

Agenda Item	14
Report No	ECI/43/2023

The Highland Council

Committee: Economy and Infrastructure

Date: 17 August 2023

Report Title: New National Parks in Scotland Appraisal Framework

Report By: Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This paper asks Members to homologate the Council response to the Scottish Government consultation on a) New National Parks in Scotland Appraisal Framework (**Appendix 1**); and b) Nomination process and draft appraisal framework (**Appendix 2**).
- 1.2 This paper also asks Members to consider whether the Council should promote the pre-registration phase and the governance procedure for supporting any forthcoming National Park nominations as outlined in section 7.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. **Homologate** the response to the New National Parks in Scotland Appraisal Framework and the Nomination Process and Draft Appraisal Framework;
 - ii. **Agree** that the Council promotes the pre-registration process within Highland (as per 7.1); and
 - iii. **Agree** the governance procedure for the Council to provide support to nominations for National Park designation as outlined in paragraph 7.2.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – no significant resource issues are expected at this stage.
- 3.2 **Legal** – no significant legal issues are expected at this stage. However, a consultation on changes to the overarching National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 are expected in due course, as is consultation on the forthcoming Natural Environment Bill which may also have implications for the legal framework governing National Parks.

- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** – Scottish Government are seeking nominations for a new National Park from within local communities and it is for local groups and organisations, which could include a Local Authority, to submit a nomination for their area.
National Parks can bring significant benefits and opportunities to an area, but it is for the local communities to explore whether these may outweigh any potential disadvantages.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – National Parks play an important role in tackling the climate and ecological crisis and a new National Park will need to help restore nature, tackle climate change, promote sustainable land use and support public and community wellbeing.
- 3.5 **Risk** – Scottish Government have committed to designating at least one new National Park by 2026 and the Highland Council area contains several areas that could develop strong nominations. At this stage we are unsure what the implications may be for the Highland Council should a Highland area be selected. Should this arise, detailed discussions with Scottish Government regarding possible implications will take place.
- 3.6 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – No implications.
- 3.7 **Gaelic** – As a Scottish Government consultation it is expected that appropriate use of Gaelic in line with Scottish Government policy will be implemented throughout.

4 Background

- 4.1 Scottish Government have committed to designating at least one new National Park in Scotland by the end of this Parliamentary session in 2026.

4.2 Previous consultation

In Spring 2022, the Scottish Government launched a public consultation on the future for National Parks in Scotland. It sought views and ideas on the role that National Parks can play in helping to restore nature, tackle climate change, promote sustainable land use and support public and community wellbeing

In Autumn 2022, NatureScot took forward further public consultation on the role and approach of National Parks in Scotland and how new National Parks should be selected, including criteria and components against which nominations should be appraised. Following a Members' workshop on 7 December 2022, during which the consultation was considered in detail, a response incorporating Member's views was submitted on 14 December 2022.

4.3 Current consultation

As part of Scottish Government's New National Parks in Scotland consultation, Scottish Government is currently consulting on a) **the Appraisal Framework** and b) **the Nomination Process and draft Appraisal Framework**. Although two separate documents, both are part of the same consultation with one consultation response required.

The Appraisal Framework includes the finalised draft selection criteria and components which will support the assessment of nominations for new National Park designations.

The appraisal framework, once finalised, will be used to appraise all nominations that are received for new National Parks. The draft criteria and components have been refined from a previous consultation and reflect comments made during the Member's workshop held at the end of last year.

The nomination process and draft appraisal framework outlines the timeline for the nomination process, support available for nominating groups, the draft appraisal process predicated on the draft criteria and components being consulted on as part of the Appraisal Framework and the proposed nomination form.

The consultation deadline was 4 August 2023, and a *draft* Council response has been submitted. However, it has been agreed with Scottish Government that, following this committee, if there are any significant changes or additions, we can submit a final version that takes account of Member's views.

4.4 **Future consultation**

Later this summer there will be further consultation on changes proposed to the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, focused on amendments to the purpose, aims and governance of National Parks. It is understood that this consultation is likely to be rolled into the wider consultation on the forthcoming Natural Environment Bill.

5 **Nominations and appraisal process**

- 5.1 The nominations and appraisal process is set out below. We are now at Stage 1 in the process where Scottish Government are inviting individuals, groups or organisations to register their interest in submitting a nomination:-
1. Register of interest – nominating groups will be invited to register their interest in bringing forward a nomination. This will enable the Scottish Government to provide interested parties with information and updates in advance of, and during, the nomination window.
 2. Scottish Government will publish the finalised appraisal framework.
 3. Scottish Government will launch the nominations process and will set out its offer of support to nominating groups – expected in October.
 4. Nomination window (5 months: October 2023 – February 2024).
 5. Deadline for nominations.
 6. Appraisal of nominations and report produced.
 7. Decision and confirmation by Scottish Ministers of nomination(s) to be progressed as 'National Park proposal(s).'
- 5.2 It is important to note that consideration regarding what powers and governance procedures may be applicable or appropriate for a nominated area will not be considered until Stage 7 once Scottish Ministers have confirmed which nomination/s are to be progressed. At this point it is understood that there will be detailed discussion with the relevant local authority regarding its role and that of the National Park.
- 5.3 It is known that a number of groups from across Scotland are in the process of preparing their nominations, including for areas of the Western Isles, Dumfries & Galloway and the Borders. In these cases the relevant local authority is understood to be actively engaging with the nominating group/s, along with other key stakeholders including the local enterprise.

- 5.4 Whilst the appraisal process enables the Council to decide how involved it wishes to be in any nomination, it is important to note that Highland has a different and more complex challenge than most. Unlike other Council areas that have a single area being put forward for nomination, Highland *may* see multiple nominations. This means the Council may be approached to offer support to multiple areas. Conversely, it may be the case that a Highland area could produce a very strong bid but lacks an obvious existing group or organisation to take a lead role around which other stakeholders can coalesce.
- 5.5 It should be noted that a coalition of local groups in Lochaber are intending to pre-register and will be preparing a nomination centred on the Glen Nevis/Glen Coe/Glen Etive area.

6 Response to New National Parks in Scotland Appraisal Framework and Nomination process & draft appraisal framework

- 6.1 This consultation presents a set of criteria and components against which nominations for new National Parks will be appraised. The criteria and components share many similarities with those presented in the consultation at the end of 2022 but have been refined, addressing the issues and concerns raised by Members during the workshop.

The components and criteria are considered to encapsulate the many and varied qualities any new National Park may be expected to have and as such we agree that all seven draft criteria and related components are suitable for Scottish Government to assess a nomination for a new National Park in Scotland.

- 6.2 A number of additional comments have been made regarding criterion 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. The importance of the availability and affordability of housing has been raised as a particular issue with a new component being suggested for Criterion 7 to ask nominating bodies to consider how the issue of housing may be addressed.
- 6.3 Once finalised, the appraisal framework will include details of how each criterion will be scored. **Question 15** asks for any comments about how the selection criteria should be scored. All the criteria are of importance, and all will need to be considered carefully and in detail by Scottish Government when assessing nominations. Whilst it is difficult to apply a specific ranking or order to the criteria, the following should, on balance, be weighted more heavily:-

Criterion 1 (is the area of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage) is of fundamental importance; if an area is to be nominated as a National Park it is this criterion that fundamentally underpins the designation.

Local support is vital to any nomination and the successful implementation of the designation and so it is suggested that *Criterion 6 (is there sufficient evidence of local support for this proposal)* should be considered second.

Criterion 7 considers what benefits designation would bring to a range of strategic priorities, including nature restoration, climate mitigation, green investment, skills and jobs and nature-friendly farming. Any new National Park should bring substantive benefits and opportunities for local communities, with strong community representation on the Board and with clear routes and mechanisms for local communities to input into decision making. As such it is suggested that this criterion should be scored third.

Whilst the remaining criteria are all considered of equal importance/weighting particular attention has been drawn to the importance of Criteria 3: Component 4 (sustainable development and community wellbeing) and Criteria 4: Component 3 (transport infrastructure).

- 6.4 **Question 16** asks for any comments on the nominations process and draft appraisal framework. Whilst it is proposed that Council agree with the nomination process it should also recognise that for groups wishing to submit a nomination but have not yet undertaken any preliminary work, timescales are tight, and the scale and scope of any resources/assistance being made available is currently unclear. There are a number of areas across Scotland that have already undertaken significant preliminary work and have amassed local and political support and evidence to support their nominations. Groups wishing to nominate an area in Highland will have less time to develop their bid.

It is understood that NatureScot will be pulling together a package (partly dependent on the number of groups that pre-register) which may include funding in time for the launch of the nominations process in October 2023 (closing February 2024).

7 Other Issues

- 7.1 *Does the Council want to do more to promote the pre-registration process to local communities?*

Individuals, groups or organisations considering making a proposal are now being invited to pre-register their interest in submitting a nomination. Pre-registration will enable interested parties to be updated by Scottish Government on important information, key dates and communications and to enable Scottish Government to contact interested parties about the offer of support that will be made available during the nomination process. Although there is no requirement to register interest in order to submit a nomination there are clearly benefits in doing so, especially in relation to being made aware of support.

Pre-registration has not been widely promoted or publicised by Scottish Government or NatureScot. Although groups that are already organised and engaged in the process will likely be aware of pre-registration, it is probable that areas/groups that are not yet fully organised will not be aware.

We would propose a series of media/press releases to alert communities to this stage in the process, and if communities/groups/organisations are interested in putting forward a nomination to start gathering support and evidence as soon as practicable.

- 7.2 *What process should the Council follow to demonstrate/evidence support for a nomination?*

The draft selection criteria asks that nominating groups demonstrate, with evidence, the level of support for the nomination from the local authority. Whilst nominations can proceed without local authority support, this may disadvantage the bid.

It is proposed that all nominations seeking Council support will be subject to a simplified assessment process by officers to ensure that the nomination does not raise any significant concerns or issues. Nominations will be discussed with local area Members at the earliest opportunity.

It is acknowledged that the Council will have no control over when a nominating group will approach the Council for support and the timescales are such that it is possible that a suitable Committee may not be available. In order of preference and dependent on Committee availability, it is therefore proposed that all nominations seeking Council support will be brought to:-

1. Highland Council or Economy & Infrastructure Committee;
2. Local Area Committee; or
3. Where no Committee is available, and following discussion with local area Members, delegated authority with approval of the Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee and the Chief Executive.

Designation: Interim Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment

Date: 18 July 2023

Author: Andrew Puls, Environment Team Leader

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 - New National Parks in Scotland Appraisal Framework May 2023: Consultation Response
Appendix 2 - New National Parks in Scotland Nomination Process and Draft Appraisal Framework May 2023

Appendix 1

New National Parks in Scotland Appraisal Framework

Consultation Paper

May 2023

Contents

Ministerial Foreword	3
1. Introduction	4
1.1. The nature and climate emergency	4
1.2. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the role of National Parks	4
1.3. Consultation background	5
2. Consultation questions	7
2.1. Questions	7
2.2. Responding to this consultation	19
2.3. Handling your response	19
2.4. Next steps in the process	20
2.5. Comments and complaints	20
Annex A: Respondent Information Form	22

Ministerial Foreword



The Scottish Government has committed to designating at least one new National Park in Scotland by the end of this Parliamentary session in 2026. As Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity, I am delighted to be consulting with you on how nominations for new National Parks should be appraised.

It is 20 years since **Scotland's first two National Parks were created.**

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs and the Cairngorms are home to some of our most iconic scenery, outstanding nature and magnificent landscapes. They each work hard to preserve, restore and promote our natural and cultural heritage. They promote responsible access to nature and they support the development of sustainable communities whilst attracting millions of visitors annually. It is clear that they **have become jewels in Scotland's crown** and now is the time to add to them.

Last year we consulted widely on the future of National Parks in Scotland and I am very grateful to everyone who took part in that process. Thank you for sharing your views, insights and ideas. These consultations have shown that many people want to see new National Parks in Scotland. They have also highlighted the important leadership role of our National Parks in tackling the interlinked crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, whilst also welcoming visitors and supporting local communities and businesses.

This Autumn we will launch the nominations process for new National Parks. I am delighted that several areas have put themselves forward as candidates for National Park status and I hope that we will receive nominations from across Scotland. In order to determine the area or areas to be taken forward for designation, we have developed a draft appraisal framework with proposed criteria for new National Parks in Scotland.

We want to ensure that the nominations and appraisal process is open, fair and transparent. That is why we are presenting the appraisal framework in draft, so that you have an opportunity to give us your views and feedback before it is finalised.

I would encourage everyone to participate in this consultation to ensure your views are heard. Your responses will help us to refine the broad criteria and finalise the appraisal framework, paving the way for this historic expansion of **Scotland's** National Parks.

Lorna Slater MSP

Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity

1 Introduction

1.1. The nature and climate emergency

There is increasing global consensus around the urgent need to address the interlinked crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. The natural environment underpins our economy and our society. It affects our jobs, our health, the food we eat and the water we drink. It supports food production and security and provides the blueprint for many modern medicines. Healthy biodiversity prevents soil erosion, purifies water and helps prevent and mitigate flooding. Nature also contributes to our wellbeing, providing recreation, relaxation and a sense of place. Sadly, Scotland has seen a decline in its biodiversity. The State of Nature Report for Scotland **shows an average decline in the abundance and the distribution of Scotland's species over recent decades.**

1.2. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the role of National Parks

The draft [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy](#) **sets out Scotland's** ambition to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and to restore and regenerate biodiversity across our land, freshwater and seas by 2045. The strategy also sets out the most urgent priority actions which are required to put us on track to become nature positive by 2030. One of these priority actions is the designation of at least one new National Park in Scotland by 2026. The strategy also highlights the important leadership role of our National Parks in halting and reversing biodiversity loss and mitigating climate change.

Scotland's National Parks are more important now than ever before. Working with partners and their local communities, they can be exemplars in their work to protect and restore nature. They can develop and test nature based solutions – such as restoring peatland and expanding woodland – in order to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change in a way that is fair and inclusive to those living and working in their areas. They can help to encourage nature-friendly farming, forestry and marine use. They can support sustainable tourism and visitor management. They can create new employment opportunities and support sustainable growth of the local economy by promoting green skills and jobs. And they can help to generate and channel inward investment in the **area's precious natural resources.**

1.3. Consultation background

In Spring 2022, the Scottish Government launched a public consultation on the future for [National Parks in Scotland](#). This was the start of a national discussion to find out what people value most about Scotland's National Parks. It sought views and ideas on the role that National Parks can play in helping to restore nature, tackle climate change, promote sustainable land use and support public and community wellbeing.

The Scottish Government subsequently commissioned NatureScot to take forward further public consultations and provide advice on the role and approach of National Parks in Scotland and how new National Parks should be selected. NatureScot's [Report](#) was published in February 2023 and, based on the consultation responses that were received, it has informed the development of a draft appraisal framework and selection criteria for new National Parks. A Strategic Environmental Assessment is being carried out and will be published in the summer.

1.4 Consultation overview

What are we asking of you?

The Scottish Government has produced an [Appraisal Framework](#) to support the assessment of nominations for new National Park designations. This consultation is seeking your views and comments on this Appraisal Framework and the selection criteria for new National Parks.

We recommend reading the Appraisal Framework before submitting your responses to this consultation. This framework, once finalised, will be used to appraise all nominations that we receive for new National Parks.

Why your views are important

The Scottish Government wants to ensure that the nominations and appraisal process for new National Parks open, fair and transparent. That is why your views matter – we want to ensure that you have an opportunity to comment on the draft framework and the selection criteria before they are finalised.

How long will the consultation be open for?

The consultation is open from 11 May 2023 and will close on 4 August 2023. The Scottish Government intend to produce an analysis of responses during the Autumn of 2023.

What will the consultation cover?

The main aspects of this consultation are

Appraisal framework

Proposed criteria for new National Parks

- Nomination form

2. Consultation questions

Respondents should take into consideration the information provided in this document alongside any knowledge or personal experiences that could be relevant. All opinions are welcome.

You are invited to answer all the questions. However, if you are unable to answer any question then please feel free to skip and move on to the next.

2.1. Questions

New National Parks appraisal framework and selection criteria

Section 4 of the draft appraisal framework sets out the nominations process for new National Parks and the proposed criteria against which nominations will be appraised.

The following questions seek your views on these criteria and the proposed components of each criterion.

Criterion 1 - outstanding national importance

Is the area of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage?	Component 1 Is the proposed area of outstanding national importance due to its natural heritage, including biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes?
	Component 2 Is the proposed area of outstanding national importance due to the area's cultural heritage, including the historic environment?

Question 1

Do you agree that 'outstanding national importance' should be a criterion for assessing nominations for new National Parks?

Agree Disagree Don't know

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

Question 2

Do you agree with the components of criterion 1 (outstanding national importance)?

Component 1

Agree **Disagree** **Don't know**

Component 2

Agree **Disagree** **Don't know**

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

Criterion 2 - size, character and coherence

<p>Does the area have a distinctive character and a coherent identity? Is the proposed area of a sufficient size to justify integrated management as a National Park?</p>	<p>Component 1 Does the proposed area have a distinctive character and coherent identity?</p>
	<p>Component 2 Is the proposed area of a sufficient size to warrant integrated management as a National Park?</p>

Question 3

Do you agree that 'size, character and coherence' should be a criterion for assessing nominations for new National Parks?

Agree Disagree Don't know

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

Question 4

Do you agree with the components of criterion 2 (size, character and coherence)?

Component 1 Agree Disagree Don't know

Component 2 Agree Disagree Don't know

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

Criterion 3 - meeting the special needs of the area

How would designating the area as a National Park meet the special needs of the area? What difference would National Park designation make to the area for nature restoration, cultural heritage, sustainable use of natural resources, public enjoyment and sustainable communities?	Component 1 How would National Park designation support the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage and the historic environment?
	Component 2 How would National Park designation support nature recovery and restoration in the area, including ecosystem restoration, protection and recovery of vulnerable and important species and wildlife management?
	Component 3 How would National Park designation help to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the area by Scotland's people?
	Component 4 How would National Park designation support the sustainable development and well-being of local communities?
	Component 5 How would National Park designation support the sustainable use of the area's natural resources and how it would make a significant contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation?

Question 5

Do you agree that 'meeting the special needs of the area' should be a criterion for assessing nominations for new National Parks?

Agree Disagree Don't know

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

Question 6

Do you agree with the components of criterion 3 (meeting the special needs of the area)?

Component 1 **Agree** **Disagree** **Don't know**

Component 2 **Agree** **Disagree** **Don't know**

Component 3 **Agree** **Disagree** **Don't know**

Component 4 **Agree** **Disagree** **Don't know**

Component 5 **Agree** **Disagree** **Don't know**

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

Component 4 is a particularly important consideration, especially in relation to the availability and affordability of housing and access to high quality transport infrastructure. A new National Park should not prevent development, but should be a catalyst for high quality communities and sustainable development that takes account of the area's unique circumstances, whether they be environmental, social or economic. Whilst we recognize that all of the above components would be useful indicators of the special needs of an area there is potential for some to conflict with one another. Scottish Government will need to consider how any resulting conflicts will be assessed, avoided or otherwise mitigated.

Criterion 4 - visitor management and experience

How would designating the area as a National Park support visitor management and the area's offer for education, recreation and enjoyment by all of Scotland's people?	Component 1 How would National Park designation enhance opportunities for enjoyment, recreation and understanding of the area's natural and cultural heritage?
	Component 2 How would National Park designation support visitor management in the area?
	Component 3 How could National Park designation support current and potential future transport infrastructure in and around the proposed area?
	Component 4 How could National Park designation support access to nature for Scotland's people?

Question 7

Do you agree that 'visitor management and experience' should be a criterion for assessing nominations for new National Parks?

Agree Disagree Don't know

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

Question 8

Do you agree with the components of criterion 4 (visitor management and experience)?

Component 1 Agree Disagree Don't know

Component 2 Agree Disagree Don't know

Component 3 Agree Disagree Don't know

Component 4

Agree Disagree Don't know

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

We welcome the inclusion of Component 2. Visitor management, a significant growth in tourism and visitor pressure/inadequate infrastructure is currently a significant challenge faced by many communities within Highland, including and most acutely in those areas that may seek National Park status.

Component 3 is of particular and significant strategic importance to the success of a National Park both for local populations and for visitors. Without the successful integration of an effective transport system both within and around a new National Park, the success of many of the other benefits listed will either not be maximized or will not be realized.

Criterion 5 – added value

Why is the investment required to create and operate a new National Park for this area justified?	Component 1 How would the benefits of a National Park in the area justify the investment required?
	Component 2 What is the added value that National Park designation would bring to the area?

Question 9

Do you agree that ‘added value’ should be a criterion for assessing nominations for new National Parks?

Agree Disagree Don't know

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

Many of Highland's most important areas for nature and landscape have not seen significant investment in habitat/species management or visitor management more generally. It is unlikely that this position will change without special status/national designation and additional /existing resources prioritized accordingly.

Question 10

Do you agree with the components of criterion 5 (added value)?

Component 1 Agree Disagree Don't know

Component 2 Agree Disagree Don't know

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

Criterion 6 - local support

Is there sufficient evidence of local support for this proposal?	Component 1 What level of local support (with evidence) is there from local interests (community bodies, landowners and managers, businesses, third sector organisations, public bodies etc).
	Component 2 What level of support (with evidence) is there from the local authority/authorities in the area?

Question 11

Do you agree that 'local support' should be a criterion for assessing nominations for new National Parks?

Agree Disagree Don't know

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

In relation to Component 2, further guidance would be welcome with regard to the extent and type of evidence that should be provided to local authorities.

Question 12

Do you agree with the components of criterion 6 (local support)?

Component 1 Agree Disagree Don't know

Component 2 Agree Disagree Don't know

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

We agree with Component 1, but would emphasize the importance of local support across a wide swathe of the local community that captures the depth and breadth of stakeholders that would be affected by such a decision.

With regard to Component 2, the Council will need to consider how and on what basis support is provided, and whether any support given should be qualified.

Criterion 7 - strategic contribution

Would the designation of the area bring benefits to Scotland as a whole and contribute to strategic priorities including nature restoration, climate mitigation and adaptation action, green investment, skills and jobs and nature friendly farming?	Component 1 How could National Park designation support the area's leadership on climate change mitigation and adaptation in a way that is fair and inclusive for local communities?
	Component 2 How could National Park designation support the area's contribution to commitments within the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, including ecosystem restoration, protection and recovery of vulnerable species, wildlife management, nature friendly farming, the expansion of areas that are protected for nature and the development of nature networks?
	Component 3 How could designation as a National Park support sustainable investment in the area's natural capital?
	Component 4 How could designation as a National Park support the development of green skills and jobs in the area?
	Component 5 How could designation as a National Park complement the contribution that Scotland's existing National Parks make to tackling the nature and biodiversity crises?

Question 13

Do you agree that 'strategic contribution' should be a criterion for assessing nominations for new National Parks?

Agree Disagree Don't know

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

Question 14

Do you agree with the components of criterion 7 (strategic importance)?

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Component 1 | Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Component 2 | Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Component 3 | Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Component 4 | Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Component 5 | Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you disagree, please give reasons for your answer.

Any new National Park should bring substantive benefits and opportunities for local communities. Strong community representation should be present on the Board with clear routes and mechanisms for local communities to input into decision making. Particular importance should be placed on Component 4 to ensure a just transition.

In addition, we would like to see an additional Component included regarding how a National Park could support the availability and affordability of housing. This is an issue that is likely to be raised by stakeholders in discussion around any nomination for a new National Park. Such a Component could be worded: "how could designation as a National Park support the provision of local affordable housing".

Question 15

Once finalised, the appraisal framework will include details of how each criterion will be scored. This will be published ahead of the nominations process being launched. Do you have any comments that you would like to make about how the selection criteria should be scored?

All the criteria are clearly of importance and reflect the wide range of considerations when determining whether an area should be considered for National Park designation. There will be interplay and overlap between many of the criteria and all will need to be considered carefully and in detail by Scottish Government when assessing nominations.

The Council would emphasize the importance of Criterion 1 as being of fundamental importance if an area is to be nominated as a National Park as it is this criterion that underpins the purpose of the designation.

Thereafter, evidence of local support (both from local communities and the Local Authority) is vital to any nomination and the successful implementation of the designation. Therefore, Criterion 6 should be considered second.

Criterion 7 considers what benefits designation would bring to a range of strategic priorities, including nature restoration, climate mitigation, green investment, skills and jobs and nature-friendly farming. Any new National Park should be positioned to demonstrate leadership in tackling the climate and nature crises but should also – and just as importantly – bring substantive benefits and opportunities for local communities in terms of investment, housing, improved transport, and employment. As such this criterion should be scored third.

With Criteria 3, component 4 is of particular importance, and within Criteria 4, component 3 is essential for the successful operation of a National Park, both for local populations and visitors. Accordingly both should be afforded a higher weighting when scoring.

The remaining criteria, all of which are of considerable importance for assessing nominations, are considered of equal importance/weighting.

Question 16

Do you have any other comments that you would like to make about the draft appraisal framework and nominations process for new National Parks?

Whilst the Council agree with the draft appraisal framework and nomination process, it should recognise that for groups wishing to submit a nomination but have not yet undertaken any preliminary work, timescales are tight and the scale and scope of any resources/assistance being made available is currently unclear. There are a number of areas across Scotland that have already undertaken significant preliminary work and have amassed local and political support and evidence to support their nominations. Local groups wishing to nominate an area in Highland will have less time to develop their bid. In order for the process to be seen as just this issue should be taken into consideration.

2.2. Responding to this consultation

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation hub [Citizens Space](#). You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of 4 August 2023.

If you are unable to respond using our consultation hub, please complete the Respondent Information Form and send it to:

New National Parks Team - Nature Division
The Scottish Government
Area 3H South
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

NationalParks@gov.scot

2.3. Handling your response

If you respond using the consultation hub, you will be directed to the About You page before submitting your response. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form included in this document.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our [privacy policy](#).

2.4. Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at [Citizen Space](#). If you use the consultation hub to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so. An analysis report will be made available.

2.5. Comments and complaints

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to the contact address above or at NationalParks@gov.scot Scottish Government consultation process

Consultation is an essential part of the policy-making process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work.

You can find all of our consultations online at [Citizen Space](#). Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision-making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis for every consultation. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy

- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.

Annex A: Respondent Information Form

New National Park Evaluation Framework

Please Note this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:
<https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- Individual
- Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Highland Council

Phone number

01463702505

Address

Highland Council Headquarters
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness

Postcode

IV3 5NX

Email Address

Andrew.puls@highland.gov.uk

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

- Publish response with name
- Publish response only (without name)
- Do not publish response

Information for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but

we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes No



© Crown copyright 2023

CCL

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80525-839-1 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, May 2023

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1292162 (05/23)

www.gov.scot

Appendix 2

New National Parks in Scotland

Nomination process and draft appraisal framework

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Background	3
2.1 Process for selecting and designating new National Parks	4
3. Nominations process	6
3.1 Timeline.....	6
3.2 Format.....	7
3.3 Submission.....	7
4. Appraisal	9
4.1 Guidance notes for areas submitting nominations for new National Park status	10
4.2 Appraisal Framework	13
4.3 Appraisal Process	16
Annex A – Nomination Form	17
Annex B – New National Park(s) Project – Timeline and Process	24

1. Introduction

The Scottish Government has committed to designating at least one new National Park in Scotland by Spring 2026, provided relevant legal conditions can be met. In order to ensure an open and transparent process, nominations for National Park status will be appraised based on the criteria set out in Section 4.

This document has been produced to support individuals, groups or organisations submitting proposals for a new National Park designation.

2. Background

“It is almost two decades since Scotland’s first National Parks in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs and the Cairngorms were established. Both are home to some of the country’s most outstanding scenery, are internationally important areas for nature and receive millions of visitors each year. They work hard to tackle the biodiversity and climate crisis, help manage facilities for visitors, promote responsible access and develop sustainable communities. They have become jewels in Scotland’s crown, and now is the time to add to them”

Lorna Slater, Biodiversity Minister

National discussion on the future of National Parks

In 2022, The Scottish Government launched a public consultation¹ on the future for National Parks in Scotland. This consultation sought views and ideas on the role that National Parks can play in helping to restore nature, tackle climate change, promote sustainable land use and support public and community wellbeing.

Following this, NatureScot was asked to lead a further public consultation in order to provide advice to Scottish Ministers². This has involved engaging with a wide range of stakeholders. NatureScot’s advice includes:

- recommendations for amendments to existing legislation regarding the role of National Parks in Scotland.
- recommendations for the nomination process and selection criteria for new National Parks in Scotland.

This document relates to the process for the nomination and selection of new National Park(s) in Scotland.

The Scottish Government is giving thorough consideration to the advice received from NatureScot and the views expressed by consultees about possible changes to the powers and functions of National Parks in Scotland. Any proposals for change will be presented for further public consultation later this year. A Strategic

¹ [The Future for National Parks in Scotland - Scottish Government - Citizen Space \(consult.gov.scot\)](https://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/national-parks)

² [National Parks Advice to Ministers - February 2023 | NatureScot](https://www.naturescot.gov.uk/national-parks-advice-to-ministers-february-2023)

Environmental Assessment will be undertaken and published in future consultations related to this project.

2.1 Process for selecting and designating new National Parks

Nominations and appraisal

The Scottish Government is aware of several communities or groups which have expressed interest in putting their area forward for National Park status. A fair and transparent nomination process is therefore required to determine the area or areas to be taken forward to designation and an appraisal framework will be used to help assess nominations and identify the candidate area(s) (the 'National Park proposals') to be progressed under the [National Park \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#).

NatureScot have provided advice to Ministers relating to the appraisal and selection process for new National Parks, recognising that although section 2 of the 2000 Act sets out the process for Scottish Ministers to make proposals for the designation of National Parks, there is no process in the legislation for the public to submit nominations for National Parks or for selecting which of those nominations will then be proposed as a National Park by Scottish Ministers.

