



## **The Case for the Dorset and East Devon National Park**

The National Park proposal represents a great opportunity for Dorset and East Devon, an opportunity to create a National Park for the 21st century, accessible and accountable, designed and developed from the outset with full participation by local stakeholders.

The suggested National Park area would include the uniquely varied and internationally important landscapes, geology, habitats and biodiversity of the Dorset and East Devon AONBs, the whole of the World Heritage Jurassic Coast, and an additional area of Dorset heath-land (recommended in 1945 for inclusion in a Dorset National Park,) immortalised by novelist, Thomas Hardy, as 'Egdon Heath.' The National Park should include as much of rural Dorset as meets the designation criteria.

### **Boost local communities**

National Parks are a successful business model, working with partners to deliver a wide range of economic and social benefits, including good quality employment, increased resources for spending and investment in the area, improved health and wellbeing, sustainable development and 'joined-up' conservation. Such benefits have been identified by successive independent evaluations of National Parks [eg DEFRA, 2011.]

The National Park would work in full partnership with local authorities, communities, businesses, farmers and landowners, recreation and conservation organisations to boost local communities, the economy, jobs and tourism while caring for the area's unique landscape and heritage.

### **National Park benefits**

From an economic perspective, the National Park would pursue economic policies, in partnership with the Dorset Council and the Local Enterprise Partnerships, to foster vibrant, productive, sustainable, living and working communities and countryside, promote employment, skills, and local, affordable housing. The area's natural capital, world-class environment and heritage, are our greatest economic asset.

National Parks support enterprise and growth, as emphasised in National Parks England's 2015 report '*National Parks – Open for Business: an offer from National Parks England to Local Enterprise Partnerships.*' The Dorset & East Devon National Park would benefit the area's countryside and towns, through the National Parks Authority's statutory roles and resources.

The National Park Authority would:

- Be a catalyst and champion for the things both local people and government want to see: thriving local communities and a strong and diverse economy, achieved with sustainability and sensitivity to the environment.
- Work in partnership with the Dorset Council and communities, the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. It would be a close partner and asset for the Dorset Council, bringing additional resources and helping to deliver a shared agenda to benefit all of rural Dorset.
- Work in partnership with the Dorset Council, the LEP and communities to develop economic policies and promote investment which develop the area's environmental economy, support communities, promote local employment and skills, help farmers and landowners and promote local and affordable housing.
- Promote the area and its many attractions for leisure and tourism while helping to manage tourism pressures, and benefit the whole population, rural and urban, through the enhanced recreational, social and health opportunities associated with National Parks.
- Give communities, towns, villages and parishes, the benefits of representation, influence and accountability through the governance arrangements of a NPA.
- Lead improved and 'joined-up' care of the area's natural capital and heritage and provide a coherent approach to sustainability and landscape-scale conservation.

## **AONBs**

The AONBs (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) do good work. But a National Park, working in partnership, would take the AONBs' activities to a new level. A National Park would do much more to help local communities, businesses, farming and tourism, as well as promote understanding, recreation, health and the area's other attractions.

## **Diverse natural environments and habitats**

The Government wants C21st National Parks to have diverse natural environments and habitats, and offer recreational opportunities to nearby urban areas – criteria which the proposed National Park meets to an exceptional degree, as evidence provided to Natural England demonstrates. Dorset is famed for its extraordinary biodiversity, including species which are found nowhere else. One 10kms grid square in the Purbeck area of Dorset has more different species than any other 10kms grid square in the country.

## **The Lawton principle**

The National Park would play a key role in achieving the government's aim of landscape-scale conservation and connectivity ['the Lawton principle'], forming a link in a biodiversity chain stretching from the South Downs National Park and the New Forest National Park in the East, to the Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks in the West. A Dorset & East Devon National Park has the potential to be a 'Green Bridge' for Southern England.

## **Value for money**

National Parks give good value for money to UK Plc. The cost to the Treasury of all the English National Parks is less than £1 per head per year. Announcing Government approval of the so-called 'Lakes to Dales' National Park extension in October 2015, the Secretary of State recognised that *"National Parks are fabulous national assets which welcome over 90 million tourists per year and contribute to our vibrant rural economy – we are committed to helping them thrive."*

## **Merits for National Park status**

Natural England, the Government Agency responsible for designated areas, has undertaken a positive initial evaluation of the area's merits for possible National Park status. This is welcome recognition of the national and international importance of Dorset and East Devon's outstanding landscapes, geology, biodiversity and recreational value. The area was recommended for National Park status in 1945 but missed out for reasons specific to the time.

## **Growing interest and support**

There is growing interest in and support for the proposed National Park. Many organisations, groups and individuals across the area and beyond support the idea of a Dorset National Park.

[Read more here about interest in and support for the proposal.](#)

We hope that communities, local authorities and other stakeholders will work together to realise this once in a generation opportunity.

The Dorset and East Devon National Park Team