

# A GALLOWAY NATIONAL PARK...?

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February 2016





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## 1. NATIONAL PARKS IN THE UK AND IN SCOTLAND

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National Park (NP) status is acknowledged worldwide as a principal means of recognising areas of highest national value for natural and cultural heritage, including landscape, wildlife and outdoor recreation.

Scotland currently has only two of the UK's 15 NPs. Both are quite large but together cover only 7.2% of the Scotland's land area, compared with 9.3% of England (10 parks) and 19.9% of Wales (3 parks).

In contrast with other, topographically similar countries: New Zealand has 14 and Norway 37 NPs.

Scotland lacks an effective alternative mechanism for protecting its finest landscapes, akin to the 38 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and Wales, with their boards, staff and statutory management plans. Their 40 Scottish National Scenic Area (NSA) equivalents lack these resources and have recently been judged unworthy of international recognition. The three in Dumfries and Galloway are in fact the only ones to have received any meaningful management.

"It is a rather strange situation in a country as renowned as Scotland for the quality and diversity of its landscapes that we don't celebrate this fact with more NPs.

Scotland's first two NPs have almost universally been judged a success over the first decade-plus of their existence."

John Mayhew Scottish Campaign for National Parks

They were designated under The National Park Scotland Act (2000) with the following defined aims;

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

It is universally acknowledged that there are other areas of the country worthy of designation as reflected by the SNP's 2011 manifesto which committed it to "work with communities to explore the creation of new National Parks".



Historically, thinking about potential additional National Parks has tended to focus on the montane landscapes of the Highlands, reflecting the view that these were Scotland's most distinctive contribution to UK's landscape resource. But it has always been recognised that the finest landscapes were not restricted to the north of the country and as people's appreciation of the interest and value of more managed "cultural landscapes" has increased, and the pressures upon them have grown, the desire to see them better cared for has also burgeoned.

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## 2. THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

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The quality and national significance of the landscapes of Galloway have long been recognised. The area around Merrick and Glen Trool was identified as "eminently suitable" for National Park status in the 1945 Ramsay Report "National Parks – A Scottish Survey", but at the time the newly proposed (Galloway) National Forest Park was seen as a satisfactory alternative.

More recently the SCNP (Scottish Campaign for National Parks) and APRS (Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland) "Unfinished Business" report of 2013 identified at least seven more areas worthy of National Park status. Galloway was one of them.

The fact that the area is already recognised as special for reasons of landscape (NSA); for natural heritage (National Nature Reserve, Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest); for recreation (Galloway Forest Park) and for being relatively undeveloped (Dark Sky Park) and as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve can all be said to support the case for National Park designation.

The region has a particularly interesting mix of natural and more cultural landscapes: the wildest hill land in southern Scotland, very attractive enclosed landscapes, forests and woodlands of many different types, fascinatingly diverse coastline, substantial archaeological and historic interests, a wealth of vernacular buildings from the grand to the humble, a range of appealing small towns and villages, which in turn have influenced many art and literary associations, including The Glasgow Boys, Goldsworthy, Burns, Scott, Crockett, Buchan and Sayers.

Looking beyond the land the Solway Firth also possesses great interest, as the least developed of the UK's major estuaries, with a very wide tidal range and with fringing habitats ranging from extensive salt-marshes and mud flats to cliff-girt peninsulas.

The cultural and environmental benefits



of a National Park largely arise as a result of better management. Focusing on the qualities that make the area special and ensuring that these qualities are both promoted and respected.

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### 3. THE SOCIO ECONOMIC CONTEXT

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According to Rural Scotland in Focus 2014, small settlements (ie those with populations under 3000) have generally grown between 2001 and 2011 across the Scottish Borders, eastern Dumfries and Galloway and South Ayrshire but have declined in the west (including Portpatrick, Wigtown, Whithorn, Tarbolton, Bellsbank). The same report points out that Youth unemployment amongst 16-24 year olds is the highest in Scotland in the three local authority areas of East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway. All of rural Southern Scotland has high percentages of people (all over 16) with no qualifications. There is therefore a need to consider how to attract people back to this part of Scotland and to provide opportunities for them.

The Crichton Institute Dumfries and Galloway economic baseline study 2014-2020 paints a picture of a region rather lagging behind the rest of Scotland in terms of economic performance. The study provides an overview of the whole of D&G as well as the former districts, neither of which exactly matches a likely

National Park boundary. However the figures for Wigtownshire and the Stewartry together highlight relatively low levels of entrepreneurship and below average gross added value. They also emphasise high dependency on traditional industries such as agriculture and forestry. As with other predominantly rural parts of Scotland, the area has a higher proportion of older people and a lower proportion of people in their 20s and 30s. Wages tend to be low. This reflects the fact that it is a popular place for people to retire to in their later years and also the shortage of high quality jobs that might attract the younger and the more ambitious. Poor infrastructure (including transport and broadband) add to difficulties. There is however an above average score for "well-being" which perhaps reflects the high quality environment and the fact that many people choose to live here. The western part of D&G has a higher dependency on tourism jobs.

The Ayrshire Local Development Strategy 2014 paints a similar picture for South and East Ayrshire citing remote rural towns and villages, with declining mining and manufacturing industries, dependent on traditional fishing, forestry and agriculture, with an increasing dependency on tourism related opportunities. Attracting more tourists to the region must thus be a key aim for economic development and can only be assisted by National Park status.



The Social benefits of a National Park include community pride in the place; health benefits from promoted access and recreation opportunities; advice and skills training; education and interpretation (eg linked to ecosystem services) and even provision of affordable homes – a significant issue in all National Parks.

The National Park Management Plan is a key requirement of all Scottish National Parks and provides an opportunity to produce a balanced guide to natural, social and economic management of the National Park area. The content is produced following extensive involvement of all parties living, working and involved in the National Park.

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## 4. ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH NATIONAL PARK DESIGNATION

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Any potential economic benefit from a National Park needs to offset against the costs of running such an organisation and the impact of any additional limiting rules and regulations that might restrict economic development.

### 4.1 Organisational Costs

The annual cost of running the Cairngorms National Park is about £4million and the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park is £6 million according to National Parks UK website [www.nationalparks.gov.uk](http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk). At a time of economic cuts, any significant investment of this nature would need to have a very good chance or guarantee of generating a good return but it should be pointed out that a National Park Authority in Galloway would almost certainly be of a smaller scale and therefore significantly cheaper as highlighted under Governances models below.

In the United States a 2013 study quotes the National Park Services Director as stating “that for every tax \$ invested in the National Park Service it returns 10\$ to the US economy due to visitor spend”.

One form of return often over looked is in providing leverage to external funding opportunities through justification for new investment, and also the capacity to seek funding for such investment. So for example, in the Northumberland National Park, an investment of £14.8 million has been approved for the construction of a visitor centre. The National Landscape Discovery Centre is specifically intended to encourage more people to visit the



National Park. Funding will come from a number of sources including the Lottery Fund. In Cairngorm during 2014/15 almost £10m of EU and HLF funding was brought in to pay for conservation and access projects over a 3-4 year period.

## 4.2 The Local Economy

National Park designation “puts a place on the map” – both literally through cartographic representation and metaphorically. It draws it to people’s attention as a place of interest, worth investigating and perhaps visiting. For those already resident it helps to reinforce a sense of identity and of pride. These attributes could be of particular benefit to an area so often overlooked, by-passed and even neglected as SW Scotland.

The value of such a designation was demonstrated in a 2012 UK Association of National Park Authorities report on the public’s awareness and opinions about the UK National Parks. This highlighted that:

90% of people had heard of the term “National Park”, although one third of the people could not name any in the UK  
89% thought that National Parks were important to them

93% agreed that they were a countryside area of national importance

85% of people thought that National Parks were places that encouraged

public recreation

65% of those interviewed had visited a National Park in the last year with 30% having visited three or more times.

The respective D&G and Ayrshire LEADER Local Development Strategies 2014, both identify agriculture, forestry and fishing as being significant occupations (7.4% and 6.2% respectively) within the area that a new National Park might cover. Media reports from the consultation on new English National Parks in 2003 show that at the time there was considerable unease from these sectors regarding the impact that additional bureaucracy generated through such a designation would have on their business operations. Conversely it is also recognised that National Park status can create new opportunities linked to diversification, direct marketing and sale of produce, and can help in securing agri-environment grants.

