# The Dorset Heathlands Development Plan Document

# Preferred Options Consultation











Bournemouth Borough Council

Christchurch ...where time is pleasant

East Dorset District Council

boroughofpoole.com

Purbeck District Council

February 2013

# Contents

# 1 Introduction

1.1 A growing body of evidence shows that increasing the numbers of people living near to heathland results in harm to these important internationally protected habitats and the species they support. The effects of increased residential development close to lowland heath has led to an increase in wild fires, damaging recreational activities, the introduction of incompatible plants and animals, loss of vegetation and soil erosion and disturbance by humans and their pets amongst other factors. The wide range of effects is shown in the table below. These impacts are called 'urban effects' and it is the purpose of this document to set out the long term strategy for the avoidance or mitigation of the adverse urban effects of residential development in South East Dorset. This draft Development Plan Document explains the options that have been considered, identifies a preferred approach and proposes draft policies as to how the protection of heathland could be undertaken. The Plan will run to the end of 2026.

**Table 1: The Main Urban Effects on Lowland Heaths in Dorset**

| | |
|---|---|
| Reduction in area | Mid 18C *c*36,000 ha to 1996 7373 ha (Webb and others 2000). |
| Fragmentation of heaths | 768 fragments, 88% < 10ha (Webb & Haskins 1980). |
| Supporting habitats | Less semi-natural habitat adjoining heaths. |
| Predation | Cat/rat predation on ground nesting birds and reptiles. |
| Disruption to hydrology | Diversion of pre-existing natural water sources away from heathland catchments.<br>Rapid run-off onto heaths from urban areas. |
| Pollution | Changes in pH of water supplies to heathland.<br>Enrichment and pollutants from urban run-off.<br>Pollutants from overflows, spills, accidents. |
| Sand and gravel working with landfill after-use | Mineral working destroying habitat and disrupting hydrology.<br>Polluted water can leak from landfill. |
| Enrichment | Dog excrement causes vegetation change along sides of paths.<br>Rubbish dumping by roads and from gardens. |
| Roads | Increased fire risk from car thrown cigarettes.<br>Pollution/enrichment causing vegetation change from vehicles in transport corridor.<br>Roads forming barriers to species mobility.<br>Road kills increasing mortality rates.<br>Noise and light pollution from traffic. |
| Service infrastructures both over and under heathland | Disturbance during construction and maintenance.<br>Leakage from underground pipes and sewers.<br>Changes to heathland hydrology.<br>Poles providing bird predator look-out posts. |
| Disturbance | Changes in breeding bird and animal distributions.<br>Reduction in breeding success of birds/animals. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Trampling | Changes to vegetation.<br>Creation of bare areas and subsequent soil erosion.<br>Damage to bare ground reptile and invertebrate.<br>Habitats and populations.<br>Increases in path and track networks.<br>Damage to archaeological features. |
| Fire | Increased frequency of fires with majority in spring and summer.<br>Long term vegetation changes.<br>Increased mortality of heathland animals/birds. |
| | Fragmentation/reduction of habitat on heaths. |
| Vandalism | Damage to signs and fences. |
| Public hostility to conservation management | Opposition to management eg tree felling, fencing and grazing. |
| Management costs | Greatly increased management costs on urban heaths. |

The main urban effects on lowland heaths in Dorset, J Underhill-Day 2005 (from de Molenaar 1998, Haskins 2000, or as referenced in the table).

**1.2** In September 2007 a partnership of local authorities across South East Dorset (Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset, East Dorset, Poole and Purbeck) published for consultation an 'Issues and Options' document that set out the key considerations for producing a long term strategy and avoidance/mitigation plan for the 'Dorset Heaths'[1].

**1.3** Since then the authorities have been undertaking further research and monitoring the impacts of those projects that have been implemented by way of the joint Interim Planning Framework[2]. The Councils are now in a position to publish their preferred approach and draft policies to balancing protection of the Dorset Heaths whilst enabling appropriate development to support the social and economic needs of the resident population of South East Dorset.

**1.4 This is your opportunity to comment on the preferred approach and draft policies within the Plan**.

1 Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area, Dorset Heathlands, Ramsar site, Dorset Heathlands Special Area of Conservation and Dorset Heathlands Special Area of Conservation (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes

2 Dorset Heathland Interim Planning Framework came into effect in January 2007 and was subsequently extended to September 2012. From 20 September, until April 2014, it was superseded by the Dorset Heathland Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document.

# 2 The Local Plan and Role of this Document

**2.1** The Local Plan is the name given to the home for planning policy documents at the local level. Each Unitary or District Council is responsible for their production and they may be produced individually or jointly between local authorities. The local authorities from South East Dorset in whose area the Dorset Heaths are predominantly located have agreed to produce a joint Development Plan Document. Dorset County Council who are the upper tier authority for the area excluding Bournemouth and Poole are also party to the plans' production although having no statutory responsibility for plan making with respect to this Development Plan Document. Neighbouring authorities North and West Dorset have small areas of protected heathland within their jurisdiction and while not party to this particular Plan they have been engaged in its development. This is particularly pertinent for West Dorset given the proposed housing development at Crossways and the need for the emerging West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Local Plan to have fully assessed the impact of that proposal. Other key stakeholders have also been engaged and consulted with over the plans' development.

**2.2** The Dorset Heathland joint Development Plan Document will provide the necessary cross boundary approach to managing the Dorset Heaths. No one local authority is in a position, or able, to operate a system without an agreed approach across all heathland. Such an approach provides a consistent basis for decision making for developers as well as for the community while protecting the interest features of the European and International sites[3](referred to as International Sites from here on).

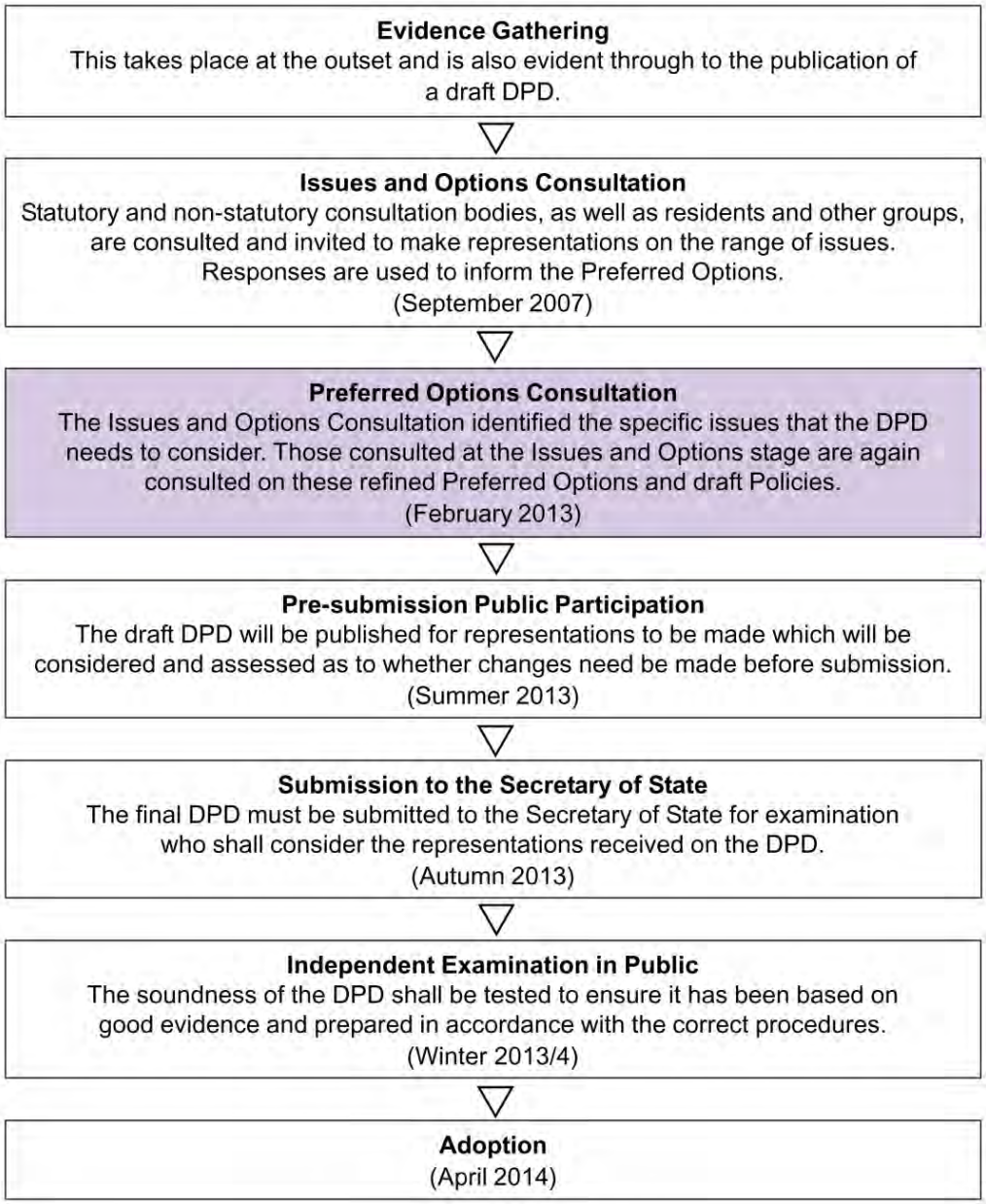
**2.3** In producing this document regard has been had to the existing and emerging Core Strategies and/or Local Plans of the partner local authorities in what they say about heathland issues. In addition, as part of the scoping for the Sustainability Appraisal of this document together with understanding critical avoidance or mitigation projects required to support the target level of housing growth within the plan period each authority's Core Strategy or Local Plan Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) forms part of the evidence base for this document.

**2.4** There are a number of steps that the Plan will have to go through before it can be adopted and implemented by the local authorities. The diagram on the following page sets out the stages of plan production and where this plan is currently within this process.

**2.5** This document will set the policy framework for the protection of the International Sites from development that would ordinarily be likely to have a significant adverse effect on them. The Plan therefore sets out an avoidance and mitigation approach to managing urban pressures on protected heathland. In order to ensure that appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are being implemented it will be necessary to maintain a programme of projects both short and long term to ensure that suitable measures are in place by the time development is occupied. To this end there will be the need to continue with a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) akin to the current Dorset Heathland Planning Framework SPD with an overarching body to oversee the implementation of projects and ensure that the long term objectives for the Dorset Heaths is delivered.

3 Sites that are protected for their wildlife under either the EC Birds or the EC Habitats Directive and those sites identified for their wetland importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

**Figure 1: Plan Production Process with current stage highlighted**



# 3 Housing Targets in South East Dorset

**3.1** The 'Coalition Government' has laid before Parliament the necessary paperwork revoking Regional Spatial Strategies. At the same time it has reaffirmed the need for continued plan making under the current Development Plan system. It will be for each local authority to determine through their Local Plans the appropriate level of housing to support local need and deliver economic growth.

**3.2** The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West 2006 underwent Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal on the housing targets proposed i.e. 34,400 – 36,700. The appraisals concluded that this level of housing could be accommodated, however, an avoidance and mitigation strategy to overcome harm to European and International wildlife sites would need to be put in place. The Heathland Development Plan Document will be that avoidance and mitigation plan.

**3.3** The Local Plans of the partner Local Authorities are now either adopted or sufficiently advanced to identify the housing numbers to which this development plan document is concerned. Housing delivery rates will be monitored and will help to inform any review of this plan. The housing numbers are for the period 2012 to 2026:-

| | |
|---|---|
| Bournemouth | 6,716 |
| Poole | 6,216 |
| Christchurch and East Dorset | 7,603 |
| Purbeck | 1,505 |
| **Total** | **22,040** |

**3.4** Between 2006 and 2012 the total number of completions across South East Dorset was 10,710. This together with the housing identified in Local Plans up to 2026 gives a total housing figure of 32,750 for South East Dorset which is within the range promoted through the Draft South West RSS (2006). Regardless, this document in its own right has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment and screening for Habitats Regulation Assessment purposes.

# 4 What did the Issues and Options Consultation tell us?

4.1 The previous Issues and Options consultation during 2007 asked a number of questions to draw out wider views on the initial approach for the Development Plan Document. In response to the consultation 1001 responses were received from 91 interest groups and individuals, as well as statutory stakeholders. Overall, 119 objections were received, 199 representations of support, 96 support with conditions, as well as 595 'observations' and 'other' comments. The responses can be summarised as follows:-

**Is a DPD the appropriate way forward?**

4.2 Most developers generally accepted the DPD as a way of achieving development whilst protecting the environment but there was some comment on whether the Habitat Regulations were being correctly interpreted by Natural England and concern that a balance is maintained between conservation and people's freedoms.

**Are the zones and methodology appropriate?**

4.3 Opinion was divided on the way the 400m exclusion and 5km mitigation zones should be used to manage mitigation measures, with objections for differing reasons. Some supported the 400m zone but sought clarification on what might be permissible within the zone and queries were raised on its arbitrary nature where it divided existing housing or excluded brownfield sites. The 5km zone was regarded as too far for casual users. Some suggested that the distances should be travel distances, not as the crow flies, whilst others suggested that there should be a graduation between 400m and 5km and that it should also take account of natural barriers. Proactive monitoring would provide evidence for an on-going review of effectiveness.

**Is a tariff approach the appropriate mechanism & should it be applied to dwelling extensions?**

4.4 Opinion was divided. Concerns were raised around the impact on affordability of market housing, particularly for first time buyers, the lack of concessions for affordable housing and a one-off tariff system would not meet the need for long-term funding for heathland management including access work. It was suggested that the system should be flexible to enable mitigation to replace a tariff, where appropriate. Not all extensions result in extra people so it would be difficult to justify.

**What form mitigation might take?**

4.5 Comments included: mitigation could take a variety of forms depending on the situation and suggestions include appropriate Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, formal leisure facilities, on-site mitigation and management and access works; UHP and Natural England should work closely to identify priority sites; mitigation sites should work together strategically. Dorset authorities should work with adjacent local authorities to co-ordinate mitigation plans.

**Does development other than residential have an impact and should it therefore contribute towards mitigation?**

**4.6** Opinion was split on whether other types of development should be treated in the same way. There are two main issues, one being the assumption that any kind of development that brings more people in proximity to heathland must have some effect and therefore a tariff should be applied and the opposite is that if there is no evidence that harm is caused no tariff should be applied.

**How should existing issues be dealt with?**

**4.7** Support was expressed for the Urban Heaths Partnership (UHP), provided that they are treated in the same way as other mitigation projects. It was suggested that existing issues should be dealt with through education, wardening, enforcement and access and habitat management.

**Does natural greenspace provide a viable alternative to heathland and if so where should it be provided and how can it be secured in perpetuity?**

**4.8** There was overall support for alternative natural greenspace provided it is wild/natural and large enough to attract people and give a similar experience to heathland and close to population areas. More strategic sites should endeavour to be accessible by means other than the car where possible, including maximising the Rights of Way network. It is agreed that all users need to be catered for e.g., dog walkers, cyclists & motor bikes, horses and children's play. Alternative locations should be assessed according to the pressures each heathland is under and where land is available already in public ownership or where there is a real possibility of purchase or leasehold or access agreement. It is important to secure future management not just access to land. It was suggested that the CROW Act might be used to secure access to some sites.

**Is there a role for heathland support areas and access management measures?**

**4.9** Support for heathland support areas in reducing pressure on the designated sites. There was some concern that the areas could attract people to adjacent heaths and be potentially damaging to other habitats. There was general agreement that all sites would benefit from improved access management. It was suggested reducing car parking would result in inappropriate parking or travelling further to other sites, increasing carbon emissions.

**What measures could help divert people from heathland sites?**

**4.10** A suite of facilities to suit all users and provide a remote experience, as in heathland mitigation facilities need to fit into a strategy for open space provision, not stand alone. Improvements to Rights of Way away from heathlands, signage and extra facilities at honeypot sites are seen as key.

# 5 What Evidence Tells Us

**5.1** There are a number of critical pieces of evidence that inform this Development Plan Document. *Access Patterns in South East Dorset. The Household Survey 2008: Consequences for Future Housing and Greenspace Provision (Clarke, R.T., Sharp, J & Liley, D (2008)* informs us:-

- Where people go.
- Who goes where e.g. where dog owners or non-dog owners go.
- The importance of local space and choices for people.
- Value of wardening/management.
- The highest correlation of visits to heathland by foot is from within 1500m whereas car borne trips is between 1500 and 5000m.
- Households in Poole and Bournemouth with no heathland within 500m visit coastal greenspace.
- Increasing the size of greenspace in itself is unlikely to deflect people from heathland. Although as there is no Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) provision, these are, as yet, untested (at 2008).
- New greenspace needs to target heathland users with quality and variety of features.

**5.2** The *Analysis and Presentation of IPF Monitoring and Projects to inform the Heathland Development Plan Document (Fearnley & Liley, 2011)* considers the impact of the mitigation approach. A monitoring system was established to test the impact of projects implemented through the Interim Heathland Planning Framework. In summary it shows that:-

- Annex 1 bird numbers have been increasing, but there have been fluctuations in recorded numbers.
- Studies in Dorset and across the Country show that mitigation measures should be tailored and site specific.
- Household survey information shows that different sites have different draws in relation to car and pedestrian borne visitors. This again indicates that mitigation and management should be on a heath-by-heath basis.
- Capital projects to improve accessibility to areas of non-heathland adjacent and near to heathlands have been effective. However, it is still unclear as to whether this increased usage has diverted people from using the heaths.
- With no major Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces delivered in South East Dorset it is not possible to establish how successful they will be.
- The management of heathland and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces offers the opportunity to divert harmful recreation activities from the heaths.

# 6 Vision for the Dorset Heaths

**6.1** The very fact that the Dorset Heaths are afforded the highest level of protection under European and UK law provides a strong contextual setting for their future. The recognised impacts of predominantly urban effects on the heaths identify pressures that need to be avoided, mitigated and managed. This option would provide a very specific vision that could clearly articulate the future for heathland.

## Vision 1

**Preferred Option**

**The Dorset Heaths are places where heathland and the species they support thrive in favourable conditions, are respected and enjoyed by the local community and help to support the quality of life across South East Dorset.**

**6.2** It is recognised that the Dorset Heaths form part of a wider green infrastructure network across South East Dorset and almost without exception form open access land[4] being criss-crossed by rights of way. The Green Infrastructure Strategy for South East Dorset (2011) adopts the definition of green infrastructure:-

*'Green infrastructure' is a strategic network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life in sustainable communities. It delivers a broad range of functions and provides vital socio-economic and cultural benefits which underpin individual and community health and wellbeing.*

*These functions include: conserving and enhancing the natural environment; providing wildlife corridors; reducing noise and air pollution; and helping communities to adapt to a changing climate through water and carbon management. In urban areas, functions include providing routes (e.g. footpaths and cycleways) which link areas of open space within settlements; providing sustainable drainage, flood storage and urban cooling; and providing a wide range of opportunities for engagement and active citizenship, relaxation and quiet contemplation, sport, recreation and children's play.'*

**6.3** The South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy has a vision that highlights the importance of habitats, including heathland habitat, and the need for an integrated approach to the planning of all green infrastructure. This vision recognises the intrinsic link between habitat and green infrastructure and therefore provides a suitable alternative vision for this DPD. It could enable the objectives in the Development Plan Document to be tailored towards the needs of heathland in its wider setting:-

4 Land identified in the CROW Act 2000.

## Vision 2

**Alternative Option**

**South East Dorset is a place with high-quality, distinctive and accessible parks, corridors, habitats and spaces for people and wildlife. Green Infrastructure will complement the unique coast and harbours setting of the area and enhance internationally important wetlands and heaths as well as local wildlife sites while actively supporting the development of healthy, prosperous, sustainable and resilient communities.**

## Question 1

**Which option should be the vision for the DPD? Are there further suggestions for the vision?**

# 7 Objectives

**7.1** In developing objectives for the future of heathland there is already a wealth of evidence to draw on listed in Appendix A. The work that went into the Regional Spatial Strategy provides an important evidence base. It establishes the impacts of proposed development on heathland and the importance of internationally protected sites as an integral and spatially significant land use.

**7.2** The Dorset Heaths are not just an important habitat but they are in part green lungs for the built up areas of South East Dorset, providing an area wide landscape that forms an important backdrop and context for the area and an opportunity for enrichment and education in understanding natural environments and their interrelationships with human activity. The heaths are therefore integral to the environmental quality of the area that help make South East Dorset an attractive but also a challenging place to manage.

**7.3** The growing evidence of the effects of urban pressures and the views of the community expressed through engagement lead to three possible objectives being identified for the Development Plan Document and the long term protection of the Dorset Heaths.

**7.4** The primary objective of the Development Plan Document is to ensure the integrity of the Dorset Heaths and whilst this plan deals with matters under the influence of the planning system objective 1 sets out an overarching policy context for the Plan. Without ensuring the integrity of the International Sites there will be serious consequences for South East Dorset in accommodating further growth and improving social and economic benefits for the area. To maintain the integrity of the heaths will require action on a number of fronts. As a long term strategy for the Dorset Heaths there is the need to ensure that the habitat is not degraded and effort is made to improve the habitat that supports the important birds and characteristic heathland species. This will require continued action to minimise incidents of arson, vandalism and activities such as motor bike scrambling all of which can have devastating effects. These were documented in the Bern Convention report on the Dorset Heaths 1996. The impact on the area should also be considered in balancing the need for heathland restoration including the impact on other important landscapes such as woodland. The access management regime that was put in place by the LIFE[5] project that established the Urban Heaths Partnership and which has continued by way of the Interim Planning Framework and now the SPD offers a co-ordinated approach to management and education.

## Objective 1

**To protect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths by:**

- **Improving the quality of habitat;**
- **Increasing the presence of important heathland species;**
- **Reducing the effects of fragmentation and isolation by linking and securing sympathetic land use; and**
- **Reducing incidents of arson, vandalism and damaging activity.**

5 The LIFE programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment. The general objective of LIFE is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental policy and legislation by co-financing pilot or demonstration projects with European added value.

7.5 The second objective addresses the need to mitigate the effects from additional development on the internationally designated heathland sites. For a growing area that is heavily constrained by its outstanding environment the challenge is to make use of those existing assets of open and green space and identify opportunities to access land currently not available to the public. There is a myriad of open spaces of different sizes across South East Dorset that serves a range of purposes. New development will need to show how it can incorporate or link to spaces that avoid adverse effects of urban pressure on heathland sites. Where development cannot provide on site mitigation a mechanism is required to secure improvements through a range of measures including the provision of large areas of alternative natural greenspace and adding capacity at particular existing open spaces. Under the current SPD contributions are collected that are then used to mitigate and manage the impact of housing development. As the Community Infrastructure Levy is introduced, and certainly from April 2014, this will provide a source of income that will enable the continuation of area wide mitigation and management.

7.6 While there may be pressures on heathland from human activity there remain many routes across the Dorset Heaths open to the public for their enjoyment. The aim is to manage access to heathland and provide other opportunities which divert the impact of human activity. This can be achieved through better education and access management but also through works that could include opening up adjacent land for recreational activity such as dog walking and improving connectivity between these areas and other open spaces and cater for innovative projects which can divert and reduce pressure on protected sites.

### Objective 2

**To mitigate and avoid the impacts of population and housing growth and other contributing development through measures that include:**

- **Suitable alternative sites giving an attractive natural experience;**
- **Creating a network of alternative recreational facilities;**
- **Providing new routes and connections between open spaces;**
- **Enhancing capacity of existing open spaces and recreational facilities; and**
- **Providing access management of the heaths and education of users.**

7.7 The third objective identifies the need to manage the Dorset Heaths as part of a wider green infrastructure network. The Dorset Heaths form part of a much larger network of green infrastructure that together provides many social, economic, health and environmental benefits to local people and visitors. The South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy creates a framework for the protection, improvement and provision of green infrastructure that support the needs of South East Dorset. The role of heathland as a managed landscape, home of important bird species, and a backdrop to the built environment has a crucial role in maintaining the environmental quality of the area.

7.8 Green Infrastructure has an intrinsic role in creating attractive environments, providing a place to escape to and relax and helping to combat the effects of climate change. The Dorset Heaths as part of this network can make a contribution to these aims but will not be immune to the effects of changing climate. It is now established that greenspaces and the natural environment in general have positive effects upon people's health and well-being and the Dorset Heaths offer an escape to a natural and semi wild environment on the doorstep of people in South East Dorset.

7.9 Green Infrastructure can help to combat the effects of climate change. The natural environment can help keep towns and cities cooler during hot spells of weather, providing a retreat for shade and relaxation. Natural surfaces are also able to absorb rainfall and less likely to cause runoff problems associated with hard landscaped surfaces. The Dorset Heaths are a significant area of natural environment and whilst generally an exposed landscape as part of a wider natural environment they help balance the effects of development. However, they are themselves susceptible to the worse effects of climate change and periods of hotter weather and increased storms are likely to be detrimental to the Dorset Heaths with the potential for loss of habitat for the protected bird species.

## Objective 3

**To integrate the Dorset Heaths and the avoidance and mitigation measures within a wider green infrastructure network by:**

- **Implementing heathland avoidance elements of the green infrastructure strategy and local plans;**
- **enabling health and well-being benefits; and**
- **ameliorating the effects of climate change.**

## Question 2

**Do you agree with the objectives for the Development Plan Document?**

# 8 Delivering a Long Term Strategy

**8.1** Sections 6 and 7 set out a preferred vision and objectives for establishing the policies to guide decision making in relation to the internationally protected Dorset Heaths. This section contains draft policies with which to make those decisions on development proposals. Section 8 is laid out in the same order as the objectives appear in Section 7 and draft policies appear under each particular objective to address the issues that have been identified for each.

**Objective 1: To protect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths**

**8.2** First and foremost the Dorset Heaths represent a natural environment that has been recognised at the International, European and National level for its unique flora and the fauna that it supports. It is afforded the highest level of protection and it is the responsibility of government nationally and locally and landowners to ensure that the habitat is maintained in a favourable condition. Local authorities and others within the decision making process have to ensure that they are satisfied that development proposed will not harm the identified interest features of the Dorset Heaths and that where necessary avoidance and/or mitigation measures are put in place to enable otherwise acceptable development to take place.

**8.3** The options would need to cover the following elements of Objective 1:-

- The condition of protected sites
- Management of the Dorset Heaths
- Education programme

**8.4** The following options were developed during the Issues and Options stage of consultation (the Preferred Option is shown in bold):-

**Option 1: To maintain an overall body to co-ordinate management and education of the Dorset heaths and an educational programme to teach people how to look after these areas.**

Option 2: Establishing local volunteer forums to manage heathland.

Option 3: Landowner responsibility for full management and educational programme.

**8.5** The Sustainability Appraisal of the Options highlighted the most beneficial strategy to protect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths. The SA matrix considered the positive and negative impacts of three options against the high and sub-level sustainability objectives. When compared with the alternative options, the benefits of Option 1 were slightly higher for reducing crime and fear of crime and protecting and expanding habitats and species (taking account of climate change), and avoid adverse impacts. However, the strength of option 1 is that it would provide a single focused body responsible for management and educational activities. Working in partnership with leisure and countryside services across South East Dorset and the emergency services and other nature conservation organisations would help to ensure a greater coordinated approach to the desired outcomes. The matrices and accompanying text can be found at Appendix C at the back of this document.

**8.6** Critical to any long term strategy is the continued conservation management of the Dorset Heaths ensuring they are restored or maintained in a favourable condition. Under the arrangements of the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework SPD the Urban Heaths Partnership (UHP)[6] is funded to undertake a wide range of access management and education activities to protect and improve the Dorset Heaths. This Partnership's objectives are:

- To avoid harm to the heathlands in South East Dorset arising from additional urban pressures due to increased residential developments
- To increase the understanding of residents within the prescribed area of the impacts their activities have on the heathlands
- To encourage residents and user groups to visit alternative recreational areas to divert pressures from the heaths
- To provide a visible presence on heaths to deter undesirable activities and to record all incidents occurring on the heath
- To monitor urban pressures on the heath
- To monitor effectiveness of mitigation projects and activities
- To seek additional funding for projects which will add value to work included in the Dorset Heathland Planning Framework SPD
- To work on developing a green infrastructure that is best able to cope with the development pressures of the future.

**8.7** Funding of the Urban Heaths Partnership comes from the current tariff arrangements where residential development makes a financial contribution towards mitigation of development's adverse effects. Dorset County Council acts as the employer for partnership staff whilst Dorset Wildlife Trust makes available office and support facilities for employees. The Urban Heaths Partnership works with the Leisure and Countryside Services across South East Dorset, Dorset Police and Fire Services and nature conservation organisations to protect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths.

**8.8** Consultation indicates that the work of the Urban Heaths Partnership is much valued and makes a significant contribution to protection of the heathlands. It is therefore considered that as part of any long term strategy there is a need to maintain a strongly focused access management regime for the Dorset Heaths. Whilst this is undertaken by the UHP in partnership with the local authorities and other landowners at this time, it may be that the nature of the partnership will evolve to reflect future circumstances.

6 A partnership consisting of the Borough of Poole, Bournemouth Borough Council, Christchurch Borough Council, Dorset County Council, East Dorset District Council, Purbeck District Council, Dorset Fire and Rescue Service, Dorset Police, Dorset Wildlife Trust, Natural England, The Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust, The Forestry Commission, The National Trust and The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

### Draft Policy DH 1

**Protection of the Dorset Heaths**

The Dorset Heaths International Designations represent a unique ecosystem that supports rare and endangered species. It is for local authorities, representatives of central government and its advisors, other organisations and bodies as well as the community to ensure that the heaths are restored to or maintained in favourable condition. The partnership of local authorities across South East Dorset will, through their planning and other powers, ensure that development is accommodated within the terms of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and subsequent amendments while working to maintain heathland sites in a favourable condition.

**Objective 2: To mitigate the impacts of population and housing growth**

**8.9** The growing body of evidence demonstrates the link between human activity and adverse effects upon the Dorset Heaths. The evidence base for this document shows amongst other things that people travel up to 5km to access heathland by car. By far the most popular activities are walking and dog walking and it is uncontrolled dogs that can have serious adverse effects on protected bird species In addition cat predation from development within 400m of heathland has serious impacts upon ground nesting species.

**8.10** Adverse effects from housing and population growth over the next 15 years and other development which may impact upon the Dorset Heaths need to be mitigated. While the additional housing and other development will help to support economic objectives which in themselves will be able to deliver social and environmental benefits it is critical that this growth does not adversely affect the Dorset Heaths. Given the distances that people are prepared to travel to access heathland there is almost nowhere within South East Dorset not within 5km of a protected site. Further, the locations that will accommodate the vast majority of the growth i.e. the urban area will come under increasing pressure to provide and improve both accessible and high quality greenspaces both close to development and further out where alternative opportunities can be realised.

**8.11** The options would need to cover the following elements of Objective 2:-

- Mitigating adverse effects of additional growth
- Contributions from different types of development
- Mechanisms for securing mitigation
- Development locations

**8.12** The following options were developed during the Issues and Options stage of consultation (the Preferred Option is shown in bold):-

**Option 4: To prioritise an appropriate level of funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy to secure avoidance and mitigation measures across South East Dorset.**

Option 5: Developers to directly provide mitigation alongside infill sites.

Option 6: Developers of sites on the edge of settlements to contribute through tariff based approach (pre CIL)

**8.13** The Sustainability Appraisal of the Options highlighted the most beneficial approach to mitigating the impacts of population and housing growth in relation to securing funding. The SA matrix and appraisal considered the positive and negative impacts against the high and sub-level sustainability objectives of three options. When compared with the alternative options, the benefits of Option 4 were greatest for improving health, minimising consumption of natural resources, improving environmental assets, reducing the need to travel and helping to provide communities that meet people's needs. Option 4 would enable the use of CIL funding for appropriate mitigation projects, to support the delivery of the forecast growth in housing over the next 15 years. The matrices and accompanying text can be found at Appendix C at the back of this document.

**8.14** It has been established that residential use as defined within Class C3 of the Use Classes Order[7] is likely to have a significant effect within 400m of International Sites and that it is unlikely that this harm can be avoided or mitigated. In addition it is now identified that other uses may also have a significant adverse effect on the International Sites. New Use Class C4 is a form of residential development the impacts of which are the same as that which can occur from Use Class C3 residential accommodation. Further, other forms of use that provide accommodation such as residential institutions and types of tourist accommodation are also likely to have a significant effect on International Sites and will therefore need to be assessed in this context.

7 The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and subsequent amendments

## Draft Policy DH 2

**Development within the Plan Area**

Development that is able to avoid or mitigate its adverse effects upon the Dorset Heaths International Sites may be granted planning permission by virtue of complying with the Conservation and Species Habitats Regulations 2010.

The following uses within 400 metres of protected sites are likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination, upon the International Sites:

a. Residential Development within Use Class C3 and C4.
b. Residential Institutions within Use Class C2 where the residents are not severely restricted by illness or mobility.
c. Self catering, caravan and touring holiday accommodation.
d. Permanent and transit Gypsy & Traveller sites.
e. Student accommodation.

Development of the uses identified above (including changes of use) will not be permitted within 400 metres of the International Sites unless it can be demonstrated conclusively that they give rise to no adverse effects, either alone or in combination on the Dorset Heaths International Sites.

Between 400m and 5km such developments will be required to avoid or mitigate adverse effects through a combination of on-site measures and/or measures implemented across the plan area.

**8.15** The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) removes the direct link between development and the impact that development has in terms of infrastructure provision. Whilst Planning Agreements will still exist and section 106 will still in some cases be required for development CIL fundamentally changes the relationship and the means by which mitigation of adverse impacts are managed. The most notable impact in respect of heathland sites is that not all forms of new residential development will be subject to CIL. Conversions and redevelopments within given floor sizes where previously they would have made a contribution through section 106 to heathland mitigation will no longer do so. Further, affordable housing and permitted changes of use fall outside of the CIL regime and will not be liable to make payments towards the adverse effects that result from the creation of new residential development from these sources. It may even be the case that subject to the viability evidence that is required to support CIL that certain areas will not be able to support a CIL rate. This means that what monies are collected through CIL will need to be prioritised for mitigating the adverse effects of all residential development whether paying a CIL or not. This inevitably will create a pressure on the CIL ‘pot’ from the outset.

### Draft Policy DH 3

**Prioritising funding for Infrastructure and Mitigation required by European Legislation**

The five charging authorities within South East Dorset will prioritise funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy towards avoidance measures and the mitigation of adverse effects upon the Dorset Heaths International Sites.

**8.16** Under the arrangements of the current SPD s106 monies from contributing development is pooled from across South East Dorset. This enables a co-ordinated approach at a strategic level for the distribution and provision of mitigation projects related to the acknowledged harm. From adoption of this DPD there will be the continued need to have a mechanism in place that provides a strategic management approach. Therefore it is proposed that this arrangement continues, supported by an officer group and a programme of mitigation that is reviewed regularly.

