



**STEPHENSON
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Planning, Landscape & Environment
an **RSK** company

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT OF TORBAY



Final report
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June 2025

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Landscape Character Assessment has been made possible through the valuable contributions and collaboration of a range of individuals and organisations. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Torbay Council for commissioning and supporting this study, and particular thanks are due to Tracy Brooks, Senior Strategic Planning Officer, for her dedicated coordination and detailed guidance throughout the project, and to David Pickhaver, Principal Policy and Project Planner, for his strategic oversight and commitment to integrating robust landscape evidence into the emerging Local Plan.

Special thanks are extended to Melanie Croll, County Landscape Officer (member of the Devon Landscape Policy Group or DLPG) for her expert advice and support in ensuring the consistency of methodology with Devon-wide landscape character principles. We also gratefully acknowledge input from the South Devon National Landscape team, for their insights regarding designated landscape interests within the study area.

Finally, we thank representatives from neighbouring authorities - Teignbridge District Council and South Hams District Council, and Devon County Council - for their constructive collaboration in reviewing cross-boundary landscape character and ensuring alignment across administrative areas.

Document history

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Approved	Andrew Tempany FLI	27/02/2025	18/06/2025

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 Torbay Council are in the process of reviewing and updating the Local Plan, working towards the new local plan *Torbay Local Plan Update: A Landscape to Thrive*. The Local Plan will need to identify locations for development, to meet housing and economic needs identified in the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) 2022.
- 1.1.2 As part of the evidence base for the preparation of the updated Local Plan the Council has commissioned Stephenson Halliday (an RSK Group company) to prepare a Strategic Landscape Study, comprising four related studies. The **Landscape Character Assessment** is the first of these interlinked studies, which will provide a tool to understand the Torbay landscape and assist in monitoring and guiding future landscape change. The other studies are:
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (in two parts).
 - Open Space Review (in three parts).
 - Review of Valued Landscapes.
- 1.1.3 It should be noted that the Landscape Character Assessment and its supporting studies do not make policy in their own right. They will form an important part of the evidence base to inform Torbay Council in the preparation of the Local Plan update and related strategies.
- 1.1.4 This report provides an update to the previous Torbay Landscape Character Assessment produced by Enderby Associates in 2010. Some sections of text have, therefore, been retained from the previous report where they are still relevant.
- 1.1.5 The location and extent of the study area, covering the local authority area of Torbay Council, is shown on Figure 1.1.

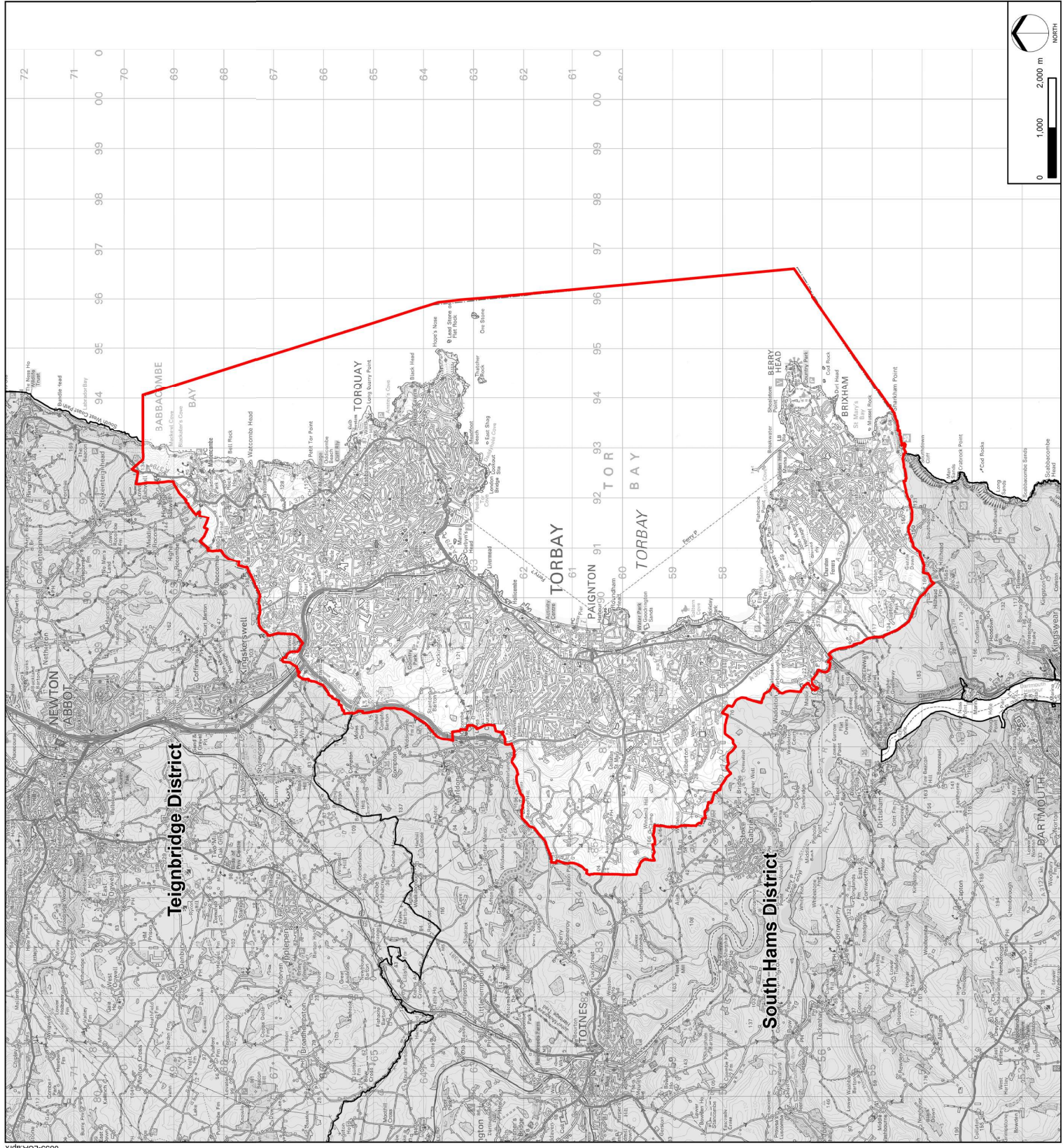
1.2 Policy context

- 1.2.1 Landscape and the biosphere is all around us and forms the setting to every aspect of our lives, providing the vital framework for the essential goods and services (natural capital and the component ecosystem services) that not only make life possible but also worth living. This value of landscape and the character and sense of place it creates is recognised in a suite of policies from international to national and local level, as described below.

TORBAY STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE STUDY
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FIGURE 1.1

Location and Extent of Study Area



Projected Coordinate System: British National Grid

United Nations

- 1.2.2 In 2015 the United Nations Member States adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*¹. This sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (the UN SDGs, or the Global Goals for Sustainable Development), that seek to transform our world and will ultimately affect the landscapes that we live in.
- 1.2.3 We can use our landscapes to contribute to the targets set out in the UN SDGs, particularly thinking about the synergies between humanity and nature. The goals seek to find solutions to all manner of world issues and ultimately seek to achieve resilience of place and communities, climate, nature and resources.

European Landscape Convention

- 1.2.4 Created by the Council of Europe (COE), the European Landscape Convention (ELC) promotes adoption of an integrated approach to landscape protection, management and planning, and European cooperation on landscape issues.
- 1.2.5 Signed by the UK Government in February 2006, the ELC applies to all landscapes, towns and villages, as well as open countryside, the coast and inland areas, and ordinary or degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection. A central tenet of the ELC is that all landscapes matter and that all are of value, irrespective of their perceived quality or condition.
- 1.2.6 The ELC highlights the importance of developing collaborative policies dedicated to the protection, management, planning and creation of landscapes, and establishing procedures for the general public and stakeholders to participate in policy creation and implementation.
- 1.2.7 Since the ELC was established by the COE and sits outside of the European Union, the UK's commitment to the ELC is not affected by the UK's departure from the European Union at the time of writing.

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

- 1.2.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024, as amended) states that “*strategic policies should set out the overall strategy for the pattern, scale, and design quality of places*”. This should make provision for the “*conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaption*”².

¹*Agenda for Sustainable Development*, United Nations, 2015. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> - accessed February 2025

² *NPPF— paragraph 20*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, last updated 2024

- 1.2.9 The NPPF emphasises the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes³, ensuring their conservation reflects their statutory status, particularly maintaining the character of undeveloped coasts and improving public access to them. It states that “*plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of...designated sites and allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value*”⁴. It assigns greatest weight to conserving landscapes and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes⁵.
- 1.2.10 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for the Natural Environment supports the use of landscape character assessments in local planning, recognising their role in understanding the landscape’s character and distinctiveness⁶.
- 1.2.11 An up-to-date Landscape Character Assessment to support planning decisions is also recommended in ‘An Approach to Landscape Character assessment, 2014’⁷, to guide the siting and design of developments.

25 Year Environment Plan

- 1.2.12 The 25-Year Environment Plan, published in 2018, sets out the UK Government’s approach to protecting and enhancing the environment. Target areas for action in the policies include sustainable land management, the creation and restoration of habitats and tree planting to ensure landscape resilience against climate change.
- 1.2.13 Within the 25-Year Environment Plan there is a focus on the Nature Recovery Strategy. The aim is to restore the losses suffered in nature over the past 50 years through the development and implementation of a new strategy – the ‘Nature Recovery Network’. Landscape-scale restoration plays a key role in achieving this through connecting larger parcels of land and creating a network of habitats.

National Landscapes

- 1.2.14 The southern part of Torbay Unitary Authority forms part of the South Devon National Landscape.

³ NPPF— paragraph 187, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, last updated 2024

⁴ NPPF— paragraph 188, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, last updated 2024

⁵ NPPF — paragraph 189, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, last updated 2024

⁶ Planning Policy Guidance for the Natural Environment, paragraph 037 Reference ID:8-037-20190721 (2019), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, last updated 2024

⁷ An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, NE579, Natural England, Tudor, C, 2014

- 1.2.15 National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB) are designated for scenic quality and are under statutory protection of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW Act) 2000 (as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act in December 2023) further enhances their protection. The primary purpose of National Landscapes is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and provide wider benefits to the country. A duty applies to public bodies and organisations (defined in law as “relevant authorities”) in exercising or performing any function that affect National Landscapes (AONBs) in England, to “*seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*”⁸.
- 1.2.16 The entire administrative area of Torbay was awarded UNESCO Geopark status in 2007. The award covers a four year period and it was last revalidated in 2023. The designation is embedded within Torbay’s strategic documents and policies. The award celebrates the area’s significant geology and interrelated environment, heritage and culture. The English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark partnership (ERUGGp) is committed to retaining the Geopark status, in order to do this the conservation and enhancement of geological sites must occur and Torbay Council must ensure no designated site is lost or damaged.

Local Policy

- 1.2.17 The current Torbay Local Plan⁹ at the time of writing was adopted in 2015. One of the aspirations for this plan is to “*protect and enhance a superb natural and built environment*” and it identifies the unique setting and geological, historical and cultural heritage that has led to it being recognised as a Global Geopark.
- 1.2.18 The key policies relevant to the Landscape Character Assessment within The Plan for Torbay: 2012 to 2030 are:
- Policy SS8 Natural environment.
 - Policy C1 Countryside and the rural economy.
 - Policy C2 The coastal landscape.
 - Policy C5 Urban landscape protection areas.
- 1.2.19 Other related policies include:
- Policy SS1 Growth Strategy for a prosperous Torbay.
 - Policy SS9 Green infrastructure.

⁸ National Landscapes Association Briefing, Applying the CROW Act section 85 duty to ‘seek to further the purpose’ in National Landscapes (AONBs), November 2024

⁹ Torbay Local Plan A Landscape for Success – The Plan for Torbay: 2012 to 2030, Torbay Council, December 2015 - <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/planning-policies/local-plan/local-plan/> - accessed October 2024

- Policy SS10 Conservation and the historic environment.
- Policy SDB3 Brixham Urban Fringe and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Policy C3 Coastal change management.
- Policy C4 Trees, hedgerows and natural landscape features.
- Policy NC1 Biodiversity and geodiversity.

- 1.2.20 The Local Plan policies listed above are augmented by policies in the Torquay, Paignton and Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plans (all “made” in 2019).
- 1.2.21 A review of the Adopted Local Plan was carried out in 2020. In response to this and further consultation, Torbay Council are in the process of producing the Torbay Local Plan Update¹⁰. To support this, the evidence base is being updated, which this Strategic Landscape Study will form a part of.
- 1.2.22 The new Strategic Landscape Study, including updated Landscape Character Assessment for Torbay, will be published alongside the Consultation Plan in 2025, to be consulted upon during the Local Plan examination period.
- 1.2.23 Previous County and Local Plans designated Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). The current Torbay Local Plan has removed the AGLV designation. It relies on the application of criteria-based landscape policies supported by the Landscape Character Assessment to balance developments with the needs of conservation and enhancing the landscape, scenic quality, seascape and townscape character.

Other Strategy and Guidance

- 1.2.24 There are several strategies and guidance documents of relevance to the Landscape Character Assessment, namely:
- 1.2.25 *Devon’s Tree and Woodland Strategy*¹¹, which sets out a potential vision for the future of trees, hedges and woodlands across Devon. It seeks to establish a roadmap of key actions, identify and recommend delivery mechanisms and opportunities to collaborate to drive a thriving tree population and woodland resource for nature, environment and economy.
- 1.2.26 A *Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)* that covers Devon County, Plymouth and Torbay is currently being produced¹². This will identify opportunities, priorities and actions for restoring habitats as well as other benefits such as provision for health and well-being and carbon sequestration.

¹⁰ Details available <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/planning-policies/local-plan-update/> - accessed November 2024

¹¹ *Tree for Devon: Devon’s Tree and Woodland Strategy and Action Plan*, Devon Local Nature Partnership, April 2024

¹² *Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy*, Devon Local Nature Partnership <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/our-work/local-nature-recovery-strategy/> - accessed October 2024

- 1.2.27 The Devon Landscape Policy Group (DLPG) has produced a series of *Advice Notes*¹³ that provide information about the shared evidence base of landscape character assessments across Devon. They also set out protocol for keeping this up to date, along with guidance for using landscape character assessments, accommodating renewable energy development and maintaining the undeveloped coast.

1.3 Approach to the LCA update

What is landscape?

- 1.3.1 Article 1 of the ELC defines landscape as “an area perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”¹⁴.
- 1.3.2 Furthermore, ‘landscapes provide the physical and the cultural context to everyday life; they require thriving communities and well managed biodiversity, geodiversity, soils and historic environment in order to provide a wide range of ecosystem services for people and reinforce the relationship between people and the places in which they live and work. Similarly, our seascapes are important to society both culturally and economically’¹⁵.

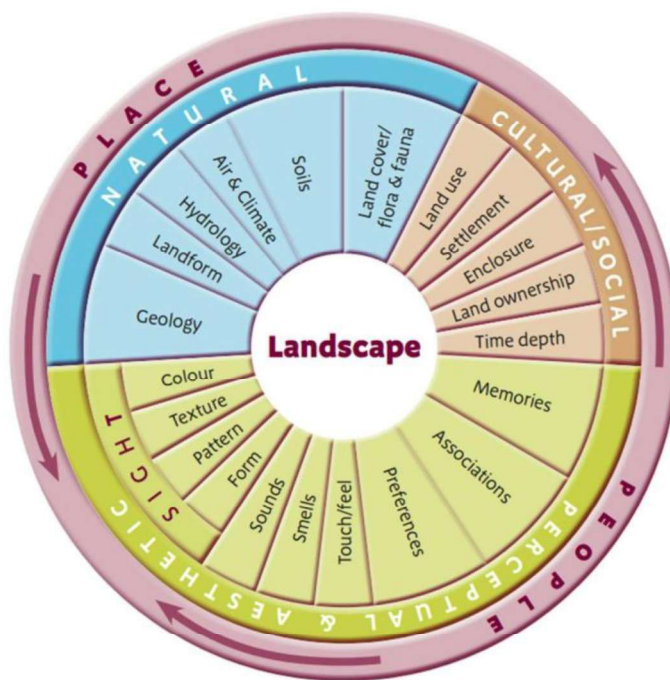


Plate 1.1 What is Landscape? – Natural England wheel¹⁶ (Open Government Licence v3.0)

¹³ *Advice Notes*, Devon Local Nature Partnership, 2013-2025 <https://www.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/landscape-policy-and-guidance/> - accessed October 2024

¹⁴ *European Landscape Convention*, Council of Europe, 2000

¹⁵ *Natural England Standard Landscape: Why we do what we do*, Natural England, 2013,

What is landscape character assessment?

- 1.3.3 Landscape character assessment is the process of analysing the features and characteristics of a landscape. It involves classification and description of the main landscape character types. As part of this, it identifies areas of distinctive character including the key characteristics and attributes that contribute to local distinctiveness.
- 1.3.4 *'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment'*¹⁷ is the national guidance on the method for undertaking landscape character assessments. It provides an informative explanation of the background and process of Landscape Character Assessment, stating that *"with sympathetic planning, design and management (our landscapes) offer an opportunity to provide a more harmonious link between man and the natural world, for the benefit of both"*. It also identifies that *"all landscapes matter to someone"* and that a landscape character assessment is the tool that helps us to understand these landscapes.
- 1.3.5 The guidance identifies that *"the management of change is essential to ensure that we achieve sustainable outcomes – social, environmental and economic. Decision makers need to understand the baseline and the implications of their decisions for that baseline. The process of landscape character assessment has an important role to play in managing and guiding change"*.
- 1.3.6 Using the landscape character assessment approach, plan policies can be prepared to protect, conserve or enhance the key characteristics and valued attributes of the landscape.

Methodology

- 1.3.7 The approach and methodology used for the Landscape Character Assessment follows the Natural England guidance *'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment'*, with reference to the companion volume *'An Approach to Seascape Assessment'*¹⁸, where appropriate.
- 1.3.8 The landscape character assessment process is advocated across Devon by the Devon Landscape Policy Group (DLPG). The DLPG have established a *Landscape Character Assessment Protocol*¹⁹ to ensure consistency in landscape character assessment across neighbouring Devon authorities. The DLPG has also produced Advice Notes, including *Advice Note 1: A Guide to Devon's landscape character*²⁰ and *Advice Note 3: Principles of defining and maintaining the character of Devon's undeveloped coast*²¹. These have been used and referenced as appropriate in the development of the methodology for this study.

¹⁷ *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*, NE579, Natural England, Tudor, C, 2014

¹⁸ *An Approach to Seascape Character Assessment*, Natural England Commissioned Report NECR105, 2012

¹⁹ Version 3, DLPG, 2019

²⁰ DLPG, 2015

²¹ DLPG, 2013

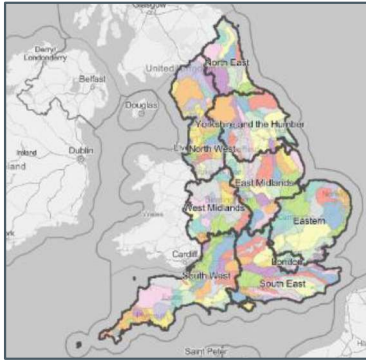
- 1.3.9 This assessment update has been shaped within the landscape character assessment framework set out in Section 3. It is based upon the previous Landscape Character Assessment for Torbay (2010), with the main purpose being to better align the classification with the Devon wide character types.
- 1.3.10 The key stages of the methodology are set out in Appendix 1.

1.4 Structure of this report

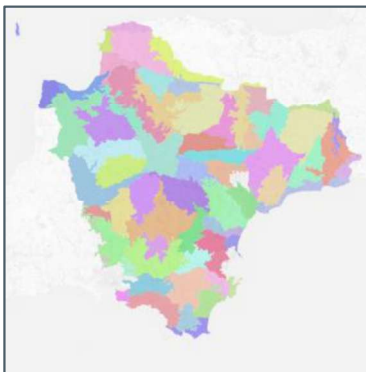
- 1.4.1 This report is structured as follows:
- **Chapter 2: The landscape context** – sets out the hierarchical landscape character context and relationship with Landscape Character Assessments of adjoining authorities.
 - **Chapter 3: The shaping of the Torbay landscape** – a detailed description of the natural and human forces that have influenced the Torbay landscape over time.
 - **Chapter 4: Torbay character profiles** – provides a description for each Landscape Character Type (LCT), including key characteristics, valued landscape attributes and landscape guidelines.
 - **Chapter 5: Devon Character Areas** – provides a review of the DCA that overlap the Torbay authority boundary, with proposed updates boundaries and key characteristics.
 - Appendix 1: Methodology – Key Stages.
 - Appendix 2: Summary of consultee comments.
 - Appendix 3: Glossary

2 THE LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

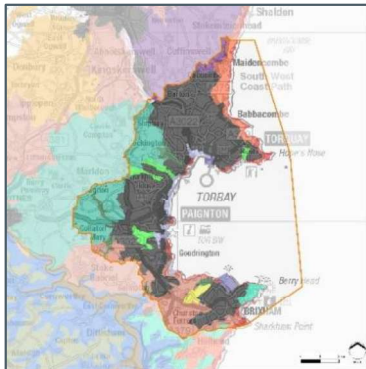
2.1.1 Landscape character assessments at a variety of scale provide the framework for the landscape classification of the Torbay administrative area. Typically, the hierarchy of national, county and local landscape assessments fit together, with each level of assessment informing the next.



National Character Areas²² (National level)



Devon Landscape Character Areas²³ (County level)



Torbay Landscape Character Types²⁴ (Local level)

Plate 2.1 Landscape Character Assessment hierarchy

²² <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/> - © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023 - accessed December 2024.

²³ <https://www.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/devons-landscape-character-assessment/> - accessed December 2024.

²⁴ <https://www.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/devons-landscape-character-assessment/> - accessed December 2024.

2.2 European Context

- 2.2.1 As described in detail in Section 1 the European Landscape Convention (ELC) establishes the principle of the consideration of landscape as a whole and is dedicated to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes throughout Europe.
- 2.2.2 The Torbay landscape character assessment is undertaken as a way of implementing the objectives of the ELC at a local level, to inform future landscape policies and guide future development.

2.3 National Context

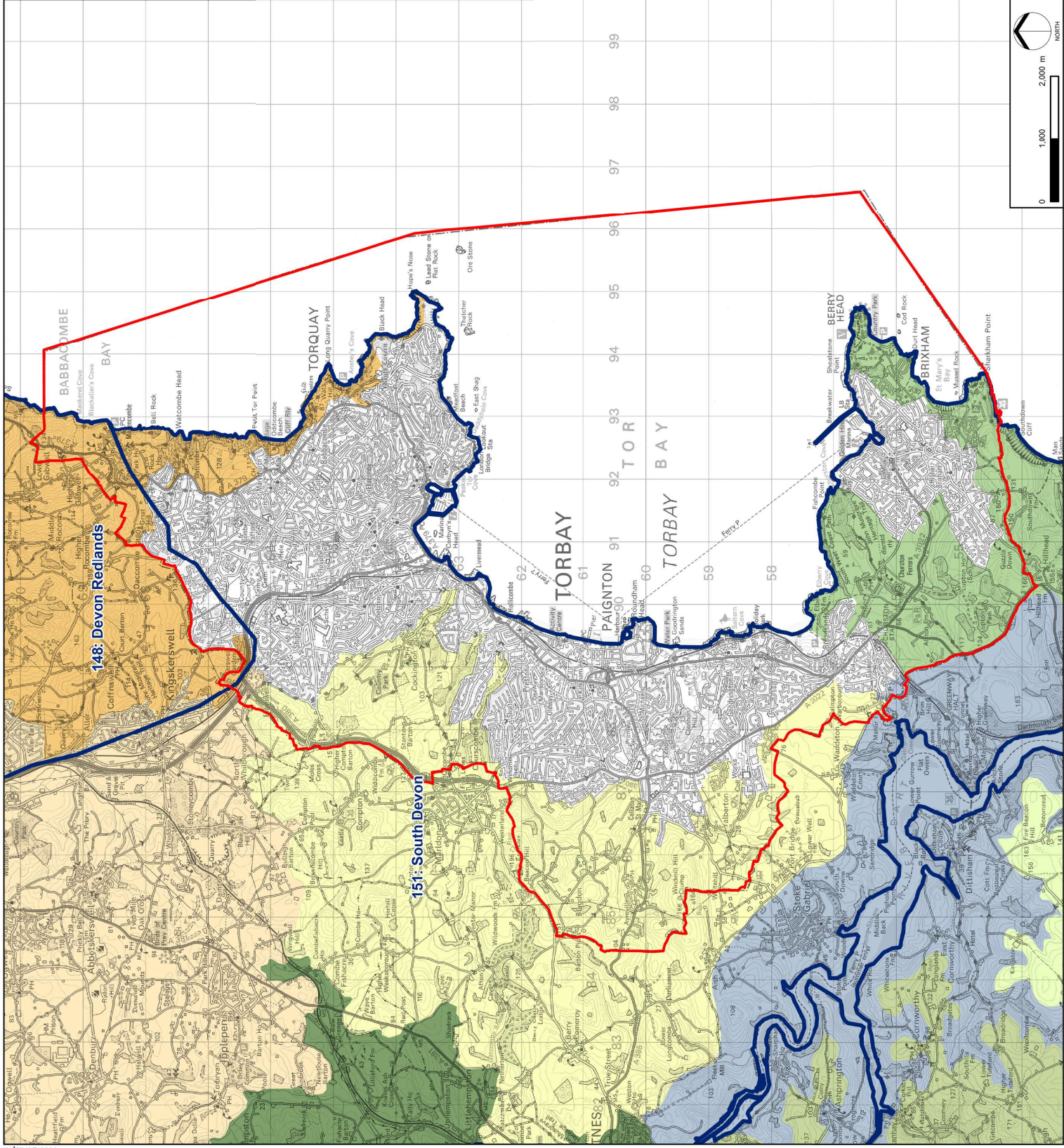
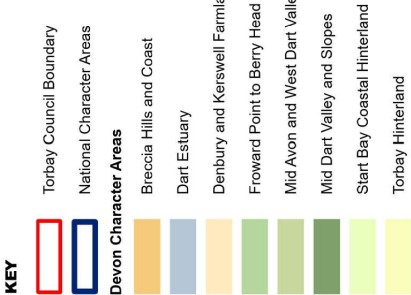
- 2.3.1 At the National level, England is divided into 159 distinct National Character Areas (NCAs), defined at a scale of 1:250,000. Each is characterised by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history and cultural and economic activity. Profiles for each NCA²⁵ provide a description of landscape character, understanding of landscape change, analysis of landscape attributes and opportunities and statements of environmental opportunities.
- 2.3.2 Torbay is predominantly within NCA 151 South Devon; forming part of the coastal plateau that extends from Torbay around the south coast of Devon, encompassing Dartmoor. A small area in the north of the study area falls within NCA 148 Devon Redlands; characterised by the distinctive red sandstone and soils. The NCAs within the study area are shown in Figure 2.1.

²⁵ <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/> - accessed October 2024.

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FIGURE 2.1

National and Devon Character Areas



Projected Coordinate System: British National Grid

Nationally protected landscapes

- 2.3.3 The national value and importance of the landscape in the south of Torbay is recognised through designation as part of the South Devon National Landscape (formerly named Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB). As shown in Figure 2.2, the South Devon National Landscape forms the southern edge of the study area, extending from the south through the rural landscape around the east and west of Brixham.

2.4 County Context

- 2.4.1 At a county level, the assessment of Devon's landscape character has been reviewed and updated since the previous Landscape Character Assessment of Torbay in 2010. The Devon Policy Group developed a common methodology to produce Devon's Landscape Character Assessment, details of which are available online²⁶. The Devon LCA describes the variations in character between different areas and types of landscape across the county. This divides Devon into 68 Devon Character Areas (shown in Figure 2.1), each of which has a geographically unique and distinct identity.
- 2.4.2 37 Landscape Character Types have been identified, which can occur throughout the county. The LCTs are set out in a 'menu'²⁷, which provides common key characteristics associated with each of the types.
- 2.4.3 The 2010 landscape character assessment was based upon the previous Devon County study that identified Landscape Description Units²⁸. Following ongoing updates to local studies, the current Devon LCA was developed to draw together local findings and establish the framework for ongoing local landscape character studies and provides the evidence base for local plans.
- 2.4.4 The Devon Landscape Policy Group has produced a series of Advice Notes and protocols²⁹ to encourage a consistent approach to landscape characterisation across the Devon area, which have been referenced as required in producing this study.

²⁶ <https://www.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/> (accessed October 2024)

²⁷ Available via this webpage <https://www.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/devons-landscape-character-assessment/> (accessed October 2024)

²⁸ Landscape Description Units or LDUs are a form of landscape classification based on a combination of six 'key characteristics' or landscape attributes in relation to geology, topography, soils, character of tree cover, historic settlement pattern and land use.

²⁹ <https://www.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/landscape-policy-and-guidance/> (accessed October 2024)

2.5 Local Context

- 2.5.1 A priority for this update is to bring the Torbay landscape classification and descriptions in line with the Devon LCA. Landscape character is not defined by administrative boundaries, it crosses into adjoining administrative areas. Along with the previous Landscape Character Assessment for Torbay, the Landscape Character Assessments of the neighbouring authorities provide the local landscape context for Torbay. These are Teignbridge Landscape Character Assessment³⁰ and A Landscape Character Assessment for South Hams and West Devon³¹.

Locally protected landscapes

- 2.5.2 The local value of the landscape in Torbay is recognised through designation under local policies as Undeveloped Coast and Urban Landscape Protection Areas (ULPA). As shown in Figure 2.2, the Undeveloped Coast covers an extended area of the landscape washed over by the South Devon National Landscape in the south of the Torbay area, as well as the length of coastline in the north of Torbay, between Peaked Tor Cove and Herring Cove.

³⁰ Burton Reid Associates, 2024 [tdc-lca-final-issue_lr-compressed.pdf](#)

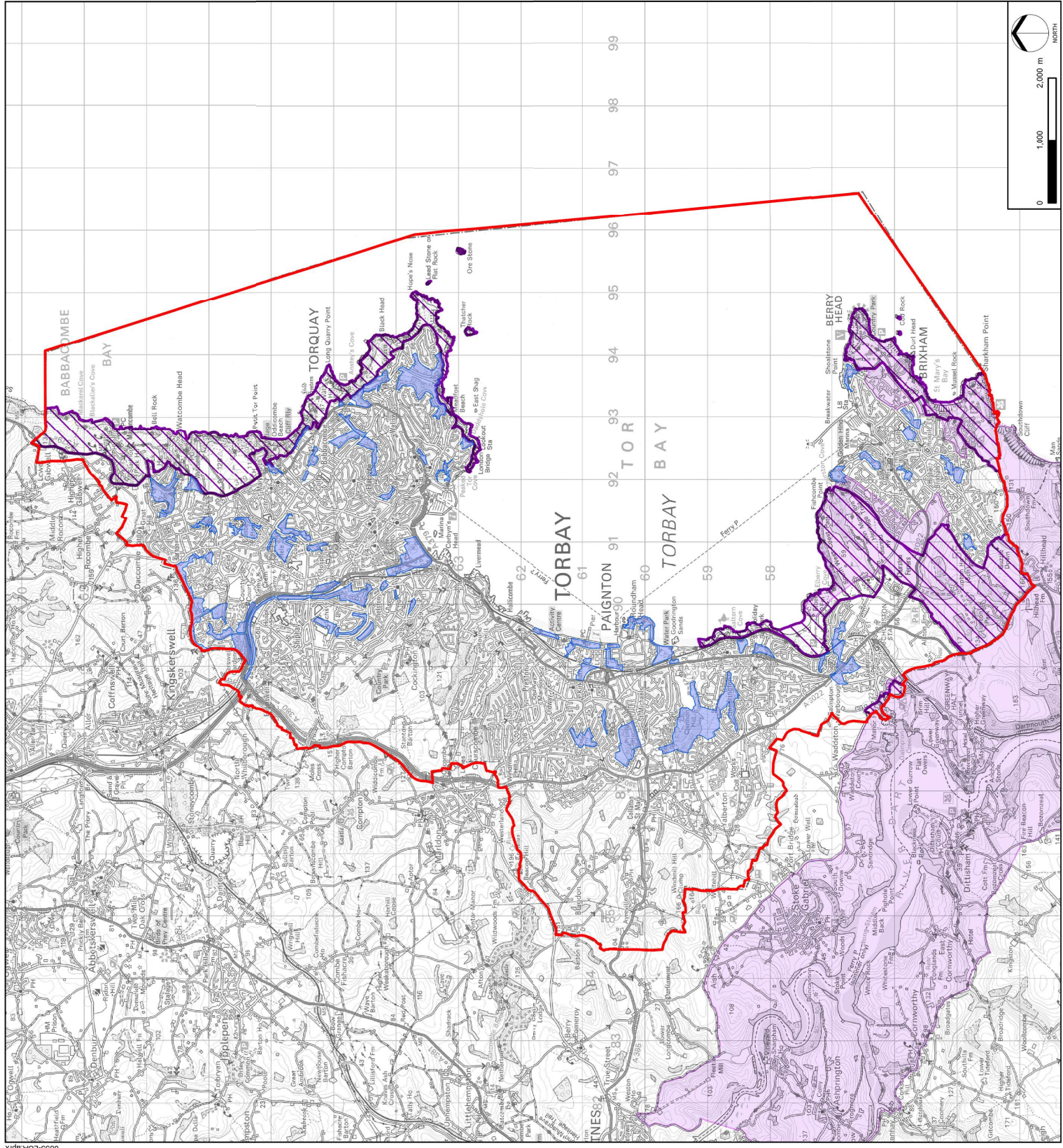
³¹ LUC, 2018

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FIGURE 2.2
Landscape Designations

KEY

- Torbay Council Boundary
- South Devon National Landscape
- Undeveloped Coast (Local Plan Policy C2)
- Urban Landscape Protection Areas



2.6 Cross-boundary Review

Table 2.1 Review of LCT boundaries that adjoin Teignbridge

Landscape Character Type	Review
3A Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes	No proposed changes across boundary or need for further review.
3F Settled valley floors	No proposed changes across boundary or need for further review.
4C Coastal slopes and combes with settlement	Localised change to boundary of urban area at Scott's bridge. No proposed changes across boundary or need for further review.
4D Coastal slopes and combes	No proposed changes across boundary or need for further review.
4H Cliffs	Slight realignment along the coastline – recommend future review in Teignbridge as part of their future LCA update.

