



Partnership Plan 2019–24

**Management framework for the East Devon
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**





Contents

- 4** Map of East Devon AONB
- 6** Ministerial foreword
- 7** Partnership commendation
- 8** Our vision
- 10** Context
- 21** Theme 1: Place
- 30** Theme 2: People and prosperity
- 44** Theme 3: Communication and management
- 51** Delivery and monitoring
- 54** Appendices

East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty





KEY

-  Jurassic Coast
-  Towns/villages
-  Nature reserves
-  South West Coast Path
-  East Devon Way
-  Cycleway
-  View point
-  Fort/castle

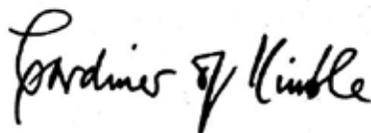


Ministerial foreword

I am fortunate that England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are part of my ministerial responsibilities. Whether it be rolling hills, sweeping coastline or a tranquil village, spending time in an AONB can stir the heart and lift the spirit.

This is a pivotal moment for all AONBs. The government has set its ambition in the 25 Year Environment Plan which states clearly the importance of natural beauty as part of our green future, while AONBs retain the highest status of protection for landscape through national planning policy. Leaving the EU brings with it an opportunity to develop a better system for supporting our farmers and land managers, who play such a vital role as stewards of the landscape. And the Review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty led by Julian Glover – the first of its kind for generations – will make recommendations to make sure our designated landscapes can flourish in the years ahead.

In my visits to AONBs around the country, I have been struck by the passion of many people – farmers, volunteers, and hard-working staff – for the beautiful places they live and work in. In this spirit I am delighted to welcome publication of this Statutory Management Plan (Partnership Plan) for East Devon AONB. It is significant that this Plan will be delivered in partnership by those who value East Devon AONB. I would like to thank all those involved in the preparation of this document and wish you the best of success in bringing it to fruition.



John Gardiner, Baron Gardiner of Kimble
Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity

“

Whether it be rolling hills, sweeping coastline or a tranquil village, spending time in an AONB can stir the heart and lift the spirit

“

Guide and regularly review delivery to achieve the best we can for our landscape, its communities and in turn the economy, and in doing so help keep East Devon truly outstanding





Partnership commendation

As a born and bred East Devonian, the countryside in this south eastern corner of Devon holds a special place in my heart. I have been fortunate to play my part in its conservation and enhancement through my previous employment as a vet, and more recently as a Town and District councillor and now as Chairman of the East Devon AONB Partnership.

Public funding, our exit from the EU and a government spotlight on AONBs and National Parks in the form of the Glover review of designated landscapes will all present fresh challenges and perhaps some exciting opportunities for AONBs over the next five years.

This new Plan has been revised in preparation for this change. As we enter a new era, we will remain fleet of foot to adapt and move with the times and ensure we remain locally effective and relevant. My Partnership will guide and regularly review our delivery to ensure we achieve the best for our landscape, our communities and our economy and in doing so, help keep East Devon truly outstanding.

Cllr Graham Godbeer
Chairman, East Devon AONB Partnership

Commendatory statement

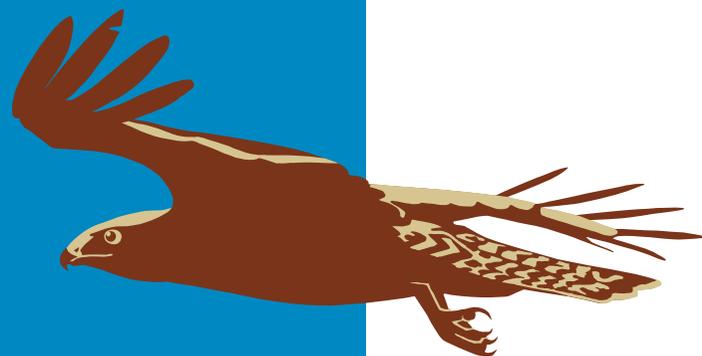
This Partnership Plan has been reviewed and is commended and endorsed by the East Devon AONB Partnership. The Partnership is committed to the delivery of this Plan and will work with a wide range of organisations and individuals to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the East Devon AONB for future generations.

Context of review

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) requires local authorities to prepare, publish and review (on period of not more than five years) Management Plans for AONBs in their areas. This Partnership Plan is the result of a review carried out in 2017–8 by the East Devon AONB Partnership on behalf of Devon County Council and East Devon District Council to fulfil this requirement for the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Our vision for an inspirational landscape

The natural beauty of the East Devon AONB landscape, its dramatic World Heritage Site coastline, internationally important habitats and species and its cultural heritage, is conserved, managed and enhanced to support and benefit present and future generations.



Our strategic aims and objectives

Place

Strategic aim 1: Place – To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB

KEY OBJECTIVE

- 1.1 Landscape character and historic environment**
Improved coordination and influence in the management of the distinctive landscape and historic environment features of the AONB, to ensure they are maintained, enhanced, understood and appreciated.
- 1.2 Environmental quality and climate**
The sustainable management of the natural resources of the AONB.
- 1.3 Biodiversity and geodiversity**
The biodiversity and geological assets of the AONB are conserved and enhanced as part of a bigger, better and more joined up landscape.
- 1.4 Coast**
The conservation and enhancement of the high quality and internationally significant coastline.

People and prosperity

Strategic aim 2: People and Prosperity – Encourage and support sustainable economic development, social engagement and recreational activity that conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the AONB

KEY OBJECTIVE

2.1 Farming, forestry and land management

A sustainable farming, forestry and land management sector that helps to conserve and enhance the character of the AONB.

2.2 Access, recreation and tourism

A sustainable access, recreation and tourism sector that is compatible with the protected landscape and does not harm the conservation of natural beauty or the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

2.3 Planning and development

Planning development and policy protects the special landscape character and tranquillity of the AONB and will enable appropriate forms of social and economic development that are compatible with the landscape, so conserving and enhancing the environment.

2.4 Transport and highways

The impact on the landscape, environment and enjoyment of the AONB is considered in the planning and provision of transport networks and services.

2.5 Rural economy and services

A sustainable rural economy in the AONB that serves to conserve and enhance the character of the landscape.

2.6 Community and culture

Improved access to services and facilities and the active participation in community and appropriate landscape related social enterprise.

Communication and management

Strategic aim 3: Communication and Management – To ensure the AONB is recognised and valued as a national, regional and local asset and is effectively managed in partnership with our stakeholders

KEY OBJECTIVE

3.1 Communication, education and awareness

A greater awareness of the AONB, the purposes of the designation, the role of the Partnership and range of opportunities for engagement.

3.2 Management

The AONB Partnership will act as ambassadors for East Devon AONB, influence policy and decision making affecting AONBs and work to secure funding for the long-term co-ordinated management of the area and report on its work.

0.1 Legislative context

The requirement for this plan

Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 consolidates earlier legislation regarding the designation and purposes of AONB's. It also adds some important provisions that:

- Require 'relevant authorities' (public bodies etc) to 'have regard' to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB
- Require AONB local authorities or conservation boards to prepare and publish an AONB Management Plan and to review it at intervals in line with the Act clauses (in not less than five year intervals). This Plan and the accompanying Partnership Delivery Plan fulfils this requirement.

The purpose of AONB designation

Natural England is responsible for advising on AONB designation. In its 1991 policy statement on AONBs they identified the following three aims for AONBs:

1. The primary purpose of AONB status is to conserve and enhance natural beauty.
2. When carrying out the above duty, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of the local communities. In particular, sustainable forms of social and economic development, that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment, should be promoted.
3. Recreation is not a purpose of designation but demand should be met if this does not harm conservation of natural beauty or the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

This Partnership Plan therefore focuses primarily on conserving and enhancing the quality of the AONB landscape, in particular its natural beauty.

However, as the 1991 Countryside Agency policy statement confirms, this duty should not be implemented in isolation. Socio-economic needs and recreation are to be taken into account in furthering this primary aim in an integrated approach to the management of the AONB.

Duty of regard

Statutory duties in relation to AONBs are provided for in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Specifically, they state that, "in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in these areas, relevant authorities 'shall have regard' to their purposes". The AONB Partnership Plan is a useful mechanism for public bodies to support AONB purposes and demonstrate compliance.

¹ HMSO (2000)

² Section 114 of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act stated "References in this Act to the preservation, or conservation of the natural beauty of an area shall be construed as including references to the preservation or, as the case may be, the conservation of its flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features."

Also, Section 99 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 clarified natural beauty in the countryside as follows:
The fact that an area in England or Wales consists of or includes—
(a) land used for agriculture or woodlands,
(b) land used as a park, or

(c) any other area whose flora, fauna or physiographical features are partly the product of human intervention in the landscape, does not prevent it from being treated, for the purposes of any enactment (whenever passed), as being an area of natural beauty (or of outstanding natural beauty).

0.2 The plan purposes

The Plan has five key purposes:

- To present an integrated vision for the future of the AONB
- To highlight its special qualities
- To set out key objectives and policies
- To identify priority actions for the plan period
- To state how the Plan will be monitored

Who is the plan for?

The plan essentially relates to the AONB landscape. As a consequence, it will be of relevance to local communities, parishes, residents, businesses, developers, landowners and farmers, agencies, local authorities, utilities, organisations and amenity/neighbourhood groups operating within or with an interest in the area. In this sense it is a shared plan that has been influenced and will continue to be developed through partnerships and through on-going consultation with these interests.

Plan status and partnership commitment

This plan formulates East Devon District Council and Devon County Council local authority policy and action in relation to the management of the East Devon AONB as required under Part IV, Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The AONB Partnership role

The East Devon AONB Partnership acts on behalf of East Devon District Council and Devon County Council to guide, deliver and monitor the Partnership Plan and advise on the AONB Business Plan. The following organisations are represented on the East Devon AONB Partnership and endorse this Partnership Plan, its vision and objectives:

- AONB Ambassador representative
- Axe Vale & District Conservation Society
- Clinton Devon Estates
- Country Land & Business Association
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Defra
- Devon Association of Parish & Town Councils
- Devon County Council
- Devon Wildlife Trust
- East Devon District Council
- Historic England
- Environment Agency
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Forestry Commission
- Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Trust
- National Farmers Union
- National Trust
- Natural England
- Otter Valley Association
- Sid Vale Association
- The Donkey Sanctuary

Business planning

The AONB Business Plan is revised and updated annually and is the key supporting document in the partnership grant application to Defra and the local authorities for core team and delivery funding. We review the Delivery Plan targets annually to ensure that both the Partnership Plan and Business Plan priorities are aligned.



0.3 National and regional context

National

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, our finest landscapes have been conserved through designation as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

AONBs were brought into being by the same legislation as National Parks – the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949.

Regional

The richness and diversity of the South West environment differentiates it from other English regions, making the region attractive as a place both to live and work. It is a rural region with some 80% of the land in agricultural use and higher than average numbers engaged in agricultural employment.

Approximately 38% of the region is classified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as Category V Protected Landscapes. A protected area is defined as “A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values” (IUCN).

These protected landscapes are:

- Twelve AONBs and parts of two others cover around 30% of the region. This is twice the proportion covered by AONBs in England as a whole.
- Two National Parks – Dartmoor and Exmoor.

Other key South West environmental assets are:

- 638 km of defined Heritage Coast, and 60% of England’s undeveloped coastline³
- The South West Coast Path National Trail
- 4 World Heritage Sites
- 2 Community Forests
- 1 Biosphere
- 1 Geopark

Local

Devon’s natural and historic environment is notable for its high quality. Over 50% of the land is designated for its environmental quality, encompassing two World Heritage Sites, five AONBs, two National Parks and a biosphere Reserve. The AONBs and National Parks together cover some 38% of the county.

Within East Devon, the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONBs occupy approximately two thirds of the district.

“

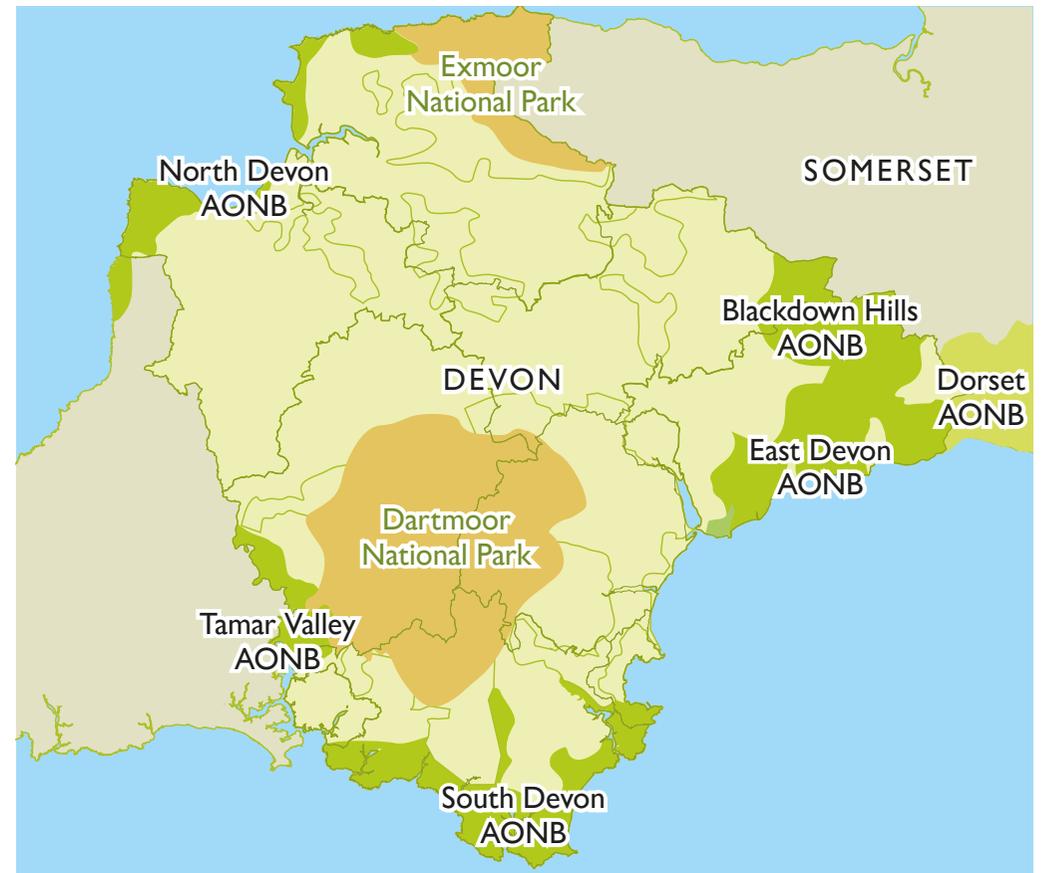
The richness and diversity of the South West environment differentiates it from other English regions, making the region attractive as a place both to live and work

³ defra.gov.uk/erdp/docs/swchapter/section12/landscape

▼ AONB's throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland



▼ East Devon AONB county and district setting: landscape designations



0.4 An introduction to what makes East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty special

The East Devon AONB is a outstanding landscape, full of contrast and colour, diverse and rich in wildlife: a working landscape that is home to around 30,000 residents⁴. The AONB lies solely within East Devon District and covers, or part covers, 30 parishes. It was designated in 1963 and covers 103 square miles (268 sq kms) – approximately 32% of East Devon District.

It is one of five AONBs that fall within Devon, abutting the Blackdown Hills AONB to the north and Dorset AONB to the east. With the exception of Budleigh Salterton, the AONB skirts the major settlements in the area and is characterised by small villages and hamlets at the coast and along its valleys.

The striking East Devon coastline has a great influence on the social, economic and environmental makeup of the AONB and the inscription of the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site is serving to further raise its significance. As the first natural World Heritage Site in England, the ‘Jurassic Coast’ (as it’s more commonly referred to), gives a unique insight into 185 million years of earth history through the rocks exposed along its 95-mile coastline.

Along the coast the villages still retain a vernacular character and rural charm that to date has been largely unspoilt by the expansion

of tourism. There is no better way to sample this impressive coastline than on the South West Coast Path, the most popular National Trail in the country, which brings in significant economic benefit to the South West as a whole.

The hinterland to the coast is less visited. Large expanses of heathland provide a contrast to well-wooded combes and fertile river valleys, all of which can be explored on foot through an extensive network of public rights of way, or traversed by walking the 40 mile East Devon Way long distance footpath.

In the west of the AONB is the largest single block of lowland heathland west of the New Forest, the East Devon Pebble Beds, (Woodbury and other East Devon Commons). Elsewhere on high ground woodland dominates, both deciduous and coniferous. East Devon AONB is one of the more wooded AONBs in the South West of England.

