



DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2027-2032

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

**SA Report
September 2026**

enfusion



DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2027-2032

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

SA Report

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Non-Technical Summary (available separately)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Sustainability Appraisal (SA) & Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- 1.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment¹ (SEA) is a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of a plan that has the potential to give rise to significant environmental effects. The aim of SEA is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to promote sustainable development. The Dartmoor Partnership Plan is likely to have significant effects on environmental topics such that it would require SEA in accordance with the SEA Regulations. The SEA of plans sets the strategic context for subsequent environmental impact assessment (EIA) of project proposals.
- 1.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporates the requirements of SEA to ensure that potential environmental effects are considered fully alongside social and economic issues. An SA must be carried out during the preparation of local plans and spatial development strategies - as set out in the previous National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)² and in accordance with the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). Whilst not a spatial development plan, the DNPPP is likely to have significant effects for sustainable development and the environment. It was considered appropriate to align with the SA/SEA of the DNPA Local Plan for consistency, correlation and efficiency during the preparation and testing of the current DNPPP (2021-2026)³. It is understood that the new DNPA Local Plan will be tested through SA/SEA under transitional arrangements such that it remains appropriate to continue with SA incorporating SEA of the DNPPP. The DNPA has commissioned independent specialist consultants Enfusion Ltd to undertake the SA process for the draft Dartmoor National Park Partnership Plan (DNPPP).
- 1.3 The DNPA is also required to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Dartmoor National Park Partnership Plan in accordance with the Habitats Regulations⁴. The aim of the HRA process is to assess the potential effects arising from a plan against the nature conservation objectives of any site designated for its nature conservation importance. While the HRA process is being undertaken in parallel to the SA, the detailed method and findings are reported separately and the findings of the HRA have informed the SA.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004 "The SEA Regulations"

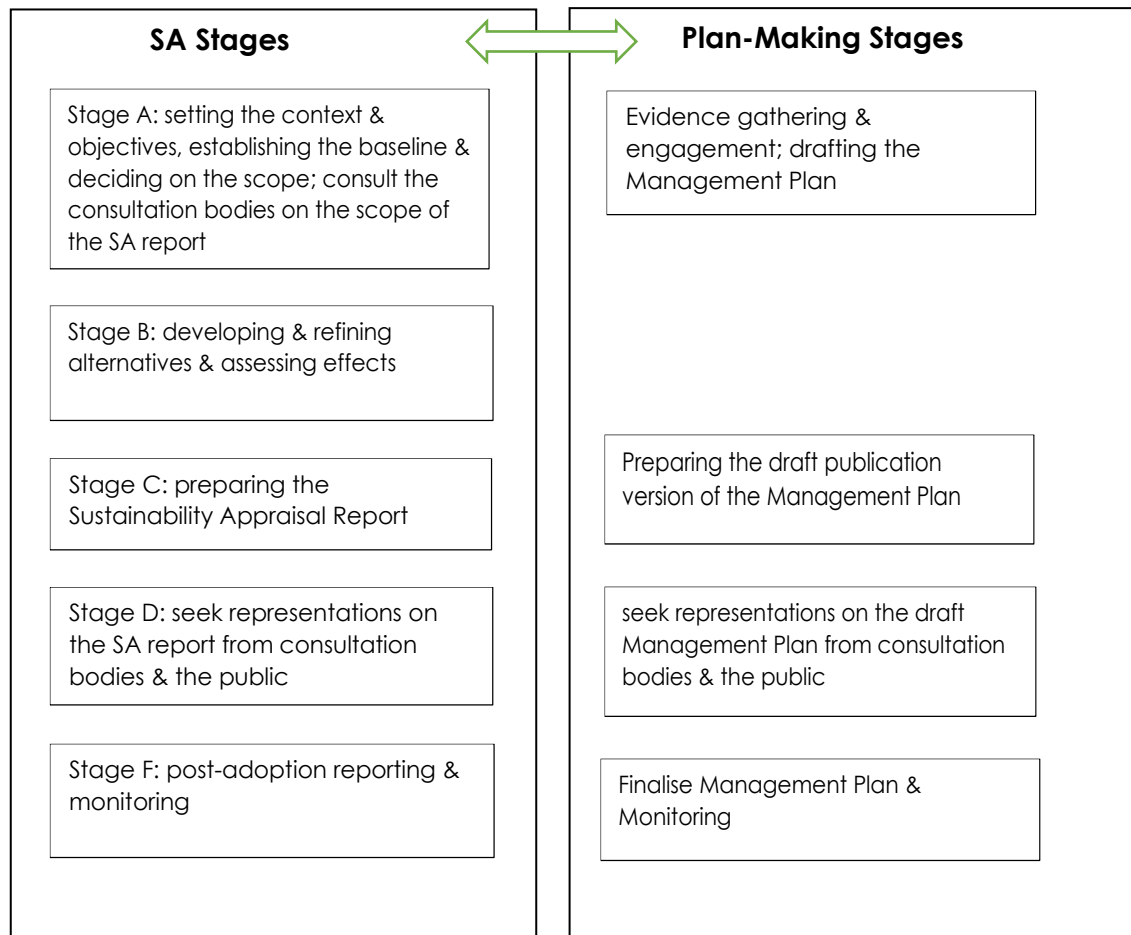
² It may be noted that the new NPPF (August 2026) requires plan-making to undertake environmental assessment, not sustainability appraisal.

³ <https://www.yourdartmoor.org/developing/preparation-of-the-plan>

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents> The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended "The Habitats Regulations"

- 1.4 National Planning Practice Guidance⁵ sets out the key stages and tasks for the SA/SEA process (drawing upon established SEA working) and these remain applicable for environmental assessment of the DNPPP, as follows:

Figure 1.1: SA and Plan-making Stages



- 1.5 The scoping stage is the first stage of the SA process (Stage A), and it aims to identify the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SA Report. It sets out the context, objectives and proposed approach for the assessment; it identifies key issues and opportunities to develop a framework of SA objectives that will form the basis against which the emerging elements of the plan will be assessed.
- 1.6 The next stage of the SA process is concerned with developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects (Stage B). The Partnership Plan is limited in the alternatives that are meaningful since it must comply with the requirements of its statutory designation as a National Park. Management of the National Park requires careful negotiation of potentially competing interests and needs – within the overall statutory requirements and duties. The DNPA is required to prepare a Partnership Plan and therefore, the do-nothing scenario is not an option, however, the baseline characterisation has

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

considered the implications of not having a plan on the environmental topics in the SEA Regulations.

- 1.7 It may be noted that the new system of Environmental Outcomes Reports⁶ (EORs) brought forward through the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act (2023)⁷ will replace the current requirement for SEA for plans (and Environmental Impact Assessment EIA for projects, as required by the EIA Regulations⁸) by the end of 2027. EORs should be aligned with the national Environmental Improvement Plan (December 2025)⁹ and Government is preparing new regulations and guidance.
- 1.8 This SA Report progresses SA/SEA Stages B & C – the assessment and reporting stages – and accompanies the draft DNPPP on public consultation. Any comments received on this SA Report and the draft Partnership Plan will be taken into account for finalising and adopting the Partnership Plan.

The Dartmoor Partnership Plan Review 2027-2032

- 1.9 Dartmoor National Park Authority is undertaking a review¹⁰ of the current Dartmoor National Park Management Plan 2021-2026. The review covers the period 2027-2032 with a long-term Vision through to 2045. Fundamental to the review of Partnership Plan are the two statutory¹¹ purposes of the National Park designation:
- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
 - to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public

Also, the duty of National Park Authorities in pursuing National Park purposes:

- to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities (within the National Park) by working closely with the agencies and local authorities responsible for these matters

- 1.10 The location of the Dartmoor National Park is shown in the following Figure 1.1:

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/environmental-outcomes-reports-a-new-approach-to-environmental-assessment/outcome/environmental-outcomes-reports-roadmap-to-reform>

⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55>

⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/contents> "The EIA Regulations" 2017

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan-2025/environmental-improvement-plan-eip-2025>

¹⁰ <https://www.yourdartmoor.org/partnership-plan-review>

¹¹ National Parks & Access to the Countryside Action 1949 as amended by the Environment Act 1995

Figure 1.2- Location of Dartmoor National Park¹²



- 1.11 The Vision for Dartmoor has been updated through public consultation, stakeholder engagement and work with partners during 2025-26. The Vision¹³ sets a shared direction for Dartmoor to 2045 and reflects a collective commitment to care for the National Park, balancing the needs of people and place, and building long-term resilience. The full Vision for Dartmoor includes a more specific detailed vision for each of the seven Themes of the Partnership Plan. The overall Vision is:

“Dartmoor is a thriving and resilient landscape of moors and valleys, where nature, farming, communities and heritage flourish – where everyone feels welcome to live, work or visit.”

- 1.12 Shared priorities, challenges and opportunities have been identified through collaborative working and these have shaped the outcomes and targets that comprise the framework for the plan. The seven themes are as follows:

- A Better Response to Climate Change (Cross-Cutting)
- Better for the Next Generation (Cross-Cutting)

¹² Dartmoor National Park Authority

¹³ <https://www.yourdartmoor.org/the-vision>

- Better for Nature & Natural Beauty
- Better for Cultural Heritage
- Better for Farming & Forestry
- Better for People
- Better for Business & Communities

For each theme, there are 2-6 draft outcomes aligned with clear specific draft targets by which progress towards the vision can be monitored and reviewed.

- 1.13 The draft Partnership Plan has been reviewed and updated using evidence such as the State of the Park Report 2025, as explained in the Background Papers, and Climate Change Risk Assessments.¹⁴ The draft plan has been strongly informed through the Public Opinion Survey 2025¹⁵ and the programme of stakeholder engagement workshops and meetings (November 2025-January 2026)¹⁶. Potential significant negative effects, arising particularly through conflicts of different land uses, imbalance or perceived hierarchical approach to plan outcomes, and concerns to support thriving communities and livelihoods, were shared and discussed. This informed the development of the draft plan – negative effects are avoided or mitigated through the wording of the Themes and the proposed Outcomes with carefully considered and measurable Targets.
- 1.14 Thus, the process of developing the draft plan has identified potential negative effects and considered appropriate mitigation measures that have been iteratively reviewed through further consultation. Consequently, the draft Partnership Plan has inherently considered interrelationships between topics, sought to avoid significant negative effects and to promote positive effects, where possible. Mitigation measures are embedded within the Plan framework of Outcomes and Targets.
- 1.15 The Partnership Plan and the Local Plan are the two important statutory documents that guide activity, decision-making and investment on Dartmoor. Both have the same overall objective to help deliver National Park purposes. The Local Plan sets the policies that guide planning decisions about development and the use of the land. For example, Outcome 6 in Better for Communities aims for access to housing that is energy efficient, affordable and meets local needs. New development can have negative effects on sustainability and the environment and this will be assessed in detail through the detailed SA/SEA of the new emerging Local Plan. The Partnership Plan is a broader plan that sets out the long-term vision for Dartmoor and provides the framework for partnership working to deliver this. It also provides the strategic context for more specific plans and strategies, for example on nature recovery or recreation management. It may be identified that such plans or strategies should be tested through SA/SEA. There is a hierarchy of plan-making and assessment processes and this is explained further in this report in section 2.

¹⁴ <https://www.yourdartmoor.org/partnership-plan-review>

¹⁵ https://www.yourdartmoor.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0033/189528/Public-Opinion-Survey-Report-2025-.pdf

¹⁶ https://www.yourdartmoor.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0029/216749/Partnership-Plan-Stakeholder-Engagement-Report.pdf

SA Consultation and Engagement

- 1.16 The draft Plan has been developed collaboratively with Dartmoor's communities, stakeholders and partners through a programme of engagement, including workshops, surveys and discussions held across the National Park¹⁷.
- 1.17 The draft SA/SEA Scoping Report was sent to the statutory environmental bodies – Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England for the 5-week consultation period during November-December 2025. Comments received and responses made are set out in the Final SA/SEA Scoping Report (January 2026). Historic England advised that the SA scoping looks fine and appears to accord with HE's guidance. Natural England advised that they have no comments on the SA scoping. The Environment Agency was particularly concerned that aspects relating to nature recovery, natural ecosystem functioning, headwaters peatlands restoration and strategic flood risk management, and improving resilience and recovery where flood risk still occurs, were addressed in the assessment.

Compliance with the Requirements of the SEA Regulations

- 1.18 The Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations set out certain requirements for reporting the SEA process. This SA Report presents the SA/SEA testing of the draft Partnership Plan, includes a Non-Technical Summary, and an appendix that clearly signposts the requirements for reporting the SEA.

Purpose & Structure of this SA Report

- 1.19 This document reports the SA/SEA process for the draft Dartmoor Partnership Plan. Following this introductory Section 1, the SA report is structured into further sections:
- Section 2 describes the approach and methods used to assess the emerging elements of the Plan, including how consideration of reasonable alternatives has been addressed
 - Section 3 summarises the environmental context and characteristics with details available in the Final SA/SEA Scoping Report (January 2026) available on the DNPA website
 - Section 4 summaries the findings of the SA of the draft themes, outcomes and targets; it integrates the summary findings from the HRA
 - Section 5 introduces the approach to monitoring and the SA
 - Section 6 provides summary conclusions from the SA, sets out the requirements for consultation and commenting on the report, and explains the next steps.

¹⁷ <https://www.yourdartmoor.org/partnership-plan-review>

- 1.19 Appendix I comprises the Statement of Compliance with the SEA Regulations and provides signposting to where key aspects of the SA are located in the SA Report. Appendix II is the SA/SEA Scoping Report (available separately www.dartmoor.gov.uk/ and including the details of the baseline evidence and the development of the SA Framework for assessment.

2.0 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL METHODS

Introduction & the SA/SEA Process

- 2.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is an iterative and ongoing process that aims to provide a high level of protection for the environment and to promote sustainable development for plan-making. The SA/SEA is required to assess the emerging draft plan, and any reasonable alternatives, against the baseline environmental characteristics of the area and the likely situation if the plan were not to be adopted. It should integrate the findings from any draft Habitats Regulations Assessment undertaken.
- 2.2 There is a tiering of assessment processes that aligns with the hierarchy of plans – from international, national and through to local. Planning guidance advises¹⁸ that assessment should focus on what it needed to consider the likely significant effects of the plan. It does not need to be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is considered to be appropriate for the content and level of detail in the plan. This SA has taken a proportionate and pragmatic approach. It has taken account of, and drawn upon, the SA undertaken of the adopted Dartmoor National Park Local Plan (2018-2036)¹⁹ and the SA that was undertaken of the current DNPPP (2021-2026). This SA appreciates that the Partnership Plan is a high-level overarching framework to deliver the Vision for Dartmoor to 2045. As such, the overall approach to the SA is high level, reflecting the content and level of detail in the Plan. More detailed SA/SEA (and HRA/AA) may be undertaken of any specific plans that are developed, and including the preparation of the new DNPA Local Plan.

Scoping & the SA Framework

- 2.3 A key aim of the scoping procedure is to help ensure the SA process is proportionate and relevant to the plan being assessed. Relevant plans and programmes (PP) were reviewed for applicable environmental objectives, and baseline information was identified, collated and analysed to identify key issues, problems and opportunities for the DNPA plan area. The details of this analysis are presented in final SA/SEA Scoping Report (January 2026) and a summary is provided in the following Section 3 of this SA Report.
- 2.4 The overall approach to the SA/SEA considers both baseline-led and objectives-led methods. The baseline analysis considers the sensitivity and condition of the receiving environment, and the likely interactions with the emerging plan. The objectives analysis considers the extent to which the draft plan supports or conflicts with SA objectives that have been derived the SA topics scoped into the assessment and relevant environmental legislation, environmental protection objectives, and national and international policy

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

¹⁹ <https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/living-and-working/business/planning-policy/dartmoor-local-plan>

commitments – thus aligning the strategic direction of the plan with legislative and policy commitments.

2.5 The SA Framework provides the basis by which the sustainability effects of the emerging DNPPP are described and evaluated. It includes SA objectives, elaborated by decision making criteria, that are relevant to the aims of the Partnership Plan, the role and duties of the Dartmoor NPA, and sustainable development in the Dartmoor National Park area. These objectives have been identified through the SA/SEA Scoping Stage from the information collated in the PP review, baseline analysis, identification of issues/problems, discussions with DNPA Officers, and consultation comments. The SA Framework drew upon the SA/SEA scoping for the Local Plan and built further upon the previous SA/SEA undertaken of the current Partnership Plan.

2.6 The SA Framework of objectives is presented in Table 2.1 below:

Table 2.1: SA Framework

SA Objectives	
Sustainability Topic: Natural Beauty	
<i>SEA Regulations topics: landscape; flora, fauna, biodiversity</i>	
1.	To conserve and enhance the special qualities and natural beauty of the National Park
2.	To conserve, and enhance Dartmoor's special boundary features and mosaic farmland
3.	To protect and enhance sites of special geological interest and protect the landscape scale geology of Dartmoor
4.	To preserve the wild, remote & tranquil characteristics of Dartmoor, including minimising light and noise pollution
Sustainability Topic: Biodiversity & Wildlife	
<i>SEA Regulations topics: flora, fauna, biodiversity, landscape</i>	
5.	To recover and enhance natural and semi natural woodlands in the National Park
6.	To recover and enhance Dartmoor's moorland areas
7.	To recover and enhance Dartmoor's wetlands
8.	To recover and enhance habitats, and biodiversity networks for net gain and with a landscape-scale approach for nature recovery
Sustainability Topic: Historic & Built Environment; Cultural Heritage	
<i>SEA Regulations topics: cultural heritage, architectural & archaeological heritage, landscape</i>	
9.	To conserve, and enhance the historic environment of sites, areas, buildings & landmarks of archaeological, historic, cultural and/or architectural interest and their settings
10.	To enhance the attractiveness and local distinctiveness of the built environment by raising the quality of design and construction
11.	To support cultural heritage including local traditions, and improve access and understanding of local heritage
Sustainability Topic: Resources	
<i>SEA Regulations Topic: air, water, soil, biodiversity, material assets, human health</i>	
12.	To protect and improve air quality
13.	To promote efficient water use and improve water quality

14. To protect and conserve soil, land and minerals, reduce soil erosion and protect soil quality
Sustainability Topic: Climate Change SEA Regulations Topics: <i>climate change, climatic factors, air, flood risk, water, human health</i>
15. To minimise Dartmoor's contribution to climate change including through carbon storage & sequestration, energy efficiency, and renewable energy technologies
16. To reduce the risk of flood likelihood or magnitude and improve resilience and recovery where flooding still occurs
Sustainability Topic: Countryside Access & Recreation SEA Regulations topics: <i>population, human health</i>
17. To promote understanding & enjoyment of the National Park's special qualities
18. To improve access to Dartmoor's open countryside
Sustainability Topic: Economy, Education & Employment SEA Regulations topics: <i>population, human health</i>
19. To promote and support a sustainable economy, particularly of key business sectors (tourism, agriculture, leisure/recreation, small businesses), and to utilise employment land & premises effectively and efficiently
20. To enable all residents to share in growing prosperity by improving access to training, education and job opportunities
Sustainability Topic: Communities, Health & Equality SEA Regulations Topics: <i>population, human health</i>
21. To ensure that the needs of all National Park residents are met for affordable housing & access to good quality services & facilities
22. To promote sustainable transport, reduce traffic congestion & noise, and improve safety, health & air quality by reducing the need to travel, especially by car
23. To safeguard and improve community health, safety and wellbeing
24. To promote inclusiveness, equality and participation and take account of the needs of all sectors of the community in understanding and enjoying the special qualities of the National Park

- 2.7 The categories of significance used with the SA Framework are as set out in the key below:

Table 2.2: Significance Key

Categories of Significance		
	Meaning	Sustainability Effect
++	Major Positive	Plan element encouraged as would it resolve existing sustainability problem
+	Minor Positive	No constraints and plan element acceptable
0	Neutral	Neutral effect
?	Uncertain	Uncertain or Unknown Effects

-	Minor Negative	Potential sustainability issues: mitigation and/or negotiation possible
--	Major Negative	Problematical, improbable because of known sustainability issues; mitigation likely to be difficult and/or expensive

Assessing the Dartmoor National Park Partnership Plan

- 2.8 The Themes and Outcomes of the Dartmoor National Park Partnership Plan were appraised against the SA Framework of objectives using professional judgment supported by the baseline and wider plan evidence base, including the background papers. The nature of the likely environmental effects were described in the assessment commentary where possible, and together with any assumptions or uncertainties. If any significant negative effects were to be found, the SA would seek to make suggestions for mitigation. If relevant, the SA would also seek to promote opportunities for enhancement of positive or neutral effects.
- 2.9 The SA framework grouped the SA objectives into sustainability topic areas in order to better consider inter-relationships and enhance the meaningfulness of the assessment at the strategic level plan, as follows:
- Natural Beauty
 - Biodiversity & Wildlife
 - Historic & Built Environment; Cultural Heritage
 - Resources
 - Climate Change
 - Countryside Access & Recreation
 - Economy, Education & Employment
 - Communities, Health & Equality
- 2.10 The assessment under each topic considered the potential effects of the draft Outcomes of the plan against the SA objectives as well as the interrelationships between topics and cumulative effects of the plan as a whole (and as required by SEA Regulations). This also seeks to avoid duplication as so many factors are inter-related.

