

John Muir Trust
response to
Argyll and Bute Council
LDP2 Main Issues Report



Question MIR 14

Do you agree with the Council's preferred option to explore the potential to create a new National Park within Argyll and Bute?

(The concept would be a coastal/marine Argyll and Islands National Park which recognised that our heritage includes agriculture, seafood industries, forestry and tourism industries, potentially including the western seaboard of Argyll including Mull, Coll, and Tiree, Islay, Gigha, and the west Kintyre coast, the National Scenic Areas of Knapdale; Lynn of Lorn; as well as Jura, Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs. If a review of National Parks is to be instigated by the Scottish Government then Argyll and Bute would actively seek to be included in this review in order that the options can be fully appraised at that time.)

Answer -

Yes. The John Muir Trust exists to conserve and protect wild places with their indigenous animals, plants and soils for the benefit of present and future generations. So the Trust is supportive of the Council's request that the potential is explored for a new Coastal and Marine National Park in the Argyll coast and islands area. However, any new National Park would rightly be covered by the four aims of the Scottish National Parks:

To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area.

To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area.

To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public.

To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

Sandford Principle - The Trust considers it essential that the Sandford principle should be applied to any new National Park. It is our view that it is essential that conservation aims are first and foremost in any National Park and that this aim is entirely aligned with boosting the local and regional economy as the area is already famed for the quality of its heritage, with tourism which is dependent on that resource.

Coastal and Island areas - We are happy to support a call for a coastal and marine national park as it is our view that such areas were not fully considered when Scottish Natural Heritage mapped Wild Land Areas. Many coastal and island areas have a high quality of wildness but did not fit the criteria

developed for identifying Wild Land Areas. This was a point which was made at the time of consultation.

Question MIR 15

It is further proposed that:

- The boundaries of the coastal/marine Argyll and Islands National Park area must be wholly within the Argyll and Bute Council area;
- The Council retains the town and country planning function;
- That substantial resources are made available to both the Local Authority and the National Park to ensure the successful implementation of the Park and to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Park can be delivered;
- That the Park should have as its driving force the aim of securing the social and economic development of our communities;
- The Park should not in any way jeopardise our indigenous local industries of fishing, agriculture, aquaculture and tourism;
- That the vast majority of the members of the National Park Board must be from those living and working in the Park area;
- The governance model adopted should not represent a large costly bureaucratic organisation.

Do you agree with the above proposals?

Answer – Some of these points are addressed above. In particular, conservation aims must be foremost in a National Park. Indeed, that is the brand which “National Parks” around the world promote.

The Trust does not agree that council boundaries should define the boundaries of the Park. Indeed, the Cairngorm National Park was recently extended to include an area within another council region which had been originally proposed. The boundaries would need careful consultation with local and other relevant stakeholders. It is important that the Park would have a cohesive feel with logical boundaries.

The Trust believes any National Park should have the planning powers, rather than the council.

As befits an area designated for conservation, there should be special expertise on the Board, as well as local representatives.

The Trust agrees that such a new Park does not need to be costly and bureaucratic and that new models for National Parks should be explored.