



**EXMOOR**  
**NATIONAL PARK**

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
EXMOOR HOUSE, DULVERTON  
SOMERSET TA22 9HL  
TEL: (01398) 323665  
FAX: (01398) 323150  
E-mail: [info@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:info@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)  
[www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

21 May 2025

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

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

The Annual Meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority will be held in the **Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton** on **Tuesday, 3 June 2025 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 Corporate 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 Facebook and Twitter or other 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

## A G E N D A

1. **Election of Chairperson**
2. **Election of Deputy Chairperson**
3. **Apologies for Absence**
4. **Declarations of Interest**

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

5. **Chairperson's Announcements**

6. **Minutes**
  - (1) To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Authority held on 6 May 2025 (Item 6)
  - (2) To consider any Matters Arising from those Minutes.
7. **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.
8. **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.
9. **Exmoor Active Travel Plan:** To consider the report of the Head of Access, Engagement & Estates (Item 9).
10. **Planning Committee Substitutes:** To consider the report of the Head of Enterprise & Operations and the Solicitor & Monitoring Officer (Item 10).
11. **Annual Appointments:** To consider the report of the Chief Executive Item 11).
12. **Personnel Update**

Starters:

19 May 2025 - Joshua Collins – Field Services and Estates Worker (2-year fixed term)
13. **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 Judy Coles, Corporate Support Officer, at Exmoor House.

## ITEM 6

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**MINUTES** of the Meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority  
held on Tuesday, 6 May 2025 at 10.00am  
in the Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton.

#### PRESENT

Miss A V Davis (Chairperson)

Mr R Milton (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr A Bray

Mrs M Chilcott

Mr M Ellicott

Mr D Elson

Mr W Geen

Mr J Holtom

Dr M Kelly

Mr M Kravis

Mrs C Lawrence

Mr J Patrinos

Mr S J Pugsley

Mrs F Smith

Mr N Thwaites

Dr S Warren

Miss L Williams

Mr J Yabsley

Apologies for absence were received from Mr L Baker, Mr T Butt Philip, Mrs F Nicholson and Miss E Stacey.

**192. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none.

**193. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:** There were none.

#### 194. MINUTES

- i. **Confirmation:** The **Minutes** of the Authority's meeting held on 1 April 2025 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
- ii. **Matters arising:** There were none.

**195. BUSINESS OF URGENCY:** There was none.

**196. PUBLIC SPEAKING:** There were no public speakers.

**197. EXTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS:** The Authority considered the **report** of the Chief Finance Officer.

#### **The Authority's Consideration**

The meeting received a summary of the External Audit Plan from Grace Hawkins of Grant Thornton. The following aspects of the Audit Plan were noted:

- In relation to identified risks and the introduction of IFRS 16 (accounting for leases), the planned audit procedures to evaluate the design effectiveness of management controls over accounting for leases were set out on page 17 of the Audit Plan.
- The approach to materiality and the planned audit procedures were set out on page 20 of the Audit Plan.
- No significant weaknesses in relation to Value for Money arrangements had been identified.

- The audit timeline was set out on page 29 of the Audit Plan.

Members receive the External Audit Plan and it was requested that future plan documents include an Executive Summary.

**RESOLVED:** To receive the External Audit Plan at Appendix 1 to the report.

Miss L Williams joined the meeting.

**198. REVISED MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2025/26 TO 2029/30 AND REVISED BUDGET 2025/26:** The Authority considered the **report** of the Chief Finance Officer.

**The Authority's Consideration**

Members were disappointed that following receipt of a Letter of Intent from Defra on 2 April 2025 in respect of the 2025/26 Grant Funding Settlement, a review of the approved Budget for 2025/26 and the Medium-Term Financial Plan had been necessary.

The Committee was particularly concerned, as the original budget documents had been approved as recently as March 2025 to meet the statutory requirement of setting a balanced budget at the start of the financial year in April. The potential for UK National Park Authorities jointly to consider seeking a Judicial Review of Defra's action was noted.

It was confirmed that the Letter of Intent informed the Authority of:

- an 8.2% reduction in Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit allocation (revenue funding) amounting to £263,443
- an in-year capital allocation of £263,443 to match the revenue reduction
- a further £1,140,000 fixed capital, giving a total capital allocation of £1,403,500.

Formal confirmation of the funding allocation was awaited.

It was recognised that the Letter of Intent may represent a strategic shift in government funding for National Parks and it would be important and challenging for the Authority to optimise both the revenue and capital elements.

Regarding the capital allocation, there remained uncertainty about Defra's approach to capital spend proposals, however Members were advised that training had been provided on the areas Defra would consider as capital spend - which differed from the capital allocation requirements of the Authority's formal accounts.

In relation to the capital spend projects set out at Appendix 3, it was requested that Officers identify the revenue raising opportunities and consider prioritising those projects with the greatest long-term revenue generation potential.

The Chief Finance Officer advised that capital allocation may potentially be on a quarterly basis, providing opportunity for investment; however, the impact of a likely reduction in interest rates on investment potential was noted.

The meeting was informed that proposed capital spend projects would require strong project management and detailed cash flow analysis; however, it would remain a risk that if a project were not completed on time, an element of the in-year capital spend allocation could be lost, and the project would require funding from the following year's capital allocation.

The importance of the Authority's staff resource to the delivery of National Park purposes was recognised; however, it was acknowledged that a continuing move

towards project-based working may be essential, together with greater emphasis on bid-writing to seek access to additional funding streams.

While the situation was concerning, it was agreed that the Authority's own estate was working efficiently, and Members welcomed the information on fees and charging set out in Appendix 6 and noted that a detailed Income Generation strategy would be presented later in the year.

In conclusion, Members were troubled by the trend towards an allocation of National Park Grant on an annual basis together with a condition to spend the capital allocation in-year. This was considered incompatible with the requirement to produce a 5-year Partnership Plan, and with setting of a strategic vision for the achievement of government targets and the delivery of National Park purposes.

The Chief Executive advised that the adverse impact of diminishing government funding on the operation of the National Park Authority had been made clear to Mary Creagh, Minister for Nature, during a recent visit to Exmoor. It was agreed that all UK National Park Authorities would need to be in close dialogue with government officials and to continue to advocate for National Parks through National Parks England and the Campaign for National Parks, and through working with local Members of Parliament.

Mr J Yabsley joined the meeting during this item and was ineligible to vote.

**RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Revised Core, Capital and Programmes, Partnerships and Contributions to Reserves Budgets for 2025/26 as summarised in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to the report.
2. To note the position on Reserves set out in Appendix 4 to the report.
3. To adopt the Medium Term Financial Plan at Appendix 5 to the report.
4. To approve the suggested Fees and Charges at Appendix 6 to the report.
5. To thank staff for their work in preparing the report the revised Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan.

**199. GOVERNANCE REVIEW:** The Authority considered the report of the Chief Executive.

**The Authority's Consideration**

Members supported the return to monthly Authority Committee meetings, with August and January being reserve dates.

In relation to the trial of a smaller Planning Committee of 12, most Members considered this had been successful and supported its retention.

However, there remained concern about the public perception of planning applications being determined by fewer Members, and to ensure the attendance of 12 members at each Planning Committee meeting, it was requested that the process for nominating substitutes be reviewed, and the notice period be reduced. It was noted that while desirable, it was not a requirement that a substitute member be nominated from the same member category as the nominating member. It was confirmed that all Members would continue to receive planning training to be eligible to sit on the Planning Committee or to be nominated as a substitute.

While it was recognised that Parish Members may have a greater interest in the planning function of the Authority, it was confirmed that all Members were appointed equally regardless of the nature of their appointment, ie by a principal local authority,

by the Secretary of State, or by parish council nomination (and Secretary of State appointment). Therefore, the division of the membership of the Planning Committee would continue to be as nearly as possible in the same proportion as the composition of the Authority itself. The meeting was reminded that it was open to any Member not appointed to the Planning Committee to observe meetings.

The role of the Exmoor National Park Forum was debated and while it was acknowledged that the proposed reduction in meetings was disappointing, the majority of Members considered it an appropriate response to the resource constraints facing the Authority, having regard to the many other mechanisms for public engagement with the Authority.

It was agreed that attendance by Authority staff at the Somerset Local Community Network was valuable, as would be attendance at a Devon LCN if established in the future.

**RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the retention of a Planning Committee of 12 Members.
2. To approve the revised schedule of Authority Committee and Planning Committee meetings for the remainder of 2025 at Appendix 2.
3. To approve the proposals for the future of the Exmoor National Park Forum.
4. To pay tribute to Authority Member Mr M Ellicott for his contribution as Chairperson of the Exmoor National Park Forum.

**200. DRIVER – DEVELOPMENT PHASE 2025-2028:** The Authority considered the report of the Head of Access, Engagement & Estates.

**The Authority's Consideration**

The Committee thanked Officers for a comprehensive report and agreed that the development phase for Driver represented an impressive vision which supported the Authority's corporate and strategic objectives, and provided an opportunity to develop an exemplar programme to deliver:

- nature recovery,
- engagement, learning, skills and activities,
- improved physical access, and
- landscape recovery.

In response to Member questions, the meeting was advised as follows:

Due to its remote location and access arrangements, it was not envisaged that Driver would host larger events such as weddings or festivals, however this may depend on the aspirations of the tenant.

Video imagery of progress at Driver was being captured and this would increase once the Pioneers project staff were on site.

With multiple funding strands and uncertainty around the continuation of some funding schemes, it was acknowledged that the programme was complex. It was therefore proposed to defer letting a tenancy until 2026 when it was hoped to have greater clarity of the funding scenario.

It would be essential that any prospective tenant shared the Authority's values and was aligned with the vision for Driver, and the Authority envisaged continuing

involvement with the Driver programme once the tenant was recruited. The proposed short-term lease would provide flexibility both for the Authority and for the tenant.

Officers were working on a Gantt chart to include reporting periods and an update on progress at Driver would be included in the Authority's annual estate review.

**RESOLVED:** To approve a development phase for Driver until the end of 2028 as set out in the report.

**201. MEMBERS' REPORTS:** There were none.

**202. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS:**

**RESOLVED:** To pass a resolution pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the duration of Item 13 - Land and Property Matters on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business and that the following information would be considered which is exempt information as presented in Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended):-

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

**203. LAND AND PROPERTY MATTERS:** The Authority considered the confidential report of the Head of Climate, Nature & Communities and the Senior Woodland Officer.

**RESOLVED:** To approve the recommendations as recorded in the confidential minute.

The meeting closed at 12.35pm

(Chairperson)

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

20 May 2025

### Exmoor Active Travel Plan

**Purpose of the report:** To provide Members with a near-complete version of the Exmoor Active Travel Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):** The Authority is recommended to:

- (1) Agree to support the general conclusions of the Plan and pursue its high priority recommendations.
- (2) Delegate authority to the CEO to make minor final changes and corrections to the Plan ahead of the grant deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025

### Authority Priority:

Partnership Plan Ambitions:

- More people enjoy Exmoor, are inspired, get involved and learn about its special qualities
- Exmoor has a first-class rights of way network. Our paths, open access and recreational facilities are enhanced to offer more and better experiences for people who want to explore the National Park
- The tourism economy is vibrant, innovative, and growing and celebrates Exmoor's distinctive character.
- The local economy is more sustainable with increased innovation, entrepreneurship, and improved economic prospects
- Exmoor's local communities are thriving with strong connections to the National Park
- Implementation of the plan will support our Climate Emergency ambition to reduce carbon emissions across the National Park

### Legal and Equality Implications:

**The equality impact of the recommendation(s) of this report has been assessed as follows:** There are no equality impacts for this decision, however the study has considered accessibility as part of the route designs.

**Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendation(s) of this report is as follows:** There are considered to be no human rights issues in relation to this report.

**Financial and Risk Implications:** The Plan does not commit the Authority to any specific proposal or associated financial risk. Media releases and information about the plan needs to be carefully managed so as not to create unrealistic expectations.



## **1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 ENPA was awarded funding via the Active Travel England – Capability Fund in March 2024 to develop an Active Travel Plan for the National Park, alongside all other English National Parks.
- 1.2 Development of the Plan has included extensive and inclusive public consultation alongside data analysis and investigation of opportunities in and around the National Park, making reference to national and local guidance.
- 1.3 The Exmoor Active Travel Plan is now complete, bar final corrections and minor amendments, and the draft Plan has been provided with this paper.
- 1.4 The vision within the Plan explains 11 themes that have emerged and goes on to recommend next steps and priorities.
- 1.5 Due to time and financial constraints, the Plan is largely a strategy document; however, some detailed study has been undertaken for a selection of areas and opportunities.
- 1.6 There is also an Active Travel Off-Road study for two specific areas (Parracombe and West of Minehead) that has been completed and forms an appendix of the main Plan.
- 1.7 Members are asked to support the strategy, methodologies and next steps highlighted in the document but not any financial commitment or support for specific projects, as this will be for future potential work and would be brought forward on a case-by-case basis as required.

## **2. Proposal**

- 2.1 Members are asked to absorb the detail of the Plan and agree support for taking its general aims and recommendations forward, alongside landowner consultation and funding bids where appropriate.
- 2.2 Due to time constraints there are some minor final changes and corrections still to complete within the Plan and Members are asked to delegate authority to the CEO to agree these final changes.
- 2.3 We plan to publish the Plan and promote it widely through media releases and our various normal channels.

**Dan Barnett**  
**Access and Recreation Manager**  
**May 2025**



# Exmoor Active Travel Plan





The Active Travel Plan for Exmoor National Park  
has been developed with support from consultants [WSP](#).



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Appendices

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- Appendix A
- How the Active Travel Plan was prepared
- Appendix B
- Context and Background
- Appendix C
- Vision Diagram

## Foreword

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- Image of Andrea Davis, Chairperson – Exmoor National Park Authority
- ACTION: ENPA to write 'Foreword' / ENPA to liaise with Cllr Davis for sign-off

Foreword text TBD

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 What is Active Travel?

‘Active travel’ is a collective term referring to transport modes involving a level of physical activity to get around, rather than in a motor vehicle (such as a car). For the purposes of this document, active travel is defined as walking, wheeling, cycling and horse-riding journeys.

‘Wheeling’ is an emerging term referring to journeys made by people using wheelchairs, mobility scooters, and similar mobility aids. The term ‘cycling’ covers journeys using bicycles, electric power-assisted cycles (e-bikes), hand cycles or other adapted cycles for disabled people, cargo bikes, recumbents, tandems, tricycles and bikes with trailers.

In the summer of 2022 the government set up [Active Travel England](#), a new public body tasked with – amongst other things – raising infrastructure design standards for active travel and spreading good practice in design, implementation and public engagement. [Chris Boardman CBE](#) was appointed as the first National Active Travel Commissioner.

## 1.2 What is Exmoor National Park’s Active Travel Plan?

### Background

In 2024 Active Travel England awarded all ten English National Park Authorities, including Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA), dedicated funding. This was to be spent on active travel network planning, evidence gathering, design, and related activities. ENPA used a portion of the money to prepare this Active Travel Plan.

### Scope and purpose

The Exmoor Active Travel Plan outlines a range of strategic proposals and specific high priority infrastructure investment opportunities to be taken forward for funding. The Active Travel Plan considers journeys made by local residents and visitors, and trips for a range of purposes, both for leisure and for everyday activities (such as travel to school, shops or work). It provides a long-term approach, over a 10-year period, to enhance the National Park’s active travel network.

### Overall objective

The overall objective of the Active Travel Plan is to identify projects and schemes eligible for funding bids, with a particular focus on proposals likely to enable the greatest numbers of new active travel journeys. Additionally, the Active Travel Plan provides an evidence base for, and will guide, future investment decisions.

The vision for active travel in the National Park, including thematic objectives, is set out in Chapter 4.

### Key elements of the Active Travel Plan

The Active Travel Plan includes:

- Background context and evidence on active travel;
- A Network Map showing priority locations for investment; and
- A list of proposals for further planning and development.

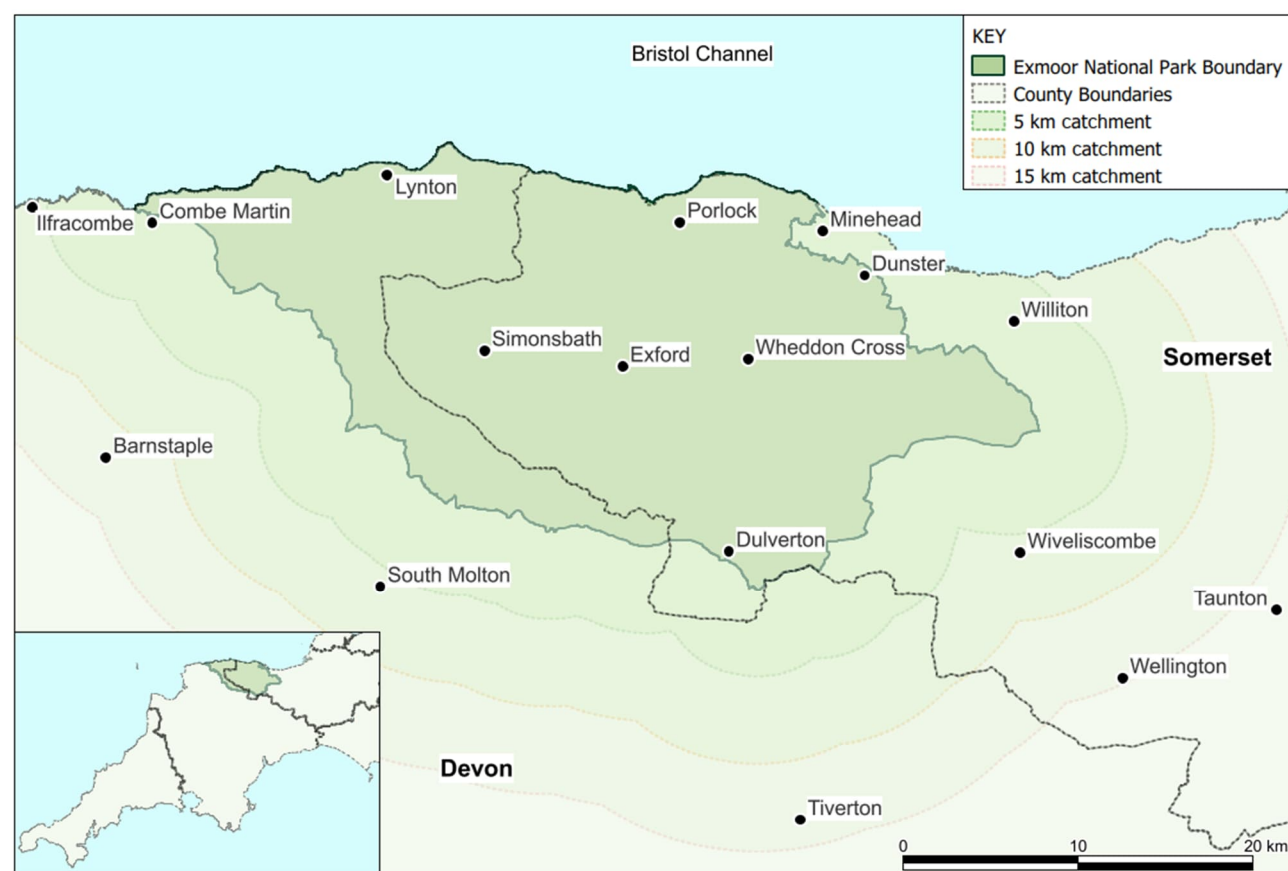
Whilst the Active Travel Plan sets out the strategic context, in many cases individual scheme proposals and plans will require separate detailed study, design, focused engagement and the identification of funding and resources for them to proceed.

The Active Travel Plan does not include detailed plans for every intervention or identify every aspiration for active travel improvements across the National Park.

### Geographical coverage

The Active Travel Plan covers the entire National Park, including journeys within the larger settlements and connections between communities. It also considers connections to and from key destinations and origins outside the National Park, including from nearby urban centres. Figure 1-1 shows the National Park boundary, and the location of selected larger settlements, both inside and outside the National Park.

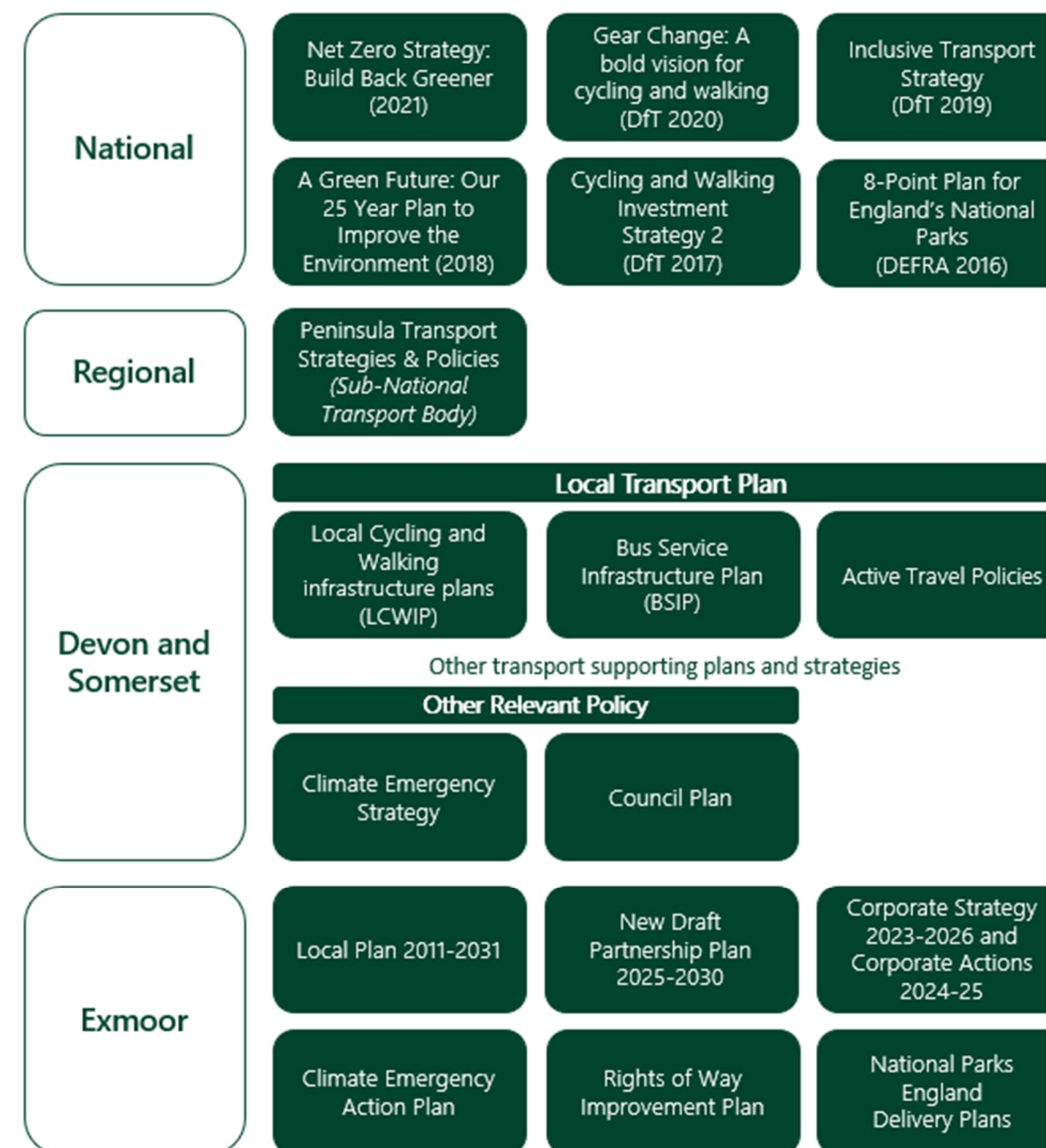
Figure 1-1 - Approximate geographical coverage of the Active Travel Plan



## Policy and strategy context

Enabling more active travel is supported by policies and strategies at the national, regional and local level. Active travel also helps to achieve a range of wider environmental, health, social and carbon reduction objectives. The diagram in Figure 1-2 outlines the key policy linkages relevant to Exmoor National Park's Active Travel Plan.

Figure 1-2 - Diagram showing how the Active Travel Plan relates to other policies and strategies





1.3 The importance of active travel to Exmoor National Park

Active travel is already important to the National Park, with walking, cycling and horse-riding being popular activities undertaken by residents and visitors alike, as evidenced below:

- The National Park has a high density of public rights of way, with over 1000km of routes;
- The National Park contains sections of popular promoted trails. They include the [South West Coast Path](#) – England’s longest National Trail – now part of the King Charles III England Coast Path, and sections of [National Cycle Network routes](#), including part of route 3, the West Country Way;
- The [2021 Exmoor National Park Visitor Survey](#) identified that outdoor activities are the third most important attractor to the National Park. 65% of visitors enjoy a short walk and 60% a long walk (over 2 hours) as part of their stay;
- The [2024 STEAM report](#) reports that in 2023 tourism was worth an estimated £232.4 million to the economy of the National Park; and
- ENPA employ a staff team of around 80 undertaking a range of functions. Exmoor National Park Rangers help provide and maintain the infrastructure required for active travel for the people who live, work and run businesses in the National Park.

Case study: Examples of completed active travel investment

Recent examples of investment in active travel infrastructure within the National Park are outlined below:

- On the South West Coast Path – now part of the King Charles III England Coast Path – there are six sections where the route has recently been changed, to enhance access and people’s experience of the coastal landscapes.
- Great Bradley Bridge – This new bridge, shown in Figure 1-3, opened on 19 October 2024, on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Park designation. The crossing helped upgrade the Two Moors Way route and opened more access opportunities in the Barle Valley for people cycling, horse-riding and walking. The bridge was funded from a range of sources, including [CareMoor fundraising](#), plus contributions from Farming In Protected Landscapes scheme, the British Mountaineering Council, the Keene Foundation and many others.

Figure 1-3 - Great Bradley Bridge, on opening day in October 2024



1.4 Why active travel is important

Enabling more active travel journeys can directly benefit us, and our communities, in a number of ways. Examples of these benefits are set out below:

- **Improving our physical health:** The health benefits of journeys made by active travel modes cannot be overestimated. For most people it is one of the easiest and most effective ways to introduce more physical activity into everyday life. Public Health England states that a lack of physical activity is the cause of one in six deaths in the UK and costs the country an estimated £7.4bn per year;
- **Improving our mental health and wellbeing:** Connecting to nature has multiple benefits for your mental health. According to a [report by the Mental Health Foundation](#), high-quality natural spaces are better for us and spending time connecting to nature is linked to improved life satisfaction, reduced anxiety and increased happiness. Enhancing Exmoor National Park’s network of active travel routes will enable more people to benefit from the National Park’s outstanding landscapes in low-impact ways;
- **Reducing carbon emissions:** Car travel is the single largest contributor to the overall carbon footprint of the National Park (35% of the combined footprint of the residents and visitors). Enabling more journeys by active travel (and public transport) can be a cost-effective way of reducing transport carbon emissions and helping achieve our local, national and international climate change commitments;



- **Reducing the impacts of motor vehicles:** Enabling people to make additional journeys without a car can also reduce parking and traffic pressures in the National Park's hub settlements and visitor hotspots;
- **Providing transport independence and choice:** Many resident and visitor journeys to, from and within National Parks are currently made by car. Creating safe and convenient active travel infrastructure and routes enables more journeys to be made without needing a car or relying on others for transport. This particularly benefits children, older adults, disabled people, and households on lower incomes; and
- **Supporting the National Park economy:** Tourism is a significant contributor to the economy of Exmoor National Park and was estimated to be worth £232.4 million in 2023. Enhancing the active travel offer can help to widen the visitor appeal to different markets, including day trips by local residents and younger adults, and securing more longer-stay visits. This in turn helps generate new business opportunities and additional visitor spend.

## 1.5 How the Active Travel Plan was prepared

The Active Travel Plan was prepared in accordance with the principles set out in guidance documents, including [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans](#) [Technical Guidance for Local Authorities](#). The guidance was flexibly applied to account for the sparse rural geography of the National Park, and the different needs of trips made for leisure or everyday purposes. Technical support was provided by transport consultants WSP.

The Active Travel Plan has been informed by data analysis and stages of engagement with key stakeholders and members of the public. The engagement in particular helped to identify key existing network issues, plus local aspirations and priorities for active travel infrastructure improvements.

Further details of how the Active Travel Plan was prepared, and how stakeholders and the public were involved, is contained in Appendix A.

## 1.6 Active Travel Off-Road Studies

ENPA also commissioned two Active Travel Off-Road Studies alongside the Active Travel Plan, focused on the areas South and West of Minehead, and around Parracombe. These are detailed assessments identifying gaps and opportunities to enhance off-road public access (i.e. the unsealed-surface active travel network) whilst considering the unique landscapes and visitor pressures of the areas. They have involved a mix of engagement, desk study and site visits, to consider the potential for establishing new public or permitted rights of way, and the feasibility of upgrading routes to public bridleway status. The studies will be published separately.

## 2 Context and background

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter briefly gives context about the following:

- The geography of Exmoor National Park;
- The National Park designation and the role of ENPA;
- A summary of key issues and opportunities affecting active travel in the National Park; and
- A summary of key points from the public engagement and stakeholder inputs supporting the Active Travel Plan.

Appendix B contains further detail about the National Park in terms of travel patterns, transport network, economy, environment and population, including data analysis and plans.

### 2.2 Geographic and landscape context

Located in southwest England, Exmoor National Park covers parts of North Devon and West Somerset and has a range of [special qualities](#). The distinct and diverse landscape of the National Park includes large areas of open moorland, deeply incised wooded valleys with fast flowing streams, and a spectacular coastline with high sea cliffs along the Bristol Channel, supporting a wide range of wildlife. The National Park is a farmed landscape, with traditional upland farms, and is remote from large population centres, with deeply rural communities.

The landscape provides inspiration and enjoyment to residents and visitors alike and there are superb opportunities for active travel, with an extensive range of public rights of way nearly 1000 kilometres (km) in length, plus permitted paths and open access land.

### 2.3 National Park designation and role of the National Park Authority

National Parks are nationally designated landscapes with two purposes set out in law:

- 1) To conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and
- 2) To promote opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities by the public.

Exmoor National Park was designated in 1954 and is one of 15 National Parks in the United Kingdom (UK). It is one of England's smallest National Parks with a total area of 692.8 square km (267.5 square miles). It is approximately 23km (14 miles) north to south and 37km (23 miles) west to east at its widest points.

[ENPA](#) is the body tasked to deliver the statutory purposes of National Parks. ENPA is also the local planning authority within the National Park.

In terms of transport and public rights of way, responsibilities are divided between ENPA and the local highway authorities ([Devon County Council](#) and [Somerset Council](#), depending on the location):

- The local highway authorities are responsible for public highways within the National Park, including setting speed limits. They are also responsible for legal public rights of way matters as [described in government guidance](#), such as the Definitive Map and Statement and changes to route alignment or status; meanwhile; and
- ENPA have delegated responsibilities for the management and maintenance of public rights of way within the National Park.

### 2.4 Key issues and opportunities affecting active travel in the National Park

Based on the data and analysis in Appendix B, the section below summarises how different factors shape active travel in the National Park.

#### Key issues affecting active travel in Exmoor National Park – the geography

- **Elevation and topography** – Elevation within the National Park rises from sea level at the Bristol Channel up to a maximum of 513m at Dunkery Beacon, south of Porlock. The National Park's landscape, including its steep and hilly topography, is one of the chief attractions for visitors, but this can act as a barrier to active travel, requiring increased physical effort to make journeys. However, innovations such as e-bikes can reduce these issues.
- **Planning policies, designations and legislation** – The National Park's importance in terms of biodiversity, dark skies, heritage and landscape is underscored by the designations and policies in place to protect it. Nearly 30% of the National Park is designated as Special Areas of Conservation and/or Sites of Special Scientific Interest and 40% falls within an international dark sky reserve and buffer zone, focused on the high moorland. The National Park has over 700 listed buildings,

nearly 300 Scheduled Monuments and 19 Conservation Areas, along with locally valued non-designated assets. The National Park Authority and local highway authorities must find sensitive ways of managing highways, public rights of way and delivering active travel improvements, which align with legislation and planning policy.

- **Long distances to everyday destinations** – Certain key destinations and services such as major employment, supermarkets, hospitals, secondary schools and college education are located in towns outside the National Park. Whilst some of these towns (such as Minehead and Williton) are within a short distance of certain National Park communities, other places (like Taunton, Tiverton, and Barnstaple) are substantially further away, limiting active travel potential.
- **Active travel by Exmoor National Park residents** – The National Park has a population of just over 10,000, with the largest settlements being Combe Martin, Dulverton, Dunster, Lynton & Lynmouth, and Porlock. Notwithstanding the limited settlement sizes, many communities retain important facilities, and data for travel to school and work indicate comparatively high levels of walking in these larger National Park settlements. There is the potential to enable more local journeys to be made by active travel where origins and destinations are reasonably close to each other, if conditions were suitable.

#### Key issues affecting active travel in Exmoor National Park – the network

- **Accessibility of the network** – The National Park Authority promotes several short distance walking routes which are accessible, step and stile-free. However, much of the network has path furniture which is not accessible to certain groups of people or active travel modes – for example stiles, or gates without easy to use catches, for example.
- **Road traffic flows and speeds** – Motor traffic speeds and flows are chief barriers identified in [national surveys](#) preventing or discouraging people from making active travel journeys. Whilst there are few locations within the National Park where roads have annual average traffic flows over 2,500 vehicles per day, this masks seasonal fluctuation, with traffic levels being higher during the peak summer visitor period. There can be locations away from main roads where motor vehicles can cause congestion in narrow lanes. In terms of motor vehicle speed, the national speed limit applies across much of Exmoor National Park's rural road network. Lower limits apply in certain locations, including 30mph and/or 20mph limits in the

National Park's villages and towns. However, traffic speeds are likely to discourage active travel on many of the road sections outside of villages and towns within the National Park

- **Disconnected networks** – The National Park has a generally dense public rights of way network. However, many routes terminate on roads with traffic speeds and/or flows that make them unsuitable for most onward active travel and requiring long deviations. As 44% of the public rights of way have public footpath status, disconnected networks can be more problematic for cycling and horse-riding journeys.
- **Access secured by landowner agreement** – In addition to the roads and public rights of way, there are a series of routes where public access has been agreed between ENPA and the landowner. However, permitted routes do not have the permanence or legal status of public rights of way, and therefore there is the risk that public access may be withdrawn and the case for significant investment is limited.
- **Maintenance issues** – In the 2023/24 financial year, ENPA invested an estimated £384,932 into the public rights of way and access network and related activities. However, this is required to address needs across the 992km network and equates to roughly £388 per km. A series of damaging storms, particularly Storm Daragh in December 2024, closed many routes due to fallen trees and resulted in significant additional workload for ENPA Access staff (Figure 2-1).



Figure 2-1 - Fallen trees block paths near Lee Bay



- **Access routes connecting people to Exmoor** – Whilst the resident population of the National Park is small, a number of larger towns such as Barnstaple, South Molton and Tiverton are within a 15km catchment of the National Park boundary. Residents of these towns often look to the National Park for their leisure and recreation but lack routes of a consistent standard which are safe and suitable for a range of ages and abilities to walk, wheel or cycle.
- **Public transport connectivity** – Enhanced active travel infrastructure offers the potential to safely connect residents to public transport or can bring visitors to the National Park to start their recreational active travel journeys (Figure 2-2). However, the current public transport network serving the National Park is limited, with no National Rail services within or adjacent to the National Park. The most frequent services operate along the West Somerset coast to Minehead (two per hour), and from Barnstaple to Combe Martin or Lynton and Lynmouth (broadly hourly), but many communities have a very limited bus service, or no services at all.

Figure 2-2 - Lynton – Lynmouth – Barnstaple Station Rail Link bus service



#### Key Issues Affecting Active Travel in Exmoor National Park – Other Issues

- **Finance and resources** – Developing infrastructure schemes and supporting community-led projects to 'construction ready' status requires considerable resource. Funding for transport schemes, including active travel, has generally been distributed to local highway authorities. ENPA has not traditionally been awarded dedicated funding to prepare transport schemes.
- **Land ownership** – In comparison with urban areas, active travel routes in the National Parks are more likely to involve use of public rights of way, especially for recreational journeys. In the majority of cases these routes traverse land in private ownership; therefore, landowners and land managers have a very important role in managing and maintaining routes, and in facilitating or enabling improvements to be made.

## 2.5 Engagement and feedback

Stakeholder engagement and public feedback have been key elements in the development of this Active Travel Plan, as described below:

- Public survey - an online survey was available on ENPA's webpage during autumn 2024, featuring a mapping element that allowed stakeholders to show where they wanted active travel improvements or to highlight issues. 85 unique individuals or organisations responded to the online survey up to the end of November 2025;
- Stakeholder workshops – two sets of workshops were held in November 2024 and February 2025. These were attended by 18 people representing a range of organisations, including the local highway authorities (Devon and Somerset), local parish councils, Forestry England, active travel interest groups (including horse-riding) and members of the public; and
- An engagement event was held with 5 Young Rangers (young people aged 14-18+) in December 2024.

Stakeholder engagement was also carried out with 80 individuals as part of the Active Travel Off-Road Studies across eight community-based sessions. These events were held in accessible settings such as coffee mornings, schools and youth clubs. To ensure feedback from the wider community, there was a focus on those stakeholders within underrepresented groups, including families with young children, young adults, older adults and those with limited access to digital tools.

A summary of the key themes emerging from engagement is set out below:

- Of those responding to the online survey, the majority lived within Exmoor National Park;
- 64% of the online respondents indicated that they represented two or more age ranges and some responses were from people or organisations that represented all age groups;
- There was support for a broad range of possible infrastructure improvements (including multi-user trails and/or shared-use paths; path surface upgrades; supporting infrastructure such as cycle parking and e-bike hire; tackling barriers such as stiles; walking infrastructure such as improved footways; safer roads for active travel.
- The online survey received clusters of comments relating to specific geographical areas, including the areas between Minehead and Porlock; around Dulverton; and

- between Parracombe and Lynton – these areas were further supported via comments received during the stakeholder workshops;
- There was support for both a new cycle route and path upgrades/maintenance (including additional public rights of way links) from Minehead to Porlock;
  - There was a desire for a safer active travel route between Dulverton and Brushford;
  - Several comments highlighted the need for safer crossings of the A39 especially focused on the Parracombe area.
- 
- 25% of all comments captured by the online survey were not specific to one geographical area and covered general themes, including gate upgrades, issues such as lack of dog control and/or maintenance of existing routes, public transport improvements and requests for more family-friendly routes and/or upgrades to existing path status.

These general comments were further supported via feedback from the workshops and the youth engagement, including comments suggesting:

- more and/or better information such as more wayfinding signs;
- new facilities i.e. a Mountain Bike Trail centre;
- improved public transport options including multi-modal elements (bikes on buses or a bike and bus route), and
- more organised clubs (cycling groups) or events (i.e. blossom trail).

Similar issues emerged from the Active Travel Off-Road Studies community sessions:

- Accessibility and inclusion themes: Mobility challenges, stiles, poor surfacing, and limited transport links hinder access, especially for older adults and families with young children;
- Safety and confidence: Concerns about traffic, poor lighting, and path conditions deterred use, particularly for youth and carers;
- Knowledge and awareness: Many participants were unaware of existing walking and cycling information resources provided by ENPA.
- Fun, exploration and social connections: Families and youth called for fun, interactive, and social elements, such as interactive trails or pump tracks, to make active travel more attractive; and
- Connectivity: Reliable, integrated public transport and well-connected paths were repeatedly highlighted as priorities.



### 3 Designing for Active Travel in Protected Landscapes

#### 3.1 Guidance

The Department for Transport (DfT) has published best practice guidance on planning and designing active travel infrastructure. Key documents currently include:

- [Inclusive Mobility - A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure \(2021\)](#);
- [Local Transport Note \(LTN\) 1/20 - Cycle Infrastructure Design \(2020\)](#);
- [Manual for Streets 1 \(2007\)](#) and [2 \(2010\)](#).

A range of tools are also available from the DfT and/or Active Travel England to help plan active travel networks and design improvements, including the Route Selection Tool, Walking Route Audit Tool, Route and Area Check Tools.

Much of this guidance is based on schemes and good practice from large urban areas, initially with a focus on commuter trips. As such, it can set standards that are not always appropriate in rural areas or protected landscapes such as National Parks. Active Travel England is currently preparing new Rural Design Guidance to help address this issue. However, further work is likely to be required to identify feasible and deliverable solutions appropriate to the context of the National Park. ENPA will continue to work collaboratively with other National Parks and Active Travel England on this matter.

Some National Parks and National Landscapes have issued guidance on rural road management and design, such as [Roads in the South Downs \(2015\)](#) and [Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Highways in the Chilterns \(2009\)](#). These consider sympathetic and appropriate measures to address issues including motor traffic speeds and flows; however, these tend to pre-date the national guidance specific to active travel.

In addition, a wide range of guidance is also available from charity organisations representing the interests of different active travel modes. These include [The British Horse Society](#), [Living Streets](#) (representing walking) and [Sustrans](#) (representing walking, wheeling and cycling).

For the purposes of this report there was an identified need to interpret and adapt the available guidance for an Exmoor National Park context, as set out below.

#### 3.2 Core design principles

The national government guidance sets out core design principles for active travel networks. Table 3-1 summarises these principles, and how they are interpreted for the Exmoor National Park context, to reflect a greater focus on leisure and recreation trips and the requirements of a National Park setting.

Table 3-1 - Interpretation of core design principles

Core principle	Exmoor National Park context
Coherent	The network must be coherent - it must link places to where people want to start and finish their journeys with a route quality that is easy to navigate. There should be a consistent standard of provision along a route.
Direct	Routes should avoid unnecessary detours. However, for leisure focused routes, directness may be less important than attractiveness. Going for a walk, cycle or horse ride may be the purpose of someone's trip and routes may even be circular.
Safe	Routes should be safe and feel safe. Active travel routes should be separate from motor traffic wherever possible, with opportunities for people to rest and shelter. Where active travel routes mix with motor traffic, motor traffic volumes and speeds must be at acceptable levels. In most cases in the National Park lighting of routes is not appropriate due to the protected landscape setting, dark skies preservation, and predominantly daytime leisure use.
Comfortable	Routes should be good quality, well maintained, with suitable surfaces of adequate width for the volume and mix of users. There should be minimal obstructions causing people to stop and start, such as gates or road crossings. Routes should avoid steep gradients where possible.
Attractive	Active travel should be a pleasurable activity. Routes and public spaces should be attractive to use and create enjoyable experiences, with plenty of things to see and do. Routes should consider their potential to attract new visitors and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park.

## Accessibility

Active travel infrastructure should be inclusive and accessible. While this is not always possible on the active travel network across Exmoor National Park, routes and infrastructure should ideally cater for people of all ages and abilities including those using wheelchairs, mobility scooters, pushchairs, and non-standard cycles. Wherever possible and practical to do so, multi-use trails should be designed to accommodate horse-riding.

### 3.3 Potential design solutions – Introduction

Some design solutions outlined in government guidance, such as in LTN 1/20, are not appropriate for a National Park setting. For example, protected cycle routes separated from people walking are typically not appropriate due to the urbanising impact on the National Park and lower peak walking and cycling flows. Conversely, some interventions that are suitable for a National Park, such as alternatives to gates and stiles, are not included in LTN 1/20.

The sections below set out types of solution to address rural active travel issues likely to be appropriate for locations in the National Park.

### 3.4 Infrastructure for routes

#### Shared-use paths / multi-use trails

These are paths for active travel users, where motor traffic is not permitted. To make them usable by a wide range of people and active travel groups, investment may be required, for example, to upgrade the path surface, manage drainage and widen the route. In many places multi-use trails will make use of existing public rights of way; in some locations it may be beneficial to secure new links (Figure 3-1). Where upgrades to path surfaces are required there will be a need to consider various surfacing options on a case-by-case basis. This will need to balance factors including the anticipated levels of use, the range of active travel modes who will have access, the sensitivity of the path's location and visual impacts.

Figure 3-1 - Example of a shared-use path / multi-use trail with stone dust surface



#### Quiet Lanes

Local highway authorities can designate parts of their road network as Quiet Lanes, to emphasise their role as routes for active travel, alongside considerate use by drivers of motor vehicles. [Government advice](#) states these are minor rural roads with low motor traffic flows and speeds, and narrow road widths. Quiet Lanes are identified by signage, which is included in the Highway Code (Figure 3-2).

Figure 3-2 - Example of Quiet Lane Signage





However, if traffic flows or speeds are too high, then other measures would be required, such as motor traffic access restrictions, speed limits or measures to reduce speeds.

### Grids, gates, and stiles (path furniture)

The National Park adopts the policy of the 'least restrictive' path furniture at boundaries. Cattle grids with an adjacent gate for horses are the most accessible form of access at fenced boundaries and should be considered first. Stiles should be avoided and instead 'gaps', cattle grids with adjacent gates, or standalone easy to operate gates introduced where possible (Figure 3-3).

Figure 3-3 - Example of a standalone lever-operated gate



### Improvements for walking and wheeling in settlements

A range of solutions can be used to help create safe, connected and inclusive routes for walking and wheeling. These include completing missing sections, widening at pinch points, tackling uneven surfaces and providing dropped kerbs and tactile paving. There may be opportunities for lighting improvements to enhance safety whilst protecting the dark sky designation of the National Park. Crossing points and road junctions can be redesigned to reduce the distance people walking and wheeling have to traverse (Figure 3-4). This can help to enhance safety, and emphasise pedestrian priority, in line with the revised Highway Code rules.

Figure 3-4 – Redesigned side road junction with greater pedestrian priority



### Managing traffic speeds in settlements

A range of measures can be implemented to help ensure that people drive at appropriate speeds and make streets safer and more pleasant for active travel journeys. A combination of changes to traffic regulations (such as lower speed limits, including 20mph limits and zones) and to the physical street environment may be required to achieve this. Changes to speed limits need to align with the relevant local highway authority's (Devon County Council or Somerset Council) position on setting speed limits.

Less engineering-focused solutions can be considered to reduce traffic speeds. 'Natural calming' concepts can include the introduction or positioning of planters, tree planting, the positioning of parked vehicles or the removal of central white line road markings.

### Managing rural traffic flows

There may be locations on key routes where existing motor traffic flows are not supportive of safe active travel. If alternative routes are available for motor traffic, then measures could be considered to divert through traffic whilst retaining access to properties and agricultural land. These could be direction signing strategies, 'access only' signage, or measures to prevent vehicles passing through a particular point (typically gates, bollards, posts or planters. These arrangements allow active travel users to pass but not motor traffic.



3.5 Supporting infrastructure

Alongside investment to create suitable active travel routes, there are a range of other measures which can give people the support and confidence to make active travel journeys. These include the following:

- Benches and resting points – these offer people a place to stop, take in the view and extend the distance they are comfortable travelling.
- Cycle parking – It should be fit-for-purpose, secure, and as close to the destination as possible, and cater for all cycle users and cycle designs such as adapted cycles, those with trailers and tandems (Figure 3-5).

Figure 3-5 - Example of cycle parking in historic settlement



- Cycle hire – to enable residents and visitors to access and use bikes, including options for e-bikes or cargo bikes;
- Public transport connectivity – integrated and effective public transport gives people the confidence to use active travel for the ‘first mile’ or ‘last mile’ of journeys. This also requires there to be safe routes to access bus stops.
- Things to see and do – Creating facilities for activities such as picnics, play or wildlife spotting areas increases the attractiveness of routes.
- Wayfinding, signage, maps and gateway features – clear and consistent direction information helps people navigate and feel confident about routes and

connections, in the countryside and in settlements. Gateway features and signage can also promote general awareness of routes and encourage exploration. Wayfinding can include destination and distance information or indicate the location of key facilities (Figure 3-6).

Figure 3-6 - Example of information board with map and explanation of area’s important flora and fauna



- Other supporting infrastructure – A range of other facilities can help to emphasise that active travel is encouraged, and there is significant scope for businesses and communities to show that they welcome people arriving by active travel. This includes access to e-bike charging facilities, the provision of drinking water fountains, and public bike tyre air pumps and toolkits, for example. There is the potential for these kinds of facilities to be provided at major destinations, at businesses, visitor centres or visitor accommodation.

### 3.6 Supporting initiatives

Alongside the infrastructure referenced above, there are other initiatives to support active travel. These include:

- [Active travel social prescribing](#), where healthcare professionals prescribe active travel as a means of improving health and wellbeing;
- [Bikeability](#) is the government's flagship cycle training programme available for primary and secondary school age children, which gives them the skills and confidence to cycle safely;
- School Streets are temporary restrictions on motorised traffic on roads outside of schools, at drop-off and pick-up times, to enhance pupil safety and support active travel for the school run. Further information is available from [Devon County Council](#) and the [Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership](#); and
- Information and publicity about routes and facilities. This currently includes [Exmoor's Access and Recreation Map](#), the [Miles without Stiles routes](#), and for areas in Somerset the [Explore Somerset](#) website identifies the locations of path furniture

These are often coordinated by the local highway authorities, working in partnership with stakeholders; however there are roles for other organisations.

### 3.7 Developing proposals

Active travel proposals have the potential to impact on residents, businesses and landowners. At present ENPA has not been awarded dedicated money to take forward and develop any of the proposals discussed in the Active Travel Plan. However, as and when funding becomes available, proposals will require detailed design, engagement and consultation in order to identify a suitable and appropriate scheme to be delivered.

In seeking to enhance active travel routes and infrastructure, care will need to be taken to assess, minimise and mitigate the impacts on the surrounding landscape, natural environment and heritage. This means carefully considering the alignments chosen, and the materials and colours used in schemes, and making use of locally-derived items wherever possible. It will also require environmental improvements and biodiversity net gain in line with policy and guidance.

Some types of proposal will require specific types of permission or consent. These include:

- legal orders to change speed limits, or change the status or alignment of public rights of way; and
- planning permission, such as proposals for multi-use trails not on public rights of way alignments.

Many parts of the National Park have nationally or internationally important fauna or flora; in many cases designated as Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The [Exmoor Rights of Way Improvement Plan](#) indicates the processes which are to be followed where maintenance is required in protected areas, including consent from Natural England in certain circumstances. If new routes are proposed across protected sites, compliance with SSSI and SAC legislation will be required. Liaison will take place with Historic England as appropriate.

4 Our Proposed Network and Priorities

4.1 Our Vision for the Active Travel Network in Exmoor National Park

- Our vision for the active travel network has been developed based on:
- The outcome of the evidence review, including data on existing travel patterns, potential demand for active travel, important journey origins and destinations, plus key opportunities and challenges for active travel;
  - Feedback from the public engagement on gaps in the network, key issues and requested improvements; and
  - Stakeholder workshops at which the emerging vision was discussed.

The vision is comprised of 11 themes. Each theme focuses on a different aspect of active travel, a key issue, or a particular geography in the National Park. Figure 4-1 summarises the active travel vision, grouped into four overarching areas as follows:

- Existing network;
- Future network;
- Traffic issues; and
- Active travel welcome.

Figure 4-1 - Vision for the Active Travel Network in Exmoor National Park – overview

Existing network	A. Improving existing promoted trails	B. A more accessible public rights of way network	C. Extending the network for cycling & horse riding
	D. Maintaining the rights of way network	E. Enhancing active travel infrastructure in larger settlements	
Future network	F. New family-friendly multi-use trails	G. Enhancing local links between communities	H. Active travel routes into the National Park
Traffic issues	I. Tackling main road severance	J. Traffic Speeds on rural roads in the National Park	
Active travel welcome	K. Active travel welcome and supporting measures		

The full vision diagram is set out in Appendix C with the following set out for each theme:

- Context – why the theme is considered important or why action is required;
- Objective – what the Active Travel Plan wishes to achieve in relation to this theme;
- Example geographical areas – possible target areas for study and investment.

All the themes are intended to achieve an enhanced active travel network for the National Park, suitable for a wide range of ages, abilities and purposes.

Next steps, with the recommended actions for how each objective will be achieved, are set out in Chapter 5.

4.2 Our vision: the existing network

Theme A: Improving existing promoted trails

**Context:** Long-distance promoted trails are some of the most popular routes used for active travel in the National Park. They include the England Coast Path National Trail and National Cycle Network routes. Collectively these could form a ‘core’ active travel network. However, they are currently of variable quality; for example, with some sections having poor quality surfaces or involving the use of roads with high motor traffic speeds.

Maintaining and improving existing promoted trails was also a theme which emerged from the Active Travel Plan public engagement and stakeholder workshops.

**Our Active Travel Plan objective:** Support the role of promoted trails as core parts of the network and work towards more consistent quality.

Example potential areas for improvement:

- NCN Route 3 from Brushford to Dulverton – this currently follows the B3322 and improvements to this corridor was identified in the public engagement.
- Two Moors Way – section following the A39 by Hillsford Bridge.



## Theme B: A more accessible public rights of way network

**Context:** There are a range of features on the active travel network which can reduce the physical accessibility and usability of routes. Examples include steps, stiles and steep gradients affecting people with limited mobility or using mobility aids, and gates which are difficult to use on horseback. These features can mean that walking, wheeling, cycling or horse-riding journeys are prevented, curtailed in distance or made difficult for some people. ENPA has ongoing initiatives to address physical accessibility issues through our Rights of Way Improvement Plan policies.

Physical accessibility issues were also frequently raised in the Active Travel engagement survey.

**Our Active Travel Plan objective:** Enhance the physical accessibility of routes, with a focus at, and surrounding, popular locations for active travel.

### Example potential areas for improvement

- Exford and Exe Valley; Lyn Valleys; Porlock Vale; Selworthy; Tarr Steps and the Barle Valley.

## Theme C: Extending the network for cycling and horse-riding

**Context:** Comments in the public feedback survey requested more safe routes and connections for cycling and horse-riding. Of the 992km of the public rights of way network, 44% are footpaths which do not permit cycling or horse-riding.

Consequently, the byways and bridleways (which permit the use of cyclists and horse-riders) are often only connected via roads, which can result in a fragmented and incoherent network.

ENPA have commissioned two new detailed assessments of the public rights of way network. These assessments are badged as Active Travel Off-Road Studies and are investigating opportunities to make more of the public rights of way network available for cycling and horse-riding.

**Our Active Travel Plan objective:** Extend and better connect the network of traffic-free routes for cycling and horse riding.

### Example potential areas for improvement

- Active Travel Off-Road Study areas (covering South & West of Minehead & Parracombe parish).

## Theme D: Maintaining the rights of way network

**Context:** The National Park's public rights of way network is diverse and extensive - 992km (617 miles) in length. ENPA is responsible for its maintenance, covering matters such as repairing path furniture, vegetation clearance and waymarking. At present, there are heavily reduced funds available to maintain the existing public rights of way network and infrastructure or prepare the legal orders to modify the status or alignment of public rights of way. A series of damaging storms, particularly Storm Daragh in December 2024, closed many routes due to fallen trees and resulted in significant workload for ENPA Access staff.

Requests to address specific maintenance issues were also a common topic raised in our public engagement. Without a sustainable funding settlement for maintenance, there is a concern that the quality and usability of the public rights of way network in general may deteriorate substantially over the next 3 to 5 years, negatively impacting on active travel users.

**Our Active Travel Plan objective:** Secure a sustainable level of maintenance funding for the public rights of way network, to improve its quality and avoid a deterioration in its usability.

### Example potential areas for improvement

- Applies across the National Park; priority actions / locations to be identified separately.

## Theme E: Active travel infrastructure in larger settlements

**Context:** Exmoor's larger settlements act as hubs for local services and facilities needed by residents, including primary schools, GPs and shops. They are also home to visitor accommodation, retail businesses and tourist attractions. As a result, many resident and visitor trips are made to, from, and within these settlements. The provision and quality of active travel infrastructure in the settlements is varied.

**Our Active Travel Plan objective:** Support and enable active travel in the larger National Park settlements, with a focus on addressing safety issues.

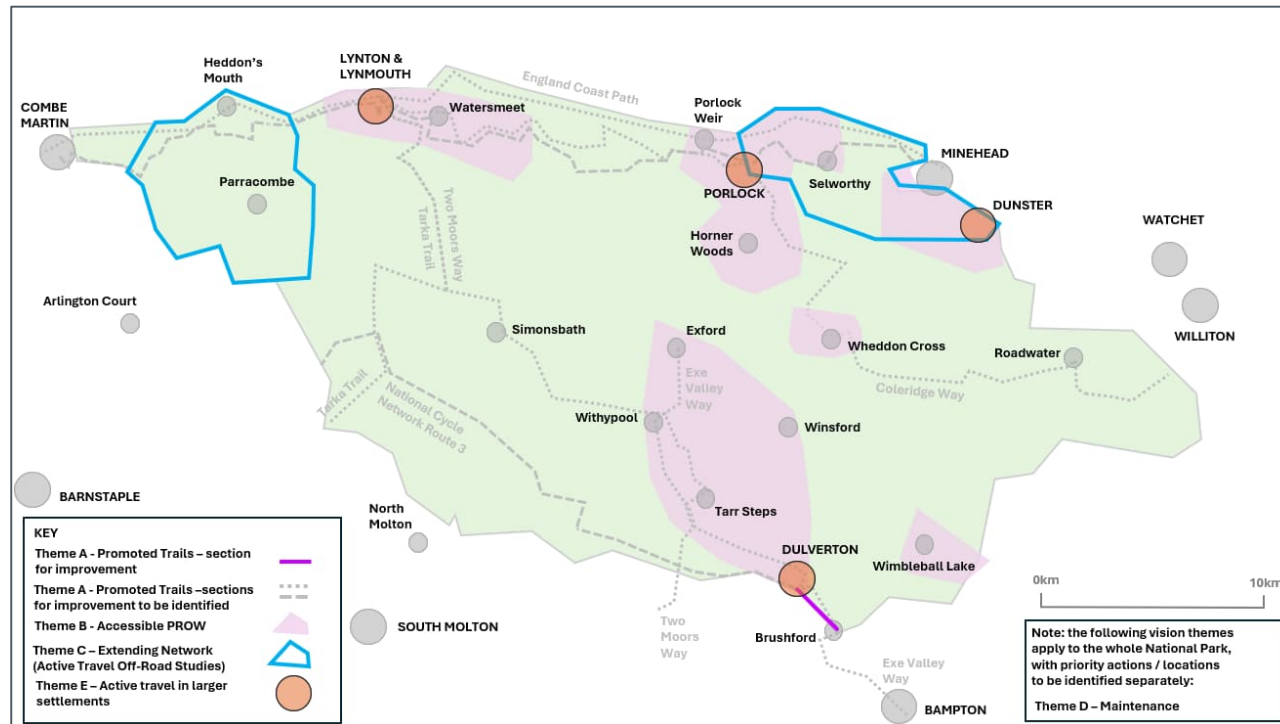
### Example potential focus areas

- Dulverton; Dunster; Lynton-Lynmouth; Porlock.

## Network Plan

The Network Plan in Figure 4-2 illustrates the proposed geographical areas of focus for investment for themes A-E.

Figure 4-2 - Network Plan for existing network themes



- Wimbleball Lake circular.

## Theme G: Enhancing local links between communities

**Context:** The Active Travel Plan evidence review identified communities which could be linked together to enable shorter-distance everyday active travel journeys and provide a non-car alternative for some trips.

**Our Active Travel Plan objective:** Create safer local links between communities for active travel, focusing on shorter connections.

### Example potential focus areas

- Minehead to Porlock;
- Dulverton to Brushford;
- Timberscombe-Dunster-Minehead; and/or
- Roadwater to Washford/Williton.

## Theme H: Active travel routes into the National Park

**Context:** According to the 2021 Exmoor National Park visitor survey, half of those surveyed came from elsewhere within the South West region. Whilst the population of Exmoor National Park is small, the towns of Ilfracombe, Minehead, Watchet and Williton are located in the immediate surrounding area, and communities such as Barnstaple, South Molton and Tiverton are within a 15km catchment of the National Park boundary.

Residents of these towns often look to the National Park for their leisure and recreation. However, the settlements tend not to be connected to National Park visitor destinations and there are limited 'gateway' settlements with routes of a consistent standard which are safe and suitable for a range of ages and abilities to walk, wheel or cycle. Better links into the National Park could also extend horse-riding opportunities. In some places, former railway lines could offer potential alignments for active travel routes, whilst the Steam Coast Trail is an existing proposal for a connected multi-use trail along the West Somerset coast.

**Our Active Travel Plan objective:** Create and promote safe and suitable waymarked routes to enable residents and visitors to access the National Park from key surrounding settlements.

## 4.3 Our vision: Future Network

### Theme F: New family-friendly multi-use Trails

**Context:** At present there is an absence of promoted cycling routes in the National Park targeted at, and suitable for families. Public engagement responses suggested routes for family-friendly multi-use trails. Filling this gap in provision will help to appeal to new visitor markets and provide recreation opportunities for local residents.

**Our Active Travel Plan objective:** Create and promote multi-use trails to appeal to families.

### Example potential focus areas

- Minehead to Porlock Weir;
- Dulverton to Brushford;
- Minehead to Dunster to Wooton Courtenay; and

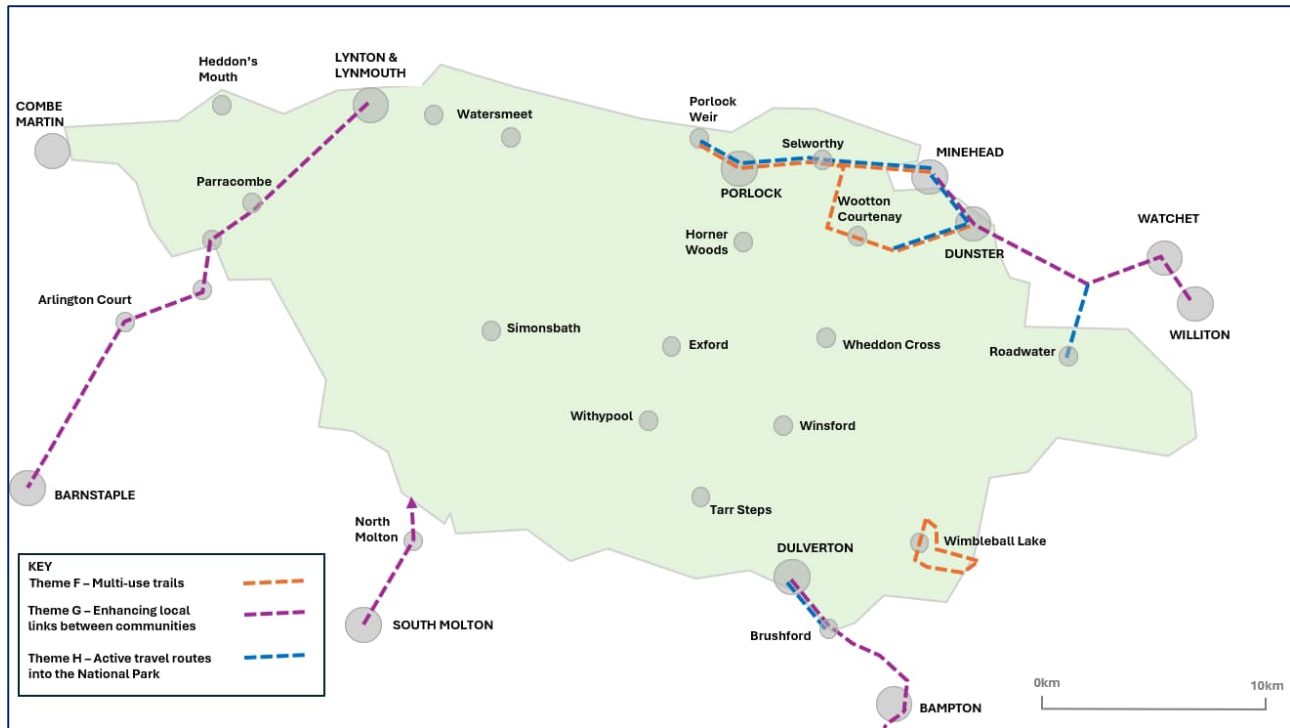
Example potential focus areas

- Barnstaple to Lynton; and/or
- Watchet to Minehead (completing the Steam Coast Trail);
- South Molton to the National Park; and
- Tiverton to Bampton to Dulverton.

Network plan

The Network Plan in Figure 4-3 illustrates the proposed geographical areas of focus for investment for themes F-H.

Figure 4-3 - Network Plan for future network themes



highlighted several connectivity issues where public rights of way terminate at busy A-roads, limiting their use and attractiveness for all active travel modes.

**Our Active Travel Plan objective:** Address road severance to create a better connected active travel network, focusing on high-speed A- and B-road locations.

Example potential focus areas

- A39 between Lynton and Parracombe; and/or
- A39 Porlock Vale.

Theme J: Traffic speeds on rural roads in the National Park

**Context:** The road network links together traffic-free active travel routes. In many parts of the National Park traffic flows are likely to be sufficiently low to support safe active travel along roads. However, traffic speeds in some areas are likely to make certain road sections currently unsuitable for most active travel. The public engagement raised concerns about traffic speeds and its negative impact on active travel.

**Our Active Travel Plan objective:** Ensure that the minor road network supports and enables safe active travel.

Example potential focus areas

- The road network across the National Park; priority actions / locations to be identified separately.

Network plan

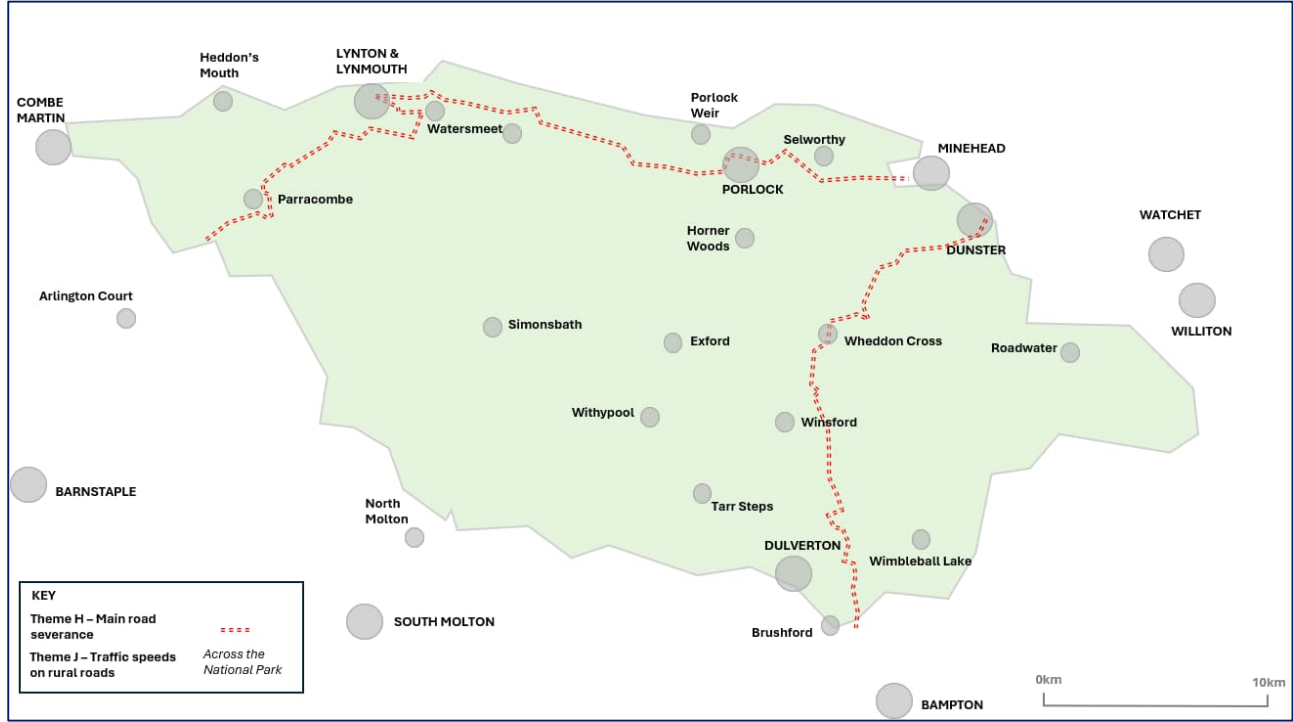
The Network Plan in Figure 4-4 illustrates the proposed geographical areas of focus for investment for themes I-J.

4.4 Our Vision: Traffic Issues

Theme I: Tackling main road severance

**Context:** Due to the disjointed nature of the public rights of way network, many active travel journeys require the use of sections of road to reach, or connect between, traffic-free routes. Motor traffic speeds and flows are a key issue which can dissuade or prevent active journeys from taking place. Feedback from the public engagement

Figure 4-4 - Network Plan for traffic issues themes



4.5 Our Vision: Active travel welcome

Theme K: Active travel welcome and supporting measures

**Context:** As set out in Chapter 3, there are a variety of supporting infrastructure and initiatives which demonstrate that active travel is encouraged. The facilities and information currently available to support and encourage active travel varies depending on location.

Many active travel journeys made by visitors start or end in Exmoor's larger settlements, using them as a base to explore the area. Arrival and departure points are often car parks, or bus stops. All of the promoted trails start, end or run through one or more of the larger settlements, so these act as active travel 'gateways'. Other important locations for active travel journeys include holiday accommodation sites and major tourist destinations.

**Our Active Travel Plan objective:** Ensure a consistent welcome, in terms of information and supporting facilities, is provided at key locations for active travel within the National Park.

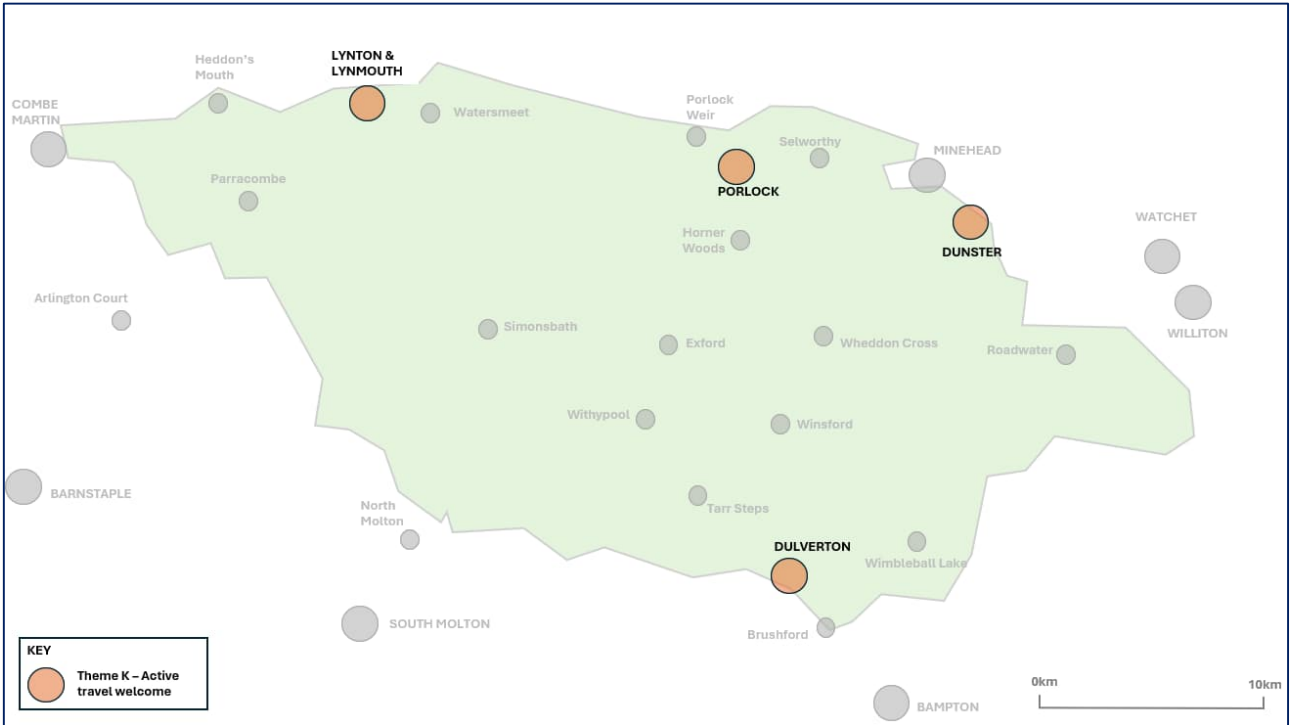
Example potential focus areas

- Dulverton; Dunster; Lynton-Lynmouth; Porlock.

Network Plan

The Network Plan in Figure 4-5 illustrates the proposed geographical areas of focus for investment for theme K.

Figure 4-5 - Network Plan for active travel welcome theme

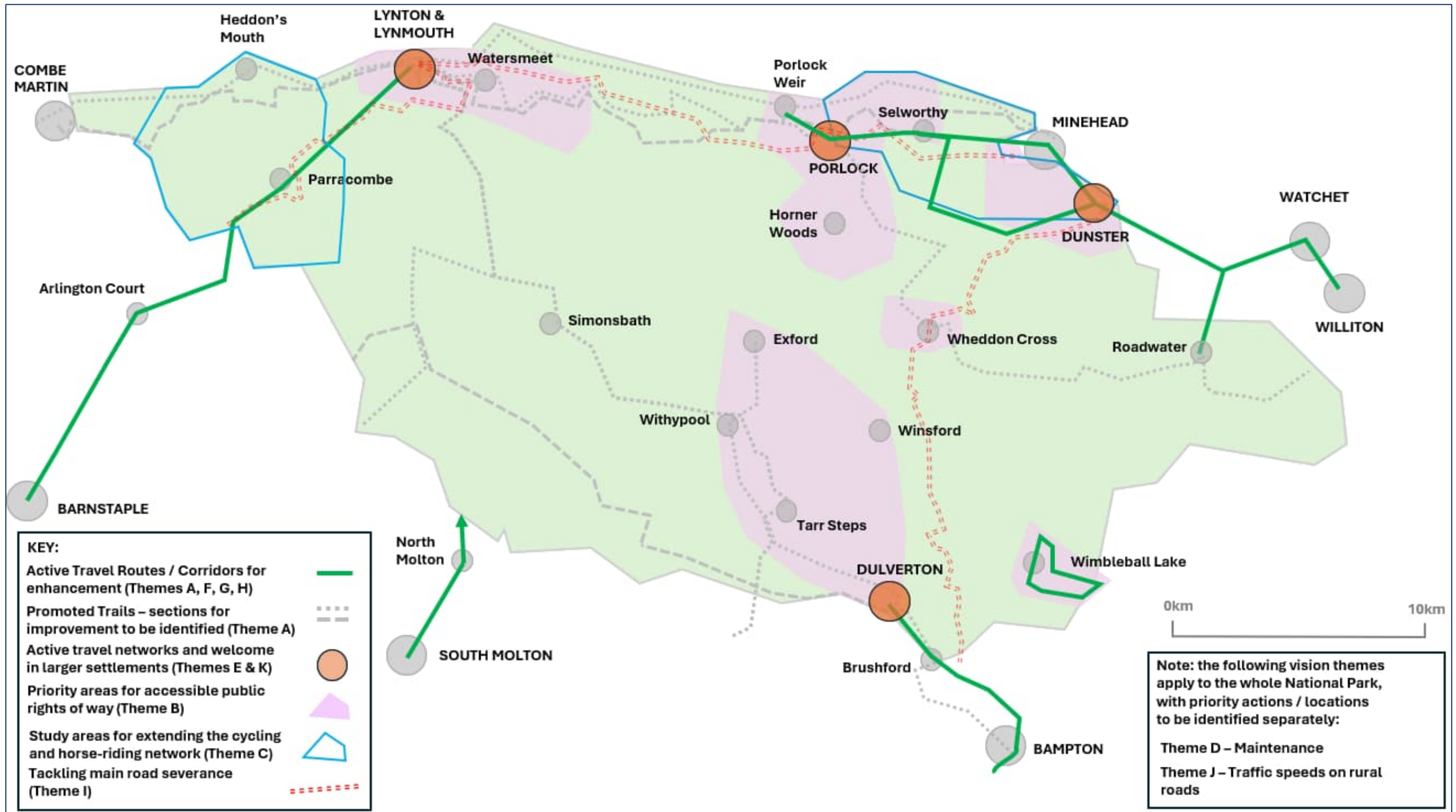


4.6 Network Plan

The Network Plan in Figure 4-6 overleaf illustrates the proposed geographical areas of focus for investment, based on all themes.



Figure 4-6 - Network Plan for Active Travel Investment





## 5 Delivery and next steps

### 5.1 Introduction

The Active Travel Plan themes identify a range of projects and proposals, focused on different aspects of the active travel network. In some cases, potential areas for improvement are identified, but in others, further study is required to identify these.

This chapter comprises:

- A delivery plan of actions against each vision theme;
- Commentary about funding and partnership working; and
- The next steps to take forward any proposals contained in this document.

### 5.2 Delivery plan

Table 5-1 overleaf sets out the identified actions to help achieve the objectives in the Active Travel Plan. These have been categorised into shorter and longer-term timeframes, informed by the consideration of:

- Policy alignment and positive impacts (the number of active travel journeys which would benefit or be enabled); and
- Deliverability or feasibility issues.

The required funding for improvements is likely to come from central government via Active Travel England. The scale and timing of future funding is unclear and therefore it would be inappropriate to commit to exact delivery timescales.

### 5.3 Funding and partnership working

Whilst certain public rights of way functions rest with ENPA, the local highway authorities (Devon County Council and Somerset Council) are responsible for the road network and some public rights of way activities in the National Park. In addition, transport funding has usually been distributed or awarded to local highway authorities. Therefore, ENPA will need to work closely with Devon County Council and Somerset Council to support and take forward any active travel proposals affecting the road network.

In the course of its operations ENPA already works closely with a wide range of other organisations and people, and this partnership working be required to take forward the Active Travel Plan actions.

The dedicated active travel funding awarded to ENPA in 2024 from Active Travel England was restricted to network planning, evidence gathering, design, and related activities. At the present time there is no separate or dedicated funding stream available to National Park Authorities to fund the construction and delivery of proposals. However, ENPA is committed to investigating all funding sources. Funding may be available for design only, or for construction and delivery and there are a wide variety of potential funding opportunities

In making investment decisions public bodies are required to demonstrate that they are achieving a range of objectives, including value for money. Many factors influence value for money of active travel proposals, including scheme costs, the positive impacts (such as the likely number of journeys that will be enabled), consideration of adverse impacts and projected lifetime of any new infrastructure or agreements

The Active Travel Plan aims to focus investment where it can have the greatest impact, particularly in terms of increasing the numbers of active travel journeys. However, without ring-fenced active travel infrastructure funding for National Parks, there is a risk that investment may not take place. ENPA will work with other National Parks to make the case for a separate funding stream to enable the achievements of the improvements outlined in this Active Travel Plan.

Table 5-1 - Active Travel Plan Delivery Programme

Principal vision themes supported	Objective	Initial action	Follow-on actions	Potential focus areas
<i>A. Improving existing promoted trails</i>	<i>Support the role of promoted trails as core parts of the network and work towards more consistent quality.</i>	Audit promoted routes within the National Park and create schedule of proposed improvements	Develop and deliver a programme of investment for long-distance promoted trails, prioritised by issues to be addressed and scale of improvement, working with partners as appropriate, including local highway authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coleridge Way</li> <li>• Exe Valley Trail</li> <li>• Tarka Trail</li> <li>• Two Moors Way</li> <li>• National Cycle Network Route 3</li> </ul>
<i>B. A more accessible public rights of way network</i>	<i>Enhance the physical accessibility of routes, with a focus at, and surrounding, popular locations for active travel.</i>	Compile list of physical barriers to tackle, identified by ENPA along with public feedback, and continue existing investment programme	Extend the investment programme to further areas of the National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exford and Exe Valley</li> <li>• Lyn Valleys</li> <li>• Porlock Vale</li> <li>• Selworthy</li> <li>• Tarr Steps and the Barle Valley</li> </ul>
<i>C. Extending the network for cycling and horse-riding</i>	<i>Extend and better connect the network of traffic-free routes for cycling and horse riding.</i>	Implement any 'quick win' recommendations from the initial Active Travel Off-Road Studies	Commission further Active Travel Off-Road Studies for other parts of the National Park  Implement more complex recommendations from studies, either in terms of infrastructure upgrades or introducing the legal orders to give access rights for cycling and horse-riding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Active Travel Off-Road Study areas (covering South &amp; West of Minehead &amp; Parracombe parish)</li> <li>• Parts of National Park not covered by initial two studies</li> </ul>
<i>D. Maintaining the rights of way network</i>	<i>Secure a sustainable level of maintenance funding for the public rights of way network, to improve its quality and avoid a deterioration in its usability.</i>	Continue ongoing programmes of maintenance	Scale up if maintenance programmes if additional funds were made available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Across the National Park, through ongoing identification by ENPA, stakeholders and public feedback</li> </ul>

Principal vision themes supported	Objective	Initial action	Follow-on actions	Potential focus areas
<i>E. Active travel infrastructure in larger settlements</i>	<i>Support and enable active travel in the larger National Park settlements, with a focus on addressing safety issues.</i>	Undertake further study into existing conditions in key settlements  Work with local highway authorities and stakeholders to identify potential solutions	Work with local highway authorities and stakeholders to fund, design, consult on and (where supported) implement measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dulverton</li> <li>• Dunster</li> <li>• Lynton &amp; Lynmouth</li> <li>• Porlock</li> </ul>
<i>F. New family-friendly multi-use trails</i>	<i>Create and promote multi-use trails to appeal to families.</i>	Undertake further study to ascertain feasibility and deliverability of potential routes	Prepare designs for proposed routes  Undertake engagement and consultation  Subject to outcome, construct / implement designs in phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minehead to Porlock</li> <li>• Dulverton to Brushford</li> <li>• Minehead to Dunster to Timberscombe / Wooton Courtenay circular</li> <li>• Wimbleball Lake circular</li> </ul>
<i>G. Enhancing local links between communities</i>	<i>Create safer local links between communities for active travel, focusing on shorter connections.</i>	Undertake further study to ascertain feasibility and deliverability of potential routes	Prepare designs for proposed routes  Undertake engagement and consultation  Subject to outcome, construct / implement designs in phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minehead to Porlock</li> <li>• Dulverton to Brushford</li> <li>• Minehead to Dunster to Timberscombe</li> <li>• Roadwater to Washford/Williton.</li> </ul>
<i>H. Active Travel routes into the National Park</i>	<i>Create and promote safe and suitable waymarked routes to enable residents and visitors to access the National Park from key surrounding settlements.</i>	Work with partners including local highway authorities to identify suitable alignments, and commission studies into feasibility as required  Engagement and liaison with key stakeholders including landowners	Work with local highway authorities and stakeholders to fund, prepare designs for proposed routes  Undertake engagement and consultation  Subject to outcome, construct / implement designs in phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnstaple to Lynton</li> <li>• Tiverton to Bampton to Dulverton.</li> <li>• South Molton into the National Park</li> <li>• Watchet to Minehead (Steam Coast Trail)</li> </ul>

Principal vision themes supported	Objective	Initial action	Follow-on actions	Potential focus areas
<i>I. Tackling main road severance</i>	<i>Address road severance to create a better connected active travel network, focusing on high-speed A- and B-roads.</i>	Assess locations where public rights of way and minor roads meet A- and B-roads to identify priorities for improvement	<p>Work with local highway authorities and stakeholders to prepare/update information which encourages responsible, safe and courteous road use by all users</p> <p>Prepare proposals to address priority road severance locations</p> <p>Undertake engagement and consultation</p> <p>Where supported, implement improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A39 between Lynton and Parracombe</li> <li>• A39 Porlock Vale</li> <li>• Other locations as identified through separate study</li> </ul>
<i>J. Traffic speeds on rural roads in the National Park</i>	<i>Ensure that the minor road network supports and enables safe active travel.</i>	Investigate traffic speeds and issues across the National Park and potential solutions	<p>Subject to outcome of study, work with local highway authorities and stakeholders to fund, design, and undertake engagement and consultation for proposals</p> <p>Where supported, implement improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Across the National Park (identified by separate study)</li> </ul>
<i>K. Active travel welcome and supporting measures</i>	<i>Ensure a consistent welcome, in terms of information and supporting facilities, is provided in key National Park visitor settlements.</i>	Audit existing facilities in key locations, identify potential improvements and work with stakeholders to develop feasible designs	Where supported, implement improvements, including updates to wayfinding, information, infrastructure and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dulverton</li> <li>• Dunster</li> <li>• Lynton &amp; Lynmouth</li> <li>• Porlock</li> </ul>

## 5.4 Next steps

The priority proposals identified within the Active Travel Plan will be taken forward as funding and resources become available. Several proposals will require further study, design work, stakeholder engagement and/or public consultation to agree and confirm the appropriate improvements or specific alignments.

In broad terms, the next steps for each proposal will be:

- The area and/or corridor will be selected for progression; for example, when it meets funding bid criteria;
- Potential improvements, including possible alignments, for the area or corridor will be investigated, with early stage inputs from, and engagement with stakeholders;
- ENPA will then decide whether to proceed with the proposed improvements; and
- Following a decision to proceed, a detailed design will be prepared for the proposed area and/or alignment, along with any supporting work to secure necessary approvals and consents, such as agreements with landowners, planning applications or definitive map orders or other consents.

Improvements in targeted areas and/or corridors will be designed and developed to the latest design standards and guidance while remaining sympathetic to the National Park's protected landscape and special characteristics. Improvements will also include partnership working between ENPA, Devon County Council, Somerset Council, district, town and parish councils, landowners, and other key stakeholders.

## 5.5 Targets and monitoring

Targets relevant to active travel are set out in policy documents at the national, county and local (Exmoor) level. Achieving the actions set out in the Exmoor Active Travel Plan will locally contribute to the achievement of these targets.

The level of information currently available about active travel in the National Park, varies by topic, as indicated in Appendix B. Some information is already collected by ENPA. The local highway authorities covering the National Park (Devon County Council and Somerset Council) are preparing new Local Transport Plans and some information may be collected or analysed at a county level by them.

ENPA will work with Devon County Council, Somerset Council and other partners to consider how information can be collected within the National Park on topics such as:

- The overall numbers of people making active travel journeys on selected routes in the National Park;
- The travel modes used by residents and visitors to the National Park and resultant carbon emissions;
- The diversity of people making active travel journeys and for what purpose; and
- Users' perceptions about the suitability of the network.

Data collection will however be dependent on funding being available. Opportunities and requirements for data collection will be considered and integrated into the planning and delivery of new schemes.

## 5.6 Reviewing and updating

The Active Travel Plan will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect progress made or wider changes influencing active travel at a local or national level. This may include the completion of schemes, publication of new policies, strategies or design guidance, or new sources of funding.

## 5.7 Conclusion

Establishing active travel as the first choice for more everyday utility and leisure journeys has the potential to unlock major benefits, including: improved health; better air quality; improved place-making; boosted connectivity; strengthened local communities and economies; and conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the National Park.

