

Dartmoor Partnership Plan

THE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK

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Dartmoor Partnership Plan Review Background Paper

Theme: Better for Nature

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:

- Climate change - Available data demonstrates that rainfall patterns, 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.
- Vegetation change – Land ownership, climate change and market forces influence land use and changes to vegetation type and structure. This is a dynamic and inevitable process with increasingly polarised views between different interests on how vegetation should be managed.
- Grazing regimes – The quantity, timing and species of livestock grazing the moor is fundamental to the type, quality and composition of vegetation and habitat with policy and financial vagaries heavily influencing these factors.
- Development and recreational impact – Whilst the population on Dartmoor remains relatively stable, the surrounding areas are subject to significant growth, which in addition to increasing tourist numbers and recreational use result in

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additional pressure and disturbance to the moor, land management and biodiversity.

- Invasive non-native species (INNS) – Are now ubiquitous across Dartmoor with new species likely to appear in future. Non-native deer and Grey squirrel are having a devastating impact on woodland composition and establishment while plant species such as Himalayan balsam and American skunk cabbage remain widespread despite ongoing efforts to control the spread.
- Pests and diseases – Likely to increase with climate change and globalised markets. Ash die-back, phytophthora and heather beetle have fundamentally altered the Dartmoor landscape whilst some livestock diseases are also becoming more prevalent affecting land management and business profitability.
- Atmospheric nitrogen deposition – Already exceeding critical levels in the 1990s, this affects all habitat types on Dartmoor and has been associated with the spread of Molinia and Heather beetle.
- National policy – Uncertainty and delays to agri-environment schemes, agricultural viability, other support mechanisms, funding and robust regulatory frameworks are affecting confidence and jeopardising natural environment outcomes

Key Issues and opportunities

- Dartmoor faces increasing drought, flooding and wildfire risks. Proactive land management such as peatland restoration and other natural flood measures need to be scaled up with secure, long-term funding mechanisms
- Upland farming is marginal with graziers and livestock numbers falling due to increased costs and volatile markets. Farming is essential to maintain many valuable habitats and Dartmoor offers opportunities for increasing sustainable farming systems through reliable, robust and rewarding Agri-environment schemes
- 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

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- Recovery and expansion of native broadleaf woodland through targeted natural regeneration and planting alongside the active management of existing high value woodlands. This could be further incentivised and processes streamlined.
- Species recovery initiatives alongside habitat enhancements to secure declining populations and re-introduce key species that provide valuable ecosystem benefits
- Increase understanding of invertebrates and focus measures to increase bio abundance and diversity

Strengthen citizen science, volunteering, and eco-tourism to support conservation, address invasive non-native species (INNS), and create opportunities for social prescribing. **Policy Drivers:**

- European Water Framework Directive – provides a legislative framework for improving the ecological value of the water environment, including fresh surface water and groundwater. Particularly aims to deal with diffuse pollution issues.
- [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.
- [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.
- [Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework](#) (PLTOF) sets out how Protected Landscapes will meet key goals in the Environment

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Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023 and how Defra will track progress. PLTOF targets can be found in Appendix A.

- [Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain](#) 2023 – 2028, Defra et al – sets out a vision for the next 5 years of plant biosecurity in Great Britain, and a range of actions to protect Great Britain’s plants.
- [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).
- Delivery Plan for National Parks for wildlife and nature recovery, National Parks England – sets out how National Park Authorities will deliver 20% of the government’s nature recovery target on 10% of the land - 330,000 tonnes of CO2 per year.
- National Parks for sustainable farming and land management, National Parks England – in our parks, sustainable farming and land management systems deliver a wide range of public goods, and farmers receive a sustainable and realistic income

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 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 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 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 Continuing favourable management of all existing 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.</p>	<p>Ambition to be agreed in the workshops</p> <p>Target to be agreed over the review period</p>	<p>100% of priority habitat and newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment under favourable management by 2042</p>

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<p>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.</p>	<p>Ambition to be agreed in the workshops Target to be agreed over the review period</p>	<p>At least 65% of land managers have adopted nature-friendly farming on at least 10% of their land by 2030.</p>
<p>Target 6 Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels.</p>	<p>Carbon negative by 2045.</p>	<p>Carbon negative by 2045.</p>
<p>Target 7 Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050</p>	<p>Ambition to be agreed in the workshops Target to be agreed over the review period</p>	<p>8,030ha peatland restored by 2050 (apportioned figure) To be agreed or amended in the review period</p>
<p>Target 8 Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).</p>	<p>Ambition to be agreed in the workshops Target to be agreed over the review period</p>	<p>2,867ha of tree canopy and woodland cover created by 2050 (apportioned figure) To be agreed or amended in the review period</p>
<p>Target 9 Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme.</p>	<p>Ambition to be agreed in the workshops Target to be agreed over the review period</p>	<p>Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme.</p>
<p>Target 10 Decrease the number of nationally designated</p>	<p>Ambition to be agreed in the workshops</p>	<p>Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes.</p>

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heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes.	Target to be agreed over the review period	
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