

Dartmoor Partnership Plan

THE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK

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Dartmoor Partnership Plan Review Background Paper

Theme: Better for Farming

Purpose of paper:

The [Dartmoor Partnership Plan 2021-2026](#) is the single most important policy document for the National Park (also known as the National Park Management Plan). It is the strategic, overarching plan for the National Park and is the principal vehicle for ensuring that the statutory purposes and duty are met and provides a mechanism for combining national and local priorities.

The Partnership Plan is for the National Park and not just the National Park Authority, or any individual group or organisation. It sets the framework for partnership action to deliver outcomes set out in the Plan and the Vision for Dartmoor.

The Partnership Plan is required to be reviewed at least every five years. This paper provides the background evidence required to support the review of the Partnership Plan.

A background paper has been prepared for each of the seven themes within the Partnership Plan.

Forces for Change

- Economic forces – the vulnerability of marginal Less Favoured Area (LFA) livestock units to commodity markets, rising input costs, pressure to diversify and risk of unfavourable trade deals leading to greater competition. Increasing reliance on historic agri-environment payments with the demise of the Basic Payment Scheme.
- Climate change - Available data demonstrates that rainfall patterns, nitrogen deposition, temperature and growing patterns of vegetation are being affected by climate change. Impacts are likely to include hotter summers, more extreme weather patterns and flooding, longer growing seasons and desynchronisation of ecological processes. Climate change will benefit disease vectors such as mosquitos and tick-borne disease impacting both humans and livestock.
- National policy – post Brexit removal of direct support and the design of the new Environmental Land Management scheme linked to public goods. A general concern over limited upland options in the Sustainable Farming Incentive Scheme and Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier. Lower payment levels for land

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above the moorland line and a general lack of confidence in Government policy, support and investment for the agricultural sector.

- Vegetation change – Land ownership, climate change and market forces influence land use and vegetation communities. This is a dynamic process with increasingly polarised views between different interests on how vegetation should be managed linked to protected site condition, re-wilding and natural capital investors.
- Grazing regimes – impact of Government policy and national targets for protected site condition, priority habitats, species and water outcomes. Encapsulated in the Fursdon Review of Protected Site Management on Dartmoor
- Cultural identity – Upland farming has shaped the special qualities of the National Park and its communities. The farming population is shrinking and ageing with multiple barriers impacting succession and new entrants. This erosion of identity will impact culture, landscape and tourism as well as intangible cultural heritage associated with traditions such as commoning.
- Land Use debates – Increasing public support and interest in environmental goods such as carbon storage, flood prevention, recreation and biodiversity. External investment and post covid inward migration reducing available land for agricultural production i.e. re-wilding, tree planting etc.
- Development and recreational impact – Whilst the population on Dartmoor remains relatively stable, the surrounding areas are subject to significant growth. Recreation and tourism impacts post Covid have resulted in additional pressure and disturbance to the moor with associated impacts for land management and biodiversity.

Key Issues and opportunities

- LFA upland farming is marginal with graziers and livestock numbers continuing to fall. Farming is essential to maintain many societal goods and Dartmoor offers opportunities to enhance sustainable farming systems through reliable, robust and rewarding agri-environment schemes. Emerging markets for public goods and natural capital are relevant to Dartmoor but require innovation to enable participation.

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- Condition Monitoring Assessment of Protected Site status leading to disillusionment, doubt and friction around how sites should be managed to achieve favourable condition. Collaborative development of targeted research, trials and tailored approaches offer opportunities to deliver more effective and realistic outcomes.
- Local and regional food networks require investment to link producers and customers whilst adding value to farm produce. Future proofing local supply chains and developing collaborative opportunities will build resilience for family farms.
- Supporting new models to help the next generation and new entrants to enter farming and to remain on Dartmoor. This includes forms of investment, tenure and affordable housing.
- Dartmoor faces increasing drought, flooding and wildfire risks. Land management such as peatland restoration, tree planting and other natural flood measures need to be scaled up with secure, long-term funding mechanisms. These could help provide additional resilience to farm businesses in the face of the changing climate.
- Investment in sustainable energy such as wind and small scale solar will help spread supply risks and reduce costs on farm. Improvements to rural broadband will facilitate diversification, business administration, diversification and the use of emerging technologies.
- Investment in skills and governance for the farming sector to support administration of commons, delivery of ELM schemes and engagement in policy and community forums.
- Promotion of nature friendly and regenerative farming practices to further enhance soil health, landscape resilience and biodiversity
- Landscape scale, holistic initiatives are essential to ensure long-term resilience, spread risk and rebuild ecosystems. This will require greater collaboration between landowners, communities and conservation groups, incentives and a willingness to deliver in new and innovative ways

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- Explore opportunities to reconnect farming and farm woodland management as part of an integrated and sustainable business

Policy Drivers

- The Agricultural Transition Plan and the new Environmental Land Management Schemes, Defra Designed to support farmers and land managers across England by providing payments to improve farm businesses, nature and the environment
- Inheritance Tax Reform, HM Treasury and HMRC will restrict inheritance tax relief available for agricultural and business property.
- The Environment Act was passed by Government in 2021 and was described at the time as the most ground-breaking piece of environmental legislation in years. It replaced or incorporated former EU regulations to introduce a legal framework for environmental governance in the UK. This included the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Water Industry Act 1991
- The end of the Direct Support with the implementation of Delinked Payments
- The Government is looking at a new Land Use Framework which will also be picked up by the Dartmoor Land Use Management Group looking at a framework for the National Park
- [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#), Defra (2018), set out the Government's 10 goals for improving the environment, within a generation. It details a series of policies to achieve those goals, and how government will work with communities and businesses to do this.
- [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023](#), Defra - revises and updates the 25 Year Environment Plan. Includes a detailed delivery plan with policy actions allocated to different government departments, local government, and the private and third sector.
- [Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework](#) (PLTOF) sets out how Protected Landscapes will meet key goals in the Environment Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023 and how Defra will track progress. PLTOF targets can be found in Appendix A.

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- [Delivering 30 by 30 on land in England](#), Defra (2023) - sets out the Government's approach to protecting 30% of the UK's land by 2030.
- [Independent Review of Protected Site Management on Dartmoor](#) - makes a series of recommendations for Defra ministers to consider on the future management of Dartmoor's sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs). It set up the Dartmoor Land Use Management Group to deliver on a number of recommendations approved by Defra.
- At the request of the Secretary of State an internal Defra Policy Lab team has been commissioned to review existing and design future long term policy for the uplands. Dartmoor is a potential pilot area
- 25 Year Farming Roadmap (2025) Government announces reforms to boost profits for farmers with a cast iron commitment to food production - GOV.UK. The Government recently announced a reshape of the agricultural landscape of England in a 25-year farming roadmap. It marks a significant shift in focus towards an environment that supports agricultural growth, ensures food security, and restores natural ecosystems. At the heart of the plan is a vision that places food production at the forefront of agricultural policy with a renewed commitment to domestic food production

Public consultation on priorities for Dartmoor

A public consultation on Dartmoor's future priorities was held during August and September 2025. The consultation invited people to share their views on the most important issues to be addressed in the updated Dartmoor Partnership Plan and for Dartmoor's long-term future.

Data and trends

The [State of the Park Report](#), produced on a five-year cycle to inform the review of the Partnership Plan, provides a detailed assessment of data and trends relating to the National Park and is the principal evidence base for all themes within the Partnership Plan.

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Appendix A. Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework

PLTOF Target	Dartmoor Partnership Plan 2027-2032 Target (short term target)	PLTOF long term target (Dartmoor specific)
<p>Target 1</p> <p>Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).</p>	<p>Ambition to be agreed in the workshops</p> <p>Target to be agreed over the review period</p>	<p>7,548ha by 2042 (apportioned figure)</p> <p>To be agreed or amended in the review period</p>
<p>Target 2</p> <p>Bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042</p>	<p>Ambition to be agreed in the workshops</p> <p>Target to be agreed over the review period</p>	<p>80% by 2042</p>
<p>Target 3</p> <p>For 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.</p>	<p>Ambition to be agreed in the workshops</p> <p>Target to be agreed over the review period</p>	<p>60% by 2028</p>
<p>Target 4</p> <p>Continuing favourable management of all existing</p>	<p>Ambition to be agreed in the workshops</p>	<p>100% of priority habitat and newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment under</p>

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priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042.	Target to be agreed over the review period	favourable management by 2042
Target 5 Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.	Ambition to be agreed in the workshops Target to be agreed over the review period	At least 65% of land managers have adopted nature-friendly farming on at least 10% of their land by 2030.
Target 6 Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels.	Carbon negative by 2045.	Carbon negative by 2045.
Target 7 Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050	Ambition to be agreed in the workshops Target to be agreed over the review period	8,030ha peatland restored by 2050 (apportioned figure) To be agreed or amended in the review period
Target 8 Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined)	Ambition to be agreed in the workshops	2,867ha of tree canopy and woodland cover created by 2050 (apportioned figure)

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by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).	Target to be agreed over the review period	To be agreed or amended in the review period
Target 9 Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme.	Ambition to be agreed in the workshops Target to be agreed over the review period	Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme.
Target 10 Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes.	Ambition to be agreed in the workshops Target to be agreed over the review period	Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes.