

Agenda for Overview Committee Thursday, 22nd January, 2026, 6.00 pm

Members of Overview Committee

Councillors: A Bailey, B Bailey, K Bloxham, B Collins, R Collins, T Dumper (Vice-Chair), P Fernley, A Hall (Chair), M Hall, M Hartnell, J Heath, Y Levine, D Mackinder, H Riddell and D Wilson

Venue: Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton

Contact: Sarah James;

01395 519978 email sarah.james@eastdevon.gov.uk

(or group number 01395 517546)

Tuesday, 13 January 2026; reissued 19 January 2026



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

DX 48808 HONITON

Tel: 01404 515616

www.eastdevon.gov.uk

1 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 September 2025 (Pages 3 - 10)

2 Apologies

3 Declarations of interest

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

4 Public Speaking

Information on [public speaking](#) is available online.

5 Matters of urgency

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

6 Confidential/exempt item(s)

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

7 Landscape Recovery Programmes in East Devon (Pages 11 - 35)

8 Work Programme 2025 - 2026 (Pages 36 - 51)

- i) To receive the Overview Committee Work Programme 2025 – 2026
- ii) To consider the Cabinet Forward Plan; would the Committee wish to receive a report on key decisions prior to Cabinet?
- iii) To consider a proposal from submitted by Cllr Charlotte FitzGerald: Introducing policy to support the temporary placement and trading of privately-managed mobile saunas on EDDC-owned / -leased beaches or adjacent land.

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, any members of the public are now allowed to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings (including on social media). No prior notification is needed but it would be helpful if you could let the democratic services team know you plan to film or record so that any necessary arrangements can be made to provide reasonable facilities for you to report on meetings. This permission does not extend to private meetings or parts of meetings which are not open to the public. You should take all recording and photography equipment with you if a public meeting moves into a session which is not open to the public.

If you are recording the meeting, you are asked to act in a reasonable manner and not disrupt the conduct of meetings for example by using intrusive lighting, flash photography or asking people to repeat statements for the benefit of the recording. You may not make an oral commentary during the meeting. The Chair has the power to control public recording and/or reporting so it does not disrupt the meeting.

Members of the public exercising their right to speak during Public Speaking will be recorded.

[Decision making and equalities](#)

For a copy of this agenda in large print, please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01395 517546

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Overview Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 30 September 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 9.50 pm

44 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 July 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record.

45 Declarations of interest

Minute 50. Public Spaces Protection Orders consultation.

Councillor Brian Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 50. Public Spaces Protection Orders consultation.

Councillor Daniel Wilson, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 50. Public Spaces Protection Orders consultation.

Councillor Marcus Hartnell, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Seaton Town Councillor.

Minute 50. Public Spaces Protection Orders consultation.

Councillor Matt Hall, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor and dog owner.

Minute 50. Public Spaces Protection Orders consultation.

Councillor Tim Dumper, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 51. Public toilets programme review.

Councillor Brian Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 51. Public toilets programme review.

Councillor Daniel Wilson, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 51. Public toilets programme review.

Councillor Matt Hall, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 51. Public toilets programme review.

Councillor Steve Gazzard, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 51. Public toilets programme review.

Councillor Tim Dumper, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

46 Public Speaking

Seven members of the public had registered to speak. It was agreed to take the public speakers at the start of the relevant agenda item.

47 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

48 **Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were no confidential or exempt items.

49 **Blackdown Hills National Landscape Annual Review and Management Plan**

The Blackdown Hills National Landscape Manager, Tim Youngs, presented the Annual Review and update on progress being made with reviewing the Management Plan 2025 – 2030. It provided an opportunity for the Committee to understand the work programmes and activities that had been carried out by the Blackdown Hills National Landscape team over the last 12 months and also to hear about the plans for 2025/26 and how they align with the Council's own priorities for the environment. The Blackdown Hills National Landscape team is hosted by Devon County Council, with East Devon DC (along with Mid Devon DC and Somerset Council) as key match funding partners, alongside Defra. The Management Plan 2025 – 2030, including the Delivery Plan, would be published imminently.

In response to a question regarding soil loss and soil entering rivers due to agricultural activity, the Manager advised that advice was available for farmers to assist with promoting crop management to minimise soil loss.

That Overview Committee noted the Blackdown Hills National Landscape Annual Review report 2024/25 and update on the Management Plan Review 2025-2030.

The Chair thanked Mr Youngs for attending the meeting.

50 **Public Spaces Protection Orders consultation**

Five members of the public had registered to speak on this item. The following points were made by the members of the public:

Martin Huscroft represented Kilmington Cricket Club and advised that the Club had seen a large reduction in recorded dog fouling incidents following the introduction of the PSPO. The continuation of the dogs on leads PSPO was supported as it would positively address the issues of dog fouling and dogs running free and causing a nuisance.

Ash Cook represented the Kilmington Playing Field Committee and noted that the Playing Field was distinct from the Kilmington Recreation Ground which was referred to in the consultation. It was requested that any further final PSPO document referred to the Playing Field. The Playing Field Committee opposed the introduction of dogs off leads for a large part of the day, as this would inevitably result in increased dog fouling with the associated risks to public health, including the potential for dog attacks which was a growing national problem. The Playing Field Committee supported retaining the current dogs on leads PSPO.

Yvette Turner represented the Kilmington Dog Walking Group and advised that the school and Cricket Club only use a part of the Playing Field during the summer months. There are no suitable alternative areas in Kilmington which elderly or less mobile residents can access to exercise their dogs off lead safely. Off lead exercise is also highly beneficial for dogs' well-being. Ms Turner outlined a compromise position which

would restrict dogs on leads to the summer months only: Kilmington Dog Walkers Association proposed that the dog on lead requirement should be removed and a new dog exclusion requirement between 10am and 6pm from 1 May to 30 September is applied. This compromise had worked well in other parts of Devon and the Dog Walking Group requested the Committee to support the compromise.

Sandra Ward highlighted the need for a place where disabled people and those with mobility issues can exercise their dog safely off the lead. Currently disabled people and those with impaired mobility have to use country lanes which can result in dangerous incidents such as Ms Ward had experienced when walking her dog. The compromise position worked in other parts of the country and took account of the Council's legal obligations and the needs of the whole community.

Robert Kathro addressed the Committee with regard to Exmouth Donkey Field and Exmouth beach. Mr Kathro advised that he had regularly observed dogs off lead on the beach during restricted times and had submitted complaints in previous years. Mr Kathro had been advised by the Council that his complaints would be treated as vexatious. A volunteer survey this summer had witnessed 53 dogs off lead on Exmouth beach and members of Mr Kathro's family had personally experienced a distressing incident involving a dog off lead. A compromise position for Exmouth beach could include a stretch which prohibited dogs at all times to enable everyone to enjoy use of the beach.

Angela Ashwin also addressed the Committee and expressed concern that local people are unable to use the beach anymore due to the large number of dogs. The time restriction prohibiting dogs between 10am and 6pm during the summer season is not relevant for local people who use the beach outside those times. Beach activities such as lying on the sand, picnics and children playing are being made impossible due to the intrusion of dogs and dog faeces left behind. Requests to owners to remove their dog have been met with an abusive response. Ms Ashwin asked the Committee to ensure that the beach is kept for the citizens of Exmouth to enjoy without the problems which dogs are causing.

The Chair thanked the public speakers for their contributions.

The Portfolio for Environment – Operational, Cllr Geoff Jung, commended the report to the Committee.

The Assistant Director – Environmental Health introduced the report and provided a short presentation which highlighted key points.

The Council currently has three PSPOs in place covering dog control, seashores and promenades and anti-social behaviour dating back to 2023. The Council has carried out a review of these PSPOs to ensure that the three-year review period is met and to assess if the controls are still required and if so whether they need to be amended. This included public consultation. It is recommended that the evidence supports the ongoing use of PSPOs but changes to existing controls require three new orders.

Responses to questions and discussion included the following points:

- The public might be interested to understand the differences in the figures for 2024 and 2025 as shown in the presentation;
- Concern was expressed about dog owners not abiding by the rules on Exmouth beach;
- Insufficient enforcement capacity is a major issue;
- Dog owners who have a disability should be supported;
- Fines should be issued in order to communicate the messaging clearly;

- People should be the priority rather than dogs;
- The impact of aggressive dog behaviour or dog faeces can be long-lasting;
- Messaging in tourist areas should be clear to ensure that visitors are aware of controls;
- It was noted that no fixed penalty notices had been issued in the previous two years as personal details of those involved could not be collected;
- Officers' concern to ensure the safety of EDDC staff was noted following aggressive abuse towards an EDDC officer from a member of the public on Exmouth beach;
- Mixed messaging and variations in the timings of controls across the district may lead to confusion;
- It is important that dogs are socialised properly and have sufficient exercise to prevent problems occurring;
- Only a small minority of dog owners do not act responsibly;
- It should be borne in mind that dog owners visiting Exmouth to exercise their dogs also contribute to the local economy;
- Residents of Kilmington have to access the Playing Field via narrow lanes and footpaths could be improved to enable greater access for disabled people;
- A very clearly defined demarcation between dog-friendly and prohibited areas on Exmouth beach, using obvious landmarks such as the lifeboat station, could be beneficial;
- Any changes to controlled areas on Exmouth beach should take account of life-guarded areas for swimmers.

The following recommendations were agreed:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

1. That the evidence supports the ongoing need for public space protection orders in relation to the control of dogs, seashores and promenades and anti-social behaviour and consumption of intoxicating substances;
2. That Cabinet discharge the three Public Spaces Protection Orders from 2023 in March 2026;
3. That Cabinet approves three new East Devon Public Spaces Protection Orders for 2026 as attached to the report, with the exception of the PSPO for Exmouth seafront which the Overview Committee recommends should remain as it currently stands and that further consultation should be undertaken, if necessary, with a view to extending and clearly defining the areas where dogs are either permitted or prohibited.

51

Public toilets programme review

Two public speakers had registered to speak for this item.

Cllr Graham Deasy, representing Exmouth Town Council, advised that the Town Council had growing concerns regarding the review which had resulted in a shortfall of facilities for Exmouth. Existing facilities are struggling to remain serviceable and the Town Council would like to see additional and larger public toilet blocks. The Town Council seeks to promote Exmouth as a welcoming tourist destination but has received many complaints, including from international visitors, regarding the condition of the facilities. This is damaging the town's reputation and negatively impacting those wanting to visit the town, including local sports groups, which then has an unwanted negative impact on

the local economy. The Town Council was of the view that the review was based on outdated information and urged EDDC to work with the Town Council moving forwards.

Cllr Dianne Conduit, representing Exmouth Town Council, informed the Committee that she had received many complaints during this year, particularly from women and those caring for small children. The impact assessment which had formed part of the review was out of date in the post covid pandemic era. Cllr Conduit expressed concern regarding the public toilet provision at Foxholes which had been problematic: money had been taken although the public could not access the toilets; people had been locked in; disabled people had difficulty accessing the toilets and the design did not meet the needs of stoma users. There was a lack of confidence in the facilities at Foxholes. There had also been public health issues when the facilities at The Maer had been closed.

The Chair thanked the public for their contributions.

The report was introduced by the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Assets, Cllr Paul Hayward, who advised that the review and provision of the service was challenging and complex.

The Assistant Director – Place, Assets and Leisure, Tim Child, presented the report which followed on from a Spotlight Briefing to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 15 July. A key milestone has been reached in the programme for delivery against the outcomes of the 2021 Public Toilets Review. Phase 1 of the planned investment programme has now been completed alongside the transfer of some facilities to Town and Parish Councils and the sale, lease or closure of others.

The report also considered the current context for the delivery of the Public Toilets programme, including the challenges associated with the Medium Term Financial Plan and the backdrop of the forthcoming local government reorganisation [LGR], and considered the options for moving forward whilst also reflecting on learnings from the first phase.

The outcomes of the Spotlight Session were as follows:

1. Overview Committee to receive a report and make recommendations on the way forward;
2. The Scrutiny function to be satisfied by a cross-party Members group with oversight of project as it moves forward.

This report addressed the first outcome and provided Overview Committee with the opportunity to influence direction of travel and a more detailed options appraisal to inform Cabinet decision making.

The Assistant Director advised that it would be a significant budgetary ask to complete the programme in its current form and that any legacy as regards LGR needs to be balanced against budgetary restraints.

Responses to questions and comments on responses included the following points:

- There have been teething issues with the delivery of facilities which has not been unexpected. The programme follows a model of delivery which was being rolled out in other parts of the country;
- In light of incidences where people have been locked into cubicles, concern was expressed as to whether sufficient research was carried out given that there have been similar issues in other areas. Sound proofing of cubicles was a real concern if the user was in difficulty;

- Overall the number of faults and complaints have been low when compared with the level of use;
- Improved signage had been installed to assist users and it was noted that some issues were not due to a fault, but to incidences where the public were uncertain as to how to use the facility;
- Capital receipts from the sale of sites had gone back into general reserves;
- The first phase of delivery had to include Exmouth, Seaton and Budleigh due to the timescale around Government funding for the adult Changing Places facilities;
- The second phase of delivery would be based on need which included consideration of the state of specific buildings;
- Steamer Steps/Cliff Path site in Budleigh was on the list for rebuilding, but it was noted that this site would be challenging due to its location and constraints for installing a modular building;
- Administration of introducing and operating a discount scheme for local people would be costly and complex and no recommendations had, as yet, been made;
- Industry advice had been to move away from using radar keys which also have an administrative burden. All new toilet blocks had at least one accessible cubicle;
- Of the 11 remaining sites, the majority of these were currently planned to be new buildings;
- Concern was expressed regarding the ease of use of stoma facilities, although this may depend on the type of stoma. Officers would consider this issue further going forwards;
- A good facility at the Exmouth gateway site was desperately needed. It was noted that this site was not a Category A site and had never been identified to be kept open during the 2021 review so that there was no capital budget for this site. More recently the decision had been taken to retain this site, therefore, a revenue budget only was available and it was now doubtful whether any upgrades could be delivered ahead of LGR due to the lack of capital budget;
- Concern was expressed that the Council was considering expenditure on buildings which were only 7-10 years old;
- Consideration of the options available going forwards would determine whether further public consultation would be required, however, there would be time constraints due to the imminent approach of LGR;
- Discussions had commenced with Town and Parish Councils regarding the transfer of assets ahead of reorganisation;
- The design concept for the next phase of delivery was in place and therefore ready to apply for planning permission. Consultation with Ward Members would take place prior to seeking planning permission. If that approach was not going to be adopted, an options appraisal would be required as soon as possible with a view to a report to Cabinet at the end of this year, or early next year;
- There was concern regarding the timescales for LGR as toilet facilities would eventually transfer to another body such as a Town or Parish Council. Strong engagement with local councils at this stage could save time and money in the long run;
- Cabinet had received a report at the end of July on the stewardship of public amenities going forwards, with a further report due at the end of the year, which would address safeguarding amenities for the future. This timescale would align with the intention to submit an options appraisal on public toilets to Cabinet, should that be agreed as the way forwards;
- Councillors were advised that the anticipated S.24 notice at the end of next year would severely limit the Council's expenditure;
- There was concern that the timing of LGR does not align with the budget setting process for local councils. Currently Town and Parish Councils do not have data on the running costs of public toilets which were more of a liability than an asset;
- It was requested that consultation with Ward Members should include all members of a town with more than one ward.

During the debate, the following points were included:

- It was suggested that the capital amount available could be divided between the remaining facilities in the next phase of the review and transferred to Town and Parish Councils with the asset itself, for them to consider the options most suitable for their parish's needs. The legality of this as an option would need to be considered;
- The agreement between Exmouth Town Council and EDDC with regard to the maintenance of the toilets at The Maer was working well;
- The Exmouth Placemaking project with Exmouth Town Council would potentially provide the Town Council with the scope to enable keeping the station toilet facilities in place;
- Noted that EDDC can offer its services to Town and Parish Councils to keep amenities such as toilets operational;
- It was noted that Budleigh Salterton Town Council wants the Cliff Path site to remain on the phase 2 list;
- There are examples of unitary authorities not closing toilet facilities and other options were available and should be considered to ensure viability going forwards;
- Planning conditions could ensure that supermarkets and large commercial premises provide toilet facilities;
- The provision of public toilets should be put at the forefront of discussions on asset transfer with Town and Parish Councils;
- An options appraisal should be kept as wide and flexible as possible and should align with the timing of the forthcoming stewardship report to Cabinet.

It was agreed to recommend the following to Cabinet:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

1. That an options appraisal is undertaken to influence direction of travel informed through the debate, to include flexibility around capital expenditure and early engagement with Town and Parish Councils and that the timing of the options appraisal aligns with the forthcoming stewardship report to Cabinet, and
2. That Officers have regard to the discussion and comments made by the Overview Committee at its meeting on 30 September 2025.

52

Work Programme 2025 - 2026

It was suggested that the Committee could consider the care and maintenance of ancient trees in the District. A proposal form would be submitted.

With this addition, the Work Programme, as published, was agreed.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

B Bailey
B Collins
R Collins
T Dumper (Vice-Chair)
A Hall (Chair)
M Hall
M Hartnell
D Mackinder
H Riddell
D Wilson

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

I Barlow
S Gazzard
S Jackson
G Jung
M Martin
P Hayward

Officers in attendance:

Matthew Blythe, Assistant Director Environmental Health
Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Leisure
Andrew Hancock, Assistant Director StreetScene
Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Andrew Wood, Director of Place

Councillor apologies:

P Fernley
J Heath
Y Levine

Chair

.....

Date:

.....

Report to: Overview Committee



Date of Meeting 22 January 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Landscape Recovery Programmes in East Devon

Report summary:

This paper informs Members of the existence and value of three Landscape Recovery programmes in East Devon – Three Rivers (National Trust, Killerton), Luppitt Landscape Partnership (Luppitt Valley, Blackdown Hills), and Clinton Devon Estate's (Heaths to Sea, Lower Otter) which align with a number of Council plans and objectives.

This report provides details of the Heaths to Sea and Luppitt Projects and requests in principle support for their objectives and highlights the existence of dependencies between attaining permits/permissions, generating income for local businesses and the deliverability of nature recovery over the longer term. The Three Rivers Landscape Recovery program is already at an advanced stage, so this report focuses on the developing programs.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That Overview Committee note the report and supports the nature recovery ambitions of the Heaths to Sea and Luppitt Landscape Partnership (LLP) Landscape Recovery Projects (with the caveat that where required planning and other approvals will need to be secured)

Reason for recommendation:

The Landscape Recovery Projects align with a number of East Devon District Council's Strategies including our Council Plan, Climate Change Strategy, and emerging Local Plan.

Officer: Will Dommett/Charlie Plowden, Assistant Director Countryside, Environment & Ecology - Charlie.Plowden@eastdevon.gov.uk 07734 568983; Paul Osborne, Green Infrastructure Project Officer - Paul.Osborne@eastdevon.gov.uk 01395 571530

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Assets and Economy
- Communications and Democracy
- Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- Environment - Nature and Climate
- Environment - Operational
- Finance
- Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

Climate change High Impact

Risk: Low Risk

Links to background information [Heaths to Sea Landscape Recovery Project | Clinton Devon Estate - Heaths to Sea, Luppitt Landscape Partnership](#)

Link to Council Plan

Priorities (check which apply)

- A supported and engaged community
- Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- Resilient economy that supports local business
- Financially secure and improving quality of services

Report in full

1. This paper informs Members of the existence and value of three Landscape Recovery programmes in East Devon – Three Rivers (National Trust Killerton), Luppitt Landscape Partnership (Luppitt Valley, Blackdown Hills), and Clinton Devon Estate's *Heaths to Sea* Landscape Recovery project in the Lower Otter, which align with a number of Council plans and objectives.
2. Landscape Recovery is one of DEFRA's environmental land management (ELM) schemes which aim to pay farmers, foresters, and land managers to deliver public environmental benefits. Landscape Recovery supports large-scale, long-term projects that restore nature, improve biodiversity and deliver environmental benefits across whole landscapes in England.
3. Projects bring together farmers, landowners, environmental organisations and local communities to create plans tailored to their local area.
4. By combining government funding with private investment, projects can be more ambitious, spread risk, and open new income streams for farmers and landowners through things like Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) units and carbon credits.
5. This approach is still relatively new, but it shows how nature recovery can become an economically viable and sustainable use of land.
6. Projects are focused on ambitious environmental goals while at the same time aiming to strengthen rural communities and support local action to make space for nature alongside food production.
7. There are currently three Landscape Recovery projects in East Devon – Three Rivers (National Trust, Killerton), Luppitt Landscape Partnership's *Luppitt Landscape Recovery* in the Blackdown Hills, and Clinton Devon Estate's *Heaths to Sea* Landscape Recovery project in the Lower Otter Valley, which align with a number of Council plans and objectives.
8. The Three Rivers Landscape Recovery Project has completed its Project Development Phase and the National Trust is currently working with DEFRA to move into the Project Implementation Phase, which will secure funding to restore nature and the natural landscape across the 2,500 hectare Killerton estate, with a focus on improving habitats for the future. The National Trust have offered to present information on this project to Overview Committee at a future date, once they have secured agreement to move to the next phase.

9. The appendices to this report summarise the Luppitt Landscape Partnership and Heaths to Sea Landscape Recovery projects, which are both nearing the end of their Project Development Phase and will be shortly submitted to DEFRA.
10. Both of these projects align with a number of National and East Devon District Council policies and objectives, including:
 - The **Environment Act 2021, Environment Improvement Plan 2025, Climate Change Act 2008 and 30x30 Commitment** – through habitat restoration and creation, woodland planting and increasing species populations and diversity
 - **East Devon's Council Plan and Climate Change Strategy** – through landscape scale ecological recovery, changing agricultural practices to reduce emissions associated with farming operations, manage soils sustainably and replenish soil carbon, and through increasing storage through tree planting and habitat creation.
 - **Objective 8 of East Devon's Emerging Local Plan** committing to safeguard and enhance biodiversity across the district. This is allied to **Objective 2** which focuses on tackling the climate emergency by moving towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2040.
 - By conserving the natural environment and promoting the integration of ecosystem services, the projects also help the delivery of a number of themes of **Strategy 5** of the Plan including: protecting, expanding and reconnecting of habitats through a network of green infrastructure (**Biodiversity and Green Networks**); recognising the environmental and climate value of natural carbon stores such as soils, woodlands and heathlands (**Natural Assets and Carbon Storage**); supporting natural flood management to increase resilience to extreme weather events driven by climate change (**Flooding and Surface Water**); creating a connected green infrastructure of river corridors, cycle paths and nature routes to integrate urban and rural spaces (**Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services**).
 - The projects also have potential to support the **Economic Development and Tourism Strategies** which integrate tourism into wider economic growth, with tourism and the development of green businesses based on the promotion of the area's natural and cultural assets. Both projects also have ambitions relating to trees, hedges, and woodland which would support the delivery of the **East Devon Tree, Hedge, and Woodland Strategy (THaWS)**.
 - The projects can also deliver a number of key actions for Devon Special Species and Priority Habitats identified in the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** and a significant proportion of the long-term targets of the revised **East Devon National Landscape Management Plan** (2025 to 2030) and **Blackdown Hills National Landscape Management Plan** (2025-2030).

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations in this report.

Legal implications:

The schemes are being delivered by Clinton Devon Estates and Luppitt Landscape Partnership – direct input from EDDC will be in relation to our planning/regulatory functions (ALW/002512)

Appendix 1 – Heaths to Sea Landscape Recovery Project Summary

This report summarises the Heaths to Sea Landscape Recovery Project which is led by Clinton Devon Estates (one of a small number of private estates forming part of the Government's National Estate for Nature) with additional partners including the Devon Wildlife Trust and the RSPB.

East Devon, through the South-East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership, have worked closely with Clinton Devon Estates and the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust for the past 10 years – supporting the Conservation Trust's management of the Pebblebed Heaths and working together to mitigate the impact of development on the Special Protection Area/Special Area of Conservation (SPA/SAC).

The main body of the report has been prepared by Clinton Devon Estates, with input from Council Officers. Officers strongly support the project which will assist with the delivery of a number of East Devon District Council's Strategies including our Council Plan, Climate Change Strategy, and the emerging Local Plan, and request that Overview Committee note the content of the report and support the Heaths to Sea Landscape Recovery Project.

Background

Located in the lower Otter catchment,

The scheme, located in the lower Otter catchment, is currently in a development phase (2024 to 2026) with a view to delivery over 20 years from 2027. Focusing on habitat restoration and climate adaptation across some 4,500 ha+, Heaths to Sea builds on the declaration of the Pebblebed Heaths as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) in 2020 and the completion of the Lower Otter Restoration Project in 2022. Given its relationship to the EA's Exe Estuary Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy and success in restoring intertidal habitat and attracting associated species, the Lower Otter has potential to become an SPA or SAC in the future. If the Heaths to Sea project is successful, parts of the project area may also become a potential candidate for SAC/SPA status over the longer term.

The Landscape Recovery Scheme is one of three Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes. It aims to enable the delivery of ambitious, large-scale long-term environmental projects that bring positive environmental change and benefits to the local community. Two other Landscape Recovery Projects are being progressed in East Devon at the National Trust's Killerton estate and the Luppitt Landscape Partnership, within the Blackdown Hills National Landscape.

There is excellent potential for the Heaths to Sea project to help deliver a core part of EDDC's planning strategy to create a 'Greener East Devon' and to protect, enhance and restore the district's natural environment.

The Heaths to Sea vision is:

By 2046, the Heaths to Sea initiative will be nationally and internationally recognised as a leading example of how world-class nature recovery can be achieved within a thriving, productive, and populated lowland English landscape.

The Pebblebed Heaths National Nature Reserve (NNR) and its surrounding agricultural hinterlands will form a fully connected, climate-resilient ecological network; priority habitats will be restored to favourable condition and will support thriving populations of priority terrestrial, wetland, and riparian species. A new, landscape-scale wildlife reserve of international renown will provide habitat connectivity, excellent public access, and nature-rich experiences, acting as a model for conservation, sustainable land use and rural regeneration.

The landscape will be ecologically functional and deliver a full range of ecosystem services, including clean water, carbon storage, soil health, pollination, and natural flood management (NFM). Degraded ecological processes will be restored, and environmental risks associated with land use will be significantly reduced through regenerative, nature-friendly farming systems.

A strong evidence-based monitoring programme, co-developed with local communities and underpinned by science, will demonstrate the ecological, economic, and social benefits of nature recovery. Land managers, communities, and policymakers will share a renewed social contract rooted in trust, collaboration, and transparency—where land use decisions, trade-offs, and benefits are clearly understood by all.

Optimism will replace past pessimism around biodiversity loss, with vibrant opportunities for people to connect with, care for, and benefit from the natural environment. The restored landscape will contribute to reversing climate change through carbon sequestration and will underpin sustainable green growth, improved health and wellbeing, and regional economic prosperity.

A plan showing the project area and concept images showing the potential landscape change are provided at Appendix 1.

What land use change is proposed under Heaths to Sea?

The primary ambition of Heaths to Sea is to create a new great wildlife reserve in East Devon that also supports wider economic and societal needs. The primary project foci are the restoration of the main river, tributaries and floodplain in the lower Otter catchment, the restoring of natural processes and habitat and species diversity across the wider landscape to develop a ‘super NNR’ in East Devon, and the reduction of environmental risk from farming activities. The project is compatible with, and indeed supports, continued sustainable food production in the valley.

Specifically key objectives include:

- 1) creating 100+ hectares of multi-purpose woodland providing a future timber resource, wildlife habitats and additional access,
- 2) the restoration and creation of 155 ha of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh adjacent to the Otter Estuary to build upon East Devon’s exceptional wetland wildlife offer,
- 3) the transitioning of 185 ha of low productivity pasture into a dynamic mosaic of wildlife-rich wood pasture, scrub and species rich grasslands,
- 4) expansion of permanent conservation grazing from 200 ha to 600+ ha across the Pebblebed Heath,
- 5) enhancing access opportunities to the countryside, potentially also including the opening up of an old railway line for public access between Newton Poppleford and Otterton,
- 6) developing integrated farm plans across 4,500 ha that collectively deliver the priorities of East Devon society, including food production, flood risk reduction, water quality improvement, carbon storage and wildlife support.

Project alignment with local policies and plans

The Heaths to Sea project aligns with the objectives in East Devon District Council’s **Council Plan** and **Climate Change Strategy** – through landscape scale ecological recovery, changing agricultural practices to reduce emissions associated with farming operations, manage soils sustainably and replenish soil carbon, and through increasing storage through tree planting and habitat creation.

Heaths to Sea helps deliver **Objective 8** of **East Devon’s Emerging Local Plan** committing to safeguard and enhance biodiversity across the district. This is allied to **Objective 2** which focuses on tackling the climate emergency by moving towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2040. By conserving the natural environment and promoting the integration of ecosystem services, the project also helps the delivery of a number of themes of **Strategy 5** of the Plan including: protecting, expanding and reconnecting of habitats through a network of green infrastructure (**Biodiversity and Green Networks**); recognising the environmental and climate value of natural carbon stores such as soils, woodlands and heathlands (**Natural Assets and Carbon Storage**); supporting natural flood management to increase resilience to extreme weather events driven by climate change (**Flooding and Surface Water**); creating a connected green infrastructure of river corridors, cycle paths and nature routes to integrate urban and rural spaces (**Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services**).

Heaths to Sea also support EDDC's **Economic Development and Tourism Strategies** which integrate tourism into wider economic growth, with tourism and the development of green businesses based on the promotion of the area's natural and cultural assets.

The project can also deliver a number of key actions for Devon Special Species and Priority Habitats identified in the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** and a significant proportion of the long-term targets of the revised **East Devon National Landscape Management Plan** (2025 to 2030). These targets include restoring 2,691 ha of new habitat outside of protected sites, bringing 80% of SSSIs into favourable condition, increasing tree canopy cover by 807ha by 2050 and improving water quality.

Project alignment with national policies and plans

- The project will help deliver priority targets under the **Environment Act 2021**. These include:
- halt the decline in species populations by 2030 and increase species populations by at least 10% by 2042 over 2022 levels;
- restore and improve habitats both within protected areas and outside; restore water bodies to a 'natural state';
- cut exposure to small, air borne pollution particles that are harmful to health (PM2.5) by over a third compared to 2018 levels;

Key **Environment Improvement Plan 2023** targets that are supported by Heaths to Sea are:

- halting species decline by 2030, and increasing species abundance by at least 10% by 2042 (relative to 2022);
- restore/create >500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites by 2042;
- 50% of SSSIs have actions on track to achieve favourable condition by 2028;
- increase tree canopy & woodland cover to 16.5% of land by 2050;
- restore 400 miles of river and create 3,000 hectares of new woodland along rivers; improve resilience to climate change droughts, wildfires

Heaths to Sea can also deliver 30%+ of the project area being wildlife-rich habitat meeting the **30x30 Commitment** for this part of East Devon.

Key targets of the **Climate Change Act 2008** supported by the project include:

- to increase afforestation and reforestation efforts to enhance carbon sinks;
- adopt sustainable land management practices to boost biodiversity and carbon storage.

Heaths to Sea & dependencies with the planning process

Should some central funding of the delivery of Heaths to Sea be approved by Defra, the project will proceed into the delivery phase from early 2027. To proceed, a number of permissions will be required from a variety of organisations, including water resource permits, flood risk activity permits, land drainage consents, species licensing etc.

In addition, the project may be seeking planning permissions to help diversify the income streams which will enable certain aspects of the project to proceed. An example may be the opening of the Newton Poppleford to Otterton railway line for public access. To manage this asset over the long-term and to a safe standard it will require funding and planning permission for the establishment of income generating infrastructure. Likewise, farms that are changing their management model away from environmentally damaging to more regenerative farming practices may look to capture income lost through alternative activities e.g. ecotourism and farm shops.

The project team understands that EDDC is not able to pre-judge any future planning applications. However, we hope that the dependencies between attaining permits/permissions, generating income for local businesses and the deliverability of nature recovery are recognised.

Funding & timescales

The Heaths to Sea project team will be submitting landscape recovery proposals for funding in March 2026. Should these be met with approval by Defra then a grant offer will be issued by government for a minimum period of 20 years, likely by autumn 2026. Grant funding will only pay for a proportion of delivery costs and Defra expects all LR projects to blend green finance and business diversification opportunities into the project Business Case. This must be supported by a Natural Capital Account demonstrating value for money.

Appendix 1A – Heaths to Sea Landscape Recovery Project Plans and Conceptual Images

Appendix 2 – Luppitt Landscape Partnership Project Summary

The Luppitt Landscape Partnership (LLP) is a Community Interest Company (CIC) which was formed in 2023 to enable a group of Blackdown Hills landowners to undertake the development phase of Landscape Recovery (LR), following a successful bid to Defra.

The LLP is entirely landowner-led, with a board of directors drawn from a membership of 40 land holdings covering 1427 hectares in the parishes of Luppitt and Combe Raleigh, including the extensive Luppitt Commons, within the Blackdown Hills National Landscape. The project area contains the River Love, a sub-catchment of the Otter, and also includes some holdings on the main River Otter. It complements the Heaths to Sea LR project which lies at the southern end of the same catchment.

The LLP has employed a small staff team led by Gavin Saunders which is drawing together a 20-year set of implementation plans for submission to Defra in March 2026.

Vision

The LLP is setting out to create a resilient community, both natural and human, fit for the future, built on the diversity and qualities of the land, its people and its history. Participating landowners will collaborate to restore an ecologically coherent landscape, while also building its capacity for sustainable agriculture. This work will enable the land to hold more water, support more biodiversity and store more carbon, while producing the same amount of food on healthier soils. The project will build a learning culture amongst all stakeholders to enable the community to continue to farm with nature for the common good.

Key targets

- Restoration of 52 ha in the springline zone to mire vegetation through re-wetting.
- 102 ha of existing open habitat in secured, and 267 ha of improved pasture restored to species-rich neutral grassland/lowland meadow.
- 94 ha of valley mire on Hense Moor SSSI and lowland meadow on Hense Moor Meadows SSSI brought into Favourable Condition.
- All 170 ha of existing woodland brought into moderate or good condition, 17 ha of new woodland created, and 41 ha of new parkland trees established.
- 21 ha of riparian habitat created along 11.8 km of the Rivers Love and River Otter, and 1370m made more stable with more natural channel forms.
- 312 ha of Grade 3 land brought into herbal ley-based rotations, with 457 ha managed with low-input or legume-rich swards.
- A rich learning culture established, generating annual farm educational visits and training events, supporting the practical needs of land managers, together with a traineeship programme, and dedicated learning facilities.
- New entrants to farming and land management supported.
- Land management and data gathering being actively supported by volunteers from the wider community.
- Residents and visitors are better able to access and enjoy the permissive and public rights of way on the Luppitt Commons, and access information about the LLP and the Luppitt landscape.

Funding & timescales

The LLP's 20-year implementation proposals are based on majority of funding being secured from Defra, with an ongoing ambition to seek blended finance funding through future sale of carbon credits, BNG, other private investment and grant support. If plans are approved the LLP hopes to begin implementation in early 2027 and run to 2047.

Alignment with local and national policy

30x30

The LLP's plans align with the UK Government's commitment to protect 30% of UK land and seas for nature by 2030 to support the global 30by30 target agreed at UN Biodiversity Summit (COP15) in 2022.

By securing the management of all existing priority habitat in the project area, and achieving its targets for enhancement or restoration of degraded or lost habitat, the LLP will deliver **665 hectares** of land managed primarily for nature. This represents **47%** of the LLP project area. The LLP therefore exceeds the 30by30 target and demonstrates that the project punches above its weight in terms of its contribution to UK Nature Recovery policy.

Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The LLP's habitat and species proposals will contribute to a number of key actions for Devon Special Species and Priority Habitats identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Devon LNRS). In particular this project supports the following Headline Priorities from the LNRS:

- *Mire, wet heath, wet woodland and flower-rich wet meadows form extensive mosaics across Devon's wet, acid lowland soils. March Fritillaries, sundews, Lesser Butterfly Orchids and dragonflies abound. Carbon and water are stored.*
- *Flower-rich grasslands are common across Devon's rural, urban and coastal areas. They are full of colour and structure and buzz with insects. Bats and birds feed overhead and harvest mice nest in tussocks.*
- *Farmland has healthy soils, bushy hedges with thriving Dorice and Hedgehogs, broad flower-rich field margins, trees and ponds. Yellowhammers, Barn Owls, Kestrels and Red Kites are common.*
- *Clean rivers and streams provide the wildlife-rich veins of Devon, full of leaping Atlantic Salmon, Eels, Water Voles and Otters. Beavers create new wetlands helping to store water and reduce flooding.*

East Devon local policies

The LLP project supports objectives in East Devon District Council's Local Plan and Climate Change Strategy, through landscape scale ecological recovery, changing agricultural practices to reduce emissions associated with farming operations, managing soils sustainably and building soil carbon, and through increasing storage through habitat creation.

