

**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 2018

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 October 2009 for 10 years (9 years since renewal)

Central authority concerned:

Name: Dorset County Council
Address: County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ
Tel: 01305 228239
Fax: 01305 224835
e-mail: t.munro@dorsetcc.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 228239
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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 British Petroleum are being strictly adhered to, and BP continues to work to the highest standards.

The Wytch Farm oilfield is now operated by Perenco which took over from BP in 2013. A new agreement has been agreed which 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.

2. The extension of existing quarries or the opening of new quarries conforms to the 'exceptions' principle that they should not be permitted unless they do not impair the character of the 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, 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 County Council adopted a new minerals strategy in May 2014, available online (<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/mcs>). This strategy sees a strengthening of policy for the conservation of designated areas (Purbeck Heritage Coast and the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Following its adoption, Dorset County Council has been developing a Minerals Sites Plan (draft available here <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/mineral-sites>); it was consulted on between May & July 2016. A public hearing on this plan led by a Planning Inspector was carried out in September 2018.

The proposed plan still describes a potential extension to Swanworth Quarry, northeast of Worth Matravers within the Purbeck Heritage Coast area. The Dorset AONB team have advised that development of this site would impair the character of the Heritage Coast and be in contravention of this condition; there is significant public opinion supporting this position.

The Inspector's decision is expected in early 2019.

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. Work should continue on the inventory of Natural Areas calling for more adequate protection and research on these sites, particularly in the marine reserves where the periodic inventories of fauna and flora should be continued.

The Natural Areas inventory has been superseded by the National Character Area profiles managed by Natural England. The relevant areas are the Dorset Heaths (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4961534241406976>) and South Purbeck (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4610950>) which were completed in 2014.

Heritage Coast's coastal waters and Poole Harbour are Marine Protected Areas (<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0030382>); data gathering and sharing is encouraged through the Dorset Environmental Record Centre. Seabed mapping and survey information is available from the Dorset Wildlife Trust <http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/doris.html>

2. Any progress will be welcomed to reduce intensive arable use on the immediate edge of the cliffs.

The vast majority of the Purbeck Heritage Coast's clifftop land is in Environmental Stewardship with a focus on extensification (see map 1). Management agreements (10-year in length) include measures such as:

- conservation headlands (cultivated field margins with little or no agrochemical application with great benefit to rare arable plants and arable fauna)
- grass field margins (tussocky grass margins creating buffer, habitat linkages and tussocky grassland habitat)
- arable reversion to grassland (creation of calcareous grassland)

3. Work should continue to restore eroded paths by using local stone in an innovative way as done at Lulworth Cove.

Efforts continue in this regard led by Dorset Countryside and the Lulworth Estate. Innovative use of local stone is evident.

4. Efforts to promote the use of more sustainable methods of transport to visitors (bus and train usage, improved use of cycling and walking and riding) should be increased.

Dorset County Council leads work to develop the potential of the existing park and ride site at Norden near Corfe Castle. As the rail line between Wareham and Swanage is being reconnected to the main line, the Norden site can play an important part in reducing car numbers travelling to Studland.

Two non-car routes are being considered from Norden. One is to connect the site more effectively with Corfe Castle village (and historic site). The other is to connect the site more effectively with an existing off-road cycle route to the coast at Studland.

5. Measures should be taken to address risks of oil pollution from shipping.

Policy: ship-to-ship transfers in open water are now illegal; activity is policed and compliance enforced by the UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency.

Response: Dorset County Council's Emergency Planning unit runs regular Beach Masters' courses to enable an effective and efficient response to spills. No significant spills have been reported in 2017.

6. New resources should be made available to ensure the integrity in perpetuity of the newly designated World Heritage Site and its effective presentation to the public.

Management of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site is still financially supported by the local authorities. By mutual agreement, the management team has transitioned from the existing local government host (Dorset County Council) to a charity (the Jurassic Coast Trust). They anticipate the charitable structure will enable greater income generation for ongoing management.

Delivery on visitor management has come under the Dorset AONB team, still hosted by Dorset County Council. A programme of interpretation improvements is being developed by Dorset AONB staff for the Purbeck Coast.

7. Appropriate management should be exercised and sufficient resourcing for this should be ensured, for the proposed South Purbeck National Nature Reserve.

Known as Durlston National Nature Reserve, this site is owned and well managed by Dorset County Council and is deemed to be in favourable ecological condition. A new Countryside Stewardship agreement has been agreed to continue resourcing this site from ERDF-origin funds to 2026.

8. The Heritage Landscape Management Plan for the Lulworth Estate should be implemented.

The Lulworth HLMP continues to be implemented.

9. Co-operation and the establishment of partnerships in management planning, action and exchange of information between all major bodies involved with conservation and management should continue as it is a key method for future management of the Coast.

The Wild Purbeck Nature Improvement Area Partnership continues to deliver this function.

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 is potentially an issue; all conservation bodies are working hard to secure funds from alternative sources for the ongoing conservation of the Heritage Coast and surrounding area.

Finances: £1.7M has been transferred to Dorset County Council from the operators of Wytch Farm Oil Field to be disbursed as the Wytch Farm Landscape & Access Enhancement Fund. The target areas cover a large proportion of the Heritage Coast (see Map 2). Application processes are being finalised and the first grants were awarded in 2018.

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.

None

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.

We were pleased to welcome Dr Rainho who undertook an on-the-spot appraisal of the Purbeck Heritage Coast in June 2018 as an independent expert. We would like to thank her for her interest, intelligence and advice during her visit and contained within her report.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

6.1. Environment:

The Purbeck Heritage Coast (PHC) is 127 km² of dramatic and beautiful countryside along a 52 km length of coastline in the County of Dorset. It sits entirely within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB - <http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/>), an IUCN Category V Protected Landscape.

It was defined in 1981 for its varied landscape and rich biodiversity and geodiversity. Its landward boundary is defined by landscape character; it has an seaward boundary approximately 1.25km offshore.

The coastal cliffs and landforms between Redcliff Point and Swanage represent an almost unbroken section of Upper Jurassic and Lower Cretaceous rocks. They are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for their geological interest, and form part of the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site (designated 2001).

The complex geology gives rise to spectacular landforms and scenery which secure the area's inclusion as part of the Dorset AONB, a designation of national landscape importance. Its natural landforms are enriched by a cultural heritage of fortifications, field boundaries, stone quarries and buildings and farming which represent thousands of years of occupation.

The geological diversity of the PHC and its relatively extensive land use creates a huge range of ecological niches and related habitat diversity; it includes the most diverse grid square for vascular plants and mammals in the UK. International biological designations cover over half of the PHC area (over 80% of its marine area) and comprise 2 Special Protection Areas, 2 Ramsar sites, 5 Special Areas for Conservation.

Landscape condition of the Dorset AONB is assessed periodically – the first assessment was in 2009, the latest in 2018. While the condition itself has been stable (85% moderate; 15% good) there has been a significant improvement in the direction of change as a result of conservation interventions.

	2009	2018
IMPROVING	5%	33%
STABLE	75%	46%
DECLINING	20%	8%

6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes

Over the last 10 years significant improvements have been made to the extent and intactness of the Purbeck Heaths in the northern area of the PHC. The majority of 'new' heathland areas have been restored from commercial forestry plantation.

Plentiful new data on species coverage on the Studland dunes has been gathered by National Trust volunteers and staff in a project comparing that data to detailed surveys made in the 1930s.

Changes can be largely attributed to natural succession; it is informing management approaches to benefit particular flora and fauna.

The above data, as well as ad hoc survey data is held by the Dorset Environmental Record Centre.

Trends in key species can be viewed here <https://bsbi.org/maps>

6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

Regular monitoring is undertaken for the seabird populations on the PHC's southern cliffs, cetaceans off Durlston Head and the introduced Sika (*Cervus nippon*).

In general seabird populations have experienced declines in parallel with national and European trends, which could be attributed to climate change affecting the distribution of sand eel (*Ammodytidae*) and other important prey species. Disturbance from recreational uses (climbing and 'coasteering') has been a concern and is being managed through licencing on the National Trust's land ownership, and through an educational approach with the activity providers elsewhere.

The invasive Sika is managed largely across the area, with a growing focus on population control. This has been effective in most areas, with population density decreasing.

6.4 Water quality:

Water quality is a concern in Poole Harbour and its tributaries. Nitrogen and phosphorus contributions to the harbour exceed acceptable limits and are attributable to sewage treatment discharge and intensive farming practices throughout the catchment. The Poole Harbour Catchment Initiative is addressing these issues and brokering solutions such as nitrogen trading (subsidising farmers to limit inputs in sensitive locations) and water treatment investments.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

7.1. Cultural heritage

The landscape of the PHC has been marked and influenced by continual human activity since the Mesolithic period. The area includes 86 Scheduled Monuments with the majority being burial barrows from the Bronze Age. The others include sites from the Iron Age, Roman, early Mediaeval, Mediaeval, Georgian, and modern eras.

The area has also inspired its inhabitants and visitors to artistic endeavour and has a thriving artistic community.

7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage

There have been no significant changes regarding the conservation status of the cultural heritage assets of the area. 13 Scheduled Monuments are regarded as being 'at risk'. Several sites are being lost to coastal erosion, the policy for these sites is to record them rather than defend them. Several other sites are at risk from agricultural practices – both undergrazing (causing scrub encroachment) and intensification (damage from ploughing or overgrazing). Condition improvements to Heritage at Risk sites are sought by Historic England, the responsible government agency using agri-environment payments as an incentive.

7.2. Socio-economic context

Mining and quarrying are important economic activities within the PHC: the area is home to the largest onshore oil field in Western Europe currently operated by Perenco.

Tourism and related services are also a significant contributor to the area's economy. The most popular site in the PHC is Studland Beach, which receives in excess of 1.2M visitors annually.

Agriculture covers the vast majority of the land area, so is important to the area's landscape and biodiversity, but is a lesser contributor to the area's economy. Fishing is culturally significant with a number of small inshore boats working with the conservation organisations to maintain sustainable catches from the designated areas. Fixed gear (pots) for crab, lobster and whelk are the preferred methods.

Onshore, the site is largely in private ownership. There are significant land holdings in the ownership of the state (Natural England for biodiversity conservation and the Ministry of Defence for army training), and by conservation charities (most notably the National Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds). Land management changes largely rely on the provision of advice and incentives from national agri-environment schemes or more local initiatives.

7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

Perenco took over management of Wytch Farm in 2011 and in 2013 renegotiated permissions to operate the site until 2037 (the original end date was 2016). Permission was granted with numerous strict conditions for operating safely and within sensitive environmental limits. Additionally, a fund of £1.7M was made available for landscape, wildlife and access improvements to compensate for the extended operating period. This fund is disbursed by a decision-making panel facilitated by the Dorset AONB team.

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Visitors – Information policy

As the site is large, has numerous entry points, has multiple land ownership and visitor business interests, there is no coherent information delivery. However, the Dorset AONB team are to start to audit the on-site visitor information across the site, to investigate the requirement for modernisation, rationalisation and de-cluttering.

8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)

Local authority-managed Tourist Information Centres exist in the nearby towns of Swanage, Wareham and Poole providing information on access to the various visitor sites of the area. A private tourism information centre exists at Lulworth Cove, and there are reception facilities at Corfe Castle and Studland (National Trust) and at Arne (RSPB).

There are many information products available (books, maps, guides and post cards) which celebrate and inform about the area's natural and historic heritage.

8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behaviour (number, distribution in time and space)

The PHC is a popular holiday destination, driving the majority of the tourism to the District. Tourism data is collected at District level, with tourism numbers around 3.8M days visitors and 2.1M visitor nights. Studland Beach alone receives over 1.2M per annum.

Visitor pressure is managed by the provision of public footpaths and signage at sensitive locations. It is believed that visitor pressure is beginning to adversely affect the coastal SSSI / SACs; further research and intervention is required in this area. Dorset AONB is discussing this as a project with Natural England.

The PHC is well-used as a field trip destination by visiting educational establishments from around the country, from primary schools to universities. It is the area's richness in terms of geology, geomorphology and biology that provides the attraction.

8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

We were pleased to welcome Dr Ana Rainho in the summer of 2018 as an independent expert undertaking an on-the-spot appraisal of the PHC for the Council of Europe.

8.2. Scientific research

The PHC is most frequently surveyed by students and staff of Bournemouth University, their work is summarised here: <https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/about/governance/annual-review-2016/research-bu/bu-students-lead-environmental-research-isle-purbeck>

8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)

8.2.2. Scientific publications

Bournemouth University's lead researcher in this area has numerous publications, listed here: <https://staffprofiles.bournemouth.ac.uk/display/adiaz#publications>

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations

None

9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)

In the last 10 years there has been a few significant land transfers from the private sector to conservation organisations, amounting to about 200ha.

9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

n/a

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

10.1. Improvements made

The site has numerous individual projects working to enhance the area, all reporting to the Wild Purbeck Partnership convened by the Dorset AONB team. This forum for reporting and project development helps to ensure individual initiatives are complementary

10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

Wide efforts by numerous organisations are being made on this front, reporting to the Wild Purbeck Partnership.

Notable initiatives are:

Arne Moors project (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-moors-at-arne-reducing-flood-risk-and-creating-habitat/the-moors-at-arne-coastal-change-project>) which will create 150 hectares of diverse wetlands.

Back from the Brink: Dorset's Heathland Heart <https://naturebftb.co.uk/the-projects/dorsets-heathland-heart/> creating important microhabitats for 35 species across the heathlands.

Durlston Country Park <https://www.durlston.co.uk/wildlife-and-marine.aspx> managed by Dorset County Council for wildlife and access.

10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)

The PHC heathlands are vulnerable to fire. The Wild Purbeck project in 2015 developed Fire Guidance and an Action Plan to reduce the area's vulnerability and improve the ability of any fire outbreaks to be minimised.

10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

The area's most accessible (and least vulnerable) areas are well-signposted with easy paths. Car parks continue to be an important revenue stream for many of the managing organisations which can present a conflict as the overall conservation aim is to reduce traffic in and around the PHC.

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

A new wildlife observation hide is being constructed in the Arne nature reserve (RSPB); another being planned on Brownsea Island (Dorset Wildlife Trust).

10.1.5. Waste management

While there is some impact of visitor-generated litter, waste from the area's commercial and residential properties is well-managed by the Dorset Waste Partnership. Beach litter is being tackled by a local initiative, Litter Free Coast & Sea both by organising clean-up days, working with food providers to reduce food packaging waste and providing information to discourage the leaving of litter.

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems

Renewable energy installations are encouraged at the appropriate scale and location for the protected landscape. There are numerous small-scale solar PV installations, mainly on rooftops. Small wind turbines exist. Installation guidance is given by the Dorset AONB team:

<https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/our-work/landscapework/139-renewable-energy>

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made

The Dorset AONB Partnership continues to be the authority responsible for the Diploma award and works to encourage a coherent approach to managing the area by the various agencies, organisations and individuals responsible. This partnership is hosted by Dorset County Council, which in April 2019 is merging with 6 other local authorities to form a new 'Unitary Authority', Dorset Council. This will inherit its responsibilities for the PHC area, and its merging should enable greater coherence of management across planning, tourist information, rights of way and Country Park management.

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

Wardening is still provided by Dorset County Council, RSPB and National Trust.

10.2.3. Internal policing measures

Policing is the responsibility of the Dorset Police force and the Environment Agency in partnership with the organisations listed at 10.2.2

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

There have been no significant infringements to report.

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

The Diploma award has been used by the Dorset AONB in its work to limit the impact of development activity in the PHC, most recently related to the proposed extension of Swanworth Quarry.