

# Landscape Character Type I: **Wooded and Farmed Hills with Combes**



A typical view in the Brendon Hills, looking east from Churchtown.  
The village of Kingsbridge is nestled out of sight in the bottom of the valley.

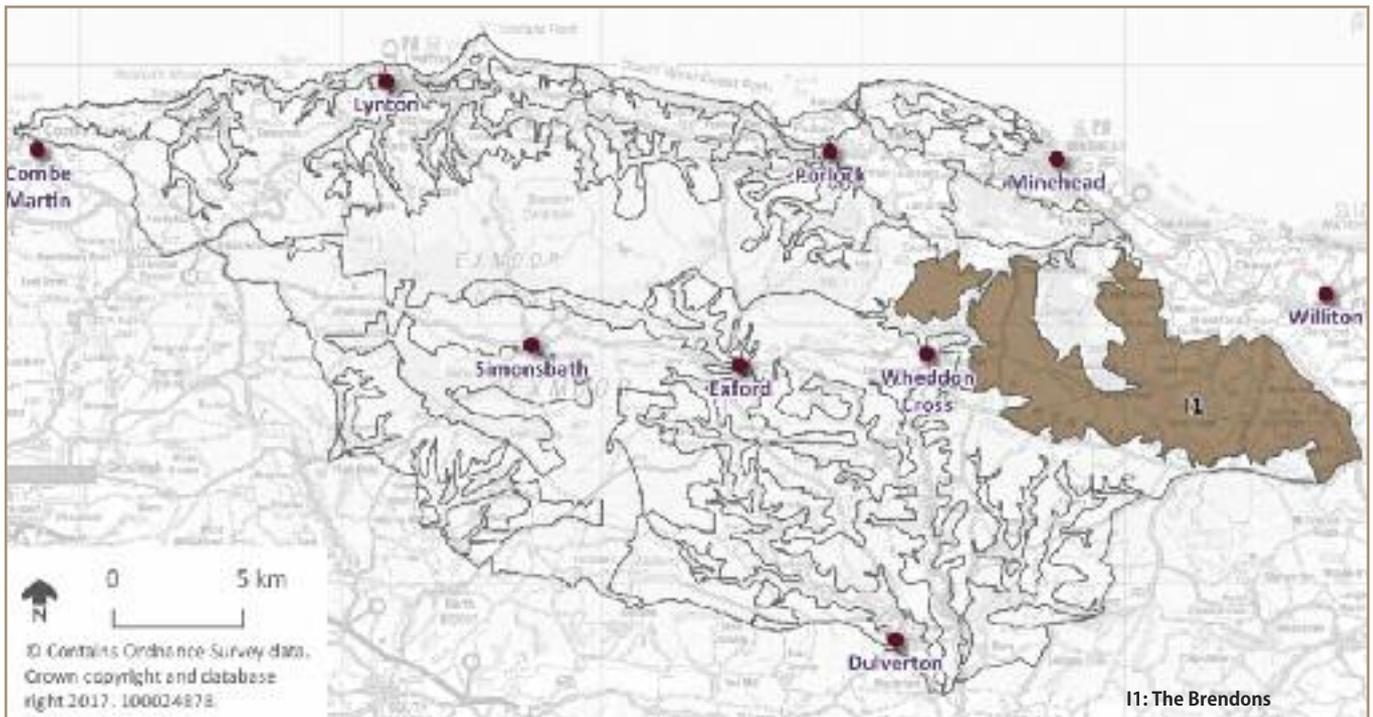
## Summary Description

This LCT is located in the eastern side of the National Park and is associated with the Brendon Hills. It stretches from the eastern slopes of Dunkery Hill to the National Park's eastern boundary. To the north are the Farmed and Settled Vale and Plantation (with Heathland) Hills. To the west are Open Moorland and Incised Wooded River Valleys and to the south are Enclosed Farmed Hills with Commons. Views out of the Brendon Hills are strongly influenced by these surrounding Landscape Character Types, as well as by views out of the National Park towards the coast and across to the Quantock Hills.

