

Appendix 1

National Parks England Press release June 2015

So much more than the view England's most iconic landscapes - a hidden economic powerhouse. 'So much more than the view...'

Far from being sleepy backwaters, England's finest landscapes contribute more than £20bn each year to our economy - similar to that of Birmingham, according to a new report.

The publication '[So much more than the view...](#)' from England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Parks, highlights the wide range of benefits these iconic areas provide to society.

Covering a quarter of England, National Parks and AONBs are our most beautiful and cherished landscapes, with iconic archaeological and historical sites and valuable wildlife habitats. Yet they provide so much more to society than a beautiful view.

More than two thirds of people in England live within half an hour's travel of a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

AONBs and National Parks welcome more than 260 million visitors who spend in excess of £6bn and support thousands of jobs and more than 85,000 businesses.

Rightly regarded as a treasured national resource and internationally recognised for their special qualities, they provide a base for businesses that rely on a high quality environment; creative and sporting inspiration; homes for people and wildlife; food and drink; and life enhancing experiences for millions of visitors of all ages.

Environment Minister Rory Stewart MP said:

"Our British landscapes are among the most beautiful and precious in the world. And such land remains central to the British imagination, to our souls and to our identity.

"We would miss such landscapes profoundly if they were gone. We have a deep obligation to protect this land, its farms and its communities.

"This report also reminds us that safeguarding our countryside can also generate economic value, how our protected landscapes are increasingly rare in a rapidly

developing world and just how precious they are to visitors and residents. However, while we celebrate the fact that they have also the potential to bring prosperity, we must never reduce such places simply to their economic value – they are so much more than that.”

Chair of National Parks England and the North York Moors National Park Authority, Jim Bailey said:

“People are passionate about National Parks and AONBs and care deeply about their future. Those who visit, live or work within, these special landscapes, experience and enjoy the range of benefits that they provide for people and wildlife. They may not realise that these dynamic, living landscapes underpin the economy and the health and wellbeing of society and that all these benefits come at less than £1 per person a year.”

Chair of the National Association for AONBs, Philip Hygate said:

“AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards, and National Park Authorities, with their dedicated small teams, make things happen; translating vision and national policy into local action. Our staff and volunteers work with local communities, businesses and others, supporting skills development, investing in infrastructure and attracting visitors to promote sustainable rural economies that conserve and enhance the natural environment for the benefit of everyone. Together our volunteers put in over half a million days’ work each year to help keep these places special and accessible.”

The publication also highlights the vital work that the National Park Authorities, AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards undertake with local people and businesses to help keep these places special. They work to maintain thriving, living landscapes, where natural assets are conserved and enhanced and where people, businesses and communities can prosper, now and in the future.

[So much more than the view... England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks \(Navigable pdf\)](#)

[So much more than the view... England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks \(standard pdf\)](#)

Notes

1. National Parks England is the umbrella organisation that brings together the nine National Park Authorities (NPAs) and the Broads Authority. It exists to support policy and practice by providing a collective voice for the views of the English NPAs; raising the profile of their work; facilitating discussion on issues of common concern; and working in partnership with other bodies. Follow us on Twitter: [@natparksengland](#)

2. The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) is a charity that provides a strong collective voice for the UK’s 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Its objectives are to promote the conservation and enhancement of AONBs, advance the education, understanding and appreciation by the public of AONBs, and promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those promoting or representing AONBs, other Protected Areas and those areas for which designation might be pursued. It does this by taking a collaborative and partnership based approach to working with our membership and other organisations at a national level to achieve shared goals. For more information see Web: www.landscapesforlife.org.uk Twitter: [@naaonb@AONBFamily](#)

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Contact details for Media Officers for each of the AONBs and National Parks are available.

Appendix 1: Narrative on National Parks funding (FINAL DRAFT)

Our National Parks are special places that bring huge economic and environmental benefits to the nation, and contribute to improving quality of life.

The value of these places requires independent National Park Authorities that are closely linked to their rural communities and retain planning powers.

Since 2010, the National Park family has grown in number and responsibilities but for the majority of National Park Authorities their income has fallen by over 40% in real terms.

Over this time, the National Park Authorities have had to make very difficult decisions and hard choices. They have made themselves ruthlessly efficient and spear-headed new measures (like the formation of National Parks Partnerships Ltd.) in order to secure new streams of income.

Further cuts, however small, will have a much bigger, disproportionate, and detrimental impact on our much loved National Parks and their value to the nation.

Such cuts would lead to a deterioration in the quality of England's finest landscapes; fewer opportunities for people to experience, access and enjoy these special areas, and a reduced contribution of National Parks to the national and local economy.

Now is a critical moment for National Parks. We look to Government to work with NPAs to secure more financial resilience with less dependence on Defra funding; in order to be viable organisations conserving and enhancing these valuable assets for the nation.