

Dorset & East Devon National Park Proposal

Background Note

- 1) A National Park for Dorset and E Devon can provide an important economic stimulus for Dorset. Irrespective of the form local government reorganization may take, a National Park would work in partnership with other authorities, the LEP and businesses, promote affordable housing, market and develop a Dorset National Park brand and a Dorset wide tourism strategy and look after our greatest economic asset – our environment.
- 2) A National Park has a statutory duty to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities as well as conserve and enhance our environment and cultural heritage. It would support the development of affordable homes for local people and keep them affordable so that young people, key workers and others with key skills can remain here and be attracted to Dorset.
- 3) The National Park brand would give Dorset a marketing edge, promote higher value tourism and attract visitors to stay longer and spend more. A National Park could develop and deliver a county wide tourism strategy benefiting all of Dorset.
- 4) National Parks attract inward business investment, encourage apprenticeships and build partnerships with the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. They work with farmers to secure agri-environment funds and project funding for schemes such as food enterprise zones. The NP would attract additional central government funding and other resources, to be pumped back into local communities and businesses.
- 5) The Government wants National Parks to be at the centre of successful, resilient economies and thriving communities in England's finest rural areas.
- 6) National Parks are well placed to develop and implement locally based plans that reflect local needs. Community involvement in planning chimes well with the aspiration to increase the role of parishes and towns as part of local government reorganization.
- 7) A Dorset National Park may take 5 or 6 years to come into being. That timescale would allow a Combined Authority and new Unitary arrangements to bed down. The NP would fit in and work efficiently with new arrangements. It is worth noting that the newly approved Devon and Somerset Combined Authority includes their two National Parks alongside the other local authorities.
- 8) More evaluation is needed and the National Park opportunity has been remitted by Dorset County Council to Councillor Turner's Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee. DCC joins NDDC, WDDC and PDC in committing to further evaluation and scrutiny of the National Park proposal and its potential benefits for Dorset. Such evaluation has received cross party and cross county support, and has been welcomed by many local communities.

For further information: www.dorsetandedevonnp.co.uk

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