Deben Estuary Plan – Summary of Actions – v12 [DRAFT]

Notes:

- *These Actions result from chapter-based statements of **Policy** and **Recommendations** in the Deben Estuary Plan (link)*
- *The Lead on actioning is given in **bold.***
- *Abbreviations key at foot of document*

Ref	Chapter/Recommendation/Action	Who	When	Status	Notes/Outcome
	1. Executive Summary **2. Introduction & Context**				
	No recommendations/actions				

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	3. Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management				
3/1	**Complete FC1 Repairs - Stage 1**	**Landowners;** DEP	2027	Started	
3/2	**Work with partners and landowners to continue to identify and pursue opportunities for future funding to support the maintenance, improvement or adaptation of FC1 where justified to support the long-term resilience of the flood cell:**	**DEP;** Landowners; EA	2030		This through monitoring the condition and performance of FC1 following completion of the current repair works and, together with potential funding opportunities, to support the long-term resilience of the flood cell
3/3	**Flood preparedness and funding:** Work together to ensure a holistic and inclusive approach to managing flood risk.	**EA;** DEP; Landowners; Businesses	2026-36		Subject to funding, regulatory requirements and the outcome of technical assessment.

3/4	**Maintain and/or improve flood defence assets (economically viable flood cells):** that protect estuary communities, businesses, and the environment	**EA;** Landowners; Local Residents; Parish Councils; ESWMB	Ongoing		Subject to funding, regulatory requirements and the outcome of technical assessment.
3/5	**Manage flood defence assets protecting rural areas:**	**Landowners**; EA; (NE; SCC)			Use collaboration to deliver the best strategy for maintaining or improving these defences. (NE and SCC where part of KC3 Coast Path
3/6	**Seek co-ordinated funding solutions to deliver maintenance / improvement of strategic estuary defences:**	**DEP;** EA; Landowners			
3/7	**Felixstowe Ferry flood risk management:** A considered long-term response avoiding short-term reactive measures.	**EA;** DEP; Landowners; FF Residents' Association			E.G. Explore further adaptation options, including a potential secondary defence line to reduce flood risk if the Knolls move, the level of erosion is changed and defences are compromised.
3/8	**Saltmarsh as an element of flood protection:** Continue to deliver saltmarsh restoration projects and ensure existing marshes are managed and enhanced	**EA;** DEP; RtD			? Part of "considered response to flood risk management" EA/DEP Possible co-operation with HHA
3/9	**Wildlife impacts of maintenance work on sea walls to be minimised** through co-ordinated and well-timed works safeguarding valuable habitat and flora & fauna	**EA**; DEP; Landowners	Started	Ongoing	FC1 work commencing Sept 2026 Clearing vegetation on seawalls. Advice for walls managed by landowners.
3/10	**Compensate loss of habitat when evidenced:** through partnership working that consider locations where new, compensatory intertidal habitat could be created	**EA**; RtD; Landowners; Interest Groups	Now	Ongoing	Must be the result of rigorous research and discussion, e.g. as part of managed realignment
3/11	**Annual monitoring and recording changes within the estuary:** e.g. evidence of sea level rise; erosion at the mouth (at Felixstowe Ferry and Bawdsey Ferry;) coastal squeeze; any ongoing loss of intertidal habitat	**EA;** NE; RtD	Now	Ongoing	RtD to follow up with NE
3/12	**Flood risk management policies:** Implement appropriate responses to estuarine change, developing and implementing adaptive options when required	**EA**	Now	Ongoing	Subject to funding, regulatory requirements and the outcome of technical assessment.

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	4. Water Quality				
4/1	**Identify sources of pollutants:** Foster action to limit and mitigate their effect. Hold polluters to account.	**DCC-WQ**; DEP; RtD			RtD here as we have the demonstration project at National Trust Sutton Hoo to capture runoff before discharge to the estuary
4/2	**Water quality profiling:** Build on current understanding of the Estuary's water quality to create a more complete profile. Accessing funding where available. Communicate to those undertaking water recreation	**DCC-WQ**; RtD			
4/3	**Ad hoc MST (Microbial Source Tracking):** To identify the specific origins of faecal contamination in water bodies. Beyond traditional methods that only confirm the presence of general faecal indicator bacteria ('FIB' e.g. E. coli. To verify the source of E.coli, understand the source and the implications for public health	**DCC-WQ/UoS**; EA; AWS			
4/4	**Changes to allow Natural England to designate the Estuary as IMPROVING**: Co-operate with and support the efforts of stakeholders to implement and special designation sites to be reversed from UNFAVOURABLE DECLINING to cease the decline in the first instance and then move toward improvement through the recovery process, until it becomes FAVOURABLE again.	**RtD;** DCC-4RP			"RtD: Source to Sea" carried out initial desktop review July 2026. RtD may secure another round of SSSI investigation funding to help with water quality monitoring and modelling. RtD will link to major landowners group who wanted to see the piece of work completed.
4/5	**Educate public on their role in improving water quality:**	**AWS;** SCC; ESC RDA; DCC-WQ			Example - reducing the use of sanitary products, not putting cooking oil and grease down kitchen sink drains and consider using porous materials if creating a firm surface on which to park cars

4/6	**Establish better information base regarding water quality:** which can be used to inform recreational water users of the best time to swim or engage in water sports.	**DCC-WQ;** Deben Bluetits		Ongoing	
4/7	**Promote the importance of good water quality:** For benefit of marine biodiversity and for the safe use of the river for recreation.	**NE; EA;** RDA DCC-WQ; Save the Deben			
4/8	**Secure Designated Bathing Water Status for Woodbridge:**	**Save the Deben;** SCC; ESC; EA			DBWS would require regular EA testing the results of which could be used for various purposes. E.G. To drive investment in a tertiary treatment plant at Martlesham and Melton STWs as well as improved infrastructure to reduce CSO spills in the area around Woodbridge (see below). This will require lobbying at Central Government level because in order to qualify for DBWS the number of swimmers need to be counted and a threshold needs to be reached. Counting swimmers is no longer supported at Woodbridge because of the river traffic so it is proposed that instead of DBWS Defra should create a category that covers recreational water users instead.
4/9	**Press for installation of tertiary treatment at Martlesham and Melton STWs:** (for E. coli / Enterococci and proxy pathogens)	**DCC-WQ;** RDA; Save the Deben			
4/10	**Gain prioritisation for Anglian Water Source Apportionment Study:**	**DCC-WQ;** AWS; EA; Save the Deben; RDA			Results used to drive investment in tertiary treatment at Martlesham and Melton. Encouragement should be given to the Environment Agency to implement appropriate trials to endorse sustainable performic acid tertiary treatment methodology as in (pilot) use at Southwold STW

4/11	**Lobby for Quaternary treatment:** at Woodbridge and Melton STWs for removing micropollutants like pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.	**DCC-WQ;** Save the Deben; RDA			Under the EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) QT is mandatory for plants of 150,000 pop and above, and in at-risk areas for plants of 10,000 pop or more. A designated bathing water is considered to fall into the at-risk category if impacted by urban waste water discharges or fails to meet bathing water quality standards. https://eurlex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/3019/oj
4/12	**Promotion of Best Practice for wastewater disposal from boats on the Deben Estuary:**	**Robertsons;** DEP; RDA			• Promote/increase use of 'Percy Pump-Out.' (Robertsons Boatyard has a mobile / wheeled pump-out facility 'Percy Pump-Out' for holding tanks that is available for use by non-boatyard visitors) • Regulations regarding the adoption of environmentally friendly anti-foul protection and discharge of sewage from boats are gradually improving. However as yet there is no legislation which requires private pleasure craft to retrofit a holding tank. Although no specific provisions are made for smaller pleasure vessels in the UK, it is important.
4/13	**Support Catchment Sensitive Farming:** Work with farmers and landowners to reduce the risk of diffuse water pollution from agriculture.	**RtD/UDFC** ESFWAG; NL-CSF division; Landowners; DCC-4RP;			This is a big part of Recovering the Deben workstream 2 – land and water, lead by the Upper Deben Farm Cluster. Ensure that the Estuary Catchment well represented.
4/14	**Lobby for the inclusion of water companies as statutory consultees in developments larger than 10 dwellings:**	**DCC-WQ;** DEP			All such developments to be required to pay a "water infrastructure levy" to the water companies to finance ring-fenced infrastructure development

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	5. Freshwater Management				
5/1	**Ensure efficient management of water resources:** to deliver sufficient water to meet human, agricultural and environmental needs, promoting schemes such as drainage water recycling and aquifer recharge:	**WRE;** ESWMB; EA; SCC; AWS; RtD; WRE			Felixstowe Hydrocycle complete – North of Deben next in line
5/2	Amalgamated with 5/1				
5/3	**Support the creation of reservoirs and much-needed changes to the 'Reservoirs Act' legislation:**	**DEP;** EA; ESWMB; WRE; AWS; SWS			E.G. for storage of water for agriculture and public water supply
5/4	**Reduce damage to the built environment caused by water:**	**SCC;** EA; WMA; RtD			I.E. Surpluses (floods) and Shortages (droughts)
5/5	**Support/encourage urban and rural SUDS/ Natural Flood Management programmes:** – particularly where such schemes can mitigate instances of local flooding. See also statutory guidance item (4/14)	**EA;** ESRT; RtD; SWS			
5/6	**All bodies to work more closely together:** who influence the freshwater environment of the R. Deben - use sound science to ensure that changing pressures can be managed	**DEP;** ESRT; EA; ESWMB; WRE AWS; SWS; ESC; SCC; DCC-4RP; RtD; Landowners			

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	6. Recreation & Leisure				
6/1	**Fairways Committees should meet together as a body, periodically:** Together with Harbour Masters; representatives of local authorities; in conjunction with boatyards; parish councils; inc. perhaps Harwich Harbour Authority	**RDA;** Fairways Committees; ESC		Ongoing	To discuss the general issues of river safety and any possible changes/amendments to the regulatory framework applicable to the river
6/2	**Update the 1979 River Deben Byelaws with prospect of enforcement:**	**ESC;** RDA; Fairways Committees; Suffolk Police (RWHP)			• Byelaws to apply year-round • Change to a single speed limit of 8 knots everywhere on the river (outside of existing 'unrestricted zone'). • Allow the existing 'unrestricted zone' to continue, (though a sizeable minority want to abolish it) • Ban Personal Water Craft upstream of the 'unrestricted zone' • Provide more publicity & signage of the byelaws so users are aware of their responsibilities
6/3	**Promote creation of focused Waldringfield Access and Use Forum:**	**Waldringfield PC**			Under the auspices of the Parish Council to monitor and respond to pressures as they develop.
6/4	**Increased formal parking on existing (visitor) sites:** AND/OR establishment of greater parking control during peak times to reduce overall demand	**Parish Councils;** ESC			AND/OR creation of formal, and regulated, small scale parking in selected locations to reduce the incidence of unregulated activity
6/5	**Increase facilities for public launching and recovery of personal watercraft:**	**Parish Councils;** ESC; RDA; Slipway Owners			E.G. canoes, kayaks and paddleboards: (not jet-skis) **AND/OR** better structured public use of existing private facilities
6/6	**Support the enhanced provision of public toilets:** to offset environmental damage caused by human waste	**Parish Councils**			Specifically for public toilet provision at Waldringfield

6/7	**Support selective closure of impassable/redundant footpaths close to the river:** Those that no longer provide a through route. Leaving areas for nature to thrive and rewilding to occur	**DEP;** SCC PRoW; Wildlife Wise			
6/8	**Establish a clear distinction between foot and cycle paths:**	**SCC PRoW**			E.G. those that permit, or encourage cycle use Put up appropriate/improved signage and publicity.
6/9	**Provide improved pedestrian/ cycle/wheeling pathways**:	**SCC PRoW**			I.E. relatively close to existing access points to facilitate those with limited mobility to benefit
6/10	**Implement a programme of improved maintenance of the existing footpaths close to the river:**	**SCC PRoW;** Landowners			E.G. improved signage (including eligibility criteria), together with an education programme on footpath usage, and measures to prevent cycling on footpaths, especially along the river wall
6/11	**Fairway Committees not to increase the number of regular tenanted moorings:**	**Fairways Committees;** Crown Estates			Where possible Fairway Committees to consolidate current or reduce the number of moorings to increase areas of the river free from moored boats.
6/12	**Provision of visitor mooring buoys:**	**Fairways Committees**; Crown Estates			To reducing anchor damage by boats
6/13	**Continuing education of all river users:**	ESC; RDA; Wildlife Wise; Deben Paddlers; Deben Bluetits; Other Clubs…			• to be aware of nature • to be aware of each other • to reduce possible conflicts and improve safety
6/14 See also 4/13	**Support establishment of improved pump out facilities for boats permanently moored on the river and alternative use of onshore facilities:**	**DEP;** ESC; RDA			E.G. Melton, Woodbridge, Martlesham Creek, Felixstowe Ferry Also: the provision of on-shore toilet facilities isn't helped by East Suffolk Council insisting on closing the public conveniences overnight at Felixstowe Ferry in spite of the case for them remaining available 24/7 being pleaded by the local Residents Association

6/15 See also 4/13	**Support reduction in discharge of human waste into the river:** Support research into how an effluent ban might be instituted	**ESC**; SCC; DCC-WQ; RDA; Boatyards; Fairways Committees			E.G. publicity and education programme to encourage boat owners (resident and visiting) to avoid, wherever possible the discharge of human waste into the river
6/16	**Consideration to be given to extension of positive dog use and safe walking policies, including new housing projects to have provision for dog walking facilities:**	**Wildlife Wise**			As introduced by the National Trust and Suffolk Wildlife to other areas of the Deben, thus assisting the survival and development of "at risk" flora and fauna through enhanced awareness of dog walkers to keep their animals on a short lead. This should apply, if possible, to "beach" areas of the Deben in particular. And, e.g. off-lead provision and provision of fenced areas where dogs can run off the lead without impacting nature.
6/17	**A presumption against any significant housing or other building development in the Deben Estuary area:**	ESC Planning			Whilst recognising that there may well be significant housing development fairly close to the Deben Estuary area to meet national targets
6/18	**A presumption against any significant increase in the provision of tourist-related accommodation in the immediate Deben Estuary area:**	ESC Planning			This in relation to second homes, Airbnb, other holiday lets, caravan and camping sites. Whilst recognising that the promotion of Suffolk in general & East Suffolk in particular as a tourist destination, by virtue of the associated local attractions, will lead to greater visitor numbers overall
6/19	**Support a public education programme to highlight the unique qualities of the Deben Estuary area and to encourage community engagement:**	**DEP**; RtD ESC (East Suffolk Means Business) Wildlife Wise			E.G. regarding water-borne and land-based nature and wildlife, and why it needs to be valued and protected for the present and the future
6/20	**During the transition period to Unitary Councils, thought should be given as to how best to ensure that the management of the Deben estuary,**	**SCC; ESC;** DEP			

	especially in relation to recreation and leisure, is fully addressed:				

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	7. Landscape & Heritage				
7/1	**Promote recognition that the landscape of the Deben Estuary has changed over the centuries and continues to change to reflect society and what people need, want and value:**	**DEP;** ESC; NT; SWT			Particular reference to landscape policy for uses other than agriculture such as recreation habitat and eco-tourism
7/2	**Promote recognition of importance of heritage in shaping how the estuary has changed, and continues to change and why people (residents and visitors) come to the area:**	**DEP;** ESC; WTC; WRT; Woodbridge Historic Riverside Group			Fundamental shift towards leisure and recreation

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	8. Environment, Biodiversity & Geodiversity				
8/1	**Seagrass: Encourage and deliver projects to restore and regenerate (planting) eel grass where feasible**	**EA;** NE; DEP; RtD;			
8/2	**Saltmarsh: Solicit better future saltmarsh focussed partnerships at all levels**	**DEP;** EA; MMO; RDA; Landowners; Crown Estate			
8/3	**Saltmarsh: Keep updated on saltmarsh research and support a comprehensive study of the evolution and decline of saltmarsh in the Deben Estuary with institutional and academic partners:**	**DEP;** RtD; Community Academic Support eg Essex Univ.			

8/4	**Saltmarsh: Encourage and deliver projects to conserve, restore and regenerate saltmarsh where feasible:**	**DEP;** RtD; MMO; RSPB; Community Action			
8/5	**Saltmarsh: Advocate beneficial re-use of dredged silt (BUDS) as recharge for degraded saltmarsh sites - where practicable and appropriate:**	**DEP;** MMO/EA; Crown Estate; Boatyards			Good example is Harwich Copperas Bay project compensatory habitat)
8/7	**Conserve the landscape, natural environment, and heritage in the Deben Estuary, and take opportunities to enhance them:**	**SECHNL;** ESC; SCC; DEP			Ensure that any projects coming forward seek to align with the objectives and policies of the Suffolk & Essex Coasts & Heaths National Landscape Management Plan 2023-2028
8/8	**Ensure that all landowning stakeholders in the estuary are aware of the potential of national funding for environmental improvement initiative:**	**ESFWAG;** SWT; DCC-4RP; RtD; ESCP			
8/9	**Support working with local, national and international initiatives:**	**DEP;** SCC; RSPB			E.G. - SCC Local Nature Recovery Strategy - UNESCO East Atlantic Flyway nomination for inclusion of the East Anglian coastal wetlands to promote the continuity of habitats
8/10	**Promote the good management/enhancement of features, which provide wildlife habitats and refuge**:	**DEP;** SECHNL; NE; RSPB; SWT; Landowners			E.G. Maintenance and creation of hedgerows; freshwater marsh
8/11	**Encourage the safeguarding of sites of geological, ecological, and environmental importance and support other areas managed in the interests of wildlife or set aside as wildlife reserves:**	**DEP;** SECHNL; NE; RSPB; SWT			
8/12	**Encourage the safeguarding and sustain the long-term future of designated sites:**	**DEP;** NE; RtD; Landowners			Specifically, improving sites that are in unfavourable condition
8/13	**Encourage the safeguarding of all freshwater wetland from pollution, disturbance:**	**DEP;** SECHNL; NE; RSPB; SWT; RtD; DCC-4RP; Wildlife Wise; Landowners			

8/14	**Encourage conservation of the tranquillity of the river by seeking the appropriate control of excess light and noise from developments in the plan area:**	**DEP;** RDA; ESC Planning; Parish Councils			
8/15	**Support appropriate management of sites outside the SSSI designation:**	**DEP;** SECHNL; NE; RSPB; SWT; RtD; SFWAG			E.G Through agri-environment grants or other mechanisms:
8/17 (see also 3/9)	**Seek environmental net gain when work is undertaken on flood defences and development planned close to the estuary:**	**EA** ESC Landowners			
8/18	**Monitor habitats and species within the estuary for evidence of climate change and identify options for structured recording and storing of data:**	**DEP; CPN; RSPB; Greener Waldringfield; NL;** NE; EA; SWT; RDA; DCC-4RP; RtD			Currently stored by Greener Waldringfield, SWT E.G. • coastal squeeze • deterioration of water quality • integrity of the intertidal zone
8/19	**Counter the threat of alien and Invasive Species:**	**NE;** RtD; ESCP			
8/20	**Continue to support the work of local environmental groups:**	**DEP**			Deben Marine Centre DCC 4-Rivers RtD Greener Waldringfield Save the Deben Transition Woodbridge

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	9. Land Use and Agriculture				
9/1 See also 4/14	**Support coordinated effort to address if not eliminate increased concentration of nutrients:**	**SFWAG;** Landowners; AWS; RtD; DCC-WQ			E/G. phosphates/nitrates in the system causing water quality issues, e.g. algal blooms and freshwater duckweed

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	10. Broader Constituencies & Community Engagement				
10/1	**Continue to support and encourage community engagement:**	**All DEP Partners**			E.G. through projects such as Deben Soundings and the Deben Marine Centre
10/2	**Involve more people (Citizen Science, of all ages and backgrounds) in gathering information and learning more about their local environment:**	**All DEP Partners**			Outreach programmes for schools
10/3	**Look for opportunities to create events where people can share their local knowledge, memories and experiences:**	**All DEP Partners**			
10/4	**Explore ways of capturing the value placed on the estuary by the visiting public (stakeholders without franchise) and consider wider communities of interest beyond the resident stake holder community:**	**NT; SWT; Wildlife Wise**; DEP			Reference Marine Pioneer Visitor records for NT; SWT. Wildlife Wise monitoring

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	11. Estuary Economics & Natural Capital				
11/1	**Recognise that the environment has an economic 'value:'**	**All DEP Partners**			I.E. Environment should be considered alongside more traditional financial

					metrics when making decisions that may reduce (or increase!) Natural Capital and biodiversity:
11/2	**Continue to support and encourage projects that treat 'waste' materials in one context as valuable inputs to other projects:**	**All DEP Partners**			Examples include: creation of borrow dykes when building new flood walls; reuse of dredged materials; reuse, repurposing, and recycling materials.

Abbreviations/Actioned

Acronym	Actioned Party
All DEP Partners	All DEP Partners All Deben Estuary Partners
AWS	AWS Anglian Water Services
Crown Estates	Crown Estates Crown Estates
CPN	CPN Coastal Partnerships Network
Deben Bluetits	Deben Bluetits Deben Bluetits
Deben Paddlers	Deben Paddlers River Deben Paddlers
DEP	DEP Deben Estuary Partnership
DCC - Water Quality	Deben Climate Centre - Water Quality
DCC	DCC Deben Climate Centre
DCC 4 - Rivers Project	DCC 4-Rivers Project: Deben Climate Centre Four Rivers Restoration Project
EA	EA Environment Agency
ESC (East Suffolk Means Business)	ESC (East Suffolk Means Business) ESC (East Suffolk Means Business)
ESC (Planning)	ESC Planning
ESCP	ESCP East Suffolk Catchment Partnership
ESRT	ESRT Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust
Essex University	Essex University Essex University

ESWMB	ESWMB East Suffolk Water Management Board
ESFWAG	ESFWAG East Suffolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
HHA	HHA Harwich Haven Authority
Fairways Committees: -	Fairways Committees: Kyson
	Fairways Committees: Waldringfield
	Fairways Committees: Ramsholt
	Fairways Committees: Felixstowe Ferry
Landowners: -	Landowner - Agric: Bawdsey (Adeane) Estates-
	Landowner - Business: PGL
	Landowner - Nature: National Trust
MMO	MMO Marine Management Organisation
NE	NE Natural England
NE-CSF	NE-CSF Natural England – Catchment Sensitive Farming division
NT	NT National Trust
Parish Councils: -	Parish Councils: East Bank Rep
	Parish Councils: West Bank Rep
Robertsons	Robertsons' Boatyard
RSPB	RSPB Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RtD	RtD Recovering the Deben
Save the Deben	Save the Deben
SECHNL	Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape
SCC	SCC Suffolk County Council
SCC PRoW	SCC PRoW Suffolk County Council: Pubic Rights of Way
Suffolk Police (RWHP)	Suffolk Police (RWHP) Suffolk Police (Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Policing)
SWS	SWS Sustainable Water Solutions Ltd
SWT	SWT Suffolk Wildlife Trust
UDFC	UDFC Upper Deben Farm Cluster

UEA	UEA University of East Anglia
Waldringfield Parish Council	Waldringfield Parish Council Waldringfield Parish Council
Wildlife Wise	Wildlife Wise Wildlife Wise, partnership project (East Suffolk, Babergh, Mid-Suffolk, Ipswich Borough council)
Woodbridge Historic Riverside Group	Woodbridge Historic Riverside Group
WRE	WRE Water Resources East
WRT	WRT Woodbridge Riverside Trust
WTC	Woodbridge Town Council