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A Landscape Character Assessment for South Hams and West Devon

Draft Report
Prepared by LUC
February 2017

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Client: South Hams District Council | West Devon Borough Council

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1

Introduction

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) will form part of the evidence base for South Hams and West Devon Council's forthcoming *Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan* which covers the South Hams District, West Devon Borough and Plymouth City areas. Please note that this LCA relates to the local planning authority areas for South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council (as shown in **Figure 1.1**), which are distinct from the wider administrative areas which include significant parts of Dartmoor National Park. The areas within Dartmoor National Park which are excluded are covered by a separate LCA for the National Park.
- 1.2 The updated LCA is intended to provide context for policies and proposals within the emerging Joint Local Plan, inform the determination of planning applications, and the management of future change so that it is in sympathy with local variations in landscape character in order to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the rural area within South Hams and West Devon. The management bodies for the nationally designated landscapes of South Devon AONB, the Tamar Valley AONB and Dartmoor National Park are also encouraged to use this work as an evidence base to assist with their work to develop and refine Management Plans, Special Qualities and the settings to these protected landscapes.
- 1.3 This report provides an update to the previous LCAs which were produced by Diacono Associates in 2007-8¹. Some sections of text have therefore been retained from the previous reports where they are still relevant.

Policy context

The European Landscape Convention

- 1.4 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007. It establishes the need to recognise landscape in law; to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes; and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies.
- 1.5 The ELC definition of 'landscape' recognises that all landscapes matter, be they ordinary, degraded or outstanding:
"Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors".
- 1.6 The Convention puts emphasis on the whole landscape and all its values and is forward looking in its approach, recognising the dynamic and changing character of landscape. Specific measures promoted by the Convention, of direct relevance to this study include:
 - the identification and assessment of landscape; and
 - improved consideration of landscape in existing and future sectoral and spatial policy and regulation.
- 1.7 This updated Landscape Character Assessment will continue to make a key contribution to the implementation of the ELC in the South Devon AONB, Tamar Valley AONB and Dartmoor National Park. It helps to reaffirm the importance of landscape, co-ordinate existing work and guide future work to protect, manage and plan these nationally protected landscapes.

¹ South Devon AONB and South Hams District Council Landscape Character Assessment (2007) and West Devon Borough and Tamar

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012

- 1.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), states within its core planning principles that planning should *"take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it"*.
- 1.9 The NPPF calls for valued landscapes to be protected and enhanced (para 109), with the greatest weight being given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) (para 115). An up-to-date Landscape Character Assessment is also recommended in the NPPF to support planning decisions by local planning authorities.

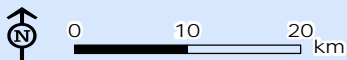
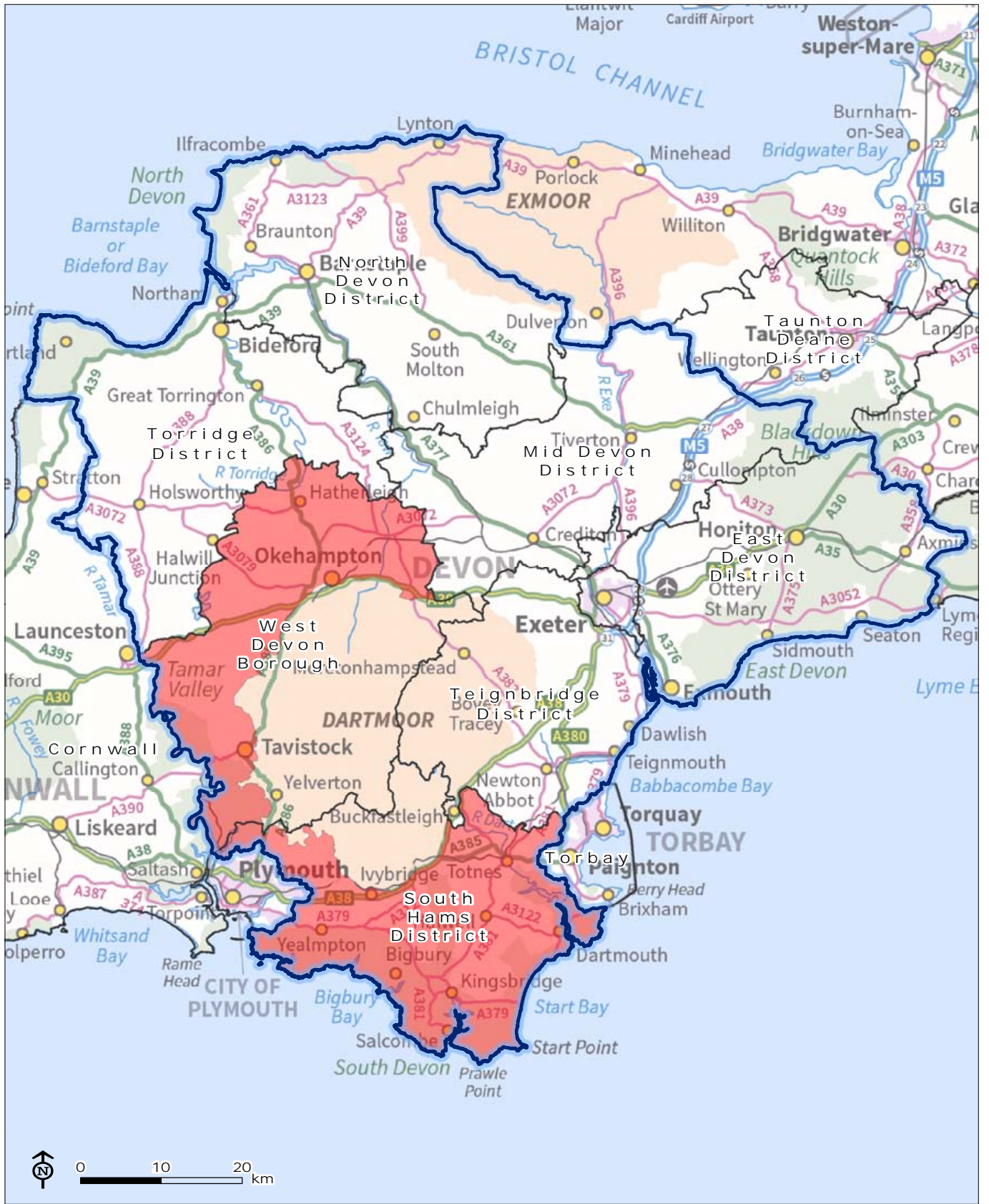
Local

South Hams and West Devon Local Plan

- 1.10 Planning is underpinned by the current Development Plan. In South Hams this is comprised of the Core Strategy (2006), an AAP and a number of DPDs including the Development Management and Delivery DPD (2013) and a number of SPDs. In West Devon, this is comprised of the Core Strategy (2011) and the 2005 Local Plan Review (as amended 2011). Of key relevance to this study are core strategic aims as set out in South Hams Core Strategy Policy CS9 and West Devon Core Strategy Policy SO15 :

'...the quality, character, diversity and local distinctiveness of the natural and historic environment will be conserved and enhanced...'

- 1.11 This sits alongside other policies contained within the current Development plan including South Hams DM DPD policies DP1 (High Quality Design) and DP2 (Landscape Character) and West Devon's Strategic Policy 17 (Landscape Character), Strategic Policy 20 (Promoting High Quality Design) and Local Plan Review Policy NE10 (Protection of the wider countryside and other open spaces).
- 1.12 The Joint Local Plan is currently being prepared, with this Landscape Character Assessment forming part of an updated evidence base to underpin the policies and allocations in the new Plan.
- 1.13 This LCA will sit alongside the two AONB Management Plans (South Devon AONB and Tamar Valley AONB) for the period 2014-2019 and will inform future iterations.



- South Hams and West Devon Local Planning Authority Areas
- Devon County boundary

South Hams and West Devon LCA Update

Figure 1.1: Location of South Hams District and West Devon Borough

Source: OS

Map Scale @ A4: 1:670,000



Content of this report

1.14 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2: Method for undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment and Classification** – a summary of the method undertaken to classify the area into Landscape Character Types (LCTs).
- **Chapter 3: South Hams Landscape Character Type Descriptions** – the character descriptions, strategy and landscape guidelines for each LCT found in South Hams
- **Chapter 4: West Devon Landscape Character Type Descriptions** – the character descriptions, strategy and landscape guidelines for each LCT found in West Devon.
- **Appendix 1:** List of references used to inform this study.

1.15 Also accompanying this document is a separate report of the consultation held to inform the study in 2017.

2

**Method for
undertaking the
Landscape
Character
Assessment and
Classification**

2 Method for undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment and Classification

What is the South Hams and West Devon Landscape Character Assessment?

- 2.1 The landscape is the result of the interaction between people and the environment that gives an area a local identity. **Landscape Character is defined as “a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse”²**
- 2.2 Landscape Character Assessment is a tool to identify what makes a place unique, and can serve as a framework for decision making that respects local distinctiveness. It emerged in the 1980s as a process by which to define the character of the landscape - i.e. what makes one area distinct or different from another. It sought to separate the classification and description of the landscape from the evaluation process, the latter being more concerned with what makes one landscape ‘better’ than others. **During recent years, the techniques and methodology have been refined, culminating in the publication of “An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment” (Natural England, October 2014).**
- 2.3 Understanding the character of place and evaluating **an area’s defining characteristics is a key component** in managing growth sustainably and ensuring that the inherent quality of the landscape in South Hams and West Devon can continue to be celebrated, creating places that people can be proud of. Understanding of character can be used to ensure that any change or development does not undermine whatever is valued or characteristic in a particular landscape.
- 2.4 This report can be used to consider landscape character when planning any type of change:
 - to inform work on policy development as part of emerging Development Plans;
 - to inform development management, guiding development and land management that is sympathetic to local character and special qualities;
 - to promote an understanding of how landscapes are changing and how they can be strengthened.

Landscape Character Assessment framework

National

National Character Areas

- 2.5 This assessment sits within the existing national landscape character framework (the National Character Areas published by Natural England³). Existing national character areas are shown on **Figure 2.1 National Character Areas and Devon Character Areas.**

Nationally protected landscapes within or adjacent to South Hams and West Devon

- 2.6 Much of the landscape within South Hams District and West Devon Borough form part of the Dartmoor National Park. The landscape of the Dartmoor National Park does not form part of this assessment and has been subject to its own separate assessment.

² An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment” (Natural England, October 2014)

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>

- 2.7 A total of 37.5% of South Hams District and 7.8% of West Devon Borough form part of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. The extent of nationally protected landscapes within South Hams District and West Devon Borough are shown on **Figure 2.2: South Hams and West Devon nationally protected landscapes**.

Table 2.1: Percentage of protected landscapes within South Hams and West Devon

	Percentage	Area (hectares)
Area of Dartmoor National Park within South Hams administrative area	17.3%	16,538.9 ha
Area of Dartmoor National Park within West Devon administrative area	55.6%	53,092.1 ha
Area of South Devon AONB within South Hams	96.4%	32,762.1 ha
Area of Tamar Valley AONB within West Devon administrative area	46.3%	9,095.5ha
Area of Tamar Valley AONB within South Hams administrative area	6.2%	1,208.9ha

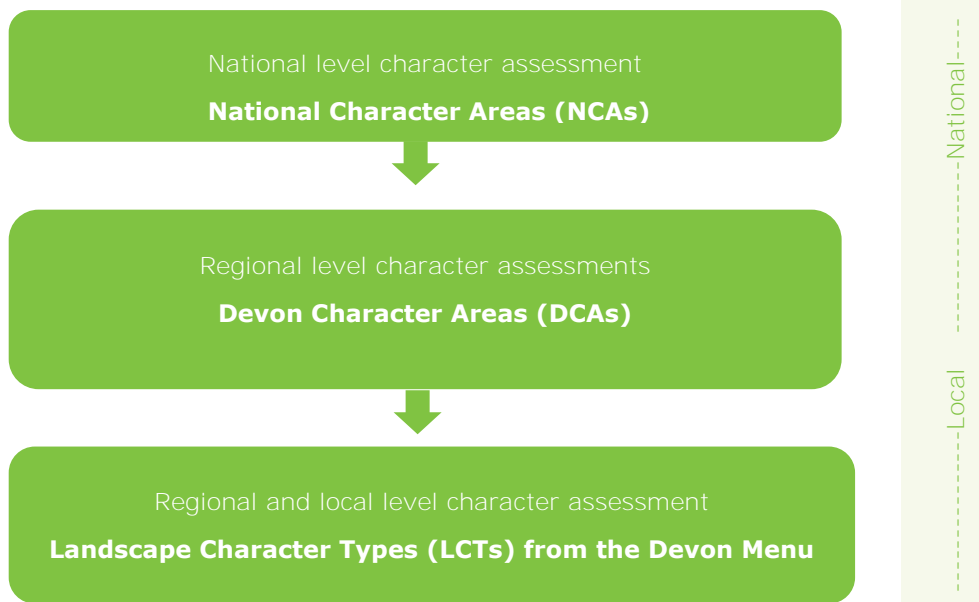
Devon-wide

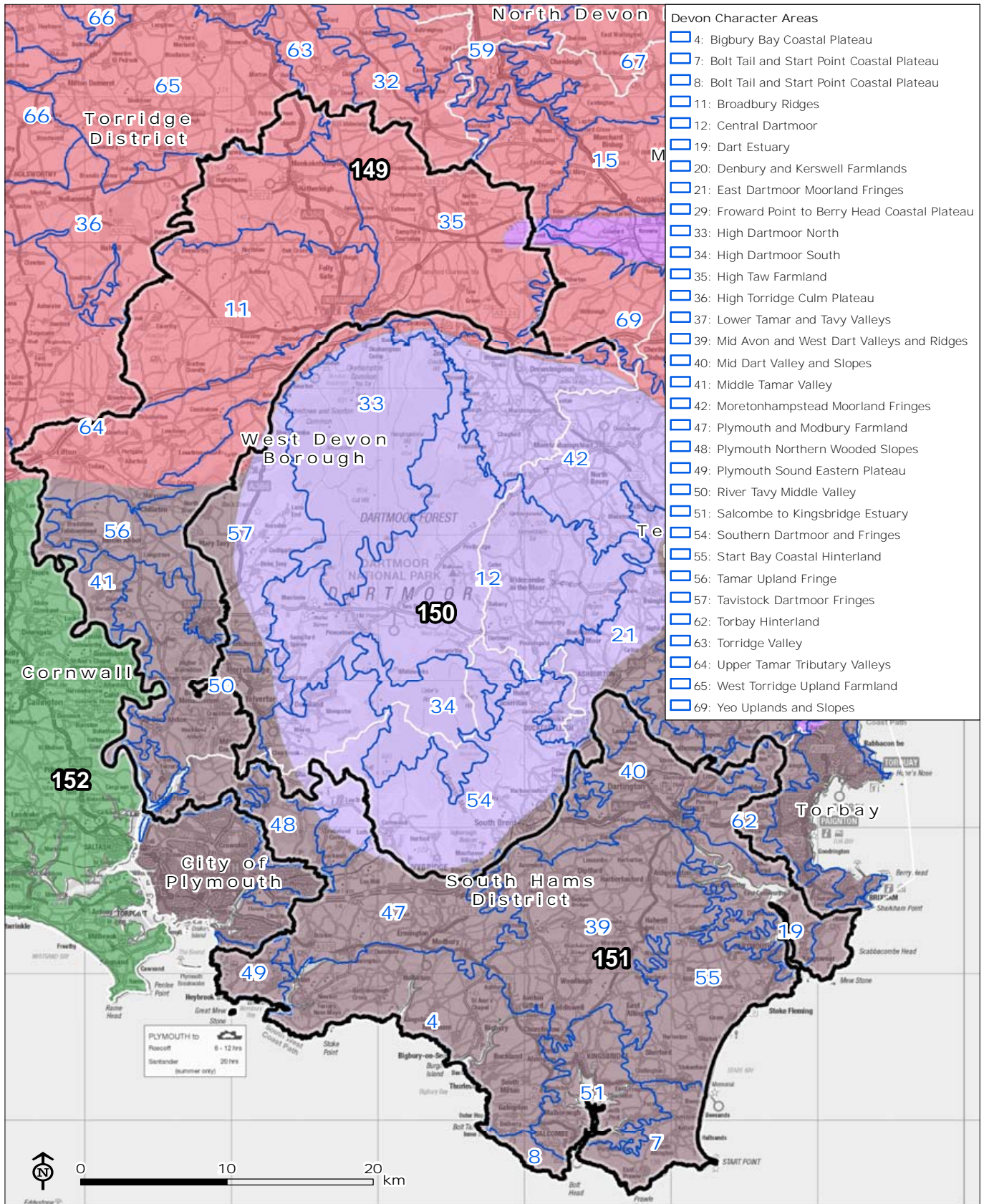
Devon Character Areas; 'Devon Menu' of Landscape Character Types

- 2.8 **Devon's landscape character assessment (DLCA)**⁴ divides the National Character Areas into Devon Character Areas which describe unique, geographically-specific areas of landscape. Each of the Devon Character Areas (DCAs) has its own particular identity as a whole landscape but most Areas comprise a number of different Landscape Character Types. Devon Character Areas are called by a specific place name e.g. '**Southern Dartmoor and Fringes**' or '**Broadbury Ridges**'. However, DCAs have not been used as a landscape character framework within this LCA. Existing Devon Character Areas are shown on **Figure 2.1 National Character Areas and Devon Character Areas**.
- 2.9 The Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the DLCA describe the variations in character between different types of landscape in the county. The Devon Menu of Landscape Character Types covers the county of Devon ensuring a consistent naming and numbering system based on this shared Menu and key characteristics of each of the Landscape Character Types.
- 2.10 The Devon Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are generic landscapes that share similar characteristics but may occur in different parts of Devon allowing different landscapes to be compared. LCTs are called by a descriptive name e.g. '**Wooded ridges and hilltops**'. Some types of landscape occur throughout the County, for example, '**Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes**' while others may occur only once or twice, for example, 'Estate Wooded Farmland which only occurs within West Devon. Landscape does not stop at administrative boundaries but continues seamlessly into surrounding administrative areas. Therefore, an aim of this assessment was to join up with the Landscape Character Assessments of adjacent authorities. The Devon Character Types within South Hams District and West Devon Borough are shown on **Figure 2.3a Landscape Character Type classification of South Hams** and **Figure 2.3b The Landscape Character Type classification of West Devon**.

4

The Devon Landscape Character Assessment Framework





- Devon Character Areas**
- 4: Bigbury Bay Coastal Plateau
 - 7: Bolt Tail and Start Point Coastal Plateau
 - 8: Bolt Tail and Start Point Coastal Plateau
 - 11: Broadbury Ridges
 - 12: Central Dartmoor
 - 19: Dart Estuary
 - 20: Denbury and Kerswell Farmlands
 - 21: East Dartmoor Moorland Fringes
 - 29: Froward Point to Berry Head Coastal Plateau
 - 33: High Dartmoor North
 - 34: High Dartmoor South
 - 35: High Taw Farmland
 - 36: High Torridge Culm Plateau
 - 37: Lower Tamar and Tavy Valleys
 - 39: Mid Avon and West Dart Valleys and Ridges
 - 40: Mid Dart Valley and Slopes
 - 41: Middle Tamar Valley
 - 42: Moretonhampstead Moorland Fringes
 - 47: Plymouth and Modbury Farmland
 - 48: Plymouth Northern Wooded Slopes
 - 49: Plymouth Sound Eastern Plateau
 - 50: River Tavy Middle Valley
 - 51: Salcombe to Kingsbridge Estuary
 - 54: Southern Dartmoor and Fringes
 - 55: Start Bay Coastal Hinterland
 - 56: Tamar Upland Fringe
 - 57: Tavistock Dartmoor Fringes
 - 62: Torbay Hinterland
 - 63: Torridge Valley
 - 64: Upper Tamar Tributary Valleys
 - 65: West Torridge Upland Farmland
 - 69: Yeo Uplands and Slopes

Study area

National Character Areas

- 148: Devon Redlands
- 149: The Culm
- 150: Dartmoor
- 151: South Devon
- 152: Cornish Killas

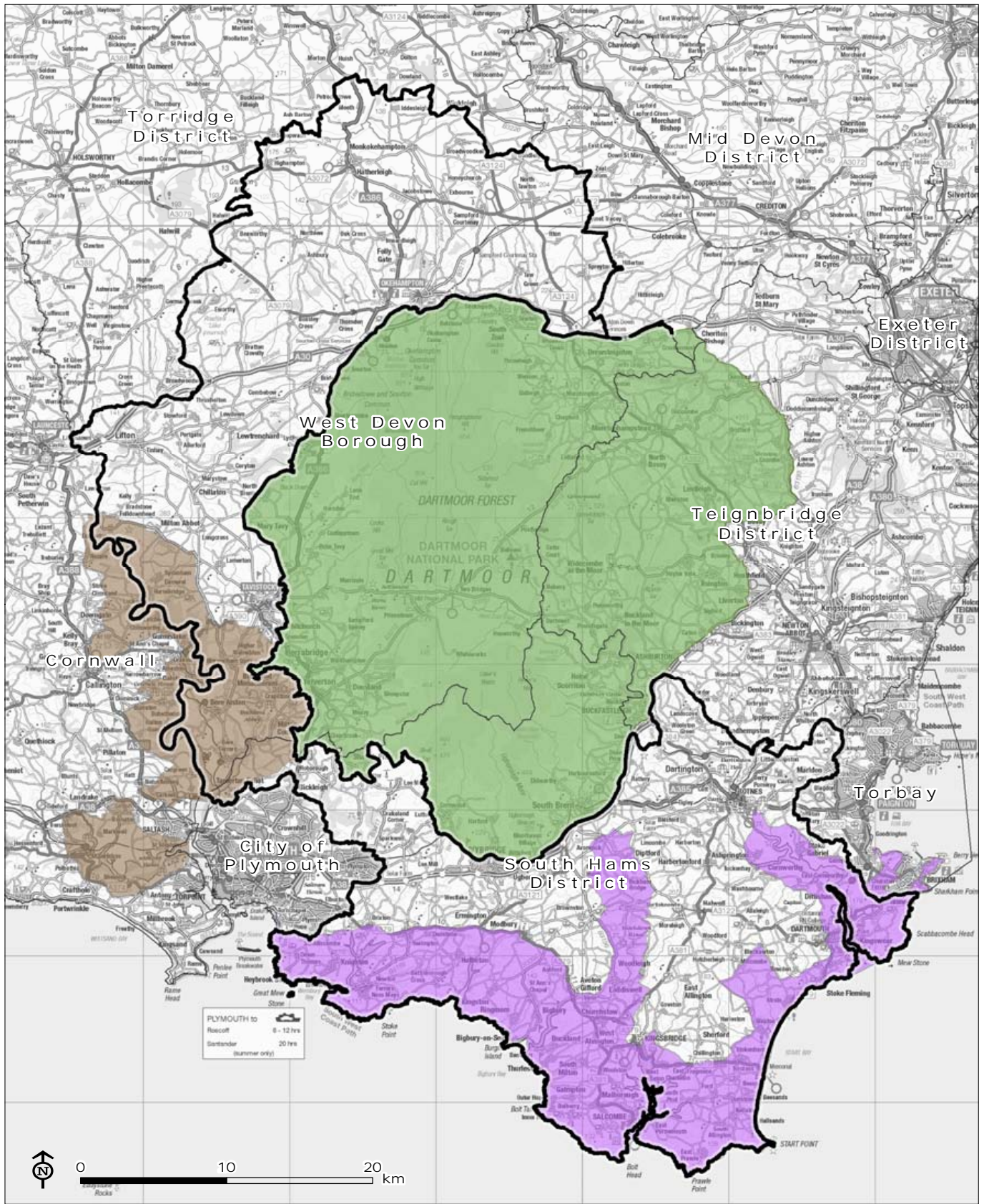
Source: OS, Devon County Council, Natural England

Map Scale @ A4: 1:370,000

South Hams and West Devon LCA Update

Figure 2.1: National Character Areas and Devon Character Areas





South Hams and West Devon LCA Update

Figure 2.2: South Hams and West Devon Nationally Protected Landscapes



Source: OS, Natural England

Map Scale @ A4: 1:370,000

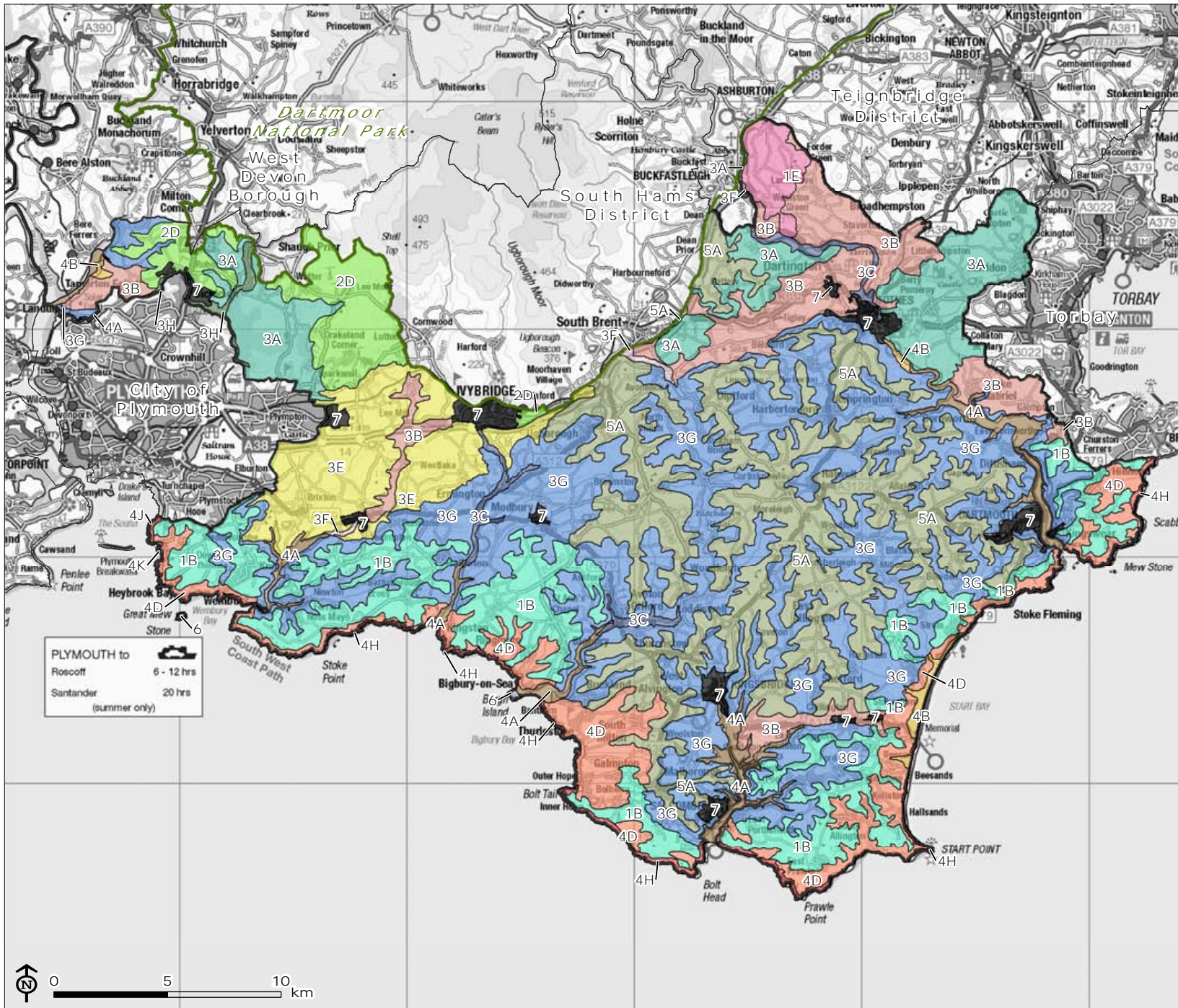
South Hams and West Devon LCA Update

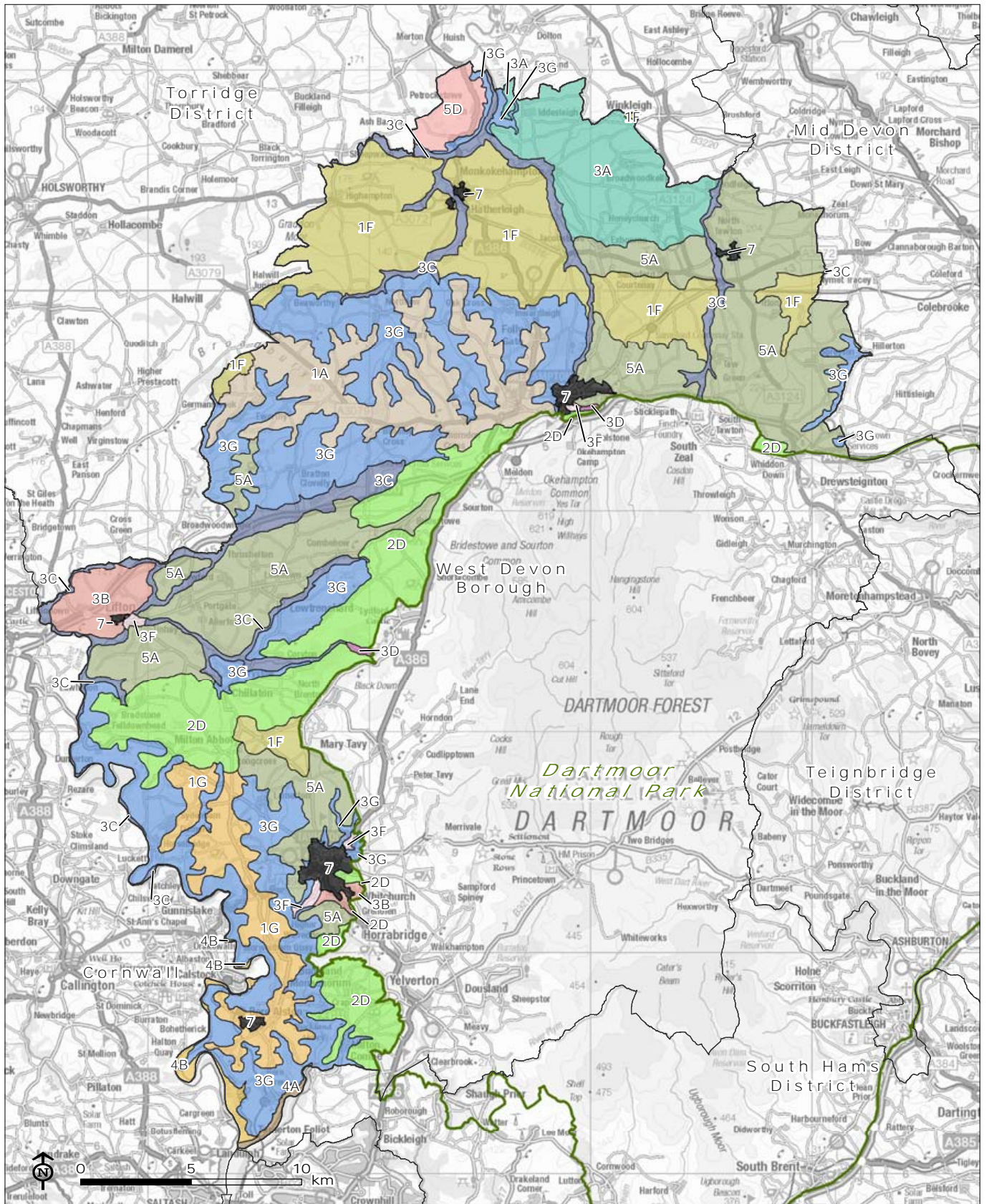
Figure 2.3a: The Landscape Character Type Classification of South Hams

- 1B. Open coastal plateaux
- 1E. Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 2D. Moorland edge slopes
- 3A. Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B. Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C. Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E. Lowland plains
- 3F. Settled valley floors
- 3G. River valley slopes and combes
- 3H. Secluded valleys
- 4A. Estuaries
- 4B. Marine levels and coastal plains
- 4D. Coastal slopes and combes
- 4H. Cliffs
- 4J. Harbours, ports and marinas
- 4K. Outer harbour/Port approaches
- 5A. Inland elevated undulating land
- 6. Offshore islands
- 7: Main towns/villages

Source: OS, West Devon Borough Council, South Hams District Council

Map Scale: 1:240,000 @ A4





- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1A. Open inland planned plateaux | 3F. Settled valley floors |
| 1F. Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland | 3G. River valley slopes and combes |
| 1G. Open inland plateaux | 4A. Estuaries |
| 2D. Moorland edge slopes | 4B. Marine levels and coastal plains |
| 3A. Upper farmed & wooded valley slopes | 5A. Inland elevated undulating land |
| 3B. Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes | 5D. Estate wooded farmland |
| 3C. Sparsely settled farmed valley floors | 7. Main towns/villages |
| 3D. Upland river valleys | |

South Hams and West Devon LCA Update

Figure 2.3: The Landscape Character Type Classification of West Devon

Map Scale @ A4: 1:245,000



Source: OS, West Devon Borough Council, South Hams District Council
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Approach to the 2016 update

- 2.11 The method for undertaking this Landscape Character Assessment follows the method promoted by Natural England through 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014)⁵ which embeds the principles of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) within it. This 2014 guidance updates the previous 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland', published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage in 2002, though the methodology is broadly the same as the previous guidance.
- 2.12 The 2014 guidance lists the five key principles for landscape character assessment as follows:
- Landscape is everywhere and all landscape has character;
 - Landscape occurs at all scales and the process of Landscape Character Assessment can be undertaken at any scale;
 - The process of Landscape Character Assessment should involve an understanding of how the landscape is perceived and experienced by people;
 - A Landscape Character Assessment can provide a landscape evidence base to inform a range of decisions and applications;
 - A Landscape Character Assessment can provide an integrating spatial framework- a multitude of variables come together to give us our distinctive landscapes.
- 2.13 **The assessment has been prepared within the framework set by Natural England's Natural Character Areas, and aims to join up with surrounding authorities' LCAs. It draws on the previous South Hams District Council Landscape Character Assessment (2007) (which included areas within the South Devon AONB) and the West Devon Borough and Tamar Valley AONB Landscape Assessment (2008), and information from unpublished updates to those assessment where this remains relevant.**
- 2.14 The process for undertaking the study involved four main stages, described below, namely:
- Desk study and classification;
 - Field survey;
 - Description;
 - Evaluation.
- 2.15 GIS was used throughout the study as the tool for collating, manipulating and presenting data.

Process of Assessment

Desk study and classification

- 2.16 **This stage involved the collation of a wide range of mapped information to 'sense-check' the existing landscape classification.**
- 2.17 Data used within the report, including data collated in the GIS database, is shown in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.2

Name	Source
Base OS mapping at 1:50K and 1:25K	Ordnance Survey

⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396192/landscape-character-assessment.pdf

Name	Source
Nationally protected landscape designations	Natural England
Terrain 50 Contour data	Ordnance Survey
Solid & drift geology 625k	British Geological Survey
Nature conservation designations	Natural England (national datasets) and South Hams District Council & West Devon Borough Council (local datasets)
Historic Landscape Character Types (Devon HLC)	Devon County Council
Heritage designations	Historic England (national datasets) and South Hams District Council & West Devon Borough Council (local datasets)
Tranquil Areas and Intrusion mapping	CPRE
Dark skies	CPRE

Field Survey

2.18 A field survey was undertaken to verify the classification. This specifically focussed on information that is less easily gathered from desk work alone:

- verifying and fine-tuning the classification of the landscape types identified;
- verifying information on landscape character and key characteristics and noting local variations in character;
- gathering information on perceptual qualities and views;
- identifying valued attributes;
- assessing landscape condition i.e. the physical state of the landscape and its intactness; and
- assessing forces for change.

Description

2.19 For each **landscape character type** a map and two representative photos are provided and landscape character is described in terms of:

- Summary of location and landscape character (taken from the existing LCAs but with any inconsistencies corrected)
- Key characteristics (taken from the existing LCA and but with any inconsistencies with the 'Devon Menu' corrected and expanded where necessary to paint a picture of the area);

Evaluation

2.20 The "Approach to Landscape Character Assessment" document does not provide guidance on what should form part of an evaluation. Therefore we have proposed something that we feel will be useful for a number of different future applications. The evaluation covers:

- **valued attributes** i.e. the features and characteristics that are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide (i.e. those things that if lost would change the character to the detriment of the landscape) This section notes when the LCT is located within an AONB and includes any relevant attributes contained within the AONB Management Plan.;

- **landscape condition** i.e. the current physical state of the landscape and its intactness, as well as the presence of any detractors;
- **forces for change** i.e. current or future drivers for landscape change including a combination of some or all of the following; climate change, natural processes, social and cultural trends, continued development pressure, economic and market trends, changing values and policy changes.
- **landscape strategy and guidance** i.e. landscape guidelines to protect, manage and plan for the landscape.

Consultation

- 2.21 A workshop was held in 2017 to present the work being undertaken and to gather views on what is valued in the landscape and pressures affecting the condition of the landscape. A follow up email was sent to all invitees to invite further information on values and key issues impacting on condition (and provide the opportunity for those who could not attend the workshop to contribute information). It is acknowledged that gaining a comprehensive picture of what residents value about their landscape could be a project within itself, but the purpose of this consultation was to **back up the consultants’ professional judgement about what is of value and why**. The list of contributors is provided at **Appendix 2** and comments made are included in **Appendix 3**.

Classification of Landscape Character Types

- 2.22 Classification is concerned with dividing the landscape into areas of distinct, recognisable and consistent common character and grouping areas of similar character together.
- 2.23 A total of 23 landscape character types have been identified as listed in **Table 2.2** below (plus LCT 7 main towns and villages which were not assessed), with 18 LCTs in South Hams and 14 in West Devon with considerable cross-over of types between the two authorities. The classification is shown in **Figure 2.3a** for South Hams and **Figure 2.3b** for West Devon.
- 2.24 This classification is based on the previous classification but boundaries have also been adjusted to follow more suitable features. These changes are listed as a table in Appendix 1.
- 2.25 The precision of boundaries drawn around landscape character areas and types varies with the scale and level of detail of the assessment. This assessment has been mapped at a scale of 1:25,000 which means that it is suitable for use at this scale. The scale of this classification will need to be taken into account whenever the assessment is used to ensure that the level of detail is compatible with the intended application.
- 2.26 In reality landscape character does not change abruptly at the boundaries. Boundaries therefore often represent transitions rather than marked changes on the ground.

Table 2.3: LCT classification and occurrence within South Hams and West Devon

LCT number	LCT name	South Hams	West Devon
1A	Open inland planned plateaux		x
1B	Open coastal plateaux	x	
1E	Wooded ridges and hilltops	x	
1F	Farmed lowland moorland and Clum grassland		x
1G	Open inland plateaux		x
2D	Moorland edge slope	x	x
3A	Upper farmed & wooded valley slopes	x	x
3B	Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes	x	x
3C	Sparsely settled farmed valley floors	x	x

LCT number	LCT name	South Hams	West Devon
3D	Upland river valleys		x
3E	Lowland plains	x	
3F	Settled valley floors	x	x
3G	River valley slopes and combes	x	x
3H	Secluded valleys	x	
4A	Estuaries	x	x
4B	Marine levels and coastal plains	x	x
4D	Coastal slopes and combes	x	
4H	Cliffs	x	
4J	Harbours, ports and marinas	x	
4K	Outer harbours/Port approaches	x	
5A	Inland elevated undulating land	x	x
5D	Estate wooded farmland		x
6	Offshore islands	x	

3

The Landscape Character of South Hams

3 The landscape character of South Hams

South Hams Landscape Character Type descriptions

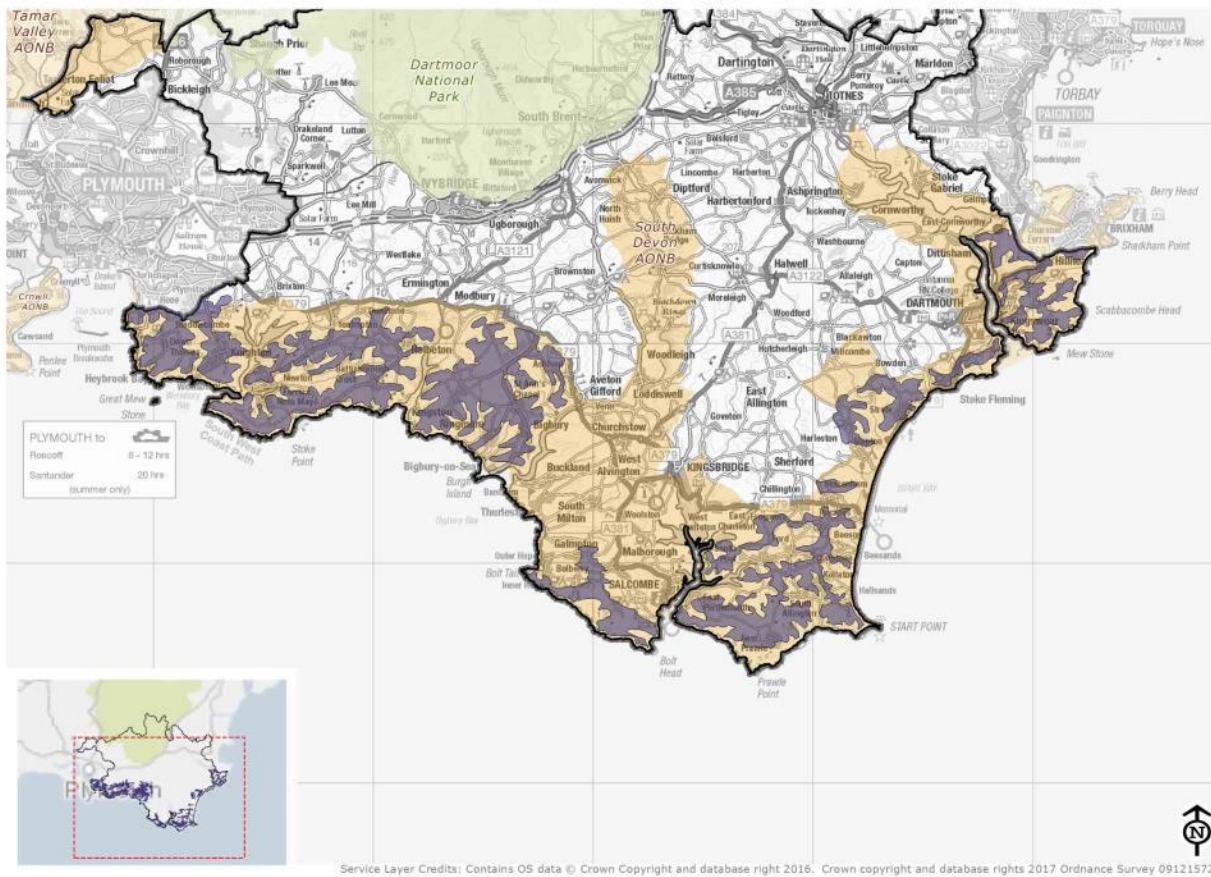
- 3.1 This section contains the landscape character type profiles including descriptive and evaluative information for South Hams.

Table 3.1: Contents of the South Hams LCT descriptions

Landscape Character Type	Page number
LCT 1B: Open coastal plateaux	21
LCT 1E: Wooded ridges and hilltops	27
LCT 2D: Moorland edge slopes	32
LCT 3A: Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes	39
LCT 3B: Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes	44
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LCT 6: Offshore islands	99

LCT 1B: Open coastal plateaux

1B. Open coastal plateaux



Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

Along the English Channel coast intermittently between Plymouth and Brixham, interrupted by combes and river valleys (LCTs 4D and 3G) and extending up to 4 kilometres inland.

High, open, gently undulating or rolling plateaux, dissected by deep combes and with notable coastal influence on windblown vegetation. Land use is mixed farmland, with arable dominant, and some localised recreational use. Sparsely settled with limited narrow roads, although many rights of way including the South West Coast Path. Extensive views of the sea.

Landscape and seascape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- High, open plateaux (often rising to 110 metres AOD) close to the south and east coast of South Hams which are dissected by combes and river valleys.
- The underlying geology of schists and Dartmouth slates give a dark colour to soils.

Woodland cover

- Limited woodland, particularly on higher ground immediately adjacent to the coast. Trees in field boundaries may be windswept due to the exposed conditions. Occasional blocks of mixed woodland occur further inland.

Land use and field patterns

- Mixed land use, with frequent arable cropping creating a variety of colours and textures within the landscape.
- Regular medium to large field pattern, with stone boundary walls and dense low hedges (often elm) with occasional hedgerow oaks. Characteristic stone walls are present as field boundaries on land adjacent to the coast.
- Recreational land uses including golf courses at Staddon Heights and Bigbury which are locally prominent.

Semi-natural habitats

- Pockets of semi-natural grassland and scrub are a valued habitat for birds and invertebrates with some areas local designated as County Wildlife Sites.
- Windblown vegetation is found on higher elevations, including gorse and blackthorn.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Rich in heritage features, with evidence of defences from various eras of history located along the coast.
- Estate character in places adjacent to historic parks and gardens including Greenway (Grade II Registered Park and Garden), Langdon (Grade II Registered Park and Garden) and Coleton Fishacre (Grade II* Registered Park and Garden).

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- The settlement pattern is sparse, with isolated farms or large houses and several villages, often distinguished by their uniform appearance, and a few scattered small coastal resorts.
- Roads are sparse and generally comprise narrow rural lanes. There are many rights of way including parts of the South West Coast Path along the coastal edge which can result in roads and car parks becoming busy.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Long, panoramic views are experienced out to sea due to typical elevations of around 100m giving a horizon of approximately 25km offshore and contributing to a sense of expansiveness. Onshore views of this character type are dominated by its skyline structures of daymarks, radio masts, signal stations and water towers. There are also long views inland to the uplands of Dartmoor.
- Expansive seascapes under big skies with high levels of intervisibility to and from the sea. Changing sea moods and associated skies form a backdrop to seaward views, particularly shafts of sunlight from cloudy skies creating bright light patches on an otherwise dark sea surface.
- **At night, moonlight reflections off the sea's surface have a dramatic effect and navigation/deck lights**

from shipping highlight night time marine activity

- From rights of way along the coastal edge of this type there are extensive views of the adjoining dramatic cliff landscapes.
- Most of the LCT is contained within the South Devon AONB, contributing to special qualities including *'iconic wide, unspoilt and expansive panoramic views.'*
- The variety and complexity of coastal features and the dynamic nature of the coast provide experiential, historic and natural interest reflected in the Heritage Coast designation.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- A regular pattern of large arable fields and wind-blown vegetation creating a variety of colours and textures bounded by
- hedges and characteristic stone walls.
- Rich in historic coastal defences, notably around Plymouth Sound and the Dart Estuary and parkland estates such as Langdon, Greenway and Coleton Fishacre.
- Scattered villages, hamlets and farmsteads linked by a network of narrow lanes, resulting in a tranquil and un-hurried landscape.
- The iconic unspoilt and expansive panoramic views of the sea and the adjoining dramatic cliffs, from the undulating coastal plateau.
- Expansive seascapes under big skies influenced by the changing sea moods and skies
- The seemingly remote, windswept character of the high open plateau, sparsely settled with high levels of tranquillity and in places, where the undulating topography limits light pollution from nearby major conurbations, dark night skies can be experienced.

Summary of landscape condition

The structure of the high open plateau landscape with its expansive sea views and lack of built development is largely intact. However, post-war agricultural intensification has resulted in a loss of field boundaries with a resultant decline in wildlife species and habitat diversity. Until recently, field boundaries were in declining condition, with hedges and stone walls replaced by post and wire fences, particularly around pasture fields. The character of the landscape has been weakened by non-vernacular buildings, including modern agricultural barns prominent on the skyline and a few derelict buildings. High levels of recreational use have historically impacted the condition of the landscape, with an increase in car parking, camping and caravan sites. Non-traditional land uses, such as the golf courses at Staddon Heights and Bigbury are locally prominent. Recent development around adjacent settlements, particularly Brixham and Hillhead are highly visible and intrusive. The communications masts at Start Point are particularly intrusive to the open skylines of the AONB.

Forces for change

- Potential agricultural intensification (pastoral to arable or intensive monoculture), which may lead to a loss of traditional field boundaries, gate widening to accommodate larger farm machinery, loss of characterful stone quoins and wooden gates and a change to the existing landscape pattern as well as a gradual decline in wildlife species and their habitats. There may also be the introduction of very large modern farm buildings on plateau tops.
- Continuing decline in traditional rural skills such as hedge-laying casting up and maintaining stone faced banking resulting in under management of hedges and verges in some areas with regular tight flailing and the loss of both soil and stone facings.
- Climate change may lead to the deterioration of semi natural habitats, including the nationally important grassland in the area through the spread of invasive and woody species due to higher temperatures
- An increase in traffic levels on rural roads and pressure to widen roads which can result in the degradation of roadside hedge banks and verges the loss of hedgerow trees through direct vehicle damage and the wearing of passing places eroding rural character.
- Continuing pressure for development which could result in expansion of settlements (particularly major settlements adjacent to this LCT - Plymouth and Dartmouth, onto the plateau edge where they could be highly visible from this elevated landscape..
- Pressure for the development of renewable energy infrastructure such as wind turbines and solar farms, and communications masts which could be intrusive on prominent skylines.
- Recreational pressure related to the use of the plateau for car parking and accessing the coastal path. Potential for recreational development (e.g. camp sites and caravan parks and conversion of traditional farm buildings, particularly barns to accommodation) affecting the rural character and sense of tranquillity.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

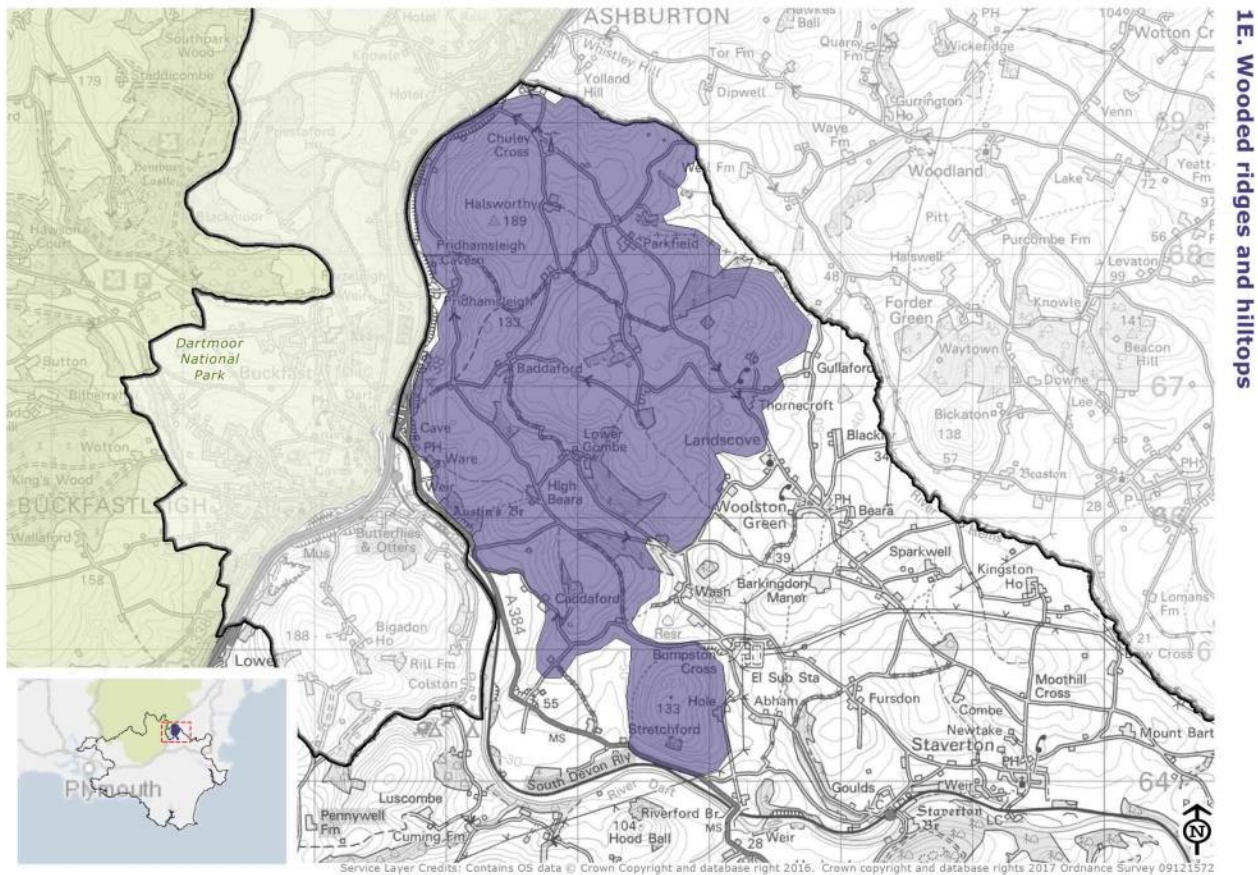
Overall Landscape Strategy

To protect the open, undeveloped character of the coastal plateaux with expansive sea views and high levels of tranquillity. Distinctive woodlands in sheltered coastal combs are managed (including for wood fuel) and coastal habitats are traditionally grazed. The ever-changing coastline is strengthened and prepared for the future effects of climate change.

Landscape Guidelines

- **Manage and protect the landscape's network of hedgerows** and characteristic dwarf hedgerow trees, replanting ageing or diseased specimens (with climate hardy species) to ensure the future survival of these characteristic features.
- Manage nationally important **coastal habitats**, including coastal heath and maritime grasslands, through supporting a continuation of extensive grazing at appropriate levels. Re-link sites where feasible and provide a buffer between cliffs and improved grassland.
- Plan for the impacts of a **changing climate on the coastline**, allowing natural processes to take place whilst considering how habitats and the South West Coast Path can be expanded or relocated taking account of coastal squeeze.
- Protect and appropriately manage the landscape's **archaeological heritage**, particularly features associated with defence and sea trade.
- Protect the **historic settlement pattern** by encouraging the sensitive location of new farm buildings away from open skylines, ensuring that any new development incorporates local vernacular building styles of whitewash, local stone and thatch wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).
- Plan for the **growth of major settlements** adjacent to this landscape type (Plymouth and Dartmouth), aiming to accommodate new development sensitively within the landscape through appropriate siting, planting and green infrastructure provision.
- **Manage the landscape's popularity for recreation**, encouraging the use of existing facilities and South West Coast Path whilst providing sustainable transport options to reduce levels of traffic accessing this area.
- Protect the **landscape's open vistas and horizontal emphasis**, avoiding the location of new development and vertical structures on prominent skylines. Ensure that historical vertical structures such as medieval church towers, lighthouses and daymarks remain as prominent local landmarks (e.g. by avoiding siting other vertical structures on the same skyline).
- Protect the character of the landscape's **expansive sea views**.
- **Protect the landscape's high levels of tranquillity and wild character** through the retention of dark night skies, control and management of development (including highways) and retention of green lanes and tracks ensuring significant parts of the coast remain relatively inaccessible by vehicle.

LCT 1E: Wooded Ridges and Hilltops



Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

A small area located in the north of the district, east of the River Dart at Buckfastleigh which extends north east along the A38 beyond the district boundary to the River Lemon in Teinbridge.

A remote and visually distinct area of small rounded hills with a mix of woodland and farmland.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Small hills with distinctive rounded shapes (rising to c.190m) stand out from the lower valley slopes to the south. The hills are separated by narrow valleys with small tributary streams rising from springs on higher ground.
- Underlain by Devonian mudstone and sandstone geology, creating a gentler topography than the adjacent basalt of Dartmoor. There are cave passages in the limestone outcrops at Pridhamleigh.

Woodland cover

- Small deciduous woodland copses on the brows of the hills are a feature of the landscape and coniferous plantations cloak the lower valley sides.

Land use and field patterns

- A mix of land uses with cattle and sheep-grazed pasture and larger arable fields particularly in the north of the LCT.
- Horticultural glasshouses have been built around some farmsteads; elsewhere small traditional orchards have been retained.
- Medium to large-scale field pattern of modern fields with sinuous boundaries that suggest they have been created out of medieval enclosures. To the north west of Baddaford there is an area of large, regular enclosures laid out between C15th-C18th known locally as '**Barton fields**'.
- Field boundaries are generally species-rich tall hedgebanks with rows of mature hedgerow trees, commonly oak and ash.

Semi-natural habitats

- The frequent mixed deciduous woodland provides a valued habitat.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Historic mining activity is evident along the valleys with quarries associated with the medieval slate industry.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- A lightly settled area of isolated farmsteads and houses nestled into the folded landscape or screened by woodland.
- A strong local vernacular of local stone and slate farmhouses and outbuildings with stone walls associated with properties.
- Narrow winding lanes enclosed by high hedgebanks which often traverse at steep angles to the hillsides.
- A network of byways links the farms within the LCT.

Views and perceptual qualities

- There are long-distance views across the hills from the valley sides, with panoramic views from hill summits across to the high moorland on Dartmoor from the north of the LCT.
- The A38 and the A384 road corridor which run along the boundary of the LCT has a local impact on the tranquillity of this seemingly remote landscape.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Characteristic small rounded hills with hilltop tree clumps, providing a locally distinctive feature of the landscape.
- Areas of deciduous woodland, species-rich hedgebanks and hedgerow trees;
- The mosaic of arable and pasture fields with a mixed pattern of field sizes and origins, including medium to large-scale modern fields created out of medieval enclosures and post-medieval Barton fields.
- The local legacy of the soft fruit industry evident in traditional orchards around farms;
- A working rural landscape which forms a green backdrop to surrounding urban areas along the A38 corridor;
- The seemingly remote character, lightly settled with high levels of tranquillity despite the proximity of larger settlements to the north and east;
- Long, expansive views available within this high open landscape, including strong visual links across the hills to Dartmoor.

Summary of landscape condition

- This is a distinctive landscape thanks to the undulating topography of small rounded hills and the mix of land cover overlain by an irregular field pattern and frequent semi-natural woodland and coniferous plantations on the slopes;
- There has been some field boundaries loss due to agricultural intensification and replacement of traditional pasture and orchards with arable and other crop planting;
- Variable management of Devon hedgebanks and hedgerows – with some sections overgrown.
- The area retains its rural and tranquil character although the quality of the LCT along the A38 is affected by the close proximity of 20th century development and increasing traffic.

Forces for change

- Decline in traditional woodland management, leading to a reduction in the species and age diversity **of the landscape's important semi-natural woodland** and replacement with conifer plantations;
- Change in woodland tree species as new pests and diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)). Loss of hilltop tree clumps and along hedgerows would be particularly noticeable in this landscape type;
- On-going decline in traditional skills including traditional hedgerow management resulting in variable management of Devon hedgebanks with associated impacts on landscape;
- Intensification of agriculture, resulting in field enlargement and conversion of pasture to arable and other cropping;
- Loss or lack of management of traditional farm orchards;
- Late 20th century expansion of settlements on the edge of the LCT, particularly Ashburton and Buckfastleigh, visible in views from higher ground within the LCT. Continuing pressure for development on the edge of the LCT around the main settlements along the A38;

- Location of major road corridors on the edge of the LCT and potential for increase in traffic levels on rural road network, particularly those linking to the A38 and A384;
- Growth in tourism and the proximity to popular visitor attractions such as Buckfast Abbey, South Devon steam railway, Buckfast Butterfly Farm and Otter Sanctuary at Buckfastleigh which contributes to an increase in traffic and potential spread of caravan and camping sites along roads eroding the **landscape's high levels of tranquillity**.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

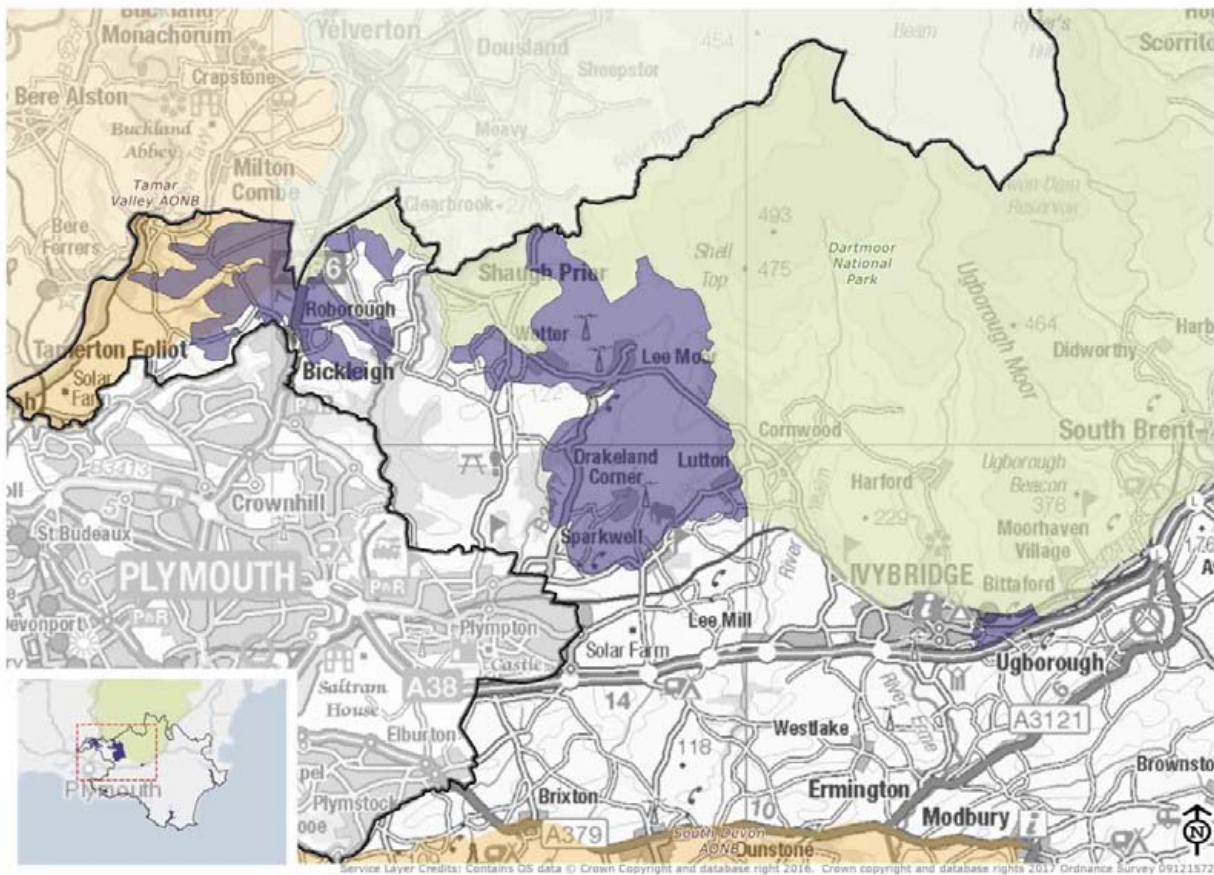
Overall Landscape Strategy

To protect the distinctive character of this seemingly remote landscape, with long views from the hills (particularly towards Dartmoor). Opportunities are sought to restore conifer plantations to broadleaf woodland and other semi-natural habitats, creating a climate-resilient green network. The historic time-depth and working rural character of the landscape is retained through the sensitive management of tracks and narrow lanes and the retention of the dispersed pattern of farmsteads and their vernacular architecture.

Landscape Guidelines

- **Manage the area's conifer plantation** to enhance their wildlife interest and undertaking new planting to create green links to broadleaved woodlands where appropriate. Plan for long-term restoration to open or other semi-natural habitats.
- **Manage the landscape's Devon hedgebanks**, reinstate hedge-laying to neglected sections and strengthening field-patterns.
- Manage and enhance the **wildlife interest of agricultural fields** by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and grass buffer strips and other wildlife-friendly farming methods around intensively farmed fields. These measures will also help reduce diffuse pollution into adjacent water courses and spring lines.
- Protect **important geological exposures** revealed through past quarrying activity (including through keeping vegetation at bay). Quarries should also be protected as valued historic landscape features.
- **Protect the area's settlement pattern of dispersed farmsteads.**
- Protect the **traditional building styles** of exposed local stone and slate. Limited new development should utilise the same materials and building styles wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).
- Protect the network of **quiet rural lanes and tracks**, resisting unsympathetic highways improvements or signage.
- Protect the distinctive character of the landscape with its **long views**, particularly to Dartmoor National Park.

LCT 2D: Moorland Edge Slopes



2D. Moorland edge slopes

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT falls away from the south west edge of Dartmoor National Park wrapping around the edge of Plymouth from Buckland Monachorum eastwards to Sparkwell with a small pocket to the south of the National Park, east of Ivybridge.

An elevated, gently rolling landscape containing a mix of open heathland, woodland and farmland. Extensive quarrying activities have resulted in a much altered landform in some locations.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Elevated land with a gently rolling topography, in parts steeply sloping from the south west fringes of Dartmoor and forming an elevated backdrop to Plympton and Plymouth.
- Underlain by Devonian mudstone and sandstone geology, creating a gentler topography than the adjacent basalt of Dartmoor, with less exposed rock although occasional tors (Blackadder Tor) are also features of the landscape.
- A landscape crossed by streams rising from springs which flow from higher ground toward the Plym and Tavy rivers.

Woodland cover

- Conifer plantations are frequent features of the landscape. Broadleaved and mixed woodland is found along sheltered valley slopes on the edge of the LCT and includes tracts of ancient woodland. There is some amenity woodland around the china clay works.

Land use and field patterns

- Areas of unenclosed lowland heathland and grassland define the slopes particularly to the north east of Plympton. Enclosed farmland is mostly pasture generally bounded by low hedgebanks or dry-stone walls.
- Extensive china clay works and tipping dominate the landscape to the north east of Plympton including Headon China Clay works and Lee Moor Quarry and have resulted in a mix of natural and artificial landform. A large solar farm is located to the west of Bottle Hill and mica dams south of Lee Moor China Clay Works.
- A varied field scale and pattern, with an intricate pattern of small curving fields of medieval origin to the south of the LCT (particularly around Hemerdon and Bickleigh) some enclosed with stone walls, areas of rough pasture and larger more regular modern fields.

Semi-natural habitats

- Semi-natural habitats include extensive areas of lowland heath to the south of the LCT (e.g. Crownhill Down and Riding Down) and lowland acidic grassland (Headon Down) with areas of upland heath (e.g. Blackadder Tor) to the north of the LCT adjacent to upland moorland in the National Park.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Numerous ancient features are found in commanding positions above the valleys, including the prehistoric hillfort at Maristow Camp and several prehistoric barrows and cairns.
- A landscape shaped by the extensive mining activity in the 19th century which exploited the wide local variety of mineral and ores, such as the disused quarry site at Hemerdon Ball and other quarries, mines and setting beds around Bottle Hill.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Settlement is generally sparse, consisting of scattered farmsteads and hamlets such as Bickleigh, Hemerdon and Lutton. There are a number of 19th and 20th century quarrying villages such as Lee Moor. The south of the LCT adjacent to the industrial estates on the edge Plymouth has a more urban fringe feel with some urban edge uses and MOD buildings enclosed by barbed wire security fences at Bickleigh.
- The A386 crosses through the landscape from Plymouth to Yelverton, with traffic detracting from the rural, tranquil feel of the area. Elsewhere the road network is limited and roads are minor and narrow.
- Open access land is located over much of the LCT to the east (at Headon Down, Crownhill Down, Shaugh Moor and Wotter Common).

Views and perceptual qualities

- There are long views from higher ground towards Plymouth and Plymouth Sound in the south, expansive vistas of the estuaries and green patchwork of fields in the Tamar Valley AONB to the west and intervisibility with land within Dartmoor National Park to the north.
- The china clay works have an industrial influence on an otherwise rural landscape.
- A small area in the west of the LCT is located within the Tamar Valley AONB which recognises the quality of this valley and water landscape, representing a classic English estuarine landscape.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities to development within this LCT:

- The role of this landscape in providing a rural setting to the nationally protected landscape of Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley AONB (which forms part of the LCT to the west) and as a rural backdrop to Plymouth to the south.
- Valued areas of semi-natural woodlands including those designated as CWS.
- Some areas have a strong moorland character with areas of open access land and the rich mosaic of habitats and vegetation;
- The time depth associated with the Iron Age hillfort at Maristow Camp and prehistoric barrows and cairns in commanding positions above the valleys, plus mixed pattern of field enclosures including those of medieval origin.
- The industrial heritage of the area evident in the 19th century disused mines and setting beds;
- Views to and from Dartmoor and Plymouth and the Sound as well as extensive vistas over the green patchwork of fields and estuary within the Tamar Valley AONB.
- A generally rural landscape with sparse settlement, but the quarrying activity at the Headon and Lee Moor China Clay works has an industrial influence on some areas. This A386 road intrudes on levels of tranquillity and there are high levels of light pollution on the south of the LCT from Plymouth and the china clay works.

Summary of landscape condition

- A rural landscape with strong visual links to the nearby open moorland to the north and across the Tamar Valley. The unenclosed lowland and heather heathland to the north of the LCT reinforce the **landscape's moorland character** – although functional links between these areas and the open moorland on Dartmoor to the north have been diluted by on-going quarrying and mining activities **which has also eroded the area's field patterns in parts.**

Forces for change

- Continuing pressure for development on the edge on the fringes of Plymouth and Plympton would be highly visible within this elevated landscape and would affect the rural character and sense of tranquillity. Expansion around Roborough would extend into this LCT.
- Noise and visual impacts from china clay quarrying. Further expansion of china clay extraction, tipping and quarrying (particularly Lee Moor) as well as other quarrying sites (Hemedon quarry) and land uses to support development (e.g. landfill and energy from waste sites) impacting on views, dark skies and levels of tranquillity.
- Change in tree/woodland species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora pathogens* and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)).
- Medieval field patterns are vulnerable and can be lost with changes in land ownership and cropping. Variable management of Devon hedges and stone walls in some areas.
- Reduced agricultural viability of areas of heathland with a decline in grazing levels leading to scrubbing up, impacting on the open character and biodiversity value.
- Climate change impacts leading to decrease in heathland due to enhanced growth rates of vegetation

(bracken, gorse etc).

- Location of major road corridors on the edge of the LCT and potential for increase in traffic levels on main roads, particularly A38 and A386 likely to diminish levels of tranquillity.
- Growth in tourism and the proximity to popular visitor attractions such as Dartmoor National Park and Tamar Valley which contributes to an increase in traffic and potential spread of caravan and **camping sites along roads eroding the landscape's tranquillity.**

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

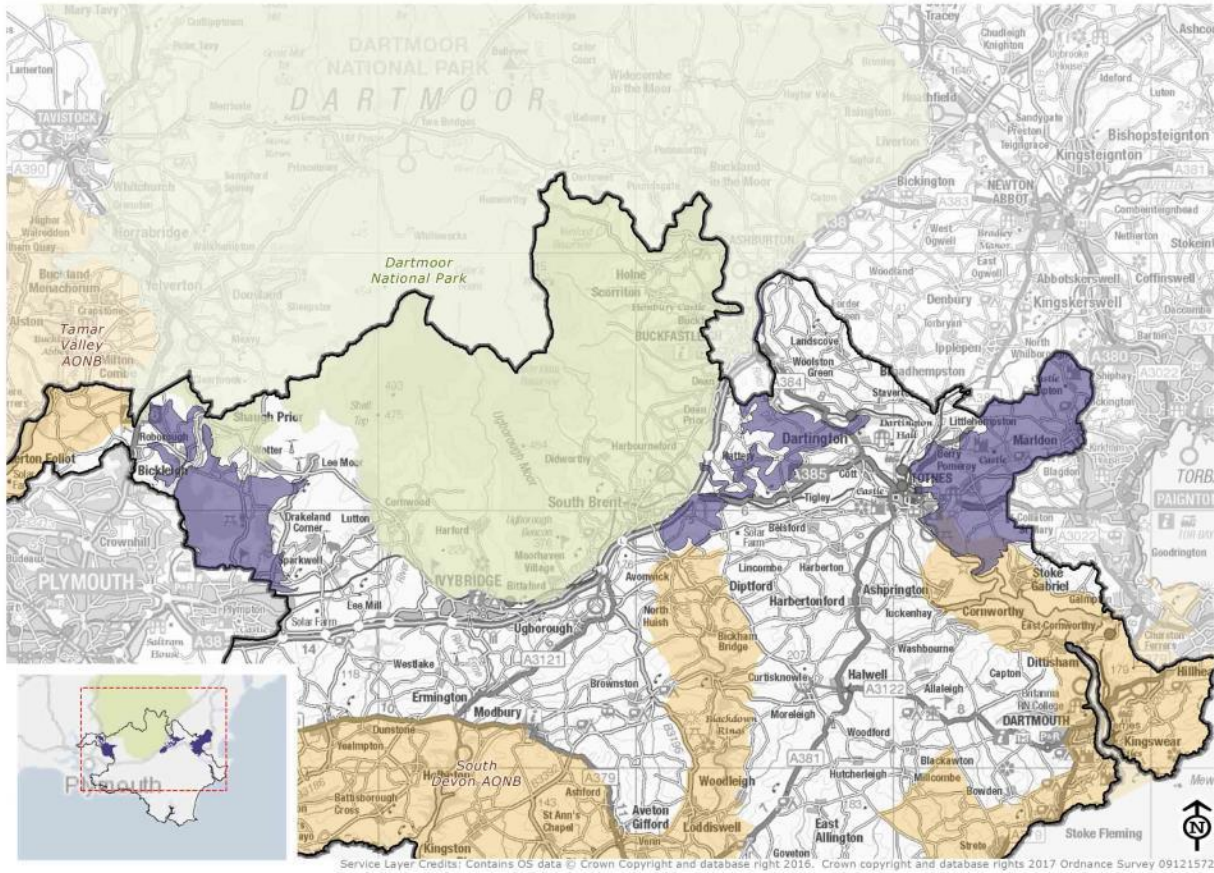
To protect the strong historic character of the Moorland Edge Slopes, where numerous ancient sites and features are scattered across a landscape of small-scale pastoral fields enclosed by intact Devon hedges or dry-stone walls. Manage and enhance areas of semi-natural habitat including heathlands to build resilience to climate change. Plan new landscapes associated with conifer plantations and disused china clay pits and tips.

Landscape Guidelines

- Plan for the long-term **restructuring of conifer plantations** with a move towards their gradual reversion to locally indigenous broadleaf woodland, encouraging management to create and maintain a diverse age structure, to reduce the 'amenity' aspect of some recent planting.
- Pursue opportunities to extend and link **woodland and semi-natural grassland habitats** including as part of Green Infrastructure network, utilising native, climate-resistant species.
- Restore lost **dry-stone walls and Devon hedgebanks** and respecting any local variation in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials where possible. Ensure that ditches and verges are managed to maximise their biodiversity potential.
- Conserve and appropriately manage and protect the integrity of **valued semi-natural habitats**, including broadleaved woodland, lowland and heather moorland and acid grassland, including those designated as County Wildlife Sites.
- Encouraging the retention and **appropriate management of areas of rough ground** through livestock grazing at appropriate levels to enhance biodiversity to enhance biodiversity. Encourage and support an increase in numbers of local livestock breeds (e.g. White Face and Greyface Dartmoor sheep). Re-link fragmented heathland sites to provide green infrastructure networks.
- Protect and appropriately manage the **landscape's historic sites and features** including prehistoric hut circles, cairns, hillforts, stone circles and mining heritage features. Promote understanding and **sensitive interpretation of the landscape's archaeology**, particularly when located on open access land or close to public rights of way.
- Ensure **development respects the current scale of the landscape**, its underlying landform, historic field patterns and existing landscape features.
- **Protect the landscape's sparsely settled character**, particularly to the north of the LCT, and control and control new development outside the footprints of the area's small settlements.
- Seek to ensure opportunities for **access and enjoyment of the countryside** including links to the long distance routes such as the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail, West Devon Way while managing recreational pressure on areas of open access on the edge of Dartmoor National Park.
- Protect the **expansive views from higher ground** in the LCT, including vistas of Plymouth Sound and the estuaries in the Tamar Valley AONB.
- Protect the wider **setting the landscape provides to Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley AONB**. Ensure any development does not detract from the special qualities of these protected landscapes.
- Conserve the landscape's function as a **rural backdrop to the city of Plymouth** to the south.
- Restructure the topography and recreate appropriate vegetation cover as part of a long-term strategy to **restore disused areas of china clay quarrying** and tipping around Lee Moor restoring the site to a mosaic of different habitats. This landscape restructuring should maximise opportunities to filter views of current quarrying and tipping activity, as well as provide new green infrastructure links with disused sites and providing a setting for recreational facilities including footpaths and bridleways.

- Explore opportunities to **use former quarry areas** around Bottle Hill as brownfield sites for development – but consider their geological, biological and archaeological significance in any proposal.

LCT 3A: Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes



3A. Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT is located on the upper river valley slopes to the north east of Plymouth and east of Totnes with a small area to the west of Dartington.

Elevated undulating valley slopes and rolling hills with a well wooded character cut by steep sided stream valleys.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- An elevated landscape of rolling hills and undulating valley slopes. Steeper sided valleys are associated with small streams rising from springs and running to the River Plym to the west and River Dart to the east.
- Underlying geology predominantly comprising mudstone, siltstone and sandstone with some limestone and sandstone, and occasional intrusions of later igneous granite in the east of the LCT.

Woodland cover

- A well-wooded landscape containing areas of deciduous and coniferous woodland on the ridges and valley sides, with numerous smaller woodlands and copses. Oak and ash are the most prominent species.
- Large areas of ancient replanted semi-natural woodland are found at Great Shaugh and Cann Wood north of Plympton and Castle Woods at Berry Pomeroy Castle.

Land use and field patterns

- A mixture of pasture and arable fields bounded by wide hedgebanks with mature, species-rich hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees creating a well-treed character. The numerous traditional orchards (particularly around Berry Pomeroy, Luscombe and Compton Castle) are a legacy of the soft fruit industry in the area.
- Fields are varied in size and origin, ranging from small irregular medieval enclosure to medium-scale modern enclosure with regular boundaries.
- There is little modern development except for a large mica dam south of Lee Moor China Clay Works in the west of the LCT and a solar farm near the A38 east of South Brent. In areas close to larger settlements there are some urban edge uses including a golf course at Effordleigh, and a quarry north of Totnes and a well-hidden caravan park on the Totnes Road. A number of pylons cross the LCT.

Semi-natural habitats

- Semi-natural habitats including extensive areas of deciduous and coniferous woodlands (many designated as County Wildlife Sites), areas of semi-improved grasslands and small areas of rush pasture.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- A landscape shaped by former industrial activity; with many small disused quarries and mines such as the Bulkamore Iron Mine and the lead mine and ore works at Boringdon Park.
- Strong sense of time depth due to prominent prehistoric hilltop forts and enclosures (Boringdon Camp, the earthworks at Northwood above Staverton and at Barbin Pines) fortified medieval castles (Compton Castle and Berry Pomeroy Castle) and areas of historic parkland and estate woodland (Boringdon Park, Newham Park, Dartington Hall).

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Despite the proximity of much of this LCT to Plymouth in the west and Paignton to the east, there is little settlement, with isolated historic farms, houses and hamlets with the occasional historic village such as Berry Pomeroy, Aish and Marldon.
- There is a strong local vernacular of rendered and exposed stone used for houses and farm buildings, some with red brick details and slate roofs. Corrugated iron has sometimes replaced traditional slate, clay tile or thatch roofs on farm buildings.
- The roads are generally minor and rural although a number of main roads run along the boundary of the LCT and the A385 which crosses the LCT from Paignton. Old mining tracks are a feature within the landscape. There is open access across Cann Wood, north of Plymouth and several long-distance trails

cross the LCT including the Torbay-Totnes Trail and the John Musgrave Heritage Trail and the West Devon Way.

Views and perceptual qualities

- A small area of the LCT on the valley slopes above the River Dart forms part of the South Devon AONB which recognises the quality of the rolling patchwork of this agricultural landscape as part of the protected landscape.
- The landform and vegetation create a generally enclosed landscape although in places there are extensive views over the surrounding countryside from higher slopes near Berry Pomery Castle and Aish in the east and views over Plympton from the edge of the LCT in the west.
- A rural landscape with high levels of tranquillity (despite the proximity of Plymouth in the west and Paignton to the east). Remoteness and tranquillity reduced locally close to main roads (particularly the A385 Totnes to Torquay and A38).

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Areas retaining high levels of tranquillity and a strong rural character away from the main roads which cross this landscape and urban centres at Plymouth and Paignton;
- Distinctive topography of elevated rolling hills with ridgelines cut by steep sided valleys with springs and streams running to the Dart and Plym;
- The well-wooded, enclosed character of the landscape with deciduous and coniferous woodland on the valley sides, including large areas of ancient woodland, plus numerous smaller woodlands and copses;
- The mosaic of pasture and arable fields bounded by wide hedgebanks with low, species-rich hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees creating a well-treed character in a pattern ranging from small irregular medieval enclosure to medium-scale modern enclosure with regular boundaries;
- The local legacy of the soft fruit industry evident in numerous traditional orchards around farms and villages;
- Strong archaeological heritage particularly associated with past mining history plus prominent prehistoric hilltop forts and enclosures, fortified medieval castles and areas of historic parkland and estate woodland.
- Relatively low density of dispersed settlement, with isolated historic farms, houses and hamlets with the occasional village and strong local stone vernacular;

Summary of landscape condition

This is a distinctive landscape owing to its complex topography and mix of land cover, set within a framework of dense Devon hegebanks and interspersed with frequent woodlands. The landscape framework has been fragmented in parts closer to the large urban settlements where the quality of the landscape is affected by the spread of urban and industrial development as well as the close proximity to major road corridors. Some hedgebanks are suffering from a lack of management in some location.

Forces for change

- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora* pathogens and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)). Loss of trees within hedgerows would be particularly noticeable in this landscape type.
- Medieval field patterns are vulnerable and can be lost with changes in land ownership and cropping.
- Continuing decline in rural skills such as woodland management and hedge laying threatening the age and species diversity of semi-natural woodland and leading to variable quality of hedgebanks in some areas.
- Decrease in the number and area of traditional farm orchards.
- **Continuing pressure for development particularly due to the LCT's proximity to the existing settlement edge of Plymouth and Paignton.** Development in these areas would be highly visible within this elevated landscape and would affect the rural character and sense of tranquillity. Expansion around Totnes would extend into this LCT.
- Location of major road corridors on the edge of the LCT and potential for increase in traffic levels on main roads, particularly A38 and A385 likely to diminish levels of tranquillity

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

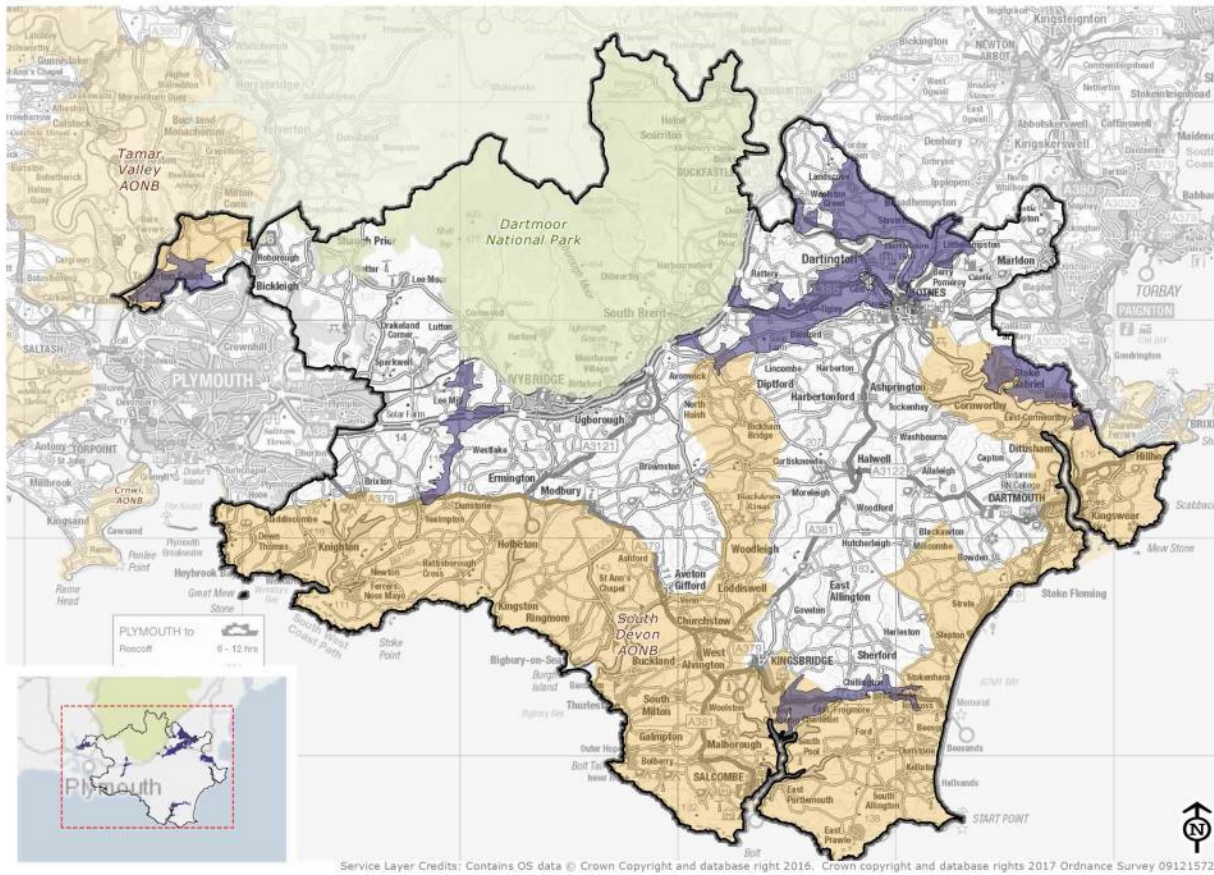
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the strong field patterns of this landscape, including the rich network of well-managed Devon hedgebanks. Manage the farmed landscape to enhance wildlife interest and local diversity restoring areas of relict tradition orchards. Protect the wooded character of the landscape, utilising new woodland planting to filter views of development. Maintain the sparse settlement pattern and avoiding a spread of suburban influences from larger settlements adjacent to the LCT.

