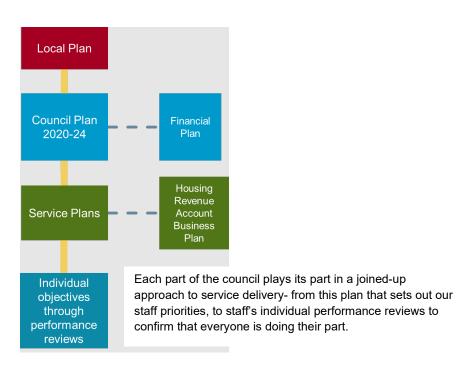
Countryside and Leisure service plan 2024-25 Version 0.2

April 2024 – March 2025





Director: Tracy Hendren

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Cllr Nick Hookway - Tourism, Sports, Leisure & Culture

Service Plan Template 2024-25: Contents Page

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Notes for Director and Assistant Director/Service Leads:

Shaded areas are for guidance.

When you have completed your Service Plan:

- ✓ Save to Service Planning 2024-25 Teams folder. Final versions will be placed on the intranet/internet
- ✓ Communicate it to your staff
- ✓ Keep it under review make it a live document which adds value!
- ✓ Use it to formulate individual objectives

Section 1 – Brief description of service and purpose(s)

What we do and who we deliver to

Purpose of Service:

To provide a more beautiful natural environment that conserves and protects East Devon's outstanding wildlife, habitats and landscapes. Also, to help make East Devon a more vibrant cultural ecosystem whose distinctive communities and outstanding natural environment are enhanced and enriched through creativity, curiosity and collaboration.

This includes the development and delivery of the following EDDC Strategies by the Countryside and Leisure Service:

- 1. Culture Strategy 2022-2031.
- 2. Leisure & Built Facilities Strategy 2021-2031
- 3. Green Space Strategy 2017 –2027
- 4. East Devon National Landscape Management Plan 2024-2029
- 5. Blackdown Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2024-2029
- 6. Tree Strategy 2024-2034 (in development)
- 7. Local Nature Recovery Plan 2024- 2034 (in development)

The Countryside and Leisure Service also works in partnership with other teams in helping to deliver EDDC's Climate Change Strategy and Public Health Plan with specific actions identified for the Countryside, Cultural and Leisure teams.

The delivery is undertaken through the following teams:

Countryside team – responsible for the management of our 13 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) for both wildlife and public access. Managing the East Devon section of the SW Coast Path. Providing an annual programme activities and events on those sites to local communities. Co-ordinating a network of volunteers across all our LNRs. Delivering an environmental educational programme to the District's secondary and primary schools. Securing Defra environmental stewardship grants to assist with costs of managing our nature reserves.

Ecology team – the Council's lead on ecology and responsible for ensuring the delivery of the Biodiversity Net Gain duty and its implementation into the planning system. Leading the Council's work with partners to deliver Nutrient Neutrality in our

catchments and developing East Devon's Local Nature Recovery Plan and Local Habitat Map for the district's key species and habitats to create an Est Devon Nature Recovery Network.

Tree team – the Council's lead for trees and planning with responsibility for the delivery of our work with Tree Preservation Orders and Trees in Conservation Areas; providing advice on planning consultations and major projects to Planning on tree related matters. Leading the delivery of East Devon's Tree Strategy work to help future proof the district's treescape.

Arts & Culture team – responsible for the delivery of East Devon's Culture Strategy 2022-31 and Delivery Plan; managing the Manor Pavilion theatre; managing the Thelma Hulbert Gallery and delivering an annual programme of outreach work to East Devon's communities as well as an annual programme of exhibitions, events and activities. Overseeing the Council's strategic partnerships with Villages in Action and South West Museums to ensure rural communities have access to the creative arts. Supporting the district wide ACED (Arts Culture East Devon) Network which represents East Devon's rich and diverse creative arts communities.

East Devon National Landscape team – responsible for the delivery of the statutory Management Plan working with local communities, farmers, tourism providers and local businesses in the National Landscape.

How we do this:

- Deliver our statutory functions within the Environment Act 2021 by providing ecological expertise to secure Biodiversity Net Gain and prepare five yearly Biodiversity Reports.
- Deliver our statutory functions within the Environment Act 2021 to help prepare an East Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Species Conservation Strategies and Protected Site Strategies that cover East Devon.
- Deliver our statutory function for the making and serving Tree Preservation Orders & Trees in Conservation Areas and advising on management of our Council owned tree stock.
- Delivery of the Tree Strategy for East Devon DC
- Managing 13 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) for people and wildlife and enhances East Devon's green spaces through Nature Recovery Networks.
- Provide an annual programme of public events on our LNRs that raises understanding and awareness of the district's outstanding natural environment.

- Deliver a district-wide outdoor learning experiences, manage and run a district-wide volunteer programme on our LNRs.
- Manage and maintain the East Devon section of the SW Coast Path.
- Deliver health and wellbeing benefits through all the Service's work programmes.
- Provide support and funding for the East Devon and Blackdown Hills National Landscape Partnerships as nationally important landscapes.
- Deliver the East Devon Culture Strategy 2022-31 working in close collaboration with all our cultural organisations and partners as well as supporting the ACED Network.
- Manage the Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG) which provides outstanding contemporary art exhibitions, delivers a district wide outreach programme, delivers a strong art-based learning programme linked to exhibitions for community groups & individuals including schools, young & older people; THG supports & promotes regional artists and supports a network of volunteers.
- Manage the Manor Pavilion Theatre providing a venue for local and national performers to put on a variety of performances/shows and local groups to use as a venue for rehearsals, training etc.
- Deliver EDDC's Leisure & Built Facilities Strategy 2021-31
- Provide funding to support LED to manage the district's leisure centre facilities enabling community sport and physical activities, also deliver an outreach programme for local clubs and communities within East Devon.
- All functions of the Countryside & Leisure Service are targeted at the district's population, as well as helping to attract visitors and tourists into the area.

Statutory responsibilities

- Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 protection of wildlife.
- Town & Country Planning Act 1990 and Town & Country Planning (Tree Preservation) England Regs 2012 for managing and maintaining our TPOs and Trees in Conservation Areas.
- Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 LAs duty to produce National Landscape Management Plans and provide open access on heathland, moorland.
- Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006; all LAs have duty to have regard for (including the enhancement of) biodiversity in decision making.

Staff Structure

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); duty for LAs to consider impacts of plans and projects on Protected Sites.
- Environment Act 2021 for Local Planning Authority duties for delivering Biodiversity Net Gain and preparing Local Nature Recovery Strategy's.

It is a front facing service that engages with all of East Devon's communities and local residents through our work on planning applications, tree preservation orders and annual events and activity programmes delivered by the Countryside and Cultural teams.

Section 2 – Looking forward: what we will do in 2024-25 (service objectives)

2.1 Service level priorities we will deliver in 2024/25 which support the Council Plan Priorities; Better homes & communities, A greener East Devon, A resilient economy and Quality services	Financial/ corporate resource	Lead Officers	Due Date
A greener East Devon - new areas of work			
 District Ecologist to deliver following targets for 2024/25: Appointment of Ecology Officer and Trainee Ecologist into the team to manage Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements from 2024/25 Identify as part of the new BNG duty suitable land to create a Local Habitat Bank to secure a district natural credit scheme. Work with Development Management (DM) team in providing guidance and training on Biodiversity Net Gain implementation. Work with the Planning Policy team on the biodiversity chapter and supporting evidence of the new local plan, to include 10% BNG policy for East Devon, and assessment/integration of biodiversity within site allocation process. Work with Service Leads in both Countryside and Planning to deliver Natural England policy on nutrient neutrality on the River Axe SAC through the Triple Axe project 	Service budget New Burdens payment	Assistant Director – Countryside & Leisure District Ecologist	Ongoing

		T	T	
•	(collaborative partnership with National Landscapes, SWW, WRT, NE & EA); training for DM colleagues, draft Habitat Regs Assessment document, and exploration of other measures such as water saving measures and upgrades of septic tanks. Collaborate with Devon Local Nature Partnership to develop new statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategy with targets for east Devon sites to improve the district's biodiversity. Improvement of the EDDC website and DM processes relating to ecology – i.e., overhauling the website to provide an ecology section, updating validation criteria and providing Listed Building Consent protected species position. Integration of Habitats Regulations Assessment into internal processes, such as events booking, engineering team projects and other internal processes.			
2.	Countryside team and District Ecologist to develop proposals: for both further habitat acquisition in the District that can facilitate commitments to nature recovery and carbon reduction/adaptation such as the Seaton Wetlands utilising the emerging Local Habitat map to implement nature recovery networks.	EDDC Capital Biodiversity Net Gain contributions and development of a credit sales system	District Ecologist Countryside Team Manager	Ongoing
•	Deliver new visitor infrastructure to Seaton Wetlands to enhance visitor experience and monetise the increased footfall:	EDDC capital	Countryside Team Manager	December 2025

 Development of a pop-up refreshment facility – concessionary arrangement or in-house (Black Hole Marsh hub) Installation of revised interpretation and welcome panels throughout the site, including updated waymarking system Work with DCC to ensure smooth delivery of cycle route extension. Development of a small suitable retail offer from the Discovery Hut selling natural history books and children's explorer equipment. Installation of revised interpretation and welcome panels throughout the site, including updated waymarking system 	n		
 3. Work with Forestry England and Offwell Woodlands Trust deliver in 2024/25: take on tenancy of the Offwell Woods site as a Countrysid Team managed woodland to enable the declaration of a new Local Nature Reserve for East Devon. Embed existing volunteers into the wider countryside volunteering framework 		Countryside Team Manager	March 2025
 4. Heritage Lottery Fund `Saving Species Fund' project successfully applied for and first year delivery funded. Species Spaces from Sea to Source in year one will: create Sheep's Marsh intertidal scheme, make improvements to freshwater grazing marsh, engage private landowners with 12 hectares of species rice pasture restoration. 	Service budget Heritage Lottery Fund	Countryside Team Manager	March 2026

•	work with neighbouring landowners to increase conservation grazing of heathland over 20 hectares at Trinity Hill.			
5.	Develop a Tree Strategy that sets out the framework for engaging with climate change, tree wardens and community engagement, tackling pests and diseases, and requirements for trees within development sites.	Service budget	Assistant Director – Countryside & Leisure District Ecologist Arboricultural Team Manager	March 2025
6.	Tree team to establish: Emphasis on planting initiatives across East Devon working with climate change officer, Streetscene, Housing to get a council wide approach. Engage local stakeholders / landowners for large scale planting including the identification of appropriate street tree planting locations throughout East Devon. Actively engage and develop tree warden scheme across East Devon to help with the protection of existing trees and planting of new trees.	Service budget	Arb Team Manager Countryside Team Manager S/Scene Manager	March 2025
7.	Support the work of the World Heritage Site Partnership, East Devon & Blackdown Hills National Landscapes partnerships:	Service budget Defra core grant Devon CC funding	Assistant Director— Countryside & Leisure	March 2025
•	Consultation, review and adoption of 2 National Landscapes Management Plans during 2024-25	Somerset Council funding Dorset Council funding		

 Implement recommendations from the Defra reprotected landscapes including the rebranding thandscapes Recruit into the vacant East Devon National Land Manager, National Landscape Project Officer and Landscape Comms Officer roles (due to retireme Provide funds for the delivery of the 2 National Landscape Business Plans (see www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk and www.blackdownhillaonb.org.uk) The whole Service to contribute to the East Deventealth Plan and improved health and wellbeing Establish projects delivering health benefits such Honiton THG outreach programme – Creative Cabin, THG About Actively support volunteers on our sites and helpmental and physical benefits through their partiactivities. 	dscape d National ent) dscape d on's Public through: n as Wild G Out & p provide	THG Manager Countryside Team Manager	March 2025
Better Homes & Communities – new areas of work			
 Implement East Devon's Culture Strategy for East 2022-32 that sets out the vision and aims for ED support for the arts & culture sector. Identified new areas are projects, activities and ever 2024/25 which include: 	DC's Prosperity Fund Service budget	Assistant Director – Countryside & Leisure Cultural Producer	Ongoing

Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment:			
Improve the environmental practices of the district's			
cultural festivals to establish them as leaders in sustainable			
event management (pilot with Exmouth Festival)			
Cultural Tourism: Linking with the new Tourism Strategy,			
develop a central 'what's on' hub to inform both the			
tourism industry and consumers about the local cultural			
offer.			
Creative Enterprise and Skills: Build inspiring talent			
development pathways for the current and next generation			
of East Devon creatives through setting up an ACED			
mentoring scheme.			
New Places for Culture: Integrate cultural spaces and			
opportunities into new housing developments including			
Cranbrook.			
Connectivity: Continue building the ACED network via 3			
annual meetings, monthly newsletters, information-sharing			
and socials			
Cultural Leadership: Integrate Cultural Strategy Objectives			
and Actions into wider Council plans, staff work schedules			
and resource planning to understand what resources are			
available and where gaps remain.			
Capture Value: Develop a single evaluation process that			
captures the social, economic, environmental and health &			
wellbeing value of culture, enabling advocacy for the sector			
as a whole.			
D. Deliver year 2 of the UK SPF cultural programme & Rural	Service budget	Cultural Producer	March 2025
England Prosperity Fund culture and leisure programme	Climate Change budget		
2022-2025 with the following outputs:	Cililiate Cilarige budget		

 Continue delivering training opportunities for ACED Members Enhance the quality and appeal of collections, and the sustainability of local museums, through a programme of shared capital investment in display and interpretation. Support the Economic Development Team on the new Climate Action Programme (CAP, replacing Culture, Leisure and Tourism Fund) to administer decarbonisation grants to community organisations 			
11. THG to deliver a new programme (outside of core work programme) that will be submitted to the Arts Council for funding in July 2024 to create a new programme for 2024/25 'Process and Place' - exploring creative process through time and place including.	Service budget National Lottery Programme Grant - Arts Council.	THG Manager & Curator	March 2025
Art in the form of climate care and action. Supporting and showering local South West artists.			
 Supporting and showcasing local South West artists. Considering human engagement with the earth, art and artefacts. 			
Researching our cultural heritage.			
Engaging and reviving of forgotten craft techniques.			
Transforming THG's engagement programme and strengthened relationships to East Devon communities i.e., schools and other groups including.			
12. Manor Pavilion Theatre will deliver new areas of work outside of the main programme in 2024/25 that include:	Service budget	Theatre Manager	March 2025

 Set up new programme of collaborative talks/plenary sessions with THG's exhibition programme 2024/25 Ballet Theatre UK return with 2 new productions 2024/25. Explore opportunity to make Sidmouth Youth Theatre a permanent residency within the arts centre from 2025. 	Capital budget	Property Services	
 13. EDDC's Leisure & Built Facilities Strategy 2022-31 and delivery plan to achieve new work areas in 2024/25: Start review of dual use site arrangements and secure a better outcome for EDDC in the funding arrangements. Agree the future template for LED's management fee for 2024/25 and beyond integrating future savings targets to reduce fees. Implement programme of energy reduction measures with replacement of existing boilers with air source heat pumps etc. Review and put in place new management fee arrangement on a rolling 2 yearly basis that enables flexibility in setting the fee. LED Outreach programme enables delivery of EDDC's Public Health action plan targets 2024/25 and also year 2 of the UK SPF Leisure programme 	Service budget EDDC capital funds	Assistant Director – Countryside & Leisure Assistant Director - Place, Assets & Commercialisation Finance Director	Ongoing
Service actions relating to climate change	Financial/ corporate resource	Lead Officers	Due Date

14. Embed consideration of climate change into biodiversity assessments, policy, and decision making, such as consideration for suitable plant species, control of invasive species, and use of technology to minimise carbon consumption, e.g., by reducing travel.	Service budget New Burdens payment	District Ecologist	Ongoing
15. THG `Climate Conversations programme'. Encouraging artists and groups to promote climate justice as part of our ongoing programme.	Service budget	THG Manager	Ongoing
16. Improve the environmental practices of the district's cultural festivals to establish them as leaders in sustainable event management working with Exmouth Festival in 2024 as a pilot to create a template for other festivals in East Devon to achieve carbon footprint reductions.	Climate Change budget	Cultural Producer	March 2025
17. Following on from members of the THG team receiving Carbon Literacy "train the trainer training", we aim to deliver Carbon Literacy awareness and sound bites to THG staff, volunteers, young people, artists and wider groups	Service budget	THG Manager	March 2025
18. THG, leisure centres and Manor Pavilion theatre are buildings with poor heating, ventilation and insulation due to their age and their energy consumption/efficiency can be improved	Capital programme Low Carbon Skills Fund	Estates	Ongoing
19. Undertake carbon reduction evaluation on events using toolkit such as Julie's Bicycle to capture reduced emissions achieved	Service budgets	All Countryside & Leisure Team Managers	Ongoing

20. Work with Climate Change Officer to help develop the	Climate Change budget	All Countryside & Leisure	Ongoing
Council's Carbon Descent plan with an audit of the carbon		Team Managers	
footprint of existing buildings, assets etc			

Key Projects 1 – Countryside and Ecology teams Service development / project supporting strategic objectives including the council plan.	Local Nature Recovery Plan for East Devon DC (as part of the Environment Act 2021 new duties.)		
Expected outcome	Development of a Local Nature Recovery Plan for the district that identifies our key species and habitats and also where nature recovery will be targeted in the district.		
Link to Council Plan priorities	A Greener East Devon		
Resources required including additional budget, staffing or Digital / Data Transformation	Service budget use of any New Burdens grants for Defra to delive Strata input into digitizing the Local Habitat Map and its key habitats on GIS;		
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer	
1.Agree workscope and consultation process for the Local Nature Recovery Plan (LNRP) and present to Overview Committee	March 2024	Assistant Director District Ecologist Countryside Manager	
2.Carry out a series of open days and engagement events across the district's main towns on emerging themes and priorities to engage local communities.	July-September 2024	Assistant Director District Ecologist Countryside Manager	

3.Draft Local Nature Recovery Plan prepared and checked against Devon's	October 2024	Assistant Director
draft LNRS to ensure synergy. Take draft LNRP to Overview for comment and final editing.		District Ecologist Countryside Manager
4.Present final draft of Local Nature Recovery Plan to Cabinet for sign off	December 2024	Assistant Director
and adoption		District Ecologist
		Countryside Manager

Key Projects 2 – Ecology team Service development / project supporting strategic objectives including the council plan.	Creation of a local Habitat Bank (as part of the Environment Act 2021 new duties for Biodiversity Net Gain.)		
Expected outcome	Development of a local Habitat Bank as part of the mitigation requirements for the new Biodiversity Net Gain duty. This will be parcels of land that will be owned by East Devon DC or key partners that can provide habitat credits for the offsetting of new development where it cannot be created on or offsite.		
Link to Council Plan priorities	A Greener East Devon		
Resources required including additional budget, staffing or Digital / Data Transformation	Capital funds to purchase suitable land to create a Habitat Bank;		
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer	
1.Agree list of suitable sites (woodland, improved farmland etc) within East Devon that could provide a habitat credit scheme for securing suitable mitigation for new development	April 2024 – March 2025	Assistant Director District Ecologist	

