



DARTMOOR TRAINING AREA

Environmental Appraisal

Public Access and Recreation

11

11. Public Access and Recreation

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 Military training on Dartmoor Training Area (DTA) restricts public access to Merrivale, Willsworthy and Okehampton training areas when live firing takes place as for safety reasons, members of the public cannot access the Range Danger Area (RDA). However, these three training areas as well as Cramber and Ringmoor are open to the public during dry training exercises and days on which live firing can take place are restricted to ensure public access. Therefore, public access effects have been appraised as part of the EA process. This was undertaken by Defence Estates (DE). Richard Brooks, Head of Access and Recreation within the DE Environmental Support Team (EST) undertook the assessment and wrote the chapter.

11.2 Context

11.2.1 This section outlines the legislative and planning policy context relating to public access issues on DTA.

Legislative Context

11.2.2 The main elements of legislation relevant to public access to DTA are:

- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW)
- Dartmoor Commons Act 1985 and related Byelaws
- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

Planning Policy Context

11.2.3 The main elements of policy relevant to public access to DTA are set out in **Table 11.1**.

Table 11.1 Public Access Policy Relevant to DTA

Policy Reference ¹	Implications
<p>MoD SDiG Access and Recreation Vision</p> <p>MoD SDiG Access and Recreation High Level Targets</p> <p>Declaration of intent between the MoD and the Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA).</p>	<p>MOD has a declared presumption in favour of safe public enjoyment of the estate wherever this is compatible with military training and operational requirements, safety, security, conservation and the interests of our tenants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that people are at the heart of management of access and recreation on the defence estate. • Focus on enabling access and recreation at appropriate places where a good quality experience can be provided in a safe environment. • Provide adequate information to enable users to make informed choices about responsible public access and recreation on the defence estate. <p>MoD and ANPA will make and maintain close working relationships, and will endeavour to develop and promote an understanding of their respective interests and requirements through dialogue, information exchange and training.</p>
DNPLP Policy ML1	Development will not be permitted within any areas of moor and heath unless it would lead to maintaining or improving public access arrangements.
DNPMP MA2	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
DNPMPD Policy MT.G3	The quality of public access to the military training areas will be improved
DNPMPD Policy MT.M2	Levels of public access will be improved through negotiation between the DNPA, the Defence Estates and the Duchy of Cornwall which seeks to reduce the area of public exclusion during live firing and to increase the number of days on which the public have access to the military ranges.
DNPMPD Policy MT.M3	Improvement to the quality of public access through acceleration of the clearance of unexploded ordnance, the removal of redundant military artefacts, where they have no historic value, avoiding erosion and damage by military vehicles and reduction of the impact of dry training on the public.
PPG17 Policy 32	Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks.
EA3 Policy 13	The National Park Authorities should continue to promote the widest range of opportunities for recreation to reflect the variety of ways in which the Parks can be enjoyed.
	The National Park Authorities will need to take into account the Parks' limited environmental capacity. It will not be appropriate for all forms of recreation to take place in every part of the Parks and the Government accepts that some recreational activities could cause unacceptable damage or disturbance to their natural beauty, wildlife or cultural heritage
EA3 Policy 14	In most instances, it should be possible to reconcile any conflict which may arise by co-operation between relevant interests and the National Park Authorities, and through careful planning and positive management strategies.

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

11.3 Scope of the Assessment

Consultations

11.3.1 A total of 4 Public Access Working Group (PA WG) meetings were held between 14th February 2007 and 26th June 2007. The attendees at these meetings are outlined in **Table 11.2**.

Table 11.2 Attendees at Public Access Working Group Meetings

Attendee	Organisation
Dominic Ash	DE EST (Chair NCWG)
Ian Brooker	DNPA
Richard Brooks	DE EST (Working Group Chairman)
Martin Brown	DE EST (Chair CH WG)
Lt Col (Retd) Tony Clark	Comdt DTA
John Cooper	Dartmoor Commoners Council
Peter Harper	Dartmoor Access Forum
Colin Jones	Natural England
John Loch	DTE SW SLA
Lt Col (Retd) Peter Mellor	HQ 43 (Wx) Bde
Maj Hamish Miln	HQ DTE (Secretary)
Lt Col Paul Norrington-Davies	HQ DTE

11.3.2 Invitations were also extended for specific meetings to Simon Bates (Natural England), Helen Booker (RSPB) and Norman Baldock (DNP). Unfortunately none were able to attend.

11.3.3 The issues discussed during these meetings were:

- assessing the demand for access and recreation by members of the public within DTA
- the potential for removing all military training on DTA to allow unrestricted public access;
- the potential for reducing the number of days allowed for live firing;
- the potential for adjusting the Range Danger Areas (RDAs) to allow access to certain areas such as Yes Tor, High Willhays, Tavy Cleave and Beardown Tor;
- the need for a review of guaranteed public access days, including the relevance of current open periods;

- dry training;
- helicopter activity
- Okehampton Loop Road;
- the potential for extending Firing Notices;
- the depiction of DTA on Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping;
- Ten Tors and Jubilee Challenges; and
- dissemination of DTA access information.

11.3.4 In addition, the following effects were also discussed at PA WG meetings. These effects have been assessed in other chapters of this Report, as indicated, and are not considered any further in this chapter:

- unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance (**Chapter 13**);
- visual effects on visitors from military infrastructure (**Chapter 7**); and
- noise effects on visitors to DTA (**Chapter 10**).

11.3.5 **Table 11.3** outlines information on external consultations which were undertaken with interested NGO's outside of the Working Group meetings.

Table 11.3 Consultation Outside of the Working Group Meetings

NGO	Meeting date	Attendees	Organisation
DPA	10 th May 2007	Richard Brooks Lt Col (Retd) Tony Clark John Loch Jonathan Cardale	DE EST Chairman PA WG Comdt DTA DTE SW SLA DPA Chief Executive
Ramblers Association	10 th May 2007	Richard Brooks Lt Col (Retd) Tony Clark John Loch John Howell John Skinner George Coles Alan Bennett	Chairman PA WG Comdt DTA DTE SW SLA Devon Ramblers Association Devon Ramblers Association Dartmoor Ramblers Dartmoor Ramblers
Open Spaces Society	5 th July 2007	Richard Brooks Lt Col Paul Norrington-Davies Kate Ashbrook	Chairman PA WG HQ DTE Open Spaces Society

Effects Requiring Further Consideration

Effects Scoped-in in the Scoping Report

11.3.6 All potential effects relating to public access to DTA were scoped-in in the Scoping Report, as at that time it was considered that further assessment was required to fully understand the relationship between the demand for access and recreation and current levels of training. The scope of the assessment has been refined through PA WG meetings which have identified in more detail which particular effects need to be considered further.

Effects Subsequently Scoped-in to the Appraisal

11.3.7 The PA WG meetings identified that the following effects should be considered further as part of the assessment of public access effects in the EA.

- Effects on members of the public due to a restriction on the number of days that access to DTA is available. The EA has assessed the potential for reducing the number of days for live firing and has reviewed the guaranteed public access days, including the relevance of current open periods as part of the assessment. Consideration has been given in undertaking the assessment to determining the current levels of use and demand.
- Effects on members of the public due to a restriction to access to Yes Tor and High Willhayes Ridge and Tavy Cleave. The EA has assessed the potential for adjusting the RDAs to allow continuous access to Yes Tor, High Willhays and Tavy Cleave.
- Effects on members of the public due to a perceived restriction to access to DTA due to dry training activities. The EA has considered the effects of dry training on public access and the notification of such training.
- Effects on members of the public wishing to plan access to DTA in advance due to the amount of notice provided about live firing. The EA has assessed the potential for extending Firing Notices.
- Effects on members of the public wishing to plan access DTA due to the depiction of DTA on OS maps. The EA has considered how information about DTA and training activities is distributed and portrayed; the depiction of OS mapping covering the training area in relation to access has been reviewed as has the interpretation and communication of public access information.
- Effects on member of the public using DTA as a result of 'startle' effects from helicopters. This particularly affects horses and riders.

11.3.8 Although not part of the scope of the appraisal, as it is not considered to be a military training activity, the potential public access effects associated with Ten Tors are outlined in **Appendix 1.1**.

Effects Not Requiring Further Consideration

Effects Scoped-out in the Scoping Report

11.3.9 No effects relating to public access were scoped-out in the Scoping Report.

Effects Subsequently Scoped-out of the Appraisal

11.3.10 The PA WG meetings have identified that the following effects can be scoped-out of the EA and for the reasons provided do not required any further appraisal.

- The potential for removing all military activity from Dartmoor. The Military Needs Paper¹⁰ concluded that “DTA makes an essential contribution to the delivery of light force training (about 70% of available dry training and 53% of live fire training) and therefore remains a key asset of the MoD estate”. This potential has been scoped out.
- Effects on members of the public due to restricted access to Beardown Tor. Commandant (Comdt) DTA has confirmed that Beardown Tor lies outside Merrivale RDA and therefore access to this Tor is not restricted when the RDA is closed due to live firing. This has been scoped out.
- Effects on members of the public due to restricted access to northern parts of DTA via the Okehampton Loop Road due to the condition of the Loop Road. The Loop Road is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and they are responsible for the policy on its state of maintenance. As part of the current license MoD maintains the road for logistic re-supply and safety of training on the Moor. Whilst Statutory Body and Public comment ranged from either extreme end of the spectrum of complete degradation to full access for vehicles this decision does not lie within MoD’s gift. This is a decision for the Duchy of Cornwall in liaison with DNPA. Therefore the Loop Road has been scoped out.

11.4 Environmental Management Measures

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

11.4.2 The following management measures are currently implemented on DTA.

- Careful control of military aircraft activity which takes into account when activities will occur, number of aircraft, flying heights, which are normally limited. Low flying requires prior authorisation. Helicopter pilots are briefed to avoid habitation, riders and livestock.
- RDAs are closed during live firing, which is notified by the raising of warning signals (red flags or lamps).
- Blank firing and use of pyrotechnics is prohibited within 100m and 200m of civilians respectively.
- It is ensured that all troops are briefed on their responsibilities as regards the general public on DTA, reinforcing DTE SW SOs requiring troops to be considerate of other users.
- Byelaws are published and displayed in main car parks around the RDAs.
- People are cleared from the RDAs and stock from the exercise danger area before day firing, as is necessary during the daytime and half an hour before last light if night firing is programmed.

¹⁰ The Continuing Need for Military Training on Dartmoor (RPS June 2005).

- Good relations are maintained with the police, in order to help with crime prevention and assist by locating and identifying any UXO reported within the National Park.
- The quantity and certainty of access and recreational quality is maximised where possible.
- Every effort is made to ensure that the public is aware of public access opportunities.
- Comdt DTA and wider DE community publish and make available to the public the 'Walks and Rides on Dartmoor' leaflet and website www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk revising the text at least triennially.
- Information boards in the main car parks are well maintained and revisions to the information are considered at least triennially.
- Maintenance of information displays and a video at the High Moorland Visitor Centre and a smaller display at Postbridge.
- Development of a display at Okehampton Camp including a history of the military on Dartmoor, for loan to museums and libraries.
- Publishing Guaranteed Access Periods at least annually on the web, in the Dartmoor Visitor Centre and in the 'Walks and Rides on Dartmoor' leaflet.
- Publishing six weeks notice of firing programme on the website, for active graziers and in the Express and Echo, Western Morning News and Okehampton/Tavistock Times/Gazette and for broadcast daily on Radio Devon. Updated firing is shown in bold in each week's firing programme to indicate cancellations
- Informing the National Park Authority and Radio Devon of last minute changes, so that they can publicise them.
- Seeking reductions in the gap between programmed and actual use for live firing. In particular, dialogue with allocated users to identify potential cancellations at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensuring that the training area, ranges and training facilities are as safe as possible, and users, authorised personnel and members of the public are warned of the remaining military hazards (including unexploded ordnance) and cautioned about action that should be taken.

11.4.3 Additional mitigation measures have been identified from the WG meetings.

- In order to improve dissemination of information about dry training known horse riding establishments, hunts and individual riders will receive an annual brief on dry training and relevant contact numbers.
- Operation Bright Eyes information will be promoted and disseminated through this briefing mechanism.
- A review of the existing interpretation boards and their locations will be undertaken in order to improve the clarity of information about what dry training comprises plus additional military information in agreement with DNPA
- Improvements to the High Moorland Visitor Centre military display will be considered to better inform the public of military issues

- Training will be programmed to avoid agreed honey pot sites when the public are likely to be making extensive use of them. eg. Cullever Steps, Row Tor, car parking areas and East Okement River valley near Antony Stile.
- The possibility of extending the firing time notice will be kept under review.
- The OS and MoD will continue to review wording published on OS map sheets covering DTA.
- The DTA website will continue to develop and add information to increase the quality of experience gained from accessing DTA. Specifically a description of what dry training entails and what the public are likely to encounter will be added.
- A suite of access leaflets covering each of the 3 range areas within DTA will be produced.
- Ground exercises supported by four or more aircraft will be notified on the Firing Notice.
- A training DVD will be produced to reinforce DTE SW SOs and to inform troops of the National Park Purposes, care of the moor and consideration of other users.
- Comdt DTA has been authorised to negotiate minor local amendments to guaranteed public access periods.

11.5 Assessment of Potential Effects on Members of the Public Accessing DTA

Data Gathering and Survey Work

Data Gathering

11.5.1 Data about the access patterns to Dartmoor has been obtained from the Tourism Associates report⁷². Information on guaranteed access days has also been taken from the DTA website (www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk). Information on mitigation has been taken from the DTA EMS, DTA ILMP and DTE SW SOs.

Survey Work

11.5.2 No further survey work has been undertaken as part of the appraisal of public access effects. A discussion of the findings from survey work completed as part of the Tourism Associates report is provided under **Paragraphs 11.5.15 to 11.5.21**.

Current Conditions

Current Availability of Public Access on DTA

11.5.3 The majority of DTA is identified as either open country or registered common land under the CROW (2000) Act. Most of the land comprising the Okehampton and Merrivale Training Areas is shown as registered common land, whilst that comprising Willsworthy, Cramber and Ringmoor is predominantly depicted as open country (mountain, moor,

⁷² Tourism Associates, March 2007, Sustainable Military Training on Dartmoor: Final Report

heath or down). However, military byelaws exempt the RDAs from the provisions of the Act and consequently, for uniformity across the UK, the RDAs are not shown as CROW access land on OS mapping. Nevertheless, the level of access provision on DTA is unchanged, since the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985 recognised a right of public access by foot or horse for recreational purposes to the unenclosed moorland. Under the military byelaws, access to the RDAs is restricted when live firing is notified.

- 11.5.4 In addition to the general right of access, there are 6 bridleways and 1 footpath in the southern Training Areas (Cramber and Ringmoor); 3 bridleways and 2 footpaths within Merrivale; and two footpaths within Willsworthy. In total, there are some 724km of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) across the whole of the National Park.
- 11.5.5 Generally, the majority of tracks tend to provide access to the moor rather than across it and most of the northwest of Dartmoor is inaccessible except on foot or by horse, although some tracks do exist. The Loop Road from Okehampton provides access 5km into the northern part of DTA. Some argue that the Loop Road allows vehicles to penetrate too far into Dartmoor's wild open spaces. Others argue that the Loop Road enables people to access and enjoy the moor. Farmers point out that the Road and MoD maintained tracks enable them to clear and care for their stock deeper on the moor. The MoD license from the Duchy of Cornwall for the use of Dartmoor for military training requires that the Loop Road as far as East Okement Farm, a working farm, be maintained for two-wheel drive vehicles and allows the remainder of the Road to be maintained to the standard required for military two-wheel drive vehicles. Other tracks may be maintained by MoD to the standard required for four-wheel drive vehicles. A policy of managed decline, developed with the relevant local statutory bodies, requires MoD to allow the Loop Road and tracks to deteriorate to the minimum standard required thus limiting access.
- 11.5.6 In 1998, the Dartmoor Commons Byelaws were amended to control off-road mountain biking, which is now restricted to bridleways, byways and routes agreed with landowners. Public access to DTA is managed in a similar fashion to other parts of the Dartmoor with unrestricted access by foot and horse to the moor for the majority of the time.
- 11.5.7 Under the military byelaws, public access to the RDAs is forbidden when live firing is notified. Restrictions are only imposed to the specific RDA being used. There are periods, particularly during public holidays and at weekends, when there is guaranteed public access. **Table 11.4** outlines the number of guaranteed public access days per year.

Table 11.4 Live Firing and Guaranteed Public Access

Range Danger Area	Live Firing (days per year)	Guaranteed public access (days per year)
Okehampton	120	245
Merrivale	180	185
Willsworthy	245	120

- 11.5.8 **Table 11.5** outlines the guaranteed non-firing dates for 2007.

Table 11.5 Guaranteed Non-firing Dates for 2007

Month	Okehampton	Merrivale	Willworthy
Every Month	Every Sat, Sun & Mon Public Holidays	Every Sat, Sun & Mon Public Holidays	Every Sat, Sun and Public Holidays except the weekend containing the second Sun in the month
Jan	1 - 3	1 - 3	1 - 3
Feb	-	-	-
March	-	-	-
April	1 - 30	4 - 9	6 - 9
May	1 - 31	7 and 28	7 and 28
June	-	-	-
July	1 - 31	-	-
Aug	1 - 31	1 - 31	1 - 31
Sep	1 - 15	-	-
Oct	-	-	-
Nov	12 - 16	12 - 16	-
Dec	20 - 31	20 - 31	20 - 31

11.5.9 The booking and notification process runs through two iterations. Initially a number of programmed live firing days become available for access once detailed military planning has taken place. The details are published in firing notices six weeks in advance and changes are published in the firing notice. Subsequently, further days become available at short notice, mostly because poor visibility prevents observation of the RDA, or because good weather permits training objectives being achieved more quickly, and some due to users cancelling at short notice due to operational commitments or other reasons beyond their control. Wherever possible, cancellations are announced by 1600 hrs the previous day and the public informed through the DTA web site, DNPA Information Centres and Radio Devon. Further information is outlined in **Chapter 2** of this Report.

The Demand for Access on DTA

11.5.10 Overall, the more popular areas, where visitor levels tend to be concentrated are:

- stream and tor locations adjacent to or within 1km of metalled roads such as Cullever Steps, East Mill Tor, Oke Tor and the area directly to the south of Okehampton camp;
- the Yes Tor / High Willhays ridge taking in Dartmoor's highest points; and
- Tavy Cleave.

11.5.11 Beyond these areas access across DTA is difficult with the terrain limiting access to the more adventurous walker or rider as tracks are limited. The commonest recreational activities undertaken across DTA are walking (including dog walking), horse riding, letter-boxing, picnicking and observing wildlife. Historically there has been some demand for unrestricted access to all of DTA i.e. a cessation of live firing. Additionally, there has been a request for increased access to specific area of the moor including Yes Tor, High Willhays and Tavy Cleave. Whilst DNPA, OSS, RA, and DPA all stated a demand for additional access to DTA there is no forthcoming statistical evidence available to support

this aspiration. It is acknowledged by these bodies that these demands are based on a principle of unrestricted access to DTA.

- 11.5.12 There are no accurate and accepted records of number of visitors to Dartmoor. In 1994 the 'All Parks Survey' conducted a measurement of visitation for each of the then 10 National Parks in England and Wales, as well as the Norfolk Broads and the New Forest. This survey calculated a figure of 3.8 million total visitor days for Dartmoor. For the same year, in its 'Recreation and Tourism Dartmoor Fact Sheet' DNPA suggests that this figure should be 11.42 million visits.
- 11.5.13 The innumerable number of access routes into the National Park makes an accurate assessment of visitor numbers virtually immeasurable. Visitors can cross the National Park Boundary from any direction and the number of formal and informal parking areas is so numerous that accurate counting cannot be achieved.
- 11.5.14 This can be applied on a smaller scale to undertaking a detailed visitor count to the DTA. There are countless parking and innumerable access points onto the moorland areas of DTA and indeed walkers and riders can enter DTA from any direction across open moorland.

Information from the Tourism Associates Report

- 11.5.15 The discrepancy in available figures and the lack of additional information about visitor patterns and use of Dartmoor, specifically DTA, led the MoD through its consultant RPS to engage Tourism Associates at the University of Exeter to undertake a socio-economic and socio-cultural study to try and assess the current use and demand for access on DTA in relation to military training.
- 11.5.16 A comprehensive multi-method approach was devised, including: secondary research; a general visitor survey; a series of semi-structured interviews; and a programme of discussion groups. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data was collected, analyzed and interpreted. The year long study focussed on 6 specific terms of reference, 4 of which were directly related to public access issues.
- A. Understand more clearly and completely the claims made by special interest groups about the military presence on Dartmoor and the potential changes in tourism and leisure use patterns, were the military use of Dartmoor to change or the military to depart.
 - B Investigate current spatial and temporal usage and spending patterns by visitors on Dartmoor, with special reference to DTA.
 - C. Assess potential spatial and temporal usage and spending patterns by visitors on Dartmoor, with special reference to DTA.
 - F. Provide recommendations about the interface between military activities, the local community and visitors to inform the future management of DTA.
- 11.5.17 The full report⁷³ from this study highlights a huge amount of information about current access use and associated demand. The report can be accessed at the DTA website (<http://www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk>) but the key findings for the specific terms of reference are reproduced below:

⁷³ Sustainable Military Training on Dartmoor Final Report By Tourism Associates Exeter University March 2007

11.5.18 The key finding for term of reference A were:

- A.1. Military training on Dartmoor has generated considerable debate since Dartmoor was first designated as a National Park in 1951. At the crux of this debate has been whether military training is compatible with the Sandford Principle where conservation takes a higher precedence over other National Park purposes.
- A.2. The Sharp Report is often quoted by opponents to military training on the moor, in particular her memorable phrase that 'military training and a National Park are discordant, incongruous and inconsistent'.
- A.3. By and large, debate has not moved on significantly in substance in the past 25 years. Today broadly the same debates are rehearsed in the print media, but contemporary twists characterise the presentation.
- A.4. Academic analysis would suggest, though, that the MoD's tactics are to attempt to connect its activities on DTA with broader debates on national training and environmental stewardship, while its opponents tend to deploy a more localised focus.
- A.5. There is an imbalance in favour of negative stories compared with positive stories in the press about military training on the moor. The key themes covered by the negative stories include: pressure for the military to withdraw training from the moor; calls for a public enquiry; perceived access restrictions; risk to safety, and environmental damage caused by training.
- A.6. With respect to tourism and recreation, claims have been made that military alienation would lead to increased public access and large increases in visitor numbers and spend. This speculation is not grounded in empirical research, nor do existing studies offer a reliable baseline for such claims. Importantly, they also overlook the feasibility of increasing tourism in the areas currently covered by DTA as well as governance issues surrounding the Sandford Principle, were large volumes of visitors to access these areas.
- A.7. Interviews with organisations and pressure groups connected with the management of DNP revealed that the majority are in favour of current management arrangements on the moor including the military presence. There were some dissenting voices including DPA and OSS, which are opposed to the continuing presence of the military on Dartmoor.

11.5.19 The key finding for term of reference B were:

- B.1. The most popular activities on Dartmoor are sightseeing / picnicking, walking, and driving / touring. The most popular areas on the moor are Princetown, Haytor, Widecombe, Burrator and Postbridge.
- B.2. Of those visitors staying on Dartmoor and day visitors respectively the average length of stay was 7 nights and 4 hours 19 minutes.
- B.3. The average spend per night by staying visitors on accommodation was £18.44 per head and average spend per day excluding accommodation for all visitors was £8.43 per head.
- B.4. Only 1.39% of the respondents to the visitor survey planned to visit DTA during their trip and the average duration of this visit was 113 minutes.
- B.5. 11.1% of respondents to the visitor survey claimed to have visited DTA in the past year.

- B.6. 64.7% stated that the military presence had no effect on their visits to Dartmoor. 16.1% stated that the military presence had a positive effect.
- B.7. Less than a third (32.9%) of those who were aware of training looked for access information. Red flags, firing range telephone and newspapers were the most popular sources.
- B.8. Less than 2% of visitors were fully conversant with the access restrictions.

11.5.20 The key finding for term of reference C were:

- C.1. 86.1% of visitors were aware that the military trains on Dartmoor.
- C.2. Were the military to depart from Dartmoor, 3.8% claimed they would make more visits to the moor (6.13 per year).
- C.3. Were the military to depart from the training area, 5.4% claimed they would make more visits (4.85 per year).
- C.4. Claims that the removal of the military would lead to large numbers of new visitors to the (former) DTA were tempered by interviewees and discussion group participants who questioned how visitors would get there, what facilities are there to support them, and whether existing visitation patterns would be modified. There were also notes of caution over the potential impact on the environment of developing new facilities and much increased visitor use.

11.5.21 The key finding for term of reference F were:

- F.1. There is a gap between what the military thinks the local community knows and understands (i.e. about access issues, location of training area boundaries, and its activities on Dartmoor) and what the local community actually does know.
- F.2. In general, local people are not against the presence of military training on Dartmoor but their enthusiasm is curbed by a lack of knowledge of what goes on and why.
- F.3. There is little knowledge about the environmental and community-related activities of the military on Dartmoor. More could be made of this good work.
- F.4. There is much speculation that tourism is worth far more to the local economy than military spend, but this is speculation and based on a simple lack of public understanding in the absence of fuller information.

Significance Evaluation Methodology

11.5.22 The determination of significance is based on the use of professional judgement, with reference to the following considerations:

- the extent to which the public accessing DTA are affected by the restrictions in access from military training; and
- the duration of the effect resulting from restrictions in access (i.e. whether such restrictions are permanent or temporary, if the latter for how long).

11.5.23 The evaluation of the significance of public access effects depends on the sensitivity of the receptor in question and the magnitude of change/effect that is predicted to result from the activity.

Sensitivity of Receptors

11.5.24 It is not possible to provide a single overarching description of the sensitivity of the public who access DTA for recreation. The sensitivity varies to include the different types of receptors (who may respond differently to a particular effect) and nature of the effect. In determining the sensitivity or value of receptors the particular needs or concerns that are specific to DTA and surrounding area were considered. This focused on:

- Statutory bodies and other organisations with vested interests;
- local communities, groups and individuals; and
- external groups and individuals (i.e. not local).

11.5.25 Based on the approach described above, the sensitivity of public access receptors is expressed as High, Medium, or Low. **Table 11.6** provides a summarised definition of sensitivity.

Table 11.6 Definition of Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Definition
High	The recognised needs or concerns of the receptor (e.g. community, organisation or individual) indicate that it will be highly sensitive to change as a result of the effect
Medium	The recognised needs or concerns of the receptor (e.g. community, organisation or individual) indicate that it will be moderately sensitive to change as a result of the effect
Low	The recognised needs or concerns of the receptor (e.g. community, organisation or individual) indicate that it will have a low/negligible sensitivity to change as a result of the effect

Magnitude of Effects

11.5.26 The determination of the magnitude of an effect depends on informed judgement rather than any measurable scale of effects. The magnitude of effect on a given receptor takes into account:

- the spatial extent and number of people or firms affected (for example, individuals, neighbourhoods, local area, region, UK economy);
- the duration of the effect (for example, temporary or permanent, irreversible or reversible, short-term, medium-term or long-term); and
- thresholds: where an effect might create an unacceptable step change.

11.5.27 The magnitude of public access effects is expressed as High, Medium, or Low. **Table 11.7** provides a summarised definition of magnitude.

Table 11.7 Definition of Magnitude

Magnitude	Extent	Duration	Thresholds
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High number of firms/people – for example; UK or region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent and or irreversible change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dramatic 'step change'
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sub-region or local authority area/district 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate or partial difference
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low number of firms/people – for example; individuals or neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary and or reversible change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor or negligible discernable difference

11.5.28 Direct effects tend to have a greater magnitude but secondary or indirect effects can also be important and contribute towards an assessment of magnitude. Informed judgement is necessary to evaluate the overall importance of an effect.

Summary of Determination of Significance

11.5.29 It is assumed that significance is related to sensitivity and magnitude and **Table 11.8** presents a matrix illustrating how the definitions of sensitivity and magnitude are to determine the significance of recreation and socio-economic effects:

Table 11.8 Definition of Significance

Magnitude	Sensitivity		
	High	Medium	Low
High	Significant	Significant	Not Significant
Medium	Significant	Significant/Not Significant	Not Significant
Low	Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant

11.5.30 Importantly, an effect's significance is also a product of the policy importance of the effect and judgement is required in assessing how an effect either contributes or is counter to national, regional or local policies.

