

## COASTAL AND MARINE NATIONAL PARK consultation

### RESPONSE FROM MULL & IONA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

January 2007

The Chamber sees the setting up of a marine park as being potentially beneficial to the socio - economic development of our islands. However, this will require significant **additional** resources being made available for infrastructure improvement. There must also be **substantial** local representation on the park authority.

The additional publicity and focus of attention on the whole area would bring additional visitors. Provided that enough resources were made available to upgrade the present infrastructure, this would obviously bring a greater visitor spend to the area, increasing the number of accommodation providers and visitor attractions, as well as hopefully increasing the length of the tourist season. On the back of this, the additional income generated would feed throughout the local community, creating extra jobs in the support industries.

The area designated should be large enough to accommodate the increase in visitors, while remaining small enough to be easily managed. Resources should be targeted on improvements to the area, rather than on a large bureaucratic body. There also needs to be **additional** investment in order to meet visitor expectation. Argyll and the Islands would appear to be an excellent choice, although the sea area to the North of Mull -up to the South west Skye coast - is of great importance in terms of the marine life found there.

Above all, the park should not create the excessive bureaucracy that many fear, nor should it destroy or impact severely upon existing jobs. Rather it should assist, and work with, existing bodies to promote the whole area, and to promote new businesses and ventures for the people in that region.

If managed sensitively, with local **residents** with the appropriate experience making up a majority of 60% of the park board, then the park could be an asset to any area - and particularly to Argyll and the Islands.

*This statement may be made available to the public.*