There are many hamlets and small villages within this LCT, mostly located in river valleys. They include

Churchtown, Kingsbridge and Pooltown (collectively forming Luxborough), Treborough, Roadwater, Monksilver, Elworthy, Nettlecombe and Rodhuish. Often the central settlement is very small, and parishes are comprised of several hamlets and isolated farms.

The landscape comprises a series of interconnected rounded hills (often draped with woodland), separated by narrow combes containing fast-flowing rivers and streams. It is a peaceful and intimate landscape, with winding lanes providing constantly changing and unexpected views over fields, farms and woodland.



## Key Characteristics of the Wooded and Farmed Hills with Combes

- Underlying geology primarily of Devonian sandstone and Morte slates (with limestone outcropping in river valleys) giving rise to red soils, particularly in the east.
- Low-lying, narrow valley floors meet steep valley sides that give rise to a series of interconnected rounded hills.
- Numerous fast-flowing streams and rivers, often fed by springs.
- The landscape has significant woodland cover- deciduous, coniferous and mixed- ranging from geometric plantations to sinuous swathes.
- Other semi-natural habitats include grassland and streams.
- Parkland character in the eastern part of the LCT, around the large estates of Nettlecombe and Combe Sydenham.
- Medium-sized fields on valley sides, delineated by banked, mixed hedges.
- Winding lanes connect the linear hamlets and small villages that nestle alongside streams in valley bottoms.
- A landscape containing a range of historic landscape features, particularly associated with mining and industrial land uses.
- Open hilltops offer extensive coastal and inland panoramas.
- Red soils, green pastures, arable crops and dark green plantations create a colourful and strongly textured landscape.
- Cultural associations with Sir Francis Drake, who lived at Combe Sydenham.

## Natural Landscape Features

The landform is one of the most striking features of this LCT, with elevation ranging from 100m to almost 400m AOD, low-lying narrow combe valley floors, steep valley sides and interconnected rounded hills. The underlying geology is varied and complex, and is revealed in the many Local Geological Sites (often located in quarries) within this LCT. Much of the area is underlain by slate, siltstones and sandstones, but there are localised areas of limestone in the river valleys, and there are some surviving lime kilns, which were used for burning limestone to create lime for improving acidic soils. The Devonian sandstone gives rise to distinctive red, fertile, well-drained soils, and as a result there is some arable agriculture, particularly in the eastern part of the LCT. There are numerous springs emerging on high ground, which feed a network of fast-flowing and flashy rivers and streams. Most are tributaries of the Washford River system, which runs north-east to meet the sea at Watchet.

The landscape has significant woodland cover, including deciduous, coniferous and mixed woodland, and some surviving orchards. There are

areas of ancient woodland, and plantation on ancient woodland sites. The pattern and size of woodland is varied, ranging from small irregular broadleaf and mixed woodland swathes within the combes, to large geometric coniferous blocks that drape over the hilltops. The largest areas of coniferous plantation are located along the southern boundary e.g. Kennisham Hill, Langham Hill, Hazery Plantation and Eastern Woods. There has also been extensive coniferous planting to the south of Combe Sydenham. Although smaller in size, these areas of plantation have a strong visual connectivity with the Plantation (with Heathland) Hills landscape type which lies to the north.

Mixed hedgerows and hedgerow trees make an important contribution to the overall well-treed character of the landscape- mature beech and oak trees are particularly eye-catching features. The eastern part of the LCT also contains mature parkland trees, including veteran trees, in the designed landscapes at Nettlecombe (a Site of Special Scientific Interest) and Combe Sydenham.



Red soils, green pastures and hedgerow trees in the eastern part of the LCT



Deciduous woodland and conifer plantation at Combe Sydenham

## Designated Nature Conservation Sites

<b>Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</b>	Nettlecombe Park
<b>County / Local Wildlife Site (C/LWS)</b>	Numerous sites, including woodland, grassland, streams and quarries

<b>Ancient Woodland</b>	Scattered throughout. Largest include Langridge Wood, Forehill Wood and Charget Wood
<b>Local Geological Site (LGS)</b>	Allercott Quarry West; Atowey Farm Quarry; Kingsbridge New Mill Quarry; Golsoncott Quarries; Leigh Barton Quarry

## Historic Landscape Features and the Built Environment

This is primarily a farmed landscape, with the majority of field patterns dating from the medieval period, although there are also small patches of post-medieval and ancient enclosures. The irregular-shaped fields form a patchwork pattern, clearly edged by banked, mixed hedges (on lower ground) and some beech hedges (on higher ground in the south of the LCT, where it merges with the Enclosed Farmed Hills with Commons). Commercial game shooting takes place within the **Wooded and Farmed Hills with Combes**, often in conjunction with traditional farming or forestry, and game crops, feeders, pens and birds may be seen throughout the LCT.

Many of the farms and hamlets are have been established for several hundred years. They contain numerous Listed Buildings, and two of the farmsteads are Conservation Areas. The fields contain excellent examples of gutter systems which drained higher land, and flushed spring grass with warmer water to extend its growing season. The village of Clicket (south of Timberscombe) was abandoned in the late nineteenth century, but the crumbling ruins of houses can still be seen. Together with adjacent deserted medieval farmsteads, it is designated a Principal Archaeological Landscape.

There are two areas of designated historic parkland, both towards the east of the LCT. Nettlecombe Court is a sixteenth century red sandstone manor house (Listed Grade I) surrounded by a parkland listed Grade 2 on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. It is a late eighteenth century park,

incorporating extensive earlier deer parks and wood pasture. Combe Sydenham (formerly the seat of the Sydenham family, with connections to Sir Francis Drake) contains the remains of a complicated water catchment system with leats and ponds, but much of the parkland is now under conifer plantation. The area around the house is now a country park. A smaller parkland estate can also be seen at Chagot, Luxborough. This estate contains a Grade 2\* listed house, and surrounding parkland, lakes and woods (today used for game shooting).

Although today the area has a strongly agricultural feel, in the nineteenth century the Brendon Hills were exploited for their mineral resources, particularly iron ore. Mines on Brendon Hill (in the adjacent Enclosed Farmed Hills with Commons LCT) were served by the West Somerset Mineral Railway (WSMR) which connected Gupworthy with the coast at Watchet, from where the iron ore could be transported by boat. The WSMR comprised two conventional sections of track linked by an incline between Comberow and Brendon Hill. The lower parts of the track (within the **Wooded and Farmed Hills with Combes** LCT) is a road today, and the incline is still visible up the steep, wooded valley side. Many of the mines, settlements, stations and other buildings have since been lost as features within the landscape, but others remain, including miners' cottages, structures associated with the WSMR and industrial placenames (e.g. Tacker Street). Slate was extracted from Treborough Quarry for over 600 years, and today the site is within Treborough Woods County Wildlife Site.



Nettlecombe Court



Nettlecombe Park in spring

All the settlements within this LCT are small, with some villages and hamlets comprising clusters of farms, often in association with a church. Most are nestled in the combe bottoms alongside rivers; some nucleated (e.g. Kingsbridge, Luxborough) and others more scattered. Roadwater developed as a series of mills along the Washford River, which have subsequently been infilled by residential development, giving it a more linear feel. The building materials reflect the underlying geology,

and include red sandstone, painted stone and render, with slate or thatch roofs. There are also examples of locally-distinctive walling using vertical slates, such as at Chidgley. Roadwater, Kingsbridge and Pooltown (Luxborough) all contain recently-built housing using locally-distinctive materials. Settlements are connected by a network of winding lanes and tracks, but often there is no direct route between them



Typical rural lane near Churchtown



Leighland Chapel hamlet in its landscape setting



Historic farmstead at Hook Farm, near Leighland Chapel



West Somerset Mineral Railway incline near Comberow

## Designated Cultural and Heritage Sites

<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	Incline between Brendon Hill and Comberow and remains of Combe Row Station; Churchyard crosses at Churchtown, Treborough and Nettlecombe; WWII pillbox, Glasses Farm; Cist in Langridge Wood; Enclosure & Barrows on Monkslade Common	<b>Conservation Areas</b>	Leigh Barton and Colton Farm
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	Scattered throughout, especially in the south of the LCT. Include many farms, farm buildings, churches	<b>Registered Park/ Garden</b>	Nettlecombe Court; Combe Sydenham
		<b>Principal Archaeological Landscapes</b>	Clickets deserted Medieval village and adjacent deserted farmsteads; part of Bat's Castle and Gallox Hill; Part of West Somerset Mineral Railway and associated mine-workings; Colton Pits mining remains

## Landscape Perceptions and Cultural Associations

### Perceptual qualities of the landscape

Much of this LCT is difficult to access by road, and there is a sense of peace and timelessness about this area. With the exception of Combe Sydenham Country Park at the eastern edge of the LCT, there are few visitor attractions or marked viewpoints, and no main roads pass through. Consequently the area is relatively rarely visited, and the deep wooded valleys give it a slightly secretive quality. The lanes are quiet, and much of the area has a strong sense of tranquillity. This is particularly apparent when one considers how busy parts of the area would have been when the iron ore mines were in production.

The mix of green improved pastures, strong red soils of ploughed fields, greens and goldens of arable crops, dark green of woodland blocks, distinctive parklands and views of the sea make for a very colourful and highly textured landscape with significant variety of scene. However, much of the landscape is of a smaller scale than found in other parts of the National Park.

There are very few sources of light pollution within the LCT, although light pollution from towns within the vicinity (e.g. Wiveliscombe, Watchet and Williton) may reduce the quality of night skies.

The 'Exmoor Landscape Perceptions Study' picks up on the landscape compositions associated with the parkland areas, with descriptions including *picturesque, changing seasons, both man-made*

*and natural and classical painting.* People here felt *free, relaxed, inspired, de-stressed and connected with the changing seasons.*

### Key views, viewpoints and landmarks

The wide elevation range and associated landform variation creates a changing sense of enclosure, and a series of unravelling, surprise views. These range from dark, well-wooded combes to open hilltops that offer extensive coastal and inland panoramas, including towards the Quantocks AONB to the east. There are also views over the surrounding LCTs, including the Farmed and Settled Vale, Open Moorland, Plantation (with Heathland) Hills and Enclosed Farmed Hills with Commons. The **Wooded and Farmed Hills with Combes** are also visible from the Quantock Hills AONB.

Horizons are often wooded, either formed of woodland/ plantation blocks within the LCT, or in the adjacent Plantation (with Heathland) Hills. Despite removal of some of the dish antennae, the lattice radio tower on Kennisham Hill (within the National Park) is prominent on the skyline, as are the masts at Washford and Elworthy (beyond the National Park boundary).

There is an excellent network of paths within the LCT, and the Coleridge Way runs through it from east to west, bringing walkers into the area. Combe Sydenham is also a popular Country Park and base for walks.



### Cultural Associations

Contemporary artists have captured the patterns and textures within this landscape, the sense of enclosure within the woodlands, and the glimpsed longer views.



My Secret Wood, Kennisham  
Image ©Rosina Woodthorpe



Kennisham, Looking towards Luxborough  
Image ©Rosina Woodthorpe

Combe Sydenham has connections with Sir Francis Drake, who married Elizabeth Sydenham in 1585. Nettlecombe was visited by the influential nineteenth century garden designer J.C. Loudon, who describes Nettlecombe and the surrounding landscape in *"In Search of English Gardens: The Travels of John Claudius Loudon and his wife Jane"*<sup>1</sup>. It is interesting to note that the description is before the planting of conifer blocks on many of the hill tops.

*We were astonished and delighted with the view from the windows of the house, looking up the steep sides of the rounded hills that rose on every side, and which were mostly crowned with old oak woods. Rounded hills covered with grass at the top, with winding valleys having sloping sides; the valleys more or less wide, and the sides of hills differing in degrees to steepness; occasionally with water in the bottom in the form of a stream or brook...*

<sup>1</sup> National Trust Publications (1990) pp226-8

## Natural Assets and Ecosystem Services

The unique combination of landscape features within this LCT gives it a specific combination of Natural Capital Assets, which provide a number of ecosystem services.

This is a well-wooded landscape, containing a variety of woodland. Trees help to regulate climate by sequestering (storing) carbon and absorbing air pollution. They regulate water flows and improve water quality by absorbing rainwater and slowing run-off into rivers (thereby reducing downstream flooding). The deciduous woodlands are rich in biodiversity, offering habitats to a wide range of plants, insects, animals and birds. Plantations also provide timber for fuel and building. Traditionally, wood from cut hedgerows has been used as fuel in woodburners, and this remains an opportunity to support traditional hedgerow management.

The function of trees in slowing the rate at which rainwater reaches rivers is likely to become

increasingly important as climate change results in increased intensity and frequency of storm events.

The soils and water supplies of farmland areas enable production of food, fibre and fuel. The mix of pastoral and arable farming evident here indicates the ability of the Natural Capital Assets such as soil and groundwater to provide a range of goods. Land also functions to capture, store and channel water supplies.

This is an historic landscape, shaped by centuries of farming practices. As such it contributes to a variety of cultural ecosystem services such as recreation, aesthetic experiences and understanding of the past. There are excellent opportunities for people to explore and enjoy the landscape at Combe Sydenham Country Park, and through the good network of paths within the area, including the Coleridge Way.

## Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) within LCT I

### LCA I1: Brendon Hills

There is only one LCA within the **Wooded and Farmed Hills with Combes** LCT as the landscape character and sense of place are considered to be fairly consistent across it.

## Strength of Landscape Character and Landscape Condition in LCT I

The Brendon Hills has a distinctive and **strong** landscape character. A defining feature is the landform- steep slopes, rounded summits and enclosed combes offering inspiring changes of scene yet having a seamless quality which unifies the landscape. Woodland cover also plays a key role in defining landscape character - both the coniferous blocks on high ground and enclosing broadleaf trees in the combes provide distinctive wooded skylines and enclosed, leafy valley sides and floors.

There are occasional examples of poorly-maintained hedgerows, but on the whole, the condition of the landscape within this LCT is considered to be **good**. There is only one SSSI within this LCT (Nettlecombe Park), and this has been assessed as being in 'favourable' condition. However, there are a number of listed buildings which have been assessed as 'at risk' based on a

combination of their condition and occupation status. These are: Manor Mills, north of the main historic nucleus of Roadwater; two limekilns near Treborough, and chest tombs in the churchyards at Churchtown and Elworthy. In addition, a conduit near Pooltown and Leigh Barton stables have been assessed as listed buildings in relatively poor condition.

Since the 2007 Exmoor Landscape Character Assessment was written, work has been done at Nettlecombe to restore estate railings, and to plant replacement parkland trees. From fieldwork undertaken in 2016, game shoots appear better managed such that pens, coloured feeders and other shooting infrastructure can appear to be less visible from roads and footpaths. Formerly 'stripy' game crops are now more likely to be naturalistic in form, or kept to field edges. They are therefore less apparent in the landscape, although they may still be present. Similarly, forestry tracks and woodland

clearance is not always visible from outside the woodland, especially if there is no public access. Communications masts outside the National Park still affect local skylines and wider views, as does Kennisham Tower, although it has been recently reduced in height.

There are positive examples of newer buildings which have been carefully integrated into existing settlements in terms of their design, siting and materials. There are also areas of former coniferous plantation which have been cleared and are now exhibiting a heath character (for example on the

western slopes of Croydon Hill) and which allow open views across the wider landscape.

Natural Flood Management is also taking place within this LCT. The Washford Upper Catchment Multi-benefits Project began in 2015 and combines enhancements to biodiversity, improvements to the ecological condition of the river, and flood reduction. The Williton Flood Protection Project, covering the catchments of the Monksilver and Doniford Streams is currently being developed by the Environment Agency and partners, with work scheduled to take place between 2018-2020.

## Landscape Issues and Forces for Change in LCT I

Landscapes are dynamic and are constantly affected by a variety of forces for change, which may be natural (e.g. coastal erosion) or man-made (e.g. development pressure, and changes in farming practices). The following table illustrates the main forces for change acting on this LCT, and

how they will potentially affect the landscape. Recommendations for addressing these issues are provided in the following section. Please note that forces for change acting across the whole National Park are described in Section 2.9.

Issue/Force for Change	Landscape sensitivities and potential impacts
Conifer plantations reaching maturity	Felling of mature conifer plantations affects landscape character, and also provides opportunities for positive change. For example, there are opportunities for heathland re-establishment, and the planting of broad leaved woodland, including restoration of ancient woodland sites. There are also opportunities to open up views across the wider landscape.
Changes in woodland management and funding	Changing woodland management priorities and funding schemes continue to affect this well-wooded landscape. Replanting of conifers on ancient woodland sites is likely to continue if it is financially beneficial. Grants for planting new woodland and management of broad leaved regeneration of woodland are inadequate with current land values and therefore there is very limited uptake. There is currently no funding for encouraging permitted access into woodland.
Forest tracks	Tracks for forestry management can become a landscape issue if they become too wide or suffer from erosion (by vehicles or water). Often they are hidden by surrounding trees, but if woodland is felled, they appear as linear scars. Forest tracks can also be linked to increased run-off and flooding.
Game shooting	Game crops can be prominent in the landscape, particularly if they have a geometric or stripy pattern which stands out against the natural curved form of the landscape. There can also be a cumulative impact of tracks, feeders, pens, birds etc. in views from roads and public rights of way.

Issue/Force for Change	Landscape sensitivities and potential impacts
Changing farming practices	Increased intensification of arable agriculture is likely to result in changes in crop choice, larger machinery (requiring wider gateways and tracks) and larger storage buildings. A change from traditional small farms to larger farms (arable and pastoral) leads to landscape change and a potential loss of traditional farming techniques. The increased use of plastic sheeting can potentially contribute to increased surface water run-off.
Demand for larger agricultural buildings	The current trend towards indoor rearing of livestock demands agricultural buildings of a size and scale not previously seen within the National Park. Such buildings can be very visually intrusive and difficult to accommodate sensitively within the landscape. They can also be a source of light pollution
Decline in management of hedgerows and field boundaries.	Management of environmental features such as hedgerows and hedgebanks are particularly vulnerable to change in land management grants. If grants are reduced and the upkeep of traditional field boundaries becomes unviable, then the landscape pattern will be lost, as well as habitat links between woodland areas.
Loss of parklands	Historic parklands within the LCT have been affected by past conversion to arable land use or forestry. Parkland trees are also vulnerable to disease or over-maturity which will result in the loss of parkland character.
Loss of orchards	Orchards have been lost from this landscape in recent decades, changing the pattern of the landscape and its seasonal colour. There is potential to manage/ reinstate traditional orchards, and reintroduce this element back into the landscape.
Recreation pressure	This is a relatively little-visited part of the National Park, with generally low levels of recreation, usually limited to walkers and cyclists. However, the area is also occasionally used for larger-scale recreation activities such as charity events, which can cause problems (e.g. erosion of paths and tracks) if not carefully managed, or if conventional recreation is not prioritised.
Loss of historic features	Historic features within the landscape (particularly those associated with mining heritage) are being damaged by vegetation. For example, trees are growing along The Incline and the path along it is very difficult to access, with the top section of the footpath along the incline closed.
Loss of character of rural lanes, and traffic issues	There is potential for the special qualities of narrow, hedged rural lanes to be lost due to unnecessary signage and other 'clutter', particularly through villages/ hamlets and at junctions. Some traditional signposts are in a poor condition. Wide vehicles (including farm vehicles) may also damage gateways, bridges and sunken lanes. Lorries use the B1390 (narrow in places) to avoid restrictions at Dunster, resulting in loss of tranquillity, and damage to the road surface.

Issue/Force for Change	Landscape sensitivities and potential impacts
Demand for residential development	New development could appear incongruous within the landscape if it is not carefully sited and designed with reference to settlement form, scale and building materials. .
Skyline features	Skylines within the LCT are very prominent and therefore sensitive to change. Where masts occur on summits (e.g. Kennisham) they can be seen over a wide area. Large farm buildings may be viewed against skylines when seen from lower viewpoints. Poles and wires alongside roads and in villages/ hamlets are also noticeable.
Views outside the National Park	There are extensive views from this LCT over land outside the National Park. Vertical features (for example the communications masts at Washford) are prominent in views. New developments, renewable energy schemes (e.g. solar farms) and highways schemes outside the National Park boundary will all potentially affect views from within the National Park. They may also increase light pollution.
Tree disease	This is a well-treed landscape, with different types of woodland and trees. It is therefore vulnerable to a range of tree pests and diseases, including (for example) ash dieback, phytophthora, leaf miner moth and bleeding canker (which particularly affect horse chestnut trees). Not only is tree disease likely to affect the types of species present, but felling to prevent further spread of disease is also likely to affect the appearance of woodland and parkland within the landscape.
Climate change	Woodlands within the LCT are likely to be affected by drought, and by increased frequency and intensity of storms, including rain (increasing flood risk) and high winds blowing over or damaging trees. Changing temperatures and seasonal patterns may affect crop choices and farming patterns, which will be particularly noticeable in parts of this LCT used for arable crops



Recently felled and partially replanted woodland with tracks visible, Eastern Wood



Pheasant feeder, near Roadwater



Lattice tower of wireless station on Kennisham Hill



Poorly maintained traditional signpost, Robbery Gate

## Landscape Management Recommendations for LCT I

### Landscape Strategy

Woodlands are well-managed in a holistic way, and contain a mosaic of deciduous and coniferous woodland, heathland and glade habitats which reflect the landscape patterns of the LCT. Game shoots are managed in a way which is not detrimental to the character of the landscape, and the cumulative impacts of game crops, feeders and other game-rearing equipment is minimised. Hedgerows and hedgebanks are well maintained, as are the designed landscapes of historic parks. Recreation is encouraged, and there is wider awareness of this part of the National Park. Development is sensitive to the existing built form of the area, and views (particularly skylines) are free from intrusive features. The historic features of the landscape, including its mining heritage, are celebrated and easy to access.

## LCT-Specific Management Guidelines for LCT I

### Protect

- Protect skylines from visually-intrusive masts and other structures including new housing and agricultural buildings.
- Protect archaeological sites such as The Incline, including raising awareness of the area's mining heritage, and encourage public access where possible.
- Protect views from the National Park which include land outside the National Park Boundary. Work with neighbouring authorities (including Quantock Hills AONB) to ensure a consistent response to development proposals outside the National Park boundary.
- Protect dark night skies, minimising sources of light pollution (e.g. arising from new agricultural buildings) within the LCT.

### Manage

- Manage woodlands, considering plans for plantations once they reach maturity, for example creating heathland areas or re-planting with broadleaf species (particularly in plantations on

ancient woodland sites). Consider extending the coverage of broadleaved woodlands, and enhancing the links between them, to increase resilience to climate change impacts. Work with landowners to encourage good practice with regard to forestry tracks.

