

Strategic Landscape Analysis

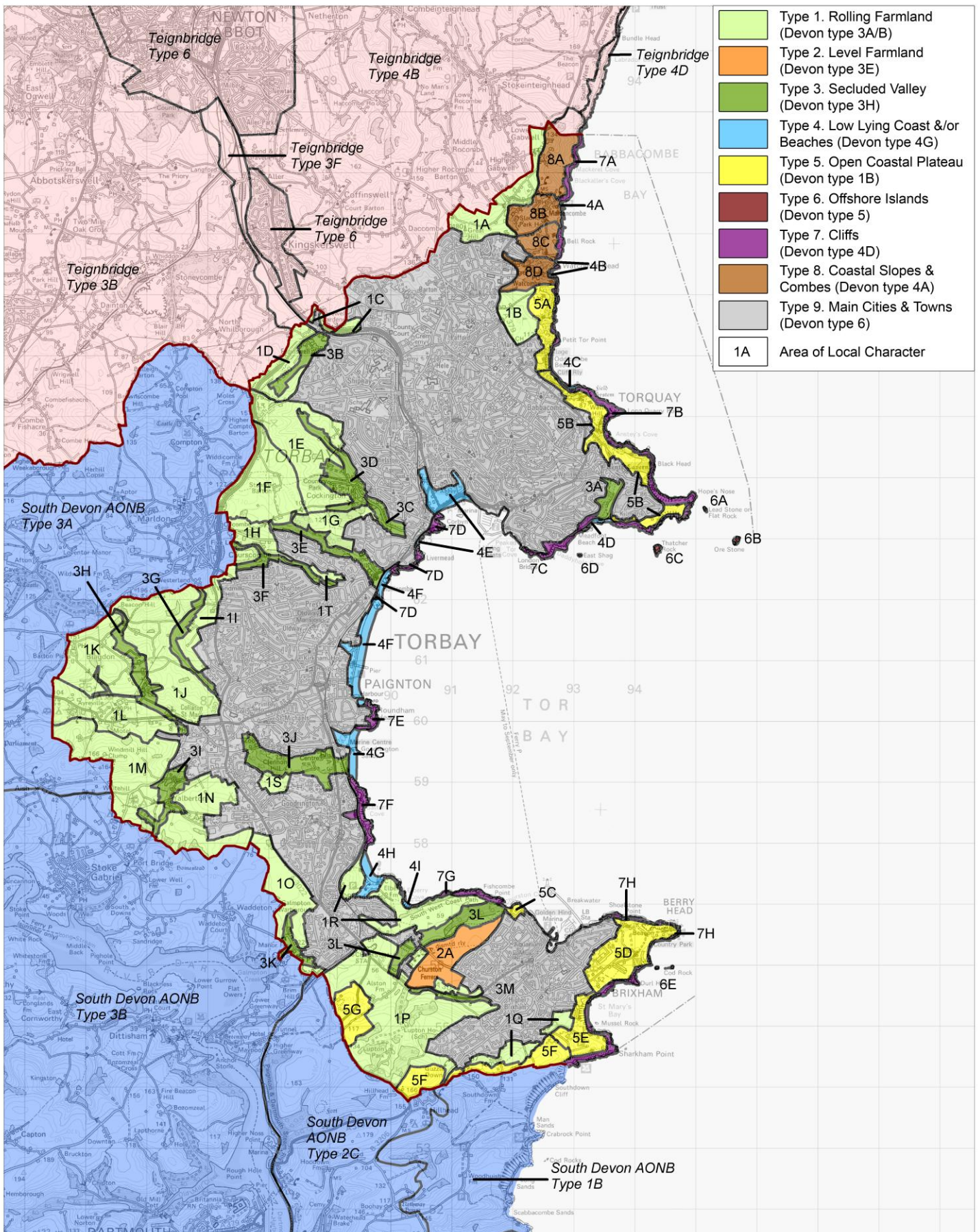


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**Figure 14: Strategic landscape analysis of Torbay and its setting**



Torbay Landscape Character Types and Local Character

 Local Authority Boundaries

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Figure 15: Torbay Landscape Character Types and Areas of Local Character (AoLC)

## 4. PROFILES OF TORBAY CHARACTER TYPES

4.1 The character types used in the Torbay study are summarised in this section of the report. More detailed descriptions of individual AoLC are provided in Part 2 of the report.

4.2 The **Rolling Farmland** (Devon Type 3A & B merged) character type is the archetypal Devon landscape of rolling hills incorporating hedge banks and narrow secluded lanes. The topography is characterised by the lack of pattern to the series of relatively flat topped hills and irregular concave/convex valley sides and floor. The land-cover is a mixture of arable and ley grass land with some permanent pasture. The characteristic reddish soils define the arable areas in autumn and winter. Narrow copses often run beside the lanes and the streams. Settlements in the form of nucleated hamlets or farmsteads are dispersed throughout the area.

### Key characteristics of this character type are:

- *The rolling topography which is the key defining feature of this landscape, where subtle changes in slope and gradient occur constantly, without a strong pattern. Flat land is uncommon and generally located on the hill tops.*
- *A rolling well farmed landscape with an irregular pattern of field boundaries and occasional hilltop woodland.*
- *A network of sunken lanes with tall hedge-banks and trees cross the area, and occasionally allow wider views across this landscape.*
- *An irregular patchwork of arable and pasture land with the distinctive red soils visible in autumn and winter.*
- *Thinly populated, with nucleated hamlets or farmsteads dispersed throughout the area.*



**Figure 16:** Showing typical **Rolling Farmland** landscape type

- 4.3 The **Level Farmland** (Devon Type 3E) character type is generally level or slightly undulating. As a result it has been converted to continuous arable cropping during the last century. The move from mixed farming has rendered the hedgerows and banks redundant and encouraged the removal of these features to enable amalgamation of smaller fields to suit modern machinery. The larger rectilinear field boundaries which do remain still retain hedgerow trees but are permeable and in places overgrown. The absence of discreet narrow lanes and hedge-banks is noticeable.

**Key characteristics of this character type are:**

- *A regular pattern of large arable fields on relatively flat or gently undulating land.*
- *Hedgerows along the side of relatively straight roads, although gateways may have been enlarged to suit modern machinery.*
- *Stark prominent edges to the urban areas which have expanded into this character type.*
- *A general lack of enclosure with some distant views.*



**Figure 17:** Showing typical **Level Farmland** landscape type

- 4.4 The **Secluded Valley** (Devon Type 3H) character type occurs within the areas of Rolling Farmland; however these have been defined separately as a distinctive character type at the Torbay level. These areas, within the context of Torbay, have a distinctly different character and would benefit from different management policies. They are characterised by steep sided valley landforms with a narrow valley floor in their lower reaches. There is often a complex and irregular small scale pattern of hedge-banks and lanes, which separate small woodlands, orchards and smaller fields of permanent pasture. Nucleated and linear settlements sometimes occur at the bottoms of these valleys, located to make use of the water supplied by the streams.

**Key characteristics of this character type are:**

- *A steep valley landform with narrow valley floor in the lower reaches of each valley.*
- *A topography which helps to enclose and separate these areas from the wider landscape.*
- *A secluded character due to the enclosing topography and complex network of narrow sunken lanes enclosed by high hedge-banks which contain views across fields and out to the surrounding landscape.*
- *A complex and irregular small scale pattern of hedge-banks and lanes, which separate small woodlands, orchards and areas of permanent pasture.*
- *The lanes and fields are often damp and species rich with small streams, overhanging trees and small scale enclosure.*



**Figure 18:** Showing typical **Secluded Valley** landscape type

- 4.5 The **Low Lying Coast and/or Beach** (Devon type 4G) character type includes a series of parks, beaches, coastal golf courses, associated car parks and other recreational areas within Torbay. This is an urban landscape character type and has been developed and managed for recreation.

**Key characteristics of this character type are:**

- *Recreation land and associated urban furniture (seats, signs, litter bins) and other features of an urban landscape such as beach huts, cafés, amenity buildings, and hard sea defences.*
- *Proximity to the sea, which is often partially hidden from the hinterland by beach huts and sea defences. Some areas of windblown scrub, occasional tree groups and amenity planting of exotics in local amenity spaces.*