



# EXMOOR

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## NATIONAL PARK

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
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25<sup>th</sup> June 2026

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**To: All Members of the Exmoor National Park Authority**

A meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority will be held in the **Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton** on **Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> July at 10.00am.**

The meeting will be open to the press and public subject to the passing of any resolution under s.100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

There is Public Speaking at this meeting, when the Chairperson will allow members of the public two minutes each to ask questions, make statements, or present a petition relating to any item relevant to the business of the Authority or relating to any item on the Agenda. Anyone wishing to ask questions should notify the Democratic Support Officer as soon as possible, or at the latest by 4pm on the working day before the meeting of the agenda item on which they wish to speak, indicating a brief summary of the matter or matters to be raised (contact [Committees@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:Committees@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)).

The meeting will be **recorded**. By entering the Authority's Committee Room and speaking during Public Speaking you are consenting to being recorded. We will make the recording available via our website for members of the public to listen to and/or view, within 72 hours of the meeting taking place.

Members of the public may use forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting. Anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairperson so that those present may be made aware.

(The agenda and papers for this meeting can be downloaded from the National Park Authority's website [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)).

Sarah Bryan  
Chief Executive

As set out above, the Authority welcomes public engagement with its work and believes that everyone attending a meeting of Exmoor National Park Authority or one of its Committees has the right to be treated with respect and to feel safe at all times, including before, during and after the meeting they attend.

The Authority understands that some situations can be difficult and lead to frustration; however, the Authority is committed to promoting an environment where everyone feels listened to and respected and is not subjected to unacceptable behaviour. Further guidance is provided in our Customer Notice, available on our [website](#).

## AGENDA

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in relation to items on the agenda for this meeting.

**3. Chairperson's Announcements**

**4. Minutes** (1) To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2026 (Item 4).

(2) To consider any Matters Arising from those Minutes.

**5. Business of Urgency:** To introduce any business which by reason of special circumstances the Chairperson, after consultation with the Chief Executive, is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency and to resolve when such business should be ordered on the Agenda.

**6. Public Speaking:** The Chairperson will allow members of the public to ask questions, make statements, or present a petition. Questions of a general nature relevant to the business of the Authority can be asked under this agenda item. Any questions specific to an agenda item can be posed when that item is considered subject to the discretion of the person presiding at the meeting.

**7. Corporate Plan 2025/26 Annual Report:** To consider the report of the Chief Executive / Head of Climate, Nature and Communities / Head of Enterprise and Operations. (Item 7)

**8. 2025/26 Outturn – Budget Performance, Reserves, New Year Monitoring and MTFP Update:** To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer (Item 8)

**9. Annual Treasury Management Report:** To consider the report of the Head of Enterprise and Operations (Chief Finance Officer) (Item 9)

**10. Members' Allowances Scheme:** To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer. (Item 10)

**11. Members' Reports:** To receive any updates and reports on meetings or events attended by Members as representatives of Exmoor National Park Authority.

Further information on any of the reports can be obtained by contacting the National Park Authority at the address and telephone numbers at the top of the agenda. Details of the decisions taken at this meeting will be set out in the formal Minutes which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions can be obtained from the Democratic Support Officer, at Exmoor House.

## ITEM 4

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**MINUTES** of the Annual Meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority held on Tuesday, 2 June 2026 at 10.00am in the Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton.

#### PRESENT

Miss A V Davis (Chairperson)

Mr R Milton (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr L Baker	Mrs F Nicholson
Mr A Bray	Mr J Patrinos
Mr T Butt Philip	Mr S J Pugsley
Mr M Ellicott	Mrs F Smith
Mr W Geen	Miss E Stacey
Mr J Holtom	Miss C Strom
Mr R Hopley	Mr N Thwaites
Dr M Kelly	Dr S Warren
Mr M Kravis	Miss L Williams

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON:** Miss A V Davis was re-elected as Chairperson of the Authority for the ensuing year.
2. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON:** Mr R Milton was re-elected as Deputy Chairperson of the Authority for the ensuing year.
3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** None.
4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none.
5. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**
  - Mr Gwilym Wren, recently appointed by Somerset Council, was welcomed to the Authority and attended the meeting as an observer.
  - Miss M Chilcott was thanked for her service to the Authority, following her decision to step down as a Somerset Council-appointed Member.
  - Miss E Stacey was also thanked for her long and valuable service as a Secretary of State Member, with her current 10-year term ending on 30 June 2026.
  - The Authority would welcome applications for two Secretary of State Member vacancies, with a deadline to apply by 16 June 2026.
6. **MINUTES**
  - i. **Confirmation:** The **Minutes** of the Authority's meeting held on 5 May 2026 were agreed and signed as a correct record with one correction in Chairpersons announcements: Condolences were sent to the family of former Member John Edwards, his wife Jackie had recently passed away.
  - ii. **Matters arising:** None.

7. **BUSINESS OF URGENCY:** There was none.
8. **PUBLIC SPEAKING:** There were no public speakers.
9. **ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS:** The Authority considered the **report** of the Chief Executive.

**RESOLVED:** To make the following appointments to the Authority's statutory committees, partnership boards, working groups and external organisations:

**Final Accounts Committee and Finance & Performance Advisory Panel:**

Miss A V Davis (Chairperson), Mr R Milton (Deputy Chairperson), Mr A Bray, Mr M Ellicott, Mr W Geen, Mrs F Nicholson, Mr S J Pugsley. Vacancy held open for a new Secretary of State appointee

**Planning Committee:** Mr A Bray, Mr T Butt Philip, Mr W Geen, Mr J Holtom, Mr R Hopley, Dr M Kelly, Mrs F Nicholson, Mr J Patrinos, Mr S J Pugsley, Mrs F Smith, Miss L Williams (temporary SoS, until new appointments made)

**Standards Committee:** Mr M Ellicott, Mr J Patrinos, Mr S J Pugsley, Mr N Thwaites, Dr S Warren (temporary SoS, until new appointment made)

**Exmoor Local Access Forum:** Mr M Kelly, Mr N Thwaites

**Exmoor National Park Forum:** All Authority Members

**Exmoor Historic Environment Advisory Group:** Mr J Holtom, Dr M Kelly, Mr S J Pugsley

**Exmoor Learning and Engagement Network:** Mr L Baker, Mr A Bray, Mr T Butt Philip, Dr S Warren

**Exmoor Moorland & Farming Board:** Mr L Baker, Mr W Geen, Mr J Holtom, Mr R Milton

**Exmoor Nature Conservation Advisory Panel:** Mr W Geen, Mr J Holtom, Mr R Milton, Mrs F Smith, Dr S Warren

**Exmoor Woodland and Forestry Advisory Group:** Mr A Bray, Mr N Thwaites

**Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Group:** Mr T Butt Philip, Mr J Patrinos, Dr S Warren, Miss L Williams

**External Funding Working Group:** Will cease to exist

**FiPL Assessment Panel:** Mr A Bray, Mr J Holtom, Mr R Milton, Dr S Warren

**Planning Policy Advisory Group:** Miss A V Davis (Chairperson), Mr R Milton (Deputy Chairperson), Mr S J Pugsley (Chairperson of the Planning Committee), Mr A Bray, Mr M Ellicott, Mr W Geen, Mr J Holtom, Dr M Kelly, Mr M Kravis, Mrs F Nicholson

**Rural Enterprise Exmoor Group:** Mr A Bray, Miss A V Davis

**UK National Parks Chairs Forum:** Miss A V Davis (Chairperson), Mr R Milton (Deputy Chairperson)

**Campaign for National Parks:** Miss L Williams

**Exmoor Hill Farming Network:** Mr M Ellicott

**Exmoor Landscape Advisory Group:** Dr M Kelly, Mr M Kravis

**Exmoor Rural Housing Network:** Mr M Ellicott, Mr W Geen, Mr J Holtom, Mrs F Nicholson, Mr S J Pugsley

**North Devon Coast National Landscape:** Miss L Williams

**Team Devon Joint Committee:** Miss A V Davis (Chairperson), Mr R Milton (Deputy Chairperson)

**Visit Exmoor CIC:** Miss L Williams

**Somerset Local Community Network:** - ENPA Rangers will attend, additional Officers will represent when input is required.

**Independent Person:** Ms Diana Mortimer, Mr Adam Stanyer

Mrs F Smith arrived at 10.15am during Item 9.

10. **PERSONNEL UPDATE:** The Authority noted the recent staff changes as set out on the agenda.
11. **MEMBERS' REPORTS:** There were none.

The meeting closed at 10.25am

(Chairperson)

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 July 2026

### CORPORATE PLAN 2025/26 ANNUAL REPORT

**Report of the Chief Executive / Head of Climate, Nature and Communities / Head of Enterprise and Operations**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:** To inform Members about the progress made in implementing actions within the Corporate Plan 2025/26.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Authority is recommended to NOTE the progress in implementing the Authority's key commitments set out in the Corporate Plan 2025/26.

**Authority Corporate Plan:** The Corporate Plan 2025/26 set out a series of actions for the year, within the framework of a three year Corporate Strategy. This report covers the period April 2025 to March 2026.

**Legal and Equality Implications:** Section 65(4) Environment Act 1995 – provides powers to the National Park Authority to “do anything which in the opinion of the Authority, is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to:

(a) the accomplishment of the purposes mentioned in s. 65 (1) [National Park purposes]

(b) the carrying out of any functions conferred on it by virtue of any other enactment.”

**The equality impact of the recommendations of this report has been assessed as follows:** There are no foreseen adverse impacts on any protected group(s). Engagement through the outreach work within the plan is designed to have a positive impact on protected groups.

**Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendations of this report is as follows:** There are no implications for the Human Rights Act.

**Financial and Risk Implications:** No financial or risk implications have been identified. Performance management exerts a positive influence on financial and risk management.

**Climate Change Response:** A report on the ENPA climate action plan is included in Appendix 2.

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Authority agreed a three-year Corporate Strategy in May 2023, setting out its key priorities through to 2025/26. The Corporate Plan for 2025/26, the final year of the Strategy, translated those priorities into a programme of actions. The Strategy reflected the emerging themes of the Exmoor National Park Management Plan 2025–2030, as well as priorities identified in the Government's response to the Landscapes Review and subsequent protected landscapes policy. Members approved the 2025/26 Corporate Plan at the Authority meeting on 1 April 2025.

- 1.2 Performance is monitored quarterly by Leadership Team to ensure that the actions within the Corporate Plan are being achieved and, where necessary, to provide an opportunity for resources to be re-allocated or proposed action to be reviewed. Oversight is provided by Members through the regular Authority reporting.
- 1.3 This end of year report provides an overview of key achievements during the year and reports on performance against key corporate indicators.

## **2. Corporate Plan at a Glance**

- 2.1 The actions within the plan are grouped around the Priorities identified in the Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Strategy 2023-26 are as follows:
  1. **A clear response to the nature and climate crises**
  2. **A welcoming place for all, improving people's health and well-being**
  3. **A cared for landscape and heritage**
  4. **A place with flourishing, vibrant, communities and businesses**
  5. **A highly performing Estate, delivering National Park purposes**
  6. **A great organisation to work for**

## **3. Performance Report - Overview**

- 3.1 Delivery of Corporate Plan actions during 2025/26 took place against a fast-changing national and local context. This included implementation of the new Exmoor National Park Management Plan 2025–2030, significant additional capital and programme delivery expectations, and continuing pressure on core resources and staff capacity.
- 3.2 The year was particularly significant because it represented the final year of the Authority's three-year Corporate Strategy, while also marking the transition into delivery of the new National Park Management Plan. The Management Plan was adopted in July 2025 and formally launched in October 2025, with partnership work then progressing to prepare delivery plans and a monitoring framework for the 2025–2030 period.
- 3.3 Government expectations for Protected Landscapes continue to place a strong emphasis on nature recovery, climate action, access, engagement and delivery of national environmental targets. During 2025/26 the Authority continued to align its work with these requirements while maintaining delivery across core services and major externally funded programmes.
- 3.4 There were a number of notable achievements during the year. These included delivery of the first year of the Exmoor Pioneers programme, with heritage, nature recovery, skills and engagement activity underway and more than 1,200 people engaged through volunteering, youth action, careers events, talks, festivals, work experience and other activities.
- 3.5 The launch of the Exmoor National Park Management Plan 2025–2030 in 2025 was a significant milestone for the Authority and its partners. It provided the strategic framework for delivery across the National Park and helped to align local priorities with national expectations for protected landscapes, including nature recovery, climate action, access and engagement.
- 3.6 The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme was fully delivered in 2025/26, with 52 projects completed, £520,842.58 allocated and no underspend. Delivery was challenging due to the need to manage both over- and under-spend across

multiple agreements, but all funds were successfully committed by year end. A new three-year FiPL settlement was also confirmed, extending the programme to March 2029.

- 3.7 Significant progress was also made on major strategic projects. Extensive development work was completed on the Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands Landscape Recovery scheme, including land management proposals, governance arrangements, blended finance work, access and engagement planning, and monitoring and evaluation arrangements. The project deliverables were due for submission shortly after year end for Defra assessment.
- 3.8 Across the Authority's wider programme, progress continued on income generation work, estate projects and core service delivery. A new Income Generation Strategy was agreed by Members and work has continued to develop business plans and refresh the project pipeline. Delivery also continued on estate priorities including Driver, Pinkery and wider capital planning, alongside progress in planning, access, communications, National Park Centres and corporate services.
- 3.9 In the corporate work of the Authority, internal audit for 2024/25 was completed with excellent results, new systems continued to bed in, and organisational development work progressed. Supporting material for this report includes updated employee and organisational development information prepared for Members.
- 3.10 Performance data shows that many core services continued to deliver strongly. Planning performance remained above national targets for minor and other applications, and work continued to improve planning systems and digitisation. The new statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements have been implemented through development management.
- 3.11 National Park Centres achieved another solid year, with visitor numbers of 162,438 and retail spend of £174,318 for 2024/25 comparator reporting included in the draft accounts narrative, while Pinkery user numbers remained high at 2,917. Rights of Way performance remained strong overall, with 89% of the network open and easy to use, although below the previous year and affected by pressures on the network and delivery environment.
- 3.12 Delivery during the year was, however, affected by funding constraints, staff capacity, procurement complexity, licensing and consents, weather, and the scale of additional capital programme expectations. These pressures particularly affected areas where delivery depended on specialist staff capacity, external permissions or project development timescales.
- 3.13 Analysis of the areas with less progress indicates that some slippage arose in relation to climate adaptation work, car-free travel planning, conservation area management planning, and some capital and infrastructure projects. In a number of cases, work is underway but has taken longer than originally planned due to competing priorities and limited capacity.
- 3.14 The expenditure and delivery of Defra capital funds remained one of the most challenging aspects of the year. A substantial programme of capital works was approved and delivery continued across many schemes, but these projects created additional operational pressure because they had to be progressed alongside normal service delivery and within fixed year-end deadlines.
- 3.15 Despite these pressures, the overall position for 2025/26 is one of strong delivery across a broad and ambitious programme of work. The Authority has completed the final year of its 2023–26 Corporate Strategy with substantial achievements across

its priorities, while also preparing for implementation of the new Corporate Plan 2026–2030.

- 3.16 Full details of delivery against the Corporate Plan 2025/26 actions are given in Appendix 1. The appendices to this report provide further detail on climate action plan progress, employee profile and organisational development, customer feedback, and key corporate indicators.

**Appendix 1** - Delivery of Corporate Plan Actions 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

**Appendix 2** - ENPA Climate Action Plan Progress Report 2025/26

**Appendix 3** - ENPA Employee Profile/Organisational Development Update 31 March 2026

**Appendix 4** - Customer Feedback Report 2025/26 (compliments, complaints and Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests)

**Appendix 5** - Key Corporate Indicators 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

**Sarah Bryan**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Clare Reid**  
Head of Climate, Nature and Communities

**Ben Barrett**  
Head of Enterprise and Operations

**Judy Hagley-Coles**  
Corporate Support Officer

**Ellie Woodcock**  
HR Officer

**June 2026**

**Background papers on which this report, or an important part of it are based, constitute the list of background papers required by Section 100 D (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to be open to members of the public comprise:**

Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2025/26

## Delivery of ENPA Corporate Plan Actions 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

### Cross Cutting Actions

1. **Priority action:** Review consultation responses, revise the draft Partnership Plan, and adopt the final Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2025-2030 at the Authority meeting in July 2025. Prepare Delivery Plans with partners and begin implementation. Establish a monitoring and reporting process for the 5-year Plan period.
  - ✓ *The Exmoor National Park Management Plan was launched at an event in Lynton in October 2025, with around 80 partners attending. The full Plan and a summary document are available on the ENPA website. Work is now underway with the Partnership groups to prepare and start implementing Delivery Plans. A separate monitoring framework has been created with indicators for reporting progress.*
2. **Priority action:** Commence delivery of the 5-year Lottery funded Pioneers programme, covering: nature enhancement, heritage at risk, an extensive engagement/learning programme and a skills programme.
  - ✓ *We delivered the first year of the Exmoor Pioneers programme, focusing on refining and beginning delivery of heritage, nature recovery, and skills projects, and developing partnerships. We engaged with over 1200 people through volunteering sessions, youth action, talks, festivals, careers fairs, work experience, and other events. Total spend of £270,000 between project start and 30 November 2025 (figures up to end March 2026 not yet available).*
3. **Priority action:** Deliver the Farming in Protected Landscapes 2025/26 programme.  
**Target:** allocate £520k in 2025/26.
  - ✓ *52 projects were delivered in 2025/26, with £520,822 allocated and no underspend. Despite pressures from project over- and underspends, all funding was committed and work completed by 31 March 2026. A new three-year FiPL settlement was confirmed in February, extending the programme to March 2029 with £527k per year. Panel members have been updated and are largely keen to continue, although two will step down. Additional habitat funding will also be delivered through FiPL.*
4. **Priority action:** Deliver strategy for income generation. Maintain the project pipeline for external project funding and publish a revised prospectus while pursuing funding opportunities.
  - ✓ *A new Income Generation Strategy has been agreed by Members outlining our approach and ambition. Following on from this c. 20 business areas across the Authority have been identified for external income and mini business plans developed. A staff workshop is proposed to firm these up and prioritise. Alongside this work various bids have been submitted, and work has begun to update and refresh our Project Pipeline for external funding opportunities.*
5. **Priority action:** Complete second year of development phase of the 'Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands' Landscape Recovery programme including land management plan, finance plan, governance arrangements and contracts.
  - ✓ *Significant progress was made in 2025/26 on the Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands Landscape Recovery scheme, working with farmers, land managers and specialist consultants. Core elements were completed, including land management proposals,*

*governance, blended finance, access and engagement, and monitoring and evaluation. Project deliverables are due to be submitted by the end of April 2026 for assessment by Defra and statutory agencies, after which funding and contract negotiations will be considered. [Note: the submission date was extended to end of May 2026]*

6. **Priority action:** Progress building restoration and land management plans for Driver.
- ✓ *The planning application for the house which includes off-grid elements is currently under consideration. A separate application for the conversion of the West Barn, the creation of parking provision and a campsite is also under consideration. Both applications should come before the June Planning Committee.*

#### Corporate Priority 1: A clear response to the nature and climate crises

7. Assist lead authorities in completion of any outstanding tasks to ensure successful launch of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- ✓ *Both Devon County Council and Somerset Council's LNRS teams carried out public consultation on their strategies, and ENPA inputted to the amendments to respond to the queries raised. Both LNRSs have now been adopted and are publicly available.*
8. Develop plans for ENPA Estate within the National Trust Holnicote Landscapes Recovery project.
- ✓ *Feedback to date following submission of the LRS application has been encouraging with an increase in confidence from the lead partner (National Trust) that the application will be successful.*
9. Develop and submit ideas for a joint National Lottery Landscape Connections bid with the National Trust on the coast and the Barle valley.
- ✓ *The National Lottery approved the initial Expression of Interest to be worked up into a formal proposal for development funding, with a bid to be submitted in September 2026. ENPA is exploring the opportunities for the bid in partnership with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West.*
  - ≠ *The work to develop the proposal is unfunded and has been delayed due to capacity constraints, particularly due to the Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands Landscape Recovery scheme.*
10. Complete Air Quality Management Strategy. Look at ways to implement and fund the strategy.
- ✓ *The Air Quality Evidence Report and Management Strategy were completed during 2025/26. A non-technical report has also been prepared for engagement with the farming community and wider stakeholders. A programme of local air quality monitoring has been set up with funding from Natural England, with 19 samplers at locations across the National Park. The monitoring will continue for a year, with CEH carrying out the analysis and reporting.*
11. Deliver further year of the Sowing the Seeds project. **Target:** restore 200ha of grassland, engage with 10 landowners and train 20 meadow owners.
- ✓ *The project strengthened partnerships with a business sponsor and a charity, securing sponsorship from Buckleys Bees and a three-year donation from Burge's Meadows to support delivery. The team has started visiting new meadow owners and contributed information to support grassland restoration through the REH project. Plans are also underway for a Meadows celebration day at Driver on 3 July to showcase restoration work and promote wildflower meadows. A total of 353 hectares of wildflower meadows*

*are now in active management, with 13 new landowners engaged and 5 new meadow owners trained this year.*

12. Work with partners to progress species recovery including pine marten, beaver, white-tailed eagle, marsh fritillary and water vole. Scope the development of a species recovery plan.
  - ✓ *The Two Moors Pine Marten Project continues to monitor 19 animals released in September 2025, now spreading across the National Park and forming territories. Stakeholder engagement on white-tailed eagles has continued, with Natural England's licence decision expected in early 2026/27 and possible releases in summer 2026. Feasibility studies for water vole and marsh fritillary are complete.*
13. Seek funding to further implement Exmoor Non-Native Invasive Species (ENNIS) Project.
  - ✓ *A programme of knotweed treatment was successfully carried out and an annual report submitted.*
14. Work with Natural England on SSSI monitoring programme.
  - ✓ *ENPA worked with Natural England to complete a SSSI survey of the 7,000 hectare area of moorland within the Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands project area, part funded by the NE national team. Key results from the SSSI survey have been fed back to landowners as part of the REH LRS development phase. Meetings have been held with local and national NE staff to discuss proposals for management for the North Exmoor SSSI including a site visit to inform proposals for REH.*
15. Explore peatland restoration opportunities via Exmoor's Heartlands Landscape Recovery project and Exmoor Pioneers.
  - ✓ *Plans for ongoing peatland restoration have been included in the Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands Landscape Recovery scheme. South West Peatland Partnership have inputted to this and further work will be carried out to develop detailed restoration plans if the LRS bid is successful. In the meantime, small scale restoration works of valley mires have been carried out with volunteers as part of the Exmoor Pioneers programme*
16. Deliver national ambitions for expansion of tree and woodland cover including delivery of 'Exmoor's Temperate Rainforest' project in combes around Simonsbath and Exmoor Forest.
  - ✓ *Plans for the expansion of woodland and tree cover have been developed as part of Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands Landscape Recovery Scheme, plus additional areas of wood-pasture and scattered trees and scrub on ENPA land. Land Use Consultants were appointed to prepare an Exmoor Woodland Futures/Woodland Strategy including visualisations, and this work is progressing well. No further progress has been made on private land since the Treescapes Officer post ended.*
17. Update ENPA Climate Action Plan for 2025-2030 and continue to deliver actions.
  - ✓ *Good progress continued against the ENPA Climate Action Plan in 2025/26, with overall greenhouse gas emissions reducing. Improvements were driven by lower building emissions, LED upgrades, the Exford tree nursery solar array and increased use of electric vehicles, with EVs now accounting for 34% of business mileage. Work also progressed on scope 3 emissions, procurement and land use, with further fleet, lighting and renewable energy measures planned for 2026/27.*
18. Develop an action plan for Race to Zero by end of Q1. Complete annual report by end of Q2.
  - ✓ *Annual submission to Race to Zero completed end of September.*

≠ *Work on action plan not progressed due to lack of capacity but officers continue to work with other NPAs on joint reporting opportunities.*