The LLP project will help deliver Objectives 2 and 8 of the emerging Local Plan (safeguarding and enhancement of biodiversity, and tackling the climate emergency by moving towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2040). The project also contributes to several themes of Strategy 5 of the Plan including:

- protecting, expanding and reconnecting of habitats through a network of green infrastructure (Biodiversity and Green Networks);
- recognising the environmental and climate value of natural carbon stores such as soils, woodlands and heathlands (Natural Assets and Carbon Storage);
- supporting natural flood management to increase resilience to extreme weather events driven by climate change (Flooding and Surface Water).

Blackdown Hills National Landscape

The Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF, 2024) sets the ambition for how Protected Landscapes are expected to achieve three outcomes from the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP23) which relate to these goals:

- Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife.

- Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- Goal 10: Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

The Nature targets within the PLTOF, and their apportionment within the Blackdown Hills National Landscape, are set out in the BHNL Management Plan 2025-2030. The LLP project contributes to a number of these targets including:

Target 1:

Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline). The apportioned target for the BHNL is to restore or create more than 2,919 ha of a range of wildlife-rich habitats by 2042. The LLP project plans in total will deliver **369 ha** of restored or recreated habitat, representing **13%** of the BHNL target.

Target 2

Bring 80% of Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042. Hense Moor and Hense Moor Meadows SSSIs together cover 94 ha, representing 15% of the 639 ha of SSSI across the BHNL as a whole. The LLP's plans will bring these SSSIs into Favourable Condition within the lifetime of LR implementation, thereby achieving **18%** of the BHNL target.

Appendix 2A – Luppitt Landscape Partnership Summary of Interventions

Appendix 2 – Luppitt Landscape Partnership Project Summary

The Luppitt Landscape Partnership (LLP) is a Community Interest Company (CIC) which was formed in 2023 to enable a group of Blackdown Hills landowners to undertake the development phase of Landscape Recovery (LR), following a successful bid to Defra.

The LLP is entirely landowner-led, with a board of directors drawn from a membership of 40 land holdings covering 1427 hectares in the parishes of Luppitt and Combe Raleigh, including the extensive Luppitt Commons, within the Blackdown Hills National Landscape. The project area contains the River Love, a sub-catchment of the Otter, and also includes some holdings on the main River Otter. It complements the Heaths to Sea LR project which lies at the southern end of the same catchment.

The LLP has employed a small staff team led by Gavin Saunders which is drawing together a 20-year set of implementation plans for submission to Defra in March 2026.

Vision

The LLP is setting out to create a resilient community, both natural and human, fit for the future, built on the diversity and qualities of the land, its people and its history. Participating landowners will collaborate to restore an ecologically coherent landscape, while also building its capacity for sustainable agriculture. This work will enable the land to hold more water, support more biodiversity and store more carbon, while producing the same amount of food on healthier soils. The project will build a learning culture amongst all stakeholders to enable the community to continue to farm with nature for the common good.

Key targets

- Restoration of 52 ha in the springline zone to mire vegetation through re-wetting.
- 102 ha of existing open habitat in secured, and 267 ha of improved pasture restored to species-rich neutral grassland/lowland meadow.
- 94 ha of valley mire on Hense Moor SSSI and lowland meadow on Hense Moor Meadows SSSI brought into Favourable Condition.
- All 170 ha of existing woodland brought into moderate or good condition, 17 ha of new woodland created, and 41 ha of new parkland trees established.
- 21 ha of riparian habitat created along 11.8 km of the Rivers Love and River Otter, and 1370m made more stable with more natural channel forms.
- 312 ha of Grade 3 land brought into herbal ley-based rotations, with 457 ha managed with low-input or legume-rich swards.
- A rich learning culture established, generating annual farm educational visits and training events, supporting the practical needs of land managers, together with a traineeship programme, and dedicated learning facilities.
- New entrants to farming and land management supported.
- Land management and data gathering being actively supported by volunteers from the wider community.
- Residents and visitors are better able to access and enjoy the permissive and public rights of way on the Luppitt Commons, and access information about the LLP and the Luppitt landscape.

Funding & timescales

The LLP's 20-year implementation proposals are based on majority of funding being secured from Defra, with an ongoing ambition to seek blended finance funding through future sale of carbon

credits, BNG, other private investment and grant support. If plans are approved the LLP hopes to begin implementation in early 2027 and run to 2047.

Alignment with local and national policy

30by30

The LLP's plans align with the UK Government's commitment to protect 30% of UK land and seas for nature by 2030 to support the global 30by30 target agreed at UN Biodiversity Summit (COP15) in 2022.

By securing the management of all existing priority habitat in the project area, and achieving its targets for enhancement or restoration of degraded or lost habitat, the LLP will deliver **665 hectares** of land managed primarily for nature. This represents **47%** of the LLP project area. The LLP therefore exceeds the 30by30 target and demonstrates that the project punches above its weight in terms of its contribution to UK Nature Recovery policy.

Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The LLP's habitat and species proposals will contribute to a number of key actions for Devon Special Species and Priority Habitats identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Devon LNRS). In particular this project supports the following Headline Priorities from the LNRS:

- *Mire, wet heath, wet woodland and flower-rich wet meadows form extensive mosaics across Devon's wet, acid lowland soils. March Fritillaries, sundews, Lesser Butterfly Orchids and dragonflies abound. Carbon and water are stored.*
- *Flower-rich grasslands are common across Devon's rural, urban and coastal areas. They are full of colour and structure and buzz with insects. Bats and birds feed overhead and harvest mice nest in tussocks.*
- *Farmland has healthy soils, bushy hedges with thriving Dorice and Hedgehogs, broad flower-rich field margins, trees and ponds. Yellowhammers, Barn Owls, Kestrels and Red Kites are common.*
- *Clean rivers and streams provide the wildlife-rich veins of Devon, full of leaping Atlantic Salmon, Eels, Water Voles and Otters. Beavers create new wetlands helping to store water and reduce flooding.*

East Devon local policies

The LLP project supports objectives in East Devon District Council's Local Plan and Climate Change Strategy, through landscape scale ecological recovery, changing agricultural practices to reduce emissions associated with farming operations, managing soils sustainably and building soil carbon, and through increasing storage through habitat creation.

The LLP project will help deliver Objectives 2 and 8 of the emerging Local Plan (safeguarding and enhancement of biodiversity, and tackling the climate emergency by moving towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2040). The project also contributes to several themes of Strategy 5 of the Plan including:

- protecting, expanding and reconnecting of habitats through a network of green infrastructure (Biodiversity and Green Networks);
- recognising the environmental and climate value of natural carbon stores such as soils, woodlands and heathlands (Natural Assets and Carbon Storage);

- supporting natural flood management to increase resilience to extreme weather events driven by climate change (Flooding and Surface Water).

Blackdown Hills National Landscape

The Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF, 2024) sets the ambition for how Protected Landscapes are expected to achieve three outcomes from the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP23) which relate to these goals:

- Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife.
- Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- Goal 10: Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

The Nature targets within the PLTOF, and their apportionment within the Blackdown Hills National Landscape, are set out in the BHNL Management Plan 2025-2030. The LLP project contributes to a number of these targets including:

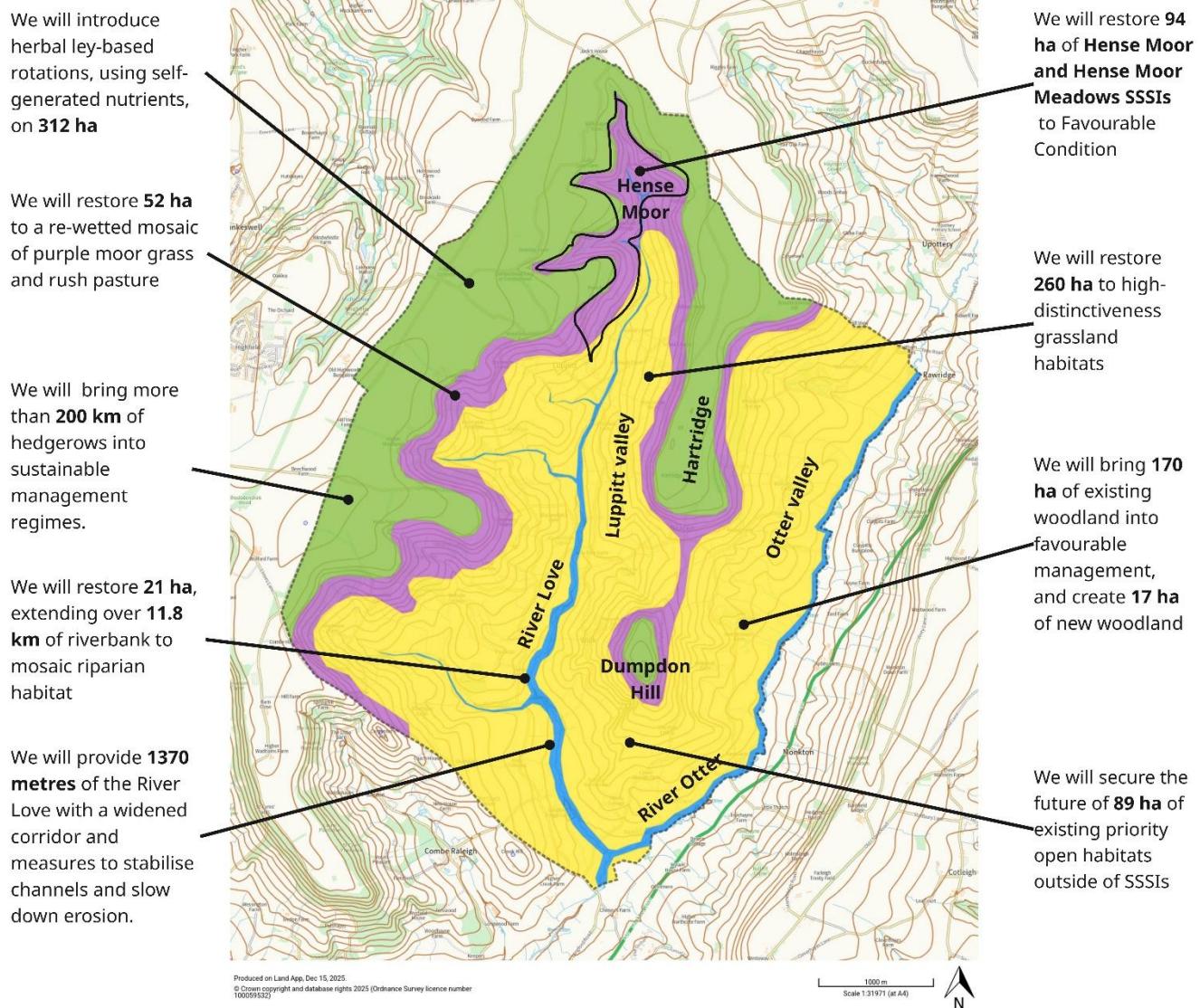
Target 1:

Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline). The apportioned target for the BHNL is to restore or create more than 2,919 ha of a range of wildlife-rich habitats by 2042. The LLP project plans in total will deliver **369 ha** of restored or recreated habitat, representing **13%** of the BHNL target.

Target 2

Bring 80% of Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042. Hense Moor and Hense Moor Meadows SSSIs together cover 94 ha, representing 15% of the 639 ha of SSSI across the BHNL as a whole. The LLP's plans will bring these SSSIs into Favourable Condition within the lifetime of LR implementation, thereby achieving **18%** of the BHNL target.

Luppitt Landscape Partnership - summary of proposed land management interventions through Landscape Recovery



HEATHS TO SEA

LANDSCAPE RECOVERY OF THE LOWER OTTER VALLEY



CLINTON DEVON ESTATES

Project Background

VISION

A diverse landscape, rich in nature and ecologically healthy whilst also supporting food production, net zero, timber and access needs.

AIM

To power nature recovery across agricultural hinterlands linking 3 parts of the Pebblebed Heaths NNR by building connectivity through 4,144ha of the lower Otter catchment through floodplain restoration and riparian and multi-purpose woodland creation.

page 27

LANDSCAPE RECOVERY

One of DEFRA's three environmental land management schemes (ELMs), alongside the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) and Countryside Stewardship (CS).

ELMs support farmers and land managers to deliver similar things – clean and plentiful water, thriving plants and wildlife, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and healthy soils – but each will do so in different ways.

The SFI and CS offer shorter agreements based on a menu of standards and options. Farmers can select those best suited to their holding and farming practices.

Landscape Recovery offers farmers and land managers the opportunity to co-design a long term, bespoke, agreement to produce environmental and climate goods across landscape scale projects.



HEATHS TO SEA

LANDSCAPE RECOVERY OF THE LOWER OTTER VALLEY

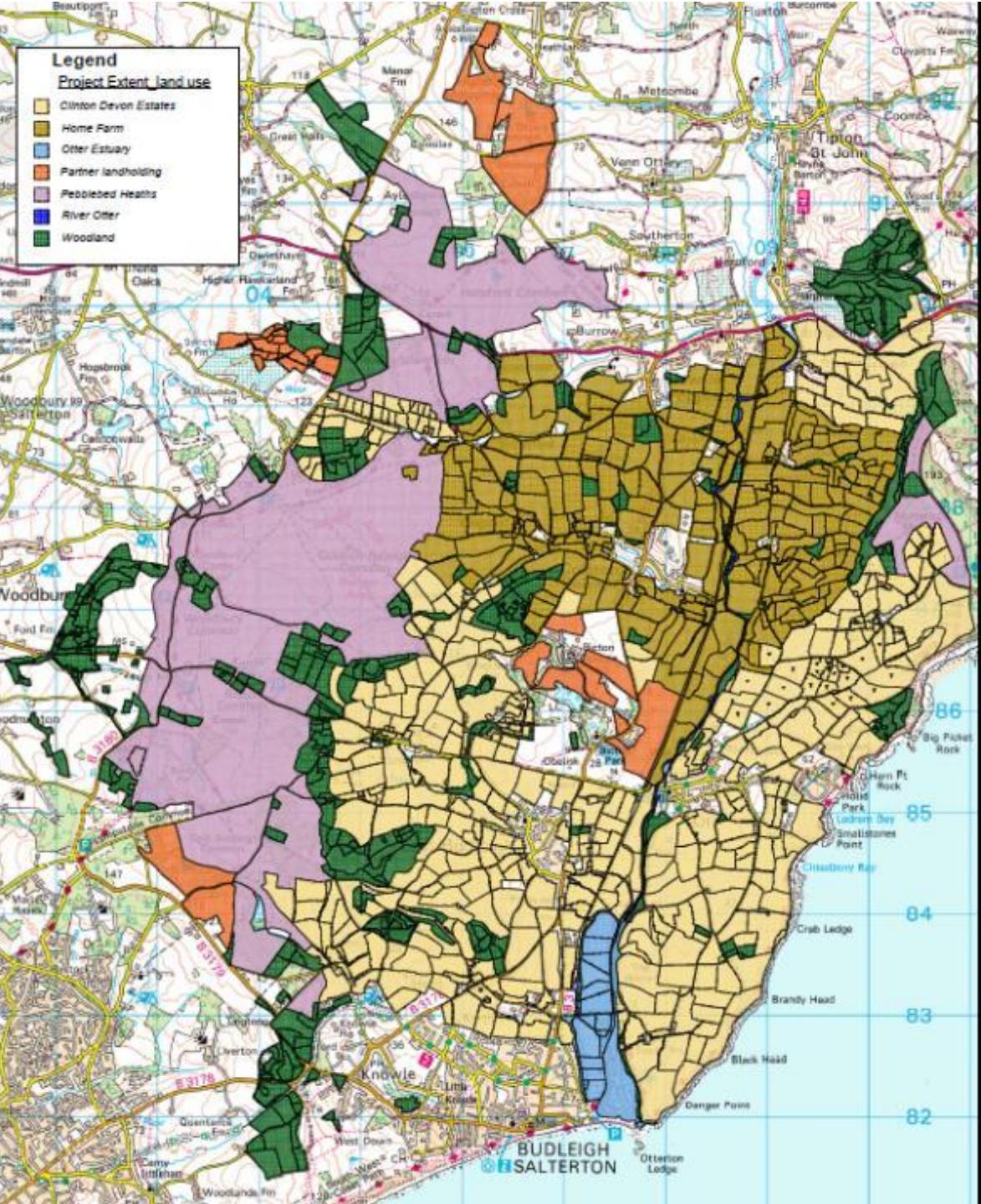
Landscape change planning

Whole project area – current land use	Approx area (ha)
Home Farm	911
Tenant Farms	1632
Pebblebed Heaths (inc NNR)	1117
Otter Estuary (NNR)	90
East Devon Woodland	694*
Partner landholdings	224

page 28

Estate land in project area – land use	Approx area (ha)
Agriculture	2543
Conservation	1207
Woodland	694*

*some overlap with Home Farm



Landscape change planning

Ambition:

Proposed change	Approx area
Commercial woodland creation	100
Wood pasture / sp. rich grass / scrub (cattle grazed)	185
Meadow / species rich grassland	30
Wetland – floodplain (grazed with cattle)	200
Riparian and field buffers (incl wet woodland)	40
Total	555





Transitioning of 185 ha of low productivity pasture into a dynamic mosaic of wildlife-rich wood pasture, scrub and species rich grasslands on Otterton Hill

page 30



HEATHS TO SEA

LANDSCAPE RECOVERY OF THE LOWER OTTER VALLEY



page 31

The restoration and creation of 155 ha of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh adjacent to the Otter Estuary to build upon East Devon's exceptional wetland wildlife offer



HEATHS TO SEA

LANDSCAPE RECOVERY OF THE LOWER OTTER VALLEY



page 32

Riparian margins and corridors to buffer streams from agricultural activities and provide corridors and space for wildlife



HEATHS TO SEA

LANDSCAPE RECOVERY OF THE LOWER OTTER VALLEY

Landscape change planning

Approach: Pebblebed Heaths

- Increasing grazing extent across the Pebblebed Heaths through capital funding for fencing and infrastructure.
- Secured funding for Ranger and management team for 20+ years
- Increased engagement offer to support conservation outcomes and manage footfall



Landscape change planning

Approach: Wider farmed area

- Work with all tenants to identify a range of interventions that join up across the wider landscape to support:
 - Nature enhancement – flower rich margins and meadows, wild bird plots, creation or management of orchards
 - Water management to reduce run off and erosion
 - Soil management to increase soil carbon and reduce inputs
 - Creation of ponds and water bodies
- Produce a bespoke farm plan for each tenant



Stakeholder engagement

- Tenants and project partners
- Technical Advisory Group
- Stakeholder Communication Advisory Group
- Stakeholder workshop to feed-in public thoughts
 - 34 different community groups, activities, educational institutions, charities and businesses across the project area
- Public engagement:
 - 6-week programme of 9 drop-in sessions, 2 guided walks, and online survey. 185 people took part.
 - Public Forum and exhibition to present draft proposals
 - Presence at local community or partner events e.g. Budleigh Salterton Gala, Heath Week Festival day
 - Farmwise schools day
 - Volunteering - Riverfly and Redd surveying
 - Plans available online
- 98% supportive of Heaths to Sea project aims
- General public values access/walking routes, the views, Estuary and Pebblebed Heaths managed for nature
- General public main concerns include new housing developments in East Devon, sewage management, water quality, flood risk, risk to public access routes, unsustainable land management

Rank	Options
1	Greater wildlife diversity and connection/connectivity
2	Improved water quality
3	Maintaining food productivity while enhancing nature
4	Re-naturalising the river and flood management
5	Managing public access
6	Tree planting and cover
7	Improving the health of soil
8	Participation, engagement and education
9	Project funding and financial sustainability
10	Clear plan explaining the progress of landscape recovery



Overview Committee Work Programme 2025 – 2026
--

Proposed date	Topic
15 July 2025	Joint Overview and Scrutiny Spotlight Session: update on public conveniences provision (Officer: AD Place, Assets & Commercialisation)
30 September 2025	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public Toilets review (Officer: AD Place, Assets & Commercialisation) 2. Blackdown Hills National Landscape Annual Review and Management Plan (Officer: AD Countryside and Leisure) 3. Public Space Protection Orders consultation (Officer: AD Environmental Health)
14 January 2026	Joint meeting with Scrutiny Committee to consider Directorate Plans and Budget for 2026-27
22 January 2026	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Landscape Recovery Programmes in East Devon (Officer: Green Infrastructure Project Manager)
26 March 2026	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing Strategy (Officer: Housing Projects Officer) 2. SANG Delivery Strategy (Officer: Green Infrastructure Project Manager)
Dates TBC	Topic – dates to be confirmed with lead officers
TBC	Beach Hut arrangements and charging review of current agreed policy
TBC	Anti-Poverty Strategy
TBC	Outcome of government consultation on hybrid meetings and proxy voting – development of formative policy proposals

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Forward Plan of Key Decisions - For the 4-month period: 1 January 2026 to 30 April 2026

This plan contains all the Key Decisions that the Council's Cabinet expects to make during the 4-month period referred to above. The plan is rolled forward every month.

12.1.1 Key decisions: A “key decision” means an executive decision which is likely:

- (a) to result in the Council incurring expenditure or the making of savings of £100,000 or more; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the Council's area:
 - (i) In accordance with section 38 of the Local Government Act 2000, in determining the meaning of “significant” regard shall be had to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State
 - (ii) A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

A public notice period of 28 clear working days is required when a Key Decision is to be taken by the Council's Cabinet even if the meeting is wholly or partly to be in private.

page 37

The Cabinet may only take Key Decisions in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to information) (England) Regulations 2012. A minute of each Key Decision is published within 2 days of it having been made. This is available for public inspection on the Council's website <http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk>, and at the Council Offices, Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton. The law and the Council's constitution permit urgent Key Decisions to be made without 28 clear days' notice of the proposed decisions having been published provided certain procedures are followed. A decision notice will be published for these in exactly the same way.

This plan also identifies Key Decisions which are to be considered in the private part of the meeting (Part B) and the reason why. Any written representations that a particular decision should be moved to the public part of the meeting (Part A) should be sent to the Democratic Services Team (address as above) as soon as possible. **Members of the public have the opportunity to speak on the relevant decision at the meeting in accordance with the Council's public speaking rules.**

Obtaining documents

Committee reports in respect of Key Decisions include links to the relevant background documents. If a printed copy of all or part of any report or background document is required, please contact Democratic Services (address as above) or by calling 01395 517546.

Members of the public who wish to make any representations or comments concerning any of the Key Decisions referred to in this Forward Plan may do so by writing to the Leader of the Council c/o Democratic Services (as above).

Key Decision	Portfolio (Lead Officer)	Documents to be considered before Cabinet take decision	Whether other documents will be considered before decision taken [Y/N]	Other meetings where matter is to be debated / considered	Date of Cabinet meeting	Part A = Public meeting Part B = private meeting [with reasons]
---------------------	-------------------------------------	--	---	--	------------------------------------	--

Towards Zero Carbon Development in the West End: Interconnector Project Final Investment Decision (Parts 2)	Director of Place	Full Business Case				Part B
Use of Climate Change Budget to support Green Loans to Householders	Assistant Director Environmental Health					Part A
Air Quality/Contaminated Land Strategies	Assistant Director Environmental Health					Part A
Anti-Poverty Strategy	Asst Director Revenues, Benefits, CSC, Fraud & Compliance	Outcomes from consultation		Poverty Working Panel	4 March 2026	Part A
Formation of an Exmouth Town and Seafront Subgroup	Assistant Director Place Assets & Leisure	Steering Group ToR		Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group		Part A
Council Depots Review	Project Manager Place, Assets & Commercialisation					Part B (commercially sensitive)

Key Decision	Portfolio (Lead Officer)	Documents to be considered before Cabinet take decision	Whether other documents will be considered before decision taken [Y/N]	Other meetings where matter is to be debated / considered	Date of Cabinet meeting	Part A = Public meeting Part B = private meeting [with reasons]
--------------	-----------------------------	---	--	---	-------------------------	--

Exmouth Town Hall	Assistant Director Place Assets & Leisure					Part B (commercially sensitive)
Hayne Lane Masterplan	Assistant Director Place Assets & Leisure	Hayne Lane Masterplan	No	Asset Management Forum		Part A
Strategic Development Review Exeter Science Park Limited	Director of Place		No			Part B
Public Toilets Review	Assistant Director Place Assets & Leisure					Part A
Housing Strategy	Director Housing and Health			Overview Committee		Part A
Cranbrook Category 4 contributions mechanism for allocation and spend	Assistant Director Place Assets & Leisure					Part A
Dog Control Enforcement Policy	Assistant Director Environmental Health			Overview Committee		Part A

Key Decision	Portfolio (Lead Officer)	Documents to be considered before Cabinet take decision	Whether other documents will be considered before decision taken [Y/N]	Other meetings where matter is to be debated / considered	Date of Cabinet meeting	Part A = Public meeting Part B = private meeting [with reasons]
--------------	--------------------------	---	--	---	-------------------------	--

Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy	Assistant Director Environmental Health					Part A
Climate Change Strategy	Assistant Director Environmental Health				Winter 2025/26	Part A
EDDC Local Nature Recovery Plan page 40	Assistant Director Countryside, Environment and Ecology				4 March 2026	Part A
Supported Housing Services	Assistant Director Statutory Housing Services					Part A
Procurement of CBRE through the Crown Commercial Services Framework to undertake work in relation to the second new community	Delivery Manager					Part A
Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2026/27	Asst Director Revenues, Benefits, CSC, Fraud & Compliance				4 February 2026	Part A

Key Decision	Portfolio (Lead Officer)	Documents to be considered before Cabinet take decision	Whether other documents will be considered before decision taken [Y/N]	Other meetings where matter is to be debated / considered	Date of Cabinet meeting	Part A = Public meeting Part B = private meeting [with reasons]
--------------	--------------------------	---	--	---	-------------------------	--

Colyford Road and Fosse Way Viability Assessment	Assistant Director Place Assets & Leisure	Colyford Road and Fosse Way Viability Assessment	No	Asset Management Forum		Part A *possibly some Part B commercially sensitive
Cloakham Lawns Employment Site Viability Assessment	Assistant Director Place Assets & Leisure	Colyford Road and Fosse Way Viability Assessment	No	Asset Management Forum		Part A *possibly some Part B commercially sensitive
Exmouth Town and Seafront Placemaking Plan Adoption	Assistant Director Place Assets & Leisure	Placemaking Plan and appendices	Yes some Strategic Outline Business Cases (SOBC)	Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group		Part A *possibly some Part B commercially sensitive
Biodiversity Duty Report	Assistant Director Countryside, Environment and Ecology				4 March 2026	Part A
Sidmouth and East Beach BMP – Approval to enter design and construction contracts	Assistant Director StreetScene				4 March 2026	Part A
Disposal Opportunities	Assistant Director Place, Assets & Leisure			Asset Management Forum		Part B

Key Decision	Portfolio (Lead Officer)	Documents to be considered before Cabinet take decision	Whether other documents will be considered before decision taken [Y/N]	Other meetings where matter is to be debated / considered	Date of Cabinet meeting	Part A = Public meeting Part B = private meeting [with reasons]
--------------	-----------------------------	--	---	--	----------------------------	--

Key Officer/Portfolio Holder Decisions

Sale of Workshop paSite, Exmouth page 42	Estates Surveyor					Part B Portfolio Holder Assets & Economy Decision
Individual property: external and internal repairs and refurbishment	Assistant Director Housing					Part B Officer Decision
Individual property: external and internal repairs and refurbishment	Assistant Director Housing					Part B Officer Decision
Individual property: external and internal repairs and refurbishment	Assistant Director Housing					Part B Officer Decision

