



SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

East Devon District Council
Blackdown House
Border Road
Heathpark Industrial Estate
Honiton
EX14 1EJ

DX 48808 HONITON

Tel: 01404 515616

www.eastdevon.gov.uk

Agenda for South and East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee Tuesday, 17th May, 2022, 2.30 pm

Members of South and East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

Councillors R Sutton, M Wrigley and G Jung

Venue: Council Chamber, Teignbridge District Council, Forde House,
Brunel Road, Newton Abbott TQ12 4XX

Contact: Debbie Meakin 01395 517540; email
dmeakin@eastdevon.gov.uk or tcorns@teignbridge.gov.uk

(or group number 01395 517546)
26 April 2022; reissued 10 May 2022.

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1 Public speaking

There is a fifteen minute period for members of the public to ask questions. Each speaker is restricted to three minutes. Members of the public are required to register to speak using publicspeaking@eastdevon.gov.uk or calling 01395 519970 at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting. Where a question does not relate to an item on the agenda, and a response is required from a member or an officer, the question must be submitted in writing via publicspeaking@eastdevon.gov.uk not less than two working days before the meeting.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 March 2022 (Pages 3 - 5)

3 Apologies

4 Declarations of interest



Exeter
City Council



Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making [declarations of interest](#)

5 Matters of urgency

Information on [matters of urgency](#) is available online

6 Confidential/exempt items

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the Press) have been excluded. There are no items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.

7 2022-23 Annual Business Plan and 5 Year Delivery Plan (Pages 6 - 32)

8 Financial report April 2022 (Pages 33 - 43)

9 South East Devon Visitor Survey 2020-21 (Pages 44 - 155)

10 2021-22 Annual Business Plan - Annual Report (Pages 156 - 172)

11 Habitat mitigation team update report April 2022 (Pages 173 - 177)

12 Risk Register Report 2022 (Pages 178 - 190)

13 Communications report April 2022 (Pages 191 - 202)

14 Warden vehicle (Pages 203 - 210)

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[Decision making and equalities](#)

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EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of South and East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee held at Council Chamber, Teignbridge District Council on 3 March 2022

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 3.00 pm and ended at 4.03 pm

82 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

83 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 October 2021

RESOLVED

The Minutes of the SEDHREC held on 28 October 2021 are confirmed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

84 Declarations of interest

Cllr Martin Wrigley: Minutes 86 to 88: Personal Interest: His house overlooks the estuary, and he is a member and Treasurer of Cockwood Boat Club.

Cllr Geoff Jung: Minutes 87 Personal Interest: He is a board member of the Pebblebed Heaths NNR Advisory Board and also a member of Woodbury Parish Council, the area of which includes part of the pebblebed heath and marsh.

85 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

86 Confidential/exempt items

None.

87 Habitat mitigation team updates

The agenda report provided a regular update from the habitat mitigation delivery team, detailing the initiatives, partnership working and day to day activities of public-facing staff. Continued and effective delivery of the Strategy and the development this enables remained of very high importance to staff and all partners.

The Executive thanked staff for their hard work in the effective delivery of the Strategy and the successful Dawlish dog show.

It was unanimously

Resolved that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the updates provided by the Habitats Mitigation Officers and Devon Loves Dogs project co-ordinator;
2. Receives a further update at the next meeting of the Executive.

88 **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths annual monitoring report**

The report covered the period from 2016 to 2021, the first five years of the strategy delivery. It detailed the condition of the features of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths (EDPH) in relation to the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy. This was important because without robust and effective mitigation which enabled the partner authorities to be certain of no net impact to protected sites, continued development as outlined in respective local plans and within 10km of the heaths was at risk of legal challenge.

The monitoring across all three districts showed that the populations were exceeding targets. The areas of no change identified on the map at page 11 related to private land and not in the Partnership's control.

The Executive thanked staff for their hard work

It was unanimously

Resolved that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the comment and information presented in the report
2. Receives future reports concerning the condition of the features of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths on an annual basis.

89 **Exe Estuary wildlife refuges - next steps**

Consideration was given to the agenda report which set out action following the results of the monitoring programme, presented to the executive in October 2021. The continued objective of the refuges is to prevent recreational disturbance to the protected bird species on the Exe estuary. The 3 year monitoring from 2018 to 2021 evidence that incursions into both refuges decreased during their respective active periods and that the maximum numbers of wildfowl recorded in and around the Exmouth refuge showed an annual increase over the three years of the study.

Paragraphs 3.4 and 3.6 of the report was referred to regarding a broken fence, and planting and screening in the area of the Royal Avenue Exmouth to prevent dogs accessing the refuge and foreshore. Mitigation would be reported at the next meeting.

The appropriate positioning of signage and informative boards was also discussed and that most visitors to the site were happy to follow rules.

The Partnerships Forward Plan advising the major issues coming forward would be updated and published on the website.

It was noted that there was a Dawlish Warren special interest group of the Exe Estuary Management group to oversee the situation of the geotubes not performing as expected.

It was unanimously

Resolved that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the outcome of discussions from the officer working group relating to the performance of wildlife refuges;

2. Keeps the refuges in place and receives annual monitoring reports following the vantage point count methodology as outlined in the Exe Estuary wildlife refuge monitoring programme;
1. Maintains the refuges as voluntary, and that their boundaries applicable time of year, and duration, remain unchanged at this time;
2. Receives further recommendations relating to signage as part of the 2022-23 Annual Business Plan;
3. Notes the comments regarding the future operation and monitoring of refuges (as referenced in sections 3.7 – 3.11 in the agenda report) and that these are considered as part of the Migration Strategy Review;
4. Notes the feedback provided in response to questions asked by members at the October 2021 meeting (in sections 4.1 – 4.7 of the agenda report) and that these are considered as part of the Exe Management Plan 2022-27 review.

Attendance List

Steering Group Members:

Councillor Rachel Sutton, Exeter City Council
Councillor Martin Wrigley, Teignbridge District Council
Councillor Geoff Jung, East Devon District Council

Also in attendance:

Alison Slade, Natural England
Kim Strawbridge, Clinton Devon Estates
Stephanie Parker-Stephenson, Natural England

Officers in attendance:

Trish Corns
Jill Day, Principle Project Manager (Strategic Policy) Exeter City Council
Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management
Naomi Harnett, Enterprise Zone Programme Manager
Fergus Pate, Princicap Growth Point Officer, Teignbridge District Council
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Chair

Date:



SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

2022-23 Annual Business Plan and 5Yr Delivery Plan

*Neil Harris & Naomi Harnett
Growth, Development & Prosperity,
East Devon District Council
April 2022*

Legal comment/advice:

There is no direct comment to be made in relation to this report, each and any individual issue will need to be considered as it arises.

Finance comment/advice:

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Public Document:	Yes
Exemption:	None
Review date for release	None

Recommendations

It is proposed that the Executive Committee:

1. Approves the 2022-23 Annual Business Plan (Appendix A) and the commitments and actions set out therein.
2. Notes the updated 5 Year Delivery Plan also shown in Appendix A.
3. Receives a further report relating to any proposed changes to the mitigation strategy regarding Dawlish Warren and the Exe estuary in relation to the Dawlish Warren Beach Management Scheme. Timing dependent on completion of a review by the Environment Agency.

Equalities impact: Low

Risk: High.

If the 2022-23 Annual Business Plan is not approved there is a high risk that the delivery of the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy would be significantly compromised or delayed. This would put the delivery of the partner Authorities' Local Plans at risk due to their continued legal duties under the Habitat Regulations.

1. Summary

1.1 This paper sets out the principles for the projects which have been recommended as a priority for delivery over the next 12 months by the Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager. These recommendations have been reviewed and agreed by the respective organisations which constitute the Officer Working Group. These projects are contained within the attached Appendix A as the Annual Business Plan (ABP).

1.2 Whilst Covid 19 restrictions have been lifted, there is still a degree of uncertainty as to whether new impacts will emerge from a resurgence or new variant of the virus. Further delay or interruption to delivery cannot be ruled out and there has been careful consideration of revised income forecasts to decide upon the most appropriate course of action with the best available information.

1.3 The ABP has been incorporated into an updated 5 year delivery plan, also contained within the attached Appendix A. This therefore sets out an indicative programme and budget forecast for the short and medium term.

1.4 As with previous business plans, it is important to note that a number of measures included in the 5 year plan are dependent on the continued success (or otherwise) of established measures, such as the Exe Estuary wildlife refuges. Accordingly, projects earmarked for 2023-27 of the 5 year plan should be read in this context, as an indicative guide, rather than a prescription.

1.5 Using the balance of receipts and income forecast from issued planning permissions, measures from the mitigation Strategy (“the Strategy”) are allocated according to the available budget, logical progression of related projects and, where still appropriate, delivery timescales as recommended in the Strategy.

1.6 The last line of each year’s spreadsheet (termed “Balance less expenditure”) in Appendix A refers to the *potential* carry-forward of income once the projected income (3rd line of each spreadsheet) has been received and after allowing for the recommended expenditure. This potential carry-forward is in effect an ongoing fund which sets aside revenue income over a period of time to fund the ongoing mitigation projects over their intended 80 year lifespan. This is to ensure mitigation in-perpetuity as per the Strategy remit.

1.7 Measures recommended in the 2022/23 ABP seek to maintain and build on the projects delivered in the preceding plans, such as the third and final phase of the Pebblebed Heaths visitor access improvements. The timing of delivery of these projects is guided by the updated 5 year Delivery Plan and where there is logic or merit in the sequential, co-ordinated delivery of mitigation projects, seeks to build on work already completed (or due for completion).

2.0 Dawlish Warren / Beach Management Scheme

2.1 By now, members will be familiar with the Beach Management Scheme (BMS) review at Dawlish Warren currently underway by the Environment Agency (EA).

2.2 A pause in any new significant spend on projects at Dawlish Warren which could potentially be affected by further storm action or erosion at the distal end of the Warren in the short to medium term is still in effect. This is intended to ensure that investments are as effective as possible, both in terms of cost and mitigation impact.

2.3 The EA review of the BMS is now consulting with stakeholders about a number of different options at the Warren. Therefore it remains a work in progress and still too early to make further recommendations to the Committee.

2.4 This review remains critical to understanding what further changes might be anticipated, over what timescale, what management is proposed for the site and how this might affect the mitigation strategy. A future report to the Committee will enable a plan for the future to deliver cost-effective mitigation and ensure that the authorities continue to meet their legal obligations

2.5 Whilst a pause in significant spend remains prudent, there are three items of smaller investment which concern ongoing monitoring of key species and habitat present onsite.

2.6 One of the key species found at Dawlish Warren is Petalwort, an Annex II species¹ under the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation that covers the reserve. As previously reported², it is considered highly likely that without intervention and monitoring, this key species may disappear from the site entirely.

2.7 Whilst the site Rangers continue to progress attempts at translocating samples of the plant³ to trial areas of the site, it is 3 years since the 2019 report. Following the recommended Strategy monitoring timeframe, it is recommended that an updated petalwort monitoring report is funded to provide an up to date assessment of the plant at the Warren. Estimated cost: £3000.

2.8 Similarly, it has been 3 years since a botanical survey⁴ of the Warren was conducted and regular monitoring of vegetation is recommended. Using the methodology and baseline results from the previous survey, it will be possible to identify any emerging trends in terms of visitor pressure from fertility (dog fouling) and/or trampling. This enables an ongoing review of any particular areas which would benefit from management/access intervention. Estimated cost: £5000.

2.9 The Rangers have reported evolving pressures around the site, with lowering of beach levels along the coastal shoreline resulting in large numbers of people, notably summer beach visitors looking for dry sandy areas within the dunes, particularly around high water. This can have a significant negative impact on developing strandline and mobile dune ecological communities. Fencing along the front already exists, but much of this is plain post and wire which some visitors are climbing through to set up for the day. The erection of chestnut paling will help to reduce this happening.

2.10 In addition the changing foreshore has altered where the protected bird flocks can roost, with more now utilising the estuary shoreline. These roosts are particularly vulnerable to disturbance from visitors walking the shoreline. The Rangers require paling to protect the most important, and vulnerable roosts, particularly at the distal end of the sandspit. Estimated cost: £1500

Proposed spend: £9500, comprised of:

Petalwort monitoring - £3000

Botanical survey - £5000

Fencing - £1500

¹ A list of species which have priority status (a priority species is one in danger of disappearance and for which there is a particular responsibility to conserve).

² Monitoring Petalwort at Dawlish Warren, July 2019

³ See Annual Business Plan Progress report, April 2022

⁴ Dawlish Warren NNR botanical survey 2019

3. Exe Estuary leaflets and Personal Aircraft Code of Conduct.

3.1 There are some excellent existing leaflets for the Exe Estuary, including the Exe Explorer, an Exe Activities leaflet and an Exe Wildlife leaflet, and these are widely distributed and available for download from the Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP) Website.

3.2 The leaflets currently include a map of the estuary and information on where to go, sources of additional information and guidance. The leaflet include a map of the zones and a section on avoiding disturbance to wildlife. There is cross reference to codes of conduct and information for users wanting to undertake particular activities. This leaflet works particularly well as an overview and has a good balance of promoting the estuary, providing information and guiding visitors on how to behave to minimise their impacts.

3.3 Although the leaflets have been updated in respect of the Exe wildlife refuges and codes of conduct, it is recommended that this can be improved to ensure key mitigation messages are included. It is necessary to ensure the leaflets stay 'live'. Estimated cost for updates and reprints: £6,000.

3.4 Codes of conduct set out clearly how users undertaking a particular activity should behave and are most relevant to sporting activities. Developing good, clear codes with user groups ensures that safety issues, insurance, consideration of other users and nature conservation issues can be accommodated, ensuring users can enjoy their chosen activities while minimising any impacts.

3.5 There have been ongoing reports of aerial disturbance to migratory birds on the Exe Estuary over the last few years. The creation of a code of conduct can provide guidance on how to behave to minimise these impacts and can be created as part of the existing suite of codes of conduct identified in the Strategy.

3.6 It is proposed that the EEMP, working alongside the Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager, would work with Natural England and other partners in a coordinated manner. This would involve engaging with local clubs and organisations to ensure their input into the project, to align with existing best practice. The EEMP has already established contact with an individual involved with recent disturbance incidents, who is keen to address this issue through a code of conduct and promotion via local clubs.

3.7 Since the EEMP were commissioned by the Executive Committee to create the existing suite of Exe Estuary codes, they are well placed to create the Code of Conduct for Personal Aircraft (including drones) in a cost and time effective manner. This would also ensure consistency with existing codes in terms of the design and content. The new code will be written in a friendly style, whilst promoting key messages in a manner compatible with the overall objectives of both the Mitigation Strategy and the Exe Estuary Management Plan.

3.8 The Exe Estuary Officer would ensure that the code of conduct receives approval from both the Executive Committee and the EEMP. Two options are offered for the undertaking of this work, either a focussed consultation with the stakeholders involved with this specialist activity, or a wider public consultation. Details and quotes for the two options are included in Appendix B for consideration of the HREC.

3.9 Having considered the scope of the proposal and both options, the officer working group recommends option 1 (focussed consultation with specific stakeholders) to the Executive Committee. However, should members wish to conduct a wider consultation, this option is also costed.

Recommended option estimate: £1,534. (Option 2 estimate: £2850).

Proposed spend: £7,534 (or £8,850), comprised of:

Exe leaflets update and reprint - £6,000.

Personal aircraft code of conduct - £1,534 (or £2,850)

4.0 Pebblebed Heaths visitor access improvements.

4.1 As reported separately, Phase 1 of the visitor access improvement works are completed, with Phase 2 awaiting planning approval at East Devon District Council.

4.2 A phased approach achieves a number of different objectives in terms of objectives, preparation, implementation and communication:

- Allows prioritisation of works which encourage visitors towards car parks where habitats are more robust and away from more dispersed access points.
- Economies of scale can be achieved in terms of materials and labour.
- Tenders become more attractive due to the amount of expenditure.
- Proposed phasing of works would appeal to different sized contractors.
- Budget can be allocated without risking funding needed to ensure ongoing delivery of other projects.
- Phased improvements enable continued access to the heaths with as little disruption as possible.
- Works can be organised so as to provide significant improvements prior to any scheduled restrictions of access in other areas of the heaths.
- Planning applications can apply to whole phases rather than per proposal.
- Communication to visitors and other arrangements about the works can be more easily co-ordinated.
- A clear, phased communications plan can be implemented to inform the wider public about the works and act as a reminder for why they are needed.

4.3 With works on the ground to implement phase 2 anticipated in summer/autumn 2022 and funding secured⁵, it is timely and appropriate to undertake phase 2 improvements this year. Appendix C illustrates the proposed schedule of improvements and the estimated budget requirements per year.

4.4 As is the case throughout the scheme, cost estimates include a 15% consultancy fee in order to cover project management of all aspects of the works. This is considered a reasonable allowance based on experience of previous phases and other engineering projects of a similar scale and complexity.

4.5 This fee includes design development, planning support, appointment/overview of contractors to undertake the work, liaison with the Delivery Manager and Pebblebed Heaths site manager and a contingency reserve. Issues of capacity and staff resource prohibit both Clinton Devon Estates and EDDC from undertaking the project management work itself.

4.6 Appendix D is included in order to provide an overview of the current situation at each site and the intended end result. Appendix E provides an overview map of the whole of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths SPA/SAC.

4.7 According to the principles established in the Visitor Access Advisory Report⁶ the proposals remain focused on improving surfacing, layout, signage and entrance points to the heaths. They are aimed at making areas safer to access, easier to park and easier to find, whilst at the same time enabling greater communication of key messages and therefore promoting positive behavioural change.

Proposed spend: £175,859, comprised of:

Works to car parks – Phase 3 - up to £175,859

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 This paper seeks approval for the 2022/23 Annual Business Plan in the context of an updated 5 year Delivery Plan.

5.2 Further work remains in order to fully understand the current (and likely future) situation at Dawlish Warren and the Exe estuary. Any potential implications for the protected sites as they relate to the mitigation Strategy will be the subject of a future report to the Executive, following discussion between relevant organisations including the EA, Natural England, TDC, Devon Wildlife Trust and the Exe Estuary Management Partnership.

5.3 The recommendations also build on previous reports relating to behavioural change initiatives and survey work on the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths.

⁵ See also 2022 Financial Report.

⁶ See East Devon Pebblebed Heaths visitor access consultation, Jan 2020.

Growth, Development and Prosperity
East Devon District Council,

April 2022

Natural England comment:

Natural England is currently awaiting confirmation of funding for SSSI improvement projects from Defra. We understand that a bid will be made for funding the translocation of petalwort, but the bid will be competing with other project proposals. The proposed repeat of the petalwort survey is welcomed.

	Dawlish Warren	Exe Estuary	Pebblebed Heaths	Cranbrook	Infrastructure funded from CIL	Totals
2022-23						-
Projected income	91,000.00	460,133.63	313,530.13		117,123.00	2,212,488.76
Total potential budget	735,471.44	943,124.03	752,426.90	222,727.91	822,826.73	5,383,372.81
Dog project	666.67	666.67	666.67			2,000.00
Delivery manager	20,333.33	20,333.33	20,333.33			61,000.00
Dog project officer	6,866.67	6,866.67	6,866.67			20,600.00
Dog project vehicle	625.00	625.00	625.00			1,875.00
2 Wildlife Wardens	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00			60,000.00
Warden Vehicle	666.67	666.67	666.67			2,000.00
Monitoring support	90.75	90.75	90.75			272.24
Accountancy support	1,054.96	1,054.96	1,054.96			3,164.88
Communications Officer	3,012.13	3,012.13	3,012.13			9,036.40
Boat		7,000.00				7,000.00
Repay SANGS						500,000.00
Exe & Dawlish Warren						
Regular Warren Newsletter	500.00	500.00				1,000.00
Exe WeBS	500.00	500.00				1,000.00
DW Vegetation monitoring	5,000.00					5,000.00
DW Petalwort monitoring	3,000.00					3,000.00
Personal aircraft code of conduct	767.00	767.00				1,534.00
Updates of the Exe Estuary leaflets (28)		6,000.00				6,000.00
Pebblebed Heaths						
Infrastructure						
Works to car parks Phase 3					176,000.00	176,000.00
Dog bins					3,370.00	3,370.00
Total expenditure	63,083.17	68,083.17	53,316.17	-	179,370.00	863,852.51
Balance less expenditure	672,388.26	875,040.86	699,110.72	222,727.91	643,456.73	4,519,520.30

Carry-forward (including potential)	672,388.26	875,040.86	699,110.72	222,727.91	643,456.73	4,519,520.30
2023-24						-
Projected income	110,500.00	502,676.64	314,238.14		92,841.00	2,301,359.78
Total potential budget	782,888.26	1,377,717.50	1,013,348.86	222,727.91	736,297.73	6,820,880.08
						-
Dog project	666.67	666.67	666.67			2,000.00
Delivery manager	20,740.00	20,740.00	20,740.00			62,220.00
Dog project officer	7,004.00	7,004.00	7,004.00			21,012.00
Dog project vehicle	208.33	208.33	208.33			625.00
2 Wildlife Wardens	19,413.56	19,413.56	19,413.56			58,240.69
Warden Vehicle	666.67	666.67	666.67			2,000.00
Monitoring support	92.56	92.56	92.56			277.68
Accountancy support	1,076.06	1,076.06	1,076.06			3,228.17
Communications Officer	3,012.13	3,012.13	3,012.13			9,036.40
Boat		7,000.00				7,000.00
Repay SANGS						500,000.00
						-
5-year plan items						-
Exe & Dawlish Warren						
DW Erosion monitoring	1,000.00					1,000.00
BBQ info at local retailers	50.00					50.00
Regular Warren Newsletter	500.00	500.00				1,000.00
New interpretation boards (five boards) (26)		1,250.00				1,250.00
Update signs at public slipways (17)		1,000.00				1,000.00
Updates of the Exe Estuary leaflets (28)		-				-
						-
Pebblebed Heaths						-
Education work with schools (24)			4,656.00			4,656.00
Infrastructure						
Dog bins					3,370.00	3,370.00
Interpretation Boards (Ten boards) (23)					2,000.00	2,000.00
Boardwalks/Path surfacing (24)					5,000.00	5,000.00
Total expenditure	54,429.98	62,629.98	57,535.98	-	10,370.00	684,965.95
Balance less expenditure	728,458.28	1,315,087.51	955,812.88	222,727.91	725,927.73	6,135,914.12

Carry-forward (including potential)	728,458.28	1,315,087.51	955,812.88	222,727.91	725,927.73	6,135,914.12
2024-25						-
Projected income	110,500.00	365,798.03	218,674.03		80,934.00	1,632,740.06
Total potential budget	838,958.28	1,680,885.54	1,174,486.91	222,727.91	806,861.73	7,768,654.18
						-
Dog project	666.67	666.67	666.67			2,000.00
Delivery manager	21,154.80	21,154.80	21,154.80			63,464.40
Dog project officer	7,144.08	7,144.08	7,144.08			21,432.24
Dog project vehicle	625.00	625.00	625.00			1,875.00
2 Wildlife Wardens	19,801.84	19,801.84	19,801.84			59,405.51
Warden Vehicle	666.67	666.67	666.67			2,000.00
Monitoring support	94.41	94.41	94.41			283.24
Accountancy support	1,097.58	1,097.58	1,097.58			3,292.74
Communications Officer	3,012.13	3,012.13	3,012.13			9,036.40
Boat		7,000.00				7,000.00
Repay SANGS						
Exe and Dawlish Warren						-
DW Erosion monitoring	1,000.00					1,000.00
BBQ info at local retailers	50.00					50.00
Regular Warren Newsletter	500.00	500.00				1,000.00
New interpretation boards (five boards) (26)		1,250.00				1,250.00
Update signs at public slipways (17)		1,000.00				1,000.00
Pebblebed Heaths						
Education work with schools (24)			4,656.00			4,656.00
Infrastructure						
Dog bins					3,370.00	3,370.00
Interpretation Boards (Ten boards) (23)					2,000.00	2,000.00
Boardwalks/Path surfacing (24)					5,000.00	5,000.00
						-
Total expenditure	55,813.17	64,013.17	58,919.17	-	10,370.00	732,683.46
						-
Carry-forward	783,145.11	1,616,872.37	1,115,567.74	222,727.91	796,491.73	7,035,970.72
Balance less expenditure	783,145.11	1,616,872.37	1,115,567.74	222,727.91	796,491.73	7,035,970.72

Carry-forward (including potential)	783,145.11	1,616,872.37	1,115,567.74	222,727.91	796,491.73	7,035,970.72
2025-26						-
Projected income	94,250.00	213,255.59	106,507.59		36,384.00	872,115.18
Total potential budget	877,395.11	1,830,127.96	1,222,075.33	222,727.91	832,875.73	7,908,085.90
						-
Dog project	666.67	666.67	666.67			2,000.00
<i>Delivery manager</i>	21,577.90	21,577.90	21,577.90			64,733.69
<i>Dog project officer</i>	7,286.96	7,286.96	7,286.96			21,860.88
<i>Dog project vehicle</i>	625.00	625.00	625.00			1,875.00
2 Wildlife Wardens	20,197.87	20,197.87	20,197.87			60,593.62
Warden Vehicle	666.67	666.67	666.67			2,000.00
Monitoring support	96.30	96.30	96.30			288.90
Accountancy support	1,119.53	1,119.53	1,119.53			3,358.59
Communications Officer	3,012.13	3,012.13	3,012.13			9,036.40
Boat		7,000.00				7,000.00
Repay SANGS						-
						-
Exe and Dawlish Warren						-
Vegetation monitoring	5,000.00					5,000.00
Petalwort monitoring	3,000.00					3,000.00
DW Erosion monitoring	1,000.00					1,000.00
BBQ info at local retailers	50.00					50.00
Regular Warren Newsletter	500.00	500.00				1,000.00
New interpretation boards (five boards) (26)		1,250.00				1,250.00
Update signs at public slipways (17)		1,000.00				1,000.00
Pebblebed Heaths						-
Education work with schools (24)			4,656.00			4,656.00
Cross site						
Visitor numbers monitoring & visitor behaviour	4,000.00	4,000.00	4,000.00			12,000.00
Infrastructure						-
Interpretation Boards (Ten boards) (23)					2,000.00	2,000.00
Boardwalks/Path surfacing (24)					5,000.00	5,000.00
Dog bins					3,370.00	3,370.00
Total expenditure	68,799.03	68,999.03	63,905.03	-	10,370.00	212,073.08
						-
Carry-forward	808,596.08	1,761,128.93	1,158,170.30	222,727.91	822,505.73	7,696,012.82
Balance less expenditure	808,596.08	1,761,128.93	1,158,170.30	222,727.91	822,505.73	7,696,012.82

Carry-forward (including potential)	808,596.08	1,761,128.93	1,158,170.30	222,727.91	822,505.73	7,696,012.82
2026-27						-
Projected income	109,850.00	306,445.76	185,511.76		70,854.00	1,396,153.52
Total potential budget	918,446.08	2,067,574.69	1,343,682.06	222,727.91	893,359.73	9,092,166.34
						-
Dog project	666.67	666.67	666.67			2,000.00
<i>Delivery manager</i>	<i>22,009.45</i>	<i>22,009.45</i>	<i>22,009.45</i>			66,028.36
<i>Dog project officer</i>	<i>5,574.53</i>	<i>5,574.53</i>	<i>5,574.53</i>			16,723.58
<i>Dog project vehicle</i>	<i>625.00</i>	<i>625.00</i>	<i>625.00</i>			1,875.00
2 Wildlife Wardens	20,601.83	20,601.83	20,601.83			61,805.49
Warden Vehicle	666.67	666.67	666.67			2,000.00
Monitoring support	98.23	98.23	98.23			294.68
Accountancy support	1,141.92	1,141.92	1,141.92			3,425.76
Communications Officer	3,012.13	3,012.13	3,012.13			9,036.40
Boat		7,000.00				7,000.00
Repay SANGS						-
						-
Exe and Dawlish Warren						-
DW Erosion monitoring	1,000.00					1,000.00
BBQ info at local retailers	50.00					50.00
Regular Warren Newsletter	500.00	500.00				1,000.00
New interpretation boards (five boards) (26)		1,250.00				1,250.00
Update signs at public slipways (17)		1,000.00				1,000.00
Pebblebed Heaths						-
Education work with schools (24)			4,656.00			4,656.00
Cross-site						-
Visitor numbers monitoring & visitor behaviour	4,000.00	4,000.00	4,000.00			12,000.00
Infrastructure						-
Dog bins					3,370.00	3,370.00
Interpretation Boards (Ten boards) (23)					2,000.00	2,000.00
Boardwalks/Path surfacing (24)					5,000.00	5,000.00
						-
Total expenditure	59,946.42	68,146.42	63,052.42	-	10,370.00	201,515.27
						-
Carry-forward	858,499.65	1,999,428.27	1,280,629.63	222,727.91	882,989.73	8,890,651.07
Balance less expenditure	858,499.65	1,999,428.27	1,280,629.63	222,727.91	882,989.73	8,890,651.07

Exe Estuary Management Partnership Project Proposal: Code of Conduct for Personal Aircraft

Introduction

The Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP) takes an impartial approach, to help ensure that there is a balance between human use and the protected nature of the Exe. The role of the Partnership is to coordinate the management of the estuary, on behalf of local authorities, government agencies and conservation, commercial and recreational interest groups balancing competing demands and addressing any conflicts as they arise. The EEMP produces and coordinates the delivery of the [Exe Estuary Management Plan](#) which details management measures to guide key and statutory organisations in delivering their statutory duties in a co-ordinated manner, including the SPA management scheme. The EEMP also acts as a contact point for local communities of the estuary and promotes and leads on consultations where relevant.

The EEMP has a history of working closely with the Habitat Regulations Executive Committee to jointly mitigate for the potential impacts of new housing development on the Exe Estuary and Dawlish Warren and has carried out several pieces of work on behalf of the HREC. The EEMP is able to offer cost effective approaches to management on the estuary with established routes of public engagement.

Code of Conduct for Personal Aircraft

Codes of conduct set out clearly how users undertaking a particular activity should behave and are most relevant to sporting activities. Developing good, clear codes with user groups ensures that safety issues, insurance, consideration of other users and nature conservation issues can be accommodated, ensuring users can enjoy their chosen activities while minimising any impacts.

There have been ongoing reports of aerial disturbance to migratory birds on the Exe Estuary over the last few years. The creation of a code of conduct can provide guidance on how to behave to minimise these impacts and can be created as part of the existing suite of codes of conduct identified in the Mitigation Strategy. The EEMP, working alongside the HREC, would work with Natural England and our other partners in a coordinated manner, engaging with local clubs and organisations to ensure their input into the project to align with existing best practice. The EEMP has already established contact with an individual who was involved with recent disturbance incidents, who is keen to work with us in addressing this issue through a code of conduct and promotion via local clubs.

Since the EEMP were commissioned by the HREC to create the existing suite of codes, we are well placed to create the Code of Conduct for Personal Aircraft (including drones) in a cost and time effective manner, whilst ensuring consistency in their design and content with other codes. The new code will be written in a friendly style, whilst promoting integral HREC messages in a manner compatible with the overall objectives of both the Mitigation Strategy and the Exe Estuary Management Plan. The Exe Estuary Officer will ensure that the code of conduct receives approval from both the HREC and the EEMP.

Two options are offered for the undertaking of this work, either a focussed consultation with the stakeholders involved with this specialist activity, or a wider public consultation. Details and quotes for the two options are below for consideration of the HREC.

Quote for Delivery

Quote based on previous 2018 costs of creating codes of conduct.

There are two options available for the HREC to consider:

Quote 1: Based upon focussed consultation with all relevant bodies, clubs and only stakeholders who are involved with this activity, seeing as this is a specialist activity. This code of conduct will promote existing guidance with no new restrictions, so wider public consultation may not be required.

Format	Time committed by Officer *	Additional costs	Estimated Cost
Consultation meetings – likely to be 3 virtual meetings (consultation organisation, drafting and administration)	15 hours	Potential costs for printed material covered by Devon County Council Additional venue / refreshments / travel costs if meetings take place in person	EEO = £615
Creation of Code of Conduct	6 hours	Design = £200 (A3 leaflet, amendments, A4 electronic version) Print = £60 (for 200 copies) – increased costs if HREC require more copies	EEO = £246 Design & print = £260 (dependant on more accurate quotes)
Email bulletins / correspondence	Estimated at 3 hours	N/A	EEO = £123
Website www.exe-estuary.org Social Media @Exeestuary	4 hours to promote project, any consultation and final code, converting to web friendly and accessible version	Possible web support costs absorbed by Devon County Council as host body	EEO = £164
Newsletter	2 hours to draft articles for relevant editions	Design costs £300 / edition Printing costs £412 / edition Design & print cost per page = £44.50	EEO = £82 Design & print (1 page) = £44.50
Exe Estuary Forum Events	Promotion at Summer Stakeholder Forum (September 2021): no cost unless consultation required Promotion at EEMP attended events: no cost	Venue = 0 Catering for Winter Forum covered by EEMP	0
		Mileage & subsistence	0
		Total	£1534.50

Quote 2: Based upon consultation with all relevant bodies, clubs and stakeholders, including a wider public consultation with an online six-week feedback opportunity through the EEMP website. Should this option be requested by the HREC at a later date, the additional costs would need to be covered.

Format	Time committed by Officer *	Additional costs	Estimated Cost
Consultation meetings – likely to be 5 virtual meetings (consultation organisation, drafting and administration)	25 hours	Potential costs for printed material covered by Devon County Council Additional venue / refreshments / travel costs if meetings take place in person	EEO = £1,025
Creation of Code of Conduct	6 hours	Design = £200 (A3 leaflet, amendments, A4 electronic version) Print = £60 (for 200 copies) - increased costs if HREC require more copies	EEO = £246 Design & print = £260 (dependant on more accurate quotes)
Email bulletins / correspondence	Estimated at 10 hours	N/A	EEO = £410
Website www.exe-estuary.org Social Media @Exeestuary	10 hours to promote project, any consultation and final code, converting to web friendly and accessible version	Possible web support costs absorbed by Devon County Council as host body	EEO = £410
Newsletter	4 hours to draft articles for relevant editions	Design costs £300 / edition Printing costs £412 / edition Design & print cost per page = £44.50	EEO = £164 Design & print (2 pages) = £89
Exe Estuary Forum Events	Consultation at Summer Stakeholder Forum (September 2021): 6 hours Promotion at Exe Winter Forum (February 2022): no cost Promotion at EEMP attended events: no cost	Venue = 0 Catering for Winter Forum covered by EEMP	EEO = £246
		Mileage & subsistence	0
		Total	£2850.00

EEO = Exe Estuary Officer

* Hourly rate & overheads = £41.00

(Additional annual pay rises and inflation may be applied for subsequent financial years)

Project	Capital
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2020-21	
Four firs works	£ 77,180
Fryings pans works	£ 9,425
Stowford works	£ 7,873
Joneys works	£ 46,651
Consultancy fees@ 15%	£ 21,169
Total	£ 162,298

2021-22		Entrance	View	Trail
Estuary (entrance, view & trail) works	£ 76,541	£ 42,702	£ 13,839	£ 20,000
Castle works	£ 18,519			
Warren works	£ 46,033			
Consultancy @ 15%	£ 21,164			
Total	£ 162,257			

2022-23	
Uphams work	£ 24,447
Model air works	£ 67,534
Wheathill works	£ 41,528
Squabmoor works	£ 19,412
Consultancy @ 15%	£ 22,938
Total	£ 175,859

Overall total	£ 500,414
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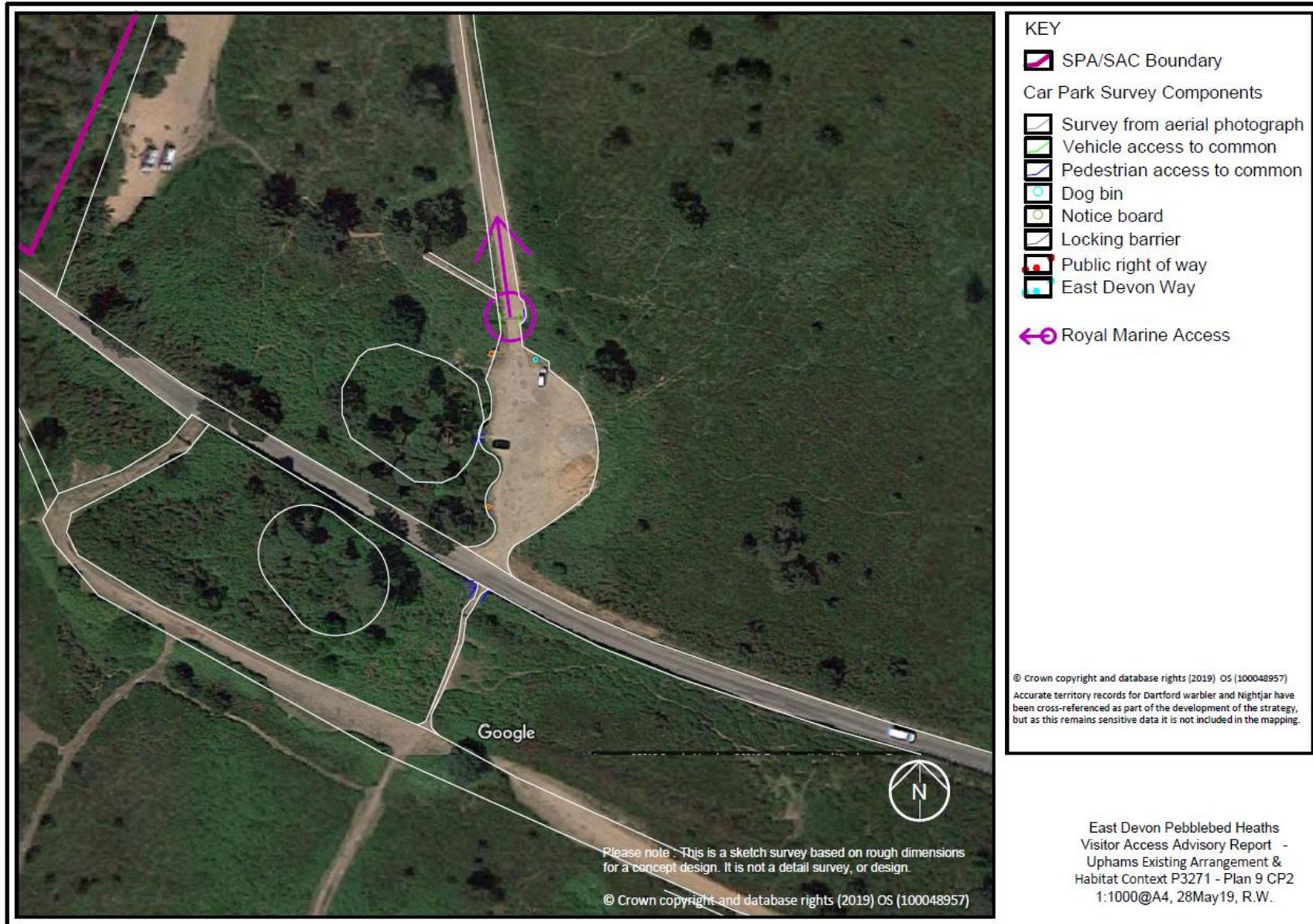
Note that these original estimates include signage on a per car park basis rather than as one project (see 2020-21 and 2021-22 ABPs). The overall budgets remain the same.

Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

2022-23 Annual Business Plan and 5Yr Delivery Plan: Appendix D - Current and proposed car park arrangements:

Uphams – current arrangement

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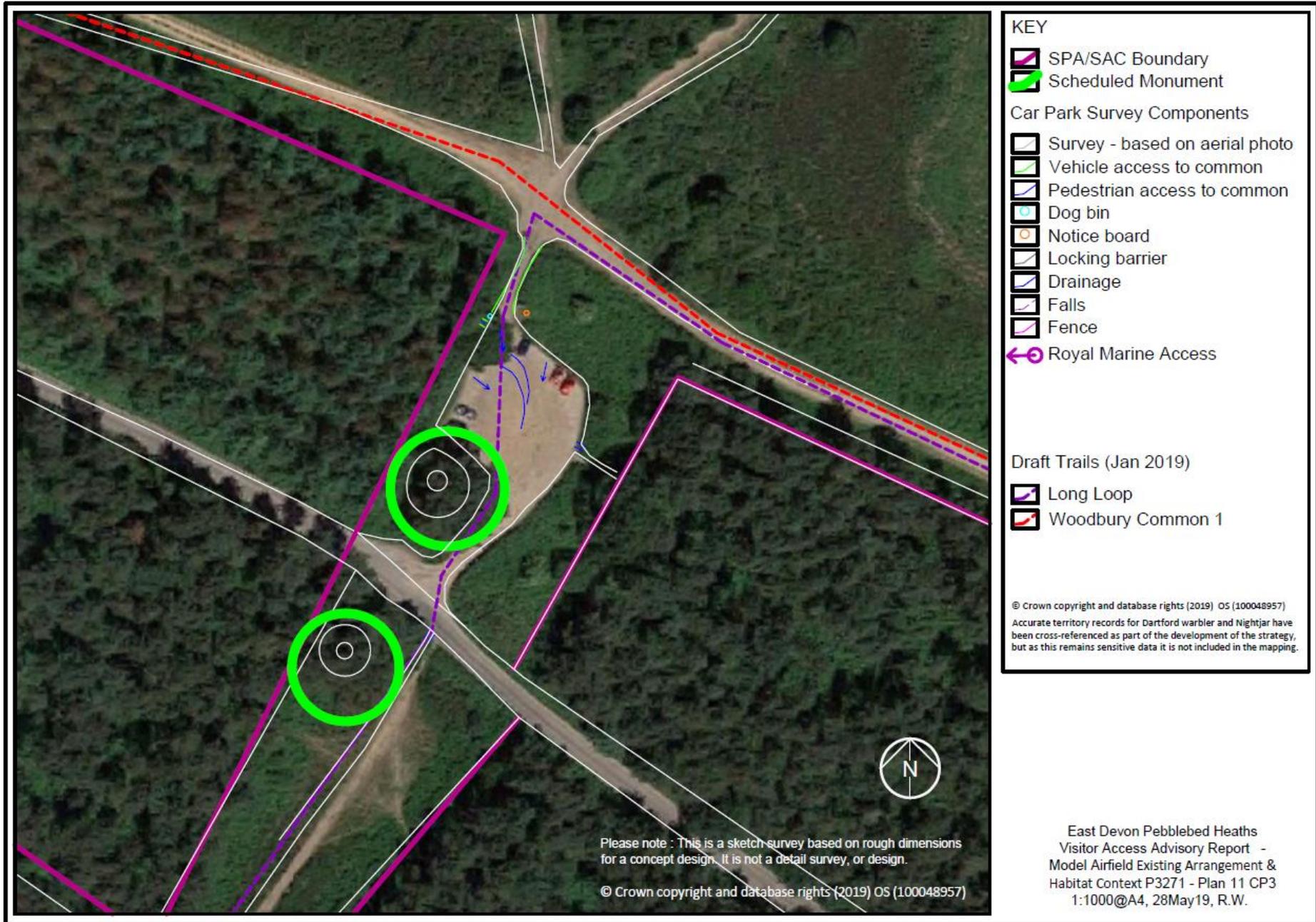


Please note - This is a sketch survey based on rough dimensions for a concept design. It is not a detail survey, or design.

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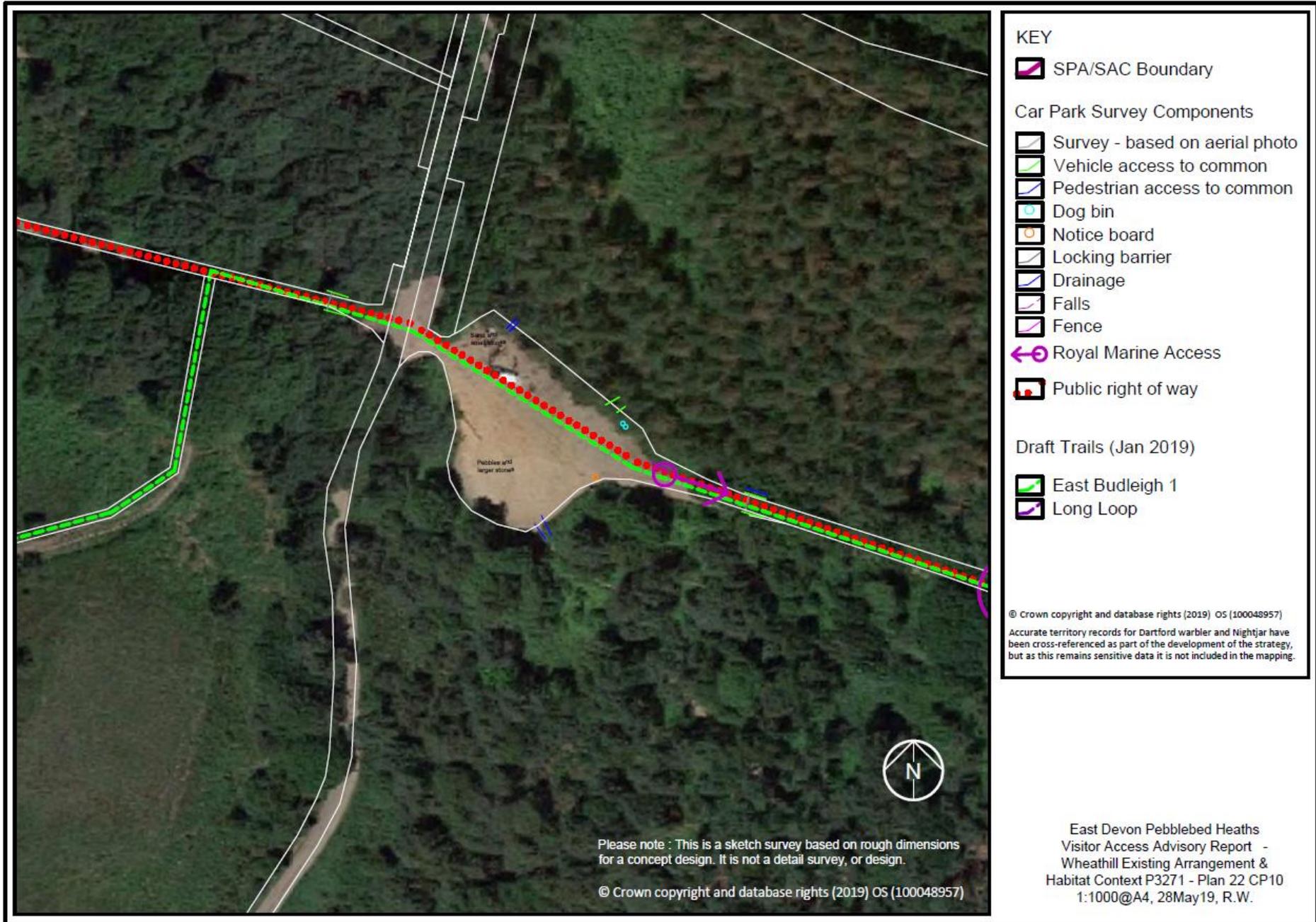


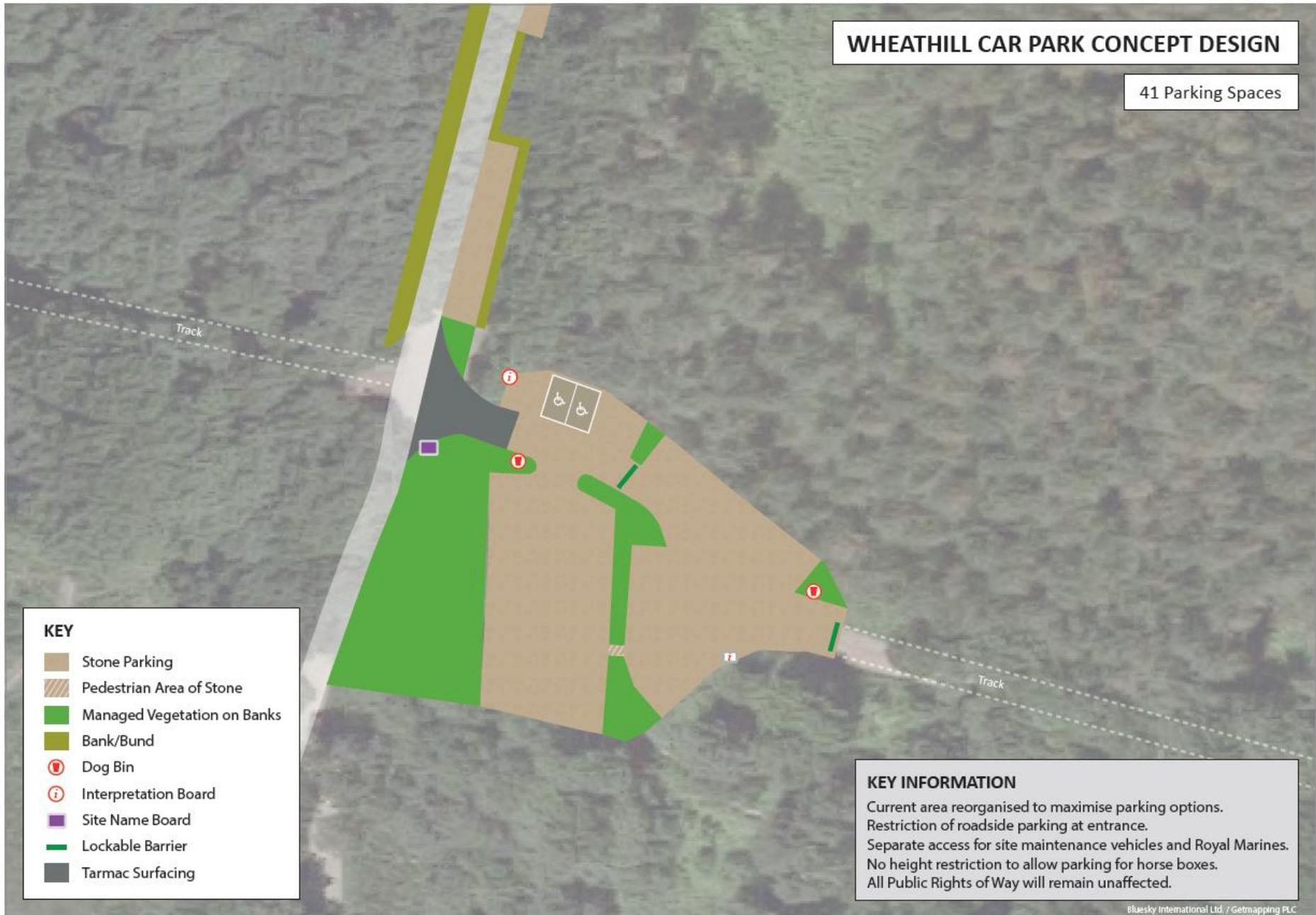
Model Air – current arrangement





Wheathill – current arrangement





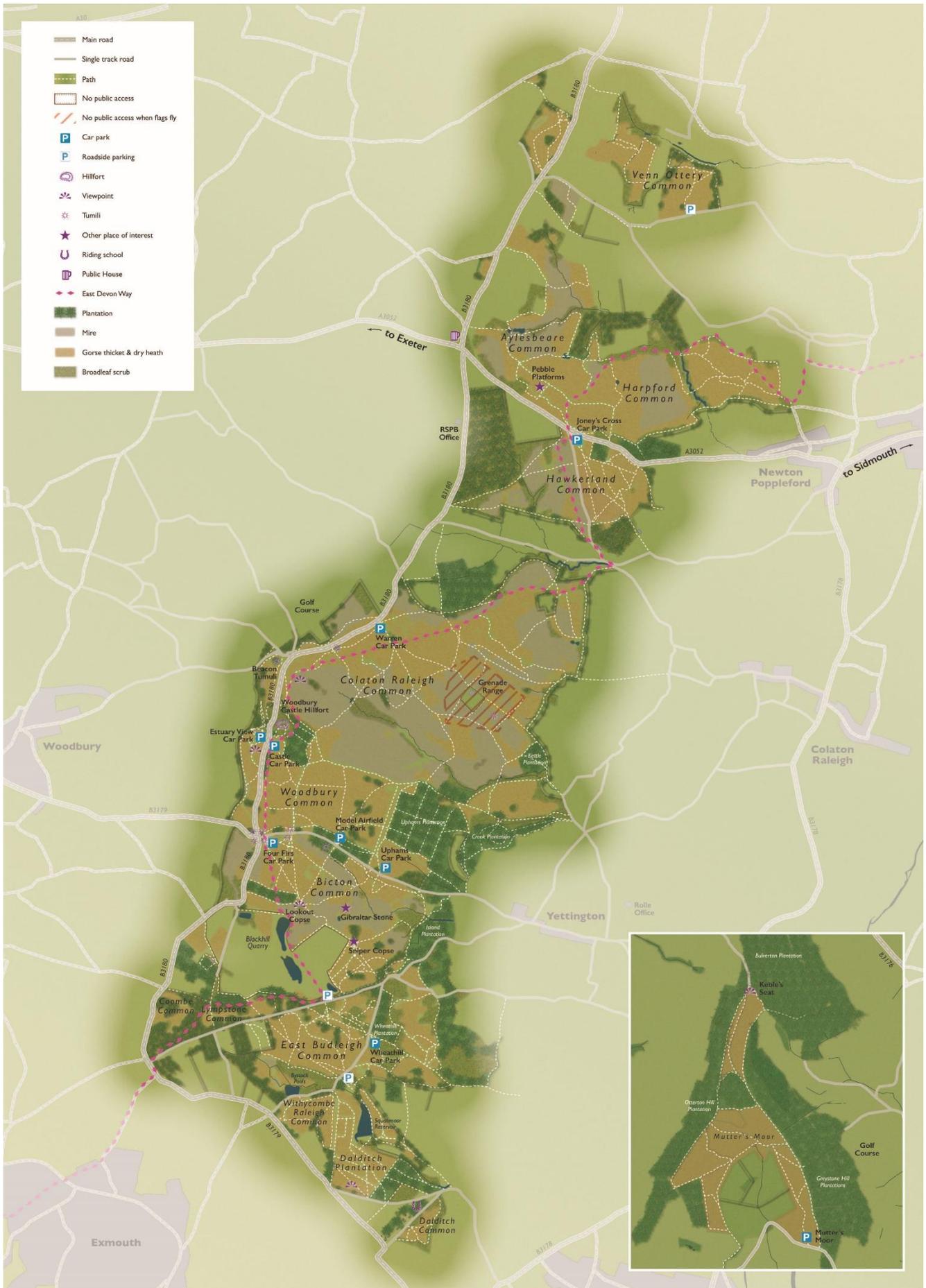
Squabmoor – (minor area of parking so only recommendation presented)

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Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

2022-23 Annual Business Plan and 5Yr Delivery Plan: Appendix E Overview map of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths NNR SPA/SAC





SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

Financial Report

East Devon District Council

April 2022

Legal comment/advice:

There is no direct comment to be made in relation to this report, each and any individual issue will need to be considered as it arises.

Finance comment/advice:

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Public Document:	Yes
Exemption:	None
Review date for release	None

Recommendations

It is proposed that the Executive Committee:

- 1. Notes the update on the overall financial position including contributions received, expenditure and anticipated contributions (from signed S106 and CIL).**
- 2. Notes the expenditure against budget for the 2021-22 Annual Business Plan and reasons given for any variance.**

Equalities impact: Low

Risk: Low

This is an update, repeated annually on the current financial position of developer contributions (both collected and anticipated) for Habitat Regulations mitigation across the three partner authorities.

1. Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members of the Executive Committee on the overall financial position of developer contributions received by the partner authorities as mitigation payments towards measures identified in the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy (“the Strategy”).

1.2 The report sets out details of the contributions received from inception to date and anticipated income from contributions where planning permission has been granted but the contribution has not yet been paid. Details of expenditure against the 2020/21 Annual Business Plan, as well as total expenditure to date are also provided.

1.3 Updated housing forecasts have been made available from each partner authority and are reported in Table 3. These projections have also been used to assist in outlining the indicative 5 year Delivery Plan, reported separately.

1.4 As previously reported, in order to maintain consistency as far as possible with the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) methodology of forecasting income, amounts expected from signed planning obligations are now included within the forecast figures.

1.5 Rather than forecasting receipt of these amounts in the immediate future, this recognises that the period between planning permission and commencement varies and assumes a steady but cautious rate of delivery over the five years of the plan. For the purposes of this report, this category of applications was treated as one potential receipt, spread according to the phasing assumed by HELAA. Analysis individually by date of planning approval would not be meaningful, as some of these applications now date back to the earliest years of the partnership/interim arrangements and have not conformed to average delivery assumptions.

1.6 There remains the risk that some approved applications in this category will be withdrawn or expire. However, all authorities agreed that once permission is commenced, it can remain live and active, with no timeframe on reaching contribution trigger dates. It is therefore deemed more prudent to assume a more phased approach, with ongoing reviews of older applications.

1.7 Forecast figures were put together using the market conditions model for calculating housing delivery rates as per the joint HELAA methodology.

1.8 Expenditure is an amalgamation of East Devon District Council financial download figures and Teignbridge information (in relation to SANGS and other relatively minor items such as accountancy and monitoring support).

1.9 Due to the differences in approach and information constraints, there are limitations on the level of analysis, for example over exactly which income streams are used to fund recharges.

Table 1. Developer contributions received (less expenditure) to 31/12/21.

Charging zone/period	Total received to 31/12/21	Total expenditure to 31/12/21	Balance to 31/12/21
SANGS	£5,839,434 ¹	-£5,119,625 ²	£719,809
Dawlish Warren On site	£915,810	-£327,811	£587,999
Exe Estuary On site	£775,124	-£417,157	£357,967
Pebblebed Heaths On site	£664,136	-£312,526	£351,610
EDDC CIL ³	£742,902	-£37,198	£705,704
Cranbrook agreement ⁴	£222,728	£0	£222,728
Total	£9,160,134	-£6,214,317	£2,945,817

Table 2. 5 Year forecast of income/housing delivery.

Year	Dawlish Warren	Exe Estuary	Pebblebed Heaths	SANGS	EDDC CIL	Total
22-23	£91,000	£460,134	£313,350	£1,230,702	£117,123	£2,212,309
23-24	£110,500	£502,677	£314,238	£1,281,104	£92,841	£2,301,360
24-25	£110,500	£365,798	£218,674	£856,834	£80,934	£1,632,740
25-26	£94,250	£213,256	£106,507	£421,718	£36,384	£872,115
26-27	£109,850	£306,446	£185,512	£723,492	£70,854	£1,396,154
Total	£516,100	£1,848,311	£1,138,281	£4,513,850	£398,136	£8,414,678

¹ Includes forward funding and internal borrowing at TDC as well as the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF).

² Includes future commitment to funding Dawlish Countryside Park maintenance.

³ This is the sum reserved for measures identified by EDDC as infrastructure. Therefore it can be spent as appropriate on SANGS or on site infrastructure.

⁴ This agreement was calculated using a method different to the rest of the Strategy and therefore does not neatly fit into the other categories.

1.5 Table 3, below, shows the estimated expenditure on the 2022/23 ABP and projected remaining balance at the end of each year until 2026/27.

Table 3 – Recommended on site expenditure by year and projected balance of funds as at end of each year until 2026/27⁸.

Year	Dawlish Warren spend	Exe Estuary spend	Pebblebed Heaths spend	Infrastructure funded from CIL	Total spend
2022-23	£64,757	£69,757	£53,316	£179,370	£367,200
2023-24	£56,104	£64,304	£57,536	£10,370	£188,314
2024-25	£57,487	£65,687	£58,919	£10,370	£192,464
2025-26⁵	£68,799	£68,999	£63,905	£10,370	£212,073
2026-27⁶	£59,946	£68,146	£63,052	£10,370	£201,514
Total	£307,093	£336,893	£296,728	£220,850	£1,161,565

Remaining balance at end 2026-27	£853,478	£1,999,406	£1,280,630	£882,990	£2,616,237⁷
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2. Expenditure against Annual Business Plans (ABP)

2.1 Previous finance reports have reported nil expenditure against mitigation measures which have not yet been implemented, such as the potential for new byelaws regarding fires, reed screening near the golf course and the visitor management plan at Dawlish Warren.

2.2 These measures are all on hold and under review, given the increased speed of coastal change at the Warren and it is currently uncertain whether these measures will continue in their current form. An update on the future of these measures will be due when more is known about the future plans for the site, in particular the Environment Agency and the Beach Management Scheme review. As such, nil expenditure on these measures will no longer be reported in finance reports.

⁵ Funding arrangements for the Delivery Manager and Devon Loves Dogs Coordinator are currently in place until March 2025.

⁶ See (5)

⁷ Total remaining "on site" balances as at end 2026-27. Other funds (from the Cranbrook Agreement) will also remain available – see 1.9 for reporting constraints.

⁸ SANGS expenditure & balance dependent on funding arrangements relating to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) – see report "HREC funding arrangements", Nov 2020.

2.3 The continuing cross-site mitigation measures are shown in Table 5, below. The largest variance in expenditure (staff and associated recharges) is accounted for because the data does not include the 4th quarter of the current financial year.

Table 4. Cross site mitigation and expenditure recommended as part of the 2021/22 ABP.

Site	Measure	Revenue budget	Expenditure (Actual)	Variance +/-
All	Staff (salary, pension, NI)	£143,666	£139,471	+£4,195 ⁹
All	Staff recharges	£18,874	£12,590	+£6,284 ¹⁰
All	Wildlife Wardens – operational (stationary, PPE, uniform, training)	n/a	£199	-£199 ¹¹
All	Wildlife Wardens – vehicle	£3,000	£2,081	+£919 ¹²
All	Patrol Boat	£7,000	£5,057	+£1,943 ¹³
All	Dog project vehicle	£1,875	£482	+£1,393 ¹⁴
All	Dog project – operational	£2,000	£1,332	+£668 ¹⁵
Totals		£176,415	£161,212	+£15,203

2.4 Expenditure on all site specific mitigation measures either completed or initiated is shown below in Table 5.

2.5 As indicated by the “(Total) SEDESMS budget” column, the majority of these measures all have an element of ongoing funding allocated for revisions and/or maintenance in future years.

⁹ Additional 12 month 0.5 FTE Wildlife Warden approved in Nov 2020. Includes £11,583 furlough salary recovery towards these costs, as anticipated.

¹⁰ Recharges for Delivery Manager expected at year end.

¹¹ The strategy does not identify operational costs for the Wildlife Wardens but these are minor and can easily be accounted for from underspend in other budgets such as the vehicle or patrol boat.

¹² Staff changes within the team from Nov 2021 meant that there were fewer journeys made.

¹³ See 12.

¹⁴ Many of the usual events and guided walks were cancelled due to Covid restrictions and so fewer journeys were made.

¹⁵ Fewer large events due to Covid restrictions meant that there was less spend on materials/resources than usual.

2.5 Phase 1 of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths visitor access improvements is complete. WSP will submit a planning application for Phase 2 in April, with works expected in summer 2022. New interpretation and signage design/manufacture is almost complete, with first phases due for installation April 2022. All projects continue to be invoiced according to agreed contractual schedules.

Table 5. Expenditure on completed/initiated mitigation measures.

Site	Measure	Initial budget	Expenditure (Actual)	Variance +/-	(Total) SEDESMS budget	(Remaining) SEDESMS budget
Dawlish Warren	Petalwort monitoring	£1,000	£1,608	-£608	£26,667	£25,059
Dawlish Warren	Translocation of petalwort	£2,000	£330	+£1,670 ¹⁶	£2,000	£1,670
Dawlish Warren	Fencing to prevent access along shore near roost on Bight.	£2,800	£3,082	-£282 ¹⁷	£160,000	£156,918
Dawlish Warren	Carry out audit of information boards	£1,500	£2,506	-£1,006 ¹⁸	£19,500	£5,722 ¹⁹
Dawlish Warren	BBQ info at local retailers	£2,000	£0	+£2,000 ²⁰	£6,000	£6,000
Dawlish Warren	Monitoring of vegetation change	£5,000	£1,355	+£3,645 ²¹	£133,333	£131,978
Exe Estuary	Codes of conduct	£11,500	£10,720	+£780	£11,500	£780
Exe Estuary	Wildlife refuge consultation	£5,000	£9,186	-£4,186	£5,000	-£4,186
Exe Estuary	Disturbance monitoring - Refuges	£27,950	£27,950	£ ⁻²²	£30,000	£2,050
Exe Estuary	Wildlife Refuge buoy markers.	£30,000	£17,606	+£12,394	£30,000	£12,394
Exe Estuary	Update signs at public slipways	£40,000	£25,940	+£14,060 ²³	£120,000	£94,060

¹⁶ Initial consultant site visit paid for. EA paid for report. Further discussion required re: future plans.

¹⁷ Cost of timber has increased since original costs estimated in 2014.

¹⁸ See 17

¹⁹ Takes into account £11,272 spent on new signage, approved in 2017/18 annual business plan.

²⁰ Design of posters completed in-house @ TDC.

²¹ Survey completed, reported to Committee November 2020.

²² 3 year study completed and reported to Committee October 2021.

²³ Economies of scale achieved in first phase. 2020-21 Annual Business Plan (July 2020) recommended savings be reinvested in other behavioural change initiatives (gazebo, website redesign – see below). This accounts for discrepancy between initial budget/expenditure/variance.

Site	Measure	Capital cost	Expenditure (Actual)	Variance +/-	(Total) SEDESMS budget	(Remaining) SEDESMS budget
Exe Estuary	Interpretation boards	£5,000	£0	+£5,000	£112,500	£112,500
Pebblebed Heaths	Dog bins	£13,480	£10,379	+£3,101 ²⁴	£273,100	£262,721
Pebblebed Heaths	Educational resources	£4,656	£4,590	+£66	£46,560	£41,970
Pebblebed Heaths	Pebblebeds Codes of conduct	£4,000	£4,000	-	£6,000	£2,000
Pebblebed Heaths	Signs directing people	£6,500	£0	+£6,500 ²⁵	£6,500	£6,500
Pebblebed Heaths	Signs related to conduct	£6,600	£0	+£6,600 ²⁶	£6,600	£6,600
Pebblebed Heaths	Path monitoring/repair	£12,000	£5,269	+£6,731 ²⁷	£95,000	£89,731
Pebblebed Heaths	Interpretation Boards	£5,000	£510	+£4,490 ²⁸	£64,800	£64,290
Pebblebed Heaths	Changes to car parks (preliminary survey)	£15,000	£15,000	-	£15,000	£0
Pebblebed Heaths	Phase 1 Visitor Access Improvements	£161,129	£39,597	+£121,532 ²⁹	£161,129	£121,532
Pebblebed Heaths	Phase 2 Visitor Access Improvements	£147,837	£5,075	+£142,762 ³⁰	£147,837	£142,762
All	Visitor survey	£12,422	£10,570	+£1,852 ³¹	£167,000	£156,430
All	Gazebo	£3,500	£2,128	+£1,372 ³²	£3,500	£1,372
All	Website redesign	£7,000	£6,740	+£260 ³³	£7,000	+£260
All	HMO vehicle change	£3,000	£3,452	-£452	£140,000 ³⁴	£136,548
Sub total		£535,874	£207,593	+£328,281	£1,796,526	£1,577,661

²⁴ Economies of scale achieved during installation, annual costs include maintenance/repair (not yet required). Awaiting invoice for 2021/22.

²⁵ Contract awarded, project due to complete summer 2022.

²⁶ See 23.

²⁷ Priority works have completed. Future audits due according to intervals.

²⁸ Integral part of Phase 1 works, contract awarded, project due to complete summer 2022.

²⁹ Permission granted and works underway, completion April 2022. Invoicing ongoing.

³⁰ WSP will submit planning application April 2022. Works expected summer/autumn 2022.

³¹ Additional surveys for Pebblebed Heaths included in original budget will be paid for by the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust.

³² Procured below budget.

³³ New website (and monitoring dashboard) launched April 2022.

³⁴ Based on £20K for change of vehicle every 10 years. See 7.4, 2016-17 Annual Business Plan, June 2016.

3. Core staff capacity – update.

3.1 A July 2019 report³⁵ to the Executive recommended the extension of funding for staff roles considered critical to the successful delivery of the mitigation Strategy.

3.2 This was updated in the “Core Staff Capacity” report in November 2020 which further recommended securing additional contributions in order to fund a 0.2 FTE Communications Officer role. The estimated funding requirement at that time was £150,182, which necessitated an increase of developer contributions of £6.81, as shown in Table 6, below:

Table 6. Required increase in developer contributions (Nov 2020).

Required funds (July 2019)	£ 105,000
Communications Officer 0.2 FTE (5 years)	£ 45,182
Total	£ 150,182
Number of charges	22,044
Increase per dwelling	£ 6.81

3.3 During the November 2020 meeting, the Executive resolved that the increase in developer contributions were approved, with a further review in April 2022.

3.4 A review of the housing and income forecasts has been completed, which indicates that the increase to contributions approved in November 2020 remain sufficient to ensure certainty of delivery. However, it should be noted that these calculations are based on forecast data which cannot take account of unforeseen changes to housing delivery in the future. This is illustrated by the fact that projected housing numbers have increased by 2347 since Nov 2020.

3.5 The position as at April 2022 is shown in Table 7, below. The current position would allow for a 10% contingency decrease in income whilst still covering the majority of costs.

³⁵ Staffing requirements of the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy.

Table 7. Review of developer contributions, April 2022

Required funds	£150,182
Number of charges ³⁶	24,391
Increase per dwelling	£ 6.81
Projected income	£166,103
10% decrease	£149,492

3.6 Given the reassurance that the current forecast secures the required funding, it is considered unnecessary to make any further changes to developer contributions at this time.

Growth, Development & Prosperity,
East Devon District Council

April 2022

Natural England comment:

Natural England have reviewed the report and have no comment to make.

³⁶ From 2020 to the end of respective Local Plan/Core Strategy periods.



SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

South East Devon Visitor Survey 2020-21

Neil Harris & Naomi Harnett
Growth, Development & Prosperity,
East Devon District Council
April 2022

Legal comment/advice:

There is no direct comment to be made in relation to this report, each and any individual issue will need to be considered as it arises.

Finance comment/advice:

There are no direct financial implications set out in the report.

Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None
Review date for release None

Recommendations

It is proposed that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the results from the South East Devon Visitor Survey 2020-21 report.
2. Notes the interpretation and discussion relating to proposed operational changes in light of the report.

Equalities impact: Low

Risk: Low. This report provides the results of the first South East Devon Visitor Survey monitoring programme undertaken as part of the mitigation Strategy. These results are compared with the initial visitor surveys carried out to establish the original evidence base for the Strategy. The objective of the programme is to determine the efficacy of the approach to preventing recreational disturbance across the protected sites. This is important because without robust and effective mitigation which enables the partner authorities to be certain of no net impact to protected sites, continued development as outlined in respective local plans and within 10km of the estuary is at risk of legal challenge.

1. Summary

1.1 The South-east Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy (*Footprint Ecology, 2014*) was informed by postal surveys of local residents and by on-site visitor surveys to establish existing patterns of access, motivation and behaviour. This work went on to establish a 10km “zone of influence” within which new residential dwellings were considered likely to cause a likely significant effect as a result of increasing recreational demand. This zone of influence identified an increase of approximately 30,000 dwellings from the respective Local Plans.

1.2 Since the formation of the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee (HREC) in June 2016, a number of regional and site specific mitigation initiatives have been implemented and there is the ongoing need to regularly undertake a robust programme of monitoring. This is to ensure that mitigation continues to be effective and for any emerging trends or pressures to be identified and addressed.

1.3 The outputs of the South East Devon Visitor Survey, attached here as Appendix A, will be used to inform management advice in respect of delivering adequate and effective mitigation to ensure no net impacts to internationally important wildlife sites as a result of increasing recreational pressures.

1.4 This study helps to contribute to the delivery of the mitigation Strategy by providing an updated understanding of visitor access, motivations and behaviour across the three protected sites. It will also help to guide management effort by enabling a measure of the awareness of the sensitivity of the sites and the mitigation initiatives implemented since June 2016.

1.5 The Executive Committee approved the recommendation to undertake the visitor surveys as part of the 2019-20 annual business plan. Following a competitive tendering process, Footprint Ecology were awarded the contract and began monitoring the areas in February 2020. The coronavirus pandemic and associated restrictions put a stop to fieldwork in March 2020 and it was not resumed until April 2021 when the majority of restrictions had eased.

2. The study.

2.1 The main objectives of the monitoring were:

- To design and undertake face to face visitor surveys across Dawlish Warren, the Exe Estuary and the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths.
- To determine where visits originate, frequency, length & duration of visits, activities & routes taken, transport used and factors influencing the choice of site. Questions should also be aimed at establishing an understanding of wider Habitat Regulations mitigation “brand awareness” – i.e. value of sites for nature conservation, site designations, interaction with staff, experience of codes of conduct, knowledge of consultations and other mitigation initiatives.
- To compile a written report which compiles, analyses and interprets the data.

2.2 Essential components of the survey included the following elements:

- To survey, record and quantify visitor responses to an agreed set of specific questions (postcode, mode of transport, activity, factors for site choice and awareness of mitigation initiatives).
- To undertake face to face visitor surveys at different locations across the protected sites of Dawlish Warren, the Exe Estuary and the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths.
- Use existing studies (Exe on-site visitor survey (Liley *et al.* 2010b), Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan (Liley, D., Panter, C., Underhill-Day, J. (2015)) to inform survey methodology and to ensure a growing and consistent evidence base.
- To compile a final report including summary of results, interpretation of the data, direct comparison and analysis with reference to previous surveys, full results, any issues arising and (if appropriate) recommendations for future management.

2.3 To ensure clear and concise output from the 3 year programme, the survey is intended to enable the following questions to be answered:

- 1) How far are visitors travelling to the sites and how do they arrive?
- 2) How often do they visit, for how long and what specific factors influence their choice of site?
- 3) What activities do visitors to the sites undertake and how long have they been visiting the site?
- 4) Are specific activities at a certain time of year or year-round?
- 5) Which routes do the visitors take on the sites?

- 6) Do visitors use any other sites and if so, how often and what for?
- 7) What level of understanding do visitors have about nature conservation value of the sites?
- 8) Are visitors now going to the Dawlish SANGS instead of/as well as the Exe Estuary and Dawlish Warren? How often?
- 9) How could we encourage greater use of the SANGS?
- 10) What is the level of awareness of the different mitigation initiatives?
- 11) Has visitor behaviour changed since the mitigation initiatives were launched?
- 12) How are the mitigation initiatives perceived by visitors?
- 13) What further actions (if any) could be taken to increase visitor awareness and influence behaviours?

2.4 Visitor surveys were undertaken between February 2020 and October 2021, and included both counts of the number of visitors and face-to-face interviews with a random sample of visitors. Survey methods were broadly consistent with those used in previous surveys.

2.5 Survey work took place at 12 locations as shown in Appendix B. 6 were on the Pebblebed Heaths, 5 on the Exe Estuary, and Dawlish Countryside Park (DCP). All except DCP and Model Airfield (on the heaths) had been included in previous visitor surveys. 192 hours of survey effort were undertaken in total, equally spread across the 12 survey points (16 hours at each).

2.6 The number of survey locations was determined by the available budget and then survey locations were selected to provide a reasonable geographic spread and to include range of different types of location. All survey locations (except for DCP) have direct access to the SPA and/or SAC. All were based either in/near popular car parks, or at other key access points such as slipways.

2.7 Face-to-face interviews were conducted with a random sample of visitors, by approaching the next person seen by the surveyor. Only one person was interviewed per group and no minors (under 18s) were interviewed.

2.8 The questionnaire design was based on previous surveys but with some additional questions to ensure that the requirements of the brief were met regarding visitor awareness of nature conservation and the effectiveness of mitigation measures. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix C.

2.9 Alongside the interview data, surveyors maintained a tally of all people seen, recording the number of groups (of any size), individuals, minors, dogs and cyclists. These counts allow a comparison across survey points in terms of footfall, and allow the proportion of visitors that were interviewed at each location to be determined.

2.10 Each survey point was surveyed at a relevant time of year, i.e. when the wildlife interest was likely to be present and potentially vulnerable. Each location was surveyed for 16 hours, with 8 hours on a weekend day and 8 hours on a weekday. Survey days were split into set 2-hour sessions to capture usage across daylight hours.

2.11 The weather during fieldwork was varied since it covered several seasons. The only location that was potentially affected by wet weather was Model Airfield, which had rainfall throughout almost all sessions, however this was mostly drizzle rather than heavy rain.

2.12 An additional question was added to the questionnaire in 2021 (Q7) to find out if interviewees' visit patterns had changed due to the pandemic, for example, if they were visiting more or less frequently now.

3. Monitoring results.

Visitor counts.

3.1 Total footfall is the summed count of people recorded passing the survey point (i.e. the combined sum of those entering, leaving or passing through at the survey point).

3.2 Over the 192 hours of survey, the tally counts recorded a total footfall of 6,066 people. This equates to an overall average 31.6 people moving through the survey points per hour. There were also 2,496 dogs, roughly 0.41 to every 1 person, and 10% of the people were minors (585) and 5% of people were on bikes (318).

3.3 There were marked differences between survey points and sites, with the highest value of 72.6 people per hour at Goat Walk (Topsham), and just 5.4 people per hour at Lympstone. Taking the average for each site, the values were 25.4 people per hour at the Pebblebeds (6 survey points), 37.6 at the Exe Estuary sites including Dawlish Warren (5 survey points) and 38.8 at the SANG (1 survey point).

3.4 Occasionally large, organised groups were observed with each involving 20-50 people. For example, running clubs were seen meeting at Joney's Cross and at The Warren, a group of marines passed through at The Warren and the City of Exeter hash house harriers were at Wheathill. These events could have affected the number of other visitors, for example if the majority of parking spaces were taken up by these groups.

3.5 A total of 2,982 people were counted 'entering', with both the busiest and quietest sites recorded on the Exe Estuary, ranging from 2.6 people per hour at Lympstone to 37.3 at Goat Walk. The survey points on the Pebblebeds were less variable, ranging from 8.4 (Model Airfield) to 17.7 people per hour (Woodbury Castle).

3.6 The average number of dogs entering across all sites was 6.1 dogs per hour. The number of dogs entering per hour was highest at DCP SANG with 13.1 dogs per hour. This was notably much higher than on the Pebblebeds and the Exe Estuary.

Interviews.

3.7 During the 192 hours of survey, 872 groups were approached to be interviewed. A total of 499 interviews were conducted (i.e. 57% of those approached). Those groups who did not take part in the interviews either had already been approached and interviewed, in which case they were not re-interviewed (39 groups, 4% of those approached), refused to take part in the survey (331 groups, 38%) or had language issues (3 groups, <1%).

3.8 The number of refusals tended to be higher on the Exe Estuary sites and this may be a reflection of those sites being surveyed during the winter (when colder and people perhaps less likely to linger). At the Exe Estuary sites and particularly Powderham the high proportion of cyclists following the Exe cycle trail may also be a reason for refusal as many were reluctant to stop given they were moving fast.

3.9 Overall, 464 of the interviewees (93%) were visiting directly from home. A further 27 interviewees (5%) were on holiday in the area and 6 interviewees (1%) were staying with friends or family. Finally 2 interviewees (<1%) described themselves as "other", both visiting the sites for work.

3.10 There was an overall pattern of more interviewees visiting directly from home at the Pebblebeds, compared to the Exe. The percentage of interviewees visiting directly from home on the Pebblebeds was 97% (and the same at the SANG), compared to 88% on the Exe Estuary, with the Duck Pond and Dawlish Warren being notable for the proportion of holiday makers. On the Exe, the percentage of interviewees on holiday or staying with friends and family was 12% (25 interviewees), compared to just 3% (6) on the Pebblebeds and 3% (2) at the SANG.

Activities.

3.11 The most common activity was dog walking, with roughly 3 in every 5 interviewees stating that this was their main activity (285 interviewees, 57%). However, these were the self-reported single choice main activities, and it should be noted that while 57% of interviewees gave their main activity as 'dog walking', in fact 64% of interviewees had a dog with them.

3.12 The next most common response was walking, (150 interviewees, 30%). 64 interviewees (13%) gave an activity type that was not dog walking or walking and these included a range of activities such as cycling, running, wildlife watching, watersports etc.

Visit pattern.

3.13 Over 50% of interviewees at the Pebblebed Heaths and at the Exe Estuary said that they had been visiting the site for over 10 years. At the Dawlish Warren survey location, this figure was 70%. The SANG has only been open since 2017, however 45% of interviewees said they had been visiting it for at least 3 years.

3.14 The length of time spent on site varied greatly by survey location. Overall, 57% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds, 52% of interviewees at the Exe and 73% of interviewees at DCP had spent less than an hour on site. Sites where interviewees were staying the longest were Powderham, Exmouth Duck Pond and Lympstone. At Powderham, 30% of interviewees had spent or were intending to spend more than 3 hours there.

3.15 Across all interviews, the most commonly cited visit frequency during the past year was 1-3 times a week, given by 155 interviewees (31%). 16% of interviewees said they had visited at least once a day, and 14% had visited 'most days'.

3.16 The combined percentage of interviewees who visited more than once a day, daily or most days was 28% at the Pebblebeds, 26% at the Exe Estuary and 49% at DCP.

3.17 The majority (60%) of those who were interviewed in 2021 were visiting just as frequently as they had before the pandemic (Q7). 19% were visiting more frequently and 8% were visiting less frequently.

3.18 Over a third of interviewees (173 interviewees, 35%) indicated that the time of day that they visited varied, and they did not have a regular time that they visited. Of those who did give a time period, the most common response was 'before 9am', given by a quarter (25%) of interviewees.

3.19 Around two thirds of interviewees (337 interviewees, 68%) indicated that they tended to visit equally all year round. However, this varied by activity type, for example 31% of interviewees who were wildlife/birdwatching said that they tended to visit more in the winter.

Mode of transport.

3.20 Overall, 79% of interviewees had travelled to the interview location by car or van, 19% had come on foot and 3% by bicycle. However, this varied by survey location, and whilst car/van was the mode of transport used by the majority of interviewees at the Pebblebed locations and at DCP, this was not the case for all of the Exe Estuary survey locations. At Goat Walk and Lympstone the majority of interviewees had arrived on foot (77% and 67% respectively). Powderham and Goat Walk were the only locations where any interviewees had arrived by public transport (2 interviewees at each).

Routes on site.

3.21 Out of 499 interviewees, 491 of them were able to describe the route that they had taken during their visit, or the route that they planned to take.

3.22 In response to Q11, which asked interviewees at the Exe Estuary whether they went onto the intertidal areas at all, only 14 interviewees (7%) said they had, and an additional 3 interviewees (1%) said only their dogs had. However, examining the routes in GIS shows that 75 interviewees (36% of interviewees on the Exe) took routes that passed through intertidal areas within the Exe Estuary SPA. 35 of these interviewees were at Dawlish Warren, 22 at Exmouth Duck Pond, 17 at Lympstone and 1 at Goat Walk.

3.23 Across all sites, the length of interviewees' routes ranged from 170m to 32.73km, with a median length of 2.27km. The median route lengths on the Pebblebeds and the Exe were similar, 2.46km and 2.59km respectively. At DCP the median route length was 1.68km.

3.24 Across all locations, 58% of interviewees said that their route length was typical for when they visit this location (Q12). However, 28% said that their route was shorter than normal. Only 4% said that their route was much longer than normal.

3.25 The most common factor that influenced interviewees' choice of route was previous knowledge of the area, which was cited by 108 interviewees (22%). The next most common factors were the weather (16%) and time (13%). There were 98 responses that didn't fit into the pre-determined categories. These included visiting a pub/café en route, following their dog, taking a 'random' route, and the terrain (either preferring flat, level terrain, or favouring hills).

Reasons for site choice.

3.26 Overall, the most common reason given by interviewees for choosing to visit the particular location where interviewed was that it was close to home (142 interviewees, 28%). However, the reasons for site choice did vary by site, and at DCP the most common reason was because they could let their dog off the lead (37% of interviewees). On the Exe Estuary, the scenery was also a particularly important factor, given by 32% of interviewees.

Alternative sites.

3.27 Almost all interviewees (465, 93%) were able to name an alternative site that they would have visited for their activity if they could not visit the location where they were interviewed. Only 4% said that they wouldn't have visited anywhere and 3% were unsure or didn't answer this question.

3.28 30% of those interviewed on the Exe gave another place on the estuary as the alternative they would visit, and a further 16% indicated they would have visited the coast. 7% of those interviewed on the Exe would have gone to the Pebblebeds instead and the most commonly cited single location outside the Exe Estuary was DCP (cited by 8% of those interviewed at the Exe Estuary sites).

3.29 For those interviewed on the Pebblebeds, 63% gave an alternative location within the Pebblebed Heaths. 10% gave a location on the Exe Estuary and a further 4% gave other coastal locations away from the Exe. The most common single destination given away from the Heaths was Exmouth (8%).

3.30 For those interviewed at DCP, 31% would have visited the Exe Estuary instead and a further 16% another coastal location away from the Exe. The most commonly cited single alternative was Dawlish Warren (19% of interviewees there) and then Dawlish (15%).

3.31 DCP was named by 17 interviewees on the Exe Estuary in Q15 as an alternative site that they would visit instead of their interview location. In addition to this, when directly asked (Q16) another 75 interviewees said that they had visited DCP. However, most of these were infrequent visitors, with 85% (64 interviewees) visiting the SANG less than once a month. In total, therefore, 44% of interviewees on the Exe Estuary had visited DCP.

Awareness of nature conservation.

3.32 Interviewees at the Pebblebed Heaths and the Exe Estuary were asked two additional questions to gauge their awareness of the nature conservation importance of the site. Interviewees were not shown any options for these questions, although the surveyors had pre-determined categories to facilitate recording the responses given.

3.33 Regarding designations, 59% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds and 76% of interviewees at the Exe Estuary were aware that the site had environmental protection but only 43% and 42% respectively were able to name or describe what these were.

3.34 At the Pebblebeds, 20% of interviewees knew that it was a nature reserve and 18% knew that it was a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). On the Exe, 29% mentioned it being a nature reserve and 22% knew that it was protected because it was important for birds.

3.35 Regarding wildlife and habitats, 84% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds and 78% of interviewees at the Exe Estuary were able to name at least one group of species or habitats that the site is important for.

3.36 Over half of interviewees at both sites were aware that it was important for birds, even if they weren't able to name any species. A third of interviewees at the Exe knew that it was important for wading birds or wildfowl, with many of them specifically naming examples such as Avocet or Curlew. Around a third of interviewees at the Pebblebeds knew that it was important for reptiles.

Awareness of mitigation measures.

3.37 A third of interviewees (33%) at the Pebblebeds and a quarter of interviewees (25%) on the Exe Estuary had met one of the rangers or mitigation officers. Of those who had met a ranger or mitigation officer, 78% had spoken to them.

3.38 Interviewees on the Pebblebeds and Exe Estuary were asked if they were aware of any visit Codes of Conduct. Overall 34% (169 interviewees) were not aware of any, and 47% (236) were aware but unable to name any specific codes. Only 27 interviewees (6%) were able to name one or more than one specific codes.

3.39 The percentage who were aware, but unable to name specific codes, was greater amongst those on a short visit directly from home (49%, 227) compared to those on holiday (30%, 8), but still relatively high. Interestingly those who visited daily or more than once a day did not record high percentages (25%, 39 and 6%, 10 – although note smaller sample sizes). Those who had been visiting for more than 10 years included a very high proportion of those aware, but unable to name (83%, 123). For dog walkers the awareness (but not explicit naming of) codes of conduct was also very high (92%, 142).

3.40 Knowledge of any codes of conduct was lower on the Exe Estuary, where 58% (121) unaware of codes, compared to 22% (48) on the Pebblebeds. On the Pebblebeds over 7 in 10 interviewees will have been aware of codes of conduct, compared to just under 4 in 10 on the Exe Estuary.

3.41 Interviewees who were dog walking were asked if they had heard of, or were members of “Devon Loves Dogs”. Overall, 30% of dog walkers (86 interviewees) had heard of the organisation. A higher percentage of dog walkers had heard of the organisation at the Pebblebeds (36% of dog walkers, 50 interviewees), compared to the Exe (30% of dog walkers, 27), and Dawlish Warren Country Park (15% of dog walkers, 9).

3.42 In total, 5% of all dog walkers interviewed were members “Devon Loves Dogs”, and this percentage was 4% of dog walkers (3 interviewees) on the Exe Estuary, 6% (8) on the Pebblebeds and 3% (2) at DCP.

3.43 For the survey points along the Exe Estuary, specific questions were asked, regarding the interviewee’s awareness of the mitigation efforts. Across all the Exe Estuary survey points, 18% (37) of interviewees had seen the patrol boat, ranging from 25% (6) of interviewees at Lymphstone to just 8% (3) at Powderham. Interviewees were then asked if they were aware of the wildlife refuges along the estuary. Across all the Exe Estuary interviewees, 53% (110) said they were aware of them, ranging from 85% (33) at Exmouth Duck Pond to 29% (14 interviewees) at Goat Walk.

Preferred communications methods.

3.44 Interviewees were asked what are the “best ways of keeping visitors such as yourself informed about this area and the way it is managed?” Interviewees were asked to rate 5 mechanisms for disseminating information from “1 - not useful” to “5 – very useful” and from these we were able to produce an average score for those who responded. Averaging the three scores for each area suggest the highest approval for noticeboards (3.6) and word of mouth (3.5), but lowest support for rangers (2.8) and leaflets (2.4).

Visitor origins

3.45 Full, valid postcodes were obtained for 445 (89%) of the interviewees. Approximately half (46%) of the interviewees who gave full, valid postcodes lived in East Devon District, 26% were from Teignbridge District, 18% were from Exeter District and 2% were from Mid Devon District. Other local authorities accounted for less than 1% each.

3.46 The mean linear distance from the interviewee's home postcode to the survey point at which they were interviewed was 16.7km and the median distance was 5.0km. Three quarters of all interviewees lived within 9.9km of the survey point at which they were interviewed.

4. Comparison with previous surveys

4.1 Previous surveys were undertaken in 2010 (Exe Estuary) and 2015 (Pebblebed Heaths) and used broadly similar methods. Comparisons provide some opportunities to check how access has changed. There are of course important caveats to note in that the surveys are 'snapshots' in time and represent just 2 days at each location in the most recent survey which also coincided with the Covid pandemic.

4.2 The data suggest a number of changes. Most striking is the change in the number of visitors, with marked increases suggested at all sites. The data show overall totals of footfall per hour are more than double on the Exe Estuary (excluding Dawlish Warren) and on the Pebblebed Heaths compared to the previous survey. The change at the Pebblebed Heaths from 12.6 people entering per hour in 2015 to 26.9 people per hour in 2021 represents a 213% increase over 6 years.

4.3 The mean number of dogs per group appears to have dropped slightly at all sites, suggesting perhaps that there have been bigger increases in the use from those visiting without dogs. The percentage of interviewees who gave dog walking as their main activity decreased on the Pebblebeds (78% to 63%) but increased at the other sites. The percentage of people who stated walking was their main activity appears to have increased at all sites, particularly the Pebblebeds (8% of interviewees to 25%).

4.4 There appears to be a difference at Dawlish in the proportion of local residents using the site on a short visit from home, with an increase from 77% in 2010 to 89% in 2020.

4.5 Close to home appears to be a stronger factor influencing site choice now for those at Dawlish compared to 2010 (cited by 13% in 2010 and 54% in 2020) while by contrast it appears to have dropped in priority for those visiting the Pebblebeds (cited by 37% of interviewees in 2015 and just 22% in 2021).

4.6 There were no clear differences in the postcode data between the different surveys, suggesting that people who visit the relevant sites are not living any further afield or closer now compared to the previous survey.

4.7 It is clear that all the numbers from the tally counts are higher at all locations compared to previous surveys with the exception of one survey point on the Exe, Lymptone. This is the site that has seen the most marked increase. Changes seem more consistent on the Pebblebeds, though Four Firs perhaps stands out in that the data suggest a disproportionate increase in the number of dogs entering at that location.

5. Discussion

5.1 The survey results provide a snapshot into the levels of use and insights into visitor behaviour at a selection of adjacent countryside sites. The results provide direct comparison between locations and will help inform future management and mitigation delivery.

5.2 The survey results from 2020/21 provide a snapshot of visitor use at on the Exe Estuary, Pebblebed Heaths and the DCP. Some of the surveys (on the Exe Estuary) were undertaken prior to the Covid pandemic, in the early part of 2020 while other sites were surveyed just as restrictions relating to Covid were being relaxed but at a time where the pandemic would still have been affecting people's decisions regarding travel and where to go.

5.3 Visitor numbers have increased very markedly at the Exe Estuary and Pebblebed Heaths since the last surveys and this higher footfall potentially means increased pressure on the respective sites. The increase in use could be linked to Covid as well as changes such as increases in local development.

5.4 It is widely recognised that the pandemic has had a marked effect on how people use local greenspaces. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the 2021 visitor survey results show some marked changes from previous surveys, in particular in the overall number of visitors, the reasons behind site choice and the behaviour. Looking to the future it is not clear how patterns of use will further change following the pandemic and whether the increased levels of countryside access are a new 'normal'. Climate change is also likely to be a driver of change in recreational use. Long term monitoring will therefore be important to pick up emerging trends and the drivers behind those trends.

5.5 The results from this survey indicate that DCP is well used and draws a high number of dog walkers, a target audience for the SANG given the particular impacts associated with dogs off-lead. The postcode data show that the site draws visitors from the local area, including Dawlish but that visitors using the site are also coming from Exeter and Newton Abbot.

5.6 The results show that the SANG is deflecting use away from the European sites. For example, 44% of the interviewees on the Exe Estuary had visited DCP. Furthermore, when asked which single alternative location visitors at the SANG would have gone to instead, Dawlish Warren was the most popular alternative (cited by 13 interviewees, 19% of interviewees at the SANG). Furthermore, those using DCP are doing so regularly (45% of those interviewed visiting more than once a day, daily or most days), suggesting that the site is working to draw frequent dog walkers.

5.7 SANGs have been a key element in strategic mitigation for European sites in other parts of the country, for example around the Thames Basin Heaths and the Dorset Heaths. The data presented here (and as previously reported¹) provide strong evidence that the approach is relevant for coastal sites, particularly for dog walkers.

5.8 The results suggest a reasonable level of awareness among interviewees that the sites they were visiting were protected (59% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds and 76% of interviewees at the Exe Estuary were aware that the site had environmental protection). Furthermore some 84% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds and 78% at the Exe Estuary could name a group of species or habitat for which the site was important. These figures would suggest that visitors are well informed. Messaging about the importance of these sites through face to face contact and a variety of different media has been at the heart of public engagement work and would appear to be making a difference.

5.9 It would seem the on-site ranger presence has reached a reasonable proportion of visitors, with a third of interviewees (33%) at the Pebblebeds and a quarter of interviewees (25%) on the Exe Estuary having met one of the rangers or mitigation officers. Powderham and Lypstone were the two sites with the lowest percentages of visitors having met a ranger. The locations with the highest percentages – at Dawlish Warren (36%) and the Exmouth Duck Pond (28%) – are potentially the more sensitive and reflect the locations of the refuges, so this potentially reflects that wardening effort is focussed in the right locations.

5.10 The responses to membership of “Devon Loves Dogs” indicate a relatively low membership among dog walkers, with just 5% of dog walking interviewees stating they were members. This could reflect the relative infancy of the organisation and suggests there is scope to boost membership, especially at DCP, where just 2 members were interviewed.

5.11 Although already identified as a prime location to engage with the target audience, efforts to establish a regular Devon Loves Dogs presence at DCP via “Waggy Walks” and gazebo pitstops are ongoing. Whilst very keen to promote the scheme at DCP as much as possible, issues of staff resource within the small TDC Ranger team and at Devon Loves Dogs have hampered efforts to have a greater impact.

5.12 The Devon Loves Dogs scheme has a steadily growing membership base (currently around 850) and engages with thousands of dog owners across the region via face to face events and other media. The data shows that 92% of dog walkers on the Pebblebed Heaths were aware of a code of conduct and 36% of all visitors had heard of Devon Loves Dogs. This is reflective of the high degree of cross-working and partnership effort between Devon Loves Dogs and the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust.

¹ Covid-19 impact on sites and future management, Oct 2021 (4.5, page 8)

5.13 What the data infers, in addition to specific workload and capacity at DCP, is that the Devon Loves Dogs scheme may be approaching the limit of its reach in terms of what can be achieved across the region, with a 0.5 full time equivalent (FTE) staff resource and a small (£2K) annual operations budget. There is clear direction here in terms of recommendation for respective Local Plan reviews and the next mitigation Strategy.

5.14 Similarly, it is obvious that the 2 FTE Wildlife Wardens are not able to cover all the c.4000 hectares of the protected sites at the same time. The focus of their effort has to be prioritised to cover the areas which require support according to their ecological sensitivity at certain times of year. As previously reported², this is broadly adequate, yet there is also clear evidence from this report (and wider support from partners) for increased staff resource. Sites are ecologically sensitive for different reasons at different times of year and this is often at the same time as other sites, at times of year where visitor pressure is increased across the board.

5.15 There is ongoing effort to promote awareness of the various site based codes of conduct, although to a certain extent these are targeted at specific activities. Someone simply visiting the site for a walk (the most common activity after “dog walking”, 30% of visitors) may have little interest for codes governing activities which they do not participate. The codes have been developed to specifically address the “impact pathways” by which the protected sites are most affected by recreational activity.

5.16 Acknowledging that, there is more to do in terms of maintaining awareness of the codes and keeping them relevant and “live”. As previously identified and reported³ the Strategy currently only provides resource for one exercise to update these media. By making provision for updates of a website, signage, codes and other literature periodically (say every 5-10 years), this would ensure that they are kept relevant and up to date with inevitable changes to the operating environment(s). Again, this is a clear recommendation for the next mitigation Strategy.

5.17 There was little variation in the interviewee responses to the preferred means of being kept informed about management and other issues at the location where interviewed. Rangers scored slightly lower on average compared to noticeboards, word of mouth and social media.

5.18 The question was specific around being kept informed and does not therefore reflect the role played by some of these communication methods in influencing behaviour or informing visitors about the nature conservation importance of sites. The responses reflect that a range of approaches are perhaps likely to be effective in maximising the reach of any communication.

² Covid-19 - impact on sites and future management, October 2021 (4.3 – 4.4, page 8)

³ See (1) (4.7, page 9)

5.19 This report provides the results of the first regional visitor survey since the formation of the Executive Committee in June 2016. It provides valuable insight into the visitor profiles for each site and the motivations behind the reasons for the visit. Moreover, it offers important data relating to the level of awareness of key mitigation messages, which can be used to help focus/amend future mitigation effort. According to the timescales recommended in the Strategy, the next survey is due in 2025/26.

April 2022

Natural England comment:

We welcome this valuable survey.



South East Devon Visitor Survey 2020-2021

Zoe Caals, Chris Panter & Durwyn Liley

FOOTPRINT ECOLOGY, FOREST OFFICE, BERE ROAD,
WAREHAM, DORSET BH20 7PA
WWW.FOOTPRINT-ECOLOGY.CO.UK
01929 552444



FOOTPRINT ECOLOGY

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Summary

This report has been commissioned by the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership and presents the results of visitor surveys at a selection of countryside sites in south east Devon, namely Dawlish Countryside Park, the Exe Estuary (including Dawlish Warren) and the Pebblebed Heaths. The aim of the survey was to understand current visitor patterns and behaviour, including where visitors come from, and to assess the awareness and effectiveness of current access management.

Visitor surveys were undertaken between February 2020 and October 2021, and included both counts of the number of visitors and face-to-face interviews with a random sample of visitors. Survey methods were broadly consistent with those used in previous surveys (in 2010 on the Exe Estuary and in 2015 on the Pebblebeds). 192 hours of survey effort were undertaken in total, equally spread across 16 hours survey points (6 on the Pebblebeds, 5 on the Exe Estuary and 1 at Dawlish Countryside Park).

Key findings from the counts were:

- 6,066 people were seen during the 192 hours of survey.
- Counts included 2496 dogs (i.e. 0.41 dogs to every person).
- Goat Walk at Topsham was the busiest survey point (72.6 people recorded per hour).
- Rates for people 'entering' (i.e. starting their walk) ranged from 8.4-17.7 people per hour at the Pebblebeds survey points, from 2.6-37.3 people per hour at the Exe survey points, and 18.6 people per hour at the Dawlish Countryside Park.

A total of 499 interviews were conducted, and key findings from these included:

- 93% of interviewees were visiting directly from home and 5% were on holiday.
- Locations with high proportions of interviewees on holiday included Dawlish Warren (10%) and the Exmouth Duck Pond (15%).
- Dog walking was the most commonly stated main activity (57% of interviewees) and a further 8% of interviewees had a dog with them while undertaking a different main activity. The only survey points where dog walking was not the most commonly stated activity were Powderham and Goat Walk. The sites with the most dog walkers were Dawlish Countryside Park, Dawlish Warren, the Warren and Model Airfield.
- Walking was the next most commonly stated main activity (30% of interviewees). It was the most common main activity at Goat Walk, Powderham, Joney's Cross and Woodbury Castle (the latter two locations on a par with dog walking).
- 13% of interviewees gave a main activity type that was not dog walking or walking and these included a range of activities such as cycling, running, wildlife watching, watersports etc. Notable locations for these other activities included Powderham (22% of interviewees cycling, 14% bird/wildlife watching), Joney's Cross (16% bird/wildlife watching) and Exmouth Duck Pond (10% windsurfing, 8% kitesurfing).

- Interviewees had been visiting the locations where interviewed for many years, for example those visiting for over 10 years accounted for over 50% of interviewees at the Pebblebed Heaths and the Exe Estuary and 70% at Dawlish Warren. 45% of those interviewed at Dawlish Countryside Park had been visiting for at least 3 years.
- Visits were typically relatively short, and duration varied by survey location. The mean visit duration was around 76 minutes. Overall, 57% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds, 52% of interviewees at the Exe and 73% of interviewees at Dawlish Countryside Park had spent less than an hour on site.
- On average interviewees made around 24 visits per year to the location where interviewed. Those who visited more than once a day, daily or most days accounted for 28% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds, 26% at the Exe Estuary and 49% at Dawlish Countryside Park.
- 68% of interviewees visited equally all year round and for those that did indicate a preferred season there was little difference between seasons (e.g. 12% stated they tended to visit more in the summer, 11% in the spring, 10% in the winter and 8% in the autumn).
- 491 interviewee routes were mapped as part of the interview.
- Mapped routes on the Exe showed that 36% of interviewee routes passed through intertidal areas on the Exe Estuary, notably at Dawlish Warren (57%), Exmouth Duck Pond (59%) and Lympstone (71%).
- The length of interviewees' routes ranged from 170m to 32.73km, with a median length of 2.27km. The median route lengths on the Pebblebeds and the Exe were similar (2.46km and 2.59km respectively). At Dawlish Countryside Park the median route length was 1.68km.
- Key factors that influenced interviewees' choice of route included previous knowledge of the area (22%), weather (16%) and time (13%).
- The key factor that influenced interviewees' choice of where to go was that it was close to home (28%). At Dawlish Countryside Park the most common reason was the ability to let their dog off the lead (37%). On the Exe Estuary, the scenery was also a particularly important factor, given by 32% of interviewees.
- Interviewees cited a range of alternative locations that they would have visited instead of the location where interviewed that day, and these responses highlighted a crossover between the Exe Estuary and the Pebblebeds (7% of those interviewed on the Exe would have gone to the Pebblebeds instead and 10% of those interviewed on the Pebblebeds would have gone to the Exe Estuary instead).
- Away from the Exe Estuary and Pebblebed Heaths, the most common named alternatives were Dawlish Countryside Park (an alternative for 8% of interviewees at the Exe Estuary sites), Haldon Forest (an alternative for 3% of Exe visitors and 2% of Pebblebed Heath visitors) and Dartmoor (an alternative for 4% of Exe visitors and 1% of Pebblebed Heath visitors).
- For those interviewed at Dawlish Countryside Park, 31% would have visited the Exe Estuary instead and a further 16% another coastal location away from the Exe. The most commonly cited single alternative was Dawlish Warren (19% of interviewees there).
- 59% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds and 76% of interviewees at the Exe Estuary were aware that the site had environmental protection, but only 43% and 42% respectively were able to name or describe what these were.

- 84% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds and 78% of interviewees at the Exe Estuary were able to name at least one group of species or habitats that the site is important for.
- A third of interviewees (33%) at the Pebblebeds and a quarter of interviewees (25%) on the Exe Estuary had met one of the rangers or mitigation officers.
- Awareness about codes of conduct was lower on the Exe Estuary, where 58% were unaware of codes, compared to 22% on the Pebbebed Heaths.
- 30% of dog walkers interviewed had heard of, or were members of “Devon Loves Dogs” and 5% of dog walkers were members of the organisation.
- 18% of interviewees at the Exe Estuary had seen the patrol boat and 53% said they were aware of the refuges. Notably with the refuges awareness was higher in the vicinity of them (e.g. 85% of interviewees at Exmouth Duck Pond were aware of them).
- The mean linear distance from the interviewee’s home postcode to the survey point at which they were interviewed was 16.7km and the median distance was 5.0km (all interviewees at all sites). Three quarters of all interviewees lived within 9.9km of the survey point at which they were interviewed.
- For the Pebblebed Heath interviewees the median distance from the interviewee’s home postcode to the survey point was 5.3km and 75% lived within 8.5km. For the Exe Estuary sites the median was 4.2km and 75% lived within 15.4km and for Dawlish Countryside Park the median was 3.2km and 75% lived within 5.9km.

Comparisons with previous surveys (on the Exe Estuary in 2010 and Pebblebed Heaths in 2015) show marked increases in visitor numbers and these appear to be across all locations. While the numbers of dogs has increased the increases seem disproportionately to involve those without dogs. There were no significant differences in the distances between survey point and home location, suggesting there has been no change in how far people are travelling.

The data provide a snapshot of use at the given survey times. The surveys were started before the Covid pandemic, survey work was paused and resumed towards the end of the pandemic. This will clearly have an impact on visitor use and patterns of access. The implications of the results are discussed in terms of the mitigation measures and access management measures in place at the sites.

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1. Introduction

Overview

- 1.1 This report has been commissioned by the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership and presents the results of visitor surveys carried out in 2020 and 2021 at a selection of countryside sites in south east Devon. The aim of the survey was to understand current visitor patterns and behaviour, including where visitors come from, and to assess the awareness and effectiveness of current access management.

The sites included in the survey

- 1.2 The survey included the following sites, which all lie in close proximity:
- The East Devon Pebblebed Heaths,
 - The Exe Estuary,
 - Dawlish Warren,
 - Dawlish Countryside Park.
- 1.3 The East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, the Exe Estuary and Dawlish Warren are all internationally important for nature conservation and are afforded strict protection.
- 1.4 The East Devon Pebblebed Heaths is the largest block of lowland heath in Devon, and it is internationally important for its Northern Atlantic wet heaths and extensive areas of lowland European dry heaths. The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and classified as a Special Protection Area (SPA) for the breeding bird interest. The Exe Estuary lies to the west of the heaths and is of international importance for wintering and migratory wetland birds, for which it is classified as an SPA and listed as a Ramsar site. Dawlish Warren is a geomorphologically important sand spit which protects the mouth of the Exe Estuary. It lies within the Exe Estuary SPA and qualifies as an SAC for the dune habitats and presence of Petalwort, a liverwort.
- 1.5 Dawlish Countryside Park is a relatively new countryside site, created as a 'SANG' (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace), a dedicated space to provide for increasing levels of access in the area.

Impacts and importance of access

- 1.6 A challenging issue for UK nature conservation is how to respond to increasing demand for access without compromising the integrity of protected wildlife sites. Areas that are important for nature conservation are often important for a range of other services, including the provision of space for recreation for an increasing population. Such recreation space can be used for a wide variety of activities, ranging from daily dog walks to competitive adventure and endurance sports.
- 1.7 Visits to the natural environment have shown a significant increase in England as a result of the increase in population and a trend to visit the countryside more (O'Neill, 2019). The issues are particularly acute in southern England, where population density is highest. The Covid-19 pandemic has further had a marked effect on how people use local greenspaces and many locations across the UK have seen a marked increase in recreation use during the pandemic (Burnett et al., 2021).
- 1.8 There is a strong body of evidence showing how increasing levels of access can have negative impacts on wildlife. Issues are varied and include disturbance, increased fire risk, contamination and damage (for general reviews see: D. Liley et al., 2010; Lowen et al., 2008; Ross et al., 2014; Underhill-Day, 2005). The issues are not, however, straightforward. It is now increasingly recognised that access to the countryside is crucial to the long term success of nature conservation projects, for example through enforcing pro-environmental behaviours and a greater respect for the world around us (Richardson et al., 2016). Access also brings wider benefits to society that include benefits to mental/physical health (Keniger et al., 2013; Lee and Maheswaran, 2011; Pretty et al., 2005) and economic benefits (ICF GHK, 2013; ICRT, 2011; Keniger et al., 2013; The Land Trust, 2018). Nature conservation bodies are trying to encourage people to spend more time outside and government policy is also promoting countryside access in general (e.g. through enhancing coastal access).

Legislative context

- 1.9 The designation, protection and restoration of European wildlife sites is embedded in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended, which are commonly referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations'. Importantly, the most recent amendments (the Conservation of Habitats and

Species (amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019¹) take account of the UK's departure from the EU.

- 1.10 The Regulations provide strict protection for European sites and this extends to local plans. Regulation 105 *et seq* addresses the assessment of local plans and there is also Government Guidance on the interpretation and application of the Regulations which includes local plans². Local planning authorities, as public bodies, are given specific duties as 'competent authorities'. A competent authority should only approve a project or give effect to a plan where it can be ascertained that there will not be an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site(s) (or exceptionally, if there is overriding public interest and no alternatives).
- 1.11 Whereas a single dwelling is unlikely to have implications in terms of visitor use, large but gradual changes in housing over a wide area over a number of years may well result in marked changes in local access levels and have impacts for European sites.

Mitigation for housing growth

- 1.12 A strategic approach to mitigation was established in 2014, developed with partnership working between East Devon, Exeter and Teignbridge local planning authorities, with input from a number of wider organisations involved in the protection and management of the three European sites. The South-east Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy (Liley, Hoskin, Lake, Underhill-Day, & Cruickshanks, 2014) set out a zone of influence (i.e. the evidence based zone within which it is deemed that mitigation measures are required) and series of mitigation measures that worked together to provide robust protection for the three European sites.
- 1.13 The strategic approach was designed in light of the 30,000 new dwellings anticipated within the zone of influence and planned to run over the lifetime of the relevant Local Plans, and then beyond as a continual rolling programme, but with interim reviews. Since 2014, the strategy has been

¹ The amending regulations generally seek to retain the requirements of the 2017 Regulations but with adjustments for the UK's exit from the European Union. See Regulation 4, which also confirms that the interpretation of these Regulations as they had effect, or any guidance as it applied, before exit day, shall continue to do so.

² Habitats regulations assessments: protecting a European site. Defra and Natural England. 24 February 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site> (accessed 4 March 2021)

progressed by the three local planning authorities and dedicated staff are in place to facilitate implementation.

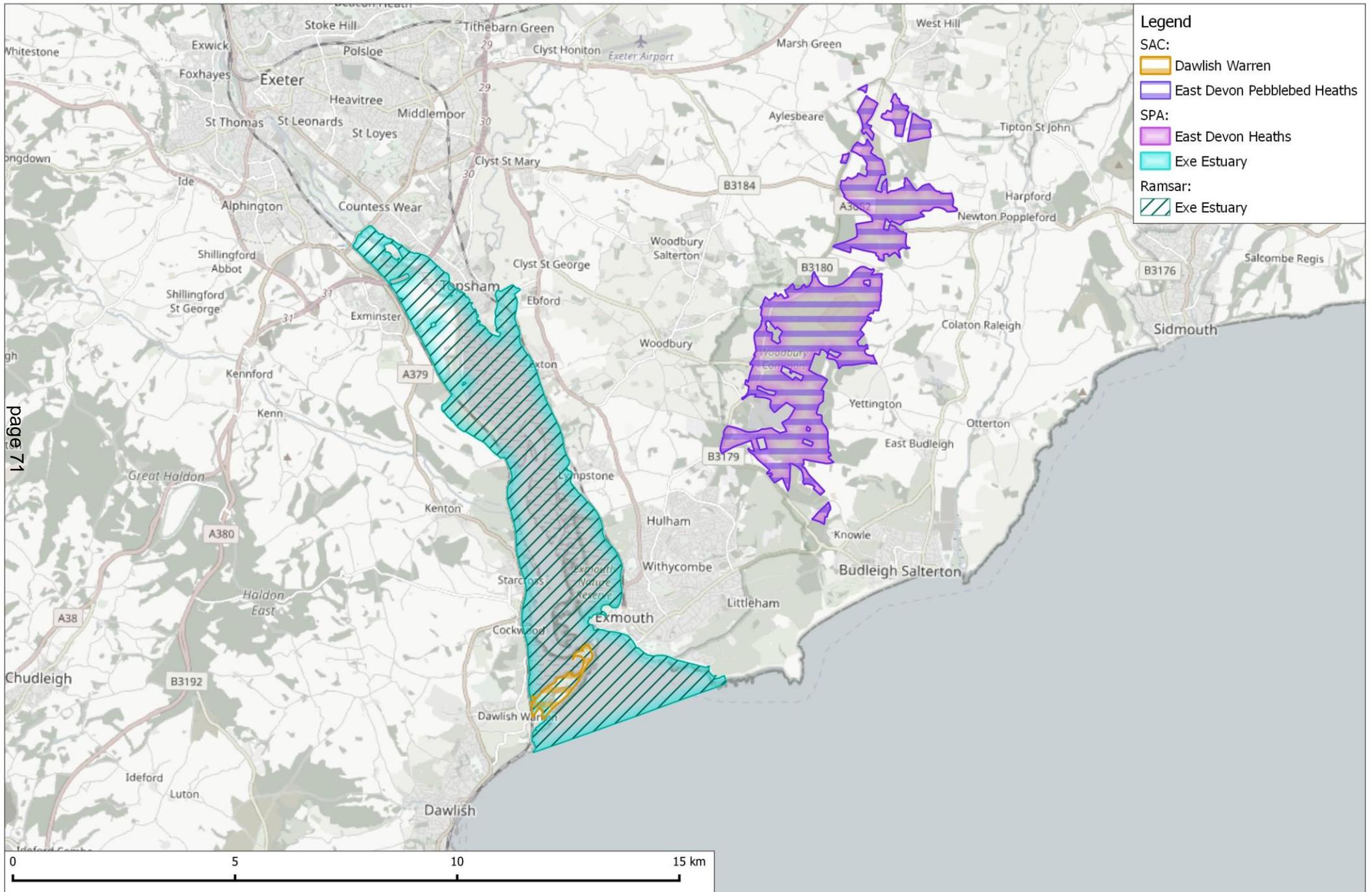
Previous visitor survey work

- 1.14 Previous visitor surveys were carried out on the Pebblebed Heaths in 2015 (Liley et al., 2016) and in 2011 (Ecology Solutions, 2012). An on-site visitor survey was carried out on the Exe Estuary in 2010 (D Liley et al., 2010) and a household postal survey was also conducted in 2010 across East Devon, Exeter and Teignbridge (Cruickshanks and Liley, 2012).

Reasons for this survey

- 1.15 Monitoring is essential to ensure the successful delivery of the mitigation work, acting as an early warning system and providing the feedback to hone mitigation. Monitoring is necessary to ensure approaches are working as anticipated and whether further refinements or adjustments are necessary. Monitoring will inform whether resources can be better allocated, and will pick up changes in access patterns (for example in response to changes in climate, new activities or in response to changes on the sites themselves). The monitoring is therefore aimed at ensuring mitigation effort is focused, responsive to changes in access and that money is well-spent and correctly allocated. Monitoring is therefore integral to the mitigation 'package'.
- 1.16 In addition, monitoring is necessary for the relevant local authorities to demonstrate that measures have been effective and costs to developers have been proportionate.
- 1.17 This survey was commissioned to update the information from previous studies (in some cases nearly 10 years old) and provide information to help inform future mitigation delivery. Given the major effect of Covid on travel patterns and use of outdoor spaces, the survey will identify emerging trends and patterns of use.

Map 1: Relevant European sites.



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2. Methods

Overview

- 2.1 Visitor surveys were undertaken between February 2020 and October 2021, and included both counts of the number of visitors and face-to-face interviews with a random sample of visitors. Survey methods were broadly consistent with those used in previous surveys.

Survey locations

- 2.2 Survey work took place at 12 locations: 6 on the Pebblebed Heaths, 5 on the Exe Estuary, and Dawlish Countryside Park. All except Dawlish Countryside Park and Model Airfield had been included in previous visitor surveys.
- 2.3 Survey locations are summarised in Table 1 and Map 2. The number of survey locations was determined by the available budget and then survey locations were selected to provide a reasonable geographic spread and to include range of different types of location. All survey locations (except for Dawlish Countryside Park) have direct access to the SPA and/or SAC. All were based either in/near popular car parks, or at other key access points such as slipways.

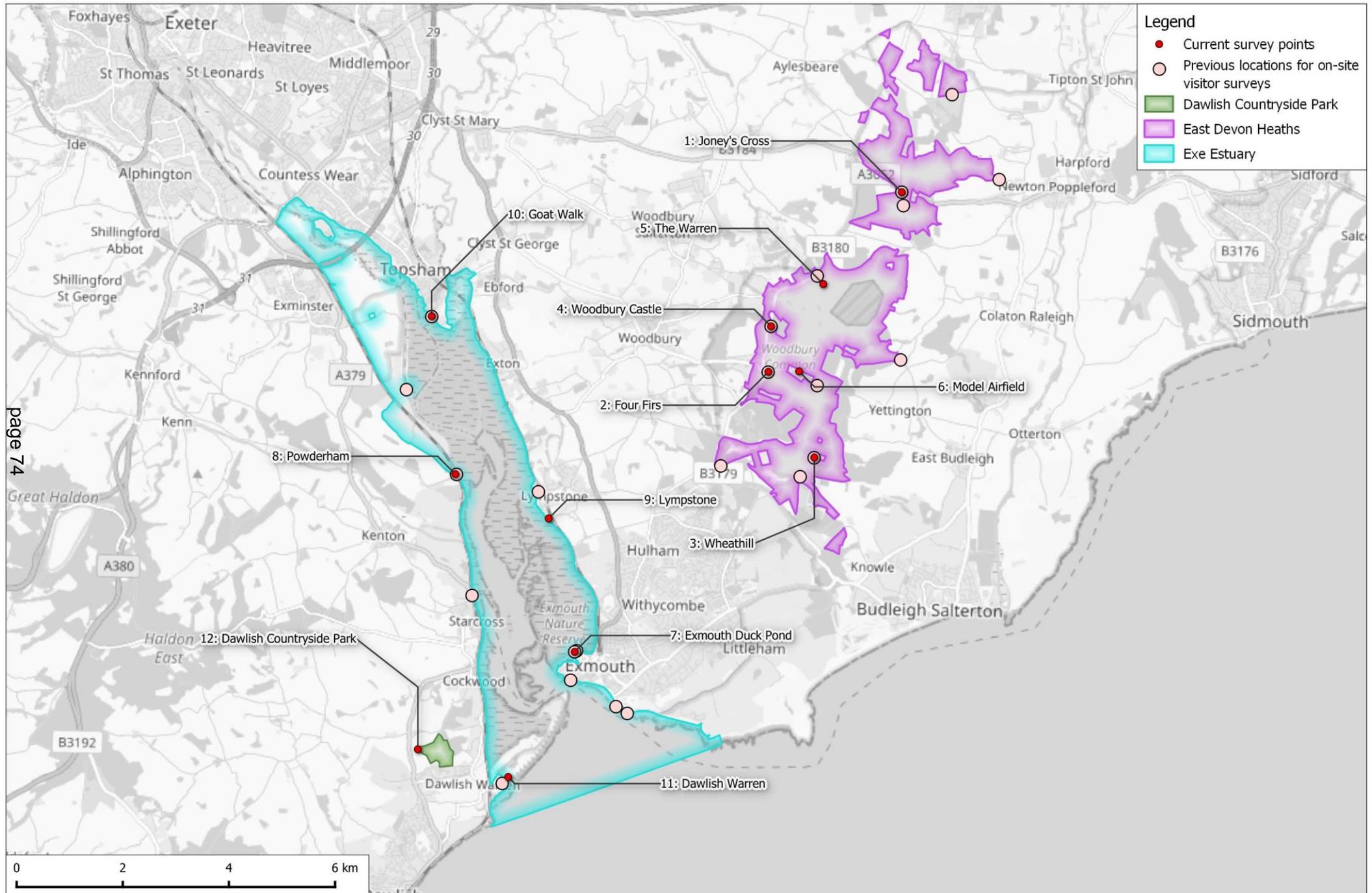
Table 1: Summary of the survey points used. Colours used show the 3 broad regions: purple for the Pebblebeds, blue for the Exe Estuary (including Dawlish Warren) and green for the SANG. The final column indicates which locations were included in previous visitor surveys.

Region	Survey point ID and name	Grid reference	Description	Previous surveys
Pebblebed Heaths	1: Joney's Cross	SY05698972	Based in the car park	2011, 2015
	2: Four Firs	SY03188637	Based in the car park	2015
	3: Wheathill	SY04048477	Based in the car park	2015
	4: Woodbury Castle	SY03238721	Based in the car park	2011, 2015
	5: The Warren	SY04218800	Track junction to south of The Warren car park * ¹	2011, 2015
	6: Model Airfield	SY03768638	Based in the car park	-
Exe Estuary including Dawlish Warren	7: Exmouth Duck Pond	SX99538114	Roaming along shoreline	2010
	8: Powderham	SX97288445	At start of Exe Estuary Trail on Church Road near the church	2010
	9: Lypstone	SX99048363	Top of slipway on corner of Sowden Lane * ²	2010
	10: Goat Walk	SX96848740	Northern end of Goat Walk, by the Strand	2010
	11: Dawlish Warren	SX98287880	On promenade just past the first groyne	2010
SANG	12: Dawlish Countryside Park	SX96587931	By the noticeboards inside entrance from car park	-

*¹ In previous surveys, the survey point at The Warren was at the car park itself, but this time was moved to a nearby path junction, in order to intercept a wider range of visitors.

*² In the previous survey, the survey point at Lypstone was further north, by the sailing club.

Map 2: Location of current and previous surveying locations.



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Interviews

- 2.4 Face-to-face interviews were conducted with a random sample of visitors, by approaching the next person seen by the surveyor. Only one person was interviewed per group and no minors (under 18s) were interviewed.
- 2.5 The questionnaire design was based on previous surveys but with some additional questions to ensure that the requirements of the brief were met regarding visitor awareness of nature conservation and the effectiveness of mitigation measures. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1. It included some site-specific questions, for example visitors to the Pebblebed Heaths and the Exe Estuary were asked about their awareness of the nature conservation value of the site they were visiting, whereas these questions were not asked at Dawlish Countryside Park.
- 2.6 The questionnaire was designed using Snap Surveys software and was conducted using tablets running the Snap Mobile Anywhere app. As part of the interview, visitors were asked what route they had taken on site (or were planning to take). This was captured by the surveyor on a paper map, using a unique reference number to match it to the corresponding questionnaire data, and these routes were subsequently digitised into GIS for analysis.

Visitor counts

- 2.7 Alongside the interview data, surveyors maintained a tally of all people seen, recording the number of groups (of any size), individuals, minors, dogs and cyclists. These counts allow a comparison across survey points in terms of footfall, and allow the proportion of visitors that were interviewed at each location to be determined.
- 2.8 Separate tallies were maintained, as relevant, at each survey point for those entering (e.g. parking and starting their walk at the survey point), leaving (e.g. someone returning to the survey point having completed a walk) or passing through (those clearly passing the surveyor mid-way through their visit, e.g. those on a long run or bike ride).

Timings

- 2.9 Each survey point was surveyed at a relevant time of year, i.e. when the wildlife interest was likely to be present and potentially vulnerable. The Pebblebed Heath locations were surveyed between April and June (representing a time when breeding birds are present), and the Exe Estuary

locations (including Dawlish Warren) were surveyed between mid-September and March (reflecting the period when wintering/passage birds are present). Exmouth Duck Pond was surveyed whilst the nearby wildlife refuge was active. Dawlish Countryside Park was surveyed in June and August (reflecting times when use is likely to be relatively high). The dates surveys were conducted at each site are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Survey dates for each location

Survey point ID and name	Weekday	Weekend
1: Joney's Cross	10 May 2021	24 April 2021
2: Four Firs	7 May 2021	20 June 2021
3: Wheathill	18 June 2021	25 April 2021
4: Woodbury Castle	23 April 2021	9 May 2021
5: The Warren	26 April 2021	19 June 2021
6: Model Airfield	21 June 2021	08 May 2021
7: Exmouth Duck Pond	27 October 2021	19 September 2021
8: Powderham	27 February 2020	29 February 2020
9: Lympstone	13 March 2020	14 March 2020
10: Goat Walk	28 February 2020	1 March 2020
11: Dawlish Warren	7 February 2020	8 February 2020
12: Dawlish Countryside Park	4 August 2021	13 June 2021

2.10 Each location was surveyed for 16 hours, with 8 hours on a weekend day and 8 hours on a weekday. Survey days were split into set 2-hour sessions to capture usage across daylight hours. The timings of these were adjusted for different times of year as follows:

- February: 0700-0900, 0930-1130, 1230-1430, 1500-1700
- March and October: 0700-0900, 1000-1200, 1300-1500, 1600-1800
- April to September: 0700-0900, 1030-1230, 1400-1600, 1700-1900

2.11 There was one exception to the timings above, where the surveyor arrived late due to vehicle breakdown. This was at The Warren, and the first session was instead 0800-1000. The survey effort was therefore the same and should be comparable.

Weather

2.12 The weather during fieldwork was varied since it covered several seasons (see Figure 1 for a summary of temperature and rainfall). The only location that was potentially affected by wet weather was Model Airfield, which had

rainfall throughout almost all sessions, however this was mostly drizzle rather than heavy rain.

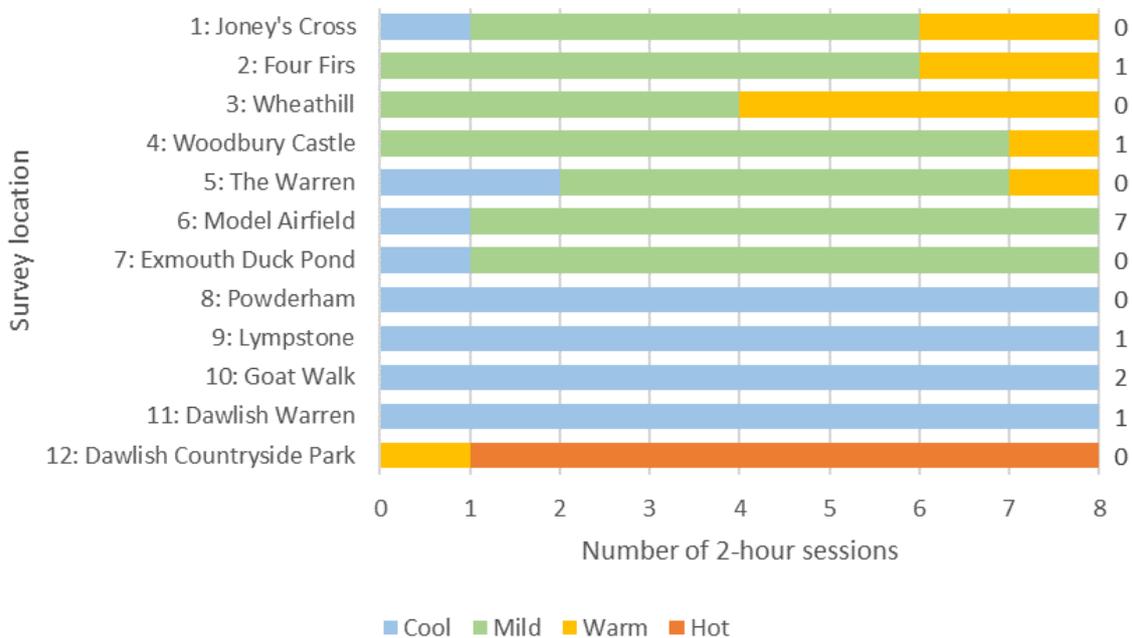


Figure 1: Summary of the temperature during each survey session, as categorised by the surveyor. The numbers on the right-hand side indicate the number of sessions (out of 8) where there was rainfall for over half of the session.

Coronavirus restrictions

2.13 The coronavirus pandemic and associated restrictions put a stop to fieldwork in March 2020 and it was not resumed until April 2021 when the majority of restrictions had eased. At the time of fieldwork restarting, people were once again allowed to travel outside of their local area and meet in groups of up to six people. Initially, overnight stays were restricted to self-contained accommodation but within a few weeks all overnight accommodation was allowed to re-open. See Figure 2 for a timeline covering some of the key dates during this period. The figure shows how the survey window in the April/May period of 2021 coincided with the lifting of restrictions.

2.14 An additional question was added to the questionnaire in 2021 (Q7) to find out if interviewees’ visit patterns had changed due to the pandemic, for example, if they were visiting more or less frequently now.

- 2.15 For fieldwork in 2021, some adaptations were made to minimise the risk of transmission between surveyors and interviewees. Surveyors followed the social distancing guidelines current at the time (2m apart, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m was not viable) and wore a face covering or visor. In order to map routes, the surveyors had large (A3) laminated versions of their paper maps and were able to show these to the interviewee who could then broadly indicate their route with their finger (refraining from touching the laminated map).

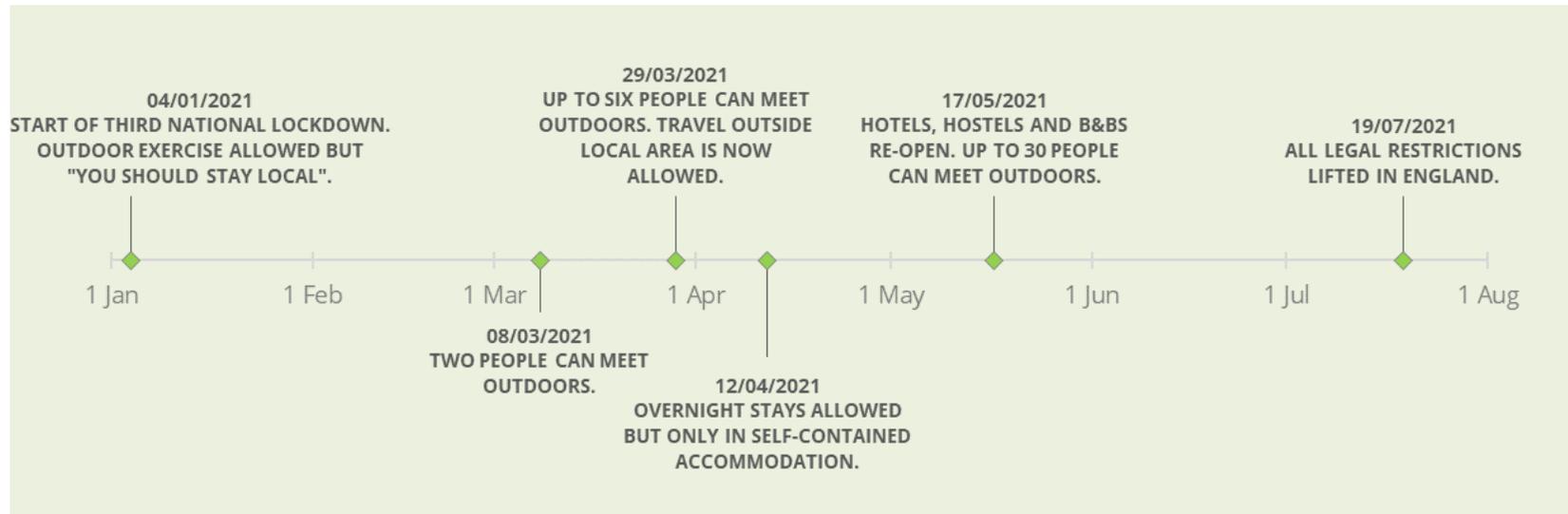


Figure 2: Summary of key coronavirus restrictions affecting outdoor recreation in early 2021.

3. Results: visitor counts

Total footfall

- 3.1 Visitor counts involved the tallies maintained during the survey times. Total footfall is the summed count of people recorded passing the survey point (i.e. the combined sum of those entering, leaving or passing through at the survey point). It should be noted that at the busiest sites the tally count is approximate, as the surveyor noted they struggled to maintain an accurate count while interviewing.
- 3.2 Over the 192 hours of survey, the tally counts recorded a total footfall of 6,066 people (Appendix 2). This equates to an overall average 31.6 people moving through the survey points per hour. There were also 2,496 dogs, roughly 0.41 to every 1 person, and 10% of the people were minors (585) and 5% of people were on bikes (318).
- 3.3 There were marked differences between survey points and sites, with the highest value of 72.6 people per hour at Goat Walk, and just 5.4 people per hour at Lypstone. Taking the average for each site, the values were 25.4 people per hour at the Pebblebeds (6 survey points), 37.6 at the Exe Estuary sites including Dawlish Warren (5 survey points) and 38.8 at the SANG (1 survey point).
- 3.4 From the total footfall count of 6,066, the average group size was as 1.9 people per group. This ranged from 2.2 at Joney's Cross and Dawlish Warren to 1.4 at Model Airfield. Average group size was 1.7 at the SANG and 1.9 at both the Pebblebeds and Exe Estuary.
- 3.5 Occasionally large, organised groups were observed with each involving 20-50 people. For example, running clubs were seen meeting at Joney's Cross and at The Warren, a group of marines passed through at The Warren and the City of Exeter hash house harriers were at Wheathill. These events could have affected the number of other visitors, for example if the majority of parking spaces were taken up by these groups.

People entering

- 3.6 A total of 2,982 people were counted 'entering', of which 306 were minors. The total number of groups was 1,551, giving an average group size of 1.9 people per group (and 0.2 minors per group).

- 3.7 The numbers entering are expressed as per hour figures and shown by survey point in Figure 3 (with supporting data in Table 3). Based on the per hour counts, both the busiest and quietest sites recorded were on the Exe Estuary, ranging from 2.6 people per hour at Lymptone to 37.3 at Goat Walk (see Figure 3). The survey points on the Pebblebeds were less variable, ranging from 8.4 (Model Airfield) to 17.7 people per hour (Woodbury Castle). Numbers of minors per hour were above 3 at the two busiest survey points (Lymptone and Goat Walk). The next highest value was at Exmouth Duck Pond (2.9), where minors accounted for 20% of all people entering.
- 3.8 The average number of dogs entering across all sites was 6.1 dogs per hour. The number of dogs entering per hour was highest at Dawlish Countryside Park SANG with 13.1 dogs per hour. This was notably much higher than on the Pebblebeds and the Exe Estuary. The number of cyclists entering per hour was by far the greatest at Powderham, with 4.7 per hour. This equated to 36% of people entering on bikes at this location, compared the second highest percentage was 7% at Four Firs and to 5% across all the data.

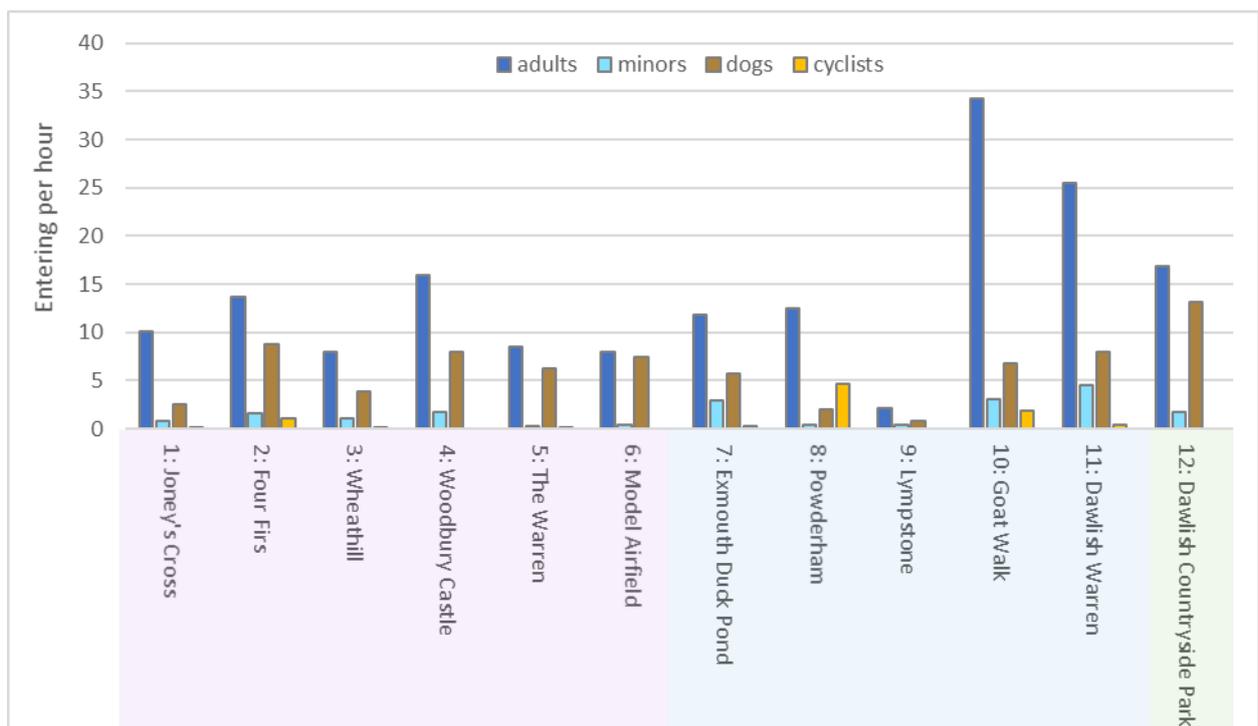


Figure 3: Total number of adults, minors, dogs and cyclists recorded entering per hour by survey point. Background shading indicates the grouping by the Pebblebeds (purple), Exe Estuary (blue) and SANG (green).

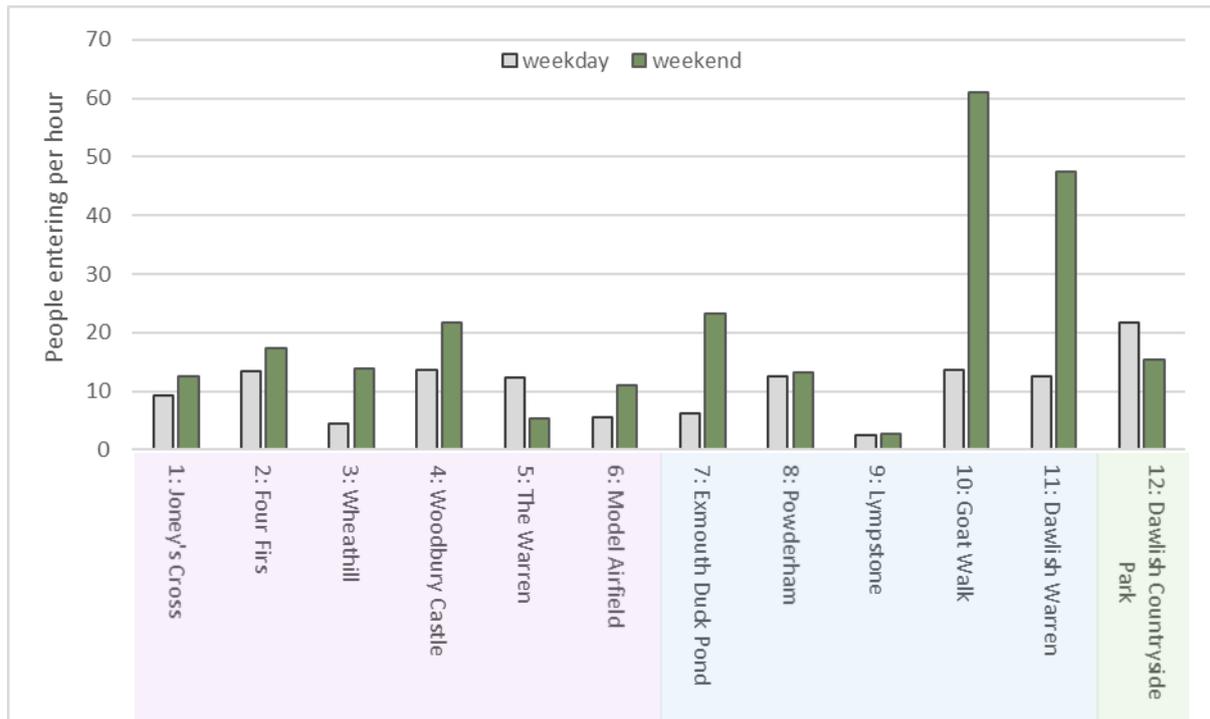


Figure 4: Averaged number of people per hour entering by survey point, shown separately for weekdays and weekend survey days. Background shading indicates the grouping by the Pebblebeds (purple), Exe Estuary (blue) and SANG (green).

Tally composition (using counts of those entering)

3.9 The average groups site (people entering) was 1.96 people per group on the Pebblebeds, 1.94 on the Exe Estuary and 1.71 at the SANG. The breakdown of adults and minors, and associated number of dogs and people on bikes are shown in Figure 5. These are based on an average across survey points. This figure shows that although overall group sizes were very similar between the Pebblebeds and Exe (1.96 and 1.94), this was driven in part by the relative number of minors. On average there were 0.18 minors per group on the Pebblebeds, compared to 0.25 on the Exe. The average number of dogs was very different between sites; with 1.21 dogs per group at the SANG, 1.03 on the Pebblebeds and 0.49 on the Exe.

3.10 The average group size is also shown Map 3 and Table 3. Group size was highest on the Pebblebeds at Wheathill and Joney's Cross (2.9 and 2.5 people per group respectively). The number of minors per group entering was highest at Exmouth Duck Pond and Lypstone (0.4 and 0.3 respectively). None of the Exe survey points recorded an average number of dogs that exceed 1 dog per group whereas on the Pebblebeds and the SANG values tended to be higher. Numbers of cyclists were highest at Powderham, but otherwise very small across all others.

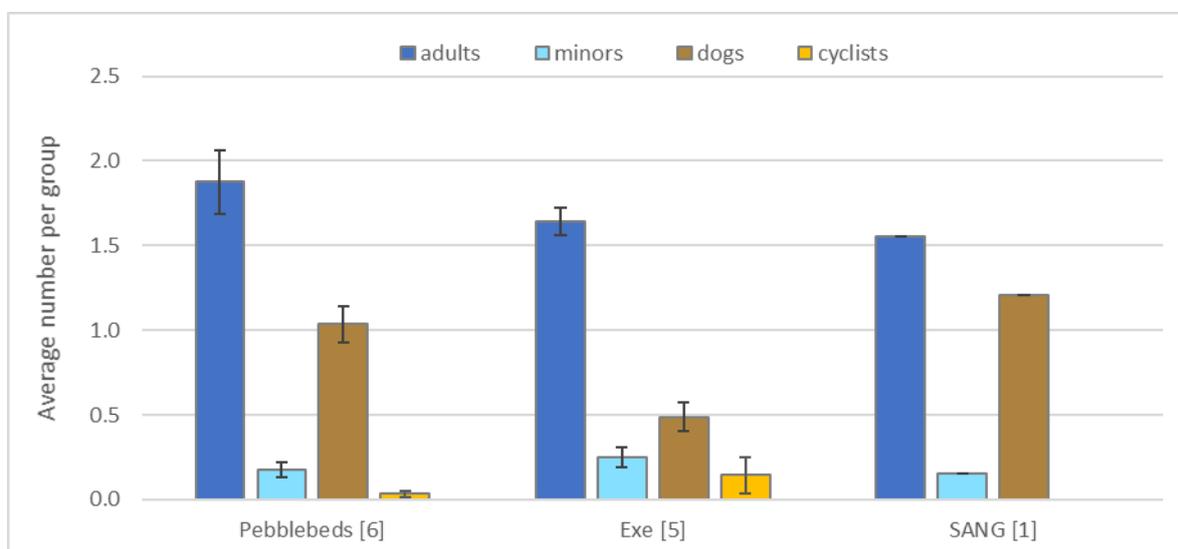


Figure 5: Typical group composition at the 3 sites, shown as the number of adults, minors, dogs and cyclists in an averaged group. Average is based on a mean across survey points. Number of survey points given in parenthesis.

Map 3: Typical group composition at each survey point.

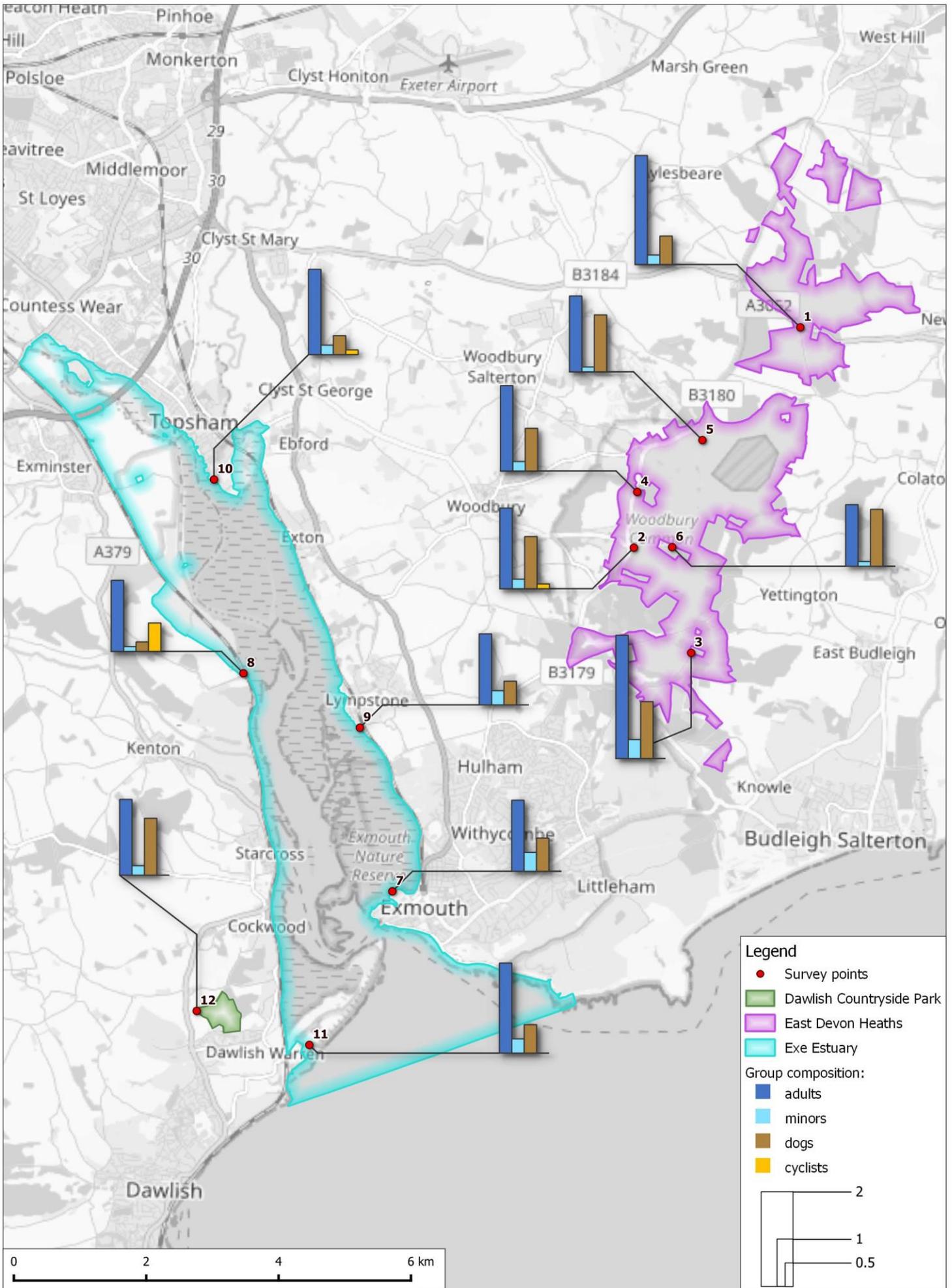


Table 3: Summary of the number of people, groups, minors, dogs and cyclists recorded entering at each survey point. Highest 3 values in each column are highlighted in red, lowest 3 are highlighted in blue. In the final column, the higher percentage (i.e. weekday or weekend) is highlighted in red.

Survey point	Total people	Total groups	Total dogs	Total minors	Total cyclists	People per hour	Group size	Dogs per group	% minors	% cyclists	% people weekday: weekend
1: Joney's Cross	174	71	41	13	2	10.9	2.5	0.6	7%	1%	43: 57
2: Four Firs	246	129	141	26	17	15.4	1.9	1.1	11%	7%	44: 56
3: Wheathill	146	50	62	18	1	9.1	2.9	1.2	12%	1%	25: 75
4: Woodbury Castle	283	142	128	28	0	17.7	2.0	0.9	10%	0%	39: 61
5: The Warren	141	83	99	5	2	8.8	1.7	1.2	4%	1%	70 :30
6: Model Airfield	134	99	119	6	0	8.4	1.4	1.2	4%	0%	34: 66
7: Exmouth Duck Pond	236	126	91	47	4	14.8	1.9	0.7	20%	2%	21: 79
8: Powderham	206	133	32	7	75	12.9	1.5	0.2	3%	36%	49: 51
9: Lympstone	41	22	12	7	0	2.6	1.9	0.5	17%	0%	49: 51
10: Goat Walk	597	303	108	49	29	37.3	2.0	0.4	8%	5%	18: 82
11: Dawlish Warren	481	219	127	73	6	30.1	2.2	0.6	15%	1%	21: 79
12: Dawlish Countryside Park	297	174	210	27	0	18.6	1.7	1.2	9%	0%	59 :41
Total	2982	1551	1170	306	136	15.5	1.9	0.8	10%	5%	34 : 66

4. Results: interview data

Number of interviews

4.1 During the 192 hours of survey, 872 groups were approached to be interviewed. A total of 499 interviews were conducted (i.e. 57% of those approached). Those groups who did not take part in the interviews either had already been approached and interviewed, in which case they were not re-interviewed (39 groups, 4% of those approached), refused to take part in the survey (331 groups, 38%) or had language issues (3 groups, <1%).

Table 4: The numbers (and percentage) of people approached who refused, had language issues, had already been interviewed and were successfully interviewed at each location. Highest 3 percentages in each column (for individual locations) are highlighted in red.

Survey location	Refusals	Language issues	Already interviewed	Total interviews	Total groups approached
1: Joney's Cross	14 (30)	0 (0)	1 (2)	32 (68)	47 (100)
2: Four Firs	32 (39)	0 (0)	6 (7)	44 (54)	82 (100)
3: Wheathill	16 (33)	1 (2)	2 (4)	30 (61)	49 (100)
4: Woodbury Castle	28 (37)	1 (1)	1 (1)	45 (60)	75 (100)
5: The Warren	25 (36)	0 (0)	4 (6)	41 (59)	70 (100)
6: Model Airfield	33 (44)	0 (0)	11 (15)	31 (41)	75 (100)
Pebblebed locations	148 (37)	2 (1)	25 (6)	223 (56)	398 (100)
7: Exmouth Duck Pond	29 (43)	0 (0)	0 (0)	39 (57)	68 (100)
8: Powderham	60 (61)	0 (0)	1 (1)	37 (38)	98 (100)
9: Lympstone	3 (10)	1 (3)	2 (7)	24 (80)	30 (100)
10: Goat Walk	53 (51)	0 (0)	2 (2)	48 (47)	103 (100)
11: Dawlish Warren	18 (21)	0 (0)	5 (6)	61 (73)	84 (100)
Exe Estuary locations	163 (43)	1 (<1)	10 (3)	209 (55)	383 (100)
12: Dawlish Countryside Park	20 (22)	0 (0)	4 (4)	67 (74)	91 (100)
All locations	331 (38)	3 (<1)	39 (4)	499 (57)	872 (100)

4.2 The number of refusals tended to be higher on the Exe Estuary sites and this may be a reflection of those sites being surveyed during the winter (when

colder and people perhaps less likely to linger). At the Exe Estuary sites and particularly Powderham the high proportion of cyclists following the Exe cycle trail may also be a reason for refusal as many were reluctant to stop given they were moving fast.

Visit type (Q1-2)

- 4.3 Overall, 464 of the interviewees (93%) were visiting directly from home. A further 27 interviewees (5%) were on holiday in the area and 6 interviewees (1%) were staying with friends or family. Finally 2 interviewees (<1%) described themselves as “other”, both visiting the sites for work.
- 4.4 A breakdown by survey point is shown in Table 5, reflecting an overall pattern of more interviewees visiting directly from home at the Pebblebeds, compared to the Exe. The percentage of interviewees visiting directly from home on the Pebblebeds was 97% (and the same at the SANG), compared to 88% on the Exe Estuary, with the Duck Pond and Dawlish Warren being notable for the proportion of holiday makers. On the Exe, the percentage of interviewees on holiday or staying with friends and family was 12% (25 interviewees), compared to just 3% (6) on the Pebblebeds and 3% (2) at the SANG.
- 4.5 Of the 27 interviewees who were on holiday, 11 of them (41%) were staying in a campervan/campsite, 8 of them (30%) were staying in self-catering accommodation, 4 of them (15%) were staying in a B&B, 3 of them (11%) in a second home and 1 of them (4%) in a hotel.

Table 5: Number (%) of interviewees by visit type (from Q1) and survey location. Highest 3 percentages in each column (for individual locations) are highlighted in red.

Survey point	Visiting directly from home	On holiday	Staying with friends/family	Other	Total
1: Joney's Cross	31 (97)	1 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	32 (100)
2: Four Firs	43 (98)	1 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	44 (100)
3: Wheathill	29 (97)	0 (0)	1 (3)	0 (0)	30 (100)
4: Woodbury Castle	42 (93)	2 (4)	0 (0)	1 (2)	45 (100)
5: The Warren	40 (98)	1 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	41 (100)
6: Model Airfield	31 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	31 (100)
Pebblebed locations	216 (97)	5 (2)	1 (<1)	1 (<1)	223 (100)
7: Exmouth Duck Pond	33 (85)	6 (15)	0 (0)	0 (0)	39 (100)
8: Powderham	32 (86)	3 (8)	1 (3)	1 (3)	37 (100)
9: Lympstone	21 (88)	1 (4)	2 (8)	0 (0)	24 (100)
10: Goat Walk	43 (90)	4 (8)	1 (2)	0 (0)	48 (100)
11: Dawlish Warren	54 (89)	6 (10)	1 (2)	0 (0)	61 (100)
Exe Estuary locations	183 (88)	20 (10)	5 (2)	1 (<1)	209 (100)
12: Dawlish Countryside Park	65 (97)	2 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	67 (100)
Total	464 (93)	27 (5)	6 (1)	2 (<1)	499 (100)

Activities (Q3)

4.6 The most common activity was dog walking, with roughly 3 in every 5 interviewees stating that this was their main activity (285 interviewees, 57%). However, these were the self-reported single choice main activities, and it should be noted that while 57% of interviewees gave their main activity as 'dog walking', in fact 65% of interviewees had a dog with them. Those interviewees who had a dog with them included those who stated that their main activity was walking (38 interviewees, 25% of those walking), bird/wildlife watching (3, 23%), running/jogging (2, 15%), canoeing/kayaking (1, 50%), "other" (1, 17%) and cycling (1, 6%). The percentage of interviewees who had at least one dog with them was 73% on the Pebblebeds, 48% on the Exe and 90% at Dawlish Countryside Park.

4.7 The next most common response was walking, (150 interviewees, 30%). 64 interviewees (13%) gave an activity type that was not dog walking or walking and these included a range of activities such as cycling, running, wildlife watching, watersports etc. Activity types are summarised by site in Figure 6 and by survey point in Map 4.

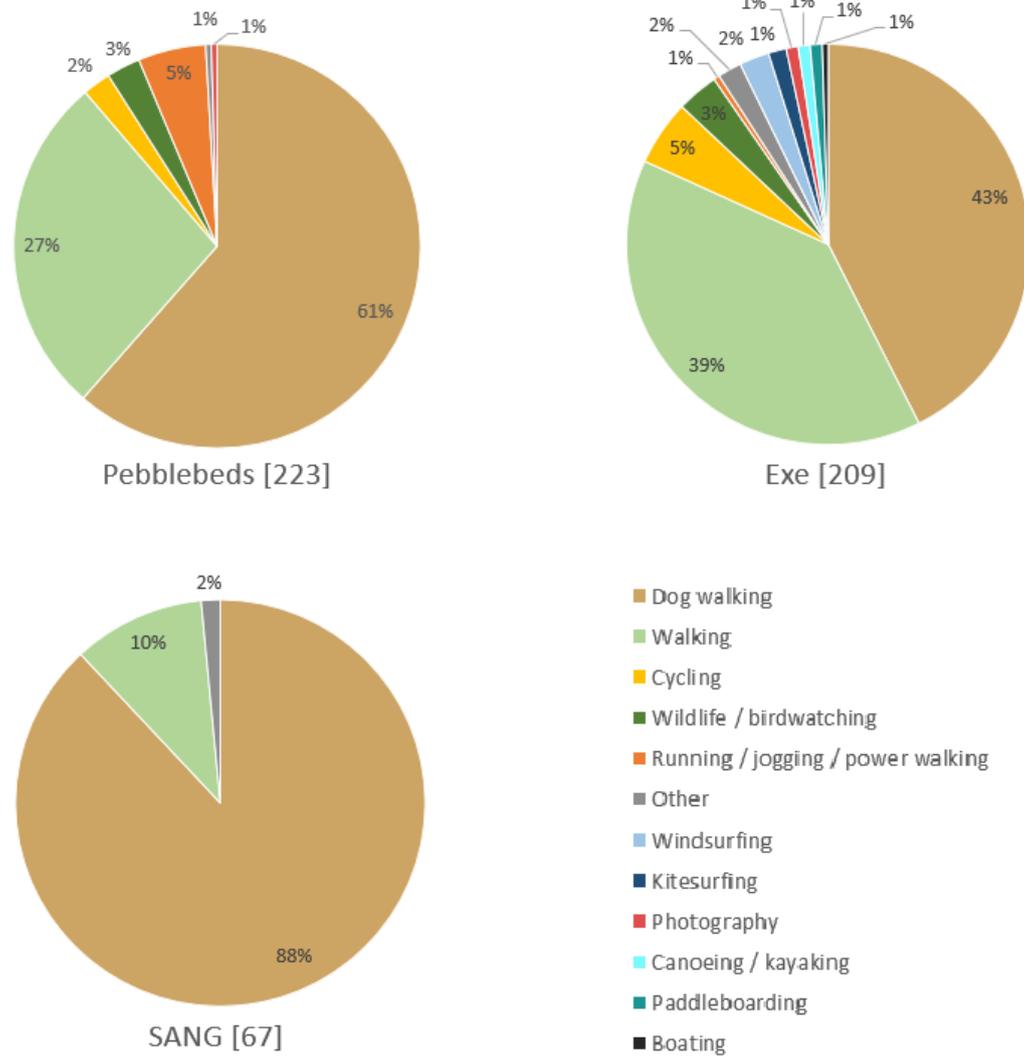
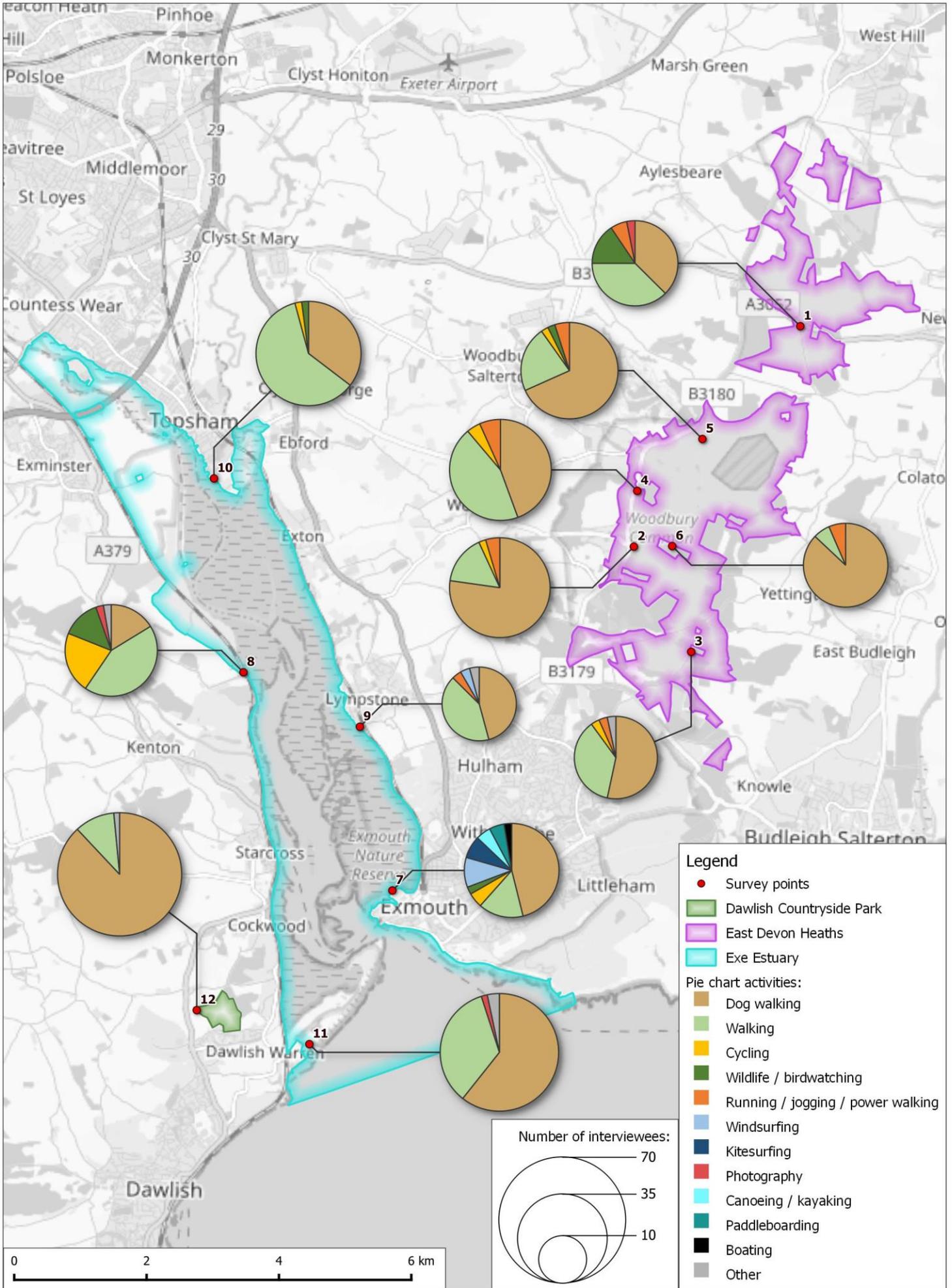


Figure 6: Main activity (from Q3) of interviewees by site.

Map 4: Pie charts to show interviewee activities.



Visit pattern (Q4-9)

Length of time visiting (Q4)

4.8 Over 50% of interviewees at the Pebblebed Heaths and at the Exe Estuary said that they had been visiting the site for over 10 years. At the Dawlish Warren survey location, this figure was 70%. The SANG has only been open since 2017, however 45% of interviewees said they had been visiting it for at least 3 years (Figure 7).

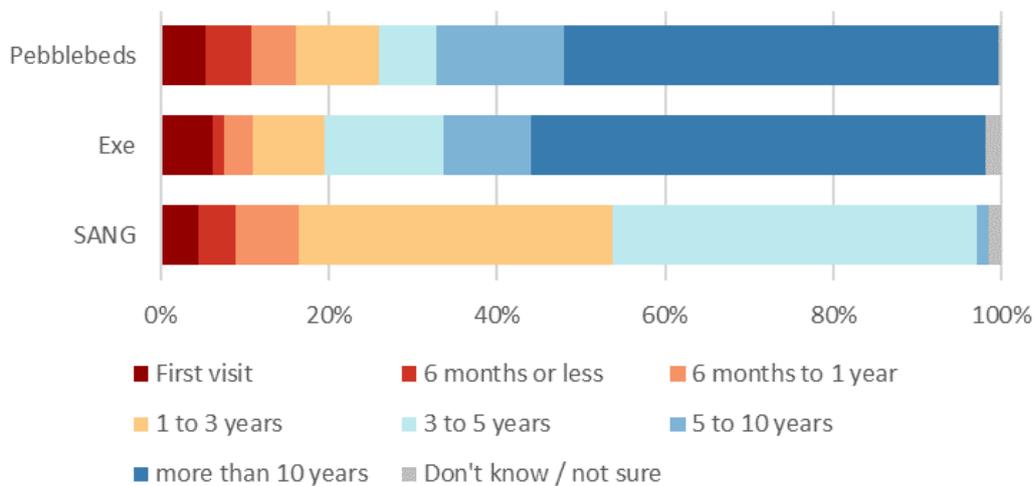


Figure 7: Length of time that interviewees had been visiting the location where interviewed (from Q4).

Visit duration (Q5)

4.9 The length of time spent on site varied greatly by survey location (Figure 8). Overall, 57% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds, 52% of interviewees at the Exe and 73% of interviewees at Dawlish Countryside Park had spent less than an hour on site. Sites where interviewees were staying the longest were Powderham, Exmouth Duck Pond and Lymptstone. At Powderham, 30% of interviewees had spent or were intending to spend more than 3 hours there.

4.10 The mean visit duration³ of interviewees (across all locations) was 76 minutes. For the Pebblebeds the mean was 70 minutes, for the Exe Estuary 91 minutes and for the SANG it was 54 minutes.

³ Calculated by using the following values for each category: Less than 30 minutes = 20 mins; Between 30 minutes and 1 hour = 45 minutes; 1 to 2 hours = 90 minutes; 2 to 3 hours = 150 minutes; More than 3 hours = 240 minutes.

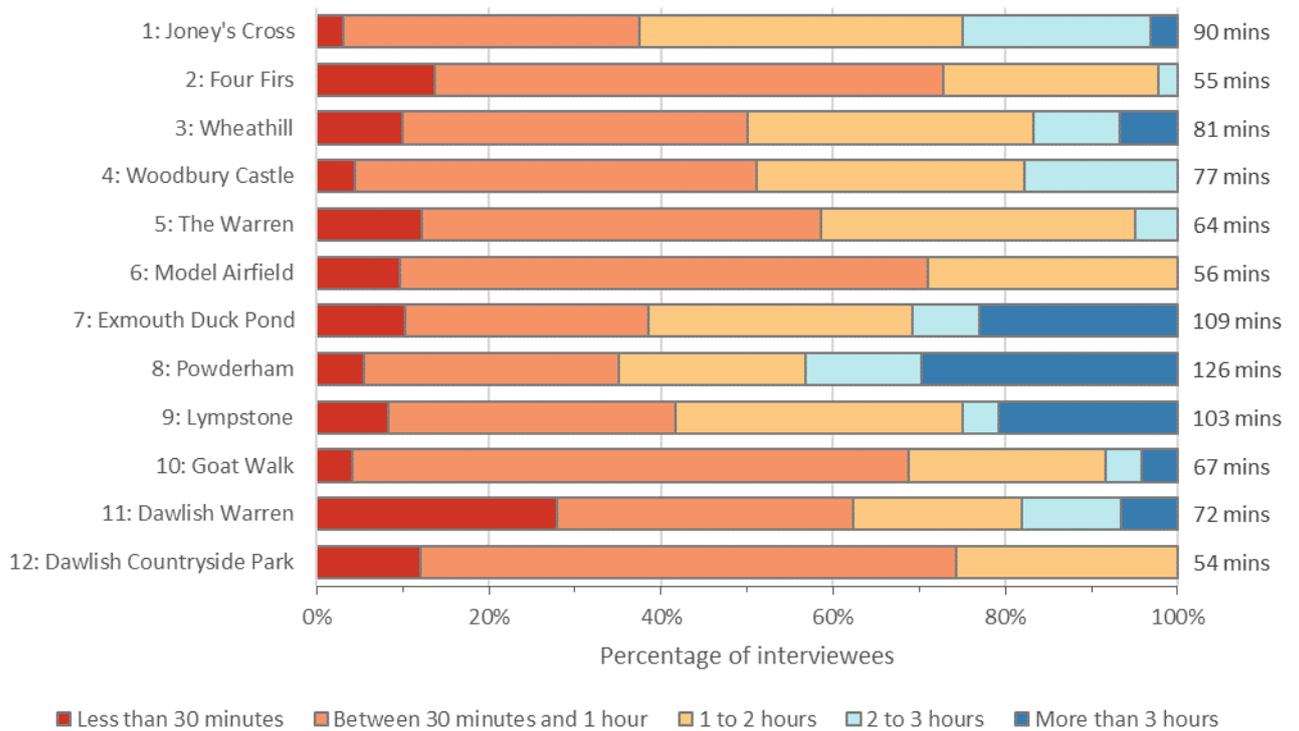


Figure 8: Length of time spent on site (Q5) by survey location. The times on the right-hand side are the average (mean) visit durations for each location.

Visit frequency (Q6-7)

- 4.11 Across all interviews, the most commonly cited visit frequency during the past year was 1-3 times a week, given by 155 interviewees (31%). 16% of interviewees said they had visited at least once a day, and 14% had visited 'most days'.
- 4.12 The combined percentage of interviewees who visited more than once a day, daily or most days was 28% at the Pebblebeds, 26% at the Exe Estuary and 49% at Dawlish Countryside Park. Visit frequencies for individual survey locations are shown in Figure 9.
- 4.13 By assigning a single value to each visit frequency category⁴, it was possible to calculate that the mean number of annual visits made by each interviewee was 24.

⁴ Using the following values for each category: 'More than once a day' = 700 visits; 'Daily' = 350 visits; 'Most days' = 200 visits; '1 to 3 times a week' = 110 visits; '2 to 3 times per month' = 27.5 visits; 'Once a month' = 10.5 visits; 'Less than once a month' = 3 visits; 'Don't know/First visit' = 1.

4.14 The majority (60%) of those who were interviewed in 2021 were visiting just as frequently as they had before the pandemic (Q7). 19% were visiting more frequently and 8% were visiting less frequently.

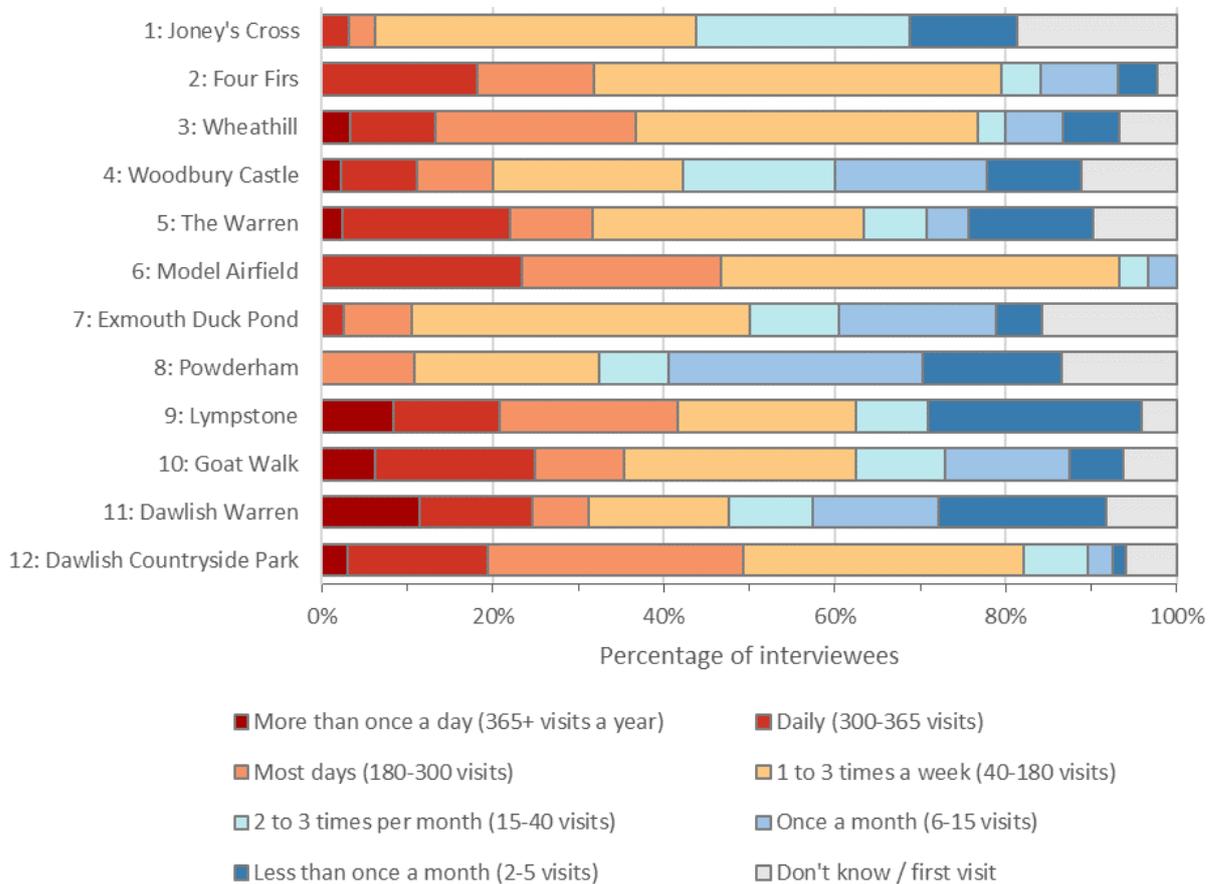


Figure 9: Visit frequency (Q6) by survey location.

Time of day and time of year (Q8-9)

4.15 Over a third of interviewees (173 interviewees, 35%) indicated that the time of day that they visited varied, and they did not have a regular time that they visited. Of those who did give a time period, the most common response was 'before 9am', given by a quarter (25%) of interviewees.

4.16 Around two thirds of interviewees (337 interviewees, 68%) indicated that they tended to visit equally all year round. However, this varied by activity type, for example 31% of interviewees who were wildlife/birdwatching said that they tended to visit more in the winter (Table 6).

Table 6: Number (%) of interviewees by the season that they tended to visit (Q9) and main activity (Q3). Multiple responses were allowed for Q9 so row percentages are based on the total number of interviewees and will not necessarily add up to 100%. The highest percentage in each row is highlighted in red.

Main activity	Spring (Mar-May)	Summer (Jun-Aug)	Autumn (Sept-Nov)	Winter (Dec-Feb)	Equally all year	Don't know / first visit	Total interviewees
Dog walking	26 (9)	26 (9)	21 (7)	29 (10)	214 (75)	12 (4)	285 (100)
Walking	20 (13)	22 (15)	17 (11)	13 (9)	87 (58)	25 (17)	150 (100)
Cycling	2 (13)	4 (25)	1 (6)	0 (0)	11 (69)	1 (6)	16 (100)
Wildlife / birdwatching	1 (8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (31)	6 (46)	3 (23)	13 (100)
Running / jogging / power walking	0 (0)	2 (15)	0 (0)	1 (8)	10 (77)	0 (0)	13 (100)
Windsurfing	3 (60)	2 (40)	3 (60)	1 (20)	1 (20)	0 (0)	5 (100)
Kitesurfing	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (33)	1 (33)	0 (0)	3 (100)
Photography	1 (33)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (33)	1 (33)	3 (100)
Canoeing / kayaking	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (50)	1 (50)	0 (0)	2 (100)
Paddleboarding	0 (0)	1 (50)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (50)	0 (0)	2 (100)
Boating	0 (0)	1 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (100)
Other	0 (0)	2 (33)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (67)	0 (0)	6 (100)
Total	53 (11)	60 (12)	42 (8)	50 (10)	337 (68)	42 (8)	499 (100)

Mode of transport (Q10)

4.17 Overall, 79% of interviewees had travelled to the interview location by car or van, 19% had come on foot and 3% by bicycle. However, this varied by survey location, and whilst car/van was the mode of transport used by the majority of interviewees at the Pebblebed locations and at Dawlish Countryside Park, this was not the case for all of the Exe Estuary survey locations (Figure 10). At Goat Walk and Lypstone the majority of interviewees had arrived on foot (77% and 67% respectively). Powderham and Goat Walk were the only locations where any interviewees had arrived by public transport (2 interviewees at each).

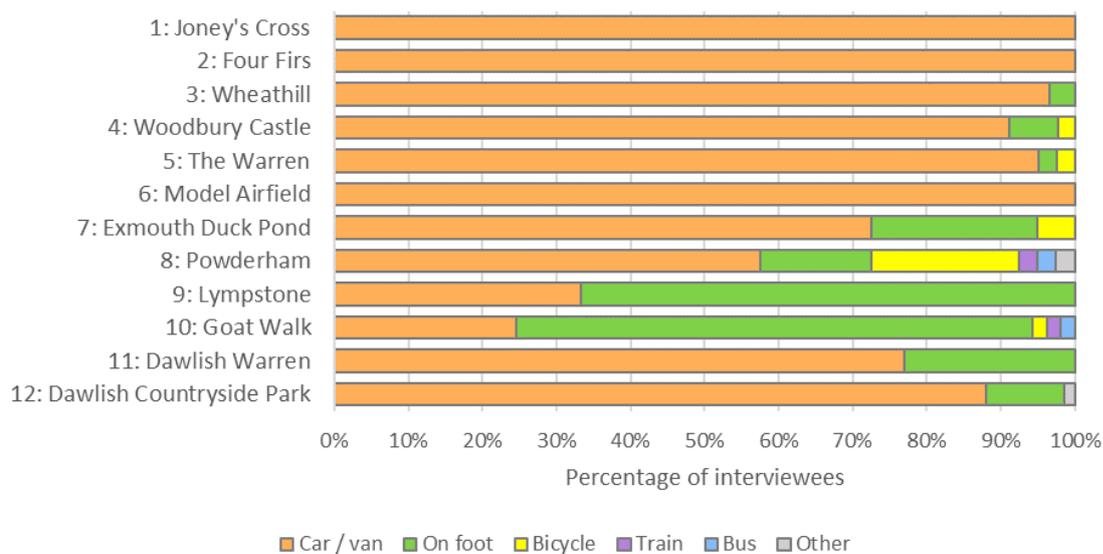


Figure 10: Mode of transport (Q10) by survey location.

Routes on site (Q11-13)

- 4.18 Out of 499 interviewees, 491 of them were able to describe the route that they had taken during their visit, or the route that they planned to take. Maps 5 to 7 are heatmaps showing the density of routes taken by interviewees at each site, which highlight where there was the most footfall. Maps 8 to 10 show separately the routes for the most common activity types.
- 4.19 In response to Q11, which asked interviewees at the Exe Estuary whether they went onto the intertidal areas at all, only 14 interviewees (7%) said they had, and an additional 3 interviewees (1%) said only their dogs had. However, examining the routes in GIS showed that 75 interviewees (36% of interviewees on the Exe) took routes that passed through intertidal areas within the Exe Estuary SPA. 35 of these interviewees were at Dawlish Warren, 22 at Exmouth Duck Pond, 17 at Lympstone and 1 at Goat Walk. Maps showing these routes are in Appendix 3.
- 4.20 Across all sites, the length of interviewees' routes ranged from 170m to 32.73km, with a median length of 2.27km (Table 7). The median route lengths on the Pebblebeds and the Exe were similar, 2.46km and 2.59km respectively. At Dawlish Countryside Park the median route length was 1.68km. The longest routes at Dawlish Countryside Park were made by interviewees who had done two laps of the park. Interviewees at Powderham tended to have the longest routes, with a median length of 5.29km. Routes

at other survey locations were mostly shorter than 5km (Figure 11). Route lengths varied by activity type, with cyclists generally having the longest routes, with a median route length of 16.7km (Figure 12).

4.21 Across all locations, 58% of interviewees said that their route length was typical for when they visit this location (Q12). However, 28% said that their route was shorter than normal. Only 4% said that their route was much longer than normal.

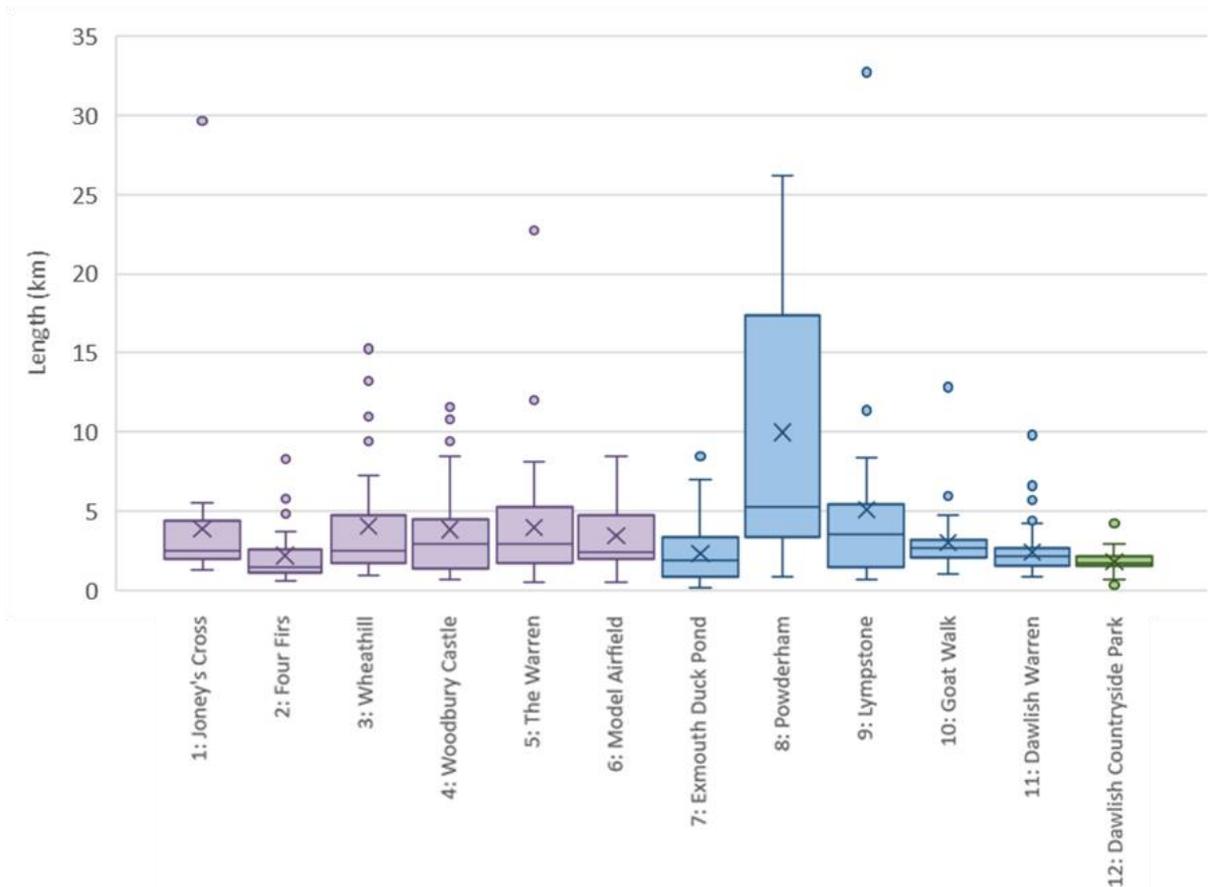


Figure 11: Boxplot showing route lengths (km) of interviewees, by survey location. Horizontal lines show the median, crosses indicate the mean, boxes show the interquartile range and the dots are outliers.

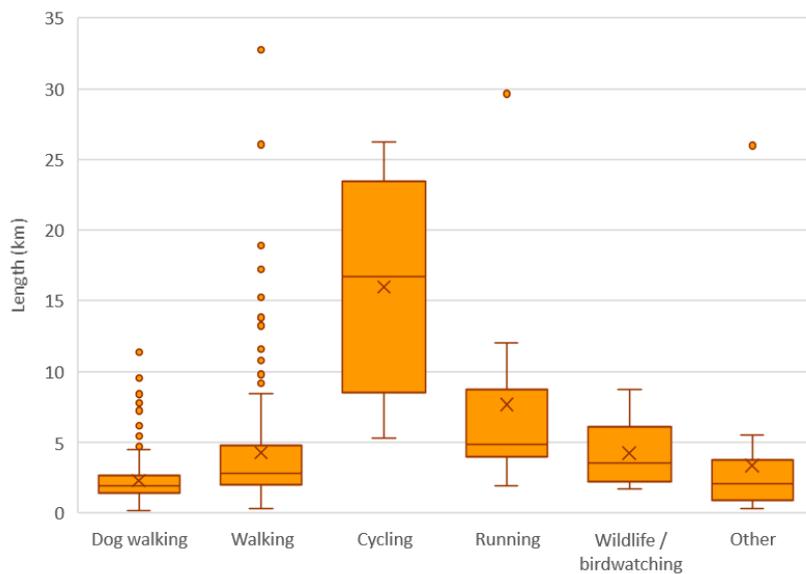


Figure 12: Boxplot showing route lengths (km) of interviewees, by their main activity (Q3). Activities given by fewer than 10 interviewees are grouped as 'Other'. Horizontal lines show the median, crosses indicate the mean, boxes show the interquartile range and the dots are outliers.

Table 7: Summary statistics for route lengths (km), by survey location and by main activity. Activity types given by fewer than 10 interviewees are grouped as 'Other'.

Survey point / Activity	N	Range	Mean (\pm SE)	Median	Q3
1: Joney's Cross	31	1.24 - 29.64	3.85 \pm 0.89	2.46	4.43
2: Four Firs	43	0.61 - 8.46	2.16 \pm 0.28	1.43	2.53
3: Wheathill	30	0.96 - 15.25	4.06 \pm 0.70	2.49	4.72
4: Woodbury Castle	43	0.64 - 11.58	3.82 \pm 0.46	2.90	4.47
5: The Warren	40	0.51 - 22.76	3.94 \pm 0.61	2.92	5.25
6: Model Airfield	31	0.47 - 8.42	3.43 \pm 0.38	2.43	4.72
Pebblebed locations	218	0.47 - 29.64	3.50 \pm 0.23	2.46	4.23
7: Exmouth Duck Pond	37	0.17 - 8.49	2.31 \pm 0.33	1.85	3.35
8: Powderham	37	0.87 - 26.23	9.97 \pm 1.43	5.29	17.34
9: Lypstone	24	0.64 - 32.73	5.07 \pm 1.32	3.48	5.39
10: Goat Walk	48	0.99 - 12.82	2.99 \pm 0.26	2.65	3.20
11: Dawlish Warren	61	0.80 - 9.80	2.42 \pm 0.20	2.10	2.65
Exe Estuary locations	207	0.17 - 32.73	4.19 \pm 0.37	2.59	4.16
12: Dawlish Countryside Park	66	0.35 - 4.27	1.79 \pm 0.09	1.68	2.11
Dog walking	280	0.17 - 11.35	2.30 \pm 0.09	1.92	2.70
Walking	148	0.35 - 32.73	4.29 \pm 0.36	2.82	4.76
Cycling	15	5.29 - 26.23	16.01 \pm 1.98	16.72	23.45
Running / jogging	13	1.94 - 29.64	7.68 \pm 1.98	4.83	8.73
Wildlife / birdwatching	13	1.70 - 8.78	4.22 \pm 0.60	3.55	6.07
Other	22	0.33 - 25.98	3.35 \pm 1.13	2.08	3.75
All	491	0.17 - 32.73	3.56 \pm 0.19	2.27	3.85

4.22 Factors that influenced interviewees' choice of route (Q13) are summarised in Figure 13. The most common factor was previous knowledge of the area, which was cited by 108 interviewees (22%). The next most common factors were the weather (16%) and time (13%). There were 98 responses that didn't fit into the pre-determined categories. These included visiting a pub or café en route, following their dog, taking a 'random' route, and the terrain (either preferring flat, level terrain, or favouring hills). Some interviewees mentioned that they were aiming for a set distance, which is how they had decided on their route.

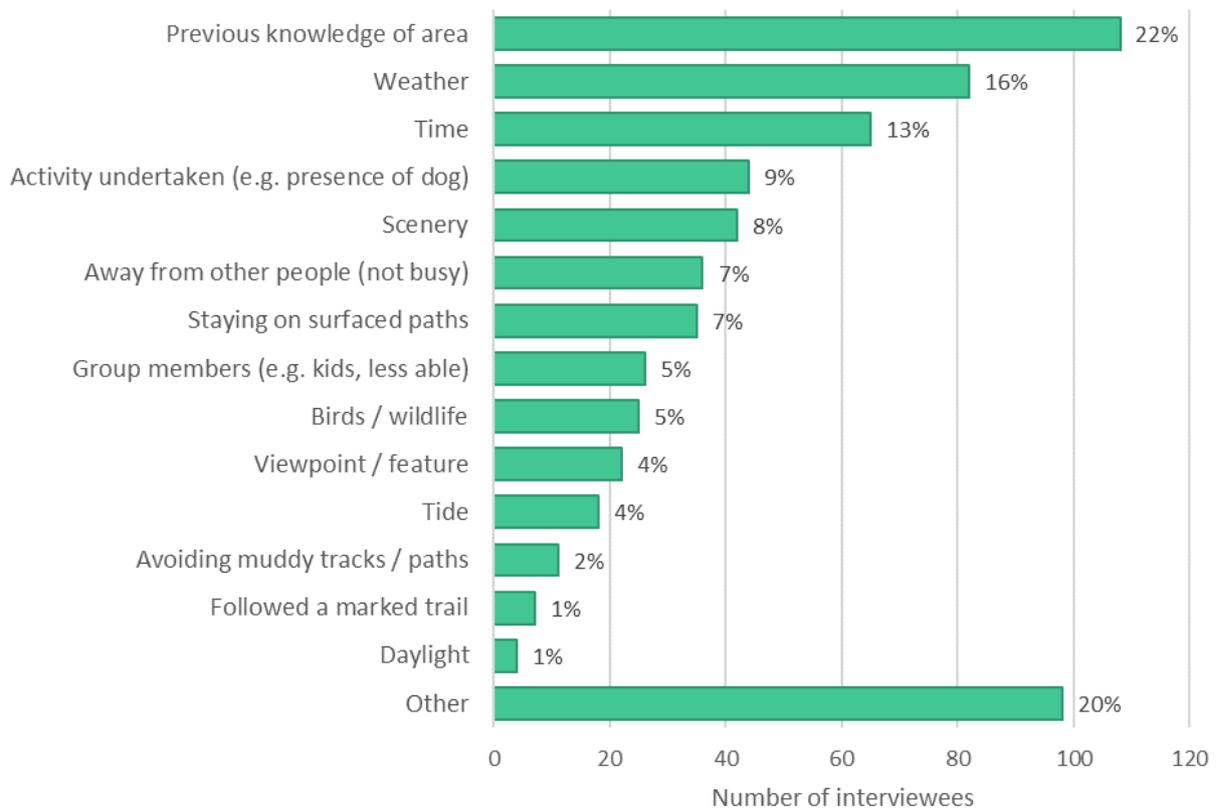
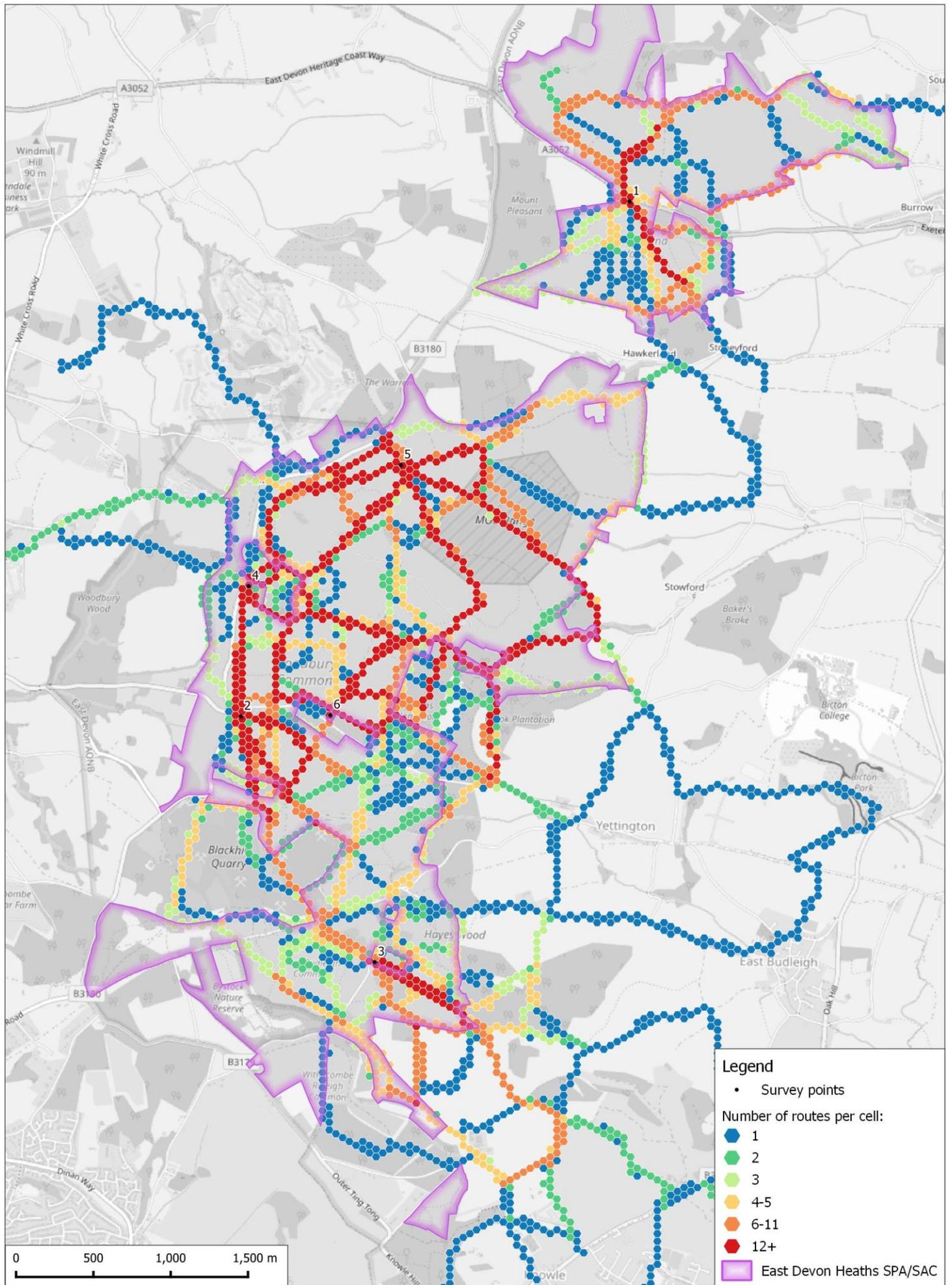
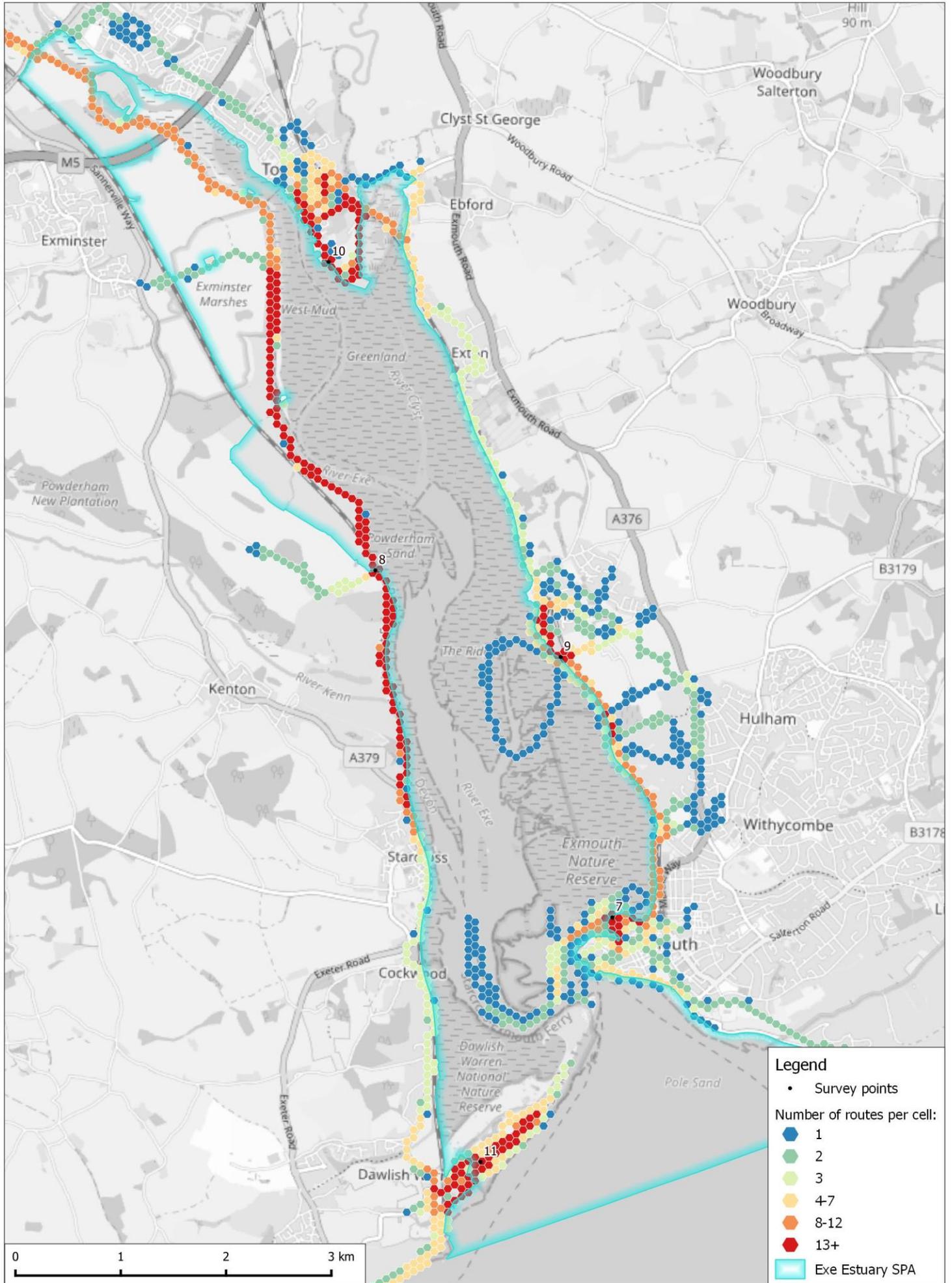


Figure 13: Factors influencing route choice (Q13). Percentages are calculated using the total number of interviewees. Interviewees could cite more than one factor so percentages will not add up to 100%.

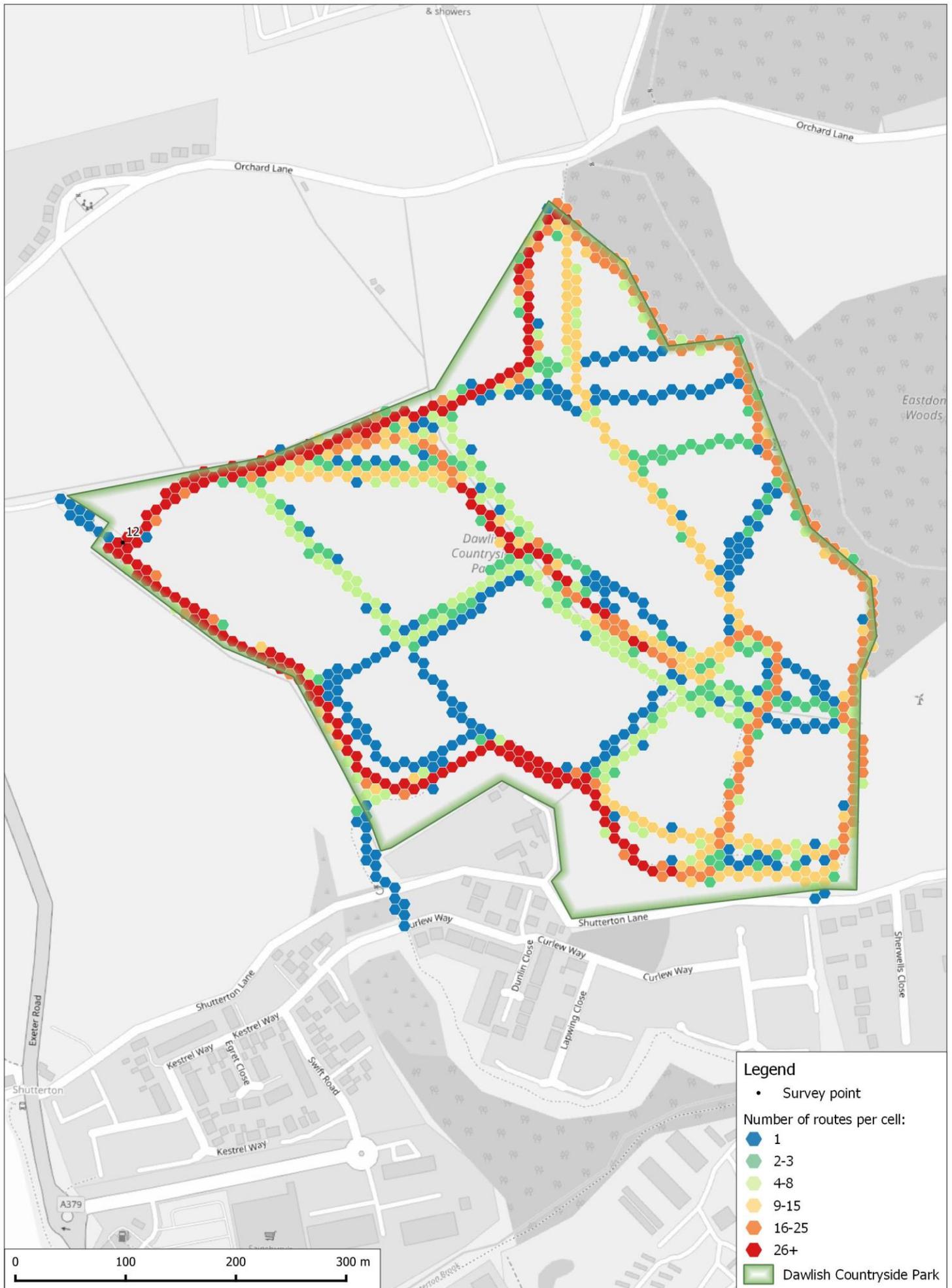
Map 5: Routes taken by interviewees at the Pebblebed Heaths, overlaid onto a 50m hexagonal grid and displayed as a heatmap.



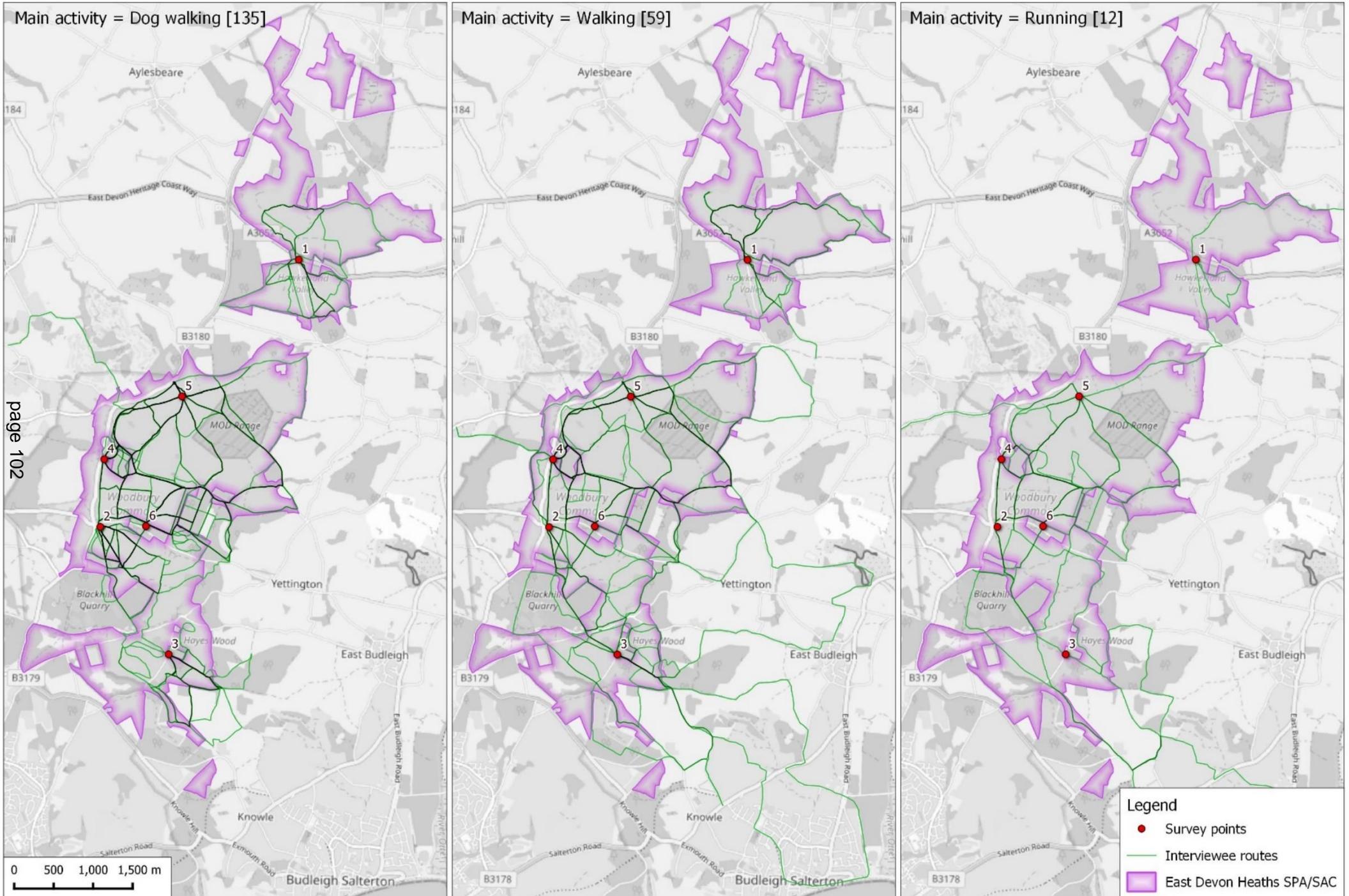
Map 6: Routes taken by interviewees visiting the Exe Estuary, overlaid onto a 75m hexagonal grid and displayed as a heatmap.



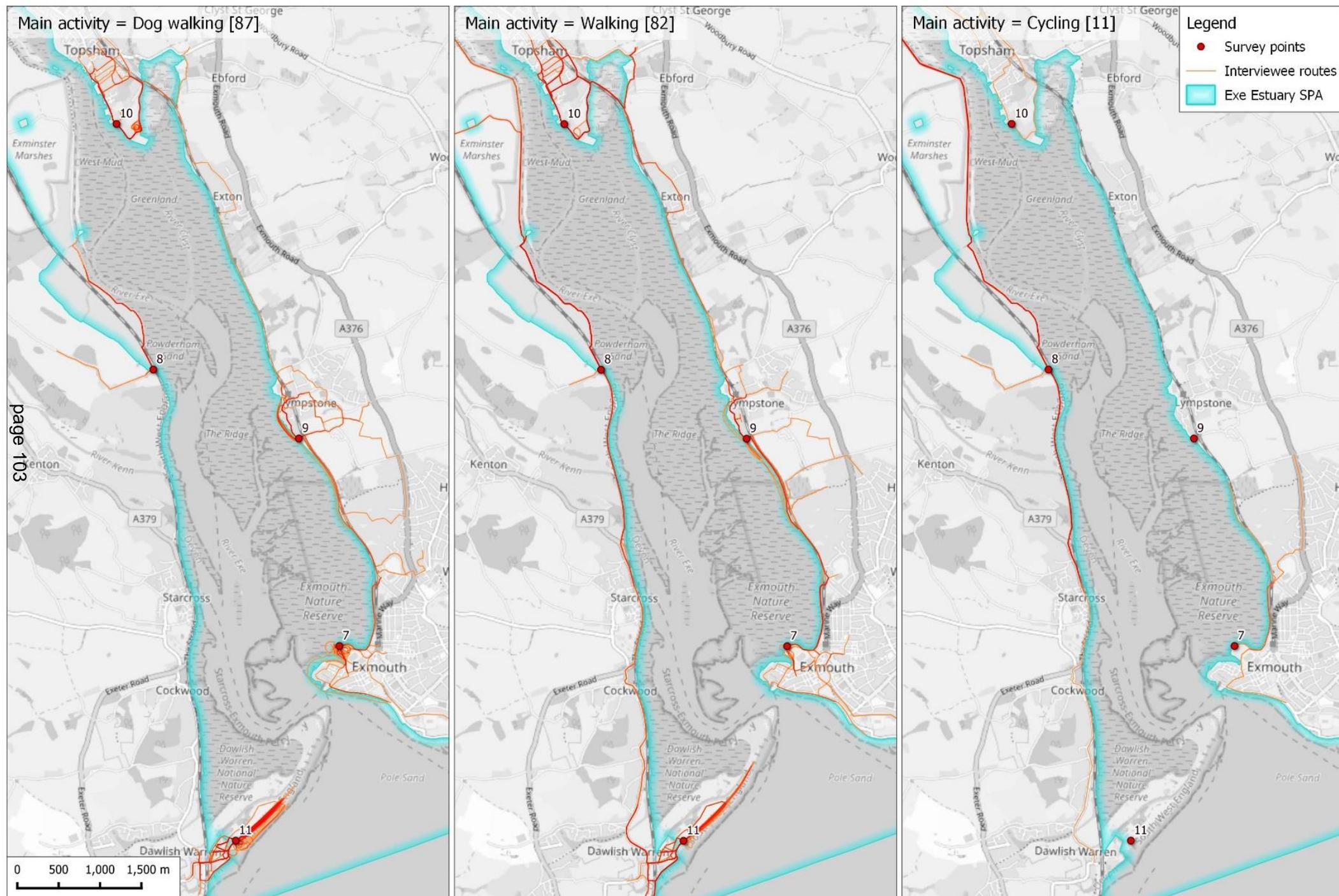
Map 7: Routes taken by interviewees visiting Dawlish Countryside Park, overlaid onto a 10m hexagonal grid and displayed as a heatmap.



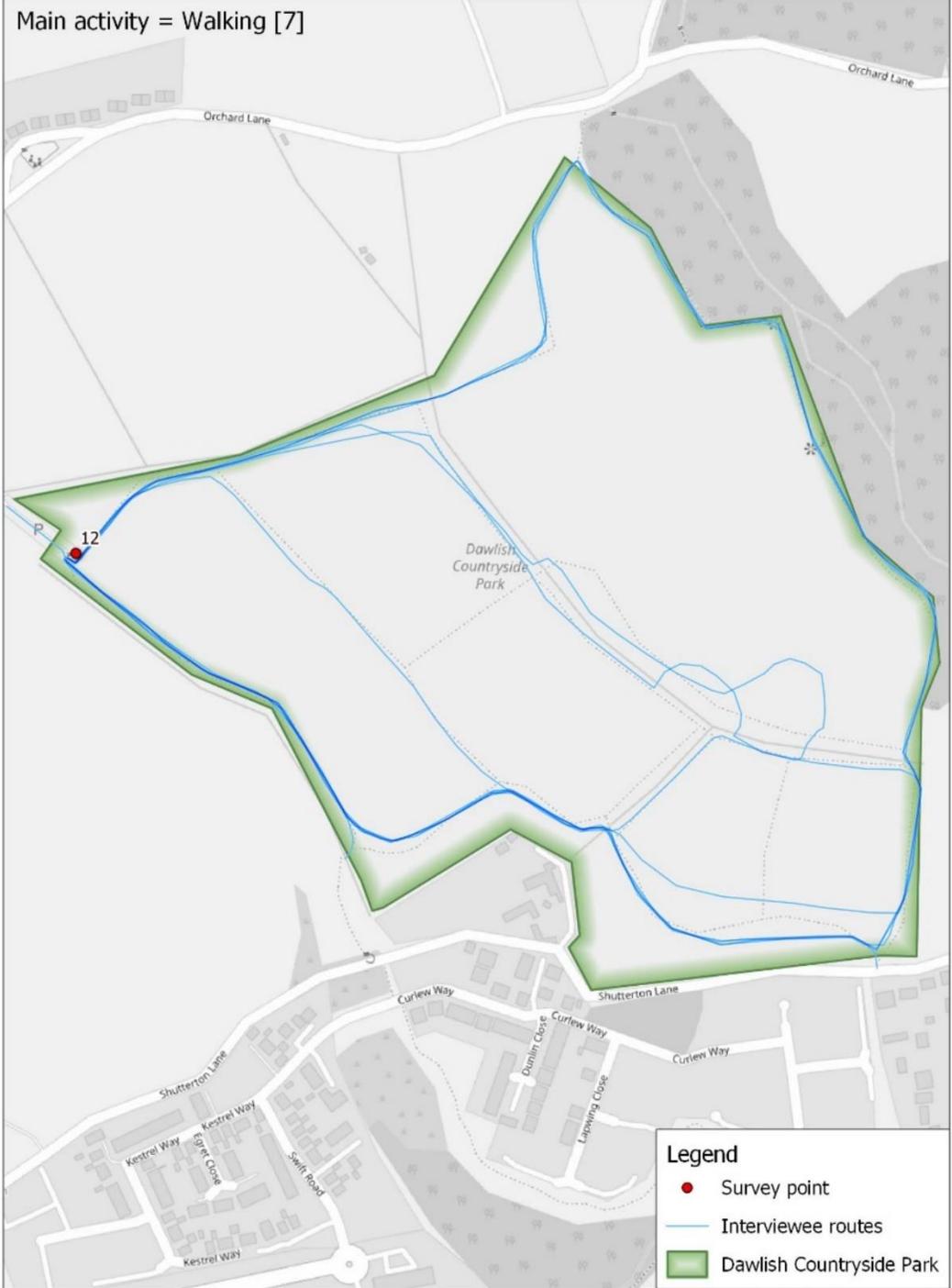
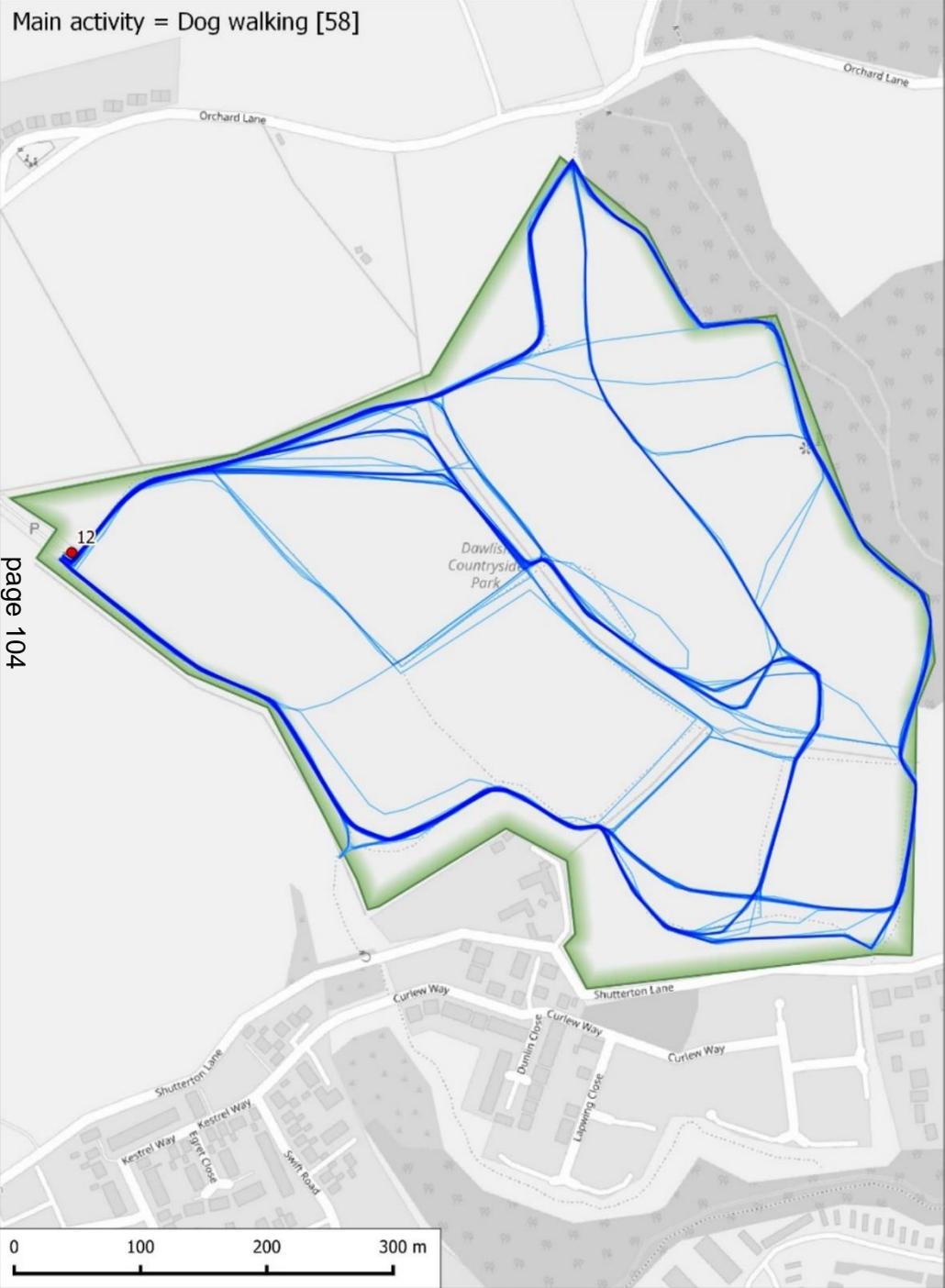
Map 8: Routes taken by interviewees at the Pebblebed Heaths, by main activity (Q3). Darker lines indicate where routes overlap i.e. where footfall is highest.



Map 9: Routes taken by interviewees visiting the Exe Estuary, by main activity (Q3). Darker lines indicate where routes overlap i.e. where footfall is highest.



Map 10: Routes taken by interviewees visiting Dawlish Countryside Park, by main activity (Q3). Darker lines indicate where routes overlap i.e. where footfall is highest.



Reasons for site choice (Q14)

- 4.23 Overall, the most common reason given by interviewees for choosing to visit the particular location where interviewed was that it was close to home (142 interviewees, 28%). However, the reasons for site choice did vary by site (Figure 14), and at Dawlish Countryside Park the most common reason was because they could let their dog off the lead (37% of interviewees). On the Exe Estuary, the scenery was also a particularly important factor, given by 32% of interviewees.
- 4.24 Reasons grouped under 'Other' included visiting on a recommendation from a friend (6 interviewees), seeing a route in a magazine/book (3 interviewees) and specifically wanting to visit Woodbury Castle Hillfort (3 interviewees).

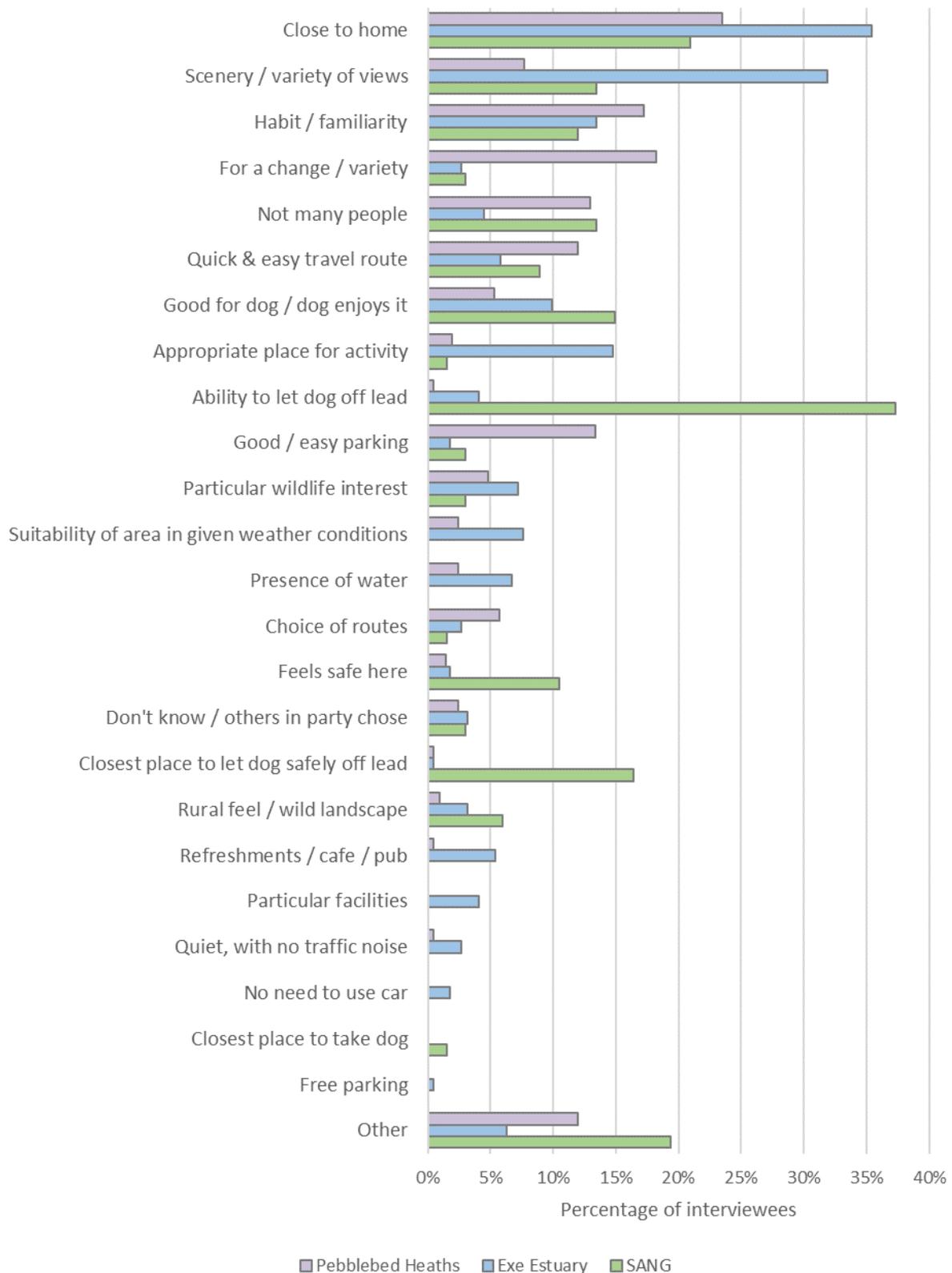


Figure 14: Reasons given by interviewees for visiting the specific place where they were interviewed on that day rather than another location (Q14). Interviewees could give multiple reasons. Reasons are in descending order of the total number of responses.

Alternative sites (Q15)

- 4.25 Almost all interviewees (465, 93%) were able to name an alternative site that they would have visited for their activity if they could not visit the location where they were interviewed. Only 4% said that they wouldn't have visited anywhere and 3% were unsure or didn't answer this question.
- 4.26 30% of those interviewed on the Exe gave another place on the estuary as the alternative they would visit, and a further 16% indicated they would have visited the coast. 7% of those interviewed on the Exe would have gone to the Pebblebeds instead and the most commonly cited single location outside the Exe Estuary was Dawlish Countryside Park (cited by 8% of those interviewed at the Exe Estuary sites).
- 4.27 For those interviewed on the Pebblebeds, 63% gave an alternative location within the Pebblebed Heaths. 10% gave a location on the Exe Estuary and a further 4% gave other coastal locations away from the Exe. The most common single destination given away from the Heaths was Exmouth (8%).
- 4.28 For those interviewed at Dawlish Countryside Park, 31% would have visited the Exe Estuary instead and a further 16% another coastal location away from the Exe. The most commonly cited single alternative was Dawlish Warren (19% of interviewees there) and then Dawlish (15%).
- 4.29 In Figure 15 we show the most frequently cited alternative locations and the shading reflects the different interview locations. The percentage values reflect the percentage of interviewees that named the alternative location. The 10 most frequently named alternatives for each site are listed in Table 8.

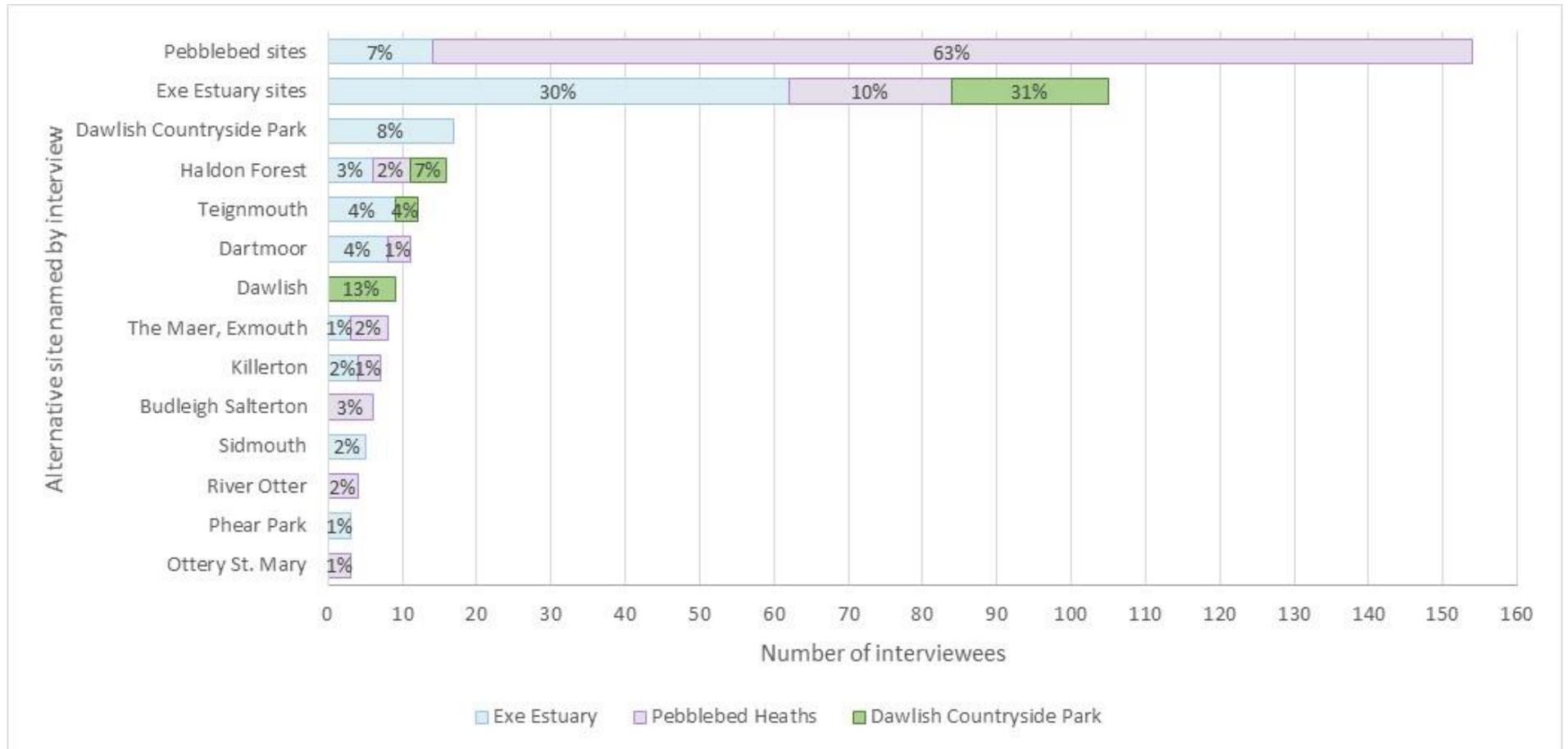


Figure 15: Alternative locations named by interviewees (Q15). Shading reflects the site where the interview took place. All alternative locations are included that were named by at least 3 interviewees at a given site. Value labels give the percentage of interviewees at each broad site that named the alternative location. The alternative locations at the Exe and the Pebblebeds have been grouped together.

Table 8: Top 10 alternative destinations specified by interviewees at each location (from Q15). Numbers in brackets indicate the % of interviewees.

Pebblebed Heaths	Exe Estuary	SANG
Elsewhere Pebblebed Heaths (43)	Exmouth (16)	Dawlish Warren (19)
Exmouth (7)	Dawlish Countryside Park (8)	Dawlish (15)
Woodbury Common / Woodbury Castle (7)	Woodbury Common / Woodbury Castle (7)	Haldon Forest (7)
Four Firs (5)	Teignmouth (4)	Powderham (6)
Budleigh Salterton (3)	Dartmoor (4)	Teignmouth (4)
The Maer, Exmouth (2)	Haldon Forest (3)	Mules Park (3)
Haldon Forest (2)	Topsham (2)	Ashcombe (3)
Aylesbeare Common (2)	Sidmouth (2)	Oaklands (3)
River Otter (2)	Killerton (2)	Holcombe (3)
Dartmoor (1)	Lympstone (2)	Dartmoor (3)

Use of Dawlish Countryside Park (Q16-17)

4.30 Dawlish Countryside Park was named by 17 interviewees on the Exe Estuary in Q15 as an alternative site that they would visit instead of their interview location. In addition to this, when directly asked (Q16) another 75 interviewees said that they had visited Dawlish Countryside Park. However, most of these were infrequent visitors, with 85% (64 interviewees) visiting the SANG less than once a month. In total, therefore, 44% of interviewees on the Exe Estuary had visited Dawlish Countryside Park.

Awareness of nature conservation (Q18-19)

- 4.31 Interviewees at the Pebblebed Heaths and the Exe Estuary were asked two additional questions to gauge their awareness of the nature conservation importance of the site. Interviewees were not shown any options for these questions, although the surveyors had pre-determined categories to facilitate recording the responses given.
- 4.32 Regarding designations, 59% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds and 76% of interviewees at the Exe Estuary were aware that the site had environmental protection (Figure 16), but only 43% and 42% respectively were able to name or describe what these were.
- 4.33 At the Pebblebeds, 20% of interviewees knew that it was a nature reserve and 18% knew that it was a SSSI. On the Exe, 29% mentioned it being a

nature reserve and 22% knew that it was protected because it was important for birds (Figure 17).

4.34 Of the 12 responses grouped as 'Other', 8 of them mentioned scheduled monuments or heritage sites, 2 mentioned grazing, 1 mentioned the Wildlife and Countryside Act and 1 of them mentioned the Jurassic Coast.

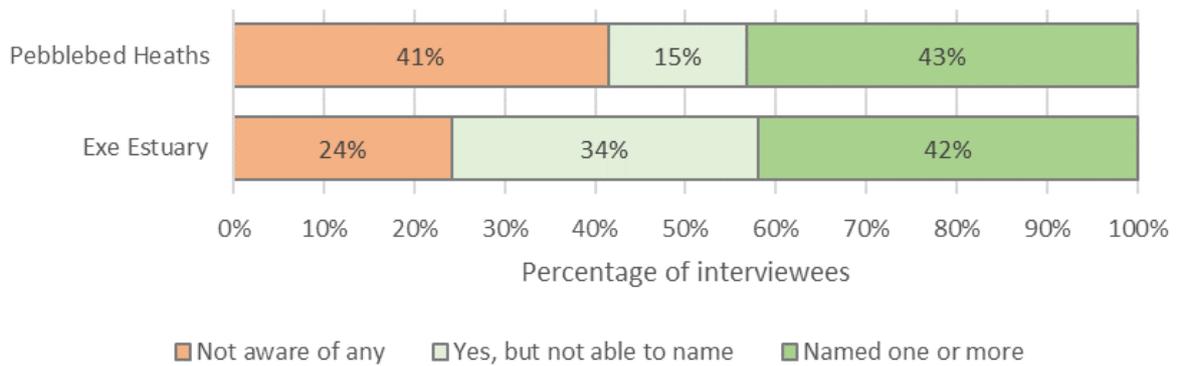


Figure 16: Awareness of designations or environmental protections (Q18).

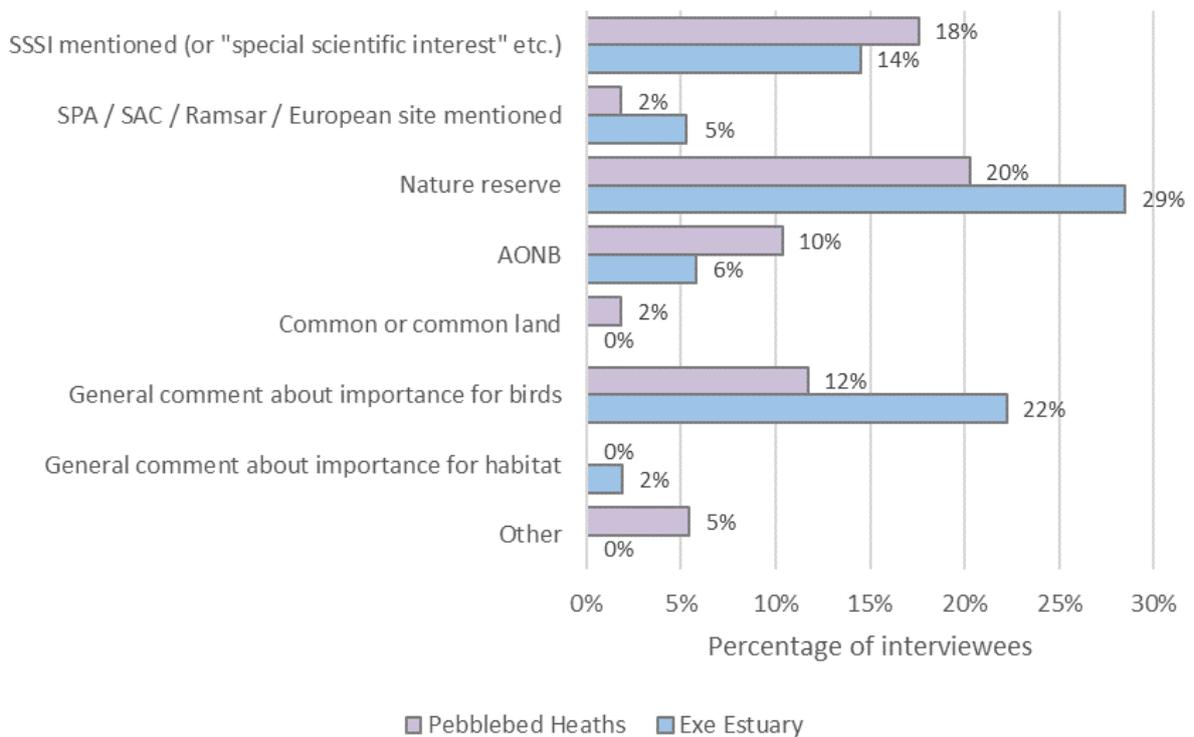


Figure 17: Designations named or described by interviewees (Q18).

4.36 Regarding wildlife and habitats, 84% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds and 78% of interviewees at the Exe Estuary were able to name at least one group of species or habitats that the site is important for (Figure 18).

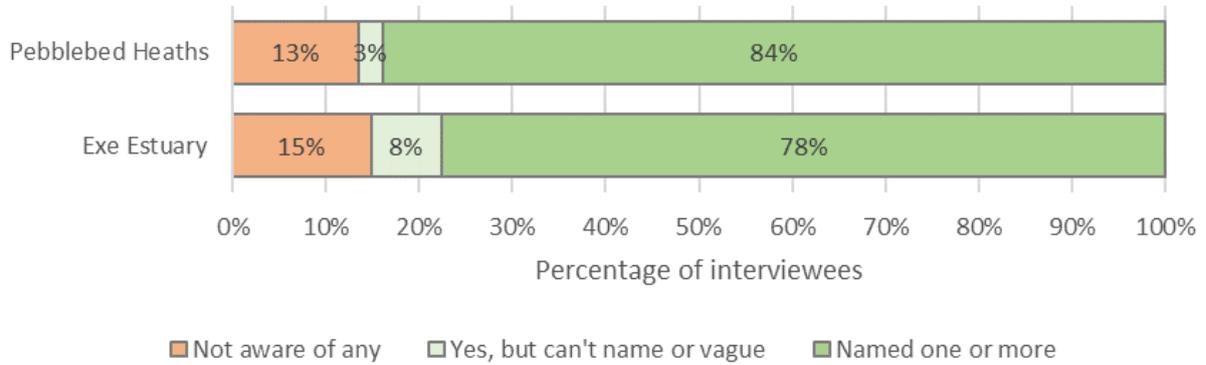


Figure 18: Awareness of important wildlife species or habitat that are present (Q19)

4.37 Over half of interviewees at both sites were aware that it was important for birds, even if they weren't able to name any species. A third of interviewees at the Exe knew that it was important for wading birds or wildfowl, with many of them specifically naming examples such as Avocet or Curlew. Around a third of interviewees at the Pebblebeds knew that it was important for reptiles (Figure 19).

4.38 Comments grouped as 'Other' covered a wide range of species including deer (22 interviewees) and butterflies (19 interviewees).

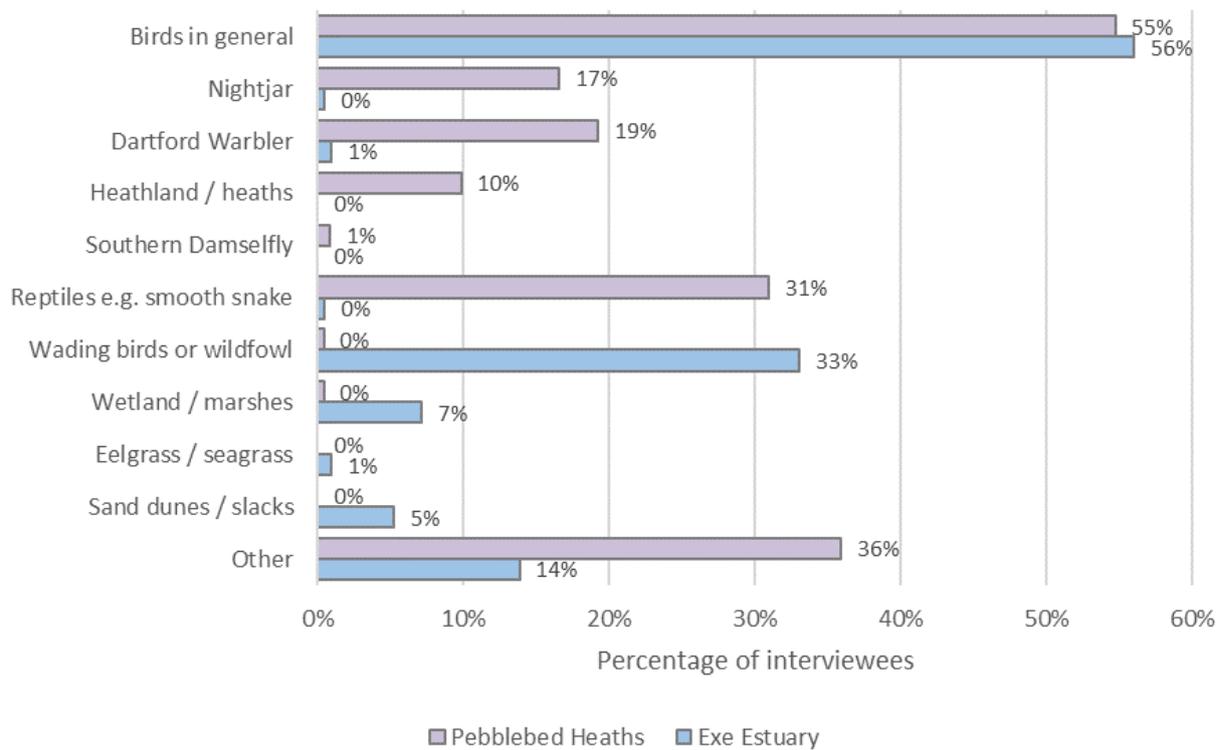


Figure 19: Species or habitats named by interviewees (Q19)

Awareness of mitigation related measures (Q20-29)

Interaction with rangers/mitigation officers (Q20-24)

4.39 A third of interviewees (33%) at the Pebblebeds and a quarter of interviewees (25%) on the Exe Estuary had met one of the rangers or mitigation officers. Of those who had met a ranger or mitigation officer, 78% had spoken to them. Interactions with rangers and mitigation officers are summarised in Table 9.

Table 9: Summary of interviewees' interactions with rangers and mitigation officers (from Q20-24) by survey location. In the first column, percentages are based on the total number of interviewees; for the other columns percentages are based on the number of interviewees who answered 'Yes' to Q20 i.e. they had met one of the staff on site.

Survey point	Yes, have met (Q20)	Yes, have spoken to (Q21)	Yes, have learnt about wildlife (Q22)	Yes, have changed behaviour (Q23)	Yes, feel safer (Q24)
1: Joney's Cross	28%	67%	33%	22%	0%
2: Four Firs	32%	79%	21%	7%	0%
3: Wheathill	40%	100%	25%	8%	17%
4: Woodbury Castle	31%	79%	29%	14%	14%
5: The Warren	34%	57%	14%	7%	7%
6: Model Airfield	35%	82%	27%	9%	36%
Pebblebed locations	33%	77%	24%	11%	12%
7: Exmouth Duck Pond	28%	64%	45%	27%	0%
8: Powderham	14%	60%	20%	0%	40%
9: Lympstone	13%	67%	67%	0%	67%
10: Goat Walk	23%	82%	73%	18%	9%
11: Dawlish Warren	36%	91%	45%	23%	32%
Exe Estuary locations	25%	79%	50%	19%	23%
Total	29%	78%	35%	14%	17%

Codes of conduct (Q25)

4.40 Interviewees on the Pebblebeds and Exe Estuary were asked if they were aware of any visit Codes of Conduct. Overall 34% (169 interviewees) were not aware of any, and 47% (236) were aware but unable to name any specific codes. Only 27 interviewees (6%) were able to name one or more than one specific codes.

4.41 The percentage who were aware, but unable to name specific codes, was greater amongst those on a short visit directly from home (49%, 227) compared to those on holiday (30%, 8), but still relatively high. Interestingly those who visited daily or more than once a day did not record high percentages (25%, 39 and 6%, 10 – although note smaller sample sizes). Those who had been visiting for more than 10 years included a very high proportion of those aware, but unable to name (83%, 123). For dog walkers

the awareness (but not explicit naming of) codes of conduct was also very high (92%, 142).

4.42 Figure 20 shows the knowledge of any codes of conduct was lower on the Exe Estuary, where 58% (121) unaware of codes, compared to 22% (48) on the Pebblebeds. On the Pebblebeds over 7 in 10 interviewees will have been aware of codes of conducted, compared to just under 4 in 10 on the Exe Estuary.

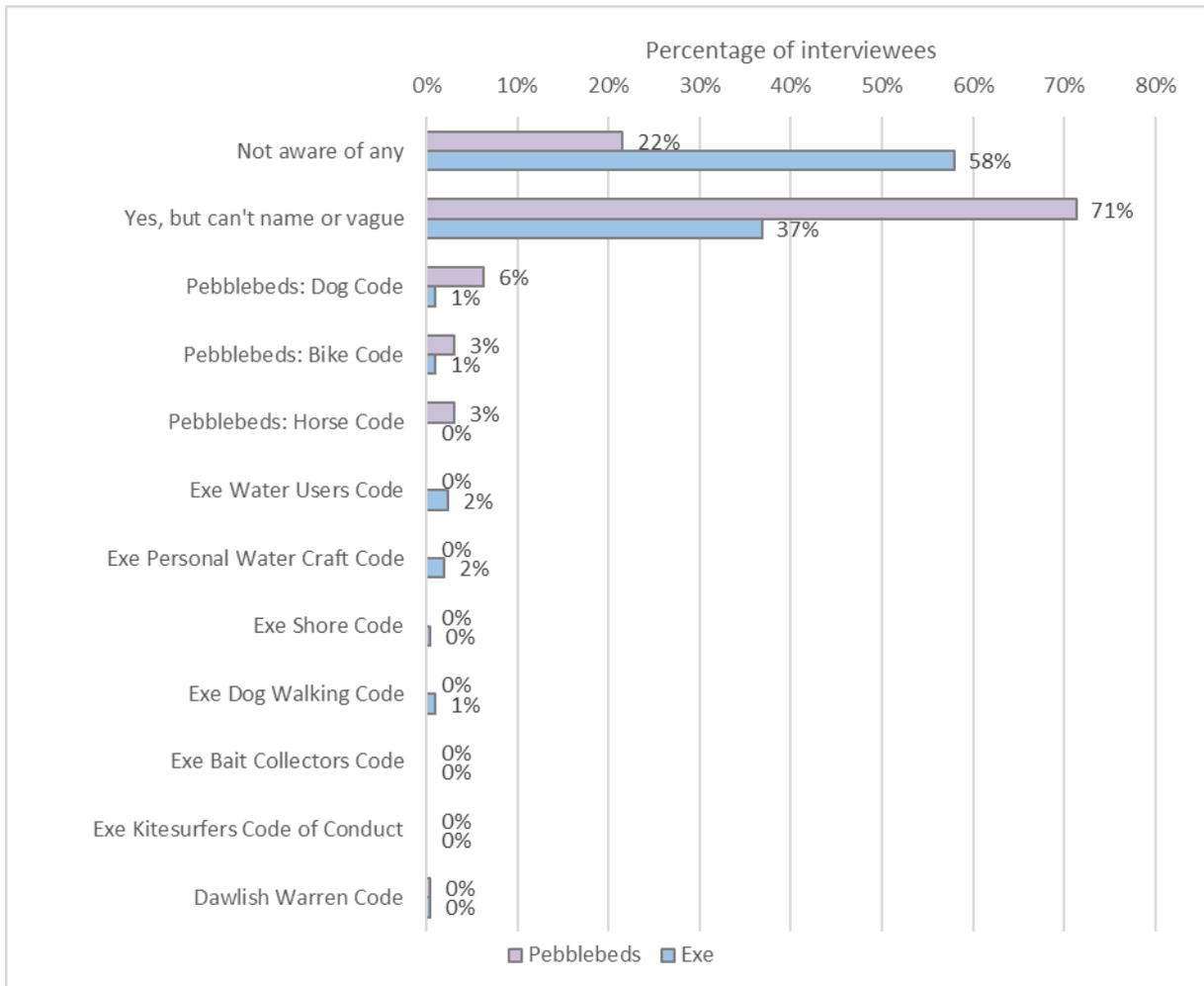


Figure 20: The percentage of interviewees who were aware of codes of conduct on the Pebblebeds and Exe Estuary.

Devon Loves Dogs (Q26-27)

4.43 Interviewees who were dog walking were asked if they had heard of, or were members of "Devon Loves Dogs". Overall, 30% of dog walkers (86 interviewees) had heard of the organisation. A higher percentage of dog walkers had heard of the organisation at the Pebblebeds (36% of dog

walkers, 50 interviewees), compared to the Exe (30% of dog walkers, 27), and Dawlish Warren Country Park (15% of dog walkers, 9).

- 4.44 In total, 5% of all dog walkers interviewed were members of “Devon Loves Dogs”, and this percentage was 4% of dog walkers (3 interviewees) on the Exe Estuary, 6% (8) on the Pebblebeds and 3% (2) at Dawlish Countryside Park.

Estuary mitigation (Q28-29)

- 4.45 For the survey points along the Exe Estuary, we asked some specific questions regarding the interviewee’s awareness of the mitigation efforts. Across all the Exe Estuary survey points, 18% (37) of interviewees had seen the patrol boat, ranging from 25% (6) of interviewees at Lypstone to just 8% (3) at Powderham. Interviewees were then asked if they were aware of the wildlife refuges along the estuary. Across all the Exe Estuary interviewees, 53% (110) said they were aware of them, ranging from 85% (33) at Exmouth Duck Pond to 29% (14 interviewees) at Goat Walk.
- 4.46 Interviewees were not specifically asked how they had come to be aware of the wildlife refuges, however one of the kitesurfers interviewed at Exmouth Duck Pond said that they had heard about the wildlife refuges via Edge Watersports. Another interviewee at Exmouth Duck Pond, who was paddleboarding, had only become aware of the refuges as a result of overhearing other site users discussing the marker buoys, and this interviewee suggested putting leaflets on windscreens to increase awareness.

Preferred communication methods (Q30)

- 4.47 Interviewees were asked what were the “best ways of keeping visitors such as yourself informed about this area and the way it is managed?”. Interviewees were asked to rate 5 mechanisms for disseminating information from “1 - not useful” to “5 - very useful” and from these we were able to produce an average score for those who responded. Averaging the three scores for each area suggest the highest approval for noticeboards (3.6) and word of mouth (3.5), but lowest support for rangers (2.8) and leaflets (2.4). Figure 21 shows how these scores vary across sites, which will be in part due to the activities and demographics of site users and the prevalence of any specific issues.

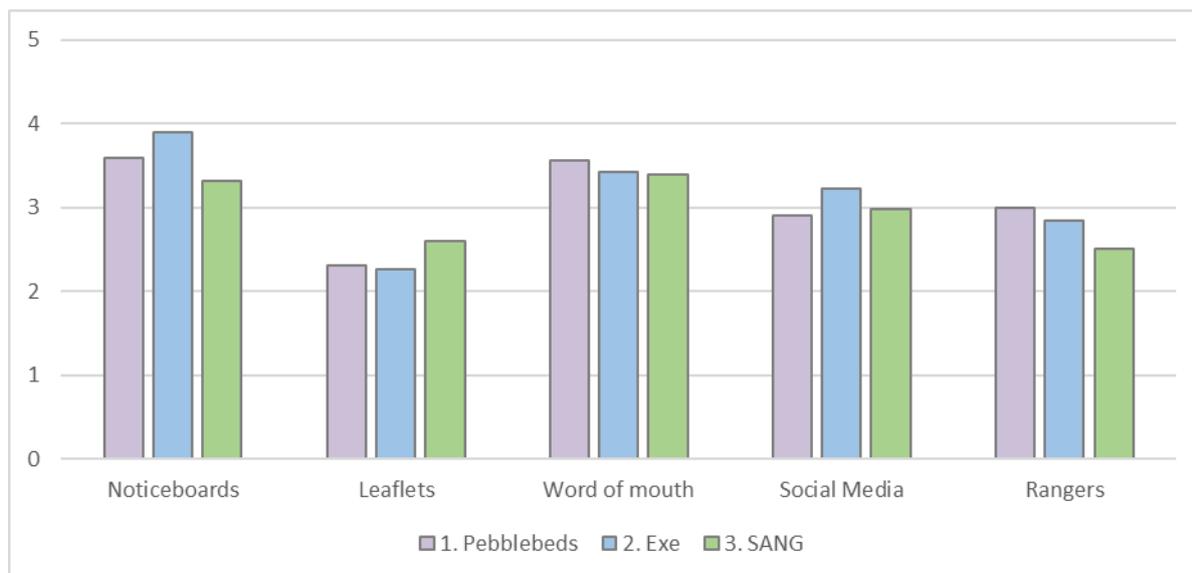


Figure 21: Averaged scores on preferred communication methods shown separately for the 3 areas.

Spirit of place (Q31-33)

4.48 Words chosen by interviewees at the Pebblebed Heaths to describe what the place means to them are shown in Figure 22. The most commonly given words were 'freedom' (41 interviewees), 'beautiful' (32 interviewees) and 'space' (26 interviewees).



Figure 22: Word cloud summarising the words chosen by interviewees to describe the Pebblebed Heaths (Q31-33). Interviewees could name up to three words each. Font size indicates how frequently each word was given. Words only given once are not included. Graphic created using WordClouds.com.

Visitor origins (Q35-38)

- 4.49 Full, valid postcodes were obtained for 445 (89%) of the interviewees. The locations of these are shown in Maps 11-13 by the site at which they were interviewed, their visit type and their visit frequency.
- 4.50 Approximately half (46%) of the interviewees who gave full, valid postcodes lived in East Devon District, 26% were from Teignbridge District, 18% were from Exeter District and 2% were from Mid Devon District. Other local authorities accounted for less than 1% each.

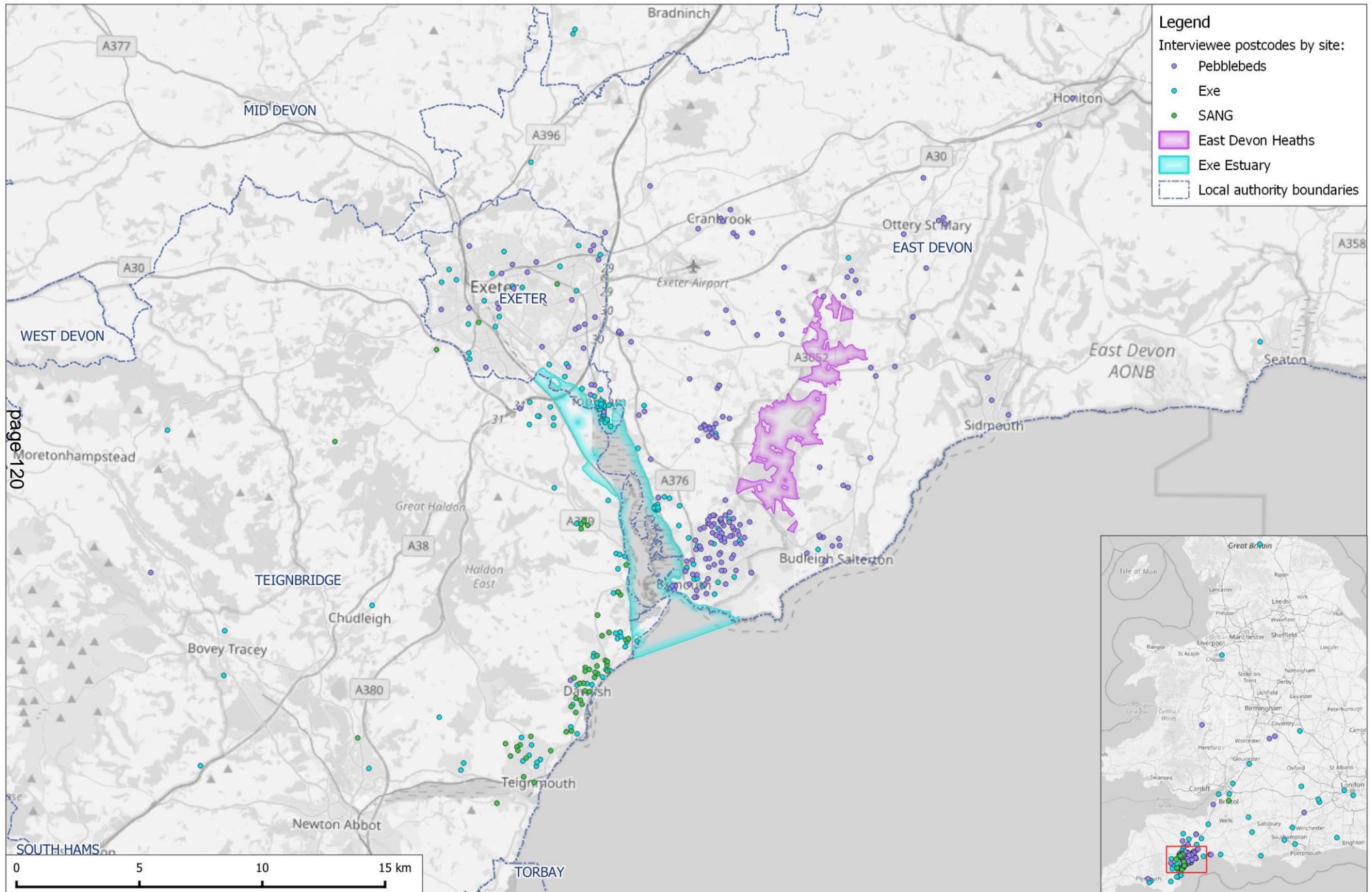
Linear distances

- 4.51 The mean linear distance from the interviewee's home postcode to the survey point at which they were interviewed was 16.7km and the median distance was 5.0km. Three quarters of all interviewees lived within 9.9km of the survey point at which they were interviewed. Data for different types of visitors are summarised in Table 10.

Table 10: Summary statistics for linear distance (km) from interviewee home postcode to survey location, for different groups of interviewees. N is the total number of interviewees within that category for which we have full, valid postcodes.

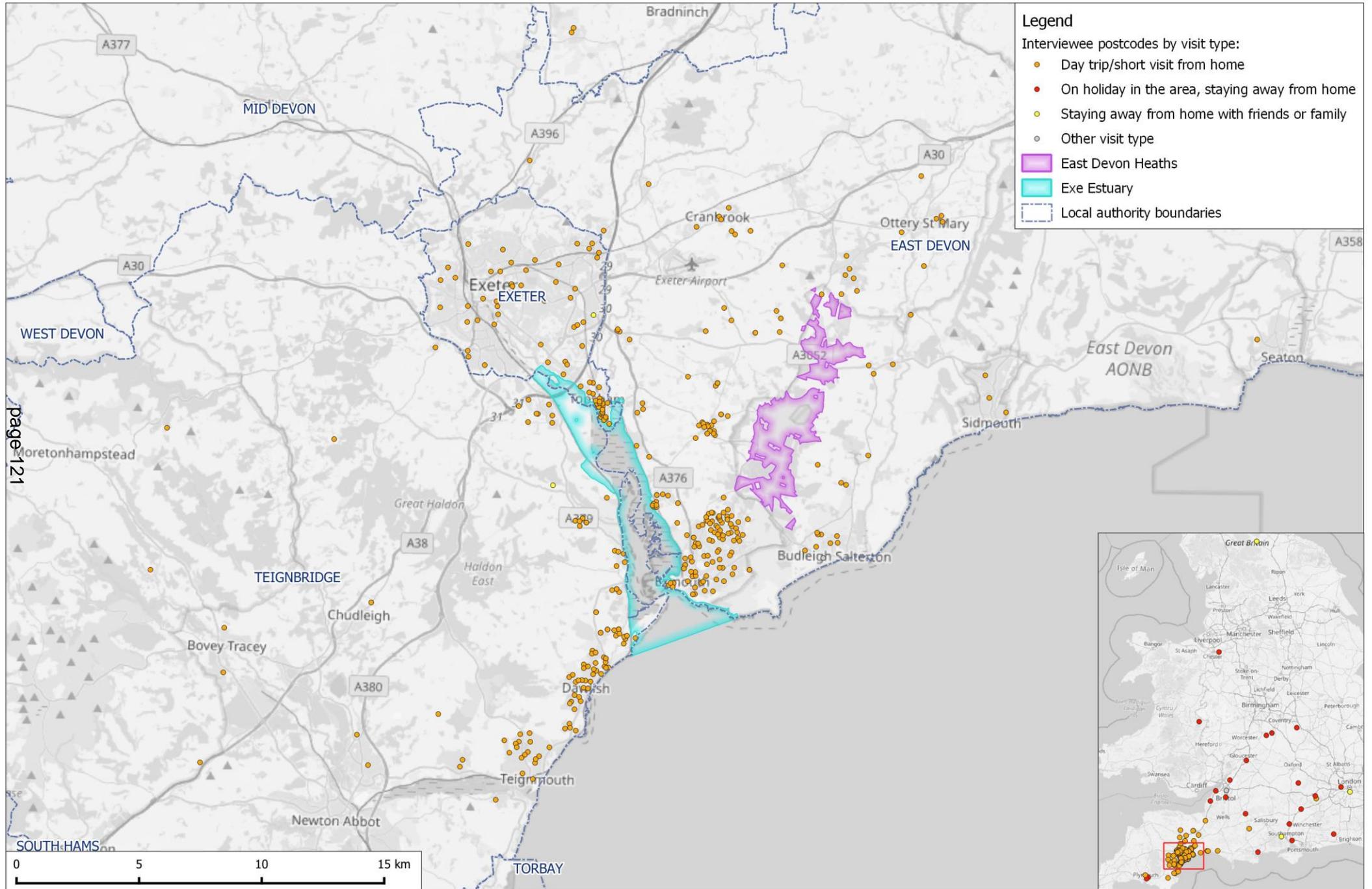
	Category	N	Range	Mean (\pm SE)	Median	Q3
	All interviewees	445	0.0 - 444.5	16.7 \pm 2.1	5.0	9.9
Visit type	Day trip/short visit from home	417	0.0 - 204.8	7.5 \pm 0.7	4.6	8.6
	On holiday	21	52.2 - 287.8	159.9 \pm 13.8	160.7	205.2
	Staying with friends/family	5	2.5 - 444.5	169.2 \pm 82.5	139.7	346.8
Survey location	1: Joney's Cross	28	1.9 - 182.2	14.9 \pm 6.3	8.0	10.5
	2: Four Firs	41	1.9 - 82.8	7.4 \pm 2.0	5.0	7.0
	3: Wheathill	28	2.4 - 62.5	7.7 \pm 2.1	4.4	8.8
	4: Woodbury Castle	41	1.4 - 199.2	16.3 \pm 6.1	6.9	11.6
	5: The Warren	36	2.6 - 205.0	12.8 \pm 5.6	6.0	8.1
	6: Model Airfield	28	2.5 - 25.9	5.3 \pm 0.8	4.2	5.7
	Pebblebed locations	202	1.4 - 205.0	11.0 \pm 1.9	5.3	8.5
	7: Exmouth Duck Pond	30	0.4 - 191.4	18.5 \pm 6.8	3.2	24.4
	8: Powderham	31	0.4 - 213.4	33.8 \pm 9.7	11.2	24.1
	9: Lypmstone	21	0.3 - 287.8	36.2 \pm 18.2	0.9	11.2
	10: Goat Walk	46	0.0 - 444.5	24.0 \pm 11.4	0.8	6.6
	11: Dawlish Warren	56	0.3 - 243.0	25.3 \pm 7.0	9.2	16.4
Exe Estuary locations	184	0.0 - 444.5	26.5 \pm 4.5	4.2	15.4	
12: Dawlish Countryside Park	59	0.3 - 107.4	5.8 \pm 1.8	3.2	5.9	
Main activity	Dog walking	262	0.0 - 204.8	7.6 \pm 1.2	3.7	6.0
	Walking	131	0.2 - 444.5	33.0 \pm 6.1	8.5	15.3
	Cycling	14	2.0 - 19.2	7.0 \pm 1.1	6.5	8.3
	Wildlife / birdwatching	11	2.5 - 182.2	42.4 \pm 17.2	20.1	37.4
	Running / jogging	11	1.5 - 8.8	5.4 \pm 0.8	5.4	8.3
Visit frequency	More than once a day	17	0.4 - 4.2	1.6 \pm 0.3	0.9	2.6
	Daily	59	0.0 - 8.0	2.9 \pm 0.3	2.8	4.7
	Most days	68	0.1 - 10.9	3.1 \pm 0.3	3.2	4.5
	1 to 3 times a week	140	0.2 - 82.8	5.7 \pm 0.7	4.1	7.5
	2 to 3 times per month	45	0.3 - 205.3	15.6 \pm 5.0	7.7	12.0
	Once a month	49	1.9 - 204.8	22.5 \pm 5.5	10.0	16.9
Less than once a month	38	2.0 - 287.8	44.2 \pm 11.6	15.9	31.6	

Map 11: Postcodes of interviewees, coloured by site

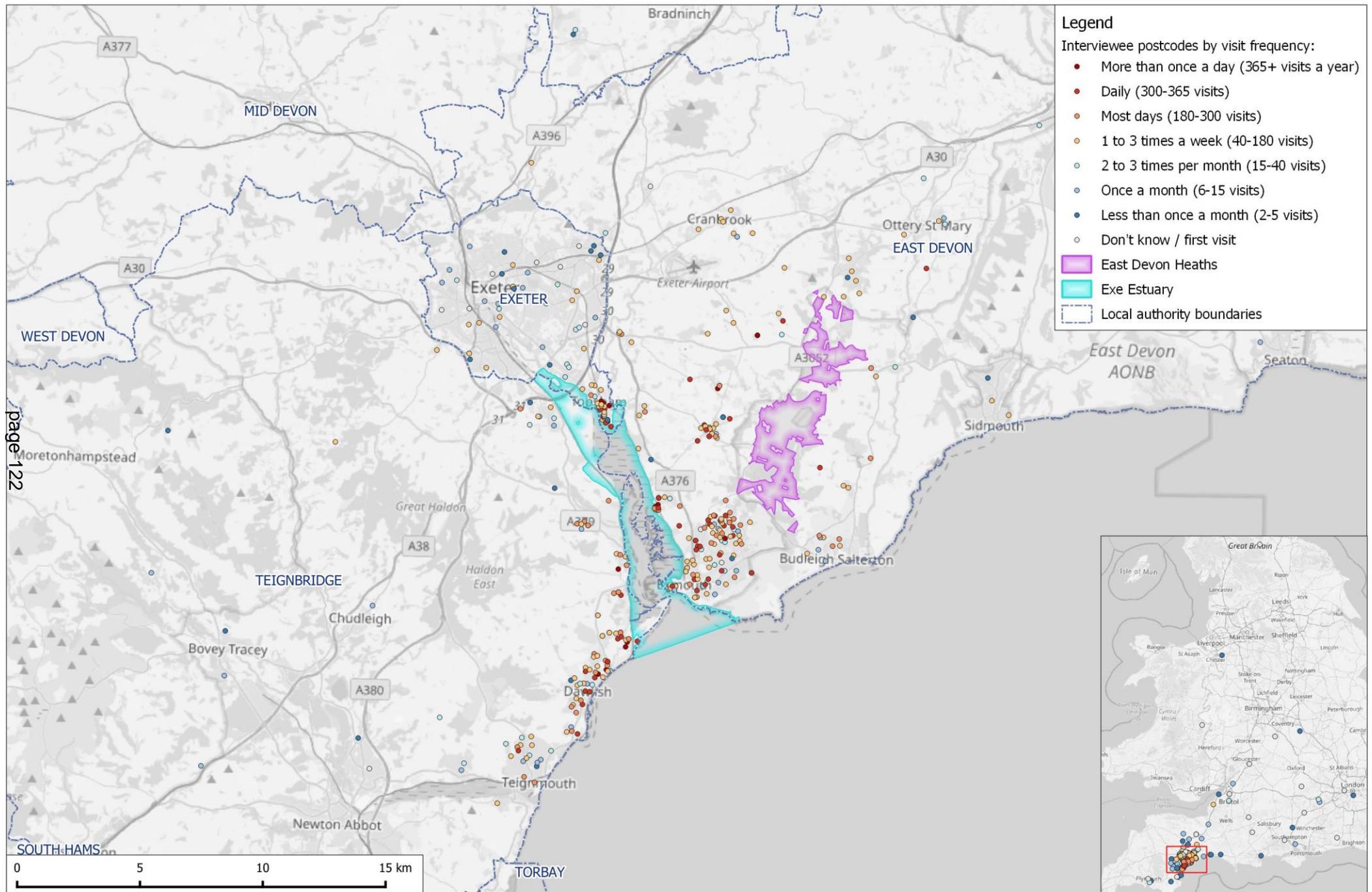


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Map 12: Postcodes of interviewees, coloured by visit type



Map 13: Postcodes of interviewees, coloured by visit frequency



5. Comparison with previous surveys

- 5.1 Previous surveys were undertaken in 2010 (Exe Estuary) and 2015 (Pebblebed Heaths) and used broadly similar methods. Comparisons provide some opportunities to check how access has changed.
- 5.2 In order to ensure as like-for-like a comparison as possible we have filtered the data from each survey to give the closest match in terms of survey effort, survey locations and timing (so for example we have excluded the data from the Turf survey point on the Exe which was surveyed in 2010 but not in 2020/21. There are of course important caveats to note in that the surveys are 'snapshots' in time and represent just 2 days at each location in the most recent survey which also coincided with the Covid pandemic.
- 5.3 In Table 11 we provide a summary of selected metrics, drawing on the relevant data from the different surveys. We have included Dawlish Countryside Park in the table simply to allow a comparison across the different sites.
- 5.4 The data suggest a number of changes. Most striking is the change in the number of visitors, with marked increases suggested at all sites. The data show overall totals of footfall per hour are more than double on the Exe Estuary (excluding Dawlish Warren) and on the Pebblebed Heaths compared to the previous survey. The change at the Pebblebed Heaths from 12.6 people entering per hour in 2015 to 26.9 people per hour in 2021 represents a 213% increase over 6 years.
- 5.5 The mean number of dogs per group appears to have dropped slightly at all sites, suggesting perhaps that there have been bigger increases in the use from those visiting without dogs. The percentage of interviewees who gave dog walking as their main activity decreased on the Pebblebeds (78% to 63%) but increased at the other sites. The percentage of people who stated walking was their main activity appears to have increased at all sites, particularly the Pebblebeds (8% of interviewees to 25%).
- 5.6 We have included the number of interviews in the table as a reference for the sample size but differences in the number of interviews between years will not reflect overall visitor numbers as only a small proportion of people are interviewed and the number of refusals and length of questionnaire was different in each survey (with the length of time taken to conduct an

interview obviously influencing the number of interviews that can be achieved with a given level of survey effort).

- 5.7 There appears to be a difference at Dawlish in the proportion of local residents using the site on a short visit from home, with an increase from 77% in 2010 to 89% in 2020.
- 5.8 Close to home appears to be a stronger factor influencing site choice now for those at Dawlish compared to 2010 (cited by 13% in 2010 and 54% in 2020) while by contrast it appears to have dropped in priority for those visiting the Pebblebeds (cited by 37% of interviewees in 2015 and just 22% in 2021).
- 5.9 There were no clear differences in the postcode data between the different surveys, suggesting that people who visit the relevant sites are not living any further afield or closer now compared to the previous survey. Mann-Whitney tests comparing the median values for the distance from home postcode to survey point for Dawlish Warren (2010 and 2020), Pebblebeds (2015 and 2021) and Exe Estuary (2010 and 2020), using the comparable data from the same survey points, were not significant (significance >0.05 in all cases).
- 5.10 Tally data for the comparable surveys are explored in more detail in Figure 23. In these plots each dot is a survey point and the data for the base year (2015 for Pebblebeds, 2010 for the Exe) are shown on the x axis while the more recent data are shown on the y axis. Were the data to be the same in the two surveys we would expect all points to be on the diagonal 1:1 line. Where points are above the diagonal line then there has been an increase in use.
- 5.11 By plotting the data in this way it is possible to determine whether any change has been consistent across all locations. For example, if all points are above the line but parallel to it, it suggests that the increase has been consistent across locations.
- 5.12 From these plots it is clear that all the numbers from the tally counts are higher at all locations compared to previous surveys with the exception of one survey point on the Exe, Lypstone. This is the case in all three plots and shows increases in visitor numbers across all locations. It should be noted that the survey point at Lypstone was slightly different in 2020 compared to 2010 (see Map 1) and this may explain the difference. The site that has seen the most marked increase is Topsham (Goat Walk). Changes seem more consistent on the Pebblebeds though Four Firs perhaps stands

out in that the data suggest a disproportionate increase in the number of dogs entering at that location.

South East Devon Visitor Survey 2020-2021

Table 11: Selected metrics from the 2020/2021 survey and previous surveys. ‘*’ indicates that the metric is extracted only for those on a short visit/day trip directly from home. Note the data in the table below have been filtered to provide like for like comparison and therefore selected survey points have been excluded. Red text indicates the higher value for column pairs.

Metric	Dawlish Warren 2010	Dawlish Warren 2020	Exe 2010 ¹	Exe 2020/21 ²	Pebblebeds 2015	Pebblebeds 2021	Dawlish Countryside Park 2021
Months when fieldwork conducted	Feb	Feb	Feb-March	Feb-Mar; Sep-Oct	May/June	April-June	June
Number of survey points	1	1	4	4	5	5	1
Total hours fieldwork	16	16	64	64	80	80	16
Mean group size (from tally)	2.2	2.2	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.9	1.7
Mean number of dogs per group (from tally)	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.9	1.2
Mean people counted per hour (from tally)	38.1	58	14.6	32.6	12.6	26.9	39
Mean people counted per hour, entering only (from tally)	20.5	30.1	7.5	16.9	6.5	12.4	18.6
Number of interviews	94	61	259	148	207	223	67
% interviewees on short day visit from home	77	89	87	87	94	97	97
% interviewees with dog walking stated as main activity*	46	69	31	36	78	63	89
% interviewees with walking stated as main activity*	20	28	34	40	8	25	9
% interviewees arriving by car*	74	80	40	46	98	97	88
% interviewees visiting daily or more than once a day* ³	28	28	(42) ³	14	19	16	18
% interviewees giving ‘close to home’ as main reason for site choice*	13	54	29	36	37	22	22
Median route length of interviewees (km)	1.96	2.1	1.78	2.99	3.1	2.46	1.68
Median distance from survey point to home postcode (km)*	3.24	4.33	2.89	2.29	5.31	5.26	3.19
75 th percentile distance from survey point to home postcode (km)*	14.84	15.22	16.81	9.89	7.54	8.23	5.48
Median distance from survey point to home postcode (km)	8.39	9.16	2.89	3.01	5.36	5.32	3.21
75 th percentile distance from survey point to home postcode (km)	81.95	16.27	16.81	12.17	7.63	8.5	5.7

- 1: To allow direct comparison these are only data from Topsham, Lympstone, Powderham and Exmouth Duck Pond and just using the standard survey (in 2010 additional targeted surveys were added for certain weather conditions and these data are excluded).
- 2: To allow direct comparison these are only data from Topsham, Lympstone, Powderham and Exmouth Duck Pond.
- 3: Note that the figures for the Exe are not strictly comparable as the categories for frequency of visit used in the two surveys were different and in 2010 the most frequent category was "most days"; therefore the 42% figure includes daily and those visiting most days.

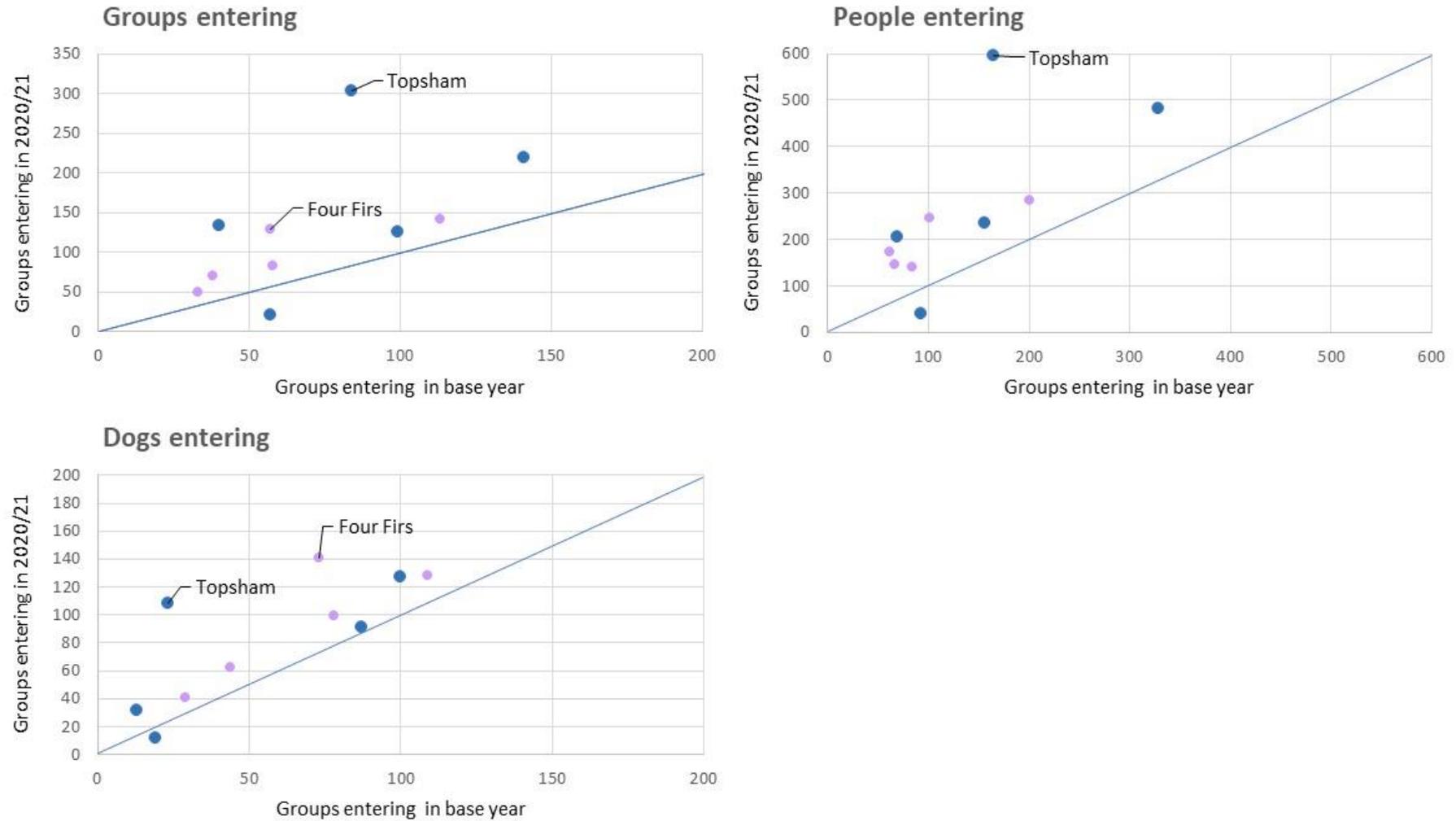


Figure 23: Comparisons of tally data from different years of survey. The base year for the Exe surveys was 2010 and for the Pebblebeds it was 2015. Blue circles are Exe Estuary survey points (including Dawlish Warren) and purple circles are Pebblebed survey points. Diagonal lines show the 1:1 relationship.

6. Discussion

6.1 The survey results provide a snapshot into the levels of use and insights into visitor behaviour at a selection of adjacent countryside sites. The results provide direct comparison between locations and will help inform future management and mitigation delivery. In this section we provide context and consider some of the implications of the findings.

Context

6.2 The survey results from 2020/21 provide a snapshot of visitor use at on the Exe Estuary, Pebblebed Heaths and the Dawlish Countryside Park. Some of the surveys (on the Exe Estuary) were undertaken prior to the Covid pandemic, in the early part of 2020 while other sites were surveyed just as restrictions relating to Covid were being relaxed but at a time where the pandemic would still have been affecting people's decisions regarding travel and where to go.

6.3 Visitor numbers have increased very markedly at the Exe Estuary and Pebblebed Heaths since the last surveys and this higher footfall potentially means increased pressure on the respective sites. The increase in use could be linked to Covid as well as changes such as increases in local development.

6.4 It is widely recognised that the pandemic has had a marked effect on how people use local greenspaces (Burnett et al., 2021; Natural England and Kantar Public, 2021; Randler et al., 2020). Outdoor space – during the pandemic – has become the safe place and default location for many for exercise and for socialising, and there is a continued and growing importance of urban green spaces in particular as spaces to connect with nature and each other (Natural England and Kantar Public, 2021). It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the 2021 visitor survey results show some marked changes from previous surveys, in particular in the overall number of visitors, the reasons behind site choice and the behaviour. Looking to the future it is not clear how patterns of use will further change following the pandemic and whether the increased levels of countryside access are a new 'normal'. Climate change is also likely to be a driver of change in recreational use (Coombes and Jones, 2010; McEvoy et al., 2008). Long term monitoring will therefore be important to pick up emerging trends and the drivers behind those trends.

Implications: zone of influence

- 6.5 There is no evidence that the zones of influence as currently established need to change (the 9.9km 75th percentile for all interviewees closely reflects the 10km used in the mitigation strategy).

Implications: role of SANG in mitigation

- 6.6 The results from this survey indicate that Dawlish Countryside Park is well used and draws a high number of dog walkers, a target audience for the SANG given the particular impacts associated with dogs off-lead (De Frenne et al., 2022; Gómez-Serrano, 2021; Groome et al., 2018; Liley et al., 2011).
- 6.7 The results show that the SANG is deflecting use away from the European sites. For example, 44% of the interviewees on the Exe Estuary had visited Dawlish Countryside Park. Furthermore, when asked which single alternative location visitors at the SANG would have gone to instead, Dawlish Warren was the most popular alternative (cited by 13 interviewees, 19% of interviewees at the SANG). Furthermore, those using Dawlish Countryside Park are doing so regularly (45% of those interviewed visiting more than once a day, daily or most days), suggesting that the site is working to draw frequent dog walkers.
- 6.8 SANGs have been a key element in strategic mitigation for European sites in other parts of the country, for example around the Thames Basin Heaths and the Dorset Heaths. The data presented here provide strong evidence that the approach is relevant for coastal sites, particularly for dog walkers. It is interesting to note that the median route length on the SANG (1.68km) is less than that on the nearby European sites (e.g. 2.1km for Dawlish Warren in 2020) and yet the SANG still seems to work. Providing the potential for longer routes may enhance the potential for SANGs to draw more use.
- 6.9 The postcode data (Map 11) show that Dawlish Countryside Park draws visitors from the local area, including Dawlish but that visitors using the site are also coming from Exeter and Newton Abbot. The SANG therefore works for the western side of the Exe Estuary. The postcode data for the European sites highlights the high numbers of interviewees originating from Exmouth and there is a potential need for SANG on the eastern side of the Estuary.

Implications: access management measures on the respective sites

- 6.10 The results suggest a reasonable level of awareness among interviewees that the sites they were visiting were protected (59% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds and 76% of interviewees at the Exe Estuary were aware that the site had environmental protection). Furthermore some 84% of interviewees at the Pebblebeds and 78% at the Exe Estuary could name a group of species or habitat for which the site was important. These figures would suggest that visitors are well informed. It is interesting to perhaps note (from Figure 19) that it is awareness of birds that predominates, even on the Pebblebeds.
- 6.11 It would seem the on-site ranger presence has reached a reasonable proportion of visitors, with a third of interviewees (33%) at the Pebblebeds and a quarter of interviewees (25%) on the Exe Estuary having met one of the rangers or mitigation officers. There is clearly scope to increase these percentages and Powderham and Lympstone were the two sites with the lowest percentages of visitors having met a ranger. The locations with the highest percentages – at Dawlish Warren (36%) and the Exmouth Duck Pond (28%) – are potentially the more sensitive and reflect the locations of the refuges, so this potentially reflects that wardening effort is focussed in the right locations.
- 6.12 The responses to membership of “Devon Loves Dogs” indicate a relatively low membership among dog walkers, with just 5% of dog walking interviewees stating they were members. This could reflect the relative infancy of the organisation and suggests there is scope to boost membership, especially at Dawlish Countryside Park, where just 2 members were interviewed.
- 6.13 There was little variation in the interviewee responses to the preferred means of being kept informed about management and other issues at the location where interviewed. Rangers scored slightly lower on average compared to noticeboards, word of mouth and social media. The question was specific around being kept informed and does not therefore reflect the role played by some of these communication methods in influencing behaviour or informing visitors about the nature conservation importance of sites. The responses reflect that a range of approaches are perhaps likely to be effective in maximising the reach of any communication.

- 6.14 The questionnaire included interviewee comments and general feedback and these data have been shared with the respective site managers and provide specific information regarding changes visitors would like to see or particular issues at sites.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Survey questionnaire used in the face-to-face interviews. As indicated, some of the questions were site-specific and so were not asked at all survey locations.



FOOTPRINT ECOLOGY

www.footprint-ecology.co.uk

Good morning/afternoon. I am conducting a survey on behalf of the local authority, who wants to better understand recreational use across South East Devon. Can you spare me a few minutes please?

Q1 **Firstly,**

- Are you on a day trip/short visit and travelled from home today ... *if no*
- Are you staying away from home with friends or family ... *if no*
- Are you on holiday in the area, staying away from home
- If none of the above, **How would you describe your visit today?**

Details

Q2 *if on holiday:* **What type of accommodation are you staying in?** *Tick closest answer. Do not prompt. Single response only.*

- Hotel/Motel
- Bed & Breakfast
- Pub/Inn/Guesthouse
- Self-catering
- Second home
- Campervan/campsite
- Home of friend/relative
- Other, please detail:

Further details

Q3 **What is the main activity you are undertaking today?** Tick closest answer. Do not prompt. Single response only. Ensure activity rather than reason for undertaking (e.g. not "health", "relaxing" etc.)

- Dog walking
- Walking
- Running / jogging / power walking
- Cycling
- Wildlife / birdwatching
- Fishing
- Photography
- Windsurfing
- Kitesurfing
- Boating (give details)
- Canoeing / kayaking
- Paddleboarding
- Bait digging / cockling / crab tiling
- Meeting up with friends
- Other, please detail:

Further details

Q4 **How long have you been visiting this location?** *Single response only. Do not prompt.*

- First visit
- less than or approximately 6 months
- less than or approximately 1 year
- less than or approximately 3 years
- less than or approximately 5 years
- less than or approximately 10 years
- more than 10 years
- Don't know / not sure

Q5 **How long have you spent / will you spend here today?** *Single response only. Do not prompt.*

- Less than 30 minutes
- Between 30 minutes and 1 hour
- 1 to 2 hours
- 2 to 3 hours
- More than 3 hours
- Don't know / not sure

Q6 **Over the past year, roughly how often have you visited this location?** *Tick closest answer, single response only. Only prompt if interviewee struggles.*

- More than once a day (365+ visits a year)
- Daily (300-365 visits)
- Most days (180-300 visits)
- 1 to 3 times a week (40-180 visits)
- 2 to 3 times per month (15-40 visits)
- Once a month (6-15 visits)
- Less than once a month (2-5 visits)
- Don't know / first visit
- Other, please detail

Further details

Q7 **[2021 only] Has your use of this place changed due to the Covid-19 situation during the past year?** *Single response only. If necessary, prompt with 'For example, has the frequency of your visits changed?'*

- Yes, started visiting here for the first time/not been here for a long time
- Yes, been here more than usual
- Yes, been here less than usual
- Yes, come at a different time of day
- Yes, use for different activity
- No, visiting the same as before
- Not sure/don't know

Further details

Q8 **Do you tend to visit here at a certain time of day?** *Tick closest answers. Multiple answers ok.*

- Before 9am
- Between 9am and 12pm
- Between 12 and 3pm
- Between 3 and 5pm
- After 5pm
- Varies
- Don't know / first visit

Q9 **Do you tend to visit this area more at a particular time of year for [insert given activity]?** *Multiple answers ok.*

- Spring (Mar-May)
- Summer (Jun-Aug)
- Autumn (Sept-Nov)
- Winter (Dec-Feb)
- Equally all year
- Don't know / first visit

Q10 **How did you get here today?** What form(s) of transport did you use? *Multiple responses ok.*

- Car / van
- On foot
- Bicycle
- Train
- Bus
- Other, please detail

Further details:

Now I'd like to ask you about your route today. Looking at the area shown on this map, can you show me where you started your visit today, the finish point and your route please. Probe to ensure route is accurately documented.

Use **P** to indicate where the visitor parked, **E** to indicate the start point and **X** to indicate the exit.

Mark the route with a line; a solid line for the actual route and a dotted line for the expected or remaining route.

Q11 *[For Exe Estuary only]* **Can I check, did/will you, or any of your party (including dogs) go onto the open sandflats/mudflats at all?** *Single response only.*

- Yes, one or more people
- Yes, but dog(s) only
- Don't know
- No

Q12 **Is / was your route today the normal length when you visit here for [insert given activity]?** *Tick closest answer, do not prompt. Single response only.*

- Yes, normal
- Much longer than normal
- Much shorter than normal
- Not sure / no typical visit / first visit

Q13 **What, if anything, influenced your choice of route here today?** *Tick closest answers, do not prompt. Multiple responses ok.*

- Weather
- Daylight
- Time
- Away from other people (not busy)
- Group members (e.g. kids, less able)
- Avoiding muddy tracks / paths
- Staying on surfaced paths
- Followed a marked trail
- Previous knowledge of area / experience
- Activity undertaken (e.g. presence of dog, add details)
- Viewpoint / Feature
- Scenery (e.g. views from a certain direction)
- Tide
- Birds / wildlife
- Interpretation / leaflets
- Other, please detail

Further details:

Q14 Why did you choose to visit this specific place today, rather than another location?
Tick all that apply, do not prompt.

- Don't know / others in party chose
- Close to home
- No need to use car
- Quick & easy travel route
- Good / easy parking
- Free parking
- Particular facilities
- Refreshments / cafe / pub
- Choice of routes
- Feels safe here
- Quiet, with no traffic noise
- Not many people
- Scenery / variety of views
- Rural feel / wild landscape
- Habit / familiarity
- Particular wildlife interest
- Good for dog / dog enjoys it
- Ability to let dog off lead
- Closest place to take dog
- Closest place to let dog safely off lead
- Appropriate place for activity
- Suitability of area in given weather conditions
- Presence of water
- For a change/variety
- Other, please detail

Further details:

Q15 **Could you name one location you would have visited today for [insert given activity] if you could not visit here? Do not prompt. Single response only.**

- Not sure / don't know
- Nowhere / wouldn't have visited anywhere
- Aylesbeare Common
- Woodbury Common / Woodbury Castle
- Four Firs
- elsewhere on the Pebblebed Heaths
- Exmouth
- The Maer, Exmouth
- Dawlish Warren
- Dawlish Countryside Park
- Topsham
- River Otter
- Haldon Forest
- Dartmoor
- Other site:

Record site name:

Q16 *[Exe Estuary and Pebblebeds only]* **If Dawlish Countryside Park not named above: Have you visited Dawlish Countryside Park before?**

- Yes
- No

Q17 *If yes,* **How often do you visit Dawlish Countryside Park?**

- Daily
- Most days
- 1 to 3 times a week
- 2 to 3 times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month
- Don't know

Q18 *[Exe Estuary and Pebblebeds only]* **Are you aware of any designations or environmental protections that apply to this area? If so, can you name them?** *Do not prompt. Tick any that are mentioned. Multiple responses ok.*

- Not aware of any
- Yes, but not able to name
- SSSI mentioned (or "special scientific interest" etc.)
- SPA / SAC / Ramsar / European site mentioned
- Nature reserve
- AONB
- Common or common land
- General comment about importance for birds
- General comment about importance for habitat
- General comment about importance for dragonflies/damselflies
- Other, please detail

Further details:

Q19 *[Exe Estuary and Pebblebeds only]* **Are you aware of any important wildlife species or habitats present in this area? If so, can you name them?** *Do not prompt. Tick any that are mentioned. Multiple responses ok.*

- Not aware of any
- Yes, but can't name or vague
- Birds in general
- Nightjar
- Dartford Warbler
- Heathland / heaths / dry heathland / wet heathland
- Southern Damselfly
- Reptiles e.g. smooth snake
- Wading birds or wildfowl
- Wetland / marshes
- Eelgrass / seagrass / Zostera
- Sand dunes / slacks
- Other, please detail

Further details:

Q20 *[Exe Estuary and Pebblebeds only]* **Have you met any of the rangers or mitigation officers who work here?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q21 *If yes,* **Have you spoken to any of them?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q22 *If yes,* **As a result of the rangers being present, have you learnt more about the local wildlife?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q23 *If yes,* **As a result of the rangers being present, have you changed what you do?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q24 *If yes,* **As a result of the rangers being present, do you feel safer visiting here?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q25 *[Exe Estuary and Pebblebeds only]* **Are you aware of any codes of conduct that have been produced for this area? If so, which one(s)?** *Do not prompt. Tick any that are mentioned. Multiple responses ok.*

- Not aware of any
- Yes, but can't name or vague
- Pebblebeds: Dog Code
- Pebblebeds: Bike Code
- Pebblebeds: Horse Code
- Exe Water Users Code
- Exe Personal Water Craft Code
- Exe Shore Code
- Exe Dog Walking Code
- Exe Bait Collectors Code
- Exe Kitesurfers Code of Conduct
- Dawlish Warren Code

Q26 *[Dog walkers only]* **Have you heard of Devon Loves Dogs?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q27 *If yes,* **Are you a member?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q28 *[Exe Estuary only]* **Have you seen the patrol boat on the estuary?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q29 *[Exe Estuary only]* **Are you aware of the wildlife refuges on the estuary?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q30 What are the best ways of keeping visitors such as yourself informed about this area and the way it is managed? Please score each of the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not useful and 5 is very useful. *Order of questions will be randomised.*

	1 - not useful	2	3	4	5 - very useful	Don't know
Noticeboards	<input type="radio"/>					
Leaflets	<input type="radio"/>					
Word of mouth	<input type="radio"/>					
Social media	<input type="radio"/>					
Ranger contact	<input type="radio"/>					

[Pebblebeds only] **What three words describe what the Pebblebed Heaths mean to you? This could be a feeling, a feature of the place or something it enables you to do. Do not prompt. Order of words is not important.**

Q31 First word:

Q32 Second word:

Q33 Third word:

Q34 Do you have any further comments or general feedback about your visit, access to this area and what you would like to see in the future? *Free text*

Q35 **What is your full home postcode?** *This is an important piece of information, please make every effort to record correctly.*

Q36 *If visitor is unable or refuses to give postcode:* **What is the name of the nearest town or village?**

Q37 **How long have you lived at that postcode?**

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 years +

Q38 *If visitor is on holiday ask:* **Which town / village are you staying in?**

That is the end. Thank you very much indeed for your time.

TO BE COMPLETED AFTER INTERVIEW FINISHED

Q39 Survey details

Surveyor initials	<input type="text"/>
Survey location code	<input type="text"/>
Map reference number	<input type="text"/>
Gender of respondent (M/F)	<input type="text"/>
Total number in interviewed group	<input type="text"/>
Total males	<input type="text"/>
Total females	<input type="text"/>
Total minors (under 18)	<input type="text"/>
Number of dogs	<input type="text"/>
Number of dogs seen off lead	<input type="text"/>

Q40 **Did the interviewee appear to be part of an organised group, e.g. Ramblers, fitness group, Duke of Edinburgh expedition?**

Yes, interviewee part of an organised group

Q41 **Surveyor comments.** *Note anything that may be relevant to the survey, including any changes to the survey entry that are necessary, e.g. changes to answers, additional information*

Appendix 2: Footfall summary from visitor counts

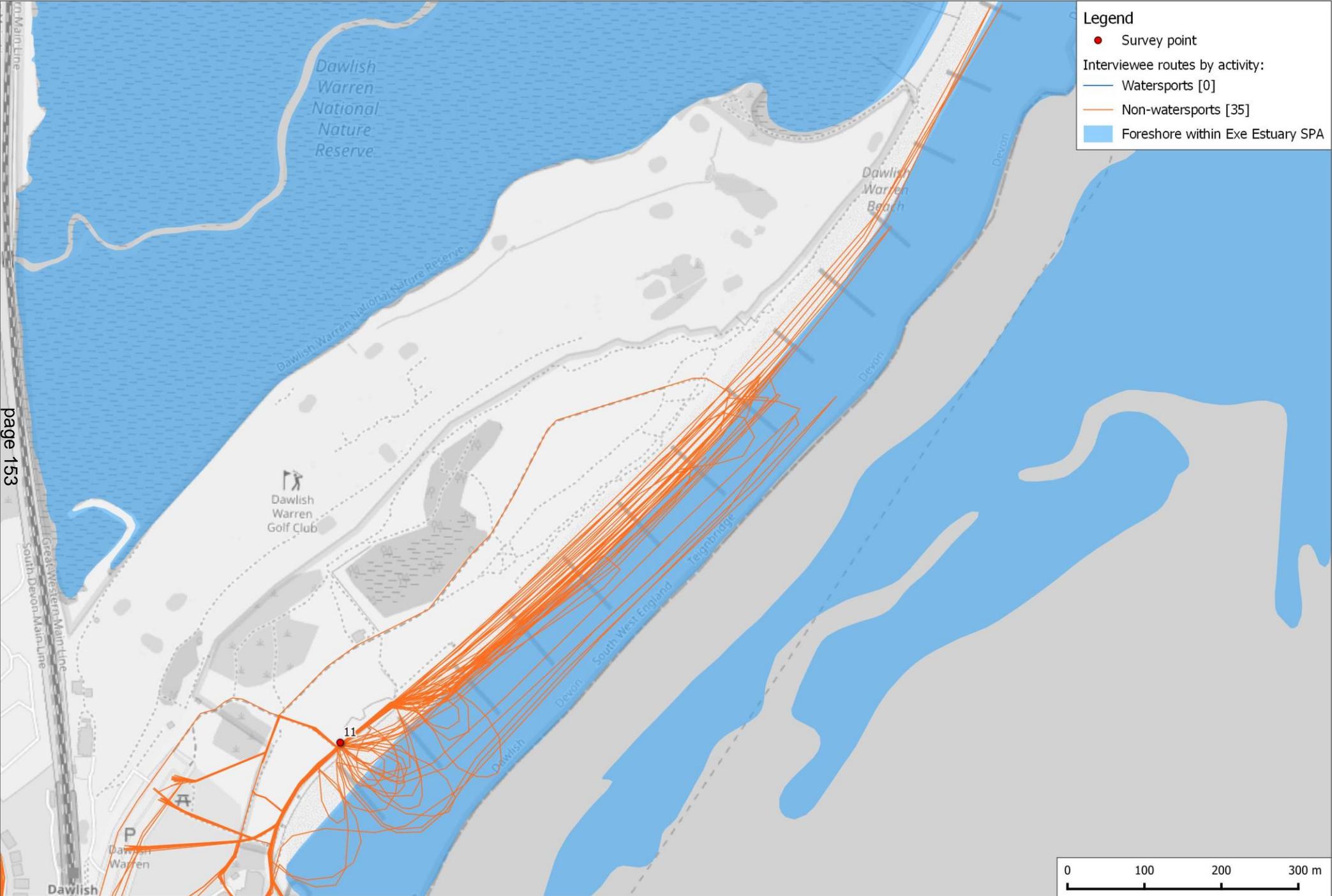
The table below summarises the footfall (all people recorded entering, leaving or passing) at each survey point. The highest 3 values in each column are highlighted in red, the lowest 3 are highlighted in blue.

	Total people	Total groups	People per hour	Group size
1: Joney's Cross	306	142	19.1	2.2
2: Four Firs	518	290	32.4	1.8
3: Wheathill	301	146	18.8	2.1
4: Woodbury Castle	671	324	41.9	2.1
5: The Warren	352	197	22.0	1.8
6: Model Airfield	287	207	17.9	1.4
7: Exmouth Duck Pond	474	272	29.6	1.7
8: Powderham	367	242	22.9	1.5
9: Lympstone	87	47	5.4	1.9
10: Goat Walk	1,161	590	72.6	2.0
11: Dawlish Warren	921	415	57.6	2.2
12: Dawlish Countryside Park	621	376	38.8	1.7
Total	6,066	3,248	31.6	1.9

Appendix 3: Routes that entered intertidal areas

These three additional maps show the routes of visitors who were interviewed at either Dawlish Warren, Exmouth Duck Pond or Lypstone and whose route passed through the intertidal part of the Exe Estuary SPA. There is no map for Goat Walk since only one route went onto the intertidal area and only for a few metres.

Map A1: Interviewee routes that went onto the foreshore around Dawlish Warren



Map A3: Interviewee routes that went onto the foreshore around Lymstone





SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

2021-22 Annual Business Plan – Annual Report

*Neil Harris & Naomi Harnett
Growth, Development & Prosperity,
East Devon District Council
April 2022*

Legal comment/advice:

There is no direct comment to be made in relation to this report, each and any individual issue will need to be considered as it arises.

Finance comment/advice:

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Public Document:	Yes
Exemption:	None
Review date for release	None

Recommendations

It is proposed that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the progress made in delivering the 2021/22 annual business plan.
2. Notes the status of mitigation measures from each of the plans, as well as explanations given for measures subject to delay and revised completion dates.

Equalities impact: Low

Risk: Medium.

This report is an update on the progress made in delivery of ongoing mitigation measures set out in previous annual business plans and ongoing measures established in the Plan. It is important that progress continues to be made, or this would put the delivery of the partner Authorities' Local Plans at risk due to the continued legal duties under the Habitat Regulations.

1. Summary/Overview.

1.1 The 2021/22 annual business plan (ABP) was approved at a virtual meeting of the Executive Committee on 29th April 2021.

1.2 The measures had been debated and endorsed by the Officer Working Group. The plan outlined the delivery of ongoing measures established in previous ABPs as well as a range of additional measures. In total, the plan released funding for projects estimated at £369,954.

1.3 Projects included the continued funding of keystone mitigation measures such as the Delivery Manager, Wildlife Wardens (previously "Habitat Mitigation Officers" and Project Officer (Devon Loves Dogs) (DLD).

1.4 New measures approved as part of the plan included phase 2 of the visitor access improvements on the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths and associated signage/interpretation. Measures at Dawlish Warren included the instigation of specialist contractor works required to safeguard petalwort, improvements and repairs to spur fencing near the Bight high tide bird roost and redesign of signage at Soft Sand Bay relating to landing by boat.

1.4 Tables 1 & 2 report the status of mitigation measures identified in the 2021/22 ABP.

Table 1. 2021/22 Annual Business Plan – ongoing mitigation measures. ¹

Site	Measure	Status
Cross Site	Delivery Manager	Completed (ongoing)
Cross Site	Two Wildlife Wardens	Completed (ongoing) ²
Cross Site	Warden vehicle	Completed (ongoing)
Cross Site	Dog project	Completed (ongoing)
Exe Estuary	Patrol boat	Completed (ongoing)
Pebblebed Heaths	Dog bins	Completed (ongoing)
SANGS	Dawlish Countryside Park	Completed (ongoing) ³
SANGS	South West Exeter	Phase 1 complete, open to the public (ongoing) ⁴

Table 2. 2021/2 Annual Business Plan - “new” mitigation measures.

Site	Measure	Status
Dawlish Warren	Petalwort translocation.	Complete/In progress. ⁵
Dawlish Warren	Spur fencing in Bight.	Complete
Dawlish Warren	Signage at Soft Sand Bay.	Complete
Pebblebed Heaths	Interpretation & signage design	In progress ⁶
Pebblebed Heaths	Visitor access improvements – phase 2 works	In progress ⁷

1.5 Tables 3 & 4 reflect the status of mitigation measures from all previous annual business plans.

¹ Staffing and associated resources approved by HREC November 2020.

² Two new staff now in post.

³ Land Trust assumed management (999 year lease) Dec 2021.

⁴ HREC approved funding arrangements November 2020.

⁵ Funding provided for consultant site visit. EA funded report. Further funding required, see (2.4) of this report.

⁶ Signs for Phase 1 car parks have been installed. Remaining phases expected summer 2022.

⁷ Planning application submitted, works expected summer/autumn 2022.

Table 3. Initiated/completed/in progress mitigation approved by Executive.

Site	Measure	Status
All	Visitor counts & surveys	Completed ⁸
All	Website redesign & monitoring dashboard	Completed ⁹
Exe Estuary	Updates of the Exe Estuary leaflets	Awaiting approval ¹⁰
Exe Estuary	Wildlife refuge monitoring	Completed. ¹¹
Exe Estuary	Codes of Conduct	Completed
Exe Estuary	Procurement, installation, maintenance of buoy markers.	Completed
Exe Estuary	Update signs at public slipways (1)	Completed
Dawlish Warren	Vegetation monitoring	Completed ¹²
Dawlish Warren	Regular newsletter	Initiated (ongoing)
Dawlish Warren	Reed screening between Bight & Golf Course	On hold ¹³
Dawlish Warren	Visitor Management Plan	In progress (ongoing)
Dawlish Warren	Petalwort monitoring	Completed ¹⁴
Dawlish Warren	Changes to car parking management	On hold (ongoing)
Dawlish Warren	Carry out audit of information boards	Completed
Dawlish Warren	BBQ info at local retailers	Completed
Dawlish Warren	Regular Warren Newsletter	Completed (ongoing)
Dawlish Warren	Monitoring of vegetation change	Completed
Pebblebed Heaths	Visitor access improvements – phase 1 works	Completed ¹⁵
Pebblebed Heaths	Visitor Access Improvements (advisory report)	Completed
Pebblebed Heaths	Visitor Access Improvements (public consultation)	Completed

⁸ Reported to HREC April 2022.

⁹ Site launched April 2022.

¹⁰ Recommended as part of 2022/23 Annual Business Plan.

¹¹ Overarching review report approved by HREC October 2021. Monitoring by wardens to continue.

¹² Next survey due and recommended for approval April 2022.

¹³ Certain measures at Dawlish Warren remain under review, see separate 2022-23 ABP report.

¹⁴ Next survey due and recommended for approval April 2022.

¹⁵ Phase 1 works completed April 2022.

Pebblebed Heaths	Maps highlighting sensitive areas	Completed ¹⁶
Pebblebed Heaths	Codes of conduct	Completed
Pebblebed Heaths	Boardwalks/ Path surfacing	Initiated (ongoing) ¹⁷
Pebblebed Heaths	Educational work with schools	Completed (ongoing)

Table 4 – mitigation measures carried over from previous business plans

Site	Measure	Status
Dawlish Warren	Removal of Dog Control Order	On hold ¹⁸
Dawlish Warren	Changes to car parking management	On hold
Dawlish Warren	Byelaw preventing fires and barbeques in buffer zone	Under investigation ¹⁹
Dawlish Warren	Monitoring of accretion and erosion	On hold ²⁰

2. Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager.

2.1 The Delivery Manager continues in post, working to organise and implement the approved Annual Business Plans, report progress to the Executive Committee, co-ordinate delivery of the Strategy, liaise with the Officer Working Group and undertake ongoing review of the Strategy.

2.2 Progress is marked by the management of public-facing staff, recruitment and training of two new staff, project management of Pebblebed Heaths visitor access improvements, procurement of contracts relating to website and signage design (and manufacture), procurement of materials and budget management.

2.3 Ongoing work streams are implementation of visitor access improvements on the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths (phase 2) and associated interpretation and signage installation. These are expected to complete in summer/autumn 2022. There will be regular and ongoing updates to the South East Devon Wildlife²¹ website as required.

¹⁶ Incorporated into interpretation/signage design and promoted routes work (Phase 1 complete).

¹⁷ Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust continue work with a contractor to complete schedule of priority works.

¹⁸ District-wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) regarding dogs enacted by TDC in April 2019. This measure postponed until the effect of the PSPO is known.

¹⁹ Remains a watching brief with TDC Resorts, Rangers and Legal departments. No recent incidents reported.

²⁰ This is still being undertaken by the Environment Agency (EA) as part of the Beach Management Scheme. Recommend reviewing this measure after EA scheme review complete.

²¹ www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk

2.4 As part of recent discussions with the Environment Agency (EA) (regarding a possible new Beach Management Scheme at Dawlish Warren), the EA funded a report into the potential for a habitat creation, petalwort translocation and monitoring project through a Cornwall based consultancy with experience in this work. It had been hoped that the EA would fund this work over 2022-23 or so, but EA advise that funding is now unlikely to be available.

2.5 As such, and in view of the poor prognosis for the long term survival of the plant at the Warren²², the Rangers are investigating other funding opportunities for the work. They are currently awaiting advice from Natural England regarding funding bids from their internal schemes.

2.6 Appendix A provides visual examples of the monitoring dashboard on the new website, fencing and signage at Dawlish Warren and the completed Phase 1 visitor access improvements on the heaths.

2.5 An update from the habitat mitigation team is reported separately.

**South East Devon
Habitat Regulations
Executive Committee
April 2022**

Natural England comment:

Natural England is currently awaiting confirmation of funding for SSSI improvement projects from Defra. We understand that a bid will be made for funding the translocation of petalwort, but the bid will be competing with other project proposals. The proposed repeat of the petalwort survey is welcomed.

We welcome the new website and monitoring dashboard.

²² *Conservation assessment and prognosis for Petalwort at Dawlish Warren 2019*

1. Vehicle



2. Signage at the Imperial Recreation Ground, Exmouth

Exmouth Wildlife Refuge Ahead!  

**All Visitors
Avoid Wildlife Refuge**

Dog walkers: head straight out
or left from slipway to avoid
disturbing wildlife

15th Sept to 31st Dec





**Exmouth
Wildlife Refuge**



NO ENTRY

All users please keep out

**15th September
to 31st December**





EXMOUTH WILDLIFE REFUGE

Keep out: 15th September 31st December

Keep out - keep wildlife safe.

No people or dogs,
on foot or on water,
including the shoreline.

Marked by
yellow buoys. 





Keep it special for years to come ...



3. Gazebo design



4. Redesigned website homepage



South East Devon Wildlife

Search this site

Twitter Facebook Instagram

OUT & ABOUT | DAWLISH WARREN | EXE ESTUARY | PEBBLEBED HEATHS | Activities | Our Work | News & Events

Protecting

Exe Estuary, Dawlish Warren and East Devon Pebblebed Heaths for future generations to enjoy

more

◀ ▶

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DAWLISH WARREN

Dawlish Warren is an important part of the Exe Estuary Special Protection Area and Ramsar site – an area of international importance for wildlife.

more



EXE ESTUARY

The Exe Estuary is designated as a special protection area (SPA), site of special scientific interest (SSSI) and a wetland of international importance (RAMSAR).

more



PEBBLEBED HEATHS

The East Devon Pebblebed Heaths is an area of rare lowland heath in East Devon. It is located inland of the coastal towns of Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton.

more



NEWS



EVENTS



Gallery

Filter by: All



Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

2021-22 Annual Business Plan Annual Report: Appendix A – New website monitoring dashboard, fencing and signage at the Warren and completed Phase 1 works on the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths.

1. Monitoring dashboard.



South East Devon Wildlife

Search this site

- OUT & ABOUT
- DAWLISH WARREN
- EXE ESTUARY
- PEBBLEBED HEATHS
- Activities
- Our Work

MONITORING DASHBOARD

Monitoring is essential to ensure the successful delivery of our mitigation work. It's necessary to ensure that the planned approaches are working as anticipated and to identify whether further refinements or adjustments are necessary.

It's difficult to be confident of how visitor access patterns may change over time, for example in response to new activities, changes in climate, and changes on the sites themselves. The unprecedented increase in visits during the Covid-19 pandemic is a good example of changes in access which could not be foreseen when the mitigation Strategy was created.

The monitoring is therefore aimed at ensuring mitigation effort is focused and responsive to changes in access, and that money is well-spent and correctly allocated. The monitoring is integral to the mitigation 'package' and there are a number of monitoring projects. Some of these are specific to an area or site and some are concerned with all three of our protected sites.

Interactive Map

Use our interactive map opposite to select the area you are interested in and view more detailed information of our monitoring programmes.

Alternatively, choose your area of interest:

- Exe Estuary Special Protection Area
- Dawlish Warren
- Pebblebed Heaths



PETALWORT MONITORING

Conservation assessment and prognosis for Petalwort at Dawlish Warren

DAWLISH WARREN is 1 of 7 sites in England where petalwort is found. more	CURRENT POPULATION between 1300-1700 individual plants in 7 main areas. more	AFTER A SLIGHT FALL in numbers between 2003-2012, number of plants is stable. more
NO PLANTS FOUND near Visitor Centre where "safe" population was thought to be. more	MAIN AREAS FOR PETALWORT are at risk of inundation by the sea. more	FUTURE OF THE PLANT depends on management, sea level rise and visitor pressure. more

CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT AND PROGNOSIS FOR PETALWORT AT DAWLISH WARREN

Read the full report

Dawlish Warren is 1 of 7 sites in England where petalwort is found.

- Petalwort is a small, pale green plant which is one of the special interest features for which Dawlish Warren Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is designated. It is nationally scarce in the UK, being widely but sparsely distributed. Dawlish Warren is one of seven sites in England where the plant is recorded.



Explanation of Grades	
A	Outstanding examples of the feature in a European context.
B	Excellent examples of the feature, significantly above the threshold for SSSI/ASSI notification but of somewhat lower value than grade A sites.
C	Examples of the feature which are of at least national importance (i.e. usually above the threshold for SSSI/ASSI notification on terrestrial sites) but not significantly above this. These features are not the primary reason for SACs being selected.
D	Features of below SSSI quality occurring on SACs. These are non-qualifying features ("non-significant presence"), indicated by a letter (L) but this is not a formal global grade.

2. New fencing and signage at Dawlish Warren



Dawlish Warren National Nature Reserve

Dawlish Warren National Nature Reserve is internationally important for wildlife, with huge importance for birds, plants, insects and reptiles. The Warren Point area is particularly sensitive.

- The beach and mudflats around Warren Point are vital feeding and resting areas for birds that come to the Warren throughout the year. Disturbance can threaten their survival, so please avoid the wildlife refuge and bird rest areas – see map
- The dunes support rare species of flora, some of which are only found in dune systems. Amongst the plants live rare species of insects and reptiles like Sand and Common Lizards

Ringed plover



High Tide Bird Rest Areas

- Birds that feed across the mudflats at low water must rest around high tide
- Please avoid the areas marked on the map and do not climb fences

Warren Point Dunes



Sand lizard

- Many creatures live on the shoreline and in the dunes at the Point, from insects like sand wasps and rare beetles that rely on driftwood to spectacular Sand Lizards.
- Many ground nesting birds use this area so please stay on the paths

Warren point



Oystercatcher



No Landing of Watercraft at Any Time

The Landing Area

- Please only land your boat here between 1st April and 4th September
- Please no Fires or BBQs
- No Dogs Anywhere at Warren Point at any time– site byelaws apply



Wildlife Refuge

To maintain an undisturbed area for birds to feed, please avoid this area at all times



Brent geese

How you can help protect this place:

- If you arrive by boat please only do so between April 1st and September 4th
- Do not land outside of the landing zone
- Please no Fires or BBQs
- Avoid entering the roosts and mudflats as indicated on the map
- Dogs are not permitted anywhere at Warren Point



SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

3. Phase 1 visitor access improvements on the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths.

(a) Joney's Cross



3. Phase 1 visitor access improvements on the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths.

(b) Four Firs



4. New entrance signs and interpretation on the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths

page 172

PEBBLEBED HEATHS
CONSERVATION TRUST

Welcome to Four Firs

Part of the Pebblebed Heaths National Nature Reserve

The Pebblebed Heaths NNR is the largest area of lowland heath remaining in Devon. The unique landscape has been shaped by the underlying Triassic geology and people living and working with nature for thousands of years. Known locally as 'The Common', the Pebblebed Heaths cover more than ten square kilometres, with over 80km of tracks and paths to explore.

Explore the heaths

There are many of footpaths in the area and to find out more visit the OS code here.

What to see

Four Firs takes its name from the four trees in the corners of the reserved junction, each of which were planted with pine trees. The grounds are believed to be Bronze Age and are protected as scheduled ancient monuments.

Conservation grazing

Having breeds of cattle and ponies on the heath grazing is part of the heath during the summer.

Conservation grazing

Having breeds of cattle and ponies on the heath grazing is part of the heath during the summer.

Have a safe and enjoyable visit

The Pebblebed Heaths are Open Access Land for nature, with additional permission allowing cyclists and horse riders to enjoy parts of the estate. Many footpaths lead on to waste the ground and road conditions can be very poor. To protect wildlife please stay on walking paths and tracks. Be aware of other visitors and livestock and share the track responsibly. Check gates are not locked and you have the correct access. Dog waste bins are provided at all parking areas. Please pick up after your dog and dispose of it in a bin.

Site Rules:

- Keep dogs on paths, leashed and under control
- Always bag and bin dog waste in all parking areas
- Take litter home
- No fires
- No camp or barbecues permitted anywhere
- No camping or overnight stays in vehicles permitted
- No motor vehicles
- No motor vehicles

Woodbury Castle

Woodbury Castle

PEBBLEBED HEATHS
CONSERVATION TRUST

Woodbury Castle

Pebblebed Heaths National Nature Reserve

Site Rules:

- No overnight stays
- Rangers on duty

PEBBLEBED HEATHS | National Nature Reserve

Woodbury Castle

Structure:
Douglas fir
1 off upright
1 off uprt
2 off SOC
Anti graffiti
1500x700x
Tricoya t
with cou

Larger px to allow j

Site nam front of
3mm of
Gablions local pol placed a

Delivery Structur
Panel fix
fixings or
On install
200mm up before pinned ir

Woodbury Castle

Structure:
Douglas fir
1 off upright
Anti graffiti
1200x700x
fixed to uprt
Taller post
1200x700x
fix panel to
Fixings allow

Site name < front of lon

Delivery an Structure c
Panel fixed
fixings on ft
On install, c
can be use
with postcr



SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

Habitat mitigation team updates.

*Neil Harris & Naomi Harnett
Growth, Development & Prosperity,
East Devon District Council
April 2022*

Legal comment/advice

There is no direct comment to be made in relation to this report, each and any individual issue will need to be considered as it arises.

Finance comment/advice:

There are no direct financial implications set out in the report.

Public Document:	Yes
Exemption:	None
Review date for release	None

Recommendations.

It is proposed that the Executive Committee:

- 1. Notes the updates provided by the Wildlife Warden and Devon Loves Dogs project co-ordinator.**
- 2. Receives a further update at the next meeting of the Executive.**

Equalities impact: Low

Risk: Low.

The purpose of this report is to provide a regular update from the habitat mitigation delivery team. This enables the Executive Committee to maintain a good understanding of the initiatives, partnership working and day to day activities of public-facing staff. Continued and effective delivery of the Strategy and the development this enables remains of very high importance to all partners.

1 Wildlife Warden (previously Habitat Mitigation Officers (HMOs))

1.1 Trudi Righton started as a full time Wildlife Warden with the team in February this year. As both previous post holders are no longer currently in post, Julie Owen from Devon Loves Dogs has been guiding Trudi through her first weeks in role. The remainder of this section is an update from Trudi.

1.2 Since joining the team on 7th February, I worked through a staff induction programme, which included sorting out kit and uniform, meeting internal staff and undertaking mandatory in-house East Devon training.

1.3 Over the past six weeks, accompanied by Julie, I've also been visiting and getting to know the protected sites, meeting partners and stakeholders, including the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust, RSPB, the rangers at Dawlish Warren and Devon Wildlife Trust.

1.4 I've attended several meetings, including some evening ones: Exe Estuary Management Partnership forum and the National Coastwatch Institute "Get Together" in Exmouth. At the latter, I met (in person) many of the wonderful Coastwatch volunteers, and learnt about water safety via the RNLI's 'floattolive' campaign.

1.5 Julie and I have engaged with the public by undertaking several pop-up gazebo events on site, including on the Pebblebed Heaths and at Dawlish Warren. I hope to add an interactive element to our gazebo visual displays, which will encourage site visitors to engage with our messages in a fun and educational way.

1.6 I've received training on, and have started to post on social media (Twitter and Facebook).

1.7 I accompanied Julie on a "Waggy Walk" with members of Devon Loves Dogs. It was also lovely to attend a tree-planting afternoon in the Clyst Valley, where I joined a volunteer group creating a mixed hedge for wildlife as part of the EDDC "Routes for Roots" project.

2. Devon Loves Dogs (DLD).

2.1 Since my last update at the end of the year, changes in the wider mitigation team have had a big effect on the running of DLD with the loss of two experienced staff. During January I returned to part time hours and other than one Waggy Walk, I mostly spent my time catching up on admin for the project.

2.2 Since 7th February my working hours have increased to full time so that I can work alongside the new Wildlife Warden, Trudi until the second Warden starts at the end of March. Together we have had site visits with Kim Strawbridge (site manager for the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust), Phil Chambers (Senior Ranger, Dawlish Warren), Natalie Holt (site manager, RSPB Exe reserves) and Edrik Hopkinson (site manager, Devon Wildlife Trust), and I found all of these visits to be most beneficial. We are looking forward to more visits with the remaining site managers soon.

2.3 My programme of Waggy Walks has been continuing, I have run 4 walks so far this year at Four Firs, Uphams, Core Copse and Mutters Moor on the Pebblebed Heaths. I am in the process of arranging walks for the coming months at Dawlish Countryside Park as part of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, Lower Halsdon Farm with the National Trust and a continued plan of monthly walks on the Pebblebed Heaths and with Forestry England. Take up has been very good and my next walk is fully booked with a waiting list.

2.4 I am excited to be receiving invites to external events again. Last weekend saw the return of the gazebo and poo game at Bicton Lambing Day, the sun shone and thousands of people turned up to enjoy the event. I already have bookings for Turn of the Tide in Dawlish and Dawlish Dog Festival to be held at Dawlish Countryside Park in October. We also have a booking for Devon County Show, this year starting on 30th June.

2.5 Membership is continuing to increase with a total of 881 members, an increase of 41 since the beginning of the year. I'm pleased with this figure as my time spent on DLD has been reduced whilst covering the Wildlife Warden role.

2.6 I have been involved with a number of other events, including running an online presentation and workshop at the nationwide Countryside Management Association's (CMA) annual conference. I'm also planning on being part of the EDDC summer campaign for responsible dog owners, due to start in May 2022.

2.7 In September 2021, several members of our team, joined by Kim Strawbridge and a selection of our dogs, took part in filming for an episode of BBC's "Escape to the Country". Our scheme was covered in some detail, the programme aired in February and we've had lots of positive comments and interactions about it on social media and in person on Waggy Walks. We also recruited some new members through it.

2.7 I have also formed links with a local author who is writing a series of books of dog walks, the first covering Teignbridge and Dartmoor, the second covering East and Mid Devon. The author joined us on a Waggy Walk, met some of my members and has offered a discount on books for DLD members and the opportunity for my members to contribute photos to the new book, with the opportunity to win books and other prizes.

2.8 Finally, the SCCAMP (Southern Counties Canine Access Management Partnership) group is going from strength to strength and we are currently joining together to promote Canines in the Countryside, a whole week of walks, activities and social media content culminating in a joint online zoom quiz with Kennel Club Access Advisor and "Your Dog" magazine columnist Stephen Jenkinson. It's a great opportunity for us to highlight the fact that our messages are also relevant in many other areas of the country.

**South East Devon
Habitat Regulations
Executive Committee**

Natural England comment:

Natural England have reviewed the report and have no comment to make.



SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

Risk Register Report

*Neil Harris & Naomi Harnett
Growth, Development & Prosperity,
East Devon District Council
April 2022*

Legal comment/advice

There is no direct comment to be made in relation to this report, each and any individual issue will need to be considered as it arises.

Finance comment/advice:

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Public Document:	Yes
Exemption:	None
Review date for release	None

Recommendations.

It is proposed that the Executive Committee:

1. **Notes the identification, categorisation and prioritisation of risks as recorded in the accompanying Risk Register, associated with delivery of the South-east Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy.**
2. **Notes the control measures in place to mitigate the risks identified.**
3. **Receives an updated Risk Register report in 12 months.**

Equalities impact: Low

Risk: High.

The coronavirus pandemic continues to play out, although the vaccination programme has reduced the number of severe cases of the disease. Experience of the last two years shows that the virus could still have the potential to be a severe risk to both operational, economic and strategic elements of the delivery of the mitigation strategy. Additionally, rising inflation and the situation in Eastern Europe are causing global economic shocks which could affect the housing market in the UK. The government's review of the Habitats Regulations is ongoing and we await the outcome of that review. As always, continued partnership working and keeping updated on changes in the operational environment will assist in mitigating these risks. Continued and effective delivery of the Strategy and the development this enables remains of very high importance to all partners.

1. Summary

1.1 As part of the project development of the South-east Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy ("the Strategy"), a detailed risk register (see Appendix A) is used to take account of the various categories of risk that exist or emerge in all elements of the Strategy. This was developed as part of a set risk management process.

1.2 It is important to note that the purpose of a risk register is to record the details of all risks that have been identified along with their analysis and plans for how those risks will be treated. It does not necessarily mean that the risks will be realised or are expected to occur (unless specifically noted).

1.3 The purpose of the report is to update members of SEDHREC on the status of the risk management register and the status of risk management across the partner authorities at this time.

1.4 The register now also includes “inactive” risks which have either expired or are no longer considered a risk to the delivery of the Strategy.

2. Identifying Risks

2.1 Risk is categorised in relation to the aims and objectives of SEDHREC (i.e. delivering the Strategy). The main categories used in this register are:

- Strategic;
- Operational;
- Financial;
- People;
- Regulatory;
- Governance.

2.2 Strategic: This considers external risks which may affect the aims and objectives of SEDHREC - such as changes in the environment within which it operates.

2.3 Operational: This considers the risks which arise from the services delivered or the activities carried out.

2.4 Financial: This section considers any potential financial risks facing the organisation in terms of internal systems, planning, funding, etc.

2.5 People: These risks are associated with the employment of staff and the involvement of volunteers.

2.6 Regulatory: These risks consider the legislative framework within which SEDHREC operates.

2.7 Governance: This section identifies the risks which are part of the management of SEDHREC.

There may be a degree of overlap between some of these categories.

Classification

3.0 In addition to the identification of risks as outlined above in 2.0 – 2.6, risks to the successful implementation of the Strategy are also categorised. The probability of a risk occurring and the potential impact of that risk is assessed and recorded on a scoring matrix (see Appendix B). This assigns categories accordingly:

- **Minor** (1 to 4)
- **Moderate** (5 to 8)
- **Major** (9 to 12)
- **Severe** (13 to 16)

3.1 The matrix shown in Appendix B illustrates that there are currently no assessed risks classified as Severe.

3.2 However, there are 5 assessed risks classified as Major for their potential impact and probability of occurring. They are:

- Potential future Covid outbreak.
- Proposed SANGS at Cranbrook do not meet essential criteria.
- Habitat Regulations watered down / abolished following exit from European Union.
- Delays to mitigation measures identified in annual business plans.
- HREC decisions not implemented at local level.

3.3 Mitigation of each of these identified risks are described within the risk register itself (see Appendix A). The register is as updated from April 2021 and will continue to be updated and reported to the joint Committee on a regular basis.

3.4 Should any risk to delivery of the Strategy be assessed as Severe at any stage, this will be reported to the Officer Working Group and SEDHREC as and when necessary.

**South East Devon
Habitat Regulations
Executive Committee
April 2022**

Natural England comment:

Natural England have reviewed the report and have no comment to make.

Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

Risk Register 2022: Appendix A

ID	Description	Category	Probability	Impact	Proximity	Response Category	Response	Risk Status	Risk Owner	Risk Actionee
1	Covid-19	Operational Strategic Financial People	Medium	High	Current	Reduce Fallback Avoid	Ensure safety of public-facing team. Maintain constant review of procedures, amend as necessary. Compile housing delivery data when available, incorporate into revised finance forecasts, and consider impact on 5 yr Delivery Plan. Report impacts to existing mitigation projects.	Active	Partner LPA / Staff	Partner LPA / Staff
2	Delays to mitigation measures identified in annual business plans	Operational	High	Medium	Within project	Reduce	Ensure regular contact with site/land managers to identify causes of delay and revised completion dates. Work with stakeholders to minimise delays and identify remedial action if necessary. Notify Offer Working Group (OWG) and HREC via progress reports.	Active	HRDM	HRDM/ Stakeholders
3	Proposed SANGS at Cranbrook do not meet essential criteria.	Strategic	Medium	High	Within stage	Fallback	Appropriate input from EDDC planning dept & liaison with Consortium to ensure proposed SANGS meet required standards. Liase with NE to understand their position. Planning permission for expansion areas cannot be given until this key requirement is met.	Active	Consortium / EDDC	Consortium / EDDC
4	Regulations amended following exit from EU	Regulatory	Medium	High	Within stage	Accept	Keep up to date with changes to legislation. Plan contingency response as part of Strategy review.	Active	HRDM	TDC/ECC/EDDC

5	HREC decisions not implemented at local level.	Strategic	Medium	High	Within stage	Reduce	Close liaison with LPA Planning Delivery Officers to ensure good working relationship and understanding. Training for LPA staff with presentations reemphasising importance of implementing Strategy to whole Council. Regular briefings to Members and leadership.	Active	Partner LPA / HRDM	Partner LPA / HRDM
6	Dawlish Warren coastal realignment	Strategic Operational	High	Medium	Within stage	Accept Fallback	Liaise with Environment Agency, Natural England and TDC to understand existing control measures, timescales. Agree new / amended mitigation as appropriate.	Active	SEDHRP / TDC / NE	SEDHRP / TDC / NE
7	Economic shocks lead to housing market crash.	Financial	Medium	High	Within stage	Accept	Technically, fewer houses mean fewer impacts and therefore less mitigation is required. However, potential impact to longer term measures which are forward funded in expectation of future developer contributions. Understand how many dwellings are still to contribute & review costs.	Active	Partner LPA / HRDM	Partner LPA / HRDM
8	Cost of mitigation measures exceed identified budgets.	Operational Financial	Medium	Medium	Within stage	Reduce Accept	Keep income & expenditure under regular review. Undertake benchmarking, cost certainty for large projects (such as Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Access Improvements). Ongoing evaluation of validity of measures.	Active	HRDM / Partner LPA	HRDM
9	Developer contributions not paid	Financial	Medium	Medium	Within stage	Reduce	LPA planning departments responsible for ensuring contributions are paid. Enforcement measures should be undertaken if not paid.	Active	Partner LPA	Partner LPA
10	Expiration of planning obligations / repayment of contribution to developers	Financial	Medium	Medium	Within stage	Reduce	LPA planning departments responsible for monitoring status of planning obligation compliance & expiration. Ongoing review of financial monitoring data from LPAs by accountants and HRDM. Expirations identified in advance and prioritised for payment.	Active	Partner LPA / HRDM	Partner LPA / HRDM

11	Insufficient funding to contribute to Dawlish Warren Visitor Centre	Financial	Medium	Medium	Within project	Reduce	Increased frequency of housing forecasts to signal any changes to income. Reprioritise projects to accommodate if appropriate. Seek forward funding if necessary. Keep project manager/s informed of forecasts. <Mitigation Strategy review of this measure>	Active	HRDM	HRDM
12	Patrol Boat/4x4 accident / vandalised	Operational	Medium	Medium	Within project	Reduce	Mandatory job related training. Vehicles insured and stored according to Council policy.	Active	HRDM	HRDM
13	Mitigation strategy measures insufficient to prevent significant effects to protected sites.	Strategic	Low	High	Within project	Avoid	Regular and established monitoring of key species and habitats, as well as visitor numbers and behaviour, will establish whether the measures implemented are sufficient to prevent impacts from effecting the sites. Further and/or different measures to be considered if/when necessary.	Active	Partner LPA / HRDM	Partner LPA / HRDM
14	One of the partner authorities withdraws from approach	Strategic	Low	High	Within project	Avoid	HRDM to continue to work closely partners. Demonstrate effective delivery, value for money. Ensure understanding of consequences of no mitigation. Understand needs, expectations, and budgets. Ensure delivery of key projects to demonstrate benefits to all.	Active	Partner LPA / HRDM	Partner LPA / HRDM
15	Loss of experienced staff – Delivery Manager / wardens / DLD	People	Medium	Medium	Within project	Fallback	Ensure good understanding of Strategy within existing team. Communicate approach, aims and objectives widely across 3 authorities. Ensure attendance at officer workshops. Hold regular 1:1 meetings to discuss roles, issues arising, etc.	Active	HRDM	HRDM
16	Quantum of SANGS required increases significantly	Strategic	Low	High	Within project	Avoid	We have an agreed Partnership SANGS Strategy. Continue work on delivery of identified and prioritised sites. Monitor effectiveness of delivered sites. Maintain emphasis on developer provision of SANGS, reduce LPA burden, continue	Active	HRDM	HRDM / GI Officer

							investigation of Land Trust-type model.			
18	Partnership unable to identify appropriate model for ongoing management of Strategy in perpetuity.	Strategic	Low	High	Within stage	Reduce	Funding identified and heads of terms for in-perpetuity management of Dawlish and SWE SANGS agreed between TDC and Land Trust. Final HIF arrangements completed.	Active	Partner LPA / HRDM	TDC/ECC/EDDC

ID	Description	Category	Probability	Impact	Proximity	Response Category	Response	Risk Status	Risk Owner	Risk Actionee
19	Accident/injury at work (Habitat Mitigation Officers & Project Officer (Dogs))	People	Low	Medium	Within project	Avoid	Mandatory job related training (First Aid at Work, Sea Survival, Boat Handling etc), insurance. Post holders to read, understand and abide by EDDC H&S policy requirements. Lone working policy change agreed in consultation with EDDC Health & Safety Officer. Body Worn Camera policy and procedures to be followed as instructed.	Active	HRDM	HRDM
20	Dog bins vandalised on PBH	Operational	Low	Low	Within project	Fallback	Identify/allow for replacement as per PBH VMP.	Active	HRDM	Stakeholders / HRDM
21	Inappropriate behaviour at work.	People	Low	Medium	Within project	Avoid	Clear direction on desired approach from stakeholders. Regular 1:2:1 meetings with line managers. Post holders to read, understand and abide by EDDC Behaviours Framework policy requirements.	Active	HRDM	HRDM
22	Poor staff performance	People	Low	Low	Within stage	Reduce	Regular 1:2:1 meetings with line managers. Clear direction on desired approach from stakeholders. Clear job description and person specifications. Sufficient work and variation in work to motivate staff. Recognition of success and learning from failure.	Active	HRDM	HRDM
23	Change in (voting) Committee Member/s	Governance	Medium	Low	Within project	Accept	Ensure broad understanding of Strategy across the authorities - Members newsletters, media releases etc. Ensure new Member/s receive full briefing and access to previous reports.	Active	HRDM	HRDM
24	Users refuse to respect Wildlife Refuges	Operational	Low	Medium	Within project	Reduce	HMO presentations to user groups prior to start of peak season. Signage, interpretation, patrol boat and codes of conduct in place. Monitoring of WRs by wardens. Satisfactory 3 year review. If no other option, investigate statutory restrictions.	Active	HRDM	HRDM

Risks - Inactive status

1	Failure to reach agreement on funding SANGS	Strategic	Medium	High	Imminent	Avoid	Cross authority officer workshop. Agree criteria. Clarify SANGS Strategy approach/requirements. Identify accurate costs (purchase, uplift, manage), delivery models, quality, timeframes, outcomes for each area.	Inactive	HRDM	Group
2	Poor turnout of user groups for codes consultation	Operational	Medium	Medium	Within stage	Reduce	Good promotion of consultation via EEMP contacts and social media. Work with user groups to ensure ownership and involvement, respond to requests from users.	Inactive	HRDM	HRDM
3	Inability to source a Patrol Boat within budget	Financial	Medium	Medium	Within stage	Fallback	Delay purchase until after peak season. Test boat before purchase. Explore part funding opportunities.	Inactive	HRDM	HRDM
4	Change in line management for staff	Operational	Low	Low	Within project	Fallback	Handover meeting with EDDC Countryside & HRDM. Monthly one to one meetings with HMOs & PO (DLD) to review and agree objectives. HRDM to undergo relevant training.	Inactive	HRDM	HRDM
5	Inability of Partnership to acquire sufficient land at acceptable cost to qualify as SANGS.	Strategic	Low	Medium	Within project	Reduce	SANGS procured @ Dawlish, procurement at SWE underway. Change of approach to developer provided SANGS as a pre-requisite for larger developments.	Inactive	HRDM	TDC/ECC/EDDC
6	Insufficient funding to employ Delivery Manager / DLD after initial term	Financial	Medium	Medium	Within project	Reduce	Presuming a sound and robust rationale for maintaining roles, make business case to partner authorities and identify potential funding solution(s). Increased frequency of housing forecasts to signal any changes to income. Reprioritise projects to ensure continuity	Inactive	HRDM	HRDM
7	Landowner decides not to sell land for SANGS Opportunity (SWE)	Strategic	Low	High	Within stage	Avoid	Maintain communication with landowners/developers. Expedite agreement of terms and sign contracts.	Active	TDC	TDC



SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

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Risk Register Report: Appendix B – Scoring Matrix

Risk categorisation		
	SEVERE	13 to 16
	MAJOR	9 to 12
	MODERATE	5 to 8
	MINOR	1 to 4

PROBABILITY >	Probable		Delays to mitigation measures identified in annual business plans 9 MAJOR		
	Possible		Dawlish Warren coastal realignment 7 MODERATE		
			Housing market crash 7 MODERATE		
			Developer contributions not paid 6 MODERATE		Covid-19 9 MAJOR
			Expiration of planning obligations / repayment of contribution to developers 9 MAJOR		Proposed SANGS at Cranbrook do not meet essential criteria. 9 MAJOR
			Insufficient funding to contribute to Dawlish Warren Visitor Centre 6 MODERATE		Habitat Regulations amended following exit from EU 9 MAJOR
			Loss of experienced staff 7 MODERATE		HREC decisions not implemented at local level. 9 MAJOR
			Patrol Boat/4x4 accident/vandalised 5 MODERATE		
			Partnership unable to identify appropriate model for ongoing management of Strategy in perpetuity. 5		
			Rare		
Poor work performance 4 MINOR					
Change in (voting) Committee Member 4 MINOR	One of the partner authorities withdraws from approach 7 MODERATE				
Accident/Injury at work 4 MINOR	Amounts charged per dwelling insufficient to deliver all projects in Strategy 7 MODERATE				
Patrol Boat/4x4 accident/vandalised 4 MINOR	Quantum of SANGS required increases significantly 7 MODERATE				
Inappropriate staff behaviour at work 2 MINOR	Landowner decides not to sell land for SANGS Opportunity (SWE) 7 MODERATE				
	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
IMPACT >					



SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

South East Devon Wildlife Communications Report

Anne Mountjoy, Communications Officer
April 2022

Legal comment/advice:

There is no direct comment to be made in relation to this report, each and any individual issue will need to be considered as it arises.

Finance comment/advice:

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Public Document:	Yes
Exemption:	None
Review date for release	None

Recommendations

It is proposed that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the results of the communications report for the period August 2021 – February 2022, further to earlier communications report for this period.
2. Will receive future communications reports on an annual basis with the next report due in March 2023.

Equalities impact: Low

Risk: Low. This report provides the results of the communications report for August 2021 – February 2022.

1. Summary

1.1 South East Devon Wildlife (SEDW) is the public facing brand for the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership.

1.2 Key performance indicators (KPIs) enable evaluation as measures of success.

1.3 Six agreed KPIs reflect the business plan objectives:

1. Website page views
 2. Website time spent on site
 3. Website average number of pages/session
 4. Website referrals
 5. Website top referral channel
 6. Number of people signing up to newsletters
- In addition, social media engagement is being monitored:
7. Social media engagement – facebook, twitter, instagram

1.4 Collecting this data on a monthly basis means officers are able to monitor and evaluate it to understand how project delivery, stakeholder engagement and communications efforts are impacting on our overall goals.

1.5 As previously stated, a communications officer role is providing only 1 day per week support, which limits direct delivery. Engagement and communications is delivered by the Wildlife Wardens as part of their work in the limited time available while performing a range of duties.

1.6 During the busy summer and autumn months the wardens are spending more time on site engaging directly with visitors, which means less time spent on communications including social media and writing articles for partners' newsletters. International travel was limited in 2021, which led to a significant increase in visitor pressure from staycationing and UK based holidays.

1.7 Staff changes have had a significant impact on engagement and communications as already reported with a reduction in staff resource from November 2021 until February 2022. One new member of staff started as a Wildlife Warden in February, with a maternity cover Wildlife Warden starting in March 2022.

1.8 Appendix 1 shows figures for the KPIs for the period from August 2021 – February 2022. Comparing average figures with the previous report we can see a significant increase on the last period.

2. Current website

2.1 Overall average website statistics are much higher than last reported on in July 2021 (for the period Feb 21- July 21). Fresh content is paramount to encourage visitors to the website, which has been the case.

2.2 In addition, there are a number of factors driving new visitors: Previously organic search was the most effective way visitors found the website. However, with more targeted content, the top referral channel for web traffic has been through email newsletters – especially in November 2021 and February 2022 focussing on car park improvements updates on the Pebblebed Heaths. This topic was the most read content on the website for the months November 2021, January 2022 and February 2022.

2.2 The average number of total monthly visitors increased from 89 in Feb 21-July 21 to 255 in Aug 21-Feb 22. As reported above, email newsletters have helped to increase the number of web visitors, as well as links from social media content.

Table 1. Comparison of average website page views, sessions and highest referrals.

	Feb 21 – July 21 Average	Aug 21 – Feb 2022 Average
Page views	294	516
Average number of page/sessions	1.76	1.73
Total users / referrals	89	255
Top referral channel	71 (organic search)	119 (organic search and email)
Top web content	74 (home page)	122 (home page and PBH car parks)

2.3 The web KPIs collected from June 2020 until the launch of the new website on April 4th will be reviewed as benchmarks for objectives for the new website.

4. Social media and newsletter

4.1 Facebook engagement rate hovers around 6-16% but increased markedly to 62% in January due to a video post about Snipes (a wetland bird), which featured on the BBC's Winterwatch TV programme -- although the post actually mentioned Springwatch, which boosted engagement.

4.2 Top twitter post for engagement (at 16.3%) featured in September focussing on the ITV Westcountry TV broadcast because it tagged @itwestcountry and @itvbob.

4.3 The top instagram post featured in October focussing on searocket (a coastal plant), reaching 215 accounts mainly because it used popular hashtags inc #wildflowerhour (15.1k posts) and #dune (1.4m posts). It also tagged @wildflowerhour which currently has 2,881 followers and asks for images of wild flowers to be posted 8-9pm on Sundays.

4.4 Many additional people can be reached through the use of popular hashtags, for example in August 2021, a total of 569 people were reached and of those 337 were not followers of SEDW which shows the post would have been found through following or searching for the hashtags we used.

4.5 Newsletter: There has been a significant increase in newsletter subscribers in this period which can be attributed to traffic driven to the website (where sign up form is located on homepage) from activity in the press, the media and in partner newsletters. Statistics for the most recent newsletter (Shores, Heaths and Dunes) which was issued on 2 Feb 2022 reported there were 1063 recipients; 1630 total opens; 196 total clicks; and the top story was car park improvements story on our website at 119 total clicks.

5. Media

Press releases

5.1 The following press releases were issued during this period and featured on the website. This sustains a healthy presence in the local press, driving web traffic and maximising search engine optimisation:

28 July 2021 New guide to enjoying countryside dog walks launched for Heath Week - sent to 54 media contacts (Devon Loves Dogs).

7 September 2021 Epic 3000 mile journey to the Exe Estuary has begun – sent to 79 contacts inc media and cllrs.

Public plea as hundreds of exhausted birds arrive on Exe Estuary ahead of winter - Devon Live

9 September 2021 Wildlife refuges piece for Exmouth Journal – in place of Clinton Devon's Kate Ponting's usual column Brent geese arrive at Exe Estuary | Exmouth Journal and in Midweek Herald too.

27 October Green light for car park improvements on East Devon Pebblebed Heaths – sent to 79 contacts inc media and councillors.

2 November 2021: Three years of Exe Estuary wildlife refuges are working – sent to 79 contacts inc media and cllrs.

9 December 2021: Dawlish Countryside Park managed by Land Trust – press release with quotes and photos sent by the Land Trust, on TDC and SEDW websites and shared on social media Land Trust takes over management of Dawlish Countryside Park - Teignbridge District Council. This was sent by Teignbridge DC.

1 Feb 2022: Car parks press release – sent to 54 media contacts. Press coverage included in Exmouth Journal (<https://www.exmouthjournal.co.uk/news/heathland-car-parks-close-for-improvement-work-8660436>)

6. TV and Radio

6.1 TV and radio coverage has been fairly frequent for this period:

ITV Westcountry filming on patrol boat and interviews with Wildlife Wardens and Cllr Martin Wrigley, Broadcast 29 September 2022.

<https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2021-09-28/warning-as-hundreds-of-birds-on-the-brink-arrive-after-epic-journey>

BBC Radio Devon interview with Cllr Martin Wrigley on Wildlife Refuges, 8 November 2022.

Devon Loves Dogs on East Devon's Pebblebed Heaths NNR featured on Escape to the Country, BBC1, 22 Feb 3pm and on iplayer. Visitors to Devon Loves Dogs website peaked on this day with 200 visitors to the website, when numbers usually average around 50 per day. Of the 377 visitors to the website during February, 367 were new with 282 finding their way to the site through organic search.

The profile of the Pebblebed Heaths NNR has been raised by Clinton Devon Estates appearance in January 2022 on BBC1's Countryfile, where Kim Strawbridge gave an interview about the Pebblebed Heaths NNR.

7. Editorial

7.1 A range of articles have been provided for partner e-newsletters during this period:

September 2021 Devon and Cornwall Police's Teignmouth and Dawlish Rural Neighbourhood Gazette featured the Dawlish Warren code of conduct as well as an article explaining nesting birds, no dogs past Groyne 9, no BBQs and body cams worn by rangers due to anti-social behaviour. 'Saul's corner' explained community engagement with a visit to the Warren to meet Phil Chambers and rangers. Sent to all parish council's and local stakeholders in that area.

17 September 2021 TDC residents and staff newsletters: Exe Estuary cited as one of best in country by RSPB

11 November 2021 Wild East Devon newsletter: 4847 recipients; 2336 total opens; 121 total clicks. Pebblebed Heaths car park improvements (top story) 78 total clicks; Exe Estuary wildlife refuges are successful 36 total clicks.

4 Feb 2022: East Devon District Council's weekly residents update – article on car park closures on Pebblebed Heaths. 11826 recipients; 10760 total opens; 1437 total clicks; car park improvements on EDDC website 249 total clicks (top story);

8. Lessons learned and future plans

8.1 “Content is king” and drives communications across the board. Our media activities show that regular news updates should continue to be distributed through press releases and newsletters which encourages visitors to the website and increases awareness and engagement. Social media supports distribution of news too.

8.2 Content which isn't newsworthy/suitable for the media, should also be distributed through our own and partner councils' channels where appropriate.

8.3 The social media statistics show that the use of images and videos in social media means they are given higher profile through the platform's algorithms so we should continue to develop this approach.

8.4 Optimisation of relevant hashtags and tagging partners increases reach and engagement in social media. We will focus on this with the new team members.

8.5 Social media is optimised by using the rule of thirds (personal, point, promote) so we don't just talk about ourselves. When the new website is launched, we will ensure that social media posts link to relevant content on our website as much as possible. Including web links in our newsletter significantly increases web traffic.

8.6 Securing new platforms to distribute our content is key. Reporting shows that content provided to platforms like Wild East Devon newsletter, Exe Press newsletter and Police news etc. increases our reach and engages more people. Our key messages can be shared in articles supplied to third parties which will bring about behaviour change over time. (Some reports suggest that people need to read/hear a message 5 times before they take fully it on board and act on it.)

8.7 Forward planning communications according to seasonal variations is also key, so that the right content is shared at the right time and visitors can be targeted according to their behaviour. The monitoring reports show what has worked well in the past and can be built on in future. We have built this into our regular communications review and forward planning process.

8.8 Although we strive to increase reach in our communications and engagement on social media, we cannot be sure that we are reaching all visitors to the protected sites. Therefore, we extend our reach by sharing content and tagging partners on social media and by providing content to partner newsletters to complement our face to face onsite exchanges and influence our target audience.

8.9 To better target our audience, we will develop 'user journey' profiles for the different types of user to different sites to help us understand their behaviour and target them more effectively. This will help us find more communication outlets to engage with.

8.10 After the new website is launched, we will review visitor journeys – to see how they navigate through the site and seek ways to develop and improve the content.

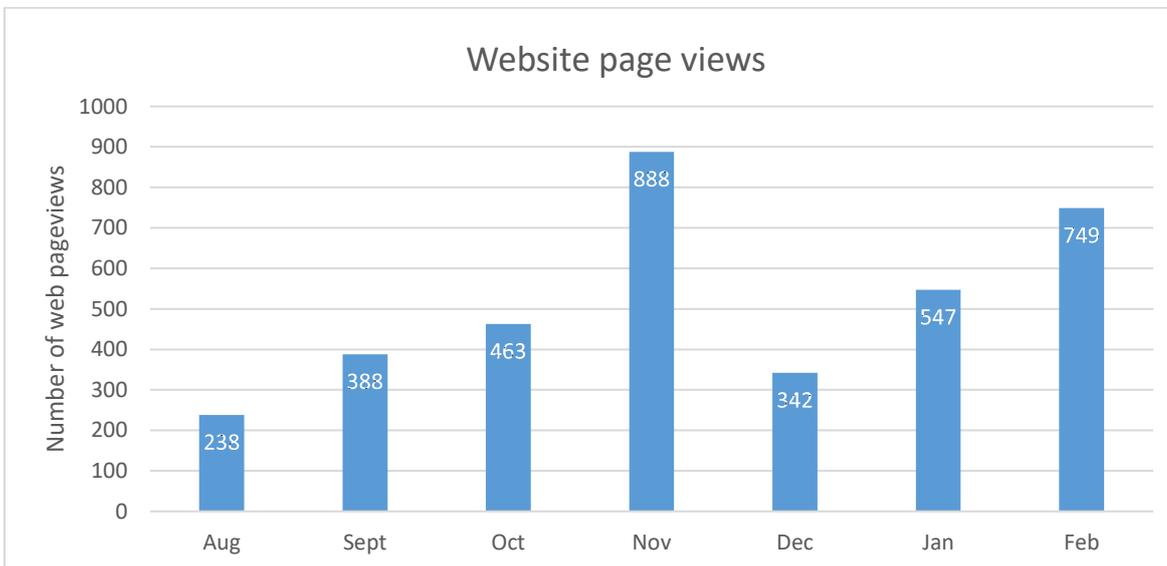
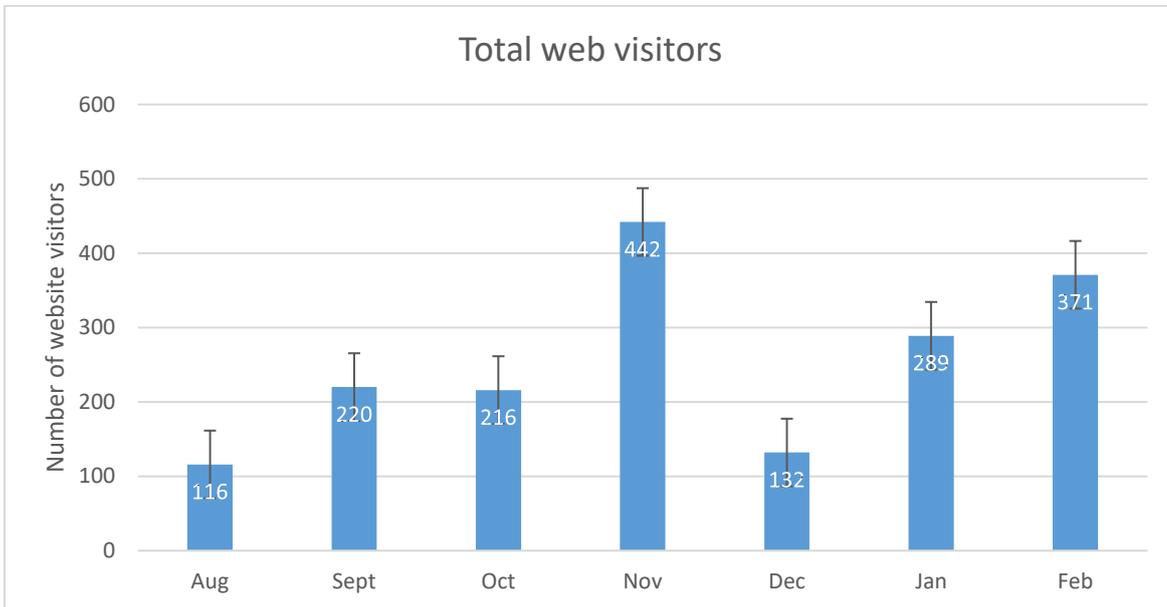
Anne Mountjoy
Communications Officer

South East Devon
Habitat Regulations
Executive Committee
March 2022

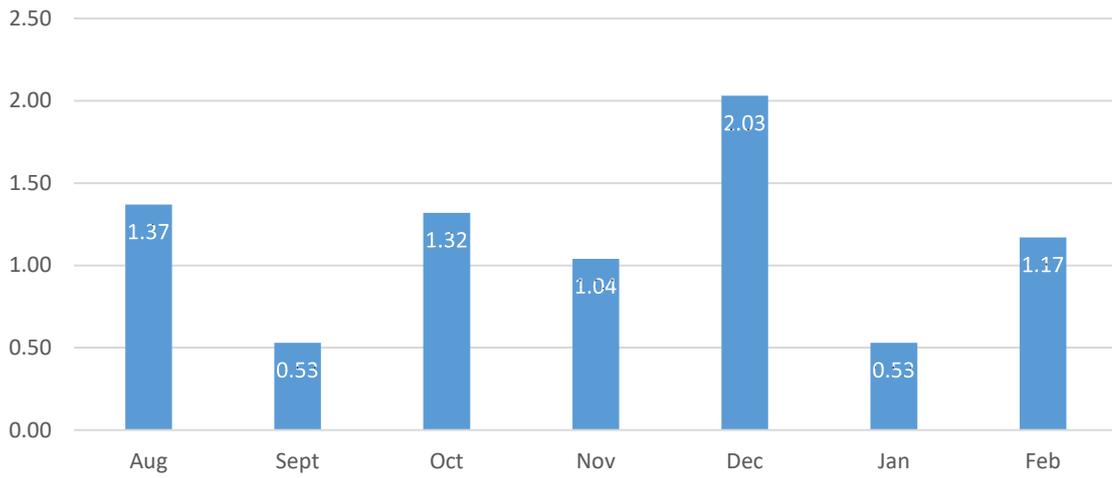
Natural England comment:

Natural England have reviewed the report and have no comment to make.

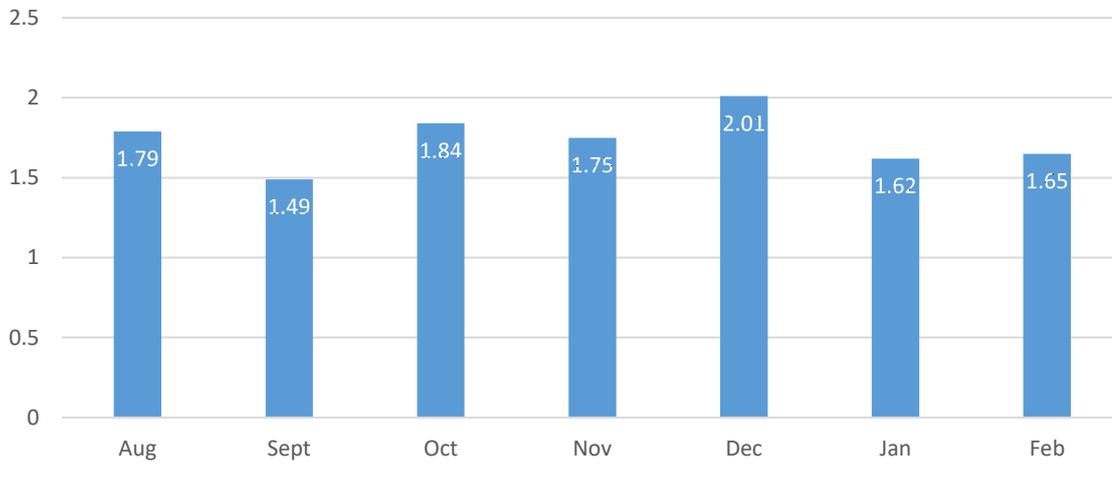
Charts for www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk



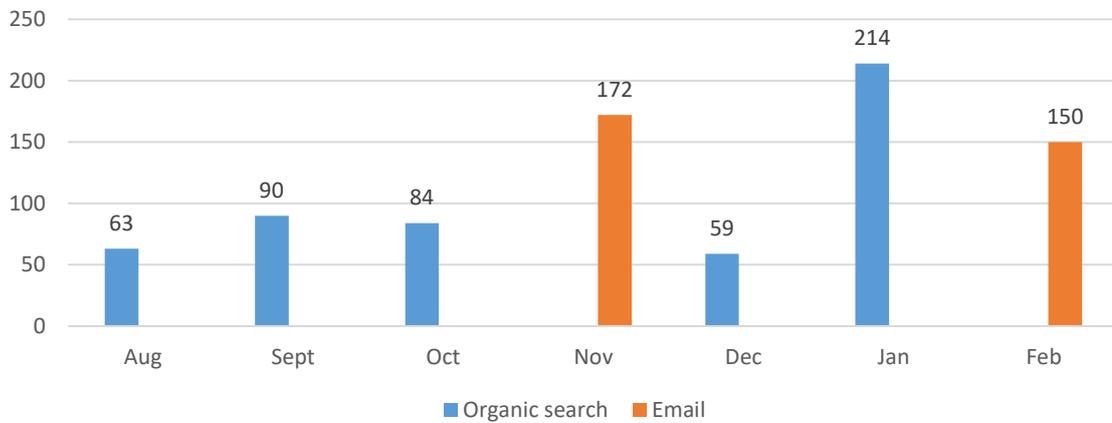
Time spent on site (avg session duration)



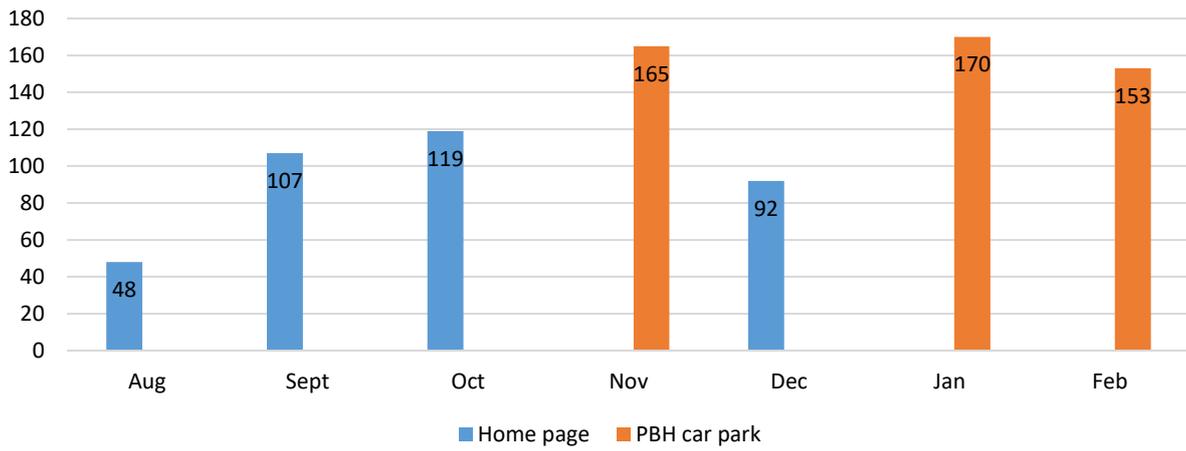
Average number of pages/session



Top referral channel

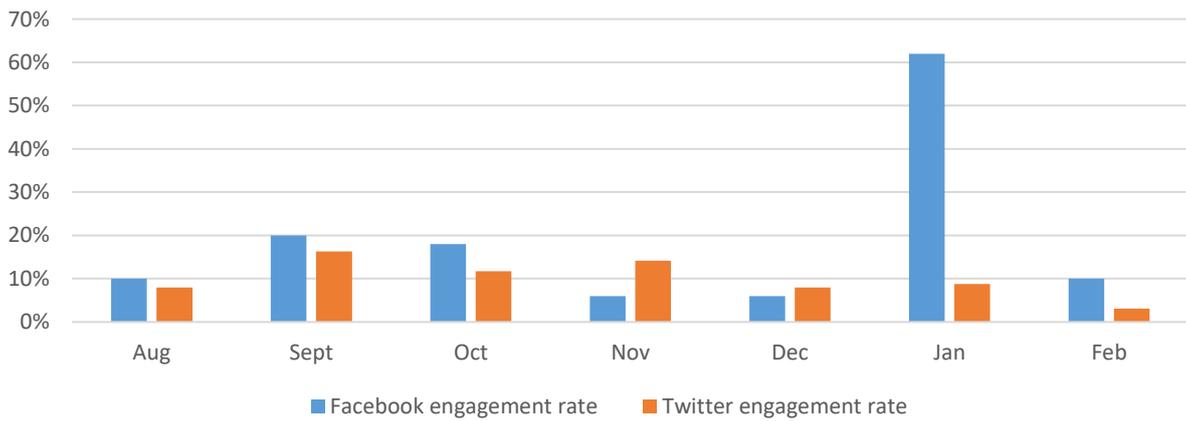


Top web content

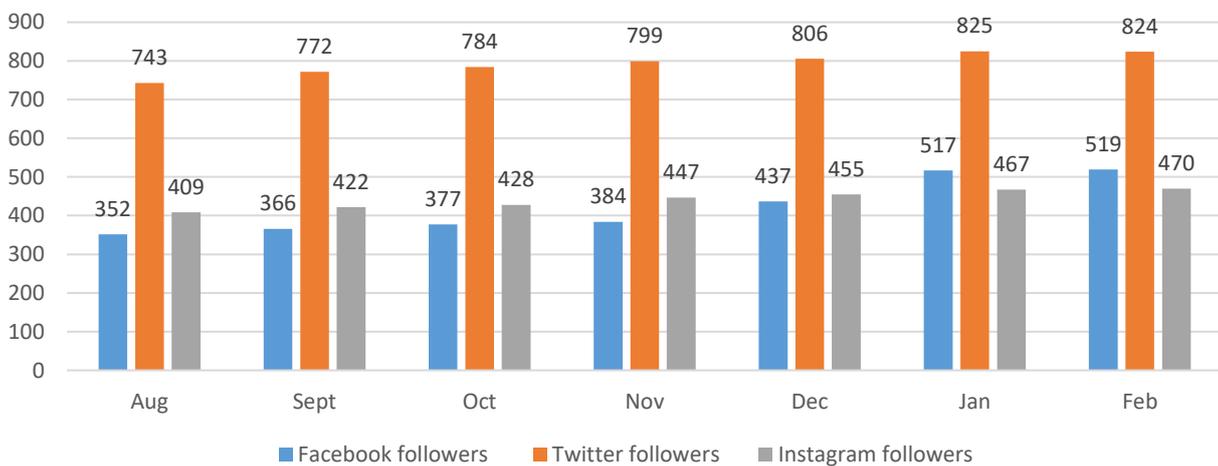


Social media statistics

Facebook and twitter engagement rates



Followers



Newsletter subscribers





SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

Warden vehicle

*Neil Harris & Naomi Harnett
Growth, Development & Prosperity,
East Devon District Council
April 2022*

Legal comment/advice:

The legal issues are covered in the report.

Finance comment/advice:

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Public Document:	Yes
Exemption:	None
Review date for release	None

Recommendations

It is proposed that the Executive Committee:

1. Approves funding for the temporary hire of a work van (Citroen Berlingo or similar) for a period of up to 26 weeks or until a replacement vehicle is available to purchase.
2. Approves funding for outright purchase of a replacement work van (Electric Vehicle, Citroen eBerlingo or similar), with associated livery, vehicle tracker and dashcam.
3. Approves funding for replacement of equipment (telescope, gazebo, body cameras, etc.) held in the storage compartment of the damaged vehicle – if required.
4. Receives an update at a future meeting relating to the insurance settlement and actual costs of replacing the vehicle and/or equipment.

Equalities impact: Low

Risk: Medium.

If funding for the hire of a temporary vehicle and/or a replacement vehicle is not approved, the Wildlife Wardens will not be able to transport the gazebo and associated equipment. This will mean the loss of our capacity to carry out on site information point “pit stops” as a critical element of public outreach/engagement. Additionally, Wildlife Wardens would be required to use their own vehicles to travel to site for day to day operations which will result in increased business mileage claims and increased carbon emissions.

1. Summary

1.1 As approved in the 2016-17 (first) annual business plan, the Wildlife Wardens have access to a work vehicle to enable their patrols and wider engagement across the region. In changing the strategy approach from lease to outright purchase (with capital replacement every 10 years) it was estimated that this saved approximately £380,000 over the duration of the strategy.

1.2 At their July 2020 meeting, the Executive Committee approved changing the work vehicle to a Citroen Berlingo in light of a better understanding of requirements. It was estimated that the change of vehicle realised significant carbon emissions savings of 83 g/km, or approximately 1000kg/year based on estimated annual mileage of 7500.

1.3 On Sat 26th March 2022, the purchased Citroen Berlingo was involved in a road traffic accident (RTA). This RTA occurred whilst a Wildlife Warden was driving the vehicle between EDDC Honiton (where the vehicle is parked overnight) and Exmouth, to attend Powerboat training. The vehicle was subsequently recovered by Highfield Garage & Recovery Ltd, Exeter. Thankfully, the Warden was able to walk away from the accident with only minor injuries.

1.4 A motor claim form has been provided to the Insurers who are arranging to view the vehicle and will inform us of their assessment. Delays at the insurance company mean that we do not yet know the outcome of their investigation. However, due to the reported damage to the vehicle we are anticipating that it will be written off and we will receive a settlement towards the costs of a replacement vehicle.

1.5 Equipment in the vehicle, such as the gazebo, display equipment, telescope and body cameras remains inside. The insurers need to assess the damage from the accident before entry to the vehicle is forced to gain access. As such, the extent of damage to the equipment from shock or subsequent ingress of water is unknown and the cost of replacement needs to be factored in, should this be required.

2. Short term requirements.

2.1 The vehicle is an indispensable tool to enable the Wardens to move from site to site and carry out enhanced public engagement with the gazebo, display equipment and telescope. It has clear and attractive branding and demonstrates the presence of staff onsite. The requirement for this work remains and therefore a replacement vehicle is required.

2.2 Ongoing supply chain issues related to the pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine is affecting the availability of new vehicles. The Citroen dealership in Exeter has advised a wait time of up to six months from point of order to purchase a replacement vehicle.

2.3 It will be necessary to hire a vehicle to cover the waiting period. The Citroen Berlingo work van provides sufficient space and performance for the type of duties required by the Wardens and therefore it is logical to look for the same or very similar model.

2.4 Table 1 below shows the comparative cost of (short term) lease of a Citroen Berlingo (diesel, ad-blue) and a similar electric vehicle (EV) (Toyota Proace) over 6 months.

Table 1.

Model	Citroen Berlingo (diesel)	Toyota Proace (EV)
Cost/day (plus VAT)	£18	£28
Cost over 6 months	£3276	£5096

2.5 Due to relatively low mileage over the course of six months and the reduction in emissions due to the use of the “ad-blue” fuel additive, it is not considered to result in sufficient emissions savings to justify selecting the Toyota EV (at an extra cost of £1820). Therefore the Citroen Berlingo diesel model is recommended.

2.6 The hire vehicle should remain unbranded as it is not economically viable to put livery on a hire vehicle for such a short period of time.

2.7 The extent of the damage to the contents of the vehicle remains unclear until such time as the insurance assessment is completed. Should it be necessary to replace all of the equipment, Table 2, below, outlines the estimated cost.

Table 2.

Item	Cost (estimated)
Gazebo (including frame, cover, table, display equipment, base, "A" frames)	£2300
Telescope	£750
Body Cameras	£1250
Total	£4,300

Proposed (potential) spend: £7576, consisting of:

Vehicle hire for up to six months: £3276

Replacement of equipment: £4300

3.0 Long term requirements.

3.1 The long term requirement for transport remains and as previously established, the Citroen Berlingo type work van has been proven to meet our specifications.

3.2 The three partner authorities have all declared a climate emergency. As such, all respective climate change/carbon action plans (as well as the Interim Devon Carbon Plan) are supportive of switching to low carbon council operated fleet, such as EV. There is the need for rapid decarbonisation, which should rule out waiting for new technologies and further prototyping. Additionally, Government has committed to phasing out the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2030 and local authorities have a role to play in supporting this transition and setting an example.

3.3 This incident now presents the opportunity to transition to an EV for the Wildlife Wardens, although this has some financial implications. Whilst the capital purchase of an EV is higher than a diesel model, there are significant differences in terms of running costs such as road tax, servicing and fuel. A rough estimation is that these costs are halved for an EV compared to a diesel¹, although this will increase with rising fuel prices.

3.4 Table 3 outlines how the Strategy vehicle budget is currently allocated. A 50% saving in EV servicing, tax and fuel costs over the remaining 73 years of delivery will result in savings of approximately £73,000 (at current prices).

Table 3. Current vehicle budget (Strategy lifetime)

Item	Cost	Frequency over 80yrs	Total
Vehicle purchase	£22500	8	£180,000
Servicing, tax, fuel	£2000	80	£160,000
Total	£24500	-	£340,000

¹ "Are electric vehicles really cheaper than their fuel counterparts?" LV insurance: www.lv.com/car-insurance/electric-car-insurance/cost-of-owning-an-ev

3.5 The most recent budget estimate for a warden vehicle is based on outright purchase of a vehicle every 10 years, which is still considered to be better value than an ongoing lease. Table 4 shows a comparison of outright purchase against (long term) rental for both EV and diesel (forecast at current prices). A period of 10 years for this comparison has been selected because of Government plans to halt the sale of petrol and diesel cars and vans from 2030.

Table 4. Comparison of outright purchase/lease, diesel and EV.

Item	Purchase/Lease	Capital	Revenue/10yrs	Total/10yrs
eBerlingo (EV)	Purchase	£24363 ²	£10000 ³	£34,363
Berlingo (diesel)	Purchase	£16437 ⁴	£20000 ⁵	£36,437
eBerlingo (EV)	Lease	£4526/year	£5000	£50,260
Berlingo (diesel)	Lease	£3527/year	£10000	£45,270

3.6 Although the Berlingo EV is costlier to purchase, it can be seen that in the longer term, the reduced running costs mean that it is more cost effective than the diesel model (and has significantly reduced carbon emissions).

3.7 Leasing of a vehicle over the long term is shown to be less cost effective. Servicing, tax and repairs would be covered by the leasing company⁶ but this is reflected in the charges and of course there would be no resale potential. Fuel (whether electric or diesel) will be the same whether purchased outright or leased.

3.8 Branding of the new vehicle is important to demonstrate the presence of the Wardens on site and therefore signage/livery of the new vehicle will be required. Additionally, a dashcam and vehicle tracker is recommended in order to promote operational safety.

Proposed (potential) spend: £26,413, consisting of:

eBerlingo purchase £24,363
 Vehicle livery £ 1,700
 Dashcam £ 200
 Vehicle tracker £ 150

² Crown Commercial Services framework quoted price.

³ Estimated running costs over 10 years including electric, servicing, repairs, etc.

⁴ See (1) above.

⁵ Estimated running costs over 10 years including diesel, tax, servicing, repairs, etc.

⁶ Prices obtained from www.vanarama.com

4. Conclusion

4.1 The Wildlife Wardens require a replacement work van to continue their outreach and engagement work across the protected sites.

4.2 There are issues of reduced supply affecting the sale of new vehicles for reasons outlined earlier in the report. Funding of £3276 to enable a temporary vehicle lease for a period of up to six months is recommended.

4.3 The condition of the equipment held in the damaged vehicle at the time of the accident is not yet known. We will be able to access the contents of the vehicle after it has been assessed by our insurers. Until more is known, it is prudent to recommend approval of £4300 to cover the potential cost of replacement.

4.3 Switching to EV are clear recommendations in respective climate change/carbon action plans for council operated fleet vehicles. To play our part in achieving rapid decarbonisation whilst also achieving longer term financial savings, outright purchase of a Citroen eBerlingo van (and associated livery/equipment) is recommended. Capital funding of £26,413 is required.⁷

4.4 Assessment of the vehicle by the insurers is not yet complete but it is anticipated that a financial settlement will cover a proportion of the costs of purchasing a new vehicle. As this amount is not yet known, approval is sought for the full funding requirement. A further update will be provided to the Committee when this is fully accounted for.

4.5 Local authority partners are collecting developer contributions to cover the total costs of the 80 year Strategy. As such, funds are accumulating as intended to cover these lifetime costs. There is sufficient headroom in existing finance with which to cover the finance outlined in this report without affecting either the annual business plan or 5 year delivery plan.

4.6 Furthermore, a saving of £73K⁸ in vehicle running costs over the lifetime of the Strategy are anticipated by switching to EV. This saving enables the replacement of the vehicle (and associated equipment) to be absorbed without impacting the total Strategy vehicle budget. Savings remaining after funding the measures outlined in this report should be held in the event of other unforeseen events in the future. Table 5 provides an overview of this position.

⁷ Ongoing revenue for fuel, repairs, servicing, etc. is already accounted for as part of the original approval from Committee for a warden vehicle in June 2016 and as amended in July 2020.

⁸ At current prices.

Table 5. Anticipated revenue savings by switching to EV.

Current vehicle revenue budget/73years	£146000
Anticipated EV running cost savings/73 years	£73000
Vehicle lease, purchase and replacement of equipment	-£33989
Remaining EV running cost savings/73 yrs.	£39011

**Growth, Development and Prosperity
East Devon District Council,**

April 2022

Natural England comment: