

Future National Parks in Scotland Possible Governance Models



REPORT 02 / AUGUST 2015

A paper discussing some governance options that could be applied to future National Parks in Scotland.

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APRS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This short summary paper has been prepared by Graham Barrow for the Scottish Campaign for National Parks (SCNP) and the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS) and is the second in a series of papers being published by SCNP/APRS following the production of 'Unfinished Business – A National Parks Strategy for Scotland' in 2013.
- 1.2 After a debate and negotiation spanning many decades two geographically large National Parks were established in Scotland under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. These were for Loch Lomond and the Trossachs and for the Cairngorms. These parks and their governance systems are largely similar to those of the National Parks established in England and Wales through the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, although our Scottish National Parks have some significant differences, particularly with regard to their role in supporting local communities and helping rural economic development.
- 1.3 This paper reviews some different management models that could be applied to new National Parks of different scales and characteristics that may be established in Scotland in the future. The relatively complex and costly arrangements that apply in the two existing National Parks may not necessarily be required when considering smaller or less populated areas as future National Parks.
- 1.4 The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 defines the aims of a National Park in Scotland as:
- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
 - To promote sustainable use of the natural resources
 - To promote understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public, and
 - To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.
- 1.5 Various schedules attached to the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 describe the legal constitution, general powers, functions, staff, property and liabilities of National Park Authorities. These provide significant scope for a variety of approaches and flexibility to be applied depending on the character and needs of the area in question.
- 1.6 Of particular note are the potential alternative approaches to the planning and development control functions of a new National Park Authority. The relevant section of the Act states that a new National Park designation order may make provision for a park authority:
- To be the full planning authority for the National Park
 - To be the planning authority for the National Park, but only with regard to the production of a development plan, or
 - To have whatever planning functions the designation order may specify.
- 1.7 Significant emphasis is often given to the planning functions of National Parks in the UK, possibly at times diverting attention from the positive and valuable work that National Parks can carry out in habitat and landscape enhancement, public access improvements, interpretation and education, local sustainable business development, training and tourism development and marketing. But the control of inappropriate development in National Parks is clearly fundamental to their long-term wellbeing.

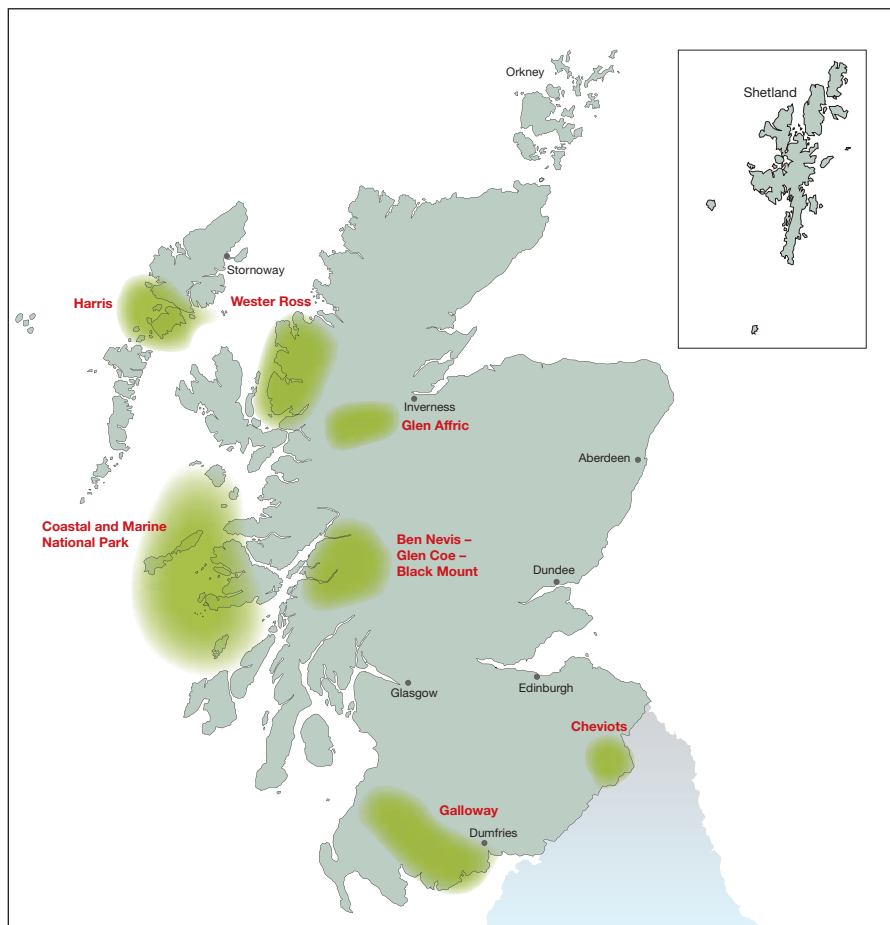
1.8 The SCNP/APRS 'Unfinished Business Report' suggests seven areas that should be considered for future National Park designation (see map) and these vary significantly in size and character with most not being of the scale or complexity of the existing two National Parks in Scotland. Consideration must therefore be given to adopting governance arrangements appropriate to each particular circumstance.

