

What has been announced?

Scottish Ministers have made a [statutory proposal](#) to establish a new National Park in Galloway (with the broad area of search extending to parts of Dumfries and East and South Ayrshire). They have also asked NatureScot to be the Reporter for the next phase of work in developing and consulting on the detailed arrangements for the proposed National Park.

Where has this come from?

The Programme for Government includes a commitment to establishing a new National Park in Scotland. To identify a preferred area, the Scottish Government sought nominations from local groups across Scotland. Information on the selection process is available from the Scottish Government [website](#).

The successful [bid](#) was submitted jointly by the Galloway National Park Association and the Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve. The bid was supported by all three councils – Dumfries and Galloway, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire.

What does this mean?

The proposal is not itself a designation announcement.

Informed by NatureScot's advice, final decisions on establishing Scotland's third National Park will be made in due course by Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament. If Ministers decide to go ahead with designation, further consultation will take place on a draft designation order which will include a detailed boundary. More information on the designation process is available from the NatureScot National Parks [web pages](#).

What does the Reporter do?

The Reporter will develop the detail of the proposal and seek the views of local people and other stakeholders on it. Details to be developed include:

- identifying, at a broad scale, what area the new Park should cover,
- options for the new Park's powers (e.g. planning, access), and
- governance (e.g. size and make-up of its Board) and administration.

While the bid contains a map of a proposed area, Scottish Ministers have also indicated that a Park area could be smaller or larger in size. A key task for the reporter will be develop several options for the area to test views on, and to also discuss their implications for the possible powers and governance of the proposed National Park.

The legislation provides for considerable flexibility in how a National Park in Galloway could operate and Scottish Ministers have directed NatureScot to consider how a new Park can best contribute directly to its priorities for tackling the climate emergency, growing the economy

and improving public services in Galloway. They also recognise the importance of this area for farming, forestry and renewables which needs to be taken into account in developing the detail of the proposal. The relationship between the proposed National Park and the existing Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve will also need to be explored carefully. More information on the National Park legislation is available from the NatureScot National Parks [web pages](#).

Who will be consulted?

As reporter, NatureScot will need to engage and consult with everyone who has interest in the future of the area, and particularly those who live or work in it.

To do this, we will:

- raise awareness of the proposal and provide information on what a National Park could mean
- meet and listen to the views of the local authorities, community councils and other stakeholders
- develop and run an online engagement and consultation portal
- distribute household leaflets in and close to the bid area to ensure everyone is aware of the proposal and has an opportunity to contribute to the consultation if they wish
- hold a formal public consultation of at least 12 weeks from November 2024 to January 2025
- analyse and report on all the views expressed and by whom so that Ministers are fully sighted on any issues and concerns that have been raised.

Importantly, all of this means that the Reporter stage is about being in 'listening mode'. Nothing is ruled in or out at this stage. It is an open opportunity for people to express their thoughts, opinions and reasoning.

Implications for community councils

You can read more about how the existing National Parks work with local communities here:

- Loch Lomond & the Trossachs - <https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/how-we-can-help/communities/capacity-building-communities/>
- Cairngorms - <https://cairngorms.co.uk/working-together/supporting-communities/>

If a National Park is established in Galloway, the current role of community councils across the area will remain. Experience from Scotland's first two National Parks indicates that community councils can play a key role in the successful operation of the Park and an active part in its work. As a person living in the Park area, members of community councils can also be elected to the governing board of the National Park as a directly elected member.

How can I get in touch?

We are keen to hear from you. Contact us via email: NationalParkReporter@nature.scot
Or in writing: NatureScot, Battleby, Redgorton, Perth PH1 3EW