		GI Manager
		Countryside Manager
2.Prepare report to purchase land and a schedule of costs for site management to go to Cabinet for approval (when a suitable site is identified).	April 2024 – March 2025	Assistant Director District Ecologist GI Manager
		Countryside Manager

Key Projects 3 – Ecology and Tree teams	Tree Strategy for East Devon DC		
Service development / project supporting strategic objectives			
Expected outcome	Adoption by Full Council of a Tree Strategy for East Devon		
Link to Council Plan priorities	A Greener East Devon		
Resources required including additional budget, staffing or Digital / Data Transformation	Service budget		
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer	
1.Agree workscope of Tree Strategy with Overview Committee	March 2024	Assistant Director District Ecologist Arboricultural Manager	
2. Issue a project tender brief for Tree Strategy development and appoint external freelancer support to provide relevant datasets, policy development, sense check against legislation and against existing EDDC Local Plan policies etc.	January - July 2024	Assistant Director District Ecologist Arboricultural Manager	

3. Present final draft of Tree Strategy to Overview Committee and Cabinet	October 2024	Assistant Director
for sign off and adoption		District Ecologist
		Arboricultural Manager

Key Projects 4 – Cultural Producer Service development / project supporting strategic objectives including the council plan.	Delivery of UK SPF Cultural programme	year 2
Expected outcome	To have delivered the agreed cultural interventions for the year 2 programme as agreed with DHLUC.	
Link to Council Plan priorities	Better Homes & Communities	
Resources required including additional budget, staffing or Digital / Data Transformation	ta UK SPF funding	
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer
1. Deliver Round 2 of the Creative East Devon Fund	March 2025	Cultural Producer
2. Continue delivering training opportunities for ACED Members	March 2025	Cultural Producer
3. Enhance the quality and appeal of collections, and the sustainability of local museums, through a programme of shared capital investment in display and interpretation	March 2025	Cultural Producer
4. Support the Economic Development Team on the new Climate Action Programme (CAP, replacing Culture, Leisure and Tourism Fund) to administer decarbonisation grants to community organisations	March 2025	Cultural Producer

Key Projects 5 – Countryside team Service development / project supporting strategic objectives including the council plan.	Delivery of Heritage Lottery Fund Species Survival Fund project (Space from Sea to Source project)		
Expected outcome	Delivery of £1.1 million Heritage Lottery Fund Species Survival		
	Fund project (*if bid application in February 2024 successful).		
Link to Council Plan priorities	A Greener East Devon		
Resources required including additional budget, staffing or Digital / Data	Project will be fully funded from Heritage Lottery Funds and		
Transformation	existing capital funds allocated to the project.		
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer	
1. Recruit Project Officer	May 2024	Countryside Manager	
2. Secure planning permission for Sheep's Marsh scheme	April 2024	Countryside Manager	
3. Create screen access to Sheep's Marsh scheme	August 2024	Countryside Manager	
4. Groundworks, engineering of sea wall and vale installation	February 2025	Countryside Manager	

Section 3 – What we will measure in 2024-25: Performance targets

3.1 Service performance indicators	Target	How often –	Responsible Officer for
		monthly,	production of
		quarterly, bi-	management information
		annually, annually	

Also include any performance indicators that support the council			
plan			
Countryside school visits & events – numbers of groups and numbers of attendees	Quarterly	Cabinet & SPAR reporting	Countryside Team Manager
Site footfall at Seaton Wetlands; Knapp Copse; Trinity Hill LNRs	Quarterly	Cabinet & SPAR reporting	Countryside Team Manager
THG footfall, donations and income performance for each exhibition	Quarterly	Cabinet & SPAR reporting	THG Manager
THG events – numbers of events and numbers of attendees	Quarterly	Cabinet & SPAR reporting	THG Manager