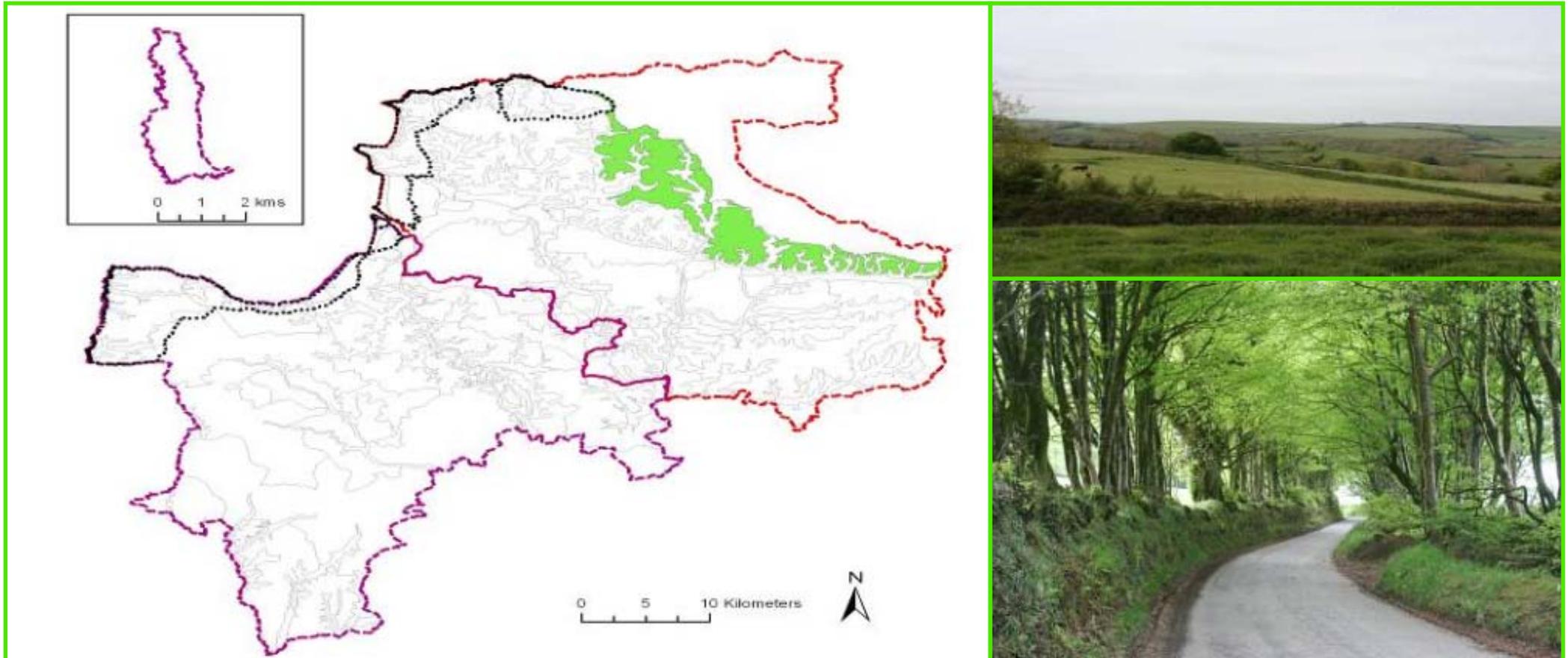


**LANDSCAPE TYPE:  
2D: MOORLAND EDGE SLOPES**

**PART I: DESCRIPTION**



**CONSITUENT LDUs:** 358, 384, 399, 403, 452, 526, 544, 545, 547, 548, 552, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 563, 564, 566, 567, 568, 570, 571, 572, 576, 579, 580, 603, 849

**SUMMARY OF LOCATION**

This LCT forms the southern and western edges of Exmoor National Park, providing an important setting and transition to the protected landscape.

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS FOR THIS LCT WITHIN NORTH DEVON & TORRIDGE

- Elevated land with a rolling topography, in parts steeply sloping down from the moorland core of Exmoor. Long-distance views from hill summits across North Devon and to the coast. This LCT is overlooked by Molland and East/West Anstey Commons (within the National Park).
- Devonian sandstone geology around the edges of Exmoor, with a band of Upcott Slate marking the transition with the softer siltstones and mudstones of the Culm Measures further south.
- Landscape crossed by streams and springs draining into the adjacent steeply incised wooded valleys (described as separate LCTs).
- Generally sparse woodland cover with occasional bands of broadleaved woodland lining streams and grown-out beech hedgebanks forming tree lines. Some pine shelterbelts on higher ground.
- Clustered hamlets and villages at road crossing points often centred on a square-towered church. Farmsteads scattered throughout, nestled in dips and shielded by beech shelterbelts.
- Modern expansion of Bratton Fleming (cream houses and bungalows), a caravan park at Stowford Cross and prominent telecommunications mast on Bratton Down – locally diluting overarching strong perceptions of tranquillity and remoteness.
- Mixture of regular modern and Parliamentary fields of small to medium scale, with smaller curving fields of medieval origin remaining on valley slopes.
- Fields enclosed by square-cut beech hedgebanks with some grown out sections of mature wind-sculpted trees and historic banks on the edge of Exmoor. Lengths near spring-lines include ferns in banks, and valley slopes are characterised by more species-diverse Devon hedges (e.g. beech and sycamore) with flower-rich banks.
- Mainly sheep grazing in improved pasture fields and rough grazing on areas of rush pasture on the edges of Exmoor. Some horse keeping on the edges of settlements (e.g. Stoke Rivers).
- Exmoor character reflected in areas of species-rich rush pasture and patches of gorse scrub. Sloping land south-east of Twitchen includes wet heath, *Molinia* mire and neutral grassland as part of the wider South Exmoor SSSI and Exmoor Heaths SAC. Historic wood pasture and parkland is nationally valued on the Arlington Hall estate.
- Bronze Age barrows forming crowning features on Bampfylde Hill, Berry Hill and the summits of Bratton Down. Iron Age hillforts in commanding positions above valleys, including Smythapark and Castle Roborough, as well as ancient settlement remains contributing to a strong time depth. The Regency Arlington Hall with 19th century parkland estate is Grade II\* registered.
- Strong local vernacular of sandstone buildings with slate roofs and red brick detailing, with some cream cob/render buildings standing out against a pastoral backdrop.



## **PART 2: EVALUATION**

### **SUMMARY OF SPECIAL QUALITIES**

- Views to Exmoor and across to North Devon
- Small, square field patterns with beech hedges on stone-faced banks.
- Moorland influence in vegetation and rich, varied wildlife habitats.
- Picturesque villages with traditional buildings linked by rural lanes.
- Senses of isolation, tranquillity and remoteness.



### **FORCES FOR CHANGE**

#### **PAST / CURRENT FORCES FOR CHANGE AFFECTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

- The past planting of coniferous shelterbelts and plantations on higher ground forming conspicuous features in the open landscape.
- Agricultural improvement of former areas of moorland to pasture, beginning in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and intensifying after the Second World War.
- Recent undergrazing on land of a moorland character leading to a spread of gorse and bracken.
- Small, privately owned woodlands suffering from a lack of management (particularly coppicing) and spread of invasive/exotic species.
- Hedgerow removal in the drive for agricultural intensification, spurred on by the introduction of the CAP in the 1970s. Replacement of some lengths with post-and-wire fencing.
- Lack of hedgerow management (laying and coppicing) leading to grown out sections of individual beech trees, now susceptible to wind thrown and storm damage. There is some evidence of recent laying and coppicing supported by agri-environment scheme payments.
- Prominent telecommunications mast on Bratton Down.
- 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion of Bratton Fleming in a linear form along roads, with cream houses and bungalows standing out in the landscape.

**PAST / CURRENT FORCES FOR CHANGE AFFECTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER (Continued)**

- The wider area's importance for tourism and recreation leading to demand for facilities such as caravan parks, holiday accommodation and visitor attractions – many as farm diversification enterprises due to a decline in the agricultural economy.
- Pony paddocks on edges of settlements (e.g. Stoke Rivers) as smallholdings are taken out of traditional agricultural management.

**FORCES FOR CHANGE****FUTURE FORCES FOR CHANGE AFFECTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

- Uncertain future for the agricultural economy – levels of future agri-environment support and market prices for farmed products unknown.
- Development pressure within the area and along the main A399 corridor, particularly due to its attractiveness of the area as a place to live.
- Continued trend in hobby farming and the development of further equine enterprises – pushing house prices out of the reach of many local people (particularly young farmers) leading to a further decline in rural skills.
- Increase in domestic tourism with associated demands for new facilities and infrastructure, as well as an increase in traffic levels on rural roads and farm conversions.
- Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland resulting in a decrease in remaining areas of heathland and rush pasture.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back.
- Individual hedgerow beech trees may become increasingly susceptible to damage from the increasing frequency and magnitude of storm events.
- Increase in the area of coniferous plantation and woodland; planted to enhance the landscape's roles in filtering water, minimising downstream flooding, storing and sequestering carbon dioxide and providing low-

## LANDSCAPE TYPE: 2D: MOORLAND EDGE SLOPES

### FUTURE FORCES FOR CHANGE AFFECTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER (Continued)

carbon fuel sources (through coppice management).

- Changes in crops and land use as a consequence of climate change and response to changing markets – including bioenergy crops.
- Increased demand for wind turbines and communications masts within the open, exposed parts of the LCT.
- Demand for domestic and community-scale renewable energy installations such as solar panels, small wind turbines and ground-source heat pumps.