Landscape Guidelines

- Protect the **wooded character of the landscape** including the ancient replanted woodland at Cann Wood and Castle Wood. Extend areas of mixed and broadleaved woodlands through natural regeneration and new planting (including with species suited to a changing climate).
- Manage and enhance the **historic irregular field patterns**, restoring lost and gappy Devon hedgebanks. Respect any local variations in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials wherever possible.
- Restore and manage areas of relict **traditional orchards** and explore opportunities for the creation of new ones, including community orchards.
- Conserve, appropriately manage and protect the integrity of **valued semi-natural habitats**, including the broadleaved woodland and grasslands, particularly those within the County Wildlife Protect.
- Manage and enhance the **wildlife interest of the farmed landscape**, including through the creation of species-rich grass buffers around arable fields (also serving to reduce agricultural run-off).
- Protect the setting and integrity of the **local archaeological heritage** particularly features associated with local mining legacy, prehistoric hilltop forts and enclosure, medieval castles and areas of historic parkland.
- **Protect the landscape's dispersed settlement pattern** and ensure development respects the scale of the underlying landform, field patterns and existing landscape features and scattered historic farmsteads, houses and villages. Resist the further spread of new development (including caravan and camping sites) outside the limits of the villages and hamlets, including along roads, protecting **the landscape's agricultural character and avoiding a spread of suburban influences** from larger settlements adjacent to the LCT. **Use the landscape's high levels of tree cover and sloping landform** to help screen any new development or land uses into their landscape setting.
- Protect in a good state of repair the **traditional local vernacular** of local rendered and exposed stone and slate roofs. Limited new development should utilise the same materials and building styles wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).
- Plan a long-term strategy for the **future restoration of the quarry sites** to a variety of wildlife habitats including species-rich grassland, heathland, semi-natural woodlands and wetlands
- Pursue opportunities for **access and enjoyment of the landscape**, including links to the long-distance paths that cross the LCT and areas of open access land. Plan for a network of green spaces and green infrastructure links to support future population growth in existing settlements, integrating development into the landscape and providing for local access and recreation.
- Protect **important views across the surrounding landscapes**, including views to Dartmoor.

LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes



3B. Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT occupies the lower slopes above the rivers and estuaries across the district including the Dart, Harbourne, Hems, Tavy and Yealm and the Kingsbridge Estuary.

Valley slopes that rise gently from the middle or upper reaches of the flat river valley floors throughout the district, often densely settled.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Gently rolling landform, sloping up from the flat valley floors with a height of between 15m and 140m AOD incised by numerous streams rising from springs on the higher slopes.
- Underlain by limestone, sandstone and clay, with occasional outcrops of basalt.

Woodland cover

- Mixed woodland and coniferous plantations along the river and stream valleys, with frequent hedgerow trees (often oaks), and small copses result in a well-wooded appearance particularly on the lower slopes.

Land use and field patterns

- A complex mix of pasture and arable fields with numerous traditional orchards on drier slopes near farmsteads particularly around Woolston Green and between Stoke Gabriel and Waddeton which are a legacy of the soft fruit industry in the area.
- A pattern of small to medium irregular fields which are varied in origin from medieval enclosure based on strip fields to more modern enclosures, bounded by distinctively tall hedgebanks with low wide and mature hedges. There is some use of post and wire.

Semi-natural habitats

- Valued habitats include the areas of semi-natural deciduous woodland and semi-improved grassland.
- Ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites are found on the valley sides, **often reaching down to the water's edge along the estuaries.**

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Scattered prehistoric sites (including enclosures at North Wood and earthworks at Port Bridge west of Waddeton and bowl barrows at West Charleton) give the landscape time-depth.
- An historic settlement pattern of waterside villages that were established above the banks of the estuaries and creeks, such as Stoke Gabriel and Waddeton on the Dart and the villages east of the Kingsbridge Estuary. The growth and prosperity of these settlements was strongly linked with the rivers and estuaries including fishing, trade and boat building.
- The LCT provides a setting to the historic villages (often with Conservation Areas), numerous listed buildings and historic parklands including Dartington Hall, Waddeton Court and Warleigh Court.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- The LCT lies adjacent to larger settlements including Dartington, Totnes, Kingsbridge and Plymouth and is in parts densely settled with larger villages such as Stoke Gabriel that have expanded beyond the historic core. Elsewhere the LCT is characterised by a clustered settlement pattern of small farms and hamlets linked by narrow lanes.
- The settlements are characterised by a wide variety of building ages and styles, with a traditional vernacular of local limestone rubble usually rendered at the front, sometime slate hung and with slate roofs.
- There is an extensive network of paths, often linking the villages with the estuaries and rivers.

Views and perceptual qualities

- A part of the southern section of this LCT, east of the Kingsbridge Estuary and along the Dart Estuary, forms part of the South Devon AONB which recognises the quality of this rural rolling patchwork of this agricultural landscape, representing a classic English estuarine landscape. A pocket of the LCT to the west of the district is located within the Tamar Valley AONB above the Tavy.

- Views are variable throughout the landscape. Dense tree cover, tall hedgebanks and topography can limit views in some places. Elsewhere there are dramatic views across the surrounding countryside and over the estuaries (the Dart and the Kingsbridge Estuary in the east and Plymouth Sound in the west).
- The rural tranquillity of the area is disturbed locally by the main road and rail line which runs west out of Totnes, the A38 at Lee Mill and the A379 between Kingsbridge and Stokenham. Elsewhere settlements are linked by a network of quiet narrow lanes enclosed by high hedgebanks and woodland.
- The proximity of larger towns and related development along approach roads (e.g. farm shops and caravan sites) and the intrusion of industrial development on the edge of some settlements including solar farms, pylons, landfill sites and small industrial estates affects the quality of some parts of the LCT.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- A rural backdrop to the adjacent river and estuarine valleys of the Dart, Kingsbridge, Yealm, and Tavy retaining high levels of tranquillity and a strong rural character away from the urban centres and larger villages;
- The incised streams and ditches that arise as springs on higher land running down to the river creating areas of contrast within the farmed landscape;
- The well-wooded character of the landscape with mixed woodland and coniferous plantations along the river and stream valleys, much of it ancient;
- The mosaic of pasture and arable fields bounded by distinctively tall hedgebanks with low, species-rich hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees creating a well-treed character in a pattern ranging from small irregular medieval enclosure to medium-scale more modern enclosure;
- The local legacy of the soft fruit industry evident in numerous traditional orchards around farms and villages;
- A patterned mosaic of small to medium irregular fields which are varied in origin bounded by hedgebanks topped with low wide hedges.
- Scattered prehistoric sites on hilltops overlooking the valleys, and historic houses with riverside parklands give the landscape time-depth;
- The historic settlement pattern of waterside villages is still evident and the dominance of local stone rubble and slate as a building material;
- The continuing dependence on traditional lanes, resulting in a tranquil and unhurried landscape.

Summary of landscape condition

- There has been a significant impact on the landscape from the highways network, settlement and associated development which has diluted the character of the area. The inherent character of settled pasture is still present, but has been considerably overtaken by recreation and amenity pressures. The former village of Tamerton Foliot to the west of the LCT has been absorbed into Plymouth, and other settlements vary in building style. The intrusion of built development on the edge of some settlements, pylons and landfill sites have an impact in the area and are highly visible from the surrounding landscape.

Forces for change

- **Continuing pressure for development, particularly housing expansion, due to the LCT's proximity** Galmpton, Paignton, Totnes and Dartington, Ivybridge and Plymouth. Development in these areas would affect the rural character of the LCT and sense of tranquillity.
- Potential for settlements to coalesce along the A379 especially at Chillington and Stokenham leading to erosion of the predominately rural character.
- The potential for increase in traffic levels on main roads, particularly on approach roads to Totnes, and along the A38. Recreational pressure, related to increases in traffic levels, particularly in the South Devon AONB along the A379 and on narrow winding lanes likely to diminish levels of tranquillity.
- Pressure from recreation and holiday development, especially within the South Devon AONB, leading to loss of farmland.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora pthogens* and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)). Loss of trees within hedgerows would be particularly noticeable in this landscape type.
- Medieval field patterns are vulnerable and can be lost with changes in land ownership and cropping. Variable management of Devon hedges in some areas.
- Continuing decline in rural skills such as woodland management and hedge laying threatening the age and species diversity of semi-natural woodland and leading to variable quality of hedgebanks in some areas.
- Loss or lack of management of traditional farm orchards
- There is a shortage of suitable skills and labour to maintain the traditional buildings and landscape features. Building stone is no longer produced in South Devon. The character of some older settlements has been weakened by recent developments and renovations that have not respected settlement pattern, materials or style.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

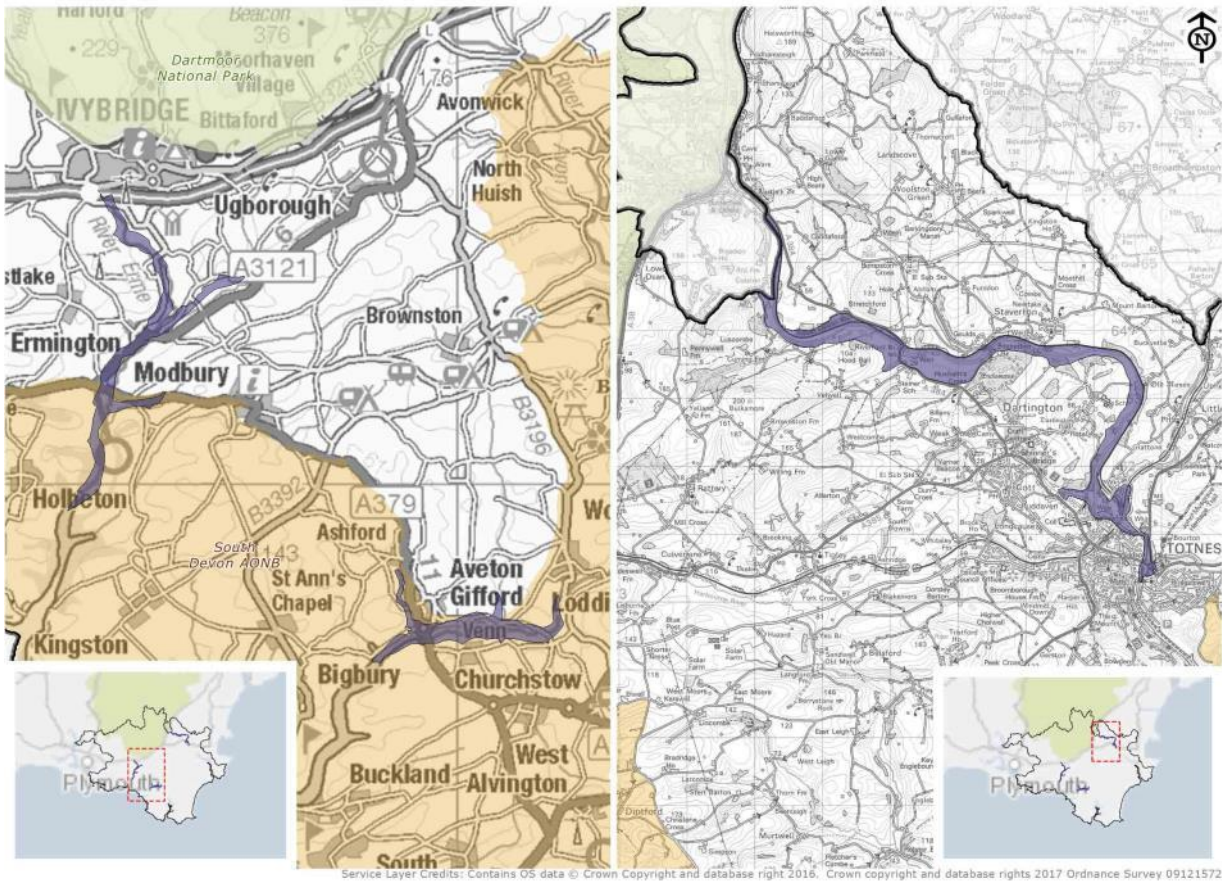
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the settled but rural character of this area **and the landscape's function** as a setting for adjacent river valleys. New development should reflect the small scale, historic settlement pattern and vernacular character. The landscape pattern of mixed pasture and arable fields with hedgerows, narrow lanes and woodland is conserved and enhanced and opportunities for green infrastructure links to settlements and appropriate recreation developments are sought.

Landscape Guidelines

- Ensure **development respects the scale of the underlying landform**, well-managed woodlands and historic field patterns and existing landscape features and ensure the area remains valued for recreation.
- **Manage and enhance the valleys' semi-natural woodlands** through traditional woodland management, including coppicing. Control access by livestock to promote natural regeneration. Plan the natural regeneration of woodland and new planting (using climate-hardy species) to link fragmented sites.
- Manage species-rich **Devon hedgebanks** through regular coppicing and relaying of gappy sections, strengthening irregular medieval field patterns. Replace lost lengths and lines of fencing, respecting traditional bank styles and species composition, particularly where at right angles to slopes, to help reduce soil erosion and run-off into watercourses.
- Restore and manage areas of relict **traditional orchards** and explore opportunities for the creation of new ones, including community orchards to promote local food and drink production.
- Protect the setting and integrity of the local **archaeological heritage** particularly features associated with prehistoric enclosures and bowl barrows and areas of historic parkland and veteran trees.
- Protect the **settlement pattern of houses, farms, hamlets and small nucleated villages**, resisting development which is uncharacteristic and visually intrusive over wide areas or results in linear spread of development along river valleys and roads and avoiding a spread of suburban influences from larger settlements adjacent to the LCT. Utilise woodland cover and topography to filter views of any new development.
- Protect **traditional building styles and materials**, particularly the use of local stone, reflecting these in any new development or extensions wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable design).
- Plan for **appropriate uses of rural buildings** or their sympathetic conversion where appropriate, including all associated works such as drives, hedgebanks, visibility splays and entrance detailing.
- Protect the **landscape's network of quiet lanes**, resisting unsympathetic highways improvements, signage and lighting schemes.
- Ensure any **road improvements follow local guidance** for management of roadside verges and ditches and verges to maximise their biodiversity potential.
- Pursue opportunities for **access and enjoyment of the landscape**, including links to the estuaries and rivers.
- Protect **important views** to and from the hills across the surrounding landscapes, including dramatic views over the estuaries.

LCT 3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors



3C. Sparsely settled farmed valley floors

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT is located along the middle and upper reaches of the, Avon, Dart and Erme rivers, north of their estuaries.

A relatively small LCT within South Hams District, encompassing the sparsely settled valley floors of the main river valleys which flow through the district above the tidal reaches.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Narrow meandering river courses and floodplains contained by sloping valley sides.
- The rivers are shallow and fast flowing, passing over rocky river beds.
- Underlain by mudstone siltstone and sandstone bedrock with deposits of river alluvium.

Woodland cover

- Linear groups of trees follow the course of the rivers upstream, with blocks of deciduous woodland on the lower reaches marking the edge of the floodplain and extending down on the steeper valley sides to **the water's edge**. The lower reaches of the Erme at Flete are more extensively wooded.

Land use and field patterns

- The valley floor is characterised by floodplain pasture fields grazed by cattle and sheep with some areas of unenclosed meadows extending across the river floodplains with ditches and hedges generally on the boundary with rising land.
- Fields form an irregular pattern of varied origin. There is some limited urban edge uses adjacent to Totnes and Ivybridge.

Semi-natural habitats

- Rich semi-natural habitats lining the river course include semi-improved grassland and floodplain grazing marsh, with areas of wet woodland.
- The floodplains and flood meadows support valuable plant and breeding bird populations. The lower section of the Erme in this LCT is designated as an SSSI for its wet oak-hazel woodland with a diverse ground flora.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Historic parkland estates with veteran trees and ancient woodland fringe the rivers at Dartington Hall and Flete Damarel.
- The rivers were vital routes for transporting goods at a time when overland movement was slow and difficult and the rich industrial heritage of the valleys is evident in several upstream causeways, weirs, riverside mills and kilns, such as the woollen mills along the Dart, paper and grist mills at Ivybridge and lime kilns at Aveton Gifford.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- A peaceful landscape with low levels of development and a sparse settlement pattern. Villages are located at river crossing points, on the slopes above the valley floor, outside this LCT. Rounded river boulders were used in stone walls in the Erme valley south of Ivybridge.
- The winding course of the valley floors are sometimes traced by roads including the A384 along the Dart and the A3121 along the Erme. Elsewhere the rivers are crossed by characterful stone bridges linked by narrow winding lanes.
- The valleys are popular destinations for recreational activities. The Avon Estuary Walk and the Erme-Plym Trail are strategic recreational walking routes which follow the course of the rivers and the South Devon steam railway follows the course of the Dart.

Views and perceptual qualities

- The southern half of the LCT along the River Erme and Avon form part of the South Devon AONB which recognises the undeveloped areas of the middle estuaries and smaller creeks with their riverside floodplains, representing a classic English estuarine landscape.
- A secluded landscape, sometimes only accessible by foot and often enclosed by wooded valley slopes,

with scenic river views along the valleys to the surrounding valley slopes.

- The strong sense of tranquillity is only broken locally by the presence of main roads and on the fringes of larger settlements at Ivybridge and Totnes.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Secluded peaceful floodplain landscape, containing the fast-flowing water running over rocky river beds crossed by characterful stone bridges;
- Trees and woodland enclose the shallow meandering watercourses forming linear belts and blocks, with more extensive wet oak-hazel woodland at Flete on the River Erme;
- Mosaic of valued riparian and floodplain habitats including floodplain grazing, marshland, unimproved permanent pasture and wet woodland which support rich biodiversity;
- Irregular field pattern of varied origin.
- Historic parklands and stone bridges contribute to the strong sense of place;
- Riverside mills, kilns, weirs and causeways demonstrating links to the rich industrial heritage of these valleys;
- Largely unsettled with settlements mainly located in adjacent areas away from the floodplain with few/minor valley roads creating strongly tranquil character;
- Valued for recreation with local footpaths or strategic recreational walking routes, including the Avon Estuary Walk and the Erme-Plym Trail, often providing the only access to the landscape. The South Devon heritage railway along the Dart provides one of the most popular tourist attractions in the district.

Summary of landscape condition

This LCT retains its peaceful and tranquil character with an intact pattern of floodplain pasture and wetland habitats along the rivers. There is little modern built development although the quality of the area near Totnes and Ivybridge is affected by the close proximity of built development. Increasing traffic, particularly along the A38 and the main approach roads into Totnes, disturbs the tranquillity of the river valleys.

Forces for change

- Continuing pressure for growth of adjacent larger settlements impinging on the floodplain creating a more urban/urban fringe character and loss of tranquillity;
- Potential for increase in traffic levels on along narrow valley roads, particularly those linking to the A38 and the approach roads into Totnes **eroding the landscape's high levels of tranquillity** and damaging the historic stone bridges;
- Decline in traditional woodland management, leading to a reduction in the species and age diversity **of the landscape's important semi-natural woodland**. Change in woodland tree species as new pests and diseases spread;
- On-going decline in traditional skills including traditional hedgerow management resulting in variable management of Devon hedgerows and some replacement by post and wire;
- Loss or lack of management of floodplain pasture and wet meadows.
- Potential threats to important valley bottom habitats including floodplain grazing marsh due to water abstraction or nutrient enrichment from agriculture;

- Increased winter precipitation and decreased summer precipitation, will potentially alter river flows causing potential damage to habitats and species.
- Growth in tourism and recreation along the river valleys, and the presence of popular visitor attractions such as the South Devon Railway, which contributes to an increase in traffic eroding the tranquillity of the landscape.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

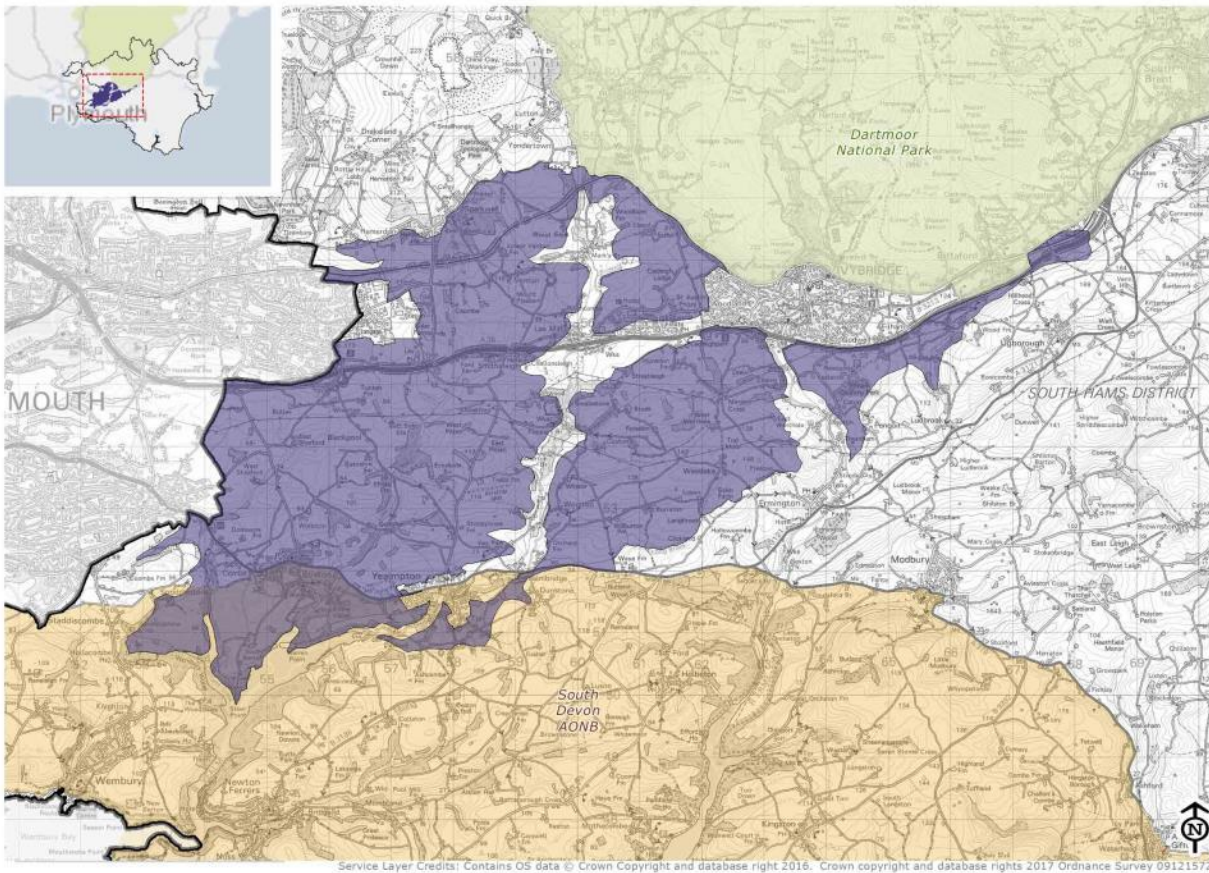
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the peaceful and tranquil character of the valley floors, maintaining views along the valleys to the surrounding valley slopes. Manage and enhance floodplain pastures and wetland habitats to enhance their flood storage capacity and encourage sustainable uses of the landscape for recreation while protecting their special qualities. Protect characteristic stone bridges, the relicts of the industrial heritage of the valley and historic riverside parkland.

Landscape Guidelines

- Manage and protect **semi-natural woodland and riverside trees** through traditional woodland management techniques including coppicing and pollarding particularly along the shoreline. Where opportunities arise encourage woodland planting to link fragmented sites.
- **Manage the landscape's hedgerows** (particularly on slopes where they can provide a role in stabilising the soil and reduce run-off) and encourage the re-planting of lost hedgerows whenever appropriate.
- Encouraging the retention and management of **wet meadows, floodplain pasture and other wetland habitats** - through appropriate grazing and traditional land management regimes – both to enhance their biodiversity value and flood storage capacity.
- Protect and maintain the **industrial heritage of the river valleys** including the stone quays, weirs and causeways. **Promote understanding of the landscape's industrial heritage to ensure public access and recreation respects the presence of valued features.**
- Protect and maintain the **historic stone bridges** which are characteristics features of the valleys;
- Manage the valleys' use for recreation whilst ensuring they retain their inherent **levels of tranquillity, peacefulness and absence of built development** and protecting the rural views along the valleys and to the adjoining valley sides.

LCT 3E: Lowland Plains



Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

Variable lowland inland areas within South Devon, South of Dartmoor and to the east of Plymouth, cut by the Yealm (Type 3B) but not directly associated with river valleys.

A settled, farmed landscape, with its rural qualities impacted by nearby urban development, historic quarrying activity, electricity infrastructure and other intensive industrial land uses.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Areas of settled level or gently rolling lowland based on Devonian mudstone, siltstone and sandstone bedrock. Elevation ranges between 10 metres AOD near the Yealm Estuary to 130 metres AOD near the Dartmoor National Park boundary.
- Past quarrying has resulted in geologically important exposures including New England Quarry and Venn Quarry which are now designated as RIGs.
- The landscape is crossed by a number of smaller streams which flow to the main river of the Yealm.

Woodland cover

- Small areas of mixed plantation woodland are frequent. Some of the linear riparian woodland and estate woods are ancient in origin.
- Absence of hedgerow trees, with tall sloping banks, wide mixed hedgerows curving around large fields and oak as a distinctive roadside tree. Some hedgebanks are denuded. There is, however, much amenity strip woodland planting associated with New England Quarry and several small irregular linear woods along watercourses including Silverbridge Lake.

Land use and field patterns

- Mixed farmland, with arable dominant and many other land uses, including extensive extractive industry, horticultural glasshouses, orchards, industrial development, equestrian development, golf courses and solar farms.
- Irregular medium to large-scale field pattern of various origin. Some medieval enclosures based on strip fields and Barton fields mixed in with modern enclosures.

Semi-natural habitats

- Limited nature conservation value, with some valued habitats found within deciduous woodlands and pockets of species-rich and marshy grassland. Kitley Lake is a large lake near the Yealm Estuary with swamp, willow scrub and damp grassland and designated as a County Wildlife Site.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- The Iron Age hill fort at Wasteberry Camp is designated as a Scheduled Monument.
- Historic manor houses and farmhouses including Fardel Manor House, Higher Hareston and Lyneham House which are Grade I listed buildings.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- This LCT is densely settled, with small villages and adjacent to larger urban areas (e.g. Plymouth).
- Distinctive stone-built villages with characteristic stone boundary walls, but generally this type has a variety of building styles and materials, with some 19th century terraces and a variety of building materials. Farms often have extensive outbuildings.
- Generally the highway network is sparse and consists of minor rural lanes, although the LCT is crossed by major transport routes including the A38 dual carriageway and mainline railway introducing noise and movement which can detract from tranquillity.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Some long views are available to both Dartmoor and the South Devon coast, but may be interrupted by pylons, wind turbines, communications masts and other structures.
- Parts of the LCT to the south of Brixton fall within the South Devon AONB, contributing to special qualities including a '*deeply rural rolling patchwork agricultural landscape.*'

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- The inaccessible nature of much of the landscape, gives the area a remote and tranquil character in places
- Distinctive oak trees lining roadsides
- The settlement pattern containing clusters of hamlets and villages with few larger settlements
- Historical characteristic stone built villages and stone boundary walls
- Long views over the landscape in places over the hedges, including to Dartmoor and the coast
- Valued area for recreation with many paths and tracks, providing quiet enjoyment and ready access to the natural environment
- Relationship of this area to Dartmoor National Park – views to/from and setting

Summary of landscape condition

The condition of this landscape varies across the character type, with some parts being in good condition and others in poor. To the south east of Plympton is in a fair to good condition, with strong field patterns, although there evidence of parkland or wooded pasture being lost to arable cultivation. Changes in agricultural practices have meant a decline in the mixed farming systems of the landscape, which has impacted the number of species. The ancient pastoral farmlands north of Brixton and Yealmpton are generally in good condition, although in places field boundaries have been eroded, with much variation in field size and shape, and loss of parkland estates to housing development. Pylons and an electricity sub-station also have a localised visual impact near Blackpool. The area to the south of Ivybridge is in good condition and suffering less impact from nearby urban development and intrusive land uses.

Forces for change

- Agricultural intensification (pastoral to arable), which has led to a loss of traditional field boundaries and a change to existing landscape pattern as well as a gradual decline in wildlife species and their habitats
- Loss of hedgerows leading to enlargement of field patterns
- Pressure for housing and industrial development associated with expansion of the adjacent larger urban centres, notable Plymouth and associated with main roads (A38 and A379 which cut across this landscape). The new settlement at Sherford will comprise 5,500 new homes, and also introduce two 120 metre wind turbines within the planned country park.
- Landscape change due to mineral extraction and urban development
- Potential for large scale landscape change when quarrying ceases
- Pressure for large scale and tall infrastructure (pylons, turbines and masts)

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

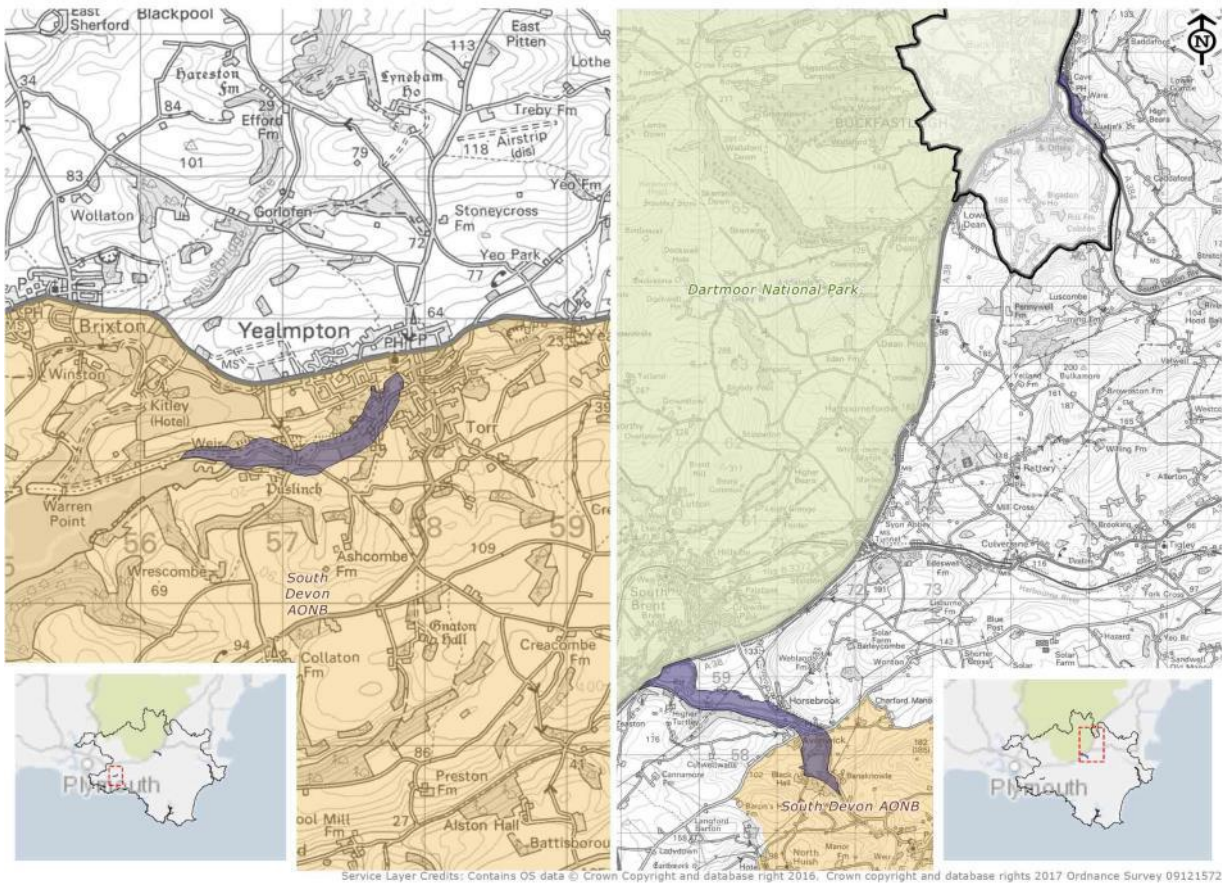
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the landscape's function as a buffer between the wider National Park and development outside; retaining long views across this landscape to Dartmoor and views out to an essentially rural landscape. Manage and enhance the hedgerow network to enhance wildlife corridors and reduce soil erosion. Explore opportunities to gradually re-stock small conifer plantations with mixed species and promote green infrastructure links with nearby urban centres at Plymouth and Ivybridge. Seek to develop a co-ordinated approach to development and change, including tall structures which interrupt this landscape.

Landscape Guidelines

- Protect **long views** across the gently undulating plain to the wooded hills and rising mass of Dartmoor to the north, including consideration of location of further tall structures within views.
- Protect and manage **veteran trees** as important landscape features.
- Protect the landscape's function as a **rural setting to the wider Dartmoor landscape** to the north and to Plymouth to the west.
- Protect the **rural character** of the area and ensure careful siting of new development, avoiding suburbanisation of areas adjacent to major conurbations.
- **Manage and protect the landscape's hedgerow network** – restoring lost sections and replanting and replacing over-mature hedgerow trees. Strengthen sections on slopes bordering the landscape's streams to reduce diffuse pollution. Reinforce links to the landscape's woodland blocks to strengthen wildlife networks.
- Manage small **broadleaved woodlands and wet woodlands** which fringe streams through traditional techniques including coppicing.
- Plan for the creation of **new green infrastructure networks** linking to large settlements outside the National Park boundary (e.g. Ivybridge and Plymouth).
- Where appropriate, plan for the **gradual restructuring and softening of the edges of small conifer plantations** with a range of mixed species (including those suited to a changing climate).
- Consider options for a **strategic landscape approach along the route of the A38** which is a key route and gateway, and is vulnerable to pressures for development associated with expansion at Plymouth, Ivybridge. Seek to maintain as a rural road corridor with appropriate planting to contain and conceal development.

LCT 3F: Settled Valley Floors



Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

This landscape type contains the flat, settled river valleys of the River Yealm and the River Avon as the flow from their origins on Dartmoor towards the sea.

Low lying and enclosed, containing a mix of recreational, industrial and agricultural land uses.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Small areas of flat river valley floor, directly adjacent to settlement and tightly contained by steep valley sides.
- Rivers have carved through the underlying Devonian mudstone, limestone and siltstone geology, leaving a layer of alluvial deposits. Where the rivers run into the settlements their character becomes more managed with mills, weirs, and bridges.
- Rounds Nest Quarry has geological interest including limestone caves and is designated as a RIGS.

Woodland cover

- A mixture of broadleaved and plantation/mixed woodland clothes the steep valley sides, some of which is ancient. Mature trees are also a feature along roads and footpaths. Woodland becomes sparse closer to settlement.

Land use and field patterns

- Distinct gradation through valley from urban land uses to rural water meadows and rough grassland.
- Used for recreation and leisure activities. A number of tennis courts are located close to Avonwick. A variety of industrial land uses are also evident including water treatment works.

Semi-natural habitats

- Ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland along river valley sides with wet pasture found along the valley floor.
- Warren Wood is designated as a County Wildlife Site for ancient broadleaved woodland habitat.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Limited archaeological features or interest. Some field patterns are historic in origin and based on medieval enclosures.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Footpaths run along the valley floor, providing an informal recreational resource to the local population.
- Little settlement away from the main settlements. Narrow roads run along the valley floor. Near Yealmpton, a dismantled railway route runs along the valley floor.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Low-lying and enclosed. Views out of the valley are contained by woodland and trees on valley sides and floor.
- Noise and movement from fast moving traffic on adjacent or nearby major roads including the A38 and A379 dual carriageways can detract from tranquillity.
- Strong visual association and suburban character close to the settlements. Retains some naturalistic qualities, particularly in the woodland areas and the areas further away from the settlements.
- The area to the south of Yealmpton falls within the South Devon AONB.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Valued semi-natural habitats, including rivers, wet grassland and broadleaved woodland which may be ancient in origin.
- Extensive use for both formal and informal recreation with sports facilities and numerous rights of way.
- Geological interest at the former Rounds Nest Quarry.

Summary of landscape condition

Variable condition depending on land uses generally grading from urban and suburban influences immediately adjacent to settlements to a typical rural landscape further away from development. Noise from traffic can be intrusive.

Forces for change

- Demand for development and associated infrastructure within adjacent settlements.
- Increasing population in the local area leading to demand for recreation infrastructure, both formal and informal.
- Climate change potential leading to increased rainfall, leading to flood defences being required along the watercourse.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

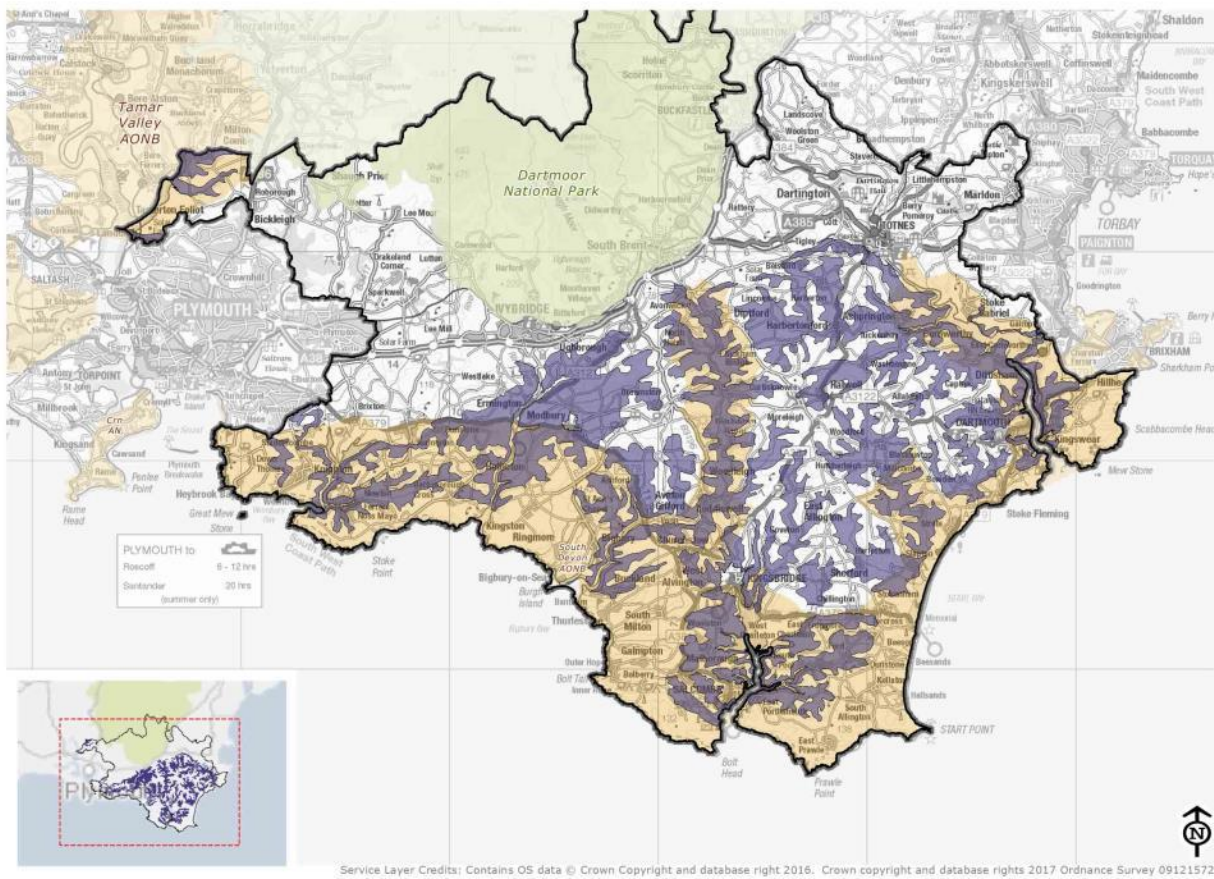
Overall Landscape Strategy

Strike a balance between the various land uses within the settled valleys, noting the significant development and recreational pressure. Ensure new development is sympathetic in design and location and protect valued semi-natural habitats.

Landscape Guidelines

- Protect **valued semi-natural habitats** including woodland and watermeadow/wet grassland.
- Retain a balance between **recreational, industrial and agricultural land uses**.
- Ensure that any **alterations/management of watercourses** is undertaken in a matter sympathetic to the biodiversity and visual amenity provided by the river.
- Seek to **replace plantation woodlands** with native species where possible to increase wildlife resource.

LCT 3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes



3G. River valley slopes and combes

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT is located across the district on the banks of the numerous rivers along the south coast, such as the Yealm, Erme, Dart and Salcombe-Kingsbridge Estuary.

Rounded hills and steep undulating slopes overlooking the river valleys.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Rounded hills and steep undulating slopes, with branching narrow valley systems, overlooking the rivers and estuaries on the south coast. The landscape is crossed by a network of narrow streams and rivers which drain into the estuaries or direct to the sea.
- Underlying geology predominantly comprising Devonian rocks (mudstone, silt stone and sandstone) with occasional intrusion of later igneous granite to the north of the district.

Woodland cover

- A well-wooded landscape with deciduous and mixed fringing the streams, creeks, rivers and estuaries emphasizing the landform. Larger mixed and coniferous plantations cloaking lower valley sides.
- There are extensive areas of ancient semi-natural woodland particularly along the upper reaches of the River Avon and the lower reaches of the River Erme.

