

# 3

## The Landscape Character of South Hams



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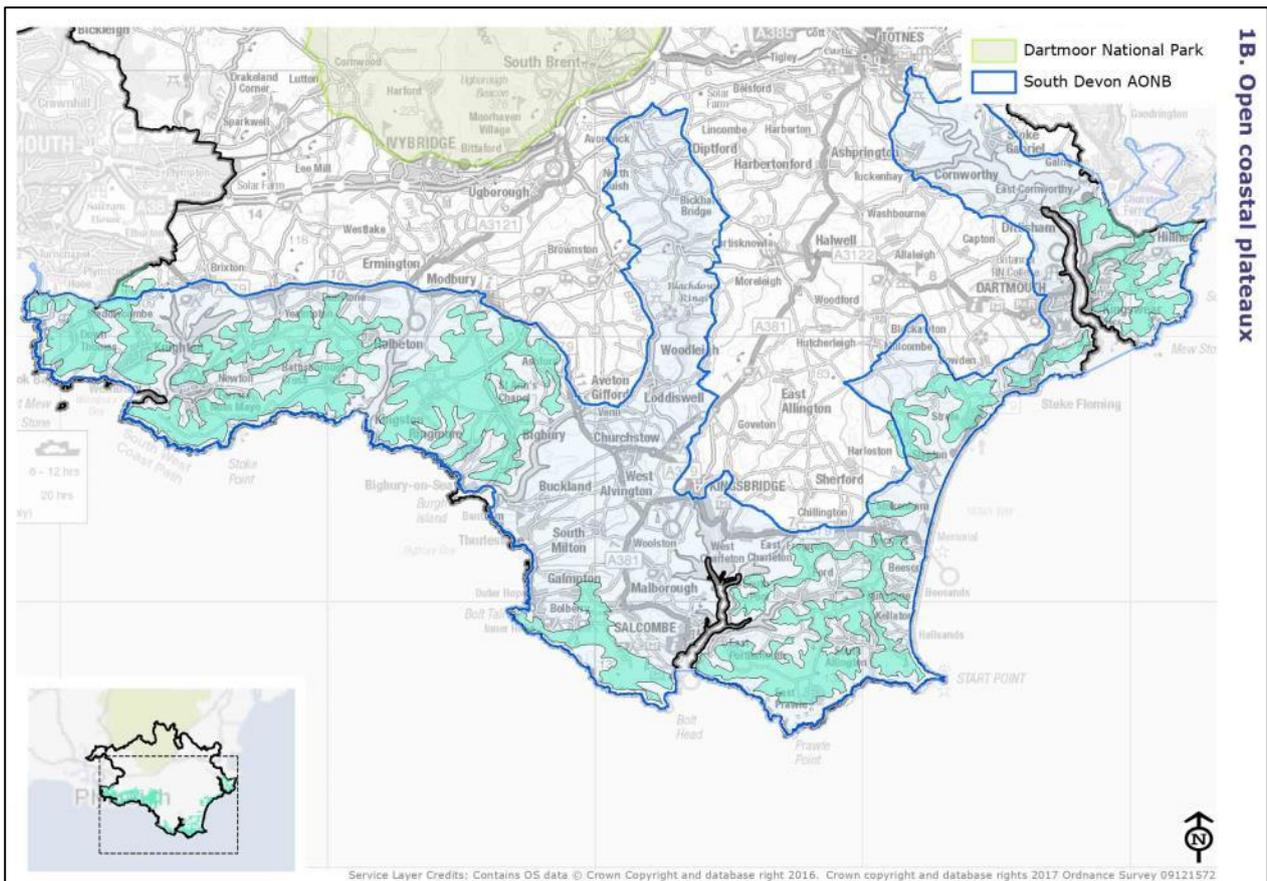
#### South Hams Landscape Character Type descriptions

- 3.1 This section contains LCT profiles including descriptive and evaluative information for South Hams.

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## LCT 1B: Open coastal plateaux



### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

## Landscape and seascape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

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

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

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

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

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

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

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

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

- Sparse settlement pattern, with isolated farms or large houses and several villages, often distinguished by their uniform appearance, and a few scattered small coastal resorts. Settlements are often hidden by the dips in the topography.
- Roads generally comprise narrow rural lanes. There are many rights of way including the South West Coast Path along the coastal edge.

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

- Long, panoramic views out to sea due giving a horizon of approximately 25km offshore and contributing to a sense of expansiveness. Views inland dominated by daymarks, radio masts, signal stations and water towers. There are also long views towards the uplands of Dartmoor.
- Expansive seascapes under big skies. Changing sea moods and associated skies form a backdrop to seaward views.
- At night, moonlight reflections off the sea's surface have a dramatic effect and navigation/deck lights from shipping highlight night time marine activity.
- Extensive views afforded from the coastal edge of the adjoining dramatic cliff landscapes (LCT 4H).
- Most of the LCT is contained within the South Devon AONB, contributing to special qualities including '*iconic wide, unspoilt and expansive panoramic views.*'
- The variety and complexity of coastal features and the dynamic nature of the coast provide experiential, historic and natural interest reflected in the Heritage Coast designation.

# Landscape Evaluation

## Valued attributes

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

- Arable farmland and wind-blown vegetation creating a variety of colours and textures which change with the seasons, bounded by hedges and characteristic stone walls.
- Hedgerows of high value for wildlife, containing many wildflowers.
- Rich in historic coastal defences, notably around Plymouth Sound and the Dart Estuary and parkland estates such as Langdon, Greenway and Coleton Fishacre.
- Scattered villages, hamlets and farmsteads linked by a network of narrow lanes, resulting in a tranquil landscape.
- Settlements contained within dips in the land and often hidden from view.
- The iconic unspoilt and expansive panoramic views of the sea and the adjoining dramatic cliffs.
- Expansive seascapes under big skies influenced by the changing sea moods and skies
- The remote, windswept character of the high open plateau, sparsely settled with high levels of tranquillity and dark night skies (especially where topography limits light spill from nearby conurbations).

## Summary of landscape condition

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

## Forces for change

- Further agricultural intensification (including intensive monoculture), leading to a loss of traditional field boundaries, vernacular buildings, gate widening, loss of characterful stone quoins and wooden gates as well as a gradual decline in wildlife. Large modern farm buildings are highly visible on plateau tops.
- Continuing decline in traditional rural skills such as hedge-laying and maintaining stone faced banking, resulting in under-management of hedges and verges in some areas with regular tight flailing and the loss of both soil and stone facings.
- Climate change may lead to the deterioration of semi natural habitats, including the nationally important grasslands, through the spread of invasive and woody species due to higher temperatures. Less rainfall in the summer leading to increased incidences of wildfires.
- Erosion of thin soils close to the coast may alter the vegetation cover.
- An increase in traffic levels on rural roads and pressure to widen roads resulting in the degradation of roadside Devon hedges and verges, the degrading influence of suburban or engineered features (e.g. retaining structures or kerbs), the loss of hedgerow trees through direct vehicle damage, and the wearing of passing places eroding rural character.
- Continuing pressure for development (particularly from major settlements adjacent to this LCT – Plymouth, Dartmouth and Brixham) onto the plateau edge where they could be highly visible and out of keeping with the existing settlement pattern.
- Pressure for the development of renewable energy infrastructure such as wind turbines and solar farms, and communications masts which are intrusive on prominent skylines.
- Increasing recreational pressures and associated demand for infrastructure such as car parks, growing camp sites, caravan parks and the conversion of traditional farm buildings and their replacement with larger modern agricultural buildings.

# Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

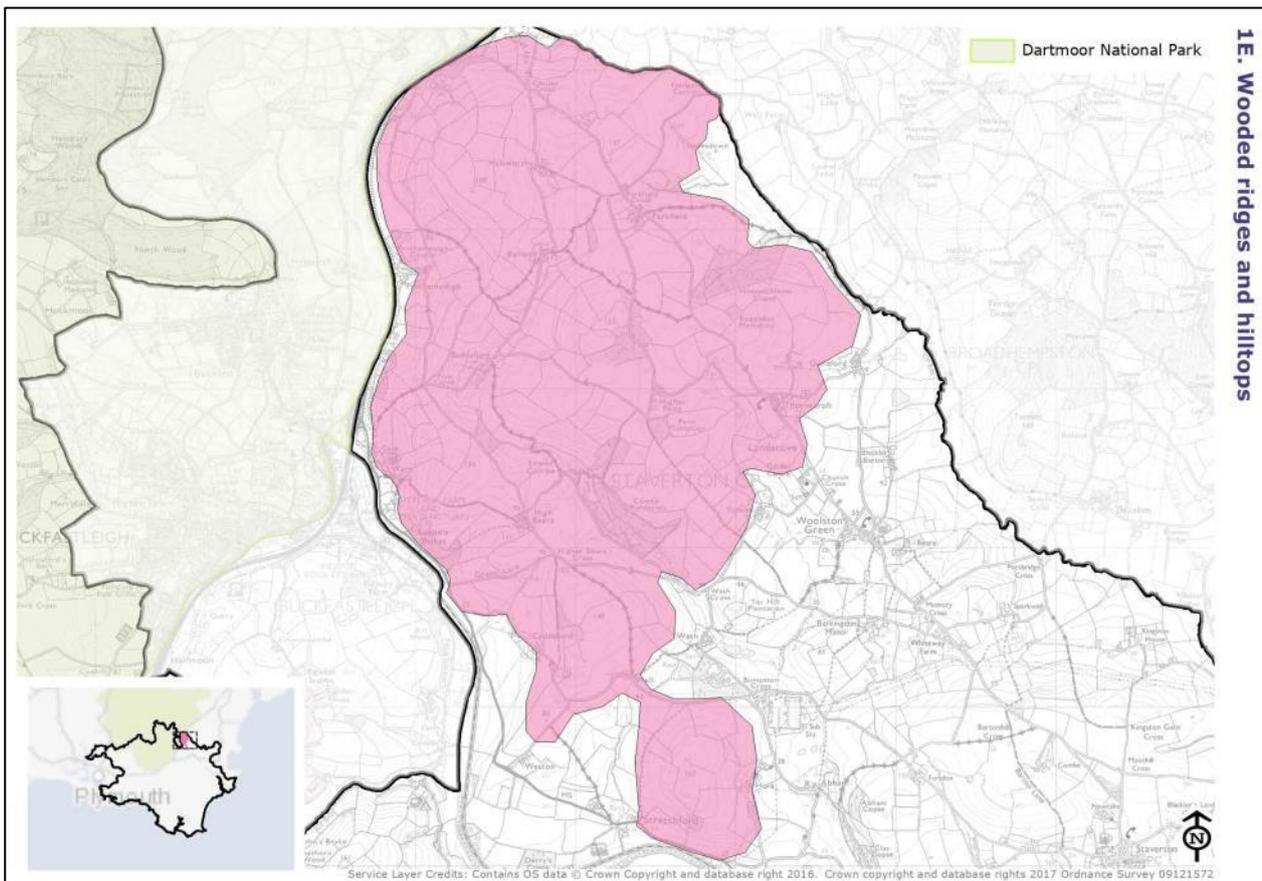
## Overall Landscape Strategy

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

## Landscape Guidelines

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

## LCT 1E: Wooded Ridges and Hilltops



### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

## Landscape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

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

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

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

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

- The frequent mixed deciduous woodland provides a valued habitat, as do traditional orchards associated with some farms.

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

- Historic mining activity is evident along the valleys with quarries associated with the medieval slate industry.
- Evidence of a number of prehistoric enclosures is found on the hilltops and slopes, possibly indicating the use of these hills as historic lookout points.

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

- A sparsely settled area of isolated farmsteads and houses nestled into the folded landscape, often screened by woodland.
- A strong local vernacular of local stone and slate farmhouses and outbuildings with stone walled boundaries associated with properties.
- Narrow winding lanes enclosed by high Devon hedges which often traverse at steep angles to the hillsides.
- A network of byways links the farms within the LCT, resulting in a high permeability of public access.

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

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

# Landscape Evaluation

## Valued attributes

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

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

## Summary of landscape condition

There has been some field boundary loss due to agricultural intensification and replacement of traditional pasture and orchards with arable and other crop planting. Variable management of Devon hedges and hedgerows – with some sections overgrown. The area retains its rural and tranquil character although the quality of the LCT along the A38 is affected by the close proximity of modern development and increasing traffic.

## Forces for change

- Decline in traditional woodland management, leading to a reduction in the species and age diversity of the landscape's important semi-natural woodland and replacement with conifer plantations.
- Change in woodland tree species as new pests and diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens and ash die-back). Loss of hilltop tree clumps and along hedgerows would be particularly noticeable.
- On-going decline in traditional skills including traditional hedgerow management resulting in variable management of Devon hedges with associated impacts on landscape character and biodiversity.
- Intensification of agriculture, resulting in field enlargement and conversion of pasture to arable and other cropping.
- Loss or lack of management of traditional farm orchards.
- Late 20th century expansion of settlements on the edge of the LCT, particularly Ashburton and Buckfastleigh, visible in views from higher ground. Continuing pressure for development on the edge of the LCT around the main settlements along the A38.
- Location of major road corridors on the edge of the LCT and potential for increase in traffic levels on rural road network, particularly those linking to the A38 and A384.
- Growth in tourism and the proximity to popular visitor attractions such as Buckfast Abbey, South Devon steam railway, and the Buckfastleigh Butterfly Farm and Otter Sanctuary contributing to an increase in traffic and potential spread of caravan and camping sites along local minor roads.

## Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

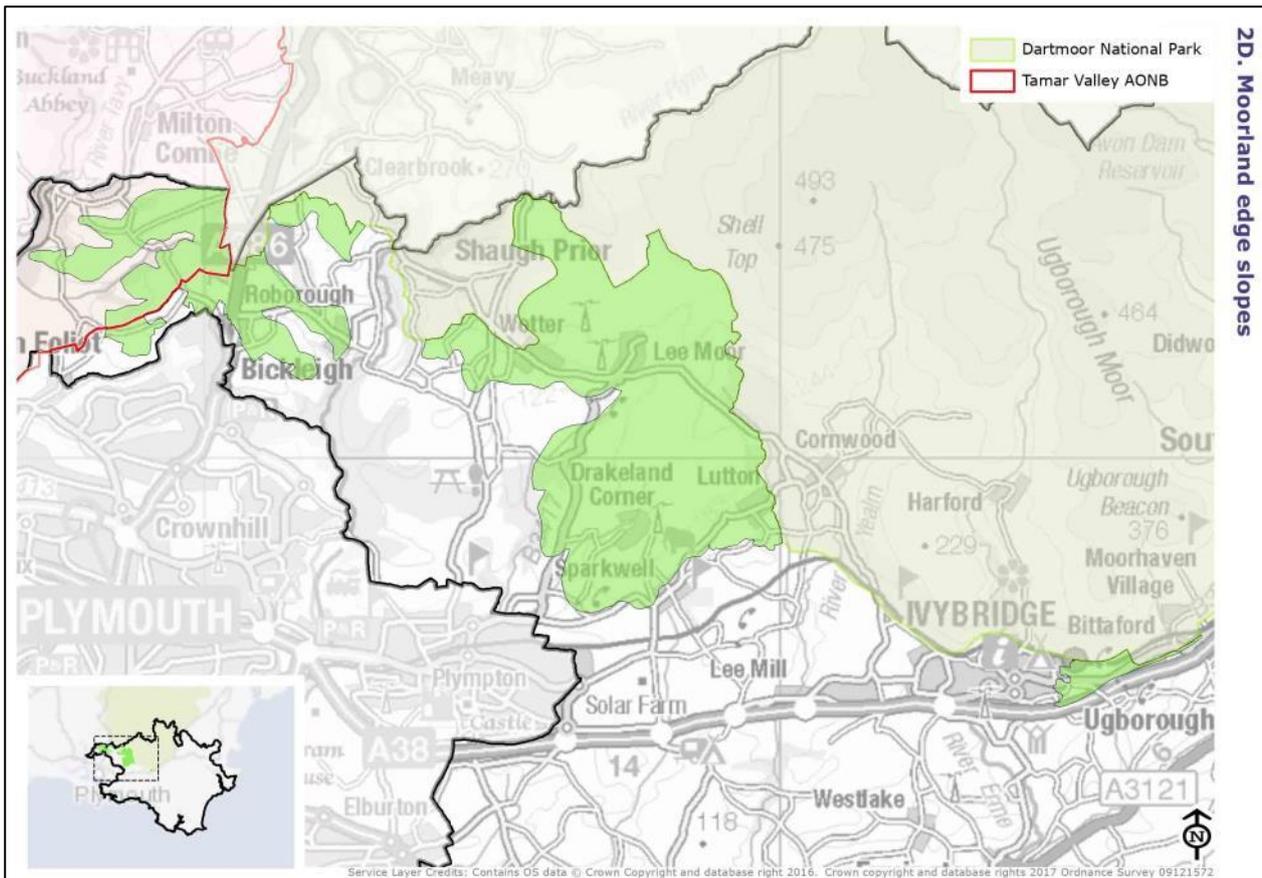
### Overall Landscape Strategy

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

### Landscape Guidelines

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

## LCT 2D: Moorland Edge Slopes



### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

## Landscape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

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

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

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

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

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

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

- Numerous ancient features are found in commanding positions above the valleys, including the prehistoric hillfort at Maristow Camp and several prehistoric barrows and cairns.
- A landscape shaped by the extensive mining activity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century which exploited the rich mineral and ore resource, such as the disused quarry at Hemerdon Ball and other quarries, mines and settling beds around Bottle Hill.

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

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

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

- There are long views from higher ground towards Plymouth and Plymouth Sound in the south, expansive vistas of the estuaries and green patchwork of fields in the Tamar Valley AONB to the west and intervisibility with land within Dartmoor National Park to the north.
- The china clay works have an industrial influence on an otherwise rural landscape, and the A386 dilutes perceptions of tranquillity locally.
- A small area in the west of the LCT is located within the Tamar Valley AONB which recognises the scenic qualities of this classic English estuarine landscape.

## Landscape Evaluation

### Valued attributes

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

- The role of this landscape in providing a rural setting and continuation of character to the nationally protected landscape of Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley AONB, and as a rural backdrop to Plymouth.
- Valued areas of semi-natural woodlands including those designated as County Wildlife Sites.
- Some areas have a strong moorland character with areas of open access land and the rich mosaic of habitats and vegetation.
- The time depth associated with the Iron Age hillfort at Maristow Camp and prehistoric barrows and cairns in commanding positions above the valleys, as well as field patterns of medieval origin.
- The industrial heritage of the area evident in the 19<sup>th</sup> century disused mines and settling beds.
- Views to and from Dartmoor and Plymouth and the Sound as well as extensive vistas over the green patchwork of fields and estuary within the Tamar Valley AONB.
- A generally rural landscape with sparse settlement.

### Summary of landscape condition

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

### Forces for change

- Continuing pressure for development on the fringes of Plymouth and Plympton which would be highly visible within this elevated landscape, impacting on its rural character and sense of tranquillity. Expansion around Roborough would extend into this LCT.
- Noise and visual impacts from china clay quarrying. Further expansion of china clay extraction, tipping and quarrying (particularly Lee Moor) as well as other quarrying sites (Hemerdon quarry) and land uses to support development (e.g. landfill and energy from waste sites).
- Change in tree/woodland species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora pathogens* and ash die-back).
- Medieval field patterns vulnerable to loss with changes in land ownership and cropping. Variable management of Devon hedges and stone walls in some areas.
- Reduced agricultural viability of areas of heathland with a decline in grazing levels leading to scrubbing up, impacting on the open character and biodiversity value.
- Climate change impacts leading to decrease in heathland due to enhanced growth rates of vegetation (bracken, gorse etc.).
- Location of major road corridors on the edge of the LCT and potential for increase in traffic levels on main roads, particularly A38 and A386 likely to diminish levels of tranquillity and dark night skies.
- Growth in tourism and the proximity to popular visitor attractions such as Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley, contributing to an increase in traffic and potential spread of caravan and camping sites along roads.

## Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

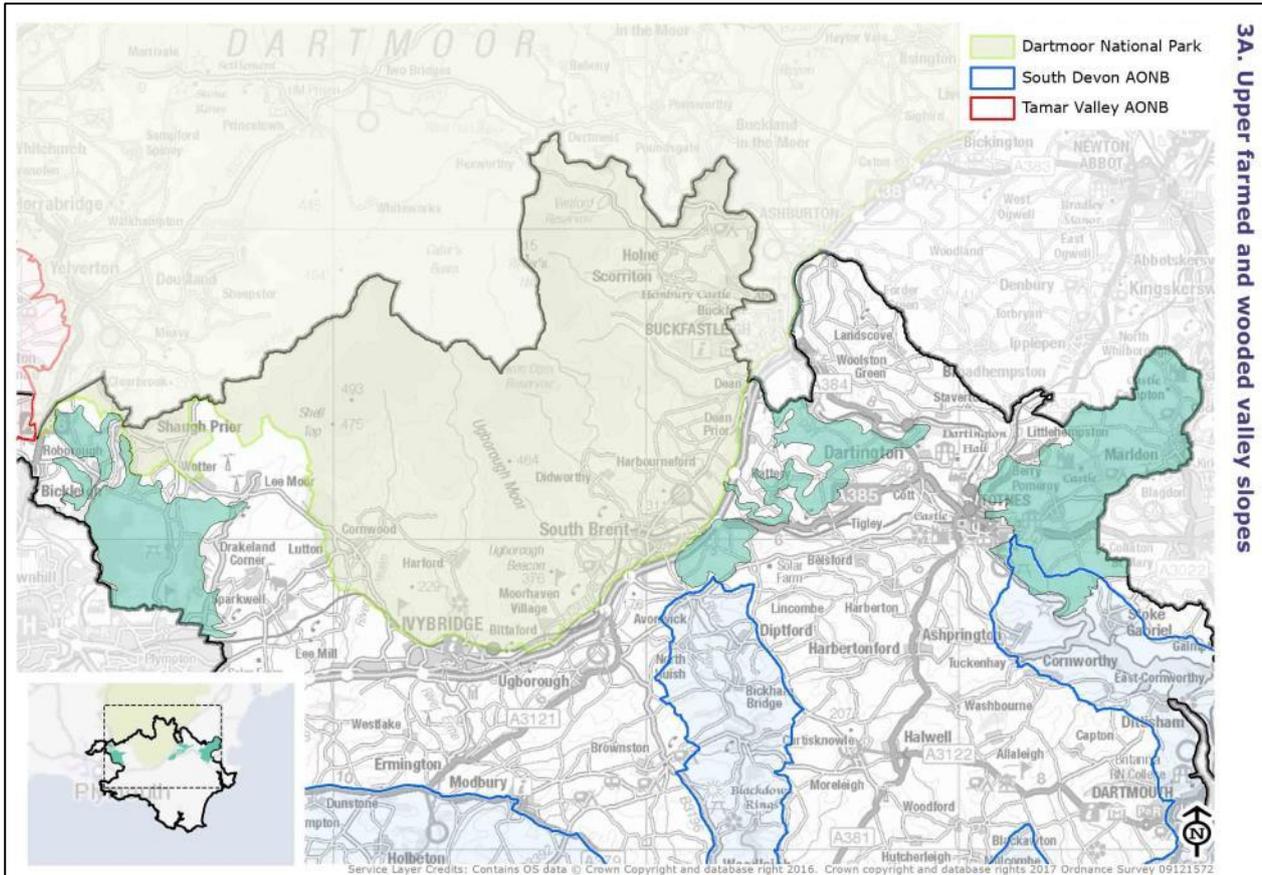
### Overall Landscape Strategy

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

### Landscape Guidelines

- Plan for the long-term **restructuring of conifer plantations** with a move towards their gradual reversion to locally indigenous broadleaf woodland, encouraging management to create and maintain a diverse age structure, to reduce the 'amenity' aspect of some recent planting.
- Pursue opportunities to extend and link **woodland and semi-natural grassland habitats** including as part of Green Infrastructure network, utilising native, climate-resistant species.
- Restore lost **dry-stone walls and Devon hedges**, respecting any local variation in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials where possible. Ensure that ditches and verges are managed to maximise their biodiversity potential.
- Conserve and appropriately manage and protect the integrity of **valued semi-natural habitats**, including broadleaved woodland, lowland and heather moorland and acid grassland, including those designated as County Wildlife Sites.
- Encourage the retention and **appropriate management of areas of rough ground** through livestock grazing at appropriate levels to enhance biodiversity. Encourage and support an increase in numbers of local livestock breeds (e.g. White Face and Greyface Dartmoor sheep). Re-link fragmented heathland sites to provide green infrastructure networks.
- Protect and appropriately manage the **landscape's historic sites and features** including prehistoric hut circles, cairns, hillforts, stone circles and mining heritage features. Promote understanding and sensitive interpretation of the landscape's archaeology, particularly when located on open access land or close to public rights of way.
- Ensure **development respects the current scale of the landscape**, its underlying landform, historic field patterns and existing landscape features.
- Protect the landscape's **sparsely settled character**, particularly to the north of the LCT, and control new development outside the footprints of the area's small settlements.
- Seek to ensure opportunities for **access and enjoyment of the countryside** including links to local strategic recreational routes such as the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail and West Devon Way while managing recreational pressure on areas of open access land on the edge of Dartmoor National Park.
- Protect the **expansive views from higher ground** in the LCT, including vistas of Plymouth Sound and the estuaries in the Tamar Valley AONB. Conserve the landscape's function as a **rural backdrop to the city of Plymouth** to the south.
- 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.
- Restructure the topography and recreate appropriate vegetation cover as part of a long-term strategy to **restore disused areas of china clay quarrying** and tipping around Lee Moor restoring the site to a mosaic of different habitats. This landscape restructuring should maximise opportunities to filter views of current quarrying and tipping activity, as well as provide new green infrastructure links with disused sites and providing a setting for recreational facilities including footpaths and bridleways.

## 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 to the north east of Plymouth and east of Totnes with a small area to the west of Dartington.

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

## Landscape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

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

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

- A mixture of pasture and arable fields bounded by wide Devon hedges with mature, species-rich hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees creating a well-treed character. Numerous traditional orchards (e.g. around Berry Pomeroy, Luscombe and Compton Castle) remain.
- Fields are varied in size and origin, ranging from small irregular medieval enclosure to medium-scale modern enclosure with regular boundaries.
- Little modern development except for a large mica dam south of Lee Moor China Clay Works in the west, and some more recent renewable energy development.
- In areas close to larger settlements there are some urban edge uses including a golf course at Elfordleigh, and a quarry north of Totnes and a well-hidden caravan park on the Totnes Road. A number of pylons cross the LCT.

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

- Extensive areas of deciduous and coniferous woodlands (many designated as County Wildlife Sites), areas of semi-improved grassland and small areas of rush pasture.

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

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

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

- Little settlement, with isolated historic farms, houses and hamlets with the occasional historic village such as Berry Pomeroy, Aish and Marldon.
- There is a strong local vernacular of rendered and exposed stone used for houses and farm buildings, some with red brick details and slate roofs. Corrugated iron has sometimes replaced traditional slate, clay tile or thatch roofs on farm buildings.
- Roads are generally minor and rural, although the A385 crosses the LCT from Paignton. There is open access land at Cann Wood and several strategic recreational routes cross the LCT including the Torbay-Totnes Trail, John Musgrave Heritage Trail and the West Devon Way.

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

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

## Landscape Evaluation

### Valued attributes

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

- Distinctive topography of elevated rolling hills with ridgelines cut by steep sided valleys with springs and streams running to the Dart and Plym.
- The well-wooded, enclosed character of the landscape with large areas of ancient woodland.
- The mosaic of pasture and arable fields bounded by wide Devon hedges with low, species-rich hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees.
- Traditional orchards around farms and villages.
- Strong archaeological heritage particularly associated with past mining history plus prominent prehistoric hilltop forts and enclosures, fortified medieval castles, areas of historic parkland and medieval fields.
- Relatively low density of dispersed settlement, with isolated historic farms, houses and hamlets with the occasional village and a strong local stone vernacular.
- Areas retaining high levels of tranquillity and a strong rural character away from the main roads and nearby urban centres.

### Summary of landscape condition

The landscape framework has been fragmented in parts closer to the large urban settlements where the quality of the landscape is affected by the spread of urban and industrial development as well as the close proximity to major road corridors. Some Devon hedges are suffering from a lack of management.

### 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.
- Decrease in the number, area and levels of management of traditional farm orchards.
- Continuing pressure for development particularly due to the proximity of Plymouth, Paignton and Totnes. Development in these areas would be highly visible within this elevated landscape and would affect the rural character and sense of tranquillity.
- Location of major road corridors on the edge of the LCT and potential for increase in traffic levels on main roads, particularly A38 and A385 likely to diminish levels of tranquillity and dark night skies.

## Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

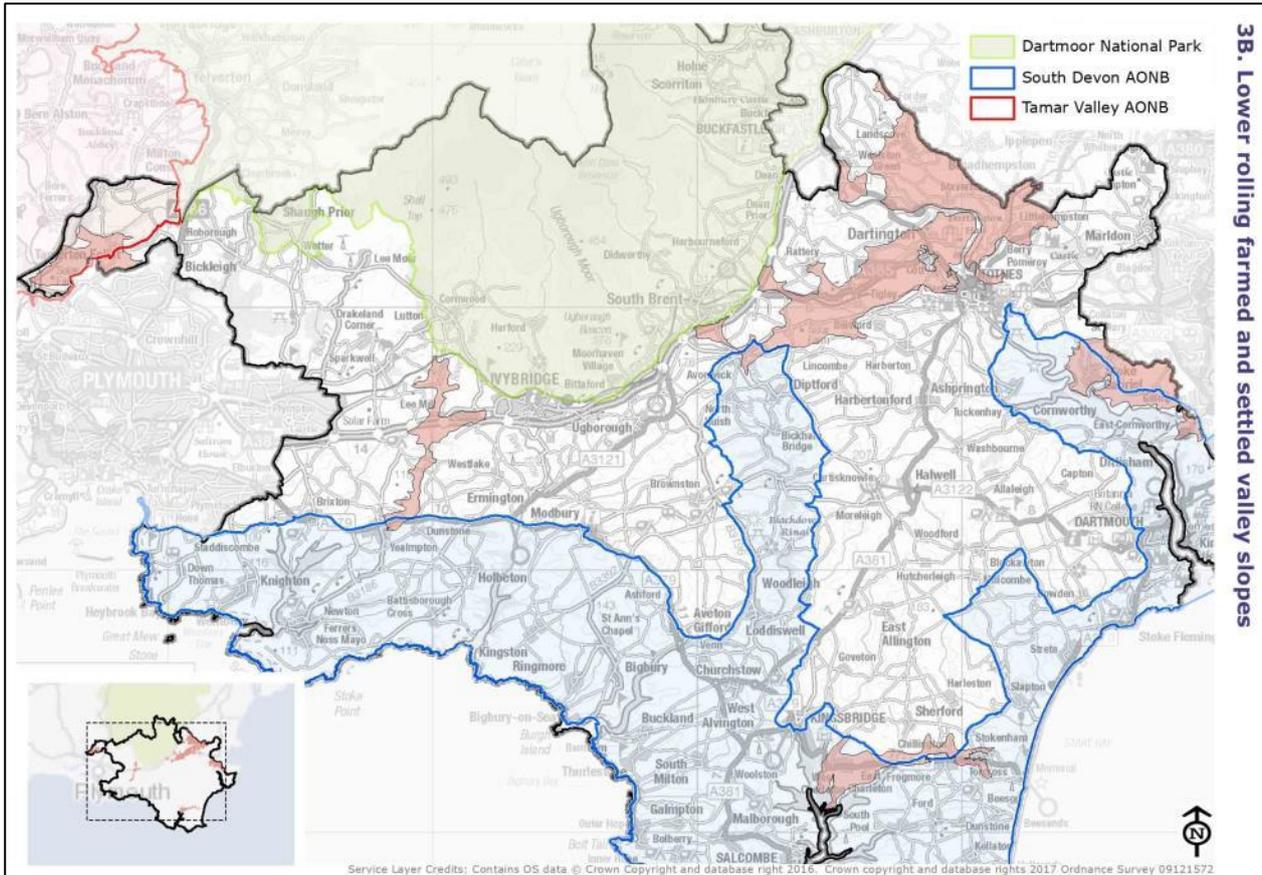
### Overall Landscape Strategy

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 restoring areas of relict traditional orchards. Protect the wooded character of the landscape, utilising new woodland planting to filter views of existing development. Maintain the sparse settlement pattern and avoiding a spread of suburban influences from larger settlements adjacent to the LCT.

## Landscape Guidelines

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

## LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes



3B. Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes

### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

## Landscape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

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

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

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

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

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

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

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

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

- In parts densely settled with larger villages such as Stoke Gabriel that have expanded beyond the historic core. Elsewhere a sporadic clustered settlement pattern of small farms and hamlets is linked by narrow lanes enclosed by high Devon hedges and woodland.
- A wide variety of building ages and styles, with a traditional vernacular of local limestone rubble usually rendered at the front, sometime slate hung and with slate roofs.
- There is an extensive network of public access routes, often linking the villages with the estuaries and rivers.

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

- A small part of the southern LCT falls within the South Devon AONB, which recognises the quality of this rural rolling patchwork of agricultural land. A pocket of the LCT to the west of the district is located within the Tamar Valley AONB above the Tavy.
- Dense tree cover, tall Devon hedges and topography can limit views in some places. Elsewhere there are dramatic views across the surrounding countryside and over the estuaries and Plymouth Sound.
- Levels of tranquillity are disturbed locally by the main road and rail line which runs west out of Totnes, the A38 at Lee Mill and the A379 between Kingsbridge and Stokenham.
- The proximity of larger towns (Dartington, Totnes, Kingsbridge and Plymouth), related development along approach roads (e.g. farm shops and caravan sites) and the intrusion of industrial development on the edge of some settlements affect the quality of some parts of the LCT.

## Landscape Evaluation

### Valued attributes

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

- The incised streams and ditches, creating areas of contrast within the farmed landscape.
- The well-wooded character of the landscape with many ancient woodlands and a strong hedgerow network.
- The local legacy of the soft fruit industry evident in numerous traditional orchards around farms and villages.
- A patterned mosaic of small to medium irregular fields which are varied in origin, bounded by Devon hedges topped with low, wide species-rich hedges.
- Scattered prehistoric sites on hilltops overlooking the valleys, and historic houses with riverside parklands.
- The historic settlement pattern of waterside villages and the dominance of local stone rubble and slate as a building material.
- A rural backdrop to the adjacent river and estuarine valleys of the Dart, Kingsbridge, Yealm, and Tavy retaining high levels of tranquillity and a strong rural character.
- Characterful hedge and woodland-lined rural lanes, contributing to a tranquil and unhurried landscape.

### Summary of landscape condition

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

### Forces for change

- Continuing pressure for development, particularly housing expansion, due to the LCT's proximity to Galmpton, Paignton, Totnes and Dartington, Ivybridge and Plymouth. Development adjacent to these areas would affect the rural character of the LCT and sense of tranquillity.
- Potential for settlements to coalesce along the A379 especially at Chillington and Stokenham leading to erosion of the predominately rural character.
- Increase in traffic levels on main roads, particularly on approach roads to Totnes, and along the A38.
- Pressure from recreation and holiday development, especially within the South Devon AONB, leading to loss of farmland and diminishing levels of tranquillity.
- 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.
- Medieval field patterns are vulnerable and can be lost with changes in land ownership and cropping. Variable management of Devon hedges in some areas.
- Continuing decline in rural skills such as woodland management and hedge laying threatening the age and species diversity of semi-natural woodland and leading to variable quality of Devon hedges in some areas.
- Loss or lack of management of traditional farm orchards.
- Shortage of suitable skills and labour to maintain the traditional buildings and landscape features. The coherent character of some older settlements has been weakened by recent developments and renovations.

# Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

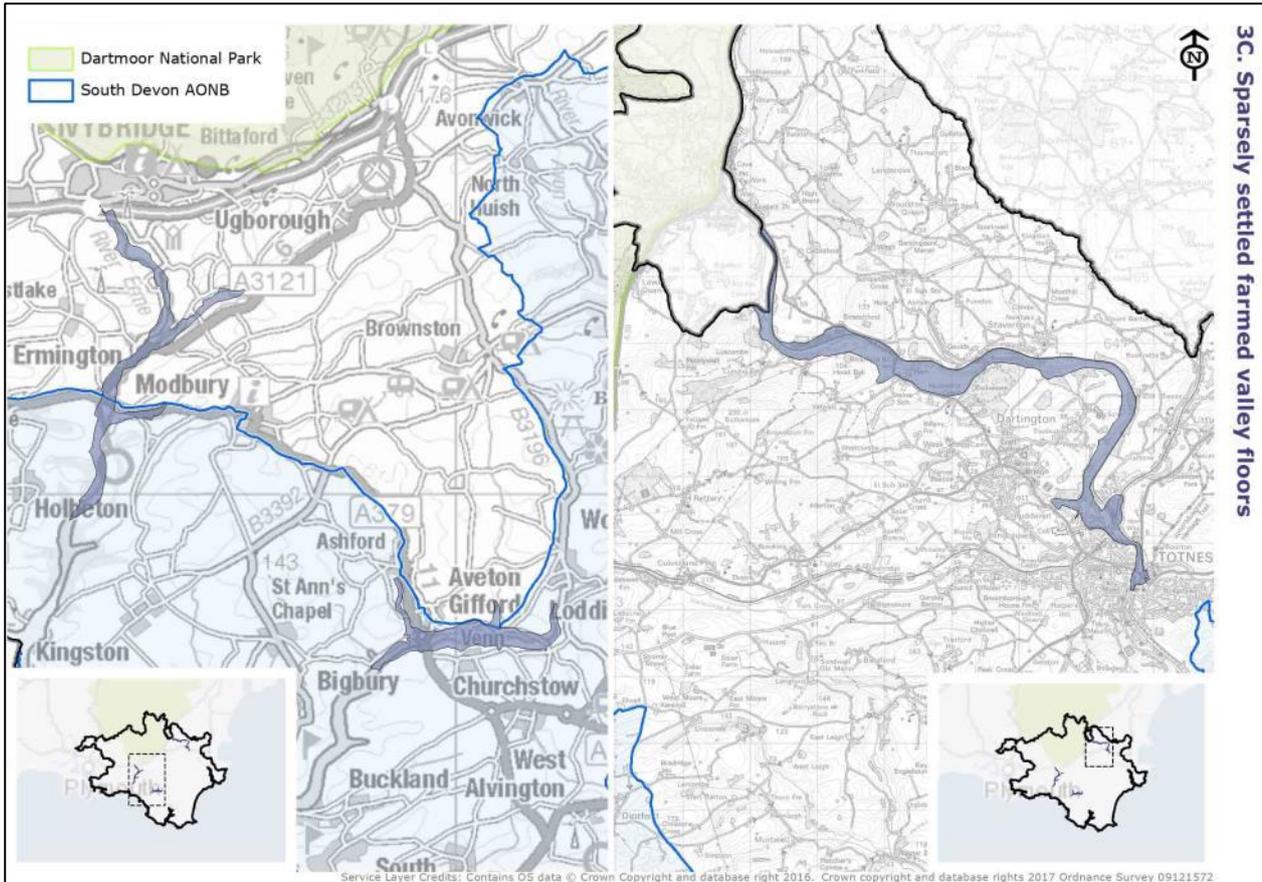
## Overall Landscape Strategy

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

## Landscape Guidelines

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

## LCT 3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors



### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

## Landscape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

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

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

- Floodplain pastures grazed by cattle and sheep with some areas of unenclosed meadows extending across the river floodplains.
- Ditches and hedges are generally found on the boundary with rising land.
- Fields form an irregular pattern of varied origin. There are some limited urban edge uses adjacent to Totnes and Ivybridge.

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

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

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

- Historic parkland estates with veteran trees and ancient woodland fringe the rivers at Dartington Hall and Flete Damarell.
- Rich industrial heritage of the valleys evident in several upstream causeways, weirs, riverside mills and kilns, such as the woollen mills along the Dart, paper and grist mills at Ivybridge and lime kilns at Aveton Gifford.
- The South Devon Railway runs along the Dart Valley between Totnes and Buckfastleigh.

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

- A peaceful landscape with little development and a sparse settlement pattern with buildings often built of stone. Villages are located at river crossing points. Rounded river boulders were used in stone walls in the Erme valley south of Ivybridge.
- Winding course of the valleys sometimes traced by roads including the A384 along the Dart and the A3121 along the Erme. Elsewhere the rivers are crossed by characterful stone bridges linked by narrow winding lanes.
- The Avon Estuary Walk and the Erme-Plym Trail are strategic recreational walking routes which follow the course of the rivers and the South Devon Railway follows the course of the Dart.

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

- The southern half of the LCT along the River Erme and Avon form part of the South Devon AONB which recognises the undeveloped areas of the middle estuaries and smaller creeks with their riverside floodplains, representing a classic English estuarine landscape.
- A secluded landscape, sometimes only accessible by foot and often enclosed by wooded valley slopes, with scenic river views along the valleys to the surrounding valley slopes.
- The strong sense of tranquillity is only broken locally by the presence of main roads and on the fringes of larger settlements at Ivybridge and Totnes.

# Landscape Evaluation

## Valued attributes

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

- Secluded peaceful floodplain landscape, containing the fast-flowing water running over rocky river beds crossed by characterful stone bridges.
- Valued tree and woodland cover, including extensive wet oak-hazel woodland at Flete on the River Erme.
- Mosaic of valued riparian and floodplain habitats including floodplain grazing, marshland, unimproved permanent pasture and wet woodland.
- Irregular field pattern of varied origin.
- Historic parklands, riverside mills, kilns, weirs and causeways resulting in a strong sense of time depth.
- Valued for recreation with local footpaths or strategic recreational walking routes, including the Avon Estuary Walk and the Erme-Plym Trail, often providing the only access to the landscape. The South Devon Railway provides one of the most popular tourist attractions in the district.

## Summary of landscape condition

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

## Forces for change

- Continuing pressure for growth of adjacent larger settlements impinging on the floodplain creating a more urban/urban fringe character and loss of tranquillity.
- Potential for increase in traffic levels on along narrow valley roads, particularly those linking to the A38 and the approach roads into Totnes. These can erode the landscape's high levels of tranquillity and damage the historic stone bridges. Use of concrete (out of keeping with the traditional stone) in repairing roads and bridges by the highways authorities can also undermine character.
- Decline in traditional woodland management, leading to a reduction in the species and age diversity of the landscape's important semi-natural woodland. Change in woodland tree species as new pests and diseases spread.
- On-going decline in traditional skills resulting in variable management of Devon hedges and some replacement by post and wire.
- Loss or lack of management of floodplain pasture and wet meadows.
- Potential threats to important valley bottom habitats including floodplain grazing marsh due to water abstraction and nutrient enrichment from agriculture.
- Climate change effects on precipitation may alter river flows, causing potential damage to habitats and species.
- Growth in tourism and recreation along the river valleys, and the presence of popular visitor attractions such as the South Devon Railway, may contribute to an increase in traffic, eroding the tranquillity of the landscape.

## Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

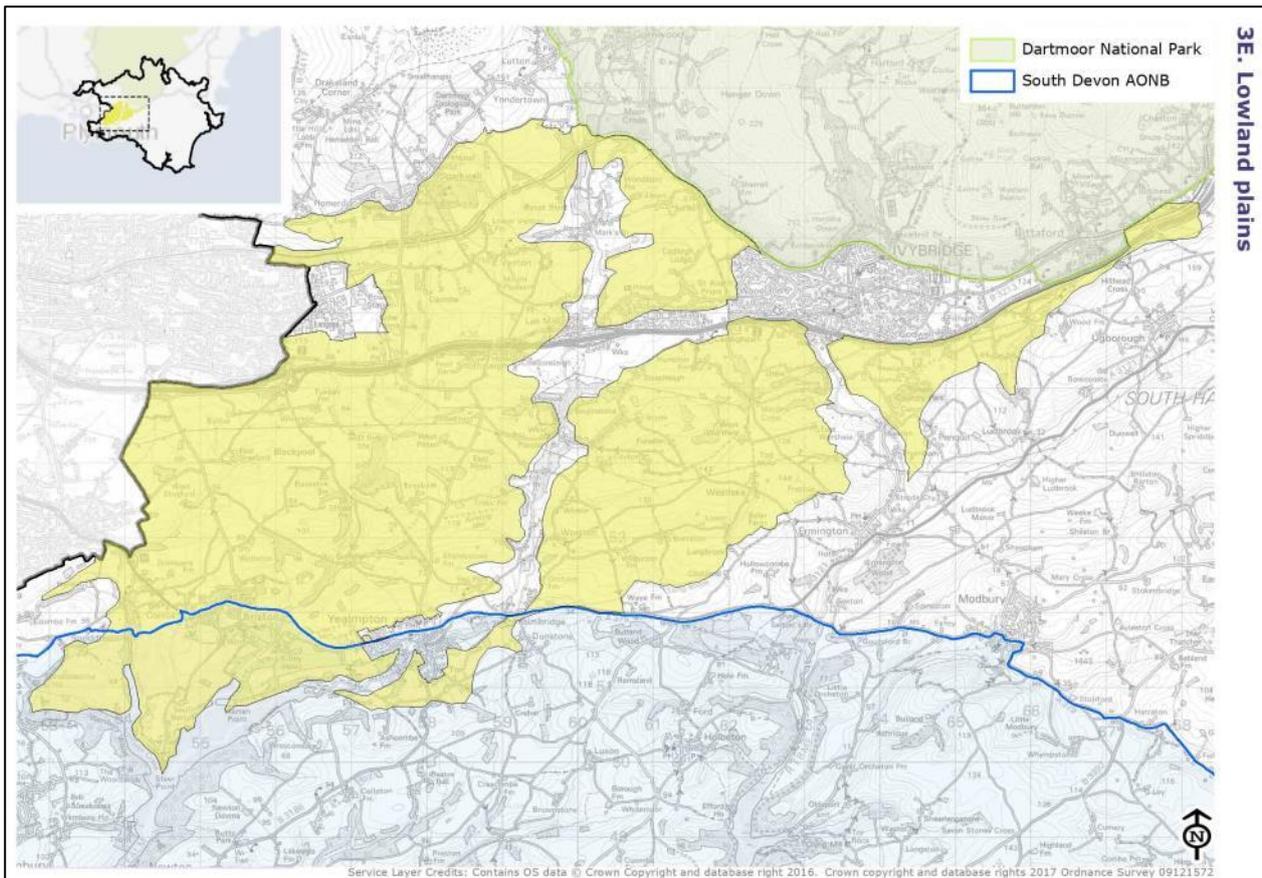
### Overall Landscape Strategy

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

### Landscape Guidelines

- Manage and protect **semi-natural woodland and riverside trees** through traditional woodland management techniques including coppicing and pollarding, particularly along the shoreline. Where opportunities arise, encourage woodland planting to link fragmented sites.
- Manage the landscape's **hedgerows** (particularly on slopes where they can provide a role in stabilising the soil and reduce run-off) and encourage the re-planting of lost hedgerows whenever appropriate.
- 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 and maintain the **industrial heritage of the river valleys** including the stone quays, weirs and causeways. Promote understanding of the landscape's industrial heritage to ensure public access and recreation respects the presence of valued features.
- Protect and maintain the **historic stone bridges** which are characteristics features of the valleys.
- Manage the valleys' use for recreation whilst ensuring they retain their inherent **levels of tranquillity, peacefulness and absence of built development** and protecting the rural views along the valleys and to the adjoining valley sides.
- Ensure new development is sensitively sited away from **rural views along the valleys** and is sited to avoid the need for visually intrusive ground engineering.

## LCT 3E: Lowland Plains



3E: Lowland plains

### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

## Landscape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

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

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

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

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

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

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

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

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

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

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

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

## Landscape Evaluation

### Valued attributes

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

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

### Summary of landscape condition

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

### Forces for change

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

## Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

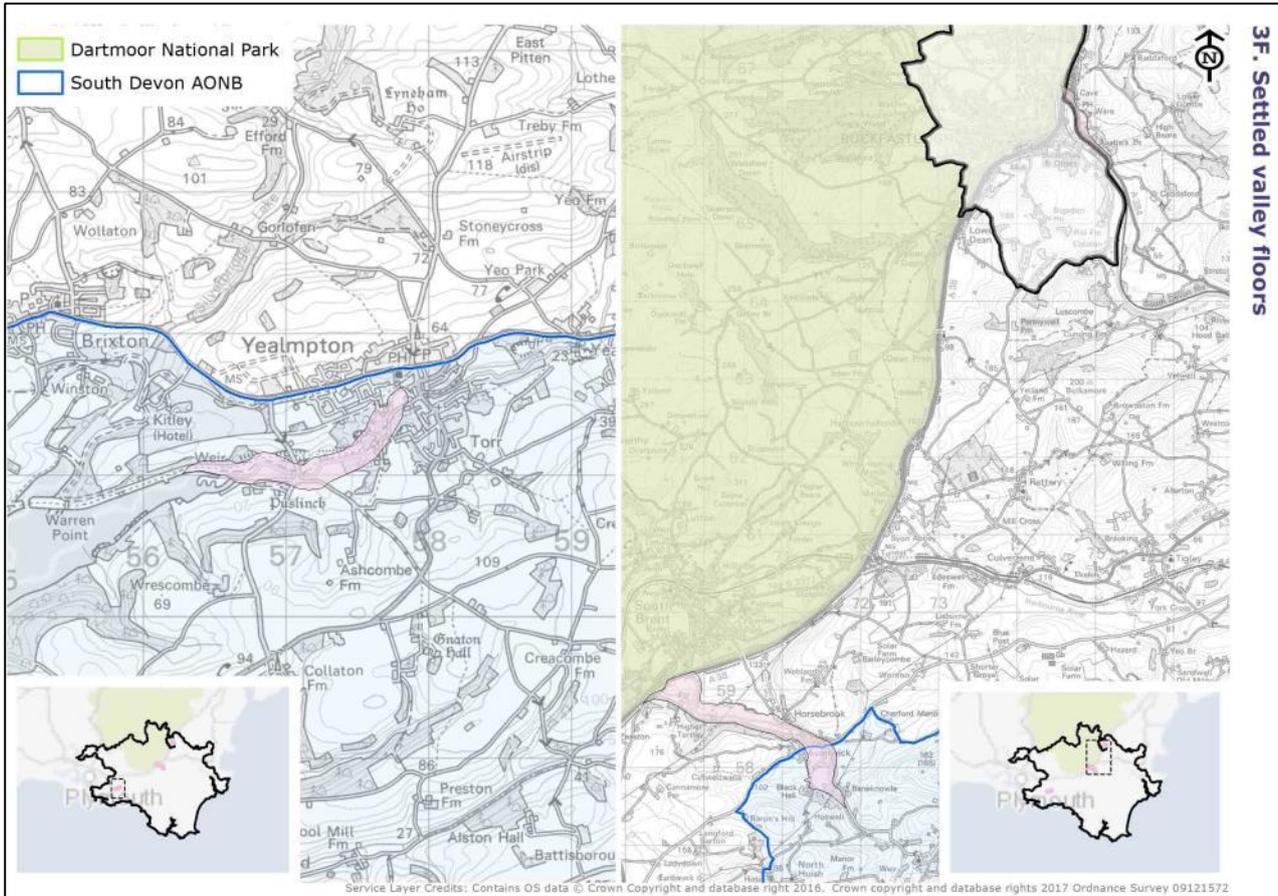
### Overall Landscape Strategy

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

### Landscape Guidelines

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

## LCT 3F: Settled Valley Floors



### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

## Landscape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

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

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

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

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

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

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

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

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

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

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

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

## 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.
- Extensive use for both formal and informal recreation with sports facilities and numerous rights of way.
- Geological interest at the former Rounds Nest Quarry.

### Summary of landscape condition

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

### Forces for change

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

## Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

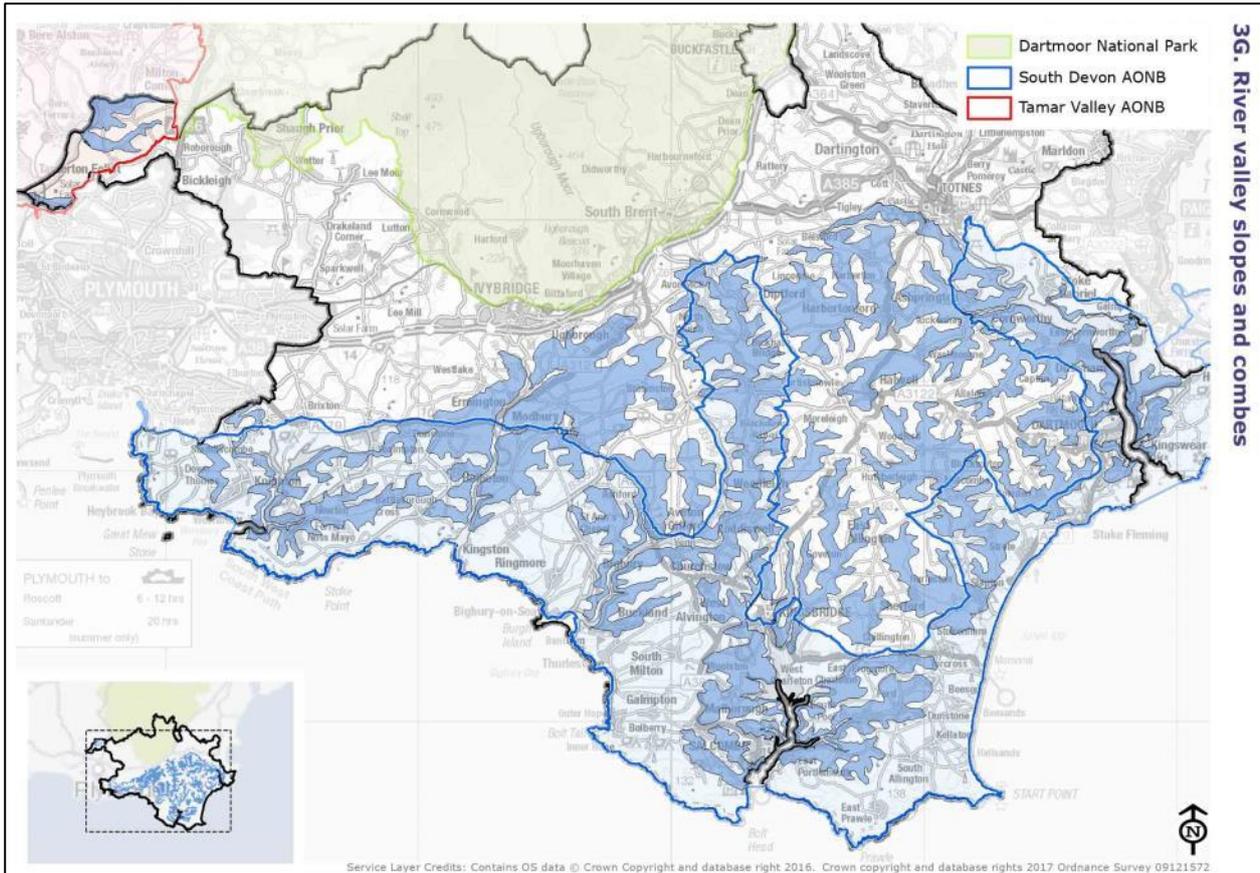
### Overall Landscape Strategy

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

### Landscape Guidelines

- Protect **valued semi-natural habitats** including woodland and watermeadow/wet grassland.
- Retain a balance between **recreational, industrial and agricultural land uses** 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.
- Seek to **replace plantation woodlands** with native species where possible to increase wildlife resource.

## LCT 3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes



### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

Rounded hills and steep undulating slopes overlooking the river valleys.

## Landscape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

- Rounded hills and steep undulating slopes, with branching narrow valley systems flowing into and overlooking their associated rivers and estuaries.
- Underlying geology predominantly comprising Devonian rocks (mudstone, silt stone and sandstone) with occasional intrusion of later igneous granite to the north of the district.

#### *Woodland cover*

- A well-wooded landscape with deciduous and mixed woodland located on the steeper slopes and the fringes of streams, creeks, rivers and estuaries, emphasising the landform.
- There are extensive areas of ancient semi-natural woodland particularly along the upper reaches of the River Avon and the lower reaches of the River Erme and Dart.

#### *Land use and field patterns*

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

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

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

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

- The LCT provides a backdrop to the Conservation Areas of the many small historic villages which have scenic waterside settings along the rivers. There is little modern development on the valley sides.
- Evidence of the industrial heritage of the valleys and their importance for navigation is visible through the historic railways including the Primrose Line and the Dartmouth Steam Railway.
- The growth and prosperity of waterside settlements was strongly linked with the rivers and estuaries, including fishing, trade and boat building.

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

- A clustered settlement pattern of historic villages in sheltered locations above the floodplain and scattered historic farmhouses and cottages nestled in dips in the landscape. There are some larger historic riverside settlements on the lower reaches of the main estuaries, such as Newton Ferrers.
- A strong vernacular of whitewashed cottages with thatch or slate roofs, as well as exposed stone. The church towers form distinctive local landmarks.
- Sparse network of narrow sunken lanes bounded by high Devon hedges and hedgerow trees which often create tunnels through the landscape.
- The area is popular for recreation and has an extensive network of footpaths, with many strategic recreational routes along the rivers such as the Avon Estuary Walk, Dart Valley trail and the Erme Plym Trail. Some of these routes are based on ancient walkways, including Harper's Hill south of Totnes.

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

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

## 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 busy roads.
- Extensive woodland cover, much of ancient origin retained on the valley sides.
- Numerous traditional orchards around farms and villages.
- The field boundaries of mature species-rich Devon hedges enclosing a mosaic of field patterns including some of medieval origin which give the landscape a strong sense of time depth.
- Diverse and connected habitat network including semi-improved and unimproved neutral grassland, plus areas of wet grassland and marshland on the lower slopes supporting rich wildlife.
- Intact historic settlement pattern of small nucleated villages and dispersed farmhouses, with distinct Devon vernacular; many settlements designated as Conservation Areas, and with distinctive rural and riverside settings.
- The intimate winding narrow roads and sunken lanes enclosed by Devon hedges which contribute to the hidden, secluded and historic character.
- Spectacular views from upper valley slopes across the estuaries and rivers, as at Kingsbridge, contrast with the sense of seclusion along the lower valleys. This rapidly changing character whilst travelling through the area is a distinctive South Hams characteristic.
- Dark night skies which can be experienced within the area away from the major conurbations.

### Summary of landscape condition

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

### Forces for change

- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora* pathogens and ash die-back). Loss of trees within hedgerows would be particularly noticeable in this landscape type. Sweet chestnut is a distinctive tree in this LCT and is susceptible to a number of diseases.
- Clear felling of larch along the Avon Valley due to disease has changed the wooded character of certain areas, with some areas replanted and others not.
- Continuing decline in traditional rural skills such as hedge laying and active woodland management threatening the age and species diversity of semi-natural woodland and leading to variable quality of Devon hedges in some areas.
- Loss or lack of management of traditional farm orchards.
- Important wetland habitats can suffer from nutrient enrichment and siltation from agricultural practises or increasing drought conditions due to climate change.
- Climate change effects on precipitation may alter river flows, causing potential damage to habitats and species.
- Decline in livestock numbers leading to scrub encroachment on pastoral land.
- Continuing pressure for development particularly due to the LCT's proximity to the urban fringes of Plymouth to the west and Paignton to the east of the LCT. Expansion of development in these areas would affect the rural character and sense of tranquillity.
- Demand for housing expanding towns within the LCT onto the upper slopes, where they would be prominent in the wider landscape.

- Increase in recreational pressure resulting in elevated traffic levels on narrow winding lanes is diminishing levels of tranquillity.
- Pressure for new leisure and recreational development (including caravan and camp sites) is eroding the rural character.
- Conversion of small traditional farm buildings, which are characteristic of the area, which can increase the need for new agricultural buildings elsewhere.
- Breaking up of larger farm holdings, leading to a diversification of land uses and an increase in equestrian development and infrastructure, and small-scale farming practices.

## Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

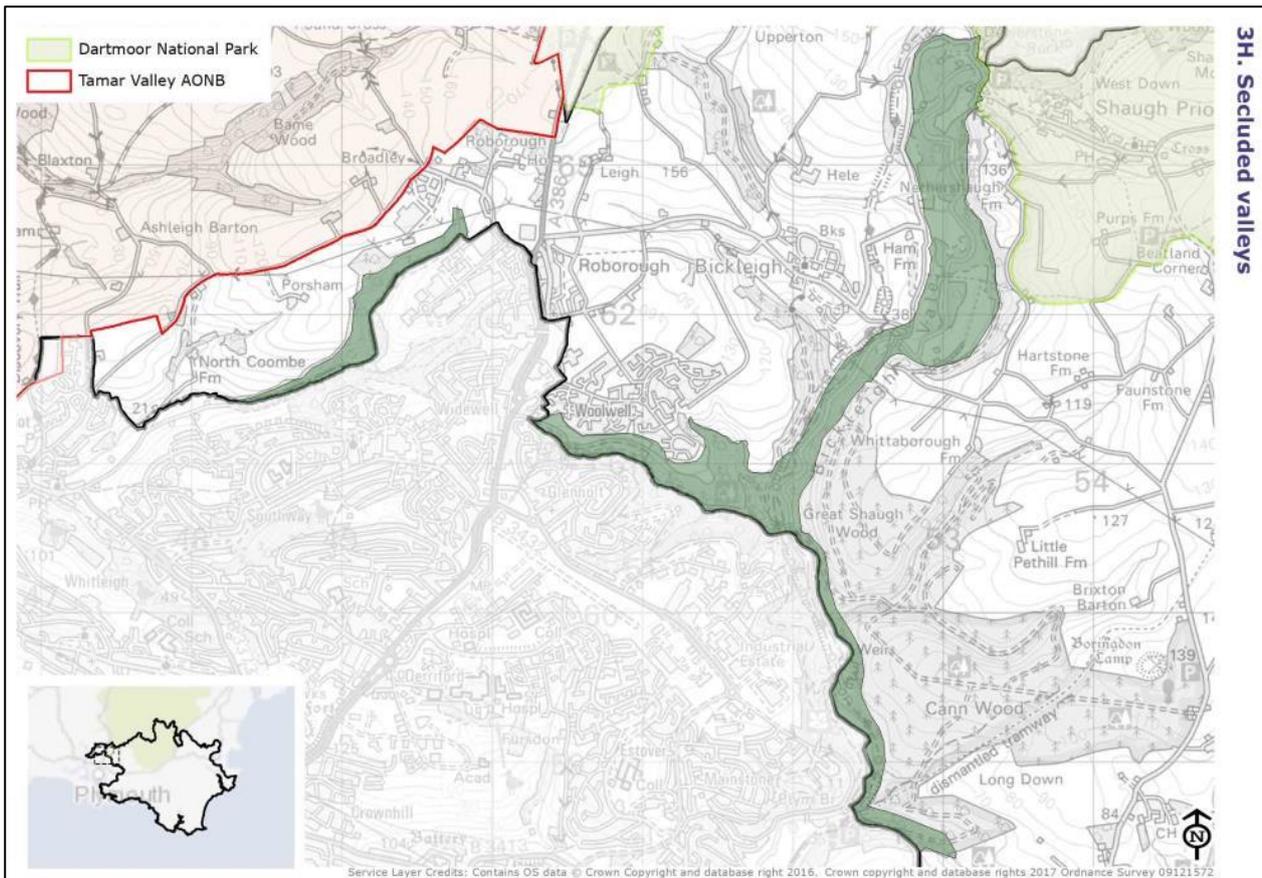
### Overall Landscape Strategy

To protect and enhance the peaceful character of the valley slopes, fringed by well-managed woodlands and fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedges. Opportunities are sought to restore conifer plantations to broadleaf woodlands 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 fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedges and dark night skies, and ensure the area remains valued for informal recreation.
- Manage and enhance **semi-natural woodlands** through traditional woodland management, and explore new incentives for good woodland management practices. Promote natural regeneration to enhance longevity whilst using extensive grazing to promote the species diversity of woodland ground flora.
- Manage and extend areas of **wet woodland and grassland**, through appropriate grazing and traditional land management regimes – both to enhance their wildlife value and functions in flood prevention.
- Manage **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).
- 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, laying, and replanting of gappy sections, strengthening irregular medieval field patterns. Reinstate lost lengths of hedgerow and replacement 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 **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 Paignton and Salcombe where there are already extensive urban views.
- Protect **traditional building styles and materials**, particularly cream or whitewashed thatched cottages, as well as exposed stone and slate. Any new development or extensions should utilise the same materials and building styles, 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.

## LCT 3H: Secluded Valleys



3H. Secluded valleys

### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

## Landscape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

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

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

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

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

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

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

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

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

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

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

- Secluded character due to the enclosing topography and complex network of narrow sunken lanes enclosed by high Devon hedges, which allow gateway views across fields and out to the surrounding landscape.
- Views are generally enclosed by the topography and high level of woodland cover.
- Sense of peace and tranquillity despite close proximity to urban/industrial areas. Birdsong and the sounds of the river flowing contrast with the hum of distant traffic.

## Landscape Evaluation

### Valued attributes

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

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

### Summary of landscape condition

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

### Forces for change

- Increased demand for recreation – including the construction of facilities and the erosion of the footpath network.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora* pathogens and ash die-back).
- Climate change resulting in increased rainfall changing the character of the watercourses and altering the composition of vegetation within the valley.
- Pressure for development due to the close proximity of the valley to the city of Plymouth.

## Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

### Overall Landscape Strategy

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

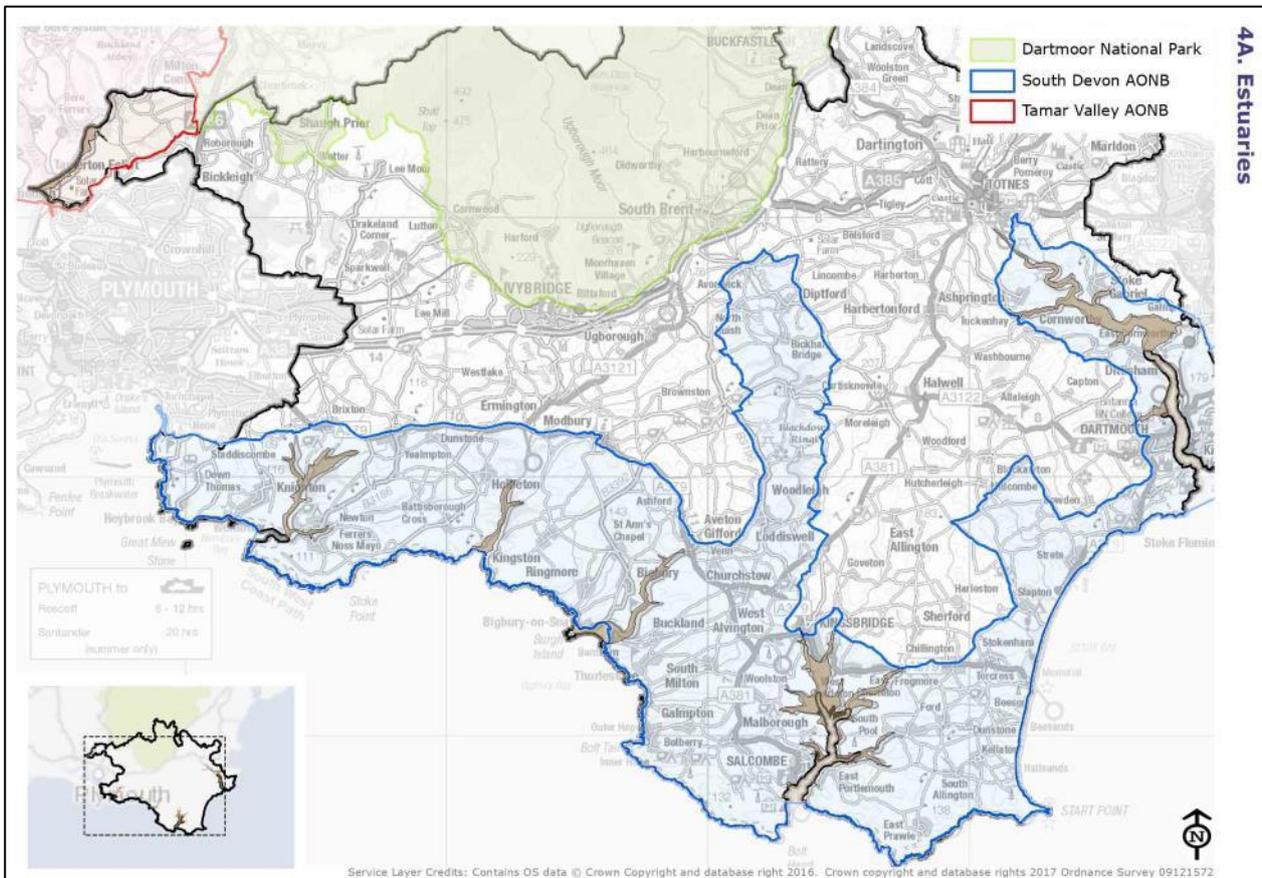
### Landscape Guidelines

- Protect **valued areas of ancient and broadleaved woodland**, riparian habitats and regionally important geological sites.
- Protect the **setting of archaeological sites** and features related to the area's industrial heritage.
- Avoid siting any **new development** in the most elevated locations above the valley, where it will affect the locally distinctive wooded skyline, and ensure new development in the valley is carefully sited away from key gate gaps and rural views.
- Use the landform, dense woodland cover and features such as former quarries to **screen any new development or land uses** (as seen currently at the old quarry site at Wood Park).
- Pursue opportunities to **extend semi-natural woodland, grassland and riparian habitats**, including as part of a Green Infrastructure network, utilising native, climate-resilient species

wherever possible.

- Consider further opportunities for strengthening **opportunities for access and enjoyment**, including links to existing strategic recreational paths and cycle routes.
- Strengthen the **landscape's distinctive wooded ridgelines**, including new planting and re-stocking with locally prevalent species such as oak and wild cherry.

## LCT 4A: Estuaries



### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

## Landscape and seascape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

- Lower parts of main rivers and estuary mouths where rivers enter the sea resulting in brackish water. Extensive mudflats are often revealed at low tide.
- Inland, the upper reaches of the estuaries are enclosed by adjacent valley slopes and graduate to large sandy bays with low headlands and rock outcrops close to the sea.
- High levels of variation both between the different estuaries and within the same estuary system. The Salcombe-Kingsbridge estuary is particularly unique – without a main river feeding it and remaining saline within its upper reaches as a consequence. The River Dart remains tidal up to Totnes Weir, 12 miles upriver.

#### *Woodland cover*

- Little woodland within the LCT itself, although woodland in adjacent landscapes (particularly valley slopes) adjoins and contributes to the character of the estuaries.

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

- Open water and intertidal sands grading to mudflats and reed beds upstream. The clear, pristine waters are teeming with life, and species including egrets and otters can be seen on the estuaries.
- High biodiversity value – internationally, nationally and locally designated for marine and coastal habitats, supporting many breeding birds. The Yealm is within the Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC.

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

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

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

- Large villages and towns are often associated with the estuaries, including Kingsbridge, Totnes, Dartmouth and Salcombe. Historically their growth and prosperity was strongly linked with the estuary including fishing, trade and boat building. Seasonal foot and vehicle ferries cross the estuaries.
- Low accessibility by road but well used for water-based recreation with some small informal parking areas and clustered areas of moorings, marinas and boating infrastructure.
- The sandy beaches provide an important recreational resource serving the local population throughout the year, however at times they are tranquil due to their remoteness and inaccessibility.

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

- Unsettled and undeveloped areas are very tranquil with low levels of light pollution, especially where adjoining river banks are also undeveloped. These estuaries act as a focus for adjoining areas of cliff and combes to create highly valued and visually attractive landscapes.
- A visually dynamic landscape and seascape, encompassing views to and from the estuary and along the coastline. They are also heavily influenced by tides, weather conditions and seasons.
- Enclosed and sheltered by low cliffs and woodland, with longer, more expansive views out to sea near the mouths of the estuaries.
- High levels of activity, often seasonal, from recreational sailing and other watersports. Pleasure crafts and ferries are commonly used to explore the estuary, and in places boat noise travels up onto the estuary sides, detracting from tranquillity.
- The estuaries fall within the South Devon AONB, contributing to special qualities of the protected landscape.

## 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 estuaries support very large numbers of passage and overwintering birds, particularly within the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Special Area of Conservation.
- Distinctive and attractive large settlements on adjacent land including Kingsbridge, Dartmouth and Salcombe.
- Relatively inaccessible with limited vehicle access resulting in high levels of tranquillity and dark night skies.
- The landscape is popular with tourists and water-based recreation, providing for quiet enjoyment and ready access to the natural environment.
- A visually dynamic landscape and seascape highly influenced by tides, weather conditions and seasons.
- Picturesque, with winding rivers, sand bars, and overhanging woodlands extending to the water's edge.

### Summary of landscape condition

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

### Forces for change

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

# Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

## Overall Landscape Strategy

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

## Landscape Guidelines

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



## Landscape and seascape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

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

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

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

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

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

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

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

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

- Unsettled and unenclosed without roads, although often accessible by public footpaths and used extensively for informal recreation.
- Popular rights of way and strategic recreational routes pass through or adjacent to the LCT, including the John Musgrave Heritage Trail, Tamar Valley Discovery Trail and South West Coast Path.

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

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

## Landscape Evaluation

### Valued attributes

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

- Extensively used for recreation providing quiet enjoyment and ready access to the natural environment, with links to a network of strategic recreational routes and public rights of way.
- Highly valued marine-influenced terrestrial habitats including mudflats, reedbeds and saltmarshes providing habitats for wetland birds.
- The shingle beach at Slapton Ley is an impressive and unique feature along the South Devon Coast and the freshwater lagoon (SSSI) supports an abundance and diversity of aquatic invertebrate fauna.
- Open, expansive views near the coast, which are uncommon elsewhere within the valley landscapes of South Hams.
- Remote, tranquil and naturalistic.

### Summary of landscape condition

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

### Forces for change

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

# Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

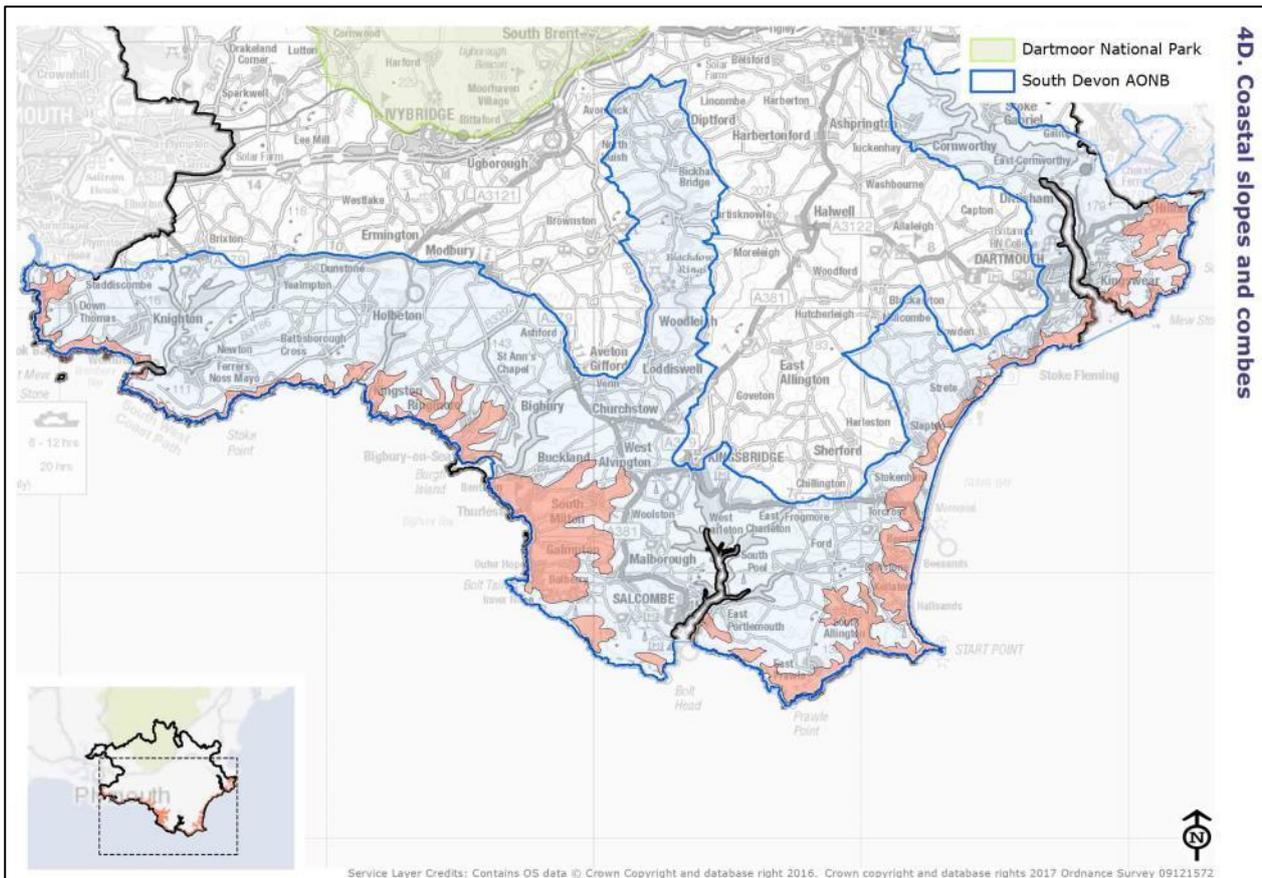
## Overall Landscape Strategy

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

## Landscape Guidelines

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

## LCT 4D: Coastal slopes and combes



### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

## Landscape and seascape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

- A number of separate coastal areas of branching valley systems, occasionally with small coastal cliffs.
- The topography of the combes varies, with some narrow and steep and some more open, shallow systems.
- Valleys are carved into Devonian mudstones, siltstones, sandstones and schist, with some alluvial deposits. In places, erosion has created wave cut platforms and visible succession of coastal geomorphology. Many areas are designated as RIGS or SSSIs, including Wembury Point.

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

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

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

- Extensive nature conservation designations inland including species rich grassland of high interest for bird life.
- High biodiversity value for marine and coastal habitats, internationally and nationally designated including as part of Prawle Point to Start Point SSSI/SAC and Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC.

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

- Contains the Grade II\* Registered Parks and Garden of Coleton Fishacre and part of the Langdon Court Estate (Grade II listed). It also provides a setting to Conservation Areas including South Milton, Thurlestone, Ringmore and Stoke Fleming.
- A number of historic field systems and defences located along the coast, often designated as Scheduled Monuments.
- Important coastal settlements marking a long and close relationship with the sea, coastal trading and transportation.

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

- There is little settlement on the steeper slopes, although occasional historic settlements are nestled into wider combes, typically with stone as the dominant building material. There is some modern holiday development including Thurlestone and Challaborough Bay.
- Narrow and winding roads link with a network of rights of way, with extensive use for recreation. There is very little vehicle access to the coast. Steep paths down to beaches and the South West Coast Path provide access to the upper slopes with extensive coastal views. Some Open Access Land is also located near the coast.

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

- High, open and exhilarating on top slopes, grading to intimate and enclosed in the lower valleys.
- Generally high levels of tranquillity due to strong naturalistic qualities and few human influences, although there is localised loss of tranquillity near the A381 to the east of South Milton.
- Extensive coastal rights of way and Open Access Land including the South West Coast Path with steep paths down to beaches. Many areas are owned and managed by the National Trust.
- This LCT falls wholly within the South Devon AONB, including special qualities identified in the AONB Management Plan such as '*fine, undeveloped, wild and rugged coastline*' and '*deeply incised landscape that is intimate, hidden and secretive away from the plateau tops.*'

## Landscape Evaluation

### Valued attributes

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

- The variety and complexity of undeveloped coastal features and the dynamic nature of the coast providing experiential, historic and natural interest reflected in the Heritage Coast designation.
- Cliffs displaying varied geology and a diversity of habitats, with a wealth of associated wildlife including cliff breeding birds and coastal grassland communities.
- The sparse transport network and settlement pattern, with traditional nucleated villages sheltered in valley locations.
- Important coastal settlements marking a long and close relationship with the sea, coastal trading and transportation. Many coastal settlements remain vibrant, some with active ports and small fishing fleets.
- Strong links to the remaining military and maritime defences, including a WWII battery at Froward Point.
- Coastal and maritime leisure and recreation facilities, which provide a rich variety of attractions and activities that appeal to a wide audience.
- Extensive coastal footpaths and Open Access Land with the South West Coast Path allowing continuous access along the dynamic coastline.
- Historic parks and gardens including Coleton Fishacre National Trust property, Kingswear Castle and mills e.g. Gara Mill.
- Remote, intimate, sheltered and tranquil qualities – with contrasting expansive views from upper slopes.

### Summary of landscape condition

An intact and varied landscape, aided by the fact that some of the area is inaccessible. However, there has been some change indicated by the dereliction of barns and use of post and wire fencing locally within rough grazing areas. There is evidence of locally neglected pasture, which is unusual for the area. A change in agricultural practices has meant a decline in the mixed farming systems of the landscape, which has impacted the number of species present. The loss of coastal heath and planting of amenity trees reduces the landscape condition around some settlements. The landscape around Ringmore and Challaborough is in decline due to a loss of field pattern as a result of arable cultivation and field amalgamation. The settlement pattern is subject to a range of pressures from enlargement of tourism hot spots and expansion of settlement over the valleys. This in turn is changing the inherent clustered pattern of settlement and reducing the contribution of small farms to the landscape character, as larger settlements dominate. Farmland is also being lost to settlement, leisure and tourism uses. The related infrastructure in the area such as coastal defences and seafront car parks can often be harsh and unsympathetic in design and materials.

### Forces for change

- Increased amenity tree planting which is a detracting element from the landscape character
- Agricultural intensification (pastoral to arable), which may lead to a loss of traditional field boundaries and a change to existing landscape pattern as well as a gradual decline in wildlife species and their habitats
- Decline in livestock numbers and traditional management practices leading to scrub encroachment on unenclosed pasture.
- Loss or damage to coastal heath due to lack of management and erosion from recreational use
- Important wetland habitats in coastal combes may suffer from increasing drought conditions and demand for irrigation lowering groundwater levels
- Further degradation of historic features such as stone walls and barns, which are characteristic of the area
- Loss of farmland to settlement, new leisure and recreational developments, eroding the rural character and tranquillity of the area
- Settlement expansion, for example at Thurlestone and Stoke Fleming eroding the rural character and tranquillity
- Recreational pressure on already heavily used car parks, local road network and footpaths

# Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

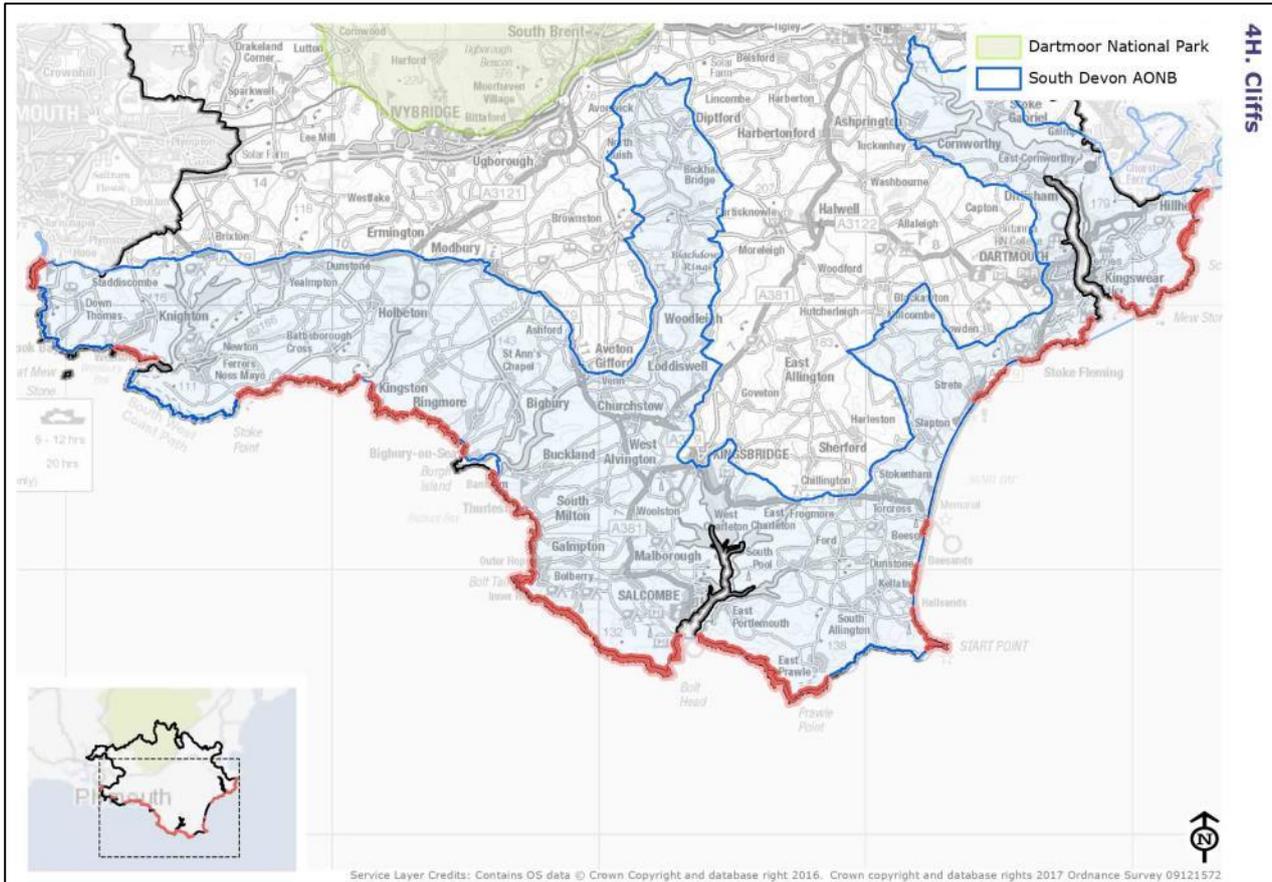
## Overall Landscape Strategy

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

## Landscape Guidelines

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

## LCT 4H: Cliffs



### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

## Landscape and seascape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

- Hard cliffs generally consisting of schist, slate and limestone, with vertical or near vertical faces and ledges, often dramatic with pinnacles and pillars.
- Rocky spurs and outcrops often surround sandy bays, producing areas of white water visible in the sea.
- Heavily incised with variable geology expressed in distinctive rock formations, outlying rocks, headlands and bays. Beesands Quarry RIGS displays exposures of Lower Devonian Meadfoot beds.
- Punctuated by a large number of caves and coves. Numerous areas are designated as geological SSSIs and provide important evidence of coastal geomorphological processes.

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

- Largely open and unenclosed cliff faces and cliff tops. Some of the less steep upper slopes consist of scrub, heath and coastal grassland, occasionally grading to farmland along the inland edge. Within these areas there is a relic field pattern of downland intake, with some grazed pasture and gorse scrub.
- Disused quarries at Jennycliff, Bovisand and Beesands Quarry provide evidence of past land uses.

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

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

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

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

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

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

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

- Wild and exposed with dominant marine influence, including the sound of crashing waves. Highly influenced by weather conditions and subject to meteorological extremes.
- Open and unenclosed, often highly visible from long distances out to sea due to the clearly expressed variable geology, colour and height. Clifftops provide extensive views, especially from their highest points, and include iconic views of Burgh Island, Start Point, Cawsand/Kingsand Bay, Rame Head and Froward Point.
- Cliff scenery is an important part of the South Devon Heritage Coast designation, also recognised through the special qualities of the wider South Devon AONB.

## Landscape Evaluation

### Valued attributes

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

- An incised coastline of dramatic vertiginous cliffs with rocky spurs and outcrops out to sea.
- Largely open and unenclosed cliff tops with scrub heath and coastal grassland with a relic field pattern of downland intake.
- Cliffs and the shoreline marine environment highly valued for biodiversity.
- Significant evidence of early historic settlement and ancient field systems.
- Historic cliff top forts and lighthouses form iconic features along the empty and exposed skyline.
- The variable geology, colour and height of the cliffs make them highly visible far out to sea.
- Remote, undeveloped and unspoilt character, with access only available along the popular South West Coast Path, which allows cliff top views of the ever-changing seascape and iconic views along to coastal headlands and out to offshore islands.
- Dark night skies can be experienced where distance and topography limits light spill from conurbations.

### Summary of landscape condition

The cliffs running around the coast from Noss Mayo to Mothecombe and from Bolt Tail to Salcombe are in good condition with the coastal footpath being well used but also well maintained. There has been a spread of gorse in downland areas running around the coast from Noss Mayo to Mothecombe, indicating a decline in grazing levels. Development visible around Wembury and Heybrook Bay has impacted the rural character of the coastline between Mount Batten and Newton Ferrers and the area inland extending to Staddiscombe, with similar impacts apparent from Thurleston and other more recent coastal developments. Holiday camps, caravan parks, and communications masts are all visually intrusive in the cliffs LCT. The farmland along the inland edge of the cliffs between East Portlemouth and Torcross has some undermanaged field boundaries, degraded stone walls with localised use of post and wire fencing. Coastal defences can be unsympathetic and visually intrusive.

### Forces for change

- Loss or damage to field boundaries due to lack of management or erosion from recreational use.
- Changes to the physical form of the cliffs resulting from erosion. This may also lead to the loss of thin soils, impacting upon vegetation.
- Pressure for new masts, communication towers and pylons, which would be potentially visible on prominent skylines (such as the existing prominent masts at Staddon Fort).
- Continuing pressure for development due to the LCT's popularity as a recreational landscape, and its proximity to the fringes of urban areas, potentially affect coastal views and eroding rural character.
- Climate change causing potential sea level rise, which could lead to the loss of coastal habitats and an increase in unsympathetic coastal defences.
- Recreational pressure on the South West Coast Path and potential for new leisure and recreational development (e.g. holiday camps and caravan parks) affecting the rural character and sense of tranquillity. The introduction of the All England Coast Path may result in further recreational demand.
- Some farmland under National Trust ownership is being restored to a semi-natural state.
- The expiry of some agri-environment schemes may result in reduced levels of grazing on cliffs, potentially leading to an increase in gorse and decline in floristic interest.
- Climate change, causing increased carbon dioxide levels and higher temperatures, may place fragmented heathland habitats on cliff tops under pressure from scrub invasion. Wildfires may also become more frequent due to less rainfall.

# Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

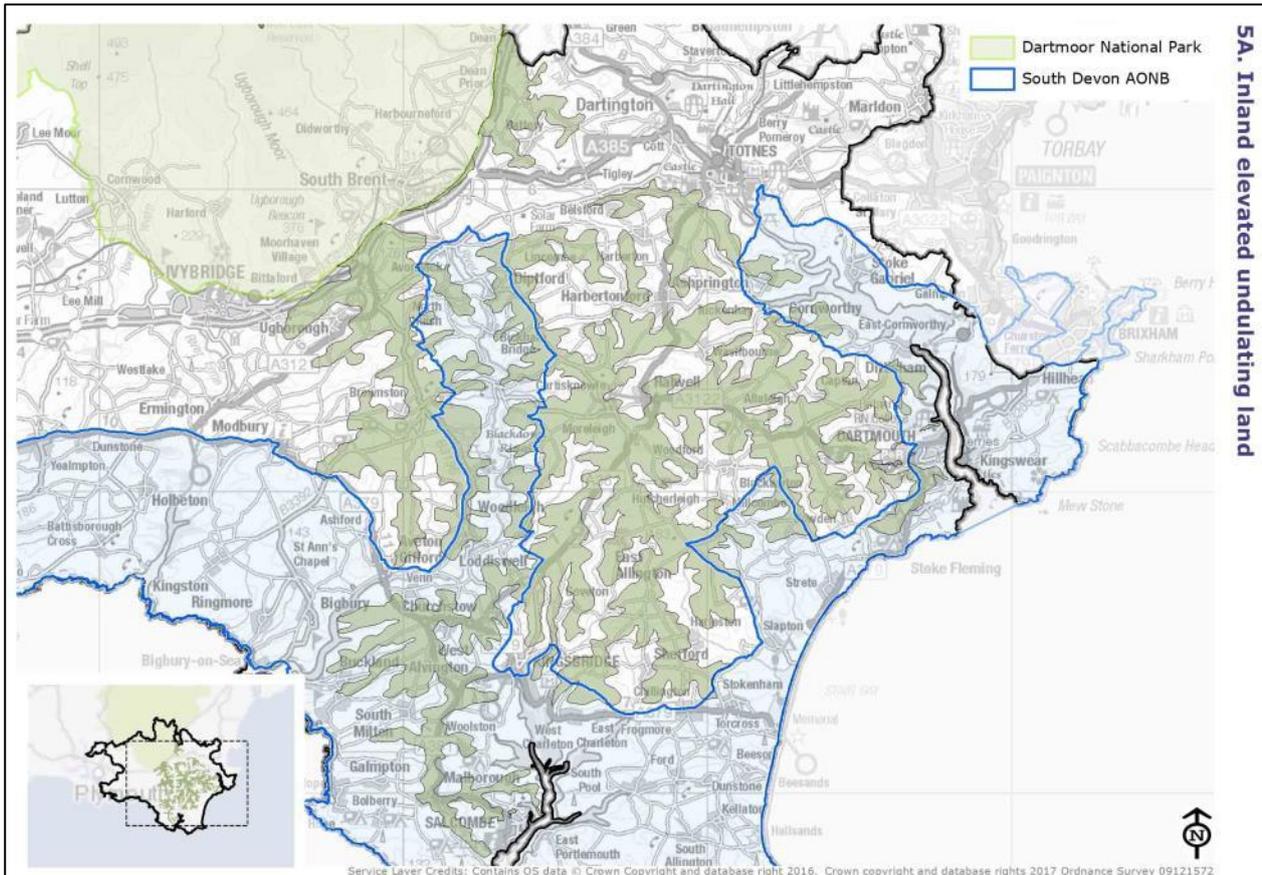
## Overall Landscape Strategy

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

## Landscape Guidelines

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

## LCT 5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land



### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

## Landscape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

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

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

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

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

- Small areas of acid grassland, purple moor grass and rush pastures on the higher land which give a moorland character particularly west of Moreleigh and west of Blackdown Rings.
- Andrew's Wood SSSI is designated for its mosaic of species-rich grassland, wet heath and secondary woodland.

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

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

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

- Sparsely settled with high levels of tranquillity, largely undeveloped with isolated farms and houses away from ridgelines and nestled in dips often with shelterbelts. Occasional small historic villages such as Malborough and West Alvington with their distinctive church towers.
- Local vernacular of exposed stone and slate hung walls, slate roofs and some whitewashed cottages with thatch.
- Straight narrow roads traverse ridges, linked by steep sunken lanes plunging down adjacent valley slopes. Main spine roads are important links across the district, and those which give access to the coast can be busy in the summer. There is a good network of footpaths linked with the long-distance river valley walks or South West Coast Path.

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

- The southern half of the LCT along the coast forms part of the South Devon AONB, recognising the quality of the rural rolling patchwork of this agricultural landscape.
- The low hedges on elevated ground, and lack of hedgerow trees results in open skylines with far-reaching views over the countryside including to Dartmoor National Park in the north.
- The open sea is visible from the edge of the plateau and there are occasional panoramic views over the estuaries on the south coast. (e.g. Snapes Point at Salcombe, Jawbone Hill over the Dart).
- A peaceful landscape with dark night skies and a strong sense of remoteness. This is diluted in places by development on the edge of coastal settlements such as Salcombe, Dartmouth and Stoke Fleming (including caravan and camp sites).
- Telephone masts and pylons are visually intrusive on the ridgelines of this LCT.

## 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.
- Open, windswept, largely unwooded, landscape with hilltop tree clumps, plus pine and beech roadside trees providing locally distinctive landmarks.
- The mosaic of arable and pasture fields with pastures grazed by distinctive Devon Red and South Devon cattle.
- Areas of small irregular medieval fields on hillsides and larger, regular Barton Fields which give the landscape a sense of time depth.
- Small areas of deciduous woodland and semi-improved grassland which provide valuable habitats, with areas of moorland character on higher land.
- Steep sunken lanes which plunge into the valleys, bounded by Devon hedges often covered with a profusion of wildflowers. Many visitors experience the district from the ridge top roads.
- Clusters of Scheduled prehistoric hillforts (e.g. Blackdown Rings, Burleigh Dolts and Stanborough Camp) and frequent ring cairns and bowl barrows forming highly visible features on the exposed ridgelines.
- Extensive rights of way valued for recreation, and quiet enjoyment and access to nature.
- Open skylines and long rural, estuarine or seascape views.

### Summary of landscape condition

Because much of the landscape is unsettled and remote, its structure, with gently undulating open farmland, extensive views and lack of built development, is largely intact. Settlement is scattered, with isolated houses and farms, especially near the south coast, except for recent development on the edge of Dartmouth and Stoke Fleming which, where it has spread up into this LCT, is widely visible and intrusive. Adjacent urban areas are not generally apparent from within the LCT, except for Totnes where factory chimneys, the castle and traffic on major roads can be seen. The presence of pylons is visually intrusive. The A38 (including settlements along its length) intrudes on levels of tranquillity and dark night skies towards the north of the LCT.

### Forces for change

- Changes in land ownership or agricultural intensification (pastoral to arable), which may lead to a loss of traditional medieval field boundaries, a decline in traditional hedgerow management techniques, and a change to existing landscape pattern as well as a gradual decline in wildlife species and their habitats.
- Decline in livestock numbers leading to scrub encroachment onto pastoral land.
- Continuing decline in traditional rural skills such as hedge-laying resulting in under management of hedgerows and verges in some areas.
- Continuing pressure for development particularly due to the LCT's proximity to the urban fringes of Totnes, Dartmouth, Kingsbridge and Salcombe, and along the A38. Development in these areas could affect the rural character and sense of tranquillity of the LCT.
- Further expansion of smaller settlements adjacent to the LCT, onto the upper slopes where they could be highly visible within this elevated landscape (e.g. Loddiswell and Morleigh).
- An increase in traffic levels, and the increasing size of farm machinery on narrow rural lanes is likely to diminish levels of tranquillity and increase pressure to widen spine roads, eroding their rural character and important banked verge habitats.
- Pressure for new telecommunications masts, pylons and wind turbines, which would be highly visible on prominent skylines.
- Pressure for new leisure and recreational development (e.g. diversification of farms to caravans/campsites and conversion of small traditional farm buildings, particularly barns, to accommodation which can increase the need for new agricultural buildings elsewhere), affecting the rural character and sense of tranquillity of the LCT.

## Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

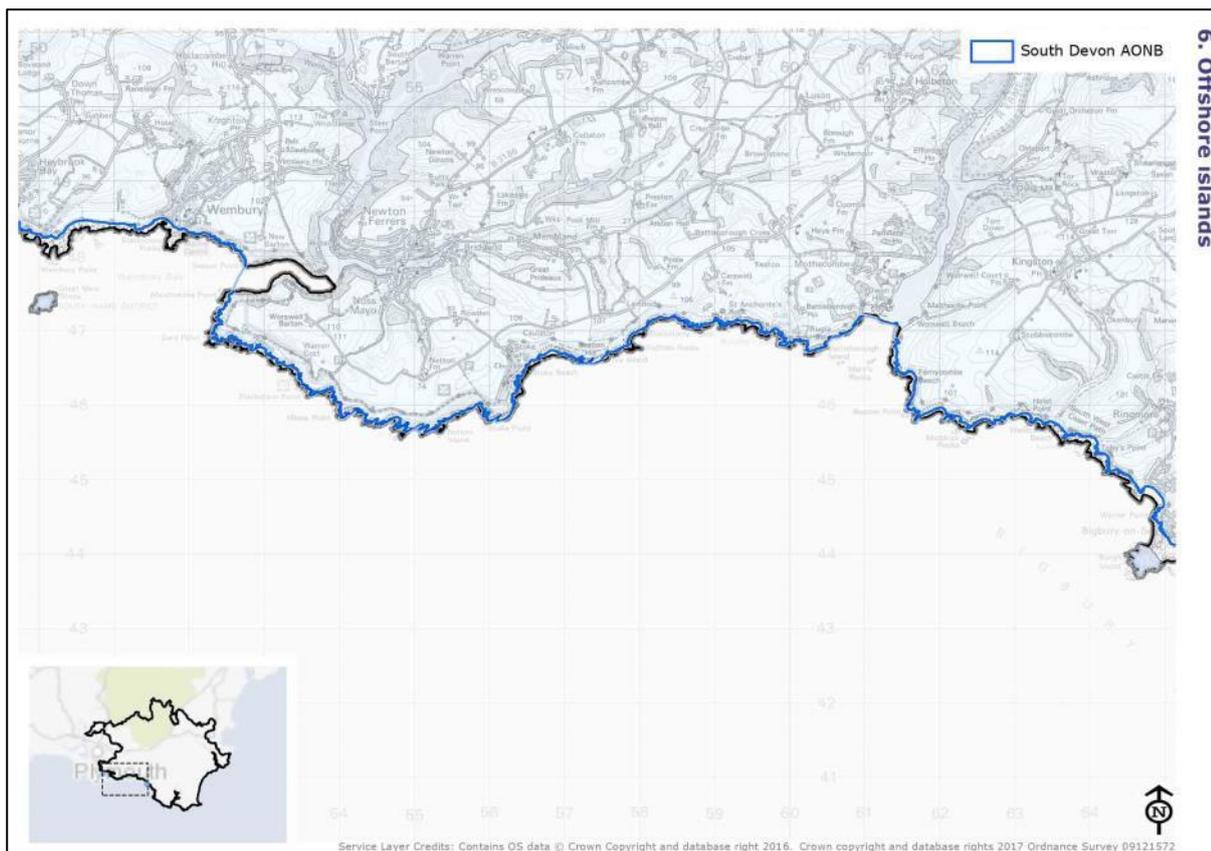
### Overall Landscape Strategy

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 and distinctive tree clumps. Manage and enhance the farmed landscape by ensuring that pastoral land is conserved and field boundaries maintained, wildlife interest and local diversity is enhanced, soil erosion and agricultural run-off reduced. Maintain the sparse settlement pattern, open views to Dartmoor and panoramic views from the edge of the plateau over the estuaries along the south coast.

### Landscape Guidelines

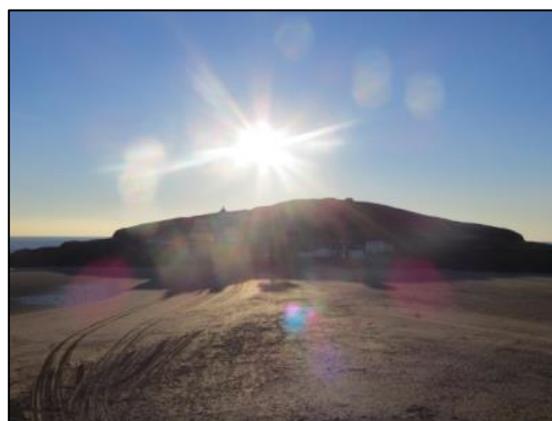
- Manage the **ridge top tree clumps and shelterbelts** which form characteristic features within the open landscape, encouraging the development of further beech and pine hedgerow trees.
- Protect and maintain the **historic field patterns of the landscape**, restoring and replanting lost and gappy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

## LCT 6: Offshore Islands



6. Offshore islands

### Representative photographs



### Summary of location and landscape character

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

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

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

## Landscape and seascape description

### Key characteristics

#### *Topography, geology and drainage*

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

#### *Woodland cover*

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

#### *Land use and field patterns*

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

#### *Semi-natural habitats*

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

#### *Archaeology and cultural heritage*

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

#### *Settlement, road pattern and rights of way*

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

#### *Views and perceptual qualities*

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

## Landscape Evaluation

### Valued attributes

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

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

### Summary of landscape condition

The landscape is in good condition although very exposed. Pressure for development on Burgh Island is high due to its importance for tourism with a hotel and pub. Some more visually intrusive development associated with the hotel has been recently consented. The islands are grazed by rabbits, but there is a potential for scrub encroachment if management by grazing ceases.

### Forces for change

- Coastal erosion, which may be exacerbated by more frequent extreme weather events. Erosion may result in the loss of soil, impacting upon the island vegetation.
- Introduction of invasive species/migratory species, which may be related to climate change.
- Recreational pressure which can erode the rural character of the landscape.
- Potential for scrub encroachment if the management regime changes.
- Potential for new tourism and recreational development on Burgh Island, affecting its rural character and visual quality.

## Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

### Overall Landscape Strategy

Conserve the largely undeveloped nature of the landscape, resisting any development proposals, particularly where they increase visible built form. Manage the footpaths on Burgh Island, and consider replacing post and wire fencing with boundaries that reinforce the traditional landscape character of the area. Plan for a changing climate by conducting research into the effects of climate change on the islands.

## Landscape Guidelines

- Encourage **management of pasture fields** to control and eliminate scrub.
- Ensure the favourable condition of sites and habitats is achieved through the application of extensive grazing regimes, particularly where **protection of archaeological sites** coincides, such as the remains of St Michael's Chapel
- **Avoid the use of post and wire fencing** and where possible replace with hedgerows and stone faced banks.
- Consider conducting research into **mitigation of potential impacts of climate change** and rising sea levels on the islands.
- Sensitively maintain, restore and enhance areas of **semi natural habitat** as appropriate to enhance biodiversity value.
- **Resist development which is uncharacteristic and visible from the mainland.** .
- **Maintain footpaths and car parks sensitively** to ensure they are kept in good condition whilst respecting local character.
- Manage the **public rights of way network** with sensitive standards of path maintenance, appropriate information and clear but uncluttered sign posting. Their management as conservation corridors in partnership with landowners will be supported.
- Ensure **continued yet sustainable access to Burgh Island**, providing local opportunities for education, play, exercise and quiet enjoyment.