



NPA/26/015

Dartmoor National Park Authority

3 July 2026

Update on Dartmoor's Dynamic Landscapes Programme

Report of the Strategic Planning & Projects Manager

Recommendation: **That Members take note of the contents of the report.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a summary update on the progress of the Dartmoor's Dynamic Landscapes programme since the previous report, [being July 2025](#). The Partnership follow a quarterly reporting cycle and at the time of writing and presentation to Authority the formal April to June 2026 reports have not been received from Partners but commentary is provided based on our regular communication with project leads.

2. Background

- 2.1 In July 2024 Members approved submission of a bid to The National Lottery Heritage Fund (HF) for a partnership programme of work to be delivered between 2025 and 2030 ([NPA/24/032](#)), we duly submitted the bid for funding and were awarded a grant of £3,124,178, towards the total programme value of £5,559,384, at the end of 2024.
- 2.2 Dartmoor's Dynamic Landscapes (DDL) is a partnership comprising nine organisations, delivering fifteen projects (see Appendix A for a list of projects). Not all projects run throughout the full five years.
- 2.3 DDL has a landscape focus on three of Dartmoor's river catchments, the Okement, Dart, Erme & Yealm as well as Okehampton, Princetown and Ivybridge (a map of the programme area is shown in Appendix C).
- 2.4 DNPA is the lead partner, the Woodland Trust being the other principal partner. The rest of the delivery partnership is made up of the RSPB, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans), South West Water (for the South West Peatland Partnership), Environment Agency through the Dartmoor Headwaters Project, Shallowford Trust, Emergency Exit Arts, and Westcountry Rivers Trust.
- 2.5 Over the course of the programme the DDL projects will:

- Gather information, vital to understanding natural and cultural heritage, by supporting around 150 new citizen scientists (through 5 projects looking at meadows, river health, moorland birds, ancient trees and tin streaming archaeology).
- Enhance and restore over 1,000 hectares of habitat for nature
- Contribute to Dartmoor's knowledge & skill base. Exploring the application of new technology, woodland management, access to funding and organisational sustainability for farmers and other land managers.
- Improve and encourage responsible car free access to green space around the three focus towns, through practical improvements and a project to encourage 3,000 people to walk, wheel and cycle.
- Celebrate and learn about Dartmoor's natural heritage through a series of events attended by over 20,000 people.

2.6 Critically the DDL programme will be delivering to the aims and outcomes of the National Park Partnership Plan.

3. Progress & milestones

- 3.1 All scheduled projects are underway (the Shallowford Trust's Farm to City project is not scheduled until 2028) with most making very good progress. Most of the new roles created through the programme were filled by the start of 2026 with people who are proving motivated and highly capable.
- 3.2 Collaboration between partners has started very well with both people engagement and land management project leads communicating regularly to coordinate their work and add value through the partnership model. The Champion Schools approach led by the Authority's Community Engagement Rangers has proved especially successful, being taken up by 12 of 13 schools in the immediate programme area. All projects with a youth/people engagement focus have joined in with this coordinated multi-partner approach to schools and their communities.
- 3.3 Dartmoor's Dynamic Landscapes is particularly focused on citizen science approaches, helping people play a greater role in understanding and caring for Dartmoor. The RSPB's Moorland Bird Surveys are now exceeding their aims for survey data and numbers of surveyors involved. The Woodland Trust and Westcountry Rivers Trust are also making excellent progress with their projects under this theme.
- 3.4 At the Woodland Trust's Hall Farm, Seb Powell and family have made exceptional progress in their project to demonstrate opportunities for trees, woodland and nature within a successful farm business. Thousands of trees have been planted, creating 4ha new woodland and 5ha wood pasture. Work is also underway to plan ambitious wetland restoration work there.
- 3.5 We are showing Peatland Restoration work within the DDL area as 'Behind schedule' as the South West Peatland Partnership (SWPP) prioritised other areas in the last restoration season. SWPP have a far wider remit than the DDL programme area and we have only planned to include a relatively small amount of their work within DDL, so are confident that the anticipated output will be achieved in future programme years.
- 3.6 Some good work has been delivered by the Dartmoor Headwaters Project in the DDL area so far with exciting prospects under development. However, the Headwaters team has recently been short of staff with new officers joining from mid-2026, so there will be a period of lower output while the team returns to a full complement of staff.

