


# Hazeley Heath Management Plan Consultation Process

## Outcome B: Management Aims Discussion Paper

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# 1. Introduction and Background

## SITE CONTEXT

- 1.1 Hazeley Heath is a substantial area of registered common land extending along a low ridge of sands, clays and gravel immediately to the north-west of Hartley Wintney in the county of Hampshire. The ridge rises gently from about 80m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) at the north end of the common to about 89m AOD near the south end. The valleys of the River Hart and River Whitewater are to the north-east and south-west respectively, at about 50 to 60m AOD. The Heath extends along the top and upper slopes of the ridge, extending down to the Hart valley floor at Hazeley Lea and also in the south-eastern corner, where an area of wetter ground is overlooked by a distinctive line of small wooded ridges.
- 1.2 There are two common land units: CL 49 covering about 52 ha at the south-eastern end next to Hartley Wintney and wholly owned by Hart District Council (HDC); and CL 100 covering about 137 ha and extending into a smaller area of common to the north at Hazeley Lea, of which about 120 ha is owned by the Timpany Trust with the rest in smaller private ownerships.
- 1.3 175.5 ha of Hazeley Heath were designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1979, due to the extent of heathland and the variety of different heathland plant communities. The boundary of the SSSI encompasses almost all of the registered common land and one area of gardens outside the common (at Hazeley Bottom). A map of the Heath showing the boundaries of the registered common land and of the SSSI is included in **Appendix A**.
- 1.4 The B3011 runs along the ridge, dividing the Heath along its length, with the larger area being to the north-east of the road. Three local lanes run across the Heath to the south-west towards West Green, Hazeley Bottom and Mattingley; one local lane runs northwards across the Heath at Hazeley Lea. The Heath is crossed by several public footpaths, including one along most of the northern boundary, and there are numerous other paths. Some of the paths also act as access to adjacent properties, including the police college at Bramshill Park. The footpaths at the south-eastern end of the Heath are included in the Three Castles Path that runs broadly north-south through this area. There are no public bridleways across or connecting to the Heath.
- 1.5 The Heath has had a long and varied history of intervention and management, with the most relevant influences being those of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, when substantial areas of the gravel cap were extracted and the resultant voids used for landfill, after which much of the Heath was also used for military training or vehicle testing. These activities removed all vegetation over large areas and ensured that many areas of the Heath were largely devoid of woodland until at least the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, partially continuing the role of the grazing that went before in maintaining the complex heathland habitats that have developed over many centuries of management.
- 1.6 Since that clearance, the heath has been allowed to revert to woodland, with birch and pine woodland extending over large parts of the site, until the more enlightened approach of recent years has brought about some control of encroaching bracken,

scrub and trees. The present appearance is principally one of woodland with three substantial areas of more open ground in which much of the heathland is found: along the northern end of the ridge; in the centre to the east of the road; and on the low ground in the south-east corner. There is a fourth open area on the central plateau at the south end resulting from the former landfill site, which was capped with imported soil with a chalky content and hence has not reverted to heathland. The history and condition of the Heath are covered in detail in the introductory sections of the draft management plan produced by Hart District Council (HDC) and English Nature (EN) in 2004.

- 1.7 Aerial photographs (courtesy of HDC and [Hampshire County Council](#)) of the Heath between 1946 and 2000 are included in **Appendix B**, from which several trends can be discerned through this period:
- ◆ Complete loss of vegetation during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century in the central northern and southern areas
  - ◆ Relatively little activity in the smaller areas west of the B3011 and at Hazeley Lea
  - ◆ Little change to the low lying wet land in the south-east corner
  - ◆ Continuity of areas of woodland around the margins near to adjacent properties and in places just to the east of the B3011
  - ◆ Prominence of the straight central track through the southern area
  - ◆ Expansion of Hartley Wintney up the edge of the Heath through the 1960s, 70s and 80s
- 1.8 The common land at Hazeley Heath has always been open for access by the commoners and, to varying degrees, the public. It has become increasingly popular as a destination for informal recreation, particularly with the rising population in and around Hartley Wintney. The 1925 Law of Property Act (LPA) section 193(1) provides a right of access for the public for 'air and exercise' onto commons having commoner's rights; this has subsequently been clarified as including the right of access on horseback for the same purposes. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides a right of pedestrian access over various types of land, including registered common land, but not including 'excepted land', such as areas within 20m of residential property. There is no general right of access for cyclists onto common land, unless using the property accesses that cross the common. The public roads are excluded from the registered extent of the common land. [the implications of the Common Act 2006 will be included in the final post-consultation version of this report]
- 1.9 The SSSI was one of the many heathland sites in the region incorporated in the designation of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) in March 2005, reflecting the presence of three bird species of conservation concern at European level – Dartford warbler, woodlark and nightjar – that all depend on the heathland habitat. These three species all nest at or near ground level and are therefore particularly susceptible to disturbance by human activity and by domestic dogs and cats.
- 1.10 There are therefore two principal types of interest in the site – conservation and recreation - which do not easily sit together.

