

CAMPAIGN FOR A
SCOTTISH
BORDERS
NATIONAL PARK

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PLEASE RESPOND TO: marionjanelivingston@yahoo.co.uk

Dear Community Councillors,

Scottish Borders National Park: your feedback on boundaries and visitor management, please

You may be aware that the Scottish Government has committed to the creation of at least one new National Park before 2026. A two-month consultation is now underway, which will lead next year to the evaluation of those proposals submitted - including one for a Scottish Borders National Park (SBNP). Several of the SBNP team are CC members so we are acutely aware of CCs' need to deal with pressing local issues. However, we are also all too aware of the need to plan ahead for the sake of current and future generations, so your feedback as a CC, or as individuals in a personal capacity, will be invaluable. Enclosed is our recent newsletter with, on the back page, a map and succinct details of the Scottish Borders proposal. Key considerations are:

National Park boundaries: the current proposal centres the new National Park on the old county of Roxburgh. However, this is just to start discussion – where do YOU think the boundaries should be? Please remember the internationally-recognised 'halo' effect of benefits that ripple out from a National Park to areas in close proximity to it. The sheer strength of the National Park brand, which is instantly and internationally recognised, would put the Scottish Borders 'on the map' almost overnight. It would also provide the massive – and permanent - marketing muscle needed to attract greater inward investment and interest in the region's unique events (ie the Border towns' riding festivals, Tweed Valley's Enduro cycling marathon, the Golden Eagle Festival and the Jim Clark Rally), cultural experiences (ie Trimontium, Traquair, Abbotsford and Paxton House plus the four medieval abbeys) and major initiatives like Destination Tweed.

National Park Authority functions: the Scottish Borders proposal envisages a slimline, cost-efficient model - annual cost of @ £2.3 million funded by the Scottish Government, with **NO** planning function (no point in duplicating SBC's Planning Department), and which collaborates with existing facilities to boost footfall. This is very different from existing National Parks but entirely permissible under Scottish legislation.

Visitor management: the post-pandemic increase of visitors to many parts of the countryside has not been universally welcome but a National Park here will never attract the volume of visitors who travel to the more dramatic landscapes such as the Lake District and we need face up to the fact that more visitors – and local residents – want to experience the great outdoors. Acknowledging the challenges of increased footfall where many local people live and work, the SBNP team has examined the experiences/best practices of parks elsewhere to see how best a new National Park here could manage the main issues (see How to Keep (Almost) Everyone in the Countryside Happy, and the independent feasibility study for a National Park in the Scottish Borders under RESOURCES at: www.scottishbordersnationalpark.com). The key is having sufficient boots on the ground, so the SBNP proposes a pan-Borders Ranger Corps working with emergency services, game-keepers, ghillies and farmers to inform, educate, direct, monitor and if required, police the new National Park.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

With kind regards

Marion Livingston, SBNP team member