Dartmoor National Park Authority

Organisational Climate Action Plan

October 2025

Executive Summary

The UK Government has committed to reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, with interim carbon budgets and a clear expectation that public bodies lead by example in delivering climate action. This ambition is underpinned by the latest IPCC science, which states that global emissions must fall by 43% by 2030 to limit warming to 1.5°C, and by the UK's Sixth Carbon Budget, which commits to a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. This is reinforced locally by the Devon Carbon Plan, which sets a net zero target of 2050 for the county, identifies priority actions across sectors, and highlights the importance of climate leadership from public organisations. As a public body operating within a nationally designated landscape, DNPA recognises its responsibility to act in line with these ambitions.

This Climate Action Plan sets out how DNPA, as an organisation, will respond to the climate crisis. DNPA declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019, recognising the urgent need for action. This plan covers only the Authority's direct and indirect emissions and does not apply to the wider Dartmoor National Park area. The Plan draws on analytical support from the University of Exeter to produce a detailed baseline of DNPA's greenhouse gas emissions and a decarbonisation trajectory that aligns with the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). This provides DNPA with a credible, science-led pathway to reduce emissions in line with limiting global warming to 1.5°C. The plan includes both a near-term target to 2030 and a long-term net zero target, set in accordance with SBTi guidance.

DNPA's Climate Action Plan also contributes to broader public sector goals. By embedding climate action into decision-making, demonstrating leadership, and delivering tangible reductions in its own footprint, DNPA supports the wider transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient Devon and UK. In doing so, it responds to calls from the Glover Review and National Parks England's Delivery Plan for Climate for Protected Landscapes to lead in tackling the climate and ecological emergency**.** This is not only a response to environmental urgency, but it also reaffirms DNPA's role as stewards committed to protecting and enhancing this nationally protected landscape.

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Why Urgent Action is Needed

Recent climate science underscores the critical need for urgent action:

- Atmospheric CO_2 concentrations reached a record high of 420 parts per million in 2023 — levels not seen for millions of years.
- The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), culminating in the March 2023 Synthesis Report, confirms that human activity has already caused approximately 1.1°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels.
- The past decade (2013-2022) was the warmest on record globally, with extreme weather events increasing in frequency and severity.
- Climate scientists such as Professor Tim Lenton highlight the risk of crossing planetary “tipping points,” including irreversible ice sheet loss and ecosystem collapse, which would dramatically amplify climate impacts and undermine global efforts.
- Without urgent, accelerated emission reductions in this decade, the world will exceed 1.5°C of warming in the 2030s or 2040s, triggering irreversible damage to the most vulnerable ecosystems and human populations.
- UK Met Office projections for Devon indicate that by 2050, average summer temperatures could rise by 2–3°C, summers will become drier, and winters wetter and stormier, increasing flood risks and stress on water resources — all impacting Dartmoor’s landscape and communities.
- These findings reinforce the importance of DNPA’s leadership in climate mitigation and adaptation through this Climate Action Plan, aligned with international and national science-based targets.

Introduction

DNPA is committed to acting on climate change. As the organisation responsible for protecting Dartmoor’s special qualities, wildlife, and cultural heritage, we must also take responsibility for reducing our own environmental impact.

After declaring a climate and ecological emergency in 2019, DNPA produced and approved our first organisational Climate Action Plan in March 2020. This set out how the Authority would work to become carbon neutral for its scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2025. In October 2023, Members endorsed a review of this Climate Action Plan and expressed support for developing an updated, science-based approach. The revised plan, set out in this document, aligns with the latest climate science.

Following this, in January 2024, DNPA pledged to join the Race to Zero campaign - a global UN initiative uniting organisations to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 at the latest. This reflects our support for climate action at both national and global levels.

Alongside this public pledge, DNPA is taking focused steps to reduce emissions from our own operations and estate. This Climate Action Plan sets out our approach to organisational climate action, targeting the emissions we produce directly (such as from fuel and energy use) and indirectly (such as staff commuting and procurement).

To guide this work, we are aligning our targets with the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). The SBTi is a leading international standard that helps organisations set emissions reduction goals in line with what the latest climate science says is needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Following this framework means DNPA must reduce emissions across our operations by at least 42% by 2030 for scopes 1 and 2 and 25% for scope 3. We also aim to reach net zero by 2050 at the latest, through emission reductions rather than offsetting.

This Climate Action Plan sets out DNPA's organisational response to climate change. It draws on work we commissioned from the University of Exeter, who helped us calculate our emissions baseline for 2023/24 and apply the SBTi approach. The plan outlines the practical steps we will take to reduce emissions over the coming years. It is intended as a clear and accessible guide to what we've done so far, where we are now, and how we plan to meet our targets.

Emissions Baseline

To guide our climate action, Dartmoor National Park Authority commissioned the Centre for Energy and the Environment at the University of Exeter to calculate our organisational greenhouse gas emissions and provide a new baseline for 2023/24. This assessment followed best-practice standards, including the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, and covered emissions from across our operations, estate, staff activity, and investments.

In 2023/24, DNPA's total net emissions were **3,096 tCO_2e**, measured across all three scopes:

- **Scope 1 (Direct emissions): 82 tCO_2e** from sources owned or controlled by DNPA, such as fuel used in vehicles and heating in DNPA-operated buildings.
- **Scope 2 (Indirect energy emissions): 31 tCO_2e** from purchased electricity used in our facilities.
- **Scope 3 (Other indirect emissions): 4,755 tCO_2e,** including pensions (4,259 tCO_2e), procurement of goods and services (322 tCO_2e), staff commuting and transport (140 tCO_2e), and building-related emissions (34 tCO_2e).

Our woodland estate acts as a carbon sink, sequestering an estimated 1,771 tCO_2e per year. However, in line with Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) guidelines, sequestration from natural sinks like woodland is excluded from our net emissions

for target setting purposes. Additionally, while pensions represent the largest single emissions category, they are also excluded from our target-setting baseline due to DNPA's limited influence over investment decisions. Nonetheless, both pension emissions and woodland sequestration will continue to be reported—pensions annually and sequestration on a five-yearly basis—for transparency.

After these exclusions, DNPA's adjusted net emissions for 2023/24, used for target setting, **total 609 tCO_2e** (rounded for simplicity). This baseline provides a clear starting point for setting science-based targets and tracking progress in reducing our organisational emissions over time.

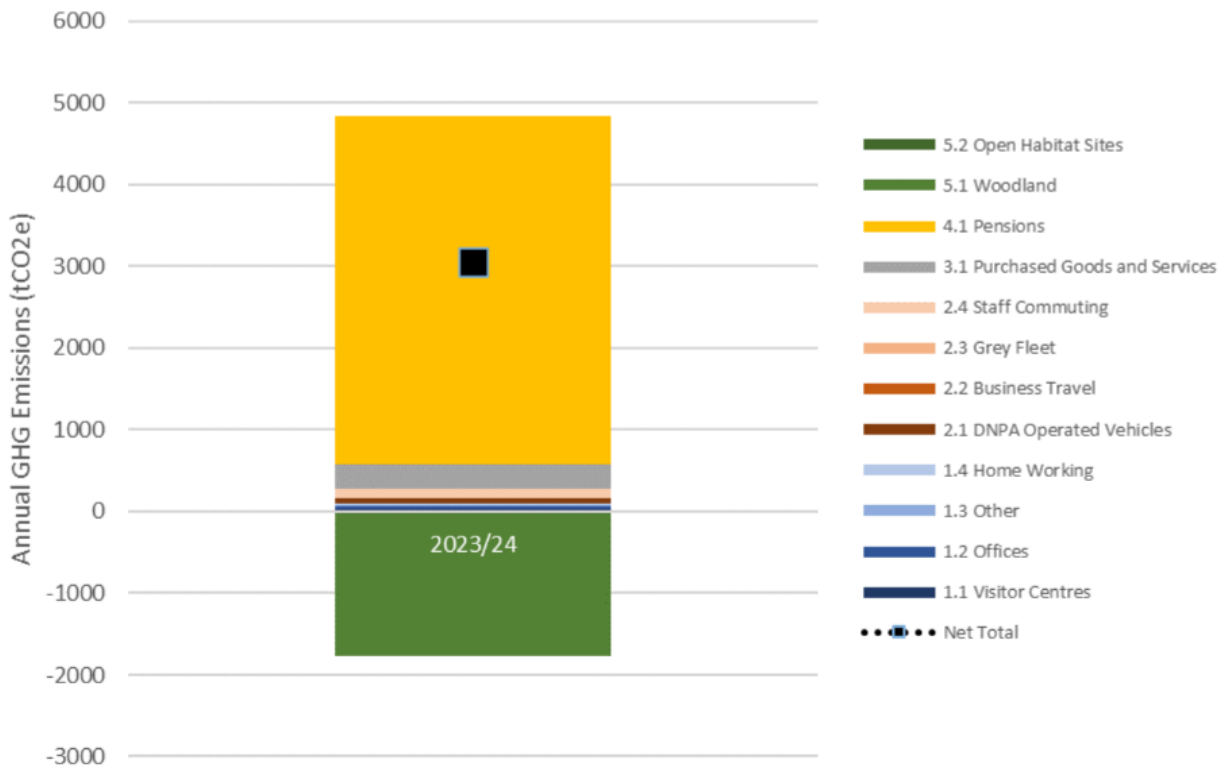

Figure 1: Graph showing a breakdown of DNPA's greenhouse gas emissions in 2023/24.

