

## SCOTLAND'S FIRST COASTAL AND MARINE NATIONAL PARK: A CONSULTATION

### Chapter 1 – The added value and benefits of a Coastal and Marine National Park

#### 1. *How could a Coastal and Marine National Park help communities develop in a more sustainable way and meet community aspirations?*

Public participation and community consultation will be key in decision making, and thus, meeting community aspirations and sustainable development. Benefits will include improved economic development and the provision of more job opportunities. This will also allow communities to take pride in their environment and in turn, take more responsibility for protecting and enhancing it. It could encourage more cohesion and strength within communities.

#### 2. *What problems could a Coastal and Marine National Park address?*

A Coastal and Marine National Park could address the following: -

- Conflicts of natural resource use;
- Addressing sectoral control of this environment and moving towards a more integrated approach. For example, learning from strategies already developed at a voluntary level such as those working towards Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM);
- A lack of job opportunities within the area;
- Lack of business opportunities;
- Poor economic growth;
- Lack of housing including affordable housing;
- Insufficient control and protection for natural and cultural heritage; and
- Lack of planning control in coastal and marine area.

#### 3. *Are there any other examples of benefits that a park could bring?*

Some further benefits may include: -

- More co-operation and animation in terms of the public promoting and enhancing their natural and cultural heritage;
- Encouraging a Territorial Approach; and
- Innovation and stimulation of new ideas.

# SCOTLAND'S FIRST COASTAL AND MARINE NATIONAL PARK: A CONSULTATION

## Chapter 2 – Selecting the location of Scotland's first Coastal and Marine National Park

1. *Comment on whether the final selection should be based on these factors, including how accessibility can best be considered.*

The factors used for selection are fair and should all be considered together. However, the overarching factor is sustainable development of the area selected where there will be benefits to all things environmental, social and economic in an integrated way.

Accessibility is also important so that as many people can be attracted to area as possible due to ease of access. This would mean that areas accessible from the mainland would be desirable with reasonably short trips from mainland to islands. Transport would, therefore, need to be considered. Some questions would need to be asked, for example, what modes of transport already exist; would current levels of transport need to be increased; would new modes of transport need to be introduced; and how would this impact on the environment? Plus, distance and accessibility in terms of infrastructure needs to be considered for potential visitors from the rest of the UK and internationally.

2. *Are there other factors that should also be considered when selecting the location (Rank the proposed criteria in order of preference)?*

Perhaps, the proximity of suggested locations to other designated sites such as Geoparks and National parks could be considered. Tourists to areas such as these may decide to continue on and visit the Coastal and Marine National Park.

All five criteria are important and it was difficult to rank in order of importance. However, the criteria that stood out as most important were firstly: -

- Outstanding national importance for natural heritage, or the combination of natural and cultural heritage; and
- Distinctive character and coherent identity.

Next in importance were the following: -

- Meet the special needs of the area and be the best means of ensuring that the National Park aims are collectively achieved in relation to the area in a co-ordinated way; and
- Make a significant contribution to the social and economic development of its communities.

Finally, next in importance was: -

- Area should be, or have the potential to be, generally accessible to the population of Scotland.

## SCOTLAND'S FIRST COASTAL AND MARINE NATIONAL PARK: A CONSULTATION

### 3. *Which area do you consider to be the strongest candidate as a Coastal and Marine National Park?*

After consideration of the all the suggested areas, the following shows the 10 areas ranked as follows (1 being most favourable while 10 being least favourable): -

1. Argyll Islands and Coast
2. Lochaber and South Skye
3. North Uist, Sound of Harris, Harris and South Lewis
4. Wester Ross
5. Solway
6. Moray Firth
7. Shetland (including Fair Isle)
8. South Uist, Sound of Barra and Barra
9. Orkney and Pentland Firth
10. Clyde

The top two locations (Argyll Islands and Coast, and Lochaber and South Skye) have a wide range of interest in terms of natural and cultural heritage. They also have a combination of accessible locations on the mainland, plus islands that are within a reasonable distance to the mainland.

*Do you agree that the strongest all round case can be made for Argyll Islands and Coast area and Ardnamurchan, Small Isles and South Skye Coast area? Would a combination of these two areas also be a strong candidate?*

After considering all locations, it was decided that Argyll Islands and Coast along with Lochaber and South Skye were the strongest candidates. Given that both areas overlap one another, it is suggested that both areas be amalgamated into one as long as, in terms of size, it could be managed effectively and efficiently.

*Any other views on the areas outlined or other areas not identified?*

None.

*What criteria would you use to set the landward and seaward boundaries of the Park?*

It is appreciated that it is difficult to set boundaries but agree with SNH's view to include coastal habitats and landscapes with a strong coastal character, and thus, include islands and peninsulas that depend heavily on the coastal and marine environment. Perhaps it would not be a case of establishing a blanket boundary for all areas, but allowing for each area's boundary to be established individually depending on what it has to offer. That is, to consider its individual characteristics and, therefore, establish what would be the most appropriate boundary for that particular area. In terms of seaward boundaries, it would appear that the Inshore Waters boundary of 6 nautical miles would involve fewer complications than going as far as 12 nautical miles, which would then involve engagement at UK and EU levels. This issue would therefore need to be considered. Another consideration for establishing boundaries, is the current debate on how an ecosystem approach to managing different areas as opposed to management of boundaries could be incorporated as part

## SCOTLAND'S FIRST COASTAL AND MARINE NATIONAL PARK: A CONSULTATION

of an EU Maritime Policy. It is agreed that further discussion is required on this subject including a need to consider how the Coastal and Marine National Park will fit in with EU Maritime Policy and ICZM in terms of managing boundaries.

### Chapter 3 – Functions, Powers and Governance

#### 1. *The Park Plan - What functions and powers would you wish a Park to have?*

It may be more appropriate for the Park to select option 1, which consists of the Planner and Enabler. This would allow the Park Authority to concentrate on planning and resolving issues, plus, getting involved with projects and research. This option, which has the least amount of powers and functions, would allow time to become established, and thus, provide an opportunity to grow and develop, increasing powers and functions over time.

#### 2. *Relationships with Town and Country Planning – Do you consider that planning control for the land component should remain with the local authority or should it be transferred to the Park Authority?*

It would be more appropriate for control of the land component to be transferred to the Park Authority. This would improve added value and efficiency. For example, it is possible that the Coastal and Marine National Park may cover more than one local authority, plus, agreements with the relevant authority may be difficult as a result of differences of opinions. Full planning authority would ensure clarity of role and consistency in terms of management of the Park.

#### 3. *Conservation and Recreation Management – Suggest potential functions of a Coastal and Marine National Park in this context.*

- To develop a plan or plans and management agreements for conservation of area, however, collection of baseline data of the marine environment would need to be conducted to establish what species and habitats are present and thus, establish what habitats require conserving. Marine Local Biodiversity Actions Plans could be incorporated or developed if not in existence.
- Work towards increased protection of area through further designations or lobbying for the strengthening of legislation.
- Develop plans that help to enhance the area in a sustainable way so that opportunities for recreation are created and promoted, and thus, encourage tourism and economic development. Also include improving access as per the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.
- Be proactive in terms of potential conflicts of resource use and develop procedures to assist in problem/conflict resolution.
- There is also a role for research, educating and informing.

## SCOTLAND'S FIRST COASTAL AND MARINE NATIONAL PARK: A CONSULTATION

- Monitor effects of the above plans and make changes where necessary.
4. *Do you think that the potential for zoning to form an element of the development and implementation of the Plan is sufficient or should other site-based protection measures be considered?*

Given that historically coastal zoning has been difficult to define, plan and manage due to the dynamic nature of the marine environment, zoning on its own may not be the best option in this context. In terms of site-based protection measures, it appears that these have not been fully tried and tested, therefore, it may be appropriate to develop these measure further in a bid to improve conservation and recreation management. Steps will, however, be required to provide the baseline data from which these site-based protection measures can be built.

5. *Should a Park Authority be given a last resort 'stop' power?*

It is agreed that a Park Authority should be given a last resort 'stop' power to ensure effective implementation of a Park Plan.

6. *Relationship with Inshore Fisheries Management – How can Inshore Fisheries Groups work with the Park Authority?*

It is agreed that the work of the Inshore Fisheries Groups should continue with the Park Authority being involved through the development of an advisory group. This will allow a joint working relationship with the Park Authority providing assistance when and where required.

7. *Relationships with Aquaculture – Do you agree with the proposed approach (option e) to managing aquaculture?*

Option 'e' appears practical by giving the Park Authority an appropriate level of involvement, while leaving room for change to roles and functions over time if required.

8. *Selecting the right model for the National Park Authority – Which approach do you prefer for the National Park Authority and why?*

It is agreed that the first option would be the best option initially, giving time for the Park Authority to build on experience and knowledge, while allowing for changes in the future to powers and functions.

## SCOTLAND'S FIRST COASTAL AND MARINE NATIONAL PARK: A CONSULTATION

9. *Comment on the option of a phased approach that provides for review at a later date.*

A phased approach appears a sensible approach allowing for new powers at times that are appropriate such as having adequate experience and resources. This would allow the Park Authority time to become established in line with the development of new policies and strategies such as an EU Maritime policy, ICZM and Marine Spatial Planning. In general, this would allow for improved efficiency in the Park Authority's role.

10. *Do you think the existing powers and functions provided in the Act are sufficient for a Coastal and Marine National Park Authority?*

Initial indications are that the Act does provide sufficient powers and functions given that it does allow ministers to modify functions and that the Park Plan can be reviewed at 5 year intervals. In general, the Act appears to allow powers, structures, functions and governance to be tailored to suit the needs of the area.

11. **Governance** – *Are the principles for establishing the Park Board the right ones for ensuring local and national views are taken into account, including the views of those using the area but who do not live there?*

The Act appears to be flexible in terms of targeting the appropriate key stakeholders for the Board of the National Park Authority. However, the size and dispersal range of the area will need to be considered along with the fairness of the representation.

12. *Do you have any other views on the Board and governance of the National Park Authority?*

None.

13. **Financial Implications** – *Comment on the running costs and financial implications of a Coastal and Marine National Park.*

This is difficult to comment on, however, lower costs would be assumed if the first option, in terms of the model for the Coastal and Marine National Park, were adopted over any of the other options. It is agreed that costs could be shared with other organisations especially those involved with a supporting role.