

EXETER HARBOUR BOARD

Thursday 12 June 2025

Present:-

Councillor Williams, R (Chair)
Councillors Cookson, Read, Snow and Sheridan

Apologies

Also Present

20

SOUTHEAST DEVON WILDLIFE- JOINT HABITAT MITIGATION STRATEGY **2024**

The Chair welcomed Neil Harris, Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager (East Devon District Council) from Southeast Devon Wildlife to the meeting, who provided a presentation on 'A Joint Approach to Habitat Regulations Mitigation'. The presentation discussed the following points: -

- Our history;
 - the strategy is a joint approach to habitat regulations and mitigation, formally constituted in 2016;
 - habitat regulations are a critical legislative requirement for local plan delivery, placing a legal duty on competent authorities to ensure mitigation is delivered before granting permission for any plan or project likely to affect European sites;
- Southeast Devon;
- Our Sites;
 - Devon contains internationally important wildlife sites; the Exe Estuary, Dawlish Warren, and East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, all with the highest environmental designations;
- Decision Making;
 - Natural England has oversight on delivery of mitigation delivery; and
 - decisions are largely made using visitor strategies, which are then referred to an officer working group, there is an annual business plan, and a 5-year business plan. This goes to committee for ratification, and there is a review of measures each year.
- Mitigation Delivery; and
 - wildlife wardens;
 - Devon Loves Dogs;
 - public awareness campaigns;
 - visitor access improvements;
 - complete redesign of signage;
 - Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGs)
 - Dawlish Countryside Park- funded through Council partners and is secured with a 999-year lease to The Land Trust.
- What Next?
 - new local plans;
 - increase housing targets;
 - new strategy;
 - devolution; and
 - Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

The Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager responded to Members questions as follows: -

- there is increasing concern from charities nationally about the Planning and Infrastructure Bill;
- it is a legal requirement for new housing developments to be assessed, and this is carried out extrapolating data from current population access patterns;
- financial contributions are collected by council finance departments through planning obligations (Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy);
- the mitigation strategy has been developed with careful input from stakeholders and council partners to ensure appropriateness and proportionality;
- The strategy aims to provide certainty that environmental impacts will be addressed; and
- SANGs are classified as a priority infrastructure, which guides related planning and funding decisions, they are required to have 8 hectares per 1000 new population.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.41 pm)

Chair

A Joint Approach to Habitat Regulations Mitigation

- Neil Harris
- Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager
- nharris@eastdevon.gov.uk



Covering

- Our history
- South East Devon
- Our sites
- Our Strategy
- Decision making
- Mitigation delivery
- What next?

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Why are we here?

The ‘Habitats Regulations’

63.—(1) A competent authority, before deciding to...give any...permission...for, a plan or project which—

(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site ...(either alone or in combination with other plans or projects),

must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of that site’s conservation objectives.

(5) In the light of the conclusions of the assessment...the competent authority may agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site...



Housing delivery

Approximately 2,000 dwellings/year across region.

Housing delivery by LPA 2025 - 2040:

EDDC 14,400 (49%)

ECC 8,607 (30%)

TDC 6,104 (21%)

TOTAL 29,111 (100%)

Offsite - Mix of developer SANG, LPA strategic SANG and local projects.

Developer provides SANG for sites of 300 or more dwellings.

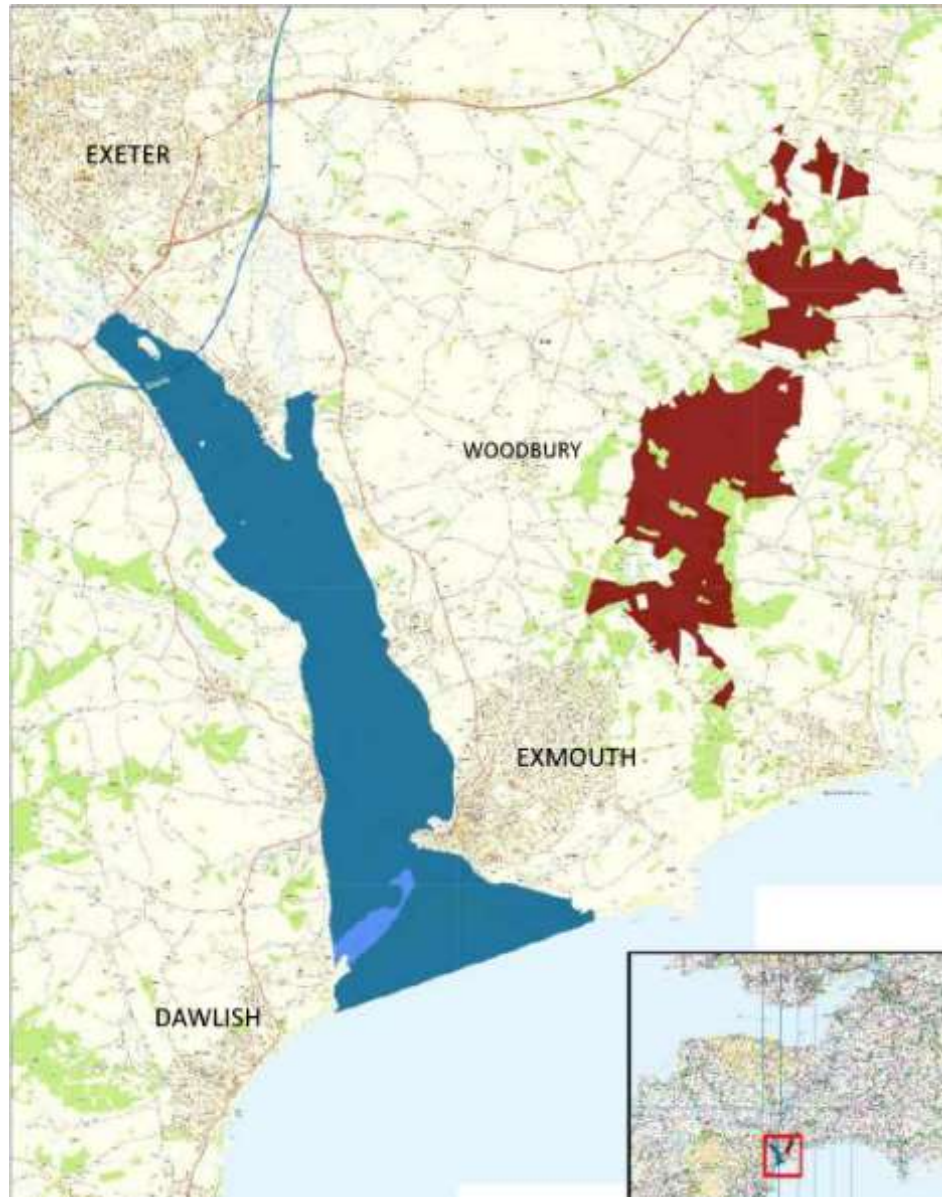
SANG provision 8ha per 1000 new residents.



Exe Estuary SPA

Dawlish Warren
SAC

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Pebblebed Heaths
SPA/SAC



- Internationally important wildlife sites.
- Legally protected, highest environmental designation.
- Primary consideration in the planning process.

Impacts: evidence base 2009-2013



Report



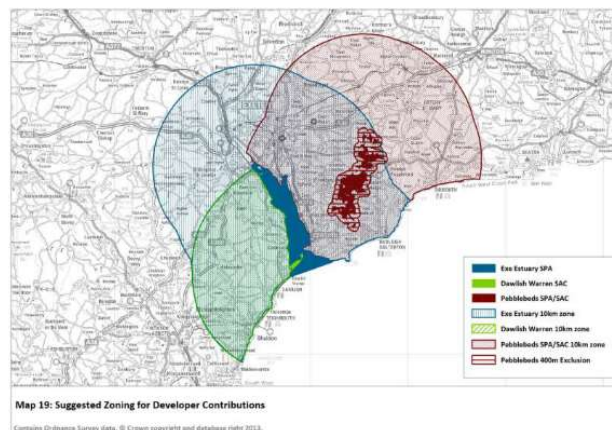
South-east Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy



Durwyn Liley, Rachel Hoskin, Sophie Lake,
John Underhill-Day & Katie Cruickshanks

Forest Office
Cold Harbour
Wareham
Dorset BH20 7PA
Tel/Fax: 01929 552444
info@footprint-ecology.co.uk

connecting wildlife and people
www.footprint-ecology.co.uk



East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan



Durwyn Liley, Chris Panter
& John Underhill-Day

Forest Office
Cold Harbour
Wareham
Dorset BH20 7PA
Tel/Fax: 01929 552444
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Mitigation measures

Onsite / SAMM

Delivery Manager

Wardens (outreach & engagement)

Devon Loves Dogs

Communications Officer

Websites/Social Media

SANGS/Infrastructure Delivery Officer

Wildlife Refuges

Access Management

Signage/Interpretation

Patrol Boat

Car Parking management review (Heaths)

Visitor surveys

Ecological monitoring



Offsite / SANG

Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS)

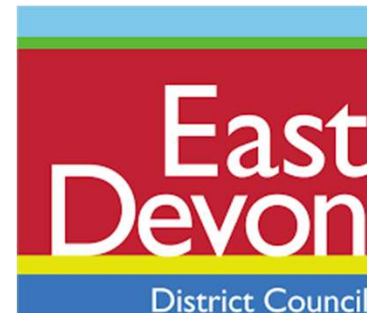
New (or enhanced) countryside areas to ease pressure on protected sites by providing alternatives

Strategic provision.

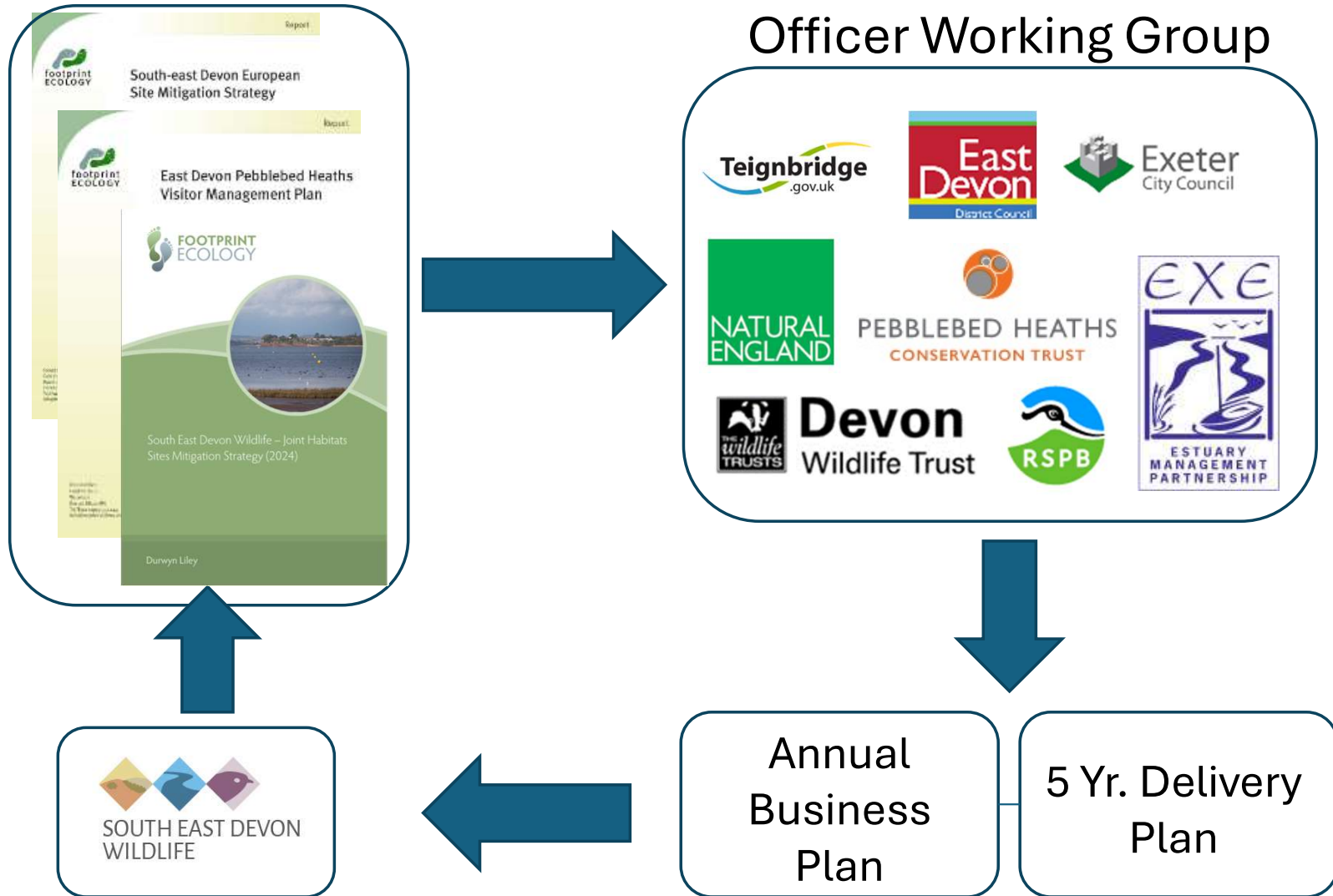
Mix of delivery mechanisms
developer/LPA



Executive Committee:

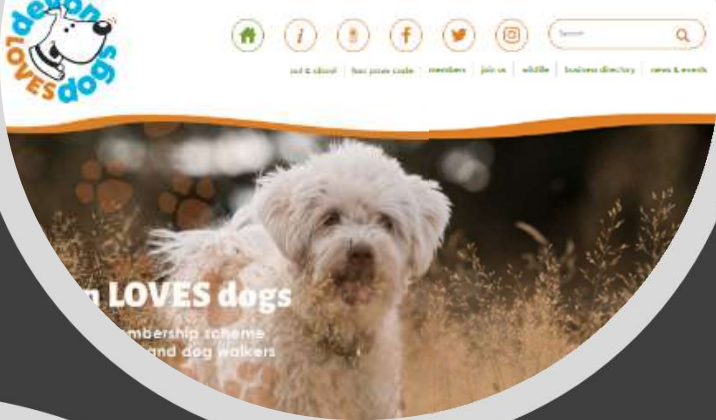


Decision making



Wildlife Wardens





Devon Loves Dogs





Public awareness campaigns



Many of our birds and plants are easily scared by dogs. Thank you for protecting wildlife by keeping your dog under control and on the path.



Monitoring

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South East Devon Visitor Survey 2020-2021

Zoe Caals, Chris Panter & Durwyn Liley



Exe Estuary Wildlife Refuge Monitoring Programme – Final Report

Phil Saunders & Durwyn Liley



VEGETATION SURVEY & ASSESSMENT

Petalwort Petalophyllum ralfsii Monitoring at Dawlish Warren National Nature Reserve in 2023

REPORT TO EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

May 2023



Dawlish Warren NNR
trampling & nutrient enrichment
assessment
2023



December 2023



Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Access Improvements



Types of activity
affecting the
heaths



SOUTH EAST DEVON
WILDLIFE



PEBBLEBED HEATHS
CONSERVATION TRUST

£500K invested

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- Changing layouts
- Tarmac entrances
- Install height barriers
- Additional dog waste bins
- Improving surfaces and drainage
- Cycle racks
- Vehicle counters



Signage and interpretation



- **S**uitable
- **A**lternative
- **N**atural
- **G**reen
- **S**pace





Welcome to Dawlish Countryside Park

These spacious acres, for centuries farmed to feed us, are now yours to explore and enjoy.

If you have an hour to spare why not follow the **Red Route** right round taking in the panoramic views from the **Ridge Path**, the **Island Viewpoint** and **The Lookout**.

For a shorter stroll why not follow one of the **Mellow Yellow** loops past the **Bird Feeding Station** to the **Coffee Curve seat** with sea views

...or make your own route around the many meadow paths - there's room to run and room to roam.



'Port Road' bus stops are on the main road



Birdsong and barley fields

Enjoy a real country walk with our classic farmland birds for company. Skylarks singing joyfully high overhead - and our real Devon celebrities, the bandit masked Cirl Bunting (pronounced sirl) making their subtle rattle. They were once called the Village Bunting because of their close ties to us.



Patches will still be farmed for Barley to support these special and long standing country companions..

As their name suggests tiny Harvest Mice like fields of corn, we've added a few to the countryside furniture - see if you can spot them!



Marbled White butterfly, (it scatter bombs its eggs!).



Marvellous meadows

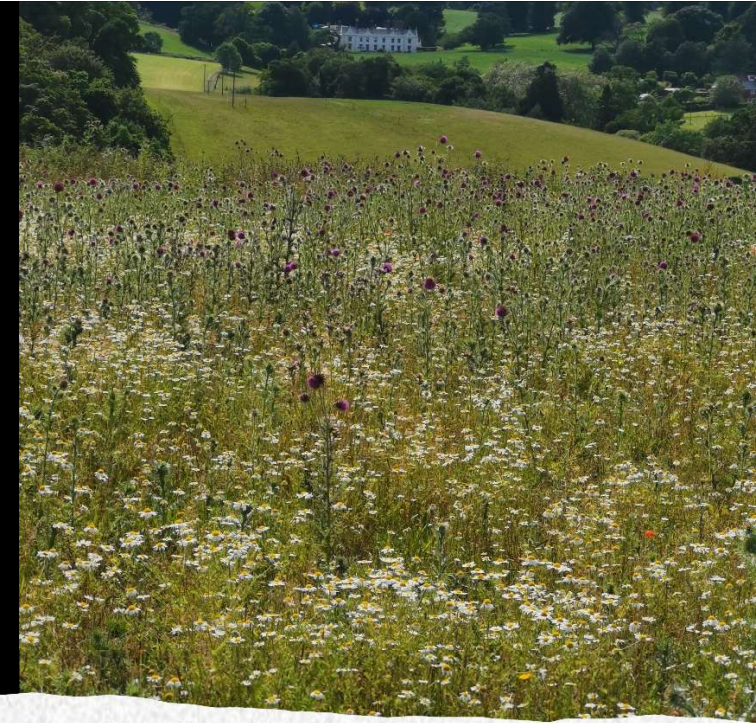
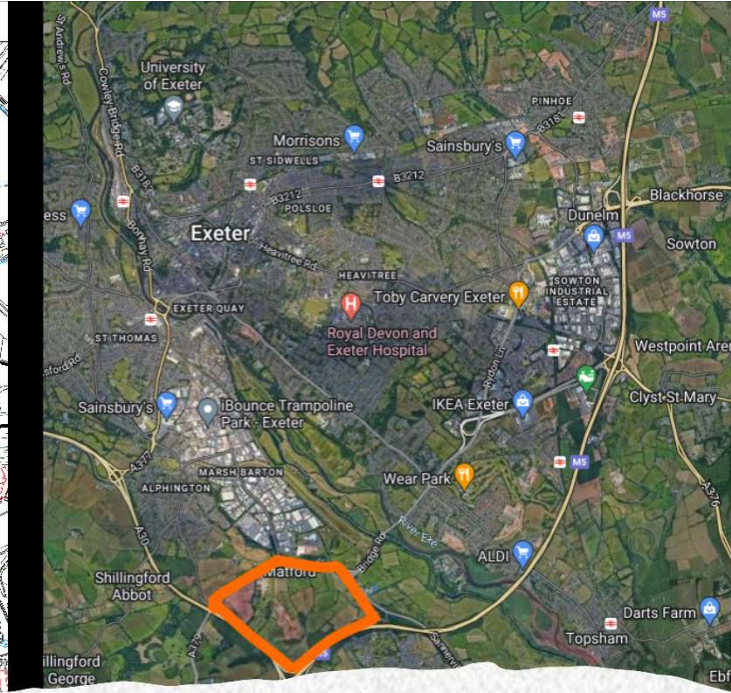
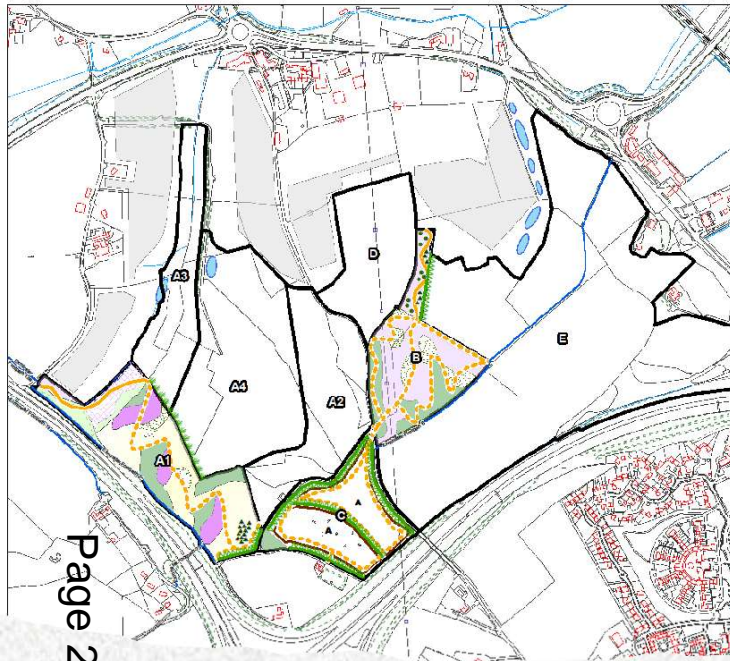
Grassland will be managed as hay meadows packed with colourful wildflowers and bustling with butterflies, with mown paths for exploring and shorter strips for throwing a ball.



Scentless Mayweed

Ladybird





• Ridgetop Park - SANGS

Website

www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk

Social media

@SEDwildlife



SOUTH EAST DEVON HABITAT REGULATIONS PARTNERSHIP

Why does wildlife need to be protected?

Welcome to South East Devon Wildlife. We are an organisation created to protect internationally important nature reserves for future generations. We work for East Devon, Exeter and Teignbridge councils, in **partnership** with Natural England, the Pebblebed Heaths Foundation Trust, Devon Wildlife Trust, RSPB, and the Exe Estuary Management Partnership.

In the future, there will be more recreational pressure on significant conservation sites at Dawlish Warren, East Devon Pebblebed Heaths and the Exe Estuary.

What next?

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- New Local Plans
- Increased housing targets
- New strategy
- Devolution
- Planning & Infrastructure Bill



South East Devon Wildlife – Joint Habitats
Sites Mitigation Strategy (2024)

What has been amended?

- Supersedes and replaces the existing Strategy.
- Covers 2025-30. Updated on a rolling basis every 5 years thereafter. (80yr framework outlined)
- Staff resource increases:
- Expansion of current team and SANGS/Greenspace Project Delivery Officer. Operational budgets for staff projects.



What is new?

ECC “Infrastructure Projects”
as offsite mitigation - as an
alternative to SANG.

To “provide access or
enhance existing land away
from the European sites”

Flexible “special projects
pot” funding for site
specific mitigation, along
with defined projects.



In summary

- Evidence base
- Housing delivery in South East Devon.
- Wildlife within reach – our sites.
- Mitigation strategy & measures.
- Local Authority partnership with stakeholders.
- Mitigation delivery.
- What next?





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