

Mr Stewart D Fraser
Head of Corporate Governance
The Highland Council
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness IV3 5NX

18th December 2015

Dear Mr Fraser

Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, Proposed Exemption Order Gorteneorn – Ardnamurchan Estate

We are writing in response to the above proposal to exempt an area of land in Ardnamurchan from statutory access rights under s.11 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Ramblers Scotland is a membership organisation with 6,500 members and 56 walking groups across Scotland all run by volunteers. We are the representative body for walkers in Scotland, and we are recognised by **sportscotland** as a governing body of sport. We would like to make the following comments relating to public access on the site.

Ramblers Scotland is not making a formal objection to the exemption order, given that the Local Access Forum and local authority have approved this application. However, we are keen to ensure that there is a full and correct understanding by the landowners, the film-makers and the public of the consequences of the exemption if it is approved by Scottish Ministers. In particular all parties need to understand that the presence of an exemption order does not preclude the taking of access by anyone over the land concerned on the basis of custom or tradition, or create any offence, as long as no damage or disturbance is caused to other interests, they are not in breach of other legislation relevant to public behavior or protection of property, or in breach of any interdict. In addition, we question whether an order is necessary in this situation when we believe that alternative methods of requesting visitors to avoid the area could achieve the same outcome. We believe regular signage placed along the perimeter of the red line with clear information endorsed by the local community, police, local authority and film makers would deter the vast majority of visitors without the need for an exemption or any fencing, given the wooded and rugged terrain.

We are pleased to note that the core path and access to the beach both from land and from the sea will not be affected, as the path from Arivegaig to the singing sands at Camus an Lighe is popular with walkers. We recognise the potential economic benefits for the local area from the making of this film, both directly during the filming itself and afterwards in attracting increased visitors to the area. We believe that overall a fair balance of maintaining public access within the area while enabling the filming to take place has been achieved, and are pleased that the red line marking the exemption area now lies along the back of the beaches.

We trust these comments are helpful and would be happy to answer any queries on the points raised.

Yours sincerely

Helen Todd
Campaigns & Policy Manager