



**CLYST
VALLEY**
REGIONAL
PARK



25 Year Masterplan

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Foreword

Councillor Geoff Jung

As the East Devon District Council Portfolio Holder for Coast, Country & Environment, I'm delighted that this exciting plan has gone through a full public consultation. The Coronavirus pandemic has been a stark reminder of the importance of spending time outdoors to our health and wellbeing. We received more than 240 representations from people and organisations, with much support for the Regional Park. We have carefully considered each one and this revised plan is the result.

Devon is well-known for its countryside with national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty, estuaries and beautiful coastline. But there is greater pressure than ever on these stunning locations. With a growing population, it is necessary to provide much-needed homes, jobs and infrastructure. As more people explore the countryside, it is imperative that we protect and enhance our green spaces because getting active outdoors keeps us healthy and happy, plus the countryside can help us address climate change by storing carbon and water, as we work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2040.

The Clyst Valley Regional Park will play a valuable role in providing new open spaces near major growth areas. The idea for a Regional Park was included in the East Devon District Council Local Plan in 2016: *Strategy 10 - Green Infrastructure in East Devon's West End* will ensure that the new town of Cranbrook and developments close to Exeter are provided with large scale, high quality greenspace.

The Clyst Valley Regional Park will enhance the land surrounding the River Clyst and its tributaries, with linked green corridors enabling people to visit the outdoors via cycleways and footpaths. The Park will improve biodiversity, for example through natural woodland regeneration, urban tree planting, creating nature reserves, and helping to reduce flooding by careful natural, water flow management. The creation of the Regional Park will help reduce the pressure on more environmentally sensitive locations and help to conserve heritage assets, protecting our cultural identity. It will be managed to the highest standards.

The numbers of organisations financially supporting the Park has grown to 17¹ and many more are pledging in-kind support. The Clyst Valley Regional Park is becoming a reality. Pieces of this jigsaw are coming together: There are Country Park's at Cranbrook and at Pin Brook; the first sections of the Clyst Valley Trail are being built; 3,500 broadleaved trees and shrubs have been planted through the 'Great trees in the Clyst Valley' initiative. The next step is to bid for significant funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund in order to deliver the priorities identified in our action plan over the next 5 years.

Please join with us in creating space for nature and people, for now, and for future generations.

¹ Active Devon, Broadclyst Parish Council, Clyst Honiton Parish Council, Cranbrook Town Council, Devon County Council, Devon Gardens Trust, East Devon District Council, Environment Agency, Eon, LiveWest, Move More Cranbrook, National Trust, Poltimore Parish Council, Sport England, University of Exeter, Whimble Parish Council, and the Woodland Trust.

Introduction

What is the Regional Park?

The Clyst Valley Regional Park (hereafter referred to as 'the Regional Park') is a large protected greenspace. It is protected from development through Strategy 10 in East Devon District Council's Local Plan (see Appendix 2 for the full text of the strategy). Strategy 10 states: "Development will not be allowed in the designated area [i.e. the Clyst Valley Regional Park] unless it will clearly achieve valley park specific objectives for people and wildlife. Countryside policies of the plan will still apply in non-allocated development locations and areas." Strategy 7 states: "Development in the countryside will only be permitted where it is in accordance with a specific Local or Neighbourhood Plan policy that explicitly permits such development". The area of the Regional Park is presently 2,338 hectares, which is roughly half the size of Exeter.

The concept of the Clyst Valley Regional Park is that a number of greenspaces will be linked by greenways. There is no intention that the whole of the Regional Park will become accessible to the public, as most of it is in private ownership. However, 762 hectares is currently accessible and the ambition is to increase that by a further 740 hectares over 25 years. A large proportion of the Regional Park is within the National Trust's Killerton estate. 40% of the Regional Park is within a floodplain.

The concept of the Regional Park originates from the Green Infrastructure Strategy (Exeter & East Devon Growth Point Team, 2009). The diagram below is taken from this strategy and shows the 'clyst meadows' as a "well defined network of accessible semi-natural greenspaces and less accessible biodiversity rich areas...creating a strong buffer between [Exeter] and the countryside".

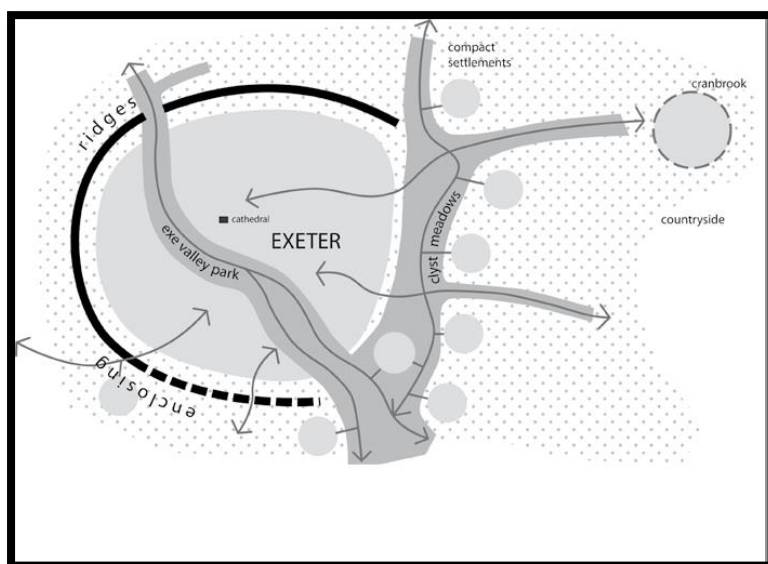


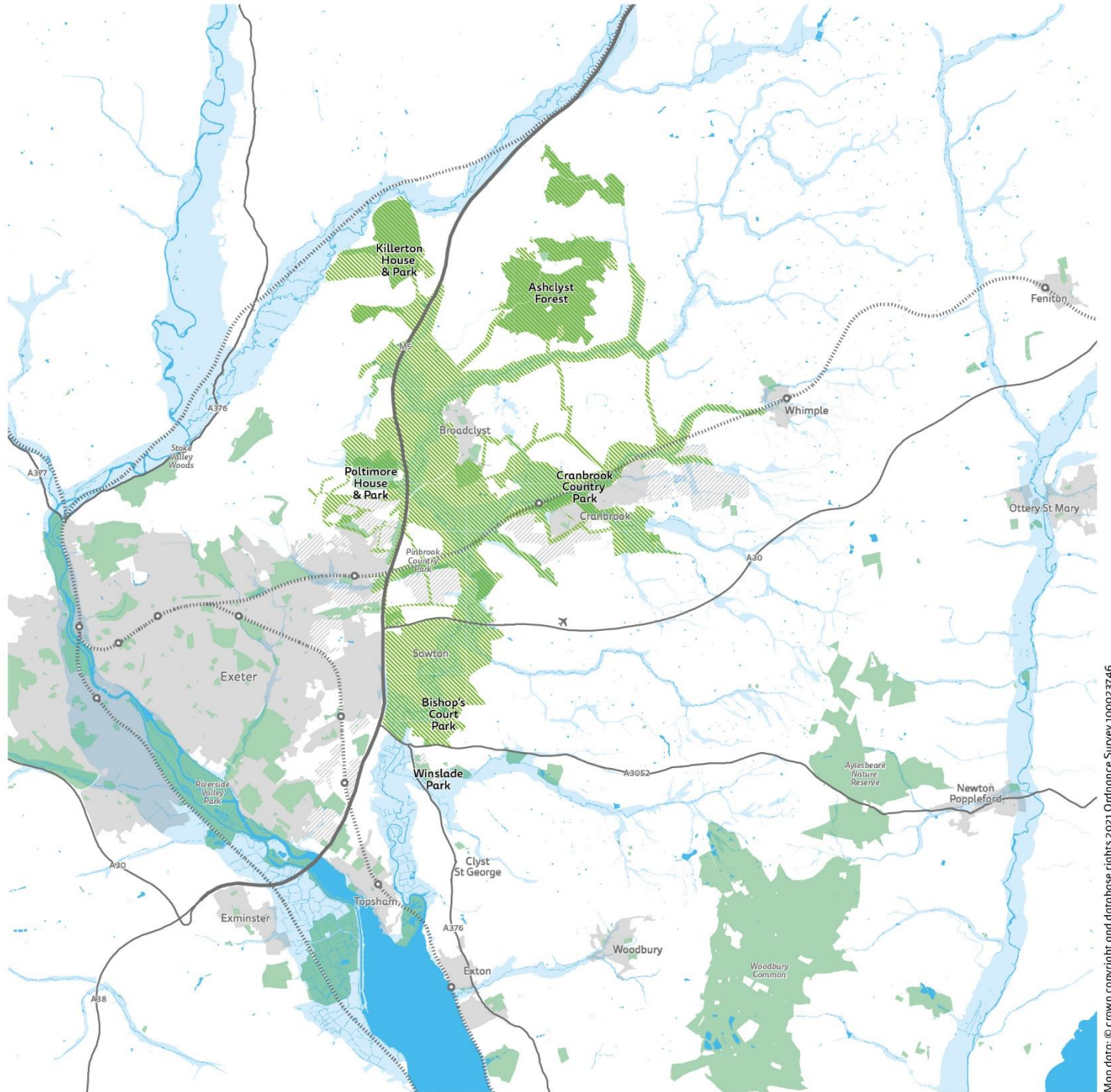
Figure 1 Concept of 'clyst meadows'

The key diagram below illustrates the general extent of the Regional Park and how it relates to existing settlements, rivers and transport infrastructure.

A view of the Clyst Valley Regional Park Policy boundary



Areas where development needs to meet the Clyst Valley Regional Park's objectives



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-  Rail station
-  Built-up area
-  Clyst Valley Regional Park policy boundary
-  New/proposed built-up area
-  Green space
-  Flood plain

Figure 2 Policy boundary

Who is supporting the Clyst Valley Regional Park?

The Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy 2009 was sponsored by East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Teignbridge District Council and Natural England, working in partnership with Devon County Council. In 2013, a GI Board was established to drive forward delivery of the projects within the strategy. In addition to the organisations named above, Devon Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency and the National Trust joined the Board, which was chaired independently.

In 2014, the GI Board commissioned a discussion document on the Clyst Valley Regional Park. What emerged from this was the idea to give the Regional Park traction by applying for funding from the Heritage Lottery for a project focussed on trees. The bid was successful, and 'Great trees in the Clyst Valley' was born, with the aim of:

“encouraging the public to explore, record and restore the heritage of trees in fields, hedges, parks and orchards across nine priority parishes.”

The project has been a great success, illustrated by the infographic below.



www.clystgreattrees.org.uk



Figure 3 Pupils from Broadclyst Primary School planted 150 English Oaks on a single day in February 2019 on farmland at Clyst Honiton next to a public footpath

Keen to maintain the momentum that the partners in this project have achieved, EDDC pursued a second bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This has also been successful and 'Routes for Roots' began in Summer 2020. The goal of Routes for Roots is to:

“work with the public, charities, landowners and public bodies to research, explore and plan a network of inter-generational, all ability routes. We will use art, performance, and play to enable a wide spectrum of the public to discover their routeway heritage. We will create opportunities for young families, inactive people and those suffering from mental ill health to build new trails and improve the quality of the existing network through better surfaces, signage and interpretation.”

The purpose of this plan

The purpose of this masterplan is to define a shared vision, objectives, and values as a platform for partnership in developing the Regional Park. The unique social, environmental and economic context (the 'drivers of change') are identified, as are the policies, strategies and targets of organisations that could be delivered in the Regional Park. The key natural and human assets are described.

The draft masterplan included plans and descriptions of potential projects and invited stakeholders to identify their priorities to inform an action plan with short (five-year) and longer timescales for delivery. This was successfully achieved. However, it did draw criticism from some consultees as seeking to control the use of land beyond the designated policy boundary. It has therefore been replaced by four key diagrams which are indicative only.

The masterplan will be a material consideration in assessing planning applications within the Clyst Valley Regional Park policy boundary. It should be used by land owners, developers and their agents as additional guidance on how, and where, green infrastructure can be delivered. It adds detail to Strategy 10 in the Local Plan. Changes to the policy boundary will be brought forward in the new Local Plan for 2021-2040.

The plan sets out a funding strategy and we intend now to work with partners on a major funding bid to deliver the five-year actions. The masterplan contains a wealth of background information to support bids and is evidence itself of extensive public support for the park's objectives.



Figure 4 Looking north from a Whimble orchard

Setting the scene

The River Clyst begins its journey at Clyst William, 6 kilometres south east of Cullompton, and enters the sea via the estuary at Topsham. The word “clyst” is thought to be derived from the Celtic word for “clear stream”. Downstream of Broadclyst, the river spills out into a broad floodplain.

The landscape is gently rolling but rises to a high point of 167 metres at White Down Copse, part ancient woodland. From this and other hills it’s possible to get sweeping views of the valley below. Ashclyst Forest forms the major area of woodland in an otherwise sparsely wooded landscape, due in part to the loss of hedgerow elms. However, individual trees, in fields, hedges, and parklands, are a very significant feature of the landscape. There are some rare black poplars at Clyst St Mary. Killerton estate alone has more than 1,500 ancient or veteran trees.

The landscape around the villages of Clyst Hydon, Clyst St Lawrence, Aunk and Westwood is very intimate. There are thatched cottages and Barton farms², and beautiful, tranquil river valleys. There is great potential for more natural habitat here and throughout the river system, and for greater public access along the footpaths that link up the villages.

Whimble is justly proud of its orchard heritage, made famous by the arrival of Henry Whiteway in 1891. The village has extensive remaining traditional orchards, augmented by more recent commercial planting. Many are accessible via footpaths. The revival of the traditional wassail in 1993 and the growth of local cider production has reinvigorated this heritage.

The National Trust is a significant land owner; the Killerton estate covers 42% of the proposed Park and is already a major recreational, heritage, and landscape asset. There are 52 kilometres of permissive rights of way on the estate, including 27 kilometres of permissive bridleway. This is a huge asset which largely remains undiscovered because these paths are not shown on the Ordnance Survey maps and there are few public leaflets available. With more information, use would increase.

Moving south, the impact of growth becomes more noticeable: the new town of Cranbrook; the noise and visual intrusion of the M5, A30, and Exeter Airport; and major new employment centres at Sky Park and Science Park. However, there are also some surprising natural and historic treasures. A mosaic of fen habitats at Hellings Parks, just north of Cranbrook; the tranquillity of old Sowton village; and the gothic splendour of Bishops Court are just a few examples.

In the Lower Clyst between Topsham and Clyst St Mary, there is a large expanse of mainly freshwater grazing marsh. Rising sea-levels will inundate this flat landscape more frequently in future.

You can watch a short film about the Clyst Valley here: [YouTube film about the Clyst Valley](#)

² A Barton farm was the land retained and farmed by the lord of the manor in the Middle Ages.

Our vision and values

Our partnership's 25-year vision

Lying just east of Exeter, there is a tranquil haven for people and wildlife centred on the River Clyst, its floodplain and tributaries. This little river has become great by virtue of the clear waters which nourish new wild woods and wetlands from its source at Clyst St Lawrence, to the estuary at Topsham. The Clyst Valley is resilient to a changed climate.

More than 740 hectares of new, high quality greenspace are now accessible to the public. Residents and visitors spend lots of time outdoors, and are able to explore the Regional Park via a network of traffic-free trails that link with trains and buses. They have a great choice of places to go, and things to do: birdwatching and tea at Topsham; glamping, biking, riding and den building at Ashclyst Forest; cycling to the rugby at Sandy Park; a stroll beneath the spring blossoms of Whimble; a charity run at Cranbrook Country Park; feeding the pigs at Heathfield Farm; or watching a play at Poltimore House.

Despite the increased population in Exeter and out to the new town of Cranbrook, nature is thriving in designated sanctuary areas. Our globally important wildlife on the Exe Estuary and the Pebblebed Heaths has been protected by providing Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace. A vast number and variety of new trees are beginning to dominate the landscape through planting in parklands, orchards and farmland, natural regeneration in valleys and around woods, and nurturing in hedgerows.

Traditions remain strong in vibrant villages and the historic setting of the Killerton estate remains a great gift to the country. A new culture of discovery and self-sufficiency is evident in Cranbrook. New jobs and volunteering opportunities have been created to enable people to enjoy and understand this wonderful new Regional Park, and to give back, to ensure it's there for future generations.

Recognising that there will be some difficult choices to make about how the Regional Park is managed and used, our partnership will be guided by the following core values.

Environmental sustainability

- Our projects and actions will deliver a rapid reduction of greenhouse gases, and we will encourage farmers and businesses to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions and nature recovery
- Where public access might damage priority habitats or reduce populations of priority species, the needs of nature will take precedence
- Natural capital and natural processes will increase in the Regional Park; clean water & air, healthy soils, and greater resilience to extreme weather events.
- The quality and extent of natural habitat and the populations of key species will increase, as will natural beauty
- The understanding of the time depth and quality of the historic landscape above and below ground will be increased, its fabric protected and its stories told in exciting and inspiring ways.

Inclusive for everyone

- We will be a champion of The Equality Act 2010 by ensuring that every opportunity is taken to improve facilities and communication for those with protected characteristics

- Our strategic trails will be multi-use whenever practical and affordable, and we will promote ‘share this space’ behaviours, but segregation will also be used if it can create a more enjoyable experience for specific users
- Our places will be safe but not sanitised – the ability for teenagers in particular to explore their environment independently will be promoted
- We will make local customs and cultures relevant to where people live their daily lives

Locally distinctive

- We will value the process of co-design in creating new culture and art
- We will promote high quality, distinctive local food and drink produced in an ecologically sustainable way
- We will promote local character, for example, the lime wash paint of Killerton estate cottages, and the use of local Breccia stone in buildings
- We will encourage everyone to connect with place (environment, culture) and each other

Working landscape

- We will support job creation where it promotes the Parks objectives
- We respect the rights of private landowners and encourage everyone to follow the new Countryside Code

A place of greater understanding, action and collaboration

- We will create opportunities for people to learn from each other, to break down barriers, and to understand the health of the environment, causes of problems and solutions
- We listen actively to understand personal and organisational objectives, share resources, play to each other’s strengths, and act in unison – the sum will be greater than the individual parts



Figure 5 Winter mist in the Clyst Valley (courtesy of James Cook Photography)

Objectives

People



To enhance the health and wellbeing of residents

Education



To create opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to learn outside the classroom.

Nature



To protect irreplaceable habitats, restore natural processes, ensure that internationally important wildlife sites achieve their conservation objectives, and increase the size, quality, quantity and connectivity of priority natural habitat and populations of key species.

Climate



To rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to extreme weather events and rising sea levels.

Water & Soil



To achieve good ecological status in the River Clyst and tributaries, enhance natural flood storage, and restore soil health.

Landscape



To restore landscape character and promote local distinctiveness and to maintain the high landscape setting of Killerton.

Heritage



To protect historic landscapes, sites, buildings and their settings, enhance them where appropriate and promote public access to and enjoyment of them.

Employment



To increase and sustain high value jobs.

A note on the objectives for people

Delivering a network of walking and cycling trails well connected to public transport is one way in which we can improve physical and mental health, including for those with limited mobility, visual and or hearing impairments and people with hidden disabilities. Easier access will benefit almost all of us at some stage in our lives, whether it is as a parent pushing a buggy or older people finding steps more difficult. Activity is considered a 'wonder drug' in reducing and preventing non-communicable diseases and in enhancing general mental health and wellbeing.

However, health benefits do not just accrue from active travel. Improved access to natural space in general and the range of activities and opportunities that provides is important. Taking part in physical activity in a natural setting is associated with improved mental health outcomes when compared with physical activity indoors. There is emergent evidence that biodiversity is important to human health through a variety of mechanisms, notably biophilia, our innate tendency to seek connection with the natural world.

Being active, volunteering and learning together outdoors, all provide opportunities for individuals and communities to connect, learn new skills and give to others. Unstructured play in a natural setting is vital for children's cognitive and physical development.

The Regional Park has huge potential for cross-curricular outdoor learning by all ages from nursery to U3A. Whilst some of this should be structured, simply creating opportunities to explore the countryside will benefit personal development. The Park has quite diverse geology accessible via quarry faces and hollow-lanes. These can help to tell the story about traditional buildings and the growing importance of local, low carbon building materials.

We will therefore promote the **five ways to wellbeing**:

1. Connect with other people
2. Be physically active
3. Learn new skills
4. Give to others
5. Pay attention

Other objectives are important for human's to thrive. Clear interventions are required to prevent and mitigate the risks associated with greenhouse gases and public health (e.g. heatwaves and cardiovascular and respiratory health). Flooding of property can have significant effects on longer term mental health and wellbeing. The Covid pandemic has shown just how important mindfulness is to our wellbeing. We have all found sanctuary during a time of reduced noise and air pollution, and it is important that there are places near to home where such solace can be found. Finally, employment is also fundamentally important. Promoting environmental quality will attract inward investment and visitor spend, and help to sustain high value jobs in the area.

The assets of the Clyst Valley

Geology

The bedrocks of the Regional Park were laid down during a long hot dry period between 300 and 200 million years ago, known as the Permian and Triassic. The climate was like that of the Sahara Desert today. Seasonal flash floods swept large quantities of sediment into the valleys and the plains fringing the deserts and both the red mudstone and the Pebble Beds found in east Devon are classic examples of such deposition.

An excellent display of the large scale dune cross-bedding characteristic of the Permian sandstone is at the Bishop's Court Play Area, Sidmouth Road, Exeter (Fig 6).

Devon also featured volcanoes at this time. The lava erupted from the deposits found around Exeter, known as the 'Exeter Volcanic Series'. This beautiful pink/purple stone was widely used to construct high status buildings across the Clyst Valley, such as the 'Chapel of the Holy Evangelists' in Killerton Park (Historic England, 2017).

The 'Heavitree Breccia'³ is also a classic building stone and the parish church of St Michael and All Angels at Sowton is a fine example (Fig 7). The finer grained 'Poltimore Sandstone' is found in many buildings of the Poltimore and Broadclyst area.



Figure 7

³ Breccia (from the Italian for 'rubble') consists of rock fragments cemented together, and was formed from sediments washed out during flash floods.

Soils

There are essentially two types of soil in the Regional Park. The freely draining, sandy, slightly acidic loam soils of the 'Devon Redlands' occur on the eastern and northern fringes of Exeter. Some of this land is Grade 1 for agriculture and has the greatest potential to grow cereals, fruit and vegetables. However, it is erosion prone and if not managed sensitively, this leads to water pollution. Grade 1 land is also under pressure from building.



Figure 8 Classic red soils at Clyst St George, with the church and its tall Wellingtonia tree breaking the skyline

In the floodplains, the soils are of clay or clay loam and are only slowly permeable and are prone to winter flooding. They generally support livestock (predominantly dairy & beef cattle).

Three more soil types are far less extensive. A small but very significant area of peat soil occurs at Hellings Park. It is the deepest and the most extensive peat deposit within the catchment and is associated with some high quality fen meadow habitat (see Fig 10 below). Poorly drained clay soils over the inlier of Carboniferous (Culm) rocks characterise Ashclyst Forest and White Down. Then on the moderately well drained soils along the eastern boundary of the Regional Park are clay loams over reddish clay (Mercia mudstone), which extend out beyond Whimble. These form a marked landscape contrast with the Devon Red, as can be seen in the photo at Clyst St George, where these soils are under the grassland, the village and the Wellingtonia! This soil and geology is the main source of the River Clyst alluvium, in which are formed predominantly red clayey soils.

An excellent introduction to the soils of East Devon in relation to natural flood management has been produced by Dr Richard Smith (East Devon Catchment Partnership, 2017).

Biodiversity

A description of the priority habitats found in the Regional Park and their associated key species is given below. In terms of nationally important designations, the whole of the Regional Park is covered by a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone because the permeable soils do not protect the underlying aquifer from nitrate pollution. There is one Site of Special Scientific Interest; Killerton. This is nationally important for its igneous rocks. However, further SSSI lie just outside the Regional Park

Habitats and species of principal importance (Section 41 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act) are indicated with an asterisk.



Figure 9 Poltimore Parkland*

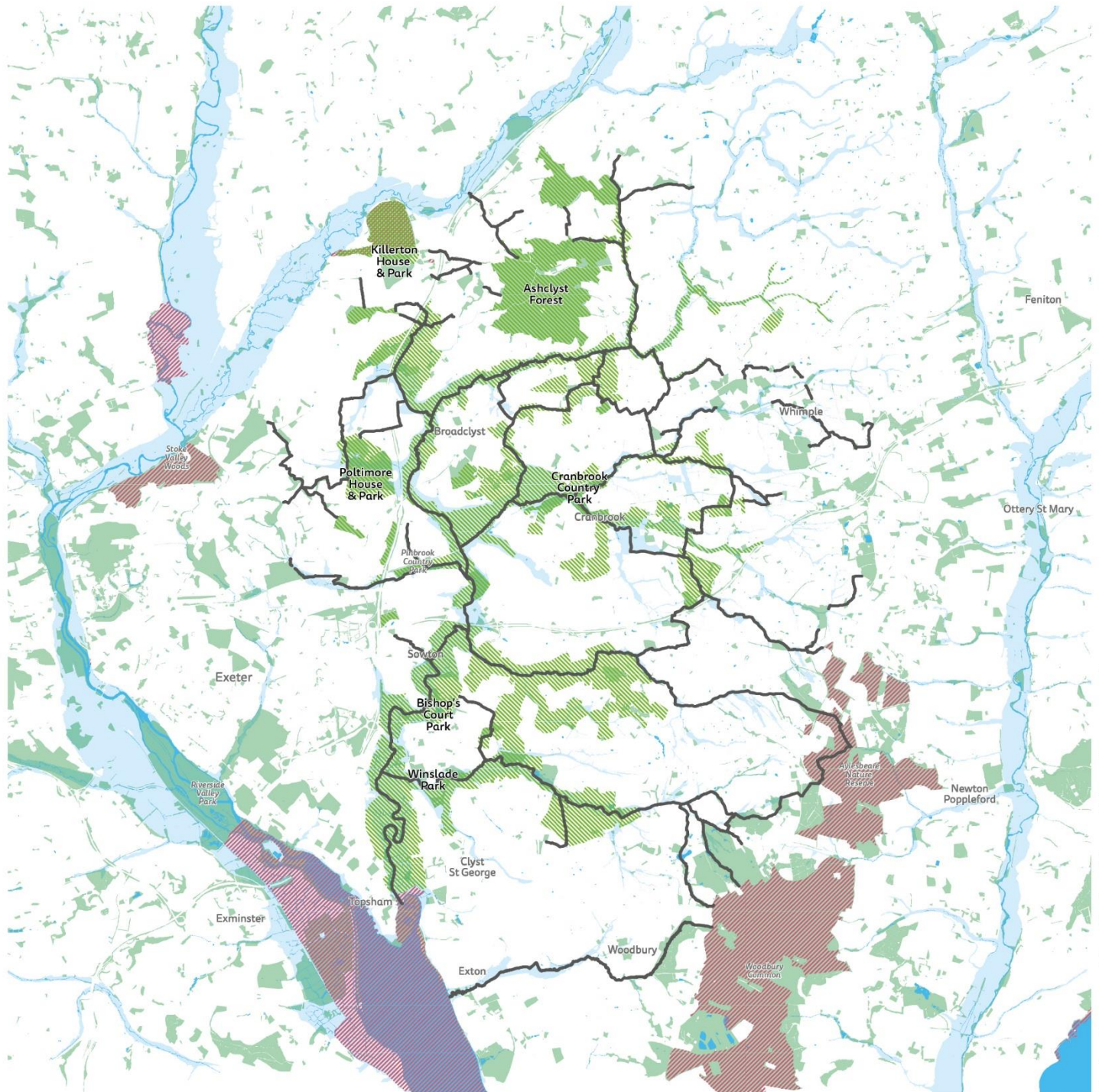


Figure 10 Lowland fen* at Hellings Park

A view of the Clyst Valley Regional Park Nature recovery network



Spaces for nature to thrive and move



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-  Nature enhancement area
-  Site of special scientific interest (SSSI)
-  Green space
-  Flood plain
-  Wildlife corridor

Figure 11 Nature Recovery Network

Please note that Figure 11 is indicative and provides technical guidance only in support of relevant policies and strategies of the approved East Devon Local Plan, most notably Strategy 10 on the Clyst Valley Regional Park.

Lowland mixed deciduous and wet woodland*

The oak and ash woodlands of Farringdon, Cat Copse, Columbjohn Wood, Park Wood, the north-west corner of White Down Copse, and Paradise Copse are ancient i.e. they have existed since at least the 1600's. It is here that we find carpets of bluebells, primroses, dog's mercury, enchanter's nightshade, ferns, and early-purple orchids. Plants characteristic of ancient woodland can also be found at Dane's Wood (Moschatel) and Burrowton Copse (Wood Spurge).

Cutton Alders is the largest area of wet woodland, dominated by downy birch and alder. It is on valley bottom wet sandy soils with a peaty surface that extends across the motorway to Broadclyst Moor. The ground flora includes greater tussock sedge, wood club-rush and a single specimen of royal fern, which is uncommon nationally. Ashclyst Forest is an important site for butterflies, particularly pearl-bordered and small-pearl bordered fritillary.

Parkland*, wood pasture*, ancient and veteran trees

The UK supports more than half of all the ancient and veteran trees in Europe, many of which stand within parkland and wood pasture, priority habitats that are specific to the UK and of international importance. Mature and ancient trees are a very special feature of the Clyst Valley. The National Trust's 6,400 acre Killerton estate is outstanding in the context of Devon and Cornwall, supporting 1,218 ancient, veteran & notable trees. Many other parklands support ancient trees; Bishop's Court, Bluehayes, Poltimore, Redhayes Rockbeare, and Winslade Park.

Pedunculate oaks are the most frequent species but there are also ancient specimens of ash, crack willow, hawthorn, holly, field maple and introduced species such as those found in Killerton Park and at Sprydon including turkey oak, Luccombe oak and sweet chestnut. Many of the more ancient oaks are pollards in excess of 400 years of age. They are concentrated around the higher ground – around Dolbury and Sprydon Beacon – and especially along old route-ways up onto what was then the common grazings of the parish; the trees are effectively former wood-pasture trees. The old deer park of Killerton was almost certainly located there because of the existing large old trees which created an instant parkland effect.

The older generation trees of the fields and their boundaries provide important habitat for lichens, fungi, insects and bats*. They are the last vestiges of ancient wood pasture. The hollowed rotting heartwood of these old trees supports a specialist insect fauna. On Elbury Farm, one hedgerow oak is the only tree in Devon known to have a population of the rare wood-decay beetle *Dorcatoma flavicornis* – it requires the special form of heartwood decay created by the fungi called 'chicken-of-the-woods'. Many other trees harbour Nationally Scarce darkling beetles. Fourteen species of bat* have been recorded in Farringdon parish, including the extremely rare Alcathe bat*, which was confirmed by an expert in Germany from a sonogram.

Overall, the wood-decay beetle fauna of the Killerton estate is one of the richest known anywhere in Devon. Although the fauna is concentrated in Killerton Park and around Ashclyst Forest, uncommon species also occur within the surrounding agricultural landscape. Most recently the 'Great trees in the Clyst Valley' project added 300+ more trees to the database, many of which are outside the Killerton estate. Their successful conservation is dependent on active measures throughout the Regional Park, not just in the core areas.

Traditional orchards*

Despite large losses in the past 50 years, orchards with old fruit trees provide very valuable habitats for fungi, insects, birds and bats. Orchards are particularly valuable in association with ancient trees that have had long continuity of mature timber and wood-decay habitat. The apple orchard at Higher Comberoy supports a large population of the Nationally Scarce orchard bark beetle *Scolytus mali* on the dead bark of the dying or fallen trees. Old pear trees at Winters Garden provide decaying heartwood for the Nationally Scarce beetle *Aderus populneus*,



Figure 12 Traditional orchards* at Whimble

Hedgerows*

Species-rich hedges often support five or more woody native shrubs. In the Regional Park, blackthorn, hawthorn, elm, spindle, and field maple are typical. Those also supporting frequent mature trees, particularly Pedunculate oak, are most valuable. Ditches and streams are often associated with the hedges, many of which are traditional Devon hedgebanks. The spring-time displays of bluebells, early-purple orchids, red campion, and stitchwort are very distinctive.

Where hedges are being allowed to grow up, such as those at Elbury Farm, Hellings Park, Caddihoe, Merry Downs and Little Loxbrook they provide nesting and feeding sites for bats, dormice and birds such as the spotted flycatcher*. Hedges are vital “flight-lines” for all species of bats which use them to navigate to feeding and roosting sites.

Flower-rich lane verges are now vital for pollinating insects. Vehicles kill bees, flies, butterflies and beetles, so the adoption of quiet ways will benefit nature as well as people.



Figure 13 A hedgerow* in spring

Small changes can have a huge positive impact; leaving individual hawthorn and blackthorn bushes to flower and fruit provides food for insects, small mammals and birds.

Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh*

This is seasonally waterlogged grassland (and associated ditches) which is grazed by livestock. There is extensive evidence of their creation and management by humans over the centuries. The Lower Clyst (a County Wildlife Site) is the best example, comprising herb-rich unimproved grassland, fresh, brackish and salt water marsh, and small areas of reed bed. The meadows are dissected by ditches and are rich in plant life, including several county rarities e.g. wild celery, horned pondweed and bulbous foxtail grass. They are also a refuge for rare insects such as the hairy dragonfly.

At Dart's Farm, the grazing marsh is used in winter by feeding and roosting curlew*, black-tailed godwit, wigeon, shoveler and dark-bellied brent goose*. These birds are the reason that the Exe Estuary is internationally important as a Special Protection Area (SPA). The reed bed supports breeding warblers (reed, sedge and Cetti's) and reed bunting.

Although the Lower Clyst does support valuable habitat, man-made flood embankments prevent the natural daily flow of tidal water across the whole floodplain. Unless this natural process is restored, sea-level rise is highly likely to reduce the extent of mud, sand and saltmarsh in the Exe Estuary, and the internationally important populations of birds will decline.

Rivers*

The River Clyst and tributaries still provides habitat for a range of freshwater species, for example, European eel, coarse and salmonid fish. However, the wildlife value is much reduced due to historic management such as field drainage, channel straightening and dredging. As a consequence the rivers are often narrower and flow through deep, steep-sided gullies so that emergent vegetation is limited. The lack of semi-natural riparian habitat (trees and fen), resulting from farming right up to the river bank, further constrain wildlife.



Figure 14 Kingfishers feed on the River Clyst

However, there are some stretches with fragments of riparian habitat e.g. at Jarvishayes Farm, where purple loosestrife, celery-leaved buttercup, floating sweet-grass, tansy, square-stemmed St. John's-wort and water plantain occur. Kingfishers and otters* are found throughout the river system, though their breeding status is unknown. The Nationally Scarce whirligig beetle *Gyrinus urinator* has been found in the River Clyst at Wishford Farm. There are no records of white-clawed crayfish within the Clyst catchment and water voles are locally extinct too.



Figure 15 Marsh marigolds by a reed-fringed River* Clyst

Ditches and streams

Good quality ditches and streams have a variety of plants such as hemlock water-dropwort, brooklime, meadowsweet, water-mint, and water-figwort. One of the best ditches at Wishford Farm supports celery-leaved buttercup, common spike-rush and trifold bur-marigold. Ditches on Broadclyst Moor have the short-winged conehead (a bush-cricket) – a coastal species which is gradually spreading inland in Devon along the river valleys. There are many other particularly valuable ditches and streams including those at Hellings Park, Ashclyst Farm (with Nationally Scarce beetles and flies), and in the fields to the west of Elbury Farm.

Ponds*

Ponds are frequent on the farmland and all provide valuable habitats for wildlife such as frogs, toads, newts and freshwater invertebrates. As far back as the 1500s, farmers are recorded as rotationally cleaning out ponds in September as part of the good husbandry calendar, to provide marl (lime-rich clay) for fields, and to keep the water accessible for livestock.

Great crested newt* breed at Farrington, where long-term monitoring indicates a growing population and scope for expansion into surrounding ponds as part of a meta-population. Other sites include Rockbeare Court, Hellings Park, the front park at Killerton and several

ponds in Ashclyst Forest. Nationally Scarce water beetles occur at Burrow Farm and Caddihoe. Ponds which dry out in summer, and those open to grazing and poaching, create a variety of microhabitats for insects. Ornamental ponds, such as those at Killerton Park and Bishop's Court, and irrigation lagoons such as those at Elbury Farm and Mosshayne Farm do provide larger areas of standing water which is scarce in the area. Some support breeding little grebes. Newly created ponds at Dart's Farm have been colonised by scarce chaser dragonfly.

Lowland meadows*

The better quality hay meadows in the Clyst Valley have a variety of herbs in association with sweet vernal-grass and red fescue; selfheal, ribwort plantain, yarrow, bird's-foot trefoil, germander speedwell, cat's-ear, autumn hawkbit, smooth hawk's-beard and occasional common and greater knapweed. Small heath butterfly occurs in the dry grassland on the hillocks around the electricity sub-station, and populations of brown argus butterfly appear to be increasing.

The nationally uncommon species corky-fruited water-dropwort is frequently found in damper fields alongside the River Clyst. Hellings Parks, Yarde Farm, and Highfield Farm near Topsham are known locations. Extensive areas of herb-rich marshy grassland are found at Hellings Park on Wishford Farm and support beautiful southern marsh orchids and a rare cross between southern marsh and common spotted orchids *Dactylorhiza x hallii*. The insect fauna associated with them is diverse. The barn owl relies on meadows for abundant vole and mice prey. They breed at one location in the Regional Park.

Lowland fens*

In addition to the small stands of reed bed, mainly in the Lower Clyst, Hellings Park is an area of fen peat of regional nature conservation interest and there are smaller areas at Higher Comberoy and Southerlake.

Arable field margins*

The rare ciril bunting*, whose national population is confined to areas of traditional mixed farming, mostly in south Devon, is now breeding in parts of the Regional Park area in East Devon. It is particularly dependent for its winter seed food on spring-sown barley that is harvested and left over winter as stubble while arable margins can support good populations of invertebrates that are important food for its chicks. Wildlife-friendly arable management supports a range of declining and scarce species.

Unsprayed and unfertilised field margins are a haven for plants, insects, small mammals and birds (including ground-nesting species). Several uncommon species of plants have been recorded at Wishford Farm, including stone parsley, bugloss, stork's-bill, common poppy, common fumitory and sharp-leaved fluellin. Heathfield Farm and Winter's Garden are good for beetles associated with arable margins.

Water

Water quality

The Environment Agency have assessed that waterbodies within the Regional Park are currently failing to meet Good Ecological Status/Potential under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017. The Upper Cranny Brook catchment is in 'bad' condition due to high Biological Oxygen Demand, poor fish status (in part attributable to physical barriers), and high phosphate levels; much of the remainder of the Clyst and tributaries is in 'poor' condition.

Failures are caused by poor agricultural practice, in-channel barriers and urbanisation. More specifically, growing and harvesting maize on erosion-prone soils, farming right up against the river, cattle and slurry in rivers, run-off from roads and misconnected residential waste pipes all cause pollution.

There is high potential for habitat creation along the Clyst, Crannybrook, Rockbeare Stream and at Clyst Honiton to mitigate poor water quality whilst also sequestering carbon, ameliorating flooding, and boosting nature.

Water quantity

Much of the Regional Park is underlain by Permian sandstones which are a Principal Aquifer (Environment Agency, 2021). Abstraction for public water supply is from boreholes whilst private users abstract from boreholes and springs. Natural habitats, and particularly woodlands, scrub, and hedges all have much higher infiltration rates than poorly managed farmland, because the soil structure is better. They therefore have an important role in enhancing resilience to drought.

Natural flood management

Floodplains and rivers are significant assets that (along with flood defences) help to prevent local communities from flooding. There is potential to remove river embankments in some rural locations, increasing the area of fully functioning floodplain, and reducing the risk of flooding to property downstream.