**Objective 3: To integrate the Dorset Heaths within a wider green infrastructure network**

**8.17** All greenspace makes a contribution to placeshaping i.e. the art and science of making places for people to live, work and take leisure. Greenspaces help to make better places as they provide formal and informal recreational opportunities, they help to mitigate against climate change, they can support a range of plant and animal species and they enable the escape from an increasingly hectic world. They help create a setting for development softening the effect of buildings as well as providing opportunities to access more remote countryside. They therefore provide both short and long trip opportunities that together provide a range of different spaces to fulfil a variety of activity.

**8.18** The Dorset Heaths together provide an expansive array of managed habitat most of which is easily accessible. It therefore makes a significant contribution to the green infrastructure network albeit with established adverse effects. There is also significant non designated heathland and sometimes the potential to restore land to heathland type habitat. This is the focus of the Wild Purbeck Nature Improvement Area one of ten nature conservation focused pilot projects across England.

**8.19** The preferred option directly related to mitigating the growth of the local population and its associated housing need and adding to the overall green infrastructure provision across South East Dorset is the aim to bring forward new areas of land and create the type of environment that draws people away from the Dorset Heaths. The name for such sites is Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and by their very nature need to be substantive in size to provide people and their dogs with opportunities for walking and experiencing the natural environment similar to that experienced on the Dorset Heaths. They may also afford the opportunity to provide other recreational facilities where a need is demonstrated, such as dog agility tracks, that could not be accommodated on protected sites. Land which is provided to function as a SANG must be secured for the duration of the development which it is mitigating (e.g. in perpetuity) and its management maintained for this purpose. To date land brought forward has been in Local Authority ownership. Other bodies may bring forward proposals to deliver SANG in the future subject to demonstrating that the mitigation proposed can be shown to be secured. Further detail of what a SANG is and its typical attributes can be found in Appendix B.

**8.20** The options would need to cover the following elements of Objective 3:-

- Improving accessibility and attractiveness of existing green space
- Opening up of land of heathland character to deflect users from heathland

**8.21** The following options were developed during the Issues and Options stage of consultation (the Preferred Option is shown in bold):-

**Option 7: Identify opportunities for utilising land, including both existing open spaces and new areas of land, for alternative recreational use known as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)**

Option 8: Converting greenspaces to heathland type habitat.

**8.22** The Sustainability Appraisal of the Options highlighted the most beneficial strategy to protect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths. The SA matrix considered the positive and negative impacts of three options against the high and sub-level sustainability objectives. When compared with the alternative options, the benefits of Option 7 were slightly higher for improving health. It scored positively for; reducing crime and fear of crime, reducing poverty and income inequality, making public transport, cycling and walking easier and more attractive; reducing vulnerability to flooding and sea level rise (taking account of climate change). Where it scored a high negative value, this could be addressed by the policy provisions which would seek to ensure the benefits of the SANG is not outweighed by other issues. The matrices and accompanying text can be found at Appendix C at the back of this document.

**8.23** The provision of SANGs is therefore proposed as one of the key tools in mitigating the adverse impacts of development on the Dorset Heaths. The draft Map that accompanies this plan identifies opportunities for securing SANGs. These are at different degrees of detail ranging from specifically identifiable projects such as at Upton Farm in Poole to broad areas of search for sites in Purbeck. Once SANGs are secured they need to be retained in perpetuity unless alternative sites offering the same degree of protection and benefit can be delivered. For large sites of over 50 dwellings it will be expected that provision of SANGs will form part of the infrastructure provision of that site particularly where urban extensions or greenfield sites are proposed. Within the built up area brownfield sites are unlikely to be able to accommodate the scale of space required for a SANG and would therefore make contribution through either s106 or CIL towards SANG provision.

## Draft Policy DH 4

**Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs)**

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace provides one mechanism by which land can be used to avoid or mitigate the adverse effects of development. The SANGs identified on the Proposals Map represent a spatial approach to securing new greenspace and increased capacity on existing publicly accessible spaces related to where the development is planned. SANGs can consist of new areas of land or improvements to the accessibility and attractiveness of existing publicly accessible spaces.

A. New SANGs

The implementation of SANGs may be through direct provision related to a development or through the combined income apportioned by the Local Authorities from their Community Infrastructure Levy contributions.

B. Safeguarding

The change of use of existing SANGs identified on the Proposals Map and land that functions as a SANG, will not be supported unless alternative provision that meets the requirements of mitigating the adverse effects of the development can be provided. Any proposal would need to:

i. Be at least equivalent in size and function
ii. Provide a variety of landscapes to act as an attractor for visitors
iii. Be able to accommodate circular routes for dog walkers
iv. Not be further away from residential development encouraging longer trips to the SANG.

## Question 3

**Are there any other options that should be considered as part of the development of this Plan?**

## Question 4

**Do the draft policies appropriately address the relationship between the Dorset Heaths and future development in South East Dorset?**

## Question 5

**Are there any other issues or concerns that require a policy response?**

# 9 Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment

**9.1** Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA) has been used to inform the preferred options in this document. This follows on from the SA/SEA that was undertaken for the Issues and Options stage and which drew upon both the SA/SEA frameworks that were used for the former emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West and that for Poole's Local Development Framework.

**9.2** A revised SA framework has been compiled for this document by combining the SA frameworks developed by the partner local authorities for their adopted or emerging Core Strategies. Appendix C contains the relevant SA stages for this document.

**9.3** Screening of options and draft policies as required by the Habitat Regulations 2010 has also been undertaken and this can be read in Appendix D. Also Habitat Regulation Assessments have been undertaken by each local authority as part of their emerging Core Strategy. Between the individual HRAs a number of projects and avoidance and mitigation measures have been identified. Where these are of relevance to this document such as the need to provide SANGs they are shown on the draft proposals map. Others projects are listed in Appendix E.

**9.4** In the September 2007 Issues and Option Document three options were put forward as possible mitigation approaches: Alternative Greenspace; Access Measures; and Recreational Facilities. These approaches received support through the consultation responses and have made up the capital projects funded through originally the Interim Planning Framework now Supplementary Planning Document.

**9.5** This document promotes the preferred approach for protecting the integrity of the Dorset Heaths as required by law. Without a long term strategy it may not be possible to determine planning applications for future development without safeguards being in place to protect the recognised value of flora and fauna of the heaths. The SA has identified the need for a robust approach to the protection of the Dorset Heaths and that the range of options and draft policies set out a positive range of measures to avoid and/or mitigate the adverse effects of additional urban pressure of the heaths.

# Appendix A: Documented Evidence

The following document list has been used as the evidence base for the production of this Plan:-

**European and National Legislation/Policy**

EU Directive 92/43/EEC Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna

EU Directive 09/147/EC Conservation of Wild Birds (codified version)

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

National Planning Policy Framework

**Adopted or Emerging Plans**

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006

Borough of Poole Core Strategy adopted 2009

Bournemouth Borough Council Core Strategy adopted 2012

Christchurch and East Dorset Joint Core Strategy Submission Document 2012

Purbeck District Council Core Strategy Submission Document 2011

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# Appendix B: Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace

**Guidelines for the establishment of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) Quality Standards for the Dorset Heaths**

**Introduction**

'Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space' (SANGS) is the name given to green space that is of a quality and type suitable to be used as mitigation for applications likely to affect the Dorset Heathlands European and internationally protected sites. The provision of SANGs is one of a range of mitigation measures, a number of which are detailed in the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework SPD, which the south east Dorset Planning Authorities and Natural England consider offer an effective means of avoiding or mitigating harm from a number of urban effects.

Its role is to provide alternative green space to divert visitors away from the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA), the two Dorset Heaths SACs and the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar (collectively called the 'Dorset Heathlands' in these guidelines). SANGS are intended to provide mitigation for the likely impact of residential type developments on the Dorset Heathlands by preventing an increase in visitor pressure. The effectiveness of SANGS as mitigation will depend upon its location and design. These must be such that the SANGS is more attractive than the Dorset Heathlands to visitors of the kind that currently visit them.

These guidelines describe the features which have been found to draw visitors to the Dorset Heathlands, which should be replicated in SANGS:-

- the type of site which should be identified as SANGS
- measures which can be taken to enhance sites so that they may be used as SANGS

These guidelines relate specifically to the means to provide mitigation for development of a residential nature within or close to 5km of the Dorset Heathlands. They do not address nor preclude the other functions of green space (e.g. provision of disabled access). Other functions may be provided within SANGS, as long as this does not conflict with the specific function of mitigating visitor impacts on the Dorset Heathlands.

SANGS may be created from:-

- existing open space of SANGS quality with no existing public access or limited public access, which for the purposes of mitigation could be made fully accessible to the public
- existing open space which is already accessible but which could be changed in character so that it is more attractive to the specific group of visitors who might otherwise visit the Dorset Heathlands
- land in other uses which could be converted into SANGS

The identification of SANGS should seek to avoid sites of high nature conservation value which are likely to be damaged by increased visitor numbers. Such damage may arise, for example, from increased disturbance, erosion, input of nutrients from dog faeces, and increased incidence of fires. Where sites of high nature conservation value are considered as SANGS, the impact on their nature conservation value should be assessed and considered alongside relevant policy in the core strategy/local plan.

**The Character of the Dorset Heathlands and its Visitors**

The Dorset Heathlands are made up of 42 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and consists of a mixture of open heathland and mire with some woodland habitats. The topography is varied with some prominent viewpoints. Many sites contain streams, ponds and small lakes and though some have open landscapes with few trees others have scattered trees and areas of woodland. Most sites are freely accessible to the public though in some areas access is restricted by army, or other operations.

Surveys have shown that about half of visitors to the Dorset Heathlands arrive by car and about half on foot. Where sites are close to urban development around Poole and Bournemouth, foot access tends to be most common. On rural sites in Purbeck and East Dorset, more visitors come by car. Some 75% of those who visited by car had come from 5.3km of the access point onto the heathlands. A very large proportion of the Dorset Heathland visitors are dog walkers, many of whom visit the particular site on a regular (i.e. multiple visits per week) basis and spend less than an hour there, walking on average about 2.2km. Further detailed information on visitors can be found in the reports referenced at the end of this document.

**Guidelines for the Quality of SANGs**

The quality guidelines have been sub-divided into different aspects of site fabric and structure. They have been compiled from a variety of sources but principally from visitor surveys carried out at heathland sites within the Dorset Heathlands and the Thames Basin Heaths. These are listed as references at the end of this appendix.

The guidelines concentrate on the type of SANGS designed principally to cater for heathland dog walkers. Other important heathland mitigation measures, for example facilities designed to attract motor cycle scramblers or BMX users away from heathlands, or facilities for adventurous play for children, are not covered specifically and will need to be considered on a case by case basis.

The principle criteria contained in the Guidelines have also been put into a checklist format which can be found in a table at the end of this appendix.

It is important to note that these Guidelines only cover the Quality of SANG provision. There are a number of other matters that will need to be agreed with Natural England and the Local Planning Authority including; Provision of In Perpetuity Management of the SANG; SANG Capacity; Other Avoidance and Mitigation Measures as necessary.

**Accessibility - reaching the SANG**

Most visitors reach the Dorset Heathlands either by foot or by car and the same will apply for SANGS. Thus SANGS may be intended principally for the use of a local population living within a 400 metre catchment around the site; or they may be designed primarily to attract visitors who arrive by car (they may also have both functions).

SANG design needs to take into account the anticipated target group of visitors. For example, where large populations are close to the Dorset Heathlands the provision of SANGS may need to be attractive to visitors on foot.

