

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of Meeting: 30 July 2025

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Review date for release n/a



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## **Stewardship of Public Amenities**

### **Report summary:**

The population of East Devon is increasing at more than twice the national average, driven in part by new housing developments. Prompted by financial pressures, the council took a decision around 15 years ago to stop adopting public amenities in such developments. In the intervening period a private management model has emerged, part of a wider national trend. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has recently concluded that the proliferation of such models is leading to significant customer detriment.

High levels of housing development in the District lead to concerns about residents being locked in to management arrangements that represent poor value for money and that are unaccountable locally. In the context of the Local Plan review, over 20,000 households (nearly 25% of households in East Devon) could be under private estate management regimes by 2040.

This report sets out the need for a new approach to the stewardship of community assets in East Devon's new housing-led developments, including strategic scale new communities, that focuses on creating social value for the lasting benefit of residents. The report recommends the development of a Stewardship Strategy to set out the new approach to the ownership and management of community assets. This is allied to the creation of a Charter Mark for community friendly developments.

More widely public amenities, from parks and gardens to cultural assets, continue to be a key determinant of the character of individual places across the District. This is alongside being a source of considerable civic pride and bringing significant added value, for example through supporting the visitor economy. Against a backdrop of both local government reorganisation and the need for likely cost savings, there is an opportunity for the Council to review its approach to the stewardship of public amenities more widely.

The context of the future transition to a larger unitary Council raises the question how to safeguard these amenities into the future, including the relationship with Parish and Town Councils. It is recommended that a Portfolio Holder Group is constituted to consider the Council's current approach to stewardship, including aspects such as Community Asset Transfer, and how this approach can evolve given this revised context.

### **Is the proposed decision in accordance with:**

Budget                      Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework    Yes ☒ No ☐

### **Recommendations:**

That Cabinet;

- 1) Recognises the vital role that the effective stewardship of public amenities plays in supporting the establishment of sustainable communities

- 2) Supports the commissioning of a Stewardship Strategy targeted at new developments coming forward in the District, alongside the formulation of a Charter Mark for community-friendly developments
- 3) Supports an annual quality of life survey being undertaken across all new developments in the district in order to monitor progress
- 4) Supports the establishment of a Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning Portfolio Holder Group to consider the Council's approach to the stewardship of public amenities more widely and for this to bring an initial report back to Cabinet within six months

**Reason for recommendation:**

To ensure that new housing-led developments in the district are supported by high quality community infrastructure and public services through a management regime that is predicated upon the creation of social value.

To ensure that the Council's approach to the stewardship of public amenities more widely remains in step with the changing context of future local government reorganisation and expected budgetary pressures.

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**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

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

A full equalities impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the development of the Stewardship Strategy. The proposed approach to stewardship should ensure equal and improved access to community services for all residents across the district.

**Climate change** Low Impact – A climate impact assessment will also be undertaken as part of the development of the Stewardship Strategy. Ensuring that people have access to high quality services close to where they live has potential to have a positive impact on carbon emissions (reducing need to travel etc).

**Risk:** High Risk; As outlined in the report, failure to resolve stewardship issues poses a significant potential reputational and financial risk to the council.

**Links to background information** Cabinet 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024 – 190 New Communities in East Devon [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 1st May, 2024, 6.00 pm - East Devon](#), Competition and Markets Authority [Housebuilding market study - GOV.UK](#)

**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
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## Report in full

1. Cabinet resolved in May 2024 to '*endorse undertaking a strategic review of the Council's approach to the delivery of assets and services in major new developments to take forward recommendation 9 from the Planning Advisory Service report*' (which stated that the Council should '*Work with other Council services to develop a more corporate approach to supporting the development of Cranbrook and the ongoing services that a community like Cranbrook needs as it develops.*')
2. This report sets out the need for a new sustainable approach for stewardship of community assets in East Devon's new housing-led developments and larger new communities, that focuses on creating and capturing social value. It recommends the development of a new Stewardship Strategy to set out the council's approach moving forwards.
3. Against a backdrop of future local government reorganisation and expected budgetary pressures, the report goes on to consider the implications for the Council's approach to the stewardship of public amenities more widely. It further recommends the establishment of a Portfolio Holder Group to consider how the Council can best respond to this changing context.

## Background

4. The population of East Devon is increasing at more than twice the national average, driven in part by new housing development primarily in the West End of the district. This growth is primarily driven by new housing developments, with an average of 886 new homes delivered annually over the past three years. We are progressing a new Local Plan which seeks to meet a need for 950 homes per year under transitional arrangements in the new National Planning Policy Framework. National government has updated housing targets which increase this figure to up to 1188 homes (using the standard methodology).
5. Prompted by financial pressures, the council stopped adopting public amenities in such developments around 15 years ago. These amenities were largely play areas and new greenspaces but on larger scale developments also included new buildings such as community halls and sports pavilions. Together, these facilities are a vital component in supporting the establishment of sustainable communities. In the intervening period a private management model has emerged, part of a wider national trend.
6. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA, Housing Market Study, February 2024) has recently concluded that the proliferation of such models is leading to significant customer detriment. Issues include the 'service' charges residents pay, the quality of amenities and management services, potential for disproportionate sanctions for outstanding charges, and the efforts required to achieve satisfactory outcomes. The report warns that if the status quo is maintained, aggregate detriment to householders is likely to worsen over time.
7. High levels of housing development in East Devon amplify concerns about the impact that private management regimes could have locally. The table below shows that nearly 8,000 homes in the district are currently subject to private estate management arrangements. The Council is progressing a new Local Plan which will guide development through to 2042. If the status quo endures, over 20,000 households (nearly 25% of households in East Devon) could be under private estate management regimes by this end date.

Size of development	Count
10 – 100	43
100 - 500	16
500 - 1000	2
Total number of sites	61
Total number of homes	7,577

*Figure 1: Distribution of housing developments with private management companies by size*

8. For larger scale developments in particular, there is a risk that a schism develops between these new communities and older, more established settlements. Put another way there effectively becomes a 'new' East Devon and an 'old' East Devon which are distinguished not just by their very different population characteristics, but also by the services they receive from the council and how these are funded. Used as a positive force for change this can be harnessed to help implement new and more creative and innovative models of service delivery. At worst though this will become a source of lingering resentment within the district.
9. Although the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill seeks to broaden the community right to buy community assets and broadens this power to include sports assets it does not directly address the management issues raised in this report.

### **Impact of Current Management Regimes on New Communities**

10. Effective long-term stewardship helps to create better managed, more liveable and sustainable communities and ensures that new developments enable people and the environment to flourish in perpetuity. It involves the responsible management of shared spaces like parks, playgrounds, and community centres.
11. There are strong synergies between stewardship and the concept of placemaking. This is the act of shaping civic life using a place-led, human-centred approach that engages those most affected by changes. It leverages community strengths and creativity to create better living spaces. Placemaking supports community development by maximising social, economic, and environmental benefits. This aligns with the vision of the Council Plan.
12. The Local Plan's spatial strategy focuses major development in the West End area, including Cranbrook and the proposed second new town. Cranbrook saw its first residents in 2012 and now has over 3,000 homes, with a demographic profile that differs significantly from that of established towns in the district. Growth is not confined to purely the new town with significant growth in the Tithebarn/Mosshayne and West Clyst areas in Broadclyst parish. These include significant areas of green space currently managed and future playing fields anticipated to be managed, through a private management company. More widely there are new developments with private management companies distributed across the District, from Plumb Park in Exmouth to Pebble Beach in Seaton.
13. To help define and understand residents' experiences a survey was conducted over 4 weeks in August- September 2024. The survey focused on the West End area that has been a focus for accommodating over 5,500 new homes since 2012. These are located within three main areas:
  - **Cranbrook** (Cranbrook Town Council - c3,300 homes occupied, increasing to 8,000). Cranbrook Town Council manage key public amenities including allotments, play areas and the country park following the effective abolition of the main estate rent charge in 2018. They also own and manage The Younghayes Centre community building and the

sports pavilion at Ingrams. Two pockets of development (less than 100 homes in total) are still the subject of private estate management companies.