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## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

- 1.11 Heathland is a form of vegetation that is maintained by external influence to retain its open character; left to its own devices, it will gradually revert to woodland. As the site is valued for its character and condition of its heathland, it has therefore been accepted for some time that a degree of management is needed, even just to maintain the site in its current state. Hence EN has entered into grant-aided Wildlife Enhancement Scheme (WES) agreements with the landowners in order to achieve betterment for the wildlife on the site. About 95% of the SSSI is currently classed by EN as having the main habitat (heathland) as being in 'unfavourable recovering' condition, although this includes unspecified areas in 'favourable' condition. Some small areas near Hazeley Bottom, about 3% of the SSSI, are classed as being in 'favourable' condition.
- 1.12 The SPA designation has increased the onus on those responsible for the management of the SSSI to protect and enhance the habitat for the three bird species, leading to the production of the draft management plan by HDC and EN in 2004 and the supporting grazing feasibility study. However, the approach taken in the draft management plan and the implications of its recommended management strategy were not accepted by all of the stakeholders, which include local individuals, local interest groups and non-local organisations. In short, it was seen as being almost entirely driven by habitat issues.
- 1.13 Atkins have therefore been commissioned by [Hampshire County Council \(HCC\)](#) to address the current management issues for the registered common land at Hazeley Heath and the concerns of the many and varied stakeholders, by use of the process outlined in 'A Common Purpose'. This recent publication was prepared for English Nature, Defra Rural Development Service, the Open Spaces Society (OSS), the Countryside Agency (CA) and the National Trust. It therefore encompasses the views of the main organisations responsible for conservation, recreation and stewardship in the countryside. It sets out a step-by-step process for the involvement of the stakeholders in the identification of management aims for a site and the development of associated management options, leading to a recommended strategy for the achievement of those aims.
- 1.14 This commission is intended as a 'clean-slate' project to address the issues underlying the management of the site, using the findings of consultation exercises undertaken by HCC in 2005. This report is the first stage in the Common Purpose process, which is the identification and evaluation of Management Aims that can be applied.

## APPROACH

- 1.15 The HCC brief for the Atkins commission has been based on 'A Common Purpose' and requires four Outcomes from the study:
- ◆ Outcome A an understanding of the site and the issues entailed in planning for its future management and of the responses from the consultation already undertaken

- ◆ Outcome B the identification and ranking of Management Aims for the site and the distribution of these to the stakeholders for comment – this establishes ‘where we wish to get to’
  - ◆ Outcome C the development of Management Options for the delivery of the Management Aims, with emphasis on those Aims that are favoured from the previous consultation, with further comment obtained through a meeting with stakeholders – this establishes ‘how we wish to get there’
  - ◆ Outcome D the identification of the preferred Management Aims and Options from the comments received and the production of an outline Management Plan.
- 1.16 This report is the first part of Outcome B, setting out the potential Management Aims on the basis of the understanding of the issues gained through Outcome A.
- 1.17 The purpose of this report is to outline the Management Aims that have been identified and evaluated against criteria derived from the previous consultations, as a starting point for gaining comment from the stakeholders. The desire is to receive any comments within four weeks of receipt of this report, so that the most appropriate Management Aims can be used as the basis for the development and evaluation of Management Options for Outcome C.
- 1.18 The report looks at the potential management aims first and then outlines the issues that have been raised in the consultations and responses.

#### **CONSULTATION TO DATE**

- 1.19 The consultation already undertaken for Stage 1 of the Common Purpose process and the comments received in response to the draft management plan of 2004 have identified a range of issues as being of concern to those making the responses. These issues range from general aspirations that could relate to management aims or options down to highly specific issues that relate to the interests of those making the comment. They have been used a platform for the development of the management aims for the site, but have not been taken to represent an exhaustive list of all the relevant issues.
- 1.20 Consultation was undertaken in 2005 by asking the stakeholders what they thought were the features of the Heath that they valued most and the issues of most concern. This was done partly through a through a questionnaire, which is included in **Appendix C**, and partly through meetings, the notes from which are included in **Appendix E**.
- 1.21 Responses were also received to the publication in 2004 of a draft Management Plan and an accompanying Grazing Feasibility Study. These documents followed an earlier period of consultation that included visits to Parish Councils and key local residents, heathland talks and walks, exhibitions and eight issues of a newsletter over two years.

## 2. Management Aims

### DEVELOPMENT OF MANAGEMENT AIMS

- 2.1 We have combined the issues raised in the consultation process (and summarised in Section 3) with our understanding of the site and its background, the wider issues that the SPA designation has raised in the region and the legal background to the management of common land and protected habitats. From this we have developed a series of Management Aims together with a series of management Aspirations against which the Aims have been evaluated.
- 2.2 The Aims should not be viewed as a series of equivalent alternatives. In working towards a Management Strategy, some of these Aims could be taken forward in combination with others; some could be taken forward instead of others. Some of the Aims are mutually beneficial; some are not. The intention at this stage is to establish the degree of consensus amongst stakeholders for the direction that management of the site should take.
- 2.3 The Management Aims have been identified at two levels:
- ◆ **Generic Management Aims** that can be applied to the whole site and/or to whole issues, such as nature conservation, access, openness, etc
  - ◆ **Specific Management Aims** that relate to particular elements or locations within the site, such as scrub removal, path condition, deer, dogs, etc
- 2.4 The Generic Management Aims have at this stage been intentionally expressed as a series of absolutes, mostly starting with 'maximise' or 'minimise' and hence mostly embodying an expectation of change. In the context of this protected site, the words 'maximise' and 'minimise' should be taken to mean making the most of the potential of the site to maximise or minimise a particular aspect, without changing the inherent identity of the place. Some of these Aims could therefore be viewed as an extreme stance, intended to provoke comment. A Management Strategy would be expected to embrace a combination of Aims and the relative balance of 'maximise', 'minimise' would need to be reviewed and decided in due course.
- 2.5 The Specific Management Aims are in part also tending towards Management Options for achieving some of the Generic management Aims. Many of the more detailed aspirations raised in the meetings and other responses – particularly those that anticipate a mechanism for implementation – have been retained for use in the development of Management Options for Outcome C, rather than included here as ever more specific Aims.

### Generic Management Aims

- 2.6 The Generic Management Aims that have been identified are:
- ◆ Maximise nature conservation value over the whole site
  - ◆ Maximise recreational access over the whole site for all users
  - ◆ Maximise nature conservation value over substantial defined areas of the site

- ◆ Maximise recreational access over substantial defined areas of the site for all users
- ◆ Maximise recreational access over substantial defined areas of the site for defined user groups
- ◆ Maximise nature conservation value for species of special status
- ◆ Maximise diversity of the site, in nature conservation, landscape and access terms
- ◆ Maximise openness of the whole site by woodland removal
- ◆ Maximise openness of the site in defined areas by woodland removal
- ◆ Increase educational and interpretive facilities on the site
- ◆ Minimise adverse effects of rubbish from landfill and other former uses on appearance and safety of the site
- ◆ Minimise litter, dog mess and old cars
- ◆ Minimise access for unauthorised vehicles (travellers, tipping, motorbikes, etc)
- ◆ Minimise conflict between vehicles and other users, especially along the B3011
- ◆ Minimise susceptibility to reduction in status and protection of the site
- ◆ Remove encroachment on common by neighbours
- ◆ Maintain the existing situation

### **Specific Management Aims**

2.7 The Specific Management Aims that have been identified are:

- ◆ Prevent loss of lowland heath
- ◆ Reduce scrub
- ◆ Remove invasive species
- ◆ Minimise bracken
- ◆ Maintain mature woodland
- ◆ Reduce tree cover by selective removal of species or sizes
- ◆ Create additional ponds and ditches
- ◆ Encourage deer population for browsing and visual beauty
- ◆ Reduce deer population
- ◆ Reduce number of foxes
- ◆ Remove tarmac tracks
- ◆ Improve wet or damaged paths
- ◆ Enhance access to wetter areas
- ◆ Increase quantity of paths
- ◆ Provide bridle paths to separate pedestrians and horses
- ◆ Reduce number of horses due to safety; dung and damage
- ◆ Provide unrestricted access for dogs
- ◆ Keep dogs on leads during bird nesting season

- ◆ Improve visitor behaviour and respect for site
- ◆ Discourage visitors to enhance tranquillity of site
- ◆ Enhance views
- ◆ Establish community steering group(s)

### Aspirations





2.8 The evaluation Aspirations have also been developed from the issues identified during the project briefing and during the previous consultation. These are expressed as whether the Aims would comply with the aspirations of or for:

- ◆ **Public access:** Public access by right on foot or horseback is provided by the Law of Property Act 1925, section 193 (LPA 1925 s193) and on foot the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act 2000) and there are several public footpaths across the common
- ◆ **Commoners:** a commoner owns a property to which rights are attached that allow activities on all or parts of particular commons (not owned by the commoner), such as allowing cattle grazing, collecting bracken, etc and these rights are summarised in Appendix D.
- ◆ **Special Protection Area or SPA** is a designation under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/CEE). Member States of the European Union have a duty to safeguard the habitats of migratory birds and certain species, particularly threatened birds. SPAs comprise one or more SSSIs (Site of Special Scientific Interest) or ASSIs (Areas of Special Scientific Interest). Hazeley Heath falls within the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, which extends over 11 local authorities in Surrey, Berkshire and Hampshire and comprises 13 SSSIs. It is designated because of the three protected bird species: Dartford warbler, woodlark and nightjar.
- ◆ **Site of Special Scientific Interest** status gives legal protection to the best sites for wildlife and geology in England. English Nature is responsible for protecting the SSSIs in England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).
- ◆ **Landscape:** This reflect the inherent visual attractiveness of the location including landform, vegetation and land use pattern and is acknowledged by inclusion in the Forest of Eversley landscape area in the Structure Plan.
- ◆ **Landowners:** The requirements of the various landowners, especially Hart District Council and the Timpany Trust, need to be accommodated – these are expanded on below.
- ◆ **Local residents:** It is important that the needs of the local community are addressed.
- ◆ **Local amenity societies:** Examples of local amenity societies are listed in Table 3.1 and their requirements also need to be addressed.
- ◆ **National amenity societies:** Examples include the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Open Spaces Society (OSS). Each of these have their own aims and objectives.
- ◆ **Funding:** a very broad indication of whether an aim is likely to attract funding for management works.

- ◆ **Sustainability:** Agendas at national and local level need to be met so that the management works are energy efficient and that waste materials can be utilised on site. Ideally, 'Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. This was defined in 1987, by the World Commission on Environment and Development.
- ◆ **Open space:** this reflects the importance of maintaining the attraction of the Heath as an area of open land to visit.

### RANKING OF MANAGEMENT AIMS

- 2.9 The evaluation process is contained in **Table 2.1** for the Generic Management Aims and **Table 2.2** for the Specific Management Aims, where the degree of compliance with each criterion has been allocated a rating of:

	◆	reasonably full compliance
	♣	partial compliance
	♠	substantial non-compliance
	-	not applicable

- 2.10 The two tables set the lists of Management Aims against the Aspirations and the symbols indicate the general degree of compliance with the aspirations of the issues and groups used. Colours have been used with the symbols to provide a more immediate picture of the pattern of compliance.
- 2.11 Clearly, there is a degree of subjectivity to this initial evaluation; also an approach of viewing the relative merits of the different Aims by simply accumulating the results can be open to criticism, as it implies that different the criteria are of equal value when they are not. However, what is apparent from this evaluation is that some aims are clearly different in terms of the quantity of fully- or non- compliant entries and, at this initial stage; these aims should be considered as being more or less favoured.

**Table 2.1 –Potential Generic Management Aims**

ASPIRATIONS  AIMS	Public access	Commoners	SPA	SSSI	Landscape	Landowners	Local residents	Local amenity societies	National amenity societies	Funding	Sustainability	Open space
	Maximise nature conservation value over the whole site	♠	♠	♦	♦	♣	♣	♠	♣	♣	♣	♦
Maximise recreational access over the whole site for all users	♦	♣	♠	♠	♣	♣	♦	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦
Maximise nature conservation value over substantial defined areas	♣	♣	♣	♦	♦	♣	♦	♣	♣	♣	♦	♦
Maximise recreational access over substantial defined areas for all users	♦	♣	♠	♣	♦	♣	♦	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦
Maximise recreational access over substantial defined areas for defined user groups	♣	♦	♣	♣	♦	♦	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦
Maximise nature conservation value for species of special status	-	-	♦	♦	-	♣	♣	♣	♦	♦	♦	♣
Maximise diversity for nature conservation, landscape and access	♣	♣	♣	♦	♦	♣	♦	♦	♣	♣	♦	♦
Maximise openness of the whole site by woodland removal	♦	♣	♣	♣	♠	♠	♠	♠	♣	♣	♠	♣
Maximise openness of the site in defined areas by woodland removal	♦	♣	♣	♦	♦	♦	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦
Increase the educational and interpretive facilities on the site	♦	-	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦	♦
Minimise adverse effects of rubbish from landfill and other former uses on appearance and safety	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♣	♣	♦
Minimise litter, dog mess, old cars, etc	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♣	♣	♦
Minimise access for unauthorised vehicles (travellers, tipping, bikes)	♠	♠	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦	♦	♣	♣	♦
Minimise conflict between vehicles and other users, esp. along B3011	♦	♦	-	-	♣	♣	♦	♣	♣	-	♦	♣
Minimise susceptibility to reduction in status and protection of site	♣	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♣
Remove encroachment on common by neighbours	♦	♦	♦	♦	♣	♣	♦	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦
Maintain the existing condition	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦	♣

Table 2.2 - Potential Specific Management Aims

ASPIRATIONS AIMS	ASPIRATIONS											
	Public access	Commoners	SPA	SSSI	Landscape	Landowners	Local residents	Local amenity societies	National amenity societies	Funding	Sustainability	Open space
Prevent loss of lowland heath	-	♦	♦	♦	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦	♣	♦	♦
Reduce scrub	♦	♦	♦	♣	♦	-	♦	♣	♦	♦	♦	♦
Remove invasive alien species	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Minimise bracken	♦	-	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Maintain mature woodland	-	-	♣	♦	♦	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦	♦	♣
Reduce tree cover by selective removal of species or sizes	♦	♣	♦	♦	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦	♦	♣	♣
Create additional ponds and ditches	-	-	♦	♦	♦	♣	♣	♣	♦	-	♦	♦
Encourage deer population for browsing and visual beauty	-	-	♣	♣	♣	-	♣	♣	♣	-	♣	♣
Reduce deer population	-	-	♣	♣	♠	-	♣	♣	-	-	♠	♠
Reduce number of foxes	-	-	♣	♠	-	♣	♣	♣	♠	-	♠	♠
Remove tarmac tracks	♣	-	♣	♦	♦	♣	♣	-	-	♠	♠	♦
Improve wet or damaged paths	♦	♣	♣	♣	♦	♣	♦	♦	♣	♦	♦	♦
Enhance access to wetter areas	♦	♣	♠	♠	-	♣	♦	♦	♣	-	♠	♦
Increase quantity of paths	♦	♣	♠	♠	-	♣	♦	♦	♣	-	-	♦
Provide bridle paths to separate pedestrians and horses	♦	♦	-	-	-	♦	♦	♦	♦	-	♦	♦
Reduce number of horses due to safety; dung and damage	♠	♠	♦	♣	-	♦	♣	♣	♣	-	-	♣
Provide unrestricted access for dogs	-	-	♠	♠	-	♣	♣	♣	♣	-	-	♠
Keep dogs on leads during bird nesting season	♣	♣	♦	♦	-	♦	♣	♦	♦	-	-	♣
Improve visitor behaviour and respect for site	♦	♣	♦	♦	♣	♦	♦	♦	♦	♣	♦	♦
Discourage visitors to enhance tranquillity of site	♠	♠	♦	♦	-	♣	♣	♠	♠	-	♦	-
Enhance views	♠	♠	-	-	♦	♦	♦	♦	♣	♣	♣	♦
Establish community steering group(s)	♣	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♣	♣		

**REQUIREMENTS OF LANDOWNERS AND EN**

- 2.12 The requirements of landowners and of English Nature have been included here for information, insofar as they are known to Atkins.
- 2.13 The aims of HDC, as owner of CL49, are summarised as:
- ◆ To meet all legal requirements
  - ◆ To head towards "favourable condition status" for the SSSI, as required by law as a section 28g Authority.
  - ◆ To meet conservation requirements for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.
  - ◆ To, whenever possible, encourage the development of the site's notable species eg silver-studded blue butterfly.
  - ◆ To be considerate to the landscape value of the Forest of Eversley Heritage Area.
  - ◆ To provide an appropriate and legal recreational resource for the local community, within the site's ability and without compromising the above.
  - ◆ To explore the possibilities for research, interpretation and education.
  - ◆ To allow Commoners to undertake their rights in a way that is considerate to the above points.
  - ◆ To meet these aims in a way that is sustainable and makes best use of the Council's limited resources.
- 2.14 The aims of the Timpany Trust, as the principal owner of CL100, have not been received but some aspects have been deduced from the Management Agreement made with EN in 2003. In this, the Management Objectives are stated as restoring Dry Heath and Wet Heath from currently unfavourable condition to favourable condition. Favourable condition in each case is defined in terms of % cover of vegetation types. A five-year management programme and plans are included for the clearance of 6.9 ha of scrub, 4.1 ha of bracken and 14.8 ha of secondary woodland. ~~The introduction of a controlled grazing regime is also stated as being part of achieving favourable condition.~~
- 2.15 The aims of the Lyons, as the owners of a small part of CL100 beside Crabtree Lodge, have not been received but some aspects have been deduced from the EN Site Management Statement of 2000. This includes management of the vegetation around the ponds in this location to be managed by grazing and cutting for the benefit of nature conservation and particularly for swans, geese, ducks and moorhen.
- 2.16 The aims of Mr Kear, as the owner of the northern end of CL100 at Hazeley Lea, have not been received but some aspects have been deduced from the EN Site Management Statement of 2002. This includes management of the land to enhance its wildlife value and includes thinning or clearance of the secondary birch woodland as being beneficial.

2.17 The aims of EN are summarised as:




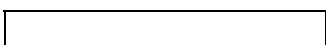
- ◆ Maintain lowland acid grassland preferably through stock grazing
- ◆ Maintain areas of dry and wet lowland heath
- ◆ Control invasive species
- ◆ Retain a few scattered individual trees and some small patches of scrub
- ◆ Maintain existing ditches and drains
- ◆ Control scrub
- ◆ Maintain a diverse woodland structure
- ◆ Enforce deer management
- ◆ Recreational activities may need to be controlled

### 3. Responses from Consultation

#### SUMMARY AND RANKING OF ISSUES RAISED IN THE RESPONSES

3.1 The Hazeley Heath management committee obtained consultation responses in the form of letters, e-mails, memos and notes of meetings from local and non-local stakeholders, in response to the questionnaire (Appendix C). Local stakeholders were invited directly and by adverts to provide comments on Hazeley Heath, including their concerns and aspirations for the heathland. Responses were also obtained to the publication of the Hazeley Heath draft management plan produced by Paul Edgar for HDC and EN.

3.2 The consultation responses have been provided to Atkins. These responses have been analysed and the main issues discussed were identified by respondents and ranked coarsely in order of the frequency of their mention, as follows:

	High	More than 50%
	Medium	10% to 50%
	Low	Less than 10%
	None	0%

3.3 The ranking of responses has been undertaken objectively, based on the frequency of responses, with no value judgements imposed by Atkins. Some of the responses imply an incomplete understanding of the underlying issues or of the site; this is not unexpected and part of the purpose of this intended collaborative approach to identifying suitable site management is that the stakeholders also become more aware of the full range of issues that are relevant and become more conversant with the site as a whole.

3.4 There is limited detail in some of the recording of the meetings undertaken with stakeholder groups, in that the issues raised are recorded, but without accompanying detail on the concerns that gave rise to the discussions, so it is not always clear what the desired response would be in terms of management of the site. Conversely, the letters received in response from various individuals and representatives provide often considerable detail. Due to this variability in what is a relatively limited quantity of responses, it has not been practicable to assign any level of arithmetic or statistical value to the number of times that issues have been identified in the responses.

3.5 The consultees are listed in **Table 3.1**, where they are divided in to local individuals, local interest groups and non-local interest groups.

Table 3.1 – List of Stakeholders

Individuals		Local Interest Groups	
Name	Where From	Name	Organisation
Mr Arnold	Hazeley Heath	Mr and Mrs Abbott	Mattingley Parish Council
Mr Ashworth	Hazeley Heath	Mr Bickerton	Hart District Council
Mr Baker	Yateley	Councillor Doughty	Hartley Wintney Parish Council
Ms Barker	Farnborough	Mr Fay	Forest of Eversley Trust
Mr and Mrs Beazley	Hartley Wintney	Mr Green	Hart District Council
Ms Bickerton	Hazeley Heath	Mrs Hancock	Hook Local History Group
Mr and Mrs Bishop	Hartley Wintney	Mr Vaughn	Hartley Wintney Parish Council
Ms Brabec	Hartley Wintney	Mr Whiting	Hart District Council
Mr Burgelis	Hazeley Heath	Mr Harvey	Hartley Wintney Preservation Society
Mr Carlisle	Hazeley Bottom		
Mr and Mrs Catt	Hartley Wintney		
Mr and Mrs Collman	Hartley Wintney		
Mr Cook	Hazeley Bottom		
Mrs Cook	Hazeley Heath		
Mr Cowdrey	Hartley Wintney	<b>Non-Local Interest Groups</b>	
Mrs Cox	Hazeley Bottom	<b>Name</b>	<b>Name</b>
Mr and Mrs Davies	Hartley Wintney		Countryside Agency, South East Region
Mr Denton	Mattingley	Mr Baker	Ramblers Association, NE Hants Group
Ms Ellingland	Hartley Wintney	Ms Bretherton	National Farmers Union
Mrs Everard	Hartley Wintney	Ms Burley	English Nature, Thames & Chilterns Team
Mr and Mrs Everson	Hazeley Bottom	Ms Busby	Countryland and Business Association
Mr Frazer	Hartley Wintney	Ms Cross	Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Ms George	Hook	Mr Offer	Hampshire Heathland Project
Mr and Mrs Gibb	Hartley Wintney	Mr Davis	Rural Development Service South east
Mr and Mrs Green	Hartley Wintney	Mr Edgar	Herpetological Conservation Trust
Mr Hazell	Hartley Wintney	Councillor Glen	Hampshire County Council
Ms Innes	Hazeley Lea	Ms Hart	Hampshire Countryside Access Forum
Mr Kear & Ms Brown	Farnham	Mr Hoare	Butterfly Conservation
Mrs Kerr	Hartley Wintney	Mr Hopkins	Hampshire County Council
Mr and Mrs Kilroy	Hartley Wintney	Ms James	English Heritage
Ms Knox-Wright	Hartley Wintney	Mr Milton	Open Spaces Society
Mrs Lewcock	Hook	Mr Mundell	BSBI
Ms Lincoln	Hartley Wintney	Ms Petronella	Hampshire County Council
Mr Lyon	Hazeley Heath	Mr Allen	Hampshire County Council
Mr Mackay	Hazeley Heath	Mr Oates	National Trust
Miss Major	Hartley Wintney	Mr Pellatt	Hampshire County Council, Highways
Ms Mayo	Hartley Wintney	Duty Sergeant	Hampshire Constabulary
Mr & Mrs McDonald	Hartley Wintney	Ms Temple	RSPB
Mr and Mrs McEwan	Hartley Wintney		
Mr Mills	Hazeley Heath		
Mrs Morris	Hartley Wintney		
Mr Phillips	Hazeley Heath		
Mr and Mrs Robinson	Hazeley Heath		
Mr Rose	Fleet		
Mr and Mrs Ryley	Hazeley Heath		

Mr and Mrs Savill	Hazeley Heath		
Mr Sennett	Hazeley Heath		
Mr Seymour	Hazeley Heath		
Mr and Mrs Smith	Hartley Wintney		
Ms Stephens	Hartley Wintney		
Ms Tucker	Hartley Wintney		
Mr Walsh	Hartley Wintney		
Mr and Mrs Watt	Hazeley Heath		
Ms Evans	Hartley Wintney		

3.6 The content of the responses is summarised and ranked in **Table 3.2**, and then discussed in rank order in more detail below.

**Table 3.2 – Ranking of Issues raised in Consultee Responses**

Rank	Issue	Individuals	Local groups	Non-local groups
1	Grazing and fencing			
	Wildlife			
	Access			
2	Landfill site			
	Deer			
	Dog walking			
3	Horse riding			
	Scrub			
	Tree clearance			
	Pathways			
	Education/signs/visitor centres/parking			
	Litter and dog mess			
4	Silver-studded blue butterfly			
	Lowland heath			
	Bracken			
	Invasive species			
	Peace/tranquillity			
	Development			
5	Grassland			
6	Cutting or scraping vegetation			
	Bare ground			
	Burning			
	Woodland			
	Travellers			
	Ponds and ditches			
	Foxes			
	Tarmac tracks			
	Views			

### INTERPRETATION OF THE ISSUES RAISED IN THE RESPONSES

3.7 The interpretation of issues is discussed in order of how they have been ranked. Comments from certain stakeholders have been highlighted to show the range of concerns, likes or dislikes and the names of those expressing their viewpoints. Certain issues were controversial in the sense that some stakeholders were in favour whereas others were against. There was a definite difference of opinion on the majority of issues between local and non-local stakeholders, which is reflected in the different patterns of priorities illustrated above in **Table 3.2**.

#### Rank 1

3.8 The three major issues identified with Hazeley Heath were:

- ◆ Grazing and fencing
- ◆ Wildlife
- ◆ Access

#### *Grazing and fencing*

3.9 Grazing and fencing was one of the main issues discussed by both local and non-local stakeholders. Local stakeholders were generally against and non-local stakeholders were generally in favour of grazing and fencing.

3.10 Why non-local stakeholders considered grazing/fencing to be important:

- ◆ To improve the diversity of the habitat
- ◆ To regenerate young heather which the silver-studded blue caterpillars consume
- ◆ Maintain historic values
- ◆ To maintain specialist heathland and prevent heathland reverting to secondary woodland

3.11 Concerns regarding grazing/fencing:

- ◆ Potential safety issues, including visibility to drivers on B3011
- ◆ Access for visitors to the site could become restricted if fencing is installed
- ◆ If cows are used to graze, there is the fear of people being trampled to death
- ◆ Grazing without fencing could potentially cause the destruction of surfaces/paths

3.12 Some consultation responses noted the issue that permission is required from the Secretary of State for the Environment to erect fencing (even temporary fencing) in order for grazing to proceed.

#### *Wildlife*

3.13 It was generally acknowledged that the protection of wildlife is important from a local and non-local perspective.

3.14 Why stakeholders considered wildlife important to manage:

- ◆ Maintain wildlife links and corridors
- ◆ English Nature's conservation objectives
- ◆ Manage and restore the lowland heathland in order to maintain the habitat types critical for internationally important species
- ◆ From a pleasure point of view (interesting species to look at)

#### *Access*

- 3.15 It was generally acknowledged that access to the heathland should be maintained and free accessibility to all provided. A range of local and non-local stakeholders agreed with this principle.

#### **Rank 2**

- 3.16 The next set of major issues was cited only by local stakeholders and comprises:

- ◆ Landfill site
- ◆ Deer
- ◆ Dog walking

#### *Landfill site*

- 3.17 There are concerns about the emerging rubbish from the landfill site in terms of health and safety and scarring the beauty of the landscape. Those that mentioned their concerns were individuals.
- 3.18 Further studies may need to be undertaken to establish the depth and contents of the landfill to help develop management objectives and processes. Such specialist studies are not included within this commission, although their findings would be relevant.

#### *Deer*

- 3.19 Some local stakeholders appreciated deer and others thought the deer population was too high and wished to see a reduction in numbers.

- 3.20 Reasons why individuals deemed deer important:

- ◆ Browsing of heathland
- ◆ Enjoy the beauty of deer

#### *Dog walking*

- 3.21 Generally dog walkers do not wish cattle/ponies to graze because they or their dogs could get injured by these animals. Dog owners did not want management measures to impede dog walking and many owners wished to be able to freely let dogs off leads.
- 3.22 Negative comments were also made regarding dog walking, but these concentrated on concerns about dog faeces, which are discussed as a separate issue below.

**Rank 3**

3.23 The next set of issues was of medium importance for local stakeholders and low importance for non-local stakeholders:

- ◆ Horse riding
- ◆ Scrub
- ◆ Tree clearance
- ◆ Pathways
- ◆ Education/signs/visitor centres/car parks
- ◆ Litter and dog mess

*Horse riding*

3.24 A local interest group envisaged that the draft management plan would not have impeded horse riding, whereas some individuals believe too many horses produce dung and cause footpaths to become inaccessible by turning them in to bogs.

*Scrub*

3.25 The majority of local and non-local stakeholders wish to see the continuation of scrub clearance, for the following reasons:

- ◆ to ensure access to the site and to ensure that features of the landscape are not obstructed
- ◆ to increase generation of specialist flora
- ◆ Reduction of brambles/nettles especially on the old landfill site
- ◆ Control of ragwort to avoid poisoning grazing animals

3.26 However, generally locals were in favour of a reduction of gorse by mechanical means rather than grazing.

*Tree clearance*

3.27 A representative from a non-local interest group commented that pine species need to be cleared. However, some local stakeholders considered that there was already too much felling.

*Pathways*

3.28 Many individuals commented on the current state of pathways and wished to see an improvement in both quantity and quality, especially wet or damaged paths, particularly those which had been poached by horses and made boggy. Suggestions were made to provide bridle paths to separate pedestrians and horses.

*Education/signs/visitor centres/car parks*

3.29 Both local and non-local stakeholders held positive and negative views:

- ◆ Positive:

- Heathland to be used as an educational resource
- Signs to remind people of the dangers of fire by throwing away cigarette ends, litter etc
- Encourage children by visiting local schools, mailing
- Educate dog walkers to keep their dogs on leads especially during bird nesting season
- ◆ Negative:
  - Objection towards signage as it is visually intrusive
  - Heathland to be maintained as it is and not upgraded to the style of a ‘country park’

#### *Litter and dog mess*

- 3.30 All stakeholders were in accord in wishing for the removal/prevention of litter and dog mess.

#### **Rank 4**

- 3.31 The next set of issues was of medium or no importance:

- ◆ Silver-studded blue butterfly
- ◆ Lowland heath
- ◆ Bracken
- ◆ Invasive species
- ◆ Peace/tranquillity
- ◆ Development

#### *Silver-studded blue butterfly*

- 3.32 Issues such as the silver-studded blue butterfly should perhaps feature under the title of wildlife but because so many people commented on this particular species, it was deemed appropriate to create a separate category. The silver-studded blue butterfly is classified as a high priority species in the south-central England Regional Action plan. It is a UK BAP priority species and requires young heather and bare ground for breeding and sheltered areas of taller heather or young scrub as roosting sites.. Mostly non-local stakeholders commented on this species, with only one local stakeholder appreciating this species. Management solutions were received from various organisations, including:

- ◆ Grazing required to regenerate young heather which the silver-studded blue caterpillars consume
- ◆ Heathland vegetation cutting and bare ground management

#### *Lowland heath*

- 3.33 Some individuals commented on the state of the lowland heath and wished to see prevention against loss of this habitat.