19. **Priority Action:** Commission a climate adaptation and risk assessment for Exmoor National Park to feed into the Partnership Plan delivery and action planning.
- ✓ *WSP Global were commissioned to carry out a climate risk and vulnerability assessment in 2025/26. This included identifying the key receptors and climate scenarios for the National Park and assessing the potential hazards and impacts. Workshops were held with ENPA staff and stakeholders to inform this work. A climate adaptation plan will be developed in 2026/27*

Corporate Priority 2: A welcoming place for all, improving people's health & well-being

20. Develop and recruit a Youth Voice board.
- ✓ *The Youth Voice board has now been recruited and held first meetings. Two members attended the EDI working group in March and others will be attending the national meeting for Youth Boards this year.*
21. Adopt and deliver a volunteer strategy to promote and support a wide range of volunteering opportunities within Exmoor.
- ✓ *The Volunteer Strategy has been adopted and its Action Plan is being implemented. Exmoor Pioneers has expanded year-round heritage and nature volunteering, supported by strong interest in Heritage at Risk, tree nursery sessions and Ecology Action days. Volunteers have contributed valuable monitoring data on species including mink, riverflies, dormice and otters, while partnership work also included a successful beach clean in Lynmouth.*
22. Promote the health and well-being benefits that Exmoor provides by working with partners to deliver the 'Nature prescriptions' project.
- ✓ *Nature prescriptions continue to operate through health coaches within the West Somerset PCN, although some organisational changes have created some challenges. Follow up in person walks events for participants are planned for Q4 – and potential for wider rollout in 2/27 to other communities. There is a funding requirement for printing of further NP booklets.*
23. Continue to maximise NPCs' contribution to National Park purposes and income generation. **Target:** 5% increase in net spend whilst maintaining 40% margins and continue to expand the Authority's online shop. **Target:** 5% increase in gross profit year on year.
- ✓ *Across the three Centres, footfall fell by just under 12%, in line with the 10–20% reductions reported by many south-west tourism providers and influenced by the relocation and winter closure of Dulverton and reduced hours at Lynmouth. Visitor spend fell by only 6%, representing a real terms increase in the spend per visitor. The Centres also continued to receive positive feedback and deliver National Park purposes through an impressive range of events, activities and exhibitions. Awaiting final accounts to confirm margins but anticipate being ahead of target.*
24. **Priority action:** Maintain a safe rights of way and access network with resources focused on the most popular routes. **Target:** open and easy to use score above 80%.
- ✓ *Our Ranger path inspections are up-to-date. Volunteer PROW Path Fixer events have restarted following recruitment of our new ranger. FST have delivered on a big programme of works this year including Cloutsham Splash bridge (funded by SC Highways) and the replacement bridge on the Danesbrook damaged by flooding earlier*

*in the year. The ticket backlog remains stubbornly high but overall PROW condition is good with our recently completed assessment showing 89% of the network as Open and Easy to Use.*

25. Complete Exmoor Active Travel Plan and explore opportunities to fund implementation.
  - ✓ *Village Audits are now completed in first draft and awaiting review by ENPA officers. Our bid for phase 2 Active Travel funding was successful, and we now have an ambitious programme to further develop our plans and design work for potential new schemes and active travel improvements. As well as developing our Active Travel Plan in more detail we aim to get at least one scheme to a 'bid ready' stage by Sept 2027.*
26. Deliver year 3 of Defra Access for All funding to improve disability access infrastructure
  - ✓ *Our full programme of expenditure was completed including: Pinkery Highly Accessible Room, Pinkery Pond Path, Public Toilets accessibility survey, Oakbeer Wood path improvement (near Great Bradley), Hinds Pitt Bridge preparatory surveys, Cloutsham Splash Bridge, Snowdrop Valley seating.*
27. Scope works needed to replace Hinds Pitt Bridge on the Tarr Steps Circuit.
  - ✓ *Landowner negotiations are actively ongoing to agree long-term public access for a new bridge and routes around. Preliminary design work is progressing, but detailed design and fund-raising cannot progress whilst this delicate work continues.*
28. Work with Visit Exmoor to maximise benefits to Exmoor through involvement in Somerset & Exmoor and Devon + Partners Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP).
  - ✓ *ENPA is now part of two Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) that have been accredited by VisitEngland – Devon & Partners and the Somerset & Exmoor LVEP. While it is early days and there is no doing attached to the LVEPs they are already proving to be beneficial in terms of bringing strategic partners together and it is important that ENPA is represented – we are taking a lead on Regenerative tourism for both LVEPs (in partnership with Dartmoor NPA for Devon).*
29. Work with the Exmoor Tourism Network to deliver ambitions outlined in the shared Good Tourism Plan for Exmoor. Manage a tourism challenge fund to support partners in delivering against the plan.
  - ✓ *In Autumn 25 we launched our shared Good Tourism Plan, working with partners to agree a future approach to tourism on Exmoor that is regenerative, productive and resilient leading to benefits for businesses, visitors, communities and landscapes. In the next year we will be working on delivery of actions to achieve the ambitions.*
  - ✗ *The challenge fund was not progressed due to the in-year revenue reduction and the loss of the tourism top slice allocation. This means for the first year in many we have not been in a position to contribute financially to influence the work of tourism partners across Exmoor.*
30. Finalise Exmoor Visitor Survey data collection (Q1) and publish results (Q2).
  - ✓ *The 2024/25 Visitor Survey was completed in Q2 and launched in Q2. Briefings have been given to key stakeholders and the results used to feed into a wide range of plans.*
31. Deliver inaugural Exmoor Nature Festival in May and evaluate long term feasibility.
  - ✓ *The inaugural festival took place in late May 2025 with over 1,500 participants in over 50 events with positive feedback from participants and partners. The programme has been launched for the 2026 festival.*

32. **New Action:** Explore opportunities to further promote car free travel within and to the National Park.

≠ *Continued reductions in public transport options have hindered significant progress on this, although every effort has been taken when appropriate to promote car-free opportunities. The Exmoor Explorer (nee Coaster) service was much reduced this year and despite best efforts we were unable to proactively work with the operators to promote it. It is understood that both Devon County Council and Somerset Council have gone out to tender for the route for this year (2026) but no plans have yet been confirmed.*

### Corporate Priority 3: A cared for landscape and heritage

33. Continue the restoration of Ashcombe Gardens.

✓ *During 2025/6 we have been able to restore the Ashcombe leat and associated water management, as well as the western path. We have also installed bridge abutments for the car park bridge.*

34. Engage people in Exmoor's dark skies through delivery of the 2025 Dark Skies Festival.

✓ *Over 2300 engaged in over 60 events with very positive feedback, Media coverage again was high including live ITV broadcast and a feature on BBC Breakfast. Plans for 2026 (our 10<sup>th</sup>!) under development.*

35. Draft and consult on a Design Planning Document to encourage high quality, locally distinctive design and take account of national design guidance.

✓ *Completed external review of sustainability chapter and checklist. Work progressing to enable design of document.*

36. Produce Management Plans for all Conservation Areas including public consultation. Investigate potential for small scale improvement schemes.

✓ *Draft improvement scheme for Winsford parking area agreed with Parish Council. Some revisions are required. Management plans and updated appraisals remain in draft form.*

37. Enhance engagement with the Historic Environment Record (HER).

✓ *Forestry Commission Project K completed with addition of 170 new Monument records and 465 SHINE (Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England) features created in addition to data cleaning and enhancement. Historic England HER film released to acclaim, wrote promotional blog shared by Natural England. Significant support of the Exmoor Heartlands LRS project. Record number of Q1 consultations responded to, all within time limits, including HEFER (Historic Environment Farm Environment Record) production, FIPL support and multiple site visits. New HER software presented to managers and procurement completed subject to funding approval.*

### Corporate Priority 4: A place with flourishing, vibrant, communities and businesses

38. Support businesses and partners to deliver the Rural Enterprise Exmoor vision.

✓ *REE directory has been refreshed and updated. Successful annual Rural Enterprise Exmoor Day held and opportunities taken throughout the year to support initiatives that further the vision. Limited capacity and resources within ENPA and partners has hindered further progress.*

39. Promote philanthropic giving via CareMoor for Exmoor with a focus on promoting legacy opportunities. **Target:** Increase general donations (excluding large gifts over £1,000) by 5% above 2024/25 figures.
- ✓ *A total of £45,453 was raised in the last year (a reduction of 31% on the previous years' total of £66,179). There was no single 'big' appeal this year. However new initiatives included the Donate a Fingerpost scheme generating over £7,500 and just under £4,000 from sales of old signposts in Centres. We also raised over £5,000 toward Woods and Trees and benefitted from over £9,000 via the Best of Exmoor towards the Porlock Marsh boardwalk. Training is being undertaken to enable the lead officer to undertake pro-active work on legacies. General donations (i.e those of £1k or under) increased by 19% (from £26,882 to £32,110) - ahead of the 5% target.*
40. Work with partners to support increased use and promotion of local produce including further roll out of Eat Exmoor branding.
- ✓ *We have continued to support local producers, retailers and hospitality providers with point of sale materials to promote the use of local produce. For #ExmoorDay a new scheme to 'Eat cake for CareMoor' was introduced involved 10 businesses and will be repeated in future years. The Exmoor Young Chef competition was again hosted by Visit Exmoor.*
41. Prepare for the review of the Local Plan.
- ✓ *Early preparations on review of local plan under the new system underway. Evidence gathering progressing. Strategic flood risk assessment and Somerset and Exmoor local need affordable housing assessment complete. Working on joint commissions with North Devon/Torridge Councils.*
42. Implement transfer to a new planning database.
- ✓ *Completed transfer to DEF Mastergov (the new planning database) on 19 January.*
43. Consult on and adopt updated local list of requirements for validating planning.
- ✓ *Local List now fully adopted and in use.*

**Corporate Priority 5:** A highly performing Estate, delivering National Park purposes

44. **Priority action:** Progress the ENPA Estate Strategy with a particular focus on completing baseline surveys and preparing management plans for priority land assets (those in Landscape Recovery).
- ≠ *Changes in Defra requirements for the development of Landscape Recovery Schemes meant that available capacity had to be focused on progressing the two scheme applications, which cover the majority of the estate. This work required detailed survey activity, evidence gathering and management planning across the project areas, limiting the capacity available to prepare wider estate management plans during the year. The focus for 2026/27 will therefore be to build on this work and prepare management statements for priority assets.*
45. Continue management of ENPA woodland estate and develop the tree nursery. Progress timber sales **Target:** £14,000 in 2025/26.
- ✓ *Actions during 2025/26 include the completion of open space and ride management, control of rhododendron on North Hill, other invasive species and scrub control, coppicing, and thinning at Moor Wood and Yarner. Additional tools and equipment were acquired for the tree nursery with funding from the Forestry Commission and Exmoor*

*Pioneers, and new accessible paths created with CDEL funding. 10,000 seeds collected in 2025.*

*≠ Timber to the value of £8,200, if sold on the open market, was used for ENPA's own projects during the year. Whilst this fell short of the £14k target, an informed decision was taken not to divert resources from key work priorities during the year. It is anticipated that normal activity will resume in 2026/27.*

46. Continue management of the Authority's Exmoor pony herds.

*✓ All foals are now registered. One mare has been dispatched on North Hill due to old age / poor condition. We anticipate foals being born on Haddon Hill this coming year.*

**Corporate Priority 6:** A great organisation to work for

47. Review and update Organisational Development Strategy.

*✓ Survey results have been communicated with LT / LT&DT, staff and Members. Information gathered from team meetings and appraisals has been communicated with LT and will inform the next Organisational Development Strategy. Progress against the actions in the Organisational Development Strategy will be taken to Members in June.*

48. **Priority action:** Take positive action to support the Authority's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Adopt an EDI strategy and develop actions to ensure EDI is embedded into our work.

*✓ The Equity Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Group has been meeting regularly and have had useful insights from external speakers. The Group will continue to embed this work across the organisation and will have input into our Equality Impact Assessments for services. The Women's Workplace Forum has held their first meeting where it agreed the aims and function of the group. The next meeting is planned for the first quarter of next year.*

49. **New Action:** Implement new Communications Strategy.

*✓ Implementation of strategy continues for all cross-cutting project communications and brand guidelines issued for all partnership working.*

50. Fully integrate Risk Management with Performance Management.

*≠ This is a standing item on Leadership Team and LTDT agendas, Limited progress has been made with this action during 2025/26 due to competing priorities and capacity pressures.*

51. Develop use of innovative GIS and AI tools in project and service delivery.

*✓ AI generated habitat data was used in a major project for the Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands Landscape Recovery Scheme. Looking at how we can implement other tools from Esri geared toward AI innovation.*

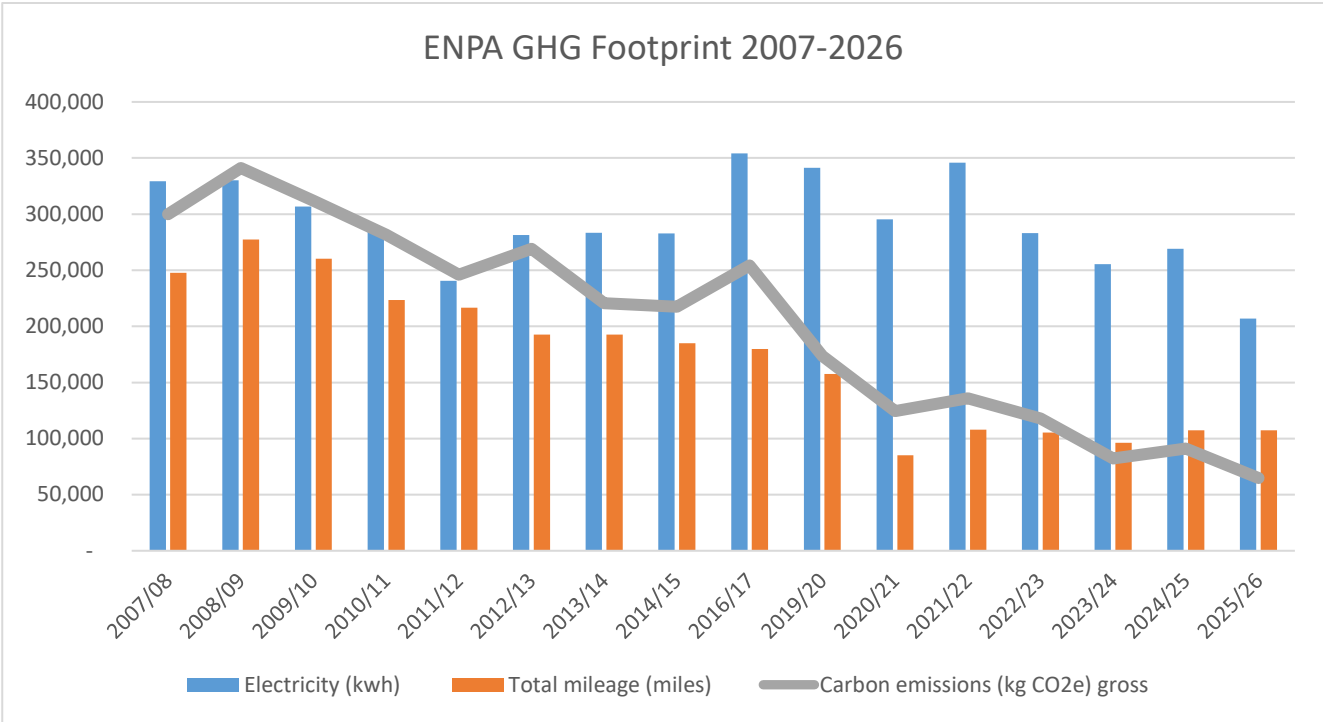
### Climate Action Plan Progress Update 2025/26

In 2019 Exmoor National Park Authority declared a climate emergency and set a target to become carbon neutral by 2030. This appendix provides the 2025/26 progress update on delivery of the Climate Action Plan and supports the Corporate Plan objective relating to climate action and environmental sustainability. It summarises the Authority’s greenhouse gas performance in 2025/26, the main measures delivered during the year, and the priority actions planned for 2026/27.

#### Headline summary of 2025/26 progress

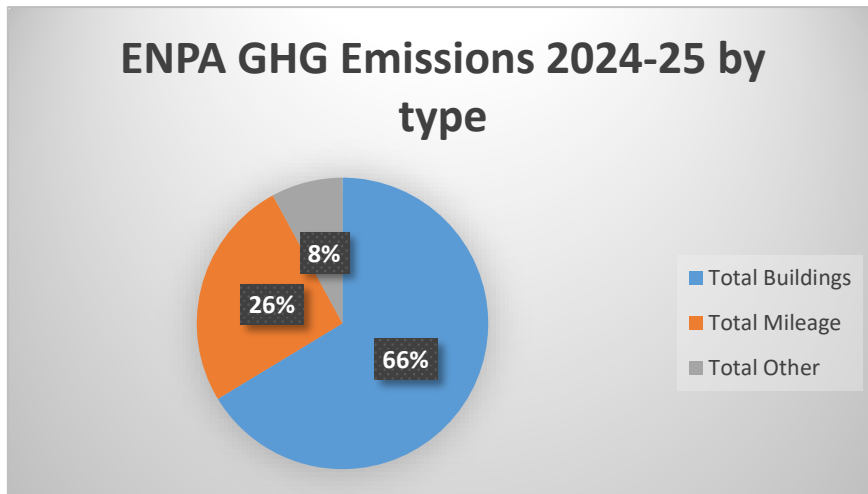
Overall greenhouse gas emissions reduced in 2025/26 following a slight increase in 2024/25. The main drivers of improvement this year were lower emissions from buildings and a greater proportion of business travel being undertaken in electric vehicles. Since the declaration of the climate emergency in 2019, the Authority has made substantial progress in reducing its operational emissions and remains on a positive trajectory towards the 2030 carbon neutral target, although further action will be required over the remainder of the Corporate Plan period to maintain that trajectory.

#### Overall greenhouse gas footprint



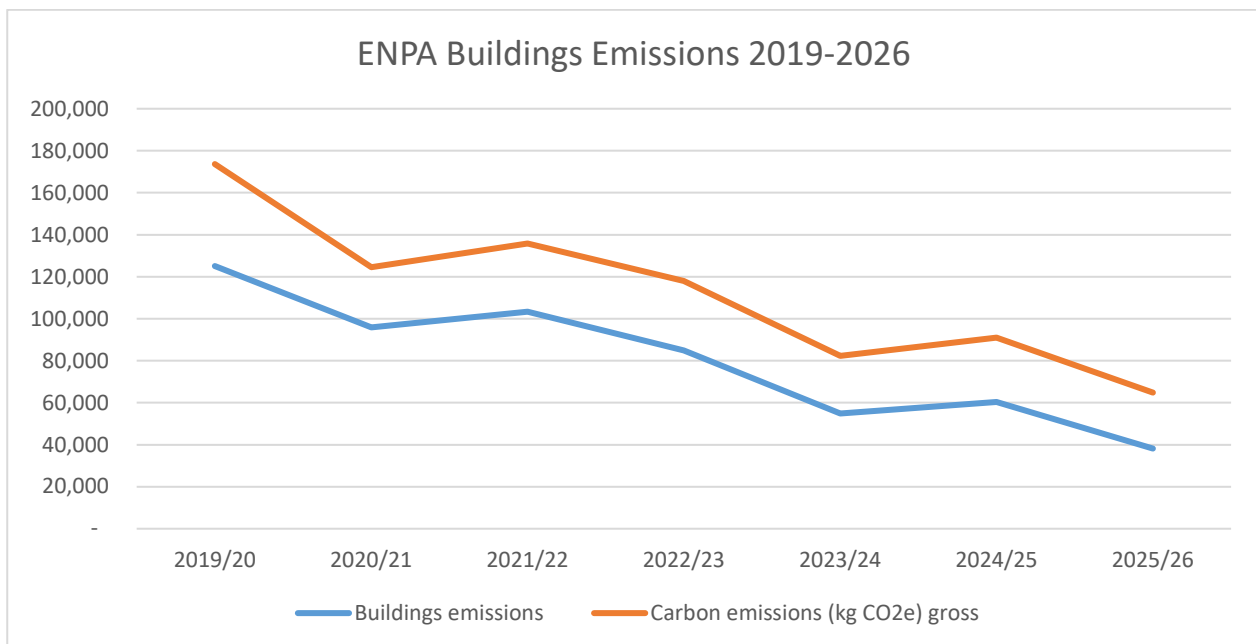
There has been a reduction in the Authority’s greenhouse gas footprint in 2025/26 following a slight increase in 2024/25 and several years of decline before that. The overall reduction this year reflects lower emissions from buildings together with a reduced emissions impact from business mileage as a greater proportion of travel has been undertaken in electric vehicles. The chart above shows the overall direction of travel since 2019 and demonstrates continued progress in reducing the Authority’s operational emissions.

## Main sources of emissions



Authority buildings continue to represent the largest source of operational emissions, followed by business mileage. As the proportion of electric vehicles in the fleet increases, the current reporting methodology will need to be refined, as electricity used to charge vehicles is presently recorded within building electricity consumption. This means there is currently a slight overstatement of building emissions and a corresponding understatement of vehicle emissions. The intention is to separate this out in future annual reporting so that the profile of emissions is shown more accurately.

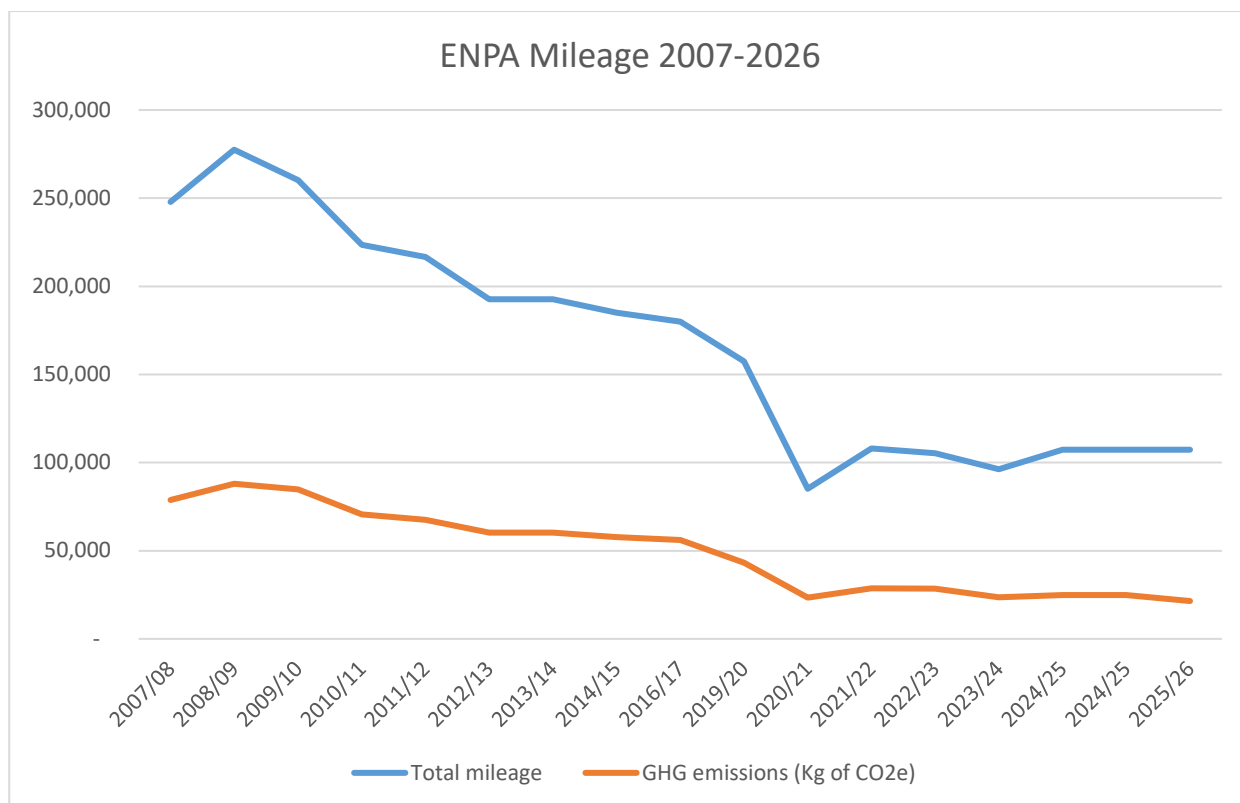
## Buildings



Emissions from Authority buildings have fallen significantly since 2019 as a result of decarbonisation works, including the replacement of fossil fuel heating systems with renewable alternatives and the installation of LED lighting. Building-related emissions continue to arise mainly from electricity usage, particularly where electricity is used for heating. The emissions impact of electricity use is also influenced by the national grid conversion factor, which can vary from year to year depending on the overall generation mix, although the Authority is on a green energy tariff.

There was a significant reduction in building emissions in 2025/26 compared with previous years. This reflects a combination of factors, including the full-year effect of the renewed heating system at Lynmouth Pavilion National Park Centre and lower oil use at Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Learning, where improved weather conditions supported greater solar and wind electricity generation and reduced reliance on the back-up generator. Overall, the 2025/26 position shows the benefit of building decarbonisation measures already delivered, while also illustrating the influence that weather and operational conditions can have on annual results.

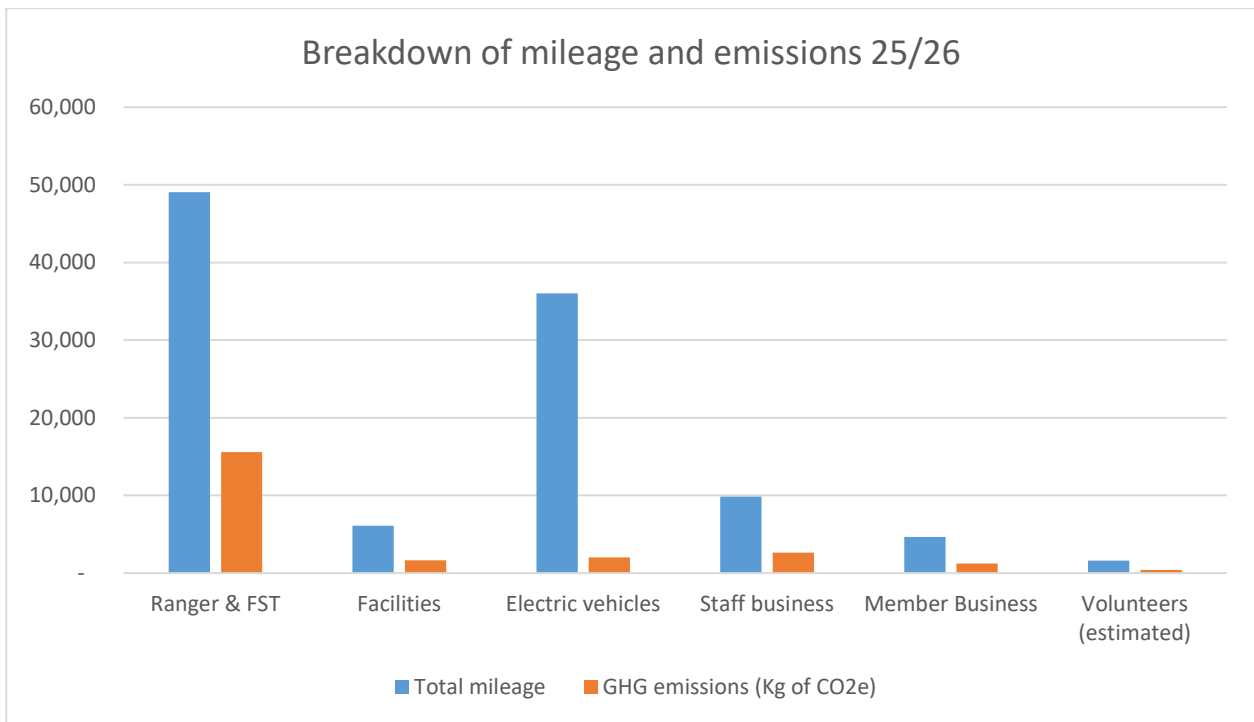
### Fleet and business mileage



Overall business mileage changed little in 2025/26 compared with the previous year, but total emissions reduced because a greater proportion of travel was undertaken in electric vehicles. In 2025/26, 34% of mileage was undertaken in EVs compared with 19% in 2024/25, demonstrating the continued benefits of fleet transition.

Since 2023/24, the Authority has been greening its fleet through the replacement of pool cars and other vehicles with EVs, and further transition is planned in 2026/27 as set out below. All pool cars are now electric or hybrid vehicles. The EVs are charged using green electricity from the grid and help to reduce emissions that would otherwise arise from diesel vehicle use. In 2025/26, emissions associated with mileage undertaken in EVs totalled 2,038 kg CO2e, representing a significant saving compared with the equivalent mileage being undertaken in diesel vehicles.

The remaining highest-emitting mileage continues to arise from diesel vehicles in the fleet, including the 4x4 vehicles used by the Rangers and Field Services Team and the Caddy van used for deliveries, outreach and facilities management.



### Wider emissions context: commuting and homeworking

Staff commuting is not currently included within the Authority’s core greenhouse gas monitoring. However, it remains a relevant source of wider emissions and, using Carbon Trust assumptions developed for Defra’s reporting approach, commuting emissions are estimated at around 15 tCO2e annually. This figure is presented for context only and is not included in the core footprint reported above.

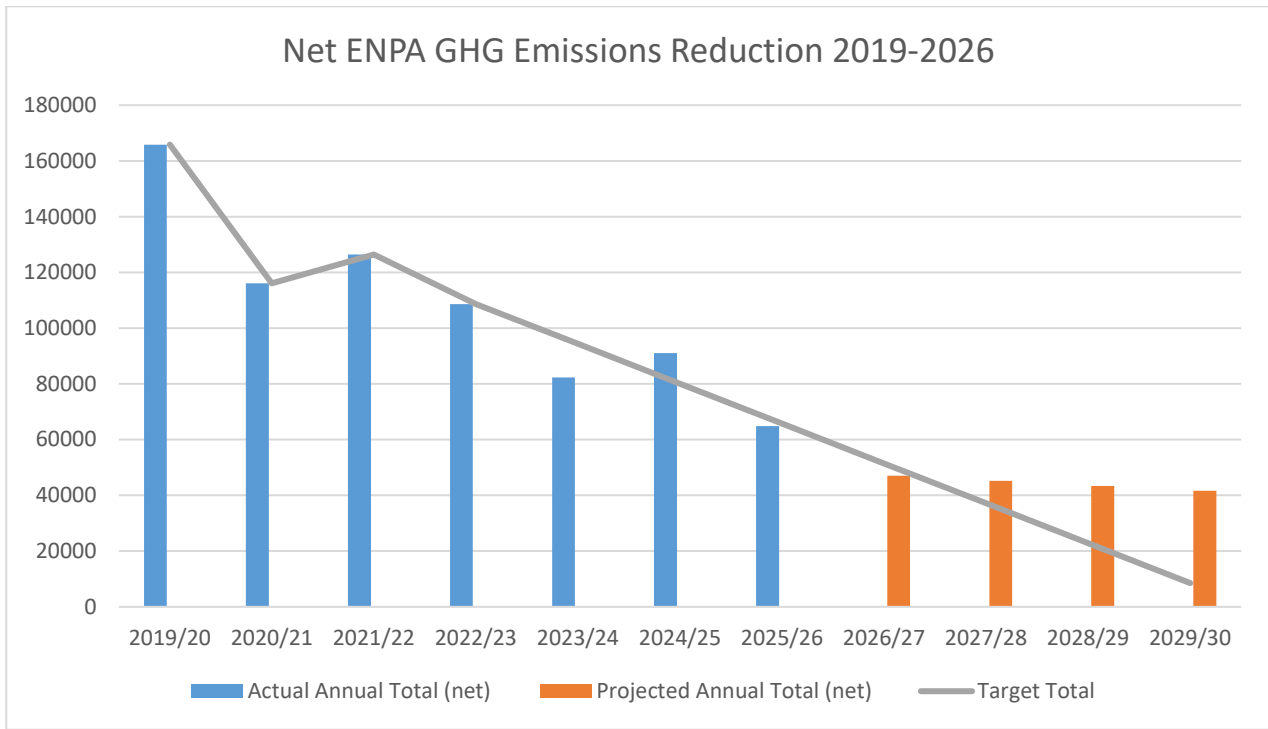
### Homeworking

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the Authority moved to blended working arrangements, with staff working both from their work base and, for some roles, partly from home. This has not reduced emissions from Authority buildings directly, as the buildings remain operational for staff use. Government guidance indicates that organisations should estimate the emissions associated with homeworking as part of their wider consideration of carbon reporting.

Using an assumption of an average of two days worked from home in 2025/26 for 62 staff, estimated annual emissions from homeworking are 14,770 kg CO2e. As with commuting, these figures are not currently included within the Authority’s core greenhouse gas monitoring but are presented to provide wider context on indirect emissions.

### Progress towards the 2030 carbon neutral target

Good progress continues to be made towards the Authority’s 2030 carbon neutral target. Overall emissions have reduced substantially since the declaration of the climate emergency in 2019, and the reduction in building emissions in 2025/26 has helped maintain the overall downward trajectory. Continued delivery of fleet replacement, building improvements and renewable energy measures will be important if that trajectory is to be maintained over the remainder of the Corporate Plan period.



Key measures delivered in 2025/26 that support continued emissions reduction are set out below:

<b>Measures taken in 2025/26</b>	<b>Estimated annual CO2e saving (kg)</b>
Replacement pool cars with an electric Hyundai Kona	1,540
Purchase of an additional electric Hyundai Kona	1,540
Completion of replacement lighting in Exmoor House with LEDs	2,864
Replacing lighting in Lynmouth Pavillion NPC with LEDs	3,237
Solar Array at Exford tree nursery	N/A

Further measures are underway or planned in 2026/27 to continue the decarbonisation trajectory:

<b>Measures to be delivered in 2026/27</b>	<b>Estimated annual CO2e saving (kg)</b>
Replacement of Facilities Caddy Van with electric EV van	2,300
Replace 2 Land Rovers with Isuzu electric 4 x 4 D Max	6,000
Replacement lighting at Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Learning with LEDs	52
New battery storage at Exford Depot, extension of PV roof	N/A
Driver biomass	N/A
Driver Solar array	N/A

**Areas under development: renewable generation, sequestration, procurement and land use**

Renewable energy generation remained broadly stable in 2025/26. During the year, around 105,538 kWh of renewable energy was generated, compared with 106,892 kWh in 2024/25, saving around 27,000 kg of carbon. The biomass boiler at Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Learning continues to make a significant contribution. Renewable generation is

expected to increase in 2026/27 through enhanced wind generation at Pinkery following changes to the shelterbelt and through further renewable systems coming on stream.

### **Carbon sequestration**

Tree planting programmes on Authority land continued during 2025/26, including planting at Little Halescombe, Kings Wood, Balewater, Driver and Mount Pleasant. This work supports the wider Climate Action Plan and the Authority's longer-term approach to habitat improvement and carbon storage. At present, these schemes are not being entered into the Woodland Carbon Code due to their scale and low-density nature.

Further work will be needed over time to determine how sequestration activity should best be reflected within the Authority's wider carbon reporting framework.

### **Procurement**

The Carbon Trust completed an initial assessment of emissions from the Authority's supply chain. This included an estimate of emissions related to purchased goods and services, capital goods, and upstream transportation and distribution, using the Greenhouse Gas Protocol approach.

The initial assessment used a spend-based methodology, applying emissions factors to expenditure data grouped by Standard Industrial Classification categories. This provides a useful baseline and helps identify the main hotspots, but it should be regarded as indicative rather than precise.

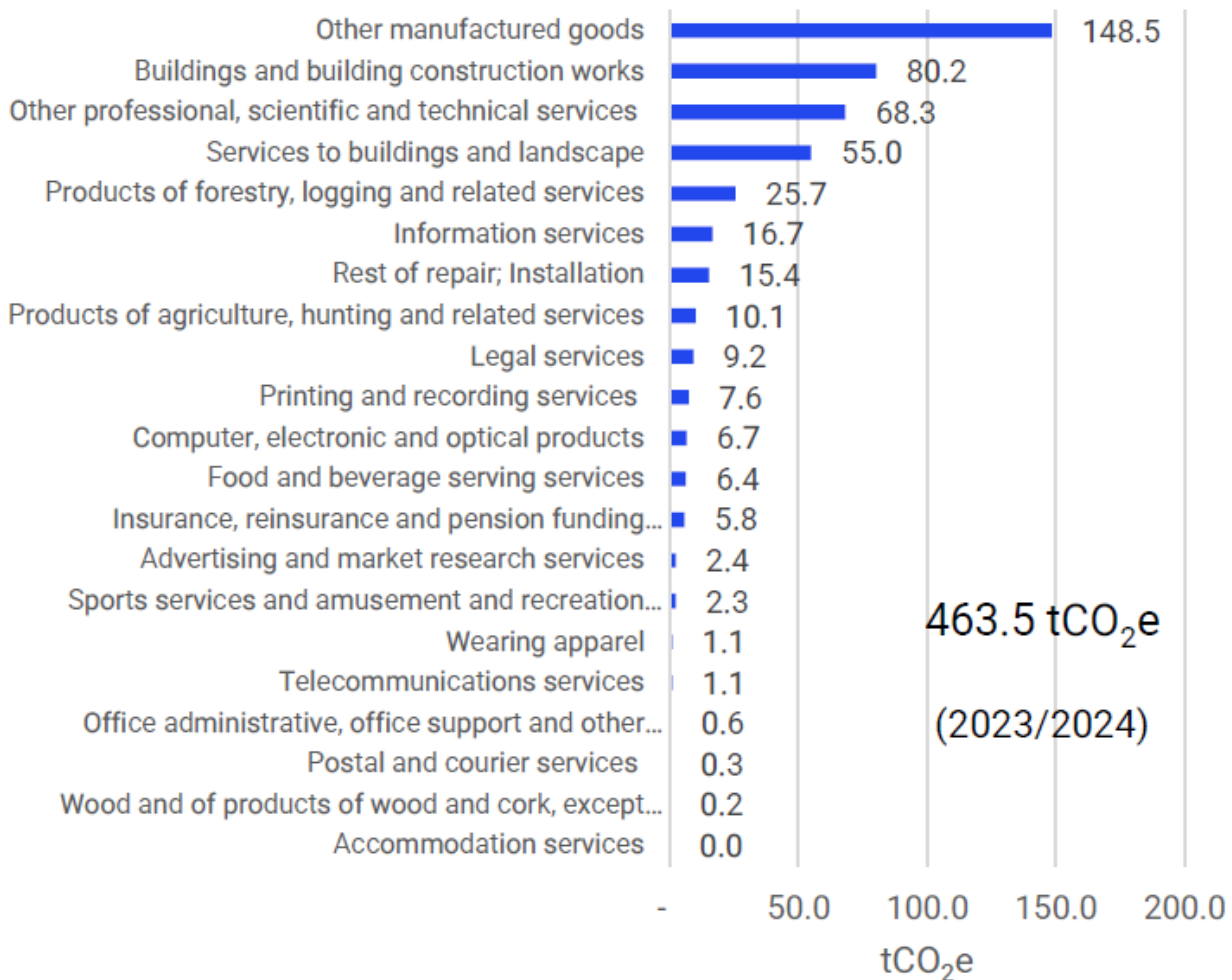
Emissions from Exmoor's supply chain were estimated to account for **463.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>e** in 2023/24. Initial estimates from the Access Financials system indicates a comparator figure of **728.8 tCO<sub>2</sub>e** in 2025/26.

The analysis showed that the highest-emitting categories were other manufactured goods and buildings and construction works, which together accounted for almost half of the estimated supply chain footprint. This provides a helpful indication of where further work should focus as the Authority develops its approach to scope 3 emissions.

The highest emitting service category was "Other manufactured goods" with 148.5 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e, followed by "Buildings and construction works" at 80.2 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e. These two areas together account for 49% of ENPA's supply chain carbon footprint.

The graph below shows the top industry categories identified through that initial assessment.

## Emissions per SIC (tCO<sub>2</sub>e)



Source: Carbon Trust, October 2024

This was a useful initial exercise to develop the Authority's understanding of supply chain emissions, but there are clear limitations in the methodology and available data. Spend-based factors provide a broad estimate and are best used to identify hotspots that can then be explored in more detail using supplier-specific information where this is available.

The next phase of work will focus on improving reporting methodology, identifying practical opportunities to reduce scope 3 emissions, and engaging with key suppliers where the potential impact is greatest. Progress in this area will continue as resources and capacity allow.

Current priorities for this area of work include:

- improving the methodology and accuracy of scope 3 emissions reporting
- developing an approach to target-setting for indirect emissions across the value chain
- assessing the feasibility of reducing supply chain emissions through practical supplier and procurement initiatives
- developing supplier engagement activity to improve data quality and support emissions reduction

As an early practical step, the finance team is working on incorporating SIC climate reporting within the new Access finance system. For 2025/26 the initial report from Access Financials indicates a supply chain footprint estimate of 728.8tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

The Authority also expects to benefit from wider work on supplier engagement and decarbonisation being developed through Devon County Council and across the Defra group.

### **Land use**

The Authority's current carbon footprint reporting does not yet include emissions from land use. This remains an important area for development, both in terms of understanding potential emissions and in recognising opportunities for carbon storage and sequestration.

A baseline assessment of land at Driver and North Hill has provided a useful starting point for understanding how land-based emissions and carbon stocks might be considered in future reporting. At Driver in particular, the work has helped illustrate the different accounting considerations that arise depending on whether land is managed directly by the Authority or through third-party grazing arrangements. Related work is also progressing through the Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands Landscape Recovery Scheme to assess carbon stocks and the potential for future carbon storage and sequestration through land management and habitat restoration.

Progress on the woodland carbon toolkit has been limited during the year because of capacity constraints.

## EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS &amp; KEY INDICATORS

For the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS HELD**

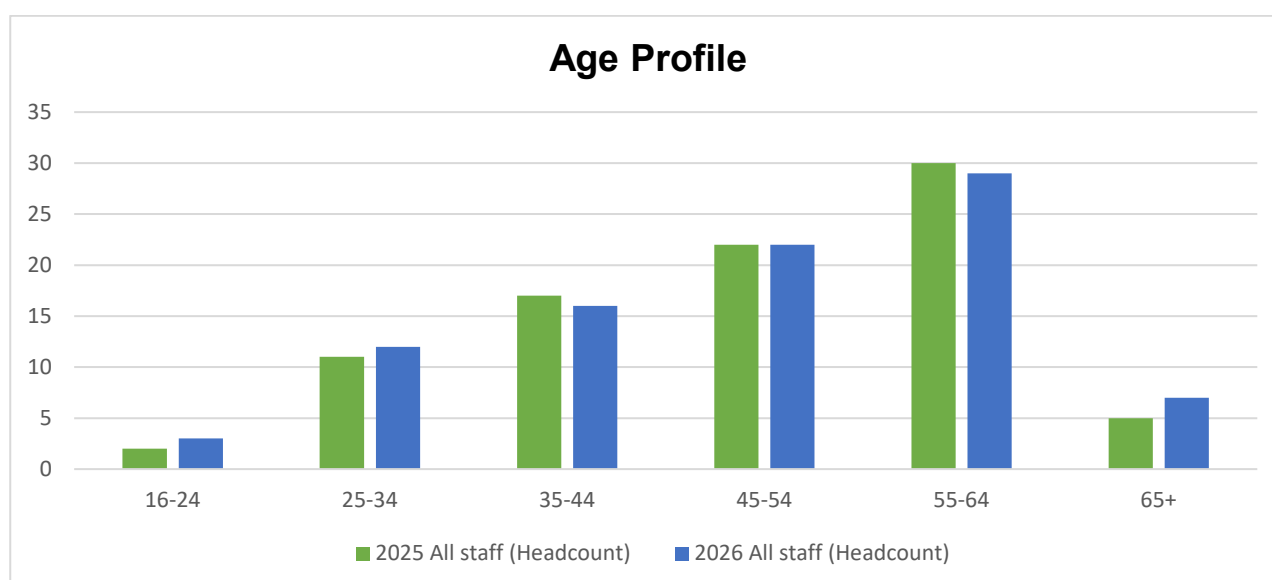
Core and non-core staff in post 31 March 2026

SECTION	Headcount	Full Time Equivalent
Access, Engagement and Estates	25	21.64
Climate, Nature and Communities	18	16.50
Enterprise and Operations	20	16.25
Chief Executive	1	1.00
<b>Total (Core staff in post)</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>55.39</b>
<b>Fixed-term project staff and seasonal staff</b>	<b>26*</b>	<b>18.86</b>
<b>Total (all staff) 31/03/2026</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>74.25</b>
<b>Comparable total 31/03/2025</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>72.69</b>

\* Note that some staff have multiple contracts across fixed term and permanent

**AGE PROFILE**

All staff in post 31 March 2026



The Authority's stability index has again increased this year (**63%** of staff have over 3 years of service, 61% on 31 March 2025).

Staff aged over 45 with over 3 years' service has also increased to **70%** this year (69% on 31 March 2025).

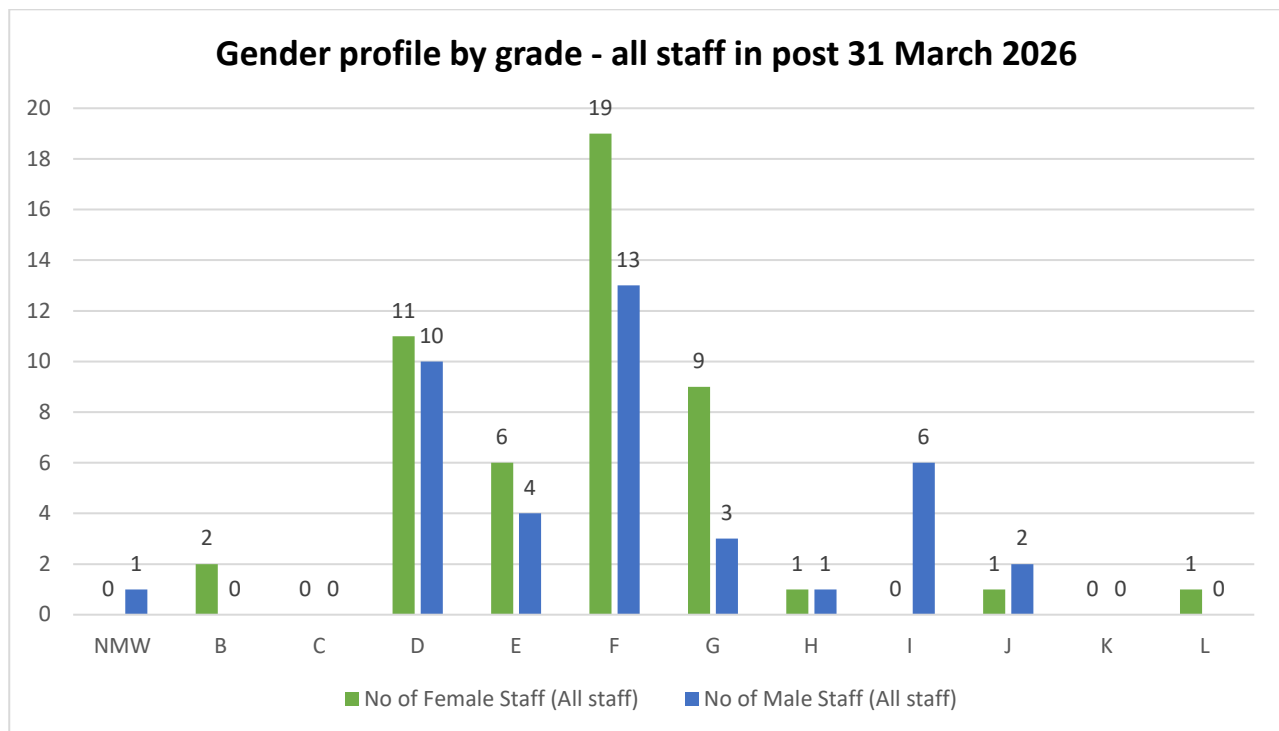
The Authority continues to host one apprenticeship into 2026 and will be developing further opportunities for trainee positions and supported internships over the next year.

Strategic succession planning remains a focus for the Authority to ensure we do not lose vital knowledge and expertise.

