



NatureScot
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Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

Accompanying reports

Findings from the surveys

The Summary

Consultation - online

Report number 2(c)

May 2025

A report on the proposal for a national park in southwest Scotland

Introduction

This is one of 21 reports that accompany NatureScot’s Reporter advice on the proposal for a new National Park in southwest Scotland. The advice was submitted on 5 May 2025. This report sets out the findings from the Summary Survey (online). Separate reports provide the findings from the Technical Survey, the Summary Survey (paper) and freehand responses to the consultation.”

Quotes have been selected with the aim of presenting a range of views and topics.

The online Summary Survey was hosted on the SmartSurvey platform. A link to the survey was provided on NatureScot’s website, and information was also contained in a leaflet posted to addresses in and near the proposal area.

Summary

The Summary survey received strong engagement, with around 4,500 responses submitted. Attitudes were highly polarised, particularly around the reasons for supporting or opposing the proposal.

As with the other surveys, some opponents of the proposal were less engaged with subsequent questions, with some querying whether indicating a preference for other aspects of the consultation (such as area options or board composition) might be misinterpreted as supporting the principle of the proposal itself.

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Response profile

There was a total of 4,597 responses to the Summary Survey. Following validation (details below) this number included for quantitative analysis was reduced to 4,477. Tables 1-4 outline the numbers and categories of respondents. Tables 5-10, in the Quantitative Analysis section on page 26, provide more detailed information.

Survey Type Response Rate

Table 1 – Total number of responses received and number excluded from analysis following validation (All Surveys)

Survey Type	Total received	Invalid duplicate	No contact information	Test responses	Total excluded	Valid responses
Paper	341	1	32	-	33	308
Summary	4597	100	17	3	120	4477
Technical	449	-	2	2	4	445
Total	5387	101	51	5	196	5230

Breakdown of responses by identity questions and the capacity of response.

Table 2 – Breakdown of Summary Survey responses by identity questions and capacity of response (Summary Survey)

Relationship	Business	Household	Individual	Organisation	Blank	Total
Live in proposal area	221	793	2440	18	7	3479
Work in proposal area	220	337	1024	7	3	1591
Farmer or forester, or work in these sectors	147	92	296	1	-	536
Landowner / land manager	144	103	331	4	1	583
Local councillor or other elected representative	9	9	55	3	-	76
Business owner	236	118	418	3	-	775
Retired	13	369	1117	7	3	1509
Student / in full-time education	-	14	138	-	-	152
Frequent visitor to the area	17	115	572	5	-	709

Open Question response rate

Table 3 – Open-ended question response rate (Summary Survey)

No	Question Description	Average response length (incl. non-responses)	Non responses
Q1b	Please tell us the main reasons for your opinion	72	377
Q2b	Would you like to make any changes to or comments on your preferred option (e.g. make it smaller or larger, add or remove particular areas, features or settlements)? If so, where and why?	16	1,859
Q3	Please note any comments on these suggestions for planning, access, forestry and wind farms in the box below.	28	1,715
Q4b	What alternative options do you suggest?	11	2,206
Q4c	Please explain why	9	2,577
Q5b	What other areas of expertise would the Board require, and why?	12	1,760
Q6b	If not, what alternatives would you suggest?	8	1,741
Q12	Please add here any other comments that are relevant to the proposal	17	3,092

Consultation response publication preference

Table 4 – Response publication preference – (Summary Survey)

Permission Level	Count	Percentage
Do not publish response	702	15%
Publish response only (without name)	2,937	59%
Publish response with name	955	21%

Survey Findings

SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSAL

Q1a To what extent do you support the idea of a new National Park being established in the southwest of Scotland?

Table 5 - details of stance of respondent – oppose or support

Stance	Count	Percentage
Strongly Support	1484	33.2%
Tend to Support	457	10.2%
Tend to Oppose	263	5.8%
Strongly Opposed	2116	47.3%
Undecided	143	3.2%
Blank	14	0.3%
Total	4477	-

Q1b Please tell us the main reasons(s) for your opinion

Summary

Responses to this question reflected the polarised positions held by supporters and opponents of the proposal. The main points in favour were as follows:

- opportunity for regeneration of the area, including benefits to businesses, job creation, opportunities for young people, and local investment as being among the perceived benefits of National Park status.
- Closely linked to this theme was the benefits of increased tourism, cited by around a third of supporters.
- Around two fifths of supporters pointed to the need for natural and cultural heritage protection in the area, including protection of local landscapes, improvements to ecosystem health, and preserving local cultural heritage. Some also linked designation with a need to respond to climate change and the biodiversity crises.
- With economic recovery, many people hoped this would also bring improvements to local infrastructure as well as investments in services and housing.
- Raising the status of the area, putting Galloway ‘on the map’, was also commonly cited as a significant benefit of National Park designation.

The main points made by opponents of the park were as follows.

- Over half of opponents argued that local infrastructure was in poor condition and was unsuitable for the increased traffic volumes that a National Park might bring.
- Many raised concerns around the potential for increased numbers of tourists, pointing to a lack of existing capacity, irresponsible behaviour, pollution, and overcrowding in the area.

-
- More regulation, perceived as placing onerous restrictions on farming and other industry, was also a leading concern, particularly among people working in farming or forestry.
 - People also felt worried about the impact on housing and the potential for rising house prices and greater numbers of holiday lets and second homes.
 - Some argued that national park status would generally change the character of the area
 - Scepticism over the cost of a National Park, both in terms of running costs and setup costs, was common, with many people arguing that the funds would be better spent improving local services or infrastructure.

Although opponents and supporters of the proposal generally agreed over the economic and demographic challenges currently faced by the area, many of those in opposition felt that National Park status was unnecessary or that it would not be effective in addressing these issues.

Many people expressed uncertainty over what National Park status might deliver, highlighting also a perceived lack of specificity in the proposal and a desire for more information. These points were particularly made by people who were undecided about the proposal.

