

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of South and East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Border Road, Honiton on 30 October 2019

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.40 pm

23 Public speaking

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

24 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 July 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Alison Slade, Natural England, provided the Committee with an update on progress with Monitoring Petalwort at Dawlish Warren. She would liaise with the Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager to provide a written report to the Committee as soon as possible, when significant progress could be evidenced.

Neil Harris, Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager, gave an update on the staffing requirements of the SEDESMS. He would provide a written update report at the next meeting of the Committee.

25 Declarations of interest

Minute 28 Cllr Martin Wrigley – Personal interest. His house looked over the Estuary. Was a member a treasurer of Cockwood Boat Club.

Minute 28 Cllr Geoff Jung – Personal interest. EDDC Environment Portfolio Holder and former speed boat owner.

26 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

27 Confidential/exempt items

There were no matters which the officers recommended be dealt with in Part B.

28 Monitoring the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy and Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan

The Executive Committee considered the report of the Habitats Regulations Delivery Manager concerning a review of the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy and Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan monitoring programmes. It was acknowledged that monitoring was an essential component of the mitigation approach

and that he considered the current monitoring programme was considered to be robust, sufficient and fit for purpose.

Councillor Martin Wrigley, Teignbridge District Council wished to express his concerns that the report as presented had not answered the questions that he had given at the previous meeting. There was no evidence base and no monitoring of the impact of measures and monitoring of what was being achieved.

He considered that there was the need to achieve behavioural changes by the users of the Exe Estuary. It was crucial that the public supported what we were trying to achieve. Cllr Wrigley felt that there was a failure to market activities that were being carried out. An improved evidence base would lead to greater influence on the Exe Estuary Partnership and other users of the Estuary. If what we are doing was not working we should change the way things were done. In addition he felt that there was no effective monitoring of the effect of each action taken and measure of what they had achieved. The exclusion zones designed to protect wildlife were voluntary and there needed to be understanding of their purpose by users for them to be respected.

During discussions the following points were noted:

- Natural England were happy with the approach being taken.
- Would producing more statistics change the behaviour of users of the estuary?
- Need to persuade estuary users to change their behaviour and avoid disturbing the wildlife.
- It was not cost effective to spend more money on monitoring of the estuary.
- Balance between holidaymakers, environment and estuary users.
- Many estuary users did not like regulation as it affected what they wanted to do on the estuary.
- Could be valuable for Committee members to attend a forum meeting of the Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP) to learn more about the concerns about the operation of the estuary. Although it was acknowledged the people who attend the forum are not necessarily fully representative of users of the estuary.
- Importance of increasing the education of the users of the Exe estuary, possibly in partnership with the Queens Drive Water Sports Centre built by Grenadier.
- Understanding the importance of mitigation measures on the Exe Estuary. Education and marketing were key to changing people's behaviours.
- When taking actions there was the need to inform local residents why we were doing it.
- A need to seek a change to behaviour in the estuary.
- Importance of winning over hearts and minds of estuary users as the codes of conduct were voluntary and needed to be adhered to by consent. This could be achieved by having more evidenced based monitoring.
- The committee's purpose was to mitigate the effect of further development that goes on in such a way that it does not affect the integrity of the Exe estuary.

RESOLVED:

1. that the recommendations presented at the meeting be noted but in the light of discussions at the meeting a further report be presented to the next meeting considering the role of the Executive Committee, the discharge of its legal duties and whether it should undertake further responsibilities to protect the wildlife in the Exe estuary by changing behaviour of users, including improvements to education and marketing strategies.

2. that a representative of the Exe Estuary Management Partnership be asked to make a presentation to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

S Bond (Chairman)
Rachel Sutton
Martin Wrigley

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

G Jung

Officers in attendance:

Naomi Harnett, Principal Projects Manager East Of Exeter
Neil Harris, Habitat Regulation Delivery Manager
Peter Hearn
Fergus Pate
Andrew Wood, East of Exeter Projects Director
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing
Christopher Lane
Alison Slade, Natural England
Anne Mountjoy

Officer apologies:

Ed Freeman

Chairman

Date: