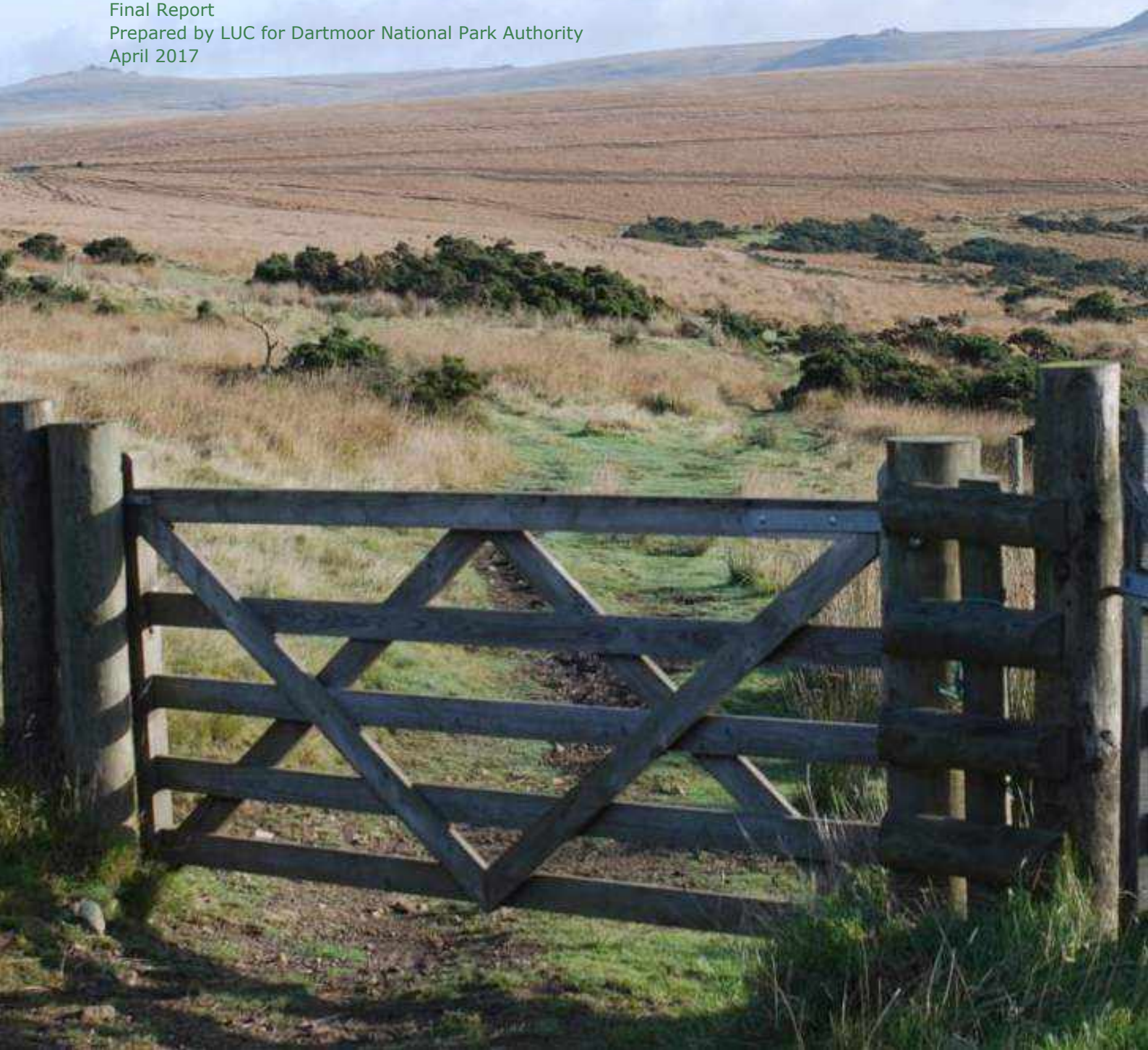




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A Landscape Character Assessment for Dartmoor National Park

Final Report
Prepared by LUC for Dartmoor National Park Authority
April 2017



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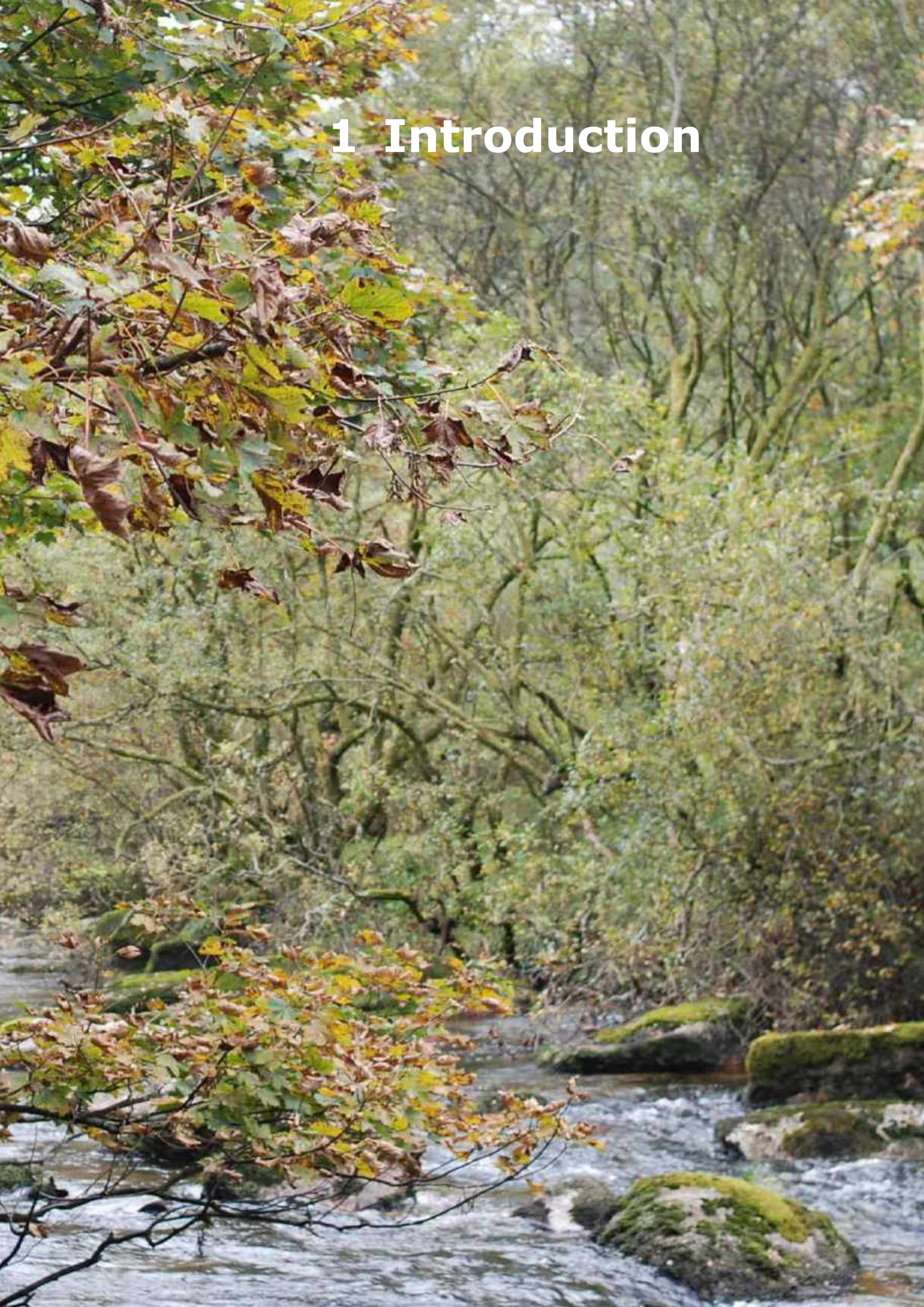
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Contents

1	Introduction	1
	What is the Dartmoor Landscape Character Assessment?	1
	Policy context	3
	Content of this report	6
2	The evolution of the Dartmoor landscape	8
	The Special Qualities of Dartmoor National Park	8
	Geological and physical evolution	9
	The cultural evolution of the Dartmoor landscape	18
3	Method for undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment	31
	Background	31
	Landscape Character Assessment framework	31
	2010 study: Key stages	33
	2017 update: Key stages	36
4	Landscape Character Type descriptions	38
	Format of the LCT descriptive profiles	38
	1K: Unsettled High Upland Moorland	40
	1L: Upland Moorland with Tors	47
	3D: Upland River Valleys	55
	2D: Moorland Edge Slopes	63
	5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land	71
	1J: Farmed and Forested Plateau	78
	3A: Upper Farmed and Wooded Slopes	85
	3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors	92
	3E: Lowland Plains	96
	3F: Settled Valley Floors	100
	List of Figures	
	Figure 1.1: The 'landscape wheel' (Natural England, 2014)	1
	Figure 1.2: Landscape Character Assessment hierarchy	2
	Figure 2.1: The granite batholith of the South West	9
	Figure 2.2: The geology of Dartmoor	10
	Figure 2.3: The distinctive granite tors of Dartmoor	11
	Figure 2.4: Left: waterfall in the Lyd Gorge (the deepest gorge in the South West); Right: the Teign Valley near Fingle Bridge	12
	Figure 2.5: Topography and drainage	13
	Figure 2.6: Dartmoor's Agricultural Land Classification	14

Figure 2.7: Dartmoor's nature conservation designations	16
Figure 2.8: Key Wildlife Areas found across Dartmoor (taken from Living Dartmoor, 2013)	17
Figure 2.9: Dartmoor's historic environment	19
Figure 2.10: Shovell Down Stone Row	20
Figure 2.11: Hound Tor deserted medieval settlement	22
Figure 2.12: Evidence of tin streaming still visible in the landscape	23
Figure 2.13: Plantation on open moorland at the edge of Dartmoor Forest	24
Figure 2.14: Tranquillity map for Dartmoor and the surrounding area	26
Figure 2.15: Levels of dark night skies and light pollution within and surrounding the National Park	27
Figure 2.16: Example of an equine enterprise, illustrating the introduction of structures into the farmed landscape (as well as evidence of overgrazing/poaching)	28

1 Introduction



1 Introduction

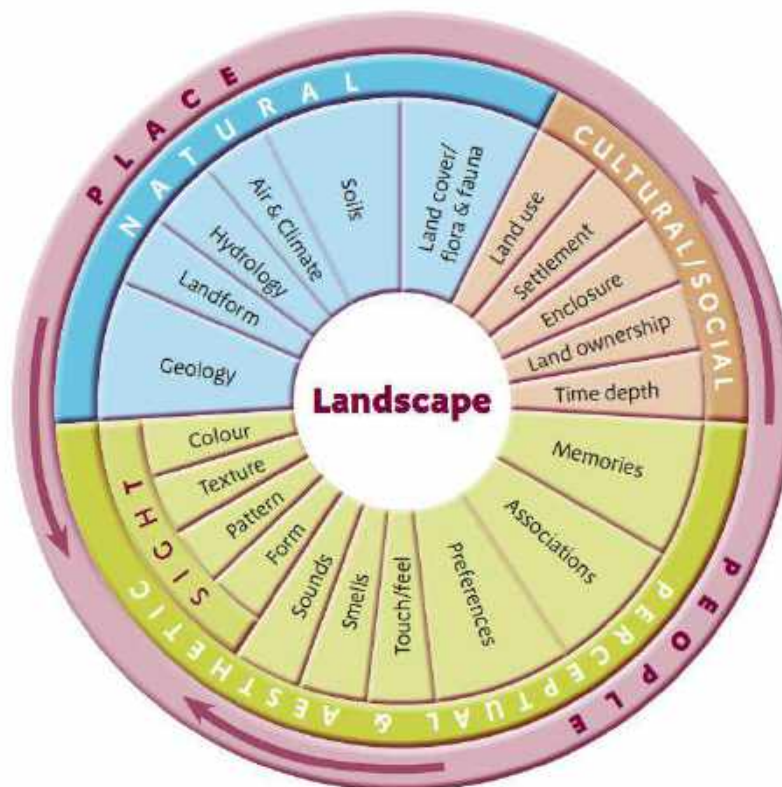
- 1.1 This Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) forms part of the evidence base for Dartmoor National Park Authority's Local Plan and also informs the current National Park Management Plan (to be reviewed in 2019). It is designed to be used both as a tool to guide development to be in sympathy with local variations in landscape character, and to inform land management activity to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park. It is important to recognise that this LCA does not set out policy, but provides an evidence base to inform decision-making in the Local Plan, Management Plan or more widely, around policy change, development and landscape management.
- 1.2 This report provides an update to the previous Landscape Character Assessment which was produced for DNPA by LUC in 2010.

What is the Dartmoor Landscape Character Assessment?

What is 'landscape character' and 'landscape character assessment'?

- 1.3 **Landscape character** can be defined as the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another. **Landscape character assessment** is the process of identifying and describing such variations in character across a landscape – in this case Dartmoor National Park. It also seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of features and attributes (characteristics) that make different landscapes distinctive¹. The 'landscape wheel' at **Figure 1.1** below illustrates how the different natural, cultural and perceptual attributes of a landscape combine to produce character.

Figure 1.1: The 'landscape wheel' (Natural England, 2014)

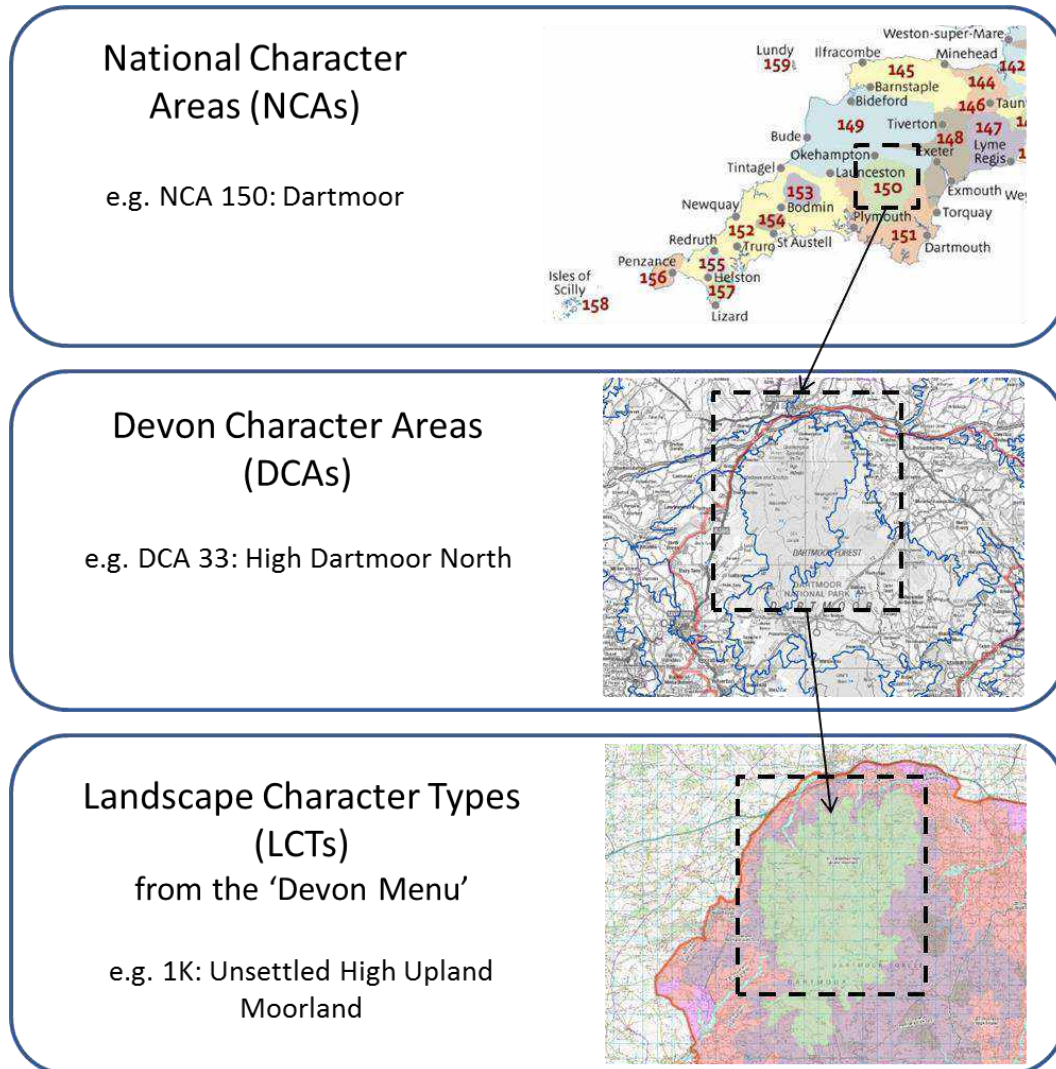


¹ Definitions taken from Natural England (2014) *An approach to Landscape Character Assessment*. Available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types>

The approach for Dartmoor

- 1.4 **Chapter 3** sets out detailed information on the method followed to produce this Landscape Character Assessment for Dartmoor National Park. It forms part of a wider hierarchy of landscape character assessment information cascading down from the national, county to local (Dartmoor) level. This hierarchy is illustrated at **Figure 1.2** below.

Figure 1.2: Landscape Character Assessment hierarchy



- 1.5 At the national level, England is divided into 159 distinct **National Character Areas (NCAs)**. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity. There are descriptive profiles available for each NCA (published in 2014), setting out information on landscape character, changes happening in the landscape and an assessment of ecosystem services delivered. Much of Dartmoor National Park is covered by one NCA – 150: Dartmoor², with land on the fringes included within two further NCAs which extend beyond the national park boundary into adjacent landscapes.
- 1.6 At a county level, Devon's landscape character assessment³ describes the variations in character between different areas and types of landscape in the county. It divides Devon up into 68 **Devon Character Areas (DCAs)**, each representing areas with a unique and distinct identity recognisable on a county scale. There are 16 DCAs which include land within the National Park.

² The NCA profiles are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles#ncas-in-south-west-england>

³ Further information available at: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/devons-landscape-character-assessment>

- 1.7 Feeding up to the DCAs is a framework of Devon-wide **Landscape Character Types (LCTs)**, each sharing similar characteristics. Some types of landscape occur throughout the county, for example, 'Sparsely settled farmed valley floors' while others may occur only once, for example, 'Upland moorland with tors' – which is only found in Dartmoor. The Dartmoor Landscape Character Assessment is based on this LCT framework, with a total of 10 representing the different types of landscape found in the National Park.
- 1.8 Collectively, the Devon county work provides an evidence base for local plans, articulating what people perceive as distinctive and special about all landscapes in Devon. It also set out strategies and guidelines for the protection, management and planning of the landscape.

What is the Dartmoor Landscape Character Assessment used for?

- 1.9 This LCA forms a sound evidence base for planners, developers and land managers to take account of the character and valued attributes of the National Park's landscape when considering new development or land uses – and to pursue opportunities to enhance and strengthen character wherever possible.
- 1.10 The need for this evidence base is all the more apparent in the context of continual pressures to accommodate new development and land uses, against the backdrop of a changing climate.

Policy context

The European Landscape Convention

- 1.11 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007. It establishes the need to recognise landscape in law; to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes; and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies.
- 1.12 The ELC definition of 'landscape' recognises that all landscapes matter, be they ordinary, degraded or outstanding:
- "Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors"***
- 1.13 The Convention puts emphasis on the whole landscape and all its values and is forward looking in its approach, recognising the dynamic and changing character of landscape. Specific measures promoted by the Convention, of direct relevance to this study include:
- the identification and assessment of landscape; and
 - improved consideration of landscape in existing and future sectoral and spatial policy and regulation.
- 1.14 This updated Landscape Character Assessment will continue to make a key contribution to the implementation of the ELC in Dartmoor National Park. It helps to reaffirm the importance of landscape, co-ordinate existing work and guide future work to protect, manage and plan the landscapes of Dartmoor.

National Park designation

- 1.15 The special qualities of the Dartmoor landscape are recognised nationally through the area's status as a National Park, designated in 1951 as one of the first in the UK. As such, its landscape is of outstanding importance, protected under the first statutory purpose of National Parks as established under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act and updated in the Environment Act 1995. The current designated area stretches for 954 square kilometres (368 square miles). The two statutory National Park purposes are:
- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and

- to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

1.16 The Environment Act also requires National Park Authorities to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities when carrying out the above duties.

1.17 Dartmoor's location in the context of other nearby nationally protected landscapes is shown at **Figure 1.3**.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

1.18 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in 2012, states within its core planning principles that planning should *"take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it"*.

1.19 The NPPF calls for valued landscapes to be protected and enhanced (para 109), with the greatest weight being given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) (para 115). An up-to-date Landscape Character Assessment is also recommended in the NPPF to support planning decisions by local planning authorities.

Local

Dartmoor Local Plan

1.20 Planning - with DNPA as local planning authority – is underpinned by the current Local Plan which was adopted in 2008 – comprising the Core Strategy, Development Management and Delivery DPD (2013) and a number of SPDs. Of key relevance to this study is the core strategic aim for 'Landscape Evolution', as follows:

"To conserve and enhance Dartmoor as a living, working, evolving landscape that continues to offer special qualities of peace and quiet, remoteness, solitude, unspoilt natural beauty, wide open spaces, wildness and wildlife habitats, the freedom to roam, and archaeological qualities/sense of history."

1.21 The Local Plan is currently being reviewed, with this Landscape Character Assessment forming part of an updated evidence base to underpin the policies in the new Plan.

Dartmoor National Park Management Plan

1.22 The current Management Plan, *Your Dartmoor* (adopted 2014), is the strategic plan for the National Park, guiding decision-making until 2019 when it is reviewed.

One of the five 'Priorities' which form the focus of the Plan's actions is 'Spectacular landscapes and natural networks', with the overall aim being:

"conserving and enhancing Dartmoor's diverse landscapes, natural ecosystems and improving the connections between them, both within and across National Park boundaries".

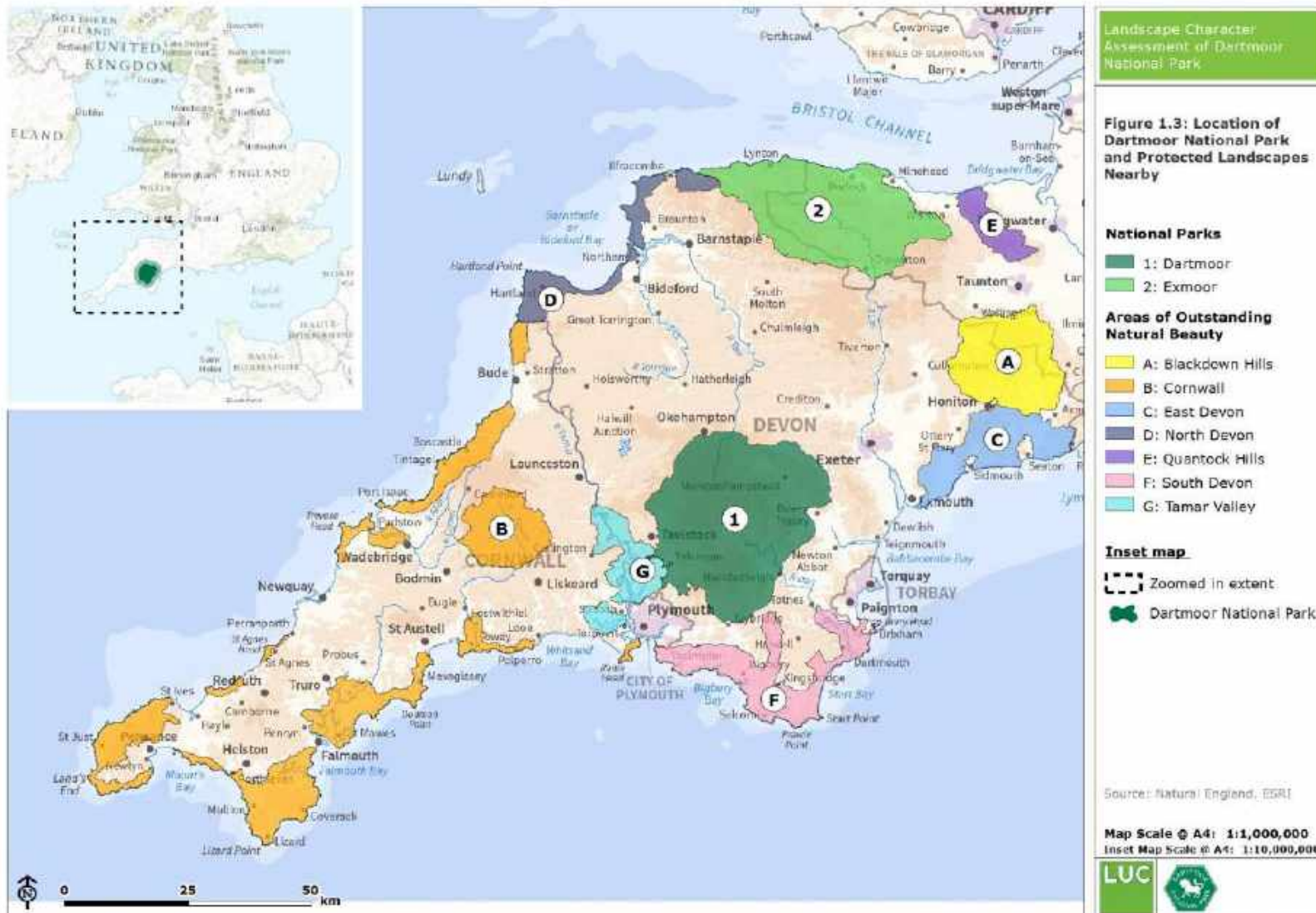
Relationship with other DNPA documents

1.23 This LCA will sit alongside other National Park documents, including:

- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment: The sensitivity of land around key settlements (2017)
- Dartmoor National Park Design Guide (2011)
- Living Dartmoor: A Strategy to deliver benefits for Dartmoor's Wildlife (2013)
- The Moorland Vision for Dartmoor
- Recreation and Access Strategy for Dartmoor 2011 - 2017
- Conservation Area Character Appraisals

1.24 It will also form an important baseline of evidence for landscape monitoring and 'State of the Park' reporting.

Figure 1.3: Location of Dartmoor National Park and nearby protected landscapes



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Content of this report

1.25 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2: The Evolution of the Dartmoor Landscape** – looking at the physical and cultural influences that have shaped today’s landscape.
- **Chapter 3: Method for undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment** – a summary of the method undertaken to classify the National Park into Landscape Character Types (LCTs).
- **Chapter 4: Landscape Character Type Descriptions** – the character descriptions, strategy and landscape guidelines for each LCT found in Dartmoor.

2 The evolution of the Dartmoor Landscape



2 The evolution of the Dartmoor landscape

The Special Qualities of Dartmoor National Park

- 2.1 A summary of the special qualities of the National Park, agreed through consultation to inform the current National Park Management Plan, provides a helpful snapshot of the Dartmoor landscape. These are set out in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1: Dartmoor’s special qualities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> open, windswept upland moors with far reaching views and a sense of remoteness and wildness, distinctive granite tors surrounded by loose rock or 'clitter', and large expanses of grass and heather moorland, blanket bogs, and valley mires providing habitats for distinctive wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> traditional farming practices, using the moorland commons for extensive grazing of hardy cattle, sheep and ponies including locally distinctive breeds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sheltered valleys with upland oak woodland, rhôs pasture and fast-flowing boulder-strewn rivers, home to characteristic wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clean water, the catchment area for most of the rivers of Devon – historic leats still supply water to surrounding settlements. The peatlands and open water of the reservoirs provide an important water store helping to regulate the flow of water
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enclosed farmland with small irregular pasture fields bounded by dry stone walls and hedgebanks providing a mosaic of different wildlife habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one of the most important archaeological landscapes in western Europe revealing a chronology of human activity stretching back over 8,000 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a varied geology, including the granite bedrock providing the dominant building material throughout history, and a wide range of valued minerals including tin, copper, lead, silver and arsenic; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a wealth of historic buildings, structures and townscapes, including a strong medieval settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, hamlets, villages and towns, set within enclosed farmland surrounding the open moor and linked by an intimate pattern of sunken lanes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> timelessness - a place spared many of the intrusions of modern life, with dark night-time skies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resourceful rural communities with distinctive culture and traditions, characteristic ways of life, local crafts, fairs, food and drink
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tranquillity, where it is possible to find absolute peace, offering spiritual refreshment and opportunities for quiet reflection, escape and creativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an inspirational landscape of legends and myths that has inspired art and literature through the centuries and continues to inspire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unrivalled opportunities to roam at will over the extensive open moorland, and an exceptional rights of way network for walking, riding and cycling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> opportunities for discovery, challenge and adventure for all

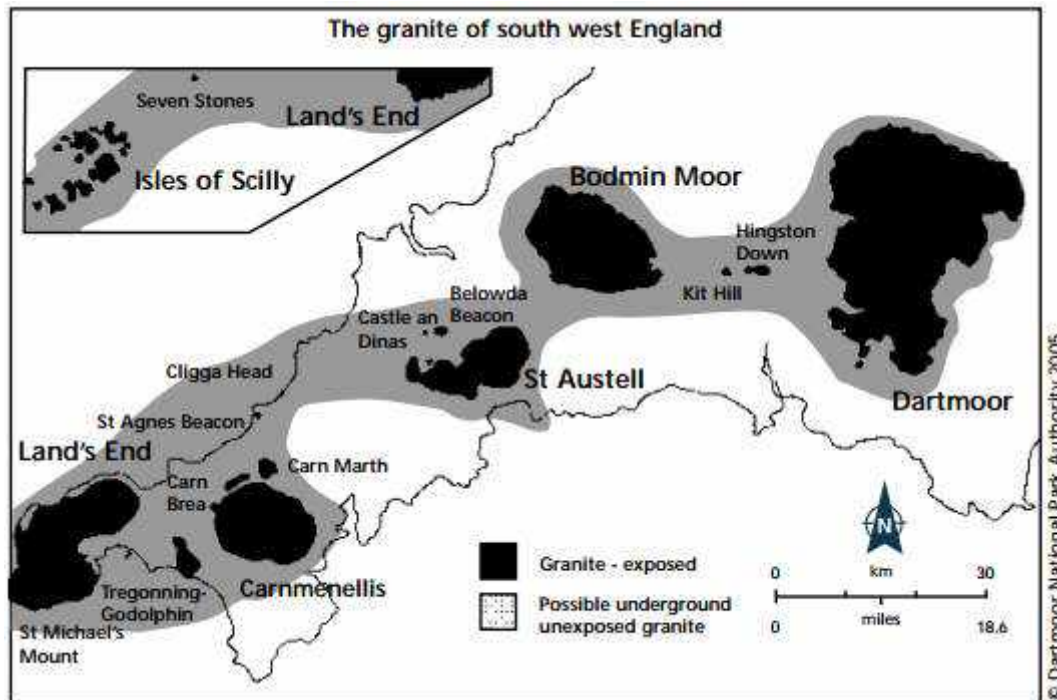
- 2.2 The remainder of this chapter summarises the main phases of physical and cultural evolution which have shaped the distinctive Dartmoor landscape seen today. The later detailed descriptions of the different Landscape Character Types (Chapter 4) highlight those key characteristics and valued attributes that are of significance to the particular landscape concerned.

Geological and physical evolution

Geology

- 2.3 The National Park is a granite massif, forming one of six domed outcrops of the rock in the region linked within the Earth's crust to form a 'batholith' (one massive intrusion). Dartmoor is the largest of the intrusions, linked to Bodmin Moor to the west by Hingston Down and Kit Hill. See **Figure 2.1** below.

Figure 2.1: The granite batholith of the South West



- 2.4 These granite masses represent the stumps of a mountain system which was formed 290 million years ago during the Cornubian mountain building period. With the upheaval of this system, the Dartmoor intrusion rose in molten form from its depths in the south and spread northward. As the hot granite was thrust into the surrounding rocks of shales, grits, limestones and cherts, they were metamorphosed by the heat to form an aureole surrounding the granite core. Igneous rocks surrounding the granite include dolerite dykes and sills and some lavas, including the steep-sided mass of basaltic lava forming Brent Tor. Dolerite is, or has been, quarried commercially for road stone and railway ballast at Meldon Quarry, Crockam Quarry and Pitts Cleave, all of which are now designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. See **Figure 2.2** for an overview of the National Park's geology.
- 2.5 Hydrothermal activity led to the local concentration of minerals in both the granite and the surrounding rocks of the aureole. This mineralisation resulted in tin and copper ore veins, as well as arsenic and lead ores, all of which were traced and worked by miners many millions of years after their formation. Other metals to be found include zinc and tungsten, with much smaller amounts of cobalt, bismuth, antimony, uranium, iron, silver and gold. Vapours from within the granite also led to the formation of china clay, still extracted from Lee Moor to the south-west of the National Park.
- 2.6 The Dartmoor granite itself can be divided into three main types: the dark granite contaminated by minerals from the surrounding rocks; the tor granite which contains the large feldspar crystals typical of many of the tors; and the finer grained blue granite, known as 'aplogranite'. The grain of granite generally becomes finer the further down the surface it is quarried – a fact which has saved the tors from being dismantled by the quarrymen of the 19th century, who favoured the finer grained variety. See further information on Dartmoor's tors in **Figure 2.3** below.

Figure 2.2: The geology of Dartmoor

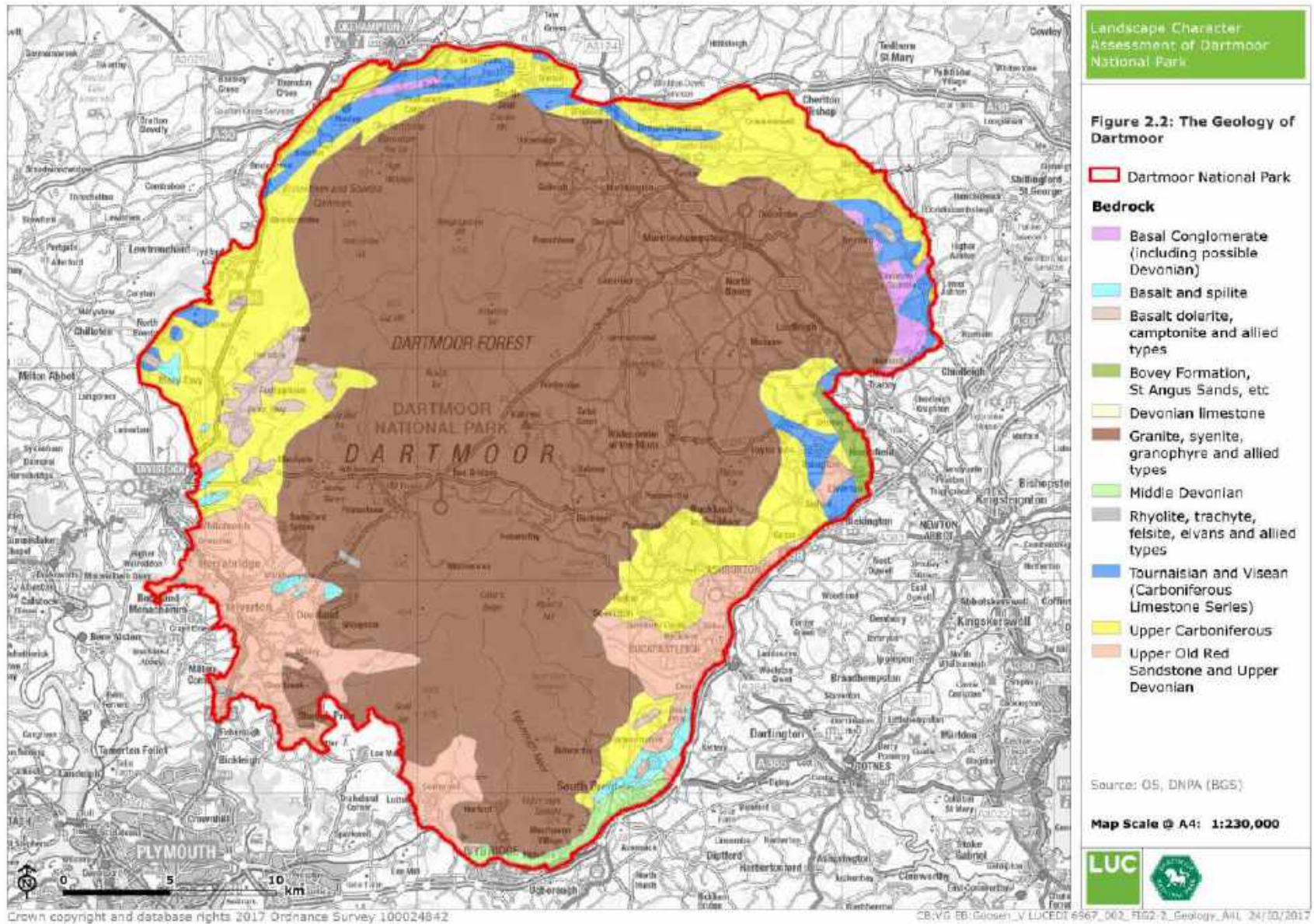


Figure 2.3: The distinctive granite tors of Dartmoor



The Tors of Dartmoor

Dramatic rocky outcrops, known as tors, are distinctive features in the Dartmoor landscape. The formation of tors has been the subject of considerable debate. Some observers have noted their resemblance to the granite kopjes found in the tropical African savannah. Indeed, many of Dartmoor's tors would have been formed under the same tropical or sub-tropical conditions which persisted into the late Tertiary period.

Tors owe their particular shapes to the pattern of joints within the granite. The vertical joints are thought to have been caused by the contraction of the granite as it cooled. The more horizontal joints often appear to closely follow the shape of the surrounding land – probably formed as the load of sedimentary rock above was eroded away to allow the granite to spring apart.

Landform and drainage

Landform

- 2.7 Dartmoor is often described as a plateau, but there is greater variation in topography than this description suggests. The highest summits are assumed to be the remains of a plain; weathered and eroded during the Tertiary period (65 million years ago) to form two plateaux. Summits are lower on the southern plateau due to a mid-Tertiary tilt of the landform, caused by Alpine earth movements. The northern part of the granite rises to the highest points of the National Park (High Willhays at 621 metres), whilst summits in the southern part peak at 515 metres on Ryders Hill. Below around 200 metres there is evidence on the edge of the moor for 'marine platforms' or ancient shorelines, created when Dartmoor was an island during the Pleistocene era, around two million years ago.

Drainage

- 2.8 As the icy conditions thawed after the Pleistocene, the rivers were torrential and incised their valleys deeply to produce the steep-sided, boulder-filled gorges of today's landscape. The erosion of the sedimentary and metamorphic rocks surrounding the granite took a different pace – creating generally steeper slopes and valleys of a different character (e.g. the River Lyd cuts a spectacular course before plunging into a deep chasm, then transforming into a wider course through the underlying softer shales). See **Figure 2.4**.
- 2.9 Dartmoor is the source of many of the main rivers of Devon. The main headstreams of the River Dart and the Rivers Tavy and Walkham drain the northern plateau in a generally southerly direction, reflecting the tilt of the landform. The Rivers Plym, Yealm, Erme and Avon drain the southern plateau similarly. The River Dart collects its headwaters between the two plateaux and leaves the granite through the most spectacular of the fringe gorges. The River Teign drains the eastern edge of the northern plateau but turns south upon leaving the granite. Only the River Taw and the East and West Okement Rivers drain northwards, after relatively short moorland courses. See **Figure 2.5** for an overview of topography and drainage.

Figure 2.4: Left: waterfall in the Lyd Gorge (the deepest gorge in the South West); Right: the Teign Valley near Fingle Bridge



Climate

- 2.10 The higher altitude and exposed nature of Dartmoor determines more extreme climatic conditions than the rest of the South West region. As the prevailing south-westerly air flow is forced up over the hills, it cools and creates the more cloudy conditions which in turn give rise to higher levels of precipitation.
- 2.11 The mean daily temperatures on North Hessary Tor, Princetown, at 510 metres above sea level, are always 2 to 4°C below those at Yarner Wood, which stands at 198 metres and is tucked away in the more sheltered eastern side of the moor. Frequent strong winds and many days of poor visibility with mist and rain result in a climate that can present a formidable challenge for both wildlife and the people who work the land.

Soil types

- 2.12 The soil types found across Dartmoor are influenced by a combination of the underlying rock type, climate, slope, drainage and vegetation cover. Human activity over many centuries, particularly vegetation clearance and land management, has also influenced soil development. See **Figure 2.6** for an overview of Dartmoor's Agricultural Land Classification.
- 2.13 The highest parts of the moor are covered with raw peat deposits, several metres thick in places, whilst lower slopes are characterised by thinner gleyed soils and podzols. Significant areas of the highest ground support internationally important swathes of blanket bog and valley mires. Off the moor, particularly in the east, are gritty brown loams with a high content of organic matter in their upper layers; acidic but fertile. These support mainly pastoral farming with some fields of arable cultivation.

Figure 2.5: Topography and drainage

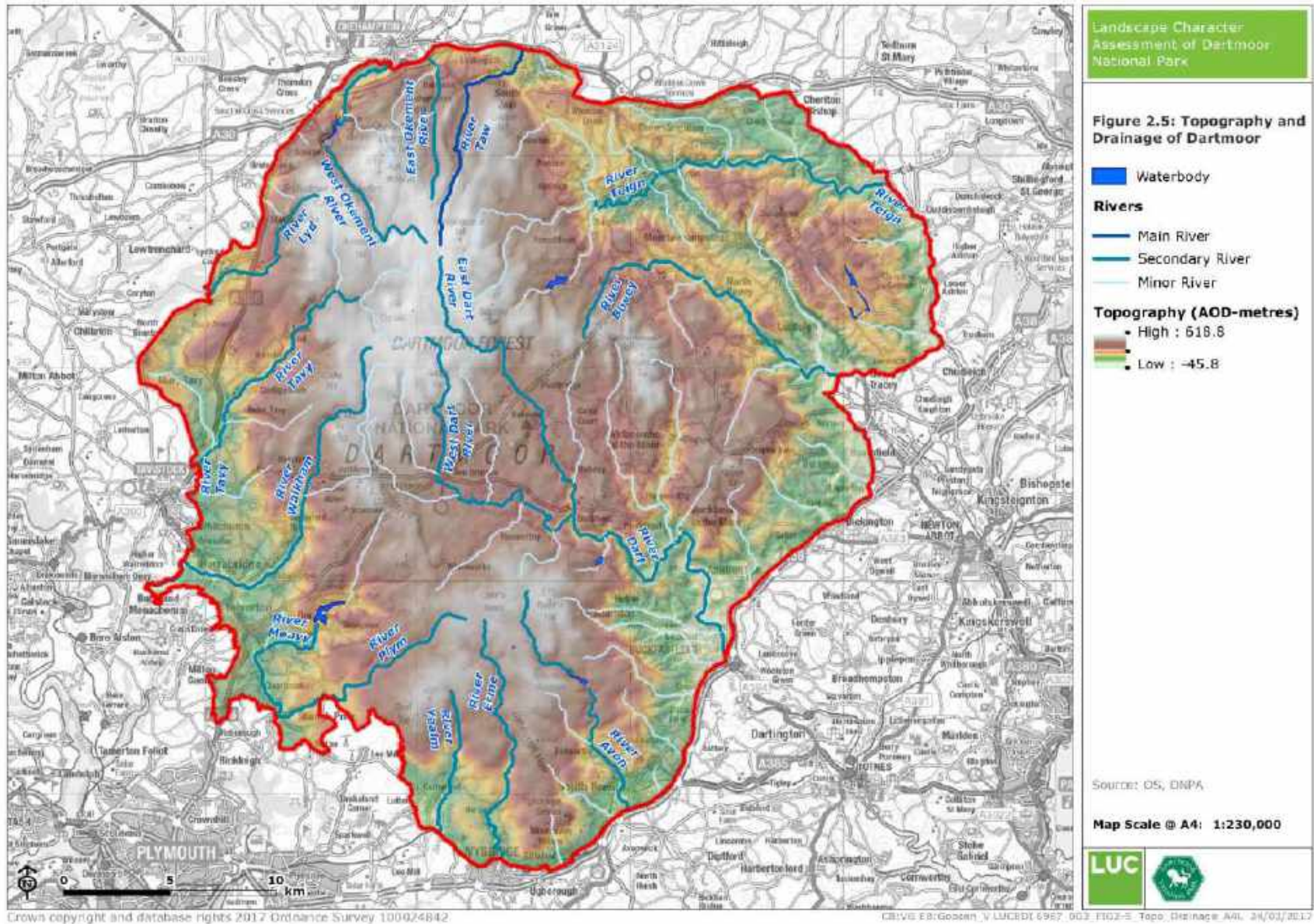
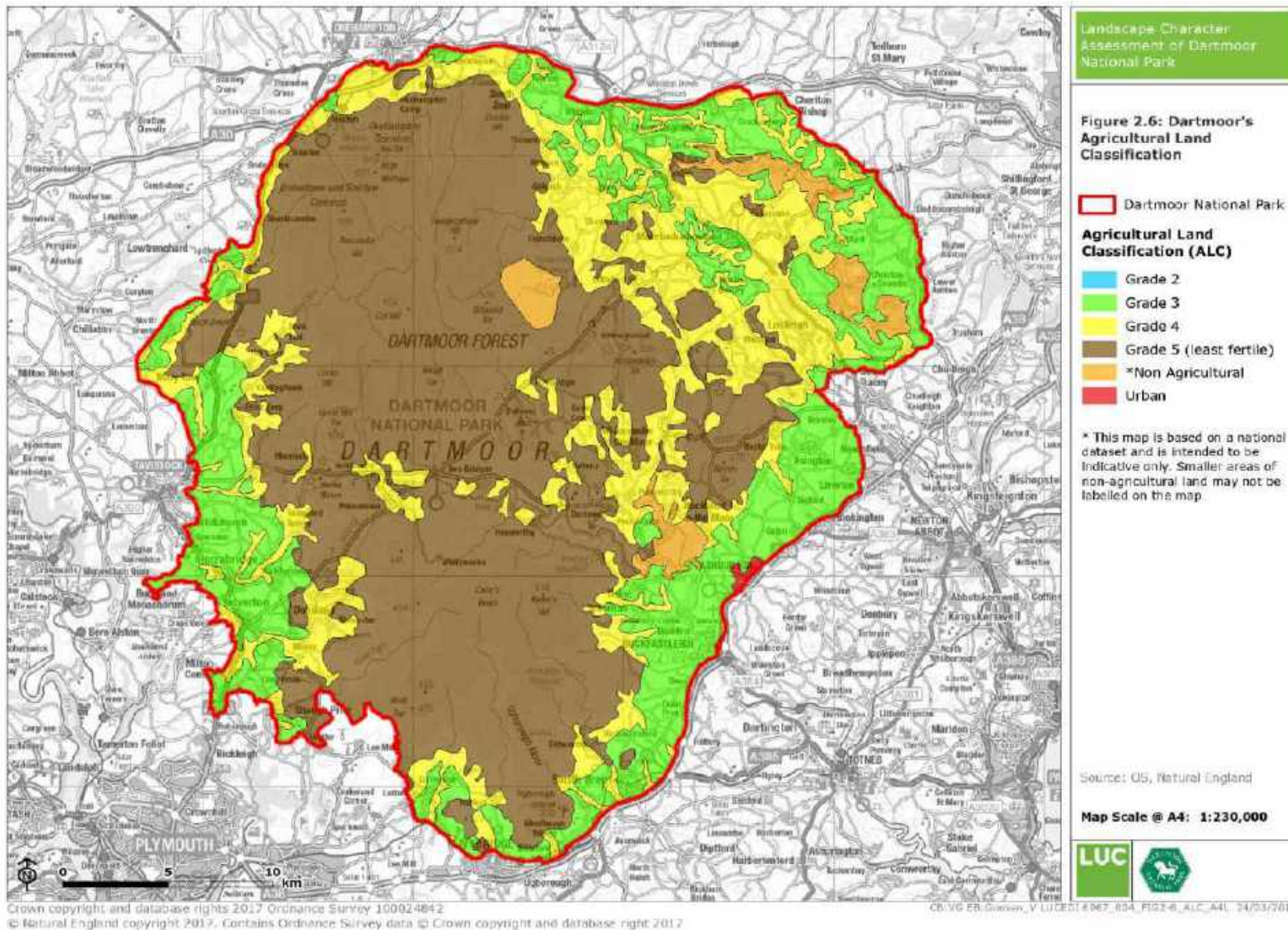


Figure 2.6: Dartmoor's Agricultural Land Classification



Wildlife habitats and biodiversity

- 2.14 **Figure 2.7** shows the nature conservation designations covering Dartmoor, whilst **Figure 2.8** illustrates the spatial distribution of the 'Key Wildlife Areas' found in the National Park, as identified in *Living Dartmoor* (2013).
- 2.15 Dartmoor National Park supports a rich diversity of semi-natural habitats, home to an array of wildlife species. The central moorland core includes the most southerly distribution of blanket bog in Britain, with abundant bog-mosses and associated plants including deer grass, hare's-tail cottongrass, cross-leaved heath and unusual species such as cranberry. Internationally rare birds such as the dunlin use Dartmoor's blanket bog habitats for their breeding grounds. Off the moor, deep peat-filled valley bottoms and former tin streaming areas form valley mires; the numerous examples found in the National Park are unrivalled elsewhere in upland Britain, and the habitat extent is likely to be limited elsewhere in Europe. Of international importance, the valley mires support a special plant community, including the threatened bog orchid. Wildlife associated with the valley mires includes wading birds such as the curlew, lapwing and snipe, as well as dragon/damsel flies including the globally scarce southern damselfly.
- 2.16 The wider importance of Dartmoor's blanket bogs and valley mires is being increasingly recognised, particularly in terms of their role as carbon sinks and for the storage of rain water to prevent downstream flooding. The Mires on the Moors project ran from 2010 to 2015 and aimed to restore areas of blanket bog and valley mire to protect and enhance the ecosystem services provided, including upland wildlife biodiversity, water storage and carbon storage. An evaluation of the project concluded that the objectives had been achieved, with the restoration works establishing a locally appropriate technique for working in sensitive wildlife habitats and a visually important landscape. Bird monitoring has shown that breeding numbers of dunlin, a rare and in many places declining upland breeding wader have increased in a short space of time following restoration, indicating the positive impact this project has had on biodiversity. Dartmoor's breeding population of dunlin is often stated as being the most southerly located in the world.
- 2.17 Surrounding the blanket bogs are large expanses of upland heath and grass moorland, including wet and dry heathland, western gorse, purple moor grass and bilberry. Along with the area's blanket bog and valley mires, the upland heathland habitats found on Dartmoor are of international importance. The National Park includes some 11,500 hectares of heather moorland, supporting populations of rare birds such as the red grouse, skylark and ring ouzel. Dartmoor's grass moorland, largely the product of heavy grazing in the past, is nevertheless a habitat of significant wildlife value. It is one of only three areas in Britain where the nationally rare high brown fritillary butterfly survives in significant numbers. The grass moor also supports populations of the pearl bordered fritillary, a high concentration of breeding whinchat (a bird associated with areas on the moorland fringe), as well as nationally scarce flowering plants such as chamomile and heath violet.
- 2.18 At lower altitudes are pockets of lowland heath, including at Trendlebere Down and Roborough Down. Characteristic plant species include heather, western gorse, bristle bent, cross-leaved heath and bell heather. When in flower in the late summer, the heathers and gorse present a spectacular display of colour. These heathlands support a variety of invertebrate and bird species, including breeding nightjar and Dartford warbler on Trendlebere Down (both species listed on the EU Birds Directive).
- 2.19 The steep valley sides of the river valleys in the east of Dartmoor are characteristically cloaked in biodiversity-rich ancient oak woodlands, including one of the best examples of high altitude oak woodland in Britain at Black-a-Tor Copse. The woodland floors are often clothed in ferns and wildflowers, including wild daffodils and bluebells – adding a splash of colour to the landscape in spring. The fast-flowing, clean rivers and streams are home to a nationally important stronghold of otters, as well as freshwater fish such as salmon and brown trout.
- 2.20 Important areas of Rhôs pasture (representing 20% of the total resource in England) are also associated with valley bottoms and moorland edge slopes, habitat for a number of butterfly species including a major national stronghold for the marsh fritillary and breeding birds such as snipe and reed bunting. Rare flowers, rushes and purple moor pasture provide further wildlife interest within the valleys.

Figure 2.7: Dartmoor's nature conservation designations

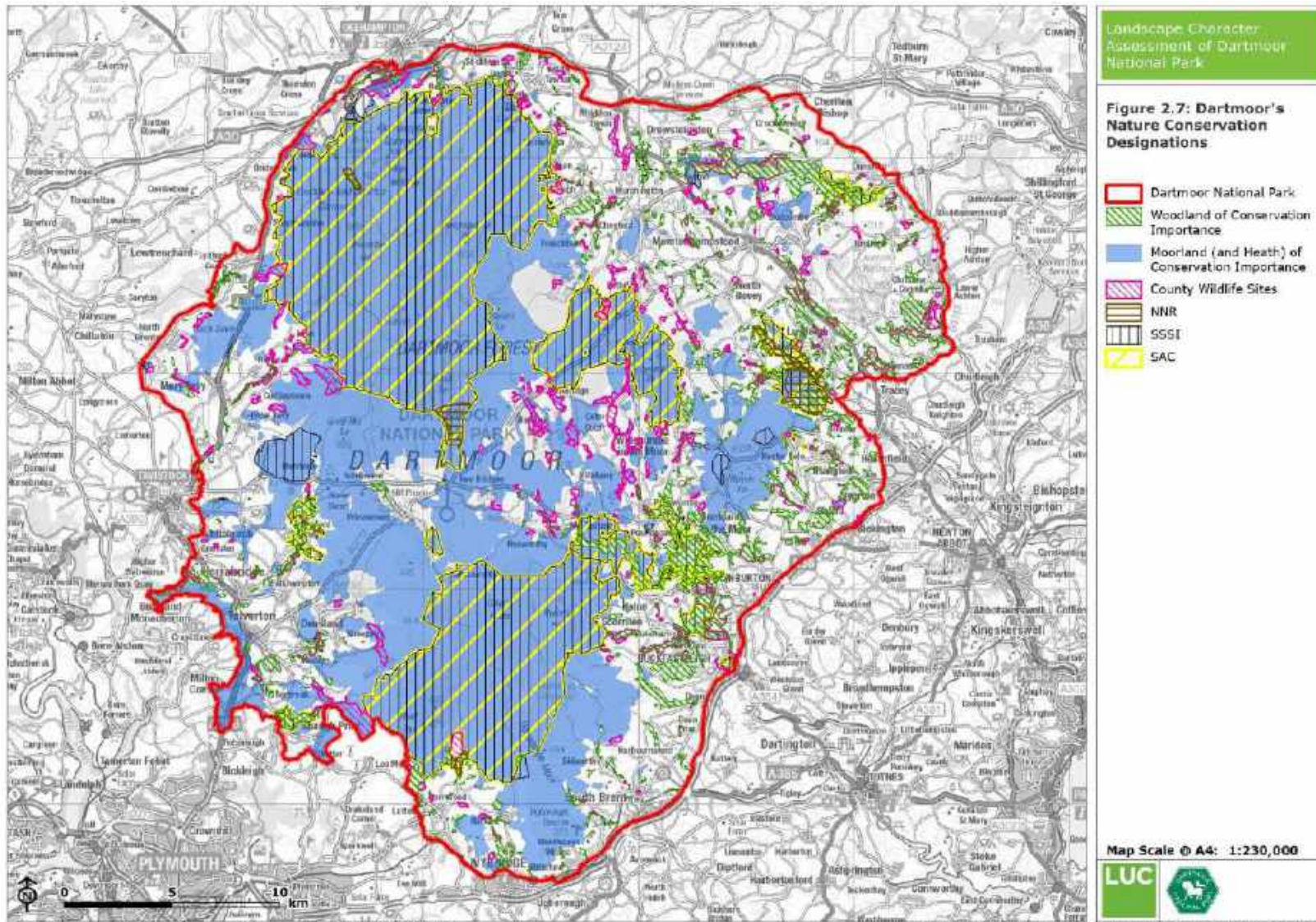
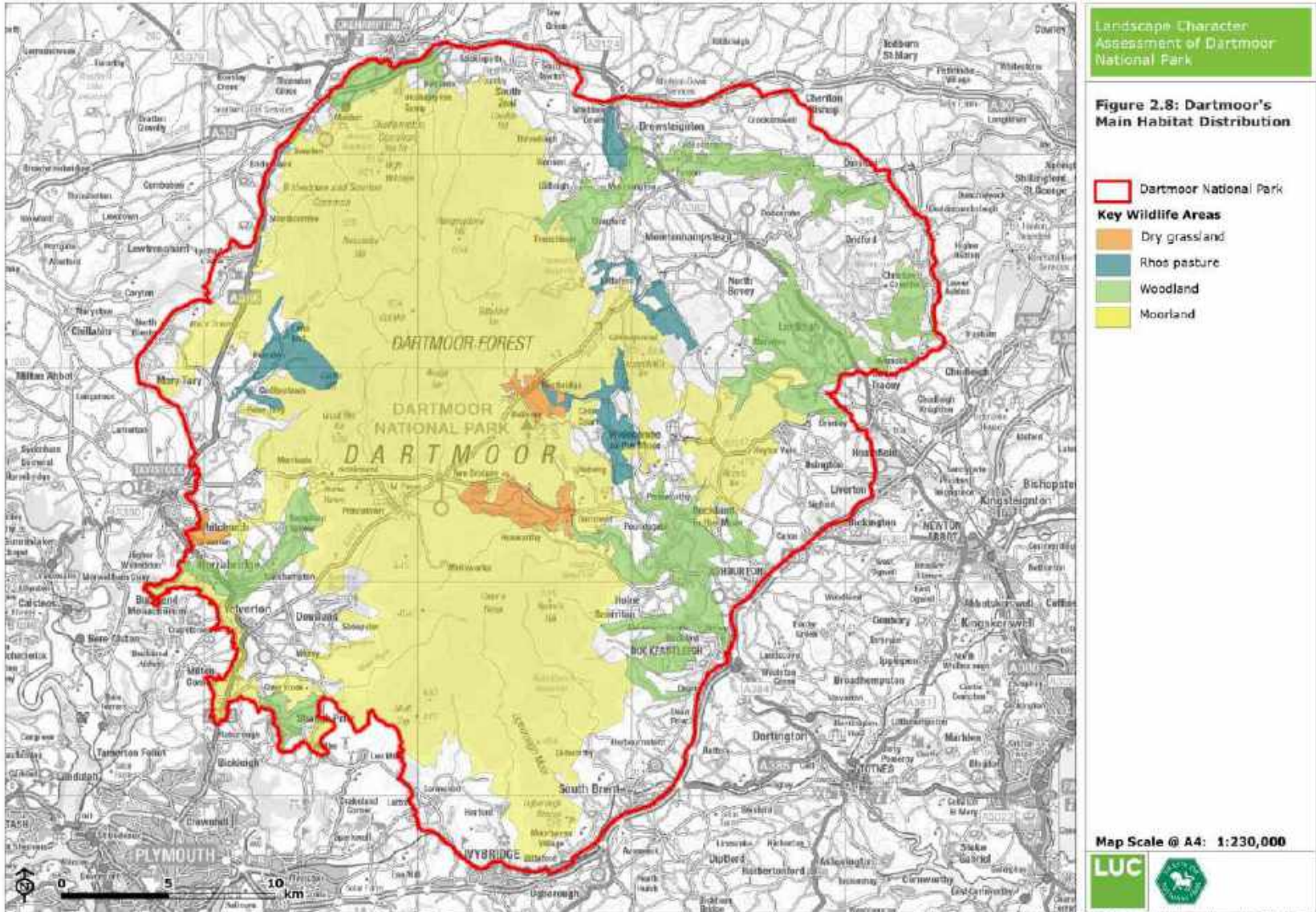


Figure 2.8: Key Wildlife Areas found across Dartmoor (taken from Living Dartmoor, 2013)



- 2.21 Agricultural land surrounding the moor also provides a mosaic of different wildlife habitats. Devon hedgebanks (often species-rich, with hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, oak, ash and holly) are important for butterflies and moths, farmland birds, bats and dormice. Stone walls, another boundary type found on Dartmoor, are colonised by plants and rare lichens. The fields which they enclose form part of a wider habitat network which supports many of the country's native farmland birds, including skylark, song thrush, buzzard, curlew and the only agricultural breeding population of woodlark in Britain. Species-rich grasslands, traditional orchards, veteran trees, hay meadows and redundant farm buildings provide further wildlife refuges within the farmed landscape.
- 2.22 The diverse and outstanding wildlife interest of the National Park is reflected in a quarter of its land area being afforded international recognition as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the European Habitats and Species Directive. Many other sites are nationally designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) – there are 42 such sites in Dartmoor covering 27% of the National Park. In addition, voluntarily designated County Wildlife Sites include important areas of Rhôs pasture, hay meadow, ancient woodland and wet woodland.

The cultural evolution of the Dartmoor landscape

- 2.23 See **Figure 2.9** for map of the main historic/cultural designations found in the National Park. Dartmoor is internationally renowned as a rich cultural landscape containing evidence for thousands of years of human interaction. The reason for the survival of so many archaeological remains within the National Park is due to many structures being constructed of strong and durable granite, and also because human activity on the moor from the latter centuries BC onwards has not been intense.
- 2.24 There are 1,082 Scheduled Monuments within the National Park, which cover approximately 10% of its land area – the highest in both number and concentration of all National Parks in England. The National Park Authority has defined 14 Premier Archaeological Landscapes (PALs) as part of its Moorland Vision. These are considered to be of international importance, ranking amongst the finest archaeological landscapes in Europe. PALs cover over 7,000 hectares of moorland – nearly 8% of the National Park. Dartmoor's Historic Environment Record (HER) contains detailed information on Dartmoor's diverse archaeological and historical resource, holding over 18,600 records at present.
- 2.25 This Section provides an overview of the main periods of cultural influence in Dartmoor, covering the years from 8000 BC to the present day.

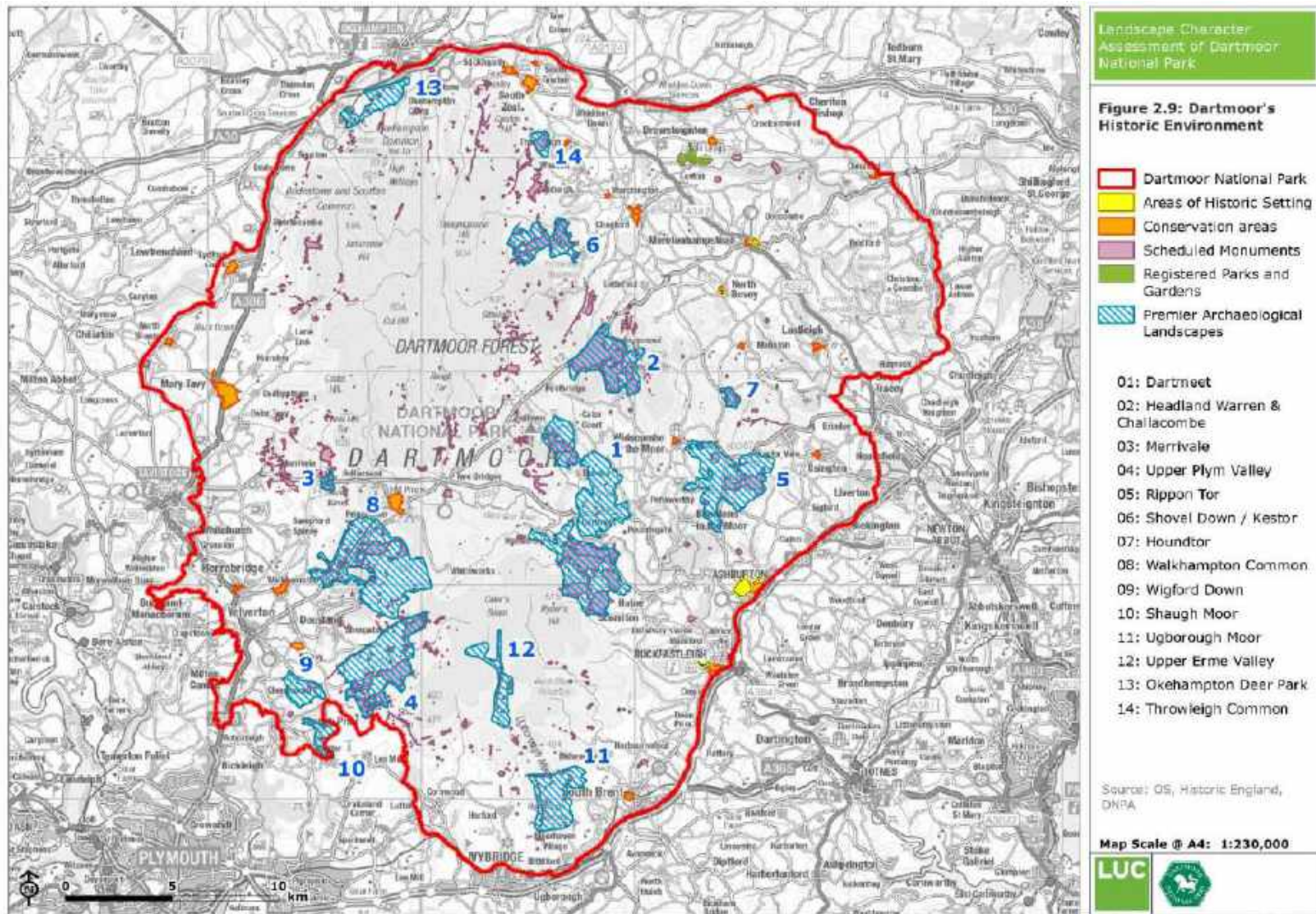
The Mesolithic Period (8000 to 4000 BC)

- 2.26 This period followed the retreat of the last ice-sheets, when it is likely that Dartmoor would have been used as a seasonal source of food (meat, as well as nuts and berries). By c7000 BC, tundra grasslands had been replaced by woodland including extensive oak woodlands flourishing along Dartmoor's river valleys and lower slopes. The highest areas, like today, were open moorland with few isolated trees. Evidence for Mesolithic occupation and use of Dartmoor takes the form of flint scatters.
- 2.27 Woodland species such as deer, wild oxen and pig replaced the large (and easily hunted) grazing animals of the previous tundra landscape. This change had a significant impact on the hunting and gathering lifestyle of prehistoric people living in the area. Evidence has shown that throughout the period small clearances were created in the woodland (some as a result of fire), likely to have been used to draw wild animals in to graze and be hunted more easily. This combination of burning and grazing began the slow spread of blanket bog which today covers much of the high moorland.

The Neolithic Period (4000 to 2500 BC)

- 2.28 Across Britain, the Neolithic period witnessed a gradual change from a wandering, nomadic lifestyle to a more settled one, as both animals and crops were domesticated and the deliberate cultivation of food plants was introduced. Hunting remained important on Dartmoor, whilst the impact of farming on the landscape was negligible. Pollen evidence from various parts of the area has indicated that some woodland was cleared and replaced by cultivated herbs and grasses.

Figure 2.9: Dartmoor's historic environment



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 The most publicly available up to date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from HistoricEngland.org.uk.

- 2.29 The Neolithic period produced the earliest surviving visible structures in today's landscape – granite-built chamber tombs. These tombs housed communal or family burials, sited at one end of long earth and stone mounds with examples at Spinster's Rock and the Corringdon Ball long cairn. Low stone walls encircle the tors at Dewerstone Rock and White Tor and these may represent settlements or ritual centres.

The Later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (c 2,500 – 1500 BC)

- 2.30 In the later part of the Neolithic period and early part of the Bronze Age, the inhabitants of Dartmoor built a variety of burial and ritual monuments on the moor and within woodland clearings; these monuments include stone rows and circles, as well as burial cairns, some of which covered cists/small rectangular chests formed from granite slabs. Unlike the earlier communal chamber tombs, Bronze Age cists housed only one burial, that of significant members of their communities. This reflects the emergence of a social hierarchy with an increase in the power of individuals.
- 2.31 An increased awareness of landscape also emerged during this period – with stone cairns occupying highly visible ridge or hilltop positions (known as 'prestige cairns'), whilst some of Dartmoor's prominent tors and granite outcrops were ringed by stone banks or partially covered by round cairns ('tor cairns'). Groups of up to 30 small cairns, known as 'cairn fields', are particularly associated with the north-west of the moor, some linked to areas of woodland clearance which continued throughout the Bronze Age. There are about 1,310 round cairns and over 210 ring cairns on Dartmoor. Upright stones of various shapes and sizes arranged in rows (single, double or even triple) or circles are often associated with burials, with some theories suggesting their use for astronomy. There are about 75 stone rows and 18 stone circles across the National Park – the former being the greatest concentration of such features in Britain (see example at **Figure 2.10**). The Stall Moor-Greenhill stone row may be the longest in the world.

Figure 2.10: Shovell Down Stone Row



Middle and Late Bronze Age (1700 – 600 BC)

- 2.32 This period saw the radical re-shaping of the landscape at the hands of Bronze Age people keen to provide pasture on the higher ground for the grazing of sheep, ponies and cattle, as well as some areas of arable cropping on the fertile fringe slopes. By about 1500 BC, much of the tree cover had been cleared from the high slopes of Dartmoor to maximise these opportunities, whilst the steep valleys remained heavily wooded. The combination of grazing and widespread clearance of trees accelerated the formation of peat on the moor and led to the poor soil conditions of today

(as well as, of course, the moorland landscapes so strongly associated with the National Park). The resultant land cover was predominantly grassland, with some heather and bracken present.

- 2.33 From around 1700 BC Bronze Age people began to create fields, consisting of long rectangular strips of land bounded by low, stony banks known as 'reaves'. Inside these banks animals were grazed and some crops cultivated on a small scale. Thus a hierarchy of land division was laid down to form the foundation of a land management system that still exists today. Reaves divided enclosed land on the lower slopes for more intensive farming, whilst higher ground was used for extensive communal grazing – further formalised through the common land system of the medieval period. Over 600 kilometres of reaves enclose around 10,000 hectares of land on the open moor. Many of these ancient boundaries are still in use today, some 3,500 years after they were first constructed, often surviving as a 'fossilised' structure beneath later field banks.
- 2.34 Within and beyond the field systems are the circular remains of the round dwelling houses of the prehistoric farmers. These round houses would have varied in usage from shelters for shepherds, permanent dwellings, for storage or to house livestock. Although today only their granite walls survive, these buildings would have had conical timber and thatched roofs. There are around 5,000 hut circles scattered across Dartmoor – forming the root of today's settlement pattern of isolated houses, and smaller and larger groupings of buildings (what we today call hamlets and villages), with lanes snaking through the fields onto the high moor.
- 2.35 Towards the end of the Bronze Age the climate deteriorated, with cooler summers and wetter conditions, together with the formation of further areas of peat blanket bog. This meant that the previous levels and intensity of agricultural use could not be sustained. A slow abandonment of sites followed, with a retreat to the lower and more easily farmed areas off the moor.

The Iron Age (c. 600 BC – AD 43)

- 2.36 The final centuries of the prehistoric era saw the gradual introduction and adoption of iron for the manufacture of tools and weapons. The slow abandonment of the high moor continued through this time, although there is some evidence for Iron Age occupation on the extreme edges. A new settlement type emerged during this period – hillforts – usually situated above the wooded gorges surrounding the moorland core. There are around twelve hillforts within the National Park, consisting of hilltop settlements heavily defended by ramparts and ditches.

The Romano-British Period and the Dark Ages (43 AD – 700 AD)

- 2.37 The first millennium AD presents a gap in our understanding of the nature and extent of settlement within Dartmoor, with little archaeological evidence from this period. Inscribed memorial stones found on the northern and western edges of the moor provide some evidence of occupation on the moorland fringe during the post-Roman period, as do parish churches dedicated to Welsh and Irish Celtic missionaries at Lydford, South Brent and Harford.
- 2.38 There are some suggestions that the Old English name 'Walla Brook', given to four tributaries of the Dart, Teign, Tavy and Avon, may indicate continued habitation by the descendents of Iron Age farmers in Dartmoor. This is translated as '*the stream of the Welsh*' (i.e. foreigners).

The Saxon and Medieval Periods (700 – 1540)

- 2.39 Dartmoor continued to be sparsely occupied during the majority of the Anglo Saxon period. A notable exception being the planned burgh at Lydford, where the original street Saxon plan and earthwork defences survive well. As the climate warmed and the population increased, isolated /paired farmsteads and hamlets – surrounded by fields – appeared on the moorland flanks and around the east and west Dart. It is unclear when this began, but evidence suggests that many settlements were created in the 13th and early 14th centuries – some later abandoned (known today as deserted settlements) due to the reversal of the climatic trend and spread of the Black Death. The site at Houndtor is a classic example – see **Figure 2.11**. The medieval period further established the basic settlement pattern of the National Park: isolated farmsteads and hamlets linked by a dense network of narrow sunken lanes and tracks crossing streams on hump-backed granite bridges. Larger villages grew in sheltered locations whilst gateway towns, often with prominent churches, developed around the fringes of the National Park on the wealth of the wool and tin industries.

- 2.40 Sometime before the Norman Conquest, much of central Dartmoor became a Royal Hunting Forest – reserved for the hunting of deer and other wild beasts. This stayed in place until 1239, when Henry III granted the Forest and Manor of Lydford to the Earldom, later the Duchy of Cornwall, as it remains today. Intensive common grazing on central Dartmoor maintained its open character (there were 10,000 cattle on the Forest at the beginning of the 15th century), with sheep grazing expanding to serve the growing wool trade. Off the moor, more small fields were created as plots for cereal cultivation (including open communal fields surrounding settlements) and as further pasture land for grazing animals. Areas under arable cultivation declined towards the end of the medieval period, and the formerly open, communal fields were divided up and enclosed.
- 2.41 The medieval period thus resulted in a lasting legacy of small, irregular fields enclosed by Devon hedgebanks, with traces of ridge and furrow indicating areas of past cultivation. The best surviving examples of medieval cultivation are the strip fields and lynchets at Challacombe.

Figure 2.11: Hound Tor deserted medieval settlement



Dartmoor's industrial legacy (from the 12th century)

- 2.42 Dartmoor's industrial past has had a significant influence on its historic landscape. The discovery of large deposits of tin ore was a major stimulus for the local economy. Documentary evidence dating from the late 12th century indicates that the upper reaches and valleys of most of Dartmoor's rivers and streams were worked for tin ore leaving extensive arrangements of spoil heaps associated with tin-streaming⁴ (see **Figure 2.12**). More visible features are associated with the exploitation of underground tin ore from the 16th century onwards, leading to the formation of steep-sided openworks (particularly in the south and eastern moorland areas) and the sinking of shafts in the 19th century. Spoil heaps, water-powered mills, processing areas, tramways, and a network of leats are strong reminders of the landscape's industrial past; tin mining continued on Dartmoor until the early years of the 20th century. Exploitation of other minerals such as copper, iron, lead and silver around the periphery of the National Park left a similar legacy – including prominent engine houses standing out in the bleak landscape.
- 2.43 Quarrying activity also led to landscape change on Dartmoor from the early 19th century, especially around Princetown and Haytor (for granite) and Lee, Brent and Harford Moors for china clay. From the medieval period, Dartmoor's peat was an important source of industrial and domestic fuel – with its cuttings characterised by long trenches or 'ties' – visible around

⁴ 'Streaming' involved extracting tin ore from the alluvial beds in valley bottoms. Spoil was arranged in parallel ridges to channel the flow of water over fresh beds of alluvial tin.

Rattlebrook / Annicombe Hill. On the South west part of the moor china clay was exploited in the 19th century and has left a lasting legacy of pits and spoil heaps as well as several processing sites such as at Shaugh Bridge and Shipley Bridge, as well as associated infrastructure including tramway and leats. Other more specialist industries were also developed although many failed financially. These include the ice works at Sourton Tor and the Powdermills gunpowder factory near Postbridge.

Figure 2.12: Evidence of tin streaming still visible in the landscape



19th century

- 2.44 A desire for the improvement of agriculturally unproductive areas prevailed at the end of the 18th and early 19th century, influencing parts of the Dartmoor landscape seen today. Of most significance was the enclosure of large areas of moorland by dry stone walls, forming large rectilinear fields known as 'newtakes'.
- 2.45 The dry stone walls were a new introduction to Dartmoor around 1780, used as part of the ambitious aim of creating larger areas of productive pasture – a venture which ultimately failed due to the difficulties presented by the climate and soils. The development of Princetown and its prison was instigated by Dartmoor's most famous improvers, Thomas Tyrwhitt.
- 2.46 Infrastructure developments from the late 18th century onwards made the landscape more accessible and spurred on the prosperity of the quarrying, mining and farming industries. Dartmoor's major roads were turnpiked – meaning that they were not only better maintained but also became permanent fixtures in the landscape. The development of the railways in the early 19th century and throughout the Victorian period stimulated the further development of the larger settlements, allowing for more universal architecture and the introduction of non-local materials such as Welsh slate and brick.
- 2.47 Until the 19th century, Dartmoor was seen as an unforgiving and inhospitable place – Reverend J. Swete, writing at the end of the 18th century, described it as '*a wild waste where the eye found not a point to rest on*'. The modern view of Dartmoor – where its wilderness qualities are highly valued – was influenced by the spread of the Romantic Movement, inspiring writers, artists and poets. By 1842 Samuel Rowe described the landscape as '*a scene of unsurpassed loveliness*' and it formed the setting of Conan Doyle's early 20th century book 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'.

Into the 20th century

- 2.48 Exploitation of Dartmoor's natural resources to meet the demand of growing urban populations on its doorstep continued through the construction of eight reservoirs from the late 19th century. The first was completed in 1861 at Tottiford, and the last at Meldon in 1972. The afforestation of

the open moorland for timber production began in earnest after the First World War (see **Figure 2.13**); several plantations were associated with the newly created reservoirs. The plantations still represent a major source of timber in the South West region.

- 2.49 The late 19th century also saw the arrival of another land use which continues today – military training. The construction of structures to facilitate training has impacted on the undeveloped character of the open moorland, but restrictions on access and agricultural uses may have helped to preserve many of the National Park’s internationally important habitats and archaeological features.

Figure 2.13: Plantation on open moorland at the edge of Dartmoor Forest



Post- Second World War towards the present day

National Park designation and Dartmoor’s growing popularity as a visitor destination

- 2.50 The designation of Dartmoor as a National Park in 1951 strongly influenced the extent and nature of post-war change. This included an increase in the number of people keen to explore the landscape for air and exercise. The National Park Visitor Survey in 1994 estimated that Dartmoor was the destination of over three million visitor days per year, whilst traffic counters placed at key locations in the 1990s revealed a far higher estimate, calculating 11 million visits in 1997, though this is still widely regarded as an underestimation. Research from the 1994 survey found that over half of visitors came to Dartmoor whilst on holiday in the South West, 88% travelled by car and the most popular activities were walking and visiting Dartmoor’s towns and villages.
- 2.51 Recreational pressure is often concentrated at honeypot sites such as the reservoirs, river valleys (e.g. Dartmeet, Becky Falls, Lydford Gorge), picturesque villages such as Chagford and Yelverton, and some parts of the moor such as Haytor, leading to localised impacts including erosion along river banks and sections of moorland, damage to archaeological sites and traffic congestion. The National Park Authority’s ‘Moor Care’ campaign seeks to educate visitors and users of Dartmoor about how to enjoy their visit whilst minimising their impacts on the environment, including through encouraging the use of public transport.

Changing agricultural policies

- 2.52 Perhaps the most significant post-war landscape changes have resulted from agricultural policies – particularly the drive for food production following the Second World War. This was spurred on in the 1970s through the introduction of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which assured farmers of minimum market prices for their cattle, sheep and crops, eventually leading to the infamous ‘food mountain’ surpluses in the 1980s. Impacts of this policy on Dartmoor included high stocking levels on the moorland leading to overgrazing and a spread of grass moor at the

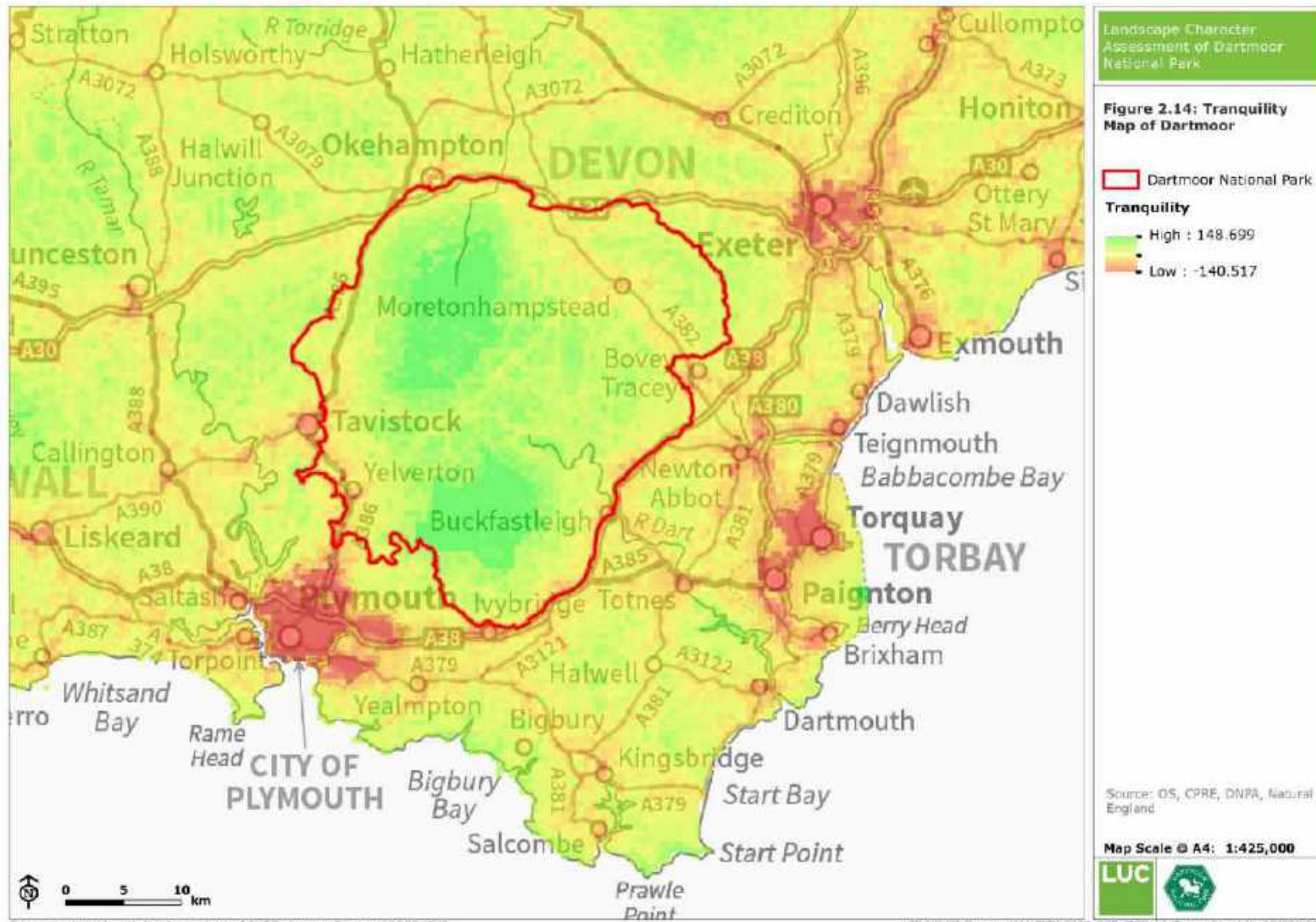
expense of heather (which at the same time revealed the extent of previously hidden archaeology); drainage and erosion of blanket bogs and other wetland habitats in the drive for production; field enlargement and a spread of arable cultivation off the moor – eroding ancient field patterns and reducing wildlife interest; and the amalgamation of farms and introduction of modern farm buildings which sometime fit uneasily with the local vernacular and historic settlement patterns of the area.

- 2.53 Subsequent reviews of the CAP in 1992, 1993 and 2003 eventually resulted in the link between direct payments and production levels being broken, replacing headage payments with the area-based Single Farm Payment scheme. The introduction of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) scheme in 1992 sought to reverse the negative environmental impacts of farming by encouraging farmers to adopt agricultural practices which would safeguard and enhance the high landscape, wildlife and historic value of the National Park. This included supplements to reduce numbers of grazing animals to tackle issues relating to overgrazing.
- 2.54 The introduction of Environmental Stewardship in the mid-2000s also aimed to tailor grazing levels to the needs of the internationally important moorland habitats. In some locations, previous grazing pressures were reversed, with areas of the moor becoming undergrazed and suffering from scrub and bracken encroachment. Falling market prices for livestock exacerbated this issue, leaving upland farmers heavily reliant on subsidies to be able to continue the traditions of farming so crucial to the conservation and enhancement of the Dartmoor landscape. The Dartmoor Hill Farm Project, established in 2003 by the National Park Authority with support from the then Regional Development Agency, seeks to ensure a viable future for upland farmers by, for example, encouraging collaborative marketing initiatives and providing guidance on training opportunities. This ongoing project is hosted by DNPA and funded by the Prince's Countryside Fund, DNPA and the Duchy of Cornwall.
- 2.55 Applications to the Environmental Stewardship closed in 2015 and the scheme has been replaced by the new Countryside Stewardship Scheme (which also supersedes the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) and capital grants from the Catchment Sensitive Farm (CSF) programme). Whilst the impacts of the new scheme on the landscape are yet to be seen, a positive impact on landscape is expected, with one of the scheme's objectives being 'keeping the character of the countryside'.

Development and other land use changes

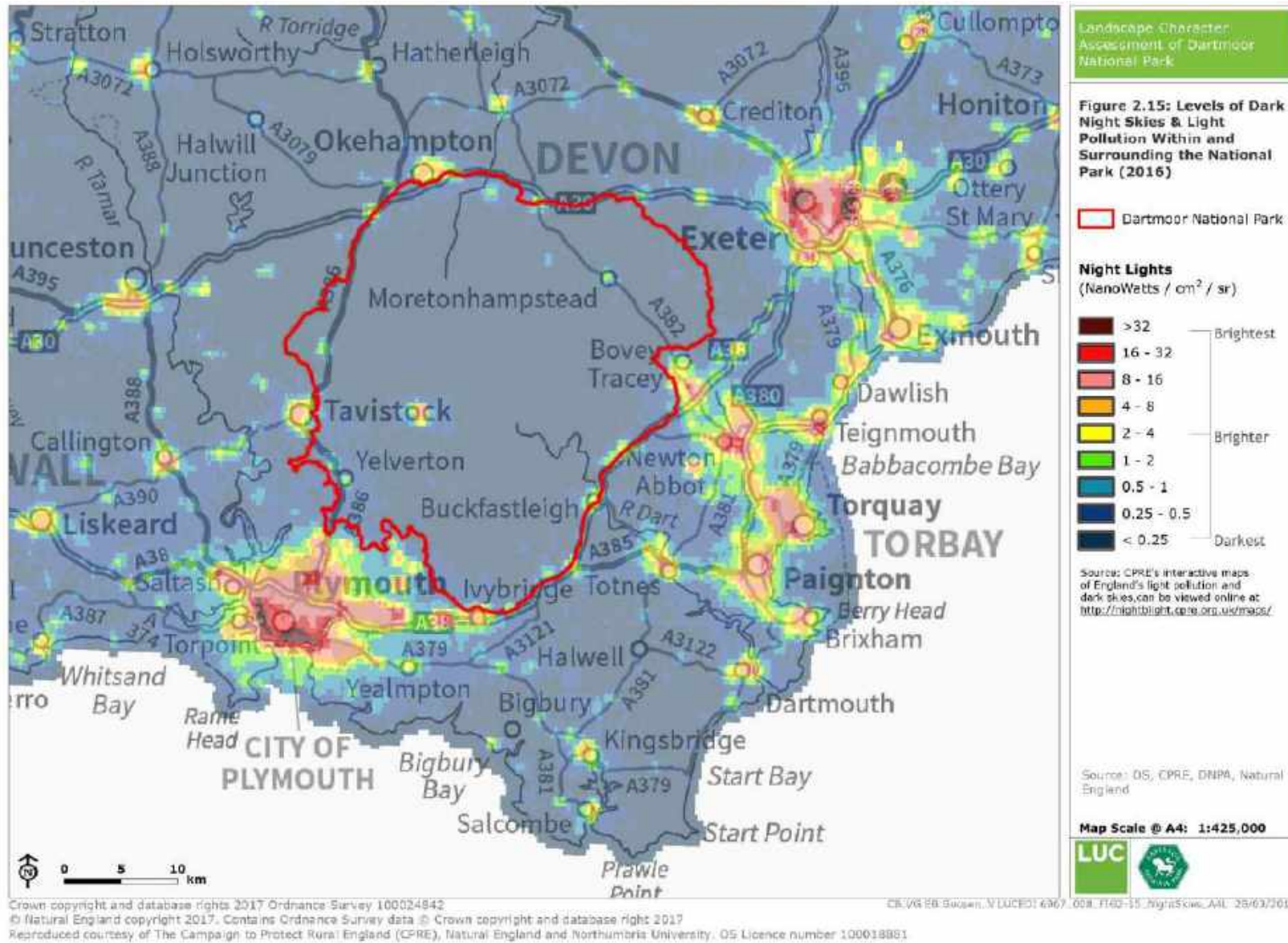
- 2.56 Other change within the National Park since the mid-20th century has been gradual, with intrusion into some areas by a spread of development and new land uses such as the A30 Okehampton bypass, china clay extraction in the south west and golf courses on the moorland fringes (the first created in 1918 on Roborough Down). The more accessible settlements have also witnessed significant growth, including Ashburton, Chagford, Buckfastleigh, South Brent, Moretonhamptead, Horrabridge and Mary Tavy – the latter now six times the size it was in the 19th century.
- 2.57 Despite these incursions, Dartmoor remains a haven of tranquillity in the region, as demonstrated by the tranquillity map at **Figure 2.14** (based on CPRE's national mapping from 2006). This clearly shows the close proximity of urban centres at Plymouth, Exeter, Tavistock and Torquay with their significantly lower levels of tranquillity. These patterns are also echoed in the 2016 dark night skies mapping shown at **Figure 2.15**. This was created using the latest satellite imagery and shows the dark night skies strongly associated with the National Park, with pockets of light pollution at HM Prison Dartmoor in Princetown and settled areas, particularly around the periphery of the moor including Tavistock and Okehampton. It also shows the impact of light pollution from nearby urban centres including Plymouth, Exeter, Newton Abbot and Bovey Tracey. Nevertheless, Dartmoor is ranked fourth out of all of the National Parks in England in terms of the darkness of its night skies.

Figure 2.14: Tranquillity map for Dartmoor and the surrounding area



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Figure 2.15: Levels of dark night skies and light pollution within and surrounding the National Park



The 21st century and beyond

Summary of current and predicted drivers for change

2.58 The drivers of future landscape change are inherently difficult to predict, as well as the nature of their impacts, intensity and inter-relationships. The key drivers for landscape change in Dartmoor are a mixture of emerging forces for change as well as a continuation of current ones. These include:

- **Continued demand for new housing and associated infrastructure and land uses**, particularly relating to Plymouth, Newton Abbot and Exeter. Growth of these surrounding populations is likely to result in increased recreational pressures and use of Dartmoor's natural resources.
- **Social and cultural trends** – including changing patterns of living (e.g. spread of broadband facilitating more home working) contributing to the trend of increasing house prices. Stemming the out-migration of young people, particularly farmers, is a growing concern.
- Linked to the above - **conversions of agricultural buildings to residential or holiday uses**, with associated incursion into the surrounding land, diluting characteristic landscape patterns and land uses – e.g. new outbuildings, creep of suburban gardens and associated plantings (including non-native species).
- **Traditional agricultural holdings divided into smallholdings, with an increase in 'lifestyle' farming and equestrian/pony keeping** – with associated landscape impacts (e.g. the sub-division of fields with white pony tape or other non-traditional fencing; the introduction of incongruous features such as jumps, gallops and flood-lit training areas).
- **Uncertainty regarding future agricultural support**, including agri-environment schemes – particularly as a result of the UK's decision to leave the European Union (EU). Current support runs until 2020 with a growing shift in focus towards recognising the ecosystem services and 'natural capital' provided by the environment – see further below.
- **Climate change** – mitigation (reducing the causes of climate change, including through renewable energy generation) and adaptation (both naturally and through planned interventions).
- **Natural processes**, including the effects of climate change – such as flooding, erosion and the changing patterns of pests and disease, all of which are likely to become more extreme with climate change.
- **Policy and regulatory responses** – international, national and local policy and regulatory responses to all of the above, and in particular the consequences of the UK's exit from the European Union – see the '*Potential impacts of 'Brexit''*

Figure 2.16: Example of an equine enterprise, illustrating the introduction of structures into the farmed landscape (as well as evidence of overgrazing/poaching)



Emerging environmental policy – taking an ecosystems services and ‘natural capital’ approach

- 2.59 Defra is currently preparing a new 25-year plan for the environment, which is also likely to place a strong emphasis on the ecosystems approach and concept of ‘natural capital’⁵, with the independent Natural Capital Committee established to advise the government on the Plan. It will set out a framework to deliver the government’s ambition of *‘being the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than that in which we found it’*⁶. It also recognises the importance of the plan in shaping agricultural policy from 2020, stating that *‘...agriculture is the major land use in England and should be one of the central features of any integrated environment plan’*.
- 2.60 Echoing this thinking, Natural England’s recent Conservation Strategy for the 21st century⁷, published in October 2016, sets out how the organisation will work to protect England’s nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and the ecosystem services they provide. This could also mark a significant change in the way that decisions about management of the countryside are made, and in the way in which outcomes are incentivised.

Potential impacts of ‘Brexit’

- 2.61 The UK’s decision to leave the European Union in June 2016 could prompt a period of considerable change for the British countryside, particularly in the period after 2020. This is likely to include:
- **The replacement of CAP funded agri-environment schemes with a programme funded, developed and administered by the UK government.** While there is significant potential to devise and implement a scheme which is more innovative and better tailored to the British countryside and farming sector, this will in part depend on the level of funding available and the range of priorities that are agreed.
 - **Changes in areas of regulation currently subject to EU Directives.** This includes environmental regulation to prevent pollution of the water environment and protection provided for internationally important habitats and species. While it is likely that existing requirements will be transposed into UK law at the time Britain leaves the EU, it is possible that they will subsequently be reformed.
 - **Changing markets for agricultural and forest products** in response to new international trading arrangements, policies to promote food security and fluctuations in the value of Sterling.

Considering forces for changing impacting on Dartmoor’s landscapes

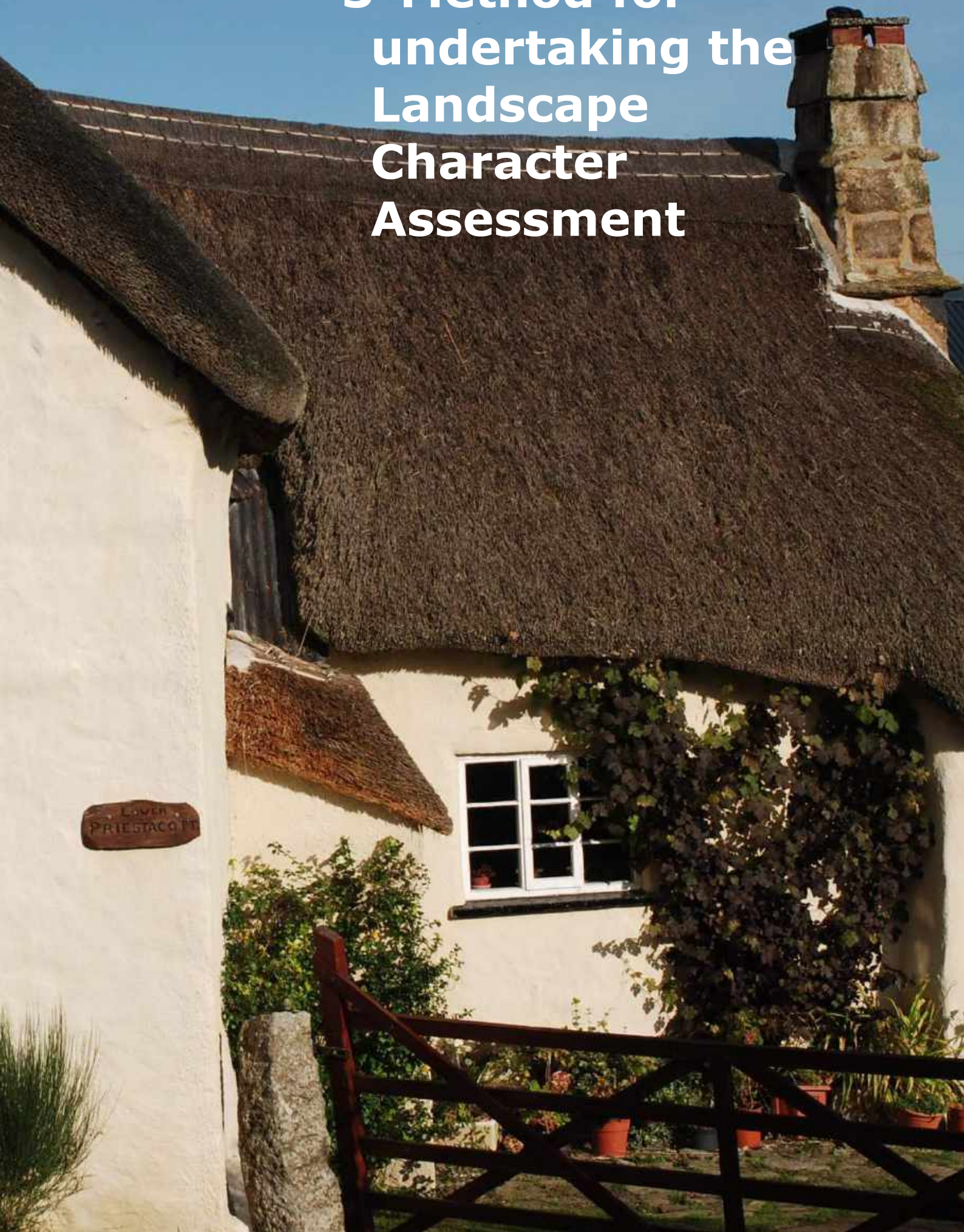
- 2.62 Forces for change are examined at a more local level as part of the ‘Evaluation’ section of each Landscape Character Type (LCT) description included in **Chapter 4** of this report.
- 2.63 Change, and how we respond to it, affects all landscapes – including National Parks such as Dartmoor. As this chapter demonstrates, Dartmoor’s landscape as experienced today is a result of many millennia of natural and human-influenced change. The challenge for the 21st century is to set in place measures that can respond to and influence landscape change whilst protecting and enhancing those qualities which are integral to the National Park’s unique sense of place. This Landscape Character Assessment plays a key role in helping the National Park Authority and others respond to this challenge.

⁵ ‘Natural capital’ are the elements of the natural environment which provide valuable goods and services to people, such as clean air, clean water, food and recreation (Natural Capital Committee, January 2017)

⁶ The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature (Defra White Paper, June 2011).

⁷ Natural England (October 2016) Conservation 21: Natural England’s conservation strategy for the 21st century. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conservation-21-natural-englands-conservation-strategy-for-the-21st-century>

3 Method for undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment



3 Method for undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment

Background

3.1 This Landscape Character Assessment follows the method promoted by Natural England through 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014), which embeds the principles of the European Landscape Convention (ELC). The assessment for Dartmoor was originally produced in 2010, with updates made in 2017 to ensure that the evidence contained is robust and up-to-date.

Landscape Character Assessment framework

3.2 Landscape Character Assessment can be undertaken at a variety of scales and levels of detail, with the land within the National Park included within a hierarchy of landscape characterisation documents from the national down to the local level. This hierarchy was summarised in Chapter 1 and illustrated at **Figure 1.1**. Further detail on each level of the hierarchy is included below.

National

3.3 England is divided into a total of 159 National Character Areas (NCAs), which identify areas based on their landscape character, biodiversity and geodiversity. Dartmoor National Park contains three NCAs, as shown in **Figure 3.1** and listed below:

- NCA 149: The Culm (northern fringes of the National Park)
- NCA 150: Dartmoor (covering the majority of Dartmoor)
- NCA 151: South Devon (eastern, southern and western fringes of the National Park)

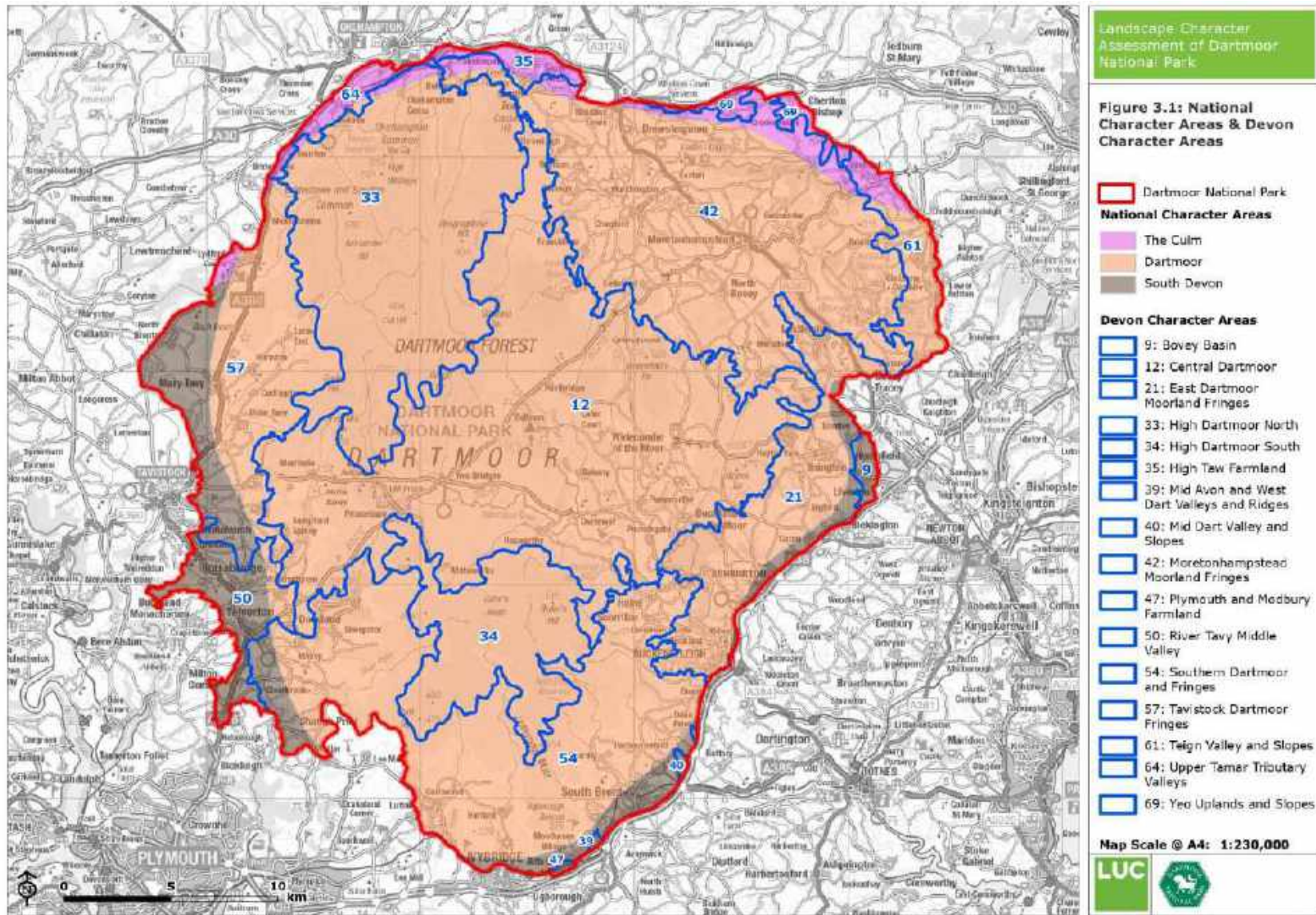
Devon-wide

3.4 The County of Devon is classified into 68 Devon Character Areas (DCAs), each representing landscapes with a unique and distinct identity recognisable on a county scale. The DCAs that fall wholly or partially within the National Park boundary are listed below. Each DCA has its own descriptive profile, including a strategy and guidelines, available from the Devon County Council website⁸.

DCA 9: Bovey Basin	DCA 42: Moretonhampstead Moorland Fringes
DCA 12: Central Dartmoor	DCA 47: Plymouth and Modbury Farmland
DCA 21: East Dartmoor Moorland Fringes	DCA 50: River Tavy Middle Valley
DCA 33: High Dartmoor North	DCA 54: Southern Dartmoor and Fringes
DCA 34: High Dartmoor South	DCA 57: Tavistock Dartmoor Fringes
DCA 35: High Taw Farmland	DCA 61: Teign Valley and Slopes
DCA 39: Mid Avon and West Dart Valleys and Ridges	DCA 64: Upper Tamar Tributary Valleys
DCA 40: Mid Dart Valley and Slopes	DCA 69: Yeo Uplands and Slopes

⁸ <https://new.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/devons-landscape-character-assessment>

Figure 3.1: National Character Areas and Devon Character Areas



Dartmoor National Park

3.5 This Landscape Character Assessment classifies the National Park landscape into ten different Landscape Character Types (LCTs), based on a Devon-wide approach. These represent distinct types of landscape which are summarised in the 'Devon Menu of LCTs'⁹. LCTs 1J, 1K and 1L are unique to Dartmoor – added to the Devon Menu following this study. The ten LCTs are listed below:

- 1K: Unsettled High Upland Moorland
- 1L: Upland Moorland with Tors
- 3D: Upland River Valleys
- 2D: Moorland Edge Slopes
- 5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land
- 1J: Farmed and Forested Plateau
- 3A: Upper Farmed and Wooded Slopes
- 3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors
- 3E: Lowland Plains
- 3F: Settled Valley Floors

3.6 The key stages of the original 2010 study and its 2017 update are described below.

2010 study: Key stages

Stage 1: Desk based classification

3.7 This stage used various information layers presented in GIS format to start to identify draft LCT boundaries to be verified in the field. This included as a basic framework the 67 Land Description Units (LDUs) identified for Dartmoor through an earlier county-wide desk based exercise; as well as the Landscape Character Types identified by the assessments for the adjoining districts of West Devon, Teignbridge and South Hams (some of which crossed over the National Park boundary).

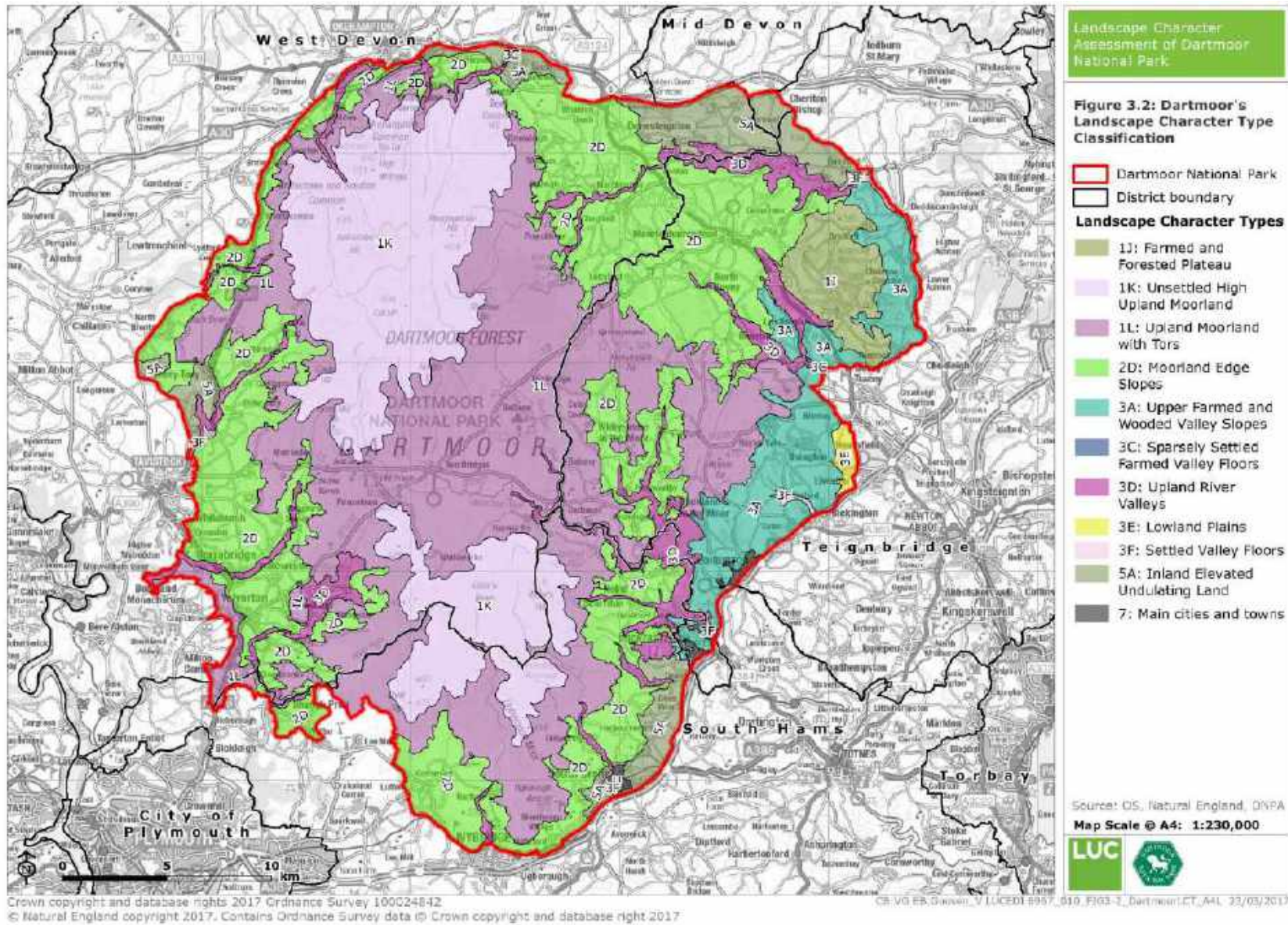
Where possible, the most appropriate LCTs were selected from the Devon Menu (version available in autumn 2009) for the draft classification. It was clear at this stage that the Devon Menu did not include LCTs that would reflect the distinctive high moorland and upland river valleys of Dartmoor.

3.8 These layers were interrogated against various other spatially-available information layers, including:

- Geology
- Soils
- Topography
- Agricultural Land Classification
- River catchments
- Land cover and habitats
- Designations – e.g. SACs, SSSIs, PALs
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- The Moorland Vision
- Aerial photographs
- 1:25,000 scale Ordnance Survey mapping (showing field boundaries and contours)

⁹ The final Devon Menu of LCTs, containing summary key characteristics for each LCT found in Devon, is available here: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/devons-landscape-character-assessment>

Figure 3.2: Dartmoor's Landscape Character Type classification



Stage 2: Fieldwork verification

- 3.9 A thorough fieldwork exercise was undertaken in October 2009 to review and refine the draft LCT classification, make detailed notes on landscape character (key characteristics, visible forces for change, information on condition) and take photographs across the LCTs to help with subsequent write ups. GPS recording was used to ensure that the exact location of photographs was noted, to allow them to be mapped in GIS. Following fieldwork, the draft LCT boundaries were digitised and Dartmoor-specific key characteristics drafted for comment by the Steering Group and at the first stakeholder workshop.
- 3.10 At this early stage it was clear that the LDU framework drafted for Dartmoor did not adequately reflect the key elements of Dartmoor character – e.g. river valleys were not identified; boundaries tended to follow contours rather than traceable features demonstrating a clear change in character (e.g. unenclosed/enclosed land, changes in field patterns, woodland cover etc). Therefore it was agreed that the Dartmoor assessment should focus on a thorough fieldwork based approach, rather than retrofitting the classification of Landscape Character Types into the framework of desk-based LDUs which did not account for the variations so strongly associated with the National Park.

Stage 3: Stakeholder workshop

- 3.11 A workshop was held in early December 2009 to invite comments back on the draft classification, as well as brainstorm key 'forces for change' that have influenced past landscape change and that are likely to influence future change. This workshop was attended by a range of different stakeholders including representatives from the National Park Authority, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Devon County Council, the adjoining districts, Devon Wildlife Trust, the local group of the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), the Dartmoor Society, Dartmoor Preservation Association, Devon Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) Group and the Commons and Open Spaces Society.
- 3.12 Following this workshop, an additional meeting was held with landscape officers from the adjoining districts to account for variations in classification along the National Park boundary to ensure compatibility wherever possible.
- 3.13 The draft classification was then revised and re-digitised following comments from the workshop and the neighbouring districts to feed into a draft assessment.

Stage 4: Draft landscape character assessment report

- 3.14 A draft report was circulated to the Steering Group for comment prior to the second workshop at the end of February 2010.

Stage 5: Wider stakeholder workshop

- 3.15 A second workshop was held on 23 February 2010, with a broader group of attendees including representatives of local parish councils. This met the ELC requirement of involving communities in making decisions about the future management and planning of their local landscapes. The workshop included two main exercises; the first to brainstorm the 'positive landscape attributes' people felt were most important to each LCT; and the second for break-out groups to put forward suggestions for landscape guidelines under the 'protect', 'manage' and 'plan' categories for the different LCTs. A full report of the workshop and list of attendees is included in Appendix I of the 2010 assessment report.

Stage 6: Final landscape character assessment report

- 3.16 Following discussions and thoughts put forward from the second workshop, and comments from the Steering Group, the 2010 Landscape Character Assessment report and the LCT classification were finalised. The document was published by Dartmoor National Park Authority in June 2010.

2017 update: Key stages

- 3.17 The process for updating the 2010 assessment involved five main stages described below:
- Desk -based review
 - Focused stakeholder consultation
 - Draft report
 - Final report
- 3.18 Up-to-date GIS information was used throughout the study as the tool for collating, manipulating and presenting data.

Stage 1: Desk based review

- 3.19 The initial desk based stage involved a boundary review and update of the landscape classification for Dartmoor to bring the classification in-line with the latest (January 2012) iteration of the Devon Menu. This is because the codings and names given to LCTs listed on the Devon Menu changed following the 2010 Dartmoor study – taking account of the completion of all local authority landscape character assessments in Devon.
- 3.20 The desk review also involved checking whether designations relating to cultural heritage, nature conservation or landscape have changed along with any differences in land ownership (e.g. acquiring of land by the National Trust). Some very slight amendments to LCT boundaries were also made where deemed necessary – an example being unenclosed land at Roborough Down being previously classified as within an enclosed farmland LCT.
- 3.21 A new field verification exercise was not been considered necessary for the update, as significant visual changes have not been witnessed in the National Park since the original fieldwork. The study did, however, seek to verify the current and likely future forces for change impacting on the Dartmoor landscape – information gauged through targeted stakeholder consultation (see below).

Stage 2: Focused stakeholder consultation

- 3.22 Due to public consultation undertaken for the original study, a focused stakeholder workshop was held for the update – concentrating on gauging information on the condition of the landscape and the current and future forces for change.
- 3.23 A stakeholder consultation workshop was held at the Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) offices on 14th December 2016 and included attendees from DNPA, Devon County Council, surrounding local authorities, Natural England, Dartmoor Commoners Council and Dartmoor Preservation Association. A list of workshop attendees and summary of the workshop discussions is available on request from DNPA.
- 3.24 Please note that decisions around landscape policy, informed by the evidence in this LCA, will form part of the public consultation on the Local Plan, and later the National Park Management Plan. The LCA will also be published at the time of Local Plan consultation as supporting evidence for the Plan. It would also be necessary to undertake statutory consultation if it is decided that the document should be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Stage 3: Draft report

- 3.25 A draft report was submitted to the internal DNPA Steering Group for comment in February 2017.

Stage 4: Final Report

- 3.26 Following comments from the DNPA Steering Group, the 2017 Landscape Character Assessment report and updated LCT classification were finalised.

4 Landscape Character Type descriptions



4 Landscape Character Type descriptions

Format of the LCT descriptive profiles

- 4.1 The majority of the National Park is classified into seven LCTs, with marginal areas on the periphery of the National Park boundary falling within a further three (shaded in light green in the contents table below).

Landscape Character Type	Page number (<i>Ctrl + click to jump to page</i>)
1K: Unsettled High Upland Moorland	40
1L: Upland Moorland with Tors	47
3D: Upland River Valleys	55
2D: Moorland Edge Slopes	63
5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land	71
1J: Farmed and Forested Plateau	78
3A: Upper Farmed and Wooded Slopes	85
3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors	92
3E: Lowland Plains	96
3F: Settled Valley Floors	100

- 4.2 It is important when considering the LCTs on the periphery of the National Park to refer to the Landscape Character Assessments produced by the adjacent authorities – within which the majority of these LCTs will lie. The relevant DCA profiles – available on the Devon County Council website – should also be referred to for further local detail.
- 4.3 The descriptive profiles are structured as follows – note that the three peripheral LCTs do not include the ‘Landscape condition and forces for change’ section:

Map and summary of location and landscape character

- 4.4 An overview map shows the location of the LCT within the National Park, followed by a summary paragraph explaining its distribution within the landscape, and an overview of landscape character.

Representative photographs of the landscape

- 4.5 These help the reader appreciate the visual character of the LCT.

Key characteristics and valued landscape attributes

- 4.6 In bullet point format, the key characteristics provide a more detailed explanation of character of the LCT in Dartmoor. Following the key characteristics is a boxed set of ‘valued attributes’ – these were selected from fieldwork observations and opinions from the workshops held to inform the study. The valued attributes are those aspects of the landscape that are really key to landscape character – i.e. if any one attribute ceased to exist, it would have a major impact on the landscape concerned.

Landscape condition and forces for change

- 4.7 The first part of this section is a boxed summary of current landscape condition, based on fieldwork observations and information from other sources (e.g. SSSI condition assessments, aerial photographic interpretation, the DCA and NCA descriptions).
- 4.8 This is followed by a bullet point summary of past/current forces for change affecting landscape character, along with a list of potential future forces for change – gauged from opinions given during the workshops, from fieldwork and from other references such as the National Park Management Plan and NCA descriptions.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

- 4.9 This section begins with an 'Overall Landscape Strategy' for the LCT – summarising what the subsequent landscape guidelines are seeking to achieve for the landscape as a whole in the future. The strategy aims to provide an overarching ambition for the future landscape of the LCT concerned.
- 4.10 The landscape guidelines are arranged under the headings of 'protect', 'manage' and 'plan'; the broad definitions provided by the European Landscape Convention (ELC). Input from stakeholder consultations was sought when shaping the guidelines for each LCT.
- 4.11 The ELC definitions are summarised below, followed by text in italics showing the 'traditional' terminology often used for landscape guidelines:

Landscape protection consists of measures to preserve the present character and quality of a landscape which is greatly valued on account of its distinctive natural or cultural configuration. Such protection must be active and involve upkeep measures to preserve significant features of a landscape. *Other terms often used include 'conserve', 'preserve' and 'sustain'.*

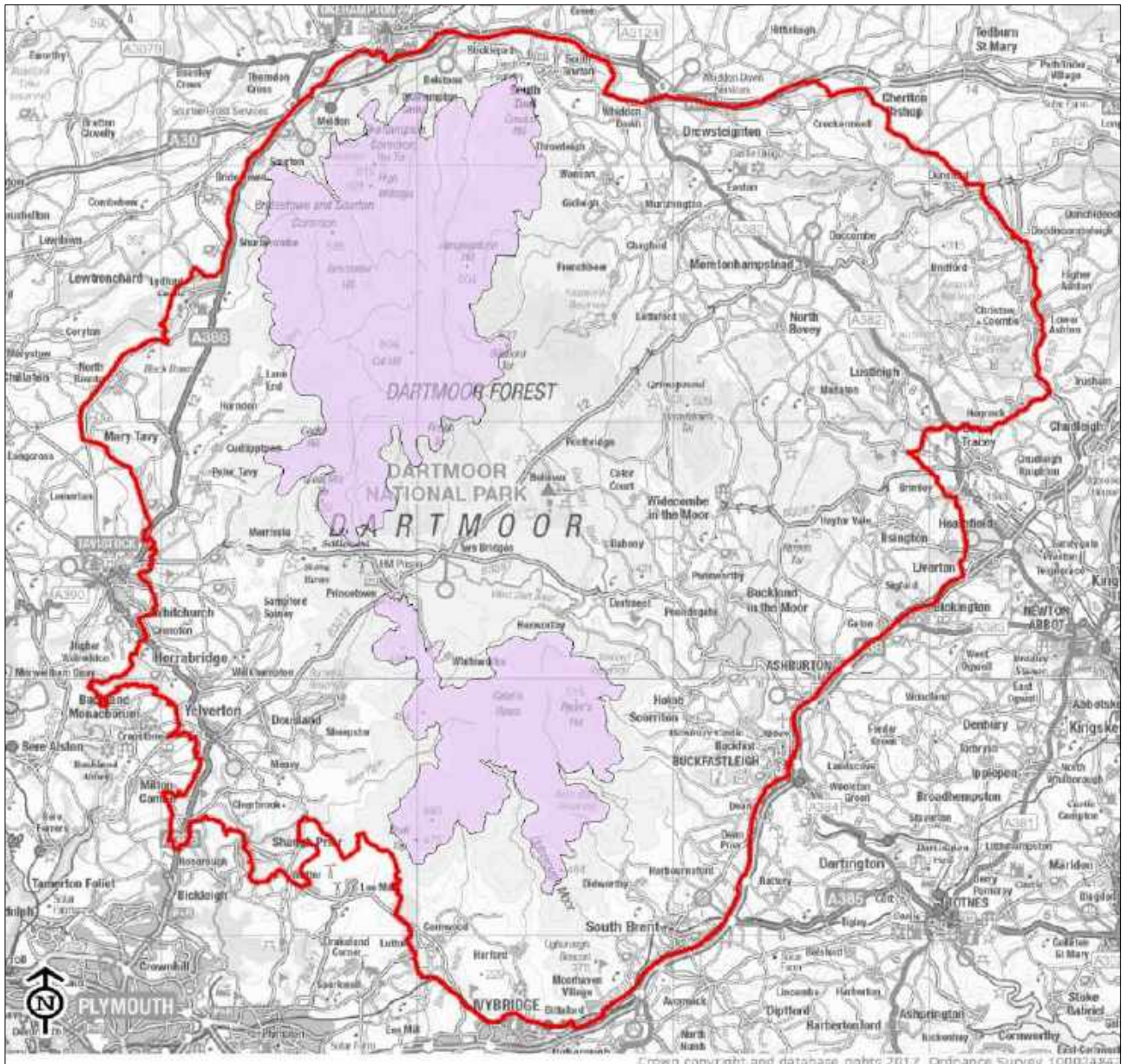
Landscape management is any measure introduced, in accordance with the principle of sustainable development, to steer changes brought about by economic, social or environmental necessity. Such measures may be concerned with organisation of the landscape or its components. They will ensure a regular upkeep of the landscape and that the landscape evolves harmoniously and in a way that meets economic and social needs. The management approach must be a dynamic one and seek to improve landscape quality on the basis of the population's expectations. *Other terms used include 'maintain', 'enhance', 'strengthen' and in some cases 'restore'.*

Landscape planning is the process by which new landscapes are created to meet the aspirations of the people concerned. It involves framing planning projects, more particularly in those most affected by change and badly damaged areas (for example suburbs, peri-urban and industrial areas). The purpose of such planning projects is to reshape the damaged landscapes. *Other terms include 're-create', 'create' and 'restore'.*

(Taken from Article 1 of the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe), March 2004)

- 4.12 The ELC also provides a helpful overarching aim which has strongly influenced the approach taken in preparing the landscape strategies and guidelines for Dartmoor's LCTs:
- "In seeking the right balance between protection, management and planning of a landscape, it should be remembered that the aim is not the preservation or "freezing" of the landscape at a particular point in its lengthy evolution. Landscapes have always changed and will continue to change, both through natural processes and through human action. In fact, the aim should be to manage future changes in a way which recognises the great diversity and the quality of the landscapes that we inherit and which seeks to preserve, or even enhance, that diversity and quality instead of allowing them to decline"* (paragraph 42 of Article 1).
- 4.13 The landscape guidelines seek to deliver multiple benefits (sometimes referred to as the 'ecosystem services' or 'natural capital' approach) and, in particular, seek to strengthen the landscape's resilience to future change.

1K: Unsettled High Upland Moorland



Summary of location and landscape character

The Unsettled High Moorland LCT forms two discrete plateaux separated by the Dart Valley, containing the highest and most remote land in Dartmoor rising to 621 metres at High Willhays. Large expanses of heather and grass moorland form broad, uninterrupted skylines broken only by the occasional tor and rock outcrop. The landscape is crossed by a network of streams and valley mires fed by thick deposits of peat and blanket bogs on the plateaux tops – forming the source of many of the major rivers of Devon. High levels of tranquillity and remoteness are occasionally interrupted by sounds relating to the long-standing military use of the moor, whilst the strong time depth of the landscape is reflected in a rich archaeological resource tracing human activity over many millennia. The high, open moorland scene affords expansive and panoramic views across the surrounding lower landscapes within the National Park and beyond.

Representative photographs of the landscape



Key characteristics

- Large scale, unsettled upland plateaux with broad ridges, expansive panoramic views and an overwhelming sense of remoteness and exposure. This Type includes the highest land in the National Park, rising to 621 metres at High Willhays.
- Occasional tors and rock outcrops are dotted along the plateaux edges, providing distinctive crumpled silhouettes contrasting with smooth, uninterrupted skylines.
- Large expanses of grass and heather moorland are interspersed with patches of bilberry, purple moor grass, gorse and bracken – extensively grazed by sheep, cattle and ponies.
- Blanket bog and mixed valley mires cover a large proportion of the plateau tops where thick layers of peat are found. These important upland habitats are internationally recognised for their nature conservation interest.
- A major water catchment, with an extensive network of small moorland streams and mires in shallow valleys radiating off the plateaux tops, feeding larger watercourses draining the moor.
- The strong time depth of the landscape is reflected in the extensive remains of ancient settlements, cairns and boundaries, particularly associated with the Bronze Age period.
- Evidence of the area's mining heritage from the medieval period is associated with numerous tinner's huts sited close to valley mires, along with evidence of early 'streaming' – where alluvial tin was extracted from the stream and river beds.
- There is an absence of settlement and intrusion resulting in high levels of tranquillity and dark night skies. The only modern built structures are found on the northern plateau relating to its long-standing use for military training.
- A sparse network of rights of way often follows ancient tracks. The Two Moors Way and historic Abbot's Way cross the southern moorland plateau.

Valued landscape attributes

- Open and expansive landscape with extensive views.
- Isolation and exposure – a wild, bleak, remote and empty landscape.
- Undeveloped, smooth skylines with rounded profiles contrasting with rocky tors.
- Rich and varied semi-natural habitats of high nature conservation value, grazed by Dartmoor ponies and native breeds of cattle and sheep and supporting distinctive wildlife species.
- Strong time depth – numerous historic features found scattered across the landscape.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity with dark night skies.

Landscape condition and forces for change

Summary of landscape condition

Because much of the landscape is unsettled and remote, the structure of the landscape – with its open expanses of moorland and lack of built development – is intact. The only modern built structures present relate to the long-standing military use of the moor in the north. This use can interrupt the overriding sense of tranquillity and remoteness for which the landscape is renowned, introducing built elements into an otherwise undeveloped landscape. The condition of the LCT's large tracts of heather and grass moorland has been affected by land management practices since the Second World War, with some locations experiencing over-grazing in the post-war years resulting in a predominance of grassland over heather, whilst others have lost their open, heathland character due to scrub / bracken encroachment following reduced grazing and burning levels since the early 1990s, as well as a milder climate. Past habitat and archaeological damage caused by over-grazing, drainage and burning has affected internationally important peat and blanket bog deposits. Efforts to remedy these effects have included agri-environment support and initiatives such as the National Park Authority-led Blanket Bog Restoration Project and 2010-2015 Mires on the Moors programme.

Forces for change

Past / current forces for change

- Historic peat cutting and drainage operations (dating as far back as the medieval period), reducing the area of blanket bog, valley mire and damaging archaeological features.
- Impact of recreation on open moorland including erosion, disturbance of wildlife and car parking. Concentrated impacts are associated with large-scale recreational events such as the Ten Tors Challenge and large scale bike rides/endurance events.
- Increased pressure for signage along moorland roads which can change visual and perceptual qualities of the landscape.
- Urban fringe issues including fly tipping and general littering. This is particularly noticeable in car parking areas.
- Military use of large areas of the LCT since the 19th century, with associated impacts including off-road vehicular use, the building of structures (e.g. warning signs, look-out shelters and flagpoles) and noise related to live firing and helicopters flying overhead. Live firing restricts public access at certain times of the year.
- Bracken and gorse no longer used for livestock bedding or fuel – with this trend contributing towards their spread within the open moorland.
- Traffic noise from the A30 impacting on the tranquillity of the open moor in areas where it is in close proximity (including Okehampton Common and Yes Tor).
- Increased numbers of telecommunications masts (relating to increased demand for mobile infrastructure and broadband internet) introducing prominent vertical structures.
- Changing agricultural economics in the late 1990s to the present day (e.g. the move away from headage to area payments through Single Farm Payment and winter livestock removal through ESA), with past problems of overgrazing now switching to undergrazing – with a spread of gorse and bracken.
- Recent decline in the market value of livestock and ongoing decline in traditional upland farming and commoning also resulting in lower numbers of stock on the moor.

Future forces for change

- Uncertain future for the agricultural economy – levels of future funding support and market prices for livestock unknown.

- Loss of rural skills required to maintain traditional landscape features and potentially a further decline in upland farming and levels of livestock grazing. Some areas of open moor may become scrubby/wooded as a result.
- Peat bog restoration effects may also have an impact on farming and grazing patterns leading to a change in vegetation cover and the appearance of the moor.
- Development pressure from within the National Park and outside (e.g. areas in close proximity to the A38 road corridor; the Plymouth conurbation) leading to potential demands for increased water supply (through new reservoirs).
- Population growth and increasing popularity of UK-based holidays resulting in associated recreation impacts and demand for infrastructure (e.g. signage, benches, litter bins, car parking).
- Impacts of new recreational activities including drone flying (which introduces noise and movement, impacting on local levels of tranquillity).

Climate change impacts

- Potential drying out of wet heath, blanket bog and valley mires due to an increased frequency of drought conditions in the summer months. These conditions may also lead to more frequent and intensive moorland fires and erosion causing damage to archaeological sites.
- Increased autumn and winter precipitation levels could lead to higher water levels in upland streams, mires and tracts of blanket bog, resulting in more frequent downstream flooding.
- Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland resulting in a decrease in the area of open heather moorland and a 'scrubbing up' of upland stream valleys.
- Increased difficulty in managing swaling in drier summer conditions and an increased danger of fires.
- Increase in the prevalence of pests and diseases which may affect species such as heather and bilberry.
- Spread of non-native and alien species in response to a changing climate. The changing climate will likely result in conditions which favour some species, but not others, overall resulting in a net loss of biodiversity.

Climate change responses

- Potential changes to subsidies and markets for renewables, leading to increased demand for wind turbines, solar farms, hydroelectric plants and other technologies, including in locations visible from the open moor.
- Higher demand for UK food production potentially leading to an increase in stocking levels on the commons, resulting in the overgrazing of upland habitats and spread of grassland.
- Scope for re-wilding in the form of peat bog restoration or afforestation to improve water management, attenuation and biodiversity.
- Scope for increased woodland planting and regeneration, including at the heads of stream valleys to enhance flood storage capacity, water filtration and carbon sequestration functions to strengthen the landscape's resilience to climate change.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the open and remote character of the Unsettled High Moorland LCT, with its rich archaeological heritage reflecting thousands of years of human interaction. Manage and enhance internationally important habitats through traditional upland farming practices, whilst ensuring the landscape's resilience to climate change is strengthened to benefit the wider National Park and its surrounding communities.

Landscape and planning guidelines

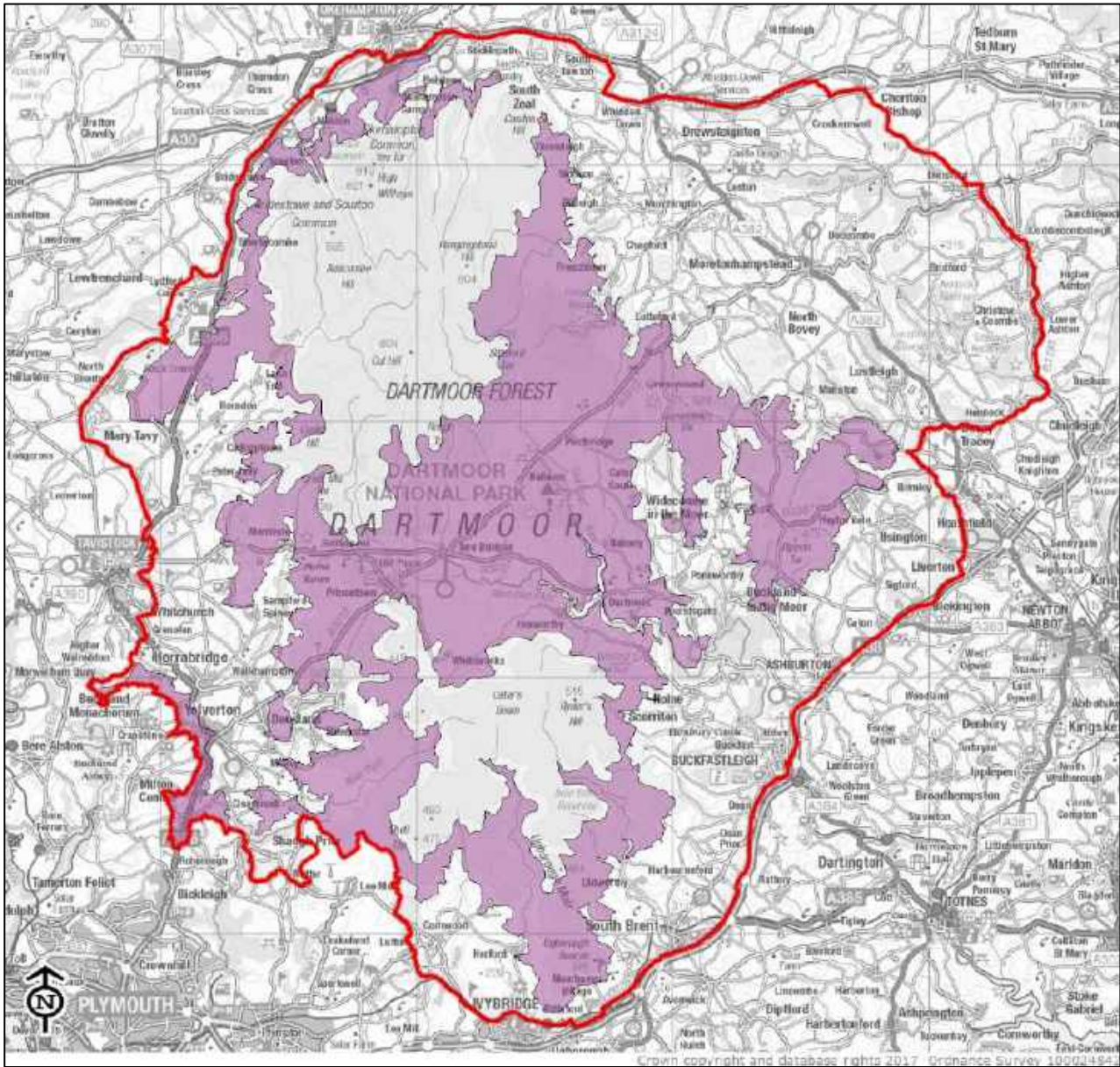
Guideline
PROTECT
<p>Protect and appropriately manage the rich cultural heritage of the area, including Bronze Age ceremonial and ritual monuments, former tin workings, tanners' huts, mine shafts, ancient trackways and deserted ancient settlements. The removal of scrub and light grazing should be used to maintain and enhance the setting of features, including groups of monuments within PALs.</p> <p>Promote understanding of the landscape's archaeology to ensure public access and recreation respects the presence of valued sites and features.</p>
<p>Protect the geological and geomorphological features of the landscape, including tors and clitter slopes and implement appropriate management regimes (e.g. sustaining grazing on clitter slopes).</p>
<p>Protect the undeveloped character of the open plateaux, seeking to reduce the impacts of military activity whilst respecting this long-standing land use (as long as national interests demand its continuation).</p>
<p>Avoid the development of vertical structures and planting of trees / woodland on the open moorland to maintain its open character and lack of intrusion.</p>
MANAGE
<p>Manage and enhance tracts of heather moorland through extensive grazing and controlled burning at appropriate levels to enhance biodiversity and sustain traditional upland farming practices. Encourage an increase in numbers of Dartmoor ponies and other local livestock breeds (e.g. White face and Greyface Dartmoor sheep) whilst ensuring numbers remain sustainable and in line with conservation objectives.</p>
<p>Manage and enhance important wetland habitats, particularly blanket bogs and valley mires, through preserving and managing water flows and controlling invasive vegetation. This will enhance their roles in storing and absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide and regulating stream and river flows.</p>
PLAN
<p>Create, extend and link upland habitats, particularly blanket bog, valley mire, western heath and heather moorland. Reduce the overall area of acid grassland through encouraging heather regeneration whilst retaining areas of importance for species diversity and as habitat for ground nesting birds.</p>

Guideline

Consider the potential for allowing the natural regeneration of semi-natural woodland and scrub along the upper courses of streams to enhance flood storage capacity to reduce downstream flooding and improve water quality. In addition, carefully consider whether it is appropriate to allow natural regeneration to take place on the open moorland. Where appropriate, manage woodland through sensitive coppicing techniques, with residues used as a potential fuel source.

Plan for the effects of larger scale developments on the periphery of the National Park (e.g. quarrying, large scale housing developments) – for example by exploring requirements for landscape scale mitigation to minimise or offset the impacts felt within this LCT.

1L: Upland Moorland with Tors



Summary of location and landscape character

This is a large-scale moorland landscape sweeping below the high plateaux and summits of the Unsettled High Moorland LCT. Smooth outlines are punctuated by many tors and jagged rock outcrops, with slopes often strewn by granite boulders and 'clitter'. Areas of open moorland grazed by free-roaming livestock are fringed by a strong pattern of newtaks marked by granite walls containing rough grazing land. The landscape contains numerous sites and features of archaeological significance, scattered within a mosaic of heather and grass moorland punctuated by wetland habitats of international importance. Small villages and hamlets occupy sheltered locations, often associated with streams and rivers draining from the moor.

Representative photographs of the landscape



Key characteristics

- A gently rolling, large scale moorland landscape with a strong sense of exposure, tranquillity and far reaching, often panoramic views.
- Tors punctuate the smooth moorland slopes, fringed by scatterings of granite boulders and clutter slopes. The tors form characteristic silhouettes on smooth, uninterrupted skylines.
- Large conifer plantations create dark blocks with hard edges, contrasting with the smooth, muted landscape backdrop.
- Patches of deciduous woodland are dominated by oak, ash and beech; generally limited to valley sides and around settlements.
- Vegetation cover on more elevated areas is of a heathland character with a patchwork of heather and grass moor, Western heath, gorse scrub, tufts of Molinia grass, bracken and scattered, windswept trees.
- Free-roaming sheep, cattle and ponies are strongly associated with the moorland scene.
- Valley mires and blanket bogs thread through the rolling landscape before feeding into fast-flowing tributary streams, which grow in size and occupy steep sided valleys off the moor.
- Strong pattern of late 18th and 19th century 'newtakes' surround the moorland core, defined by a regular pattern of granite drystone walls and low hedgebanks enclosing rough grazing land.
- Numerous sites and features of high archaeological significance include prehistoric cairns, ceremonial monuments, round houses, hut circles, deserted medieval settlements, ancient field systems and boundary markings. Often constructed from granite, these features add to the 'rocky' appearance of the moor.
- Former mineral workings and associated buildings dating from the medieval period onwards and 19th century quarries scatter the landscape, providing evidence of a long history of a moorland exploited by people.
- Local vernacular is characterised predominantly by granite and slate. Settlements are small and clustered around bridging points or crossroads nestled into the folds of the landscape. Isolated farmsteads, often with colourwashed walls, are dotted across the moorland; commonly framed by trees providing shelter from the elements.
- Princetown stands out in an exposed position as the largest settlement, backed by expansive moorland and fringed by large geometric field patterns. The prison dominates views when approaching the town from the east.
- The moorland is crossed by an extensive rights of way network including the Two Moors Way and the historic Abbot's Way. Open and straight roads cross the moorland contrasting with small, winding lanes traversing the lower slopes.
- The telecommunications mast above Princetown is a prominent vertical element standing out on the uninterrupted western skylines.

Valued landscape attributes

- Dramatic moorland landscape, with wide open spaces, panoramic views and a strong sense of tranquillity.
- Traditional upland farming communities with the moorland grazed by Dartmoor ponies and native hill breeds of sheep and cattle.
- Valued wildlife habitats including blanket bogs, mires and heather moorland – home to rare upland birds.
- Hill tops dominated by granite tors and other geological features.
- Rich archaeological heritage with numerous archaeological remains.
- Unifying granite local vernacular displayed in farmhouses, bridges, stone walls and settlements linked by deep lanes.
- Valued area for recreation, with large tracts of open access land.

Landscape condition and forces for change

Summary of landscape condition

The heather moorland has suffered from overgrazing (particularly in the winter months), drainage and inappropriate burning levels over past decades, leading to a dominance of grass moor over heather and some drying out of important wetland habitats. In other locations, bracken and scrub encroachment has impacted on the open character of the moorland due to insufficient grazing levels and the impacts of climate change, and historic stone walls have fallen out of management and gapped up with wire fencing in parts. Agri-environment schemes have been helping to tackle these issues particularly within the North Dartmoor and East Dartmoor SSSIs through managing and more appropriately targeting grazing and burning practices. Overall, this landscape retains its open moorland character, with low levels of intrusive development or light pollution. The telecommunications mast on North Hessary Tor, along with the prominent granite settlement of Princetown, stand out in the bleak landscape resulting in reduced local levels of tranquillity. Small-scale, incremental development change on the fringes of the LCT – particularly related to tourism and equine activities – is having localised impacts on landscape character.

Forces for change

Past / current forces for change

- Development of reservoirs in the late 19th and 20th centuries to provide a water supply to surrounding urban populations.
- Grey squirrel populations threatening the maturation of oak trees and dissuading the forestry industry from new woodland planting. Potential for pine marten introduction as an alternative to culling.
- Ash trees threatened by die-back caused by *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*. The spread of *Phytophthora*, a disease associated with heavy or waterlogged soils, is being controlled by widespread larch felling which is likely to be replaced with Sitka spruce.
- Light pollution from Dartmoor Prison in Princetown detracting from the experience of dark night skies and sense of wilderness on the open moor.
- Early 20th century planting of conifer blocks on former areas of heather moorland which are now reaching maturity. Current Forestry Commission Forest Design Plans propose the conversion of plantation to broadleaved woodland, particularly on woodland edges, along with a move away from clear-felling in some areas to a staged felling process.
- Post World War II intensification of agriculture which included drainage and burning operations on the open moor. This caused a spread of grass at the expense of heather as well as damage to blanket bog, valley mires and archaeological features.
- Military activity near Lydford making some parts of the moor temporarily inaccessible and impacting on tranquillity due to live-firing exercises.
- Changing agricultural economics from the late 1990s (e.g. the move away from headage to area payments through Single Farm Payment and winter livestock removal through ESA), with past problems of overgrazing now switching to undergrazing.
- Recent decline in the market value of livestock and ongoing decline in traditional upland farming and commoning also resulting in lower numbers of stock on the moor.
- Variable management of stone walls and Devon hedgebanks associated with the newtakes on the edge of the moorland.
- Pressure from tourism and people moving to the area leading to farm conversions and an increase in traffic levels on roads crossing the moor.

- Recreational pressure in more accessible honeypot locations, such as at Haytor and Postbridge. Landscape impacts can include erosion, car parking and anti-social behaviour (including fly tipping). Concentrated pressure can be associated with large-scale recreational events.
- Impacts of new recreational activities including drone flying (which introduces noise and movement, impacting on local levels of tranquillity).
- Visual and noise impacts from quarrying at Lee Moor (china clay) and Drakelands (tungsten), just outside the National Park boundary in the south west.
- Spread of commercial and other industrial development on the fringes of Plymouth and Ivybridge – with associated noise and visual impacts felt within the southern parts of the LCT.
- Traffic noise from the A30 corridor affecting tranquillity levels on the northern fringes of the LCT.
- Increased numbers of telecommunications masts (relating to increased demand for mobile infrastructure and broadband internet) introducing prominent vertical structures.
- The undergrounding of the Walkhampton to Princetown power lines in 2014 has improved visual amenity locally.
- Popularity of wood heating in domestic households has improved the viability of wood chip and fire wood businesses, increasing demand for woodland and hedgerow management.

Future forces for change

- Uncertain future for the agricultural economy – levels of future funding support and market prices for farmed products unknown.
- The gradual felling of single-age blocks of coniferous plantation that have reached maturity is likely to result in prominent landscape changes in some localities.
- Development pressure from within the National Park and outside (e.g. areas in close proximity to the A38 road corridor; the Plymouth conurbation) leading to potential demands for increased water supply (through new reservoirs) and local aggregates (from quarrying).
- New quarrying activity outside the National Park (e.g. Drakelands mine and Lee Moor -extraction, processing and tipping) could be visible in long views from this LCT.
- Demand for small-scale quarrying within the National Park – particularly to provide local stone to new development.
- Increase in UK-based tourism with associated demands for new facilities and infrastructure, as well as an increase in traffic levels, recreational pressure and farm conversions.
- Further recreational demand from expanding urban centres close to Dartmoor, including Plymouth.
- Continued trend in hobby farming, people retiring to the area and home working pushing house prices out of the reach of local people (particularly young farmers) leading to a further decline in local skills and upland farming traditions.

Climate change impacts

- Potential drying out of wet heath, blanket bog and valley mires due to an increased frequency of drought conditions in the summer months. These conditions may also lead to more frequent and intensive moorland fires and erosion causing damage to archaeological sites.
- Increased autumn and winter precipitation levels could lead to higher water levels in upland streams, mires and tracts of blanket bog, resulting in more frequent downstream flooding.
- Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland resulting in a decrease in the area of open heather moorland and a 'scrubbing up' of upland stream valleys.
- Increase in the prevalence of pests and diseases which may affect species such as heather and bilberry.
- Spread of non-native and alien species in response to a changing climate.

Climate change responses

- Potential changes to renewable subsidies leading to increased demand for wind turbines, solar farms, hydroelectric and other renewable energy technologies within the open, exposed landscapes of the moorland, as well as outside the National Park visible in long views from this LCT.
- Further demand for domestic and community-scale renewable energy installations such as solar panels, small wind turbines, hydro-electric power and ground-source heat pumps.
- Scope for increased woodland planting and regeneration (impacting on open character); planted to enhance the landscape's roles in filtering water, minimising downstream flooding, storing and sequestering carbon dioxide and providing low-carbon fuel sources (through coppice management).
- Potential for re-wilding in the form of peat bog restoration or afforestation to improve water management, attenuation and biodiversity.
- Higher demand for domestic food production potentially leading to pressure for agricultural improvement on the moorland fringes.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

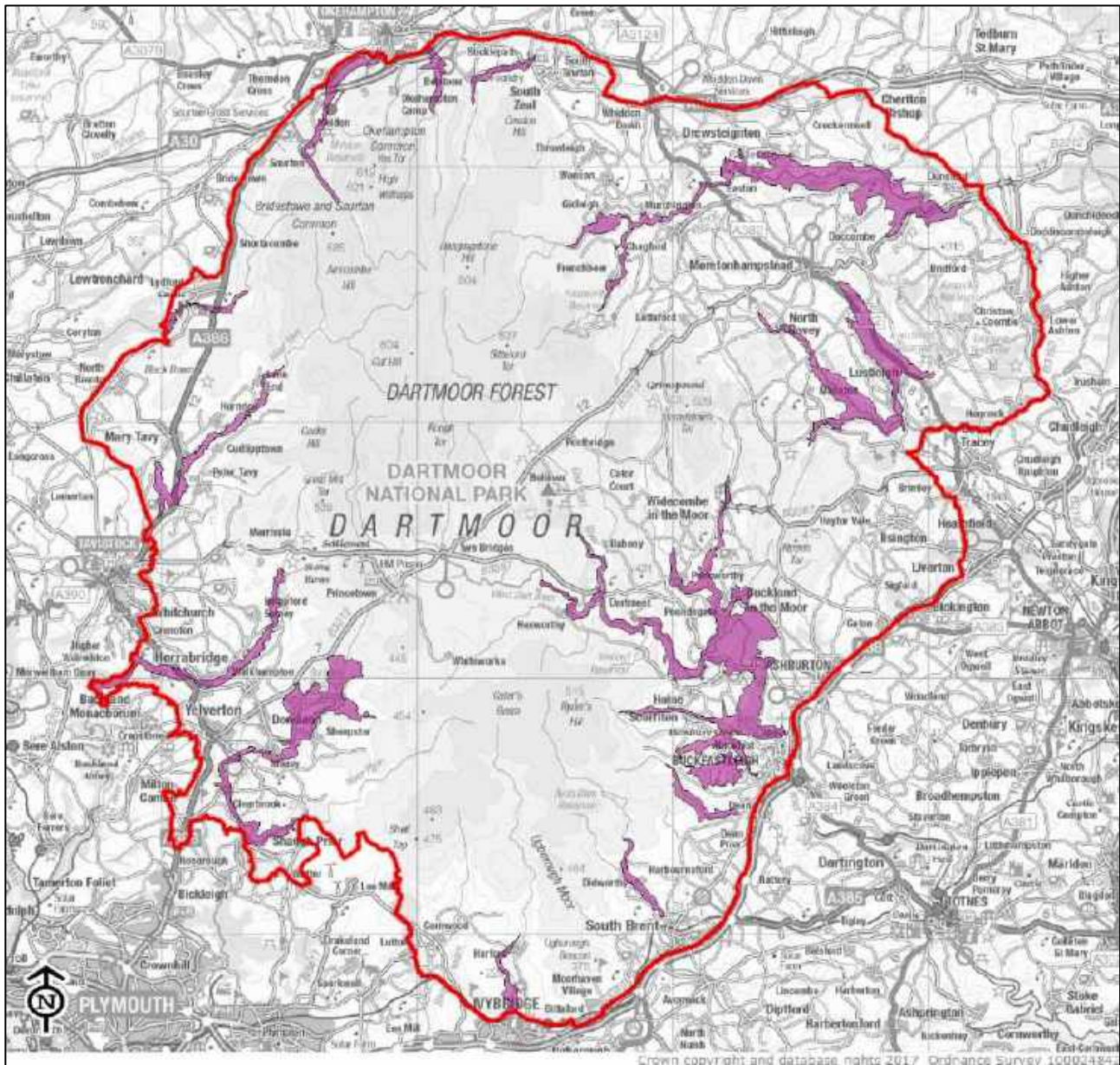
Protect the rich cultural, geological and natural heritage of the Moorland with Tors landscape, retaining its strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity. Manage and plan the landscape to strengthen resilience to the impacts of climate change, managing sustainable recreational opportunities and promoting greater habitat linkages for a range of public benefits.

