

Introduction

Who and what is the Management Plan for?

1.1

This is the single most important plan for the future of Dartmoor National Park. It is the strategic plan for the National Park, one that will guide decisions affecting Dartmoor's future over the coming five years. It is a Plan for the National Park as a whole and not just for the National Park Authority, although the Authority, along with many other stakeholders and the local community, will be key to the delivery of the Management Plan. This is a Plan for all who care about Dartmoor and its future.

1.2

It has been prepared on behalf of Dartmoor National Park by the Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) as the body charged with that statutory responsibility. The Authority has been greatly assisted by a wide range of stakeholders and the Dartmoor communities concerned about the future of this distinctive and special place.

1.3

This Management Plan takes forward national and regional policies where relevant to the National Park purposes and duty. It provides the strategic context to more specific plans such as the Dartmoor National Park Authority Local Development Framework and other topic or

area specific plans and strategies that will help deliver the Ambitions and Goals of this Management Plan.

What are the national park purposes and duty?

1.4

The purposes of national park designation are enshrined in national legislation. First set out in the 1949 *National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act*, and amended by the *Environment Act 1995*, the two purposes of national park designation are:

to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and

to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities (of the national park) by the public

1.5

The National Parks of England, Wales and Scotland are living and working landscapes where many of the characteristic qualities that give them their appeal are as much the result of human activity, especially farming, as of natural forces. It is in the interests of maintaining the close connections between local communities and economies and environmental conservation that the National Park Authorities have an additional statutory duty:

... the [Dartmoor National Park] Authority along with many other stakeholders and the local community, will be key to the delivery of the Management Plan.



In pursuing the purposes to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park by working closely with the agencies and local authorities responsible for these matters.

Does one purpose have priority over the other?

1.6

Whilst in most cases the two purposes are mutually supportive and have equal status, if an occasion arises where there is an acute conflict between the two purposes, the *Environment Act 1995* applies greater weight to the first purpose, that concerned with conservation and enhancement. This is sometimes referred to as the 'Sandford Principle'.

Who is responsible for fulfilling the national park purposes?

1.7

Section 62 of the *Environment Act 1995* makes it a duty for all relevant authorities (for example, Government departments and agencies, utility companies and parish councils) to have regard to the national park purposes when coming to decisions or carrying out their activities. This duty safeguards national park interests and also encourages pursuit of the purposes by a wide range of bodies and organisations.

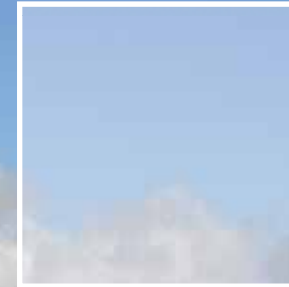
Relevant authorities are expected to be able to demonstrate that they have fulfilled their Section 62 duty.¹

Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995 makes it a duty for all relevant authorities ... to have regard to the two national park purposes when making their decisions ...

¹ Defra 2005: *Duties on relevant authorities to have regard to the purposes of National Parks, AONBs, and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads. Guidance Note.*

A Vision for Dartmoor National Park in 2027

natural
beauty



cultural
heritage



enjoyment



Images: Main vision image: Haytor © Adrian Oakes Inset images: © DNPA



understanding



livelihood & well-being



special qualities



sustainability





A Vision for Dartmoor National Park in 2027

At the centre of Dartmoor stands one of the many great granite outcrops (tors) that encircle the central plateaux and give this National Park its unique character. Gaunt against the skyline, it appears like a huge monument to the primeval world, surrounded by the windtugged heather. But it is not just the rock itself that is impressive. Go there and you will be surrounded by the ancient landscape of deep valleys and rockcrested hills, long established hill farms and the buried remains of our Bronze Age predecessors. You can follow the horizon full circle, turning beneath the vast freedom of the sky, while breathing the pure, clear air of the moor. To be there gives you the reassurance that the world need not be overcrowded, polluted and dominated by consumerism. If a glint of sunlight catches a distant tractor,

reminding you that this is part of a working community, it is nevertheless still a place where you can find solitude and nature thrives. Few depart without a better sense of themselves and what they cherish most, despite the pressures of the modern world.

The tor and its surroundings epitomise what makes Dartmoor a national asset. But even this is not the whole story. From the blanket bogs and valley mires to the high moors, woodland and enclosed fields, Dartmoor National Park remains a unique and varied landscape, with habitats of international importance, an extraordinary range of wildlife and wide expanses of wildness. It is also a cultural landscape, where extensive archaeological remains testify to generations of human activity.



At the same time it is a place where people live, work and play, with consequent competing demands on resources.

Farming and tourism are encouraged and balanced, both to manage the landscape and to enable it to be enjoyed. The conservation of the ancient fabric of the towns, villages and farmsteads remains a high priority, as does the protection of the moor from creeping urbanisation, such as light pollution and highway infrastructure. A modest degree of expansion is allowed in the larger settlements, to accommodate new employment and to provide housing for a thriving local population. Responsible use of natural resources and a commitment to generating energy in sustainable ways is fostered in order to minimise damage not only to Dartmoor but to the wider environment.

Crucial to all of this is the continuing relationship between the local communities and the National Park itself. Both the working economy and the National Park's cultural identity are vested in the local people.

They provide the continuity, support and living heritage that make each place much more than a mere location on a map. This vision for Dartmoor National Park is therefore one of balance, in which both stability and change are beneficial to local people and visitors alike, and the special qualities of Dartmoor are conserved and enhanced for future generations as well as for those who visit and live in the National Park today.



INTRODUCTION

Dartmoor's Special Qualities



An area with a unique collection of features that in different combinations in different places create an unmistakable sense of place ...

[Comment from stakeholder workshop, 2006]

Dartmoor's Special Qualities

1.8

Dartmoor has a very special place in people's appreciation of Devon and the wider south west of England. It is a cultural landscape created through the interaction of distinctive land management practices with the physical environment. This is a place set apart, one made up of many distinct localities but possessed of a clear and cohesive identity rooted throughout recorded history, with its name well established by the 10th century.

"An area with a unique collection of features that in different combinations in different places create an unmistakable sense of place"

[Comment from stakeholder workshop, 2006]

1.9

Dartmoor's special qualities which have been identified through wide ranging consultation include:

Its **imposing bulk** in the centre of Devon, forming the highest point in southern England and the highest unglaciated upland in the UK, with broad sweeping horizons, vast skies, huge sunsets and extensive views across Devon and beyond to coasts and seas.

*"Magical in its features and continuity of views"
"It's always there even when you're not"*

[Comments from stakeholder workshop, 2006]

Extensive open moorland – the largest tract of unbroken moorland and most extensive area of open access land in southern England, offering unrivalled opportunities to roam at will.

The **granite bedrock** of the high central plateaux, exposed as unique weather sculpted granite tors on moorland hilltops, surrounded by loose granite rock or 'clitter'.

Granite as the dominant building material throughout history, evident in the exceptional survival of Dartmoor's archaeological remains and in its field boundaries, structures and buildings which appear as one with the landscape.

A **metamorphic aureole** around the edge of the granite mass, creating a varied geology and a wide range of valued minerals including copper, lead, silver and arsenic.

Weather creating an often harsh, unforgiving and changing environment that has shaped Dartmoor's culture and architecture and adds to the remoteness and isolation of the moors: howling westerly winds, high rainfall, fogs and mist.

"Changing moods in response to season and weather"

[Comment from stakeholder workshop, 2006]



Strong rural communities, with their origins in farming adapted to their rugged environment, with a distinctive dialect and long established local traditions.

Traditional farming practices extending back thousands of years, using the moorland commons for extensive grazing of cattle, sheep and ponies.

The **main catchment area for most of the rivers of Devon** and east Cornwall – the extensive blanket bogs of the high moors feed a radiating pattern of headwaters which tumble off the central granite moors as fast flowing streams and rivers, running through deep wooded valleys, linking the upland moorland with the surrounding farmed landscape.

A **unique assemblage of wildlife** dependant upon Dartmoor's distinct habitats, including the upland blanket bogs, heathland and ancient oak woodland of international importance: vast displays of gorse and heather create a rich palette of colours and textures through the seasons.

One of the most **important collections of archaeological landscapes** in Western Europe revealing a chronology of human activity stretching back over 8,000 years, from ancient field systems to the legacy of tin mining. A strong medieval settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, hamlets, villages and

towns set within enclosed farmland surrounding the open moor, linked by an intimate pattern of sunken lanes.

“Each village has a distinctive character – you know where you are”

[Comment from stakeholder workshop, 2006]

An area where it is still possible to find **absolute peace**, dominated by the sounds of nature – the song of the skylark and the rustle of wind: vast clear night skies and a strong sense of wildness on the open moor.

“Dartmoor offers a different scale of rurality – a higher degree of wildness”

[Comment from stakeholder workshop, 2006]

A **timeless and unspoilt** place spared many of the intrusions of modern life where villages continue to thrive.

“Dartmoor has a slow clock – leave everything behind and go into a different time and space”

[Comment from stakeholder workshop, 2006]

An **inspirational landscape** of legends and myths that has inspired art and literature through the centuries and continues to inspire, offering spiritual refreshment and opportunities for quiet reflection, escape, challenge and creativity.

Traditional farming practices extending back thousands of years ...



... a set of guiding ideals to which all relevant partners and stakeholders can sign up.

Key Principles

1.10

These *Key Principles* have been developed to provide a set of guiding ideals to which all relevant partners and stakeholders can sign up.

Sustainability

- 1 The principles of sustainability will lie at the heart of all decisions affecting Dartmoor; ensuring that all activities maximise the range of benefits provided – delivering people's social and economic well-being whilst working within environmental limits.
- 2 All decisions that affect Dartmoor will consider the implications of climate change – seeking to minimise the output of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases and make every effort to mitigate or adapt to the effects of climate change in ways that conserve and enhance Dartmoor's special qualities.

Protecting Dartmoor's special qualities

- 3 All significant and intrusive developments within the National Park or which impinge upon Dartmoor's special qualities will be strongly resisted.
- 4 In all work undertaken within the National Park an emphasis will be placed on quality, longevity, local distinctiveness, support for the local economy, and use of local materials wherever possible and appropriate.

- 5 If there is an acute conflict between the two national park purposes which cannot be reconciled by management or dialogue, then conservation and enhancement of Dartmoor's natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage will have priority.

Information management and communication

- 6 Research, monitoring of trends and sharing of appropriate data will inform decisions about current and future activity.
- 7 Partnership working and communication will be vital to make sure everyone's understanding and appreciation of what is special about Dartmoor is shared, and to allow consensus to be built about how the Ambitions in this Management Plan will be achieved.

Environment Act 1995 Section 62 Duty

- 8 Relevant authorities² will demonstrate active compliance with their statutory duty to have regard to national park purposes wherever their decisions or activities affect land and interests within the National Park.

² Relevant authorities are comprised of Government departments and executive agencies, any public body or statutory undertaker, and local authorities including parish councils. Guidance on compliance with the S62 Duty is published by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and is available on its web site: www.defra.gov.uk

Main Components of this Management Plan

1.11

The main body of this Management Plan is divided into three sections covering the two national park purposes and the duty:

- Sense of Place (the first purpose)
- Access for All (the second purpose)
- Communities and Business (the duty)

1.12

Under each section a set of Ambitions with Goals and a series of Means to Achieve are identified. These form the core of this Management Plan setting out how the Vision for Dartmoor National Park will be achieved. In total there are 18 Ambitions in support of the Vision.

Specifically: Ambitions

These should endure for **20 years** (the same life as the Vision). Collectively the Ambitions should deliver the Vision for Dartmoor National Park and directly contribute to the achievement of the national park purposes and duty.

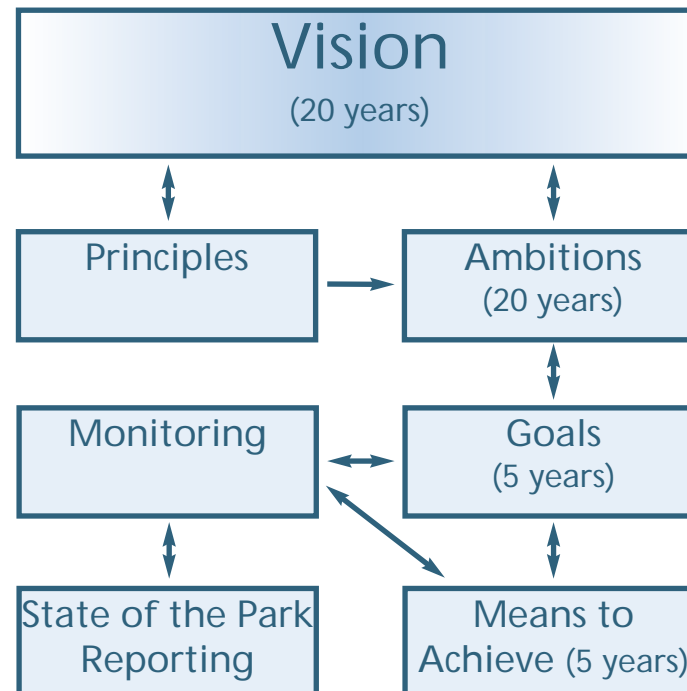
Goals

These are steps towards achieving each Ambition over the next **five years**. Progress will be measured and reported in a State of the Park Report for Dartmoor.

