



Forum for the Future

South West Sustainable Land Use Initiative

# The Dorset Heathlands Projects:

'Hardy's Egdon Heath' and Urban  
Heaths **LIFE** Project



Sustainability appraisal case study  
October 2004

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Forum for the Future is a sustainable development charity, and our mission is to accelerate the transition to sustainable way of life. Our mission is one we share with partners drawn from business, local authorities, regional bodies and universities. It is also the organising principle behind our portfolio of leading edge projects. We provide advice on issues as diverse as climate change, procurement strategies, sustainability accounting and the digital divide. We communicate what we learn with our partners to a wide network of decision-makers and opinion-formers.

This report has been developed with help and advice from the Dorset Heaths project teams and partners, including members of the Dorset Heathlands Forum. Any omissions or inaccuracies are the sole responsibility of Forum for the Future.

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## Executive summary

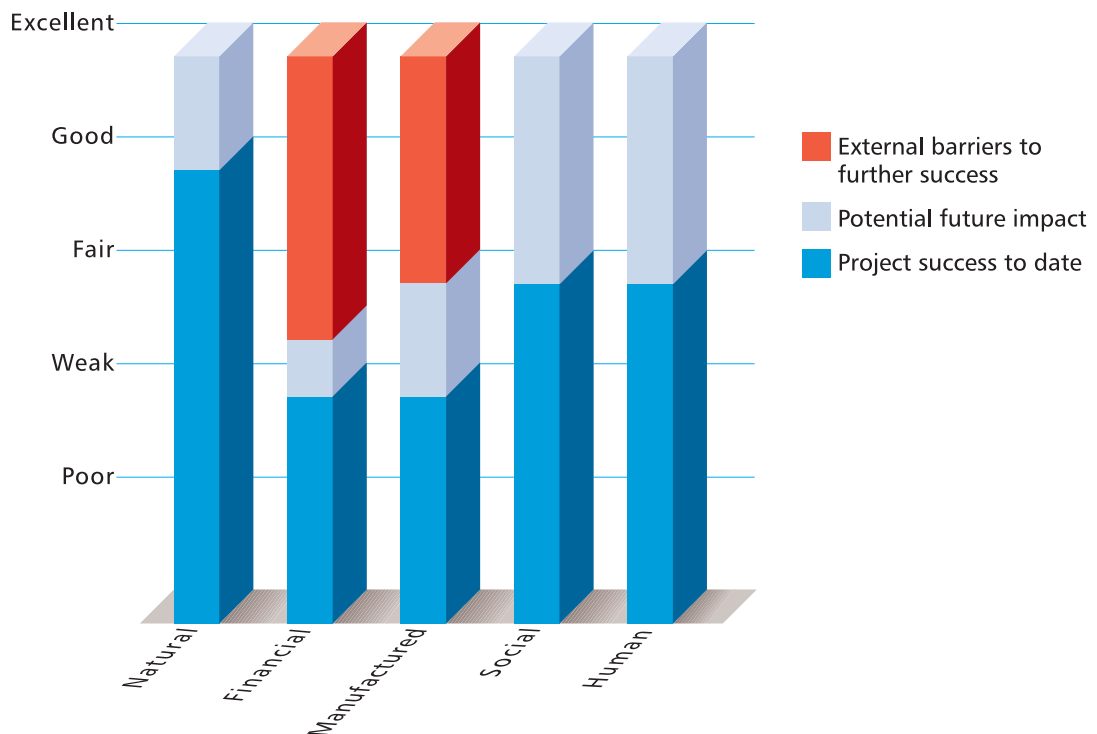
Our land resource is finite and we need to find more integrated and sustainable ways of using it. The challenge is to safeguard and enhance soils, air, water and natural systems whilst achieving social equity and economic prosperity in rural areas. This report covers one of four case studies undertaken by Forum for the Future in the South West, to test a sustainability appraisal tool for developing a new evidence base of good practice. Sustainability South West, who maintain the region's Sustainable Development Framework, are helping to steer the development and use of the appraisal tool.

The Dorset Heathlands are a mosaic of dry and wet heath, mires and woodland currently covered by two complementary projects funded by Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) monies and by European Union LIFE-nature funding. These complimentary projects are concerned with practical management and restoration work and the issues arising from the urban proximity of the Heathlands: a third of which are in and around the large urban conurbation of Bournemouth and Poole which has a population of nearly 450,000. Originally, the intention was to treat the heathland complex as a single entity but over time the two projects have developed their own identities and networks.

The sustainability appraisal process has identified the areas's stock and flows of its natural, human, social and manufactured capital assets. This involved working through the appraisal process at a one-day workshop involving project teams, field staff and project partners, including members of the County-wide Dorset Heathland Forum. Workshop feedback and editing were carried out by email, and widened to include subsequent discussion and feedback from members of the Dorset Heathland Forum, to result in an agreed database entry and this final report.

The appraisal assessed both projects' impacts on local sustainability. It found that the combined project impact on natural capital was, unsurprisingly good. Combined project impacts on human and social capital were fair, with the potential to further boost sustainability locally through further, targeted efforts. Sustainability performance in terms of manufactured and financial capital impacts were less successful, mainly because of factors beyond each of the projects' direct control. This particularly applies to the lack of secure long-term funding for critical activities that are currently only possible through attracting time-limited one-off awards of grant-in-aid. The following bar chart is simply a picture to illustrate a qualitative analysis of the projects' combined impact on local sustainability, based on the views and perceptions of local project members and partners. A strength of this approach is that it allows relative comparison between very different project areas and activities.

## The Dorset Heaths project(s) sustainability profile for 2004



This chart for the Dorset Heaths projects shows that for:

**Natural Capital** – they are effectively improving local biodiversity and natural resource quality.

**Social Capital** – the projects are steadily developing their outreach. Establishing why local people value the heathland would help identify ways of improving their understanding and acceptance of conservation management needs.

**Human Capital** – there are growing opportunities for linking heathland management with local health and education objectives.

**Manufactured Capital** – fiscal and legislative barriers are suppressing the development of local markets for wood fuel and compost using waste material from heathland management.

**Financial Capital** – on-going heath land restoration and management is too heavily dependant on time-limited grant-in-aid despite the international importance of the area's habitat.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were suggested for deepening the Dorset Heaths' combined impact on local sustainability across the Natural Area:

### Building sustainability in the Dorset Heaths Natural Area

- the Dorset heathland projects are probably best presented to all partners, stakeholders and potential funders as a single entity, to help to fully integrate activities and benefits at the local level.
- a joint HLF/LIFE annual survey and linked communications strategy for stakeholder engagement to cover the entire heathland complex of sites across the Natural Area would help identify why local stakeholders value the heath and how best to involve people in its conservation and management.
- The project partnership(s) should perhaps give serious consideration to ways of obtaining local income for routine heathland management with local elected members, local authority officers and local businesses to improve the long term financial security of essential conservation management.

### Using the appraisal tool

- The appraisal's baseline data could be further developed and added to over the coming year as an integral part of ongoing project management.
- A subsequent workshop event or a partnership survey could be carried out to establish how things have developed, and to identify where further action may be necessary to bring together each project's method of working, objectives and ways of measuring future project success.
- the Dorset Heathland Forum could use the appraisal findings to help develop a joint business case for future funding, ensuring that the heathland is treated as a single entity for conservation management and programmes of work, and to track the impact of a range of local and national policies .

Lastly, the appraisal findings suggest that there is a strong case for the Government to mainstream long-term funding to conserve the Dorset Heaths as an acknowledged natural and cultural resource of not only national but European importance.

# 1 Introduction: context to the SW land use appraisal case studies, their scope and purpose.

## 1.1 What is sustainable, integrated land use?

There are several definitions of sustainable development currently in use, for example “At its most simplest sustainable development means ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come” (Defra, 2004). Another widely used definition comes from the Brundtland report of 1987, “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Forum for the Future’s own definition similarly explains that “sustainable development is a dynamic process which enables all people to realise their potential and to improve their quality of life in ways which simultaneously protect and enhance the Earth’s life support systems” (1996)

At present, the costs of economic activity are largely accounted for without including all of the impacts on the land and its resources in terms of pollution, inefficient energy use and the production of materials currently considered as waste to be disposed of at further cost. A damaged environment impairs and threatens everyone’s quality of life and threatens long term economic stability e.g. climate change impacts. Obviously, land is a finite resource and we cannot make more of it or replace it. The challenge is to find more integrated and sustainable ways of using it so that natural resource function is not compromised or impaired in pursuit of short-term economic gain. This approach involves taking into account all of the goods and services that land is capable of providing society with in any given area.

To integrate simply means to bring together all of the parts or components of land use to result in more sustainable outcomes, i.e. social equity and economic prosperity are achieved in ways that work with the environment to protect and conserve natural resource function and natural assets such as biodiversity, water quality and landscape character.

Forum for the Future advocates the use of the Five Capitals Model as a robust and practical way of thinking about using all kinds of resources in more sustainable ways.

The Five Capitals are:

**Natural capital** – is the basis of life itself, it is the stock or flow of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, sinks that deal with wastes, and processes that regulate the climate, e.g. use renewable resources only from well-managed and restorative ecosystems.

**Human capital** – consists of people’s health, knowledge, skills and motivation. Enhancing it through education and training and is essential to a flourishing economy for meeting basic human needs such as housing, food, freedom and security, creativity and leisure.

**Social capital** – helps us maintain and develop human capital in partnership with others through trade unions, voluntary bodies, institutions and communities through effective communication based on trust, shared values and objectives.

**Manufactured capital** – means the material goods or fixed assets, like buildings, roads, pathways and machines, which contribute to the production of goods. It can be enhanced by harnessing natural systems to reduce wastes and treat them by efficient re-cycling and re-manufacturing,

**Financial capital** – represents the full value of natural, human, social and manufactured capital, i.e. by ensuring that financial costs and payments take due account of the other four capitals.

## 1.2 The South West land use initiative and case studies

The appraisal process trialled in this case study is being developed by Forum for the Future to help identify good practice in sustainable, integrated land use, the barriers to achieving it and to help promote solutions to these problems across the South West region. The appraisal methodology draws on the Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF) and checklist, so findings from this initiative should help further develop the land use strand of the South West's RSDF and help to refine its indicators. Other sustainability appraisal tools such as Quality of Life Capital (see <http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LivingLandscapes/qualityoflife/overview/index.asp>) have also been drawn on to develop the appraisal process for the south west. There are four initial case studies, of which the Dorset Heathlands is the first.

The others are the Ruby Country Initiative centred on the economic diversification of 45 adjoining parishes in north Devon, the River Parret Catchment Project in Somerset and the Purbeck Delivering Biodiversity Project. These case study findings will be used to develop a user-friendly "how to do it" guide aimed at regional, sub-regional and local organisations and groups interested in appraising their own area-based land related initiatives or in helping to design and monitor new ones. It is important to realise that the appraisal process does not test the projects achievements against their original objectives. Instead, it appraises each project's impact on the resolution of local sustainability issues and suggests ways in which each project's sustainability 'signature' or profile could be improved.



The appraisal process and the companion 'user guide' to its application will be an end in themselves. However, they will also be a practical means of developing a regionally-held body of evidence about what:

- good practice actually is and where it exists
- is necessary to turn good practice into common practice
- issues are common across the South West
- issues are locality specific
- processes and delivery methods work well
- needs changing, or requires further investigation in order for more sustainable, integrated land use to become mainstream.

The SW Regional Observatory will hold case study information in a web-accessible database from spring 2005. This database could be added to by individual area-based projects as they complete their own appraisal. Material could be quality controlled by the Forum, acting as a gatekeeper and co-ordinator for further case studies and development of the new regional evidence base.

## **2 The Dorset Heathland projects**

### **2.1 About the "Hardy's Egdon Heath" and "Urban Heaths LIFE" projects**

Appropriate management of Dorset's unique complex of lowland heathland has been an issue of concern for at least the last 3 decades. Over this time public sector and NGO partnerships have developed to jointly manage this valuable resource. Estimates in 1978 suggested that only around 15% of the original heathland area catalogued in 1811 remained. Scrub encroachment and development pressures have further reduced and fragmented the total area remaining. Today, 95% of the open heathland sites are designated as SSSI. The populations of Dorchester, Poole/Bournemouth and smaller settlements like Wareham, Ferndown and Wimbourne use the project area for recreation and leisure, in varying degrees. In addition, visitors primarily from the South East and London account for the majority of summer and weekend visitors to the area. The long-standing heathland restoration efforts were given a substantial boost in 2000 when English Nature were awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) on behalf of the local partnership, to carry out a programme of restoration works over a 5 year period to early 2005. A complementary bid for EU LIFE-Nature funding for the heaths in and around the conurbation (Urban Heaths Life Project or UHLP) with a focus on public outreach and working with local communities was also successful. It is important to appreciate that the both the HLF and LIFE-nature grant awards did not initiate restoration efforts, but considerably helped to extend and speed up progress of an existing, shared programme of work.

The English Nature led, Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) project was named “Hardy’s Egdon Heath” to celebrate and raise awareness of the close relationship between national biodiversity interest and the important literary and cultural aspects of the Dorset heathlands. The project built on existing management aspirations for the National Nature Reserves (NNR), numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and candidate Special Areas for Conservation (SAC) sites and developed these into a unified bid for Heritage Lottery funding under the EN block bid “Tomorrow’s Heathland Heritage”. This block bid comprised at least one heathland project in virtually every English region. The Dorset bid was the most substantial in terms of both size and cost, but even then it had to be curtailed to match HLF funding provision at the time. This meant that critical aspects such as reversion from farmland to heathland were not included in the bid, but it nevertheless forms part of the wider partnership’s on-going programme of work for land outside of the project area, e.g. Hartland Moor and Sunnyside near Stoborough. Once approval for the block HLF bid was confirmed, a detailed business plan for the Hardy’s Egdon Heath (HEH) project was developed to restore and rehabilitate 7,000 hectares of fragmented Dorset heathland immortalised in Thomas Hardy’s novel *The return of the Native*. This featured the fictional Egdon Heath, which was based on the now fragmented but once extensive tract of lowland dry and wet heaths and mires stretching from east of Dorchester and around Poole, equating to the joint Character Area No 135 “Dorset Heaths”. The fact that substantial grant-in-aid was the most effective way of addressing management needs amply demonstrates that ring-fencing heathland with special designations is insufficient to safeguard them, i.e. effectively resourced, area-wide management regimes are essential for the long term conservation and enhancement of lowland heath environments.

The HLF funding for the HEH project area is being used to clear and manage a range of sites from the urban fringes of Poole and Bournemouth to more remote rural areas to the north and west of the conurbation. In order to make the bid for funding manageable and achievable, the county partnership forum took the decision to develop a parallel bid for LIFE funding that would complement these management and restoration works<sup>1</sup> (see <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/life/>). The LIFE bid comprised a detailed outline of 33 project actions that together combat the urban pressures on heaths within the following headline objectives:

- Improve ability to prevent and tackle heathland fires
- Prevent the abuse of heathland through improved education
- Promote local community support for heathland conservation
- Provide web-based, integrated information to communicate the project to stakeholders

These objectives and actions are centred on the heaths identified on the project map but are not confined to them. UHLP activities require a level of collaborative working by

<sup>1</sup> <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/life/> gives full details about the purpose of this funding stream available under Framework 6: the Sixth Action Programme for the Environment – 2000 to 2004



partners which was not required for the HEH project, but which has strengthened the working of the Heathland Forum as a whole. It is important to view the separate HEH and UHLP bids as two halves of a whole. The map above illustrates the fragmented nature of the heathland complex (green areas) covered by both projects, although the UHLP focus is more concentrated on specific sites fringing Poole and Bournemouth.

HLF and LIFE funding appeared at a convenient time for the Dorset Heathland Forum. All of the local partners had wanted to “do the right thing” since the Forum’s establishment in 1989, but securing adequate funding to accelerate restoration works was the main problem. The HLF and LIFE awards unlocked the substantial financial support needed to enable a ‘belt and braces’ approach to heathland management. It also reinforced local commitment to get things done as effectively as possible.

The HLF funding enabled considerable capital works for clearance of self-seeded scrub, bracken and trees so that the lowland heath flora can re-generate naturally in selective areas. Restoration of typical heathland plant associations will enable valued animal populations to stabilise and hopefully increase. Funding has also been used to help establish appropriate, on-going management regimes, including the re-introduction of cattle and horse grazing to specific wet heath areas. The challenge facing the HEH project is how to ensure appropriate management into the longer term, once the HLF monies come to an end in 2005, and if possible, how to extend and enlarge the heathland sites to ensure long term viability of the protected, internationally important habitats through more widespread habitat creation. This longer term goal does not aim to turn the clock back and recreate the landscape of the early 19th century, but seeks to develop a modern heathland landscape comprising a mosaic of ecologically viable open heath and woodland habitats able to supply a range of goods and services that meet local needs.

**The main objectives of the HEH project are to:**

- Contribute to the achievement of nationally agreed Biodiversity Action Plan associated with four priority habitats and sixteen priority species, and government international obligations concerning lowland heath;
- Restore to active management and secure the future viability of 7000 ha of lowland heath (12% of national target) through a programme including the removal of scrub and bracken clearance (1000ha) and the reintroduction of restorative grazing on 1500ha;
- Reduce fragmentation of heathland by re-creating 94ha of lowland heath (2% of the national BAP target) from established woodland;
- Secure populations of many typical and scarce species, including a number of key BAP species;
- Increase local community support, involvement and appreciation of the local heathland heritage by enhancing local access to selected heritage sites;
- Restore the original setting of heathland ancient monuments.

## **2.2 Sustainability and the HEH and UHLP**

The HLF funding criteria cover social and environmental aspects. The HLF are especially keen to encourage access to areas by those who are disabled or currently socially excluded. The criteria do not directly or explicitly require funding bids to meet sustainable development objectives of any kind, although several facets of sustainability are integral to HLF aims. However, the omission in the criteria that projects should seek to deliberately achieve the integration of HLF objectives means that the opportunities to use HLF monies to substantially increase sustainability are perhaps being missed.

In contrast to the HLF, the LIFE III programme makes direct reference to sustainability, stating that as “the framework of sustainable development, LIFE should contribute to the implementation, development and enhancement of the Community environmental policy and legislation as well as the integration of the environment into other EU policies. LIFE should also lead [to] new solutions facing EU environmental problems being explored”. More specifically, LIFE-Nature funding for the Dorset heathlands has as its specific objective “to contribute to the implementation of Community nature protection legislation: the ‘Birds’ Directive (79/409/EEC) and the ‘Habitats’ Directive (92/43/EEC), and in particular the establishment of the ‘Natura 2000’ network for the in situ management and conservation of Europe's most remarkable fauna and flora species and habitats”, which unsurprisingly includes heathland.

Commendably, English Nature commissioned an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the HEH project in its first year of implementation. This was not a requirement of HLF funding but EN saw this as an essential aspect for the project. The EIA examined the impacts the project may have on the local area, including an initial examination of the project's carbon emissions and ways of reducing these.

The main HLF bid document made no direct reference to sustainability, except in relation to the need for long term sustainable management of the area in terms of appropriate, economically viable management practices. The bid covered social, economic and environmental benefits of the proposals as separate sections and did not seek to explain how these benefits could be integrated to optimize them.

The outcome of the HLF funded project was described as the enhancement and sustainment of the heathland's biodiversity in ways that would "enhance the wider aesthetic and environmental value of south east Dorset for the benefit of the community, visiting tourists and therefore the local economy". However, what the bid did not explain, primarily because the HLF did not explicitly require it, was how boosting the local tourism economy and related businesses could help towards securing the long-term management of the heathlands. Thus the key challenge that the sustainability appraisal addressed was how to more closely link these activities to make them mutually supportive and reinforcing into the future.

### **3 The sustainability appraisal process**

A detailed analysis and critique of the developing appraisal process itself is given in an overarching report arising from each of the initial appraisal case studies undertaken to date. The appraisal process comprises 4 main stages from preparation to local dissemination, summarised in Box 1 on page 13 for information.

Forum for the Future are compiling the lessons learnt from individual case studies for wider dissemination across the SW region as a whole so that good practice can be understood, articulated and spread. Secondly, greater understanding about the barriers to good practice and the scale at which these need to be resolved, by whom and how, will also develop from the case studies to inform policy development and decision-making at local and strategic.

## Box 1 The sustainability appraisal process

**Stage 1** – Work with the project team/project officer to establish the scope of the project and baseline data and information to develop a summary ‘profile’ of the current ‘state’ of the project area. This provides a referenced set of information that characterizes the area in terms of socio-economic and environmental assets. This characterisation is done for each of 5 types of capital assets (their stock and flows) rather than simply social, economic and environmental:

**Natural** (climate and air, soils, water, biodiversity, landscape character, minerals and non renewables)

**Human** (employment and skills base, education, training opportunities, health and well-being)

**Social** (leadership and trust, community cohesion and sense of place, structures and institutions promoting good stewardship of land and resources, stakeholder processes)

**Manufactured** (traffic, transport and access, processes and waste arisings, energy production and consumption, built heritage and buildings, archaeology)

**Financial** (primarily types of public investment in the area and how these monies complement or work against each other)

**Stage 2** – Work with the project team to identify partner organization representatives and key players who should be invited to take part in the appraisal workshop or discussion process so that specialist knowledge of all the capital assets helps to shape the debate about state of the assets, trends for change, issues/problems and how these have or are being resolved.

**Stage 3** – Arrange a one day, participative workshop with project partners to work through the appraisal process, to discuss issues and project impacts by answering a sequence of questions for each capital asset in turn. These are:

- what sustainability issues/problems need addressing within the project area?
- how has the project helped to address these issues to date?
- How should project success in addressing these sustainability issues be measured?
- What rating (using CPA system – see Annex A) should be assigned to project performance to date?
- What would “good” look like in 10-20yrs time i.e. how do people want the project to develop to help achieve greater sustainability through more integrated land use and management across the project area.

Aspects covered in these questions include the range of land uses within the project area (in terms of land and catchment units), the physical management of the land, who is involved, how this is planned for and funded, how structures and institutions responsible for good stewardship of the environment, landscape and biodiversity work together and with stakeholders (lines of communications, etc) and how effective stakeholder processes. All of the discussion is focused around what works well, what could be improved and how improvements could be made.

**Stage 4** – Following the workshop, develop a draft report and sustainability profile of the project in relation to each of the 5 capitals and their respective assets for further consultation with key partners and specialists, etc. Once comments and views on the draft have been gathered in, a second version is circulated for final comments. This second version will provide an agreed, overall appraisal rating, areas for future action to improve the project’s sustainability performance. This will include the key learnings from the appraisal process about what is working well, how issues were resolved and what barriers need tackling to achieve further success.

### 3.1 Project team interview

At an inception meeting to begin the appraisal process, the English Nature project team gave information about the background to the project, its objectives, structure, staffing and operations. This meeting was extremely useful in yielding the following information and insights about the HEH project.

- a) The main sources of funding available for heathland clearance and restoration were Countryside Stewardship (Defra) and EN's own Management Agreements for SSSI landowners. As both of these schemes are voluntary with limited funding, they had to be targeted very carefully, but could not achieve the necessary magnitude and extent of change that HLF funding has done.
- b) A conscious decision to split bids for funding between the HLF and LIFE proposals was made by local partners in order to keep the proposals manageable and easier to co-ordinate. The downside of splitting the package into two separate projects for funding purposes was that each proposal had to be tailored to different funding criteria, making it less easy to treat the projects as a single geographical entity with a shared purpose and objectives. The LIFE funded urban heathland project bid had a far greater emphasis on outreach, education and social inclusion. The DETR (now Defra) also supported the LIFE bid since it was led by Dorset County Council and involved the local police and fire authorities as part of a ground-breaking, holistic initiative working with local communities to combat arson and vandalism in the urban fringe.
- c) The HEH project focused on capital works so that on-going maintenance would become the key requirement once funding had been used. There is considerable scope to further extend the open heathland sites and reverse fragmentation if much of the commercial forestry areas were removed, but it is not clear what sustainability impacts this might have.
- d) Heathland management costs for 'rural' areas amount to some £50/ha whereas the costs rise to around £600-£700/ha on the urban fringe because of the need to employ wardens. Wardens work closely with the local police authority and as such provide a valuable interface between the authority and local community, possibly also helping to reduce policing costs in these areas.
- e) All of the grant-in-aid secured for capital works has gone towards paying local contractors to carry out clearance, fencing, etc, thus the money has gone straight into the local economy. Improvements to the heathland landscape arising from grant-in-aid have also been beneficial to the local tourist economy, although this is very difficult to quantify. The literary connections (Thomas Hardy and T.E.Lawrence) are a big pull factor for the heath. Other aspects important to visitors are the archaeological and historic remains found on the heathland. Summer traffic can be very heavy at times due to tourists.
- f) Detailed botanical site information from the 1930's to the Pearman report of 1994 provide robust evidence of change and deterioration in heathland habitat and condition, even in sites protected by designations, due to lack of appropriate management. The economic value of heathlands has declined over time so that today there is little direct financial value in managing them, rather, they are a drain on owners resources in direct

monetary terms. This, coupled with the decline in timber value in recent years makes it hard for even the Forestry Commission to make managing a woodland – heathland mosaic pay its way. Where the FC retains land under lease there are real constraints in timber removal, making it harder to get the right heathland/woodland balance.

- g)** Other land ownership issues concern private land managed for grass and maize. Private land owners are encouraged to enter land into Countryside Stewardship agreements to achieve less intensive regimes and revert to heath where possible. [This is where the Dorset heathland projects link with the Purbeck Biodiversity case study]. However, CSS monies have not always been a sufficient financial incentive and it remains to be seen whether the new Environmental Stewardship Scheme from April 2005 will be any different in this respect. The agricultural recession has actually helped to keep marginal farmland under more sympathetic management. The project area is dominated by large estates for which the planning system is the main restraint to commercial development. Also, the National Trust is a major landowner with an inherently sustainable approach to land use and land management.
- h)** Water quality is not a priority issue for the heathlands as they drain into the main watercourses and River Frome rather than receive water from it. Agricultural pollutants appear to have declined markedly since over the last 3 decades as a result of changes in land ownership and local farming practice. However, urban run-off is causing enrichment to fen vegetation in some areas rather than more desirable heathland mires. The Forestry Commission, as a local landowner, has bid to government for funding to restore more complexes on land it manages in the county, e.g. Morden Mire.
- i)** Fragmentation of habitat is the biggest issue local conservationists have to deal with. Grant funding has enabled the ‘easy wins’ to be achieved, doing more will be much harder. Although loss of heath to new housing has greatly slowed, the current market has led to further infill and intensification of residential use. This impacts on vulnerable species such as Nightjars and other ground-nesting birds arising from local recreational use, but there are few alternative areas for residents, thus there are no easy trade-offs. It is questionable whether the county Structure Plan and Local Plans give sufficient strategic consideration to the type and location on infill development, especially how such development could help regenerate more deprived urban and former industrial areas.
- j)** Heathland clearance through felling and scrub removal generates considerable waste material that is currently left in-situ, except for the urban heath sites where it is a fire hazard and removal/disposal is an extra cost of management. All of this waste material has potential as a biomass fuel, particularly from broad-leave stands. A feasibility study explored wood fuel from the sites for a proposed sports centre but the local planning committee timidly vetoed the project on the mistaken assumption that a CHP project of this nature was too risky. Instead, a conventional heating system was procured in line with the shortsighted local procurement policy to replace like with like. The Forestry Commission currently leave waste wood and debris to rot in-situ<sup>2</sup>. More work is necessary to identify how this material can be profitably used in the local area.

<sup>2</sup> A proportion of waste from thinning/brushing in conifer stands must be left in-situ to replenish humic soil content.



- k) It is proving difficult to achieve consensus with local residents and landowners in urban some urban fringe areas about best ways of managing the heathland, e.g. some people don't want trees removed or fences put up, they don't want to see any changes. What isn't clear is whether these views are coming from people who've moved to the area in recent years or from longer-term residents. However, this suggests that participative processes with stakeholders need to be revised and improved to bring together management needs and local peoples' heathland values. All too often the skills required for such processes are under rated and insufficient time is allocated. Unfortunately the specifically targeted and time limited nature of current funding streams can make this unavoidable.

### 3.2 The appraisal workshop

The Dorset Heathlands workshop was the first case study event to trial the new appraisal process outlined in Box 1 above. The format centred on 'live' editing and completion of the database entries to make development of the record as easy as possible and demonstrate how the information could be structured, updated and used. The workshop's original focus was the HEH project alone, but as the discussion with and between participants developed it quickly became apparent that it would be far more useful to consider the HEH and UHL projects as two halves of a whole, i.e. it was only funding constraints that had resulted in two separate projects developing in parallel. The Holton Lee Trust<sup>3</sup> generously provided Faith House as the main venue for the event, located in a tranquil heathland setting.

Out of the 15 people invited a total of 11 came on the day, all of whom were primarily concerned with practical action on the ground rather than a strategic overview of the projects' aims and objectives. During the discussion it transpired that 2 participants with a key stake in heathland management and conservation were unfamiliar with either the HEH or UHL projects.

The event was chaired by Forum's Director of Land Use and Resources, working closely with a professional facilitator to jointly manage each session, record and facilitate the discussion. Participants were split into 2 groups and each group was helped to work through different capital assets to answer the appraisal questions as follows in order to develop the two projects' joint sustainability appraisal profile at Figure 2:

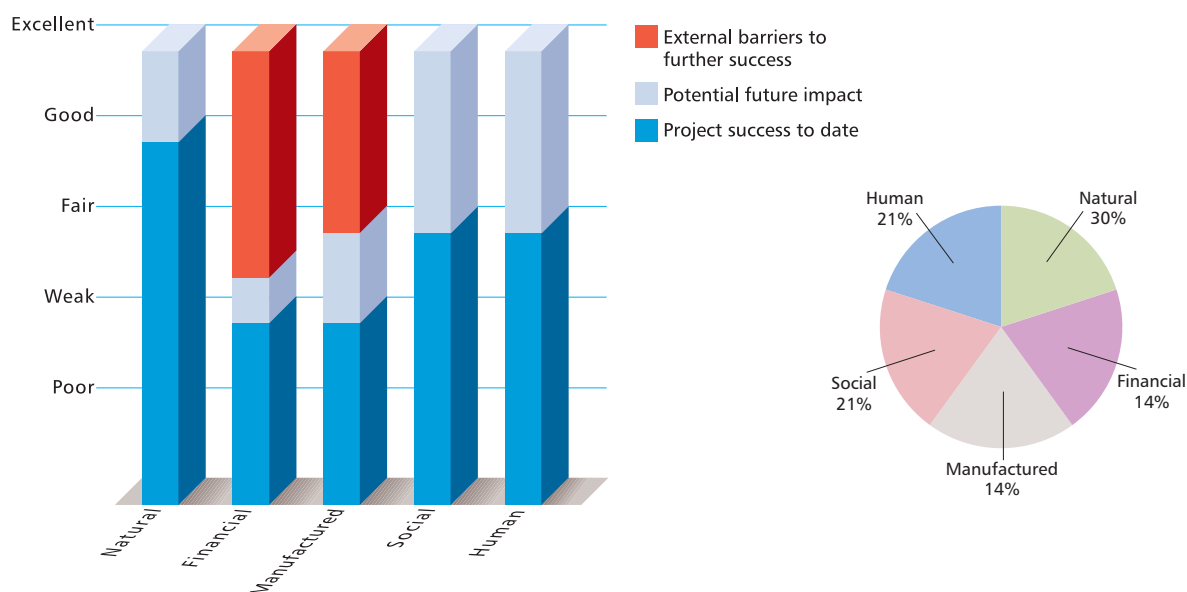
- what sustainability issues/problems need addressing within the project area?
- how has the project helped to address these issues to date?
- How should project success in addressing these sustainability issues be measured?
- What rating (using CPA system – see Annex B) should be assigned to project performance to date for each of the 5 capitals?
- What would "good" look like in 10-20yrs time i.e. how do people want the project to develop to help achieve greater sustainability through more integrated land use and management across the project area.

<sup>3</sup> The Holton Lee charitable trust was established to provide much needed facilities for disabled people, their carers and families – to aid recovery from illness or to simply enjoy being close to nature and open spaces on a site with appropriate access and facilities to maximise this enjoyment. See <http://www.holtonlee.co.uk/>

It soon became obvious that people were keen to follow the process through but lack of familiarity made progress very slow at first. Many participants were also reluctant to proffer views and perceptions about issues that were outside of their professional remit, e.g. nature conservation professionals were hesitant in describing traffic pressures and how the Local Transport Plan covered demand management in relation to heathland areas. In contrast, almost everyone had strong views about stakeholder processes and local leadership issues. Because of lack of time to work through and complete responses for 4 of the capitals the database report was emailed to all participants for further input and comments, following the inclusions of the discussion points after the workshop. The response was limited but detailed enough to enable the Forum to collate all comments and complete the appraisal. Full details are given at Annex C.

## 4 Measuring and increasing project success

**Figure 2: Dorset Heaths: combined sustainability performance of HLF and LIFE funded projects in 2004**



These charts illustrate the current, combined sustainability profile for the Dorset Heathland projects as a result of the appraisal workshop and subsequent comments and information from attendees. The dominance of natural capital is probably a reflection of the overriding nature conservation objectives. Improving on each of the four under-performing capitals to reach the suggested sustainability benchmark of “good” should be fairly easy to do without affecting natural capital achievements. The table on the following pages suggests how this could be done.

Capital	SD Rating	Issues to be tackled, further opportunities to be realised	Actions required and timing	Who should do this?
Social	Fair	<p>Local political leaders need to be made more accountable for protecting and securing the international status of the heathland through adequate policies and financial provision for long term management.</p> <p>The Dorset Heathland Forum could be more outward facing to ensure that synergies are realised with county recreation, health, transport, planning and other sectoral strategies.</p> <p>Similarly, the HEH project could be more pro-active in working with local groups and communities to help them get more direct benefits from the heathland as part of on-going management plans.</p> <p>This includes creating much greater understanding about the heathland as a cultural asset.</p> <p>There appears to be some confusion as to whom are the stakeholders for the heathland area and what are existing stakeholder processes.</p>	<p>Review how local political leaders and parties are involved in discussions and plans for the heathland. Do they see the area as an asset or a drain on resources? Does the Heathland Forum have a strategy for ensuring that local political leaders become more involved in how the heathland area is used sustainably to its full potential?</p> <p>Review the Forum's role, remit and ways of working to ensure that all necessary linkages are made and that related strategies take on board aspects of heathland management in appropriate ways.</p> <p>Extend the Urban Heaths LIFE survey of local residents to cover all of the heathland areas so that annual survey data about local views and aspirations informs how information about the heath and projects to manage it are communicated to local users.</p> <p>Work with local tourist offices and business to help them develop how they market the heathlands as part of the areas's attractions.</p> <p>Carry out an up to date stakeholder mapping exercise to establish all types of stakeholders, their needs and aspirations for the project areas, both now and in the long term; this will help develop the vision for the area and the strategy and management plans that need to flow from it.</p>	

Capital	SD Rating	Issues to be tackled, further opportunities to be realised	Actions required and timing	Who should do this?
Human	Fair	<p>The HEH project has been extremely successful in increasing security in employment/contract opportunities (grazing and capital works) to the area.</p> <p>However, more could be done to secure site management through training in types and timing of operations to protect both biodiversity and historic interest.</p> <p>More could be done with schools, colleges and local interest groups to encourage increased and appropriate use of the project area for educational purposes beyond nature conservation, e.g. literature, art and history.</p> <p>The Holton Lee Trust's approach to combining heathland management with health and well-being merits consideration for wider adoption.</p>	<p>Develop advice to contractors that covers all disciplines and interests, i.e. develop specifications and standards that meet the requirements of the proposed inter-disciplinary site management plans.</p> <p>Work with training providers and site wardens to offer on site advice to contractors about how to carry out operations to minimise adverse impacts to flora, fauna, soils, groundwater and archaeological/historic features.</p> <p>Develop an education programme for all local schools to engage with. This could be done in conjunction with local training and transport providers, higher education establishments and history and arts societies. Is there an unmet need for visiting schools and students – could a combined tourist and education centre meet these needs?</p> <p>Work with Holton Lee and health care providers to increase the use of appropriate heathland areas by those with learning difficulties, access problems and those recovering from long term or debilitating illness.</p>	
Natural	Good	<p>The Dorset heaths appear to lack a shared long term vision and overall plan for multiple land use and resource protection.</p>	<p>Work to bring together all heathland owners, users and managers to formally agree a long term strategy and management plan for all of the existing heathland sites. Also, work with this group to develop/broker a sustainable, integrated land use vision for the area for 2050. Both the vision and management plans could draw on the 2004 AONB Management Plan and developing Action Plan which have resulted from an extensive consultation exercise. Even if heavily idealised, this approach help focus debate on how to fund sustainable exploitation of the areas natural wealth for social and economic benefit.</p>	

Capital	SD Rating	Issues to be tackled, further opportunities to be realised	Actions required and timing	Who should do this?
Manufactured	Weak	<p>Heavy seasonal visitor traffic causes nitrogen enrichment of vulnerable areas of heathland vegetation and may also impact on heathland fauna.</p> <p>Waste arisings from heathland sites are an asset currently going to waste.</p> <p>Use of heavy machinery and air-borne spraying of bracken with ASULAM are energy hungry activities that should be avoided as far as possible. On a few selected, appropriate sites more traditional methods of management using volunteers would also help to involve local people taking an active part in the upkeep of their local heritage and biodiversity.</p>	<p>Ensure that traffic demand management and transport interchange policies are enforced as part of the Local Transport Plan area/zonal strategies that cover the heathland; or should the heathland have its own area-wide strategy cross-referenced to the county-wide strategy for Dorset?</p> <p>EN, the FC and National Trust should investigate whether they can re-fit their own local offices with wood fuel systems as an example to the local planners. Local landowners seeking an outlet for their own timber waste could also be involved with a view to setting up a local arm of the SW wood fuels group. Possible funding for such an enterprise should also be investigated either via the Rural Enterprise Scheme, or as a potential project for the region's wood fuel strategy action plan (as this takes shape).</p> <p>The potential for cutting and composting bracken rather than spraying it should be seriously investigated. Also, more effort should be made in exploring the potential for volunteer help with the various "Friends of" societies and local BTCV and Groundwork groups in partnership with the Primary Care Trust and Local Strategic Partnership for a minority of specific sites where this would be feasible.</p>	

Capital	SD Rating	Issues to be tackled, further opportunities to be realised	Actions required and timing	Who should do this?
Financial	Weak	<p>The projects have achieved good value for money so far in relation to capital works, practical clearance and management activities, and important aspects of social and human capital, e.g. employment of local rangers resulting in cost savings to local Police and Fire services through reduction of anti-social behaviour and arson.</p> <p>However, more could be done to try and bring heathland management into the local economy through tourism, education, local product and health care links. This may well help to improve the long term viability of project activities currently under threat given the need to apply for further funding to continue restoration through further clearance and re-introduction of appropriate grazing regimes.</p>	<p>A strategy and business plan to attract new and secure funding and revenues is needed; this should be developed out of the marketing plan suggested above.</p> <p>The new business plan should incorporate, or at least consider the ideas discussed in the workshop and subsequent exchange of comments, for developing local income streams not subject to time-limited agreements. This would involve serious discussions with the Dorset Heathland Forum and local council members.</p>	<p>Heathland Forum to broker ideas with local authority officers and members.</p>

## Overview of sustainability profile

Both projects have achieved a great deal since they were first set up. However, since then sustainable development has risen up the political and policy agenda. The joint sustainability profile for the projects suggests that there is further scope for each to widen their reach and influence on the locality. There is obviously much potential for greater use of the heathland sites by the local population in ways that would help manage the areas in the longer term, but this will take a concerted, shared effort and a lot of hard work. Bringing in consultants to advise may not be the best approach. It may be more productive to use facilitators to work through those issues of greatest concern (such as public access, tree removal and restoration of grazing) and debate with all local stakeholders, including local elected members and all kinds of conservatists, professional and amateur, involved in shaping the area's future.

The LIFE funded survey suggests that only a small proportion of local people really understand what heathland is although they value it as a local open space. Those with little or no understanding cannot be expected to value or fully appreciate the huge

efforts being made to conserve this internationally important resource. The heathland's historic interest seems to be as poorly understood as its great biodiversity interest, yet the two are co-dependant on each other. There appears to be considerable potential for the heathland to pay its way in terms of biomass for renewable energy development and through more direct links to tourism revenue through local "branding". Commercially composted bracken may be another potential income stream. Some form of marketing plan such as a marketing audit and SWOT analysis could be developed with local businesses to explore and map out ways to help realise some of this potential (see <http://www.it-analysis.com/article.php?articleid=1251> for further advice). This could be based and build on the suggested stakeholder mapping exercise recommended under Social Capital above. Similarly, the heathland has potential for greater educational and health related use in ways that could help assist management. The marketing plan should also take these aspects into account so that local people are put at the centre of efforts to conserve "their" resource.

## 'Learnings' for wider dissemination

Sectoral silos at the local level can be just as much a barrier to increased sustainability as those at regional and national level. Much can be done to achieve joined-up action on the ground with the right links in local management plans and policies, for example a standard approach to inter-disciplinary site plans that several organisations can sign up to. This also helps avoid problems with local contractors and may even save some time and effort if activities can be jointly planned to take place at a time convenient for more than one purpose.

People need to be placed at the centre of efforts to successfully conserve and enhance a cultural, semi-natural resource such as heathland. Effective communication and outreach may be expensive but police, fire and health service cost-savings will ultimately result, making such efforts cost-effective for society as a whole.

Lateral-thinking isn't easy and needs fostering. County-wide groups can do much to foster the right links between different sectors and organisations by making sure that their membership adequately reflects the views of others and that lines of communication ensure that objectives are shared across strategies.

Current funding sources may not overlap but there is often little complementarity in their funding criteria and objectives, making it difficult for local projects to secure adequate financial support without splitting and tailoring activities to meet disparate bureaucratic objectives. To ensure long-term integrity, project documentation, team structure and communications are best dealt with as a single whole in operational terms. Information can then be pulled out to bid to various funders as and when necessary.

## 5 Conclusions and recommendations

The following table summarises immediate feedback from the workshop on 22nd April. An additional comment made was that more information about the process (steps involved, etc) in advance would be helpful.

Evolution form questions	1 Not easy	2	3	4	5	6 Very easy
<b>1</b> How easy was it to understand and use this process?		<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	
	1 No	2	3	4	5	6 Yes
<b>2</b> Did you feel able to express and contribute your views?			<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	1 Very little	2	3	4	5	6 Very much
<b>3</b> To what extent do you feel this workshop has helped you to see how the project could deliver more sustainable outcomes?		<b>1</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	
	1 Not well	2	3	4	5	6 Very well
<b>4</b> How well do you feel this workshop was organised and managed?					<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>

*NB 2 participants had to leave just before the end and were unable to complete an evaluation form*

The appraisal workshop and subsequent comments have thrown up some interesting information about the Dorset heathland projects. Many of the practical aspects of site management have been very successful but there is obviously much potential for increasing the sustainability of the approach taken to date. However, the findings of the appraisal are limited in that not all members the project partnerships took part. It is recommended that:

- R1** Irrespective of funding mechanisms and grant scheme conditions, the Dorset heathlands perhaps ought to be presented to all partners, stakeholders and potential funders as a single entity. Even if this was the original intention, it has appears to have dissipated over time and two project identities have evolved, making it more difficult to integrate activities at the local level.
- R2** There is a real and urgent need to expose, more clearly, what the value of heathland in Dorset is for people living close to it. It would then be easier to work at finding ways and means of keeping it. Professional conservationists' views and assumptions about needing to 'save and maintain Dorset heathland' do not seem to be strongly enough connected to widely held understandings about why local people and businesses value the heaths. What would local people miss or lose out on if the resource disappeared? Thus the HLF project team could take a far more consumer-based approach to working with local



stakeholders. A joint HLF/LIFE project communications strategy for stakeholder engagement would help, especially if it covered the entire heathland complex. To succeed, this strategy would need to be actively supported and implemented by each project partner.

- R3** In view of the first 2 recommendations, the project steering groups and Dorset Heathland Forum could use this evaluation to help revise their actions plans and business case for future funding to ensure that the heathland is treated as a single entity in terms of management and project team programmes of work. Although this may have been the original goal it seems to have dissipated over time and two separate project identities have evolved.
- R4** The appraisal's baseline data could be further developed and added to over the coming year as an integral part of project management. A second workshop event or partnership survey could be carried out to establish how far things have moved on or to identify where further action is needed to widen the project's method of working and objectives. This also applies to the suggested indicators for helping to quantitatively measure project success. The SW Regional Observatory and Local Authority and agency partners should be able to progress these aspects fairly rapidly between them.
- R5** A follow-up workshop or survey would help to ensure that more project partners take part and that more senior, or strategic views are incorporated into the appraisal. This will either confirm earlier findings or present a more balanced picture of activities and lines of communication.
- R6** To get the most out of it and to ensure that local sustainability is improved on, on an on-going basis, the appraisal process could be made an integral part of Dorset heathland management. Exactly how this is done requires careful consideration, most probably by the Dorset Heathland Forum. One advantage of making this kind of more formal commitment to sustainability is that it should be easier to supply evidence for future funding bids for capital works and to track the impact of a range of local policies.
- R7** The project partnership(s) could seriously consider investigating ways of obtaining local income for routine heathland maintenance/on-going management with local elected members, local authority officers and local businesses as discussed at the workshop, in order to improve long term financial security.

## 6 References

<http://www.countryside.gov.uk/> for countryside character area information.

<http://www.dorsetcc.gov.uk/> for local statistics on population, and information on Structure Plan, Minerals Plan and Waste

<http://www.english-nature.org.uk> for information about the Dorset Heaths Natural Area

Dorset AONB Partnership. Dorset AONB Management Plan (2004) Dorset County Council

English Nature. Hardy's Egdon Heath: Return of the Native Dorset Heathland – Stage 2 of the Dorset Partners' bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (2000)

English Nature. Hardy's Egdon Heath Project: Environmental Assessment (2001)

English Nature. State of the Lowlands report, (2004)

English Nature. Research Report No. 580 'The ecological effects of diffuse air pollution from road transport' (1987)

English Nature. Research Report No. 178 'The significance of secondary effects from road and road transport on nature conservation' (199?)

Terence O'Rourke. Hardy's Egdon Heath Project: A development plan for the return of Dorset's Heathland (2004). English Nature

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/> for information on Heritage Lottery funding objectives and criteria

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/life/index.htm>

<http://www.purbeck.gov.uk/index/index.asp> for information on Wareham and its hinterland

Urban Heaths Partnership. Public perceptions of heathland in Dorset, final report (2003). Prepared by Atlantic Consultants.

## Annex A: Sustainability appraisal matrix

<b>Capital assets for defined area</b>	<b>Describe</b> Use existing baseline information and identify gaps in knowledge	<b>Issues</b> List the sustainability issues affecting each asset	<b>Measure of success</b> Use existing and/or new indicators	<b>Success rating</b> Area stakeholders give qualitative score for each 'capital', from Undermining to Excellent	<b>Future success</b> What would 'good' look like for these assets in 10–20 years' time?
<b>Natural</b> Biodiversity Landscape character Soils Water Air and climate Minerals and other non-renewables					
<b>Human</b> Employment and skills base Education and training Health and well-being					
<b>Social</b> Leadership and trust Community cohesion and sense of place Stakeholder networks and processes Institutions conserving the land					
<b>Manufactured</b> Archaeology Buildings and built heritage Transport infrastructure, traffic and access networks Processes and waste arisings Energy production and consumption					
<b>Financial</b> Public funding eg for CAP or rural regeneration Local authority expenditure Conservation funding Other (such as match funding)					

## Annex B: CPA criteria adapted for the appraisal

These criteria were adapted by the Forum for the Future from the Audit Commission's criteria for Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) which were developed to assess local authority service delivery.

Sustainability evaluation criteria	Natural capital	Human capital	Social capital	M'factured capital	Financial capital
<b>Excellent:</b> the initiative is making a close to optimal contribution to sustainable development across the project area.					
<b>Good:</b> the initiative is making a significant positive contribution to area-wide sustainability					
<b>Fair:</b> the initiative is making some direct or significant indirect contribution to sustainability across the project area					
<b>Weak:</b> The initiative does little to contribute to area-wide sustainability and there are missed opportunities					
<b>Poor:</b> The initiative's activities are limited or not relevant, so do not contribute to area-wide sustainability					
<b>Undermining:</b> The initiative's activities significantly undermine area-wide sustainability					

## Annex C: Workshop findings

### C1 Natural Capital

Natural capital – is the basis of life itself, it is the stock or flow of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, sinks that deal with wastes, and processes that regulate the climate, e.g. use renewable resources only from well-managed and restorative ecosystems.

#### Baseline information

There was some dispute about aspects of the baseline data, such as what was meant by favourable condition of SSSIs, that were subsequently resolved through the editing process (see database report in Annex for details).

## Sustainability issues

- open heathland areas have declined in recent decades whilst self-seeded woodland and scrub have increased
- urban expansion is much reduced, but can still be an issue in some localities.
- There is no locally agreed long -term 'master plan' or landscape vision for the project area
- tree clearance has met with resistance on specific sites as being too radical, suggesting that preservation of the status quo is preferred locally, even amongst some conservationists.
- fragmentation of habitat leading to unviable populations of plants and animals and, ultimately, species loss
- poor habitat condition, which can put all species at risk.
- poor public understanding about what heathland is and how it needs to be managed, i.e. what conservation actually means. The LIFE funded public opinion survey for October 2003 is highly revealing, showing that 79% of those locals surveyed think that heathland is a natural landscape that doesn't need to be sustained/managed by man. This suggests that increasing public understanding needs to be a primary goal or priority (see social capital).
- LBAP targets do not necessarily relate back to national BAP targets, i.e. lack of co-ordination results in some tension where targets for individual species and habitats appear to be in conflict, also it is not clear to local staff how to measure some of the targets.
- Water quality issues are mostly confined to the main Frome watercourse, where nutrient enrichment is a problem affecting fen/mire vegetation. Sources are household sewage and agricultural inputs from the upper, arable part of the catchment.
- localised air quality issues arising from seasonal tourist traffic causing enrichment of roadside vegetation, resulting in reduced species diversity.
- Wetter winters and more frequent stormy weather events arising from climate change will limit the "management tools" currently used. In particular, controlled burning of over-mature vegetation probably won't be possible within the current permitted window of November to March. This could lead to a build up of combustible material to result in more intense wild fires threatening wildlife, property and people. Furthermore, hotter and drier summers resulting from climate change will also increase the risk of fire, and the cost of insuring against it. Climate change will also influence species range and distribution.
- Some heathland soils have been capped and 'lost' to development in recent years.
- There are still significant reserves of ball clay under the Poole Basin. Should Government policy decide that these are important for the country this will put pressure on the heathland resource.

## Project impacts – success to date:

There is much restored functionality on most of the heathland sites, with improved landscape integrity and improved condition of key landscape elements and features in most places, but there is no clear and widely owned vision for the area's landscape as a whole amongst the project partners, although the current heathland strategy could be developed into one. In keeping with the primary aim of the HLF funded area, larger more viable heathland blocks have been restored, but these remain 'fragments' that need connecting up to increase species/habitat viability in the longer term. Barriers to reversing fragmentation are other land uses (housing, communications infrastructure, forestry and farming). Possibilities for creating larger blocks and corridors were investigated via the county Heathland Re-creation Strategy and further developed by the Heathland Forum, directly linking biodiversity and amenity potentials. However, there are few resources available as 'carrots' to persuade landowners to sell their land, or to change their use of it. The main gain, in this respect, has been made by the Forestry Commission, a project partner and controlling land manager for Rempstone Forest. Other project partners such as the RSPB and National Trust further complement HLF and LIFE funded activities by managing their own heathland to complement both projects (see financial capital). Similarly, the LIFE project has been able to influence the activity of a proportion of landowners, volunteers and users in urban fringe areas to actively take care of the heathland and use it more sensitively. Thus both the HLF and LIFE funded projects act as a hub for a wider, collective conservation effort that began several years earlier, but give these a new impetus. Using HLF and LIFE funding for re-instating appropriate management regimes has enabled others partners to tackle heathland re-creation on adjacent land to help reverse fragmentation, e.g. the related Purbeck Biodiversity project is able to tackle heathland creation through targeting applications for Countryside Stewardship grant – see Purbeck Case Study). There is also scope for serious debate over stock grazing on the heathlands to contribute to the local food chain, as branded products promoting local benefits and origins.

Discussions are in progress between the heathland partnership members about the potential for blocks of cleared scrub and forest to be re-created on other, more suitable areas within the county to replace loss of carbon sinks, but nothing has been planned yet. This new woodland would not only be a carbon sink but would also be designed as an additional amenity for local communities in the area to enjoy. Habitat restoration from woodland or scrub to open heath rapidly restores the soil profile by returning it to a less nutrient-rich status, especially if the tree species are birch or conifer. With regard to mineral deposits, there are still significant reserves of ball clay under the Poole Basin. Should Government policy decide that these are important for the country this will put pressure on the heathland resource.

## Suggested measures of success

- % of potential heathland area brought into active, more sustainable management. (sustainable yet to be defined)
- Net %/ha of SSSI sites restored to favourable condition via plant surveys for a sample

of key sites (will also help inform how favourable condition is defined over time).

- Heathland LBAP and BAP targets met, e.g. increase in key target species populations, e.g. Nightjars (via the repeat surveys carried out every 9-10 yrs)
- % of local population who understand that heathland is 'man-made' or semi-natural and needs to be constantly managed to prevent it scrubbing over.
- Watercourses and bodies of good ecological status (to be defined).
- % of wet mires with adequate to good water levels
- Site specific impacts of localised air quality problems, e.g. N enriched road verges
- Total area (of mires, heath, scrub and woodland) secured for long-term carbon sequestration.
- Annual or seasonal incidence of wild fires.
- % of area with soils removed from 'risk' through improved management.
- % of area where soils remaining at risk.
- Area of soils lost to development per annum

### CPA sustainability rating:

**Good:** the projects have made a significant, direct contribution towards area-wide sustainability in terms of natural capital, which could be relatively easily quantified. However, the lack of a shared, overall long-term vision for the project area's landscape and biodiversity interest is an important gap that needs filling. The recently completed Management Plan for the Dorset AONB could be used as the basis or core for developing this wider local vision, taken from the existing Heathland Strategy, as a large proportion of the heathland Character Area/Natural Area falls within the Southern section of the AONB.

### Future success in 10-20yrs

The heathland landscape is a diverse mosaic of woodland, grassland, mires and open heath enjoyed by the wider community (local and visitors) as an amenity for recreation and spiritual refreshment. Former areas of lowland mire have now been restored to an appropriate condition as pollution and enrichment in the key watercourses draining the heathland have been eradicated, removing risks to plant and animal species whilst improving the visual and recreational amenity of the area.

Appropriate management across this mosaic of heathland and woodland vegetation ensures that soil nutrient status and soil profiles are conserved in the long term. The area's special landscape character is now understood and respected by all those using it, for example, vandalism, litter, or physical damage is very rare and actively discouraged, possibly because schools have become far more involved in their local heathlands. Local communities take a very active role in caring for "their heathland" (see social capital), and are keen to help develop site management plans that take climate change into account, for example, collective measures to minimise the risk of fires and their threat to people, property and wildlife. The Australian concept of "rain gardens" is very popular in both existing and new development in urban fringe areas and small settlements to help reduce

the risk of summer fires. The replacement of forestry plantations removed from the heathland with substitute tree planting in more suitable locations is a routine practice to aid carbon sequestration and landscape amenity. There is now a much deeper and wider local understanding about the dynamics of and need for active management of the large open heathland blocks. Similarly, local communities feel that they have much greater ownership of “their heathlands” and that their views on its management are respected and understood (see social capital). This shift in attitudes has been greatly helped by efforts to involve local communities in the development of a long term vision for the Natural Area as a whole, drawing heavily on similar experiences and material developed through the AONB visioning process, not least because a proportion of the heathland project area falls within this designated landscape. Mineral extraction poses absolutely no threat to the Dorset heathlands now, i.e. heathland is seen as a more sustainable land use compared with losing its integrity and capital assets to primary mineral extraction, especially when sustainable construction materials and designs are now more mainstream and highly cost-effective.

## C2 Human capital

Human capital – consists of people’s health, knowledge, skills and motivation. Enhancing it through education and training and is essential to a flourishing economy for meeting basic human needs such as housing, food, freedom and security, creativity and leisure.

### Baseline information

There is a wealth of local information but at an aggregated level that makes it difficult to directly relate to the heathland project area. However, it should be possible to create appropriate ‘data markers’ for use during data collation so that more information can be readily accessed for correlation and analysis with heathland conservation and management opportunities.

### Sustainability issues

- Between them, the HLF and LIFE funded projects collectively offer big educational potential for local communities (in the broadest sense) to look at natural processes and how these interact with the historic environment and cultural landscape of the heathland. However, additional resources would be necessary to realise most of this potential.
- Qualified teachers need to be closely involved in order to gain credence with educational establishments and to produce schemes and teaching resources that are readily adopted by classroom practitioners. Local teacher training about the heathland resource and its value to local people, the economy and environment could be more extensively addressed.
- There is an unrealised opportunity to train volunteers in more traditional types of management practice to avoid the use of heavy, fuel hungry machinery at least on the more sensitive sites.



- Declining resources for heathland conservation in the longer term could threaten job security in the land management sector and lead to loss of skills.
- There are missed and unrealised opportunities to make more of the area for contributing to local health and well-being through close working with the Primary Care Trust(s).

### Project impacts – success to date

There have been definite gains in job security for those on existing heathland management contracts, plus new local contractors have become involved as a result of HLF funding for heathland restoration and management, e.g. over £900K of work has gone to Dorset-based contractors in the first 4 years of the project (see financial capital). Thus the project has helped to develop the local land-management skills base whilst increasing awareness of the need for active conservation management. The restoration of open areas of heathland and improved access to these new open spaces has undoubtedly improved local opportunities to access these ‘public goods’ for healthy walks and spiritual refreshment. The LIFE project is working directly with people with learning difficulties to give them the confidence to enjoy outdoor recreation on the urban heaths, plus a related Greenlink initiative organises a programme of healthy walks, many of which are on heathland. The Holton Lee Trust, a partner to the HLF project, is able to demonstrate how health and well-being issues could be addressed as a core part of the heathland management strategy. The Trust specialises in offering provision for the less able, those in wheelchairs and/or with learning difficulties to enjoy the natural capital of the area. There is scope to substantially build on these efforts by the project teams working more directly with the local Primary Healthcare Trust to meet shared objectives for improved local health and quality of life whilst improving the local heathland environment.

### Suggested measures of success

- Net gain in jobs resulting from the projects.
- Net increase in local contracts resulting from the projects.
- Nos of health focussed events, walks, etc
- Nos of people using specific sites for (regular) informal recreation
- Tailored events and facilities for special groups in liaison with local NHS partners
- Contribution to fulfilling local community strategy targets for open space, etc..
- Success in resolving policing issues (fly-tipping, vandalism, ASB, etc...)

### CPA sustainability rating:

**Fair to Good:** the projects have made a significant, direct contribution towards area-wide sustainability in terms of human capital, which could be relatively easily quantified, but could do still more, taking a more structured approach and involving new local partners, e.g. the Local Strategic Partnership, Primary Care Trust, Local Education Authority and Local Skills Council.

## Future success in 10–20yrs

Dorset-based contractors are regarded as specialists/leaders in the field of heathland management and a proportion take part in local awareness-raising and educational events to promote greater local understanding of the heathland and its assets. The availability of resources to fund long term restoration and management activities means that the skills base is never depleted and that there is a steady supply of people wanting to be employed in this sector. Building on the success of Holton Lee's approach to using the heathland environment as a means of aiding physical and mental recovery, or increasing quality of life through direct contact with nature and open spaces, the heathland management plan is further developed to specify where direct health benefits can be achieved from access to the project area. Much has been done to build on the work of the LIFE approach to involving people (visitors and locals) with learning difficulties. The NHS are interested in learning from Holton Lee's example the PCT work with Holton Lee, sharing appropriate facilities on selected/appropriate parts of the heathland area to encourage convalescing patients to aid their recovery through increased contact with nature. Similarly young offenders are actively encouraged to take part in management activities to teach them practical skills and to care for their local environment and its ecosystems. (see manufactured capital and access).

### C3 Social Capital

Social capital – helps us maintain and develop human capital in partnership with others through trade unions, voluntary bodies, institutions and communities through effective communication based on trust, shared values and objectives.

#### Baseline information

The Dorset Heathland Forum, convened in 1990, is a broad partnership that exists to oversee the conservation and enhancement of the project area. This group reports to an overarching county level Biodiversity Forum. There are also county and district level recreation, historic environment, education and transport groups, etc. Membership involves the same organisations and sometimes, the same individuals. Each representative has responsibility for ensuring that pertinent information and intelligence is shared between these strategic groups. In addition, each of these groups has its own suite of stakeholders, including community, business and local lobby group representatives. The Heathland Forum is pivotal as the project area runs across several local authorities from parish up to county level and is covered by Structure and Local Plan policies. The project area is also subject to the local Community Strategy and the county and district-wide LSPs. The heathland was the inspiration for Thomas Hardy's novel "The return of the native", and thus it has strong cultural associations both locally, nationally and internationally. Local residents value the project area's tranquillity and "wildness". There is no overall "Friends of the Heath" group but a number of individual sites have their own "Friends of" groups.

## Sustainability issues

- There doesn't appear to be a comprehensive evaluation of who the stakeholders are for the Dorset heathlands. There are concerns that, even those identified are not all properly engaged.
- People locally and possibly the majority of visitors don't understand heathland, as revealed in the LIFE project's recent local survey.
- Local politicians are perceived to have a poor understanding of what's on their doorstep, i.e. an internationally designated habitat, and their legal obligations under the CROW Act.
- There are serious concerns over the lack of clear vision for the project area in terms of strategic land use planning policy and objectives, i.e. there is a lack of coherence within and between local governing bodies concerning current and long term resource requirements and management needs of the heathland.
- Most local politicians are felt to have little understanding of the heathland's full value and potential in socio-economic terms.
- Wardens and rangers help police and other local services to deal with petty crime and anti-social behaviour impacts, including arson and fly-tipping, but this service may disappear when current funding comes to an end.

## Project impact – success to date

The project helps reinforce specific planning and community strategy policies that secure the area as a semi-natural open space and cultural asset for the future. Increased resources for the heathland area as a whole via the LIFE funded project mean that petty crime and anti-social behaviour have been effectively tackled on the fringes of Poole and Bournemouth through the employment of local wardens and rangers. Promotion of the area's cultural attributes via events, guided walks and leaflets appears to have increased levels of understanding and pride in the area. There has been a marked reduction in conflicting and inappropriate use, e.g. biking and horse-riding in sensitive areas through warden and ranger efforts. There is also growing trust and greater participation in exploring land use change scenarios such as tree removal, but there is still some way to go before a few long-standing tensions with a vocal minority are overcome. The work of the Dorset Heathland Forum, begun in 1988 has been consolidated and strengthened, enabling the 1990 area-wide strategy to be substantively progressed and updated, but this could possibly be wider in scope to achieve more sustainable outcomes in terms of social capital. Stakeholder processes and dialogue are reasonable but could be much improved to establish what existing and potential users of the heathlands know about it and what they want from it. Furthermore, lines of communication between professionals in the partner organisations could be improved so that more streamlined and sustainable care and use of the heathland environment can be achieved.

## Suggested measures of success

- Formal recognition and demonstratively wider local ownership of management objectives and aims across all administrations whose jurisdiction includes all or a part of the heathlands.
- Project's contribution to local 'sense of place' and civic pride, e.g. targets met in community and cultural strategies.
- Increase in membership of local voluntary groups and societies.
- Additional land/open space made accessible to locals and visitors.
- Positive media coverage, i.e. fewer articles about conflicts between users, residents and conservationists.
- Shared communications strategy implemented/in use by all partners and Forum members.

## CPA sustainability rating:

**Fair:** the projects are addressing all sectors in terms of social capital, but are making a minimal direct or significant contribution towards greater area-wide sustainability compared to what more they could achieve.

## Future success in 10–20 years

A shared vision and understanding of the full value of the heathlands are now in place and collectively pursued by all local administrations. Local politicians take a longer-term view of the potential value of the heathlands for the local tourism economy and related business opportunities. All heathland conservation and management activities are now co-ordinated by a small but well-resourced central team or unit that has responsibility for holding and commissioning all evidence-based research and best practice information on heathland conservation and management. Furthermore, all of the partner organisations have agreed a formal system for notifying this unit of any relevant strategic and local policy information that does or could have a bearing on how the heathlands are managed and used; this agreement covers all policy sectors from health and education, to planning and transport as well as environment. Clear lines of communication have been agreed at the organisational and individual job plan level to ensure consistency of approach survives changes in staffing across all of the partner organisations. In parallel, increasingly effective stakeholder engagement via a widely shared communications strategy means that awareness and respect for the heathlands as an important national and local asset has dramatically increased, with many stakeholder processes taking on a life of their own, i.e. no longer needing careful fostering. There is a strong and growing sense of local ownership of the heathland complexes. The various "Friends of" groups and societies have increased their membership and outreach so that an umbrella group for the entire area has been formed. This group works closely with the conservation organisations, schools, local authorities and businesses to celebrate the heathland's history and contribution to local character, amenity, the economy, biodiversity and local distinctiveness. In this way it can also act as an effective mediator in local issues over conflicts of use.

## C4 Manufactured capital

Manufactured capital – means the material goods or fixed assets, like buildings, roads, pathways and machines, which contribute to the production of goods. It can be enhanced by harnessing natural systems to reduce wastes and treat them by efficient re-cycling and re-manufacturing.

### Baseline information

The baseline for manufactured capital could be improved and developed further by identifying the potential for renewable energy development and how this is being realized locally, e.g. the number of homes heathland wood/biofuels could supply. Also, the character of the current on and off-road transport network and traffic demand management measures. It is not clear whether any local industrial processes other than forestry impact on the heathland resource.

### Sustainability issues

- Increased pressure for housing development resulted in further loss and fragmentation of heathland and its cultural heritage in recent decades. The relationship between habitat conservation and the conservation of the historic landscape interest are not properly understood even amongst professional stakeholders.
- The HLF and LIFE projects have inefficient formal lines of engagement between ecologists, historic specialists and community coordinators; in fairness the LIFE project was never required to do this. However, these oversights caused tensions between professionals, field-workers and contractors [NB now largely resolved as a result of the appraisal workshop].
- None of the heathland sites have interdisciplinary management plans and operations are seldom coordinated although cost and energy savings could be made and damage avoided. Training for contractors on site clearance in ways that does not damage archeological remains is virtually non-existent.
- Now that much larger areas of heathland are grazed a larger number of cattle grids have been fitted. The grids have been problematic, creating highly localised noise, which is a big issue for a small proportion of residents. Cattle grids also prevent wheelchair and pushchair access unless the right kind of gates are fitted.
- Honey pot sites suffer most from traffic, especially during the summer when tourist numbers are highest.
- Mountain bikers and horse-riders can degrade sensitive sites through over use, plus shared routes can cause conflict between these groups. The growing number of mountain bikes, often brought by visitors, is a growing issue.
- Dog walkers can upset grazing animals, especially if dogs are not kept on leads. The biggest problem with non-motorised users to date is that it difficult to control when and how they access areas and conflicts often result.
- Waste from commercial forestry and heathland clearance could be used as a local fuel and heat source and is thus currently a wasted opportunity.

- Some conservation NGOs have used helicopters for bracken spraying, which heavily increases carbon emissions and affects ecologically important fern species. The Forestry Commission use tractor-mounted sprayers to control bracken, which is less energy hungry and potentially more selective. In contrast, there are probably a small proportion of sites where volunteers could possibly be used to help manually remove unwanted vegetation and selectively weed-kill rather than employ heavy machinery and blanket spraying of vegetation. This would also help re-connect local residents with their heaths and increase social capital. An even better outcome would be to cut and compost bracken to bring in revenue rather than just try to chemically control it.

## Project impact – success to date

Neither the LIFE nor the HLF project have a remit to directly engage with the planning system concerning new development. However, both projects have indirectly been successful in raising awareness about the importance of not losing heathland to new housing or other development through awareness-raising events for local communities. This approach may be helping to support local “Friends groups” and encourage stronger local opposition to further heathland loss. Information gathered by the LIFE project’s ‘incident database’ has been used to support planning objections and refusals for sites adjacent to SSSI heathland. Improved management and conservation of historic resources have been achieved on a proportion of the heathland sites, but a more systematic and collaborative approach would help bring the remaining ones into good management and help develop a commonly shared ongoing management regime for all of the resource. Both HLF and LIFE funding require that public access is provided for in appropriate ways; this means that it must be inclusive and well managed. Experience has shown that more visitors can actually be easier to control because formal management measures can be more easily implemented, i.e. everyone agrees the need and sees the benefits. In this sense, the LIFE project’s outreach work has been very effective in raising awareness about the need to keep away from certain areas at certain times of the year. There is no over-arching access strategy for the heathland complex as a whole since each individual site has specific access requirements and constraints. Thus measures have been developed and implemented as part of each site’s management plan. This allows for greater flexibility and a more rapid response to conflicts of use. However, more could be done to make greater use of the most accessible sites in a more inclusive way for everyone, whether on foot or in wheelchairs and pushchairs. Carbon reduction and potential contributions to local waste treatment developments have been considered by the HLF funded project but there has been little progress to date. The project partnership has been working to promote the use of biofuel burners and last year came close to agreement with Purbeck District Council for the installation of a wood-fuel system at the Purbeck Sports Centre. However, this was short-sightedly turned down by District Council members for financial and procurement reasons in the mistaken belief that the venture posed an unacceptable risk. More recently the HEH project joined the South West Wood Fuels Co-operative, which aims to link wood fuel producers with existing and potential customers. This should improve the potential for developing a local market for heathland products.

## Suggested measures of success

- Net % of area, no of ha of land of archaeological interest secured under appropriate management as a result of the project.
- % or nos of sites and monuments at risk.
- % or nos of sites with an interdisciplinary management plan in progress
- Area of heathland lost to new development per annum
- % of sensitive areas subject to traffic demand management (within wider area/rural strategy) as a result of the project.
- Management measures for riders, bikers, etc implemented via the Heathland Recreation strategy and individual site management plans.
- Net (tonnes) of waste material generated as a result of the project, i.e. left to rot or disposed of rather than used.
- Change in study area's carbon footprint as a result of the project (difficult to measure).

## CPA sustainability rating:

**Weak:** there are no gaps but activities do not contribute as significantly towards sustainable development as they could in terms of manufactured capital, but there are external market barriers to further progress that the project partnerships have no control over.

## Future success in 10-20yrs

Over time a more integrated and inclusive access strategy has been developed for locals and visitors alike. There is widespread understanding of the area's ecology so that when parts of the heath are closed to riders and bikers there are fewer complaints or transgressions. A system of fines is agreed with local residents and wardens, who are able to issue on-the-spot penalties. Repeat transgressors can be photographed and reported in the local press through a "name and shame" campaign. Visitors to the area are harder to manage so local accommodation providers help by ensuring that guests are supplied with clear, easy to use guides and advice about how to use the heathland appropriately for maximum enjoyment (developed by the project partnerships). The potential for synergy between all of the conservation interests between project partners has been realised and area-wide management plans are in place and are being actively used to conserve and enhance the heathlands' historic environment. The majority of local communities are now aware that heathland is a semi-natural "cultural artefact" with a rich and varied history. Local schools regularly use the heathland sites as outdoor classrooms to learn about human development and ways of life down the centuries. Through the visioning process for the heathlands, there is widespread formal agreement via the planning process as to which areas are protected from development into the future. Local planners and development control officers take a rigorous approach to appropriate design for new development close to or adjacent to heathland sites where development is permitted. Local design statements and design guidance put together with local stakeholder help is

promoted to developers to use in putting together planning applications. This helps to save time by encouraging a better quality of planning applications, reducing the need for negotiation and resulting in more successful results on the ground. Sustainable construction principles are an integral part of this process to minimise impacts on the heathland hydrology and biodiversity. Using local timber for glue-laminate building construction is growing in popularity locally. Waste material from forestry and scrub clearance is collected from agreed sites by contractors working within a local authority initiative to produce energy from waste. Selling the material for this purpose helps to fund management activities today, although originally it was provided free of charge to help counter the capital costs of investment in alternative CHP systems. This local arrangement also helps to keep transportation costs and vehicle use to a minimum. The use of heavy machinery is rationalised to a minimum to reduce the project's carbon footprint, and to help boost local awareness of the need for active management by working with friends groups to encourage local volunteers to help specific manage sites. The search for local customers prepared to use modern wood fuel burners is successful; a local school replaces their oil-fired boiler system with a more efficient, virtually emission-free modern wood fuel system and a community heating scheme is successfully instigated with the help of a local Friends group. The savings made on running costs and trouble-free systems mean that local demand for this form of heating rapidly rose so that heathland management is generating a steady income whilst eradicating waste.

## C5 Financial capital

**Financial capital** – represents the full value of natural, human, social and manufactured capital, i.e. by ensuring that financial costs and payments take due account of the other four capitals.

### Baseline information

There was general agreement about how the appraisal process categorised public funding streams for the area. There was also a brief discussion about how these helped to lever in further monies for the local economy through, for example, charitable trusts, developer contributions and increased tourist revenues.

### Sustainability issues

- CAP monies have been used to improve privately owned heathland and marginal heath areas of poor productivity in recent decades, with the result that former blocks of heathland were fragmented, heathland archaeology damaged and species put at risk. It can take decades to reverse the effects of cropping, re-seeding and regular applications of agro-chemicals.
- Financial incentives for farmers to “improve” heathland have generally been greater than monies for low output, more sustainable, extensive systems.



- The biggest issue has been securing project activities on a long-term basis. Current project funding is short term and thus unsustainable. Perhaps the main issue is how to 'mainstream' site restoration and management.
- Dorset attracts affluent incomers who can afford desirable housing on the urban fringe or in small settlements easily accessible to Poole and Bournemouth. This contributed strongly towards the increased cost of local housing and land suitable for new development, thus heathland was lost to housing up until 1990 (see Social Capital).
- Economic development has increased manufactured capital to the detriment of natural capital in the area, and it is not clear to what extent the environment as an economic driver features in local regeneration and economic development policies and practices.
- There needs to be far greater efforts to integrate activities across the economic and environmental sectors by local public and private sector players. There is considerable potential for local renewable energy generation that could help fund benefit heathland management activities but these efforts are hampered by shortsighted and overly risk-averse local elected members.

### **Project impact – success to date**

HLF and LIFE funding has been used very effectively by local partners to halt and begin to reverse deterioration of the heathland's environmental quality and nature conservation interest. Furthermore, the substantial sums involved enabled sufficient financial security over a 5 year period to focus efforts, deploy dedicated staff and contract local firms (£900K over first 4 years) for capital works and on-going management activities, considerably adding to local human capital. This core funding also enabled other partners to re-direct their conservation efforts on adjoining land to reverse habitat fragmentation. LIFE funding towards the employment of wardens and rangers for the urban fringe areas has almost certainly meant that fewer calls have been made on police and fire service time, resulting in savings to local rate-payers whilst building local social capital.

On the downside, there is currently little evidence of any substantial economic connection between project activities with other sectors beyond forestry and education. There is virtually no link with local tourism activities in ways that encourage the channelling of revenues into heathland management. It is not clear how the heathland areas feature in economic diversification and regeneration activities, or in helping to reduce local expenditure on health by encouraging healthy exercise, etc. Furthermore, poor communication between project partners at some levels, so that efforts to target conservation funding on heathland management had less than optimal results, i.e. the lack of interdisciplinary management plans led to ineffective use of public monies, although this has very recently been addressed. Similarly, local authorities have not coordinated and sufficiently integrated conservation, highways, development and planning efforts to ensure conflicting objectives and activities are minimized for maximum cost benefit.

There has been fairly limited success in encouraging private landowners to appropriately manage heathland and adjacent, marginal land, simply because mainstream agricultural

subsidies have been unsustainably coupled with high productivity; this is obviously outside of local partners' control. This could change from 2005 when the new Single Farm Payment and ESS come on-line. However, some farmers may take the SFP but continue to intensify, so project partners will need to ensure that Environmental Stewardship Scheme monies are effectively targeted to those farmers and landowners with land of greatest potential for reversion to heathland under secure, more extensive methods of management.

The absence of substantive, long-term means of funding conservation management of the remaining Dorset heathlands resulted in a substantial and effective collective effort by agencies, local authorities and NGOs. Time-limited grants have enabled the most substantial conservation efforts so far. However, funding objectives for disparate schemes have been a barrier to 'joined-up' strategy, activities and outcomes, i.e. it would be far easier for local partners to work together if they only needed to apply to a 'single pot' or had more leeway to adapt scheme objectives and application windows to local needs and aspirations, i.e. scheme originators need to be far more aware of potential bureaucratic and institutional barriers that prevent users from fully realising collective, streamlined activities on the ground. Again, this is largely outside the control of the project partnership but with hindsight a more seamless approach between respective project teams could have been achieved.

### **CPA sustainability rating:**

**Poor to Weak:** activities do not contribute as significantly towards sustainable development as they could, although all of the monies levered into the area via the projects directly benefit the local economy. The projects have realised some opportunities to increase sustainability performance in terms of financial capital, but others are being missed.

### **Future success in 10–20 years**

The decoupling of CAP payments from production and further development of the England Rural Development Plan and how measures to implement it are locally delivered has made it far easier for farmers, conservation organisations and local authorities to work together to develop a shared landscape- scale approach to sustainably managing the Dorset heathlands. The heathlands are explicitly acknowledged as a valuable heritage and natural capital asset important to the local economy; for tourism and related retailing activities, and as an attractive locality to invest in new business enterprise in ways that add to local quality of life, i.e. they help to "sell" the area to visitors and inward investors. Heathland conservation costs are now also partially underwritten by the EU and UK government as an internationally important ecosystem and cultural landscape. A locally administered surcharge on accommodation and eating places popular with tourists provides a secure and long- term source of revenue towards heathland management. Thirdly, much greater local community understanding of the full goods and services provided by the heaths makes it possible to levy a charge as part of local household and business rates for upkeep of this important lowland landscape.