Landscape and planning guidelines

Guideline
PROTECT
Protect the distinctive geology and periglacial features of the landscape, including the famous granite tors, clitter slopes and boulder runs. Remove scrub and secondary woodland on clitter / boulder-strewn slopes through extensive grazing. Provide guidance and interpretation to enhance public understanding and manage recreational activities (e.g. climbing), to reduce damage.
Protect and appropriately manage the rich cultural heritage of the area, particularly Bronze Age landscapes with their ceremonial and ritual monuments, medieval landscapes and features relating to the area's industrial heritage. The removal of scrub and appropriate grazing levels should be used to maintain and enhance the setting of features, including groups of monuments within PALs.
Promote understanding and sensitive interpretation of the landscape's archaeology to ensure public access and recreation respects the presence of valued sites and features – particularly where located on Open Access Land or close to Public Rights of Way.
Protect the sparsely settled character, high levels of tranquillity and dark night skies, as well as panoramic views across the open moorland, resisting significant intrusions (including lighting). Avoid locating any new development on the open moorland or outside the existing built form of the small, clustered medieval settlements.
Protect in a good state of repair the strong unifying local building vernacular of granite and slate, with some colourwashing. 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).
Protect the historically important network of leats; restoring and maintaining sections to preserve their important role in water management and supplying agricultural and domestic needs.
Protect and manage ancient and veteran trees as important landscape features of the enclosed landscapes surrounding the open moorland.
Avoid the development of vertical structures and planting of trees / woodland on the open moorland to maintain its open character and lack of intrusion.
MANAGE
Manage and enhance tracts of heather moorland through continued livestock grazing at appropriate levels to reduce levels of scrub and bracken, enhance biodiversity and sustain traditional upland farming practices. Encourage and support an increase in numbers of Dartmoor ponies and other local livestock breeds (e.g. White Face and Greyface Dartmoor sheep) whilst ensuring numbers remain sustainable and in line with conservation objectives.

Guideline
Manage and enhance important wetland habitats, particularly valley mires, through preserving and managing water flows and controlling invasive vegetation. This will enhance their roles in storing and absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide and regulating stream and river flows.
Manage the recreational uses of the landscape, ensuring damage to wildlife habitats and archaeology is reduced and mass events are closely supervised – whilst enhancing opportunities for sustainable tourism and recreation.
PLAN
Plan for the long-term restructuring and removal of conifer plantations occupying prominent positions on the open moor, with hard visual edges softened and a move towards their gradual removal and reversion to heather moorland. Any felling operations should respect the presence of archaeological features and wildlife. Consider retaining some of the less prominent conifer plantations as places for recreation off the open moor (e.g. for mountain biking).
Create, extend and link upland habitats, particularly valley mire, western heath and heather moorland. Reduce the overall area of acid grassland through encouraging heather regeneration whilst retaining areas of importance for species diversity and as habitat for ground nesting birds.
Consider the potential for natural regeneration of semi-natural woodland (particularly oak) and scrub along the upper courses of moorland tributaries to enhance flood storage capacity, water filtration and carbon sequestration functions. Encourage coppice management where appropriate and explore opportunities for use of wood as a potential fuel source.
Consider the introduction of noise attenuation and reduced lighting on major road corridors (including the A30) to reduce impacts on levels of tranquillity and dark night skies within this LCT.
Plan for the effects of larger scale developments on the periphery of the National Park (e.g. quarrying, large scale housing developments) – for example by exploring requirements for landscape scale mitigation to minimise or offset the impacts felt within this LCT.

3D: Upland River Valleys



Summary of location and landscape character

This LCT comprises the spectacular courses of Dartmoor's major rivers as they drain from the central moorland plateaux – namely the Taw, East & West Okement, Lyd, Tavy, Walkham, Meavy, Plym, Erme, Avon, Dean Burn, Dart, Bovey, Wray Brook and Teign. The rivers are characterised by clean, fast flowing water tumbling through steep, woodland cloaked valleys which form strong physical and ecological connections between Dartmoor's upland core and its surrounding lowlands.

Representative photographs of the landscape



Key characteristics

- Steep-sided river valleys radiating out from the upland core, forming fingers draining from the moorland. These are fed by a series of upland tributaries and mires which usually, but not exclusively, drain southwards from the moor.
- The lower reaches of the valleys have a more enclosed and intimate character, contrasting with their open and exposed upper courses where they cut through the granite plateaux.
- Valley floors are fringed by wet woodland and often Rhôs pasture, whilst valley sides are cloaked in extensive areas of ancient semi-natural woodland dominated by sessile oak and beech of high nature conservation importance.
- The valleys are varied and colourful, with broadleaved woodlands providing seasonal interest through a range of colours including autumnal reds and oranges, and blankets of bluebells, primroses and wild garlic in spring.
- Some valleys, including the Teign and the Meavy, are fringed by large areas of coniferous plantation.
- Rivers are fast flowing and quickly swell in size after rainfall drains from the moorland. As they pass over rocky courses, there are areas of white-water, small waterfalls and gushing torrents.
- Some valleys demonstrate links to Dartmoor's industrial past – including a strong network of leats. Shipley Bridge on the Avon still retains structures from past china clay extraction and the distillation of oil from peat (naptha).
- Valley woodlands contain evidence of past woodland management, including coppicing and the remains of charcoal bunders and hearths.
- Medieval granite stone bridges are characterful features of the valley landscapes. These often form the historic focus for the location of hamlets, small villages and farmsteads with a unifying granite and slate local vernacular.
- Reservoirs are prominent features within the Meavy and West Okement valleys.
- Small, narrow winding roads traverse steep valley sides, often enclosed by high hedgerows creating 'tunnels' through the landscape. Larger settlements along the lower reaches of the main rivers on the edge of the National Park, traditional at their cores, include 20th century development displaying a mixture of vernacular styles and materials.

Valued landscape attributes

- Times when the light and sound of fast-flowing, bubbling water running over rocky river beds can be experienced (can vary seasonally).
- Strong perceptions of tranquillity, remoteness and seclusion: 'a place to hide'.
- Steep valley sides covered in dense broadleaved woodlands of high nature conservation importance.
- Valued industrial archaeology and historic stone bridges forming characteristic features.
- Much-loved areas of Dartmoor for both locals and visitors for a range of recreational activities.
- Sheltered landscape of high scenic value contrasting with the wild moorland above.

Landscape condition and forces for change

Summary of landscape condition

Dartmoor's rivers are classic features within the National Park, forming dynamic, moving elements within the open moorland and surrounding farmland. The valleys retain a strong sense of tranquillity, with little intrusive development along their main stretches. Some of the lower reaches of the valleys pass through the edges of the larger settlements, where a mixture of 20th / 21st century development can be out of keeping with traditional building styles and materials (e.g. the Erme on the fringes of Ivybridge, and the Dart around Buckfastleigh). The river valleys' strong sense of place is enhanced by their extensive covering of semi-natural woodland on steep slopes, often oak dominated and of ancient origin. These woodlands support a rich ground flora including wild flowers and rare mosses forming a luxuriant carpet over boulders and trees. Some woodlands are suffering from a decline in traditional management, leading to an even-age structure, spread of species such as beech and sycamore, and an invasion of exotics within their understoreys. Access by livestock and deer has slowed levels of natural regeneration in some woodlands, causing the poaching of wet ground and eutrophication of nearby watercourses. The Meavy and Teign Valleys contain extensive tracts of coniferous plantation which are now reaching maturity. The rivers themselves contain clean, fast flowing water with generally low levels of pollution.

Forces for change

Past / current forces for change

- Development of the Burrator Reservoir at the head of the Meavy Valley (constructed in 1898), and the 1970s construction of the Meldon Reservoir within the West Okement Valley to supply water to the surrounding urban populations.
- Early 20th century planting of conifer blocks along valleys, particularly extensive along the Meavy and Teign. Extensive felling of larch has occurred along some valley sides due to *Phytophthora* infection.
- Ongoing decline in levels of traditional woodland management (particularly coppicing) in some valleys reducing species and age diversity and leading to an even age structure, although this is being addressed in some woodlands with grant scheme support.
- Subdivision of larger woodlands into smaller plots can result in differing management techniques and regimes being used within one continuous area of woodland.
- Spread of exotic species within ancient semi-natural woodland, including rhododendron and Himalayan balsam, also reflecting a decline in woodland management.
- Overgrazing by deer and livestock impacting on the richness of woodland ground flora and damage to trees (e.g. bark stripping by deer).
- A concentration of livestock in some riverside locations causing poaching on river banks and diffuse pollution (the rivers Tavy, Lyd, Erme, Dart and Avon are part of wider Priority Catchments identified by Defra).
- Increasing levels of water abstraction, with some sections considered by the Environment Agency as 'over-abstracted', particularly during the summer months.
- Popularity of riverside locations for tourism and recreation, including Dartmeet, Steps Bridge, New Bridge, Cadover Bridge and the Burrator and Meldon reservoirs, leading to traffic congestion on rural roads, erosion and reductions in local levels of tranquillity – particularly in the summer months.
- The installation of the Wray Valley Trail has subdivided field patterns in some places. A lack of sustainable transport options exacerbates traffic issues.
- Historic bridges are at risk in some areas due to increased traffic and larger vehicles requiring stronger structures.
- Micro-scale hydropower installations becoming more frequent and with a large variation in scale and design, making their landscape impacts difficult to predict.

Future forces for change

- Development pressure from within and on the fringes of the National Park leading to higher water supply demands – further impacting on water levels and potential demand for new reservoirs.
- Increase in UK-based tourism with associated demands for new facilities and infrastructure, as well as an increase in traffic levels and recreational pressure at ‘honeypot’ sites (both on the rivers and within the valleys).
- Continuing decline in traditional woodland management skills threatening the age and species diversity of semi-natural woodlands.
- Intensification of agriculture on more fertile valley pastures to meet rising food demands, leading to an increased risk of diffuse pollution in watercourses.
- Weirs may be removed as part of ecological restoration measures for migrating fish. Collaborative efforts are required on such projects to reach appropriate solutions that achieve both ecological and heritage conservation goals.
- Heavy metal pollution from old mines may impact on water quality, with temporary infrastructure for monitoring and remediation also having potential landscape and visual impacts.
- Felling of single age plantations resulting in an immediate change to the character of the landscape. The working of some steeper plantation slopes may be less commercially viable and could therefore become more semi-natural in character.
- Forest Design Plans moving from a clear-felling to a staged felling process.

Climate change impacts

- More intense periods of drought leading to the drying out of important wetlands including Rhôs pasture and wet woodland – affecting their functions in reducing flood risk in the winter months.
- Summer droughts reducing the water supply to the upland rivers – as the blanket bogs and other moorland habitats dry out.
- Increased autumn and winter precipitation levels leading to higher water levels in upland streams and consequential increases in flood risk in their lower catchments.
- Increase in poaching on river banks due to wetter autumn and winter conditions leading to waterlogged ground.
- Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland resulting in a ‘scrubbing up’ of the upper courses of the river valleys and a spread of such vegetation in understoreys.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora*) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back. Individual trees may become more susceptible to damage from the increasing frequency and magnitude of storm events.
- Increased extreme weather events leading to other knock-on effects, for example increased flooding, damage or loss of historic bridges.
- Further spread of non-native and alien species in response to a changing climate including Himalayan Balsam and Japanese knotweed.

Climate change responses

- Further demand for harnessing the power of Dartmoor’s fast flowing rivers through hydro-electric schemes.
- Increased demand for active woodland management to produce woodfuel as a low-carbon fuel source.
- Potential changes to renewable energy subsidies and markets, possibly leading to increased demand for renewable energy developments on the periphery of the National Park, impacting on its setting.
- Scope for an expansion of the area of woodland, planted and allowed to spread through natural regeneration to enhance the landscape’s roles in filtering water, minimising downstream flooding,

storing and sequestering carbon dioxide and providing a low-carbon fuel source (through coppice management).

- Planting of non-native woodland species to respond to different growing conditions – altering the species composition of the landscape’s oak-dominated valley woodlands.
- Higher demand for domestic food production potentially leading to an increase in stocking levels and higher incidences of livestock congregating in woodlands (with consequential impacts of poaching and over-grazing).

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

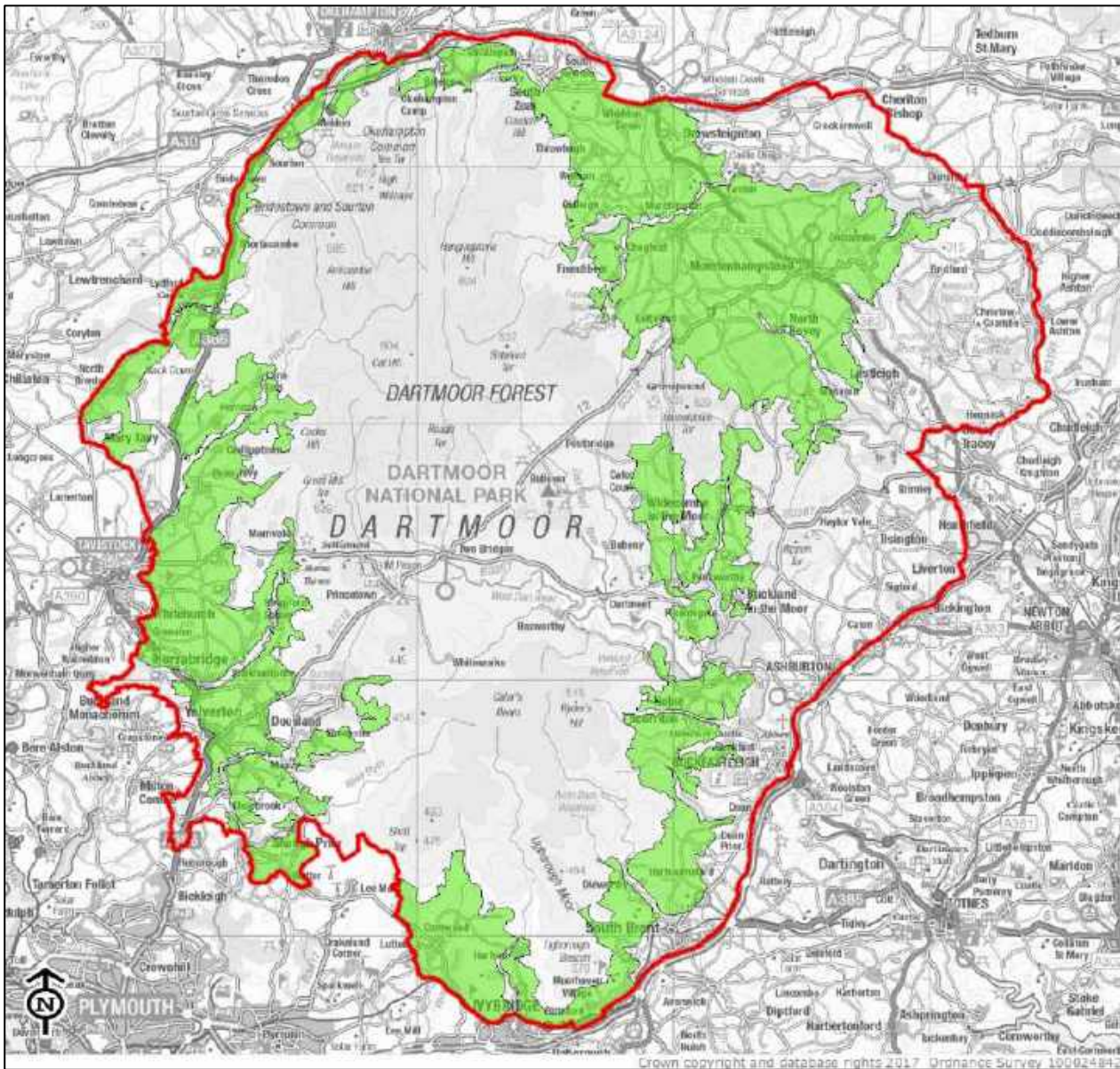
Protect the tranquil, unspoilt character of the river valleys and their historic sense of place. Manage, enhance and strengthen ancient semi-natural woodlands on valley slopes, areas of Rhôs pasture and wet woodland to increase the resilience of habitats and species to climate change, protect the water quality of the Dartmoor rivers and regulate water flows to prevent downstream flooding. Explore the potential to harness the power of the water to produce a renewable energy supply to local communities.

Landscape and planning guidelines

Guideline
PROTECT
Protect the sparse settlement pattern of occasional granite-built nucleated hamlets, villages and dispersed farmsteads often focused at river crossing points. Prevent the linear spread of development along river valleys wherever possible, to maintain their tranquil and unspoilt character.
Protect the strong unifying local vernacular of granite and slate, also reflected in walls and historic bridges. Limited new development should draw from the same materials and building styles where appropriate (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design), utilising the screening effects of woodland to minimise visual impacts.
Protect the historically important network of leats; restoring and maintaining sections to preserve their important role in water management and supplying agricultural and domestic needs.
Protect and manage ancient and veteran trees as important features of the valley landscapes.
MANAGE
Manage and enhance the valleys' semi-natural woodlands through traditional techniques including coppicing. Control access by livestock to promote 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.
Manage and enhance important wetland habitats, particularly Rhôs pasture and wet woodland, through preserving and managing water flows, controlling invasive vegetation and resisting agricultural improvement. These measures will enhance their roles in regulating stream and river flows.
Manage and restore Devon hedgerows on valley sides, particularly at right angles to slopes, and create grass buffer strips around arable fields to reduce soil erosion, cross-land water flows, and protect the rivers from diffuse pollution.
Manage recreational pressure at popular sites through interpretation and education, careful rights of way management, and promotion of sustainable transport options. Any signage or infrastructure requirements should be kept to a minimum and be sensitively sited within its landscape setting.

Guideline
PLAN
<p>Plan for the long-term restructuring of large conifer plantations in the Teign and Meavy valleys, through gradual restocking with a mixture of native broadleaf species – including those more suited to a changing climate. Any felling operations should respect the presence of archaeological features. Consider retaining and promoting some of the less prominent conifer plantations as recreational spaces (e.g. for mountain biking).</p>
<p>Create, extend and link woodland and wetland habitats to enhance the water storage capacity of the landscape (reducing 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 undertaken to link fragmented sites.</p>
<p>Plan for the potential development of small scale hydro schemes as a valuable source of renewable energy on suitable sites (both in ecological and landscape terms).</p>

2D: Moorland Edge Slopes



Summary of location and landscape character

The Moorland Edge Slopes LCT falls away from the high moorland core of the National Park in a series of slopes and rolling hills. Some hill summits contain pockets of open heathland commons providing a strong link back to the traditional upland character of the National Park. The landscape is characterised by an intricate pattern of medieval fields with post-medieval hedgebanks enclosing small fields of pasture and rough grazing. Sitting within the farmed mosaic are nucleated hamlets and villages, often sheltered by woodland and featuring prominent church towers. A network of winding rural lanes run through the landscape, crossing numerous streams on granite bridges. A strong historic sense of place is presented through a rich scattering of archaeological sites, including prehistoric and medieval monuments and features relating to past mining activity.

Representative photographs of the landscape



Key characteristics

- A sloping upland moorland edge characterised by rolling hills incised by steep valleys containing fast-flowing streams and small rivers.
- Pockets of moorland common, marginal pasture and rough grassland define the upper moorland slopes, retaining visual and functional links to the adjacent moorland. Occasional tors are also features of the landscape (e.g. Hunter's Tor, Heltor Rock and Easdon Tor).
- Significant areas of heathy commons are found as 'islands' of higher ground, for example around Chagford and above the Teign Gorge. In winter months they appear as striking bronze-coloured areas, providing a contrast with the green farmland on their lower slopes.
- Valleys are often densely wooded and contain tracts of Rhôs pasture grazed by sheep and cattle. Scattered copses and linear woodland strips follow small tributary streams.
- Patches of coniferous woodland are found on higher slopes.
- Strong, small scale, medieval field patterns are bounded by mixed species hedgebanks with bracken and gorse contributing to a moorland feel.
- The area's cultural heritage is reflected in the presence of features relating to past mining activity such as engine houses, as well as evidence for ancient settlement including prehistoric round houses, cairns and ceremonial monuments and deserted medieval settlements.
- The landscape has a strong local vernacular of granite and slate, with colourwashed cob/render and thatch also common. Square towered medieval granite churches with ornate pinnacles are prominent features within settlements, acting as focal points in long views.
- A sparse settlement pattern is characterised by small nucleated villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads nestled in the folded rolling landform and often surrounded by woodland. Glimpses of colourwashed farmsteads stand out against a pastoral backdrop.
- Sinuous narrow winding lanes and tracks cross the landscape, with a strong sense of enclosure created by high hedgebanks and many hedgerow trees. Sunken lanes form tunnels through pockets of woodland and mature hedgebanks.
- Some more recent development is associated with the larger settlements.

Valued landscape attributes

- A rich and intricate landscape full of contrasts.
- Strong pattern of medieval fields with prominent Devon hedgebanks and dry stone walls.
- Pastoral character of fields contrasting with areas of heathy moorland.
- Strong local vernacular of granite, colourwash and slate.
- Spectacular views to the moorland core of Dartmoor as well as the surrounding countryside outside the National Park, including granite church towers as landmarks.
- Traditional orchards
- Features associated with the area's mining heritage and historic land uses.

Landscape condition and forces for change

Summary of landscape condition

This is strongly rural landscape set within a framework of medieval fields with strong visual links to the nearby open moorland. The area's distinctive field patterns have been eroded in parts due to post-Second World War intensification – with fields enlarged and Devon hedgebanks removed; areas of arable cropping contrasting with the landscape's predominantly pastoral character. Some hedgebanks are suffering from a lack of management, with out-grown hedges in some locations, whilst others are gapped up with wire fencing. The heathland commons which stand out above the farmed landscape reinforce the landscape's Dartmoor character – although some have seen a decline in grazing levels resulting in a spread of bracken, scrub and secondary woodland. Other commons have more intensive grazing and recreational pressure, producing close-grazed grassy 'lawns' in place of heathland habitats. Functional links between the open moorland and the farmland of this LCT have been diluted in parts due to an increase in hobby farming and equine land uses – leading to a loss of rough pasture land on the edge of the moor traditionally used for in-bye grazing. This landscape has a strong historic character with little modern development apart from the occasional isolated property. Overall, it retains a distinctive sense of place, with peaceful, historic settlements set within an intricate mosaic of rolling medieval fields and a network of winding lanes bounded by tall Devon hedgebanks.

Forces for change

Past / current forces for change

- Early 20th century planting of conifer blocks on higher slopes, including on areas of former heathland.
- Post World War II intensification of agriculture, including some spread of arable, an enlargement of fields and modernisation of farm buildings – with consequential impacts on ancient field patterns, narrow lanes and Devon hedgbanks.
- Reduced agricultural viability of fragmented areas of heathland common - with a decline in grazing levels leading to a scrubbing up of the heath impacting on their open character and biodiversity value.
- Recent decline in livestock values also resulting in lower numbers of stock grazing the commons. Other more accessible commons (particularly in the west) have areas of concentrated grazing pressure leading to a spread of closely-grazed grassland over heath.
- On-going decline in traditional skills including commoning, hedge laying, stone walling and thatching, with associated impacts on landscape character.
- Variable management of Devon hedgebanks, with some sections overgrown whilst others are gapped up by fencing.
- Decline in the usefulness of traditional farm buildings leading to neglect / conversions.
- Decrease in the number and area of traditional farm orchards.
- Pressure from tourism and people moving to the area leading to farm conversions and an increase in traffic levels on minor roads, particularly in locations close to the A30, A38 and A382.
- Spread of equine development resulting in the splitting up of parcels of land into hobby farms, especially where they lie in close proximity to areas of common land (e.g. around Yelverton, Throwleigh and Gidleigh). Ménages and other facilities are resulting in the gradual encroachment of development into the landscape.
- Increased use of areas of common land in close proximity to settlements for recreation, including dog walking, with some negative impacts from erosion and litter.
- Visual and noise impacts from china clay quarrying on Lee Moor, just outside the National Park boundary in the south west.
- Spread of commercial and industrial development on the fringes of Plymouth and Ivybridge – with associated noise and visual impacts felt within the southern parts of the LCT.

- Increased traffic on main roads encircling the National Park, particularly the A30 and A38, which associated impacts on tranquillity.
- Introduction of large scale dairy units and increased number/width of tracks and gateways to accommodate larger vehicles.
- Increased equine pressure, particularly on the edge of settlements, with associated shelters, vehicles and trailers/horse boxes, field sub-division (including by pony tape and fencing) and the installation of larger gateways.
- Increased numbers of telecommunications masts on the periphery of the moor as a result of increased demand for mobile infrastructure and superfast broadband.
- Trend of larger farm holdings being broken up and sold for different uses, resulting in an increase in the number of buildings and diversification of vernacular styles/scales and encroachment into the open countryside. Farms often include new buildings/structures such as anaerobic digesters.

Future forces for change

- Uncertain future for the agricultural economy – levels of future funding support and market prices for farmed products unknown. Farm diversification is likely as a result of these issues.
- Felling of single age plantations resulting in an immediate change to the character of the landscape. The working of some steeper plantation slopes may be less commercially viable and could therefore become more semi-natural in character.
- Forest Design Plans are now moving from a clear-felling to a staged felling process. Development pressure on the edges of existing settlements and from the outside (e.g. areas in close proximity to the A30 and A38 road corridors; the Plymouth conurbation) leading to potential demands for increased water supply (through new reservoirs) and local aggregates (from quarrying).
- Further expansion of china clay extraction, tipping and quarrying outside the National Park (particularly Lee Moor), as well as other quarrying sites (e.g. Hemerdon quarry) and land uses to support development – e.g. landfill and energy from waste sites – impacting on views and levels of tranquillity.
- Continued trend in hobby farming and equine enterprises (including flood lit training areas and gallops) – pushing house prices out of the reach of many local people (particularly young farmers) leading to a further decline in rural skills.
- Long-term possibility of re-opening the railway between Tavistock and Okehampton if coastal routes become unviable due to increased extreme weather events.

Climate change impacts

- Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland resulting in a decrease in heathland on areas of common land.
- Increase in the prevalence of pests and diseases which may affect species such as heather and bilberry.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back. Individual trees may become more susceptible to damage from the increasing frequency and magnitude of storm events.
- Spread of non-native and alien species in response to a changing climate.
- More intense periods of drought leading to the drying out of important wetlands including Rhôs pasture– affecting their functions in reducing flood risk in the winter months.
- Increased autumn and winter precipitation levels leading to higher water levels in upland streams and consequential increases in flood risk in their lower catchments.

Climate change responses

- Potential changes to renewable energy subsidies and markets leading to increased demand for wind turbines within the open, exposed landscapes parts of the LCT – including areas of upland common and demand for solar farms within enclosed land.

- Demand for domestic and community-scale renewable energy installations such as solar panels, small wind turbines and ground-source heat pumps.
- 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-carbon fuel sources (through coppice management).
- Changes in crop and land use as a consequence of climate change and response to changing markets (e.g. new / novel food crops).
- Increased demand for UK food production leading to a further expansion in areas of arable production – potentially leading to field enlargement and loss of Devon banks.
- Increase in domestic tourism with associated demands for new facilities and infrastructure, as well as an increase in traffic levels, recreational pressure and farm conversions.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

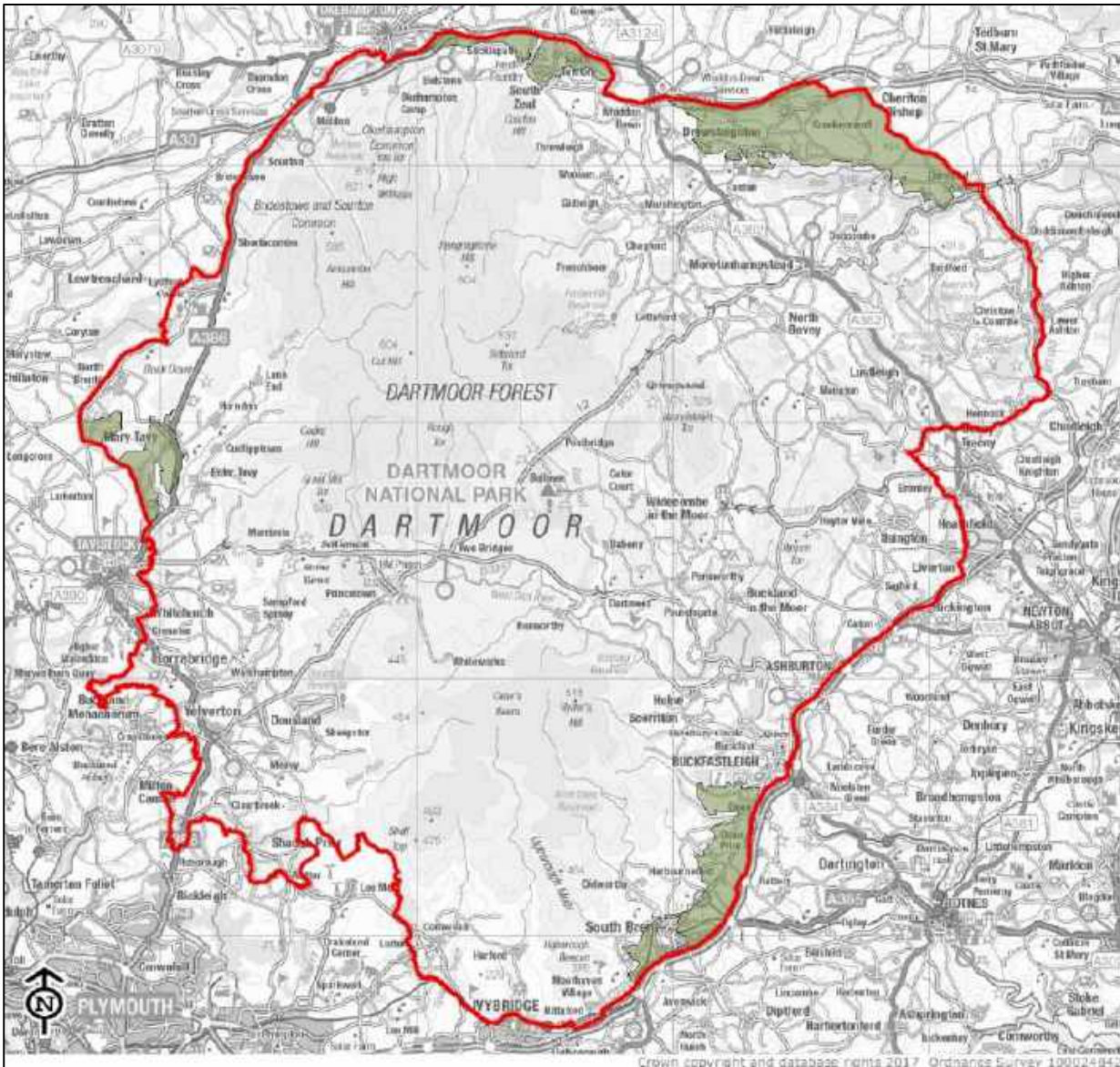
Protect the strong historic character of the Moorland Edge Slopes LCT, with numerous ancient sites and features scattered across a landscape of medieval fields and tranquil settlements. Manage and enhance areas of semi-natural habitat including heathlands, wetlands and orchards to build resilience to climate change. Plan new landscapes associated with conifer plantations and disused china clay pits and tips.

Landscape and planning guidelines

Guideline
PROTECT
<p>Protect and appropriately manage the landscape’s numerous historic sites and features including prehistoric hut circles, cairns, hillforts, stone circles and mining heritage features, as well as the Premier Archaeological Landscapes (PALs) of Okehampton Deer Park and Shaugh Moor.</p> <p>Promote understanding and sensitive interpretation of the landscape’s archaeology to ensure public access and recreation respects the presence of valued sites and features – particularly where located on Open Access / common land or close to Public Rights of Way.</p>
<p>Protect and maintain the small-scale medieval field patterns of the landscape, restoring lost Devon hedgebanks (particularly on valley slopes where they can provide a role in stabilising the soil and reducing agricultural run-off). Respect any local variations in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials wherever possible.</p>
<p>Protect the landscape’s sparsely settled character and key views to the high moorland. Resist any new development within or on the edges of common land and carefully manage new development outside the existing built form of the small, nucleated medieval settlements. Maintain views to granite church towers as important local landmarks.</p>
<p>Protect the strong unifying local vernacular of stone and slate, with some colourwashing and thatch. Limited new development should utilise traditional materials and building styles wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).</p>
<p>Protect and manage ancient and veteran trees as important features of the landscape.</p>
MANAGE
<p>Manage and enhance areas of heathland common through continued livestock grazing at appropriate levels to enhance biodiversity and sustain traditional upland farming practices. Encourage and support an increase in numbers of Dartmoor ponies and other local livestock breeds (e.g. White Face and Greyface Dartmoor sheep) whilst ensuring numbers remain sustainable and in line with conservation objectives.</p>
<p>Manage and enhance important wetland habitats, particularly Rhôs pasture and wet woodland, through preserving and managing water flows and controlling invasive vegetation. This will enhance the habitats’ roles in regulating stream and river flows to reduce downstream flooding.</p>
<p>Manage recreational pressure on areas of common land currently experiencing heavy use – including through the promotion of alternative sites (see below) and options for access other than the private car.</p>

Guideline
PLAN
Plan for the long-term restructuring of conifer plantations on upper slopes, with hard visual edges softened and a move towards their gradual reversion to broadleaves and, where appropriate, heathland habitats. Any felling operations should respect the presence of archaeological features and wildlife. Consider retaining some of the less prominent conifer plantations as recreational spaces to take the pressure of the landscape's heavily used commons – particularly where located in close proximity to settlements.
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.
Re-link fragmented heathland sites, particularly on the edges of the main upland core of the National Park, to extend and improve the connectivity of nationally important habitats (Western heath, blanket bog, Rhôs pasture, valley mire), provide Green Infrastructure networks and build resilience to climate change.
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 (the majority lies outside the National Park). 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 potentially restored to a mosaic of different habitats – providing a setting for recreational facilities including footpaths and bridleways.
Consider the introduction of noise attenuation and reduced lighting on major road corridors (including the A30 and A38) to reduce impacts on levels of tranquillity and dark night skies within this LCT.
Plan for the effects of larger scale developments on the periphery of the National Park (e.g. large scale housing developments) – for example by exploring requirements for landscape scale mitigation to minimise or offset the impacts felt within this LCT.

5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land



Summary of location and landscape character

This LCT is found on the fringes of the National Park forming four discreet areas – in the west on the fringes of Mary Tavy; along the northern boundary around South Zeal and Drewsteignton; and in the east stretching from the edges of Buckfastleigh to the South Brent area. The landscape has a strong farmed character – with areas of arable cropping interspersed within a predominantly pastoral landscape of medieval and later fields divided by Devon hedgebanks. Streams and valleys are lined with mixed and broadleaved woodlands, with some patches of species-rich neutral grassland, marsh and rush pasture. A dispersed settlement pattern of nucleated villages and hamlets is linked by a winding network of rural lanes. Levels of tranquillity are affected by the proximity of main roads skirting around the National Park boundary.

Representative photographs of the landscape



Key characteristics

- Gently rolling farmland with occasional streams creating small wooded valleys.
- Lower slopes are more wooded, with small linear bands of mixed and deciduous woodland and trees lining tributary streams.
- Fields are bounded by low cut hedgebanks with few hedgerow trees.
- Land use is largely pastoral but includes fields of arable cultivation within a medium to large scale geometric field pattern on sloping land.
- Lower areas and valley floors are more pastoral in character with small to medium medieval fields of rough sheep grazing and dairying.
- Some areas of rough pasture can be found where a moorland influence is stronger closer to the central core of Dartmoor.
- Patches of species-rich neutral grassland, marsh and rush pasture provide nature conservation interest in valley bottoms.
- Castle Drogo is a prominent feature on the skyline when looking south from the Drewsteignton area.
- Settlement is dispersed and characterised by scattered isolated farms on elevated slopes. Small nucleated villages and hamlets are often focused around bridging points.
- Buildings are traditionally constructed from local stone, slate and thatch with colourwashed cob/render also common.
- Small narrow winding lanes thread over slopes and follow the valley floors.
- Gaps in hedgerows sometimes afford long views towards central Dartmoor and the high moorland on the horizon.
- Traditional orchards associated with farmsteads and settlements.

Valued landscape attributes

- An intricate, 'patchwork' landscape of productive farmland, woods, small settlements and rural lanes.
- Gently rolling topography dissected by small streams.
- Bands of mixed and broadleaved woodlands, along with patches of neutral and marshy grasslands.
- Strong medieval field pattern on lower slopes and valley floors.
- Pastoral character with patches of rough grazing serving as a reminder of the close proximity of the moorland.
- Scattered villages, hamlets and farmsteads linked by a network of narrow winding lanes.
- Traditional orchards associated with farmsteads and settlements.

Landscape condition and forces for change

Summary of landscape condition

This is a strongly farmed landscape, with areas of intensive arable cultivation and dairying contrasting with the pastoral and rough grazing character which characterises the majority of the National Park. Recent decades of intensification have led to the enlargement of fields and the removal of Devon banks, diluting medieval field patterns on some slopes. A feeling of neglect is evident in some locations, including the inappropriate management of traditional field boundaries (some over-flailed whilst others are gapped up with post-and-wire). Tranquillity is broken by the proximity of major roads skirting the National Park boundary – particularly the A38, A30 and A386, as well as power lines located on some prominent ridgelines. Wooded stream valleys and patches of species-rich neutral and marshy grassland are important for nature conservation interest and provide local landscape diversity (including Lady's Wood & Viaduct Meadows SSSI, near South Brent). Long views to the higher land of central Dartmoor serve as reminders of the proximity of the contrasting 'wild' landscapes of the open moor.

Forces for change

Past / current forces for change

- Location of major road corridors on the edge of the LCT, impacting on levels of tranquillity.
- 20th century growth of settlements on the fringes of the National Park (e.g. Tavistock, Okehampton, Buckfastleigh and South Brent).
- Spread of tourism related development, particularly caravan parks along the main routes into the National Park. There is also greater demand for associated infrastructure, including cycle paths.
- Increased traffic and excessive speed on roads has resulted in higher numbers of animal deaths on highways.
- Post World War II intensification of agriculture, with the ploughing up of pastoral land and unimproved grassland for arable production and intensive dairying. Field enlargement through the removal of Devon hedgebanks has diluted medieval field patterns.
- Ongoing decline in traditional skills including hedge laying and thatching, with associated impacts on landscape character.
- Variable management of Devon hedgebanks, particularly in the more intensively farmed locations.
- Loss or lack of management of traditional farm orchards and change in management of historic oak coppice.
- Spread of equestrian enterprises (including flood lit training areas and gallops) and hobby farms, especially on the edge of main settlements. Ménages and other facilities are resulting in the gradual encroachment of development into the landscape, with associated intensive grazing pressure.
- Farm diversification leading to variation in the scale and design of buildings.

Future forces for change

- Uncertain future for the agricultural economy – levels of future funding support and market prices for farmed products unknown.
- Pressure for development in and around the main settlements within and on the edge of this LCT, including Tavistock, Okehampton, Buckfastleigh and South Brent, impacting on levels of tranquillity and rural character.
- Increased levels of commuting across the LCT to / from major roads, as more incomers seek to live in the National Park and work in nearby settlements. Linked requirements for traffic management and road engineering works out of keeping with the character of the landscape's rural lanes.
- Demand for new quarries (or the extension / re-opening of existing sites) to supply building stone for new development – e.g. Blackaller limestone quarry in Drewsteignton.

- Continued trend in hobby farming and equine enterprises – leading to a further dilution of traditional farming practices in the landscape.
- Use of plastic poly-tunnels to lengthen growing season in areas where arable growing occurs.
- Construction of larger industrial buildings which are not reflective of traditional building styles.
- New tracks impacting on field patterns and leading to the loss of hedges and old gates.

Climate change impacts

- Potential drying out of important valley bottom habitats including neutral grasslands, marsh, rush pasture and valley mire due to higher summer temperatures and lower rainfall.
- A changing climate may also result in a spread of invasive and woody species, reducing species diversity of unimproved grasslands.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back. Individual trees may become more susceptible to damage from the increasing frequency and magnitude of storm events.
- Spread of non-native and alien species in response to a changing climate.
- More frequent drought conditions leading to crop failures and reduced productivity of the farmed landscape.
- Long-term possibility of re-opening the railway between Tavistock and Okehampton if existing coastal routes become unviable due to increased extreme weather events / sea level rise.

Climate change responses

- Potential changes to renewable subsidies leading to increased demand for wind turbines, solar farms, hydroelectric and other renewable energy technologies. This may be within the National Park or in locations outside the National Park visible in views from this LCA.
- Demand for domestic and community-scale renewable energy installations such as solar panels, small wind turbines and ground-source heat pumps.
- New crops more suited to higher summer temperatures may appear in the landscape, as well as new land uses such as vineyards.
- Increased demand for UK food production leading to a further expansion of land under arable production – leading to field enlargement, loss of Devon banks and a decrease in water quality.
- Increase in domestic tourism with associated demands for new facilities and infrastructure, as well as an increase in traffic levels, farm conversions and the siting of caravan / camping sites.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect and restore the landscape’s medieval field patterns and rich agricultural mosaic, with Devon hedgebanks restored to reinforce the landscape’s historic sense of place and enhance functions in reducing soil erosion and agricultural run-off. Manage the farmed landscape to enhance wildlife interest and local diversity, and utilise new woodland planting to reduce diffuse pollution, flood risk and filter views of development. Maintain the sparse settlement pattern and open views to the open moorland of the Dartmoor core.

Landscape and planning guidelines

Guideline
PROTECT
Protect and maintain the small-scale medieval field patterns of the landscape, restoring and replanting lost and gappy Devon hedgebanks (particularly on intensively farmed slopes where they can provide a role in stabilising the soil and reducing agricultural run-off into watercourses). Respect any local variations in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials wherever possible.
Protect the sparsely settled character and intermittent long views to the high moorland. Carefully manage any new development outside the built form of the landscape’s small, clustered medieval settlements, including along roads, and avoid development on prominent ridgelines where it will interrupt the character of undeveloped skylines. Protect the landscape’s traditional agricultural character, avoiding a spread of suburban influences.
Protect in a good state of repair the strong unifying local vernacular of local stone and slate, with some colourwashing. 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) – including farm outbuildings.
Protect and manage ancient and veteran trees as important features of the landscape.
MANAGE
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). Manage the area’s herb-rich neutral grasslands, including Culm grasslands, through extensive grazing and hay cutting, seeking to extend and re-link fragmented sites to expand the wildlife network and strengthen climate change resilience.
Manage and enhance important wetland habitats, particularly wet woodland, purple moor grass, marsh and valley mires, through preserving and managing water flows and controlling invasive vegetation. This will enhance their roles in storing and absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide and regulating stream flows.
Reinstate traditional management techniques to the landscape’s woodlands, particularly coppicing, to promote a diverse age and species structure and provide a low carbon fuel source to local communities.

Guideline

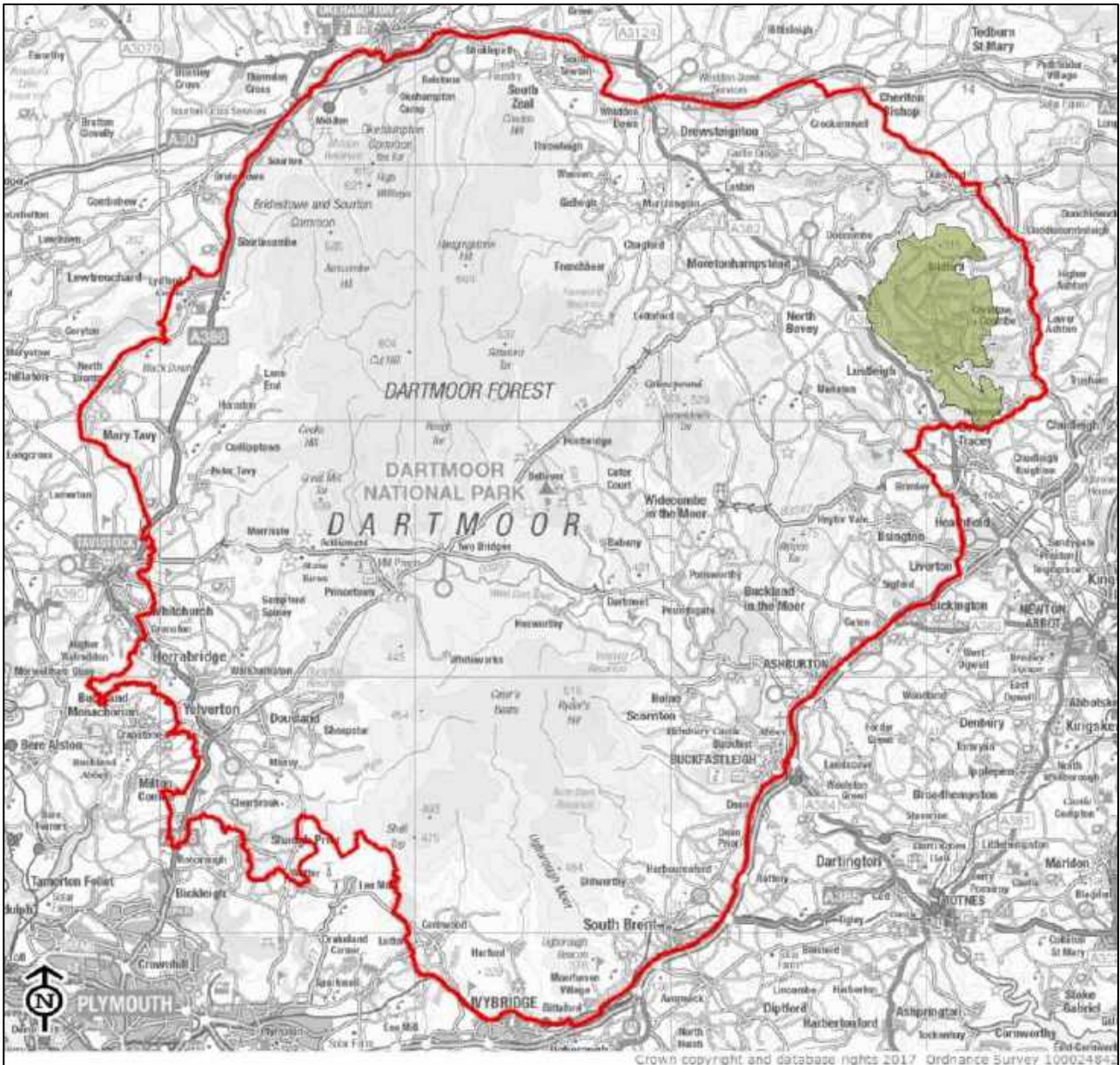
PLAN

Extend areas of mixed and broadleaved woodlands through natural regeneration and new planting (including with species suited to a changing climate). Focus the creation and extension of woodlands on slopes and valley bottoms, particularly where they can help reduce agricultural run-off from areas of intensive farming and absorb water in times of high rainfall to reduce the likelihood of flooding. Also use new woodland planting to filter views of main roads and development on the National Park boundary.

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.

Consider the introduction of noise attenuation and reduced lighting on major road corridors (including the A30 and A38) to reduce impacts on levels of tranquillity and dark night skies within this LCT.

1J: Farmed and Forested Plateau



Summary of location and landscape character

The Farmed and Forested Plateau occupies the north-eastern corner of the National Park, forming a distinctive plateau landform rising up from the farmed and wooded slopes of the Teign Valley to the east, and adjoining the slopes of the moorland fringe to the west. Much of the LCT is dominated by conifer plantations associated with the Kennick, Tottiford and Trenchford reservoirs, around which is a gently undulating mixed farmed landscape interspersed by belts of woodland and rough heathy grassland. The landscape is sparsely settled and crossed by a network of minor lanes – its open character affording long views, including to the high Dartmoor moorland to the west.

Representative photographs of the landscape



Key characteristics

- A gently undulating upland plateau which rises above the steep slopes of the *3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Slopes* LCT.
- The central plateau is dominated by extensive conifer plantations surrounding Kennick, Tottiford and Trenchford Reservoirs, which are popular for recreation.
- Smaller patches of coniferous, mixed, wet woodland and heathy scrub fringe tributary streams and mires, linking to small farm woods and copses to provide landscape interest.
- Medium scale medieval and post-medieval fields surrounding the plantations are predominantly pastoral, interspersed with occasional larger and more regular arable fields and localised areas of horticulture. A smaller scale, more ancient irregular field pattern is associated with the fringes of hamlets.
- Low cut mixed species hedgerows with hedgerow trees are the main boundary type, with fewer trees on the exposed plateau. Some sections include patches of gorse and bracken contributing to an upland feel.
- There are intermittent wide and expansive views to the higher moorland to the north and west through gaps hedgerows along the plateau edges. Within the plateau views are enclosed and framed by the rolling landform and woodland cover.
- Blackingstone Rock, formed of Dartmoor granite, is a distinctive look-out point affording panoramic views across the landscape, including to the high moorland to the west.
- Settlement character is confined to dispersed farms of granite, cob and slate on the plateau edge with occasional larger hamlets of mixed building styles nestling within the rolling landform.
- An extensive network of narrow winding lanes thread through the landscape, linking the farmsteads and hamlets. In places the lanes pass through 'tunnels' formed by avenues of mature beech trees, often on banks.

Valued landscape attributes

- Wooded character and variety – mosaic of plantation, mixed, broadleaved and wet woodland providing a sense of enclosure.
- Rolling pastoral farmland with some heathy patches and wetland habitats, crossed by an intricate network of narrow lanes.
- Strong regular field patterns with low-cut hedgerows and few hedgerow trees, giving parts of the plateau an open character.
- Its use as a water source for nearby populations, with 19th century reservoir structures contributing to character.
- Traditional orchards.
- Lightly settled character with a strong local vernacular.
- Managed recreational opportunities as an alternative to the open moor.
- Framed long-distance views from the undulating plateau to the high moorland to the west – tors forming silhouettes on distant skylines.

Landscape condition and forces for change

Summary of landscape condition

This plateau landscape is dominated by the three reservoirs and large conifer plantations which introduce geometric shapes with hard edges at odds with the smooth shape of the landform. The plantations are reaching the end of their commercial lives, therefore requiring a long-term strategy to restore the areas they occupy to more appropriate open heathland habitats and broadleaved woodlands. Surrounding the wooded core of the plateau are some large fields of intensive arable and horticultural farmland – the drive for production leading to a loss of hedgebanks and semi-natural habitats such as heathland and ancient woodland. Inappropriate boundary management is evident in sections that are closely failed and gappy, with some lengths replaced by post-and-wire fencing. Other sections are extremely overgrown with bracken and scrub; interrupting the lines of the boundaries to further dilute field patterns. This landscape is popular for recreation – including the Blackingstone Rock look-out point as well as the two reservoirs. As such, tranquillity levels can be eroded at peak visitor times, with an increase in traffic and cars parked on the landscape's quiet rural roads. Although lightly settled, traditional character has been gradually eroded in parts by the presence of housing and farm buildings constructed in a range of non-vernacular materials and styles. Overall though, the landscape's predominantly pastoral character, frequent belts of woodland, patches of heathy rough grazing land and long views across the National Park contribute to a distinctive sense of place.

Forces for change

Past / current forces for change

- Development of the Kennick, Tottiford and Trenchford reservoirs in the late 19th / early 20th century to supply water to surrounding populations – now popular sites for fishing and informal recreation.
- Early 20th century planting of conifer blocks on former areas of heathland and ancient woodland.
- Post World War II intensification of agriculture, resulting in field enlargement, lack of management of traditional field boundaries and a spread of arable and other cropping in place of pasture and rough grazing.
- Ongoing decline in traditional skills including hedge laying and thatching, with associated impacts on landscape character and the built vernacular.
- Loss or lack of management of traditional farm orchards.
- Variable management of Devon hedgebanks and hedgerows – with some sections low and heavily flailed whilst others are overgrown with bracken and scrub.
- Farm diversification resulting in new structures of varying scale and design.
- Pressure from tourism and demand for new development leading to an increase in traffic levels, particularly around the reservoirs.
- Recreational pressure related to the reservoirs and plantations, with associated impacts including demand for new footpaths/trails, erosion, car parking and anti-social behaviour.
- Impact of changes and improvement of the water treatment works, including the construction of larger buildings and the impact on hedgebanks/rural lanes to accommodate large delivery vehicles.

Future forces for change

- The conifer plantations occupying a large proportion of the LCT will soon reach maturity, with opportunities for their re-structuring and eventual removal. Forest Design Plans propose for the conversion of plantation to broadleaved woodland particularly on woodland edges and a move away from clear-felling to a staged felling process, reducing landscape impacts.
- Uncertain future for the agricultural economy – levels of future funding support and market prices for farmed products unknown.
- Conversion to arable farming may lead to the widening of lanes and the removal of banks/hedges.

- Further development pressures and demand for farm conversions to residential use, particularly due to the LCT's proximity to the A38 and A382 road corridors. Development pressure also putting increased strain on the reservoirs' water resources.
- Increase in tourism with associated demands for new facilities and infrastructure, as well as an increase in traffic levels, car parking and recreational pressures (including associated with the reservoirs).

Climate change impacts

- Potential drying out of wet woodland and valley mires due to an increased frequency of drought conditions in the summer months – affecting their functions in sequestering carbon and storing water (to prevent downstream flooding).
- Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland resulting in a further scrubbing up of hedgebanks and rough grazing land.
- Increased autumn and winter precipitation levels could lead to higher water levels in streams draining from the plateau and consequential increases in flood risk in their lower catchments (including the River Teign).
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back. Individual trees may become more susceptible to damage from the increasing frequency and magnitude of storm events.
- Spread of non-native and invasive species in response to a changing climate.
- More frequent drought conditions leading to crop failures and reduced productivity of the farmed landscape.

Climate change responses

- Potential future changes to renewable energy subsidies and markets leading to increased demand for solar farms and wind turbines capitalising on the exposed character of the plateau and the screening effects of the plantations.
- Demand for domestic and community-scale renewable energy installations such as solar panels, small wind turbines and ground-source heat pumps.
- Higher demand for domestic food production leading to a further expansion in areas of arable and horticultural production, loss of rough grazing land and potential impacts on water quality.
- New crops more suited to higher summer temperatures may appear in the landscape.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect and reinforce traditional field patterns and boundaries to strengthen the landscape framework of this LCT. Maintain long views to the high moorlands of the National Park by avoiding development on the plateau; and protect the sparsely settled character of the landscape. Enhance the wildlife interest of the farmed landscape, managing woodlands and areas of heathy ground whilst planning a new landscape structure through better integrating conifer plantations into their landscape setting and promoting sustainable recreation.

Landscape and planning guidelines

Guideline
PROTECT
Protect the small-scale ancient field systems found on the fringes of hamlets, and restore lost and gappy Devon hedgebanks on the plateau to reinforce field patterns and help prevent soil erosion / diffuse pollution where surrounding intensively farmed land. Respect any local variations in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising locally sourced bank materials and hedgerow saplings wherever possible.
Protect the sparsely settled character of the open plateau, retaining long views north and west to the higher moorland of the National Park and east across the Teign Valley. Avoid the expansion and linear spread of the landscape's clustered hamlets and scattered farmsteads, and resist the development of vertical structures which would be prominent on the open plateau.
Protect in a good state of repair the local vernacular buildings of granite, cob and slate, utilising the same materials and building styles on limited new development wherever possible (whilst seeking to incorporate sustainable and low carbon building construction and design).
Protect and manage ancient and veteran trees, including historic avenues, as important features of the landscape.
MANAGE
Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of the farmed landscape, including through the creation of species-rich grass buffers around arable fields (also helping to reduce agricultural run-off) and the retention of areas of rough grazing land and heathy scrub – to preserve elements of a Dartmoor character.
Manage and enhance important wetland habitats, particularly wet woodland and valley mires, through preserving and managing water flows and controlling invasive vegetation. This will enhance their roles in storing and absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide and regulating stream flows (particularly important for the tributaries of the Teign).
Reinstate traditional management techniques to the landscape's mixed and broadleaved woodlands, mature hedgebanks and historic avenues, particularly coppicing, to promote a diverse age and species structure and explore using residues as a potential fuel source.

Guideline

PLAN

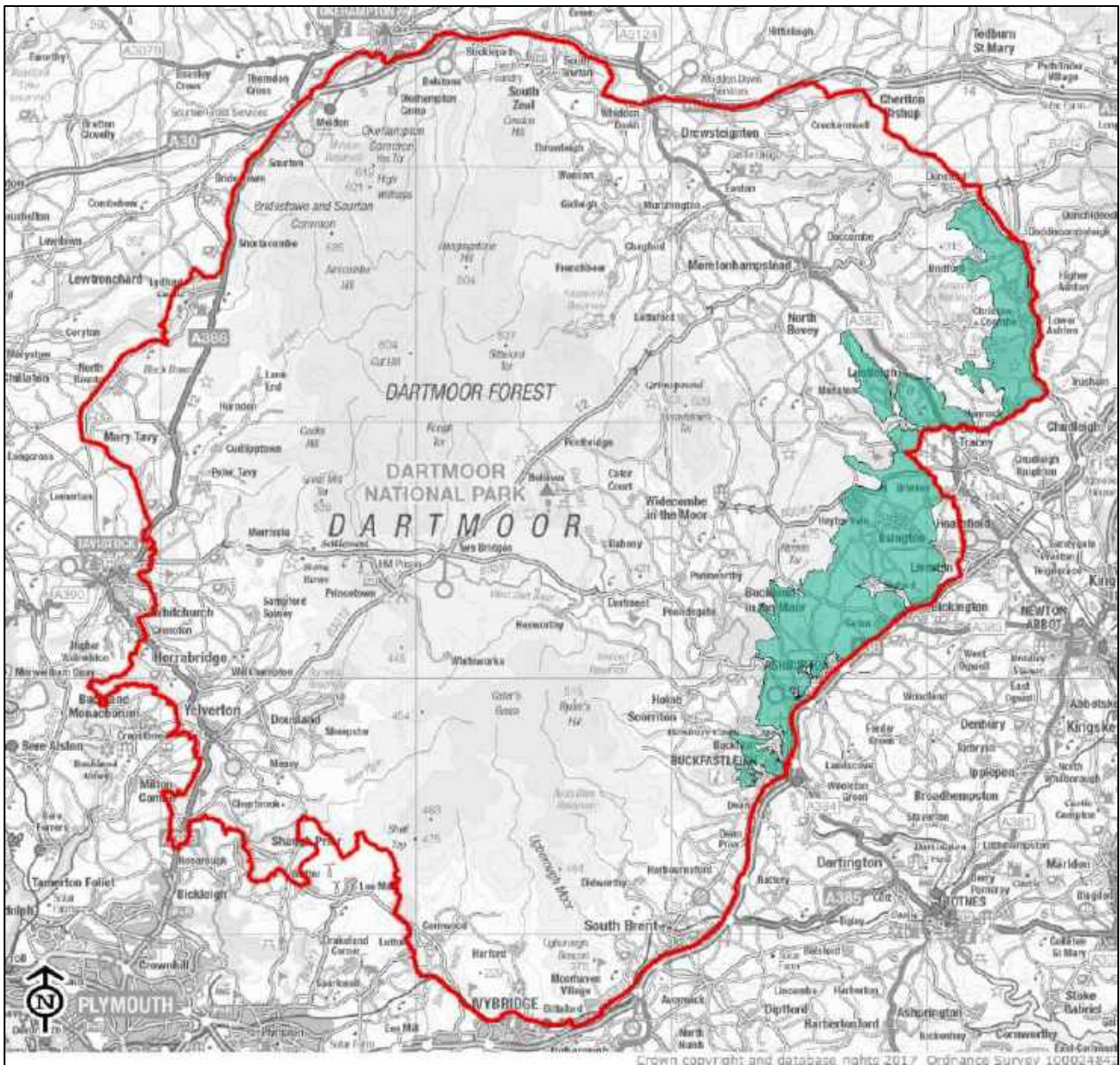
Plan for the long-term integration of the landscape's conifer plantations into their landscape setting, including through soften their edges with broadleaved planting. Carefully consider the use of the plantations as valued recreational spaces (e.g. for mountain biking) and to screen views of associated development such as car parks.

Extend areas of mixed and broadleaved woodlands through natural regeneration and new planting (including with species suited to a changing climate). Focus the creation and extension of woodlands on stream sides and slopes bordering arable and horticultural land – where they will absorb water in times of high rainfall to reduce the likelihood of downstream flooding (particularly important for the tributaries of the Teign) and help reduce agricultural run-off. Avoid planting on areas of the plateau that would disrupt important views.

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.

Plan for the effects of larger scale developments on the periphery of the National Park (e.g. large scale housing developments) – for example by exploring requirements for landscape scale mitigation to minimise or offset the impacts felt within this LCT.

3A: Upper Farmed and Wooded Slopes



Summary of location and landscape character

This landscape is characterised by its undulating topography – forming the eastern edge of the National Park. Rolling hills and slopes are defined by a strong mosaic of irregular predominantly pastoral fields, frequent semi-natural woodlands and many hedgerow trees contributing to a well-wooded character. Patches of heath, bracken and rough grazing land give the landscape its Dartmoor character. Historic settlements are nestled into the landform, with some areas of modern development spreading along roadsides.

