



Perth and Kinross Council

Tay Forest National Park Consultation Analysis

Draft report

Prepared by LUC

January 2024



Perth and Kinross Council

**Tay Forest National Park
Consultation Analysis**

Project Number
12641

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Overview

1.1 The Scottish Government's 'A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021-22'¹² committed to establish at least one new national park (NP) in Scotland by the end of the current Parliamentary session in 2026. The Scottish Government then undertook public consultation in May 2022 on what people value about Scottish National Parks, and what these areas should deliver in future. This explored in particular, how they can help to protect and restore nature, tackle climate change and promote sustainable land use. The Scottish Government set out the proposed timetable and announced the beginning of the nomination process in October 2023, inviting communities and organisations to submit proposals for their area to be designated as a national park³. In March 2023, in recognition of the forthcoming nomination process, Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) made budget provision to support a bid submission for a new National Park in Highland Perthshire, called the Tay Forest National Park (TFNP). This facilitated the bid preparation process, including community and stakeholder engagement.

1.2 . The Council recognises the importance of community and stakeholder consultation and carried out an extensive consultation exercise between October and December 2023. The key aim of this was to ensure that the bid submission and the selected vision for the NP reflects the views and priorities of the many different people that live and work in the area.

1.3 This report provides a summary of the key findings derived from the stakeholder and community engagement. It is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1** (this chapter) provides a summary of the consultation process.
- **Chapter 2** provides an overview of headline findings, including overall support for the proposal and support, broken down geographically and by interest/group.
- **Chapter 3** sets out a summary of findings relating to the proposed indicative TFNP boundary.
- **Chapter 4** provides a summary of findings relating to the most important special qualities of the local area.
- **Chapter 5** provides a summary of findings on the main priorities and opportunities identified for the area, organised by theme.
- **Chapter 6** provides a summary of feedback from the targeted land manager engagement.
- **Chapter 7** provides a summary of feedback from the targeted workshop with environmental organisations.
- **Chapter 8** sets out next steps.

Community and stakeholder engagement

1.4 The engagement period ran for eight weeks, from 6th October 2023 to 1st December 2023. The engagement comprised an online survey, community drop in events, targeted workshops with land managers and environmental organisations, and an online webinar.

1.5 Quantitative data presented in this analysis is derived from the responses received to closed questions on the online survey. This analysis is supplemented by qualitative data derived from responses to open survey questions, post-it notes left at drop-in consultation events, verbal feedback recorded by Council and LUC staff at the consultation events, email submissions and notes taken at stakeholder workshops.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-greener-scotland-programme-government-2021-22/>

² New National Parks for Scotland - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

³ New National Parks in Scotland - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Online Survey

1.6 An online survey was hosted on PKC's consultation hub website⁴ for the duration of the consultation period. Questions aimed to:

- Gather information about the survey respondent (e.g. location, main interest),
- The respondent's level of support for their community being within a NP,
- The respondent's thoughts on the proposed indicative boundary, and
- What the respondent believes the special features of the area are and the areas which require improvement.

1.7 The full content of the survey is presented in **Appendix A**. In total, there were 352 responses to the online survey during the consultation period.

Public drop-in events

1.8 Five public drop-in events were held at locations throughout the proposed TFNP area. Display boards presented information on the bid, the proposed boundary, mapping of the existing assets of the local area and an overview of the potential benefits and opportunities of a NP. Staff from LUC and PKC were available to answer questions, record verbal feedback and attendees were also encouraged to provide feedback on post-it notes and via the online survey.

1.9 The locations for events were chosen to allow people to attend throughout the proposed TFNP area. Accessible venues were selected and the timing of events extending from late afternoon into the early evening to allow people to attend who work during the day. Events were held at (see **Figure 1.2**):

- Dunkeld (Royal School of Dunkeld, Monday 30th October, 15:30 -18:45): **30 attendees**
- Pitlochry (Pitlochry High School, Wednesday 1st November, 16:00-19:00): **18 attendees**
- Comrie (Comrie Primary School, Tuesday 7th November, 15:30 – 18:45): **35 attendees**
- Aberfeldy (Breadalbane Community Campus, Thursday 9th November, 15:30 – 18:45): **45 attendees**
- Crieff (Strathearn Community Campus, Wednesday 15th November, 15:30 – 18:45): **34 attendees**

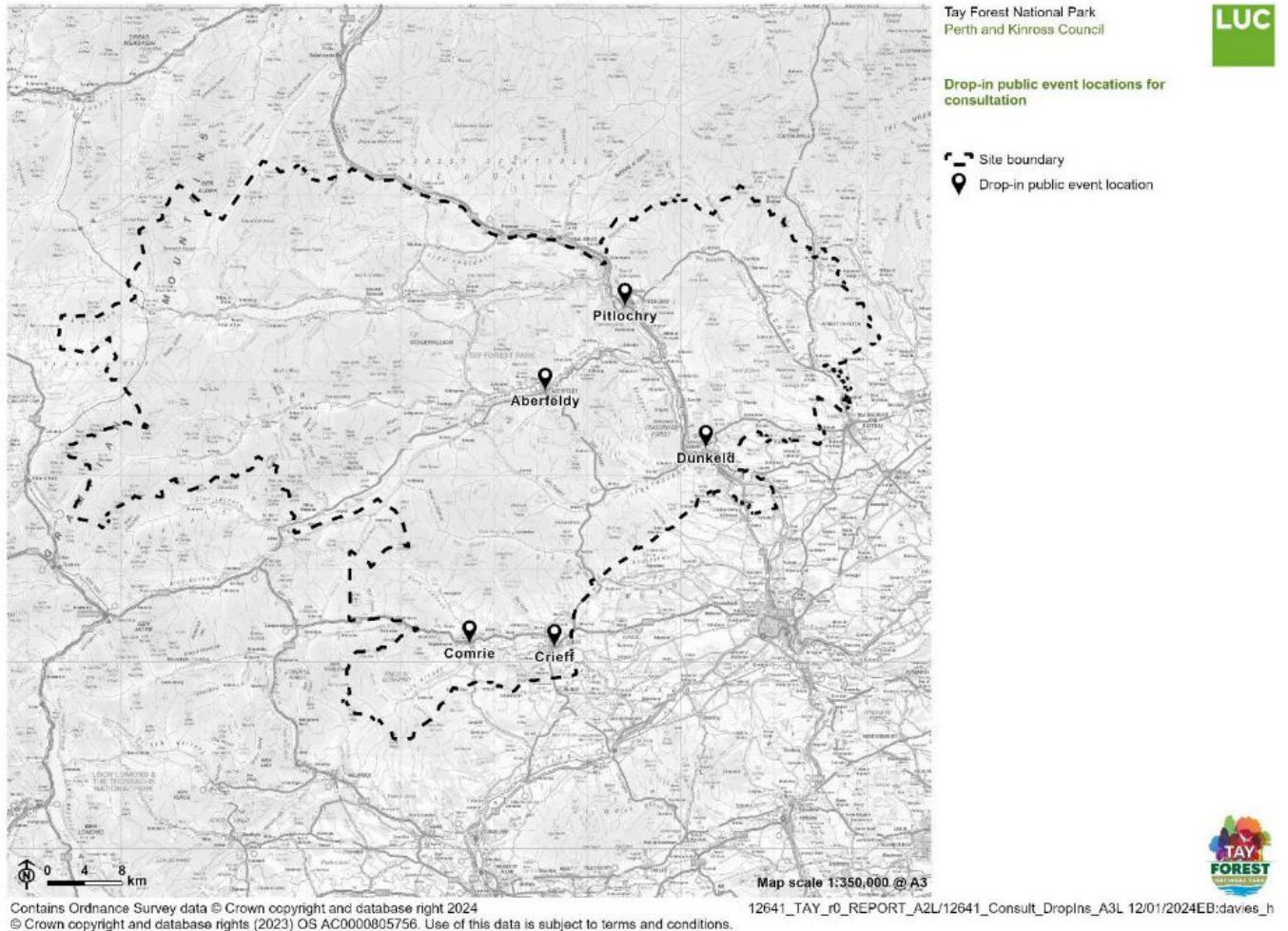
1.10 An online event was also hosted on Microsoft Teams on Friday 24th November (10:00 – 11:30) with the purpose of providing an opportunity to respond to any final questions on the bid and allow those unable to attend the drop-in sessions to ask questions and provide feedback. The online session was held in webinar format with attendees able to type-in questions.

1.11 The Provost led a final Q&A session in Pitlochry on the 28th November.



⁴ <https://consult.pkc.gov.uk/communities/tay-forest-national-park-consultation/>

Figure 1.1: Public drop-in event locations



Targeted consultation events

1.12 Two targeted consultation events were held specifically for landowners and managers and environmental organisations. These groups were recognised as being important stakeholders and their interests expected to have a different focus to that of wider communities. The format of sessions (in-person/online) was chosen based on feedback from representatives of those groups.

- A workshop for landowners and land managers (e.g. farmers, estate owners/managers, those employed in certain land management roles), was held at Pitlochry Town Hall on Thursday 16th November). This event was organised in coordination with National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) and Scottish Land and Estates (SLE). Further details of the event are provided within Land Manager Consultation **chapter** of this report.
- Nature Voices workshop (Microsoft Teams, Thursday 23rd November). Further details are provided within the Environmental Organisations Consultation chapter of this report.

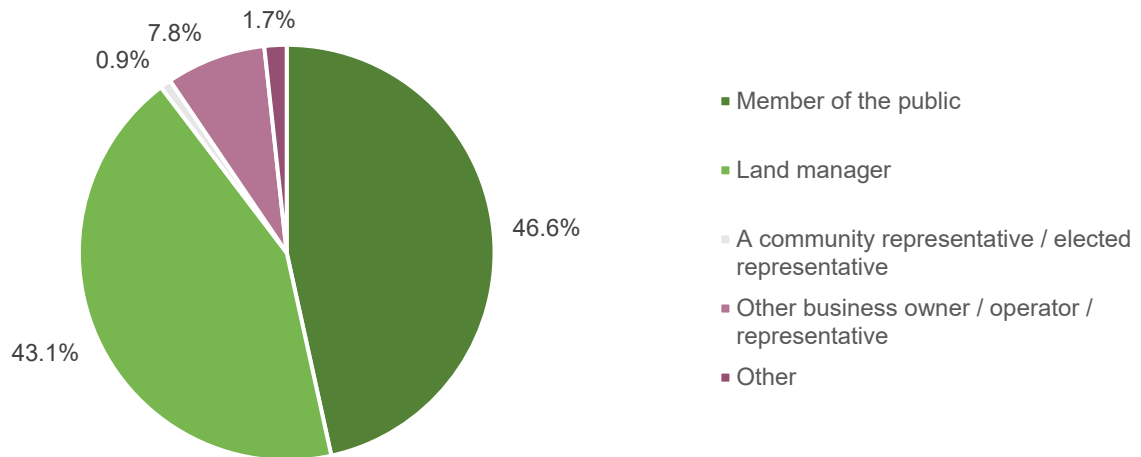
Chapter 2

Summary Findings

Headline data

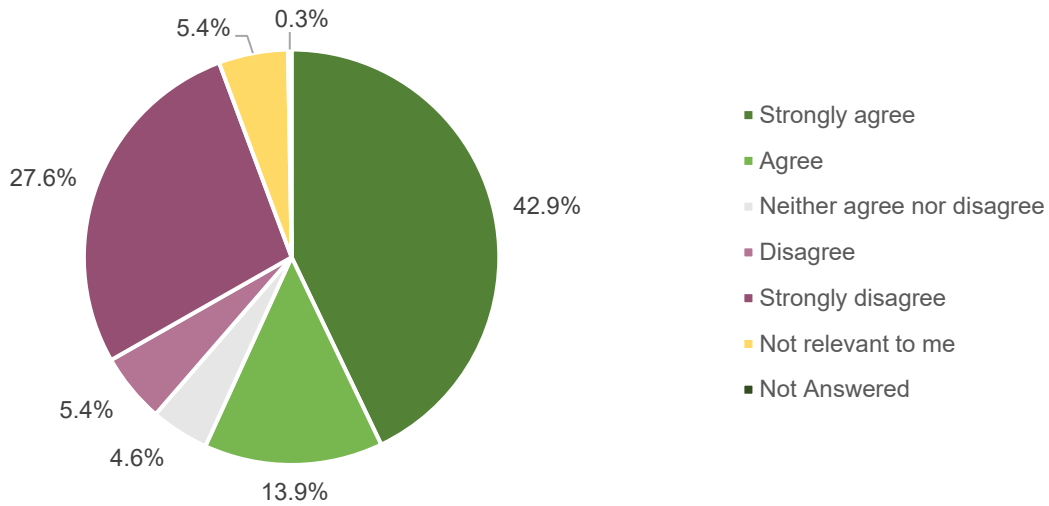
2.1 In total, there were 352 responses to the online survey. It was recognised that respondents may have interest in the bid from several perspectives, however, to ensure that conclusions could be drawn on the interest of different groups, respondents were asked to identify the primary category from which they were responding to the survey. **Figure 2.1** provides the breakdown of the main interests of survey respondents.

Figure 2.1: Main interest of survey respondents: 'I am...'



2.2 Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with their community being within a new NP. **Figure 2.2** summarises overall levels of support for the proposal.

Figure 2.2: 'To what extent do you agree with your community being in a national park in northern Perthshire?'



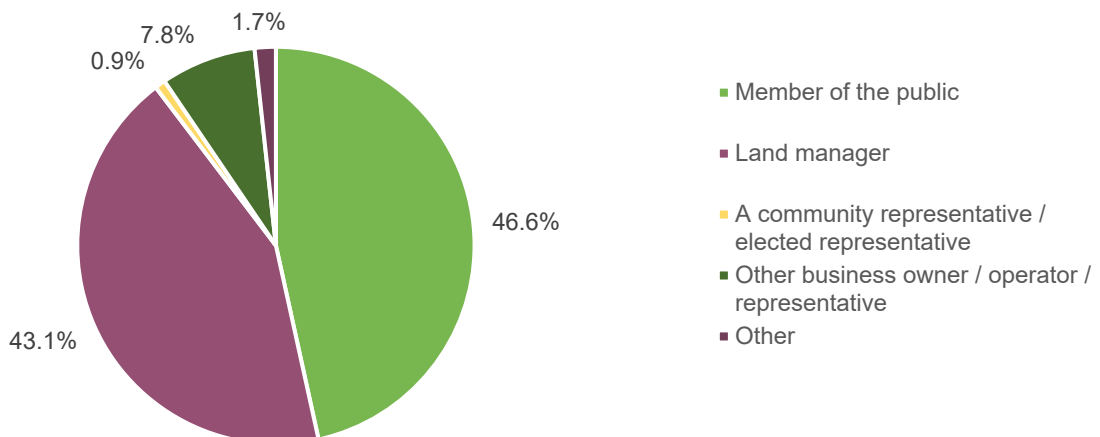
2.3 Overall, there was general support for the proposed NP in the local area, with **56.8% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing** with the idea of their community being located in the proposed NP.

2.4 33% stated that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with their community being in a NP in northern Perthshire. The remaining 10.3% of respondents did not answer, felt the question was not relevant to them, or neither agreed nor disagreed.

2.5 **Figure 2.3** illustrates the main interests of the 33% of total respondents who disagree with the proposal. Of this group of respondents:

- 46% are members of the public;
- 43% are land managers; and
- the other 11% consists of other businesses owners/operators/representatives (8%), community/elected representatives (1%) and other (2%).

Figure 2.3: Interest of survey respondents who disagree / strongly disagree with a NP in the local area: 'I am a...'



Overall support for a new National Park by respondent group

2.6 The following charts break down overall support for a new NP by survey respondents by main group/interest (see Figures 2.4 – 2.8). Members of the public, community representatives/elected officials, and representatives of charities/conservation groups expressed the most support for a new NP, with business owners and land managers expressing less support.

Figure 2.4: Members of the public (total: 236)

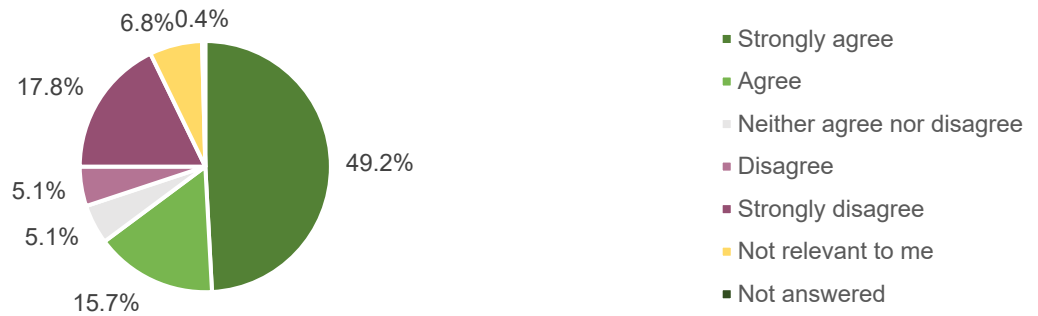


Figure 2.5: Land managers (total: 64)



Figure 2.6: Community representatives / elected officials (total: 4)

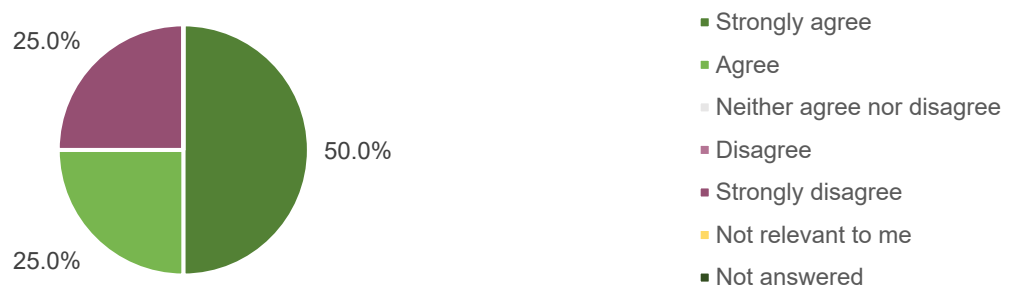


Figure 2.7: Charity / conservation group representative (total: 10)

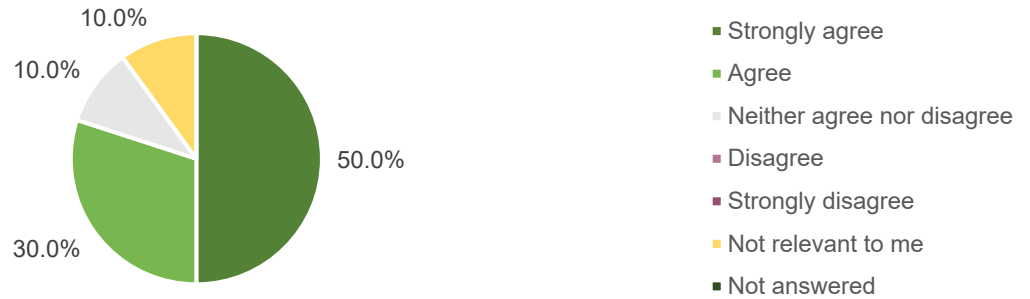
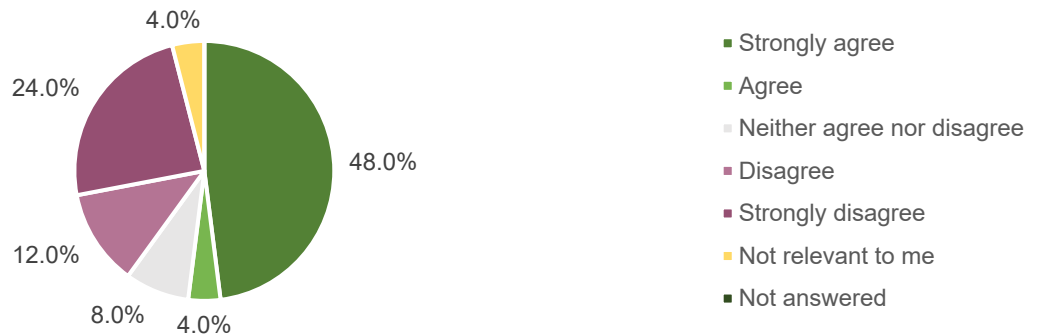


Figure 2.8: Other business owner / operator / representative (total: 25)



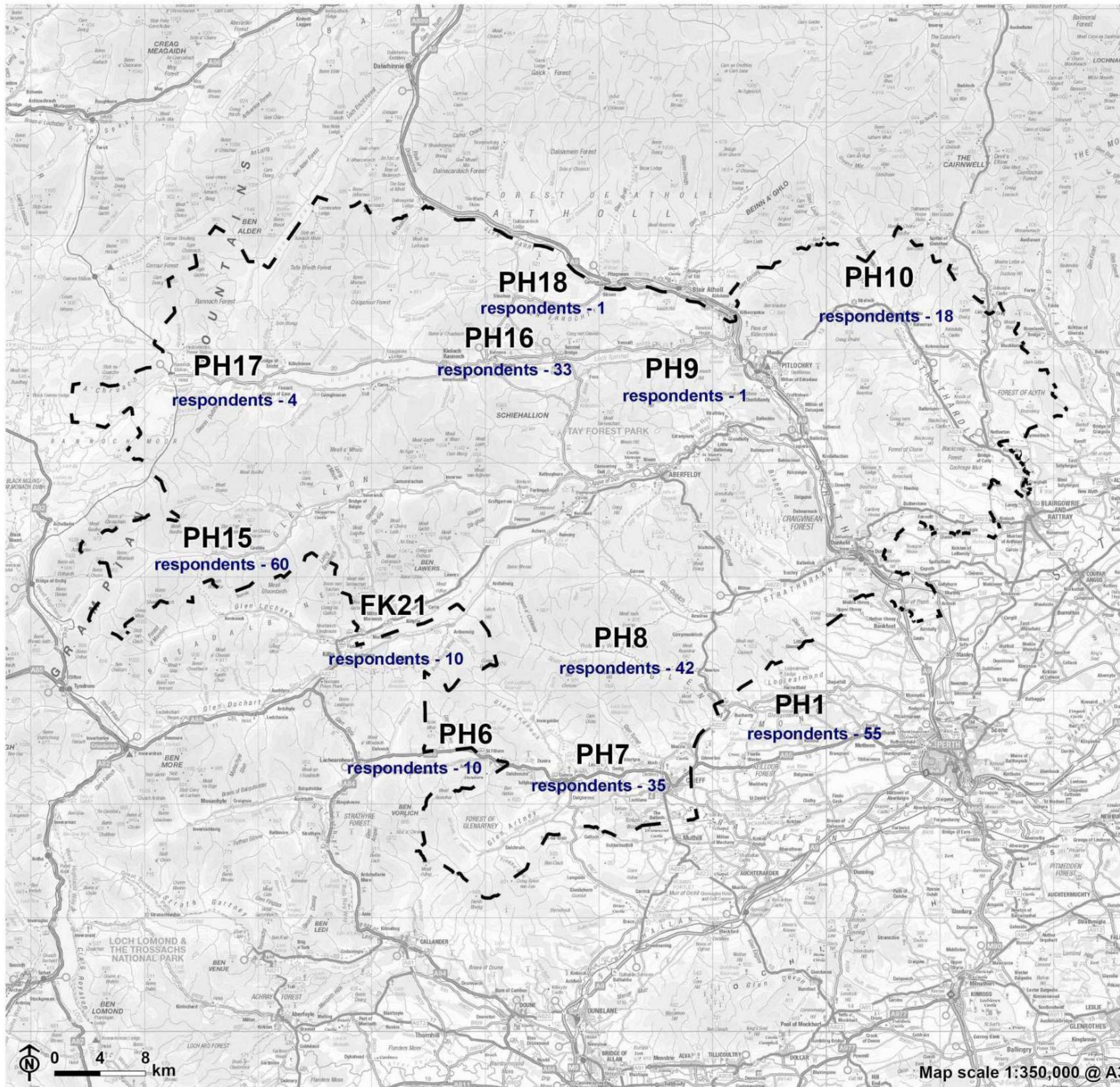
Overall support by geography

Overall support by postcode area

2.7 The following section provides an overview of support, broken down by postcode. **Figure 2.9** illustrates the number of survey respondents within each postcode area of Perth and Kinross Council (PKC).

Figure 2.9: Survey respondents by postcode area

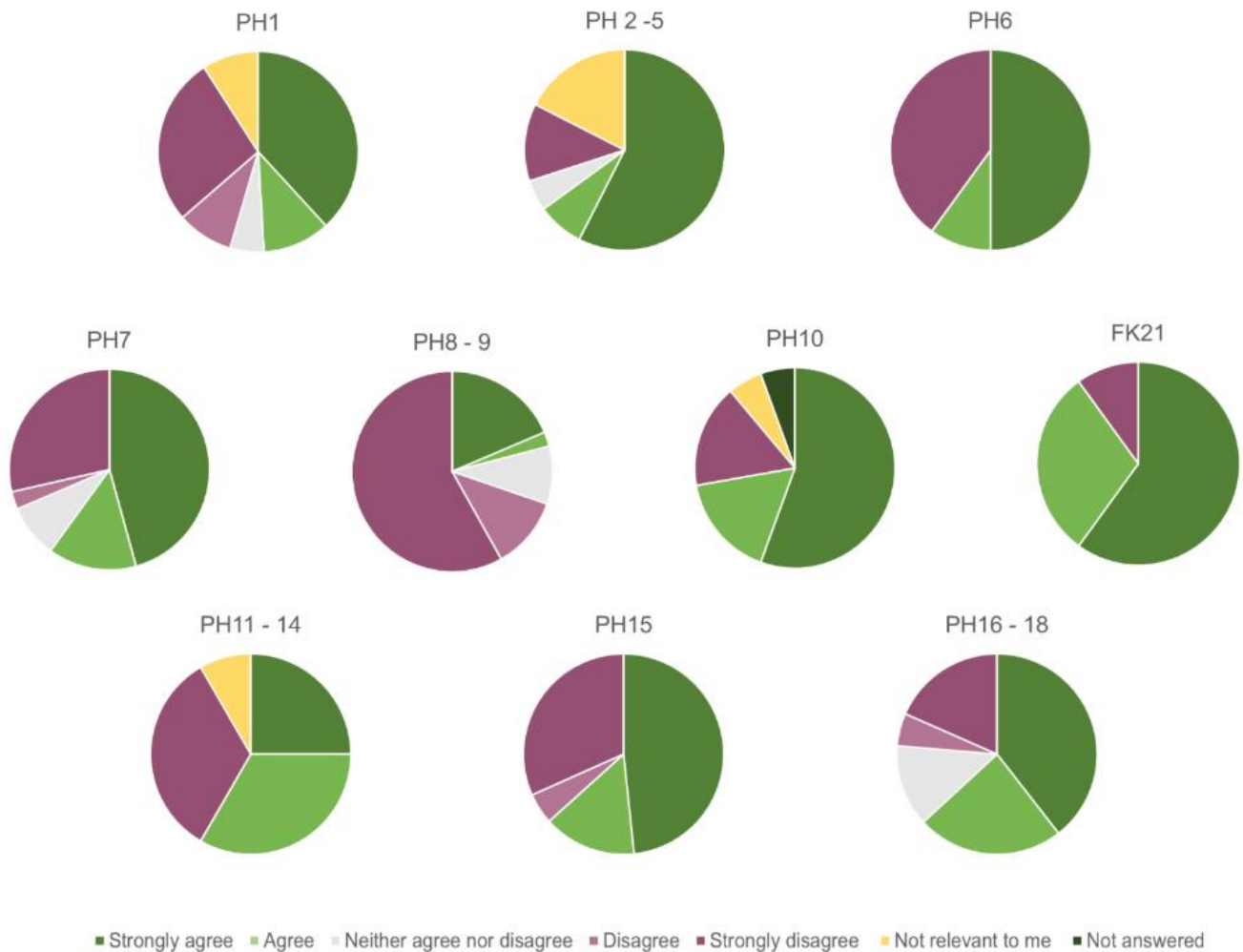
■ Site boundary



Map scale 1:350,000 @ A3

2.8 It must be noted that the number of survey responses varied significantly across the region, and therefore postcode areas with low numbers of respondents (less than five) have been grouped in with neighbouring postcode areas for the following analysis. **Figure 2.10** illustrates the extent to which residents agree with the proposal of a NP in their local area.

Figure 2.10: Support by postcode area: ‘To what extent do you agree with your community being in a NP in northern Perthshire?’



2.9 There are generally high levels of support within postcode areas PH2 - PH7, PH10, and PH11 – PH18 (over 50% agree / strongly agree). Of areas within the proposed TFNP⁵, highest levels of support are identified within PH10, FK21 and PH15 - PH18 (over 60% agree / strongly agree). Lower levels of support (over 60% disagree / strongly disagree) for the proposal are identified within PH8/9 (areas around Dunkeld, Birnam and Amulree).

Overall support by nearest settlement

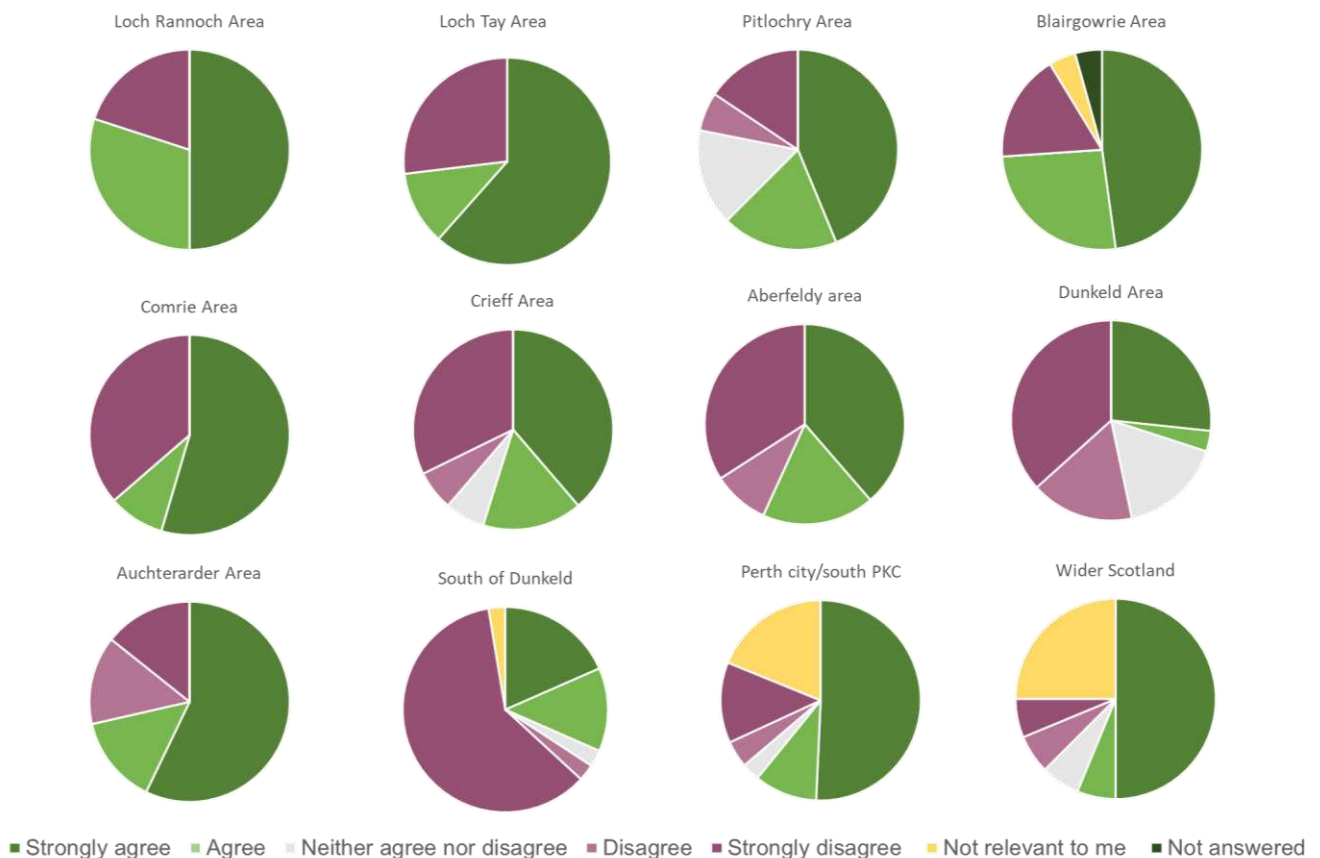
2.10 Respondents were asked to identify their nearest settlement. **Table 2.1** provides an overview of the grouped geographical areas in the ‘nearest settlement’ analysis and the number of survey respondents within these areas. **Figure 2.12** provides a breakdown of overall support for the designation of the TFNP within these areas.

⁵ Note: some postcode areas are only partly located within the proposed TFNP and it is unknown how many respondents from these postcodes live within the proposed boundary.

Table 2.1: Nearest settlements - grouped settlements

Area	'Nearest settlements' grouped	Total survey respondents
Aberfeldy area	Aberfeldy, Grandtully, Strathtay	44
Auchterarder area	Auchterarder, Braco, Muthill, St. David's	7
Blairgowrie area	Blairgowrie, Alyth, Ballintuim, Kirkmichael	23
Comrie area	Comrie, St. Fillans	11
Crieff area	Crieff, Gilmerton	31
Dunkeld area	Dunkeld, Little Dunkeld, Birnam, Dalguise	30
Loch Rannoch area	Kinloch Rannoch, Rannoch, Foss	11
Loch Tay area	Ardeonaig, Fearnan, Fortingall, Keltneyburn, Kenmore, Killin, Milton Morenish, Tombreck Lawers	26
Perth city/south PKC	Perth, Scone, Bridge of Earn, Milnathort, Abernethy, Almondbank, Ballbeggie, Errol, Forgandenny, Kilspindie, Kinnesswood, Kinross, Longforgan, Powmill, Methven, St. Madoes	69
Pitlochry area	Pitlochry, Moulin	32
South of Dunkeld	Murthly, Amulree, Stanley, Bankfoot, Burrelton, Caputh, Guildtown, Luncarty, Logiealmond, Glenalmond	38
Wider Scotland	Aberdeen, Carnoustie, Dunbar, Dunblane, Dundee, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Elgin, Glasgow, Ballmedie, Buckpool, Kirriemuir.	17

Figure 2.11: Support by nearest settlement (grouped): 'To what extent do you agree with your community being in a NP in northern Perthshire?'



2.11 There are generally higher levels of support around Loch Rannoch, Loch Tay, Auchterarder and Blairgowrie⁶ (over 70% of respondents selected agree / strongly agree). Overall support (50-70% of respondents selected agree / strongly agree) is also identified around Pitlochry, Comrie, Crieff, Aberfeldy, wider PKC and wider Scotland. However, lower levels of support (less than 40% of respondents selected agree / strongly agree) are identified around Dunkeld and areas south of Dunkeld (around Amulree, Glenalmond and the River Tay corridor north of Perth).

Key Findings

- Overall, there was general support for the proposed NP in the local area, with 56.8% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the idea of their community being located in the proposed NP.
- The greatest levels of support for the proposal (by group) are from charity / conservation group representatives (80% agree / strongly agree), community representatives / elected officials (75% agree / strongly agree), and members of the public (64.9% agree / strongly disagree).
- The lowest level of support for the proposal (by group) is from land managers (78.1% disagree / strongly disagree).
- There were generally high levels of support across most postcode areas within the proposed TFNP⁵. Highest levels of support were identified within FK21 (90.0% agree / strongly agree), PH10 (72.2% agree / strongly agree), PH15 (63.3% agree / strongly agree) and PH16 - 18 (63.2% agree / strongly agree).
- Lower levels of support (by postcode) are identified within PH8 (areas around Dunkeld, Birnam and Amulree) (69.8% disagree / strongly disagree).
- Similar locational analysis was carried out based on nearest settlement. Highest levels of support were identified around Loch Rannoch, Loch Tay, Auchterarder and Blairgowrie⁶ (over 70% agree / strongly agree). General support was identified across most other areas within the proposed TFNP with the exception of areas around Dunkeld.

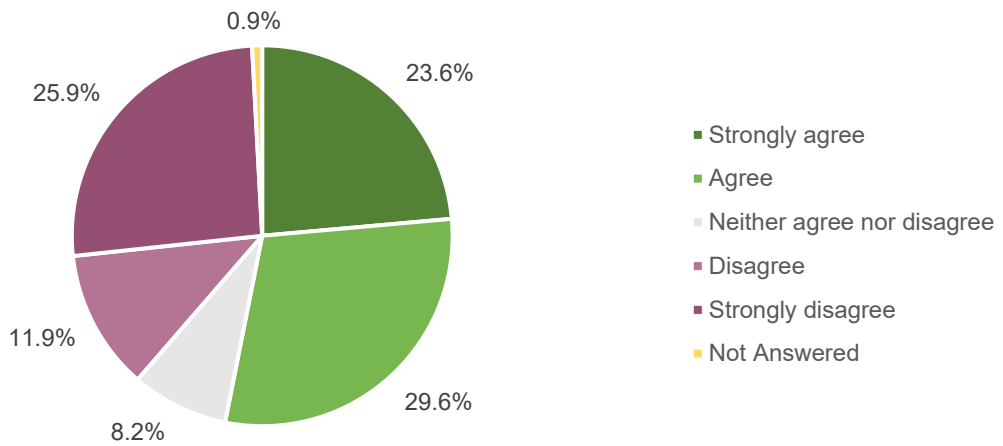
⁶ Note: the settlements of Auchterarder and Blairgowrie are not themselves within the proposed TFNP boundary. However, respondents noting them as their closest settlement may be located in areas within the proposed TFNP/close to the boundary.

Chapter 3 Proposed National Park Boundary

Survey results

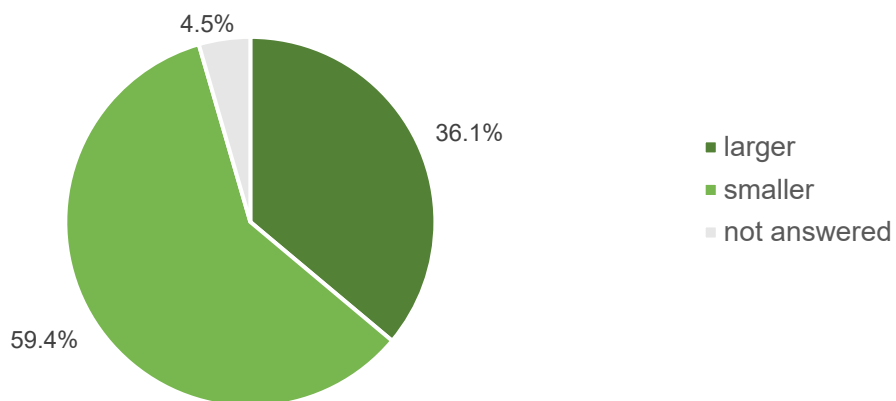
3.1 Respondents to the consultation were asked to provide feedback on the proposed boundary for the TFNP. A map showing the proposed boundary was presented as part of the consultation materials. Feedback was sought on the location of the boundary and areas of Perthshire which should be included or excluded. Quantitative feedback from the online survey is set out below and is supported by comments provided (both online and at public events).

Figure 3.1: Proposed indicative boundary: ‘Do you agree/disagree with the indicative boundary as currently proposed?’



3.2 In total, 53.1% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed indicative boundary. 37.8% of survey respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed with the indicative boundary. Respondents who disagreed with the proposed boundary were asked whether they thought it should be larger or smaller.

Figure 3.2: Proposed indicative boundary: ‘If you disagree with the indicative boundary proposed, do you think that it should be...’



3.3 A summary of the comments provided by respondents who thought the boundary should be altered is provided below.

The boundary area should be smaller...

- 3.4** 59.5% (79 respondents) of respondents who disagreed with the indicative boundary felt that it should be smaller. Of these:
- 59 disagreed with the concept of TFNP entirely and therefore did not have further comments about which areas were included/excluded.
 - Three respondents expressed concerns about the overall size and diversity of the area generally (i.e. the TFNP would cover a very large area. One comment noted that the area would lack clear purpose and have too many competing objectives).
 - Five respondents proposed removal of settlements (i.e. removal of larger urban areas). These were:
 - Removal of Crieff and Comrie unless they are very keen to be included.
 - Exclusion of Comrie, Crieff and Dunkeld with the southern boundary following the south side of Loch Tay to Aberfeldy.
 - Exclude urban areas as much as possible e.g. exclude Crieff.
 - Exclude the busiest areas (e.g. Dunkeld and Pitlochry). Some of these areas are already suffering from the effects of high-levels of tourism (e.g. traffic, parking, housing shortages, concentration of short-term-lets etc.) and their inclusion in the NP could exacerbate existing problems with increased visitor numbers.
 - Exclude towns generally. There is potential risk that these larger towns could dominate and detract benefits away from other areas of the park.
 - 7 respondents provided comments relating to the specific refinement of the boundary. These included suggestions for:
 - Greater consideration for landscape features, ensuring the indicative boundary made geographical sense. For example, moving the boundary at the A9 to just south of the Birnam junction, where there is a distinct change in the landscape character. The boundary would therefore better follow the Highland fault line and make more topographical sense.
 - Ensuring that the boundary line did not bisect an area of land ownership.
 - Specific requests for land ownership areas to be excluded e.g. exclusion of Murthly Estate.

The boundary area should be larger

- 3.5** 14% (45 respondents) of total survey respondents felt that the indicative boundary should cover a larger area. In particular:
- 21 respondents noted that the proposed indicative boundary of TFNP would leave a NP 'gap' between the boundary of TFNP and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park (LLTNP). This area, which covers Glen Lochay, Glen Beich and Ardeonaig, falls out with PKC and is located within Stirling Council. Individuals proposed that the TFNP boundary should be extended, or that PKC should engage with Stirling Council, ensuring that there is a cohesive and continuous link between LLTNP, TFNP and Cairngorms NP.
 - Six respondents expressed 'the bigger the better' sentiments, supporting the designation of a NP generally.
 - Ten respondents supported the inclusion of areas to the east/south-east of the indicative boundary. This included areas around Blairgowrie and Rattray, Alyth, and the River Tay generally (including areas south of Dunkeld such as Stanley and Meiklour).
 - One submission requested that the boundary follows the River Tay from Murthly to Stanley, as the area is at the heart of a community-led project by the West Stormont Woodland Group to bring Taymount and Five Mile Woods into community ownership, within the wider context of the West Stormont Connect Initiative. It also notes that the area contains the Woodland Trust's Kinclaven Bluebell Wood (ancient oak woodland) and is bounded by the River Tay Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
 - Five respondents proposed the inclusion of areas to the south of the indicative boundary i.e. Muthill, Auchterarder, Gleneagles and the Ochils.

- Three respondents supported the inclusion of Perth city.
 - One respondent noted the benefit of encompassing areas to the west of the proposed indicative boundary (e.g. the whole of Rannoch Moor, Ben Alder SSSI).
 - One respondent suggested the inclusion of Clunie Lochs as there is a preservation group already set up there for visitor management.
- 3.6** Other comments provided by respondents who did not feel the indicative boundary should be smaller/bigger related to:
- Questions around the methodology for the detailed refinement of the final proposed boundary.
 - Questions of the possibility of 'joining-up' with the two existing NPs to create one big national park.

Key points for consideration in defining the boundary

The next stage in defining the proposed boundary will require:

- Further detailed analysis to inform the exact proposed boundary, including:
 - Further analysis of landscape and geographical features
 - Further engagement with landowners would be beneficial for detailed alignment of the boundary. In particular, those near to the indicative boundary edge and those who have expressed particular interest in being included/excluded from the TFNP.
- Engagement with Stirling Council and LLTNP Authority, for the identification of a proposed solution to address the NP 'gap'.

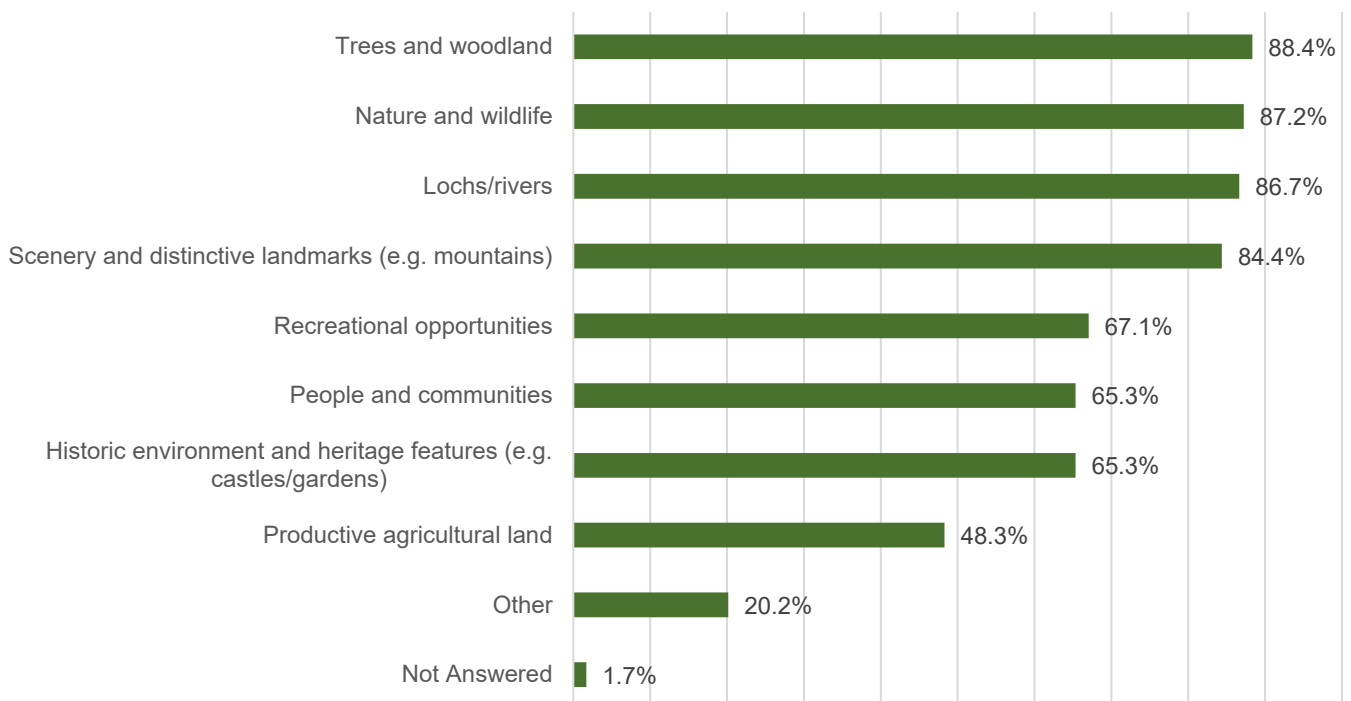
Chapter 4

Qualities of the Area

4.1 The consultation process sought views on what local people thought were the special and most important qualities of the area. This chapter provides an overview of the response to the online survey with regards to this question.

Summary of online consultation

Figure 4.1: 'What do you think are the special qualities of the area (select all that apply)'



4.2 Figure 4.1 demonstrates that the majority of survey respondents consider the area to have a wide range of special qualities, with most identifying trees and woodland, nature and wildlife, lochs/ivers and scenery as the top qualities respectively.

4.3 Where respondents selected 'other', further detail was provided. Other key features mentioned include:

- Diversity of habitats
- Specific mention of particular habitats/species (e.g. red and amber listed bird species such as curlew and black grouse, limestone with particular flora such as vascular plants, lichens and bryophytes, threatened species of butterfly and moths, semi-ancient Caledonian pine forests)
- The accessibility of the area from wider Scotland
- Cultural activities (music, art, events)
- Existing community networks, projects, and groups
- Educational opportunities
- Specific opportunities for recreation (sporting estates, fishing, cycling, wild camping)
- Economy and employment
- Opportunities for renewable energy
- Peace, tranquillity and open space

- Particular land uses including traditional hill farming
- Unique geology (e.g. the Highland boundary fault line, series of mesotrophic lochs)
- Spiritual landmarks e.g. Fortingall Church, standing stones, etc.

Key points for consideration in the bid preparation

The survey respondents consider the area to have a wide range of special qualities, with most identifying trees and woodland, nature and wildlife, lochs/rivers and scenery as the top qualities respectively.

Respondents' perceptions of the special qualities of the area have been surveyed and should be used to inform the preparation of the bid.

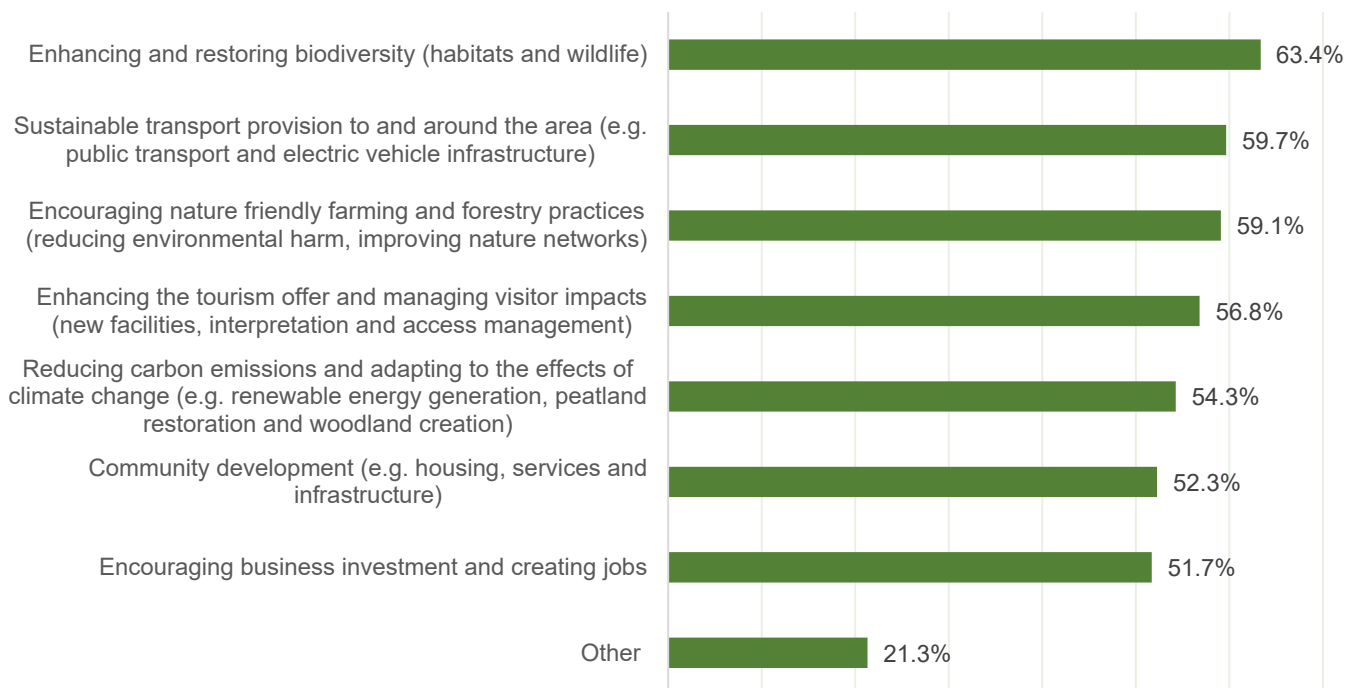
Chapter 5

Priorities and Opportunities

Summary

5.1 This section sets out the overall online survey feedback for what respondents felt were the key areas for improvement in the area. **Figure 5.1** below sets out the key things that respondents felt could be improved in the area.

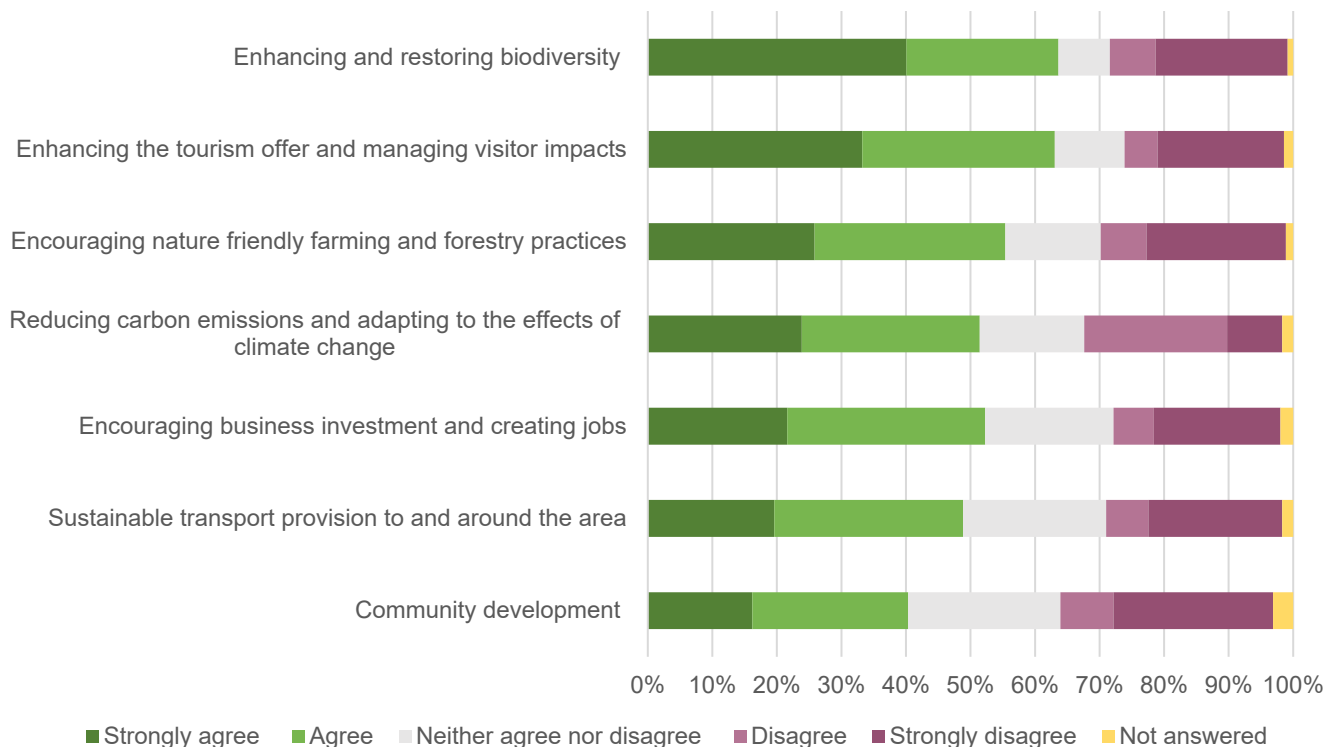
Figure 5.1: Survey feedback: 'What could be improved in the area? (tick all that apply)'



5.2 63.4% of respondents felt that local biodiversity (habitats and wildlife) require improvement in their area. Other key priorities which most people considered to need improvement include improving sustainable transport provision, encouraging nature friendly farming and forestry practices, and enhancing the tourism offer and managing visitor impacts. 21.3% of people provided suggestions for 'other' areas for improvement. These have been considered within the analysis below, organised by theme.

5.3 **Figure 5.2** below illustrates the key areas that respondents stated a NP could provide benefit.

Figure 5.2: Online survey feedback: ‘Do you think a national park would help to improve...?’



5.4 Figure 5.2 demonstrates that respondents identified that the proposed TFNP could particularly help with improving biodiversity outcomes (enhancement and restoration of habitats and wildlife), improving the tourism offer and managing visitor impacts, and encouraging nature friendly farming and forestry practices. They identified that there may be relatively less benefit for community development.

5.5 The following sections provide further qualitative analysis of responses by the priorities and opportunities that respondents identified that the proposed TFNP could or should address, organised by theme. The comments summarised below were provided both in response to the survey and at the drop-in public events.

Biodiversity and nature restoration

5.6 As illustrated in Figure 5.2, the majority of respondents stated that the creation of TFNP would support the enhancement and restoration of biodiversity in the local area (habitats and wildlife), which was ranked top for needing improvement. Qualitative data gathered, through online feedback and at public events, suggested key comments related to three main categories:

Landscape-scale ecological restoration

5.7 Several respondents, both online and in-person, felt that nature restoration should be a top priority of TFNP. In particular, opportunities were identified for large, landscape-scale improvements and joined-up working to improve habitat connectivity, reverse habitat loss and address the biodiversity crisis. Key examples include:

- Enhancing nature connectivity (e.g. wildlife corridors). This was a priority which came through strongly in consultation feedback. A number of comments specifically noted the potential for joined-up working and nature connectivity between TFNP and the two adjoining NPs (LLTNP and CNP).
- Additional funding for wildlife projects and habitat restoration across woodlands, peatlands and other habitats (e.g. wetland, ancient grasslands, heaths and moors) including a specific suggestion for river to summit habitat connectivity (River Tummel to Ben Vrackie).

- Supporting and building on the work that many local landowners and farmers are already trying to carry out. Several respondents noted that there are opportunities to link up existing projects and encourage nature connectivity.

Habitats and species

5.8 Particular comments raised with regards to habitats and species included support for:

- Rewilding projects.
- Restoration of heather moors (bracken control).
- Improved deer management, invasive species management and grouse moor management.
- Creation of wildflower-rich road verges.
- Protection of heather moorlands and the wildlife they support. Identified strongly by land managers, with 30 respondents stating this.
- Ensuring resources for enforcement against habitat destruction and wildlife persecution.
- Ensuring the long-term management of newly created / enhanced habitats.
- Recognising areas of geodiversity as an important feature

5.9 Particular habitats and species noted within responses included:

- Threatened butterflies and moths (e.g. *Boloria*, *Euphrosyne* & *Boloria selene*)
- Beavers
- Hedgerows
- Ancient woodlands
- Ancient grasslands
- Heaths
- Moorlands
- Wetlands
- Riparian
- Wild salmon
- Freshwater pearl mussels
- Raptor species e.g. hen harriers
- Capercaillie
- Regionally important fungi species (e.g. hygroclybe)
- Juniper landscapes
- Lynx reintroduction

5.10 Other regionally important species are highlighted in **Chapter 7: Environmental Organisations Consultation** of this report.

