

Assignment 2

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Destination Management: Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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Executive Summary

This report was written with the intent to evaluate Dorset AONB as a tourism destination. By outlining the three pillars of sustainability it is clear to see that the destination management plan the destination has in place is thorough and extremely in-depth. An analysis was drawn from this report, by identifying where the destinations was situated on both Butler's life cycle model and Doxey's irridex, that despite the decrease in tourism due to the global pandemic, Dorset AONB can be expected to fully recover from this. There are certain recommendations that have been made in terms of issues arising from lack of employment, in order to combat this issue it is suggested that the governing bodies and stakeholders provide incentives in order to rebuild the workforce.



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Introduction

Destinations around the world are now under heavier pressures than ever due to the rise in global travel. The results of which can be seen with negative effects on the environment and local communities. Destination Management is an ongoing process that requires stakeholders to come together to develop a sustainable plan surrounding a destination. The process examines the cultural, economic, environmental and social risks and opportunities and is an ongoing process (MBIE, 2022).  2

The purpose of this report is to outline and analyse the Destination Management plan of Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Dorset AONB). Within the report the three pillars of sustainable tourism will be outlined and related back to the actions being taken within the area. The report will look at practices currently in place within the destination and the way in which these practices are implemented. Regulations, travel to and from the destination and the bodies involved within the process will be identified and examined.

Both Butler's Life Cycle and Doxey's Irridex model will be applied to the destination in order to determine what stages the destination is presently at. Following this an appropriate conclusion will be drawn as well as recommendations regarding the destinations future developments.  3

Background

Dorset AONB covers 1,128 kilometres of coastal and beach area, forest, countryside and heathland and has been held as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for the last 60 years (Dorset Council, 2022). An estimated 12.6 millions day trips are taken to the area each year with 1.8 millions people visiting for short breaks. Tourism within Dorset AONB supports almost 13,000 employee in full time employment and tourism contributes £860 million to the local economy. Dorset AONB is the main reason that tourists travel to the region and as such has created a need for a thorough Destination Management Plan to be put in place to protect the area (Dorset AONB, 2022).

Within the UK, AONB have the highest level of protection awarded in relation to the areas scenic beauty and landscape. This is to ensure that these areas are conserved and the natural beauty of the landscape is not destroyed by the many visitors that travel there.

Three Pillars of Sustainability

The three pillars of sustainability are outlined as social, economic and environmental (Purvis, Mao & Robinson, 2019). The three fundamental pillars are used to define the practices of sustainable development. Each pillar can be viewed as a circle with each circle overlapping one another, this meaning that each section effects the next and needs to be in synchronicity with one another in order to achieve full sustainable practice (Gibson, 2006).



Practices

Dorset AONB currently have a destination management plan in place covering the years 2019-2024. Within this plan it is outlined what position the destination is currently in, and where the destination would ideally be within the coming years. To relate the plan to the pillars of sustainability it is possible to delve into each pillar to examine what actions are in place.



First and foremost, AONBs are dedicated towards the goal of sustainability. These areas are tourist destinations which strive to continuously work towards preserving the

environment and surrounding communities. Because of this the practices in place are largely guided towards that of a sustainable manner.

One such initiative entitled the Poole Harbour catchment initiative seeks to improve water quality and boost wetland habitats in order to benefit both nature and local communities through farming initiatives (DorsetLNP, 2017). This initiative works towards all three pillars of sustainability, by improving the habitat, the environment is protected, farming initiatives help boost the local communities which will create further jobs and in turn benefit the economy by pouring money back into the destination.

In terms of economic practices in place, Dorset AONB is currently working towards the national housing policy and has passed new regulations regarding the building of second homes- boosting both the economic aspect as there comes loss of economic growth within high areas of second home purchases (DorsetCouncil, 2022).

Regulations and Regulating Bodies

Dorset AONB is managed by the Dorset AONB Partnership which is comprised of 18 organisational bodies. Among some of which are Historic England, Dorset Council, National Trust, the Environmental Agency and Purbeck Heritage Network (DorsetAONB, 2022). Destination Management Organisations (DMO's) such as Visit Dorset and the National Coastal Tourism Academy oversee the implementation of outlined destination management activities (VisitBritain, 2022). The area is also supported by smaller organisations such as Litter Free Dorset and Litter Free Coast and Sea who work towards reducing litter and waste and focus on improving water quality.

Each AONP within England must have a destination management plan in place, these also must be made available to the public. This plan must include a cross reference in regards to any existing plans such a biodiversity action plans or local transport plans as well as an action plan of who is undertaking what actions. The regulations are imposed by the government but any plans created are done so by local authorities (Gov.UK, 2022). When creating this plan the local authority must ensure that all proposals are taking into account the conservation and enhancement of the AONB,

this is a positive thing as it ensures that all decisions made are working towards the goal of sustainability, in all aspects of the three pillars.  6

In 2019, a government commissioned review titled the **Glover Review** investigated rules and regulations that surround AONBs. This review has a direct impact on the way in which AONBs operate. The 12-week consultation examined nature recovery initiatives and how to better support the communities surrounding AONB. Dorset AONB was used as a case study within the Glover Review to showcase good environmental practice surrounding habitat mapping, volunteer engagement, affordable home building and the Poole Harbour catchment initiative (Dorset AOB, 2022). 

This however was criticised by individuals stating that the review simply did not provide the benefits that were expected with many dubbing the review a 'let-down'. It was recorded that the Government did not appear to have enough drive in regards to delivering lasting improvements to these designated landscapes (Truman, 2021). At present it is still being determined what the outcomes of the report will be and as such further review would have to be undertaken as the situation develops. 

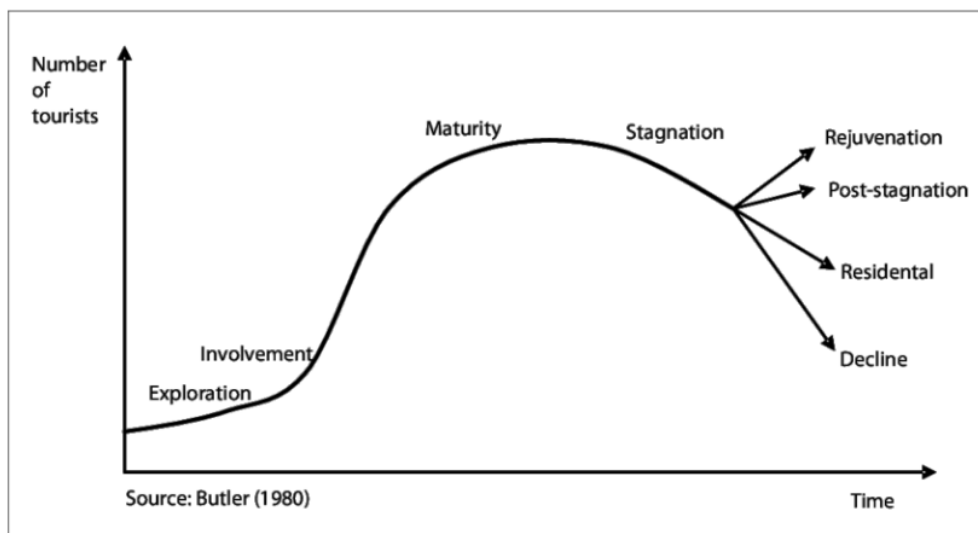
Travel

Dorset AONB has an active role with 'out of season' tourism and due to being managed partly by local authorities- has strong connections to transport links. Dorset AONB promotes sustainable travel and has initiatives in place that encourage the use of public transport this help to reduce the environmental impact of car use (Dorset AONB, 2022). Initiatives have worked actively to improve the available information at train station and via online channels which enable for easier exploration via bus, bike or on foot. This has a significant impact on reducing the carbon footprint that has an adverse affect on the eco-systems of tourist destinations. The environmental pillar of sustainability was used as a spearhead to drive these changes.

Dorset AONB have created a traffic in villages 'toolkit', this action plan seeks to protect local quality of life from growing traffic volumes which threaten economic sustainability and societal aspects of community life. The Rural Roads Protocol uses community engagement to develop new ideas along with highway authorities. This is done by monitoring traffic in each village, understanding the way traffic operates within villages and identifying entry points (Dorset AONB, 2020). This protocol ties each of the three pillars of sustainability and is an excellent example of how destinations can make small changes within local communities to achieve positive results which can have a reaching effect.  8

Butler's Life Cycle

Butler's Life Cycle is a model that outlines the life cycle of a tourism destinations. It is a simplistic linear model which plots the different stages that a destination has developed in accordance with time and tourist number growth (McKercher, 2005). There are six levels of tourist area evolution which are left unnumbered so it is able to be applied to many different situations as can be seen on the chart below. It helps to develop contingency plans which in turn allows for sustainable tourism to be undertaken.



(Nordin, 2009)

It is arguable that Dorset AONB is currently in the Decline stage just as many other tourist destinations are following the Covid-19 Pandemic. This decline however is out of the destinations control and therefor not down to a mismanaging of the situation.

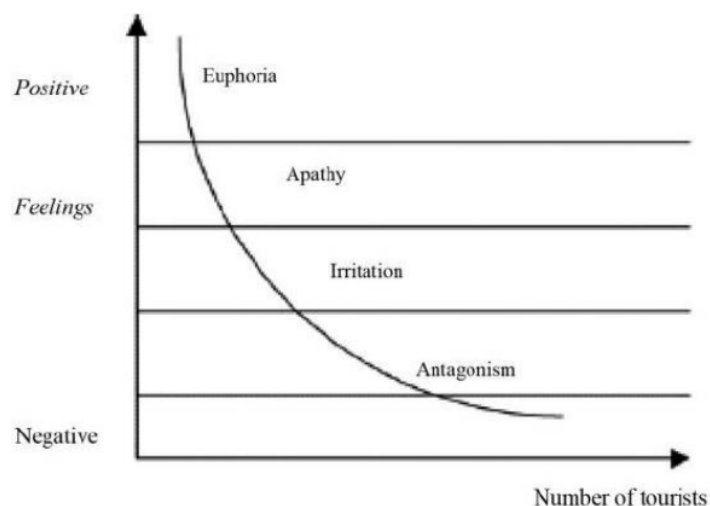
By comparing statistics from November 2020 and August 2021 it shows a large decrease in staying and daily visitors to the area. Tourism numbers dropped from 30,035,000 (VisitDorset, 2019) to around half that volume at 15,548,000 (VisitDorset, 2020). This is a by-product of the Pandemic and can not be used as an appropriate measure of how the destination is faring in terms of tourism. By looking at the figures for 2018 it is possible to see that day trips were slightly lower than 2019 which provides insight that the destination was entering the rejuvenation stage pre Pandemic. 

Following this time, Dorset AONB have implemented new initiatives which have been able to breathe new life into the destination through sustainability projects and there is expected to be a full recovery in terms of tourism although unemployment is reported to be a large hurdle the destination will need to tackle in order to obtain success (DorsetLLP, 2020). Perhaps the ideal course of action here would be to invest in recruitment and offer incentives- especially for younger individuals- to enter the tourism sector to ensure a seamless recovery.

Doxey's Irridex Model

Doxey's Irridex Model is a theoretical model which correlates the level of tourism against the feelings of the local communities effected by it. This theoretical model suggests the four stages of a residents response to tourism activities. As seen on the chart below, often time, the higher level of tourism the more negative feelings locals will feel towards them. Doxey's Irridex can be viewed from an economic perspective and compliments the findings available from Butler's lifecycle- when managed in a correct and efficient way, large amounts of tourism can be managed in order to create

an equilibrium wherein the environment, economy and community are all able to benefit (Fan, Liu & Qiu, 2018).



The issue here with Doxey's model is that it directs the resident feelings in one direction. When initiatives are in place to ensure that both the locals and tourists are happy it is possible to have high volumes of visitors without any negative feelings festering.

Dorset AONB is arguably at the positive end of the spectrum in terms of Doxey's Irridex despite the large number of tourists that visit the area. Initiatives such as the traffic roadmap have lessened the impact of tourism on the community. Other initiatives include the Promise to Love Dorset project, a behavioural change campaign with the aim to increase positive opportunities between locals and visitors. This initiative ensures not only that the social pillar is addressed via reducing and managing any visitor-resident tensions but also the environmental as it seeks to align the values of visitors and community. It aims to do this by attempting to instil a sense of environmental responsibility across the board (DorsetAONB, 2021).

That being said, there is a lack of evidence to support this on the side of the residents opinions and because of this it is unclear how successful this initiative has been. Perhaps an online forum would be advisable in order for locals to share the opinions that they hold for further changes to be undertaken.

Conclusion

To conclude- Dorset AONB has a thorough destination management plan in place. There is clear evidence of the destination operating within the three pillars of sustainability. Nearly every action the governing body is undertaking is directed at resolving issues relating to social, economic or environmental issues than need to be addressed to ensure the running of a sustainable destination. Although the destination is currently in a decline state that is only to be expected following the Coronavirus Pandemic. Highlighted missions that have been decided show promise for the destination reaching the rejuvenation stage. In order to reach this stage however it is clear that some attention will have to be directed to the recruitment of individuals back in to the tourism industry.



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Assignment 2

GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

75 / 100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor

1. Research-informed Literature 15/20

Your work should contain at least 15 academic references in support of your work from a variety of valid and reliable sources. A reference list should be provided using UWTSD's Harvard referencing conventions. Access relevant and current data from your chosen destination.

There was clear evidence of background reading, and you drew on a variety of relevant sources for your work, with appropriate in text citations

2. Knowledge and Understanding of Subject 15/20

You should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theories/models associated with sustainability, for example, the Butler model of Tourism life cycle and Doxey's Irridex model. You should demonstrate a sound understanding of your destination of choice, with clear rationale for your choice. **The relevant models were dealt and applied to the chosen destination, but could perhaps have been taken further. It may have been better to concentrate on issues pre-pandemic to really see the patterns, especially for Doxey - surely there have been more examples of negative impacts of over-tourism in Dorset?**

3. Analysis 15 /20

You should critically evaluate your sources, synthesis of information from your research and academic theories/ models and draw appropriate conclusions and recommendations. **A good overview of the main topics, supported by relevant citations and examples in places**

4. Practical application and deployment 15 /20

The report should include critical evaluation of the benefits and drawbacks of sustainable tourism and sustainable development. Consider comparisons with other successful destinations to emphasise the need for change / development.

More could have been included on the impacts of 'over-tourism' on parts of Dorset AONB and there was little mention of some of the complaints from local residents about this

5. Skills for professional practice 15/20

The report should be presented using a formal business report as demonstrated within the assignment guidance notes. The content should be of a professional standard with correct spelling, grammar and a logical flow to your discussion. Include data through the use of graphs, tables and charts throughout your report, where necessary. Images can also be included. **Generally well structured and presented, in a clear and logical manner. Well done.**

PAGE 1

PAGE 2



Comment 1

good summary covering the key points

PAGE 3

PAGE 4



Comment 2

good use of ref



Comment 3

a good introduction, setting the scene for your work

PAGE 5



Comment 4

good, and say that the 3 pillars will be applied in the context of your work



Comment 5

a ref / source for this would be good here



Comment 6

good to provide the wider context



Citation Needed

Cite Source:

Please use the link below to find links to information regarding specific citation styles:

http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_citation_styles.html

Additional Comment

Good point, but ref/source needed to support this



Comment 7

If this is from the Truman reference, then that could be shown earlier



Sp.

Spelling error



Comment 8

good point. How does Dorset compare with other similar destinations in this respect?



Comment 9

surely these are a 'blip' in the long-term trend? And some UK destinations such as Snowdonia suffered from over-tourism issues during the 'staycation' surge?



Comment 10

nice, clear conclusion!