Table 2.2 Review of LCT boundaries that adjoin South Hams

Landscape Character Type	Review
1B Open coastal plateaux	Removal of land from 1B and inclusion within 3B to the east of the A379 (South Hams boundary). Need for future review of 1B by South Hams. Removal of land from 1B and inclusion within 3B, along South Hams boundary at Southdown Cross. Need for future review of 1B by South Hams.
3A Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes	Localised alteration to boundary of 3A with 7A Wooded valley at Teignbridge boundary. No proposed changes across boundary or need for further review.
3B Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes	Some removal of land from 3B, to be included in the urban area in proximity to the South Hams boundary. No proposed changes across boundary or need for further review. (see above in relation to boundary with 1B)
3H Secluded valleys	Removal of land from 3H at Galmpton, and inclusion within 3B. No proposed changes across boundary or need for further review.
4D Coastal slopes and combes	Extension of small area of 4D, and removal from 1B, southeast of Brixham at Southdown Cliff. Recommend future review of this classification in South Hams and Torbay.
4H Cliffs	No proposed changes across boundary or need for further review.

3 THE SHAPING OF THE TORBAY LANDSCAPE

- 3.1.1 Torbay covers the towns of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham in southeast Devon. It is administered by Torbay Council (a Unitary Authority). It covers a total area of 63km², of which 48% is countryside or has a landscape designation³². There are 45km of coastline and over 20 public beaches, as well as 42km² of sea within the Torbay authority boundary.
- 3.1.2 Torbay has a growing population of 139,324 (2021) and this increases substantially during the peak summer periods when tourists visit the popular, long stay holiday resorts.
- 3.1.3 Torbay is an area under pressure, due to the predominantly urban influence, constrained rural landscape, requirements to develop areas for housing, coastal pressures of tourism and climate change. These result in issues such as loss of rural landscape, urbanisation of landscape features, ecological fragmentation and coastal erosion. Such pressures are balanced against an often sensitive and high-quality series of landscapes which form the hinterland to the coastal towns, reinforcing the need for a targeted and context driven approach to spatial planning.
- 3.1.4 The following section describes the physical and human influences that have shaped the landscape and identifies key pressures and trends affecting landscape character today.

3.2 Physical Influences

- 3.2.1 The landscape within the study area is derived from the complex interaction of the physical structure of the landscape and the vegetation and land uses that cover it.
- 3.2.2 The United Kingdom has a complex geology that has been subjected to a variety of different natural and human forces over time. This has produced the diverse landscapes experienced across the county of Devon and which contributes to the distinctive setting of Torbay. Landscape character assessment seeks to analyse and understand the layers that contribute to the landscape we experience today. The natural phenomena of geology, soils, weathering and native plant growth provide the 'palette' for the actions of ancestors, who in the past have cleared, drained, flooded, reclaimed, cropped, quarried and built over the natural landscape for at least the last 50,000 years.
- 3.2.3 Landscape is dynamic and changing. Whilst we often wish to conserve and protect the landscape, particularly through designations such as National Landscapes and National Parks³³, it is impossible to entirely prevent change. The best approach is to manage it sensitively, positively and proactively. To do this, we need to understand the evolution of the landscape and the forces for change if we are to develop effective policies for conserving, managing or enhancing landscapes, whilst recognising the many pressures that are placed upon them to provide for our needs (such as food production, economic development, transport, recreation and energy).

³² *Torbay Local Plan A Landscape for Success – The Plan for Torbay: 2012 to 2030*, Para 4.1.7, Torbay Council, December 2015

³³ National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW Act) 2000 (as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act in December 2023) and National Landscapes Association Briefing, Applying the CROW Act section 85 duty to 'seek to further the purpose' in National Landscapes (AONBs), November 2024

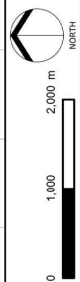
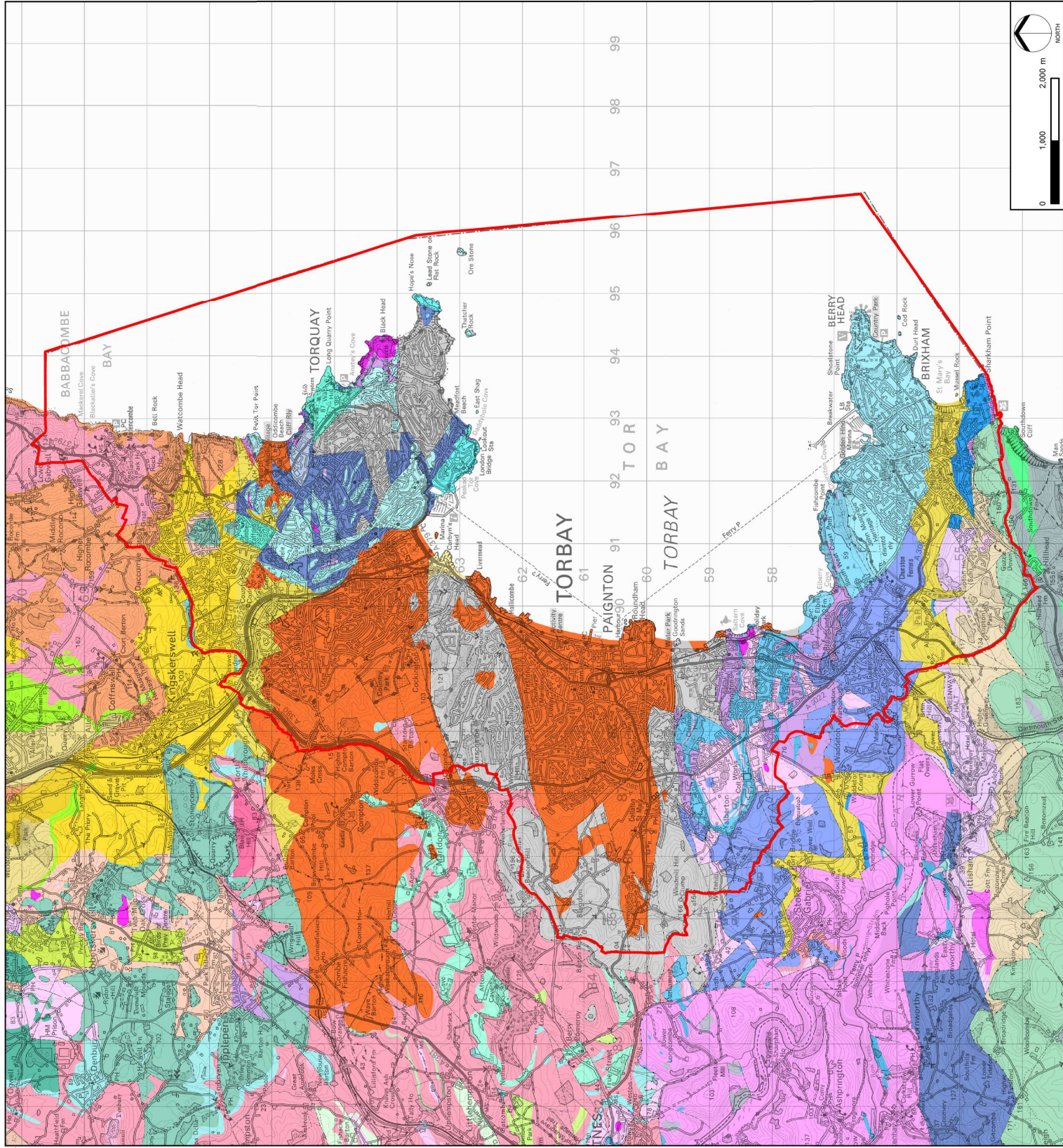
TORBAY STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE STUDY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 3.1

Geology and Soils

KEY

- Torbay Borough Council Boundary
- Fault, inferred, displacement unknown
- Reverse or thrust fault, inferred, barbs on hanging wall side, throw in metres
- Aller Gravel Formation - Gravel
- Alphington Breccia Formation and Heavitree Breccia Formation (Undifferentiated) - Breccia
- Aspington Volcanic Formation - Limestone
- Aspington Volcanic Formation - Tuff
- Barton Limestone Member - Limestone
- Blair Hill Tuff Member - Tuff
- Berry Head Member - Limestone and Mudstone, Interbedded
- Bovisand Formation - Mudstone, Siltstone, Limestone and Sandstone
- Bovisand Formation - Sandstone
- Brixham Limestone Formation - Limestone
- Churston Member - Limestone
- Corbyn's Head Member - Sandstone and Conglomerate, Interbedded
- Daddyhole Member - Limestone
- Dittisham Member - Mudstone and Limestone, Interbedded
- East Ogywell Limestone Formation - Limestone
- Greenway Tuff Member - Basaltic Tuff and Basaltic Lava
- Marldon Limestone Member - Limestone
- Meadfoot Group - Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone
- Nordon Formation - Lava, Basaltic
- Nordon Formation - Limestone
- Nordon Formation - Mudstone, Siltstone, Limestone and Sandstone
- Nordon Formation - Slate
- Nordon Formation - Tuff
- Odcombe Breccia Formation - Breccia
- Pett Tor Breccia Member - Breccia
- Saltern Cove Formation - Limestone
- Saltern Cove Formation - Mudstone and Limestone, Interbedded
- St Mary's Bay Member - Mudstone and Limestone, Interbedded
- Staddon Formation - Sandstone, Siltstone and Mudstone
- Torbay Breccia Formation - Breccia and Sandstone, Interbedded
- Torquay Limestone Formation - Limestone and Mudstone, Interbedded
- Unnamed Igneous Intrusion, Devonian to Carboniferous - Microgabbro
- Upper Greensand Formation - Sandstone
- Walls Hill Member - Limestone
- Watcombe Breccia Formation - Breccia
- Watcombe Breccia Formation - Siltstone and Sandstone
- Whiteway Mudstone Formation - Slate



Projected Coordinate System: British National Grid

DATE JUN 2025
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Geology and soils

- 3.2.4 Devon has a complex geology, and this is reflected in Torbay as shown in Plate 3.1. Torbay is located on the eastern most edge of the harder, older rocks that extend across the west of the county and into and across Cornwall. The Torbay area also sits on the eastern edge of the ring of rocks which were affected by the igneous intrusions that formed the granite boss that we now call Dartmoor.
- 3.2.5 Torbay is particularly geologically famous for its limestone cliffs and quarries, and it has a rich and well exposed geological heritage, from Devonian reefs to Pleistocene bone-caves (Kent's Cavern and Windmill Hill Cavern, Brixham). The limestone has created a range of habitats that support species of national and international importance.

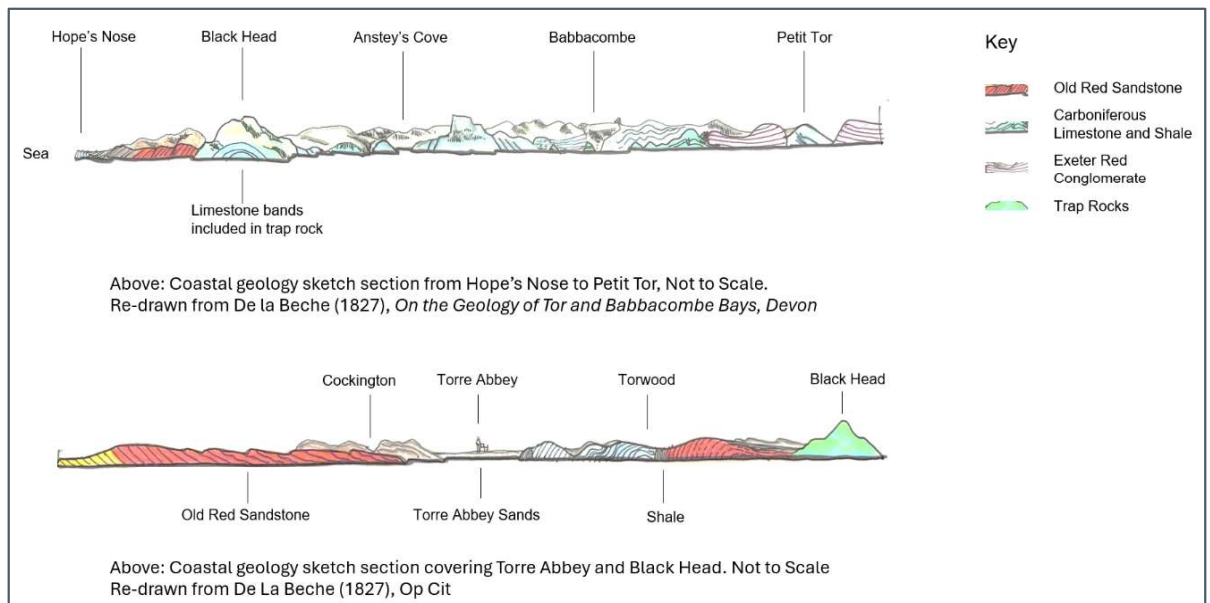


Plate 3.1 Illustrative sections showing the geological composition of parts of the Torbay landscape

- 3.2.6 The whole of Torbay was designated a Geopark in 2007 by UNESCO, because of the unique and often spectacular geology and natural environment. The geological history of the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark is reflected in the diversity of landscapes experienced across Torbay. The Geopark has one of the highest concentrations of geological sites in the country, with 32 sites representing a range of geological periods, rock types and geological and geomorphological features. The *Geopark Management Plan 2023 – 2033*³⁴ provides a detailed description of the geology of Torbay, as well as recognising the interrelated environmental, historical and cultural heritage associated with this.

³⁴ http://www.englishrivierageopark.org.uk/section_main.cfm?section=5211 – accessed January 2025

- 3.2.7 In general, softer rocks tend to weather more than harder rocks, leaving the harder rocks as higher land. However, this can vary if the harder rocks have been subjected to much longer periods of weathering. In the Torbay area there are three main geological strata, all of which run broadly east to west. The highest ground is located on Devonian limestone, whilst the softer rocks such as Permian sandstone and Permian conglomerates form generally lower ridges or hills. This geomorphology has given rise to a unique and fascinating coastline of rock cliffs, attractive bays and sandy beaches. Bright red cliff exposures (between Hollicombe Head and Corbyn's Head) can be easily viewed across the bay, whilst Permian Tor Bay Breccias form Roundham Head in Paignton.
- 3.2.8 In the south of Torbay, the harder and older Devonian sandstone is found in the east-west ridge which ends where it meets the limestone at Sharkham Point. This ridge is generally higher than the Devonian limestone of Berry Head, a massively quarried limestone headland that stands 60 metres above sea level forming the southern arm of Torbay to the north. Another flatter and slightly higher area of Permian sandstone separates this Devonian limestone from the Paignton area, which is located on a bowl of land which was formed from Permian sandstone and Conglomerate. This softer material has been eroded more heavily by the action of the sea to form Tor Bay. The higher land to the west of Paignton is again derived from the harder sandstones which are also found wrapping round the northern edge of Torbay, although softer Permian conglomerates have eroded to form a valley between Torquay and Paignton. This broadly coincides with the Torre Abbey valley. A slightly lower area of Carboniferous limestone wraps around the principal Devonian sandstone ridge in Torquay which forms the main area of hills which are now occupied by the suburbs of Babbacombe, Wellswood, Ellacombe, Plainmoor and Upton. The local Devonian stones, and particularly limestone, were used for the construction of a number of buildings, including the old Torquay Town Hall and Museum. The local geology also influences the street scene and is a common material for the building of boundary and sea walls. Variations occur across Torbay, such as between Torquay and Paignton where the boundary wall material changes from grey limestone to red sandstone.
- 3.2.9 The soils derived from the Devonian sandstones are generally the characteristic free draining red sandy soils that are so closely associated with the county, whilst those derived from the limestone are heavier clay soils. The soils derived from the sandstones and covering most of the area are Soilscape 6, which are 'freely draining slightly acid loamy soils' that have low fertility and generally support a land cover of arable and grassland with habitats of neutral and acid pastures and deciduous woodland and acid communities including bracken and gorse in the uplands³⁵. The soils of the headland areas between Torquay and Hope's Nose and the Churston to Berry Head area, are Soilscape 7, which are 'freely draining slightly acid but base-rich soils' derived from the limestone and are more naturally fertile. These also generally support arable and grassland land cover and habitats of base-rich pastures and deciduous woodlands.
- 3.2.10 Soilscape 13 'freely draining acid loamy soils over rock' are characteristic of the valleys that cut through the urban area of Torbay, hosting land cover of grassland and rough grazing with habitats associated with steep upland pastures.

³⁵ Cranfield University 2024. *The Soils Guide*. Available: www.landis.org.uk. Cranfield University, UK. Last accessed 06/08/2024

- 3.2.11 Specialist calcicole plants live on the thin dry limestone soils which have survived on the more exposed parts of the coast. Unusual marine life inhabits the underwater reefs and submarine caves within the limestone too.

3.3 Topography and drainage

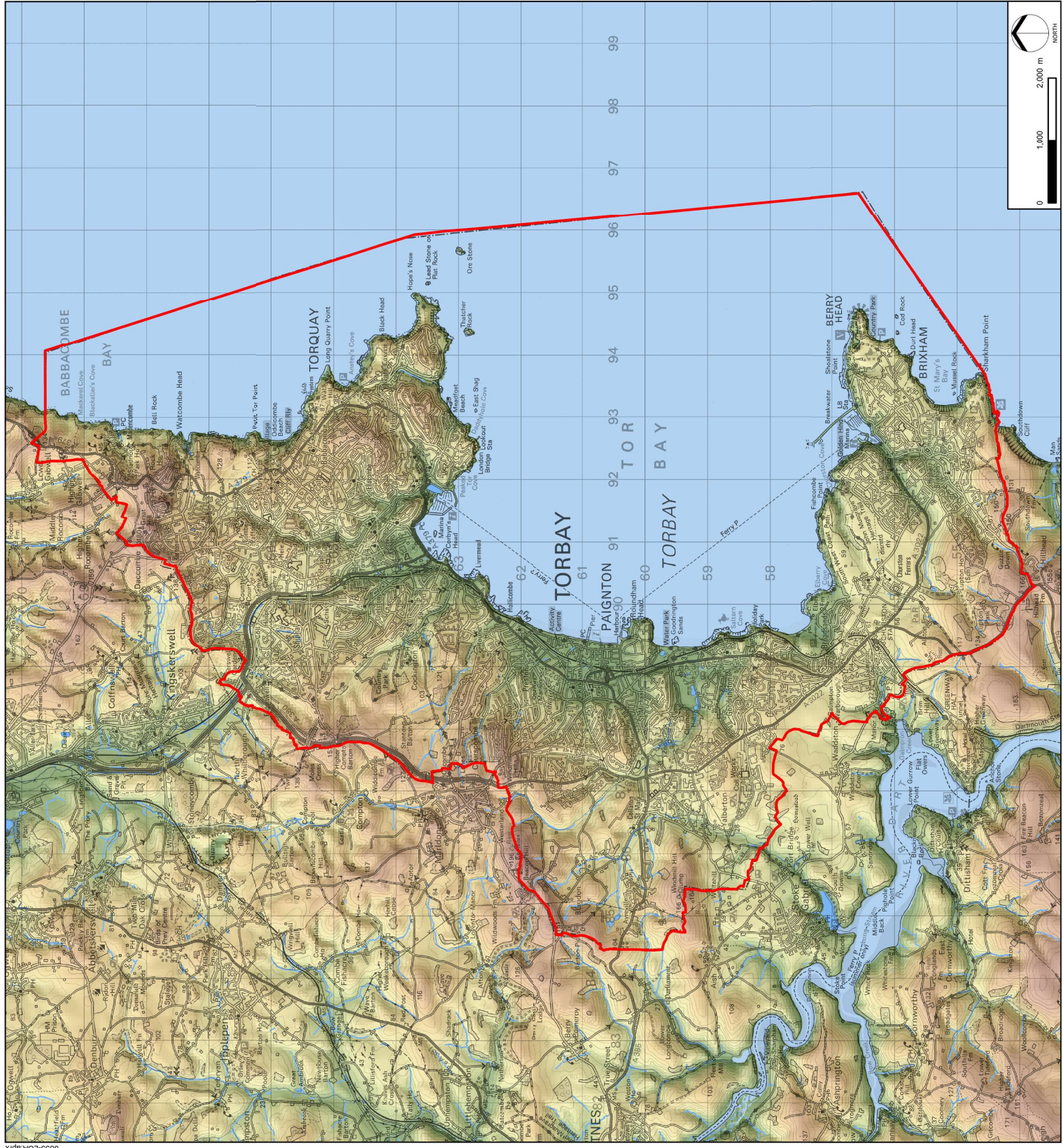
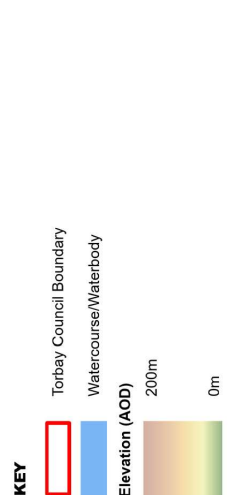
- 3.3.1 Erosion of the three main geological strata found within the area (Permian sandstone, Devonian limestone or Permian conglomerate) has determined the landform, shown in Figure 3.2. In essence Torbay is surrounded by a bowl of higher ground and land generally slopes eastwards towards the bay, from the higher land in the west and north.
- 3.3.2 The land which is derived from the Permian sandstone is characterised by rolling topography. The flatter hilltops vary in height from 100 to 190 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and are dissected by quite steep sided narrow valleys. The land derived from both the Devonian limestone and the Permian conglomerates is generally less steep and lower lying, with the highest land located in the north close to the cliff tops at Babbacombe.
- 3.3.3 There are no major rivers in the district, only relatively small streams which flow down into the bay. The streams which drain Torbay are the Higher Brixham, Clennon, Churston, Yalberton, Victoria, Ocombe, and Aller Brook which are now classed as rivers. These streams are the relics of more powerful rivers which drained the thawing snows of the Ice Ages and carved the steep valleys which are features of the area today. Some fringes of the area drain southwards into the River Dart, whilst the northern parts drain northwards away from the Bay into the River Teign. The highly urbanised nature of many of these catchments has meant that these watercourses are subject to sudden flash flooding, and a series of storage areas have been constructed to accommodate the peak flows which can occur. Coastal flooding due to high tides can also occur, with land at Goodrington being one of the most vulnerable areas of the Bay.
- 3.3.4 The Torbay coast varies from the steep limestone headlands of Hope's Nose and Sharkham Point and the limestone headland of Berry Head which protect Torbay from the worst of the winter weather, through to the sandy beaches of Broadsands, Goodrington and Torre Abbey. The cliff tops are often of geological and wildlife value, supporting rare species and important rock exposures. The unusual geology, warm climate, and sheltered aspect allow various continental plant species to flourish. A part of the distinct and varied coastal landscape between Berry Head and Sharkham Point has been designated as a Special Area for Conservation (SAC)³⁶. The adjoining marine environment is also part of the Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC, designated for its nationally important reef habitats and submarine sea caves, which further enhance the ecological significance of the area³⁷.

³⁶ Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

³⁷ Natural England. Lyme Bay and Torbay Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Available at: <https://sac.incc.gov.uk/site/UK0030372> (Accessed June 2025)

TORBAY STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE STUDY
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 3.2
Topography and Drainage



3.4 The evolution of the landscape

Pre-historic influences

- 3.4.1 Kents Cavern (Plate 3.2) is a historically and culturally significant prehistoric cave system. It is one of the most important Stone Age sites in Europe, where evidence of Britain's earliest humans and Ice Age creatures has been found.
- 3.4.2 The natural vegetation that developed during the warmer climatic period following the most recent Ice Age (c.12,000 years ago) would have been dominated by trees and woodland. This prehistoric forest or wild wood evolved as trees re-colonised the southwest from mainland Europe, as the climate warmed. Different woodland species became dominant and pollen records suggest that as the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) period came to an end, the woods in the Torbay area were likely to have contained Birch, Hazel, Lime, Oak and Elm, and may have contained Beech and Ash.
- 3.4.3 Exposed cliff tops may well have contained clearings or been dominated by scrub, whilst the valley bottoms would have contained marshland. Coastal lowlands tended towards heathland if the salt winds and high water table prevented woodland development. Natural clearing occurred within the wild wood, which would have been grazed by deer and other herbivores, which were in turn preyed on by predators such as wolves. Early humans are likely to have had relatively little impact on this natural landscape, but as the population grew and techniques and technologies developed, the human influence on the Torbay landscape became more significant.

Early human influences

- 3.4.4 The dating of artefacts and bones indicate that Kents Cavern in Babbacombe, Torquay and Windmill Hill Cave in Brixham were occupied by Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) *Homo sapiens* from as far back as 450,000BC through the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) period in approximately 8000BC, and then sporadically up to the Roman period.



Plate 3.2 Kents Cavern. Public Domain, via Wikimedia Commons

- 3.4.5 The development of more settled farming began following clearance of the natural wooded landscape and arable cropping with the improved stone axes of the Neolithic (New Stone Age) from c.4000 BC.
- 3.4.6 A Middle to Late Neolithic chambered tomb was constructed on the top of the hill above Broadsands in the period 3400-2400BC. A late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age bowl barrow lies on Beacon Hill, which straddles the Torbay boundary to the west of Marldon, and four similar bowl barrows (from the period 2400-1500BC) lie north of Barton Pines. These are identified as scheduled monuments on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and recorded in the Devon Historic Environment Record (HER).

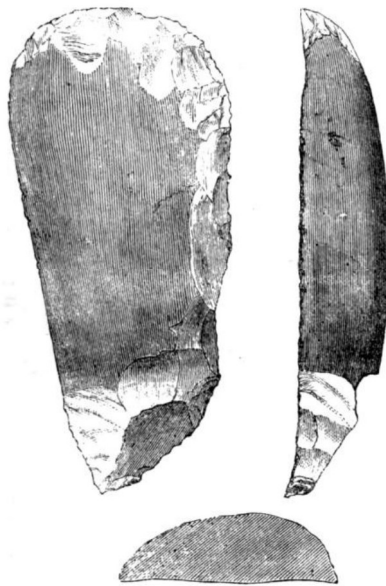


Plate 3.3 Neolithic implements found Kents Cavern. Image: J Evans, 1897. Public domain and {PD-US}

Bronze and Iron Age influences

- 3.4.7 There is considerable evidence of human occupation on the southern side of Dartmoor from the Bronze Age, and parts of Torbay were being occupied at the same time. Churston limestone plateau shows evidence of occupation from the Early Neolithic to the Late Bronze Age.
- 3.4.8 Aerial photography has helped to identify the earthworks on Dartmoor and throughout South Devon, where the land has been largely undisturbed in recent centuries, but later development masks evidence from this period in Torbay in most cases. There is a surviving late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (1200-700BC) field system on the cliff tops at Babbacombe's Walls Hill and a rare hilltop enclosure complex of similar age overlying the bowl barrows at Barton Pines. Other earthworks have been recorded at Warberry Hill and Great Hill, as traces of some of the first settlers in Torbay, known as the Celtic Dumnonii people.

- 3.4.9 It is known that Bronze Age field systems continued to expand during the Iron Age in other parts of Devon, which is also likely to have occurred in Torbay. There are fortified Iron Age hilltop settlements close to Torbay, at Milber Down near Newton Abbott, as well as a promontory fort at Berry Head close to Brixham. The remains of the fort at Berry Head are largely lost, due to the construction of defences and garrisons to protect the Torbay anchorage during the French wars of the 18th and 19th centuries. A series of routes linking fields, villages and camps along the higher ground and ridge tops evolved during this period. Swedwell Lane is one of these, providing a link between Watcombe and the Iron Age Camp and Milder Down.

Roman and Saxon influences

- 3.4.10 The Roman invasion in 43AD has some influence west of Exeter at Isca Dumnoniorum ('Watertown of the Dumnonii'), which is an early legionary fortress and later Civitas capital (administration centre for Roman local government). Some settlement has also been recognised in the landscape to the west of Torbay, mainly through crop marks in the valleys of the Dart and Teign.
- 3.4.11 Roman contact with the Celtic Dumnonii (a Brythonic³⁸ Kingdom of sub-Roman Britain in the southwest) was mainly commercial. Roman coins have been found at Berry Head, which may indicate a settled trading environment. The remains of a person who had been buried with Roman pottery and artefacts were uncovered in the 1990s in the Hookhills area of Paignton.
- 3.4.12 The Celtic Dumnonii outlasted the Roman period and continued in Devon until the 7th Century AD, despite plague and emigration, having been largely Christianised. The landscape of the time is likely to have been progressively cleared for cultivation. The woodlands that remained are likely to have been on the sides of the steep, narrow valleys where clearance and cultivation were most difficult. At this stage, it is likely that Oak, Ash and Beech would have been the dominant tree species of the remaining woodland.
- 3.4.13 A series of Saxon invasions and campaigns in the 7th and 8th Centuries are thought to have displaced or subjected the Dumnonii and introduced the Saxon pattern of settlement and land use, which was to form the core of the subsequent medieval landscape. The Saxon pattern of villages based on church parishes and hundreds evolved and much of this pattern remains today. Torbay was part of the hundred of Kerswell but known as Haytor. Nucleated villages existed in the Saxon Period; Paignton was thought to have been one such settlement but recently Late Iron Age pottery (c.200BC) has been found suggesting Celtic foundation. Similarly, St. Marychurch, Torre, Cockington, Churston and Brixham were well established in Saxon times but may not have been new foundations as they could equally have been taken over from earlier Celtic settlements.

³⁸ Denoting or relating to the southern Celtic linguistic groups – Welsh, Cornish or Kernewek, and Breton

- 3.4.14 The Saxons introduced their open field system to the larger villages to enable the co-ordinated co-operative cropping that this system entailed. The Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation Study³⁹ has explored the patterns of field systems throughout the County and identified some field boundaries, particularly those on Parish boundaries, that are likely to date from the Saxon period. Other features of the Saxon landscape were the parish churches. Torre Church, pictured below in Plate 3.4, was originally dedicated to St. Petrox, a Celtic saint, and was located next to a spring. It was subsequently changed to St. Saviours after the Norman invasion.



Plate 3.4 View of Torre Church by Revd John Swete, 1793. Public domain and {PD-US}

- 3.4.15 The Saxons used various hilltops as lookout areas for watch or *ward*, which was reflected in the names of Warborough (two instances, next to Warberry Hill and at Galmpton) and Warbreck (south of Brixham). Hill tops were also important as meeting sites, (the Saxon Hundred Court is thought to have met at Gallows Hill next to Marldon), worship and warning beacons (there are two named 'Beacon' hills).

Medieval (1068-1540AD) influences

- 3.4.16 After the Norman Conquest, the Great Survey of England (Domesday Book) was carried out in 1086, to document manorial holdings. Domesday records that Paignton (Peintone) was held by the Bishop of Exeter, Brixham (Briseham) by Ludhael of Totnes, and Torre (Tormoham) by William the Usher. At this time Paignton was by far the largest settlement in the Bay, with both Brixham and Torre much smaller by comparison. Many of the smaller settlements, hamlets and isolated farmsteads were occupied by smallholders, recorded as unnamed tenants.

³⁹ https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/devon_hlc_2015/index.cfm - accessed 08/08/2024

- 3.4.17 Paignton's location on the fertile and productive red soils meant that the village could produce food to support a larger population. The manor of Paignton was held by the Bishop of Exeter from 1050 to the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Part of the palace, the 14th century crenellated walls and a corner tower, with a lodging house, remain today. Torre was much smaller than Paignton or Brixham. Much of the manorial land was granted to the Premonstratensian Abbey founded there in 1196 by William de Brewer, who was one of the Justiciars responsible for the government of the country whilst Richard I was absent on the Third Crusade. Various charters describe the lands granted to the Abbey, which included meadow, arable, stream and sheep pastures. The Abbey constantly expanded its land holdings and by 1370 it held the whole of the manor of Tormoham and much land elsewhere. During the later Middle Ages granges were established at Torwood, Shiphay and Ilsham. Water mills are recorded on the stream through the Abbey lands at Chelston; the last, Fulford Mill, was only demolished in the 1870s.
- 3.4.18 The period after the Norman Conquest was a period of woodland clearance, growing population and agricultural expansion. In the period between 1150 and 1350 many new smallholdings were created, primarily by peasants claiming wasteland, combining strip fields (enclosures) and exchanging bound manorial labour for paid tenancies. The Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) reproduced on Figure 3.4, identifies large areas of medieval enclosure in the Lower and Middle Blagdon areas, some of which are based on strip field systems and are evident in places today.
- 3.4.19 The Black Death caused a massive shrinkage in the primarily rural population from 1348 onwards, which did not recover until the 16th century. This period led to the desertion and abandonment of settlements in some parts of the county, with Hound Tor on Dartmoor being a nearby example, and their replacement in some instances by animal husbandry, especially sheep.
- 3.4.20 Prosperity returned to the County with renewed growth in the cloth trade and tin mining and, in the case of Torbay, through the growth of the fishing industry in Brixham. One of the medieval manor houses from this period is located at Blagdon Barton, now partly surrounded by holiday park lodges. The current manor house has its origins in the 1500s (probably on the site of earlier buildings) with alterations in the 17th and 18th centuries, as well the 20th century. Torre Abbey, pictured below in Plate 3.5, in Torquay grew to become one of the wealthiest monastic institutions in the region at the end of the 15th century. At its dissolution in 1539 it was the richest house of its order in England.

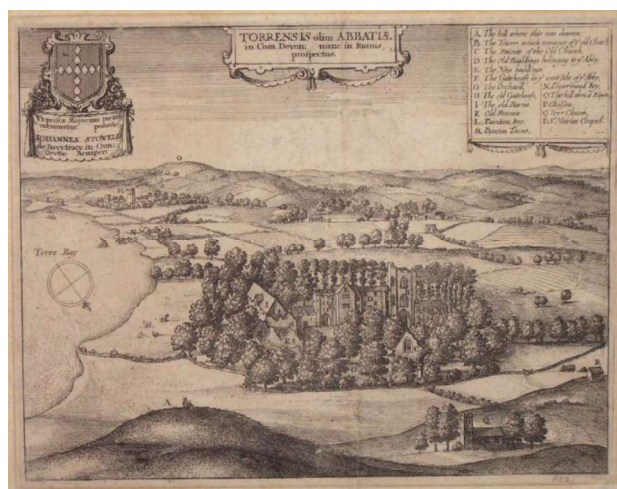


Plate 3.5 Torre Abbey, c.1676, by Wenceslaus Hollar. Various sources, Public Domain

Post Medieval (1540-1800) influences

- 3.4.21 This period saw the reformation and growth of estates. Torre Abbey was one of the large monastic estates to be dissolved early in this period. The sale of its estates and properties, through the Court of Augmentations, helped to establish a network of small estates managed by a rising class of gentry. Often these were formerly the secular stewards and other officials who went on to occupy the monastic houses and develop rural industries, which were to leave a rich pattern on the landscape of Torbay in the 18th century. These families included the Carys, formerly of Cockington, who purchased Torre Abbey in 1660; the Ridgeways (who became Earls of Londonderry) who acquired Torwood; the Mallocks of Cockington; and the Palks (Barons Haldon) who subsequently purchased the Ridgeway lands, not already in Cary Ownership, in 1768.
- 3.4.22 A slowly expanding population encouraged developments in the mechanisation of the traditional rural industries, which added a new feature to the landscape of the area. The first recorded manorial grant to erect a windmill was made in 1673 for the construction of a mill at Yaddon Down (now called Windmill Hill). They were not common in Devon but well known in the Torbay area. Reverend Swete famously sketched in his journals and produced watercolours of the windmills (and many other aspects of the landscape of Torbay and the wider county), between 1793 and 1810. There are also 'Windmill Hills' at Churscombe, Collaton St. Mary and Brixham, as well as a separate Windmill Copse on the edge of Lupton Park and Kings Barton.
- 3.4.23 The continuing growth of the fishing industry, with Brixham developing into Devon's foremost commercial port, led to further growth at the harbour and in Higher Brixham. The inner harbour was filled in during the 18th century and a naval reservoir was built. Net fishing in Torbay was also undertaken by boats from St. Marychurch and Paignton, with landings at local quays. A stone quay is thought to have been present at 'Torkay' from the 16th century. Torbay took centre stage in 1688 at the start of the 'Glorious Revolution' when the Protestant William of Orange landed an invading force of 15,000 men at Brixham, to depose the last Catholic Stewart monarch, James II, as pictured in Plate 3.6 below.

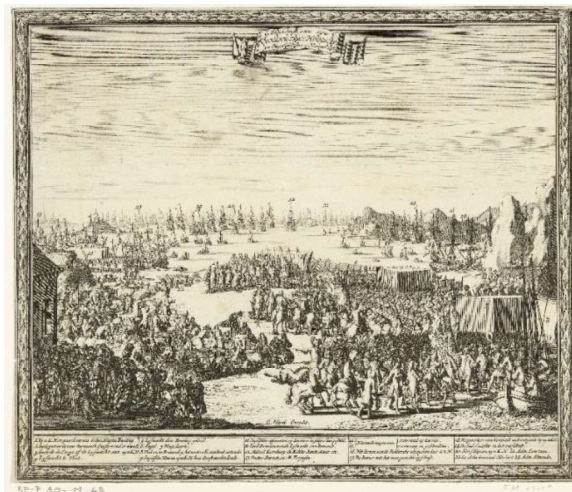


Plate 3.6 The arrival of William of Orange in Brixham, 1688. Public Domain, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

- 3.4.24 Artillery batteries were first established at Berry Head in 1779-1780 to counter the danger of attack from France and Spain. During the French Wars of 1793-1815 the whole headland was occupied with two stone-walled forts (out of the four planned). These comprised barracks, magazines, ancillary buildings and artillery redoubts to defend the batteries and counter a Napoleonic invasion. A military hospital was established below the forts on the Brixham side and a naval Hospital at Goodrington, south of Paignton. During periods of westerly gales Torbay was the chosen anchorage for the naval ships which were blockading the French port of Brest. It remained so for both merchant and naval vessels until the completion of the Plymouth breakwater in 1840.
- 3.4.25 Despite the restrictions imposed by the French wars, agricultural improvements continued. The local gentry consolidated their estates and embellished their manor houses, such as the Cary and Mallock seats at Torre Abbey and Cockington Court, and the Yarde Bulls at Churston Court, and Lupton house – all formerly medieval estates. The fashion for the picturesque encouraged the owners to develop ornamental grounds and scenic features such as tree groups, lakes and carriage drives. The 18th and 19th century parkland and pleasure grounds associated with Cockington and Lupton remain prominent and notable features of the current landscape of Torbay. Both parklands have experienced changes through the 20th century. Lupton, pictured below in Plate 3.7, experienced changes in land use and ownership, including country house to hotel and school, before more recent and ongoing restoration of the historic house and estate, for community use. At Cockington, historic mapping demonstrates alteration in enclosure patterns and woodland cover over the centuries.



Plate 3.7 Lupton House, by Revd John Swete, 1793. Public Domain. Swete praised the effect of the wooded valleys and the wide views of Tor Bay from the park's upper slopes⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000696?section=official-list-entry>: Accessed January 2025

- 3.4.26 At the beginning of the 19th century Torquay was still only a small harbour, as seen below in Plate 3.8 and Plate 3.9, with a scattering of houses at the inner harbour and the main village of Tormohun (medieval Torre) set back a mile inland. While the British Naval fleet used Torbay as an anchorage during the Napoleonic wars, the officers' wives and families started to take lodgings in the area. Afterwards, with the fashion for sea-bathing, the perceived benefits of its 'healthy airs' and its likeness to the Mediterranean Riviera, Torquay slowly started taking shape as a fashionable resort. Improvements to the Harbour (1806-14), combined with new rail links to Newton Abbot in the 1820s, supported the entrepreneurial development of new suburbs of spacious villas in their own grounds from the 1830s.



Plate 3.8 Torquay Harbour, c.1830 by John Rawson Walker. Public Domain. Source: Courtesy of Torre Abbey Museum

Modern influences

- 3.4.27 The growth of Torbay as a popular seaside resort accelerated after the arrival of the railway at Torre in 1848. This brought more visitors to the area, stimulating the growth of the Victorian villas and terraces to cover what had been open fields at the turn of the century. It was not until 1859 that the railway advanced to reach the coast at Torquay and continued south to Paignton. Following this, a branch line was constructed from Churston to Brixham in 1868.
- 3.4.28 Whilst urban development subsumed many fields, meadows and woods, new estates were also being established. These included Brunel's planned estate at Watcombe (now Brunel Manor), where the house and grounds were incomplete at his death in 1859, though considerable planting to his designs was carried out. The industrialist Isaac Singer constructed a Rotunda in 1873 and his 'Wigwam' in 1875, on the old Fernham estate north of Paignton (with Oldway Mansion being built there for Singer in the 1870s). Now designated as conservation areas, Torquay's large garden suburbs of Warberries, Lincombes and later Chelston were more or less completed by 1900, and Roundham and Polsham in Paignton were executed between 1880-1900.

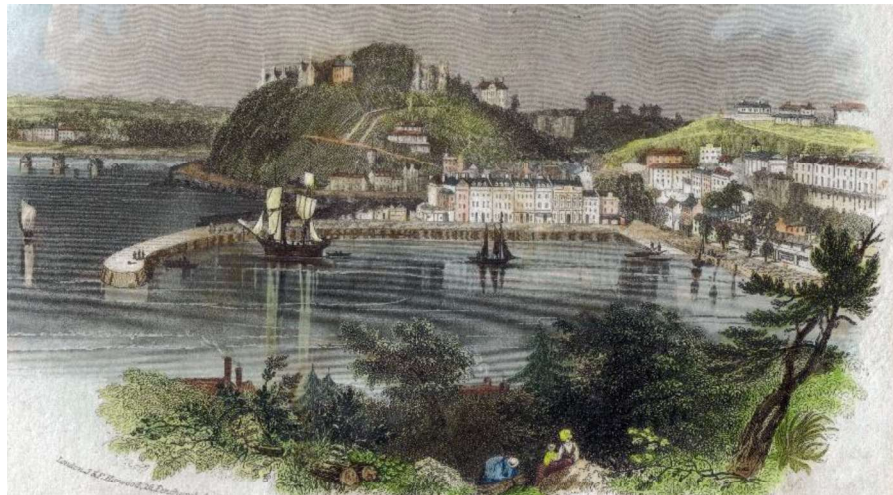


Plate 3.9 Aquatint of Torquay in 1842. Public Domain

- 3.4.29 Further growth across the Torbay area continued into the 20th century. The area was promoted as the Devon Riviera, and the mild climate enabled the parks and gardens to be planted with exotic species including the 'Torbay Palm' (*Cordyline australis*), a 'signature' species for the area. Other popular exotics which feature within the more mature parks and gardens, include Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*), and Corsican pine (*Pinus nigra*).
- 3.4.30 The Torbay countryside experienced a greater rate of change through the 20th Century than ever before. Agricultural mechanisation which began in the 19th century gathered pace in the early 20th century. Change from draught bullock teams to heavy horses and steam traction encouraged a move towards larger fields. This pressure increased as a result of the development of the diesel tractor and progressively larger machines during and after the Second World War. Devon's traditional mixed cropping and dairy farming systems moved towards arable mono-cropping during the 1950s and 60s as a result of the introduction of agrochemicals, which enabled continuous arable cropping where soils and topography allowed. This period saw the highest rate of hedgerow clearance, and the loss of farm ponds and copses, and an increase in under-soil drainage to support government programmes to produce 'food from our own resources'. The area to the south of Galmpton illustrates this trend, where average field sizes are now two or three times larger than during the Victorian period.
- 3.4.31 The growth of tourism has also had a major impact on the countryside. Touring and permanent mobile home parks have spread into agricultural areas to support agricultural enterprises that have struggled during the last two decades. Other forms of diversification such as car boot sales have tended to remove land from agricultural cropping.

3.5 Cultural Value

English Riviera

- 3.5.1 Torbay is otherwise known as the English Riviera and promoted as a leading UK holiday resort due to the spectacular coastline and abundance of activities and landmarks. It has more recently been recognised by UNESCO as a diverse landscape of international importance for geological, historical and cultural heritage.
- 3.5.2 In 2007 the English Riviera was designated as a global Geopark by UNESCO (shown on Figure 3.3). This encompasses the entire area of Torbay including 42 square kilometres of sea. The Geopark Management Plan⁴¹ sets out the vision, the objectives and the evidence for the Global Geopark recognition.
- 3.5.3 Interesting cultural associations, that have a relationship with or have influenced the Torbay landscape are:
- The development of the 'Brixham Trawler' boats, which had characteristic 'red sails' due to the use of locally mined red ochre combined with oil to coat and protect them. The trawling heritage remains apparent as part of the distinctive character of the busy fishing port at Brixham Harbour.
 - Historic remains and geological sites of international importance, that help explain the history of evolution and migration of humans, such as finds at Kents Cavern that is now a popular tourist attraction.
 - Agatha Christie was born in Torquay and lived in the area, at Greenway, overlooking the Dart. Many of her books are set locally or inspired by the local scenery. There is a walking tour of Torquay that identifies various landmarks with a connection to the author.
 - Much of the architectural heritage of Torbay is a result of its popularity as a tourist resort from the 19th century. There are large numbers of villas, civic buildings, public gardens, churches and tourist infrastructure dating from the late Georgian period through to the early 20th century, which are often the most prominent in the townscape.
 - There are many festivals throughout the year, still drawing in huge number of tourists and promoting the attractions, landmarks and heritage of the bay. These include the Christmas Train of Lights on the heritage railway, English Riviera Walking Festival focusing on local sites and history, Torbay Royal Regatta at Torquay harbourside and the Geopark Festival that promotes the rich culture and fascinating history of Torbay.

⁴¹ Geopark Management Plan 2023-2033 Part 1 and Part 2, English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

Historic buildings and parklands

- 3.5.4 Local government in the earlier part of the century was in disparate authorities. In 1968 parts of the Borough of Torquay, the Paignton and the Brixham Urban District Councils, and the Totnes Rural District Council were merged to form Torbay Borough Council. This merger brought the historic buildings and grounds of Torre Abbey, Cockington Court, and Oldway Mansion, which had all been acquired by the former authorities, into one ownership.
- 3.5.5 Scheduled monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens are shown on Figure 3.3. Torre Abbey is a significant archaeological site, once the wealthiest English monastery of the Premonstratensian Order and now one of the best-preserved in the southeast. Torbay Council have adapted the abbey as an art gallery and museum with award-winning formal gardens. Cockington Court and its Country Park is managed by Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust, as office space and craft studios set within the coastal country park. The original Oldway Mansion was extensively remodelled and reconstructed by Paris Singer 1904-1907 in the style of the Palace of Versailles, with elevations described by Pevsner as ‘stunningly bombastic⁴²’. It has been used as a hospital, country club and WWII pilot training establishment and filming location but has since been abandoned. Volunteers have kept the gardens open, but the Grade II* listed house is in a state of disrepair. Recent award of government and council funding has enabled work to start on Phase 1 of the restoration of Oldway Mansion, to once again allow public access and community use of the buildings.
- 3.5.6 In the past, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has funded major restoration works to Torre Abbey and awarded funding to Cockington Court. Smaller properties such as Paignton’s medieval Bishop’s Place and the WWII Coastal Defence Battery at Brixham have received smaller but substantial HLF funding towards restoration and interpretation. Historic properties that remain in private ownership have been converted to institutional uses; Churston Court is a hotel, and Lupton, set within a large park has recently been taken on by The Lupton Trust group of local people, who are restoring the site for events and community use. Nearly 1000 properties are subject to statutory protection, many being located within designated Conservation Areas. The locations of these and the Registered Parks and Gardens are shown on Figure 3.4. The following have been designated by English Heritage as Registered Parks and Gardens:
- Grade II* Lupton Park, Brixham.
 - Grade II Watcombe Park and Brunel Manor, Torquay.
 - Grade II Barton Road Cemetery, Torquay.
 - Grade II Princess Gardens and Royal Terrace Gardens, Torquay.
 - Grade II Castle Tor, Torquay.
 - Grade II Oldway Mansion, Paignton.

⁴² <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1195207?section=official-list-entry> Accessed 9th August 2024

Promoted routes

- 3.5.7 The South West Coast Path is England's longest waymarked path (shown on Figure 3.3). It runs for 630 miles between Minehead and Poole Harbour, covering much of the coast of Torbay. This forms part of the King Charles III England Coast Path National Trail, which encompasses the entire English coastline. As the National Trail winds around the coastline, it passes through a number of statutory designations including sections of cliffs and foreshore that are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and South Hams SAC, which are described separately in this report.

TORBAY STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE STUDY
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 3.3

Environmental Constraints - Cultural Designations

KEY

Torbay Council Boundary

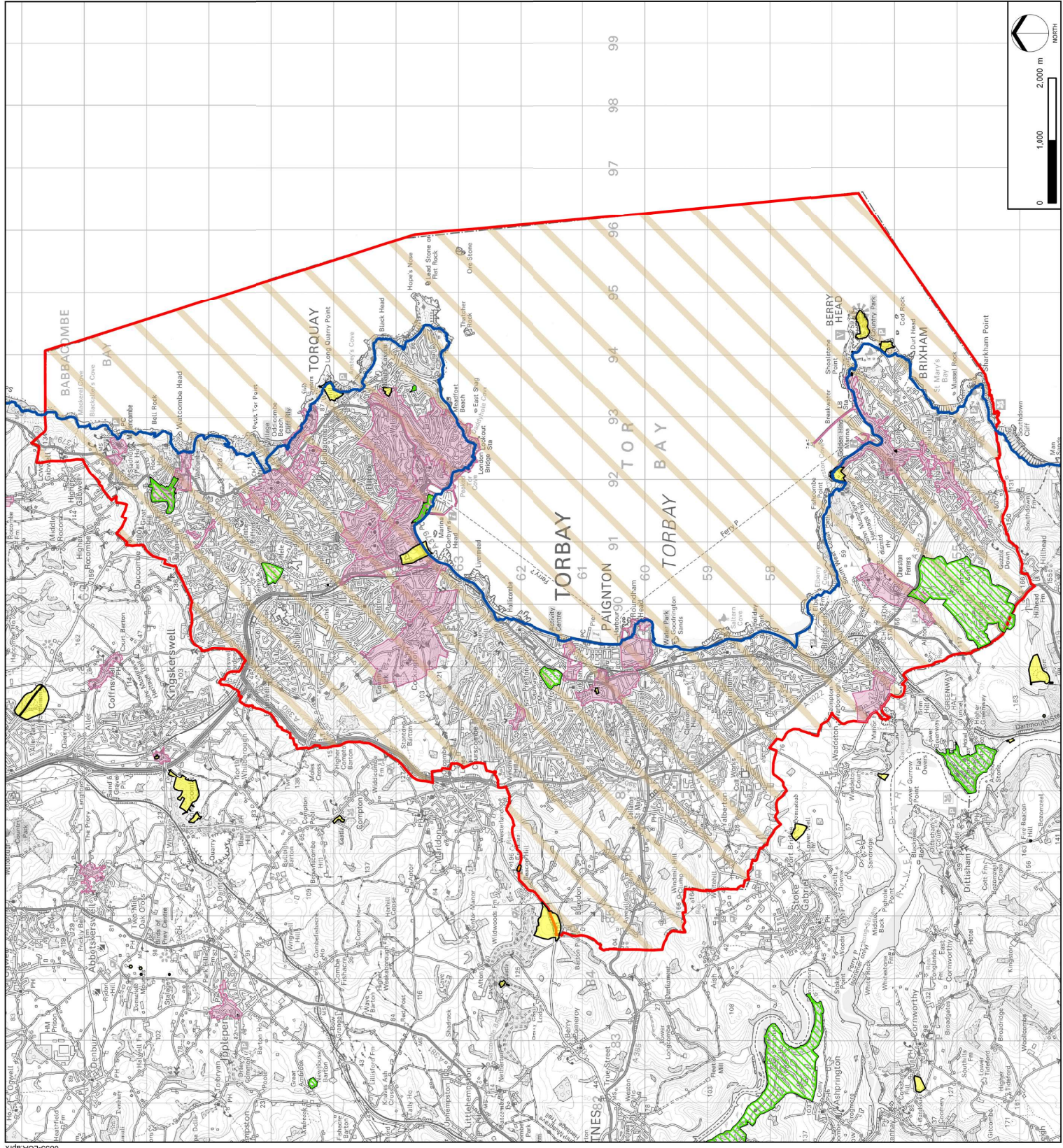
Conservation Areas

Registered Parks and Gardens

Scheduled Monuments

English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

South West Coast Path / King Charles III Coast Path



0 1,000 2,000 m

NORTH

Projected Coordinate System: British National Grid

DATE	BY	PAPER	SCALE	QA	REV
JUN 2025	MP	A3	1:60,000	JGa	-

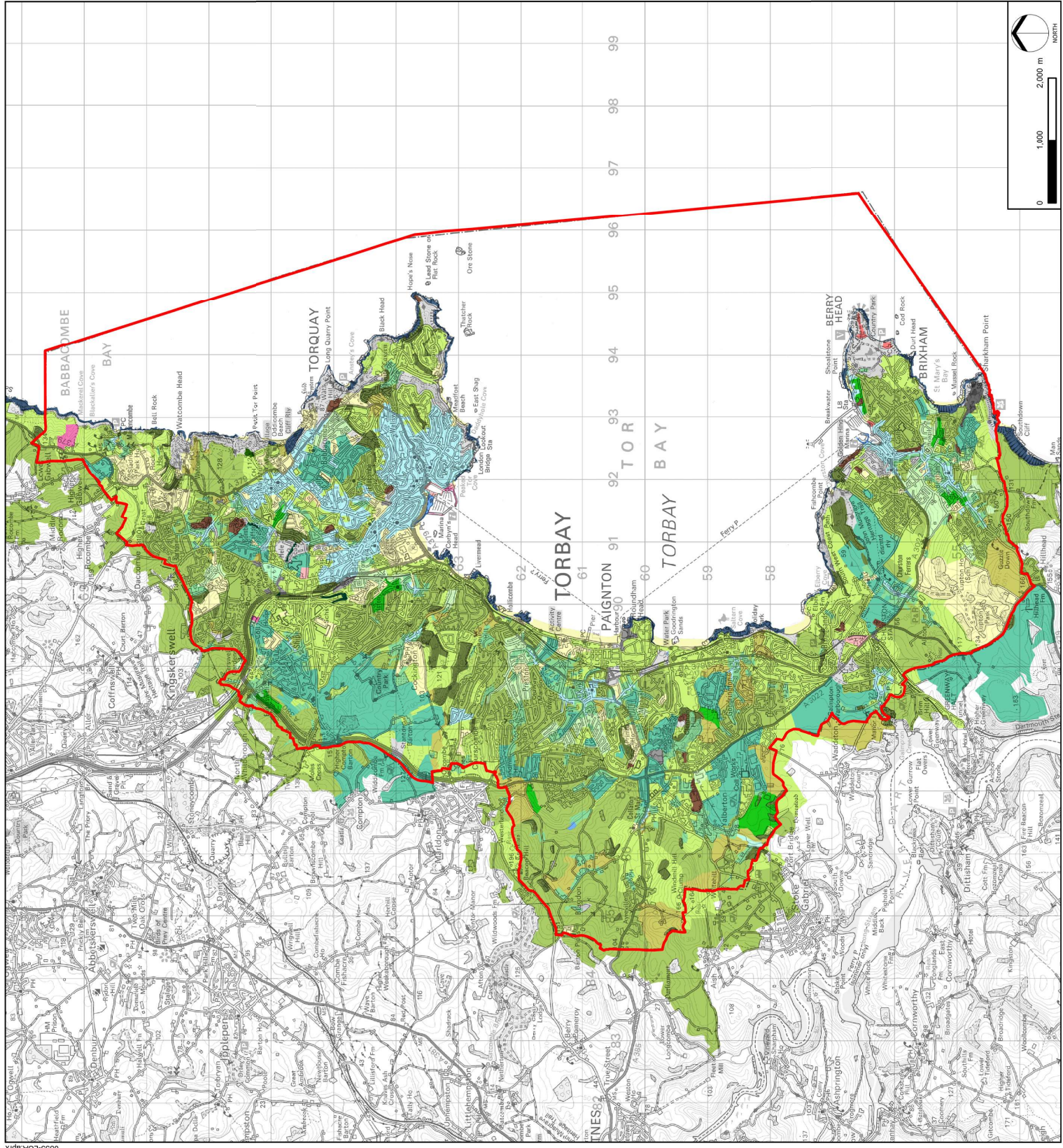
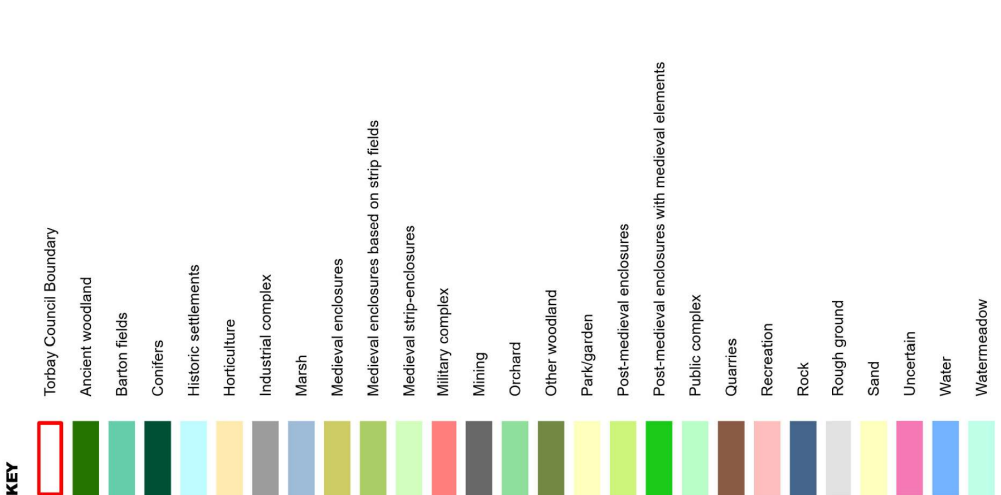
3.6 Historic Landscape Characterisation

- 3.6.1 A historic landscape characterisation study of Devon was undertaken for the County Council in 2005. This primarily desk based study considers the historical development of the current landscape, and the development of the existing field systems in rural areas. The mapping in Figure 3.4 is a reproduction of the Post-Medieval Devon HLC, and shows how the pattern of field systems, historic landscape processes and land uses is distributed across the study area.
- 3.6.2 The HLC provides a useful understanding of how the landscape has evolved over time, particularly considering the influence of landform on enclosure patterns and land uses. The pattern of field systems within the rural parts of the study area is derived from historical records and includes, among others:
- Ancient woodland.
 - Medieval enclosures.
 - Medieval enclosures based on strip fields.
 - Post-medieval enclosures.
 - Orchards.

TORBAY STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE STUDY
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 3.4

Historic Landscape Characterisation



Projected Coordinate System: British National Grid

3.7 Biodiversity Value

- 3.7.1 *'The Nature of Torbay – A Local Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plan 2006-2016'*⁴³ identifies the Priority Habitats in Torbay and sets out the key objectives and actions for protecting them.
- 3.7.2 The Action Plan identifies that Torbay has a distinct and varied landscape that contributes to an array of important habitats and species, from caves and sandy shores to ancient woodland and limestone grassland. This variety is not only important for nature, but it drives the local economy and improves quality of life, including through provision of natural capital and its component ecosystem services and cultural services that enhance health and well-being through nature connectedness. Unfortunately, ongoing pressures on the landscape are resulting in loss of wildlife, habitats and geological features.
- 3.7.3 The diversity of habitats is recognised in the designation of Torbay as a UNESCO Global Geopark. The Geopark Management Plan notes that the rich geological heritage of the area has contributed to important habitats for rare and diverse plant and animal species, found at the cliffs, farmland fringes, pockets of ancient and semi-natural woodland and within the marine environment. Of particular note are:

- Extensive stands of calcareous grassland.
- Areas of broadleaf woodland, mostly oak, ash and hazel, with small areas dating back to 1600AD (ancient woodland sites on the Ancient Woodland Inventory or AWI).
- Mixed farmland with the rich red soil, species-rich hedgerows, hedgerow trees, orchards, meadows and permanent pasture.
- Woodland on steep-sided valleys in urban areas.
- Sheltered sandy shores, rocky coves and rugged cliffs.

Designations

- 3.7.4 The considerable biodiversity of the Torbay area is recognised by the number of sites designated for their nature conservation interest, which are listed in *'The Nature of Torbay'* and shown on Figure 3.5. Those of particular note are the three European designations:
- Berry Head to Sharkham Point SSSI is included within the **South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**.
 - The marine area of the Geopark is incorporated into the **Lyme Bay and Torbay Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**.

⁴³ Torbay Council and partners, 2006.

- **Torbay Marine Conservation Zone** was designated in 2013, covering the area of coastline between Oddicombe Beach and Sharkham Point.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- 3.7.5 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a relatively new statutory requirement. The process of creating the emerging LNRS for Devon began in 2022 and is being coordinated by Devon Local Nature Partnership. Part of this is the mapping of the Devon Nature Recovery Network to identify existing wildlife habitats, networks and the priorities across the county. The Core Nature Areas and Strategic Nature Areas are available to view on the Devon County Council Environment Viewer⁴⁴, with work on production of the LNRS ongoing.

⁴⁴ Available online: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/environmental-maps> - Accessed October 2024

TORBAY STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE STUDY
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 3.5

Environmental Constraints - Ecological Designations

KEY

Torbay Council Boundary

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

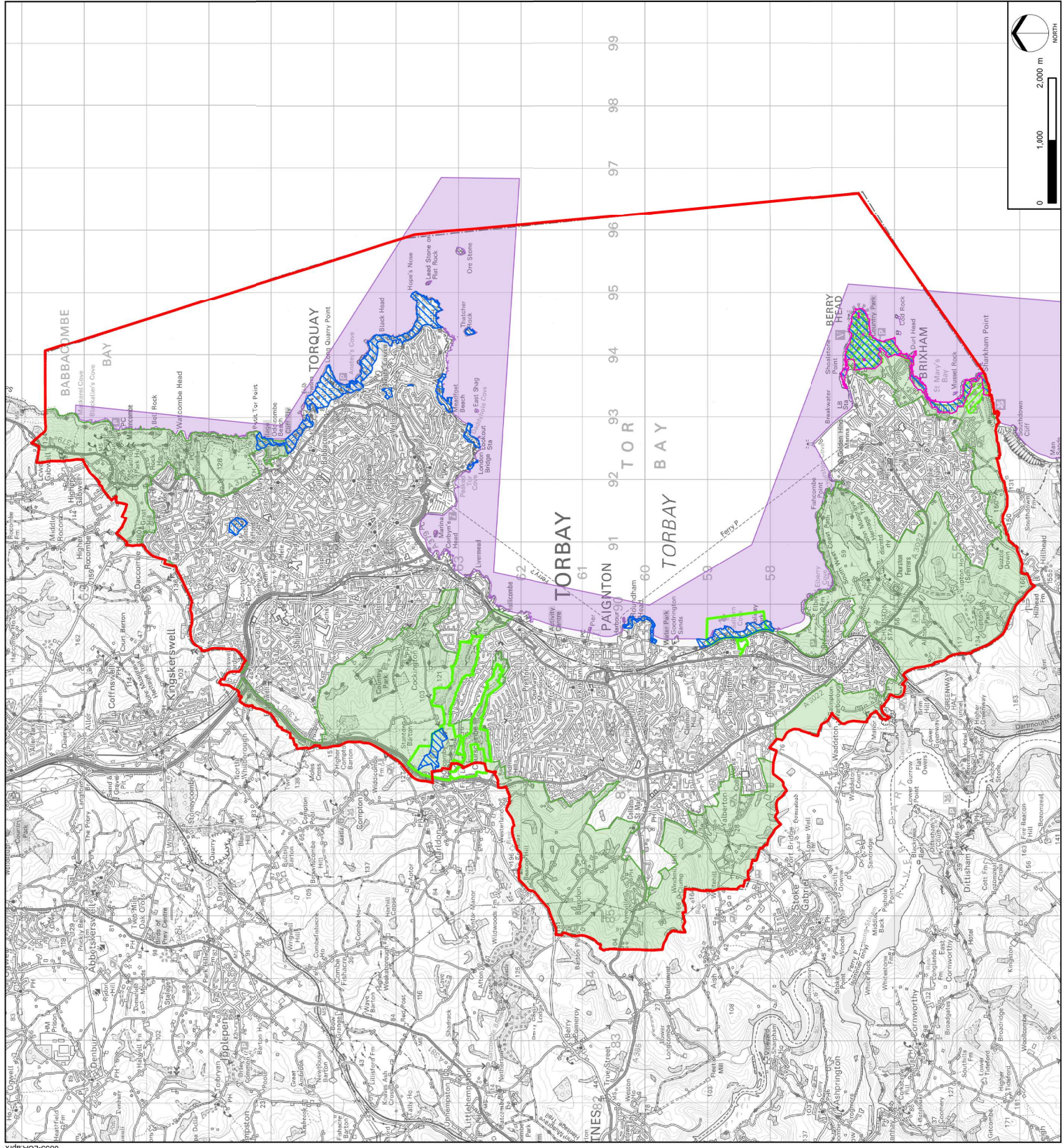
Special Areas of Conservation

National Nature Reserves

Countryside Zone (Local Plan Policy C1)

Local Nature Reserves

Lyme Bay and Torbay Marine Special Area of Conservation



NOTE:
C1 is not strictly an ecological designation but seeks to protect the overall character of the open countryside, encompassing rural and landscape character, recreational spaces, ecological habitats and features, and historic features.

Projected Coordinate System: British National Grid

DATE	BY	PAPER	SCALE	QA	REV
JUL 2025	MP	A3	1:60,000	JGa	-

3.8 Forces for landscape change

3.8.1 Landscapes are dynamic, ever changing and subject to both environmental and anthropogenic change. In order to inform the future strategy for the landscapes of the area, it is useful to understand the likely strategic forces for change acting on the landscape. It is important to note that landscape change can be both positive (restoration, conservation, nature recovery and regenerative land management) as well as change which is predominantly negative (such as climate change and built development). There are clearly nuances within some of these and there is also some degree of overlap between the change phenomena discussed below. Some forces for or agents of change listed below, such as climate change, are in fact 'hyper objects', i.e. very large changes out-with landscape change per se, but changes which will nevertheless have profound consequences for landscapes and the ways in which they are perceived and experienced. Table 3.1 identifies past changes which are continuing to have expression upon the Torbay landscape, as well as present and future changes to the landscape.

3.8.2 The Forces for Change have been organised into the following thematic groupings in the table below:

- Climate change
- Pest and disease
- Nature recovery and resilience
- Land and coastal management
- Infrastructure
- Development

Table 3.1 Forces for change identified across the LCTs within Torbay

Climate Change

Increase in climate extremes including increase in levels and more inconsistent and unpredictable patterns of rainfall, periods of drought, stormwater/groundwater/fluvial flooding events, plus warmer and wetter summers and winters. Increases in rainfall would alter the character of the watercourses and erosion of soils. Periods of drought could result in increased incidences of wildfires. Ultimately, this would affect the type, distribution and diversity of habitats and species, and ultimately the aesthetic composition – the 'look and feel' of the landscape and its character.

The phenomena listed above are likely to also affect ancient woodlands and trees (as will related matters like increased presence of disease and pathogens in tree and plant populations - see below), habitat composition/loss and species migration patterns, as well as affecting farming in terms of crop suitability, growing seasons and availability of shade and water. It would also be likely to impact land use patterns related to recreation and tourism use.

Heightened intensity and violence of storm events and surges may cause damage to and loss of trees, increased and more erratic rainfall could affect river flows and groundwater conditions, providing environments where flooding could intensify.

Sea level changes and extreme weather events leading to loss of coastal habitats and species and increased coastal erosion that would alter the physical form of the cliffs and coastline. This would also result in loss of soil, which would impact upon vegetation cover. This could also lead to an increase in unsympathetic coastal defences in an attempt to prevent/slow the process. The South Devon and Dorset Shoreline Management Plan identifies management policies⁴⁵ along the coast, which could have implications for local landscape character.

All these factors will create potential for increased changes in the character and appearance of the landscape.

See also below: Nature-based Solutions.

Pest and disease

Increase in diseases and pests, for example Ash Dieback (Chalara) which could have wide ranging implications for ash-based and ash associated woodland and associated mature landscape structure and landcover. Other potential pests and diseases are identified in the Devon Woodland Strategy⁴⁶ and others may be pathogens and invasive/pest species introduced as a result of climate change.

This is likely to affect ancient woodlands and trees, plus habitat composition/loss.

Nature recovery and resilience

The Devon Local Nature Partnership has created a Vision (Trees for Devon⁴⁷) for Devon's woodlands and hedges to be sustainably managed and rich in wildlife through being reconnected to the local economy and communities. The Local Nature Partnership's guidance, Right Place Right Tree⁴⁸ seeks to reduce the negative effects of new tree planting on the landscape. It provides a guide to increasing tree cover, including re-creating lost landscape features and creating new climate-resilient woodlands.

Increase in nature based solutions to make landscapes more resilient and adapted to climate change would alter land cover and land use patterns. Such changes could include new woodland planting, landscape scale and catchment scale nature-based solutions and natural flood management initiatives and wetland creation, nature pathways and new ecological networks, shoreline management interventions and renewable energy infrastructure.

The emerging Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy has not been published at the time of writing.

Land and coastal management

Woodland/vegetation management

Changes in woodland management can have a variety of results such as expansion, felling, quality of trees, inaccessible spaces and change in species, that will ultimately alter how the landscape looks.

⁴⁵ Available online: <https://southwest.coastalmonitoring.org/projects/shoreline-management-plans/sdadcag-smp2/> - Accessed November 2024

⁴⁶ Trees for Devon: Devon's Tree and Woodland Strategy and Action Plan, Trees for Devon, April 2024

⁴⁷ Available online: <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/our-work/trees-for-devon/> - accessed December 2024

⁴⁸ Available online: <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/knowledge-hub/trees-and-hedges/right-place-right-tree/> - accessed December 2024

Continuing decline in traditional rural skills such as coppicing and hedge laying, potentially resulting in poor management of hedges and woodlands, with associated impacts on biodiversity, layering of vegetation and ultimately affecting local landscape appearance and character.

New woodland planting in response to climate change, carbon sequestration, net zero targets and BNG requirements, resulting in changes to the landscape composition.

Coastal and shoreline management strategies

Potential conflicts between prioritising biodiversity interests and coastal defences.

The South Devon and Dorset Shoreline Management Plan-SMP 16 Durlston Head to Rame Head⁴⁹ which covers Torbay, identifies relevant strategies by area, which may have potential for expression in terms of landscape change:

‘Hold the line’ – to maintain the status quo in terms of maintaining cliff wall, sea walls and revetments, and in some parts of the coastline to maintain/improve existing defences to sustain adequate levels of protection.

‘No active intervention’ – to maintain a non-interventional approach to encourage natural coastal evolution and support objectives for the area's internationally designated and protected environment (designated for geological variety and biogenic reef and sea caves).

‘Allow natural coastal evolution’ – to maintain a non-interventional approach to encourage natural coastal evolution and support objectives for the area's nationally and internationally protected environment.

‘Maintain/improve existing defences to protect against flooding and erosion’ - this will include managed re-alignment in the medium term. For some areas in the SMP this includes an approach based on: Maintain defences in the short term whilst plans are put in place for Managed Realignment, either by setting back defences (and which may include creation of new tidal habitat) or by realigning to higher ground behind.

Published national flood and coastal erosion risk information provides an updated overview of national flood risk; identifying potential future scenarios, which will influence future planning and guidance in Torbay.

Agricultural changes

Past increase in agricultural intensification and diversification, leading to changes to field size and form, conversion of pasture to arable, alternative cropping, loss of traditional field boundaries, loss or conversion of traditional farm buildings, widening of field entrances, loss/neglect of traditional stone walls, introduction of larger scale agricultural buildings and introduction of more intensive stock farming. This could result in an overall change to habitat/wildlife decline and change to the landscape.

Economic pressures on farming, land for food production and/or energy crops may lead to greater competition for natural resources with potential for physical and visual change to the landscape. This may also be counter-balanced by increasingly progressive farming practices such as regenerative agriculture, activities of Farm Clusters and farm diversification schemes including re-wilding initiatives.

⁴⁹ Available online: <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/emergencies/extreme-weather/flooding/south-devon-and-dorset-shoreline-management-plan/> and <https://environment.data.gov.uk/shoreline-planning/search?long=-3.521831930719892®ion=South+West&label=TQ1+1QD&lat=50.463780080469505> – accessed November 2024

Accessed 7th August 2024

Expiry of agri-environmental schemes, leading to potential for changes in land uses, such as reduction of grazing, which will alter the habitats and appearance of the landscape at these locations. It is however likely that many schemes would be renewed or new agreements drawn up and entered into.

Loss of traditional field boundary features including hedges, hedgebanks, orchards, woodland and semi natural grasslands. This can also include lack of appropriate hedgerow and small woodland management. Medieval field patterns are vulnerable and are at risk of loss through changes in land ownership and farming practices. There is potential to re-establish traditional management under agri-environmental and other funding schemes.

Pressures from tourism in the English Riviera (see below also) have contributed to diversification of farms and farmland, with expansion of holiday accommodation and tourist destinations within the previously farmed landscape, resulting in loss of rural character and tranquillity.

Conversion/loss of traditional farmsteads that are characteristic of the rural landscape, which could increase the need for new agricultural buildings elsewhere. This would ultimately alter the settlement pattern and have the potential to be more conspicuous in the landscape, particularly on rising landform.

Variable management/neglect of historic Devon hedges and hedgebanks leading to a decline in these traditional features throughout the countryside.

Decrease in the number, area and levels of management of traditional farm orchards leading to changes in land use and appearance of the countryside.

Infrastructure

Renewable energy infrastructure

Pressure to develop parts of the Torbay countryside for renewable energy.

Vertical structures such as wind turbines have the potential to be prominent on the skylines of rural hilltops that form the backdrop to the settlement areas, or on undeveloped coastal headlands and cliffs.

Pressure to accommodate solar development could result in prominence of solar arrays on rising valley slopes and hilltops and loss of vegetation including networks of hedgerows/ Devon hedges, trees and woodland.

Renewable energy scenarios in Torbay are likely to be relatively small in scale, due to relatively limited rural landscape space in the Torbay area.

Transport and communications infrastructure

Increased traffic levels resulting in the need to alter and/or expand the road networks, leading to further urbanisation. More open landscapes such as LCT 3B are vulnerable to change arising from linear transport infrastructure, in terms of both landscape legibility and perceptual character.

Urbanisation of local road networks, including widening of rural roads and lanes, to deal with increasing traffic volumes, which would result in loss of hedgerows, Devon hedges and trees that contribute to landscape structure and green infrastructure networks. Also, introduction of associated road signage, lighting and traffic calming measures and safety measures such as vehicular restraint systems/barriers, all of which contribute to the urbanising effect on the rural landscape.

Increase of built infrastructure, including telecommunication and mobile phone masts, infrastructure for wireless communications and telephone masts and wires would affect the character and perception of the landscape (such as reduced sense of tranquillity and/or rurality). Elevated, open and visually prominent landscapes such as LCT 3A are vulnerable to the skyline alterations features such as communication masts can impose.

Development

Tourism

Increasing urbanising effect on landscape character from the introduction/expansion of Leisure parks, golf courses, caravan parks, holiday accommodation, garden centre and farm shop developments.

Continued pressure from tourism and requirements for visitor infrastructure may lead to intensification and diversification of development such as holiday lodges, glamping and camping sites and caravan parks, and associated potential tension in terms of views versus settings.

Increasing recreational pressures resulting in further demand for supporting infrastructure such as car parks, expansion of campsites/caravan parks and the conversion/replacement of traditional farm buildings.

Growth and development pressure

Considerable pressure to release land for housing development within the study area, to meet the 5-year Housing Supply. Particular pressures are around the edges of the main towns, in the form of strategic land allocations in the Torbay Local Plan – sites taken forward from the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). This includes pressures on the countryside areas that contribute to the landscape setting of the towns and villages.

Key strategic sites for potential future growth are as follows:

- Maidencombe
- Torquay Gateway / Stantor Barton
- Land west of Paignton (Collaton St Mary)
- Land West of Paignton (Berry Acres / Whiterock)
- Land at Churston
- Sites in South Devon National Landscape

Some of the landscape within these areas is currently protected by existing designations including conservation areas, Local Nature Reserves and Urban Landscape Protection Areas.

Coalescence of settlements is a potential result of this expansion, which could erode the identity and landscape setting of individual settlements.

Development on the periphery of existing settlements does provide an opportunity to enhance the setting through sensitive design and through enhancement of landscape and green infrastructure features including open space, woodland and hedgerows. It can also have an adverse impact on the adjoining rural landscape.

Larger scale development requires careful and high quality design including sensitive, place-appropriate incorporation of associated features such as large attenuation basins and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), public green space, new planting that should provide multiple benefits as part of a multi-functional local landscape and contribute to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Importantly, such interventions should always consider the landscape context.

Increasing pressure for expansion of employment sites, on the periphery of the main settlements; extending further into the rural landscape in the west of the study area, with the potential to alter the skylines (in views inland or across the bay) as development encroaches on the upper, currently undeveloped slopes.

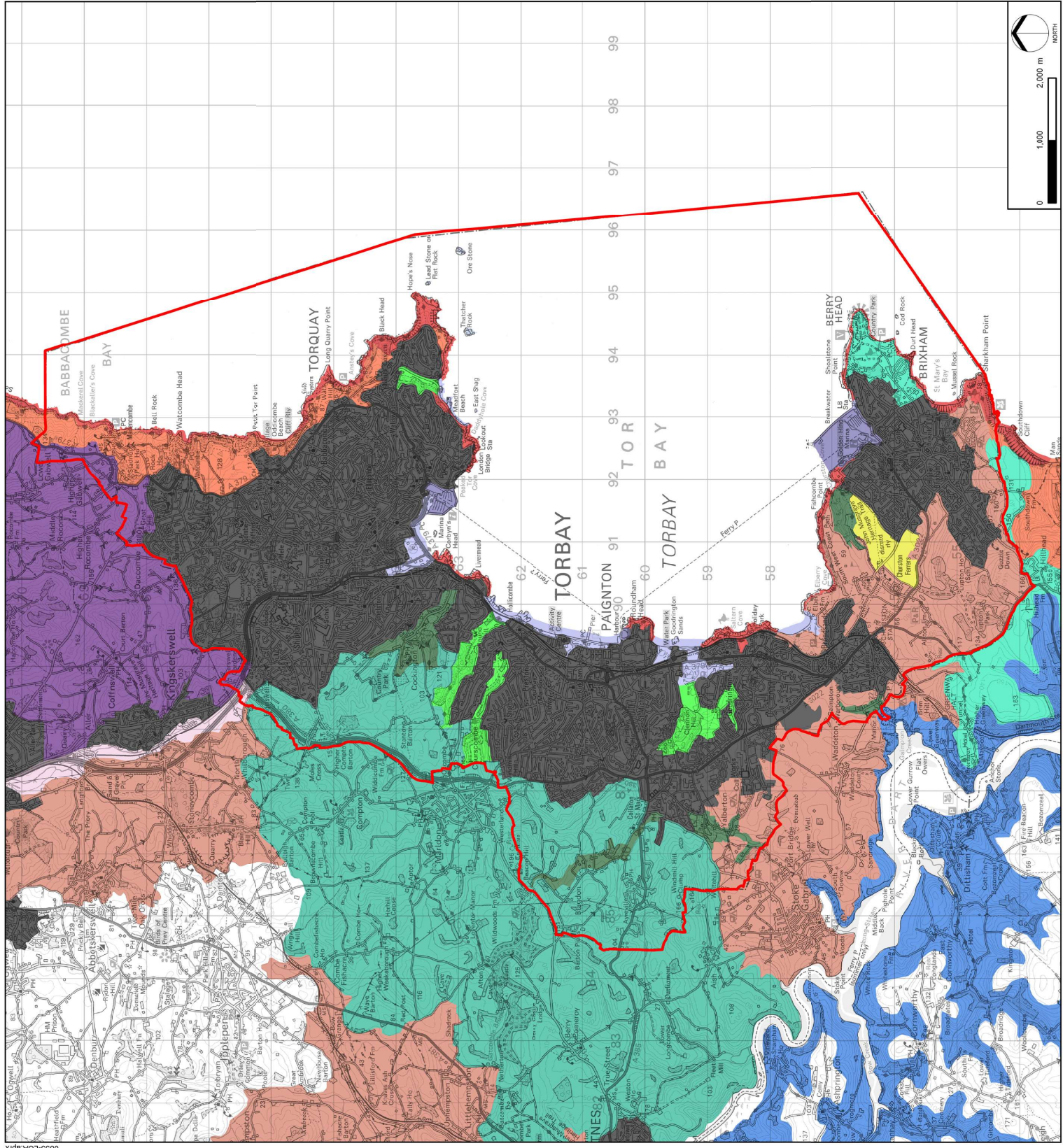
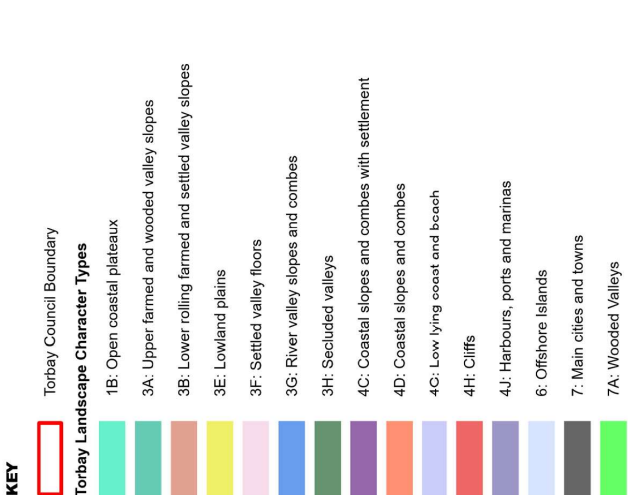
Diversification and/or intensification of farms is also leading to requirements for larger agricultural buildings, that would become conspicuous particularly in the small scale landscape.

4 TORBAY CHARACTER PROFILES

TORBAY STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE STUDY
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 4.1

Torbay Landscape Character Types



Projected Coordinate System: British National Grid

[illegible]

4.1.1 This landscape type is characterised by a high, open plateau with a notable coastal influence and extensive views out to sea. The coastal edges of the plateau are formed by gentle slopes transitioning to steep sided cliffs. Land use is generally pastoral with substantial areas of windblown, scrub vegetation. It is a sparsely settled landscape, with many rights of way including the South West and King Charles III England Coast Path and informal footpaths linking between heritage and nature sites.

DCA 29 Froward Point to Berry Head Coastal Plateau



Wide ranging views along the coastal footpath across the plateau and of the surrounding sea

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- High, open, gently undulating, elevated coastal plateau.
- Distinct headland of Devonian limestone, with light red, generally stony soils.
- Geologically important rock strata are visible in rock faces exposed through quarrying.

Vegetation cover

- Distinct areas of woodland and scrub, that often have a windblown appearance and low height due to the exposed nature of the plateau.
- Hedgerow boundaries with trees, particularly forming more distinct field enclosures inland.

Land use and field patterns

- Mixed land uses of pasture and woodland, interspersed with tourist/leisure facilities including hotels and holiday parks that are relatively well integrated.
- Mixed land use and various pressures over time have resulted in a varied field pattern, from irregular enclosures of varying size on the headland, to more regular small to medium size fields further inland.
- A recreational landscape due to the variety of cultural and natural features, with a network of footpaths, with signage and facilities.

Semi-natural habitats

- Substantial areas of reclaimed limestone landscape with designated geological and nature sites.
- Limestone grassland is dominant across the plateau, with some rare and protected species.

- Distinct areas of woodland and scrub, with acid heathland.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- The heritage of this landscape is strongly related to the variety and ongoing change in land uses through history, including distinct areas of quarrying and defences that have altered the landform and introduced new features.
- Rich in heritage features, with physical evidence of historic defences and visitor interpretation provided along the coast.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Sparse settlement pattern, with occasional individual dwellings in proximity to the urban edge but primarily associated with holiday parks or campsites.
- Few roads but numerous footpaths cross the area, particularly associated with the tourist destinations.
- Close proximity to expanding, modern settlement edges.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Open, often exposed landscape with extensive views along the coastal edge and of the adjoining, often dramatic cliff landscapes (LCT 4H).
- Wide, unspoilt and expansive panoramic views out to sea, which are also identified as a special quality of the South Devon National Landscape.
- Presence of coastal and historical features that form prominent local landmarks and reflect the sense of place associated with this landscape.



View from the walls of historic fortifications, looking across the Open Coastal Plateau

Valued landscape attributes

- Exposed and expansive landscape, with valuable limestone grassland and heathland. Scrub and woodland edges contribute to a variety of colours and textures in the landscape.
- Landmark features such as stone walls of former defences, exposed rock faces of former quarries and other coastal structures such as a lighthouse.
- A network of public footpaths that provide access to the remote coastal landscape, with pockets of tranquillity and valued nature spaces.
- Iconic wide, unspoilt and expansive panoramic views of the coast and out to sea.
- Expansive seascapes under big skies influenced by the changing weather and moods of the sky and sea.



Limestone grassland with a distinct edge formed by shrubs and low-level trees

Specific Forces for Change

- Increasing recreational/tourism pressures leading to further expansion of holiday parks and campsites, and associated facilities such as car parks that erode the rural character and tranquillity of this landscape.
- Neglect or mismanagement of the woodland and scrub leading to it expanding into areas of valuable limestone grassland.
- Due to the open and exposed character there could be future pressure for additional communications masts, as well as renewable energy such as solar panels and wind turbines that would be prominent in this landscape.
- Further expansion of the urban area, across the coastal plateau, resulting in visually prominent settlement edges and further removal of grassland and heathland habitats.
- In line with the South Devon Shoreline Management Plan, the allowance of this part of the coast to naturally evolve, could impact on the current cliff line and valuable habitats in this landscape type.



Long and expansive view of the Torbay coastline and sea, over exposed limestone rock face

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The exposed and undeveloped character of the landscape, avoiding the siting of new development including residential, recreational or energy along the coastline and particularly the prominent headland location.
- The character of the expansive coastal and sea views, through careful consideration of location, type and scale of future development.
- Recreational, heritage and cultural assets, particularly the landmark features that are distinct in this landscape type.
- Vantage points, for experiencing the iconic views and for quiet enjoyment of the landscape.

Manage

- The nationally important coastal habitats as part of the intrinsic character of this landscape, in line with relevant nature and coastal management plans.
- The tourist infrastructure in a way that respects the overriding remote and exposed character of this landscape.
- Public open spaces, conserving habitats whilst enabling sustainable public access to peaceful, rural landscapes away from the main settlements.

- Grassland, heathland and woodland with an understanding of the wildlife value, with detailed management prescriptions to maximise landscape and wildlife benefit, in accordance with local guidance⁵⁰.

Plan

- For resilience to the effects of climate change on this landscape, through monitoring of existing land cover and habitats, and careful consideration of location for future development and materials used, including options for locally specific materials, fabric first design and low embodied carbon approaches as part of a light touch on the landscape.
- For sensitive siting and design of any renewable energy and infrastructure, particularly tall structures such as masts and wind turbines on prominent hilltops, with particular avoidance of prominent headland locations that contribute positively to the sense of place, and in line with local guidance⁵¹ and the emerging sensitivity study⁵².
- For future settlement growth that respects the valued landscape attributes and is located to avoid the most coastal locations, skylines and headland in the LCT. Development proposals should follow a landscape-led approach to design, to conserve and incorporate landscape features as appropriate from the outset as part of the site's green infrastructure and to contribute to the wider green infrastructure network.

Local Landscape Character Areas

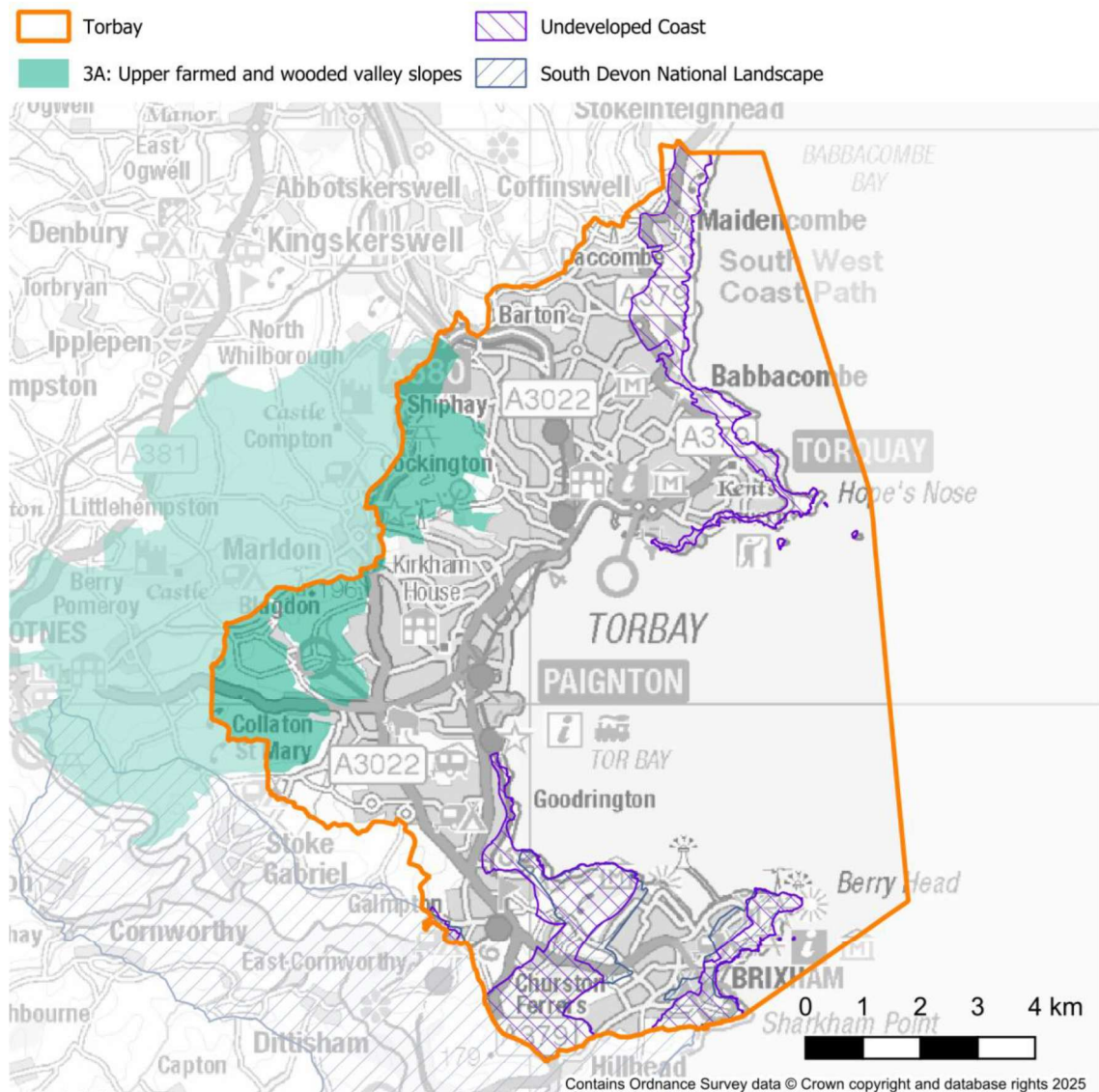
- 1B-1 Berry Head
- 1B-2 Gillard Road and Durl Head
- 1B-3 Southdown Hill

⁵⁰ Including but not limited to [Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy \(2024\)](#), [Devon's Right Place Right Tree guidance](#) and [Devon's emerging LNRS](#)

⁵¹ *Advice Note 2: Accommodating wind and solar pv developments in Devon's landscape*, Devon Landscape Policy group, 2024

⁵² Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 ii Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind and Solar, 2025

LCT 3A: UPPER FARMED AND WOODED VALLEY SLOPES



Summary description

- 4.1.2 This landscape type is characterised by its distinct elevated, rolling hills and undulating valley slopes with an often intricate field pattern. It has an overall wooded character, particularly associated with slopes of the narrow valleys. The northern part of the LCT is largely unsettled and rural in character with greater integrity of historic enclosure patterns, whereas the southern part has experienced more modern development, particularly expansion of holiday parks on valley slopes.

Devon Character Areas

DCA 62 Torbay Hinterland



Long views from a high point at Gallows Gate, looking east across Torbay Hinterland to the coast

Key characteristics

Topography, geology, soils and drainage

- Elevated rolling hills with undulating valleys and occasional prominent hill tops.
- Underlying geology is primarily formed by sedimentary Breccia and sandstone, extending east to the coast. Mudstone, siltstone and sandstone extend around this.
- Soils are distinctly red, freely draining and loamy, influencing the land cover of mixed agriculture with deciduous woodlands.

Vegetation cover

- A well wooded appearance established by small woodlands on undulating valley slopes, linked by robust, species-rich hedgerow field boundaries with frequent, mature hedgerow trees and tree clumps.
- Small valleys are characterised by undulating slopes, often wooded.

Land use and field patterns

- Mixed farmland, with arable cultivation generally on the less steep, mid-slopes and pasture / grazing located on the steeper, upper slopes or in smaller fields at the foot of the hills, in proximity to settlement edges or roads.
- Medium-small field size, with smaller scale enclosure patterns to lower slopes and valleys.
- Irregular field enclosure pattern defined by wide, species-rich hedgerows often substantial in height, with frequent hedgerow trees.

Semi-natural habitats

- Areas of connected deciduous woodlands link into and form part of Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and Country Park, also linking with adjoining secluded, wooded valleys.

- An area of herb-rich, unimproved meadows supporting grassland communities (designated SSSI), which also forms part of the valuable wider environmental assets.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- The heritage of this landscape is well preserved and contributes to local identity, and links into the secluded valleys.
- Pockets of historic landscape encompass conservation areas, historic farmsteads and designed parkland and woods.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Settlement is generally dispersed, comprising isolated farms and small villages. Buildings are predominantly small scale and do not stand out in the layered, rural landscape.
- Diversification of land uses, with the introduction and expansion of leisure facilities along roads and farms developed as visitor attractions.
- Timber cladding and rendered walls are common, particularly associated with commercial areas and the holiday parks.
- Main routes cut through this LCT, between the towns but otherwise there is little accessibility; primarily comprising farm tracks with occasional narrow lanes linking settlements and public rights of way.

Views and perceptual qualities

- An intimate landscape with views often locally contained by substantial and mature vegetation particularly on lower slopes. High points provide long distance views over the rolling landform, towards urban settlement on rising slopes and the sea in the distance.
- A largely peaceful, remote landscape that has retained areas of strong rural character around small areas of modern development.



Looking west from the sea, towards the coastline and settlement of Paignton and elevated, rolling landform of LCT 3A that forms the backdrop

Valued landscape attributes

- Distinctive, elevated rolling natural landform with prominent hilltops visible from the sea.
- Clear views from landmarks, looking out over rolling landform to the sea.
- Areas of intimate spatial scale with an enclosed character, associated with medieval enclosure patterns that present as an irregular and intricate historic field pattern bounded by species-rich hedgerows with mature and frequent hedgerow trees.
- Isolated, rural and tranquil designed landscapes, with areas of garden landscapes, open parkland and substantial woodland connecting along valleys.
- A strong rural character with distinct areas with high levels of tranquillity, away from nearby urban areas.



View of irregular, small scale field pattern defined by species rich, wide hedgerow field boundaries

Specific Forces for Change

- Woodland creation could have both positive and negative effects upon this character type, resulting in loss of pasture landscapes and obstruction of long views towards the coast. It provides the opportunity to strengthen the wooded character.
- Loss of hedgerow trees, as a result of land use changes, farming practices and/or an increase in pests and diseases would be particularly noticeable in this landscape.
- Potential for further loss of farmland and historic enclosure patterns to settlement, new leisure and recreational developments and expansion of farms that would erode the rural character and tranquillity and have potential to interrupt long views.
- Potential for further expansion of settlement and recreational facilities and associated increase in traffic on rural roads and pressure to connect/widen routes, resulting in the degradation of ancient roadside Devon hedges and banks and the influence of suburban or engineered features.
- Potential for prominence of vertical elements such as wind turbines, overhead line grid connections and communications masts on existing rural skylines that form the rural backdrop to the coastal settlements of Torbay.



View across rolling farmland to the settlement edge and holiday park on rising landform

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The valued and wide, species-rich hedgerows and substantial hedgerow trees as part of the distinctive landscape character.
- Native species-rich hedgerows, hedgerow trees, woodland and unimproved grassland areas as contributors to character and important wildlife corridors, in line with the emerging Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).
- Recreational and heritage assets including designed landscape and parkland features.
- The rural qualities of lanes and tracks with their associated species-rich hedgerows and Devon hedges, resisting highway changes unsympathetic to these qualities.

- Vantage points, for views to the coast and quiet enjoyment.
- The rural settlement pattern, ensuring that future development respects the scale of the underlying landform and intricate, historic field pattern. Any future development should sit within the folds of the landscape, avoid prominent skylines and maintain the countryside backdrop in views inland from the sea and coast.

Manage

- The irregular, historic field patterns through enhancement and appropriate maintenance of field boundary hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Agricultural land for wildlife, enhancing its potential for this, particularly areas of semi-natural habitat and including creation of species-rich grass buffers within fields as part of the multi-functional green infrastructure network.
- Woodlands through traditional silvicultural management techniques such as coppicing to promote a diverse age and species structure as well as providing potential low-carbon fuel sources and to maximise landscape and wildlife benefit, in accordance with local guidance⁵³.
- Public open spaces, conserving habitats whilst enabling sustainable public access to peaceful, rural landscapes away from the main settlements.

Plan

- For resilience to the effects of climate change on this landscape, through monitoring of existing land cover and habitats, and careful consideration of location for future development and materials used, including options for locally specific materials, fabric first design and low embodied carbon approaches as part of a light touch on the landscape.
- For connection, extension and restoration of habitats where practicable, to increase biodiversity and connectivity, join up fragmented habitats, and contribute to nature recovery networks as identified in the emerging Devon LNRS.
- For restoration of lost or gappy Devon hedges and hedgerows, as part of the irregular field pattern and with respect to local variations in construction and species.
- For the focus of woodland creation and tree planting to be in places that extend and strengthen the existing woodland and hedgerow network, replaces hedgerow trees and retains valued views towards the coast. For further guidance see the Devon Local Nature Partnership's Right Place, Right Tree⁵⁴.

⁵³ Including but not limited to [Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy \(2024\)](#), [Devon's Right Place Right Tree guidance](#) and [Devon's emerging LNRS](#)

⁵⁴ <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/knowledge-hub/trees-and-hedges/right-place-right-tree/>

- For sensitive siting and design of any renewable energy and infrastructure, particularly tall structures such as masts and wind turbines on prominent hilltops, with particular avoidance of prominent upper slopes and hilltops that contribute positively to the sense of place, and in line with local guidance⁵⁵.
- For future settlement growth that respects the valued landscape attributes and is located to avoid the most prominent slopes, skylines and hilltops in the LCT. Development proposals should follow a landscape-led approach to design, to conserve and incorporate landscape features as appropriate from the outset as part of the site's green infrastructure and to contribute to the wider green infrastructure network, and in line with sensitivity guidance where relevant⁵⁶.