Trees and woodland

5.11 With regards to trees and woodland:

- Several comments noted support for an ambition for the TFNP to be the most forested area in Scotland.
- Several comments highlighted the importance of encouraging the right type of woodland e.g. ancient oak woodlands should be enhanced and enlarged.
- Other comments highlighted the importance of encouraging natural regeneration.
- There was acknowledgement of the potential associated benefits from trees and woodland, including natural flood management.

Tourism and visitor impacts

5.12 A number of comments (online and in-person) identified the need for significant additional resources and infrastructure for visitor management if the area was to become a NP. Several people noted support for the NP but concern about the impacts of additional visitor numbers on the area and local communities. Comments received within these themes have been broken into several sub-categories, outlined below:

Access, recreation and infrastructure

5.13 Several survey respondents and attendees at drop-in events provided suggestions for improved of visitor infrastructure in the local area, for the benefit of both tourists and local people. Key suggestions include:

- Several comments noted improved path maintenance, including a focus on the prevention of footpath erosion, improved wayfinding and better surfacing for a range of users (walkers, cyclists).
- Enhanced outdoor activities (e.g. mountain biking, rock climbing, water activities). For example:
 - Community management such as local climbers maintaining walls to ensure they are safe and enjoyable to climb.
 - Mountain biking in the area (e.g. around Dunkeld and Glenshee) could gain national significance with improved infrastructure.
 - Activities should be managed to prevent negative impacts on the environment (e.g. mountain biking, water sports speed limits, etc.)
- The need for additional parking provision was a key issue raised by a large number of respondents. A few comments noted the NC500 as a key example of where existing infrastructure has not been fit for purpose to meet popularity.
- More visitor facilities (e.g. public toilets, waymarked paths, play spaces, themed walks, visitor centres, cafés, camp sites etc.). These should also be oriented to also benefit the local community. One comment noted the closure of the Tourist Information Centre in Crieff.
- Potential for off-road overnight parking for motorhomes, for which a small fee could be charged.

Visitor management

5.14 Ensuring sufficient additional resource for visitor management was a key issue for many respondents. Key comments included:

- Provision of an enhanced ranger service.
- Need to address existing issues associated with visitor pressures before any additional numbers come to the local area (e.g. in key areas such as Dunkeld).
- Opportunity for rules and enforcement to be implemented for wild camping, particularly in high-demand areas.
- Suggestion for the implementation of a tourist tax.
- Improved signage to educate visitors about considerate access (e.g. sensitivity to farming practices and the protection of important habitats)

Local business

- One comment suggested that new tourist ventures should not be prioritised over long-standing businesses and communities and their needs.

Marketing

- Several comments noted support for marketing the area as a sustainable tourism destination and to harness demand e.g. for ecotourism, low-traffic holidays. These could provide a distinct draw for many holidaymakers throughout the UK and beyond.
- One comment raised concern about a NP turning the area into a “Disney-esque” experience which is not authentic to the character of the local area.

Nature friendly farming and forestry

5.15 Key comments raised, relating to the support of nature friendly farming and forestry, included:

Farming

- The proposed TFNP could build-on and support ongoing efforts where landowners and farmers are working to deliver benefits for nature and local communities.
- Supporting the protection of good quality agricultural land.
- Working with landowners and land managers to make improvements to their land management practices. Creation of land management partnerships and supporting joined-up working. One comment stated the opportunity to contribute to collaborative landscape nature restoration, access improvements and food production e.g. through landowner clusters such as the Highland Good Food Partnership.
- Ensuring the sensitive re-introduction of species which affect farming practices (e.g. beavers).
- Support for local community food production and community-owned farmland.

Forestry

- Support for sustainable forestry practices and addressing poor management practices. One comment noted that active engagement with large-scale landowners (both FLS and private owners) will be essential to ensuring they can play their part in delivering climate and nature-recovery targets.
- A few comments received raised concern that a NP could place additional constraints on commercial forestry, which many stakeholders consider to be already heavily regulated.

Other land management

- Several responses stated support for reducing grouse shooting and improving management of these areas e.g. reducing areas of muir burn.
- General improvement of land use management e.g. reducing certain activities such as use of pesticides, planting Sitka Spruce, draining peat and burning heather.
- Several comments noted the need for greater recognition and support of existing efforts from local land managers to improve land use for the benefit of nature, climate, and the local community.

Climate Change

5.16 Reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change was also identified as a potential opportunity of the TFNP. Key points are set out below:

Renewable energy

5.17 A large number of comments received in relation to climate changes were focused on the development of renewable energy, in particular, onshore wind. Key points included:

- Several people expressed support for renewable energy development, including onshore wind, in the local area and noted that they hoped NP designation would not put further restriction on this. In particular, a couple of comments noted support for cases where renewables could bring high levels of community benefit e.g. funding, community ownership and private investment in the local area.
- Conversely, other respondents noted that they do not support the environmental impacts (e.g. landscape and visual effects) of renewable energy development such as onshore wind and would support further restrictions within the proposed TFNP. One comment suggested that a NP should limit wind farm development but promote other types of renewables (e.g. solar and hydro).
- Some comments stated that there was potential for the NP to add an additional layer of scrutiny to planning for future windfarms, which may improve outcomes.

Mitigation and adaptation

- A number of respondents noted support for improving the energy efficiency of local businesses and support for improvements to individual homes/building stock.
- A number of comments noted that there is potential for better planning and management to care for the environment and mitigate the effects of global warming. Specific opportunities include:
 - Supporting peatland restoration and woodland creation
 - Reducing the risks of forest fires

Businesses and jobs

5.18 Respondents provided a range of comments relating to employment opportunities and economic development in the local area. In particular, support for local workers and local businesses. Key points include:

- Respondents stated that it is imperative that any increases in tourism and businesses are supported by affordable local housing for local people. Staff must be available to work at visitor attractions and access jobs easily. Many local businesses are suffering from lack of availability of staff and people that work locally should be able to afford to live in the area.
- Support for the creation of new jobs in areas such as hospitality, tourism, woodland management, deer management, visitor management and nature restoration.
- Encourage local entrepreneurial developments.
- Creation of new employment opportunities for young people in the area e.g. apprenticeships and hands-on skills learning.
- Support for local hospitality businesses in off-seasons.
- Identification of the potential of the tourism industry to provide economic benefits, if managed correctly (see 'Tourism: local businesses' section above).
- A couple of comments noted that the location of where TFNP staff would be based would have an impact e.g. ensuring that employment opportunities were spread out geographically across the area to make sure that these opportunities are not focussed to one area.

Sustainable transport

5.19 In terms of areas requiring improvement in the local area, sustainable transport was ranked second in the survey results (see **Figure 5.1**). However, lower levels of survey respondents believed that a TFNP could help to improve it. A range of opportunities for improvement were identified by local people, with particular focus on public transport, active travel and roads infrastructure (including parking).

Public transport

5.20 Respondents identified a need for high-quality public transport and it was widely understood that large portions of the proposed TFNP currently have very limited access to public transport. Several respondents noted concerns that the creation of TFNP and likely associated increases in visitor numbers could not be supported by the existing public transport network and would exacerbate existing road traffic issues without significant enhancement of public transport (both to/from and within the local area). Specific suggestions for public transport improvement included:

- General improvement of the connectivity, frequency and reliability of local bus services.
- Improved accessibility of public transport (e.g., projects underway at Dunkeld & Birnam and Blair Atholl with a focus on accessibility of these train stations for all, including disabled users).
- Seasonal bus routes such as targeted shuttle buses that serve popular walking routes (e.g. Munros such as Ben Lawers and Schiehallion).
- Reinstatement of the Breadalbane bus route (seasonal circular link connecting Crieff, Comrie, St. Fillans, Lochernhead, Killin, Kenmore, Acharn and Aberfeldy).

- Creating a larger-scale bus link that connects all three NPs, through the proposed TFNP (e.g. Aviemore – TFNP – Crianlarich/Aberfoyle).
- Marketing and advertisement that encourages access to the area by public transport from Scotland's larger urban areas (e.g. Perth, Edinburgh, Glasgow).

Active travel:

- General improvement in terms of sustainable access to amenities required in the area.
- Improved safety and conditions of roads and paths, for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Develop and join routes through hills and drove roads, enhancing green travel options across the area (e.g. Cycle Crieff community project).
- Ensuring buses are bike friendly.

Roads:

- Identified need for greater parking provision overall, including EV charging infrastructure.
- Improved road traffic management and safety, particularly in key areas e.g. through village centres (Comrie, Dunkeld) and the A9 generally (but particularly at the Dunkeld crossing).
- Additional visitor numbers should not exacerbate local issues further. Therefore, it was stated that support for public transport and active travel infrastructure is essential to ensure that NP status does not bring a significant increase in road traffic.

Community development

5.21 There was general support for inward investment to local communities and a number of comments raised relating to specific local issues. Respondents provided a range of local issues which they felt TFNP could affect.:

Homes:

5.22 The availability of housing, particularly affordable homes, came through very strongly in consultation feedback, from both survey respondents and in-person attendees. The topic was raised both in terms of concern for the potential of a NP to reduce availability of affordable homes and as an opportunity for the TFNP to encourage the provision of affordable homes. Key points included:

- General support for supporting sustainable, affordable housing delivery in the local area. The delivery of affordable homes was a key concern of local residents and something that respondents stated should be delivered within the proposed NP.
- In particular, a main issue across the local areas is the lack of available homes for local workers and young people. Several respondents stated that local workers and families are being priced out of the housing market and raised concern that a NP could exacerbate these issues and push local people out of the area.
- A number of comments raised concern about the lack of progress that other NPs (e.g. Cairngorms) had made to address the issue of lack of affordable housing.
- Several comments raised objection to recent large developments in the local area, which they stated were not benefiting local people.
- Several comments noted support for restrictions on numbers of second homes, absentee landlords and Airbnb, in order to reduce the impacts of increased demand on local housing affordability.
- Development of community housing.
- Additionally, a few comments noted the opportunity to improve energy efficiency of existing building stock (e.g. support for home insulation schemes, small-scale energy generation such as solar panels).

Planning

5.23 Additional, and potentially more restrictive planning controls was a common concern raised by attendees at in-person events. In particular, how a NP designation would impact smaller applications (e.g. householder applications, applications for individual dwellings, etc).

- Most attendees felt that NP designation should not put any unnecessary planning restrictions on smaller applications.
- A number of comments related to ongoing larger planning applications, and it was noted that several people perceived an NP as likely to provide increased development restrictions.
- Several attendees raised questions about what a NP planning authority would look like and how it would affect decision-making in the local area. This should be communicated in the preparation of the bid.

Local infrastructure and community facilities:

5.24 In addition to the above, other points raised relating to community development focused on local infrastructure and facilities. Examples include:

- Provision of new community facilities, reducing the need to travel out with the local area to meet needs (e.g. to Perth or Stirling).
- Delivery of high-speed broadband to support local businesses and homes.
- New parking facilities and improved management of existing ones.
- A few comments highlighted good examples of community projects that a NP could support (e.g. specific examples included the community arboretum in Dunkeld and the Cycle Crieff active travel project.
- Development of community heating systems.
- Regeneration of town centres (e.g. a specific comment relating to the regeneration of Crieff).
- Overall, there was general support for inward investment, as long as it addressed local needs and benefited local people.

Other

5.25 In addition to the main themes set out above, other key topic areas emerged from consultation feedback highlighted a couple of other areas that were important to people:

Landscape, beauty, and cultural heritage:

- Preserving the beauty of local landscapes and cultural heritage. Some respondents identified the potential of TFNP to support community protection of the landscape.
- Opportunity to support the creation of a designated local 'dark skies' area.
- Importance of local heritage assets e.g. funding for restoration of heritage assets falling into disrepair (e.g. Crieff Church), creation of a monuments trail, storytelling and interpretation boards. One suggestion was to celebrate the story of the use of Schiehallion to calculate the mass of the earth.
- There is an opportunity to protect local heritage assets for the benefit of local people and sensitively promote the area to those who will enjoy and appreciate it.
- The cultural heritage of the Perthshire Glens (Glen Lednock to Strathbraan), relating to game bird shooting, livestock farming and deer stalking, was identified as having particular importance to land managers, with 30 survey responses stating this. There was concern that a TFNP would be impact on these land uses.

Community voice, governance and funding:

- There is an opportunity for the NP to demonstrate effective community participation and ensure that local voices are at the forefront of decision-making.
- Several comments noted the importance of listening to local people who understand the local context.

- Strong local control could also ensure that significant benefits are obtained from inward investment (e.g. natural capital, renewable energy development, etc.)
- Ensure benefits are spread throughout the whole geographical expanse of the park and are not just focused on certain areas/larger urban centres.
- Concern that a NP would introduce additional layers of bureaucracy came through strongly in the consultation feedback, particularly from land managers. Further detail is provided in **Chapter 6** of this report.
- A few comments raised concern about how much funding would be available to deliver the opportunities outlined in this section. In particular, some respondents noted concern that funding would be re-directed from other areas (e.g. other PKC services, other government bodies, etc.)

Branding

5.26 A handful of comments raised concern about the name of the proposed NP. Particular points included:

- 'Tay Forest' places too much focus on forests (including non-native forestry plantations which can have a negative impact on the environmental and landscape) and detracts from the range of other land uses within the area that the NP covers.
- The name is confusing because there is already a Tay Forest Park.
- The name is not enticing to a holidaymaker.
- Alternative name suggestions included:
 - 'Highland Perthshire National Park'
 - 'Breagha d'Alban' (i.e. 'the most beautiful part of Scotland')

Other

5.27 A number of comments provided through the consultation period suggested strong support for the delivery of many of the benefits and opportunities outlined in this Chapter. They hoped that they will be delivered regardless of the area becoming a designated NP.

Key points for consideration in the preparation of the bid

5.28 The discussion above sets out some of the opportunities and priorities that local people raised during the consultation period, organised thematically. The key points arising from the analysis of responses which should be considered in the preparation of the bid are set out below.

Overall: Biodiversity and nature restoration was the top priority for improvement for many survey respondents. However, the majority of people (over 50% of survey respondents) also felt that all other areas required improvement (see **Figure 5.1**).

Most survey respondents felt that NP designation had the greatest potential to help enhance and restore biodiversity, with enhancing the tourism offer/visitor management and encouraging nature-friendly farming practices ranking second and third, respectively (see **Figure 5.2**).