1.9 In England and Wales there are, in addition to National Parks, many areas of nationally important landscape that have been designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). These are generally smaller than the National Parks and were not at the time of designation seen as having the same potential for outdoor recreation. To ensure their proper care, however, they have

since the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 enjoyed the benefits of management committees, with a small staff and dedicated budgets. They have produced and implemented management plans, although planning and development control matters have remained with the local authorities. The most recently designated National Park in England, the South Downs, had its origins in a consortium of such AONB committees.

1.10 In Scotland 40 National Scenic Areas were designated in 1980 on a broadly similar basis to AONBs, and again without an explicit recreational purpose. Despite recommendations made in a report by SNH in 1998, however, they have never been given equivalent management structures or funding (see section 4).

National Parks recommended by SCNP and APRS 2013



Map reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey, licence number 100053751.
* For layout purposes the Shetland Islands are not shown in the correct geographical position.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 When considering the establishment of the first National Parks in Scotland SNH commissioned a report in 1998 – Models of National Parks by Bishop, Green and Phillips (published as SNH Review Number 105). This extensive report reviewed the management arrangements for National Parks in a number of countries, including various models being applied in England and Wales as well as in eight other, mainly European countries.
- 2.2 The report identified four main methods used to protect the land of National Parks:
1. Public ownership of the land – such as applies in Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden as well as in North America
 2. Legally enforceable lists of prohibited actions – as applies in Austria, France and Italy (and also on UK National Nature Reserves and SSSIs)
 3. Regulation through land use planning – as applies in the UK National Parks
 4. Positive management works (although it is unclear from the consultants’ report where this applies).
- 2.3 It is universally regarded as a pre-requisite of any effective National Park for there to be a comprehensive and professionally prepared National Park Plan and a National Park Management Plan.
- 2.4 The existing two National Parks in Scotland operate a governance model strongly influenced by their English and Welsh predecessors, with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park having full land use planning and development control powers and with the Cairngorms NP having plan making powers, with a power of call-in from the local authority in relation to planning applications. Both National Parks have a board consisting of a mixture of local elected members (some directly elected to the boards of the parks) and of those appointed by central government. The locally elected members are required not least to satisfy the need for democratic accountability for decisions under the planning legislation.
- 2.5 As the National Parks have some significantly sized settlements within them, such as Aviemore and Grantown-on Spey in the Cairngorms and Balloch and Callander in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, the park planning committees have to deal with a significant and varied number of planning applications. Remoter areas with only small settlements and farms and extensive semi-natural vegetation would have far fewer planning applications – although some developments could still be potentially damaging to the landscape or to natural habitats.
- 2.6 In 1999 SNH published National Parks for Scotland – its advice to the Scottish Government regarding National Parks – and recommended the establishment of the first two parks and the further consideration of other National Parks. When considering management models the report states:

“To achieve the proposed purposes of National Parks, SNH is convinced of the need to establish a new National Park Body for each area. At one extreme such a body could have extensive executive powers transferred to it from national and local bodies – in effect to become a new form of public authority with a large staff and many functions. At the other extreme, it could have limited direct functions and would concentrate on integrating and co-ordinating the efforts of others through the National Park Plan.”

2.7 This clearly indicates that SNH considered at that time that different governance and management models should be considered for different types of National Park area. Later in the report SNH stated that any new National Park body should have powers in the fields of:

- Conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage
- Enjoyment and understanding of the natural and cultural heritage
- Town and country planning, and
- Land and water management.

2.8 SNH suggested that one option could be a sharing of planning powers with the existing local authorities and stated that:

“Engagement by the National Park Body in all aspects of planning is unlikely to be necessary to achieve the objectives of the National Park Plan. We therefore remain unconvinced that the National Park Body needs necessarily to be the planning authority with the fullest range of development planning, control and enforcement powers, as is the case in England and Wales. Instead, we propose a very significant role for the National Park Body which involves a sharing of planning functions with local authorities”.

2.9 In the light of experience in the two existing Scottish National Parks, SCNP/APRS see this statement as needing some qualification. Recent history has shown across the UK that large and complex National Parks do require full planning powers to effectively protect them.