- **West Clyst** (Broadclyst Parish Council – c1,200 homes and a care home occupied, increasing to 1,350 homes). Amenities are predominantly managed through private management companies. Some work has been sub-contracted to Broadclyst Parish Council by one of the management companies. Allotments will be transferred to the Parish Council. Current application from a Housing Association to enable them to manage communal areas and not transfer this to a management company.
  - **Tithebarn/Mosshayne** (Broadclyst Parish Council – c950 homes occupied, increasing to 1,669 homes) Amenities to be predominantly managed through private management companies which are at various stages of establishment.
14. Despite a low response rate (less than 5% of residents) the survey results help to define the problem and align with the findings of the CMA report. A summary of the survey responses is provided at Appendix 1.
  15. The majority of respondents stated that the availability of public amenities was important or fairly important in influencing their choice of home, but when moving to an area 34% of respondents were unaware of how local facilities would be managed (compared to less than 2% who were very aware). There was a general lack of satisfaction with the availability and management of public amenities, with the highest proportion of fairly/very satisfied respondents in Cranbrook (where public amenities are largely managed by the Town Council) and the lowest level of satisfaction in Tithebarn/Mosshayne (where there are a mixture of private management companies).
  16. The quality of maintenance was identified as the most important factor by 46% of respondents, followed by the cost of maintenance (21%). An ability to influence local management decisions was identified as the least important factor (32%) followed by clarity of who is responsible for maintenance (15%).
  17. Low satisfaction levels and the sense of frustration and urgency expressed in response to open questions highlight the need to review the council's approach. Residents feel that the rapid housing development in the area has outpaced the provision of essential facilities. There is a desire greater accountability and a balanced approach to development that prioritises quality of life.

## Financial Considerations

18. Estate rent charges, paid in addition to Council Tax, mean that individual households are required to meet additional costs in areas where community assets are managed by Estate Management Companies.
19. In Cranbrook the impact of abolishing the estate management charge has had a significant impact on the parish precept. This now stands at £256.03 for a band D property, the highest in the district and almost three times the average. Reducing this to the average level would require a £2 increase in the wider district precept, but the district council is limited to a £5/3% increase per annum before triggering a referendum. Allocating 40% of this increase to Cranbrook could strain wider service delivery.
20. Whilst recognising the desire for equity between Cranbrook and existing towns, the council faces the challenge of ensuring a balanced budget in the face of a further reduction in funding. This emphasises the importance of finding a sustainable financial model that does not exacerbate these pressures.
21. The CMA concluded that the root cause of the aggregate detriment that it observed was the decrease in the levels of adoption of amenities by relevant authorities, resulting in a proliferation of private management arrangements. The survey results helped to demonstrate higher levels of satisfaction where public amenities were managed outside of this regime (e.g. in Cranbrook). The potential role for commuted sums to help pay for management and maintenance also needs to be considered and explored in this context and this could be passported to organisations such as parish and town councils.

## Options

22. The Council is part of the Town & Country Planning Association's New Communities Group, which includes over twenty local authorities that are planning and delivering large-scale communities totalling over 300,000 homes. Advice was sought on best practice nationally, leading to contact with representatives from Chilmington Green in Ashford (6,000 homes) and Chelmsford Garden Community in Essex (10,000 homes) and Ebbsfleet Garden City in Kent (15,000 homes).
23. The approach taken with each development varies. For example, Chelmsford Borough Council still adopts certain facilities like large green spaces and sports pitches. A common theme is the establishment of community-led management organisations, such as community interest companies, allowing direct resident representation in decision-making alongside wider stakeholders.
24. Drawing on these case studies, and experience with the Cranbrook new community, two key variables guide the options: governance and funding arrangements. These frame two options, one community-led and the other parish-led, along with the status quo and adoption by the local authority regime. These are set out below;
- 25.

### Options Development

	Private Estate Management Companies (Status quo)	Community-led approach	Parish-led approach	Readoption of public amenities by local authorities (Pre 2010 regime)
<b>Governance</b>	Private company	Community based organisation established on a not-for-profit basis e.g. Community interest company	Parish or town council, potentially formed through a community governance review	Higher tiers of local government hierarchy (District and County Councils) perform an enhanced role
<b>Funding</b>	Estate Rent Charge	Estate rent charge, possible further sources including asset endowment	Parish precept component of Council Tax, possible further sources including asset endowment	District/County components of Council Tax. Potential for commuted sums.

## Cost Benefit Analysis

26. The CMA report finds limited competitive pressure on estate management companies to deliver services at reasonable costs or acceptable standards. This approach does not enable all the issues, such as environmental benefits or the creation of social value, to be considered.
27. The costs and benefits of two alternative approaches (community-led and Parish-led) are summarised below. This does not consider all of the options, including the current status quo arrangement or returning a regime of the District/County Councils adopting assets, but is intended to help give insight in to potential alternatives.

## Community-Led Management

### Costs

- Initial establishment costs need to be met
- Perception of high costs and paying twice in relation to Council Tax
- Potential lack of expertise and specialised skills – may require external support at additional expense
- Ongoing reliance on volunteer capacity – with a young demographic families tend to be time poor
- Potential for disagreements and inability to manage diverse interest and opinions
- Long term resilience – may become too dependent upon key individuals

### Benefits

- Not for profit constitution should deliver better value for money than private model and reduce burden on local authorities
- Local representation and active participation enhances accountability and community empowerment
- More responsive to the needs of the community including bringing forward tailored solutions
- Ability to collect estate rent charge
- Potential to hold assets and to secure wider incomes streams
- Stronger social bonds contributes to sense of belonging

## Parish-Led Management

### Costs

- Parish precept will increase which will accentuate perception of double paying
- Could lead to tensions between 'old' and 'new' parishioners, with higher charger for existing residents
- Time and cost implications if a community governance review is needed to establish a new parish
- Potential lesser role for volunteers
- Perception that public sector does not achieve value for money, is more bureaucratic and less agile
- Variable capacity/expertise across different parishes

### Benefits

- Potential to lever existing institutional capacity and expertise
- Tried and tested nature of the regime means that new residents will be more familiar with it
- Simple to administer, drawing on existing arrangements
- Democratic accountability
- Lower income households can benefit from Council Tax reduction schemes
- Opportunities for public consultation and community engagement
- Potential to access wider public funding streams

28. These alternative options can draw from ongoing revenue sources, such as estate rent charges or parish precepts. However, neither option avoids the potential perception around 'double paying' for public amenities and services relative to the regime in more established settlements.
29. Ultimately, no preferred option emerges from the cost-benefit analysis – there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Both community-led and parish-led options can work, depending on the context and stakeholders. Indeed, they are not mutually exclusive, and the case studies help to demonstrate that these options can work in tandem.
30. More in depth research could help to explore further potential options including full community ownership or a cooperative approach. A menu-based, multi-agency stewardship model could also offer the most balanced and practical way forward.

## Impact of Local Government Reorganisation

31. The potential for Local Government Reorganisation acts a further catalyst for resetting the Council's approach to stewardship. Indeed the English Devolution White Paper, which underpins the drive for reorganisation, sets out the government's expectation that local authorities will "rewire their relationship with parish and town councils, and strengthen expectations on engagement and community voice." The Council's own Interim Plan submission recognises the vital role that town and parish councils play in the communities



they represent and commits to further engagement in developing final proposals over the course of this year.

