



**NatureScot**  
**NàdarAlba**

Scotland's Nature Agency  
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

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

Report number 3(b)  
Stranraer Hub

outsidethebox



# Stranraer 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 Stranraer 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 Stranraer area were carried out over three days:

Date	Location	Time
Monday 13 January	Leswalt Memorial Hall	1.00-3.00pm
Monday 13 January	Stranraer Millenium Centre	6.00-8.00pm
Tuesday 14 January	Portpatrick Village Hall	12.00-2.00pm
Tuesday 14 January	Sandhead Community Hall	4.00- 6.00pm
Wednesday 15 January	Stranraer Millenium Centre	11.00am-1.00pm
Wednesday 15 January	Ballantrae Garden Centre	1.30-3.30pm

## Attendance

In total 148 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 - **106**
- Local resident & farmer - **1**
- Local resident & local business - **8**
- Farmer - **6**
- Local resident & works locally - **1**
- Local interest - **1**
- Farmer and business owner - **6**
- Moving to the area - **1**
- No category given - **18**

The postcodes given in this hub area were:

- DG9 - **123**
- DG8 - **2**
- DG7 - **1**
- DG6 - **1**
- DG2 - **2**
- No postcode given - **19.**

---

## 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.

The table below 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	45	9	5	8	5	13	1	3	8	4	8

59 people indicated they were 'very negative' towards the proposal and 20 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

People said that the area needed help to reach its potential and to be recognised as an area of interest. A National Park would benefit; land use appreciation and education; more opportunities for young people; more businesses would bring more investment.

### Employment

Comments focused on the positive impact it would have for employment for young people, as well as an increase in well-paid permanent jobs.

### Tourism

Comments focused on the potential to boost tourism, and the positive impact of bringing more people into the area to live and to visit.

### Nature

Comments focused on positive impacts for nature conservation, rural issues, investment and jobs it will create for the area. People also said that the area needs long-term funding to address challenges with nature, the economy, rural deprivation and to help pull together local initiatives.

### Investment and planning

People said it was an opportunity to bring funding and further improvements to the area that are needed such as, roads, rail links and ferry links.

### Future and young people

Comments focused on the need to increase opportunities for young people to stay in the area and to increase local affordable housing. It was also an opportunity to improve access and awareness of the area nationally and internationally.

## What do you not like?

### General

Comments focused on the proposal being too vague and how delays in communication have allowed misrepresentation. People also said the area is beautiful and unspoilt and it should be left that way and to let locals live their lives just as they have been doing and want to continue to.

### Tourism

Comments focused on concerns about tourism negatively impacting the area and nature and wildlife. More people bring increased litter and rubbish, campervan traffic and mess. And concern that tourism doesn't provide good jobs with long contracts. Most roles within hospitality are low paid and seasonal, making it difficult for people to live well in the area.

---

## Housing

Comments focused on the concern that house prices will increase, pushing them out of the reach of younger people and those in low-paid and seasonal work. Concern that essential workers will not come to the area as they will not be able to find accommodation.

## Nature

The key comment was that the best way to help nature is to reduce human impact and have fewer people around.

## Roads and infrastructure

Comments focused on concerns about roads and healthcare including:

- A77 and A75 may have had massive improvements but they still can't cope with more traffic, not fit for purpose and ferry traffic is problematic
- health service is already inadequate - 70 miles to hospital and no public toilets on route, increased traffic make the journey longer and slower
- there is only one air ambulance in the area which is already used on a regular basis - if the numbers of visitors increase then accidents are also likely to increase.

## Bureaucracy

Comments focused on concern about how much a National Park will cost, where the money is coming from and that it will increase regulation and only create jobs for civil servants and bureaucrats. People were also concerned that it is undemocratic, reduces local accountability and will be impossible to get rid of once in place.

## What changes would you like to see?

The comments focused on investment needed for roads and transport for the area, such as an improved rail electric service with rail bus links to encourage people to reduce their car use, and upgrades to A75 and A77. People also talked about the health services in the area being at capacity and the need for investment in town centres and with local businesses.

---

## 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.

NatureScot  
Great Glen House  
Leachkin Road  
Inverness, IV3 8NW

[www.nature.scot](http://www.nature.scot)

Published: May 2025



**NatureScot**  
**NàdarAlba**

Scotland's Nature Agency  
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba