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The Landscape Character of West Devon



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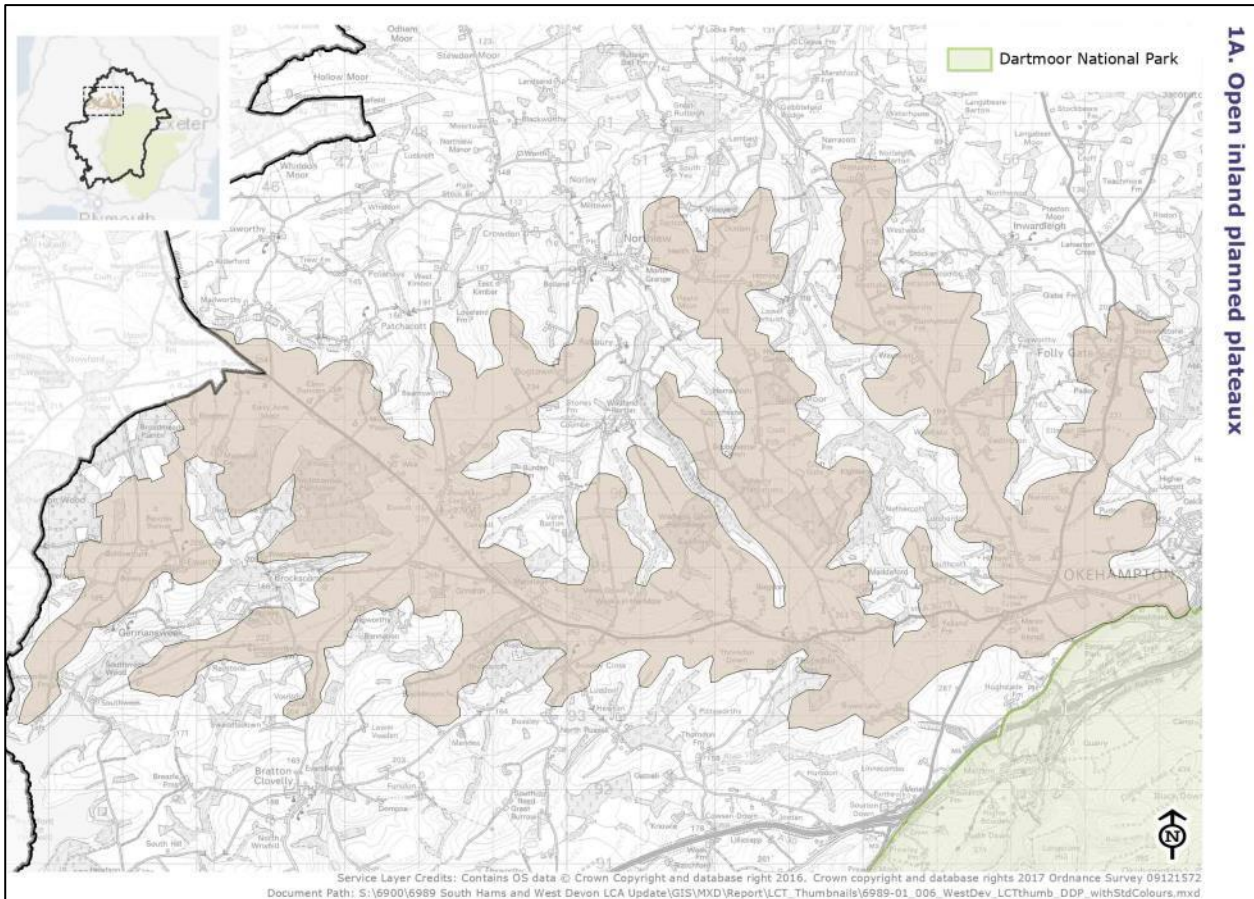
West Devon Landscape Character Type descriptions

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

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LCT 1A: Open inland planned plateaux



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.

The plateau stretches towards the borough 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 hedgerows 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 hedgerows 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 is 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 are usually stone and slate, with construction dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, although farm buildings may have more recent corrugated 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 limited settlement, in which modern elements such as communications masts and wind turbines are prominent over the low Devon hedges 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

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes within this LCT:

- 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 clustered at crossroads.
- Large-scale, open landscape, with extensive views 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 narrow Devon hedges. The extensive geometric plantations have altered the open character of the plateaux in places. There has been some recent loss of valued semi-natural habitats due to modern 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, as well as telecommunications masts in elevated positions.
- Increased development pressure, particularly on the fringes of Okehampton.
- The conversion of vernacular agricultural buildings to residences and other uses (e.g. hobby farming) owing to the decline in the agricultural economy.
- The absorption of smaller farms into larger landholdings, along with an increased industrialisation of farming (and associated large scale farm buildings). An abandonment of more marginal land could become more common.
- Uncertainty surrounding the future of the agricultural sector (e.g. post-Brexit, market forces), including with regard to agri-environment scheme support. This may lead to changes in cropping patterns and crop choice.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

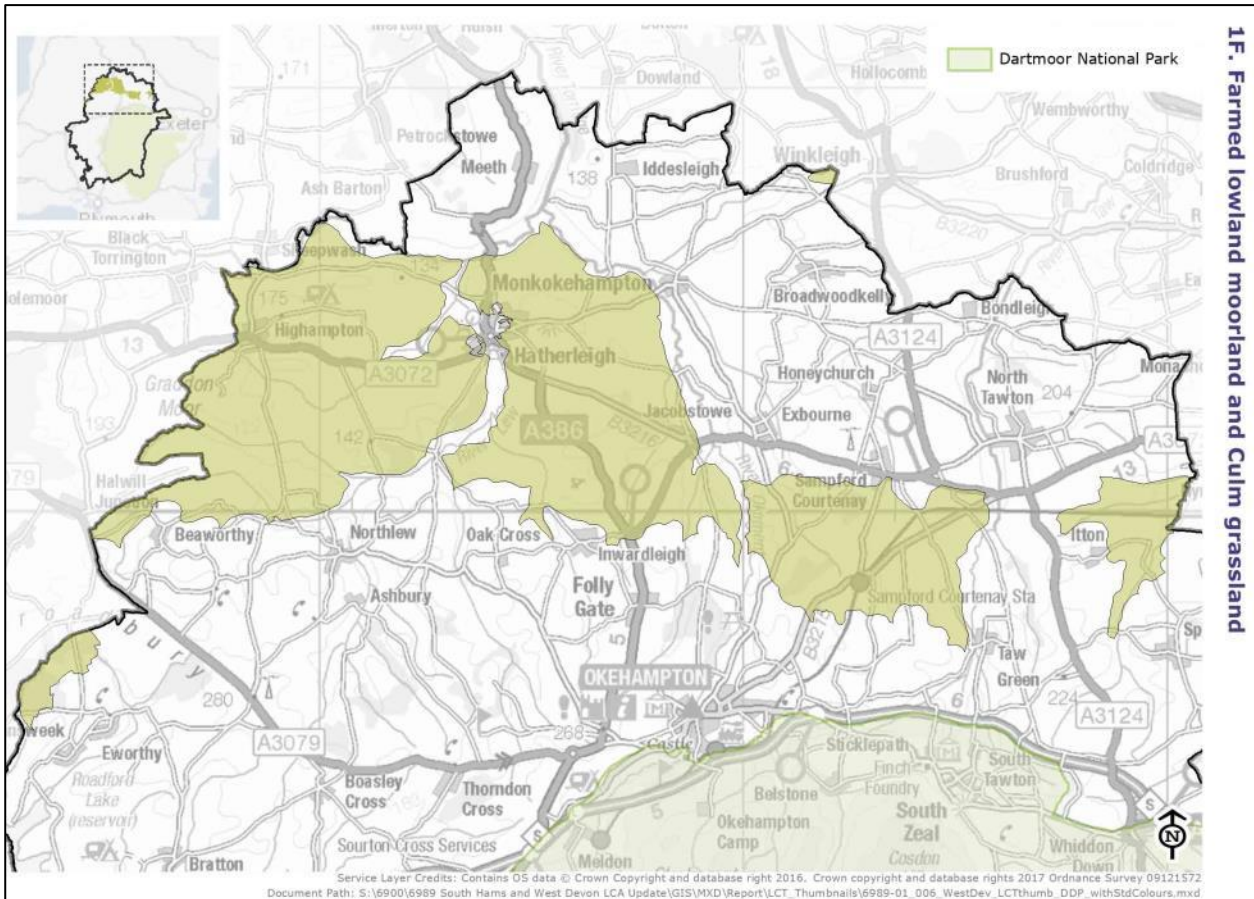
Overall Landscape Strategy

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

- Manage the network of characteristic **Devon hedges**.
- Encourage the continuing management of **beech hedgerows and tree lines** to maintain local distinctiveness, including replanting individual trees in rows to maintain continuity, while generally encouraging the maintenance of locally indigenous multi-species hedgerows.
- Encourage discussion with highways authorities and landowners to ensure that **ditches and verges are managed to maximise their biodiversity potential**.
- Wherever possible, retain **pastoral cultivation** as the dominant land use throughout this type.
- Manage scrub and bracken invasion to improve wet heath habitats with due attention to and care for **buried and earthwork archaeological sites**.
- Encourage an integrated approach to the management of the **biodiversity and archaeological resource**.
- Encourage the appropriate management of the **small copses** on roadside and in damp patches and the creation of ecological links to existing field boundaries by planting new hedgerows.
- Identify and survey areas of **heathland, acid grassland and species-rich permanent pasture**.
- Protect and manage characteristic **small estate plantations** and coverts.
- **Gradually restructure mature conifer plantations to broadleaves and/or [wet] heathland**, to increase local biodiversity and create more effective ecological corridors.
- Maintain the **existing limited and clustered settlement pattern** across the landscape character type.
- Ensure that **development proposals associated with key settlements** (e.g. Okehampton) mitigate any negative impact on local landscape character and valued semi-natural habitats.
- Ensure the **careful siting of renewable energy sources and telecommunications infrastructure** such as wind farms and solar arrays to limit impacts on local landscape character, particularly in open views.
- Encourage the **appropriate uses of rural buildings** or their sympathetic conversion, including all associated works such as gardens, drives, Devon hedges, visibility splays and entrance detailing. Ensure that new agricultural development is clustered away from open and exposed sites, and well integrated into its landscape setting.
- Ensure 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.
- Discuss with highways authorities ways of **reducing road signage and lighting** without jeopardizing road safety, as the highway layout encourages speeding, while signage detracts from the openness and unsettled character.

LCT 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 borough, 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 places of a plateau-like character based upon an underlying geology of Culm Measures with mudstones and siltstones with bands of sandstone.
- Landscape is crossed by frequent streams, springs, wet ditches and small ponds.

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 Devon hedges 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 hedgerows 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. The LCT contains part of and forms a setting to Hatherleigh Conservation Area.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- A predominantly undeveloped 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 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', including the Devonshire Heartland Way and Tarka Trail routes. Open Access Land is found at Hatherleigh Moor and Berrydown Plantation.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Elevation across the area affords 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 the national park at 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 wind turbines are found throughout the landscape, with varying impacts on local character.

Landscape Evaluation

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes within this LCT:

- Distinctive internationally 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 hedges and surrounded by open grazing land.
- Sparse settlement pattern, largely undeveloped 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 in elevated locations can be visible from long distances across the landscape, detracting 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.
- Uncertainty surrounding the future of the agricultural sector (e.g. post-Brexit, market forces), including with regard to agri-environment scheme support. This may lead to changes in cropping patterns, crop choice and neglect of 'marginal' areas.
- 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 and modern 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. Where this extends onto high ground it can be particularly intrusive.
- 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 on-going decline in the agricultural economy – e.g. overgrown hedgerows, derelict farm buildings, inappropriate farm building repairs, and 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

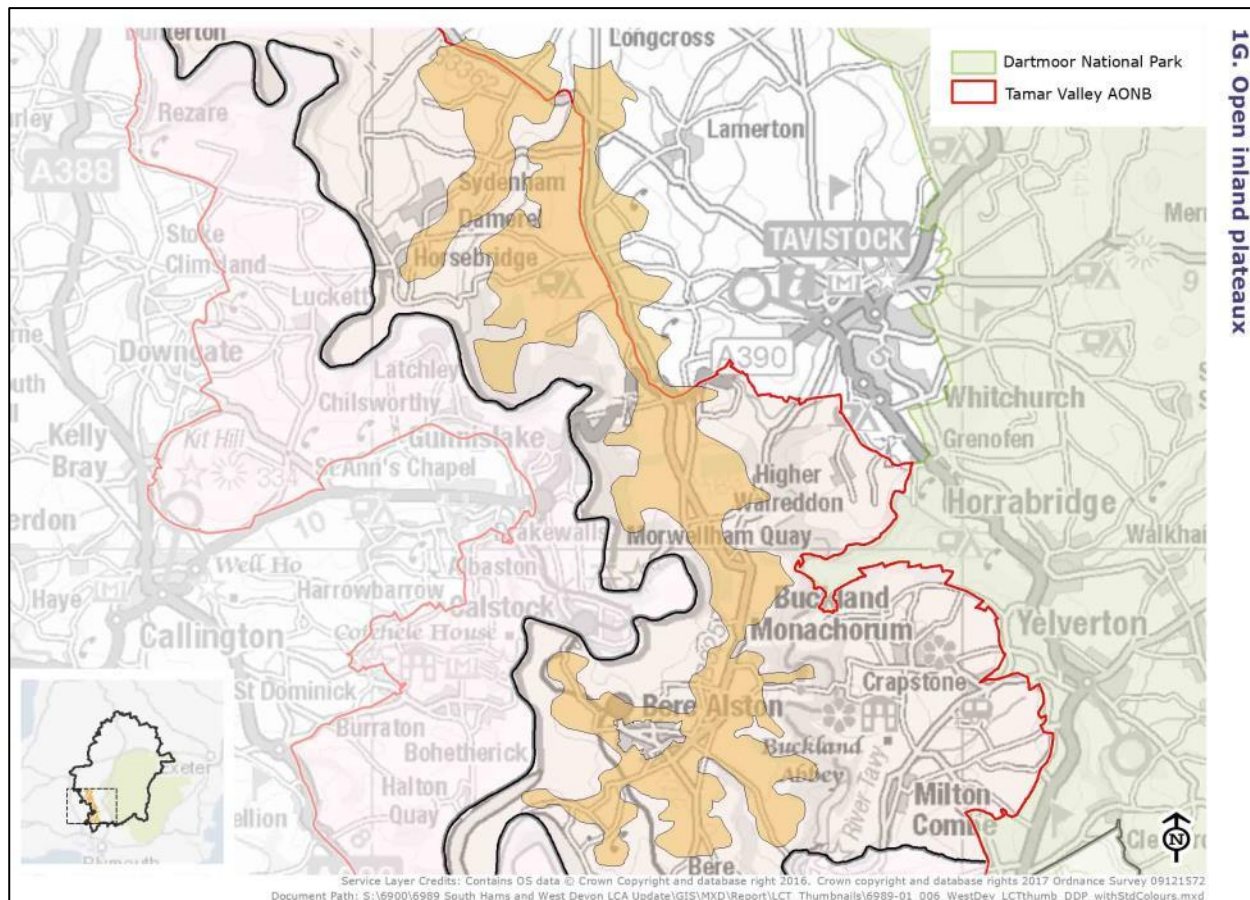
Overall Landscape Strategy

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

- Promote the **improved maintenance and gapping-up** of hedgerows, especially where hedgerows have grown out into lines of scrub or where post-and-wire fencing is prominent.
- Facilitate 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.
- Ensure the appropriate management of **wet pasture, heath and scrub habitats** and their expansion when conifer plantations are felled/re-structured.
- Ensure that **plantations are not extended** so as to impede continuity of grassland and other habitats around them.
- Where plantations are to be conserved, **promote further edge planting of beech**, which is locally distinctive.
- Ensure that **development proposals associated with key settlements** (e.g. Hatherleigh) mitigate any negative impact on the local landscape character, semi-natural habitats or archaeological interest, and avoid encroachment onto open elevated ground.
- Protect areas of open countryside and elevated land from intrusive development. Any **development should reinforce the traditional landscape character** of the area.
- Ensure the **careful siting of renewable energy sources and telecommunications infrastructure** such as wind farms and solar arrays to limit impacts on local landscape character, particularly in open views.
- Encourage **appropriate uses of rural buildings** or their sympathetic conversion where appropriate, including all associated works such as gardens, drives, Devon hedges, visibility splays and entrance detailing. Ensure that new agricultural development is clustered away from open and exposed sites, and well integrated into its landscape setting.
- Encourage 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.
- Have regard to the **high skyline and cross-boundary intervisibility** of the landscape, protecting open areas of skyline from intrusive development.
- **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



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 RIGS, a former copper mine.

Woodland cover

- Few large woodlands but small scattered deciduous woods, hilltop beech clumps, relic pine shelterbelts and copses and trees along roadsides, where wide verges add interest to the sinuous narrow lanes.
- 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 typically low Devon hedges with ditches and verges, while estates are defined by areas of regularly spaced and even-aged oaks. Sometimes banks are denuded with no hedgerow remaining.
- Some horseculture and equestrian development has introduced visually intrusive fencing instead of hedgerows, usually in close association with settlements or large properties.

Semi-natural habitats

- 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 hedgerows 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 are within the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site.
- Grade I listed houses of Collacombe Manor and Morwell Barton. 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 in an otherwise undeveloped landscape, with a few historic settlements and several crossroad settlements. The larger village of Bere Alston is an exception.
- Typically stone vernacular, with slate roofs. Estate buildings are distinctive.
- Dense highway network with narrow sinuous lanes branching from the B3362 and B3257 which run along the plateau top. The landscape is also crossed by numerous strategic recreational routes and other rights of way.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Although some of the roads are sunken, the generally low field boundaries and sparse tree cover create an open character, with long views 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 to the special qualities of the protected landscape, particularly the LCT's mining heritage.

Landscape Evaluation

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes within this LCT:

- The sparse settlement pattern with characteristic stone vernacular and slate 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.
- An open and exposed character, with long views from higher elevations which include the picturesque Tamar 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 and Devon hedge 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

- Pressure for new development on the edge of existing settlements, including Bere Alston.
- Seasonal increases in levels of traffic accessing the Tamar Valley resulting in a reduction in tranquillity.
- Conversion of vernacular agricultural buildings to residential use, and an increase in associated residential paraphernalia.
- Change from pastoral farming to arable cultivation and diversification to other land uses, including equestrian/hobby farming.
- The absorption of smaller farms into larger landholdings, along with an increased industrialisation of farming (and associated large scale farm buildings and machinery). An abandonment of more marginal land could become more common.
- Uncertainty surrounding the future of the agricultural sector (e.g. post-Brexit, market forces), including with regard to agri-environment scheme support. This may lead to changes in cropping patterns and crop choice.
- Climate change may also influence future crop choice, with new or novel crops appearing in the landscape. Vineyards are already found in some locations.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

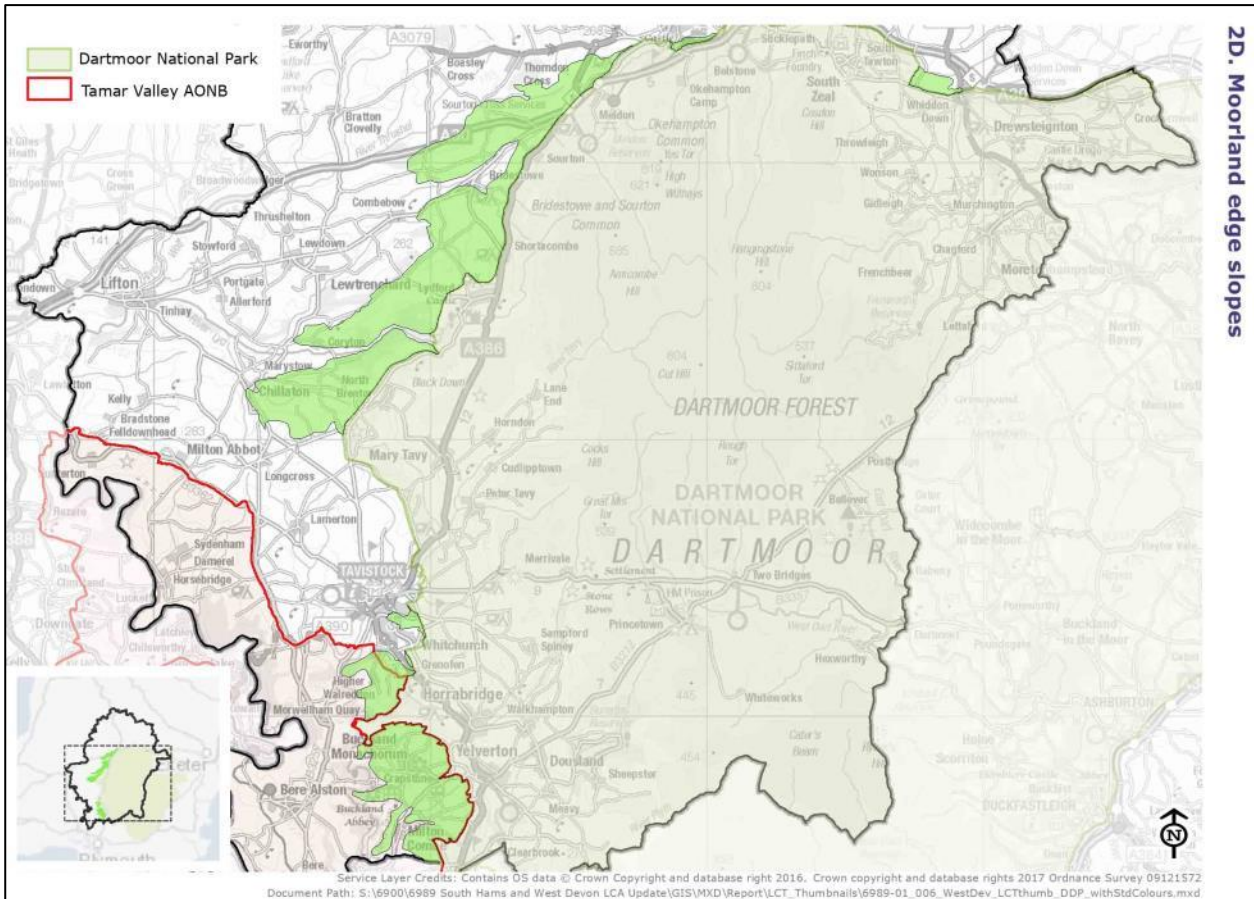
Overall Landscape Strategy

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 appropriately small scale and utilises traditional building materials. Promote responsible tourism activity, including sensitive road improvements to accommodate traffic needs.

Landscape Guidelines

- Encourage management to **maintain hedgerows 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.
- Encourage maintenance of **earth banks**, especially along roadsides, and avoid the creation of large visibility splays on narrow banked lanes wherever possible.
- Encourage the continued **contribution of verges and ditches to the ecological network**, which is particularly important where arable cultivation is locally dominant.
- Encourage the maintenance of **hedgerow oaks** to reinforce local estate farmland character.
- Promote the maintenance of **pastoral cultivation** as the dominant land use throughout this type.
- Identify and survey areas of **rough ground, wet pasture and species-rich permanent pasture** and encourage appropriate management for their conservation.
- Encourage 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 hedgerows.
- Encourage 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.
- Maintain the **existing settlement pattern** across the landscape character type.
- Ensure that development does not lead to the loss of valuable habitats.
- Ensure that development proposals associated with key settlements are small-scale, sensitively sited, and mitigate any negative impact on the local landscape character or visual quality of the area. Any **development should reinforce the traditional rural landscape character** of the area.
- Have 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.
- Encourage **appropriate uses and design of rural buildings** or their sympathetic conversion where appropriate, including all associated works such as drives, Devon hedges, visibility splays and entrance detailing.
- Encourage 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.
- Have regard to the **high skyline and cross-boundary intervisibility** of this landscape type.
- Discuss 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.
- Encourage 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



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 towards 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 gentler 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 Devon hedges 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, and sessile oaks with some birch, rowan and hazel.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Ancient features in commanding positions above the valleys, including the prehistoric enclosures near Berra Tor, 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 clustered 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.
- The A30 crosses the landscape running west from Okehampton and the A386 adjoins the LCT along its eastern boundary with the National Park. Elsewhere the road network is limited to narrow lanes.
- Areas of open access land on the open downs and woodlands in the Lyd valley, and a good network of public rights of way 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 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.

Landscape Evaluation

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes 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 Devon hedges 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.
- Areas of open access land and many strategic recreational routes which make this a popular area for recreation.
- Spectacular views across undeveloped 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 hedges. The LCT has strong visual links to the open moorland on Dartmoor, and across the wooded slopes of the Tamar Valley. Areas of arable cropping contrasts with the landscape's predominantly pastoral character. Some Devon hedges suffer from a lack of management with out-grown hedgerows 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 and Plymouth (at Roborough) could extend into this LCT, affecting its rural character and role as a setting to Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley AONB.
- 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.
- Uncertainty surrounding the future of the agricultural sector (e.g. post-Brexit, market forces), including with regard to agri-environment scheme support.
- Conversion of vernacular agricultural buildings to residential and other uses resulting in a loss of agricultural character, and farm diversification including to equestrian/hobby farming.
- Change in tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora* pathogens and ash die-back).
- 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 a 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 the potential for increases in traffic levels to further diminish levels of tranquillity.
- Growth in tourism and the proximity to Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley AONB, contributing to an increase in traffic and demand for tourism facilities (e.g. camping and caravan sites, car parking areas), particularly along the A30.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

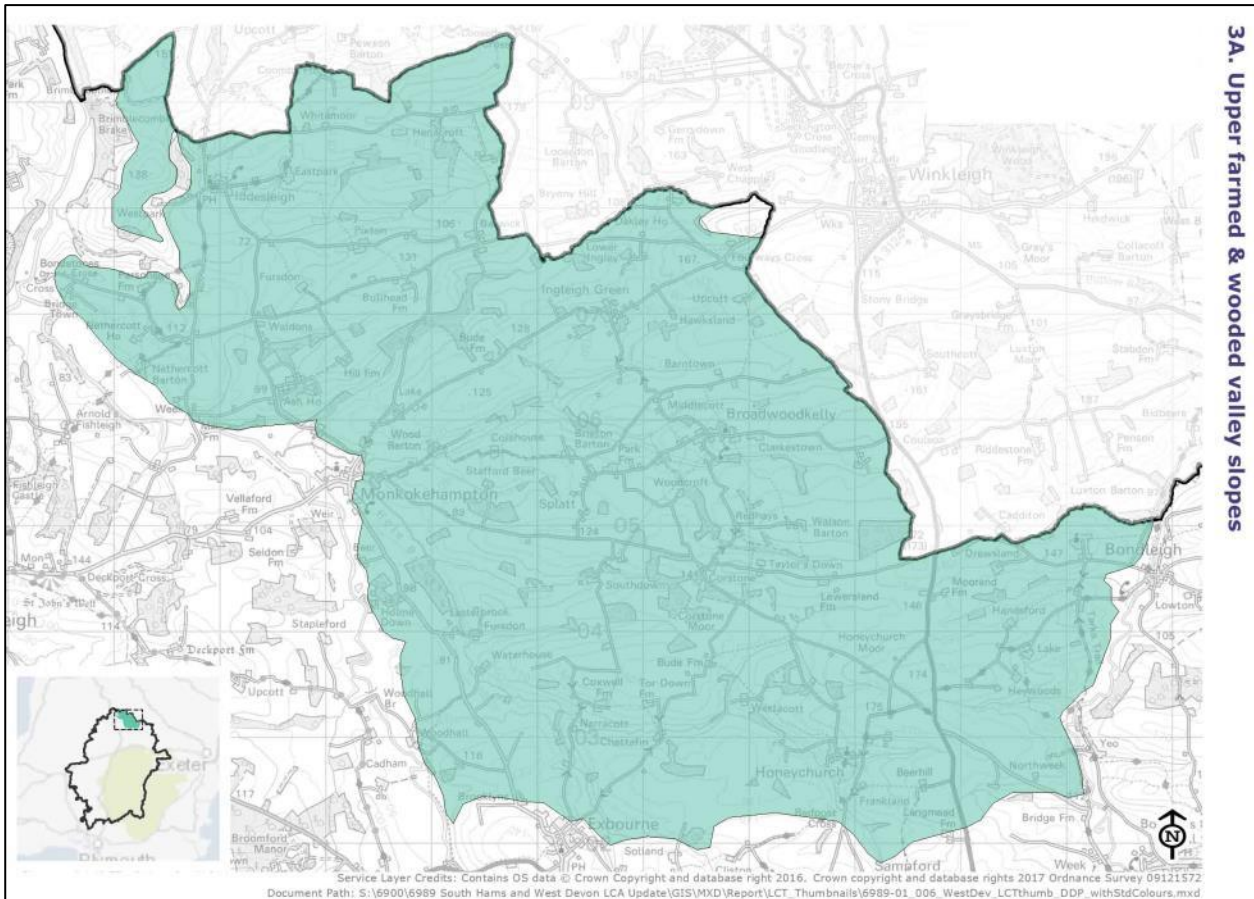
Overall Landscape Strategy

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 hedges**, encouraging the development of further beech hedgerow trees and avenues. Respect any local variation in Devon hedge 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.
- Encourage 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 small-scale of the landscape**, its underlying landform, historic field patterns and existing landscape features including trees and vernacular 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 render, white wash and thatch. New development should utilise traditional materials and building styles wherever possible.
- Seek to ensure opportunities for **access and enjoyment of the countryside** including links to the strategic recreational 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, including the Tavy valley (within 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.

LCT 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 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 Okement 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 working agricultural landscape with a strong historic field pattern of small and medium-scale pastures 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 hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees are found on the lower sheltered valley slopes.

Semi-natural habitats

- Nature conservation interest is 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

- Often unsettled, with a sparse settlement pattern of historic hamlets clustered on hilltops and occasional isolated 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 hedgerow-lined rural roads with the crossroads marked by distinctive white finger posts.
- The LCT is crossed by two strategic recreational routes; the Devonshire Heartland Way and the Tarka Trail.

Views and perceptual qualities

- The low Devon hedges 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.
- This contrasts with a sense of enclosure within the sunken Devon lanes and steep-sided wooded valleys.
- 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

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes 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 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 sides of rolling hills, within a strong framework of medieval and post-medieval fields and a network of winding lanes bounded by tall Devon hedges. 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 hedges removed, resulting in areas of arable cropping which contrast with the landscape's predominantly pastoral character. Some Devon hedges are suffering from a lack of management in some locations.

Forces for change

- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora* pathogens and ash die-back). 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 Devon hedges in some areas.
- Reduced agricultural viability of fragmented areas of lowland heath and upland grasslands and heaths.
- Change from pastoral farming to arable cultivation and diversification to other land uses, including equestrian/hobby farming.
- The absorption of smaller farms into larger landholdings, along with an increased industrialisation of farming (and associated large scale farm buildings, larger machinery, and an increase in heavy traffic on narrow lanes). An abandonment of more marginal land could become more common.
- Uncertainty surrounding the future of the agricultural sector (e.g. post-Brexit, market forces), including with regard to agri-environment scheme support. This may lead to changes in cropping patterns and crop choice.
- Climate change may influence future crop choice, with new or novel crops appearing in the landscape. Vineyards are already found in some locations.
- 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

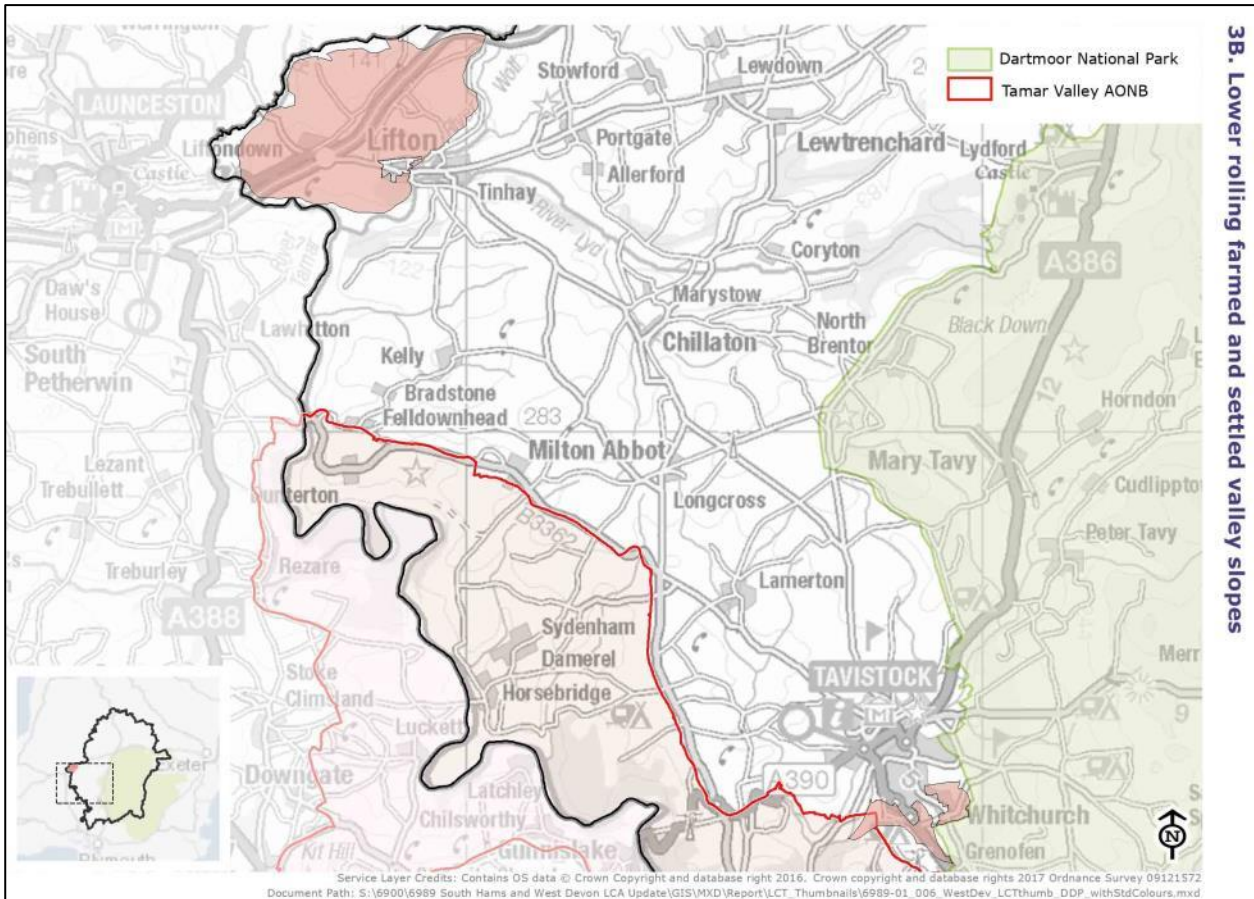
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the strong field patterns of this landscape, including the rich network of well-managed Devon hedges. 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, open views of the rolling 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.
- Manage and enhance the field patterns, restoring lost and gappy **Devon hedges**. Respect any local variations in Devon hedge 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 small-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, protecting the landscape's rural character. Ensure new agricultural development is sensitively sited away from open and exposed high ground.
- 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.
- Pursue opportunities for **access and enjoyment of the landscape**, including links to the strategic recreational routes that cross the LCT.

LCT 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, occasionally 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 Devon hedges, some with overgrown hedgerows. There is some use of post and wire.
- A mix of small to medium irregular fields from medieval and post medieval enclosures and some 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) both of which have Conservation Areas, and Whitchurch to the south of Tavistock.
- The ruins of the 19th century Gothic 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

- Predominantly undeveloped, with a dispersed pattern of small, clustered 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 20th century suburban development of houses and bungalows on settlement edges.
- There is a limited network of right of way in the LCT, but strategic recreational routes (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 Devon hedges 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 Devon hedges.
- The proximity of the LCT to larger towns, and associated 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) can negatively affect the visual quality of parts of this LCT.

Landscape Evaluation

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes 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.
- Strong sense of time depth resulting from small to medium irregular fields originating from medieval enclosures based on strip fields, which are bounded by Devon hedges.
- 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 and mining heritage giving the landscape a strong time-depth.
- The sparsely dispersed pattern of small, historic 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 in some places, 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 Devon 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 adversely 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 further diminish levels of tranquillity locally.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora* pathogens and ash die-back). 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 variable quality of Devon hedges.
- The absorption of smaller farms into larger landholdings, along with an increased industrialisation of farming (and associated large scale farm buildings and increase in heavy traffic on narrow lanes). An abandonment of more marginal land could become more common.
- Uncertainty surrounding the future of the agricultural sector (e.g. post-Brexit, market forces), including with regard to agri-environment scheme support. This may lead to changes in cropping patterns and crop choice.
- Climate change may influence future crop choice, with new or novel crops appearing in the landscape. Vineyards are already found in some locations.
- A shortage of suitable skills and labour to maintain traditional built features - building stone is no longer produced in South Devon. The settlement edge character of Tavistock and Lifton has been weakened by recent developments that have not respected settlement pattern, materials or style.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

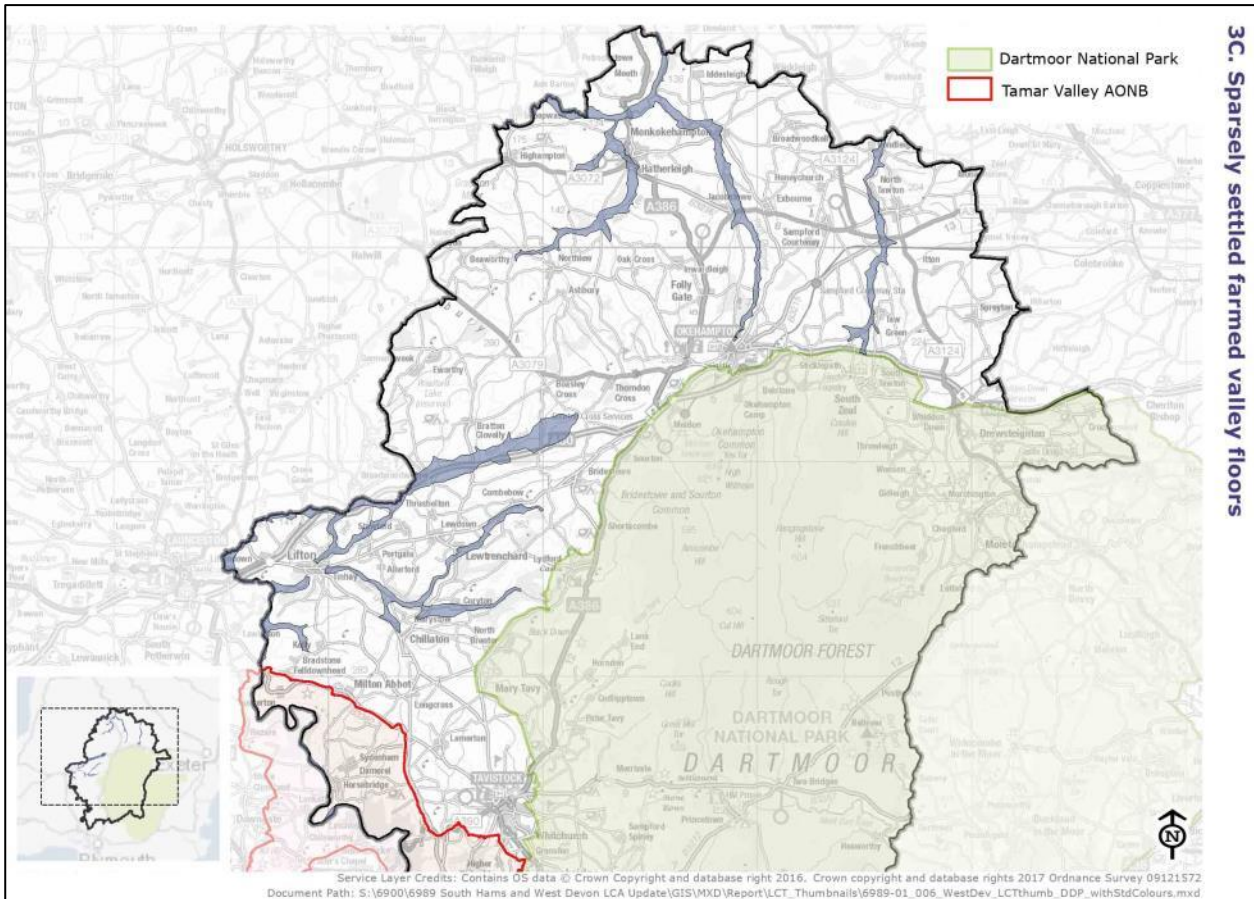
Overall Landscape Strategy

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 small-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 hedges** through regular coppicing and re-laying gappy sections, strengthening irregular medieval field patterns. Replace lost hedgerow 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 isolated houses and farms**, resisting development which is uncharacteristic and visually intrusive, or results in the linear spread of development along river valleys and roads. Avoid the 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.
- Protect the landscape's **network of quiet lanes**, resisting unsympathetic highways improvements, splays, kerbs, 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 and strategic recreational routes.
- Protect **important views to and from the hills** across the surrounding landscapes.

LCT 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.

This landscape encompasses 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 hedgerows generally forming the boundary with rising land.
- Fields forms 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 Endsleigh 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. Morwellham Quay) were linked by the Tamar Canal, and carried carry 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 flanked by 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 walking access to the rivers in West Devon, except for the strategic recreational 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 the focal point of this nationally protected landscape.

Landscape Evaluation

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes within this LCT:

- Secluded peaceful floodplain landscape, containing the meandering upper reaches of larger 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 demonstrate links to the rich industrial heritage of these valleys.
- Largely unsettled, with settlements mainly located in adjacent areas away from the floodplain. Few valley roads creating a strongly tranquil character.
- Valued for recreation, particularly along the Tamar Valley within the AONB.

Summary of landscape condition

This LCT retains its strongly 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 in some places 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 in some areas.

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* pathogens and ash die-back).
- 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.
- Climate change effects on precipitation may 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, eroding the tranquillity of the landscape in currently remote places.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

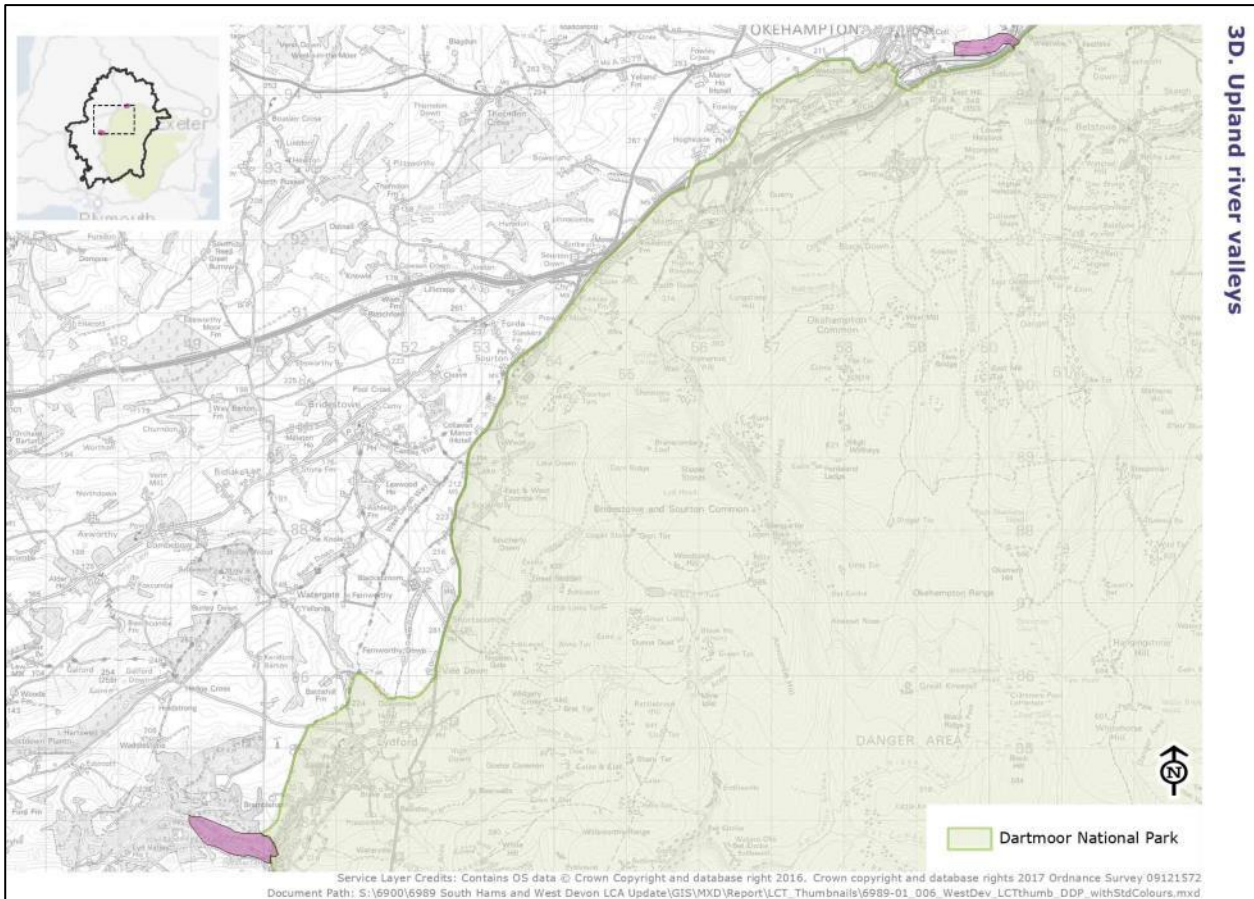
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the peaceful, tranquil and undeveloped 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 its special qualities. Protect characteristic stone bridges, other relicts of the industrial heritage of the valleys, 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.
- Encourage 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 the **undeveloped valley character**, controlling the spread of development on the valley floors, and ensuring any new development is unobtrusively sited, and designed to conserve rural views within the valleys.
- 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



Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

Valleys of watercourses originating on high ground in Dartmoor National Park, including the East Okement River and the lower part of Lydford Gorge as it extends from Dartmoor into Lydford Forest.

Intimate and tranquil, with strong natural qualities including the sound of birdsong and rushing water, and woodland habitats which are 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 Whitelady 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

- Lydford Forest has large areas of open access land, with footbridges crossing the river. The East Okement River is flanked on either side by two strategic recreational routes, and provides rights of way linking Okehampton to Dartmoor. Both areas are 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 remoteness.

Landscape Evaluation

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes within this LCT:

- Highly tranquil and strong natural perceptual qualities. Enclosed views which provide a sense of remoteness and a '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 linking to Dartmoor National Park.
- Important semi-natural habitats including woodland, ancient woodland and wetland.

Summary of landscape condition

A landscape essentially in good condition with a distinctive sense of place. Deeply incised river valleys with fast flowing water courses and steep sides, often cloaked in forest cover. The conversion of the woodland to conifer plantation in some places has substantially changed character.

Forces for change

- Extensive conifer plantation 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

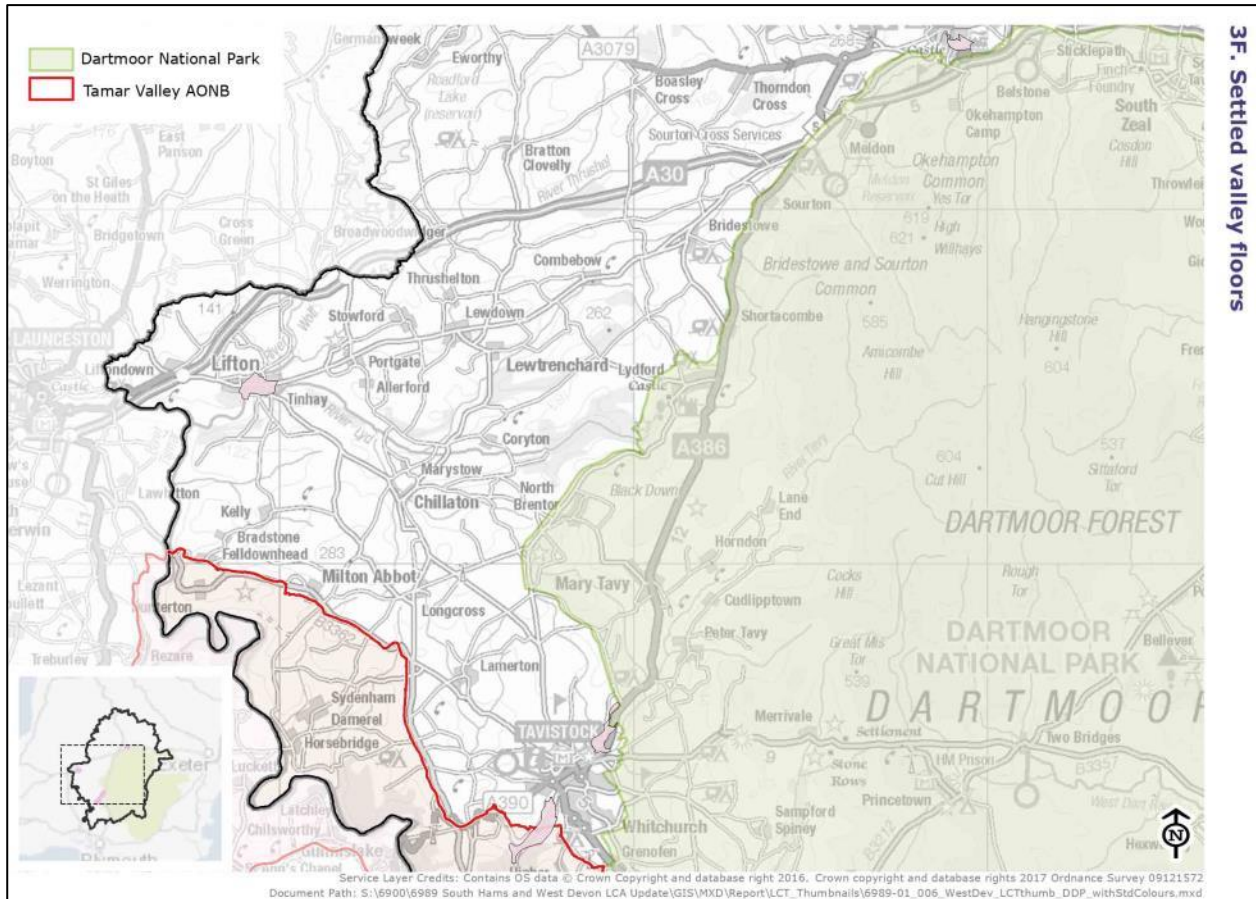
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the tranquil, hidden character of the river valley and sense of place, and its use for informal recreation, both linking to the National Park, and 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, tranquil, remote and undeveloped character** of the valleys linking into the valleys 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 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 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

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes 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 strategic recreational routes.

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

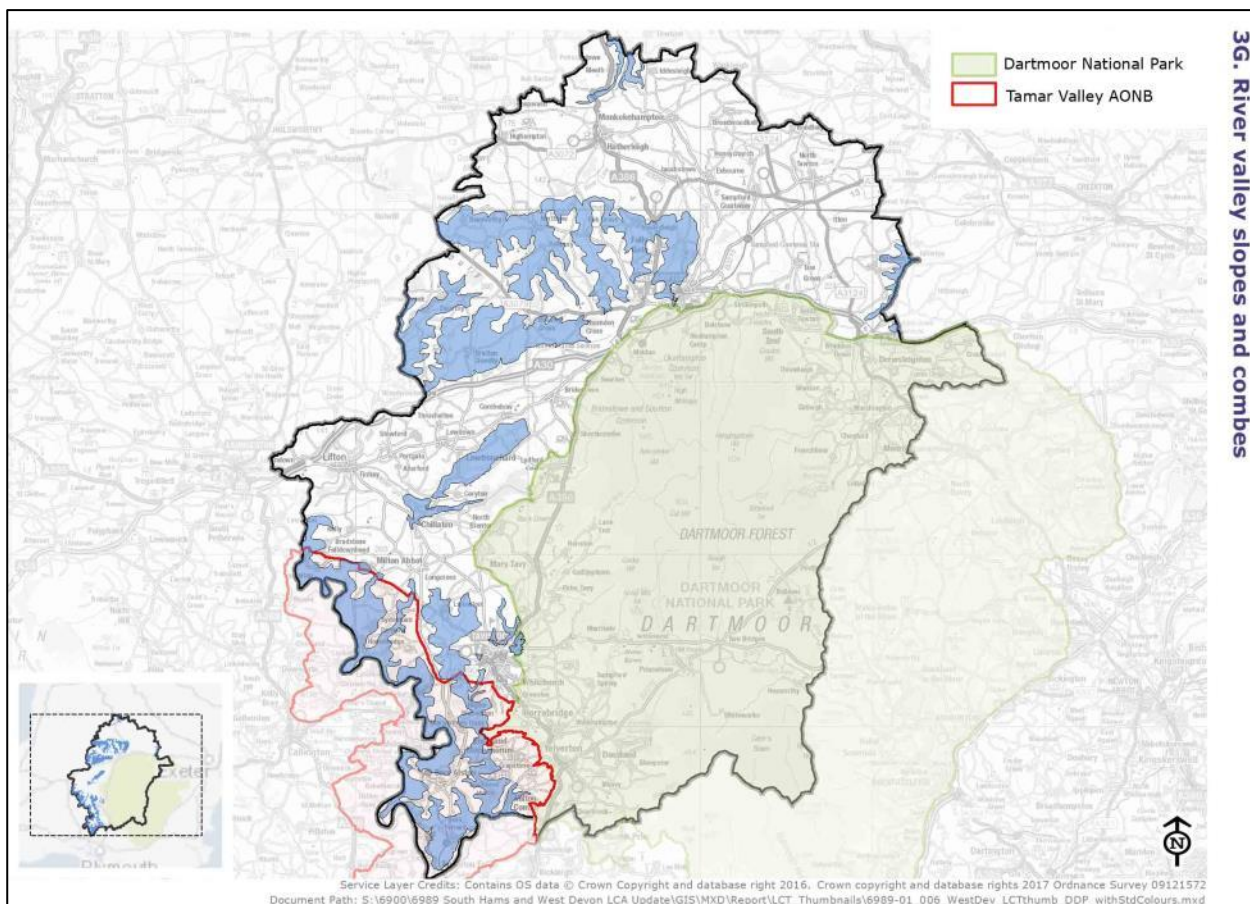
Overall Landscape Strategy

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, and seek to retain naturalistic character where it prevails in close proximity to settlements.

Landscape Guidelines

- Retain a balance between **recreational, industrial and agricultural land uses** ensuring that new development does not intrude into areas retaining naturalistic characteristics.
- 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 **screen visually intrusive structures**.

LCT 3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes



Representative photographs



Summary of location and landscape character

The LCT is located across the borough 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.
- Dominant geology of Devonian rocks (mudstone, silt stone and sandstone) with occasional intrusions 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.
- 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 Devon hedges with low hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees on lower slopes with stone gateposts and facings to banks at field entrances.

Semi-natural habitats

- 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.
- Watercourses lined with pockets of unimproved neutral or acid grassland, lowland heath, marshy grassland, mire rush pasture, scrub and wet woodland.

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. The valley contains remnant mines and structures such as shafts, chimneys, 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 in the world.
- Buckland Abbey, a 13th century Cistercian abbey has extensive grounds running down to the Tavy.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- A sparse 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 strategic recreational routes such as the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail and the Tarka Trail. The Tamar Valley Line steam railway takes visitors from Plymouth to Gunnislake.

Views and perceptual qualities

- The network of deeply incised lanes, woodland, and high Devon hedges 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

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes 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 hedges 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 Devon hedges 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* pathogens and ash die-back). Loss of trees within hedgerows would be particularly noticeable in this landscape type.
- 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 Devon hedges.
- 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.
- Climate change effects on precipitation may alter river flows, causing potential damage to habitats and species.
- Potential future flood defence works / SUDS introducing built structures into the landscape.
- 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

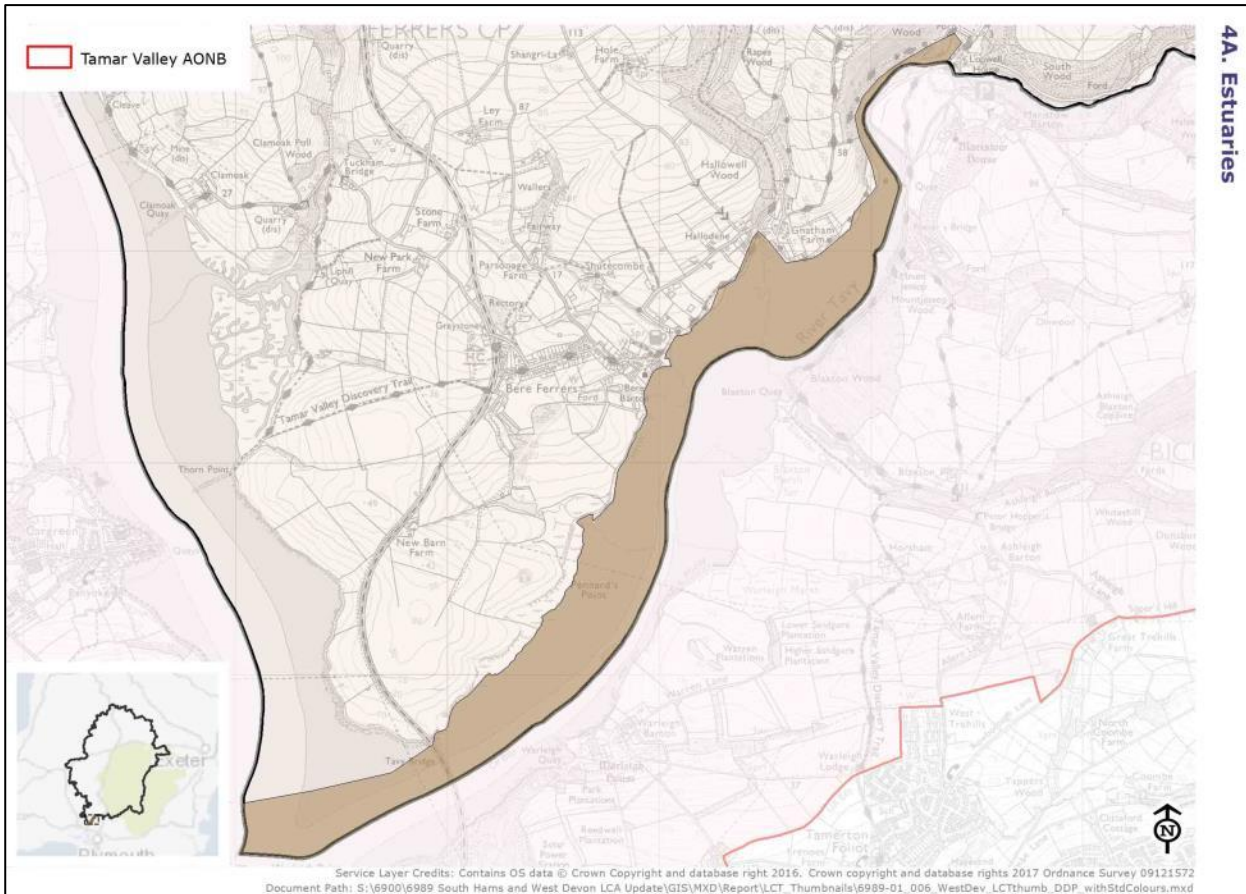
Overall Landscape Strategy

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 hedges 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 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 hedges** through regular coppicing and re-laying 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 **sparsely 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, and be sited to avoid the need for excessive ground engineering.
- Protect the **narrow rural character of the lanes**, and manage roadside verges to maximise their biodiversity potential.
- Encourage the creation of **new footpath links** to existing strategic recreational routes, whilst ensuring the retention of inherent levels of tranquillity.

LCT 4A: Estuaries



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 small recreational watercraft such as kayaks and canoes.
- 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. 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 is limited and infrequent. Bere Barton is adjacent to the shore and is sensitive to the surrounding rural landscape with vernacular stone or rendered slate roofed cottages. 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 out of the valley 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

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes 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 SPA and Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC.
- 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, and limited access for large watercraft. 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 and seasons.

Summary of landscape condition

The landscape and 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 both on and off the water, including demand for more on-shore facilities and related increases in traffic.
- Noise funnelling up the estuary landforms, including from boat cruises and ferries originating from Plymouth.
- Potential for new development at Bere Ferrers and Bere Barton, and associated urbanising effects on local road networks.
- 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 result in pressure on internationally important estuarine habitats.
- Potential for re-opening the railway to Tavistock, which may increase visitor numbers and impact on tranquillity.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

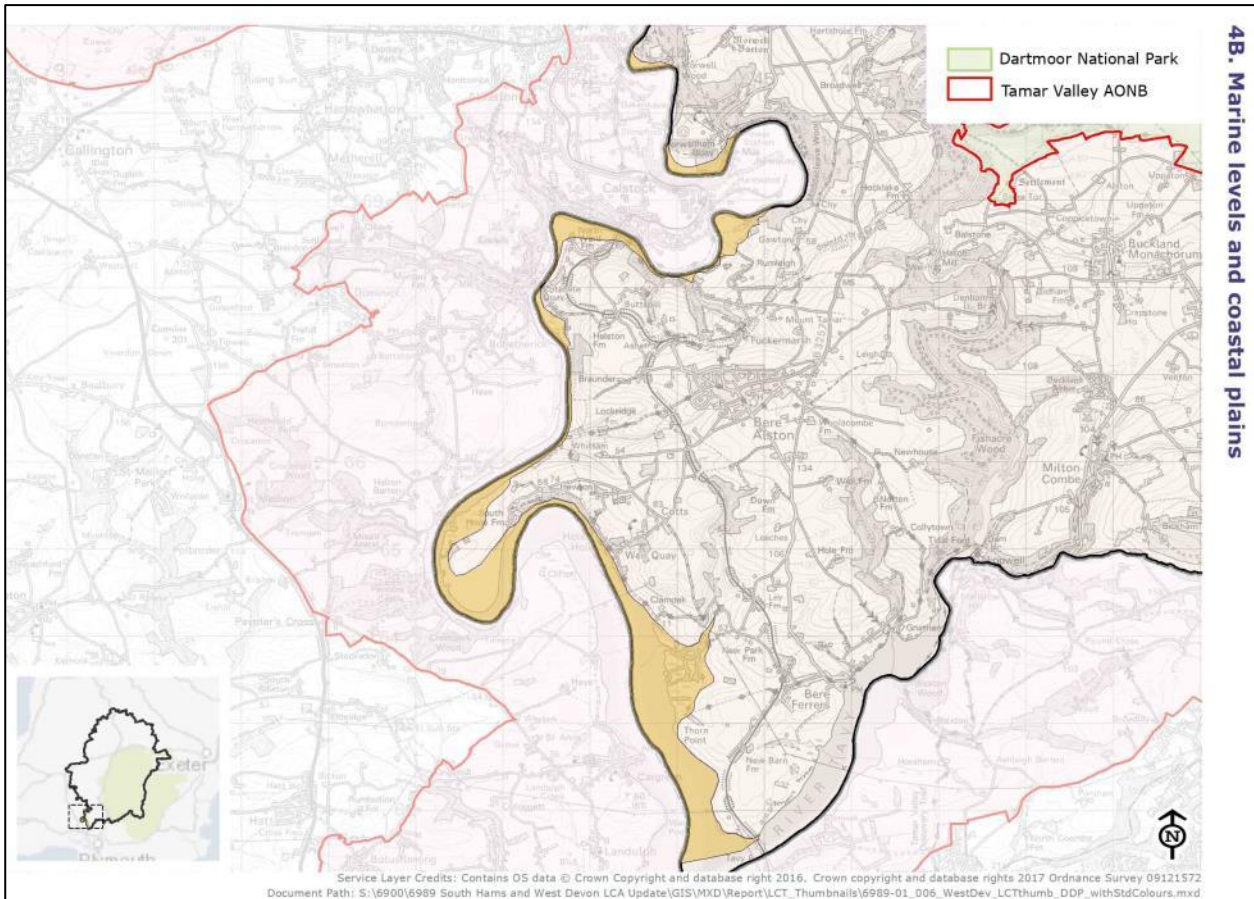
Overall Landscape Strategy

To protect the open character and expansive views to and from the estuary, ensuring any new development on its fringes is sensitively 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. New development, recreational pressure, and 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, undeveloped 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.
- Reflect **traditional building materials** and styles in any new development.
- Consider the **visual impact of any new development** and ensure development is incorporated into the landscape setting through the use of sensitive design and materials, and avoiding the use of overly engineered solutions.

LCT 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.
- The LCT includes intertidal areas and adjacent land which is inundated with brackish water from the estuary during high spring tides.
- Underlain by Upper Devonian bedrock.

Woodland cover

- Fruit trees and outgrown native shrubs along riverside banks and within hedgerows – otherwise this is an open landscape.

Land use and field patterns

- An organic landscape pattern is created 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.
- Much of the LCT is designated 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 Tamar.
- Morwellham Quay is a Scheduled Monument, scheduled for its transport infrastructure, part of the water control system and a manganese mill. The distinctive Calstock viaduct crosses over this LCT and is a Grade II* listed structure.
- The landscape of the LCT provides a setting to the Conservation Area at Weir Quay.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- The landscape is 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 strategic recreational route 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, and the sight of sunlight reflecting off the 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 lies within the Tamar Valley AONB, with the river and its associated habitats forming the focal point of this nationally protected landscape.
- Open and exposed character that is highly influenced by weather conditions, with views funnelled along the valley system. Views 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

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes within this LCT:

- Open undeveloped flanks of the Tamar framing the open water with strong sense of remoteness, despite proximity to more developed areas (Plymouth).
- Dynamic character, changing with the tides and creating a natural, organic landscape pattern.
- High biodiversity interest associated with habitats, such as reedbed, saltmarsh and mudflats resulting in 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, and the sight of sunlight reflecting off water.
- Industrial history associated with the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site, including a number of historic weirs and quays.
- Part of the setting to adjacent inland landscape including Conservation Area and Scheduled Monument at Morwellham Quay, and for the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail.
- Integral to the special qualities of the Tamar Valley 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 World Heritage Site).

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

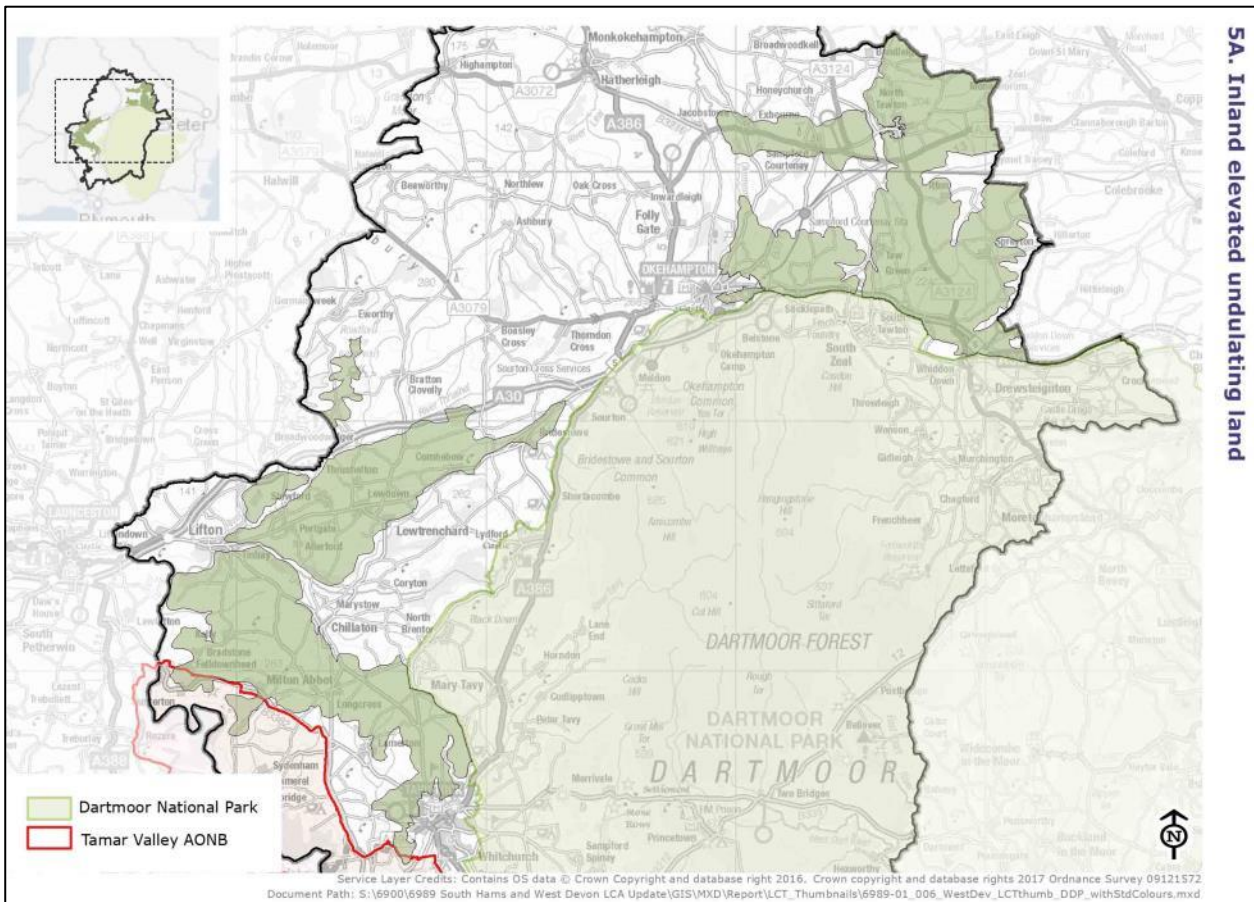
Overall Landscape Strategy

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 provided with sensitive visitor interpretation.