Key Decision	Portfolio (Lead Officer)	Documents to be considered before Cabinet take decision	Whether other documents will be considered before decision taken [Y/N]	Other meetings where matter is to be debated / considered	Date of Cabinet meeting	Part A = Public meeting Part B = private meeting [with reasons]
---------------------	-------------------------------------	--	---	--	--------------------------------	--

Procurement Support from Devon County Council – renew 5-year SLA	Director of Finance					Officer Executive Decision
Household Support Fund – Determining groups for targeted support	Assistant Director Customer Services, Revenues & Benefits		As per Cabinet recommendation at their meeting 30 October 2024			Officer key decision
Sewerage Treatment Plant Replacement Programme 2025/26	Planned Works & Climate Change Manager					Appointment of contractor. Request for Officer Executive Decision
Bathroom Adaptations to 20 properties	Planned Works & Climate Change Manager					Appointment of contractor. Request for Officer Executive Decision
Bathroom Adaptations to properties ED0322-24	Planned Works & Climate Change Manager					Appointment of contractor. Request for Officer Executive Decision

Key Decision	Portfolio (Lead Officer)	Documents to be considered before Cabinet take decision	Whether other documents will be considered before decision taken [Y/N]	Other meetings where matter is to be debated / considered	Date of Cabinet meeting	Part A = Public meeting Part B = private meeting [with reasons]
--------------	-----------------------------	---	--	---	-------------------------	--

Structural Repairs & Refurbishment – 33, 35 & 37 Underleys, Beer	Planned Works & Climate Change Manager					Appointment of contractor. Request for Officer Executive Decision
Refurbishment of Flats, Langford Avenue, Honiton	Planned Works & Climate Change Manager					Appointment of contractor. Request for Officer Executive Decision
Refurbishment of 4no. Blocks of Flats, Arcot Park, Sidmouth	Planned Works & Climate Change Manager					Appointment of contractor. Request for Officer Executive Decision
Refurbishment & Extension of 1 School Lane, Newton Poppleford	Planned Works & Climate Change Manager					Appointment of contractor. Request for Officer Executive Decision
Internal Adaptations to various properties	Planned Works & Climate Change Manager					Appointment of contractor. Request for Officer Executive Decision
LAD 1 Completion – Heating & Fabric Upgrades	Planned Works & Climate Change Manager					Appointment of contractor. Request for Officer Executive Decision

Key Decision	Portfolio (Lead Officer)	Documents to be considered before Cabinet take decision	Whether other documents will be considered before decision taken [Y/N]	Other meetings where matter is to be debated / considered	Date of Cabinet meeting	Part A = Public meeting Part B = private meeting [with reasons]
--------------	-----------------------------	---	--	---	-------------------------	--

Upgrade of Peazen Flats, Beer	Planned Works & Climate Change Manager					Appointment of contractor. Request for Officer Executive Decision
Internal Adaptations Q2-25	Planned Works & Climate Change Manager					Appointment of contractor. Request for Officer Executive Decision
Redon Testing and Mitigation Contract for the Compliance Department	Compliance Surveyor					Appointment of contractor. Request for Officer Executive Decision

Officer Decisions to enter into Contract

Recycling and Waste: - MRF/Baling Plant Refurbishment/Site Compliance - vehicle refurbishment programme	Assistant Director StreetScene	
Seaton Wetlands southern expansion and habitat creation project – HLF bid over £100K	Countryside Manager	EOI by January/Febr 2025 TBC

Key Decision	Portfolio (Lead Officer)	Documents to be considered before Cabinet take decision	Whether other documents will be considered before decision taken [Y/N]	Other meetings where matter is to be debated / considered	Date of Cabinet meeting	Part A = Public meeting Part B = private meeting [with reasons]
--------------	-----------------------------	---	--	---	-------------------------	--

Radon Testing & Mitigation	Compliance Manager	
East Devon National Landscape HLF Open Programmes bid for Landscape Connections project	East Devon NL Manager	EOI Dec 2024
Recycling & Waste – Green Waste Narrow Access Vehicle purchase.	Assistant Director StreetScene	
Resurfacing Land of Canaan and Foxholes Car Parks	Assistant Director StreetScene	11 December 2025

Key Decision	Portfolio (Lead Officer)	Documents to be considered before Cabinet take decision	Whether other documents will be considered before decision taken [Y/N]	Other meetings where matter is to be debated / considered	Date of Cabinet meeting	Part A = Public meeting Part B = private meeting [with reasons]
---------------------	-------------------------------------	--	---	--	------------------------------------	--

Proposal form for items for consideration by Overview Committee

Submitted by: Cllr Charlotte FitzGerald

Date submitted: 15/12/2025



Item for Consideration: Introducing policy to support the temporary placement and trading of privately-managed mobile saunas on EDDC-owned / -leased beaches or adjacent land.

Expected outcome (i.e. new policy, new action, new partnership, improve the performance of other public bodies or of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas):

Creation of an inaugural EDDC policy stating support for privately-managed, temporary mobile saunas on EDDC land; also creation of any by-laws required to ensure the successful and appropriate operation of such saunas, as deemed necessary by the council.

Priority for matter to be considered (please tick):

High (up to 3 months)	Yes
Medium (3 to 6 months)	
Low (over 9 months)	

Basis on which priority has been set:

To provide surety for Sauna owners about the status of leasing EDDC land for saunas with good notice before the opening of the tourism season (Easter holidays).

The suggested item should be included in future programme(s) because: (please tick as appropriate)

a) It is a district level function over which the district has some control	
b) It is a new policy area or service area of activity to be developed and introduced	Yes
c) It is a policy area which has been required for some time and is due for development	Yes
d) It is a major proposal for change	
e) It is an issue raised via complaints received	
f) It is an area of public concern	
g) It would be of benefit to residents of the district	Yes

Which of the Council's objectives does the issue address?:

- Supporting the community, by providing services for the enhancement of personal and social health and well-being;
- Supporting the local economy, including the sustainable and wellness tourism sector;
- Supporting the council's finances (through rental income).

Is there a deadline for the Council to make a decision? (If so, when and why?):

As above, this topic has been dragging for some time due to a lack of specific bylaws pertaining to it and perceptions of complexity or the potential for resistance, whilst local sauna owners have not had a chance to make the most of their assets (by placing them on or very near East Devon beaches). It is now time that the council considered and decided upon some appropriate guidance and processes, well before the opening of the forthcoming 2026 tourism season (starting in Easter, although noting that saunas can be operated year-round).

Members are requested to provide information on the following:-

What do you wish to achieve from the review?:

Since being first approached about the placement of a ward resident's mobile sauna on a beach in my ward almost one year ago now, neither the resident nor I have been able to get a straightforward answer about whether or how to proceed. On the one hand, the sauna-owner's request has not been denied, but it has been put in a 'holding pattern' for about a year now. I have experienced the same obfuscation. Having discussed among portfolio holders and other members, my sense is that there is no 'in-principle' reason for which saunas should not be allowed to operate on EDDC land, including beaches, but that in the absence of any policy of by-laws pertaining to them, there is concern that issues could arise from the use of saunas for which the council is not prepared. Therefore, I suggest that the matter be brought before the Overview Committee such that considerations, both positive and negative, can be raised, and policies be put in place, to allow the council to create a supportive policy whilst mitigating concerns about unforeseen adverse consequences.

Are the desired outcomes likely to be achievable?:

Yes!

Will it change/increase efficiency and cost effectiveness?:

It will allow the council to access a new – albeit likely modest – funding stream from a new type of concession. It will increase efficiency among officers and members by providing clarity on the procedures for leasing land to sauna owners.

Additional information – an explanatory sentence or paragraph to be provided below to support each box which has been ticked:

The first two boxes have been explained previously in this document. As to the third, regarding the benefit to residents, the provision of mobile saunas has been well received in other parts of the country and fits with a trend towards greater health and well-being among both local communities and as a driver of tourism to coastal areas, which benefit from sea views and a bracing dip to go with the sauna experience. It provides a beneficial income stream to the sauna managers, which fits with the district's and parishes' shared objectives of promoting sustainable rural diversification and low-impact tourism facilities.

Please can you return the completed form to Democratic Services via email to
democraticservices@eastdevon.gov.uk.

MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS

This appears to be an operational matter, an update on the current approach to the provision of sites for saunas can be given to members at the meeting.

Date: 15 January 2026

Overview Committee's Role

The Council's Constitution details the role of the Overview Committee in [Article 7](#) and in the Terms of Reference in [Part 3 Section 2](#). It has statutory powers through the Local Government Act 2000.

The following sets out the role of the Overview Committee in general terms:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committees operate within the guiding principles of effective scrutiny promoted by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, namely:

- a) Provide a 'critical friend' challenge to the Cabinet as well as external authorities and agencies;*
- b) Its aim is to hold Council to account on behalf of the public and its communities;*
- c) Take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public;*
- d) Make an impact on the delivery of public services*

The Overview Committee will principally provide the 'critical friend' challenge and reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities prior to the decision being taken so as to make an impact on the delivery of public services.

More specifically the functions of the Overview Committee relating to policy development and review are:

- To assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues.*
- To conduct research and carry out community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options.*
- To consider and propose mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options.*
- To question Members of the Cabinet and/or committees and Senior Officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area.*
- Subject to prior Council approval of an annual work plan, liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working.*

Members will also find useful information in the following guidance:

- Government's 'Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for Councils' – statutory status*
- Centre for Public Scrutiny 'The Good Scrutiny Guide' – non-statutory status*