32. Experience from Cornwall and Somerset suggests that the creation of larger, unitary Councils covering a wider area is likely to lead to an enhanced role for parish and town councils. Subsequently there is a question as to what the Council can be doing now to consider this scenario and to safeguard the provision of public amenities, particularly given likely budgetary pressures. Structured engagement would help to define critical success factors and to develop a collegiate response to this challenge. This will draw on the key role that parish and town councils already perform and also help to test different ideas and to understand different ambitions.

## **Recommendations and Implementation Plan**

33. There is an opportunity to redefine the approach to long-term stewardship in relation to new developments by creating a new model which is based upon social value, with wide stakeholder support and engagement, to ensure that our new communities are sustainable places with equitable access to community assets. The proposed approach needs to be carefully considered to ensure it does not place additional financial burdens on the Council.
34. There is a need for a deliberate strategy that properly recognise the contribution of effective stewardship arrangements to meeting the vision of the Council Plan. An agile approach will be required to navigate complexity and uncertainty, with an emphasis on building collaborative advantage with key partners.
35. The following recommendations are therefore proposed to implement a sustainable stewardship approach for new developments coming forward across the district:
36. **Develop a Stewardship Strategy:** This will reset the council's approach and address the paradox between the desire to support the creation of sustainable communities and the rise of private management arrangements due to budgetary constraints. Structured engagement with key stakeholders will be required to build collaborative advantage and reinforce the importance of moving away from the current status quo. Ongoing dialogue and engagement with key partners as the Stewardship Strategy will help to shape workable models that respond to the differing contexts that apply across the District and to identify opportunities to pilot specific approaches.
37. It is suggested that the strategy focuses on the achievement of the following strategic objectives;
- New housing-led developments are supported by the timely provision of public amenities that are managed effectively and sustainably over the long term for the benefit of residents
  - The approach to stewardship is agreed with key stakeholders at the earliest opportunity and prior to the granting of planning permission
  - There is a clear governance structure that gives residents a strong voice and provides accountability for decision making
  - Management costs are transparent and represent good value for money with long term, sustainable funding mechanisms in place
  - The stewardship approach is adaptable and able to respond to changing circumstances over time
  - Stewardship arrangements foster a sense of belonging and community spirit within new development and help to improve residents' quality of life
  - Private estate management companies are only established as a last resort
38. Consideration needs to be given to the potential to adopting this strategy as a Supplementary Planning Document. This will give it weight in the determination of planning applications,



substantially strengthening the council's negotiating position. This will need to be balanced with meeting the procedural requirements to achieve this status.

39. **Produce a Community-Friendly Charter Mark for new developments:** This will address the lack of awareness of management arrangements in the house purchasing process. Part of the challenge here is the contrast principle where an annual management fee will always look small, and hence insignificant, in relation to the cost of buying a new home. The Charter Mark will help to provide visible social proof that a development safeguards future residents' interests which should also help to drive house values and sales. This potential for mutual gain will help to incentivise housebuilders to move away from private estate management arrangements. Housing associations, given their social purpose, would also be natural advocates for this approach.
40. **Undertake an annual quality of life survey:** Introducing this type of survey in East Devon will provide data to measure progress over time and form the basis for one of the Key Performance Indicators. This builds on best practice in other areas.
41. **Identify a pipeline of potential developments:** Early and proactive engagement with stakeholders will set the proposed stewardship approach in partnership. Refocusing an existing role will help determine the best fit for each development, ensuring arrangements are context-specific and capture potential future revenue generation opportunities.
42. Progressing these work streams can draw on the balance of the £80k budget not required to progress the Cranbrook Community Governance Review that was agreed at May 2024 Cabinet meeting.
43. **Establish a Portfolio Holder Group to consider the Council's approach to the Stewardship of Public Amenities across the District:** Whilst there is a need to consider the Council's approach to the stewardship of public amenities in new developments, the backdrop of future local government reorganisation necessarily raises a broader question around existing arrangements in established towns and villages. In order to address this, it is recommended that a Portfolio Holder Group that includes representation from key portfolio holders is formed to consider this issue in detail. This will need to include engaging key stakeholder, developing critical success factors, identifying capacity constraints and considering key policies, such as in relation to community asset transfer. Suggested draft terms of reference are set out at Appendix 2.