2.10 The sharing of planning powers between the Cairngorms National Park Authority and its five constituent local planning authorities over the last 12 years has proven in general to be confusing and unhelpful for all involved, including local residents, developers, NGOs, the local authorities, the Park board and other public bodies. Smaller, less populated areas that are designated as National Parks in the future may, however, not necessarily need this approach to their planning.

2.11 When considering the governance of proposed National Parks SNH stated that:

The balance of representation on the National Park Board will be equally crucial to the success or failure of a National Park. We consider that the main options for representation in the governing structure of each National Park Body are:

- Local government councillors or appointees from both within and outwith the National Park area
- Community councillors or specially elected community representatives
- Selected national appointees.

2.12 Regarding membership of any new National Park Authority, Schedule 1 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 requires that:

- The number of members must not exceed 25 (but no minimum size is given)
- Locally elected members must comprise at least one fifth of the total number of members
- The remaining members are appointed by the Scottish Ministers, of which half are nominated by local authorities part of whose area is within the National Park.

2.13 Table 1 shows the current membership of the two existing NP authorities. It also sets out, for illustrative purposes only, three smaller options which also comply with the Act, but which might be more appropriate for future NPs with smaller populations or areas and which only cover parts of one or two local authority areas. Other compliant options are also possible.

Table 1

Member Type	CNPA	LLTNPA	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Locally elected	5	5	3	3	2
Appointed by local authorities	7	6	5	4	3
Appointed by Scottish Ministers	7	6	5	4	3
Total Members	19	17	13	11	8

2.14 In deciding on the best governance model for future National Parks in Scotland the relative importance of development pressures, land and water management, recreational use and ecological land use management should be taken in to account. Just how prominent each of these factors is likely to be in the overall programme of action needed to achieve park purposes will be a key determinant of the governance model that should be adopted.

2.15 If a new National Park was orientated more towards influencing the behaviour of private landowners and the alignment of the programmes and expenditure of relevant public agencies (and not so much towards the exercise of statutory planning powers) then a rather different mix of professional backgrounds and interests would be appropriate amongst the board members than applies in the existing National Parks.

2.16 The issues in Scotland regarding the governance of National Parks also relate to a number of key points which can be summarised as:

- The need to balance local and national interests – the issue of democratic accountability at local and national level
- The planning and development issues and who prepares the plans for an area and who decides what developments can be permitted
- Influencing land management activities to protect and enhance the habitat and landscape
- How and who promotes the National Park for recreation and tourism and sustainable economic development
- How the National Park can contribute to desirable land use that reflects the national Land Use Strategy
- The level of financial resources that can be justified and applied to the planning and management of the area.

2.17 It is vital that National Parks should as a key matter of principle give priority to both the national interest and to long-term thinking over short-termism and potentially narrower local interests. We recognise that this can of course lead to tensions over certain issues and that is why a robust and open governance model is important.

2.18 The following table, table 2, summarises the range of management models that could be applied to different sizes and complexities of future National Parks in Scotland.

GOVERNANCE FOR NATIONAL PARKS IN SCOTLAND

Table 2 is offered to stimulate thinking about the range of types and scales of National Park and their potential governance models. It is not a proposed classification for future National Parks.

Table 2

Character of Area	Resident Population range	Area Range: sq kms	Example of potential National Park	Emphasis of role of National Park body	Possible Park Governance Model	Possible Minimum Number of staff required for Park
1. Area with only isolated buildings and hamlets.	0 – 100	200 – 500	Glen Affric	Ecological and landscape management and enhancement. Public access and management Interpretation and Education. Land use issues.	Park Committee – possibly a sub-committee of the Local Authority with specialist members appointed.	6 – 12
2. Area with hamlets and small villages and/or scattered settlement.	50 – 250	400 – 1000	Cheviots	Landscape and ecological enhancement. Access and Interpretation. Advice to Local Authority on planning.	Park Board – with specialist members appointed nationally.	12 – 20
3. Area with small towns and villages and/or scattered settlement.	250 – 5000	750 – 1500	Coastal and Marine National Park (Mull, Coll, Tiree etc...)	Advice to Local Authority on planning matters. Landscape enhancement. Access and Interpretation. Tourism development.	Park Board – with specialist members appointed nationally. Preparation of Park Plan.	15 – 30
4. Extensive area with a range of settlement sizes.	5000 +	1500 +	Galloway	Planning and Development Control. Access and tourism matters. Visitor management. Sustainable economic development.	Planning Authority Preparation of Park Plan. Full Park Committee with local and national members.	30 +

NB. Not all of the posts referred to in column 7 (minimum number of staff required) need be new jobs as some could be filled by secondments or transfers from existing bodies.

2.19 Table 2 suggests four broad types and scales of governance and park staffing, but all combine local views with some nationally appointed experts on a management board/committee. SCNP/APRS strongly believe that this national view of and expertise on how the land should be managed and what is appropriate sustainable development in the national interest is vital in all governance models for National Parks. This point must be fully comprehended by all those associated with the management of our National Parks and with their future protection and sustainable development.