A predominantly pastoral landscape, the AONB is interspersed with copses and wooded goyles, some dating back beyond the 1600s, providing a contrast to the hilltop plantations. Steep sided Devon hedge-banks border fields and narrow country lanes, disguising the richness of this outstanding landscape to all but the most observant traveller.

“

An outstanding landscape, full of contrast and colour, diverse and rich in wildlife

⁴ Source: ONS, mid-year Population estimates, 2010

The countryside is punctuated by hamlets and villages with cottages and houses built of local stone, pebbles, thatch and cob, a reflection of the underlying geology and traditional land use of the area. Cob, a more common, accessible and alternative material to stone, is a mixture of clayey soils and straw, and is also found in many farmhouses and local buildings, particularly in the west of the AONB.

Devon has a strong tradition of combed wheat thatching, but since the 1950s, water reed, mainly imported from Eastern Europe, has also been used extensively. Imported brick, slate and clay tiles all brought greater changes to local buildings in the 19th century to provide a more diverse building form to the AONB.

Chert (flint) and pebblebed stone ('popple') can be found in many churches, local buildings and walls. The much sought-after Beer limestone, used locally in Beer has also been used in buildings such as Exeter Cathedral and as far afield as America.

Evidence of man's former activity is present today in the form of the historic environment ranging from the nationally significant Bronze Age hill-barrow cemetery at Farway to several Iron Age hill-forts and numerous tumuli, barrows, and former quarries, to the more recent enclosure field patterns and anti-invasion World War II pill boxes in the Axe Valley.

0.5 Landscape character

East Hill Strips



The European Landscape Convention (ELC) defines landscape as: “An area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”. (Council of Europe 2000).

The ELC highlights the importance of developing landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes and establishing procedures for the general public and other stakeholders to participate in policy creation and implementation.

The UK is recognised as already putting many of the principles of the ELC into practice and the AONB Partnership Plan is an excellent example of this. Another example is the well-established practice of using Landscape Character Assessment to inform local policymaking.

In terms of area-wide landscape management,

there have been a number of developments in the assessment and evaluation of the landscape over the last decade that have served to improve our detailed understanding of the natural and cultural landscape of East Devon AONB.

At the National level, National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. Their boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them an invaluable aid for planning environmental projects and decision making for the environment. There are two NCA's covering the AONB, The Blackdowns (147) and Devon Redlands (148).

NCA profiles have been developed as guidance documents which will help to achieve a more



sustainable future for individuals and communities. The profiles include a description of the key ecosystem services provided in each character area and how these benefit people, wildlife and the economy. They identify potential opportunities for positive environmental change and provide the best available information and evidence as a context for local decision making and action.

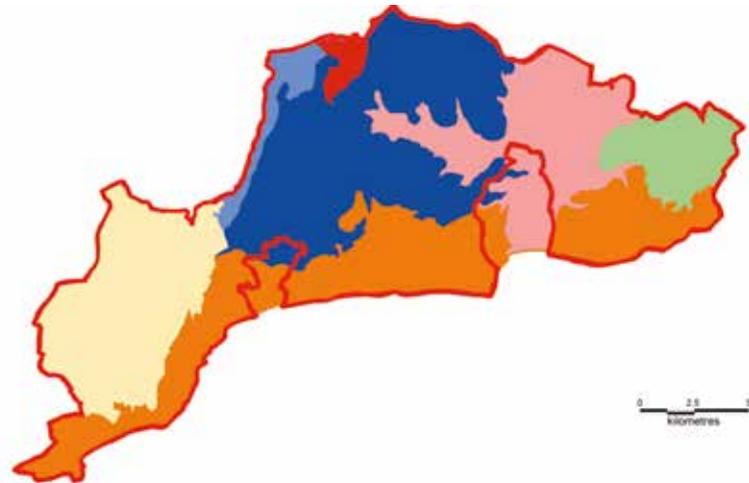
Local variations in the distinctive character and special qualities of the AONB's landscape are articulated through the Devon-wide "Landscape Character Assessment" (LCA). Hidden characteristics and past land uses are identified in Devon's "Historic Landscape Characterisation" (HLC). These assessments are now extensively used in planning and land management to understand and describe the landscape and guide change.

A Landscape Character Assessment of Devon was completed in 2012, complementing the earlier East Devon LCA (2008) and the HLC of Devon (2006). Together these assessments provide a basis upon which to protect, manage and plan landscape change within the AONB.

These assessments identify a hierarchy of landscape units, building from smaller more detailed Land Description Units (LDU's) to generic Landscape Character Types (LCT's) and finally to the more geographically unique and locally identifiable Devon Landscape Character Areas (LCA's).

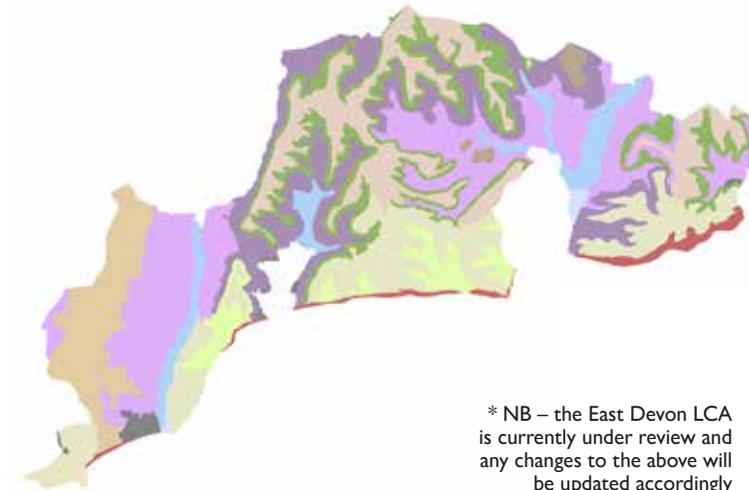
The detailed assessment work has included the development of guidelines to protect, manage and plan landscape change. The AONB Partnership will use these guidelines in developing its work and in responding to consultations.

▼ Devon Landscape Character Areas



- Axe Valley
- Blackdown Hills
- Clyst Lowland Farmlands
- East Devon Central Ridge
- Pebblebed Heaths and Farmland
- Sidmouth and Lyme Bay Coastal Plateau
- Wootton Hills

▼ East Devon Landscape Character Types*



* NB – the East Devon LCA is currently under review and any changes to the above will be updated accordingly

- 1A Open inland planned plateaux
- 1B Open coastal plateaux
- 1C Pebble Bed heaths
- 1E Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 2A Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 2B Coastal slopes and combes
- 3A Upper farmed and wooded slopes
- 3B Lower rolling farmed and settled slopes
- 4A Unsettled farmed valley floors
- 4B Unsettled marine levels
- 4C Estuaries
- 4D Lowland plains
- 5 Coastal cliffs
- Urban

0.6 Special qualities



A landscape of significant scenic beauty that is the basis for its agricultural and tourism economy

East Devon AONB is notable for its varied and dramatic coastal scenery; the grandeur of sheer red sandstone cliffs, intimate wooded combs and coves contrast with the stark, white chalk outcrop that punctuates the coast at Beer Head and further east, the wilderness of the undercliffs.

Its special qualities do not stop at the coast. Inland, the heathland commons provide high, open and remote plateaux. Important recreationally, the heathland habitat is valuable for its flora and fauna and contrasts sharply with the lower undulating agricultural mosaic of small fields, hedgerows and woodland copse.

Elevated fingers of land extend from the Blackdown Hills to the north, their height and linearity accentuated by cathedral-like beech avenues; woodlands clad their sides, flowing down steep sided goyles to infiltrate the tranquil and often intimate agricultural valleys below.

This contrasts with the broad flat floodplains of the Axe and Otter which cut into the area, drawing their life from tributaries deep within the valleys of the undulating hinterland. The human engagement, use and management of this land since pre-historic times has guided the pattern and shape of the settlements, field patterns, woodland and heath, creating a landscape of significant scenic beauty that is the basis for its agricultural and tourism economy.

Recreational, cultural and spiritual qualities

abound, with the South West Coast Path, East Devon Way and open access land, most notably on the Pebblebed Heaths, providing extensive opportunities for open air recreation, healthy exercise, uninterrupted views or an escape to tranquillity and relative isolation. Our association with the cultural and heritage dimension of the landscape has inspired descriptive writing, poetry, art and song for generations.

The Countryside Commission appraisal of the East Devon AONB (CCP442) identifies many of these associations and special qualities and has been more recently supplemented by assessments of the character of the landscape at the national, county and local level. These assessments have enabled further articulation of the special qualities and features of significance as they relate to natural beauty, which are summarised in the table on the following page.

These features of significance and special qualities are axiomatic to what goes into making the natural beauty of the landscape of such high quality. Alongside the key characteristics of the landscape areas and types, they require protection, conservation and enhancement if the AONB is to retain its character and status amongst England's finest landscapes.

Appendix 1 contains a table showing the links between special qualities and landscape character of the AONB.

▼ The relationship between natural beauty and special qualities

Legal context for natural beauty

Natural England Evaluation Framework for natural beauty criterion

Six landscape factors, covering landscape and scenic quality, relative wildness and tranquillity, natural and cultural heritage

Evidence base

National, county and district and local records and assessments

Landscape and historic landscape character assessments, heritage, geological and biodiversity records, other records

Special qualities

Key features and attributes of significance

Locally specific, distinctive, reflecting the natural beauty criterion



Delivering the vision

Introduction

It is recognised that there will be an on-going role for all partners to work towards our vision through the delivery of this plan.

The plan is made up of three over-arching themes which are further divided into 12 sub-themes, each with their own vision, objective and policies.

A delivery plan will outline how we will implement the plan, with targets and timescales. We will report on our work annually and update our Delivery Plan, which will in turn feed into our annual business planning process each year.

The themes

The three themes to this plan are:

1. Place

2. People and prosperity

3. Communication and management

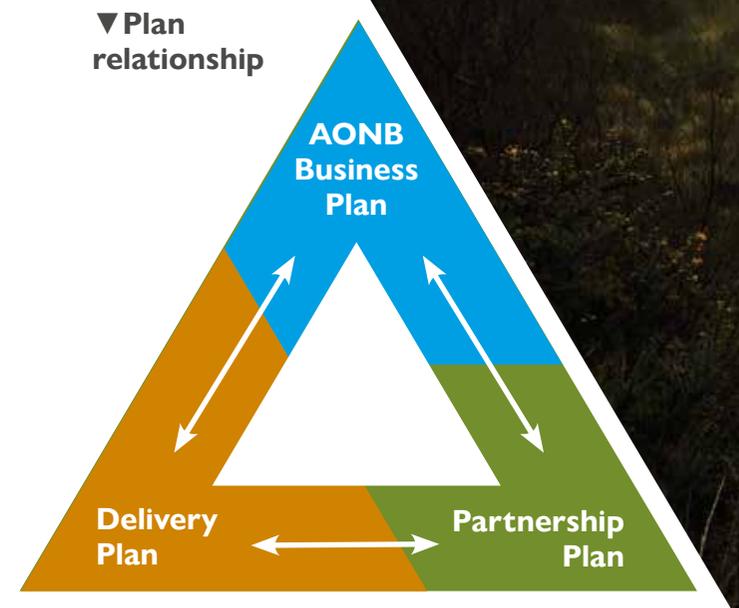
It is recognised there will be overlaps and interdependencies between all the themes. It is also expected that the development of the AONB team and Partnership and delivery of the Plan over the next five years will continue to refine the delivery framework on the basis of improved information and data.

Interpretation of policies

All the policies in the Partnership Plan must be interpreted in the light of:

- the key objective of the sub-theme
- the sub-theme vision
- the vision for the AONB
- the statutory purpose of the East Devon AONB designation 'to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty'

Where there are any doubts or conflicts, policies should be interpreted using a 'purposive' approach which returns to the statutory purpose of the AONB designation, 'to conserve and enhance natural beauty'.



Place

**Strategic aim 1: Conserve
and enhance the natural
beauty of the AONB**

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. This sub-theme is concerned with conserving and enhancing the diversity of the AONB landscape; what makes and maintains its character, heritage and local distinctiveness. It is fundamentally linked with landscape management practices and policy.

What are the key forces for change?

- Agricultural practices and market influences
- Built Development – new housing, business units, roads and power/energy projects
- Renewable energy developments
- Habitat and species change (diseases such as Ash Dieback/invasives)
- Climate change
- Government policy – post-Brexit environmental legislation
- Public awareness, perceptions and understanding

What are the key policy influences?

- Landscape and wildlife designations – UK and EU designations
- Environmental policy – habitat and species regulations
- Government 25 year Environment Plan
- Landscape and historic character assessments/records
- National and local planning policy
- European landscape convention

Who are our key partners?

- UK Government, Defra bodies, local authorities
- Wildlife and landscape organisations/charities/trusts
- Landowners, local communities, societies, groups and individuals
- Devon Landscape Policy Group

Our work to date

- Input into district level landscape character assessment
- Developed an Historic Environment Action Plan
- Undergrounded power lines on Aylesbeare Common with CDE/RSPB
- Organise an AONB Annual Heritage Conference
- Delivered Lottery Funded heritage projects:
 - Parishscapes
 - In the footsteps of Peter Orlando Hutchinson
 - Legacy to Landscape
- Awarded Heritage Angel award 2012
- Support to East Devon History Group
- Helped fund the Historic England/Devon CC, National Mapping Programme (LIDAR)

Policies

L1 Support the development and delivery of environmental schemes and projects aimed at maintaining and improving the landscape character, historic environment and local distinctiveness of the AONB.

L2 Develop methods that enable effective and targeted management and monitoring of the AONB's natural, historic and cultural landscape.

Priority actions

- Review and update the East Devon Landscape Character Assessment with EDDC, DCC and BHAONB
- Encourage appropriate woodland creation projects especially in areas of high soil erosion
- Secure partnership and funding for follow on Legacy to Landscape project
- Complete the Lidar 3D investigation and mapping: East Devon AONB survey
- Seek to develop guidance and design of farm buildings with Devon Landscape Policy Group
- Seek to develop cross boundary guidance on protecting areas of tranquillity

Theme indicator

Primary

- No of listed buildings on the 'Heritage at Risk' register (Historic England)
- Total woodland cover as % of AONB (Forestry Commission)

Secondary

- Heritage Assets enhanced with AONB support (AONB)
- Area of land enhanced through AONB programmes (AONB)

A vision for landscape character and historic environment

The AONB landscape, its historic features and distinctive vernacular buildings are conserved and enhanced as part of a living and working landscape for which there are mechanisms in place to ensure their continued long-term management and care.

Key objective 1.1

Improved coordination and influence in the management of the distinctive landscape and historic environment features of the AONB, to ensure they are maintained, enhanced, understood and appreciated.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND CLIMATE

This sub-theme is concerned with the key natural resources of the AONB where the partnership has a key role; land and water. It also covers the issue of air quality and climate change.

What are the key forces for change?

- Agricultural practices and policy
- Built development – new housing, business units, roads
- Waste management – especially plastics
- Climate change
- Government policy – post Brexit environmental legislation
- Public awareness, perceptions and understanding

What are the key policy influences?

- Water, flood and waste management regulations – UK and EU post Brexit
- Water Framework Directive and associated programmes post Brexit
- Government 25 year Environment Plan
- National and local planning policy
- Government Clean Air Strategy

Who are our key partners?

- UK Government, Defra bodies, local authorities
- Wildlife and river organisations/charities/trusts
- Landowners and farmers
- Local communities, societies, groups and individuals

Our work to date

- We are a partner on the East Devon Catchment Partnership (delivering Water Framework Directive outcomes)
- We sponsored a Devon/Cornwall natural flood/soil management guide
- We are a partner on the Lower Otter Restoration Project
- Consultation responses for large scale renewable energy scheme proposals in the AONB
- Provided funding for renewable energy surveys and local schemes

Policies

EQC 1 Support and encourage environmental and energy initiatives aimed at maintaining and improving the natural resources of the AONB and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, that are in keeping with the sustainable management of the landscape, maintain landscape character and conserve and where possible enhance, natural beauty.

EQC 2 Support and encourage schemes that will help to reduce, re-use and recycle waste in a sustainable manner whilst respecting the landscape character of the AONB.

EQC 3 Seek to understand and plan to exploit or minimise possible impacts arising from climate change in order to conserve and enhance the AONB, in particular habitats and species protected for their nature conservation value.