A wider review of businesses in English National Parks reported that the National Park designation had some negative impacts (planning etc) but over half of the businesses consulted felt that on balance, the designation had a positive impact on their business and indeed a proportion of businesses had located specifically to be within the National Park. They also highlighted that National Parks are attractive places to locate businesses, a point supported by Valuing England’s



“... over 50% of businesses surveyed felt that their business was directly or indirectly dependent on a high quality landscape and environment, and positively impacted by the National Park designation, with this figure rising for tourism-related businesses. Many businesses in towns and cities located close to, but outside, National Parks stated that they were also dependent on and positively influenced by National Parks. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that businesses in National Parks are suffering from undue planning restrictions compared to elsewhere, with a significant majority of planning applications in National Parks being approved by NPAs (89%, compared to 87% for England as a whole).” Valuing the English National Parks 2013

National Parks 2013 which states;  
A survey of businesses in Northumberland by the Centre for Rural Economy at Newcastle University (2009) has shown the importance of Northumberland National Park as a stimulus for business location. Twice as many business start-ups in the area stated location in the National Park and work life balance as being a key factor compared to a similar survey of those outside the Park boundary. Another key consideration was “exploiting a market opportunity”.

In the Cairngorms National Park over 400 businesses are surveyed annually on the value of the National Park in attracting first time and repeat customers. They score from 1-10 where 1 is not at all influential and 10 is very. For the last four consecutive years they have scored an average rating of 6 on the value of the National Park in helping to generate business.

### 4.3 Tourism

The draft 2016-2020 D&G Tourism Strategy states “Dumfries and Galloway has a unique mix of marine, coastal and inland based tourism assets supporting a broad range of nature, environment, activity orientated attractions and hospitality providers,” and a need to “Develop marine, coastal and inland based products of the highest quality.” In a similar vein the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy 2012-2017 vision aspires to “...be a premier destination of choice, where visitors will receive a fantastic welcome and enjoy outstanding experiences of our coastline, countryside, culture and hospitality.” National Park status could go a long way to helping fulfil both of these objectives.

With a Galloway National Park likely to cover parts of one or more local authority areas it is very challenging to accurately assess the likely impact it could have on



tourism numbers. This is particularly true when existing regional tourism figures for D&G are skewed by hotspots such as Gretna Gateway.

However Tourism and National Parks do work very well together. National Parks provide an opportunity to market a region to a relatively wealthy global audience. More tourists means more business and this can be throughout the year.

National Parks can help to promote a cross sectoral portfolio of tourist attractions with many now employing tourism development officers that bring together natural, cultural and outdoor tourism opportunities that help to extend and develop their season. It has been noted by the SCNP that areas like SW Scotland could stand to benefit from these new tourism opportunities.

The case for the two existing Scottish National Park relied on the fact that there was already significant pressure from people using the areas for recreation. National Parks designation was seen very much as a means of improving the management of this demand. Many of the other UK National Parks had similar origins. The situation in Galloway is different in that the level of demand is not currently an issue (although there are growing pressures in some specific locations). The benefit of National Park designation would be

that the area would attract more interest and would then benefit from the resulting economic in-flow. Other protected areas have been designated for similar reasons.

The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was established, at least in part, on the grounds that this was a little known and little visited area and that a national designation would assist wider recognition and more visits. We understand that this has been successful although the area has not experienced a Lake District like deluge of tourists.

Further afield, the State Government of Tasmania has decided that conservation, recreation and tourism are likely to be a better basis for development than the previous aim of generating cheap electricity. They have since undertaken a series of National Park designations and Tasmania has sought, with some success, to position itself as Australia's "eco-destination."

Wales has some geo-political similarities to Scotland within the UK and has three National Parks and four Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. A recent study has shown that the three Welsh National Parks attract around 12 million visits per annum and some £1 billion pa of spending. A study calculated that £557 million per annum was added to the Welsh



economy as a direct result of the presence of the National Parks with average visitor spend per head per day of £87. This was considerably higher than the UK average of £60 per day, primarily due to a larger number of overnight stays. There were almost 30,000 jobs located in the three Welsh National Parks and over 5,000 businesses, many of them tourism related. The SCNP report “National Parks and Tourism - How More National Parks Could Help to Develop the Tourism Economy in Scotland” reviews the data on the impact of National Parks from the UK, Europe and around the world. It would seem likely that a National Park in Galloway would have a positive impact on local rural development.

