

The Economic Opportunities, Benefits and Wider Impacts of a Dorset and East Devon National Park



A Research Report

Prepared by David Dixon and Robert Deane

For the Dorset and East Devon National Park Team

Foreword

By Sandra Brown, for the Dorset and East Devon National Park Team

Britain's National Parks are world-famous for their outstanding scenery and environments. Much less well-known is their success in promoting thriving and resilient rural economies and communities.

The case for a Dorset & East Devon National Park rests on these three pillars. Building a strong and sustainable economy and thriving communities goes hand in hand with safeguarding our world-class environment, landscape, geology and biodiversity. These aims are inter-dependent.

A report earlier in 2016 for DCC reminded us that the Dorset and East Devon environment is not only outstanding but is also our greatest economic asset. It is worth around £1.5 billion every year. The Dorset Local Nature Partnership's follow up study suggested this environment represents precious natural capital which deserves an appropriate and ongoing investment strategy. A National Park for Dorset and East Devon would be the natural next step to enhance still further the economic value of the environment and sustain the area's natural capital. This would also fit with the Government's plans for National Parks; its recent 8 Point Plan for England's National Parks sees them at the heart of the economy and communities of England's finest areas.

The environment, landscape, geology and biodiversity of the Dorset and East Devon National Park area are by any measure world class, and not only for the UNESCO World Heritage Jurassic Coast. It is no wonder that the area was recommended for National Park status in the Dower report of 1945, and that Natural England has given our 2013 proposal a positive initial assessment.

But what about the economic implications of a National Park? These are understandably very important to all stakeholders, including local authorities, local communities, businesses in a wide range of sectors, landowners and farmers.

We concluded that the economic implications of a National Park for Dorset and East Devon should be thoroughly considered. So we asked two respected consultants, with experience of the rural economy and designated areas, to undertake an independent and objective review of the extensive literature which is available on the opportunities, benefits and wider impacts of National Parks in the rural economy, and consider the implications for Dorset and East Devon.

We are very grateful to David Dixon and Robert Deane for this report. It highlights the opportunities, benefits and advantages for the Dorset and East Devon economy which National Park designation would bring. It does not shrink from identifying some possible economic downsides while pointing out that National Park Authorities have the resources and expertise to deal with such issues, unlike other authorities and AONBs.

The key messages we take from the report are as follows. A Dorset & East Devon National Park would:

- Offer opportunities, benefits and advantages to the economy and businesses in the National Park and throughout Dorset and East Devon.
- Promote thriving local communities, including affordable housing, key services, employment and skills.
- Bring additional and more certain resources to the area, including central government funding which might amount to £10m annually, plus other sources of income. A parallel study examines how the National Park Authority would work efficiently with the Unitary Authority on service delivery and financial outcomes.
- Conserve and enhance the area's environment, which is our greatest economic asset, and provide practical facilitation and leadership for a natural capital investment strategy.

Local government re-organisation provides an opportunity for Dorset councils to include a National Park as part of a Devolution proposal to government in 2017. We see this study as a significant contribution to Dorset councils' and others' consideration of this question.

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Version control: Final report prepared for circulation, 17 May 2016

Document reference: Dixon, D. and Deane, R. (2016). *The Economic Opportunity, Benefits and Wider Impacts of a Dorset and East Devon National Park*. Report to the Dorset and East Devon National Park Team, May 2016.

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Executive Summary

This report has been commissioned as a piece of independent research by the Dorset and East Devon National Park Team. It brings together documented evidence of the direct and indirect economic impacts that arise from the National Park designation. It uses this evidence, together with an assessment of the characteristics of the Dorset and East Devon area, to consider the likely effects and opportunities that would arise as a result of the designation of a Dorset and East Devon National Park.

The context to the report

The area being put forward as the proposed National Park (pNP) covers 1,565 km². The area covered by the pNP has been recognised for its nationally important landscape and amenity value for over 70 years. The large majority of the area is covered by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation and the coastal strip is inscribed as a World Heritage Site.

In 2012 Natural England published a Designations Strategy NE353 (2012) and invited a number of stakeholder groups to provide evidence for their landscape designation projects. The proposal for a Dorset and East Devon National Park is one of 13 under consideration by Natural England. Another driver of change relevant to the proposed National Park is the reorganization of local government. In both Devon and Dorset, the Councils will submit proposals for local government reorganisation to Government by January 2017. The potential for a National Park is being given close consideration in Dorset as part of this review.

Direct economic impacts of a National Park Authority

A National Park Authority would be likely to bring additional funding in the order of £10 million a year, producing a Gross Value Added to the local economy of at least £6.5 million a year. Comparative analysis shows that National Park Authorities in England receive, on average, income equivalent to £409 per resident, contrasted with £9.93 for AONB Partnerships (2013 data). National Park status would relieve the County Councils from responsibility for funding the designation (in contrast to AONBs which are part funded by Local Authorities, the National Park grant is met by Defra). This would free up around £100,000 of current expenditure by the two County Councils.

National Park Authorities are the statutory planning authorities for their National Parks, responsible for Local Plan preparation and development control. Annual planning statistics from the Department for Communities and Local Government show that National Park Authorities consistently approve a higher proportion of planning applications and reach decisions more quickly than other local planning authorities.

National Park Authorities have a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within their areas. This includes providing support to businesses. The Government's 2010 Circular to National Parks emphasizes National Parks as "*models of sustainable development*" and urges National Park Authorities to "*foster and maintain thriving rural economies*". National Park Authorities use a range of tools and activities to address these challenges.

Economic impacts and effects of the National Park designation

The economic significance of the National Park designation goes well beyond the direct contribution that National Park Authorities make to the economy. National Parks perform well against key economic indicators such as rates of employment and self-employment and have substantial levels of economic activity.

There is strong evidence from many UK studies that the National Park designation, supported by the work of National Park Authorities, plays an important role in sustaining the natural and cultural capital on which local, sub-regional and regional economies depend. This role is recognised by Government, which wishes to see National Parks as "*Test beds for integrated economies*" (Defra, 2016. '8 Point Plan for National Parks').

The designation is increasingly being used to support the provision of essential ecosystem services that, for instance, enhance the quality of air and water and regulate flooding, benefiting businesses and individuals within and beyond protected landscape boundaries.

A range of surveys of businesses in protected landscape areas have found strong business support for the designation, showing how environmental quality and the National Park brand support a significant proportion of local economic activity.

The Planning Inspectorate (2013) report on the inquiry into the extension of the Lake District & Yorkshire Dales National Parks was clear about the economic contribution of NPs: *“Money spent during the course of about 115 million visitor days in the English National Parks contributes £2.5 billion to the local economies and a similar amount in spin-off benefits for nearby towns... Government recognises that National Parks contribute to the economy well beyond tourism and the visitor economy. Their economies are mixed and varied – like the parks themselves – and include hill farming, extractive industries, and manufacturing as well as a wide range of creative and service-sector businesses, firms using new technologies and many innovative enterprises”*

The report considers the resilience of rural economies in National Parks to pressures such as housing availability and the impact of high visitor numbers. It finds that the National Park designation provides the resources and capacities to take positive action to address challenges of economic resilience.

Overall conclusions

Recent studies on the environmental economies of Dorset and Devon provide both the evidence and the challenge for the future management of the proposed National Park area. The area’s natural and cultural assets already provide great value to the local economy but building on this value will require additional management and investment.

This report demonstrates that the National Park model is a proven and effective mechanism for investing in natural capital, providing the right purposes, the right level of resources and critically public and business understanding of and support for delivery of purposes.

It is likely that the designation of a National Park in Dorset and East Devon would bring a demonstrable ‘uplift’ to the area for the following reasons:

- National Park Authorities have the powers and resources to think and act in the long term interest of natural and cultural assets, using these as drivers of growth, consistent with the purposes of the designation.
- The Government is strongly supporting National Parks, both through the recent funding settlement and the 8-Point Plan for National Parks published in March 2016.
- Aligning planning delivery with the purposes of the designation offers a pathway to the levels of coherent and integrated decision-making required to effectively manage natural and cultural assets.

- The status and staffing of National Park Authorities allows them to work effectively with local partners to ensure that the environment works for business and that business development does not work against the interests of the natural and cultural assets.
- The established National Park brand is recognised by the public and the business community, providing a point of difference that can be used to the advantage of local businesses as well as providing ‘buy-in’ and support of residents and visitors alike.
- National Park status brings opportunities for businesses in ‘gateway’ locations to provide a range of services to visitors.

Notwithstanding the good work of the existing AONB Partnerships, fostering economic and social wellbeing is not part of their core activities as it is for National Parks. Furthermore, the reliance of AONBs on funding from Local Authorities at a time of ongoing budget cuts will be a constraint on the activities of AONBs.

This study has found that, as a comparator, the experience of the South Downs National Park, operational since 2011, is likely to be closest to the situation that would pertain in Dorset and East Devon. The changes taking place in the South Downs National Park since its establishment in 2010, give a good indication of what would occur in the proposed National Park. The National Park has played a critical role in developing sustainable economic responses to the management and use of the South Downs natural and cultural assets, and is positively regarded by its people. It has been able to do this as a result of the greater resources and greater certainty of long term funding that the designation has attracted, and the integrated way it has been able to develop and pursue policies with partners.

Whether the Dorset and East Devon designated area can fully satisfy all the criteria for National Park status is for others to consider. The core message from this review is that the importance of the natural and cultural assets found in the area and the value they offer to the local economy requires appropriate investment and management to ensure future sustainable use. National Park designation offers a tried and tested means of balancing protection, enjoyment and sustainable growth in the UK’s most precious and popular landscapes. It should be given appropriate consideration in the reviews of local government reorganisation in Dorset and East Devon.

1. Introduction and Methodology

Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. This report was commissioned by the Dorset and East Devon National Park Team in January 2016.
- 1.2. The report aims to bring together documented evidence of the direct and indirect economic impacts of the National Park designation and the effects that the designation would have on Dorset and East Devon. In collating the economic evidence the report considers the key economic opportunities for the area covered by the proposed Dorset and East Devon National Park.
- 1.3. The report examines a wider case for recognising and positively managing the economic values of natural capital and cultural assets. There is increasing recognition, from the European Landscape Convention¹ through to research programmes developed by The Economics Of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB²), that the special qualities of designated landscapes are fundamental drivers for economic resilience and that investment in safeguarding and enhancing natural and cultural assets can have positive outcomes for the economy and society as a whole.
- 1.4. The report challenges the accepted view that environmental protection ‘costs’ the business community. Indeed, it shows that evidence exists to support an alternative approach where the conservation and enhancement of the environment, pursued in National Parks, can be the basis for sustainable regeneration and growth.

Key Questions Addressed in the Report

- 1.5. This report has sought to answer the following questions:
 - What direct impacts do National Park Authorities have on local economic performance?
 - How well do National Parks perform economically and what are the indirect benefits of the designation?
 - What is understood about the wider environmental economies of Dorset and East Devon?
 - How might National Park status serve as a catalyst for ensuring that the special qualities of designated landscapes make the most effective contribution to wider sustainable rural development goals and help underpin thriving rural economies and communities in Dorset and East Devon?

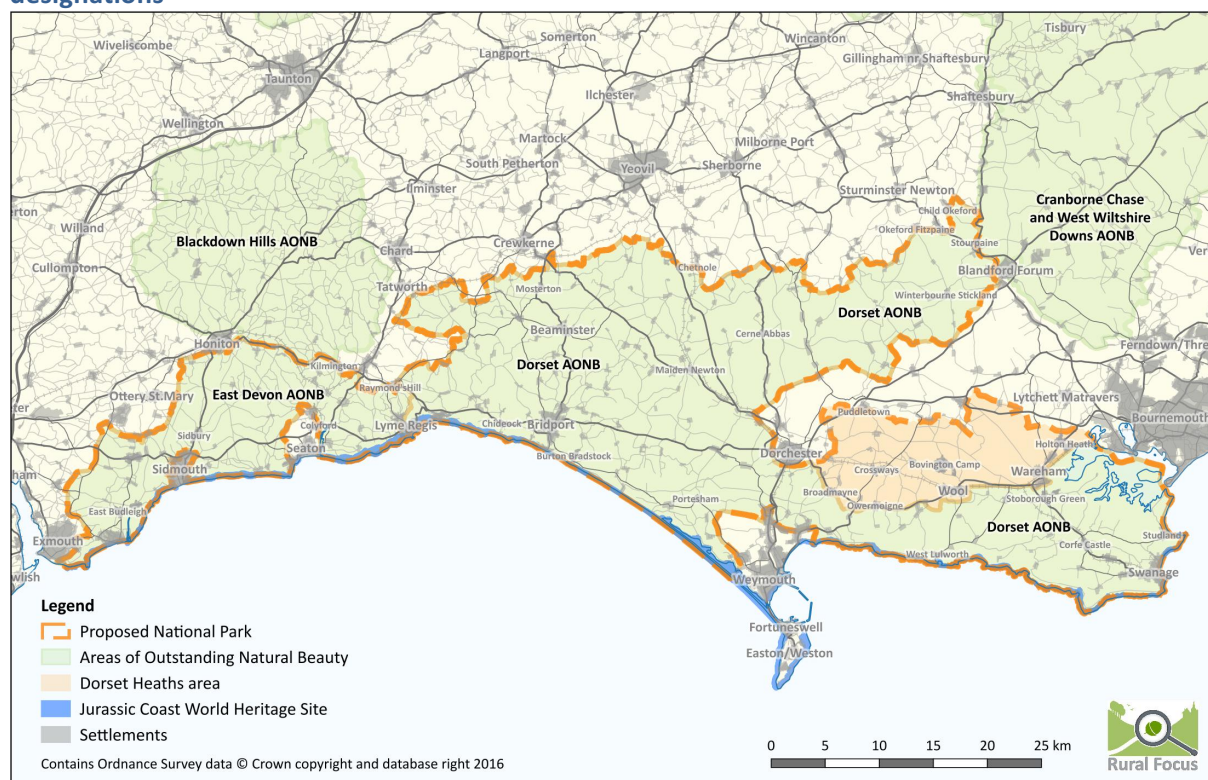
¹ EU Landscape Convention Guidelines see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-landscape-convention-guidelines-for-managing-landscapes>

² TEEB “Making Natures Values Visible” see: <http://www.teebweb.org>

Context for the Report

- 1.6. The area being put forward as the proposed National Park (pNP) by the Dorset and East Devon National Park Team covers 1,565 km² (156,486 ha). The pNP covers an area known for its outstanding environmental quality. The large majority (89%) of the area is designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), encompassing the whole of the Dorset and East Devon AONBs. The remainder of the area, lying between Dorchester and Wareham contains large areas of internationally important heathland habitat, part of the Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area. The pNP also includes the majority of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site which runs from Orcombe Point near Exmouth in the west to Old Harry Rocks near Studland in the east. The location of these areas is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

Figure 1.1. Proposed Dorset and East Devon National Park, showing existing landscape designations

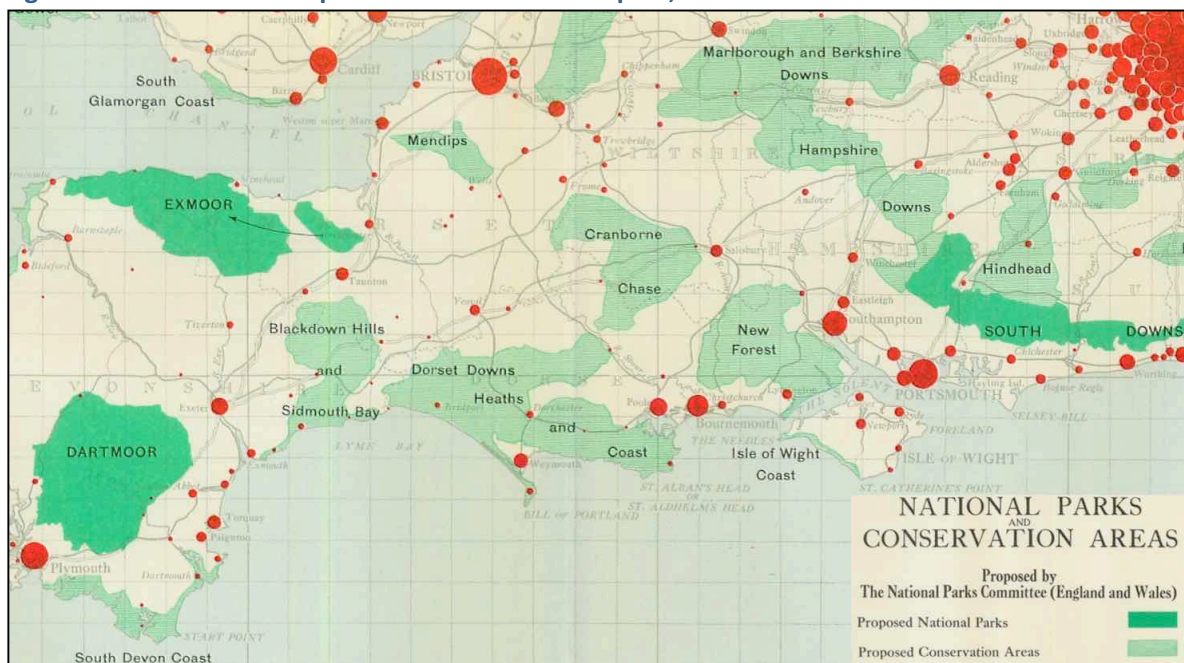


- 1.7. To the east of the pNP are the internationally important urban heaths around Poole and Bournemouth and the New Forest National Park. To the northeast, the pNP shares a boundary with the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB near Blandford. To the northwest near Honiton it shares a boundary with the Blackdown Hills AONB.
- 1.8. To the north lies the Blackmore Vale, to the east the Frome and Piddle Valleys and to the south the Isle of Portland. Significant and growing urban populations adjacent to the pNP at Dorchester, Weymouth, Yeovil, Taunton and the Poole-Bournemouth conurbation look to the pNP as an area for leisure and recreation. The surrounding countryside in Dorset and East Devon, while not being covered by landscape designations, is still of high quality.
- 1.9. As a coastal protected landscape, management of the pNP has a strong relationship and linkage to the adjacent marine environment. Harbours, estuarine and intertidal areas all lie within the boundary of the pNP. Activities within these, as well as out at sea, will have significant implications for the character and qualities of the pNP as well as implications for economic activities.

The Designation History of the Proposed National Park Area

- 1.10. The area covered by the pNP has been recognised for its nationally important landscape and amenity value for over 70 years. John Dower, in his report, National Parks in England and Wales, to Government in May 1945 identified the “Dorset Coast and Heaths” (200 square miles) as one of twelve areas listed in his Division B, ‘Reserves for possible future National Parks’, and the “Dorset Downs” and “Blackdown Hills” (which included parts of the East Devon Coast) amongst the thirty-four Division C areas, ‘Other Amenity Areas not suggested as National Parks’. In choosing these ‘Other Amenity Areas’, Dower had recognised that certain areas “might not be suitable as National Parks because of their limited size and lack of ‘wildness’, but that they nonetheless required the special concern of local and central planning authorities to safeguard their landscape beauty.”
- 1.11. The Dower report was swiftly followed in July 1947 by the Report of the National Parks Committee (England and Wales), chaired by Arthur Hobhouse. The Hobhouse report placed the ‘Dorset Downs, Heaths and Coast’ and the ‘Blackdown Hills and Sidmouth Bay’ in the list of 52 Proposed Conservation Areas (defined as “areas of high landscape quality, scientific interest and recreational value”). These areas are shown in **Figure 1.2**.

Figure 1.2. Part of the map from the Hobhouse Report, 1947



Source: Report of the National Parks Committee (England and Wales), July 1947

- 1.12. The National Parks Commission, which was established under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, adopted most of the recommendations of the Hobhouse Report, designating, the UK’s first ten National Parks, amongst them Dartmoor and Exmoor, by 1960. Hobhouse’s Proposed Conservation Areas went on to be the basis for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty that were designated from 1956 onwards, starting with the Gower Peninsular in South Wales. The Dorset AONB was designated in 1959 and is the fifth largest AONB in the country (covering 1,129 km², or 42% of Dorset county). The East Devon AONB was designated in 1963 (covering 260 km² or 32% of East Devon District).
- 1.13. It is notable that the New Forest, which had been listed as a Proposed Conservation Area in the Hobhouse report, was not designated as a National Park until 2005 (operational in 2006) and the South Downs (which was proposed by Hobhouse as a National Park but had been originally proposed as a Division C area by Dower) was not designated until 2009 (operational in 2011).

Describing the Special Qualities of the Proposed National Park Area

- 1.14. 'Special qualities' is the term used by both National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty³ management bodies to describe the elements of natural beauty that form the basis for designation. It has long been recognised that natural beauty⁴ does not simply refer to the visual appearance of the countryside, but includes flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features, manmade, historic and cultural associations and our sensory perceptions of it. These special qualities are summarized in **Figure 1.3**.

Figure 1.3. The special qualities of the areas covered by the proposed National Park

The Dorset AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 includes a 'Statement of Significance' that sets out the special qualities that are the basis of the designation⁵. These can be summarized as:

- Contrast and diversity - a Microcosm of England's Finest Landscape
- Wildlife of national and international importance - unusually rich association of habitats and species (90% of British bird species and 80% Mammal species are recorded in the designated area)
- A living textbook and historical record - Including the exceptional undeveloped coastline
- A rich legacy of cultural associations - Thomas Hardy being the best known.

The East Devon AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 explains that the East Devon AONB is notable for its varied and dramatic coastal scenery; the grandeur of sheer red sandstone cliffs, intimate wooded combs and coves contrast with the stark, white chalk outcrop that punctuates the coast at Beer Head and further east, the wilderness of the undercliffs.

Its special qualities do not stop at the coast. Inland, the heathland commons provide high, open and remote plateau. Important recreationally, the heathland habitat is valuable for its flora and fauna and contrasts sharply with the lower undulating agricultural mosaic of small fields, hedgerows and woodland copse.

The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site: A nomination for World Heritage Site (WHS) listing for parts of Dorset and East Devon Coast's known as the Jurassic Coast was submitted to UNESCO in 1999. In 2001, the undeveloped cliffs and beaches between Orcombe Point near Exmouth in East Devon and Studland Bay near Poole in Dorset were inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO. The Site was granted World Heritage status under UNESCO's criterion viii) - 'Earth's history and geological features' - which indicated that its geology and geomorphology were of Outstanding Universal Value. UNESCO require a management plan for the WHS. The future management of the landscape designation that serves as a backdrop to the inscribed area is central to effective management planning for the WHS site.

The Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area contain large areas of dry heath, wet heath and acid valley mire, all habitats that are restricted to the Atlantic fringe of Europe. The examples of the Dorset Heathlands are among the best of their type in the UK. There are also transitions to coastal wetlands and floodplain fen habitats. The whole complex has an outstanding fauna in a European context, covering many different taxa. Many species have a specialist ecology, strongly associated with, or restricted to, heathland. The area is ornithologically important for specialist breeding birds of lowland heathland, as well as for some wintering raptors.

³ Statute considers natural beauty in AONBs and National Park to be of equivalent value.

⁴ Section 114 of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act stated "References in this Act to the preservation, or conservation of the natural beauty of an area shall be construed as including references to the preservation or, as the case may be, the conservation of its flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features

⁵ <http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/assets/downloads/ManagementPlan/Dorset AONB 2 Statement of Significance.pdf>

Natural England's Designations Strategy/Review

- 1.15. Launched in 2010 and subsequently endorsed by the Coalition Government in May 2011, the Government Vision and Circular for English National Parks and the Broads sets out a range of priority outcomes including: A renewed focus on the achievement of National Park purposes; Leadership in climate change adaptation and mitigation; Securing a diverse and healthy natural environment and enhancing cultural heritage; Working to support vibrant living and working communities, and wider partnership working generally.⁶
- 1.16. In 2012 Natural England published a Designations Strategy NE353 which sets out the roles and responsibilities of Natural England as the government's statutory body responsible for landscape designation. This Strategy sees the use of designation as one tool available to Natural England.

Figure 1.4. Natural England's Designations Strategy

Assuming the proposed area meets the statutory requirements for designation, the considerations Natural England will be guided by in deciding whether designation is the most appropriate mechanism are:

- Is designation a duty or a discretionary option?
- Will designation address the impacts on the site or area?
- Are there other mechanisms available which would address the issues in the medium to long term?
- Do we have sufficient evidence to be confident that these other mechanisms will secure the protection of the natural features and special qualities of the area without designation?
- Would designation increase the likelihood of management mechanisms being put in place (e.g. HLS) and are we confident that this will happen?

Source: Natural England (2012). Designations Strategy. NE353

- 1.17. With regard to National Parks and AONBs the 2012 Strategy states *"We intend to scope possibilities for a review of the extent of AONB and National Park designations in England in order to help establish: whether the number of established AONBs and National Parks is appropriate for 21st century needs; and that a suitably diverse range of landscapes of natural beauty is under positive management to secure their conservation and enhancement"*.
- 1.18. Natural England go on to say *"We are not intending this work to result in any proposals for revocations or to remove land from designation generally. Where any future designation projects are being considered the principles and objectives of this strategy, and Focus Areas identified through Natural England's spatial prioritisation work will influence any decisions made. The primacy of the statutory natural beauty and, for National Parks only, the recreation opportunity criterion for designation will, however, not be affected."*
- 1.19. There are three specific work commitments in the 2012 Strategy; the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales extension (completed), a variation order for Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and a Surrey Hills AONB boundary variation to be undertaken by Natural England when time and resources allow.
- 1.20. As part of the Designations Strategy, Natural England has received a significant number of representations concerning other areas, amongst them the proposal for a new National Park in Dorset and East Devon. These representations have been subject to a sifting process and it is understood that 13 issues or proposals remain under consideration by Natural England, including the proposal for the new Dorset and East Devon National Park.

⁶ Defra (2010). While it remains relevant as the context for Natural England's Designations Review, the Circular has been superseded by the Government's 8-Point Plan for National Parks in the England, published in March 2016.

- 1.21. Designation of new National Parks is governed by primary legislation and has often been a lengthy process. Demonstrating widespread local support for new National Parks would be extremely helpful in any designation process.

Wider Policy Contexts

- 1.22. There are two broader policy considerations that this report seeks to take account of. The first of these is local, relating to the ongoing review of Local Government structures in England, and the second is international, in terms of the economic contributions that protected landscape designations can make to the rural regions in which they sit.

Local Government Review

- 1.23. The government is pursuing policies on devolution, economic growth and austerity. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government are encouraging English local authorities to come forward with proposals to meet the challenges in a spirit of ambition and innovation.
- 1.24. Local government change is being widely considered. By 2020, revenue support grant funding from the Government will have ended. Councils will have to rely on Council Tax, Business Rates and other forms of income. As the demand for public services is increasing, the current models of local government in many parts of England do not look sustainable in the medium to long term.
- 1.25. In Devon, 17 local authorities, the two National Parks, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the three Clinical Commissioning Groups are commencing detailed negotiations with Government on a devolution deal that would see a new Combined Authority covering Devon and Somerset known as the 'Heart of the South West'⁷. Combined Authorities coordinate the work of Local Authorities and oversee Local Enterprise Partnerships. Local government arrangements may remain with the Combined Authority choosing to focus on the economy, infrastructure delivery, and possibly health and social care. In the "Statement of Intent" produced by the Devon local authorities and partners the National Parks are identified as "*test beds for integrated land management and productivity*".
- 1.26. In Dorset the Local Authority leaders recognise the need to be pro-active in developing new solutions with the opportunity of devolution and the prospect of continuing austerity. Dorset is also considering moving to a Combined Authority model. Currently there is agreement to consider three options for local government structures:
- A pan-Dorset unitary Council including Poole and Bournemouth;
 - A unitary Council for South East Dorset and a unitary Council for the rest of the Dorset area; and
 - "No change" option retaining the current local government structures.
- 1.27. In both Devon and Dorset the Councils are aiming to submit proposals for local government re-organisation to Government by January 2017. The potential for a National Park, with a new National Park Authority being partners in new arrangements for delivery of local government services, needs to be given full consideration.

⁷ See Devon County Council "Statement of Intent" Feb 2016 - <https://new.devon.gov.uk/democracy/how-the-council-works/devolution/>

Rural Economies in Europe

- 1.28. There is also an international context to this report, framed by discussion around the economic contribution of designated landscape areas to their regional rural economies. This includes consideration of emerging perspectives and thinking about the socio-economies of regions across Europe.
- 1.29. Rural regions in Europe are facing diverging pathways of development. In many ways rural regions are becoming more vulnerable, rather than more resilient, as their agricultures become either more marginalised or intensified. Many regions also have to compete globally for mobile capital, investment and labour. Recognising the value of natural capital to economic resilience and therefore the growing importance of the role protected landscapes management bodies can play in safeguarding natural assets will be key for many rural regions across Europe. New visions for rural regions are being developed which play on their environmental strengths and seek to increase their social and economic connections to urban markets. One such approach is the 'New Paradigm for European Rural Regions' advocated by the OECD in 2006 (Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5. A new paradigm for European rural regions

The New Paradigm was advocated by the OECD in 2006, based upon four key characteristics:

- A new multi-sector and multi-functional, place-based approach to rural development, with closer links between the rural and urban economy;
- Seeing and enabling rural areas as part of more dynamic and smart regions;
- Adapting to a shift from subsidy-driven to more variably sourced investment
- Making the most of a wider set of hitherto unused resources - such as approaches now espoused in terms like 'ecosystem services' and 'integrated natural resource management'

Approach to this Report - Methodology

- 1.30. The evidence and analysis presented in this report has been generated in two ways.
 - Firstly, an extensive literature review of published and 'grey' research papers and other documents has been conducted. The bibliography for the study is provided at the end of this report and a summary of the outputs of the literature review is available as a technical annex.
 - Secondly, a small number of conversations were undertaken with individuals able to offer unique perspectives on the operation of National Parks, in particular the effect that National Park status has had on the economies and management of the New Forest and South Downs.
- 1.31. The second draft of this report was shared with a limited number of people to ensure that the information presented in the report was clear and accurate. Comments were sought from: The Dorset & East Devon National Park Team (D&ED NP), John Butterfield (Natural England), Tom Munro (Dorset AONB), Chris Woodruff (East Devon AONB), Simon Cripps (Dorset Local Nature Partnership) and Sam Rose (Jurassic Coast WHS). National Parks England is aware of the commission and the analysis contained in this report.
- 1.32. Throughout this report, important distinctions are made between:
 - The economic activity that is taking place in an area which is already valued for its natural beauty and tourism;
 - The additional effects on the local economy that would be likely as a result of National Park status; and

- The direct impacts on the local economy that would arise as a result of the activities of a National Park Authorities.
- 1.33. There is a clear challenge in differentiating these issues from each other and also from the influence of other external factors.
- 1.34. Section Two of this report focuses on the direct impacts on the economy brought about through the activities of the National Park Authority and Section Three considers the indirect effects of National Park designation on economic performance across the area. Section Four turns attention to the economy of the pNP and attempts to identify the likely economic opportunities that might flow from National Park designation.

Limitations of this Study

- 1.35. It was not part of this report's remit to compare or contrast the different landscape designations - National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). We intentionally restrict this report to considering the economic impacts of National Park designation.
- 1.36. Boundaries of protected landscapes rarely conform with other administrative boundaries, which presents a challenge for analyses based on standard socio-economic datasets. Nevertheless, various studies have been able to profile the economies of protected landscape areas with a reasonable degree of accuracy, and to compare them with wider regional and national economies.
- 1.37. Describing, understanding and attributing values to the environmental economy is a relatively new and growing area of research. Fortunately for this report a number of studies have recently reported with data relevant to the pNP area. These include the Defra funded AECOM Ltd report on Ecological Accounting (2015) and Ash Futures report on Dorset's Environmental Economy (2016), the Transform report on Devon's Green Economy (2012) and the Dorset Local Nature Partnership's Natural Capital Investment Strategy (2016). This report draws on published material from these and a range of economic valuation studies from other areas but does not attempt to explore in any detail the many issues surrounding data collection or validation. Despite the growing number of research studies which have assessed the economic impacts of protected landscape designations, there remain significant gaps (see [Figure 1.6](#)).

Figure 1.6. Common issues encountered in gathering evidence for assessing the economic impacts of protected landscape designations

- Methodologies deployed across the studies examined are not consistent; without similar calculations for other activities in the economy, based on identical methodologies, it is difficult to place one activity in any kind of relative position.
- There are difficulties in generating consistent data and avoiding the 'double counting' of statistics.
- There is usually no baseline against which to assess the economic contribution of designation and no monitoring of the costs and benefits of designation; most protected landscapes were designated some time ago making such an assessment very difficult if not impossible.
- There are few studies which seek to assess the economic contribution of designation against a counter-factual, or assess the economic impact of designation on the surrounding area (the 'halo' effect).
- There is limited evidence comparing different types of protected landscape designation – NP and AONB – and none comparing the relative economic contributions arising.
- There is no evidence on the extent to which the value of ecosystem services – specifically non-market values – is influenced by designation.
- Economic impact studies cannot account for the whole range of heritage values, such as social or intrinsic values. These values are often excluded as they are not represented by market prices and therefore the picture is incomplete.

- Studies fail to take into account the opportunity costs of any investment in protected landscapes. The investment made in a particular project may have had larger multipliers, and hence reaped more income, if it had been invested in an alternative project or location.
- There is a difficulty in assessing the current situation (of having NP and AONB designations) against the 'counterfactual', i.e. what would happen if there was no designation to protect the landscape resulting in a (serious) deterioration in the quality of the landscape.

Source: This figures draws particularly on Cumulus Consultants and ICF GHK (unpublished). *The Economic Contribution of Protected Landscapes*. Final report to Defra dated 26 March 2014.

- 1.38. The challenge of separating out the economic value of landscape designation has been pointed out by the Ash Futures report (2016) for Dorset County Council, *"the Dorset AONB is effectively a 'public good'. That is, open and free for anyone to access. Understanding the volume and value of use (by residents, visitors and/or businesses) is difficult to capture. The absence of any sort of market valuation is a problem for policy formulation (and for economic impact assessments). A further complication is that we do not know the 'influence' that those environmental assets have upon people's choices or their economic behaviour."*

2. Direct Impacts of the National Park Designation

- 2.1. This section of the report examines the economic effects that can be directly attributed to the processes and activities (the statutory purposes, powers and duties) that arise from the National Park designation. These centre around the work of National Park Authorities and also other bodies involved in delivering the purposes of the designation.

National Park purposes, powers and resources

- 2.2. It is helpful at the outset of this section of the report to describe the statutory underpinning of the National Park designation. This is done by examining the purposes of the designation and the legal protection it has, and by examining the powers and resources available to National Park Authorities.

Purposes

- 2.3. The National Park designation in England has two statutory purposes which apply to all relevant authorities operating in the designated area. These are set out in Section 61 of the Environment Act 1995. The purposes cover firstly conservation of natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage (these elements often being defined as the ‘special qualities’ of the designation) and secondly the promotion of enjoyment by the public of these special qualities (see [Figure 2.1](#)). Where there is a conflict between these two purposes the Act states that greater weight should be attached to the first purpose (this is referred to as the ‘Sandford Principle’ after the 1974 Sandford Review).
- 2.4. National Park Authorities, which are established under Sections 63 to 79 of the Environment Act 1995 are statutory bodies which are responsible for ensuring that the purposes are carried out. They also have a duty to support economic and social well-being in the way that they pursue the purposes of the designation ([Figure 2.1](#)).

Figure 2.1. National Park purposes and duty

The Environment Act 1995 set out the following two statutory purposes for National Parks in England and Wales. These purposes apply to all relevant authorities.

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
- Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the public

In pursuing these purposes National Park Authorities have a duty to:

- Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Parks

- 2.5. The Government has set out an 8-Point Plan for National Parks, covering the period 2016-2020⁸ ([Figure 2.2](#)). The plan identifies ‘*shared priorities and passions for special places*’ and provides National Park Authorities in England with guidance as to government interests in the delivery of national park purposes and duty. In terms of the economic impact of National Parks, the Plan, which has been prepared with National Parks England (the body representing National Park Authorities in England) stresses that “*National Parks are at the heart of the rural economy in their regions. We are working to ensure that the rural economy works for people of all ages, with opportunities for young people to develop the right skills*”. Under the heading of ‘Drivers of the Rural Economy’, the Plan includes specific ambitions to increase annual visitors from 90m to 100m

⁸ Defra (2016)

generating an estimated £440m for local businesses; double the number of apprenticeships in National Park Authorities by 2020; and increase the number of Protected Food Names from National Parks and increase exports.

Figure 2.2. The Government's 8-Point Plan for National Parks in England

<p>The Government's Plan, published in March 2016, is structured around the following eight objectives.</p> <p>Inspiring Natural Environments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connect young people with nature 2. Create thriving natural environments <p>Drivers of the Rural Economy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. National Parks driving growth in international tourism 4. Deliver new apprenticeships in National Parks 5. Promote the best of British Food from National Parks <p>National Treasures</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Everyone's National Parks 7. Landscape and Heritage in National Parks 8. Health and Wellbeing in National Parks

Statutory Protection

- 2.6. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the over-riding importance that should be given to natural beauty in all protected landscapes and places a presumption against major development in these areas (**Figure 2.3**). It should be noted that there is no difference in the protection accorded to National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty by the planning system in England.

Figure 2.3. National planning policy in protected landscapes

<p>The National Planning Policy Framework states the following:</p> <p>Para. 115. Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.</p> <p>Para. 116. Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy; • the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and • any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

- 2.7. The use and management of land that is outside the control of the planning system (for instance farming and forestry) have no greater protection in National Parks (or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty for that matter) than in other areas of countryside. For instance, the Environmental Impacts Assessment (EIA) regulations that apply to cultivation of permanent grassland and forestry regulations make no distinction in relation to land in protected landscapes. The same is true of the various pollution control regulations.

- 2.8. In its response to the third report of the Natural Capital Committee, Defra confirmed that it is preparing a 25 year plan for its work that will “*ensure the value of Green Belts and AONB’s, National Parks, SSSI’s and other environmental designations are appropriately protected*”⁹.

Powers Available to National Park Authorities

- 2.9. National Park Authorities (NPAs) have a number of powers at their disposal to deliver the purposes and duty of the designation. They include the following:
- Section 66 of the Environment Act 1995 requires National Park Authorities to prepare a statutory Management Plan, to be drawn up and agreed with other relevant authorities and revised every five years. The format and content of the Management Plan is not specified in legislation.
 - Sections 67 to 69 of the Act specifies that National Park Authorities are the planning authority for their National Park and, as such, are required to prepare a Local Plan and to control development according to the policies of that plan. NPAs can choose to delegate development control (the implementation of their planning policies) to constituent planning authorities (see [Figure 2.14](#) for the situation in the South Downs).
 - Section 65 of the Act gives National Park Authorities general duties to protect the countryside and avoid pollution which are the same as those that apply to Local Authorities (based on Sections 37 and 38 of the Countryside Act 1968).
 - National Park Authorities have an important role under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as ‘access authorities’ in managing public access to land. They may make byelaws, appoint wardens, erect and maintain notices indicating boundaries and negotiate agreements with a landowner or occupier to provide means of access and undertake the necessary works themselves if such agreements cannot be reached. The 2000 Act also imposes a duty on the Authorities to establish and maintain a Local Access Forum for their area.
 - Although National Park Authorities are not Highways Authorities, Section 72 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 gives them the power to make their own Traffic Regulation Orders in respect of rights of way and unsealed roads in National Parks.
 - In December 2015 the Government announced that National Park Authorities are to be given a new ‘Power of Competence’ similar to that available to Local Authorities under the Localism Act 2011. It is expected that this will allow National Park Authorities to establish and act through companies and will allow them to trade in a broader way than they currently can subject to control by the Secretary of State¹⁰.
- 2.10. It is important to emphasise that these powers to deliver the purposes of the designation are relatively modest and that National Park Authorities do most of their work through persuasion and voluntary incentives. The way in which they do this in partnership with other organisations is examined later in this section ([para 2.22](#)).
- 2.11. This report does not seek to compare the effectiveness of National Parks with Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. However a brief summary of the purposes and powers of AONBs is relevant and this is provided in [Figure 2.4](#).

⁹ Defra (2015)

¹⁰ See Hansard, 7 December 2015, column 728.

Figure 2.4. The purposes and powers of AONBs

The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation has similar but more restricted objectives to those of National Parks. The primary purpose of the designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape and it is given two secondary aims which are: Meeting the need for quiet enjoyment of the countryside; and having regard for the interests of those who live and work there.

In most AONBs responsibility for seeing that the purpose of the designation is carried out rests with the Local Authorities, reporting to Natural England. The Local Authorities delegate that responsibility to a Partnership. In two AONBs (the Cotswold and Chilterns) the Section 86 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides for the establishment of Conservation Boards to oversee the purpose of the AONB designation.

All relevant authorities exercising their functions in AONBs are required to have regard to the purpose of the designation (Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). Local Authorities in AONBs (or Conservation Boards where they exist) are required to prepare a statutory Management Plan which is revised every five years (Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act).

Unlike National Park Authorities, AONB Partnerships have no direct or statutory role in the planning process (for instance they are not statutory consultees) although many actively monitor and comment on large development proposals, focusing on ensuring the purpose of the designation is served. AONB Management Plans frequently contain sections on planning setting out policies that seek to interpret or add value to policies in Local Plans. A number of AONBs have produced design guidance and other documents which have been adopted by the planning authorities as Supplement Planning Documents or Guidance.

Resources

- 2.12. The following paragraphs provide an introduction to where National Park Authorities receive their income from. Analysis of how they spend this money is contained under the following heading, with further commentary on potential spending by a Dorset and East Devon National Park Authority in Section 4.
- 2.13. Data on the income received by all National Park Authorities in England for the year 2011/12, distinguishing between the National Park Grant from Defra and other sources, is available from research for National Parks England¹¹ (**Figure 2.5**). This shows that on average, the National Park Grant accounted for 70% of the Authorities' income. It should be noted that the Government's austerity measures have resulted in cuts to the National Park Grant since 2011/12.

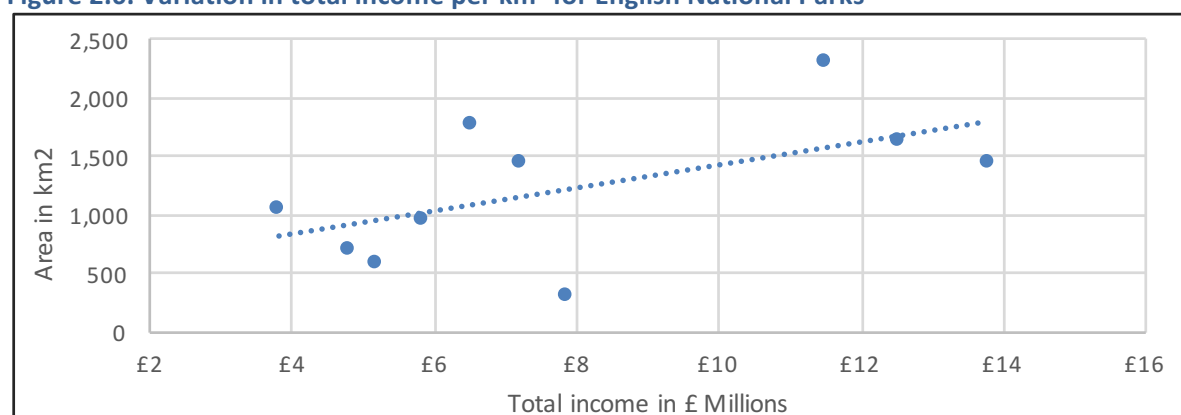
Figure 2.5. Income (£thousands) received by National Park Authorities in England, 2011/12

National Park	National Park Grant	Income from other sources	Total income
The Broads	£4,002	£3,840	£7,842
Dartmoor	£4,484	£1,318	£5,802
Exmoor	£3,765	£1,011	£4,776
Lake District	£6,591	£4,898	£11,489
New Forest	£3,812	£1,369	£5,181
Northumberland	£3,136	£664	£3,800
North York Moors	£4,936	£2,244	£7,180
Peak District	£7,664	£6,110	£13,774
South Downs	£11,373	£1,130	£12,503
Yorkshire Dales	£5,108	£1,385	£6,493
Total	£54,871	£23,969	£78,840

Source: Cumulus Consultants and ICF GHK (2013)

- 2.14. Analysis by this study has calculated the income received and spent in their National Parks by National Park Authorities on an area basis and for each resident. On average, National Park Authorities in England received a total income of £5,983/km² or £409 per resident in 2013 (excluding the Broads Authority which has a much larger income). This compares to a spend of £657/km² or £9.93 per resident by English AONB Partnerships.
- 2.15. There is significant variation between National Parks as shown in **Figure 2.6**.

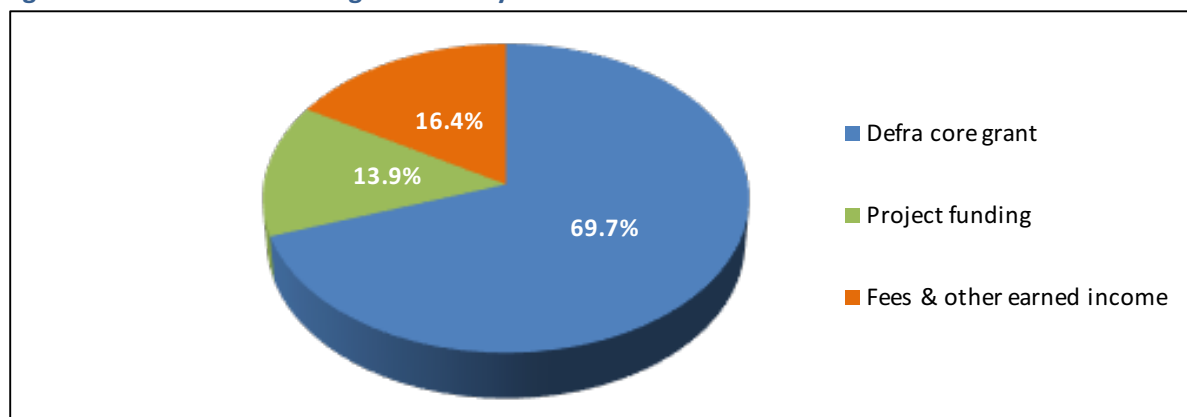
Figure 2.6. Variation in total income per km² for English National Parks



Source: Analysis by this study using income data for 2011/12 in Figure 2.5)

¹¹ Cumulus Consultants (2013)

Figure 2.7. Sources of funding received by National Park Authorities



Source: Analysis of data provided by National Park Authorities to an unpublished report by LUC for Defra. *Maximising Revenues for Protected Landscapes (2014)*.

- 2.16. It should be noted that because National Park Authorities receive substantial core funding from central government, the constituent Local Authorities in National Parks are not required to contribute to their funding (although there may be transfers of money between them for services undertaken). Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in contrast, receive a much smaller DEFRA grant and rely on funding from their constituent Local Authorities.¹²
- 2.17. **Figure 2.7** shows that National Park Authorities as a whole in England receive a significant proportion of their income from fees and other earned income. This is derived from activities such as car parking charges, the renting of buildings and land, agri-environment payments received and sales made through tourist information centres. However, the level of non-grant income varies significantly between National Park Authorities and depends on the assets they hold which can generate income. In general terms, the oldest National Park Authorities (such as in the Peak District, Lake District and Exmoor) own significant areas of land and properties whereas the youngest (such as in the New Forest and South Downs) do not, and their income from these sources is much less.

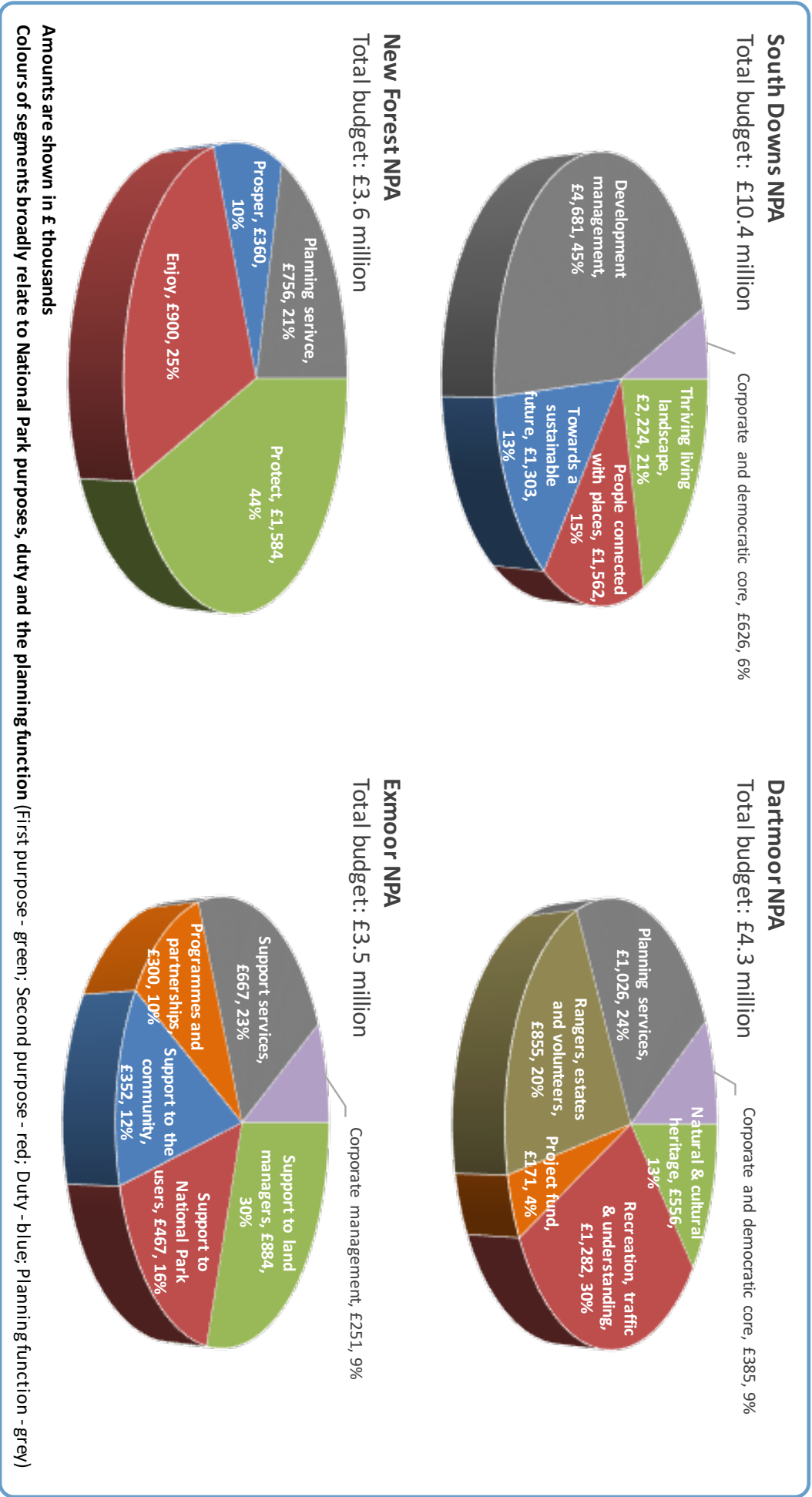
National Park Authority Expenditure and Staffing

- 2.18. National Park Authorities' spending plans are set out in their annual corporate or business plans. **Figure 2.8** uses data on budgeted expenditure from the plans of the four National Park Authorities closest to Dorset and East Devon (the New Forest, South Downs, Dartmoor and Exmoor) to examine the spread of spending across different activities.
- 2.19. The structure of National Park Authorities business plans and budgets tends to be related to their purposes, duty and planning function and this is shown by the colouring applied to the segments in **Figure 2.8**. This shows that there is significant variation between the sums allocated to these broad activities. In relation to the first purpose of National Parks, the New Forest has allocated 44% of its budget to its 'Protect' theme, Exmoor has 30% against its support to land managers, the South Downs has allocated 21% to a thriving living landscape and Dartmoor has allocated 13% to conservation of the natural environment and cultural heritage¹³. For the delivery of their planning functions, the South Downs has allocated 45% of its budget, Dartmoor 24%, Exmoor 23% and the New Forest 21%. The costs of running the Authority (such as servicing Authority meetings and their back office functions of financial and human resources management) run at between 6% and 9% of the budget.

¹² There is no statutory requirement for Local Authorities to fund their Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (and they receive no additional sums from central government through the Revenue Support Grant) but there is a long standing expectation that Local Authorities should match fund Defra's grant to AONB Partnerships on a 25:75 ratio.

¹³ Direct comparisons are difficult. For instance a proportion of Dartmoor's 20% of its budget allocated to rangers, estates and volunteers is likely to be spent on primary purpose activities.

Figure 2.8. Comparison of expenditure budgets using the strategic themes of the South Downs, New Forest, Dartmoor and Exmoor NPAs, 2015-16



Source: The Corporate or Business Plans of the four National Park Authorities

- 2.20. As shown in **Figure 2.9**, National Park Authorities have a significant complement of staff. This is significantly higher than those of AONB Units (which in 2011/12 had an average staffing of around five full time equivalent posts¹⁴). Staffing structures are typically organised around the purposes, duties and functions of the NPA. Most NPAs have a conservation and land management directorate, a tourism and recreation directorate, a planning directorate and a corporate services directorate. The employment of environmental specialists (including ecologists, landscape architects, archaeologists and land agents) and recreation specialists (for instance tourism managers and rangers) gives National Park Authorities a breadth and depth of expertise that is not available to most local authorities.
- 2.21. The majority of these staff are employed using the National Park grant received from Defra but some Authorities are able to employ significant number of project staff from other funding sources such as Heritage Lottery Fund and EU programmes (see below).

Figure 2.9. Estimate of staff levels (full-time equivalents) at existing National Park Authorities in England (projections made in 2013 – more recent data is not available to this study)

National Park Authority	Funded from the National Park grant (Defra)	Funded from other sources	Total staff
Peak District	113.6	70.0	183.6
Lake District	171.2	4.0	175.2
Broads Authority	76.2	56.1	132.3
North York Moors	103.9	7.0	110.9
Yorkshire Dales	100.4	0.0	100.4
South Downs	89.2	3.0	92.2
Dartmoor	76.7	2.6	79.3
Exmoor	58.6	4.0	62.6
New Forest	47.3	9.3	56.6
Northumberland	47.9	0.0	47.9

Source: Defra

Partnership and Leverage of Additional Resources

- 2.22. Much of National Park Authorities' work to deliver their purposes and duty is done in partnership with other organisations. The Authorities are increasingly keen to emphasise this approach and both the South Downs and Exmoor NPAs now use the word partnership in the title for the Management Plan for their National Parks. By working with partners the Authorities lever in additional resources to their work, both from matched cash funding for joint projects and from in-kind support from organisations and volunteers. Examples of external funding acquired to deliver the purposes of the National Park designation are provided in **Figure 2.10**.
- 2.23. In attracting and managing resources as part of a partnership, National Park Authorities offer the benefits of their 'accountable body' status (their ability to manage grants and earned income)¹⁵ and their existing staff resource of environmental, cultural heritage, land management and tourism specialists. The inspector's report on the enquiry into the extension of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks concluded that *"these bodies [the NPAs] are far more likely to be able to deliver what have been variously described as strategic 'landscape-led', 'multi-purpose', and 'joined-up' long-term programmes and initiatives of the type likely to assist the necessary measures across all aspects of the two NP purposes"*¹⁶.

¹⁴ LUC (2013)

¹⁵ AONB Conservation Board also have this status. For other AONB Partnerships, accountable body status is provided by the Local Authorities.

¹⁶ Planning Inspectorate (2013). Para.3.259.

Figure 2.10. Examples of external funding sources used to deliver National Park purposes

Sources of external funding used to deliver the purposes of the National Park designation include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Heritage Lottery Fund (for instance the £2.6 million grant recently awarded to the Broads Landscape Partnership for the Water, Mills and Marshes project, led by the Broads Authority and the £2.9 million grant recently awarded to the 'Our Past, Our Future' New Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme led by the New Forest NPA)• Utilities companies (for instance South West Water's Exmoor Mires project, working closely with the Exmoor NPA)• Natural England through targeting of higher level agri-environment scheme agreements with farmers and landowners and pilot projects to test new approaches (for instance the 'outcomes focussed' approach on Dartmoor)• The 'Leader' element of the England Rural Development Programme (EU funded), delivered through Local Action Groups, providing grants to rural community groups and businesses• Local tourism partnerships (such as Brecon Beacons Tourism which has a membership of 250 tourism businesses and is separate from, but works closely, with the Brecon Beacons NPA)• Visitor gifting schemes (such as the Nurture Lakeland scheme which raised £114,552 for spending in the Lake District National Park in 2014/15)¹⁷• EU transnational programmes (such as the £1.7 million Collabor8 project promoting activity tourism, local food projects and green accreditation run by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority with funding from the EU Interreg 4B programme)	

- 2.24. From 2002-2014, National Park Authorities operated a small grants fund aimed at businesses and community groups to support the delivery of purposes of the designation. Initially this Sustainable Development Fund was allocated by Defra as a ring fenced sum (£200,000 per NPA) but since 2011, Defra's grant has been provided as a 'single pot', allowing the Authorities to decide how to spend the money. All have maintained a small grant scheme (some no longer calling it their Sustainable Development Fund). Grants are relatively small (an evaluation in 2010¹⁸ found that nearly a third of grants were for less than £2,000) and are match funded by the recipient (on average on a 50:50 basis). Funded projects cover a wide range of topics such as improving access to the National Park, mitigating climate change, processing and marketing food and drink and enhancing biodiversity, but activities that are seen to be innovative or which address specific policies in the National Park Management Plan tend to be given priority.

Multiplier Effects of NPA Spending in the Local Economy

- 2.25. A report for National Parks England in 2013¹⁹ made a number of estimates about the ways that spending by the National Park Authorities on their staff, on goods and services and on grants to local community groups and businesses contributed to the local economy. It found that employee salaries and related costs accounted for around £36 million (48% of NPA's gross expenditure) which represent a direct contribution to National Parks' economies.
- 2.26. Much of the remaining £38 million spent by NPAs each year was also likely to support the turnover of businesses that supply goods and services to the NPAs and to those who benefit from NPA grants. The report suggested that the potential impact of this non-salary spending could be illustrated by assuming (conservatively) that 25% of this expenditure involves purchases of goods and services from local suppliers, supporting business turnover of £9.6 million annually. On the assumption that each £1 million of business turnover directly supports Gross Value Added (GVA) of

¹⁷ A useful review of visitor gifting (or payback) schemes is Reed et al. (2013)

¹⁸ LUC (2010)

¹⁹ Cumulus Consultants (2013)

£0.50 million and 10 direct FTE jobs, the report estimated that this could have the effect of supporting GVA of £4.8 million annually and 96 FTE jobs among supplier businesses.

- 2.27. Furthermore, on the assumption that each unit of direct expenditure is associated with a further 0.25 units of activity through indirect and induced effects, the report estimated that these multiplier effects could support a further 300 FTE jobs and £10 million of GVA locally. Overall, it estimated that NPA expenditure in England supported more than 1,500 FTE jobs and GVA of £50 million in their respective local economies ([Figure 2.11](#)).

Figure 2.11. Estimated economic impact of NPA expenditures

Type of expenditure	Expenditure (£m)	Employment (FTE)	GVA (£m)
Direct staffing	35.6	1,118.5	35.6
Other purchases	38.5	96.3	4.8
Indirect and induced effects		303.7	10.1
Total impact of NPA expenditures		1518.4	50.5

Source: Cumulus Consultants and ICF GHK (2013) Valuing England's National Parks. Report for National Parks England. Table 3-2, page 30.

The Planning System and Effects on Development

- 2.28. As noted earlier, National Park Authorities are the statutory planning authorities for their National Parks, responsible for preparing, reviewing and monitoring the Local Plan and for adopting accompanying development plan documents (Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans) and for ensuring compliance with planning policy through development control.
- 2.29. The overall scope and structure of Local Plans in National Parks are similar to those in other areas. They contain a vision and objectives for the National Park; a set of strategic policies; a spatial strategy which sets a settlement hierarchy and targets for new housing and employment land and allocates preferred sites; and a set of development control policies.
- 2.30. The content of the vision, objectives and strategic policies is influenced by the purposes of the designation and is likely to have strong links to the Management Plan for the National Park. Local Plans in National Parks, like others in rural areas, tend to emphasise the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the need for affordable housing, the importance of a diverse and vibrant economy and the provision of services close to where people live. An example of the objectives and strategic policies from a recently published National Park Local Plan is provided in [Figure 2.12](#).

Figure 2.12. Objectives and strategic policies from the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan (published July 2015)

<p>Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support locally sustainable development that will improve the National Park as a high quality place to live, work and visit. 2. Support development that will maintain existing services or develop new ones for the benefit of local communities. 3. Encourage development that will support a growing, diverse and resilient economy, which increases the proportion of young adults and people of working age living in the Park. 4. Use the planning system to help deliver the statutory National Park purposes: conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, the promotion of opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public. 5. Encourage development in locations with the best access to existing services and facilities, and where it will not be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change or will increase resilience to it. 6. Support innovative, high-quality and more sustainable building design that complements the distinctive character of the National Park. 7. Ensure the landscape of the National Park continues to be responsive to change while at the same time conserving and enhancing its character. <p>Strategic Policies (titles only – the policies are too long to repeat here)</p> <p>SP1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development</p> <p>SP2. National Park Purposes</p> <p>SP3. Spatial Strategy</p> <p>SP4. Development Quality</p> <p>SP5. Major Development</p>

- 2.31. National Park Authorities are subject to the duty to co-operate with neighbouring planning authorities (as applies to all planning authorities under Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011), ensuring that there is a consistency in strategic planning across boundaries. This can include joint working to agree housing allocations or transport planning to meet expected demand (for instance commissioning evidence research across boundaries) and can include the preparation of joint local plans. In this regard, the South Downs National Park Authority has adopted Joint Core Strategies with its constituent Local Authorities.

Development Control Policies and Practices

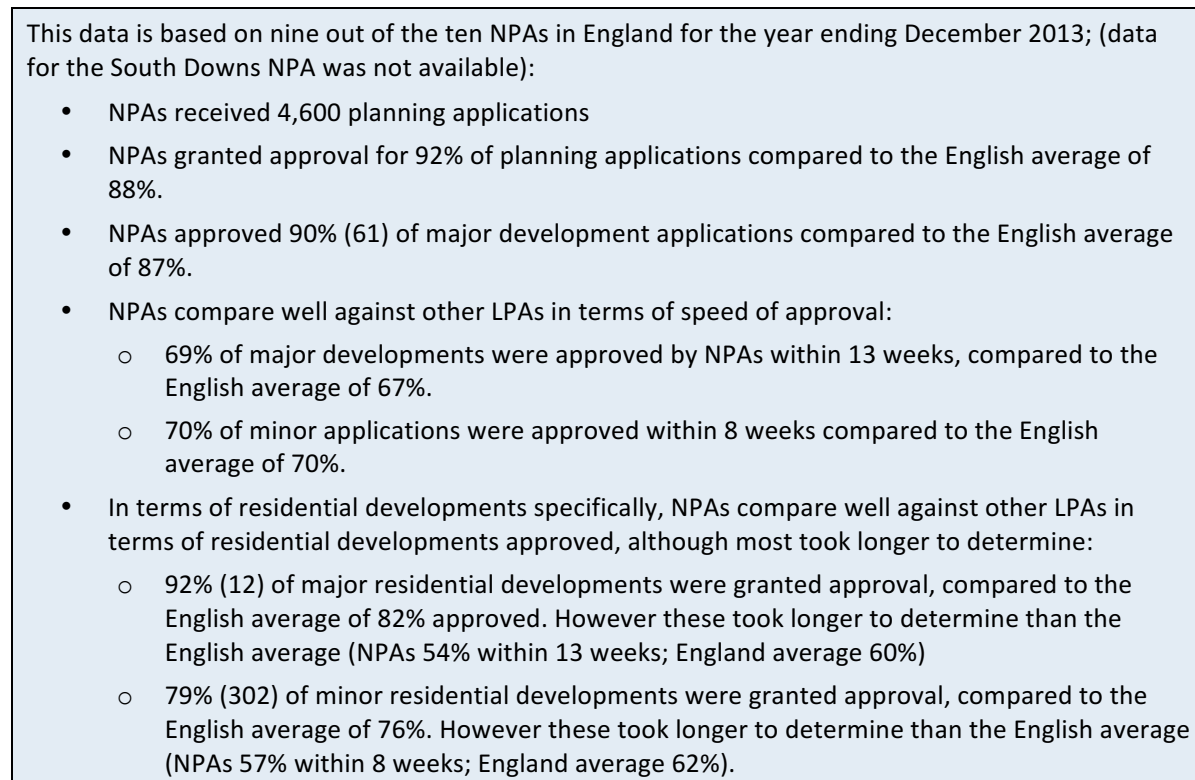
- 2.32. There is often a perception from businesses that planning requirements in National Parks are a barrier to development (see for instance objections made to the planning inquiry for the extension of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks in 2013²⁰). However, there is no reliable evidence to support these perceptions. The Inspector's report on the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales extensions stated "*Suggestions of over-burdensome planning requirements in the NPs were of the anecdotal/hearsay variety and not borne out by the statistical evidence which does not indicate that any such demands translate into materially different rates of refusal or issues raised under the prior notification procedure for agricultural buildings*".²¹
- 2.33. Planning statistics for 2012 published by the Department for Communities and Local Government showed that NPAs approved a higher proportion of planning applications than other local planning authorities – 92% compared with an English average of 88% (see [Figure 2.13](#)). This reinforces data

²⁰ Planning Inspectorate (2013)

²¹ *Ibid.* Para.3.261.

from DCLG from 2012 and also the findings of earlier research by the Council for National Parks in the Yorkshire and Humber Region.

Figure 2.13. Planning approvals and performance in English National Parks, 2012



Source: DCLG (2013) Planning Statistics for year ending June 2013 for nine NPAs, excluding the South Downs, quoted in Cumulus Consultants (unpublished).

- 2.34. Further evidence of the levels of development taking place in National Parks is provided by research from Peter Bibby at the University of Sheffield²². Far from showing that residential development is prevented by National Park status, it shows that house building in National Parks in the decade 2001 to 2011 actually took place at a faster rate than for England as a whole. During that decade the housing stock increased by 10.4% in National Parks compared to 8.5% in England.
- 2.35. Recent research for the Welsh Government examined the delivery of planning services in protected landscapes in Wales. It found little difference between AONBs and National Parks (the average approval rate was 84.5%, 87% in Snowdonia National Park and 85% in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park). There was no difference in the percentage of applications determined within 8 weeks (64%) for the two types of protected landscape²³.
- 2.36. It should be noted that there are different models for how planning services can be delivered by National Park Authorities. Some National Park Authorities, such as the New Forest and South Downs, have considered collaborating with their constituent Local Authorities to prepare Joint Local Plans (the New Forest decided not to, whereas the South Downs has prepared Joint Plans with some of its constituent Authorities and is now reviewing its development control arrangements). In Wales, the Marsden review (2015) considered whether National Park Authorities should retain their planning powers and concluded that they should, helping them to be *“more integrated in the delivery of their purposes. While planning will remain one tool amongst the several required to deliver the new three purposes, it will serve a key function delivering consistency across our National Parks”*.

²² Bibby (2014) quoted in Cumulus Consultants (unpublished)

²³ LUC (2012)

Figure 2.14. Planning services in the South Downs National Park

South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is the sole planning authority for the National Park area covering a large populace (112,000 residents) and 15 local authorities. It receives over 4,000 planning applications a year. The SDNPA delegates the bulk of its development management to the local authorities. Major applications are sifted by applying a 'significance test' in which the larger, high-impact ones, are determined by the NPA. The rest (the vast majority of applications) are passed to local planning authorities (LPAs) across the National Park for determination.

The other LPAs receive a fee from SDNPA for these planning services, for example Chichester District Council receives in the order of £1 million a year from the NPA for its planning service work in the National Park. This is in place of the central government support grant they receive as a LPA for that part of the district within the National Park.

Recently, four of the 11 Districts / Boroughs and Unitaries have handed back all planning determination in the Park to the NPA. These are LPAs with only small proportions of NP-designated land in their area, including urban-centric authorities. SDNPA is taking back the county councils' planning work (minerals and waste, schools etc) as this is relatively minor in the SDNP.

Joint Core Strategies between SDNPA and the other LPAs was a way of addressing the challenge of transition. Many LPAs were advanced in developing core strategies at the time the NP was being established so the decision was made to work together to sign off joint core strategies. This has been successful with five joint core strategies and two minerals and waste strategies in place.

SDNPA is now working on the single Local Plan for the Park (expected 2017). This plan has an evidence base focused on National Park purposes and is looking to take an ecosystem services approach to planning, highlighting the natural capital of the SDNP. The evidence base for the Local Plan is already a valuable tool for NPA managers to use in ensuring appropriate management and actions are taken to safeguard and enhance special qualities of the NP.

SDNPA has a planning reserve fund specifically set aside, so it can be more assertive in being able to reject planning applications and defend any objections if appealed. Local Councils can be in a position where the fear of costs associated with appeals can affect the confidence to reject borderline applications. SDNPA has won all major appeals to date.

Source: Phil Belden, SDNPA, *Pers. Comm.* March 2016

Support to Businesses

- 2.37. National Park Authorities have a duty to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities within their areas (Figure 2.1). This includes providing support to businesses. Although the Environment Act 1995 makes clear that this duty is intended to be delivered in the context of the purposes of the designation (i.e. National Park Authorities are not expected to operate as economic development bodies *per se*), the Government's 2010 Circular to National Parks emphasises National Parks as "*models of sustainable development*" and urges National Park Authorities to "*foster and maintain thriving rural economies*". National Park Authorities are addressing these challenges in a number of ways.
- 2.38. As noted earlier (para. 2.24), National Park Authorities set aside some of their budgets to offer small grants to businesses and community groups through their Sustainable Development Fund (some NPAs use a different name). A review of these schemes in 2010²⁴ found that a 21% of the grants (for nearly £4 million) were received by businesses to support activities such as the processing and marketing of locally produced food, drink and forestry products and the enhancement of tourism enterprises.

²⁴ LUC (2010)

- 2.39. These two sectors (farming/forestry and tourism) also receive wider support from National Park Authorities because of their critical role in delivering the purposes of the designation (the management of natural beauty by land-based businesses and the promotion of enjoyment of the special qualities by the tourism and hospitality businesses).
- 2.40. **Figure 2.15** summarises the different activities undertaken by National Park Authorities to support land-based businesses and **Figure 2.16** does the same for the tourism sector.

Figure 2.15. Activities of NPAs to support farming and forestry

- Grants advice and support (especially for agri- environment schemes)
- Land and woodland management advice
- Farm diversification advice and grants
- Local food/drink and wood product initiatives
- Renewable energy, including wood fuel, advice and support
- Planning policies that support farm diversification
- Branding and marketing initiatives
- Training and skills development

Source: Summarised from Cumulus Consultants (2013) Valuing England's National Parks. Report for National Parks England

Figure 2.16. Activities of NPAs to support tourism businesses

- Operation of Tourist Information Centres
- Provision of ranger services involved in recreation management and events
- Support for green tourism accreditation schemes
- Support for visitor gifting/payback schemes
- Local food/drink supply initiatives
- Branding and marketing initiatives
- Training and skills development

- 2.41. Most National Park Authorities worked closely with the Regional Development Agencies (for instance the Peak District National Park Authority ran two large programmes part funded by its Development Agencies – the 'New Environmental Economy' and 'Peak Live Work' programmes). With the advent of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), National Park Authorities, with Defra encouragement, are keen to show how they can support the sustainable growth agenda within their rural economies.
- 2.42. In January 2015, National Parks England, on behalf of all the Authorities, published an 'offer' to the network of Local Enterprise Partnerships entitled 'Open for Business' that sets out the role that National Park Authorities can play to support the work of Local Enterprise Partnerships (**Figure 2.17**). The paper points out that England's National Parks contain over 22,000 businesses and collectively generate up to £6.3bn GVA which is equivalent to that of the UK aerospace industry or a city the size of Plymouth.

Figure 2.17. How NPAs can support Local Enterprise Partnerships

- Bringing clusters of businesses together (e.g. farming networks, Rural Business Hubs)
- Supporting rural supply chains (e.g. for forestry and local food)
- Promoting sustainable tourism initiatives and campaigns
- Acting as trusted intermediaries between land owners, farmers, businesses, and local communities
- Testing new ideas and new rural economic programmes, such as Community Land Trusts and rural self-build
- Link with Local Nature Partnerships in support of paragraph 165 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Offer their track record in securing investment to support development
- Be a strategic partner with knowledge, skills and access to networks that can support sustainable rural development.

Source : Open for Business NPE

- 2.43. There are already good examples of National Park Authorities working with their Local Enterprise Partnerships, especially in Yorkshire where both the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors NPAs have developed strong, clear relationship with the LEPs and their Strategic Economic Plans²⁵. NPAs are taking a lead to support jobs and growth through schemes for the tourism sector, through farming futures known as the Dales and Moors Farm Innovation Project and latterly looking to develop schemes for young apprenticeships.
- 2.44. The South Downs National Park Authority is an active partner with the Coast to Capital LEP, sitting on the statutory joint committee and on the European Structural & Investment Funds (ESIF) sub-committee they advise the national Managing Authorities for these funds on local growth conditions and priorities.
- 2.45. In the South West, Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities are currently putting together a proposal for the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership and Defra for the development of rural productivity networks in their National Parks to drive economic productivity and innovation.

²⁵ York, North York and East Riding Economic Partnership – Strategic Economic Plan 2014 Annex C

3. Indirect Impacts of National Park Designation

- 3.1. This section examines economic effects that can be indirectly attributed to the processes and activities that arise from National Park designation. These centre around the impact of the designation on the decisions, perceptions and actions taken by stakeholders, from land owners, land managers, public authorities, NGOs through to businesses and communities.

The Environment as an Economic Driver

- 3.2. It is widely accepted that the environment is a vital economic asset that underpins local business activity and provides inward investment. A University of Reading report²⁶ highlights that the environment has a key role to play in the European agenda to promote regional competitiveness and sustainable economic growth. But it suggests that this role is poorly understood, stating *“the environment is too often seen as a constraint on the economy. This view is incorrect. The role that the environment plays in achieving economic objectives must be more widely acknowledged. Environmental protection and enhancement should be core objectives of regional and rural development policy and funding”*. The report goes on to call for a more proactive approach at both the European and UK levels: *“it is not only possible but also necessary and desirable to invest in the environment to achieve economic growth and competitiveness”*.
- 3.3. The recent report on Dorset’s Environmental Economy²⁷ defines natural capital assets as *“the foundation of all wealth, consumption and production. Materials and energy flows from and to the environment are vital elements of the economic process on both the demand and supply sides of the market. They underpin the process of employment and productivity that drives growth and living standards, and, thereby, they promote wider wellbeing.”*
- 3.4. Arriving at a clear, unambiguous and all-encompassing valuation of the economic impacts of National Park designation is subject to a number of constraints ([para 1.35 et sequ.](#)). For the purposes of this report, the evidence of the economic impacts of the National Park designation is reviewed under the following headings:
- Heritage Management
 - Visitor Economy
 - Land Base Sector - Farming and Forestry
 - Housing Provision and Demand
 - Health and Wellbeing - including the Volunteer Economy.

²⁶ University of Reading (2004)

²⁷ Ash Futures (2016). See para. 4.24 *et sequ.* on page 54 of this report for more information.

Government Policy on the Economies of National Parks

- 3.5. The Government, with National Parks England (NPE), stress the important economic, social and environmental roles of National Parks in their shared Vision for English National Parks in 2030 (**Figure 3.1**). This vision emphasises that National Parks have a key role as beacons of sustainable development in action, both through the visitor and heritage economies but also in the way that other sectors of the economy, such as energy and transport, use the environmental quality of the area as an economic asset.

Figure 3.1 Vision for English National Parks 2030

By 2030 English National Parks and the Broads will be places where:

There are thriving, living, working landscapes notable for their natural beauty and cultural heritage. They inspire visitors and local communities to live within environmental limits and to tackle climate change. The wide-range of services they provide (from clean water to sustainable food) are in good condition and valued by society

Sustainable development can be seen in action. The communities of the Parks take an active part in decisions about their future. They are known for having been pivotal in the transformation to a low carbon society and sustainable living. Renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, low carbon transport and travel and healthy, prosperous communities have long been the norm

Wildlife flourishes and habitats are maintained, restored, and expanded and linked effectively to other ecological networks. Woodland cover has increased and all woodlands are sustainably managed, with the right trees in the right places. Landscapes and habitats are managed to create resilience and enable adaptation

Everyone can discover the rich variety of Englands' natural and historic environment, and have the chance to value them as places for escape, adventure, enjoyment, inspiration and reflection and a source of national pride and identity. They will be recognised as fundamental to our prosperity and well-being

Source: NPE 2010

- 3.6. As detailed in paragraph 2.5, the Government has set out in an 8-Point Plan for National Parks, covering the period 2016-2020 (**Figure 2.2**). The Government sees National Parks as being drivers of the rural economy, placing particular emphasis on the potential for more international visitors, on new apprenticeships and promoting high quality food²⁸.

²⁸ Defra (2016)

The Economic Characteristics of National Parks

- 3.7. The primary factor influencing economic activities in the majority of English National Parks is their rural nature. They share many of the characteristics of other rural areas such as an older age profile, a higher proportion of self-employment and small businesses and relatively low levels of social and economic deprivation, compared to England's economy as a whole. **Figure 3.2.** summarises key factors about the economies of England's National Parks from a recent study.

Figure 3.2. Key factors about the economies of England's National Parks

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England's National Parks cover a total area of more than 1.2 million hectares (9.3% of England's land area) • NPs are relatively sparsely populated with an average population density of 0.3 persons per hectare, (although there is considerable variance in both the size and the population density of individual National Parks) • The total population of England's National Parks is 321,000 (0.6% of the England population) and of the working age population 70% are economically active, in line with the national average. • The population of NPs are older, and population growth over the past ten years has been lower in the National Parks compared to England as a whole, reflecting their rurality • Around half the population of England resides within one hour's travel of a National Park and National Park areas provide benefits to people who live well beyond their boundaries • The National Parks have a higher proportion of self-employed people than the country as a whole (19% compared to 10%), a similar proportion of part-time workers and a lower proportion of full time workers. Unemployment is 2%, lower than the national average • Average household income is higher than regional averages for most National Parks and average house prices in National Parks, also command a significant premium over regional averages • There are 22,500 businesses located in England's National Parks providing around 141,000 jobs, according to 2012 data; this equates to 1.2% of all businesses and 0.6% of total employment in England • While the contribution of National Parks to overall employment is in line with their population, the number of businesses per unit of population is twice the national average, a reflection of the number of small businesses in the National Parks • Of the 157,000 employees in the National Parks, there is a high proportion of senior, professional and skilled occupations in the workforce • From an analysis of turnover, employment and county-level productivity data, it is estimated that England's National Parks generate £4.1 to 6.3 billion of GVA in 2012 (0.4% to 0.6% of all GVA generated in England). This is comparable to a smaller city such as Plymouth, Coventry, Swindon or Sunderland, or the UK aerospace sector • GVA estimates for England's National Parks in 2012 were concentrated in the South Downs (43.5%), the New Forest (16%) and the Lake District (13%), which jointly account for approximately 72% of all GVA generated across the English National Parks

Source: Cumulus Consultants (2014 unpublished)

- 3.8. National Parks contain a diverse range of business activity. Cumulus Consultants in "Valuing England's National Parks" (2013) found that *"Just over two thirds (68%) of all businesses in National Parks are in sectors other than agriculture, forestry and fisheries and accommodation and food services, i.e. those most directly associated with farming, forestry and land management and tourism and recreation. The proportion of businesses in these other sectors varies from 29% in Northumberland National Park through to 85% in both the New Forest and South Downs National Parks. The average for England as a whole is 89%. Over three quarters (76%) of total employment in National Parks is linked to these other sectors. This proportion varies across National Parks, with*

other sectors accounting for as much as 89% of total employment in the South Downs. Key sectors by employment include education, wholesale and retail, and health.”

- 3.9. The Planning Inspectorate (2013) report on the inquiry into the extension of the Lake District & Yorkshire Dales National Parks was clear about the economic contribution of NPs: *“Money spent during the course of about 115 million visitor days in the English NPs contributes £2.5 billion to the local economies and a similar amount in spin-off benefits for nearby towns...Government recognises that NPs contribute to the economy well beyond tourism and the visitor economy. Their economies are mixed and varied – like the parks themselves – and include hill farming, extractive industries, and manufacturing as well as a wide range of creative and service-sector businesses, firms using new technologies and many innovative enterprises”*.
- 3.10. The Marsden review (2015) of Designated Landscapes in Wales emphasises the complementary relationship between conservation and economic wellbeing. *“Increasingly it is recognised that the quality of the environment is a source of competitive advantage to Wales. The value of economic activity that is dependent on the quality of the environment within the National Parks greatly outweighs the value (and cost) of activity concerned with the protection and management of the environment”*.
- 3.11. In ‘So Much More Than The View’ (2015), National Parks England and the National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty estimated that there are over 85,000 businesses located in the protected landscape designations generating a gross value added to the economy of £20 Billion, equivalent to the contribution of the City of Birmingham.
- 3.12. **There have been several studies that have assessed the economic impact of or economic contribution made by a protected landscape designation. Below we list or summarise the evidence of the economic contribution made primarily by National Parks.**
- 3.13. **Figure 3.3** lists the turnover of businesses located in National Parks and shows the relative significance of the South Downs and New Forest National Parks (between them accounting for 60% of business turnover in all English National Parks). **Figure 3.4** lists business turnover by the number of employees, showing that businesses in National Parks tend to be smaller than those in England as a whole.

Figure 3.3 Business turnover in English National Parks, 2012

National Park	Turnover (£m)
The Broads	104
Dartmoor	605
Exmoor	165
Lake District	1,245
New Forest	2,701
North Yorks Moors	428
Northumberland	27
Peak District	1,102
South Downs	3,594
Yorkshire Dales	422
All English NPs	10,404
UK Economy Total	4,480,574

Source: ONS (2013) UK Business: Activity, Size and Location, 2012 and additional analysis of IDBR data

Figure 3.4 Business turnover by number of employees in English National Parks and UK, 2012

Size	English NPs (£m) and proportions		UK proportions
0-9 employees	2,947	37.9%	12.6%
10-49 employees	3,346	32.2%	11.6%
50-249 employees	531	5.1%	13.6%
250+	476	4.6%	62.20%
Total	10,404	100%	100%

Source: ONS (2013) UK Business: Activity, size and Location, 2012 and additional analysis of IDBR data NB: some of the data for the smaller NPs has been suppressed to safeguard identity so numbers do not sum to 100%

- 3.14. SQW Ltd (2004) in conjunction with Land Use Consultants undertook an assessment of the economic value of the protected landscapes in the North East region to investigate the value of public and private sector investment in protected landscape management and inform regional policy on the contribution of protected landscapes to the economy. **Figure 3.5** summarises the findings from that report.

Figure 3.5. Characteristics of businesses in protected landscapes in the North East

- The total turnover generated by businesses in the protected areas (including the knock-on effects of supply-chain purchases and employee spend) was just over £700m. The GVA contribution was £323m and total employment supported was 14,000
- £22m of turnover (10% of total) and 1,187 FTE jobs (26%) are supported by businesses that started or relocated to one of the areas because of the quality of the landscape and environment in the area; 10% of businesses located in designated areas specifically because of the high quality environment
- £107m (52%) and 3,141 FTE jobs (69%) are supported by businesses which, directly or indirectly, are positively affected by the quality of the landscape and environment, see Table 3-2
- The five protected landscapes represent an important asset to the North East region, accounting for 11% of all tourism activity in terms of turnover and employment

Source: SQW (2004). *The Economic Value of Protected Landscapes in the North East of England. Report to ONE North East: Summary of Findings*

- 3.15. The SQW Ltd study (2006) 'Prosperity and Protection: The economic impact of National Parks in the Yorkshire and Humber regions (Council for National Parks, 2006) explored the economic impact of the three NPs in the Yorkshire and Humber region by: examining whether businesses in the NPs and their 'gateway' towns are affected by their rural location and the NP landscapes and designation, and estimating the contributions that sales by the NPs' businesses and expenditure by visitors to the NPs make to the regional economy (**Figure 3.6**).

Figure 3.6. Economic activity in National Parks in the Yorkshire and Humber region

- The three NPs generate £1.8 billion in sales annually
- Businesses in the NPs support just over 34,000 jobs with key sectors including tourism, public sector, and banking finance and insurance
- Using the average ratio of turnover to GVA in the region suggests that around £576 million of GVA is supported by businesses in the NPs
- Based on the survey, 65% of this business activity depends either directly or indirectly on the quality of the environment
- The designation of NP makes a major positive impact on 24% of NP businesses estimated to support over 8,000 jobs

Prosperity and Protection: The economic impact of NPs in the Yorkshire and Humber regions' (Council for National Parks, 2006). Summary of findings

Distinguishing the National Park Designation from Other Influences on the Economy

- 3.16. As previously explained, a key issue for any assessment of the economic contribution of National Parks is accurately differentiating economic activity from the impact of the National Park designation and other influences on the area such as their rural location and their attractiveness as a tourism destination. These difficulties have been experienced and extensively highlighted in previous studies²⁹.
- 3.17. While it is difficult to calculate the impact of the National Park designation as either a stimulus for or inhibitor of economic growth, there are a number of ways that this issue can be examined using existing research and analysis. Firstly, a number of studies have questioned businesses in and close to National Parks about their views on the effect of the designation. Secondly, there is 'before and after' evidence from a few National Parks on the changes that have been observed since their designation.

The Views of Businesses Toward National Park Designation

- 3.18. There have been a number of business surveys undertaken in protected landscapes. Business surveys show that National Park status can be an 'attractor' for business providing an attractive setting, high quality environment for employees to enjoy and an association that has demonstrable benefits to business bottom line. **Figure 3.7** shows that businesses in the National Parks in the Yorkshire and Humber region were strongly positive about the effects of being located in a National Park.

Figure 3.7. Views of businesses in National Parks in the Yorkshire and Humber Region

- Over two thirds of businesses believed that high landscape quality had a positive effect on their performance
- 49% of businesses identified at least one negative of locating business in a rural setting (most commonly poor infrastructure)
- 73% of businesses identified at least one positive of locating business in a rural setting (most commonly the effect of tourist income on business)
- Nearly two thirds did not identify National park designation as a negative impact on business. Over half felt that on balance, designation had a positive impact on business
- Businesses in gateway towns were more concerned about planning restrictions than businesses in the NPs (it is worth noting that gateway towns are usually in the jurisdiction of local authorities not NPAs)
- 57% of businesses attributed no negative effects to NP designation
- 21% were concerned about planning and development restrictions
- 26% and 28% of businesses, respectively, thought rural location and NP status were important in attracting business
- NP status had been a factor in the re-location of three out of seven businesses to these towns

Source: Prosperity and Protection – the Economic Impact of NPs in the Yorkshire and Humber Regions' (Council for National Parks, 2006). Summary of Findings from Business Survey

- 3.19. The SQW Consulting study (2008) 'Contribution of the Peak District NP to the economy of the East Midlands' focused on expenditure in the NP attracted from outside the region, and analysed the

²⁹ Cumulus reports, SQW Ltd reports

contribution of the NP to the regional economy. It looked at the extent to which this expenditure was dependent on the high quality landscape and environment that the NP designation protects. The key findings from the survey are outlined in **Figure 3.8**.

Figure 3.8. Views of businesses in the Peak District National Park

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32% of businesses said that they depended directly on the landscape and environment, 33% said they depended on it indirectly, and 35% said they did not depend on it • 60% of businesses said that their business performance would be affected by deterioration in quality of the landscape, either seriously (40%) or to some extent (20%) • 48% of businesses said that there was no negative impact from being located in the NP • 33% of businesses mentioned planning restriction as a negative effect, and 7% poor infrastructure • The East Midlands attracts about 12.8 million visitors because of the NP, resulting in a net additional income to the East Midlands region from visitor spend of almost £135 million • The performance of 40% of businesses (i.e. 1,120 businesses) would be seriously affected by a deterioration in landscape quality • £314 m of turnover and £119m of GVA is dependent on the high quality landscape and environment that the NP designation protects • When incorporating the multiplier effect, these businesses contribute £408m turnover and £155m to regional GVA. This supports 7000 jobs in the region

Source: Contribution of the Peak District NP to the Economy of the East Midlands' (SQW Consulting, 2008) Summary of findings from Business Survey

- 3.20. The SQW Ltd report (2014) on North East Protected Landscapes compared responses from businesses across three protected areas as to the positive impact of landscape quality on their business performance. Again, this shows a high level of support for the contribution that the quality of the environment makes to businesses.

Figure 3.9. Views of businesses in Protected Landscapes in the North East of England

Percentage of businesses in the protected areas agreeing with the following statements	Northumb-erland NP	North Pennines AONB	Northumberland Coast AONB
The quality of the landscape and environment impacts on the performance of the business	60%	77%	76%
The effect of a deterioration of the landscape and environment would have a serious or some impact on the business	65%	80%	72%
The designation of the area is crucial, important or of some importance to the business	53%	71%	65%

Source: SQW (2004). The Economic Value of Protected Landscapes in the North East of England. Report to ONE North East:

How National Park Economies Have Changed Since Designation

- 3.21. As data analysis in Section 4 of this report will show, the South Downs National Park is a good comparator for the pNP area for Dorset and East Devon. The two areas are similar in size and share similar socio-economic and demographic profiles. The South Downs were designated as a National Park in 2009 and the National Park Authority became operational in 2011. Prior to that time the area had been managed as an AONB through a Conservation Board. As part of this study, Phil Belden, Director of Operations South Downs National Park Authority, was interviewed to identify the big differences for the South Downs brought about by National Park designation (see [Figure 3.10](#)).

Figure 3.10. Discussion of effects of the South Downs National Park designation

We asked Phil Belden, Director of Operations South Downs National Park Authority to identify the big differences for the South Downs brought about by National Park designation:

PB replied: *"The permanence of NPAs, with their security and core funding base (Defra grant enshrined in law v. AONBs' dependency on annual LA budget rounds). This enables long-term decisions and action, plus the capacity to directly deliver on NP Purposes and NPA Duty, and commit to putting in work to broker and maintain partnerships. Thinking and acting for the long term is important. Heritage management is a long-term process and requires long-term investment. The greater certainty that comes with NP status allows staff to think and operate with a long term vision as a single, coherent body focused on NP Purposes – for example: now actively putting together funding bids, as accountable body or as a partner; undertaking research and development projects that previously would have been unthinkable due to funding uncertainty or the challenge of getting 15 local authorities + central government to agree and support a particular course of action. Having to negotiate annual funding contributions from 15 local authorities made it difficult to run the Protected Area. It took time and energy away from project delivery and was often uncertain until very late on, when one or more of the Joint Committee signatories delayed final budget decisions".*

The National Park Brand – *"There are high levels of public perception as to what a National Park is and does. Supported by strong international recognition. The National Park brand works well at the individual Park level in the UK, but much more work is needed to get the National Parks brand established in the UK psyche (draws contrast with National Parks in the USA). US National Parks Service has centenary celebrations this year. US National Parks have a strong collective identity. A \$2.5bn budget for this year, thanks to a 10% increase in the Federal Grant. Because of their popularity ("America's Best Idea") they also greatly benefit from external income, with their equivalent of a charitable trust (a National Parks Federation and individual NP foundations/associations) attracting corporate sponsorship, philanthropic donations and more".*

Since National Park designation *"There has been no change in the intent with regard to heritage management across the South Downs – what is now in place are the resources and powers to deliver more effectively. For example, SDNPA has the resources (budgets and staffing + attracting funds) to initiate Lidar surveys over the woodlands to identify and ultimately safeguard a large archaeological resource. These sorts of large scale, evidence-gathering, project-building initiatives did not happen prior to NP status – or, if they did, they depended on NGOs or other partners to secure the funding, legal sign-off (if beyond three years) and were invariably "one-off" project bids".*

PB was keen to point out the *"time and staff now available to work more effectively with a wide range of delivery partners, from the LEPs to a host of NGOs. SDNPA has the political weight and staff resources to engage and influence in meaningful ways (often at a senior level) to ensure that the purposes of NP are understood, and that opportunities to pursue economic or heritage initiatives by others occurring in the NP area align / integrate with NP Purposes. For example: SDNP has been working with New Forest NPA and Hampshire County Council (and the Sussex LHAs) on sustainable transport plans, unlocking significant DfT resources to improve access and enjoyment".*

Source: conversation with Phil Belden, Director of Operations South Downs National Park Authority, March 2016

- 3.22. The only published report that makes a broad economic assessment of the situation ‘before and after’ National Park designation is a study of the Cairngorms National Park. The study by Cogent Strategy International (2010) describes the economic and social baseline of the communities in and around the Cairngorms National Park using data from 2010 and compares it with data from before the Park was designated in 2003 (see [Figure 3.11](#)).

Figure 3.11. Economic and social changes in the Cairngorms National Park since designation

- It can be estimated that approximately 1.2 million visits are made to attractions within the current National Park boundary each year, and a further 0.4 million to those in the ‘halo’ area.
- Employment in the tourism cluster peaked at more than 3,500 in 2004. In 2010 it stood at 3,000. However, this is still significantly more than the 2,500 or so who were employed in the cluster between the mid 1980s and mid 1990s, i.e. well before the Park’s designation.
- Since National Park designation, employment numbers have increased by around 1,000. Unemployment levels in the NP are at a historically low level. Unemployment rate is much lower than Scottish national averages. In 2010 around 200 individuals were without work (a rate of 2%), compared to a peak of 1,000 during the late 1980s and 300 at Park designation in 2003.
- In the past the Cairngorms has had a highly seasonal employment pattern, thanks largely to the effects of the tourism industry. The amplitude of this seasonality has declined dramatically 2000-2010.

Estimating Non-market Values of National Parks

- 3.23. A study of the value of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park (Cogent Strategy International, 2011) concluded that the *“majority of the value created by the Park does not pass through the marketplace, and indeed, is not counted in conventional accounting systems.”* It also highlighted that *“the remarkable feature that is the very large contribution of the natural assets to the production of value from the Park. People, manufactured plant and buildings, and purchased consumables are important, but overall the natural assets are what makes the Park work. This is in a sense an economic validation of designation.”*
- 3.24. Arup (2013) concluded that *“whilst there are tangible benefits of National Parks – whether economic, social or environmental – the environment also has an intangible value which is less easily captured. Non-use value refers to the value that people attach to the environment even if they never have and never will use the environment for recreation or economic gain”*. *“Part of the rationale for the National Parks is to conserve the environment for future generations for its own sake, irrespective of contribution to quality of life through other domains. There is a clear fit between the above values and the impacts and statutory purpose and activities of the National Park Authorities. It is often perceived that the National Park designation places constraints on economic development. However, this is a simplification which ignores the overall value and contribution of the environment which National Park status is intended to conserve and enhance.”* There are a number of studies beginning to develop methodologies and approaches for capturing or otherwise estimating the non-market value of ecological goods and services in protected landscapes. See [Figure 3.12](#) for a comparison of non-market valuations.
- 3.25. A recent study “Developing Ecosystem Accounts for protected areas in England and Scotland” undertaken by AECOM Ltd funded by Defra (2015) pointed out that *“The value of ecological services is significant and the capacity of the environment to continue to provide such services has a direct impact on an area’s prosperity and well-being. However, the monetary value of these ecosystem services is not always fully accounted for in the management of land and other natural assets”*.
- 3.26. The ecosystem accounts being considered by Defra attempt to quantify the extent and condition of ecosystem assets as well as to quantify and value the flow of ecosystem services from these assets. Developing and adopting a common methodology for ecosystem accounts will be a major step

forward in understanding the non market values of protected areas and allowing sharper financial representation of their undoubted value.

Figure 3.12. Monetary Value of Ecosystem Service Supply across selected Protected Areas

Protected Area (Survey, date)	Drinking water supply	Carbon sequestration	Public health Recreation	Total estimate
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, (Cogent SI, 2011)	£142 to £202m	-	£100m	£866m
Valuing National Parks in Wales (Arup, 2013)	£6.7m	£24.4m to £97.2m	-	-
Lake District NP (Aecom Ltd, 2015)	£37m	£20m	£43m	£179m
Dorset AONB (Aecom Ltd, 2015)	£2m	£54m	£20.7m	£62m

Resilience of Rural Businesses and the National Park Designation

- 3.27. Small and medium sized businesses are the lifeblood of many rural economies. Small businesses accounted for 99.3% of all private sector businesses in the UK at the start of 2015. Total employment in SMEs was 15.6 million, accounting for some 60% of all private sector employment in the UK. The combined annual turnover of SMEs was £1.8 trillion, 47% of all the private sector turnover in the UK³⁰. South West England with 1,189 SME's has the highest number of businesses per 10,000 adults outside of London and the south east.
- 3.28. The extent to which businesses outside tourism and land management sectors benefit from environmental and landscape quality, and the factors that may affect these linkages, is not clear, and would benefit from further research and case study evidence.
- 3.29. The published literature gives consideration to the generic business challenges that relate to National Parks as a result of their rural nature. A summary of business challenges is listed in **Figure 3.13**. It should be noted that the degree to which these challenges impact locally will vary across the National Parks and many of the challenges apply in all rural areas irrespective of their designation as protected landscapes.

Figure 3.13. Summary of Business Challenges in Rural Areas

- Lack of diversity of businesses and employment in some National Park economies, with high reliance on farming, forestry and tourism
- Seasonality of economic activity
- Lack of access to markets and passing trade in some National Parks
- Limited stock and quality of employment premises and land available to be developed for employment
- Limited road and rail infrastructure, and public transport services
- Significant levels of commuting in and out of some National Parks
- Low broadband speeds and/or lack of broadband altogether, and poor mobile phone reception
- A shortage of modern and traditional skills
- A limited number of young people available to join new or growing businesses

³⁰ Business population estimates Dept Business Innovation and Skills: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/business-population-estimates>

- Low affordability of housing
- Lack of access to reasonably priced and reliable energy supplies in some National Park

Source: Cumulus Consultants (2013) Valuing England's National Parks. Report for National Parks England

- 3.30. Cumulus Consultants in "Valuing England's National Parks" (2013) identified that *"There is evidence that at least some National Park economies have been relatively resilient in the recent downturn (for example in terms of business numbers and employment over the period 2009-2012)."*

Heritage Management

- 3.31. *"The heritage of National Parks is fundamental to their unique present-day character and central to the sense of identity of local communities. It is also a key factor encouraging inward investment and tourism. However, the socio-economic benefits of heritage have yet to be fully defined and there remain a number of major methodological challenges to enable the full range of heritage benefits to be measured and evaluated in ways that can usefully inform policy formulation and management practice"*³¹
- 3.32. As the Natural Capital Committee explains in the State of Natural Capital (2015) *"a major reason to protect and improve natural capital lies in the benefits this can have for economic growth"*. Conventionally, economic growth refers to an increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), either in total or on a per capita basis. However, GDP clearly does not capture many other important benefits derived from natural capital. For example, many of the benefits from nature-based recreation are provided directly to households and are not captured in national accounts. These benefits, provided by National Parks through heritage management, are intangible and escape the methods conventionally used to assess economic growth. Yet such intangible benefits comprise a substantial part of people's total wellbeing and its importance is likely to increase over time.
- 3.33. From a legislative perspective the cultural heritage of National Parks was formally recognised by the 1995 Environment Act, which made the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage a primary aim.
- 3.34. English Heritage³² has identified a range of heritage values, arranged in four groups, which are considered important in determining the significance of any place (Figure 3.14). The four groups of heritage value are considered to be 'intrinsic' to a place and are distinct from the 'instrumental' heritage values, which generate social and economic benefit for places.

Figure 3.14 English Heritage – Four heritage values

Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield primary evidence about past human activity;

Historical value: the ways in which the present can be connected through a place to past people, events and aspects of life;

Aesthetic value: the ways in which people derive sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place;

Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, and whose collective experience or memory it holds.

Source: CCR 2008

- 3.35. The RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) in collaboration with the Heritage Lottery Fund has produce a Heritage Index³³ which takes over 100 indicators of heritage assets and activities to come up with a single score for an area. The index is

³¹ Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) (2008b).

³² Ibid.

³³ Heritage Index – see: <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/seven-themes-from-the-heritage-index/>

designed to promote local discussions about local heritage and the role heritage can play in the economic and cultural life of local communities. Coastal areas perform well in the index recognising the rich landscape and natural heritage as well as the concentration of heritage activities, trails, museums, attractions etc. The Heritage Index is a valuable tool for understanding where heritage is being used well to address socio-economic pressures and where heritage has the greatest potential to contribute to socio-economic needs of localities. The Heritage Index scores for the proposed National Park area are described in paragraph 4.23.

Defining Heritage Tourism

- 3.36. According to Copley and Robson (1996)³⁴, cultural and heritage assets are well suited as tourist attractions. They represent “the unique features of a place or region, are experiential and promote tradition, ethnic backgrounds and landscapes”. National Parks are places rich in natural and cultural heritage and as a result the designation is a powerful driver for heritage tourism.
- 3.37. According to English Heritage data (2004), heritage tourists stay longer and spend up to 40% more than their leisure counterparts.
- 3.38. In their report on Economic Value of English National Parks (2013), Cumulus Consultants conclude, *“heritage is an important motivator for tourists in the UK, particularly for overseas visitors. Heritage landscapes and history and tradition in National Parks are of particular importance in attracting visitors to these areas. Heritage tourism is also regarded as one of the most significant and fastest growing components of tourism”*.
- 3.39. A comprehensive analysis of the links between the UK economy and heritage has been carried out by Oxford Economics 2013/ 2014. It shows that heritage tourism (including natural heritage) contributes some £26.4 billion to the economy and supports around 742,000 jobs (**Figure 3.15**).

Figure: 3.15. The Economic Benefits of Heritage Tourism

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage tourism directly accounts for at least £5 billion in GDP and 134,000 jobs • Once indirect and induced effects are accounted for, however, the heritage-based tourism economy is estimated to account for at least £14 billion in GDP and 393,000 employees • Total direct heritage-based tourism expenditure is estimated as £8.5 billion for heritage activities and £16.1 billion inclusive of natural heritage. Total direct heritage-based tourism visitation is estimated as 101 million for heritage activities and 195 million inclusive of natural heritage. • The heritage economy GDP is £5.1 billion excluding natural heritage. If natural heritage is included, this number rises to £9.6 billion. • Direct employment generated by the heritage tourism economy is 134,000, including natural heritage increases the estimate to 253,000. • The combined direct and indirect heritage tourism economy GDP is worth £11.2 billion per annum (£21.1 billion with natural heritage). The combined direct and indirect heritage tourism economy accounts for 267,000 jobs across the UK (505,000 including natural heritage). • The combined value of direct, indirect and induced heritage-based tourism GDP (the total GDP impact) is estimated to be £14 billion (£26.4 billion with natural heritage). The sum of the direct, indirect and induced employment effects is 393,000 jobs (742,000 with natural heritage).

Source: The heritage-based tourism economy - Oxford Economics 2013/2014

³⁴ Copley, P & Robson, I (1996)

Supporting the Visitor Economy

- 3.40. One of the two main aims of National Park designation is to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities by the public. National Parks therefore are important centres for tourism and recreation, as well as education. This is reflected in the large numbers of visitors that National Parks receive and the prominence of tourism and recreation in their local economies.
- 3.41. The combined visitor economy of UK National Parks is significant. Cumulus Consultants (2013) states that *“England’s National Parks attract 95 million visitors per annum, with 87 million day trips and 24 million visitor days from staying visitors. Annual visitor expenditure equates to £3.0 billion, which increases to at least £4 billion when the wider “area of influence”, which includes neighbouring towns and villages which cater for National Park visitors, is counted”* According to the Council for National Parks³⁵ 58% of visitors to National Parks come to enjoy the scenery and landscapes, the most popular activity being walking (40% of visitors).
- 3.42. Marsden (2015) reviewing the future of Welsh protected landscapes explains the important role of the National Park Authorities in *“maintaining the tourism infrastructure of the Parks – from information centres to footpaths – ensuring access to the environment for recreation. And that they also work in partnership with tourism bodies to promote the Parks to visitors and promote the benefits of sustainable tourism to the industry. National Parks have to both capitalise on tourism while ensuring that it remains sustainable and, importantly, retains the distinct role that heritage plays in this process”*.
- 3.43. Marsden (2015) goes on to describes Welsh National Parks as ‘Wellbeing Factories’. *“Wales’ three National Parks provide access to open space, which allow a wide range of activities that are beneficial to individuals’ mental and physical health and wellbeing”*.
- 3.44. it is clear that many of the economic benefits of National Parks are felt outside the Park boundaries (see [para 3.88 et sequ.](#) on the ‘halo effect’). Nowhere are the ‘spillover’ benefits of the National Parks more evident than with regard to the tourism sector, especially in the Gateway towns.
- 3.45. Most people visit National Parks to carry out recreational and leisure pursuits. The most common activity is walking followed by visiting an attraction. The net economic benefits to the area come from the purchases of visitors; in village shops, tea rooms, pubs and on overnight accommodation
- 3.46. TSE Research (2011) undertook surveys exploring the economic impact of visitors and tourism in the South Downs National Park. TSE Research found that the majority of those visiting the South Downs are attracted by the qualities it has to offer – *the opportunity to get fresh air and enjoy the great views, to ‘slow down’ from the hectic pace of modern life, to spend quality time with friends and family, as well as enjoy the space on ones own”*. (see [Figure 3.17](#)).
- 3.47. TSE Research also found that three-quarters (74%) of local residents agree with the statement that *“visits to the South Downs create income and jobs for the local economy through visitor expenditure”* and a further 16% strongly agree with this statement (see [Figure 3.17](#)).

³⁵ CNP Tourism Facts see: <http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/students/ourchallenges/tourism>

Figure 3.17 Views on Impacts Residents and Visitor to the South Downs

Residents View (Base = 2,208)	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
Visits to the South Downs create income and jobs for the local economy through visitor expenditure		9%	74%	16%
Visits to the South Downs helps preserve rural services like buses, village shops and POs	1%	19%	62%	18%
Visits to the South Downs causes damage to the landscape dog fouling, litter, erosion, fires, disturbance to livestock, vandalism	6%	57%	33%	4%
Visits to the South Downs causes traffic congestion and pollution	5%	68%	23%	3%
Visitors View (Base = 6,815)	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
Visits to the South Downs create income and jobs for the local economy through visitor expenditure	3%	34%	54%	10%
Visits to the South Downs helps preserve rural services like buses, village shops and POs		3%	79%	18%
Visits to the South Downs causes damage to the landscape dog fouling, litter, erosion, fires, disturbance to livestock, vandalism		11%	72%	17%
Visits to the South Downs causes traffic congestion and pollution	4%	58%	35%	3%

Source: TSE Research (2011)

- 3.48. There have been a number of surveys undertaken across the National Park network exploring the relationship with visitors and estimating value in terms of visitor expenditure, the value of overnight stays and number of jobs supported. **Figure 3.18** captures data from a number of surveys. This data reinforces the conclusion that the visitor economy of National Parks is significant and represents a major investment to the local economy in National Park areas.

Figure 3.18 Comparison of visitor valuation survey Data:

National Park	Surveyed by & Date	Value of Tourism/ Heritage Tourism
South Downs National Park	TSE research 2011/12	46 million visitor days – of which 6.4 million informal leisure visits by residents £464.4 million spent by visitors (excl residents) supporting 8,194 jobs in the local economy
Brecon Beacon National Park	Brecon Beacon NPA, 2007	Over £126 million to the local economy each year, or £4,000 per head of Park residents
North York Moors National Park	2006	Total expenditure of the visitors in the Park was just under £300 million annually
Lake District National Park	2002	Visitors to the Park generated over £534 million in tourism expenditure annually

Three National Parks - Yorkshire and Humber region	CNP 2006	Spend by visitors to in the region was around £660 million. This expenditure was estimated to support around 12,000 jobs and to generate further indirect economic activity, bringing the total impact on the region's output to almost £1 billion annually
Three Welsh National Parks	Arup 2015	Receive 12 million visitors each year spending an estimated £1bn on goods and services
Northumberland National Park	SQW Ltd (2004)	Applying visitor spend figures to visitor numbers resulted in an annual tourism expenditure in the Park of £42.8 million
Five protected landscapes North East England	SQW Ltd (2004)	Estimated £165 million of tourism expenditure in the region – including indirect and induced effects the total impact on expenditure could be as much as £460 million, equivalent to 11% of the region's total tourism income. This tourism contribution supports 5,163 jobs directly (10,584 including indirect and induced impact) – 11% of the region's employment in tourism. Tourism businesses in the protected landscapes also generate £75.8m in value added
North West England	Culture NorthWest 2007	The visitor economy as a whole contributes £10 billion to the North West's economy each year. Heritage tourism makes a significant contribution to this, with over 2 million people visiting heritage sites in 2006 alone. It is estimated that heritage tourism could be worth as much as £3 billion to England's Northwest region annually (English Heritage, 2004a).

Tourism Benefits to Visitors and Host Communities

- 3.49. The level of positive economic impacts from tourism vary from National Park to National Park. Mathieson and Wall (1982) suggest that this is dependent on a number of factors, *“such as the attractiveness of the destination, the level of tourism expenditure, economic development at the destination, the size of the economic base, the recirculation of tourism expenditure (e.g. Income Multiplier Effect) and the seasonality of demand”*³⁶.
- 3.50. There are a number of studies that have considered the positive social impacts of tourism on host communities, such as improving local infrastructure and services, local incomes, education and employment opportunities (particularly for women)³⁷. Employment opportunities and the presence of visitors also encourage younger people to areas of tourism development³⁸ and curb out-migration of youth and other marginally employed community members, particularly in rural areas. Fig 3.19 identifies the often overlooked benefits of tourism to host communities, taken from the National Trust Tourism Policy and Practice report (2005).
- 3.51. CCRI (2008b) point to growing evidence for *“people needing heritage to add perspective and meaning to their lives and enhance their well-being. Indeed, it is widely acknowledged that heritage tourism can have a substantial educational significance to visitors (Hooper-Greenhill 1994; Prentice 1993). Beyond this, however, heritage may have other impacts, such as evoking an emotional*

³⁶ *Tourism economic, physical and social impacts* by Alister Mathieson and Geoffrey Wall. Longman, Harlow, 1982

³⁷ See for instance *Gendered jobs and social change* by Rosemary Crompton, Kay Sanderson. Unwin Hyman, 1990

³⁸ *Tourism, Tourists and Society* by Richard Sharpley. Elm Publications, 1994

experience (Poria et al, 2003) or creating a 'sense of place' whereby people feel a particular attachment to an area (McIntosh, 1999) or connection to ancestors (McCain and Ray, 2003)".