Assessment of Alternatives in SA/SEA

- 2.11 The SEA Regulations require assessment of the likely significant effects of implementing the plan and “reasonable alternatives” taking into account “the objectives and geographical scope” of the plan and the reasons for selecting alternatives should be outlined in the report. The Regulations do not specifically define the term “reasonable alternative”; however, UK SA/SEA guidance²⁰ advises that reasonable alternatives are the different realistic options considered by the plan-maker in developing the policies in the plan. They need to be sufficiently distinct to highlight the different implications of each so that meaningful comparisons can be made.

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

- 2.12 The Partnership Plan has developed with a strong recognition of the cross-cutting factors involved –the need to address the predicted effects of climate change and the need to improve management of the National Park for the next generation. It was determined that there were no suitable or meaningful approach options for the Plan to consider and therefore, no meaningful or reasonable alternatives for the SA to consider. Doing nothing is not a reasonable alternative for the DNPPP as the authority is required to comply with the requirements of its statutory designation as a National Park.

Consultation

- 2.13 The SEA Regulations require early and effective public consultation. The development of the Dartmoor NPPP 2027-2032 has been subject to wide consultation since 2025. The SA/SEA Scoping Report was subject to consultation during November-December 2025 for formal consultation with the SEA statutory bodies (Historic England, the Environment Agency, and Natural England). This SA Report accompanies the draft Dartmoor National Park Partnership Plan on public consultation. Any comments made on the draft plan and the SA will be taken into consideration in developing the final DNPPP for adoption.

3.0 SUSTAINABILITY CONTEXT, OBJECTIVES & BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS

Introduction

- 3.1 Full details of the plans/programmes review and baseline conditions can be found in the final SA/SEA Scoping Report (January, 2026) and they are summarised in this section. It is noted that this SA is being undertaken during a time of significant change for environmental management and assessment, and land use planning. Since the scoping stage of this SA, key documents have been published, for example, The Land Use Framework (Defra, March 2026), The Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations (August, 2026), and the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, August 2026). The following summary includes updating of relevant policy and legislative context and focuses on the key aspects relevant to the SA of the draft DNPPP.

Review of Plans and Programmes

- 3.2 Plans, programmes and projects were considered to identify the relevant objectives and environmental issues with likely implications for the plan and the SEA with key documents, as follows:

National:

- A Green Future: our 25 year plan to improve the environment (Defra, 2018, updated 2023)
- Environment Act (2021) & Local Nature Recovery Strategies (2023)
- Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA)
- Environmental Land Management ELM (update 2023)
- Environmental Improvement Plan (2023)
- Plant Biosecurity Strategy 2023-2028
- Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (January 2024) - how Protected Landscapes are expected to contribute towards Government's EIP (2023)
- Government Guidance (December 2024) sets out how the Protected Landscapes duty operates
- Delivering 30 by 30 on Land in England (2023)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, August 2026)
- The Land Use Framework (Defra, March 2026) with a vision to 2030 & 2050, identifies land uses – Housing; Energy infrastructure & Clean Power; Food Production; Nature Recovery; Resilient Landscapes; Landscapes for Water; and Communities
- The Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations (August, 2026)
- UK National Food Strategy (Defra, July 2025)
- National Adaptation Programme (NAP) & Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting (July 2023)

Regional

- South West Water Resources Management Plan (2025-2050) South West Water Drought Plan (2022)
- South West River Basin Management Plan (2015, updated 2022)
- Devon & Torbay Local Transport Local Plan 4, 2025-2040
- Devon County Council Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011; Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP March 2025); Minerals Plan 2011-2033; Waste Plan to 2031; Carbon Reduction Strategy & Plan 2024-2027; Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2026)

Local:

- Dartmoor National Park Local Plan 2018-2036
- Other Local Plans at various stages of preparation - North Devon & Torridge; Plymouth & South West Devon; Teignbridge; Mid Devon; Torbay; East Devon; Exeter City

- 3.3 Plans and policies aiming to protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, landscape character, and the historic environment are all important for Dartmoor. Plans relating to the water environment are also key, as the many rivers and streams which flow from Dartmoor are an integral part of the environment for the National Park. All these plans are relevant to adaption and mitigation of the effects of climate change – a cross cutting topic. The adjoining local plans are relevant due to the development growth proposed that can bring pressures such as recreation, and links for businesses and communities.

Summary Baseline Character & Conditions

- 3.4 **Natural Beauty & Landscape:** The Dartmoor National Character Area (NCA) is characterised by extensive upland moorland, which is overlaid with peat deposits and supports internationally important blanket bogs. The peat and bogs are important for carbon storage, and for absorbing and releasing large amounts of water. The peat condition directly affects runoff rates, peak flows, water quality and downstream flood risk, not just storage capacity. Deep-cut valleys steeped in woodland where rivers flow are notable landscape features, as are the skylines and ridges and distinct granite tors. A large amount of the National Park land is used for the grazing of cattle, sheep and ponies which has helped shape the NCA. Associated farmsteads, pastoral fields and hedgebanks are a key part of the landscape. The National Park is considered to have a high level of tranquillity, and with dark night skies - designated as a Dark Sky Reserve.
- 3.5 The State of the Park 2025 notes that a number of trends and pressures are likely to impact on Dartmoor's landscape character in the future – including forces associated with climate change, water, biodiversity and farming. Landscape scale initiatives are essential to ensure long-term resilience and rebuilding of ecosystems. This will require greater collaboration between landowners, communities and conservation groups, incentives and a willingness to deliver in new and innovative ways. Energy efficiencies are integral to good design with positive effects for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to and managing climate change effects.

- 3.6 **Biodiversity, Geodiversity & Green Infrastructure:** Within Dartmoor National Park there are 3 European designated Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); Dartmoor SAC, South Dartmoor Woods SAC and South Hams SAC. The 3 SACs cover 25,346ha (27%) of the National Park area. Dartmoor SAC is designated for the presence of several Annex I habitats, including European dry heaths, Northern Atlantic wet heaths, blanket bogs and old sessile oak woods, and for an Annex II species which is the southern damselfly. The South Dartmoor Woods SAC is designated for old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum. South Hams SAC is designated for Annex I habitats in the form of European dry heaths and semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrate, and for the presence of Greater horseshoe bats.
- 3.7 There are several national biodiversity designations within the National Park. Overall 26,262ha of the National Park (27.6%) is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - 6 notified SSSIs North Dartmoor; South Dartmoor; East Dartmoor; Dendles Wood; Tor Royal Bog; Wistmans Wood. The SSSIs are widely spread across the National Park. Within the National Park there are 44 Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), several of which are previous gravel workings or mining areas. The National Park also contains locally designated biodiversity sites, which includes County Wildlife Sites (CWS). Of the 116 sites monitored since 2009, 56 were found to be in favourable condition, 51 in fair condition, and 9 were in declining condition.
- 3.8 Moorland and woodland is the predominant habitat of the National Park, covering 83.9% of the entire National Park. Dartmoor contains a selection of Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs) which identify areas for maintenance and potential expansion of Priority Habitat. Key Wildlife Areas (KWA) have been identified on Dartmoor. In the longer term KWAs could form the basis to establish Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). The fragmentation of habitats and loss of stepping stones/linkages have negative effects on wildlife mobility. Maintaining, enhancing and creating new stepping stones/linkages will be beneficial for local biodiversity.
- 3.9 Dartmoor's peatlands have been damaged with just 0.8% still intact peat-forming bog – the remainder damaged by drainage, cutting, drying and erosion. Water is coming off the damaged peatlands more quickly contributing to flood risk downstream. The damaged peat is releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and dissolved carbon and silt into rivers. As the peat dries out, there is loss of the wildlife that relies on the peat bogs. Peatland restoration will bring multiple benefits including resilience to climate change, improvements to the hydrological functioning, and restoring ecosystems that support the recovery of habitats and associated wildlife.
- 3.10 There are a variety of protected species on Dartmoor, protected at both an international and a national level. Dartmoor encompasses vast expanses of wildlife-rich habitat, yet longstanding concerns remain over the poor ecological condition of many of these areas and the declining populations of key species.

- 3.11 Dartmoor has an important role to play for Green Infrastructure (GI) of Devon and the South West as a whole. Due to the presence of a variety of habitats, open spaces and recreation areas, and several large rivers and many smaller streams, green and blue networks can be found across the moor. GI has a strong role to play in managing flood risk and surface water management.
- 3.12 Dartmoor is a popular tourist destination with visitors coming to the National Park throughout the year. However high number of visitors can have detrimental effects on key habitats and wildlife, through disturbance, litter and increased recreational pressure. Wider habitat management is key to providing sufficient suitable habitats for wildlife. Habitat enhancement or creation can be used in strategic locations away from recreation hotspots.
- 3.13 Farming is a prominent feature of the Dartmoor landscape, and a large component of the National Park's economy, with 86.3% of the National Park land used for farming. Farming on Dartmoor has helped shape the landscape, including managing habitats, for thousands of years. However, farming practices, such as grazing, have the potential to have negative effects on priority habitats and on protected and priority species. Forestry is also an active industry on Dartmoor
- 3.14 **Historic Environment:** The archaeological landscape of Dartmoor is extensive, as people have been using the landscape, and leaving their mark on Dartmoor for thousands of years. The various communities which have lived and farmed on Dartmoor have not only shaped the physical landscape but have imposed their cultural practises and traditions in the form of Dartmoor's cultural heritage. Dartmoor has historic farmsteads, longhouses and historic settlements, with a wide range of other historic assets located across the National Park.
- 3.15 Dartmoor has a variety of designated heritage assets. Overall there are: 1083 Scheduled Monuments; 2059 Listed Buildings; 2 Registered Parks and Gardens; 25 Conservation Areas; 14 Premier Archaeological Landscapes; Non-designated heritage assets; and 24,022 Historic Environment Record Sites. Not all the archaeological and historic features on Dartmoor are designated. Many of these historical features are integral parts of the landscape and may have local significance to communities and individuals, contributing strongly to the character of places.
- 3.16 Changes in the farming industry have resulted in many farmsteads and farm buildings no longer being used for agricultural purposes. Allowing residential occupation of historic farm buildings helps support a new generation of young farmers and retired farmers; it can also promote the maintenance or enhancement of such heritage. There is a risk that conversion of historic agricultural buildings to residential or holiday lets would have significant adverse effects on the cultural heritage of the Park.
- 3.17 **Soils, Land & Minerals:** Dartmoor's geology is mainly comprised of granite which has been quarried for centuries. Weathering and erosion on Dartmoor have resulted in the creation of Tors, large outcrops of granite rock, which are a notable feature in the National Park landscape. Mining has also been a

feature of Dartmoor landscape, with the resources of tin, copper, and lead. Due to the impermeability of the granite formation, Dartmoor has a high drainage rate. Currently there are only a small number of quarries within the National Park.

- 3.18 The soil on the Dartmoor has been influenced by the underlying granite geology, organic matter and the climatic conditions. Raw peat deposits cover the higher areas of the moor, and there are areas of blanket bogs and valley mires on the higher areas. The peat soil is prone to wind and water erosion. Although farming is prevalent in the National Park with 86% of Dartmoor declared as utilisable agricultural area, the soil type is mostly designated as Grade 5, least fertile. Due to the poor soil quality, horticulture, arable farming and dairy farming are constrained to small areas within the National Park.
- 3.19 The soil resources of Dartmoor are still important, and non-intensive grazing of sheep, ponies and cattle rely on soil for grazing. The loss of soil resources can not only affect farming but also biodiversity. Soils are important for nature recovery, carbon storage and natural flood management – the high moors are overlaid with thick deposits of peat and support internationally important blanket bogs. These bogs and mires absorb and store significant amounts of water and carbon.
- 3.20 **Water: Resources, Quality, Flooding:** Dartmoor is considered to be a major water catchment in the south west, with a network of streams and mires on the high moor feeding into fast flowing rivers. Much of Devon including the city of Plymouth, has its water supplied from Dartmoor. The National Park is within the Roadford Water Resource Zone (WRZ) with water services provided by South West Water. The Roadford WRZ is mainly served by Roadford Reservoir and the Water Resources Management Plan WRMP24 indicates that there is a significant risk of a supply-demand deficit in 4 or the 5 WRZs, including the Roadford zone. Within Dartmoor there are some small areas designated as Groundwater Source Protection Zones.
- 3.21 Dartmoor is within the South West River Basin District, and the National Park is within 3 different Management Catchment Areas; North Devon, South Devon and Tamar. The chemical and ecological status of waterbodies on Dartmoor is mainly affected by pollution from agricultural runoff but some waterbodies are affected by mine drainage and natural factors such as pH. It is assumed that sewage is collected and treated through rural sewage treatment works and localised septic tanks, but no details have been found.
- 3.22 The main flood risks on Dartmoor occur from fluvial and surface water sources, with fluvial flooding being the main flood source. Surface water flooding, which includes direct runoff, inadequate stormwater drainage and land drainage, is another significant flood source within the National Park. Dartmoor contains the headwaters of Teign, Dart, Tavy, Plym, Erme catchments and thus it is important with regard to flood risk benefits downstream of the NP boundary. Settlements where people and property are at greatest risk are in the Local Centres of Ashburton, Buckfastleigh, and Horrabridge. More sustainable flood risk management includes

provision/maintenance of habitats and land use higher up the catchments thus helping to attenuate surfacewater run-off and flood risk lower down the catchment. There has been some progress in this respect on Dartmoor but the underlying geology and associated land use may limit further possibilities.

- 3.23 **Communities:** Dartmoor has a population of around 34,000 residents who live within the National Park boundaries and this is considered to be stable. The average age of residents in Dartmoor is around 50, which is higher than the average age of 46 for Devon and 40 for England. The ageing population of Dartmoor means that the proportion of residents who are over 65 has risen. The ethnic composition of Dartmoor is predominantly White British and is higher than the national average. Each settlement on Dartmoor has its unique features and identity, and therefore each settlement has its own set of issues that are important to that specific community. Common issues across communities include access to local services/facilities, employment in settlements and rural areas, public transport and traffic. The fewer employment opportunities has resulted in people out-commuting for employment, a lack of opportunity for young people and weaker economies for local settlements.
- 3.24 House prices in the National Park largely exceed average earnings. Young people, seasonal staff and part time workers, and other key workers are priced out of Dartmoor as they cannot afford accommodation. Enabling people to continue to farm whilst providing the highest status of protection to the landscape remains an issue. Housing growth will need to consider water & wastewater capacity and infrastructure within the Park.
- 3.25 **Health & Equality:** Dartmoor has a lower than average Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score, of 18.2 compared to the national average of 21.7. Rural areas, like Dartmoor, tend to score most highly on deprivation indicators such as income, access to services and employment. Health on Dartmoor is consistent with national figures, with 81% of Dartmoor residents reporting good or very good health, and just over 5% reporting bad or very bad health. 29% of the population on Dartmoor is over 65 and more people on Dartmoor will be over 65 in 2035 than in 2021.
- 3.26 Accessibility for all remains a key objective for the DNPA Good access to open space and recreation facilities results in positive health effects and well-being. Overall, 49% of Dartmoor National Park is designated as Access Land for the public, and therefore all residents and visitors have access to this land to use for recreational purposes. The top issues impacting visitor experience are litter; too many visitors; poor parking; speeding vehicles; and dog behaviour.
- 3.27 **Economy and Employment:** The State of the Park report (2025) indicates that employees are in six key sectors – agriculture & forestry; health & care; arts & recreation; accommodation & food services; retail; and education. Many of the National Park's sectors with the highest number of jobs including agriculture and accommodation are those with the lowest average turnover per employee.

- 3.28 In 2023, there were 3.09 million people who visited Dartmoor National Park, attracted by the area's wildlife, natural beauty, tranquillity and cultural heritage. The tourism sector employs 2,691 people - more than any other sector within the National Park. The economy on Dartmoor is heavily reliant on the tourism industry and it is important that tourism can help to increase understanding of the National Park without causing damage to its special qualities. Availability of broadband connectivity and mobile connection is vital to enable rural businesses to thrive and ensure the growth of the rural economy.
- 3.29 **Transport & Movement:** Dartmoor is bordered to the north by the A30, to the south by the A38 and to the west by the A386. The A30 and A38 to the east provide access to the M5 at Exeter. Within the National Park, there are 2 main roads which cross east to west, the B3212 and the B3357. A 40mph speed limit has been enforced on Dartmoor due to the presence of grazing cattle, sheep and ponies. Traffic on Dartmoor is not a serious problem, as the main roads crossing the moor are not generally used by commuters. The main mode of transport for locals is private vehicles such as cars and vans, with public transport being a much less used form of transport in rural areas. Bus services in Dartmoor are limited.
- 3.30 The Public Rights of Way Network (PRoW) on Dartmoor is extensive, with 733 km of footpaths, bridleways and byways located across the National Park. 86% of this is considered to be 'easy to use'. There is the potential for the PRoW network to suffer further disrepair as a result of climate change. There are several long-distance footpaths on Dartmoor, including the Two Moors Way, the Tarka Trail and the Two Castles Trail. The National Park also contains National Cycle Routes.
- 3.31 **Energy & Climate Change:** The largest emissions categories on Dartmoor are energy (36%), agriculture (26%), food and drink (23%), and travel (16%). Transport is a high source of energy consumption due to the rural nature of the area, which requires individuals to rely on private vehicles for mobility and to access services/facilities. Land management can form part of the solution to reaching net zero as carbon can be sequestered (absorbed) by trees, hedgerows, grasslands and other healthy soils. There is the potential to use different renewable energy sources within the National Park, such as wind power, solar power and hydro power. However, renewable energy developments can have negative effects on the special qualities of the National Park.
- 3.32 Overall the climate of Dartmoor is changing, becoming warmer and wetter with a longer growing season. The changes occurring as a result of climate change will have an impact on the agricultural industry. Also, changes will affect the ecology of the National Park. There are opportunities for mitigating climate change through land management changes and nature recovery, for example, peatland restoration, increasing soil carbon storage, and with more woodland planting. Peatland restoration is integral to climate resilience, safeguarding water supply/quality in addition to other benefits of carbon storage, ecosystem function and habitat management.

Likely Evolution of Baseline without Partnership Plan

- 3.33 Without a Partnership Plan, changes in land use and land management have the potential to result in negative effects on the landscape characteristics and biodiversity/geodiversity assets of Dartmoor. The Plan can help ensure that decision-making addresses the key challenges for dealing with the predicted effects of climate change and the anticipated increases in visitor numbers.
- 3.34 For example, letting natural processes take their course with more trees and more natural river systems will change the landscape character and it could change the quality of the landscape with its natural beauty. Without a plan and managed landscapes, there is a risk of increased flooding and loss of natural attenuation. However, a Partnership Plan composed of agreed priority outcomes with proposed targets can guide activities in a more coordinated way seeking to minimise negative effects and optimise positive effects – this is particularly relevant to managing natural beauty at a landscape (strategic) scale.
- 3.35 By developing a new Partnership Plan, activities will be guided such that the key sensitive areas are protected, for example, priority habitats, priority species, stepping stones and habitat linkages. The Partnership Plan can ensure areas of important biodiversity and geodiversity are given sufficient protection from harmful activities. It can also take a leading role to promote a nature recovery approach aligned with changes to farming subsidies.
- 3.36 Without the Plan, designated heritage assets would still be protected through national and local policy. However, undesignated heritage assets, heritage settings and potential archaeology could be more vulnerable to the impacts of land management change – with cumulative effects for the rich cultural and historic environment of the National Park as a whole.
- 3.37 Without the Plan, and coordinated nature/GI management, there will be increased flood risk and loss of natural flood attenuation. With a plan, activities can be coordinated in a more strategic manner that better supports aims for sustainable water management. It may be noted that flood risk and extreme weather events, cannot be eliminated through plan-making, only reduced and that extreme events will still occur.
- 3.38 Without the plan, changes to management activities could have negative effects on communities through affecting employment, services and facilities. Without the plan, current health and equality issues in the National Park may be exacerbated, including the limited range of diversity of visitors. there would be a potential failure to support economic growth and benefits to the National Park's communities.
- 3.39 There is national policy relating to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which would likely result in reduced energy consumption within the National Park. However, specific encouragement in the new Partnership Plan could promote a high level of energy efficiencies and stronger sustainability, as well as supporting sustainable transport. The plan can also promote more

resilience to the effects of climate change through sustainable water management and nature recovery.

Key Sustainability Issues, Problems & Opportunities

3.40 The key sustainability issues, problems and opportunities were derived from the analysis of the identified baseline conditions, characteristics of the plan area and taking into account the objectives of other relevant plans and programmes. The SA Objectives were then developed, and they aim to resolve the identified issues/problems and seek to promote the opportunities. The key issues may be summarised, as follows:

- Potential conflicts between themes in the plan, for example, nature recovery/habitat restoration versus farming, archaeology and access; pressures to increase afforestation versus traditional farming with open and wild moorland; encouraging increase in visitors with problems of path/soil erosion and capacities of more vulnerable/sensitive areas; military training and tranquillity, access, biodiversity; economy versus conservation/enhancement
- Extent of nature recovery and rewilding; natural regeneration of native woodland and commercial forestry including conifer plantations
- Importance of rivers and their roles in sustainable water management and climate change resilience
- Importance for peatland restoration and strategic nature recovery, natural functioning of ecosystems, including benefits for water, flooding, soils, nature, climate change, and human health
- Vibrant economy needed to enable Dartmoor to be a living place
- The special landscape needs to support all – farmers, visitors, wildlife and natural resources

4.0 SA OF THE DRAFT DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2027-2032

Introduction

- 4.1 The cross-cutting Themes for A Better Response to Climate Change and Better for the Next Generation were assessed and it was noted that effects also extend to the other Themes (as signified through green and blue shading in the draft plan). The five specific Themes Better for – Nature & Natural Beauty; Cultural Heritage; Farming & Forestry; People; Business & Communities) comprised of Outcomes and Targets were assessed using the SA Framework of objectives, the baseline information and professional judgment to consider the likely significant effects. The grouping of the SA objectives into sustainability topics seeks to avoid duplication and to more clearly consider the inter-relationships between topics and any cumulative effects. The SA objectives for each SA theme are considered together and any noteworthy comment is made in the narrative assessment. A summary assessment representing the assessment finding for each grouping of SA objectives is provided later in a summary table that uses symbols and colours to show the nature and significance of effects.
- 4.2 SA should be proportionate and relevant to the level and sphere of influence of the draft plan being assessed. As previously explained in paragraphs 1.13 and 2.2 of this report, this SA has taken a pragmatic and proportionate approach, recognising that the DNPPP has been prepared through an iterative and strongly participatory process that has included identification of significant negative effects and inter-relationships between topics. Mitigation measures have been investigated and informed the proposed wording of the Outcomes and specific Targets, such that mitigation to avoid significant negative effects for any specific theme has been embedded into the development of the plan.

SA of Outcomes & Targets: Natural Beauty

4.3

Natural Beauty

SEA Directive Topics: Landscape, flora, fauna, biodiversity

Relevant SA Objectives:

- SA Objective 1: To conserve & enhance the special qualities and natural beauty of the National Park
- SA Objective 2: To conserve & enhance Dartmoor's special boundary features and mosaic farmland
- SA Objective 3: To protect and enhance sites of special geological interest and protect the landscape scale geology of Dartmoor
- SA Objective 4: To preserve the wild, remote & tranquil characteristics of Dartmoor, including minimising light and noise pollution

- 4.4 The three proposed Outcomes for the Theme of Better Response to Climate Change will all have inter-related positive effects for SEA objectives on Natural Beauty by seeking to address the effects of climate change through recognition of the need for a cross-cutting approach – and specifically citing Dartmoor's landscapes. Boundary features were not specifically listed in the Climate Risk Summary Table but the risk to upland meadows is reported as extreme, together with the Rhos pasture, blanket bogs and valley mire. Thus, the positive effects will be for a clearly identified sustainability problem and are likely to be synergistic and cumulative in the longer term, although there can be uncertainties for effects associated with climate change. The Outcome 1 for children and young people to have regular, inclusive opportunities to enjoy and learn about Dartmoor will not have direct effects on the SEA topic. However, embedding the needs and aspirations of future generations in the planning and management of Dartmoor in Outcome 2 will help secure the delivery of positive effects, particularly in the longer term.
- 4.5 The three proposed Outcomes for the Theme of Better for Nature & Natural Beauty will all have major positive effects for SEA objectives on natural beauty and these will be synergistic and cumulative in the longer term. The Outcome for a nature first approach comprises an overarching commitment that recognises landscape-scale ecological restoration. Landscape scale initiatives are essential to ensure long-term resilience and rebuilding of ecosystems. The need for a shared evidence base and improved understanding will contribute to delivery of the positive effects, with certainty indicated by the specific measurable proposed targets. The recognition that species reintroductions should be appropriate and where suitable provides mitigation for any potential negative effects that could arise from the third Outcome proposed.
- 4.6 The Outcomes for the Theme of Better for Cultural Heritage will have positive and neutral effects on natural beauty. Whilst development of a comprehensive, accessible evidence base will not have direct effects on SEA objectives for natural beauty, overall it will contribute to the effective implementation of the other two Outcomes that will then have positive effects.
- 4.7 The six Outcomes on Better for Farming & Forestry have been developed to ensure that the natural beauty of Dartmoor is maintained and enhanced through the landscape scale changes that are needed to ensure resilience to the predicted effects of climate change. Upland farming has shaped the special qualities of the National Park and its communities. The increasing public support and interest in environmental goods, such as carbon storage and rewilding, was recognised in the previous DNPPP, noting that this could reduce the land available for agricultural production. Such understanding has been considerably further developed in the new draft plan with Outcomes specific to supporting farm and woodland businesses. The clear and measurable Targets will help ensure that such embedded mitigation measures will be implemented with the predicted positive effects and avoidance of significant negative effects. A high risk was identified to the

economic viability of upland farming with livestock productivity and grazing-based land management under pressure from climate hazards.

- 4.8 Supporting farm businesses to be economically viable and resilient will have major positive effects for farming practices, likely in the longer term as the ELM schemes develop and improve with positive effects overall for natural beauty objectives. There is uncertainty associated with the vulnerability of marginal Less Favoured Area (LFA) livestock units to economic forces, and uncertainties associated with limited upland options in the Farming Incentive Scheme and Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier. The plan recognises these forces for change and seeks opportunities, for example improving supply chains and promoting locally produced products. The plan notes that supporting new models to help the next generation and new entrants will require investment, tenure and affordable housing. Investment in sustainable energy such as small scaler wind and solar will help. The issues and effects associated with new housing and renewable energy developments will be subject to detailed SA through the local plan process.
- 4.9 The “*sustainable and collaborative land management*” in Outcome 5, together with a target 5.3a to establish a baseline understanding including “*landscape considerations*” should further enable mitigation measures are in place to conserve natural beauty. Whilst a shared evidence base will not have direct effects on SEA objectives for natural beauty, overall it will contribute to the effective implementation of the other five Outcomes that will have positive effects. The aim of clear pathways for new and next generation farmers and land managers to thrive will have help continue positive effects for the longer term.
- 4.10 The new Plan and its predecessors understand the potential conflicts between aspirations for landscape scale nature recovery and the need to manage visitor pressures to maintain a balance between access, tranquillity, nature and landscape character. Better for People Outcome 1 has Dartmoor accessed and enjoyed by a diverse range of people, with Outcome 2 improving the transport network to enable more people with the potential for negative effects on natural beauty. However, these are mitigated through the Outcome 3 that “*maintains a balance between accessible, well-serviced areas and wilder, quieter spaces, sustaining... landscape character...*”.
- 4.11 The Outcomes 1-3 in Better for Communities & Business will not have direct effects on SEA objectives for natural beauty – neutral. Outcomes 4-6 by sustaining employment and businesses, and providing housing will overall contribute to sustaining the living and working in the National Park with likely positive effects but uncertainty of their significance. Upland farming has shaped the special qualities of the National Park and its communities, such that positive effects for business and communities will in turn contribute to sustaining the natural beauty.

SA of Outcomes & Targets: Biodiversity & Wildlife

4.12

Biodiversity & Wildlife

SEA Directive Topics: Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna; Health, Landscape

Relevant SA Objectives:

- SA Objective 5: To recover and enhance natural and semi natural woodlands in the National Park
- SA Objective 6: To recover and enhance Dartmoor's moorland areas
- SA Objective 7: To recover and enhance Dartmoor's wetlands
- SA Objective 8: To recover and enhance habitats, and biodiversity networks for net gain and with a landscape-scale approach for nature recovery

- 4.13 The Outcomes 1-3 for the Theme of Better Response to Climate Change will all have inter-related positive effects for SEA objectives on Biodiversity & Wildlife by seeking to address the effects of climate change through recognition of the need for a cross-cutting approach. Whilst biodiversity is not specifically mentioned, Outcome 3 refers to Dartmoor's landscapes – and these are in themselves composed of their characteristic biodiversity and wildlife.
- 4.14 The Outcome 1 for children and young people to have regular, inclusive opportunities to enjoy and learn about Dartmoor will not have direct effects on the SEA topic. However, embedding the needs and aspirations of future generations in the planning and management of Dartmoor in Outcome 2 will help secure the delivery of positive effects, particularly in the longer term.
- 4.15 Outcomes 1-3 of the Theme for Nature & Natural Beauty will all have major positive effects for SEA objectives on biodiversity & wildlife and these will be synergistic and cumulative in the longer term. This will be promoted by ambitious, clear targets, including all delivery programmes to apply a nature-first approach, increasing proportion of Dartmoor managed under coordinated landscape-scale nature recovery by 0-40%, indicating certainty of the predicted positive effects. The potential for certain negative effects through reintroductions of species has been recognised and mitigated through the inclusion in Outcome 3 for “*where suitable*”.
- 4.16 Outcomes 1-3 for the Theme of Cultural Heritage are likely to have neutral effects for SEA objectives on biodiversity & wildlife.
- 4.17 Outcome 1 of the Theme for Better Farming & Forestry supports viability and resilience of farm businesses with a target to influence the improvement and evolution of Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes. Habitat and ecosystem restoration, and at a landscape-scale, is fundamental to the ELM system indicating positive effects – likely in the longer term and some uncertainty of significance for now. Outcomes 2 and 4 recognise the role of farming and woodland systems for improvement in biodiversity. The target for collaborative deer management helps resolve an identified environmental problem with positive effects. The coordinated support in Outcome 6 will

support such land management into the future with potential positive effects but some uncertainty of precise significance.

- 4.18 Outcomes 1-2 of the Theme of Better for People are likely to be neutral for SEA objectives on biodiversity & wildlife. Positive effects are indicated for Outcome 3 that recognises the potential inherent conflicts between users and effects on biodiversity. Maintaining a balance between accessible and wilder spaces sustaining biodiversity provides mitigation and supports positive effects to accommodate increasing use.
- 4.19 The Outcomes 1-6 in the Theme of Better for Communities & Business are likely to have neutral-minor positive effects overall on SEA objectives for biodiversity and wildlife. No significant negative effects were identified. Three outcomes are likely to have neutral effects and three outcomes are likely to have some minor positive effects with some uncertainties of such significance. For example, provision of employment, housing and renewable energy land will be planned and managed through the local plan process. Such new development has the potential for negative effects and also requirements for improvements, such as the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements which are likely to have positive effects on SA objectives for biodiversity and wildlife. Such plans and proposals will be subject to detailed SA/SEA in due course – thus providing embedded mitigation measures in the PP.

SA of Outcomes & Targets: Historic & Built environment; Cultural Heritage

4.20

Historic & Built Environment; Cultural Heritage

SEA Directive Topics: Cultural Heritage, *architectural & archaeological heritage, landscape*

Relevant SA Objectives:

- SA Objective 9: To conserve, and enhance the historic environment of sites, areas, buildings & landmarks of archaeological, historic, cultural and/or architectural interest and their settings
- SA Objective 10: To enhance the attractiveness and local distinctiveness of the built environment by raising the quality of design and construction
- SA Objective 11: to support cultural heritage including local traditions, and improve access and understanding of local heritage

- 4.21 The Outcomes 1-3 for the Theme of Better Response to Climate Change will all have inter-related positive effects for SEA objectives on the historic & built environment and cultural heritage by seeking to address the effects of climate change through recognition of the need for a cross-cutting approach. Outcome 3 refers to Dartmoor's cultural heritage and infrastructure – both being more resilient and better adapted to impacts of climate change.