- 3.7 The Rivers & Moorland Festival delivered a range of valuable output and was very well received, so represents an excellent start in an ambitious project. The aim of the project is to celebrate Dartmoor's special qualities with our focus towns, and the approach was enthusiastically welcomed by Ivybridge to run alongside their own summer event (run for the first time in 2025). The event included a programme of walks, day of talks on the Friday and then a creative community day on the Saturday with a procession led by Lady Erme (a giant puppet) and local school children carrying an artistic representation of the river. The project supported two headline and a number of smaller art commissions, all of which were well received and provided a diverse mix of local people to showcase their talent. Despite rain throughout the morning and a yellow warning for wind on the Saturday, the event ran as planned and was enjoyed by over 2000 people.

4. Governance arrangements

- 4.1 The Partnership is overseen by an Executive Board, comprising representatives from DNPA and the Woodland Trust. This board meets quarterly (aligning with quarterly reporting and claims required by HF). The DDL Partnership are grateful to DNPA Member Dr Mary Seddon, for chairing the Executive Board and providing valuable insight, advocacy and support.
- 4.2 A full meeting of the Delivery Board, all Partners represented, should take place twice a year and the next full meeting of the Partnership is planned for 3rd August 2026.
- 4.3 Communication and collaboration across the Partnership is facilitated by a monthly meeting of project delivery leads which has been well attended and seems valued.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Almost all projects are running within planned budgets relative to activity so far. Projects are set at differing funding requirements with some being net contributors to the overall programme finances and others being a net cost. The South West Peatland Partnership and Dartmoor Headwaters Project are fully funded out with the Heritage Fund grant and so are net contributors to the programme finance, the lower than expected level of peatland restoration work and Headwaters delivery to date creates a greater cash flow need for DNPA in the short term.
- 5.2 Partners are committed to finding additional match funding for the programme and included a Fundraising Plan valued at £389,000 as part of the bid to HF. £195,000 of this additional funding is intended for the River & Moorland Festivals and £43,000 of this additional funding was secured against the first festival in Ivybridge (with £30,500 from Arts Council England (ACE)). Other match funding is being identified, including from DEFRA Access for All and Farming in Protected Landscapes, alongside bids for grants to be submitted shortly.
- 5.3 Most projects requiring additional match funding have the flexibility to be scaled down to still deliver at a reduced budget if this proves necessary.

6. Equality and Impact Assessment

- 6.1 The DDL Partnership specifically aims to increase understanding of and between under-represented groups and to provide access to nature and the National Park to a wider range of people, providing better physical access and better information. Specific examples include Girls Do Dartmoor, building confidence of teenage girls to enjoy the

National Park and outdoors generally, supporting creative people through our festival work, providing knowledge exchange activities for next generation Commoners.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The Dartmoor's Dynamic Landscapes programme provides a significant opportunity to deliver the aims of the National Park Partnership Plan by working in partnership with a range of other organisations, stakeholders and local community groups.
- 7.2 In 2026 Partners have the good fortune to have been joined by a number of excellent dedicated staff who, supported by enthusiastic colleagues across the Partnership, are delivering a wealth of valuable work. There are challenges to navigate but the Programme is off to a strong start.

JAMES SHARPE

Background Papers:

Report April 2022 (NPA/22/020)

Report January 2024 (NPA/24/01)

Report & decision July 2024 ([NPA/24/032](#))

Report July 2025

Attachments: **Appendix A - List of DDL projects including summary report**
 Appendix B - Table showing roles created within DDL
 Appendix C - Map of DDL area

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