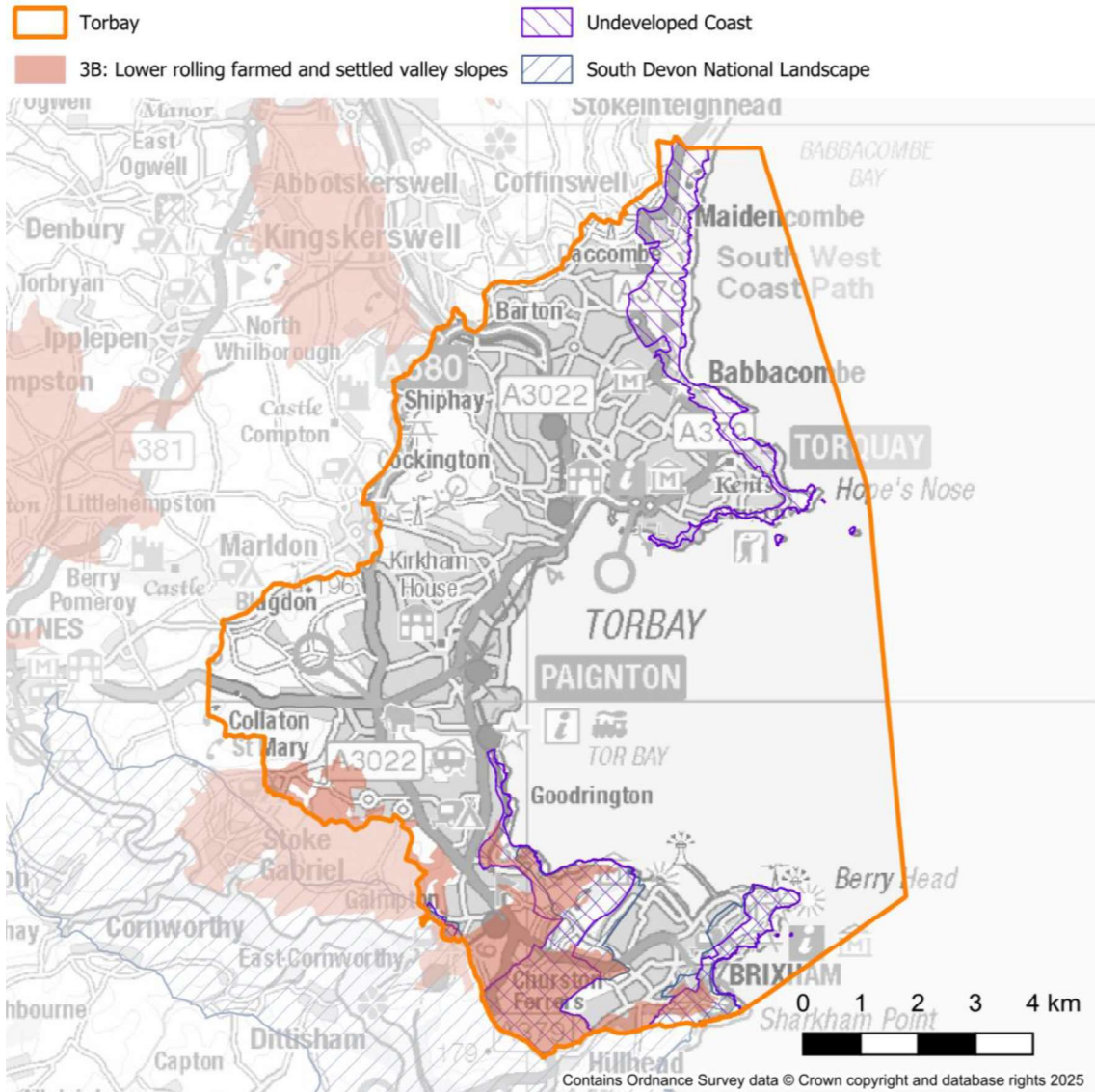
Local Landscape Character Areas

- 3A-1 Edginswell
- 3A-2 Cockington - Ocombe
- 3A-3 Blagdon

⁵⁵ Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 ii Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind and Solar, 2025

⁵⁶ Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 i Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Future Growth Areas, 2025

LCT 3B: LOWER ROLLING FARMED AND SETTLED VALLEY SLOPES



Summary description

- 4.1.3 This landscape type is characterised by wooded, rolling landform that gently slopes down from wooded ridges to the coastal cliffs. Woodlands, parkland trees, orchards and hedgerows combine to form a distinct wooded landscape between substantial settlement areas along the coast. It has a strong rural character, with generally sparse settlement and strong historic cores within villages. Tourist development is generally well integrated in coastal areas.

Devon Character Areas

DCA 62 Torbay Hinterland

DCA 29 Froward Point to Berry Head Coastal Plateau



View of the rolling landform gently sloping down to the coast, between settlements

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Gently sloping, rolling landform associated with lower valley slopes, with subtle changes in slopes and gradient and no strong pattern. Steeper landform in the south is cut by small streams that rise from hillside springs.
- Includes lower lying, gently undulating landform that slopes down to the coast, with locally prominent hill tops.
- Underlain by limestone and mudstones, with some Devonian sandstone in the south where landform is more undulating.
- Distinctive red soils seasonally noticeable on large, ploughed fields.

Vegetation cover

- Some substantial areas of woodland, associated with areas of remnant parkland, hilltops, coastal edges and linking along steeper gradients into defined secluded or river valleys.

Land use and field patterns

- A complex mix of pasture and arable fields, with larger, more regular enclosures on gently sloping or upper slopes and smaller, historic pasture and strip fields around settlement edges and often on steeper landform.
- Historic estate parkland, orchards and trees within leisure facilities such as golf courses contribute to the wooded landscape character.

Semi-natural habitats

- Some substantial areas of semi-natural deciduous woodland including pockets of ancient, replanted woodland.
- Traditional orchards scattered across the landscape type, often against a settlement edge.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Scattered settlement with historic cores (often conservation areas) with clusters of listed and local landmark buildings.
- Historic parkland and estates with listed buildings, pockets of ancient, replanted woodland and veteran trees contributes to landscape pattern.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- A settled landscape, containing small historic villages and holiday accommodation, and encompassing the modern, suburban edges of the main settlements. Leisure-related development is common in proximity to the coast.
- A variety of building ages and styles. Traditional vernacular of local limestone and slate roofs is found in village cores. More modern development on village edges makes use of local materials and styles, establishing a unified character.
- Main roads that cut through the area are relatively well integrated by landform and vegetation, and do not dominate.
- Smaller, rural, winding and narrow minor roads and lanes, often with tall hedges and hedgebanks, connect farms and village settlements with the larger urban areas.

Views and perceptual qualities

- There are strong perceptions of tranquillity and remoteness in parts of the LCT away from the urban edges. Near the coast there is a greater variety of elements and land uses. Rural qualities are retained and there is a strong visual relationship with the sea.
- The wooded character contributes to a sense of enclosure within parts of the LCT. Long views towards the coast are achieved between vegetation, from high points.



A strong visual relationship with the sea from more coastal parts of LCT 3B

Valued landscape attributes

- The wooded, gently sloping landform encompasses and forms the backdrop to settlement in views from the sea, providing a green break between substantial settlement areas.
- Rolling, sloping landform combined with the variety of land uses and vegetation cover create a patchwork agricultural landscape with strong rural qualities.
- Sense of time-depth established by historic settlement vernacular and features including estate parkland, intact historic village cores, remaining strip field enclosures and orchards, and the steam railway that cuts through and influences this LCT.
- Network of woodlands including ancient replanted woodland, hedgerows, hedgebanks and remaining orchards that link through and are a defining characteristic of this landscape. They contribute to local enclosure and seclusion, as well as a habitat network that connects into/through the settlement areas.



View over wide hedgerows of gently sloping, wooded agricultural landscape with settlement nestled within

Specific Forces for Change

- Mismanagement and loss of woodland that would alter the landscape composition and be particularly noticeable in this LCT.
- Continuing pressure for housing and tourism development on existing settlement edges that would affect the rural character and sense of tranquillity. This is likely to result in increasing traffic and pressure to connect/widen the existing historic minor road network, leading to removal or degradation of roadside hedges and hedgebanks and introduction of urbanising elements such as signage.
- Further loss of traditional orchards and historic strip field patterns that are particularly vulnerable to changes in land ownership and farming practices.
- Potential for prominence of vertical elements such as wind turbines, overhead line grid connections and communications masts on existing rural skylines that form the rural backdrop to the coastal settlements of Torbay, particularly considering development on hilltops/ridges.
- In line with the South Devon Shoreline Management Plan, the allowance of parts of this coastline to naturally evolve, could impact on the current cliff line and valuable habitats in this landscape type.



Wooded hills and ridges form the backdrop to settlement

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The settled but rural and often tranquil character of the LCT.
- The valued wide, species-rich hedgerows and the woodlands, remaining orchards and parkland trees as part of the distinctive, wooded landscape character.
- Native species-rich hedgerows, hedgerow trees, woodland and unimproved grassland areas as contributors to character and important wildlife corridors, in line with the emerging Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

- The rural qualities of lanes and tracks with their associated species-rich hedgerows and Devon hedges, resisting highway changes unsympathetic to these qualities.
- Recreational spaces for quiet enjoyment and vantage points, for important views to and from the hills, including often dramatic views of the coast.
- The rural settlement pattern and vernacular, ensuring that future development respects the scale of the underlying landform and intricate, historic field pattern particularly associated with village edges. Any future development should sit within the folds of the landscape, avoid prominent skylines and maintain the countryside backdrop in views inland from the sea and coast.

Manage

- The historic field patterns around settlement edges, through enhancement and appropriate maintenance of field boundary hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Agricultural land for wildlife, enhancing its potential for this, particularly areas of semi-natural habitat and including creation of species-rich grass buffers within fields as part of the multi-functional green infrastructure network.
- Woodlands through traditional silvicultural management techniques such as coppicing to promote a diverse age and species structure as well as providing potential low-carbon fuel sources and to maximise landscape and wildlife benefit, in accordance with local guidance⁵⁷.
- Public open spaces, conserving habitats whilst enabling sustainable public access to peaceful, rural landscapes away from the main settlements.
- Development within rural settlements, guiding its location and form in line with local guidance including conservation area appraisals and village design statements.

Plan

- For resilience to the effects of climate change on this landscape, through monitoring of existing land cover and habitats, and careful consideration of location for future development and materials used, including options for locally specific materials, fabric first design and low embodied carbon approaches as part of a light touch on the landscape.
- For connection, extension and restoration of habitats where practicable, to increase biodiversity and connectivity, join up fragmented habitats, and contribute to nature recovery networks as identified in the emerging Devon LNRS.

⁵⁷ Including but not limited to [Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy \(2024\)](#), [Devon's Right Place Right Tree guidance](#) and [Devon's emerging LNRS](#)

- For the focus of woodland creation and tree planting to be in places that extend and strengthen the existing woodland and hedgerow network, replaces hedgerow trees and retains valued views towards the coast. For further guidance see the Devon Local Nature Partnership's Right Place, Right Tree⁵⁸.
- For sensitive siting and design of any renewable energy and infrastructure, particularly tall structures such as masts and wind turbines on prominent hilltops, with particular avoidance of prominent upper slopes and hilltops that contribute positively to the sense of place, and in line with local guidance⁵⁹.
- For future settlement growth that respects the valued landscape attributes and is located to avoid the most prominent slopes, skylines and hilltops in the LCT. Development proposals should follow a landscape-led approach to design, to conserve and incorporate landscape features as appropriate from the outset, as part of the site's green infrastructure and to contribute to the wider green infrastructure network, and in line with sensitivity guidance where relevant⁶⁰.

Local Landscape Character Areas

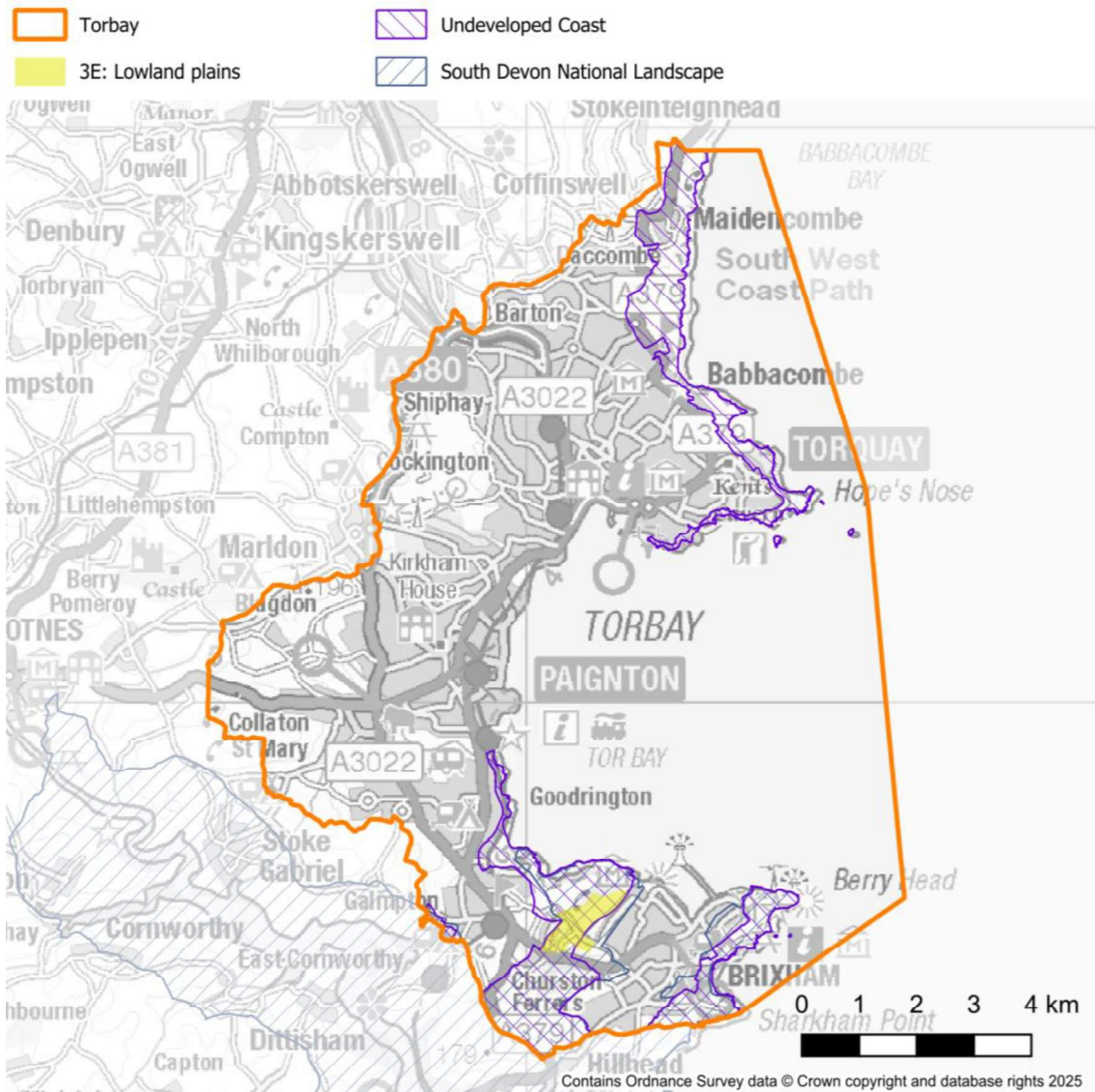
- 3B-1 West Yalberton
- 3B-2 East Yalberton
- 3B-3 Inglewood and Galmpton
- 3B-4 Galmpton and Alston
- 3B-5 Churston
- 3B-6 Broadsands and North Churston
- 3B-7 Lupton
- 3B-8 Redwells
- 3B-9 Sharkham

⁵⁸ <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/knowledge-hub/trees-and-hedges/right-place-right-tree/>

⁵⁹ Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 ii Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind and Solar, 2025

⁶⁰ Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 i Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Future growth Areas, 2025

LCT 3E: Lowland Plains



Summary description

- 4.1.4 This landscape type is characterised by very gently sloping to level mixed farmland cut by narrow lanes and tracks with hedgerow and stone wall boundaries. It forms a transitional landscape between the settlement edge and more distinct rolling landform of LCT 3B. It is a locally enclosed landscape with generally strong rural character away from the immediate settlement edge.

Devon Character Areas

DCA 29 Froward Point to Berry Head Coastal Plateau



View from a bridge, looking over a narrow, hedge-lined lane winding through the level farmland

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Level to gently sloping landform at the base of the farmed, wooded valley slopes and rising slightly to the settlement edge.
- Underlain by limestone and mudstones that are evident in the stony red soils of the arable fields.

Vegetation cover

- Species rich hedgerows of varying height and condition, form field and roadside boundaries.
- Distinctive lines of shrubs and trees along a dismantled railway line.

Land use and field patterns

- A regular pattern of medium size arable fields defined by hedgerow boundaries with occasional trees that reflect post-medieval and modern enclosure patterns.
- Some localised change to recreational land use adjoining the settlement edge.

Semi-natural habitats

- Some woodland edges and a network of mixed species hedgerows that link with nearby ancient and semi-natural and replanted woodland.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Remnant features of former railway lines are distinct features in the landscape.
- Historic stone walls evident along the side of the historic lane network, between vegetation that is overgrown in places.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- An unsettled landscape in itself, with small clustered agricultural buildings and glimpses of historic settlement features such as church towers and roofs.
- The edge of the urban area is locally prominent, where boundary vegetation has been removed and replaced by boundary fencing and ornamental planting.
- The network of historic lanes is partially intact, with some now promoted walking routes and other narrow lanes and vehicular connections between rural and urban settlements.

Views and perceptual qualities

- This is a working agricultural landscape, in which the enclosure pattern has been altered over time to create larger, more open fields.
- Localised sense of enclosure is established by a generally robust network of hedgerows and trees along former railway lines.
- Visibility across the landscape and towards other LCTs and the coast is generally limited by the level landform combined with vegetated boundaries. Occasionally views across the fields open up at field entrances and from raised routeways.
- The LCT within the South Devon National Landscape contributes to the visual rural qualities of the National Landscape where it extends around Brixham to the coast and forms a distinct green and rural landscape between the urban settlements.



Glimpses of historic village features along a narrow lane that connects rural and urban settlements

Valued landscape attributes

- Remnant historic features that are distinct features in this landscape, such as linear vegetation features along former lanes and railway lines, and local stone walls.
- Woodland edges and hedgerow network that link with and contribute to a wider green network in adjoining LCTs.
- A small number of narrow, rural lanes that are discrete in the landscape.



Remnant local stone wall boundaries are integrated by hedgerows and shrubs along field boundaries

Specific Forces for Change

- Mismanagement of and selection of uncharacteristic materials in private property boundaries that abut this LCT, contributing to a conspicuous and often incoherent urban settlement edge against the rural landscape.

- Pressure for residential development on land abutting the existing settlement edges, which would result in prominent urban edges and likely increase of traffic on narrow lanes. This could ultimately lead to widening of the roads, which would lead to removal of roadside hedgerows and alter the rural character of the LCT with the introduction of urbanising road furniture.
- Proposals for renewable energy including solar and wind developments have the potential to be locally prominent in this landscape, particularly vertical features of a much greater scale than the underlying landscape⁶¹.



View across arable fields of the urban settlement edge, with some prominent built features

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The rural qualities of the agricultural landscape, including narrow lanes and remnant routes with associated tree and hedgerow vegetation, stone walls and bridges and mostly unsettled character.
- The valued and distinctive linear vegetation features including native species-rich hedgerows, tree rows and woodland edges as contributors to character and important wildlife corridors, as habitat corridors and in line with the emerging Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).
- Views across this LCT from high points in surrounding areas, in the context of the South Devon National Landscape.

Manage

- Agricultural land for wildlife, enhancing its potential for this, particularly areas of semi-natural habitat and including creation of species-rich grass buffers within fields as part of the multi-functional green infrastructure network.

⁶¹ Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 ii Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind and Solar, 2025

- Woodland edges and historic linear vegetation features through traditional management techniques that promote a diverse age and species structure and to maximise landscape and wildlife benefit, in accordance with local guidance⁶².

Plan

- For appropriate hedgerow restoration, where boundaries have become weak/gappy for biodiversity and to help better integrate the urban edge, respecting locally distinctive characteristics.
- For small scale woodland creation that would contribute to a more robust green network within this LCT, and provide physical and visual links with woodland, parkland and orchards in the surrounding LCTs. For further guidance see the Devon Local Nature Partnership's Right Place, Right Tree⁶³.
- For resilience to the effects of climate change on this landscape, through monitoring of existing land cover and habitats, and careful consideration of location for future development and materials used, including options for locally specific materials, fabric first design and low embodied carbon approaches as part of a light touch on the landscape.
- For future settlement growth and renewable energy development that respects the valued landscape attributes and is located to avoid the most prominent slopes, skylines and hilltops in the LCT. Development proposals should follow a landscape-led approach to design, to conserve and incorporate landscape features as appropriate from the outset as part of the site's green infrastructure and to contribute to the wider green infrastructure network, and in line with sensitivity guidance⁶⁴.

Local Landscape Character Areas

- 3E-1 Churston and Copythorne

⁶² Including but not limited to [Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy \(2024\)](#), [Devon's Right Place Right Tree guidance](#) and [Devon's emerging LNRS](#)

⁶³ <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/knowledge-hub/trees-and-hedges/right-place-right-tree/>

⁶⁴ Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 i Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Future Growth Areas, 2025

Torbay
 Undeveloped Coast
 3F: Settled valley floors
 South Devon National Landscape

The map displays the Torbay area, including locations such as Torquay, Paignton, Goodrington, Brixham, and Babbacombe. Key roads like the A3022 and A381 are shown. The Torbay boundary is marked with an orange outline. The Undeveloped Coast is indicated by a purple hatched pattern, the 3F: Settled valley floors by a pink fill, and the South Devon National Landscape by a blue hatched pattern. A scale bar at the bottom right shows distances from 0 to 4 km. An inset map in the bottom left corner provides a broader geographical context.

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2025

- 4.1.5 A very small area to the northwest of Edginswell falls within the Settled Valley Floors LCT, within the Torbay administrative boundary.
- 4.1.6 The description within the Teignbridge Landscape Character Assessment is directly applicable and should be referenced⁶⁵. As such, a full description is not provided within this study. Additional specific forces for change and landscape guidelines for the parts of LCT 3F within the Torbay administrative area are set out below.

⁶⁵ [Teignbridge Landscape Character Assessment, Burton Reid Associates - Chapter 4.0 pg108 for LCT description](#) - accessed December 2024

Devon Character Areas

DCA 20 Denbury and Kerswell Farmlands

Specific Forces for Change

- Expansion of nearby commercial land uses associated with major road corridors, which could lead to further urbanisation and removal of field boundary hedgerows.

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The rural qualities of the agricultural landscape, including tree and hedgerow vegetation.

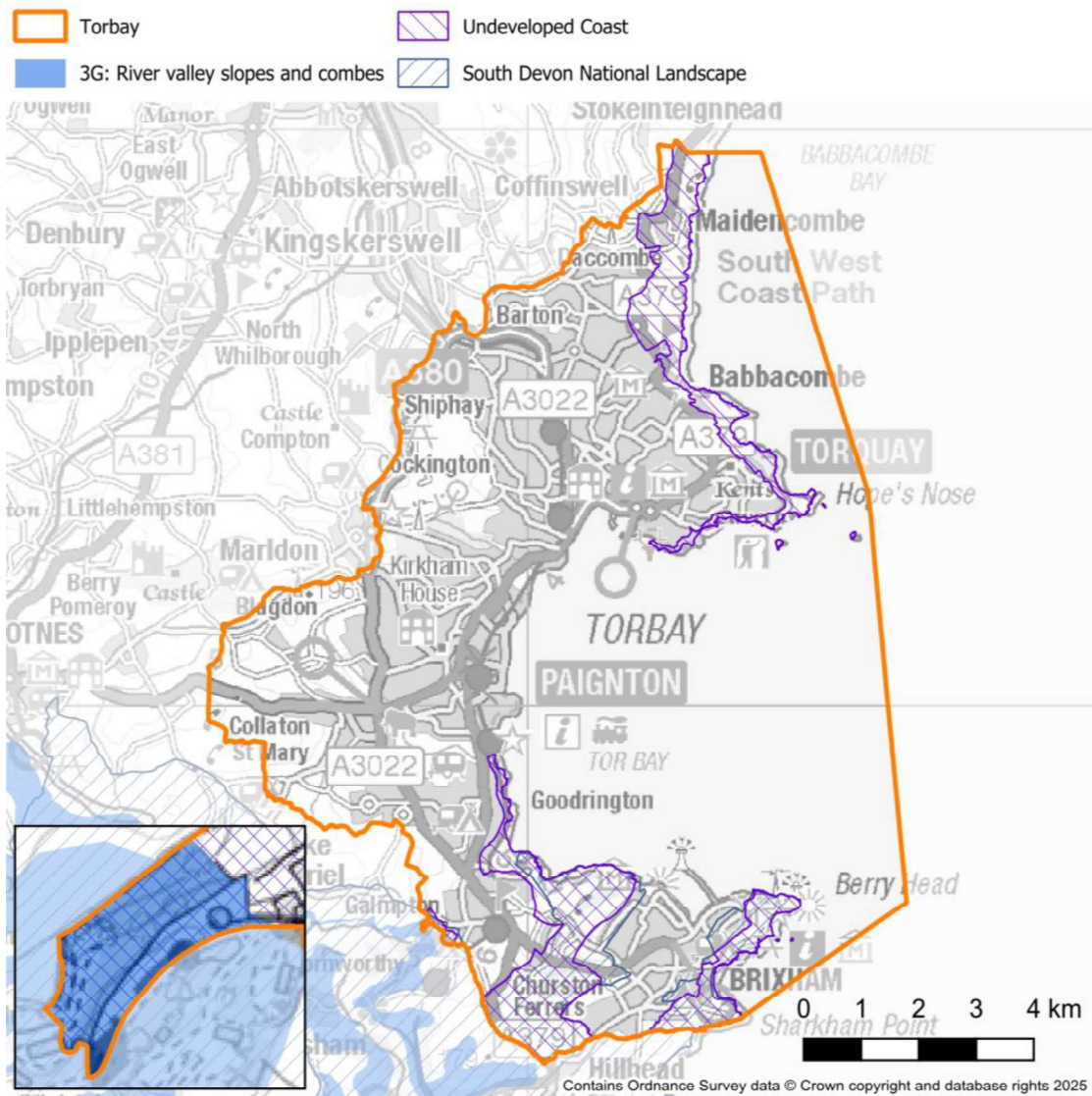
Manage

- Agricultural land for wildlife, enhancing its potential for this, particularly areas of semi-natural habitat and including creation of species-rich grass buffers within fields as part of the multi-functional green infrastructure network.

Plan

- For resilience to the effects of climate change on this landscape, through monitoring of existing land cover and habitats, and careful consideration of location for future development and materials used, including options for locally specific materials, fabric first design and low embodied carbon approaches as part of a light touch on the landscape.

LCT 3G: RIVER VALLEY SLOPES AND COMBES



- 4.1.7 A very small area to the west of Galmpton falls within the River Valley Slopes and Combes LCT, within the Torbay administrative boundary.
- 4.1.8 The description within the South Hams Landscape Character Assessment is directly applicable and should be referenced⁶⁶. As such, a full description is not provided within this study. Additional valued landscape attributes, specific forces for change and landscape guidelines for the parts of LCT 3H within the Torbay administrative area are set out below.

⁶⁶ A Landscape Character Assessment for South Hams and West Devon, LUC 2018 - Chapter 3 pg50 for LCT description - accessed October 2024

Devon Character Areas

DCA 62 Torbay Hinterland

Valued landscape attributes

- Narrow, historic lane with species-rich hedgerows and hedgebanks.

Specific Forces for Change

- Expansion of industrial land uses, which could lead to removal of woodland and widening of roads.

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The rural settlement/development pattern within and adjacent to this LCT, ensuring that future development respects the scale and type of existing land use and land cover, with particular consideration of woodland cover.

Manage

- Woodlands through traditional silvicultural management techniques such as coppicing to promote a diverse age and species structure as well as providing potential low-carbon fuel sources and to maximise landscape and wildlife benefit, in accordance with local guidance⁶⁷.

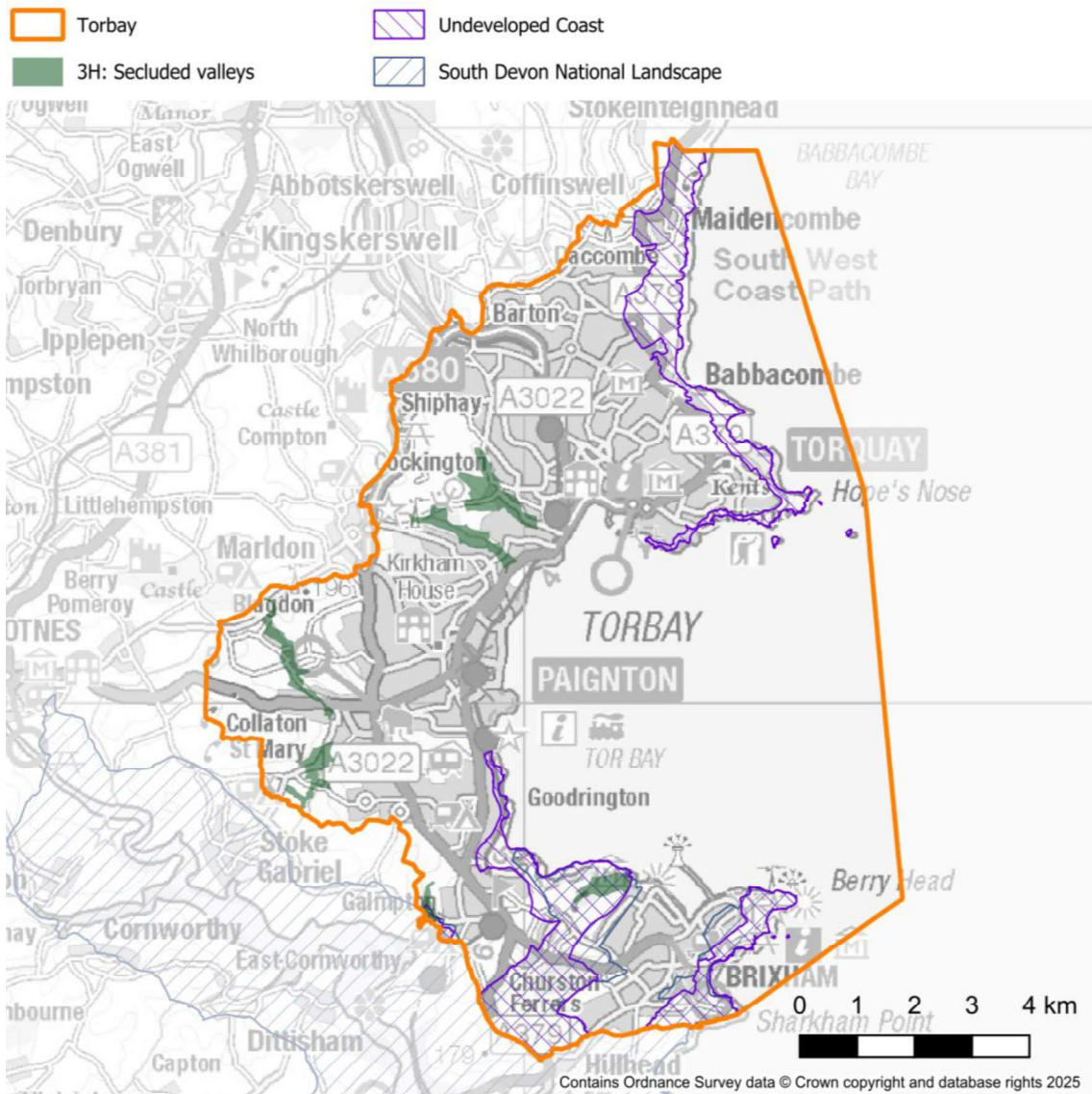
Plan

- For resilience to the effects of climate change on this landscape, through monitoring of existing land cover and habitats, and careful consideration of location for future development and materials used, including options for locally specific materials, fabric first design and low embodied carbon approaches as part of a light touch on the landscape.
- For sensitive siting and design of any renewable energy and infrastructure, particularly tall structures such as masts and wind turbines on prominent hilltops, with particular avoidance of prominent upper slopes and hilltops that contribute positively to the sense of place, and in line with local guidance⁶⁸.

⁶⁷ Including but not limited to [Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy \(2024\)](#), [Devon's Right Place Right Tree guidance](#) and [Devon's emerging LNRS](#)

⁶⁸ Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 ii Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind and Solar, 2025

LCT 3H: SECLUDED VALLEYS



Summary description

- 4.1.9 This landscape type is characterised by enclosed, steep valley landform. It has a secluded and strong rural character, with very limited influence from urban settlement. The valley sides are generally wooded, with some small scale pastoral fields and orchards in proximity to rural settlements.

Devon Character Areas

DCA 62 Torbay Hinterland

DCA 29 Froward Point to Berry Head Coastal Plateau



View from the sea looking to the wooded slopes of the secluded valley, where it joins the cliffs in a small cove

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Steeply sloping valley landform with narrow valley floor, cutting through the surrounding rolling, undulating farmland.
- Underlying Devonian bedrock has been cut through by small watercourses that have shaped the valley landform over time.
- The topography encloses the valley systems and separates them from the wider landscape.

Vegetation cover

- Woodland is the predominant land cover. Species-rich hedgerows with trees and orchards contribute to the wooded character and provide strong physical green links.
- There is a strong wooded character through much of the LCT, including pockets of ancient and semi-natural, and ancient replanted woodland.

