

Investing in Dorset's Future



Independent evidence suggests that a Dorset National Park would be an investment in Dorset's future health and economic success. It would open new opportunities and bring additional resources. All of Dorset could benefit.

National Parks are funded by central government and are not a call on local businesses or residents.

The **economic benefits of a National Park** include the following:

- Through investing in and improving the environment (Dorset's greatest economic asset¹) and growing Dorset's natural capital, a National Park (NP) would help achieve sustainable economic growth and develop Dorset's potential in the "green/blue" economy.
- NPs attract investment, jobs and skills. Evidence suggests that National Parks are more resilient in economic downturns and that the overall unemployment rate in National Parks has been half the national rate. They are home to many vibrant businesses including small businesses². They work in partnership with economic stakeholders and communities to plan for and meet the needs for economic space.
- National Parks promote local products, including food and drink, and could boost the Dorset brand at home and abroad.
- Over 55% of businesses in National Parks believe that the quality of the landscape and environment has a positive impact on their business performance, and a majority feel that National Park designation has a positive impact on their business³.
- In a survey by Bournemouth University, more than 50% of businesses reported that the quality of the natural environment was one of the main reasons for conducting business in Dorset⁴. Some business leaders have said a National Park would help them attract key staff including younger people who value all that a NP can offer them and their families.
- A report by Bournemouth University concluded that a Dorset National Park could add considerable value to the county's economy including through stimulating additional annual visitor spend worth several million pounds⁵.
- In the South Downs National Park, Dorset's relevant comparator, visitor spending increased following its designation as a National Park, with an associated increase in employment. The increase in visitor spending per capita suggests the NP helped promote higher value tourism including eco/heritage/cultural/dark skies tourism and a longer season. The South Downs NP has supported public transport and other rural services and helped manage tourism pressures through its sustainable tourism and transport policies.
- A NP would value farmers as guardians of the countryside and producers of quality foods as well as providers of vital ecosystem services (such as clean water, flood resilience, healthy soils and woodlands which contribute to carbon capture.) It would support them in securing "public benefit" farm funding and in appropriate diversification⁶.
- The NP would work with councils, communities and all stakeholders to help ensure an effective response to the triple emergencies of health, climate change and nature.
- Research shows that, in addition to benefitting the economy in the NP area, a NP brings major economic benefits to communities and businesses across a much wider area⁷.

A Dorset National Park could give an ongoing boost to Dorset's economy of millions of pounds annually, bring additional funding and attract investment, jobs and skills.

¹ *Dorset's Environmental Economy*, report for Dorset County Council by Ash Futures, 2016

² *A Report on the Economic Cost-Benefit Analysis on the Creation of a National Park within Dorset and East Devon* Kyle Dyett, Professor Davide Parrilli and Dr Ishmael Tingbani, Jan 2018

³ *The Economic Benefits of a Dorset National Park*, Cumulus Consulting, November 2018

<https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com/post/economic-benefits>

⁴ *Trends in Natural Capital...Valuing Nature Research Report*, Adrian Newton, Stephen Watson et al, Bournemouth University, June 2019

⁵ *A Report on the Economic Cost-Benefit Analysis* etc op cit

⁶ See eg evidence from the South Downs <https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com/post/new-farming-case-studies>

⁷ *The Economic Opportunities, Benefits and Wider Impacts of a D&ED NP*, Dixon and Deane, July 2016,

<https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com/post/2016/04/28/the-economic-case-for-the-national-park>