

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 May 2018

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT REPORT

Report of the Head of Conservation and Access

Purpose of Report: To adopt the updated Exmoor National Park Landscape Character Assessment as a Supplementary Planning Document.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Authority is recommended to:

1. ADOPT the Exmoor Landscape Character Assessment report 2018.
2. AUTHORISE the Chief Executive to:
 - (a) make any minor changes if required following completion of the public consultation.
 - (b) arrange for the LCA report to be designed, printed and disseminated.

Authority Priority: 2017-2020 Business Plan

National Treasures: *Our Priorities*

We will: 1. *Complete, review and publish the Exmoor Landscape Character Assessment as Supplementary Planning Guidance and integrate the findings into policy and land management in the National Park.*

Legal and Equality Implications:

The following legislation has been adhered to in the preparation and consultation of this report:

Town and Country Planning Act 1990; Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012-Regulations 12-14.

The equality impact of the recommendation(s) of this report has been assessed as follows: There are considered to be no equality impacts arising from the implications of this report.

Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendation(s) of this report is as follows: There are considered to be no human rights issues in relation to this report.

Financial and Risk Implications:

The financial and risk implications of the recommendation(s) of this report have been assessed as follows: Funding for the preparation of a fully updated Landscape Character Assessment report has been met from the Local Plan budget. Final preparation of the report will be undertaken by Authority staff. Publication and printing of up to 300 copies of the report is anticipated at approximately £2,500 and funding has been allocated for this.

1. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT REPORT

- 1.1 Approval for a comprehensive update of the Exmoor National Park Landscape Character Assessment report, (as prepared by LUC Consultants in 2007), was approved in June 2016 by the Authority.
- 1.2 The original 2007 LCA report has proven to be a very useful tool in providing evidence for the 2012 Partnership Plan, the emerging Local Plan, and the 2010-2013 Landscape Action Plan. It has also helped identify numerous land management issues, and has been especially useful in providing objective advice on landscape in the context of development management and planning enquiries. Additionally it has also proved helpful in planning inquiries.
- 1.3 Consultants, Fiona Fyfe and Associates, were appointed to carry out this update during 2016/2017. Working with the staff, members and partnering organisations, the preparation of a comprehensive update to the 2007 document has enabled new research and concepts to be considered and incorporated. This is in line with current best practice in the process of landscape character assessment, a concept embedded in the planning system including the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
- 1.4 The final draft of the updated report was approved by the Authority on 4 July 2017 and was taken to public consultation 14 July to 8 September 2017. Consultation responses were considered by Steering Group members, including partnering organisations, Authority staff and the consultants. As a result, a number of amendments were made to the draft document. Details of the consultation comments received and the response made to these are available on the Authority web site.
- 1.5 Adoption of this updated LCA report will provide a detailed and purposeful document that is both a celebration and an analysis of the diverse and distinctive landscapes of Exmoor. It retains the nine Landscape Character Types identified in the 2007 report, and provides detailed information on key characteristics, landscape perceptions and cultural associations, natural assets and ecosystem services, strength of landscape character and landscape condition, forces for change, landscape management recommendations and LCT specific planning guidelines.
- 1.6 The adoption of this updated LCA report as a Supplementary Planning Document will give the document additional weight and enable its greater use to help provide more advice and guidance to landscape policies in the Local Plan and to act as an aid to help applicants make considered and successful applications.
- 1.7 Should the Authority be minded to adopt the supplementary planning document, an adoption statement will be prepared and sent to consultees that have responded to the LCA through informal and formal consultation and engagement.
- 1.8 Following adoption by the Authority, a designed version of the report will be produced and subsequently launched.

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18 April 2018