

Leek and Upper Hulme Military Training Area Integrated Land Management Plan Defence Estates

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) made a commitment that, by the end of 2001, it will have prepared 'Integrated Land Management Plans' (ILMPs) for all of its Training Areas located within National Parks. These Plans are seen as the appropriate means to reconcile the many, sometimes conflicting interests that apply to these Areas.

For example, many Training Areas have significant nature conservation interest and are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and / or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). The MOD has legal commitments relating to these designations and has also made a commitment to conserve wildlife on the land that it manages. However, meeting these commitments has implications for the types and intensity of military training that can be undertaken. The ILMP is the means by which the right balance between these interests is achieved

The process of preparing ILMPs involves undertaking detailed studies into each activity or interest that is relevant to a site. Separate 'component management plans' are prepared for each of these. Following consultation with all relevant stakeholders, an 'integration' process is then carried out, which seeks to achieve the optimum balance between all of the relevant interests.

The Leek and Upper Hulme Training Area lies within the Peak District National Park, a nationally important landscape. Much of the Area falls within the Leek Moors SSSI, which forms part of an SPA, reflecting its internationally important populations of breeding birds, and a proposed SAC. The Area also supports numerous sites of archaeological importance, is extensively used for countryside recreation, is in agricultural use and is, of course, in military use.

Entec was commissioned to undertake detailed vegetation surveys (using the National Vegetation Classification), other ecological surveys, an archaeological survey, a review of access provision and a landscape assessment. The data collected were plotted on a Geographic Information System.

We were then commissioned to prepare component management plans for ecology, landscape, pollution, and recreation and access. The completed plans were used by Defence Estates in the formulation of the full ILMP, which built upon a Management Agreement between the MOD and the Peak District National Park

Authority that covered about two thirds of the Training Area. With the agreement of all interested parties, the ILMP provides the required basis for the successful future management of the Training Area, which will not only enable military training to be carried out but will also meet all of the MOD's legal and voluntary commitments.

*Reconciling military,
economic and
environmental interests*