## GENDER PAY REPORTING

All staff in post 31 March 2026

PAY SCALE		ALL STAFF	
Grade	Top of Pay Scale £	Female Staff	Male Staff
Apprentice	24,521	0	1
<b>B</b>	25,185	2	0
<b>C</b>	25,989	0	0
<b>D</b>	28,142	11	10
<b>E</b>	32,061	6	4
<b>F</b>	36,363	19	13
<b>G</b>	41,771	9	3
<b>H</b>	48,226	1	1
<b>I</b>	54,495	0	6
<b>J</b>	63,560	1	2
<b>K</b>	Not used		
<b>L</b>	98,711	1	0
<b>Total posts</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Average (mean) salary 2024/25 (based on top salary point for each grade)</b>		<b>Female £36,593 £45,551 Without CE post included</b>	<b>Male £38,233</b>



The Authority's mean gender pay gap<sup>1</sup> for all staff in post on 31 March 2026 has increased to **4%** (from 2% in 2025). The mean gender pay gap nationally is 12.8%.

The median pay gap<sup>2</sup> is more typically used as a measure nationally as outliers can skew the mean, particularly in small data sets such as these. According to the ONS, nationally the gender pay gap based on median hourly earnings for all employees continues to decline slowly over time and has now decreased to 12.8%.

**The Authority's median gender pay gap remains at 0%.**

March 2026	Authority median hourly earnings	Change in gap	UK median hourly full-time earnings
Female	£18.85	0%	£18.87
Male	£18.85	0%	£20.27

QUARTILE DATA (All staff in post 31 March 2026)					
	Women	Male	All	% Women	% Male
Lower (A-C)	2	1	3	67%	33%
Lower Middle (D-F)	36	27	63	57%	43%
Upper Middle (G-I)	10	10	20	50%	50%
Upper (J-L)	2	2	4	50%	50%
	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>44%</b>

## RECRUITMENT AND TURNOVER

The CIPD's Labour Market Outlook (Winter 2025/26)<sup>3</sup> reports that intentions to hire are at low levels showing that employer confidence is subdued. Within the public sector these levels are even lower with public sector hiring at below zero for the last 4 consecutive quarters.

The Authority has been successful in all its recruitment campaigns during 2025/26 with all vacant posts being filled. The Authority continues to promote its offer through its recruitment packs, advertising, etc. We will be developing other ways to promote our workplace over the next year, for example short films, interviews and feedback from staff,

The Authority's turnover rate between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 is **6.3%** (core staff only), another decrease from 9.3% on 31 March 2025.

The turnover rate for all staff (including project, fixed term, and seasonal staff) during this period is **9%**, much lower than 20% reported last year. This figure will always fluctuate as the Authority appoints more fixed term project staff. The current UK average rate is estimated to be around 15%.

The Authority continues to consider and review its processes. Exit interviews highlighted the need for the Authority to do more to support women in the workplace. We responded by establishing a Women's Workplace Forum which aims to provide a culture where

<sup>1</sup> The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees.

<sup>2</sup> [Gender pay gap in the UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Labour Market Outlook | CIPD](#)

women feel comfortable sharing their experiences and seek support, build confidence, providing allyship and advocate for broader cultural change within the organisation.

## DECLARED DISABILITY

All staff in post 31 March 2026

Physical	2	<p><b>10% of the total staff group declare a disability.</b></p> <p>A disability may be defined as “A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on the person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.</p>
Progressive conditions e.g., MS, cancer	1	
Recurring conditions, e.g., arthritis	4	
Sensory	1	
Respiratory conditions, e.g., asthma	1	
Mental Health	0	
Learning Difficulties	0	
Other	0	

## ETHNICITY

All staff in post 31 March 2026

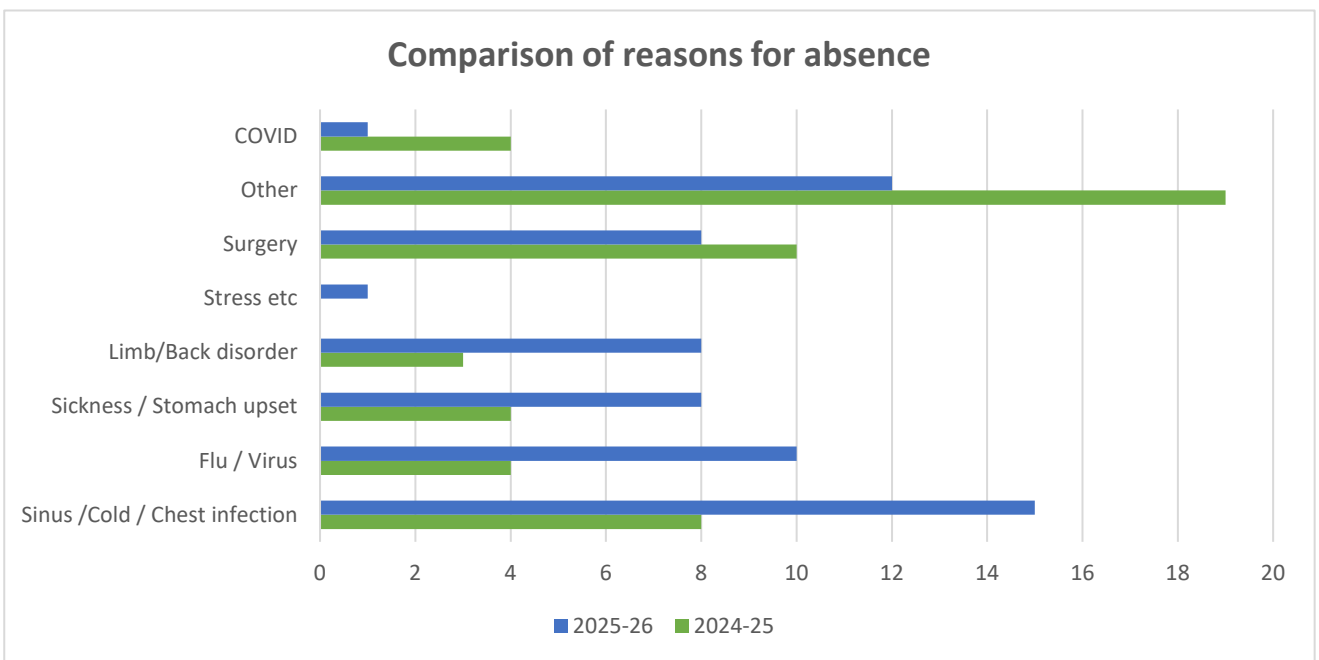
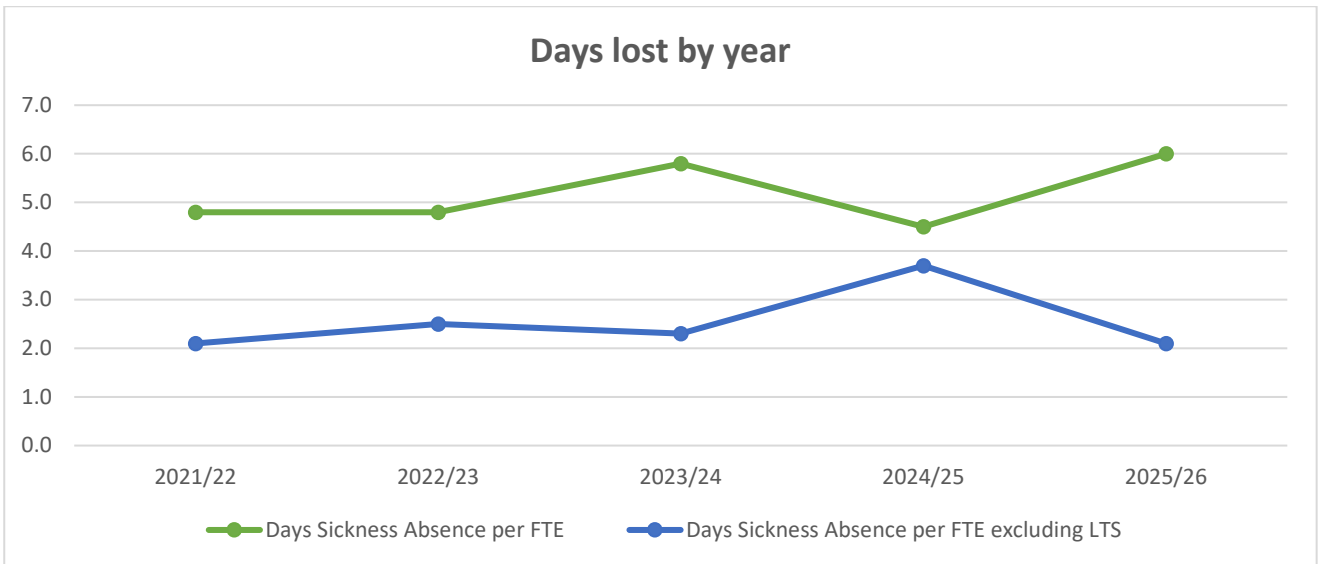
White	British	87	<p><b>96.6% of employees identify themselves as white British.</b></p> <p><b>3.4% any other white background and any other ethnic group</b></p>
	Irish and wider European	0	
Any other white background		2	
Asian/Asian British		0	
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British		0	
Mixed/Multiple ethnic		0	
Any other ethnic group		1	
Gypsy or Irish Traveller		0	
Mixed Ethnicity		0	

## SICKNESS ABSENCE

All staff

Year End March	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Total Days lost through sickness absence	<b>414</b>	305	388	318	314
Total Days lost excluding LTS*	<b>145</b>	251	159	168	138
<b>Total Days per FTE</b> (Avg. FTE over year)	<b>6.0</b>	4.5	5.8	4.8	4.8
<b>Total Days per FTE excluding LTS</b>	<b>2.1</b>	3.7	2.3	2.5	2.1

\*LTS=Long Term Sick (20 consecutive working days or over)



On 31 March 2026 sickness levels per full time equivalent increased to **6.0** from 4.5 at the end of 2024/25. However, sickness levels per full time equivalent excluding long-term sickness absence decreased to **2.1**. The Authority experienced an increase in sickness absence where staff required a longer recovery period but was less than the 20 consecutive days for long term sickness absence. This particularly relates to the increase in flu/virus and coughs and colds in the last two quarters of the year where some cases led to staff requiring further sickness absence, having returned to work, due to secondary infections.

A proactive response in terms of flexibility, working from home, and the ability to plan phased return to works, particularly following surgery, enabled more staff to begin to return to work sooner, albeit on less hours, with the aim of building up to their full weekly contractual hours. This is monitored closely by managers to ensure the health and wellbeing of their staff. This has also increased the figure per full-time equivalent, whilst reducing long-term sickness absence.

The Authority continues to have robust sickness reporting procedures in place and ensures that those on long-term sickness are supported to return to work. We will always take the lead from our staff and use our Occupational Health service to help identify adjustments that

can be made which has helped in developing personalised risk assessments. Sickness absence forms are monitored as they are submitted to HR and any concerns are immediately raised with the manager, if not already identified in the return-to-work meeting.

There were **63** occasions of sickness absence (compared to 52 in 2025/26).

There were **53** staff (compared to 58 last year) who had no sickness absence in 2025/26.

This year we had 1 reported absence relating to stress. This was due to personal reasons and was not directly work-related. We supported the employee through time off and flexible working, as well as having access to our 24-hour confidential helpline service. The Authority also offers support provided on its Intranet covering mental health and wellbeing, healthy lifestyles, the menopause, and financial wellbeing, and signposting to resources and support.

The Authority continues to offer its Employee Assistance Programme which includes up to 6 structured telephone counselling sessions, a Wellbeing Hub and Your Care Platform.

The Authority continues to have safe working practices in place in line with current government guidelines and flexible/hybrid working continues to be popular amongst staff. We continue to develop our Wellbeing pages on the staff intranet and have renewed our commitments to being a Mindful Employer and a Disability Confident Employer.

### **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-26**

Our Corporate Strategy 2023-26 has two priorities related to this work:

- A welcoming place for all, improving people's health and wellbeing.
- A great organisation to work for.

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was developed with the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Group which includes staff from across the organisation and Authority Members. A representative from our Youth Board also attends. They meet at least 3 times a year and aim to:

- Look at where we are as an organisation and how we currently address EDI, as well what is happening more widely.
- Scope issues and opportunities.
- Identify ideas for actions and a framework for how we respond.

A Terms of Reference was produced setting out the role of the Group:

- Acting as Champions for the EDI Strategy both collectively and within their Teams/ Sections/Board.
- Acting as a forum where EDI issues can be discussed in a supportive, open and positive way.
- Reviewing the progress of the Strategy against agreed objectives in the Corporate Plan, be a sounding board for issues and ideas to achieve our objectives and provide guidance on actions that may contribute to more effective delivery.
- Reviewing equality impact assessments, particularly for larger projects or new policies.

A set of actions were developed:

1. Adopt and commit to an Authority EDI statement.
2. Incorporate EDI into all our work and communicate this both internally and externally.
3. Raise awareness and understanding of EDI.
4. Increase diversity on our Board and within our workforce.

5. Engage with new audiences and partners and encourage a diverse range of visitors that reflects the nation.
6. Provide services that are accessible, inclusive, and welcoming for all.
7. Provide clear goals and targets for teams to work towards.

Progress against the Strategy and next steps have been monitored by Leadership Team. Our progress is measured against the 4 key areas set out in Public Sector Equality duty (1. Culture and values; 2. Services; 3. Resources; 4. Strategy)

Next steps will be to identify areas of work to focus on and develop the strategy further for the period 2026-2030.

### **Our People, Our Culture (Organisational Development Strategy 2023-2026)**

The Authority developed and adopted an Organisational Development Strategy in 2023 which set out the Authority's aims that would support our people in the organisation for the next three years. The key aims were:

- Support staff so they can undertake their roles effectively and efficiently.
- Develop a strong culture and vision that staff and Members are connected to.
- Improve processes, procedures, communication, and guide the workforce into the future.
- Strive for excellent performance.

Four key areas were identified that we felt were important to delivering the Strategy's aims:

1. Improving processes, procedures and communication.
2. Supporting staff to undertake their roles effectively and efficiently.
3. Striving for excellent performance.
4. Creating a strong culture that staff and Members are connected to.

Progress made was regularly reviewed by Leadership Team and Delivery Team and there are actions we intend to take forward. In summary, good progress has been made and some key highlights include:

- Strengthening the 'golden thread' through our Management and Corporate Plans and linking to other strategies developed across the Authority (e.g., Communications Strategy, Estate Strategy, Organisational Development Strategy).
- A new set of values
- Implementing new systems (e.g., payroll system and finance system)
- Reviewing our appraisals process and providing training
- Expanding collaborative working due to becoming a more project-led organisation
- Supporting digital transformation through encouragement and training

Next steps will be to develop a new Strategy that is aligned to our Corporate Plan 2026-2030. The new Strategy will follow a similar format, reflecting on the current aims and actions and renewing these where needed. It will also incorporate some of the actions we intend to take forward. The Authority will aim to bring a new Strategy to Members in the autumn.

## ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

All staff and volunteers

During the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 the following were reported:

### **Accidents (5)**

- 1 volunteer
- 2 staff
- 2 public

<b>Causes</b>	
Slips, trips, and falls	2
Manual handling	1
Vehicle/Machinery/Equipment	2

<b>Resulting injuries</b>	
Bruise/cuts	3
Muscular/skeletal	2

There was one RIDDOR reportable accident this year. A member of the public was found deceased on Winsford Hill with suspected cattle injuries. The Authority has been working with and taking advice from the Health and Safety Executive on this matter.

### **Incidents/Near Miss (4)**

- 2 staff incidents - fire alarm activation and evacuation (NPC Lynmouth and White Rock Cottage).
- 1 staff driving related incident (no injury or damage).
- 1 public incident – rock pooling activity (rash from snake lock anemone).

There was one incident relating to customer behaviour, but no formal action was deemed necessary.

All accidents and incidents, whether they result in injury or are considered a 'near-miss', are reported at the Authority's quarterly Health and Safety Committee and, where necessary, modifications to processes to prevent reoccurrence and to control risk are put in place.

**Ellie Woodcock**

**HR Officer**

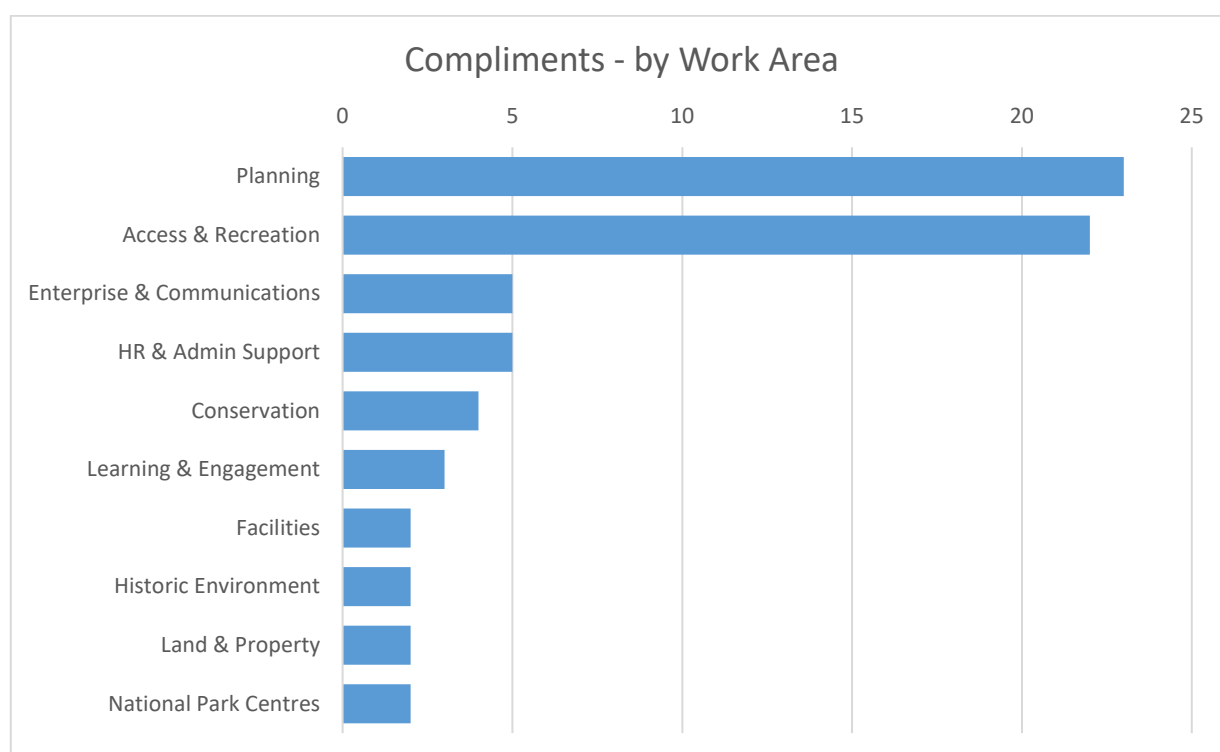
15 May 2026

# Customer Feedback Report 2025-26

A summary of the compliments, complaints, freedom of information and environmental information regulations requests for the period 1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026

## Customer Compliments

Below is a breakdown of the **70** written compliments received in 2025/2026. We receive many more through the visitor books in National Park Centres, calls to our offices or in conversation with officers in the field.



Below is a small sample of the comments received which reflect the efforts of our staff to offer good service.

A massive thank you, I really appreciate the work you do in keeping public rights of way open, whether I'm on my feet, my bike or my horse, it makes such a difference. Thank you all. **Field Services Team**

*It was really good of you to send such a comprehensive reply. In this digital age, you've lifted my heart and made me realise there are still human beings out there. I'll do as you say. Hopefully I won't need to complain about anything else this side of Christmas. I hope you have a good one. **Rangers***

Thank you to you & your team for organising and making possible the tree planting dedication ceremony today. Apart from the warm sunny weather it was a lovely, moving day to bring back memories of x and other loved ones. Many thanks again – **Rural Enterprise / Woodlands / FST**

*Thank you so much for your talk to the Archaeology Society yesterday evening. You managed to cram in an amazing amount of information in a very short time. I've had some really good feedback from the membership it was very much enjoyed by all.*

**Historic Environment**

Visited the information centre on the 17th June with a specific question relating to the location of a swimming spot on the river barle. The lady in the centre went above and beyond to help us and with obvious knowledge of the area. Thankyou. We did find the spot and returned to give feed back. Looking forward to coming again **National Park Centres**

*My child doesn't have endless energy nor likes to get dirty. So the activities you offer aren't something they would normally be drawn to do. The outcome of their stay at Pinkery wasn't to experience difference activities, for them it was the ability to try different activities. It sounds like they smashed it! They came home aware of the staff names and safety measures around fire - **Learning & Engagement / Pinkery***

I expect you have seen this clip of film from Sunday on your social media. However, what you won't have heard are the wonderful 'mentions in dispatches' which you got at each property for the support which you have given to the self builders. From all those people benefiting now, and in Exmoor's future, thank you for the knowledge, skills, guidance and experience which you have brought to these, and other, local lives

**Planning**

*I had a fabulous time. Everyone is so welcoming and kind and I really felt like a part of the team. I thought it was structured amazingly as I got to work with each of the rangers doing such a range of things. They are all so passionate and knowledgeable about the park it was really inspiring. I think I learnt more from everyone last week than I have at Uni so far! - **Work Experience feedback - Access & Recreation Team / HR***

The recognition that you are giving to the importance of young people for the future of Exmoor National Park will filter into the culture, expectations, and aspirations of young people who wish to stay living and working here. Their parents plus significant adults/entrepreneurs/philanthropists who live here will also pass on your initiatives into the young networks who might not realise that you are championing their cause, and the need for young workers, families, education and a more balanced population – **Exmoor Pioneers Team**

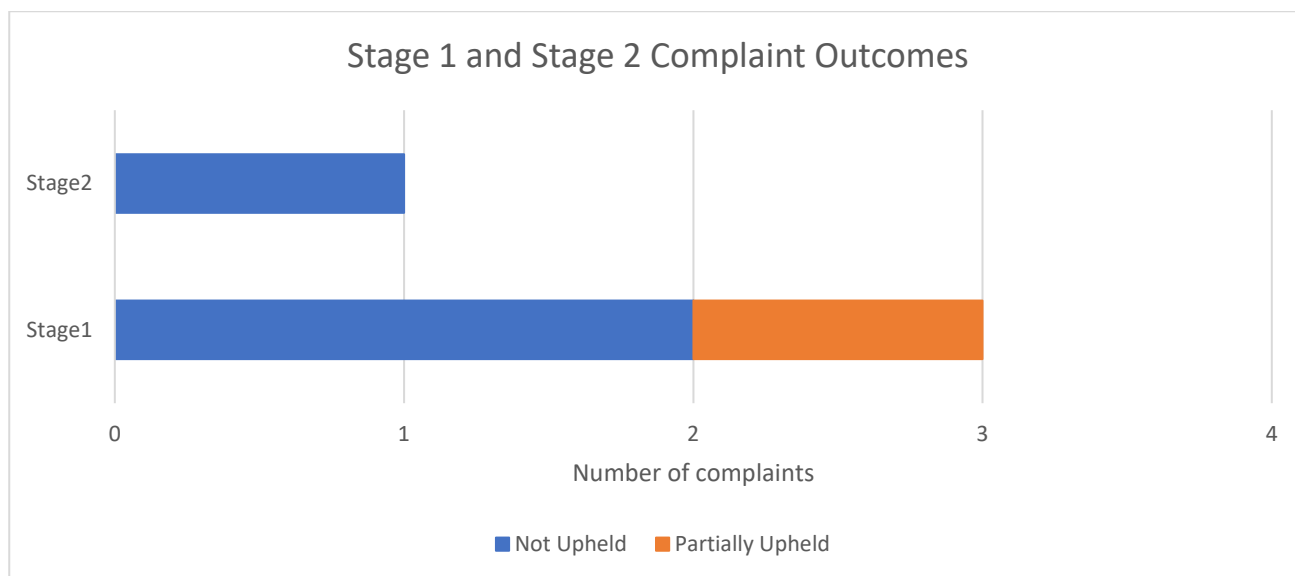
*Thanks so much for checking in here and we really appreciate your support on this project. All of the locations were very gorgeous - we got lots of good stuff everywhere - particularly enjoyed being on the moor and finding the windswept trees and Colbourne woods was a really surprising shift in colours and scale which was great. We hope to come and film on Exmoor again - it was so beautiful. – **Land & Property***

Today we were invited by one of our parents to the big family nature day at Haddon Hill Exmoor. We had an absolutely fantastic day taking part in all the activities they had set up and learning about skulls you would find on the moor and the types of animals and bugs. We got to make our own dens, make butterfly wands and flags. Absolutely fantastic day had by us all. Thank you Exmoor National Park – **Multiple Teams involved**

## Formal Customer Complaints

Officers deal with concerns and issues raised by members of the public, most of which are resolved at an informal stage without the need to invoke the formal complaints procedure. A total of 40 informal complaints were received in the Complaints inbox during 2025-26.

During the same period, the Authority received three formal complaints, all relating to planning matters. Each complaint was investigated by the senior manager of the service area and a Stage 1 response sent. One of the complaints was subsequently referred to the Complaints Officer for further investigation and a Stage 2 response was sent.

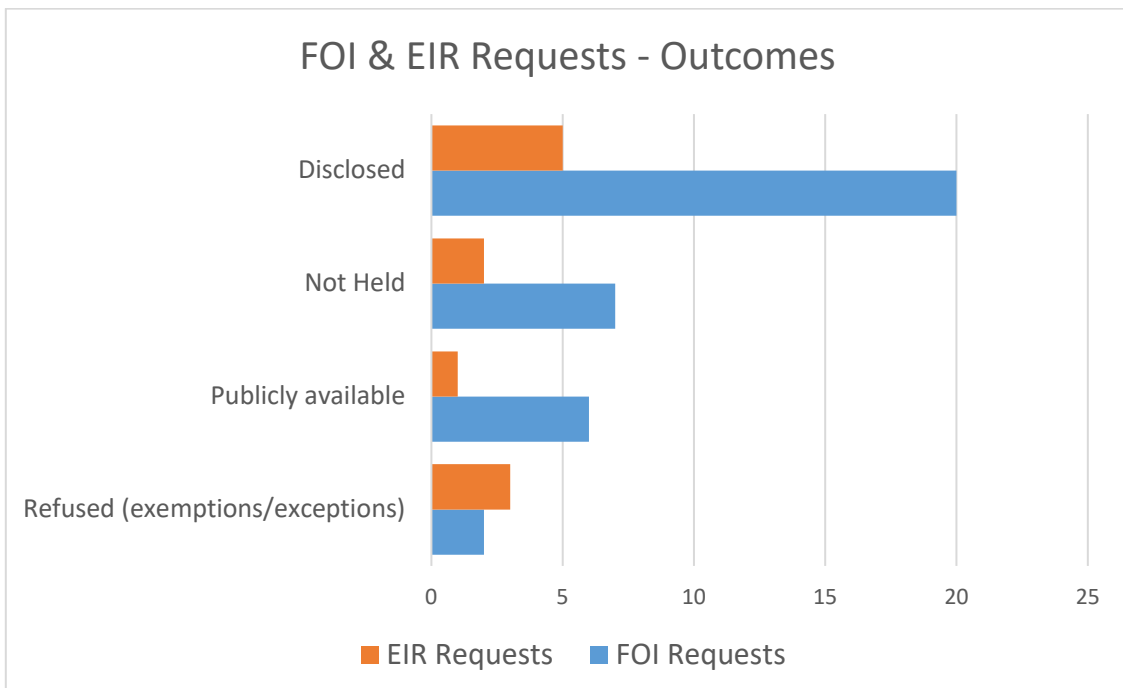
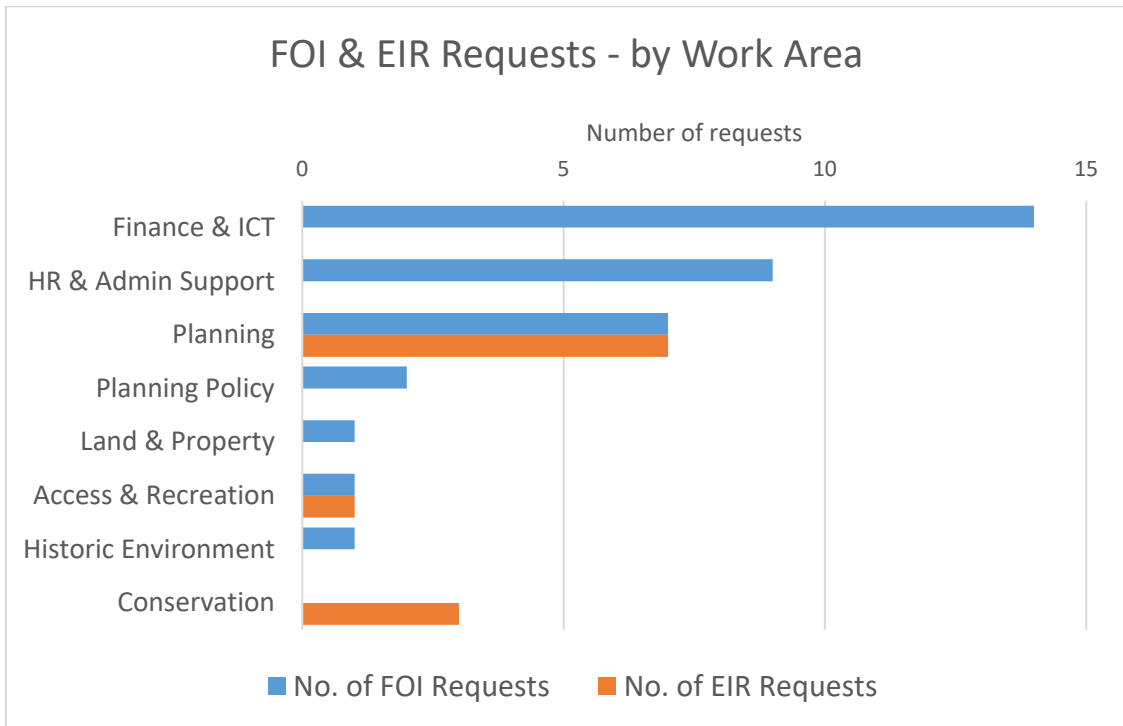


The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) has issued its Annual Review Letter for the year ending 31 March 2026. This records that the Stage 2 complaint was referred to the LGSCO, but the case was closed in February 2026 without a decision being reached, due to the complainant submitting a claim for Judicial Review to the High Court. At the time of writing, the Authority is still awaiting the High Court's decision.

## Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations Requests

The Authority received a total of 46 requests for information during 2025-26 – with 35 being assessed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and 11 under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

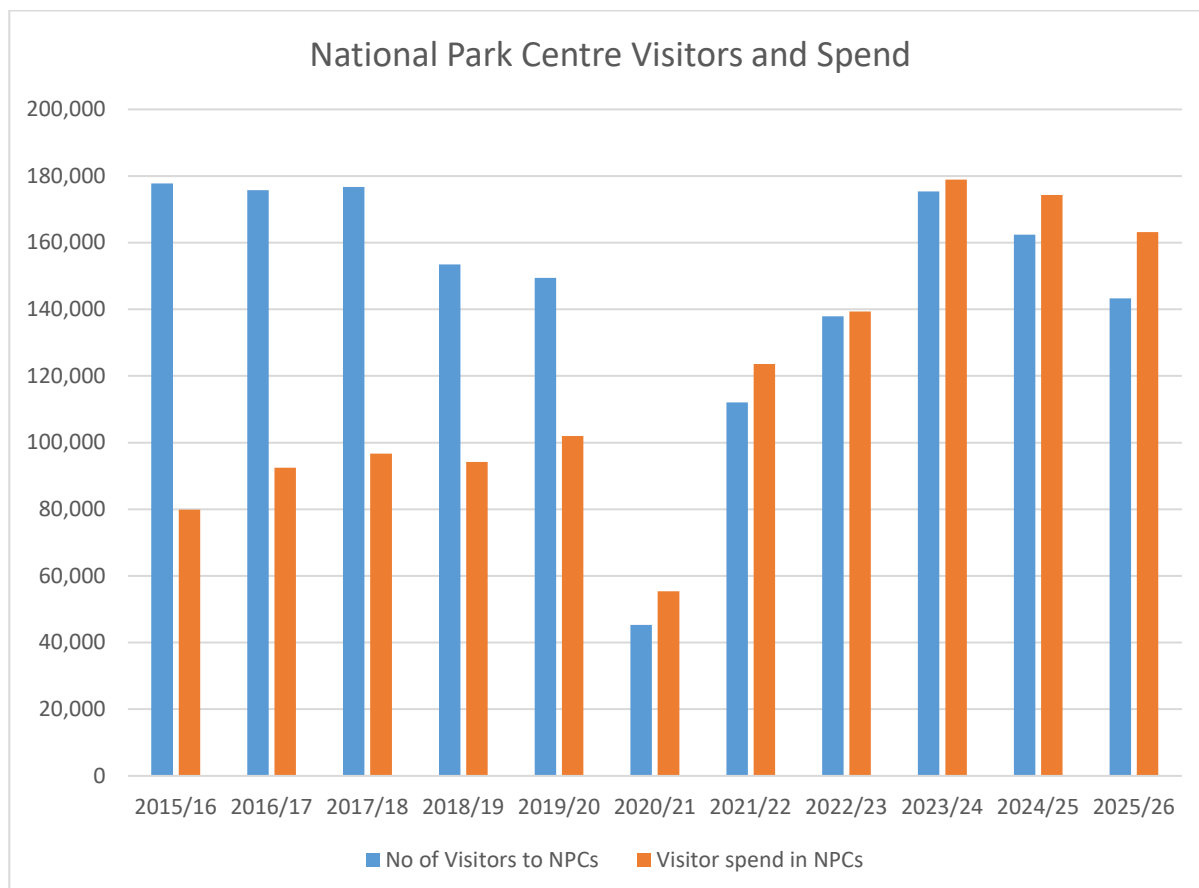
The graphs below show the different work areas the requests related to and also a summary of the response outcomes.



## Key Corporate Indicators 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

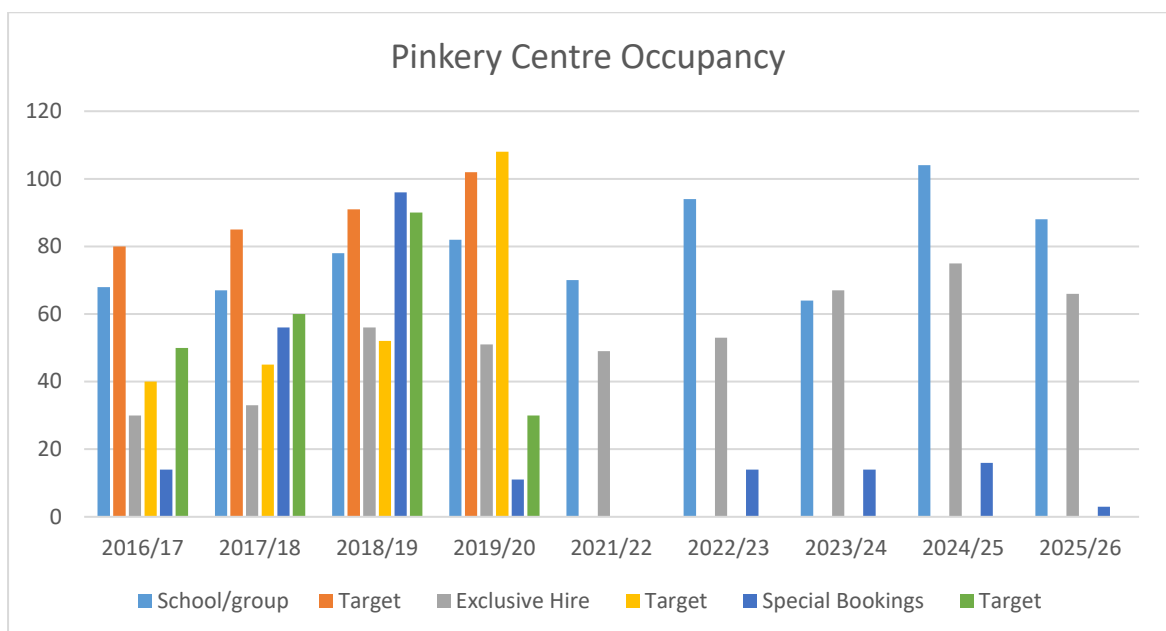
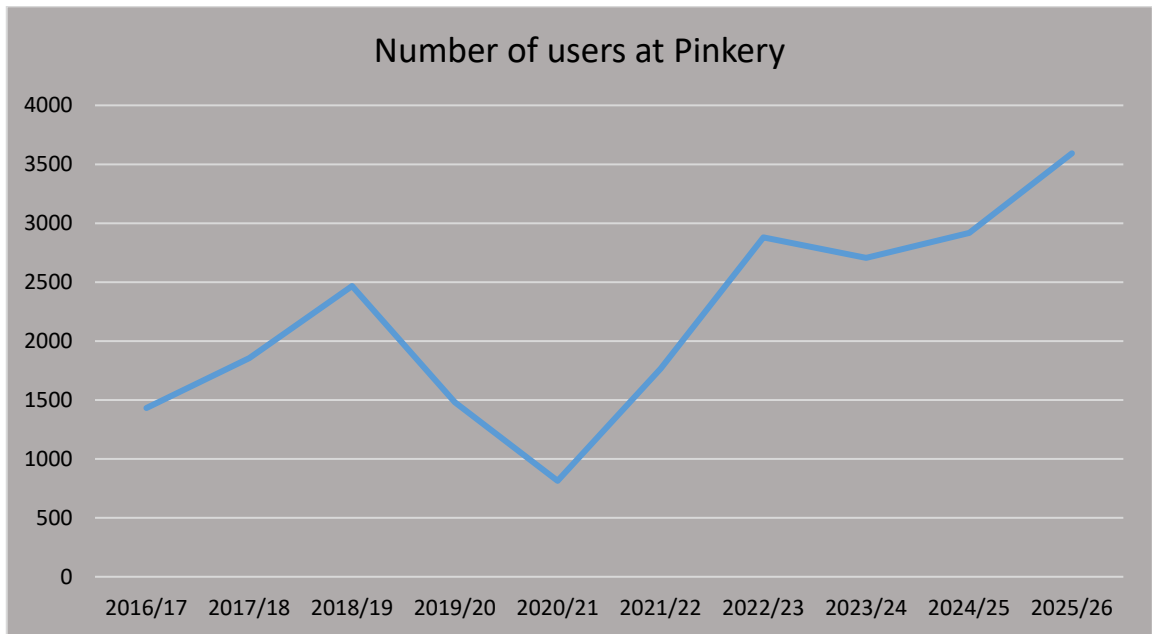
### National Park Centres

- Visitor numbers totalled 143,266 across the 3 Centres – a fall of just under 12% compared to the previous year. Many south-west tourism providers reported reductions of 10-20% in volume and for us this is partly accounted for by the winter closure of Dulverton, reduced trading hours at Lymouth and the relocation of the Dulverton NPC.
- Visitor spend fell by just over 6% to £163,180 however this represented a real terms increase in the spend per visitor from £1.07 to £1.14, which is encouraging given the economic climate.
- In addition, the Centres have continued to receive positive customer feedback and reviews and this year have developed an impressive range of additional events, activities and exhibitions to further deliver NP purposes in addition to their core information role.
- Profit margins across the three centres were 44% (2024/25 42.8%) against a target of 40%. The online shop continues to generate an additional income within existing resource. Net sales at £8,363 were down on the previous year (£11,198 - which was an exceptional year mainly due to the publication of the Exmoor Farms book). The online shop had a profit margin of 63% (N.B. includes parking permits), far exceeding the 40% target.



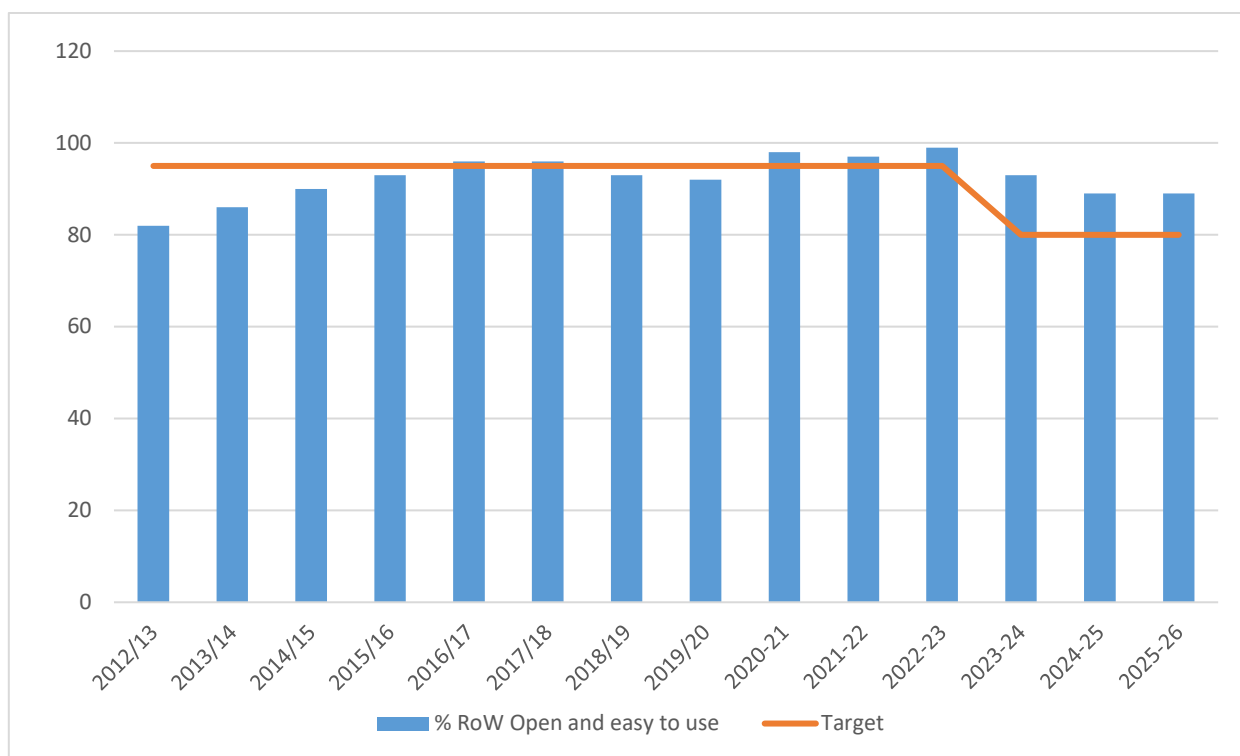
## Learning and Engagement

- The total no. of users at Pinkery was 3,593 exceeding last years' figure of 2,917 which was the highest level recorded to date. As a result, trading income totalled £168,729, exceeding the £152k target.
- Exmoor Pioneers has enabled ongoing engagement with schools and other audiences including families.
- Young Rangers recruitment is complete for 2026 and a residential has taken place.
- We delivered 6 “Welcome to Exmoor Days” and these will continue as part of the Exmoor Pioneers programme.



## Rights of Way Open and Easy to Use Score

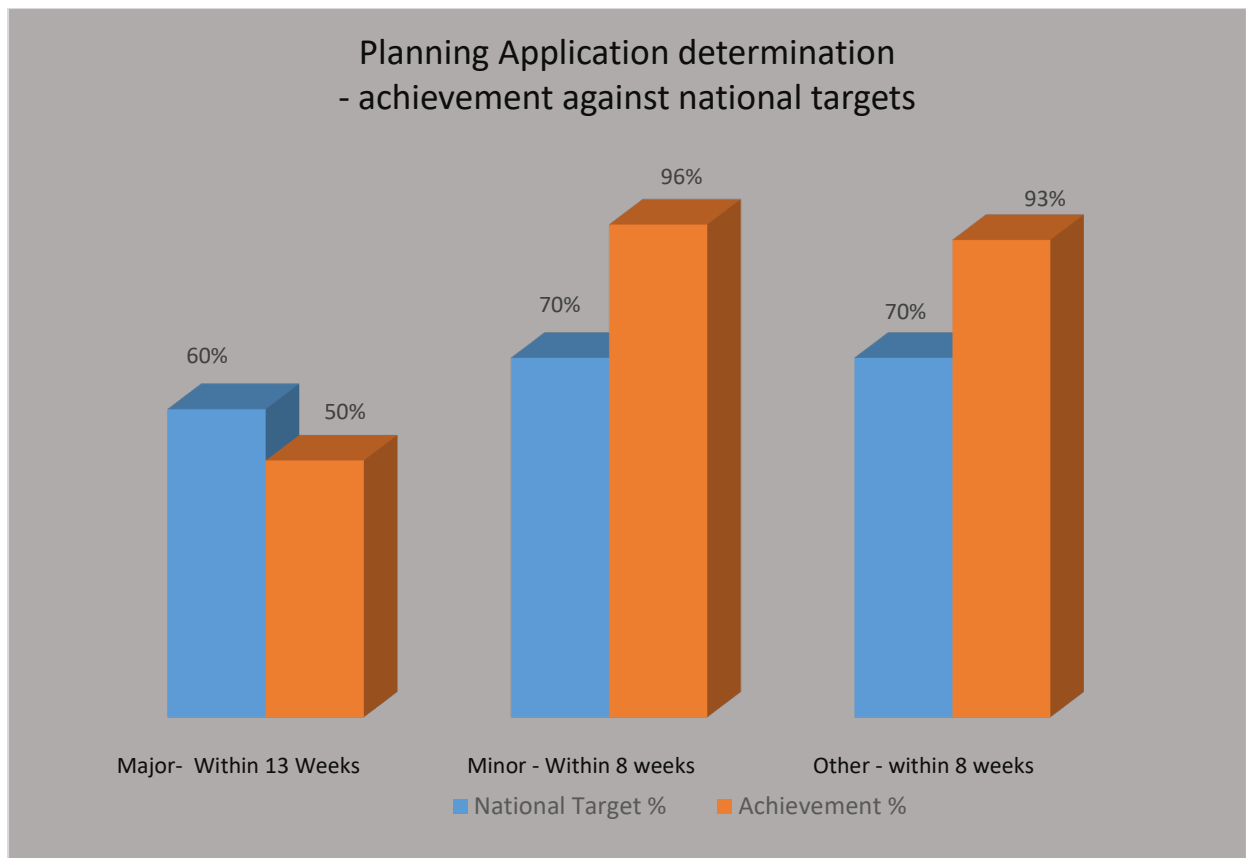
- As per last year, 89% of our rights of way are open and easy to use – whilst still above our 80% target the score continues to reflect the cuts to resources implemented in 2023.
- 608 network faults were resolved but the figure for faults resolved within 3 months was 42.5%, well below the 80% target. The large backlog of PROW ticket works is mainly due to the damage caused by Storm Darragh in November 2024 and the excellent work the Field Services and Access and Recreation teams carried out to clear paths as quickly as possible.
- 3 major works were completed and 39 legal orders made. Consultations on 33 recreational events were made with 27 taking place. A summary of the types of recreational events is shown below.
- Rights of way income totalling £172,805 was received which exceeded the £155k target.



Type of Event	2025/26
Running	6
Motor Event	8
Road Cycling	3
Mountain Biking	2
Walking	2
Triathlon	1
Equestrian	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>

## Planning Application determination – achievement against National targets

- Figures show that 88% of minor applications and 98% of other applications were determined well within the 70% statutory timeframes. There were 2 major applications this year, but only one of them was determined within the 13 week time limit. The major application that was determined out-of-time was submitted in June 2023. It was subject to air quality assessments and protracted conversations with Natural England. Whilst Officers worked proactively to achieve a positive outcome on the application, the applicant was unwilling to agree a formal extension of time for the determination of the application.
- 265 applications were determined, of which 95% were approved. In addition, 39 new enforcement sites were recorded this year, with 55 cases being resolved. This performance was achieved whilst also implementing a new database to manage planning applications.
- Eight appeals were determined, of which five were successfully defended, with three allowed, therefore a 62.5% success rate which fell short of the 75% target. Whilst three appeals were allowed, there was no consistent pattern or general trend between these cases. One decision related to whether a planning condition requiring timber windows and doors was reasonable or necessary, one related to a certificate of lawful use or development and specifically whether a fence and gate was within the curtilage of a listed building, and one related to conditions of a planning permission including one relating to occupancy of a dwelling.