Means to Achieve

These are the activities that will be undertaken over the next five years by a wide range of organisations individually and in partnership in pursuit of the Ambitions and in support of the Goals. They are not necessarily specific to individual Goals.

The relationship between different aspects of the Management Plan



Under each section a set of Ambitions with Goals and a series of Means to Achieve are identified.



the capturing of carbon; spiritual refreshment and inspiration; public health; education and knowledge.

It is these benefits that must be passed on to future generations through sound management and the maintenance of exemplary standards.

Climate change

1.18

The central concern of sustainable development is to work within environmental limits, in other words not to reach a stage where the environment can no longer recover naturally, nor to destroy those aspects of the environment that are finite or cannot be recreated.

1.19

At the start of the 21st century Britain is living as if there are three planets of natural resources to be exploited and three planets worth of capacity to absorb CO₂. Climate change is a clear and evident consequence, caused by rising levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere resulting from the use of fossil fuels. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are now higher than at any other time in the last 740,000 years and are around 40% higher than before the industrial revolution⁴.

Scientific evidence suggests that we can expect to see warmer, wetter winters, hotter, drier summers and more frequent and extreme weather events,

including extensive flooding and high winds in winter. Climate change models will be subject to regular review over the coming years.

1.20

Current scenarios developed by the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) suggest that by 2080 the south west of England can expect average daily temperatures between 2°C and 4°C higher than current levels.

1.21

In response there is general acceptance that a twin track approach of mitigation and adaptation measures should be adopted, for example, as highlighted in *Devon County Council's Warm Response – Our Climate Change Challenge (2005)*. This twin track approach is directly relevant to Dartmoor.

1.22

Mitigation is concerned with addressing the causes of climate change, in particular:

- reducing greenhouse gas emissions through energy saving and generation of renewable energy;
- maintaining the storage of carbon in organic soils;

⁴ David Miliband, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs One Planet Living: Towards a 3D Energy Revolution. Speech Birmingham 26 October, 2006.

The central concern of sustainable development is to work within environmental limits ...



Link to other protected landscapes

1.28

Dartmoor National Park also forms part of a wider network of protected landscapes within the south west of England (which in total cover 37% of the region). Undertaking joint initiatives, exploring common problems, and collecting and sharing data across the protected landscapes, through the South West Protected Landscapes Forum, offers scope for developing more co-ordinated and cost-effective approaches. There are opportunities to develop continuous strategic wildlife corridors and regional trails linking Dartmoor with the nearby Tamar Valley and South Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

Link between the two national park purposes and the duty

1.29

The two national park purposes are clearly inter-dependent. Enjoyment of the National Park draws on its spectacular landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage, while a high quality environment is dependent on public understanding and support – financial and otherwise. In a living and working landscape, local economies and communities are instrumental in the conservation and enjoyment of Dartmoor's special qualities. Equally, the high quality environment drives much of the local economy, not least the tourist economy and the service industries on which tourism depends.

These important inter-linkages are recognised through this Management Plan.

... local economies and communities are instrumental in the conservation and enjoyment of Dartmoor's special qualities ...

INTRODUCTION

Links between
Different Parts of this
Management Plan



*The future of farming
and land management
is fundamental to the
future of Dartmoor.*

Links between Different Parts of this Management Plan

1.30

Through the remainder of this Management Plan, achievement of the Vision is explored under a series of Ambitions. Each Ambition is described separately but is part of a larger whole that collectively delivers the Vision for the National Park.

Cross-cutting themes

1.31

Running through these Ambitions are a number of cross-cutting themes that are of particular importance in ensuring a sustainable future for Dartmoor National Park.

Climate change

1.32

Climate change, as already identified, will have a fundamental influence over the future of Dartmoor. The sustainability of each of the Ambitions in this Management Plan has been assessed in the Environmental Report and this includes climate change considerations.

Climate change has been assessed across the suite of Ambitions. Its likely effects on Dartmoor National Park need to be better understood and appropriate mitigation and adaptive measures put in place, responding to what

will be a fast moving policy area over the coming five years. Awareness needs to be raised of how personal lifestyle choices can reduce damaging CO₂ emissions.

1.33

As set out under the Ambitions for New Development and Energy there is an important opportunity for Dartmoor National Park to provide a lead in reducing CO₂ emissions, meeting and exceeding current Government targets.

Future of upland farming

1.34

The future of farming and land management is fundamental to the future of Dartmoor. Land management is considered under a specific Ambition but is critical to the delivery of most, if not all, the Ambitions in this Management Plan. Dartmoor is a landscape that has been shaped by upland farming and its long tradition of commoning. Without grazing, the moorlands would scrub over and the distinct pattern of newtakes and fields on the moorland fringes would disappear. Farming is also important to the cultural identity of Dartmoor.

