

31 January 2019

Local Development Plan
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells
Melrose TD6 0SA
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Dear Sir or Madam

**Local Development Plan 2 Main Issues Report
Response to NATIONAL PARK QUESTION 14: Do you support the designation of a National Park within the Scottish Borders? If so, which general area do you think a National Park should cover?**

We are writing in response to the above question in the Main Issues Report of the Local Development Plan consultation. Ramblers Scotland helps everyone, across Scotland, enjoy walking and protects the places we love to walk. We are the representative body for walkers in Scotland and are recognised by **sportscotland** as a governing body of sport. We are a membership organisation with 54 local walking groups in Scotland, running 3,500 group walks a year. These include groups based in Tweeddale, Melrose and Coldstream, and many of our other groups regularly visit the Scottish Borders to walk.

Ramblers Scotland has long supported the proposal to set up a ministerially-led national parks strategy group to carry out a review of existing national parks and consider locations for future national parks. We backed efforts within the then Scottish Executive to establish a coastal and marine national park in 2006, and in 2013 we supported the recommendations of the [Unfinished Business](#) report by the Scottish Campaign for National Parks and Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland, which identified seven potential search areas including one which covers an area within the Scottish Borders.

In principle we support the proposal to consider a new national park centred on Scottish Borders, if there is strong local backing for this proposal. We recognise the value of national parks in promoting rural economic development while also bringing higher levels of protection to our most treasured landscapes and our natural and cultural heritage, and acting as a focus for outdoor recreation. National parks can bring significant social and economic benefit, directly through the work generated in park planning and management, but also indirectly through tourism.

We note the options for the possible borders of a national park which are set out in the feasibility study commissioned by the Campaign for a Scottish Borders National Park. At this stage we have no strong opinion on where the exact boundary should lie. However, if the proposal is taken further we would be happy to be involved in these discussions and to facilitate the involvement of our members in any consultations.

We would be happy to discuss these issues further.

Yours faithfully

Helen Todd
Campaigns & policy manager

Convener: Alison Mitchell
President: Ben Dolphin
Director: Jess Dolan

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