Representative photographs of the landscape



Key characteristics

- A rolling landscape owing to a complex underlying geology – cut by small tributary streams at the foot of undulating slopes. Some slopes are extremely steep, particularly those rising above the Teign Valley.
- A reminder of the close proximity of the moorland is evident in patches of heathy vegetation and bracken in hedgerows and sheep-grazed rough pasture on higher ground.
- A rich hedgerow network with many hedgerow trees links to bands and patches of deciduous woodland hugging valley slopes to create a well treed character.
- The land use is dominated by pastoral farming in medium sized irregular fields of medieval origin with isolated patches of larger, more recent arable fields in places (particularly around settlements and further away from the moorland core).
- Past mining activity from the 16th to the 20th centuries is evident along valleys through remnant mining structures and industrial remnants such as relic mine shafts.
- A dispersed settlement pattern is characterised by individual farmsteads of local stone, slate, thatch and colourwash nestled into the folded landform or screened by woodland. Occasional glimpses of colourwashed farmsteads can be seen against lush green pastures, creating focal points within framed views.
- Some larger villages are positioned on higher slopes, characterised by nucleated historic cores surrounded by more recent 20th century development.
- Modern ribbon development lines rural lanes between these larger settlements resulting in a 'lived in' feel (e.g. between Ilsington and Haytor Vale). Settlements on the edge of the National Park tend to include more areas of modern development with lower levels of tranquillity.
- Narrow winding lanes often traverse at right angles to the hill slopes, with some lengths extremely steep where they run downhill.
- This is an intimate landscape with occasional framed views to the wider landscape where gaps in hedgerows permit. The well-treed character results in an enclosed and unified landscape with constantly changing colours and textures.

Valued landscape attributes

- Large areas of woodland, included valued ancient semi-natural blocks and copses.
- The landscape's function as a transition between developed areas and the wild moorland core of the National Park.
- Productive farmland with small fields and winding lanes enclosed by thick hedgerows.
- The landscape's human scale, evoking a sense of calm and history.
- Strong stone vernacular reflected in farmsteads, stone-faced banks, walls and barns.

Landscape condition and forces for change

Summary of landscape condition

This is a distinctive landscape owing to its complex topography and mix of land cover – with a matrix of irregular pasture, rough grazing and arable fields set within a framework of dense Devon hedgebanks and frequent semi-natural woodlands on frequent hills and slopes. The landscape framework has been diluted in parts due to agricultural intensification – with boundaries removed, fields enlarged and a replacement of pasture with intensive cropping. Some woodlands are undermanaged, leading to an even age structure and decline in their biodiversity value. Although perceptually this is a tranquil, rural landscape overall, this quality is affected by a spread of 20th century development within and on the edges of historic settlements, as well as the close proximity of major road corridors and expanding urban/industrial centres on its boundary, Recreational uses such as golf courses and caravan sites, as well as the increasing popularity of visitor attractions within and adjacent to the LCT (e.g. Canonteign Falls, Dart Valley Country Park) can also detract from the peace and quiet of the area and its rural roads, particularly at peak times.

Forces for change

Past / current forces for change

- Post World War II intensification of agriculture, resulting in field enlargement, lack of management of traditional field boundaries and a spread of arable and other cropping in place of pasture and rough grazing – particularly on the edges of Buckfastleigh and Ashburton.
- Loss in the number and extent of traditional orchards.
- Ongoing decline in traditional skills including hedge laying and thatching, with associated impacts on landscape character and the built vernacular.
- Variable management of Devon hedgebanks and hedgerows – with some sections overgrown with bracken and brambles.
- Decline in traditional woodland management, leading to a reduction in the species and age diversity of the landscape's important semi-natural woodlands.
- Decline in the management of some of the steeper forest slopes, resulting in semi-natural regeneration.
- Late 20th century expansion of settlements on the edge of the LCT – particularly Ashburton and Buckfastleigh, as well as urban and industrial areas outside the National Park visible in views from higher ground (e.g. Bovey Tracey and Newton Abbot).
- Development pressure from people moving to the area and in response to demand for affordable housing, with modern housing developed within and on the edges of historic settlements such as Ilsington.
- Sub-division of larger woodlands into smaller plots with different management techniques and regimes.
- Ongoing quarrying activity at Ashburton.
- Increase in traffic levels on rural roads, particularly on routes linking with the A382 and main settlements on and beyond the National Park boundary.
- The proximity of visitor attractions within (Canonteign Falls Country Park and nearby golf course) and close by such as Buckfast Abbey, Dart Valley Country Park and Haytor have also contributed to an increase in traffic, as well as a spread of caravan and camping sites along roads.
- Water based recreation on rivers including kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding leading to disturbance of aquatic habitats, erosion and the creation of visitor 'hot-spots'- diluting local levels of tranquillity.
- Spread of equine development resulting in the splitting up of parcels of land into hobby farms, particularly where they lie in close proximity to the moorland fringe (e.g. Ilsington and Haytor Vale).

Ménages and other facilities are resulting in the gradual encroachment of development into the landscape, whilst closely grazed paddocks divided by pony tape dilute traditional field patterns and agricultural land uses.

Future forces for change

- Uncertain future for the agricultural economy – levels of future funding support and market prices for farmed products unknown. Continuing decline in traditional rural skills.
- Potential pressure on the edge of the National Park for arable conversion, with linked impacts relating to larger machinery (e.g. new storage buildings, lane widening, hedgebank removal).
- Continued development pressure and demand for affordable housing, particularly on the edges of settlements.
- Ongoing increase in commuting and visitor traffic (with no sustainable transport options), requiring traffic management, road engineering works and car parking impacting on landscape character.
- Demand for new quarries and expansion of existing sites to supply building stone/aggregates for new development – e.g. Linhay Hill limestone quarry near Ashburton.
- Continued trend in hobby farming, barn conversions and equine enterprises (including flood lit training areas and gallops)– leading to a further dilution of traditional farming practices in the landscape and diversification of land uses.
- Increased demand for facilities relating to tourism including accommodation and facilities for recreational activity, such as golf courses and car parks.
- Potential for changes to existing landscape character, visual and noise impacts from quarrying activity.

Climate change impacts

- Potential drying out of wet woodland and valley mires due to an increased frequency of drought conditions in the summer months – affecting their functions in sequestering carbon and storing water (to prevent downstream flooding).
- Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland resulting in a further scrubbing up of hedgebanks and rough grazing land.
- Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly *phytophthora* pathogens and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back. Individual trees, including within hedgerows, may become more susceptible to damage or loss from the increasing frequency and magnitude of storm events.
- Spread of non-native and alien species in response to a changing climate.
- More frequent drought conditions leading to crop failures and reduced productivity of the farmed landscape.

Climate change responses

- Potential changes to renewable energy subsidies and markets leading to increased demand for solar farms/arrays and wind turbines on higher ground, capitalising on the screening effects of the area's undulating topography.
- Demand for small-scale hydro-electric installations which may vary in size and scale, with the associated infrastructure having an impact on landscape.
- Increase in domestic and community-scale renewable energy installations such as roof-mounted solar panels, small wind turbines and ground-source heat pumps.
- Higher demand for domestic food production leading to a further expansion in areas of arable and horticultural production, loss of rough grazing land and potential impacts on water quality.
- New crops more suited to higher summer temperatures may appear in the landscape.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

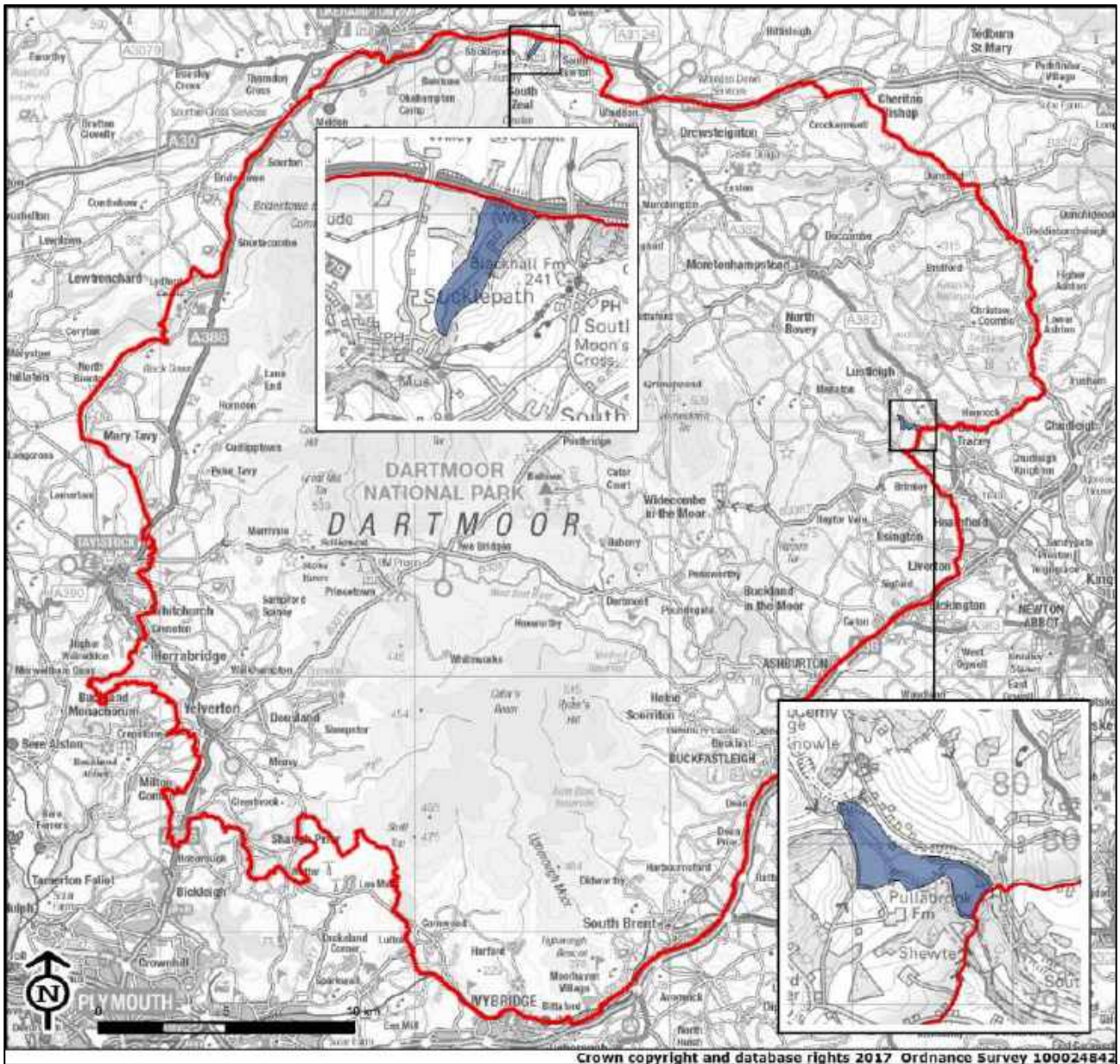
Protect the strong field patterns of the landscape, divided by a rich network of well-managed Devon hedgebanks helping to protect watercourses from diffuse pollution. Woodlands are traditionally managed to improve their biodiversity value whilst providing a low-carbon fuel source for local communities; new planting helps provide a setting for existing and limited new development. Areas of Rhos pasture are sensitively managed to strengthen their resilience to climate change and regulate water flows. Future opportunities are sought to restore quarry sites to a mosaic of habitats with green infrastructure links to nearby communities.

Landscape and planning guidelines

Guideline
PROTECT
Protect and appropriately manage the landscape’s archaeological heritage, particularly features associated with past mining activity, including the nationally important iron mines at Haytor and Smallacombe. Provide sensitive interpretation to explain the area’s mining heritage –particularly the links with the landscape’s complex underlying geology and mineral seams.
Protect and maintain the strong irregular field patterns of the landscape, restoring lost and gappy Devon hedgebanks (particularly on intensively farmed slopes where they can provide a role in stabilising the soil and reducing agricultural run-off into watercourses). Respect any local variations in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials wherever possible.
Away from the main settlements, protect the dispersed pattern of individual farmsteads of local stone, slate, thatch and colourwash nestled into the folded landform or screened by woodland. Resist the further spread of new development (including caravan and camping sites) outside the limits of the landscape’s villages and hamlets, including along roads. Avoid locating any new development on prominent slopes and ridgelines, including the steep slopes above the Teign Valley. Any new development should utilise the screening effects of the landscape’s woodlands and sloping topography to reduce its visual impact.
Protect in a good state of repair the traditional local vernacular of local stone, slate, render, thatch and colourwashed cob. 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).
Protect and manage ancient and veteran trees as important features of this enclosed landscape.
MANAGE
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). Retain areas of rough grazing land and heathy patches, to reinforce the landscape’s Dartmoor character.
Reinstate traditional management techniques to the landscape’s semi-natural woodlands, particularly coppicing, to promote a diverse age and species structure and provide a low carbon fuel source to local communities.

Guideline
PLAN
Extend areas of mixed and broadleaved woodlands through natural regeneration and new planting (including with species suited to a changing climate). Focus the creation and extension of woodlands on slopes and valley bottoms, particularly where they can help reduce agricultural run-off from areas of intensive farming and absorb water in times of high rainfall to reduce the likelihood of flooding. Also use new woodland planting to filter views of main roads and development on the National Park boundary.
Plan for a long-term strategy for the future restoration of the large limestone quarry at Linhay Hill on the north-eastern edges of Ashburton.
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.
Consider the introduction of noise attenuation and reduced lighting on major road corridors (including the A38) to reduce impacts on levels of tranquillity and dark night skies within this LCT.
Ensure any small-scale developments within the LCT are closely related to existing settlement and include screening (utilising the landscape's woodland, hedgerows and landform wherever possible) and other mitigation that is in-keeping with local landscape character.
Plan for the effects of larger scale developments on the periphery of the National Park (e.g. large scale housing developments) – for example by exploring requirements for landscape scale mitigation to minimise or offset the impacts felt within this LCT.

3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors



Summary of location and landscape character

This LCT covers the valley floors of the River Tavy, on the northern edge of the National Park north-east of Sticklepath, and the River Bovey, as it flows out of the eastern edge of Dartmoor towards Bovey Tracey. The valleys are enclosed and highly tranquil, with a sheltered character that contrasts strongly with the open moorland above. Woodland and wet grassland habitats, along with a lack of human development give a strong naturalistic character.

Representative photographs of the landscape



Key characteristics

- Narrow meandering river courses and floodplains with distinct edges forming the transition to sloping valley sides.
- Valley floors characterised by small-scale, irregular floodplain pastures and wetlands marked by thick hedgerows and Devon banks, often following the underlying landform.
- Linear groups of trees often follow the courses of the rivers – the River Taw is fringed by a block of mixed woodland on its eastern bank.
- Relict traditional orchards are associated with farmsteads.
- Stone bridges form characterful and unifying features of the local vernacular.
- The valley landscapes are peaceful with low levels of development and a sparse settlement pattern.
- Valleys are popular destinations for recreational activities, both on and off the water.
- Views from the valleys are framed by the rising mass of Dartmoor behind, contrasting with productive agricultural land and development outside the National Park.

Valued landscape attributes

- Valued heritage features including stone bridges crossing the rivers and weirs.
- Important semi-natural aquatic and terrestrial habitats including deciduous woodland and wet grassland.
- Recreational value for both land and water based activities.
- Highly tranquil and intimate landscapes with a lack of human influence and naturalistic perceptual qualities including the sound of flowing water and birdsong, in strong contrast to the open upland moorland.
- Floodplain pastures bounded by thick Devon banks.
- Relict traditional orchards associated with farmsteads.
- Framed views to the rising moorland.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

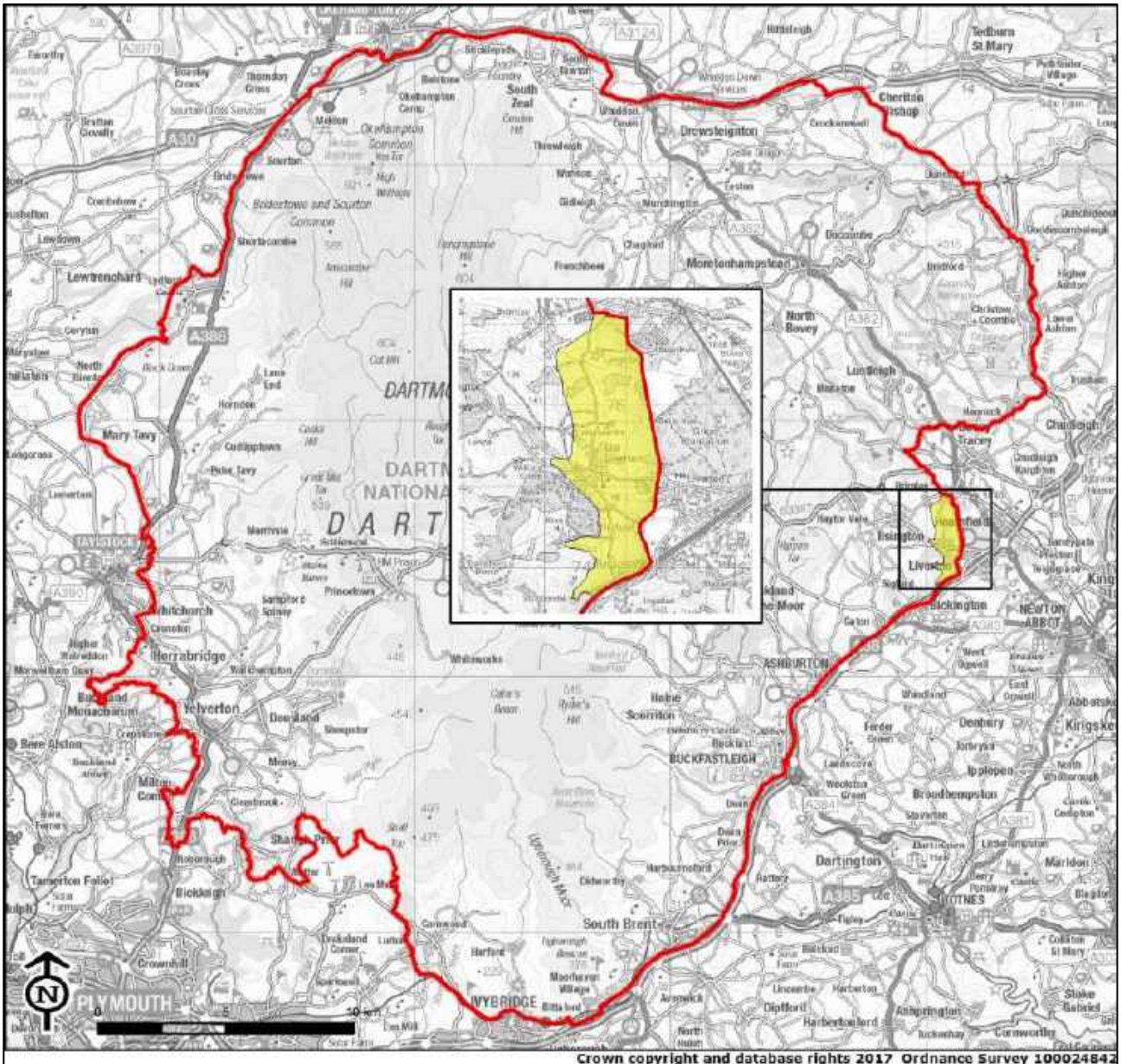
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the peaceful and tranquil character of the valley floors, maintaining views to the higher land of the National Park and the wider countryside beyond the protected landscape. Manage and enhance floodplain pastures and wetland habitats to enhance their flood storage capacity in light of climate change, and encourage sustainable uses of the landscape for recreation whilst protecting their special qualities. Protect characteristic stone bridges and riverside trees as valued landscape features.

Landscape and planning guidelines

Guideline
PROTECT
Protect the strong sense of tranquillity within the valleys, retaining their general absence of built development
Protect views to the rising moorlands of Dartmoor and to the countryside beyond the National Park boundary, maintaining the valleys' roles as visual links between the different landscapes.
Protect and maintain in a good state of repair the historic stone bridges which are characteristic features of the valleys.
MANAGE
Manage the landscape's thick hedgerows and Devon hedgebanks (particularly on slopes where they can provide a role in stabilising the soil and reducing agricultural run-off into watercourses). Respect any local variations in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials wherever possible.
Manage the valleys' use for recreation whilst ensuring they retain their inherent levels of tranquillity, peacefulness and absence of built development.
Manage and enhance floodplain pasture and wetland habitats, through low-input systems (including light grazing) to enhance their flood storage capacity and reduce levels of diffuse pollution.
PLAN
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.
Consider the introduction of noise attenuation and reduced lighting on major road corridors (particularly the A30 where it crosses the Taw Valley) to reduce impacts on levels of tranquillity and dark night skies within the National Park.

3E: Lowland Plains



Summary of location and landscape character

Flat plain landscape on the eastern edge of the National Park near Heathfield, containing the village of Old Liverton. It provides an important rural edge to development outside the National Park whilst retaining strong visual links with the upland moorland of the Dartmoor core to the west. The landscape has a strongly rural and traditional character, with pastoral fields and frequent blocks of mixed and coniferous woodland. Adjacent urban development and roads beyond the National Park boundary can impact on levels of tranquillity.

Representative photographs of the landscape



Key characteristics

- Flat, gently undulating plain crossed by small streams, contrasting with the hilly landscape to the west (LCT 3A).
- Strong farmland character with regular medium to large pastoral fields interspersed with pockets of arable cultivation.
- Veteran trees within fields and along field boundaries.
- Small blocks of mixed and coniferous woodland providing landscape interest. Relict traditional orchards are also a feature.
- Scattered farms and the nucleated village of Old Liverton, with a traditional vernacular of colourwash, slate and thatch.
- Gaps in hedgerows allowing long views across the plain to the wooded hills and upland moorland of the National Park to the west, and development to the east.
- Some areas of the landscape are more visually enclosed due to the presence of coniferous woodlands.
- Levels of tranquillity broken in the south by the proximity of the A38 road corridor.

Valued landscape attributes

- Historic farmsteads and cottages, including numerous listed buildings at Old Liverton with thatched roofs and colourwashed walls.
- Valued semi-natural habitats including streams, blocks of deciduous woodland and species-rich rush pasture and wet woodland at Brimley Farm County Wildlife Site.
- Relict traditional orchards associated with farmsteads. Veteran trees within hedgerows and in fields.
- Strong rural characteristics with farmland, hedgerows, woodland and a sparse settlement pattern.
- Long views west to the upland moorland give the landscape a sense of place and orientation.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

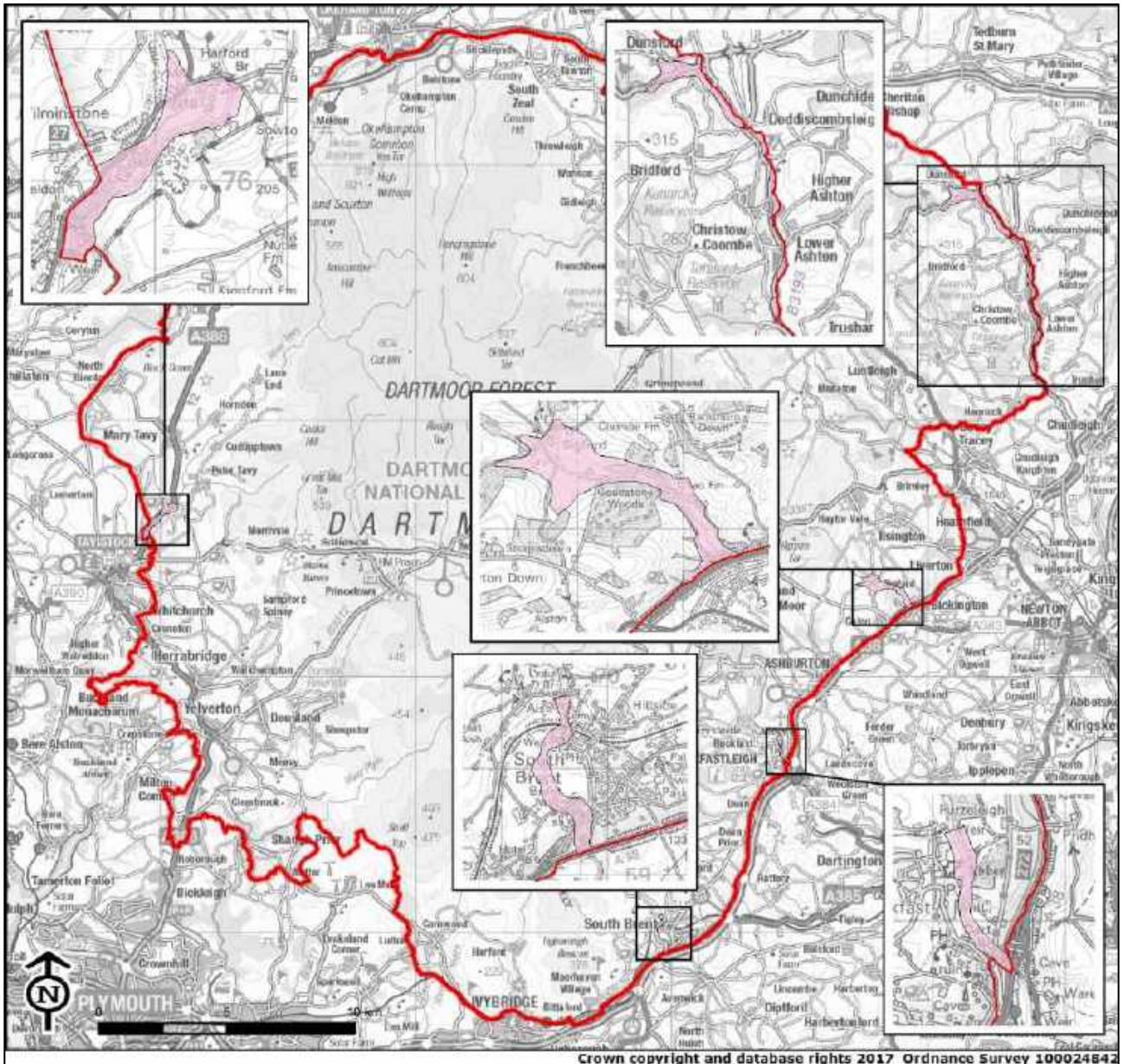
Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the landscape’s function as a buffer between the wider National Park and development outside; retaining long views across the plain to Dartmoor to the west. Manage and enhance the hedgerow network to enhance wildlife corridors, help protect land from flooding and reduce soil erosion. Explore opportunities to gradually re-stock the landscape’s conifer plantations with mixed species and promote Green Infrastructure links with nearby urban centres.

Landscape and planning guidelines

Guideline
PROTECT
Protect long views across the gently undulating plain to the wooded hills and rising mass of Dartmoor to the west.
Protect and manage veteran trees as important landscape features.
Protect the landscape’s function as a barrier to development outside the National Park and setting to the wider Dartmoor landscape to the west.
MANAGE
Manage and protect the landscape’s hedgerow network – restoring lost sections and replanting / 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.
PLAN
Plan for the creation of new Green Infrastructure networks linking to large settlements outside the National Park boundary (e.g. Coldeast, Newton Abbot and Bovey Tracey).
Where appropriate, plan for the gradual restructuring and softening of the edges of conifer blocks with a range of mixed species (including those suited to a changing climate).
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.

3F: Settled Valley Floors



Summary of location and landscape character

This LCT covers the valley floors of the rivers Teign, Lemon, Dart, Avon, Dean Burn and Tavy as they flow past settled areas towards the boundary of the National Park. These landscapes consist of flat valley floors with wet grassland vegetation, enclosed by steep sides which are often cloaked in mixed or broadleaved woodland. The valleys are often highly valued for informal recreation, despite adjacent settlement which may impact on tranquillity levels. Historic mills and weirs along the rivers indicate their past importance to nearby settlements.

Representative photographs of the landscape



Key characteristics

- Winding river valley floors, often tightly enclosed by steep valley sides.
- Intricate pattern of wet meadows and pasture fields enclosed by dense hedgebanks.
- Rivers fringed by lines of trees, copses and bands of broadleaved woodland.
- Traditional orchards are associated with farmsteads and settlements.
- Adjacent to picturesque villages and hamlets with a strong vernacular of local stone.
- Strong industrial heritage linked to water power, with weirs and stone-built mills and bridges.
- Occasional development including industrial/business parks and sewage/water treatment works.
- Valleys traversed by a network of quiet lanes enclosed by hedgebanks. Exceptions are the main road into Tavistock (A386) and the B3193.
- Strong sense of tranquillity away from main roads. Enclosed and sheltered, especially when compared to the Dartmoor uplands.
- Valued for recreation, with footpaths often running along valley floors. A camp site is located east of Tavistock.

Valued landscape attributes

- Valued heritage features including numerous historic stone bridges crossing the rivers. Historic mills and weirs also provide important evidence of the area's industrial heritage.
- The valleys provide part of the setting to historic cores of settlements (including Conservation Areas at South Brent and Dunsford and the historic buildings at Buckfast Abbey).
- Important semi-natural woodland along the valley sides some of which is designated as Woodland of Conservation Importance. Wetland habitats are also found adjacent to watercourses.
- Thick Devon hedgebanks which enclose the fields.
- High levels of tranquillity with naturalistic perceptual qualities including the sound of flowing water and birdsong.
- Traditional orchards.
- Popular destinations for walkers and hikers with footpaths following the valley.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Overall Landscape Strategy

Protect the sheltered, self-contained character of the tranquil valley floors, with traditional villages and hamlets linked by a network of quiet rural lanes. Features relating to past industry, including mills and stone bridges, are protected and restored where appropriate, whilst floodplain habitats and hedgerows are strengthened to build resilience to climate change – particularly flooding.

Landscape and planning guidelines

Guideline
PROTECT
Protect the self-contained character of the valley landscapes, reinforced through the pattern of roadside walls, hedgebanks, woodlands and trees.
Protect and maintain in a good state of repair the historic stone bridges, mills and other features relating to the valleys' industrial heritage.
Protect the character of the landscape's network of quiet lanes enclosed by hedgebanks with verges, traditional gateways and roads following their existing alignments.
Protect in a good state of repair the traditional local vernacular of the landscape's villages and hamlets. Manage and enhance the setting of settlements including through tree planting. 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).
MANAGE
Manage and protect the pattern of riverside trees (including veteran trees), woodlands and copses through reinstating traditional management techniques including coppicing and pollarding. This will also enhance the role of trees and woodlands in flood water storage, reduce soil erosion (to prevent diffuse pollution) and provide a low-carbon fuel source for local communities.
Manage intricate fields bounded by thick hedgerows and Devon hedgebanks (particularly on slopes where they can provide a role in stabilising the soil and reducing agricultural run-off into watercourses). Respect any local variations in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials wherever possible.
Manage and enhance floodplain pasture and wetland habitats, through low-input systems (including light grazing) to enhance their flood storage capacity and reduce levels of diffuse pollution.
PLAN
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.
Consider the introduction of noise attenuation on major road corridors (including the A386, A38 and A382) where traffic impacts on levels of tranquillity within the valleys.
Consider the potential development of small scale hydro schemes as a valuable source of renewable energy on suitable sites (both in ecological and landscape terms).