Sample quotes

SUPPORTERS

The creation of a national park would be like any business – it’s scary, it’s new, it involves change but with the right leaders it will grow and succeed and survive for a long time. The A75 isn’t going to become full of people on day one. It takes years to market an area, to put things in place. The National Park also won’t work without investment in infrastructure. Surely this is a win win. A brand gives value, credibility and purpose, why wouldn’t we want Dumfries and Galloway to have this, to have importance and maybe even a more prominent position in the economy. **[Anon, business, 264298632]**

Emphasis must be on eco- and small-scale to fit surroundings. **[KM (Kirkpatrick Macmillan) Cycle rally, organisation, 259697512]**

‘Right’ would prioritise biodiversity, a zero-carbon economy and thriving local communities; this would include strengthening of local & active transport, including reinstating the Dumfries to Portpatrick railway, with a spur to the ports in Loch Ryan; decentralised/localised services; high-skilled local jobs in small-medium manufacturing and services; ‘slow’ tourism, including outdoor sports, hiking, sailing, wildlife... **[Anon, individual, 264215150]**

The idea of a body to protect and enhance the natural environment while also enhancing the social and employment opportunities of the area must be a good thing. I did however nearly put ‘undecided’ as there are too many pieces of information that are unclear - funding, planning a representation being the main ones. An underfunded operation would only make things worse - more regulation without the funding benefits needed for housing, digital infrastructure, warden services etc. **[Anon, individual, 259356162]**

We feel severely let down that Scotland has only 2 National Parks (covering 7% of our land area), with 3 in Wales (20% of their land area) and 10 in England (10% of their land). Comparing to the Scottish Government’s comparator

countries Denmark (5), Sweden (30), Norway (47), Iceland (3), Ireland (6), Switzerland (1), Austria (7), Belgium (6) and the Netherlands (21) we have to question the purpose of a National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 if it's not going to be used to further protect our people, nature, land and environment? Fortunately the southwest of Scotland covers a huge land area compared to the small 3,000km² (3.8% of our land area) of this suggested new National Park, and the more realistic 9,000km² (11.6% of our land area) of our UNESCO Biosphere. But this area can easily be much larger as suggested by our Government's SEA report's 30km buffer zone (instead acting as the official park boundary) which would take us well above Wales (rather than behind) should our Government realise the requirement to be ambitious about our environment and people. We also have two marine areas in the Firth of Clyde and the Solway already suggested by SNH (NatureScot) two decades ago to be National Parks themselves, which must both be fully included for protection in our new National Park due to the climate and nature emergency. This way we can lead the UK with her first marine National Park and educate the global public from right here in Scotland about its importance.

For a world first, this absolutely needs to be a 'fully accessible' National Park, which as a new venue following the Equality Act 2010 it surely must be, by law. A win for everyone involved, and a brilliant commitment for Scotland to show we are fully part of the UK's 2019 plans to become the most accessible tourist destination on the planet. It must also place southwest Scotland at the heart of the UK's New Disability Action Plan 2024 to be the most accessible place in the world for disabled people to live, work and thrive. **[Laird David Whannel, household, 264641691]**

I think the region is in need of a carefully considered and thorough strategic plan to help it develop into the future taking account of communities and the environment, sustainability and community cohesion. National Park status could help achieve this if people across all sectors and across the country work constructively together. **[Anon, individual, 262807195]**

OPPONENTS

Galloway is an area that needs more attention from government. The best way to achieve this is by identifying the deficiencies in housing, employment, infrastructure, retail and hospitality in order to implement specific improvements for the benefit of the community. This targeted approach has to be better than simply setting up another layer of bureaucracy with a broad remit and little real accountability to the people who live in Galloway. **[Anon, business, 264138115]**

Will restrict land use and increase planning restrictions. The opportunities from it all relate tourism which tends to be seasonal. What would be more helpful is more full time job opportunities. It could also create a two tier housing market because of second homes making it more difficult for locals to get on housing market . Poor use of government resources in current climate with so many other priorities. **[Anon, business, 264471199]**

A National Park may increase low paid work in the tourism sector, but funding local communities to develop self-sustaining business and community models, looking at examples such as Aberfeldy, Beauly, Cromarty, Huntly and many others, should be a priority to help rural communities survive and thrive more widely, and this would include Galloway. In Norway, the proportion of people

living and working in rural areas is much higher than in Scotland - why not find out what we can learn from them? **[Anon, individual, 263877746]**

I would like to see all of Scotland given equal attention when it comes to protecting and enhancing our natural and cultural heritage. To be inclusive we should be supporting a national culture where opportunities are available across all communities not just focusing on chosen areas and leaving their neighbours feeling like poor relations. **[Anon, individual, 260467493]**

I would like to see a national park in the area but feel that until the infrastructure is upgraded it will cause serious concerns for people living and working in the area. The roads in the area are difficult enough at present with heavy hgv trucks using them, the A714 for example, was never meant for vehicle of this size and weight and I believe that with extra tourist traffic added to the roads, it could become problematic and extremely dangerous for local people and tourists alike. **[Anon, household, 261266149]**

Don't want house prices to go up stopping young local people getting on housing ladder. A large proportion of the money generated by tourists will just leave the local area due to non local people buying Airbnb property and the influx of chain stores / cafes **[Anon, individual, 259527619]**

UNDECIDED

In general, I am unsure how the biosphere and NPA and LAs and other bodies would interact in ways which would genuinely address the threats and create opportunities for a more sustainable economy, environment and communities. It doesn't appear that the local authorities involved & biosphere have a strategic plan which sets out shared aims which the NPA has been identified as the opportunity to meet - it seems there is still much conflict and hostility which a better period of ongoing debate involving more detail and ongoing conversations on key topics would have helped with. **[Anon, individual, 264676560]**

The park could be good or bad for the region depending on how it is delivered/managed. Currently there is not enough detail in the proposal to determine which of these it would be. **[Anon, individual, 264170717]**

Housing problems, particularly escalating costs and lack of availability of affordable family could be addressed by ensuring vacant overnight stay capacity is used and putting premiums/rules in place to prevent more self-catering for instance - but there are no proposals for this, and it is unclear how any approach could be aligned across the different LA areas as it is unclear what remit the NPA would have around this. **[Anon, individual, 264676560]**

POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL PARK AREA

Q2a Which option do you prefer?

Table 6 - details of stance of respondent – oppose or support

Option	Count	Percentage
Option 1	499	11.2%
Option 2	374	8.4%
Option 3	1469	32.8%
Don't know / no opinion	1178	26.3%
Blank	957	21.4%
Grand Total	4477	-

Q2b Would you like to make any changes to or comments on your preferred option (e.g. make it smaller or larger, add or remove particular areas, features or settlements)? If so, where and why?

Summary

This question received a wide variety of answers reflecting little consensus around particular options.

Responses typically related to specific boundary details or geographic suggestions – such as the inclusion or exclusion of certain settlements, industries, communities or landscape features.

Overall, a similar proportion of responses argued for increasing the size of the park area as did decreasing it. Some people who preferred Option 3 suggested extending the area further; some of those who preferred Option 1 also argued for reducing its extent e.g. to Forest Park boundary. This reflects a general polarisation on the subject of the Park area in which supporters of the proposal were more likely to prefer the largest possible area, while opponents were more likely to prefer the smallest area – if they expressed a preference at all.

Arguments in favour of a larger Park included that it would extend the benefits (or dilute negative impacts) over a greater area, maximising habitat diversity within the boundary, and having the greatest natural and cultural heritage benefits.

Those favouring a smaller area said that this would reduce or limit the negative impacts of the Park and give the Park area a more focused character or identity.

The primary benefit of Option 2 was the increased coastal extent.

Many opponents of the proposal expressed frustration that ‘No Park’ was not presented as an answer option in Q2a, with some people concerned that selecting one of the proposed areas could be interpreted as a tacit endorsement of the proposal itself.

Sample quotes

SUPPORTERS

Bearing in mind the nature of my work (outdoor and environmental education) either option 2 or 3 would work. Option 1 would miss key areas that would be important such as the Rhins and Machars - both having very important sites for rock climbing. It is disappointing that internationally important coastal / tidal areas such as Wigtown Bay will not be included. It is also disappointing to find no possibility to extend eastwards into the Moffat and Langholm uplands. **[Anon, business, 260781177]**

It needs to pass the “elephant test”. You know one when you see one! I firmly believe the boundary should run approximately up the Cree on the west and then include Glen Trool, the Merrick, Loch Dee, Clatteringshaws, Loch Doon, Kirroughtree, Cairnsmore NNR and with the eastern boundary at Loch Ken. The inclusion of the Fleet NSA would add some coastline. It would be Galloway Forest Park plus. It could then be called The Galloway Hills National Park which would have the enormous marketing advantage of being descriptive. Entrances to the Park could be at Glen Trool, Kirroughtree, Clatteringshaws, Loch Doon, Cairnsmore or Gatehouse of Fleet and somewhere up Loch Ken. By keeping the area smaller it would allow limited funds to be concentrated, and the area suggested would avoid virtually all the commercial farmland and wind farms that might otherwise be included and would always provide sources of conflict. Indeed, the farms within said area as described would likely benefit from additional landscape style grants e.g. for dyking, etc. **[Anon, business, 262011925]**

Whether the bigger settlements are within or out with the National Park should be a decision of their residents. We believe that, at the time that the exact boundaries are being determined, there should be consultation with them. Community Councils, working together, have an important role here. **[Scottish Countryside Rangers Association (SCRA), organisation, 264173020]**

It's easy to pick the beauty spots such as Glen Trool and the Ayrshire coast, but national parks should also encompass the grittier, industrial heritage of the area. We live in the Doon Valley where the river Doon supports a rich diversity of wildlife, and the sides of the valley are still tattooed with the scars of the mining industry which previously dominated the area. There is also a proposal to connect Ayr and Dalmellington with an active travel route following the old railway line. This would bring tourists and locals into the park on foot and on bicycles and forge a strong link between Ayr and the proposed national park. **[Anon, household, 259563409]**

I have had a few people ask why the sources of three of the key rivers in Galloway; the Ken, the Deugh and the Urr are not included in the proposed Galloway National Park area? Surely the preservation of these rivers at source is key to the health, wellbeing and beauty of the area going forward. If the river sources are damaged or impacted through current or future land use - forestry, wind turbines, or in the future potentially fracking or mining or other as yet unknown land use potentials - the whole area would be impacted. These river sources should be included in the NP area in order to safeguard them. **[Anon, individual, 260538734]**

OPPONENTS

I would prefer if the area in consideration was not prime productive agricultural land, e.g. “land capable of only supporting rough grazing” as defined by the Macaulay system. **[Anon, business, 264670140]**

Make the area smaller so that it doesn't include local villages, including Dalmellington or Patna, as this would increase house prices and price local out of the market and would encourage people to buy up houses as second homes which would be empty most of the year or converted to air B&Bs. If this is to be considered the northern boundary should stop at loch doon. **[Bellsbank woodland project, organisation, 259536027]**

If we have to have a National Park, the area should ONLY be north of the route of the A75 and exclude Newton Stewart and any town of over 2500 inhabitants. It should also extend eastwards to the A76 (but still North of the A75), an area which seems to have been ignored on the above maps - has that area been earmarked for major forestry or windfarms and the proposals are avoiding a National Park hampering such developments? That way, the wilder countryside will be protected but the Park regulations will hardly impact on farmers and residents, whilst “preserving” the “natural environment” that the proposers seem to think visitors desire. It is ridiculous to include nearly all the towns in the Stewartry and Wigtownshire. **[Susan & Ian Bradbury, household, 264322699]**

Only if that option isn't available would I opt for no 3 - I actually think this is too large and diverse an area, but I want to see that corridor between Kirkcudbright and Dalbeattie included in any NP. **[Anon, individual, 261452084]**

Don't agree with any of the three options posited. If there is to be a National Park it should cover the area easily accessed by rail from Glasgow i.e., South Ayrshire, the Rhinns of Galloway, the Machars and current Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. **[Anon, individual, 261452084]**

UNDECIDED

The areas should be slightly redrawn to include the entirety of the Dee and Cree catchments that are within the DumGal Authority area. Consideration should also be given to including the Urr catchment. This would allow a management plan that can seek to improve the entirety of the waterbodies. Left as-is, it would be very difficult to enact meaningful improvements to water quality in the region. **[Anon, household, 257582612]**

Option 2 concentrates on the coastal areas which are likely to be of more interest to tourists and capable of development e.g. like Noth Cornwall and west Pembrokeshire. Option 3 includes large areas of bare hill with little access and of interest for incomers. An alternative would be to include a coastal strip of Option 3. **[Jamie Dalrymple Hamilton, individual, 257604925]**

PLANNING, FUNCTIONS AND POWERS

Q3 Please note any comments on these suggestions for planning, access, forestry and wind farms in the box below.

Summary

In terms of planning, views diverged on what role the Park should have, with supporters proposing that the park should become the full planning authority, that it should have consultee or call-in powers, or that local authorities should retain planning control. Opponents of the proposal were much more likely to suggest the last point.

On access issues, supporters of the proposal generally agreed that the National Park Authority should adopt the role of access authority and that a ranger service should be established. Several points were made in support of improving access to outdoor recreation in the area, with people from both sides suggesting more should be done to address irresponsible behaviour among visitors to the outdoors. There were some queries around how the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and existing access rights operate within a designated area, and why a National Park is needed if legislation is already in place.

The importance of forestry to the region came out strongly in the response, with many responses suggesting that forestry management in the area could be improved, such as by moving away from non-native and monoculture plantations. Many supporters felt that the park authority should have an active role in forest management or be a statutory consultee on forestry issues. A small minority argued that Forestry and Land Scotland should retain control over forestry in the area.

Views on windfarms were varied and cut across support and opposition for the proposal. Many people suggested that wind developments should be limited in the area, and that they should offer greater community benefit and take into account scenic considerations. Others argued that windfarms should be prohibited outright.

A clear message from this section was the high number of No Opinion responses.

Sample quotes

SUPPORTER

To provide a more cohesive approach to outdoor access, ScotWays suggests that any new National Park should take the lead on outdoor access. To enable this, it is suggested that any new National Park is either designated a local planning authority, or that the local authorities with which the National Park overlaps should be encouraged to delegate some or all of their powers for the management of public rights of way. **[ScotWays, organisation, 264461496]**

I feel strongly that the more perspectives involved on decisions affecting our areas the better the outcomes will be, and that the proposed introduction of a National Park authority, or suchlike, is necessary; our region is seeing an influx of all the above already anyway and it is concerning that the voice of nature is not being represented in any kind of a cohesive or overarching way. **[Anon, business, 260413944]**

We also would welcome regulatory powers on second home ownerships and holiday rental accommodation (there are already plenty of these in the area), and perhaps a NPA could be a mechanism to achieve this? **[Anon, household, 263554252]**

I believe that the national park authority should be a stake holder and have mandatory consultation rights for planning and housing. But not have any specific veto rights on planning. Any authority on access rights would need to consider the current circumstances in the area and be able to maintain the road, track, path network that currently exists whilst building upon it working with existing groups that have promoted these. **[Anon, individual, 259430280]**

The access role and ranger service are essential, so that the authority has 'boots on the ground' and interested expertise available to it. I would support the authority being the statutory consultee on forestry and wind farm development. Is there a similar role in relation to solar farm development? **[Anon, individual, 259459559]**

OPPONENTS

I do not see how the Park can be a timber production forest and also a place where tourists are being encouraged to come in high numbers. The fact a National Park Authority would be involved in granting permission on pouring thousands of tons of concrete into it for Wind Power Plants doesn't seem to bring to mind what a National Park should be. **[Dark Sky Dome, business, 264467093]**

Forestry is currently managed by FLS. As an owner of a 10 acre woodland, I can see no change as being beneficial for either commercial forestry, or as in my case, a small woodland managed for ecology and biodiversity. **[Anon, household, 259406217]**

The Park authority should not be a 'statutory consultee' for proposals but put in place a strategy for balancing biodiversity protection and industry. **[Anon, individual, 259328954]**

If the park is created the local authorities should retain planning control. While the park authorities should be involved with access decisions, but it should ask the private landowners for permission to create paths through their land. The forestry should have to adhere to the park authority on certain matters such as areas designated for the public to stay but maintenance and care should be left to the forestry. **[Anon, individual, 260596758]**

I believe that not all the local authorities involved in the proposed NP area have a LAF so a fully operating and resourced one in the NP would be a great bonus for visitors and residents. It would be preferable for the NP to have its own ranger service; with their own identity [uniform etc] trained in a consistent approach when working with the public and in the work and conservation of the NP. The successful delivery of NP aims sensitive visitor management, conservation and education are highly dependent on a well-resourced and motivated ranger service; rangers are the public face of the NP. There are some existing ranger services in the area and effective partnerships could be established between them and the NP rangers. There are different models for this involving a mix of seasonal, full time, site based, itinerant and partner rangers, but whatever is decided on they would need to have consistency in approach in interactions

with the public and be fully aware of their, admittedly limited, powers. This would involve having a training scheme which should include area familiarity, training in interactions with the public to avoid confrontation, legal knowledge of the Act and the SOAC, and recruitment, deployment and induction of volunteers. The NP should have a policy or similar on ranger recruitment and retention, and training. [Beryl Leatherland, individual, 264363972]

UNDECIDED

Ultimately the governance of the NPA is of concern - There needs to be a balance not only of local / national reps but also balance between the different parties of interest. [Anon, individual, 264676560]

Whilst forestry is extensive, both public and private foresters are not so held to account. Commercial forestry has a place and can be managed much better than it is. There is little to no stewardship of the crop (thinning etc) species diversity (of the crop) or planting of broad-leaf compensation in anything like the degree needed. Lip service is paid to the guidance, the industry is entirely extractive, and the revenue does nothing for the local areas. I would want a level playing field so that forestry is required to achieve the same standards of land stewardship and community benefit as wind. [Anon, individual, 264687618]

BOARD COMPOSITION

Q4a Do you support these suggestions for Board size and percentage of directly elected members

Table 7 - details of stance of respondent – oppose or support

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	1473	32.9%
No	1754	39.2%
In part	741	16.6%
-	509	11.4%
Total	4477	-

Q4b What alternative options do you suggest?

Summary

Many responses were unclear on this. A wide range of interpretations were provided.

A common theme, across both opponents and supporters, was around the importance of local representation and ensuring that there would be a majority local interest which would not be able to be outvoted by “incomers”.

Generally, opponents of the proposal were more in favour of a smaller board with a greater share of directly elected members and fewer Scottish Government appointed members.

There were several concerns expressed around funding, salaries and whether this approach was the most cost-effective use of public funding.

There were also comments about how each local authority should be represented and in what proportion.

Sample quotes

SUPPORTERS

1. Both options seem like excessively high numbers, when support staff are also taken into account the overall costs will be high - compared to anticipated local benefits. Equivalent funding should be given instead, directly to local projects.
2. The number / proportion of members appointed by Scottish ministers is too high and should be minimal. Local members would better support local needs / views. **[Anon, individual, 261910528]**

Hybrid Rotational Board (Board of 12)

- Maintain a core of 8 permanent members (split between local elected, local authority-nominated, and national appointments).
- The remaining four seats rotate between different stakeholder groups (e.g., farmers, conservationists, tourism representatives) every few years.

This model introduces flexibility and adaptability, ensuring different voices are heard at other times. **[Galloway Wildlife Conservation Trust, organisation, 264465810]**

I think there should be a majority - even if only a majority of one - of directly elected members. I feel that Council nominees, if these are likely to be elected Councillors, should be restricted to those who represent whatever wards fall within the boundaries of the eventual Park. Ideally those appointed by Scottish ministers should also have local connections and there should be some cross-party representation. **[Meta Maltman, individual, 261331738]**

The National interest could be underrepresented. Communities of interest e.g. access takers, nature conservation experts, tourism operators and land restoration ecologists should be represented. Equally important is ensuring the purpose of the Park adequately reflects the need to save and restore biodiversity as per the Scottish Government biodiversity strategy. **[Stuart Housden, individual, 261678648]**

OPPONENTS

12 Board members, all elected for 3-year term by residents and businesses in the GNPA area. All Board members must live in the GNPA area and not have just a postal address/holiday home in the GNPA. They should receive an honorarium of £50,000 per annum, and have no other paid work, so they can focus on their role in the GNPA.

A maximum term of 6 years (2 x 3 years), with a minimum of 6 years before they can re-stand for election. That makes the Board fully accountable to the people whose lives they want to control.

Businesses would have one vote for every 5 people that they employ FULL TIME and who live and work in the NP area - so contractors brought from Dumfries, Glasgow and Carlisle and firms offering part-jobs would have far less sway than locally based businesses. To be a “voting business” the criteria would be to be registered for VAT, so giving an easily checkable qualification. **[Anon, household, 264322699]**

Alternative solutions need to be not under the auspices of a National Park. So no boards but funds and professional staff within the Councils who can provide a development plan, remembering that for many of these decisions planning permission may not be required and those that do will be taken not by the Council. The Forestry Authority has a significant role to play. **[Anon, individual, 259404697]**

I don't think that it is necessarily the best option to focus on elected members from the electoral wards. While I agree that the majority of members should be local, if ministers appoint one third of members, these should be from outside the NP only, so that the national interest is represented. What is key is to do a skills audit and identify at an early stage the skills and expertise required of Board members, and to ensure a good match is achieved.

The Board should have the power to appoint one or two co-opted members if there is a key skill shortage. This may be an important consideration, as with a Board of say, 12 these may be unlikely to cover the whole range of skills and expertise needed. The size of the Board required may partly depend on the size of the NP: if it is decided to adopt Option 1 for the Park area then a Board of 15 could be excessive; on the other hand if Option 5 or even 3 is adopted then 15 may be more appropriate. It is difficult to achieve efficiency and good decision making with an overlarge Board. **[Beryl Leatherland, individual, 264363972]**

The regional council supported by community councils is the correct mechanism to manage Dumfries and Galloway. Nature Scot should be developing a comprehensive package of Natural Capital Proposals for land managers to implement which would help drive change in the region. This can be managed by the Rural Payments Division and overseen by the regional Council. Putting in place further layers of Bureaucracy is completely unnecessary. **[Peter Landale, business, 264669541]**

UNDECIDED

The proposal that a group should be appointed by Scottish Ministers should not solely be made by ministers for the sake of transparency and having undue influence and payment. To ensure representation is from a range of political view points and cannot be overly influenced by strong political pressure groups, there should be a balance of political voices on the Boards. **[Anon, business, 264646069]**

We keep getting told the park, if approved, will be designed for Galloway by Galloway people but as only one third of board members will be answerable to the electorate in the area that is patently untrue, members following instructions from those who nominate them would be able to outvote the elected members any time they choose to. All board members should be elected if it goes ahead. **[Galloway Static Gear Fishermen's Association, organisation, 257560644]**

If a National Park was to be established, then it would seem more appropriate

for those members directly elected by those living in the electoral wards covering the park area to be matched by an equal number of those appointed be it at local authority or at Scottish Ministerial level. The casting vote on issues would have to be from a member directly elected by those living in the electoral wards covering the park area i.e. one of those would have to be chairman. **[Anon, household, 259663489]**

Q4c Please explain why

Summary

As with the previous question, respondents emphasised the importance of local voices and the need to prevent undue influence over the board by particular groups. The board was seen as needing to be as democratic and locally accountable as possible.

Sample quotes

SUPPORTERS

For this to work well, to be a real model for others, it has to be for the many and not the few. It has to benefit the quiet person who says very little. The citizen who is time poor, financially not comfortable or secure. It has to inspire children to new careers, to feel they belong, and it has to show its vibrancy in all areas and that has to start with the governance. Think hard...think outside the box and take some risks. Make everyone talk about it, not just the educated ones with ease of access to the power the new structure represents **[Anon, individual, 259711295]**

A board of limited diversity in age profile making decisions on their behalf will never be as effective or as inclusive as making decisions with young people represented on the board. EDI and board make up requires consideration in other aspects as well, but I feel the inclusion of young people is the most crucial aspect here. **[Anon, business, 260781177]**

Politicians are mainly working for power; they need to let that down. Local authorities are mainly going for money; they need to safeguard that. People from the local area will mainly speak from their own ideas, wishes, and objections; they need to learn to listen to the land, and the people. If all of these groups would be able to really safeguard nature, culture, and working and living, and be able to give the right education and funding for change, then that would be a great asset. It all lays in the question: why do you want what you want, and how can we manage this in an objective, safeguarding, caretaking way. **[Anon, household, 259888432]**

OPPONENTS

Decisions that affect local communities MUST be made by those who are directly affected by these decisions. Board members must also be democratically accountable giving local people the opportunity to express their views through regular periodic elections of board members IF a park is imposed on us. **[Anon, business, 257717163]**

Specialist experts are individuals that are able to provide specialist support to the decision-making processes which is helpful, but they also come with specific vested interests and agendas which should not be allowed to directly

influence through voting rights. Political appointees are expected to promote the priorities of their political party which can be at odds to the wishes of the local community. Such appointees cannot be held to account by the residents of the Park in the same way as directly elected representatives can. They should not therefore have an equal voting base as the directly elected representatives. Those directly elected should be in the majority, not minority, in voting rights. **[Anon, household, 259406217]**

As per previous input, I don't think any concrete advantages to Galloway from the proposed infrastructure have been outlined. **[Anon, organisation, 264633747]**

UNDECIDED

So that we can be sure that there will be a fair representation of the different stakeholders, not just some random person from Edinburgh or Ayrshire. There is a tiny sliver of land from Ayrshire in the largest proposed area, I don't see why they should be so highly represented. **[Anon, business, 264689472]**

If the Park is to be for the people who live here then we must be represented in the majority. Local Authorities should be represented, ideally at Councillor level, so that democratic interests should be maintained. Central Government involvement should be minimised to remove the inevitable allegations of party interference and to insulate the authority from the whims of successive parties and people whose only interest is election to a seat of power. **[Anon, household, 257582612]**

The National Park area that I have proposed is compact compared with those areas described for Options 2 and 3. Its management would require fewer Board members than those suggested in the diagrams above. If specialist unelected members are appointed then these could be nominated by the Scottish Government or by Dumfries and Galloway Council. **[Anon, individual, 261270454]**

BOARD EXPERTISE

Q5a Should Scottish Ministers appointments to the Board include expertise on nature, farming and forestry?

Table 8 - details of stance of respondent – oppose or support

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	2876	64.2%
No	832	18.6%
Blank	769	17.2%
Total	4477	-

Q5b What other areas of expertise would the Board require, and why?

Summary

A wide range of areas of expertise was proposed, reflecting a range of important issues relevant to the area. The leading suggestions were: experience in tourism or hospitality; environmental or ecological training; a planning or infrastructure background; business experience; and local knowledge.

Sample quotes

SUPPORTERS

Yes, appointments to the Board should include expertise in nature, farming, and forestry. Additionally, the Board would benefit from expertise in the following areas:

1. Climate Change and Sustainability – Given the urgent need to address climate change, expertise in climate science, carbon sequestration, and sustainability practices would help guide policies that align with Scotland’s net-zero goals.
2. Land Use and Planning – Understanding land management, urban and rural planning, and ecosystem restoration is crucial for balancing economic development with environmental conservation.
3. Community and Rural Development – Representatives with experience in rural economies, local governance, and community-led initiatives can ensure policies reflect the needs of those directly affected by land-use decisions.
4. Biodiversity and Conservation – Specialists in ecology and conservation biology can help ensure that natural habitats and species are protected and restored.
5. Renewable Energy and Green Infrastructure – As Scotland transitions to a low-carbon economy, expertise in renewable energy, such as wind, hydro, and biomass, can help integrate sustainable energy solutions into land management.
6. Legal and Regulatory Affairs – Expertise in environmental law, land rights, and rural policy is essential for navigating complex regulatory frameworks and ensuring compliance.
7. Economic and Financial Management – A background in sustainable finance, agricultural economics, or rural business development

can support economic resilience while promoting environmentally responsible practices.

8. Public Health and Wellbeing – Land use impacts public health through air and water quality, food production, and access to green spaces. Expertise in health and social policy can help address these intersections.
9. Technology and Innovation – As the world increasingly relies on digital tools for precision farming, forestry management, and environmental monitoring, technology and data analysis expertise would be valuable.
10. Cultural and Heritage Preservation – Scotland’s landscapes are deeply tied to its cultural heritage. Experts in archaeology, history, and indigenous knowledge can help preserve this legacy while promoting sustainable land use.

This diverse expertise would ensure the Board can make well-rounded, informed decisions that balance environmental protection, economic viability, and community well-being. **[Galloway Wildlife Conservation Trust, Organisation, 264465810]**

Marine conservation groups should also be part of the board. There is the subway partnership and Scamp it would also be good to include freshwater conservation groups as well particularly as forestry does have an impact on waterways and the sea. **[North Bay innovations Limited, business, 264004074]**

OPPONENTS

There is no expertise available for the formation of a new National Park. With no research having been undertaken how does anyone know what will be required. **[Frederick Fraser, individual, 263017055]**

The area is hugely reliant on agriculture and will become more important in terms of food security due to population growth and the impact of global warming on other areas of the globe. Many local businesses and people are employed directly and indirectly therefore supporting agriculture and production should be a key focus. **[John McIntosh, business, 262023243]**

Again, please see my earlier responses. If such a skill set exists, the board would require members experienced in making quangos work in practice with a proven track record on delivering demonstrable results without resorting to politician’s empty rhetoric. An ability to get things done rather than simply talking about ‘targets’, ‘visions’, ‘mission-statements’ and ‘long-term development aims’. **[Julian Shaw, household, 261229421]**

Independent experts, not ones already part of this proposal. People who actually work in the fields. **[Anon, organisation, 263434044]**

UNDECIDED

It is important that there is an understanding of the often complex history of the area. All too often the border between Scotland and England tends to a thinking which ignores actual history - e.g. rendering Lockerbie in Gaelic as Locharbaidh on the rail station sign ignores the ‘bie’ or ‘by’ ending being the Norse for farmstead or village. Baidh doesn’t seem to have a meaning & baigh means ‘bay’! It’s a long way from the sea!! **[Anon, household, 262456684]**

NAME OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Q6a Do you agree the park, if established, should be called the Kingdom of Galloway National Park?

Table 9 - details of stance of respondent – oppose or support

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	834	18.6%
No	3081	68.8%
Blank	562	12.6%
Total	4477	-

Q6b If not, what alternatives would you suggest?

Summary

The name “Kingdom of Galloway National Park” was highly unpopular. Many responses questioned the rationale behind this proposed name. By far the most common alternative suggestion was “Galloway National Park”. Other suggestions included “South West Scotland National Park”, “Galloway & Ayrshire National Park”, and “Dumfries & Galloway National Park”.

Sample quotes

SUPPORTERS

The park should be simply called “The Galloway National Park” for simplicity, because that is what it will be referred to in the vernacular. Other benefits of keeping the name simple is that it will potentially reduce publication & stationery costs.

Furthermore a distinctive eye-catching logo / emblem / badge / Registered Trademark is just as important as the park name for use on stationery headings, building, asset, highway, car park and footpath signage.

There would also be the potential of merchandising product sales at National Park establishments of trade-marked products. Use of a National Park Registered Trademark / logo on employee (e.g. National Park Rangers) ID badges, uniforms and equipment (e.g. PPE - personal protective equipment), ID Badges and Vehicles would also be of importance. Agri-tourism sales of local produce might also benefit from National Park trade marking / quality assurance ref. labelling / marking on packaging. e.g. beef, lamb, mutton, milk, butter, cheese, pate, eggs. **[Anon, household, 259412157]**

“Kingdom of Galloway” is a misleading title that acknowledges some history in that the area in question is principally the old Pictish sub-kingdom of Galloway but also includes substantial parts of the British kingdom of Strathclyde. The title does nothing to address the inclusion of parts of Ayrshire and Dumfries(shire). However, it remains the case that the majority of Options 1, 2 and 3 are based on the geographical area of Galloway. An alternative name could reasonably be: “Galloway and Strathclyde” national park if the historical

referencing is to be retained and the inclusion of arts other than Galloway is to be acknowledged. [Bartholomew, individual, 262718682]

OPPONENTS

Galloway National Park would be sufficient. [Anon, business, 263074108]

The word 'kingdom' seems anachronistic and a bit pretentious. Galloway National Park is simple and clear. [Anon, household, 260827303]

More important to make sure that there is some actual benefit from and support for establishing a National Park, before worrying about picking a name. [Anon, organisation, 264633747]

We are in Ayrshire, so this is then confusing. We are not Galloway. However both are areas of superb landscapes and attract many tourists, we do not need rename - this is Burns country - I wonder what the poet Robert Burns would say to this. [Anon, individual, 264674360]

UNDECIDED

Including Kingdom in the name entrenches the idea that the Park Authority will be an unaccountable group of elites making decisions for the good of the little folk, who simply couldn't understand the complexities of high office. [Anon, household, 257582612]

Q12 Please add here any other comments that are relevant to the proposal.

Summary

Most responses to this question used this opportunity to reiterate previously articulated positions, either in support or opposition to the proposal. Points were also made about a range of issues that tallied with other respondents' input to other questions. These included infrastructure, the natural and cultural heritage, and development. Learning from the experience of the current two national parks was also mentioned.

Sample quotes

SUPPORTERS

Galloway is a gem that has hardly changed in the 70 years I have known it apart from across hills increasingly covered in bland forests that destroy the natural habitats. More effort needs to go into diversifying the woodlands and supporting the ancient native woodlands.

Our big concern is the infrastructure around the key roads A75 and A77 and how to create better access into the region from the A74 and the M6 without destroying the existing landscapes.

I am aware of the strong arguments from the NO campaign, but Galloway will never attract the millions that go to the Lake District. The region needs investment to sustain businesses throughout the year and to attract visitors in the winter months when the weather can still be lovely, gardens full of snow drops, hills and coastlines excellent for walking and bird watching sometimes

at its best while holiday lets especially in rural areas can provide peaceful respites from busy urban lives. **[Anon, business, 264398151]**

Commercial development and new housing within the key towns of the region should not detract from the historic character of the towns. However, modern commercial and housing developments should be allowed without undue restrictions on the outskirts of the larger towns. I don't believe the designation of a new National Park in itself will lead to a huge influx of tourists. However, should that become a problem then the National Park should take appropriate powers to deal with the problem. **[Anon, individual, 257718653]**

The establishment of a National Park in southwest Scotland presents a valuable opportunity to enhance environmental protection, promote sustainable land management, and support local communities. To ensure its success, the Park Authority should prioritize:

- Strong community engagement – Local residents, businesses, and land managers should have a meaningful role in shaping policies to balance conservation with sustainable development.
- Clear conservation goals – The Park should have a strong mandate to protect biodiversity, restore degraded habitats, and support Scotland's climate targets.
- Sustainable tourism and recreation – Visitor management strategies should minimize environmental impact while supporting responsible access and local economies.
- Funding and resources – Adequate financial support will be essential to effectively implement conservation projects, ranger services, and educational programs.

Overall, this National Park has the potential to become a model for balancing environmental sustainability with community needs, benefiting both people and nature for generations to come. **[Sophie Miller, individual, 264559338]**

OPPONENTS

D&G produces lots of low-cost green energy and uses only about 1/6 of it. The rest gets exported out of the area. A new pricing structure needs to be found as D&G still pays one of the highest electricity prices in Europe/Britain. Surely, we should be in a position to sell our green locally produced power to local business and homes. This would be a major incentive to retain existing and create new business. If governments won't or can't, then we should stop all wind farm development until the local communities get real benefits. We should not sell/ lease all the good wind farm sites until pricing is sorted. If I understand the literature correctly, National Park status does not have the ability to stop any development of wind turbines. **[John Turnbull, household, 261383339]**

With no comprehensive review of the other two Scottish national parks, how can the Scottish Government claim that they have performed well as models of sustainable development? There is widespread coverage of the difficulties that communities have faced in each of the other national parks given the dilution of local governance. **[Anon, individual, 260648210]**

I would leave Dumfries & Galloway alone to develop its own way forward with its own electable officials and respond to the needs of its current population. It will encourage tourism, at its own rate. A massive glut of people (the one sure

negative effect of NP status) will fracture the communities and forever lose the peace and tranquillity that is probably the jewel in the crown of our area. Yes it needs economic development but to ensure the preservation of nature and habitat the last thing we need is NP hype tourism. **[Anon, business, 262879451]**

UNDECIDED

We have so few years left to take decisive action on climate change and biodiversity crises. Is the NPA the best way to achieve a sustainable future for Galloway? In addition to one centralised board, there would need to be lots of local engagement mechanisms, much more than biosphere have done, and these would need to provide proper, meaningful spaces for dialogue to address issues and harness ideas of local people. **[Anon, individual, 264676560]**

A node Biosphere Reserve would also be appropriate, if not extending the Biosphere area to encompass more of the park. **[Anon, household, 264075044]**

Quantitative Analysis

This section presents information on the quantitative aspects of respondents to this survey. They illustrate respondent engagement with the area (e.g. resident), location by postcode, and against an outline of SIMD data.

