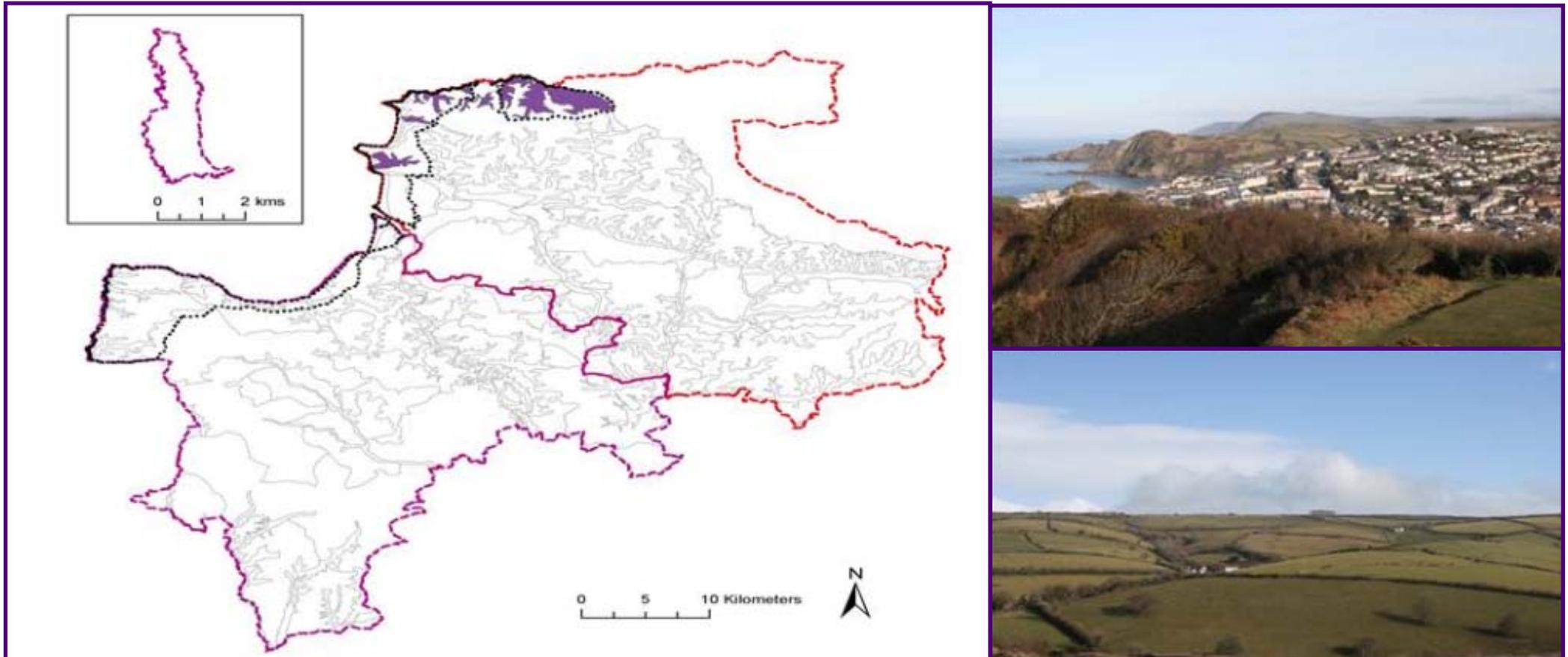


4C: COASTAL SLOPES & COMBES WITH SETTLEMENT**PART I: DESCRIPTION**

CONSITUENT LDUs: 382, 383, 384, 386, 387, 388, 397, 403, 532, 576, 578, 579, 580, 581, 583, 852, 853

SUMMARY OF LOCATION

This LCT comprises the distinctive coastal combes of North Devon, which carve through the landform on their way to the sea. These combes include linear settlements in their valley bottoms and at their coastal mouths, including Combe Martin, Croyde and Woolacombe.

4C: COASTAL SLOPES & COMBES WITH SETTLEMENT**KEY CHARACTERISTICS FOR THIS LCT WITHIN NORTH DEVON & TORRIDGE**

- Steep-sided and narrow branching combes carving through the surrounding rolling landform to the coast.
- Dense woodland found at the heads of some combes, whilst lines of trees follow the stream courses and provide shelter to settlements.
- Mixed fields, including small-scale irregular medieval patterns following valley contours and larger post-medieval and modern fields along the combe bottoms and summits, with numerous localised variations (including medieval strip fields around settlements).
- Fields bounded by a range of Devon hedge styles, including sections faced by Morte slate, as well as windblown, sparse hedges on exposed slopes.
- Rough sheep-grazed pasture characterises much of the landscape, including open tracts on steep combe slopes and summits.
- Semi-natural habitats include ancient oak-dominated woodland, wet woodland, and mosaics of unimproved grassland (including Culm grassland), heath and scrub, with maritime grassland, heath and scrub occurring towards the coast.
- Historic features include the limekilns, silver mines and other mineral workings on the edge of Exmoor National Park, the stone church towers of Combe Martin and Berrynarbor, the castle at Newbury, and Whitestone standing stone.
- Long linear settlements generally follow the narrow valley floors, whilst dispersed farmsteads and hamlets are scattered throughout and are nestled into valley sides. Villages are typically historic, such as Berrynarbor and Lee, while modern expansion outwards from a settlement's historic core is also common, including at Combe Martin and Croyde.
- Traditional vernacular of whitewash walls and grey slate roofs, with exposed stone and thatch a local variation. Victorian and Edwardian seaside properties are a feature of some combes, such as Combe Martin.
- Winding rural lanes traverse the combe slopes and follow the valley floor. The South West Coast Path passes along the coastline and often connects with rights of way running inland along the combe bottoms.
- A strong sense of containment, with views often limited by the steep wooded combe slopes; levels of tranquillity vary greatly according to the proximity of development.
- The combes of Combe Martin and Croyde are influenced by modern resort activities, including holiday parks, caravan and camping sites and car parks.



4C: COASTAL SLOPES & COMBES WITH SETTLEMENT**PART 2: EVALUATION****SUMMARY OF SPECIAL QUALITIES**

- Strong medieval strip field systems around Combe Martin.
- Linear settlements contained within the landscape, some with farmsteads in village centres.
- Industrial heritage, including stone-built harbours, lime kilns and mining remains.
- Traditional vernacular of cob, Morte slate, thatch, whitewash and stone.
- Edwardian and Victorian seaside influence.

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

- The popularity of the area as a tourism destination is a key force for change – with an influx in traffic and people into the landscape during holiday periods.
- Modern tourism-related development and land uses including chalets, caravan parks, camp sites, car parks, holiday apartments and hotels often in prominent locations.
- Planting of conifers affecting the nature conservation interest of the combes' ancient oak woodlands, particularly in the Sterridge and Borough Valleys.
- Field enlargement and loss of traditional stone-faced hedges in favour of fencing, as a result of modern farming practices, particularly on higher combe slopes.
- Lack of or varying levels of management of traditional Devon hedges, with some sections overgrown and their banks in a poor state of repair whilst others are intensively flailed.
- Views to telecommunications masts on prominent hill summits (often in the adjacent 5C Downland LCT), eroding perceptions of tranquillity – e.g. Ora Hill.
- Erosion and recreation pressure close to the coastal resorts, including along the South West Coast Path.
- Extensive spread of post-war and recent development outside the

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settlements' historic cores. Views to other development outside the AONB possible from some ridgelines/coastal locations (e.g. to Ilfracombe, Northam and Westward Ho!).

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

- Further growth in popularity of the area for recreation and tourism, eroding the landscape's high levels of tranquillity and leading to increased demand for facilities (including through farm diversifications / conversions), infrastructure and higher traffic levels on rural roads.
- Decline in rural skills as young people move away from the area (due to a lack of affordable housing) resulting in an ageing farm workforce, with consequential impacts on the management of landscape features such as Devon hedges, woodlands and traditional buildings.
- Further planting of conifers affecting the nature conservation interest of the combes' ancient oak woodlands.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread as result of climate change (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back.
- Demand for both on-shore and off-shore wind farms – e.g. proposals for the Atlantic Array off-shore windfarm in the Bristol Channel which would be visible from the higher land and coastal sections of the north-facing combes.
- Demand for domestic and community-scale renewable energy installations such as solar panels, small wind turbines and ground-source heat pumps – leading to incremental change to traditional buildings.
- Development pressure and increase in the number of 'hobby farms' due to the popularity of the area as a place to live / retire to.

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PART 3: LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

OVERALL STRATEGY: To protect the distinctive linear and contained settlement pattern of the combes, enhancing traditional vernacular building styles and the setting of development within the landscape. The area’s popularity as a tourism destination is managed to both provide further sustainable recreational opportunities whilst ensuring landscape character managed and strengthened. Medieval field patterns are divided by an intact network of Devon hedges, semi-natural habitats are managed and extended and landscape is prepared for the future impacts of climate change.

Landscape and planning guidelines

Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
PROTECT		
Protect the north-eastern combes’ role as part of the setting to Exmoor National Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the most prominent skylines on the upper combe slopes Identify important views and view points to and from the National Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Management Plan: Objective; LHI, Policy A1. North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6. Devon’s Structure Plan: Policies CO1, CO2 and CO3. 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).
Protect the contained form of the combes’ settlements, resisting any further linear spread or coalescence with smaller villages or hamlets within the combes. Ensure the stone church towers of Combe Martin and Berrynarbor are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation Area Management Plans / Appraisals Avoid siting tall buildings or structures on the same skylines as local church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Management plan: Policies A1 and H2 North Devon & Torridge Joint Core

4C: COASTAL SLOPES & COMBES WITH SETTLEMENT

Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
<p>protected as local landmark features.</p>	<p>towers.</p>	<p>Strategy: Policy COR3, COR4, COR6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devon’s Structure Plan: Policies CO6 and CO7. • Consider producing a Design Guide as a SPD to the LDF. • Prepare design guidance focused on the quality of development and the special attributes of the landscape (e.g. lighting design guidance to preserve dark night skies). • Lobby / review the 28 day rule for temporary tourism-related land uses.
<p>Protect the landscape’s traditional building styles and materials, particularly cob, Morte slate, thatch, whitewash and stone. Any new development or extensions should utilise the same materials and building styles wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).</p> <p>Protect and, where required, sensitively restore other features of the local vernacular including stone walls and white wooden finger posts, respecting local variations in styles and materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Area Management Plans / Appraisals • CORDIALE Interreg bid (focusing on Combe Martin) • Devon Rural Skills Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider formulating a Design Guide as a SPD in the forthcoming LDF. • North Devon Sustainable Energy Action Plan • AONB Management Plan: Objectives LH1 and LH2; Policies A1, G1 and G4. • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policies COR1, COR6 and COR8. • Devon Structure Plan: Policies CO7 and CO8. • Devon CC Environmental Review of permitted highway development

4C: COASTAL SLOPES & COMBES WITH SETTLEMENT

Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
		proposals.
<p>Protect the landscape’s network of winding rural lanes, resisting unsympathetic highways improvements (e.g. hedgerow/woodland cutting) or signage. Promote sustainable transport options to reduce traffic levels during busy holiday periods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Devon Green Lanes and Veins Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Management Plan: Objectives F1, F3, TH1, TH2, TH3; Policies H1, H2 North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policies COR5 and COR6. Devon’s Structure Plan: Policies CO1 and TO6. Develop a policy for protecting the character of rural lanes in the forthcoming LDF. DCC to roll out a highways protocol / best practice guide on roadside management for rural areas. Devon CC Environmental Review of permitted highway development proposals.
<p>Protect and sensitively manage historic features within the landscape, including medieval strip fields, limekilns, silver mines and other mineral workings on the edge of Exmoor National Park, the castle at Newbury, and Whitestone standing stone (including through grazing at appropriate levels and recreation management). Provide sensitively sited interpretation to enhance public understanding of the landscape’s cultural and industrial heritage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Stewardship Conservation Area Management Plans / Appraisals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Management plan: Objective LH1, ART4, CC3; Policies A1 and F2. North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6. Devon’s Structure Plan: Policies CO1 and CO7
<p>MANAGE</p>		

4C: COASTAL SLOPES & COMBES WITH SETTLEMENT

Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
<p>Manage and enhance the combes' ancient oak woodlands through traditional techniques including coppicing. Control access by livestock, promoting natural regeneration to enhance longevity whilst using extensive grazing to promote the species diversity of woodland ground flora. Explore opportunities for community utilisation of coppice residues as a low-carbon fuel source.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship • England Woodland Grant Scheme • Devon BAP • South West Woodlands Renaissance scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AONB Management Plan: Objectives FL1, FL2 and G5; Policies A1, C1 and E2. • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6, COR7.
<p>Manage and extend areas of wet woodland and meadows through appropriate grazing and traditional land management regimes – both to enhance their wildlife value and functions in flood prevention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship • Devon BAP • South West Nature Map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AONB Management Plan: Objectives FL2; Policies C1 and E2 • Devon's Structure Plan: Policies CO9 and CO13 • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6
<p>Manage species-rich Devon hedgerows 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.</p> <p>Replace lost or over-mature hedgerow trees (particularly wind-sculpted specimens on higher ground) as important landscape features.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship • Devon BAP • Devon Hedge Group • Devon Rural Skills Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AONB Management Plan: Policy A1, • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6 • Devon's Structure Plan: Policy CO1
<p>Manage and re-link valued mosaics of unimproved grassland (including Culm and maritime grasslands), heath and scrub including through livestock grazing at appropriate levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship • Devon BAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6 • Strengthen and promote links between

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Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
Support farmers to continue to farm these 'marginal' areas as an integral part of their farming system and protect them from alternative land uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devon Food Links • South West Nature Map 	local markets and produce from the area
PLAN		
Create, extend and link woodland and wetland habitats to enhance the water storage capacity of the landscape (reducing future incidences of downstream flooding) and improve water quality through reducing soil erosion and agricultural run-off. The natural regeneration of woodland should be encouraged and new planting [using climate-hardy species] undertaken to link fragmented sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship • Devon BAP • South West Nature Map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6 • AONB Management Plan: Objective FL2 and EQ5; Policies B3 and E2 • Devon's Structure Plan: Policy CO13
Plan for the creation of green infrastructure links to/from the landscape's coastal resorts and the South West Coast Path, to facilitate more recreational opportunities, reduce the use of the private car and enhance the natural setting of development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship • Devon BAP • South West Nature Map • Consider the use of 'zoning' and promote less sensitive sites for tourism (e.g. inland). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Infrastructure Strategy • AONB Management plan: Objectives BG5, ART1, ART3; Policies FI, F3, G2, HI. • Devon's Structure Plan: Policy CO1, CO6 and TO6. • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policies COR5 and COR17
Plan for the future effects of climate change along the coast, allowing natural processes to take place as much as possible, whilst ensuring local people are involved in decision-making relating to future landscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South West Nature Map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2 currently in consultation phase). • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR2 • Devon Structure Plan: Policy CO5 • AONB Management Plan: Objectives;

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Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
		EQ3, CO1, CO3, CC4, Policies A2, C1, D1, D5, K2, L1