1.35

The combination of recent and ongoing reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is now seriously threatening the future livelihood of hill farmers.



Diversification, for example into tourism, has helped support variable farm incomes, but it has also accelerated changes in farming systems with the majority of farm incomes supplemented by non-farming activities. The challenge is to respond to the evolving nature of farming, ensuring that farmers keep farming as a viable, rewarding and respected activity, and that there is sufficient grazing livestock of the right type (i.e. hardy breeds able to be kept out on the moor) to maintain Dartmoor's special landscape.

Transport

1.36

Transport plays an important part in the life of local communities and in the recreational and tourism use of Dartmoor. There is still very heavy reliance on the private car, with traffic having the potential to detract from the tranquillity and remoteness of Dartmoor. Reduced car use, and the development of viable alternatives designed to meet the needs of local communities and visitors, have the potential to enhance Dartmoor's special qualities and visitor enjoyment whilst contributing to a reduced carbon footprint. The relevance of such measures to the delivery of the Vision for Dartmoor is self-evident.

Social inclusion

1.37

Social inclusion is an important aspect of sustainable development and has particular relevance to all aspects of the second purpose

and the Ambitions relating to it. Government is strongly committed to making understanding and enjoyment of the countryside accessible to all: the young and old, people with disabilities, people from minority groups, and those from inner city areas.

1.38

Government wishes to see this emphasis actively promoted within the National Parks. Social inclusion is also of direct relevance to the communities of the National Park, ensuring that there is adequate affordable housing to retain social diversity and to provide opportunities for those who were born in the National Park to continue to live and, where possible, work there.

Evidence and research

1.39

Management decisions affecting Dartmoor need to be informed by clear evidence. This premise relates directly to all the Ambitions and becomes all the more important as we respond to the effects of climate change. Data collection, monitoring and research can be resource hungry. It is very important that there is a sharing of base data, knowledge and monitoring results relating to Dartmoor amongst all relevant partners. Equally, many management decisions need to take account of a range of different issues at the same time. It therefore makes sense for relevant agencies to work in partnership, setting research priorities and commissioning research.

Management decisions affecting Dartmoor need to be informed by clear evidence.



*Delivering the Vision
and Ambitions of this
Management Plan
will be a shared
responsibility ...*

1.40

Dartmoor has and continues to play host to much educational and academic research. There are many benefits in this continuing, not least the potential to link academic research programmes to identified information needs.

Again there is much to be gained from better co-ordination of research effort and increased availability of research findings.

Management Plan Delivery and Monitoring

Helping deliver national and regional agendas

1.41

This Management Plan has been prepared with close attention given to national and regional strategies and agendas. Not all of these have been named but relevant policies and aims have been taken into account. This Management Plan seeks to deliver those national and regional policies relevant to the national park purposes and duty.

Delivery through partnership

1.42

Delivering the Vision and Ambitions of this Management Plan will be a shared responsibility dependent on forging new and maintaining existing, strong working relationships. Delivery will involve everyone with an interest in the future of Dartmoor, from national agencies and local authorities to local communities and the voluntary sector. Collectively these make an invaluable contribution to the conservation and enjoyment of the National Park and can contribute much to the future sustainability of Dartmoor.



1.43

To deliver this Management Plan a clear process for prioritising annual activity and delivery will be put in place involving all relevant stakeholders.

The importance of communication

1.44

Communication will form a vital part in the delivery of this Plan. Helping raise public awareness and appreciation of what is involved in combating climate change and in the conservation and enhancement of Dartmoor's landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage is vital. Good communication through a range of media is also very important in reaching out to a wide audience, making Dartmoor accessible to all.

Monitoring success (State of the Park reporting)

1.45

Monitoring the success of this Management Plan is essential to inform future management decisions. Successful monitoring requires robust baseline data against which the achievement of individual goals can be assessed. Laying down this baseline will be the first task for the State of the Park Report for Dartmoor.

1.46

Under each Ambition a series of Goals is identified. The majority of these are measurable and will be monitored through the State of the Park Report for Dartmoor.

1.47

Base data gathering and monitoring, like delivery of this Management Plan, will require close collaboration as relevant data is held across a range of agencies, organisations and data holders. Volunteers and the local communities of Dartmoor can play a valuable role in data collection and monitoring change.

1.48

The Dartmoor National Park Authority will collate this data in a State of the Park Report for Dartmoor.

Monitoring the success of this Management Plan is vital to inform future management decisions.