

Countryside and Leisure Service Plan 2024-25

Link to the full draft [Countryside and Leisure Team Service Plan](#)

2.1	<p>Service Objectives 2024-25</p> <p>Service level priorities we will deliver in 2024/25 which support the Council Plan Priorities; Better homes & communities, A greener East Devon, A resilient economy and quality services.</p>
	<p>Greener East Devon</p>
2.1.1	<p>District Ecologist to deliver following targets for 2024/25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of Ecology Officer and Trainee Ecologist into the team to manage Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements from 2024/25 • Identify as part of the new BNG duty suitable land to create a Local Habitat Bank to secure a district natural credit scheme. • Work with Development Management (DM) team in providing guidance and training on Biodiversity Net Gain implementation. • Work with the Planning Policy team on the biodiversity chapter and supporting evidence of the new local plan, to include 10% BNG policy for East Devon, and assessment/integration of biodiversity within site allocation process. • Work with Service Leads in both Countryside and Planning to deliver Natural England policy on nutrient neutrality on the River Axe SAC through the Triple Axe project (collaborative partnership with National Landscapes, SWW, WRT, NE & EA); training for DM colleagues, draft Habitat Regs Assessment document, and exploration of other measures such as water saving measures and upgrades of septic tanks. • Collaborate with Devon Local Nature Partnership to develop new statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategy with targets for east Devon sites to improve the district's biodiversity. • Improvement of the EDDC website and DM processes relating to ecology – i.e., overhauling the website to provide an ecology section, updating validation criteria and providing Listed Building Consent protected species position. • Integration of Habitats Regulations Assessment into internal processes, such as events booking, engineering team projects and other internal processes.
2.1.2	<p>Countryside team and District Ecologist to develop proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for both further habitat acquisition in the District that can facilitate commitments to nature recovery

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and carbon reduction/adaptation such as the Seaton Wetlands utilising the emerging Local Habitat map to implement nature recovery networks.
2.1.3	<p>Deliver new visitor infrastructure to Seaton Wetlands to enhance visitor experience and monetise the increased footfall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a pop-up refreshment facility – concessionary arrangement or in-house (Black Hole Marsh hub) • Installation of revised interpretation and welcome panels throughout the site, including updated waymarking system • Work with DCC to ensure smooth delivery of cycle route extension. • Development of a small suitable retail offer from the Discovery Hut selling natural history books and children’s explorer equipment. • Installation of revised interpretation and welcome panels throughout the site, including updated waymarking system
2.1.4	<p>Work with Forestry England and Offwell Woodlands Trust to deliver in 2024/25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take on tenancy of the Offwell Woods site as a Countryside Team managed woodland to enable the declaration of a new Local Nature Reserve for East Devon. • Embed existing volunteers into the wider countryside volunteering framework
2.1.5	<p>Heritage Lottery Fund ‘Saving Species Fund’ project successfully applied for and first year delivery funded. Species Spaces from Sea to Source in year one will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create Sheep’s Marsh intertidal scheme, • make improvements to freshwater grazing marsh, • engage private landowners with 12 hectares of species rich pasture restoration. • work with neighbouring landowners to increase conservation grazing of heathland over 20 hectares at Trinity Hill.
2.1.6	<p>Develop a Tree Strategy that sets out the framework for engaging with climate change, tree wardens and community engagement, tackling pests and diseases, and requirements for trees within development sites.</p>
2.1.7	<p>Tree team to establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on planting initiatives across East Devon working with climate change officer, Streetscene, Housing to get a council wide approach. • Engage local stakeholders / landowners for large scale planting including the identification of appropriate street tree planting locations throughout East Devon. • Actively engage and develop tree warden scheme across East Devon to help with the protection of existing trees and planting of new trees.
2.1.8	<p>Support the work of the World Heritage Site Partnership, East Devon & Blackdown Hills National Landscapes partnerships:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation, review and adoption of 2 National Landscapes Management Plans during 2024-25 • Implement recommendations from the Defra review of protected landscapes including the rebranding to National Landscapes • Recruit into the vacant East Devon National Landscape Manager, National Landscape Project Officer and National Landscape Comms Officer roles (due to retirement) • Provide funds for the delivery of the 2 National Landscape Business Plans (see www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk and www.blackdownhillaonb.org.uk)
2.1.9	<p>The whole Service to contribute to the East Devon’s Public Health Plan and improved health and wellbeing through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish projects delivering health benefits such as Wild Honiton • THG outreach programme – Creative Cabin, THG Out & About • Actively support volunteers on our sites and help provide mental and physical benefits through their participation in activities.
Better Homes and Communities	
2.1.10	<p>Implement East Devon’s Culture Strategy for East Devon 2022-32 that sets out the vision and aims for EDDC’s support for the arts & culture sector.</p> <p>Identified new areas are projects, activities and events for 2024/25 which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment: Improve the environmental practices of the district's cultural festivals to establish them as leaders in sustainable event management (pilot with Exmouth Festival) • Cultural Tourism: Linking with the new Tourism Strategy, develop a central ‘what’s on’ hub to inform both the tourism industry and consumers about the local cultural offer. • Creative Enterprise and Skills: Build inspiring talent development pathways for the current and next generation of East Devon creatives through setting up an ACED mentoring scheme. • New Places for Culture: Integrate cultural spaces and opportunities into new housing developments including Cranbrook. • Connectivity: Continue building the ACED network via 3 annual meetings, monthly newsletters, information-sharing and socials • Cultural Leadership: Integrate Cultural Strategy Objectives and Actions into wider Council plans, staff work schedules and resource planning to understand what resources are available and where gaps remain. • Capture Value: Develop a single evaluation process that captures the social, economic, environmental and health & wellbeing value of culture, enabling advocacy for the sector as a whole.