Such a Plan could deal more thoroughly with ecological and landscape management matters for the wilder types of National Park (similar to a National Nature Reserve Management Plan)

2.20 Also it is important that a National Park Plan is prepared and approved both at local and national level for every National Park. Such a Plan could deal more thoroughly with ecological and landscape management matters for the wilder types of National Park (similar to a National Nature Reserve Management Plan) but cover land use planning matters for a park with significant human habitation and potential development pressures.

2.21 The four broad categories of National Park governance suggested in table 2 are:

1. A National Park Management Committee with representatives of the public, private and voluntary landowners of the area who prepare a management plan that is adopted by the Local Authority and by all the statutory agencies concerned with land management. This could apply to a Type A National Park in table 2.
2. A National Park Committee, which could be a sub-committee of the Local Authority but chaired by an appointed expert. It would have some local representatives and some appointed experts. Appropriate for Type B National Parks.
3. A National Park Board with a combination of local elected members and members appointed nationally. It could be separate from the Local Planning Authority with local elected members and additional appointed members. Appropriate for Type C National Parks in table 2.
4. A Planning Authority National Park Board which would be a separate planning authority and have local elected members and nationally appointed members. The National Park Plan they approved would also be the planning and development control document for the National Park. This would apply in Type D National Parks as in table 2, as with the two existing National Parks in Scotland.



St Cyrus National Nature Reserve

3. National Scenic Areas

- 3.1 National Scenic Areas (NSAs) were designated both to identify the finest scenery of the type considered most characteristic of Scotland and to ensure their protection from inappropriate development. This limited measure of protection is achieved through the local authority planning system. Scottish Natural Heritage has surveyed all the NSAs and produced an up-to-date list of the special qualities that justify each area's designation as Scotland's finest landscapes. (see *The Special Qualities of National Scenic Areas*, 2010).
- 3.2 Apart from those NSAs subsequently included within the boundaries of the two National Parks, National Scenic Areas have never received significant publicity or public recognition and have not generally been the subject of management plans or staff appointed to manage or enhance them. Although the Local Authorities were encouraged to prepare management strategies for their NSAs, only three have been prepared to date – all in Dumfries and Galloway. This is in stark contrast to the AONBs in England Wales and Northern Ireland – all of which have approved management plans and staff to help implement them.
- 3.3 In a recent review of all protected area designations in the UK the IUCN National Committee for the UK concluded that the National Scenic Areas in Scotland did not meet the criteria for inclusion in any of the IUCN categories for protected areas. They stated that *“evidence that the effectiveness of protection of nature in planning policy is insufficient”*. This contrasts starkly with its conclusion that AONBs in England and Wales should continue to be recognised as Category V Protected Landscapes. (*Putting Nature on the Map*, 2014).
- 3.4 NSAs in Scotland do not have a purpose of promoting access and recreation or sustainable rural development and as such have limited value in assisting the development of their areas. Neither have they been the subject of any substantial landscape or habitat improvement efforts (except to some extent in the three Dumfries and Galloway NSAs).
- 3.4 Whilst SCNP/APRS recognise the value of the extra development control vigilance that NSAs provide, we feel that to some extent their existence has deflected thinking from the designation of further National Parks in Scotland. We feel therefore that there is a need for a thorough review of how Scotland protects and sustainably utilises its finest landscapes which would take into account both the existing National Parks, the NSAs and the ideas and proposals within the 'Unfinished Business – A National Parks Strategy for Scotland' report.
- 3.5 We note that in Wales the review of their protected landscapes has recently (2015) addressed the issue of the title of both their National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has concluded that both should continue to be recognised as nationally important and should be given a similar set of objectives.

4. Costs

4.1 The staffing levels and associated costs for any new National Parks could be expected to vary considerably with their size, character, functions and precise style of operation. In the Appendix to this report we seek to illustrate this by reference to four existing protected landscapes, two in England, one in France and one straddling the border between Wales and England.

These case studies show that the staff numbers for even a large AONB in northern England are no more than 16 and that the smallest English National Park employs fewer than 50 staff.

4.2 The cost of running National Parks of comparable scale and complexity in Scotland could thus be considerably lower than those associated with the two existing Parks – possibly in the range of £1.5 to 3m per annum. Given the value of the economic activity that Parks have shown themselves capable of generating (see our separate report on the socio-economic benefits of National Parks), this can be seen as an excellent investment.