- 4.22 The Outcome 1 for children and young people to have regular, inclusive opportunities to enjoy and learn about Dartmoor will not have direct effects

on the SEA topic. However, embedding the needs and aspirations of future generations in the planning and management of Dartmoor in Outcome 2 will help secure the delivery of positive effects, particularly in the longer term.

- 4.23 Outcomes 1-3 of the Theme for Nature & Natural Beauty will all have neutral effects on SEA objectives for the historic environment and cultural heritage.
- 4.24 Outcomes 1-2 of the Theme of Better for Cultural Heritage will have major positive effects for SEA objectives on the historic environment & cultural heritage and these will be synergistic and cumulative in the longer term. The target to ensure heritage considerations are integrated into 100% of relevant land management plans and environmental funding projects will help ensure the certainty of these positive effects. Similarly, the target to produce and adopt a Cultural Heritage Climate Adaptation Strategy by 2032 will help ensure that effects of climate change are addressed. The Outcome to sustain Dartmoor's cultural identity through learning and participation will support positive effects but some uncertainty of significance.
- 4.25 The Outcomes 1-6 of the theme of Better for Farming and Forestry are likely to have neutral effects for SEA objectives on the historic environment and cultural heritage. Outcomes 2-3 specifically refer to support for biodiversity, carbon storage, and ecosystems in the context of farming and woodland with climate change action and nature recovery. Cultural heritage and the historic environment is not specifically mentioned but such assets are protected through other mechanisms, and for example, farming infrastructure such as renewable energy and water storage will be subject to local planning management that will have been subject to detailed SA/SEA.
- 4.26 Outcomes 2-3 of the Theme for Better for People are likely to have neutral effects on SEA objectives for the historic environment and cultural heritage, which include both well-serviced areas and wilder quieter areas. Outcome 1 with access and enjoyment by a diverse range of people should enhance the extent of the positive effects from the historic and cultural environments for people.
- 4.27 The Outcomes 1-6 in the Theme of Better for Communities & Business are likely to have neutral effects on SEA objectives for the historic environment and cultural heritage, although the support for "*a thriving cultural life*" is recognised in Outcome 1.

SA of Outcomes & Targets: Resources – Air, Water, Soil, Land, Minerals

4.28

Resources: Air, Water, Soil, Land & Minerals

SEA Directive Topics: *air, water, soil, biodiversity, material assets, human health*

Relevant SA Objectives:

- SA Objective 12: To protect and improve air quality
- SA Objective 13: To promote efficient water use and improve water quality
- SA Objective 14: To protect & conserve soil, land & minerals, reduce soil erosion and protect soil quality

- 4.29 The Outcomes 1-3 for the Theme of Better Response to Climate Change will all have inter-related positive effects for SEA objectives on air, water, soil and land by seeking to address the effects of climate change through recognition of the need for a cross-cutting approach. The clear commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions whilst increasing carbon sequestration and storage in Outcome 2 will support certainty of the positive effects – particularly in the longer term.
- 4.30 The Outcome 1 in Better for the Next Generation for children and young people to have regular, inclusive opportunities to enjoy and learn about Dartmoor will not have direct effects on the SEA topic. However, embedding the needs and aspirations of future generations in the planning and management of Dartmoor in Outcome 2 will help secure the delivery of positive effects in the longer term.
- 4.31 Outcomes 1-3 of the Theme for Nature & Natural Beauty will all have positive effects for SEA objectives on natural resources and these will be synergistic and cumulative in the longer term. The nature-first approach in Outcome 1 underpinning decision-making across Dartmoor supports connectivity and natural functioning of habitats to support water quality and climate regulation as set out in Outcome 2 indicate positive effects. Targets include specific quantities of peatland restoration, improvement of river water quality, and soil health – confirming likely positive effects. Outcome 3 with priority species thriving is likely to have some positive effects on natural resources but significance is uncertain.
- 4.32 Outcomes 1-3 of the Theme for Better for Cultural Heritage will have neutral effects on SEA objectives for natural resources.
- 4.33 All the Outcomes 1-6 of the Theme on Better for Farming & Forestry are likely to have some positive effects on natural resources through enabling shared knowledge, supporting climate resilience and adaptation, and supporting farm and woodland business, including the next generation. Soil health is fundamental to EML schemes, together with reduced inorganic fertiliser and pesticide use, such that there will be positive effects for air, water, soil and land, particularly in the longer term. Outcome 2 includes a target to develop a National Park wildfire strategy by 2028 and a target to restore 2000 hectares

of peatland – and these will help resolve identified environmental problems with further positive effects.

- 4.34 Outcomes 1-2 of the Theme of Better for People are likely to be neutral for SEA objectives on natural resources. Positive effects are indicated for Outcome 3 where the balance between accessible, well serviced areas and wilder, quieter areas should help reduce the pressure on the soil/land resource by soil erosion/compaction through overuse, thus helping to resolve an identified environmental problem.
- 4.35 The Outcomes 1-2 & 4 in the Theme Better for Communities & Business are likely to have neutral effects on SA objectives for resources, whilst Outcome 3 that increases sustainable transport will have positive effects by reducing potential pollution of natural resources. Outcome 5 with resilience to climate change and Outcome 6 with energy efficient housing are likely to have some positive effects but some uncertainty for significance overall.

SA of Outcomes & Targets: Climate Change

4.36

Climate Change

SEA Directive Topics: *climate change, climatic factors, air, flood risk, water, human health*

Relevant SA Objectives:

- SA Objective 15: To minimise Dartmoor's contribution to climate change including through carbon storage & sequestration, energy efficiency, and renewable energy technologies
- SA Objective 16: To reduce the risk of flooding from all sources and manage flood risk more sustainably

- 4.37 The importance of adapting to and mitigating for the predicted effects of climate change is fundamental to the Plan and the Theme of Better Response to Climate Change is at the heart of the new Plan, cross-cutting and integrated throughout the other Themes of the Plan. Therefore, major positive effects indicated that will be synergistic and cumulative in the longer-term.
- 4.38 The Outcome 1 in Better for the Next Generation for children and young people to have regular, inclusive opportunities to enjoy and learn about Dartmoor will not have direct effects on the SEA topic. However, embedding the needs and aspirations of future generations in the planning and management of Dartmoor in Outcome 2 will help secure the delivery of positive effects in the longer term.
- 4.39 Outcomes 1-3 of the Theme for Nature & Natural Beauty will all have positive effects for SEA objectives on climate change and these will be synergistic and cumulative in the longer term. The nature-first approach in Outcome 1 underpinning decision-making across Dartmoor supports connectivity and natural functioning of habitats to support water quality and climate

regulation as set out in Outcome 2 indicate positive effects. Targets include specific quantities of peatland restoration to support recovery of natural hydrological functioning – confirming likely positive effects. Outcome 3 with priority species thriving may have some positive effects as their recovery is inter-related with addressing climate change but significance is uncertain.

- 4.40 Outcomes 1-3 of the Theme for Better for Cultural Heritage will have neutral effects on SEA objectives for climate change in themselves, (although the target to produce a Cultural Heritage Climate Adaptation Strategy is noted and will have positive effects for other SEA objectives as reported earlier).
- 4.41 All the Outcomes 1-6 of the Theme on Better for Farming & Forestry are likely to have some positive effects on SEA objectives for climate change through enabling shared knowledge, supporting climate resilience and adaptation, and supporting farm and woodland business, including the next generation. Outcomes 2 and 4 with their specific focus on resilience and adaptation may progress towards major positive effects in the longer term.
- 4.42 Outcomes 1-3 of the Theme of Better for People are likely to have neutral or not directly applicable effects for SEA objectives on climate change.
- 4.43 The Outcomes 1-2 & 4 in the Theme Better for Communities & Business are likely to have neutral effects on SA objectives for climate change, whilst Outcome 3 that increases sustainable transport will have positive effects by reducing emissions. Outcome 5 with specific resilience and adaptation to climate change and Outcome 6 with energy efficient housing are likely to have positive effects.

SA of Outcomes & Targets: Countryside Access & Recreation

4.44

Countryside Access & Recreation

SEA Directive Topics: Population & Human Health

Relevant SA Objectives:

- SA Objective 17: To promote understanding & enjoyment of the National Park's special qualities
- SA Objective 18: To improve access to Dartmoor's open countryside

- 4.45 The Outcomes 1-3 for the Theme of Better Response to Climate Change will all have inter-related positive effects for SEA objectives on access and recreation by seeking to address the effects of climate change through recognition of the need for a cross-cutting approach.
- 4.46 The Outcome 1 in Better for the Next Generation for children and young people to have regular, inclusive opportunities to enjoy and learn about Dartmoor will have major positive effects on the SEA topic for access and recreation. Embedding the needs and aspirations of future generations in the planning and management of Dartmoor in Outcome 2 will help secure the delivery of positive effects in the longer term.

- 4.47 Outcomes 1 in the Themes for Better for Nature & Natural Beauty and Better for Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage are likely to have positive effects for promoting enjoyment and improving access to the National Park through promoting greater public understanding. Other Outcomes 2-3 are not directly applicable and neutral effects are indicated.
- 4.48 All the Outcomes 1-6 of the Theme on Better for Farming & Forestry are likely to have some positive effects for the open countryside through their overall approach to sustaining farming and woodland systems but are not directly applicable to these SEA objectives.. Most of the intentions for Better for Farming & Forestry will support the special qualities of the Park and sustain farming and forestry such that there will continue to be some positive effects for SA objectives on enjoyment and understanding but with uncertainty of significance.
- 4.49 Outcomes 1-3 of the Theme of Better for People are likely to have major positive effects for SEA objectives on access and recreation, particularly with inclusivity, participation, and awareness.
- 4.50 The Outcomes 1-6 in the Theme of Better for Communities & Business are likely to be not applicable and thus to have neutral effects on SEA objectives for access and recreation.

SA of Outcomes & Targets: Economy, Education & Employment

4.51

Economy, Education & Employment

SEA Directive Topics: Population & Human Health

Relevant SA Objectives:

- SA Objective 19: To promote & support the economy, especially key business sectors of tourism, agriculture, leisure/recreation and small businesses, and to utilise employment land & premises effectively & efficiently
- SA Objective 20: To enable all residents to share in growing prosperity by improving access to training, education and job opportunities

- 4.52 The Outcomes 1-3 for the Theme of Better Response to Climate Change will all have inter-related positive effects for SEA objectives on the economy, education and employment by seeking to address the effects of climate change through recognition of the need for a cross-cutting approach to this issue that is fundamental to the economic sustainability of the Park.
- 4.53 The Outcome 1 in Better for the Next Generation for children and young people to have regular, inclusive opportunities to enjoy and learn about Dartmoor will have positive effects on the SEA objectives for learning. Embedding the needs and aspirations of future generations in the planning

and management of Dartmoor in Outcome 2 will help secure the delivery of positive effects in the longer term.