The proposed nominations and appraisal process is set out below and in Image 1 contained in Annex B:

- Register of interest – nominating groups will be invited to register their interest in bringing forward a nomination. This will enable the Scottish Government to provide interested parties with information and updates in advance of, and during, the nomination window.
- Scottish Government will publish the finalised appraisal framework
- Scottish Government will launch the nominations process and will set out its offer of support to nominating groups
- Nomination window (5 months)
- Deadline for nominations
- Appraisal of nominations and report produced
- Decision and confirmation by Scottish Ministers of nomination(s) to be progressed as 'National Park proposal(s)'.

Pre-registration for nominating groups

Individuals, groups or organisations considering making a proposal are invited to register their interest in submitting a nomination as part of this process.

Registration will allow Scottish Government to update interested parties with any important information, key dates and communications throughout the process. It will also enable Scottish Government to contact interested parties about the offer of support that will be made available during the nomination process.

In order to pre-register interest, nominating groups can contact NationalParks@gov.scot or by post (to New National Parks Team, Scottish Government, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ) including name, contact details and the name of the area you are interested in nominating. There is no requirement to register interest in order to submit a nomination. Nor does registration commit a group or organisation to submitting a nomination. Registration details will not be made public.

Reporter Investigation

Following the appraisal phase, subject to at least one nomination being selected to proceed as a National Park proposal, Ministers expect to appoint a reporter to undertake an investigation and report to them on the proposal(s). As outlined in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, it is anticipated that Ministers will require NatureScot to take on the role of reporter.

As outlined in section 3 of the Act, if Scottish Ministers require such an investigation and a report on the National Park proposal(s), there is a legal process that must be followed. The reporter is required to publicise the proposal, conduct the investigation including a public consultation and provide a recommendation to Ministers on the following to inform a Designation Order to be laid in the Scottish Parliament:

- (a) the area which it is proposed should be designated as a National Park,
- (b) the desirability of designating the area in question (with or without modifications) as a National Park,
- (c) the functions which it is proposed the National Park authority for the Park should exercise,
- (d) the likely annual costs and capital expenses of the authority in exercising its functions,
- (e) such other matters relating to the proposal as the requirement may specify.

The reporter's report will be published by Ministers and laid before Parliament upon completion.

Designation

Following the publication of the report on the National Park proposal(s), Scottish Ministers may decide to make a "designation order" following the process set out in the Act (Sections 6-7). This will include sending a copy of the draft designation order to every local authority within the proposed area, laying the proposed draft order before parliament and a further phase of public consultation on the proposed draft order.

3. Nominations process

3.1 Timeline

The timeline for the nomination process is set out below (final dates will be included in the table below at time of publication):

Process Stage	Description	Date
Registration of interest	<p>Individuals, groups or organisations considering making a proposal will be invited to register their interest.</p> <p>Registration will be open from 11 May 2023. There is no requirement to register interest in order to submit a nomination. Nor does registration commit a group or organisation to submitting a nomination. Registration details will not be made public.</p> <p>Registration will allow Scottish Government to update interested parties with any important information, key dates and communications throughout the process. It will also enable Scottish Government to contact interested parties about the offer of support that will be made available during the nomination process.</p> <p>Registration of interest can be completed before or during the nominations window by emailing NationalParks@gov.scot or by post to New National Parks Team, Scottish Government, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ.</p>	11 May 2023
Publish final appraisal framework and timeframes	<p>Final appraisal framework published following a period of consultation.</p> <p>The framework sets out the nominations process and selection criteria that proposals will be appraised against.</p> <p>This includes confirmed dates/durations for each stage of the process.</p>	
Launch nominations process (including support offering to nominating groups)	<p>The nomination window will formally commence – for a period of 5 months/20 weeks.</p> <p>The external organisation providing support will contact all nominating groups registered with Scottish Government and where individuals, groups or organisations have requested such support.</p>	

Process Stage	Description	Date
Nomination window (5 months)	The period during which individuals, groups and organisations will compile their proposals including the information required as set out in the appraisal framework.	
Deadline for nominations	Deadline for the submission of nominations to be received by Scottish Government.	
Screening and appraisal of nominations	All proposals will be appraised based on the criteria set out in the framework. The Scottish Government may request additional information from nominees. Appraisal report will be prepared for Ministers.	
Confirmation of nomination(s) to be progressed as 'National Park proposal(s)'	Scottish Government to announce the nomination(s) to be taken forward for designation as a National Park, subject to the findings of the statutory reporter process and relevant legal conditions being met.	

(This table will be replaced with a final and confirmed timeline following the consultation of the appraisal framework. This indicative table is included for information during the consultation phase).

Support to areas wishing to put forward a nomination

Subject to a successful open procurement exercise to appoint an external organisation with the relevant expertise, a non-financial support offering will be made available to nominating groups. Final details of this support offering will be confirmed before the nomination window commences and it will be designed to enable and support groups in the planning, and development of their nominations, for example by helping to arrange and host local community discussions and workshops.

3.2 Format

The Scottish Government recognises that proposals may be based on a wide range of information and evidence. Where possible, electronic files are requested and should be provided in PDF format.

3.3 Submission

Proposals must be received by the deadline (date to be confirmed following consultation).

These can be submitted by the following means:

Email: NationalParks@gov.scot

Post: New National Parks Team
Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

4. Appraisal

The appraisal of nominations for new National Park(s) will be based on:

- The nomination form which all areas wishing to submit a nomination for National Park status will be asked to complete by the deadline.
- The appraisal framework that will be used to assess proposals.

General guidance:

- All sections of the nomination form must be completed.
- Maximum word counts for each of the sections of the nominations form have been included in the appraisal framework and should be adhered to.
- While groups collaborating to combine resources/knowledge is to be encouraged, all nominations will be considered as part of the appraisal process.
- A clear message from the public consultation was the need to ensure the nomination process is clear, simple and as open as possible. As a result, there is no requirement to provide detailed plans about what a National Park would seek to do in a particular area beyond the information that is requested in the nomination form. A more detailed consideration of the role, powers and functions of a National Park proposal would form part of the reporter investigation if a nomination is taken forward for designation.
- Where required, Scottish Government officials may contact nominating groups during the appraisal phase where information is required to support the appraisal of nominations.
- To ensure transparency and fairness, any questions or clarifications submitted to the Scottish Government during the nomination window will be made available publicly along with the response provided.
- The table below sets out the questions being asked of nominating groups. This includes guidance on the information and level of detail required at this stage.
- Nominations must be submitted using the Nominations Form (Annex A).

4.1 Guidance notes for areas submitting nominations for new National Park status

Question	Guidance for nominations	Maximum word count
1. What is the area being nominated for National Park designation?	<p>Provide a name and simple written description of the potential area (or options for the area) including its approximate size and its main settlements. A map image can also be provided for this section to support this.</p> <p>Include what local authority area(s) the nomination is within.</p>	500 words
2. Why does the area nominated merit National Park status?	<p>Provide a non-technical description of what is special about the area, why it merits designation as a National Park and how National Park status would help to meet the special needs of the area.</p> <p>Your description should explain how the area meets the conditions for National Parks as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the area is of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage • That the area has a distinctive character and coherent identity • That designating the area as a National Park would meet the special needs of the area and would be the best means of ensuring that the National Park aims are collectively achieved in relation to the area in a coordinated way 	2000 words

Question	Guidance for nominations	Maximum word count
<p>3. What difference would designation as a National Park make for both nature and people? What is the strategic contribution that a National Park in this area could make?</p>	<p>Outline the benefits and added value that could be achieved by the area becoming a National Park, describing the opportunities for nature recovery, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable and progressive land use and support to the area's communities in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible. These could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complementing and adding to the strategic contribution of Scotland's existing National Parks; • positive action for the restoration and regeneration of biodiversity and the protection of vulnerable and important species; • reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change; • encouraging nature-friendly farming, forestry and marine use; • generating inward investment in the area's natural capital and the growth of green skills and jobs; and • supporting the development of a green wellbeing economy. 	<p>3000 words</p>
<p>4. How would designating the area as a National Park support visitor management and the area's offer for education, recreation and enjoyment by all of Scotland's people?</p>	<p>Outline the benefits, opportunities and challenges including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for enjoyment, recreation and understanding of the area's natural and cultural heritage; • How National Park designation could support visitor management in the area; • How National Park designation could support current and potential future transport infrastructure in the area; • How National Park designation could support access to nature for Scotland's people. 	<p>2000 words</p>

Question	Guidance for nominations	Maximum word count
5. Who has been involved in the development of this nomination?	<p>Provide the name of the lead person, group or organisation in the nominated area, including contact details.</p> <p>Provide a list of who has been involved in developing the nomination (e.g. local landowners and managers, businesses, community representatives, young people and seldom heard groups as well as any support from local authorities and public bodies). Provide a summary of the issues and opportunities that have been raised. Personal details must only be shared where the individual has granted permission to do so in line with data protection processes.</p> <p>Provide details of any local community engagement activities undertaken to discuss, consider or measure/gain support for the nomination and any evidence of local/stakeholder support for the nomination where available.</p> <p>Where applicable, details of any surveys or assessment of local support undertaken should also be provided here. This should not include any respondents' personal information.</p> <p>Any conflicts of interest that nominating groups are aware of should also be declared with supporting information/evidence.</p>	2000 words
6. Annexes	<p>Further material including simple maps, photographs, a list of relevant protected area designations and quantitative data can be included in separate annexes if this is considered relevant to the nomination. Any additional information provided should be clearly linked to one of the four questions above.</p>	

4.2 Appraisal Framework

The table below outlines the broad criteria against which nominations will be appraised, which will support the selection of National Park proposals to be taken forward for designation.

Criteria		Components
1. Outstanding national importance	Is the area of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage?	Is the proposed area of outstanding national importance due to its natural heritage, including its biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes?
		Is the proposed area of outstanding national importance due to its cultural heritage and historic environment?
2. Size, character and coherence	Does the area have a distinctive character and a coherent identity? Is the proposed area of a sufficient size to justify integrated management as a National Park?	Does the proposed area have a distinctive character and coherent identity?
		Is the proposed area of a sufficient size to warrant integrated management as a National Park?
3. Special needs of the area	How would designating the area as a National Park meet the special needs of the area? What difference would National Park designation make to the area for nature restoration, cultural heritage, sustainable use of natural resources, public enjoyment and sustainable communities?	How would National Park designation support the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage and the historic environment?
		How would National Park designation support nature recovery and restoration in the area, including ecosystem restoration, protection and recovery of vulnerable and important species and wildlife management?
		How would National Park designation help to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the area by Scotland's people?
		How would National Park designation support the sustainable development and well-being of local communities?
		How would National Park designation support the sustainable use of the area's natural resources and how it would make a significant contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation?

Criteria		Components
4. Visitor management and experience	How would designating the area as a National Park support visitor management and the area's offer for education, recreation and enjoyment by all of Scotland's people?	How would National Park designation enhance opportunities for enjoyment, recreation and understanding of the area's natural and cultural heritage?
		How would National Park designation support visitor management in the area?
		How could National Park designation support current and potential future transport infrastructure in and around the proposed area?
		How could National Park designation support access to nature for Scotland's people?
5. Added value	Why is the investment required to create and operate a new National Park for this area justified?	How would the benefits of designating a National Park in the area justify the investment required?
		What is the added value that National Park designation would bring to the area?
6. Local support	Is there sufficient evidence of local support for this proposal?	What level of local support (with evidence) is there from local interests (community bodies, landowners and managers, businesses, third sector organisations, public bodies etc.)
		What level of support (with evidence) is there from the local authority/authorities in the area?

Criteria		Components
7. Strategic contribution	Would the designation of the area bring benefits to Scotland as a whole and contribute to strategic priorities including nature restoration, climate action, green investment, skills and jobs and nature friendly farming?	How could National Park designation support the area's leadership on climate change mitigation and adaptation in a way that is fair and inclusive for local communities?
		How could National Park designation support the area's contribution to commitments within the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, including ecosystem restoration, protection and recovery of vulnerable species, wildlife management, nature friendly farming, the expansion of areas that are protected for nature and the development of nature networks?
		How could designation as a National Park support sustainable investment in the area's natural capital?
		How could designation as a National Park support the development of green skills and jobs in the area?
		How could designation as a National Park complement the contribution that Scotland's existing National Parks make to tackling the nature and biodiversity crises?

4.3 Appraisal Process

The appraisal framework will be used to help assess nominations for new National Parks.

Once finalised, the appraisal framework will include details of how each criterion will be scored. The final appraisal framework will be published ahead of nominations opening.

Following the appraisal of all nominations received, a summary report will be produced. This report will inform advice to Scottish Ministers on the area or areas to be progressed as National Park proposals, subject to legal conditions being met.

Where nominations do not succeed in being proposed for National Park designation, the Scottish Government may seek to contact nominating groups to discuss the contents of their nomination and any viable alternative options, particularly where there is the potential for nominating groups to make a significant contribution to nature restoration and climate change mitigation in their areas.

Annex A – Nomination Form

Nomination for New National Park – **[insert nomination group or area name]**

Submitted by	[Name]
On behalf of	[insert names of key groups, organisations and persons involved in the nomination]
Date submitted	[Date]

1. What is the area being nominated for National Park designation?

Please provide a name and simple written description of the potential area (or options for the area) including its approximate size and its main settlements. A map image can also be provided for this section to support this.

Include the local authority area(s) the nomination is within.

2. Why does the area nominated merit National Park status?

Please provide a non-technical description of what is special about the area, why it merits designation as a National Park and how National Park status would help to meet the special needs of the area. Your description should explain how the area meets the conditions for National Parks as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000:

- That the area is of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage;
- That the area has a distinctive character and coherent identity; and
- That designating the area as a National Park would meet the special needs of the area.

3. What difference would National Park designation make for both nature and people? What is the strategic contribution that a National Park in this area could make?

Outline the benefits and added value that could be achieved by the area becoming a National Park, describing the opportunities for nature recovery, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable and progressive land use and support to the area's communities in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible. These could include:

- complementing and adding to the strategic contribution of Scotland's existing National Parks;
- positive action for the restoration and regeneration of biodiversity and the protection of vulnerable and important species;
- reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change;
- encouraging nature-friendly farming, forestry and marine use;
- generating inward investment in the area's natural capital and the growth of green skills and jobs; and
- supporting the development of a green wellbeing economy.

4. How would designating the area as a National Park support visitor management and the area's offer for education, recreation and access to nature for all of Scotland's people?

Outline the benefits, opportunities and challenges including:

- Opportunities for enjoyment, recreation and understanding of the area's natural and cultural heritage;
- How National Park designation could support visitor management in the area;
- How National Park designation could support current and potential future transport infrastructure in the area;
- How National Park designation could support access to nature for Scotland's people.

5. Who has been involved in the development of this nomination?

Provide the name of the lead person, group or organisation in the nominated area, including contact details.

Provide a list of who has been involved in developing the nomination and details of any local community engagement activities undertaken to discuss, consider or measure/gain support for the nomination and any evidence of local/stakeholder support for the nomination where available.

Where applicable, details of any surveys or assessment of local support undertaken should also be provided here. Any conflicts of interest that nominating groups are aware of should also be declared with supporting information/evidence.

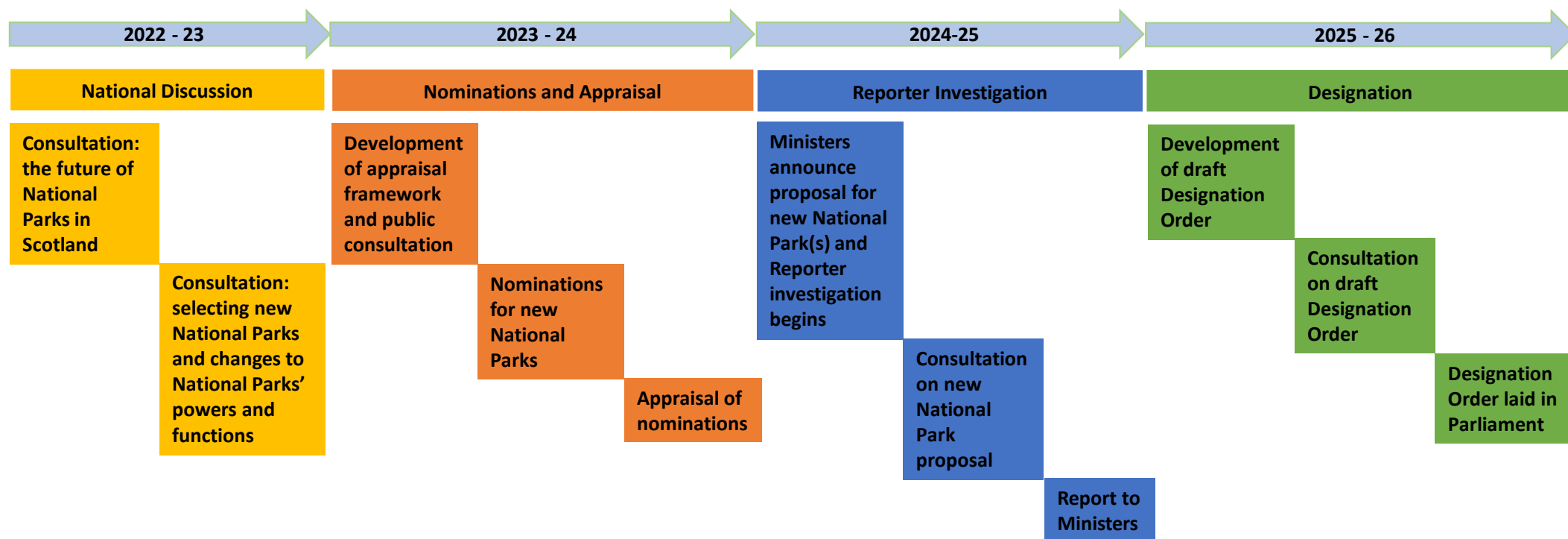
Nomination Form Annexes/Attachments:

[Insert any annexes or attachments here]

Annex B – New National Park(s) Project – Timeline and Process

Image 1 shows a high level timeline of the process stages for the selection and designation of a new National Park(s).

Image 1





© Crown copyright 2023



This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80525-838-4 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, May 2023

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1292223 (05/23)

W W W . g o v . s c o t