There are number of existing tourism attractions that would obviously benefit from any increase in visitor numbers that a National Park would generate. These include businesses and organisations offering both guided and unguided recreational experiences (walking, cycling, kayaking, sailing, golf etc), cultural attractions such as the Historic Environment Scotland properties in the region which are known to be underutilised along with both the National Trust for Scotland and Landmark Trust properties that would fall within the proposed area. In addition there is the added attraction of the Ayr-Stranraer railway (now being promoted, along with the Kilmarnock to Dumfries line, as one

of Scotland’s “Great Scenic Railways), the Gemrock Museum in Creetown, the proposed Art Gallery in Kirkcudbright (into which DGC are proposing to invest a lot of money). Attracting more visitors to the wider area would help to boost the strength and viability of these and justify other proposed investments.

A 2014 study shows that Northumberland National Park, one of the quietest in England, attracts 1.5 million visitors a year who jointly spend £190 million. The Cairngorm National Park also with 1.5 million visitors a year generates £185 million of visitor spend. By comparison the Galloway Forest Park in its 2009 Dark Sky Park Application estimated visitor numbers at just over 0.85 million and its value to region (excluding forestry) to be £11 million a year.

Whilst a proposed Galloway National Park would encompass more than just than Galloway Forest Park it does indicate that there is a significant potential economic opportunity waiting to be developed. It also suggests that the costs of running the National Park could be more than offset by the economic benefits.



#### 4.4 Potential Effect On Local People

The increase in local spend can be vital for the maintenance of local services such as shops, pubs, tradesmen, laundries, etc. This effect can be wider than the National Park itself with surrounding towns and settlements benefitting from visitors seeking accommodation, shopping, services, etc.

Rural business in a National Park could benefit from enhanced access to grants, diversification opportunities and the additional advice that a National Park structure could provide. Whilst some may be concerned about additional red tape it is unlikely that National Park status would add significantly to what there is already. The "Prosperity and Protection" report produced by the Council for National Parks in England found that a higher percentage of planning applications within National Parks were approved than in comparable areas outside.

There would also be opportunities for direct sales of local produce at premium prices supported by branding linked to National Park status. The Yorkshire Dales National Park has developed such a brand and is actively encouraging farmers to use it, similar initiatives linked to products and services have taken place in Cairngorm.

"The Cairngorms brand was developed in 2004 to provide a strong identity for the National Park. It represents quality and environmental sustainability and features prominently on entry point signage and visitor information. It is not the logo for the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA). Rather it represents the Cairngorms National Park as an area. It attempts to capture the character of the Park, and is there for everyone to use. Used consistently, it will help build visitor and customer loyalty and awareness of the Park as a quality destination, offering very special experiences." Cairngorms National Park Authority

It has been argued that one effect of National Park designation is that property prices rise which can cause difficulties for local people who are often already on below average wages. The SCNP commissioned a review of this issue and concluded that:

"..whilst house prices in National Parks in the UK, including Scotland, are generally high compared with national averages, there are many other areas of attractive countryside and coast where the prices are every bit as high if not higher. National Park designation in itself does not seem



to cause a significant increase in house prices and the affordability of houses in the existing National Parks has not significantly worsened over the past decade.” SCNP

A second fear expressed about National Parks is that they attract investment from people wanting second homes or holiday cottages for let. This can remove “affordable” housing from the locality but the evidence is that this trend has little to do with National Parks themselves, but is a feature of all attractive rural areas. The potential advantage of National Park designation is that efforts can be put into countering the impact of this trend to some extent (eg by helping communities take action to take control of local housing stock).

Encouraging public engagement and growing community resilience are key aspects of Government policy. A National Park could play a key role in encouraging volunteering amongst both local people and visitors. A paper produced by the SCNP shows that the value of such volunteering can be significant and it can provide multiple benefits including improved infrastructure, increased local pride, help with administration and fund-raising, improved visitor experience, enhanced monitoring and scientific work not to mention the health, skills development and well-being benefits gained by the volunteers themselves.

Effective volunteering requires management and is often a key part of a National Park Ranger’s role, so there is a cost. However, estimates from the Peak District National Park suggest that for every £ spent on supporting volunteers, £3 is gained in work delivered. The SCNP paper on volunteering suggests the annual value of volunteering in a Galloway National Park could be £118,000.

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## 5. SIZE AND BOUNDARIES

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The IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) recognises 6 types of National Park across the world. These range from areas of minimum human influence through to significantly managed landscapes. Any National Park in Galloway would fit category V because of its largely managed nature. In this category of National Park it is acknowledged that humans play a key role in maintaining the quality landscapes and habitats and it is accepted that sustainable development will be a significant component of ongoing management. Galloway is recognised as an area with high quality landscape but also high rural deprivation. Adding value to the former should help address the latter.



