

Exmoor National Park



Management Plan 2025-2030

The 'Partnership Plan for Exmoor'

July 2025



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INSIDE FRONT COVER:

Foreland Point by Shaun Davey www.shaundavey.co.uk

GRAPHICS:

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July 2025

This is a summary of the full Exmoor National Park Management Plan 2025 -2030.

The full plan can be downloaded at
www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/Management-Plan

Further information on the Plan and its delivery can be found on the above website including background information, delivery plans for the objectives and links to relevant projects.



Snipe
Ben Andrew (rsfb-images.com)



Neville Stanikk

Exmoor National Park



Foreword

Our 2025 - 2030 Management Plan explains how the statutory National Park purposes will be delivered. But going beyond this, it explains our bold ambitions for nature recovery, for positive action to mitigate and adapt to climate change, to improve the quality of our natural resources, and to ensure that Exmoor is a welcoming place for all.

Exmoor is a national asset, one of a family of 15 National Parks that are special places for people and nature, 'breathing spaces' for the nation. It takes a collective effort to care for these precious landscapes. We have a clear ambition to maximise the benefits our National Park can provide for nature and people. Exmoor National Park Authority can't achieve these ambitions alone, we must work with our partners, people and organisations who have a role in securing a positive future for Exmoor. Hence why we refer to this National Park Management Plan as our 'Partnership Plan'.

Globally we're facing a climate emergency and nature is in crisis, with our natural resources - soil, water and air under enormous pressure. Many of those impacts are being felt within the National Park. This Plan also comes at a time when challenges for local communities and businesses are greater than ever. As a remote rural area Exmoor faces limited access to services, rural isolation and inequality. Tourism and farming are the key drivers of our economy and both face many challenges.

But, alongside these challenges come opportunities.

There are new opportunities for landowners, businesses and communities that can create jobs, keep local wealth within the community, improve people's health and well-being and connect people with nature, heritage and natural beauty. Changes are happening in the way that land is managed, our priorities for land and resources, and how these are funded.

So we have taken a different approach for this Plan. The ambitious vision and targets in the Plan set out what is required to deliver both National Park purposes and the Government's agenda for Protected Landscapes. Our partnership approach is crucial to delivery of the Plan, and we will continue to work with established partners, and develop new partnerships to achieve this.

We want Exmoor to be even better; greener, wilder and more accessible to all; and a home to thriving communities.



Andrea Davis

Chairman



Obyn

Chief Executive



Shaun Davey www.shaundavey.co.uk





Grasshopper warbler
Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)



Purpose of the Plan

The National Park Authority is required to prepare and keep under review a Management Plan setting out how the National Park purposes and duty will be achieved. The Plan is for the National Park as a whole and involves many organisations and people and is also referred to as a Partnership Plan to reflect this collective effort. It aims to mobilise the shared knowledge and resources of everyone who cares for Exmoor in a collective effort.

Exmoor National Park statutory purposes

The purposes of National Parks, enshrined in law, are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities by the public

Where there is conflict between these two purposes that cannot be reconciled, the first purpose takes precedence (known as **'the Sandford Principle'**).

Socio-economic duty

Exmoor National Park Authority was established under the Environment Act 1995 as a special purpose body charged with leading action to achieve National Park purposes, and in pursuing the purposes set out above, the Authority has a duty to foster the social and economic well-being of National Park communities.

How the Plan has been prepared



Exmoor National Park profile



Key challenges and drivers

Health & wellbeing

Connecting with nature and the outdoors provide health and well-being benefits.

Over **1,200** volunteer days completed each year.



Local communities

There are concerns over the viability of local communities with pressure on affordable housing and local services.

House prices are unaffordable for many, with a 10:1 house price to income ratio.

19% of housing is secondary or holiday homes.

Climate change

There needs to be greater focus on adapting to a changing climate and reducing carbon emissions.

Exmoor's carbon footprint is **~328,000 tonnes CO₂e** per year.

Local economy

Exmoor's economy is primarily made up of micro-businesses. Exmoor needs to retain and attract young people to visit, live and work here.

Tourism and farming are key drivers of the Exmoor economy. Tourism / hospitality accounts for approx.

2/3 of all employment.

Changing landscapes

Monitoring has shown incremental but evident change in landscape character.

Around **90%** of visitors cite landscape as one of the key attractors to the area.

Nature recovery

Urgent action is required to restore nature across Exmoor at scale.

38% of Exmoor is estimated to be priority habitats.

Farming and land management

The financial viability of upland farming remains of concern.

Exmoor's landscape character derives from a long history of extensive livestock farming.

Natural and cultural capital

Biodiversity, clean water, reduced flood risk, and stored carbon can provide new sources of income for landowners and managers.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

A proactive approach is needed to address the barriers that prevent people from visiting or engaging with the National Park.

Woodlands and grasslands sequester

85 tonnes of carbon a year.

Visitor management and experience

Visitors bring economic benefit, but pressures from visitor activities need to be managed.

Litter and dog mess impact popular countryside visitor sites.

6% of visitors from ethnic minorities (vs 18% UK population).

Special qualities



Who is it for?

It's a Plan for everyone who has an interest in and cares about the National Park, including:

- National Park Authority Members, staff and volunteers
- Partners. The Plan can only be achieved if we work together to deliver it. This involves a wide range of partners who all have an important role to play and, in some cases, a statutory obligation to the area, including relevant authorities (see the full Plan for details)
- Exmoor's land and property owners and managers, farmers and foresters, without whose support and co-operation the special qualities of the National Park would not be maintained and enhanced
- The people who live and work here: Exmoor's local communities and businesses
- The nation. The Plan sets out what is important about Exmoor and what is being done to conserve and enhance the National Park as a nationally significant landscape and to ensure that the health and wellbeing benefits from accessing and enjoying the National Park are available to all

Vision

This statutory Management Plan covers the period 2025 to 2030 but its vision, objectives and targets extend to 2050:

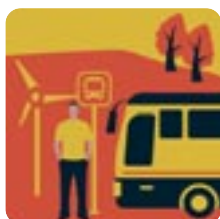
Exmoor National Park is a beautiful landscape, leading the response to climate change and nature recovery. It is a place where nature can thrive, that's proud of its cultural heritage, welcoming to all who seek out inspiration and adventure, and where people can connect with this special landscape. It is home to thriving local communities, with a low carbon local economy benefitting from Exmoor's natural and cultural capital.



Aim A

A nature-rich landscape

- Exmoor’s rich mosaic of wildlife habitats are enhanced, extended, well-connected, and resilient to climate change, forming a network of nature-rich areas with blurred edges, with corridors linking them and stretching across the National Park boundary
- Wildlife is thriving with a greater abundance and diversity of species that can easily move across the landscape and adapt to a changing climate



Aim B

A net zero National Park, mitigating and adapting to climate change

- Exmoor is a net zero National Park, reducing greenhouse gas emissions to a minimum level and locking up carbon in peatlands, trees, soils and plants
- Exmoor’s natural and historic assets, local communities and businesses are adapted and resilient to climate change



Aim C

Healthy natural resources

- Exmoor’s soils, air and water resources are healthy, resilient and support naturally functioning ecosystems



Aim D

A cared for landscape and heritage

- Exmoor’s unspoilt natural beauty, tranquillity, openness, wildness and dark night skies are celebrated, cared for, and enjoyed
- Exmoor’s irreplaceable historic environment and cultural heritage is cared for, celebrated and plays a key role in informing our future



Aim E

A welcoming place for all, that people feel connected to, improving their health and well-being

- More people from a broader range of backgrounds are connected with, inspired by, and care for Exmoor, improving their health and well-being and providing a “Natural Health Service”
- There are more opportunities for young people from all backgrounds to explore and connect with Exmoor, developing skills and knowledge, and taking an active role in the future of Exmoor
- Public paths, open access land, recreational facilities and popular sites are well maintained and accessible for all to experience and enjoy Exmoor
- Exmoor is promoted and managed as a regenerative tourism destination, providing a great visitor experience, leaving the environment in a better state, and positively contributing to the well-being of local communities



Aim F

A great place for people to live, work and do business

- Exmoor’s communities and economy are sustainable and resilient, supporting the transition to a low carbon economy and lifestyles, and providing new opportunities, skills and employment



Aim G

Bringing it all together - place based delivery

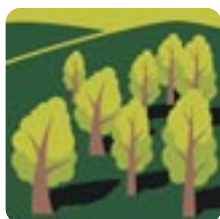
This section of the Plan explores in more detail how the aims and objectives come together on a place basis, focusing on Exmoor’s moorland and farmland; woodland; rivers and streams; and coast



Aim G1

Moorland and Farmland

- Exmoor's distinctive **moorland and farmed** landscapes are evolving and resilient to climate change. Their natural beauty is enhanced and heritage conserved. Habitats are more diverse, in better condition, extended, connected and richer in wildlife. Some areas are wilder and natural processes are restored. Land is managed sustainably to produce high quality food and timber. People can access and enjoy these special places including the tranquillity and dark night skies



Aim G2

Woodland and Trees

- Exmoor's **woodlands and tree cover** are diverse, well-managed, expanded, better connected, more resilient, and productive. They enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage and enjoyment of the National Park and play a major role in responding to climate change



Aim G3

Rivers, Streams and Wetlands

- Exmoor's **wetlands, rivers, streams** and their associated valleys are in good condition and function more naturally. Their native flora and fauna are thriving, and flood risk is reduced. Access is managed sensitively



Aim G4

Coast

- Exmoor's stunning **coast** has access opportunities for all, where people and nature can thrive, heritage is conserved, and we build resilience to coastal change

Delivering and monitoring the Plan

The full Plan sets out a series of detailed targets for each of the Aims and Objectives. These are also provided within the Plan's website pages at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/Management-Plan. Separate Delivery plans have also been prepared setting out the actions needed to achieve the targets, the funding and delivery mechanisms, and the partners who will be involved in helping to deliver them. These will be kept updated throughout the Plan period.

A wide range of partners have been involved in helping to develop this Plan and a collective effort will be required to deliver the ambitious vision and targets. There are a number of Partnership Plan groups that the National Park Authority co-ordinates, or works with, to facilitate delivery of the Plan.

Partnership Plan Groups

- Devon & Somerset Climate Partnerships
- Exmoor Engagement Network
- Exmoor Historic Environment Advisory Group
- Exmoor Land Management Group
- Exmoor Landscape Advisory Group
- Exmoor Local Access Forum
- Exmoor Nature Conservation Advisory Panel
- Exmoor Rivers and Streams Group
- Exmoor Rural Housing Network
- Exmoor Tourism Network
- Exmoor Woodlands and Forestry Advisory Group
- Health and Well Being Partnerships
- Rural Enterprise Exmoor

As well as this collective effort from partners, delivering the shared vision and targets set out in this Plan will require:

- Appropriate funding and resources
- The alignment of many different plans, policies and projects
- Relevant skills and training
- Communications and engagement
- Supportive regulation, national legislation and policy.

Progress against delivering the targets in the Plan will be regularly monitored to assess whether these are on track, enabling delivery plans and actions to be reviewed if needed and solutions found. This will be reported in annual progress reports, overseen by the Partnership Plan groups. The outcomes from delivering the Plan will be reported through the State of Park report.

In 2024, the Government produced the **Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework** (PLTOF), identifying the Environment Improvement Plan goals that Protected Landscape bodies and other relevant authorities and partners must prioritise. This Partnership Plan sets out how Exmoor National Park will contribute to the delivery of these national targets. The national targets are highlighted in the main plan and on the web pages in bold under the relevant aims and objectives of the Plan, alongside other targets set locally. Progress towards these national targets will be reported by Defra.





Steering Group

Our particular thanks go to these organisations who helped to shape this Plan:





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