- **Biodiversity and nature restoration:** Opportunities for landscape-scale natural restoration was a theme that came through strongly from the consultation process, with opportunities for particular habitats, species and connectivity identified.
- **Agricultural and forestry:** Respondents felt that encouraging sustainable farming and forestry practices in the area was important, with opportunities for increased local food growing, improved land management and collaborative working. Some noted concern about the potential constraints that a NP could put on land use for agriculture.
- **Tourism:** The opportunities that TFNP could bring for the area related to tourism (improved facilities, access and recreation, economic benefits, job creation) were supported by respondents. However, ensuring this was coupled with resources and funding for improved visitor management, new/improved infrastructure and appropriate branding came through as very important in the feedback.

- **Climate change:** There were mixed views from respondents about the role of the NP with regards to renewable energy development (particularly onshore wind). Some stated that it should not create additional barriers while others supported an additional layer of protection it could provide to mitigate landscape and visual effects. Other opportunities identified for the mitigation and adaptation to climate change including improving the carbon efficiency of local building stock and supporting peat restoration and woodland creation.
- **Businesses and jobs:** The creation of employment opportunities and support for local business was important to many respondents. It was also highlighted that this must be supported by affordable homes and transport infrastructure to ensure local workers can live and work in the area.
- **Transport:** There was general acknowledgement that existing sustainable transport access within the local area is poor and requires significant improvement. Respondents provided suggestions for public transport and active travel improvements, as well as opportunities to improve road safety, traffic management and parking infrastructure.
- **Homes:** The affordability of housing in the local area was a theme that came through strongly in consultation feedback, with some concern that a NP could exacerbate existing issues and others noting opportunity for TFNP to support its availability (e.g. greater regulation, community housing, support for sustainable schemes etc). Of particular concern was provision of affordable homes for local workers, young people and families.
- **Planning:** Respondents raised questions about the impacts a NP would have on the planning system, with general consensus that additional constraints on smaller applications were not necessary. However, some support for greater control over large/more controversial development was also noted.
- **Landscape and cultural heritage:** The preservation and celebration of local landscapes and heritage was important to respondents.
- **Governance and community voice:** Respondents stated that it was important that local communities continue to be involved as the proposals for the TFNP are developed, with efforts made to reach all community members.
- **Branding:** A small number of respondents raised questions about the name of the proposed NP.
- The preparation of the bid should ensure that the proposal takes a holistic view of local issues and priorities, as consultation with local communities and stakeholders has identified the wide-ranging benefits that a NP could help to deliver.

Chapter 6

Land Manager Consultation

6.1 In recognition of the critical interest and influence of land managers (e.g. farmers, estate owners/managers, those employed in certain land management roles) in the development of the TFNP bid, targeted consultation was undertaken with landowners and land managers to ensure opportunities and concerns relevant to them were captured and considered.

6.2 Land managers and landowners submitted responses to the online survey and a dedicated event was held on Thursday 16th November at Pitlochry Town Hall and was attended by c.40 land managers. This event was organised in coordination with National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) and Scottish Land and Estates (SLE). Attendees took part in facilitated roundtable discussion within groups of 8-10 people.

Figure 6.1: Photo of land manager event



6.3 64 land managers also provided responses to the online survey.

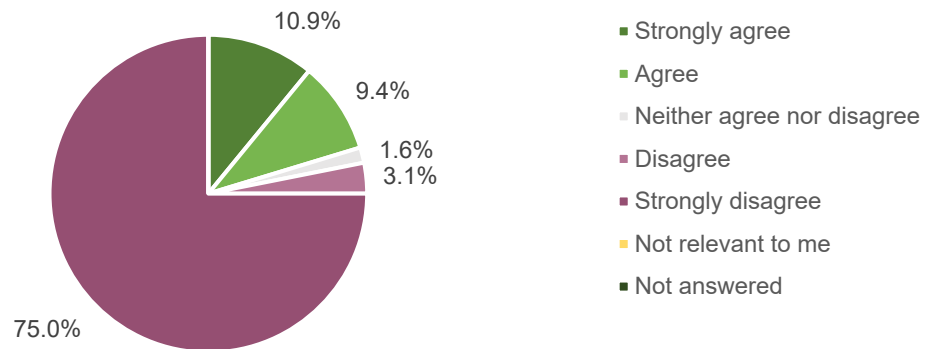
6.4 Additionally, a written submission was also received from the NFUS, representing their members. Views gathered by the NFUS suggest that existing NPs are not viewed by their members as having made a positive contribution for farming. Their key concerns are incorporated into the summary below. However, the NFUS also recognise that some members see potential benefits from living and farming in a NP.

6.5 The analysis below provides an overview of online survey feedback from respondents who identified their main interest in the TFNP as being a 'land manager'. This provides a quantitative overview of feedback from this group. Further commentary is set out below under 'opportunities' and 'concerns' and summarises feedback by key theme received both via the online survey and from group discussion at the in-person event.

Survey feedback

6.6 The results of the online survey provide an overview of the general views of land managers. **Figure 6.1** illustrates the overall views of land managers.

Figure 6.2: Survey feedback (land managers) 'To what extent do you agree with your community being in a national park in northern Perthshire?'



Opportunities

6.7 The consultation process with land managers highlighted perceived benefits and opportunities associated with the designation of the area as a NP. It was noted by several respondents that NP status would need to come with substantial funding and resources that properly address the challenges and opportunities identified below.

Governance and decision-making

6.8 Land managers were supportive of some of the opportunities a NP could bring regarding decision-making and coordinated working. Comments included:

- Support for a transparent and representative governance structure with clear local influence. Attendees noted the importance of the representation of land managers as part of this (e.g. as part of a TFNP board).
- Opportunity for the employment and involvement of local people with local knowledge to ensure most informed decision-making and ensure that there is not disconnect between local knowledge and the national agenda.
- One group noted that land managers already undertake survey work and understand their land better than anyone, so this should inform decision-making.
- A NP has the potential to help facilitate things at a large landscape-scale. It was noted that there are already a lot of groups/projects in the area and TFNP could improve opportunities to work together.
- One group noted the opportunity for more joined-up policy.

Agriculture

6.9 Land managers identified some opportunities for a TFNP to help support farming in the local area. Those identified included:

- Additional grant funding for farming businesses. This could support the undertaking of activities such as:
 - development of farm plans,
 - peatland restoration,
 - fencing off water margins,
 - access paths,
 - promotion of the area to enhance tourism and diversify.

- Protection of prime agricultural land and acknowledgement of the importance of food security.
- Support for sustainable farming and an integrated approach to land management, which understands the need to plant trees in the right place (rather than everywhere). TFNP could potentially support this approach.

Infrastructure, homes and community development

6.10 Another issue which came through strongly in consultation feedback was the concern of land managers about local house prices/availability and the opportunity for a NP to address this. Comments included:

- There is a need to address the spread of holiday homes and availability of affordable homes for local workers (e.g. lower income jobs including tourism, agriculture, certain land manager roles).
- More visitor accommodation would be required to support additional visitor numbers. There could be regulation on short-term lets to ensure that there is enough accommodation for visitors and local people who provide supporting services.
- NP status has the potential to address some of the shortcomings of the planning system.
- A shared view that local people should benefit most from NP status. In particular, future generations. One comment noted the Scottish Government 'wellbeing economy' could be compatible with a NP economy, particularly if generational and local knowledge is recognised.
- There is potential to review, re-shape and coordinate the community benefits arising from things like wind farm development (community benefit funding) and carbon credits. There are existing good examples of money being invested effectively in rural communities which could be replicated and improved upon.

Tourism, access and visitor management

6.11 Land managers also highlighted the importance of managing the effects of tourism, which can sometimes have negative impacts on their work. Comments included:

- Recognition that Cairngorms NP has managed to improve visitor impacts post-covid.
- A NP will require a ranger service for policing and enforcement.
- Implementation of mechanisms to promote the respectful use of the countryside e.g. education of visitors on how the land is managed, signage, etc.
- Opportunity to promote the area, especially with foreign tourists.
- Enhancement of visitor infrastructure, including public toilets and rural bus services.

Nature restoration and climate change

6.12 A number of comments focused on the role of land managers with regard to nature restoration and climate change mitigation. In particular, opportunities for a NP included:

- Utilisation of the skills and experience of land managers in adaptive management to address climate change. There should be greater recognition of the role and positive contribution of land managers.
- Opportunity to provide funding for good woodland management, as this is currently lacking.
- Potential to support 'wood pasture' as there is currently no incentive for this. This could help meet woodland creation targets in smaller areas, but there is currently a lack of scaled support.

Jobs and employment

6.13 Finally, land managers noted support for direct rural employment within the local area, to implement land management initiatives e.g. deer management. A TFNP should support these local jobs.

Concerns

6.14 Several groups noted general uncertainty about what the creation of a NP would actually lead to and cited difficulties in identifying any potential benefits. Several respondents and attendees expressed concern that the creation of NP in the local

area would make things harder for them in their roles as land managers. Others suggested that a lot of the benefits set out (see above) should be delivered whether or not the area became a designated NP. The main areas of concern are set out below.

Governance and policy

6.15 The most common concerns raised by land managers throughout the consultation period were related to the governance of TFNP, additional bureaucracy, and potential policy implications. Event attendees noted the perception that a disproportionate amount of financial resource is spent on bureaucracy within other existing NP's. Key concerns for TFNP included:

- Existing national policy (e.g. NPF4, forestry legislation etc.) already covers a lot of the things a NP would provide. Therefore, there is concern that NP status would simply create another layer of unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Some participants noted support generally for the Scottish Government's green agenda but didn't see any additional benefit that NP status could bring.
- Existing policy (e.g. new game keeping legislation) is already making some roles difficult to manage and some are already struggling with different legislation.
- Many land managers are currently dealing with significant uncertainty due to changing legislation and changes to EU funding. Therefore, several noted that it is a bad moment to introduce something new and it would be better to think about a NP once farmers have more certainty.
- Similarly, other new policies (e.g. licensing constraints on holiday lets, associated requirements for water quality, etc.) have been recently introduced and not yet settled.
- The area is already heavily regulated (e.g. with landscape and nature designations) and doesn't need more.
- Concerns that often law and policymakers create legislation for rural areas through an urban lens.
- Concern that Scottish Government agenda would take precedent over local agenda.
- Several groups noted concerns that the current efforts that landowners and land managers are currently carrying out are not being appreciated and recognised and that further regulation might restrain their efforts. There is currently a lack of recognition/pride from the Scottish Government in what land managers are currently achieving for wildlife.
- One group raised the question whether NP funding would increase funding overall or split existing funding across more NPs.

Tourism and access

6.16 The second most common area of concern related to additional visitor numbers in the local area. Comments included:

- Broad concerns that there is already over-tourism in Highland Perthshire that has negative impacts on land management. Whilst it is recognised that NP status could address this by investment in visitor management (see above), there are also risks that further investment and attraction of tourists could exacerbate existing issues.
- The area is currently experiencing negative pressures from tourism (e.g. wild camping, right to roam) and there are fears that NP status could exacerbate these issues (e.g. over-camping at Loch Lomond was cited multiple times as an example).
- There is a risk that naming the area a 'national park' could make people think they can use the area without consideration of existing land use.
- There are existing concerns about the countryside access code. One comment suggested it needed to be updated.
- Concern that tourism-related development is often seen as inherently 'good for the economy' and that a lot of new funding would be directed towards this without proper consideration.

Ranger service

6.17 While land managers recognised some of the opportunities a TFNP ranger service could have (see above), a few comments noted potential limitations such as:

- Concern that national park rangers will lack local knowledge.

- Concern over the potential lack of impact of the rangers in the existing NPs.

Land use and forestry

6.18 A number of attendees noted concern about how a NP could influence land use / land use change in the local area, such as:

- It is currently unclear exactly how NP designation would impact rural development.
- Concern that incentivising diversification of farming can have consequences as farmers are distracted from their area of expertise by focusing on other things.
- Attendees have witnessed loss of prime/good farmland to forestry plantation schemes. Crude plantation schemes have been subsidised. There is concern that a focus on rewilding and woodland planting will lead to a net reduction in jobs.
- Some expressed concern that a NP would restrict well-managed timber crop. One group noted experience of having prior notification treated like a planning application.
- One group raised concern about the visual impact of new forestry/woodland creation, particularly on tourist routes.
- Several respondents noted that TFNP should not prohibit renewable energy development.

Existing infrastructure

6.19 Several comments related to impacts a NP would have on existing local infrastructure, such as:

- Concern that existing infrastructure could be negatively impacted e.g. A9 network and the train line. It is considered likely that there would be additional pressure without significant upgrades.
- Concerns that NP status will increase house prices (as attendees noted they had observed in Cairngorms NP). Attendees noted that there is an existing lack of new affordable housing and cheaper market housing in the area and there are concerns that this could be discouraged due to restrictions.

Branding

6.20 A few comments from land managers related to the name/identity of the NP, including:

- One group noted that 'Highland Perthshire' would be a better brand for the NP.
- Another group noted concern that there would be a loss of identity of Highland Perthshire if it became too joined-up with LLTNP and CNP.
- One group suggested that the 'Tay Forest' name put too much emphasis on tree-planting and excludes recognition of other land uses including wilder land. It was also noted that much of the forest in the local area is non-native commercial plantation.

Biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage

6.21 Finally, land managers provided comments relating to natural and cultural heritage. These were:

- Concern over beaver/other species introduction and impacts that this can have on land use.
- The cultural heritage of the Perthshire Glens (Glen Lednock to Strathbraan), relating to game bird shooting, livestock farming and deer stalking, was identified as having particular importance to land managers, noting the contribution of these activities towards enhancing biodiversity and promoting landscape-scale resilience to climate change. Survey respondents (n.30) raised concern that a NP would be against and restrict these land uses.

Main issues to be considered in the bid preparation

Survey results demonstrated limited initial support from land managers for the TFNP. However, some respondents to the online survey and at the in-person event note a wide-range of opportunities that the NP could help deliver. Key concerns and opportunities include:

Concerns

- The most common concerns raised related to governance, policy, additional bureaucracy and visitor management, with a large number of responses relating to these issues.
- Land managers raised concern that they are handling a lot of other changes (EU funding, national legislation) and a potential NP. Due to concerns, the preparation of the bid must clearly communicate how NP status would (or how it would not) influence the roles of land managers (e.g. policy changes).
- Land managers raised concerns regarding how a NP could influence/restrict certain types of land use and land use change.