Target Setting

The **Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)** recommends setting both near-term and long-term targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This approach balances immediate, achievable actions with the deeper, longer-term changes needed to address climate change effectively.

Working with the University of Exeter, DNPA has adopted this structure to define science-based targets that align with the latest climate guidance and reflect what is realistically within our organisational control. These targets focus on reducing emissions across our operations — including buildings, vehicles, procurement, commuting, and business travel. Emissions from pensions and woodland carbon sequestration are excluded from the targets, in line with SBTi methodology, but continue to be monitored and reported for transparency.

Near-term target (2030/31)

By 2030/31, DNPA aims to reduce its organisational emissions to **438 tCO_2e**. This headline target is based on:

- A **42% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions** (buildings and vehicles)
- A **25% reduction in Scope 3 emissions** (including procurement, commuting, and travel)

We will also monitor progress using a **dedicated Scope 1 and 2 target** of **66 tCO_2e**, reflecting the same 42% reduction.

Long-term target (2050)

By 2050, DNPA is committed to reaching **net zero emissions**, with at least a **90% reduction** from the 2023/24 baseline. This sets a long-term emissions target of **61 tCO_2e or less**.

While woodland carbon sequestration is excluded from these targets in line with SBTi guidance, the framework allows up to 10% of residual emissions to be neutralised through verified carbon removals. The University of Exeter recommends that DNPA explore options for neutralising this portion, and we will review the most effective and appropriate methods.

These targets will be reviewed at least every five years to reflect progress, changes in our operations, and updates to climate science and best practice.

In developing these targets, DNPA has modelled a range of ambition scenarios to illustrate different routes to achieving these goals. These range from a **low ambition** scenario focused on low-cost, easily achievable actions such as behavioural change; to a **medium ambition** scenario that includes more significant operational changes; and a **maximum ambition** scenario that targets the most transformative actions, to support wider emission reductions through sustainable procurement. Rather than committing to a fixed pathway, DNPA will adopt a blended approach, selecting actions from across these scenarios to shape a flexible and pragmatic Climate Action Plan. This will allow the level of ambition to be scaled based on available resources, strategic priorities, and emerging opportunities, while ensuring alignment with the science-based trajectory.

The projected emissions for the three scenarios to 2030/31, broken down by category, together with the SBTi Scopes 1–3 target, are shown in Figure 9. If all Low measures are achieved, the target would just be missed. This outcome is particularly dependent on procurement emissions falling as modelled, which is uncertain due to the difficulty of accurately capturing the impact of spending.

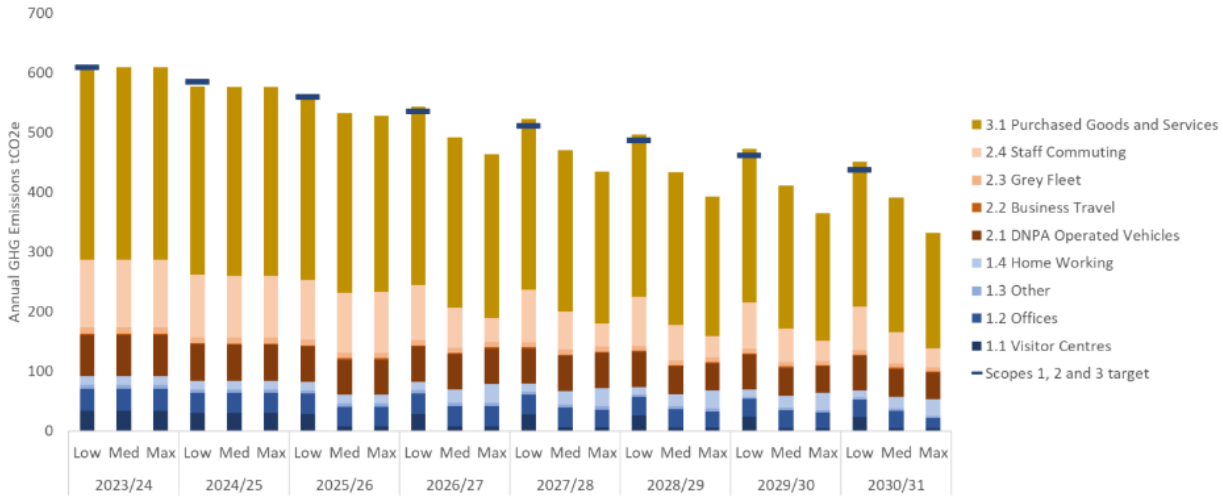

Figure 2: Graph showing projected emissions for the three scenarios to 2030/31 for buildings, transport, procurement and sub-categories.