## Conclusion

44. Stewardship arrangements are an important contributor to the achievement of sustainable development. This report considers the potential to reset the Council's approach in direct response to the findings of the CMA review and the evidence available locally together with the further impetus of Local Government Reorganisation. Together the proposed stewardship strategy and charter-mark will serve to provide a coherent response to the challenge of ensuring accountable and cost-effective arrangements are in place for new developments that have the best interests of residents at their heart. Furthermore the proposed Portfolio Holder Group will consider the arrangements in place for managing public amenities across existing towns and villages and how these can best evolve to stay in step with this changing context and to safeguard ongoing provision.

## Financial implications:

Per recommendation 4, the financial implications are yet to be calculated.

## Legal implications:

The legal and governance implications will depend upon the stewardship arrangements put in place for individual public amenities. These implications will be considered as arrangements for ongoing provision are developed further.

## Appendix 1 – Summary of Residents' Survey Feedback

The survey ran between 23<sup>rd</sup> August and 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024 with 12 questions of which two were open text. There were 213 responses in total and the majority of respondents were in the 25-54 age range. Over 70% of the respondents were women and the majority of respondents were working full time

### Residents Survey results

#### Importance of public amenities

Overall **65%** respondents stated that the availability of public amenities was important or fairly important in influencing their choice of home.

However when moving to the area **34%** of respondents were unaware of how local facilities would be managed compared to less than **2%** who were very aware.

#### Availability of public amenities

Overall **29%** of respondents were fairly or very satisfied with the availability of a range of public amenities compared to **43%** who were fairly or very dissatisfied.

The highest proportion of fairly/very satisfied respondents were in Cranbrook (**35%**) followed by Westclyst (**34%**) and then Tithebarn/Mosshayne (**19%**) with **37%** of respondents from the latter being very dissatisfied.

#### Maintenance of public amenities

In total **36%** of respondents were fairly or very satisfied with the standard of maintenance versus **35%** who were fairly or very dissatisfied.

The highest proportion of fairly/very satisfied respondents were in Cranbrook (**46%**) followed by Westclyst (**34%**) and then Tithebarn/Mosshayne (**22%**).

#### Accountability and decision making

The quality of maintenance was identified as the most important factor by **46%** of respondents. This was followed by the cost of maintenance at **21%**. An ability to influence local management decisions was identified as the least important factor by **32%** of respondents followed by clarity of who is responsible for the maintenance at **15%**.

Overall **47%** of respondents felt that they have no influence over decision-making compared to less than **2%** who felt that they had a high degree of influence.

#### Looking forward

Over **72%** of respondents said the most important future consideration was that new facilities should be provided in step with new homes. Being clear about who was responsible for maintaining specific facilities had the lowest overall score followed by increased local accountability and transparency.

Improved leisure and sports facilities was the most desired amenity that respondents wanted to see going forward. The need to improve infrastructure and amenities was the top theme that emerged when respondents were asked whether they wanted to add anything in addition to the questions.