If intended to attract visitors arriving by car, the availability of adequate car parking is essential. Car parks may be provided specifically for a SANG or a SANG may make use of existing car parks but some existing car parks may have features incompatible with SANG use, such as car park charging. The amount and nature of parking provision should reflect the anticipated numbers and mode of arrival by visitors to the site and the catchment size of the SANGS. It is important that there is easy access between the car park and the SANG i.e. this is not impeded by, for example, a road crossing. Thus such SANGS should have a car park with direct access straight on to the SANG with the ability to take dogs safely from the car park to the SANG off the lead. Similarly, the nature of foot access between urban development and a SANG is important and green corridors reaching into the urban area can be an important part of facilitating access to the SANG. Key points:-

1. *Sites must have adequate parking for visitors, unless the site is intended for local pedestrian use only, i.e. within easy walking distance (400m) of the developments linked to it. The amount of car parking space should be determined by the anticipated numbers using the site and arriving by car.*

2. *Car parks must be easily and safely accessible by car, be of an open nature and should be clearly sign posted.*

3. *There should be easy access between the car park or housing and the* SANG *with the facility to take dogs safely from the car park to the SANG off the lead.*

4. *Access points should have signage outlining the layout of the SANGS and the routes available to visitors.*

**Paths, Tracks and other SANG infrastructure**

SANGS should aim to supply a choice of circular walking routes that provide an attractive alternative to those routes on heathlands in the vicinity (i.e. those heaths that the SANG is designed to attract visitors away from). Given the average length of walks on heathland, a circular walk of 2.3-2.5km in length is necessary unless there are particular reasons why a shorter walk is considered still appropriate. Where possible a range of different length walks should be provided; a proportion of visitors walk up to 5km and beyond so walking routes longer than 2.5 km are valuable, either on-site or through the connection of sites along green corridors.

Paths do not have to be of any particular width, and both vehicular-sized tracks and narrow paths are acceptable to visitors although narrow corridors where visitors/dogs may feel constrained should be avoided. The majority of visitors come alone and safety is one of their primary concerns. Paths should be routed so that they are perceived as safe by the visitors, with some routes being through relatively open (visible) terrain (with no trees or scrub, or well spaced mature trees, or wide rides with vegetation back from the path), especially those routes which are 1-3 km long.

A substantial number of visitors like to have surfaced but not tarmac paths, particularly where these blend in well with the landscape. This is not necessary for all paths but there should be some visitor-friendly, all weather routes built into the structure of a SANGS, particularly those routes which are 1-3 km long. Boardwalks may help with access across wet areas but excessive use of boardwalks, as may be necessary on sites which are mostly wet or waterlogged such as flood plain and grazing marsh, is likely to detract from the site natural feel.

Other infrastructure specifically designed to make the SANG attractive to dog walkers may also be desirable but must not detract from a site's relatively wild and natural feel. Measures could include accessible water bodies for dogs to swim/drink; dog bins, fencing near roads/car-parks etc to ensure dog safety, clear messages regarding the need to 'pick-up', large areas for dogs to be off lead safely:-

5. *Paths must be easily used and well maintained but most should remain unsurfaced to avoid the site becoming too urban in feel. A majority of paths should be suitable for use in all weathers and all year around. Boardwalks may be required in wet sections.*

6. *All SANGS with car parks must have a circular walk which starts and finishes at the car park.*

7. *It should be possible to complete a circular walk of 2.3-2.5km around the SANGS, and for larger SANGS a variety of circular walks.*

8. *SANGS must be designed so that visitors are not deterred by safety concerns.*

**Advertising - making people aware of the SANG**

The need for some advertising is self evident. Any advertising should make clear that the site is designed to cater specifically for dog walkers:-

9. *SANGS should be clearly sign-posted and advertised.*

10. *SANGS should have leaflets and/or websites advertising their location to potential visitors. It would be desirable for leaflets to be distributed to new homes in the area and be made available at entrance points and car parks.*

**Landscape and Vegetation**

The open or semi wooded and undulating nature of most of the Dorset Heathland sites gives them an air of relative wildness, even when there are significant numbers of visitors on site. SANGS must aim to reproduce this quality but do not have to contain heathland or heathy vegetation. Surveys in the Thames Basin heath area show that woodland or a semi-wooded landscape is a key feature that people who use the SPA there appreciate. Deciduous woodland is preferred to coniferous woodland.

In these circumstances a natural looking landscape with plenty of variation including both open and wooded areas is ideal for a SANG. There is clearly a balance to be struck between what is regarded as an exciting landscape and a safe one and so some element of choice between the two is desirable.

Hills do not put people off visiting a site, particularly where these are associated with good views, but steep hills are not appreciated. An undulating landscape is preferred to a flat one. Water features, particularly ponds and lakes, act as a focus for visitors for their visit, but are not essential. The long term management of the SANG habitats should be considered at an early stage. Particularly for larger SANGS, and those with grasslands, grazing management is likely to be necessary.

A number of factors can detract from the essential natural looking landscape and SANGS that have an urban feel, for example where they are thin and narrow with long boundaries with urban development or roads, are unlikely to be effective:

11. *SANGS must be perceived as natural spaces without intrusive artificial structures, except in the immediate vicinity of car parks. Visually-sensitive way-markers and some benches are acceptable.*

12. *SANGS must aim to provide a variety of habitats for visitors to experience (e.g. some of: woodland, scrub, grassland, heathland, wetland, open water).*

13. *Access within the SANGS must be largely unrestricted with plenty of space provided where it is possible for dogs to exercise freely and safely off lead.*

14. *SANGS must be free from unpleasant visual, auditory or olfactory intrusions (e.g. derelict buildings, intrusive adjoining buildings, dumped materials, loud intermittent or continuous noise from traffic, industry, sports grounds, sewage treatment works, waste disposal facilities).*

**References**

LILEY, D., SHARP, J. & CLARKE, R. T. (2008). Access Patterns in South-east Dorset. Dorset Household Survey and Predictions of Visitor Use of Potential Greenspace Sites. Dorset Heathlands Development Plan Document. Unpublished report, Footprint Ecology.

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# Appendix C: Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment

**The Dorset Heathlands DPD – Preferred Options**

Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the Environment (referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive), requires a strategic level of environmental assessment on plans or programmes which are likely to have an impact upon the environment. This is a different requirement from Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and is focused principally upon environmental implications. SA, on the other hand, has a broader remit and is required to consider environmental, social and economic issues. Nevertheless, both assessment techniques have much in common and a process is used which meets their combined requirements.

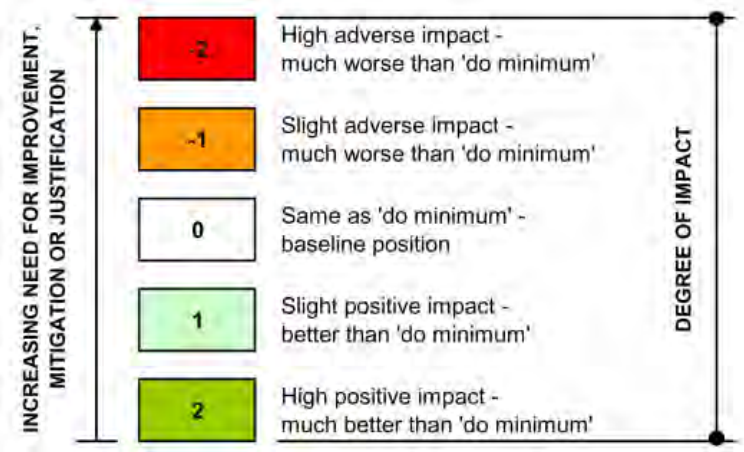
The requirement for all plans and strategies to be subject to SA is set out in the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Every Development Plan Document needs to be subject to SA, incorporating the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the provisions of European legislation, to identify the key environmental, economic and social implications of the DPD.

**The Appraisal Framework**

A matrix is the principal tool employed in undertaking SA. The matrix sets out the sustainability objectives, identified through scoping, against options and draft policies, to establish whether or not they would result in a positive or negative impact on the objectives. The level of impact is colour coded to provide an overall visual impression of performance. The degree of impact is graded as follows:-

- High adverse impact - Much worse than ‘do minimum’ (red / -2 on the matrix)
- Slight adverse impact - Worse than ‘do minimum’ (orange / -1 on the matrix)
- Same as do nothing - Baseline position (white / 0 on the matrix
- Slight positive impact - Better than ‘do minimum’ (light green / 1 on the matrix)
- High positive impact - Much better than ‘do minimum’ (green / 2 on the matrix)

**Diagram of Assessment Impact Colour Coding**



The judgement as to the nature and degree of impact is based upon a comparison against a baseline assessment for each option or draft policy. The performance of the options and draft policies have also been assessed in respect to key health and equalities issues, through Health and Equalities Impact Assessment.

Full details of how the SA and Health and Equalities matrices used in this assessment where developed, can be found in The Dorset Heathlands Development Plan Document – Scoping Report.

## Sustainability Appraisal of Options and Draft Policies set against Sustainability Objectives

### Sustainability Appraisal Matrix of Options and Draft Policies

| THE DORSET HEATHLANDS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Objective 1 | | | Objective 2 | | | Objective 3 | | Draft Policies | | | | |
| | | | To protect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths | | | To mitigate the impacts of population and housing growth | | | To integrate the Dorset Heaths within a wider green infrastructure network | | | | | | |
| | | | OPTIONS | | | | | | | | DH1 | DH2 | DH3 | DH4 |
| HIGH LEVEL OBJECTIVE | | SUB OBJECTIVE | 1. To maintain an overall body to co-ordinate management of the Dorset Heaths and an educational programme to teach people how to look after these areas | 2. Establishing local volunteer forums to manage heathland | 3. Landowner responsibility for full management and educational programme | 4. To promote an appropriate level of funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy to secure avoidance and mitigation measures across South East Dorset | 5. Developers to directly provide mitigation alongside infill sites | 6. Developers of sites on the edge of settlements to contribute through tariff based approach (the CIL) | 7. To identify opportunities for utilising land for alternative recreational use known as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) | 8. Converting greenspaces to heathland type habitat | Protection of the Dorset Heaths | Development within the Plan Area | Prioritising funding for infrastructure and Mitigation required by European Legislation | Provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace |
| 1. Improve health | 1.1 | Improve health | 0 | 0 | 0 | ++ | -1 | -1 | -1 | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 1.2 | Reduce health inequalities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1 | 1 | 1 | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 1.3 | Promote healthy lifestyles | 0 | 0 | 0 | ++ | -1 | 1 | 1 | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. Provide communities that meet people's needs | 2.1 | Help make suitable housing available and affordable for everyone | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | ++ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | 2.2 | Give everyone access to learning, training, skills and knowledge | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2.3 | Reduce crime and fear of crime | ++ | 1 | -1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | ++ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2.4 | Promote stronger, more vibrant communities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2.5 | Increase access to, and participation in, cultural and recreational activities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. Develop the economy in ways that meet people's needs | 3.1 | Give everyone access to satisfying work opportunities, paid or unpaid | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3.2 | Reduce poverty and income inequality | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3.3 | Meet local needs locally | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3.4 | Reduce vulnerability of the economy to climate change | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3.5 | Harness the economic potential of tourism | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4. Provide access with least damage | 4.1 | Reduce the need for travel | 0 | 0 | 0 | ++ | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 4.2 | Reduce traffic and its impact on air quality | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 4.3 | Help everyone access basic services easily, safely and affordably | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 4.4 | Make public transport, cycling and walking easier and more attractive | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5. Maintain and improve environmental quality and assets | 5.1 | Protect, enhance and expand habitats and species (taking account of climate change), and avoid adverse impacts | ++ | 1 | -1 | ++ | 0 | 0 | -- | 1 | ++ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5.2 | Protect and enhance landscape and townscape | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5.3 | Value and protect diversity and local distinctiveness including rural ways of life | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5.4 | Maintain and enhance cultural and historical assets | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5.5 | Reduce vulnerability to flooding and sea level rise (taking account of climate change) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6. Minimise consumption of natural resources | 6.1 | Reduce non-renewable energy consumption and 'greenhouse gas' emissions | 0 | 0 | 0 | ++ | 0 | ++ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 6.2 | Keep water consumption within local carrying capacity limits (taking account of climate change) | 0 | 0 | 0 | ++ | 0 | ++ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 6.3 | Minimise consumption and extraction of minerals | 0 | 0 | 0 | ++ | 0 | ++ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 6.4 | Reduce waste not put to any use | 0 | 0 | 0 | ++ | 0 | ++ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 6.5 | Minimise land, water, air, light, noise and genetic pollution | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 6.6 | Efficient use of land and limit the loss of soil to development | 0 | 0 | 0 | ++ | 0 | ++ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