Opportunities

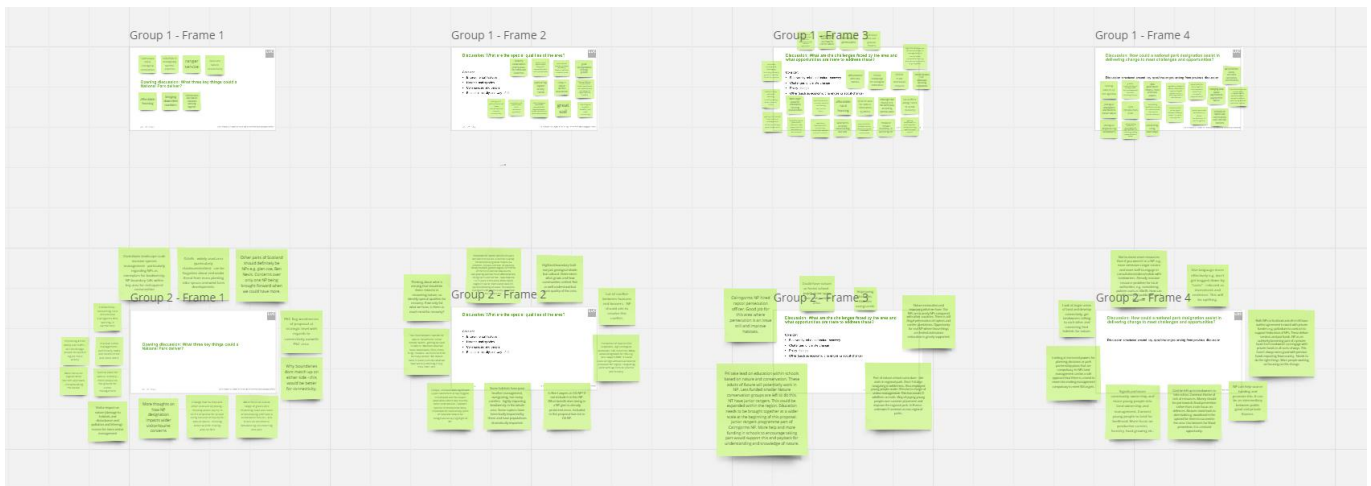
- Land managers felt that existing work and efforts (e.g. nature restoration) should be recognised more at national level and supported.
- There is support for local issues and land manager voices to be at the centre of decision-making to ensure that there is not disconnect between local knowledge/needs and national agenda, particularly with regards to land management.
- There is opportunity to promote food security, protect prime agricultural land and encourage sustainable farming practices and provide additional funding to support other activities on their land (e.g. nature restoration, access improvements etc).
- A key concern from land managers was increased visitor numbers to the area, supporting opportunities for improved education/signage to encourage responsible access and use of the land.
- Land managers also support the provision of affordable homes in the area, particularly in support of accessibility for local workers (e.g. tourism, agriculture, certain land manager roles).

Chapter 7

Environmental Organisations Consultation

7.1 An online ‘Nature Voices’ workshop was held on Thursday 23rd November 2023. 24 representatives attended the workshop from 19 organisations. The format of the session included an initial presentation on NPs and the preparation of the bid followed by discussions in breakout rooms. Miro boards⁷ were used to capture the key discussion points from these discussions and each group reported back to the wider group at the end. Participants were provided with access to the miro board and were able to add any additional comments to the boards for 5 days after the event (see **Figure 7.1**). Content of the miro boards are provided in **Appendix B**.

Figure 7.1: Tay Forest National Park – Nature Voices Session - Miro Board



7.2 A summary of the responses to the four key questions is presented below.

Key features of the area

What are the special qualities of the area?

Ecological:

7.3 Representatives provided a range of important and unique key habitats and species which are important within TFNP area. These include:

- Montane scrub, mesotrophic lochs, and calcareous grassland habitats
- Species-rich grassland, including designated areas (e.g. Ben Lawry's NNR) which are iconic at high altitudes.
- Raptor species e.g. hen harriers, red kite, ospreys, honey buzzard, golden eagles, merlin, white-tailed eagles, peregrine, short-eared owls. However, several species are in decline.
- Unique alpine plants
- Specialised plants and invertebrates
- Fungi
- Freshwater pearl mussels (parts of the Tay)
- Area in top three for robust salmon populations
- Butterfly conservation priority area
- Recently reintroduced beaver population

⁷ Miro is a digital collaboration platform which allows creates a visual workspace to mimic a whiteboard (see <https://miro.com/>)

- The area is a key area for red squirrel conservation

7.4 The diversity of soils was also noted as an important quality of the area.

Landscape and nature:

7.5 Participants also focused on the landscape, location and geological features of the area, with comments including:

- The Highland boundary fault is not just a geological but a cultural divide. It marks a difference in what grows and how communities settled in the area. It is not well understood but is a special quality of the area.
- TFNP covers a unique area encapsulating much of the upper catchment of the Tay, which is the biggest in Scotland.
- The area provides opportunities to get out and experience nature, with benefits for visitor mental health.
- The area contains a lot of designated landscapes associated with large landscapes.
- Unique location of TFNP, adjoining and linking two existing NPs.

Key opportunities for the national park

7.6 The summary below focuses on the key challenges, opportunities and actions the TFNP could help to address and deliver. Therefore, responses to the following questions have been collated below.

- What three key things could a NP deliver?
- What are the challenges faced by the area and what opportunities are there to address these?
- How could a NP designation assist in delivering change to meet challenges and opportunities?

7.7 A summary of opportunities from representatives is presented below, organised thematically.

Landscape-scale ecological restoration:

7.8 Attendees highlighted that supporting large-scale and coordinated nature restoration was a key opportunity of the TFNP. Comments included:

- Ensuring a central focus on nature connectivity, highlighting that there are many existing projects in the area which could be linked-up.
- The location of TFNP enables opportunity a 'joining up' with the two existing NPs.
- A TFNP could facilitate improved coordination between landowners and NGOs to deliver benefits for nature.
- There are opportunities for community and nature interests to work together.
- Ensure that nature should underpin the purpose of the NP (embed the Sandford principle). The TFNP provides opportunity to raise nature up the agenda. One comment noted that a TFNP should embed the concept of equity for the natural world, changing the view that human uses and other uses are opposing.
- Interventions should support flood prevention.

Protection and enhancement of the local area's diversity of existing habitats and species:

7.9 As noted above in the key special characteristics of the area, attendees highlighted the diverse range of regionally important habitats and species. Opportunities for their protection and enhancement included:

- Further re-introduction of species (e.g. montane woodland, beavers, red kites) with scope for more (e.g. one example provided of a potential pilot lynx introduction)
- Improvement of overgrazed habitats
- Improved deer management
- Landscape-scale invasive species management
- Creation of a TFNP ranger service

- Enforcement for the reduction of ecologically harmful practices (e.g. tackle illegal persecution of raptors in the area). A good practice highlighted by attendees was that Cairngorms NP hired a raptor persecution officer, which has provided valuable local employment and tackled an ongoing issue and improved habitats.
- Conflict resolution (e.g. around beavers).

Visitor management:

7.10 Attendees also noted the importance of visitor management as a key opportunity of TFNP. In particular, mitigating the effects of potential increases in visitor numbers to ensure that negative impacts on nature (e.g. damage to habitats, species disturbance, etc.) and local communities are minimised. Key examples included:

- Creation of a TFNP ranger service
- Opportunity to address issues with wild camping (e.g. issues with visitors taking down trees for fires, littering, etc).
- Provision and improvement of visitor infrastructure (e.g. public toilets).
- Embedding a regenerative tourism approach.

Educational and training:

7.11 Additionally, attendees noted the opportunity of TFNP to improve education and training opportunities, focused on nature conservation and local knowledge. Key opportunities included:

- The creation of nature school/forest school providing children with the opportunity to love and protect the area. Examples from nature school curriculums include site visits, navigation in wilderness, summer placements (providing employment opportunities for young people to be in charge of visitor management).
- The council to take greater lead on education within schools rather than relying on smaller nature conservation groups. Suggestion that education should be a key component of the proposal for TFNP.
- A junior rangers programme (existing good example within the Cairngorms was noted). It was suggested that more help and funding within schools would encourage children and young people's understanding and knowledge of nature and the local area.
- Connect young people to land for livelihood with greater focus on productive careers (e.g. forestry, food growing etc).

Governance:

7.12 Attendees noted the potential of a TFNP in terms of power and decision-making. It was noted that a TFNP brings opportunity for:

- Pioneering new governance models, with more ambitious powers.
- Partnership working with Cairngorm NP and LLTNP authorities.
- Greater lobbying power for the local area.
- Increased powers for planning decisions or park partnership plans.
- Strengthening the management of land in the area to help meet Scottish Government targets.

Other:

7.13 Other focus areas highlighted by attendees include:

- Importance of the delivery of affordable housing
- Opportunity for significant/more community ownership
- Need for improving active travel links
- Need for improving the A9 for safety and traffic
- Opportunity of TFNP in supporting the provision of a wide range of green jobs, providing a rebalance between volunteer roles and employment opportunities.

Concerns

7.14 Participants noted some potential concerns, challenges and suggestions associated with the TFNP. Their main points are set out below, organised by theme:

Land ownership:

7.15 Attendees highlighted some of the challenges with the delivery of the aims of a TFNP, these included:

- Concerns that some landowners may not consider nature a top priority.
- The coordination and cooperation of landowners to work together will require a great deal of support and will be key to the success of a NP.

Branding:

7.16 A few comments noted suggestions for consideration relating to the name and marketing of the NP, such as:

- Some attendees noted concern about 'Tay Forest' name due to the level of non-native forests and commercial forests in the area. There is potential that the name neglects other local habitats.
- There are challenges associated with the identity of the TFNP, due to the location between two existing NPs.
- Any future communications will require conscientious use of language (e.g. 'cost' vs. 'investment') to ensure that language is uplifting and effective.

Boundary and broader nature connectivity:

7.17 Attendees provided a few comments relating to how a TFNP would fit in to wider aims for nature restoration and joined-up working, including cross-boundary issues. These included:

- There is a weakness at strategic level with regards to connectivity and coordination of nature restoration, including out with the PKC area.
- One attendee noted concern that only one new NP could be brought forward when there is opportunity to have more across Scotland.
- One attendee highlighted that the Ochils (particularly in Clackmannanshire) is often forgotten about. They are under threat from mass planting of Sitka spruce and wind farm developments.

Visitor impacts:

7.18 Whilst opportunities for improved visitor management are set out above, it was also noted that more thought will be required on how NP designation will impact wider visitor/tourism concerns in the local area e.g. impacts on habitats, species, local communities, and infrastructure.

Main issues to be considered in the bid preparation

Overall, there was support from environmental groups regarding the creation of a TFNP. The attendees of the Nature Voices session raised a range of environmentally focused issues and opportunities that the TFNP could help address and deliver:

- Attendees noted that nature and ecological restoration and connectivity should be a key priority for TFNP. In particular, it offers significant opportunity for landscape-scale improvement for nature networks, habitats and species.
- Representatives from nature organisations provide a range of local species, habitats and ecological/landscape features which should be highlighted in the bid.
- The bid should consider the careful management of increased visitor numbers to ensure that adverse impacts on nature and people are mitigated (e.g. damage to habitats, species disturbance, impacts on local communities etc.)
- There is potential to include education and skills as a key benefit that the TFNP could deliver.

- There is opportunity for partnership working collaboration and greater ambition to strengthen the management of land and delivery of outcomes for nature.
- To meet these aims, significant resource would be required to support buy-in, coordination and cooperation from landowners.

Chapter 8

Next Steps

8.1 This report has provided an overview of the feedback received throughout the six week consultation period for TFNP. It provided a summary of:

- the quantitative levels of support for a NP in the local area (**Chapter 3**);
- views around the proposed indicative boundary (**Chapter 4**);
- what respondents consider the key special qualities of the area (**Chapter 5**);
- the key aims, opportunities and priorities for a TFNP that emerged through consultation feedback, summarised thematically (**Chapter 6**);
- targeted land manager consultation (**Chapter 7**); and
- targeted environmental organisations consultation (**Chapter 8**).

8.2 The next steps are to prepare an evidence report and bid for submission to the Scottish Government. This should be informed by the findings of this report, with particular consideration given to the conclusions drawn about key issues at the end of each chapter.

Appendix A

Online Survey Questions

Respondent information

What is your name? (optional)

What is your email address? (optional)

What is your organisation? (optional)

Please help us to understand your main interest in the proposed Tay Forest National Park. I am:

- a member of the public
- a public body representative
- a community representative/elected representative
- a charity/conservation group representative
- a land manager
- other business owner/operator/representative
- other (please state)

To enable us to understand your response please tell us the first part of your postcode.

Please tell us your which city, town or village you live in or closest to.

Tay Forest National Park

To what extent do you agree/disagree with your community being in a national park in northern Perthshire?

Strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree / not relevant to me

Do you agree/disagree with the indicative boundary as currently proposed?

Strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree / not relevant to me

If you disagree with the indicative boundary proposed do you think that it should be:

- larger (please specify which areas below)
- smaller (please specify which areas below)

Change in boundary – open text

What do you think are the special qualities of the area? (select all that apply)

- Trees and woodland
- Recreational opportunities

- Lochs/ivers
- Scenery and distinctive landmarks (e.g. mountains)
- Nature and wildlife
- Historic environment and heritage features (e.g. castles/gardens)
- Productive agricultural land
- People and communities
- Other

Special qualities - open text

What could be improved in the area? (select all that apply)

- Enhancing and restoring biodiversity (habitats and wildlife)
- Reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change (e.g. renewable energy generation, peatland restoration and woodland creation)
- Encouraging nature friendly farming and forestry practices (reducing environmental harm, improving nature networks)
- Enhancing the tourism offer and managing visitor impacts (new facilities, interpretation and access management)
- Encouraging business investment and creating jobs
- Sustainable transport provision to and around the area (e.g. public transport and electric vehicle infrastructure)
- Community development (e.g. housing, services and infrastructure)
- Other

What could be improved - open text

Do you think a national park would help to improve the below?

- **Enhancing and restoring biodiversity (habitats and wildlife)**

Strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree

- **Reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change (e.g. renewable energy generation, peatland restoration and woodland creation)**

Strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree

- **Encouraging nature friendly farming and forestry practices (reducing environmental harm, improving nature networks)**

Strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree

- **Enhancing the tourism offer and managing visitor impacts (new facilities, interpretation and access management)**

Strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree

- **Encouraging business investment and creating jobs**

Strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree

- **Sustainable transport provision to and around the area (e.g. public transport and electric vehicle infrastructure)**

Strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree

■ **Community development (e.g. housing, services and infrastructure)**

Strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree

Do you have any other comment(s)? (open text)

Equalities Monitoring

Would you be willing to answer some questions for equalities monitoring purposes?

