

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*