## Nature and Landscape

- A total of £520,842 was spent on delivering the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme in 2025-26 with zero underspend and all work completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March. A new FiPL 3 year settlement was confirmed in February, taking the programme through to March 2029, with £527k to deliver in the first year.
- The Sowing the Seeds project continued for a further year with 92.5 Hectares of new wildflower meadows entering restoration in 2025-2026, with 353 hectares in active management overall. 13 new landowners engaged and 5 new meadow owners trained.
- The Exmoor Non-Native Invasive Species (ENNIS) Project was once again successful in treating or monitoring 70% of knotweed and skunk cabbage sites that are able to be treated using herbicide.
- The amount of timber harvested during the year was 100 cubic metres. The value of that timber, if sold on the open market, would have been around £8,200, however instead it was used for ENPA's own projects during the year. Whilst this meant our £14k target was not met, an informed decision was taken to ensure resources were not diverted from key work priorities.

## External Income

- External income (non-National Park Grant) totalled £2,433,888 including Countryside Stewardship, CareMoor, National Park Centre retail income, external funding etc an increase of just over 8% (2024/25, £2,252,293) from the previous year.
- CareMoor donations totalled £45,453 in the last year. There was no single 'big' appeal this year. However new initiatives included the Donate a Fingerpost scheme generating over £7,500 and just under £4k from sales of old signposts in Centres. We also raised over £5,000 toward Woods and Trees and benefitted from over £9k via the Best of Exmoor towards the Porlock Marsh boardwalk. Pro-active work on legacies deferred while lead Officer undertakes training qualification.

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 July 2026

### 2025/26 OUTTURN – BUDGET PERFORMANCE, RESERVES, NEW YEAR MONITORING AND MTFP UPDATE

#### Report of the Chief Finance Officer

**Purpose of Report:** To report the Authority's 2025/26 financial outturn against revised budgets, confirm the year-end reserves position, provide early monitoring for 2026/27 and update Members on the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Authority is recommended to:

- (1) NOTE the financial performance for 2025/26.
- (2) APPROVE the adequacy of the General Fund Balance at 31 March 2026.
- (3) APPROVE the transfers to and from reserves, as set out in Appendix 3.
- (4) NOTE the Authority's spend at the end of Month 2, as set out in Appendix 5 and section 6.
- (5) NOTE the use of DEFRA Capital Grant, as set out in Appendix 4 and section 5.
- (6) NOTE the prudential indicators for 2025/26, as set out in section 7.

**Authority Corporate Plan:** The Corporate Strategy 2023–2026 established the Authority's strategic priorities, delivered through the Corporate Plan 2025/26. This Outturn – Budget Performance report covers the period April 2025 to March 2026 and provides an overview of the Authority's financial performance against its approved revenue and capital budgets, set alongside delivery of Corporate Plan actions. The report is framed within the context of the Exmoor National Park Management Plan 2025–2030 and reflects the wider Government priorities for protected landscapes, including nature recovery, climate action, access and engagement.

**Legal and Equality Implications:** Local Government Act 2003, Parts 1-3 (Capital Finance, Financial Administration and Grants), Sections 1-39.

Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, Part 2 (Financial Management and Internal Control).

The equality and human rights impact of the recommendations of this report have been assessed as having no adverse impact on any particular group or individual.

**Financial and Risk Implications:** The outturn for the year is within the Authority's overall net budget, funded principally through National Park Grant from DEFRA. Effective budget management supports financial resilience and risk management.

**Climate Response:** No recommendations within this report adversely affect the Authority's ability to meet its carbon reduction targets. The report sets out expenditure from the Environmental Resilience Reserve during 2025/26, alongside capital programmes which contribute to delivery of the Authority's 30x30 ambitions, energy generation and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The 2025/26 revenue budget was agreed by the Authority on 4 March 2025 and was subject to subsequent in-year revisions due to changes in funding. In early April 2025, DEFRA confirmed an 8.2% reduction in core National Park Grant (NPG), reducing our NPG funding to approximately £2.97 million. In response, a revised budget and Medium Term Financial Plan were approved in May 2025, and a further update was provided in November 2025, aligning resources to this reduced funding stream.
- 1.2 The Authority's finances are managed through core budgets, fixed-term programmes and partnerships, and reserve transactions, with capital projects reported separately in line with the Authority's Capital Strategy. This report highlights the key budget variances and reserve movements for the year and should be read alongside the Corporate Plan 2025/26 Annual Report, which reports delivery against the Authority's priority actions and outcomes.
- 1.3 In 2025/26, National Park Grant was £2.97m following the reduction noted above. Despite constrained core funding, the Authority generated substantial additional income through external grants, contributions and fees. The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme delivered 52 projects with over £520,000 allocated and no underspend, while interest earnings remained significant due to higher interest rates. Unlike 2024/25, there were no major one-off DEFRA revenue grants or high-value asset sales, although the Authority benefited from a £1.4m DEFRA capital allocation to support priority projects, as detailed in section 5.
- 1.4 The 2025/26 financial year was characterised by significant change and challenge. It was the first full year of operation under the Authority's Business Review, implemented in April 2024, and included sustained exceptional expenditure on a longstanding planning legal case, a broad capital programme and a range of reserve-funded and externally funded initiatives. Despite reduced core funding, the Authority used external opportunities, investment income and robust budgetary control to support priority work and maintain financial resilience.

## **2. Core Budget Outturn 2025/26**

- 2.1 Appendix 1 summarises budget performance for 2025/26, showing actual expenditure against original and revised budgets. Overall net expenditure before reserve appropriations was £511,184. After approved reserve transfers, the Authority's outturn position is a net deficit of £139,848, representing an overall call on General Fund balances.
- 2.2 The reported net deficit includes £150,000 relating to a capital accounting transaction for an external grant awarded under the Authority's capital programme. This has been treated as Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS) in accordance with the CIPFA Code and charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. As this is a non-cash accounting adjustment rather than an underlying operational cost, it is excluded for management reporting purposes. Adjusting for this item results in an underlying management accounts surplus of £10,152 for 2025/26, which has been added to the General Fund Balance, increasing it to £242,293 at 31 March 2026.
- 2.3 The national pay award for 2025/26, implemented part-way through the year and backdated to April 2025, was higher than initially budgeted but was accommodated through the revised budget process and vacancy savings. Some one-off staffing and restructuring costs linked to the Business Review transition were funded from the Modernisation Reserve.

2.4 During 2025/26 the Authority sustained a high level of externally funded project activity, including the first full year of the National Lottery Heritage Fund-supported Exmoor Pioneers programme, continued delivery of FiPL, and the development phase of the DEFRA-sponsored Exmoor's Heart of Exmoor Landscape Recovery project. The Estates and Woodlands teams also progressed projects aligned with the Authority's Estate Strategy and climate objectives, including preparatory works at Driver Farm and establishment of the new tree nursery at Exford.

2.5 There were a number of significant variances (over £10,000) between the revised budget and actual spend at the close of 2025/26. These variances are summarised below:

- **Conservation of Cultural Heritage:** Net underspend of £23,283 relative to revised budget. This favourable variance resulted from lower spending across multiple heritage projects, including a £15k underspend in Archaeology & Historic Environment (as some planned activities were deferred and part-funded from external sources) and higher external income (e.g., unbudgeted grant receipts for Ashcombe Gardens restoration).
- **Conservation of Natural Environment:** Net underspend of £34,923. While Woodlands overspent by ~£23k due to hazard tree works and increased Countryside Stewardship activity (funded from reserves), this was offset by additional unbudgeted external income and reserve contributions for ecology projects and reallocation of certain costs (e.g., Landscape Recovery project support) to external funding. The outcome is a favourable net position after these adjustments.
- **Forward Planning & Communities:** Net overspend of £25,741, primarily reflecting additional Local Plan preparation costs, partly funded from the Planning Policy Reserve as well as Air Quality Monitoring Equipment. Reduced drawdowns from the Rural Enterprise Reserve, due to co-funded staff costs, also contributed to the variance.
- **Development Management:** Net underspend of £16,415. Planning fee income was around £29k below target, reflecting lower application numbers, but this was mitigated by a £10k transfer from the Development of Planning Service Reserve and £19k of staff cost savings, partly due to vacancy management. Budgeted legal publication costs of around £5k were also not required.
- **Promoting Understanding:** Net overspend of £31,055, driven by higher costs at National Park Centres and Pinkery Outdoor Centre. National Park Centres had a net overspend of around £36k, reflecting retail and trading targets not being fully met, with visitor numbers down around 12%, alongside investment in visitor facilities. Pinkery had higher operational costs, partly offset by increased income, and planned accessibility improvements funded from earmarked reserves. These pressures were partly mitigated by savings in Education and Interpretation and additional sponsorship income.
- **Rangers, Estates & Volunteers:** Net overspend of £42,478. Field Services overspent due to temporary staffing for rights of way maintenance and workshop investment, partly reserve funded. Estates showed a net overspend after planned reserve drawdowns, with vacancy savings offset by additional landlord maintenance responsibilities, major estate project costs, Pinkery access improvements and consultancy for the Driver Farm development. Ranger Team expenditure was slightly below budget due to staff turnover, helping to offset reduced Countryside Stewardship income caused by timing.

- **Recreation Management & Transport:** Net underspend of £13,901. Access & Recreation core budgets were nearly balanced (small underspend ~£3k) after delivering a large programme of works including the final costs of the Great Bradley Bridge project, which was fully funded from reserves and external contributions. Visitor Facilities (car parks, toilets) exceeded income projections due to robust visitor numbers in peak season, leading to a net positive variance of £10.6k.
- **Support Services:** Net overspend of £138,424, largely explained by a one-off unbudgeted £150k capital grant payment to support a partner organisation's capital project. The grant is treated as Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS), meaning it is charged to revenue in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but reversed out through statutory capital accounting adjustments so that it does not represent an underlying service overspend. Human Resources and Performance costs were also around £13.8k above budget, reflecting the expanded Member Services function introduced through the Business Review. These pressures were partly offset by minor savings in ICT, Legal and other support cost centres.
- **Corporate & Democratic Core:** Net underspend of £8,896. Small underspends in Corporate Management (£1.4k) due to a lower than expected pay award and Corporate Subscriptions (£7.6k) (receiving a credit) contributed to this favourable variance. Member Services costs were on budget. Historic Pension costs were on target, and no issues arose in these budgets.
- **Core Funding:** The National Park Grant (NPG) outturn was virtually on budget, with a slight positive variance of £432 due to final grant adjustments.

2.6 The net effect of reserve movements on core budget outturn is detailed in Appendix 1. In 2025/26 there was a net transfer from reserves of £264,141 to support spending (£356,965 transferred to reserves, £621,106 transferred from reserves, see Section 4 for details).

2.7 It should be noted that several core budget cost centres include significant external project and partnership funding. For example, in 2025/26 our accounts recorded:

- **FiPL-related income and expenditure of approximately £520k**, fully utilised to deliver on-the-ground projects with no year-end underspend.
- **£255k from Natural England for the Landscape Recovery (Exmoor's Heart of Exmoor) project** – supporting its development phase and funding specialist staff and contractors.
- **£409k in Basic and Higher Level Countryside Stewardship Scheme** contributions – reflecting increased activity on our estate and through partnerships in nature recovery.
- **£85k** drawn from our National Lottery Heritage Fund grant (Exmoor Pioneers project) to support heritage, engagement, and nature recovery initiatives (first-year delivery).
- **£26.7k Biodiversity Net Gain grant** to assist in preparatory work for emerging statutory requirements, and £55k from partners for grey squirrel control – both ring-fenced to those specific purposes.

2.8 This external income (and matching expenditure) is incorporated within the outturn figures and illustrates the continued breadth of work enabled by partnership funding.

### **3. Fixed Term Programmes**

- 3.1 Aside from core budget operations, the Authority allocates top-sliced funding each year for Fixed-Term Programmes and Partnerships, and contributions to earmarked Reserves, as detailed in Appendix 2. This includes one-off project funding and the Partnership Fund small grants scheme.
- 3.2 The original top-sliced Programmes & Partnerships budget for 2025/26 was £201,000 (2024/25: £300,000). Following the in-year reduction in National Park Grant, this allocation was reduced significantly to £25,000 as part of the wider response to the revised funding position. This required the Authority to prioritise commitments carefully and limit new discretionary programme approvals during the year. Appendix 2 shows the schemes approved against the 2025/26 budget, along with expenditure by year-end, including projects continuing from previous years' allocations. During 2025/26, the Authority delivered all planned programme spend, with some adjustments to ensure funds were efficiently utilised.
- 3.3 Where approved programme funds were not fully required, the unused balances were either returned to General Balances (if no longer needed) or transferred to relevant reserves for future use on similar objectives. This approach ensures that resources remain aligned to their original purpose, supporting delivery of National Park Partnership Plan priorities via future projects when appropriate (e.g., unutilised tourism and STEAM monitoring budgets were reallocated into the Rural Enterprise reserve for use in business support initiatives, reflecting the synergy with local economic development objectives).
- 3.4 The Authority's Partnership Fund small grants scheme remained active in 2025/26, providing modest grant support (from a £25k reserve) to community and partnership projects that help deliver National Park Partnership Plan objectives. This one-off small grants pot (initially established in 2022/23) funded a handful of community-led initiatives during the year (as listed in Appendix 2) and will continue to be used to support Partnership Plan priorities on a rolling basis as funds allow. Any unallocated small grants budget at year-end (e.g., ~£1k in 2025/26) was transferred to General Balances to be re-allocated in future decision-making.

### **4. Reserves**

- 4.1 Reserves continue to play a vital role in the Authority's financial strategy – providing a mechanism to fund project spend, manage risk, and meet future obligations. Appendix 3 provides a detailed analysis of reserves held at 31 March 2026. During 2025/26, total Earmarked and General Reserves decreased from £3.957m to £3.704m, a net reduction of £264,141 over the year. This net decrease reflects planned use of reserves for priority projects, partly offset by strategic contributions to reserves (especially to support longer-term initiatives). However, as noted below, the headline movement oversimplifies the true picture, since some transfers relate to funding not yet spent or external income received in advance.
- 4.2 During 2025/26 reserves decreased by £314,145 (having increased by £464k in 2024/25). As noted above, the headline figure does not fully reflect the underlying dynamics: some "transfers to reserves" represent income recognised but not yet spent, or internal reallocations of funds between reserves for strategic alignment. The principal reserve contributions and drawdowns during the year are summarised below (see Appendix 3 for full details):

### **Transfers to Reserves (2025/26):**

- **Archaeology** – £10k addition, towards Project K multi-year approach
- **Ecology Projects Reserve** – £52k (e.g., Biodiversity Net Gain grant and other project contributions) to support the Ecology Team's ability to lever in external funding.
- **CareMoor Donations** – £34k (full transfer of CareMoor income received in 2025/26).
- **Engagement & Outreach** – £6k added (unspent 2025/26 events, shows and outreach project funds carried forward for use in 2026/27)
- **Active Travel Grant** – £200k added in respect of grant received.
- **Financial Resilience Reserve** – £15k added (interest income in excess of revised estimate).
- **Corporate Equipment & Vehicle Replacement (CEVR)** – £20k added to support car parking machine renewal.

### **Transfers from Reserves (2025/26):**

- **Heritage Projects** – £2k drawn (matching spend on historic signpost renovation).
- **Exmoor Pioneers** – £90k drawn (match funding released to support Year 2 project delivery).
- **Woodlands** – £7k drawn (to fund the Treescapes Officer post and related woodland projects).
- **Ecology Projects Reserve** - £47k drawn (match funding for enhanced ecology support).
- **Exmoor Non-Native Invasive Species (ENNIS)** - £11k drawn (towards project costs)
- **Planning Policy (Local Plan)** – £2k drawn
- **Rural Enterprise** – £12k drawn (to fund additional staffing costs).
- **Development of Planning Service** – £24k drawn (to support temporary planning staff for maternity cover).
- **National Park Centres Spend to Save** - £8k drawn (to enable 7 day per week seasonal staffing at Dulverton).
- **Pinkery Reserve** – £20k drawn (to cover income shortfall).
- **Authority Estate** – £150k drawn (to fund Driver Project costs £86k, Pinkery Drive Repairs £44k, Pinkery Biomass shed repairs £5k, Facilities Projects £15k).
- **Rights of Way** – £56k drawn (to fund Fixed Term Staffing).
- **Active Travel Grant** - £40k drawn (matching spend in year).
- **IT & Web Development** - £16k drawn (towards GIS additional licensing and ICT hardware costs).
- **Financial Resilience Reserve** - £20k drawn (for Access Financials system costs)
- **Modernisation Reserve** - £57k drawn (Members Allowances Review £7k, Estates in lieu of capital salaries £15k, Field Services Team £35k in lieu of capitalisation of salaries).

- **Environmental Resilience Reserve** - £2k drawn (to support LED lighting installation at Pinkery).
- **Capital Development Reserve** - £49k drawn (to match capital expenditure in excess of the Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (CDEL) allocation provided by DEFRA).

- 4.3 Members are asked to approve the transfers to, from and between reserves, which have been reflected in the draft accounts.
- 4.4 The General Fund Balance at 31 March 2026 was £242,293, having increased by £10.1k during the year. This balance is maintained to cover unforeseen costs and provide working capital. It remains below the Authority's target minimum of £300k; however, when combined with the General Contingency Fund of £350k, the effective general unallocated reserve is approximately £592k. This is considered adequate for the purposes of Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 4.5 Members should note that, within the overall reserves total, the Contingency Fund – Legal Reserve balance of £176,620 remains dependent on the outcome of the longstanding enforcement case. Although an interim order for sale has been obtained, the property sale is not yet complete. The reserve currently reflects anticipated net proceeds after a prudent impairment provision. These funds will not be available for general use until the sale is finalised, and this element of reserves therefore continues to carry heightened risk.

## 5. Capital

- 5.1 Members will recall that, historically, the Authority's capital programme has been relatively modest, with capital expenditure generally limited to specific asset replacements, estate works, vehicle and equipment purchases, and discrete property or infrastructure projects funded from reserves, receipts or small-scale external funding. The 2025/26 financial year was therefore exceptional. DEFRA provided a significant Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (CDEL) allocation, enabling the Authority to deliver a much larger and broader capital programme than would normally be possible within its own resources. Appendix 4 summarises total capital expenditure of £1,452,329 in 2025/26, of which £1,403,000 was funded from DEFRA CDEL and £49,329 from reserves and revenue resources.
- 5.2 The capital programme supported a wide range of projects across the Authority's estate, nature recovery priorities, operational infrastructure and digital systems. This level of activity represents a step change from the Authority's previous capital capacity and has required significant officer input to develop, procure, deliver and account for projects within the financial year. The programme has also widened the type of activity treated as capital, including eligible expenditure on land, buildings, vehicles, plant, equipment, digital systems and externally funded capital grants.
- 5.3 A major strand of expenditure related to nature recovery, land management and habitat creation. This included temperate rainforest creation around Simonsbath, wood pasture and meadow restoration on the Driver estate, new broadleaf woodland creation at Pinkery Outdoor Centre, and enhancement works at the ENPA tree nursery. The programme also included investment in no-fence collars, white-tailed eagle release infrastructure and equipment, air quality monitoring equipment to support improvements in SSSI conservation status, and estate livestock management equipment. A further £150,000 was recorded as a capital grant for land purchase for temperate rainforest creation; this is the REFCUS transaction referred to elsewhere in the report. Taken together, this nature recovery,

habitat and land-management strand accounted for approximately £449,041 of the year's capital expenditure.

- 5.4 A second significant strand related to the Authority's estate, buildings, heritage assets and visitor infrastructure. Expenditure included accessibility enhancements at the Field Services Depot in Exford, storage improvements at the depot, enhancements of the Leet and footpaths within Ashcombe Gardens, removal of a redundant barn on the Driver estate, restoration works to the historic barn and farmhouse at Driver, and works to White Rocks Cottage and Ashcombe. The programme also included capital works at Exmoor House, Lynmouth National Park Centre, Pinkery Outdoor Centre, and an irrigation system at the ENPA tree nursery. These estate, heritage and visitor infrastructure works accounted for approximately £504,982 of the capital programme.
- 5.5 A further key strand was investment in operational capacity, equipment, vehicles and digital systems. This included replacement ICT laptops, purchase of electric vehicles, Field Services Team equipment including tractor and trailer equipment, AI mapping, implementation of the DEF planning system, and Pinkery low ropes activity equipment. These investments support the Authority's ability to deliver services more efficiently, maintain its operational resilience and modernise key systems and assets. This strand accounted for approximately £498,305 of capital expenditure in 2025/26.
- 5.6 The scale of the 2025/26 capital programme should be seen in the context of the substantial increase in available capital resources rather than as a typical annual level of capital spend. The programme was deliberately broad, reflecting the need to identify eligible, deliverable projects that could support National Park purposes while complying with DEFRA capital funding requirements. It has enabled investment in core assets, land and habitat works, conservation infrastructure, operational equipment and digital systems that would otherwise have needed to be phased over a much longer period or deferred.
- 5.7 Appendix 4 also records capitalised staff costs of £75,650 within the overall capital programme. These costs reflect officer time directly attributable to the delivery of eligible capital projects. The inclusion of these costs is consistent with the scale and complexity of the programme and recognises the significant internal capacity required to deliver a capital programme of this size within the financial year.
- 5.8 Overall, 2025/26 has been an exceptional year for capital investment by the Authority. The programme has delivered tangible improvements to the Authority's estate, visitor and operational infrastructure; supported nature recovery and habitat creation; invested in equipment and systems; and strengthened the Authority's ability to deliver future work. While the availability of DEFRA CDEL funding created a significant opportunity, it also required careful management to ensure that expenditure was eligible, deliverable and properly accounted for. The final outturn demonstrates that the Authority was able to deploy the allocation effectively and use it to support a wide range of corporate and National Park priorities.

## **6. 2026/27 Budget Monitoring**

- 6.1 The Authority's budget for 2026/27 reflects the structural changes implemented through the Business Review and priority shifts set out in the Corporate Plan 2026–2030. Appendix 5 presents the Month 2 (April–May 2026) budget monitoring position, including actual income and expenditure for that period alongside the revised 2026/27 budget, pro-rated to two months. Key variances at this early stage of the year are noted below. Members are reminded that monitoring at Month 2 is of

limited predictive value, due to timing issues (e.g., prior year roll-overs, seasonality, and planned reserve-funded spend later in the year). Nonetheless, no material concerns have been identified.

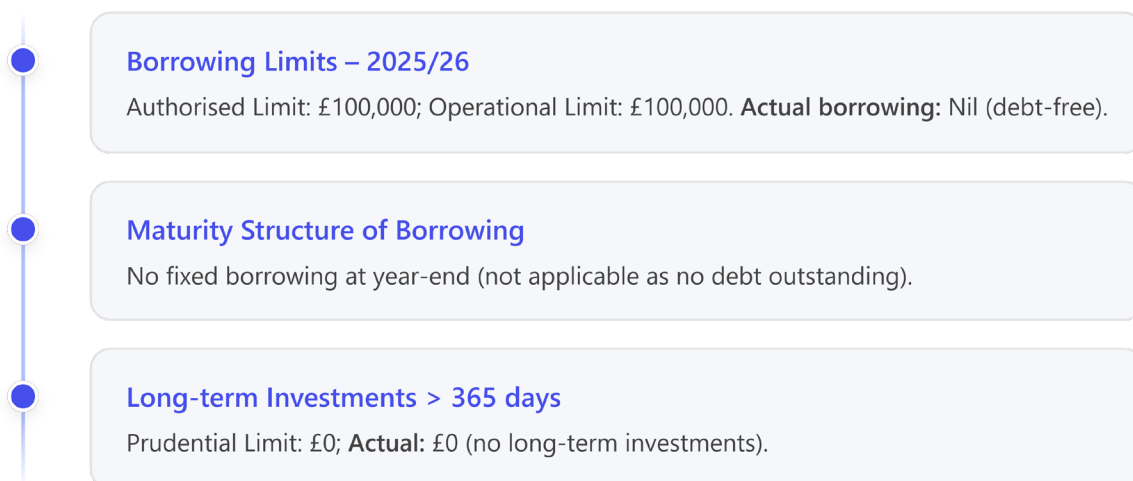
6.2 Budget monitoring at Month 2 shows a gross variance of approximately £1.075m of net expenditure above a simple pro-rata profile. This is largely due to the timing of income receipts and accounting accruals. For example:

- **Quarter 1 National Park Grant of approximately £742k** had not yet been received at the time of report preparation, temporarily increasing the apparent income shortfall.
- **FiPL grant of approximately £113k** expected in July had not yet been received by Month 2. These timing delays affected early-year cash flow but have since been resolved.

6.3 Other notable Month 2 variances include Estates and Land Management expenditure running ahead of profile by around £80k, principally due to reserve-funded project expenditure, including Driver and Pinkery access improvements, and seasonal activity. Countryside Stewardship income is also weighted towards later in the year, which distorts the early-year position. Staff cost increases, including pension deficit contributions and National Insurance changes, have been built into the 2026/27 budget. Overall, no significant overspends or emerging budget pressures have been identified at this stage.

## 7. Quarterly Monitoring of Prudential Indicators

7.1 For completeness, and to comply with guidance, the Authority reports its prudential limits and actual outcomes. All treasury activity was conducted within the approved prudential indicators for prudent and sustainable capital plans, financing and investment. The Authority remained debt free throughout 2025/26.



## 8. Update to the Medium-Term Financial Plan

8.1 The Medium-Term Financial Plan approved in March 2025 assumed a 3% pay award, general inflation and flat-cash National Park Grant, resulting in a balanced budget at that point. Those assumptions were overtaken by DEFRA's subsequent 8.2% reduction in National Park Grant for 2025/26, which required an early reappraisal of the MTFP.

8.2 The April 2025 DEFRA funding letter reduced revenue grant by 8.2%, equivalent to £265k, partly offset by an indicative £1.4m capital CDEL allocation for 2025/26. The Authority responded by bringing a revised budget and MTFP to Members in May

2025, identifying in-year savings and alternative funding to mitigate the revenue reduction. Revised allocations were formally confirmed by DEFRA in June 2025.

- 8.3 The wider economic environment remains challenging, with continuing pressure from inflation, energy and contract costs. The 2025/26 national pay award was in line with budget estimates and has been incorporated into forward projections. The Business Review has also moved staffing budgets to a comprehensive establishment approach, including externally funded posts, giving greater clarity over the full staffing cost base and associated income.
- 8.4 Looking ahead, Government spending plans indicate continued pressure on DEFRA budgets. National Park Authorities may see flat or reduced revenue settlements in future years, with greater emphasis on targeted capital funding. The Leadership Team will continue to monitor funding developments. If further material revenue reductions arise, further organisational change or a renewed Business Review process may be required to adjust the Authority's cost base and sustain priority services.
- 8.5 The current MTFP, approved in March 2026, projects budget gaps of approximately £67k in 2027/28 and £136k in 2028/29. Efficiency measures and income generation implemented through the Business Review have contained the savings requirement in the near term. However, further funding reductions or new cost pressures could widen these gaps and require additional savings or service adjustments in later years.
- 8.6 The one-off allocation of £1.7m RDEL funding from DEFRA has provided a welcome and significant short-term boost to the Authority's financial position, helping to support delivery of priority work and strengthen resilience during 2026/27. This additional funding does not remove the need for a sustainable long-term settlement, but it provides valuable capacity while the Authority continues to diversify income through project grants, donations and trading. The Authority will continue to press DEFRA for at least inflation-linked increases in National Park Grant, alongside implementing the new Income Generation Strategy approved by Members in October 2025 to support sustainable income growth over the next five years.
- 8.7 The Authority continues to face in-year financial pressures and risks, notably the ongoing legal case referred to earlier in the report. Costs associated with this long-running planning enforcement dispute continue to accrue, and it is now clear that the majority of legal costs will not be recovered from the property sale proceeds. This reinforces the importance of maintaining adequate contingency reserves.
- 8.8 Despite these challenges, there are positive factors. The FiPL programme has been extended to 2028/29 with a confirmed multi-year settlement, while Exmoor Pioneers and Heart of Exmoor Landscape Recovery are progressing and are expected to bring further external funding and partner contributions. The Driver capital project is also approaching delivery phase, supported by earmarked funding. The Authority retains significant reserve balances and land and property assets, providing resilience and potential opportunities to support future priorities.
- 8.9 In conclusion, with prudent reserve management, ongoing cost control and proactive income generation, the Authority enters 2026/27 in a stable position given the circumstances. The Authority will continue to adapt its finances to deliver statutory purposes and Corporate Plan priorities, while maintaining adequate reserves to manage risk and invest in National Park Management Plan outcomes.

Section	Budget Heading	2025/26 Approved Budget May Revision £	2025/26 Revised Budget £ November Revision	2025/26 Actual £	2025/26 Actual £ (After Reserve Appropriations)	Variance between 25/26 Approved Nov Revision and 25/26 Actual	Notes
<b>Conservation of Cultural Heritage</b>	Archaeology & Historic Environment	103,600	102,000	79,931	87,531	-14,469	
	Ashcombe Gardens (Project)	0	0	16,944	16,944	16,944	
	Exmoor Pioneers (Project)	0	0	63,850	-25,758	-25,758	Apportionment of support services and project overheads
<b>Conservation of Cultural Heritage Total</b>		<b>103,600</b>	<b>102,000</b>	<b>160,725</b>	<b>78,717</b>	<b>-23,283</b>	
<b>Conservation of Natural Environment</b>	Woodlands	64,200	59,600	90,144	83,144	23,544	Internal use of wood has been prioritised over external sales. Increase in hazardous tree works required.
	Landscape Recovery (Project)	0	0	-67,507	-67,507	-67,507	Apportionment of support services and project overheads
	ENNIS (Project)	0	0	11,383	0	0	
	Moorland Bird Survey (Project)	0	0	1,353	0	0	
	Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Project	0	0	5,971	5,971	5,971	
	River Barle Restoration Project	0	0	0	0	0	
Conservation Advice	165,700	163,900	187,969	166,969	3,069	Increase in contribution from reserves to meet additional Ecology post	
<b>Conservation of Natural Environment Total</b>		<b>229,900</b>	<b>223,500</b>	<b>229,313</b>	<b>188,577</b>	<b>-34,923</b>	
<b>Forward Planning &amp; Communities</b>	Planning & Community	103,800	106,000	106,514	131,714	25,714	Air Quality Management Spend - met from central resources
	CareMoor (Project)	0	0	-33,828	0	0	
	Rural Enterprise	130,400	133,400	141,112	133,427	27	Reduced draw from reserves for Rural Enterprise Co-ordinator post alongside slight upwards adjustments on other account lines.
<b>Forward Planning &amp; Communities Total</b>		<b>234,200</b>	<b>239,400</b>	<b>213,798</b>	<b>265,141</b>	<b>25,741</b>	
<b>Development Management</b>	Development Management	322,500	310,600	318,185	294,185	-16,415	Reduction in staffing expenditure, partially offset by increase in agency support for maternity cover. Removal of Legal Publications budget for 2025/26.
<b>Development Management Total</b>		<b>322,500</b>	<b>310,600</b>	<b>318,185</b>	<b>294,185</b>	<b>-16,415</b>	
<b>Promoting Understanding</b>	National Park Centres	146,500	135,500	165,621	157,621	22,121	Budgeting issue regarding utilities at Lynmouth NPC (circa £25,000), to be met from general fund balance at year-end.
	Grants and Contributions	200	200	133	133	-67	
	Pinkery	0	0	20,013	13	13	
	Media & Communication	97,300	97,000	101,238	97,038	38	
	Education & Interpretation	121,300	121,500	110,248	116,233	-5,267	
<b>Promoting Understanding Total</b>		<b>365,300</b>	<b>354,200</b>	<b>397,253</b>	<b>371,038</b>	<b>16,838</b>	
<b>Rangers, Estates &amp; Volunteers</b>	Rangers	125,700	122,200	117,674	117,674	-4,526	Focus on capital schemes has resulted in decreased capacity to generate internal income
	Field Services	180,900	183,400	282,611	191,611	8,211	
	FST Workshop	27,300	26,800	48,736	48,736	21,936	
	Estates	-219,300	-193,100	-124,629	-184,629	8,471	
	Driver (Project)	0	0	89,122	3,122	3,122	
	Get Involved Programme (Project)	0	0	3,653	3,653	3,653	
	Volunteer Engagement	62,200	62,200	63,811	63,811	1,611	
<b>Rangers, Estates &amp; Volunteers Total</b>		<b>176,800</b>	<b>201,500</b>	<b>480,978</b>	<b>243,978</b>	<b>42,478</b>	
<b>Recreation Management &amp; Transport</b>	Access & Recreation	111,200	111,800	-51,510	108,490	-3,310	
	Visitor Facilities	0	0	-30,591	-10,591	-10,591	
<b>Recreation Management &amp; Transport Total</b>		<b>111,200</b>	<b>111,800</b>	<b>-82,101</b>	<b>97,899</b>	<b>-13,901</b>	

Section	Budget Heading	2025/26 Approved Budget May Revision £	2025/26 Revised Budget £ November Revision	2025/26 Actual £	2025/26 Actual £ (After Reserve Appropriations)	Variance between 25/26 Approved May Revision and 25/26 November Revised Budgets	Notes
Support Services	Finance	68,100	49,200	225,118	170,789	121,589	£150,000 Capital Grant made (Capital Accounting transaction - REFCUS)
	Human Resources & Performance	167,000	188,100	201,903	201,903	13,803	
	ICT & GIS Services	250,800	251,100	267,852	252,352	1,252	
	Legal Services	70,000	70,000	71,590	71,590	1,590	
	Facilities	196,100	193,400	222,807	207,807	14,407	
<b>Support Services Total</b>		<b>752,000</b>	<b>751,800</b>	<b>989,270</b>	<b>904,441</b>	<b>152,641</b>	
Corporate & Democratic Core	Corporate Management	420,100	421,900	420,484	420,484	-1,416	
	Historic Pensions Contributions	82,000	82,000	82,000	82,000	0	
	Corporate Subscriptions	39,200	39,200	13,606	31,606	-7,594	
	Members	96,200	95,200	222,807	95,314	114	
<b>Corporate &amp; Democratic Core Total</b>		<b>637,500</b>	<b>638,300</b>	<b>738,897</b>	<b>629,404</b>	<b>-8,896</b>	
Core Funding & Partnership Fund	National Park Grant	-2,968,000	-2,968,100	-2,968,532	-2,968,532	-432	
	Reserves Transactions	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	0	
	Partnership Fund Top-Sliced	10,000	10,000	8,398	10,000	0	
<b>Core Funding &amp; Partnership Fund Total</b>		<b>-2,933,000</b>	<b>-2,933,100</b>	<b>-2,935,134</b>	<b>-2,933,532</b>	<b>-432</b>	
<b>Total Core Budget</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>511,184</b>	<b>139,848</b>	<b>139,848</b>	

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMMES, PARTNERSHIPS AND  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESERVES**

	<b>Original 2025/26 Budget</b>	<b>2025/26 November Budget Revision &amp; Actual</b>	
ORIGINAL BUDGET	<b>201,000</b>		
<b>LESS: Contributions to Reserves</b>			
Woodlands - Ash Die Back	25,000	25,000	Woodlands
Corporate Equipment & Vehicle Replacement	25,000	-	To be met from CEVR
Estates Capital Projects	50,000	-	To be met from Estates Reserve/Capital
Internship & Trainee Fund	15,000	-	Resource from reserves
Partnership Plan & State of the Park Development & Surveys	11,000	-	Resource from reserves
Local Plan	25,000	-	Resource from reserves
	<b>151,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>	
<b>LESS: Top sliced Programmes</b>			
Tourism	10,000	-	To be met from Rural Enterprise Reserve
Hill Farm Network	5,000	5,000	No change
Website Development	5,000	-	To be met from ICT Reserve
SERC/DBRC Bio-records	5,000	5,000	No change
STEAM	5,000	-	To be met from Rural Enterprise Reserve
Partnership Fund Small Grants Scheme	20,000	-	Drop in 2025/26
	<b>50,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	
<b>2025/26 Programmes &amp; Partnership Fund</b>	<b>201,000</b>	<b>35,000</b>	

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
ANALYSIS OF RESERVES

Appendix 3

	Balance 31/03/25	Transfers to Reserves 2025/26	Transfers from Reserves 2025/26	Outturn Transfers between Reserves 2025/26	Balance 31/03/26
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>EARMARKED RESERVES</b>					
<b><u>Conservation of Cultural Heritage</u></b>					
Archaeology	39,670	10,000			49,670
Exmoor Pioneers	338,787		-89,608		249,179
Heritage Projects	33,397		-2,400	2,080	33,077
<b><u>Conservation of Natural Environment</u></b>					
Deer Monitoring Study	13,424				13,424
Woodland Mgt Reserve	31,762		-7,000	8,518	33,280
Ecology Projects Reserve	97,807	52,000	-47,353		102,454
Ennis	16,467		-11,383	2,340	7,424
<b><u>Forward Planning &amp; Communities</u></b>					
Planning Policy (Local Plan)	345,035		-1,800		343,235
Caremoor For Exmoor	185,590	33,828		-32,267	187,151
Section 106 Agreements	96,000				96,000
Conserv Area Appraisals & Neighbourhd Plan	12,283				12,283
Rural Enterprise & Communications	79,518		-11,885		67,633
<b><u>Development Management</u></b>					
Development of Planning Service	70,859		-24,000		46,859
<b><u>Promoting Understanding</u></b>					
National Park Centres spend to save	71,236		-8,000		63,236
Pinkery Reserve	20,000		-20,000		0
Engagement & Outreach	12,306	5,985		3,911	22,202
<b><u>Rangers, Estates and Volunteers</u></b>					
Authority Estate	478,277		-149,500		328,777
Estates Capital Receipts Reserve	449,200				449,200
<b><u>Recreation Management</u></b>					
Rights of Way	109,452		-56,000	15,418	68,870
Active Travel Grant	100,000	200,000	-40,000		260,000
<b><u>Support Services</u></b>					
IT and Web Development	81,975		-15,500		66,475
Financial Resilience Reserve	70,000	15,000	-20,000		65,000
Corporate Equipment & Vehicle Replacement	52,150	20,000			72,150
Modernisation	150,621		-57,450		93,171
Internship and Trainee Fund	20,000				20,000
<b><u>Corporate &amp; Democratic Core</u></b>					
Partnership Plan (Research & Development)	46,901				46,901
Environmental Resilience	33,381		-1,500		31,881
Corporate Subscriptions	10,000				10,000
Capital Development Reserve	100,000		-49,329		50,671
	<b>3,166,098</b>	<b>336,813</b>	<b>-612,708</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,890,203</b>
<b>PROGRAMMES &amp; PARTNERSHIPS</b>					
Programmes - fixed term	22,490	10,000	-8,250		24,240
Partnership Fund/ small grants scheme	20,433		-148		20,285
	<b>42,924</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>-8,398</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>44,526</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND AND CONTINGENCIES</b>					
General Fund	232,141	10,152			242,293
Contingency Fund - General	349,966				349,966
Contingency Fund - Legal	176,620				176,620
	<b>758,726</b>	<b>10,152</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>768,878</b>
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>3,967,748</b>	<b>356,965</b>	<b>-621,106</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,703,607</b>

## Capital Spend Summary 2025/26

Name	Indicative Allocation	Capital Expenditure	Capitalised Staff costs	Total Capital Expenditure	Asset Type
Temperate Rainforest Creation	£65,000	£27,660	£1,563	£29,223	Land & Building
Creation of Wood Pasture and Meadow Rest	£25,000	£10,448	£385	£10,833	Land & Building
Creation of New Broadleaf Woodland	£30,000	£24,543	£2,488	£27,030	Land & Building
No Fence Collars	£20,000	£36,914	£1,215	£38,129	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
White-Tailed Eagle Release Pens	£35,000	£19,310	£37,564	£56,874	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
Air Quality Monitoring Equipment	£10,000	£44,079	£6,436	£50,515	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
Capitalizing proportion of Estates Teams	£30,000			£0	
Accessibility Enhancements	£25,000	£25,953	£1,970	£27,923	Land & Building
ICT Laptop Replacement	£50,000	£58,246	£720	£58,966	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
Enhancement of Storage Capacity at the D	£40,000	£43,929	£2,830	£46,759	Land & Building
Repurposing of ENPA Assets to create Bot	£150,000	£8,774	£308	£9,082	Land & Building
Battery Storage at ENPA Field Services Depot	£20,000			£0	
ENPA Tree Nursery Enhancements	£10,000	£7,385	£285	£7,670	Land & Building
Ground Mounted Solar Array at DRIVER	£40,000			£0	
Land Purchase for Temperate Rainforest Creation	£100,000	£150,000		£150,000	Capital Grant
Purchase of Electric Vehicles	£150,000	£39,035	£900	£39,935	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
Hydro Power Project on ENPA Estate	£20,000			£0	
Access & Rights of Way Capitalisation of salaries	£51,700			£0	
Replacement of Ashcombe Gardens Car Park	£20,000	£23,098	£2,070	£25,168	Land & Building
Landscape Enhancement ENPA Moorland Estate	£50,000			£0	
Removal of Redundant Barn on Driver Estate	£100,000	£42,540	£785	£43,325	Land & Building
Restoration of Historic Barn at Driver West Barn	£200,000	£36,934	£4,956	£41,891	Land & Building
Restoration of Historic Farmhouse Driver	£500,000	£131,374	£8,281	£139,655	Land & Building
Capitalisation of Management Fees	£100,000			£0	
Exmoor House Common Room	£20,000	£12,764	£0	£12,764	Land & Building
National Park Centre Capital Works	£20,000	£26,500	£0	£26,500	Land & Building
Pinkery Accessibility Enhancements	£150,000	£43,985	£2,760	£46,745	Land & Building
Water Vole Reintroduction	£10,000	£9,791	£0	£9,791	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
Field Services Team Equipment	£220,000	£209,329	£135	£209,464	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
White Rocks Cottage and Ashcombe	£75,000	£73,956	£0	£73,956	Land & Building
AI Mapping	£11,000	£15,750	£0	£15,750	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
Planning DM System	£136,000	£143,841	£0	£143,841	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
WTE Equipment	£30,000	£40,635	£0	£40,635	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
Pinkery Activities Low Ropes	£27,500	£30,350	£0	£30,350	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
ENPA Estate livestock management equipment	£35,000	£28,340	£0	£28,340	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
Estates Irrigation system	£11,000	£11,215	£0	£11,215	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£2,587,200</b>	<b>£1,376,678</b>	<b>£75,650</b>	<b>£1,452,329</b>	

Funded by Capital Departmental Expenditure Allocation (CDEL) from DEFRA:	<b>£1,403,000</b>
Capital funded from Reserves and Revenue Resources:	<b>£49,329</b>
<b>Total Capital Expenditure:</b>	<b>£1,452,329</b>

Section	Budget Heading	2026/27 Actual to P2 (May 2026) £	2026/27 Budgeted Expenditure £	2026/27 Budgeted Income £	2026/27 Net Original Budget £	2026/27 Profiled Budget to P2 £	Variance between 26/27 Revised P2 Profile and 26/27 P2 Outturn	Notes
<b>Conservation of Cultural Heritage</b>	Archaeology & Historic Environment	30,847	104,300	-3,300	101,000	30,167	680	
	Ascombe Gardens (Project)	4,695	0	0	0	0	4,695	
	Exmoor Pioneers (Project)	42,059	250,100	-250,100	0	41,683	376	
<b>Conservation of Cultural Heritage Total</b>		<b>77,601</b>	<b>354,400</b>	<b>-253,400</b>	<b>101,000</b>	<b>71,850</b>	<b>5,751</b>	
<b>Conservation of Natural Environment</b>	Woodlands	36,675	122,800	-63,400	59,400	18,800	17,875	Spend on Ash Die Back to date to be met from top-sliced partnership budget at year-end
	Landscape Recovery (Project)	0	252,100	-252,100	0	0	0	
	ENNIS (Project)	6	32,600	-32,600	0	0	6	
	Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Project	21,165	675,700	-675,700	0	-56,308	77,473	Awaiting first quarter FiPL income.
	Conservation Advice	67,252	320,300	-153,700	166,600	53,383	13,869	Additional revenue spend to be met from one-off DEFRA revenue allocation
<b>Conservation of Natural Environment Total</b>		<b>125,098</b>	<b>1,403,500</b>	<b>-1,177,500</b>	<b>226,000</b>	<b>15,875</b>	<b>109,223</b>	
<b>Forward Planning &amp; Communities</b>	Planning & Community	16,393	106,700	0	106,700	17,783	-1,390	
	CareMoor (Project)	-13,501	30,000	-30,000	0	0	-13,501	
	Rural Enterprise	22,281	151,000	-16,300	134,700	23,500	-1,219	
<b>Forward Planning &amp; Communities Total</b>		<b>25,173</b>	<b>287,700</b>	<b>-46,300</b>	<b>241,400</b>	<b>41,283</b>	<b>-16,110</b>	
<b>Development Management</b>	Development Management	52,926	429,100	-116,000	313,100	52,183	743	
<b>Development Management Total</b>		<b>52,926</b>	<b>429,100</b>	<b>-116,000</b>	<b>313,100</b>	<b>52,183</b>	<b>743</b>	
<b>Promoting Understanding</b>	National Park Centres	23,948	286,600	-146,400	140,200	23,367	581	
	Grants and Contributions	0	200	0	200	33	-33	
	Pinkery	27,156	174,400	-174,400	0	5,000	22,156	Planned maintenance costs include Access for All spend to be met from Access & Recreation budget.
	Media & Communication	19,367	126,100	-27,000	99,100	18,350	1,017	
	Education & Interpretation	17,938	125,300	-12,100	113,200	18,867	-929	
<b>Promoting Understanding Total</b>		<b>88,409</b>	<b>712,600</b>	<b>-359,900</b>	<b>352,700</b>	<b>65,617</b>	<b>22,792</b>	
<b>Rangers, Estates &amp; Volunteers</b>	Rangers	43,621	198,500	-87,400	111,100	32,917	10,704	Spend on capital projects to be funded at year-end
	Field Services	67,788	417,700	-234,000	183,700	69,283	-1,495	Majority of income received at year-end. £31k impact at P2
	FST Workshop	8,137	27,600	0	27,600	4,600	3,537	Cost to be recharged to services at end of quarter 1
	Estates	-4,748	327,800	-516,300	-188,500	21,600	-26,348	Rental income ahead of profiled budget.
	Driver (Project)	81,272	0	0	0	0	81,272	Project costs to be met by Capital Allocation/Estates Reserve at Year-end
	Get Involved Programme (Project)	97	0	0	0	0	97	
	Volunteer Engagement	10,328	66,800	0	66,800	11,133	-805	
<b>Rangers, Estates &amp; Volunteers Total</b>		<b>206,495</b>	<b>1,038,400</b>	<b>-837,700</b>	<b>200,700</b>	<b>139,533</b>	<b>66,962</b>	

<b>Recreation Management &amp; Transport</b>	Access & Recreation	57,554	175,000	-61,000	114,000	28,500	29,054	Some Active Travel Plan related project costs met by reserve at year-end £20k, Access for All spend incurred, awaiting funding from DEFRA Seasonal income profile. Income to date £26k c/f equal profiled budget of £17k.
	Visitor Facilities	-10,190	102,700	-102,700	0	0	-10,190	
<b>Recreation Management &amp; Transport Total</b>		<b>47,364</b>	<b>277,700</b>	<b>-163,700</b>	<b>114,000</b>	<b>28,500</b>	<b>18,864</b>	
<b>Support Services</b>	Finance	136,650	183,400	-140,000	43,400	22,433	114,217	Spend includes full year Insurance spend £70k, impact of £60k on profiled spend. Only 1 Month interest receipt included in P2 position, impact of £13k HR, Personnel & Procurement charges high c/f to profiled budget. Impact of £4k ICT hardware spend in first 2 periods, met from reserve/capital at year-end No DCC charges received to date. Spend has been on long running legal case. Draw from Corporate Equipment & Vehicle Reserve for 3 EV purchases (£51,000). Transfer to reserves for CEVR £25,000 from Top slice and £10,000 vehicle sales.
	Human Resources & Performance	34,949	182,000	0	182,000	30,333	4,616	
	ICT & GIS Services	87,327	254,600	0	254,600	73,517	13,810	
	Legal Services	7,530	70,000	0	70,000	11,667	-4,137	
	Facilities	44,683	195,400	0	195,400	32,567	12,116	
<b>Support Services Total</b>		<b>311,139</b>	<b>885,400</b>	<b>-140,000</b>	<b>745,400</b>	<b>170,517</b>	<b>140,622</b>	
<b>Corporate &amp; Democratic Core</b>	Corporate Management	64,466	422,400	0	422,400	70,400	-5,934	Awaiting first quarter compensation payment (around £7.5k) No secondary pension payment invoices included within first two months. NPE Subscription paid in first two months, budget profiled monthly.
	Historic Pensions Contributions	0	82,000	0	82,000	13,667	-13,667	
	Corporate Subscriptions	8,000	39,200	0	39,200	6,533	1,467	
	Members	15,455	95,200	0	95,200	15,867	-412	
<b>Corporate &amp; Democratic Core Total</b>		<b>87,921</b>	<b>638,800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>638,800</b>	<b>106,467</b>	<b>-18,546</b>	
<b>Core Funding &amp; Partnership Fund</b>	National Park Grant	0	0	-2,968,100	-2,968,100	-742,025	742,025	Quarter 1 National Park Grant still not received at 18 June 2026
	Reserves Transactions	0	25,000	0	25,000	0	0	
	Partnership Fund Top-Sliced	4,682	10,000	0	10,000	1,667	3,015	
<b>Core Funding &amp; Partnership Fund Total</b>		<b>4,682</b>	<b>35,000</b>	<b>-2,968,100</b>	<b>-2,933,100</b>	<b>-740,358</b>	<b>745,040</b>	
<b>Total Budget</b>		<b>1,026,808</b>	<b>6,062,600</b>	<b>-6,062,600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-48,533</b>	<b>1,075,341</b>	

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 July 2026

### ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT

#### Report of the Head of Enterprise and Operations (Chief Finance Officer)

**Purpose of Report:** To report on treasury management performance in 2025/26 and provide assurance that all activity was undertaken in accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy and prudential limits.

