Your Dartmoor
SUMMARY

Dartmoor National Park
Management Plan 2014 - 2019

2014

www.yourdartmoor.org
Introduction

1.1
At 954 square kilometres (368 square miles), Dartmoor is the largest open space in southern England. It has wild open moorland, granite tors and wooded river valleys. At its edge is a landscape of small fields enclosed by stone walls and hedge banks. Dartmoor has been a stock-grazing area for at least 4,000 years and it is, in the main, this kind of farming that has made the Dartmoor landscape worthy of National Park status.

The open spaces and sheltered valleys give pleasure to millions of people every year and for the Dartmoor farmers it is their place of work. Dartmoor’s blanket bog, upland oak woods, caves and mines are among habitats of international importance. Dartmoor’s landscape is also among the richest in western Europe in terms of its archaeological remains. Within the National Park there are many landowners, including public bodies and private individuals. National Parks are places where people live and work and Dartmoor is home to around 34,000 people.
1.2 The Management Plan is the single most important plan for the future of Dartmoor National Park. It provides an opportunity to bring together a wide range of people and organisations around a set of common goals, building on the successes of the last Management Plan and responding to the challenges ahead. It is the strategic plan for the National Park, one that will guide decisions affecting Dartmoor’s future over the coming five years. The Management Plan is for the National Park as a whole and not just for the National Park Authority; although the Authority, along with many other stakeholders and the local community, will be key to the delivery of the Management Plan. ‘Your Dartmoor’ is a plan for all who care about Dartmoor and its future.

1.3 The purpose of the Management Plan is to:
- set out a joint, long-term vision and ambitions for Dartmoor;
- provide the framework for partnership working through the priorities and action plans;
- provide the framework for all policies and activities in the National Park, co-ordinating and integrating other plans, strategies and actions (including the Local Plan);
- provide the basis for focusing resources and drawing in funding;
- communicate what is important about Dartmoor and the priorities for action to the wider community;
- provide a focus for the work of the DNPA and how it accounts to Government; and
- illustrate how partner organisations contribute to National Park purposes.
1.4 The Management Plan is divided into a number of sections. Central to the Plan is the overall Vision and Ambitions, setting out where we want to be in 20 years’ time. The Vision has three themes of Sustain, Enjoy, and Prosper, which form the structure for the remaining elements of the Plan. Within each of the three themes are a number of Priorities which will provide the focus for action over the next five years.

The Priorities were identified through consultation and an analysis of the issues and challenges facing the National Park’s special qualities, and the public benefits or ‘ecosystem services’ that these provide. Progress towards delivery of the Vision will be monitored to inform future action. A set of ‘core values’ has also been identified which will guide how we work together to deliver the Plan.

1.5 The diagram above sets out the structure of this Management Plan and how the different elements link together.
Vision

Dartmoor - an inspirational place where, in 2034:
• the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage are conserved, sustained and enhanced;
• local people and visitors enjoy and learn more about the National Park; and
• local communities and businesses prosper and benefit from Dartmoor’s human and natural resources.

The National Park is an exemplar in delivering a range of public benefits, and leading the way in developing new approaches and thinking.

2.1 The Vision is set around achievement of National Park purposes:
• to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and
• to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

2.2 And the duty to:
• seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

2.3 It contributes to the Government’s vision for National Parks in England (2010).

2.4 The three themes of Sustain, Enjoy, and Prosper, form the structure for the rest of the Management Plan.

2.5 The Vision is supported by a number of long-term Ambitions, which are the outcomes we seek. They cut across the three themes, and together describe what the National Park should be like in 20 years’ time.
Ambitions: the long-term outcomes we seek

**Land Management** – Farming communities and land management practices continue to play a central role in conserving and enhancing Dartmoor’s special qualities and delivering a range of public benefits.

**Landscape and Tranquillity** – Dartmoor is celebrated for its distinctive landscapes and provides the opportunity to experience wildness, solitude, tranquillity, dark night skies and a sense of space.

**Habitats and Wildlife** – Dartmoor’s internationally and nationally important habitats are expanded and linked and in optimal condition, supporting resilient ecosystems with healthy populations of priority species.

**Natural Resources** – Dartmoor’s distinctive and high quality natural resources are managed and enhanced for environmental and public benefits.

**Archaeology and Historic Built Environment** – Dartmoor’s outstanding archaeological and historic landscapes are well managed, understood and enjoyed, and the character of its distinctive historic built environment is conserved and enhanced.

**Cultures and Traditions** – Local communities, cultures, skills and traditional ways of rural life continue to be sustained and celebrated as defining characteristics of Dartmoor.

**Information and Communication** – People’s understanding and enjoyment of Dartmoor National Park is enhanced by high quality and accessible information.
Learning and Education – High quality, diverse learning experiences are available for everyone to enable them to understand, value and contribute to the conservation and enhancement of Dartmoor.

Recreation and Access – Dartmoor offers a variety of access and recreational opportunities for everyone seeking inspiration, peace and active recreation in harmony with each other, the local community and the area’s special qualities.

Tourism – Tourism on Dartmoor is high quality and sustainable, making a positive contribution to the environment, local economy and communities of the National Park.

Economic Activity – Broad ranging economic activity is consistent with Dartmoor’s special qualities and provides local sources of employment.

Carbon and Energy – Dartmoor is an exemplar of carbon reduction and climate change adaptation through carbon storage, energy efficiency, decarbonising products, and the production of renewable energy and heat.

Community Wellbeing – Dartmoor communities thrive, and benefit from access to a range of local services, amenities, housing, and employment opportunities.

Development – Making a positive contribution to thriving communities, through high quality, sympathetic and well-informed design; conserving the quality and distinctiveness of the built environment and reinforcing local character.

Military Training – All military training on Dartmoor is consistent with National Park purposes, and Defence Training Estate land is managed as an exemplar of conservation and recreational opportunity.
3 SPECIAL QUALITIES

Special Qualities

3.1
Dartmoor has a very special place in people’s appreciation of Devon and the wider south west of England. The special qualities of the National Park identify what is distinctive about Dartmoor, and help to identify what is most important to be conserved, enhanced and enjoyed.

3.2
Dartmoor’s special qualities include:

- open, windswept upland moors with wide views and a sense of remoteness and wildness, distinctive granite tors surrounded by loose rock or ‘clitter’, and large expanses of grass and heather moorland blanket bogs, and valley mires providing habitats for distinctive wildlife such as skylark and cuckoo, and rarities including Vigur’s eyebright and southern damselfly;

- sheltered valleys with upland oak woodland, rhôs pasture and fast-flowing boulder-strewn rivers, home to characteristic wildlife including the pied flycatcher and salmon, and rare species such as the marsh fritillary butterfly;

- enclosed farmland with small irregular pasture fields, bounded by dry stone walls and hedgebanks, providing a mosaic of different wildlife habitats, including hay meadows and species rich dry grasslands with wildlife such as the beautiful greater butterfly orchid;

- a varied geology, including the granite bedrock, providing the dominant building material throughout history, and a wide range of valued minerals including tin, copper, lead, silver and arsenic;

- timelessness - a place spared many of the intrusions of modern life, with dark night-time skies;

- tranquillity, where it is possible to find absolute peace, offering spiritual refreshment and opportunities for quiet reflection, escape and creativity;

- unrivalled opportunities to roam at will over the extensive open moorland, and an exceptional rights of way network for walking, riding and cycling;

- traditional farming practices, using the moorland commons for extensive grazing of hardy cattle, sheep and ponies including locally distinctive breeds;

- clean water - the catchment area for most of the rivers of Devon - historic leats still supply water to settlements. The peatlands and open water of the reservoirs provide an important water store helping to regulate the flow of water off the moor;

- one of the most important archaeological landscapes in western Europe revealing a chronology of human activity stretching back over 8,000 years, from ancient field systems to the legacy of tin mining;

- a wealth of historic buildings, structures and townscapes, including a strong medieval settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, hamlets, villages and towns, set within enclosed farmland surrounding the open moor and linked by an intimate pattern of sunken lanes;

- resourceful rural communities with distinctive culture and traditions, characteristic ways of life, local crafts, fairs, food and drink;

- an inspirational landscape of legends and myths that has inspired art and literature through the centuries and continues to inspire;

- opportunities for discovery, challenge and adventure for all.

3.3
The words opposite illustrate how people responded when asked to describe Dartmoor and what it means to them.
What Dartmoor means to people
Ecosystem Services

4.1
Dartmoor provides a range of public benefits which are being described nationally as 'ecosystem services'. These services include some of the essentials of life, such as clean air and water, food, fuel and raw materials, and more complex processes such as regulating climate through carbon stored in peat soils and woodlands. As well as these practical benefits, the National Park also provides opportunities for recreation, contemplation or spiritual refreshment and improving people's health and wellbeing.

4.2
Some of the key ecosystem services provided on Dartmoor:
- A strong and varied landscape providing inspiration, local distinctiveness and a sense of place;
- Dartmoor is the single largest unbroken area of tranquillity in the south of England; 92% of the National Park is classified as tranquil.
- Around one third of Dartmoor is designated as internationally and nationally important for wildlife. There are also numerous areas of local interest for wildlife.

• Dartmoor is one of the most significant areas in western Europe for archaeology and the density of archaeological remains is reflected in more than 20,000 entries in the Historic Environment Record, providing a lasting sense of history.
• Dartmoor provides extensive recreational opportunities, and is accessible to nearly half a million people living in surrounding areas. Over 2.3 million people visit a year. There are over 730 km of public rights of way and an additional 127 km of permissive paths. 40% of the National Park (over 46,600 ha) is open access or common land.
• Dartmoor is the principal source of drinking water for around 840,000 people in Devon. Water quality is generally high, with the majority of water bodies classified as moderate or good.
• Dartmoor is primarily an extensive livestock farming area, producing around 13,000 calves and 76,000 lambs annually, with a smaller number of poultry, pigs, and other livestock. Farming is important for the delivery of other ecosystem services.
• Around 12% of Dartmoor is wooded, providing timber for a range of products and woodfuel for heating.
• Dartmoor has three notable indigenous breeds – the Dartmoor whiteface and greyface sheep and the Dartmoor pony – helping to maintain genetic diversity. All three breeds are well adapted for surviving Dartmoor’s upland climate and their grazing habits play a vital conservation role.
• Dartmoor’s rich geodiversity provides a variety of resources which have been exploited in the past for granite, tin, copper, lead, silver and arsenic, leaving a strong legacy in the landscape. Many of these sites are now designated for their geological interest.
• Dartmoor’s blanket bogs and mires act as a sponge to hold rainfall high in the catchment, and woodlands and hedgerows also help slow down the passage of water, reducing flood risk.
• Dartmoor’s soils, woodlands and grasslands are important carbon stores. The deep peat is a store for 10 megatonnes of carbon – the equivalent of one year of CO₂ output from industry in the UK.
• Soils form the building block for healthy ecosystems and the basis for farming. The highest parts of the moor are covered with peat deposits and acid upland soils (about 30% of the National Park). These are important for biodiversity, water retention and carbon storage. Off the moor, the soils are acidic but fertile, supporting mainly pastoral farming. On the fringes are freely draining soils with good water infiltration that can help recharge groundwaters.
• The extensive area of semi-natural habitat, combined with species-rich hedgerows, meadows, and traditional orchards provide an important source of nectar for pollinating insects.

4.3 This range of services benefits society as a whole, but they require careful stewardship if they are to continue to be provided and enhanced in the future. This includes developing a more integrated approach to managing ecosystems, with an emphasis on maintaining the health of all elements of an ecosystem to optimise delivery across the range of benefits provided.
Drivers and Challenges

5.1 Dartmoor faces a number of challenges affecting the special qualities and delivery of ecosystem services, both of immediate concern and long-term implications. This Management Plan is set within the context of global drivers such as climate change and a time of austerity in the global economy.

5.2 The key drivers and challenges facing Dartmoor are summarised opposite. These were identified from the State of the National Park Review, and from monitoring and consultation. They are grouped into the three themes of Sustain, Enjoy, and Prosper, for ease of reference, although there are many linkages between them.

5.3 Dartmoor’s special qualities are the product of many different influences and pressures over time, and they will continue to evolve and change. Some of these influences are outside the control of the Management Plan, so the aim is to focus collective action on where the greatest opportunities arise to enhance the special qualities, and to manage the most significant pressures on the National Park, so that Dartmoor’s special qualities remain.

Sustain: Key Drivers and Challenges

• Ensure the future viability of farming on Dartmoor including farm succession.
• Ensuring traditional skills and knowledge are sustained for future management of the National Park.
• Under-grazing in some areas of the moor leading to dense vegetation, in places changing the open character of the landscape, affecting habitats and impeding access.
• Intensive grazing (and recreational pressure) on parts of the moor leading to degradation of heathland habitats.
• Decline in the number of active graziers managing the commons.
• The importance of good land management on Dartmoor to maintain clean water supplies for a large proportion of the population in Devon and east Cornwall.
• Uncontrolled burns (wild fires) affecting water quality and loss of carbon stored in peat.
• Securing woodland management (particularly for smaller woodlands).
• Developing new markets and added value for woodland products.
• Reducing the impact of conifer woodlands on landscape character.
• Restoring plantations on ancient woodland sites to their former habitats.
• Animal and plant health, including the spread of non-native species and increases in disease.
• Some habitats and wildlife under threat from inappropriate management, fragmentation, invasive non-native species and climate changes.
• Threats from inappropriate development in and affecting the National Park.
• Loss of tranquillity due to light pollution, increased traffic, large-scale events and active sports.
• Heritage assets at risk including threats to archaeology from increased vegetation on the moor, climate change, poor condition of listed buildings, and loss of character of conservation areas.
• Enabling future viable use of historic buildings.
• Loss of cultural heritage such as threats to local fairs and traditions, for example.
Enjoy: Key Drivers and Challenges
- Improving understanding and appreciation of Dartmoor by a wide range of people.
- Extending the duration and spend of visitors, to benefit the local economy.
- Path erosion from extreme weather events and heavy use, and threats to access to open areas from increased density of vegetation.
- Challenges in managing more active recreation alongside quiet enjoyment of the National Park.
- Visitor pressure on areas of heavy recreation use with congestion, litter, campfires and anti-social behaviour.
- Balancing the needs of landowners, commoners and local communities with visitors.
- Inability of and difficulties faced by certain sectors of society accessing the National Park.
- Increase in the number and scale of large recreation events.
- Impacts of traffic at peak periods, vehicle speeds, and large vehicles.
- Promoting the health and wellbeing benefits of access and recreation on Dartmoor.
- Conflict between military training (live firing) and public access.

Prosper: Key Drivers and Challenges
- Encouraging growth and resilience in the local economy through the diversity of business types and employment.
- Developing employment opportunities in growth sectors such as construction, business services, tourism and leisure.
- Retaining successful and growing businesses.
- Reversing the ‘brain drain’.
- Nurturing the culture of initiative, enterprise and energy in business, developing new markets and using new technology.
- The future viability of farming on Dartmoor including farm succession.
- Ensuring land-based and building skills are sustained for future management of the National Park.
- Increasing the quality of the ‘tourism offer’ within the National Park and spend per visitor in order to increase the value of leisure and tourism to the local economy.
- Growth and development in surrounding areas impacting on the setting of the National Park.
- A wide gap between household incomes and house prices, leading to the need for affordable housing.
- A need to provide the right type of housing, meeting the needs of local communities, including older people, and flexible housing for home working.
- Sustaining and supporting local services and amenities.
- An ageing population and fewer young people living and working on Dartmoor.
- Fuel poverty and the high proportion of old housing stock with poor energy efficiency.
- Increased interest in renewable energy technologies, with potential impacts on the National Park’s special qualities.
- High reliance on the private car for transport, exacerbated by reductions in public transport within and to the National Park.
- Opportunities and threats arising from climate change for local communities and businesses, including extreme weather events, flood risk and implications for tourism and agriculture.
6 PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Priorities for the Next Five Years

6.1
The Vision and Ambitions for the National Park are long term, and set out what we want to achieve by 2034. These need to be broken down into a set of Priorities over the short and medium term.

Sustain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>What are we trying to achieve?</th>
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| **1. The future of farming and forestry** – supporting sustainable farming and woodland businesses that conserve and enhance the special qualities of Dartmoor. | • A policy framework for upland farming that supports sustainable farming practices and National Park purposes  
• Engage with and empower farmers to manage the landscape, deliver public benefits and add value to their business  
• Next generation initiative for young farmers  
• Encourage sustainable management of existing woodlands and opportunities for new woodlands |
| **2. Spectacular landscapes, natural networks** – conserving and enhancing Dartmoor’s diverse landscapes and natural ecosystems, and improving the connections between them, both within and across National Park boundaries. | • Build coherent and resilient ecological networks  
• Support stable or increasing populations of priority species  
• Connect people with nature  
• Conserve and enhance Dartmoor’s distinctive landscapes  
• Continued good environmental management of the Dartmoor Training Area |
| **3. Making the most of cultural heritage** – conserving and enhancing the archaeology and historic built environment, and helping people to discover more about Dartmoor’s heritage. | • Community Heritage Projects  
• Identify, protect and conserve heritage assets  
• Increased understanding and awareness of Dartmoor’s cultural heritage |
Enjoy

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<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>What are we trying to achieve?</th>
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<tr>
<td>4. Enjoying Dartmoor – helping people to enjoy and learn about Dartmoor, with a particular focus on managing access and visitor pressure at areas of heavy recreation use.</td>
<td>• Clear and inspiring communication about how to enjoy and learn about Dartmoor • Understanding visitor needs and trends • Improved, sustainable recreation opportunities for all • Focused and co-ordinated management of visitors to ensure that areas for exploration and tranquillity remain for quiet enjoyment • Better understanding of, and access to, the health and well-being benefits of Dartmoor • Sustainable modes of travel onto and around Dartmoor • Opportunities for everyone to learn more about Dartmoor</td>
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Prosper

<table>
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<th>Priority</th>
<th>What are we trying to achieve?</th>
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<tr>
<td>5. Prosperous Dartmoor – enabling a diverse, resilient economy that is consistent with the special qualities of the National Park.</td>
<td>• Linking prosperity and protection • Boosting the green economy • Entrepreneurship and skills development • Infrastructure to support business development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Community focus – supporting and empowering local communities to help meet identified needs. | • Resilient and empowered local communities • Help meet identified needs for local affordable housing and other services • Development which enables communities to thrive, whilst conserving and enhancing the National Park • Low carbon communities |

6.3

The full Management Plan covers each theme and priority in more detail, setting out the issues affecting Dartmoor, what we are trying to achieve, and action plans which detail how the Priorities will be delivered. The action plans will be kept updated in the light of monitoring to reflect progress, changing circumstances and future issues.
Working together to deliver the Management Plan

Core values

7.1
A number of core values or ‘ways of working’ have been identified through consultation, which will inform how everyone involved in delivering the Management Plan will work:

Communication – improving communication and promoting understanding through shared learning, knowledge and research.

Engagement – involving people in understanding, conserving and managing the National Park and promoting social inclusion, with a particular focus on young people.

Resilience – helping to ensure that Dartmoor is sustained and enhanced for present and future generations.
Helping deliver national and local priorities
7.2
The Management Plan sets out how the National Park will help to deliver national priorities relevant to its designation, leading the way in developing new approaches and thinking, and being an exemplar in demonstrating delivery of sustainable development. It also links to local priorities, setting Dartmoor in a wider context and connecting with local communities and agencies across the National Park boundary.

Delivery through partnership
7.3
Preparation of the Management Plan has been facilitated by the National Park Authority, but its delivery will be a shared responsibility, dependent on maintaining existing, strong working relationships and forging new ones. Delivery will involve everyone with an interest in the future of Dartmoor, from national agencies and local authorities to local communities, businesses, interest groups and the voluntary sector.

7.4
A Delivery Board with senior representatives from key delivery agencies will provide a strategic overview of how progress is being made towards the Vision and Priorities, and agree how resources and activity should be focused. The Delivery Board will be supported by three working groups based around the three themes of Sustain, Enjoy and Prosper. These will enable all those who will help to deliver the Management Plan to continue to be engaged with the process, to share ideas and experiences, and to strengthen working relationships throughout the Plan period.

Action plans
7.5
Part of the feedback from the previous Management Plan identified a need for greater clarity over how it will be delivered. A series of action plans for each Priority have therefore been prepared in consultation with delivery partners with clear timeframes and resourcing.

7.6
Due to the need to monitor progress, the action plans will be reviewed and refreshed annually, enabling changing circumstances and future issues to be taken into account. There may be other projects or organisations, not specifically identified at the time of preparing the Plan, that will also help deliver the priorities.
Monitoring Success

8.1 Monitoring the success of the Management Plan is essential to inform future actions, policy and management decisions.

The focus will be two-fold:
- monitoring outcomes in relation to progress towards the Vision and Ambitions (see Indicators and Targets document); and
- monitoring delivery of the action plans.

8.2 A good baseline has been established through the State of the Park report, and this will continue to be updated periodically to provide data on outcomes. During this Plan period there will also be a focus on increasing community involvement in monitoring, such as encouraging local wildlife or conservation groups to feed in the data they collect and a greater sharing of information and knowledge. Progress against delivery of the action plans will also be monitored annually to enable them to be updated as necessary.
Get involved!

The Management Plan is for Dartmoor, Your Dartmoor.

If there is a way that you can contribute to its delivery, then please let us know.

Tel: (01626) 832093
E-mail: manplan@dartmoor.gov.uk
Web site: www.yourdartmoor.org