

30 November 2006

Nikki Milne
Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
Marine Management Division
G-H93
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Dear Ms Milne

Consultation Response - Coastal and Marine National Park

Dumfries and Galloway College welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposals to create Scotland's first coastal and marine national park.

The Benefits of a Coastal and Marine National Park

The College is supportive of the creation of a new national park and believes this could be an enabler of sustainable economic development. In particular, the Park could help communities develop and realise their aspirations by:

- o Protecting and promoting cultural heritage,
- o Promoting recreational opportunities and widening access,
- o Protecting the natural heritage and landscape,
- o Promoting sustainable economic regeneration,
- o Creating and safeguarding sustainable employment and training opportunities,
- o Providing enhanced education opportunities.

The Park could help to address a range of social, economic and conservation issues including:

- o Widening access to training and education opportunities in a sparsely populated area,
- o Promoting access to sustainable transport,
- o Developing 'high value' employment opportunities,
- o Promoting the development of 'green' energy.

Finally, the Park could bring a number of other benefits, for example:

- o Provision of information and facilities for visitors,
- o Promotion of sustainable tourism,
- o Contributing to sustainable development through the planning process.

Selection Criteria

The current selection criteria (the 'key principles') are the conditions for designation contained within the National Parks (Scotland) Act. We believe that this criteria is too narrow and doesn't take into account the potential contribution that the designated area will make to the achievement of the Aims of the National Park.

We therefore fully support the view of Ministers that the selected area must make a significant contribution to the social and economic development of its communities.

We would wish to see a broader selection criteria, which includes the extent to which the different areas could contribute to the achievement of the aims of the Act, i.e.:

- (a) to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area,
- (b) to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area,
- (c) to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public, and
- (d) to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

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

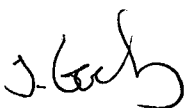
The area that we know best is the Solway and we believe that this is a very strong candidate to be the First Coastal and Marine National Park. However, we do not have the in-depth knowledge or information of the other Areas to make an informed decision. Without extensive research and analysis of the available evidence any answers to this question will be subjective at best.

Functions, Powers and Governance

We have limited our comments on the functions, powers and governance of the Park to the issues of direct concern to Dumfries and Galloway College.

We strongly believe that the Park Authority has an important role in promoting sustainable economic and social regeneration. The provision of excellent training and education within the Park will be a key constituent of this regeneration. We hope that the Solway is chosen as the preferred location of the new Park and would want to work closely with the Park to develop opportunities for training and education in the Area.

Yours sincerely



Jim Godfrey
Head of Finance