**Recommendation:** The Authority is recommended to **NOTE** treasury management performance in 2025/26, including compliance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy, the continued absence of borrowing, and the investment return achieved on surplus cash balances.

**Executive Summary:** Treasury management activity during 2025/26 remained prudent, low risk and fully compliant with the Authority's approved strategy and relevant statutory and professional guidance. The Authority remained debt free throughout the year and did not undertake any borrowing. Average cash balances were approximately £3.87m and gross investment income for the year was £160,494. Surplus cash continued to be managed through Somerset Council under the Service Level Agreement, providing a secure and efficient arrangement. No breaches of prudential limits or treasury management requirements occurred during the year.

**Business Plan Reference:** Achieve by providing core services: getting best value from our resources; and improving our performance.

**Legal and Equality Implications:** Section 65(4) Environment Act 1995 – provides powers to the National Park Authority to *“do anything which in the opinion of the Authority, is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to-*

- (a) The accomplishment of the purposes mentioned in s. 65 (1) [National Park purposes]*
- (b) The conducting of any functions conferred on it by virtue of any other enactment.*

The Local Government Act 2003 (LGA 2003)

The CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes: 2021 Edition (CIPFA TM Code). The CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities: 2021 Edition (CIPFA Prudential Code).

Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments was revised as from 1st April 2018.

The equality and human rights impact of the recommendations of this report have been assessed as having no adverse impact on any group or individual.

**Financial and Risk Implications:** Managing and overseeing treasury activities is an important way to reduce financial risk.

**Climate Change Response:** This report does not have an adverse impact on our ability to respond to climate change.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Treasury management covers the Authority's cash flow, investments, banking arrangements and any borrowing activity, together with the management of the risks associated with those activities.

*"The management of the Authority's investments and cash flows, its banking and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."*

- 1.2 Effective treasury management supports the Authority's wider service and financial objectives by ensuring that cash is managed securely, prudently and efficiently.
- 1.3 The CIPFA Treasury Management Code requires the Authority to approve an annual Treasury Management Strategy and to receive formal update reports during and after the financial year. This annual report enables members to review treasury activity undertaken in 2025/26 and confirm that it remained effective, prudent and compliant with approved policies.
- 1.4 During 2025/26, Somerset Council continued to manage treasury management activity on behalf of the Authority under an agreed Service Level Agreement. This arrangement enables cash to be managed efficiently and securely, while ensuring that investment income is appropriately apportioned between the two authorities.
- 1.5 Since the introduction of MiFID II, local authorities have been treated as retail clients unless they opt up to professional status. Somerset Council continues to meet the criteria to do so, enabling continued access to a wider range of treasury products and professional market advice.
- 1.6 The Authority delegates responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices, and the execution and administration of treasury management decisions, to me as Chief Finance Officer.

## **2. Headline Position**

- 2.1 The treasury management environment during 2025/26 remained uncertain, with changes in Bank Rate, inflation expectations and wider market conditions affecting investment returns and borrowing costs. For ENPA, the principal relevance was the effect on returns from short-term cash investments and the continued need to prioritise security and liquidity over yield.

## **3. Economic Context and Impact on Treasury Activity**

- 3.1 During the year, financial markets were affected by inflation concerns, changes in investor sentiment and international events. These factors led to periods of volatility in interest rates and investment markets. For the Authority, the practical effect was that investment returns remained changeable across the year and borrowing rates also fluctuated, although no borrowing was required.
- 3.2 UK inflation and growth expectations remained uncertain during the year. Bank Rate reduced from earlier levels but market expectations changed several times as economic conditions evolved. This uncertainty reinforced the importance of maintaining a cautious treasury management approach.
- 3.3 Economic growth remained weak overall, while labour market conditions softened. Taken together, these indicators pointed to a mixed and uncertain outlook, with continued implications for both investment income and borrowing costs across the sector.

- 3.4 Gilt yields and money market rates moved during the year in response to changing expectations on inflation and interest rates. Appendix A provides the detailed data. For ENPA, the key point is that investment returns remained broadly favourable by recent standards, while borrowing remained unnecessary.
- 3.5 After cutting Bank Rate to 3.75% in December 2025, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee voted to hold rates in February and March 2026. Market expectations changed significantly during the period, particularly following international events, and this contributed to renewed volatility in interest rate expectations.
- 3.6 The period saw significant volatility in gilt yields. The 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started the year at 4.65% and ended at 4.86%, while the 5-year and 20-year PWLB maturity rates also moved materially during the year.
- 3.7 Average money market rates moved downwards overall during the year, although they rose again towards year end following renewed inflation concerns. Base rate averaged 4.04% for the year.
- 3.8 A summary of PWLB and key benchmark lending rates is included at Appendix A.

#### **4. Treasury Management Outturn for 2025-26**

##### **4.1 Debt Management**

- 4.1.1 The Authority remained debt free throughout 2025/26. No borrowing was required during the year, reflecting the current capital programme and financing position.

##### **4.2 Investment Activity**

- 4.2.1 In line with statutory guidance, the Authority's treasury management priority is to protect capital and maintain liquidity, while achieving an appropriate return on surplus cash.
- 4.2.2 Under the Service Level Agreement, the Authority's surplus cash is placed with Somerset Council, which manages the combined funds through its approved treasury framework. This provides a secure and efficient arrangement and enables ENPA to benefit from Somerset Council's scale and treasury management infrastructure.
- 4.2.3 The detailed list below shows the counterparties used by Somerset Council during the year. It is included for transparency, although the Authority's direct exposure is to Somerset Council under the Service Level Agreement.

<b>Bank</b>		<b>Sterling LVNAV Money Market Funds</b>	
Barclays Bank UK Plc		Invesco Aim	#
Lloyds Bank Plc	#	Federated Prime	#
National Westminster Bank	#	Insight	#
Santander UK		Deutsche	#
Australia & New Zealand Bank	#	LGIM	#
Standard Chartered Bank		SSGA	#
Development Bank of Singapore	#	Aviva	#
Toronto Dominion			
Landesbank Hessen-Thuringen Girozentrale (Helaba)		<b>Strategic Pooled Funds</b>	
Bank of Montreal		CCLA Property Fund	#
DZ Bank		RLAM Bond Fund	#
National Bank of Canada		M&G Bond Fund	#
		Aegon Diversified Fund	#
<b>Other</b>		CCLA Diversified Fund - <b>Sold</b>	#
DMO (Government Debt Management Office)	#	Columbia Threadneedle Bond Fund	#
Other Local Authorities	# (21 deals)	Ninety-One Diversified Fund	#
		Schroder Equity Fund - <b>Holding Reduced</b>	#
		UBS Equity Fund	#

4.2.4 Somerset Council kept counterparties under regular review throughout the year, considering credit ratings alongside a wider range of market indicators in support of prudent investment decisions.

- Credit Default Swaps and Government Bond Spreads.
- GDP and Net Debt as a Percentage of GDP for sovereign countries.
- Likelihood and strength of Parental Support.
- Banking resolution mechanisms for the restructure of failing financial institutions i.e., bail-in.
- Share Price.
- Market information on corporate developments and market sentiment towards counterparties and sovereigns.

4.2.5 Somerset Council's treasury adviser, Arlingclose, continued to keep counterparty duration limits under review during the year.

4.2.6 A relatively small number of bank deposits were used during the year, as rates available from local authorities were often more attractive.

4.2.7 During the year, Fitch upgraded NatWest to AA- from A+, whilst Moody's upgraded Toronto-Dominion Bank and DZ Bank.

4.2.8 After spiking in April 2025 following the US trade tariff announcements, UK credit default swap (CDS) prices had trended down before picking up modestly in

October and November. After declining again in December and into the new calendar year, they rose sharply once again when the war in the Middle East started. They were still elevated at the end of the period, but prices for all banks on the Council's counterparty list remained within limits deemed satisfactory for maintaining at current durations.

- 4.2.9 Overall, European banks' CDS prices have generally been flatter and lower compared to the UK, as have Singaporean and Australian lenders. Some Canadian bank CDS prices have remained elevated since the beginning of the period in part due to ongoing trade tensions with the US.
- 4.2.10 Heightened market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and the Council will continue to monitor and assess credit default swap levels for signs of ongoing credit stress, and, as ever, the institutions and durations on the Council's counterparty list recommended by treasury management advisors Arlingclose, remain under constant review.
- 4.2.11 In order to increase the diversification of SC's portfolio, some deposits were placed with UK Local Authorities. Twenty-One deposits were made with Local Authorities during the year, with rates offered by Local Authorities generally higher than those offered by banks.
- 4.2.12 The table below summarises the Authority's cash position at the end of this and the previous financial year, together with the average balance and rate achieved during 2025/26.

	<b>Balance on 31/03/2025 £000</b>	<b>Rate (gross) %</b>	<b>Balance on 31/03/2026 £000</b>	<b>Rate (gross) %</b>	<b>Average Balance £000</b>	<b>Average Rate (gross) %</b>
Cash Balance	3,689	4.95	3,570	5.32	3,869	4.15

- 4.2.13 Cash balances at 31 March 2026 were £3.57m compared with £3.69m at 31 March 2025, a decrease of £119k over the year.
- 4.2.14 The Authority's average daily cash balance during the year was approximately £3.87m, compared with £3.70m in 2024/25. Gross investment income earned was £160,494, compared with £186,645 in the previous year. The average rate achieved was 4.15%, slightly above the average Bank Rate for the year.

## **5. Compliance**

- 5.1 During the year, all treasury management activity remained within the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy and complied with the relevant statutory guidance and CIPFA Codes. No breaches of prudential limits or treasury management requirements occurred.
- 5.2 The Authority continued to give priority to security and liquidity in managing its surplus cash. This approach remained appropriate throughout 2025/26 and was delivered through the arrangement with Somerset Council.
- 5.3 For governance purposes, the Authority is also required to report approved prudential indicators alongside actual outturn. The table below confirms that all treasury activity remained within the approved limits for 2025/26.

<b>1 Borrowing Limits</b>		<u>Actual</u>
Authorised	£100,000	<b>Nil</b>
Operational	£100,000	<b>Nil</b>

<b>2 Maturity Structure</b>				
	Upper Limit	Lower Limit		Actual
	%	%	Value	%
< 12m	100	0	0.00	<b>0.0</b>
> 12m < 24m	0	0	0.00	<b>0.0</b>
> 24m < 5yrs	0	0	0.00	<b>0.0</b>
> 5yrs < 10yrs	0	0	0.00	<b>0.0</b>
> 10yrs	0	0	0.00	<b>0.0</b>
			<hr/>	
			0.00	<b>0.0</b>
<b>3 Investments &gt; 365 days</b>			0	<b>0</b>

5.4 Overall, treasury management activity during 2025/26 remained prudent, low risk and fully compliant with the Authority's approved framework. The Authority remained debt free, no borrowing was required, and surplus cash continued to be managed securely through Somerset Council while achieving an appropriate return within a cautious risk framework.

**Ben Barrett**  
**Head of Enterprise and Operations (Chief Finance Officer)**  
**June 2026**

Table 1: Bank Rate, Money Market Rates - BID

Date	Bank Rate	O/N SONIA	7-day SONIA	1-month SONIA	3-month SONIA	6-month SONIA	12-month SONIA
01/04/2025	4.50	4.39	4.40	4.41	4.39	4.42	4.42
30/04/2025	4.50	4.42	4.24	4.26	4.27	4.19	4.15
31/05/2025	4.25	4.19	4.17	4.21	4.25	4.35	4.36
30/06/2025	4.25	4.17	4.21	4.19	4.14	4.17	4.10
31/07/2025	4.25	4.15	4.08	4.01	4.04	4.14	4.09
31/08/2025	4.00	3.88	3.92	3.95	4.01	4.16	4.16
30/09/2025	4.00	3.97	3.96	3.97	4.07	4.16	4.18
31/10/2025	4.00	3.93	3.92	3.92	4.03	4.01	3.98
30/11/2025	4.00	3.94	3.94	3.97	3.90	3.94	3.90
31/12/2025	3.75	3.77	3.65	3.74	3.78	3.82	3.90
31/01/2026	3.75	3.73	3.72	3.71	3.77	3.80	3.87
29/02/2026	3.75	3.69	3.68	3.60	3.61	3.66	3.72
31/03/2026	3.75	3.75	3.73	3.75	3.87	4.14	4.42
Minimum	3.75	3.61	3.65	3.60	3.61	3.66	3.68
Maximum	4.50	4.44	4.48	4.45	4.39	4.42	4.74
Average	4.04	3.96	3.97	3.98	4.01	4.07	4.09
Spread	0.75	0.83	0.83	0.85	0.79	0.76	1.05

**Table 2. PWLB Borrowing Rates - Fixed Rate, Maturity Loans**

<b>Change Date</b>	<b>Notice No</b>	<b>4½-5 yrs</b>	<b>9½-10 yrs</b>	<b>19½-20 yrs</b>	<b>29½-30 yrs</b>	<b>39½-40 yrs</b>	<b>49½-50 yrs</b>
01/04/2025	127/25	5.14	5.58	6.08	6.16	6.07	5.83
30/04/2025	166/25	4.85	5.41	6.02	6.12	6.02	5.76
31/05/2025	206/25	5.11	5.65	6.23	6.34	6.26	6.04
30/06/2025	248/25	4.90	5.47	6.08	6.19	6.12	5.91
31/07/2025	294/25	5.01	5.58	6.22	6.34	6.27	6.07
31/08/2025	334/25	5.10	5.72	6.39	6.53	6.45	6.23
30/09/2025	378/25	5.15	5.73	6.34	6.46	6.39	6.18
31/10/2025	424/25	4.90	5.46	6.04	6.15	6.08	5.90
30/11/2025	464/25	4.91	5.49	6.04	6.13	6.07	5.90
31/12/2025	504/25	4.98	5.54	6.08	6.17	6.09	5.91
31/01/2026	042/26	5.00	5.58	6.13	5.23	6.17	6.00
29/02/2026	082/26	4.76	5.34	5.91	6.02	5.97	5.81
31/03/2026	126/26	5.48	5.92	6.43	6.50	6.43	6.28
	Low	4.76	5.33	5.91	6.00	5.91	5.66
	High	5.67	6.08	6.57	6.65	6.58	6.44
	Average	5.02	5.58	6.18	6.28	6.21	6.01
	Spread	0.91	0.79	0.66	0.65	0.67	0.78

**Table 3: PWLB Borrowing Rates – Fixed Rate, Equal Instalment of Principal (EIP) Loans**

<b>Change Date</b>	<b>Notice No</b>	<b>4½-5 yrs</b>	<b>9½-10 yrs</b>	<b>19½-20 yrs</b>	<b>29½-30 yrs</b>	<b>39½-40 yrs</b>	<b>49½-50 yrs</b>
01/04/2025	127/25	5.02	5.16	5.60	5.93	6.09	6.15
30/04/2025	166/25	4.69	4.88	5.44	5.83	6.03	6.10
31/05/2025	206/25	4.92	5.13	5.67	6.05	6.24	6.32
30/06/2025	248/25	4.73	4.93	5.49	5.88	6.08	6.17
31/07/2025	294/25	4.81	5.04	5.61	6.02	6.23	6.32
31/08/2025	334/25	4.88	5.13	5.75	6.17	6.40	6.50
30/09/2025	378/25	4.95	5.18	5.76	6.15	6.35	6.44
31/10/2025	424/25	4.72	4.93	5.48	5.86	6.04	6.12
30/11/2025	464/25	4.71	4.94	5.51	5.87	6.04	6.11
31/12/2025	504/25	4.73	5.01	5.56	5.92	6.09	6.15
31/01/2026	042/26	4.74	5.03	5.60	5.96	6.14	6.21
29/02/2026	082/26	4.54	4.79	5.36	5.73	5.92	6.00
31/03/2026	126/26	5.36	5.50	5.94	6.27	6.43	6.49
	Low	4.54	4.79	5.36	5.73	5.91	5.98
	High	5.58	5.68	6.10	6.42	6.58	6.63
	Average	4.82	5.04	5.61	5.99	6.18	6.26
	Spread	1.04	0.89	0.74	0.69	0.67	0.65

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 July 2026

### MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

#### Report of the Chief Finance Officer

**Purpose of Report:** To publish the amounts paid to Members during 2025/26 by way of the Members' Allowances Scheme adopted by the Authority for that year.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Authority is recommended to NOTE the amounts paid to Members in 2025/26 through its Scheme for Members' Allowances.

**Authority Priority:** Achieve by providing core services; getting best value from our resources; and improving our performance.

**Legal and Equality Implications:** Publication of the amounts paid to members through the Members' Allowance Scheme is required under The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

The equality and human rights impact of the recommendation of this report has been assessed as having no adverse impact on any particular group or individual.

**Financial and Risk Implications:** No financial or risk implications have been identified in publishing the amounts paid to members of the Authority by way of the approved scheme of allowances.

**Climate change response:** Nothing contained within this report will impact upon the Authority's ability to meet its climate change targets.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Members agreed the Scheme of Members' Allowances to be operated in 2025/26 at the Authority's meeting held on 4 March 2025. The scheme adopted provided for future in-year adjustments to Basic Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances to be linked to staff pay cost of living awards.
- 1.2 The final pay award for allowances for senior officers and Members for 2025/26 was 3.2%. This was agreed by the National Joint Council for local government services on 23 July 2025 and backdated increases were processed at the end of August 2025.

## 2. Scheme of Allowances 2025/26

- 2.1 The total allowances paid to Members for meetings attended during the year are set out in Appendix 1.

- 2.2 The allowances and reimbursements paid in 2025/26 totals £90,105 (2024/25 = £91,087). This is a decrease of £982 (2024/25 increase of £2,492) from the previous year.
- 2.3 The financial data in the Appendix is supplemented by columns which show for each Member the actual mileage claimed, the number of main meetings of the Authority Committee, Planning Committee, Standards Committee and Final Accounts Committee attended by Members in the year.
- 2.4 The number of other meetings and training/awareness events attended by Members on the first Tuesday of the month is also recorded; however, it is recognised that Members may also have attended additional meetings throughout the year, including meetings of any working groups to which they were appointed.

**Ben Barrett**  
**Chief Finance Officer**  
**June 2026**

## SUMMARY OF ALLOWANCES PAID TO MEMBERS 2025/26

Member ( <i>Home town</i> )	Basic Allowance £	Special Responsibility Allowance £	Expenses Paid, subsistence, reimbursement for Fares/Tickets, Mileage Allowance £	Total Allowances paid £	Miles claimed in connection with Authority business	Main business meetings attended Actual/Possible	Other meetings and training events attended
Mr Lee Baker ( <i>Taunton</i> )	3,274	0	0	3,274		5 / 9	7
Mr Andrew Bray ( <i>Tivington</i> )	3,274	0	136	3,410	124	18 / 19	9
Mr T Butt Philip ( <i>Wells</i> )	3,274	0	0	3,274		7 / 18	5
Mrs M Chilcott ( <i>Minehead</i> )	3,274	0	47	3,321	105	7 / 9	8
Miss A Davis ( <i>Kentisbury</i> )	3,274	6,549	573	10,396	1,050	10/10	12
Mr M Ellicott ( <i>Exford</i> )	3,274	264	78	3,616	150	9 / 11	7
Mr D Elson ( <i>Combe Martin</i> )	3,274	0	0	3,274		12 / 18	6
Mr W Geen ( <i>North Molton</i> )	3,274	0	0	3,274		18 / 19	12
Mr J Holtom ( <i>Parracombe</i> )	3,274	0	0	3,274		14 / 18	11
Mr R Hopley (from 2 June 2025) ( <i>Tiverton</i> )	1,091	0	23	1,114	125	11 / 18	11
Mr M Kelly ( <i>Barnstaple</i> )	3,274	0	332	3,606	623	15 / 18	10
Mr M Kravis ( <i>Blue Anchor</i> )	3,274	0	0	3,274		7 / 9	11
Mrs C Lawrence (to 30 September 2025) ( <i>Minehead</i> )	1,637	0	0	1,637		7 / 8	3
Mr R Milton ( <i>West Anstey</i> )	3,274	4,912	31	8,217	56	10 / 10	13
Mrs F Nicholson ( <i>East Anstey</i> )	3,274	0	0	3,274		14 / 19	11
Mr J Patinos ( <i>Lynton</i> )	3,274	819	198	4,291	104	16 / 20	11
Mr S Pugsley ( <i>Withypool</i> )	3,274	4,912	140	8,326	310	20 / 20	12
Mrs F Smith ( <i>Taunton</i> )	3,274	0	146	3,420	324	15 / 18	10
Mrs E Stacey ( <i>Chudleigh</i> )	3,274	0	296	3,570	644	11 / 18	7
Mrs C Strom (from 1 December 2025) ( <i>Minehead</i> )	1,155	0	0	1,155		1 / 1	4
Mr N Thwaites ( <i>Dulverton</i> )	3,274	0	0	3,274		9 / 10	8
Dr S Warren ( <i>Ottery St Mary</i> )	3,274	0	345	3,619	602	5 / 9	9
Miss L Williams ( <i>Bournemouth</i> )	3,274	0	412	3,686		7 / 9	6
Mr J Yabsley (to 31 May 2025) ( <i>Witheridge</i> )	529	0	0	529	840	5 / 5	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>69,892</b>	<b>17,456</b>	<b>2,757</b>	<b>90,105</b>	<b>5,057</b>		

## NB:

- Mileage allowances paid vary because of the distances members have to travel to attend meetings
- Those members in particular who receive a special responsibility allowance attended a range of other meetings and events outside the recognised Authority meetings
- Some details of "Other meetings and training events attended" are noted from claims submitted by members. If members have chosen not to claim, it may mean that some meetings attended by that member are not included.