

27 May 2022

Scottish Government Call for Ideas: The Future for National Parks in Scotland

Overview

It is almost 20 years since Scotland's first National Parks in Loch Lomond and Trossachs and Cairngorms were established. Both National Parks are home to some of Scotland's most outstanding scenery, are internationally important areas for nature and receive millions of visitors each year. The Parks work closely with their communities, land managers, local businesses, third sector and individuals to tackle the biodiversity and climate crisis, to help manage facilities for visitors, to promote responsible access, develop sustainable communities and ensure sustainable development.

The current Programme for Government contains a commitment to establish at least one new National Park in Scotland by Spring 2026. To be able to do this in an open and transparent manner, The Scottish Government need to be able to assess any area which is put forward for designation against a set of agreed expectations for what National Parks will deliver for Scotland going forward.

Find out more about the work of Scotland's existing national parks at: [Loch Lomond and The Trossachs](#) and the [Cairngorms](#). Information on National Parks more generally and the designation of Scotland's first two national parks is available from [NatureScot's website](#).

Responses to Questions – Submitted via The Scottish Government's online [Dialogue platform](#).

1. What do you value most about Scotland's National Parks?

No comment.

2. How can National Parks help the environment?

No comment.

3. How can we better manage visitor pressures in National Parks?

No comment.

4. ***What criteria should we use to decide where the next new National Parks in Scotland should be?***

In designating any new National Park or Parks, The Scottish Government must balance its ambitions to increase the number of National Parks in Scotland with the need to deploy more renewable energy to meet our legally binding target of reaching net-zero by 2045 and the binding interim targets for 2030 and 2040. To realise the enormous environmental, economic and social benefits that both National Parks and renewables can bring to Scotland it is our recommendation that only areas which fall within existing National Scenic Areas should be considered.

Why the contribution is important

Scotland's planning system determines where renewable energy generation technology can be deployed and is critical to determining whether enough energy can be generated to meet our legally binding target of reaching net-zero by 2045 and the binding interim targets for 2030 and 2040, as well as realising the economic and social benefits renewables offers.

Planning policy states that wind farms will not be built in either National Parks or National Scenic Areas. The renewables industry supports this policy.

To keep Scotland on track to achieving net-zero, we will require an additional 11GW of offshore wind, at least 12GW of onshore wind and 4GW of solar by 2030 to provide the electricity to decarbonise heat and transport. Achieving an additional 12GW of onshore wind will deliver fresh economic opportunities for Scottish supply chain and ports, creating £27.8 billion in GVA and 17,000 jobs across Scotland¹.

- Creating a National Park in an area that is not currently covered by any designations that precludes wind farm development, will have significant ramifications for meeting Scotland's renewable energy targets, and pose a direct conflict with the priority given to the Climate Emergency, as seen in draft NPF4.
- It will not be possible to repower any wind farm already sited in a newly designated National Park. This will mean that, over time, there will be a loss of generation. Resulting in a loss of opportunity for increasing generation with larger and more efficient turbines typically seen with a repowered site.
- There could be a loss of opportunity to life extend existing assets, therefore wasting the opportunity to maintain output at an operational site.
- Communities currently in receipt of community benefit payments will lose this income stream from wind farms, where they could otherwise have continued to receive this via a repowered scheme.
- There may be wind farm projects not yet determined at earlier stages of the development process in a new designated National Park which are no longer viable, meaning a significant financial loss to developers and future investor confidence.

Scottish Renewables would be keen to engage further with this agenda and would be happy to discuss our response in more detail.

Scottish Renewables is the voice of Scotland's renewable energy industry. Our vision is for Scotland leading the world in renewable energy. We work to grow Scotland's renewable energy sector and sustain its position at the forefront of the global clean energy industry. We represent over 300 organisations that deliver investment, jobs, social benefit and reduce the carbon emissions which cause climate change.

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¹ https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.renewableuk.com/resource/resmgr/media/onshore_wind_prospectus_fina.pdf