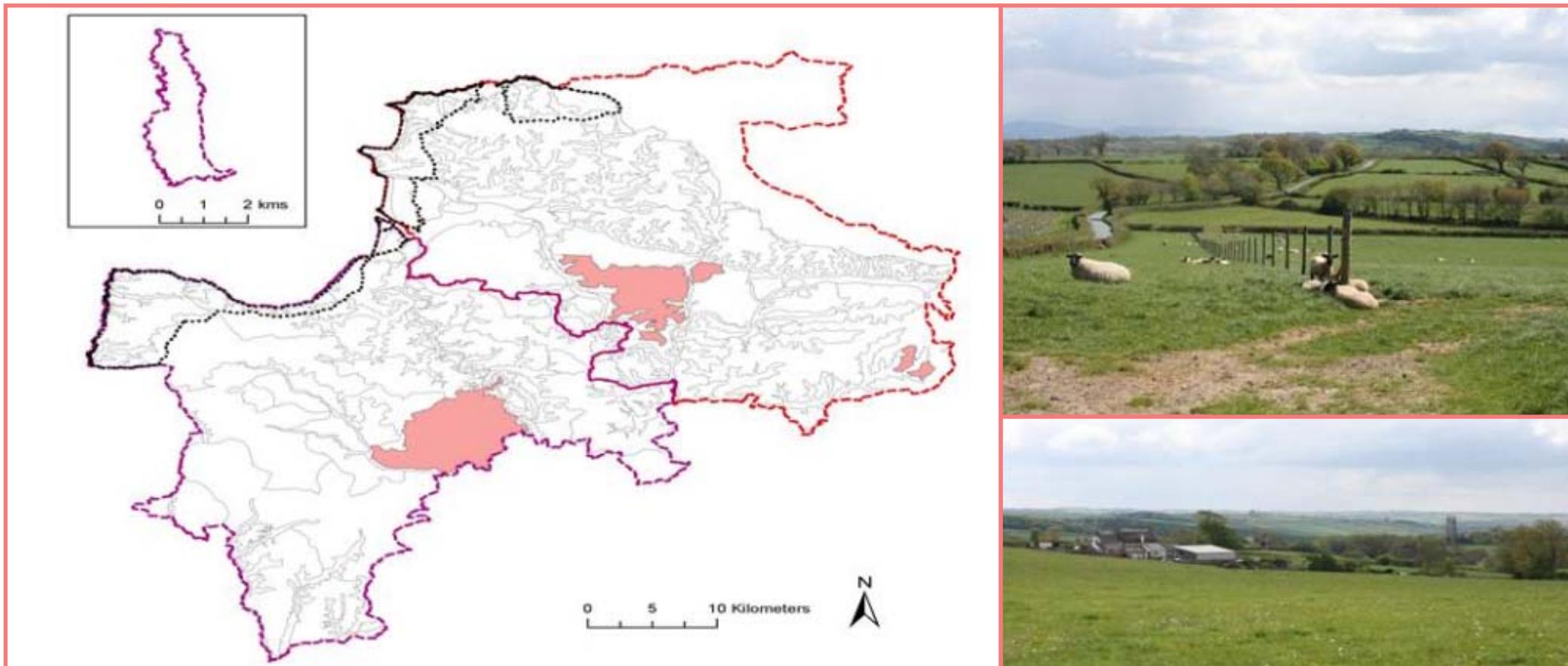


PART I: DESCRIPTION



CONSITUENT LDUs: 370, 374, 456, 552, 600, 609, 679, 682, 683, 686, 705, 812, 817, 825, 837, 875

SUMMARY OF LOCATION

This LCT covers the distinctive estate farmlands and woodlands of North Devon and Torridge – concentrated on the main estates in the southern halves of the two districts.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS FOR THIS LCT WITHIN NORTH DEVON & TORRIDGE

- Rolling hills and farmland drained by frequent streams, brooks and springs creating an undulating topography.
- Underlying geology comprising mudstones and siltstones, with harder outcrops of sandstone creating rolling hills and ridges ('Culm Measures').
- Higher land affords long views across the landscape, including to Dartmoor from the Sheepwash area.
- Well-wooded character, with frequent mixed and broadleaved plantations (often beech and oak), estate woodlands, wet woodland lining streams, historic wood pasture and conifer blocks.
- Grown-out beech and oak hedgebanks, veteran in-field trees and streamside orchards contributing to the landscape's wooded estate character.
- Mixture of sinuous medium-scale medieval fields and larger, more regular enclosures. Some villages retain small historic strip fields around their fringes.
- Fields enclosed by wildflower-rich Devon banks often topped with closely-cut mixed thorn, beech and sycamore hedges. Some use of fencing (including estate railings where associated with historic parklands).
- Predominantly pastoral land use, particularly dairying, with areas of arable cultivation and some ancient wood pasture. Pony paddocks sometimes found around villages and land around Higher Langton includes an alpaca farm.
- Nature conservation interest provided by areas of Culm grassland, rush pasture, unimproved meadows, ponds and valley mire, as well as bands of ancient semi-natural woodland lining minor valleys.
- Historic parkland, estates and manors influencing landscape character, including Heanton Satchville, Great Halmpstone Manor (Grade II* Listed), the wider Castle Hill estate around Filleigh (Grade I Registered Park & Garden) and Rackenford Manor.
- Nationally important Bronze Age bowl barrows, the Iron Age hillfort of Berry Castle, a moated site and the medieval Durpley Castle contributing to an historic sense of place.
- Traditional local vernacular of whitewash and cream cob/render cottages with slate or thatched roofs, as well as some buildings of local stone.
- Linhays (traditional livestock shelters) constructed of cob and local stone with slate or corrugated iron roofs, reinforce a strong history of farming.
- Nucleated historic hamlets and villages focused around crossroads or stream crossing points, with square stone church towers forming local landmarks. Frequent farmsteads distributed throughout.
- Winding rural roads bounded by flower-rich Devon banks restricting views, crossing many streams on stone bridges. Crossroads marked by distinctive white finger posts.
- Strong sense of peace and tranquillity and feeling of being in the heart of Devon.
- The Norboard factory on the fringes of South Molton forms a detracting feature in views from around Chittlehampton and the Castle Hill estate.



PART 2: EVALUATION

SUMMARY OF SPECIAL QUALITIES

- Large specimen trees within parkland and open farmland.
- Strong coherence in building styles.
- A managed, working landscape.
- Large areas of woodland, including ancient.
- A strong sense of history and culture.



FORCES FOR CHANGE

PAST / CURRENT FORCES FOR CHANGE AFFECTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- Landscapes have benefited from consistent management over the centuries by the same handful of estates.
- Post-war Intensification of agriculture spurred on by CAP-related subsidies in the 1970s, leading to an expansion agricultural land uses and an increase in areas under intensive dairying and arable cultivation.
- Agricultural intensification and a decline in the agricultural economy leading to an amalgamation of smaller farms into larger units – including large dairy enterprises (e.g. around Sheepwash).
- Loss and replacement of Devon banks with fencing to facilitate intensive agricultural production.
- 20th century planting of large conifer plantations within the landscape, including on sites of former ancient woodland or wood pasture.
- Lack of new planting / replacement of specimen trees (existing trees are getting old and in some instances dying).
- Increase in tourism and recreation levels – the landscape includes golf courses, part of the Tarka Trail and several camping / caravan sites.
- Prominent pylon lines crossing through the landscape, including around East Stowford, diluting the landscape's historic character.
- Ball clay workings (dating back to the 19th century) and a landfill site on Marland Moor.

5D: ESTATE WOODED FARMLAND

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

- Spread of alternative agricultural land uses including pony keeping and alpaca farming.

FUTURE FORCES FOR CHANGE AFFECTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- Increase in UK-based tourism with associated demands for new attractions (e.g. golf courses) and infrastructure, as well as an increase in traffic levels on rural roads, car parking, recreational pressures and farm conversions.
- Potential change in ownership of parkland estates, leading to a gradual change in their character and patterns of management.
- Demand for increased levels of domestic food and timber production leading to a further intensification of agriculture and expansion of plantations.
- A changing climate resulting in an increase of pests/disease affecting the composition and distribution of ancient and estate woodlands (e.g. Sudden Oak Death).
- Individual parkland and in-field trees may become more susceptible to damage from the increasing frequency and magnitude of storm events, as well as intense summer drought conditions.
- Increased prevalence of pests and diseases as a result of climate change (particularly phytophthora pathogens), threatening the survival of ancient woodland and veteran trees.
- Expansion in the growth of bioenergy crops such as Miscanthus and Short Rotation Coppice as a result of market demand for 'green' energy and fuel sources.

- Emerging demand for large-scale photovoltaic developments, capitalising on the solar radiation levels of slopes with a southerly aspect.
- Development pressure between Landkey and the South Molton roundabout.
- Demand for domestic and community-scale renewable energy installations such as solar panels, small wind turbines and ground-source heat pumps, gradually eroding the historic fabric of the landscape's settlements.



PART 3: LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

OVERALL STRATEGY: To protect the unique character and identity of the estate landscape, ensuring that its special sense of place flourishes into the 21st century. Ancient and parkland woodlands are managed for wildlife and to produce timber and woodfuel, linking to a rich farmed landscape enclosed by a strong network of wildflower-rich Devon banks. New low-carbon development reinforces and replicates the local vernacular, integrated into its landscape setting and providing green links into the surrounding countryside.

Landscape and planning guidelines

Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
PROTECT		
<p>Protect the landscape’s distinctive pattern of nucleated historic hamlets and villages focused around crossroads or stream crossing points. Any new development should be located within existing settlement limits, avoiding linear spread along roads.</p> <p>Square stone church towers should be protected as local landmark features in many views.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify important views and viewpoints (both to and from the landscape) and identify why people think they are important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR 4 and COR6. Devon Structure Plan: Policies CO1, CO3 and CO16.
<p>Protect in a good state of repair the traditional local vernacular of whitewash and cream cob/render cottages with slate or thatched roofs, as well as some buildings of local stone. Limited new development should utilise the same materials and building styles wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).</p> <p>Characteristic features such as lincays, stone bridges, estate railings and white painted finger posts should be retained and, where appropriate, restored.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation Area appraisals / management plans Estate Management Plans Devon Rural Skills Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policies COR1, COR6 and COR8. Devon Structure Plan: Policies CO1 and CO7. Consider formulating a Design Guide as a SPD in the forthcoming LDF. Devon CC Environmental Review of permitted highway development

5D: ESTATE WOODED FARMLAND

Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
		proposals.
Protect and reinforce the distinctive character and identity of the landscape’s parkland estates, supporting a continuation of management styles and traditions into the 21 st century.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship • Estate Management Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6. • Devon Structure Plan: Policy CO7 and CO8.
Protect and appropriately manage the landscape’s rich archaeological heritage including Bronze Age bowl barrows, the Iron Age hillfort of Berry Castle, and the medieval Durpley Castle. This should include livestock grazing at appropriate levels and managing recreation pressure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6 • Devon’s Structure Plan: Policies CO7 and CO8.
Protect the landscape’s network of winding rural roads bounded by flower-rich Devon banks, resisting unsympathetic highways improvements or signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Devon Green Lanes and Veins Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6 • 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.
MANAGE		
Sensitively manage the landscape’s remaining ancient and veteran trees, including through traditional pollarding where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England Woodland Grant Scheme • Environmental Stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6

5D: ESTATE WOODED FARMLAND

Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devon BAP • Estate Management Plans 	
<p>Manage and enhance the area’s ancient and estate woodlands through traditional techniques including coppicing. Control access by livestock and deer, 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"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policies COR6, COR7. • Devon Structure Plan: Policy CO9
<p>Manage and re-link fragmented patches of Culm grassland, valley mire, rush pasture and unimproved meadows. Support farmers to extensively graze these areas as integral parts of their farming systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship • Devon BAP • Working Wetlands Project (Devon Wildlife Trust) • South West Nature Map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6 • Devon Structure Plan: Policy CO9
<p>Manage the network of wildflower-rich Devon banks, reflecting local variations in styles and species composition. Reinstate coppicing and hedge laying to neglected sections, planting new trees where specimens are over-mature (consider using climate-hardy species to ensure longevity). Restore lost and gappy sections, particularly at right angles to slopes, to strengthen field patterns and reduce soil erosion / run off into adjacent watercourses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship • Devon BAP • Devon Hedge Group • Devon Rural Skills Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6 • Devon Structure Plan: Policy CO9
<p>PLAN</p>		
<p>Plan for the planting of the next generation of veteran trees, choosing climate resilient species to ensure longevity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England Woodland Grant Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6

5D: ESTATE WOODED FARMLAND

Guideline	Identified delivery mechanisms (e.g. links to specific projects, Initiatives and policies)	Planning policy links and delivery recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship • Estate Management Plans 	
<p>Plan for the long-term restoration of conifer plantations to open habitats and broadleaved woodlands (where their role in timber production has ceased), including re-creating Culm grasslands and other semi-natural habitats within open rides and on areas of wet ground. Retain some conifer plantations as recreational spaces, especially where they are accessible from rights of way (e.g. the Tarka Trail).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship • The Working Wetlands project (Devon Wildlife Trust) • Devon BAP • Forest Design Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Stewardship • Devon BAP • Devon Food Links • South West Nature Map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policy COR6 • Devon Structure Plan: Policy CO9 • Strengthen and promote links between local markets and produce from the area
<p>Plan for the future expansion of local settlements, integrating new development into its landscape framework through the provision of a surrounding network of green spaces, wildlife habitats and recreational routes.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon & Torridge Joint Core Strategy: Policies COR5 and COR17. • Devon’s Structure Plan: Policy TO6. • Green Infrastructure Strategy