Scope and Boundaries

Included in footprint and targets	**Reported but not included in targets**	**Out of scope for 23/24 footprint**
Energy use in DNPA buildings (fuel & electricity)	Staff pension fund emissions (investments)	Visitor travel to DNPA owned land
DNPA fleet vehicle fuel use	Woodland carbon sequestration	Waste disposal and downstream impacts
Staff commuting and home working		Upstream transport of purchased goods (Not applicable)
Business travel (grey fleet and public transport)		
Procurement of goods and services		

Action Plan

To meet our near and long-term emissions reduction targets, DNPA will take action across all areas of our operations. This section outlines the key workstreams that will guide our organisational response to climate change over the coming years.

Rather than following a single linear route, DNPA will draw on a range of actions across the low, medium, and maximum ambition scenarios to form a tailored strategy. This approach enables prioritisation of actions that are most feasible in the short term, while allowing for more ambitious steps to be integrated as capacity, funding, and partnerships develop. This is not an exhaustive list; additional actions and opportunities will continue to be identified as the plan evolves.Actions are grouped thematically and focused on emissions sources identified in our 2023/24 baseline. They prioritise areas where DNPA has the most control or influence and where early action will yield the greatest carbon and organisational benefits. The plan includes a mix of direct operational changes, policy development, and staff engagement, as well as groundwork to support longer-term transformation.

Progress will be reviewed annually through calculations of our annual carbon footprint, and the action plan updated as necessary to reflect learning, new opportunities, or evolving science and guidance.

Buildings and Energy Use (Scopes 1 & 2)

Emissions from buildings arise mainly from heating and electricity use, especially at the Authority's headquarters, Parke. Although buildings form a relatively small part of our overall footprint, they represent a significant share of our Scope 1 and 2 emissions — the categories where DNPA has the greatest control.

Decarbonisation Pathways:

Ambition	**Action**
Low	• Develop a building energy monitoring and management plan to identify savings
Medium	• Install solar thermal hot water systems at Parke and explore other low-carbon heating solutions

Maximum	• Investigate the feasibility of rooftop or ground-mounted solar PV at Parke and other sites • Ensure all future refurbishment or construction work aligns with high energy efficiency standards, including low-carbon heating • Upgrade insulation at Parke to improve energy efficiency and reduce gas demand • Explore low-carbon heating solutions (heat pumps)

These measures are expected to reduce energy demand, lower operating costs, and directly support our 2030 targets for Scope 1 and 2.

Fleet and Transport (Scopes 1 & 3)

Transport emissions come from our vehicle fleet, business travel, and grey fleet (staff using their own cars at work). DNPA's fleet is currently diesel-based, but transition to electric vehicles (EVs) is already underway.

Decarbonisation Pathways:

Ambition	**Action**
Low	• Encourage behavioural change through staff travel policies and internal comms. Includes promoting public transport and car-sharing for work-related travel where feasible. This also applies to staff commuting. • Monitor business mileage claims and grey fleet use to identify opportunities to reduce emissions
Medium	• Install EV charging points at Parke car park and investigate further rollout at owned sites • Review vehicle use to reduce mileage, consolidate trips, and encourage active travel

Maximum	• Replace at least four vehicles in the fleet with EVs by 2027, with a target of at least eight (32% of fleet) by 2030

Transport actions will not only reduce Scope 1 emissions but also influence Scope 3 through changes to staff travel patterns.

Staff Commuting (Scope 3)

Staff commuting accounted for 112 tCO_2e in the 2023/24 footprint. While DNPA cannot control how staff travel, we can influence behaviours through policy and support.

Decarbonisation Pathways:

Ambition	**Action**
Low	• Conduct annual staff commuting surveys to track changes and assess impacts • Incorporate commuting considerations into HR planning and policies • Promote the cycle-to-work scheme
Medium	• Encourage active travel by improving cycle facilities at Parke by introducing e-bikes. • Continue to support flexible working to reduce commuting emissions. • Encourage behavioural change through staff travel policies and internal comms. Includes promoting public transport and car-sharing for work-related travel where feasible
Maximum	• Explore incentives for low-emission commuting, including EV salary sacrifice schemes or travel vouchers

Reducing commuting emissions contributes directly to Scope 3 targets and supports wider staff wellbeing goals.

