

Appendix A: Countryside Team workscope/outputs 2013/14.

1. Countryside Team vision:

The Countryside Team operates in 8 key areas (listed below) to deliver a front facing and customer orientated service that aims to raise awareness about East Devon's outstanding natural environment and help educate and inform local communities and visitors on the importance of its wildlife. The Team also seeks to play a major part in the overall reputation management of the Council by developing partnership working, drawing in funding and maximising media opportunities to promote and publicise the work of the team and also the Council.

2. Statutory elements to the Service:

- Managing and maintaining our TPOs and Trees in Conservation Areas;
- Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 protection of wildlife;
- Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2009 all LAs have duty to have regard for biodiversity in decision making;
- Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 LAs duty to produce AONB Management Plans and provide open access on heathland, moorland etc.

3. EDDC Countryside work scope:

3.1 Site management:

- LNR management – 10 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and 3 Community Nature Reserves
- Habitat/species management targeted via Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Management Plans
- Defra Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme grants to deliver biodiversity gains to LNRs
- Green Flag standards

3.2 LNR income (2013/14)

(Axe Wetlands site):

- Axe Wetlands Environmental Stewardship annual payment - **£11,723**
- Capital grants received from partner bodies:
 - * Grant from Axe Vale and District Conservation Society toward the cost of the sand martin bank and bat cave -**£6000**
 - * Grant from DCC to upgrade the main access track and pedestrian route - **£24,000**

- Environment Agency grant to support habitat works at Sheep's Marsh (grant received in a previous financial year but remains to be spent on works during 2014/15) - **£100,000**

(LNRs excl Axe Wetlands):

- Knapp Copse LNR - **£6500 p.a** (Devon CC annual payment)
- Trinity Hill LNR Higher Level Stewardship grant – **£4934.80 p.a**
- Capital grants received for LNR works from partner bodies (we have in for 2013/14):
 - * Knapp Copse LNR – DCC money for tree works - **£1500**
 - * Holyford Woods LNR – Holyford Woodland Trust money for tree works **£280+VAT**

3.3 LNR habitat improvements (2013/14)

(Axe Wetlands site):

- Improvements to salinity and water level control on Black Hole Marsh have led to substantial gains for the wildlife of the estuary over the 6.5ha of BHM – approximately 20% of the total AEW area
- New shallow lagoons created on Colyford Common covering 0.5ha – approx 1.5% of the total AEW area
- New artificial sand martin cliff providing a safe nesting site for up to 252 pairs of sand martin, an amber listed species
- New artificial bat cave could potentially be colonised by several hundred (or even 1000s) bats including several priority species
- Large new pond created in lower Stafford Marsh
- New flooding regime instigated at Seaton Marshes, resulting in improved habitat for wintering and breeding birds over 5ha – approx 15% of the AEW total area
- Over 500 metres of new path created
- New shelter, boardwalk and platform by the upper pond in Stafford Marsh
- Mains electricity installed to the Information Centre and Wetlands Classroom
- Construction of new toilet block under way

(LNRs excl Axe Wetlands):

- Maer LNR, Exmouth LNR – no distinct percentage change
- Delderfield Community Nature Reserve – 30% habitat improvement through meadow restoration management and control of Giant Hogweed
- Knapp CNR – 5-10% habitat improvement through orchard and woodland restoration management

- Fire Beacon Hill LNR – 10% heathland habitat improvement/maintenance through grazing and heathland burning (RSPB)
- Knapp Copse LNR – 5% mixed habitat improvement through grazing, woodland management, scrub control
- Honiton Bottom CNR – 5% habitat improvement through meadow restoration management
- Holyford Woods LNR – 2% habitat improvement through conifer removal
- Trinity Hill LNR – 15% habitat improvement through conifer removal and scrub control

3.4 LNR visitor numbers 2013/14

- Axe Estuary Wetlands – **32,580 YTD**
- LNRs (excl Axe Wetlands) we are embarking on a programme of annual visitor data collation from 2014/15 – there are logistical difficulties with most of the LNRs as many have access points from many points and are remote sites. We are installing remote data counters on Holyford Woods LNR.

4. Volunteering

4.1 Outputs:

- We run an East Devon Conservation Volunteer scheme (across all LNRs)
- We run a Junior Rangers scheme (on the Axe Wetlands sites)
- We run a Tree Warden scheme (District wide)

4.2 2013/14 stats

- We have 168 volunteers on our main list:

Information Centre Volunteer Wardens	32
Otterhayes group (adults with learning disabilities)	9
Tuesday volunteer group	26
Events helpers	37
Junior Rangers volunteers	3
Meet the Birds volunteers	13
Water Vole volunteers	8
Office volunteers	1
LNR volunteers	9 (new group)
Hide caretakers	9
Wetlands Watch volunteers	27
Total	168

➤ Number of volunteer hours

Information Centre Volunteer Wardens	919
Otterhayes group	216
Tuesday volunteer group	2169
Events helpers	230
Junior Rangers	99
Meet the Birds	50
Water Vole volunteers	832
Office volunteers	175
LNR volunteers	43 (new group)
Hide caretakers	260
Total	4993

Value of volunteers' input (based on £50 per day for unskilled labour): **£35,664**

5. Public events

5.1 Outputs:

- We deliver a calendar yr programme of public events to showcase our spectacular natural environment and help inform/educate people of its uniqueness (50 events delivered p.a)
- Based mainly around our LNRs
- Supporting partnership events – local amenity groups (AVDCS/OVA/SVA), Natural England, Seaton Tram etc
- We deliver Festivals – Axe Estuary Wet n' Wild x2; East Devon Heath Week & East Devon Coastal Festival

5.2 2013/14 stats:

- Number of events delivered (50% free, 50% charged) - **50 events**
- Number of attendees - **2,200**
- Mean number of attendees per event – **45**
- Income generated from events **£3555 (YTD) target is £5,000.**
- Feedback from public on satisfaction levels: 87% awarded highly satisfied and 13% satisfied.

Number of events does not include TIC open day, Primary Focus Day and Volunteer Barbecue, as these weren't events open to the public.

These figures do not include Natural Seaton, Heath Week Open Day, Southleigh Fayre and Sidbury Fair where we interacted with thousands of members of the public through our Tow-a-van display and our 'Guess the Object' game.

6. Environmental Education

6.1 Outputs:

- We run a District-wide schools service based around LNRs (target 2K school children p.a)
- We deliver a National Curriculum based projects – Food for Thought and Deep Thought (Marine based) targeted at Key Stage 2 and 3 and accredited by Devon Curriculum Services (Geography)

6.2 2013/14 stats

- Number of pupils taken out onto LNRs - **1681**
- Number of primary & secondary schools using the service - **16 Primary, 5 Secondary, 12 other youth groups (Brownies/Beavers etc)**
- Income from this service - **£7000**
- National curriculum targets delivering - **Key Stage 1-3 Science, Biology, Geography (also contributing to Maths and English core skills)**

7. Arboricultural Service

- TPOs/TCAs & planning consultations – both 98% LPI achievements
- Consultant to Streetscene for Council owned tree stock – SLA provide management advice based on assessments
- Large schemes advice – West End
- Review of area based TPOs

8. SW Coast Path

- We manage & maintain the East Devon section (funded by Natural England) to meet Quality Standards Accreditation Scheme for National Trails.

9. Special projects/Major Partnership based

- Axe Estuary Wetlands scheme – linked to Seaton's regeneration/Green Infrastructure focussed/delivering a 230 acre regionally important nature based tourism attraction – multi partnered

- Devon Water Vole Recovery project – SITA funded scheme working with landowners in main tributaries to encourage both natural colonisation of our rivers & also targeted reintroduction schemes onto LNRs
10. East Devon AONB Partnership (refer East Devon AONB Annual Review for details)
<http://www.eastdevon.aonb.org.uk>
- Help deliver funds into area (MiL/SDF) for community based projects
 - Deliver landscape scale projects – looking out for bats/Peter Orlando Hutchison project
 - County Wildlife Site monitoring activities
 - Landscape Character Area guidelines for planners/comments on planning apps in AONB
 - Prepare 5 yr AONB Statutory Management Plan
11. Other Partnerships (main ones)
- Support Exe Estuary Partnership – links to Exmouth LNR
 - Support Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership
 - Exeter & East Devon Green Infrastructure (GI) Funders Group – delivering the GI for NGP in collaboration with partners
 - Heart of Devon Tourism Partnership – promoting sustainable tourism within the district with other partners (Exeter CC, MDDC, Exeter Uni, Met Office etc)
12. Countryside Team budget 2013/14
- The annual budget for the Countryside and AONB Teams is split as follows:

Total expenditure:	£749,540
Income:	£271,140 (grants from Natural England, Environment Agency etc)
Recharges:	£116,460
Net expenditure:	£368,940
 - This expenditure supports: 12.5 FTEs, transport (2 4x4s) and supplies & services.
13. Delivering reputation management for EDDC (some e.gs) :
- 13.1 “Shiny stars”:
- 2 Green Flag Awards for 2 LNRs – making it only LA in SW to be awarded this amount and put us in top 10% nationally in 2007-10.

- Great Trees of East Devon – Runner up in BBC Natural History Awards 2007 for most innovative project
- Devon Water Vole Recovery Project we run is the Environment Agency's regional project for this species recovery programme – it has been featured on the BBC One show
- Natural England used our Axe Wetlands project as a national pilot for setting up area based Higher Level Stewardship schemes this year and was featured on BBC's Countryfile programme in 2013.
- Delivered over 5000 public events promoting our outstanding natural environment on our LNRs since Team set up.
- Education Service has reached over 15,000 students in last 8 years to promote importance of our natural environment

13.2 Partnership working

- Core to our work and we have as a result brought in over £1,000,000 of external funds into our Team these last 10 years via Lottery Funds, Government Agencies etc with a gearing ratio of every £1 EDDC puts in we gear in £26 of external funds (2011/12 figure).
- Delivering an Axe Wetlands scheme to assist with the wider regeneration of Seaton through creation of an additional £250,000 p.a into the local economy through visitor spend
- Delivery of ground breaking Food 4 Thought and Think Deep geography curriculum based units for local schools that champions East Devon's amazing local produce and environment – gone out to all state schools in the SW. Project endorsed and featured Michelin star Chef Michael Caines.

13.3 Volunteering & Community working

- We run and co-ordinate the East Devon Wildlife Conservation Volunteer network in co-ordination with the Govt's Muckin4Life scheme (only LA to do this in Devon) to get people out and helping on our LNRs
- We run and co-ordinate the East Devon Tree Warden Scheme in partnership with the Tree Council.
- We run Devon's most successful Junior Ranger scheme with over 600 children signed up over the last six years.