

Dartmoor National Park Management Plan Review

Dartmoor Debate No. 4: Forestry & Farming held on 7 Nov 2018

Feedback received during the closing session in response to the questions:

“After all the various conversations you have been part of today.... And with the future vision for the Dartmoor national park in mind.....

What stands out for you... What single thing would you most want to see in the Dartmoor National Park Vision Statement at the heart of the new Management plan for 2020-2024?”

Transcript of contributions from workshop participants are listed below as bullet points, with key elements highlighted in yellow. The comments have been grouped into themes and an overall summary, capturing the main issues in each theme, is suggested (text in red).

Theme 1. Participants felt that hill farming is under threat and vulnerable in a way not seen for decades. Allied to this, there was a feeling that the role and knowledge of farmers in sustaining the National Park (including natural beauty, heritage, visitor economy, high quality food) is not properly recognised.

- The importance of ensuring that the **hill farming community on Dartmoor continues to thrive** by providing appropriate financial support
- **Farmers can't do this on their own!** We need the help of the National parks and central government to educate the public on **the importance of food production in the uplands** to maintain a sustainable future for agriculture and the environment. You can't expect to scrap farm support and maintain a 'cheap food' policy – to save farms & the upland environment, **the government have to appreciate the real costs**
- Money tree to **sustain the future of Business in the D.N.P.** [diagram...]
- The role of farmers properly valued and rewarded, with **acknowledgement of their expertise in conserving the environment**. Look at what we do already! Do not assume that we'll always be here as before!!
- **Farmers are by nature environmentalists too!** Please give us credit for this!
- **Clear support for the farming community** linked to increased educational awareness and resources ie town & country understanding
- **Farming & forestry is why public visit.** Protect our culture. Enable us to thrive.
- **Confirmation that farming is valued and rewarded** to enable it to continue. Rewarded = financial, cultural and trusted (so less being told what to do)
- **A stronger endorsement of the role farming plays in the national Park** and a clearer statement of support for the farming & forestry sector in the form of plans, policies and co-operative working. A few things that spring to mind from our discussions: 1. Need to look more creatively for support i.e. Sil; 2. Management of access & []; 3. Longer term approach to land management; 4. Recognition of communing as a 'public good'; 5. **Vulnerability of the tenanted sector on Dartmoor to change**

- An elected DNP Committee who understand the problems of residents living in the DNP
- Farming & forestry delivery profitably & sustainably for the priorities of [] Dartmoor

Theme 2. There is a need for a new basis of support to hill farming businesses that is based on provision of public goods. This must integrate and incentivise the full range of economic, environmental and social goals that farming and forestry can provide to society.

- “A farming sector that is helping to maintain and enhance the special qualities of the national park, contributing to vibrant communities and producing high quality food. To achieve this we will need an environmental land management scheme that is flexible at a local level, offers a proper reward for public benefit and that delivers.
- An upland National park in the 21st Century is first and foremost an area for delivering environmental benefits to both its local catchment area and the nation at large
- A realisation of the potential value the concept of public money for public goods has for Dartmoor. A clear indication of how this model will better link, improve and sustain the economy, environment and enjoyment of Dartmoor as a whole.
- A new land management grant scheme that has a holistic approach to the business – integrates farming, forestry, biodiversity, archaeology and EDUCATION / Supports businesses to think about new opportunities and provides long term security to help them deliver. This scheme should enable business (farmers / foresters / land managers) to determine how they will deliver the agreed outcomes.
- Re-affirmation of the primary statutory purpose of the DNP – the enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, in partnership with the farmers, commoners and landowners
- A sustainable payment to farmers and foresters for producing Dartmoor’s landscape which the public enjoy
- A vision that brings different groups in the countryside together. Through education and engagement at a local and national level. / Encourage government departments to have a long term vision not just parliamentary term of office.
- Plan needs to be flexible enough to allow for change across 2020 → 2024, and review of AE and agricultural business drivers
- Support for farming/ farmers on Dartmoor to include: advice (maybe); planning – look at individual needs; environment – support farmers looking after it; products – advertising help; no farmers – no Dartmoor as it is
- That the farming & forestry industries are recognised and supported to conserve and enhance the NP’s special qualities → with an emphasis on what can be done to achieve enhancement
- Landscape partnership working multisector approach charitable / private / gov / academic working to a joint landscape vision – climate change / funding opportunities / species loss re-introduction / Development? Pressures confronting?

- To make the future landscape a place to visit from all over the world / keep things local / investment in the youth / Dartmoor a place of Wellbeing
- Commitment to support a farmed environment and promote collaborative management. Using farmer knowledge and experience to improve the park as a whole.:"
- Maintaining the economic viability of farming + a more integrated approach with forestry
- Lobby the government on behalf of the nat. park farmers, residents, businesses

Theme 3. There should be better integration of forestry into the land-based economy. Key objectives being control of woodland pests and new markets for low grade timber. There are opportunities for more woodland such as on steep slopes and beside rivers.

- A vibrant woodland economy benefitting from increased woodland expansion & management that deliver a resilient landscape in the national park
- Increase woodland management and implement that management. Park wide control of pests, deer and squirrel. Increase role of low grade wood
- More woodland cover up the river valleys, managed as part of integrated farming & forestry businesses supporting more multi-generational employment
- That the management plan recognise and support small woodland enterprise within DNP and promote new tree planting of [riparian] zones and targeted productive woodlands that fit within the landscape and meet national biodiversity objectives

Theme 4. There is a need for debate about landscape functions and change – working with natural processes, natural succession, increase in truly wild areas

- Can there be more thought on the role of scrub buffer, link and extend habitats especially important for many species and water quality. Allow scrub where bracken grows currently
- Places / network with no farming or forestry to allow nature / wildlife to thrive and flourish without disturbance. This area (or ARCAS) would be set into a wider network of natural habitats to create a refuge for ecological resilience (landowners / tenants / commoners to be paid and the land to be covenanted in perpetuity)
- Greater flexibility and recognition of working with natural processes 9species re-introduction, re-wilding, natural succession to delivery changes that we need at a landscape scale. Accepting that change will happen & we shouldn't maintain the status-quo out of an obligation of what's come before

Theme 5. Constraints that are having a negative impact on the land-based economy: Visitor impacts (e.g. dogs, campervans); planning and lack of local needs housing; uncertainty (Brexit and markets)

- A clear assessment of the number of visitors that are sustainable on Dartmoor

- Pro-active control of 1. **Dogs, 2. Campervans**. These have an affect on management and costs of animal production.
- Support (including financial) for land and forestry business to enable **the balance of environmental benefits to follow reducing the need for massive invasive tourism**
- **Planning**: to allow each agricultural holding to have 2 residences to enable young generation to stay on farms as a right

Other comments

- DNP to stop spending any more money on such garbage

*Transcripts of notes from workshop sessions also available on request email:
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