

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008
at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: **United Kingdom**

Name of the area: **Purbeck Heritage Coast**

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:

Renewal granted 4th September 2019 for 10 years (1 year since renewal)

Central authority concerned:

Name: Dorset Council
Address: County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ
Tel: 01305 228237
Fax: 01305 224835
e-mail: tom.munro@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
www: www.dorsetforyou.com

Authority responsible for its management:

Name: Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership
Address: c/o Dorset County Council, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ
Tel: 01305 228237
Fax: 01305 224835
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www: www.dorsetaonb.org.uk

¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The terms of the agreement between Dorset County Council and Perenco are being strictly adhered to, and Perenco should continue to work to the highest standards;

The Wytch Farm oilfield's operating agreement with Dorset Council, the minerals planning authority, ensures:

1.1 Safety in operation and controls to ensure human and environmental health

1.2 Environmental management of areas in the estate in direct control of the company. Significant open habitat restoration has taken place; work continues.

1.3 A contribution (£1,700,000) towards off-site environmental improvements in the landscape character areas affected, largely within the Purbeck Heritage Coast

1.4 Effective decommissioning and site restoration once the operation has ceased

This agreement was finalised in July 2017 and remains valid for the extent of oilfield operation (to be fully decommissioned and sites restored by 2037).

2. The extension of existing quarries or the opening of new quarries must conform to the "exceptions" principle that they should only be permitted if they do not impair the character of the Purbeck Heritage Coast as a result of any one or a combination of the following:

- their scale and length;
- their negative impact on the landscape, wildlife and the enjoyment of the area by the public or local communities;
- the practical impossibility of achieving satisfactory restoration and aftercare within a period of five years following the cessation of work.

Dorset Council has managed the extension of quarries in accordance with the exceptions principle. However, Dorset Council received a [planning application](#) for a physical extension and extension of operation at Swanworth Quarry in July 2019; this has not yet been decided.

The Dorset AONB team has advised that the Council should refuse this application due to its likely adverse impacts to the Purbeck Heritage Coast and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Negotiations are ongoing.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Secure appropriate funding incentives for continuing environment-friendly management of the landscape.

The Wild Purbeck Partnership continues to meet to discuss work programmes to tailor for appropriate funding sources.

Additionally, the Dorset AONB Team service the panel which recommends payment from the Wytch Farm Landscape and Access Fund (the £1.7M referred to in 1.1). To date around £65,000 has been paid out for environmental enhancements; a further £900,000 has been committed to larger projects which are exemplars of excellent environmental management and public access provision.

Additionally, the Dorset AONB team has worked in partnership with the RSPB and National Trust to secure an offer of £549,900 to create a large single grazing unit of 1300ha in the Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve in the northern part of the Heritage Coast area. Physical works are to be accompanied by a Sustainable Tourism Strategy, engagement programme and visitor management interventions. This news is embargoed at the time of writing; we expect to be able to make it public in the next 2 weeks.

2. Promote and improve public transportation and other more sustainable methods of transport, particularly near the most visited sites.

The Wytch Farm Landscape and Access Fund promotes non-car access in the eligible area. The panel has made a commitment to fund a new offroad cycle between Corfe Castle and Studland, and new pedestrian access from Norden (a train/bus point) to the visitor attractions of Corfe Castle. This project is still in landowner negotiations.

A Sustainable Tourism Strategy is to be developed by March 2022 (see above) and will help, with a particular focus on the Purbeck Heaths area.

3. Monitor the number of visitors in order to determine its impact on the environment. A visitor management strategy should be prepared for the areas with the largest number of visitors in order to avoid any negative impact either on the quality of recreational experience or on the natural resources of the Purbeck Heritage Coast.

A visitor management strategy is being drawn up for the Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve (NNR – see 4b for details).

A wider visitor management strategy remains a planned action for the Dorset Tourism Association. During the summer of 2020, various parts of the Heritage Coast received huge visitor pressure and associated impacts after the initial Coronavirus lockdown was eased – particularly at Lulworth and Durdle Door. A working group of the Wild Purbeck Partnership is working to determine suitable actions to minimise negative impacts in summer 2021 and increase potential environmental education and engagement opportunities with a largely new audience.

4. Consider further investments towards the improvement of the habitat and landscape connectivity within the Purbeck Heritage Coast.

a) Dorset AONB are leading on the development of a Nature Recovery Plan for the whole AONB, which includes the Heritage Coast. This will develop the mapping previously undertaken for existing and potential ecological networks:

<https://explorer.geowessex.com/?layers=14746,14745&basemap=26&x=393489.54&y=83427.84&epsg=27700&zoom=12>

b) The new Purbeck Heaths NNR was officially opened in summer 2020, which brings together several former NNRs (approx. 1000ha) as well as another newly designated 2,500ha to form the country's second largest NNR. NNRs are areas to be promoted for conservation and sensitive access.

c) The beaver reintroduction feasibility study led by National Trust has undertaken significant consultation and awareness-raising, and is to apply for a release licence imminently. This project would be the first licenced unfenced release of beavers into the wild in this country.

5. Promote the monitoring of the main species and habitats in the area and encourage partners to coordinate efforts and produce good quality data for the whole Diploma holding area.

Bournemouth University and the NNR partner organisations are putting together a comprehensive monitoring programme for the NNR.

6. Initiate studies focusing on the biological control of invasive alien species occurring in the Purbeck Heritage Coast, particularly the Canada goose and the sika deer, and if deemed necessary, prepare a strategic plan for their control.

These species have greatest effect on the northern part of the Heritage Coast that will form the new NNR. The emerging NNR management plan has a section on their management. Sika management in particular will encourage collaborative working with landowners across the Heritage Coast area.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Risk: Public finance continues to represent a risk; all conservation bodies are working hard to secure funds from alternative sources for the ongoing conservation of the Heritage Coast and surrounding area. A national Landscapes Review has been published (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>) and recommends strengthening both funding and legal protections for AONBs and National Parks which would benefit the Heritage Coast area. The Dorset and East Devon AONBs have been recommended to be considered as a potential new National Park. This would significantly increase resources and protection for the Heritage Coast designation. UK Government is likely to respond in spring 2021.

Potential change: Government Ministers have indicated that the process for determining new National Parks will begin in 2021. The Dorset AONB, including the Purbeck Heritage Coast is among 3 areas that have been recommended to Government for designation as National Park. This would bring additional resources for environmental and visitor management. If current models of English National Parks are adopted, any new National Park would be its own planning authority. It is likely that the process or designation of any new National Parks would take several years.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

None