Land use and field patterns

- Substantial blocks of woodland with small scale, intimate network of pasture fields and orchards with remnant medieval enclosure patterns retained in some places.
- The wooded valleys are popular recreational areas, with well-trodden footpaths and providing space for quiet enjoyment away from the urban areas. Parts of the valleys are also managed for nature conservation.

Semi-natural habitats

- Substantial areas of broadleaved woodland and mixed species hedgerows, linking with other priority habitats including calcareous grassland.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Evidence of former lime kilns on First Edition OS maps, with some remaining, discrete structures in the landscape.
- Parkland features including a concentration of listed buildings, designed gardens and veteran trees, and traditional orchards remain evident in the landscape today. The designed features and small scale landscape contribute to a strong sense of time depth in places.
- Historic, small-scale pattern of hedge-banks and lanes, which separate small woodlands, orchards and areas of permanent pasture.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Generally, a sparsely settled landscape, containing individual and small clusters of properties including those associated with parkland estates and constructed from local materials including thatch, on lower valley slopes.
- Some evidence of agricultural expansion in larger farm buildings and expanding leisure facilities on more gentle slopes in the transitional area between LCTs.
- Historic, minor lanes that cross the valleys are very narrow and often steep and winding, enclosed by high hedgerows and hedgebanks and woodland.
- Rights of way provide access through this LCT in places, generally associated with proximity to urban edges and/or coastal attractions.

Views and perceptual qualities

- The woodland cover provides a strong sense of detachment from nearby urban landscapes and from the more open rolling and undulating farmland that encompasses this LCT.
- An overriding enclosed and secluded character due to the steep landform and vegetation cover including high Devon hedges and woodland, which generally enclose views and often channel them along recreational paths through the woods.
- A sense of peace and tranquillity, away from main roads and urban areas. This is heightened by the sense of leaving the urban spaces behind and sense of anticipation travelling along winding and enclosed vehicular and pedestrian routes into this LCT.



View along a secluded valley, with pasture on sloping landform and enclosed by woodland edges

Valued landscape attributes

- Peaceful and tranquil qualities and sense of being completely detached from urban areas.
- Valued woodland, historic parkland and localised riparian habitats that contribute to a wider variety of ecological features.
- Trees, hedgerows and woodlands that characterise this LCT whilst providing important ecological benefits such as carbon sequestration and flood mitigation.
- Historic features including parkland, remaining traditional orchards, narrow lanes and occasional medieval field patterns that contribute to the varied and enclosed landscape.

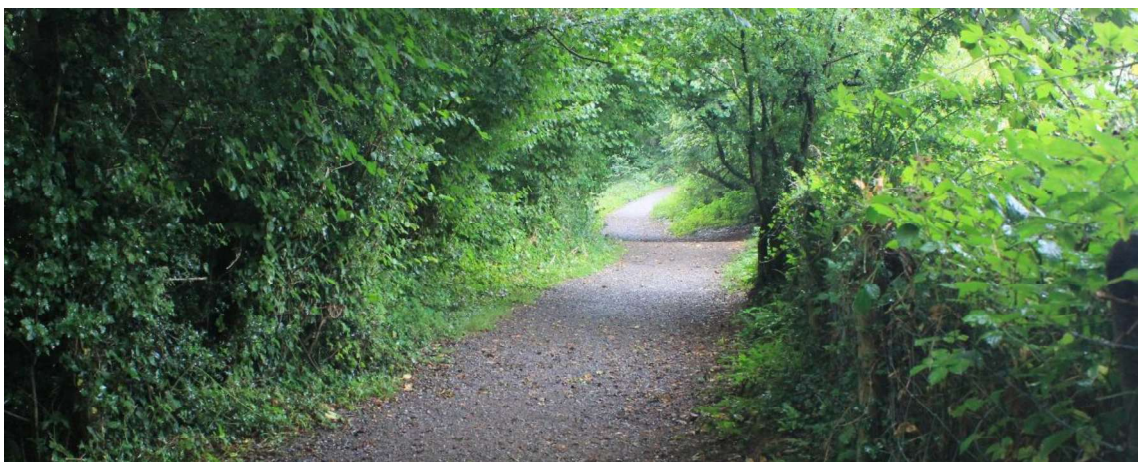


View across the secluded valley, from the surrounding rolling farmland

Specific Forces for Change

- Increased demand for recreation, including visitors to promoted historic features that contributes to an increase in vehicles along narrow lanes, erosion of the footpath network and damage to woodlands.

- Alteration to individual properties, particularly considering use of uncharacteristic materials within historic settlement cores.
- Pressure for development on existing urban edges that would lead to encroachment on this LCT and potential for the urban edge to become visible, also potential for woodland loss.
- Woodland loss and/or changes in management that would alter the species composition, contribute to increase run off into streams and potential for localised flooding and soil erosion.
- In line with the South Devon Shoreline Management Plan, the allowance of the coast to naturally evolve, could impact on the current cliff line and valuable habitats in parts of this landscape type in proximity to the coast.



View along well used footpath, through the woodland at the base of a secluded valley

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The valued areas of ancient and broadleaved woodland, riparian habitats and traditional orchards as part of the distinctive, wooded landscape character.
- The setting of historic features including remnants of former lime kilns and traditional village buildings.
- Woodland edges and skylines, by avoiding new development on elevated locations above the valleys.
- The network of historic, narrow, rural lanes and footpaths that connect through the LCT.
- The rural settlement pattern, ensuring that future development respects the scale and complexity of the underlying landform and dispersed settlement character.
- The unintrusive and rural qualities of the recreational and heritage assets including designed landscape and parkland features, links with the coast and other heritage features.

Manage

- Agricultural land for wildlife, enhancing its potential for this, particularly areas of semi-natural habitat as part of the multi-functional green infrastructure network.
- Woodlands through traditional management techniques such as coppicing to promote a diverse age and species structure as well as providing potential low-carbon fuel sources and to maximise landscape and wildlife benefit, in accordance with local guidance⁶⁹.
- Public open spaces, conserving habitats whilst enabling sustainable public access to peaceful, rural landscapes away from the main settlements.
- Manage watercourses as part of the wider woodland management, as part of a broader flood management programme.

Plan

- For resilience to the effects of climate change on this landscape, through monitoring of existing land cover and habitats, and careful consideration of location for future development and materials used, including options for locally specific materials, fabric first design and low embodied carbon approaches as part of a light touch on the landscape.
- For connection, extension and restoration of habitats where practicable, to increase biodiversity and connectivity, join up fragmented habitats, and contribute to nature recovery networks as identified in the emerging Devon LNRS.
- For the focus of woodland creation and tree planting to be in places that extend and strengthen the existing woodland and hedgerow network, replaces hedgerow trees and retains valued views towards the coast. For further guidance see the Devon Local Nature Partnership's Right Place, Right Tree⁷⁰.
- For sensitive siting and design of any renewable energy and infrastructure, particularly tall structures such as masts and wind turbines on prominent hilltops, with particular avoidance of prominent upper slopes and hilltops that contribute positively to the sense of place, and in line with local guidance⁷¹.
- For future settlement growth that respects the valued landscape attributes and is located to avoid the most prominent slopes, skylines and ridgelines in the LCT. Development proposals should follow a landscape-led approach to design, to conserve and incorporate landscape features as appropriate from the outset as part of the site's green infrastructure and to contribute to the wider green infrastructure network, and in line with sensitivity guidance where relevant⁷².

⁶⁹ Including but not limited to [Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy \(2024\)](#), [Devon's Right Place Right Tree guidance](#) and [Devon's emerging LNRS](#)

⁷⁰ <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/knowledge-hub/trees-and-hedges/right-place-right-tree/>

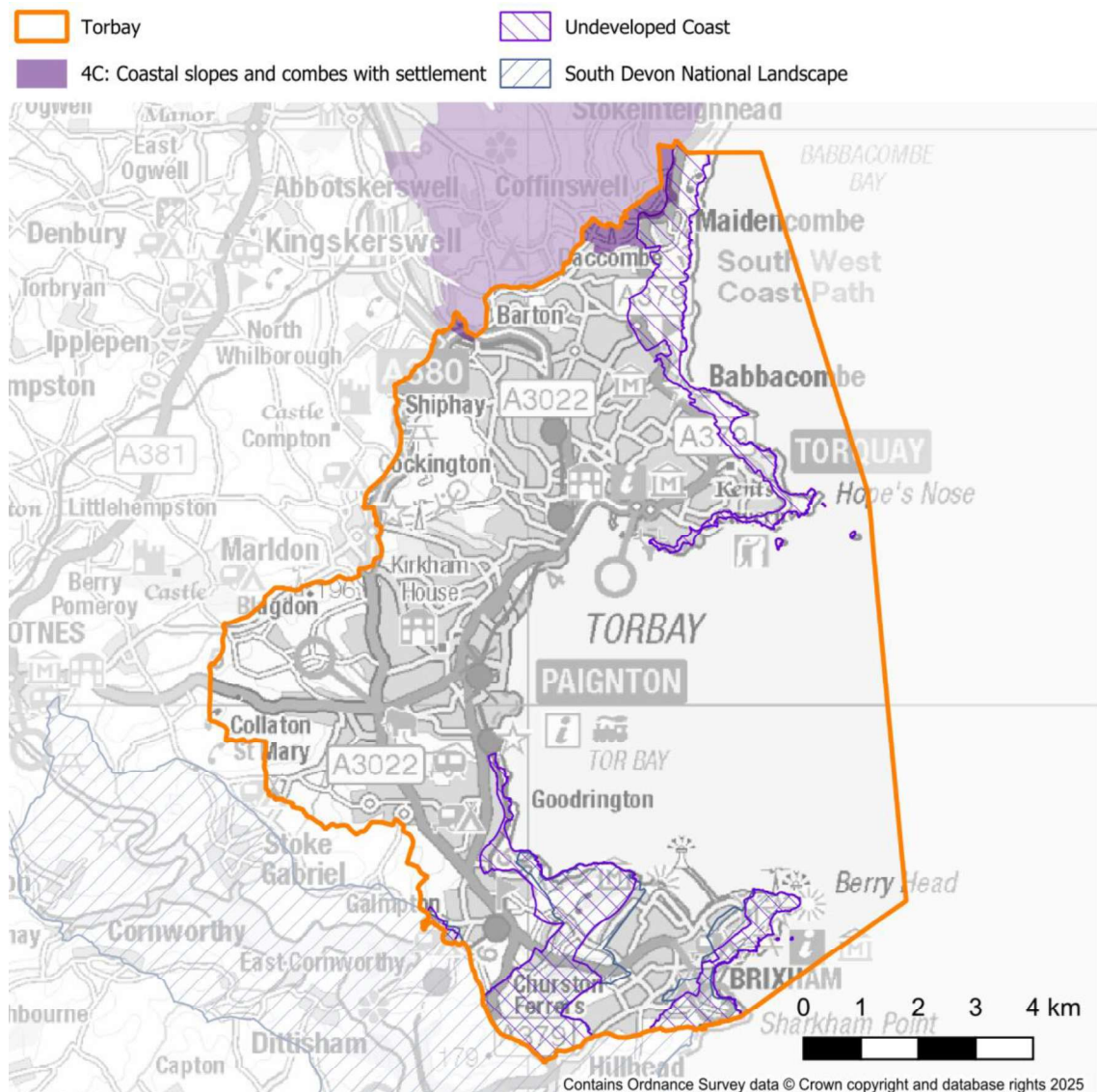
⁷¹ Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 ii Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind and Solar, 2025

⁷² Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 i Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Future Growth Areas, 2025

Local Landscape Character Areas

- 3E-1 Lower Cockington Valley
- 3E-2 Upper Cockington Valley
- 3E-3 Blagdon Valley
- 3E-4 Yalberton Valley
- 3E-5 Galmpton Valley
- 3E-6 Churston Valley

LCT 4C: COASTAL SLOPES AND COMBES WITH SETTLEMENT



Summary description

- 4.1.10 LCT 4C Coastal Slopes and Combes with Settlement falls within the Torbay administrative area at two discrete locations: Kerswell Gardens (north of Riviera Way) and west of Sladnor Park (along Claddon Lane/Teignmouth Road). These locations form part of the southern edge of a much larger area of Coastal Slopes and Combes that extends north of Torbay, with small rural settlements dispersed across complex, folded landform towards the Teign Estuary⁷³.

⁷³ Note the rural settlements are predominantly outside of the study area.

- 4.1.11 The description within the Teignbridge Landscape Character Assessment is directly applicable and should be referenced⁷⁴. As such, a full description is not provided in this report. Additional valued landscape attributes, specific forces for change and landscape guidelines for the parts of LCT 4C within the Torbay administrative area are set out below.

Devon Character Areas

DCA 10 Breccia Hills and Coast



View of landform gently sloping away from a well-integrated settlement edge with mature hedgerows and trees, and long distance views beyond

Valued landscape attributes

- Generally strong sense of separation from the urban settlement.
- Wide and extensive views over the distinctive, folded and sparsely settled rural landscape.

Specific Forces for Change

- Pressure for development on existing urban edges particularly along major transport routes, which would lead to encroachment on this LCT and potential for the urban edge to become visible, as well as merging of settlements / urban sprawl in the rural landscape.
- Increasing volume of traffic and size of vehicles resulting in alteration to/loss of the historic rural lane network and associated hedgerows.
- Alteration to individual properties, considering uncharacteristic scale, design and materials that result in prominence due to ridgeline locations and breaks in vegetation.

⁷⁴ Teignbridge Landscape Character Assessment, Burton Reid Associates - Chapter 4.0 pg108 for LCT description (accessed December 2024)

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The rural settlement pattern, ensuring that future development respects the scale and complexity of the underlying landform and dispersed settlement character, with particular consideration of treed skylines.
- Extensive, long distance views over the rolling, folded and well-treed landscape and out to sea.

Manage

- Development within rural settlements, guiding this in line with local guidance including conservation area appraisals and village design statements as appropriate.

Plan

- For resilience to the effects of climate change on this landscape, through monitoring of existing land cover and habitats, and careful consideration of location for future development and materials used, including options for locally specific materials, fabric first design and low embodied carbon approaches as part of a light touch on the landscape.
- For sensitive siting and design of any renewable energy and infrastructure, particularly tall structures such as masts and wind turbines on prominent hilltops, with particular avoidance of prominent upper slopes and hilltops that contribute positively to the sense of place, and in line with local guidance⁷⁵.
- For future settlement growth that respects the valued landscape attributes and is located to avoid the most prominent slopes, skylines and hilltops in the LCT. Development proposals should follow a landscape-led approach to design, to conserve and incorporate landscape features as appropriate from the outset as part of the site's green infrastructure and to contribute to the wider green infrastructure network, and in line with sensitivity guidance where relevant⁷⁶.

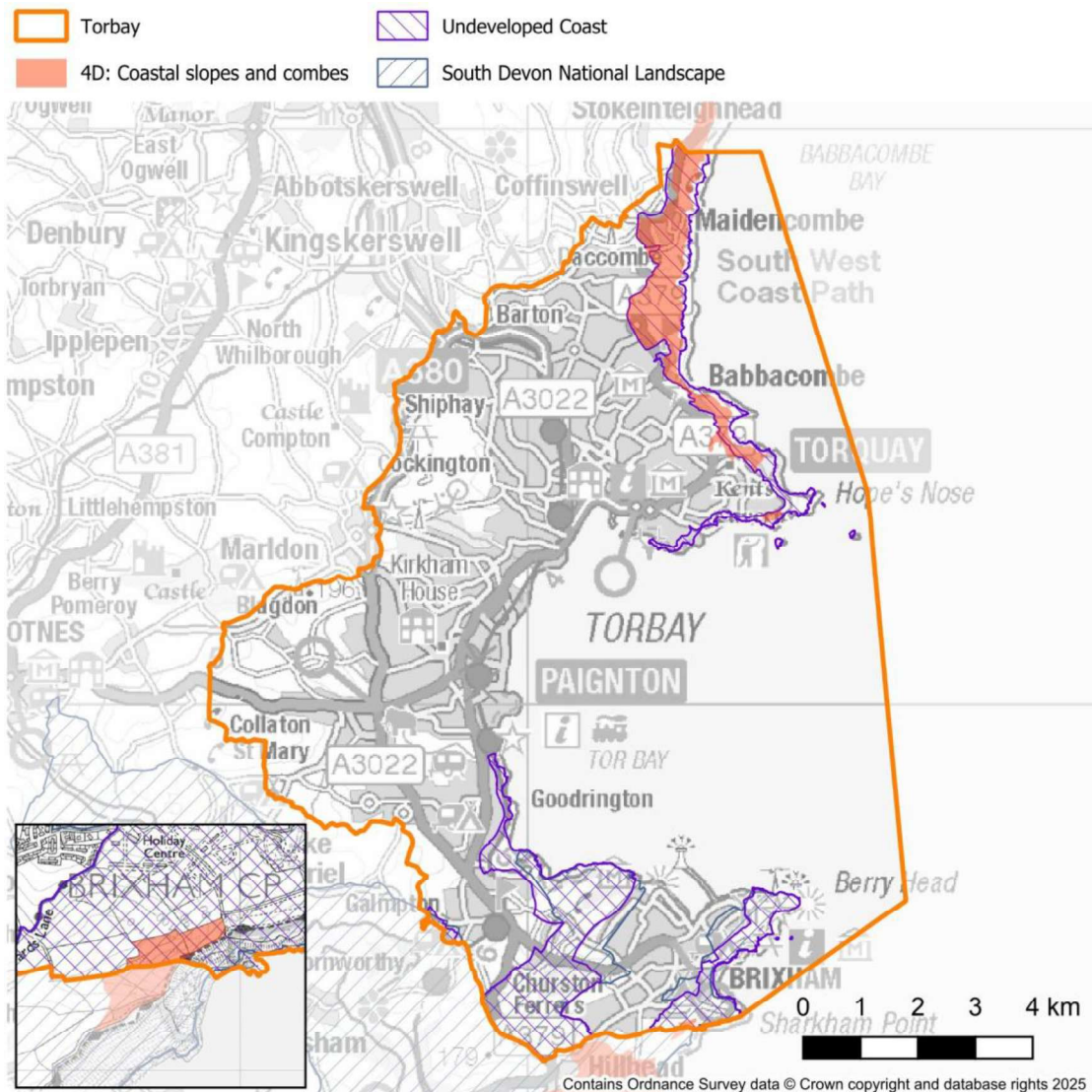
Local Landscape Character Areas

- 4C-1 Kerswell Garden
- 4C-2 Claddon Lane / Teignmouth Road

⁷⁵ Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 ii Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind and Solar, 2025

⁷⁶ Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 i Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Future Growth Areas, 2025

LCT 4D: COASTAL SLOPES AND COMBES



Summary description

- 4.1.12 This landscape type is characterised by the local combe systems of small, narrow, steep sided valleys within the complex folded landscape. The combes form a narrow strip of landscape along the coast, between the urban settlement and cliffs.

Devon Character Areas

DCA 10 Breccia Hills and Coast

DCA 29 Froward Point to Berry Head Coastal Plateau



View from higher landform, looking across the incised narrow valley to steep rising, coastal slopes and the sea beyond

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Gently sloping, occasionally plateau landform on the settlement edge, falls steeply towards the sea through a strongly undulating, dissected landscape of high ridges/plateaux and small narrow valleys.
- Individual or multiple branching valleys that are predominantly narrow and steep including scarp slopes.
- Exposures of the underlying sandstone and breccia geology are frequent in the valleys, with red, stony paths leading through the valleys to the coast.

Vegetation cover

- The steep landform is densely wooded, with predominantly broadleaf woodland and occasional tall pines that rise above the canopy.
- Woodland cover reduces on the upper, more gentle upper slopes where there is a patchwork of scrub, grassland, pasture and small scale arable farmland with hedgerow boundaries.

Land use and field patterns

- Steep wooded slopes with discreet tourist provision associated with geological features and coves at the foot of the valleys.
- Small areas of pasture or mixed cultivation and scrub with small to medium irregular field pattern defined by low hedgerows.
- Public open space and parkland with a network of well-trodden footpaths and frequent seating areas, and golf courses on upper slopes in proximity to the settlement edge.

Semi-natural habitats

- Maritime slopes down to the cliffs, with a variety of vegetation and habitats as a result of exposure to coastal processes and winds.
- Pockets of lowland dry acid grassland and lowland calcareous grassland on exposed upper slopes and plateaux. Dense limestone woodlands on the steep slopes of the combes.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Nationally important geological interest, with some excellent exposures of Devonian limestone and red coloured breccias.
- Promoted footpath trails link through this landscape, between local destinations of geological and cultural significance.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Extremely sparsely settled, with old, dispersed settlements in combes, and stone as the dominant building material.
- Some encroachment of the urban settlement edge, with often prominent and large residential properties on slopes overlooking the coast.
- Relatively discreet leisure and tourist facilities, with some more noticeable, inland on the gentle slopes that rise up to the settlement edge.
- Narrow winding roads and limited vehicular access to coast, with small and generally hidden car parks for pedestrian access to the cliffs and coves.
- Extensive coastal rights of way with steep paths down to beaches and including promoted cultural trails.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Coastal influence of vegetation and occasional sea views, through vegetation from higher locations. There are some areas on upper slopes that have an open and exhilarating character, grading to intimate and enclosed in lower valleys where views are restricted by narrowness of the valleys and dense woodland cover.
- An overall intimate, small-scale and enclosed character established by the combination of landform and woodland cover.
- Largely tranquil and remote character, particularly where vehicular access is limited or difficult, contrasting with lower tranquillity where main roads and main settlements are in proximity.



Steep sided and vegetated slopes and some exposed rock transitioning to the cliff landscapes

Valued landscape attributes

- Tranquil, remote and intimate qualities associated with the complex pattern of landform and vegetation, and historic land and settlement patterns.
- Mature and dense woodlands that are a defining feature of this landscape type, and important for carbon sequestration.
- Expansive coastal views that appear and disappear with variation in landform and woodland cover.
- Extensive network of promoted, formal and informal footpaths that are valued for recreation and the sense of escapism from urban land uses.



View of dense woodland on edge of the steep coastal slopes

Specific Forces for Change

- Continuing pressure for housing development including on formerly developed land, that would affect the rural character and sense of tranquillity. This is likely to result in increasing traffic and pressure to connect/widen the existing historic minor road network, leading to removal or degradation of roadside hedges and hedgebanks and introduction of urbanising elements such as signage.
- Increased demand for recreation, including visitors to promoted geological, cultural and historic features, which contributes to an increase in vehicles along narrow lanes, erosion of the footpath network and damage to woodlands.
- Alteration to individual properties, particularly considering use of uncharacteristic materials and unsympathetic design within historic settlement cores.
- Loss of woodland, grassland and farmland as a result of residential, leisure and recreational developments, within the narrow coastal strip on the edge of the existing urban area.
- In line with the South Devon Shoreline Management Plan, allowing parts of this coastline to naturally evolve, could impact on the current cliff line and valuable habitats in this landscape type. Works to hold the sea defences could have localised effect on landscape character.



View along the strip of coastal combes, of steep wooded slopes that merge into the cliffs and coastline

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The sense of seclusion and the intimate, tranquil character of the LCT.
- The rural settlement pattern, ensuring that future development respects the scale and complexity of the underlying landform and dispersed settlement character, with particular consideration of the distinctive landform and woodland cover within this landscape type.

- Areas of common land, that provide a valued recreational and ecological resource as part of the green network.
- Coastal views experienced from elevated locations and through breaks in vegetation.
- Sites and features of geological value, in line with guidance within the Geopark Management Plan⁷⁷.
- Native species-rich hedgerows, hedgerow trees, woodland and grassland areas as contributors to character and important wildlife corridors, in line with the emerging Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).
- The rural qualities of lanes and tracks with their associated species-rich hedgerows and Devon hedges, resisting highway changes unsympathetic to these qualities.

Manage

- Agricultural land for wildlife, enhancing its potential for this, particularly areas of semi-natural habitat and including creation of species-rich grass buffers within fields as part of the multi-functional green infrastructure network.
- Woodlands through traditional silvicultural management techniques such as coppicing to promote a diverse age and species structure as well as providing potential low-carbon fuel sources and to maximise landscape and wildlife benefit, in accordance with local guidance⁷⁸.
- Public open spaces, conserving habitats whilst enabling sustainable public access to peaceful, rural landscapes away from the main settlements.
- Manage and guide development within rural settlements, in line with local guidance including conservation area appraisals and village design statements.
- Connectivity of green spaces within and adjoining the LCT, for ecological, cultural and recreational connectivity.
- Recreational use of the area, through control and careful siting of visitor attractions and facilities such as car parks and signage.

Plan

- For resilience to the effects of climate change on this landscape, through monitoring of existing land cover and habitats, and careful consideration of location for future development and materials used, including options for locally specific materials, fabric first design and low embodied carbon approaches as part of a light touch on the landscape.

⁷⁷ http://www.englishrivierageopark.org.uk/section_main.cfm?section=5211 – accessed January 2025

⁷⁸ Including but not limited to [Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy \(2024\)](#), [Devon's Right Place Right Tree guidance](#) and [Devon's emerging LNRS](#)

- For connection, extension and restoration of habitats where practicable, to increase biodiversity and connectivity, join up fragmented habitats, and contribute to nature recovery networks as identified in the emerging Devon LNRS.
- For the focus of woodland creation and tree planting to be in places that extend and strengthen the existing woodland and hedgerow network, replaces hedgerow trees and retains valued views towards the coast. For further guidance see the Devon Local Nature Partnership's Right Place, Right Tree⁷⁹.
- For future settlement growth that respects the valued landscape attributes and is located to avoid the most prominent slopes, skylines and hilltops in the LCT. Development proposals should follow a landscape-led approach to design, to conserve and incorporate landscape features as appropriate from the outset as part of the site's green infrastructure and to contribute to the wider green infrastructure network, and in line with sensitivity guidance where relevant⁸⁰.

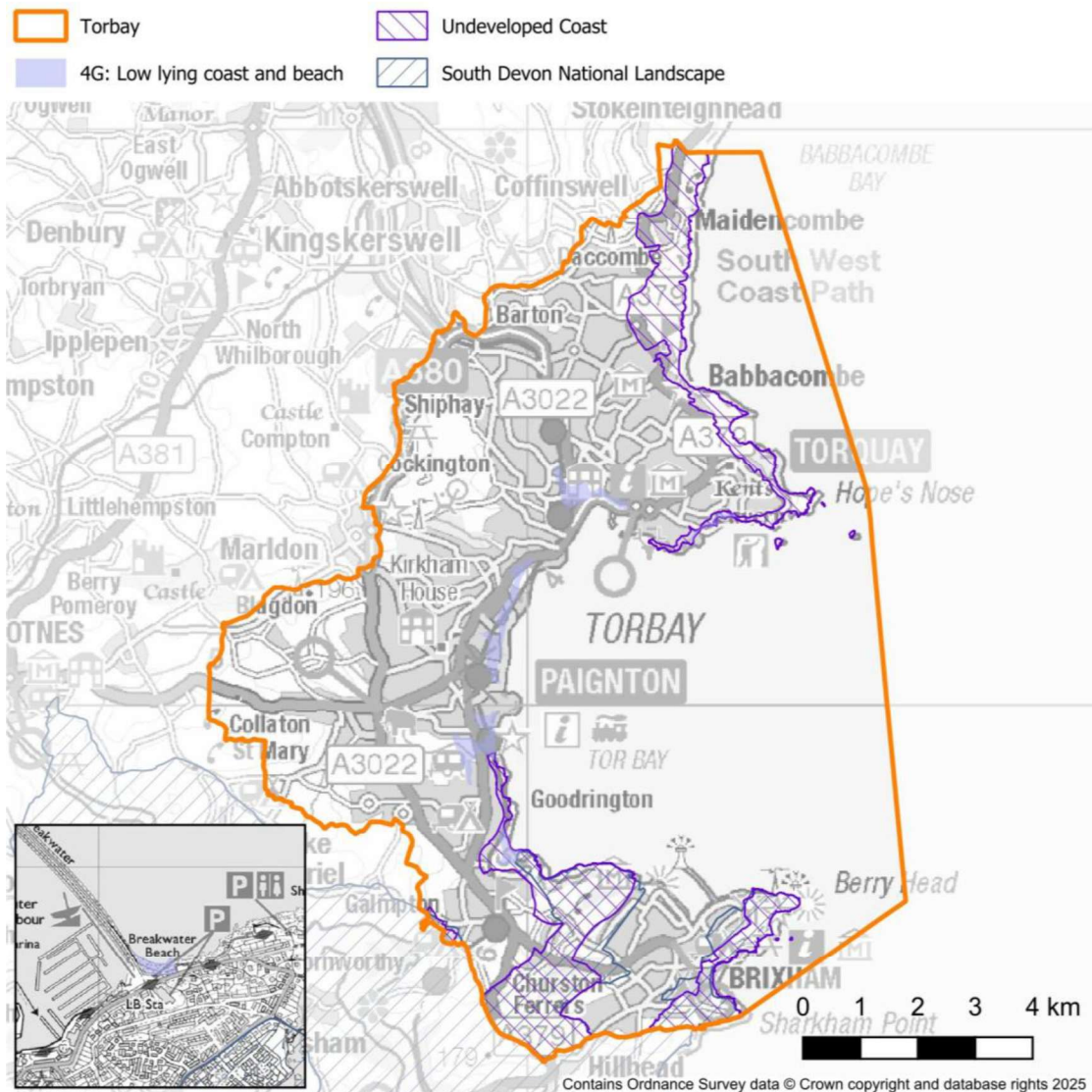
Local Landscape Character Areas

- 4D-1 North Maidencombe
- 4D-2 Maidencombe
- 4D-3 Watcombe
- 4D-4 St Marychurch
- 4D-5 Oddicombe to Babbacombe
- 4D-6 Babbacombe to Black Head
- 4D-7 Thatcher Point
- 4D-8 Southdown

⁷⁹ <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/knowledge-hub/trees-and-hedges/right-place-right-tree/>

⁸⁰ Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 i Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Future Growth Areas, 2025

LCT 4G: LOW LYING COAST AND BEACH



Summary description

- 4.1.13 This landscape type is characterised by its proximity to the sea. The low lying, level landform provides accessible and popular recreational spaces between the cliff outcrops. The beaches are characterised by the distinctive red colour of the Devonian sandstone and mudstone. Lines of beach huts and prominent sea defences are distinguishing features of this landscape.

Devon Character Areas

DCA 29 Froward Point to Berry Head Coastal Plateau



View from a high point on the cliffs, over the low lying coast with distinctive red beaches and beach huts

Key characteristics

Topography, geology, soils and drainage

- Low lying, generally level landform at the foot of the surrounding rolling landform and wooded valleys, where it meets the coast. Landform slopes gently down, across the beaches to the mean low water line.
- The local Devonian mudstone and sandstone gives rise to the distinctive red colour of the beaches.

Vegetation cover

- Vegetation cover varies within the area, confined to ornamental plantings along the formal esplanades and seafront gardens and small tree copses and scrub moving inland in the transition to the wooded and secluded valleys.
- Formal parks and gardens that form the backdrop to the beaches and esplanades contain a mix of native and exotic specimen and parkland trees, reflecting the temperate 'English Riviera' climate.

Land use and field patterns

- Tourism and formal recreation are the most common land uses through this LCT. This has historically evolved in proximity to the sea and formal esplanades, providing more leafy open spaces for enjoyment of the sea air.
- Recreational and tourist facilities vary throughout the LCT, from a simple line of beach huts and local café to large open amenity grassland and formal gardens set back behind the esplanade and main vehicular routes.
- Associated with the recreational land use and adjoining settlement areas is a mix of urban /street furniture (seats, signs, litter bins) of varying style and design, including infrastructure such as the beach huts, cafés, amenity buildings, and hard sea defences.

- Car parks and formal sports facilities are other land uses in this landscape, which are often well integrated by tree lines and woodland edges that link with the wooded valleys.

Semi-natural habitats

- Some connectivity of riparian and woodland vegetation with the adjoining wooded valley landscape, linking with the coastline.
- Rocky foreshores provide for a diverse ecological environment above and below the water. There are locally important sea grass beds in the shallow waters of the sheltered bays associated with this LCT.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Cultural heritage is associated with the historic evolution and variety of land uses in this landscape.
- There are strong links with nearby historic urban features, and parts of this landscape type fall in conservation areas associated with the surrounding urban development and locally iconic formal and terraced gardens of the seafront.
- Some distinctive historic and remnant features that have strong connections with this landscape and contribute to the recreational attributes.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Dense urban grain of the main towns encompasses this LCT and contributes to the intimate spatial character. There is a strong visual and physical relationship between the urban settlements and the public open spaces within the LCT.
- Main routes of the transport network pass through this LCT, providing access to the seafront and connecting between the separate towns.
- There are many formal and informal pedestrian routes through this landscape, enabling easy access to the associated array of recreational and tourist facilities.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Expansive and open views out to sea, across seasonally busy public, open seafront spaces.
- A dynamic seascape, with the sea tides providing temporal changes in the seafront character, where the iconic red beaches disappear to have waves crashing against sea defences and reappear to expose the varied rocky foreshores.
- Considerable intervisibility with the wooded valleys that frame the beaches and adjacent settlement on rising landform of the adjoining LCTs and settlement areas.



Formal and semi-formal green spaces provide breaks in urban form, behind the distinctive red beaches

Valued landscape attributes

- Cultural and historic connections and features that contribute to the varied character and distinct charm of the coastal tourist hotspots of the 'English Riviera'.
- The aesthetic qualities created by the visual and physical relationship with the sea, with a sense of dynamic movement and nuances in colour and light that change throughout the day.
- The woodland edges and parkland trees of the green spaces that form the backdrop to this landscape type, merging with the ornamental and exotic plants in the more formal spaces of the seafront landscape.