Land use and field patterns

- A pastoral landscape with fields grazed by cattle and sheep and occasional arable fields with rough grazing in the narrow stream valleys. The numerous traditional orchards particularly around villages are a legacy of the soft fruit industry in the area.
- An intricate patterned mosaic of predominantly small irregular fields of varied origin, from fields with medieval origins, to larger r Barton Fields laid out in the 15-18th century and more regular modern enclosures.
- Field boundaries are generally wide and mature species-rich Devon hedges with more hedgerow trees on the lower slopes.

Semi-natural habitats

- Semi-natural habitats include extensive areas of deciduous woodland, much of which is ancient oak woodland, particularly on the steeper valley sides of the River Avon and Erme. There are frequent areas of semi-improved grassland and pockets of unimproved neutral grassland, lowland fen, scrub and marshy grassland along the narrow stream valleys.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- The LCT provides a backdrop to the Conservation Areas of the many small historic villages which have scenic waterside settings along the rivers. There is little modern development on the valley sides.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- A clustered settlement pattern of historic villages in sheltered locations above the floodplain on the estuaries and rivers and scattered historic farmhouses and cottages nestled in dips in the landscape. There are some larger historic riverside settlements on the lower reaches of the main estuaries, such as Newton Ferrers on a creek off the River Yealm. Historically the growth and prosperity of these settlements was strongly linked with the rivers and estuaries, including fishing, trade and boat building.
- A strong local vernacular of whitewashed cottages with thatch or slate roofs, as well as exposed stone. The church towers form distinctive local landmarks. Many of the farm buildings have been converted to residences.
- The sparse network of narrow sunken lanes is bounded by high hedgebanks and hedgerow trees which often create tunnels through the landscape as they dip down into the valleys. The road network is lightly used by traffic as the main roads do not cross this LCT but generally follow the elevated ridges above.
- The area is popular for recreation and has an extensive network of footpaths, with many long distance paths along the rivers such as the Avon Estuary Walk, Dart Valley trail and the Erme Plym Trail.

Views and perceptual qualities

- The deeply incised valleys enclosed by woodland, tall hedgebanks and mature hedges provide a sense of enclosure and seclusion.
- A strong visual and topographical link with the rivers and estuaries on the south coast. Outstanding views from higher ground along valleys and across the estuaries contrasts with constrained views along the valley bottoms.
- A strong sense of tranquillity and experience of dark night skies except in areas impacted by light pollution from larger settlements.
- The LCT forms part of the South Devon AONB which recognises the peaceful rolling hills and wooded incised valleys, with their colourful hedge banks, green lanes and orchards, as part of the protected landscape.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Secluded, rural tranquil valley landscape which is not interrupted by modern large scale development or roads;
- Extensive woodland cover, much of ancient origin retained on the valley sides;
- The local legacy of the soft fruit industry evident in numerous traditional orchards around farms and villages;
- The field boundaries of mature species-rich Devon hedge banks enclosing a mosaic of field patterns form medieval to modern;
- Diverse and connected habitat network including semi-improved and unimproved neutral grassland, plus areas of wet grassland and marshland on the lower slopes supporting rich wildlife;
- Intact historic settlement pattern of small nucleated villages and dispersed farmhouses, with distinct Devon vernacular; many settlements designated as Conservation Areas, and with distinctive rural and riverside settings;
- The intimate winding narrow roads and sunken lanes enclosed by hedge banks which contribute to the hidden, secluded and historic character;
- Spectacular views from upper valley slopes across the estuaries and rivers, as at Kingsbridge, contrast with the sense of seclusion along the lower valleys. This rapidly changing character is a distinctive South Hams characteristic;
- Dark skies which can be experienced within the area away from the major conurbations.

Summary of landscape condition

- Due to the relatively sparse settlements and lack of main road access the structure of the landscape – with its intimate enclosed river valleys and lack of built development – is intact. The overriding sense of tranquillity and remoteness can be interrupted in some areas which have extensive views over settlements such as Paignton, Totnes, Salcombe and Plymouth. There are declining field boundaries in places, particularly in proximity to larger settlements and the A379 has a widespread impact on tranquillity levels on the landscape between Aveton Gifford and Modbury.

Forces for change

- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora pthogens* and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)). Loss of trees within hedgerows would be particularly noticeable in this landscape type.
- Medieval field patterns are vulnerable and can be lost with changes in land ownership and cropping.
- Continuing decline in traditional rural skills such as hedge laying and active woodland management threatening the age and species diversity of semi-natural woodland and leading to variable quality of hedgebanks in some areas.
- Loss or lack of management of traditional farm orchards.
- Important wetland habitats may suffer from nutrient enrichment from agriculture or increasing drought conditions due to climate change, and demand for irrigation thus lowering groundwater levels,

and reducing ecological value.

- Increased winter precipitation and decreased summer precipitation, will potentially alter river flows causing potential damage to habitats and species.
- Decline in livestock numbers leading to scrub encroachment on pastoral land.
- Continuing **pressure for development particularly due to the LCT's proximity** to the urban fringes of Plymouth to the west and Paignton to the east of the LCT. Development in these areas would affect the rural character and sense of tranquillity.
- Expansion of towns within the LCT onto the upper slopes where they would be visible in the wider landscape.
- Recreational pressure related to increase in traffic levels on narrow winding lanes likely to diminish levels of tranquillity.
- Potential for new leisure and recreational development (caravan and camp sites) affecting the rural character.
- Conversion of small traditional farm buildings, particularly barns, which are characteristic of the area, which can increase the need for new agricultural buildings elsewhere.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

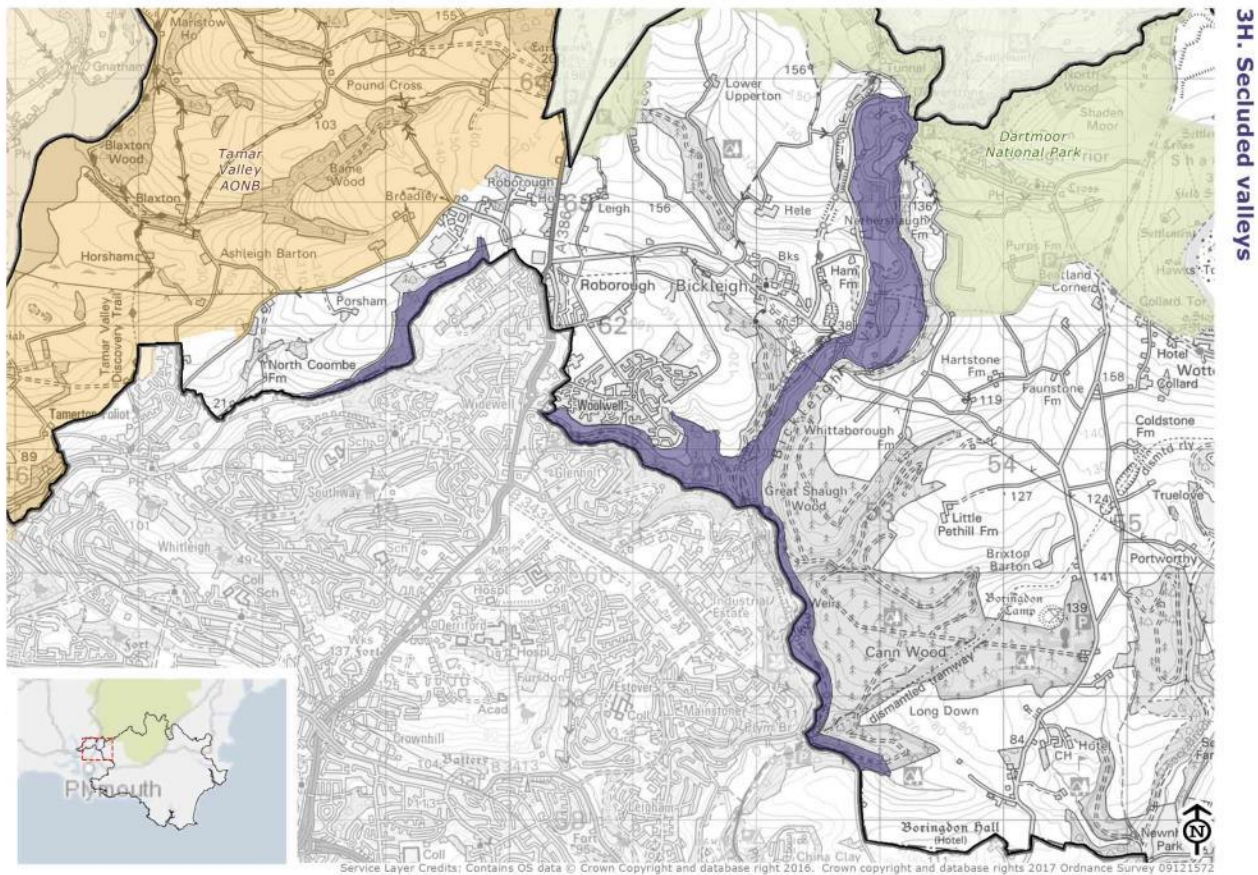
Overall Landscape Strategy

- To protect and enhance the peaceful character of the valley slopes, fringed by well-managed woodlands and fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon banks. Opportunities are sought to restore conifer plantations to broadleaves and other semi-natural habitats, creating a climate-resilient green network. New recreational spaces and infrastructure links are provided to nearby settlements.

Landscape Guidelines

- Protect the **strong perceptions of tranquillity, remoteness and seclusion** in the landscape, with its well managed woodlands and fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedgebanks and dark night skies and ensure the area remains valued for recreation.
- **Manage and enhance the valleys' semi-natural woodlands** through traditional woodland management. Control access by livestock, promoting natural regeneration to enhance longevity whilst using extensive grazing to promote the species diversity of woodland ground flora. Explore opportunities for community utilisation of coppice residues as a low-carbon fuel source.
- Manage and extend areas of **wet woodland and floodplain grassland**, through appropriate grazing and traditional land management regimes – both to enhance their wildlife value and functions in flood prevention.
- Manage the **area's existing plantations for sustainable timber production** and wildlife interest, creating new green links to surrounding semi-natural habitats. Plan for the long-term restoration of the more prominent conifer plantations to open habitats and broadleaved woodlands (where their role in timber production has ceased). Explore the retention of other plantations as recreational spaces (e.g. for mountain biking trails).
- Restore and manage areas of relict **traditional orchards** and explore opportunities for the creation of new ones, including community orchards to promote local food and drink production.
- Manage species-rich **Devon hedgebanks** through regular coppicing and relaying of gappy sections, strengthening irregular medieval field patterns. Replace lost lengths and lines of fencing, respecting traditional bank styles and species composition, particularly where at right angles to slopes, to help reduce soil erosion and run-off into watercourses.
- Protect the **lightly settled character** of the LCT ensuring that new development on the edges of nearby settlements does not encroach into the area (including related lighting schemes) and avoiding vertical structures in places such as Paignton and Salcombe where there are already extensive urban views.
- Protect the landscape's **traditional building styles and materials**, particularly cream or whitewashed thatched cottages, as well as exposed stone and slate. Any new development or extensions should utilise the same materials and building styles wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).
- Ensure that any road improvements follow local guidance for management of **roadside verges and ditches in order to maximise their biodiversity potential**.
- Consider the **introduction of whisper tarmac** on the A379 where traffic noise impacts levels of tranquillity within this LCT.
- Plan for the **creation of green infrastructure links** to nearby settlements and existing long distance footpaths.

LCT 3H: Secluded Valleys



3H. Secluded valleys

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

LCT 3H contains valleys located to the north and east of Plymouth which form a natural edge to the city. The LCT contains Bickleigh Vale and the Porsham Valley. The valleys provide a secluded and naturalistic corridor connecting Plymouth to Dartmoor.

The dense woodlands provide valued semi-natural habitats and are highly important for recreation, with the Plym Valley Way and National Cycle Route 27 running along the Plym Valley.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Steeply incised valley complex of the River Plym and its tributaries, with height of the land ranging between 15 and 135 metres AOD.
- Underlying upper Devonian bedrock. The geological value of the area is recognised in the RIGS designation at Cann Quarry which is designated for slate and granite exposures.

Woodland cover

- Strong wooded character, with high levels of ancient woodland coverage and occasional areas of mixed plantation. Primarily broadleaved, wet, riparian woodland along the bottom of the valleys adjacent to watercourses.
- **Much of the woodland is ancient, including Darklake Wood, Square's Wood, West Wood and Haxter Wood.**

Land use and field patterns

- No significant farming use due to the dense woodland cover and steep landform. Parts of the valley are owned by the National Trust and Forestry Commission and are managed nature conservation, heritage and recreational purposes – particularly walking and mountain biking.
- Disused quarry at Cann Quarry provides evidence of the past land use of this area.
- Occasional irregular wet pasture fields are located where the valley floor widens to the south east of Bickleigh.

Semi-natural habitats

- Plym Valley Woods is designated as a County Wildlife Site, supporting semi-natural woodland, grassland and riparian habitats, with species including sessile oak, goldenrod and wild cherry. Great Shaugh and Cann Woods, Shaugh Bridge Wood and Mill Wood are also County Wildlife Sites and managed for nature conservation.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Cann Quarry Canal was opened in 1829 to transport slate from Cann Quarry to the River Plym at Marsh Mills. It was closed ten years later but remains visible in the landscape.
- There has been a bridge at Plymbridge since 1238. The present bridge originates from the 18th century and is Grade II* Listed.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Mostly unsettled with occasional rural properties located within Bickleigh Vale. Where roads occur they are narrow, winding lanes.
- Large parts of the valleys are inaccessible to vehicles, but are crossed by numerous public rights of way, indicative of their value for recreation. A minor network of sunken rural routes plunge steeply into the valley. Forest tracks also cross through the woodland.
- The West Devon Way, Plym Valley Cycle Way and Plymbridge Ride cycle routes run through this area, as does part of National Cycle Route 27.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Secluded character due to the enclosing topography and complex network of narrow sunken lanes enclosed by high hedge-banks which contain views across fields and out to the surrounding landscape.
- Views are generally enclosed by the topography and high level of woodland cover.
- Sense of peace and tranquillity despite close proximity to urban/industrial areas. Birdsong and the

sounds of the river flowing contrast with the hum of distant traffic.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- The peaceful and tranquil qualities of the valley, particularly valued as an accessible greenspace to many Plymouth residents.
- Valued semi-natural habitats including those designed as part of the Plym Valley Woods County Wildlife Site, as well as large tracts of ancient woodland.
- Valued geological site at Cann Quarry which are designated as a RIGS.
- Important archaeological features which tell the story of **the valley's industrial heritage**.
- The wooded backdrop the valley provides to the north east of the city of Plymouth, and the rural transition into South Hams.

Summary of landscape condition

This landscape is in good condition and is well managed for both recreation and nature conservation purposes. There are localised impacts relating to noise and light intrusion from adjacent suburbs in Plymouth.

Forces for change

- Increased demand for recreation – including the construction of facilities and the erosion of the footpath network.
- Climate change resulting in increased rainfall changing the character of the watercourse and altering the composition of vegetation within the valley.
- Pressure for development due to the close proximity of the valley to the city of Plymouth.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

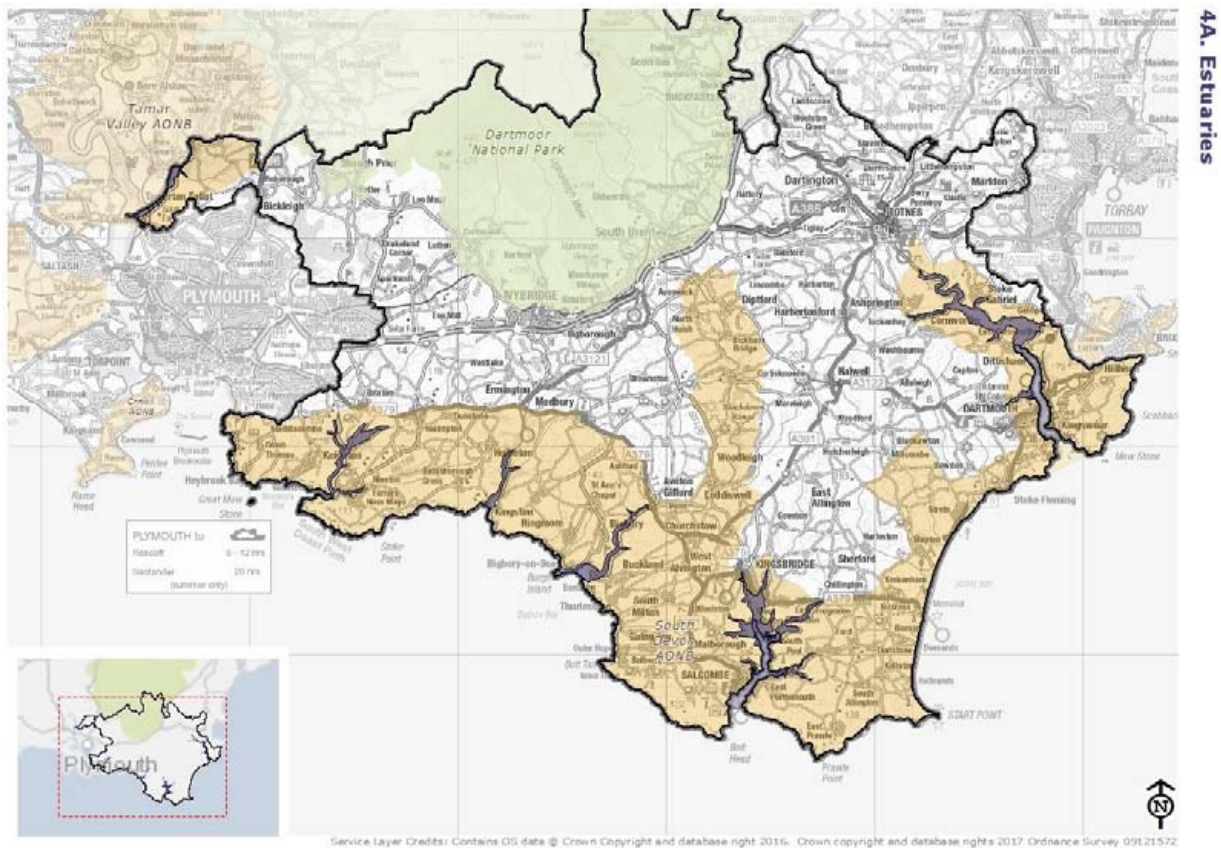
Overall Landscape Strategy

Continue to promote sustainable recreation within the valleys in light of the increasing population of the local area whilst also conserving valued semi-natural habitats. **Promote interpretation of the area's industrial heritage.** Long term, explore ways to increase the resilience of the woodland habitats to climate change.

Landscape Guidelines

- Protect **valued areas of ancient and broadleaved woodland**, riparian habitats and regionally important geological sites.
- Protect the **setting of archaeological sites** and features related to the landscape's industrial heritage.
- Avoid siting any **new development** in the most elevated locations above the valley, where it will affect the locally distinctive wooded skyline.
- Use the landform, dense woodland cover and features such as former quarries to **screen any new development or land uses** (as seen currently at the old quarry site at Wood Park).
- Pursue opportunities to **extend semi-natural woodland, grassland and riparian habitats**, including as part of a Green Infrastructure network, utilising native, climate-resilient species wherever possible.
- Consider further opportunities for strengthening **opportunities for access and enjoyment**, including links to existing strategic recreational paths and cycle routes.
- Strengthen the **landscape's distinctive wooded ridgelines**, including new planting and re-stocking with locally prevalent species such as oak and wild cherry.

LCT 4A: Estuaries



4A. Estuaries

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

This LCT is found at intervals along South Devon coast where the major rivers become influenced by the marine environment.

Dynamic landscapes which change often with tides and weather conditions. Strongly naturalistic and tranquil with semi-natural habitats that are highly important for biodiversity. Settlements are often associated with the estuaries and they form a popular destination for both land and water based activity.

Landscape and seascape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Lower parts of main rivers and estuary mouths where rivers enter the sea resulting in brackish water. Extensive mudflats are often revealed at low tide.
- Inland, the upper reaches of the estuaries are enclosed by adjacent valley slopes and graduate to large sandy bays with low headlands and rock outcrops close to the sea.
- High levels of variation both between the different estuaries and within the same estuary system. The Salcombe-Kingsbridge estuary is particularly unique amongst South Devon's estuaries in **not having a** main river feeding it and remaining saline within its upper reaches as a consequence.

Woodland cover

- Little woodland is contained within the LCT although woodland in adjacent landscapes (particularly valley slopes) fringes and contributes to the character of the estuaries.

Semi-natural habitats

- Open water and intertidal sands grading to mudflats and reed beds upstream are habitats of high nature conservation value and are internationally, nationally and locally designated.
- High biodiversity value and internationally, nationally and locally designated for marine and coastal habitats, supporting many breeding birds. The Yealm Estuary forms part of the Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Often provide a key part of the setting to adjacent historic estate landscapes including Greenway, Flete and Sharpham House.
- Provides a setting to Conservation Areas of historic settlements which have strong relationships with the estuaries.
- Historic quays and bridges, limekilns are located along the estuaries, many of which are listed structures

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Low accessibility by road but well used for water-based recreation. They are also relatively inaccessible, with no vehicle access, but there may be small informal parking areas on the edges of the estuaries. Large villages and towns are often associated with the estuaries, including Kingsbridge, Dartmouth and Salcombe. Historically their growth and prosperity was strongly linked with the estuary including fishing, trade and boat building. Seasonal foot and vehicle ferries cross the estuaries.
- Adjacent to settlements there are often clustered areas of moorings, marinas and boating infrastructure.
- The sandy beaches provide an important recreational resource serving the local population throughout the year, however at times they are tranquil due to their remoteness and inaccessibility.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Generally tranquil, although some parts are influenced by nearby or adjacent urban development. Where neighbouring areas are settled, this can have a major impact on visual unity and tranquillity.
- Unsettled and undeveloped areas are very tranquil and generally undisturbed, especially where adjoining river banks are also undeveloped. These estuaries act as a focus for adjoining areas of cliff and combes to create valued and visually attractive landscapes.
- The estuaries are a visually dynamic landscape and seascape, encompassing views to and from the estuary and over the coastline, with strong links to adjoining landscapes. They are also highly influenced by tides, weather conditions and seasons.
- Enclosed and sheltered by low cliffs and woodland, with longer, more expansive views out to sea near

the mouths of the estuaries.

- High levels of activity, often seasonal, from recreational sailing and other watersports. Pleasure crafts and ferries are commonly used to explore the estuary, and in places the noise of the engines of these boats travels up onto the estuary sides, detracting from tranquillity.
- The estuaries fall within the South Devon AONB, contributing to special qualities including '*Ria estuaries (drowned river valleys), steep combes and a network of associated watercourses*'.
- Due to the largely rural landscape, the area has little light pollution at night time from the land away from the main estuary side towns and settlements.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Expansive river floor.
- Remote and tranquil, with high biodiversity value of international and national importance.
- The estuaries support very large numbers of passage and overwintering birds, in areas such as the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Special Area of Conservation.
- Distinctive and attractive large settlements on adjacent land including Kingsbridge and Salcombe.
- Relatively inaccessible with limited vehicle access.
- The landscape is popular with tourists and water-based recreation, providing for quiet enjoyment and ready access to the natural environment.
- Dark night skies in places.
- A visually dynamic landscape and seascape highly influenced by tides, weather conditions and seasons.
- Picturesque, with winding rivers, sand bars, **and overhanging woodlands extending to the water's edge.**
- Effect of adjacent terrestrial landscapes on the character of the estuaries, making them susceptible to change.

Summary of landscape condition

This landscape is in an excellent condition, and very tranquil away from the adjacent settlements at Kingsbridge and Salcombe which are visually dominant. Recreational pressure with seasonally high levels of activity on the estuaries is well managed. The small scale creeks of Newton Creek at Newton Ferrers and Noss Creek at Noss Mayo off the River Yealm are well cared for and maintained, and access to the River Erme west of Kingston is well administered by the Flete Estate. The road networks in Kingsbridge and Salcombe are low key and unobtrusive.

Forces for change

- The huge demand for moorings, marina spaces and related boat servicing infrastructure within the estuaries which could erode the rural character and tranquillity of the estuaries.
- Continuing pressure for development, particularly new leisure and recreation facilities (such as better launch facilities and car parking areas) and rising visitor numbers, which can erode rural character and potentially damage or disturb sensitive estuarine habitats.
- New development on the fringes of adjacent urban areas and larger villages and on undeveloped estuary sides has the potential to affect estuary/coastal views and erode rural character.
- Estuary walks and trails offer great potential for countryside access and recreation, but an increasing population and the desire for more public access to and around the estuaries, including proposed coastal access provisions, has the potential to increase disturbance of sensitive wildlife habitats.
- **Potential sea level rise may place the area's internationally important estuarine habitats under pressure particularly through coastal squeeze.**

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

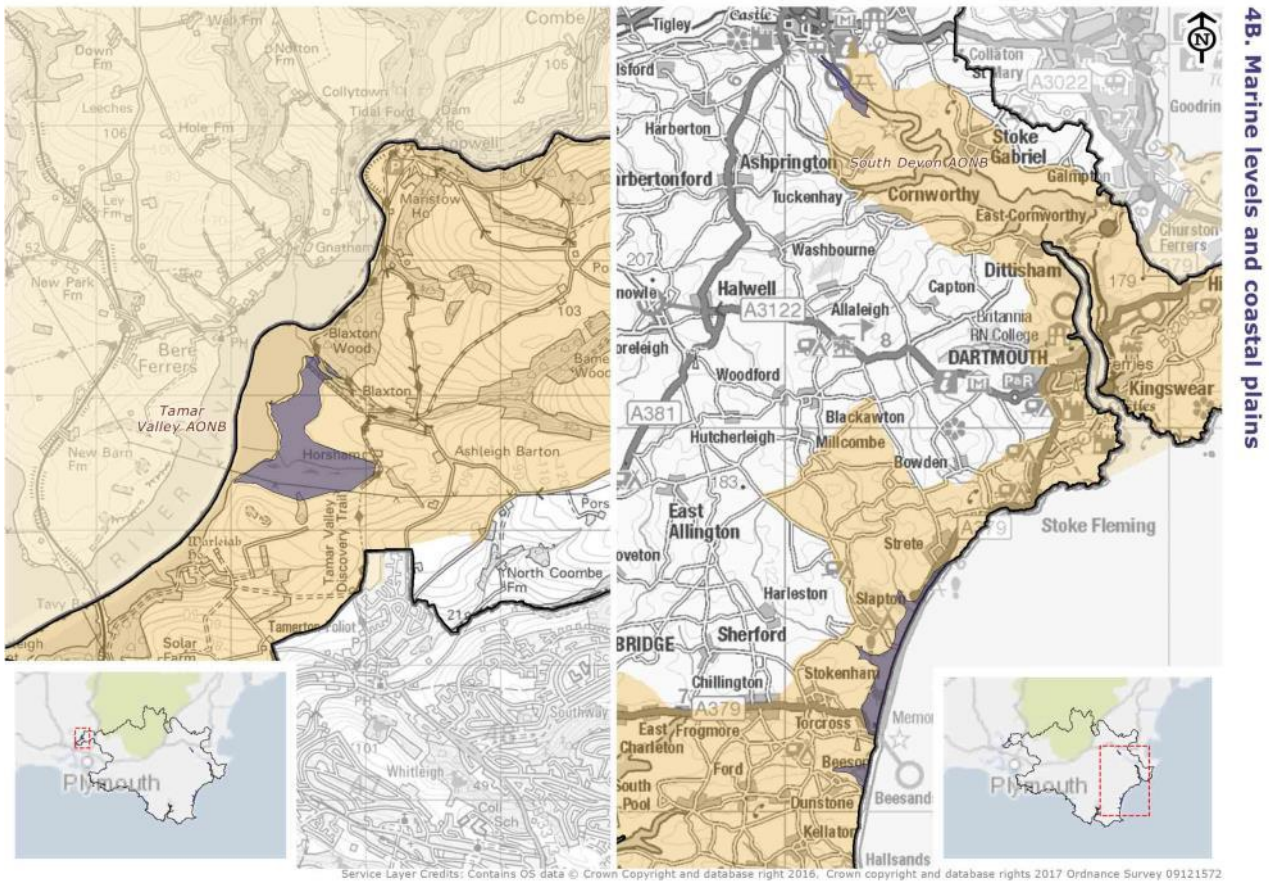
Overall Landscape Strategy

To protect the open character and expansive views to and from the estuary, ensuring new development on its fringes is incorporated into its landscape setting. The cultural heritage and natural evolution of the estuary is conveyed through sensitive interpretation, and local communities are involved in planning for future landscape change as a result of sea level rise and changes in coastal erosion patterns. Recreational pressure and in particular water-based activity is sensitively managed to retain the secret, tranquil character of inland creeks

Landscape Guidelines

- Manage the **internationally important habitats**, including seagrass beds, saltmarshes and mudflats, ensuring marshes are grazed at appropriate levels and the location of engineered sea defences respects the natural environment wherever possible.
- Plan for opportunities to **expand estuarine habitats** to build resilience to future climate change.
- Protect, and where appropriate, **restore historic features** along the estuary edges, including quays and bridges. Provide sensitively sited interpretation to help tell the story of the ever-changing nature of the landscape and its cultural significance.
- **Manage the landscape's popularity for recreation**, encouraging use of existing facilities whilst providing sustainable transport options and green infrastructure links to the surrounding settlements. Avoid the spread of moorings and built development into currently undeveloped parts of the estuaries. Plan to control moorings and water-based activities to maintain tranquillity and regulate timing and zoning of non-peaceful water-based activities to minimise impact.
- Plan for the **future impacts of climate change**, particularly as a result of sea level rise and coastal erosion, allowing natural processes to take place wherever possible whilst ensuring that local communities are involved in making decisions about their future landscapes.
- Consider the **visual impact of any new development** within the adjacent urban areas and ensure development is incorporated into the landscape setting.
- Provide **green infrastructure links from adjacent settlements** to long distance routes such as the South West Coast Path and the strategic recreational route network including the Greenway Walk, Dart Valley Trail and Avon Estuary Walk.
- Protect the **open character of the estuaries** and their important views to and from the surrounding landscapes and unfettered skylines.

LCT 4B: Marine levels and coastal plains



Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT is found adjacent to estuaries and the coast and consists of lower river valleys and their associated semi-natural habitats, which form a mosaic of open water, ditches, saltmarsh, reedbeds and grazing marsh, often of high biodiversity value. It has an unsettled and naturalistic character, and are often popular destinations for recreation.

This LCT includes Slapton Ley, Widdicombe Ley, Warleigh Marsh and Home Reach Marsh.

Landscape and seascape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Low-lying flat river valley or marine plain adjacent to the coast or estuaries, occasionally with sand or gravel bar at mouth which impede the watercourse to form freshwater or brackish waterbodies.
- Large raised shingle beaches and spits formed by longshore drift create lagoons. Slapton Ley is an impressive example of this type due to its extent and it is a unique feature along the South Devon Coast and its post-glacial formation is detailed in the SSSI citation for the site.

Woodland cover

- Woodland on the marshes is limited to occasional trees, usually willows. The marshes and leys are often surrounded by broadleaved woodland in adjacent LCTs.

Land use and field patterns

- Generally this type is unenclosed internally, although contained by the rising landform of drier land. Warleigh and Blaxton Marsh to the north of Plymouth have a small scale field pattern bounded by low hedgerows.
- If accessible, used extensively for both water and land based recreation.

Semi-natural habitats

- Numerous marine-influenced terrestrial habitats, such as fen/carr, mudflats, reedbed, and saltmarsh which are important for biodiversity (including wading birds) and often designated for nature conservation. The freshwater lagoon at Slapton Ley is nationally designated as a SSSI/NNR.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Slapton Sands has long associations with military activities. The area was used as a training ground for D-Day landings with nearby residents evacuated.
- Often associated with historic estates including Warleigh House (Grade II* Listed Building) and Sharpham House (Grade II* Registered Park and Garden).

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Unsettled and unenclosed without roads, although often accessible by public footpaths and used extensively for informal recreation. Significant rights of way that pass through or adjacent to these landscapes include the John Musgrave Heritage Trail, Tamar Valley Discovery Trail and South West Coast Path.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Extensive spectacular views over the open water of adjacent estuaries and coast.
- Much of the LCT falls within the South Devon AONB or Tamar Valley AONB, contributing to special qualities including '*open, unenclosed landscape comprising mudflats, saltmarsh, reedbeds, coastal floodplain, grazing marsh and unenclosed fens*'.
- Highly tranquil, remote and naturalistic with strong sensory characteristics: colour and texture of habitats, smell of mudflats, sound of seagulls, sight of sunlight reflecting off sea.
- Proximity of major roads and settlements in adjoining areas can reduce levels of tranquillity. In good weather large numbers of visitors (particular at Slapton Sands) can cause damage to fragile shingle vegetation due to wear and tear caused by access on foot and vehicles.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Extensively used for recreation providing quiet enjoyment and ready access to the natural environment with links to a network of long-distance paths and spectacular views over the open water and adjacent estuaries and coast;
- High valued marine-influenced terrestrial habitats including mudflats, reedbeds and saltmarshes providing habitats for wetland birds;
- Remote, tranquil and naturalistic without roads and unsettled; and
- The shingle beach at Slapton Ley is an impressive and unique feature along the South Devon Coast and the freshwater lagoon (SSSI) supports an abundance and diversity of aquatic invertebrate fauna.

Summary of landscape condition

Mainly in excellent condition due to being well managed for wildlife and pedestrian access. The proximity of major roads, including the A379, car parks and nearby settlements (including an industrial estate at Warren Point) in the adjoining LCT reduce tranquillity. The large number of visitors in good weather (particularly at Slapton Sands) can cause damage to the shingle vegetation. The coastal area, particularly the succession from open water to reedbed and scrub, is vulnerable to changes in sea level if not appropriately managed.

Forces for change

- Maintenance of sand and gravel bars in relation to global warming and sea level rise as the sand bar at Slapton and Widdicombe is very shallow. Slapton Ley itself is vulnerable to a breach of the shingle barrier due to erosive wave action during extreme winter easterly storms and the increased frequency of storm events.
- Increasing number of visitors and traffic levels, particularly in good weather, likely to diminish levels of tranquillity. Vehicle emissions and large number of visitors can damage shingle vegetation, particularly at Slapton Sands.
- Continuing pressure for recreational development particularly demands for more parking and extension of recreational infrastructure on the shingle bank at Slapton affecting the levels of tranquillity.
- Under management of open water leading to succession to reedbed and scrub at the Leys. Scrub encroachment onto saltmarsh along the River Dart
- Continuing pressure for development in adjoining landscapes which could be visible from within this landscape affecting the rural character and sense of tranquillity. .
- Competing balance between biodiversity interests and coastal defences.
- Climate change may cause important wetland habitats in river valleys to suffer from increasing drought conditions and demand for irrigation lowering groundwater levels.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

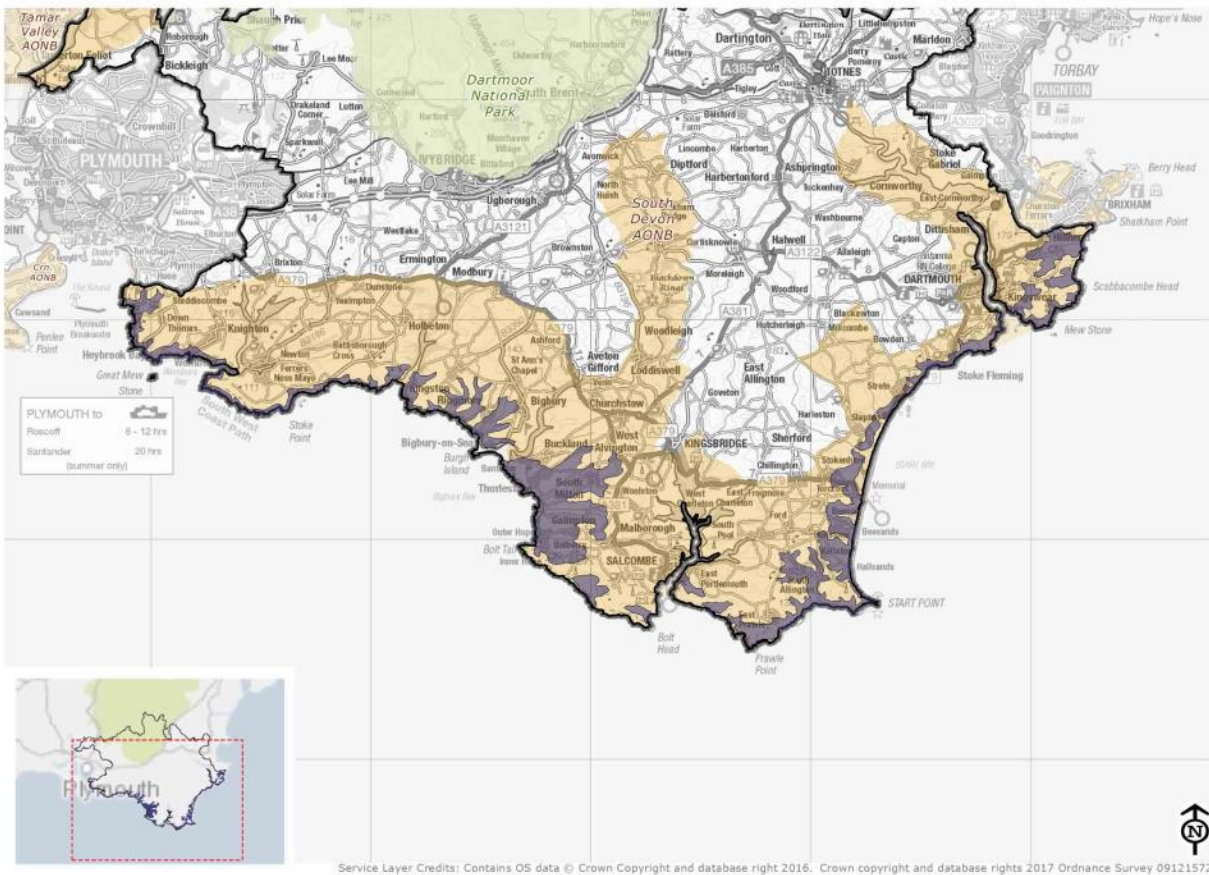
To protect the open character of the marine levels and coastal plain landscape as important backdrops to the wider South Devon Coast. The rare freshwater lagoon of Slapton Ley and sandy beach are protected and enhanced without hard sea defences using a managed/reactive realignment approach. Recreation pressure is sensitively managed to retain the open, uncluttered character of the bay area; and new associated development such as car parks, signage, and interpretation is carefully located and integrated into the landscape. Opportunities are sought to promote sustainable access. The landscape is prepared for the future effects of a changing climate, with wildlife habitats strengthened and expanded to build resilience to the changes that may lie ahead.

Landscape Guidelines

- Manage **areas of grazing marsh and adjacent farmland**, resisting agricultural improvements or conversion to arable or horticulture and monitoring and reducing levels of fertilizer run-off and soil loss from adjacent areas to ensure no contamination of nature conservation sites.
- Manage the **internationally important habitats** including saltmarshes and freshwater lagoon using traditional techniques including appropriate levels of grazing.
- Plan for opportunities to expand **wetland habitats** to strengthen species and habitat resilience.
- Protect and restore **historic features** and provide sensitively sited interpretation which explains the important cultural associations of the area.
- Protect the **open and largely undeveloped character** of Slapton Sands, ensuring any limited new development is unobtrusive and sensitively integrated.
- **Manage the landscape's popularity for recreation**, encouraging the use of existing facilities and South West Coast Path and other long-distance trails whilst providing sustainable transport options to reduce levels of traffic accessing this area.
- Protect the **landscape's expansive views** along the extensive sandy beach to prominent headlands and inland to the surrounding hills.
- Plan for the **future impacts of climate change**, particularly as a result of sea level rise, allowing natural processes to take place wherever possible whilst adapting farming practices to respond to future changes.

LCT 4D: Coastal slopes and combes

4D. Coastal slopes and combes



Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

A number of incisions in the South Devon coast between Plymouth Sound and Brixham, which may extend up to 4.5km/2.25 miles inland. These are often adjacent to river valleys (LCT 3G) and estuaries (LCT 4A).

Landscape character varies between the combe systems depending on topography and land cover. Mostly highly tranquil with a strong visual and perceptual relationship with the sea. Modern 20th century tourism development including groups of chalets and bungalows can be intrusive.

Landscape and seascape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- A number of separate coastal areas of generally wooded slopes and branching valley systems, occasionally with small coastal cliff areas. The topography of the combes varies, with some narrow and steep and some more open, shallow systems.
- The valleys are carved into Devonian mudstones, siltstones, sandstones and schist, with some alluvial deposits. In places, erosion has created wave cut platforms and visible succession of coastal geomorphology with many areas along the coastline designated as Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) or SSSIs, including Wembury Point.

Woodland cover

- Woodland coverage varies between the combe systems, with well wooded upper slopes in the narrow valleys and scrubby vegetation in the more gently sloping, open systems.

Land use and field patterns

- Land cover is a mix of unenclosed woodland and small to medium irregular fields, mainly in pastoral cultivation and with much wet pasture. This gives way to scrub along the upper edge of the adjoining cliffs. Fields are divided by wide earth banks with high hedges and stone boundary walls and gateposts.
- Important sand and pebble beaches for passive recreation, watersports and swimming. Coastal defences may be present on beaches, especially those associated with larger settlements.

Semi-natural habitats

- Extensive nature conservation designations inland including species rich grassland of high interest for bird life.
- Along the coast the LCT has high biodiversity value for marine and coastal habitats and is internationally and nationally designated, including parts of Prawle Point to Start Point SSSI/SAC and Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Contains the Grade II* Registered Parks and Garden of Coleton Fishacre and part of the Langdon Court Estate (Grade II listed). It also provides a setting to Conservation Areas including South Milton, Thurlestone, Ringmore and Stoke Fleming.
- There are number of historic field systems and defences located along the coast which are often designated as Scheduled Monuments.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- There is little settlement on the steeper slopes, although there are old settlements nestled into wider combes, typically with stone as dominant building material. There is some modern holiday development including Thurlestone and Challaborough Bay.
- The road network is generally narrow and winding, with very little vehicle access to the coast. Steep paths down to beaches and the South West Coast Path provide extensive rights of way for pedestrians and access to the high, open and exhilarating top slopes with their extensive coastal views.
- Some Open Access Land is located near the coast.

Views and perceptual qualities

- High, open and exhilarating on top slopes, grading to intimate and enclosed in the lower valley. Generally high levels of tranquillity due to strong naturalistic qualities and few human influences, although there is localised loss of tranquillity near A381 to the east of South Milton.
- Extensive coastal rights of way including the South West Coast Path with steep paths down to beaches. Many areas are owned and managed by the National Trust.

- This LCT falls wholly within the South Devon AONB, including special qualities identified in the AONB Management Plan such as *'fine, undeveloped, wild and rugged coastline'* and *'deeply incised landscape that is intimate, hidden and secretive away from the plateau tops.'*
- Coastal influence in exposure, vegetation and extensive views

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- The variety and complexity of coastal features and the dynamic nature of the coast provide experiential, historic and natural interest reflected in the Heritage Coast designation;
- The small coastal cliff areas show varied geology and a diversity of habitats, with a wealth of associated wildlife including cliff breeding birds and coastal grassland communities;
- The sparse transport network and settlement pattern, with traditional nucleated villages sheltered in valley locations;
- Important coastal settlements mark a long and close relationship with the sea, coastal trading and transportation. Many coastal settlements remain vibrant and industrious locations, some with active ports and small fishing fleets;
- Coastal and maritime leisure and recreation facilities, which provide a rich variety of attractions and activities that appeal to a wide audience;
- Extensive coastal footpaths with the South West Coastal footpath allowing continuous access along the dynamic coastline;
- Historic parks and gardens including Blackpool gardens, Coleton Fishacre National Trust Property, Kingswear Castle and mills e.g. Gara Mill;
- Strong links to the remaining military and maritime defences, including the WWII battery at Froward Point;
- Enclosed with views out to sea confined by landforms and trees; and
- Remote, intimate, sheltered and tranquil qualities.

Summary of landscape condition

The overall condition of this Landscape Character Type is of an intact pattern, aided by the fact that some of the area is inaccessible. However, there has been some change, not necessarily recent, indicated by the dereliction of barns and use of post and wire fencing locally within rough grazing areas. There is evidence of locally neglected pasture, which is unusual for the area. The settlement pattern is subject to a range of pressures from enlargement of tourism hot spots and expansion of settlement over the valleys. This in turn is changing the inherent clustered pattern of settlement and reducing the contribution of small farms to the landscape character, as larger settlements dominate. A change in agricultural practices has meant a decline in the mixed farming systems of the landscape, which has impacted the number of species present. The loss of coastal heath and planting of amenity trees reduces the landscape condition around Stoke Fleming. The landscape around Ringmore and Challaborough is in decline due to a loss of field pattern as a result of arable cultivation and field amalgamation. Farmland is also being lost to settlement, leisure and tourism uses. The related infrastructure in the area such as coastal defences and seafront car parks is harsh and unsympathetic in design and materials.

Forces for change

- Increased amenity tree planting which is a minor detracting element from the landscape character
- Potential agricultural intensification (pastoral to arable), which may lead to a loss of traditional field boundaries and a change to existing landscape pattern as well as a gradual decline in wildlife species

and their habitats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in livestock numbers leading to scrub encroachment on unenclosed pasture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss or damage to coastal heath due to lack of management and erosion from recreational use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important wetland habitats in coastal combes may suffer from increasing drought conditions and demand for irrigation lowering groundwater levels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further degradation of historic features such as stone walls and barns, which are characteristic of the area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of farmland to settlement, new leisure and recreational developments, eroding the rural character and tranquillity of the area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement expansion, for example at Thurlestone and Stoke Fleming eroding the rural character and tranquillity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational pressure on already heavily used car parks, local road network and footpaths

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

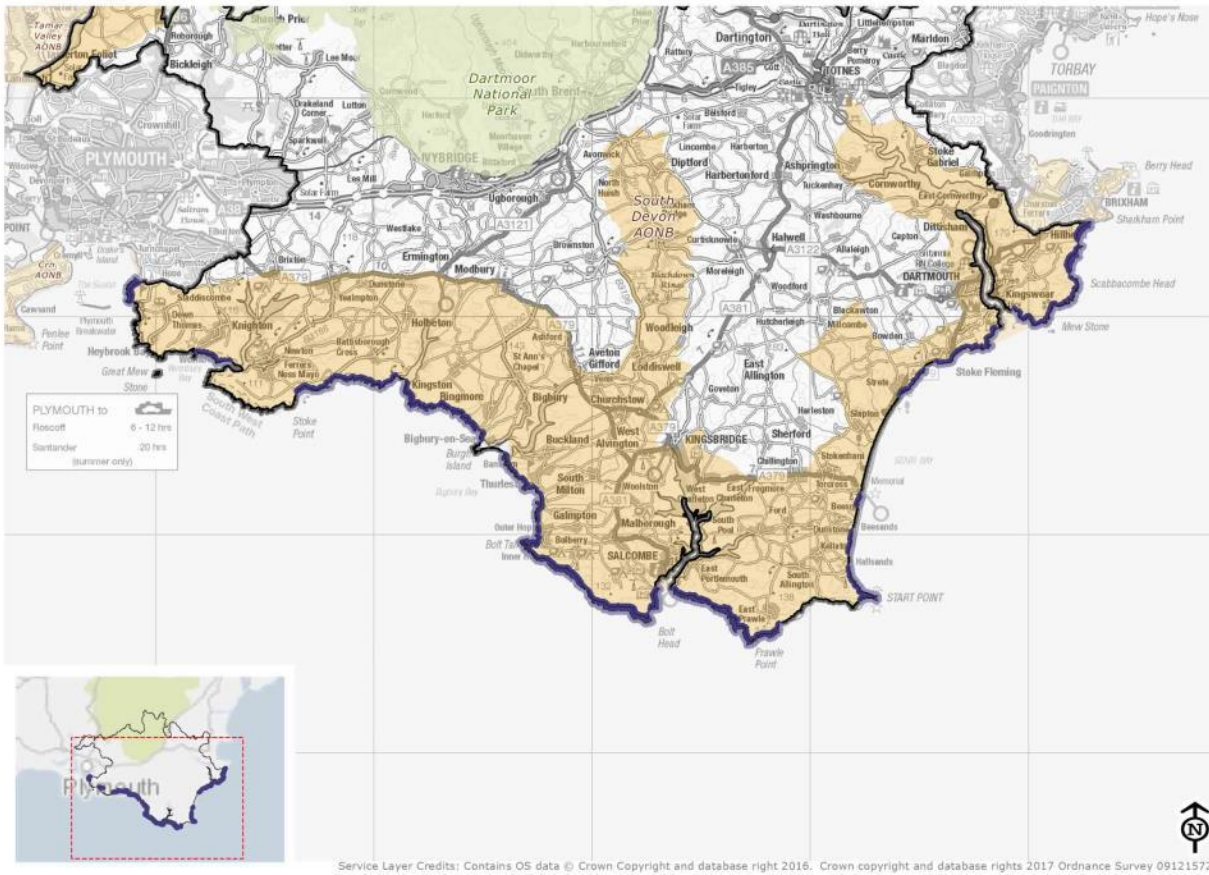
Overall Landscape Strategy

To protect the secret, historic character of the coastal combes, with their characteristic glimpses of the sea and surrounding coastlines and small scale settlements. Opportunities are sought to re-link and enlarge semi-natural habitats (to strengthen climate change resilience) within a working farmed landscape of fields enclosed by an intact network of Devon hedges.

Landscape Guidelines

- Manage areas of **semi-natural broadleaved woodland** associated with upper slopes of the narrow valleys.
- Manage and extend areas of **wet woodland and wet meadows** associated with combe streams through appropriate grazing and traditional land management regimes – both to enhance their wildlife value and function in flood prevention.
- Manage **Devon hedgebanks** through the regular coppicing of hedgerow trees and re-laying of gappy sections, strengthening irregular medieval field patterns. Replace lost lengths and lines of fencing, respecting traditional bank and stone-facing styles and materials, particularly in locations at right angles to slopes to help reduce soil erosion and run-off into watercourses. Also retain and maintain stone boundary walls.
- Manage and re-link **valued mosaics of unimproved grassland and scrub** on steep slopes through livestock grazing at appropriate levels.
- Manage **fertiliser run-off** from adjacent areas to ensure no contamination of nature conservation sites.
- Protect and manage the valued mosaics of **marine and coastal habitats** including those areas designated as SSSI/SAC.
- Protect the **character and setting of historic parkland** (e.g. Coleton Fishacre and Langdon Court Hotel), ensuring that new development does not encroach into these historic landscapes or views to or from them.
- **Protect the landscape's traditional building styles and materials**, particularly local stone and whitewash with slate or sometimes thatched roofs. Any new development or extensions should utilise the same materials and building styles wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).
- **Protect the landscape's network of winding rural lanes**, resisting unsympathetic highways improvements (e.g. hedgerow and woodland cutting) or signage. Promote sustainable transport options to reduce traffic levels particularly around tourism centres such as Thurlstone.
- Manage the **recreational popularity of the area** through the careful siting of parking, caravan sites, visitor attractions and signage.
- Protect **open views** from the top slopes, frequently characterised by glimpses of the sea and the wider coastline.
- **Protect the combes' characteristic sense of seclusion and remoteness**, ensuring limited new development is contained within existing settlement limits and any new farm buildings are integrated into their landscape setting (e.g. through woodland planting).

LCT 4H: Cliffs



Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

Cliffs are located along the south and east facing coast of South Hams intermittently between Plymouth and Brixham, interrupted by estuary mouths. The cliffs frame the bays including Start Bay and Bigbury Bay.

Dramatic sloping or vertical rocky cliffs with limited vegetation that provide a valued semi-natural habitat for many species including sea-birds. The cliffs are popular for recreation and noted for their unsettled, exposed and wild character.

Landscape and seascape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Hard cliffs generally consisting of schist, slate and limestone, with vertical or near vertical faces and ledges, often dramatic with pinnacles and pillars. At the base of the cliffs rocky spurs and outcrops often surround sandy bays or small valleys and result in areas of white water visible in the sea.
- Heavily incised with variable geology expressed in distinctive rock formations, outlying rocks, headlands and bays. Punctuated by a large number of caves and coves. Numerous areas are designated as geological SSSIs and provide important evidence of coastal geomorphological processes.

Woodland cover

- Occasional areas of deciduous woodland are found in more sheltered areas including Jennycliff and Bolt Tail.

Land use and field patterns

- Largely open and unenclosed cliff faces and cliff tops. Some of the less steep upper slopes consist of scrub, heath and coastal grassland, occasionally grading to farmland along the inland edge. Within these areas there is a relic field pattern of downland intake, with some grazed pasture and gorse scrub.
- Disused quarries at Jennycliff and Beesands Quarry (partially in LCT 4D) provide evidence of past land uses. Beesands Quarry is designated as a RIGS due to the exposure of Lower Devonian Meadfoot beds.

Semi-natural habitats

- The relative inaccessibility creates an oasis for both terrestrial and marine ecological communities. The cliffs are often internationally, nationally or locally designated for their wildlife conservation value. Valued plant and animal species include rare maritime heathland and grassland communities, lichens, invertebrates and birds (including skylarks, curl bunting, shag, cormorant and fulmar).
- Intertidal habitats are found at the bottom of the cliffs, including rock pools.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Historic buildings are found along the coast with some Scheduled Monuments including Fort Bovisand (also Grade II* listed) and Bolt Tail. The remains of the lost village at Hallsands can be seen on the cliffside at Start Bay. The village was abandoned in 1917 after persistent extreme storm events and dredging removed the protective shingle beach, exposing the village.
- Evidence of ancient field systems is found along the cliffs, with many designated as Scheduled Monuments.
- Start Point Lighthouse (Grade II listed) is an iconic feature of the South Hams cliffs. Historically, beacons were located along the cliffs where rocky outcrops create a shipping hazard.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- This is an almost entirely unsettled type, apart from occasional small structures on the skyline. There is significant local evidence of early historic settlement (including Scheduled Monuments at Prawle Point and the Warren).
- No highway network. The South West Coast Path provides access on foot and is a popular route.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Wild and exposed with dominant marine influence, including the sound of crashing waves. Highly influenced by weather conditions and subject to meteorological extremes.
- Open and unenclosed, often highly visible from long distances out to sea due to the clearly expressed variable geology, colour and height. Cliff tops provide extensive views, especially from their highest

points, and include iconic views of Burgh Island, Cawsand/Kingsand Bay and Rame Head.

- Important cliff type within the internationally important South Devon Heritage Coast, and for their scenic beauty through the South Devon AONB.
- High cliffs may be fenced for safety reasons, and as well as the eroded footpaths, these features can detract from the relatively natural and unspoilt nature of the coast. The character of the cliffs is also affected by intrusive development in the adjacent open coastal plateaux landscape (LCT 1B), for example the Port Light Hotel at Hope Cove.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- An incised coastline of dramatic vertiginous cliffs with rocky spurs and outcrops out to sea.
- Largely open and unenclosed cliff tops with scrub heath and coastal grassland with a relic field pattern of downland intake.
- Both the cliffs and the shoreline marine environment are highly valued for the habitats they provide to both plant and animal species.
- Significant evidence of early historic settlement and ancient field systems.
- Historic cliff top forts and lighthouses form iconic features along the empty and exposed skyline.
- The variable geology, colour and height of the cliffs make them highly visible far out to sea.
- The wild and exposed coastline in this LCT is highly valued for its remote and unspoilt nature, with access only available along the popular South West Coastal Path, which allows cliff top views of the ever-changing seascape and iconic views along to coastal headlands and out to offshore islands.
- In places where the undulating topography limits light pollution from nearby major conurbations, dark night skies can be experienced

Summary of landscape condition

The cliffs running around the coast from Noss Mayo to Mothecombe and from Bolt Tail to Salcombe are in excellent condition with the coastal footpath being well used but well maintained. There has been a spread of gorse in downland areas running around the coast from Noss Mayo to Mothecombe. Development around Wembury and Heybrook Bay has impacted the rural character of the coastline between Mount Batten and Newton Ferrers and the area inland extending to Staddiscombe. Holiday camps and caravan parks, a communications station with small mast and satellite dish and masts at Staddon Fort are all visually intrusive. The farmland along the inland edge of the cliffs between East Portlemouth and Torcross have some undermanaged field boundaries, degraded stone walls with localised use of post and wire fencing. Coastal defences can be unsympathetic and visually intrusive.

Forces for change

- Loss or damage to field boundaries due to lack of management or erosion from recreational use.
- Pressure for new masts, communication towers and pylons, which would be potentially visible on prominent skylines (such as the existing prominent masts at Staddon Fort).
- Continuing pressure for development due to the LCT's proximity to the fringes of urban areas, potentially affect coastal views and erode rural character.
- Climate change causing potential sea level rise, which could lead to the loss of coastal habitats and an increase in already unsympathetic coastal defences.
- Recreational pressure on the South West Coastal Path and potential for new leisure and recreational development (e.g. holiday camps and caravan parks) affecting the rural character and sense of tranquillity.
- Climate change, causing increased carbon dioxide levels and higher temperatures, may place fragmented heathland habitats on cliff tops under pressure from scrub invasion

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

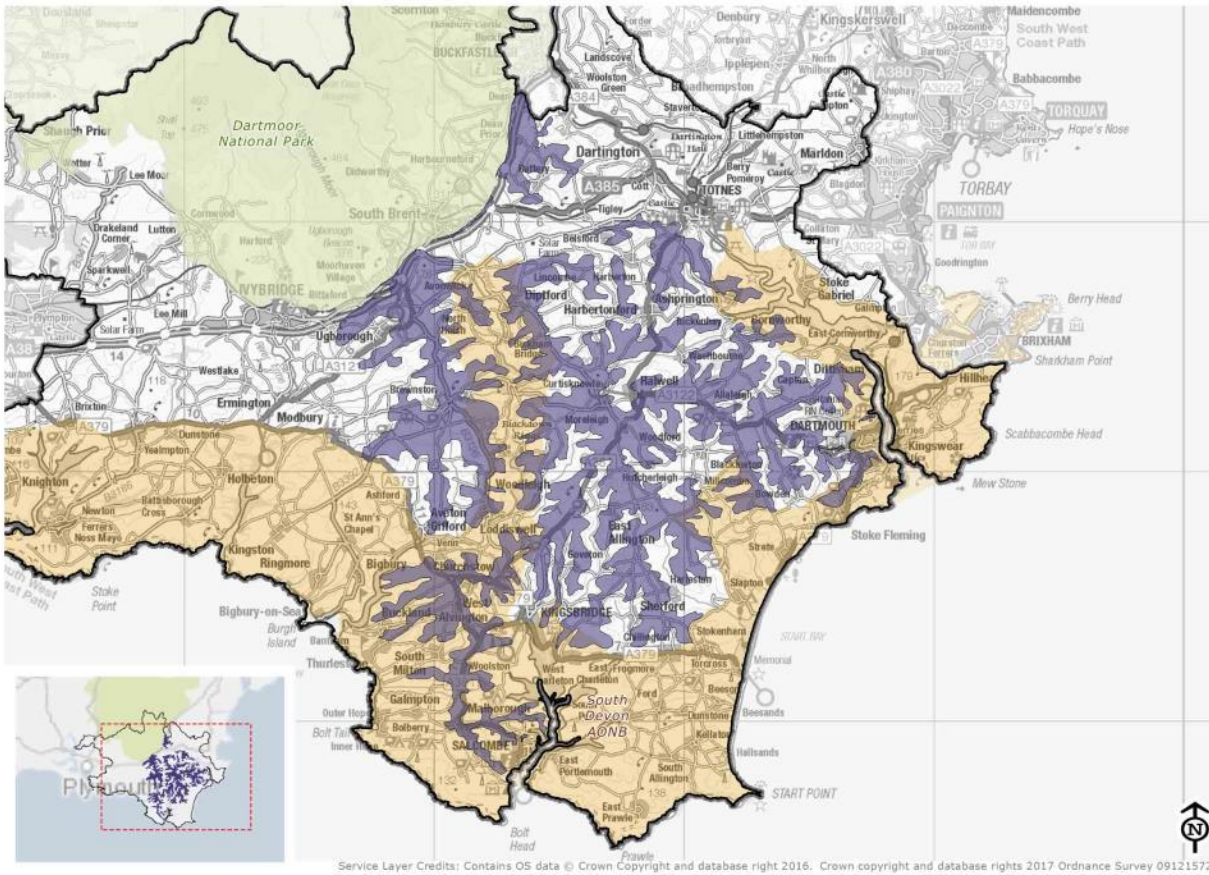
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect and enhance the wild, remote character of the cliffs, conserving the integrity of the empty skylines and panoramic views over the coastal area. .. Manage recreational pressure along the South West coastal path and access to it and consider the visual impact of any new recreational development on the LCT. **Celebrate and appropriately manage the landscape's spectacular geology, cultural heritage and unique habitats** to meet the future challenges presented by climate change. Plan for a changing climate by ensuring coastal defences reinforce the traditional landscape character of the area and considering how the coastal footpath can be expanded or relocated to account for coastal squeeze..

Landscape Guidelines

- **Protect and sensitively interpret the coastline's outstanding geological and geomorphologic features**, including rock exposures, wave cut platforms, raised beaches, and rocky spurs and outcrops.
- Manage and restore the network of **stone-faced hedgebanks enclosing rough grazing land** on less steep slopes and replacing lengths of post-and-wire fencing to strengthen field patterns. Ensure that new lengths of hedgebank replicate the traditional styles of construction such as the patterns of stone facing.
- Manage **nationally important coastal habitats**, including coastal grassland, heath and maritime scrub, through supporting a continuation of extensive grazing at appropriate levels.
- Manage **coastal beaches and coves** retaining their natural character and carefully managing pressures from tourism including increased signage, parking.
- Protect the character of the **landscape's expansive sea views** and protect the perceptions of remoteness along the cliffs, through the control and management of any development. Avoid the siting of any new development or vertical structures on prominent skylines where it would be visible within the wider landscape or seascape. Ensure historic features remain landmark features on skylines.
- **Protect the landscape's wild and highly tranquil qualities** by promoting sustainable tourism and recreation which benefit the local economy throughout the year and maintaining limited road access to significant parts of the coast. Ensure any highway improvements on the limited number of roads are sympathetic.
- Plan for the **impacts of a changing climate on the coastline**, allowing natural processes to take place whilst considering how habitats and the South West Coast Path can be expanded or relocated taking account of coastal squeeze.

LCT 5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land



5A. Inland elevated undulating land

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT consist of narrow elongated 'fingers' of higher land between the many rivers and estuaries in the south of the district.

Elevated undulating farmland which is generally open and treeless with little built development. Some areas extend towards the south coast and are influenced by coastal exposure and sea views.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Narrow spines of elevated land with summits of up to 200m with radiating fingers, sloping gently along their outside edges. Small streams, rising from springs on the higher slopes, cut folds in the gently rolling landform.
- Complex underlying geology of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, with ridges of sandstone and basalt resulting in a varied topography.

Woodland cover

- Sparsely wooded high ground often accentuated by ridge-top tree clumps. Small copses around farmsteads and on lower, less exposed, slopes.

Land use and field patterns

- Agricultural land comprising a mixture of sheep and dairy pasture on steeper slopes with arable on the flatter upland areas.
- The fields are of complex mix of size and origin, with small irregular medieval fields on the steeper hillsides, larger regular '**Barton Fields**', laid out between C15th-C18th and large regular modern fields on the rolling plateau tops.
- Field are bounded by low but mature wide hedges or hedgebanks with a few stunted hedgerow trees in exposed locations, particularly near the coast, contrasting with taller Devon hedges topped by hedgerow trees including locally distinctive pine and beech on more protected slopes.

Semi-natural habitats

- Valued semi-natural habitats associated with deciduous woodland and semi-improved grassland. There are small areas of acid grassland, purple moor grass and rush pastures on the higher land which give a moorland character particularly at Stoneleigh Manor and **west of the Blackdown Rings**. **Andrew's Wood** SSSI is designated for its mosaic of species-rich grassland, wet heath and secondary woodland.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Scattered historic features including frequent clusters of prehistoric hillforts (e.g Blackdown Rings, Burleigh Dolts and Stanborough Camp) and frequent ring cairns and bowl barrows on the exposed ridgelines. The local history of copper mining is evident at Loddiswell Mine.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Sparsely settled with high levels of tranquillity, isolated farms and houses away from ridgelines and nestled in dips often with shelterbelts. Occasional small historic village such as Malborough and West Alvington with their distinctive church towers.
- Local vernacular buildings styles of exposed stone and slate and some whitewashed cottages with thatch.
- Straight narrow roads traverse the ridges linked by steep sunken lanes plunging down valley slopes. Main roads (A381 and B3196) which give access to the coast can be busy in summer. The network of footpaths links with the long-distance river valley walks or South West Coast Path.

Views and perceptual qualities

- The southern half of the LCT along the coast forms part of the South Devon AONB which recognises the quality of this rural rolling patchwork of this agricultural landscape as part of the protected landscape.
- The low hedges and lack of hedgerow trees result in open skylines with some far-reaching views over the countryside including to Dartmoor National Park in the north. The open sea is visible from the edge of the plateau and there are occasional panoramic views over the estuaries on the south coast. (e.g. Snapes Point at Salcombe, Jawbone Hill over the Dart).

- A peaceful landscape with dark night skies and a strong sense of remoteness only diluted by development on the edge of coastal town such as Salcombe, Dartmouth and Stoke Fleming (including caravan and camp sites) telephone masts and pylons on the ridgelines in the LCT.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- **The seemingly remote and 'empty' character, sparsely settled with high levels of tranquillity and experience of dark skies;**
- Open windswept, largely unwooded, landscape with hilltop tree clumps, plus pine and beech roadside trees providing locally distinctive landmarks;
- The mosaic of arable and pasture fields with pastures grazed by distinctive Devon Red and South Devon cattle;
- The mixed pattern of field sizes and origins, including small irregular medieval fields on hillsides, larger regular Barton Fields and large modern fields on higher flatter ground;
- Small areas of deciduous woodland and semi-improved grassland which provide valuable habitats, with areas of moorland character on higher land;
- Steep sunken lanes which plunge into the valleys, bound by hedgebanks often covered with a profusion of wildflowers;
- Clusters of prehistoric hillforts (e.g Blackdown Rings, Burleigh Dolts and Stanborough Camp) and frequent ring cairns and bowl barrows forming highly visible features on the exposed ridgelines;
- Extensive rights of way of value for recreation and quiet enjoyment and ready access to the natural environment;
- The open skylines and long rural, estuarine or seascape views available within this high, open and expansive landscape, with limited urban development visible in occasional locations.

Summary of landscape condition

- Because much of the landscape is unsettled and remote, the structure of the landscape, with gently undulating open farmland, extensive views and lack of built development, is largely intact. Settlement is scattered, with isolated houses and farms, especially near the south coast, except for recent development on the edge of Dartmouth and Stoke Fleming which, where it has spread up into this LCT, is widely visible and intrusive. Adjacent urban areas are only visible from the edge of the plateau, except for Totnes where factory chimneys, the castle and traffic on major roads can be seen. The presence of pylons is visually intrusive in this LCT. The A38 intrudes on levels of tranquillity and there are high levels of light pollution from settlements along its length.

Forces for change

- Changes in land ownership or agricultural intensification (pastoral to arable), which may lead to a loss of traditional medieval field boundaries and a change to existing landscape pattern as well as a gradual decline in wildlife species and their habitats. Decline in livestock numbers leading to scrub encroachment onto pastoral land.
- Continuing decline in traditional rural skills such as hedge-laying resulting in under management of

hedges and verges in some areas.

- **Continuing pressure for development particularly due to the LCT's proximity to the urban fringes of Totnes and along the A38.** Development in these areas would affect the rural character and sense of tranquillity. Further expansion of settlements adjacent to the LCT, onto the upper slopes where they could be highly visible within this elevated landscape (e.g. Loddiswell and Salcombe).
- An increase in traffic levels on narrow rural lanes likely to diminish levels of tranquillity and pressure to widen road (e.g. B3196 which leads to Loddiswell and Kingsbridge) eroding its rural character.
- Pressure for new masts, pylons and potentially wind turbines (if government subsidies are renewed), which would be potentially visible on prominent skylines.
- Potential for new leisure and recreational development (e.g. diversification of farms to caravans/campsites and conversion of small traditional farm buildings, particularly barns, to accommodation which can increase the need for new agricultural buildings elsewhere), affecting the rural character and sense of tranquillity.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

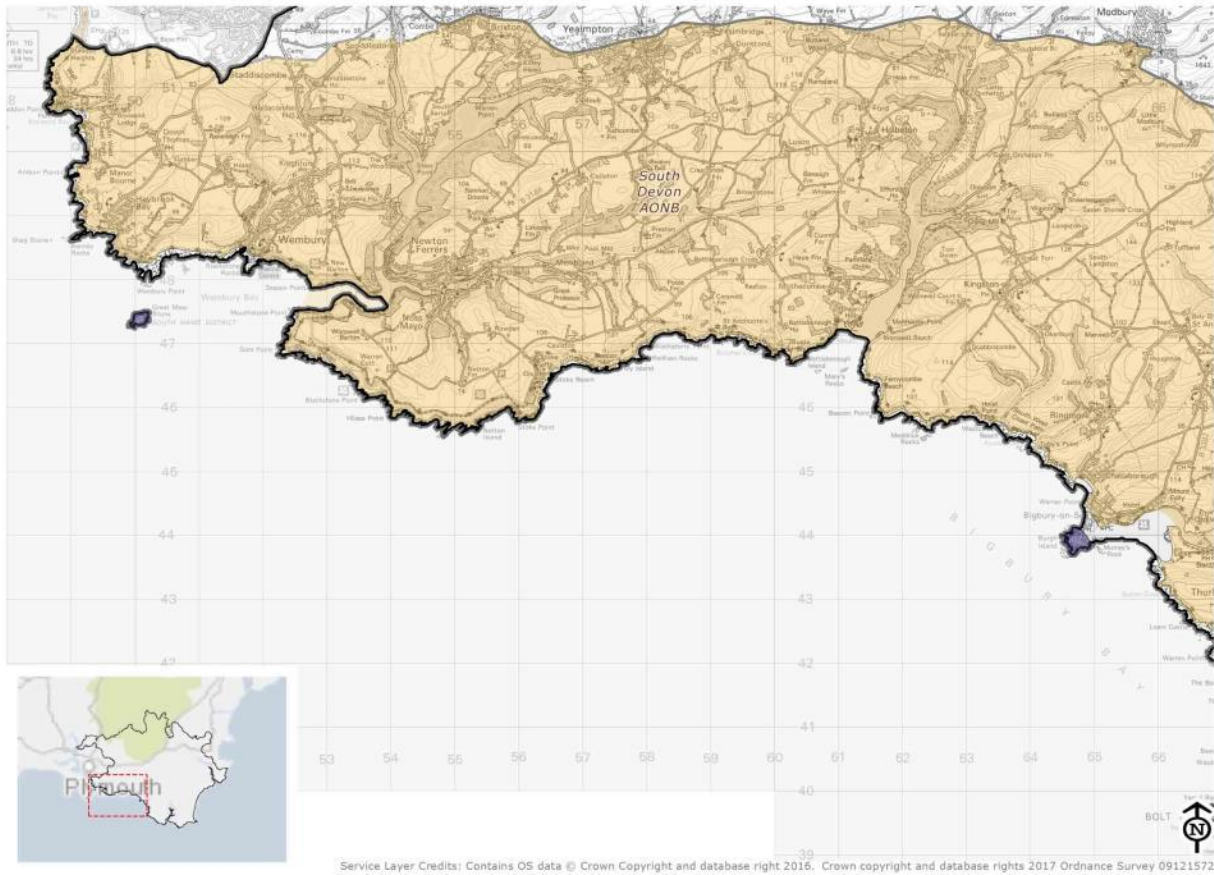
Overall Landscape Strategy

- To protect and enhance the remote character of the elevated uplands, with its intricate pattern of fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedgebanks. Manage and enhance the farmed landscape by ensuring that pastoral land is conserved and field boundaries maintained, wildlife interest and local diversity is enhanced, soil erosion and agricultural run-off reduced. Maintain the sparse settlement pattern, open views to distinctive tree clumps and to Dartmoor and views from the edge of the plateau over the estuaries along the south coast.

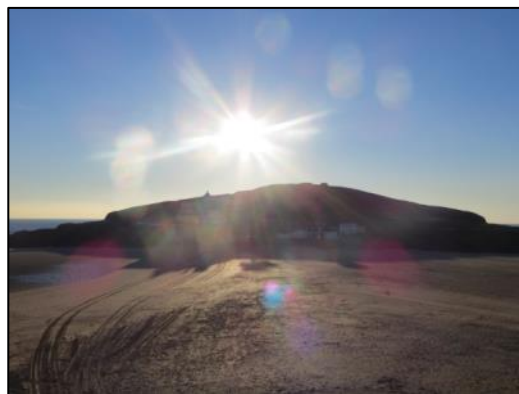
Landscape Guidelines

- Manage the **ridge top tree clumps and shelterbelts** which form characteristic features within the open landscape, encouraging the development of further beech and pine hedgerow trees.
- Protect and maintain the **historic field patterns of the landscape**, restoring and replanting lost and gappy Devon hedgebanks (particularly on intensively farmed slopes where they can provide a role in stabilising the soil and reducing agricultural runoff into watercourses). Respect any local variations in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials wherever possible.
- Manage important areas of **rough grazing and gorse scrub on upper slopes** through a continuation of livestock grazing at appropriate levels. Manage and re-link fragmented patches of unimproved species-rich grassland. **Support farmers to continue to farm these 'marginal' areas as an integral part of their farming system.**
- Manage and enhance the **wildlife interest of agricultural fields** by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and grass buffer strips around intensively farmed fields. These measures will also help reduce diffuse pollution into adjacent water courses draining from the plateaux.
- **Protect and appropriately manage the landscape's archaeological heritage** including prehistoric burial sites, ancient hilltop enclosures and historic quarries, providing sensitive interpretation where appropriate.
- Protect the **sparsely settled character** by carefully controlling any new development outside the **existing footprints of the landscape's small settlements**. Ensure that any change and/or diversification of farms to caravans/campsites are of a small scale, low key and unobtrusive.
- Protect the landscape's **traditional building styles and materials**, of exposed stone and slate and some whitewashed cottages with thatch. Any new developments or extensions should utilise the same materials and building styles wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).
- Protect rural lanes and **ensure any highway improvements are sympathetic**, resisting intrusive signage and following local guidance for management of roadside verges. Screen visually intrusive sections of the A381 and B3196 consider the introduction of whisper tarmac on major road corridors where traffic noise impacts on levels of tranquillity.
- Seek opportunities to **extend recreational routes and improve linkages** and supporting facilities where this does not damage the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.
- **Protect the landscape's far-reaching views and the open character** of the undeveloped skylines, avoiding insensitively-sited development on prominent ridgelines where it would be more visible within the wider landscape. Ensure local church towers and ridgeline tree clumps remain landmark features on skylines.
- Protect the **strong perceptions of tranquillity and remoteness** in the landscape, with its well managed fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedgebanks through the control and management of development, and ensure the area remains valued for recreation.

LCT 6: Offshore Islands



Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

Two separate islands on the south coast of South Hams District and the South Devon AONB, each with their own unique character.

Burgh Island is a tidal island, near Bigbury-on-Sea. Small domed island connected to mainland by sandbar at low tide. Stepped cliffs with sheer vertical faces and small flat plateau areas. Grazed pasture and scrub, divided into irregular fields by post-and-wire fencing. There are a few trees on the leeward side, near the few buildings comprising settlement, as well as a quay and boat landing slope. Views out to sea are picturesque, but views over to land are affected by inland settlements.

The Great Mew Stone located off Wembury is an uninhabited rocky outcrop of high biodiversity value for sea birds and seals. It is exposed and subject to wave action with a character that changes dramatically with the weather and sea conditions.

Landscape and seascape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Burgh Island is a dome shaped tidal island rising to 48 metres formed via erosion and separated from the mainland by a sandbar which is passable at low tide.
- The Great Mewstone is a distinctive wedge shaped island rising to 50 metres AOD. Now located 460 metres offshore, it was originally part of a headland.

Woodland cover

- Few trees are present due to the exposure of the islands. The limited woodland is often stunted and windswept.

Land use and field patterns

- Land cover on Burgh Island is primarily grazed pasture and scrub, divided by post-and-wire fences. The land of the Great Mewstone is unenclosed and scrubby.

Semi-natural habitats

- The island habitats are highly valued for nature conservation purposes, particularly for feeding and nesting sea birds. Both islands are surrounded by the Start Point to Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC.
- Wembury Point SSSI includes the Great Mew Stone. Isolation and lack of access allows birds to breed relatively undisturbed. The maritime cliff and slopes are a UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitat.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Ownership of the Great Mewstone was taken over by the War Office during WWII. It is now owned by the National Trust and has no public access. Great Mew Stone is part of the historic Langdon Court Hotel Registered Park and Garden (Grade II) which sold the island in the 1920s.
- The ruins of a historic chapel are found near the Burgh Island summit. Burgh Island Hotel is a Grade II listed building.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- On Burgh Island there is a cluster of buildings on the land facing north side of the island, grouped around a striking 1930s hotel.
- There is no highway network on either island. Burgh Island is accessible by paths and is linked by a sand bar to mainland at low tide. Great Mew Stone has no current public access.
- On the Great Mewstone, there is no settlement. The remains of a cottage occupied by Samuel Wakeham in the 1800s are visible.

Views and perceptual qualities

- There are panoramic views out to sea and back to the mainland from the islands. The islands themselves form the focal point of views from land and have offered inspiration for artists and photographers for centuries, including JMW Turner who visited and made a number of drawings of the Mew Stone.
- Open, exposed and highly influenced by maritime conditions. Remote and isolated perceptual qualities.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- The islands form the primary focus of mainland views out to sea, particularly from Bigbury-on-Sea and Wembury.
- Important coastal habitats which are particularly important for breeding birds.
- Open and exposed, with an intimate connection with the sea and long, panoramic views
- Burgh Island is a valued area for recreation with footpaths and tracks providing for quiet enjoyment and a quay and boat landing slope
- The inaccessible nature of the landscape gives the islands a remote and tranquil character that is much valued
- **On Burgh Island, distinctive white 1930s modernist hotel and historic remains of St Michael's Chapel.**
- The islands make important contributions to the South Devon Heritage Coast and the setting of the South Devon AONB

Summary of landscape condition

The landscape is in good condition although very exposed. Burgh Island currently is important for tourism with a hotel and pub. The islands are grazed by rabbits, but there is a potential for scrub encroachment if management by grazing ceases.

Forces for change

- Coastal erosion, which may be exacerbated by more frequent extreme weather events.
- Recreational pressure from visitor pressure which can erode the rural character of the landscape
- Potential for scrub encroachment if management regime changes.
- Potential for new tourism and recreational development on Burgh Island, affecting the rural character

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

Conserving the largely undeveloped nature of the landscape, resisting any development proposals. Manage the footpaths on Burgh Island, and consider replacing post and wire fencing with fencing that reinforces the traditional landscape character of the area. Plan for a changing climate by conducting research into the effects of climate change on the islands.

Landscape Guidelines

- Encourage **management of pasture fields** to control and eliminate scrub.
- Ensuring the favourable condition of sites and habitats is achieved through the application of extensive grazing regimes, particularly where **protection of archaeological sites** coincides, such as the remains of St Michael's Chapel
- **Avoiding the use of post and wire fencing** and where possible replace with hedgerows.
- Considering conducting research into **mitigation of potential impacts of climate change** and rising sea levels on the islands.
- Planning to create and link areas of **semi natural habitat** (including hedgebanks, streams, sunken lanes, and woodland) between arable and pastoral land to enhance their biodiversity value.
- **Resisting development which is uncharacteristic and visually** intrusive over wide areas. Any development should reinforce the traditional landscape character of the area.
- **Maintaining footpaths and car parks** to ensure they are kept in good condition.
- Managing the **public rights of way network** with sensitive standards of path maintenance, appropriate information and clear but uncluttered sign posting, and their management as conservation corridors in partnership with landowners will be supported.
- Ensuring **continued access to Burgh Island**, providing local opportunities for education, play, exercise and quiet enjoyment.

4 The Landscape Character of West Devon

4 The landscape character of West Devon

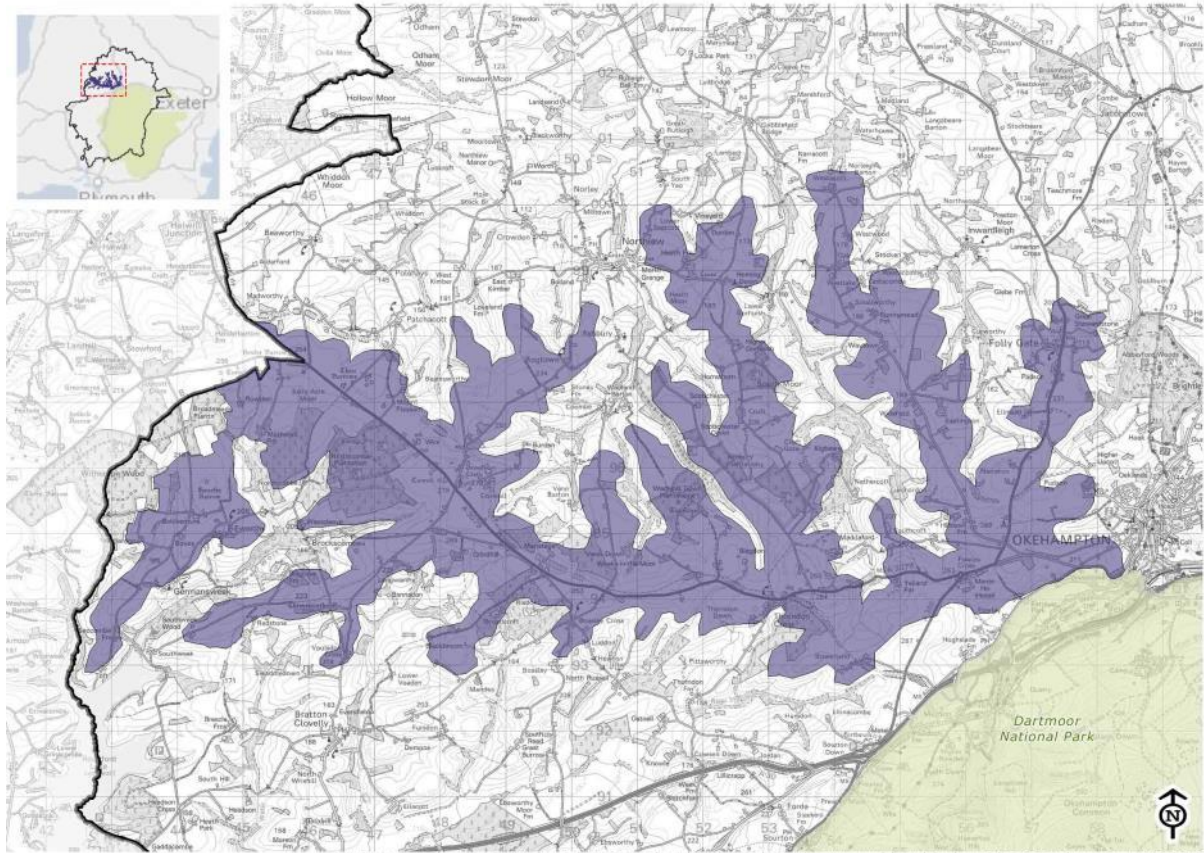
West Devon Landscape Character Type descriptions

- 4.1 This section contains the landscape character type profiles including descriptive and evaluative information for West Devon.

Table 4.1: Contents of the West Devon LCT descriptions

Landscape Character Type	Page number
LCT 1A: Open inland planned plateaux	105
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LCT 1A: Open inland planned plateaux



1A. Open inland planned plateaux

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Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

There is only one example of this type in West Devon, located on high ground to the west of Okehampton. It stretches towards the District boundary in the west, and lies between the Lew valley in the north and the Thrushel valley in the south, in an intricate relationship with the steep-sided wooded valleys which surround it.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Series of linked narrow plateaux underlain by the Upper Culm measures. High and open, suddenly sloping into adjacent river valleys. Elevation ranges between 150 metres and 280 metres AOD.
- In the east of the LCT, small streams flow towards larger water courses in the adjacent river valleys.

Woodland cover

- Trees mainly occur in dense, geometric coniferous plantations.
- Hedgerow trees are sparse but include beech, oak and hazel. Occasional small copses of broadleaved woodland. Open farmland is punctuated by narrow copses and double hedges along roads, with some beech clumps.

Land use and field patterns

- Pastoral farmland is the primary land use, followed by conifer plantations, with many areas of rough ground and unimproved pasture and some recreational uses locally.
- This is a landscape of generally late enclosure of former common land, indicated by a regular medium-large scale field pattern bounded by low-trimmed hedges on narrow earth banks.
- There is more variety of land use towards Okehampton and Dartmoor, with a golf course, equestrian centre, plant nursery, hotels and guest houses, although these are not frequent.

Semi-natural habitats

- A number of sites locally designated for wildlife conservation value are found within this landscape and include habitats such as culm grassland, rush pastures, purple moor grass and deciduous woodland.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Scheduled Monuments including tumuli, barrows and prehistoric hillfort and settlement enclosure sites indicate this landscape's much older, now visually insignificant, history.
- The LCT contains parts of Eworthy and Germansweek Conservation Areas, as well as providing a setting to these historic rural settlements.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- This landscape tends to be devoid of much settlement with isolated houses, farms and small hamlets clustered at crossroads. Large modern farm complexes are mixed with traditional rural buildings and modern bungalows. Building materials for houses are usually stone and slate, with construction dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, although farm buildings may have more recent crinkly tin roofs.
- Long, straight A and B roads run along the centre of the plateau, with narrow minor roads winding towards the plateau edge.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Extensive views in all directions owing to the elevation and exposure of the landscape. Plantation woodlands offer localised enclosure and limit some views.
- This is a fairly empty, uniform, large-scale landscape, with no villages, in which modern elements such as communications masts and wind turbines are prominent over the low hedgebanks and past lonely windswept trees.
- There is a slight moorland edge character in some places, such as around Thorndon Cross, where the field pattern becomes larger, trees are less frequent and Dartmoor is a looming presence to the south.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this Character Area:

- Nationally important prehistoric archaeology, including tumuli, barrows and hillforts.
- Valued semi-natural habitats, including culm grassland, rush pastures, purple moor grass and deciduous woodland.
- Sparse settlement pattern, with isolated farms and small hamlets.
- Large-scale, open landscape, with extensive views in all directions due to the elevation of the land.

Summary of landscape condition

The landscape is generally in good condition with much unimproved pasture and rough grassland, divided by intact hedges on narrow earthbanks. The extensive geometric plantations have altered the open character of the plateaux in places. There has been some recent destruction of valued semi-natural habitats due to inappropriate farming and land management practices. Modern structures including communications masts and wind turbines are often prominent and can detract from views.

Forces for change

- Recreational pressures, including equestrian development and golf courses.
- Increased demand for communications infrastructure including telecommunications masts.
- Felling of extensive areas of coniferous plantation as trees reach maturity.
- Demand for renewable energy installations, including wind turbines and solar arrays.
- Increased development pressure, particularly on the fringes of Okehampton.
- The conversion of agricultural buildings to residences.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

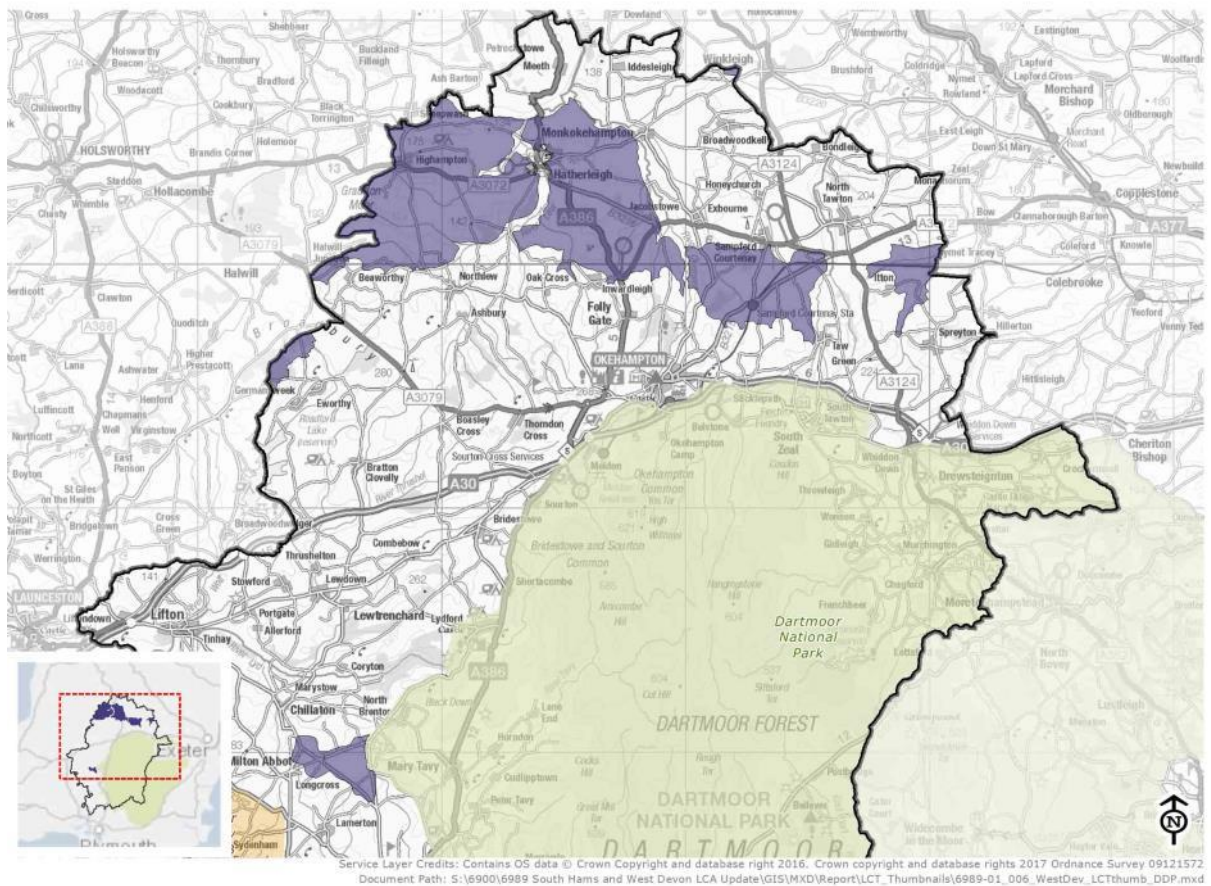
Overall Landscape Strategy

Retain the remote, open character of the landscape and protect the valued archaeology and semi-natural habitats. Undertake sensitive management of coniferous plantation, including a move away from clear felling regimes. Ensure that conversion of agricultural buildings is undertaken in a manner sensitive to the character of the building and the surrounding landscape.

Landscape Guidelines

- Encouraging maintenance of **earth banks**.
- Encouraging continuing management of **beech hedges and tree rows** to maintain local distinctiveness, including replanting individual trees in rows to maintain continuity, while generally encouraging the maintenance of locally indigenous multi-species hedges.
- Encouraging discussion with highways authorities and landowners to ensure that **ditches and verges are managed to maximise their biodiversity potential**, by seeking agreement that, for example, (a) verges are not cut until wildflowers have dispersed their seed and (b) that a programme of verge cutting is undertaken to encourage the persistence of specific species in specific locations, via timing of cutting (ie late spring or summer cutting to promote early or late flowering species).
- Encouraging the retention of **pastoral cultivation** as the dominant land use throughout this type.
- Encouraging the management of scrub and bracken invasion to improve wet heath habitats with due attention to and care for **buried and earthwork archaeological sites**.
- Encouraging an integrated approach to the management of the **biodiversity and archaeological resource**.
- Encouraging good management of the **small copses** on roadside and in damp patches and the creation of ecological links to existing field boundaries by planting new hedges.
- Identifying and surveying areas of **heathland, acid grassland and species-rich permanent pasture**.
- Encouraging the **retention and management of small estate plantations** and coverts.
- Encouraging a change to broadleaf cover or management as (wet) heath, where appropriate as conifer plantations mature, to increase local biodiversity and create more effective ecological corridors.
- Maintaining the **existing settlement pattern** across the landscape character type.
- Ensuring that development does not lead to the **loss of valuable habitats**.
- Ensuring that **development proposals associated with key settlements** (e.g. Okehampton) mitigate any negative impact on the local landscape character.
- Having regard to the potential impact on and dilution of local landscape character through the **introduction of renewable energy sources** such as wind farms and solar arrays.
- Encouraging **appropriate uses of rural buildings** or their sympathetic conversion where appropriate, including all associated works such as drives, hedgebanks, visibility splays and entrance detailing.
- Ensuring that **recreational development** is well integrated into the landscape through the use of appropriate low-key landform changes and locally indigenous tree and shrub species.
- Discussing with highways authorities ways of **reducing road signage** without jeopardizing road safety, as the highway layout encourages speeding, while signage detracts from the openness and unsettled character.

LCT 1F: Farmed lowland moorland



1F. Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

This LCT is found in a discontinuous band across the northern part of the District, to the north of Okehampton, to either side of the Torridge, and one area on the western edge of Dartmoor near North Brentor.

Unenclosed Culm grasslands create a 'wild' and exposed landscape, amongst more traditional pastoral farmland.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Gently undulating landform, in some places of a plateau-like character based upon an underlying geology of Culm Measures with mudstones and siltstones with bands of sandstone creating gently rolling topography.
- Landscape is crossed by frequent streams, springs, wet ditches and small ponds fringed by wet woodland, rush pasture and meadows.

Woodland cover

- Well wooded character, with large geometric blocks of coniferous plantation, as well as frequent patches of beech/oak woodland (some of which is ancient), secondary woodland on plantation edges and willow carr associated with streams.
- Square-cut beech hedgebanks with rushes bordering wet ditches. Patches of bracken and gorse, as well as wind-sculpted beech trees, give an exposed, upland feel to higher locations. Areas on the fringes of more intensive farming include mixed species hedges which are flower and fern-rich.

Land use and field patterns

- Open and sometimes unenclosed areas of Culm grassland and patches of wet heath and scrub including Hatherleigh Moor, surrounded by a regular, often square, pattern of medium-scale post-medieval and modern fields, with some earlier fields of medieval origin with curving boundaries.
- Pastoral character including rough cattle/sheep grazing on expanses of Culm grassland and heath. More intensive farming, including occasional dairying, arable fields, poultry units and localised pony paddocks around settlements.

Semi-natural habitats

- Internationally designated expanses of herb-rich Culm grassland and purple moor grass, including Hollow Moor SAC/SSSI. Large tracts of wet heath, rich flushes, valley mires, fen and marshy grasslands also provide valued habitat.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Limited archaeological interest; some historic manors and farmhouses are scattered throughout the countryside. Contains part of and forms a setting to Hatherleigh Conservation Area.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Sparse settlement pattern with scattered farmsteads, small clustered hamlets and nucleated villages often occupying ridgetop positions. Variety of traditional building styles, particularly white/cream cob render with slate roofs.
- Sparse road network with straight roads (including the A386 and A3072) crossing along ridgelines, occasionally running through tunnels created by mature beech trees particularly on the fringes of settlements. Characterful stone bridges are an occasional feature on minor roads. The Okehampton to Exeter railway line crosses the LCT.
- **Public rights of way link the settled areas with the remote 'moors' and including the long distance Devonshire Heartland Way and Tarka Trail routes.** Open Access Land is found at Hatherleigh Moor and Berrydown Plantation.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Elevation affording long views across the landscape and beyond with the contrasting lush green fields of the surrounding farmland and the high moorlands of Dartmoor, including the highest point of High Willhays.
- Open and exposed character within the unenclosed areas. A sense of enclosure is sometimes offered by the presence of trees.
- Golf courses, fishing lakes, caravan parks, equestrian centres, disused airfields, industrial land uses and main roads dilute perceptions of tranquillity and remoteness locally. Renewable energy installations

including solar panels and farm scale on-shore wind turbines are found throughout the landscape.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Distinctive internally and nationally designated Culm grassland habitats and associated birdlife.
- Traditional management regimes on the unenclosed grasslands, resulting in a diverse sward.
- Small field patterns (often medieval in origin) enclosed by thick Devon banks and surrounded by open grazing land.
- Sparse settlement pattern with isolated farms and farmsteads and few roads.
- High levels of tranquillity and remoteness.
- Long, open views across the landscape which includes the upland tors of Dartmoor National Park.

Summary of landscape condition

This landscape is mostly in good condition, with well managed semi-natural habitats and intact medieval field patterns. Some dilapidated farm buildings give a localised impression of neglect and renewable energy installations can be visible from long distances across the landscape and detract from the traditional rural character.

Forces for change

- Past drainage of Culm grasslands to convert land to agriculturally productive farmland.
- Uneven grazing levels and distribution leading to vegetation succession in some areas, whilst other areas of Culm grassland are closely grazed leading to a uniform grass sward.
- 20th century afforestation across significant areas of Culm **grassland/lowland 'moors'**. Some areas now being felled and restored to heathland/Culm grassland.
- Tensions between the requirements of nature conservation designations (SAC / SSSI) and traditional farming practices.
- Development pressures encroaching into the landscape from the larger settlements such as Hatherleigh (including pony paddocks) along with the need for supporting infrastructure and services.
- Tourism-related development and land uses, such as golf courses, caravan sites, fisheries and fishing lakes as well as an increase in traffic levels and car parking.
- Feeling of neglect in some locations due to an ongoing decline in the agricultural economy – e.g. overgrown hedges, derelict farm buildings, inappropriate farm building repairs, general farm 'clutter'.
- Potential effects of climate change which may include more intense drought conditions affecting **the landscape's wetland habitats and Culm grasslands**.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back.
- **Drive for increased woodland planting, planted to enhance the landscape's roles in filtering water,** minimising downstream flooding, storing and sequestering carbon dioxide and providing low carbon fuel sources (through coppice management).
- The elevated plateaux likely to come under increasing pressure for the development of commercial wind turbines.
- Demand for domestic and community-scale renewable energy installations such as solar panels, small wind turbines and ground-source heat pumps

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

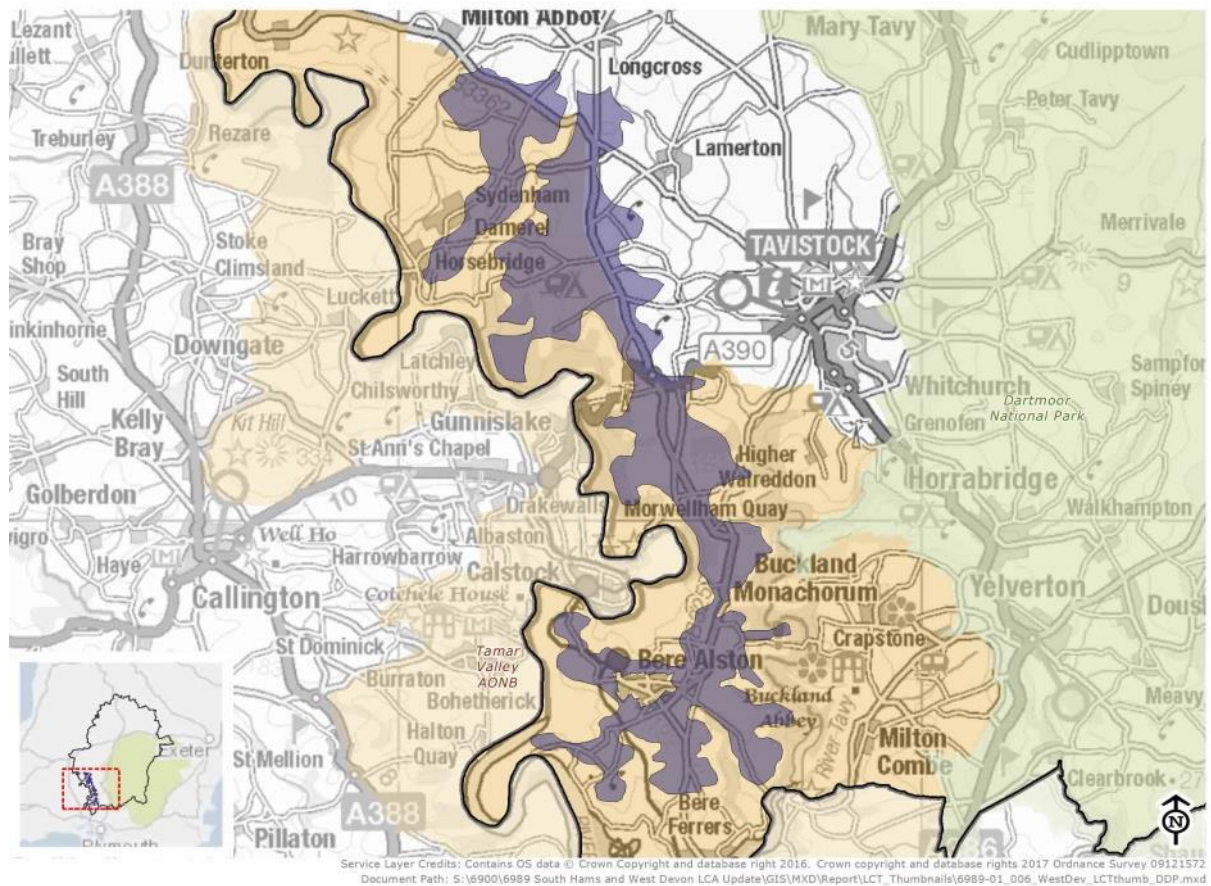
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the landscape's traditional farming systems which are integral to the survival of rare Culm grassland habitats. New development is integrated into its landscape setting, avoiding prominent open ridgelines, and opportunities are sought for the creation of Green Infrastructure networks to support future population growth and provide space for recreation.

Landscape Guidelines

- Promoting **improved maintenance and gapping-up**, especially where hedges have grown out into lines of scrub or where post-and-wire fencing is prominent.
- Encouraging discussion with highways authorities and landowners to ensure that **ditches and rush-dominated verges are managed to maximise their biodiversity potential**, by seeking agreement that, for example, (a) verges are not cut until wildflowers have dispersed their seed and (b) that a programme of verge cutting is undertaken to encourage the persistence of specific species in specific locations, via timing of cutting (i.e. late spring or summer cutting to promote early or late flowering species).
- Preserve the **traditional land uses** by promoting the conservation of pastoral cultivation as the dominant land use.
- Promoting continuing management of **wet pasture, heath and scrub habitats** and their expansion where conifer plantations are felled.
- Ensuring that **plantations are not extended** so as to impede continuity of grassland habitats around them. Examining potential for reversion of conifer plantations at maturity to open grazing moorland.
- Felling conifers at maturity and encouraging the **re-creation of heathland/moorland habitats**.
- Where plantations are to be conserved, **promote further edge planting of beech**, which is locally distinctive.
- Maintaining the **existing settlement pattern** across the landscape character type.
- Ensuring that development does not lead to the **loss of valuable habitats**.
- Ensuring that **development proposals associated with key settlements** (e.g. Hatherleigh) mitigate any negative impact on the local landscape character or archaeological interest.
- Resisting development in all areas of open countryside which is uncharacteristic and visually intrusive over wide areas. Any **development should reinforce the traditional landscape character** of the area.
- Having regard to the potential impact on and dilution of local landscape character through the **introduction of renewable energy sources** such as wind turbines and solar farms.
- Encouraging **appropriate uses of rural buildings** or their sympathetic conversion where appropriate, including all associated works such as drives, hedgebanks, visibility splays and entrance detailing.
- Encouraging the **establishment of discrete broadleaf woods and copses**, or even small conifer plantations with a deciduous edge to help screen recent development, without masking views over the river or affecting areas of archaeological interest.
- Having regard to the **high skyline and cross-boundary intervisibility** of this landscape type.
- **Improve recreation resource** by supporting and maintaining the Ruby Country initiative of tracks and trails for pedestrians and horse riders.

LCT 1G: Open inland plateaux



1G. Open inland plateaux

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

This type is found to the east of the Tamar between Milton Abbot and Bere Alston and separated by a stream valley. This type is flatter than the undulating uplands (LCT 5A), and of a farming pattern much older than the 19th century planned plateaux enclosure type (LCT 1A).

A traditional farmed landscape, strongly influenced by mining heritage.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Gently rolling open upland plateaux, sloping gradually towards neighbouring river valleys. Elevation ranges widely, from 60 metres AOD near North Hooe to 211 metres AOD near Milton Green.
- Many springs originating on higher ground, resulting in numerous streams, ponds, wet rush pasture and ditches.
- Underlain by Devonian mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, with some localised exposed granite. Legacy of mining activity associated with some areas, including Wheal Anna Maria, a former copper mine now designated as a Regionally Important Geological Site.

Woodland cover

- Few large woodlands but small scattered deciduous woods, tree clumps and copses and trees along roadsides, where wide verges add interest to the sinuous narrow lanes, hilltop beech clumps and relic pine shelterbelts.
- Some conifer plantations and mixed woodland are found on upper slopes of the river valleys near the LCT boundaries including Blanchdown Wood.
- **In localised areas, 'tunnels' are created** along roads by dense avenues of trees, typically beech.

Land use and field patterns

- Pastoral farmland divided into small-medium scale regular fields (some of medieval origin), with parkland and estate farmland and small areas of arable, rough ground and orchards. Fields tend to be larger on flatter ground away from settlements.
- Field boundaries are typically low hedgebanks with ditches and verges, and estates are defined by areas of regularly spaced and even-aged oaks. Sometimes banks are denuded with no hedge remaining.
- Some horseculture and equestrian development has introduced fencing instead of hedges, usually in close association with settlement or large properties.

Semi-natural habitats

- Semi-natural habitats present are limited compared to the adjacent valleys; the small deciduous woodlands and orchards are of wildlife interest. Areas of ancient woodland are also found within the LCT as it slopes towards the river valleys.
- Some gorse in hedges gives an upland feel to the landscape.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Mining legacy, particularly in southern areas, often obscured by woodland but also visible in settlements. Some parts of the landscape fall within the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site.
- The historic houses of Collacombe Manor and Morwell Barton are both Grade I listed buildings. The landscape also provides a setting to Bere Alston Conservation Area and the Tavistock to Bere Alston Railway Conservation Area.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Distinctive sparse pattern of dispersed hamlets and isolated farms, with a few historic settlements and several crossroads settlements. The larger village of Bere Alston is an exception. Typically of a stone vernacular, with slate or thatch roofs. Estate farmhouses and estate buildings are distinctive.
- The dense highway network has many narrow sinuous lanes off the spine roads of the B3362 and

B3257 which run along the plateau top. A railway line in cutting carves through the plateau. Crossed by numerous trails and rights of way.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Although some of the roads are sunken, the generally low field boundaries and the lack of hedgerow trees and large woodlands create an open character, with long views available over the river valleys to east and west. On higher ground, there is a feeling of exposure to the elements.
- Much of the LCT falls within the Tamar Valley AONB, contributing the special qualities including forming *part of the 'core of Tamar Valley & Tavistock WHS area with engine houses, chimneys and spoil heaps prominent in the landscape.'*

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- The sparse settlement pattern with characteristic stone vernacular and slate and thatch roofs.
- The small-medium scale field pattern, often of medieval origin or with medieval elements.
- Historic estate buildings, with their grounds having a localised impact on landscape character.
- Important mining heritage, with parts of the LCT included within the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site.
- Valued areas of ancient woodland on slopes down to adjacent river valleys.
- Long views from higher elevations which include the picturesque Tamar River valley.

Summary of landscape condition

The landscape is generally in good condition with a strong medieval field pattern and well-maintained historic estate landscapes, although some areas have localised hedgerow/earthbank loss leading to an increase in field sizes and degradation of historic field patterns. Long views from high ground including the winding Tamar valley are mostly unobstructed.

Forces for change

- Demand for new development on the edge of existing settlements, including Bere Alston.
- Seasonal increases in levels of traffic accessing the Tamar Valley.
- Conversion of agricultural buildings to residential use.
- Change from pastoral farming to arable cultivation.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

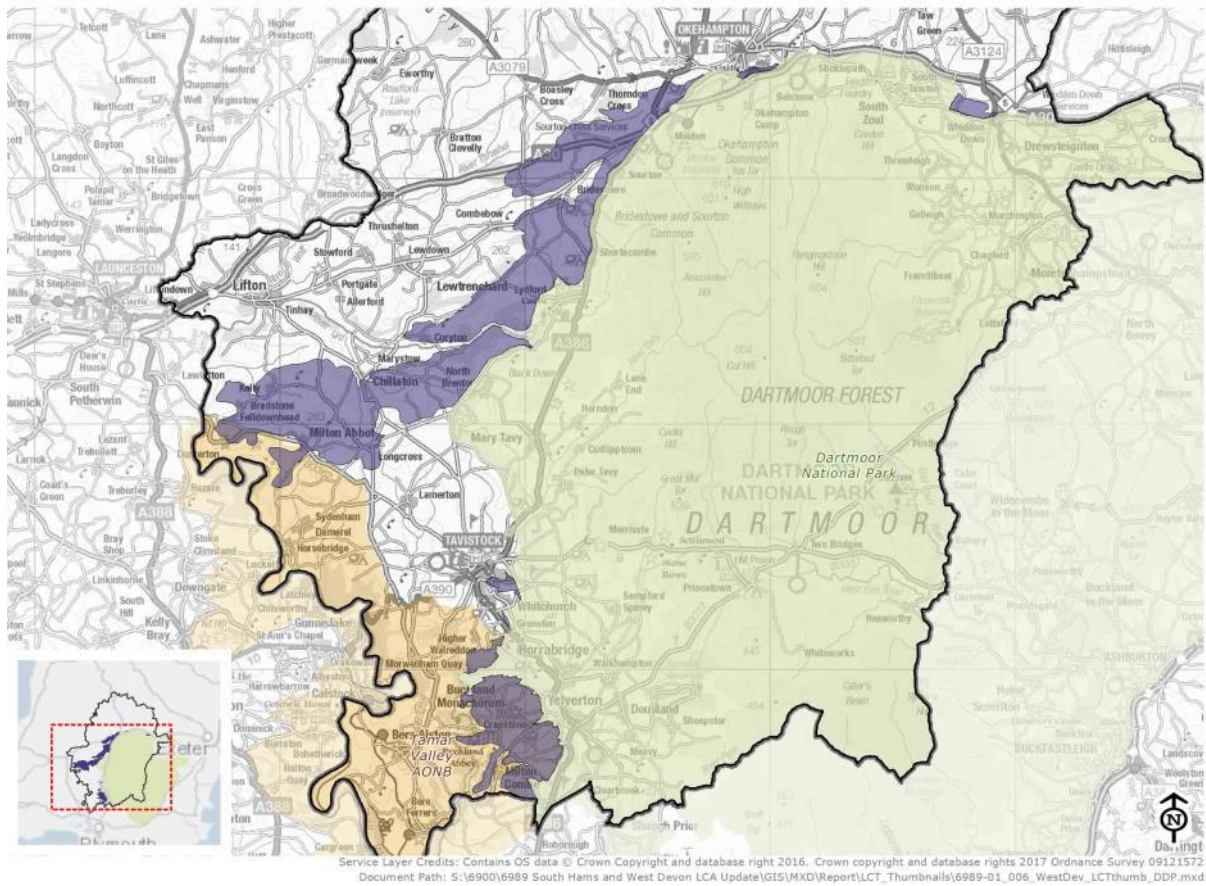
Overall Landscape Strategy

Retain the intrinsic rural qualities and traditional land uses of the landscape type. Protect and promote the mining heritage of the area and historic estate landscapes. Ensure that new development is of an appropriate scale and utilise traditional building materials. Promote responsible tourism activity, including sensitive road improvements to accommodate traffic needs.

Landscape Guidelines

- Encouraging management to **maintain hedges at a height which encourages species diversity** (minimum 1 metre of woody growth). Plant up gaps and replace individual hedgerow trees as they become over-mature or die, but ensure that they are well spaced and relatively infrequent.
- Encouraging maintenance of **earth banks**, especially along roadsides.
- Encouraging the continued **contribution of verges and ditches to the ecological network**, which is particularly important where arable cultivation is locally dominant.
- Encouraging the maintenance of **hedgerow oaks** to reinforce local estate farmland character.
- Promoting the maintenance of **pastoral cultivation** as the dominant land use throughout this type.
- Identifying and surveying areas of **rough ground, wet pasture and species-rich permanent pasture** and encouraging appropriate management for their conservation.
- Encouraging good management of the **small copses in damp patches** which are a minor characteristic of this type. Encourage the creation of strong ecological links to existing field boundaries by planting new hedges.
- Encouraging a **change to broadleaf cover as conifer plantations mature** (especially in areas of former Ancient Woodland), or management as (wet) heath where appropriate, to increase local biodiversity and create more effective ecological corridors.
- Maintaining the **existing settlement pattern** across the landscape character type.
- Ensuring that development does not lead to the loss of valuable habitats.
- Ensuring that development proposals associated with key settlements mitigate any negative impact on the local landscape character. Development which is uncharacteristic and visually intrusive over wide areas should be resisted. Any **development should reinforce the traditional landscape character** of the area.
- Having regard to the potential impact on and dilution of local landscape character through the **introduction of renewable energy sources** such as wind farms and solar arrays.
- Encouraging **appropriate uses of rural buildings** or their sympathetic conversion where appropriate, including all associated works such as drives, hedgebanks, visibility splays and entrance detailing.
- Encouraging the **establishment of discrete broadleaf woods and copses**, or even small conifer plantations with a deciduous edge to help screen recent development, without masking views over the river or affecting areas of archaeological interest.
- Having regard to the **high skyline and cross-boundary intervisibility** of this landscape type.
- Discussing with highways authorities ways of **reducing signage** without jeopardizing road safety, as the local pattern encourages speeding, while signage detracts from the openness and unsettled character.
- Encouraging awareness of the **impact of light spillage** from lighting around road junctions and from filling stations on the highway network.

LCT 2D: Moorland Edge Slopes



2D. Moorland edge slopes

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT is found along the northern and western edges of Dartmoor National Park and extends west across the Borough to Milton Abbot.

An elevated, gently rolling landscape containing open moorland and farmland which provides an important setting and transition to the protected landscape within Dartmoor.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Elevated land with a height of between 100m and 290m AOD. The landscape has a rolling topography with shallow stream valleys, in parts steeply sloping down from the fringes of Dartmoor.
- Underlain by bedrock geology of mudstone, sandstone and limestone creating a gently topography than the adjacent basalt of Dartmoor.
- The landscape is crossed by streams rising from springs on the higher ground and draining towards the Tavy, Tamar, Lew and Lyd rivers.

Woodland cover

- Generally sparse woodland cover except for conifer plantations along the upper slopes of the Lyd river valley and broadleaved woodland lining streams and small mixed plantations in sheltered areas.
- Fields enclosed by square-cut beech hedgebanks with some grown out sections forming characteristic mature beech tree lines on lower slopes and along roadsides.

Land use and field patterns

- Mainly sheep-grazed pastoral farmland with areas of unenclosed rough pasture on the edges of Dartmoor.
- Generally a small-scale field pattern with field boundaries based on medieval or post-medieval enclosures.

Semi-natural habitats

- Areas close to the National Park, particularly north of Lydford (e.g. Fernworthy Down and Beara Marshes) and south of Tavistock (West Down) reflect the Dartmoor character with a rich mosaic of habitats including lowland heathland, semi-improved grassland, lowland acid grassland, rush pasture, mire and patches of gorse scrub and silver birch.
- Deciduous woodlands are found along the stream valleys with Grenofen Wood and West Down SSSI designated for its lichen flora found on the trees, mainly pedunculate and sessile oaks with some birch, rowan and hazel.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Ancient features are found in commanding positions above the valleys, including the prehistoric hill top enclosures near Berra Tor and at Castle Park Camp and South Longridge. Buckland Monachorum has a Conservation Area.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Settlement is sparse, with little modern development and consists of hamlets and scattered historic farmsteads and cottages huddled on the slopes sheltered by trees, often found at crossroads. Settlements to the west of Yelverton are the only sizeable villages.
- Strong local vernacular of stone rubble and slate farmhouses and farm buildings some with rendered cob frontages with some 20th century bungalows.
- The A30 crosses the landscape running west from Okehampton and the A386 adjoins the LCT along its eastern boundary with the National Park with traffic and parking/picnic areas detracting from the rural tranquil feel of the area. Elsewhere the road network is limited to narrow lanes.
- There are areas of open access on the open downs and woodlands in the Lyd valley and a good network of paths including several long distance routes including the Two Castles Trail, West Devon Way and Tamar Valley Discovery Trail.

Views and perceptual qualities

- An open and often exposed landscape, with long views from higher ground across the rolling countryside of West Devon, except within the wooded folds of the shallow stream valleys. There are views to the wooded valley of the Tavy (within the Tamar Valley AONB) from the west of the LCT and spectacular views across to high moorland in Dartmoor National Park from the east of the LCT.
- A small area of the LCT to the south of the district, above the Tavy, is located within the Tamar Valley AONB which recognises the quality of this valley and water landscape, representing a classic English estuarine landscape.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- A remote and tranquil upland pastoral landscape with small hamlets and farms linked by narrow rural lanes;
- The role of this landscape in providing a rural setting to the nationally protected landscape of Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley AONB (which forms part of the LCT);
- The historic small-scale square field pattern with beech hedges on hedge banks with mature tree lines;
- Some areas have a strong moorland character with a rich mosaic of habitats and vegetation;
- A strong local vernacular of historic stone rubble and slate farmhouses;
- The areas of open access and long distance paths which make this a popular area for recreation;
- Spectacular views across rolling farmland, up to the high moorland on Dartmoor in the east of the LCT and down to the wooded river valleys of the Tavy in the Tamar AONB in the south west.

Summary of landscape condition

The LCT retains a distinctive sense of place with scattered farmsteads set within an intricate mosaic of rolling medieval and post medieval fields and a network of winding lanes bounded by Devon hedgebanks. The LCT has strong visual links to the open moorland on Dartmoor, across the wooded slopes of the **Tamar valley**. **Areas of arable cropping contrasts with the landscape's predominantly pastoral character.** Some hedgebanks suffer from a lack of management with out-grown hedges in some locations. The unenclosed **heathland reinforces the landscape's moorland character, although some have seen a decline** in grazing levels resulting in a spread of bracken scrub and secondary woodland.

Forces for change

- Pressure for development on the fringes of Tavistock, Okehampton could extend into this LCT and would affect the rural character and sense of tranquillity.
- Medieval field patterns are vulnerable and can be lost with changes in land ownership and cropping.
- Continuing decline in traditional rural skills such as hedge laying and active woodland management.
- Change in tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora pthogens* and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)).
- Reduced agricultural viability of areas of lowland heathland with a decline in grazing levels leading to scrubbing up, impacting on the open character and biodiversity value.
- Climate change impacts leading to decrease in heathland due to enhanced growth rates of vegetation (bracken, gorse etc).
- Location of major road corridors on the edge of the LCT and potential for increase in traffic levels on main roads, particularly A30 and A386 likely to diminish levels of tranquillity.
- Growth in tourism and the proximity to popular visitor attractions within Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley AONB which contributes to an increase in traffic and potential spread of caravan and camping sites, particularly along the A30 eroding the landscape's tranquillity.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

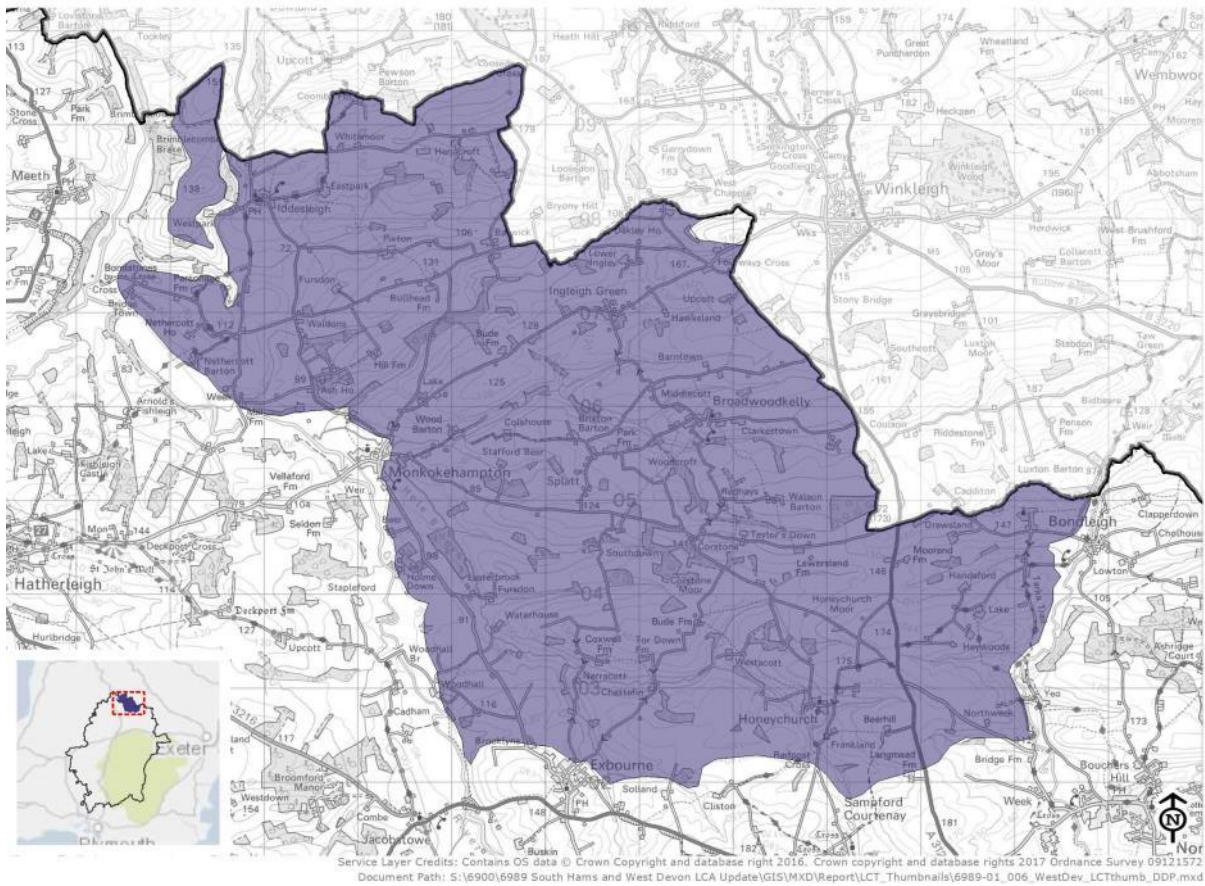
Overall Landscape Strategy

To protect the strong historic character of the Moorland Edge Slopes, where ancient sites and features are scattered across a remote rural landscape of small-scale medieval and post-medieval fields enclosed by intact Devon hedges. Manage and enhance areas of semi-natural habitat including heathlands to build resilience to climate change.

Landscape Guidelines

- Plan for the long-term **restructuring of conifer plantations** with a move towards their gradual reversion to locally indigenous broadleaf woodland, encouraging management to create and maintain a diverse age structure, to reduce the 'amenity' aspect of some recent planting.
- Pursue opportunities to extend and link **woodland and semi-natural habitats**, utilising native, climate-resistant species.
- Restore lost **Devon hedgebanks**, encouraging the development of further beech hedgerow trees and avenues. Respect any local variation in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials where possible. Ensure that ditches and verges are managed to maximise their biodiversity potential.
- Conserve and appropriately manage and protect the integrity of **valued semi-natural habitats**, including broadleaved woodland, lowland moorland and acid grassland, rush pasture and mire including those designated as County Wildlife Sites.
- Encouraging the retention and appropriate management of areas of **rough ground and wet pasture** through livestock grazing at appropriate levels to enhance biodiversity.
- **Protect and manage the landscape's historic sites and features** including the prehistoric hill top enclosures near Berra Tor and at Castle Park Camp and South Longridge.
- Ensure **development respects the current scale of the landscape**, its underlying landform, historic field patterns and existing landscape features including trees and scattered buildings.
- **Protect the landscape's sparsely settled character** and control new development outside the existing footprints of the landscape's small historic hamlets.
- Protect the **strong local vernacular of stone and slate** with some colourwashing and thatch. New development should utilise traditional materials and building styles wherever possible. Encourage appropriate uses of rural buildings or their sympathetic conversion where appropriate.
- Seek to ensure opportunities for **access and enjoyment of the countryside** including links to the long distance routes such as the Two Castles Trail, West Devon Way and Tamar Valley Discovery Trail. Manage recreational pressure on areas close to the National Park, including picnic/parking areas along the A30.
- Protect **open views to Dartmoor** and across the West Devon countryside.
- Protect the **wider setting** the landscape provides to Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley AONB. Ensure any development does not detract from the special qualities of these protected landscapes.

LCT 3A: Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes



3A. Upper farmed & wooded valley slopes

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT is located on the upper river valley slopes in the north of the borough between Monkokehampton and North Tawton.

A pastoral landscape of elevated undulating valley slopes and rolling hills interspersed with steep sided wooded stream valleys.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- An elevated landscape of rolling hills and undulating valley slopes. Steeper sided valleys are associated with small streams feeding into the main river valleys of the Okemont and the Torridge south west of the LCT.
- Underlain by mudstone and siltstones with bands of sandstone creating the rolling landform.

Woodland cover

- Numerous small deciduous and mixed woodlands and copses as well as occasional blocks of coniferous plantation particularly along the stream valleys.

Land use and field patterns

- A pastoral landscape with a strong historic field pattern of small and medium-scale pastoral fields of medieval and post-medieval origin forming a strong mosaic with interlinking Devon hedges, copses and woodlands. Some larger arable fields on more elevated land.
- Field boundaries of low species-rich Devon hedges with flower-rich banks. Thick hedges with frequent hedgerow trees found on lower sheltered valley slopes.

Semi-natural habitats

- Nature conservation interest provided by areas of lowland heath and valley mire on the lower slopes, wet broadleaf woodland and damp meadows with marshy or acid grassland associated with tributary valleys and springs. Patches of species-rich Culm grassland, heath dominated by gorse and scrub on higher slopes give some areas an upland feel.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- The whitewashed village houses and square church towers provide local landmark features amongst the rolling hills. The village of Broadwoodkelly has a conservation area.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Dispersed settlement pattern of historic hamlets clustered on hilltops and scattered historic farmhouses and farm buildings including traditional linhays.
- A strong vernacular of whitewashed cottages and farmhouses with rendered cobb walls and slate or thatched roofs.
- The settlements are linked by a network of winding rural roads with the crossroads marked by distinctive white finger posts.
- The LCT is crossed by two long-distance trails; the Devonshire Heartland Way and the Tarka Trail.

Views and perceptual qualities

- The low hedgebanks and lack of hedgerow trees on higher slopes results in an open landscape with uninterrupted views, including to the high moors on Dartmoor to the south.
- A working rural landscape which is remote and peaceful with dark night skies. Only the A3124 running across the eastern corner of the LCT erodes levels of tranquillity locally.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT.

- An area retaining high levels of tranquillity and a strong rural character;
- The more open elevated hillsides contrast with the well-wooded, enclosed character of the lower valley slopes with numerous small deciduous, mixed and wet woodlands and copses;
- A strong historic field pattern of small and medium-scale pastoral fields of medieval and post-medieval origin forming a strong mosaic with interlinking Devon hedges, copses and woodlands;
- A pastoral landscape with areas of lowland heath and valley mire in the stream valleys and grassland, gorse and scrub on higher slopes;
- Low density of dispersed settlement, with isolated historic farms and hamlets and a strong local vernacular of cobb walls with slate or thatched roofs;
- An open landscape with uninterrupted views, including to the high moors on Dartmoor.

Summary of landscape condition

The LCT retains a distinctive sense of place with peaceful, historic settlements on the side of rolling hills, within a framework of medieval and post-medieval fields and a network of winding lanes bounded by tall Devon hedgebanks. It is a strongly rural landscape with little modern development and strong visual links to the open moorland on Dartmoor. Some agricultural intensification has resulted in some fields being enlarged and Devon hedgebanks removed, resulting in areas of arable cropping which contrasts **with the landscape's predominantly pastoral character. Some hedgebanks are suffering from a lack of management in some location.**

Forces for change

- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora pthogens* and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)). Loss of trees within hedgerows would be particularly noticeable in this landscape type.
- Medieval field patterns are vulnerable and can be lost with changes in land ownership and cropping.
- Continuing decline in rural skills such as woodland management and hedge laying threatening the age and species diversity of semi-natural woodland and leading to variable quality of hedgebanks in some areas.
- Reduced agricultural viability of fragmented areas of lowland heath and upland grasslands and heaths.
- Important valley bottom wetland habitats may suffer from nutrient enrichment from agriculture or from increasing drought conditions due to climate change and demand for irrigation thus lowering groundwater levels, and reducing ecological value.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

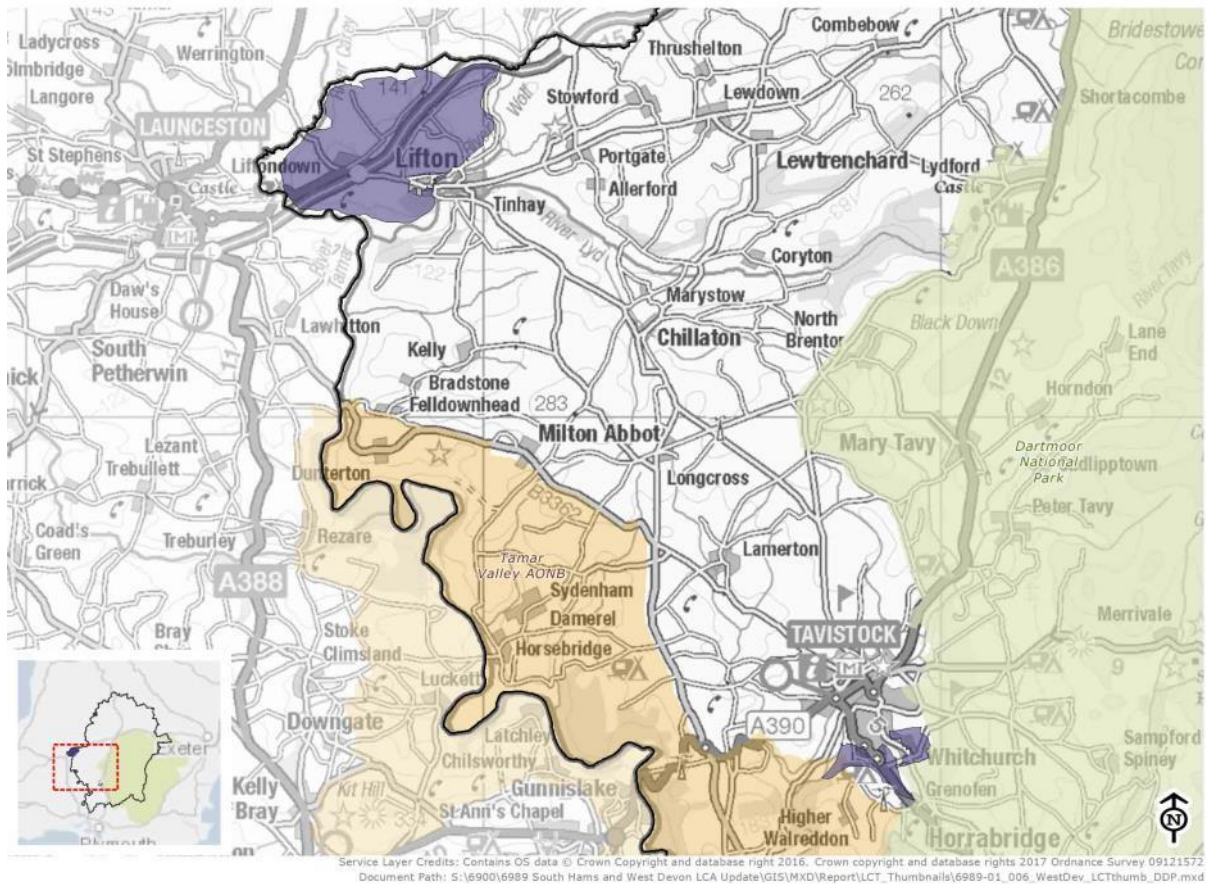
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the strong field patterns of this landscape, including the rich network of well-managed Devon hedgebanks. Manage the farmed landscape to enhance wildlife interest and local diversity, particularly important wetland habitats. Protect the wooded character of the landscape and extend areas of broadleaf woodland. Maintain the sparse settlement pattern and maintain long views of the countryside.

Landscape Guidelines

- Protect the **wooded character of the landscape** particularly the wooded stream valleys extending areas of mixed and broadleaved woodlands through natural regeneration and new planting (including with species suited to a changing climate).
- Manage and enhance the field patterns, restoring lost and gappy **Devon hedgebanks**. Respect any local variations in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials wherever possible.
- Conserve, appropriately manage and protect the **valued semi-natural habitats** including the broadleaved woodland, grassland, gorse and scrub on higher slopes, particularly those within the County Wildlife Sites. Manage and enhance important wetland habitats, particularly wet woodland, areas of lowland heath, purple moor grass, marsh and valley mire in the stream valleys through preserving and managing water flows and controlling invasive vegetation.
- Ensure **development respects the scale of the underlying landform**, historic irregular field patterns and existing landscape features.
- Protect the **sparsely settled character** and long views over the countryside and to the high moors.
- **Control any new development** outside the existing footprints of the landscape's small clustered settlements, including along roads, protecting the landscape's agricultural character.
- Protect in a good state of repair the **traditional local vernacular** of local rendered and exposed stone and slate roofs. Limited new development should utilise the same materials and building styles wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).
- Pursue opportunities for **access and enjoyment of the landscape**, including links to the long-distance paths that cross the LCT.

LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes



3B. Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT occupies the lower slopes above the River Carey and Lyd in the west of the Borough and the River Tavy south of Tavistock.

Valley slopes that rise gently from the middle or upper reaches of flat river valley floors, often densely settled.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Gently rolling landform, sloping up from the flat valley floors with a height of between 50m and 140m AOD incised by numerous streams rising from springs on the higher slopes.
- Underlain by limestone, sandstone and clay.

Woodland cover

- Deciduous or mixed woodland, copses, scrub and tree rows (with small areas of wet alder carr) and hedgerow trees (often mature oaks or beech) are found particularly along the river and stream valleys. There are small coniferous plantations on higher ground.

Land use and field patterns

- Mixed pasture and arable fields bounded by tall hedgebanks, some with overgrown hedges. There is some use of post and wire.
- A mix of small to medium irregular fields from medieval and post medieval enclosures and more intensively farmed areas that have undergone field amalgamation.

Semi-natural habitats

- Valued habitats include deciduous woodland and areas of wetland habitat including scrub and marshy grassland along the stream valleys and pockets of unimproved neutral grassland on higher ground.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- The disused quarries and the dismantled railway near Lifton relates to the mining heritage of the area.
- An historic settlement pattern of towns that were established above the banks of the rivers, including Lifton on the Lyd and Tavistock on the Tavy (located adjacent to the LCT) which both have Conservation Areas and Whitchurch to the south of Tavistock.
- The ruins of the 19th century Gothick mansion at Lifton Park, its parkland and ancient woodland on the banks of the Lyd, and the medieval Wortham Manor above the Carey add historic character to the area.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- A dispersed pattern of small farms, often with historic farmhouses in rendered stone with slate roofs with stone boundary walls linked by narrow lanes. The LCT lies adjacent to larger settlements including Lifton and Tavistock which are characterised by a wide variety building ages and styles with suburban development of houses and bungalows on settlement edges.
- There is a limited network of paths in the LCT, but long-distance paths (West Devon Way and Two Castles Way), cross the LCT and provide links to the river valleys.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Views are variable throughout the landscape. Tree cover, tall hedgebanks and topography can limit views in some places. Elsewhere there are open views across the surrounding countryside.
- The tranquillity of the area is disturbed locally by the A386 which runs south from Tavistock and the A30 which bisects the LCT near Lifton. Elsewhere settlements are linked by a network of quiet narrow lanes enclosed by high hedgebanks.
- The proximity to larger towns and related development along approach roads (e.g. a caravan park at Tavistock) and industrial development in the adjacent river valley floor (e.g. Ambrosia Factory at Lifton) affects the quality of parts of this LCT.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- A rural backdrop to the adjacent river valleys of the Carey, Lyd and Tavy retaining moderate levels of tranquillity and a rural character away from the larger settlements;
- The wooded character of the landscape along the river and stream valleys with deciduous or mixed woodland, copses, scrub and tree rows;
- The mix of pasture and arable fields with small to medium irregular fields which are varied in origin from medieval enclosure based on strip fields to more larger modern enclosures bounded by hedgebanks;
- The areas of wetland habitat along streams and pockets of unimproved neutral grassland on higher ground creating areas of contrast within the farmed landscape;
- The historic houses with riverside parklands give the landscape time-depth;
- The historic features relating to the mining heritage of the area.
- The dispersed pattern of small farms away from the main settlements and the dominance of local stone and slate as a building material;
- The continuing dependence on traditional lanes, resulting in a tranquil and unhurried landscape.

Summary of landscape condition

- The inherent character of settled pasture is still present, but has been diluted by the proximity of larger settlements and associated development. There has been a significant impact on the landscape from the highways network and some industrial development in the river valleys (e.g. the Ambrosia Factory near Lifton). The character of the settlement edges vary in building style. Many of the hedgebanks hedges, particularly around Lifton are gappy and overgrown.

Forces for change

- Continuing pressure for development, **particularly housing expansion, due to the LCT's proximity to Tavistock and Lifton**. Development in these areas would affect the rural character of the LCT and sense of tranquillity.
- The potential for increase in traffic levels on main roads, particularly the A30 and the approach roads to Tavistock, which is likely to diminish levels of tranquillity.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora* pathogens and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)). Loss of trees within hedgerows would be particularly noticeable in this landscape type.
- Medieval field patterns are vulnerable and can be lost with changes in land ownership and cropping.
- Continuing decline in rural skills such as woodland management and hedge laying threatening the age and species diversity of semi-natural woodland and leading to variable quality of hedgebanks in some areas.
- There is a shortage of suitable skills and labour to maintain the traditional buildings and landscape features and building stone is no longer produced in South Devon. The settlement edge character of Tavistock and Lifton adjacent to the LCT has been weakened by recent developments and renovations that have not respected settlement pattern, materials or style.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

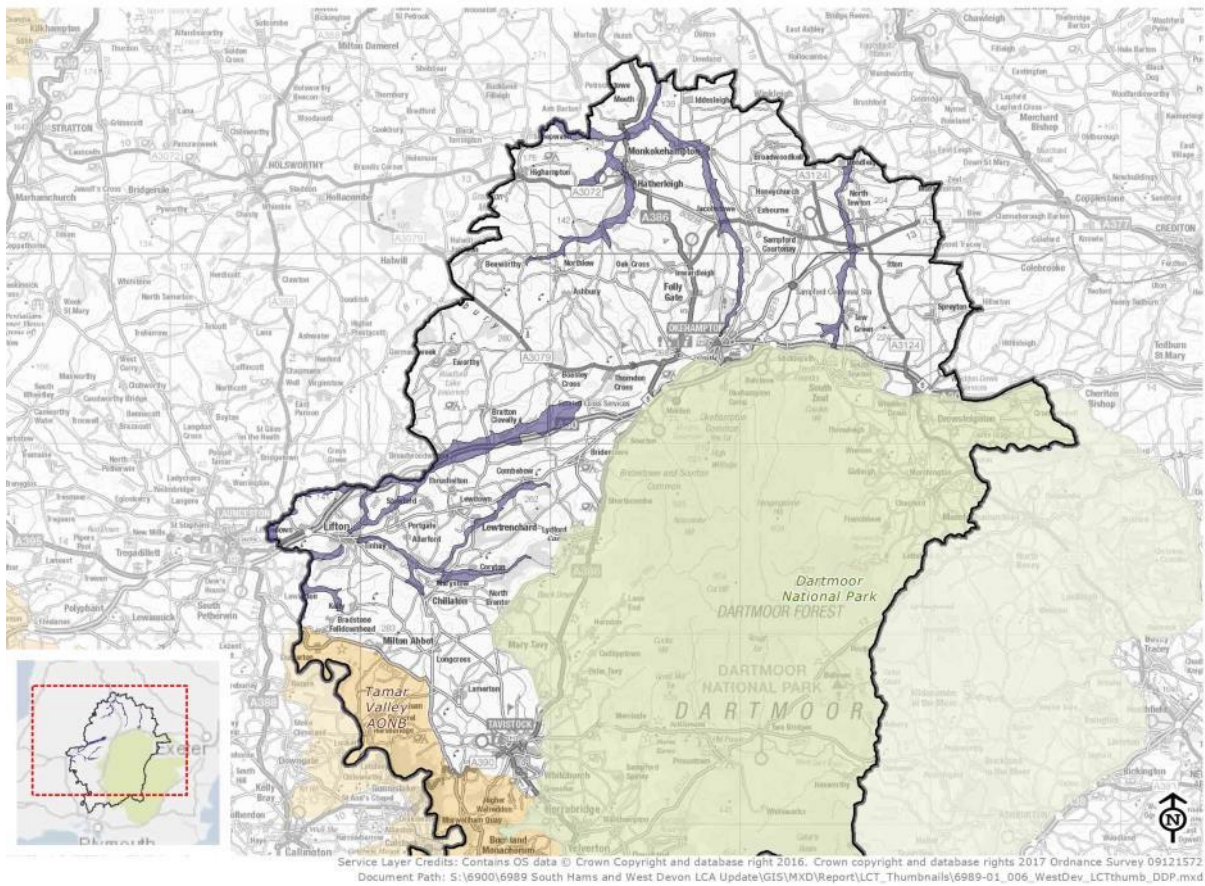
Overall Landscape Strategy

- **Protect the settled rural character of this area and the landscape's function as a setting for adjacent river valleys.** New development should reflect the small scale, historic settlement pattern and vernacular character. The landscape pattern of mixed pasture and arable fields with hedgerows, narrow lanes and woodland is conserved and enhanced and opportunities for green infrastructure links to settlements are sought.

Landscape Guidelines

- Ensure **development respects the scale of the underlying landform**, historic field patterns and existing landscape features.
- **Manage and enhance the valleys' semi-natural woodlands** through traditional techniques, including coppicing, and control access by livestock to promote natural regeneration. Plan the natural regeneration of woodland and new planting (using climate-hardy species) to link fragmented sites.
- Manage species-rich **Devon hedgebanks** through regular coppicing and relaying of gappy sections, strengthening irregular medieval field patterns. Replace lost lengths and lines of fencing, respecting traditional bank styles and species composition, particularly where at right angles to slopes, to help reduce soil erosion and run-off into watercourses.
- Protect the setting and integrity of the **local mining heritage and areas of historic parkland** and veteran trees.
- Protect the **settlement pattern of houses and farms**, resisting development which is uncharacteristic and visually intrusive over wide areas or results in linear spread of development along river valleys and roads and avoiding a spread of suburban influences from larger settlements adjacent to the LCT. Utilise woodland cover and topography to filter views of any new development.
- Protect **traditional building styles and materials**, particularly the use of local stone, reflecting these in new development wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable design).
- **Protect the landscape's network of quiet lanes**, resisting unsympathetic highways improvements, signage or lighting schemes.
- Ensure any **road improvements follow local guidance** for management of roadside verges and ditches and verges to maximise their biodiversity potential
- Pursue opportunities for **access and enjoyment of the landscape**, including links to the river valleys.
- Protect **important views to and from the hills** across the surrounding landscapes.

LCT 3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors



3C. Sparsely settled farmed valley floors

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT is found along the upper reaches of the Lew, Lyd, Okement, Tamar, Taw Torridge and Thrushel rivers.

The LCT encompassing the sparsely settled valley floors of the main river valleys which flow through the borough above the tidal reaches.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Meandering river courses and narrow floodplains generally contained by sloping and often thickly wooded valley sides. To the north of the Borough, the rivers flow through flatter and more gently rolling farmland.
- The rivers are shallow and fast flowing, passing over rocky river beds.
- Underlain by mudstone siltstone and sandstone bedrock with deposits of river alluvium.

Woodland cover

- Linear groups of trees follow the course of the rivers with blocks of deciduous woodland and some conifer plantations marking the edge of the floodplain. In the steeper valleys to the west and particularly along the Tamar in the south of the Borough, the woodlands extend up the valley slopes **from the water's edge**. Much of the semi-natural woodland is ancient.

Land use and field patterns

- The valley floor is often characterised by floodplain pasture fields grazed by cattle and sheep with some areas of unenclosed meadows with ditches and hedges generally on the boundary with rising land.
- Fields form an irregular pattern of small scale fields, many of medieval and post-medieval origin with a high proportion of water meadows and some remnant orchards.
- Some limited urban edge uses adjacent to Okehampton, Lifton, North Tawton and Hatherleigh.

Semi-natural habitats

- Rich semi-natural habitats lining the river course including extensive floodplain grazing marsh, with areas of rush pasture, reedbeds, ponds and wet woodland. These floodplains and flood meadows support valuable plant and breeding bird populations.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Historic parkland estates with country houses overlooking the rivers include Sydenham House on the Lyd, Hayne Manor on the Thrushel and Endleigh Cottage overlooking the Tamar.
- Evidence of the rich industrial heritage of the valleys is associated with the riverside mills, weirs and several upstream stone-faced quays when the rivers were vital routes for transporting goods at a time when overland movement was slow and difficult. Small harbours such as those along the Tamar (e.g. Morwelham Quay) were linked by the Tamar Canal and carried goods including metal ores from nearby mines to Plymouth as depicted in JMW Turner's iconic painting 'Crossing the Brook' of 1812.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- A peaceful landscape with a sparse settlement pattern. Towns and villages are located at river crossing points on the slopes above the valley floor, outside this LCT.
- Winding lanes along the edge of the floodplain are edged with hedgerows, with characterful stone bridges or fords across watercourses. There are few main roads except where the A30 runs alongside the River Thrushel.
- There is little public access to the rivers in West Devon, except for the long-distance walking route along parts of the Tamar (Tamar Valley Discovery Trail) and small sections of the Tarka Trail.

Views and perceptual qualities

- A secluded landscape often enclosed by wooded valley slopes, much of which is only accessible by footpath and so remains remote and tranquil, often with scenic river views from narrow river crossings.
- The strong sense of tranquillity is only broken by the presence of main roads and on the fringes of the larger settlements.

- The stretches of this LCT along the River Tamar are located within the Tamar Valley AONB with the river valley forming a focal point of this protected landscape.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Secluded peaceful floodplain landscape, containing the meandering upper reaches of the main rivers;
- Trees and woodland tracing the shallow meandering watercourses forming linear belts and blocks;
- Mosaic of valued riparian and floodplain habitats including floodplain grazing, marshland, unimproved permanent pasture and wet woodland which support rich biodiversity;
- An irregular pattern of small scale fields, many of medieval and post-medieval origin with a high proportion of water meadows and some remnant orchards.
- Historic parkland and stone bridges contribute to the strong sense of place;
- Riverside mills, weirs and several upstream stone-faced quays and harbours demonstrating links to the rich industrial heritage of these valleys;
- Largely unsettled with settlements mainly located in adjacent areas away from the floodplain and few valley roads creating strongly tranquil character;
- Valued for recreation, particularly along the Tamar valley within the AONB.

Summary of landscape condition

This LCT retains its peaceful and tranquil character, with an intact pattern of floodplain pasture and wetland habitats along the rivers. There is little modern built development although the quality of the area is affected by the close proximity of built development around Okehampton, North Tawton, Lifton and Hatherleigh with urban fringe uses such as water and sewage treatment works. Increasing traffic along main roads, particularly the busy A30, disturbs the tranquillity of the river valleys.

Forces for change

- Continuing pressure for growth of adjacent larger settlements impinging on the floodplain creating a more urban/urban fringe character and loss of tranquillity;
- Potential for increase in traffic levels on along narrow valley roads, particularly those linking to the A30 and the **approach roads into the main settlements eroding the landscape's high levels of tranquillity and damaging the historic stone bridges**;
- Decline in traditional woodland management, leading to a reduction in the species and age diversity **of the landscape's important** semi-natural woodland;
- Change in woodland tree species as new pests and diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora pthogens* and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*));
- On-going decline in traditional skills including traditional hedgerow management resulting in variable management of hedgerows and some replacement by post and wire;
- Loss or lack of management of traditional orchards, floodplain pasture and wet meadows;
- Potential threats to important valley bottom habitats including rush pasture and reedbeds, due to water abstraction or nutrient enrichment from agriculture.
- Increased winter precipitation and decreased summer precipitation, will potentially alter river flows causing potential damage to habitats and species.
- Growth in tourism and waterborne recreation along the river valleys and the presence of popular

visitor attractions particularly in the Tamar Valley AONB, which contributes to an increase in traffic eroding the tranquillity of the landscape in remote places.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

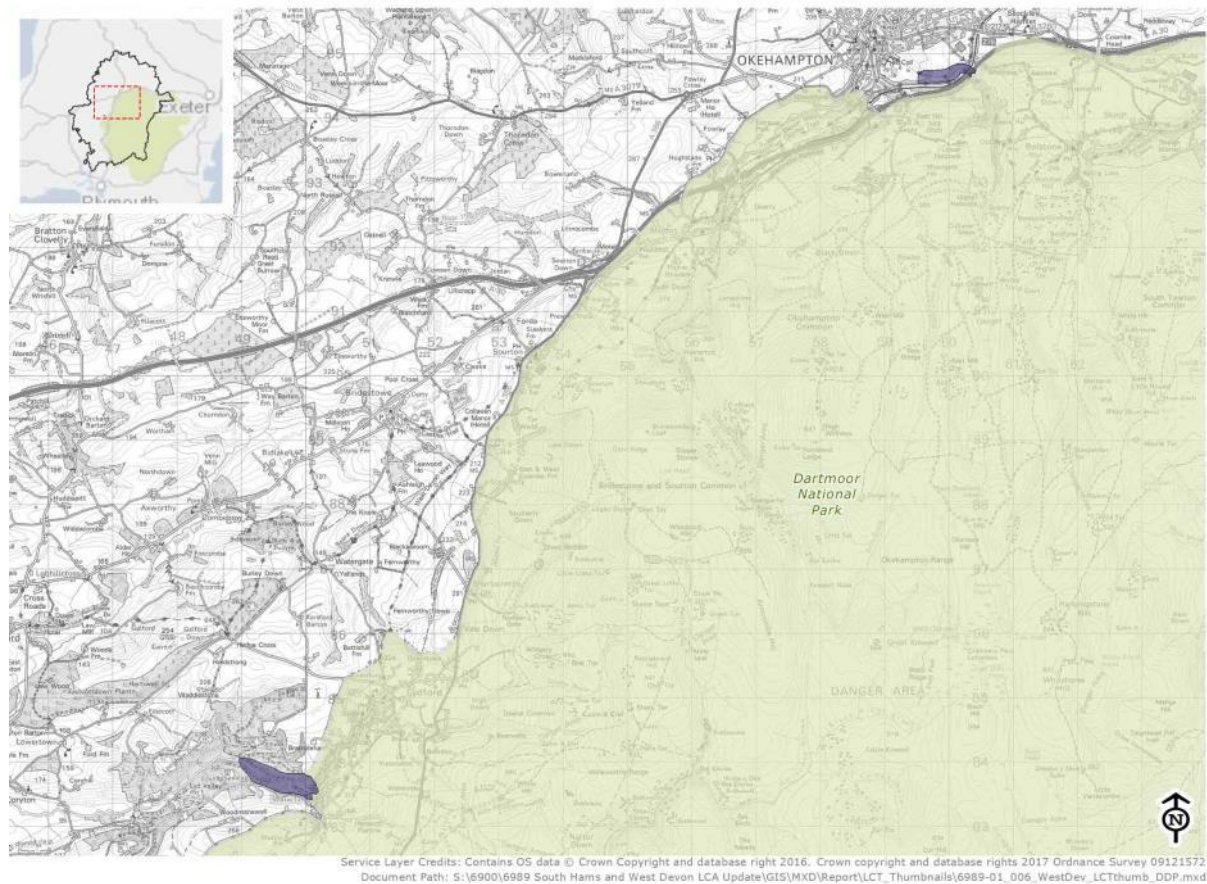
Overall Landscape Strategy

- Protect the peaceful and tranquil character of the valley floors, maintaining views along the valleys to the surrounding valley slopes. Manage and enhance floodplain pastures and wetland habitats to enhance their flood storage capacity and encourage sustainable uses of the landscape for recreation while protecting their special qualities. Protect characteristic stone bridges, the relicts of the industrial heritage of the valley and historic riverside parkland.

Landscape Guidelines

- Manage and protect **deciduous woodland and riverside trees** through reinstating traditional management techniques including coppicing and pollarding particularly along the shoreline. Where opportunities arise encourage woodland planting to link fragmented sites.
- **Manage the landscape's hedgerows** (particularly on slopes where they can provide a role in stabilising the soil and reduce run-off) and encourage the re-planting of lost hedgerows whenever appropriate.
- Encouraging the retention and management of **wet meadows, floodplain pasture and other wetland habitats** - through appropriate grazing and traditional land management regimes – both to enhance their biodiversity value and flood storage capacity
- Restore and manage areas of relict **traditional orchards** and explore opportunities for the creation of new ones, including community orchards to promote local food and drink production.
- Protect and manage the **industrial heritage of the river valleys** including the riverside mills, stone-faced quays, weirs and **causeways**. Promote understanding of the landscape's industrial heritage to ensure public access and recreation respects the presence of valued features.
- Protect and maintain the **historic stone bridges** which are characteristics features of the valleys
- Manage the valleys' use for recreation whilst ensuring they retain their inherent **levels of tranquillity, peacefulness and absence of built development** and protecting the rural views along the valleys and to the adjoining valley sides.

LCT 3D: Upland River Valleys



3D. Upland river valleys

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

Valleys of watercourses originating on high ground in Dartmoor National Park.

This small LCT in West Devon encompasses the lower part of Lydford Gorge and the East Okement River as it extends from Dartmoor into Lydford Forest. Intimate and tranquil, with strong natural qualities including the sound of birdsong and rushing water. Woodland habitats important for biodiversity. Highly valued for recreation.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Steep-sided river valleys radiating out from the adjacent upland core of Dartmoor National Park.
- Rivers are fast flowing and quickly swell in size after rainfall drains from the moorland. As they pass over rocky courses, there are areas of white-water, small waterfalls and gushing torrents. The White Lady Waterfall in Lydford Gorge is 30 metres high and the highest waterfall in south west England.

Woodland cover

- Valleys are fringed by large areas of coniferous plantation or mixed woodland.
- Ancient semi-natural woodland of high conservation value, including parts of East Okement Wood which is designated as County Wildlife Site.

Land use and field patterns

- Dense vegetation clothes the woodland floor and valley sides including gorse, holly and ferns; gorse provides evidence of the upland nature of the valley.

Semi-natural habitats

- Ball Hill is managed as a nature reserve. Otters have been recorded in the East Okement River in the past.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Evidence of the industrial past of the area including the alluvial tin streamwork at Lydford which is designated as a Scheduled Monument.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Open Access Land (Lydford Forest). Footbridges crossing the rivers. Used extensively by walkers for informal recreation.
- There is no road access to the valleys, although the A30 crosses nearby and can detract from tranquillity.

Views and perceptual qualities

- High levels of tranquillity and strong naturalistic qualities with little human development. Enclosed and intimate character, with the sound of birds and running water.
- View out are limited by the steep valley sides and dense woodland cover, providing a sense of escape.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Highly tranquil and strong natural perceptual qualities. Enclosed views and provides a sense of **escape and 'hidden' character**.
- The light and sound of fast-flowing, water running over rocky, river beds.
- Strong perceptions of tranquillity, remoteness and seclusion.
- Valued for informal recreation adjacent to Dartmoor National Park.
- Important semi-natural habitats including woodland and wetland.

Summary of landscape condition

A landscape essentially in good condition with a distinctive sense of place – a deep incised valley with fast flowing water course and steep sides cloaked in forest cover. The conversion of the woodland to conifer plantation has substantially changed character.

Forces for change

- Extensive conifer planation along the valley sides, with associated loss of ancient woodland.
- Recreation use and potential pressures associated with open access land in Lydford Forest.
- Potential for climate change leading to increased rainfall and more extreme weather events which may change the character of the river and the composition of woodland vegetation.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

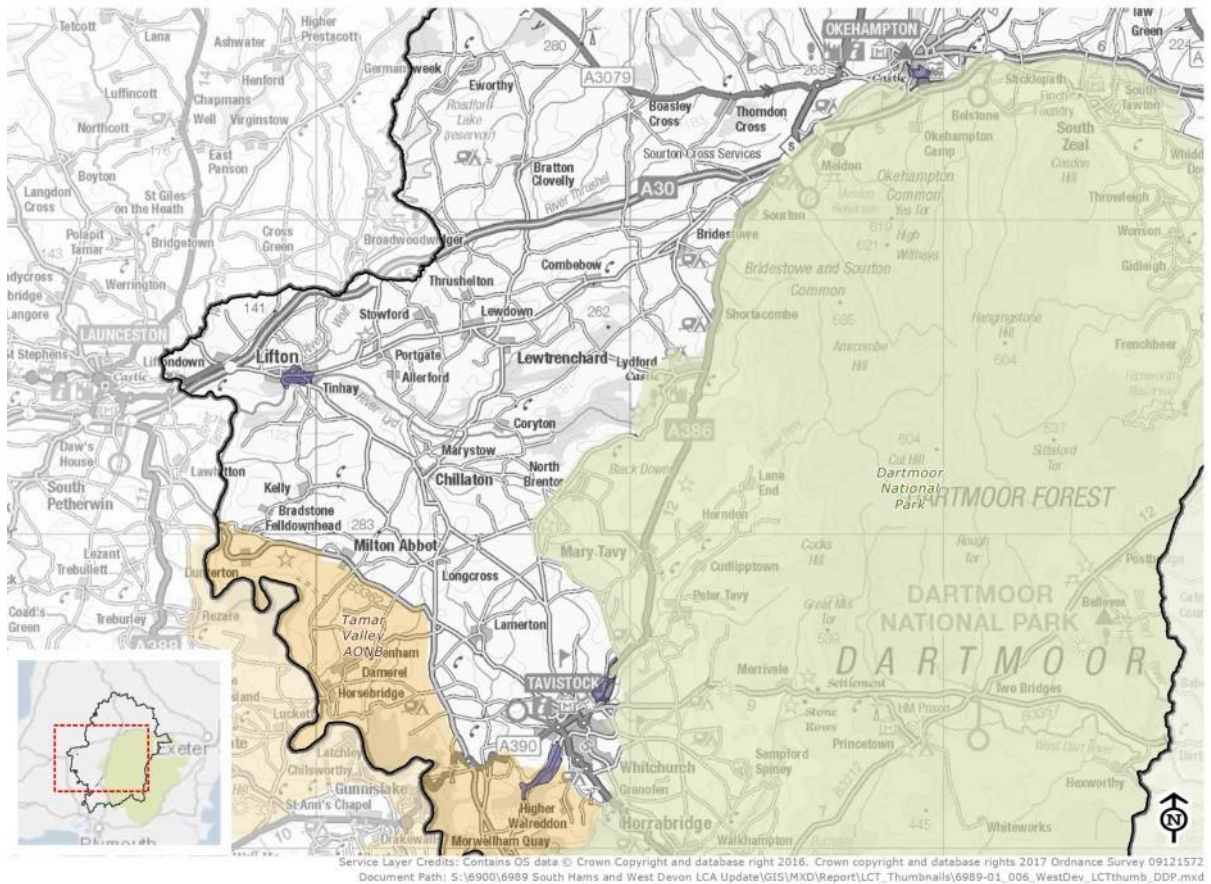
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the tranquil, hidden character of the river valley and sense of place, and its use for informal recreation including as a resource to take pressure off popular areas on Dartmoor. Manage, enhance and strengthen ancient semi-natural woodlands on valley slopes. Protect the water quality of the Dartmoor rivers and regulate water flows to prevent downstream flooding.

Landscape Guidelines

- Protect the **hidden, undeveloped character** of the valley linking into the valley in the National Park.
- Plan for the **long-term restructuring of large conifer plantations**, through gradual restocking with a mixture of native broadleaf species – including those more suited to a changing climate.
- Plan for knock-on effects relating to climate change including the **potential for increased flooding events**.

LCT 3F: Settled valley floors



Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

Tavy river valley floor to north and south of Tavistock, the East Okement valley to the south east of Okehampton and the Lyd river valley to the east of Lifton.

This type consists of river valley floor which demonstrates the impacts of settlement and thereby differs from the unsettled valley floors of the wooded river valleys. Contrasting elements of character include semi-natural woodland and riverine habitats along with a variety of recreational and industrial uses.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Small areas of flat river valley floor, directly adjacent to settlement and tightly contained by steep valley sides.
- Rivers have carved through the underlying Carboniferous mudstone and siltstone geology, leaving a layer of alluvial deposits. Where the rivers run into the settlements their character becomes more managed with walled banks, waterwheels/mills and bridges.

Woodland cover

- A mixture of broadleaved and plantation/mixed woodland clothes the steep valley sides, some of which is ancient. Mature trees are also a feature along roads and footpaths. Woodland is more sparse closer to the settlements.

Land use and field patterns

- Distinct gradation through valley from urban land uses to rural water meadows and rough grassland.
- Used extensively for recreation and leisure activities. The manicured sports fields of Okehampton College contrast with the naturalistic appearance of the adjacent woodland in the valley (LCT 3D).
- A variety of industrial land uses are also evident including sewage and water treatment works, factories (including the Ambrosia factory at Lifton) and industrial parks including Wilminstone Industrial Estate.

Semi-natural habitats

- Ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland along river valley sides. Bluebells and ferns are found on woodland floor and the woodlands support bird species including white throated dipper.
- The River Tavy is edged with wetland species such as willow and alder, and marshy grassland at Brook Mill Marsh.
- East Okement Wood is designated as County Wildlife Site.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- The river valleys are adjacent to/partially within the Tavistock and Okehampton Conservation Areas.
- The Registered Park and Garden of Simmons Park (Grade II) is found within this LCT to the west of Okehampton, along the south side of the East Okement River.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Served by a network of rights of way including the Tarka Trail which links the East Okement valley to Dartmoor and the Two Castles Trail which runs through Lifton.
- Little settlement and few roads away from the main settlements with isolated stone houses and cottages with stone boundary walls, set within pasture fields.
- The Tavistock Canal, lined by mature trees, lies above the valley floor south of Tavistock and provides an important wildlife corridor. It is also part of the Devon and Cornwall Mining World Heritage Site.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Low-lying and enclosed, although more open than adjacent valleys (LCT 3D and LCT 3G). Views out of the valley are contained by woodland and trees on valley sides and floor.
- Noise and movement from fast moving traffic on major roads including the A30 and A386 dual carriageways.
- Strong visual association and suburban character close to the settlements. Contrast between traditional and modern buildings and land uses. Retains some naturalistic qualities, particularly in the woodland areas and the areas further away from the settlements.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Valued semi-natural habitats, including rivers, wet grassland and broadleaved woodland which may be ancient in origin.
- The setting the river valleys provide to adjacent historic settlements and landscapes, including Conservation Areas and Registered Parks and Gardens.
- Extensive use for both formal and informal recreation with sports facilities and numerous rights of way including long distance trails.

Summary of landscape condition

Variable condition depending on land uses generally grading from urban and suburban influences immediately adjacent to settlements to a typical rural landscape further away from development. Noise from traffic and large factory buildings can be intrusive.

Forces for change

- Demand for development and associated infrastructure within adjacent settlements.
- Increasing population in the local area leading to demand for recreation infrastructure, both formal and informal.
- Climate change potential leading to increased rainfall, leading to flood defences being required along the watercourse.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

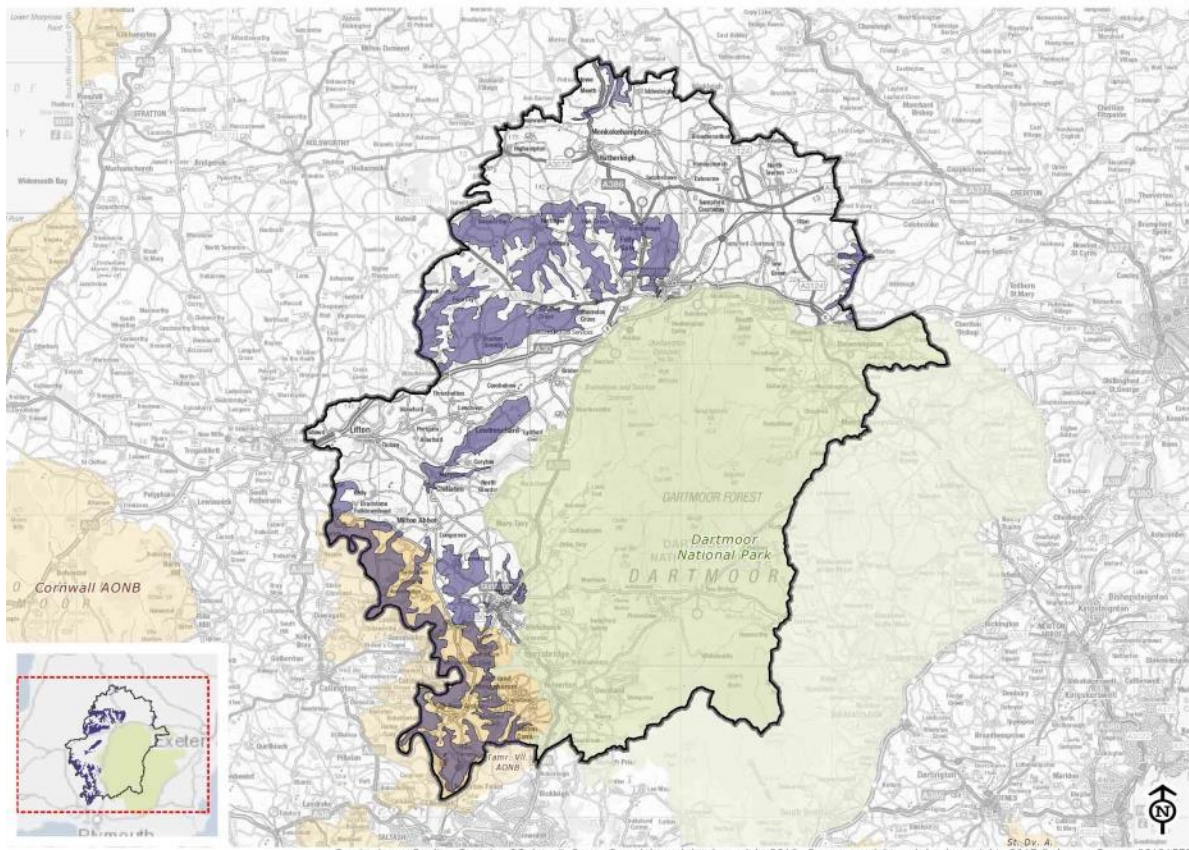
Overall Landscape Strategy

The location of these landscapes leads to significant recreational and development pressure, requiring a balanced approach in land management. Protect valued semi-natural habitat and archaeological resource, making enhancements and improvements where possible.

Landscape Guidelines

- Retain a balance between **recreational, industrial and agricultural land uses**.
- Ensure that any **alterations/management of watercourses** is undertaken in a matter sympathetic to the biodiversity and visual amenity provided by the river.
- Protect **valued semi-natural habitats** including woodland and wet grassland.
- Protect the setting of **historic landscapes and settlements**, including Conservation Areas.
- Use planting to planting to **screen visually intrusive structures**.

LCT 3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes



3G. River valley slopes and combes

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Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT is located across the district on the banks of the numerous narrow rivers including the Lew, Lyd, Okemont, Tamar and Tavy river.

Rounded hills and steep undulating slopes overlooking narrow river valleys.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Rounded hills and undulating slopes, with branching narrow valley systems, overlooking narrow river courses. The landscape is crossed by networks of streams which drain into the rivers.
- Underlying geology predominantly comprising Devonian rocks (mudstone, silt stone and sandstone) with occasional intrusion of later igneous granite running west from Dartmoor to Milton Abbot. There are exposed rocky cliff faces in the middle reaches of the Tamar.

Woodland cover

- A well-wooded landscape with deciduous woodland fringing the streams and larger mixed and coniferous plantations cloaking lower river valley sides often masking the valley floor. There are extensive areas of ancient semi-natural oak woodland dominated by conifer plantations along the upper reaches of the River Tamar and Tavy.

Land use and field patterns

- A farmed landscape with pasture fields grazed by cattle and sheep with occasional arable fields and some rough grazing.
- Numerous traditional sheep-grazed orchards around settlements and hedgerow fruit trees which are a legacy of the soft fruit industry in the area.
- An intricate patterned mosaic of predominantly small to medium irregular fields of medieval origins or Barton Fields laid out in the 15-18th century and some modern enclosures particularly on lower ground.
- Field boundaries are generally species-rich hedgebanks with low hedges and mature hedgerow trees on lower slopes with stone gateposts and facings to banks at field entrances.

Semi-natural habitats

- Semi-natural habitats include extensive areas of deciduous woodland, much of which is ancient oak woodland noted for its lichen, particularly on the slopes of the River Tamar and Tavy. There are valued semi-natural habitats associated with the streams and small rivers including pockets of unimproved neutral or acid grassland, lowland heath, marshy grassland, mire and wet woodland as well as frequent areas of rush pasture, semi-improved grassland and scrub.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- The landscape along the Tamar is designated as a World Heritage Site as part of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape. Past mining activity, mostly from the mining boom in the 19th century, is evident along the Tamar valley through remnant mines structures and industrial remnants such as shafts, chimneys poking above mixed woodland, dismantled railway lines and buildings relating to the mining of copper, silver-lead and arsenic. The Devon Great Consols, now surrounded by woodland, was **one of the largest copper and arsenic works, supplying half the world's arsenic by the end of the 19th century.**
- Buckland Abbey, a 13th century Cistercian abbey has extensive grounds running down to the Tavy.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- A scattered settlement pattern of historic villages (most with Conservation Areas) often focused on the river crossings and quays, and dispersed farmhouses nestled in dips in the landscape.
- A strong local vernacular of whitewashed cottages with thatch or slate roofs with some exposed stone or slate hung facades. Stone farmhouses and farm buildings with stone gateposts and facing to banks at field entrances.
- Narrow sunken lanes bounded by high Devon hedges and hedgerow trees traverse the landscape, with some steep lengths where they dip down into the valleys.

- An extensive network of footpaths and bridleways reflects the mining past of the area when the area was well populated. The area is popular for recreation with long distance paths such as the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail and the Tarka Trail. The Tamar Valley Line is a popular steam railway taking visitors from Plymouth to Gunnislake.

Views and perceptual qualities

- The network of deeply incised lanes, woodland, and high hedgebanks provide a sense of enclosure and seclusion, which contrasts with expansive vistas of the river valleys and green patch of fields and hedges from vantage points.
- A strong sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies except where light pollution from the larger riverside towns (Tavistock and Okehampton) or from Plymouth affects the dark night skies.
- The southern part of the LCT forms part of the Tamar Valley AONB which recognises the unspoiled valley and water landscape, representing a classic English lowland river system.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities to development within this LCT:

- Secluded, rural tranquil valley landscape which is not interrupted by modern large scale development or roads;
- Extensive woodland cover, much of ancient origin retained on the steep valley sides;
- The legacy of the local soft fruit industry evident in remnant traditional orchards around villages and fruit trees in hedgerows;
- The field boundaries of species-rich Devon hedge banks enclosing a mosaic of field patterns from medieval to modern;
- Diverse and connected habitat network including semi-improved and unimproved neutral or acid grassland, plus areas of wet woodland, wet grassland and lowland heath on the lower slopes supporting rich wildlife;
- Internationally significant cultural landscape evident in the remnant mining and industrial structures along the Tamar Valley;
- Intact historic settlement pattern of small nucleated villages and dispersed farmhouses, with distinct Devon vernacular; many settlements designated as Conservation Areas, and with distinctive rural and riverside settings;
- The intimate winding narrow roads and sunken lanes enclosed by hedge banks which contribute to the hidden, secluded and historic character;
- Expansive and spectacular views across the estuaries and river valleys from vantage points contrast with the sense of seclusion along the lower valleys. This dramatic contrast in visual character is a distinctive characteristic particularly of the Tamar Valley AONB;
- Dark skies which can be experienced within the area away from the major conurbations of Okehampton and Tavistock.

Summary of landscape condition

- Due to the relatively sparse settlements and lack of main road access the structure of the landscape – with its intimate enclosed river valleys and lack of built development – is intact. The overriding sense of tranquillity and remoteness can be interrupted in some areas which have views over settlements such as Okehampton and Tavistock. There are declining field boundaries in places, particularly in proximity to larger settlements.

Forces for change

- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora pthogens* and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)). Loss of trees within hedgerows would be particularly noticeable in this landscape type.
- Medieval field patterns are vulnerable and can be lost with changes in land ownership and cropping.
- Continuing decline in rural skills such as woodland management and hedge laying threatening the age and species diversity of semi-natural woodland and leading to variable quality of hedgebanks in some areas.
- Loss or lack of management of traditional farm orchards;

- Important wetland habitats may suffer from nutrient enrichment from agriculture or increasing drought conditions due to climate change, and demand for irrigation thus lowering groundwater levels, and reducing ecological value.
- Increased winter precipitation and decreased summer precipitation, will potentially alter river flows causing potential damage to habitats and species.
- Decline in livestock numbers leading to scrub encroachment on pastoral land.
- **Continuing pressure for development particularly due to the LCT's proximity to the urban fringes of Okehampton and Tavistock.** Development in these areas would affect the rural character and sense of tranquillity
- Recreational pressure, particularly in the Tamar Valley AONB, related to increase in traffic levels on narrow winding lanes likely to diminish levels of tranquillity.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

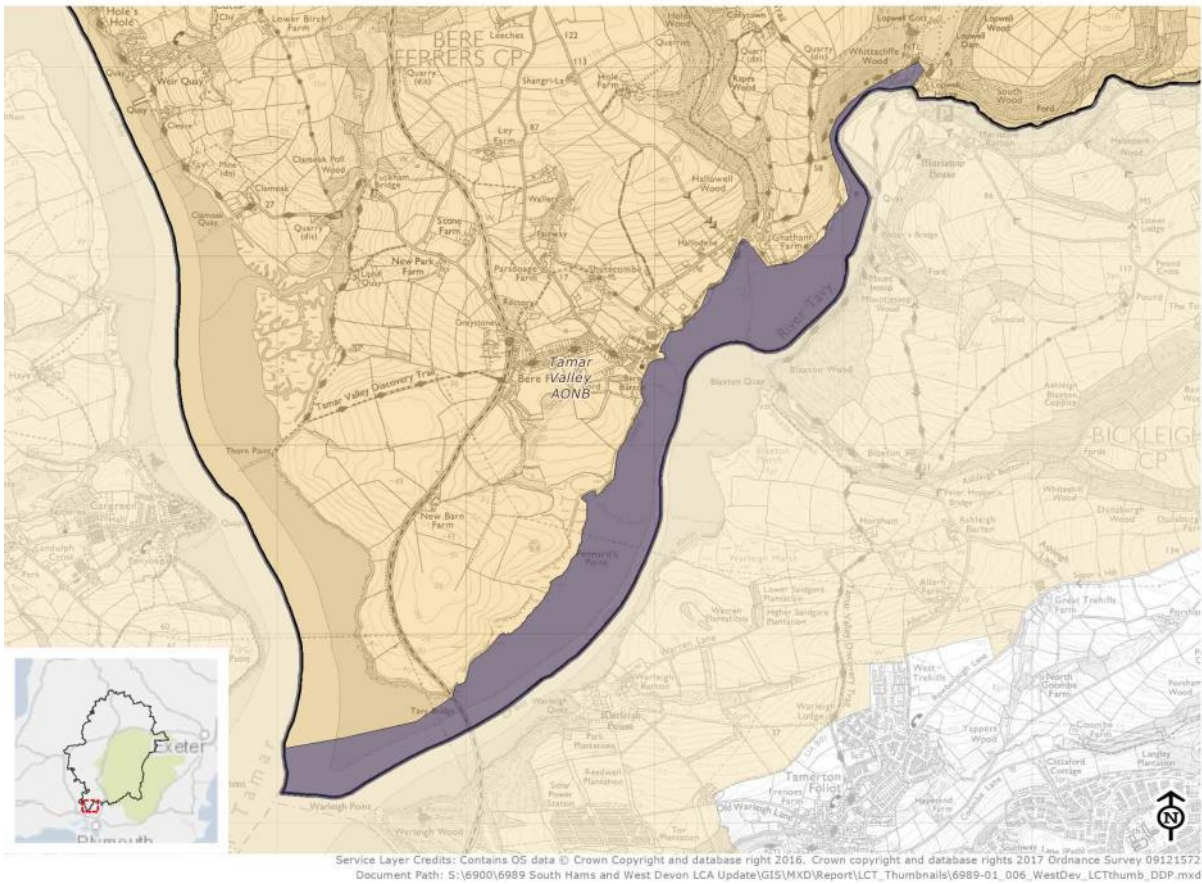
Overall Landscape Strategy

- To protect and enhance the peaceful character of the valley slopes, with fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedges fringed by well-managed woodlands. Opportunities are sought to restore conifer plantations to broadleaf woodland and other semi-natural habitats, creating a climate-resilient green network.

Landscape Guidelines

- Protect the **strong perceptions of tranquillity, remoteness and seclusion** in the landscape, with its well managed woodlands and pastoral fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedgebanks and dark night skies and ensure the area remains valued for recreation.
- Manage and **enhance the valleys' semi-natural woodlands** through traditional woodland management. Control access by livestock, promoting natural regeneration to enhance longevity whilst using extensive grazing to promote the species diversity of woodland ground flora. Plan the natural regeneration of woodland and new planting (using climate-hardy species) to link fragmented sites.
- **Manage the area's existing plantations for sustainable timber production and wildlife interest**, creating new green links to surrounding semi-natural habitats. Plan for the long-term restoration of the more prominent conifer plantations to open habitats and broadleaved woodlands (where their role in timber production has ceased). Explore the retention of other plantations as recreational spaces (e.g. for mountain biking trails).
- Encourage the retention and **management of pasture fields** to control and eliminate scrub.
- Manage and extend areas of **wet woodland and floodplain grassland**, through appropriate grazing and traditional land management regimes – both to enhance their wildlife value and functions in flood prevention.
- Restore and manage areas of relict **traditional orchards** and explore opportunities for the creation of new ones, including community orchards to promote local food and drink production.
- Manage **species-rich Devon hedgebanks** through regular coppicing and relaying of gappy sections, strengthening irregular medieval field patterns. Replace lost lengths and lines of fencing, respecting traditional bank styles and species composition, particularly where at right angles to slopes, to help reduce soil erosion and run-off into watercourses.
- Protect and maintain the **industrial heritage** of the river valleys particularly along the Tamar. **Promote understanding of the landscape's industrial heritage** to ensure public access and recreation respects the presence of valued features.
- Protect the **lightly settled character** of the LCT ensuring that new development on the edges of nearby settlements does not encroach into the area (including related lighting schemes) and avoiding vertical structures in places such as Tavistock and Okehampton where there are already urban views.
- **Protect the landscape's traditional building styles and materials**, particularly the use of exposed stone, whitewashed or slate hung facades with thatch or slate roofs. Any new development or extensions should utilise the same materials and building styles wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).
- Ensure that any **road improvements follow local guidance** for management of roadside verges and ditches in order to maximise their biodiversity potential.
- Encourage the creation of **new footpath links** to existing long distance footpaths, whilst ensuring the retention of inherent levels of tranquillity.

LCT 4A: Estuaries



Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

This LCT comprises the estuarine portion of the River Tavy, where the river widens before meeting the River Tamar.

Distinctive and dynamic depending on tides and weather conditions, with mudflats and extensive reedbeds forming valued semi-natural habitats. These areas are remote and tranquil (especially where the river bank is undeveloped), of high biodiversity value and treasured by walkers.

Landscape and seascape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Lower estuarine portion of the River Tavy between Bere Barton and the Tavy Bridge. The river flows from its source on the moorlands of Dartmoor to the north-east.
- Underlain by slates and thin limestones from the upper Devonian period covered by alluvium of silt, fine and coarse sands.
- The lower tidal reaches of the estuary have dramatic contrasts between extensive low water mudflats and expansive waterscapes at high water.

Land use and field patterns

- The shallow, tidal waters are unsuitable for large vessels. Occasional small recreational craft venture up the river. Recreational activity on the water mostly consists of kayaking and canoeing.
- Fishing activity is limited; netting is heavily restricted for nature conservation purposes, whilst rod fishing requires appropriate licencing.

Semi-natural habitats

- Recognised as part of the Tamar-Tavy SSSI, with protected species including Eurasian otter and kingfisher have been sighted in these waters.
- The Tavy also forms part of the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC (designated for habitats including mudflats, salt marsh, reedbeds, wet grassland, fen and fringing oak woodland) and is a component area of the Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA.
- Extensive mud flats are exposed during low water, internationally important for wintering waders and wildfowl populations including avocet and little egret.
- Important coastal habitats are also found along the shoreline, including marsh habitat at **Pennard's Point** and rocky shorelines.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Mouth of the river is crossed by the Tavy Bridge, which carries the Tamar Valley Railway Line. The bridge was constructed in 1890 and is a Grade II listed building.
- The estuary provides a key setting to the settlements of Bere Ferrers and Bere Barton (which includes a Conservation Area).

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Settlement at Bere Barton is adjacent to the shore and is in keeping with the surrounding rural landscape. Further up the river, isolated stone farm buildings are located along the shore.
- Minor rural lanes run adjacent to the estuary at points, but are not intrusive. The Tamar Valley Discovery Trail provides a valued resource for walkers to enjoy the estuary.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Wholly contained within the Tamar Valley AONB, with characterful rolling Devonshire countryside visible on both sides of the river. This national designation recognises the unspoiled valley and water landscape, representing a classic English lowland river system.
- Peaceful and tranquil, with little boat traffic. Low lying with an expansive feel, although views are restricted by the adjacent wooded valley slopes. The 400kV pylon line crossing the estuary is visually intrusive.
- Movement of the tides creates a constantly changing, dynamic seascape from wide expanses of sand and mudflats at low tide to rippling waves lapping the shore at high water. Perceptual qualities vary depending on tide and weather conditions.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities to within this LCT:

- Remote and tranquil, with high biodiversity value of international and national importance.
- The estuary supports very large numbers of passage and overwintering birds, forming part of the Tamar Estuaries Complex Special Protection Area and Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Special Areas of Conservation.
- The landscape is popular with tourists and walkers, providing for quiet enjoyment and ready access to the natural environment.
- Relatively inaccessible with limited vehicle access. The Tamar Valley Discovery Trail provides an opportunity for appreciation of the landscape.
- Historic elements of the landscape, including the Grade II listed Tavy Bridge which forms a focal point in views towards the mouth of the estuary.
- A visually dynamic landscape and seascape highly influenced by tides, weather conditions and seasons.

Summary of landscape condition

The landscape/seascape is in excellent condition, having long been sensitively managed for nature conservation purposes. Recreational pressure with seasonally high levels of activity on the estuaries is well managed. Adjacent settlements and roads are in keeping with the rural character surrounding the estuary and are not visually intrusive.

Forces for change

- Potential increases in recreational activity levels including demand for more on-shore facilities.
- Potential for new development at Bere Ferres and Bere Barton.
- Estuary walks and trails offer great potential for countryside access and recreation, but an increasing population and the desire for more public access to and around the estuaries, including proposed coastal access provisions, has the potential to increase disturbance of sensitive wildlife habitats.
- **Potential sea level rise may place the area's internationally important estuarine habitats under pressure.**
- The potential for re-opening the railway line to Tavistock, which may impact on visitor numbers and tranquillity.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

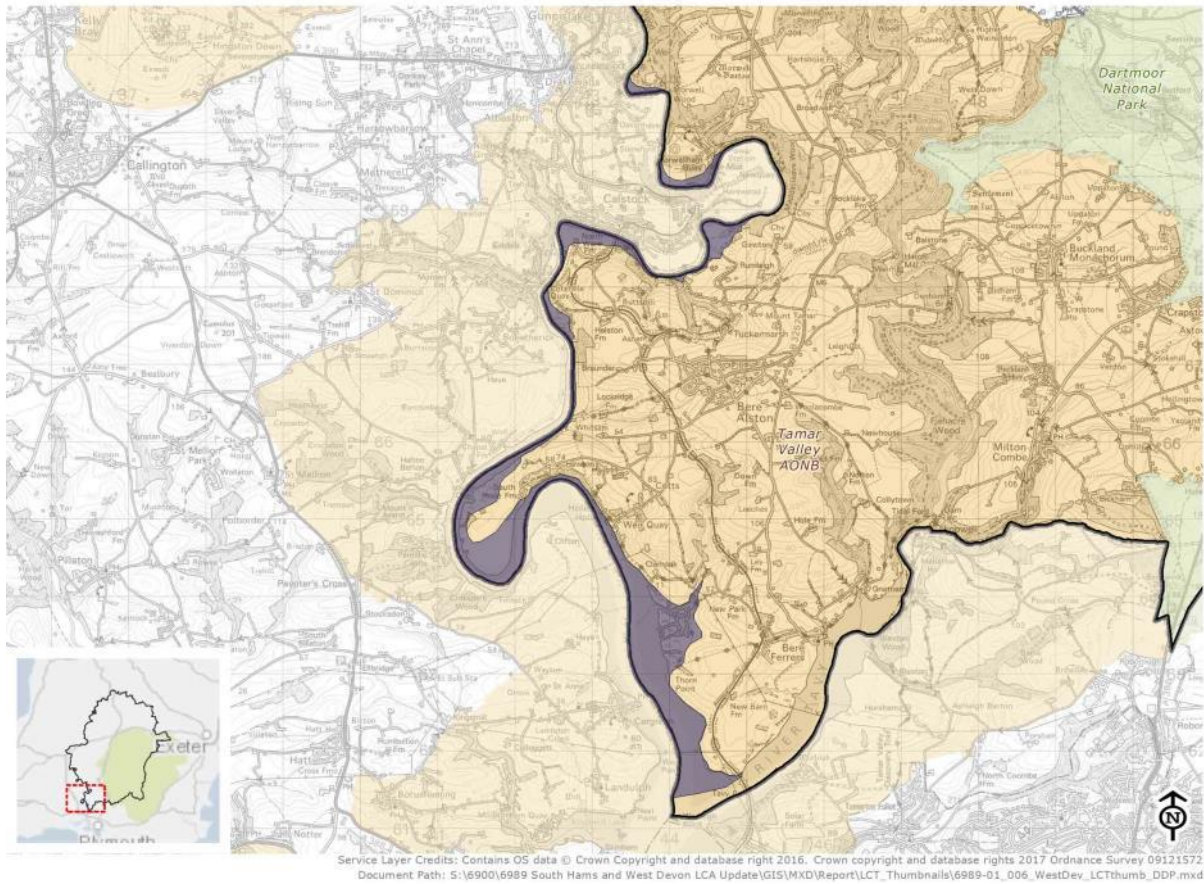
Overall Landscape Strategy

To protect the open character and expansive views to and from the estuary, ensuring any new development on its fringes is incorporated into its landscape setting. The cultural heritage and natural evolution of the estuary is conveyed through sensitive interpretation, and local communities are involved in planning for future landscape change as a result of sea level rise and changes in coastal erosion patterns. Recreational pressure and in particular water-based activity is sensitively managed to retain the peaceful, tranquil character of the estuary.

Landscape Guidelines

- Manage the **internationally important habitats**, including saltmarshes and mudflats, ensuring marshes are grazed at appropriate levels and the location of engineered sea defences respects the natural environment wherever possible.
- Plan for opportunities to **expand estuarine habitats** to build resilience to future climate change.
- Explore opportunities to **mitigate the visual impact of intrusive electricity infrastructure**.
- Protect the **open character of the estuaries** and their important views to and from the surrounding landscapes.
- Plan for the **future impacts of climate change**, particularly as a result of sea level rise and coastal erosion, allowing natural processes to take place wherever possible whilst ensuring that local communities are involved in making decisions about their future landscapes.

LCT 4B: Marine levels and coastal plains



4B. Marine levels and coastal plains

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

Small, flat areas of marsh adjacent to the river Tamar .

Unsettled, unenclosed and not accessible, although forms an important open setting to adjacent settlements and rights of way, flanking the open water of the Tamar. Marine-influenced habitats are important for biodiversity including coastal saltmarsh.

Landscape and seascape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Low-lying narrow semi-terrestrial areas within the flat unsettled river valley of the River Tamar which include intertidal areas and adjacent land which is inundated with brackish water from the estuary during high spring tides.
- Underlain by Upper Devonian bedrock, typical of much of Plymouth.

Woodland cover

- Fruit trees along riverside banks and hedgerows

Land use and field patterns

- No cultivation due to marine inundation. An organic landscape pattern is created in this type by the mix of creek, saltmarsh and grazing marsh.

Semi-natural habitats

- Saline incursion has created marine-influenced semi-natural habitats, such as reedbed and saltmarsh which are often of high biodiversity value, as demonstrated by the designation of much of this type as a marine Special Area of Conservation and many of the mudflats as SSSIs.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Important industrial history; the LCT is partially within the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site. Mining products were transported by boat from the many quays located along the River Tamar.
- Morwellham Quay is a Scheduled Monument: transport infrastructure, part of the water control system and a manganese mill. The distinctive Calstock viaduct crosses over this LCT (Grade II* listed structure).
- Provides a setting to the Conservation Area at Weir Quay.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Unsettled and unenclosed without roads, although small settlements and minor roads can be found on adjacent land, including Weir Quay.
- The Tamar Valley Discovery Trail long distance footpath runs adjacent to this LCT in places, providing an opportunity for appreciation of the natural landscape and its views.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Strong sensory characteristics: colour and texture of habitats, smell of mudflats, birdcalls, sight of sunlight reflecting off water
- Attractive, naturalistic views across the open water over the river. The 400kV pylon line crossing the river at Weir Quay can detract from views.
- The LCT is partially within Tamar Valley AONB, with the river and its associated habitats forming a focal point of the protected landscape
- Open and exposed character and highly influenced by weather conditions with views funnelled along the valley system, which may contain a juxtaposition of urban and rural elements, such as the long views towards Plymouth.
- Overlooked by the steep wooded slopes of the valley from both Devon and Cornwall.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Open undeveloped flanks of the Tamar framing the open water with strong sense of remoteness and wildness despite proximity to more developed areas (Plymouth).
- Dynamic character – changing with the tides creating a natural, organic landscape pattern.
- High biodiversity interest associated with habitats, such as reedbed, saltmarsh and mudflats designation of much of this type as a marine Special Area of Conservation and SSSIs.
- Strong sensory characteristics: colour and texture of habitats, smell of mudflats, birdcalls, sight of sunlight reflecting off water.
- Industrial history associated with the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site. Plus large number of historic weirs and quays.
- Part of the setting to adjacent inland landscape including Conservation Area/SM at Morwellham Quay, and for the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail.
- Integral to the special qualities of the Tamar AONB.

Summary of landscape condition

A landscape/seascape generally in a good condition, with a strong and distinctive sense of place as part of the Tamar River (including the AONB and part of the WHS).

Forces for change

- Continuing pressure for development in adjoining landscapes which could be visible from within this area affecting the rural character and sense of tranquillity.
- Competing balance between biodiversity interests and coastal defences.
- 400KV pylon line crossing the estuary may in future be subject to undergrounding creating a positive landscape change.
- Climate change, sea level rise and future inundation creating opportunities for managed retreat and creation of new habitats.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

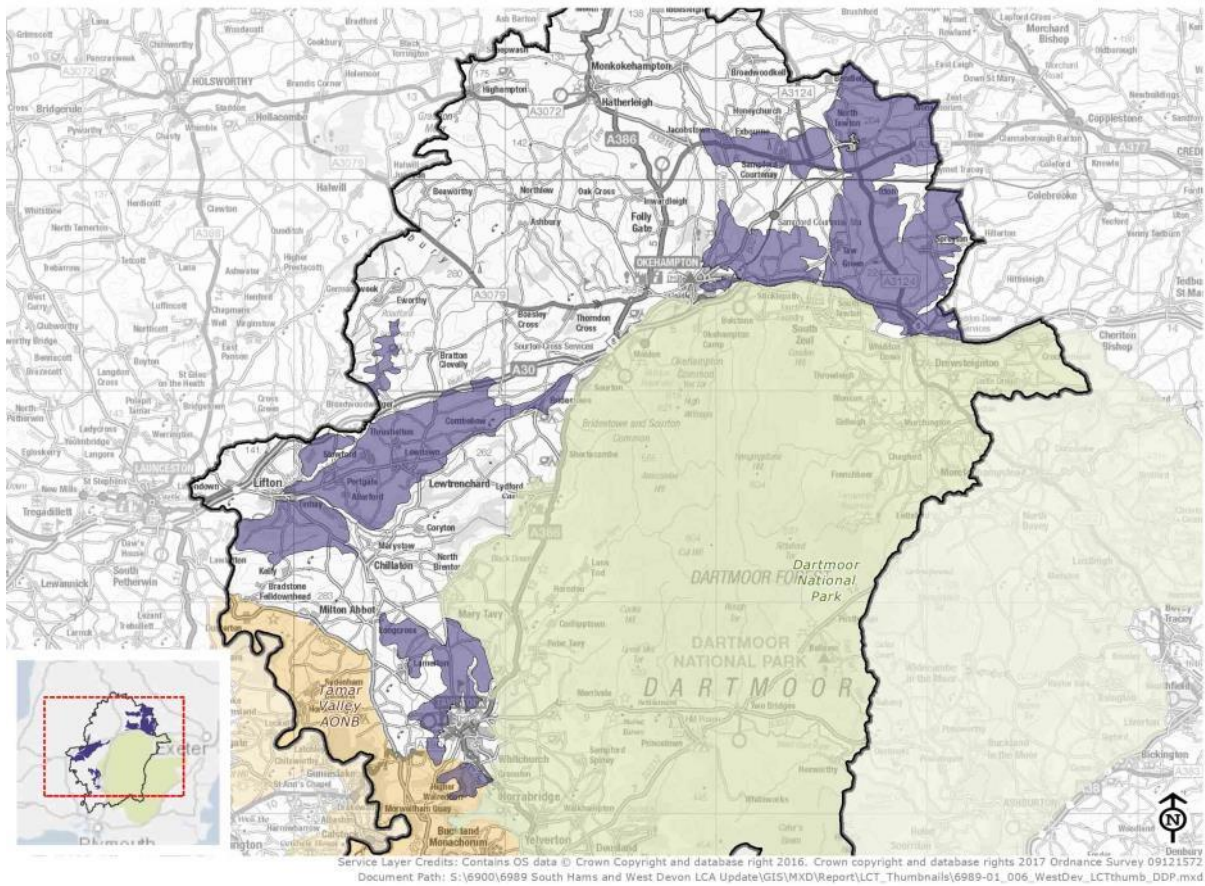
Overall Landscape Strategy

To protect the open, undeveloped character of the marine levels as part of the Tamar Valley AONB. The landscape is prepared for the future effects of a changing climate, with wildlife habitats strengthened and expanded to build resilience. Historic sites and features are conserved and interpreted.

Landscape Guidelines

- Encourage the **retention and restocking of fruit trees** in hedgerows.
- Encouraging agricultural uses which help **maintain traditional habitats**, such as seasonal grazing on saltmarsh and management of ditches as field boundaries.
- Supporting opportunities for **managed retreat, realignment and recreation/adaptation of habitats**.
- Encouraging management to **conserve reedbeds, saltmarsh, grazing marshes, ditches and mudflats**.
- Conserve the **undeveloped, remote wild character** of this type and resisting development within or adjacent to the landscape.
- Conserve and interpret the **wealth of historic features** associated with this type as part of the World Heritage Site.
- Ensure **coastal defences, where required or strengthened, are well designed** and fit with this open undeveloped landscape.

LCT 5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land



5A. Inland elevated undulating land

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

This LCT consists of areas of elevated land between the many rivers in the district, located west of Tavistock and south west and north of Okehampton.

Undulating upland farmland which is generally open and expansive with little built development.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Elevated land with summits of up to 260m located between the high moorland edge of Dartmoor and the lowland moorland and river valleys. Small streams, rising from springs on the higher slopes, cut folds in the gently rolling landform.
- Complex underlying geology of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, with ridges of sandstone and basalt resulting in a varied topography.

Woodland cover

- Woodland is sparse on higher slopes but deciduous woodlands line the narrow stream valleys and there are larger mixed and coniferous plantations on lower river valley slopes particularly along the River Lew and Lyd.

Land use and field patterns

- Agricultural land comprising a mixture of sheep and dairy pasture on hillsides and arable on the flatter upland areas. There are discrete areas of rough ground along the stream valleys.
- The fields are of mixed size and origin, with irregular small-sized medieval fields on hillsides, and relatively large, regular enclosures, **known locally as 'Barton Fields', laid out between C15th-C18th**, 19th century enclosures with straight boundaries as well as large regular fields of modern origin on higher flatter ground.
- Field bounded by low wide treeless hedges or hedgebanks on higher ground. There are hedgerow trees, commonly oak, on more protected field boundaries.

Semi-natural habitats

- Valued semi-natural habitats are associated with deciduous woodland, including wet woodland, rush pasture and marshy grassland along the numerous stream valleys. The beech woodland and remnant heathland to the south of Tavistock has a moorland edge character.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Scattered historic features including bowl barrows and hill top enclosures on the exposed ridgelines and a Roman Fort on the River Taw south of North Tawton.
- Estate woodland relating to the riverside estates at Hayne Manor on the Thrushel and Sydenham House on the Lyd, both east of Lifton.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Sparsely settled with linear roadside villages along exposed ridges and isolated farms and houses away from view down private driveways. There are several historic nucleated villages such as North Tawton, Sampford Courtney and Exbourne situated above river crossings.
- Local vernacular buildings styles of exposed stone and slate with some whitewashed cob and thatch cottages. There is 20th century settlement edge development particularly around North Tawton.
- Straight and often busy main roads traverse the ridges, some of which formerly provided the main road access to Cornwall and accounts for the pattern of roadside settlements. Elsewhere there is an extensive network of narrow winding lanes with grass verges and hedgebanks which dip down the valley slopes.
- The network of local footpaths link with the long-distance river valley walks such as Tarka Trail, while others cross the LCT including the Two Castles Trail, West Devon Way and Devonshire Heartland Way.

Views and perceptual qualities

- The low hedges and lack of hedgerow trees result in open skylines on the higher slopes with some far-

reaching views over the countryside including to Dartmoor National Park in the north.

- A traditional agricultural landscape with dark night skies and a strong sense of remoteness diluted by wind turbines along the ridgelines and heavy traffic on the straight main roads.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities to development within this LCT:

- **The seemingly remote and 'empty' character, sparsely settled with high levels of tranquillity and experience of dark skies;**
- Windswept, largely unwooded ridgeline landscapes contrast with the narrow wooded stream valleys;
- The mosaic of arable and pasture fields with pastures grazed by distinctive Devon Red and South Devon cattle;
- The mixed pattern of field sizes and origins, including irregular small-sized medieval fields on hillsides, relatively large, regular enclosures, laid out between C15th-C18th as well as larger regular fields of modern origin on higher flatter ground;
- Areas of deciduous woodland and rush pasture in stream valleys which provide valuable habitats, with areas of moorland character on higher land;
- Winding lanes which dip into the valleys, bound by grass verges and hedgebanks often covered with a profusion of wildflowers;
- Clusters of prehistoric hilltop enclosure and bowl barrows forming highly visible features on the exposed ridgelines;
- Several long distance trails of value for recreation and quiet enjoyment and ready access to the natural environment;
- The open skylines and long rural views available within this high, open and expansive landscape.

Summary of landscape condition

- Because much of the landscape is unsettled and remote, the structure of the landscape, with gently rolling open farmland, extensive views and lack of built development, is largely intact. Adjoining areas are visible from the valley sides. Settlement is scattered, with isolated houses and farms, except for recent development on the edge of North Tawton and Tavistock. The presence of pylons and busy main roads along the ridgelines stands out in this LCT, resulting in reduced local levels of tranquillity.

Forces for change

- Changes in land ownership or agricultural intensification (pastoral to arable), which may lead to a loss of traditional medieval field boundaries and a change to existing landscape pattern as well as a gradual decline in wildlife species and their habitats. Decline in livestock numbers leading to of scrub encroachment onto pastoral land.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora pthogens* and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)). Loss of trees within hedgerows would be particularly noticeable in this landscape type.
- Continuing decline in traditional rural skills such as hedge-laying resulting in under management of hedges and verges in some areas.
- Continuing **pressure for development particularly due to the LCT's proximity to the urban fringes of Tavistock and North Tawton.** Further expansion of these settlements adjacent to the LCT, onto the upper slopes would be highly visible within this elevated landscape.

- An increase in traffic levels on narrow rural lanes likely to diminish levels of tranquillity and pressure to widen roads eroding rural character.
- Pressure for new masts, pylons and potentially wind turbines (if government subsidies are renewed), which would be potentially visible on prominent skylines.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

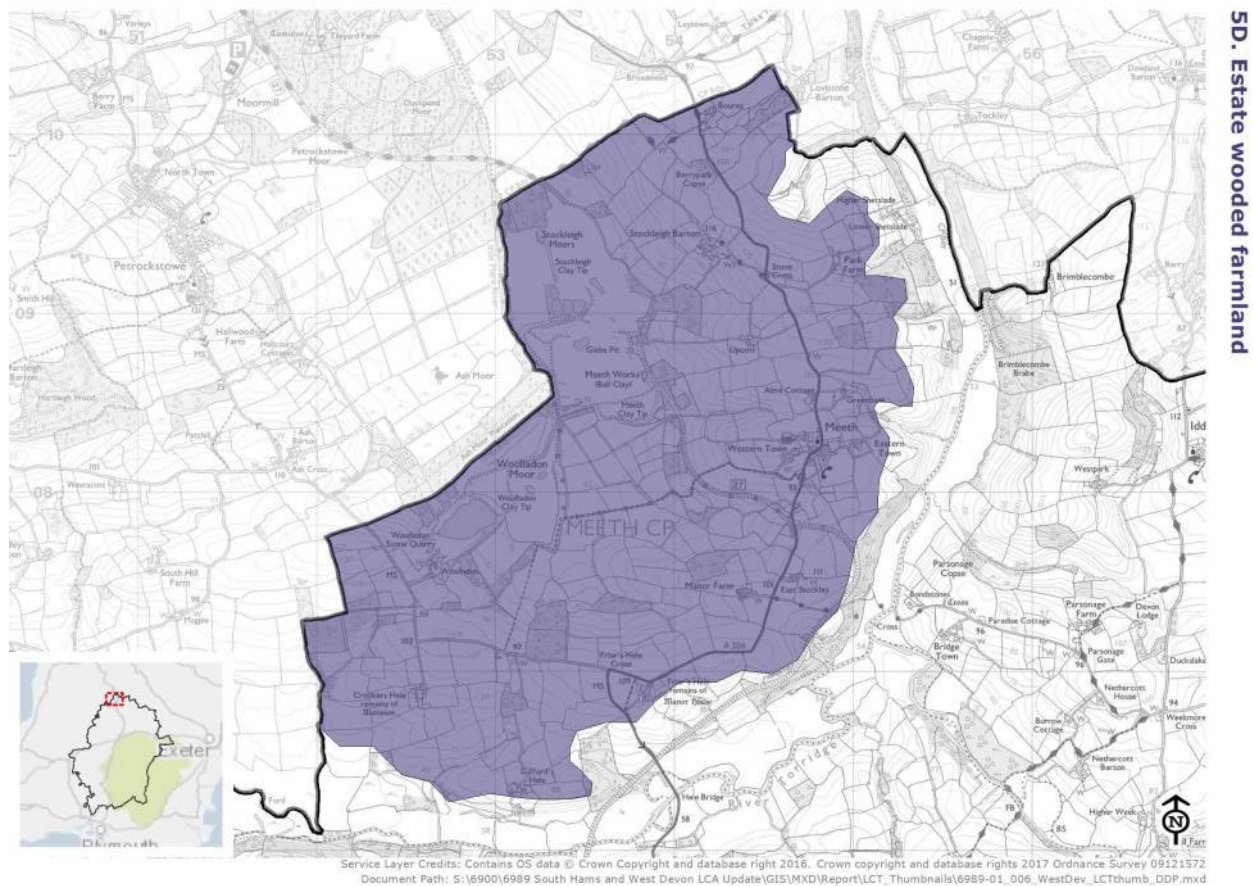
Overall Landscape Strategy

To protect and enhance the remote character of the elevated uplands, with its intricate pattern of fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedgebanks. Manage and enhance the farmed landscape by ensuring that pastoral land is conserved and field boundaries maintained, wildlife interest and local diversity is enhanced, soil erosion and agricultural run-off reduced. Maintain the sparse settlement pattern, open views to distinctive tree clumps and to Dartmoor.

Landscape Guidelines

- Protect the **wooded character of the narrow stream valleys**. Extend areas of mixed and broadleaved woodlands through natural regeneration and new planting (including with species suited to a changing climate).
- Protect and maintain the **historic field patterns** of the landscape, restoring and replanting lost and gappy Devon hedgebanks (particularly on intensively farmed slopes where they can provide a role in stabilising the soil and reducing agricultural runoff into watercourses). Respect any local variations in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials wherever possible.
- Manage the **mature hedgerow trees**, commonly oak, which form characteristic features on more protected field boundaries encouraging the development of further hedgerow trees.
- Manage **important areas of remnant heathland** on higher slopes through a continuation of livestock grazing at appropriate levels. Manage and re-link fragmented patches of wet woodland, rush pasture and marshy grassland along the numerous stream valleys. Support farmers to continue to **farm these 'marginal' areas as an integral part of their farming system**.
- Protect and appropriately manage the **landscape's archaeological heritage** including prehistoric enclosures and barrow on the exposed ridgelines providing interpretation where appropriate.
- Manage and enhance the **wildlife interest of agricultural fields** by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and grass buffer strips around intensively farmed fields. These measures will also help reduce diffuse pollution into adjacent water courses draining from the LCT.
- Protect the **strong perceptions of tranquillity and remoteness** in the landscape, with its well managed fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedgebanks through the control and management of development, and ensure the area remains valued for recreation.
- Protect the **sparsely settled character** by carefully controlling any new development outside the **existing footprints of the landscape's small settlements**.
- **Protect the landscape's traditional building styles and materials**, of exposed stone and slate with some whitewashed cob and thatch cottages. Any new development or extensions should utilise the same materials and building styles wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).
- Protect **rural lanes** and ensure any highway improvements are sympathetic, resisting intrusive signage and following local guidance for management of roadside verges. Screen visually intrusive sections of the main roads which run along the ridgelines.
- Seek opportunities to **extend recreational routes and improve linkages** and supporting facilities where this does not damage the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.
- **Protect the landscape's far-reaching views and the open character of the undeveloped skylines**, avoiding insensitively-sited development on prominent ridgelines where it would be more visible within the wider landscape.
- Protect the **perceptions of remoteness** in the landscape, with its well managed fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedgebanks through the control and management of development.

LCT 5D: Estate woodland farmlands



5D. Estate wooded farmland

Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

This landscape type is found in a small area in the north west part of West Devon Borough, adjacent to Torridge District.

A traditional farmed landscape which is dominated by former clay workings, now managed as a nature reserve.

Landscape description

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Rolling hills and ridges drained by frequent streams, brooks and springs creating an undulating topography. Underlying geology comprising mudstones and siltstones, with harder outcrops of **sandstone creating rolling hills and ridges known as the 'Culm Measures'**.

Woodland cover

- Well-wooded character, with frequent mixed and broadleaved plantations (often beech and oak), estate woodlands, wet woodland lining streams, historic wood pasture and conifer blocks.
- Grown-out beech and oak hedgebanks, veteran in-field trees and streamside orchards contributing to **the landscape's wooded estate character**.

Land use and field patterns

- Predominantly pastoral farmland, particularly dairying and sheep grazing, with areas of arable cultivation and some ancient wood pasture. Occasional pony paddocks.
- Mixture of sinuous medium-scale medieval fields and larger, more regular enclosures. Some villages retain small historic strip fields around their fringes.
- Fields enclosed by wildflower-rich Devon banks often topped with closely-cut mixed thorn, beech and sycamore hedges. Some use of fencing (including estate railings where associated with historic parklands).
- Large area of quarries and clay workings and tips in the western part of the area at Woolladon and Stockleigh Moors, including extensive area of regenerated woodland and scrub plus expanse of open water.

Semi-natural habitats

- Meeth Quarry is a former clay quarry which closed in 2004 and is now owned by the Devon Wildlife Trust and is managed as a nature reserve (County Wildlife Site) with habitats including scrub/gorse, unimproved grasslands and streams/ponds.
- High biodiversity interest associated with Culm grassland, purple moor grass, rush pasture, unimproved meadows, ponds and valley mire, as well as bands of ancient semi-natural woodland.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- The **remains of a manor house at Friar's Hele and a mansion at Crockers Hele are indicated on the OS map**.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Traditional local vernacular of whitewash and cream cob/render cottages with slate or thatched roofs, as well as some buildings of local stone. Linhays (traditional livestock shelters) constructed of cob and local stone with slate or corrugated iron roofs, reinforce a strong history of farming.
- Nucleated historic hamlets and villages focused around crossroads or stream crossing points, with square stone church towers forming local landmarks. Frequent farmsteads distributed throughout.
- Relatively little road access into the area, with tracks leading from the farms on the lower ground (east) to the moors (west)

Views and perceptual qualities

- Strong sense of peace and tranquillity and feeling of being in the heart of Devon. Noise and movement from traffic on the A386 can detract from tranquillity, as can occasional military flyovers.
- Winding rural roads bounded by flower-rich Devon banks restricting views, crossing many streams on

stone bridges. Crossroads marked by distinctive white finger posts.

- Higher land affords long views across the landscape, including to Dartmoor from higher ground to the south of Meeth. In the former quarry, views are enclosed by the topography and tree cover.

Landscape Evaluation

Key landscape sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape sensitivities within this LCT:

- Strong coherence in building styles and vernacular, with occasional small nucleated hamlets and villages (Meeth) and dispersed farms. Landmark stone church tower at Meeth.
- Generally, quiet, tranquil and rural with a sense of enclosure provided by Devon hedgebanks
- Large areas of woodland, including ancient woodlands, regenerated mineral workings and estate plantations
- Valued semi-natural habitats associated with regenerated clay pits, plus small areas of Culm grassland

Summary of landscape condition

A landscape in variable condition, previously much changed by former clay mining by now regenerating and providing an important biodiversity resource. This new landscape character contrasts with the intact Devon landscape of small fields, woodlands and hamlets in the east of the area, albeit this is subject to agricultural change.

Forces for change

- Agricultural intensification and amalgamation of smaller farms or use creation of hobby farms/ areas for pony paddocks
- Former clay workings cover an extensive area at Woolladon and Stockleigh Moor in the western part of the area, but where regenerated provide valuable habitats
- Loss of veteran tree character associated with estates as mature trees are not replaced

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

Woodlands are managed for wildlife and to produce timber and woodfuel, linking to a rich farmed landscape enclosed by a strong network of wildflower-rich Devon banks. To continue to manage the new regenerating landscape associated with the clay mining landscape to maximise its interest for biodiversity.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve **nucleated settlement pattern of hamlets and** villages focussed around crossroads or stream crossing points avoiding linear spread for example associated with the A386.
- Protect the views to and setting of the **square church tower** at Meeth as a local landmark feature.
- Conserve the **traditional local vernacular** of the villages and hamlets and including distinctive features such as lincays, stone bridges, estate railings and white painted sign posts.
- Continue to **regenerate the former clay workings** for to maximise biodiversity. Conserve and connect **fragmented areas of culm grassland**.
- Manage the network of **flower-rich Devon banks**.