*Bracken*

- 3.34 The management of bracken was mentioned more frequently by local compared with non-local stakeholders. It was mentioned that a reduction of bracken by mechanical means was the preferred method of control.

*Invasive species*

- 3.35 The eradication of Japanese knotweed and rhododendron was more frequently mentioned by local stakeholders.

*Peace and tranquillity*

- 3.36 Mostly local stakeholders noted the importance of Hazeley Heath for its peace and tranquillity and wish to maintain this.

*Development*

- 3.37 Many locals were concerned about restrictions on development around the SPA. This is a wider issue of considerable current debate in the many planning authorities affected by the implications of the SPA designation; however, decisions on the preferred management approach to Hazeley Heath would have little if any influence on planning decisions on other land.

**Rank 5**

- 3.38 The following issue was of low importance:
- ◆ Grassland management

*Grassland*

- 3.39 A representative from a non-local interest group advised that fifty per cent of the grassland should be left uncut each year to accommodate hibernacula for the Marbled White butterfly. This should be cut in the latter half of late July when it is not a caterpillar/chrysalid.

**Rank 6**

- 3.40 The final set of issues was deemed of low or no importance:
- ◆ Cutting/scraping vegetation
  - ◆ Bare ground
  - ◆ Burning
  - ◆ Woodland
  - ◆ Travellers
  - ◆ Ponds and ditches
  - ◆ Foxes
  - ◆ Tarmac tracks
  - ◆ Views

- 3.41 The first three were not mentioned by local stakeholders and only occasionally commented upon by non-locals. The latter two were considered to be management issues by a few locals but not by any non-local stakeholders.

*Cutting or scraping of vegetation*

- 3.42 Cutting or scraping of vegetation is a very important conservation measure for heathland and is a potential alternative or addition to grazing. A member of a non-local interest group noted that it is beneficial for the regeneration of young heather and to support silver-studded blue butterflies.

*Bare ground*

- 3.43 A few conservation bodies noted that the maintenance of bare ground is essential for many invertebrate and small heathland plant species.

*Burning*

- 3.44 Some stakeholders noted that burning can be beneficial for the regeneration of young heather and to support species such as the silver-studded blue butterfly.

*Woodland*

- 3.45 A few locals mentioned the importance of maintaining the mature woodland.

*Travellers*

- 3.46 Travellers that have occupied the land from time to time are a concern to a proportion of locals at a large public meeting.

*Ponds and ditches*

- 3.47 A few individuals would like to see the creation of further ponds and ditches.

*Foxes*

- 3.48 A few individuals wished to see a reduction in number of foxes.

*Tarmac tracks*

- 3.49 A few locals did not appreciate tarmac tracks as access routes to the heath.

*Views*

- 3.50 A few locals noted that they appreciated the views in the heath, but felt that these could be enhanced.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 4.1 On the basis of the responses and on our understanding of the site and its context, we have defined a series of potential Management Aims and given these an initial evaluation against criteria also derived from the responses.
- 4.2 Prior to seeing and analysing the responses to these potential Management Aims, it is not the intention to undertake a ranking of all the Aims into an order of preference at this stage. Instead, we have aimed to show that some Aims are expected to be more or less favoured; those with a more restrictive intent tending to be the least favoured.
- 4.3 Many of the Aims could be combined to varying degrees, particularly those with a remit for parts of the site only, assuming that different parts of the site can be successfully defined for the different Aims. Many of the Aims in the lower part of the tables can also be combined with the recreational and/or nature conservation aims for parts of the site.
- 4.4 The range of issues covered by the consultation carried out by the Hazeley Heath Management Committee have been summarised and discussed, along with those received in response to the draft management plan. While it is evident that there are key themes of interest and key aspects that raise discord, the variety in type and content of the responses is such that this review has not extended to any sort of statistical breakdown. Some respondents have limited themselves to their own specialist interest, whereas others have commented on many aspects.
- 4.5 Grazing & fencing, wildlife and access were ranked as the most frequently raised issues from the correspondence received from local and non-local stakeholders. Grazing & fencing is an issue of how management objectives are met rather than a management aim in itself, but it would influence many aspects of the character and use of the Heath. Careful consideration will need to be given to this issue in the next phase of the study, as it is a particularly contentious issue with strong support but a variety of concerns evident in the consultation exercise.
- 4.6 It is encouraging that the protection of wildlife and the provision of access were common aspirations for the majority of both local and non-local stakeholders. The right balance between these two issues is therefore evident as the central objective in any resultant management plan.
- 4.7 Beyond the general issues of wildlife and access, there were clear differences of prioritisation of the majority of issues between local and non-local stakeholders. Careful consideration will need to be given to these so that a solution that is acceptable to all stakeholders can be achieved.
- 4.8 At this pre-feedback stage, it is recommended that the General Management Aims of most interest for the next stage of the study in identifying and evaluating practicable Management Options would be:
- ◆ Increasing nature conservation value, recreational access and woodland removal, each over defined but not necessarily the same areas of the site; with

- ◆ Reducing the adverse effects of past and current human activity; and
- ◆ Ensuring the continued protection and status of the land.

4.9 It is vital that a balanced set of Aims is identified, so that all interests are reflected.

4.10 The gathering of additional data on the content and character of the landfill site would also be of value in informing the decisions on management options, but this lies outside the scope of this commission.