Understanding and Enjoyment
Evidence Paper summary
“I have never before, in my long and eclectic career, been gifted with such an abundance of natural beauty as I experienced filming ‘War Horse’ on Dartmoor”

Steven Spielberg
Visitor Trends and Behaviours
Visitor Numbers

• Visitor numbers increased by 15% between 2013 and 2017 from 2.14 million visitors to 2.47 million.

• The increase is largely a result of a rise in staycations and an increase in European visitors.

Annual Visitor Numbers. STEAM
Motivations

Two main reasons for visiting Dartmoor
1. General Sightseeing (36%)
2. Physical Activity (26%)

The National Park attracts more ‘older’ visitors
87% visitors aged 35 or over
13% aged 16-34

Majority of visitors come from local areas
In 2016 70% of Dartmoor visitors came from the South West
Recreation Activities

Walking and running are the most popular activities undertaken by 78% of visitors.

1994 Visitors to National Park Survey also found walking to be the most popular reason for visiting Dartmoor.
Large Scale Recreation

- Decrease in the number of large scale recreation events from 2013
- BUT participant numbers are increasing
- Fewer events but bigger in size

No. of event notifications and no. of people taking part in events (DNPA)
SWEEP – Emerging Research

South West Partnership for Environmental and Economic Prosperity have carried out work for DNPA to explore the impact of increasing recreational use.

- Future population projects suggest an overall population increase of 13% by 2039 in the areas surrounding the National Park.
- Increasing population could lead to 870,000 additional visits per year.
- MENE data shows that visits to the natural environment at least once a week have increased from 52% in year one to 58% in year seven.
Predicted growth in footfall (increase in persons per hour at peak times) across Dartmoor from 2019-2039 (SWEEP)
Possible Impacts of Increasing Visitor Numbers
Visitor Impacts

Common concerns include

- Litter
- Anti-social behaviour
- Speeding
- Illegal Camping
- Inconsiderate use of PRoW
- Dogs
- Gates being left open
Recreation Pressure and Climate Change

- Data suggests that Dartmoor’s climate is getting warmer and wetter with more intense periods of rainfall
- In 2014 about 40 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) were storm damaged
- Similar level occurred in 2017/18
Recreation Pressure and Climate Change

• Increase in visitor numbers will lead to increased pressure on the PRoW network

• Resulting in damage to vegetation, compaction of soils, erosion and gullying

• Combination of more severe weather events and increasing recreation pressure is likely to lead to significant damage in the future
Recreation Pressure and Climate Change

Predictions of locations of increasing erosion by 2039 (SWEEP)
### Species and Habitats

Assessing the potential impacts of increasing visitor numbers on key Dartmoor species (SWEEP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green: recreation impact unlikely</th>
<th>Orange: recreation impact possible or minor</th>
<th>Red: recreation impact high or likely</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Ground Beetle</td>
<td>Adder</td>
<td>Cuckoo</td>
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<td>Bog Hoverfly</td>
<td>Hen Harrier</td>
<td>Dartford Warbler</td>
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<td>Fairy Shrimp</td>
<td>High Brown Fritillary</td>
<td>Dipper</td>
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<td>Otter</td>
<td>Marsh Fritillary</td>
<td>Dunlin</td>
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<td>Peregrine Falcon</td>
<td>Narrow-Bordered Bee Hawkmoth</td>
<td>Greater Horseshoe Bat</td>
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<td>Snipe</td>
<td>Pearl-Bordered Fritillary</td>
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<td>Plants</td>
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<td>Southern Damselfly</td>
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<td>Wood Warbler</td>
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Species sensitivity to recreation activities (SWEEP)
Key species hotspots (for which spatial information was available) and predicted growth in footfall per hour 2019-2039 (SWEEP)
Benefits of Dartmoor
Health and Wellbeing

- Important link between the natural environment and wellbeing

- **73%** of people in the UK feel that the natural environment is important for personal and national wellbeing

- Recognised in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan

Dartmoor Naturally Healthy

- **Enjoyment (52 NH; 20 MTE)**
- **Sense of belonging (52 NH; 17 MTE)**
- **Learning (18 NH; 49 MTE)**
- **Relaxation (27 NH; 17 MTE)**

The *top four* participant outcomes across both projects
Education and Understanding

- 8 Point Plan for National Parks and the 25 Year Environment Plan have a focus on connecting young people with Nature

- DNPA offers a range of formal and informal education activities

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<tr>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Informal</th>
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<td>School Groups</td>
<td>Ranger Ralph</td>
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<td>Junior Rangers</td>
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<td>Visitor Centres</td>
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- Dartmoor offers a range of opportunities to promote understanding
  - Ten Tors
  - Education providers and activity centres
  - School visits
  - National Citizen service
  - Uniform Groups e.g. Scouts

- What about quality over quantity?
Tourism Businesses

- Increasing annual visitor spend
- Linked to growing number of staying visitors
Summary

• Dartmoor important resource used by thousands of people for many different reasons

• Trend data and emerging research suggests that visitors numbers will increase

• 8 Point Plan sets targets to encourage visitors to the National Park

• Recreation and use of Dartmoor can have positive and negative impacts

• How do we manage an increase in visitors to support the local economy and improve visitor experiences but also protect and enhance the natural environment that the National Park protects
Do the Mountains Speak for Themselves?