

## Response to Greater London National Park City Green Paper

The [Campaign for National Parks](http://www.cnp.org.uk) is the independent national voice for the 13 National Parks in England and Wales. Our mission is to inspire everyone to enjoy and look after National Parks – the nation's green treasures.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this Green Paper and welcome the idea of doing more to protect and promote the natural environment and cultural heritage of urban areas. We are broadly supportive of the proposition to make Greater London the world's first *National Park City* and believe that there is potential for this to be applied in other cities as well as London. The initiative could help encourage many more people to enjoy our great outdoors as well as providing benefits for urban wildlife.

We are particularly pleased to see that the proposed visitor centre will also promote the UK's existing protected landscapes. We are keen to ensure that everybody gets to know and experience the special qualities of protected areas and have run a number of successful projects to introduce new visitors to National Parks through our [Mosaic](#) programme. Providing easily accessible information about protected landscapes at the heart of London will be a great way of making more people aware of them.

We note that it is proposed that this would be a new kind of National Park that sits outside of current legislation and we are pleased that you have adopted the term *National Park City* to clearly distinguish the new proposition from the existing National Parks. However, we would urge you to continue to take great care in developing your plans to ensure that nothing you propose unintentionally undermines the role of the existing National Parks. These special places are hugely popular with the public. There are 90 million visits to National Parks in England each year and what many people value is the opportunities they provide to enjoy peace and tranquillity and to participate in recreational activities that cannot be accommodated in cities.

This is particularly important since you suggest that the proposal does not call for any new planning controls. The additional protection afforded under national planning policy is essential to ensuring that protected landscapes are not compromised by insensitive change, unsympathetic land use or irresponsible development. Many of the benefits which National Parks provide, including tourism and rural economic growth, would be lost if anything were to detract from the special qualities for which these areas are valued. So it is essential that the new proposal is something separate, and additional, to the existing designations for protected landscapes.

We look forward to seeing your full, costed and detailed proposal in July. Clearly, the issue of how the various activities proposed as part of this initiative are to be funded is a crucial one. Measures such as the visitor centre, the City Ranger teams and the accreditation scheme will all require a significant level of resources and so it will be useful to understand potential funding sources for these. Again, we would urge you to take care to avoid detracting from the funding for the existing National Parks which has already been significantly reduced in recent years.

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