

National Park purposes in the UK

Current purposes in England and Wales (Environment Act 1995):

- “To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage (of the National Parks); and
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities (of the National Parks) by the public.

In pursuing the statutory purposes, National Park Authorities have a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities.”

If it appears that there is a conflict between the two purposes, then greater weight must be given to the first (*Sandford Principle 1974*).

The Act places duty on public bodies to “*have regard*” to national park purposes”.

Current purposes in Scotland (National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000):

- *To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;*
- *To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;*
- *To promote understanding and enjoyment, including enjoyment in the form of recreation, of the special qualities of the area by the public;*
- *To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area’s communities.*

Section 9 (6) ‘*if, in any matter, it should appear that there is a conflict between the four park aims, the Park Authority must give greater weight to the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage*’.

There is currently a review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England