

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of South and East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee held at Otter Room (Ground Floor), Blackdown House, EDDC at Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton, EX14 1EJ on 24 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 2.47 pm

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee meeting held on 24 October 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

2 Declarations of interest

None.

3 Public speaking

None.

4 Matters of urgency

None.

5 Confidential/exempt items

None.

6 Exe Estuary Patrol Boat - proposed pilot scheme

The Committee were asked to consider a proposal for a 12-month pilot arrangement for the shared use of the Exeter Port Authority (EPA) rigid inflatable boat (RIB), workboat, associated training provision and plan for the existing Patrol Boat. The pilot was expected to commence on the 1 August 2025.

The proposed agreement offered operational and financial advantages compared to the current arrangements:

- Primary use of the *Exe Harbour Launch*, with the *Exe Harbour Workboat* available when joint patrols are not feasible or as backup.
- Guaranteed maximum of forty patrol days within a 12-month period.
- Vessels fuelled and maintained in a ready-to-use state.
- Annual provision of four training days with EPA instructors.
- Insurance cover provided by EPA for both vessels.
- All maintenance, servicing, and anti-fouling included in the agreement.
- Greater operational flexibility and responsiveness through use of a RIB.
- Lower risk of damage and easier handling associated with a RIB.
- Potential for resale of the existing SEDW patrol vessel should the pilot prove successful — proceeds could contribute to multiple years of charter fees.

- Savings from the release of the current Exmouth Marina berth, which would no longer be required.

The Committee were pleased with the proposed arrangements and recognised the operational advantages the pilot could yield.

Resolved:

1. Noted the proposed 12 month pilot arrangements for the shared use of the Exeter Port Authority (EPA) rigid inflatable boat (RIB), workboat, associated training provision and plan for the existing Patrol Boat, commencing 1 August 2025;
2. Approves expenditure of £9,500 as set out in Section 3, to cover the use of EPA vessels, fuel, personal protective equipment, and associated boat cramage and cradle costs;
3. Received a follow-up report following completion of the 12 month pilot to review outcomes and inform future decision making.

7 Update on SANG delivery

The Green Infrastructure Project Manager gave the Committee an update on the delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace – SANG:

- Greenspace Project (SANG) Officer now in place, with initial focus on proposals for Exmouth SANG, progression of Exeter Valley Park Projects and work with East Devon's planners to ensure the next phases of Cranbrook's Developer provided SANG (which will deliver over 78Ha of SANG) meet Natural England requirements;
- Dawlish Country Park, Ridgetop Country Park and Cranbrook Country Park were identified as Strategic SANG sites in the Mitigation Strategy and have been delivered to date. The final phase of Ridgetop Country Park is being completed, and the next phases of SANG at Cranbrook are being developed within each of the extension phases;
- Following a site options appraisal exercise potential sites for a Strategic SANG in Exmouth had been identified. Once an in-principle agreement with landowners is in place the proposals will be put forward to the Committee;
- Discussions on the potential to bring forward enhancement projects to Exeter Valley Parks to increase their functionality as SANG have taken place;
- Work is progressing on site at Clyst Meadows (10Ha SANG at Broadclyst Station), with expectation that the main contract will commence in shortly, and is likely to be completed next year with an anticipated opening date of September 2026. Further hedgerow planting to the edges of the site with volunteers over the winter are planned;
- Work is underway to understand the quantum of Strategic SANG required to meet residential allocations in the emerging Local Plans, and estimated costs for the delivery and management of these. A report will come forward to the Committee, setting out the requirements and estimated costs, alongside a proposed funding strategy for the partner authorities;
- congratulations to Cranbrook Town Council - Cranbrook Country Park has just won a Green Flag Award for the second year running.

The committee noted the report and the team were thanked for their efforts.

8 Habitat mitigation team update

The comprehensive update report before Members set out a month by month account of the initiatives and events undertaken, updated with statistical detail on interactions with the public and views of social media posts. This covered the Wildlife Wardens team work, and Devon Loves Dogs.

The sign up of the Exe Estuary Management Partnership events had been lower in recent months. In response, the 15 sessions offered to schools may have to be revisited as not offering enough choice to local schools for attending – this offer could be reviewed.

Some discussion took place on negating some of the negative comments that had come up as a result of the recruitment advertising for Devon Loves Dogs. The Chair shared his experience of the positivity of the events and alternatives offered to dog walkers when beach restrictions were in place. Communications in the media were not branded with the Councils or associated environmental health enforcement but with the southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk or Devon Loves Dogs branding as appropriate.

The Chair thanked officers present for their continued success and good results from their hard work.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the update.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

G Jung (Chair)
R Williams (ECC)
G Taylor (TDC)

Officers in attendance:

Matthew Diamond, ECC
Neil Harris, Habitat Regulation Delivery Manager
Rebecca Heal, Solicitor
Anne Mountjoy, Growth Point Communications Officer
Paul Osborne, Green Infrastructure Project Officer
Charles Plowden, Assistant Director Countryside and Leisure
Claire Spence, Wildlife Warden
Julie Owen, Project Officer Devon Loves Dogs

Chair

Date: