

ROYAL BURGH OF WIGTOWN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
CONSULTATIONS WORKING PARTY – November 2016

CURRENT CONSULTATIONS

- a) **Traffic Regulation Orders (Disabled Persons' Parking Places) 2016**– Dumfries & Galloway Council. Closing date: **10** November 2016

The Council's Roads Service wrote to the Community Council on 14 October c/o the Library and the letter eventually made its way to Machars Action on 31 October - so less than two weeks consultation period instead of the original four weeks. There were five Wigtown entries on the schedules provided and Roads Service simply asked for any comments or observations.

- b) **Review of Public Involvement Scrutiny**– Dumfries & Galloway Council. Closing date: 24 November 2016

Dumfries & Galloway Council's Scrutiny and Performance Committee is currently undertaking a review of the Council's public involvement practices and arrangements.

Community Councils are said to be a main contributor to the review and the Council wants to receive their comments, views and ideas. They issued a short survey and originally the timescale given was less than two weeks. Following intervention by Wigtown CC the timescale was extended to 24 November.

A draft response has been drawn up and circulated prior to a decision at the CC's November meeting.

- c) **Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education: A Governance Review** – Scottish Government. Closing date: 6 January 2017
<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/empowering-schools/a-governance-review>

This governance review seeks views on how education in Scotland – from early years to secondary schools – is run, including who should take decisions in relation to the education of children and young people, and how funding can be made fairer. It also asks about the support that teachers and practitioners need to do their jobs well and how this can be improved.

The Scottish Government want to hear from as many people as possible – from those with a formal role in Scottish education and those with a stake in its success.

They want to empower teachers and early years workers to make the best decisions for children and young people. They believe that decisions about children's learning and school life should be taken at school level, supported by parents and the local community.

- d) **Consultation on the Solway Firth potential Special Protection Area (pSPA)** – Scottish Natural Heritage. Closing date: 17 January 2017

A marine extension to the existing Upper Solway Flats and Marshes SPA is proposed for inshore non-breeding waterfowl and non-breeding gulls and for it to be renamed as the Solway Firth SPA. The pSPA covers the marine environment from Whithorn to just north of Whitehaven in England and will include Wigtown Bay (see attached map). As the pSPA is a cross-border site (Scotland/England) lying mainly within Scottish waters, SNH will act as the lead Statutory Nature Conservation Body for the proposals and the consultation, which seeks the views of all interested parties on the scientific case for the classification of the pSPA.

Documents relevant to the consultation can be viewed on the SNH website and can be accessed at: <http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/protected-areas/proposed-marine-spas/>. Documents include the Site Selection Document and the Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA).

The Solway Firth had been identified as an Area of Search (AoS) around the UK that had the potential to support important aggregations of overwintering populations of divers, seaduck and grebes that might warrant protection in SPAs. The AoS in the Solway Firth was shown to support an estimated 527 red-throated divers, over three times the UK SPA Selection Guidelines Stage 1.1 threshold of 170 birds, along with populations of other migratory species of European importance.

SPAs are managed to safeguard the birds and avoid significant disturbance and deterioration of their habitats. This means that proposed activities likely to affect an SPA are assessed for their potential to cause such disturbance or deterioration. The relevant consenting authority must ensure beyond reasonable scientific doubt that any impact is not significant before permitting the activity. This would likely impact on any offshore windfarm proposals and fishing/cockling activity in the pSPA.

The purpose of this consultation is to seek the views of all interested parties on:

- The scientific case for the classification of the pSPA as set out in the Site Selection Document; and
- the assessment of the likely economic, environmental and social impacts of the designation of the site as set out in the Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA).

Under an EU ruling, the Habitats and Birds Directives do not permit socio-economic considerations to influence the choice of Natura 2000 sites (SPAs and Special Areas of Conservation) or their boundaries. Member states, including the UK, must identify the sites and boundaries based only on the scientific evidence.

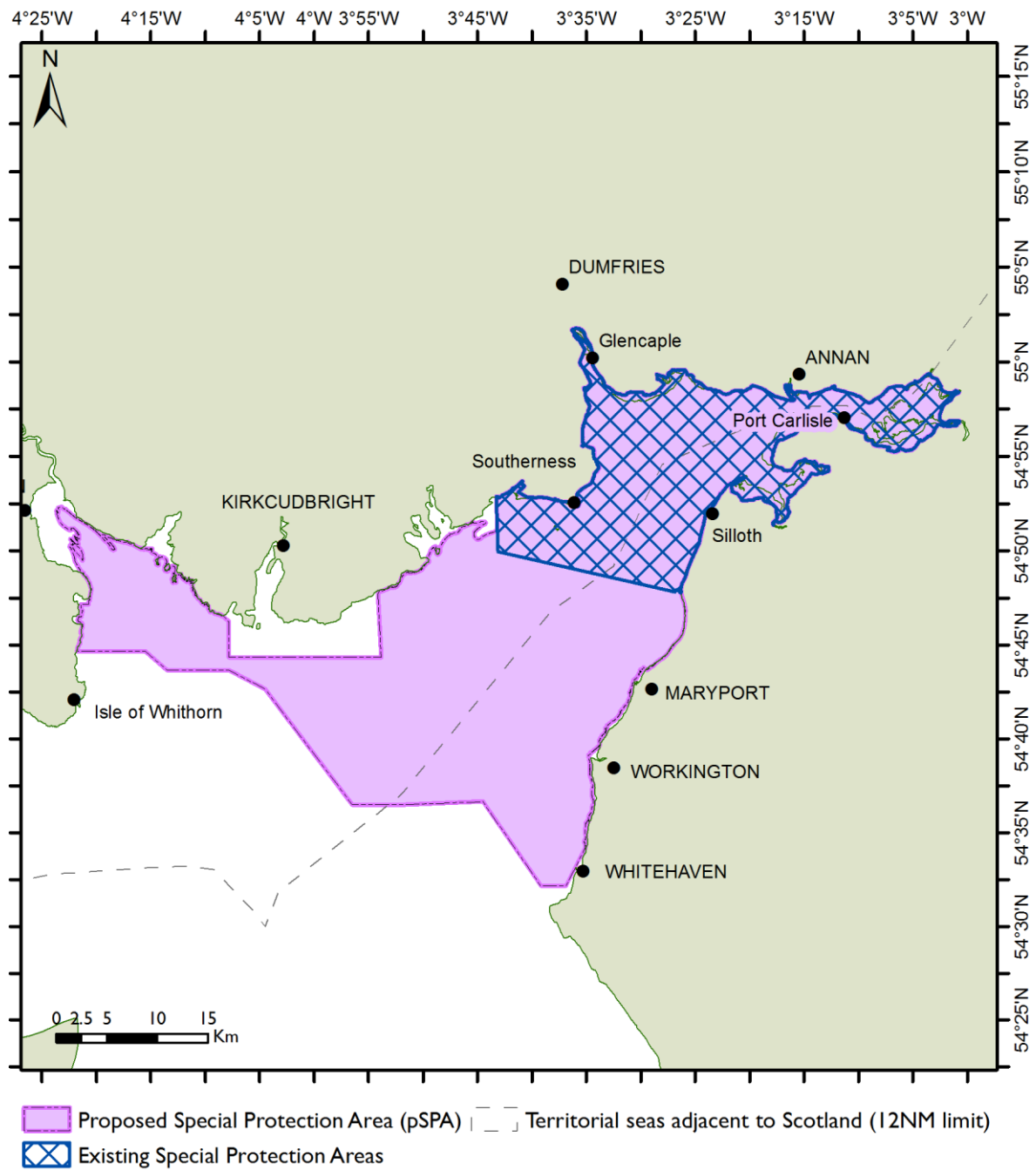
Natural England is required by the Government to assess the potential costs of decisions such as classifying the Solway Firth pSPA. Whilst the information gathered in this assessment cannot influence the decision to classify the site, it will allow those with an interest in the site to understand the socio-economic impacts that could come from it.

Responses to the consultation on the case for classifying Solway Firth pSPA should be submitted to SNH online at <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SolwaypSPA/?ne> .by midnight on 17 January 2017.

FORTHCOMING CONSULTATIONS

No Forthcoming Consultation

Figure 1. The Solway Firth pSPA.



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