## Appraisal Matrix of Health Issues for Options and Draft Policies

| KEY HEALTH ISSUES | Objective 1: To protect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths | | | Objective 2: To mitigate the impacts of population and housing growth and other contributing development | | | Objective 3: To integrate the Dorset Heaths within a wider green infrastructure network | | Draft Policies: DH1 Protection of the Dorset Heaths | DH2 Development within the Plan Area | DH3 Prioritising funding for infrastructure and Mitigation required by European Legislation | DH4 Provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPTIONS | 1. To maintain an overall body to co-ordinate management of the Dorset Heaths and an educational programme to teach people how to look after these areas | 2. Establishing local volunteer forums to manage heathland | 3. Landowner responsibility for full management and educational programme | 4. To prioritise an appropriate level of funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy to secure avoidance and mitigation measures across South East Dorset. | 5. Developers to directly provide mitigation alongside infill sites. | 6. Developers of sites on the edge of settlements to contribute through tariff based approach (pre CIL) | 7. To identify opportunities for utilising land for alternative recreational use known as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) | 8. Converting greenspaces to heathland type habitat | | | | |
| 1. Safety and security of Places and Routes | 1 | 0 | -1 | 2 | -1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 2. Access to Recreation and Open space and promoting participation | 1 | 0 | -1 | 2 | -1 | 1 | 2 | -2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 3. Reducing Air Pollution and its Health Impacts | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

## Appraisal Matrix of Equalities Issues for Options and Draft Policies

| KEY EQUALITIES ISSUES | Objective 1: To protect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths | | | Objective 2: To mitigate the impacts of population and housing growth and other contributing development | | | Objective 3: To integrate the Dorset Heaths within a wider green infrastructure network | | Draft Policies: DH1 Protection of the Dorset Heaths | DH2 Development within the Plan Area | DH3 Prioritising funding for Infrastructure and Mitigation required by European Legislation | DH4 Provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPTIONS | 1. To maintain an overall body to co-ordinate management of the Dorset Heaths and an educational programme to teach people how to look after these areas | 2. Establishing local volunteer forums to manage heathland | 3. Landowner responsibility for full management and educational programme | 4. To prioritise an appropriate level of funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy to secure avoidance and mitigation measures across South East Dorset. | 5. Developers to directly provide mitigation alongside infill sites | 6. Developers of sites on the edge of settlements to contribute through tariff based approach (pre CIL) | 7. To identify opportunities for utilising land for alternative recreational use known as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) | 8. Converting greenspaces to heathland type habitat | | | | |
| 1. Age | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. Disability | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. Ethnicity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4. Religious Belief or Faiths | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5. Gender | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6. Transgender | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7. Sexual Orientation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8. Social Inequalities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. Rural Isolation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**Sustainability Appraisal of Options**

A total of 8 options were developed to address the following 3 objectives:

- To protect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths;

1. To mitigate the impacts of population and housing growth; and
2. To integrate the Dorset Heaths within a wider green infrastructure network.

The following provides a summary of the sustainability appraisal and health and equalities impact assessment findings for each option.

**Possible Objective 1: To protect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths**

*Option 1:* To maintain an overall body to co-ordinate management and education of the Dorset heaths and an educational programme to teach people how to look after these areas.

There is evidence that the Urban Heath Partnership, funded by developer contributions, have established themselves as a valuable management regime for Dorset Heathlands. Taking this option forward scored a high positive for reducing crime and fear of crime since a co-ordinated approach to broadening education of users of the heath, could help reduce incidents of arson and vandalism and help protect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths. Also scoring high positive was the sub-objective to protect, enhance and expand habitats and species (taking account of climate change), and avoid adverse impacts as a partnership approach provides greater certainty of co-ordinating action to improve the quality of the heath through management techniques and activities to protect its integrity. A score of minor positive was given for the heath providing an environment that can mitigate the effects of climate change.

Health Issues

All three key health issues scored minor positives. These issues primarily relate to safety, security and access through the heath. The range of partners involved across a range of organisations and with a range of knowledge would combine to create the right team to identify a strategy to ensure the heath remains accessible for pedestrians and cyclists to enjoy the biodiversity and benefits of exercise or commuting in a traffic free environment, helping to reduce air pollution on the roads.

Equalities Issues

The appraisal of each individual equality issue scored mainly neutral, save for age which scored a minor negative due to the relatively limited educational programme likely to be aimed at children of school age.

*Option 2:* Establishing local volunteer forums to manage heathland.

This option scored across the same three sub-objectives as Option 1 but with lower scores across two. Whilst volunteer forums may be able to manage heathlands locally, there would not be the strategic approach that an overall management body would sustain. This may mean that the effect of moving towards reducing crime on the heath, or protecting and enhancing or expanding habitats and species could be slower or not so well co-ordinated with other heathland sites.

Health Impact Issues

Neutral scores are recorded across the three key health issues. It is not possible to determine what measures or infrastructure will be available to ensure that a local forum could contribute to or deliver.

Equalities Impact Issues

Neutral scores are recorded across all the equalities' strands as there is likely to be no significant positive or negative impacts on the identified groups.

Option 3: Landowner responsibility for full management and educational programme.

The sustainability appraisal records weaker scores across the same three sub-objectives as Options 1 and 2. Reducing crime, particularly caused by heathland fires should be a priority for any partnership or organisation managing the heathland. The monitoring and recording of incidents reported to Dorset Fire & Rescue Services needs to continue and discussions surrounding measures to reduce these figures year on year are essential for conservation of this habitat. Allied to this, an educational programme will strengthen and improve understanding of the international importance of the heathland and its species. Landowners may not be motivated by the same principles as partnerships and this may speed up the decline in size and quality of the heath and help contribute to the green infrastructure of South East Dorset.

Health Impact Issues

The appraisal scored minor negatives across the two objectives to ensure the safety and security of places and routes and to provide access to recreation and open space and promoting participation. Relying upon landowners to manage heathland sites may be unwise given the complex and synergistic educational programme that is essential to ensure a cohesive approach is adopted for protecting heathlands.

Equalities Impact Issues

Neutral scores are recorded across all the equalities' strands as there is likely to be no significant positive or negative impacts on the identified groups.

Summary of Options for Possible Objective 1

Protecting the integrity of the Dorset Heaths is the single most important priority for The Dorset Heathlands DPD. The sustainability appraisal scores for the option to maintain an overall body to co-ordinate management and education of the Dorset heaths and an educational programme to teach people how to look after these areas provided the greatest benefits when compared with the two alternatives.

**Possible Objective 2: To mitigate the impacts of population and housing growth**

Option 4: To prioritise an appropriate level of funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy to secure avoidance and mitigation measures across South East Dorset.

Positive scores were recorded across the two sub objectives to improve health and promote healthy lifestyles. CIL would be used for projects to offset the impact of additional housing by funding a range of mitigation projects. Securing buffer zones that incorporate new walking and cycle routes linking to new and existing green infrastructure help improve the network

of open spaces which in turn, will help provide accessible routes for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users and increase opportunities for taking physical activity. The option scored positively for increasing participation in recreational activities and in turn reducing crime and fear of crime by having a wider range of user groups and greater passive surveillance in these zones. This option could help make cycling and walking easier and thereby reduce the need to travel by car. There are also two positive scores within the high level objective to maintain and improve environmental quality and assets. The heathland buffer zone can encourage greater spread of habitat and higher species diversity and help reduce vulnerability to flooding, particularly taking account of climate change. High positive scores were recorded across the minimisation of consumption of natural resources since this option would allow sustainable and energy efficient development to come forward and help contribute to reducing carbon emissions.

Health Impact Issues

Overall, the appraisal scored high positives across all three objectives to improve health. CIL would provide a range of measures within this option to increase safety and security of places and routes, provide access to recreation and open space and promoting participation and reduce air pollution by creating traffic free commuter and sustainable travel routes.

Equalities Impact Issues

Neutral scores are recorded across all the equalities' strands as there is likely to be neither positive nor negative impacts on the identified groups.

Option 5: Developers to directly provide mitigation alongside infill sites.

This option creates sufficient uncertainty as to whether the appropriate safeguards and mitigation measures on this scale can be co-ordinated within a wider more strategic framework. With little opportunity to address these potential negatives, small scale mitigation could scupper the health benefits arising from the implementation of mitigation projects in the Heathlands Planning Framework, particularly as they are so significant to increasing recreational greenspace and providing areas for people to enjoy exercise as part of a daily routine. A neutral score was given across the remaining sub-objectives as there are expected to be no positive or negative issues arising.

Health Impact Issues

The option recorded slightly adverse impacts across the first two objectives to improve health, reflecting the main issues in the SA. A neutral score was recorded for reducing air pollution and its health impact.

Equalities Impact Issues

Neutral scores are recorded across all the equalities' strands as there is likely to be neither positive nor negative impacts on the identified groups.

Option 6: Developers of sites on the edge of settlements to contribute through the tariff based approach (pre CIL).

Mitigating adverse effects of additional housing growth by using contributions towards off site schemes to help improve accessibility of existing green space and open up other areas of land with heathland character would provide alternative open space for residents and

visitors to improve health and promote opportunities for daily exercise including dog walking. This option therefore scored positively for health. As it would allow suitable and affordable housing to come forward it scored high positive for this option. The tariff based approach could help to deliver schemes to provide opportunities for paid or unpaid work and reduce unemployment. Funding for additional green infrastructure could help make cycling more attractive and reduce traffic; hence minor positive scores were recorded across these sub objectives. This option could ensure that new development would directly contribute to the % of new build residential and commercial development to meet either Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 or BREEAM "Very Good". This would also reduce non-renewable energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and thus has a high positive score for minimising the consumption of natural resources.

Health Impact Issues

Like Option 4, the appraisal scored positives across all three objectives to improve health. The tariff based approach could provide a range of measures within this option to increase safety and security of places and routes, provide access to recreation and open space and promoting participation and reduce air pollution by creating traffic free commuter and sustainable travel routes.

Equalities Impact Issues

Neutral scores are recorded across all the equalities' strands as there is likely to be neither positive nor negative impacts on the identified groups.

Summary of Options for Possible Objective 2

The options appraisal has considered the three options in relation to mitigating the impacts of population and housing growth in relation to securing funding for infrastructure and heathland mitigation for the South East Dorset area. The scores in the Sustainability Appraisal matrix demonstrate that the option to prioritise an appropriate level of funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy to secure avoidance and mitigation measures is the most sustainable as they will secure the clearest benefits.

**Possible Objective 3: To integrate the Dorset Heaths within a wider green infrastructure network**

Option 7: To identify opportunities for utilising land for alternative recreational use known as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

This option resulted in minor positive scores for improving health, reducing health inequalities and promoting healthy lifestyles. Providing new greenspace has the potential to increase access to recreation and opportunities for informal sporting activities, as well as making cycling more attractive if users wish to walk dogs, whilst allowing the freedom to cycle off road. If SANGs are accessible, this would have a positive impact for crime and fear of crime by increasing passive surveillance and could lead to a reduction in heathland crime, such as arson. However, should the SANG be sited adjacent to existing heathland, it would have the potential to attract increased numbers of people to both sites, particularly dog walkers and create pressure on the heathland through soil enrichment, compaction and nesting bird disturbance, in view of this it scores a high negative for protecting, enhancing and expanding habitats and species and avoiding adverse impacts. However, management techniques,

education and signage could assist in addressing and overcoming this. The option scored positively for protecting and enhancing landscape and townscape and reducing vulnerability to flooding and sea level rise (taking account of climate change).

Health Impact Issues

The option to provide SANGs in accessible locations scored high positives across all three objectives to improve health.

Equalities Impact Issues

The appraisal of each individual equality strand scored mainly neutral, save for social inequalities which scored a minor positive score as free facilities can benefit individuals of any incomes in their local communities.

Option 8: Converting greenspaces to heathland type habitat

The loss of existing open and accessible greenspace to heathland habitat will impact upon the types of leisure activity undertaken and other uses which land may be in use for e.g. agriculture. As such it is has scored a minor negative across the health objectives. The option could contribute to existing network of green infrastructure and expand the area of land given over to heathland, providing significant opportunities for increasing habitat and biodiversity. However there is a risk that this option could result in the loss of informal and formal recreational space close to where people live and result in a reduction in available open space and consequently increase people's travel to further away spaces. For other land types there is the resultant loss of the current land use. The option scored neutral across the remaining sustainability objectives.

Health Impact Issues

If existing greenspace areas are converted to heathland type habitat the most significant consequence is the potential loss of formal/informal recreation/play space close to where people live. This could lead to longer of trips resulting in more road traffic and consequent pollution and also reduced activity rates and potential increase in obesity.

Equalities Impact Issues

Neutral scores are recorded across all the equalities' strands as there is likely to be neither positive nor negative impacts on the identified groups.

**Summary of Options for Possible Objective 3**

The objective of integrating the Dorset Heaths within a wider green infrastructure network considered three options and approaches to ensuring that the network would be more resilient to climate change and contribute to increasing biodiversity in South East Dorset. The Option to identify opportunities for utilising land for alternative recreational use known as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) scored more positively than the option to convert existing greenspace to heathland.

**Sustainability Appraisal of Draft Policies**

A total of four draft policies have been developed. Sustainability Appraisal findings for each of the draft policies are summarised below:

**Draft Policy DH1: PROTECTION OF THE DORSET HEATHS**

This policy sets out the strategy for protection of the heath and the partnerships and organisations that will help to maintain the heath in a favourable condition. The policy scored positively across two of the six higher level sustainability objectives. It will benefit the enhancement and expansion of the heathland habitat, reduce vulnerability to flooding and reduce crime and fear of crime.

Health Impact Appraisal and Equalities Impact Appraisal

The policy would not result in any positive or negative impacts for health or any equalities strands and therefore had neutral scores across all sustainability objectives.

**Draft Policy DH2: DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE PLAN AREA**

This policy sets out the framework for all proposed new development within 5km and 400m of the heathland in South East Dorset. There were neutral scores recorded across all high level sustainability objectives and sub-objectives.

Health Impact Appraisal and Equalities Impact Appraisal

The policy would not result in any positive or negative impacts for health or any equalities strands and therefore had neutral scores across all sustainability objectives.

**Draft Policy DH3: PRIORITISING FUNDING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND MITIGATION REQUIRED BY EUROPEAN LEGISLATION**

This policy establishes the prioritisation of Community Infrastructure Levy funding to mitigation projects. The sustainability appraisal scored positively on the impact of the policy on helping make suitable housing available and affordable in recognition that funding of the right projects, at the right time, has implications for growth.

Health Impact Appraisal and Equalities Impact Appraisal

Access to Recreation and Open space and promoting participation scored highly positive in the Health Impact Appraisal. There were no positive or negative impacts for the equalities strands and therefore neutral scores were recorded.

**Draft Policy DH4: SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE NATURAL GREENSPACE (SANGs)**

This policy sets out the approach to SANGs as a mechanism to mitigate effects of development and the criteria under which SANGs can be implemented. The sustainability appraisal scored positively on the impact of the policy on helping make suitable housing available and affordable in recognition that funding of strategic SANGs has implications for growth.

Health Impact Appraisal and Equalities Impact Appraisal

The policy scored highly positively across the Heath Impact Appraisal for improving the safety and security of places and routes and increasing access to recreation and open space, as well as reducing air pollution and its health impacts. The policy would not result in any positive or negative impacts for equalities strands and therefore had neutral scores across these objectives.

# Appendix D: Habitats Regulation Assessment - Screening of Likely Impacts Arising from Options and Draft Policies

| | |
|---|---|
| **Brief Description of the Plan** | Spatial plan that will provide a long term strategy for the protection of designated heathlands, through the production of a Joint DPD that allows for the more detailed consideration of mechanisms and measures that will contribute to the appropriate and necessary mitigation of future growth, across South East Dorset. |
| **Brief Description of Natura 2000 sites** | Dry & wetland heathland habitats. These include: heathland SPAs/Ramsar sites including:- Dorset Heaths SAC; Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC; Dorset Heathlands SPA; Dorset Heathlands Ramsar; Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar; The New Forest SAC; and New Forest SPA and Ramsar. Heathland habitats contain rare and protected species including the Dartford Warbler, smooth snakes and lizards. |

| Option | Potential Impact | Effect on Site Features | Risk factors | Effect on Conservation Objectives of European Site and Likely Significant Effect? | Avoidance Measures to Take Forward | Certainty of success of option in mitigating adverse impact of urban effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. To maintain an overall body to co-ordinate management of the Dorset Heaths and an educational programme to teach people how to look after these areas. | Would provide on-going co-ordinated access management of the Dorset Heaths, a requirement that is critical to any long term strategy to ensure their condition is protected and improved.<br><br>Option would seek the continued funding of a body to undertake management and education activities to protect and improve the Dorset Heaths, similar to the role that the Urban Heaths Partnership (UHP) has performed under the current Dorset Heathlands | Positive. | Funding being available to maintain an overarching body. | Likely to be a positive effect subject to funding availability. | None required. | High subject to further assessment. |

| Option | Potential Impact | Effect on Site Features | Risk factors | Effect on Conservation Objectives of European Site and Likely Significant Effect? | Avoidance Measures to Take Forward | Certainty of success of option in mitigating adverse impact of urban effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Planning Framework arrangements.<br><br>Funding of the UHP is currently provided through a tariff arrangement where residential development makes a financial contribution towards the mitigation of developments adverse effects and a proportion of the contribution is given to support the work of the UHP.<br><br>In common with the current arrangements, any management body would be expected to work with leisure and countryside services across South East Dorset, together with emergency services and nature conservation organisations, to ensure the protection and integrity of the Dorset Heaths. | | | | | |

| Option | Potential Impact | Effect on Site Features | Risk factors | Effect on Conservation Objectives of European Site and Likely Significant Effect? | Avoidance Measures to Take Forward | Certainty of success of option in mitigating adverse impact of urban effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. Establishing local volunteer forums to manage heathland. | This option may not necessarily provide the strongly focussed management regime that would be needed to deliver any long term strategy for the protection and improvement of the Dorset Heaths, and would result in the fragmentation of management and education activities.<br><br>This option could also result in tensions arising over the allocation of funding for management and educational activities.<br><br>However, it may be necessary to consider a role for such groups in the format of any future management arrangements to reflect any changes in circumstances. | Positive. | Lack of volunteers<br><br>No overall co-ordinating body. | Likely to be a positive effect subject to willing volunteers and co-ordinating body. | None required. | Moderate subject to uncertainty around reliability and lack of overall co-ordinating body. |
| 3. Landowner responsibility for full management and educational programme. | Similar issues to Option 2 above, although in this instance there is the potential for even more fragmentation | Positive. | Lack of volunteers<br><br>No overall co-ordinating body, unlikelihood | Likely to be a positive effect subject to funding availability, volunteers, programme of management | None required. | Low as a consequence of lack of capacity to co-ordinate programme. |

| Option | Potential Impact | Effect on Site Features | Risk factors | Effect on Conservation Objectives of European Site and Likely Significant Effect? | Avoidance Measures to Take Forward | Certainty of success of option in mitigating adverse impact of urban effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | in relation to management and education activities.<br><br>Further issues centre on securing landowner commitment to delivering a full management and educational programme, particularly where this might involve a future sale of the land to new owners reluctant to continue participation.<br><br>No single point of co-ordination for emergency services local authorities etc and ability to respond flexibly to high risk issues | | of long term education programme. | and capacity to fulfil commitment. | | |
| 4. To prioritise an appropriate level of funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy to secure avoidance and mitigation measures across South East Dorset. | Without appropriate mitigation, forecast growth in housing and population over the next 15 years would result in adverse effects upon the Dorset Heaths.<br><br>Securing contributions through the CIL to provide mitigation against the affects of development on | Positive subject to being in the right place and before development is occupied. | Delivering SANGs in the right places at the right time. | Likely to be positive subject to finding SANGs, funding availability and implementation plan. | None required. | Potentially high if right location and attractiveness of SANG is secured. |

| Option | Potential Impact | Effect on Site Features | Risk factors | Effect on Conservation Objectives of European Site and Likely Significant Effect? | Avoidance Measures to Take Forward | Certainty of success of option in mitigating adverse impact of urban effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | the Dorset Heaths would enable provision of appropriate mitigation. This could include the delivery of accessible areas of greenspaces both close to development and further out where alternative opportunities can be realised. | | | | | |
| 5. Developers to directly provide mitigation alongside infill sites. | Whilst large development sites could have the potential to deliver mitigation as part of an overall scheme design, it would be impracticable for small sites to deliver the mitigation necessary to offset the cumulative adverse impacts from such developments on the Dorset Heaths. | Positive subject to being in the right place and before development is occupied. | Securing mitigation on large sites. Small sites unable to mitigate adverse impacts. | Likely to be positive for those sites able to provide mitigation. | None required. | Low for small sites. |
| 6. Developers of sites on the edge of settlements to contribute through tariff based approach (pre CIL). | Similar issues to those identified in Option 4.<br><br>Where sites on the edge of settlements are unable to deliver on-site mitigation, a | None. | None. | No. | None required. | Low as a consequence of the legal requirement for all Local Planning Authorities to have CIL in place by the time of adoption of |

| Option | Potential Impact | Effect on Site Features | Risk factors | Effect on Conservation Objectives of European Site and Likely Significant Effect? | Avoidance Measures to Take Forward | Certainty of success of option in mitigating adverse impact of urban effects |
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| | tariff system would be required to provide an effective method of securing financial contributions for a range of measures to be provided elsewhere, which could include the provision of areas of alternative natural greenspace. | | | | | the DPD in 2014. |
| 7. To identify opportunities for utilising land for alternative recreational use known as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). | Whilst this option has the potential to deflect recreational uses such as walking and dog-walking away from protected heathland areas, there is also concern that providing such recreational space adjacent to heathland could also serve to encourage additional recreation use of heathland as a consequence of proximity.<br><br>Where such a risk is identified, consideration would need to be given to the implementation of management | Potential for adverse effects. | Could result in increased recreational use of heathland due to proximity of land for alternative recreational use. | Yes -<br><br>increased recreational demand due to dog walking, predation by domestic pets and disturbance, and erosion arising from walking or trail-biking. | Mitigation could involve management arrangements to limit or prevent access to designated heathland sites from adjacent land used as alternative recreational space. | Moderate subject to possible cost implications of infrastructure and active monitoring and management of sites. |

| Option | Potential Impact | Effect on Site Features | Risk factors | Effect on Conservation Objectives of European Site and Likely Significant Effect? | Avoidance Measures to Take Forward | Certainty of success of option in mitigating adverse impact of urban effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | arrangements that would seek to minimise any potential for increased recreational use of protected heathland. | | | | | |
| 8. Converting greenspaces to heathland type habitat | This option considers the conversion of designated public open space and other land to heathland as part of an overall expansion programme. | Positive | Would result in the loss of public open space which provides varied opportunity for more formal recreational activities. | Likely to be positive as it will result in an overall increase in the area of heathland habitat. | None required. | Low, given the overriding requirement to retain community recreation facilities to meet the level of housing growth in the South East Dorset area. |

| Draft Policy | Potential Impact | Effect on Site Features | Risk factors | Effect on Conservation Objectives of European Site and Likely Significant Effect? | Avoidance Measures to Take Forward | Certainty of success of option in mitigating adverse impact of urban effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DH1 – Protection of the Dorset Heaths | Draft policy that reiterates the unique nature of the Dorset Heaths and the responsibility that a range of organisations and bodies, together with the community, have in ensuring that development across South East Dorset is accommodated within the terms of the Habitat Regulations 2010 (and subsequent amendments), while working to maintain | Positive - stated outcome is to maintain heathland sites in a favourable condition. | Failure to act in consensus could lead to a fragmented and less effective approach to securing the necessary mitigation measures to planned development. | Highly positive – necessary to have a co-ordinated partnership approach to protecting and improving protected heathland sites across South East Dorset. | None required. | High due to the broad consensus that heathland sites should be protected and improved. |

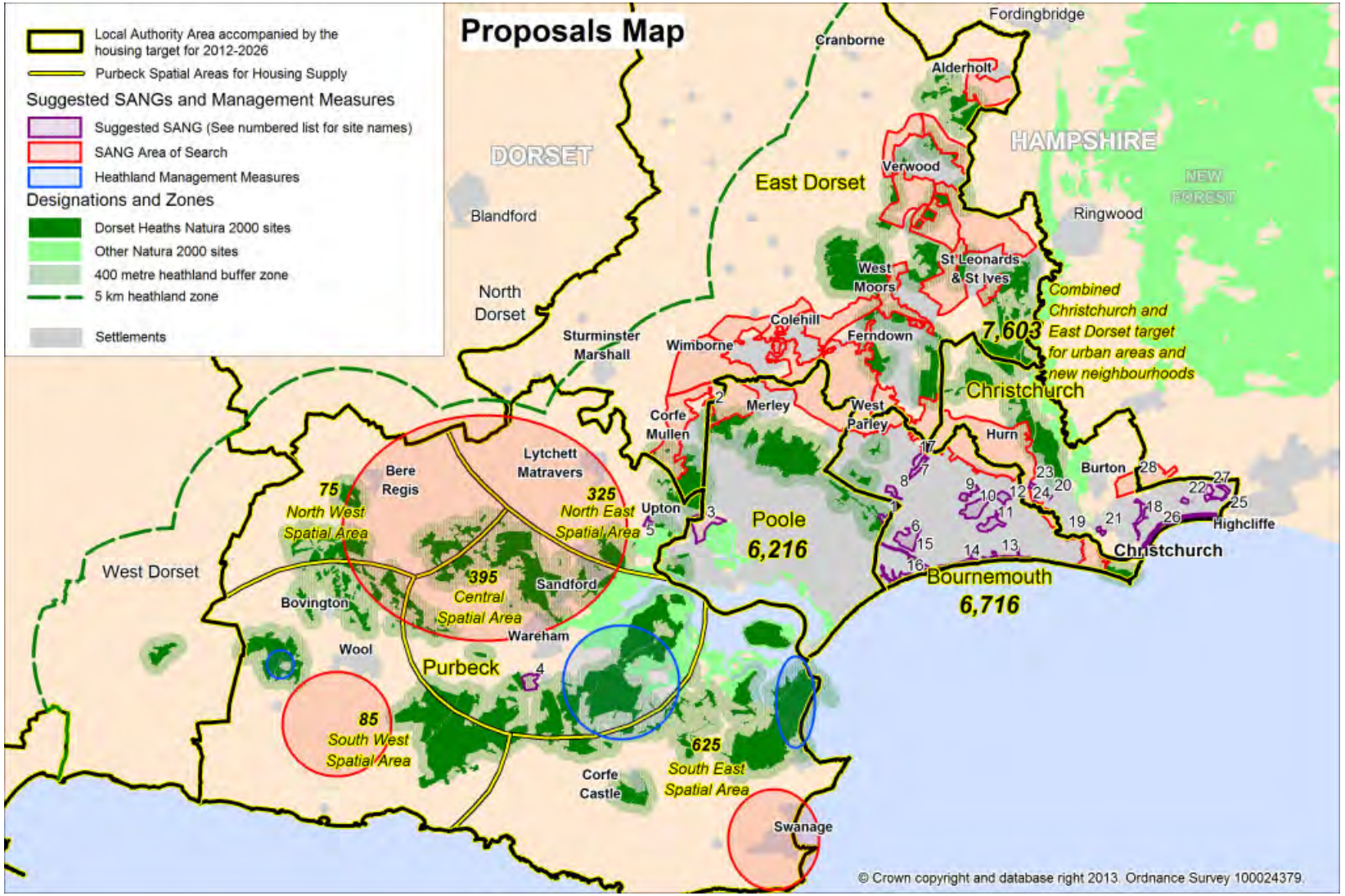
| Draft Policy | Potential Impact | Effect on Site Features | Risk factors | Effect on Conservation Objectives of European Site and Likely Significant Effect? | Avoidance Measures to Take Forward | Certainty of success of option in mitigating adverse impact of urban effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | heathland sites in a favourable condition.<br><br>Under current arrangements, a co-ordinated approach is provided through the Urban Heaths Partnership which is funded to undertake a wide range of management and education activities to protect and improve the Dorset Heaths. | | | | | |
| DH2 – Development within the Plan Area | Draft policy that sets out the framework for the consideration of development proposed within the South East Dorset area, including those uses likely to have a significant adverse effect on protected heathland sites.<br><br>Policy precludes development within 400 metres of designated heathland, as it is unlikely that it can be demonstrated that no adverse effect on protected heathland sites will occur.<br><br>Developments between 400m and 5km of protected heathland sites | Positive – sets out policy approach that ensures heathland sites will be protected from adverse effects of development. | Very limited as planning policies being adopted across South East Dorset recognise the need to avoid or mitigate the adverse impacts of additional development. | Highly positive – important to highlight the types of development likely to cause harm. | None required | High as policy sets out a clear framework to avoid or mitigate the adverse impacts of additional development. |

| Draft Policy | Potential Impact | Effect on Site Features | Risk factors | Effect on Conservation Objectives of European Site and Likely Significant Effect? | Avoidance Measures to Take Forward | Certainty of success of option in mitigating adverse impact of urban effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | will be required to avoid or mitigate adverse effects. | | | | | |
| DH3 – Prioritising Funding for Infrastructure and Mitigation required by European Legislation | Draft policy that establishes the prioritisation of funding for the mitigation of adverse effects upon the Dorset Heaths and other international wildlife sites, through Community Infrastructure Levy charges. | Positive – ensures that funding raised from CIL charges is used to mitigate the adverse effects of development. | Failure to prioritise funding for the mitigation of adverse effects of future development upon the Dorset Heaths would have significant implications for growth.<br><br>In addition, individual LA's could risk failing the 'Duty to Co-operate' requirements. | Highly positive as prioritising funding for infrastructure and mitigation projects will serve to reduce recreational pressures on designated heathland areas. | None required. | High as without the prioritisation of funding from CIL, the measures required to avoid or mitigate the adverse effects of planned development will not be delivered which will have significant implications for future growth in South East Dorset. |
| DH4 - SANGs | Draft policy that sets out the approach to the provision of SANGs, a land use which can provide a mechanism to avoid or mitigate the adverse effects of development. Identification of SANGs also represents a spatial approach to securing new greenspace close to where development occurs, either through new SANGs or criteria for the change of use of existing SANGs. | Positive – promotes the identification and delivery of land in the form of SANGs to avoid or mitigate the adverse effects of development. | Provision of SANGs in proximity to heathland could result in additional recreational pressures on these protected sites. | Positive as the purpose of SANGs is to reduce recreational pressures on designated heathland areas. | None required. | High as policy DH3 will secure the commitment to prioritising funding to deliver measures, including SANGs, that will mitigate the adverse effects of development. |

# Appendix E: Avoidance and Mitigation Projects from Local Authority Habitats Regulation Assessments

| Ref | Project | Description | Area (ha)new access created | Catchment area | Budget | Proposer |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Green Infrastructure Network - Various projects across borough on existing public open spaces. | The HRA concludes that the mitigation identified in Core Strategy Policy CS30 'Promoting Green Infrastructure' will be required to mitigate adverse effects. Implementation of the policy is identified as a key strategic project in the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy. | | | | |
| | Stour Valley Project | The HRA concludes that the mitigation identified in Core Strategy Policy CS36 'Stour Valley Project' will be required to mitigate adverse effects. Implementation of the policy is identified as a key strategic project in the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy. | | | | |
| | Christchurch New Neighbourhoods SANGs provision | Adequate mitigation for potential effects on European sites is considered to be provided by the provision of suitable alternative natural greenspace as required by Core Strategy policies relating to the North Christchurch Urban Extension and Land to the South of Burton. | | | | |
| | East Dorset New Neighbourhoods SANGs provision | Adequate mitigation for potential effects on European sites is considered to be provided by the provision of suitable alternative natural greenspace as required by Core Strategy policies ME2, and those specifically relating to the new neighbourhoods proposed Wimborne and Colehill, Corfe Mullen, Verwood and West Parley. | | | | |
| | Upton Park Farm | The release of this site within Upton Country Park for a SANG is a critical component of the Council's need to provide additional open space to mitigate adverse urban effects. The creation of this SANG is also an identified key | | | | |

| Ref | Project | Description | Area (ha)new access created | Catchment area | Budget | Proposer |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | project within the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy. | | | | |
| | Arne/Hartland/Stoborough visitor survey and recreation strategy | Identify on-site management measures and consider visitor flows within area in relation to long-term management (across NT/RSPB/NE sites). | | | | |
| | Studland Access Management | Discuss with National Trust options for on-site management around Ferry Road, especially addressing impacts of access onto Poole Harbour side of road – both to heath and Harbour. | | | | |
| | Winfrith Heath | Discuss options for on-site management at Winfrith Heath with Dorset Wildlife Trust | | | | |
| | SANG Provision | SANGs provision required near Wareham, in the north of the District and to the north of Swanage. | | | | |




Proposals Map

## Schedule of SANG sites numbered on the Proposals Map

| Number | Suggested SANG Site Location | Local Authority Area |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Area adjacent to Talbot Heath | Borough of Poole |
| 2 | Land to north of Barrow Hill | Borough of Poole |
| 3 | Upton Park Farm and Country Park | Borough of Poole |
| 4 | Holme Lane SANG, Stoborough | Purbeck District Council |
| 5 | Policemans Lane SANG, Upton | Purbeck District Council |
| 6 | Meyrick Park | Bournemouth Borough Council |
| 7 | Redhill Park and Common | Bournemouth Borough Council |
| 8 | Slades Farm | Bournemouth Borough Council |
| 9 | Area of playing fields and woodland, Strouden | Bournemouth Borough Council |
| 10 | Queens Park | Bournemouth Borough Council |
| 11 | Kings Park | Bournemouth Borough Council |
| 12 | Littledown Park | Bournemouth Borough Council |
| 13 | Overcliff Gardens, Boscombe and Soutbourne | Bournemouth Borough Council |
| 14 | Overcliff Gardens and Boscombe Chine Gardens | Bournemouth Borough Council |
| 15 | Overcliff Gardens, Upper, Central and Lower Gardens | Bournemouth Borough Council |
| 16 | Alum, Middle and Durley Chine | Bournemouth Borough Council |
| 17 | Sandy Way | Bournemouth Borough Council |
| 18 | Mude Valley Link | Christchurch Borough Council |
| 19 | Meridians, Tuckton | Christchurch Borough Council |
| 20 | Jumpers Common | Christchurch Borough Council |
| 21 | Land to the rear of 2RM | Christchurch Borough Council |
| 22 | Nea Meadows | Christchurch Borough Council |
| 23 | Bailey Way | Christchurch Borough Council |
| 24 | Iford | Christchurch Borough Council |
| 25 | Chewton Bunny | Christchurch Borough Council |
| 26 | Coastal Access Link | Christchurch Borough Council |
| 27 | Chewton Common | Christchurch Borough Council |
| 28 | North Christchurch Urban Extension SANG - Area of Search | Christchurch Borough Council |

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|---|---|
| | We can give you help to read or understand this information |
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