- 3.52. In 2015 Visit Britain launched a £3m campaign to attract international visitors to the countryside with National Parks featuring as key destinations. There is clear potential to grow visitor numbers and visitor expenditure, by improving marketing and capitalising on growth areas such as outdoor pursuits and adventure activities. National Park Authority staff teams are good at working at the interface of the different tourism interests, in particular strengthening relationships between tourism, land management, local produce and the built environment and working through the Destination Management Partnerships.

Figure 3.19 Overlooked benefits of tourism to local economies

"From our practical experience, we know that tourism contributes much needed income to local economies and increasingly demonstrates the important link between a high quality environment and the future economic sustainability of rural and urban communities.

This link is clearly illustrated in the findings of our Valuing our Environment studies, which found that 40% of the jobs created through tourism rely directly on a high quality environment and that this increases to 60% to 70% in rural areas.

As well as being a hugely important economic driver, we believe tourism has much to offer wider social and environmental objectives. This includes providing opportunities for education and lifelong learning (by visiting or volunteering at a property, for example), underpinning the viability of a large range of often small rural businesses and providing attractive places where businesses and communities can thrive.

The contribution of tourism to local identity and distinctiveness, and the opportunities it offers for personal reflection and public benefit are all too often overlooked."

Source: National Trust (2005)

Issues Arising from the Visitor Economy

- 3.53. The National Trust in their Tourism Policy and Practice report (2005) suggests that, *"while many tourism strategies refer to the importance of natural, cultural and historic assets, the need to protect these assets is not well recognised as a priority, nor is it considered fully in other policy".*
- 3.54. Matheson and Wall (1982) identify a number of negative impacts such as *"a danger in some areas of becoming over dependent on tourism for their livelihoods, thus making themselves vulnerable to changes in tourist demands".*
- 3.55. Inflated land values are common in areas attractive to tourist, especially coastal areas popular with second-home owners and the retired. The Ash Futures report on Dorset's Environmental Economy (2016) identifies a potential 10% uplift in house prices resulting from the attractiveness of the natural environment.
- 3.56. The Planning Inspectorate (2013) report on the Inquiry into the Lake District/ Yorkshire Dales National Parks extension is clear that even if the worst fears of objectors to National Park designation were realised and there were large numbers of extra visitors, *"an NPA would have the duty and resources to address the issue, giving clear precedence to the first statutory purpose of conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage."*
- 3.57. The Planning Inspectorate (2013) report goes on to say *"Similar considerations apply to issues concerning various forms of disturbance in the countryside such as the damaging over-use and erosion of the ROW network or its inappropriate use by walkers of dogs without leads or (in places) by 4-wheel drive vehicles. The evidence suggests that NPAs are better equipped to deal with these issues if, when, and where they occur".*

The Land-based Sector

- 3.58. Farming and forestry are fundamental to the positive management of protected landscapes and make a significant contribution to their local economies, both directly and indirectly. Profitability has traditionally been low for these types of businesses, and protected landscapes work to support and influence sustainable land management at local, regional and national levels.
- 3.59. In Section 2 ([para 2.39-2.40](#)) it has been seen that NPAs have developed close working relationships with farmers and foresters in the National Parks, both as authorities, landowners (in some areas) and as partners.
- 3.60. We have found no evidence to suggest that National Park designation in itself would result in greater targeting of higher level payments through the new Countryside Stewardship. Countryside Stewardship targeting is firmly focused on delivery of Biodiversity 2020 outcomes and the Water Framework Directive. Protected landscapes are already well represented on Countryside Stewardship targeting maps due to the concentration of priority habitats and species found in these areas.
- 3.61. High value landscapes do offer an added cache for local products, presenting the opportunity for developing point of difference and linkage to a strong brand, such as a National Park (see [para 3.80 et sequ.](#) on the National Park Brand).

Housing Provision and Demand – Local Affordability

- 3.62. The desirability of the National Parks as a place to live is confirmed in the CNP report “Prosperity and Protection” (2006) that found higher house prices near to and within the National Park boundaries. Although the Yorkshire Wolds also attracts those in higher earning occupations, house prices there are notably lower than in the two nearby National Parks. This may imply that a premium is attached either to the very special landscape qualities of the Parks or to the designation itself.
- 3.63. The Planning Inspectorate (2013) report on the Inquiry into Lake District/ Yorkshire Dales National Parks extension is clear that *“The CNP report Prosperity and Protection found that house prices in NPs in the Yorkshire and Humber region are already significantly above the regional and national averages and in March 2013 the only areas showing a price increase in housing in eastern Cumbria were those being put forward for inclusion in the Yorkshire Dales, possibly reflecting anticipation of designation and the perceived increased protection it brings. Housing prices in Crossthwaite, inside Lake District National Park, average £70,000 more than in Brigsteer (just outside, but within the extension area)”*
- 3.64. The Planning Inspectorate (2013) report provides a good summary of a range of objections to National Park status, including that the designation has a detrimental impact on housing affordability. The ‘standard’ objection being that National Park status would accelerate house price increase thus creating problems for young/local people who want to live and work in these areas but are priced out. Objectors are also concerned that designation would increase competition for the limited stock of housing in the area from incomers and second-home owners, thereby exacerbating the issue of affordability.
- 3.65. Such concerns about the impact of National Park designation on the housing market are often linked with the expectation that designation would tighten restrictions on planning permissions for new housing and thereby increase the difficulty of providing new affordable housing for local residents on low incomes.
- 3.66. In Natural England’s view, as presented in the Planning Inspectorate (2013) report, National Park designation.. *“Is unlikely to make it more difficult to meet the existing local needs for affordable*

housing. It is also unlikely that large numbers of houses will be built in these sparsely populated rural areas in any case". The Defra Circular on National Parks³⁹ (paras 76-79) recognised the affordability issue and makes it clear that an NPA's duty 'to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities' within NPs requires it to "maintain a focus on affordable housing and support its delivery when exercising its planning powers."

Health and Wellbeing Outcomes

- 3.67. Cumulus Consultants (2013) found that *"People derive wider benefits from National Parks, through recreational experiences, enjoyment of landscape and wildlife, or simply through the knowledge that landscape and wildlife are protected"*.
- 3.68. A number of surveys have made estimates of the value of these non-market benefits by using the 'willingness to pay' as a proxy. The Ash Futures report *"Dorset's Environmental Economy"* (2016) estimate that Dorset residents are willing to pay £3.63 per visit to the natural environment, whilst visitors to Dorset were willing to pay slightly more at £4.33 per visit.
- 3.69. Other examples include a study with the North York Moors National Park which showed that heather moorland and semi-natural broadleaved woodland were highly valued by visitors to the Park, moorland primarily for recreation and woodland primarily for nature conservation⁴⁰.
- 3.70. Marsden (2015) found that the National Parks *"enhance social capital, through the provision of education programmes, social inclusion programmes and community development programmes which add to the base inherent value of the assets found within National Parks."* He goes on to propose that *"NPs and AONBs in Wales should have a unique, creative and more proactive role in delivering on the well-being agenda in the future given changing societal needs – for instance, the alleviation of poverty."*
- 3.71. A report for Natural England has found that there is increasing recognition of the importance of nature and place as a determinant of individuals' mental health⁴¹. Large natural areas, such as those found in National Parks bring indirect benefits to human health, for example by providing opportunities for spiritual refreshment, which many people gain from wild places, and for escape from everyday pressures to enjoy quietness, peace and fresh air.
- 3.72. National Park Authorities, by actively supporting a wide variety of types of outdoor exercise, are significant contributors to a growing number of nature-based interventions operating throughout the UK, working with a wide range of vulnerable groups helping to positively benefit health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Volunteer Economy

- 3.73. One of the key expressions of the mental and physical opportunities of protected areas is through the growing volunteer economy. Most NPAs operate some form of volunteering programme. The majority of the volunteer opportunities consist of outdoor practical conservation work. However, volunteers also provide a range of support services, from general office work, a range of interactions with visitors as well as participating in educational and promotional activities that increase awareness and understanding of the protected landscape (e.g. welcoming visitors, leading walks and talks). Depending on the knowledge, interest and experience of individual volunteers, they may also undertake biological surveying or research work.

³⁹ Defra (2010)

⁴⁰ White and Lovett (1999)

⁴¹ Bragg and Atkins (2016)

- 3.74. In the 'So Much More than a View' report (2015), National Parks England and the National Association for AONBs estimate that some 500,000 work days a year are volunteered in AONBs/NPs to conserve landscapes and improve access. These are work days organised by protected landscape bodies and do not include volunteer days undertaken by other organisations. Consequently the total value of volunteering in the protected areas overall will be much higher because there are a number of volunteer programmes run by other organisations in protected landscapes such as the National Trust. It is worth highlighting that protected landscape partnerships could not achieve their current practical and administrative outputs without volunteer input.
- 3.75. National Parks England and the National Association for AONBs estimate that volunteer work days undertaken with protected landscape bodies is worth something like £400 million to the UK economy. This figure is based on an assessment by Natural England that makes a calculation based on values between the minimum wage and an average rate for particular practical skills. The value does not include any assessment of the value of volunteering to the volunteer themselves, mental and physical health benefits of volunteering nor does it value the practical improvement to the assets of the protected area.
- 3.76. Volunteering can bring additional benefits that are difficult to value, for example health and wellbeing benefits from being outdoors and undertaking physical exercise. In addition, a number of volunteering programmes aim to engage with people from 'excluded' groups or disadvantaged areas, which can provide additional benefits in terms of developing skills, building confidence, and providing the skills and encouragement to find pathways into education and work.
- 3.77. Defra (2011a) tried to assess the benefits of NPA's volunteering programmes, by comparing the value of the volunteer hours, against the cost of running the volunteer services. It was estimated that, for the Peak District NPA's volunteering programme, on average, the benefit was £600,486 and the cost was £228,450 in 2008/9, resulting in a net benefit of £372,036 (cost-benefit ratio of 3).
- 3.78. Marsden (2015) recognised that in Wales the National Park Authorities recruit and co-ordinate over 15,000 hours of volunteering activity each year, and placed a value on this in the region of £175,000. The Dorset Local Nature Partnership report 'Natural Value' identifies just a sample of the huge amount of voluntary effort committed to look after Dorset's environment. Costed at £7/hour, this is worth £843,395 to Dorset's environment.⁴²
- 3.79. It is difficult to assess the extent to which the volunteering activity in protected landscapes would happen without the coordinating input of protected landscape management bodies. Many of the partner NGO's (e.g. National Trust and Wildlife Trusts) run well-established volunteering programme both inside and outside of National Parks. However, the involvement of National Park Authorities with volunteering programmes helps ensure activities are strongly focused on achieving management plan objectives.

The National Park Brand

- 3.80. Previous sections have highlighted the influences that National Park designation exert on local economies and the way businesses make use of the National Park Brand to attract customers and add value to their goods and services.
- 3.81. 'National Park' is the leading internationally recognised designation for places of the highest national importance for natural or cultural heritage, including landscape, wildlife and recreation. While the term 'National Park' may have various meanings in different countries, National Park status is recognised across the world as the highest accolade which can be given to a place within its national context. There are over 3,500 National Parks worldwide.

⁴² Dorset Local Nature Partnership (2014b)

- 3.82. Marsden (2015) recognised that the National Park brand is used to promote the whole of Wales and that the economic benefits of this are felt beyond National Park boundaries. *“The label ‘National Park’ marks out an area as ‘special’ and confers on the Parks a level of visibility that is not matched by other environmental designations”*.
- 3.83. Amongst the protected landscape staff contacted as part of this study there was general agreement that National Parks have wide ‘brand’ recognition. The National Park brand is strong because it has international recognition and global extent and is considered the highest accolade for nature and culture. The National Park brand is considered a badge of honour that local communities are proud of and visitors use to select holiday destinations. The emergence of the idea and campaign for a Greater London National Park City⁴³ within a short space of time can, partly at least, be attributed to the levels of understanding about National Parks and what that offers to those interested in sustainable management of green space and cultural heritage.
- 3.84. Scottish Natural Heritage in its report National Parks Scotland (2014) concluded: *“National Park status brings international-level recognition of the quality of the area, generating promotional benefits in terms of marketing and branding of local produce and services”*.
- 3.85. The National Park brand values are highlighted in the Government’s ‘Britain is Great’ campaign.⁴⁴
- 3.86. National Parks have a great opportunity to further develop their brand, and to apply it to support economic growth. Branding is used to raise the profile of protected landscapes, individually and collectively, and can support a wider range of businesses than just tourism businesses, such as food-related businesses, creative businesses, and other businesses that contribute to their economies, especially those focused on high quality and adding value.
- 3.87. During Christmas and New Year 2015 the Brighton Argus ran a “Joy of Sussex” poll, a public vote to select from a shortlist of 25 reasons why people loved to live in Sussex. In January the South Downs were announced as the clear and resounding winner. The vote underlines the value people place on the natural environment. Mike Gibson, Editor of the Argus said of the overwhelming victory *“No matter where you live in this wonderful county, you are never far from a cracking country walk, ride or pub lunch... We may often take it for granted how lucky we are to have the South Downs on our doorstep, so it is fantastic to take this opportunity to celebrate them”*.

The Halo Effect – Impacts on the Hinterland of National Parks

- 3.88. Studies of the economic impact of National Parks in the UK and overseas have demonstrated that National Parks generate employment, income and business development in their hinterlands as well as within their boundaries. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) in ‘National Parks Scotland’ report (1999) attribute this to *“National Park status raising awareness of the wider region in which it is located, to visitors passing through neighbouring areas en-route to or from the National Park and to NPAs sourcing goods and services from surrounding area”*.
- 3.89. In the SQW Study “Prosperity and Protection” (2006) surveys of businesses in the ‘gateway’ towns around the Yorkshire National Parks found confirmation of the belief that the National Parks brought economic benefits and had a positive impact on the performance of their business despite being outside the designated area (**Figure 3.20**).

⁴³ <http://www.nationalparkcity.london>

⁴⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/britainisgreat>

Figure 3.20. Views of businesses located in ‘Gateway’ towns of National Parks in Yorkshire and Humber region, 2006

Over 50% believed landscape quality had a positive impact on their performance
 57% attributed no negative effects to Park designation
 58% saw no negative effects of a rural location on their business – poor infrastructure was the most commonly cited negative effect across all businesses with planning restrictions of most concern to businesses in gateway towns

Source: SQW (2006) Prosperity and Protection – Yorkshire NPs Survey of Businesses in NP “Gateway” Towns

- 3.90. Cumulus Consultants report for Defra in 2014 reviewed studies that had compared the economy of the protected landscape with the economy of the surrounding area. These show how the economic impact of National Parks extends beyond their boundaries and, in some cases, employment arising from activities taking place in the protected landscapes (such as tourism) is higher outside than inside these areas (**Figure 3.21**).

Figure 3.21. Key findings on the economic halo effect of National Parks

- For some NPs, the impacts on employment are estimated to be much greater in the wider ‘area of influence’ or ‘halo’. For example, the Northumberland and Yorkshire Dales NPs are both estimated to support nearly three times as many jobs in this wider area of influence as within the NP boundary itself. This reflects the nature of the designated area, the structure of the local economy and the importance of neighbouring ‘gateway’ towns and villages in providing accommodation and other services for visitors to these Parks
- Studies commissioned by the NPAs have estimated the employment supported by visitor expenditures. Overall, tourism is estimated to support a total of 48,000 FTE jobs within the NPs and at least 20,000 FTE jobs in the wider areas of influence, making a total of 68,000 FTE jobs within the NPs and their wider areas of influence (Cumulus, 2013)
- Defra statistics indicate that employment in tourism businesses within protected landscapes represents only a fraction of employment in tourism businesses within a 5 mile buffer (13% for AONBs and 16% for NPs) (Defra, 2011a), although the degree to which these businesses depend on the protected landscapes is unclear
- For NPs in Yorkshire and Humberside, areas within 5 miles of the Park boundaries have higher unemployment rates, less tourism-related employment and less self-employment than the Parks (Council for National Parks, 2006), although the extent of this influence is likely to vary by NP, and may not exist in some NPs

Source: Cumulus Consultants (2014) (unpublished).

Commentary

- 3.91. Cumulus Consultants (2014) (unpublished) conclude: *“The evidence demonstrates that, while they account for only a small proportion of the overall regional and national economy, protected landscapes support substantial levels of economic activity, and perform relatively well against key economic indicators such as rates of employment and self-employment.”*
- 3.92. Cumulus Consultants (2013) identified that *“There is evidence that at least some National Park economies have been relatively resilient in the recent downturn (for example in terms of business numbers and employment over the period 2009-2012).”*
- 3.93. Research on the economic effects of National Parks draws attention to the different scale of local economy activity across English National Parks. The South Downs alone accounting for 43.5% of the total estimated GVA for England’s National Parks in 2012 (Figure 3.2).
- 3.94. Many of the studies reviewed for this report provide an understanding of the scale and broad structure of protected landscape economies. It is clear that more work is needed to help understand and articulate the true value of protected landscape areas as a driver of economic activity. The Ash Futures report *“Dorset’s Environmental Economy”* (2016) is timely and provides a good source of material to better articulate the value and importance of the natural and cultural assets to the Dorset economy.
- 3.95. When considering the challenges facing rural economies, be that providing affordable housing or dealing with pressures and demands from visitors, it is clear that National Park designation, far from adding to issues, bring the resources and capacities to take positive action to enhance the economic resilience of the designated areas.
- 3.96. Defra’s 8-Point Plan recognises that National Parks are *“cherished”* for their natural beauty, outdoor recreation and cultural heritage and that the special qualities of National Parks underpin economic activities and can be more of a driver for growth in key sectors, such as farming and forestry through to food and tourism⁴⁵.
- 3.97. The surveys of businesses in protected landscape areas provide strong evidence that environmental quality in general, and protected landscape designations in particular, are seen to help to support a significant proportion of local economic activity. The compilation of all the business survey studies (Figure 3.7 to 3.9) provides strong evidence to support the economic case for National Park designation.
- 3.98. By meeting the criteria for designation, National Park areas are by definition attractive places to live, work and visit. However, it is increasingly recognised that designated areas deliver essential ecosystem services on which the wider economy depends. There is a growing amount of literature demonstrating how these wider services help to enhance the quality of air and water and to regulate flooding, thus benefiting companies and individuals within and beyond landscape boundaries. It is clear that National Park designation and the work of National Park Authorities play an important role in sustaining the natural and cultural capital on which the local, sub-regional and regional economies depend. As a consequence, the ‘true’ economic significance of protected landscape areas far outweigh the direct contribution they make to the economy.

⁴⁵ Defra (2016)

4. Opportunities arising from a Dorset and East Devon National Park

- 4.1. This final Section of the report examines the characteristics of the area that is being proposed for National Park designation based on new analysis of the resident population. It compares the proposed National Park to other English National Parks and, drawing on information from earlier in this report, it describes what are likely to be the direct and indirect economic impacts of National Park status in Dorset and East Devon.

The Socio-economic Characteristics of the Area

- 4.2. The following paragraphs provide an introduction to the geography, settlements, population and economic characteristics of the area that is being put forward for National Park status. The data is taken from the Office for National Statistics 2011 Population Census using the Census Output Areas which have a closest fit to the pNP⁴⁶. It does not attempt to describe its environmental character and special qualities.

Area

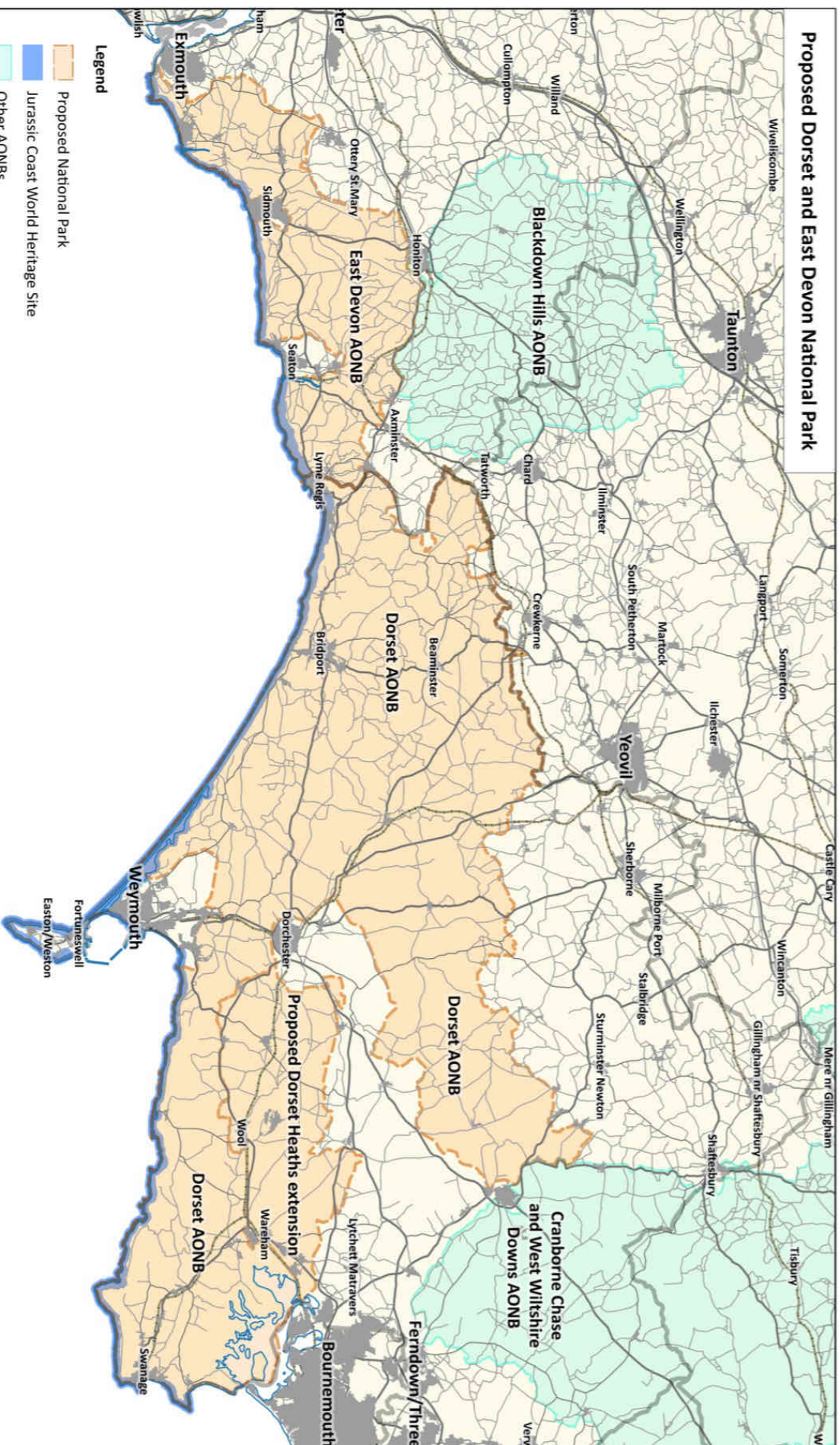
- 4.3. The pNP covers an area of 1,565 km² (156,486 ha) 72% of which is the current Dorset AONB, 17% the East Devon AONB and 11% an additional area comprising heathland in East Dorset. The pNP occupies a little less than half (46%) of the combined area of Dorset County and East Devon District. **Figure 4.1** provides a map of these areas.

Resident Population

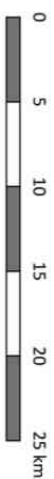
- 4.4. The pNP had a resident population in 2011 of 116,609 people which was a fifth (21%) of the population resident in Dorset County and East Devon District. The largest settlements within the pNP are, in decreasing size of population, Bridport and Swanage (both with populations over 10,000 in 2011), Wareham, Budleigh Salterton, Lyme Regis, Beaminster, Wool and Bovington Camp (all with populations over 2,000). The pNP is highly rural, with more than half (55%) of the population living outside these towns and villages and a population density which is a third of that in the rest of Dorset County and East Devon District.
- 4.5. The largest settlements surrounding the pNP (within 5km of the boundary) are, in declining order, Bournemouth, Poole, Weymouth, Yeovil, Exmouth, Dorchester, Chard, Sidmouth, Blandford Forum and Honiton (all over 10,000 people). Other smaller settlements located on or relatively close to the edge of the pNP are, in declining order, Sherborne, Seaton, Crewkerne, Axminster, Ottery St Mary and Sturminster Newton.

⁴⁶ Census Output Areas are the smallest population geography at which data is published by ONS, typically 310 people. The analysis of data for the pNP is based on all the Census Output Areas that are entirely within or, for those crossing the boundary, more than 50% within the pNP.

Proposed Dorset and East Devon National Park

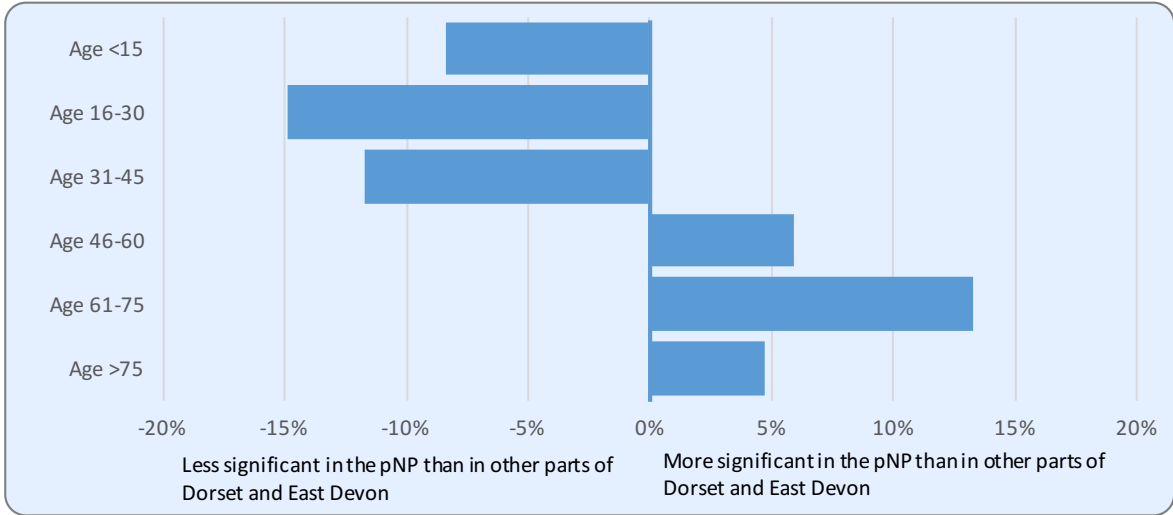


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- 4.6. The characteristics of the population are broadly similar to that in the surrounding areas, with relatively small differences in the age profile. As shown in **Figure 4.2**, the pNP has relatively more older people and fewer younger people than surrounding areas. The greatest differences are found in the 16-30 age bracket (15% fewer people in the pNP as a proportion of the population) and the 61-75 age bracket (13% more proportionately in the pNP).

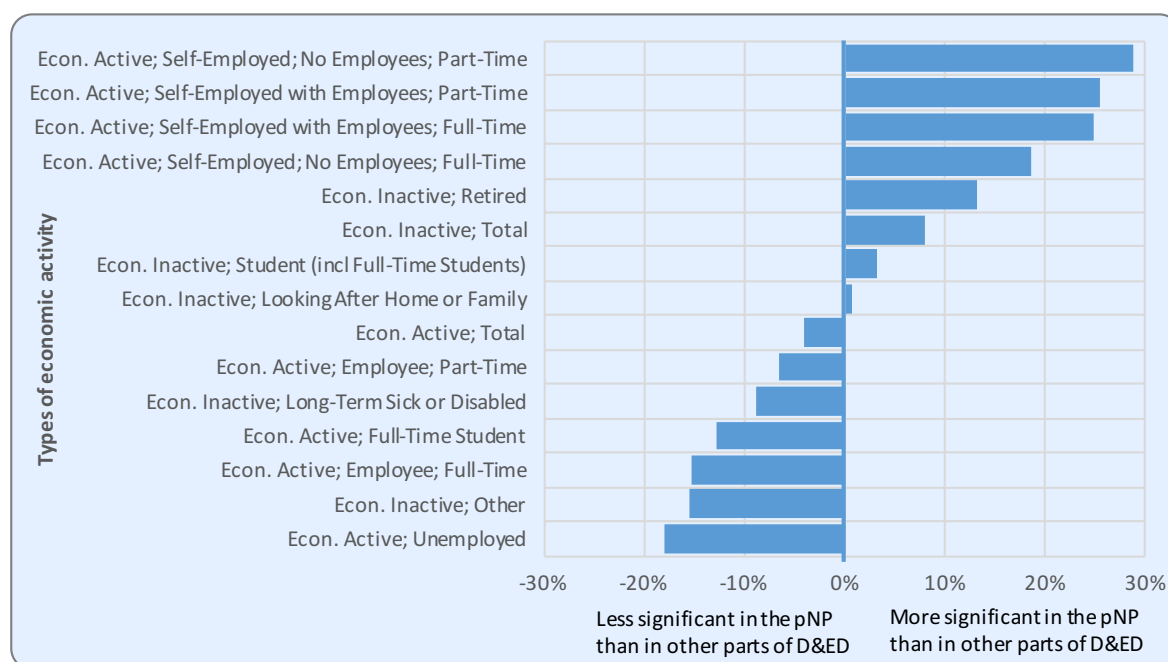
Figure 4.2. Relative differences in the age profiles of residents in the proposed National Park compared to other parts of Dorset and East Devon



Economic Activity

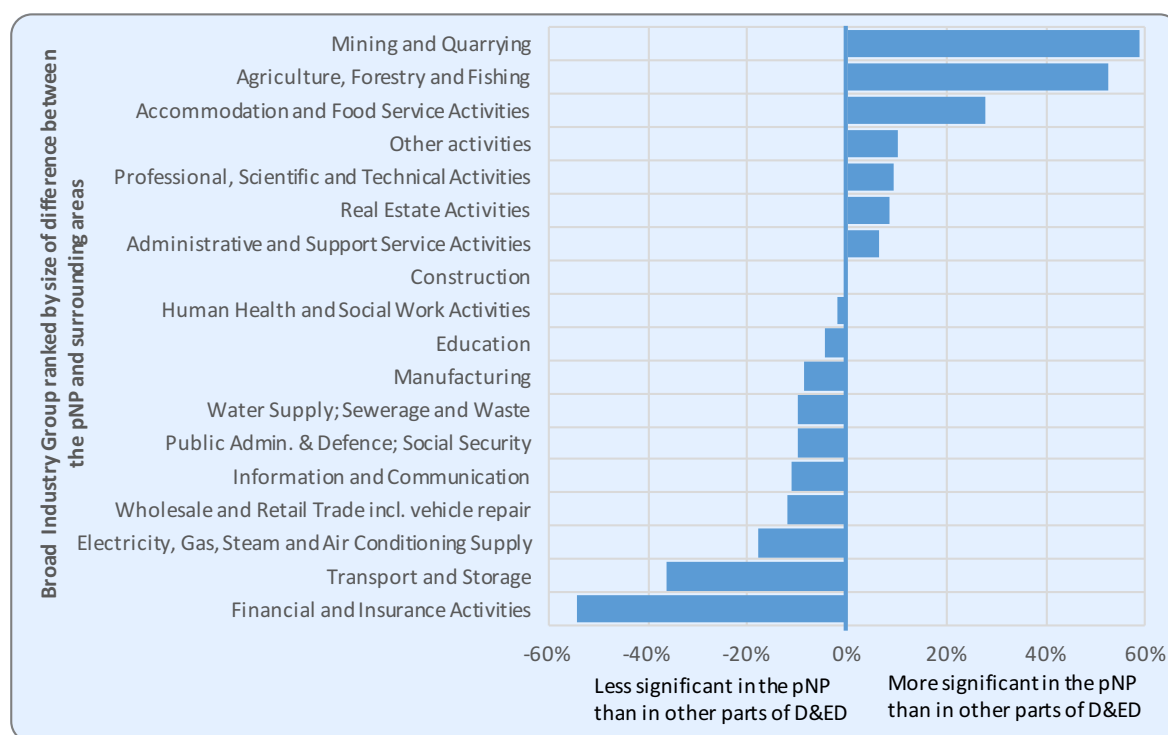
- 4.7. The pNP has an economically active population of 54,724 people which is 21% of the economically active population of Dorset County and East Devon District. There are relatively small differences in the types of economic activity in the pNP and in the rest of Dorset and East Devon. The pNP has a higher proportion of self-employed people (16% of working age residents) compared to surrounding areas (12%) and this indicates a likely higher proportion of micro-businesses, many of them probably home-based. The pNP also has a significant higher proportion of retired people (23% compared to 20%). Conversely, the pNP has a lower proportion of unemployed people and salaried employees. These and other differences are shown in **Figure 4.3**.

Figure 4.3. Relative differences in types of resident's economic activity in the proposed National Park compared to other parts of Dorset and East Devon



- 4.8. The profile of employment in the main industrial sectors (as measured by the ONS 'Broad Industry Groups') is broadly the same in the pNP compared to the Dorset and East Devon District as a whole. The largest sectors, accounting for over 60% of employment for people living in the pNP are (in declining order of importance) Wholesale and Retail Trades, Human Health and Social Work Activities, Education, Construction, Accommodation and Food Service Activities and Manufacturing.
- 4.9. As might be expected due to the more rural nature of the pNP, employment in the land based sectors of farming, forestry, fishing and quarrying are twice the level as surrounding areas ([Figure 4.4](#)), although the proportion of the population employed in these sectors is still relatively small at 5%.
- 4.10. The tourism sector (as represented by 'Accommodation and Food Service activities') is also significantly more important in the pNP, largely as a result of businesses located along the coastal strip. Eight percent of the resident population in the pNP is employed in this sector. It should be noted that many tourism businesses serving the pNP are also likely to be located in the 'gateway' and coastal towns that lie on the edge of the pNP such as (travelling from east to west) Poole, Dorchester, Weymouth, Seaton, Sidmouth and Exmouth.
- 4.11. More urban based sectors such as finance and insurance, transport and storage, the energy utilities and wholesale and retail trades are more strongly represented outside the pNP.

Figure 4.4. Relative differences in the importance of Broad Industry Groups in the proposed National Park compared to other parts of Dorset and East Devon



Comparing the Characteristics of the pNP with other National Parks

- 4.12. A detailed comparison of the socio-economic characteristics of the proposed National Park with other National Parks is outside the brief for this research. However, brief analysis of size, location and resident population is instructive. **Figure 4.5** ranks all National Parks in England by size, together with the pNP and gives the resident population and its density. It shows that the proposed National Park would be similar in size and population density to the South Downs National Park. It is considered likely that the economic characteristics of the proposed National Park, in terms of employment types and industrial sectors, would also be similar to the South Downs National Park as well as the New Forest National Park. This contrasts with the much lower population densities and less diverse economies (i.e. more reliant on primary agriculture and tourism) of upland National Parks such as Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Peak District.

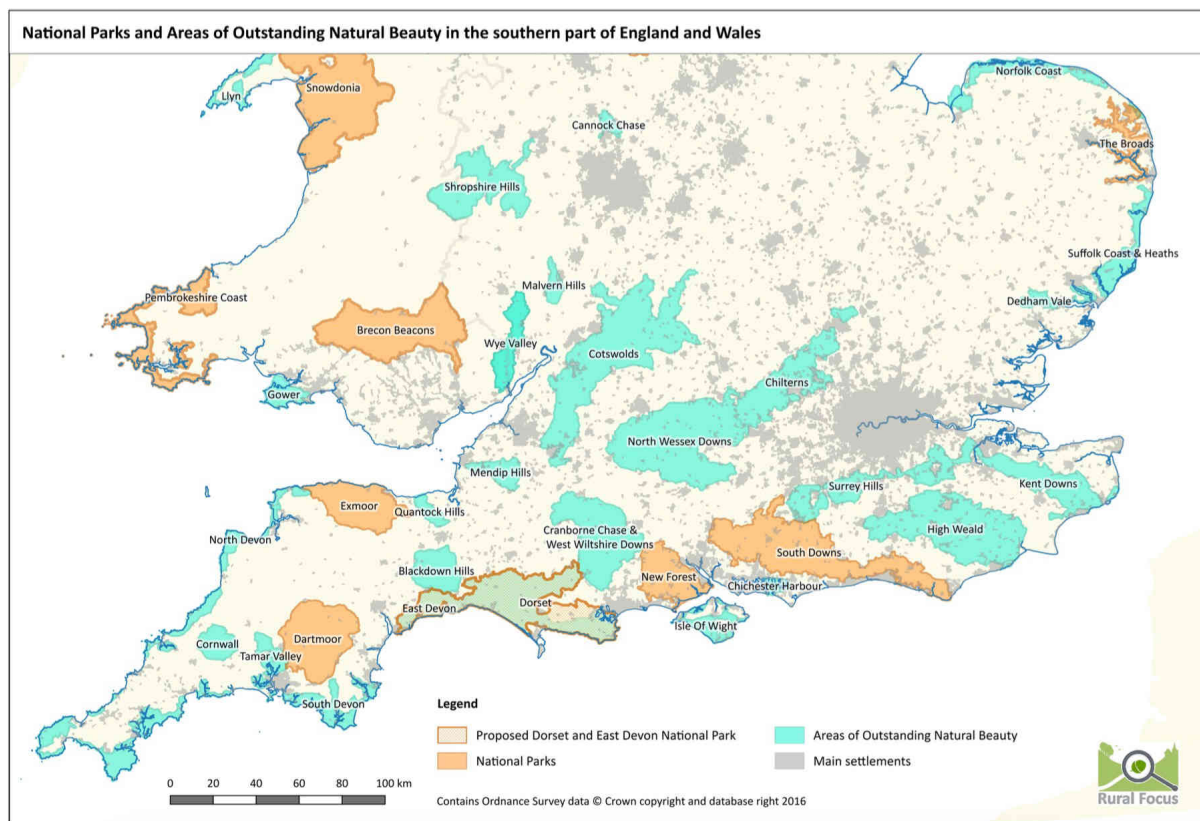
Figure 4.5. Data comparing the pNP with existing National Parks in England, 2011

National Park	Area (km2)	Resident population	Pop. density (people/km2)
Lake District (not including extensions)	2,292	40,800	17.8
Yorkshire Dales (not including extensions)	1,769	19,654	11.1
South Downs	1,624	120,000	73.9
proposed Dorset and East Devon	1,565	116,609	74.5
North York Moors	1,434	23,380	16.3
Peak District	1,437	37,905	26.4
Northumberland	1,048	2,200	2.1
Dartmoor	953	34,000	35.7
Exmoor	694	10,600	15.3
New Forest	570	34,922	61.3
The Broads	303	6,271	20.7

Source for existing National Parks. www.nationalparks.gov.uk/learningabout/whatisanationalpark/factsandfigures

- 4.13. **Figure 4.6** maps all the protected landscape designations in southern England and Wales together with the proposed National Park. It shows the position of the proposed Dorset and East Devon National Park among the protected landscapes along the south coast of England from the Kent Downs to the Cornwall AONBs. These include the two most recent National Parks to have been designated in England, the New Forest (designated 2005) and South Downs (2010).

Figure 4.6. Protected landscapes in the southern part of England and Wales



Estimate of the Direct Economic Impacts that would arise from the National Park Designation

- 4.14. Based on the similarities that there are between the characteristics of the proposed National Park and the South Downs National Park, it is possible, with a reasonable level of confidence, to anticipate how the National Park designation would bring new resources and expenditure to Dorset and East Devon.
- 4.15. An up-to-date breakdown of the income of the South Downs National Park Authority was not available to this study. However, based on its budgeted expenditure in 2015/16 (set out in the Authority's corporate plan), it is likely that it receives an annual grant from Defra of around £10 million and receives other sources of income of a further £1 million a year. On a like-for-like basis, a conservative estimate suggests that a Dorset and East Devon National Park Authority would have an annual income of around £10 million (Defra grant and additional income) and would employ around 85 full time equivalent staff.
- 4.16. These resources are clearly far in excess of (more than ten times greater than) the income and staff available to the Dorset and East Devon AONB Units, accepting that the National Park Authority would have additional duties and responsibilities (particularly the planning function). It is also worth noting that a National Park Authority would not rely on funding from its Local Authorities as is the case for the two AONBs. It is estimated that they currently receive somewhat less than £100,000 a year from Dorset and Devon County Councils towards their core running costs.

- 4.17. Section 2 of this report noted that National Park Authorities are successful at leveraging in additional funding to support their work and that their spending and other activities have multiplier effects in the broader economy. Using the conservative assumptions and ratios established by Cumulus Consultants (2013) (see para. 2.26 and Figure 2.11), it can be estimated that the National Park Authority would support 123.5 full time equivalent jobs and provide a gross value added to the economy of Dorset and East Devon of around £6.5 million (Figure 4.7)⁴⁷.

Figure 4.7. Estimated economic impact arising from expenditure by a Dorset and East Devon National Park Authority

Type of expenditure	Employment (FTE)	Gross Value Added
Direct staffing (£4.5M)	85.0	£4.5M
Other purchases (£5.5M)	13.8	£0.7M
Indirect and induced effects	24.7	£1.3M
Total impact of NPA expenditures	123.5	£6.5M

Source: Application of the assumptions and ratios from Cumulus Consultants (2013) to the pNP – see footnote 42 below.

- 4.18. These conservative and relatively crude estimates of the local economic effects of the National Park Authority's activity can be supplemented by qualitative predictions of how the Authority's work would provide opportunities for different sectors of the economy. In the following pages, examples of activities by National Park Authorities, particularly that in the South Downs (which as noted above is closest to the characteristics of the proposed National Park) are used to illustrate the likely work of a Dorset and East Devon National Park Authority.

Tourism and Recreation

- 4.19. Dorset and East Devon have a large and well-developed tourism economy, with the coast, particularly the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, as its main visitor attraction. Research undertaken for the Dorset Tourism Partnership in 2015 estimated that tourism supports 35,000 full time equivalent jobs in the county (13% of all employment) and that total visitor-related spending amounts to £1.79M a year⁴⁸. Given its purpose of 'promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment by the public' (Figure 2.1), a National Park Authority would look to enhance and add value to this activity. It is significant that the Government's 8-point plan for National Parks (Figure 2.2) anticipates that National Parks will attract increasing number of international visitors (the research quoted above estimates that international visitors to Dorset account for 21% of current visitor spending), in part by making use of the new £40 million Discover England Fund announced in November 2015.
- 4.20. Research on the tourism sector in the South Downs before and after the designation of the National Park shows that the value of tourism expenditure increased by 10.7% in real terms between 2003/04 and 2011/12 and that this led to a 13.5% increase in related employment. The research does not assess the extent to which the designation contributed to this increase, but it does comment that the National Park Authority plays a key role in ensuring that tourism remains environmentally and socially sustainable.

⁴⁷ In Figure 4.7, (using the same assumption as those in the Cumulus Consultants report) the employment and GVA arising from 'other purchases' is estimated on the basis that 25% of these purchases are from local suppliers, supporting business turnover of £1.38 million annually and that each £1m of this business turnover directly supports 10 direct FTE jobs and GVA of £0.50 million (13.8 FTE jobs and £0.7M GVA respectively). For the indirect and induced effects, it is assumed that each unit of direct impact is associated with a further 0.25 units of activity in the local economy, supporting a further 300 FTE jobs and £10 million of GVA locally.

⁴⁸ The South West Research Company Ltd (2015)

- 4.21. Based on the activities of other National Park Authorities, an Authority in Dorset and East Devon is likely to address these opportunities in a variety of ways. It would be likely to:
- **Support tourism businesses**, collectively through funding and staff support for an association representing the sector, and individually through advice and grant aid promoting sustainable tourism practices.
 - **Fund the Tourist Information Centres** that are currently provided by the District Councils in Dorset (and whose future funding is understood to be under review) in locations such as Wareham, Swanage, Bridport, Lyme Regis, Axminster, Budleigh Salterton and Exmouth.
 - **Oversee a Visitor Gifting Scheme** that provides a means for visitors to contribute directly to the maintenance of the National Park's special qualities.
 - **Employ a National Park ranger service** (see further below) to help visitors access and interpret the National Park's special qualities.

Farming and Other Land-based Businesses

- 4.22. The socio-economic profile earlier in this Chapter showed that farming and other land-based sectors such as forestry are a relatively small part of the economy but are much more significant in the proposed National Park than in other parts of Dorset and East Devon (para. 4.9). A National Park Management Plan would be likely to highlight the role of the sector in sustaining the area's natural beauty and the social and economic role it plays in small rural communities. Key local partners in this work are likely to be major landowners such as the National Trust, The Duchy of Cornwall and the Weld Estate. Working with these organisations, the National Park Authority would be likely to:
- **Work with Natural England to promote uptake of agri-environment agreements.** The Middle Tier of the current Countryside Stewardship scheme is reliant on applications being supported by third parties and the NPA is likely to have the resources to increase uptake in this Tier.
 - **Support a local products scheme to encourage sales of high value local products with high environmental qualities.** The New Forest National Park Authority operates the New Forest Marque which it set up in 2004 to promote the production, processing and distribution of local produce from the New Forest. It is understood that the future funding of the Dorset Food & Drink initiative currently supported by the Dorset AONB is under review.
 - **Take advantage of other national initiatives to support the sector.** The South Downs National Park Authority is currently using the Government's Food Enterprise Zone Pathfinder project to support the economic development of dairy farming businesses.

Heritage Management and its Economic Value

- 4.23. The proposed National Park already has a well-developed heritage sector. As noted earlier (para. 3.35), the RSA has prepared a Heritage Index for England that merges a range of datasets to show the relative value of heritage in each local authority area in England. This shows that both Purbeck and West Dorset are in the top 4% of local authority areas for their landscape and natural heritage.⁴⁹
- 4.24. Recent studies have quantified and characterised the environmental economy of Dorset and Devon. The most recent is the Dorset Environmental Economy Study which included specific data on the Dorset AONB and the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site⁵⁰. **Figure 4.8** summarises the main

⁴⁹ <https://www.thersa.org/action-and-research/rsa-projects/public-services-and-communities-folder/heritage-and-place/England/>

⁵⁰ Ash Futures (2016)

economic findings from the study. The report found that *“The environmental economy is a vital, important, indeed indispensable, part of economic, cultural and social life in Dorset. It contributes a significant amount to annual output and employment and the preservation of its productive capacity is key to future living standards and wellbeing”*. A similar study was prepared in Devon in 2012 for the County Council and Local Nature Partnership⁵¹. It found that the green economy accounting for 100,000 full time equivalent jobs (17,000 in Dartmoor) and £2,400 million in gross value added (16% of all GVA). Furthermore the report found that the natural environment in Devon provided important social benefits such as; *“mental wellbeing, sensory stimulation, social engagement, physical activity, aesthetic appreciation, sense of place education and knowledge and culture”*.

Figure 4.8. Key findings on Dorset’s environmental economy

<p>The Dorset environmental economy is worth between £0.9 billion and £2.5 billion per annum; and supports between 17,000 and 61,000 jobs in the economy. If the central estimate of £1.5 billion per annum, and 30,000 jobs is used, the environment is worth about 8%-10% of the County’s overall economy each year. This is twice the size of manufacturing in the County.</p> <p>The value of the environmental economy within the Dorset AONB area is estimated at between £183 million and £189 million; and the influence of the Dorset AONB designation on that economic output is estimated to be between £55 million and £85 million per year.</p> <p>The value of the environmental economy within the Jurassic Coast area is between £299 million and £352 million; and the influence of the WHS designation is estimated to be between £92 million and £114 million per year.</p> <p>Intrinsic valuations, undertaken via a survey show that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of resident respondents agreed that environmental quality offered a premium, estimated at 10% value on house prices, • 63% of resident respondents agreed that environmental quality was very important/ critical to the decision to live in Dorset, • Resident respondents spent on average £3.57 per visit (£6.08 coastal/countryside visit). They are willing to pay £34 per year to help conserve natural assets, • 97% of visitor respondents cited the natural environment as the reason for visiting Dorset. Over 60% felt the designations were 50% of the reason for visiting and • Visitor respondents willingness to pay to help conserve natural assets is on average £4.33 per visit.

Source: Ash Futures (2016)

- 4.25. These assets and values, and the opportunities to capitalise on them, are recognized in the Natural Capital Investment Strategy for Dorset published by the Dorset Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in March 2016⁵². The Strategy states that *“Natural Capital is a concept of particular relevance to Dorset’s natural brand and niche in that it can be used to ensure that the resource base on which development is built is not eroded but rather is built-up to increase the resilience to change, the probability of success, and future prosperity without environmental and social damage”*.
- 4.26. Although the Dorset LNP Strategy does not touch on the potential for National Park status, its statement that *“An approach to development planning in Dorset needs to integrate economic, environmental and social elements in order to achieve longer-term goals and maintain the character and health of Dorset that is so important to future business development, to people and to nature”* could be said to apply directly to the way that the purposes of the National Park designation (**Figure 2.1**) relate to planning.

⁵¹ Transform Research Consultancy (2012)

⁵² Dorset LNP (2016)

- 4.27. It is implicit in these research documents and Strategy that the costs of maintaining the economically valuable natural assets in Dorset and East Devon are not properly recognised and there are insufficient mechanisms for the market to support and reinvest in them. This provides a number of important opportunities for a National Park Authority which would be likely to:
- **Employ National Park Rangers** to work with farmers and other land managers on countryside and coastal management. This would be likely to safeguard and extend the existing coast and countryside services currently operated by the County Councils, the future of which are understood to be under review.
 - **Operate a Community Grants scheme** for local community organisations and businesses to deliver the National Park purposes. This would be an extension of the Sustainable Development Fund operated by the Dorset AONB. All National Park Authorities in England operate these schemes (see [para. 2.38](#)).
 - **Work with utility companies and other large businesses to safeguard the natural capital of the area** (using so-called 'Payments for Ecosystem Services' schemes), particularly extending the existing catchment partnership work with Wessex Water. Exmoor National Park Authority is working closely with South West Water on its Exmoor Mires Project, which is attracting large amounts of external funding to enhance the reliability and quality of public water supplies and wetland biodiversity in the National Park.
 - **Lead partnership approaches to bid for and manage significant external funding** for heritage-related projects such as from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Landscape Partnership Scheme and EU funding programmes. Building on the recent successes of the "South Dorset Ridgeway" Landscape Partnership bid developed by the Dorset AONB Partnership and the 'Umborne Community Grassland' Project bid developed by East Devon AONB Partnership. In October 2015, the HLF approved a £2.9 m grant to the 'Our Past, Our Future' Landscape Partnership being led by the New Forest National Park Authority. This will involve a total expenditure of £4.3M to restore lost habitats, develop Forest skills and inspire a new generation to champion and care for the New Forest.

Education and Skills

- 4.28. The Dorset and East Devon Coast is already a popular destination for school and university field trips (focusing on locations such as Studland beach and dunes and the Axminster to Lyme Regis undercliff) and many learning resources are already provided by the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site team. Training in land and environmental management is provided by Kingston Maurward and Bicton Colleges and large landowners such as the National Trust provide opportunities for skills development, both formally through apprenticeships and informally through volunteering. This level of activity is typical in most National Parks and National Park Authorities are able to bring their resources to add value to and supplement the work of others. The Government's 8-Point Plan (Figure 2.2) includes commitment by National Park Authorities to double the number of young people experiencing National Parks through the National Citizen Service by 2020; engage directly with over 60,000 young people per year through schools visits by 2017/18; develop three new apprenticeship standards; and double the number of apprenticeship places they offer by 2020. Based on the work typically undertaken by National Park Authorities, the following activities are likely to be undertaken in the proposed National Park:
- **Co-ordinate and enhance outdoor learning resources for use by schools and other education providers.** The South Downs National Park Authority has developed the 'South Downs Curriculum' and actively engaged with 290 schools. The electronic resources include direct links to the South Downs National Park Learning Zone website providing notes on local case studies; and many more ideas.

- **Offer apprenticeships in heritage and/or visitor management.** The South Downs National Park Authority works with local colleges to provide day-release apprenticeships to local students (two in 2015, one based with the ranger team and the other in the central admin team).
- **Enhance opportunities for volunteering** that offer people new skills and responsibilities and a personal stake in the special qualities of the National Park. The South Downs National Park Authority's Volunteer Ranger Service has 500 members who are involved in landscape management and heritage management work.

Health and Wellbeing

- 4.29. New emphasis is being placed on the role that the proximity and quality of the natural environment has as a determinant of positive health outcomes. The Local Nature Partnerships in both Dorset and Devon have recognised the opportunities that arise from this and are working with partners such as the Counties' Health and Wellbeing Boards on initiatives such as Devon's Walking for Health and Naturally Active projects. The Government's 8-Point Plan for National Parks (Figure 2.2) highlights the role that National Park Authorities can play in this area, focusing on their roles as 'test beds' to trial innovative schemes to promote wellbeing and to increase active public recreation. A National Park Authority would be likely to support this work with its funding and staff on activities such as:
- **Develop and promote walking for health routes and other outdoor-based physical and mental health initiatives.** Exmoor National Park Authority is hosting and joint funding the 'Moor to Enjoy' project with the Health and Wellbeing Boards for Somerset and Devon, working with health groups and GP practices to encourage visits to the National Park as part of the treatment patients receive.

Estimating the Potential for Indirect Impacts of NP Status

- 4.30. The values estimated above and the activities that a National Park Authority would be likely to undertake do not encompass the likely indirect economic impacts that would be expected from a National Park in Dorset and East Devon. Previous sections of this report have shown that indirect impacts and opportunities arise from a number of sources; the use of the National Park brand to attract higher value tourism and sales of local food and craft projects, the focus in both public policy and programmes on the environmental and heritage economy, and from the cohesive strength that partnership-based policy making and delivery can provide. Such opportunities are difficult to quantify financially, particularly because the economy of the proposed National Park area already makes use of its environmental assets.

New Opportunities for Businesses Using the National Park Brand

- 4.31. The coast and countryside, and associated activities, in the proposed National Park area are currently promoted to the public using a variety of identities including Visit Dorset, Dorset Food & Drink, The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site⁵³ and the two AONBs. Arguably, none of these have the wider level of public recognition or coherence that would be gained from a single National Park identity promoted by the full resources of a National Park Authority. The previous section noted that the National Park brand is highly regarded by many members of the public (the South Downs National Park recently being voted as the top reason why people love living in Sussex – see [para. 3.87](#)). Many National Park Authorities have developed a 'shared identity' brand, separate from their own, which they encourage businesses and other organisations in the National Park to use

⁵³ The value of the Jurassic Coast WHS was identified in the 'Economic Impact Study (2009)' and would provide a valuable base on which to grow any National Park 'shared identity' brand.

(see [Figure 4.9](#)). In addition, all the UK's National Parks contribute to a national 'Breathing Spaces' campaign⁵⁴ and has been promoted through the Government's 'Britain is Great' campaign⁵⁵.

Figure 4.9. Principles behind the South Downs shared identity

The South Downs National Park Authority website states:

"The shared identity is designed to give the place itself, the South Downs National Park, an identity all of its own. It is completely separate from the brand of the South Downs National Park Authority. It was developed for and by partners and stakeholders to enhance their sites and messaging as well as supporting their own brands/identities – it is an 'identity' we all share.

It is not an accreditation – rather it says we are proud to be part of the amazing place that is the South Downs National Park. It allows our businesses, partners and communities to benefit from being associated with the National Park. It enables all of us to tell the story of the UK's newest National Park.

The identity includes graphics, fonts, photography and support with telling the story of the National Park. The identity is free to use for businesses, partners, communities within the National Park who want to use it in support of the National Park's purposes and duty."

Source: www.southdowns.gov.uk/care-for/supporting-communities-business/south-downs-national-park-shared-identity/. Accessed 6 April 2016

- 4.32. This study could find no research that was able to put a financial value on the use of National Park brands by and for businesses (but see [paras. 3.80-3.87](#) for qualitative assessments). It is likely that businesses in the tourism and local products (food, crafts, art etc.) sectors would gain most benefit, giving them increased market penetration and recognition. Compared to the existing identities which are used to promote the area ([para. 4.31](#)), it is likely that a National Park brand would have most impact at a national and international (rather than regional) scale.

Halo Effects for Surrounding Towns

- 4.33. The previous section has reviewed the evidence for the impact that National Park status has on the towns that lie outside the Park boundary ([paras 3.88 to 3.90](#)). It found that the status creates economic opportunities to these areas, particularly in employment providing services to visitors. This suggests that there would be opportunities for businesses in 'gateway' locations to provide services to visitors such as accommodation, eating, shopping and paid-for recreational activities, particularly in the towns on major transport routes into the area. Towns with strong existing heritage identities such as Dorchester, Sherborne and Honiton, or outdoor recreation identities such as Weymouth and Exmouth would have advantages in this respect.
- 4.34. High visitor numbers travelling through 'gateway' points during peak holiday periods can cause traffic congestion (a situation encountered in Lymington and Brockenhurst in the New Forest, although this can be a feature of all popular visitor destinations, not limited to National Parks). Specific powers were introduced under Section 72 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 for National Park Authorities to make Traffic Regulation Orders to alleviate these problems. Several National Park Authorities including the Lake District, North York Moors and Peak District make use of these powers.

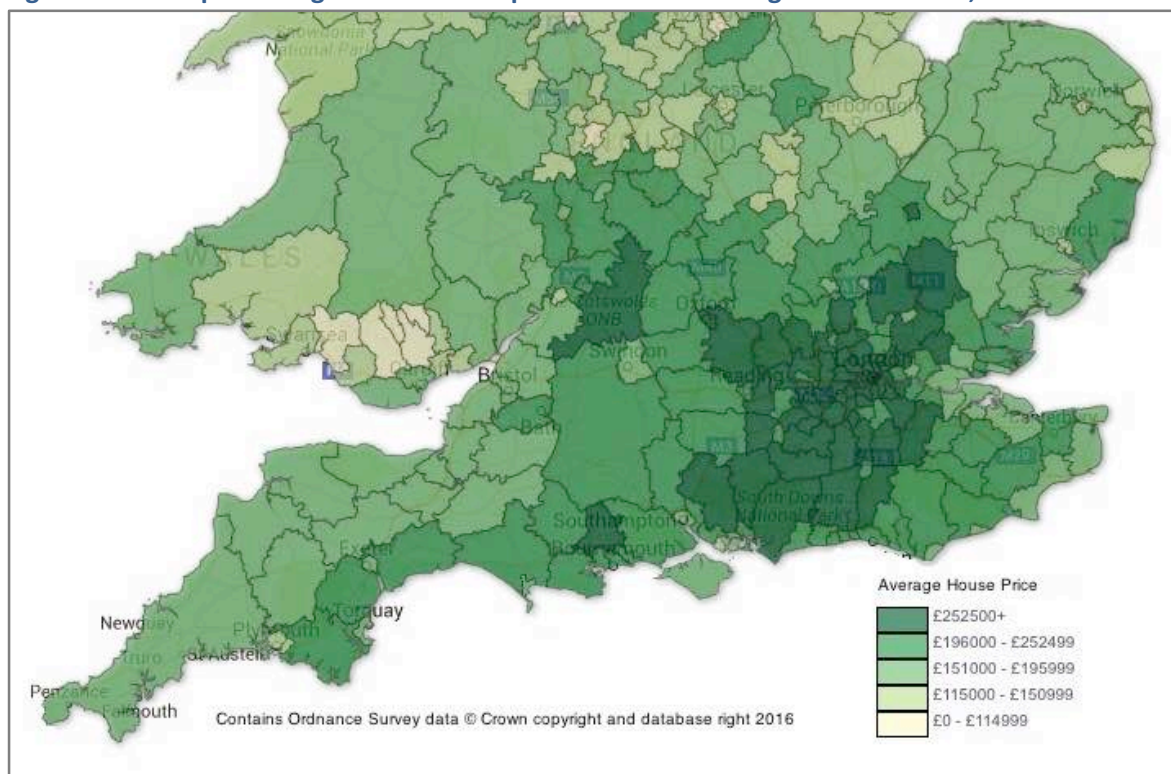
⁵⁴ <http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk>

⁵⁵ <http://www.greatbritaincampaign.com>

Potential Effects on House Prices and Availability

- 4.35. House prices in the proposed National Park area are already relatively high compared to other parts of the South West (median prices in 2013 being highest in East Dorset District at £268,000 compared to 235,000 in West Dorset and £217,500 in East Devon – see [Figure 4.10](#)).

Figure 4.10. Map showing median house prices in Southern England and Wales, 2013



Source: <http://visual.ons.gov.uk/house-prices-in-your-area/>. Accessed 7 April 2016

- 4.36. The previous section noted that house prices in National Parks tend to be higher than in surrounding areas and that there may be a causal relationship (although this is difficult to prove) with the designation increasing demand (see [paras. 3.62 and 3.63](#)). High prices can obviously be a significant issue for local people seeking to buy a house. National Park Local Plans are required to address the need for affordable housing in line with the Government's Circular on National Parks (see [para. 3.66](#)). As noted in Section 2 of this report, there is no evidence that planning policy in National Parks is more restrictive than in other areas or that it leads to a reduction in housing provision (indeed there is some evidence that the opposite has been the case – see [para. 2.33](#)).
- 4.37. Planned housing growth in Dorset and East Devon (as set out in the Local Plans) already takes account of the existing AONB designations (which has parity in planning terms with the National Park designation – see [para. 2.6](#)) and is focused on the larger settlements that lie outside these areas. For instance, the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (adopted in October 2015), places the large majority of new housing in Dorchester, Weymouth, Portland, Chickerell and Crossways, all outside the proposed National Park area. The East Devon Plan (adopted January 2016) does the same in the West End of the District (mainly the new town of Cranbrook), Exmouth, Honiton, Seaton and Axminster. It is already the case that housing growth is centred mainly on the settlements surrounding the proposed National Park area and a National Park Local Plan would be likely to adopt policies that were consistent with this approach.

Commentary

- 4.38. The findings of this report reinforce the opportunity presented by local government reorganisation to consider how best to extend and deepen the purposes of the designated areas of Dorset and East Devon, giving them the best available legislative and statutory tools and resources to meet wider socio-economic and wellbeing objectives. The current pace and direction of change in the wider political and governance frameworks lends this some urgency.
- 4.39. The recent studies on the environmental economies of Dorset and Devon⁵⁶ provide both the evidence and the challenge for the future management of the outstanding natural capital that is located in the proposed National Park area. The Dorset Local Nature Partnerships Natural Capital Investment Strategy takes up this challenge, with a set of recommendations that seek to embed the value of this natural capital in economic policy and development planning.
- 4.40. The critical issue explored by this report is what added-value and extra influence the National Park designation would bring to this endeavour in Dorset and East Devon. Quite apart from the additional financial resources and staff expertise that the establishment of a National Park Authority would bring, it is clear that the statutory purposes of the National Park designation, focussed through the National Park Management Plan and reflected in the Local Plan for the National Park, would strengthen the recognition and sustainable use of the area's outstanding natural capital.
- 4.41. This study has demonstrated that the National Park model is a proven and effective mechanism for investing in natural capital, providing the right purposes, the right level of resources and, critically, public and business understanding of and support for the delivery of these purposes.
- 4.42. From the review of evidence set out earlier in this report it is likely that there would be a demonstrable 'uplift' for the area resulting from National Park status. This study has found that:
- National Park Authorities have the powers and resources to think and act in the long term interests of natural and cultural assets and are increasingly using these assets as drivers of growth, consistent with the purposes of the designation.
 - The Government is strongly supporting National Parks, both through the recent funding settlement which maintains their budgets in contrast to continuing cuts in many other areas of public spending and in the renewed policy commitments set out in the 8-Point Plan published with National Parks England in March 2016.
 - Aligning planning delivery in National Parks with the purposes of the designation offers a pathway to the levels of coherent and integrated decision making required to effectively manage natural and cultural assets.
 - The status and staffing of National Park Authorities allows them to work effectively with local partners to ensure that the environment works for business and that business development does not work against the interests of the natural and cultural assets.
 - The established National Park brand is well understood by the public and the business community providing a point of difference that can be used to the advantage of local businesses as well as providing 'buy-in' and support of residents and visitors alike.
- 4.43. The area of the proposed National Park has been well served by the existing AONB partnerships and AONB teams. However, fostering economic and social wellbeing is not a core activity for AONB teams (as it is for National Park Authorities). Furthermore, the reliance of AONBs on funding from Local Authorities at a time of ongoing budget cuts for these Authorities will be a source of instability for AONBs and a constraint on their activities.

⁵⁶ Ash Futures (2016 and Transform Research Consultancy (2012)

- 4.44. This is an important time for designated landscape management bodies to build new partnerships with businesses to deliver the integrated economic programmes demanded by the richness of the local natural and cultural assets. Uncertainties about future funding for AONB Partnerships and local authorities cannot help in building the strategic, long term planning needed for this task.
- 4.45. The changes taking place in the South Downs National Park (which is economically, socially and environmentally similar to the Dorset and East Devon area) since its establishment in 2010, give a good indication of what would occur in the proposed National Park. The National Park has played a critical role in developing sustainable economic responses to the management and use of the South Downs' natural and cultural assets, and is positively regarded by its people. It has been able to do this as a result of the greater resources and greater certainty of long term funding that the designation has attracted, and the integrated way it has been able to develop and pursue policies with partners.
- 4.46. Whether the Dorset and East Devon designated areas can fully satisfy all the criteria for National Park status is for others to consider. The core message from this review is that the importance of the natural and cultural assets found in the area and the value they offer to the local economy requires appropriate investment and management to ensure future sustainable use. National Park designation offers a tried and tested means of balancing protection, enjoyment and sustainable growth in the UK's most precious and popular landscapes. It should be given appropriate consideration as part of local government reorganisation in Dorset and East Devon.

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