

The Future for National Parks in Scotland

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/nationalparkscommissionsurvey/>

1. Do you support "leadership of nature recovery and a just transition to net zero" becoming the overarching purpose of Scotland's National Parks? If not, what else would you propose?

Yes, Intelligent Health supports "leadership of nature recovery and a just transition to net zero" becoming the overarching purpose of Scotland's National Parks.

2. Which of the proposed elements of leadership and action set out in the list above do you support? What others - if any - would you propose?

We support each of the outlined elements of leadership and action, coming from an organisation that champions and promotes connection to green spaces and the building of social assets, much of what has been stated resonates with the aims of Intelligent Health.

3. What opportunities are there for National Parks to generate private investment in natural capital?

N/A

4. What role should local communities play in the National Park and how should National Park authorities work with and for them to secure a just transition?

Local communities should have the opportunity to play a significant role in the National Park. Nature Scot and the other National Park authorities should ensure that they are transparent, actively engaging with the local communities, providing facilities for feedback and consultation and ensuring that the voices of the local communities are heard throughout the transition process and beyond. Ultimately, local communities know more about their area and surroundings than any individual not living and working within that given area. They will be aware of community-based nuances, that administrative bodies will unlikely know about and also what is best for their community.

5. Do you support a "vision and mission" for all of Scotland's National Parks being clearly set out in a national statement? If not why not?

Yes, Intelligent Health supports a "vision and mission" for all of Scotland's National Parks being clearly set out in a national statement. This national statement will provide a method to hold authorities to account and indicate a level of commitment from them to actively work towards an increase of National Parks in Scotland.

6. If you favour a national statement for Scotland's National Parks being developed, what else should it cover?

The national statement for Scotland's National Parks should ensure that it includes details on tangible goals with timelines that can be referred back to. This will mean that the statement serves a purpose more than just words and indicate a formal commitment to the vision and mission.

7. To what extent should new National Parks be about the future potential of an area for nature restoration as well as what's currently in place

The new National Parks designations should be ambitious in any commitment to nature restoration where biodiversity in the area has already been impacted. Some areas may have been affected less than others and therefore an expectation should not be static for all designations and should instead consider the existing nature of the area before considering how best to set targets for the future potential of an area.

8. Are any specific changes to the existing four Aims required? If so why, and what are they?

No, Intelligent Health does not believe that any specific changes to the existing four Aims are required.

9. Which of these possible options, or mix of possible options, do you think would help strengthen the focus and contribution of National Parks, and why?

To help strengthen the focus and contribution of National Parks, the National Park Authority should ensure that the key theme "to promote the just transition to net zero," is included. Scotland as a nation is indicating high levels of commitment to its net zero targets, and it moves on to the 2022 perspective of National Parks as opposed to the outlook of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 which passed 20 years ago. By including this, it recognises the country-wide policy shift toward net zero targets and how the National Parks will play a part in this.

10. Are there other options that could be considered? If so, what are they?

N/A

11. Do you think there should be any changes to the wording in the Act to require public bodies to support delivery of National Park Plans? If so, what would you propose?

N/A

12. Do you have any other suggestions for improving partnership working to support the implementation of the National Park Plan by all?

Intelligent Health would recommend that the National Park authority ensures that it is consulting and working with other local organisations from across sectors to enable a whole-

system approach to implementing the National Park Plan. National Park authorities should consider working with organisations that actively encourage time in green spaces, conservationist, community and physical activity groups like Intelligent Health and Paths for All to ensure that the implementation of the National Park Plan considers all stakeholders.

13. Could any of the existing powers and functions be used more effectively? If so, which ones and how?

N/A

14. Are any of the existing powers or functions redundant or unnecessary? If so, which ones and why?

N/A

15. What, if any, changes to the powers and functions in these areas should be considered and why?

Intelligent Health would advocate that all of the above powers and functions should be considered. However, as an organisation we can only speak on the perspective of the following: Improving enjoyment of nature and community well-being and development. We believe that these areas can be considered as a standalone, as ultimately, enjoying time spent out in nature is a pivotal factor in positive community (and individual) well-being. National Park Authorities should be championing spending time in nature alongside community well-being and development. Intelligent Health delivers the popular community-led initiative Beat the Street. Beat the Street turns a whole area into one big game that incentivises communities to walk, wheel and cycle across their village, town or city to win points. The game encourages active travel, and has behaviour change evidence for up to two years following a game. Whilst it uses active travel as a means to tackle health inequalities, it also has vast benefits in encouraging improved sense of place through spending more time out and about in local green and blue spaces and improved community cohesion. The National Park authorities should also be embodying this level of community involvement by encouraging the enjoyment of nature, and as such these functions must be pivotal to their powers to take forward the refreshed vision and mission.

16. Are there any other areas where strengthened or new powers and functions will be needed by the National Park Authority? If so, what are they?

N/A

17. Should the powers and functions of National Park Authorities be decided on a Park by Park basis? Should any apply to all National Park Authorities? If so, which ones and why?