2.1.11	<p>Deliver year 2 of the UK SPF cultural programme & Rural England Prosperity Fund culture and leisure programme 2022-2025 with the following outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Round 2 of the Creative East Devon Fund • Continue delivering training opportunities for ACED Members • Enhance the quality and appeal of collections, and the sustainability of local museums, through a programme of shared capital investment in display and interpretation. • Support the Economic Development Team on the new Climate Action Programme (CAP, replacing Culture, Leisure and Tourism Fund) to administer decarbonisation grants to community organisations
2.1.12	<p>THG to deliver a new programme (outside of core work programme) that will be submitted to the Arts Council for funding in July 2024 to create a new programme for 2024/25 'Process and Place' - exploring creative process through time and place including.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art in the form of climate care and action. • Supporting and showcasing local South West artists. • Considering human engagement with the earth, art and artefacts. • Researching our cultural heritage. • Engaging and reviving of forgotten craft techniques. • Transforming THG's engagement programme and strengthened relationships to East Devon communities i.e., schools and other groups including.
2.1.13	<p>Manor Pavilion Theatre will deliver new areas of work outside of the main programme in 2024/25 that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up new programme of collaborative talks/plenary sessions with THG's exhibition programme 2024/25 • Ballet Theatre UK return with 2 new productions 2024/25. • Explore opportunity to make Sidmouth Youth Theatre a permanent residency within the arts centre from 2025.
2.1.14	<p>EDDC's Leisure & Built Facilities Strategy 2022-31 and delivery plan to achieve new work areas in 2024/25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start review of dual use site arrangements and secure a better outcome for EDDC in the funding arrangements. • Agree the future template for LED's management fee for 2024/25 and beyond integrating future savings targets to reduce fees. • Implement programme of energy reduction measures with replacement of existing boilers with air source heat pumps etc. • Review and put in place new management fee arrangement on a rolling 2 yearly basis that enables flexibility in setting the fee. • LED Outreach programme enables delivery of EDDC's Public Health action plan targets 2024/25 and also year 2 of the UK SPF Leisure programme

Service actions relating to climate change	
2.1.15	Embed consideration of climate change into biodiversity assessments, policy, and decision making, such as consideration for suitable plant species, control of invasive species, and use of technology to minimise carbon consumption, e.g., by reducing travel.
2.1.16	THG 'Climate Conversations programme'. Encouraging artists and groups to promote climate justice as part of our ongoing programme.
2.1.17	Improve the environmental practices of the district's cultural festivals to establish them as leaders in sustainable event management working with Exmouth Festival in 2024 as a pilot to create a template for other festivals in East Devon to achieve carbon footprint reductions.
2.1.18	Following on from members of the THG team receiving Carbon Literacy "train the trainer training", we aim to deliver Carbon Literacy awareness and sound bites to THG staff, volunteers, young people, artists and wider groups
2.1.19	THG, leisure centres and Manor Pavilion theatre are buildings with poor heating, ventilation and insulation due to their age and their energy consumption/efficiency can be improved
2.1.20	Undertake carbon reduction evaluation on events using toolkit such as Julie's Bicycle to capture reduced emissions achieved
2.1.21	Work with Climate Change Officer to help develop the Council's Carbon Descent plan with an audit of the carbon footprint of existing buildings, assets etc

2.2 Key projects in 2024-25	
2.2.1	Development of a Local Nature Recovery Plan for the district that identifies our key species and habitats and also where nature recovery will be targeted in the district.
2.2.2	Creation of a local Habitat Bank (as part of the Environment Act 2021 new duties for Biodiversity Net Gain.)
2.2.3	Adoption of a Tree Strategy for East Devon
2.2.4	Delivery of UK SPF Cultural programme year 2
2.2.5	Delivery of Heritage Lottery Fund Species Survival Fund project (Spaces from Sea to Source project)