- Work with land owners to manage parklands, including retention and restoration of features such as estate railings which are characteristic of this type of landscape. Manage and monitor parkland and veteran trees, and support planting of new specimens so that parkland trees continue to be a feature of the landscape. Nettlecombe Park should be managed in accordance with its SSSI Management Plan.
- Manage commercial game shoots, and work with farmers and landowners to minimise the cumulative impacts of game crops, feeders and other equipment.
- Manage surviving traditional orchards, and consider supporting the planting of new ones in appropriate locations (e.g. adjacent to farmsteads, hamlets and villages).
- Manage farmlands, including hedgerows, hedgebanks, gateways, walls, and hedgerow trees to retain the traditional pattern of the landscape, and also to provide habitat corridors between woodlands.
- Manage recreation within the area, encouraging visitors (thereby reducing visitor pressure at more vulnerable sites in other parts of the National Park) and providing suitable facilities, paths and interpretation. This could focus on the area's mining heritage. Work with organisers of large-scale recreation events to minimise landscape impacts.

#### Plan

- Work with the Highways Authority to minimise signage, road markings and street lighting which erode the rural character of lanes. Restore dilapidated traditional road signs.
- Work with multiple landowners to develop a large-scale and holistic plan for the area's woodlands.
- Campaign at a National level for forestry, woodland and farmland grants which will encourage responsible public access into private land (e.g. paths in permitted access woodland), promote woodland biodiversity and enable the long-term survival of landscape features such as traditional species-rich hedgerows and hedgebanks.

NOTE- See also detailed recommendations in the following document:

- *Unlocking Exmoor's Woodland Potential* (LRJ Associates and Silvanus for The Exmoor Society, August 2013)
- *The Exmoor Guidelines for the Management of Game Birds in the National Park*, Exmoor National Park Authority. Available on Exmoor National Park Authority website

## Specific Planning Guidelines for Wooded and Farmed Hills with Combes with LCT I

This section describes the planning guidelines which are specific to the Wooded and Farmed Hills with Combes Landscape Character Type. See also the general landscape planning guidelines in Part 3.

Defining qualities which need to be protected should new development occur, and which any new development should reflect:

Defining Quality to Protect	Perceived Threats and Issues	Guidance
Valley bottom/ lower slope settlements, often comprising loose associations of farmsteads and hamlets around river crossing points. Roadwater is more linear in form, possibly reflecting industrial influences.	Linear development which extends along the lanes and onto higher slopes away from the river valley location and undermines perceptions of a compact small scale community.	Where development along lanes is necessary, ensure it is broken up with areas of open space/landscape to avoid perceptions of high density linear growth which detracts from traditional nucleated settlement form. Avoid elevated locations for new development. Encourage infill where it would reinforce and respond to the nucleated settlement form, whilst ensuring that there is no detrimental impact on the settings of listed buildings and prominent elevated locations are avoided.
Limited palette of building types including terraced cottages, detached houses and farm complexes.	Development which is of an inappropriate form or with inappropriate detailing and arrangement that does not reflect local distinctiveness.	Ensure new built form reflects and draws on the design cues of existing local vernacular buildings. Ensure the proportion of wall is greater than windows.
Tight, winding and enclosed rural lanes connecting and passing through settlements.	New development along roadsides within or adjoining settlements which suburbanises the lane e.g. through curtilage treatment, straightening of road, introduction of pavements, kerbs, lighting or signage.	Care should be taken with curtilage treatment and ensuring the correct physical and visual relationship between dwellings and the road, in order to retain roads' rural character and sense of enclosure within and approaching settlements.
Rounded hills and slopes and wooded skylines. 'Squat' church towers rarely break the skyline but are set on the valley sides with a land/wood backdrop.	New vertical structures which break the skyline and are visually obvious and draw the eye.	Ensure new vertical structures are set below the skyline or visually integrated through use of carefully sited native planting.



A carefully-designed new house utilising local materials and vernacular features



Kingsbridge, with older and newer houses blending in the valley floor



Large agricultural buildings, Churchtown. The buildings follow the landform down the valley side, and avoid breaking the horizon. Materials and colours are generally muted and non-reflective



Locally-distinctive bank facing of vertical slates, Chidgley