

Report to: Overview Committee

Date of Meeting 28 May 2026

Heading/Title: Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site arrangements

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Richard Jefferies/Cllr Nick Hookway

Director/Assistant Director: Andy Wood/Charlie Plowden

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Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

1. Background

With the closure of the Jurassic Coast Trust in January 2025, the governance and management structures for the Jurassic Coast were dissolved and delivery of the management of the World Heritage Site (WHS) returned to Dorset Council and Devon County Council. One Jurassic Coast Trust staff member was retained by Dorset Council in the role of Principal Officer for World Heritage, providing key expertise and advice on the ongoing conservation of the Site's Outstanding Universal Value. In May 2025 a Jurassic Coast stakeholder consultation event was led by Dorset Coast Forum and was well attended. The purpose of the event was to provide a space to discuss the future of the WHS and gather views on site management priorities and key issues. Based on the feedback, the councils pursued the following key work areas;

- Re-establishing the governance structure for the WHS and developing a pathway to create a new management plan for the Site.
- Recruit a World Heritage Officer to focus on creating a new website for the WHS, a priority request from the stakeholder consultation event.
- Continue with ongoing conservation and stakeholder liaison work, including planning consultations, liaising and collaborating with key public bodies, supporting stakeholders on request, delivering key conservation projects
- Celebrate the 25th anniversary of the WHS inscription throughout the year in 2026

Progress has been made across all areas. A new Executive Group has been established to steer the management decision making for the WHS, with EDDC officers actively participating. The new management plan for the WHS has started being drafted and is following guidance provided by Historic England. Stakeholder and public consultation on the new plan is expected to take place later in 2026 and spring 2027 is being targeted for local authority adoption of a new plan.

A new World Heritage Officer was recruited and started in post in January 2026. A scope for a new Jurassic Coast website has been drafted, and stakeholder feedback will be sought April and May 2026. The intent is to appoint a web developer by summer and launch the new site by the end of 2026.

Conservation and stakeholder liaison work has continued successfully, in particular in relation to a significant strategic project titled the Jurassic Coast Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Mitigation Study. This technical piece of work is highly innovative and aims to create bespoke guidance for how the Jurassic Coast should be addressed throughout environmental impact assessment processes. The project is being led by the Flood and Coast South West team at Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council with input from the Principal Officer for World Heritage and officers in local councils, Natural England, Historic England, the Environment Agency.

The 25th anniversary celebrations for the WHS are ongoing. Stakeholders were invited to organise new or align existing events to the anniversary and were provided with a simple logo to use. A great variety of events have been linked to the celebrations, including art exhibitions, beach cleans, family events, talks, walks and whole-day programmes of engagement. A volunteer was recruited to help co-ordinate promotion of these events and create original content as part of the WHS team's contribution. In addition to this, the team have also commissioned a new artwork to showcase the world class palaeontological heritage of East Devon. Plans to use the artwork as the basis for community engagement activities in Sidmouth during late autumn are at the early stages of development.

2026 will be a crucial year for the Jurassic Coast, in which the commitment of local and national stakeholders to the Site's incredible geological heritage is reaffirmed and a new governance structure and management plan is established as the foundation for future collaborative work. Not only will this focus on preserving this spectacular coastline for future generations but also on how its values can help benefit and enrich the lives of local communities.

2. Recommendations/Decision

- 2.1 That Overview Committee note the report and supports the work of the Jurassic Coast team in East Devon.

3. Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

- 3.1 To enable the work programmes and review of the WHS Management Plan to align with a number of East Devon District Council's Strategies including our Council Plan, Climate Change Strategy, and emerging Local Plan.

4. Options

4.1 The site management framework, updated every six years, is not a statutory document but is nevertheless essential in demonstrating to UNESCO that this globally significant asset is being managed in a way that meets the UK Government's obligations to the World Heritage Convention.

5. Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

- A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure
- A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.
- A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.
- A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services

6. Financial Comments/Implications

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

7. Legal Comments/Implications

7.1 There are no substantive legal issues to be added to this report

8. Risk Implications

Please complete the risk table – further guidance available on the [Intranet](#)

8.1 Set out a short description (narrative) of the Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken.

8.2 Include details of the Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks.

8.3 The risk section should also include the risks for all the options considered.

Activity/			Assessment of Risk		
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plant/ materials etc	List significant hazards	People at risk	*Impact 1-4	*Likeli hood 1-4	Risk Score	Existing controls e.g. Safety procedures	What further action Is required to control/mitigate the risk?
No risks identified within the report	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Impact – Major = 4 Serious = 3 Significant = 2 Minor = 1
 *Likelihood – Very Likely = 4 Likely = 3 Unlikely = 2 Remote = 1

9. Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

9.1 This relevance assessment aims to analyse gathered information for potential relevance to equality. If a Full Equality Impact Assessment is required ([Equality analysis impact assessment form](#)), include it as an appendix. At the minimum, the following table must be completed.

Scope (<i>Provide an overview, including objectives and desired outcomes</i>)	The report is providing Overview Committee with an update on the changes that have been made to the governance arrangements to the World Heritage Site and also the planned programme of activities for 2026/27.
Evidence gathered and engagement (<i>List stakeholders consulted and relevant processes, policies, and data sources</i>)	N/A
Relevance assessment findings (<i>If relevant to equality, undertake a full EIA or If no relevance to equality, explain why with supporting information</i>)	<p>A full EIA is required: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, this assessment has demonstrated relevance to equality with regard to: Please check relevant boxes</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy and maternity <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> Sex <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage or Civil Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief <input type="checkbox"/> Armed Forces <input type="checkbox"/> Other, e.g. carers, care leavers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc. </p> <p>If no, explain why: This is a report to update Members only on the changes to governance arrangements and to understand more about the priorities for the WHS moving forward.</p>
Relevance ranking	<input type="checkbox"/> High – Very relevant to protected characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Medium – Somewhat relevant to protected characteristics

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low – Not relevant to protected characteristics
Key findings and impacts	N/A
Conclusion drawn (<i>i.e No major changes needed; EIA found no negative impact or adjust policy/process to remove identified barriers</i>)	N/A
Actions (<i>Proposed actions to mitigate negative impacts on identified groups</i>)	N/A
Signed off by	Charlie Plowden

10. HR and Workforce Implications

N/A

11. Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

N/A.

12. Climate Change Implications

12.1 The World Heritage Site has positive climate benefits (enhanced biodiversity etc). The site is significantly impacted by the impacts of climate change with rising sea levels and increasing sea temperatures impacting on the dynamic nature of the coastline. The WHS Management Plan has within it policies that seek to guide how to understand and protect the dynamic nature of the coastline when considering planning related matters such as coastal defence schemes.

13. Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

N/A

14. Procurement and Social Value implications

N/A

15. Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

N/A

16. Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

N/A

17. Digital and Data

N/A

18. Consultation and Engagement

N/A

19. Communications

There is an opportunity to reaffirm the Council's commitment to the World Heritage Coast and how it provides both an environmental, social and economic benefit to the district.

20. Next Steps

- 20.1 The Jurassic Coast team will provide a timetable of the review of the existing Site Management Plan and a process of consultation with key stakeholders which will include East Devon DC.
- 20.2 The team will also look to develop activities and projects that will positively engage East Devon's coastal communities and where opportunities present to work with some of the Council's internal teams (e.g Streetscene Engineers, Climate Change team and Culture) as well as the East Devon National Landscape Partnership.

21. Appendices

- 21.1 List and attach with report to ensure councillors have all the documents necessary for the decision making process.

22. Background Papers

- 22.1 No need to refer to minutes or previous reports on the same matter as these are already publicly available.

Proposed Report Sign Off process

Please make sure you have obtained the relevant sign off and the date completed before submitting your report to Democratic Services.

	Officer Name	Date requested	Date Completed
Legal & Governance	Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer	13/05/26	Required
Finance	Section 151 Officer or Deputy S151 Officer	13/05/26	Required
Communications	communications@eastdevon.gov.uk	N/A	If applicable
Digital and Data	digital@eastdevon.gov.uk	N/A	If applicable
Engagement	engagement@eastdevon.gov.uk	N/A	If applicable
HR	HR Lead	N/A	If applicable
Chief Executive	Chief Executive	N/A	If applicable
Director	Relevant Director	13/05/26	Required
Assistant Director(s)	Relevant Assistant Director(s)	N/A	Required
Cabinet Lead Member(s)	Relevant Lead Member (s)	13/05/26	Required
Executive Leadership Team	ELT	N/A	Required
Strategic Leadership Team	SLT	N/A	If applicable