These analyses primarily relate to the Summary survey, which received the greatest number of personal responses (those submitted on behalf of individuals and households rather than organisations, groups or businesses). Data from the other surveys is also presented for comparison where relevant.

Table 10 – Aggregated support for the proposal, broken down by identity questions (Summary Survey)

Identity questions	Support No.	Support Percentage	Oppose No.	Oppose Percentage	Undecided No.	Undecided Percentage	Blank No.	Blank Percentage
Live in proposal area	1376	41%	1899	56%	104	3%	7	0%
Work in proposal area	592	38%	915	59%	49	3%	3	0%
Farmer or forester, or work in these sectors	74	14%	434	83%	15	3%	1	0%
Landowner / land manager	151	26%	403	70%	17	3%	2	0%
Local councillor or other elected representative	39	52%	31	41%	5	7%	0	0%
Business owner	289	38%	444	58%	28	4%	2	0%
Retired	647	44%	763	52%	58	4%	1	0%
Student / in full-time education	60	41%	71	48%	14	10%	2	1%
Frequent visitor to the area	379	54%	306	44%	16	2%	2	0%

Table 11 - Aggregated support for the proposal among household and individual responses within the proposal area, broken down by SIMD quintile (Summary Survey)

SIMD Quintile	Oppose No.	Oppose Percentage	Support No.	Support Percentage	Undecided No.	Undecided Percentage	Blank No.	Blank Percentage	Total
1	37	46%	41	51%	2	2%	1	1%	81
2	384	50%	367	48%	19	2%	1	0%	771
3	1017	56%	745	41%	55	3%	5	0%	1822
4	547	61%	315	35%	40	4%	2	0%	904
5	105	46%	117	52%	4	2%	0	0%	226

Table 12 - Support for the proposal by respondent location postcode (Summary Survey)

Respondent Location [1]	Total	Support No.	Support Percent	Oppose No.	Oppose Percent	Undecided	Undecided Percent	Blank	Blank Percent
Within Option 1	1454	631	43.4%	777	53.4%	42	2.9%	4	0.3%
Within Option 2	2580	1077	41.7%	1421	55.1%	76	2.9%	6	0.2%
Within Option 3	3195	1276	39.9%	1809	56.6%	101	3.2%	9	0.3%
Within 30km	4014	1656	41.3%	2215	55.2%	132	3.3%	11	0.3%
Beyond 30km	403	262	65.0%	132	32.8%	7	1.7%	2	0.5%

Table 13 - Preferred option areas by support for the proposal (Summary Survey)

Stance	Option 1 No.	Option 1 Percent	Option 2 No.	Option 2 Percent	Option 3 No.	Option 3 Percent	No Opinion No.	No Opinion Percent	Blank No.	Blank Percent
Strongly Support	125	8%	198	13%	1089	73%	54	4%	18	1%
Tend to Support	59	13%	110	24%	250	55%	32	7%	6	1%
Tend to Oppose	62	24%	21	8%	38	14%	120	46%	22	8%
Strongly Opposed	221	10%	21	1%	45	2%	928	44%	901	43%
Undecided	31	22%	24	17%	43	30%	42	29%	3	2%
(blank)	1	7%	0	0%	4	29%	2	14%	7	50%

Table 14 - Preferred area options by respondent location (Summary Survey)

Respondent Location	Option 1 No.	Option 1 Percent	Option 2 No.	Option 2 Percent	Option 3 No.	Option 3 Percent	No Opinion No.	No Opinion Percent	Blank No.	Blank Percent	Total
Within Area 1 only	157	11%	130	9%	455	31%	374	26%	338	23%	1454
Within Area 2 only	138	12%	109	10%	333	30%	287	25%	259	23%	1126
Within Area 3 only	57	9%	29	5%	180	29%	196	32%	153	25%	615
All within 30 km of proposal area	449	11%	333	8%	1256	31%	1071	27%	905	23%	4014
All beyond 30km of proposal area	47	12%	36	9%	194	48%	83	21%	43	11%	403

Respondent Location	Option 1 No.	Option 1 Percent	Option 2 No.	Option 2 Percent	Option 3 No.	Option 3 Percent	No Opinion No.	No Opinion Percent	Blank No.	Blank Percent	Total
All (location identifiable)	499	11%	374	8%	1469	33%	1178	26%	957	21%	4477

Table 15 – Aggregated support by response category – Percentages show the proportion of the row total – (All Surveys)

Survey type and stance	Business no.	Business percent	Household no.	Household percent	Individual no.	Individual percent	Organisation / group no.	Organisation / group percent	Blank no.	Blank percent	Total
Summary	295	7%	937	21%	3200	71%	37	1%	8	0%	4477
Support	102	5%	365	19%	1454	75%	17	1%	3	0%	1941
Oppose	179	8%	548	23%	1635	69%	12	1%	5	0%	2379
Undecided	13	9%	24	17%	102	71%	4	3%	0	0%	143
Blank	1	7%	0	0%	9	64%	4	29%	0	0%	14
Paper	20	6%	98	32%	186	60%	0	0%	4	1%	308
Support	4	3%	41	34%	73	61%	0	0%	1	1%	119
Oppose	15	8%	56	31%	107	59%	0	0%	2	1%	180
Undecided	0	0%	0	0%	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%	4
Blank	1	20%	1	20%	2	40%	0	0%	1	20%	5
Technical	87	20%	57	13%	264	59%	37	8%	0	0%	445
Support	25	15%	17	10%	103	61%	24	14%	0	0%	169

Survey type and stance	Business no.	Business percent	Household no.	Household percent	Individual no.	Individual percent	Organisation / group no.	Organisation / group percent	Blank no.	Blank percent	Total
Oppose	55	22%	38	15%	152	61%	6	2%	0	0%	251
Undecided	6	30%	2	10%	8	40%	4	20%	0	0%	20
Blank	1	20%		0%	1	20%	3	60%	0	0%	5
Overall	402	8%	1092	21%	3650	70%	74	1%	12	0%	5230

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www.nature.scot

Published: May 2025



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