

APPENDIX TO
DORSET HEATHLANDS INTERIM PLANNING FRAMEWORK
BACKGROUND PAPER

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**Borough of Poole Bournemouth Borough Council Christchurch Borough Council
Dorset County Council East Dorset District Council Purbeck District Council**

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DORSET HEATHLANDS INTERIM PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Background Paper

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Dorset heaths now enjoy the highest level of protection of any designation in the land as European wildlife sites. They are designated as the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection (SPA) and Ramsar site and the Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC)¹. These designations cover an extensive complex of sites from Warmwell near Dorchester in the west, to Verwood and Alderholt in the north, through Poole and Bournemouth to Christchurch in the east, and across the northern half of Purbeck in the south. The complex supports an outstanding array of wildlife in a national and European context, with habitats and species dependent on the Dorset heaths for their survival in this country. The heaths also define the landscape character of much of South East Dorset, they have a rich cultural history, and are a valued recreational resource for local communities.
- 1.2. In the next few decades, and probably in perpetuity, the heaths situated close to built development in South East Dorset face particular risks to their integrity given their frequent use and abuse by people². Local people value the heaths ever more highly; they enjoy living near them, and using them for quiet recreational pursuits. The conurbation has been built on the formerly extensive tracts of heath north of the Poole Bay coastline, and the remaining heathland fragments provide communities with relatively easy access to open countryside for regular activities such as dog walking. Not only is there an existing problem that needs to be lessened through countryside management to allow people and wildlife to co-exist, but further residential and economic development in South East Dorset is likely to exacerbate the situation without careful forward planning to take account of people's recreational needs³.
- 1.3. Recent research has demonstrated links between adverse effects on the heathland and the proximity of built development, and the diverse effects that people and urban living have on the heaths have become known as 'urban pressures' and are now well understood and documented^{4,5}. The following is a list of effects that can, either directly or indirectly, adversely affect the wildlife value of the designated heathlands:
 - Increased incidence of arson (especially damaging during summer when the habitats and wildlife are most vulnerable).
 - Increased use by dog walkers leading to disturbance of ground nesting birds (particularly nightjar and woodlark) with consequent effects on their distribution, abundance and breeding success.

¹ Under *The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994*

² Haskins, L 2000. Heathlands in an urban setting - effects of urban development on heathlands of southeast Dorset. *British Wildlife* 11: 229-237.

³ Land Use Consultants, 2005, *Going going gone: The cumulative impact of land development on biodiversity in England*, English Nature Research Report 626, English Nature Peterborough

⁴ Kirby, J S & Tantrum, D A S 1999. Monitoring heathland fires in Dorset: Phase 1. Report to DETR: Wildlife and Countryside Directorate. Terra Environmental Consultancy, Northampton.

⁵ Underhill-Day, J C 2005. A literature review of urban effects on lowland heaths and their wildlife. English Nature Research Report No. 623. English Nature, 2005

- Increased number of feral predators (e.g. foxes, crows) affecting breeding success of ground nesting birds.
- Increased use of heathland for off road cycle and motorcycling, causing soil erosion, disturbance and damage to heath habitats. Similar disturbance and erosion of sandy tracks by horse riders. Sand lizard and invertebrate breeding sites are particularly at risk.
- Predation by domestic cats on birds (especially Dartford warbler) and reptiles.
- Disruption to the hydrology of heathland wetland through drainage interception and enriched urban water discharges
- Presence of more people and greater recreational use leading to more difficulties and substantially increased costs in managing the heaths effectively (e.g. from enhanced requirements for recreation and general vandalism); increased problems with the introduction of essential management measures (e.g. free roaming livestock for habitat management, removal of tree and scrub invasion and access controls).
- Increased degradation of the heathland habitats due to the dumping of garden and other waste by nearby property owners. This physically smothers the heath vegetation and enriches the soil, changing the habitat. Soil enrichment and habitat change through enrichment by dog faeces.
- Loss or degradation of key habitats used by nightjar for foraging (nightjar travel away from the heaths to forage).

2. Policy & legal framework

- 2.1. Urban pressures on the Dorset heathlands were recognised as long ago as 1998 by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention⁶, when in 'Recommendation 67' it recommended to the UK Government that it should 'avoid any more development close to existing heathland; for new housing to provide for areas other than heathlands, to avoid unwanted pressure on heathlands.'
- 2.2. European wildlife sites (SAC, SPA) are protected by the Habitats Regulations⁷. The Regulations place particular responsibilities on a local authority granting planning permission for development that may affect such sites. Government Circular (6/2003 (ODPM) 2/2005 (DEFRA))⁸ accompanying Planning Policy Statement 9, *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*⁹ explains how the Regulations should be applied.
- 2.3. The Government has recently consulted on amendment Regulations that will apply the decision-making tests of the Habitats Directive to regional and local development plans¹⁰. These are likely to come into force before the end of 2006.
- 2.4. Regulation 48 of the Habitats Regulations restricts the granting of planning permission for development which is likely to significantly affect a European site by requiring that

⁶ de Molenaar, Hans J.G. 1998. On-the-spot appraisal of the Dorset heathland (United Kingdom). Report and Recommendations. Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats. T-PVS (98)

⁷ *The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994*

⁸ ODPM Circular 06/2005. *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System.*

⁹ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005. *Planning Policy Statement 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.*

¹⁰ DEFRA, 2006. *The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c)(Amendment)(England and Wales) Regulations 2006.* Consultation Document.

an appropriate assessment is carried out of the implications of the development for the site's conservation objectives. The planning authority must ascertain that the plan or project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, either directly or indirectly, taking account of any conditions or restrictions that would help ensure no adverse effect, before granting permission or adopting plan or policy. The Regulation thus enshrines the precautionary principle in law, preventing consent, other than in specified circumstances, unless the authority is certain of no adverse effect.

3. Natural England's advice on the impact of housing development on the SPA/SAC and impact on planning control

- 3.1. Under the Habitats Regulations, Natural England considers that where development would result in an increase in residential units within 5km of the SPA / SAC, it would have a likely significant effect (upon the designated area, either alone or in combination with other developments, as a result of the potential impact of additional recreational use of the heathland or other urban effects. Their advice is set out at Annex 1 to this Interim Planning Framework Background Paper.
- 3.2. Within 400m of the designated site boundary Natural England considers that it is not possible for the planning authority, in undertaking its appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations, to be certain that any adverse effects could be avoided or alleviated, and that development resulting in increased numbers of residential units or residential occupancy should be prevented within this zone, save in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.3. Beyond the 400m zone and up to 5km, Natural England considers that such development would be permissible subject to the implementation of a comprehensive package to mitigate urban pressures. The package of measures will encompass the following:
 - Continuing the positive benefits accrued from the work of the Urban Heaths Partnership since 2001
 - Measures that would divert recreational pressure away from the heaths, including the provision of new or better managed existing greenspace to attract people to alternative locations
 - Access management measures which would limit the increased level of damage likely to result from increased visitor pressure on the designated heathlands
- 3.4. Natural England's advice on the impact of housing development within 400m of a designated heathland is not new and where development has been resisted by local planning authorities on this basis, appeals have been dismissed by Planning Inspectors, and the policy appears robust and defensible¹¹.
- 3.5. Without the ability to implement a comprehensive package of mitigation measures, the implications for planning control of advice of there being a likely significant effect of increased urban pressures that would result from development between inner and outer zones are considerable. The planning authority is obliged to undertake an appropriate assessment for each individual development, and, on a precautionary basis, currently could not conclude that, in combination with other developments, there would not be an adverse effect on the integrity. Without mitigation, applications must be

¹¹ Tyldesley, D. 2005. *Urban impacts on Dorset Heaths. A review of authoritative planning and related decisions.* English Nature Research Report 622. English Nature, Peterborough.

refused, effectively placing an embargo on most residential development within South East Dorset.

4. The work of the Urban Heaths Partnership

- 4.1. In South East Dorset from 2001 to the present time methods have been piloted for mitigating current urban pressures on the designated heathlands alone through a community education approach. The work has been undertaken by the Urban Heaths Partnership (the UHP) of organisations including all relevant local authorities and conservation organisations, and the Dorset Police and the Dorset Fire & Rescue Service. Originally funded through pump-priming by the European Commission LIFE-Nature programme, the work has more recently been supported by the former Countryside Agency's Access Management Programme¹².
- 4.2. The work of the UHP aims to reduce the effects of four key threats arising from the level of public access to the heaths, and the lack of understanding and appreciation of their importance for wildlife. It is essentially an education-led approach, targeting all ages of the population, and is designed to alter people's attitudes to the heaths and what they do on them. The four key threats are fire, disturbance, trampling, and unfavourable public perception.
- 4.3. Extra wardening is funded on the heaths, above the background level supplied by partner organisations, to discourage unwanted and illegal activities and to engage with visitors to help them understand the importance of the heaths for nature conservation and the need for management. The wardens patrol the heaths particularly at high risk times of the day and year, and are able to be demand-responsive to local spates of incidents. The wardens work closely with local police officers within the Dorset Police under the long-standing operational order 'Operation Heathland', co-ordinated by the Force Wildlife and Heathland Protection Officer. They also work with the Dorset Fire & Rescue Service when there is a fire to co-ordinate access and the public.
- 4.4. Over the six years certain infrastructure and equipment, such as fire hydrants and dedicated fire-fighting equipment to tackle heath fires, has been provided limit the effects of damaging activities. All Dorset fire tenders have a standardised atlas on board giving a fire access plan for each urban heath, and the project has also funded a single communication network between emergency services and conservation managers of the heaths.
- 4.5. An extensive life long education strategy was devised and continues to be implemented to improve knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the heaths and their management. Education resources devised by the partnership's teaching staff have been provided, free of charge, to every school. These resources tie directly into the National Curriculum, a number based on the Citizenship strand. Visits to whole school assemblies by police and other partnership staff following a serious local incident such as a major fire have proved to provide an important and direct approach to educating a key part of the local community. Other resources, such as a mobile classroom, provide a focus for education at community events.
- 4.6. The work of the UHP also encompasses survey and monitoring of incidents such as fires and motor cycling, talking to users of the heaths, and undertaking site-user questionnaire surveys.

¹² www.dorsetforyou.com (enter 'urban heaths' into search engine and navigate to all reports)

- 4.7. The project has developed a successful framework for combating the urban pressures on the heaths, although it is unlikely to be successful in the short term, or without additional greenspace to divert users. The partnership itself is one of the project's biggest successes with partners now working together in other areas related to the actions of the project.
- 4.8. The education and awareness-raising work on the urban heaths is beginning to show positive results. For example, the number, and especially severity, of fires has reduced, with an improved perception of public values towards the heaths. Assessment by the former English Nature showed that the urban heaths are no longer declining in wildlife value as they were in the 1990s. This is essential work that needs to continue in order to avoid deterioration of the habitats and disturbance to the species for which the Natura 2000 sites have been designated.

5. A long term planning solution

- 5.1. Natural England is working with planning authorities at regional and local level to develop policies that will deal with the need for mitigation to address urban pressures that would result from housing and other development over the next two decades.
- 5.2. The mechanism for policy development to provide mitigation is through the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks. However, it is likely that this process would take up to three years to bear fruit, most probably at the time of adoption of local policy through the LDF and any Supplementary Planning Documents that may deal with the housing and heathland issue.
- 5.3. In preparation for the appropriate assessments of policies the RSS and LDFs, the regional and local authorities, supported by Natural England, are currently gathering evidence necessary for each authority to undertake that assessment in dealing with the urban pressures.
- 5.4. This evidence is likely to be available by early December 2006 in advance of the Examination in Public of the RSS due spring 2007.
- 5.5. Once policy is adopted this would give Natural England and the planning authorities the confidence that the package of mitigation measures could be implemented through the development planning process, enabling the proper protection of the heathlands as required under the Habitats Regulations. It is intended that the implementation of the mitigation measures would be paid for through planning contributions, or planning gain supplement, as appropriate.
- 5.6. However, given that South East Dorset faces an almost immediate planning embargo unless a comprehensive mitigation package can be secured, the planning authorities cannot wait for the development plan process to unfold, and must come forward with an interim solution in the short term.

6. The Thames Basin Heaths SPA

- 6.1. The issue of urban pressures is not confined to the South East Dorset heathlands. A parallel situation involving long term and interim solutions is emerging in the 15 local authorities centred on Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey and around the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. There, Natural England is proposing an area-based approach to mitigating recreational impacts in a three year trial known as the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Plan. In this new approach to spatial planning housing applications would not need to

be assessed under the Habitats Regulations individually, and mitigation in the form of alternative natural green space, could be provided strategically¹³.

- 6.2. There are material differences between the situations in the Thames Basin Heaths and Dorset, in terms of habitat designation, severity of urban pressures, settlement pattern and fragmentation of the heathlands. The local situation here has determined the practical approach that the Dorset local authorities and the former English Nature and Countryside Agency have taken to tackle the urban pressures, in particular the establishment and development of the Urban Heaths Partnership over the past five years.
- 6.3. The Government has commissioned a peer review of the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Plan, and recommendations from that review when it reports later in 2006 will be considered in taking forward this Interim Framework and in the longer term.

7. Scope of the Interim Planning Framework

- 7.1. The Interim Planning Framework proposes a package of measures to mitigate impacts of urban pressures from residential development on the Dorset Heathlands SPA and Dorset Heaths SAC. The methods of mitigation proposed to tackle each urban pressure are outlined in Table 1 below.
- 7.2. The plan is designed to have a shelf-life of about three years, from end 2006 to end 2009 and is designed to cover all the local authority areas in South East Dorset and is thus a joint, area-wide plan. The list of sites and programme of works that are currently considered to be able to provide adequate mitigation are categorised in Annexes 2, 3 & 4, following the approach advised by Natural England outlined in Section 3.3 above. It provides for the establishment of baseline conditions of urban effects, where these are not already known, and for monitoring of plan implementation to demonstrate the effectiveness of proposed mitigations.
- 7.3. The list of sites and programme of works, together with the estimated costs of implementation, has been assembled by The Urban Heaths Partnership Manager in consultation with officers in all forward planning, development control, and countryside departments in the local authorities, staff of the existing Urban Heaths Partnership, and staff of relevant conservation organisations including Natural England.
- 7.4. The Interim Framework is aimed at the immediate facilitation of planning control beyond the 400m zone for the many infill or windfall residential developments that come forward constantly. It provides a mechanism to enable developers to make financial contributions towards the implementation of the Interim Planning Framework, to obviate the need for Natural England's involvement in every application, and the need for individual appropriate assessments of every application by the planning authorities. However, individual circumstances may dictate that the Interim Planning Framework does not provide an adequate mechanism for providing mitigation for development beyond 400m, either owing to its scale or location, in combination with other developments. Such developments would continue to be dealt with by the planning authorities in consultation with Natural England on a case-by-case basis.
- 7.5. Additionally, it may be that larger developments come forward between now and end 2009 which are able to supply and justify appropriate mitigation of their urban effects.

¹³ English Nature. 2005. *Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Plan. Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area: Mitigation standards for residential development*. Working Draft. English Nature, Peterborough.

Such developments would be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Natural England and may fall outside the scope of this Interim Framework.

8. Principles underpinning the Interim Planning Framework

- 8.1. Certain principles have been established through application of the Habitats Regulations tests to the issues of urban pressures and these have been reinforced by previous planning decisions by the Inspectorate or the Secretary of State. In effect, where a planning authority cannot ascertain that a development would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European wildlife site, either alone or in combination with other developments, planning permission should not be granted. For most individual residential developments it would be difficult to impose conditions or restrictions on a consent that would remove adverse effects of additional urban pressures without a strategic approach to mitigation provision across the area supporting the European heathlands. It is only at the strategic level that it is possible to make sense of the effects of a single development in combination with others and to plan for the implementation of adequate mitigation.
- 8.2. There are existing requirements under Articles 3(1) and 6(2) of the Habitats Directive¹⁴ (i) maintain or restore habitats and species at favourable conservation status; and (ii) avoid the deterioration of natural habitats and disturbance of the species for which they have been designated. The mitigation proposed in this Interim Framework is designed to address the issues arising from new development rather than those caused by existing development. Thus projects specified in this Plan should be assessed in terms of the contribution that they will make to the avoidance of harm to European sites.
- 8.3. The following are the main considerations that apply in making such assessments and are based largely on recent visitor and ecological survey and research on both the Dorset Heaths and the Thames Basin Heaths^{15,16,17,18,19,20}.
- There should be a spatial relationship between the proposed open space and the likely location of new housing, to ensure that it is genuinely likely to divert the recreational demands of new residents from the European sites (in practice because new development is dispersed across the conurbation this will not be a constraint in the conurbation itself, but it may be if new open space were proposed in more rural areas).
 - If new open space, or improved existing open space, is to function to divert pressure from existing heathlands, it should aim to provide a similar facility to existing heathlands. The size and character of alternative areas would be critical in determining whether they would be likely to be effective and therefore count as mitigation. For example, the length of a typical dog walk taken on heathland (c.2.5

¹⁴ Council Directive of 21/5/92 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (92/43/EEC)

¹⁵ Liley, D. & Clarke, R.T. (2003) The impact of urban development and human disturbance on the numbers of nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* on heathlands in Dorset, England. *Biological Conservation*, **114**, 219 - 230.

¹⁶ Clarke, R.T., Liley, D., Underhill-Day, J.C., & Rose, R.J. 2006. *Visitor access patterns on the Dorset Heaths*. English Nature Research Report No. 683. English Nature, Peterborough.

¹⁷ Liley, D., Jackson, D., & Underhill-Day, J.C. 2006. *Visitor access patterns on the Thames Basin Heaths*. English Nature Research Report. English Nature, Peterborough.

¹⁸ Liley, D. & Underhill-Day, J.C. (2006). Dog walkers on the Dorset Heaths, Analysis of questionnaire data collected by wardens on Dorset's Urban Heaths. Footprint Ecology / Urban Heaths Partnership / English Nature.

¹⁹ Underhill-Day, J C 2005. A literature review of urban effects on lowland heaths and their wildlife. English Nature Research Report No. 623. English Nature, 2005

²⁰ Murison, G. (2002). The impact of human disturbance on the breeding success of nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* on heathlands in south Dorset, England, Rep. No. 483. English Nature, Peterborough.

km) would need to be replicated; small alternative sites not able to offer this opportunity would not normally be considered.

- It is not considered possible to divert all recreational pressure on heathlands that would arise from new development onto new/improved open space. Thus, the purpose of the Interim Framework is to avoid a net increase in adverse impacts on the heathlands and this can be achieved either by diverting potential new users or by diverting existing users away from the heaths to new same areas.
- Similarly, part of the Interim Strategy involves access management measures on existing heathlands and here it is clearly not possible to distinguish between pressure from existing and new users.
- Delivery of mitigation should be phased, so that it is either in place and operational in advance of residents occupying the new houses, or is part of an ongoing programme to cater for new residents as they arrive.
- The number of additional residential units that the measures aims to mitigate (if it is a new open space, for example), or the number of additional people to be part of an education programme, should be robustly calculated
- There are both physical and permanent mitigation measures in place together with an ongoing community education and awareness programme that recognises the degree of population turnover that is in part facilitated by development of new residential units
- The current visitor usage of the open space is established as a baseline against which changes in visitor use can be measured to assess the effectiveness of mitigation. Visitor use surveys would also need to be undertaken on the European sites to measure changes in visitor use within the sites and, ultimately, the effectiveness of the mitigation measures.

8.4. Proposed mitigation measures should not have the effect of delivering additional visitor pressure to European sites as this would be counter to the purpose of the Plan. In encouraging visitor to alternative sites the Plan needs to fully consider the potential impacts of such a strategy on nature conservation or other interests. For example these sites may support significant populations of the three Annex I bird species or have potential for habitat re-creation.

8.5. Comprehensive monitoring needs to ensure that the effectiveness of the mitigation measures is determined, in order that further changes can be implemented if they do not achieve the predicted results.

8.6. The methodology for drawing up this Interim Framework has been agreed with Natural England. However, the contents of Annexes 2 - 4 have not been subject to detailed assessment of appropriateness in the context of measures to secure avoidance of harm. The projects and activities will be rationalised according to the principles established in this Section of the Plan and more detailed work will be required to identify the precise costs, mechanism and benefits of each proposal to mitigating harm to the European sites.

8.7. Activities and projects will be selected for implementation according to geographical priority determined by either:

- origin of additional urban pressures so that a link between such pressures and the mitigation elements can be demonstrated (although it may yet prove unrealistic to define geographical location of mitigation for a housing strategy based on windfall development)
- need for specific response to spate of incidents (e.g. arson on a particular heathland)

- 8.8. The scale of activities and projects will be related to, where realistically definable, the number of additional residential units, or to the additional number of people to be covered by education and awareness work.
- 8.9. Local authorities currently spend considerable resources in managing public open space including heathland nature reserves and planning contributions to this Interim Framework will not be a substitute for this continued investment in wider public benefit.
- 8.10. The work of the Urban Heaths Partnership from 2001 to date has not been funded directly by the local authorities, although in managing the partnership the County Council has absorbed some administrative costs, and the Dorset Police has part funded the costs of the Force Heathland and Wildlife Protection Officer. This work has, in part, been successful in beginning to alter public attitudes towards the heaths, in managing public access and providing a mechanism for dealing with criminal behavior on the heaths. However, without the availability of suitable alternative green space to which people can be directed through the work of the UHP, their effectiveness has been limited.
- 8.11. It is proposed to provide funds raised from the Interim Framework towards costs of the UHP to cover those elements of community education and awareness that are necessary to mitigate the impacts of additional urban effects on the heaths from increased numbers of residential units. However, it is not the effects of new additional development/new additional people, *per se*, that needs to be mitigated, rather that there is no net increase in urban pressures on the heaths as a result of the additional development.
- 8.12. The work of the UHP would fit well with this reasoning. Their work has been shown to alter people's attitudes favourably towards the heaths, albeit the changes are small. The work does not distinguish residents of new additional residential units from existing; rather it provides a mechanism for the continual renewal of education efforts throughout the population, especially in schools, via community groups, and out on the heaths. It will thus provide for education of all people in South East Dorset, and encompass those users that arise as a result of additional development.
- 8.13. The mitigating benefits of providing alternative green space combined with education work by the UHP are likely to be more successful than the work of UHP alone. For example, people wishing to undertake recreation in the countryside will increasingly be faced with a choice of sites to visit. Access management on heathlands should deter the less desirable activities, and community education will inform those choices, leading to appropriate use of the different recreational facilities on offer.
- 8.14. A further benefit of contributing to UHP through this Plan is that it provides certainty that elements of mitigation plan are being implemented at all times and across the whole of South East Dorset heathlands so that it is clear that mitigation is being provided in advance of the occupancy of new residential units. Whilst provision of alternative green space may be planned, its delivery and implementation in a 3-year programme, yet to be defined, is more difficult to guarantee.

TABLE 1. Mitigating urban pressures

Urban pressure	Mitigation methods
1. Increased incidence of arson	Effective partnership working between land owners/managers and police and fire services.
	Common fire incident recording and database
	Fire risk planning and management
	Appropriate fire equipment
	High profile wardening and policing
	Education and awareness raising
2. Disturbance from increased use by people including dog walkers, off road cyclists and motor vehicles,	Provide alternative sites and encourage people to go there.
	High profile wardening and policing to limit damaging and illegal activities
	Common incident recording and database
	On site access management measures to exclude illegal users and guide legitimate users into more robust areas.
	Education and awareness raising
3. Damage to habitats and erosion of substrate because of increased use and misuse	Provide alternative sites and encourage people to go there
	High profile wardening and policing
	Common incident recording and database
	On site access management measures to exclude illegal users and guide legitimate users into more robust areas.
	Education and awareness raising
4. Increased number of predatory species adapted to urban conditions e.g. foxes, crows, rats	Remove features likely to encourage these on site and if possible in the surrounding area e.g. food waste in accessible bins
	Education and awareness raising
5. Predation by cats	400m no development zone
	Education and awareness raising may limit cat ownership
6. Disruption to heathland hydrology and enrichment from urban run off	Surveying and monitoring of heathland hydrology
	Interception of polluted water sources e.g. SUDS schemes

7. Increase in resistance to heathland management e.g. tree felling, introduction of grazing	Education and awareness raising
	Encouraging volunteering
8. Littering and dumping	High profile wardening and policing
	Common incident recording and database
	Provision of bins
	Education and awareness raising
9. Deposition of dog faeces	High profile wardening and policing
	Provision of bins
	Education and awareness raising
10. Loss or degradation of adjacent habitats needed to support heathland species e.g. foraging areas for nightjar	Securing use of adjacent land to support integrity of heathland interest features.

Annex 1

Natural England Advice Note

Residential development in the zone between about 400m and 5km from Dorset heathland SSSIs containing internationally important sites.

The application site lies in the vicinity of heathlands that are notified as SSSIs for the special interest of their heathland habitats and associated plant and animal species. These SSSIs are part of the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA) on account of rare or vulnerable heathland bird species and are also part of a Ramsar site on account of rare or vulnerable heathland wetlands and associated rare wetland species. They are additionally part of the Dorset Heaths (or Dorset Heaths [Purbeck and Wareham] and Studland Dunes) Special Area of Conservation (SAC) on account of rare or vulnerable heathland and associated habitats and some individual species.

The proximity of the European sites (SPA and SACs) raises considerations on the requirements of the Habitats Directive 1992 for these sites to be maintained or, where necessary, restored at a favourable conservation status (Article 3 (1)). Determination of the application should be undertaken with regard to the Habitats Regulations 1994 and in particular Regulations 48 and 49, the requirements of the Habitats Directive by virtue of Regulation 3(4); and other legislative and policy considerations on the protection, conservation and enhancement of the heathland special interest features of the SSSIs.

In recent years research has demonstrated that there is a connection between adverse impacts on Dorset heathland and the proximity of developed land and also the amount of development on adjacent land. A study commissioned by the then Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions has shown that fires on heathland sites tend to increase in frequency with the proportion of adjacent land that is developed. Also fires are most frequent between April and August when they are likely to cause most damage to heathland vegetation and wildlife.

Other research has shown that urban development near heathland is associated with an adverse effect on three of the SPA interest features: nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler. The density of nightjars on heathland sites has been found to decline with the amount of development on adjacent land. Furthermore the research indicates that the breeding success of those nightjars present also declines with the amount of development. This appears, at least in part, to be related to human disturbance from visitor pressure, especially disturbance by dogs. Research on woodlarks and disturbance has reached similar conclusions. For Dartford warblers, emerging research shows that cats are a predator of young Dartford warblers and were recorded to take over 10% of all young raised on an urban part of the Dorset Heathlands SPA.