**PART 3: LANDSCAPE STRATEGY**

**OVERALL STRATEGY:** To protect the landscape’s role as a setting to Exmoor National Park, strengthening its special qualities of tranquillity and remoteness. Square field patterns are reinforced through the restoration and management of distinctive beech hedgebanks and the area’s moorland fringe character is extended. The landscape’s historic sense of place and time depth continues to have a strong pervading influence, whilst opportunities for sustainable recreation and limited low-carbon development are sensitively incorporated into its landscape setting.

**Landscape and planning guidelines**

Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
<b>PROTECT</b>		
Protect the landscape’s role as a setting to Exmoor National Park, as well as its important views to the protected landscape and across North Devon district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the most prominent skylines in the area</li> <li>Identify important views and view points (and identify why people think they are important).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Devon &amp; Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policies COR6.</li> <li>Devon Structure Plan: Policies CO1, CO2 and CO3.</li> <li>Guidance in development management planning to avoid siting vertical structures on hill summits within this LCT, and on other hill summits visible from this landscape (e.g. the North Devon Downs).</li> </ul>
Protect the landscape’s strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness with clustered villages and hamlets reinforcing a strong historic sense of place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the distinctive settlement pattern of the area when proposing any new development, including new tourism-related facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Devon &amp; Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policies COR4 and COR6.</li> <li>Devon’s Structure Plan: Policies CO1 and CO16.</li> </ul>
Protect and manage the landscape’s strong local vernacular of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation Area Appraisals /</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Devon &amp; Torridge Joint Core</li> </ul>

**2D: MOORLAND EDGE SLOPES**

Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
<p>sandstone buildings with slate roofs and red brick detailing, with some cream cob/render buildings Any new development should utilise the same materials and building styles wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design). Characteristic features such as white wooden finger posts and stone bridges should be retained and kept in a good state of repair.</p>	<p>Management Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devon Rural Skills Trust</li> </ul>	<p>Strategy: Policies COR6 and COR8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devon Structure Plan: Policies CO7 and CO8.</li> <li>• Consider formulating a Design Guide as a SPD in the forthcoming LDF.</li> </ul>
<p>Protect and appropriately manage the rich cultural heritage of the area, such as Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age hillforts and ancient settlement remains, including through livestock grazing at appropriate levels and recreation management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Stewardship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Devon &amp; Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6.</li> <li>• Devon’s Structure Plan: Policy CO7.</li> </ul>
<p>Protect the character and setting of the Grade II* Listed Arlington Hall, ensuring any new development does not encroach into the historic landscape or views to it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devon’s Structure Plan: Policy CO7</li> <li>• North Devon &amp; Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policies COR6 and COR8.</li> </ul>
<p>Protect the landscape’s network of quiet rural lanes, resisting unsympathetic highways improvements or signage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Devon Green Lanes and Veins Project</li> <li>• Encourage the Highways Authority to respect the special character of the landscape’s rural lanes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Devon &amp; Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policies COR5, COR6 and COR8</li> <li>• Devon’s Structure Plan: Policy CO1</li> <li>• Develop a policy for protecting the character of rural lanes in the forthcoming LDF.</li> <li>• DCC to roll out a highways protocol / best practice guide on roadside management for rural areas.</li> <li>• Devon CC Environmental Review of permitted highway development</li> </ul>

## 2D: MOORLAND EDGE SLOPES

Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
		proposals.
<b>MANAGE</b>		
<p>Manage the landscape’s distinctive beech hedges to strengthen the strong square field pattern. Reinststate coppicing to mature sections and grown-out trees to ensure the future survival of these characteristic features. Replant lost hedges particularly along slopes to minimise soil erosion and reduce diffuse pollution. Respect the traditional methods and styles of construction (including stone facing on banks).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Stewardship</li> <li>• Devon BAP</li> <li>• Devon Hedge Group</li> <li>• Devon Rural Skills Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Devon &amp; Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p>Manage areas of rough grassland, heath and rush pasture through a continuation of livestock grazing at appropriate levels, along with a programme of scrub removal. Support farmers to continue to farm these ‘marginal’ areas as an integral part of their farming system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Stewardship</li> <li>• Devon BAP</li> <li>• Devon Food Links</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Devon &amp; Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6</li> <li>• Strengthen and promote links between local markets and produce from the area</li> </ul>
<p>Manage the area’s conifer plantations for sustainable timber production and wildlife interest, creating new green links to surrounding semi-natural habitats. Explore their use as recreational spaces away from the more sensitive habitats surrounding them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Stewardship</li> <li>• England Woodland Grant Scheme</li> <li>• Devon BAP</li> <li>• Forest Design Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Infrastructure Strategy</li> <li>• North Devon &amp; Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR17</li> <li>• Devon Structure Plan: Policy CO9.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PLAN</li> </ul>		
<p>Plan for the long-term restoration of the more prominent conifer plantations and pine shelterbelts to open habitats (where their role in timber production has ceased), including re-creating heathland and rush pasture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Stewardship</li> <li>• Devon BAP</li> <li>• Forest Design Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Devon &amp; Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6</li> </ul>