Figure 16 Tree planting at Mosshayne Farm, Clyst Honiton February 2019 (Lidl warehouse on right)

The greatest potential to ameliorate flood risk through soft engineering (tree planting, hedge planting, ponds, buffer strips) is within small catchments, where there are properties at risk, and good hydrological connectivity. The prime locations are the headwaters of the following rivers:

- Pin Brook (properties at Beacon Heath, Pinhoe and Monkerton);
- Grindle Brook (properties at Woodbury Salterton and Higher Greendale);
- Crannybrook and Southbrook (properties at Whimble);
- Rockbeare stream at Allercombe and Marsh Green (properties at Rockbeare);
- River Clyst at Plymtree
- Stream at Clyst St George (properties around Pytte)

The potential for beavers to reduce flood peaks and maintain base river flows during drought has been proven (Brazier, 2020)

Many of the parish councils with neighbourhood plans have defined flood protection policies, but few promote natural flood management as a solution.

Landscape

The Regional Park is entirely within the Devon Redlands National Character Area and the Clyst Lowland Farmland Devon Character Area (Devon County Council, 2020). A key objective is to protect the landscape quality of Killerton estate; the 'Killerton setting study' sets out how this can be achieved (Land Use Consultants, 2013). The Landscape Character Assessment for East Devon has recently been reviewed and updated (Fiona Fyfe Associates, 2019). It can be accessed here [East Devon Landscape Character Assessment](#)



Figure 17 View from White Down Copse (the highest point in the Regional Park) towards Ashclyst Forest

The Regional Park is defined by the prominent ridge of Beacon Hill (also the administrative boundary with Exeter); Stoke Hill; the slightly lower ridge and forest of Huxham Brake; the wooded hills of Killerton and Ashclyst Forest, on the harder igneous rocks; the long skyline of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths; and the hard urban edge of Exeter, specifically the M5 motorway. It is extremely important that the views to the ridges and hills are protected, and that the landscape of those natural features is enhanced. They provide a strong sense of place and help with orientation. Indeed, Stoke Hill, Killerton and Woodbury Castle all have Iron-age hillforts, denoting their strategic importance.

Once away from the built up areas, the lanes that wind through the low-lying undulating topography of fields and hedges can be disorientating, something that needs to be born in mind when promoting greater access for less confident countryside users. A unique feature are the many villages with 'Clyst' in their names, which means 'clear water'. There are many small tributaries of the River Clyst, and tranquil, intimate river valleys.

As we have seen in the biodiversity section above, mature trees in hedges, fields, and parklands, traditional orchards, and the seasonally flooded grazing marshes are an extremely valuable and distinctive feature. The strong vernacular e.g. thatch, Breccia, and limewash seen in the conservation areas of Broadclyst, Sowton and Whimble are also unique features. The priorities for landscape protection, management and planning are set out in Appendix 3.

There are many important viewpoints from where people can get a good sense of the Regional Park landscape. This is not an exhaustive list, but moving from south to north, these are:



Figure 18 The ridge running from Dart's Farm, Topsham north towards Winslade Park giving fine views of the Lower Clyst valley, Exe Estuary and Haldon ridge

The Medieval bridge at Clyst St Mary is a major historic crossing point of the river, though the setting is now dominated by traffic on the A376;



Figure 19 Views to, and from Bishops Court Palace must be protected; the hard edge of Sowton industrial estate is viewable from here

The intimate, historic and surprisingly tranquil Sowton village, which sits in the valley and has an 'otherworldly' feel;

Trafalgar Way at Clyst Honiton, another major historic transport corridor, being the start of a Roman road to London;

The Mosshayne Lane railway bridge, which gives elevated views up and down the valley and, on the negative, across towards the airport and Sky Park;

The tranquil river valley below West Clyst, with views to some important historic buildings at Brockhill and Kerswell Barton;



Figure 20 The old windmill at Dog Village, which can be seen from a great many points in the Regional Park

Views up river from the knoll at Jarvishayes;

Views from and towards Pinhoe ridge;

Views of Ashclyst Forest and Killerton from many points in the park;

Picturesque landscaped registered parks and garden and the importance of designed views.

These assets form important destinations, distinctive features, and focal points where trails intersect.

Cultural heritage

Introduction

Since 1975 and the building of the M5, the Devon County Council Historic Environment Record (available on-line) has recorded many hundreds of sites, areas and buildings of archaeological and historic interest within the Park area and its immediate environs. Here, a summary of the heritage assets in the Regional Park is given.

The Clyst Valley has many centuries-old villages, hamlets, farms and houses. Many of these habitations are documented in the Medieval period but some are older. For example, in his 1966 book 'Old Devon', W G Hoskins wrote about the reclamation of the 'Clistwick' (now Clyst St George) saltmarshes by William Sukespic in 1170, who lived at Marsh Barton (now Grade II listed). The ancient routes can still be followed here e.g. Marsh Lane. Some settlement sites are known to be prehistoric, such as the iron-age hillforts at Stoke Hill, Killerton and Woodbury. Some places are linked to known individuals, families, and their stories. For example, Killerton House is associated with the Aclands, Poltimore House with the Bampfylde family, and Bishops Court, Sowton, was formerly the palace of the Medieval Bishops of Exeter.

Modern archaeological methods are revealing new sites in the valley day by day. Between 2014 and 2016 an archaeological aerial survey centred on the catchments of the Rivers Exe, Culm, and Clyst, was completed under the National Mapping Programme, funded by Historic England (Devon County Council, 2016). The accompanying report (Hegarty, Knight, & Sims, 2016) provide full details. Development-led archaeological excavation at Cranbrook revealed an exquisitely-crafted archers arm-bracer from a burial mound that was built where there had been a tree, showing how the landscape had evolved from ancient woodland to a more open landscape. LIDAR⁴ surveys at Killerton revealed the previously unknown earlier house, and as this survey now continues across the whole estate, more secrets may come to light.

Below ground archaeology

The Regional Park is rich in archaeology from the Stone Age (Mesolithic and Neolithic) right through to modern times. Farms and field systems from the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British periods demonstrate just how ancient the landscape here is. They are mostly below plough soil now, but could be better protected within public open spaces. The finds (in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum) and records have great potential to help create a sense of place and contribute to cultural and educational programmes linked to access to the countryside. The Bronze Age barrows are a particularly significant feature of the area – giving rise to existing settlement names such as 'Burrow'.

The floodplains and fens are an important part of the region's paleoenvironmental record. Preserved macro-fossils and pollen provide a record of the environment in the past, and human impacts on its, back into prehistory. Hellings Park and Broadclyst Moor for example have been cored for paleoenvironmental material, as has land at Mosshayne – looking at evidence dating back as far as 7000 BC.

Iron Age Hillforts

Stoke Hill, Dolbury (Killerton) and Woodbury Castle are all Scheduled Ancient Monuments and thus of national interest. These hillforts have the potential to be physically linked via the rights of way network. Access and interpretation at Woodbury Castle and Dolbury has

⁴ Laser Imaging, Detection, And Ranging (LIDAR)

recently been improved. A possible 'marsh fort' is now part of the Pin Brook Country Park. There is a possible fort or camp by the Roman road at Killerton



Figure 21 Stoke Hill Iron Age Hillfort in March 1990

Roman road alignments

The old A30 from Dorchester to Exeter is the route of the main Roman Road. The section preserved in Cranbrook Country Park (west of Jack in the Green) awaits interpretation under a planning condition. There were possible alternative routes into Exeter from the east following the present day A3052. There is also a route heading north from Exeter's East Gate to the Roman fort on St Andrew's Hill in Cullompton. Sections of the road are visible as earthworks on LIDAR images, or preserved in field boundaries and existing roads. However, some sections are conjectural. The Exeter-Cullompton Roman Road has good potential to be part of the recreational network, as much is on either exiting rights of way, lanes or National Trust land. The fortlet at Stoke Hill is a Roman signal station and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Prayerbook Rebellion Battlefields

On the night of the 3rd/4th August 1549, a battle took place at a windmill near Woodbury. Windmill Hill just south of the A3052 is thought to be the location. The battle proceeded westwards, crossing the Clyst via the bridge and causeway at Bishop's Clyst and continuing up into what is now Digby & Sowton. Clyst St Mary Bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument comprising several arches linked by a walled causeway. The two low arches at the west end of the bridge are thought to be the oldest part of the structure, possibly dating from 1238. There is an interpretation panel here. The eastern arches may date from 1310.



Figure 22 The bridge and causeway at Clyst St Mary

This nationally important battle site is still highly legible on the Clyst St Mary side of the river – the sunken lane the armies fought over, the outflanking of the bridge from the mill, and the windmill mound next to Greendale industrial park (south of the A3052).

Medieval lanes and field patterns

Much of the landscape is derived from Medieval, if not earlier, division of the land into fields. The area contains a number of intact Medieval field systems (see Devon Historic Landscape character mapping, available on-line). The pattern of Medieval lanes and fields often forms the setting of the area's Listed or undesignated farmsteads and also the Conservation Areas. There are a number of shrunken or deserted Medieval settlements, including Aunk and at Ashclyst Forest.

Tithebarn Lane, Quarry Lane, Blackhorse Lane, and Langaton Lane are all Medieval and some much older e.g. Clyst St Mary bridge. Some of these are sunken holloways, defined by banks, hedges and trees, themselves often hundreds of years old and significant features in the historic landscape. These routes are important because as well as linking stately homes, they were the means by which ordinary folk got to work (water, saw mills, corn mills, orchards), to worship, to trade, and to communicate. They are 'common inheritance'.

The animal pound on Woodbury Road is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is a highly prominent feature, being sited just off the road from Clyst St George to Woodbury and it acts as a visible reminder of former countryside practices. The term animal pound is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'pund' meaning enclosure. Stray or illegally pastured stock, and legally-kept animals were rounded up at certain times of the year from areas of common grazing. The management of the floodplains for stock grazing and hay meadows has also left its mark.

Large houses and gardens

It is in the parklands associated with large houses where the links between history, landscape and biodiversity are most evident. These parklands were once more extensive, but surviving veteran trees point to the potential for wider parkland restoration/biodiversity enhancement/connectivity. The principle properties of interest are Bishop's Court, Killerton, Poltimore, Rockbeare Manor and Winslade Park. There is also the former Redhayes House by the M5 where some of the parkland is protected as open space, and Ratclyffe at Aunk.

Bishop's Court is a Grade I listed building dating back to approximately 1265, although the 'Manor of Clist' dates back to at least 1086. It was a Palace for the Bishops of Exeter and has also been subsequently owned by the Earl of Bedford, Admiral Lord Graves, and the notable Beavis and Garratt families. The mid-14th century tithe barn & early 16th century stable block are also Grade I listed. The barn has an arch-braced base-cruck roof of seven bays. The owners undertook an English Heritage grant-aided feasibility study into potential uses, completed 2011. They are eager to restore both properties.



Figure 23 Reverend Swete's 1801 watercolour 'South view of Bishops Clyst House' shows the great tithe barn to the right

Killerton House is a Grade II* listed building dating from the 16th century, with an extensive grade II* registered park and garden. The house was acquired by John Acland

in the 17th century and remained in his family until 1943, when Richard Acland gave the estate to the National Trust. Sir Thomas Acland employed John Veitch in 1770 to lay out a landscape park around Dolbury Hill which was intended to form the setting for a new mansion. The Sections of two deer park pales, a watering pond and Dolbury Hillfort are all Scheduled Ancient Monuments at Killerton Park. Veitch developed pleasure grounds from 1808 on land enclosed from the park. Features included gravel walks, shrubberies and a grove of tulip trees. Under the direction of John Veitch's son, James, the pleasure grounds and areas of the park were planted with trees and shrubs newly introduced to cultivation by Veitch's expanded nursery which had relocated from Budlake to Exeter in 1832.

Poltimore House is a Grade II* listed 16th century country house with later additions. One of the gems of the Regional Park, Poltimore House & Park has a fascinating history. During the English Civil War, an agreement was negotiated in the house between the Roundheads and Cavaliers. Dating from the 16th century, the house was originally built for Richard Bampfylde (from where we get Bampfild Street in Exeter) and last century it served as a school and hospital. The parkland was laid out at the same time as the original house and was grazed by a herd of fallow deer. The gardens to the rear of the house were designed by James Veitch in 1840 and still retain some significant trees; five huge Wellingtonia (one is 137 foot tall), established from seed, and the first handkerchief tree *Davidia involucrata*, brought back as seed from China in 1902 for the Veitch nurseries.

Poltimore House was acquired by the Poltimore House Trust with funding from English Heritage and EDDC in 1997. A roof cover erected in 2006 has made the building weather tight. A feasibility study was undertaken in 2007 with grant from the Architectural Heritage Fund and English Heritage.

Rockbeare Manor is a Grade II registered park and garden.

Winslade Park is a late-18th century mansion built for an East India merchant. The sale particulars of 1905 noted the 'pleasure grounds of great natural beauty'. They slope away from the mansion in a southerly direction, and contain a large number of specimen trees. The terrace walk (early-19th century) along Grindle Brook, an ornamental lake formed by the widening of the stream, and parts of the kitchen garden survive. The tithe barn and stables at Bishop's Court and Poltimore House are on the 'Heritage at Risk' register (Historic England, 2019).

Other historic buildings

There are many examples throughout the Regional Park, with particular clusters in Broadclyst (including the National Trust estate buildings), Sowton, Whimble, Clyst Hydon, and Aunk. They all contribute to the quality of the landscape. There are stories to be told about the farmed landscape and local geology. Many of the buildings sit within earlier field systems, and used local stone such as the distinctive red Breccia.

Mills, some of medieval origin, and their associated water management infrastructure are widespread and important. Often these were originally corn mills but converted to textiles and associated processing. Cottage industry is brought alive at places such as Marker's Cottage, Broadclyst.

Most of the Grade I listed buildings are churches at Broadclyst, Clyst St Lawrence, Clyst St Mary, Killerton (chapel), Poltimore and Sowton. The churchyard crosses at Clyst St Lawrence, Clyst Hydon, Broadclyst, and Poltimore, and the remains of a Medieval manor house just north of St John the Baptist's Church, Broadclyst, are all Scheduled Ancient Monuments. There are opportunities for enhancing the setting of Listed and non-Listed buildings and also biodiversity (some have important bat roosts).

Orchards

Orchards often provide the setting for historic farmsteads and villages/hamlets. Devon is known for its cider, and cider apples were crucial to the agricultural economy of this area especially in the 19th and 20th century. The importance of the industry is clearly reflected by the preponderance of the earthwork remains of tree planting banks. These aided drainage and provided adequate soil depth for the fruit trees. Whiteways Cider Company at Whimble came to dominate the industry and gave rise to local apple varieties called the Whimble Wonder and Whimble Queen.



Figure 24 Traditional orchard at Whimble showing ridge banks

Water meadows

The majority of 'catch meadows' have been recorded in the steeply rolling hills and sharply incised tributary combs at Thorverton, Silverton and Butterleigh. However, there are examples at Westwood/Clyst St Lawrence, at Clyston Mill and Wishford Farm (Broadclyst) and possibly other examples at Hayes Farm & Dymond's Farm in the Clyst Honiton area. The Tale Valley Trust have restored and interpreted a water meadow in the Tale Valley.

Reclamation landscapes

Much of the Clyst valley has been reclaimed from natural wetland since Medieval times, right up to the advent of modern field drainage. There are examples of 19th century engineering that straightened rivers, built leats and water mills.

Second World War

RAF Exeter is the main site (Battle of Britain onwards) but there are a range of outlying sites including accommodation and anti-aircraft sites. The Sector Control Room (and later Observer Corps HQ) at Poltimore Park is of at least regional if not national importance (WAAF buildings also survive at Park Farm). Interpretation panels and a leaflet have been prepared and will be released to the public when the permissive paths are opened to the public. There will be a preserved aircraft dispersal bay, with war memorial, within Sky Park. RAF camps and later US bases were set up within the grounds of larger houses, e.g. Winslade Park. The Prisoner of War Camp at Dymond's Farm has an intriguing escape story – the one that nearly got away!

Drivers of change

Development

The 'West End' of east Devon is undergoing major development and this is planned to continue for the next 20 years, with potentially 26,600 jobs created and 20,000 new homes built. This development is already changing the character and tranquillity of the area, increasing road traffic, noise and light pollution (Natural England, 2013), and putting more pressure on water quality and supply. The growing population could harm internationally protected wildlife sites through increased recreational disturbance. However, the Regional Park has a key role in creating Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) to mitigate this impact.

Dawlish Countryside Park is a successful SANGS. The primary goal of creating an attractive greenspace where people can safely exercise their dogs off leads has been achieved, whilst also increasing populations of curlew buntings and introducing a rare arable plant (small-flowered catchfly) as part of the Back from the Brink project.

The draft Cranbrook Development Plan Document 2013-2031 (East Devon District Council, 2019) allocates land to take development to around 7,750 homes for 18,000 or more residents.

Health & wellbeing

Broadclyst Electoral Division covers all of the Regional Park and in 2017 had a total population of 14,056 (Devon County Council, 2020). It has significantly more young people in the 0-15 age group (23% compared to an East Devon average of 16%), and significantly fewer people aged 65-84 (16% versus 25%). Significantly more children aged 0 to 24 are 'in need' of assistance, 4.7% compared to an East Devon average of 2.7%. 19% of the population (aged 16+) is estimated to be getting less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per week.

Cranbrook has a unique demographic with early population profiles estimating over 4 times the national average of 0-4 year olds living in the town (Exeter City Council, 2019) and twice as many children on free school meals compared to the national benchmark. 40% of children entering nursery at Cranbrook have under developed gross motor skills (personal communication). There is an urgent need to get those children active outdoors. There is an opportunity now to change the behaviour of parents and their children aged 11-14, typically the age at which behaviours are 'remembered' in later life. Walking is a very cheap form of exercise that has most chance of becoming habitual. Brisk walking for 150 minutes per week can significantly improve health.

There is now 10 years of data on outdoor recreation gathered through the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (Natural England, 2020). Most people's experience of nature is within 2 miles of their home, and visits have doubled in the last 10 years. During lockdown, a 65% increase in walking has been recorded at Woodbury Common and a 60% increase in cycling in Exeter. Co-Bikes have reported 400% increase in use of their hire bikes. On cycle routes around Exeter, usage has been increasing 10% every year.

Improved access to outdoor field study centres could offer more opportunities for disabled students. Inclusive access could also open up opportunities for employment or volunteering and enable anyone to actively participate in the community. Disabled people can also contribute to the economy. In the UK, the Purple Pound, the spending power of disabled people and their families, is worth £274 billion and is estimated to be rising by 14% per year, yet less than 10% of organisations have a targeted plan to access the disability market. This

is not only a huge frustration for disabled people, but is also a missed opportunity for organisations who could be benefiting both socially and commercially by accessing the disability market.

The Equality Act (Government, 2013) is about people and provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

Historic places convey a sense of uniqueness and awe and are strong emotional pillars connecting communities across England. Heritage can also improve personal wellbeing, by helping us understand our past, our individual and communal identity and help us connect with the places where we live.

In Devon fewer than 1 in 5 people aged 15 are active for at least an hour a day, whilst just over half of young people are classed as physically active. Around 1 in 5 adults are not physically active, with activity lower in more deprived areas. Active travel can also help reduce air pollution, at present around 3.4 in 100 deaths in Devon are attributable to particulate air pollution. Increasing active travel and reducing impact of other forms of travel also assists in meeting climate change targets, with climate change being one of the biggest potential impacts on public health that we all face.

Climate

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has advised that carbon emissions must reach net-zero by 2050 if we are to avoid the worst effects of climate change by keeping warming below 1.5°C. The 2018 UK Climate Projections (Met Office, 2019) indicate that mean summer temperatures in the Clyst Valley will increase by 5°C by 2080 and that precipitation will increase by 20 – 30% in the winter and decrease by 30 – 40% in the summer.

