

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: