



Dartmoor

National Park Authority

Business Plan

2025-26

Introduction

This Business Plan sets out an ambitious programme of key actions which will help deliver National Park purposes and the vision in the Dartmoor Partnership Plan and do so in a way which supports our local communities.

The Business Plan is structured around six priorities:

- Better for Nature and Climate
- Better for Cultural Heritage
- Better for Farming and Forestry
- Better for People
- Better for Communities and Business
- Be an Excellent Organisation

The first five priorities relate to the priority themes in the Dartmoor Partnership Plan and represent a 'golden thread' between the Dartmoor Partnership Plan (a plan for the National Park as a place) and the work of the Authority. There is also a clear link between the work of the Authority and the Government's priorities such as: nature recovery, the 30 x 30 target, climate action, improved access and engagement with the environment; and the Government's Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF).

We share the Government's vision for protected landscapes – to make them greener, wilder and more accessible. This vision needs to be matched with resources. Our revenue budget is being cut, in real terms, by more than 10% in 2025/26. This comes on top of a 40% real-terms cut since 2010/11. If we want nature-rich National Parks that are living, working landscapes that bring enjoyment, wellbeing and inspiration to millions of people each year then we need a national debate about how we fund them.

National Park Grant for 2025/26 includes a significant capital element that has to be spent within the financial year. This provides us with an opportunity and an additional work area.

Our Business Plan relies more on the soft 'power' of convening and partnership working than our few statutory powers.

We look forward to another year of working with our partners to achieve our priorities and, in doing so, to deliver a National Park that is better for nature and better for people.



William Dracup
Chair



Kevin Bishop
Chief Executive

Highlights from 2024/25

250+ hectares of
PEATLAND RESTORED

 **65**
leaky dams
installed

15
pine martens
released



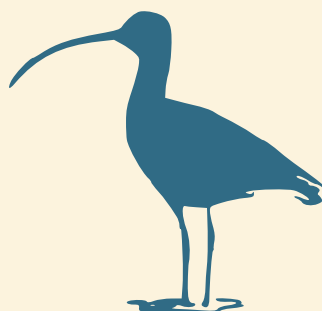
8.5 hectares of



3,782 days
of volunteer support,
valued at
£378,223



1,300+
miles flown by reintroduced
CURLEWS



7,482
outreach and
engagement interactions



80 forked
spleenwort
plants reintroduced



910
hours of
Dartmoor Marshals



given a bespoke
**DARTMOOR
EXPERIENCE**

Dartmoor National Park Authority

The Dartmoor National Park Authority was established under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995 as an independent body within the framework of local government.

Our role is clearly defined by Parliament through two statutory purposes to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park;
- promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

These purposes are of equal weight unless there is an irreconcilable conflict between the two, in which case, priority is given to the first purpose to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.

In pursuing the two statutory purposes, we are also required to:

- seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

The National Park Authority is governed by 19 Members appointed via different routes:

- by the Secretary of State to reflect the national interest
- by constituent authorities (Devon County Council, South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council and West Devon Borough Council).
- via parish council elections and subsequent appointment by the Secretary of State.

We are a small organisation and the majority of our work is undertaken in partnership with others in order to achieve the best outcomes for Dartmoor National Park, the people who live and work here and those who visit this special place. Our partners range from public authorities to private individuals, from commercial businesses to community groups.

The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (section 245) introduced a new duty on 'relevant authorities' to 'seek to further' the statutory purposes of national parks in the exercise of their functions. This new duty is active rather passive – it requires relevant authorities to take appropriate, reasonable and proportionate steps to further national park purposes. Importantly, it means such authorities should be considering the vision, ambitions and actions of the relevant National Park Management Plan (or Partnership Plan) – see next section.

To learn more about our work visit: dartmoor.gov.uk



Dartmoor Partnership Plan

The Dartmoor Partnership Plan (formerly known as the National Park Management Plan) is the most important document for the National Park. It sets out a vision for the National Park and specific objectives for the next five to ten years.

The Partnership Plan is produced in partnership with the Authority playing a key role in facilitating the partnership and leading the process. The vision for Dartmoor (see below) is ambitious: it combines national and local priorities.

In order to deliver the vision, the Partnership Plan focuses on seven themes:

- **A Better Response to Climate Change**
- **Better for the Next Generation**
- **Better for Nature and Natural Beauty**
- **Better for Cultural Heritage**
- **Better for People**
- **Better for Farming and Forestry**
- **Better for Businesses and Communities**

These themes provide a structure for the Authority's Business Plan (see next section) which, in large part, outlines how the actions and services provided by the Authority will help deliver the vision for Dartmoor.

To learn more about the Dartmoor Partnership Plan visit:
[**yourdartmoor.org/home**](https://yourdartmoor.org/home)

Vision for Dartmoor National Park 2045

Dartmoor National Park is an extraordinary landscape: shaped by nature and humans over time; steeped in history but always changing; one of Britain's finest. It has the power to inspire and enrich lives.

Our Vision is to make Dartmoor better for future generations: climate resilient, nature rich, beautiful, connected to the past and looking to the future; a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can live, work or visit. A place that is loved, cherished and cared for.

Alive with nature

Networks of healthy habitats that are home to many different plants, insects and animals create a more resilient natural environment connected within and across the boundary of the National Park. Some areas feel wilder as nature is enhanced and allowed to take its course.

Celebrated and enhanced

Dartmoor's natural beauty and rich cultural heritage is better understood, valued and looked after.

A warm welcome for all

Enriching people's lives, reaching out to people from all backgrounds, connecting them with this special place. Transformative experiences will inspire people to care for the National Park.

A great place to live and work

People of all ages can enjoy living and working in low carbon, flourishing communities that are connected physically and digitally. Farming and forestry businesses play a key role in delivering a high-quality environment and local products alongside a range of other public benefits.

Carbon negative

Dartmoor's peatlands, soils and woodlands will store significantly more carbon. Responding to climate change will be embedded in our way of life, making the best use of natural resources and reducing carbon emissions.

Everyone will come together to deliver this Vision for Dartmoor; make choices that balance the needs of people and place; embrace positive change; and inspire the next generation to help shape its future.

This Business Plan identifies key actions that we will lead on in support of the Partnership Plan (see next section).

The Business Plan

Our Business Plan is structured around six priorities:

- **Better for Nature and Climate**
- **Better for Cultural Heritage**
- **Better for Farming and Forestry**
- **Better for People**
- **Better for Communities and Business**
- **Be an excellent organisation**

Priorities one to five relate directly to the Dartmoor Partnership Plan (see previous page). The Partnership Plan themes around climate and next generation are woven into our work under all six priorities. Priority six reflects our desire to be an effective organisation providing an excellent level of service.

In developing our priorities we consider the agreed vision and actions in the Dartmoor Partnership Plan, statutory targets and Government policies (e.g. Environment Act targets and the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) and wider local priorities (e.g. Devon Carbon Plan and the corporate plans for constituent authorities).

The priorities are linked (see figure 1); our overall goal is integrated delivery: to ensure action on one priority considers and delivers, wherever possible, across all themes and helps Dartmoor become carbon neutral.

Table 1 highlights, for each priority, our ambition, the key actions we will undertake in 2025/26 to help deliver the ambition and the headline outcomes or impact that we seek. The ambitions relate to the Dartmoor Partnership Plan. Whilst we up-date our Business Plan on an annual basis most of our work programmes (and the key actions) span more than one financial year.

The key actions do not encompass all of the work that we undertake, nor do they relate to all of our services; rather, they reflect, as the name suggests the key actions, which will help deliver our priorities and contribute to delivery of the vision and ambition in the Dartmoor Partnership Plan.

As well as identifying key actions to deliver our priorities and contribute to the vision for Dartmoor; the Business Plan sets out:

- Performance targets for our key services
- The funding available to deliver our services and key actions

Figure 1: Integrated Delivery



Table 1: Key Actions to Deliver Business Plan Priorities in 2025/26

Better for Nature and Climate

Ambition:

Networks of healthy habitats that are home to many different plants, insects and animals create a more resilient natural environment, at a landscape-scale, connected within and across the boundary of the National Park. Some areas feel wilder as nature is enhanced and allowed to take its course. Dartmoor's peatlands, soils and woodlands will store significantly more carbon. Responding to climate change will be embedded in our way of life.

Key actions in 2025/26 to help deliver our ambition:

- Fully-funded programme of peatland restoration through South-West Peatland Partnership and completion of 300 ha of peatland restoration by March 2026.
- Dartmoor Headwaters programme - use of natural flood management measures within key catchments that reduce the risk of flooding, improve hydrological systems and deliver other public benefits in a way that supports local communities and the 'circular economy'. Delivery of natural flood management projects across eight catchments.
- Work at a landscape-scale to enhance nature – deliver the Walkham Landscape Recovery project; supporting the Central Dartmoor and East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery projects; and scope other opportunities for further funding (including potential new Landscape Recovery projects).
- Identify and support key species through targeted partnership programmes, for example, the Curlew Recovery project and re-introduction of Pine Martens.
- Assess the potential impacts of climate change on Dartmoor (its landscape, nature, heritage, businesses and communities). Use this assessment to inform the development of an action plan that supports the ambition for the National Park to be carbon negative by 2042.

Outcomes sought:

- Halt the decline in species populations by 2030 and then increase populations by at least 10% to exceed current levels by 2042.
- Functioning catchments that reduce the risk of flooding and improve water quality: improved flood resilience to over 600 properties, whilst delivering over 240 ha of improved habitats by 2033.
- 30% of Dartmoor actively managed for nature by 2030 (based on national criteria).
- A carbon negative National Park by 2050 (assessed against 2022 baseline).
- 7,500 ha of wildlife rich habitat restored or created, outside of protected sites, by 2042 (PLTOF)
- 8,000 ha of peat under restoration by 2050 (PLTOF).

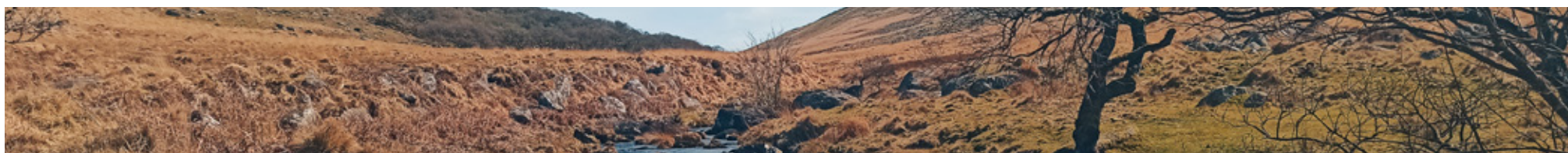


Table 1: Key Actions to Deliver Business Plan Priorities in 2025/26

Better for Cultural Heritage	
<p>Ambition: Dartmoor’s cultural heritage and historic environment is protected, well managed and in good condition. The significance of the historic environment will be understood by both those living and working on Dartmoor and by visitors. Dartmoor’s rich historic environment will be actively researched and celebrated.</p>	
<p>Key actions in 2025/26 to help deliver our ambition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete the micro-excavation of the Cut Hill cist, raise funding for this project and implement a proactive communications and engagement strategy to promote the findings and role of the Authority.• Engage with interest groups and the general public to promote understanding of and engagement with cultural heritage.• Support volunteer groups, through advice and funding, to enable delivery of archaeological objectives with a focus on reducing the number of nationally designated heritage assets that are at risk.• Develop and promote partnerships with academic institutions to further understanding of cultural heritage on Dartmoor including scoping the use of virtual reality technology to ‘bring the past to life’.	
<p>Outcomes sought:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in the National Park by at least six per cent (12) by 2027.• Increase the number of trained and active archaeological volunteers by 20 per cent by 2027, with a focus on hard-to-reach groups.• Dartmoor’s cultural heritage is better understood and appreciated – six volunteer-based events in 2025/26 to celebrate Dartmoor’s cultural heritage.	



Table 1: Key Actions to Deliver Business Plan Priorities in 2025/26

Better for Farming and Forestry	
<p>Ambition: Farming and forestry systems that sustain a resilient and thriving natural environment, store and sequester carbon, produce healthy food, high quality fibre and other products, are economically viable and deliver a wide range of public goods.</p>	
<p>Key actions in 2025/26 to help deliver our ambition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the development of farm clusters that promote farmer co-operation and facilitate a landscape-scale approach to nature and other public benefits (see Better for Nature and Climate).• Deliver ‘Boundary Boost’ - a project looking at the value and management of hedgerows within the National Park funded by the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund.• Deliver the ‘Healthy Livestock’ project and ensure learning is disseminated and embedded in Landscape Recovery projects on Dartmoor.• Deliver the Farming in Protected Landscape Programme for Dartmoor.• Assist farmers with the transition to the new Environmental Land Management schemes and seek to ensure that these schemes are relevant to Dartmoor and build on practical experience.• Support natural woodland regeneration and new broadleaf woodland creation.	
<p>Outcomes sought:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure at least 65% of farmers/land managers adopt nature friendly farming on their land by 2030.• 2,000 ha of new broadleaf woodland by 2045 (Partnership Plan Vision).• 2,900 ha increase in tree canopy and woodland cover by 2050 (PLTOF)	



Table 1: Key Actions to Deliver Business Plan Priorities in 2025/26

Better for People
<p>Ambition: Dartmoor provides a warm welcome to people from all backgrounds: enriching people’s lives and connecting them with this special place. Transformative experiences will inspire people to care for the National Park. All users will be responsible: caring for the place, respecting other users and local communities.</p>
<p>Key actions in 2025/26 to help deliver our ambition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and implement a Visitor Management Plan for 2025 season and secure continued funding for the ‘Dartmoor National Park Marshals’.• Attend at least 30 public events to promote the National Park and key messages such as ‘Love Moor Life’.• Deliver a programme of outreach events aimed at promoting ‘access for all’ and giving people from disadvantaged backgrounds the confidence and ability to visit the National Park. Including three themed ‘Dartmoor Days’.• Manage 730 kilometres of public rights of way and 38,500 ha of access land on Dartmoor with a focus on a net reduction of ‘outstanding maintenance issues’ by 10 per cent per annum.• Develop an Active Travel Plan for Dartmoor with a range of costed schemes for improving connectivity for local communities and visitors.• Targeted work on the Two Moors Way to improve the quality of route and ease of navigation. Scope feasibility of promoting this route as a National Trail to celebrate its 50th anniversary and the 75th anniversary of Dartmoor being designated as a National Park in 2026.• Develop five new ‘Miles without Stiles’ accessible routes with a total distance in excess of 10 kilometres.
<p>Outcomes sought:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve and promote accessibility to, and engagement with, Dartmoor National Park for all; by March 2026:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Five new ‘Miles without Stiles’ routes.- 90 per cent of the Public Rights of Way network is classed as easy to use.• Every visitor appreciates the National Park and has an enjoyable experience: over 90% of visitors agree that Dartmoor is well conserved.• Reduced anti-social behaviour (as recorded by the National Park Rangers).• Welcome more than 125,000 visitors to our National Park Visitor Centres.



Table 1: Key Actions to Deliver Business Plan Priorities in 2025/26

Better for Communities and Business	
Ambition: People of all ages can enjoy living and working in low carbon, flourishing communities that are connected physically and digitally. Dartmoor’s communities are thriving and engaged in caring for the National Park.	
Key actions in 2025/26 to help deliver our ambition: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support, through our role as the local planning authority, the delivery of affordable homes for local people and other infrastructure.• Develop an information-sharing forum for communities to encourage, inform and support pathways to emissions reduction and net zero.	
Outcomes sought: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over 4,000 volunteer days organised or supported by the National Park Authority per annum.• 65 new affordable housing units per annum.	



Table 1: Key Actions to Deliver Business Plan Priorities in 2025/26

Be an Excellent Organisation
<p>Ambition: A motivated, well-resourced organisation working effectively and efficiently to deliver key services and, with partners, to deliver National Park purposes and the vision in the Dartmoor Partnership Plan.</p>
<p>Key actions in 2025/26 to help deliver our ambition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working with the Partnership Board, commence the review of the Dartmoor Partnership Plan with the aim of adopting a revised plan by 2027 and establishing a robust monitoring strategy to track and evaluate progress throughout the lifetime of the plan.• Deliver a capital investment programme aimed at income generation.• Develop a revised Climate Action Plan for the National Park Authority.• Commence delivery of the Dartmoor Dynamic Landscapes Heritage programme with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.• Complete integrated management plans for the common land owned by the National Park Authority.• Commence work to either review the existing Dartmoor Local Plan or, if appropriate, commence work on a new Local Plan to ensure that planning policy continues to respond effectively to the needs and emerging issues of the National Park.• Improve and enhance the Authority’s website and develop our social media platforms.
<p>Outcomes sought:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A motivated and engaged workforce delivering high quality services that support National Park purposes – more than 80% of staff feeling engaged in the organisation (based on staff survey).• A revised Dartmoor Partnership Plan that is supported by key partners with an agreed vision, clear delivery plan and governance structure to monitor delivery and actively promote the Plan.• A costed Climate Action Plan (for the Authority) by March 2026.• An Authority website that is updated by March 2026 and with increasing ‘hits’/views per annum.• By December 2026, an Authority decision on whether a new Local Plan should be prepared based on thorough assessment of most up to evidence and legislative requirements.• Dartmoor Futures established as a key partner for funding to help deliver Dartmoor Partnership Plan vision• Determine 65 per cent of minor applications and 85 per cent of other applications (excluding ‘majors’) within eight weeks of validation, per annum.



Dartmoor Land Use Management Group (DLUMG)

The creation of the DLUMG was one of the major recommendations from the independent review of protected site management on Dartmoor commissioned by Defra Ministers in 2023 and chaired by David Fursdon. The Group's purpose is to reinforce Dartmoor's existing governance by promoting cooperation and collaboration between key stakeholders and government arm's length bodies (ALBs) with a focus on land management. The Group's remit covers the whole of the Dartmoor National Park and all relevant aspects of land-use within its boundaries. Its role in relation to the management of 'protected sites' includes ancient monuments and archaeology as well as ecological designations. In this way, DLUMG will facilitate the achievement of improved outcomes for nature and climate on Dartmoor, together with a wide range of other public benefits, in a resilient landscape that is underpinned by viable, sustainable, farm businesses.

The Authority is a member of the DLUMG and will be supporting it to deliver its terms of reference which include work on a data observatory, land use framework for Dartmoor and Dartmoor wide grazing and agri-environment schemes. The Authority is also acting as the 'banker' for the Group – it receives a ring-fenced grant from Defra which is the budget for the Group.

The work of the DLUMG is closely linked to many of the actions in the Authority's Business Plan. Progress by the DLUMG will be reported separately as the Group is independent of the Authority.

Dartmoor Futures

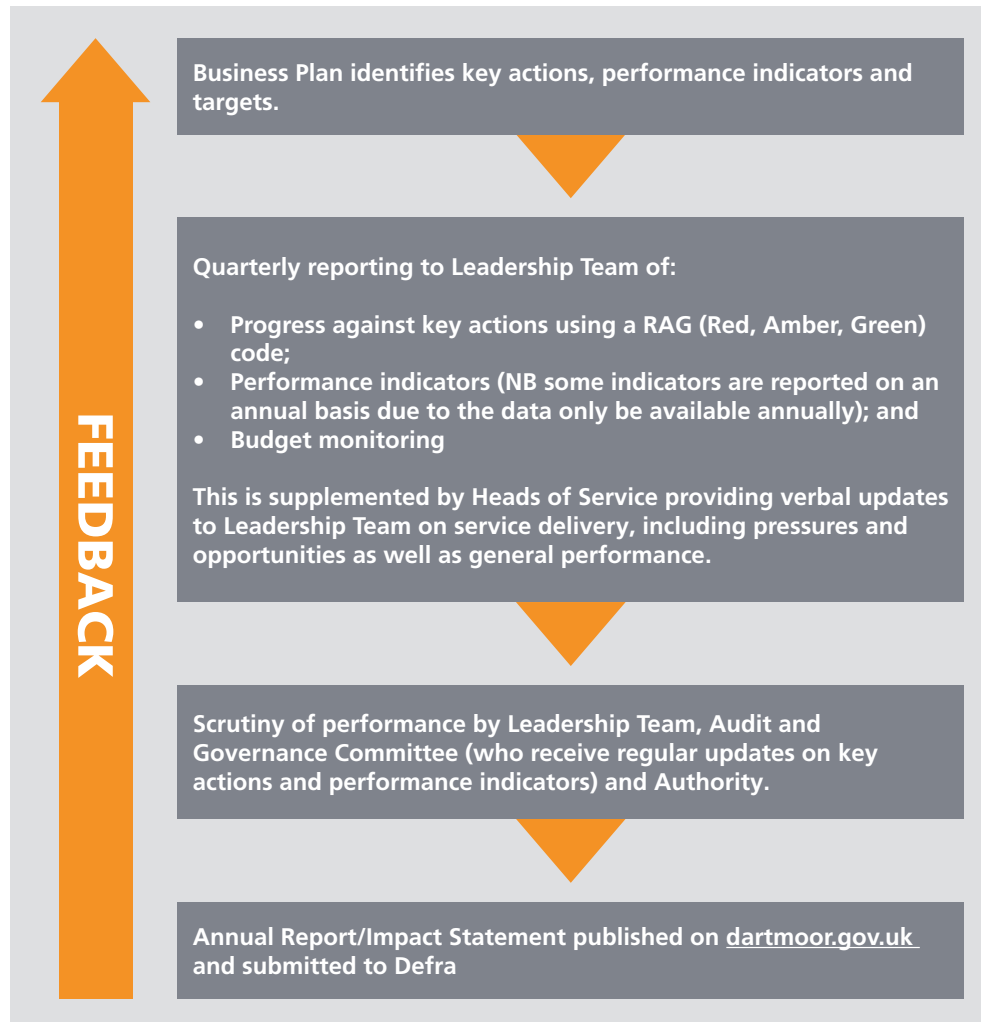
The Authority has supported the establishment of the Dartmoor Foundation (trading name Dartmoor Futures) as a limited company with charitable status. The Authority will work closely with Dartmoor Futures to help develop it as a key partner to help deliver the Partnership Plan. Progress will be reported to the Authority.



Measuring progress

We continually seek ways to improve the quality and value for money of the services we provide.

The Authority's performance framework is summarised below:



Progress against key actions is monitored on a quarterly basis and reported to the Authority's Audit and Governance Committee.

At the end of each financial year, the Authority completes an annual performance review which contains information about the progress made in delivering the Business Plan, together with achievements against a comprehensive set of performance indicators. A copy of our latest Annual review can be accessed [here](#).

In addition, the Authority reports separately on the Dartmoor Partnership Plan and produces a State of the Park report every five years.



Performance indicators

The key Performance Indicators that we will use to assess service delivery are identified below together with the associated target

Spatial Planning	Target
Percentage of major applications determined within 13 weeks	65%
Percentage of minor applications determined within eight weeks	85%
Percentage of other applications determined within eight weeks	70%
Percentage of planning applicants satisfied with quality of the service received	70%
Percentage of pre-applications for minor and householder applications which have been concluded within 42 days	70%
Percentage of pre-applications for major applications which have been concluded within 56 days	70%
Percentage of applications validated within five working days	70%
Percentage of applications registered within five working days	70%
Number of enforcement cases received	No target - trend/baseline data
Number of legal notices issued (EN, LBEN, BoCN, s215, etc.)	No target - trend/baseline data
Number of enforcement cases closed	No target - trend/baseline data
Number of enforcement related applications received (retrospective)	No target - trend/baseline data
Number of appeals received (planning & enforcement)	No target - trend/baseline data
Percentage of appeals allowed	30%
Number of affordable housing units approved	65

Performance indicators

Conservation & Communities	Target
Percentage of public rights of way network that is easy to use	90%
Total number of unresolved maintenance issues on the public rights of way network	Reduce by 10% per annum
Number of maintenance issues resolved by the Authority on the public rights of way network	600
User behaviour engagements that result in positive change	80%
Number of visitors to the National Park Visitor Centres	125,000
Number of engagement events delivered on Dartmoor and number of attendees	150 events/10,000 attendees
Number of engagement events attended/delivered beyond the National Park and number of attendees	
Percentage of engagement events attended/delivered on and off Dartmoor, reaching attendees on Index of Multiple Deprivation scale 1-3	10%
Number of followers on social media	110,000
Number of subscribers to e-communications	5,000
Percentage of e-communications opened by subscribers	48%
Number of unique visitors to Authority website and page views	300,000 total users 500,000 page views
Proportion of Farming in Protected Landscapes budget committed and spent	
Percentage of appeals allowed	100%

Performance indicators

Corporate Services	Target
Employee sickness absence	6 days per FTE 3 days (excluding long-term)
Employee turnover	10%
Employee appraisals	95%
Total number of volunteer days organised or supported by the Authority	4,000
Value of volunteer days organised or supported by the Authority	£400,000
No. of volunteer days attended by under-represented groups	400
No. of formal complaints received and number of formal complaints upheld by Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman	No target - trend/baseline data
Spend per visitor in National Park Visitor Centres	£2.00
Percentage of income derived from sources other than National Park Grant	50%
Percentage change in carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from DNPA operations	Target being reviewed as part of Climate Action Plan (see key actions)
Percentage of Membership attending Authority meetings	85%
Number of parish meetings attended by Members	30
Number of parish meetings attended by Rangers and other officers	53

Funding

Our core funding comes from central Government, not from Council Tax. This reflects the fact that, unlike local councils, our responsibilities extend to people who live well beyond our boundaries.

