

Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council



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Dear Ms Milne

COASTAL AND MARINE NATIONAL PARK

I refer to your letter of 29 November 2006 sent to the Chairman, Gwyn Phillips, enclosing the consultation document.

The Community Council appointed a study group, of which I am the convenor, to discuss the proposals. The group has prepared a response which is enclosed, together with the respondent information form as requested. A copy has been sent to you by e-mail as a back-up.

The response indicates the interest of the community, being a coastal settlement in the Moray Firth.

The contact details are my own office since most written correspondence from Highland Council is sent to the Service Point.

Yours sincerely

James Cornwell
(Vice Chairman)

COASTAL AND MARINE NATIONAL PARK

Response by FORTROSE & ROSEMARKIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

1. Community Background

The two communities of Fortrose and Rosemarkie are located on either side of the Chanonry peninsula on the NW shore of the Outer Inverness Firth which is an SAC. There are two well used caravan sites and recreational facilities at Rosemarkie beach. Self catering holiday accommodation is available but there is a shortage of hotel (1) and b & b establishments.

Specific points are

- The Structure Plan has zoned the settlement for house building connected to development of the A9 corridor.
- Large scale developments on the opposite shore of the firth at Ardersier may affect the integrity of the SAC
- Chanonry Point is a popular site for dolphin watching but the tidal stream could be suitable for a medium scale renewable energy project.
- A detailed traffic management study is required to help plan for a sustainable level of community development including tourism.
- There is a large percentage of retired people and a quantified need for a high proportion of affordable and low cost housing provision.

2. Purpose of a Coastal and Marine National Park

The Introduction states that establishing a National Park is part of an overall strategy for protecting and managing the coastline and the sea-bed. The Regulatory Impact Assessment confirms the Executive's intention to establish a Coastal & Marine National Park. In support lessons are drawn from similar parks elsewhere in the world but **not** from Marine Conservation Areas in the UK.

The document also implies that the role and aims of a Marine Park have not been determined but the emphasis seems to be on economic development issues rather than conservation of the marine ecology and environment.

3. Added Value- Chapter 1

3.1 Added Value is not readily quantified in monetary terms but some benefits may accrue by:

- Addressing coastal and marine pollution issues
- Applying sensible policies relating to fish stocks and aquaculture
- Marine eco-tourism including small cruise liners visiting the islands

3.2 Strengthening fragile communities by implementing a sustainable, low cost housing policy is important but planning to address this problem is already in hand. A residency condition could be applied to ensure that anyone buying a new house in the Park must occupy it all the year round. This would protect communities against "buy to let" or holiday homes and has been suggested for the Cairngorm National Park. Improved land and sea access routes could help small coastal-based businesses to evolve as opportunities arise without the need for central direction and planning.