

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Edward Mountain MSP,
Convenor Net Zero, Energy and Transport
Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
By email to: netzero.committee@parliament.scot

22 July 2024

Dear Edward,

Proposal for a new National Park in Galloway

As you are aware the Scottish Government has committed to designating at least one new National Park by 2026. In October 2023 communities were invited to explore and develop proposals for their local area to be considered for designation as a new National Park. The nomination phase closed on 29 February and nominations were received from Galloway, Lochaber, Loch Awe, Scottish Borders and Tay Forest.

The appraisal process considered all nominations against six [published criteria](#). Following the conclusion of the appraisal process, I am pleased to inform you that we are proposing to establish a new National Park in Galloway.

The joint [bid](#) from the Galloway National Park Association and the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO biosphere highlights the area's outstanding natural and cultural heritage and it sets out the potential benefits that designation could make to the environment, the economy and to local communities.

The proposal for a new National Park in Galloway has been laid in Parliament this morning and it will be published on the Scottish Government website.

A 'Reporter' – in this case NatureScot – will now lead further work on the proposal including extensive consultation with local people, communities, businesses, local authorities, community councils, relevant public bodies and interest groups. This will include engagement and consultation with the agriculture, forestry and other land-based sectors given their importance within the area.

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This public consultation will gauge support for the National Park proposal and will look at specifics like the proposed boundary, the desirability of the area as a National Park and what powers and functions it should have. If there is to be a new National Park in Galloway, it must take account of local circumstances and help meet the needs of local communities.

The Reporter will further investigate, develop and test the proposal for a National Park in Galloway, taking into account all views that are expressed during the consultation.

The Reporter is required to provide its findings to the Scottish Government by 28 April next year and the report will be laid in Parliament. If we decide to proceed with the National Park proposal – with or without modification - secondary legislation will then need to be developed, consulted on and approved by Parliament in order to designate the new National Park.

I have written to the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee and the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee to inform them of the proposal.

Yours sincerely,



MAIRI GOUGEON

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

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