N/A

18. Are there any changes you would want to see to the governance and management arrangements of all National Park Authorities?

N/A

19. Are these the key elements of an effective nomination process for National Parks in Scotland?

N/A

20. Do you have suggestions for improving any of the specific elements of the process?

N/A

21. Are there additional elements you want to see included, and if so, what are these?

N/A

22. Do you agree that outstanding national importance should be a criterion? Could the clarity of it be improved and, if so, how?

Yes, Intelligent Health agrees that outstanding national importance should be a criterion. However, potential nature recovery should be considered, and national importance should not be deemed as something static or limited in designation. For example, importance of something can be subjective. If a green space has the potential for nature recovery but may not otherwise be of "outstanding value," the National Park authority may want to consider consulting with those living and working in these potential areas to deem as to whether a green or blue space holds local importance and is, therefore, deserving of National Park status. We believe this provides an opportunity to build price in place, and with a designation in place, will encourage more enjoyment of the green and blue spaces within it connecting more people to nature and the natural environment.

23. Do you agree with the proposed components? Are any components missing and, if so, what are they?

Yes, Intelligent Health agrees with the proposed components.

24. Do you agree with size and coherence as a criterion? Could the clarity of it be improved and, if so, how?

Yes, Intelligent Health agrees with size and coherence as a criterion. We welcome the recognition that these green or blue spaces may also contain associated settlements as much of the natural environment is not completely untouched. This allows for a much more inclusive solution to designating National Parks available for all to enjoy and removes some limits that could mean some particularly scenic settlements could have otherwise missed out on National Park status. As in the response to Question 22, this will provide more of an opportunity for green and blue spaces to be enjoyed by all.

25. Do you agree with the proposed components? Are any components missing and, if so, what are they?

Yes, Intelligent Health agrees with the proposed components.

26. Do you support the consideration of the potential contribution of the National Park in delivering nature recovery and a just transition to net zero as criterion? Could the clarity of it be improved and, if so, how?

Yes, Intelligent Health supports the consideration of the potential contribution of the National Park in delivering nature recovery and a just transition to net zero as criterion. Community use of green spaces actively assists towards the Scottish Government's net zero targets through the promotion of active travel, National Parks have an opportunity to work towards targets for walking and cycling for leisure and travel.

27. Do you agree with the proposed components? Are any components missing and, if so, what are they?

Yes, Intelligent Health agrees with the proposed components.

28. Do you support the assessment of the merits of a National Park compared to existing or other approaches as a criterion? Could the clarity of it be improved and, if so, how?

Yes, Intelligent Health supports the assessment of the merits of a National Park compared to existing or other approaches as a criterion.

29. Do you agree with the proposed components? Are any components missing and, if so, what are they?

Yes, Intelligent Health agrees with the proposed components.

30. Do you support the consideration of existing support as a criterion? Could the clarity of it be improved?

Intelligent Health wholeheartedly supports the consideration of existing support as a criterion. Local buy-in, support and consultation should play a significant role in the designation of a

National Park. These individuals, groups and businesses will likely be the communities to benefit most from the designation, but it must be something that the local community wants for themselves as opposed to it being placed upon a local community that does not want it. Consideration must also be taken from a tourism perspective, if local infrastructure is ready for a potential tourism boost and how the designation could have impact (both positive and negative) on local business, if the local authority has the resource to maintain upkeep or will the National Park rely heavily on volunteers? All of this must be considered, and local supporters and future supporters correctly informed and consulted with before any conclusive decisions about National Park designations are made.

31. Do you agree with the proposed components? Are any components missing and, if so, what are they?

Yes, Intelligent Health agrees with the proposed components.

32. Do you support the assessment of the strategic contribution of an area as a criterion? Could the clarity of it be improved?

Yes, Intelligent Health supports the assessment of the strategic contribution of an area as a criterion.

33. Do you agree with the proposed components? Are any components missing and, if so, what are they?

Yes, Intelligent Health agrees with the proposed components.

34. Are there any significant issues that are not covered by the proposed criteria? If so, what are they?

N/A

35. Do you think any of the criteria are more important than others? If so, which ones and why?

Whilst Intelligent Health cannot speak readily on all of the criteria with it not being an area of specialism for our organisation, we would just like to reiterate the importance of engaging with the local communities in any potential National Park designation. These stakeholders will know more about the local area and interests of the local communities than anyone operating outside of this area and their voices must be heard. Consultation is key before imposing any substantial changes and buy-in is needed from local stakeholders if we are to see significant success.

36. Do you think the selection criteria and proposed components provide the right balance between covering the issues required and simplicity? If not, how could they be improved?

Yes, Intelligent Health thinks that the selection criteria and proposed components provide the right balance between covering the issues required and simplicity.

37. Should more of the proposed components be quantifiable? If so, which ones, and how?

N/A

38. Are there any other issues about either Scotland's approach to National Parks or the selection of new National Parks you would like to raise in your response at this stage?

N/A