

National Parks, AONBs and Dorset: Landscapes Review Desktop Study

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Background

In January 2018 the Government published a 25-Year Plan for the Environment. It set out an approach to “conserve and protect the natural beauty of our landscapes by reviewing National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) for the 21st century”. The review also committed to assess whether there is scope for the current network of 34 AONBs and 10 National Parks to be expanded¹.

The Landscapes Review (informally known as the “Glover Review”) was led by writer, Julian Glover, supported by an advisory panel of: Lord Cameron of Dillington, Jim Dixon, Sarah Mukherjee, Dame Fiona Reynolds and Jake Fiennes². Defra provided the secretariat for the group.

The Landscapes Review was a cross-government review and launched on 27 May 2018. The Final Report was published on 21 September 2019, in time to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the founding legislation: the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act, 1949.

Landscape Review Objectives

“The review aims not to diminish the character or independence of our designated landscapes, or to impose new burdens on them and the people who live and work in the areas they cover. Instead, its purpose is to ask what might be done better, what changes could assist them, and whether definitions and systems - which in many cases date back to their original creation - are still sufficient.”

The review examined:

- The existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met
- The alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25-Year Plan for the Environment
- The case for extension or creation of new designated areas
- How to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets
- The financing of National Parks and AONBs
- How to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations
- How to build on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks and to connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing
- How well National Parks and AONBs support communities

The review also took advice from Natural England on the process of designating National Parks and AONBs with a view to improving and expediting the process.

¹ 25-Year Plan for the Environment, Chapter 2, p.56.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

² About Review Panel Members.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-parks-review-launched>

Landscapes Review Call for Evidence

Between October and December 2018 there was a public call for evidence, during which over 2,500 responses were received. During this call for evidence a wide range of Dorset based organisations submitted material. Notably, both the Dorset AONB Partnership and the Dorset & East Devon National Park CIC made evidence submissions. Dorset County Council, a predecessor council to Dorset Council, also submitted a response.

Interim Findings of the Landscapes Review

In July 2019 Julian Glover wrote to The Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP, the then Secretary of State for Defra, setting out the interim findings of the designated landscapes review³.

The interim key findings were:

- Improvement is required to the designated landscapes: they should be examples of best practice in recovering nature and “Nature Recovery Networks”.
- The management of National Parks should be reformed as they are not representative of society and they are not sufficiently strategic.
- AONBs should be strengthened with increased funding, new purposes and a greater voice on development.
- Designated landscapes should take a lead in the national response to climate change in order to help meet the Government’s goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- There is a huge potential for social prescribing
- Societal outreach and inclusivity of the landscapes need to be improved
- The management of designated landscapes should proactively address the shortage of social (affordable) housing
- The Glover Review panel will give its view on the potential for new designations in their final report.

Landscapes Review Final Report

The Final Report was published on 21 September 2019 the: “Landscapes Review: Final Report”⁴.

At the core of the report is the proposal “to bring National Parks and AONBs together as part of one family of national landscapes” which would be served by a shared National Landscapes Service (NLS).

In summary the report recommends that AONBs receive: a name change (from AONB to National Landscapes), increased funding, increased statutory responsibilities, and a greater voice within planning processes.

For National Parks the report recommends that they retain their National Park title, retain their current levels of funding as a minimum, and retain their “local autonomy, especially over planning matters” (i.e. remain a planning authority).

³ Julian Glover Letter to Michael Gove with interim findings.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817608/landscapes-review-interim-findings-july2019.pdf

⁴Landscapes Review: Final Report

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/833726/landscapes-review-final-report.pdf

The report introduces 27 specific proposals, listed in full below:

1. National landscapes should have a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature and be supported and held to account for delivery by a new National Landscapes Service.
2. The state of nature and natural capital in our national landscapes should be regularly and robustly assessed, informing the priorities for action
3. Strengthened Management Plans should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery including, but not limited to, wilder areas and the response to climate change (notably tree planting and peatland restoration). Their implementation must be backed up by stronger status in law
4. National landscapes should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks – joining things up within and beyond their boundaries
5. A central place for national landscapes in new Environmental Land Management Schemes
6. A strengthened place for national landscapes in the planning system with AONBs given statutory consultee status, encouragement to develop local plans and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework
7. A stronger mission to connect all people with our national landscapes, supported and held to account by the new National Landscapes Service
8. A night under the stars in a national landscape for every child
9. New long-term programmes to increase the ethnic diversity of visitors
10. Landscapes that cater for and improve the nation's health and wellbeing
11. Expanding volunteering in our national landscapes
12. Better information and signs to guide visitors
13. A ranger service in all our national landscapes, part of a national family
14. National landscapes supported to become leaders in sustainable tourism
15. Joining up with others to make the most of what we have, and bringing National Trails into the national landscapes family
16. Consider expanding open access rights in national landscapes
17. National landscapes working for vibrant communities
18. A new National Landscapes Housing Association to build affordable homes
19. A new approach to coordinating public transport piloted in the Lake District, and new, more sustainable ways of accessing national landscapes
20. New designated landscapes and a new National Forest
21. Welcoming new landscape approaches in cities and the coast, and a city park competition
22. A better designations process
23. Stronger purposes in law for our national landscapes
24. AONBs strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, renamed as National Landscapes
25. A new National Landscapes Service bringing our 44 national landscapes together to achieve more than the sum of their parts
26. Reformed governance to inspire and secure ambition in our national landscapes and better reflect society
27. A new financial model – more money, more secure, more enterprising

The Landscapes Review states that they received submissions seeking new National Park designations. The submissions included proposed National Park designation for areas which

were already an existing AONB i.e.: The Chilterns (existing AONB), The Cotswolds (existing AONB) and the combined Dorset and East Devon (existing AONBs).

The Landscapes Review stated that Dorset “has some of the greatest concentrations of biodiversity in Britain and opportunities for enjoyment. It includes the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site as well as farmed areas inland where development pressures are less strong and support for a change in status may be less established” (Landscapes Review, p.121). The Report stated that the Review Panel heard from opponents as well as supporters of a new Dorset and East Devon National Park.

The Review recommends that Natural England and Ministers consider the case for new National Park designations, the Review felt the three strong candidates for designation were: the Chilterns, Cotswolds and the Dorset proposals.

What is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)?

John Dower in his 1945 Report to Government on National Parks in England and Wales, suggested there was need for the protection of certain naturally beautiful landscapes which were unsuitable as National Parks owing to their small size and lack of wilderness. Dower's recommendation for the designation of these "other amenity areas" was eventually embodied within the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949 as the AONB designation.

Purpose

The purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. "Natural beauty" includes wildlife, physiographic features and cultural heritage as well as the more conventional concepts of landscape and scenery. Account should also be taken of the economic and social need of the local communities and stakeholders, promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development and meeting the demand for recreation as far as is consistent with the conservation and enhancement of the environment.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 confirmed the significance of AONBs and created improved arrangements for their management:

- Section 85 places a statutory duty on all 'relevant authorities' to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty when discharging any function affecting land in AONBs.
- Section 89 places a statutory duty on local planning authorities to act jointly to produce a Management Plan for each AONB in their administrative area.
- Section 90 describes the notification required during the AONB Management Plan making.

National Association of AONBs

England has 34 AONBs (including one that is partly within Wales): there are also 8 in Northern Ireland and 4 in Wales. English AONBs are collectively represented by the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB).

The NAAONB have responded to the interim findings of the Glover Review⁵. The NAAONB have not yet published their response to the Landscape Review Final Report.

The NAAONB have also produced the Colchester Declaration 2019⁶ in which England's network of AONBs are making a collective Declaration on Nature, setting out their strategy for change. The Declaration contains time bound pledges with specific targets for biodiversity improvements and climate change mitigation.

Local Authority Responsibility for AONBs

- Under the CROW Act, the relevant local authority must make sure that all of their policies and decisions have regard for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.
- Decisions and activities must consider the potential effect they will have within the AONB and land outside its boundary.
- Each AONB must have a management plan, which is available to the public.

⁵https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/application/files/4415/6344/2738/NAAONB_Response_to_the_Interim_Findings_of_the_Designated_Landscapes_Review.pdf

⁶ https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/application/files/7815/6326/2583/The_Colchester_Declaration.pdf

- Local authorities are responsible for producing and reviewing the management plan. The Plan should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB with continuity and consistency over time.
- Local authorities can delegate authority to AONB Partnerships to manage an AONB and create a management plan. (**N.B.** Unless specific powers are delegated to them, AONB Partnerships cannot make decisions on development proposals or strategic planning, they can only advise).

Development proposals affecting AONBs

- Only local authorities or the Secretary of State can give permission for development in, or affecting, an AONB. Local authorities must make sure that any proposals have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.
- The national 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' is applied in a different way in AONBs, providing additional protection against harmful development. The National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraph 172 states that:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing 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 these issues..... The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- (a) 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;*
- (b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- (c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.”*

- AONB management plans should be used to help shape local and neighbourhood development plans.
- AONB management plans should also provide a helpful evidence base to take decisions on development proposals
- AONBs unlike National Parks do not have their own planning powers or their own planning authority.

AONB Funding

- Defra provides annual grant aid to each AONB Partnership to support delivery of the AONB Management Plan.
- Local authorities which have responsibility for parts of the AONB also contribute funding.
- Significant additional funds are raised via AONB partnership projects.

Landscapes Review Recommendations

The Review recommended that AONBs should be strengthened, it puts forward the following recommendations:

- The current “cumbersome” title of AONBs should be replaced, the suggestion is to rename them “National Landscapes”.
- AONBs should receive increased funding, there should be an update to the funding formula and the proposed National Landscapes Service’s role in finance. The report states that AONBs funding should be doubled from the current £6.7m to £13.4m. The 10 National Parks received £48.7m and the 34 AONBs received £6.7m. The South Downs National Park receives more funding on its own than all 34 AONBs combined.
- AONBs should have an updated statutory purpose which is equal to National Parks. The report proposed the following enhanced statutory purpose:
 1. Recover, conserve and enhance natural beauty, biodiversity and natural capital, and cultural heritage.
 2. Actively connect all parts of society with these special places to support understanding, enjoyment and the nation’s health and wellbeing.
 3. Foster the economic and community vitality of their area in support of the first two purposes.
- AONB Management Plans must have clearer vision and detailed ambition and should be given statutory weight to ensure public bodies commit to their implementation.
- AONBs should be given a greater voice within the planning process by becoming a statutory consultee within the planning process.
- AONBs should, where appropriate, be supported to work towards local plans for their AONB areas, prepared in conjunction with local authorities. The resulting single plan should have statutory status and replace the usual multitude of local authority plans.
- Reformed governance, the Review recommends that where appropriate AONB governance should mirror the proposed governance model for National Parks, that is: a small 9-12 person board, which would be advised by a partnership group.
- The creation of a new National Landscapes Service will bring together both AONBs and National Parks to work together in order to deliver for nature across boundaries, driving ambition and holding them to account for delivery.

A summary of the full list of recommendations is on p.4-5 of this document.

Introduction to Dorset AONB

- Dorset AONB was designated as an AONB in 1959. The AONB has been established for 60 years and covers 1,129 km², approximately 42% of Dorset.
- The Dorset AONB Statement of Significance is based on the 1993 Assessment of the Dorset AONB produced by the Countryside Commission, and can be summarised as:
 - Landscape – a collection of fine landscapes, each with its own characteristics and sense of place, including different landforms, soils and wildlife habitats.
 - Wildlife – the range of habitats and associated species is unusually rich, including 83% of all British mammal species, 48% of bird species and 70% of butterfly species.
 - Cultural connections – over centuries, Dorset's landscapes have inspired poets, authors, scientists and artists, many of whom left a rich legacy of cultural associations.
 - Reading the past – an unrivalled expression of the interaction of geology, human influence and natural processes in the landscape. Renowned for its spectacular scenery, geological and ecological interest and unique coastal features.
- Dorset AONB is the 5th largest in the England.
- Dorset AONB is sandwiched between 3 AONBs: Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB to the north east (and partly within Dorset Council's area) and both the East Devon AONB and Blackdown Hills AONB to the east.
- Dorset AONB includes numerous existing areas designated for nature conservation including:
 - 3 RAMSAR sites
 - 9 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
 - 3 Special Protected Areas (SPAs)
 - 67 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
 - 9 National Nature Reserve (NNRs)
 - 646 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs)
 - 9 National Nature Reserves and 5 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)
 - 1,581 hectares of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland.
- Market towns included within the Dorset AONB are:
 - Lyme Regis
 - Bridport
 - Beaminster
 - Swanage
- Dorset AONB commits to work with partners to promote and support management activities that conserve and enhance the various components that make up Dorset's historic environment.
- Dorset AONB includes the majority of the Dorset stretch of the Dorset and East Devon Coast UNESCO World Heritage Site, also known as the Jurassic Coast.
- Most of Dorset AONB is in private ownership and over 70% is actively farmed.
- Dorset AONB is member of the National Association for AONBs, the South West Protected Landscapes Forum and Europarc.

Dorset AONB Partnership

Dorset AONB Partnership brings together local authorities, statutory agencies, local community, business and landowner representatives. The Dorset AONB Partnership Board meets twice a year.

The Dorset AONB Partnership also works with Dorset Health & Wellbeing Board, Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership, Dorset Local Nature Partnership, Catchment Partnerships and the Local Access Forum.

The Partnership has a core team of 4.5 full-time-equivalent officers. The roles are:

- Dorset AONB Manager (1 FTE)
- Dorset AONB Project Support (0.5 FTE)
- Dorset AONB Landscape Planning Officer (1 FTE)
- Dorset AONB Culture, Community & Learning Officer (0.5 FTE)
- Visitor, Tourism and Access Manager (joint post with Jurassic Coast Trust) (0.5 FTE AONB)
- Dorset AONB Countryside Officer (1 FTE)

Externally funded projects with dedicated staff embedded within the AONB team are:

- Stepping into Nature Project Officer & Project Assistant
- Wytch Farm Landscape & Access Enhancement Officer
- Landscape Enhancement Project Officer
- Dorset Food & Drink Coordinator and Assistant

The Dorset AONB Partnership team prioritises its core responsibilities to be:

- Provision of high-quality advice on strategic planning, development management and agri-environment delivery.
- Securing additional resources to implement programmes of delivery which meet the objectives of the AONB Management Plan
- Promotion of the AONB Management Plan, its vision and objectives to secure support for delivery.

Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-2024⁷

Dorset AONB Management Plan is coordinated by the Dorset AONB Partnership. The plan is designed to support the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The Plan seeks to help inform a wide range of initiatives, including: public investment strategies, local & spatial plans, development management, health and well-being plans, catchment plans and others.

The Plan establishes a Policy Framework structured with four themes:

- The working landscape.
- Exploring, understanding and engaging.
- Planning for landscape quality.
- Ways of working

Dorset AONB and Planning

The Dorset AONB Partnership has influence over the landscape by shaping projects, grants and other initiatives. It also provides advice and guidance to the local planning authority, other statutory agencies, land managers and others. Dorset AONB Partnership team are involved in the development of the Dorset Council Local Plan. There is also a joint protocol which both the local planning authority and the AONB team have signed which sets out the process for effective consultation between the two parties to consider planning matters affecting the AONB. The Protocol aims to:

- Clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to statutory spatial planning.

⁷ <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/the-dorset-aonb/management-plan/>

- Clarify the mechanisms for consultation and communication between the AONB Team and local planning authorities.
- Promote a consistent approach to the application of policies for the Dorset AONB among the different authorities.
- Identify areas where the AONB Team can provide additional support and guidance to assist planners in carrying out their functions in relation to the AONB.

The Dorset AONB Partnership supports necessary development. The management plan includes aims such as “Support affordable housing within appropriate rural exception sites that meet proven local need. Good, locally sensitive design should be pursued” (Dorset AONB Management Plan, p.91). The team provides constructive advice on development proposals and works with the development management teams to advise on mitigation of potential impacts of development on the AONB.

However, there are many decisions affecting the landscape over which the AONB Partnership has no direct influence. There are challenges in terms of land- take for building with associated potential impacts on the landscape, increased nutrients being introduced to sensitive river catchments and increased recreational pressure from a growing population.

Dorset AONB Funding

AONB Partnerships’ core functions are supported by Defra (at 75%), the remaining 25% is expected to be filled by the Partnership’s local authorities. In Dorset the Local Authority contribution is frequently slightly below 25%, the remaining funds being earned by the core team in project management fees.

The Dorset AONB Partnership’s budget is split into 3 areas: core, the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and Projects. Funds from Defra are provided according to the ‘single pot guidance’ as set out below:

“CORE: Core Functions are critical to the successful operation of AONB Partnerships.

Within core functions it is to be expected that staffing and associated overheads should merit particular protection. As set out in the Defra grant offer letter the grant offer includes a maximum contribution to core funding of 75% and is conditional on AONB Partnerships securing match funding of a further 25% of core funding from other sources. It is hoped and expected that Local Authority partner contributions to all Core Functions continue at a minimum of 25%, or even at the same levels that have previously been invested.

Contributions from bodies other than local authority partners and/or earned income can be used to support core functions; this would release Defra-origin funds for other activity. Core Functions are defined in the original Defra MoA and as such provide guidance on minimum standards to allow successful operation of an AONB unit and the delivery of the AONB Management Plan.

SDF: The SDF was established as a Ministerial initiative and has political support. Defra believes the previous success of SDF will ensure its continuation in a meaningful way without the need to impose minimum levels of spending, which would go against the ethos of an interdependent and trusting relationship with AONB Partnerships. Individual SDF initiatives will be identified as part of an AONB’s programme of work. SDF will remain as a visible funding stream in the AONB family and should continue to be recorded and good practice registered to inform Defra and key partners. There are opportunities to use SDF to add value by encouraging

greater uptake of innovative, often community-based, projects. The SDF programme has associated guidance prepared by Natural England which steers the kinds of projects to be developed. This guidance was revised in 2009 to place greater emphasis on encouraging innovation and risk-taking, as well as meeting AONB Management Plan objectives. These risk and innovation elements help clarify the distinction between SDF and other funding streams. Innovative SDF projects should be assessed from local, regional and national perspectives. We make SDF available to projects through a competitive process.

PROJECTS: AONB Partnerships are free to determine how they use resources to deliver projects. If 100% AONB project funding is the only way to achieve the desired outcome, this is for the Partnerships to decide in developing their programme. Defra believes that delivery of AONB Management Plan objectives is generally greater and more sustainable if undertaken in partnership, particularly for large scale or landscape scale projects. It therefore encourages all AONB Partnerships to use their project funding to help lever in additional resources. The ability and willingness of partners to contribute to projects will be variable from partner to partner and from year to year. It is recognised that staffing costs can be met by project funding.”

Table 1. Dorset AONB Funding figures 2018-2019

Funding Source	Funding amount
Defra grant	£239,896
Local Authority contribution	£54,510
External funding acquired	£753,775

With the additional declared spend on AONB projects by partners and volunteers calculated as:

- Partner contributions £358,873
- Volunteer time: £98,438

Dorset AONB Conservation Successes

Nature Recovery Solutions

The Dorset AONB team has led on many significant conservation initiatives and shaped many other partner-led projects. Examples include the following 3 projects which were showcased alongside 70 other AONB projects across England and Wales to demonstrate the AONBs' contribution towards nature recovery⁸.

1. Mapping the AONB (survey projects)
Using freely available data from the European Space Agency, the Dorset AONB has mapped existing core habitats and identified ecological networks that allow us to better understand species movement through the landscape, and target advice and support where a helping hand is most needed.
2. Wild Purbeck Nature Improvement (heathland)
Wild Purbeck Nature Improvement project has restored 467ha heathland, created a 7ha saline lagoon, created or managed 89ha of new woodland and protected 25ha of lapwing nesting habitat.
3. Black Down Restoration (heathland)

⁸ <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/about-aonbs/nature-recovery-solutions>

An important site for public access, with great potential for habitat restoration, Black Down needed sympathetic management. This was delivered through the South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership, a £3 million Heritage Lottery supported scheme.

Bowland Award 2019 nominees

Dorset AONB was one of 6 finalists in this award, which recognises outstanding contribution to the work of AONBs, for the South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership. The Dorset AONB partnership were previous winners of this award for their Stepping into Nature project (2017).

Three Dorset AONB projects and initiatives were used as case studies and examples of best practice within the Landscape Review: Poole Harbour catchment initiative, Dorset AONB habitat mapping and volunteering with the South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership.

Landscapes Review Recommendations

Dorset AONB Partnership submitted a submission to the Glover Review's call for evidence⁹. The Dorset AONB Partnership will consider the final report of the Landscapes Review at its meeting on the 26th November 2019 and will consider the need for a formal response and how it should be framed.

The Landscapes Review states that they received submissions seeking new National Park designations for existing AONBs and this included the combined Dorset and East Devon AONBs. They felt the three strong candidates for designation were: the Chilterns, Cotswolds and the Dorset proposals and recommended that Natural England and Ministers consider the case for new National Park designations.

⁹ <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2018-12-DAONB-response-to-Review-of-Designated-Landscapes.pdf>

What is a National Park?

National Park Legislation

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 established National Parks as:

“extensive tracts of country in England and Wales as to which it appears [to the Commission] that by reason of—

(a) their natural beauty, and

(b) the opportunities they afford for open-air recreation, having regard both to their character and to their position in relation to centres of population

it is especially desirable that the necessary measures shall be taken for the purposes mentioned..”

In England and Wales, the two statutory purposes of National Parks are:

- To conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public

These purposes can conflict, in which case the conservation purpose takes priority.

John Dower’s 1945 Report to the Government on National Parks in England and Wales led to Sir Arthur Hobhouse’s 1947 Committee report which prepared the legislation for National Parks and recommended 12 areas in England and Wales be designated as National Parks (10 areas in England, 2 in Wales). All 12 areas are designated today:

- Peak District (1951)
- Dartmoor (1951)
- Lake District (1951)
- North Yorkshire Moors (1952)
- Exmoor (1954)
- Yorkshire Dales (1954)
- Northumberland (1956)
- The Broads (1989)
- New Forest (2005)
- South Downs (2010)

There are a further 3 National Parks in Wales and 2 in Scotland.

South Downs National Park

Of the original 10 proposed National Park areas in England, the South Downs National Park was the last to be designated. In September 1999 the Government, following a review of national parks policy, declared its support for the creation of a South Downs National Park and announced a consultation on its creation. The proposed park area was at the time included within 2 AONBs.

In January 2003 the then Countryside Agency (one of the predecessor bodies to Natural England) made an Order to designate the proposed park which was submitted to the Secretary of State for the Environment on 27 January 2003. As a result of objections and representations, received on the proposed Order, a public inquiry was conducted between 10 November 2003 and 23 March 2005, with the aim of recommending to Ministers whether a national park should be confirmed and, if so where its boundaries should be. The results of the inquiry were expected by the end of 2005 but were delayed pending a legal issue arising from a High Court case challenging part of the Order designating the New Forest National Park. Following conclusion of the High Court case and new legislation included in the

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the South Downs Inquiry report was published on 31 March 2006.

The Secretary of State invited objections and representations on new issues relating to the proposed national park in a consultation that ran from 2 July to 13 August 2007. In the light of the responses received, the Secretary of State decided that it was appropriate to re-open the 2003-2005 Public Inquiry. The Inquiry re-opened on 12 February 2008 and was closed on 4 July 2008 after 27 sitting days. The Inspector's report was submitted on 28 November 2008. On 31 March 2009 the result of the Inquiry was published. The Secretary of State, Hilary Benn, announced that the South Downs would be designated a National Park and on 12 November 2009 he signed the Order confirming the designation. The new National Park came into full operation on 1 April 2011 when the new South Downs National Park Authority assumed statutory responsibility for it.

National Park Authority

Following the Environment Act, 1995, each National Park has been managed by its own National Park Authority.

The National Park Authority is a public body charged with maintaining a National Park, in line with the two statutory purposes of designation referred to above. National Park Authorities also have a duty to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of the communities within the National Park.

National Park Authorities are made up of a number of nationally and locally appointed members, staff and volunteers. Members can be appointed from:

- Councillors from local authorities within the National Park
- Councillors from Town and Parish Councils
- Members appointed by the Defra Secretary of State following a national open competition

A National Park Authority can have between 10 and 30 members and one chairman. There do not seem to be rules regarding the ratios of nationally and locally selected members, however most National Park Authorities have a majority of elected representatives. Members normally live in or very close to the National Park, so they are local people.

National Park Authorities also work with other organisations that work to protect natural and cultural heritage within the National Park.

National Park Planning

National Park Authorities are the strategic and local planning authorities for their Park areas.

National Park Authorities have to perform all the duties of a local planning authority and are required to develop a Local Plan for the National Park area. Traditionally National Park Planning Authorities work separately to the local authority's planning function, however an alternative model of delivery has been followed in the newest National Park. The South Downs National Park has delegated its development management functions to its constituent local authorities. This means that the separate local authorities undertake the consideration of planning applications within the National Park, though the Park authority still takes an overview and assesses the decisions made.

No other National Parks to date have delegated the preparation of the Local Plan to the other local planning authorities. The Dorset & East Devon National Park Community Interest

Company has however suggested that a joint local plan might be prepared by the new National Park authority and Dorset Council.

National Parks and AONBs are both given strong protection under national planning policy. National planning policy on the establishment of local plan housing need figures, and assessment of delivery, is however applied differently in National Parks. The national standard methodology for establishing housing needs is not applied to National Parks and they are not subject to the national 'housing delivery test'. This means that National Parks have greater freedom to establish the total amount of housing development that they consider appropriate for their areas, and are likely to set considerably lower figures, though this can have implications for the amount that will need to be met in surrounding areas. There is more discussion of this aspect later on in this report.

National Park Funding

National Parks receive most of their money through the National Park Grant from Defra. The size of the National Park, the number of people who live there and the number of visitors who go there, all have an effect on the amount of funding the National Park Authority receives.

Table 2. National Park funding figures through the Defra National Park Grant (Defra, 2019¹⁰)

Financial Year	Money allocated to National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority through Defra core grant
2010/11	£53,824,076
2011/12	£55,216,568
2012/13	£52,334,090
2013/14	£49,451,587
2014/15	£46,569,083
2015/16	£44,729,610
2016/17	£45,875,395
2017/18	£47,127,283
2018/19	£47,937,871

N.B. The National Parks website has not published the funding broken down by National Park since 2013-14. The funding figures by National Park for 2010-2014 are available [here](#).

In addition to the Defra grant, National Park funding comes from:

- Trading and sales income
- Donations and other grants
- Fees and charges.

Local Authority Duties for National Park

Legislation states that, "in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land" in these areas, relevant authorities "shall have regard" to their purposes. For National Parks that is to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities by the public.

It is important to note that the duties apply to any decisions or activities an authority may take affecting land in these areas; not just to those that relate to narrowly-defined environmental or 'countryside' issues. Additionally, it may sometimes be the case that the

¹⁰ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-03-11/230866/>

activities of certain authorities operating outside the boundaries of these areas may have an impact within them. In such cases, relevant authorities will also be expected to have regard to the purposes of these areas. Local Authorities have a duty to co-operate with National Parks.

National Park Management Plan

In addition to the National Park Local Plan, every National Park Authority is legally required to produce a National Park Management Plan, which sets out a 5-year plan for the Park. A central role for the National Park Management Plan is to guide the delivery of the National Park purposes and their socio-economic duty.

Landscapes Review Recommendations

The Review put forward the following recommendations in relation to National Parks:

- National Parks need to keep their titles, at least their current levels of funding, and local autonomy, especially over planning.
 - The Review felt that the biggest role National Parks currently play in shaping landscapes and affecting those who live in them, is as statutory planning authorities. The Review considered these planning protections to be essential and that these protections do not hold progress back but help to sustain natural beauty.
 - A new approach to funding is recommended via a reformed funding formula. The Review also asks for greater certainty over funding, suggesting increased funding, provided partly through allowing the National Landscapes Service to be entrepreneurial and lever in more funding by working across the entire network of National Parks and AONBs.
- National Parks should have an updated statutory purpose which is equal to AONBs. The report proposed the following enhanced purpose:
 1. Recover, conserve and enhance natural beauty, biodiversity and natural capital, and cultural heritage.
 2. Actively connect all parts of society with these special places to support understanding, enjoyment and the nation's health and wellbeing.
 3. Foster the economic and community vitality of their area in support of the first two purposes.
- National Park Management Plans must have clearer vision and detailed ambition and should be giving statutory weight to ensure public bodies commit to their implementation.
- National Park Authorities require governance reform, as they were seen as too big, lacking in strategic direction and not representative of England's diverse communities.
- The Review proposes a new model for National Park Governance, comprising a small 9-12 person board, which would be advised by a partnership group. For those National Parks which will continue to have responsibility for development management planning issues, the Review proposes a Planning Sub-Committee of 9-12 members chaired by a member of the main board and made up of representatives from the constituent local authorities and parishes.
- The creation of a new National Landscapes Service will bring together both AONBs and National Parks to work together in order to deliver for nature across boundaries, driving ambition and holding them to account for delivery.

A summary of the full list of recommendations is on p.4-5 of this document.

Landscapes Review: Funding for AONBs and National Parks

- The Landscapes Review states that a new approach for funding both AONBs and National Parks is required: “The current funding formula for our national landscapes is fossilised, complex and reinforces historic anomalies, such as the poor funding of AONBs” (Landscapes Review, p.142). They recommend a simpler, fairer and dynamic system of funding, overseen directly by the proposed National Landscapes Service.
- The Review recommends that the National Landscapes Service negotiate a multi-annual financial settlement with Defra and adopt an entrepreneurial spirit to help increase funding.
- The Review stresses that when implementing the new formula, no organisation should receive a cut in grant. Any adjustments related to the formula should be in the form of additional grant where the new formula determines additional funds are required.
- The Review believed that funding efficiencies would be found across the system via the reduced costs resulting from the reformed National Park governance structures and from specialist services being concentrated and shared by the national landscapes working together. It also recommended the designated landscapes develop medium to long term financial plans that reflect a diverse range of income (e.g. philanthropic giving, trading activities, natural capital opportunities and large-scale externally-funded projects).
- The Review expects the recommended uplift in AONB funding (from £6.7m to £13.4m) would come from a revised funding formula implemented over a longer period.
- The Review recommends that local authority funding element for AONBs should continue.
- The Review stressed that any new national landscapes must be funded with new money.

Dorset and East Devon National Park Proposal

It is believed that the initial Dorset National Park proposal was submitted to Natural England in 2012/13 in response to Natural England's Designation Review. Initially the Dorset National Park proposal only covered the existing Dorset AONB area.

The current Dorset & East Devon National Park proposal supported by the Dorset & East Devon National Park CIC campaign group covers the East Devon AONB, Dorset AONB and an additional area called "Egdon Heath" in Purbeck (Figure 1). Other iterations of boundary have also included Portland (or parts of it) and extensions to the north into the Blackmore Vale. Any new areas currently outside of the existing AONB would have to pass a test for natural beauty to merit inclusion; they would also have to be found "exceptionally desirable to designate". As these areas (Egdon Heath and others) do not currently achieve AONB status, they are likely to face challenges passing the National Park beauty test.

The proposed Dorset & East Devon National Park area is approximately 1,560km² and it would be the 4th largest National Park in England. The Dorset and East Devon National Park proposal would cover approximately 52% of the Dorset Council area, estimated to cover about 1,300 km² of Dorset Council authority area. The area is an estimate, as specific GIS maps of the proposed National Park are not publicly available- the Review quotes the Dorset and East Devon National Park to be "1568.4km²", but it does not provide a break down between Dorset and East Devon.



Figure 1. Proposed Dorset & East Devon National Park area.

The Dorset and East Devon National Park CIC campaign group reported the following benefits of National Park designation as part of their submission to the Landscapes Review call for evidence:

1. Strengthen and invest in the area's natural capital, recognised as a major asset for growing a strong and resilient economy;
2. Strengthen Dorset's brand, providing major opportunities for a range of businesses across the economy;
3. Help the area attract investment from government and the private sector;
4. Partner with the Dorset Council and LEP in defining and implementing a Rural Economic Strategy;
5. Boost and help sustainably manage the growth of our tourism sector;

6. Add value to our land-based industries and the other sectors that depend on them, enhancing their productivity and resilience;
7. Together with the Dorset Council, play a key role in planning for sustainable development of the rural economy;
8. Contribute to the delivery of better rural services and the development of stronger rural communities;
9. Benefit our whole economy and the people who live and work here.

National Park Activities
Rural economic strategy
Support for land management
Growing sustainable tourism
Planning for sustainable development
Supporting rural businesses and skills
Supporting rural communities and services
Growing the Dorset brand



National Park Outcomes
Dorset's natural capital is maintained, enhanced and used for the benefit of all.
Dorset's world class environment and quality of life are widely appreciated
A stronger Dorset brand adds value to produce and attracts visitors, businesses and workers
Increased public and private investment are attracted to Dorset
Sustainable development supports business growth, infrastructure and affordable housing
Rural economy contributes to Dorset's growth, driver by clear strategy and plan
Land management sector is helped to add value, address Brexit challenge and respond to new opportunities.
Tourism benefits from plans to add value and promote sustainable growth
Rural communities are engaged, and services are improved.



National Park Impacts
Business growth and increased productivity in rural economy and across Dorset as a whole
Vital environmental services on which people and the economy depend are maintained and enhanced
Rural communities are more prosperous and inclusive
All Dorset residents benefit from outstanding natural environment and quality of life

Figure 2. Replicated extract from Dorset and East Devon National Park CIC campaign group submission to the Glover Review (p.27).

Dorset Council and the existing Dorset AONB Partnership are currently delivering the activities listed in Figure 2. Therefore, in order for Dorset Council to endorse any change in landscape designation policy, including the change of designation of Dorset AONB to a National Park, it will be important for any proposed change to clearly demonstrate the added value that such a designation would bring, over and above that which is already being

delivered . It will also be important for any change in landscape designation policy to deliver against the objectives listed in the Corporate Plan, when finalised.

Predecessor Authority Support for National Park Proposal

Dorset Council's predecessor local authorities adopted the following positions regarding Dorset and East National Park proposal:

- **Purbeck District Council.** Minutes of a meeting of the Policy Group held in the Council Chamber, Westport House, Wareham on Wednesday 19 July 2017 at 7.00pm resolved that the Council:
 - “Council notes with interest the Dorset National Park proposal and the opportunities this could offer to keep Purbeck special;
 - keeps the proposals under review; and
 - looks forward to Natural England undertaking the next stage of its evaluation in 2018.”
- **Dorset County Council.** At the Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 12 October 2016 resolved that:
 - “the proposal for the establishment of a Dorset and East Devon National Park and the evidence assembled in relation to this be noted and the matter being kept under review”.
- Dorset Council's Partnership

North Dorset District Council: No record found of committee decision or statement.

West Dorset District Council: No record found of committee decision or statement.

Weymouth and Portland Borough Council: A Notice of Motion was proposed and decision taken for the council to write “to both the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and The Glover Review Panel supporting this proposal for a National Park”¹¹. It should be noted that although some members were broadly in support of a national park they did have concerns regarding the impact on other council areas and that the matter should be considered by the Unitary Council because of the implications to housing and other infrastructure.

Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Local Authority

The Leader of BCP Council wrote to the then Defra Secretary of State, Rt. Hon Michael Gove MP lending their support in principle to the Dorset National Park proposal (4 July 2019), although the letter did note that the BCP Council has not yet had an opportunity to consider the proposal in full.

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<https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?CommitteeId=405&MeetingId=3840&DF=17%2f01%2f2019&Ver=2>

Consideration of National Park Benefits

The potential benefits of the proposed Dorset & East Devon National Park, as reported by Dorset & East Devon National Park CIC in their response to the Glover Review, have been considered alongside the work already taking place in the Dorset AONB. The findings and recommendations of the Landscapes Review have also been considered.

The ambition of the following sections is not to come to conclusions in regard to the added value of designated landscapes policy changes or National Park designation. Rather, the report has been designed to identify gaps in the data and our understanding. It shall provide a helpful steer on where we can focus further work and analysis in the future, when the Government publishes its proposals in response to the Landscapes Review. **N.B. The discussion contained within the following sections does not represent an endorsement or formal policy position by Dorset Council.**

The following section is split into six key themes:

1. [Landscape and Biodiversity](#)
2. [Rural Economic Strategy](#)
3. [Sustainable Development](#)
4. [Tourism and Dorset Brand](#)
5. [Support for Rural Communities and Services](#)
6. [Climate Change](#)

Other “near neighbour” South West National Parks (New Forest, Exmoor and Dartmoor) have been used to provide comparison data. As some datasets are only provided to the local authority level, the local authority areas overlapping the National Park areas have been used, as a proxy (Table 3). This same approach has been followed for the proposed National Park in Dorset, which does not fit with a standard administrative boundary.

Table 3. Local Authority areas used to deliver a proxy dataset for National Park areas.

Area	Local Authority Datasets Used
Dorset Council	West Dorset, Purbeck, North Dorset, East Dorset and Weymouth & Portland
Dorset National Park proposed area	West Dorset, Purbeck, North Dorset
New Forest National Park	New Forest
Exmoor National Park	North Devon and West Somerset
Dartmoor National Park	West Devon, South Hams and Teignbridge

1. Landscape and Biodiversity

Summary of reported Dorset National Park benefits¹²

For many decades the framework set by agricultural policy, farm support and incentives has worked against conservation. National Parks have had an uphill task. However, it is encouraging to see the work which the South Downs National Park (SDNP) has achieved via their farm clusters initiative which covers 70% of the Park and see farms working for nature at a landscape scale. THE SDNP has expressed interest in piloting new “public goods” farm funding, and National Parks could be given a key role in delivering new farm policy, demonstrating what can be achieved to restore and enhance biodiversity and natural capital. National Parks could support farmers as they seek to diversify their sources of income and to access and develop funding opportunities.

A Dorset National Park, working with key partners, including farmers and landowners, and other groups across Southern England would make a vital contribution to landscape scale conservation and enhancement. It [National Parks] would be the most appropriate organisation to link existing conservation efforts.

Dorset’s Natural Capital is its greatest economic asset: a Dorset National Park would recognise the value of this natural capital and provide a focus for conserving and enhancing and investing in it.”

Landscape Scale Support to Land-Based Sector

The Agriculture Bill 2017-2019, which was progressing through Parliament, will provide the policy framework for farming payments in England following the UK’s departure from the European Union. The proposed policy framework moved away from the current direct payment subsidy scheme replacing it with a new Environmental Land Management Scheme. The new Scheme will pay farmers for public goods (such as improved soil health, improved air quality, higher animal welfare standards) and the delivery of outcomes that protect and enhance the environment. The Government has committed to work with farmers to design, develop and trial the new payment scheme.

The Landscapes Review believed that the decision to focus future public money on public goods presents a major opportunity to help our National Parks and AONBs. The Review stated that the priorities for our landscapes should flow from improved AONB and National Park Management Plans. The Plans should be the “guiding framework for setting landscape-scale priorities for future payments for public goods which support and enhance the value of nature and natural beauty in all its forms” (Landscapes Review, p.56). These plans should be backed by concrete actions, determined using natural capital approaches, shaped by partners, informed by accurate data and whose delivery is monitored and assessed.

The Review stated that if Environmental Land Management Schemes came in as proposed, they would have the single biggest effect on our national landscapes- more so than anything else being planned by Government.

National Parks submitted a paper to Government with their initial ideas about how a new Environmental Land Management Scheme might work¹³: Their proposals are centred around a three tiered payment scheme:

¹² Summary extracted from Dorset & East Devon National Park CIC Submission to Glover Review, 2018. p. 16, 27 & 28.

¹³ Farming in the English National Parks, Ideas from the National England Task and Finish Group on the Future of Farming

1. **A National Park FARM (Farming and Rural Management) Scheme to provide a base or foundation level of environmental husbandry and public goods.** In return for a base level payment there would be certain management obligations (tailored to each National Park) and elements of cross compliance. The Scheme would seek to develop the National Park brand i.e. those signing up could use the National Park logo to symbolise that they are contributing to the management of our National Park landscapes; building a link between the farmers who manage the land and the millions who enjoy the landscape. Thus, this FARM Scheme could develop the National Park food economy.
2. **FARM Plus – locally-led agri-environment schemes for each National Park.** FARM Plus would be focused on enhanced levels of environmental management to deliver public goods. The scheme would offer multi-year agreements and would encourage collaboration between farmers or within farm clusters along with other elements.
3. **Wider Rural Development – local resources for wider rural development.** A key part of their vision is for local delivery of integrated solutions to deliver a triple dividend: enhanced environment, improved productivity and farm profitability and more vibrant communities. National Park Authorities are well placed to facilitate community-led local development programmes that link environment, economy and community. These programmes would include grants but should also include loans (i.e. a revolving fund rather than one-off injections of capital). There should also be the opportunity for revenue spend.

The NAAONB feels that AONB teams/partnerships are ideally placed to be able to support delivery and development of the new Environmental Land Management Scheme.

The NAAONB submitted the following report to Defra: “Farming for the Nation: AONBs as test beds for a new Environmental Land Management Scheme”¹⁴. The NAAONB proposal is that AONBs “deliver a programme of projects that will test new ideas and trial new approaches in the delivery of a future Environmental Land Management Scheme designed to fit local conditions while reflecting national priorities”(Farming for the Nation, p.4). The network of AONB teams have offered to work with current agri-environment partners such as farmers, agricultural contractors, rural estates, land agents, foresters and riparian owners. They also commit to bring new participants to environmental land management, including health and well-being organisations and voluntary community groups, adding a new depth to land management and helping to ensure the public benefits flow directly from a funded activity or project to local beneficiaries.

The proposed AONB trials will be based on the natural capital opportunities within an area and will consist of two components. Component 1 will incentivise farming and forestry and other environmental activity that delivers public benefit, generating improvements to air, soil, water, biodiversity and natural beauty. Component 2 will be based on a landscape-scale approach to delivery and where appropriate utilising a cluster approach, requiring the coordinated activity of many actors working across farm clusters and will deliver multiple benefits at different scales. The report to Government included a range of AONB project proposals including two within Dorset AONB: Purbeck Ridge and River Brit Catchment.

The Landscapes Review recommends the creation of a National Landscapes Service which would “enable National Parks and AONBs in their individual management to act more collectively as a ‘family’ to deliver benefits which could then be expected to exceed the sum of their individual efforts”.

¹⁴ <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/application/files/2015/5552/1972/Farming-for-the-Nation-AONBs-as-test-beds-for-a-new-Environmental-Land-Management-Scheme-FINAL.pdf>

The NAAONB Farming for the Nation Report states that AONB partnerships have an exceptional power to convene and cultivate the trust that they have developed with local partners into engagement and support in relation to issues of local importance¹⁵. An example of this is the South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership project by the Dorset AONB. The project ran for 5 years, 2013-2018 and brought together environment, heritage and arts organisations to work on a programme of activity including direct conservation, community involvement, access, learning and training in the South Dorset Ridgeway.

The project received a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of nearly £2million which delivered activity valued at nearly £3 million. The Project was a Bowland Award nominee in 2019 and achievements of the Landscape Partnership include:

- 20 projects delivering over £2 million investment in the area
- 146 advisory visits to local landowners and farmers
- 173 ha of priority habitat restored, and 220 ha enhanced and maintained for biodiversity
- 540m of drystone wall restored
- 2.2 km of hedgerows restored
- Condition surveys of 440 archaeological heritage features recorded
- 2,741 volunteer days of practical landscape restoration achieved delivering over £300,000 of volunteer time
- 298 SDR events reaching over 11,759 participants
- 1270 local school pupils engaged, 35 teachers trained in Forest School
- 60 days of landscape training delivered to 39 participants
- 37 young radio journalists trained

The South Dorset Ridgeway Project was used as a case study within the Landscapes Review to demonstrate how to expand volunteering within national landscapes.

The Dorset AONB has built positive relationships with land managers and community groups across Dorset. Any new National Park would have to develop and cultivate these relationships before it was able to deliver. However, the title of a National Park and any associated prestige may help to leverage in more land owner and community collaboration and engagement on projects. This would depend on the public feeling within Dorset for a National Park.

Biodiversity

The Dorset AONB Management Plan describes how via the [Natural Capital and Ecosystem approach it will deliver for Biodiversity](#). In addition, within the NAAONBs' Colchester Declaration (p.5) they pledge to work to restore habitats and re-establish species on a landscape scale through strong connections with their local landowners. Within the Colchester Declaration the network of 34 English AONBs set specific ambitious biodiversity targets:

- To prepare a Nature Recovery Plan for each AONB by July 2020
- To embed an ecosystems services approach into all AONB Management Plans by 2024

And by 2030

- That at least 200,000 ha of SSSIs in AONBs will be in favourable condition
 - That at least 100,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites will have been created/restored in AONBs to further support the natural movement of plants and animals
 - That at least 36,000 ha of new woodland will have been planted or allowed to regenerate in AONBs following the principle of the right tree in the right place
-

- That by each AONB immediately adopting a species on the threatened list and by preparing and delivering a Species Action Plan, at least thirty species relevant to AONBs will be taken off the list by 2030

The network of 10 existing National Parks have not published a shared commitment to biodiversity delivery and their ambitions are held within their individual National Park Management Plans.

The Landscapes Review found that National Park Authority Boards are “heavily focused on planning and day-to-day administration rather than strategy” (Landscapes Review, p.130). Having reviewed the agenda topics of the last three meetings of National Parks the Review found “a disproportionate amount of time is taken up with broad procedural and bureaucratic matters such as corporate planning, standards, subcommittee appointments and minutes and the like. Planning matters also featured prominently” (Landscapes Review, p.130). They found less evidence of matters related to landscape and biodiversity or to access and recreation. The recommendation put forward by the Review was for board members to be selected for their passion, skills and experience including biodiversity, natural beauty, culture, leisure, education, and community.

The Landscape Review recommends that both AONBs and National Parks have their statutory purpose strengthened in law and they should have a statutory purpose to: “Recover, conserve and enhance natural beauty, biodiversity and natural capital, and cultural heritage”. An additional recommended statutory change put forward by the Review was for the Management Plans to be given statutory recognition and a requirement should be established in law on relevant bodies to support the development and implementation of national landscapes’ Management Plans.

2. Rural Economic Strategy

Summary of reported Dorset National Park benefits¹⁶

A Dorset National Park would strengthen Dorset's international as well as national brand, providing opportunities for lots of business. It would add value to local produce and tourism and would help Dorset to attract and retain more high value businesses, workers and visitors.

A Dorset National Park would cover a significant part of the rural area of the county and provide a focus for meeting the distinctive needs of the rural economy within the overall economic strategy for Dorset defined by the Dorset Council and the LEP. A Dorset National Park would strengthen efforts to attract private sector inward investment as well as attract increased government investment to the county. The Strategy would aim to address the specific challenges facing rural businesses and communities, including rural broadband, affordable housing and sustainable transport, while seeking to promote business start-ups and enhance skills, productivity, value added and wages in rural sectors.

There is a significant economic challenge in defining and implementing an economic strategy which sustains and grows the rural economy while conserving our environment through attracting appropriate investment, increasing skilled employment and training, training and attracting young people through skilled jobs and attractive wages, and tackling seasonal unemployment

In January 2015 National Parks England submitted "An Offer to the Local Enterprise Partnerships from National Park Authorities in England"¹⁷. Research commissioned by National Parks England has found that National Parks are home to "ambitious entrepreneurs and innovative start-ups" due to the typically more remote areas of the Parks. They believe National Parks are most likely to create jobs from growing lots of small and micro businesses rather than from big developments. This is reflected in the 2011 census data which show local National Parks to have higher self-employment rates than the national average of 10% (New Forest 17%, Exmoor 19% and Dartmoor 20%). The Dorset Council area has a self-employment rate of 13%.

National Parks believe they can support LEPs by providing:

- Access to rurally dispersed businesses
- Strong community partnerships
- Capacity, expertise and a track record in delivering sustainable development
- A strategic partner

A sub-group of the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Rural Enterprise Group (REG) provided their recommendation regarding the Dorset National Park proposal in January 2019:

"At this time the REG believes the case for the formation of a National Park in Dorset is unproven. However, it welcomes the Government's Glover Review and hopes this review will result in increased resource for the management of Dorset's exceptional environment"

¹⁶ Summary extracted from Dorset & East Devon National Park CIC Submission to Glover Review, 2018. P. 26, 27, 28

¹⁷ <http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/National-Parks-Open-for-Business-An-Offer-from-National-Parks-Englan....pdf>

The REG asks the LEP to monitor the Glover Review and opportunities to achieve an outcome which best services the economic, social and environmental interests of the county. The REG briefly considered the Landscapes Review Final Report on 10 October 2019 but agreed to wait for the formal response from Government before reviewing its position and providing further advice to the Dorset LEP Board.

Dorset LEP is currently developing a Dorset Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) in collaboration with businesses, organisations, Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council and Dorset Council. This will be a 20-year plan to increase innovation, earnings and well-being and presents a tremendous opportunity for Dorset to make the case to Government for investment and support. The LIS seeks to deliver ambitious investment plans, to inject growth and prosperity in to the business community and enhance the exceptional Dorset environment and our communities. It will be submitted to Government in December 2019/January 2020 and will come into force in March 2020 and run until 2040.

Dorset Council is committed to demonstrating that Dorset is ambitious and open for business and growth. It is outward looking and seeking opportunities to pursue a “sub-national” approach to developing sectors of excellence, such as pursuing:

- Agri-tech agenda across the South West,
- Aerospace agenda with Bristol and Bath
- Marine sector with South Coast reach, notably Southampton and Plymouth

The Dorset Growth Strategy is a joint strategy between Dorset Council and the Dorset LEP, which is currently in development and will be released for consultation in October 2019¹⁸. The strategy will look to build on its predecessor strategy and prioritise the attraction of higher skill/higher wage work alongside sustaining and improving the tourism and leisure sectors. The Dorset & East Devon National Park CIC Submission to Glover Review reports that a National Park would boost the tourism sector, however, the tourism sector is often synonymous with low wage, seasonal part-time work. The full-time employment rates in neighbouring National Parks are below the national average for England of 39% (New Forest 32%, Exmoor 28%, Dartmoor 29%). Dorset Council has a full-time employment rate of 35%¹⁹ which is also below the national average, but marginally higher than the neighbouring National Parks.

When comparing employment by industrial sector in the proposed Dorset National Park area with that of neighbouring National Parks, Dorset has comparable employment dependency on the tourism sector, which may reflect the fact that the area already has a successful tourism industry (Table 4).

Table 4. Employment by industrial sector (Source: Census of Population 2011, Office for National Statistics)

Industrial Sector	England	Proposed Dorset NP area	Dartmoor NP	Exmoor NP	New Forest NP
A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1%	4%	5%	8%	2%
B Mining and quarrying	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
C Manufacturing	9%	8%	7%	7%	7%
D Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%

¹⁸ [https://www.dorsetlep.co.uk/userfiles/files/DLEP_LIS_Consultation_v6\(1\).pdf](https://www.dorsetlep.co.uk/userfiles/files/DLEP_LIS_Consultation_v6(1).pdf)

¹⁹ Source: Census of Population 2011, Office for National Statistics

E Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
F Construction	8%	9%	8%	8%	8%
G Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	16%	14%	13%	15%	12%
H Transport and storage	5%	3%	3%	3%	4%
I Accommodation and food service activities	6%	8%	8%	14%	8%
J Information and communication	4%	2%	3%	2%	4%
K Financial and insurance activities	4%	2%	2%	2%	4%
L Real estate activities	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
M Professional, scientific and technical activities	7%	6%	7%	5%	10%
N Administrative and support service activities	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%
O Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	6%	8%	6%	4%	5%
P Education	10%	10%	11%	9%	10%
Q Human health and social work activities	12%	13%	14%	12%	12%
R, S, T, U Other	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%

The Landscapes Review provides the following case studies on the economic contribution of national landscapes (p.104):

- “The National Parks in Yorkshire and Humberside are estimated to make a major positive impact to 24% of the National Parks’ businesses and support over 8,000 jobs. In the north east, 10% of businesses located in national landscapes specifically because of the high-quality environment, and £22m of turnover (10% of the total) and 1,187 full time equivalent jobs (26%) are supported by businesses which started or relocated due to the quality of the landscape or environment in national landscapes”
- “A similar study in the Cotswolds AONB showed that 73% of respondents felt that a deterioration of the landscape and environment would have a serious (22%) or some (51%) impact on business. The proportion of businesses which indicated that a deterioration in the quality of the landscape would seriously affect their business performance varied from 33% of tourism and tourism-related businesses to 12% of other businesses. The economic contribution of the AONB was estimated to £337m Gross Value Added and 9,720 jobs once multiplier effects had been taken into account”

The Review proposes that both National Parks and AONBs have a new statutory purpose to: “Foster the economic and community vitality of their area in support of the first two purposes” (Landscapes Review p.109).

Within the proposed Dorset National Park area is the Dorset Innovation Park Enterprise Zone. This is one of 44 enterprise zones in England and one of only 6 in the South West

region. Enterprise Zones offer a range of benefits to business, including business rates discounts, tax relief on large investments in plant or machinery and simplified local authority planning zones. Local Development Orders grant automatic planning permission for certain development within specified areas. Enterprise zones are reported as the driving force of local economies as they unlock key development sites, consolidate infrastructure, attract business and create jobs.

Purbeck District Council approved the Local Development Order (LDO) for the Dorset Innovation Park Enterprise Zone on 19 December 2018. The LDO will allow for fast-track planning for employment development at the Innovation Park, enabling appropriate development, whilst respecting the local environment. The Dorset LEP chair said: "The Local Development Order is the key that will unlock rapid investment in the site by target sector companies, reducing the planning process from several months to less than 28 days"²⁰. Dorset Innovation Park is a significant strategic employment site for Dorset. It is developing as an advanced engineering and manufacturing cluster of excellence for the South West, building on strengths in marine, defence and energy technology.

Dorset National Brand

This is considered within Section 4: Tourism and Dorset Brand

Broadband

Dorset Council have significantly improved residents' and businesses' access to superfast broadband: 95.4% of the Dorset Council area can get superfast broadband in 2019²¹.

Start-Ups and Small Businesses

Dorset Council is a partner to the Dorset Growth Hub whose mission is to support start-ups and SMEs to take their next steps in growth. They help to grow the health of Dorset's businesses, increase employment, and encourage inward investment. They put on free events and workshops for businesses across Dorset and provide advice on grants, loans and other finance solutions.

Transport

Dorset's Local Transport Plan²² is a plan for Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset and covers the period 2011-2026.

The AONB area has two main rail routes crossing through it, linking it to both Bristol and London. The AONB also has a heritage railway route that links the main rail network with the village of Corfe Castle and Swanage in Purbeck. It is poorly serviced by bus services; there are routes which link to the main towns, but other than that services are either non-existent or run on a limited frequency. There is a bespoke service that runs along the length of the heritage coast: the Jurassic Coaster, which runs hourly in the summer and less frequently during the winter months.

Rural bus routes within a local authority area with an ageing population face challenges to service delivery: in order for a bus route to remain economically viable there must be a balance between fare paying customers and bus pass recipients. The Review reports that the benefits to communities of national landscape designation include increased support for pubs, village shops and bus services, as a result of the greater number of visitors. .

²⁰ <https://news.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/2018/12/20/streamlined-planning-approved-for-dorset-innovation-park/>

²¹ <https://news.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/2019/04/09/superfast-broadband-its-the-norm-in-dorset/>

²² <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/transport-planning/local-transport-plan/local-transport-plan-3.aspx>

The Review recommended that National Parks with their existing role in planning, take on a more active role in coordinating and promoting low-carbon, accessible forms of transport. The Landscapes Review shared a case study from the Lake District National Park Authority, who, in partnership with Cumbria County Council was successful in obtaining nearly £5m from the government's Local Transport Sustainable Fund. The funding will be used to bring about improved passenger transport services, safer and better-connected routes for walking, wheelchairs and cycling, new integrated ticketing and the availability of electric bikes and clean vehicles to hire. Projects will be delivered through local businesses and community enterprises to ensure the economic benefits are spread throughout the local economy.

The Review also raised concern regarding the lack of electric charging points in National Parks: "National landscapes have not come together to push collectively for more charging points, and urban areas have led the way". The Review suggests that "all public car parks in national landscapes which have a suitable electricity supply are fitted with e-charging points within the next two years, drawing on central government funding" (Landscapes Review, p.105).

3. Sustainable Development

Summary of reported Dorset National Park benefits²³

Sustainable economic development depends on a modern robust yet enabling planning framework that facilitates development while protecting and strengthening the natural capital on which the economy depends. A Dorset National Park could work with Dorset Council, and LEP to facilitate sustainable development through its planning role. It would help foster and maintain vibrant, productive living and working communities and proactively respond to provision of truly affordable homes for local people. It should create a seamless planning resource with Dorset Council, develop compatible dovetailed plans for wider Dorset.

Supplying affordable housing: Dorset faces a major challenge to achieve an adequate supply of affordable rural housing. Average house prices are particularly high in certain areas such as coastal communities where a significant percentage of second homes and holiday properties in some communities impacts on the viability of some services and businesses, such as local schools, shops, post offices, petrol stations and pubs.

Local Plans

The Landscape Review recommends that AONBs should be given greater status in the planning system. The review believes that where appropriate, AONBs should be supported to work towards local plans for their areas, prepared in conjunction with local authorities. For larger AONBs especially those highlighted as candidates for possible National Park status, which includes Dorset AONB, they believe this Local Plan should have statutory status, in place of the “multitude of local authority plans”. The Chilterns AONB is used as an example, which currently works with 17 local authorities and a multitude of local plans.

Following Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on 1 April 2019 six predecessor authorities became one single authority, Dorset Council. Dorset Council is required by law to develop one Local Plan for the new authority area by 2024. This will mean that for the first time ever the whole authority area including the entire Dorset AONB will be covered by one Local Plan, thereby ensuring a consistent approach to planning proposals within the AONB. Previously development proposals within the AONB were managed by three Local Plans (Purbeck, Weymouth & West Dorset and North Dorset).

The Landscape Review heard that “planning policies and decisions, especially in large AONBs, can vary immensely between authorities. There is often no shared vision for the landscape as a whole, with different local authorities taking different approaches, inconsistent with the AONBs’ purpose and character” (Landscapes Review, p.61). This will not be the case for Dorset AONB which will be managed by one single Local Plan by 2024. The plan will be developed in collaboration with Dorset AONB, Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership, Local Nature Partnership and other key stakeholders and residents.

The Landscapes Review recommended that National Parks retain their “local autonomy, especially over planning” (Landscapes Review, p.9). Designation as a National Park involves the creation of a National Park Authority, who become the Planning Authority for the Park area and are responsible for creating a Local Plan. The proposed Dorset and East Devon National Park and associated Dorset and East Devon Local Plan would cover three authority areas (Dorset Council, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council). The Dorset

²³ Summary extracted from Dorset & East Devon National Park CIC Submission to Glover Review, 2018. P. 26, 28

& East Devon National Park CIC Submission to the Glover Review stated that a “Dorset National Park should create a seamless planning resource with Dorset Council, develop compatible dovetailed plans for wider Dorset”. However, the Dorset and East Devon Local Plan would need to give due consideration to both Dorset Councils and East Devon District Council Local Plans.

If a Dorset National Park was created, Dorset Council would lose its planning powers over the National Park area. There would be two planning authorities and two Local Plans which covered Dorset Council area, one for the National Park area and one for the remaining local authority area. Traditionally, National Park Planning Authorities work separately to the local authority’s planning function, though an alternative model of delivery has been followed in the South Downs National Park. The South Downs National Park has delegated its development management functions to its constituent local authorities. This means that the separate local authorities undertake the consideration of planning applications within the National Park, though the Park Authority still takes an overview and assesses the decisions made. It is understood that the Dorset and East Devon National Park campaign group have indicated that they would support this model of delivering development management functions in the proposed National Park, with the work on determining planning application being delegated to Dorset Council. They have also indicated that they would support the preparation of a single joint local plan by Dorset Council and the Dorset National Park, which would be helpful in reducing the complexity of plans across the area. However, such commitments cannot be guaranteed, as any delegation of planning function or decision about joint local plans would need to be considered and subject to democratic vote by the new National Park Authority.

Planning Consultee

The Landscapes Review recommends that AONBs need a stronger voice in planning and that they should become statutory consultees in the planning system. This would mean that they would formally be consulted on planning applications and have a formal voice in the decision-making process. At present, statutory consultee status for AONBs sits solely with Natural England which, as a national body, cannot be expected to know every area in the way a dedicated local AONB team does.

Dorset AONB has a good working relationship with the Dorset Council planning team. There is a joint protocol between the local planning authority and the AONB team which sets out the process for effective consultation between the two parties in order to consider planning matters affecting the AONB. However, the Landscape Review heard that in some areas this “duty to co-operate” was not working. The Review felt that by giving AONBs statutory consultee status it would encourage developers to consult AONB bodies before making a formal planning application, to facilitate good design and mitigation. It was felt that the extra resource required to deliver this could be met by the AONB teams and supported by the proposed National Landscapes Service.

AONBs and National Parks are afforded the same level of protection in terms of development. The National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 172 states that:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing 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 these issues..... The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- (a) 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;*
- (b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- (c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated."*

However, the Landscapes Review felt that the existing duty of regard to national landscapes (AONBs) is "too weak". An example of where AONB designation has been given "due regard" in Dorset is the rejection of a wind farm proposal: Navitus Bay. This wind farm was proposed 10km off the coast of the AONB in Purbeck. The windfarm was refused the planning permission it sought through the National Park Infrastructure route in 2015 due to the visual impact the wind farm would have on the AONB and on the setting of the World Heritage Coast. An instance where the Dorset's local planning authority's duty of regard was challenged was during consideration of Rampisham Down solar farm, which having been approved by Committee was called in for review by Natural England and was refused. Dorset AONB and Natural England worked with the applicant to identify a suitable alternative location with few landscape effects.

Although a number of significant developments have been allowed within the Dorset AONB they have met the "exception circumstances" as approved by an independent examiner. For example, the developments at Bridport and Littlemoor allocated in the current West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan met the exceptional circumstances required and the housing need was successfully demonstrated.

Within the Landscape Review's call for evidence they report that they heard: "in strong terms from very many respondents to our call for evidence that this [due regard] is too weak" (Landscapes Review p.50). The Review stated that "National landscapes must carry proper weight when public bodies carry out activities that might affect them" (Landscapes Review p.50). They believed that the regard for these national landscapes would be improved by establishing AONBs as statutory consultees within the planning process and by strengthening the current "duty of regard".

In the revised NPPF (February 2019) the guidance in relation to development within AONBs and National Parks has been revised and clarified, with the additional statement that "the scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited".

Housing Numbers and the Housing Delivery Test

As referred to in the section on National Park planning on pages 15-16 of this report, there are significant differences to the approaches to setting housing need figures in local plans, between National Parks and other local planning authorities. This is a major difference between National Park and AONB designations.

The updated National Planning Policy Framework of July 2018 introduced a standard methodology for calculating 'local housing need', and a 'housing delivery test' against which local authorities are tested. Neither of these applies in National Parks. The standard methodology is the starting point for setting housing requirements in local plans. Councils may argue for the use of a different approach, but this needs robust justification to be defended at the public examination. National Parks however are not given housing

requirements through this methodology and are expected to use alternative locally-derived targets.

The standard methodology is based on two input figures: the Office for National Statistics household forecasts, and information on the ratio between house prices and local incomes. Both datasets are produced at local authority area level.²⁴ Where a local authority includes, or is part of, a National Park, the data is still produced for the whole local authority area with no adjustment for the existence of the National Park. So if the National Park were designated, the standard methodology figure for Dorset Council would still reflect the whole area.

The figures resulting from the standard methodology would continue to provide the starting point for determining the housing requirement in the Dorset Council local plan. If the National Park were designated, the National Park authority would then decide what number of houses the Park could deliver and this number would be deducted from the Dorset Council standard methodology figure. It is likely that this would be a considerably lower figure than would otherwise be set for the area (for example the Dartmoor Local Plan currently commits to delivering just 65 homes a year across the National Park), leaving a high figure potentially to be met in the rest of Dorset. Clearly, the Dorset Council would then have a strong argument to justify using an alternative approach rather than the standard methodology, because of so much of its area being within the National Park. It should be noted that the recently updated (July 2019) Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 023) refers to calculating five-year housing land supply using alternative locally derived requirement figures, not only within National Parks but within *'those local planning authorities where local authority boundaries overlap with these areas'*. This indicates support for setting alternative housing figures for the whole area, not just the National Park part. But in any event it means that Dorset Council would either have very significant development pressure on the areas outside the National Park, or would not have the option of using the standard methodology, and as a result would have a greater effort in defending its figures at public examination. There would also be additional pressure on surrounding local authority areas, if Dorset has identified needs that it is unable to meet.

Alternative housing figures, with a significantly lower rate of development within the National Park area, would result in a lower rate of housebuilding across the area than would otherwise be planned for. This could have an impact on the local economy (as housing supply has been recognised as a constraint on the local job market) and on housing affordability. The proposed Dorset National Park area includes a number of significant market towns and an Enterprise Zone, all of which will need housing growth to allow for workers to move in from other areas, if the local economy is to grow. The proposed extension to include the 'Egdon Heath' area would bring an additional area of land into the National Park that is not currently within the AONB. This would bring greater protection to this area, reducing the potential for development. The Egdon Heath area includes the settlements of Crossways and Wool, both of which had been identified for further development in previous local plan consultations, and also includes the Dorset Innovation Park Enterprise Zone.

The Housing Delivery Test is an annual measurement of housing delivery by local authority area. It measures the net additional dwellings provided in the area, against the number of

²⁴ The household forecasts can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/household-projections> and the affordability data at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

homes required. Where local plans are less than five years old, the target numbers will be those from the local plan, but where plans are more than five years old, the target used will be that derived from the standard methodology. Tiered sanctions are applied where delivery targets are not achieved, with the highest penalty resulting in the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' being applied. This already applies where an authority does not have the required 'five year housing land supply' against its targets. It means that less weight can be given to local planning policies in decisions on planning applications, and that the local planning authority has less control over development.

The test and its sanctions do not apply in National Parks, but would still apply to the constituent local authorities and to authorities whose areas include parts of National Parks. This means that there would be a greater risk of Dorset Council failing to meet the delivery test, particularly where the local plan was more than five years old.

There are expected benefits to having one single Local Plan for the Dorset Council area, allowing a more strategic approach to be taken to planning policies across the area. The Local Plan allocates land for employment development alongside residential development which will seek to complement and support the Local Economic Strategy, thereby delivering balanced growth and ensuring installation of critical infrastructure remains viable. By providing opportunities for people to live and work together it also helps to reduce commuting and the associated carbon footprint. With the proposed National Park designation, the potential for the majority of housing to be delivered outside the National Park area could forcibly direct development to areas where there is less good accessibility to employment locations, or where there is no or inadequate employment land.

Affordable Housing

The Landscapes Review states that "houses in National Parks and AONBs cost more" (Landscapes Review, p.104). The Review references a study by Nationwide in 2017 which found a 22% price premium for a property in a National Park. It references another survey by Lloyds Bank which calculated that the average cost of a house in a National Park is 11.6 times local average gross annual earnings – compared with an average multiple of 7.8 times earnings across the whole of England and Wales. Within the Review's call for evidence they have heard repeatedly that local communities see housing costs climb while not much affordable housing is built to add to the supply. The Review recommends that the National Landscapes Affordable Rural Housing Association is established to help deliver the affordable housing required in National Parks and AONBs.

National Parks, as local authorities, have the power to develop housing themselves, including affordable housing, as demonstrated by the New Forest National Park, which completed two new affordable homes in 2016. However, the Review felt that this is not likely to become a widespread activity, given the pressures on budgets and other demands. The Review recommends that National Parks should consider using their powers to set conditions on new housing to ensure it remains affordable whilst also recommending the National Landscapes Affordable Housing Association as part of the solution.

The Review recommends that the National Landscapes Affordable Housing Association should have clear purpose and a defined scope with leadership provided by the new National Landscapes Service. They propose that the Association should be debt financed (the equity should be publicly owned) and should attract environmental, social and government investment funds.

The Review also recommends that the NPPF is amended to allow National Parks and local authorities more flexibility to deliver affordable homes in AONBs and National Parks. The Review proposes that "Infilling should count towards new build targets in AONBs and local planning authorities in AONBs should also make use of the provision that allows them to demand on-site affordable housing contributions on all sites, including developments of five

homes or fewer” (Landscapes Review p.110). The current Dorset local plans do include allowances for windfall development within their housing land supply, and for much of the AONB area (for example in the adopted West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan) the lower threshold (five dwellings or fewer, rather than ten dwellings or fewer) for affordable housing requirements is applied.

The Landscapes Review used a Dorset AONB case study to demonstrate delivery of affordable homes in designated landscapes. The Yarlington Housing Group and Lyme Regis Community Land Trust completed 15 affordable homes in February 2018. Yarlington, a non-profit Community Benefit Society and registered housing association, developed and now manages the completed homes, while the Community Land Trust is the long-term steward of the homes, owning the freehold.

Affordable house building already takes place in Dorset, enabled and supported through Government grants, see Table 5.

Table 5. Affordable housing completions over the last five years for the proposed Dorset National park Area.

Year	West Dorset District Council Area	Dorset Council	Weymouth & Portland Borough Council Area	North Dorset District Council Area	Purbeck District Council Area
2018/19	87		42	29	-
2017/18	131		13	9	21
2016/17	82		41	50	25
2015/16	88		80	49	53
2014/15	110		87	68	3

In Dorset it is standard planning procedure for major development sites to be asked to deliver a proportion of homes as affordable (generally between 25% and 50% depending on the location), under local plan policies. In Dorset there are also a number of examples of *all* affordable home developments for example, a site at Mosterton, which is currently being developed for 36 affordable homes.

Dorset is good at delivering small local affordable housing schemes. There is a steady pipeline of rural exception sites which are required to deliver a high percentage of affordable housing. Rural exception sites in West Dorset are required to build 100% of properties as affordable housing, whereas the current policies in North Dorset and Purbeck allow a proportion of market homes on exception sites.

Dorset Council has 12 active Community Land Trusts (CLTs) which are delivering community-led housing. West Dorset CLTs are held in high regard nationally for their work. There are currently 102 homes in Dorset where the freehold is owned by a CLT spread over 7 developments. Paul Derrien, Dorset Council’s Housing Enabling Team Leader, is often asked to talk at regional conferences to share West Dorset CLT best practice; Lyme Regis CLT development won a national award and Powerstock CLT development was recently opened by the Prince of Wales. Bridport Cohousing have planning permission for 50 homes and Broadwindsor and District CLT have submitted a planning application for a further 15 homes.

CLT developments are built entirely for local people. They deliver this through Section 106 agreements on planning applications, and through local lettings plans (i.e. local connection requirement). The requirement, as standard, will be that an individual has to live, or work, or have close family in the area of Dorset for 2 years. However, many Dorset CLTs have chosen to increase the requirement from 2 years to a longer time period. Importantly, CLT

houses are held for affordable housing in perpetuity, CLT houses are not eligible for right to buy schemes.

Second Homes

The issue of second homes is significant in Dorset, especially as it is a popular tourist destination, but it is not unique to Dorset. The near neighbour National Parks also face problems with second home ownership (Table 6) and the impact this has on community amenity and service viability.

Some National Parks, such as the Lake District, have introduced policies restricting all new homes in the Park area to principal residences. This has to be agreed through the public examination into the plan and can generally only be justified because of the fact that housing development in the area is so restrained. Neighbourhood plans can potentially introduce such restrictions over smaller areas as well, where there is sufficient evidence, and the emerging Purbeck Local Plan, currently at examination, is proposing to introduce such a policy, though the examination has still to conclude. It must be borne in mind however that such restrictions apply only to new build homes, and in circumstances where the supply of new-builds is limited.

Table 6. Number of second home for local National Parks and the proposed Dorset National Park area. Source: Home Truths 2016/17 National Housing Federation Report

Area	Number of Second Homes	Number of Second Homes per km ²
Proposed Dorset National Park area	4686	4 ²⁵
New Forest National Park	1729	3 ²⁶
Exmoor National Park	2631	3 ²⁷
Dartmoor National Park	5827	4 ²⁸

The Landscapes Review recognises second home ownership as a challenge but believes that local authorities, in consultation with residents, remain best-placed to determine whether to use the powers already open to them to charge increased rates for second homes.

²⁵ Used Dorset National Park Area of:1300 km²

²⁶ New Forest National Park area of: 556 km²

²⁷ Exmoor National Park area of: 692 km²

²⁸ Dartmoor National Park area of: 954 km²

4. Tourism and Dorset Brand

Summary of reported Dorset National Park benefits²⁹

A Dorset National Park would help develop a coherent, Dorset-wide Sustainable Tourism Strategy including eco, heritage and cultural tourism. This strategy plus the funding of a comprehensive ranger service, should help communities and landscapes to manage the pressures from tourism and recreational activities.

Tourism is a major sector in Dorset's economy worth some £1.8 billion per year. A Dorset National Park would provide a major boost for the sector. It would help spread the tourism season through eco, heritage and cultural tourism and spread the benefit to parts of the county that are currently under-valued. On the basis of the South Downs, it has led to visitors staying longer and spending more and hence adding value to the local economy.

Increased Tourism Rates for National Parks

The National Parks website³⁰ lists the positive impacts of tourism to be:

- Jobs for local people
- Income for the local economy
- Helps preserve rural services (buses, village shops, post offices)
- Increased demand for local food and crafts
- Tourists mainly come to see the scenery and wildlife, so there is pressure to conserve habitats and wildlife

Negative impacts of tourism were listed as:

- Damage to landscape: litter, erosion etc.
- Traffic congestion and pollution
- Local goods can become expensive because tourists will pay more
- Shops stock products for tourists and not everyday goods needed by locals
- Demand for holiday homes makes housing too expensive for local people
- Demand for development of more shops and hotels
- Jobs are mainly seasonal, low paid with long hours

The second statutory purpose of a National Park is to "Promote understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities by the public". The funding received by a National Park is expected to be invested towards their statutory purposes- which would lead to investment in increasing visitor numbers and visitor experience.

Dorset already builds its tourism on the basis that it has: two-thirds of a UNESCO World Heritage Site (the Jurassic Coast); existing AONB status; and many famous celebrated landscapes (Cerne Abbas Giant, Maiden Castle, Hardy Monument and many more). The success of Dorset's tourism sector is reflected in the 2011 Census data for employment by industrial sector: Table 4 shows that Dorset has the same tourism employment (accommodation and food services) as Dartmoor and the New Forest National Parks at 8%.

²⁹ Summary extracted from Dorset & East Devon National Park CIC Submission to Glover Review, 2018. p.6, 28

³⁰ <https://nationalparks.uk/students/ourchallenges/tourism/impactsoftourism>

Dorset has an existing Tourism Strategy: Dorset Destination Management Plan³¹, produced by the Dorset LEP. Visit Dorset³² is a Destination Management Organisation for Dorset formed to help support and grow Dorset's visitor economy. Visit Dorset is funded by Dorset Council and represents over 500 investing business members. Visit Dorset's purpose is to invest in the future of the tourism economy in Dorset. The Dorset AONB Management Plan seeks to ensure any growth in tourism is done in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. The Dorset AONB Management Plan includes objectives and policies in relation to protecting the AONB from an overprovision of visitor accommodation, including camping. As it currently stands this statement would only be a material consideration in the planning process, however the Landscape Review recommends that AONB Management Plans receive statutory recognition and therefore these policies would command greater regard if the recommendation was implemented.

Visit Dorset co-ordinates tourism promotion and research across the county and works with tourism businesses and public agencies including VisitEngland, to influence or deliver visitor-focused activities which promotes the Dorset Brand and grow the visitor economy.

Visit Dorset's vision is:

“To maintain and develop the recognition of Dorset as a leading international visitor destination based on the quality and local distinctiveness of our stunning natural environment and the quality and variety of our local businesses.”

The official tourism website for Dorset: www.visit-dorset.com receives 2.25 million visits each year.

The Landscapes Review states that “national landscapes should also be encouraged to bid to become ‘tourism zones’ under the new Tourism Sector Deal³³ helping pioneer truly sustainable tourism” (Landscapes Review, p.82).

Dorset Council Ranger Service

Dorset Council provides a comprehensive ranger service which covers the whole authority area. Dorset Council has over 40 rangers and countryside workers.

Dorset Council's ranger service currently manages over 40 countryside sites, many of which fall within the proposed National Park area, such as the Durlston Country Park at Swanage. The team are responsible for maintaining and improving approximately 3,000 miles of public rights of way in addition to the long-distance National Trails such as the Wessex Ridgeway and South West Coast Path. The Ranger service manages and improves access to the countryside by foot, horse and bike, for locals and visitors alike.

The Rangers also manage approximately 5,000 miles of highway verge, primarily maintained for highway safety but also to enhance the landscape and environment for wildlife. This is set out within Dorset Council's Pollinator Action Plan³⁴.

The Ranger Service employs 14 apprentices each year through the National Apprenticeship Scheme and benefits from 15 volunteers supporting their work each day. Apprentices and

³¹ https://dorsetleader.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Dorset_DMP_Final_Draft_100714.pdf

³² <https://www.visit-dorset.com/>

³³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tourism-sector-deal>

³⁴ <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/countryside-management/protecting-bees-and-butterflies.aspx>

volunteers all benefit from training and career opportunities, as well as helping to deliver enhanced services for the people of Dorset.

National Parks have an existing ranger service, which as a result of their additional funding, has the ability to be a significant workforce and therefore has the potential to deliver more for the landscapes and the visitors.

The Landscapes Review recommend a number of measures to improve the welcome and visitor experience and recommends a National Landscapes Ranger Service, present at all designated landscapes. If such a ranger service were implemented it would not cover the whole Dorset Council area.

5. Support for Rural Communities and Services

Summary of reported Dorset National Park benefits³⁵

The Dorset and East Devon National Park submission to the Glover Review identifies a challenge in addressing the specific needs and health challenges of an ageing population and increasing pressure on the county's social care and health budgets. The report states that the benefit of a National Park would be to contribute to the delivery of better rural services and the development of stronger rural communities.

Data from the 2011 Census shows that local National Parks (New Forest, Exmoor and Dartmoor) are already facing the challenges of an ageing population. 16% of the population of England is aged over 65, but this proportion is significantly higher in the New Forest (28%), Exmoor (28%) and Dartmoor (23%).

Dorset Council is also facing the challenges of an ageing population: 25% of the population is aged over 65. The Landscape Review states that the population within National Parks is both ageing and slowly growing.

Multiple Deprivation is a composite indicator of deprivation that looks at a range of indicators including: health, income, employment, education, living conditions, barriers to housing and services and crime. Those areas that fall into the top 20% most deprived are considered to be significantly deprived in a national context.

Table 7. The number of areas that fall within the top 20% most deprived in relation to Multiple Deprivation for local National Parks and the proposed Dorset National Park³⁶.

National Park	Number of areas significantly deprived (Multiple Deprivation)
Dorset part of proposed National park	1 (2%)
Dartmoor National Park	0 (0%)
Exmoor National Park	0 (0%)
New Forest National Park	0 (0%)

Within the boundary of the proposed National Park for Dorset there is only one area that could be considered as significantly deprived in a national context of multiple deprivation: the Bridport Court Orchard area (Table 7). However, there are ten areas close to the border with the National Park in both Weymouth and Portland that suffer significant multiple deprivation in a national context (Figure 4).

³⁵ Summary extracted from Dorset & East Devon National Park CIC Submission to Glover Review, 2018. P.26

³⁶ ID2019 CLG,

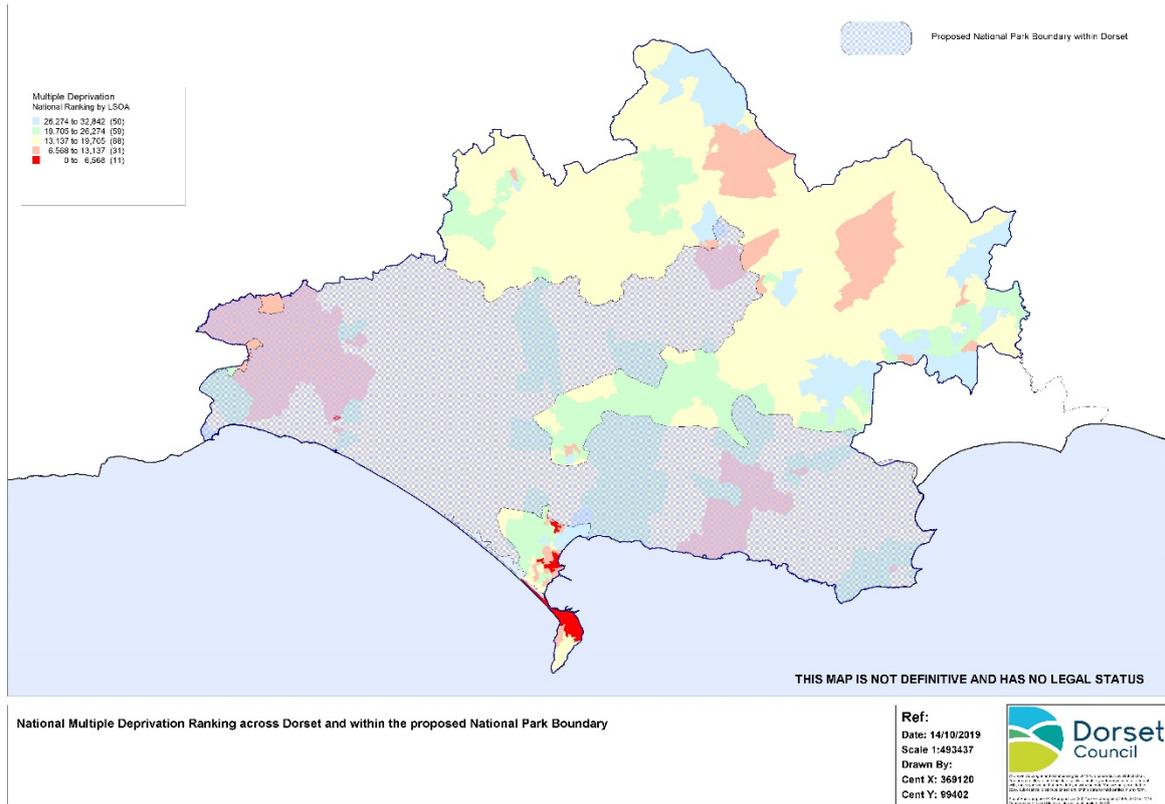


Figure 4: areas that fall within the top 20% most deprived nationally for multiple deprivation.

Figure 4 shows the proposed Dorset National Park Boundary, together with the areas that fall within the top 20% most deprived nationally for multiple deprivation, highlighted in red. Bridport Court Orchard is highlighted, along with the areas of multiple deprivation close to the proposed National Park boundary in Weymouth and Portland.

The report ‘Economic Benefits of a Dorset National Park’ by Cumulus Consultants states that there is a “halo effect”³⁷ of national park designation, whereby neighbouring areas benefit from the creation of a National Park. It lists Weymouth, Dorchester and Blandford Forum as gateway towns which could “provide services and accommodation to visitors and local businesses”.

‘Barriers to Housing and Services’ is an element of the deprivation index that considers indicators such as distance from services and housing affordability. When this element of the deprivation index is looked at in isolation it shows that large proportions (approx. 50%) of all the near neighbour National Parks rank in the top 20% most significantly deprived areas for ‘Barriers to Housing and Services’ nationally:

National Park	Number of areas significantly deprived (Barriers to Housing and Services)
Proposed Dorset National Park	33 (50%)
Dartmoor National Park	12 (50%)
Exmoor National Park	9 (100%)
New Forest National Park	17 (50%)

³⁷ Economic Benefits of a Dorset National Park, November 2018 Cumulus Consultants.

Access to Green Space and Well-being agenda

Contact with greenspaces/natural environments in both urban and rural settings has been shown to deliver significant health and wellbeing benefits. Dorset Council residents have good access rates to green space, with 72.5% of its population living within 300m of a green space of any size. Nearly 60% (57.3%) of Dorset Council residents meet the World Health Organisation (WHO) standard for access to green space, which is defined as living within 300m of a greenspace of 0.5ha in size.

Public Health Dorset, a shared service between BCP Council and Dorset Council is working to improve access to greenspace via numerous public campaigns including Live Well Dorset which can signpost residents to outdoor community groups and “green” activities. Dorset AONB also works with the Dorset Health & Wellbeing Board to promote the green agenda and public access.

The Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment “MENE”, delivered by Natural England, provides data on the frequency of visits to the natural environment in England³⁸. The analysis identifies the barriers that prevent infrequent visitors to natural environments from doing so more regularly. The most frequently cited barriers include health reasons and individual time constraints. Dorset Council, Public Health Dorset, and the Dorset Health & Wellbeing Board need to look at how these barriers can be overcome.

It is unclear whether these barriers to access would be removed if a National Park was designated.

6. Climate Change

Summary of reported Dorset National Park benefits

This is not a reported benefit of the Dorset National Park expressed within the Dorset & East Devon National Park CIC Submission to the Glover Review. However, the interim findings of the Glover Review stated that designated landscapes should be leading the way on climate change response.

Dorset Council has declared a climate emergency and the NAAONB has demonstrated its readiness to act to redress declines in species and habitats, within the context of a wider response to climate change in the Colchester Declaration 2019. The declaration contains pledges which will help to mitigate the effects of climate change and help to deliver the Government's objective of net zero emissions target by 2050. The NAAONB call on the Government to provide the power and resources to make these targets achievable. The network of 34 English AONBs working together to respond to climate change could be a significant driver for change.

The National Park Authorities and the Forestry Commission published an accord in 2018³⁹ to improve joint working in local areas and to develop a more collaborative approach to respond to climate change.

The Landscapes Review recommends that national landscapes should take a leading role in the response to climate change through joined up work and their Management Plans. Management Plans "should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery including, but not limited to, wilder areas and the response to climate change (notably tree planting and peatland restoration)" (Landscapes Review p.43).

³⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/accord-between-forestry-commission-england-and-national-parks-england>