

Key Points and Background Note

- 1) National Parks work in partnership with communities, local councils, businesses, farmers, landowners and not-for-profit groups. A Dorset National Park would bring wide-ranging opportunities and benefits to Dorset's economy and communities as well as the environment.
- 2) National Parks have a statutory duty to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities as well as to conserve and enhance the environment, wildlife and cultural heritage. A National Park would promote community involvement in planning and consult on locally based plans that reflect local needs. It would work with communities to promote appropriate development including affordable homes for local people and keep these affordable so that young people and key workers can remain here and be attracted to Dorset.
- 3) Independent studies suggest a National Park can provide important economic opportunities and benefits for rural Dorset. It would work in partnership with other local authorities, the LEP and businesses, to market Dorset products and services at home and abroad, help develop a Dorset-wide tourism strategy that would extend the season and spread the benefits to more of Dorset and look after our greatest economic asset – our environment. The National Park would give Dorset a marketing edge, promote higher value tourism and attract visitors to stay longer and spend more.
- 4) The Government wants National Parks to be at the centre of successful, resilient economies and thriving communities in England's finest rural areas. National Parks attract inward business investment, encourage apprenticeships and build partnerships with the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. They work with farmers and landowners to secure agri-environment funds and project funding. NPs are specialized local authorities funded by central government core grant; a Dorset NP could attract similar funding to that received by the South Downs National Park which secured around £50M in core grant (and £50M in project funding) in its first 5 years benefitting the local economy, communities and businesses.
- 5) A National Park may take 5 or 6 years to come into being. That timescale would allow the Dorset Council to bed down. It will have many priorities and the National Park with its focused purposes and duty could play a significant role in conserving and enhancing our landscapes, wildlife and heritage. It would work in close partnership with the Dorset Council, attract additional central Government funding and pay the Dorset Council for the services it bought in - thus freeing funds for other priorities.
- 6) Dorset County Council unanimously agreed to note the proposal and the evidence assembled for it, and to keep it under review, and stated that: "*The proposal for a National Park could potentially support the County Council's corporate outcomes in relation to a healthy and prosperous Dorset.*"