

International Union for the Conservation of Nature - UK Protected Areas Designation Review

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

16th December 2011

Purpose of report

- 1 To report to the Joint Committee about the implications for the Pentland Hills Regional Park arising from an International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) project to review Protected Area designations throughout the United Kingdom.

Main report

Background

- 2 The Pentland Hills Regional Park currently has an IUCN Category 5 Protected Area status. IUCN Protected Area status reflects the existing arrangements in place for managing and protecting nature. These arrangements include local planning policy, Park Aims, management planning and service delivery. The designation alone does not provide a greater level of protection; rather it recognises the protective mechanisms already in place. The existing designation was made according to Guidelines produced by the IUCN in 1994. These have been reviewed and a new set of Guidelines were published in 2008.

Putting Nature on the Map

- 3 In September 2011, the IUCN UK Committee launched a new project; "Putting Nature on the Map". The project aims to identify, classify and map all places in the UK that meet the IUCN definition of a "Protected Area" according to the latest Guidelines. The benefits of the exercise include:
 - improved data about extent of protected areas to help the UK meet its international commitments;
 - support for the development and implementation of national nature conservation priorities;
 - improved data for land use and climate change strategies;
 - support for more fully informed decisions about the local management of protected areas; and

- public awareness raising of protected areas including promotion of places that can attract tourists and local people looking for contact with nature and the landscape.
- 4 The latest IUCN definition of a Protected Area is:
“A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values” (IUCN Protected Areas Handbook, 2011).
 - 5 To help deliver ‘Putting Nature on the Map’, the IUCN has developed a methodology for assessing whether a site meets the criteria for Protected Area status and to assign it one of seven Management Categories. The process requires those responsible for the management of the area to make a detailed submission to the IUCN UK Committee demonstrating compliance. If accepted by the UK Committee, then the site would be entered on the World Database of Protected Areas.
 - 6 The implication for the Pentland Hills Regional Park is that it could lose its Category 5 Protected Area status if it cannot be demonstrated that it meets the revised requirements.
 - 7 In November 2011, the Regional Park Manager met with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and managers of other Scottish protected areas including Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. Although it was recognised that nature conservation is not one of the statutory functions of Regional Parks, they have from the outset placed it at the core of their activities, alongside recreation and access. SNH indicated that it would be supportive of Regional Parks retaining their Protected Area status.
 8. The Pentland Hills Regional Park will therefore be working with Scotland’s other Regional Parks and SNH to make a submission to the IUCN UK Committee in support of retaining its Protected Area status.

Financial Implications

- 9 There are no financial implications.

Equalities Impact

- 10 There is no equalities impact arising from this report.

Environmental Impact

- 11 The aims of the Regional Park and work of Regional Park Service serve to conserve and enhance the environmental quality and responsible public enjoyment of the area. Retention of IUCN Protected Area Status will help support the longer term sustainable management of the area and promote the Park as place where the landscape and wildlife can be enjoyed responsibly.

Recommendations

- 12 It is recommended that the Joint Committee notes the contents of this report and receives a further update report once the outcome of the Regional Park's submission is known.

David Jamieson
Parks & Greenspace Manager

Appendices	None
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Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.2 We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.6 We live longer, healthier lives.10 We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.11 We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.12 We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations13 We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.14 We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.15 Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
Background Papers	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Putting Nature on the Map – Identifying Protected Areas in the UK (IUCN, 2011)