The Exmoor National Park Active Travel Plan provides the long-term framework setting out ENPA's priorities for routes, informed by evidence on the potential for active travel, and feedback from stakeholders.

The Active Travel Plan sets out a vision of a better connected and safer network for walking, wheeling, cycling and horse-riding to connect communities together and to support active travel focused tourism trips and opportunities. Delivering the actions and proposals in the Active Travel Plan will enable people to access and enjoy the special qualities of the National Park in low impact ways.

# Appendices





# Appendix A

How the Active Travel Plan was prepared





## Appendix A – How the Active Travel Plan was prepared

### Background

In March 2024, Active Travel England (ATE) announced a [£1 million funding package](#) to support the development of enhanced active travel networks in England's National Parks. Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) successfully bid for and secured funding from ATE to support the development of this Active Travel Plan.

### Process

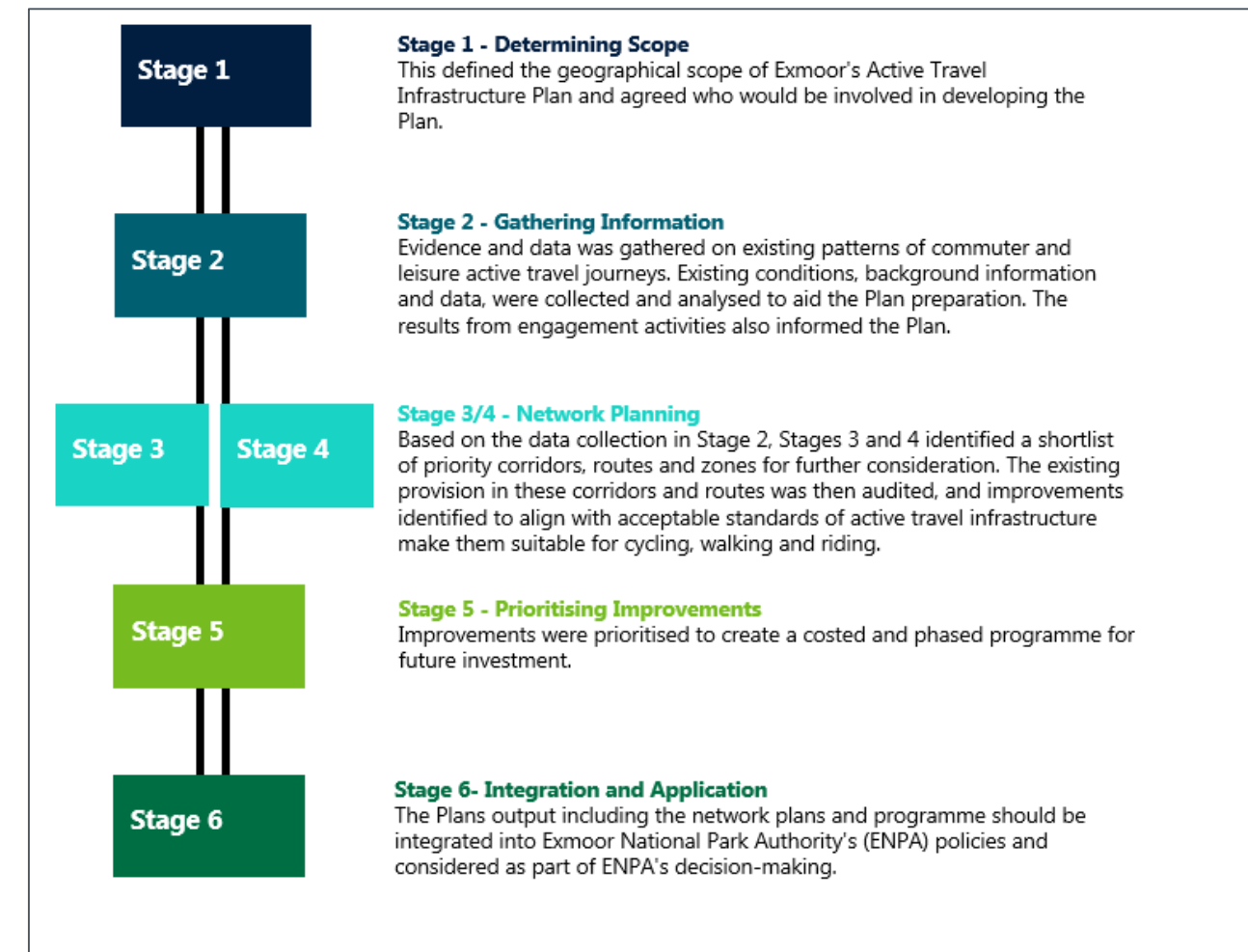
The Active Travel Plan was developed in broad alignment with advice set out in [LCWIPs Technical Guidance for Local Authorities](#) published by the DfT in 2017. The technical guidance sets out a recommended approach for local authorities, or other organisations, to plan networks of walking and cycling routes.

The national guidance was published at a time when it was assumed that planning for, and enhancing, active travel networks would be focused on urban areas and shorter-distance 'utility journeys' of up to 10km (for journey purposes including to education, employment, and shopping). However, the guidance notes that the process is intended to be scalable to the size and complexity of an area.

The development of the Active Travel Plan followed the recommended six-stage process outlined in the guidance, as described in Figure A-1. However, the guidance was flexibly applied to reflect:

- The context of the National Park, with its rural geography; and
- The Active Travel Plan's coverage of both everyday trips and leisure / visitor travel;
- Consideration of horse-riding alongside walking, wheeling and cycling in the Active Travel Plan.

Figure A-1 - Summary of the six stages of active travel plan development



### Data and evidence

The technical guidance states that active travel network planning should be evidence-led and based on data. The Active Travel Plan collected and made use of a range of datasets, including information on travel to school and work, and data on where leisure-focused journeys take place (from smartphone app users). However, it should be noted that available data does not provide a complete picture of active travel patterns in the National Park.

Engagement

The development of the Active Travel Plan has been shaped at different stages by engagement with key stakeholders and members of the public, including input on local aspirations and priorities for active travel infrastructure improvements. Table A-1 summarises the key steps in engagement through the Active Travel Plan’s development.

Table A-1 - Summary of the main stakeholder and public engagement activities

Dates	Engagement Format
October-December 2024	<a href="#">Online public engagement</a> , comprising survey and map onto which people could drop ‘pins’ to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ New active travel routes or ideas they would like to see developed;</li><li>▪ Existing active travel routes that need improvements;</li><li>▪ Support for someone else’s suggestion;</li><li>▪ Ideas within the National Park or linking routes from nearby settlements; and</li><li>▪ Any changes to make active travel safer and more attractive.</li></ul>
6 & 7 November 2024	Stakeholder workshops giving an overview of the project, the role and benefits of active travel, the information gathered so far and explaining the proposed approach to network planning and identifying priorities.  Attendees were asked to comment on important destinations for inclusion in the Active Travel Plan, identify any additional data or information for inclusion, and comments on the challenges to increasing active travel in the National Park
December 2025	Youth engagement event with Young Rangers
January 2025	Stakeholder workshops which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Summarised the feedback from the engagement to date;</li><li>▪ Outlined the proposed network and priorities, based on the data analysis and engagement feedback; and</li><li>▪ Set out next steps to take the Active Travel Plan to completion.</li></ul>

# Appendix B

Context and Background





## Appendix B - Context and Background

### Geographic and Landscape Context

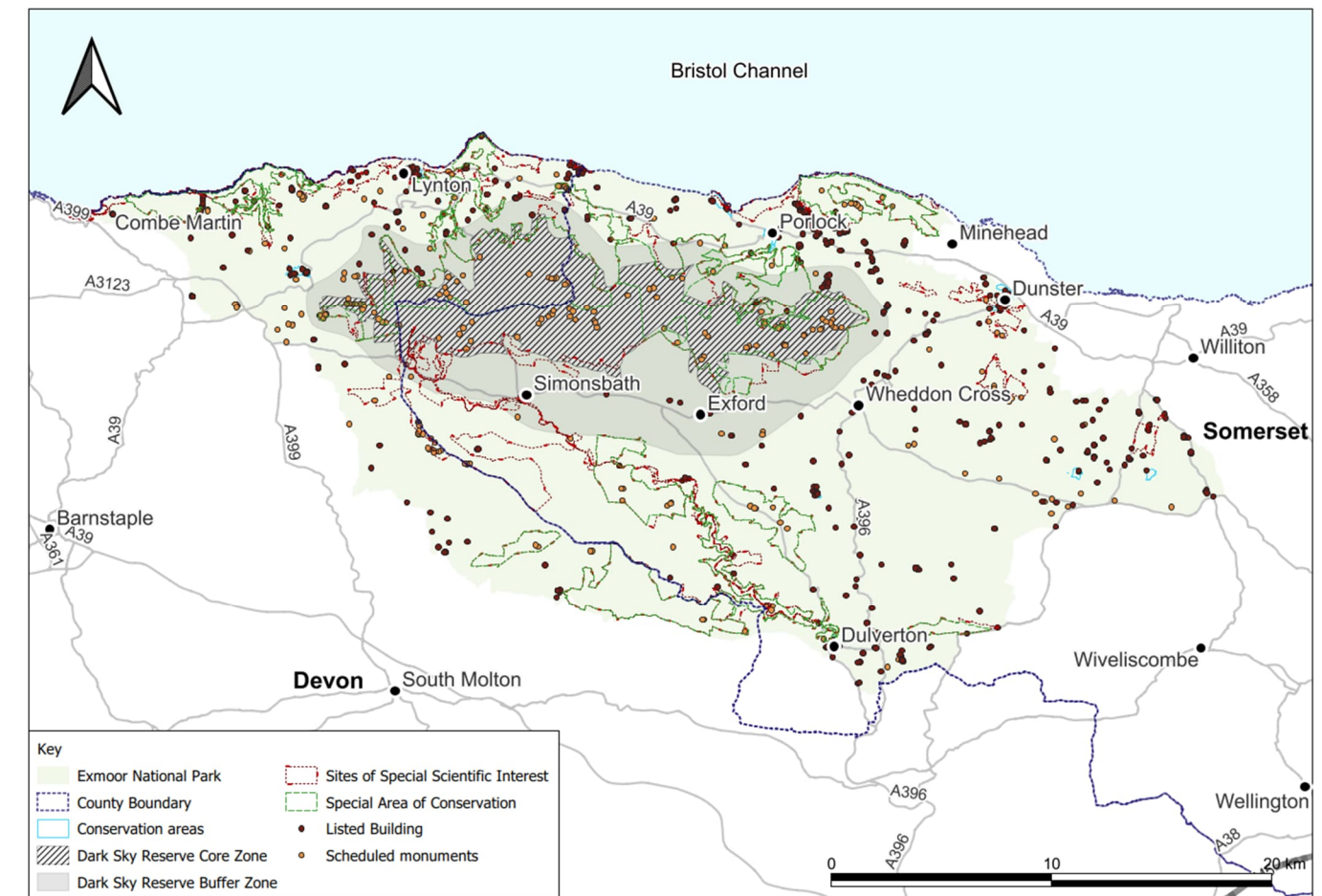
Located in southwest England, Exmoor National Park covers parts of North Devon and West Somerset and has a range of special qualities. The distinct and diverse landscape of the National Park includes large areas of open moorland, deeply incised wooded valleys with fast flowing streams, and a spectacular coastline with high sea cliffs along the Bristol Channel, supporting a wide range of wildlife. The National Park is a farmed landscape, with traditional upland farms, and is remote from large population centres, with deeply rural communities.

The landscape provides inspiration and enjoyment to residents and visitors alike and there are superb opportunities for walking, riding and cycling, with an extensive range of public rights of way, permitted paths and open access land.

Exmoor National Park is a highly protected landscape with both international and national conservation designations (Figure B-1). Many of the sites within the National Park have multiple layers of protection. These designations ensure that development, which may harm the integrity of these areas, is only allowed in exceptional circumstances. Key designations are listed below:

- Biodiversity – 126sqkm (18.2%) of the National Park is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the European Union's Habitats Directive to protect habitats and species. 195sqkm (28.1%) of the National Park are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), designated for their biological or geological significance.
- Heritage – the National Park contains 745 Listed Buildings, 296 Scheduled Monuments, and 19 Conservation Areas.
- Dark Skies - [International Dark Sky Reserves](#) are places 'possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and nocturnal environment that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural, educational, cultural, heritage and/or public enjoyment'. 83sqkm (12%) of Exmoor National Park is within the 'Dark Sky Reserve Core Zone' with a total of 277sqkm (40%) in the Core Zone and adjacent 'Dark Sky Reserve Buffer Zone'.

Figure B-1 - International and National Conservation Designations across Exmoor National Park



Much of the National Park is owned by farmers or private individuals. The organisations with the largest landholdings are the [National Trust](#), which [owns over 10%](#) of the land, and the National Park Authority, which owns about 7%. Other areas are publicly owned by [Forestry England](#), [the Crown Estate](#) and water companies.

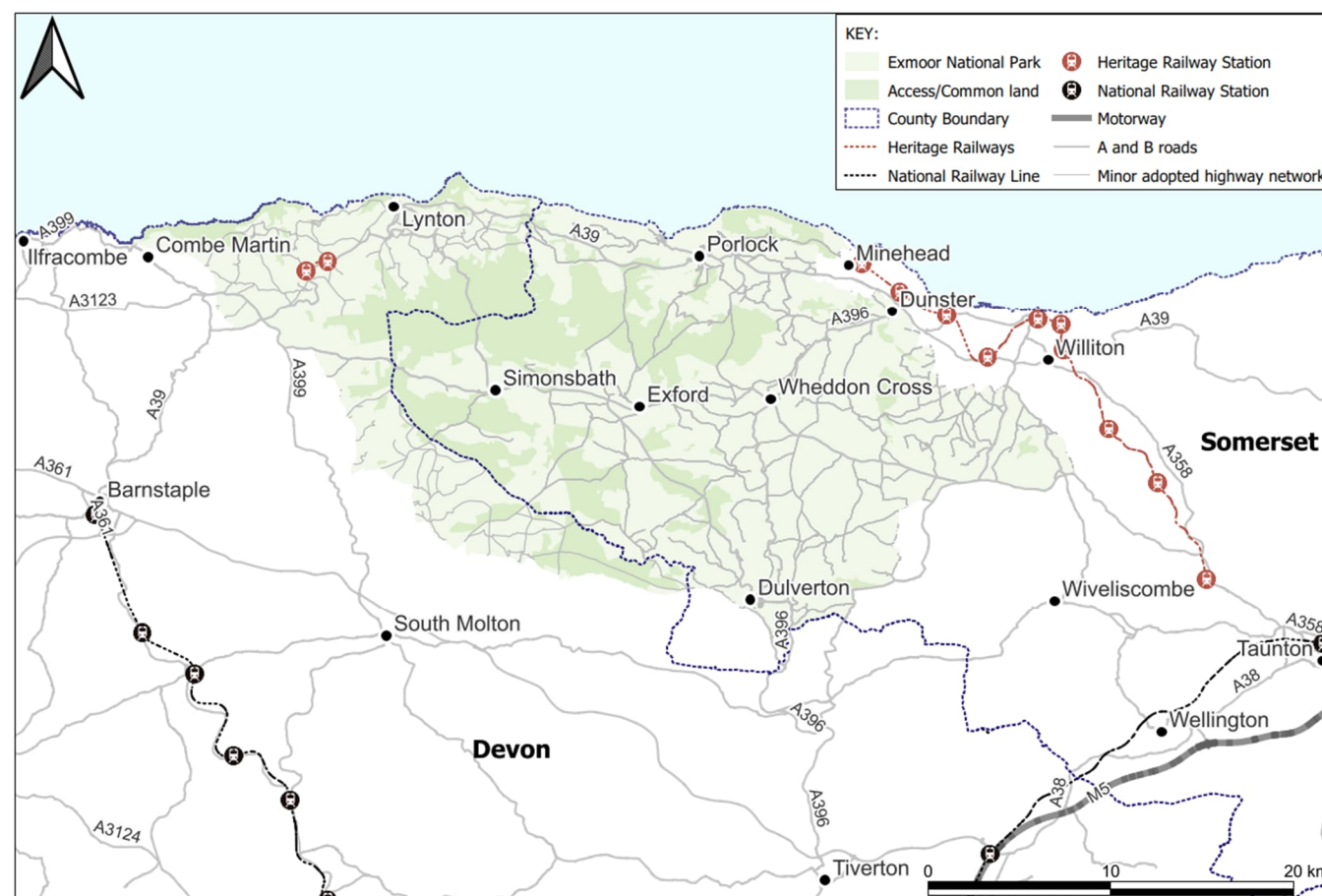
### Population

In 2021 the National Park had a resident population of 10,192 recorded in the [2021 Census](#). This equates to an average of 14.7 people per square kilometre, making it one of the least densely populated National Parks.

Figure B-2 shows the larger settlements in relation to road and rail network. The largest settlements by population are Porlock (1,200 residents), Dulverton (850 residents) and Lynton and Lynmouth (combined population of 840). The villages are mainly concentrated along the coastline, on the lower slopes and in valleys at river crossing points. The central moorlands are largely devoid of villages, with only scattered farmsteads and hamlets in

sheltered sites. Larger towns are located outside the National Park, including Minehead (11,800 residents), Williton (2,400 residents), South Molton (6,200), Ilfracombe (9,200) and Barnstaple (31,300).

Figure B-2 - Settlement and Transport Context

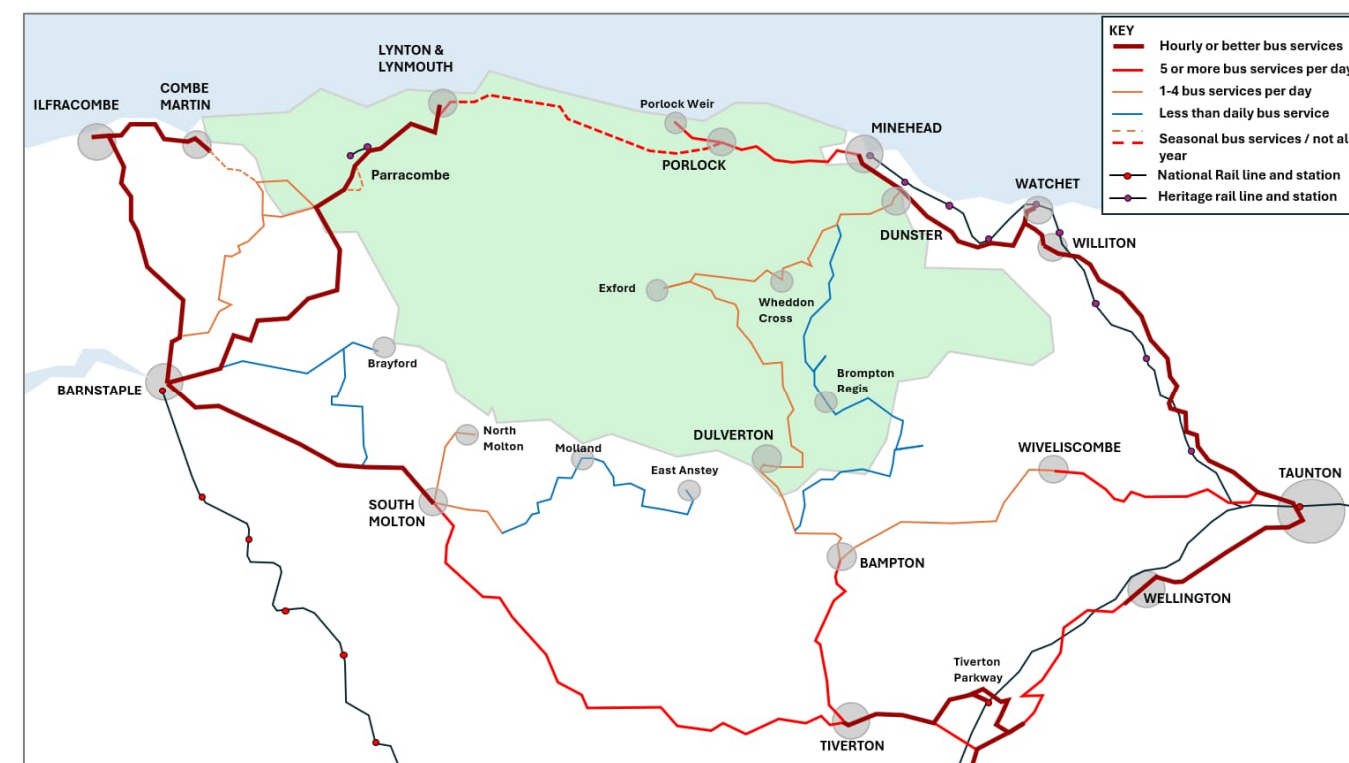


The National Park has a comparatively older population, compared to the England averages. The English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), last published in 2019, measure and compare the relative levels of community wellbeing, based on 39 indicators. [Interactive maps on the House of Commons Library website](#) indicate that some communities within and adjacent to the National Park are amongst the top 30% most disadvantaged in England. The [State of the Park 2023](#) publication reports that deprivation in Exmoor National Park worsened between 2015 and 2019 compared to other parts of the country.

## Public Transport

Figure B-3 shows the current public transport network serving and surrounding the National Park.

Figure B-3 - Diagram of Public Transport Services Serving Exmoor National Park



Public transport within the National Park is limited, leaving many residents and visitors to rely on other modes, mainly the private car. There are no National Rail lines operating within Exmoor National Park. The nearest stations are located at Barnstaple, Taunton and Tiverton Parkway, between 12km and 18km from the edge of the National Park (crow-fly distance).

The most frequent bus services in Exmoor National Park operate between Lynmouth / Lynton and Barnstaple (hourly) and between Minehead and Porlock Weir (6 services per day). Most of the services in the National Park operate all year round from Monday to Saturday, with no services operating on Sunday. Bus links between Lynmouth and Porlock operate only between April and September inclusive. Many smaller communities have no bus service at all.

Other regular bus services provide access to the edge of the National Park, notably Barnstaple – Ilfracombe – Combe Martin (hourly), and Taunton – Williton – Minehead (two per hour).

There are also local heritage railway lines focused on visitor journeys operating between Bishop's Lydeard to Minehead (West Somerset Railway), and Woody Bay to Killington Lane (Lynton & Barnstaple Railway).



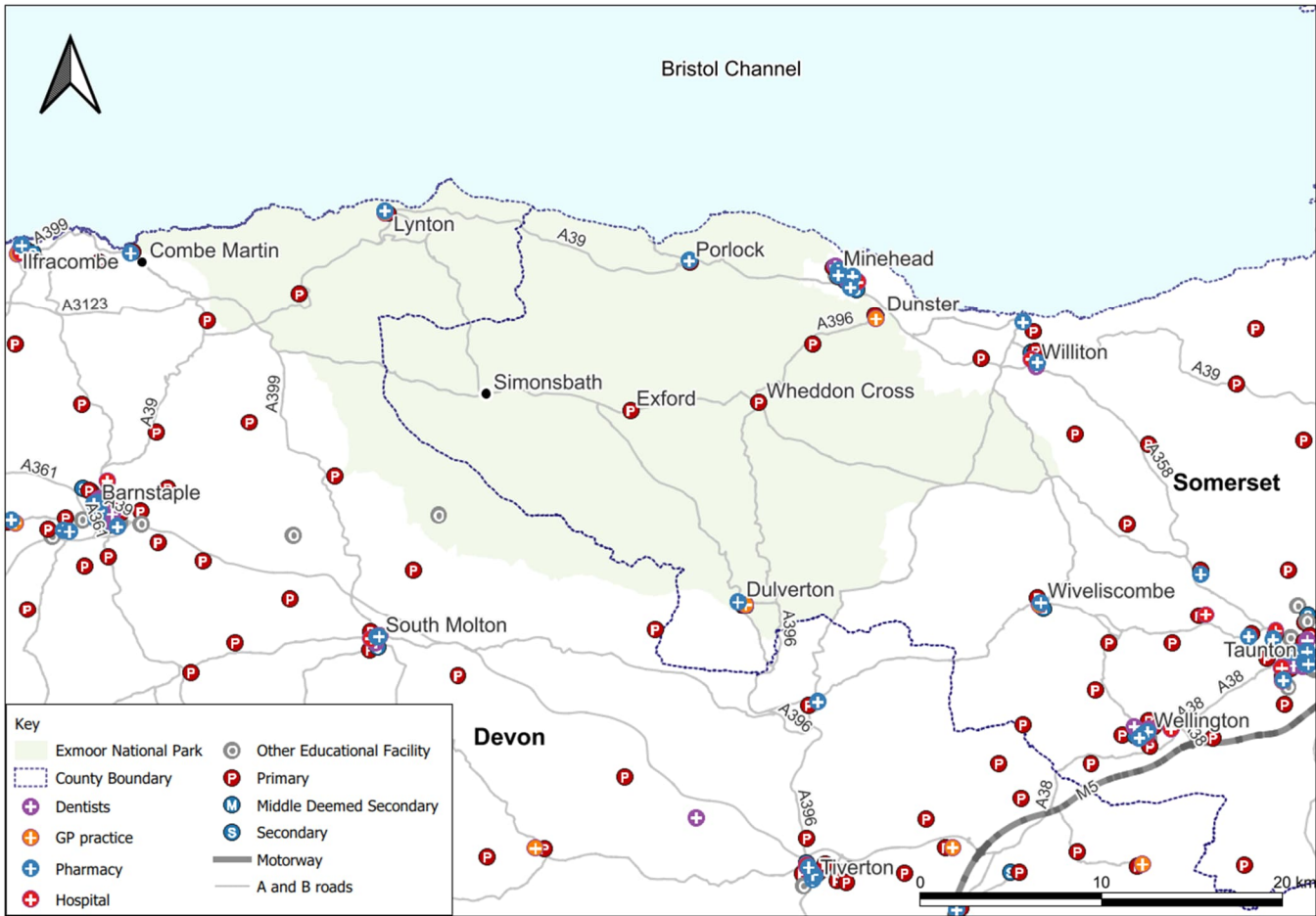
Facilities, Services and Visitor Destinations

In general, many communities within Exmoor National Park have retained important facilities and services, such as community halls, doctors’ surgeries, petrol stations, pubs, schools and shops. Their presence in local communities reduces the need for some residents to make longer distance journeys for some purposes. However, certain key facilities and services such as hospitals, secondary schools, college education and supermarkets are located in towns outside the National Park, including Minehead, Taunton, Tiverton, South Molton, Barnstaple and Ilfracombe.

Taking the example of secondary education, there are no state secondary schools within the National Park. Different communities are located in the catchments of schools at Minehead, Williton, Wiveliscombe, South Molton, Barnstaple and Ilfracombe. These are located up to 15km away from the edge of the National Park.

Figure B-4 illustrates the clustering and location of facilities in terms of schools and healthcare.

Figure B-4 - Education and Healthcare Destinations



Economy

Based on the [2021 Census](#), the local economy within Exmoor National Park is focussed on a number of key sectors. These include the accommodation and food service sector, agriculture and farming. Tourism plays a key part in the economic well-being of Exmoor National Park and the surrounding region. In 2023, the Exmoor National Park 2024 STEAM report reports that 1.65 million visitors visited the National Park. This is equivalent to 2.76 million visitor days and the economic impact of this is estimated to be £232.4 million.

According to the [2021 Census](#), 51.9% of residents within Exmoor National Park aged 16 years and over are economically active. There is a high proportion of self-employed people (20.4%), reflecting an economy dominated by small-scale businesses. 36.1% of economically inactive persons are retired and therefore there are generally low levels of unemployment (1.7% compared to an average of 3.4% across England and Wales).

Active Travel Infrastructure and Networks

Overview

The network of routes available for active travel in the National Park generally comprises:

- Public rights of way, which are routes over which the public have legal rights of passage;
- Routes where landowners have reached agreement with ENPA for public access (permitted routes); and
- Common land and open access land; and
- The surfaced and unsurfaced road network.

Figure B-5 illustrates the network of routes and land available for active travel within Exmoor National Park. The paragraphs below set out a high level overview of these elements of the network across the National Park, and the groups that can use them.

Public Rights of Way Network

As required by law, Exmoor National Park’s public rights of way are recorded on definitive map and statements (the responsibility of Devon County Council, and Somerset Council). There are approximately 992km (617 miles) of public rights of way across the National Park. Table B-1 indicates the different categories, who can use them, and the extent of the network in the National Park.



Table B-1 – Extent of Public Rights of way within Exmoor National Park

Public right of way category	Who can lawfully use them	Total length	Percentage of total public rights of way network
Public footpath	People walking, running, using mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs	440.8km	44.4%
Public bridleway	As above plus people cycling, horse-riding	482.6km	48.6%
Restricted byway	As above plus people driving horse-drawn carriages or non-motorised vehicles	67.2km	6.8%
Public byway	As above plus people driving motor vehicles	1.5km	0.2%

Source: ENPA and [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

The distribution of public rights of way is shown in Figure B-5 and Figure B-6. The Active Travel Plan indicates the different density of public rights of way across the park, with the highest density along the western coast (e.g. around Lynton and Lynmouth) and around Porlock. The network is sparsest on the high moorland and south-western edge of the National Park. Some areas have numerous footpaths but lack provision for cyclists and horse-riders, and byways are limited in extent.

Permitted Routes

In addition to the public rights of way, there is a network of routes to which the public has access where ENPA has reached agreements with landowners. Permitted routes include paths on moorland and woodland owned by The National Trust and Crown Estate, and a range of other private landowners, as well as on land owned by ENPA itself. Permitted routes may be available for walking only (permitted footpath) or walking, cycling and horse-riding (permitted bridleway status). Only routes with long-term agreements are shown on Ordnance Survey maps. With permitted routes there is the risk that public access may be withdrawn by the landowner.

Common Land and Open Access Land

There are a number of registered commons within the National Park, mainly in the central and western areas. These have public rights of access on foot across them. The Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 gave a right of access on foot to common land and ‘open country’ (areas mapped as mountain, moor, heathland and downland). This right of access applied to around 18,000 hectares of the National Park.

Figure B-5 - Existing Network for Active Travel in Exmoor National Park

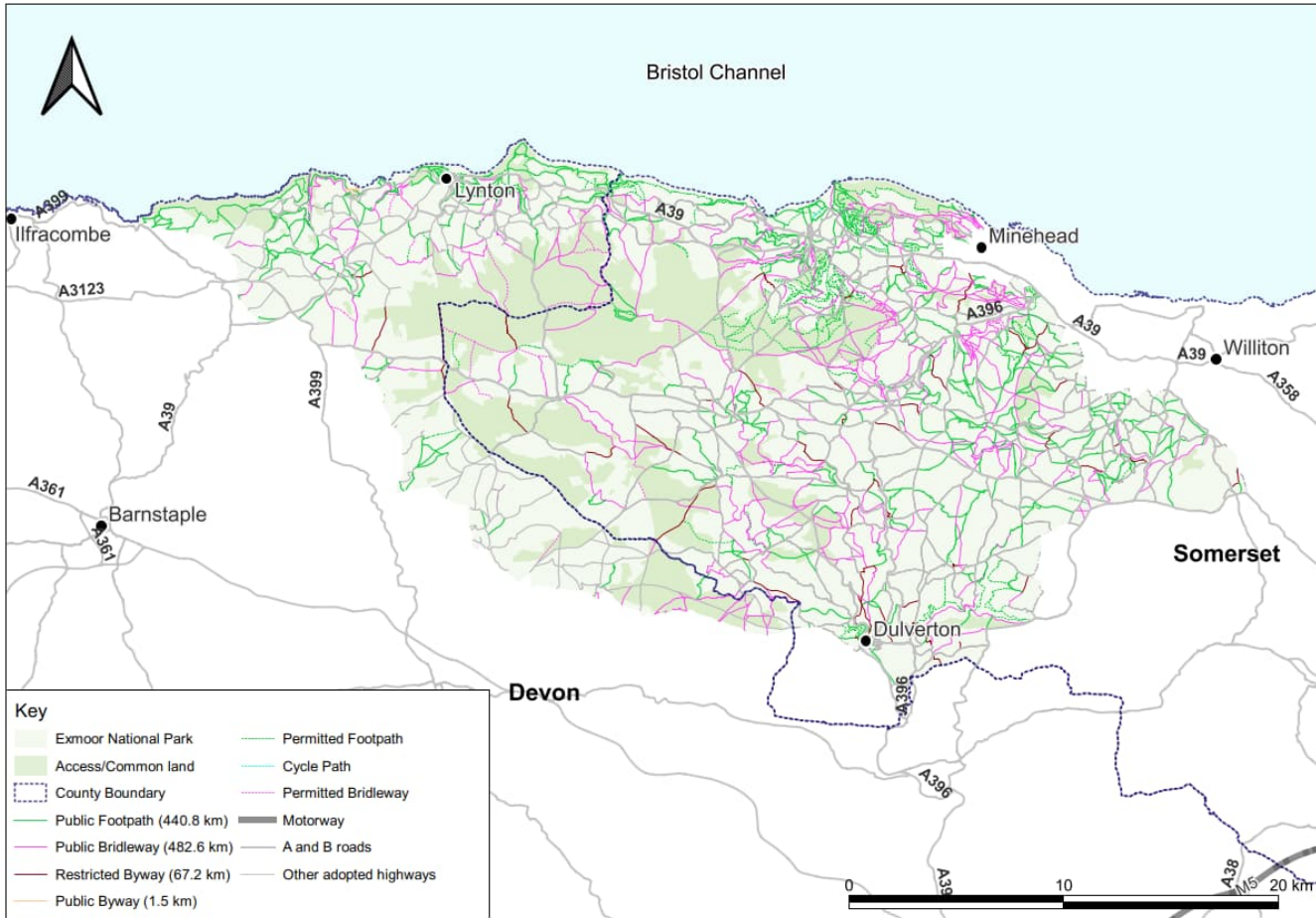
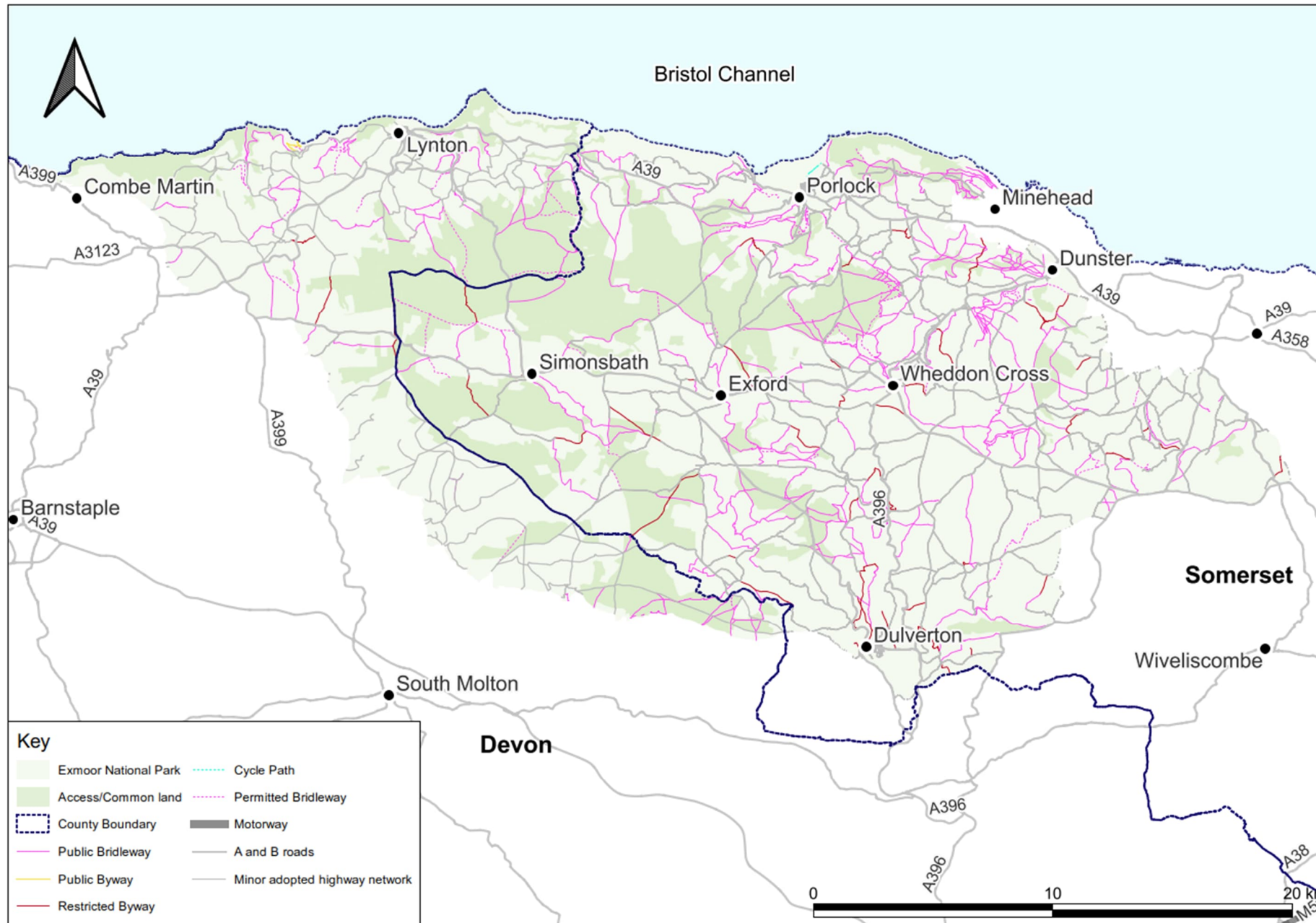


Figure B-6 - Existing Network for Cycling and Horse-riding in Exmoor National Park





## Road Network

Within the National Park the road network comprises A Roads, B Roads and a diverse range of minor roads. All active travel groups – people walking, wheeling, cycling and horse-riding – have a legal right to use all parts of the public road network (except where a Traffic Regulation Order applies). However, the suitability of the road network to be used for active travel will depend on a range of factors, including the speed and volume of motor traffic, gradients, and surface type and quality, for example.

Depending on their location and specific character, sections of road network can either:

- Extend the active travel network, safely linking public rights of way together and creating cohesive networks; or
- Dissuade people from making active travel journeys, because public rights of way are disconnected from each other by roads which have high motor traffic speeds or flows.

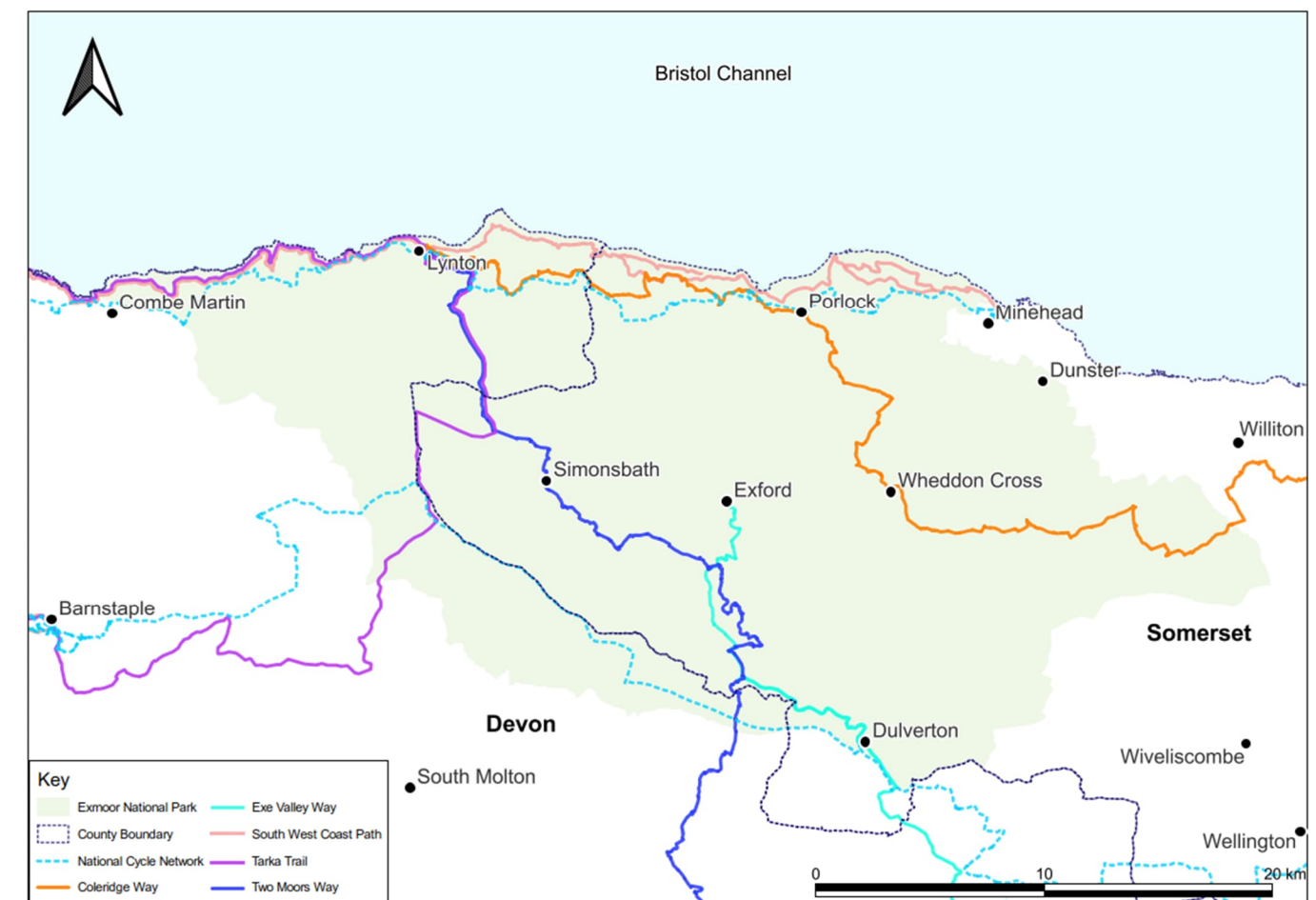
The main A-roads run east-west close to the coastline and north-south through the eastern half of the National Park. The A39 runs parallel to the northern coastline and connects Minehead (Somerset), Porlock, Lynton and Lynmouth, Parracombe and Barnstaple (Devon). The A396 starts outside the National Park at Tiverton (Devon) and extends northwards to Minehead and connects Exmoor National Park's settlements of Bridgetown, Wheddon Cross, Timberscombe and Dunster.

## Promoted Routes

Sections of long-distance leisure orientated promoted trails traverse the National Park. These are shown on Figure B-7 They comprise:

- Routes for walking – the England Coast Path National Trail, Coleridge Way, Exe Valley Way, Tarka Trail and Two Moors Way;
- Routes for cycling – National Cycle Network route 3, along the southern edges of the National Park, and 55 (Combe Martin – Lynton – Porlock – Minehead); and
- Routes for horse-riding (the bridleway variant of Coleridge Way).

Figure B-7 - Promoted long-distance trails



## Access for people with restricted mobility

Exmoor National Park has a suite of twelve accessible and/or step-free routes across the Park, some of which are located at main visitor locations, including Lynmouth, Horner Woods and the Barle Valley. Accessible routes are graded into the following 'Miles without Stiles' categories, which is used across many UK National Parks:

- Access for All – Suitable for everyone, including pushchairs and people operating their own wheelchairs;
- Access for Many – Suitable for assisted wheelchair users and families with more robust, all-terrain type buggies; and
- Access for Some – Strong and confident wheelchair users and helpers may find routes 'for some' within their abilities. May be suitable for off-road mobility scooters.

The categorisation of each of the twelve routes is described in Table B-2. Overall, five routes are, wholly or in-part, considered to be suitable 'for All'; six routes are, wholly or in-part considered to be suitable 'for Many'; and six routes are, wholly or in-part, considered to be suitable 'for Some'.



Table B-2 - Miles without Stiles routes

Route	Access for All	Access for Many	Access for Some
No.1 – Bossington Hill Walks	Yes	Yes	
No.2 – Charget Wood Mineral Trails		Yes	Yes
No.3 – Countisbury Common and Barna Barrow		Yes	Yes
No.4 – Dunkery Beacon			Yes
No.5 – Horner Wood National Nature Reserve			Yes
No.6 – Lyndale and Woodside	Yes		
No.7 – Marsh Bridge		Yes	
No.8 – North Hill		Yes	Yes
No.9 – Tall Trees Trail, Nutcome Bottom	Yes		
No.10 – Valley of Rocks	Yes		Yes
No.11 – Webbers Post	Yes		
No.12 – Wimbleball Lake		Yes	

Existing Travel Patterns

Comprehensive data on local travel patterns is not available for all journey purposes. For everyday (utility) travel, data is available for travel to school and to work, and for leisure-focused journeys data is derived from people who use certain smartphone apps.

The majority of everyday trips within the National Park boundary are likely to be undertaken by residents, while leisure trips will be undertaken by both residents and visitors. Based on findings from the data, the paragraphs below set out how people currently move around the National Park.

Travel to work

Data on travel to work (employment location, distance and travel mode) is collected in the national census. The 2021 census took place during Covid-19 travel restrictions which will

have had a material effect on the results as restrictions included travelling for employment, education and leisure. Therefore, the 2011 census has primarily been used for analysis as it provides an unaffected dataset for travel behaviours.

Table B-3 summarises the method of travel to work used by residents of the National Park. It also offers a comparison to the Southwest region and England (excluding London).

Table B-3 - Method of Travel to Work by Exmoor Residents, 2011

Area	Walk	Cycle	Bus	Train	Motorcycle	Driving car/van	Passenger in a car or van	Taxi	Work from home	Other
Exmoor*	13.9%	1.3%	1.5%	0.3%	0.6%	39.6%	3.9%	0.2%	38.2%	0.6%
South West region	12.3%	3.4%	4.6%	1.3%	1.1%	58.7%	5.1%	0.3%	12.8%	0.4%
England exc London	10.3%	2.7%	6.3%	2.7%	0.7%	60.8%	5.6%	0.5%	10.7%	0.4%

\* Data summarised for Census Mid Level Super Output Areas North Devon 002 (Lynton area), West Somerset 002 (Exford, Porlock, Dunster) and West Somerset 005 (Dulverton area). Boundaries are shown on the [Office for National Statistics Open Geography Portal](#). These census areas cover the National Park and some adjacent areas.

The larger settlements tend to have higher rates of active travel, with 29% of Lynton & Lynmouth commuters walking to work. Table B-3 highlights that in the MSOAs which the park covers, there are lower levels of public transport use for travel to work (1.5% bus and 0.3% train) when compared to the South West region (4.6% bus and 1.3% train) and England (6.3% bus and 2.7% train). This reflects the lack of public transport links within the National Park. There is also a reliance upon private car/motorcycle for travel to work, as over 2-in-5 (44.1%) either drove (car/motorcycle) to work or were a passenger in a car or a van.

The proportion of responses for Working from Home (38.2%) and Walk to work (13.9%) modes in 2011 show that over 1-in-2 work either at, or within close proximity to their place of residence, reflecting the high proportion of self-employed people within the National Park.

Table B-4 summarises the commuting destinations of National Park residents. Depending on the area, between 29% and 39% of commutes are to locations within the National Park. The data indicates that important commuting destinations outside the National Park vary considerably between different areas of Exmoor National Park. Barnstaple and other parts of North Devon are important destinations for communities on the western side of Exmoor National Park, whilst Minehead and Taunton are important for communities on the eastern side of the National Park.

**Table B-4 - Place of Work of Exmoor Residents commuting to Employment (National Census, 2011)**

	North Devon 002 (Lynton area)	West Somerset 002 (Exford to Dunster)	West Somerset 005 (Dulverton area)
Within National Park	35.7%	28.9%	39.2%
Barnstaple	24.4%	0.1%	0.7%
Elsewhere in North Devon	24.1%	0.5%	2.6%
Mid Devon	0.5%	0.4%	6.6%
Elsewhere in Devon	5.1%	0.9%	3.4%
Other parts of West Somerset including Minehead	0.6%	53.0%	23.6%
Taunton Deane	0.4%	7.8%	14.3%
Other parts of Somerset	0.3%	3.7%	3.6%
Rest of UK	9.1%	8.3%	9.6%

Boundaries are shown on the Office for National Statistics Open Geography Portal. These census areas cover the National Park and some adjacent areas.

The distances travelled by residents are also illustrated by 2011 Census TTW data for the Lynton & Lynmouth and Exford built-up areas in Table B-5 below.

**Table B-5 - Distance Travelled to work for Example Exmoor National Park Communities (National Census, 2011)**

Distance travelled to work	Lynton & Lynmouth	Exford	South West	England exc. London
Less than 2km	24%	9%	20%	18%
2km to <5km	3%	0%	18%	19%
5km - <10km	1%	5%	15%	17%
10km - <20km	5%	14%	14%	15%
20km - <30km	15%	4%	5%	6%
30km and over	7%	12%	8%	7%
Work mainly from home	38%	43%	13%	11%
Other	8%	13%	8%	8%
Average distance	27.6km	24.9km	15.2km	13.6km

Based on census data for Lynton & Lynmouth, Exford built-up-areas, the South West regions and England excluding London.

**Travel to School**

Based on the 2011 schools census, 30.3% of children attending state schools in the National Park walked to school and none cycled. This is low compared to Devon averages (51.4% walked and 1.4% cycled) and Somerset averages (49.7% walked and 2.7% cycled). Individual schools recorded higher levels of walking, for example 60% of children attending St. Dubricius First School in Porlock.

Table B-6 - Method of Travel to School (Schools census, 2011)

Area	Walked to school	Cycled to school	Driven to school	Other mode to school
Exmoor National Park schools average	30.3%	0%	37.8%	31.9%
Devon schools average	51.5%	1.4%	24.5%	22.6%
Somerset schools average	49.7%	2.7%	25.2%	22.4%

Utility Trips Summary

The data shows that active travel mode share is low due to the rural nature of the Park and large distances between settlements and services, which are not suitable for active travel modes. The low mode share of public transport is also impacted by poor availability of services and small settlement sizes.

While levels of walking and cycling are higher in larger settlements compared to smaller settlements, the relative mode share of active modes is still low, further representing a reliance on less sustainable modes throughout the Park.

Tourism and Leisure trips

Overview

The [Exmoor National Park Visitor Survey \(2021\)](#) reported:

- 50% of all visitors to the National Park originate from other parts of South West England;
- 96% of visitors to the National Park travelled by private transport. The remaining 4% of visitors travelled by public transport (3%) and active travel (1%);
- Walking is a popular activity with 65% of visitors undertaking a short walk, and 60% undertaking a long walk (more than 2 hours). Cycling and mountain biking accounted for 7% of visitors, and horse riding accounted for 3%; and
- Key tourism destinations to/within Exmoor National Park include Porlock, Dunster, Dulverton and Wheddon Cross.

App data (Ordnance Survey and Strava)

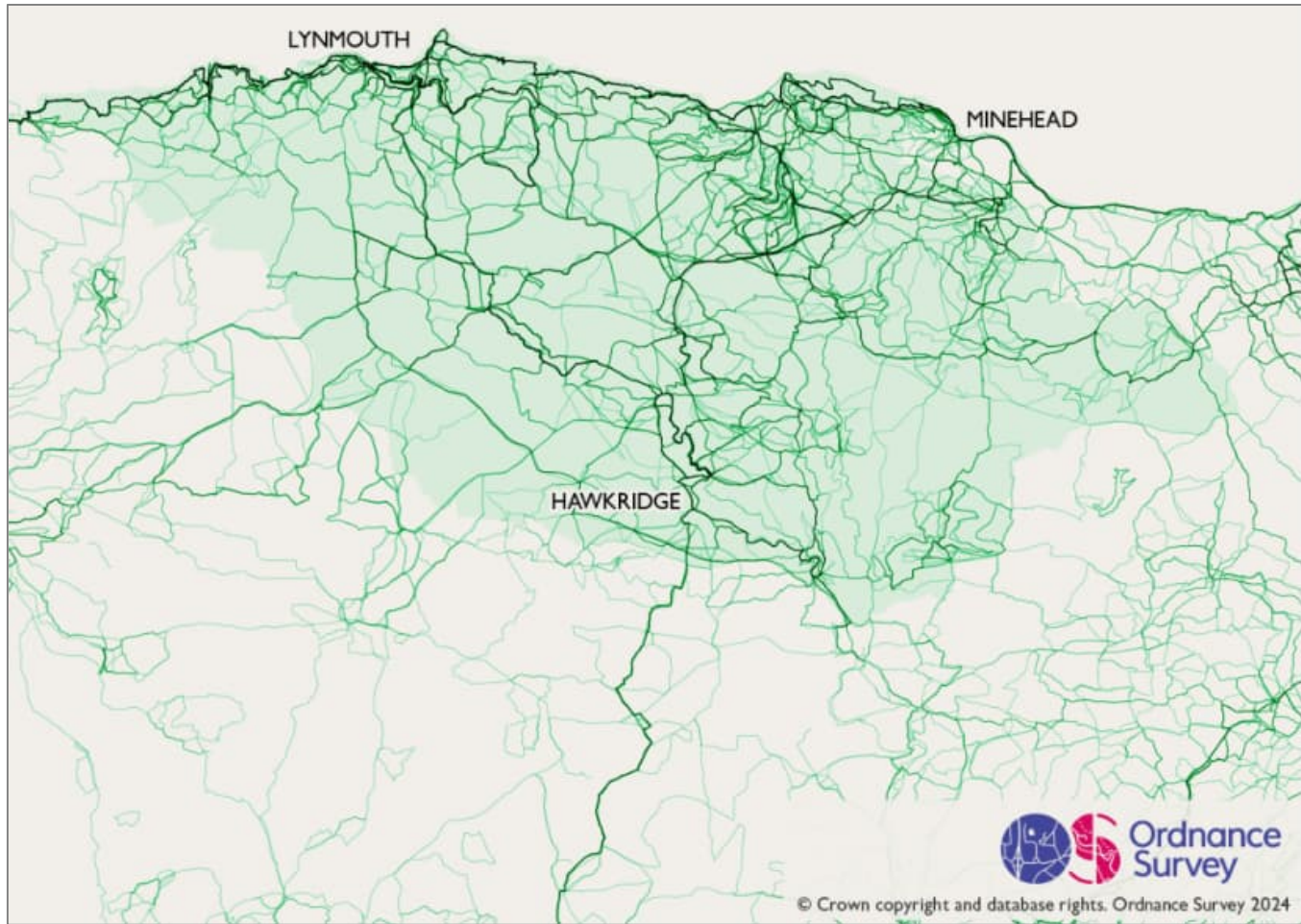
The rise in popularity of route planning and activity tracking apps such as Strava and OS Maps can be used to provide insight into the location and type of leisure activities, which

is information which has traditionally been difficult to collect in detail. App users can consent to their activities being included into an anonymised and aggregated ‘heat map’ by the app creators showing how, where and when people travel. Wider, or more intense colour lines, indicate greater numbers of trips by active travel users. Data has not been identified currently in the public domain which separately identifies routes of horse-riding journeys.

Ordnance Survey Maps app (recording all active travel modes)

Figure B-8 shows the most visited routes used by OS (Ordnance Survey) Maps app users. The darker lines indicate the intensity of active travel. Key areas include along the key promoted trails, including the England Coast Path and Two Moors Way. The app data also indicates the popularity of other areas, including the Dunster Park, Exe Valley, Horner Woods, Malmsmead, Selworthy, and Tarr Steps and Wimbleball Lake.

Figure B-8 - OS Maps App Walking Hotspots



Source: <https://getoutside.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/guides/discovering-britains-favourite-routes/>



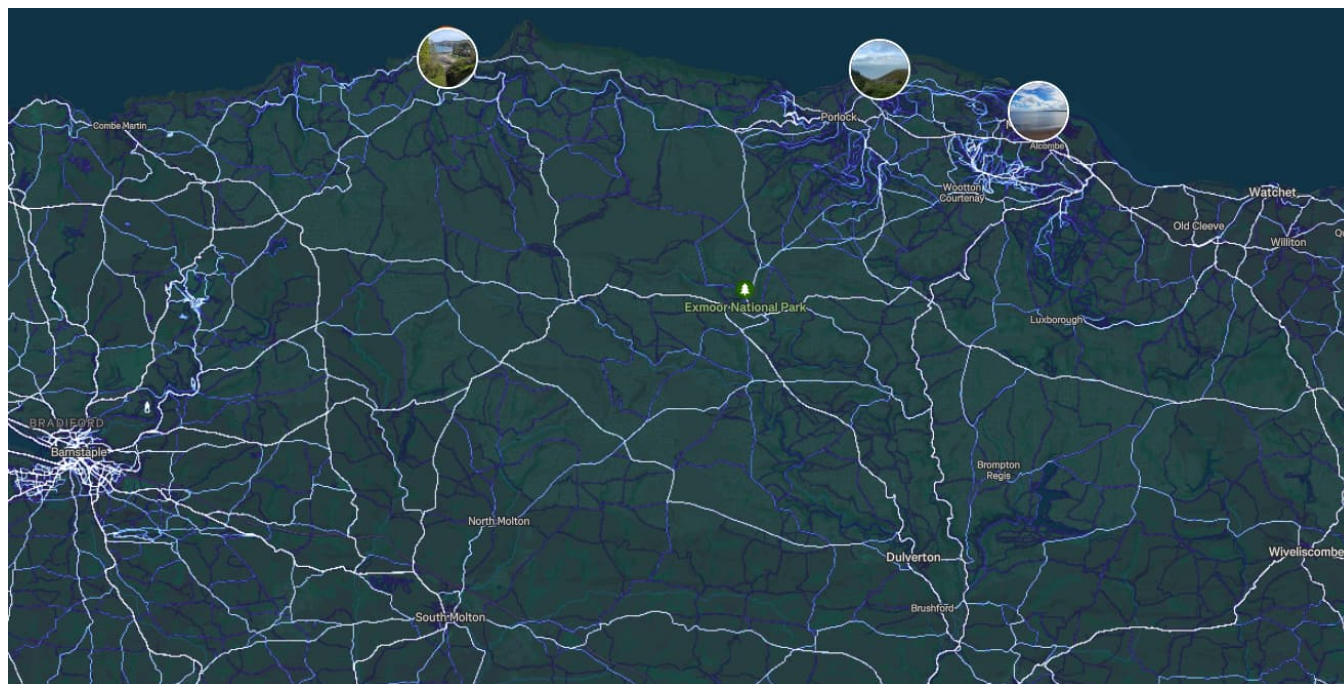
### Strava App – Cycling

Similarly, data from the Strava Global Heatmap, shown in Figure B-9, identifies popular routes for cycling. Routes with the greatest recorded cycling usage are shown in the wider, whiter lines. Key areas include:

- the areas between around Porlock and Minehead, including on forest trails of Knowle Hill;
- Existing National Cycle Network routes,
- The A- and B-road corridors.

Popular hotspots for walking captured through the Strava app are similar to that of the Ordnance Survey app.

Figure B-9 - Strava Data Cycling 'Heatmap'



Source: [Strava Global Heatmap](#)

### Leisure Trips Summary

The essential role tourism plays in Exmoor National Park's economic well-being demonstrates the important role of leisure trips. Data from the Visitor Survey suggests the opportunity to improve sustainable transport mode share into the Park due to limited public transport availability. Walking and cycling heatmap data shows the current popular locations which could most benefit from active travel improvements.



# Appendix C

## Vision Diagram

	Existing network					Future network			Traffic Issues		Active travel welcome
Theme	A. Improving existing promoted trails	B. A more accessible public rights of way network	C. Extending the network for cycling & horse riding	D. Maintaining the rights of way network	E. Enhancing active travel infrastructure in larger settlements	F. New family-friendly multi-use trails	G. Enhancing local links between communities	H. Active travel routes into the National Park	I. Tackling main road severance	J. Minor roads in the National Park	K. Active travel welcome and supporting measures
Objective	Support the role of promoted trails as core parts of the network and work towards consistent quality	Enhance the physical accessibility of routes, with a focus at, and surrounding, popular locations for active travel	Extend and better connect the network of traffic-free routes for cycling and horse riding.	Secure a sustainable level of maintenance funding for the public rights of way network, to improve its quality and avoid a deterioration in its usability.	Support and enable active travel in the larger National Park settlements, with a focus on addressing safety issues	Create and promote multi-use trails to appeal to families	Create safer local links between communities for active travel, focusing on shorter connections	Create and promote safe and suitable waymarked routes to enable residents and visitors to access the National Park from key surrounding settlements.	Address road severance to create a better connected active travel network, focusing on high-speed A- and B-road locations.	Enhance the role of the minor road network in providing safe links for active travel, where conditions are, or could be made, suitable	Ensure a consistent welcome, in terms of information and supporting facilities, is provided at key locations for active travel within the National Park.
Potential areas for improvement (examples)	NCN3 Dulverton to Brushford; Two Moors Way A39 crossing near Hillsford Bridge	Exford and Exe Valley; Lyn Valleys; Porlock Vale; Selworthy; Tarr Steps and the Barle Valley.	Areas covered by the initial <i>Active Travel Off-Road Studies</i> (South and West of Minehead; Parracombe parish)	Applies across the National Park	Dulverton; Dunster; Lynton & Lynmouth; Porlock	Minehead to Porlock Weir; Minehead – Dunster – Wootton Courtenay circular; Wimbleball Lake circular	Minehead to Porlock; Dulverton to Brushford; Timberscombe-Dunster-Minehead; Roadwater to Washford/Willilton	Barnstaple to Lynton; Watchet to Minehead (Steam Coast Trail); South Molton to the National Park; Tiverton to Bampton to Dulverton.	A39 between Lynton and Parracombe; A39 Porlock Vale.	The minor road network across the National Park	Dulverton; Dunster; Lynton-Lynmouth; Porlock
Possible improvements	New alignments at targeted locations; drainage; surface improvements; crossing enhancements; accessibility; waymarking	Accessible gates, surface improvements	Definitive map orders	Repairing path furniture; drainage; vegetation clearance	Upgrading footways; measures to calm traffic; enhanced crossings; enhanced public spaces	Traffic-free paths plus some sections along roads with low traffic flows and speeds	Footways, traffic free paths plus some sections along roads with low traffic flows and speeds	Traffic-free paths plus some sections along roads with low traffic flows and speeds	Definitive map orders for new links; visibility enhancements; enhancing or relocating crossing locations	<i>Quiet Lane</i> designations (to highlight role of routes for active travel); measures to calm motor traffic, including new or revised speed limits; direction signing strategies	Range of measures including cycle parking; seating and picnic benches; promotion about accessible routes; easily identifiable hubs/nodes for non-car arrivals



## Contact us



01398 323 665



info@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk



[www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)



Exmoor National Park Authority

Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9HL

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## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

3 June 2025

### PLANNING COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

#### Report of the Head of Enterprise & Operations and Solicitor & Monitoring Officer

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:** To invite the Authority to revise the Scheme of Delegation to Committees in relation to the nomination of Planning Committee Substitutes.

**RECOMMENDATION:** To revise Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation to Committees to reduce the notice period required to nominate a Planning Committee Substitute from 10 working days before the Committee meeting to 3 working days before the Committee meeting, save for exceptional circumstances when 24 hours' notice would need to be provided.

**Authority Priority:** To meet the requirements of legislation where applicable to National Parks and conduct Authority business in line with good practice and the 7 principles of public life.

**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 Localism Act 2011 requires the Authority to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.

**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).

**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 Human Rights Act.

**Financial and Risk Implications:** Reputational and other risks associated with the Authority's role as sole local planning authority for the National Park area.

**Climate Change Implications:** None identified.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 7 November 2023, the Authority Committee resolved to create a Planning Sub Committee of 12 Members to come into effect in April 2024 for a trial period of up to 12 months.



- 1.2 The Authority's Scheme of Delegation to Committees was revised and include the following provisions in relation to Planning Committee substitutes:
  - "4.3 A Member of the Planning Committee who is unable to attend a Planning Committee meeting is entitled to nominate a substitute Member who will be permitted to attend in their place, provided the substitute Member has undergone a programme of training in the planning system approved by the Authority.
  - 4.4 The appointed Member will be required to identify the substitute Member and provide notice to the Chief Executive at least 10 working days before the Committee meeting save for exceptional circumstances (due to an emergency or sudden illness). In such exceptional circumstances at least 24 hours' notice would need to be provided to the Chief Executive of the identity of the substitute Member."
- 1.4 At its meeting on 4 November 2024, the Standards Committee was invited to consider the efficacy and practical implications of the provisions regarding Planning Committee substitutes and particularly the required notice periods.
- 1.5. The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting record the following consideration and resolution:

### **The Committee's Consideration**

It was confirmed that the Authority's Standing Orders provided that in relation to Committees and Sub-Committees, the division of the membership between Local Authority Members and Members appointed by the Secretary of State shall as nearly as possible be in the same proportions as the composition of the Authority itself.

Therefore, if the Authority Committee were to confirm the Planning Committee arrangements currently being trialled, it was considered desirable that the ability to nominate Planning Committee substitutes should also be confirmed.

It was noted that Standing Orders were silent in relation to the particular Member group from which an appointed Member should nominate a substitute Member. However, it was acknowledged that the preferred practice was that a substitute be nominated from the same Member group to maintain the balance of the Committee, and that to date this had worked well. It was also noted that in the unlikely event of a Member from the same group being unavailable, Standing Orders did not preclude the nomination of a substitute Member from another group, eg a Member appointed by North Devon Council could nominate a Member appointed by Devon County Council.

In relation to Standing Order 4.4 and the requirement that the appointed Member be "required to identify the substitute Member and provide notice to the Chief Executive at least 10 working days before the Committee meeting save for exceptional circumstances (due to an emergency or sudden illness)...", it was agreed that the length of this notice period was problematic.

It was therefore proposed that if the trialled Planning Committee arrangements were confirmed by the Authority Committee, Standing Orders be revised to provide that the notice period for identifying a substitute Member be reduced to at least 3 working days' notice, ie that notice should be provided to the Chief Executive by 5pm on the Wednesday before the Planning Committee meeting on the following Tuesday.

It was also proposed that a list of Members eligible for nomination as a substitute be made available (ie those Members who have attended the requisite planning training sessions).

**RESOLVED:** To recommend to the Authority Committee that if the trialled Planning Committee arrangements are confirmed, Standing Orders in relation to planning substitutes be revised to reduce the notice period for identifying a substitute Member from 10 working days to 3 working days.

- 1.6 At its meeting on 6 May 2025, the Authority Committee resolved to approve the retention of a Planning Committee of 12 Members.
- 1.7 Having regard to the recommendations of the Standards Committee, the Authority Committee is recommended to revise the Scheme of Delegation to Committees in relation to the nomination of Planning Committee substitutes by reducing the notice period to identify a substitute Member and provide notice to the Chief Executive to at least 3 working days before the Committee meeting, save for exceptional circumstances (due to an emergency or sudden illness) when at least 24 hours' notice would need to be provided.

**Ben Barrett**  
**Head of Enterprise & Operations**

**Andrew Yendole**  
**Solicitor & Monitoring Officer**

**May 2025**

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

3 June 2025

### ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS

#### Report of the Chief Executive

**Purpose of the report:** In accordance with Standing Orders to set out the annual appointments to be made to the Authority's statutory Committees, partnership boards, working groups and external organisations.

**RECOMMENDATION:** To make appointments as listed in the Appendix to this report, or as agreed by the Authority Committee.

**Authority priorities:** The Authority's annual appointments are central to the achievement of each of the Partnership Plan and Corporate Plan priorities.

**Legal and equality implications:** The meetings and proceedings of a National Park Authority are regulated by local government law as if the National Park Authority was a local authority. The equality 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:** There are no significant financial or risk.

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

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its Annual Meeting, the Authority makes appointments to its statutory Committees and to the various partnership boards, working groups and external organisations as are necessary to carry out the work of the Authority.

## 2. Appointments to Committees, Partnership Boards, Working Groups and Outside Bodies

- 2.1 Appendix 1 includes a schedule of the Authority's statutory Committees (i.e. Final Accounts Committee, Planning Committee, Standards Committee and Exmoor Local Access Forum), as well as the various partnership boards, working groups and external organisations to which Member appointments are required to be made.
- 2.2 The Appendix also sets out the 2024/25 appointments and the expressions of interest received from Members in appointment/reappointment for 2025/26.
- 2.3 The Authority is recommended to consider and agree appointments in accordance with this schedule.

**Sarah Bryan**  
**Chief Executive**  
**May 2025**

## MEMBER APPOINTMENTS: 2025/26

Statutory Meetings	2024/25 Appointments	2025/26 Expressions of interest
<p><b>Final Accounts Committee</b></p> <p>The Committee comprises at least 5 Members of the Authority (with a maximum of 11), of whom at least one shall be a local authority Member and at least one shall be a Member appointed to the Authority by the SoS. The Members shall be the Chairperson of the Authority (who shall preside at meetings) and the Deputy Chairperson of the Authority and at least 3 Members chosen by the Authority.</p> <p>The Committee will meet annually to receive and approve the annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with statutory deadlines. Committee Members will meet at regular intervals as the <b>Finance &amp; Performance Advisory Panel</b> with the Chief Executive, Head of Enterprise &amp; Operations and Head of Climate, Nature &amp; Communities to maintain a detailed overview of the financial position, overall performance and management of risk within the Authority; the membership of the Panel to comprise (but not be limited to) the Members of the Final Accounts Committee.</p>	<p><u>Chairperson of the Authority</u> <u>Deputy Chairperson of the Authority</u></p> <p>Mr A Bray (Parish) Mrs M Chilcott (SC) Mr M Ellicott (Parish) Mr B Geen (Parish) Mrs F Nicholson (SC) Mr S J Pugsley (SC) Miss E Stacey (SoS)</p>	<p><u>Chairperson of the Authority</u> <u>Deputy Chairperson of the Authority</u></p> <p>Mr A Bray (Parish) Mrs M Chilcott (SC) Mr M Ellicott (Parish) Mr B Geen (Parish) Mrs F Nicholson (SC) Mr S J Pugsley (SC) Miss E Stacey (SoS)</p>
<p><b>Planning Committee –</b></p> <p>The Committee comprises 12 Members of the Authority. The Members shall be:</p> <p>4 Somerset Council Members; 1 Devon County Council Member; 1 North Devon District Council Member; 3 Parish Members; and 3 Secretary of State appointed Members.</p> <p>The Committee shall exercise the Authority's functions as sole local planning authority and minerals and waste authority for the area of Exmoor National Park Authority; the Authority's delegated and other functions in relation to footpaths and bridleways under relevant legislation conferring order-making functions on the Authority; as hazardous substances authority under the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990; and to consider and report to the Authority on any matter delegated to it by the Authority. Meets as required.</p>	<p>Mr A Bray (Parish) Mr D Elson (SoS) Mr B Geen (Parish) Mr J Holtom (Parish) Dr M Kelly (SoS) Mrs C Lawrence (SC) Mrs F Nicholson (SC) Mr J Patrinos (NDC) Mr S J Pugsley (SC) Mrs F Smith (SC) Miss E Stacey (SoS) Mr J Yabsley (DCC)</p>	<p>Mr A Bray (Parish) Mr D Elson (SoS) Mr B Geen (Parish) Mr J Holtom (Parish) Dr M Kelly (SoS) Mrs C Lawrence (SC) Mrs F Nicholson (SC) Mr J Patrinos (NDC) Mr S J Pugsley (SC) Mrs F Smith (SC) Miss E Stacey (SoS) <b>VACANCY (DCC)</b></p>



Statutory Meetings	2024/25 Appointments	2025/26 Expressions of interest
<p><b>Standards Committee</b> Comprises 5 Authority Members of whom at least one shall be a local authority Member and at least one shall be a Member appointed to the Authority by the SoS.</p> <p>The general functions of the Committee are to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and officers; to assist members to observe the Code of Conduct; and to consider and determine complaints against members under the Code of Conduct and keep an overview of other complaints received by the Authority. Meets as required, at least twice a year including shortly after the Authority AGM to appoint a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson.</p>	<p>Mr M Ellicott (Parish) Mr B Geen (Parish) Mr J Patrinos (NDC) Mr S J Pugsley (SC) Miss E Stacey (SoS)</p>	<p>Mr T Butt Philip (SC) Mr M Ellicott (Parish) Mr B Geen (Parish) Mr J Patrinos (NDC) Mr S J Pugsley (SC) Miss E Stacey (SoS) Mr N Thwaites (Parish)</p>
<p><b>Exmoor Local Access Forum</b> (Lead Officer: Dan Barnett, Access &amp; Recreation Manager)</p> <p>The Forum provides advice to Exmoor National Park Authority and others on how to improve public access for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment. It has a remit to advise on and identify potential for strategic programmes, projects, policies and provides an arena within which to raise strategic issues, exchange ideas and share good practice and experiences. Meetings are open for members of the public to attend.</p> <p><i>Includes 2 Authority Members and meets twice a year.</i></p>	<p>Mr A Bray (Parish) Mr N Thwaites (Parish)</p>	<p>Mr A Bray (Parish) Mr N Thwaites (Parish)</p>
External Consultation Group		
<p><b>Exmoor National Park Forum</b> (Lead Officer: Sarah Bryan Chief Executive)</p> <p>The Exmoor National Park Forum is an annual informal event, aimed at people who live and work on Exmoor and anyone with an interest in the National Park. It will be a chance to get together and hear more about the work of Exmoor National Park Authority. Meets once a year.</p>	<p>Chaired by Authority Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.</p> <p>All Authority Members invited to attend.</p>	<p>Chaired by Authority Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.</p> <p>All Authority Members invited to attend.</p>
Partnership Boards and Working Groups	2024/25 Appointments	2025/26 Expressions of interest
<p><b>Exmoor Historic Environment Advisory Group</b> (Lead Officer: Rob Wilson-North, Head of Access, Engagement &amp; Estates).</p> <p>The Group is a <i>Partnership Plan Group</i> and reviews current issues, opportunities, work and research relating to the Historic Environment on Exmoor.</p> <p><i>Comprises representatives from partner organisations, public, private and voluntary sectors and 2-3 Authority Members.</i> Meets twice a year.</p>	<p>Mr J Holtom (Parish) Dr M Kelly (SoS) Mr S J Pugsley (SC)</p>	<p>Mr J Holtom (Parish) Dr M Kelly (SoS) Mr S J Pugsley (SC)</p>

Partnership Boards and Working Groups	2024/25 Appointments	2025/26 Expressions of interest
<p><b>Exmoor Learning and Engagement Network</b> (Lead Officer: Ben Totterdell, Learning &amp; Engagement Manager).</p> <p>The Network brings groups, projects and individuals together who have a role in delivering learning and engagement work in Exmoor. It promotes and enables the sharing of best practice, support for partnership working and influencing of strategic actions among both Exmoor National Park Authority and our Partners.</p> <p><i>Comprises representatives from partner organisations and <b>up to 4 Authority Members</b>. Meets as required.</i></p>	<p>Mrs C Lawrence (SC) Mrs F Smith (SC) Dr S Warren (SoS) Miss L Williams (SoS)</p>	<p>Mr T Butt Philip (SC) Mrs C Lawrence (SC) Mrs F Smith (SC) Dr S Warren (SoS) Miss L Williams (SoS)</p>
<p><b>Exmoor Moorland &amp; Farming Board</b> (Lead Officers: Alex Farris, Natural Environment Manager and Heather Harley, Farming &amp; Land Management Officer).</p> <p>The group is a <i>Partnership Plan Group</i> and works with land managers to help deliver the Partnership Plan and supporting them over changes in agri-environment policy and funding.</p> <p><b>Comprises 4 Members</b> plus people nominated by other organisations with a particular interest in Exmoor's moorlands and farmlands. Meets twice a year.</p>	<p>Mr L Baker (SC) Mr J Holtom (Parish) Mr R Milton (NDC) Mr J Yabsley (DCC)</p>	<p>Mr L Baker (SC) Mr J Holtom (Parish) Mr R Milton (NDC) <b>VACANCY</b></p>
<p><b>Exmoor Nature Conservation Advisory Panel</b> (Lead Officer: Ali Hawkins, Senior Ecologist).</p> <p>The group is a <i>Partnership Plan Group</i> with a key role to lead in the development and delivery of a Wildlife Delivery Plan to take forward the wildlife ambition in the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan and deliver the Nature Recovery Vision for Exmoor. <i>Comprises representatives from partner organisations and up to 5 Authority Members</i>. Meets twice a year.</p>	<p>Mr B Geen (Parish) Mr J Holtom (Parish) Mrs F Smith (SC) Dr S Warren (SoS) Miss L Williams (SoS)</p>	<p>Mr B Geen (Parish) Mr J Holtom (Parish) Mrs F Smith (SC) Dr S Warren (SoS) Miss L Williams (SoS)</p>
<p><b>Exmoor Woodland and Forestry Advisory Group</b> (Lead Officer: Graeme McVittie, Senior Woodlands Officer)</p> <p>The group is a <i>Partnership Plan Group</i> with a key role to lead in the development and delivery of the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan, to develop and steer a Tree and Woodland Strategy for Exmoor and to consider and comment on other tree, woodland, forestry and timber related issues in the National Park.</p> <p><i>Comprises representatives from partner organisations and <b>up to 2 Authority Members</b>. Meets as required.</i></p>	<p>Mr D Elson (SoS) Mr N Thwaites (Parish)</p>	<p>Mr D Elson (SoS) Mr N Thwaites (Parish)</p>

Partnership Boards and Working Groups	2024/25 Appointments	2025/26 Expressions of interest
<p><b>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Group</b> (Lead Officers: Clare Reid, Head of Climate, Nature &amp; Communities, Ben Totterdell, Learning &amp; Engagement Manager, and Ellie Woodcock, HR Officer).</p> <p>To support delivery of the Corporate Plan action to review and update the Authority's approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and take positive action to support this. This work will also link in with the Organisational Development process.</p> <p><i>The group will include officers from across the organisation, <b>plus least 2 and up to 4 Members</b>. Meets as required.</i></p>	<p>Mr D Elson (SoS) Miss E Stacey (SoS) Dr S Warren (SoS) Miss L Williams (SoS)</p>	<p>Mr T Butt Philip (SC) Mr D Elson (SoS) Miss E Stacey (SoS) Dr S Warren (SoS) Miss L Williams (SoS)</p>
<p><b>External Funding Working Group</b> (Lead Officer: Dan James, Enterprise &amp; Communications Manager).</p> <p>The group is a joint Member/Officer task force to help develop and implement strategy and approach to securing external project funding. <i>Comprises relevant Leadership and Delivery Team Members and <b>3-4 Authority Members</b>. Meets as required.</i></p>	<p>Mr A Bray (Parish) Mr M Ellicott (Parish) Miss E Stacey (SoS) Miss L Williams (SoS)</p>	<p>Mr A Bray (Parish) Mr M Ellicott (Parish) Miss E Stacey (SoS) Miss L Williams (SoS)</p>
<p><b>FiPL Assessment Panel</b> (Lead Officer: Alex Farris, Natural Environment Manager)</p> <p>The Panel considers applications over the value of £10,000 to the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. The Panel is required to meet at least every 8 weeks and may meet as often as every 4 weeks. The Panel is set up for the duration of the FiPL programme which ends in March 2025. <i>Comprises <b>4 Authority Members</b> plus people nominated by other organisations with a particular interest in Exmoor's farming and ecology.</i></p>	<p>Mr D Elson (SoS) Mr J Holtom (Parish) Mr R Milton (SoS) Dr S Warren (SoS)</p>	<p>Mr D Elson (SoS) Mr J Holtom (Parish) Mr R Milton (SoS) Dr S Warren (SoS)</p>
<p><b>Planning Policy Advisory Group</b> (Lead Officer: Ruth McArthur, Policy &amp; Community Manager).</p> <p>The Advisory Group assists Officers in relation to the preparation of planning policy and documents to guide the development and use of land in the National Park, and which inform decisions on planning applications and appeals. The group also considers national consultations, and key issues for the community and economy. Meets as required.</p> <p><i>Formal membership of the group is made up of the Chairperson and both Deputy Chairpersons of the Authority, <b>and up to 7 appointed Authority Members</b>, however the meetings are open to other Authority Members to attend if they wish.</i></p>	<p><u>Authority Chairperson</u> <u>Authority Deputy Chairperson</u> <u>Planning Committee Chairperson</u> Mr A Bray (Parish) Mr M Ellicott (Parish) Mr B Geen (Parish) Mr J Holtom (Parish) Dr M Kelly (SoS) Mrs F Nicholson (SC)</p>	<p><u>Authority Chairperson</u> <u>Authority Deputy Chairperson</u> <u>Planning Committee Chairperson</u> Mr A Bray (Parish) Mr M Ellicott (Parish) Mr B Geen (Parish) Mr J Holtom (Parish) Dr M Kelly (SoS) Mrs F Nicholson (SC)</p>

Partnership Boards and Working Groups	2024/25 Appointments	2025/26 Expressions of interest
<p><b>Rural Enterprise Exmoor Group</b> (Lead Officer: Dan James, Enterprise &amp; Communications Manager).</p> <p>A Partnership Plan Group overseeing the sustainable economy priority alongside representative views of Local Authorities and business networks. Provides an advisory role in overseeing progress with the Rural Enterprise Exmoor Vision. <i>Comprises 2 Authority Members – 1 from each side of the county boundary.</i> Meets as required.</p>	Mr A Bray (Parish) Miss A V Davis (DCC)	Mr A Bray (Parish) Miss A V Davis (DCC)
Appointments to Outside Bodies	2024/25 Appointments	2025/26 Expressions of interest
<p><b>UK National Parks Chairs Forum</b> (Lead Officer: Sarah Bryan, Chief Executive)</p> <p>NPUK as a formal entity was wound up in 2021, however a 'Chairs Forum' involving all 15 UK Chairs continues to meet at least once or twice a year. The Chairs along with the UK CEOs continue to have sight of the work carried out by NPUK Communications Unit based with the Broads Authority.</p>	<u>Authority Chairperson</u> <u>Authority Deputy Chairperson</u>	<u>Authority Chairperson</u> <u>Authority Deputy Chairperson</u>
<p><b>Campaign for National Parks</b> (Lead Officer: Sarah Bryan, Chief Executive)</p> <p>The Campaign for National Parks is a national charity that campaigns and speaks out to protect and promote National Parks.</p> <p><b>1 Member representative.</b></p>	Miss L Williams	Miss L Williams
<p><b>Exmoor Hill Farming Network</b> (Lead Officer: Heather Harley, Farming &amp; Land Management Officer)</p> <p>The Network helps livestock farmers to improve the profitability of their businesses, including the development of strategic projects as well as encouraging access to support and funding. <b>1 Member representative.</b></p>	Mr M Ellicott (Parish)	Mr M Ellicott (Parish)
<p><b>Exmoor Landscape Advisory Group</b> (Lead Officer: Julie Layzell – Future Landscapes Officer)</p> <p>Chaired by the Exmoor Society to provide independent input to the Authority on landscape issues, the group also acts as a <i>Partnership Plan Group</i> with a key role in the development and delivery of relevant action plans in the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan. The group is a partnership of landscape specialists, planners and managers and reviews landscape matters, in particular the relationships between people and place.</p> <p><i>Comprises representatives from partner organisations and up to 2 Authority Members.</i> Meets as required, usually twice a year.</p>	Dr M Kelly (SoS) Mr M Kravis (SC)	Dr M Kelly (SoS) Mr M Kravis (SC)



Appointments to Outside Bodies	2024/25 Appointments	2025/26 Expressions of interest
<p><b>Exmoor Rural Housing Network</b> (Lead Officers: Ruth McArthur, Policy &amp; Community Manager and Joe White, Development Manager).</p> <p>The Exmoor Rural Housing Network recognises that the delivery of housing is increasingly difficult in Exmoor and other rural areas across the country. The aim of the Network is to actively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• find solutions that work for everyone in housing need on Exmoor, by supporting a locally managed and delivered programme for local needs rural housing in perpetuity.</li> <li>• bring together a group of organisations/individuals with a broad range of experiences in order to share information and ideas in a collaborative way that will help provide and improve access to housing on Exmoor for local people.</li> </ul> <p><i>Comprises representatives from partner organisations and up to 5 Authority Members. Meets as required.</i></p>	<p>Mr M Ellicott (Parish) Mr B Geen (Parish) Mr J Holtom (Parish) Mrs F Nicholson (SC) Mr S J Pugsley (SC)</p>	<p>Mr M Ellicott (Parish) Mr B Geen (Parish) Mr J Holtom (Parish) Mrs F Nicholson (SC) Mr S J Pugsley (SC)</p>
<p><b>North Devon AONB Partnership</b> (Lead Officer: Rob Wilson-North, Head of Access, Engagement &amp; Estates)</p> <p>The North Devon AONB Partnership's primary task is taking forward the objective of conserving the natural beauty of the landscape of the North Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. <b>1 Member representative</b></p>	<p>Mr D Elson (SoS)</p>	<p>Mr D Elson (SoS)</p>
<p><b>Team Devon Joint Committee</b> (Lead Officer: Clare Reid, Head of Climate, Nature &amp; Communities)</p> <p>The Team Devon Joint Committee meets monthly on Teams and brings together the District Councils, Devon Association of Local Councils, Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities. Enables a joint approach to common issues and shared challenges, and creates opportunities to strengthen joint work, partnership and collaboration. <b>1 Member representative</b></p> <p>The Authority's Standing Orders (SO 22.1) provide that in relation to all Committees, Sub Committees and <b>Joint Committees</b> on which the Authority is represented (and Sub Committees of such Joint Committees), Membership shall consist of both Local Authority Members of the Authority and of at least one Member appointed to the Authority by the Secretary of State.</p>	<p><u>Chairperson of the Authority</u> <u>Deputy Chairperson of the Authority (as sub)</u></p>	<p><u>Chairperson of the Authority</u> <u>Deputy Chairperson of the Authority (as sub)</u></p> <p>May require resolution to depart from Standing Orders</p>

Appointments to Outside Bodies	2024/25 Appointments	2025/26 Expressions of interest
<p><b>Visit Exmoor CIC</b> (Lead Officer: Dan James, Enterprise &amp; Communications Manager).</p> <p>Visit Exmoor CIC is the recognised tourism industry body promoting Exmoor, its brand and visitor economy businesses. <i>ENPA are invited to have 1 Member representative as an observer, alongside an Officer observer, at 2 board meetings a year.</i> In addition, the <b>Exmoor Tourism Network</b> brings together ENPA, Visit Exmoor and local tourism organisations together to act as a <i>Partnership Plan Group</i> with a key role to lead in the development and delivery of relevant action plans set out in the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan (comprises representatives of the tourism organisations and industry providers). Meets as required.</p> <p><i>The same Authority Member is required to serve on both Visit Exmoor and the Exmoor Tourism Network.</i></p>	Miss L Williams (SoS)	Miss L Williams (SoS)
Independent Person		
<p>Under the Localism Act 2011, the Authority must promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members of the authority. To this end the Authority has adopted a Code of Conduct for Members and has agreed arrangements for dealing with any allegation that a member or co-opted member has breached the code. In accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, these arrangements include the appointment of an Independent Person to advise on breaches of the Member Code of Conduct.</p>	Diana Mortimer Adam Stanyer	