
Press Release

DE/02/09

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MOD and Natural England partnership protects environment

Ministry of Defence (MOD) has signed a Declaration of Intent with Natural England (NE) to improve and preserve the natural environment that makes up the Defence estate.

The purpose of the Declaration is to enhance the stewardship of the natural environment, foster biodiversity and safeguard landscape character and archaeological features. The agreement also seeks to facilitate public access to the estate and aims to minimise the environmental impact of defence related activities. It provides a framework for both organisations to work together to achieve this.

Whilst the primary purpose of MOD land is to support military requirements in the interest of national defence, MOD and NE are committed to working together to enable the sustainable management of the rural elements of the Defence estate.

Richard McKinney, Head of Property at Defence Estates, said:

"This agreement reaffirms the excellent working relationship that we already have with Natural England and will allow us to continue to work together to improve the stewardship of the natural environment, foster biodiversity, safeguard landscape character and archaeological features, facilitate safe public access and to seek to minimise the environmental impact of defence-related activities."

Dr Helen Phillips, Chief Executive of Natural England, added:

"The Defence estate contains an extraordinary range of beautiful countryside and habitats and is of enormous value for wildlife. The success of the rare fen violet in Oxfordshire and the increase in public access in the North York Moors National Park are all thanks to the appropriate management

and protection of these areas. This joint Declaration will ensure that we continue to work together to protect the wildlife, landscape and archaeological features of these areas and where possible improve their accessibility for the public's enjoyment."

The agreement was signed by Vice Admiral Tim Laurence, Chief Executive of Defence Estates (DE) on behalf of MOD and Doctor Helen Phillips, Chief Executive of Natural England.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

1. Defence Estates is a Ministry of Defence organisation. On 1 April 2005 it was re-launched with responsibilities for managing the Defence estate as a corporate asset on behalf of the MOD, and for the delivery of estate maintenance, works and services. Defence Estates assumed responsibility for the management and maintenance of the Service Families Accommodation estate in the mainland UK on 1 April 2004, following its merger with the Defence Housing Executive.
2. The Declaration of Intent between MOD and NE is attached for information.
3. Attached photograph shows part of the natural environment that the Declaration will help to protect.

Further Information:

Press enquiries to Defence Estates on: 0121 311 3678

Ministry of Defence website address: <http://www.mod.uk>

Defence Estates website: <http://www.defence-estates.mod.uk>

Or

Natural England Press Office on: 020 7932 2234

Natural England website address: www.naturalengland.org.uk