | Directorate for Economic Development | Area 2G - South | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ



From: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Sent: 28 August 2023 15:41

To: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: RE: For policy views - MEDIA QUERY - Combatting overtourism in Scotland report - The Scotsman

Hello [Redacted],

We're best staying away from the Bill, as it looks like this group has been formed to respond to the Committee's call for written evidence, and will be recommending a tax on motorhomes instead. I've therefore moved the comment into the background, and added some text on SG being open to views. In another thread I've see tourism policy colleagues will also be offering some comments.

Thanks,

[redacted]

Visitor Levy Bill Team

Local Taxation Unit

Local Government and Analytical Services Division

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot **On Behalf Of** Communications Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 3:22 PM

To: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: RE: For policy views - MEDIA QUERY - Combatting overtourism in Scotland report - The Scotsman

Hi all.

Following up for [redacted] on this.

I've pulled additional lines from a more recent query we replied to around over-tourism on Skye.

[Redacted] I've added a line on Visitor Levy. Grateful for input/views. Does the levy cover off anything on motorhomes?

Thanks

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 1:41 PM

To: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: For policy views - MEDIA QUERY - Combatting overtourism in Scotland report - The Scotsman

Good afternoon colleagues,

The Scotsman have asked for our comment on the attached report.

Grateful for your views. I've pasted in a starter for ten below.

A Scottish Government spokesman said:

~~“The Scottish Government works with partner organisations including VisitScotland to deliver coordinated approaches to responsible tourism marketing, education and awareness activity.~~

~~“This includes developing and delivering public-facing communications across a wide range of channels to promote sustainable tourism and responsible behaviour along with coordinating local visitor management on the ground, particularly in hotspot areas.~~

“The Scottish Government is working to ensure tourism across Scotland – a vital part of the economy – remains sustainable. Since the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund’s introduction, £18.9 million grant funding has been awarded to 75 projects across 17 local authorities and both national park

authorities, investing in facilities such as car parks, waste disposal and toilet provision.

“We also work with partner organisations including VisitScotland to deliver coordinated approaches to responsible tourism marketing, education and awareness activity. This includes developing and delivering public-facing communications across a wide range of channels.”

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Scotland’s national tourism strategy - Scotland Outlook 2030 – outlines our ambition to become a world leader in 21st century tourism. It balances economic growth and protection of the environment by encouraging extension of the visitor season so numbers are less concentrated, directing tourists towards lesser-known areas and attracting higher value visitors who stay longer and spend more.

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[Scotland Outlook 2030 - Scotland's tourism strategy
\(scottishtourismalliance.co.uk\)](https://www.scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/scotland-outlook-2030-scotland-tourism-strategy)

[Visitor Management: Scotland’s Action Plan](#)

QUERY

Thanks for taking my call just now. Here is a bit more detail on the report and the report attached.

The document was compiled with the support of professional people, business owners and residents of the Highlands of Scotland. A working group formed in response to significant increases in issues associated with tourism, and to participate in the consultation process of the Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill.

It focuses on identifying problems and supporting initiatives to address these issues in a sustainable way. Its purpose is two-fold:

1. Initiate a serious discussion about over tourism and its impact on residents, businesses, the environment and the visitor experience.
2. Present a model of tax strategies in order to obtain income streams to mitigate the effects of over tourism.

Highlighted is the need for infrastructure development, education, legislation and policing, visitor management strategies and a proactive approach to communication. The report also analyses and compares several tourist tax strategies and concludes that the implementation of a vehicle-based visitor levy is the way forward.

My deadline is 5pm, so if you could send over a comment by then that would be great.

[redacted]

Senior Media Manager | News: Wellbeing Economy

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh
m: [redacted]

From: [redacted]visitscotland.com>
Sent: 03 October 2023 11:29
To: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Cc: [Redacted]@visitscotland.com>
Subject: RE: The NC500..

Hi [Redacted],

See below on this. Sorry, I forgot to send at the end of the week!

- The North Coast 500 (NC500) came out of the North Highland Initiative (NHI)'s work with the tourism sector in the North Highlands and, with the help of Wildlands and a number of other funders. NHI continues to work with their partners and supports the Community Infrastructure Fund applied to help deliver related items such as information signs, waste bins, toilets and preferred or designated overnight camping for tents and motorhomes. For more information see [Tourism - North Highland Initiative](#).
- VisitScotland were involved with 'roadshows' around the Highlands when the NC500 first launched. The roadshows were a joint venture with VisitScotland and NC500 – a membership drive for them and it allowed VisitScotland to talk about what we could offer businesses in terms of web listings, QA, Travel Trade etc.
- Our visitor management lines are probably the most relevant here: [Visitor Management: Scotland's Plan & Objectives | VisitScotland.org](#)

Thanks

Government & Parliamentary Affairs Manager, Corporate Communications

T: 0131 472 2222 | M: [REDACTED]

S: @VisitScotNews



From: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 10:32 AM

To: [redacted]@ visitScotland.com

Subject: FW: The NC500..

This email originated from outside of VisitScotland. Please do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hi [Redacted]

Hope you are well.

I am dealing with a micase concerning the NC500. The first part about overtourism etc I have the usual lines on.

One thing I don't have lines on is the second section about the setting up of the NC500 and who the company is responsible too – I am assuming VS were involved at the start at least. Do you have any lines on that section?

I'm not looking for anything too long. Planning on it being a short and to the point reply. Aside from the usual Visitor management lines I was basically going to direct them to this page from the VS website to show our messaging [Road Safety Archives - North Coast 500](#)

It has only just come in and is not due for a while so no great rush – late tis week or even early next week would be fine.

Thanks as always

Tourism Policy and Strategy | Directorate for Economic Development | Area 2G - South | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ



From: [redacted]@gmail.com

Sent: 25 September 2023 00:05

To: Central Enquiry Unit <CEU@gov.scot>

Subject: The NC500..

To whom it may concern...

We have just returned from our fourth trip to Scotland..excessive tourism is destroying the highlands. In Applecross the community has been forced to put up signs asking people not to park on the delicate machair, and shockingly - ask people not to defecate wherever they please.

The NC500 was set up by a private company with no consultation with any of the towns or businesses along the route.

The website is owned by North Highland Initiative (sic) located in Caithness - who are responsible to no one..

Clearly the Government of Scotland needs to step in and regulate this mess..

Regards,

[redacted]

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Sent: 26 June 2023 11:15
To: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Subject: Scotland's Overtourism problem

Hi folks

An interesting article in Saturdays The National after what we mentioned in the meeting about tourism numbers.

[What can we do about Scotland's overtourism problems? | The National](#)

Copied below in case it's behind a paywall for you

What can we do about Scotland's overtourism problems?

By Robin McKelvie

WHEN France's tourism minister Olivia Gregoire earlier this week bemoaned overtourism in her country and set out steps to tackle the issue it chimed with similar problems on the other side of the Auld Alliance.

As we veer towards the summer holidays overtourism in Scotland rears its congested head again, kicking off debate about what we can do to make tourism work both for visitors and local communities.

As a freelance travel writer who has spent the last two decades working my way around the globe, I see overtourism all over, from the sweaty streets of a Venetian summer, through to the Croatian hotspot of Dubrovnik, where I avoid going into the old town between late morning and early evening when the cruise ship passengers and Games of Thrones devotees descend. And then there is clogged Barcelona, a city break star groaning under the weight of overtourism.

We have our own pressure points in Scotland. Skye – one of Europe's most beguiling islands – often becomes the lightning rod for frustration. If you want to hurl headlong into the overtourism debate just mention the Fairy Pools to a resident.

But overtourism is not just limited to the largest island in the Inner Hebrides. Edinburgh's Old Town can be hellish in August; Luss, too, on sunny summer days. Even the Northern Isles are not spared – try to experience Skara Brae and the Ring of Brodgar when cruise ships, motorhomes and day trippers create an unholy trinity. And we've not even touched on the North Coast 500 and issues surrounding motorhomes.

I'm part of the problem. A lot of the media understandably want to cover the places people go most often, so I'm regularly commissioned by London-based editors to write about them.

People go and the media responds to demand. And round we go again. Popular culture is a factor, too, with Outlander fuelling the Skye surge. Historically there was a Braveheart bounce and Local Hero still draws people to Pennan and the Sands of Morar.

COVID has also had a role. When we were freed from lockdown, but couldn't go abroad many Scots chose to explore their own land, as did visitors from the rest of the UK.

The dreaded staycation put more pressure on popular points and created new areas of stress, generating media stories of poor tourist behaviour. As we eke beyond Covid, staycations seem here to stay as the rest of the UK realised what Scotland offers.

Tourism can be a force for good in many ways, least not financially for our country, but how do we manage tourism, and specifically overtourism? We could slap on a negative headline grabbing tourist tax, take drastic measures like Venice with one-way walkways, or copy

France with advance booking to visit the Calanques. But are there less-blunt-force ways to tackle overtourism?

I have talked a lot to VisitScotland and they are keen to stress dispersal: encouraging visitors to go to less obvious places.

So if you've already been to Skye how about slipping just south to the Small Isles? Fancy a medieval old town? Well, swap the Royal Mile for Dunfermline, our newest city.

In tandem with dispersal, there has been talk about education and awareness. This is about remembering we might think places are remote or romantic but real people live real lives there.

So respect becomes key. I often describe it as imagining a tourist came into your local pub, shop or parked in your street. How would you want them to behave?

There is much talk about overtourism, but often it ends there as just talk. Community tourism network SCOTO is taking things a step further encouraging us all to be "temporary locals". We show respect and put money directly into local communities; in return we savour richer, more engaged experiences.

SCOTO launched a new website this month (www.Belocal.scot), which flags up the work of these community groups across Scotland. There is everything from a Roman museum in Melrose, through to a hostel in Callander where your cash is used to help struggling younger people.

One of the most impressive SCOTO groups is a model for how tourism issues can be tackled in a positive way. The Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust joins the dots on its community-owned island. Yes there can be a lot of tourists in summer, but they benefit Eigg.

Last year we stayed in a camping pod knowing our cash went into the community. The same goes at the shops and cafe in the An Laimhrig centre. Even the £2 I paid contactless for a shower in the 100% green electricity toilet block benefits Eigg.

Eigg Adventures are on hand too with a fleet of green Eigg energy powered e-bikes to disperse tourists around their glorious island. Eigg is a microcosm that could be worked into strategies in other tourist spots across Scotland.



From: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Sent: 12 September 2023 08:49
To: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Subject: RE: Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland Report

Yeah

There is a great big long section at the end I have not had the chance to read in much detail on what taxes etc could be used to raise the money.

The Link is just to a summary I did of the main points.

There was an article about the report author in yesterdays Inverness Courier [Highlander calls for visitor vehicle levy to temper over-tourism on NC500 \(inverness-courier.co.uk\)](https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/highlander-calls-for-visitor-vehicle-levy-to-temper-over-tourism-on-nc500)

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From: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Sent: 11 September 2023 16:32
To: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Subject: FW: Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland Report

[Redacted] – I will look at this. Is it the report you attached? - thanks

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 3:44 PM
To: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland Report

Hi [Redacted]

I hope you are well.

I have had a couple of micasas through about this report "Tourism: But not at any price, Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland" by R J Pettigrew. Is it something you are aware of?

I particularly like this line in the report about the need for "*a multi-year tourism infrastructure deliver programme to the tune of tens of millions of pounds per annum*"- would that we had the money.

The micasas (so far – have a feeling there will be more) are:

[MiCase - View Case 373628](#)

[MiCase - View Case 373678](#) – the sender [Redacted] is mentioned on the front page of the report so I assume she had a hand in writing it

A copy of the report was sent by the author for some reason to the Minister for Transport but has been forwarded on to Mr Lochhead so I am expecting that to come through soon.

It is quite a long report so I have done a summary of the main points for ease ([📄 Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland – August 2023.docx](#)). I have highlighted the areas that I think will fit with Outdoor Access/Wild camping etc. Hopefully you can access it.

Could you provide me with some lines etc on those sections that I could use in my reply?

I am on leave from Wed for the rest of the week so Tues/Wed next week would be fine.

Thanks as always

Tourism Policy and Strategy| Directorate for Economic Development | Area 2G - South | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ



From: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Sent: 20 September 2023 17:17
To: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Subject: FW: MiCase 202300373678 OR[redacted], Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland report

[redacted] – Zero Waste colleagues agree the lines - thanks

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Sent: Wednesday, September 20, 2023 10:26 AM
To: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Subject: FW: MiCase 202300373678 OR, [redacted], Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland report

Hi [Redacted]

The references to Nat Litter and Flytipping Strategy are accurate.

Thanks

[Redacted]

Zero Waste Delivery
Circular Economy Division
Scottish Government

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot
Sent: 15 September 2023 09:02

To: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: FW: MiCase 202300373678 OR, [redacted], Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland report

Good morning,

This was sent to me this morning, they want us to check a couple of lines on fly-tipping.

As mentioned below, I think it is just the last 3 sentences of the second para.

Have a great long weekend,

[redacted]

Waste Management

Zero Waste Unit

Scottish Government



From: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 8:56 AM

To: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Subject: MiCase 202300373678 OR, [redacted], Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland report

All – attached is the correspondence with report, [redacted]’s helpful summary of the report, and a draft contribution from Nature Division to Tourism.

[redacted] – the contribution is attached, addressing calls to review the SOAC, how to tackle irresponsible behaviour, addressing excessive numbers exercising access rights responsibly, and byelaws. Happy to discuss. One other thing, on the technology points, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority were a couple of years back involved in development of a web facility to let people know of any tourism hotspots on the particular day – not sure what happened, although you may wish to enquire to them – sorry I don’t know who the contact is.

[redacted] – all off the stocks for the OR, please just look at the last four paragraphs of the draft reply on byelaws, to meet a Wednesday 20 September deadline.

[redacted] – not sure if it is you or Sara Fletcher, please just check the last three sentences of paragraph 2 of the draft reply for up-to-dateness, to meet a Wednesday 20 September deadline.

Thanks everyone,

[redacted]

Landscape and Outdoor Access policy officer

ENFOR:ND

SG

From: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 3:44 PM

To: [redacted]@ gov.scot

Cc: [redacted]@ gov.scot **Subject:** Combatting Over Tourism in Scotland Report

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