Assessment of Effects and Evaluation of Significance

Assessment of Effects Resulting from Restrictions to Access to DTA

Demand for Access

11.5.31 In assessing the effects from restricted access to DTA, the level of demand for access has been taken into consideration. Through discussion within the PA WG and individual meetings between the Chair of the PA WG and the RA, OSS, and DPA it was apparent that no one organisation was aware of other significant survey work undertaken beyond that covered within the Tourism Associates report.

11.5.32 In summary, whilst there is an acknowledgement of a demand for increased public access to the DTA through a reduction of military training it is clear that that this has been a long standing debate that has lasted for over 25 years. Whilst the MoD has broadened this debate to national training requirements and environmental stewardship the localised focus has been on the withdrawal of the military from Dartmoor National Park and the perceived access restrictions imposed by training. Historically there has been a lack of grounded empirical research undertaken to inform this debate until the production of the Tourism Associates report.

11.5.33 The Tourism Associates study has revealed the following key facts.

- The majority of those surveyed were in favour of the current management regime within DTA but there are some dissenting voices who continue to oppose the military restrictions.
- Only a very small percentage of visitors to Dartmoor plan to visit DTA and the average length of stay (less than 2 hours) indicates that the demand for access is low.
- The vast majority of those surveyed were aware that the military trained on Dartmoor but over 80 % claimed this had either no effect or a positive effect on their visit.
- It was calculated that only 5.4% of respondents would make more visits to DTA should the military leave the training area. This relatively low figure was backed by interviewees and discussion group participants who questioned if existing access patterns would be modified.
- Communication of simple messages may be an issue in the management of access on DTA. A very low percentage of people were fully conversant with access restrictions and only a third of those aware of military training looked for access information.
- There appears to be a gap between what the local community and visitors know about range boundaries and access and what the MoD perceive them to know. Clearly better communication of these messages will facilitate a better access experience and answer some of the criticism of restriction over demand. The military and visitor require certainty and clarity to maximise opportunity and minimise interruption. The visitor needs to be clear on where and when access is available. This in turn will give the military confidence to carry out its training activities uninterrupted when access is restricted.

Assessment of the Potential for Reducing the Number of Days Allowed for Live Firing;

11.5.34 The statement of military need in the independent RPS paper “The Continuing Need for Military Training on Dartmoor” published in June 2005 available on the DTA website (www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk) identified a shortage of live firing range space pan UK. As

already noted in Chapter 3 (3.4.15) all UK sites are running at or near full capacity. Other factors to be considered include the current tempo of operational commitments, Future Army Structures (FAS) and the geographical basing of the Armed Forces in the future which envisages a further 20,000 troops returning to permanent bases in the UK from overseas. On this basis it is considered that relinquishing live firing capacity is not a feasible course

Review of Guaranteed Public Access Days

Background

- 11.5.35 Live firing and guaranteed public access days are shown in **Tables 11.4** and **11.5** above. Whilst the firing calendar will vary from year to year due to the changing dates of public holidays it remains otherwise unchanged from year to year.
- 11.5.36 Comments received on the initial Scoping Report and subsequent discussions within the PA WG and with NGOs have indicated a number of requests to alter this calendar to allow guaranteed access on alternative dates within the year. Assuming that the number of required firing days remains the same (as above) then this would require a re-allocation of the same number of days.
- 11.5.37 **Table 11.9** shows the varying requests from different organisations.

Table 11.9 Firing Calendar Proposals

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	October	Nov	Dec	Comments
Existing Firing Calendar													
Current: Merrivale	1-3 Non firing		Week before and after Easter								Week beginning 2 nd Monday of month*	20 -31 Non-firing	Weekend, public holiday and Mondays are non-firing
Current: Willsworthy	1-3 Non firing											20 -31 Non-firing	
Current Okehampton	1-3 Non firing		Week before and after Easter						1 -15 Non Firing			20-31 Non Firing	Weekend, public holiday and Mondays are non-firing
Consultation responses													
DNPA	1-3 Non firing		Week before and after Easter						1 -15 Non Firing		Week beginning 2 nd Monday of month*	20 -31 Non-firing	Weekend, public holiday and Mondays are non-firing
RDA (Okehampton only)										1 -15 Non Firing			
Ramblers Association	Week after New Year Bank holiday		Week before and after Easter			Week after May Bank Holiday			1 -15 Non Firing		Week beginning 2 nd Monday of month*	Week before Bank Holiday	Weekend, public holiday and Mondays are non-firing
D of E (duke of Edinburgh)	1 – 3 Non Firing		Week before and after Easter			15 -30 Non Firing			1 -15 Non Firing			20 – 31 Non Firing	Weekend, public holiday and Mondays are non-firing
Schools timetable													
Devon School Holidays (07/08)	1 st – 2 nd	18 th -22 nd	21 st and 24 th	7 th -18 th	26 th -30 th		24 th – 31 st			22 nd -26 th		24 th – 31 st	

Key

	Firing month
	Interrupted month
	Non firing month
	Clearance week

Assessment

11.5.38 As can be seen from **Table 11.9**, complications have arisen in that requests received from the various sources are disparate and conflict with each other. In particular, it was noted that school holidays are developing an ever diverging timeline, caused by the new semester system and a lack of common dates between Devon and Cornwall and 2 further unitary authorities in Devon. In order for schools to have a holiday of a week this can be spread over a period of up to 4 weeks, and statutory periods such as Easter are no longer necessarily taken. It is obvious that to incorporate all these suggestions would not be possible within the existing number of non-firing days. If all suggestions were taken the MoD could not maintain viable Live Fire Ranges. It was concluded that the current annual publication of the programme represents the best case. However, it was also noted that Comdt DTA should be authorised to negotiate minor local amendments to the firing programme as a result of specific requests from organised bodies.

Assessment of Effects Resulting from Restrictions to Access to DTA (defined areas within DTA)

Access to Yes Tor and High Willhays

Background

- 11.5.39 Some organisations have requested that MoD exclude Yes Tor and High Willhays and access routes to them from the RDA. Both these features are contained in the Okehampton RDA which under the terms of the Duchy of Cornwall license is available for 120 days live firing each year. Therefore, the public is already guaranteed access on 245 days per year. Further days become available for access once detailed programming takes place. As well as specialist fixed target ranges, the main use of Okehampton is for firing with a number of free manoeuvre areas or boxes for tactical live fire. As the largest of the 3 RDAs, Okehampton offers the most scope for tactical freedom and larger live fire exercises. Current annual usage is running below capacity because of operational commitments overseas.
- 11.5.40 A scenario was examined where the range movement boxes were moved in order that Yes Tor and High Willhays, and a suitable access route would be available for guaranteed public access at all times. This involves a move of RDA some 1.5km south.

