

SOUTH EAST DEVON HABITAT REGULATIONS PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting of South and East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee held on 28 October 2021

Present:

Councillor Wrigley (Teignbridge District Council) (Chair),
Councillor Jung (East Devon District Council)
Councillor Sutton (Exeter City Council)

Officers in attendance

Fergus Pate, Principal Growth Point Officer Spatial Planning
Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Jill Day, Principal Project Manager (Local Plans)
Trish Corns, Democratic Services Officer
Alison Slade, Natural England

69 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

70 Minutes of the previous meeting 29 April 2021

RESOLVED

The Minutes of the SEDHREC held on 29 April 2021 are confirmed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

71 Declarations of interest

Cllr Martin Wrigley: Minutes 74 to 79: Personal Interest: His house overlooks the estuary, and he is a member and Treasurer of Cockwood Boat Club.

Cllr Geoff Jung: Minutes 74 and 79: Personal Interest: He is a board member of the Pebblebed Heaths NNR Advisory Board and also a member of Woodbury Parish Council, the area of which includes part of the pebblebed heath and marsh.

72 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

73 Confidential/exempt items

It was agreed that Agenda item 13 be taken in private session. (Minutes 80 and 81 below refers)

74 Financial Report Update

Further to Minute 65 of the last meeting on 29 April 2021, additional information as requested was reported.

It was unanimously

Resolved that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the updated information provided in the report for the variance reported in Table 6 of the April 2021 financial report;
2. Notes the itemised update of Table 6 in the report;
3. Reconsidered the April 2021 Finance report in light of the information provided.

75 **Habitat mitigation team update**

The agenda report provided a regular update from the habitat mitigation delivery team, detailing the initiatives, partnership working and day to day activities of public-facing staff. Continued and effective delivery of the Strategy and the development this enables remained of very high importance to staff and all partners.

The Executive thanked staff for their hard work in the effective delivery of the Strategy.

It was unanimously

Resolved that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the updates provided by the Habitats Mitigation Officers and Devon Loves Dogs project co-ordinator;
2. Receives a further update at the next meeting of the Executive.

76 **South East Devon Wildlife Communications Key Performance Indicators**

The agenda report set out the KPIs identified around residents website use, signing up to newsletters, and social media engagement, including facebook, twitter and Instagram. Collecting this data on a monthly basis enabled officers to monitor and evaluate it to understand how project delivery, stakeholder engagement and communications efforts are impacting on our overall goals.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the results of the communications report for the period Feb 2021 – July 2021
2. Receives further reports on communications Key Performance Indicators every 12 months beginning April 2022.

77 **COVID-19 Report** The agenda report detailed the impacts from the Covid pandemic on protected sites and staff and operations, brought about by many factors including changes to the public's behaviour, an unprecedented high level of visitor pressure to protected sites, a significant increase in dog owners and leisure activities such as paddle boarding and boat users, an increase in anti-social behaviour towards staff, cessation of volunteers, and the general health risk to staff of Covid transmission.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the identification, categorisation and assessment of impacts to the protected sites as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic;

2. Notes the discussion of the impacts and considerations for future management of the sites.

78 **Exe estuary wildlife refuges 3rd annual monitoring report**

The Chair welcomed Philip Saunders and Durwyn Liley from Footprint Ecology who presented the research work and findings on the monitoring of the wildlife refuges.

The Executive Committee approved wildlife refuges, at Exmouth from 15 Sept – 31 Dec and all year round at Dawlish Warren, in October 2017. No fines or enforcement were suggested or recommended and an annual monitoring programme, to report over a 3 year period.

The agenda report and the presentation from Philip Saunders evidenced that the refuges were being effective in reducing disturbance to water birds from recreational activities and positively contributed to the ability of the Exe Estuary to support designated bird populations in the Special Protected Area. It was recommended that the monitoring should continue as part of the mitigation measures, with a further report next year.

The full presentation can be found at https://teignbridge.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/611744

The pandemic had resulted in increased visitor pressure particularly from dog walkers and paddleboard users.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee:

1. Notes the results from the third annual wildlife refuge monitoring report;
2. Receives a future report in Jan 2022 proposing next steps for the refuges, to include: sewerage release, planting eel/sea grass, mussel collections, dog walkers' access arrangements and paddle board launching sites.

79 **Monitoring Framework**

The agenda report detailed proposals to create a new monitoring module on the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership website dedicated to reporting progress with each of the elements noted in the Mitigation Monitoring Plans.

It was considered the webpages would assist the public in understanding the purpose of the mitigation measures, and that this would result in more visitors and users of the estuary abiding by the rules to protect the site and wildlife. It would also assist in increasing transparency of the work of the Partnership

It was unanimously

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee:

1. Supports preparation of monitoring webpages for the 2014 South east Devon Habitat Mitigation Strategy and 2016 East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan;
2. Delegates authority to the Habitats Regulations Delivery Manager to oversee development of the webpages;
3. Approves a budget of up to £2,000 to create the webpages.

80. **Exclusion of Press And Public**

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

81. **Maternity Cover**

Consideration was given to the agenda report.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED

The agenda report be approved.

Councillor Martin Wrigley
Chair

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.03 pm