These urban pressures have been recognised as a significant issue on the Dorset heathlands by the Standing Committee of the Berne Convention. On urban development, the Committee has formally recommended to the UK Government (No. 67 1998) among various matters 'to avoid any more development close to existing heathland; for new housing to provide areas for playgrounds, sport or leisure in areas other than heathlands, to avoid unwanted pressure on heathlands'.

It is Natural England's view, based on recent research into access onto heathlands and other factors, that the area within about 400m of European sites is where additional small scale residential development is likely to have the most substantial further adverse effect on these sites; and where these effects cannot be mitigated.

Nevertheless residential developments beyond this area are also likely to contribute to increasing the urban pressures on the European sites. The development proposed by this application is situated in this wider area beyond the nearest part of the European sites. Natural England is concerned about the cumulative effects of this type of development. However, we are awaiting results of reviews and further research being undertaken both here and in the Thames Basin Heaths before finalising our advice in relation to this type of development.

In general terms, we believe that the most appropriate way of avoiding further adverse urban pressures on the European sites, due to additional small scale development in a zone generally between 400m and 5km from the sites, would be through the implementation of a comprehensive package of measures by the local authorities and other bodies to mitigate such pressures. These measures should include enhancements to existing open space and other publicly owned land; the provision of alternative open space that would pull recreational use away from the European sites; local community actions similar in scope to those previously funded by the Urban Heaths LIFE Project; and also measures to increase the ecological robustness of the European sites through the sympathetic use of adjacent open land. Further considerations can apply to some proposals, for example those that are large in scale, raise hydrological effects or are on undeveloped land that may compromise biodiversity or the provision of alternative open space.

Natural England is working with planning authorities at regional and local level on the development of policy and measures for dealing with small scale urban intensification through increased residential units in the vicinity of European heathland sites. The aim of this work is to ensure that the integrity of these sites is not further incrementally eroded or diminished by a steady increase in urban pressures due to additional development.

Where mitigation would be appropriate to remove a likely addition to urban pressures on the European sites, we are not generally seeking to provide specific advice on the individual circumstances of each small scale development proposal, such as the currently proposed development. Rather this development is likely to have significant effects only in combination with other such developments and that

this requires a sound package of mitigation measures that must account for their cumulative impact.

It will be some time before such policy and measures can be delivered formally through the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks. However, in the interim there is a rapidly developing understanding between you and other local authorities in South East Dorset to have in place as a soon as possible, and no later than the end of November 2006, an interim strategy to provide for effective mitigation of the effects of further development on the interest features of the designated heathland sites. These measures will include Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace and access and visitor management, and it is a matter of weeks before the details are finally agreed. These measures will need to be financed by contributions. On the basis of the commitment to both interim and longer term mitigation strategies and with measures funded by developer contributions, Natural England believes that an appropriate assessment of this application may reasonably conclude that there would not be an adverse cumulative impact on the integrity of the European sites. It follows that in this respect Natural England has no objection to permission being granted for the proposed development.

The implementation of appropriate mechanisms to collect developer contributions is a matter for the planning authorities involved.

ANNEX 2. Costings for Urban Heaths Partnership core team

<u>Core staff salaries</u>	<u>£</u>
Partnership manager	33315
Operations manager	23952
Community education officer	20235
Community education assistant	15825
Community heathlands officer	17352
Senior warden	18832
Assistant senior warden	17803
Heath wardens (10)	163380
Access projects officer	17352
Project support officer	12372
	<hr/>
	340418
On costs (NI, superannuation)	82722
	<hr/>
Total salary costs	423140
 <u>Other costs</u>	
Office costs	4000
Vehicle/travel costs	16000
Training	4000
Equipment and materials	6000
Business support	6000
Database management	12000
Website management	3000
Recruitment	2500
	<hr/>
	53500
TOTAL	476640

All of these costings are based on 2006 costs and salary rates. If 5% is allowed for inflation each year the projected costs for the three years April 2007 to March 2010 are **£1,577,270**

Core capital expenditure 2007/10

Additional vehicles	40000
Trailer	2000
Information leaflets/publications	10000
Education packs	30000
Tools	2000
Fire access identification signs	2000
	<hr/>
	86000
 UHP total core expenditure 2007/10	 £1,663,270

ANNEX 3. Projects to divert users from heaths

Location	Project	Cost	Committed sum	Owner/manager
STRATEGIC PROJECTS				
Castleman railway and linking sites	Improvements to trailway access points to welcome legitimate users whilst restricting access by motor vehicles, vegetation management along route to provide views and increase feeling of security.	47000		DCC
	New links to West Moors and Stapehill	100000	10000	EDDC
	Promotion of new opportunities.	4000		DCC BoP EDDC
	Ashley Heath Create/improve four car park gateways to forest and five gateways/links to the trailway to encourage visitors to explore the forest rather than adjacent heathlands.	80000	10000	FC
	Uddens Plantation Improve car park gateway to be more welcoming to visitors, directing visitors to woodland trails and improving links to trailway	46000	5000	FC
	Watchmoor Development of off road cycling skills area with obstacles and varied topography	35000	5000	FC
	West Moors Plantation 3 entrances improved for pedestrian/cycle access, improve gateways from trailway, provision of cycle trails linking to trailway, picnic site next to trailway, development of off road cycling area for families, with higher skills area. New play trail and natural play provision.	270000	60,000	FC