4.3 We recognise nevertheless that in the present climate of financial austerity any additional public spending will be difficult to secure. To our minds, however, this should not for a number of reasons preclude initiating at this stage a process designed to add to Scotland's currently very small number of National Parks. These are that:

1. National Parks inevitably take some time to identify, designate and establish
2. Experience elsewhere demonstrates the capacity of National Parks to generate funding from sources other than mainstream government programmes, especially for capital and project works; and
3. There are potential ways in which the costs of operating a more comprehensive network of National Parks could be contained by pooling resources.

We examine this last possibility in the next section of this paper.



5. A National Parks Service for Scotland

- 5.1 In the SCNP/APRS report 'Unfinished Business – A National Parks Strategy for Scotland' we suggest that a National Parks Service for Scotland should be considered. Though radical in a UK context, such a step would be far from unprecedented. Successful park services have long operated at either a national or regional scale in a number of other countries such as the USA, Canada, Norway, New Zealand and various states in Australia.
- 5.2 In Scotland such a body could employ the staff either for all the National Parks, building upon the co-operation that already exists in certain areas of activity between the two existing Parks, or for a number of the smaller National Parks. This would offer the prospect of both lower overheads and a commonly available source of specialist expertise which individual Parks might not be able to justify or afford. This could be made available not just to the National Parks themselves but to any other nationally protected landscapes, such as those National Scenic Areas that had not been subsumed into National Parks.
- 5.3 The role of a Scottish National Parks Service would be to serve and support the lead authority for each of the individual Parks, not to direct them as if they were a single, national entity. In particular it would be vital to ensure that the responsibility for decision-making on planning matters remained with a clearly identifiable, locally accountable forum. A National Parks Service could be an independent body or alternatively could be attached to an existing organisation, with Scottish Natural Heritage being the obvious candidate.

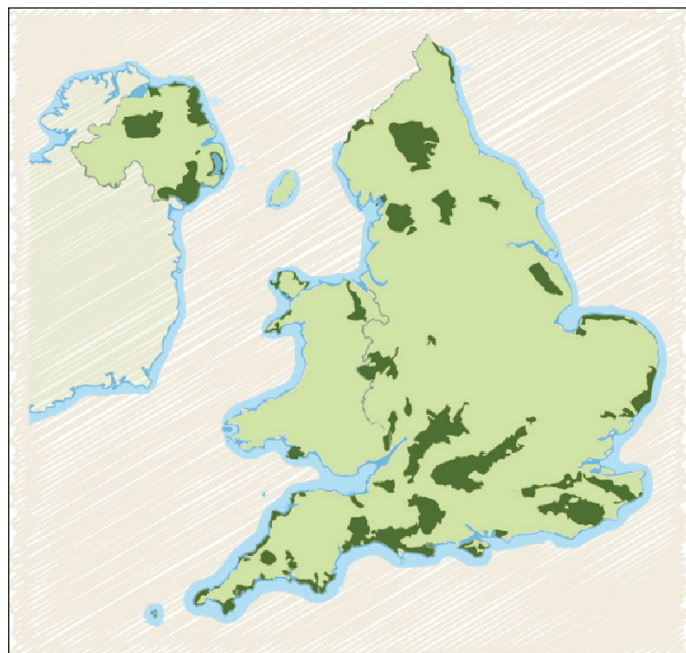
6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The many landscapes across Scotland that would on the strength of their quality justify designation as National Parks vary widely in extent and character. Demographically, some are very sparsely populated, some contain sizeable settlements. Some straddle current administrative boundaries; others lie wholly within the territory of a single local authority. If, as we believe, further National Parks should be established in Scotland for the full range of environmental, social and economic benefits that they can bring, their governance arrangements should unquestionably reflect this diversity of circumstances. Fortunately those who crafted Scotland's national park legislation recognised this and the National Parks (Scotland) Act allows for the functions, powers and governance regimes for individual parks to be geared to local conditions.
- 6.2 This paper seeks to illustrate the range of governance options that might be judged appropriate across this multiplicity of circumstances. The underlying principle is that of adequate accountability for the functions discharged – both to local people and to the nation as a whole. Another major consideration is cost: it is vital, especially in the current and foreseeable financial context, to keep overheads to the minimum compatible with effective operation and transparent, democratic control. The case studies presented from elsewhere in the UK and beyond are designed to indicate the scale of expenditure that might be involved in running National Parks in the sorts of areas highlighted as candidates for designation in our 'Unfinished Business' report.
- 6.3 The ideas and information presented are intended to stimulate and feed discussion nationally about the costs, practicalities and implications of a further programme of national park designation. Even more importantly, we hope that they will help individuals and communities in parts of the country where there is interest in the possibility of National Park designation to explore the issue further and to develop their own thoughts and proposals.

Some experience from elsewhere

NORTH PENNINES AONB PARTNERSHIP

There are 46 AONBs in England Wales and Northern Ireland. Designation seeks to protect and enhance natural beauty whilst recognising the needs of the local community and economy. This includes the protection of flora, fauna and geological as well as landscape features including the conservation of archaeological, architectural and vernacular features in the landscape.

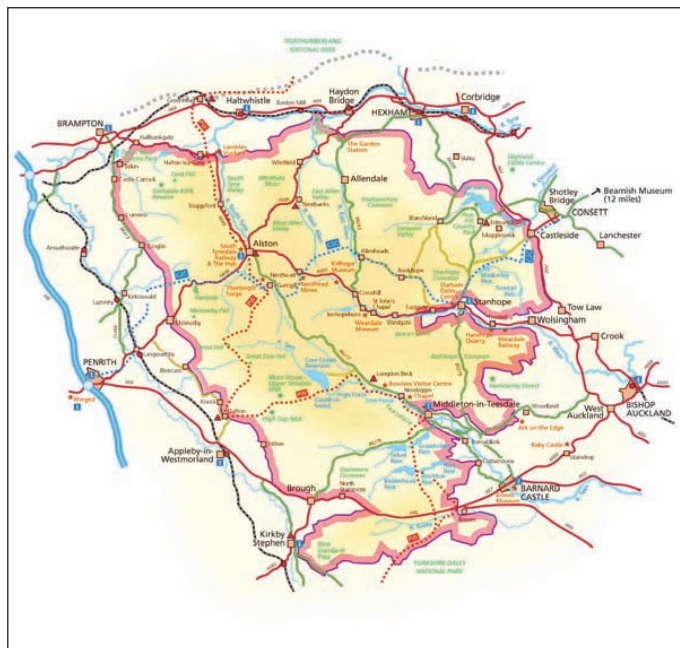


AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

The planning and management approach in each individual AONB can vary considerably. Overall responsibility of care lies with the relevant local authorities. However, most AONBs fall within more than one local authority area (city, district and/or county). To encourage consistent policies and positive coordination, AONBs have:

- Formed joint advisory committees, joint committee or conservation boards. These include representatives of not only the different local authorities, but also of landowners, farmers, residents and conservation and informal recreation interests
- Appointed AONB officers and staff to coordinate local management operation
- Prepared a statutory Management Plan.

The North Pennines AONB is one example of an AONB and is described below.



North Pennines – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The North Pennines AONB Partnership is an alliance of statutory agencies, local authorities and voluntary/community organisations which care about, and for, the area. The AONB Partnership is the body responsible for co-ordinating efforts to conserve and enhance the North Pennines. The work of the Partnership is carried out through the AONB Staff Unit, employed through its accountable body, Durham County Council. The Partnership meets twice a year, to consider important issues related to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty in the North Pennines AONB and the Global Geopark. An Executive Group meets three times a year to provide support to the Staff Unit on operational matters. The Partnership also holds an Annual Forum.

The work of the AONB Partnership and its Staff Unit of 16 staff is guided by the North Pennines AONB Management Plan 2009 – 14. This statutory plan was produced by the AONB Partnership on behalf of the area's five Local Authorities – whose duty it is to jointly prepare.

NORTH PENNINES AONB PARTNERSHIP

The Staff Unit operates four Working Groups:

- Access and Recreation
- Sustainable Tourism
- Historic Environment and
- The Geopark Advisory Group.

These groups meet three or four times a year, their purpose being to support project development and the implementation of the AONB Management Plan. They all have 'Terms of Reference' and are an important part of the AONB Partnership structure.

The Annual Forum of the AONB Partnership is designed to communicate to the wider community issues important to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the North Pennines. Specifically it is an opportunity to communicate the activities of the AONB Partnership and its Staff Unit. It is also a mechanism to receive the thoughts, guidance and advice from the wider community. A broad range of organisations and individuals are invited e.g. Parish Councils, the AONB Partnership and its four Working Groups, community groups, partner agencies, Local Authorities, MPs etc.

The AONB Partnership includes representatives from the following organisations:

The Chair of the AONB Partnership is an elected member from Durham County Council and the Vice Chair is an elected member from Northumberland County Council.

- Carlisle City Council
- Cumbria County Council
- Durham County Council
- Eden District Council
- Northumberland County Council
- Natural England
- Council for the Protection of Rural England
- Northumberland Association of Local Councils
- County Durham Association of Local Councils
- English Heritage
- Forestry Commission
- Friends of the North Pennines

- Moorland Association
- Country Land and Business Association
- National Farmers' Union
- British Geological Survey
- RSPB
- Visit County Durham
- Northumberland Tourism
- Durham Wildlife Trust
- Northumberland Wildlife Trust
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust
- Cumbria Association of Local Councils
- Cumbria Tourism

Plus the chairs of the Access & Recreation Working Group, the Historic Environment Working Group, the Geopark Advisory Group and the Tourism Working Group. In 2013/14 the expenditure budget was £1.73 million with some £882,000 being staff costs (16 fte staff). The main sources of income were £329,000 from DEFRA, £87,500 from the local authorities plus significant grants of £345,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, £87,000 from Natural England, £50,000 from the Environment Agency and £13,000 from the European Leonardo Fund.