- 4.54 Outcomes 1-2 of the Theme for Nature & Natural Beauty are likely to have positive effects for SEA objectives on the economy and employment since these are dependent on the sustainability of Dartmoor's natural environment. Outcome 3 with priority species thriving is less directly applicable, so neutral effects.
- 4.55 Outcomes 2-3 of the Theme for Better for Cultural Heritage are likely to have positive effects for SEA objectives on the economy and employment since these are dependent on the sustainability of Dartmoor's natural environment. Outcome 1 with its support for effective management of historic and cultural resources will support such positive effects for these SEA objectives but with some uncertainty of significance.
- 4.56 All the Outcomes in Better for Farming & Forestry will have positive effects for SEA objectives on employment and economy with likely major positive effects in the longer term for Outcomes 1,3, 4 & 6. Outcome 1 of the Theme for Better Farming & Forestry supports viability and resilience of farm businesses with a target to influence the improvement and evolution of Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes. Habitat and ecosystem restoration, and at a landscape-scale, is fundamental to the ELM system such that mitigation is provided for potential adverse effects that could arise through uncoordinated farming activities. Similarly, Outcome 2 includes a target for a Dartmoor Land Use Framework by 2029 to inform land management priorities – again providing mitigation for any potential conflicts of use with potential negative effects. Outcome 5 also includes a target for a shared framework for woodland, and Outcome 6 aims to re-establish a Dartmoor Forestry Group that will help to ensure implementation of positive effects indicated.
- 4.57 The Outcomes in the Theme Better for People mostly relate to recreation and access such they are not necessarily directly relevant to economy and employment, except where they relate to recreation and leisure/tourism sectors – and such effects are better addressed in the following section on assessment of Better for Business & Communities. The SEA indicated not applicable or neutral effects. However, overall these Outcomes 1-3 will improve the recreational/leisure experience such that cumulative positive effects are likely for those employed in these sectors.
- 4.58 The Outcomes 1-5 in the Theme Better for Communities & Business are likely to have positive effects, including major positive effects resilience in Outcome 1 and Outcome 5 with clear targets for supporting businesses and communities with regard to climate change risks. Outcome 6 on Housing is not directly relevant to these SEA objectives on the economy and employment.

SA of Outcomes & Targets: Communities, Health & Equality

4.60

Communities, Health & Equality

SEA Directive Topics: Population & Human Health

Relevant SA Objectives:

- SA Objective 21: To ensure that the needs of all National Park residents are met for affordable housing & access to good quality services & facilities
- SA Objective 22: To promote sustainable transport, reduce traffic congestion & noise, and improve safety, health & air quality by reducing the need to travel, especially by car
- SA Objective 23: To safeguard and improve community health, safety and wellbeing
- SA Objective 23: To promote inclusiveness, equality and participation and take account of the needs of all sectors of the community in understanding and enjoying the special qualities of the National Park

- 4.61 The Outcomes 1-3 in the Theme of a Better Response to Climate Change will all have positive effects for SEA objectives on health as these Outcomes will contribute to reducing the risks of direct harm to people and communities, for example, through increased flood risk and extreme weather, and further effects, such as anxiety, on wellbeing. Major positive effects are indicated through Outcome 1 with its partnership approach that targets maximisation of opportunities for emissions reduction, carbon storage and climate resilience, particularly in the longer term.
- 4.61 The Outcome 1 for children and young people to have regular, inclusive opportunities to enjoy and learn about Dartmoor will not have direct effects on the SEA topic. However, embedding the needs and aspirations of future generations in the planning and management of Dartmoor in Outcome 2 will help secure the delivery of positive effects, particularly in the longer term.
- 4.63 The Outcomes 1-3 in the theme for Better for Nature & Natural Beauty that promote well and natural functioning of soils, hydrological and ecosystems will all have positive effects overall for human health through improvements to environmental quality and sustainable natural resources with corresponding improvements to physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.
- 5.64 The Outcomes 2-3 in the Theme Better for Cultural Heritage are likely to have positive effects. Ensuring that cultural heritage is embedded into land management and conservation, together with promoting a sense of community and place through engagement will support mental and spiritual health and wellbeing with positive effects. Outcome 1 is not applicable as it will not in itself have direct effects but it will support the delivery of the other Outcomes.
- 4.65 The Outcomes 1-6 in the Theme Better for Farming and Forestry will support employment through future changes. Having meaningful and sustained work is known to have positive effects for health and wellbeing – therefore, overall likely positive effects.

- 4.66 The Outcomes 1-3 in the Theme Better for People will have major positive effects for human health and wellbeing as they improve, support and encourage recreational uses and access to the countryside. Movement, physical activity and exercise are known to help reduce the risk of major illnesses, improve mental wellbeing and help manage existing health conditions, being physically active leads to better outcomes including stress reduction and improved social interaction. Walking, wheeling, cycling, and outdoor recreation for active living will be accessed and enjoyed by a wide range of people. Outcome 3 maintains a balance between accessible, well serviced areas and wilder, quieter areas, thus providing mitigation measures for any potential negative effects arising through conflicts of uses and helping to resolve an existing environmental problem. These positive effects are likely to be synergistic and cumulative in the longer term.
- 4.67 An increase in visitors would have positive effects on SEA objectives for access and recreation but there is the potential for adverse effects such as those on local communities through increased traffic, loss of tranquillity, erosion of paths, and tensions between different recreation users. However, this is mitigated through Outcome 3 that includes ...*"a balance between accessible, well-serviced areas and wilder, quieter spaces..."*.
- 4.68 The Outcomes 1-5 in the Theme Better for Communities & Business are likely to have positive effects since they support services, facilities, employment, skills and training – all important to sustain health and wellbeing, directly and indirectly.
- 4.69 Outcome 6 for access to innovative and appropriate housing solutions will have major positive effects since provision of good quality housing is well known to be essential for good health and wellbeing. The requirement for homes that are energy efficient and affordable to run will have further positive effects for health. The draft Plan has acknowledged the particular issues associated with changing demographics, second homes, and retrofitting – details will be addressed through the new DNPA Local Plan. The target for affordable housing and the target for increasing community engagement will help ensure delivery and confirmation of the predicted positive effects.

Implementation of the draft Dartmoor Partnership Plan

- 4.70 The implications of the plan as a whole were also investigated and reported, and as required by the SEA Regulations. The summary findings of the SA of the draft Partnership Plan Themes and Outcomes, including consideration of proposed targets, are as follows:

Table 4.1: Summary SA Findings

Partnership Plan Outcomes	SA Topics							
	Natural Beauty	Biodiversity & Wildlife	Historic & Built Environment; Cultural Heritage	Resources: Air, Water, Soils	Climate Change	Countryside Access & Recreation	Economy, Education & Employment	Communities, Health & Equality
Cross Cutting: A Better Response to Climate Change								
1 Dartmoor's response to climate change is coordinated through strong partnership working, evidence-based decision making and shared learning	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	++
2 Dartmoor contributes towards becoming a net carbon sink by 2045 by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and delivering climate change action in line with the Devon Carbon Plan, while increasing sequestration and storage through the delivery of the wider Partnership Plan	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	+
3 Dartmoor's landscapes, communities, businesses, cultural heritage and infrastructure are more resilient and better adapted to the impacts of climate change	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	+
Cross Cutting: Better for the Next Generation								
1 By 2023, children and young people have regular, inclusive opportunities to experience, enjoy and learn about Dartmoor, regardless of their background or where they live	0	0	0	0	0	++	+	0
2 Young people actively shape decisions about Dartmoor, with the needs and aspirations of future generations embedded in planning, management and delivery	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Better for Nature & Natural Beauty								
1 By 2032, a nature-first approach underpins decision-making across Dartmoor, supported by a comprehensive, shared evidence base for the natural environment that enables consistent monitoring, improved understanding of environmental change, and informed, landscape-scale ecological restoration and land management across the National Park	++	++	0	++	+	+	+	+
2 Habitats are more connected and functioning naturally to support biodiversity, water quality, carbon storage, and climate regulation	++	++	0	++	+	0	+	+
3 Priority species are recovering and thriving, with appropriate reintroductions where suitable, and overall species diversity and abundance increasing over time	++	++	0	+?	+?	0	0	+?
Better for Cultural Heritage								
1 By 2032, Dartmoor has a comprehensive, accessible evidence base for its historic assets, their condition and constraints, supporting effective management, monitoring and greater public understanding and appreciation of its rich cultural heritage	0	0	++	0	0	+	+?	0
2 Dartmoor's historic environment is conserved, enhanced, and resilient, with priority assets protected from current and future pressures and heritage considerations embedded into land management and conservation	+	0	++	0	0	0	+	+
3 Dartmoor's cultural identity, traditions and rural skills are sustained and celebrated, with increased opportunities for participation, learning and intergenerational knowledge-sharing of traditional crafts	+	0	+?	0	0	0	+	+

Better for Farming & Forestry								
1 Farm businesses on Dartmoor are economically viable, resilient and enabled through strong networks, knowledge-sharing, advice and collaboration	+	+?	0	+	+	+	++	+
2 Dartmoor's farming systems are climate resilient and adaptive, with regenerative practices widely adopted improving soil health, water management, biodiversity, carbon storage and wider ecosystem services, supported by evidence-based decision-making, monitoring and landscape-scale collaboration that improves environmental and economic outcomes	+	+	0	++	++	+	+	+
3 Strong local markets and supply chains enhance farm and woodland business resilience, supporting profitable farming, sustainable food and timber production, and a circular low-carbon land-based economy	+	0	0	+	+	+	++	+
4 Dartmoor's woodlands and woody habitats are expanded, better managed and resilient, supporting biodiversity, carbon storage, climate adaptation and ecosystem function through sustainable and collaborative land management	+	+	0	+	++	+	++	+
5 Dartmoor has a shared evidence base and understanding of woodland extent, condition, habitat value and opportunities for action, enabling coordinated woodland management, nature recovery and sustainable forestry	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+
6 Dartmoor has connected farming and forestry networks that enable collaboration, knowledge sharing, skills development and coordinated support, providing clear pathways for new and next generation farmers and land managers to enter, remain and thrive	+	+?	0	+	+	0	++	+

