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An overview report by Outside the Box of the six consultation hubs

Report number 3(b)
Kirkcudbright Hub

outsidethebox



Kirkcudbright Hub

Introduction

NatureScot commissioned Outside the Box (OTB) to work with them to design a consultation process and materials to gain community views on the proposed National Park for Southwest Scotland.

Between November 2024 and February 2025 Outside the Box facilitated and hosted community drop-in events across Southwest Scotland. Individual reports collating all the comments from the activities have been produced separately.

This is a report of the Kirkcudbright Hub. It uses the H diagram activity as a way to illustrate the key themes and views from the Hub.

The community drop-in events were scheduled for two hours with a range of different days and times and locations to allow people to choose the event that suited them. The events also had to fit in around existing local bookings in venues.

Dates and week

The events in the Kirkcudbright area were carried out over three days:

Date	Location	Time
Monday 2 December	Kirkcudbright Community Centre	2.00-4.00pm
Tuesday 3 December	Gatehouse Community Centre	11.00am-1.00pm
Tuesday 3 December	Kirkcudbright Community Centre	5.00-7.00pm
Wednesday 4 December	Kippford Village Hall	10.00am-12.00 noon

Attendance

In total 267 people signed into the events in this area. People were invited to sign into the events, give their connection to the area and postcode. Not everyone signed into the event, either because it was busy at the sign in desk or because they didn't wish to.

- Local resident - **179**
- Local resident & farmer - **10**
- Farmer - **7**
- Local resident & local business - **6**
- Local resident & works locally - **4**
- Local interest - **2**
- Business/Landowner - **1**
- Councillor - **1**
- Local farmer & business owner - **3**
- Holiday house - **2**
- No category given - **52**

The postcodes given in this hub area were:

- DG11 - **1**
- DG9 - **3**
- DG8 - **4**
- DG7 - **79**
- DG6 - **115**
- DG5 - **23**
- DG2 - **12**
- DG1 - **1**
- ST17 - **1**
- EH11 - **1**
- No postcode given - **27**.

Consultation activities

At the community drop-in events there were a series of activities for people to participate in. People chose which activities they wanted to participate in. Some people completed all the activities and some just chose a few. OTB staff members facilitated some of the activities. NatureScot staff were also in attendance to answer questions from the community.

The aim of the activities was to share information about the proposal and to gain people’s views and ideas about the proposal and the area.

H diagram

One of the key activities was the H diagram where people were given the opportunity to indicate how they felt about the proposal. They did this via placing a red sticky dot. There tended to be two approaches to this activity. Some people arrived at the event knowing how they felt and wanted to immediately put their dot down. And others spent time looking at the other activities before deciding where to place their dot.

Table 1 - collates the H diagrams from each event in this hub.

Scale	0 (Negative)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (Positive)
Indication of feeling about proposed National Park	138	4	0	3	2	7	3	5	5	1	10

142 people indicated they were ‘very negative’ towards the proposal and 16 people indicated they were ‘very positive’.

The H diagram activity also gave people the opportunity to say what they liked about the proposal, things they didn’t like and any changes they would like to see.

What do you like?

General

The comments focused on:

- the opportunities a National Park would bring to the area, especially for the environment and economy
- an integrated approach to the economy, community, nature and landscapes
- increasing visitors and people to live and work in the area
- the National Park gives Galloway a greater say in its future.

Nature

Comments focused on bringing more jobs to the area and emphasising the importance of conservation, biodiversity and climate change.

Investment and planning

Comments stressed the importance of investment and sustainable development and the need to improve the area and bring people and business to communities.

Tourism

Comments included bringing jobs to the area, better access to the land through footpaths and cycleways etc., and a good ranger service to protect and enhance the land and visitor experience.

What do you not like?

General

Comments focused on concerns about the proposals due to the lack of information about the budget and staffing for a National Park, and the lack of evidence of the benefits for the local area, communities and residents. People said that they wanted the money to be spent on improving the infrastructure especially roads, housing, parking and healthcare. Comments also raised issues about the local democracy and accountability of a Park board.

Tourism

Comments focused on concerns about the impact of increased tourism such as:

- increased litter, rubbish and wildfires
- impact on nature and wildlife
- there are already enough visitors, and tourism is growing each year
- the need for more shops, cafes, accommodation and parking etc. to support tourism
- Visit Scotland doesn't exist in Southern Scotland - all offices are run by volunteers.

Housing

Comments focused on concerns around the needs of housing for younger people, increased house prices, and the homes lost to holiday lets and second homes.

Nature

Comments focused on concerns about the impact of increased visitors on nature and wildlife and the impact on existing local nature-based organisations, such as Solway Firth Partnership, Dark Sky and red squirrel groups.

Roads and infrastructure

Comments focused on concerns about the existing road structure and need for upgrades for the A77 and A75 to cope with existing local and ferry traffic.

Bureaucracy

Comments were concerned about introducing a new layer of bureaucracy and the cost of supporting it when it offers no benefits to local people.

Employment/Economy

Comments focused on the need for better paying jobs and for work that isn't seasonal and temporary. Concerns were also raised about the impact a Park would have on current agricultural and forestry roles and local businesses.

What changes would you like to see?

Comments included:

- the desire to vote on the proposal
- more information on what a Park does and positive feedback
- priority to be given to local affordable homes and restrictions on second homes and holiday lets
- information on how hospitals in the area will cope with increased visitors
- more people to work in cafés and local businesses
- better road infrastructure especially A75 and A77
- less tourism and people coming to the area
- increased protection for nature, wildlife and landscapes
- more funding for existing conservation groups and local projects in Galloway
- a hopeful vision for the future.

Overall

There was a strong emphasis on environmental conservation, the need for new affordable housing, employment opportunities for young people and an improved infrastructure to meet current and future demands.

Comments in favour of the National Park proposals noted that it could support year-round rather than just seasonal employment and increase the number of new businesses. Increased countryside access was seen as a positive benefit and a Park could offer greater environmental protection with funding for targeted initiatives. A National Park could bring economic regeneration leading to investment in infrastructure, but without it, the area will continue to decline.

Comments not in favour of a National Park echoed those raised at other hubs; that it will not only fail to deliver the positive changes people want to see but will negatively impact the local community and environment for the foreseeable future.

Concerns about the impact of a National Park on the infrastructure raised the issue that an ageing population is already stretching local health services, and more visitors to the area will push it to breaking point. In addition to improving roads, the need for better rail services was raised at this hub. People expressed concern that National Park tourism would bring low-paying seasonal jobs, second homes and holiday lets, pushing up house prices and driving out young people. They stressed the need for investment in innovation, training and skills for young people. Concerns were raised not only about the negative impacts of tourism on the environment, but also of the inconvenience this will bring to residents.

People want more information on what a National Park would mean for the area, they want to retain control of the future of where they live and be involved in decision making.

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