The Regional Park has a significant role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to future climate by:

1. Increasing carbon sequestration through habitat creation within Nature Recovery Networks
2. Increasing ecologically-sustainable food production and local consumption
3. Providing walking and cycling infrastructure, including electric bikes, and promoting better public transport
4. Increasing woody biomass to partly replace fossil fuels and provide building materials
5. Changing agricultural practices to reduce emissions associated with farming operations, manage soils sustainably and replenish soil carbon
6. Increasing flood storage in soils, aquifers and ponds, and through restoration of the full natural extent of floodplain, creating new riparian woodland and promoting Natural Flood Management⁵.
7. Providing shade and cooling, particularly through street tree planting and biodiverse Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

Because 1 & 2 above appear to be contradictory, it is worth exploring the science more fully. Carbon is stored in soil and vegetation. Soil organic matter (SOM) is comprised of a range of organic molecules ranging from simple sugars through to large molecules that can resist degradation for decades. SOM is approximately 58% carbon (Garnett, 2017). Peatlands

⁵ Natural Flood Management involves the use of a variety of measures including tree planting, river bank restoration, building small-scale woody dams, reconnecting rivers with their flood plains and storing water temporarily on open land (Defra, 2018).

store the most soil carbon, followed by boreal forests, then temperate and tropical grasslands. The total stock of soil carbon on earth is approximately twice the amount found in vegetation and three times that in the air. Avoiding carbon release is thus even more important than trying to sequester it. We must therefore avoid ploughing grasslands, conserve our peaty soils, and look after our existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

Storage is the total stock of carbon whereas sequestration is the net transfer of carbon from air to the soil or biomass (living and dead organisms). Carbon can be sequestered by several means, for example:

- Creating new woodland and wetland habitat
- In croplands, by adding manure, reducing tillage, growing perennials e.g. fruit/nut trees, or sowing legumes.
- In grasslands, by planting deep rooted grasses, legumes, adding manure, optimising the water/nutrient balance to stimulate forage productivity, changing the timing and intensity of grazing.

It's important to understand that sequestration can be undone by a change of land use and that, except in the case of natural forest creation, an equilibrium is reached at about 30-70 years and no more carbon is sequestered.

What land use change has the potential to deliver the largest carbon sequestration? This depends on the original land use. The largest gains measured are converting arable to wetland which lie in the range 8 to 17 tonnes of CO₂ equivalents per hectare per year⁶. Converting improved grassland to woodland sequesters approximately 8 tCO₂eq/ha/yr.

It is often stated that grass-fed livestock production as a system plays an important role in storing carbon. This is true. However, when it comes to sequestering carbon, grazing ruminants can only make a minor potential contribution to soil carbon sequestration; about 1%. Livestock supply chain emissions contribute about 14.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Added to this are the methane emissions, which will remain in the atmosphere as long as ruminant numbers continue to rise. And although ruminants do provide nitrogen to soils in a form that is readily used by plants, they are only recycling it, and any nitrate lost is critical because it is both long lived and has global warming potential.

The argument that grass-fed ruminants are using 'spare' land is not true either. Our land is finite and can be used for different purposes if there is a strong case. This is certainly not to say that livestock production should cease. Far from it. Ruminants are good at recycling residues and crop by-products, and land that can less easily be cropped. When used alongside feeding food waste to non-ruminant animals e.g. pigs and poultry, it is estimated to provide a population of 9 billion with 20 g of animal protein per person per day, much less than current Western levels (which are leading to an obesity epidemic) but a useful amount nevertheless.

At a global scale, reforestation has the greatest potential for climate mitigation. In the UK, which is a net importer of timber, increasing the amount of carbon sequestered through land use change is likely to result from expanding woodland cover, retaining old growth stands of woods (including looking after our ancient trees in hedges and fields) and greater use of timber products in buildings (Burton, 2018). However, it is worth re-stating that we need to plant the right tree in the right place, to ensure existing natural and cultural heritage is not

⁶ CO₂ equivalents are a standard way of measuring carbon footprints

damaged, and that species chosen are likely to be resilient to future pest, diseases and climate.

16% forest land cover by 2050 could be equivalent to a 10% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions at that time. However, far more measurements of actual sites are needed (as opposed to modelling) before we have a good handle on changes in SOC in woodland/forest (Natural England, 2012). This research need could be met by the Regional Park, lying as it does on the doorstep of Exeter University.



Water

The Water Framework Directive sets out a target for the UK Government to achieve 'good' existing or potential ecological status for water bodies by 2027. For the Rivers Clyst and Cranny Brook, the present condition is 'moderate' except for the Lower Cranny Brook, which is in 'poor' condition. Water quality in the River Clyst is negatively affected by manures, slurry, and soil from rural areas, compounded by soil compaction. Sewage and runoff from urban areas is also a problem. However, the greatest pressure is from manure and slurry. In terms of pollution loading, a single herd of 250 dairy cows is equivalent to a population of 12,500 people, about the size of Honiton.

Nature

The River Clyst discharges into the Exe Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar, and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the quality of the water is therefore critical to the birds for which the site is internationally important. Some of the mud and sand flats off Exmouth are in unfavourable condition but considered to be recovering (Natural England, 2021). However, populations of water birds as a whole, and oystercatcher, grey plover and dunlin in particular, are unfavourable at the site level, causes unknown.

The State of Nature report (Hayhow D B, 2016) for England confirms that nature is in crisis. Since 1970, the Wild Bird Indicator has declined by 6%, but the Farmland Bird Indicator has fallen by 56%. The Farmland Butterfly Indicator has declined by 27% and the Woodland Butterfly Indicator by 51% since 1990. Going further back, the facts remain stark:

- 97% of the lowland meadows in England and Wales were lost between the 1930s and 1984
- The area of coppiced woodland fell by 90% between 1900 and 1970
- Wetlands were drained at a rate of 1,000km² per year in the middle of the 19th century

An increase in cereal cultivation has resulted in larger fields and hedgerow loss, particularly on the valley floors. The national Countryside Survey 2007 recorded a 4.5% loss of hedgerow trees over 10 years, and there is no reason to suspect that trees in the Clyst Valley are faring any better. The same survey recorded a dramatic decrease in the number of young or small trees. Modelling reveals that for a stable population, 45% of hedgerow trees need to be 20 cm or less diameter. In Devon, parish surveys carried out between 2007 and 2009 suggest that just 26% of our trees fall into this size class. The reasons for the decline in hedgerow trees include Dutch elm disease, the advent of modern hedgerow

cutting with tractor and flail, and felling along roads and public rights of way, because they pose a perceived, or actual, risk to human safety.

Traditional orchards are becoming increasingly rare due to neglect, intensification of agriculture and pressure from land development. In 2007, the Peoples Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) identified 16,990 ha of traditional orchard habitat in England from aerial survey. In Devon, 198 ha were surveyed by volunteers. Of these, 46% were in poor condition, 36% were in good condition and only 18% were in excellent condition. A survey by the National Trust in 2016 found that causes of poor condition in orchards on the Killerton estate were either 'abandonment' or 'inappropriate management' e.g. over-hard pruning.

The Devon Hedge Group has produced an ash dieback action plan 2016. The current consensus is that over 90% of ash trees in the county will die or be severely affected within woodlands over the next 5-15 years, whilst 50% of non-woodland trees will be damaged to the extent that they shed limbs. Other threats to trees include: 'Sudden oak death'; Oak processionary moth; and ploughing beneath the crown of large infield trees leading to compaction of soil and lack of oxygen and water to roots, leading to death. Tree planting and natural regeneration now will mitigate this landscape loss and reduce flood damage, improve water and air quality, and provide crucial biodiverse wildlife habitats.



Figure 25 Sunlight through an ash tree at Ashclyst Forest by Jenny Steer Photography

Delivery

Introduction

Several excellent projects have already been delivered in the Regional Park. Examples include the Redhayes Bridge over the M5 which has seen a 64% annual increase in use by cyclists, joggers and walkers as the principal route linking Cranbrook to Exeter. The design of the associated crossing of the Tithebarn Link Road is functioning well to give cyclists primacy. The nearby Pin Brook Country Park has been laid out to a high specification. Orchards, hedges and ponds at Cranbrook Country Park are maturing and management is excellent. Heathfield Farm is embarking on an exciting new journey as a land centre, whilst Poltimore House Trust and its dedicated volunteers continue to improve lives.

The challenge now is to make a step-change in ambition, delivering projects that are not directly linked to development, to secure these gains through sustainable resourcing, to link up the pieces of the jigsaw, and achieve something greater than the sum of all of these parts.

Prioritisation

Our aim is to generate a pipeline of projects, and always have some ready to secure funds that often materialise at short notice.

Projects are prioritised against how well they meet the objectives of the Regional Park. However, particular weight is given to those projects that deliver most for climate mitigation and adaptation, for nature and for people. In delivering for people, we will use the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#) to further prioritise projects for communities in greatest need. The priority within nature is to protect the Natura 2000 sites and therefore projects that mitigate impact of development on Natura 2000 will be given substantial weight. This approach has clear support from stakeholders. Table 1 ranks projects by number of votes. Where no project code was specified, access was mentioned 17 times, cycling routes and habitat creation 9 times, and climate change 5 times.

Emphasis was given to projects that were easy or quick to deliver, or where there was a specific opportunity. The deliverability of projects is clearly a determining factor.

Table 1

Project	Votes
Lower Clyst habitat conservation and access projects	38
Clyst Valley Trail	38
Habitat corridors	16
Bishops Court	15
Ashclyst Forest	10
Crystal Clear Clyst	9
Grindle Brook	9
Cranbrook to Exeter traffic-free route	8
Winslade Park	7

Project types

There are two types of project; framework and site specific. Framework projects will enable the Regional Park to achieve its full potential, to be experienced as a coherent entity and deliver on its potential to be greater than the sum of its parts. Framework projects require: (a) working across boundaries (geographical, sectoral, and organisational); (b) bringing the right mix of skills and knowledge around the table; (c) thoroughly exploring problems and solutions; (d) sharing information; (e) constantly learning.

Framework projects centre on:

- Sustainable movement - comprehensive, joined-up, seamless public transport coupled with a traffic-free trail network
- Complex, multi-objective projects such as Crystal Clear Clyst, Clyst Canopy, and Nature Recovery Network
- Education
- Community engagement & volunteering
- Information service to users and supporters of the Regional Park

Delivery board/group

A group will be tasked with setting the direction of travel, deciding which projects should be prioritised, generating funding and other resources, and benchmarking progress against other Regional Parks e.g. River Nene, Colne, Lee, and Wandle Valley, and projects e.g. Lower Otter Restoration, Stover & Wray Valley Trail, Dawlish Countryside Park. An equality champion will be sought to ensure every opportunity is taken to optimise infrastructure for those with protected characteristics. Local business and landowners will also be represented on this group.

Delivery teams

Delivering the projects on behalf of the board will be an 'engine room' of mixed discipline and organisation delivery teams. Common to most projects is the need for skills in development control (EDDC + DCC), highways (DCC), water (DCC + EA), and agri-environment (NE, or perhaps the new Office for Environmental Protection).

Land purchase

EDDC is presently negotiating the purchase of 10 ha of land which will then be managed to optimise its value for nature, people and climate mitigation. As a local authority, we are able to borrow money at low interest rates from the Public Works Loan Board. Targeted acquisition will be part of the delivery strategy, particularly where long-term benefits and return on investment accrue. Clearly, in order to secure value for the public purse, details of proposed acquisition will need to be confidential but we will work with our partners to identify opportunities, and regularly review priorities.

Additionally, our charitable partners could buy land, or we could work with charities such as the Land Trust, as Teignbridge District Council has successfully done in establishing the excellent Dawlish Countryside Park. Another option is to create a new charity.

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

We asked consultees how much they would be willing to pay per year to support a not-for-profit organisation which supported delivery of the Regional Park. 161 people responded to this question and the results are heartening (see table below). No decision has been made on whether to form a not-for-profit organisation, and what functions it would need. However, a small Charitable Incorporated Organisation could buy land and other assets, have a self-appointed board of directors, and could invite the public to become paying members, thereby generating annual income that could be used as match-funding.

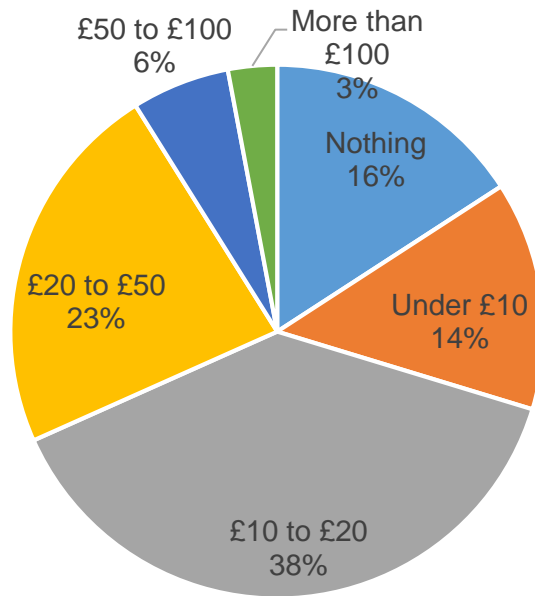


Figure 26 How much consultees were willing to pay per year to support a not-for-profit organisation delivering green infrastructure in the Regional Park

Framework projects

Volunteering

There is clearly a huge appetite and potential for more grass roots action in the Regional Park; “thinking globally, acting locally”. The National Trust has an established army of well-trained and supported volunteers carrying out diverse tasks. Poltimore House Trust have volunteers carrying out maintenance, managing the grounds and events, and researching history. Heathfield Farm (formerly Broadclyst Community Farm) has had volunteers helping to manage the farm and like Poltimore, takes referrals e.g. people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Cranbrook Town Council has volunteers helping with practical activities in the Country Park. Broadclyst Environment Group have weekly litter picking and recently planted trees. Wild East Devon has 180 active volunteers, 50 of whom carry out land management and wildlife surveys on EDDC’s nature reserves, though none are in the Regional Park yet.

During the ‘Great Trees’ project, more than 100 volunteers took part in tree and orchard surveys, tree planting, and historic research. As soon as restrictions allow, more of these activities will take place through the ‘Routes for Roots’ project. We have established Friends of the Clyst Valley and already 600+ people have signed up to receive updates on progress. Our aim is to hold an annual forum, ideally a mixture of talks and practical action, ensuring that the format appeals to young people. Additionally, we could reach out to Exeter University who hold ‘Student Volunteering Week’ in February.

Volunteering activities in the Regional Park could include:

- Monitoring the condition of trails and greenspaces
- Maintenance and repair of trails
- Practical conservation
- Tree wardening
- Giving talks and walks
- Surveys/research of wildlife, heritage, water quality, businesses etc.
- Event management

It is clear that more resources will be needed to harness this potential, and the existing providers will have to work together. We’ve committed to exploring this in the action plan.

Community engagement

There are broadly four communities that we want to work with. There are the established residents in towns and villages within the Regional Park, landowners and managers, younger residents in new housing estates, and Black and Minority Ethnic communities from Exeter.

Established residents

Not everyone welcomes the green initiatives we propose. A growing population exploring the countryside leads to issues of littering, lack of respect for privacy and the Countryside Code. On the other hand, established residents often have great knowledge of their parish, a desire to share it, keep local customs alive and maintain cherished community assets. Our priority is to hold conversations with parishes at least once every year.

Landowners and managers

Where we have sought to progress site-specific projects, such as the Clyst Valley Trail, we have established relationships with land managers. However, the resources at our disposal have been insufficient to enable us to talk to every land manager in the Regional Park. We plan to rectify that over the next 5 years by employing project officers to work on the Crystal Clear Clyst and 10% for Nature projects.

Younger residents

Many new residents do not have the confidence or ability to access greenspaces. Often there is a fundamental lack of knowledge of their existence in the first place. Thus whilst much of our work is about creating green infrastructure, there is also a need to understand barriers and to educate. There is a need to promulgate the Countryside Code, and we are starting to do that through our 'Devon Loves Dogs' initiative, visiting greenspaces and talking to the public about minimising the impact of dogs, whilst championing the benefits to health and wellbeing.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities

In the 2011 national census, 7% of the 117,000 Exeter residents were from Black and Minority Ethnic groups. Exeter Communities Together (ECT) is enabling BAME residents in Exeter to have a voice and increased visibility in the wider community. We are keen to work with them to resolve the specific barriers that these residents face in accessing greenspace.

For all of these communities, we want to progress swiftly along the spectrum of engagement, from informing and consulting, to involving, to collaborating and finally to empowering. A seed-funding grant and/or our existing Crowdfunder programme ([link](#)) could be a great way of building partnerships and momentum.

Education

Our priority for the next 5 years will be to engage with those with a stake in outdoor education and produce a strategy to grow provision. Key partners will be National Trust, who have an established relationship with all of the schools in the Killerton estate and regularly cater for Exeter College students, and EDDC's own Countryside Team, with experience of delivering activities at Seaton wetlands and Exmouth Local Nature Reserves. Key existing hubs with further potential include:

- Cranbrook, where the Town Council's Country Park Ranger delivers activities and there are thriving forest schools;
- Heathfield Farm;
- Poltimore House;
- Caddihoe

The Outdoors Group recently applied for planning permission for a new education centre at Ratsloe. This wasn't successful, but the aims of the group align with ours, and collaboration will be explored.

Information

A website for the Clyst Valley Regional Park is presently under construction. Key audiences are supporters (the Friends of the Clyst Valley), visitors to/users of the Park, and potential investors, for example, local businesses. Users of the website will be able to plan a day out, track project implementation and understand opportunities for investing.

Sustainable movement

Patronage on buses and trains has been hit hard by the pandemic. Over the next two years, the priority must be to recover use to pre-Covid levels, working closely with DCC transport teams and through them, the main providers Stagecoach and South West Trains. A new national bus strategy is expected this year and access to leisure is a priority for the Government. Through our Routes for Roots project, we can deliver some led bikes rides from Cranbrook and Pinhoe stations, where e-bikes have been installed.

In the next 5 years, we might establish a charity that delivers benefits for paying members. That might include reduced ticket fares on buses and/or trains. We will draw on DCC's expertise in route planning, so that our traffic-free trail network works for commuters and leisure. Through 'Gear Change' (Department for Transport, 2020), the Government have signalled a change in policy: more space for bikes on trains (except on peak-hour services) and better linkage, more bikes on buses, and more cycle parking at transport hubs.

We recognise that small changes to the traffic-free network can bring about large improvements in usability. For example, when our mobility champion identified a problem kerb on the Broadclyst to Killerton trail, DCC were able to install a drop-kerb. An audit of paths on the Killerton estate is already underway, with volunteers entering data on an app when in the field. This app might be rolled out across the Regional Park. It would allow improvements to be identified, prioritised and costed, with a focus on upgrades for disabled users, horse riders, and strengthening weak links in the chain.

Where existing trail infrastructure is already vulnerable to flooding, measures will need to be explored to increase resilience and ensure public safety. New trail infrastructure will be planned to avoid floodplains as much as possible. We're committed to resolving the long-term maintenance of cycleways through a partnership approach. The present system, in which only the most used commuter routes are gritted, for example, is not likely to bring about the transformation increase in cycling that is needed.



Figure 27 Electric bikes outside St Martins' School, Cranbrook

Please note that Figures 28 & 29 are indicative and provide technical guidance only in support of relevant policies and strategies of the approved East Devon Local Plan, most notably Strategy 10 on the Clyst Valley Regional Park.

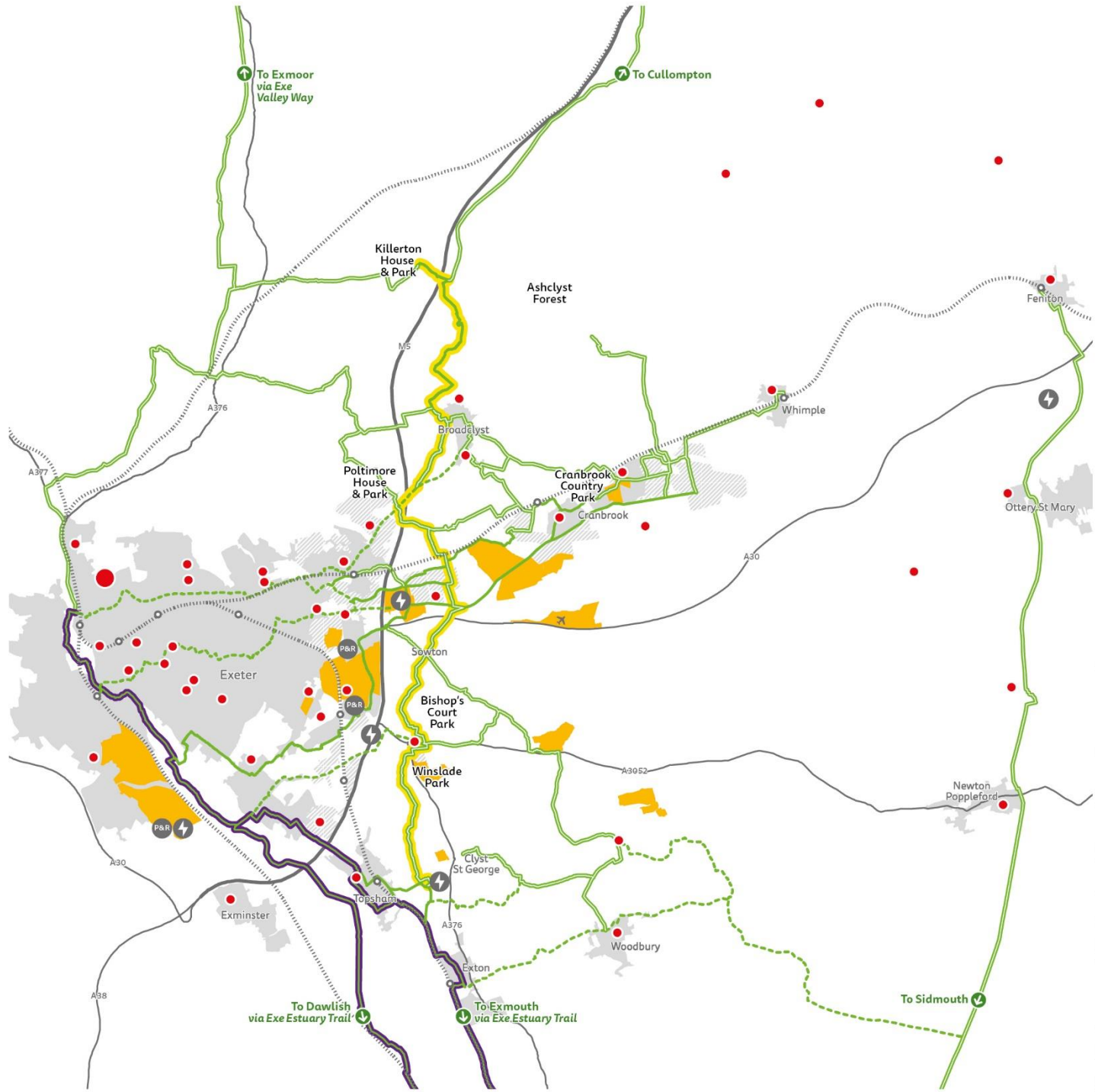
A view of the Clyst Valley Regional Park

Green commuting



People using greenways to get to work and education

Please note: All planned routes are indicative only. No agreement from landowners is implied. No public right of access exists until formally declared as such.



Map data: © crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100023746

- The Clyst Valley Trail
- Electric car charging point
- New/proposed built-up area
- Existing traffic-free route
- Park and ride
- Major employment site
- Existing traffic-free route needing upgrade
- Rail station
- Proposed new traffic-free route
- Educational facility
- Built-up area
- National cycle network

Figure 28: Green Commuting

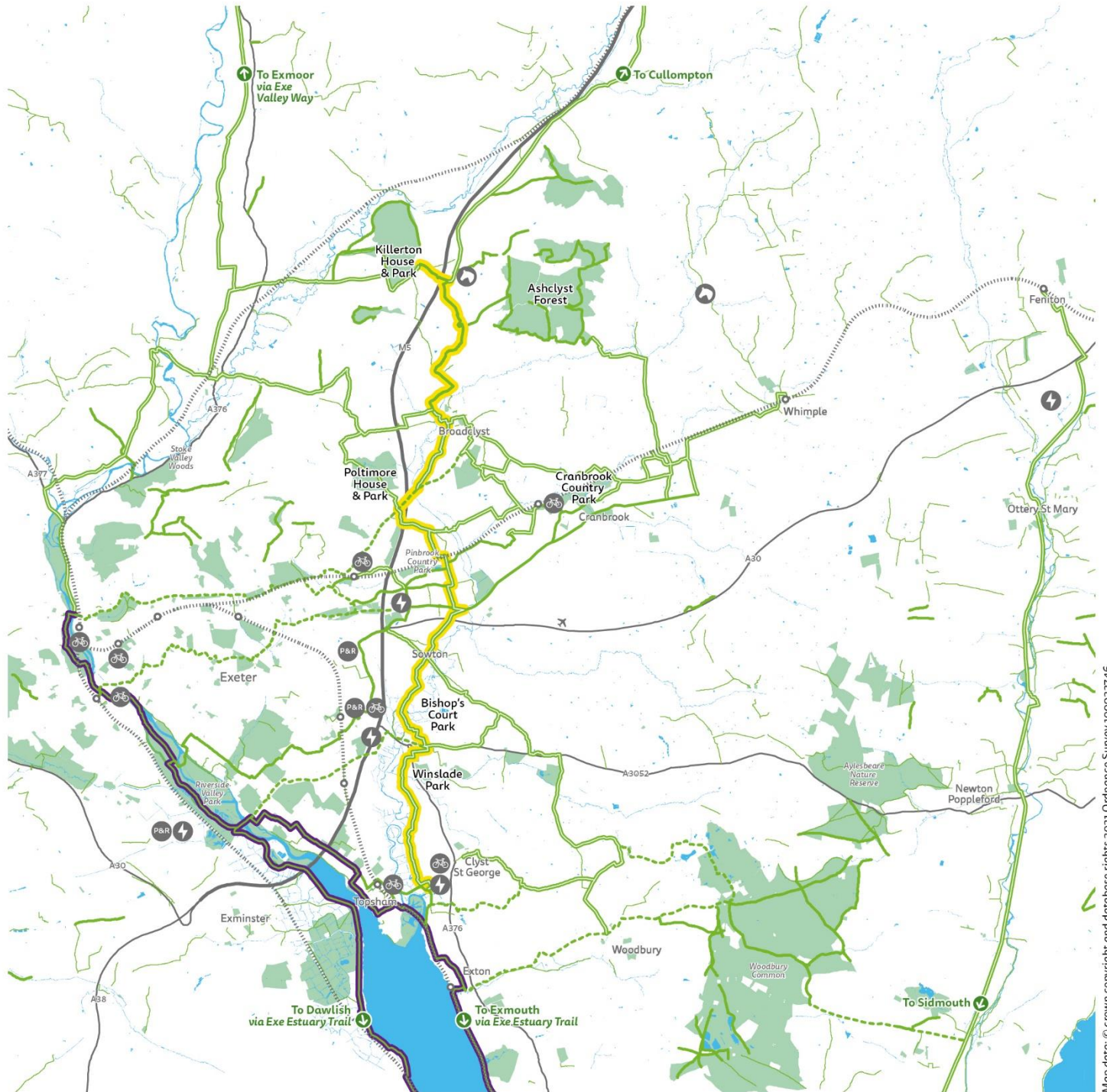
A view of the Clyst Valley Regional Park

Green recreation routes



Residents and visitors using greenways to access green spaces for a breath of fresh air

Please note: All planned routes are indicative only. No agreement from landowners is implied. No public right of access exists until formally declared as such.



Map data: © crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100023746

-  The Clyst Valley Trail
-  Existing traffic-free route
-  Existing traffic-free route needing upgrade
-  Proposed new traffic-free route
-  Footpath
-  National cycle network
-  Electric car charging point
-  Park and ride
-  Bike hire
-  Equestrian centre
-  Rail station
-  Green space

Figure 29: Green recreation

Traffic-free network – standards and types

Footpath

A footpath is a highway over which the public has a right of way on foot only.

Bridleway

A bridleway is a highway over which the public has a right of way on foot, horseback and on a pedal cycle (including mountain-bikes). There may also be a right to drive animals along a bridleway. The Countryside Act 1968 states that cyclists must give way to pedestrians and equestrians.

Traffic-free route

This is a route free from motor vehicles over the majority of their length. There may be short sections where there is no alternative to using an existing road, but traffic on these will be low. Traffic-free routes will meet the nine criteria listed below (Sustrans, 2018). They will be planned, designed, built and maintained to be inclusive for all types of user, in accordance with The Equality Act 2010.



1 Be traffic-free or quiet



2 Be wide enough to comfortably accommodate all users



3 Be designed to minimise maintenance



4 Be signed clearly and consistently



5 Have a smooth surface that is well drained



6 Be fully accessible to all legitimate users



7 Feel like a safe place to be



8 Enable all users to cross roads safely and step-free



9 Be attractive and interesting

Fig 30 Nine criteria that our traffic-free trails will meet

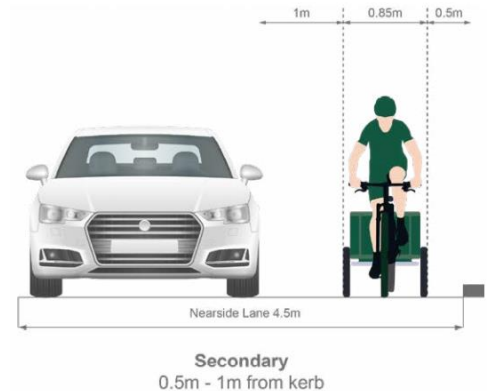
Quiet way

A quiet way is a highway used by motor vehicles but where traffic calming measures are employed to make them safe for use by pedestrians⁷, cyclists⁸, and horse-riders. Well-designed quiet ways will be in addition to, not in place of, a high quality arterial network of dedicated traffic free routes.

The general cut-off for safety is fewer than 1,000 vehicles per day (vpd) and speeds of <35mph at the 85 percentile (DfT, 2006). Ideally, the carriageway needs to be 4.5m wide (see diagram opposite). However, many Devonshire lanes are not this wide, so the ability to create regular passing places with good inter-visibility will often be a determining factor. Each case will be unique, and treated as such.

We will consult with users and the highways authority on measures to give primacy to pedestrian, cyclists, and horse-riders on quiet ways. Those measures might include:

- Closure of lanes to vehicles at weekends (except for dwelling access and farm traffic);
- 15 mph speed limit;
- Passing places;
- Road humps;
- Surface treatments;
- Gateway features



Following consultation, where there is support, some quiet ways could be formally designated as Quiet Lanes (DfT, 2006).

⁷ The terms **pedestrian** and **walking** include people using mobility aids such as wheelchairs and mobility scooters, and people with physical, sensory or cognitive impairments who are travelling on foot.

⁸ The term **cycle** includes hand-cranked cycles and cycles that conform to the Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle Regulations 1983 (as amended), which we shorten to e-bikes for ease. It does not include mopeds, stand-on scooters or other powered two-wheeled vehicles. The terms **cyclist** and **cycling** refer to anybody using a human powered vehicle as described above.

Specific traffic-free projects

Clyst Valley Trail

The Clyst Valley Trail will be a commuting and recreational trail for walkers, cyclists, mobility scooters and where feasible, horse riders. It will link the Exe Estuary trail with the historic Killerton House and Park, via an existing multi-use trail from Broadclyst. There is future potential to reach the Exe Valley Way⁹ and create a superb coast-to-coast trail linking Exmoor with Exmouth. The CVT will provide a direct, safe, green route to employment centres at Science Park, Sky Park, and close access to Exeter Business Park & Sowton Industrial Estate. On the way, it passes through historic parkland and attractive river valleys, forming the backbone of the new Clyst Valley Regional Park.



Figure 31 The latest progress towards delivering the Clyst Valley Trail; a crossing at Blackhorse Inn

A separate delivery plan will be produced and the priority over the next 5 years is to build half of the total 13 km. It is hoped that the existing section of E2 (Exeter-Broadclyst), which no longer meets Government standards, can be bypassed as a co-benefit of delivering the CVT.

Cranbrook to Exeter

As Cranbrook expands eastwards and new housing comes forward at Tithebarn and Mosshayne, this will deliver a traffic-free commuting and recreational route additional to the existing old London Road facility. The route begins at Station Road and proceeds around the back of the Amazon/Lidl warehouse alongside the railway line (thus not impacting on the wildlife corridor provided for bats). A new bridge crossing of the River Clyst is required.

Broadclyst to Cranbrook

The green commuting and recreation key diagrams include two proposed trails linking these communities. One uses the existing level railway crossing and Elbury Lane to join Cranbrook Education Campus with Clyst Vale College. The other is more directly linking Dog Village and Clyst Vale College to Cranbrook station. This latter route would probably require a bridge over the railway at old Broadclyst Station. However, all possible options for creating a safe crossing of the railway at this point will be explored.

Nature Recovery Network

The principle of nature gain through better, bigger, more and joined up natural habitat (Lawton, 2010) will be achieved by targeting priority habitat creation and restoration within

⁹ The Exe Valley Way is a walking trail, but much of it is on quiet lanes suitable for cycling [More information about the Exe Valley Way](#)

the defined Nature Recovery Network. The NRN will be revised once Devon Wildlife Trust have published their version on behalf of the Devon Local Nature Partnership.

However, many formally widespread species will continue to decline unless action is taken on all land. Much of the farmland in the Regional Park area is not currently in any agri-environment scheme, and of those that are, fewer are in the higher tier options that deliver the most valuable outcomes for biodiversity. Our objective then is to encourage all farm holdings within the Regional Park to manage 10% of their area in wildlife-friendly ways to produce year-round food and breeding sites for a range of farmland species. This will be known as our '10% for nature' target.

Much of the Regional Park area overlaps with RSPB's Cirl Bunting Priority Landscape, encompassing the current range of cirl buntings. The last national survey in 2016 showed breeding territories at a few locations in the Regional Park. These territories represent a recovery in range east across the Exe Estuary and so the RSPB is very keen to support farmland management that provides more habitat suitable for cirl buntings. Habitat requirements are invertebrate-rich grazed pasture, dense hedges and scrub patches and, crucially, arable management where spring sown barley is left as winter stubbles to provide vital seed food for cirl buntings (and a range of other farmland birds including finches and larks).

Wildlife Corridors

Wildlife corridors link nature enhancement areas and are likely to be delivered primarily through agri-environment schemes. Many follow waterways where the priority will be to improve water quality by creating or restoring natural habitat adjacent to rivers or streams. Others link patches of woodland by maintaining mature hedgerow trees and planting replacements, serving as feeding and commuting routes for bats. Some also follow quiet lanes where the creation or restoration of wildflower verges are essential for the survival of pollinating insects.

All of them link area projects with the intention that wild species can move through the landscape to ensure populations can be maintained as the climate changes. There is also tremendous potential to enhance the historic environment associated with these corridors, and tell the human story. For example, the listed Medieval Holy Well on Frogmore Lane in association with the stream corridor linking Ashclyst Forest to the River Culm.

The Aylesbeare Stream and Holbrook are important wildlife corridors connecting extensive habitat on the heathlands at Aylesbeare with extensive habitat in the Lower Clyst valley. They also connect with hotspots of biodiversity at Rockbeare (parkland), Beautiport Farm (broadleaved woodland and grasslands), and Farringdon (parkland and ancient woodland). The known biodiversity interest in the project area are the tree-lined streams, old traditional orchards, small riverine woods and at Spain Farm, small fields with good hedgerows. A small percentage of the project area is within a Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier agreement. There is little or no buffer protecting the rivers from inputs of agricultural chemicals. Dymond's Farm and Higher Holbrook Farm are both Grade II listed and with surviving orchards and Dymond's was also the site of a Prisoner of War camp during World War II.

The Grindle Brook is an historic, early Medieval boundary characterised by smaller floodplain meadows, hedgerows and patches of riverine woodland on clay alluvium. There are also some traditional orchards. Kiddicott Farm is in Higher Level Stewardship but no other land is in an agreement and in many places intensive arable cultivation takes place right up to the river. The reversion of arable to pasture and new woodland via natural regeneration would considerably enhance biodiversity, landscape, water quality and provide greater natural flood storage.

Clyst Canopy

This is a multi-agency & landowner project to bring about a generational transformation in tree cover.

Tree canopy cover in the Clyst Valley is estimated at 9.3%. Broadclyst parish, which includes Ashclyst Forest, has 14.3%, precisely the amount measured in a recent study of Cranbrook. To tackle the climate crisis, it is recommended that UK forestry cover is increased from 13% to at least 17% by 2050 by planting around 30,000 hectares (90 – 120 million trees) of broadleaf and conifer woodland each year (Committee on Climate Change, 2020). Because trees have multiple positive benefits, we are proposing a minimum target of 20% canopy cover is achieved during this 25-year plan period.



Figure 32 An aerial view of Rockbeare, with about 15% tree cover in the middle distance

The importance of maintaining the trees that we already have cannot be overstated. Ancient trees and woodlands in particular are huge stores of carbon and hotspots of biodiversity. But many are threatened through damage to roots, competition from conifers or simply a lack of management or natural processes in woodlands. Lack of after care can result in trees not reaching their potential canopy. In urban areas, this is often through lack of water, deliberate or inadvertent vandalism. In rural areas, grey squirrels and deer are a major threat.

There are multiple opportunities to increase tree and shrub cover in the Regional Park through either natural regeneration where there is a source of seed, assisted natural regeneration where it is important to nurture trees of local provenance, and planting. There is a direct link to the Crystal Clear Clyst project here, whereby the reversion of intensively managed pasture or arable to woodland should be sought. The restoration of several large historic parklands is underway or planned, and new public parks and SANGS delivered by developers should

feature more trees. Silvo-pastoral & silvo-arable systems can also make an important contribution in future.

The mantra of the right tree in the right place must be practiced, not least to protect existing or potential non-woodland priority habitat, and valuable heritage features. Thorough assessment, including ground survey, by qualified persons, is critical before schemes are implemented.

So how does 20% canopy cover break down as a target? The Clyst catchment is 155 km² (15,500 hectares) of which about 10% (1,550 ha) is tree canopy, so a doubling would equate to about 1,550 ha or up to around 3.8 million trees planted. We can further break that down to a 5 year rolling target of 300 ha or up to say 150,000 trees planted per year.

Crystal Clear Clyst

Introduction

This a catchment-scale, multiple objective project that has been sub-divided into five main areas. The principle aim is to work with landowners, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Forestry Commission to promote natural habitat and river restoration from source to sea. The new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) will be a major plank of the funding strategy. There may, for example, be a mandatory target to buffer 100m of land either side of rivers. Securing resources for field officers who can work with farmers is proven to be successful, particularly where collaboration across farm holdings is needed. Other funds should come via the capital programmes of Environment Agency, South West Water and Devon County Council. However, there are also opportunities to create new markets for paid ecosystem services, and the recently launched Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund signals the Government's intention to do that.

The Environment Agency have identified a number of mitigation measures for the waterbodies in the catchment. These include the removal of physical barriers, river and bankside restoration, tree planting, and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). We will investigate whether this project could help to deliver some of them.

Whilst the promotion of natural riverine processes and restoration of natural habitats is a key aim, so also is conservation of the historic environment. Humans have been living with and adapting the river environment for thousands of years. The evidence remains; embankments, irrigation channels, mill leats, catch-meadow systems, meadow divisions and stock control are all built into the floodplain landscape. It's important to understand the past in order to shape the future of the Park. Therefore, an historic characterisation of the river is a key project to complete in the next 5 years.

There is a very real possibility that beavers will colonise the Clyst catchment soon. They are now thriving in the headwaters of the River Tale, less than 1km from the source of the Clyst. Evidence of the environmental benefits of beavers continues to grow and they would accelerate habitat restoration. However, they would also have to be controlled and mitigation measures put in place, ideally in advance of their arrival. For example, where ancient, veteran or notable trees and orchards were within 100m of a water course or floodplain, they would need to be protected, for example, with mesh guards. Over the next 5 years, resources should be secured to commission some preliminary work on beavers in the Clyst. This would look at the benefits of a controlled release, identify infrastructure at risk and consult with landowners and statutory agencies in those high risk areas to identify mitigation.

Away from main rivers and their floodplains, it is absolutely critical that the ability of the land to absorb and retain rain water is improved. The organic content and structure of soils in fields, particularly those bordering streams, must be improved. This will reduce flooding, increase resilience to drought, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and enhance biodiversity. An increase in the cover of trees, of the right type, in the right place, will also provide all of those benefits, and support animal, fruit, nut and vegetable production. More on this is covered in the 'Clyst Canopy' project.

In the urban environment, building in the floodplain must continue to be avoided. High quality SUDS must grow in importance in order to prevent pollutants and sediment entering the watercourses.

Upstream of Ashclyst

The upper catchment of the River Clyst stretches from Talaton to Ashclyst Farm, immediately south of Ashclyst Forest. The floodplain is about 200 m wide, and though the river is tree-lined, there is no buffer to arable cultivation or cattle grazing. These floodplains have poorly drained soils of mixed texture, especially wet in back-lands well suited to wet

woodland or marshy grassland. Even narrow alluvial valley bottoms often have both levee¹⁰ and back-land developed giving a variety of target habitat options. Perennially wet soils here remove nitrate from ground and surface-waters as well as retaining sediment (with phosphorus) during periods of flooding (Clayden, 1971).

Although large areas of land in the upper catchment are in Middle Tier Countryside Stewardship agreements, these do not always protect known biodiversity or heritage assets. In addition, it is clear that information on the habitat resource is out-dated and a comprehensive River Habitat Survey is an essential first step.

Broadclyst

This section covers the area from Ashclyst Farm through Broadclyst to the B3181. At Burrow Farm, the floodplain broadens to about 350 m wide. Much of the land has been in an HLS agreement, and this has enabled the tenants to provide excellent educational visits e.g. Open Farm Sunday. There are some measures to prevent soil erosion or run-off into the river (arable reversion to unfertilised grassland & 6 m buffer strips on cultivated land), but there is no action on the creation of riverine woodland or species-rich grassland, and small areas of riverine woodland are excluded from the HLS agreement, yet the river forms a vital wildlife corridor in this location.

Broadclyst Moor is an extensive area of semi-natural habitat with permissive access. Soil textures are mixed depending on whether the parent material was derived from sandstones, siltstones or clay shales. The present NT tenant at Martinsfield Farm runs a Lambing Open Farm Sunday which is well attended. The farm has been in agri-environment schemes for at least 20 years and in that time many hedges have been planted and some parkland trees, though establishment success has been mixed. The present organic HLS agreement ended in 2019 but had high nature value options e.g. restoration of species-rich grassland.

Jarvishayes Farm is presently in the Mid-Tier scheme. More information is needed on the extent and condition of habitats on the farm, and the potential for biodiversity enhancement.

Cranny Brook

This is the area of greatest immediate potential for river and habitat restoration. It encompasses the NT farms at Elbury and Wishford, the former being managed in hand by the NT, the latter under an Agricultural Holdings Act farm tenancy. It also includes floodplain at Mosshayne and West Clyst Farms, and Kerswell Barton. The extensive clay soils of the floodplain behave differently to the more mixed soil textures along the streams to the east.

The National Trust are beginning a 40 hectare wetland habitat restoration in the floodplain at Elbury Farm. This is taking a 'rewilding Knepp-style' approach to management, initially using small numbers of pigs and cattle to develop a more dynamic, heterogeneous plant community, where hedgerows can billow out and scrub develop along the river. In the longer term the vision is to create scrapes and paths/hides for quiet nature enjoyment. Again, the impact on prehistoric archaeology around Elbury Farm and associated palaeoenvironmental features in the floodplain will need to be assessed.

¹⁰ A levee is a ridge of sediment deposited alongside a river by overflowing water, or a man-made earth bank.

At Mosshayne Farm, an initial report into options for river restoration has been received from Royal Haskoning. The owner is keen to explore options for willow biomass in conjunction with river restoration on 16 hectare of land north of the railway line (a further 14 hectares of



Figure 33 Aerial image of the floodplain areas south of Broadclyst village (top right)

river restoration is planned south of the railway. The potential impact on prehistoric, Romano-British and palaeoenvironmental features will need to be explored in full.

In between these two farms lies Wishford. The main biodiversity hotspot on this landholding is Hellings Park. All of the approximately 50 hectares of floodplain is in an Organic HLS agreement which expires in 2023. The 30 hectare field west of Station Road (which regularly floods) is a former water meadow. The tenant at Wishford Farm has recently secured planning permission for conversion of farm buildings to 14 stables and 1 tack room, and construction of a sand school for commercial use.

Wish Meadow Lane has the potential to become a permissive or public bridleway to complement the new equestrian business at Wishford Farm. Wish Meadow Lane would link with the multi-use Clyst Valley Trail to the west and Cranbrook to the east, though this is subject to feasibility assessment of using the railway underpass that floods regularly, or of securing a bridge over the railway. A potential footpath at West Clyst Farm could link with Wish Meadow Lane and the existing public footpath to Jarvishayes Farm.

Sowton

This section south of the A30 is now mostly managed by the owner of Dymond's Farm, which was a WW2 Prisoner of War camp with an intriguing escape story! The floodplain here is some 500 m broad. There is a good public footpath network from the village of Sowton, which is a heritage Conservation Area. The land is not in any agri-environment schemes and the opportunities for nature conservation are unknown at present. Subject to the owner's agreement, a primary habitat and soil survey would be a good start.

The section from Sowton to Bishop's Clyst is primarily managed by the owner of Sowton Barton Farm. The floodplain is about 300 m wide. An existing public footpath links the two villages and the proposal is for this to be upgraded to form the Clyst Valley Trail.

The plant diversity of the floodplain meadows is presently quite limited. The main natural interest is in the river itself, which supports otters, kingfishers, breeding reed and sedge warblers and dragonflies, including the uncommon white-legged damselfly. There is a small but high nature-value wet woodland by the weir. The land immediately upstream of the A376 dual carriageway floods regularly and the Environment Agency has built a flood wall to protect properties on Frog Lane from flooding. There are some fine and rare black poplars here and the owner has agreed that cuttings can be taken for planting elsewhere in the Clyst Valley.

The potential in the next 5 years for this section lies in land on the east bank which is part of the former Bishops Court estate. There is a field of about 8 hectare which is presently cut for hay. It has some fine old crack willow and oak on the river bank. The potential here is to develop some wood pasture through a combination of more dynamic grazing, perhaps with cattle and/or pigs, and some parkland tree planting. Land drains could also be blocked to speed the process of naturalisation.

Lower Clyst

This is a very significant area of freshwater grazing marsh and fen. It is at risk from sea level rise and the river banks downstream of Winslade Barton will not be defensible in the long term. Over the next 5 years, we propose to appoint a skilled practitioner in stakeholder dialogue so that the objectives of landowners can be understood and options appraised. This might be funded by ELMS. Technical assessments might also be required.

The route of the proposed Clyst Valley Trail from Darts Farm follows the ridge to the east of the river. This will be a multi-use trail, but a return footpath following the toe of the ridge back to Dart's Farm would provide great opportunities for naturally screened wildlife viewing of the river and marsh, and a beautiful circular walk for all abilities.



Figure 34 The Lower Clyst valley looking towards the water tower at Topsham

Other site-specific projects

Ashclyst Forest

The National Trust provides access to 272 hectares of the forest along a choice of colour-coded trails ranging from 2.4 km to 11.3 km, and including a 3.5 km butterfly trail suitable for wheelchairs and buggies. The forest is an important site for pearl-bordered and small pearl-bordered fritillary butterflies, twelve species of bats, dormice, and breeding birds. It is probably of national importance. Continuing ride management and glade creation are crucial for the butterflies in particular, populations of which have been declining nationally.

The clay soil does render paths very muddy in winter but the National Trust have surfaced some paths to make them accessible all year round. Signage has also been improved. Ancient oak pollard trees have been identified and work has begun to clear conifers from around them as part of the restoration of wood pasture.

The National Trust plans to make the forest a more-attractive and enjoyable destination for walking, cycling and horse-riding. The intention is to create a visitor hub at Ashclyst Farm and an outdoor field studies centre at Caddihoe, the latter in collaboration with the Scout Association. There is potential for outdoor education about the deserted Medieval landscape, how the forest was established, the ecology and conservation management of ancient trees and butterflies, and plans to establish wood pasture.

Bishops Court

Bishops Court is a place of great antiquity right on the doorstep of Exeter. Ownership is split across three private land holdings but all have a desire to protect and enhance the natural and built heritage. A public footpath crosses part of the site.

Over the next five years, parkland tree planting should continue alongside protection and maintenance of the existing old trees, one of which (an English oak) is estimated to be 700 years old. A new permissive path and picnic area in Alder Croft woodland (noting presence of Medieval earthworks) could create a circular trail from Sowton village without needing to use Bishops Court Lane, which is a 'rat run' during rush hour. There is also scope for natural regeneration of floodplain woodland.

As the name suggests, the adjacent Bishops Court Gardens Business Park occupies the whole site of the former 19th century gardens. The modern buildings also immediately about the tithe barn and stables. This use is not sympathetic to the heritage. A



Figure 35 Bishop's Court on the right, Alder Croft on the left, remnant parkland in the middle (Westpoint car park top right)

priority for the next 5 years is to establish an area policy and masterplan for Bishops Court through the new local plan. A strategy needs to be defined, and funding secured, to restore, and if possible, provide public access to the wonderful tithe barn and stables.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS)

It is EDDC policy for developers of major housing allocations to deliver Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace in mitigation for impacts on Natura 2000. However, EDDC also collects a levy from developments that cannot deliver their own SANGS. It is a primary objective of the Regional Park to bring forward SANGS in advance of development, although SANGS can be delivered outside the Regional Park, provided they meet the criteria established by Natural England. The potential for SANGS on the Killerton Estate has been assessed (Liley, 2015)

100 hectares of land is safeguarded for SANGS on the Policies Map for the Cranbrook Development Plan Document (DPD). Policy CB15 of the DPD sets out the full details, but in summary the specific sites are as follows.

Bluehayes Park

Bluehayes Park and the adjacent Cranbrook Flood Compensation Area.

Elbury Meadow

This land is to be managed on a 100 year lease from the National Trust. A planning application has been submitted.

Grange

Land either side of the Woodland Trust's Percy Wakely Woodland.

Treasbeare

Land adjacent to the existing Cranbrook County Park and also with proposed greenspace at Rockbeare Court. The potential therefore exists to create a large, linked publically accessible greenspace with natural habitats, and enhanced landscape, as a buffer to Rockbeare village. Treasbeare was the Battle Headquarters for RAF Exeter and a key component of the 1940 Battle of Britain anti-invasion story. Historic structures survive above and below ground and should be linked to interpretation of other wartime infrastructure.

Hayes Farm

Hayes Farm is owned by the Church Commissioners and provides a green buffer between housing to be built at Mosshayne and the Lidl depot. This is the only remaining recreational green space of useable size for the community of Cyst Honiton. Planning obligations secured the enhancement of wetland habitats, including the creation of reed bed and additional wet woodland. A further planning obligation linked to permission for the Amazon depot requires the Church Commissioners to provide quiet public access compatible with the enhancement and enjoyment of nature.

Pin Brook Country Park

The enhancement of the biodiversity, landscape and heritage value of the Pin Brook is a priority, together with securing public access on foot along it. The Brook is an important wildlife corridor flowing out of Pinhoe and into the River Clyst. The section west of the M5 is in Exeter and is being delivered by Linden Homes. East of the M5, the 7 ha "Minerva Country Park" has been delivered by Barratt David Wilson Homes in conjunction with new housing at Tithebarn Green. A further 3 ha immediately adjacent to it has been secured as public greenspace through a planning obligation linked to Mosshayne housing development, with an additional 1 ha for the creation of woodland.

Poltimore House & Park

Poltimore House Trust and their dedicated volunteers continue to make excellent progress towards the conservation of the house and gardens. The 'Transforming Lives' project, now 'Thrive and Grow', has constructed polytunnels for growing herbs and vegetables. Paths in the arboretum have been improved and there are plans for a disability 'sensory garden' route. Full restoration of the house is acknowledged as a multi-million pound project.

A planning obligation has secured the restoration of 34 hectares of parkland in connection with housing at Old Park Farm. This includes the restoration of the old carriageway and establishment of a public bridleway along it, extensive tree planting and linear permissive public access for 30 years.

A further 13 ha is part of the 1840's parkland extension. Presently it is subject to a housing application, but this would significantly impact the listed Poltimore House.



Figure 36 Thrive & Grow volunteers at Poltimore House

Winslade Park

Winslade Park is a late-18th century mansion built for an East India merchant. The present owners Burrington Estates have secured planning permission for mixed use, including enhancement of the heritage, landscape and wildlife value of the historic park and public access.

Woodbury Parish traffic-free routes and wildlife corridors

The Parish Council has identified the following projects.

- A. The route from Exton to Woodbury along the "historic route" running alongside Gilbrook to be made into a shared route for walkers and cyclists but not for motor vehicles;
- B. A new walking route from Woodbury Cricket field to the start of the existing walking route leading upward from Cottle's Farm and the "area" to be designated a wildlife corridor. Increase the number of hedge trees and width of hedgerows;
- C. Designate Gilbrook, Woodbury Wood and Rushmore Wood a wildlife corridor;
- D. Designate the whole length of Porter's Lane and Stoney Lane a Quiet Lane and to increase the number of hedge trees and width of hedgerows;
- E. Designate Castle Lane and Warkidons Way Quiet Lanes and protect the upper stretches of Warkidon's Way;
- F. Develop routes from the Parish to Clyst St George and Clyst St Mary using existing roads around Postlake and Bonds Lane;
- G. Include two new areas in Woodbury Salterton to enhance the wildlife corridor; and
- H. Reduce the speed limit along Village Road in Woodbury Salterton to make it a "shared" route.

The green (wildlife) corridor at Greendale Business Park has been identified because it follows the Grindle Brook. It's important that the industrial development does not impact on the stream any further, and the land within the floodplain, in particular, is improved for wildlife.



Action plan

Theme	Objective	Key Projects (* denotes multi-objective project)	Timescale		Funding	Target	
			1-5 years	5 years +		1-5 years	5 years +
Nature	To protect irreplaceable habitats, restore natural processes, ensure that internationally important wildlife sites achieve their conservation objectives, and increase the size, quality, quantity and connectivity of priority natural habitat and populations of key species.	Comprehensive survey of priority habitat & condition	✓		£100k for consultant ecologist funded as part of development phase of National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) bid. Beyond 5 years staff salaries.	Report & spatial data	
		Local plan policy & development control	✓		EDDC salaries of District Ecologist & GI Project Manager	Policy & Strategic Planning Guidance	
		Net gain for biodiversity	✓	✓	£20k to fund legal costs of establishing compensation sites via £100k bid to Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF)	100 Biodiversity Credits	
		Priority habitat creation/restoration within Nature Recovery Network*	✓	✓	£1million initially via delivery phase NLHF, then Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS).	60ha	200ha
		Mitigation strategy for Natura 2000	✓		£20k EDDC via budget for Local Plan evidence	Mitigation strategy	

Theme	Objective	Key Projects (* denotes multi-objective project)	Timescale		Funding	Target	
			1-5 years	5 years +		1-5 years	5 years +
		Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS)*	✓		Cranbrook SANGS paid for and delivered by developer. £2million from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for delivery by EDDC for other development sites. Forward funding of SANGS linked to new local plan via Government development grant & public borrowing	100ha	Quantum determined by local plan allocations
		10% for nature*	✓		£100k for Farm Advisor for 3 years funded as part of £4 million bid to NLHF	10% of holdings meeting target	All holdings meeting target
Education	To create opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to learn outside the classroom.	Annual public forum with talks and walks	✓		Initially from Routes for Roots project budget, then via membership of Friends of Clyst Valley	Annual forum	Annual forum
		Self-discovery network established to promote understanding across all objectives		✓	£500k funded as part of £4 million bid to NLHF		Network with in-field and online educational materials

Theme	Objective	Key Projects (* denotes multi-objective project)	Timescale		Funding	Target	
			1-5 years	5 years +		1-5 years	5 years +
		Geology trail particularly around historic quarries and holloways describing evolution of the landscape and historic buildings		✓	£100k from charitable fund		Geology trail
		Research studentship established on the development of the Regional Park	✓		Exeter University grant	Research studentship	
		Education strategy	✓		£50k from development phase of NLHF bid	Education strategy	Every pupil from schools and colleges within the Regional Park spends at least 5 days per year learning outdoors
		Website	✓	✓	Initially from Routes for Roots project budget, then new via delivery phase of NLHF bid	Website	Website
People	To enhance the health and wellbeing of residents	Achieve Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards by creating new high quality, nature-rich green space, prioritising the most deprived communities first	✓	✓	700ha via S106 obligation. 240ha at capital & maintenance cost of estimated £24million over 80 years from diverse portfolio of private, public and charitable sources.	200ha	740ha

Theme	Objective	Key Projects (* denotes multi-objective project)	Timescale		Funding	Target	
			1-5 years	5 years +		1-5 years	5 years +
		Audit the barriers preventing people accessing greenspace and using the traffic-free network, focusing first on those from the most deprived communities and those with protected characteristics.	✓		£100k from development phase of NLHF bid	Report & spatial data	30% of residents in Exeter/East Devon cycling at least once per week. 80% of residents walking for at least 10 minutes at least 5 times per week. Minimum carriage 10/2 (train/bus) bicycles/mobility vehicles.
		Deliver and maintain a high quality network of traffic-free routes and quiet ways	✓	✓	£35million of which £7million via S106, remainder via diverse portfolio of private, public and charitable sources.	17km	80km comprising; 7km footpath, 12km bridleway, 20km traffic-free trail, 42km quiet way
		Build and maintain 50% of the Clyst Valley Trail	✓		£7million from Government green transport funds, CIL, delivery phase NLHF.	7km	7km
		Work with partners to deliver and maintain a sustainable programme of activities	✓	✓	£50k from development phase of NLHF bid for audit of present provision and future needs, then £500k from delivery phase.	Report with recommendations.	Provide an annual volunteer programme, with at least 12 activities in each year

Theme	Objective	Key Projects (* denotes multi-objective project)	Timescale		Funding	Target	
			1-5 years	5 years +		1-5 years	5 years +
		Hayes Farm new public access	✓		Legals & path maintenance via S106. £50k for visitor infrastructure from charitable fund & Crowdfund	14ha	
Climate	To rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to extreme weather events and rising sea levels	Decarbonized public transport	✓	✓	£500k Enterprise Zone (EZ) + Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) + Local/Government funds	50 Electric bikes at 5 transport hubs	
		Lower Clyst*	✓	✓	£20k to fund independent stakeholder dialogue with all landowners		220ha priority habitat restored or created
		Clyst Canopy*	✓	✓	£1.5million Countryside Stewardship + Woodland Carbon Guarantee + NEIRF next 5 years. ELMS + blend of private, public and charitable funds thereafter.	12% canopy cover in Clyst catchment	20% canopy cover in Clyst catchment

Theme	Objective	Key Projects (* denotes multi-objective project)	Timescale		Funding	Target	
			1-5 years	5 years +		1-5 years	5 years +
Water & Soil	To achieve good ecological status in the River Clyst and tributaries, enhance natural flood storage, and restore soil health.	Crystal Clear Clyst*	✓	✓	Flood Defence Grant in Aid and Water Environment Improvement Fund next 5 years. Project officer funded via agri-environment to facilitate farmer collaboration in readiness for ELMS.	3km of river restored	Good Ecological Status for the River Clyst and Cranny Brook (or, in the case of the Lower Clyst, Good Ecological Potential, because it is heavily modified).
Landscape	To restore landscape character and promote local distinctiveness and to maintain the high landscape setting of Killerton.	Landscape sensitivity study as part of evidence base for new local plan and extension of CVRP policy boundary*	✓	✓	£10k EDDC via budget for Local Plan evidence	Landscape sensitivity study	
		Local plan policy that protects and enhances certain key landscape, nature and heritage assets in the CVRP*	✓	✓	EDDC salary for 2 x GI officers/planners	New local plan policy	
		Development control		✓	EDDC/DCC salary for 1FTE heritage planning officer dedicated to Regional Park		
Heritage	To protect historic landscapes, sites, buildings and their settings, enhance them where appropriate and promote public access to and enjoyment of them.	Historic characterisation of the river to ensure that nature recovery is compatible with restoration of key historic landscapes and features.	✓		£100k from development phase of NLHF bid	Historic characterisation report	

Theme	Objective	Key Projects (* denotes multi-objective project)	Timescale		Funding	Target	
			1-5 years	5 years +		1-5 years	5 years +
		Interpret and celebrate history through exciting and innovative ways as the traffic-free network and new greenspaces are delivered.		✓	£250k from delivery phase of NLHF bid + other charitable funds + Crowdfunding		
		Bishops Court local plan policy & masterplan to protect and restore	✓	✓	£50k from development phase of NLHF bid	Plan policy, masterplan and funding strategy	
Employment	To increase and sustain high value jobs	Support green recovery from Covid-19	✓		£1million from Green Recovery Fund	50 high-value jobs created or, where threatened with redundancy, retained.	
		Annual celebration of high quality local food & drink businesses and biannual forum to support the development of businesses that help to deliver Regional Park objectives	✓		£50k per annum raised from business sponsorship + LEP + visitor payback scheme		500 new high-value jobs created
		Support inward investment in the area, and create direct and indirect employment as a result of delivering high quality green space and traffic-free network		✓	£20k per annum for direct, targeted marketing of CVRP		£10 million invested in 'West End' of EDDC

Recreational strategy

The provision of recreational areas and trails for the growing population is a primary goal. The consultation on the draft masterplan highlighted the demand for more adventurous activities for both adults and children, such as mountain biking, jump/BMX/pump tracks, roller/inline skating, mud walks, tree canopy walks, zip wires, wild swimming and artificial beaches. There is also a request for quieter activities such as fishing. In association with all of these, there is demand for more camping/glamping.

However, our values emphasize the importance of striking a balance with wildlife conservation. Some species are not tolerant of disturbance and need sanctuaries. There is also a demand for quiet, nature-rich places, where more mindful activities can be practiced. There is a desire to reduce the impact of noise and light pollution. In a future where electric cars are more prevalent, it should be possible to reduce noise levels at least.

Fig 37 below defines recreational zones/hubs and sanctuary areas. It should only be used as a guide to where broad types of recreational development are likely to be acceptable on environmental grounds. It is indicative and provides technical guidance only in support of relevant policies and strategies of the approved East Devon Local Plan, most notably Strategy 10 on the Clyst Valley Regional Park. It should be used to start a conversation with landowners, recreational providers, potential funders and statutory agencies as to where some of the more adventurous activities could come forward.

Recreational zones

Red – high potential for adventurous recreational activities and facilities

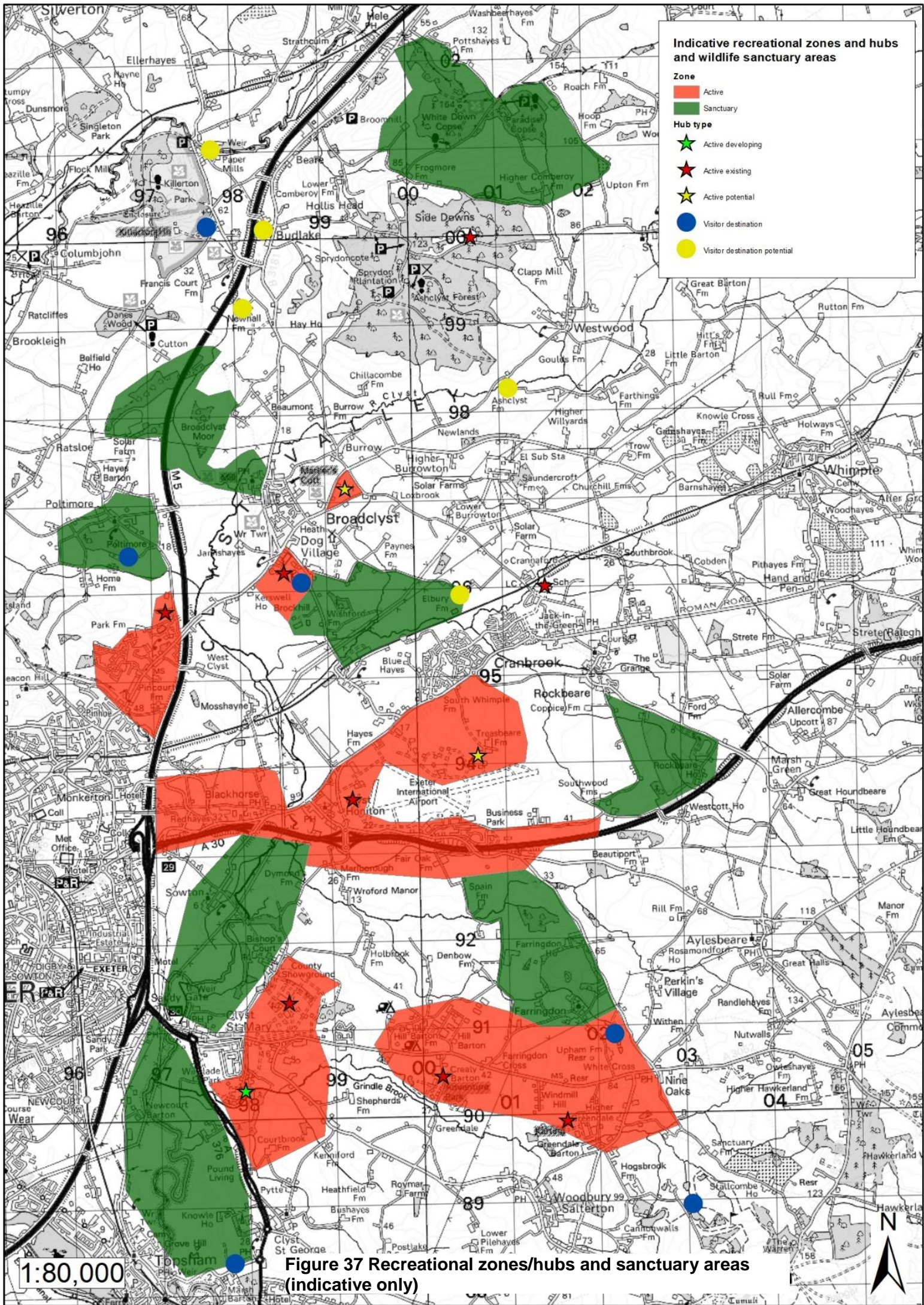
White – potential for quiet recreation activities and facilities

Red – wildlife sanctuary area, potential for controlled public access only e.g. wildlife tours

Recreational hubs

In Fig 37, activity hubs are depicted with a star. Existing facilities are shown red, developing facilities are shown green and those with potential are shown as a yellow star.

Visitor destinations are shown as a circle, with blue for existing and yellow for potential.



Indicative recreational zones and hubs and wildlife sanctuary areas

Zone

- Active
- Sanctuary

Hub type

- ★ Active developing
- ★ Active existing
- ★ Active potential
- Visitor destination
- Visitor destination potential

1:80,000

Figure 37 Recreational zones/hubs and sanctuary areas (indicative only)



Funding strategy

Delivering on all of the objectives for the Regional Park will require innovation in how capital is raised and just as crucially, how assets are maintained. Projects will often require a bespoke blend of money from public, private and charitable sectors. Our approach will therefore be to calculate the full social, environmental and economic benefits of investment in each project using tools available, such as the Outdoor Recreational Valuation Tool (University of Exeter, 2018), the Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) for walking and cycling (World Health Organisation, 2019) and i-Tree www.itreetools.org. In this way, we can approach potential investors with a clear offer.

Developer contributions

The majority of funding for new green infrastructure is expected to come via Section 106 planning obligations. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is also an important source of funding and the Regional Park is listed as a priority 1 project in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (EDDC, 2017). The CIL budget will be used to match-fund projects.

The mandating of net gain for biodiversity is an opportunity to deliver habitat creation and restoration in the Regional Park. Developers will need to work harder to firstly avoid, then mitigate loss of biodiversity. However, there will be occasions where it is not possible to achieve the mandatory 10% net gain on the development site, and offsets will be required, secured through conservation covenants. We have estimated that funding of £9.3 million could come via this route over the next 25 years. It is vital that the new Local Plan includes a policy for net gain and a process for delivering it.

Business sponsorship

Local businesses will be approached for a financial contribution where there is a demonstrable benefit resulting from implementing a project. For example, it has been calculated that £1 capital spent on cycle trail construction yields £13 in user spend in the local economy on such things as accommodation, food & drink, bike hire and maintenance.

In creating the UK's newest Regional Park, EDDC is implementing the recommendations of the Future Parks Accelerator. A report commissioned by the National Trust on behalf of the project partners recommended creating 10 large-scale regional parks in the urban fringe. Using the 'Greenkeeper' tool and Green Book compliant methods, these urban parks would generate £600 million per annum in health benefits, contribute 8% of the national tree planting target, and provide £2 of health and amenity benefits for every £1 invested over 30 years. (National Trust, 2020)

High-value, skilled people are more likely to be attracted and retained in the area if they are able to live in and access attractive, nature-rich areas. There is a powerful positive correlation between the quality of the environment and a healthy and productive workforce. LiveWest employees helped to plant and maintain woodland near their offices. Many companies encourage employees to seek volunteering opportunities under their Corporate Social Responsibility policy.

The momentum towards establishing markets for 'ecosystem services' is gathering with the recent publication of 'The Economics of Biodiversity - the Dasgupta review' (H M Treasury, 2021). For example, South West Water already fund upstream land management on the Exe that prevents pollution entering water courses. Another example is offsetting unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions by investing in carbon capture and storage in natural vegetation. Insurance companies may be willing to invest in reducing flood risk to properties. The

recently launched Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund is an opportunity for us to establish a market place, identify potential investors and set out a business plan.

Charities

The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) uses money raised by National Lottery players to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about. This includes natural heritage and NLHF provides around £100 million of grant funding to UK landscape and nature projects each year, with a particular focus on connecting people with nature.

EDDC has successfully secured £120,000 from the NLHF for the 'Great trees in the Clyst Valley' project (now finished) and the 'Routes for Roots' project (live). This capital has been matched by £62,000 from a great variety of Regional Park supporters; EDDC itself, National Trust, Woodland Trust, Devon County Council, Environment Agency, Devon Gardens Trust, EON Energy, LiveWest, Active Devon, Sport England, Cranbrook Town Council, the Parish Councils of Broadclyst, Clyst Honiton, Poltimore and Whimble.

In addition to the above, EDDC is a funding partner in Saving Devon's Treescapes, which is led by Devon Wildlife Trust. The Clyst Valley is a focus area of action. Having demonstrated to our funders and partners that we can deliver, we're now ready to apply for a large grant from the National Lottery Grants for Heritage. We are also keen to work more directly with Sustrans to develop the traffic-free network.

Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS)

The present agri-environment schemes already provide vital funding to farmers to deliver wildlife and landscape maintenance and enhancement. However, they do not promote the conservation and appropriate enhancement of, or access to, heritage assets, the historic environment or historic landscapes as well as past schemes did. Only a small proportion of heritage assets are on the SHINE database (Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England). Management options are limited and seldom linked to other environmental outcomes. The successor scheme being piloted now will put more emphasis and money into delivering enhancements, including soil conservation, carbon sequestration, and water quality and flood amelioration. There is an opportunity for local initiatives and knowledge to target options to areas where there can be multiple environmental benefits, including for heritage conservation.

Government agencies

We are delighted that our partners National Trust have been awarded a grant to protect ancient trees and plant new woodland from the Government Green Recovery Fund. A second round of funding has just been announced.

In 'Gear Change' (Department for Transport, 2020), the Government has pledged £2 billion over the next 5 years mainly channelled through Local Planning Authorities but administered by Active Travel England, which will be a new statutory consultee for sustainable travel projects. The Government has signalled an end to stop-go funding and instead wants a pipeline of projects identified in local Cycling & Walking Investment Strategies.

We will develop a closer relationship with Highways England. Their Environment Fund should be used to prevent pollution from Sowton entering the river via a culvert beneath the M5. It should also be used for tree planting and potentially for a green bridge over the M5 and/or A30 to ecologically reconnect habitat either side. The 'Users & Communities Fund' is another potential source of funding <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/designated-funds/users-and-communities-fund/>

Sport England have chosen Exeter and Cranbrook as one of 12 areas to work on bold new approaches to build healthier, more active communities across England. Presently in a 'test & learn' phase, this 'Local Delivery Pilot' (2018-2021) has secured £1.7 million of initial funding and has the potential to draw on funding of £4 million over the next 6 years. The ambition is for Cranbrook to be a model of best practice in encouraging families to be active together.

Capital funding programmes of the Environment Agency will be important sources of match-funding where water environmental objectives can be delivered. This funding still comes with a duty under the Environment Act 1995 to have regard to protecting the historic environment.

Public giving

There is strong support for establishing a not-for-profit membership organisation. However, some people qualified their support, stating that there would have to be an incentive e.g. free car parking, and some were prepared to fund nature but not trails. There was also endorsement of the role of Crowdfunding to raise funds for features that might be regarded as the 'icing on the cake', for example, public art. There was also encouragement to identify celebrities & philanthropists with roots in the valley; the Devon Environment Foundation <https://devonenvironment.org/> has an express goal to channel funds from businesses and philanthropists to grassroots nature regeneration projects.

Summary & next steps

The Clyst Valley Regional Park is crucial for the health and wellbeing of a growing population, and to restore the natural capital on which we all depend. The purpose of this masterplan is to establish a platform for partnership. The action plan sets out the priorities for delivery and if successful, a major funding bid will enable significant progress to be made on the five-year actions. This masterplan will be revised and updated following approval of a new Local Plan. Progress with the action plan will be monitored and reported annually to EDDC.



Figure 38 Lane to Poltimore by local artist Mandi Street

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Strategy 10 – Green Infrastructure in East Devon’s West End

We will ensure that the Green Infrastructure Strategy for East Devon's West End dovetails with comparable work being undertaken in Exeter to provide a green framework within which strategic development occurs. All development proposals of the West End will individually and collectively contribute to the implementation and long-term management of green infrastructure initiatives through appropriate contributions and/or on site provision, and Green Infrastructure initiatives should feature in all developments.

Clyst Valley Regional Park

Land to accommodate the Clyst Valley Regional Park is allocated on the Proposals Map. Developer contributions, the Community Infrastructure Levy and other agricultural-environmental funding streams will be used in combination to deliver this 'landscape' scale strategic project. Landowner, developer and multi-agency collaboration will be essential to achieve the broad range of outcomes intended for this area to ensure the planned growth is delivered sustainably over the plan period. The Clyst Valley Regional Park will:

Provide high quality natural green space that is complementary to development and will be a stimulus to encourage commercial and business development of the highest standard.

Ensure natural ecosystems function in the West End of our District and ensure residents, workers, school children and visitors of all abilities have easy access to high quality open spaces, with linked benefits to health, education and food production.

Take recreation pressure away from more environmentally sensitive locations thereby overcoming concerns arising from application of the Habitat Regulations that would otherwise prevent development coming forward. Provision of the park could help address need and requirements arising from development in other parts of East Devon, Exeter and potentially Teignbridge. We will encourage a park that 'reaches into' the open spaces of our neighbouring authority partners.

Provide new wildlife corridors that enhance the biodiversity of the West End.

Provide green corridors, open space and biodiversity enhancement areas. Enhance cycling and walking opportunities to link habitats and sustainable movement networks that promote the overall recreational experience for the West End.

Conserve and enhance heritage assets and their setting to reflect their intrinsic importance, maximise beneficial outcomes for park users and to encourage use of the park and to enrich the cultural identity of the area.

The park will be designed and managed to highest natural green design standards and it will be subject to parkland, open and recreation space and countryside and green infrastructure policies. Development will not be allowed in the designated area unless it will clearly achieve valley park specific objectives for people and wildlife. Countryside policies of the plan will still apply in non-allocated development locations and areas.

Habitat Regulations and West End Development

Where the likelihood of significant effects on internationally protected wildlife sites cannot be ruled out from developments in the West End, the Council will undertake an appropriate assessment of impacts and will only support and approve proposals where it can be demonstrated that adverse effects on site integrity can be prevented.

Of particular relevance to the Habitat Regulations will be the need for continued checks and monitoring to ensure that any mitigation measures for built development, linked to Clyst Valley Regional Park provision, achieve the ends envisaged and offers effective mitigation against adverse impacts that could otherwise occur. Each phase of any development occurring and park provision will be assessed and monitored.

Mitigation measures in respect of the West End established as needed to comply with Habitat Regulation assessment will need to accord with measures set out in the 'South-east Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy'. Provision of SANGS will be an essential part of the overall West End development. Where possible SANGS should dovetail with wider Green Infrastructure policies and be compatible with neighbouring authorities' plans. The functionality of any potential SANGS and its contribution to the avoidance of a likely significant effect must be clearly demonstrated.

Appendix 2: Environmental opportunities relevant to the Clyst Valley Regional Park

Natural England has published National Character Area Profile 148 for the Devon Redlands, within which the Park is situated. Relevant environmental opportunities are listed below.

- Creating reed beds and buffer strips in the upper reaches of the principle rivers and their tributaries, particularly in association with intensive agricultural and livestock activities to act as silt and nutrient traps.
- Managing and encouraging the creation of areas of low-input grassland to, for example, provide sustenance zones and strategic flyways for bats and to meet wider objectives, especially where located over sandstone aquifers and on steeper slopes in order to help to prevent soil erosion and nutrient leaching.
- Restoring and managing existing woodland and encouraging new woodland planting, particularly in the priority catchment areas of the rivers Exe and Otter, in order to prevent soil erosion, slow nutrient run-off, increase water infiltration and reduce the risk of flooding, and to act as a buffer to intensive agricultural activities.
- Supporting and re-introducing sustainable traditional woodland management techniques and the skills needed to maintain these practices, such as selective felling and coppicing, particularly on the steeper valley sides, providing a sustainable source of local wood fuel and biomass close to areas of demand.
- Restoring and managing existing wet and riparian habitats and encouraging new wetland habitat creation, which would serve to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality by reducing sedimentation and nutrient leaching, and reduce flooding.
- Restoring, managing and planting new 'traditional' orchards for the benefit of the landscape and sense of place, biodiversity and retention of genetic diversity found in old varieties.
- Managing and restoring existing hedge banks and hedgerows and where appropriate creating new ones to reinforce landscape character and sense of place, to enhance wildlife networks, and to control soil erosion and encourage water infiltration, especially within the priority catchment areas of the rivers Exe and Otter, and across the main flood plains of the area.
- Preserving and managing ancient, veteran and hedgerow trees and encouraging a new generation through planting and selective management, benefiting landscape character, sense of place, history and biodiversity.
- Reinforcing field patterns by the creation of wide grass buffer strips adjacent to boundaries protecting wetlands and watercourses from nutrient enrichment and sedimentation.
- Supporting environmentally sound arable farming measures such as low-input winter stubbles and conservation headlands to benefit farmland birds, including the curlew, and arable plants.
- Maintaining landscape character, 'iconic' views, tranquillity, a sense of 'wildness' and connection to the maritime environment by sensitive, responsive planning of future land use and offshore developments, for example large-scale photovoltaic farms and offshore wind farms.
- Improving access along and connecting with the South West Coast Path National Trail, the National Cycle Network, promoted routes including the East Devon Way and Exe Valley Way, and throughout the rights of way network. Promoting enjoyment, awareness and understanding of the National Character Area, particularly less well-known sites and features, to relieve pressure on busier destinations in order to maintain existing levels of tranquillity, remoteness and landscape character.

- Improving the number, quality and accessibility of green spaces and recreational opportunities near to where people live and stay, and around areas of planned development.
- Protecting and managing the use of fragile habitats, particularly those in close proximity to areas of significant development. The Clyst Valley Regional Park is needed as Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) to mitigate the recreational impact of additional visitors on the internationally protected wildlife sites of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths and the Exe Estuary. A number of existing assets make the area an ideal candidate as SANGS, not least more than 100km of Public Rights of Ways and permissive trails, and open access to 434ha of the National Trust Killerton estate.
- The delivery of SANGS is a major legal driver, without which much of the housing development in the growth point would not be acceptable.
- Ensuring that the network of existing sunken lanes and their character remain intact and promoting their use for non-motorised transport and quiet recreation.
- Managing, by extensive grazing and scrub removal where current land cover and use threatens, and protecting, by planning the location of new development, the integrity of sites of heritage significance and value, particularly in areas of high sensitivity, for example iron-age hill forts at Stoke Hill and Woodbury Castle, and providing opportunities for understanding and awareness of these assets.
- Conserving and managing historic parklands, including the planting of trees that are sensitive to historic character. Encouraging appropriate management of ancient and veteran trees and the retention of deadwood.
- Encouraging practices that conserve, manage and replant traditional orchards, particularly where they include local varieties that may be of genetic interest
- Maintaining and managing the dispersed settlement pattern and form, in particular the relationship between farmsteads, hamlets and 'parish' villages linked by a network of winding sunken lanes that lack modern engineered features.
- Planning and managing the introduction of new vertical elements and renewable energy technologies in the landscape to maintain character and setting.
- Using understanding of the area's traditional and historic architecture, including materials (cob, stone, thatch and pebble) and the distinct patterns of settlement, to inform appropriate conservation and use of historic buildings and the integration of renewable energy technologies, and to plan for and inspire new development which makes a positive contribution to local character.
- Seeking and realising opportunities, such as woodland planting, to mitigate the impacts and effects of existing and new development and infrastructure at the edges of settlements and along main transport routes, as on the fringes of Exeter and along the M5 corridor.
- Creating new accessible and natural green spaces and links to help to integrate new areas of development with existing ones, particularly around the significant development of the 'West End', and providing a range of natural and cultural benefits through the implementation of the various green infrastructure delivery plans.
- Supporting sustainable transport options to major existing visitor destinations, notably along the coast.
- Developing and improving the network of public rights of way and promoting open access land that provides more opportunities for informal recreation, access to nature and public enjoyment.

Appendix 3: Key Performance Indicators

Objective	KPI	Notes
People	Percentage of people walking or cycling to work, school, or for recreation	The percentage of residents who cycle at least once per week in Exeter/East Devon is about 15%. This compares favourably to an England average of 10%, but poorly to the top performing local authority, Cambridge, where the figure is 49%. Percentage of residents who walk for at least 10 minutes at least 5 times per week is better, at about 50% for Exeter/East Devon, compared to an England (and Cambridge) average of 45%.
People	Accessibility of greenspace to all	Using Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards ¹¹ , and data from the EDDC Open Space Study (June 2014), we know that there are deficiencies in natural green space at Clyst St Mary, Clyst St George, Clyst Honiton, Clyst St Lawrence, Poltimore and Whimble. No assessment has been completed on how accessible any of these sites are for vulnerable people such as children and those with disability.
People	Higher quality greenspace (Green Flag Award)	The Green Flag Award scheme sets the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world. Seaton Wetlands and Stover Local Nature Reserve are both Green Flag sites. However, there are not yet any Green Flag sites in the project area.
People	Amount of land in ecologically sustainable food production	This would include land in agri-environment schemes, organic production, allotments and communal growing spaces

¹¹ Everyone has an accessible natural greenspace of at least:

- 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home;
- 20 ha within two kilometres of home;
- 100 hectare within five kilometres of home; and
- 500 hectare within ten kilometres of home; plus

a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.

Objective	KPI	Notes
Education	Number of person days spent learning outdoors	This would include Forest Schools, and events run by National Trust and EDDC Countryside Team, amongst others.
People	Number of person days spent actively volunteering	This would require coordination across partners. We would count any activities that directly linked to the Regional Park objectives
Education	Number of people who report an increase in understanding following events or project implementation	For example, this could be via short surveys of people attending a walk and talk. An annual survey of randomly selected people could be asked to answer a few specific questions on the heritage of the Regional Park.
Nature	Delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace in the Regional Park	To mitigate impacts of the growing population on internationally protected wildlife sites.
Nature	Extent and condition of priority habitats. Status of priority species (abundance and distribution).	We have a Service Level Agreement with the Devon Biological Record Centre
Nature	Number of Biodiversity Credits delivered by development control. Area of compensation habitat under agreement.	Measured using the Defra Biodiversity Net Gain calculator and implemented through policy and guidance in the new Local Plan.
Nature/heritage/water/soil	Area of land in agri-environment scheme	This would be used to measure progress towards out target of “10% for nature” on every farm holding.
Climate	Tonnes of CO ₂ equivalents sequestered through land use change	The Woodland Carbon Code will be used. For farms, Carbon Auditing for Land Managers is a well-developed tool, but there are others. Natural England are about to release updated guidance on sequestration in natural habitats and this could be used in combination with other data sets to calculate change over time.
Landscape	Condition of Landscape Character Units, quality of protected viewpoints	The action plan includes a target to define Landscape Character Units in the Regional Park and assess their sensitivity to development.
Heritage	Listed buildings on 'heritage at risk' register	Data from Historic England

Objective	KPI	Notes
Water & soil	Good ecological status for the River Clyst and Cranny Brook	The Water Framework Directive (WFD) looks at the ecological health of stretches of rivers, as well as traditional chemical standards. Rivers are now classified according to their overall ecological status, as being high, good, moderate, poor or bad quality. For the Rivers Clyst and Cranny Brook, the objective is 'good' overall status by 2027. For all the stretches, the present condition is 'moderate' except for the Lower Cranny Brook, which is in 'poor' condition.
Water & soil	Number of properties at risk of flooding	Devon County Council
Employment	New high value jobs created (direct and indirect)	We have a list of businesses operating within the Regional Park but more work will be needed to quantify the number of jobs in the core areas of land management, low carbon, tourism, leisure and environmental sectors



Figure 39 Cranbrook Active Mums group on a ride through Ashclyst Forest

Appendix 4: Relevant policies

Objective	Organisation	Plan	Policy
Climate	Committee on Climate Change	Land use: Policies for a net-zero UK	Increasing UK forestry cover from 13% to at least 17% by 2050 by planting around 30,000 hectares (90 – 120 million trees) of broadleaf and conifer woodland each year.
Climate	Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, and Natural England	Joint vision on climate change 2020	Outlines a shared vision to use nature-based solutions to tackle the climate emergency
Heritage	Heritage England	Corporate Plan 2019-2022	Allocates resources to “reduce Heritage at Risk through repair, adaptation and re-use; Provide advice to owners on caring for their assets; Provide advice to planners and developers on sustainable change; Build capacity (knowledge and skills) in communities; Provide more opportunities for people to contribute to our work through volunteering both in Historic England and elsewhere”.
Nature	Defra	25-Year Environment Plan	Creating or restoring 500,000 hectares of priority habitat within a Nature Recovery Network. 12% woodland cover by 2060 and support for community forests, agro-forestry and biomass tree planting. One million urban trees by 2022.
Nature	Government	Environment Bill	Long term targets for the natural environment, and people’s enjoyment of it will be set, with review periods. Biodiversity Net Gain will mandate that new developments enhance biodiversity by 10% maintained for at least 30 years after the development is completed.
Nature	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	National Planning Policy Framework	Paragraph 114 instructs local authorities to plan for green infrastructure, whilst Para 175 sets out development control tests to ensure net gain for biodiversity and strengthening of the protection given to ancient and veteran trees.

Objective	Organisation	Plan	Policy
People	Defra	25-Year Environment Plan	Encouraging children to be close to nature, in and out of school, with particular focus on disadvantaged areas. Social prescribing, where nature-based interventions are used to treat people with health conditions. Supporting a national expansion of care farming by 2022, trebling the number of places to 1.3 million per year for children and adults in England. Encouraging all local Health and Wellbeing Boards to put access to the natural environment at the heart of their strategies.
People	National Health Service	Long-term plan	Make sure everyone gets the best start in life, for example, by taking further action on childhood obesity. Delivering world-class care for major health problems, for example, by helping 380,000 more people get therapy for depression and anxiety by 2023/24. Supporting people to age well.
Climate, Heritage, Nature and People	National Trust	National strategy 'Playing our Part'	<p>Growing the diversity of people who visit and work with us, and developing the quality of the experiences they have.</p> <p>By 2030 become carbon net zero and establish 18,000 hectares of new woodland made up of more than 20 million trees.</p> <p>By 2025 create 25,000 hectares of new wildlife habitats, and at least 50 per cent of farmland will be 'nature-friendly', with protected hedgerows, field margins, ponds, woodland and other habitats allowing plants and animals to thrive.</p> <p>Greater recognition of cultural and natural heritage sites that matter to local people and the delivery of 20 new green corridors: large areas of nature-rich land, connected to urban areas by safe and beautiful routes.</p>

Objective	Organisation	Plan	Policy
			Growing the number of people who support our cause, acting together for nature and heritage.
Climate, Heritage, Nature and People	Killerton Estate (National Trust)	Local Plan	Creating a Destination Estate for Killerton, which seeks to establish a wide range of propositions and activities across the Estate as a series of hubs or nodes, connected through integrated transport network, whilst delivering the Trust's Playing our Part ambitions.
All	Parish Council	Neighbourhood Plans	Various policies for protecting and enhancing nature, and improving access.
All	East Devon District Council	Local Plan	Strategy 10 sets out the policy to deliver the Cyst Valley Regional Park.
Climate	Devon County Council	Devon Carbon Plan	Declaration of a climate emergency, committing to a reduction of carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050 at the latest and collaboration with other organisations to respond to the Devon Climate Emergency.
Climate & people	East Devon District Council	Cranbrook Development Plan Document 2013-2031	<p>In order to meet the plan's vision of a zero carbon new town, policy CB13 states that "all developments which propose the construction of new homes or non-residential floor space must demonstrate that they:</p> <p>1. Minimise the need to travel and where necessary enable travel by low carbon means through:</p> <p>a) Designing neighbourhoods around 400m walkable zones so that occupiers are located within walking distance of basic services and facilities;</p> <p>b) Being served by good quality walking and cycling links and regular public transport routes;</p>

Objective	Organisation	Plan	Policy
Heritage	East Devon District Council	Local Plan	Strategy 49 states: <i>“The physical and cultural heritage of the district, including archaeological assets and historic landscape character, will be conserved and enhanced...”</i>
Landscape	East Devon District Council	Local Plan	Strategy 46 states that: <i>“Development will need to be undertaken in a manner that is sympathetic to, and helps conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of, the natural and historic landscape character of East Devon.”</i>
Nature	East Devon District Council	Cranbrook Development Plan Document 2013-2031	Policy CB15 safeguards 100 ha of land for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS).
People	Devon Health & Wellbeing Board	‘Healthy and Happy Communities’ - Devon's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2020 – 2025	Create conditions for good health, physical activity and social interaction. Prevent ill health by enabling people to live healthier lives.
People	East Devon District Council	Cranbrook Development Plan Document 2013-2031	Policy CB1 states that to maintain and improve the good health and wellbeing of individuals and the community, development proposals must: “Develop an attractive and legible built and natural environment that links into its surroundings, including the wider West End of East Devon and Exeter Airport; [and] Create well designed streets and spaces using the Healthy Streets Approach to encourage walking, cycling and social activity.”
People & nature	Exeter City Council	Core Strategy	Policy CP16 safeguards a strategic green infrastructure network and states that: “To the east of the city green corridors, that incorporate multi-use trails (for cycling, walking and horse riding) and provide high quality biodiversity habitat, will link Exeter to

Objective	Organisation	Plan	Policy
			the proposed Clyst Valley [Regional] Park and on to Cranbrook”.
People and nature	Devon Local Nature Partnership	Purpose and aims	<p>“To ensure that a healthy natural environment underpins a high quality of life across Devon, with a strong green economy and healthy communities.</p> <p>Our three aims are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To protect and improve Devon’s natural environment 2. To grow Devon’s green economy 3. To reconnect Devon’s people with nature”
Water	Environment Agency	Managing flood and coastal erosion risk for the Exe Estuary.	<p>Sets out the approach to managing the River Clyst between Clyst St Mary and Topsham The strategy for the east bank is to maintain it in the short term or until alternative measures are decided (it will not be possible to maintain these defences in the longer term due to sea level rise). The embankments around Winslade Barton and Frog Lane currently protect 30-70 local properties and the A376 from tidal flooding with an annual risk of 1 in 1000 (0.1%). The risk from fluvial flooding is greater than this. The policy is therefore to maintain the Winslade Barton to Frog Lane embankments. On the west bank, the policy is to breach embankments in agreement with landowners, to create 21 hectares of new intertidal habitat.</p>

Appendix 5 - Supporting policies and plans of our partners

Active Devon

'Connecting Actively to Nature' is a 5 year Devon Local Nature Partnership programme, funded by Sport England. We have partnered with Active Devon to deliver heritage walks in Pinhoe and Broadclyst for people aged 55+ who are currently inactive. This work is part of the 'Routes for Roots' initiative launching in 2020.

Devon Gardens Trust

The Devon Gardens Trust is a charity who aim:

- to promote the wider understanding and appreciation of the historic gardens of Devon through research and garden visits
- to protect gardens through our conservation casework and grant assistance
- to encourage a new generation of gardeners through our work in schools and our bursary scheme
- to provide advice to owners and public authorities in regard to the conservation and enhancement of Devon's gardens
- to offer a wide programme of events and activities to our members and volunteers

Devon Link Up

Devon Link Up are a Honiton-based charity for people with learning disabilities. They have recently acquired the lease of Heathfield Farm Ltd from the National Trust. Funds have been secured from the National Heritage Lottery to work up detailed plans to transform the farm into a land-based learning centre for people with learning disabilities and Autism. The centre will also provide benefits and services to the wider community, with the intention of being open 7 days a week in future, with a small core team to manage the farm. Five main enterprises are envisaged; horticulture, gardening, food and catering, fabrication, animals and training/learning/community. Subject to funding, a new building (including kitchen/café) will be constructed by March 2021.

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency has a strong delivery role in the East Devon Catchment Partnership, within which the River Clyst sits. The latest Action Plan (East Devon Catchment Partnership, 2019) has the following primary goals:

- Prevent deterioration of the watercourse
- Contribute to protected area objectives
- Maintain and enhance water quality and habitat for ecology in and around watercourses to secure good status in the highest number of water bodies and the highest number of elements
- Reduce wildlife impact of man-made structure in the water course
- Reduce impact of diffuse and point source pollution
- Control invasive species (Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed)

France-Alderney-Britain (FAB) Link Ltd

The FAB Link Interconnector Project is a 220km proposed underground and subsea interconnector which will allow exchange and trading of up to 1400MW of electricity between France and Britain. The construction date has not yet been confirmed, but is expected to be sometime between 2023 and 2026. FAB Link Limited have no objection in principle to the aims and objectives of the Clyst Valley Regional Park. However, they do hold existing rights and permissions and several areas of the Nature Recovery Network overlap with the proposed route for the underground electricity cables. Further consultation will be needed to ensure compatibility of objectives.

Forestry England

Forestry England have a national programme to get people active. At Haldon Forest, visitor numbers have grown to 400,000 per annum following the launch of self-guided Gruffalo and Zog trails. FE have volunteers at Haldon who help to maintain paths. The volunteers get a national pass to FE car parks. As they are local and regularly use the trails, they are often more aware than the rangers of defects and potential improvements, so it's a mutually beneficial partnership. FE are keen to share their experience and they own Huxham Brake and Stoke Woods just north of Exeter.

Historic England

Historic England is the public body that looks after the historic environment, providing expert advice, helping people protect and care for it, and helping the public to understand and enjoy it.

LiveWest

LiveWest is the largest landlord in the southwest. Their housing stock is affordable rented, supported living, shared ownership and intermediate rented homes (20% less than market rent). They presently have 350+ homes at Cranbrook, with plans for up to 1000 there and 380 at Pinhoe. LiveWest values community investment and collaboration with like-minded local organisations to help create thriving, sustainable communities which are great places to live.

Living Options Devon

Living Options Devon is a user-led charity championing needs and rights, and providing vital support so people with disabilities and Deaf people (who use British Sign Language (BSL)) are empowered to live the life they choose. They have strong commitment to partnership working, particularly through joining up with other charities to provide better services for disabled people. Countryside Mobility provides safe, enjoyable access to the South West's most scenic locations for anyone who has difficulty walking, through an off road mobility scooter hire scheme.

National Trust

The National Trust protects and cares for places so people and nature can thrive. Many millions share the belief that nature, beauty and history are for everyone. So they look after the nation's coastline, historic sites, countryside and green spaces, ensuring everyone benefits.

From wild and precious places to the world outside your window, the National Trust offers access, enjoyment and a chance for everyone to help out. Nature and the historic environment are under threat. They're essential to everyone, they enrich people's lives and are part of the fabric of society and they urgently need more care.

With its staff, members, volunteers and supporters, the National Trust is the biggest conservation charity in Europe. Everyone can get involved, everyone can make a difference.

Natural England

Natural England has taken an active role in the production of the Green Infrastructure strategy (Exeter & East Devon Growth Point Team, 2009) and the funding of delivery thereafter. 'Building partnerships for nature's recovery' is NE's action plan for 2019/20 (Natural England, 2019). Natural England's objectives for the Clyst Valley are set out in the National Character Area profile in Appendix 3.

Parish Councils

The parishes of Bishops Clyst, Clyst St George and Rockbeare all have 'made' neighbourhood plans with policies for the protection, enhancement, and increase of

footpaths. Several participate in the 'Parish Paths Partnership' scheme with Devon County Council. Pinhoe, Poltimore, Broadclyst & Whimble all have active history societies. The latter run heritage walks through the orchards in summer.

Poltimore House Trust

The Poltimore House Trust was set up in January 2000 as a charity and a Building Preservation Trust: 'To preserve for the benefit of the people of Devon and nation at large the building of special and architectural and historic interest known as Poltimore House in the County of Devon and its grounds and setting and any adjoining land or buildings which formed part of the Poltimore Estate.'

The vision for the future is to:

- Create a place which focuses education, training and research, share knowledge and create opportunities for innovation helping communities and organisations secure a sustainable future
- Developing an active and innovative learning hub supporting studios and workshops for arts, traditional crafts and the creative industries, making use of technologies and practices that maximise environmental benefits
- Providing a venue for arts events - exhibitions, performances, music, theatre and crafts
- Becoming a venue for conferences, seminars, workshops and events
- Making a major contribution to local employment and to volunteering activities focused on sustainable living and the arts
- Continue to provide an inspiring meeting place where people can share ideas - people working with businesses, charities and within communities and learning organisations

The Trust has made great strides forward through its 'Transforming Lives' programme and now 'Thrive and Grow'. Polytunnels have been erected to enable people with mental and physical health barriers to lead more fulfilling lives by growing plants and maintaining/restoring the fabric and grounds of the house. The Poltimore Estate Research Society continues to reveal the heritage of the house, gardens and park and is helping with interpretation of the restored parkland.

Ramblers Association

The Ramblers Association is a charity that promotes the health, recreation and environmental benefits of walking, especially by protecting and extending the network of public paths and access in town and countryside, and safeguarding the countryside and open spaces so that walkers can enjoy their tranquillity and beauty. The Exeter and District Group has over 200 members and organises regular short walks during the working week and longer walks at weekends. The national project 'Don't Lose Your Way' is supporting volunteers from all over England in finding lost rights of way and making applications to local authorities to get them back on the map before 2026.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

The RSPB has welcomed this ambitious project. Their focus is on biodiversity, ensuring the proposed green infrastructure and SANGS effectively protect the statutorily designated sites from otherwise increased recreational impacts arising from new housing development in Exeter and East Devon, and that the Regional Park projects deliver individual and combined positive benefits for other nature. They also support the aims to enable more sustainable travel and to improve people's health by connecting them with nature.

Sport England

Sport England have chosen Exeter and Cranbrook as one of 12 areas to work on bold new approaches to build healthier, more active communities across England. Presently in a 'test & learn' phase, this 'Local Delivery Pilot' (2018-2021) has secured £1.7 million of initial funding and has the potential to draw on funding of £4 million over the next 6 years. The ambition is for Cranbrook to be a model of best practice in encouraging families to be active together.

Sustrans

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity. Their vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. They work on practical, innovative solutions to the transport challenges facing us all. Sustrans is the charity behind the award winning National Cycle Network, Safe Routes to Schools, Bike It, TravelSmart, Active Travel, Connect2 and Liveable Neighbourhoods, all projects that are changing our world one mile at a time. Sustrans have already made a valuable contribution to the vision for cycling and walking in the Regional Park (Sustrans, 2015).

Together for Devon

The NHS is encouraging more collaboration between GPs, their teams and community services, by establishing 'Integrated Care Systems'. In Devon, the new partnership is called 'Together for Devon'. Their long term plan is yet to be published, but their priorities include investing more in prevention. 'Social prescribing' is one method of preventing ill health which is being successfully implemented in Exeter. The Regional Park has a major role to play in delivering the spaces where activities such as healthy walks, mindfulness, care farming, and 'green gym' can take place.

Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust wants to see a UK rich in woods and trees.

- **We plant** woods and trees to combat climate change, build a greener future for the UK and create havens for wildlife;
- **We restore** damaged ancient woods so wildlife can thrive once again;
- **We protect** woods and trees from decimation and lead the fight against tree pests and diseases;
- **We care** for over 1,000 woods, keeping them open for you to explore and enjoy.

Percy Wakely Wood is owned by the Woodland Trust and lies just south of Cranbrook.