Assessment

- 11.5.41 In analysing this issue the following points have been noted.
- A reduction in the RDA might signal an increase in the amount of space available for dry training. However, the area freed up is close to a honey pot site (Moor Brook) and the summits within this area would also have to be avoided. Therefore there is no increase in dry training availability should the range movement boxes be moved.
 - Similarly there would appear to be increased space to clear stock for live firing; however, as most Forest stock cannot be driven onto Okehampton Common, this too, is not advantage.
 - Amendment of the RDA would cause the loss of the Anti-tank range. This is the only range of its type on Dartmoor with fixed and moving anti-tank targets.
 - Roads are currently used to deploy targetry, for logistic re-supply, command and control, and medical evacuation for those operating on the Moor. Moving the firing area further south, where roads and tracks do not exist will increase the difficulties in setting up and running ranges. Setting up ranges will require considerable additional effort. Targets are placed out for each firing day, rarely in the same place, and are

collected at the end of firing. (This also has the advantage of reducing wear and tear on the Moor by not repeatedly placing targets in the same place.) This effort is not only a function of distance but comprises:

- a lack of roads to move targetry;
 - a need for all terrain vehicle to place targetry;
 - no clearance of stock on horseback because of blanket bog; and
 - an increase in clearance and setting up timings thereby reducing the time available for firing.
- The depth of range available will be reduced; additional time will be required to transit troops back to a start line to re-run an exercise as opposed to the ability to continue south with a second iteration. Training continuity will be lost.
 - Live firing can only proceed if all of the exercise danger area can be observed. Hill fog often sits in the centre of the Moor and observation posts are not sited to observe this area. If more days are lost to bad visibility then there would be a need to programme more days for live firing in order to achieve the mandated training objectives.
 - MoD already takes account of the bird breeding and nesting seasons which reduces utility. Any move further south risks bringing troops closer to these sensitive areas and will further reduce the ability to live fire.
 - Moving the RDA south will prevent concurrent exercises being conducted from Hangingstone Hill, West Okement and Amicombe. This reduction in capacity will greatly reduce the utility of the ranges.
 - A reduction in the area available for live fire is likely to increase the wear and tear on a smaller part of the Moor.

11.5.42 In addition, it should be noted that both DNPA and NE highlighted the potential for disturbance of breeding Ring Ouzel as a particular concern if the public were given increased access to this area.

Conclusion

11.5.43 All of these measures lead to a reduction in utility of Dartmoor as a realistic live fire training facility. It is assessed that this factor in addition to increased administration would result in a reduction in effective training. The disadvantages heavily outweigh any advantage which might accrue. It is clear that mandated training objectives could not be achieved within a reduced area. Therefore the MoD has rejected the proposal.

Access to Tavy Cleave

Background

11.5.44 Some organisations have requested that MOD exclude Tavy Cleave from the RDA. This feature is contained in the Willsworthy RDA the majority of which is MOD freehold. Currently firing is programmable for 245 days per year giving 120 days guaranteed public access. Further days become available for access once planning and booking take place. The nature of the fixed target ranges at Willsworthy (gallery, MMTT and ETR) are particularly suitable for initial training and they are heavily used by Commando Training Centre Royal Marines Lympstone. In addition, field firing is conducted at Willsworthy.

11.5.45 A scenario was examined where adjustments were made in order that Tavy Cleave would be available for guaranteed public access at all times.

Assessment

11.5.46 In analysing this issue the following points have been noted.

- This adjustment would remove the possibility of field firing from Willsworthy, as the resulting area is too small to allow free manoeuvre with acceptable arcs of fire.
- The MMTT and ETR ranges could no longer operate as their RDAs include Tavy Cleave, and would need to be removed. Any adjustment to RDA on the southern boundary would result in the need for at least 2 more lookouts with associated infrastructure including stables for range clearers.
- Similarly sniper firing would not be possible as the danger area includes Tavy Cleave.
- Tavy Cleave is a breeding area for at least 4 pairs of the locally scarce ring ouzel. Further opening of this area to the public will bring the prospect of access restrictions and the requirement to police the area.

11.5.47 Further technical study of the gallery range at Willsworthy is to be undertaken using the Weapon Danger Area Assessment and Prediction System (WDAAPS) in order to determine whether the range template type can be changed. If this were to be the case there would not be a need to observe the high ground outside the template and allow firing even when observation of this area is not possible due to mist, thereby reducing range closures making more efficient use of programmed time. A result from these deliberations is not expected before mid 2008.

Conclusion

11.5.48 The removal of 4 types of firing from Willsworthy is an unacceptable loss of training capability which cannot be provided elsewhere, particularly as Willsworthy is the range with the heaviest use. Therefore the MoD has rejected the proposal.

Assessment of the Effects Due to a Perceived Restriction to Access to DTA Due to Dry Training Activities

Background

11.5.49 Dry tactical training can take place over any part of the DTA. By its nature dry training cannot be contained within a small area and it is difficult to allocate and confine specific areas for this activity. It can occur 24 hours a day on 365 days a year. Responses to the Scoping Report and discussion within the PA WG and meetings with other organisations have raised a number of issues relating to dry tactical training.

- There appeared to be a lack of understanding as to what exactly dry training entailed.
- There was a perception that dry training activity detracted from the quality of access onto the DTA because of blank fire noise. Noise effects are considered in **Chapter 10**.
- There was concern that the startle effect of noise, particularly in relation to horses and riders, was an issue. Noise is covered in **Chapter 10** of this EA.
- Interest was expressed in undertaking dry training notification along similar lines to that of Firing Notices. However because the whole of DTA can be used at any time this was agreed by the majority as unworkable and likely to reduce the clear safety message of Firing Notices relating to live firing and the displaying of warning signals.

- There was a request to segregate the public from dry training to ensure separation. Separation of troops and civilians was considered but dismissed as this would naturally lead to additional closures of the DTA. This suggestion was subsequently retracted.
- Concerns were raised about dry training being undertaken in areas of high visitor numbers during peak visitor periods (sites known as 'honey pots'). These sites were identified by DNPA and discussed within the PA WG.
- The Tourism Associates report highlights a lack of information about the dry training activities undertaken by the military as an issue that could be addressed.
- Comdt DTA currently briefs user units at the highest level on National Park purposes, care of the Moor and consideration of other users. It was recommended that a training DVD be produced to ensure all troops receive a direct brief.

Assessment of Effects

11.5.50 There is no measurable effect on recreational users from dry training. The Tourism Associates Report clearly states that were the military to leave the training area that those interviewed would make in the region of 5.4% more visits but this is not broken down to differences between live and dry training. However, information from the PA WG meetings, and from the Tourism Associates report would indicate that the two main effects on public access in relation to dry training are:

- a perceived rather than an actual effect on public access due to a lack of understanding of what dry training involves; and
- potential effects on public access when dry training takes place close to honey pot sites during peak visitor times.

11.5.51 In response to the potential perceived lack of access during dry training, several mitigation measures have been identified in order to improve knowledge and communication of information about dry training. These are outlined in **Section 11.4** and comprise:

- an annual reminder to known horse riding establishments, hunts and individual riders as to what exactly dry training entails and what riders should expect to come across whilst with in the DTA boundary;
- a clear and simple definition of what dry training entails and what members of the public should expect to come across outlined in the DTA website (www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk);
- clear safety messages and simple explanations of all dry training activity in all revised/new information provision (see "Review of Information/Interpretation/Communication" below); and
- Commandant DTA will investigate production of a training DVD to reinforce DTE SW SOs and inform exercising troops of National Park purposes, care of the Moor and consideration of other users.

11.5.52 The perceived public access effects relating to dry training have the potential to affect a wide range of users of DTA and at a varying scale. It was clear from both the PA WG and from discussions with other organisations that increased and clearer information was the key to solve these perceived problems. It would appear that effects relate to a perceived lack or limitation of access rather than actual lack or limitation of access. It is considered

that with the above mitigation in place effects would be greatly reduced and unlikely to be significant.

11.5.53 The second identified effect relates to the presence of dry training activities close to popular visitor locations known as 'honey pot sites'. Current management measures help to mitigate these effects as blank firing and use of pyrotechnics is prohibited within 100m and 200m of civilians respectively. However, honey pot sites have been identified and agreed by DNPA and 'Voluntary Training Avoids' put in place in order to ensure that dry tactical training does not occur in or around these sites at peak visitor periods.. This has now been included in the DTA ILMP and covered within the brief received by all units training on the DTA. It is considered that this mitigation will ensure that significant effects will be avoided as honey pot sites are more likely to attract a greater number of high sensitivity visitors. The ease of accessibility at these sites, for example, car parks and well defined paths, are likely to allow access for more vulnerable users such as the elderly, small children and disabled. Furthermore, because of the facilities and popularity of these sites there is the potential for a higher magnitude of effects as more visitors are likely to visit such sites. Placing a voluntary avoid around these sites will ensure that significant effects are avoided.

Assessment of Effects Resulting from Amount of Notice Provided by Firing Notices

Background

11.5.54 Currently, there are several measures in place to ensure that the public and interest groups are well informed about live firing in order to plan visits and walks on DTA. These measures are outlined in **Section 11.4** and comprise the following.

- **Guaranteed Non-Firing Days:** These are published annually on the DTA website (<http://www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk>) and in a number of publications widely available including the MoD publication 'A Guide to Walkers and Riders' and within DNPA's 'Dartmoor Visitor'.
- **Publication and display of Firing Notices:** Days and nights on which firing is to take place are advertised 6 weeks in advance on the DTA website, in neighbouring police stations, some Post Offices, some public houses and hotels, and in National Park and Tourist Information Centres. Cancellations in the 6 week period are highlighted in bold. No increase is permitted except for urgent operational necessity.
- **One week in advance details of weekly firing programmes** can be obtained by using the Freephone telephone answering service on 0800-4584868 and the firing notices are published in the Tavistock and Okehampton Times on Thursdays, and in The Western Morning News and Express and Echo every Friday and on BBC Radio Devon every morning.
- **Last minute cancellations:** On days when firing has been advertised, if the red flags are not flying by 09:00hrs from April-September inclusive and by 10:00hrs from October-March inclusive no firing will take place that day or that night. The DTA website, BBC Radio Devon and the Dartmoor National Park Information Centres are informed of cancellations as soon as they occur.

11.5.55 **Advance notice:** A trial of an increase from two to six weeks in the Firing Notice was conducted during 2006. Although there was some loss of flexibility in programming live firing, the advantage of increasing the certainty of public access was accepted and the increase in notice adopted in Sep 2006. This allows better forward planning by recreational users.

- 11.5.56 Potential effects have been identified relating to notice of when live firing is taking place (known as Firing Notice) as DNPA and other organisations, which plan guided walks would wish to see the Firing Notice extended to three months, as it is considered that this would better facilitate the production of guided walks programmes which are compiled before the six week notice is available. The PA WG Chair took this forward to Comdt DTA and other military personnel for discussion.

Assessment of Effects

- 11.5.57 An extension of the current 6 week firing notice period to three months (13 weeks) will affect both the military and public alike. The military will have to commit to activity programmes further in advance which are likely to be subject to change as a result of operational commitments leading to changes in the programme. These changes may involve additional firing time or cancellations in order to complete other tasks. It is acknowledged that late cancellations are an area of concern for those wishing to see a decrease in the discrepancy between booked days and actual use. These alterations would similarly affect public access as changes inside the 13 week limit would have the potential to cancel planned walking activities. The present system provides a degree of flexibility which it is assessed limits inconvenience to the public and their ability to plan recreational activities. In addition, it is considered that the guaranteed public access days can be used to programme events up to 12 months in advance. Within the published calendar there are guaranteed days available for the organisation of guided walks in every three month period. Walk leaders have the opportunity to choose a guaranteed non firing day for any event. Regular reviews of this arrangement will continue and any feasible extensions to the Firing Notice implemented.
- 11.5.58 Changing to a 13 week firing notice has the potential to negatively affect public access. Operational commitments are likely to lead to alterations to published programmes with additional firing dates as well as cancellations thereby increasing disruption to programmes for both the military and those wishing access.

Assessment of Effects Resulting from the Clarity of Information about DTA

Review of the Depiction of OS Mapping

- 11.5.59 New OS mapping, post CROW 2000, denotes access land with a yellow colourwash. Concerns have been raised that the DTA RDA is not depicted on OS mapping with the yellow colourwash. The view was expressed that this may be misleading to potential visitors wishing to access the area.
- 11.5.60 MoD and OS policy during the production of new OS mapping was that no MoD RDA would have the yellow colourwash to ensure that there could be no mis-interpretation by the public that they had access at all times. This approach was to ensure safety, clarity and certainty for both the public and for MoD.
- 11.5.61 Military byelawed land is excepted from CROW legislation and therefore does not fall within the criteria of access land. On the majority of MoD ranges this allows for the simple removal of the yellow colourwash.
- 11.5.62 However when the military byelaws are not enacted during non-firing periods on DTA then the Dartmoor Commons Act does allow for open access on foot and on horse. This led to the discussions on how DTA should be depicted on the OS Maps indicating that at times there is open access under this Act. During the CROW roll out period discussions this was raised to Ministerial level where it was agreed that to ensure public safety the colourwash would not be applied.

- 11.5.63 To prevent the possibility of misinterpretation that DTA RDA does not have any open access it was agreed with all parties involved that additional wording would be published on the OS maps covering the DTA. This wording states 'Range Danger Area - Access may be restricted'. Additionally the DTA website address and telephone number are also given on the map.
- 11.5.64 During the process of this EA both MoD and OS discussed their policy approach and agreed that the Ministerial statement remains unaltered. The PA WG undertook a review of the explanatory wording on the OS map but no suggested improvement on the current wording was forthcoming.
- 11.5.65 Both MoD and OS continue to be open to further suggestions for improving the wording depicted on the OS map covering the DTA RDA.
- 11.5.66 In summary, there may be an effect that concern remains that the lack of colourwash may not demonstrate that there is public access when live firing is not taking place. However, the MoD and OS approach endorsed by Minister Armed Forces is to promote the safety of the general public. Furthermore, it is considered that the availability of the website address and telephone number on the map, as well as other information about DTA which is displayed around the local area does ensure that anyone wishing to enter the DTA RDA can easily obtain up to date information on access. Therefore, the depiction of the RDAs on the OS mapping is considered to have effects of a very low magnitude and thus is unlikely to be significant.

Review of Information / Interpretation and Communication

- 11.5.67 Current access information and interpretation on DTA consists of 14 information panels located at visitor car-parks. These have been in place for a number of years and DNPA have stated a wish to see a review of the location of these panels as well as the information they contain. A lack of clear messages and good information provision can affect public perception of what the military activity in a given area consists of, which can therefore have an effect in preventing or deterring members of the public from accessing DTA. Messages need to have clarity so that visitors can be certain of where and when they can visit and what to expect when they arrive.
- 11.5.68 As a result, it was agreed that MoD would seek funding for renewal of these information boards and that DNPA would be consulted over location and content. PA WG members were shown examples of best practice demonstrating what had been achieved in conjunction with Northumberland National Park.
- 11.5.69 Offsite information is available through a number of other sources including the MoD publications 'Guide for Walkers and Riders' and a public information leaflet. The DNPA annual visitor publication 'Dartmoor Visitor' includes information on the military use of Dartmoor. DNPA also produce a 'Military on Dartmoor' education fact sheet and the DNPA website (<http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk>) includes a large amount of useful information for the public on the military use of Dartmoor. The MoD also has an area within DNPAs' High Moorland Visitor Centre where there is a display and video loop on military activity on Dartmoor.
- 11.5.70 The DTA website (<http://www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk>) also contains a large amount of information for the public on the military use of Dartmoor. The website has been greatly improved in recent months and contains information on a number of topics including public access, military use and conservation management.
- 11.5.71 Despite the existing information and interpretation, concerns were raised by a number of parties that not enough was being done to communicate simple messages about military activity on Dartmoor.

11.5.72 Therefore, as part of the assessment the following mitigation has been identified (see **Section 11.4**).

- The DTA website (<http://www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk>) continues to develop and improve. Greater information provision will continue to enable members of the public to find out more about the military activities on DTA and the surrounding area.
- The existing interpretation boards outlining Military activities currently located at car-parks around DTA will be reviewed. This review will involve consultation with DNPA over location and content to ensure clarity of messages enables the public to fully understand the concept of dry training. Funding has been secured to complete this project in the financial year 2008-09.
- In order to further inform the public of the nature of activities across the DTA, including dry training, funding has been secured to refurbish the existing military display within the DNPA High Moorland Visitor Centre. This refurbishment will obviously have to be in agreement with DNPA and in line with any plans they may have for the Centre. Other alternative information provision options for this allocation will also be considered as part of this review.
- A suite of access leaflets is being developed to guide visitors around the 3 training areas. These leaflets will contain simple and concise safety messages relating to the military activities when live firing is not being undertaken as well as points of interest.

11.5.73 The MoD will continue to invest in communication with visitors to ensure that ample opportunity is provided for the delivery of safety information and interpretation to improve the safety and quality of experience for the public. It is considered that although a lack of clear messages and good information provision may be affecting public perception of military activity and therefore preventing or deterring members of the public from accessing DTA, this is only likely to be affecting a small number of people. Therefore, with the above mitigation measures in place, effects are unlikely to be significant.

Assessment of Effects from Aircraft (in Support of Ground Troops)

Background

11.5.74 Helicopters and fixed wing aircraft provide support to ground based troops. Aircraft activity is agreed with Comdt DTA and is required to conform to the rules set out in DTE SW SOs, specifically:

- other than in an emergency or with prior authority of the landowner, helicopters are allowed to land only within the DTA;
- helicopters are normally required to transit above 250 feet Minimum Separation Distance (MSD) . Helicopters may fly at any height over a training area;
- care be taken to avoid undue disturbance of livestock; and
- planning constraints require that helicopter landings should not occur within the perimeter of Willsworthy Camp.

11.5.75 Within DTA, there is no set pattern to the movement of helicopters, or landing sites. There are however, designated Helicopter Landing Sites both at Okehampton Camp and near Willsworthy Camp.

11.5.76 Existing mitigation measures in place to minimise the startle effect of helicopters on riders, horses and walkers include:

- notification in the media of training exercises likely to cause inconvenience; and
- briefing pilots to avoid horse riders where safe to do so.

11.5.77 Through the Working Group meetings, additional mitigation has been identified, which comprises:

- The existing dry training brief to all horse riders, centres, stables and hunts is extended to include a reminder about helicopter activity;
- notification in the Firing Notice, which is published on the website some 6 weeks in advance of ground exercises which employ 4 or more aircraft;
- inclusion of Operation Bright Eyes information in any brief presented to horse riders. This project was a joint undertaking by the MoD and the British Horse Society (BHS) promoting the wearing of high visibility attire for horse and rider to ensure maximum visibility of horse and rider to pilots. The project also alerts riders to the 'Pryer Reflex' which indicates where a horse may have heard or sensed a helicopter (or other noise) long before the rider. The BHS promote this operation and have awarded the MOD with a safety award as a result of this work. Details of this project can be found on the MoD access website (<http://www.access.mod.uk>) and the BHS website (<http://www.bhs.org.uk>).

Assessment of Effects

11.5.78 Concerns have been raised as to the startle effect of aircraft on the general public accessing the training area, and in particular the effect on horses and riders. The PA WG discussed this at length; it is difficult to distinguish between aircraft activity in support of ground troops, aircraft undertaking pilot training and non military aircraft transiting Dartmoor airspace. However, additional mitigation has been identified through the Working Group meetings in order to improve notification of exercises which are supported by aircraft and to improve the visibility of riders whilst out riding and their general awareness of aircraft activity.

11.5.79 Whilst helicopter activity in support of ground troops will continue, mitigation will minimise any startle effect by briefing pilots and ground troops and by maximising information available to the public.

11.6 Summary of Significance Evaluation

Table 11.10 Summary of Significant Effects: Public Access

Receptor and summary of predicted effects	Type of effect ¹	Significance ²	
The public: limitations to access due to live firing taking place	-ve	S	Access is not allowed when live firing is taking place as a matter of public safety. However, notice is provided through phones lines, websites and radio in order to maximise public access. Every effort is being made to minimise inconvenience, and reduce the significance.
The public: limited access to areas of particular interest (Yes Tor, High Willhays, Tavy Cleave)	-ve	NS	MoD has examined the possibility of opening these areas to permanent access. Unfortunately the reduction in utility of the ranges precludes this option, but as Yes Tor /High Willhays is already guaranteed to be available 245 days each year this is not considered to be significant.
The effect of dry training on public access	N	NS	It is considered that with improved information about dry training, and with limits on dry training near popular locations during peak visitor times that there will be no significant effects on the public. Those wishing to visit popular locations during peak tourist periods will not be disturbed by dry training as it will not be taking place at these areas. Those who have previously avoided visiting DTA due to a misconception about dry training should now be fully informed and be aware that access to DTA is possible during dry training periods.
The public: effects on planning visits to and walks around DTA due to the amount of notice provided about live firing.	N	NS	Consideration has been given to extending Firing Notices from 6 weeks to 13 weeks, to allow the public increased planning time. However, the assessment has shown that whilst the time available to the public will remain broadly the same there is potential for disruption as this extended timescale will reduce military flexibility. Alterations to published programmes are likely, causing difficulties for both sets of users of the Moor. Furthermore, organisations have the ability to plan ahead on guaranteed access days, which are published annually, and include a number of days within each 3 month period. Therefore the effect is not considered significant
The public: limited access to RDAs due to OS mapping depiction of DPA	N	NS	A review of access information on OS maps has been undertaken, however, the mapped information will remain the same for safety reasons. There are contact details on the OS maps where visitors can find information on accessibility. Therefore the effects are unlikely to be significant.
The public: new and improved information about access on DTA	+ve	NS	It is considered that with the proposed mitigation in place, which will improve the interpretation around the local area about military training, that members of the public will have more information about how they can access DTA. It is considered that this may have beneficial effects as more people may become aware that it possible to visit DTA. Effects are not considered to be significant.
The public: startle effects from aircraft in support of ground troops	N	NS	Mitigation has been identified which will help to provide more information about the use of aircraft in support of ground troops and improve the visibility of riders and as well as ensuring pilots are briefed regarding potential startle effects on riders.
Key/footnotes:			
1.Type of effect	-ve = negative + ve = positive N = Neutral ? = unknown	2.	S Significant or NS Not-significant This simple significance scale should not be altered