Designation of a National Park is dependent on;

1. An area being of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage,
2. That the area has a distinctive character and a coherent identity
3. That designating the area as a National Park would meet the special needs of the area and would be the best means of ensuring that the National Park aims are collectively achieved in relation to the area in a co-ordinated way. (National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000)

The exact boundaries of a new National Park would be subject to much debate, but should endeavour to be based on clearly recognisable geographic entities as opposed to arbitrary administrative boundaries. At this stage it is too early and probably unhelpful to say what that boundary would be, however there are a number of options and considerations that should be taken into account.

The options range from a boundary tightly focused on the upland core of SW Scotland to one embracing the whole region west of the Nith and south of the Ayr. It is unlikely that large urban centres (specifically Dumfries and Ayr) would be included, and close examination of the qualifying features, might determine that

other larger towns should be excluded as well. It seems likely that the boundary would enclose some parts of South and possibly East Ayrshire.

The Galloway Forest Park – identified in the 1945 Ramsay report as a potential National Park, covers 780 sq km and was based largely on upland rough grazing land in the Galloway hills suitable for tree planting. Whilst adopting this as a boundary would have the advantage of being an established area, the history of commercial planting could be said to have reduced its natural and cultural value below that appropriate for National Park designation on its own.

The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere at 5268 sq km is based largely on river catchments and encompasses Galloway Forest Park. It should be noted that:

- (i) the outer (transitional) zone of the Biosphere is defined more by reference to its relationship to the core than by intrinsic natural or cultural heritage interest, whereas the whole of a National Park should be of high intrinsic value, with communities lying close but outwith the park benefiting from “gateway” status; and
- (ii) the Biosphere currently excludes some of the areas of highest landscape value in the region, as identified by NSAs. It would be logical to try to include



these within a sensible overall envelope and with due regard to the requirement for a “distinctive and coherent character” in the words of the current selection criteria.

If working to natural geographic boundaries for a new National Park then the northern reaches would probably not want to stretch as far as the Biosphere which includes the southern boundary of the river Ayr, a more natural boundary could be the Southern Uplands fault line. Inclusion of the Nith catchment is only partial for the Biosphere and a National Park would probably look to either include or exclude it in its entirety. Excluding the Nith catchment would remove many of the opencast sites of Upper Nithsdale which are currently subject to extensive issues around restoration. Inclusion would offer the advantage of encompassing the Nith NSA.

There is a very strong argument, based on its quality and the focus that it represents for much of the existing tourist activity, for including the marine and coastal element such as the East Stewartry and Fleet NSA’s which currently sit outside of the Biosphere. It is worth noting that significant thought went into the proposal for a Marine and Coastal National Park centred on the Solway back in 2007 and much of the argument (largely in favour at that time) is

still valid. The South Ayrshire coast also includes several SSSI’s and SAC’s worthy of inclusion, as well as a number of designed landscapes running from Straiton down to Ballantrae that would add a notable cultural value to the region.

Another possibility could be something more akin to that of the Pembrokeshire Coast Park, which sticks closely to the coast where the hinterland is of little intrinsic interest but extends well inland where the quality of the landscape justifies this. A boundary might then encompass most of the Stewartry and Wigtownshire east of the Cree, plus the best of the hill and valley land across the Ayrshire border, plus the coastline to the west (with Wigtown and Luce Bays as possible marine components), together with the more interesting inland parts of the Machars and the Rhins and some of the hill land east of Loch Ryan (some of which, for example, is designated as an SPA). This would result in inclusion of some of the archaeological and cultural interest of the Machars and the attractive landscapes around Mochrum, Monreith and Galloway House, in the Luce valley and at various points around the edge of the Rhins whilst excluding the larger tracts of sitka plantation, intensive ryegrass pasture etc.



Many aspects of the park's precise design, and most definitely the composition of its board, would depend on the relationship between its boundary and that of the local authorities in the region. The geography of the area makes it almost inevitable, except perhaps in a minimal scale option, that the park would encompass the territory of more than one local authority. This fact further emphasises the importance of co-operation and goodwill to the successful operation of any park established in the region.