Yes / No

What is your age group?

- 16 – 25 years
- 26 – 35 years
- 36 – 45years
- 46 – 55 years
- 56 – 65 years
- 66 – 75 years
- 76 – 85 years
- 85+ years
- Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group?

- White (including Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showman / Showwoman)
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (including any mixed or multiple ethnic groups)
- Asian, Scottish Asian or British Asian (including any Asian ethnic group)
- African, Scottish African or British African (including any African ethnic group)
- Caribbean or Black (including Scottish Caribbean, Black Scottish)
- Other ethnic group (any other ethnic group including Arab, Sikh, Jewish)
- Prefer not to say

What gender do you identify as?

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Other
- Prefer not to say

How would you say your mental health is in general?

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Bad
- Very bad
- Prefer not to say

How would you say your physical health is in general?

Appendix A
Online Survey Questions

Tay Forest National Park
January 2024

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Bad
- Very bad
- Prefer not to say

Do you have a physical or mental condition, disability or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Appendix B

Extracts from Miro Boards

Group 1 - Frame 1

LUC

Landscape scale Ecological restoration

reduction in ecologically harmful practices

ranger service

focus on nature connectivity

Opening discussion: What three key things could a National Park deliver?

affordable housing

bringing down deer numbers

communities and nature interests working together

Group 2 - Frame 1

LUC

Contribute landscape scale invasive species management - particularly regarding NPs as exemplars for biodiversity. NP boundary falls within key area for red squirrel conservation

Ochills - widely used area (particularly clackmanninshire) - can be forgotten about and under threat from mass planting sitka spruce and wind farm developments.

Other parts of Scotland should definitely be NPs e.g. glen coe, Ben Nevis. Concerns over only one NP being brought forward when we could have more.

Connectivity - connecting Loch Lomond and Cairngorms NPs working in partnership

Improving A9 for safety and traffic - will encourage people to explore region more widely

improve visitor management - particularly roads and toilets (more and open later).

More focus on regenerative tourism approach - encapsulating the above

Special place for nature recovery - more people on the ground for visitor management

Visitor impact on nature (damage to habitats and disturbance and pollution and littering) - reason for more visitor management

Opening discussion: What three key things could a National Park deliver?

LUC | 2011/2023

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PKC flag weaknesses of proposal at strategic level with regards to connectivity outwith PKC area.

Why boundaries dont match up on either side - this would be better for connectivity.

More thoughts on how NP designation impacts wider visitor/tourist concerns

Change that human and other uses are opposing - thinking about equity in terms of access for all and using concept of equity for natural world - thinking about wildlife moving around NPs

More focus on a wide range of green jobs (matching scale and need of developing a NP and a sustainable future) - less strain on volunteers. Rebalancing volunteering and jobs

Group 1 - Frame 2

LUC

Discussion: What are the special qualities of the area?

Consider:

- Environmental features
- Habitats and species
- Communities and people
- Economic activity and way of life

Butterfly conservation priority area - for moths and butterflies

some unique alpine plants along with specialised plant and invertebrates

re-introduced species, montane woodland, beavers, red kites - scope for more

great representation of fungi groups

parts of Tay highest density FWPM

in top 3 robust salmon populations

Diverse habitats - concern about forest name due to non-native forestry and danger of neglecting other habitats

joining up 2 national parks will create connectivity and support communities

montane scrub, mesotrophic lochs, calcareous grassland

a lot of designed landscapes associated with large landscapes - survey carried out in other national parks

great soil

lots of good projects already - just need connecting

LUC | 20/11/2023 Go to Header & Footer on Insert tab to overwrite client/project/seminar

Group 2 - Frame 3

LUC

Discussion: What are the special qualities of the area?

Consider:

- Environmental features
- Habitats and species
- Communities and people
- Economic activity and way of life

Thinking about what is missing that should be there. Interest in recovering nature, so identify special qualities for recovery. If we only list what we have, is there as much need for recovery?

important for raptor species (20 pairs hen harriers but are in decline in area). Persecution on grouse moors is a problem. 20 pairs red kite, 30 ospreys, honey buzzard, golden eagles, territories of merlin (in decline now due to overgrazing and too much afforestation). Peregrine in decline too - now down to 12-15 pairs in this area. White-tailed eagles (3 pairs). Short-eared owls (25 pairs) depending on voles. This adjoins Cairngorms NP which is very important for raptors too.

Highland boundary fault - not just geological divide but cultural. Determines what grows and how communities settled. Not as well understood but great quality of the area.

Lot of conflict between humans and beavers - NP should aim to resolve this conflict.

The most fantastic habitat for nature. Benefits for visitor mental health - getting out and in nature. Maintain what we have, woodlands, SSSIs, trees, fungi, mosses - so much here for so many people. We should hand in hand promote what we have while protecting it (e.g. fires, litter, etc).

Prevalence of Species Rich Grassland - Agri-ecological landscape. SRG in decline. Many areas designated for SRG e.g. Ben Lawyers NNR. It is also iconic at high altitudes across the proposed NP region. Integrating point with agricultural practice and forestry.

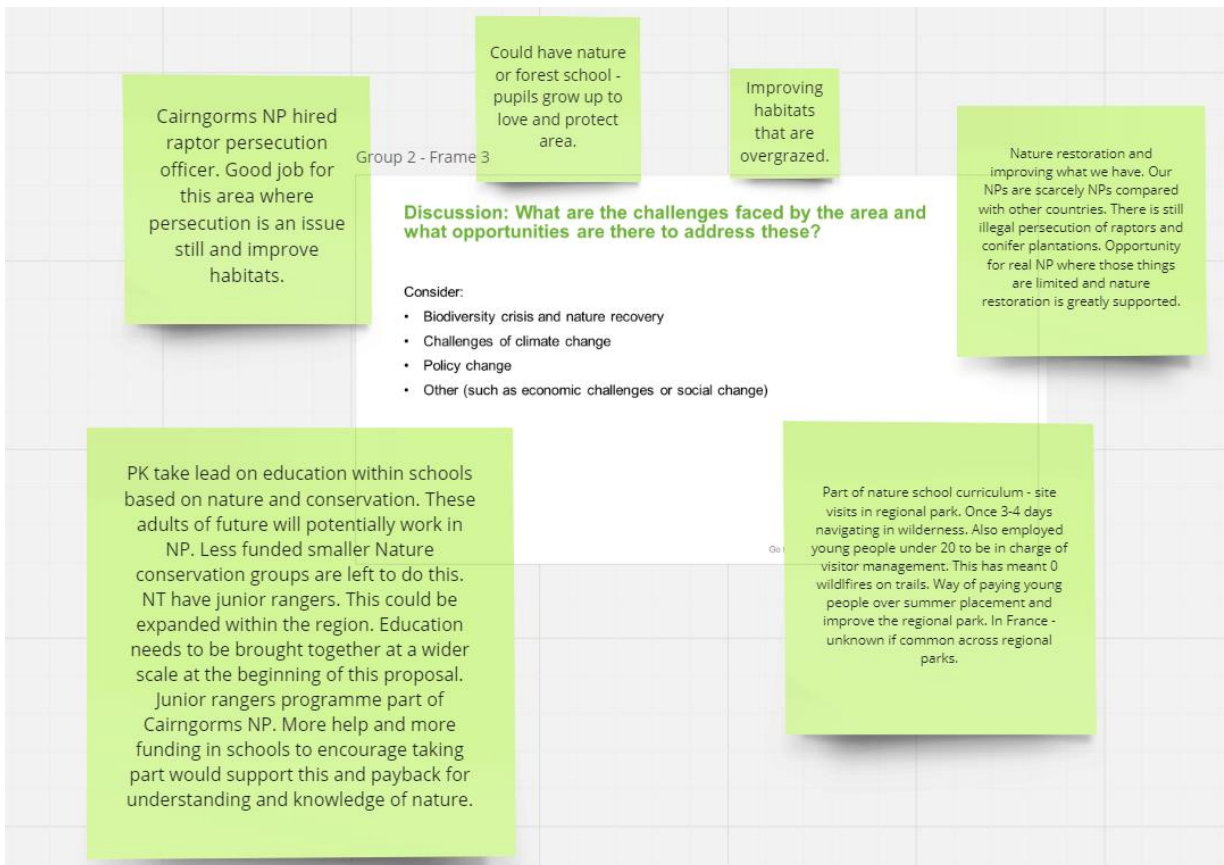
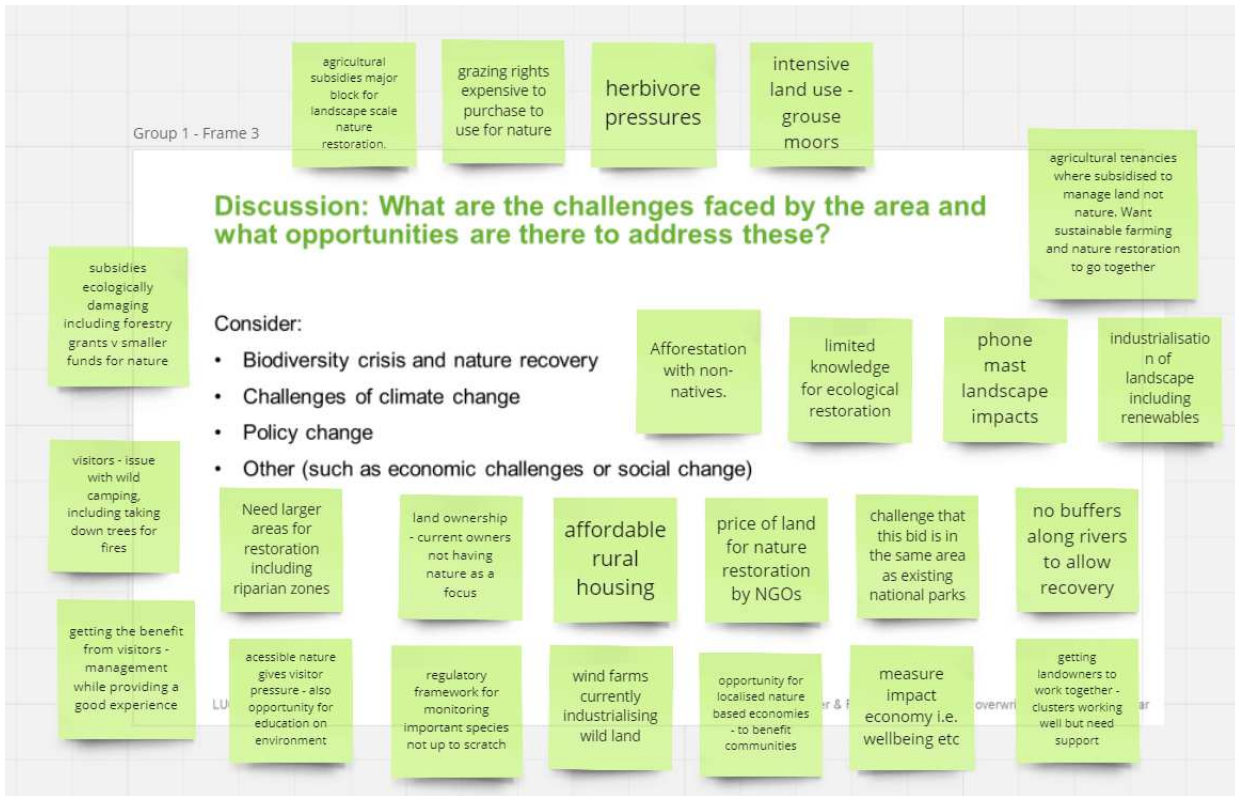
Unique - encapsulates significant upper catchment of Tay (biggest in Scotland) and the beaver population which has recently been reintroduced. Fantastic species reintroduction story. Important for biodiversity point of view and should be recognised as key highlight of NP.

Some habitats have poor heather management, overgrazing, too many conifers - highly impacting biodiversity in the whole area. Some raptors have been badly impacted by these and have populations dramatically impacted.

Is Ben Lawyers in CG NP? If not include it in this NP. What benefit does being in a NP give to already protected areas. Included in this proposal but not in CG NP.

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Tay Forest National Park
January 2024



Group 1 - Frame 4

LUC

Discussion: How could a national park designation assist in delivering change to meet challenges and opportunities?

Discussion structured around key opps/challenges arising from previous discussion

raising nature up the agenda

greater understanding of ecology when land management decisions including forestry

new governance models - more ambitious powers

regulatory change to deliver positive land uses can benefit whole country - lobbying power of national park

opportunity for bid to lead to improvements even if not successful (regional park?)

changing area based payments to payment for nature

4Cs principle: cores, corridors, carnivores, communities

co-ordinated species conservation programmes for special qualities - expand montane plants programmes and other species

joining up landowners and NGOs to deliver nature

Lynx introduction pilot

embedding Sandford principle for national parks that nature should underpin

connectivity for active travel between different areas - currently missing links

landscape scale facilitation to allow landowners to work together

principle of nature and communities over external interests

joining up neighbouring landowners

review existing powers for encouraging the right land use - co-ordinating existing powers/bodies to deliver

connecting using waterways

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Group 2 - Frame 4

LUC

Discussion: How could a national park designation assist in delivering change to meet challenges and opportunities?

Discussion structured around key opps/challenges arising from previous discussion

Got to mean more resources than if you weren't in a NP, e.g. more extensive ranger service and more staff to engage in consultation/advice/collab with landowners. Already massive resource problem for local authorities, e.g. considering policies such as 30x30. How can wealth (not just public) be used for good.

Use language more effectively e.g. don't get bogged down by "costs" - rebrand as investment and resilience. This will be uplifting.

Look at larger areas of land and develop connectivity, get landowners talking to each other and connecting their habitats for nature.

Looking at increased powers for planning decisions or park partnership plans that are compulsory. In NPs land management can be a soft approach but there is a need to move into making management compulsory to meet SG targets.

Both NPs in Scotland and all in UK have outline agreement to work with private funders e.g. palladium to contract to support federation of NPs. These deliver services and put funds. NP as an authority becoming part of a private fund. Each landowner can engage with private funds in all sorts of ways. This hasn't always been good with pension funds impacting flow country. Needs to do the right things. More people working on focusing on this change.

Significant/more community ownership and more young people into land ownership and management. Connect young people to land for livelihood. More focus on productive careers, forestry, food growing etc.

Cant be left up to landowners to take action. Common theme of lack of resources. Money should be put towards flood prevention rather than a sole focus on defences. Beavers need tools to dam build e.g. woodland in the upland for them to succeed in the area. Use beavers for flood prevention. It is a missed opportunity.

NP can help source funding and promote this. It can be an intermediary between public good and private finance.