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## **Clyst Valley Regional Park Masterplan**

### **Report summary:**

The Clyst Valley Regional Park is an important green space that is complementary to the housing and commercial development in the West End of the district. The Regional Park designation emphasises the importance of establishing high quality landscapes and settings for development, people and wildlife, as set out in Strategy 10 in East Devon District Council's Local Plan.

There are seven objectives for the Regional Park covering people, nature, climate change, water, landscape, heritage and employment. Because of the multi-functional nature of the Regional Park, its size and the majority private ownership of land, a masterplan is needed. The masterplan will support the combination of funding streams that support this landscape scale designation.

The purpose of this masterplan is to set out a long-term, broad guide to how the Regional Park could develop. It sets out the social, environmental and economic context, explaining why the Regional Park should be developed here. It defines which natural and human assets are most important, why, and how they could be nurtured. It lists potential projects and invites stakeholders to identify their priorities so that we can build towards consensus and inform a five-year action plan. It articulates the potential benefits of delivering projects and in so doing, it will be used to support funding bids, attract investors, and to pull in partners and resources to work up and deliver projects.

The masterplan will be a material consideration in assessing planning applications within the Regional Park. It should be used by land owners, developers and their agents as additional guidance on how, and where, green infrastructure can be delivered. It adds detail to Strategy 10 in the Local Plan.

### **Recommendation:**

1. That Members agree the draft Clyst Valley Regional Park Masterplan for public consultation.

### **Reason for recommendation:**

The masterplan is detail supplementary to Strategy 10 – Green Infrastructure in East Devon's West End and is intended to be a material consideration in assessing planning applications. Public consultation will enable communities and stakeholders to provide comments and shape the development of the plan.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action
- Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Finance

- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

### **Financial implications:**

The delivery plan for the Clyst Valley Regional Park does not have any direct financial implications at this stage. Further papers will be presented to Cabinet for proposals that are delivered by the Council. Capital funding for the delivery of a 14ha Countryside Park within the Clyst Valley has been allocated by the Council. This will be funded by S.106 and CIL contributions.

### **Legal implications:**

The Statement of Community Involvement sets out that the Council will consult on 'other policy documents' via a variety of methods however due to Covid-19 and government restrictions it is considered appropriate to also use online communications, with publication on various websites and making hard copies available via local libraries and on request. There are no legal implications from this consultation report other than as set out in the report.

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Medium Impact

**Risk:** Medium Risk; The projects and proposals within the draft masterplan are based on the latest information and evidence. The project proposals are couched in terms of their potential, but it has not been possible to contact every landowner to assess their support of the project proposals. There may therefore be some negative responses from key stakeholders through the consultation process.

### **Links to background information:**

[Draft Clyst Valley Regional Park Masterplan](#)

[Appendix 1 – Full project list](#)

[Appendix 1a – Plan of projects](#)

[Appendix 1b – Plan of projects north west](#)

[Appendix 1c – Plan of projects north east](#)

[Appendix 1d – Plan of projects south west](#)

[Appendix 1e – Plan of projects south east](#)

**Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

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## **Report in full**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1. The concept of the Regional Park originates from the Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy (Exeter & East Devon Growth Point Team, 2009). The GI Strategy was sponsored by East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Teignbridge District Council and Natural England, working in partnership with Devon County Council. In 2013, a GI Board was established to drive forward delivery of the projects within the strategy. In addition to the organisations named above, Devon Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency and the National Trust joined the Board, which was chaired independently. The Strategy was part of the evidence base for the East Devon Local Plan (2013 to 2031).

- 1.2. In 2014, the GI Board commissioned a discussion document on the Clyst Valley Regional Park. What emerged from this was the idea to give the Regional Park traction by applying for funding from the Heritage Lottery for a project focussed on trees. The bid was successful, and 'Great Trees in the Clyst Valley' was born, with the aim of: "encouraging the public to explore, record and restore the heritage of trees in fields, hedges, parks and orchards across nine priority parishes." The project has been a great success, illustrated by the infographic on page 6 of the masterplan.
- 1.3. Keen to maintain the momentum that the partners in this project have achieved, EDDC pursued a second bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This has also been successful and 'Routes for Roots' has now begun with the aim of: "working with the public, charities, landowners and public bodies to research, explore and plan a network of inter-generational, all ability routes. We will use art, performance, and play to enable a wide spectrum of the public to discover their route way heritage. We will create opportunities for young families, inactive people and those suffering from mental ill health to build new trails and improve the quality of the existing network through better surfaces, signage and interpretation."
- 1.4. In parallel with this work, a delivery plan was prepared for the Clyst Valley Trail, which will form the backbone of the new Regional Park. An initial delivery plan was endorsed by EDDC's Strategic Planning Committee in February 2018, but with a request to bring forward an entirely off-road alignment. Consequently, a revised delivery plan is being developed and will be considered by SPC in autumn 2020.

## **2. Process leading up to development of masterplan**

- 2.1. A Task & Finish Group was established to support the development of the masterplan. The T & F Group is supported by officers and councillors from Broadclyst Parish Council, Cranbrook Town Council, Devon County Council, East Devon District Council, Environment Agency, Exeter City Council, LiveWest, National Trust, Natural England, and Sustrans.
- 2.2. To support the development of the masterplan the following engagement activities were undertaken:
  - July 2019 - a questionnaire was sent out via direct email and social media channels with the aim to understand which places people visit in the Clyst Valley; what they regarded as special or unique; and what was understood by the phrase 'regional park'. 80 responses were received to the questionnaire.
  - October 2019 - A Clyst Valley Regional Park stand was created and brought to the Killerton Apple Festival. Conversations were held with more than 200 people and 36 signed up to receive the masterplan once out to consultation. During the weekend, draft visual identity for the Regional Park was also tested.
  - Presentations have been offered to all Parish Council's and Bishop's Clyst, Broadclyst, Cranbrook, Plymtree, West Hill and Whimble all took up that offer between October 2019 and February 2020.
  - Conversations with many of the landowners in the Regional Park have taken place either to explore the possible route of the Clyst Valley Trail, or to broker support for activities delivered during the 'Great Trees in the Clyst Valley' project.

## **3. Consultation**

- 3.1. The consultation will be carried out in accordance with the [Statement of Community Involvement](#). However the process will be adapted due to Covid-19 restrictions, with exhibitions and roadshows being replaced with online communication.
- 3.2. The masterplan will be published on the Clyst Valley Regional Park and East Devon District Council webpages. Printed copies of the document will be available in local library and printed copies will be available on request.
- 3.3. Following the consultation process representations received will be considered and an amended masterplan will be prepared. A report of the revised masterplan will be presented to SPC.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1. The final Clyst Valley Regional Park masterplan will support the implementation of Strategy 10 through the delivery of the Clyst Valley Regional Park. The masterplan provides clarity of the type of development that will be encouraged within this designation, aiding the collaboration which is essential in achieving the broad range of outcomes that are set out in the Local Plan.
- 4.2. This report seeks support from the committee to proceed with the consultation of the draft masterplan. The results of the consultation will be considered and presented to SPC with the final version of the masterplan.