Landscape Guidelines

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

LCT 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 borough, 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, the lowland moorland and the 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.
- Fields are bounded by low, wide treeless hedgerows or Devon Hedges 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 occasional 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 some 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 account for the pattern of roadside settlements. Elsewhere there is an extensive network of narrow winding lanes with grass verges and Devon hedges which dip down the valley slopes.
- The network of local footpaths link with the long-distance river valley walks such as the Tarka Trail, while other strategic recreational routes cross the LCT including the Two Castles Trail, West Devon Way and Devonshire Heartland Way.

Views and perceptual qualities

- The low hedgerows 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, occasionally diluted by wind turbines along the ridgelines and heavy traffic on the straight main roads.

Landscape Evaluation

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes within this LCT:

- The 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, give a strong sense of time-depth to the landscape.
- 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 Devon hedges often covered with a profusion of wildflowers.
- Clusters of prehistoric hilltop enclosures and bowl barrows forming highly visible features on the exposed ridgelines.
- Several strategic recreational routes of value for recreation and quiet enjoyment, providing 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 sparse, with occasional 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 scrub encroachment onto pastoral land.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora* pathogens and ash die-back). 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 hedgerows and verges in some areas.
- Reduced agricultural viability of fragmented areas of upland grasslands and heaths.
- Change from pastoral farming to arable cultivation and diversification to other land uses, including equestrian and hobby farming.
- The absorption of smaller farms into larger landholdings, along with an increased industrialisation of farming (with associated large scale farm buildings and increased heavy traffic on narrow lanes). An abandonment of more marginal land could become more common.
- Uncertainty surrounding the future of the agricultural sector (e.g. post-Brexit, market forces), including agri-environment scheme support. This may lead to changes in cropping patterns and crop choice.
- Climate change may also influence future crop choice, with new or novel crops appearing in the landscape.
- 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, particularly onto higher ground,

would be highly visible and detrimental to this open, elevated landscape.

- Tourism-related pressures, including the development of camping and caravanning sites along the A30 corridor.
- An increase in traffic levels on narrow rural lanes likely to diminish levels of tranquillity and result in pressure to widen roads, eroding rural character.
- Pressure for new masts, pylons and potentially wind turbines (if government subsidies are renewed), which would be visible on prominent skylines.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

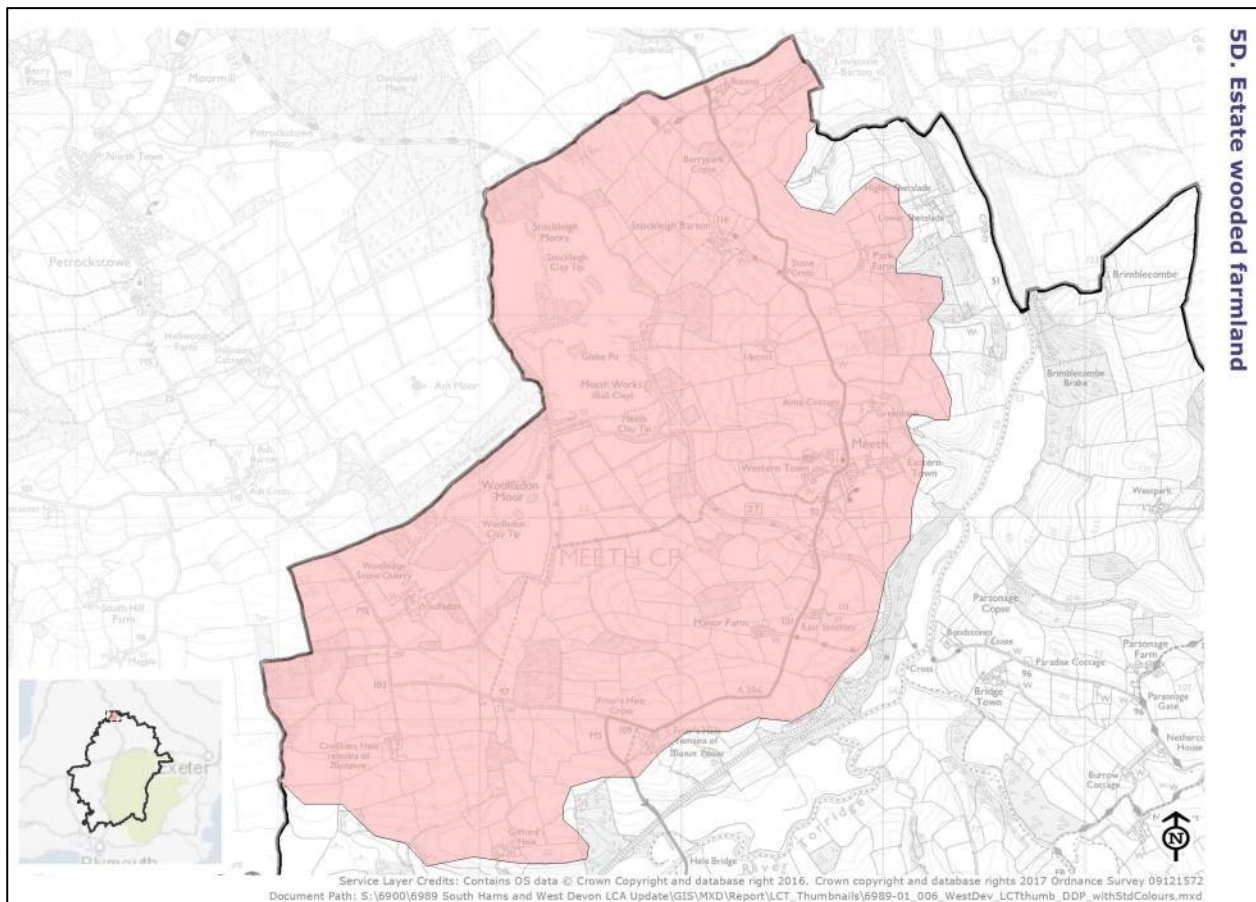
Overall Landscape Strategy

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 hedges. Manage and enhance the farmed landscape by ensuring that pastoral land is conserved and field boundaries maintained, wildlife interest and local diversity is enhanced, and soil erosion and agricultural run-off reduced. Maintain the sparse settlement pattern, open views across the landscape, 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.
- Protect and maintain the **historic field patterns** of the landscape, restoring and replanting lost and gappy Devon hedges (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. Encourage 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 barrows on the exposed ridgelines, providing sensitive 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 hedges, through the control and management of development. 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.
- Protect **rural lanes** and ensure any highway improvements are sympathetic, resisting intrusive signage and other highways infrastructure 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**, supporting facilities where they do not damage the conservation and enhancement of landscape character.
- 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 prominent within the wider landscape.

LCT 5D: Estate woodland farmlands



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.
- 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 Devon hedges, veteran in-field trees and streamside orchards contribute to the landscape's wooded estate character.

Land use and field patterns

- Predominantly pastoral farmland with 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 hedges often topped with closely-cut mixed thorn, beech and sycamore hedgerows. Some use of fencing (including estate railings within historic parklands).
- Large area of quarries, clay workings and tips in the western part of the area at Woolladon and Stockleigh Moors, including extensive areas of restoration as regenerated woodland and scrub along with expanses of open water.

Semi-natural habitats

- Former clay quarry at Meeth Quarry, now owned by the Devon Wildlife Trust and 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

- Remains of a manor house at Friar's Hele and a mansion at Crockers Hele.

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 metal roofs, reinforce a strongly evident 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, located off the higher ground in sheltered locations.
- 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 hedges 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 landscapes, views are enclosed by the topography and tree cover.

Landscape Evaluation

Valued attributes

The following provides a summary of the valued attributes within this LCT:

- Strong coherence in building styles and vernacular, with occasional small nucleated hamlets and villages (Meeth) and dispersed farms away from open high ground. Landmark stone church tower at Meeth.
- Generally, quiet, tranquil and rural with a sense of enclosure provided by Devon hedges.
- 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 but now undergoing restoration and providing an important biodiversity resource. This new landscape contrasts with the intact Devon landscape of small fields, woodlands and hamlets in the east of the area.

Forces for change

- Former clay workings cover an extensive area at Woolladon and Stockleigh Moor in the western part of the area, but where regenerated they provide valuable habitats.
- Loss of veteran tree character associated with estates as mature trees are not replaced.
- Change from pastoral farming to arable cultivation and diversification to other land uses, including equestrian and hobby farming.
- Uncertainty surrounding the future of the agricultural sector (e.g. post-Brexit, market forces), including with regard to agri-environment scheme support. This may lead to changes in cropping patterns and crop choice.
- Marginal land including areas of wood pasture and Culm grassland may become undermanaged due to agricultural changes.
- Climate change may also influence future crop choice, with new or novel crops appearing in the landscape.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

To protect and appropriately manage important areas of Culm grassland, purple moor grass, rush pasture, unimproved meadows, ponds and valley mire as part of overall farming systems. Woodlands are managed for wildlife and as a sustainable woodfuel resource where appropriate; linking to a rich farmed landscape enclosed by a strong network of wildflower-rich Devon hedges. A new generation of in-field trees is planted to assure the longevity of these features, particularly within areas of historic wood pasture. Continue to manage the 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 the linear spread of development 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, including distinctive features such as lincays, stone bridges, estate railings and white painted sign posts.
- Continue to **regenerate the former clay workings** to maximise biodiversity. Conserve and connect **fragmented areas of culm grassland, wood pasture, meadows and wetlands**.
- **Replace over-mature in-field trees**, particularly within historic wood pasture to assure the longevity of these important landscape features. Protect and appropriately manage existing specimens.
- Ensure new agricultural development is sensitively sited away from **open and exposed high ground**.
- Manage the network of **flower-rich Devon hedges**.