

Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party

The Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party seeks to reconcile the interests of military training with conservation and public access in the Dartmoor National Park, and to review progress in considering the recommendations of the Sharp Report of 1976

**PUBLICATION SCHEME
UNDER
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000**

of the

Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party

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DARTMOOR STEERING GROUP AND WORKING PARTY

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

PUBLICATION SCHEME

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Under Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act it is the duty of every “public authority” to adopt and maintain a publication scheme. Publication schemes facilitate the proactive release of information and play a crucial role in supporting and providing greater openness and transparency across the public sector. For the purposes of the Act, the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party are regarded as a public authority, and there is a consequent duty to adopt and maintain a publication scheme.
- 1.2 This is the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party scheme under the Act. The purpose of the scheme is to let people know what information will be automatically, or routinely, published by the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party.
- 1.3 The scheme has been drawn up in accordance with a new model publication scheme drawn up by the Information Commissioner in line with Section 20 of the Act. It has been developed from, and supersedes the previous scheme dated 08 Oct 2008. The publication scheme will be reviewed annually. It is valid until further notice.

2 OUTLINE OF THE SCHEME

- 2.1 This publication scheme commits the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activity. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below at Paragraphs 3 to 11 below, where this information is held by the authority.
- 2.2 The scheme commits the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party:
 - To publish proactively or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
 - To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
 - To publish proactively or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
 - To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
 - To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.

- To produce a schedule of fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.

2.3 The Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party has appointed the Joint Secretaries who can be contacted at: (see Para 3.1.5 below) as the officers responsible for this scheme on behalf of the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party and also as responsible for maintaining the scheme on a day-to-day basis.

3 CLASSES OF INFORMATION

3.1 WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO.

3.1.1 Dartmoor Steering Group

The Dartmoor Steering Group and its Working Party seek to reconcile the interests of military training in the Dartmoor National Park with conservation and public access, and to review progress in considering the recommendations of the Sharp Report of 1976. The Dartmoor Steering Group has the responsibility:

3.1.1.1 To keep under review:

- Progress made in considering those recommendations contained in *Dartmoor: A Report by Lady Sharp CBE* and accepted by HMG in *Cmnd 6837 Statement on the Non-Statutory Inquiry by Baroness Sharp into the continued use of Dartmoor for Military Training*.
- The achievement of the aims of Government as set out in Cmnd 6837 para 9.a (ii), namely the best possible reconciliation of the requirements of military training, conservation and public access.

3.1.1.2 To consider any matters referred to the Steering Group by the Working Party and to receive reports from the Working Party.

3.1.1.3 To report annually to the Secretaries of State for Defence and Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

3.1.2 Dartmoor Working Party

The Dartmoor Working Party has the responsibility:

3.1.2.1 to provide full officer level support to the Dartmoor Steering Group delivering practical actions, investigations and monitoring as tasked by the Steering Group and consistent with the appropriate discharge of its responsibilities;

3.1.2.2 to consider and implement wherever possible the recommendations contained in paras 266, 300,301 and 302 of *'Dartmoor: A Report by Lady Sharp CBE'* as cited above;

3.1.2.3 to monitor complaints by the general public concerning military activity on Dartmoor, and review appropriate actions in response;

3.1.2.4 to refer matters incapable of resolution to the Steering Group;

3.1.2.5 to report annually to the Steering Group.

3.1.3 **Membership**

3.1.3.1 The Dartmoor Steering Group will meet as often as required (normally annually) The members are:

- Independent Chair (appointed by the Secretaries of State for Environment and Defence)
- Commandant Commando Training Centre Royal Marines
- Commander 43 (Wessex) Brigade
- Defence Estates
- Dartmoor National Park Authority (3)
- Duchy of Cornwall
- Natural England
- English Heritage
- Dartmoor Commoners' Council
- Government Office (South West)

Joint Secretaries:

- Commander Defence Training Estates South West
- Chief Executive (National Park Officer), Dartmoor National Park Authority

3.1.3.2 Co-options and additional advice: The Steering Group may co-opt additional members and representatives of other bodies to contribute on occasions to discussion of particular items).

3.1.3.3 The Dartmoor Working Party will meet as often as required (normally between 2 and 4 times per annum). The members are:

- Commander Defence Training Estates South West
- Chief Executive (National Park Officer) Dartmoor National Park Authority
- Commando Training Centre Royal Marines
- Dartmoor Commoners' Council (2)
- Dartmoor National Park Authority (2)
- Defence Estates
- Duchy of Cornwall

- English Heritage
- Natural England (2)
- Headquarters 43 (Wessex) Brigade
- Commandant Dartmoor Training Area

Co-options: additional members may be co-opted from time to time as required.