Stour Valley	Improvements to Stour Valley LNR, Iford Meadows, Stour Valley Way to attract visitors to existing recreational opportunities. Planning, design and consultation on new access areas at Hicks Farm, Throop. Creation of paths at Hicks Farm and links to Stour Valley Way. Planning, design and consultation of Stour Crossing (Pig Shoe Bridge). Phase 1 of creation of strategic alternate greenspace network	200000	40000	BBC
LOCAL PROJECTS				
Border Road OS, Upton	Improvements to under used open space as interceptor site for Upton Heath	20000	4000	Upton and Lychett Parish Council
Bracken Road Ferndown	Purchase 15ha zoned for open space in Local Plan (Policy FWP11) and develop for informal recreation.	500000	100,000	EDDC
Broadstone Heath LNR	Improve path network to include all weather circular dog walk	20000		BoP
Bytheway	Provision of alternate greenspace linking to Leigh Common with car park, access routes, play facilities, fencing, landscaping, Phase 1	400000	100000	EDDC
Cannon Hill Plantation	Improve pedestrian gateways and trail network. Provide rest benches/perches	23000		FC
Chewton Bunny	999 year lease of 1+ha woodland and improvements to access and attractiveness as alternate open space	10000	2000	CBC
Chewton Common	Purchase of 17ha of alternate greenspace and develop for informal recreation	300000	50000	CBC
Corfe Mullen	Development of multi user trailway on former Somerset and Dorset railway. Planning, consultation, implementation and promotion.	150000		EDDC + BoP

Delph Woods	Improvements to car park, access points and paths network to provide alternate to adjacent Dunyeats Hill and other nearby heaths.	67500		BoP
Dewlands Common	Purchase of paddocks between northern and southern parts of the SSSI and create access with footpath and cycle links to old town centre	120000	30000	EDDC
Druitt Gardens, Christchurch	Make site safe. Public consultation process for development plan and phase 1 implementation of agreed plan. Wooded alternate greenspace	80000	20000	CBC
Ford Lane Recreation Ground	Planning for and consultation on improvements to recreation area close to Parley Common,	15000		EDDC
Gore Heath	Improvements to car parks at Lawson's clump and off B3075 to deflect visitors from Great Ovens.	23000		FC
Grove Copse OS	Improvements to access and attractiveness as interceptor site for St Catherines Hill	8000	1000	CBC
Ham Common	Buy out lease on land adjacent to heath and create access routes as alternate to heath	50000	5000	BoP
Haymoor Bottom	Improvements to access and attractiveness as interceptor site for Canford Heath	50000		BoP
Hurn Forest	Improvements to car parks, access and attractiveness to direct visitors into more robust forest areas rather than adjacent heaths. All ability access trail.	46000	8000	FC
Longfleet Drive OS	Improvements to access and attractiveness as interceptor site for Canford Heath	25000		BoP
Lower Common, Three Legged Cross	Acquisition of land adjacent to Lower Common	50000	10000	EDDC
Millhams Mead	Improve access, attractiveness and promotion as alternate greenspace	10000		BBC

Nea Meadows	Improvements to often overcrowded car park to include increased provision for disabled drivers. Improvements to access points and path network, including all ability trail. Improve promotion of site as alternate greenspace.	25000	3000	CBC
Poor Common	Open up area of dense rhododendron and improve path network to include circular dog walking route. Provide additional dog bins.	20000	5000	EDDC
Potterne Park	Creation of circular routes linking Potterne Park, Moors Valley Country Park and Ringwood Forest as alternate destinations to Verwood Heaths	75000	20000	EDDC
Purewell Meadows LNR	Improvements to path networks and landscaping including area of run down land next to LNR to encourage more visitors to use the site which is under used due to current condition.	14000		CBC
Ringwood Forest	Improvements to car parks and gateway features at Ebblake North (B3081), Forest Lodge and Chase to encourage use of forest as alternate greenspace.close to Verwood Heaths	28500		FC
Sherbourne Crescent Open Space	Improvements to bmx area to divert bmx bikes from Canford Heath	80000		BoP
Stanpit Marsh LNR/Stanpit Golf Course/Stanpit Recreation Ground/Monkswell Green	Integrated improvements to access and links between closely related sites to create new, longer walks and improve attractiveness of area particularly the recreation ground which is currently very under used.	70000	17000	CBC
Stony Lane arena	Development of bmx facilities to intercept such unwanted activities on St Catherines Hill	20000		CBC
Three Legged Cross	Upgrade 3cross to Moors Valley bridle way to multi-user greenway.	75000	20000	EDDC
Upton Country Park	Open new access to adjacent Upton Farm linking to Castleman Trailway and study and consultation on further use of the farm as alternate greenspace to relieve pressure on Upton Heath	90000		.BoP

Wareham Forest	Create new access points off Bere Regis road, improve Sika Trail, develop new off track sections linking with existing tracks to encourage mountain bikers to use these rather than slopes of adjacent Great Ovens	40000	5000	FC
West Moors	New 4ha open space on land NE of Oakhurst Rd with car park and access network linking to West Moors plantation to create alternate greenspace	70000	20000	EDDC
Woodlands, Sandford	Provision of heathland nature themed play area in woodland adjacent to Sandford Heath	160000	50000	Wareham St Martin Parish Council
Other	Visitor monitoring to survey and evaluate participation in woodland access following changes described above.	23000		FC
Other	Studies of under used recreation grounds near heaths which could be improved to attract users from heaths and consultation on recommendations.	30000		BoP
Other	Phase 1 implementation of findings of above to include play areas, climbing boulders, bmx berms, landscaping etc	400000		BoP
Other	Study of parks and open spaces which could be improved to attract users from heaths and consultation on recommendations	30000		BBC
Other	Phase 1 implementation of findings of above	175000		BBC
Other	Study of parks and open spaces which could be improved to attract users from heaths and consultation on recommendations	20000		CBC
	TOTAL	4,195,000	600,000	
	TOTAL including commuted sums	£4,795,000		

ANNEX 4. Access Management Projects

Location	Project	Cost	Land owner /manager
All sites	4WD vehicle for Force Wildlife and Heathland Protection Officer	20000	DP
All sites	User/public perception surveying and monitoring to show effect of mitigation	25000	All
All sites	Monitoring the extent of habitat degradation caused by urban effects, including digitisation	40000	All plus DERC
All sites	Establishment of baseline data on urban effects, including understanding of dog walking habits in SE Dorset.	150000	All
Avon Heath	Improvements to fire access and purchase of water bowser and pump and back pack fire fighting equipment, vehicle barriers to restrict access to sensitive areas, classroom equipment to improve education on responsible behaviour on the heath.	35500	DCC RSPB
Bourne Valley	Improvements to fire access and gates to reduce damage from fires and restrict access by unauthorised vehicles/users. Provision of dog bins to encourage dog walkers to pick up dog waste.	42400	BoP
Canford Heath	Improvements to paths and path diversions to combat erosion on 4 barrows, Hill 60 and Strawberry Hill and direct visitors into more robust areas. Remove tarmac area near Belben Rd and restore to heath to provide additional habitat area. Water level management measures and road run off SUD to improve water quality. Improvements to fire access and gates and provision of additional mains supplied fire hydrants to reduce amount of damage from fires. Additional bins to encourage dog owners to pick up and discourage littering	154000	BoP
Corfe Hills	Improvements to fire access tracks and gates. Provide dog/litter bins. Water level management	17000	BoP
Dunyeats Hill	Provision of dog bins	3000	HCT
Ferndown Common	Provision of dog bins	3000	HCT
Ham Common	Improvements to path network to direct access into more robust areas. Improvements to fire access and gates to reduce damage from fires. Provision of dog/litter bins	44000	BoP

Hartland Moor	Temporary barriers for permissive bridle routes to restrict access at sensitive times of year	250	NT
Hengistbury Head	Board walk to direct access on sensitive relict dunes. Path works on HH and adjacent Wick fields to divert visitors to more robust areas. Archaeological survey and monitoring needed as Scheduled Ancient Monument.	65000	BBC
Kinson Common	Improvements to path network to direct visitors away from the SSSI and into more robust areas	15000	BBC
Parley Common	Improvements to access points to restrict unauthorised access, new fire access point and fire hydrant. Dog bins. Community education campaign on firesetting problem (to include Ferndown Common as well)	11000	DCC HCT EDDC DRFS DP
Ramsdown Forest	Redesign car park to make a more welcoming gateway. Redesign trail network to direct access away from more sensitive heath area.	52000	FC
St Catherines Hill	Fire beaters and stand, establishment of community support/Friends group, education equipment	5600	CBC
Slop Bog	Improvements to path network to direct more visitors into wooded area.	8000	DCC
Stephens Castle	Improvements to path network to direct visitors into more robust areas, erosion control on slopes, restoration of large area of bare sand to heath.	48000	EDDC
Studland Heath	Boardwalks to direct access, temporary barriers for permissive bridle routes to restrict access at certain times of year, dog bins and education equipment. Fire bowser and pump.	34100	NT
Upton Esso	Remove fly tipping and litter. Signs and litter/dog bins	2500	HCT
Upton Heath (including Pinesprings and Roman Road)	Improvements to path networks to direct visitors into more robust areas, boardwalks to counter erosion, improvements to access points to exclude unauthorised vehicles whilst allowing access for legitimate users. Education equipment. Fire access bridge.	84500	DWT BoP
Whitesheet Plantation, Holt	Redesign carpark to make a more welcoming gateway to divert visitors from Holt Heath	29000	FC
Other	Good neighbour/volunteering leaflet	2000	BoP
Other	Improved promotion and interpretation of greenspace access opportunities to encourage people to visit areas other than heaths	3000 3000	BoP BBC
Other	Additional fire pagers	3000	Various
Other	Hand held GPS units to monitor fires and other incidents	3000	Various

Other	Fire ground radios for L4Ts	3600	DFRS
Other	Education pack for Poole heaths	2000	BoP
Other	Extend PlanWeb incident recording system to all heaths, PlanWeb training	5500	DCC DERC
Other	Fire incident training for wardens and volunteers	3000	DFRS
Other	Property risk profiles for urban heaths	2500	DFRS
Other	GPS devices for fire engines to help record locations of heath fires	7200	DFRS
Other	Community education equipment	2500	DP
Other	Digital cameras for fire stations to help record heath fires	4000	DFRS
Other	Remote video surveillance package	30000	DP
Other	Laptop with Mapinfo package and digital camera for monitoring	6000	DCC
Other	Strategic information on dog walking opportunities and restrictions	20000	UHP/all
Other	Sets of childrens gloves and tools	16000	UHP/all
Other	Hydrological surveys/water level monitoring, Slop Bog, St Catherine's Hill, Parley Common, Kinson Common, Turbary Common	40000	DCC CBC HCT BBC
Other	New residents leaflet for each local authority area showing open space opportunities for informal recreation	15000	Each LA area
Other	Contributions database	10000	DCC
	TOTAL	1,070,150	

TOTAL COSTS	
Annex 1	1,663,270
Annex 2	4,795,000
Annex 3	1,070,150
GRAND TOTAL	7,528,420