## 6. NATIONAL PARK GOVERNANCE

Within the existing legislative framework provided by the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, the powers, functions, structure and governance of any Park Authority can be tailored to meet the specific needs of each Park area. This includes different approaches to the role of the National Park Authority;

APPROACH	IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARK PLAN
<p><b>National Park as planner and enabler</b>            This model envisages a Park whose main remit is to plan for its area, to integrate and co-ordinate the efforts of others, to resolve conflicts and to facilitate the implementation of initiatives and projects on the ground. Such a Park would be a statutory consultee on town and country planning issues, and have the basic Park functions in respect to conservation and recreation. Apart from this no additional powers or functions would be envisaged. The Park authority could be relatively small but it would have sufficient programme spend to undertake research and to initiate and take forward projects with others.</p>	<p>By the Park Authority undertaking a range of specific functions provided in Schedule 3 of the NP Act (Scotland) 2000.</p> <p>Through the Park Authority's programme expenditure on specific initiatives and capital projects, either separately or in combination with others.</p> <p>Through the Park Authority drawing up concordats, voluntary agreements, codes of conduct, etc.</p>
<p><b>National Park as planner and enabler and manager</b>            This model is similar but envisages a more formal role for the Park as managing authority and as a consultee on other regulatory processes to ensure compliance with the Park Plan. This could include a call-in mechanism for the Park Authority or Scottish Ministers when there is a disagreement between them and one of the regulating bodies. A larger staff would be required to service this consultee role, though it could still be a relatively small body.</p>	<p><b>As above, plus</b>            Through the Park Authority entering into management agreements and drawing up and enforcing bylaws, management rules and agreements for its area.</p> <p>Through the Park Authority becoming a statutory consultee to existing regulatory processes.</p>
<p><b>National Park as planner and enabler, manager and regulator</b>            This regulatory model sees the Park subsuming many of the powers and functions of other public bodies and the local authority, including its planning, and access functions. The staffing requirement of such a body would be significant to ensure it has the necessary expertise and capacity to deal with regulatory casework. Rather than employing staff directly, it could enter into service agreements with others to provide these functions on its behalf, though decision making on these functions would remain with the Park Authority.</p>	<p><b>As above, plus</b>            Through the Park Authority entering into voluntary agreements with local authorities and public bodies by which it could undertake to discharge their powers and functions.</p> <p>Through direct regulation, where the Park Authority might take over full responsibility from others for the operation of their current functions.</p>

The first option would be the least administratively onerous, would have the lightest touch in terms of regulation and require the lowest resources, whilst the latter would take on the planning function of the local authority within the designated area and as such would require significant resourcing. The key consideration will be to assess the balance between the benefits of a wholly responsible new regulatory body as in the last option, and the more advisory approach promoted in the former or the mid-way point in the central proposal.

A fourth national option, should a decision be taken to create more National Parks, might be to establish a Scottish “National Park service”, a pool of staff employed nationally but responsible and accountable in the day-to-day work to the individual park authorities to which they were assigned.

A fifth more local option would be to establish a shared service for the delivery of management in the proposed National Park, existing Biosphere and too pick up responsibility for wider countryside services in the region.

A detailed appraisal of the governance options for National Parks has been produced by SCNP and this further emphasises that the management of a National Park need not be over burdensome, although there would be a need for a new management body – and indeed having such a focussed management and coordinating body would be one of the key local benefits of National Park status as it would make things happen that will otherwise remain largely aspirations.

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## 7. A GALLOWAY NATIONAL PARK IN RELATION TO OTHER DESIGNATIONS AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS

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Any decision to designating a National Park in Galloway would need to consider the likely impact on exiting designations and strategic projects. The area already has a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Dark Sky Park, Galloway Forest Park, National Nature Reserves, National Scenic Areas and a number other designations (SSSI, SAC, SPA, etc.). There are also a number of locally strategic projects at various stages of development (including the ongoing developments in Stranraer, the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership, the SW Scotland Coast Trail etc). Care would need to be taken to ensure that any new designation did not undermine the success of these. There is no obvious reason why a National Park should not support all of the above, and indeed add to their viability, unless it resulted in the reduction in support to them specifically in terms of cash. Any budget for a National Park would need to be in addition to sums already allocated to these initiatives. It is considered likely that such additional investment will strengthen most if not all of them.

The largest of the existing initiatives is the Biosphere Reserve and it is reasonable to ask why you would need both. National Parks and Biospheres have significant overlap in their principal purposes, aims and functions;

Perhaps the most notable difference is that National Parks can have regulatory controls whilst UK Biospheres do not. Biospheres style themselves as test beds for research and learning in new ideas that can then be rolled out across a wider geography.

NATIONAL PARK	BIOSPHERE
National Parks are areas of the very highest value for their landscapes, wildlife and cultural heritage. They also provide opportunities for the public to enjoy the areas special natural and cultural heritage. (SNH 2016)	Biosphere reserves are areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems promoting solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. (UNESCO 2016)
Aims of National Park:	Functions of a Biosphere:
to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area	to contribute to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation
to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area	to foster economic and human development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable
to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public	to provide support for research, monitoring, education and information exchange related to local, national and global issues of conservation and development.
to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities	





The complementary nature of the two designations is further demonstrated by the three Biospheres south of the border, Dyfi, Brighton and North Devon which all overlap to a greater or lesser extent with National Parks and maintain positive and beneficial working relationships. Internationally we have firsthand experience from a visit in November 2007 when a delegation from Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere visited the Cevennes National Park and Biosphere in southern France. The conclusions at the time highlighted the many positive developments that had taken place in the Cevennes but highlighted a key difference between Scotland and France being that the Cevennes Biosphere was embedded within the structure of the National Park which at the time was described as having “consequential spin offs in terms of staff and resources”.

In summary together they offer significant complimentary benefits linking a familiar brand such as National Park with the international credibility of UNESCO and membership of the world wide Biosphere network.

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## WHY A NATIONAL PARK IN SW SCOTLAND... ..?

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### **1. WORLD CLASS SCENERY**

National Parks are the internationally recognised top accolade for scenery and natural habitats. SW Scotland has some of the finest natural and cultural landscapes in the world and will benefit greatly from having its area recognised and marked with the National Park brand.

### **2. KEY AREAS NEED MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION**

Key rural areas with fine natural scenery and habitat need protection, appropriate management and sympathetic public access and development. Rather than wait for problems to arise in the future, the production of suitable plans and policies would protect and enhance the area.

### **3. National Parks ARE GOOD FOR TOURISM**

Tourism makes a vital contribution to Scotland’s economy, especially important in rural areas. National Parks are a brand that attracts visitors and their spending. Having a National Park in SW Scotland will create a brand and identity that will help boost the local economy.

### **4. RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

National Parks are good for business, not only for tourism related businesses but also for the location of lifestyle and



small companies that are based on the sustainable use of natural resources such as timber, fish, wildlife, geology and grazing land. A National Park in SW Scotland could be an exemplar rural development area and help to create jobs in a remote rural area.

## **5. NATIONAL IDENTITY**

Scotland is a small country that punches above its weight both within the UK, across Europe and around the world. An integrated system of new National Parks that reflects a range of landscapes will help to boost the image of Scotland, reinforce its image worldwide and increase the public's commitment to conservation. It will also show that the Scottish government has positive policies and actions that protect and enhance the environment.

## **6. COSTS AND BENEFITS**

The cost of a Galloway National Park is likely to be less than either of the existing Scottish National Parks. This modest investment could reap significant economic benefits for the area and, indeed, offers the best opportunity to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of the region.

## **7. CONTROLS AND INCENTIVES**

National Park status implies a commitment to seek to encourage the management of land in such a way as to conserve its landscape, ecological and cultural interest. This is unlikely to be achieved by more

controls but may facilitate new incentives and offer new business opportunities.

## **8. MANAGEMENT AND FACILITATION**

A Galloway NP will require administration, planning and management. This body could be designed to be a facilitator working closely with local communities, many of which are remote from the current administrative centres, whilst acknowledging and conserving the national significance of the Galloway landscape.

### **Next Steps**

1. National Park discussion by Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Partnership Board – March 3rd 2016
2. If the Board endorses the idea, stakeholder meetings within the Biosphere could take place during June / July 2016 with the aim of evidencing wider support.
3. Local Authority support would then need to be secured so that the National Park became a stated objective of the Local Authority business plan(s) – Autumn 2016
4. A wider review of potential National Park boundaries would need to be commissioned Autumn / Winter 2016/17.
5. To Support a programme of engagement with key national and local Agencies
6. Identify key stakeholders locally to support and engage with the development process.