3.1.4 **Officers**

The Joint Secretaries will alternate every two years as lead Secretary (convenor, agenda and minutes) to the Steering Group and Chair (convenor, agenda, minutes) to the Working Party.

3.1.5 **Contact Details**

All inquiries should be submitted in the first place via one or both of the Joint Secretaries as follows:

- Headquarters DTE SW, Building 7, Wyvern Barracks, EXETER, Devon EX2 6AR. (Tel: 01392 492462, FAX 01392 492470)
- DNPA, Parke, Haytor Road, Bovey Tracey, NEWTON ABBOT, Devon TQ13 9JQ (Tel: 01626 832093, FAX 01626 834684)

3.2 **WHAT WE SPEND AND HOW WE SPEND IT**

The Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party is a voluntary organisation with no budget. It has no income, no expenditure, and does not become involved in tendering, procurement or contracts.

3.3 **WHAT OUR PRIORITIES ARE AND HOW WE ARE DOING**

The Dartmoor Steering Group and its Working Party was established to reconcile the interests of military training in the Dartmoor National Park with conservation and public access, and to review progress in considering the recommendations of the Sharp Report of 1976. As such it seeks to achieve its purpose through regular meetings and discussion, rather than the formal publication for external consumption of performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews (although some information of this nature will appear within minutes and/or the Annual Report).

3.4 **HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS**

The Dartmoor Steering Group and its Working Party meet regularly during the course of the year. Discussion takes place with the aim of reconciling differences and/or problems, and this discussion is minuted after each meeting of the Steering Group, and summarised in an Annual Report to Parliament. The Dartmoor Working Party meets before and after the Steering Group Meeting, in order to prepare briefing material for and carry out directions following the latter.

3.5 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As a forum for discussion, reconciliation of interests and the resolution of problems, the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party have no policies beyond the carrying out of their established purpose, and conduct business without the need for written protocols or procedures.

3.6 LISTS AND REGISTERS

The Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party hold no list or register.

3.7 THE SERVICES WE OFFER

As a forum for discussion, reconciliation of interests and the resolution of problems, the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party offer no services to external parties, neither do they produce leaflets or booklets. Minutes and an Annual Report are produced for the Dartmoor Steering Group (see para 3.9 below).

3.8 EXEMPTED INFORMATION

In preparing this scheme, regard has been paid to the public interest. The Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party have always followed a presumption in favour of openness having regard for those few instances where confidential or exempt information is likely to be discussed. In formulating this scheme the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party seek to continue this policy of openness except generally as follows:

- Exemptions where the public interest test applies. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis and the balance will be in favour of disclosure;
- Information, the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure;
- Information in draft form;
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons;
- Information held that may be personal and private to individuals and is not dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act but is covered by the Data Protection Act. The Freedom of Information Act does not require disclosure of public, private and confidential information about people's private arrangements with the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party. The individual concerned however, does have access to that information under the Data Protection Act. In other words an individual's private affairs and business conducted with the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party on an individual basis are not subject to this publication scheme.

3.9 THE METHOD BY WHICH INFORMATION WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE

3.9.1 The information currently published by the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party is as follows:

- Annual Report to Parliament by the Chairman of the Dartmoor Steering Group. This document is available in the House of Commons Library and also at the following websites:

www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk

- Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Dartmoor Steering Group. These are available on the following websites:

www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk

3.9.2 This publication scheme will be made available:

- on participating websites and at Dartmoor National Park Authority visitor centres
- by publishing in the next Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party Annual Report

In deciding to publish the scheme in this way due regard has been paid to the geographical nature of the Dartmoor National Park Authority's area, issues of access and public interest.

3.9.3 The publication scheme and the documents to which it refers are available in the first language of the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party, namely English. If people have any difficulty with English and/or with access or require large print or otherwise require particular assistance, they are invited to contact the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party Joint Secretaries. Where the authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

3.9.4 Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

3.10 CHARGES FOR INFORMATION

No charges will be made for examining information within this scheme. A charge may be made at rates decided from time to time for any photocopying, postage and packing or other costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information.

3.11 WRITTEN REQUESTS

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

4 FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS

This publication scheme is part of an on-going process aimed at improving openness and accessibility. In order to assist in this process your comments and suggestions, in writing, about the scheme are welcome. You can contact the Joint Secretaries at the addresses contained in Paragraph 3.1.5 above or via Dartmoor National Park Authority corporate e-mail: hq@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

5 FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The information Commissioner's site www.dataprotection.gov.uk includes a general introduction and information about the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Other contact information is:

Information Commission
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
WILMSLOW
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Tel No: 01625 545745

Fax No: 01625 524510

E-Mail: data@dataprotection.gov.uk