Some experience from elsewhere

LIVARDOIS-FOREZ NATURAL REGIONAL PARK, FRANCE



Regional Natural Parks in France

There are 45 Regional Natural Parks in France. They cover 13% of its territory involving 3,706 communes, over seven million hectares of land and have more than three million inhabitants.

A Regional Natural Park is an inhabited rural area, recognised at national level as being of major value in terms of heritage and landscape, yet is fragile both environmentally and economically. It is organised around a focussed sustainable development project, based on the protection and development of the heritage. The protection and development of a park is guided by a code of practice committing the public authorities at both regional and national level.

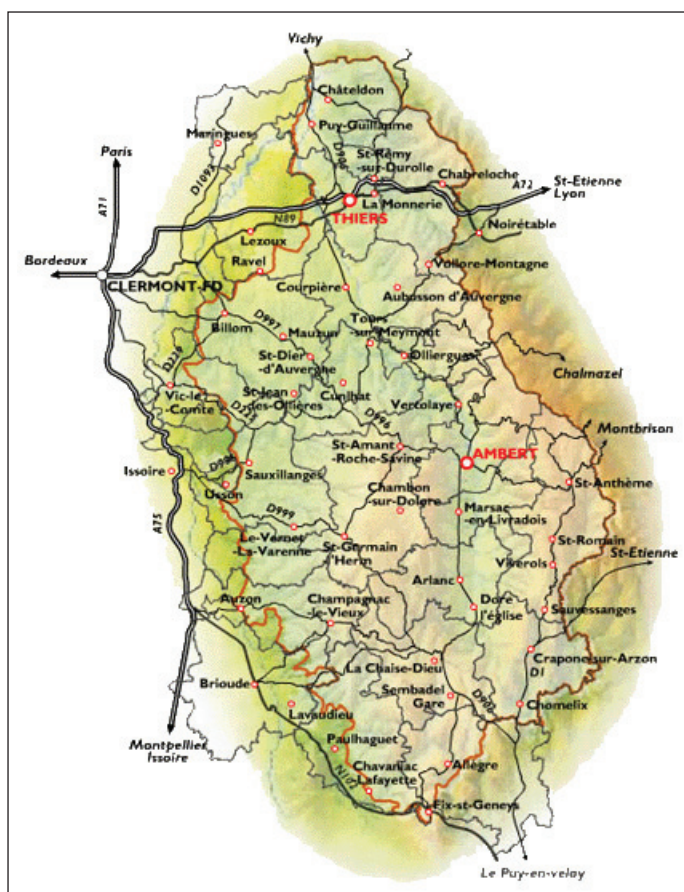
The goals described by law to guide the actions of the regional parks, in addition to heritage protection and management and land development, include economic and social development, with the aim of ensuring quality of life in the areas concerned. The parks promote the general public's contact with nature, in an educational strategy to raise awareness of environmental issues. The parks also participate in research programmes, and undertake new procedures and methods for action.

The park management is based on three elements:

- Land efficiency, based on a charter with a renewable twelve-year term
- Shared authority between the State and the regions
- The will to convince rather than compel people to change their behaviour, through information, activities and awareness raising.

One example is the Livradois-Forez 'Parc Naturel Régional' which is located in the Auvergne in south central France and was created in 1984. The area has undulating hills, pastures and forests with large agricultural plains. The park is made up of several distinct districts, each with its own history and tradition. Agriculture, forestry and strong craft traditions, with their roots dating from the Middle Ages, are the back bone of this beautiful Natural Regional Park.

LIVARDOIS-FOREZ NATURAL REGIONAL PARK, FRANCE



Livradois-Forez Natural Regional Park

The Park is 303,457 hectares in area and there is a resident population of some 112,000 living in 166 communities. The Park is managed by a Board consisting of 25 Mayors from local communities, 6 regional advisors and 12 general or technical advisors.

The Park's creation came about not only because its residents realised that it was an outstanding area with unique features but they also recognised that the area was rapidly deteriorating and thought that the creation of a 'parc naturel regional' would help with regeneration. An overall common objective was agreed and The Park's Charter was signed by an official representative of each participating community and adopted at the time of the Park's official creation. The Park's boundaries correspond to the participating communities boundaries. The Livradois-Forez Charter basically defines the territory, the conservation goals, the economic development and cultural objectives for a period of 10 years. It also specifies the management structure and how much each level of government will contribute financially to the project management.

The annual operating budget approximately £1.5 million with its revenues coming from the following sources:

- £40,000 pa from a tax per capita paid by the communities
- £315,000 pa from the Departmental Government, on the basis of approved projects
- £500,000 pa from the Regional Government, on the basis of approved projects
- £380,000 pa from the National Government, on the basis of approved projects.

Expenditure is concentrated in the following areas: 21% for environmental conservation 21% for tourism development 20% for cultural activities 24% for supporting crafts and new businesses and 14% for forest management and development.

Some experience from elsewhere

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK, ENGLAND



Northumberland National Park

The Northumberland National Park was established in 1956. It is one of the thirteen National Parks in England and Wales. The Northumberland National Park Authority seeks to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Northumberland uplands – 405 square miles of hills and valleys stretching from Hadrian's Wall northwards to the Cheviot Hills on the border with Scotland. It also promotes opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the area by the public. The park has a small resident population of 2,200 with the park boundary excluding most of the villages which sit just outside the park but benefit from its protection and promotion.

The Park receives an estimated 1.7 million recreational visits per annum with a visitor spend of around £190 million.

The National Park is managed by a committee consisting of 22 members with 6 being Local Authority appointees, 6 being Secretary of State appointees, from the Parishes and 10 being national appointments by the Secretary of State. Recently it has been suggested that the local members should be directly elected to the National Park Committee.

The Northumberland National Park has the smallest budget of all of the National Parks in England and Wales at a little under £2.8 million in 2013/14. The staff number around 48 with most based in Hexham, outside the park boundary.

The statutory purposes of the National Park are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities by the public.

In the interests of maintaining the close connections between local communities, economies and environmental conservation English National Park Authorities have an additional statutory duty to:

- Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

The Northumberland National Park Authority has a duty to prepare a National Park Management Plan as the framework for the delivery of the National Park statutory purposes and duty. The Management Plan is the single most important document for the National Park, setting out the guiding principles, vision, objectives and actions for managing the National Park.

The Park Authority guide and control new development within the National Park and this includes new buildings, extensions to buildings, minerals and waste development, and the use of land and buildings. The built environment of Northumberland National Park makes a major contribution to the special quality of the area. The Building Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document helps ensure that new development reflects this and contributes to the architectural heritage of the area.

Some experience from elsewhere

WYE VALLEY AONB (WALES AND ENGLAND)



Wye Valley – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is an internationally important protected landscape straddling the border between England and Wales. It is one of the most dramatic and scenic landscape areas in southern Britain. The AONB designated in 1971 covers parts of the counties of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Monmouthshire, and is recognised in particular for its limestone gorge scenery and dense native woodlands, as well as its wildlife, archaeological and industrial remains.

The AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) comprises of representatives from the following organisations:

Local Authorities:

- Forest of Dean District Council (2 councillors)
- Gloucestershire County Council (2 councillors)
- Herefordshire Council (4 councillors)
- Monmouthshire County Council (4 councillors).

Co-opted members – umbrella organisations:

- Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC)
- Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC)
- One Voice Wales
- Country Land & Business Association
- National Farmers Union
- Three voluntary conservation sector representatives for Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Monmouthshire.

Non-voting co-opted members:

- A representative of the local Wildlife Trusts
- Wye Valley Society
- River Wye Preservation Trust
- A Recreation interests' representative
- A Tourism interests' representative.

The JAC is supported by a Technical Officers Working Party (TOWP), which comprises lead officers from the four local authorities and a range of Government agencies, including:- Cadw Capital Region Tourism (Cardiff & South East Wales), English Heritage, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Historic England, Natural England and Natural Resources Wales.

Short Case Studies

WYE VALLEY AONB (WALES AND ENGLAND)

The AONB Unit is an established team, currently with five full time core members of staff. The local authorities have commissioned the AONB Partnership to operate as a cross-border coordinating body, engaging with local communities and other partners effectively to develop and deliver both localised projects and AONB wide initiatives. The AONB Unit staff report to the JAC and are employed through the local authorities and work on behalf of the AONB Partnership to carry out the preparation and review of the Management Plan, to advocate its policies and work in partnership to deliver a range of actions described in the Action Plan.

The budget for the AONB in 2012/13 was £333,400 with £56,000 from the local authorities, £141,000 from DEFRA, £56,000 from the Countryside Council for Wales and £70,000 from Sustainable Development Fund Wales. The AONB Unit has in the past been successful in attracting significant extra external funding such as a large HLF Landscape Partnership project of £2.8 million.

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GOT A QUESTION? – GET IN TOUCH

If you would like further information on the activities of the Scottish Campaign for National Parks please contact:

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