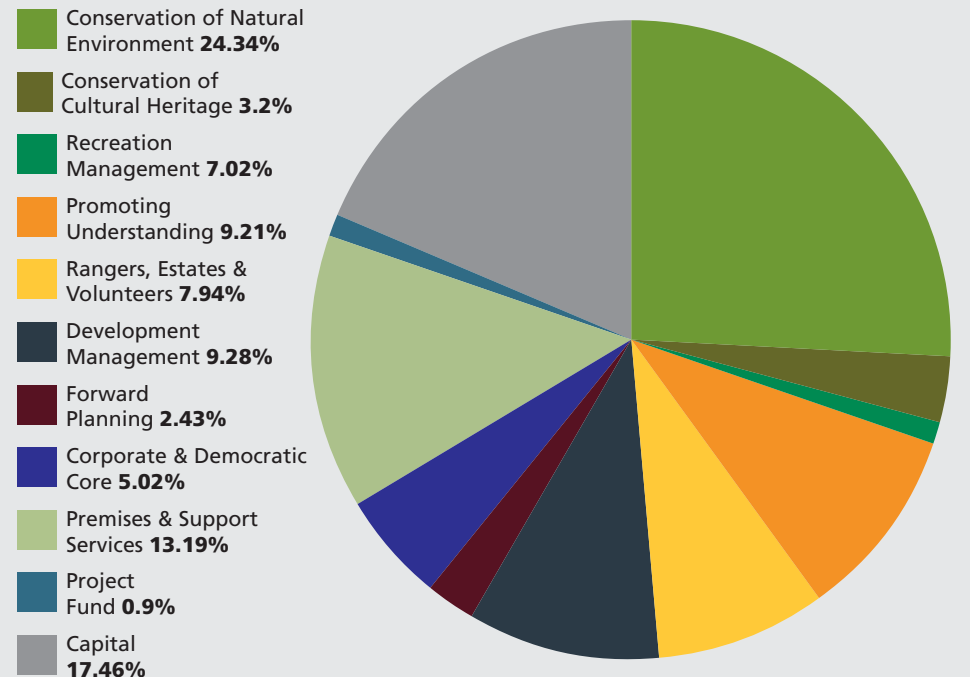
The approved budget for 2025/26 is based on a total expenditure of £8,326,256 of which £1,453,837 is capital money. This is only the second time that the Authority has received a ring-fenced capital grant. The first time was in 2024/25 when we received £250,000 capital grant from Defra. As previously noted, the capital grant provides a welcome opportunity but also a considerable challenge given the requirement to spend by 31 March 2026 and the fact that final guidance on eligible spend was only provided in June 2025.

The Defra revenue grant accounts for 51% of projected revenue expenditure in 2025/26.

Sources of Funding 2024/25

Source of Funding	£
NPG (Defra)	3,532,028
Reserves	564,712
Income	837,955
Other Grants	1,937,724
Total Revenue Funds	6,872,419
Capital funding (Defra)	1,453,837
Total of All Funds Available	8,326,256

Projected Expenditure 2025/26





Dartmoor National Park Authority
Parke,
Bovey Tracey,
Newton Abbot,
Devon TQ13 9JQ

dartmoor.gov.uk

120+
new
fingerpost
signs
installed

178 
FiPL projects completed

1000+
targeted conversations about
Dogs on Leads
during Ground Nesting Birds Campaign

25 guided
events
at **Higher
Uppacott**

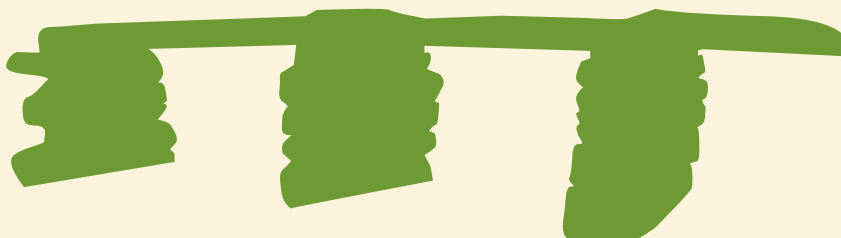


Products from
**15 new
LOCAL
suppliers**

sold at our
Visitor
Centres



SILVER AWARD



FOR POSTBRIDGE VISITOR CENTRE
at 2024 Devon Tourism Awards

£3.12M

National Lottery funding
awarded for Dartmoor's
Dynamic Landscapes



**National Park
Protector Awards
Won**

1 new sister park
partnership with