Procurement and Supply Chains (Scope 3)

Procurement is the single largest area of Scope 3 emissions in DNPA's footprint (322 tCO_2e). While we can't fully control how goods and services are produced, we can influence emissions through what we buy and who we buy from.

Decarbonisation Pathways:

Ambition	Action
Low	• Provide guidance for staff involved in low carbon commissioning and purchasing
Medium	• Engage key suppliers in dialogue about emissions reduction and transparency • Focus on high-impact categories (e.g. construction, ICT, print services) to identify reduction opportunities • Develop and implement a sustainable procurement policy that prioritises low-carbon suppliers and materials
Maximum	• Incorporate carbon criteria into tenders, contracts, and purchasing decisions

Embedding climate into procurement decisions is essential for reducing Scope 3 emissions over the long term.

Organisational Culture and Governance

Tackling emissions requires a shift in culture and decision-making across the organisation. We need to ensure that climate considerations are embedded in our daily work and long-term planning.

Decarbonisation Pathways:

Ambition	Action
Low	• Celebrate success, share learning, and communicate progress internally and externally • Appoint a climate action lead or “champion” in each team to promote and coordinate activity • Deliver carbon literacy training to staff by 2026, with induction sessions for new starters
Medium	• Integrate emissions impact assessments into key decisions, projects, and business cases • Reflect climate goals in service plans, procurement frameworks, and reporting structures
Maximum	• No actions

A shared sense of ownership and accountability across the organisation will be essential to deliver lasting change.

Neutralisation and Residual Emissions (Post-2030)

In line with the SBTi framework, DNPA will prioritise direct emission reductions and only use neutralisation to address hard-to-abate residuals. SBTi requires that by 2050, any remaining emissions (up to 10% of the baseline) must be neutralised through verified carbon removals. DNPA will prioritise deep emissions cuts first and explore neutralisation options in parallel.

Decarbonisation Pathways

Ambition	Action

Low	• Assess credibility, co-benefits, and cost-effectiveness of different neutralisation approaches • Develop a neutralisation strategy by 2030 to cover no more than 61 tCO_2e by 2050 • Continue protecting and reporting carbon sequestration from DNPA's woodland estate (outside the SBTi target boundary). • Utilise existing partnerships with carbon removal projects (e.g. peatland restoration, afforestation) or explore further UK-based projects
Medium	• No actions
Maximum	• No actions

Phasing and Prioritisation

Actions will be phased to match available resource and organisational capacity. Short-term actions (to 2027) will focus on building momentum through low-cost, high-impact steps and foundational work such as data improvement and staff training. Medium- and longer-term actions (to 2030 and beyond) will include more capital-intensive measures and deeper engagement with external contractors.

Monitoring and Reporting

To ensure accountability and track progress towards our targets, DNPA will monitor and report on its organisational greenhouse gas emissions annually. This ongoing process will help us understand whether our actions are having the intended impact, identify new opportunities to reduce emissions, and adjust our approach where needed.

Our monitoring approach is based on the **2023/24 emissions baseline**, produced by the University of Exeter using the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and ISO 14064. This footprint provides a comprehensive and consistent foundation for annual comparisons.

What we will monitor:

- **Annual organisational carbon footprint**, using the same boundary and methodology as written up in 2024/25
- **Progress towards near-term and long-term targets** (438 tCO_2e by 2030/31 and 61 tCO_2e by 2050)
- **Performance against individual action areas**, such as fleet emissions, procurement activity, and staff commuting
- **Woodland carbon sequestration** and **pension emissions**, although not included in our targets, will continue to be reported separately for transparency

Review and updates:

- The **Action Plan will be reviewed annually**, alongside the updated emissions footprint
- Actions will be revised or added based on emerging evidence, operational changes, and lessons learned
- The **targets themselves will be formally reviewed at least every five years**, in line with SBTi guidance, to ensure they reflect the latest science and remain ambitious and achievable
- We will also review the timing of our 2050 net zero commitment during each five-year review, with the aim of bringing it forward where possible.

How we will report:

- DNPA will publish a short **annual climate action plan performance update** summarising our emissions, key changes, and progress against actions
- Progress will also be shared with the National Parks Family Indicators and relevant partners to support sector-wide learning and collaboration
- Internally, we will ensure staff and Members are kept informed and involved through updates and engagement activities
- Monitoring and reporting are essential not just for compliance, but for learning and improvement. By embedding this process into our work, we can build confidence in our climate leadership and help protect Dartmoor's future through informed and effective action.