



DARTMOOR TRAINING AREA

Environmental Appraisal

# Land Use

8

## 8. Land Use

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### 8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Potential effects from military training in relation to land use include effects on stock grazing, as stock is cleared from the training area when live firing is taking place. This in turn has indirect effects in relation to nature conservation and socio-economic issues. This chapter was completed by Rachel Dimmick (BSc, MSc, AIEMA) and Lt. Col. (Retd) Tony Clark OBE.

### 8.2 Context

#### Legislative Context

8.2.1 The majority of the occupants of homesteads on Dartmoor had Commoners Rights, which were registered under the *Commons Registration Act 1965*. The *Dartmoor Commons Act 1985*, created the Commoners Council as the over-arching governing body for Dartmoor with Associations for each Common around the Moor. The Commoners Council looks after the interests of approximately 8,300 Commoners of which the large majority are inactive in that they no longer release stock on to the Moor or practice other rights of common. The Commoner's rights over MoD's freehold at Willsworthy, were bought out by MoD in 1908.

#### Policy Context

8.2.2 This section provides a review of relevant policies relating to Land Use within the local area in and around DTA, which are outlined in **Table 8.1**.

**Table 8.1 Land use planning policies relevant to DTA**

Policy Reference <sup>1</sup>	Implications
DNPMP MA2	Through the work of the Dartmoor Steering Group and Working Party current training will be harmonised with the needs of conservation and public access, military infrastructure will be sympathetically related to the landscape, untoward impact or damage will be restored, and the parties will work to secure other objectives of this Management Plan on military training land.
PPS7	Little weight should be given to the loss of lower grade agricultural lands such as uplands except where particular agricultural practices may themselves contribute in some special way to the quality and character of the environment or local economy.

Note 1 – The full names of the plans and guidance cited are given in Appendix 4.4, which details all policies and guidance that are relevant

## 8.3 Scope of the Assessment

### Consultations

8.3.1 A total of five Land Use Working Group (LU WG) meetings were held on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 21<sup>st</sup> March, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 20<sup>th</sup> June and 18<sup>th</sup> July 2007. The attendees at one or more of these meetings are outlined in **Table 8.2**.

**Table 8.2 Attendees at Land Use Working Group Meetings**

Attendee	Organisation
Colin Able	Dartmoor Commoners Council
Jeremy Bailey	Environment Agency
Bill Cann	South Tawton Parish Council
Lt Col (Retd) Tony Clark	Comdt DTA
Linda Cole	Lydford Parish Council
Sue Goodfellow	Dartmoor National Park Authority
Katie Graham	West Devon Borough Council
Andy Guy	Natural England
Dave Hatton	Throwleigh Parish Council
Tony Leech	Okehampton Town Council
Fran Luxton	Okehampton Town Council
Tim MacDonald	Burrator Grouped Parish Council
Pat Martin	Lydford Parish Council
Graham Palmer	Burrator Grouped Parish Council
Terry Pearce	Mary Tavy Parish Council
Derek Webber	Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council

8.3.2 The issues discussed during these meetings specific to land use were:

- whether the distribution of live firing should be more evenly spread in order to avoid inappropriate grazing patterns;
- whether the movement of livestock should be minimised to allow ESA objectives to be achieved and to reduce the efforts involved in shepherding stock;
- the importance of payments to commoners for the right to train, and issues around the formula and recipients of payments.
- disturbance effects from low flying aircraft on livestock; and

- the beneficial effects of MoD employment and license payments to landlords, commoners and local communities

8.3.3 The LU WG was also used as a forum to discuss direct effects relating to noise, landscape and visual, water, land quality and socio-economics on the local communities, all of which have been assessed by Entec. Such issues raised in the WG meetings have been identified in the relevant chapters of this Report.

8.3.4 Informal discussions were also held with commoners and farmers regarding the military presence on Dartmoor and the implications for grazing issues.

## Effects Requiring Further Consideration

### Effects Scoped-in in the Scoping Report

8.3.5 It was considered that the following effects require further appraisal:

- Potential effects on the local economy as a result of employment to clear people and stock from the Range Danger Areas (RDAs) before live firing takes place: Local farmers are employed to clear people and stock from the RDAs before live firing takes place. Approximately twenty clearers have been employed for this purpose. It is considered that this form of employment supplements the income of existing farmers and commoners on DTA. Therefore, this effect has been considered as part of the potential effects on the local economy (see **Chapter 12**).
- Potential effects on the local economy as a result of payments associated with military activities: Landowners receive payment for the MoD's right to train. Commoners affected by clearance and training receive payments from MoD. This may affect the income of local people and therefore will be considered further as part of the assessment of socio-economic effects (see **Chapter 12**).
- Potential effects on nature conservation as a result of stock clearance from RDAs: The effects of stock clearance on nature conservation and the achievement of the ESA objectives have been considered further under the nature conservation chapter (see **Chapter 9**).

### Effects Subsequently Scoped-in to the Appraisal

8.3.6 The WG meetings also identified that military training can result in the disturbance of breeding livestock, which in turn can have socio-economic effects on local farmers. Therefore, such effects have also been considered in the Appraisal (see **Chapter 12**).

### Effects Scoped-out in the Scoping Report

8.3.7 The effects of grazing Willsworthy in-bye land and moorland do not require further appraisal. The majority of the SSSI moorland on the MoD freehold has been upgraded to 'unfavourable recovering' indicating that the management regime is satisfactory. The in-bye land is mostly in ESA schemes is monitored by RDS.

### Effects Subsequently Scoped-out of the Appraisal

8.3.8 No further effects relating to land use have been identified scoped-out of the Appraisal since the issue of the Scoping Report.

## 8.4 Environmental Management Measures

8.4.1 Responsibility for the implementation of the mitigation measures lies with the MoD through DTE to Commandant (Comdt) DTA assisted by Senior Land Agent (SLA) DTE SW and MoD's Service Provider. Implementation and compliance will be ensured through DTA's EMS, management plans and DTE SW Standing Orders (SOs).

8.4.2 The existing mitigation and compensation measures in relation to land use effects include the following.

- Livestock are cleared out of the exercise danger area for the minimum distance prior to live firing by local farmers employed by MoD's Service Provider to areas which have been agreed with the commoners. Stock is moved in a humane manner using horses and dogs.
- Observation over approximately 70% of the RDA boundary is maintained by clearers employed by MOD's Service Provider during live firing, including main access areas. The clearers have local knowledge of the moor and good stock husbandry. Clearers often notice stock, which is clearly marked to identify the owner, that is ill or in difficulty and report back to the owner or assist as necessary.
- Commoners' stock is leared onto a particular part of Dartmoor. This they consider home and will return to it if moved. Clearance for the stock's safety during live firing interferes with this pattern. Because commoners exercising their rights of common are not bound by Military Land byelaws, it is necessary for MoD to reach agreement with each commoner affected by live firing. In exchange MoD pays commoners a sum based on livestock numbers, distance cleared and numbers of days firing. A slightly different formula applies to those commoners whose stock is affected by clearance. These commoners are paid for loss of grazing and disturbance.
- Live firing is advertised 6 weeks in advance of firing which helps to keep farmers and commoners informed of the need for movement of livestock. Large (battalion level), dry tactical training exercises and exercises involving four or more aircraft cooperating with ground troops are announced in the media and reinforced by direct communication with farmers and commoners.
- Military personnel are briefed through their Exercise Conducting Officer to be considerate of commoners and their agricultural enterprises.
- DTA undertakes effective communication and liaison with the commoners and farmers, including
  - attendance by DTA representatives at commoners' association meetings on request and at least once a year;
  - a clear route of communication between the Commoners and the Defence Estates Land Agents.
  - the employment of farmers and agricultural workers leading to a sound understanding of each others aims and objectives;
  - representation of the Commoners Council, a statutory body, on the Dartmoor Steering Group (since 1998);
  - an annual lunch held in the Autumn for Commoners Association chairman and other representatives of Dartmoor's rural community;

- feedback from the Commoners to HQ DTA regarding matters of concern, such as breaches of standing orders, etc; and
- no live firing on Okehampton and Merrivale in the week preceding the stock clearance weeks in November each year, which are set aside on the direction of the Commoners Council for worming, etc.
- Tenants are members of DEFRA's ESA scheme, which reinforces good environmental practice in relation to grazing.
- In more recent years, stock have been allowed to remain within the less dangerous areas of the weapon templates, either out of the direct line of fire, or in the cover of valleys of behind hills This reduces the distance stock are cleared and allows them back onto their grazing areas (lears) more quickly after firing thereby fulfilling the ESA grazing obligations.
- Rural inspections are completed by MOD's Service Provider in accordance with the Rural Inspection Methodology Document. Audits of these inspections are conducted by Defence Estate's Land Agents. Remediation is put in place as a result of these reports.
- Two training area marshals are employed to assist with the management of training on Dartmoor which will enhance the training area supervisor's and Head clearer's liaison with the farmers and commoners.
- With the increasingly urban population and their lack of understanding of country life, DTA will educate personnel;
  - on how stocks deliberately leave their young in cover while they graze and the consequences of not leaving them alone; and
  - in order to understand the potential danger of getting between parents and their young during training.
- The need to foster and maintain the relationship through understanding of each others objectives and problems, working together for the good of Dartmoor and interdependence should continue to be given a high priority.

8.4.3 Through the Land Use Working Group meetings, further mitigation measures have been identified and are outlined as follows.

- The review of warning signal locations will take into account implications for stock clearance in order to ensure that stock is not driven back to the moor's edge.
- In order to try to meet NE objectives for stock to be left undisturbed to graze the blanket bogs, MOD will look into minimising stock movement and leaving them to graze deep in the Dartmoor Forest providing the commoners accept that the stock are deep in the moor and the risks associated with this.
- Payments to graziers will undergo review. Payments are expected to remain at current levels despite reductions in the number of animals affected. This is partly because the commoners' workload is constant and because of the greater difficulty being experienced in leaving and shepherding stock, and the need to deal with stock at weekends when there is guaranteed access to RDAs.
- DTA will aim to procure food locally wherever possible and increase existing procurement of local food.

- MoD should continue to engage with the farming community to explain why it is not possible to purchase food locally within the UK, where relevant.