

Summary Report March 2018

Understanding and quantifying the health and wellbeing value of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths and exploring the potential of partnership working involving private sector organisations

Dr Carolyn Petersen, University of Exeter

This Valuing Nature placement, hosted by Clinton Devon Estates and supervised by Rebecca Lovell (at the European Centre for Environment and Human Health), aimed to understand and quantify the health and wellbeing value of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths using existing visitor data collected by Footprint Ecology¹ supplemented by other secondary data. In addition, it aimed to facilitate knowledge exchange amongst stakeholders; clarify pathways to developing health and wellbeing outcomes; and increase the researcher's knowledge of policy, research and practice in this area. The key activities for the placement were a literature review, an economic valuation using a range of tools, stakeholder interviews and a workshop.

Conclusions:

The Pebblebed Heaths are associated with an **important health and wellbeing value of at least £0.4m** annually relating to physical activity linked to their recreational use. This figure relates only to the minority of visitors who exercise on a regular basis. The **amount all estimated visitors are willing to pay to visit the site** (travel cost) equates to around **£1.9m** annually. The results from the different economic valuation methods are provided below:

Valuation method	Total annual economic value	No. of visits / visitors estimate based on	Age range (if applicable)	Notes & distinguishing features of tool
Travel cost method	£1.9m	422,495 visits	N/A	Based on willingness to pay to get to site
Outdoor Recreational Valuation (ORVal)	£1.7m	571,919 visits	N/A	Based on MENE ² data & travel cost and complex algorithms
WHO Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT)	£0.4m	3097 (regular visitors – 3x30 mins per week; brisk pace)	20-74 yrs	Assesses value of health impact of exercising;
MOVES tool (University of East Anglia / Sport England)	£0.6m ³	3097 (regular visitors – 3x30 mins per week; brisk pace)	16-61+	Similar to HEAT; uses (QALYs); differentiates between age groups

¹ Liley, Panter and Underhill-Day 2016

² Natural England's Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment.

³ The range for this figure is: £326,894 – 682,554 based on different values for walking intensity - 'slow' to 'cross country / hills'. This value is the middle value, brisk walking intensity (4.65 METs).





These estimates **do not include the important value of the mental health benefits** (or qualitative values) associated with visiting the Heaths, as tools for calculating these are still being developed. The MOVES estimates also show that the health and wellbeing benefits as measured by economic value **are much greater for older people**. It is likely that increased targeting of activities on the Heaths would therefore yield greater health and wellbeing benefits. However, **any increased access would need to be balanced with the implementation of appropriate education, visitor management and mitigation measures** to ensure the environmental protection of the site.

Clinton Devon Estates and similar land-based private sector organisations are likely to be well-placed to deliver partnership benefits because of their extensive stakeholder and community networks and the flexibility they have in terms of implementation on their own land. The following **potential for partnerships to increase health and wellbeing benefits** was identified:

- **strategic planning** at county, district and organisational level – e.g. identifying strategic theory of change and evaluation for interventions (behaviour change models);
- **better coordination** of existing activities;
- **consultation of key stakeholders** e.g. disability groups on access – paths, gates etc;
- **increased targeting of activities** to include disadvantaged groups; and
- **increased walks information for the public and inclusive training** for walks leaders – building confidence and allaying safety concerns.

Further research – gaps, opportunities and next steps

The following evidence gaps, opportunities and next steps were identified:

- **Refining the methodology** for how visitor data could be used to estimate health and wellbeing economic impact and what additional data is needed.
- **Informing the design of future visitor surveys** so that they can be used for better calculating health and wellbeing benefits / value. Existing visitor data was collected to inform ecological mitigation rather than health and wellbeing values.
- **Identifying and utilising other data sources** more effectively to inform interventions.
- **Quantifying the mental health benefits** of visiting natural environments.
- Calculating travel cost using the **zonal travel cost method**.
- **Collecting qualitative data** about people's experiences of visiting the Pebblebed Heaths and associated health and wellbeing benefits.

Policy relevance and influence

There is evidence from the literature that **use of natural environments encourages higher levels of physical activity**, and that there are **additional beneficial effects to doing physical activity outdoors** compared to indoor activity. The economic valuations are **robust across different valuation methods**. It is therefore recommended that **policy makers take these public values into account when planning future funding mechanisms** for this site and similar natural environments. This type of valuation could also be **extended to other sites using visitor data** in a **cost-effective way**. However, it is important that economic valuations are used **combined with a better understanding of the qualitative, mental health and non-use values of such sites**.



European Centre for
Environment & Human Health