View across the low-lying coast at high tide, when the sea covers the beach, and waves crash against sea defences

Specific Forces for Change

- The strategies being pursued in the emerging Shoreline Management Plan in response to climate change and sea level rise may also have longer term implications for the aesthetic and perceptual characteristics of elements of this LCT.
- Tourism pressure with an increasing urbanising effect, such as requirement for new car parks, leisure facilities and large scale accommodation that could result in removal of green spaces and unsympathetic design.



View from the sea of beach huts lining the wide beachfront and woodland valley slopes forming the backdrop to the low lying coast

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The characteristic ornamental esplanades, their railing, bollards and associated exotic planting, particularly associated with the cultural heritage and historic evolution.
- Historic land and seafront uses associated with the beaches, esplanades and formal gardens.

Manage

- Tourism uses and pressures for intensification of recreational uses.
- The approach to design of development, particularly leisure facilities, accommodation and associated signage, ensuring this is sensitive to the heritage and context of the English Riviera.
- Public open spaces, conserving habitats whilst enabling sustainable public access to peaceful, green space within the urban settlements.

Plan

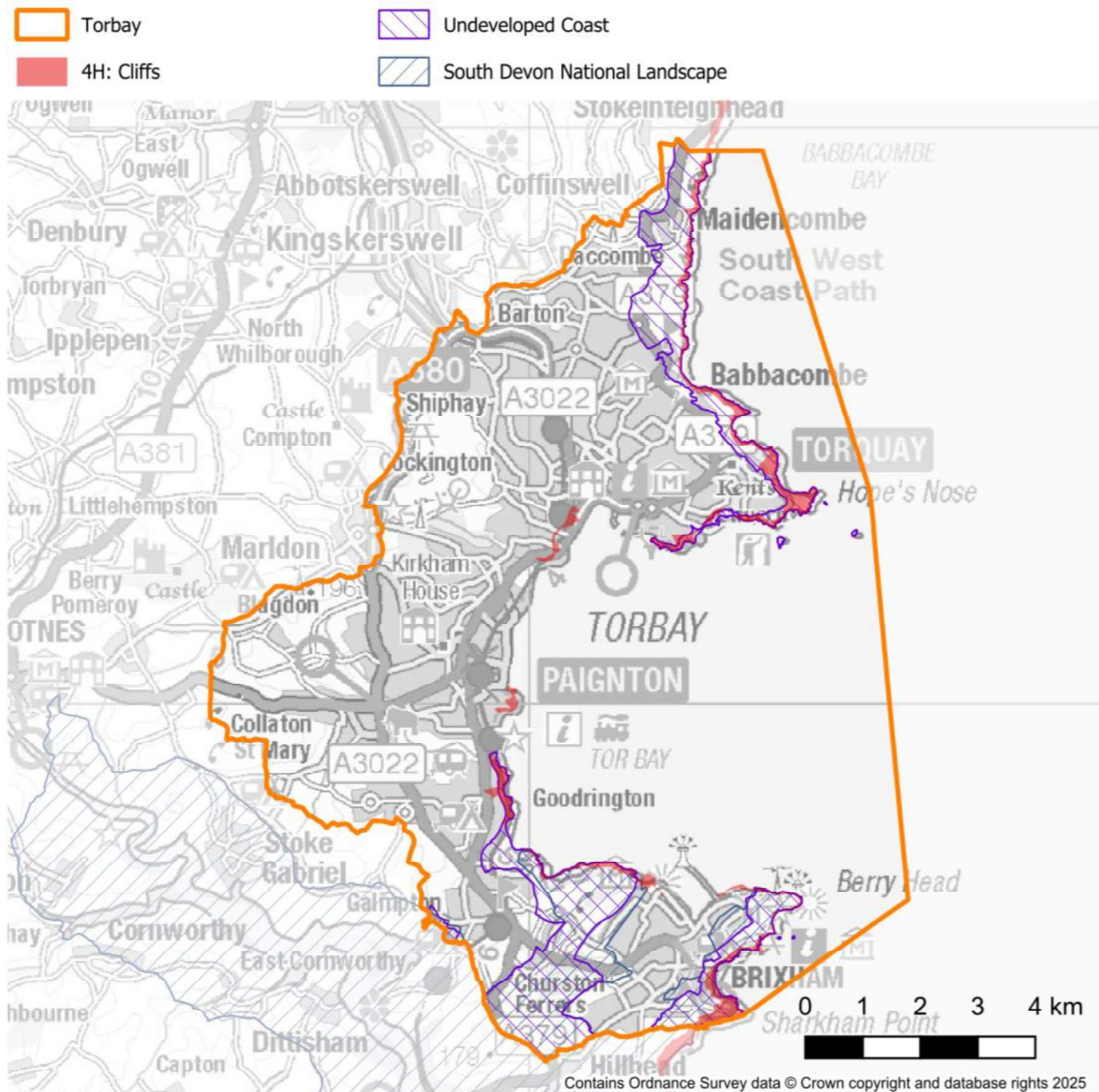
- Proactively and responsively in relation to potential forces for change which may be brought by strategies to be pursued in the emerging Shoreline Management Plan.

- For resilience to the effects of climate change on this landscape, through monitoring of existing land cover and habitats, and careful consideration of location for future development and materials used, including options for locally specific materials, fabric first design and low embodied carbon approaches as part of a light touch on the landscape.
- For connection, extension and restoration of habitats where practicable, to increase biodiversity and connectivity, join up fragmented habitats, and contribute to nature recovery networks as identified in the emerging Devon LNRS.

Landscape Character Areas

- 4G-1 Meadfoot Beach
- 4G-2 Torre Abbey Sands
- 4G-3 Hollicombe Beach
- 4G-4 Paignton and Preston Sands
- 4G-5 Goodrington Sands
- 4G-6 Lower Clennon Valley
- 4G-7 Broadsands
- 4G-8 Breakwater Beach

LCT 4H: CLIFFS



Summary description

- 4.1.14 This landscape type is characterised by the prominent and rugged cliffs and rock outcrops along the coastline. The cliffs vary in height, from low rocky headlands to steep sided, grassland plateaux, created by the varying geology along the coast. They often have a wild and remote character, with strong marine influences and extensive views. Parts of this LCT are located within the South Devon National Landscape and have various geological and ecological designations throughout.

Devon Character Areas

DCA 10 Breccia Hills and Coast

DCA 29 Froward Point to Berry Head Coastal Plateau



View of distinctive, red, layered cliffs with vertical rock faces and grassed plateaux, that stretch around the bay

Key characteristics

Topography, geology, soils and drainage

- Steep, rocky and often vegetated coastal cliffs of varying heights and vertical in places.
- Varying local geology resulting in a combination of headlands and bays that define the coastline.
- Distinctive and geologically important rock formations, outlying rocks and exposed rock stratifications, with many designated as geological SSSIs.
- Narrow beaches, small stony coves or rocky foreshore are common at the foot of cliffs.

Vegetation cover

- Vegetation cover is variable along the cliffs, including extensive stands of calcareous grassland, with scrub and gorse across plateaux and gentle slopes, and sycamore woodland on steeper slopes.
- Broadleaf woodland extends into the upper slopes of the cliffs from adjoining landscape types.

Land use and field patterns

- The narrow beaches, stony coves and rocky foreshore provide secluded and informal visitor hotspots, with some limited facilities such as small cafés and occasional beach huts.
- Informal recreation is the primary land use, evidenced by criss-crossing footpaths, and benches on the plateaued cliff tops, as well as relatively discreet signage, car parks and facilities at key access points to the shoreline.

Semi-natural habitats

- Rich in semi-natural habitats on less steep slopes, including mosaics of maritime grassland, heath and scrub.
- Cliff faces support important breeding colonies of seabirds.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Remains of historic forts occur in commanding cliff-top positions, as well as remnants of the area's industrial past such as limekilns and quarries.
- The cliffs are a focus for geological sites and designations that contribute to the overall status of Torbay as a UNESCO Global Geopark.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Accessible cliff top paths and steep, sloping tracks and paths through the adjoining combes/valleys down to the shore.
- Predominantly unsettled, with occasional individual properties on headland plateaux or less steep slopes.
- Encroachment of adjoining settlements and holiday accommodation sites at the top of the cliffs, often prominent in views back towards the coast.

Views and perceptual qualities

- The cliffs are striking, visually prominent features that are intervisible across the bay and the coastal headlands, and from local ferries connecting coastal towns.
- Extensive and dramatic views, reaching out to sea along the coastline and inland over cliff tops.
- An exposed and often wild, remote landscape with high levels of tranquillity and a dominant marine influence.



Rocky, near vertical cliff sides, with grass covered slopes and outcrops of harder rock types forming prominent geological features

Valued landscape attributes

- Distinctive and striking rock forms which create prominent and widely visible local landmark features, and skyline elements in open views across the bay.
- The contrast of smooth and weathered geology, the varying rock colours and the play of light, colour and dynamic movement created by the action of the sea.
- Variety of geological and ecological features that contribute to the unique and distinctive landscape qualities and features of the cliffs.
- Largely unspoilt and natural characteristics of the landscape.



View inland from the sea, of the near vertical, rocky cliff base with steep, wooded slopes rising to treed ridgelines, and a small, secluded cove with stony beach

Specific Forces for Change

- Coastal erosion and weathering of rock forms and associated change over time, which could affect habitats and land uses associated with the character of this landscape type.
- The different strategies along sections of the coast, being pursued in the emerging Shoreline Management Plan in response to climate change and sea level rise may have longer term implications for the aesthetic and perceptual characteristics of elements of this LCT.
- Encroachment of residential, commercial and tourist development on the clifftops that affect the biodiversity, geodiversity, visual context, and remote qualities of this landscape.
- Recreational and tourism pressures to increase the number and type of facilities, that could affect the rural character and sense of remoteness.



View across the rocky foreshore at high tide, with wooded, rocky cliffs rising steeply behind walled sea defences and brightly coloured beach huts

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The outstanding geology and ecologically important rock exposures and vegetation cover that characterise this LCT.
- The character of the expansive sea and coastline views across the bay, considering development and tourism pressures.
- The natural, secluded character of the shoreline of stony beaches, coves and rocky foreshores and the foot of the cliffs.
- The wild, remote and tranquil qualities of the cliffs, through promotion of sustainable tourism and recreation.

Manage

- Tourism uses and pressures for intensification of recreational uses.
- The approach to design of development, particularly leisure facilities, accommodation and associated signage, ensuring that it is sensitive to the sense of wildness and tranquillity.
- Nationally important coastal geology and habitats, including calcareous grassland and maritime scrub, in line with guidance within the Geopark Management Plan⁸¹ and the emerging Devon LNRS.

⁸¹ http://www.englishrivierageopark.org.uk/section_main.cfm?section=5211 – accessed January 2025

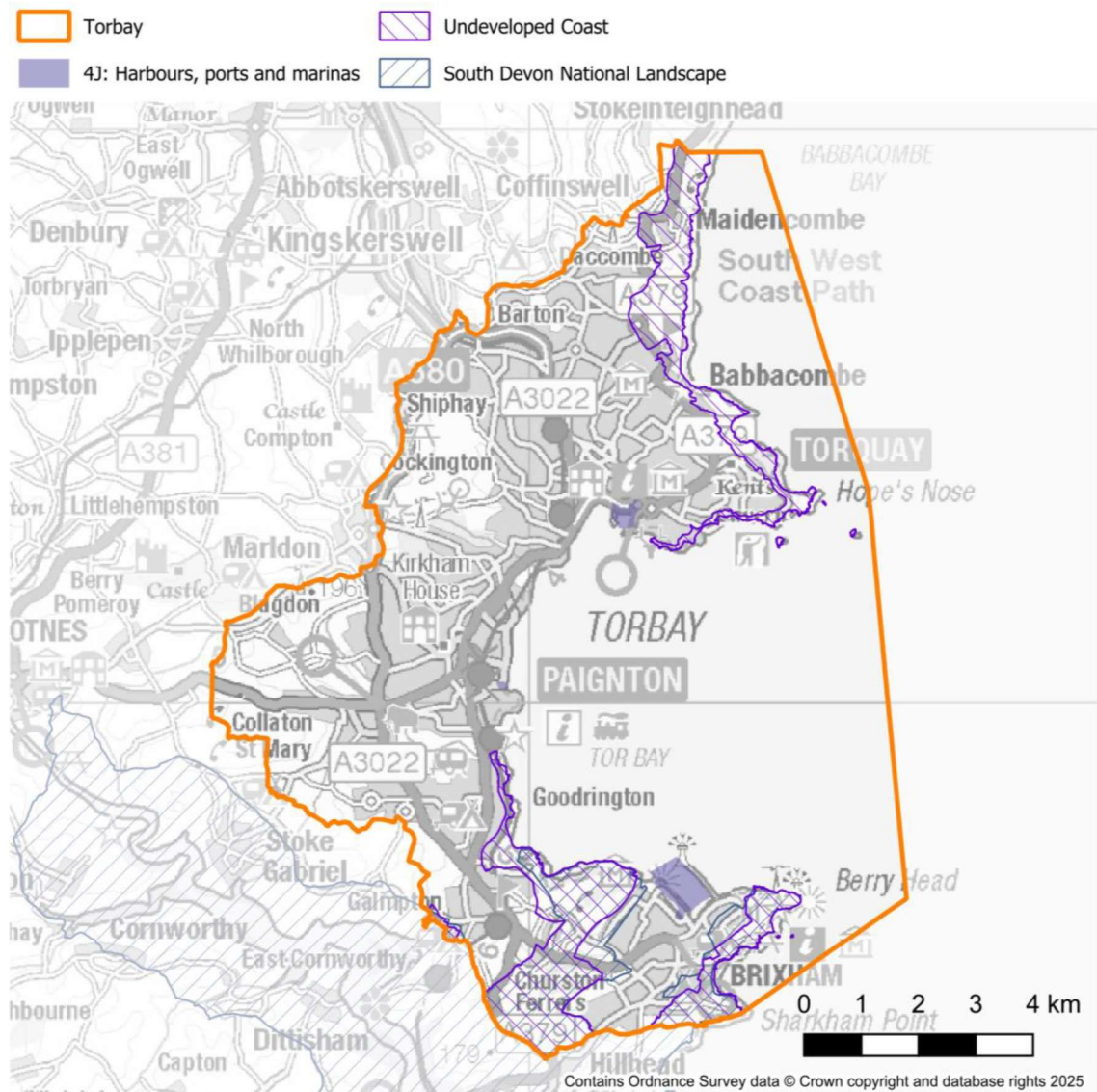
Plan

- Proactively and responsively to potential forces for change which may be brought by strategies to be pursued in the emerging Shoreline Management Plan.
- For resilience to the effects of climate change on this landscape, through monitoring of existing land cover and habitats, and careful consideration of location for future development and materials used, including options for locally specific materials, fabric first design and low embodied carbon approaches as part of a light touch on the landscape.
- For connection, extension and restoration of habitats where practicable, to increase biodiversity and connectivity, join up fragmented habitats, and contribute to nature recovery networks as identified in the emerging Devon LNRS.

Local Landscape Character Areas

- 4H-1 Maidencombe and Watcombe
- 4H-2 Oddicombe and Babbacombe
- 4H-3 Long Quarry Point to Hope's Nose
- 4H-4 Meadfoot to Torquay Harbour
- 4H-5 Corbyn and Livermead
- 4H-6 Roundham Head
- 4H-7 Saltern
- 4H-8 Churston
- 4H-9 Shoalstone to Berry Head
- 4H-10 St Mary's
- 4H-11 Sharkham Point

LCT 4J HARBOURS, PORTS AND MARINAS



Summary description

- 4.1.15 This landscape character type is associated with the principal maritime towns in the district and is located in the low lying sheltered land at the foot of the coastal headlands where they meet the sea.

Devon Character Areas

- 4.1.16 This LCT is not represented in the Devon County landscape character areas. In terms of seascape character, a feasibility study only has been undertaken for a Seascape Character Assessment of the South Devon National Landscape at the time of writing. No information is therefore currently available at County or South Devon National Landscape level.



View of diverse built vernacular of Torquay harbour, with stepped hillside terraces in the background

Key characteristics

Topography, geology, soils and drainage

- Low lying and essentially flat, engineered topography, typically at 0-5m AOD, but also with 'deep water' docks in places for relatively larger craft to dock.
- Comprising made ground associated with the historic construction of small fishing harbours, quays, tall harbour walls and wharves built in the local stone, often in heavy, rusticated style. Geology and soils otherwise have little direct expression on character.

Vegetation cover

- This is mainly confined to ornamental plantings to the formal palm tree fringed esplanades/seafront gardens and vegetation in domestic front gardens which face some of the streets adjoining the quaysides.
- Such gardens include a diverse variety of gardenesque species including exotics such as palm trees, reflecting the mild, temperate climate.

Land use and field patterns

- Maritime land uses associated with active commercial harbours, fishing ports and fishing boats, ferries and pleasure craft and associated ancillary uses and industries, and with related historic and later urban grain and built form.
- Other prominent land uses to quaysides include those associated with tourism, including inns/taverns, bars, restaurants and cafés.

Semi-natural habitats

- Not applicable other than the potential for marine habitats in the harbours/'deep water' ports.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Cultural heritage interest often relates to the diversity of built vernacular and the richness of time depth associated with the harbours (which are often of ancient/medieval origin) and associated buildings on the quayside and on the rising land behind.

- Most of the visually associated buildings on the rising land are in separate adjoining/intervisible LCTs, such as the distinctive stepped hillside terraces and the prominent stone churches overlooking the harbours.
- Buildings on the edges of the LCT include occasional grand classical harbour/customs house buildings and Regency stucco terrace houses, both with formal regular classical facades and more irregular/varied elevations, in white painted plaster or pastel/‘seaside’ shades beneath slate roofs.
- Tall weatherboard faced houses in white and cream also feature, as do modern shop fronts integrated in the ground floors of some properties.
- Iron verandas and colonnades feature as do ‘civic monuments’ such as drinking fountains and ‘miniature’ clock towers, plus distinctive white and blue painted iron railings and bollards to quaysides and esplanades.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Dense urban grain of 18th and 19th century and later harbourside development and houses, as described above and which create an intimate spatial character.
- Development is served by a main spine road parallel to the esplanade/waterfront and an often complex network of small, narrow subsidiary roads and streets.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Expansive open views out to sea, framed by an often busy, colourful foreground of fishing boats and related activity on the bustling quaysides.
- The relatively shallow waters in most parts of the ports and harbours lead to varied interplay of light, colour and reflections, enhanced by the light reflecting pale colour palette employed for most of the surrounding buildings.
- Considerable intervisibility with the settled and partly wooded rising hinterlands which frame the ports and harbours, and which lie in adjacent LCTs.



View of the active Paignton harbour and fishing port, with a backdrop of historic harbour walls and buildings

Valued landscape attributes

- The rich historic urban character, vernacular and materiality, and associated strong sense of time depth.
- The aesthetic qualities created by the visual and physical relationship with the sea and associated myriad reflections, sense of dynamic movement and nuances in colour and light.
- The bustling and colourful character of the harbours and their fishing boats.
- The sylvan setting and backdrop created by the wooded rocky headlands dotted with white stucco villas in woodland and occasional terraces and which reinforce the sense of the 'English Riviera', as does the lush, exotic garden vegetation in the LCT itself.



Terraces of houses with mature tree backdrop and skyline, on the steep slopes overlooking Brixham harbour

Specific Forces for Change

- Ongoing residential pressure for individual property extension and redevelopment of traditional buildings to be replaced by modern apartments/flats.
- Tourism and recreational pressures.
- Modern shop fronts of sometimes unsympathetic design.
- The different strategies along sections of the coast, being pursued in the emerging Shoreline Management Plan in response to climate change and sea level rise may have longer term implications for the aesthetic and perceptual characteristics of elements of this LCT.



The interplay of varying land uses that contribute to a bustling and colourful character around Torquay harbour

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The intimate and often intact historic character and vernacular, including the rich array of Regency styles and detailing and more modest 19th century weatherboarded fishermen's cottages.
- The characteristic ornamental esplanades, their railings, bollards and associated exotic planting, along with that of the domestic front gardens.
- Historic land and sea uses associated with the harbours and traditional fishing fleets.

Manage

- Tourism uses and pressures for intensification of recreational uses.
- The approach to design of shop fronts and associated fenestration and signage, ensuring this is sympathetic to architectural vernacular, styles and detailing, and avoiding unsympathetic building modernisation more generally.

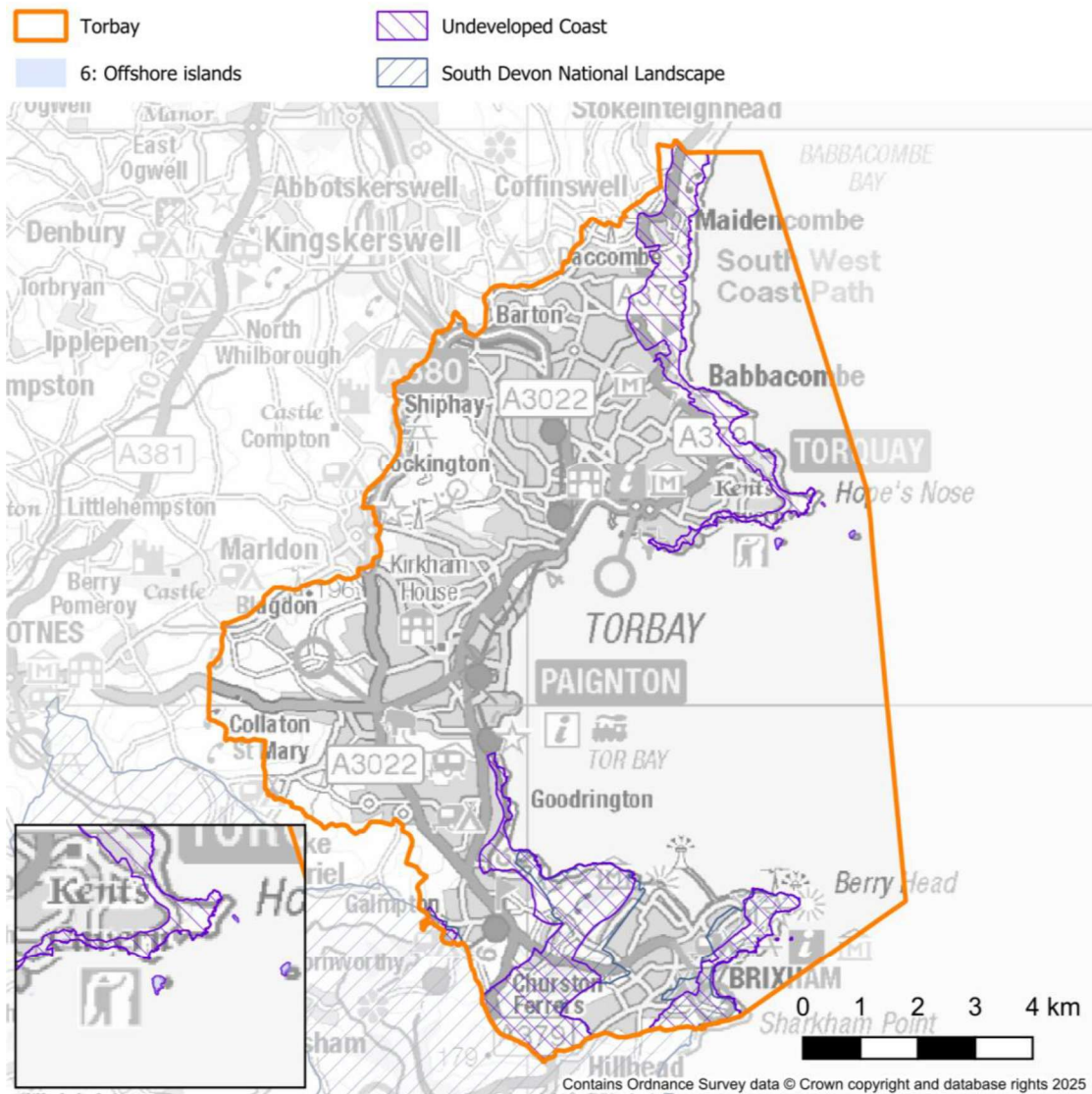
Plan

- Proactively and responsively to potential forces for change which may be brought by strategies to be pursued in the emerging Shoreline Management Plan.

Local Landscape Character Areas

- 4J-1 Torquay
- 4J-2 Paignton
- 4J-3 Brixham

LCT 6: OFFSHORE ISLANDS



Summary description

- 4.1.17 This landscape type is located off the Hope Nose headland to the east of Torquay. The grouping of islands and rocks off Hope's Nose (Thatcher Rock, Ore Stone and Lead Stone) are visually significant and prominent physical and geological features, visible in open views across much of the bay.

Devon Character Areas

- 4.1.18 This LCT is not represented in the Devon County landscape character areas. In terms of seascape character, a feasibility study only has been undertaken for a Seascape Character Assessment of the South Devon National Landscape at the time of writing. No information is therefore available at County or South Devon National Landscape level.



Visually prominent and inaccessible islands and formations in proximity to the coastal headlands

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- The islands are formed of similar hard limestones to the adjacent cliffs and headlands, and with a distinctive jagged, craggy and weathered appearance which contrasts with areas of smooth rock. They have very rugged steep sides and topography, often with distinctive geological strata evident.
- Sparse, extremely thin soils to the extent they are apparent at all.

Vegetation cover

- There is a general absence of vegetation, by virtue of the thin soils and exposed and inhospitable aspect. Some small areas of species-rich limestone grassland are apparent on larger islands.

Land use and field patterns

- Not applicable.

Semi-natural habitats

- The islands and rocks are an important roost site for seabirds.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Not applicable.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Not applicable – although close to the shore, the islands are entirely inaccessible.

Views and perceptual qualities

- The islands are striking, visually prominent features intervisible with the bay and the coastal headlands, and from local ferries connecting coastal towns.
- Wild, elemental quality and play of colour and light on the pale limestone rocks from the sea and its reflection of light, and from tidal movement and waves.



Striking and visually prominent features that are intervisible with the bay and headlands

Valued landscape attributes

- Distinctive and striking limestone rock forms which create prominent and widely visible local landmark features, orientation points and skyline elements in open views out to sea from the headlands and the bay.
- The contrast of smooth and weathered limestone and the play of light, colour and dynamic movement created by the action of the sea.



View of distinctive, jagged and weathered rocks and variety of colour and light across the bay

Specific Forces for Change

- Specific potential forces for change acting on this LCT relate largely to coastal erosion and weathering of rock forms and associated change over time.
- The strategies being pursued in the emerging Shoreline Management Plan in response to climate change and sea level rise may have longer term implications for the aesthetic and perceptual characteristics of elements of this LCT.



View across the bay to the rocky headland with distinctive, craggy outlying rock formations

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The distinctive open views to the islands and the rocks from the coastal headlands and the bay and such vantage points which are used for quiet enjoyment.
- The habitat (seabird) interest of the rocks and islands.

Manage

- Recreational and tourism usage of the headland, bay and seascapes in such a way as to conserve the open and wild, elemental character of views out to the islands.

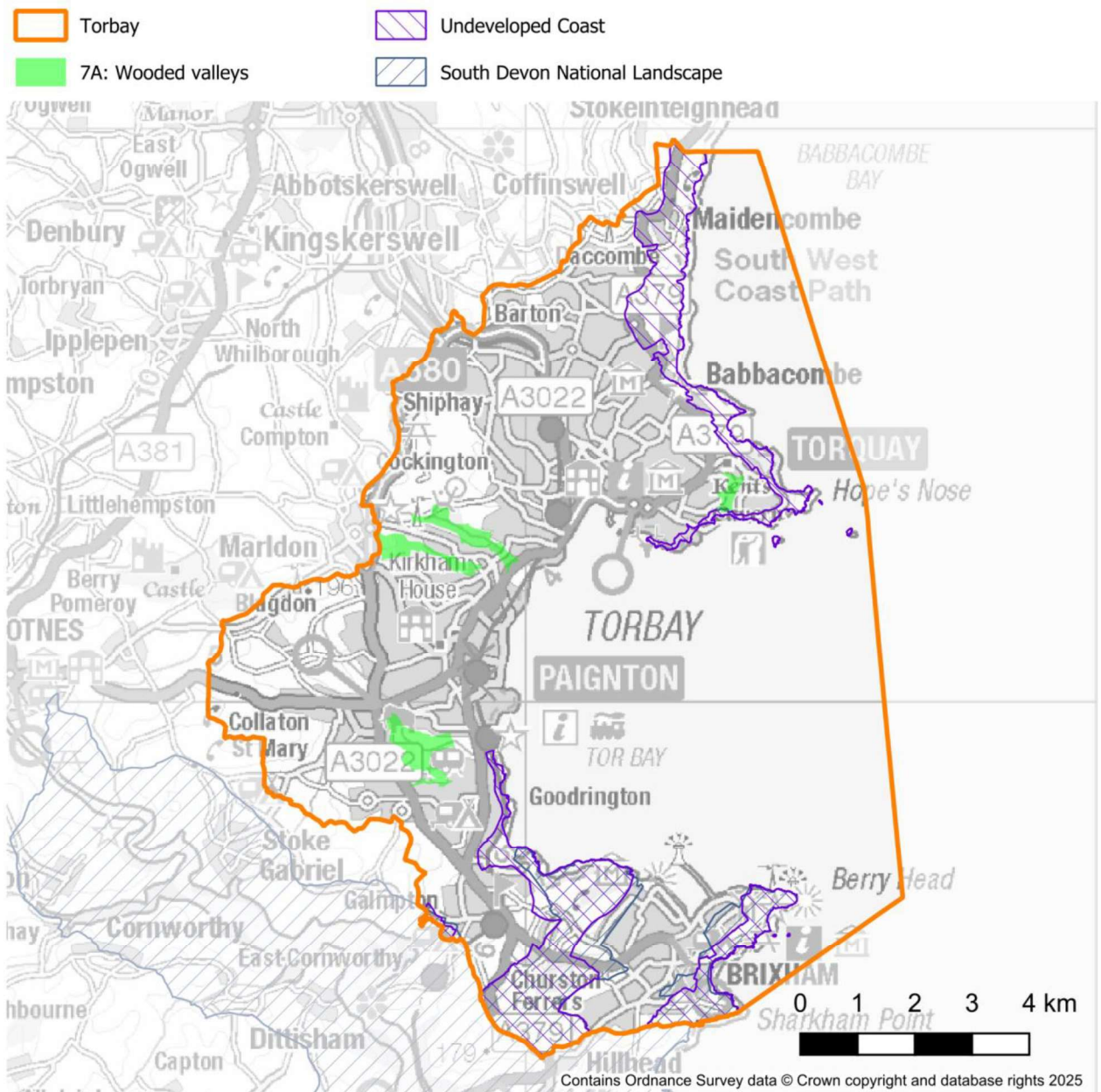
Plan

- Proactively and responsively to potential forces for change which may be brought by strategies to be pursued in the emerging Shoreline Management Plan.

Local Landscape Character Areas

- 6-1 East Shag
- 6-2 Thatcher Rock
- 6-3 Flat Rock and Ore Stone

LCT 7A WOODED VALLEYS



Summary description

- 4.1.19 This landscape type is characterised by steep sided valley landform that breaks up the urban land cover. The valleys have a secluded and intimate character, with an urban influence particularly on the upper slopes at the valley edges. The valleys are well used for recreation and quiet enjoyment.

Devon Character Areas

DCA 62 Torbay Hinterland



Steep wooded slopes enclosing views along the flat valley floor towards the sea

Key characteristics

Topography, geology and drainage

- Steep sided, generally narrow valleys that slope down to a wider valley floor where they transition to the coastal edge.
- The valleys contain small watercourses that cut through Lower Devonian bedrock of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. Ponds/lakes have been formed in places as part of recreational land uses.

Vegetation cover

- There is substantial mixed woodland cover through the valleys, with a greater density on steeper upper slopes, reducing as the valley slopes down to open space at the coastal edge.
- Amenity grassland spaces are commonly found on the lower lying valley floors, where they open up towards the coast, providing for informal recreation.

Land use and field patterns

- Woodland is the primary land cover.
- Recreational land use is common throughout the LCT. These are generally informal, making use of a network of well-trodden paths through woodlands. Small spaces of open grassland provide for informal recreation, with footpaths linking through.

Semi-natural habitats

- Swathes of the valleys are designated as Local Nature Reserves, for their woodland habitats.

- Substantial areas of broadleaved woodland on steep valley slopes, with pockets of ancient and semi-natural woodland.
- Small areas of calcareous and species rich grassland, beginning to scrub over.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Some evidence of medieval enclosure at the settlement edges.

Settlement, road pattern and rights of way

- Largely unsettled within the valleys, but with strong physical and visual links to the surrounding urban settlements. As a result of the connectivity, recreational facilities are located within this LCT, at the settlement edges and on more level landform in proximity to the coast.
- Very limited vehicular access. Narrow lanes and local roads pass around the edges of the LCT and occasionally cut across the valley landform.
- Pedestrian access is largely from the adjacent vehicular routes, with occasional small parking areas. A strong network of formal and informal walking routes that wind through the woodlands, along the contours and cutting downslope to open recreational spaces.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Views are mostly contained within the LCT, by steep valley landform and woodland.
- There is some intervisibility with the coast and sea, particularly as the woodland cover reduces and the valleys widen towards the coast.
- There are views across the wooded valleys from surrounding residential streets, looking over the tops of the trees and often with the sea forming a backdrop to the view.
- A sense of isolation and tranquillity within the picturesque, semi-natural woodland areas. Occasional, localised intrusion is evident from adjoining urban areas, but this is quickly left behind as one moves through the woodland.