Priority actions

- Support and encourage environmental and energy initiatives, particularly where these are under community ownership
- Support community schemes that will help to reduce, re-use and recycle waste
- Work with partners on the East Devon Catchment Partnership to deliver climate change adaptation measures and promote sustainable management of our natural resources
- Assist farmers in reducing impacts on clean water and air

Theme indicator

Primary

- River water quality (Environment Agency)

Secondary

- Renewable energy installations/schemes (RegenSW)

A vision for environmental quality and climate

The land, air, soils and water across the AONB are exposed to fewer pollutants, are better valued and are managed in a more integrated way. Our rivers, lakes and coastal waters are cleaner and support sustainable ecosystems that provide for recreation, the needs of the local and visiting community and in doing so help sustain the local economy. We understand the unavoidable impacts of climate change and are taking steps to adapt to these and facilitate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Key objective 1.2

The sustainable management of the natural resources of the AONB.

BIODIVERSITY AND GEODIVERSITY

This sub-theme is concerned with conserving and enhancing the wildlife, habitat and geological assets of the AONB.

What are the key forces for change?

- Agricultural practices and impact on designated sites/species/water quality
- Climate change
- Government conservation and environmental policy/legislation post Brexit
- Public awareness, perceptions and understanding

What are the key policy influences?

- Government 25 year Environment Plan
- Natural England's Conservation 21 Policy
- Devon Local Nature Partnership – Action Plan
- National and local planning/minerals policy

Who are our key partners?

- UK Government, Defra bodies, local authorities
- Wildlife and conservation organisations/charities/trusts
- Landowners
- Local communities, societies, groups and individuals

Our work to date

- We are a lead partner in the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project
- We assist delivery of River Otter Beaver Trial
- We are a member of the Jurassic Coast Trust Management Plan Advisory Group
- We are a partner on the Lower Otter Restoration Project
- We respond to consultations on mineral extraction sites
- We have provided SDF funding to support to local wildlife projects
- We play an active role in the Devon Local Nature Partnership

Policies

BG1 In partnership with others, support and encourage conservation and enhancement actions for key habitat and species within the AONB that maintain and enhance landscape character and the historic environment.

BG2 Encourage actions that serve to conserve and promote geo-diversity within the AONB, in particular within the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site.

Priority actions

- Continue to support delivery of the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat project
- Confirm and deliver actions in support of the Government's 25 year Environment Plan; in particular developing Natural Capital and achieving Net Gain
- Work with NE, Defra, WHS Trust and key partners on post Brexit environmental policy and delivery
- Play an active role in the Devon Local Nature Partnership
- Play an active role in the Lower Otter Restoration Project
- Play an active role in the River Otter Beaver Trial

Theme indicator

Primary

- Total percentage of SSSI's in 'favourable' condition (Natural England)

Secondary

- Wildlife project supported by AONB (AONB)
- Area of enhanced biodiversity habitat through AONB programmes (AONB)

A vision for biodiversity and geodiversity

The diversity and abundance of wildlife and geology within the AONB is conserved and measures are being taken to further enhance habitats and geological features. The importance of these assets on the fabric of the landscape are understood and appreciated by local people and visitors alike.

Key objective 1.3

The biodiversity and geological assets of the AONB are conserved and enhanced as part of a bigger, better and more joined up landscape.

COAST

This sub-theme is concerned with conserving and enhancing the coastal areas of the AONB, including the Heritage Coast/ World Heritage Site.

What are the key forces for change?

- Climate change, weather patterns and an eroding coastline
- Raised awareness of marine pollution/litter

What are the key policy influences?

- Government 25 year Environment Plan
- Marine and landscape environmental protection Policy
- Water Framework Directive
- National and Local Marine/Shoreline and Coastal Change Management Policy
- Jurassic Coast Management Plan

Who are our key partners?

- Jurassic Coast Trust, South West Coast Path, National Trust
- UK Government, Defra bodies, local authorities
- Wildlife and conservation organisations, charities, trusts
- Key landowners and holiday parks/coastal sites
- Local communities, societies, groups and individuals

Our work to date

- Member of the Jurassic Coast Management group
- Partner on the Lower Otter Restoration Project
- Funding support to coastal community projects
- Engagement in EDDC Beach Management Planning process
- Coastal Corridor Plan to guide future action
- Support to South West Coast Path enhancement projects
- Consultation on coastal protection and development schemes

Policies

C1 Conserve and enhance the tranquil, unspoiled and undeveloped character of the coastline and estuaries and encourage improvements to coastal sites damaged by past poor-quality development or intensive recreational pressure.

C2 Support and encourage action that maintains the highest standard of bathing water quality and litter management in the estuaries and along the coast.

Priority actions

- Encourage environmental and landscape improvements to existing large scale holiday sites on the coast
- Support and encourage beach/marine litter and consumer/behaviour change campaigns
- Support Jurassic Coast Trust initiatives and the conservation and protection of the coast in particular in regards of its setting
- Engage in EDDC Beach Management Planning in Sidmouth/Seaton

Theme indicator

Primary

- Percentage of time bathing water sites meets imperative standards (Environment Agency)

A vision for the coast

The high quality, largely undeveloped and internationally significant coastline is conserved and enhanced, maintaining the highest environmental and design standards and sustaining opportunities for recreation and tourism that has regard for local communities.

Key objective 1.4

The conservation and enhancement of the high quality and internationally significant coastline.

People and prosperity

Strategic aim 2: Encourage and support sustainable economic development, social engagement and recreational activity that conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the AONB





Seaton/
Axe Valley

FARMING, FORESTRY AND LAND MANAGEMENT

This sub-theme is concerned with the role of agriculture, forestry and other land management practices in the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.

What are the key forces for change?

- Future agricultural policy post Brexit
- Global market price changes
- Climate change and trend for natural flood management tools
- Crop and machinery innovation

What are the key policy influences?

- Government 25 year Environment Plan
- Government farm/food policy
- Water Framework Directive and/or its replacement post Brexit
- Post-Brexit agri-environment and rural development schemes

Who are our key partners?

- Defra, Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission
- Local authorities
- Wildlife and conservation organisations, charities, trusts
- Farmers and landowners
- Local communities, societies, groups and individuals

Our work to date

- Providing farm advice and support for agri-environment schemes
- Drawing down Making it Local rural development funding
- Coordinating an East Devon Farm Facilitation Scheme
- Facilitating a Princes Farm Resilience Programme
- Providing SDF support to farmland wildlife and habitat projects
- Encouraging Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat project farm habitat schemes
- Managed delivery of the River Axe Invasives Project and River Axe Catchment Sensitive Farming scheme

Policies

FLM1 Promote and support appropriate and positive land management, diversification and agri-environment schemes that are in keeping with the purposes of AONB designation.

FLM2 Support initiatives that enable the land management sector to adapt to change and remain viable, whilst maintaining and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.

Priority actions

- Actively engage in the Catchment Sensitive Farming programmes
- Influence, support and encourage environmental stewardship schemes
- Work with partners to develop and support sustainable woodland and hedgerow/tree management
- Work with partners to develop and support sustainable farming and land management practices and reduce flood risk
- Engage in agricultural policy development through National Association for AONBs
- Co-ordinate delivery of the East Devon Farm Facilitation programme

Theme indicator

Primary

- % AONB in the Environmental Stewardship scheme (Defra)
- % woodland in the England Woodland Grant Scheme (Forestry Commission)

Secondary

- Number of farmers/landowners actively engaged in Catchment Sensitive Farming (Natural England)

A vision for farming, forestry and land management

The AONB is a well-managed landscape in which every farm and woodland make a positive and profitable contribution to the biodiversity, economy and communities of the AONB

Key objective 2.1

A sustainable farming, forestry and land management sector that helps to conserve and enhance the character of the AONB

ACCESS, RECREATION AND TOURISM

Whilst recreation is not a primary purpose for designation, it is recognised that demand should be met through active management, if this does not harm the conservation of natural beauty or the needs of agriculture, forestry and other land uses. The quality of the AONB environment and coastline play a significant role in boosting tourism and the rural economy.

What are the key forces for change?

- Tourism policy, promotion, and sector development
- Increasing recognition of the health and welfare benefits of outdoor recreation
- Growing interest in sporting, cultural and lifestyle events/festivals
- Population increase through housing development
- Developments in new technology – eg. battery operated bikes

What are the key policy influences?

- UK, Regional and local tourism policy
- Access policy and legislation
- Health and well-being policy
- Post-Brexit rural tourism development schemes
- Devon Countryside Access Forum Position Statement

Who are our key partners?

- Defra, Natural England, Destination Management bodies
- Tourism providers and AONB Business Ambassadors
- Local authorities – rights of way and South West Tourism Association
- Local communities, societies, groups and individuals

Our work to date

- Coordinating the management and promotion of the East Devon Way
- Work with Devon CC/South West Coast Path on access enhancements
- Development of links with tourism and accommodation providers
- Promotion and support to Sidmouth and East Devon Walking Festival
- Monitoring recreational route use across the AONB
- Providing opportunities for informal recreation through projects
- Group winner of South West Tourism Alliance Outstanding Contribution to Tourism award (2018)

Policies

ART 1 In partnership with others encourage and support the provision of high quality, sensitive, physical access for as wide a range of users as possible and the on-going sustainable development of key recreational routes where this does not conflict with the conservation of internationally protected sites and species.

ART 2 In partnership with others encourage and support sustainable tourism activities within the AONB through the promotion of the special qualities of the AONB, where this would not lead to conflict with the conservation of internationally protected sites and species.

Priority actions

- Coordinate East Devon Way Management Plan and promotion
- Continue to promote and develop links with the tourism sector/businesses and the environment, in particular around the East Devon Way and South West Coast Path corridors
- Support improvements to coastal access, in particular in the Undercliffs

Theme indicator

Primary

- Percentage of footpaths qualifying as 'Ease of use of public rights of way' (Devon CC)
- Changes in visitor numbers on key rights of way (AONB)

Secondary

- Number of businesses with Green Tourism Business Scheme accreditation or an equivalent (Devon CC)

A vision for access, recreation and tourism

The quality of the AONB landscape is a key driver in the local economy. It is a destination for a range of recreation and tourism opportunities that have little impact on the environment, which can be accessed by sustainable means and where the quiet enjoyment of the AONB and the benefits for health and well-being activities are promoted.

Key objective 2.2

A sustainable access, recreation and tourism sector that is compatible with the protected landscape and does not harm the conservation of natural beauty or the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Planning controls and their implementation play a key role in the conservation and enhancement of the AONB, its wildlife and communities.

What are the key forces for change?

- Population increase/ housing development within the AONB and its setting
- Protected landscape policy/proposals for a Dorset and East Devon National Park
- Impacts of new technologies on domestic and commercial properties
- Demand for micro-business premises
- Opportunities for local plan making
- Post Brexit impact on planning regulations and related environmental protection
- Climate change

What are the key policy influences?

- National Planning Policy Framework*
- Local plans, neighbourhood plans and mineral and waste plans
- Landscape assessment tools and policy guidelines
- The East Devon AONB Partnership Plan
- Environmental law/protection
- Government 25 Year Environment Plan
- Glover Review of National Designated Landscapes

Who are our key partners?

- Local Authority planning and policy staff
- Natural England
- Devon Landscape Policy Group
- Fellow AONBs/National Parks

Our work to date

- Instigated the first Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for East Devon
- Input into Devon Landscape Policy Group guidelines
- Production of AONB Equestrian Development Advice Notes
- Operating a Planning Consultation Protocol with Devon CC and East Devon DC
- Input on a wide range of planning consultations /plans
- Review of East Devon Landscape Character Assessment (2018/19)

* See Appendix 2 for summary of key AONB references in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

Policies

P1 Encourage the development of guidelines to support high quality sustainable development which complements and respects the AONB landscape and historic character.

P2 Provide advice and support on planning policy and development to enable the special qualities of the historic and landscape character to be protected, conserved and enhanced.

Priority actions

- Develop advice and guidelines in close liaison with planning/policy staff
- Support the development of village and neighbourhood plans/guides
- Respond to planning consultations in accordance with the AONB protocol as resources allow
- Engage in the Glover Review of Designated Landscapes
- To encourage use of Landscape Sensitivity Assessments in and within the setting of the AONB

Theme indicator

Primary

- Policy guidelines/tools developed/amended (AONB/East Devon DC/Devon CC)

Secondary

- Number of planning applications commented on by the AONB team

A vision for planning and development

The special qualities of the AONB landscape are protected, enhanced and conserved by planning policies which are robust enough to ensure that development is both appropriate and compatible with the national importance of the landscape.

Key objective 2.3

Planning development and policy protects the special landscape character and tranquillity of the AONB and will enable appropriate forms of social and economic development that are compatible with the landscape, so conserving and enhancing the environment.

TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

The AONB is a place where sustainable transport and opportunities for improved appropriate access to the countryside are welcomed. Design of transport and highways/access is important to conserving character and tranquillity.

What are the key forces for change?

- Traffic increase through greater housing development
- Increasing interest in cycling and safe off-road routes
- Management of the highway corridor for wildlife/safety
- The recognised health and welfare benefits of outdoor recreation
- Developments in new technology – eg. battery operated bikes

What are the key policy influences?

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Local and county plans
- Transport plans, neighbourhood plans
- Highways Management Guidelines for Devon's protected landscapes

Who are our key partners?

- Local Authority transport/highways departments
- Developers/transport providers
- Parish/town councils

Our work

- Production of highways management guidelines for AONBs/National Parks in Devon
- Support to local transport projects – e.g. Sidmouth Hopper, X53 Jurassic Coast bus service
- Input on all-user access scheme consultations
- Promotion of public transport in AONB literature
- Encouraging sustainable tourism initiatives

Policies

T1 Promote the development of high quality, integrated and sustainable transport services and initiatives in and around the AONB where compatible with conserving natural beauty and the conservation objectives of European nature conservation sites.

T2 Work to ensure road and transport schemes within the AONB have regard to the purpose of AONB designation.

Priority actions

- Contribute to the development of sustainable transport initiatives
- Investigate options to monitor and identify tranquil areas within the AONB; including the creation of a network of quiet lanes
- Encourage and support village gateway signs promoting the AONB
- Encourage and support safe off-road access routes for all users

Theme indicator

Primary

- Traffic counts at fixed locations in/near the AONB (Devon CC)
- Length of dedicated cycle ways in the AONB (Devon CC)

A vision for transport and highways

The AONB highways network is designed and maintained with landscape in mind and serves an area where there is a culture for reduced traffic impact, improved public transport services and flexible sustainable transport opportunities.

Key objective 2.4

The impact on the landscape, environment and enjoyment of the AONB is considered in the planning and provision of transport networks and services.

RURAL ECONOMY AND SERVICES

The AONB is a living and working landscape, with agriculture, forestry, and a wide range of business and economic activity taking place. The social needs of local communities vary from towns to isolated rural hamlets.

What are the key forces for change?

- Mobile working, rural isolation/access and broadband provision
- New technological developments and demand for micro-business premises
- Greater demand for local products, supply chains and traceability
- Local authority funding, revenue and asset management programmes
- 'Natural capital' models may influence future rural business and land management

What are the key policy influences?

- Government strategic/growth investment programmes
- Local authority planning/housing and economic development programmes
- Rural development programmes post Brexit
- Local plans/neighbourhood plans

Who are our key partners?

- Local Authority economic development departments
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Parish/town councils
- Businesses and local advice networks

Our work to date

- Helping secure and deliver Making it Local rural development programme funding
- SDF supported community facility initiatives – e.g. Beer Scouts, Umborne Village Hall
- The AONB and whs Ambassador schemes are developing links with local businesses
- Input into neighbourhood plans and advice documents

Policies

RES 1 Encourage the principle of local markets and sustainable local produce where it adds value to the local economy and contributes to the AONB purpose of designation.

RES 2 Encourage the development of sustainable employment opportunities that are compatible with the AONB purpose and objectives, promote good design and encourage people to continue to live and work within in their communities.

RES 3 In partnership with others develop monitoring and research that serves to quantify and assess the economic value of the environment in the AONB.

Priority actions

- Secure legacy programme funding for Making it Local RDPE programme and assistance to micro-businesses
- Support and encourage local produce/supply networks and support improved services for isolated rural communities
- Support local businesses in the development of the environmental economy and complementary programmes eg. AONB Ambassador scheme
- Work with partners to develop models demonstrating the natural capital of the AONB

Theme indicator

Primary

- Number of businesses pledged on the AONB Ambassador scheme (AONB)

A vision for rural economy and services

The AONB economy is robust and able to adapt and is sustaining local communities, services and businesses whilst operating in harmony with the conservation and enhancement of the outstanding landscape.

Key objective 2.5

A sustainable rural economy in the AONB that serves to conserve and enhance the character of the landscape.

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

The AONB population is small (c30k) with a high percentage of retired residents attracted by the quality of life and landscape. There are opportunities to develop local community initiatives and activity in partnership with others help to develop skills, improve health, raise awareness and encourage cohesion.

What are the key forces for change?

- Social/community/health support programmes
- Rural development programmes post-Brexit
- Village housing/affordable housing programmes
- Local authority funding, revenue and asset management programmes

What are the key policy influences?

- Government strategic/growth investment programmes/LEPs
- Local authority planning/housing, health and economic development programmes
- Rural development programmes post-Brexit local plans/neighbourhood plans
- Local and neighbourhood planning

Who are our key partners?

- Parish/town councils
- Local interest groups and societies, partners
- Local Authority economic development departments
- Voluntary services/networks

Our work to date

- Secured and delivering Making it Local rural development programme funding
- Operated three community based Cultural Heritage Projects 2007–17
- Active engagement with the main civic groups in the AONB area
- Supported Neighbourhood plans and town/village projects
- Assisted development and promotion of walking for health programmes

Policies

CC1 Support local community engagement in physical, cultural and natural heritage initiatives within the AONB.

CC2 Work with others to strengthen community capacity, resources, information, services and facilities within the AONB where these contribute to the AONB purpose of designation.

Priority actions

- Actively engage local community groups and organisations in AONB projects and activities
- Support local action through the AONB Sustainable Development Fund and other programmes
- Support community level plan development eg. neighbourhood plans

Theme indicator

Primary

- Number of parish and town councils in the AONB area with up to date/'made' Neighbourhood Plans or their equivalent (East Devon DC)

Secondary

- Membership numbers of the Otter Valley Association, Sid Vale Association and Axe Vale & District Conservation Society (Amenity groups)

A vision for community and culture

The AONB is an area where communities have an active association with the landscape and where local events serve to reinforce this relationship, maintain local traditions, and support the local economy. Mechanisms have been established that address local housing need and enable the provision and long-term use of community buildings and resources.

Key objective 2.6

Improved access to services and facilities and the active participation in community and appropriate landscape related social enterprise.

Communication and management



Strategic aim 3: The AONB is recognised and valued as a national, regional and local asset and is effectively managed in partnership with our stakeholders.



COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

The activity of the AONB Partnership and its supporters will help develop understanding of the countryside, awareness of the AONB designation, its purposes and the work of the Partnership.

What are the key forces for change?

- Defra/government policy post-Brexit
- Local authority/partner education activity and programmes
- Business awareness of the value of the environment to them/their customers
- Social media and technological development

What are the key policy influences?

- Defra protected landscape investment programmes
- National Association for AONBs communication programmes
- Local authority and AONB partner activity/awareness and engagement projects

Who are our key partners?

- National Association for AONBs
- Parish/town councils
- Local schools, interest groups and societies
- Local Authority economic development, heritage, countryside departments
- Voluntary services/networks

Our work to date

- Developed an AONB website and a range of promotional leaflets
- Provide talks to local organisations
- Held an Annual public meeting since 2003
- Undertaken a wide range of community-based project work – e.g. Legacy to Landscape
- Initiated an AONB Ambassador scheme
- Installed AONB boundary markers and encouraged village gateway signs

Policies

CEA 1 In partnership with others promote and support the education, understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural landscape of the AONB.

CEA 2 Promote and highlight good practice within the AONB and the role and activities of the AONB Partnership.

Priority actions

- Promote the AONB and work of the Partnership and its member organisations
- Survey local communities on levels of awareness and understanding of the AONB
- Provide information and educational materials on the AONB to support partners across the area
- Continue to develop the AONB Ambassador scheme for individuals, organisations and businesses

Theme indicator

Primary

- Levels of awareness of the AONB designation and purpose (AONB five yearly)
- Number of people engaged in AONB activities (AONB)

A vision for communication, education and awareness

There is a high level of awareness of the AONB designation, the Partnership's activities and the wide range of opportunities and media available. This is enabling people and businesses to engage with, learn more about and benefit from the opportunities this special landscape has to offer.

Key objective 3.1

A greater awareness of the AONB, the purposes of the designation, the role of the Partnership and range of opportunities for engagement.

MANAGEMENT

This sub theme addresses the operational aspects of the AONB Partnership and team.

What are the key forces for change?

- Defra/government protected landscape policy post-Brexit
- Local authority/partner funding and support
- Community involvement and support

What are the key policy influences?

- Protected landscape legislation e.g. CROW Act 2000
- Defra protected landscape investment programmes
- National Association for AONBs performance agreements with Defra
- Local authority business plans

Who are our key partners?

- Defra and Local authority funders (Devon CC and East Devon DC)
- Parish/town councils
- Local interest groups and societies
- Conservation organisations, charities and trusts

Our work to date

- Reporting on our work through the AONB Annual Report/meetings
- Production of AONB Annual Business Plan
- Efficiency/adaptation measures – reductions in key budget areas
- Securing sponsorship for our events
- Securing external funding for AONB activity, project work and programmes

Policies

M1 Encourage co-ordination and partnership amongst the wide range of national and regional agencies and organisations and other Devon based AONBs to secure funding for the care and enhancement of the AONB.

M2 Ensure that the AONB Management Plan is reviewed every five years and that the Delivery Plan is annually updated and made publicly available.

Priority actions

- Produce and deliver Annual AONB Business Plan and Annual Report
- Secure Memorandum of Agreement with Defra and LA partners
- Secure additional funding in support of AONB objectives and programmes
- Continue to review AONB operations and working arrangements

Theme indicator

Primary

- Production of a publicly available Annual Report and Business Plan (AONB)

Secondary

- Number of partnerships where AONB promote delivery of the Management Strategy (AONB)
- Value of work delivered directly or secured by the AONB team (AONB)

A vision for management, organisation and partnerships

The AONB Partnership and team are respected as ambassadors for the East Devon AONB. They are recognised for their ability to balance the aims of designation in caring for and enhancing the AONB landscape and wildlife whilst supporting and sustaining local communities and businesses.

Key objective 3.2

The AONB Partnership will act as ambassadors for East Devon AONB, influence policy and decision making affecting AONBs and work to secure funding for the long-term co-ordinated management of the area and report on its work.



Delivery and monitoring

The Partnership Plan will be delivered by the East Devon AONB team, guided by and on behalf of the AONB Partnership and Executive Group. There will be two strands for monitoring the AONB and the Partnership:

1. National indicator/performance programme

These will comprise of annual Key Performance Indicators developed through the National Association for AONB's (NAAONB) and Defra, reported annually by NAAONB.

2. Theme indicators of the Partnership Plan

The plan contains a series of Indicators which will seek to monitor progress in delivery. The AONB team will collate this information/data annually with support from the identified partners for each indicator. In some cases the NAAONB indicators will also be indicators for delivery of this plan.

▼ East Devon AONB Partnership organogram



East Devon AONB key indicators summary



Key targets 2019–24

The targets opposite will assist in guiding how we will work with our partners to conserve and enhance the area.

**Maintain/
improve levels
of awareness
of AONB**

**Increased
SSSIs area in
'favourable'
condition**

**Increased
woodland
area in active
management**

**Increased
area of AONB in
agri-environment
schemes**

**Maintain
'ease of use'
levels for public
footpaths**

**Reduced number
of Scheduled
Ancient
Monuments on
the Heritage at
Risk register**

**More
Neighbourhood
Plans and
community
engagement**

**Improved water
quality in the
rivers Otter, Sid,
Axe and Lim**

**Bathing water
rating 3* for
all sites**

Appendix 1

NCA number: 147

National character area: Blackdowns

Devon Landscape Character Areas	Special qualities and features of significance	LCA no.	Landscape character type*
Blackdown Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive, unspoilt, and very exposed skylines often looking over the crowns of woodland on the steep greensand slopes. • High scenic quality reflected in the area forming part of the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONBS. • Outstanding views across East Devon and the Otter valley. • Sense of isolation and remoteness, enhanced by exposure of the plateau; tranquillity provided by the dense woodland of the greensand scarps. • Many CVVs and SSSIs including ancient semi-natural woodland, semi-improved and improved acidic and neutral grasslands and spring line mires. • Picturesque villages with traditional buildings linked by narrow winding lanes; many listed buildings. 	1A	Open inland planned plateaux
		2A	Steep wooded scarp slopes
		3A	Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
East Devon Central Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive, unspoilt, and very exposed skylines. • Outstanding views across East Devon, mainly southwards to the coast but also northwards into the Blackdowns. • Sense of isolation, tranquillity and remoteness, enhanced by natural qualities of the rivers and scarp woodlands. • Many County Wildlife Sites comprising ancient semi-natural woodland; semi-improved and improved acidic and neutral grasslands; spring line mires; and extensive areas of heathland and gorse scrub particularly on Gittisham Hill and Broad Down. • Prominent Bronze Age barrows on Gittisham Hill and Farway Hill; earthwork remains of former castles e.g. Farway Castle hill forts. • Combe House Registered Park and Garden, including historic wood pasture and parkland. • Picturesque villages with traditional buildings linked by narrow winding lanes crossing historic stone bridges; many listed buildings 	1A	Open inland planned plateaux
		2A	Steep wooded scarp slopes
		3A	Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes

Devon Landscape Character Areas	Special qualities and features of significance	LCA no.	Landscape character type*
Sidmouth and Lyme Bay Coastal Plateau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area between the cliff tops and mean low water mark forms part of the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site (whs), of outstanding world value for its geological and geomorphological formations (particularly fossils). • The chalk and limestone cliffs unique in a Devon context and the most westerly chalk cliffs in England. • Rare chalk grassland along the coast which is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (sssi) and cws. • Shingle beach between Beer Head and Sidmouth is one of three UK sites for the rare scaley cricket. • Undercliffs valued for nature conservation and geological formations – Sidmouth to Beer Coast sssi and Special Area of Conservation (sac) and Axmouth to Lyme Regis Undercliffs sssi, sac and National Nature Reserve (NNR). • Estuary habitats valued for their salt marshes and mudflats (i.e. Otter Estuary sssi and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Otter Meadows cws). • Historic Park and Garden at Rousdon. • High value for recreation, including part of the South West Coastal Path long distance route. Cultural associations with writers and artists inspired by the dramatic coastal scenery including Lionel Aggett, John Fowles and Carolyn Vernon • Coastal hillforts e.g. Berry Camp/High Peak and remains of prehistoric field boundaries at Beer Head and Littlecombe Shoot. 	1B	Open coastal plateau
		1C	Pebble Bed Heaths
		3A	Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
		4B	Marine Levels
		4D	Coastal Slopes and Combes
		4H	Cliffs

Devon Landscape Character Areas	Special qualities and features of significance	LCA no.	Landscape character type*
Wootton Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive, unspoilt, and exposed skylines. • Outstanding views across East Devon, mainly southwards to the coast but also northwards into the Blackdowns and across the Axe Valley. • Bronze Age barrows in elevated positions on ridges; setting to and site of Musbury Castle hill fort. • Many cwss designated for unimproved neutral grassland and broadleaved woodland; and sssi designations at Park Farm Meadows and Bulmoor Pastures and Coppice. • Notable areas of ancient semi-natural woodland in the north e.g. New Park Coppice. • Contains the East Devon Way long distance path. • Picturesque historic villages with traditional buildings linked by narrow winding lanes crossing historic stone bridges; many listed buildings 	1A	Open inland planned plateaux
		2A	Steep wooded scarp slopes
		3B	Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
Axe Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High degree of tranquillity and remoteness in the tributary valleys. • River Axe sssi and SAC; • Estuary habitats valued for their salt marshes, mudflats and waders (eg. Seaton Marshes). • Ancient woodlands, many of which are cwss • County Geological Site on former sand and gravel workings at Kilmington (terrace gravels containing exotic pebbles) • 87th and 88th country houses including Stedcombe House; and Woodend Park which contains notable veteran trees of national importance for their wood decay invertebrates and lichens. • Vernacular buildings of cob and thatch and village church towers that add to the picturesque qualities of the area. • Cultural associations with WG Hoskins who described Colyton as “singularly beautiful, with rolling green hills and deep combs”. • Second World War pillboxes within flood plain form a distinctive landscape feature. • Important area for recreation including walking and horse riding – area includes the East Devon Way long distance footpath which runs through the valley. 	1E	Wooded ridges and hilltops
		3A	Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
		3B	Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
		3C	Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
		4B	Marine Levels

NCA number: 148
National character area: Devon Redlands

Devon Landscape Character Areas	Special qualities and features of significance	LCA no.	Landscape character type*
Clyst Lowland Farmlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well managed, generally low hedgerows enabling views to distinctive wooded skyline hills which help provide orientation and sense of place. • Sense of tranquillity enhanced by natural qualities of the meandering streams and rivers. • Other nature conservation interest mainly limited to patches of unimproved neutral grassland and marshy grassland or fen, traditional orchards and steam margins. • Rich cultural heritage of the area’s hilltops, such as Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age hillforts and ancient settlement remain. • Picturesque villages with traditional buildings linked by narrow winding lanes crossing historic stone bridges; many listed buildings and Conservation Areas. • Many buildings constructed of local stone. 	3A	Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
Pebble Bed Heaths and Farmland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive, unspoilt, wooded skyline providing local distinctiveness and orientation. • Outstanding views across East Devon to west and east and also south to the coast. • Sense of isolation, tranquillity and remoteness, enhanced by natural qualities of the heath, woodland and commons. • Rarity value as one of Devon’s few areas of remaining lowland heath. • Varied wildlife habitats including sssi, SAC and Special Protection Area (SPA) designations on heathland habitats valued for endangered species such as Dartford Warbler, Nightjar and invertebrates. • Other habitats of value including ancient semi-natural and broadleaved woodland. • Bicton and Cadhay Historic Parks and Gardens (Grade I and Grade II registered respectively) which include historic wood pasture and parkland and nationally significant population of veteran trees at Bicton. • Woodbury Castle (Iron Age hill fort, Scheduled Monument) and numerous Bronze Age burial mounds • Picturesque villages with traditional buildings linked by narrow winding lanes crossing historic stone bridges; many listed buildings. • Valued area for recreation with good access provision and high carrying capacity. • Woodbury Common associated with Arthur Mee and described in Peach L Du Garde Guide to Unknown Devon 	1A	Open inland planned plateaux
		2A	Steep wooded scarp slopes
		3A	Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes

Appendix 2

National Planning Policy Framework in relation to AONBS

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was originally published by the UK's Department of Communities and Local Government in March 2012, consolidating over two dozen previously issued documents called Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG) for use in England.

A revised NPPF was published by the UK Government's Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 24 July 2018. This is the first revision of the National Planning Policy Framework since 2012. It implements around 85 reforms announced previously through the Housing White Paper, the planning for the right homes in the right places consultation and the draft revised National Planning Policy Framework consultation.

The key change in the NPPF in relation to national policy for AONBs, National Parks and the Broads was that the paragraph numbers are altered, with Para 115 and 116 combined into a single paragraph 172.

172. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development⁵⁵ other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside

the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

173. Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 172), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character.

Footnote 55. For the purposes of paragraphs 172 and 173, whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

Details of supporting documents

The following documents form an important part of the Partnership Plan and its delivery.

- Strategic context and background to AONB purpose, designation and policy
- Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulation Assessment
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Plan Adoption Report

These and other documents relating to AONB activity can be found on the AONB website eastdevonaonb.org.uk. Further important reference documents for development and initiatives include:

- East Devon Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidelines (revised 2018/19)
- East Devon AONB Historic Environment Action Plan
- East Devon AONB Equestrian Development Guidelines
- AONB Monitoring/Indicator data
- Neighbourhood Plans
- AONB Planning Guidance (in development)

The AONB team and partnership will refer to these and other documents in its responses to planning consultations and land management initiatives and will also seek to develop and implement the recommended areas for future research and activity.

Acknowledgements

This Partnership Plan has been developed and produced by the East Devon AONB Partnership, Executive Group and team.

All images, maps and photographs used in this Partnership Plan by kind permission and © copyright of East Devon AONB unless shown otherwise.

Maps based on Ordnance Survey
© Crown Copyright and database rights 2019
East Devon District 100023746
Natural England Licence 100018881
Devon County Council 076562
All rights reserved. Unauthorised production may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.

With the exceptions of the above copyrights, this publication or any section of it may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium provided it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context and the source of the material is recognised and acknowledged.

Requests for alternatively accessible versions of this Plan will be accommodated where practical. (Large print, braille, other languages).



EAST DEVON

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Contact details

Phone 01404 46663
Email info@eastdevonaonb.org.uk
Write/visit East Devon AONB Partnership
Kennaway House, Coburg Road
Sidmouth, EX10 8NG

The East Devon AONB Partnership is funded by Defra, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council.