Better for People								
1 By 2032, Dartmoor is accessed and enjoyed by a diverse range of people, with inclusive and well-promoted volunteering and participation opportunities widely available	0	0	+	0	0	++	0	++
2 Dartmoor's transport network is better connected, more reliable, and easier to use, enabling more people to access and enjoy Dartmoor sustainably	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	++
3 By 2032, people enjoy Dartmoor responsibly, helping protect the National Park, while visitor management maintains a balance between accessible, well-serviced areas and wilder, quieter spaces, sustaining tranquillity, biodiversity, landscape character and climate resilience	+	+	0	+	0	++	0	++
Better for Business & Communities								
1 By 2032, Dartmoor has resilient, collaborative businesses and communities with a strong voice, active local networks, a thriving cultural life, and a strong sense of belonging, underpinned by a well-understood local economy	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	+
2 Businesses and communities across Dartmoor have reliable digital connectivity that enables effective living, working, and access to services and opportunities	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+
3 Businesses and communities across Dartmoor are supported by innovative, locally appropriate transport options that are accessible, connected and sustainable	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	+
4 Dartmoor has accessible employment, strong skills pathways, training, and enterprise opportunities that enable people to live and work and for businesses to thrive locally	+?	0	0	0	0	0	+	+

5 Businesses and communities across Dartmoor are better adapted and resilient to climate risks, with improved awareness, planning, and local capacity to respond	+	0	0	+	+	0	++	+
6 By 2032, Dartmoor communities have access to innovative and appropriate housing solutions, with homes that are energy efficient, affordable to run, and meet local needs	+	0	0	+	+	0	0	++

- 4.71 The draft Partnership Plan has confirmed and refined the inter-relationships between themes such that Better for Climate Change and Better for the Next Generation are clearly presented as cross-cutting themes that are embedded with outcomes and targets integrated throughout the Plan. This approach will have positive effects for SA objectives particularly in the longer term. The plan has been prepared through an iterative participatory process that has rigorously considered potential negative effects and conflicts between different land use and management. The inherent inter-relationships between topics is understood and plan-making has explored options to resolve conflicts and potential negative effects.
- 4.72 Overall, the SA found positive or neutral (insignificant or not directly applicable) effects for the Plan Themes and Outcomes; there were no negative effects identified. Potential adverse effects have been identified, including possible conflicts within the plan, and considered through plan-making such that any potential significant negative effects have been mitigated through embedded measures.
- 4.73 The SA found major positive effects for the Outcomes to manage nature and natural beauty, including progressing naturally functioning systems at landscape scale to support biodiversity, water quality, carbon storage, and climate regulation. The SA found major positive effects for the Outcomes to manage cultural heritage and the historic environment, with heritage considerations embedded into land management and conservation.
- 4.74 The challenges for supporting farming and forestry through a period of Government and Brexit policy and funding changes continue to be recognised. The draft Plan includes outcomes for economic viability, resilience and shared strong networks with support for a circular low-carbon land-based economy, indicating positive effects. Some uncertainty was noted by the SA for the precise significance of positive effects, particularly until the new Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMSs) are further developed and implemented. Some SA objectives were not relevant and therefore, neutral effects; there were no significant negative effects indicated. The outcomes include provision of pathways for new and next

generation farmers and land managers – indicating positive effects into the longer term.

- 4.75 A key feature of the SA findings were the major positive effects for health and wellbeing. Through careful balancing between accessible, well-serviced and wilder, quieter spaces, outcomes will progress increased access and national policy objectives for more active living.
- 4.76 The findings of the Habitats Regulations Assessment were integrated into the SEA.
- 4.77 Overall, the SA found positive effects with any potential negative effects mitigated to neutral or insignificant; no likely significant residual negative effects were identified. The Plan is bold and ambitious seeking to scale-up proactive land management – and continues to reflect the Authority's declaration in 2019 for a climate change and ecology emergency. It provides a strategic framework for managing Dartmoor's National Park with cross-cutting and specific Themes that comprise strong Outcomes and measurable targets. These will help ensure that the positive effects predicted will be delivered and that the embedded mitigation measures will help ensure that there are no significant negative effects arising from implementation of the plan. Challenges will remain to adjust to the emerging new national policy and funding regimes such that priorities for action can be implemented. The outcomes for strong partnership, shared evidence and knowledge and collaborative land management, together with clear targeted commitments, demonstrate progress with environmental sustainability objectives since the last plan.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- 4.78 The HRA screening identified that due to the strategic nature of the Partnership Plan, and the limited potential environmental pathways for impacts to the habitats sites outside of the National Park, there were no identified adverse Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) for air quality changes, recreational disturbance, changes to water quality or levels, or habitat loss/fragmentation – alone or in-combination with other plans
- 4.79 Overall, it is considered that the draft Dartmoor National Park Management Plan is not likely to have any significant adverse effects on the integrity of the identified habitats sites – alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. The Partnership Plan is an aspirational plan that sets a strategic framework for development of more specific strategies, plans and actions; at this strategic stage there may be insufficient information or locational specificity to assess the effects on the habitats sites. As any specific projects or plans are developed, there may be a need to consider further HRA. This is in line with emerging new guidance on HRA for England (Defra, 2026)²¹ that seeks to improve guidance with an increased emphasis on proportionality and on the level of precaution appropriate to the application of assessment thresholds.

²¹ https://consult.defra.gov.uk/protected-sites/8c7b61c8/user_uploads/draft-hra-guidance-text.pdf

5.0 MONITORING PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The SEA Regulations require that the significant effects (positive and negative) of implementing the plan should be monitored in order to identify at an early stage any unforeseen effects and to be able to take appropriate remedial action. Government guidance²² on SA/SEA advises that existing monitoring arrangements should be used where possible in order to avoid duplication. The DNPA has advised that the plan will be monitored through periodic updates to the State of the Park Report²³. These measures should be sufficient for monitoring requirements from the SA process.

²² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

²³ <http://www.yourdartmoor.org/delivering/measuring>

6.0 CONCLUSIONS, CONSULTATION & NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 The SA has been undertaken according to good practice and in line with Government requirements and guidance. The SA has built upon the SA/SEA of the current DNPPP and this had been aligned with the SA/SEA of the Dartmoor Local Plan. The assessment used the SA framework of objectives together with the baseline information and professional judgment to test the draft DNPPP 2027-2032 with its Themes, Outcomes and Targets.
- 6.3 Overall, the SEA has found that implementation of the draft Dartmoor Partnership Plan will have likely positive effects or neutral (insignificant or not directly applicable) effects for the Plan Themes; there were no negative effects identified. Outcomes for Better for Climate Change and the Next Generation are clearly presented as cross-cutting themes that are embedded and integrated throughout the Plan. Mitigation measures are provided through avoidance and recognition of potentially conflicting objectives for land management. Partnership working and shared learning is particularly strong throughout the themes, such that any potential negative effects have been mitigated through embedded measures.
- 6.4 A pragmatic and proportionate Habitats Regulations Assessment was undertaken and the findings of the were integrated into the SA; the HRA screening stage of the process determined that there would be no adverse likely significant effects (LSEs) on the identified habitats sites – either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, and no further assessment was required at this time. The HRA screening suggested where consideration of HRA may be needed for projects in the future.
- 6.5 This SA Report will accompany the draft Dartmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2027-2032 on public consultation during late 2026. Comments received on the SEA and the draft Plan will be taken into account in finalising the DNPPP prior to adaptation early in 2027. This will be accompanied by a SA Adoption Statement in line with the requirements of the SEA Regulations.

APPENDICES:

- I **Statement on Compliance with SEA Regulations**
- II **SA Scoping Report (Final, January 2026) available at**
<https://www.yourdartmoor.org/partnership-plan-review> and including
the details of the baseline evidence and the development of the SA
Framework for assessment.

Appendix I: Statement on Compliance with SEA Regulations

The EU SEA Regulations (Annex 1) require certain information to be provided in the Environmental Report²⁴. Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations sets out the criteria for determining the likely significant effects on the environment. It requires consideration of the characteristics of plans and programmes – their relevance and the degree to which they set a framework or influence other plans. It requires consideration of the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular “the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects”, “cumulative nature”, “risks to human health or the environment”, “geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected”, and the “value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected”.

Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations sets out the requirements for Environmental Reports. The details are provided in Appendix 1 of the SA Report – specific requirements of the SEA Regulations are listed with signposting for the location of such elements within this report. The requirements include consideration of certain topics – “The likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, on issues such as— (a)biodiversity; (b)population; (c)human health; (d)fauna; (e)flora; (f)soil; (g)water; (h)air; (i)climatic factors; (j)material assets; (k)cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage; (l)landscape; and (m)the inter-relationship between the issues...”.

This Appendix 1 sets out how the requirements for SEA have been met and signposts where this information is found in the SA Report (September 2026)

SEA Regulations Requirements	SA Report Section	Summary of Contents
An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans	Section 1 Introduction	Sets out the outline of the contents of the Dartmoor Partnership Plan 2027-2032
	Section 3 Context & Baseline	Summarises the relationship with other plans and references the detailed review provided in the SA/SEA Scoping Report (January, 2026)
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without the implementation of the plan	Section 3 Context & Baseline	Summarises the relevant baseline conditions for the environment in the Dartmoor NPA area. The information is set out in more detail in the SA/SEA Scoping Report (2026) that also indicates the likely evolution of current conditions and trends where available

²⁴ <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/post/postpn223.pdf>

SEA Regulations Requirements	SA Report Section	Summary of Contents
<i>The environmental characteristics of the area likely to be affected</i>	Section 3 Context & Baseline	Summarised in Section 3 of Main SA Report; where relevant and available; this information is detailed in the SA/SEA Scoping Report
<i>Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relation to any areas of a particular environmental importance</i>	Section 3 Context & Baseline	Summarises existing environmental problems for the Dartmoor area. This section also summarises information for Habitats sites in line with Habitats Regulations Assessment requirements (HRA Report available separately, August, 2026).
<i>The environmental protection objectives relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation</i>	Section 2 SA Methods Section 3 Context & Baseline	Provides the summary of objectives for environmental protection and the implications of these objectives for the Partnership Plan (refers to details in the SA Scoping Report 2026); explains how the environmental considerations have been taken into account.
<i>The likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-</i>	Section 2 SA Methods Table 2.1	Presents the SA Framework of objectives that shows which of the issues listed by the SEA Regulations are progressed by which SEA objectives.
	Section 4 Table 4.1	Summarises the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Partnership Plan. Where possible, an indication is given of whether the effect is likely to be cumulative, short, medium and long term.

SEA Regulations Requirements	SA Report Section	Summary of Contents
<i>term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects</i>		
<i>The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan</i>	Section 4 Table 4.1	The SA did not find any significant adverse effects. The SA noted that certain mitigation measures had been embedded into plan-making.
<i>An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties encountered in compiling the required information</i>	Section 2	Explains that the DNPPP is limited in any possibilities for investigating reasonable alternatives.
	Sections 2 & 3 Methods & Context, Baseline	Outlines how the assessment was undertaken – the appraisal methodology and difficulties encountered in compiling information are noted.
<i>A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring</i>	Section 6	Explains measures proposed for monitoring the environmental effects of the implementation of the Partnership Plan.
<i>A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings</i>	Report preface (available separately)	Provides a non-technical summary.