**Background paper – an overview of the governance arrangements for the Park Authority**

The Board of the National Park Authority is the principal decision-making body of the National Park Authority and directly accountable to Scottish Ministers for its actions. The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 sets two main rules in relation to this Board. First, it can be no larger than 25 members in size. Second, Ministers can only reserve places on the Board for a number of nominees from local authorities. All other places on the Board must therefore be filled by competition under Nolan rules or by direct election. The detailed arrangements for the composition of the Park Board are contained in Schedule 1 of the Act, though these can be substantially amended by Section 31 of this Act in relation to coastal and marine areas and this was explored further in NatureScot’s advice in 2006.

**Composition**

The composition of the Park Boards are subject to complex arrangements but can be illustrated as follows

Upto 25 members in total

Up to 5 members directly **elected** Up to 20 members **appointed** by

by those living in the electoral wards Scottish Ministers

covering the Park area

Up to 10 members appointed on Up to 10 members directly nomination of local authorities appointed

A minimum of 5 members (20% of total

number of members) must be **appointed**

as “local members” as described above

Implicit in these existing Board arrangements is the general recognition of the need to have strong local representation on a Park Authority. This was considered to be particularly important in the case of the first two National Parks because of the transfer of the planning function to both.

**Size**

The Act allows for a Board of between 5 and 25 members. Although the first two National Parks started with the maximum size of board, both have subsequently been reduced in size to ensure more effective and more efficient decision making.

Key factors in determining the size of the Park Board include

* *Size of and distribution of the population* Future National Parks could have very different populations to the existing ones (which have populations of between 16,000 and 23,000. As well as size, issues to do with more dispersed or very unevenly distributed populations may need to be considered.
* *Number of local authorities.* Scotland’s current Parks each cover 4 and 5 local authority areas with representation from each depending the proportion of the Park in their area. For National Parks covering smaller numbers of local authority areas or just one, the share of local authority nominations to the Board could be reduced allowing for a smaller board overall.
* *Range of relevant experience and expertise.* With the exception of the local authorities, no stakeholder interests are specifically allocated places on the Board. Nevertheless, Scottish Ministers can seek to use their appointments to ensure that the Park Authority includes a range of relevant expertise and experience. Each Park can also establish a number of fora, advisory groups and sub-committees to ensure greater involvement of stakeholders in specific issues

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| **Park Aim** | **Relevant experience and expertise in existing Parks** |
| Natural and Cultural Heritage | Biodiversity |
| earth heritage |
| Landscape |
| built heritage and archaeology |
| local history, language and culture |
| Sustainable use | water and wood land management |
| food and timber production |
| field sports |
| fisheries management |
| Enjoyment and Understanding | informal recreation and access |
| Sport |
| environmental education |
| Sustainable Economic Development | Tourism |
| Commerce and business |
| Community development |
| Planning and development |

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