View over the steep-sided, wooded valley to the urban settlement edge at the top of the valley slopes

Valued landscape attributes

- Unspoilt, peaceful and naturalistic landscape with a sense of isolation in contrast to the surrounding urban areas.
- The network of informal and formal footpaths that winds through the woodlands and links recreational spaces, providing valued accessible green space.
- The wooded backdrop that the steep valley sides provide to adjoining settlement areas and in views inland from the sea.



View across the recreational space in the wider valley floor, towards the steep wooded slopes of the upper valley

Specific Forces for Change

- Pressure for development on existing urban edges that would lead to encroachment on this LCT and potential for removal of woodland, resulting in overall loss of wooded backdrops and woodland breaks in the urban form, and greater prominence of built form.
- Woodland loss due to disease and/or changes in management that could alter the species composition, contribute to increased run off into streams and potential for localised flooding and soil erosion.
- Increased demand for recreation in the semi-rural spaces, leading to potential for construction of facilities and erosion of the footpath network.



View from the sea, of the wooded valley forming a distinctive green break between urban settlement edges

Landscape guidelines

Protect

- The valued areas of mature, mixed and broadleaved woodland, including valley floor riparian habitats and grasslands as distinctive, wooded green breaks in and backdrops to the urban settlements.
- Woodland edges and skylines, by avoiding new development on elevated locations above the valleys.
- The network of footpaths that provide strong recreational connectivity to and through the rural woodland haven from the dense urban settlement areas.
- The undeveloped, rural character of the valleys, to retain their strong identity as green fingers that break up the urban form and contribute to wooded skylines and backdrops particularly seen in views inland.
- The unintrusive and rural qualities of the existing recreational assets that are well integrated in this landscape.

Manage

- Pockets of grassland for wildlife, enhancing its potential for this, particularly areas of semi-natural habitat as part of the multi-functional green infrastructure network.
- Woodlands through traditional silvicultural management techniques such as coppicing to promote a diverse age and species structure as well as providing potential low-carbon fuel sources and to maximise landscape and wildlife benefit, in accordance with local guidance⁸².

⁸² Including but not limited to [Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy \(2024\)](#), [Devon's Right Place Right Tree guidance](#) and [Devon's emerging LNRS](#)

- Public open spaces, conserving habitats whilst enabling sustainable public access to peaceful, rural landscapes away from the main settlements.
- The network of public paths to maintain and encourage informal recreation, including clearing fallen trees and overgrown shrubs, monitoring erosion and sensitive and appropriate resurfacing where necessary.
- Watercourses as part of the woodland management, and wider flood management programme.

Plan

- For resilience to the effects of climate change on this landscape, through monitoring of existing land cover and habitats, and careful consideration of location for future development and materials used, including options for locally specific materials, fabric first design and low embodied carbon approaches as part of a light touch on the landscape.
- For connection, extension and restoration of habitats where practicable, to increase biodiversity and connectivity, join up fragmented habitats, and contribute to nature recovery networks as identified in the emerging Devon LNRS.
- For the focus of woodland creation and tree planting to be in places that extend and strengthen the existing woodland and retains valued views towards the coast from lower, level landform. For further guidance see the Devon Local Nature Partnership's Right Place, Right Tree⁸³.
- For sensitive siting and design of any renewable energy and infrastructure, particularly tall structures such as masts and wind turbines, with particular avoidance of prominent upper slopes and ridges that contribute positively to the sense of place, and in line with local guidance⁸⁴.
- For future settlement growth that respects the valued landscape attributes and is located to avoid the most prominent slopes, skylines and ridgelines in the LCT. Development proposals should follow a landscape-led approach to design, to conserve and incorporate landscape features as appropriate from the outset as part of the site's green infrastructure and to contribute to the wider green infrastructure network.

Local Landscape Character Areas

- 7A-1 Meadfoot valley
- 7A-2 Hollicombe valley
- 7A-3 Occombe valley

⁸³ <https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/knowledge-hub/trees-and-hedges/right-place-right-tree/>

⁸⁴ Torbay Strategic Landscape Study: Part 2 ii Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind and Solar, 2025

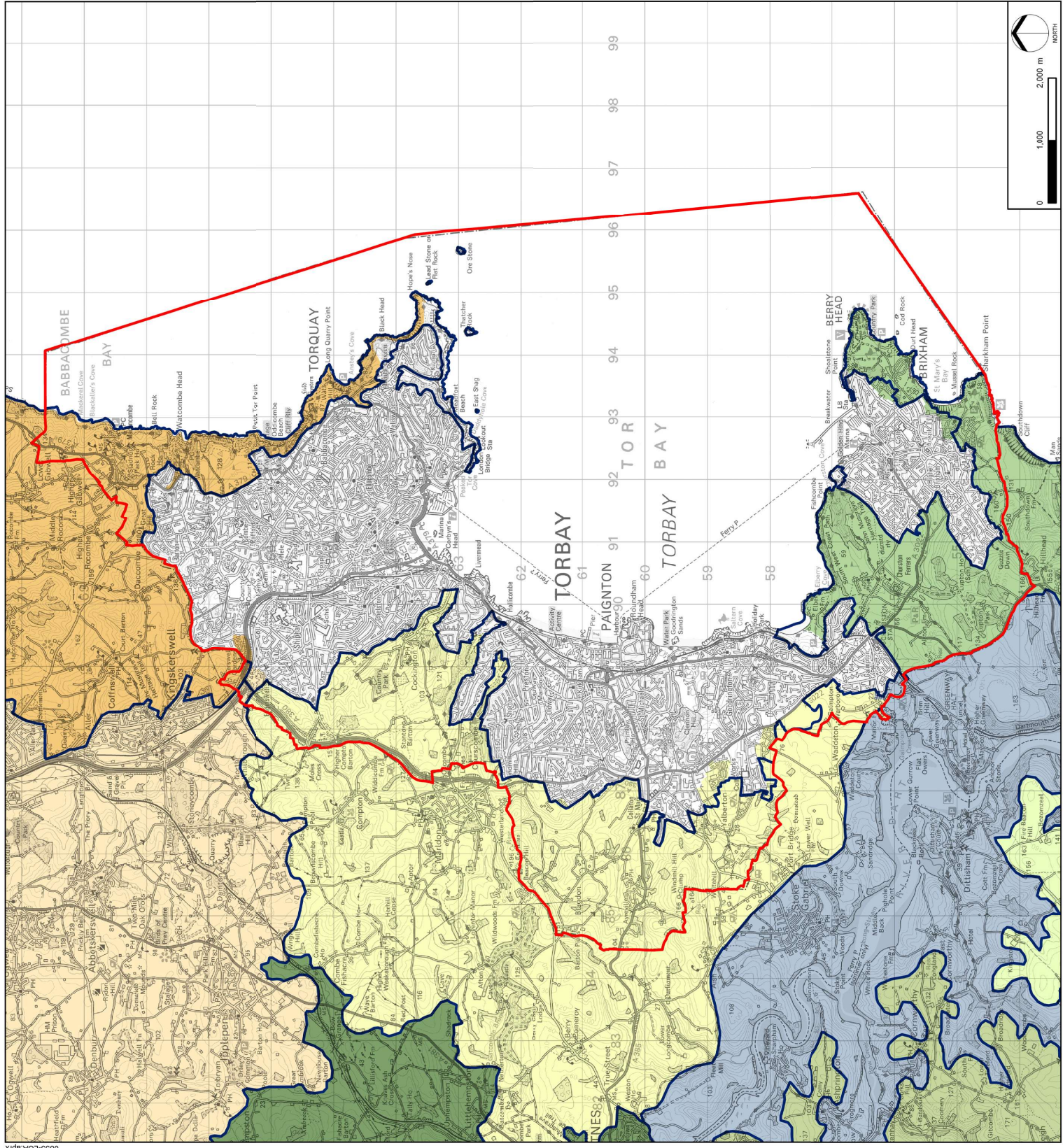
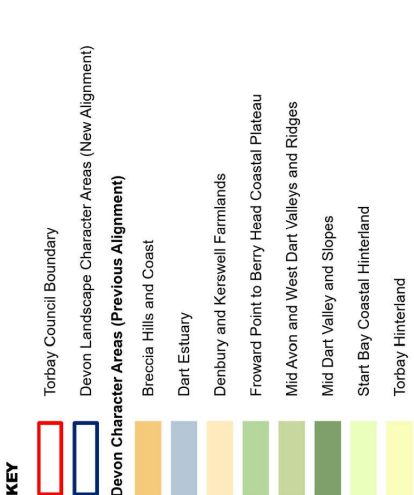
- 7A-4 Clennon Gorge

5 DEVON CHARACTER AREAS

TORBAY STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE STUDY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 5.1

Devon Landscape Character Areas



Projected Coordinate System: British National Grid

DCA 10: BRECCIA HILLS AND COAST

Boundary Review

5.1.1 The following are suggested boundary changes, to incorporate the wider rural landscape that displays the key characteristics and qualities of this character area:

- Remove sliver of urban green space along the A379, to realign with the boundary of LCT 4D Coastal Slopes and Combes.
- Update boundary at Watcombe to exclude recent development and align with adjacent LCT boundaries.
- Extend eastern boundary in various locations along the coast, to align with the boundary of LCT 4H Cliffs.
- Extend west boundary at Black Head, to include the prominent coastal hill and align with the urban settlement edge.
- Extend the boundary south to include the whole of Hope's Nose, Thatcher Point, Meadfoot and Offshore Islands.

Constituent LCTs

- 4C Coastal slopes and combes with settlement
- 4D Coastal slopes and combes
- 4H Cliffs

Key Characteristics Review

5.1.2 Consider including the following additional characteristics:

- Mature and dense woodlands along the coastal edges.
- Extensive network of promoted, formal and informal footpaths that are valued for recreation and the sense of escapism from the adjoining urban areas, such as at Watcombe, Babbacombe and east of Wellswood.

DCA 29: FROWARD POINT TO BERRY HEAD COASTAL PLATEAU

Boundary Review

5.1.3 The following are suggested boundary changes, to incorporate the wider rural landscape that displays the key characteristics and qualities of this character area:

- Update the boundary around the coastal edges, to align with the boundary of LCT 4H Cliffs.
- Update the boundary around the urban edge of Brixham, to exclude more recent development that has removed areas of rural landscape and align with the relevant LCT boundaries.
- Extend the north boundary to include the beach and coastal hill at Broadsands, to align with the boundaries of LCT 3B Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes and LCT 4G Low lying coast and beach.
- Review and simplify the boundary on the border between Torbay and South Hams.

Constituent LCTs

- 1B Open coastal plateau
- 3B Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3E Lowland Plains
- 3H Secluded valleys
- 4D Coastal slopes and combes
- 4G Low lying coast and beach
- 4H Cliffs

Key Characteristics Review

5.1.4 Consider including the following additional characteristics:

- Network of inland woodlands, including ancient replanted and semi-natural woodland, which connects with parkland trees, orchards and woodland in secluded valleys and along coastal cliffs.
- Small scale, discreet leisure and tourism facilities including golf courses, holiday parks and beach car parks in proximity to the coast.

DCA 62: TORBAY HINTERLAND

Boundary Review

5.1.5 The following are suggested boundary changes, to incorporate the wider rural landscape that displays the key characteristics and qualities of this character area:

- Update the boundary around new developments at Naptor, Yalberton and Waddeton Road, and emerging development at Inglewood, to follow the boundary of LCT 3B Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes.
- Alter the boundary southwest of Galmpton, to remove the area of 3G River valley slopes and combs (and include this area within DAC 19 Dart Estuary instead).
- Alter the boundary southeast of Galmpton, to follow the urban edge and include all LCT 3H Secluded valleys at this location and parts of 3B Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes (removing these from DCA 19 Dart Estuary).
- Extend the boundary at Collaton St Mary to align with boundary of LCT 3H Secluded valleys.
- Extend the boundary at Hollicombe to take into account the LCT 7A Wooded valley at this location.

Constituent LCTs

- 3A Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3H Secluded valleys
- 7A Wooded valleys

Key Characteristics Review

5.1.6 Consider including the following additional characteristics:

- Distinctive, elevated rolling natural landform with prominent hilltops that are visible from the sea.
- Intimate, steep-sided, wooded valleys that cut into the rolling landform and link into the urban edges.

5.1.7 It is also suggested that Cockington historic village and parkland is referenced as a historic site and visitor attraction in the Special Qualities and Features.

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY – KEY STAGES

Background

1. Torbay's landscape character evidence is used to inform both strategic planning and help inform determination of planning applications against Local Plan policies. The Devon-wide Landscape Character Areas inform land management decisions and processes.
2. Torbay's landscape character evidence comprises four layers of landscape units of different scales, within the hierarchy of the national framework:
 - National Character Areas.
 - Devon Character Areas.
 - Devon Landscape Character Types.
 - Torbay Local Landscape Character Areas.
3. The update to the Torbay Landscape Character Assessment is being undertaken in accordance with Devon's Duty to Co-operate Protocol, 2014. The Devon Landscape Policy Group is identified within the Protocol as the steering group for cooperation under the topic of Landscape, with the aim of developing a '*consistent, agreed, up to date and where appropriate, shared evidence base and consistent and robust approach to policy development and landscape management, particularly through the endorsement of Devon Landscape Policy Group Advice Notes*'¹.

Objectives

- To provide an assessment of the character, distinctiveness and qualities of the Torbay landscape, including cultural and natural heritage resources.
- To identify the key characteristics and valued landscape attributes of each Landscape Character Type.
- To identify current and future forces for change and strategic guidelines for each landscape type, to guide development and landscape management decisions.
- To promote awareness of landscape character and the importance of landscape conservation, enhancement and restoration.

Key steps

Step 1 - Desk study

4. A review of the current Torbay Landscape Character Assessment was undertaken. Mapped information and available data sets were analysed and evidence gathered, to corroborate the existing landscape character type evaluation from the 2010 study, and to identify any changes in land use, land cover, land management etc that ultimately alter the landscape character.

¹ [The Duty to Co-operate: A Devon-wide co-operation protocol](#), Appendix C: Topic areas for co-operation, March 2014

5. The main datasets used were:

Table 0.1 Data sets used to inform the update

Dataset	Source
OS 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 base mapping	Ordnance Survey
Terrain 50 Contour data	Ordnance Survey
GBR BGS 1:50,000 Bedrock and Linear Features	British Geological Survey
Protected landscape designations	Natural England Torbay Council
Nature conservation designations	Natural England Torbay Council
Historic Landscape Characterisation (Devon HLC)	Devon County Council
Cultural / historic designations	Historic England Torbay Council
Access (National Cycle Network / PRoW)	Sustrans Open Data Devon County Council
Relevant adopted policies	Torbay Council

6. The main purpose of this step was to identify where the current classification did not reflect the key characteristics of the Devon Landscape Character Types.
7. Where a change in landscape character was identified, amendments to the existing Landscape Character Type boundaries were drafted for in-field checking.

Step 2 - Field survey

8. Following identification of draft boundary changes, the main field survey work took place in September 2024. The purpose of this was to:
- Confirm the proposed updated landscape classification.
 - Verify/refine the definition of draft LCT/LCA boundaries where necessary.
 - Validate/refine the draft LCT/LCA descriptions.
 - Record experiential/perceptual qualities for each LCT/LCA.
 - Understand landscape changes, evaluate forces for change and landscape condition, to guide the outline strategy (landscape guidelines) for each LCT.
 - Take up-to-date photographs for illustration of the report.
9. Further field work was carried out in November 2024, following consultation and review of the draft classification by Torbay Council. This focussed on areas where potential boundary and classification changes were identified.
10. Field work was carried out using ArcGIS Survey 123. Digital field survey forms were filled out in the field, for each of the LCTs.

Step 3 - Consultation

11. Online consultation took place between 21st August and 5th October 2024. This was an ArcGIS StoryMap hosted website, made available to key stakeholders and the local public. A separate email address was also provided, as an alternative method for providing consultation responses.
12. The consultation took place as a combined consultation on the Landscape Character Assessment (Part 1 of the Strategic Landscape Study) and Open Spaces Study (Part 3 of the Strategic Landscape Study).
13. The online consultation was presented as an interactive map of the Devon LCTs, on which consultees could pinpoint their responses upon a particular LCT. Survey questions were included, to prompt consultees to think about the key characteristics and valued attributes of the LCT as well as identifying changes in the landscape and allowing space for other observations.
14. The consultation responses are summarised in Appendix 2.
15. A project email address was also provided for consultees to respond with more general comments and observations.

Step 4 – Draft Classification

16. Having collated consultation responses and field work, the draft classification was updated, with proposed boundary changes identified. This updated classification is based upon the previous classification. Boundaries have been adjusted to reflect land use changes, updates to the Devon wide landscape character typologies² and consultation responses where applicable. The update also includes tidying up of boundaries to follow more suitable landscape features, reflect areas of settlement growth and match adjoining LCTs where appropriate.
17. A pilot for one of the Landscape Character Type profiles was drafted, including context maps and photographs. These were presented to the Client for comment and to validate the updated classification and text descriptions.

Refinement

18. Following further review, with input from Torbay Council Planning Officers, the classification of LCTs were updated.
19. The following table details the changes made to the LCTs and DCAs as part of this Landscape Character Assessment review and update.

Table 0.2 Changes to boundaries of LCTs following the review

LCT	Summary of changes during review	Action taken
1B: Open coastal plateaux	Boundary refined at Sharkham Point and along boundary with South Hams, reclassification to either 3B:	Update shapefile

² Devon's landscape character assessment (DLCA) - [Devon Menu](#)



LCT	Summary of changes during review	Action taken
	Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes or 4H: Cliffs Small areas of loss due to expansion of Brixham (reclassification to 7: Main cities and towns)	
3A: Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes	Small areas of loss due to expansion of Paignton (reclassification to 7: Main cities and towns); or reclassification to 7A: Wooded valleys (at Ocombe) Addition due to reclassification of areas of 3H: Secluded valley such as at Cockington and at Blagdon; and of areas of 4G: Low lying coast and beach / 7: Main cities and towns at Broadsands	Update shapefile
3B: Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes	Small areas of loss due to expansion of Paignton and Brixham (reclassification to 7: Main cities and towns); or reclassification to 7A: Wooded valleys (at Goodrington) Addition due to reclassification of areas of 3H: Secluded valley around Churston Ferrers	Update shapefile
3E: Lowland plains	Small area of loss due to reclassification of areas of 3H: Secluded valley near Churston Cove	Update shapefile
3F: Settled valley floors	Small area of loss due to expansion of Torquay (reclassification to 7: Main cities and towns)	Update shapefile
3G: River valley slopes and combes	Small addition due to reclassification of area of 3H: Secluded valley at Galmpton	Update shapefile
3H: Secluded valleys	Boundary refined at Cockington Areas of loss due to reclassification at Blagdon (reclassification to 3A: Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes); at Galmpton and Churston Ferrers (reclassification to 3B: Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes); and at Clennon (reclassification to 7A: Wooded valleys) Small areas of loss due to expansion of Torquay and Paignton (reclassification to 7: Main cities and towns)	Update shapefile
4C: Coastal slopes and combes with settlement	Small areas of loss due to expansion of Torquay (reclassification to 7: Main cities and towns)	Update shapefile
4D: Coastal slopes and combes	Boundary refined at Thatcher Point and Black Head Small areas of loss due to expansion of Torquay (reclassification to 7: Main cities and towns)	Update shapefile
4G: Low lying coast and beach	Boundary refined in relation to urban edge at Torquay and Broadsands Small area of loss due to reclassification of areas of 7A: Wooded valleys at Hollicombe and Goodrington	Update shapefile
4H: Cliffs	Boundary refined in relation to adjacent LCTs; aerial mapping of the coastline; and the urban edges at Torquay, Paignton and Brixham	Update shapefile
4J: Harbours, ports and marinas	New LCT introduced at Torquay, Paignton and Brixham harbours (typically previously either unclassified or otherwise reclassified from 7: Main cities and towns)	Update shapefile and create new LCT description

LCT	Summary of changes during review	Action taken
6: Offshore islands	Boundary refined in relation to aerial mapping of the coastline	Update shapefile
7: Main cities and towns	Boundary refined in relation to adjacent LCTs; typically, due to expansion of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham Small areas of loss around Thatcher Point and Black Head (reclassification to 4D: Coastal slopes and combes); Torquay Marina / Torre Abbey (reclassification to 4G: Low lying coast and beach or 4J: Harbours, ports and marinas); Hollicombe (reclassification to 7A: Wooded valleys); and Broadsands (reclassification to 3B: Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes and 4G: Low lying coast)	Update shapefile
7A: Wooded valleys	New LCT introduced in urban areas (typically previously reclassified from either 3H: Secluded valleys or 7: Main cities and towns)	Update shapefile and create new LCT description

Table 0.3 Changes to boundaries of DCAs following the review

DCA	Summary of changes during review	Action taken
Breccia Hills and Coast	Small areas of loss due to expansion of Torquay Refinement of boundary at Thatcher Point, Black Head, Lincombe and Meadfoot to align with changes to LCTs	Update shapefile
Denbury and Kerswell Farmlands	Small area of loss due to expansion of Torquay at Edginswell	Update shapefile
Torbay Hinterland	Small areas of loss due to expansion of Paignton Refinement of boundary at Galmpton to align with changes to LCTs	Update shapefile
Dart Estuary	Refinement of boundary at Galmpton to align with changes to LCTs	Update shapefile
Froward Point to Berry Head Coastal Plateau	Small areas of loss due to expansion of Brixham Refinement of boundary at Broadsands and north of Brixham to align with changes to LCTs	Update shapefile

20. The classification of LCTs has been mapped at a scale of 1:25,000, which means that it is appropriate for application to other studies and decision-making at this scale. Finer grain studies will need further, more detailed landscape analysis, as will decision-making at finer grain or site scales.

Step 5 - Reporting

21. The structure of the updated Torbay Landscape Character Assessment follows the guidance³ and proforma provided by the Devon Landscape Policy Group, in line with ongoing updates of landscape character assessments in the wider Devon area.
22. The LCT profiles are structured as follows:
 - Location and context plan – showing the extent of the LCA in context with landscape designations.
 - Summary description – providing an overview of the representative characteristics.
 - Devon Character Areas – identifies the relevant DCA that the LCT is located within.
 - Key characteristics – a list of the distinctive landscape characteristics associated with the LCT.
 - Valued landscape attributes – identifies the special qualities and features of the LCT.
 - Specific Forces for Change – in addition to the Torbay-wide forces for change in Section 3.8, identifies LCT specific past, current and future forces for change.
 - Landscape guidelines – identifies place-appropriate responses to protect, manage and plan for landscape changes within the LCT.
 - Local Landscape Character Areas – identifies smaller units of geographically unique landscape character.
23. The LCT profiles are supported by quality photographs that represent the key characteristics of the landscape character type.

³ [Devon Landscape Policy Group: Landscape Character Assessment Protocol](#), December 2017

APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF CONSULTEE COMMENTS

Table 1: Statutory consultees and a summary of their comments

Statutory Consultees	Comments
English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark (Melanie Border - Coordinator)	Confirmed the Geopark boundary matches the Torbay Council administrative boundary, including the marine area.
South Hams District Council & West Devon Borough Council (Amanda Urmson and Alex Whish – Urban Fringe Team)	Support for proposed changes to landscape character boundaries near shared administrative borders with SHDC. Appreciated the additional explanation table. Noted boundary amendments around Lupton Park (3A/3B/1B) and confirmed understanding of proposed changes. Indicated that South Hams may need to review LCT 1B in future. Overall support of Torbay's approach.
Teignbridge District Council (Kati Owen – Senior Planning Officer)	No comments on minor LCT updates within Torbay. Confirmed that the extract does not indicate a need to review any LCTs within Teignbridge bordering Torbay. No objections raised.
Torbay Council (Tracy Brooks – Senior Strategic Planning Officer and David Pickhaver – Principal Policy and Project Planner)	Support for the overall approach. Feedback and local knowledge input throughout.
Devon Landscape Policy Group County (Melanie Croll - Landscape Officer)	Acknowledged the useful summary of landscape changes. Provided input to forces for change drawn from neighbouring LCA updates. Emphasis was placed on the importance of conserving local distinctiveness, green wedges, and accessible coastal and countryside areas, alongside managing development pressures sensitively. Note to update the LCT map to reflect recent urban change.

Table 2: Website responses on Landscape Character Types (LCTs)

LCT	Summary Points	Summary changes to landscape (past/present and future)	Suggested boundary changes
1B: Open coastal plateaux	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognised for biodiversity and mental health benefits Concerns over development and marine activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative impact from loss of green spaces Concerns over recreational marine use (e.g. jet skis) affecting wildlife 	None suggested
3A: Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about poor land management and public access Noted as peaceful and valued by children and wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor maintenance of planting and access routes Some areas considered unchanged Concerns about future housing pressure 	Suggestion to extend the boundary to include a larger, continuous area from Torbay Ring Road (Hamlin Way), across to the top of Preston Down Road, through the valley to Cockington Country Park and Livermead Beach.
3B: Lower rolling farmed and settled valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognised as having valued walking routes Seen as diverse and visually important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No detailed change comments submitted 	None suggested
3E: Lowland plains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about abrupt urban edges Some felt it lacked distinctive landscape character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No clear commentary on change, but housing pressure implied 	None suggested
3H: Secluded valleys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued for intact rural character Concern about nearby housing visibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Largely unchanged, but concerns about visible extensions and development pressure Future threats to tranquillity noted 	Suggestion to protect the whole Yalberton Valley and surrounding fields

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater flooding and ground stability issues raised 	
4D: Coastal slopes and combes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong support for preserving undeveloped coastal character Recognition of Local Plan policy protections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Past threats of development recalled Emphasis on restricting future development, especially under Policy C2 	None suggested
4G: Low lying coast and beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value placed on well-maintained green space and biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some positive recent maintenance noted Concerns about overuse and maintenance pressures Issues raised about condition of car park and coastal paths 	None suggested
7: Main cities and towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral comments overall Some references to green spaces within urban areas (e.g. wildflower beds, playing fields) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant change mentioned Isolated positive changes (e.g. new planting) 	None suggested

Table 3: Website responses on Urban Landscape Protection Areas (ULPA)

ULPA	Important / Valuable Features	Summary changes to landscape (past/present and future)	Anything negative about the space
Cary Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trees and green space Car-free and accessible paths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived as neutral/no major change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None raised
Galampton Warborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open green common space, well used and appreciated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing road traffic nearby 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential need for safe pedestrian crossing at Windy Corner
Ilsham Valley / Lincombe Slopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wooded slopes, open valley with sea views Recreation, tranquillity, and biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased winter flooding and erosion noted Growing recreational use appreciated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking abuse Obstructions, dumping, and lack of parking enforcement
Palace Hotel Grounds (South)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green space of historical and landscape value Former hotel grounds enjoyed by public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently inaccessible since development began Loss of public access noted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fencing prevents access Concerns about dense development and pressure on local infrastructure
Tor Rocks, Broadsands (West of Railway)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local woodland habitat Regular recreational use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree growth affects sea views from nearby properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desire for management that balances view preservation and habitat health

Table 4: Website responses on Local Green Spaces (LGS)

Open Space	Important / Valuable Features	Summary changes to landscape (past/present and future)	Anything negative about the space
Abbey Park and Meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-maintained gardens Long-standing local amenity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gardens seen as in good condition Concern about condition of associated buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of old buildings seen as neglected
Cary Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trees and car-free walking routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant change reported (neutral) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None raised
Chapel Woods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic chapel and geological features Secluded wooded area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comment notes a lack of maintenance and unmanaged self-seeded vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The unmanaged appearance creates an intimidating atmosphere
Cockington Country Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peaceful - wildlife Accessible Landscape heritage and beauty Removed from the urban sprawl – sense of space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived decline in landscape care Reports of poor maintenance and degraded planting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for improved maintenance overall Concerns over housing pressures encroaching
Maidencombe Village Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important community space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value placed on its protected status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern about threats of past development
Monastery, Winner Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rare woodland area with ecological and historic value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No clear opinion on change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about antisocial behaviour from local youths
Occombe Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important, accessible green space for local people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape perceived as maintained Still feels valued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern over traffic speed near the site
Torre Churchyard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tranquil setting Proximity value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value placed on care and ongoing protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed by a group facing pressures

Wellswood green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational space and for events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water feature, new planting and seating • Wellswood Community Partnership have taken on the space to improve it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None raised
Upton Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees and flower borders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing improvements and active care noted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None raised

General feedback summary points

- There is strong community support for retaining the protection of Local Green Spaces designated in Neighbourhood Plans.
- Respondents highlight the importance of striking a balance between landscape protection and the integration of renewable energy, with interest in how wind and solar opportunities are addressed in the evidence base.
- A green corridor between Torquay and Paignton (e.g. tree planting around Hollicombe) is suggested to maintain visual separation and local character.
- Consideration of infrastructure impacts, especially traffic, is encouraged when planning new development, with support for contributions from developers to help address these.
- There is a desire to see development guided by long-term environmental resilience, with support for safeguarding biodiversity, local distinctiveness, and quality of life.
- Many comments advocate for prioritising brownfield and town centre sites for new housing to protect open spaces and the wider countryside.
- The value of green spaces for wellbeing, recreation, and mental health is repeatedly emphasised, alongside interest in re-establishing and maintaining wildlife corridors.
- Consideration of the marine environment (e.g. impacts of watercraft like jet skis) within landscape and environmental assessments.
- Preserving the rural character and limited infrastructure capacity of areas like Brixham and surrounding National Landscape is seen as important for future planning.
- Rural villages such as Cockington, Edginswell and Maidencombe are highlighted as needing ongoing protection, with support for the continued application of Village Envelope policies.
- Comments express a wish to see more housing on underused urban land, while ensuring green infrastructure and space for families are incorporated.
- There is support for reimagining town centres with more residential use, alongside preserving the distinctiveness of Conservation Areas.
- The community in areas like Wellswood values its Local Green Spaces and Urban Landscape Protection Areas and encourages careful consideration of cumulative impacts from small-scale developments.
- Respondents are open to appropriate, well-designed development that respects the character of the area and contributes positively to its sense of place.

APPENDIX 3: GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Amenity open space	Green space, generally in proximity to settlement/the community, which provides open space with opportunities for recreation.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Refers to an approach to development and land management that ensures a measurable increase in biodiversity compared to what was present before the development or management activity.
Cultural heritage	The legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society.
Devon hedges	Traditional boundary features combining earth banks with shrubs and trees, characteristic of Devon.
Green break	An area of landscape that is largely development free, forming a gap between densely built up areas and often links with other green spaces and / or open countryside.
Green infrastructure	A network of natural and semi-natural spaces providing environmental, social, and economic benefits.
Historic Landscape Characterisation	A method for understanding the historical development of the landscape.
Key Characteristic	Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.
Landmark	An identifiable feature/object that is easily recognised and related to a particular landscape or open space.
Landscape Character	The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse. ¹
Landscape Character Assessment	A tool for identifying, describing, and understanding landscape character.
Landscape Character Areas	These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. ²
Landscape Character Types	These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur, they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern, and perceptual and aesthetic attributes.

¹ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p156

² The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p157

Term	Definition
Landscape Effects	Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right. ³
Landscape Elements	Individual components which make up the landscape such as trees and hedges.
Landscape Features	Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements, like tree clumps, church towers or wooded skylines.
Landscape Quality or Condition	This is a measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which a typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements. ⁴
Landscape Resource	The combination of elements that contribute to landscape context, character and value.
Landscape Value	The relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities. ⁵
Local Nature Recovery Strategy	A statutory requirement to identify areas for nature restoration and enhancement.
Local vantage point	A specific location that provides clear views, often associated with an elevated position with views over the surrounding area.
Major Development	Means development involving any one or more of the following: <i>“(a) the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits; (b) waste development; (c) the provision of dwelling houses where: (i) the number of dwelling houses to be provided is 10 or more; or (ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within sub-paragraph (c)(i); (d) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or (e) development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more;”</i> ⁶
National Character Areas	Landscape zones in England defined by Natural England based on unique characteristics.
National Landscapes	National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB) are designated for scenic quality and are under statutory protection.
Natural Beauty	Natural beauty includes a range of factors: landscape and scenic quality, relative wildness, relative tranquillity, and the contribution of both natural heritage (such as habitats and geology) and cultural heritage (such as historic buildings and land use

³ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p157

⁴ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p157

⁵ The Landscape Institute; Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations

⁶ UK Government (2015). The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 Accessed at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents/made>

Term	Definition
	patterns). These elements combine to create the unique sense of place and visual character of a landscape. ⁷
Seascape Character Assessment	Similar to a Landscape Character Assessment, but focused on marine and coastal areas.
Sense of Place	The essential character and spirit of an area: <i>genius loci</i> literally means ‘spirit of the place’.
Sensitivity	A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor. ⁸
Tranquillity	“A state of calm and quietude associated with peace, considered to be a significant asset of landscape” ⁹ . It is often associated with natural environments, free from disturbance.
Visual amenity	Value of a particular place in terms of what is seen by visual receptors taking account of all available views and the total visual experience.
Wildness	A quality of appearing to be remote, inaccessible and rugged with little evidence of human influence.

⁷ Natural England (2021). Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation, 2021. Available at: https://www.cotswolds-nl.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/NE_Guidance-on-Assessing-Landscapes-for-Designation_June21-1.pdf

⁸ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p157

⁹ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013.