## Appendix 2

### East Devon District Council: Portfolio Holder Group – Stewardship of Public Amenities

**1. Title of Group:** Stewardship of Public Amenities Portfolio Holder Group

**2. Purpose/Objectives:** The primary objective of this Portfolio Holder Group is to conduct a comprehensive review of the current stewardship arrangements for public amenities across East Devon District, with a view to developing recommendations for a sustainable and effective future approach. This will involve:

- Assessing the current landscape of public amenity provision and management.
- Identifying best practices in public amenity stewardship from other local authorities and organisations.
- Evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of current stewardship models, including the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) approach.
- Engaging with key stakeholders to gather their perspectives and insights.
- Developing critical success factors for effective public amenity stewardship.
- Formulating actionable recommendations for future stewardship models and policies that ensure the long-term sustainability and community benefit of public amenities, both existing and those that will be forthcoming in the future.

**3. Scope of Work:** The Group will consider the stewardship of all public amenities currently owned, managed, or significantly influenced by East Devon District Council. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Parks and open spaces.
- Community buildings and halls.
- Leisure facilities.
- Specific land parcels with public access or community benefit.

Specifically, the Group will:

- Review the current approach to Community Asset Transfers (CATs), including its criteria, processes, and outcomes.
- Examine different models of stewardship, including direct council management, partnership working, lease agreements, and community ownership.
- Assess funding models and resource implications for various stewardship approaches.
- Consider the role of technology and innovation in amenity management.
- Identify opportunities for greater community involvement and empowerment in amenity stewardship.

Out of Scope:

- Detailed operational management of individual amenities (beyond the scope of stewardship models).
- Planning decisions related to new developments, unless directly impacting the long-term stewardship of existing public amenities.

**4. Membership:** The Group will comprise:

- [Number] East Devon District Councillors, appointed by [relevant committee/council motion].
- Relevant East Devon District Council Officers (e.g., from key service areas, Legal, Assets, Finance departments) providing technical advice and support.

**5. Engagement with Key Stakeholders:** Extensive engagement will be a critical component of the Group's work. Key stakeholders to be consulted include, but are not limited to:

- Parish and Town Councils: As significant local partners and potential stewards of amenities, their input is essential. Specific engagement methods will include:
  - Dedicated workshops or focus groups.
  - Requests for written submissions on their experiences and aspirations.
  - Interviews with key representatives.
- Community groups and organisations currently managing or utilising public amenities.
- Leisure and recreation providers.
- Local residents (through broader consultation methods, potentially managed by a separate work package if deemed too extensive for this Group).
- Relevant internal East Devon District Council departments.

**6. Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for Public Amenity Stewardship:** The Group will develop specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) critical success factors, which will guide its recommendations. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Financial Sustainability: Ensure that stewardship models promote the long-term financial viability of public amenities, reducing reliance on direct council funding where appropriate.
- Community Benefit and Accessibility: Maximise the social, health, and environmental benefits derived from public amenities for all residents, ensuring equitable access.
- Quality and Maintenance: Maintain public amenities to a high standard, ensuring they are safe, well-maintained, and fit for purpose.
- Community Empowerment: Foster genuine opportunities for local communities to be involved in the management and decision-making processes regarding their local amenities.
- Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities: Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability for all parties involved in amenity stewardship.
- Efficiency and Effectiveness: Implement stewardship models that are efficient in resource utilisation and effective in achieving desired outcomes.

**7. Reporting and Duration:** The Group will convene its first meeting by [Date - e.g., July 2025]. The Group will provide an initial report detailing its findings, stakeholder feedback, and preliminary recommendations to Cabinet within six months of its establishment [e.g., by January 2026]. A final report, incorporating feedback on the initial findings, will be presented to Cabinet within [e.g., 9-12 months] of its establishment.

8. **Resources:** The Group will be supported by officers from [relevant Council departments, e.g., Legal, Assets, Community, Finance] for data provision, legal advice, and administrative support. Any specific budget requirements for external expertise or consultation activities will be identified and approved separately.

9. **Review and Dissolution:** These Terms of Reference will be reviewed and approved by Cabinet. The Group will be dissolved once its final report and recommendations have been presented and considered by Cabinet, unless otherwise determined.