

AONB Partnership Committee Meeting

to be held at

10am on Friday 25 November 2022

Hybrid Meeting

Repton Room at Follaton House and via Zoom

Agenda & Papers



South Devon AONB Staff Unit, Follaton House, Totnes, TQ9 5NE
Telephone 01803 229330 Email enquiries@southdevonaonb.org.uk

AONB Partnership Committee Membership

Members nominated by local authorities

Devon County Council	Cllr Roger Croad Cllr Jonathan Hawkins (officer advising Peter Chamberlain)
Plymouth City Council	Mike Oxford
South Hams District Council	Cllr Nicky Hopwood Cllr Bernard Taylor (officer advising Graham Swiss)
Torbay Council	Cllr Anne Brooks (officer advising Tracy Brooks)

Members nominated by statutory agencies

Environment Agency	Emma Magee
Forestry Commission	Jacob Taylor
Historic England	Ross Simmonds
Natural England	Eamon Crowe Becky Hughes

Members co-opted by the AONB Partnership Committee

Independent	John Green (Chair)
National Trust	Richard Snow
Plymouth University	John Martin (Vice Chair)
South West Coast Path Association	Ken Carter (Apologies given – Bob Mark as substitute with support from Lorna Sherriff)

Community Representatives

Amenity groups	Penny Mills
Business community	Gary Jolliffe
Coast and marine sector	Natasha Bradshaw
Community/voluntary groups	Peter Sandover
Environmental organisations (NGOs)	Ed Parr-Ferris
Landowning/farming community	Charles Wreford-Brown
Parish Councils	Liz Hitchins
Tourism community	Laura Campbell

AONB Unit staff attending

AONB Manager	Roger English
AONB Projects Officer	Adam Davison
Life on the Edge Project Development Officer	Rob Skinner
AONB Office Manager	Vanessa Gray

Agenda

Item 1	Public statements	
The formal meeting and live recording to YouTube immediately follows the public statement session		
Item 2 (5 mins)	Introductions & apologies for absence	
Item 3	Declarations of Interests	
Item 4 (5 mins)	Minutes of the last Partnership Committee meeting (9 September 2022) for approval and any matters arising	Page 2
Item 5 (10 mins)	South Devon AONB Management 5a) Devon Local Nature recovery Strategy, National and Devon Nature Recovery Networks	to follow
(10 mins)	5b) South Devon AONB Nature Recovery Plan	Page 13
(10 mins)	5c) Life on the Edge Project	Page 16
(10 mins)	5d) South West Coast Path – National Trail 50 th Anniversary	Page 21
(10 mins)	5e) Plymouth Freeport/Freezone and Investment Zones	Verbal
Item 6 (10 mins)	National AONB Matters 6a) National Landscapes Prospectus and Branding	Page 26
(10 mins)	6b) Heritage Coasts Review	Page 29
(10 mins)	6c) All England Assessment & Strategic Landscape Mapping	Page 34
Item 7 (5 mins)	South Devon AONB Partnership Matters 7a) Partner Conference – Wednesday 25 th January 2023	Verbal
Item 8 (25 mins)	Partner updates – partner contributions to conserving and enhancing the South Devon AONB and AONB Management Plan priorities – recent, current and year ahead. A summary of the 30 th September meeting of the AONB Core Funding Group will be provided during this item	Verbal
Item 9	For Information 9a) Planning update	Annex

ITEM 4 Approval of Minutes & Matters Arising

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SOUTH DEVON AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE REMOTE VIDEO MEETING VIA ZOOM ON FRIDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2022

1. INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Those present were:

Peter Chamberlain	PC	Devon County Council
Cllr Nicky Hopwood	NH	South Hams District Council
Graham Swiss	GS	South Hams District Council
Cllr Anne Brooks	AB	Torbay Council
Emily Browne	EB	Plymouth City Council
John Green	Chair	Independent
Richard Snow	RS	National Trust
Penny Mills	PM	Representative: amenity groups
Peter Sandover	PS	Representative: community/voluntary groups
Ed Parr Ferris	EPF	Representative: environmental organisations (NGOs)
Liz Hitchins	LH	Representative: parishes
Laura Campbell	LC	Representative: tourism
Roger English	RE	AONB Manager

Apologies if you have been missed, please inform Vanessa Gray to be added to the list of attendees.
Kindly enter names in chat box if attending meetings remotely.

Also attending (to present):

Diane Lethbridge	DL	AONB Communications Officer
------------------	----	-----------------------------

Apologies for absence were received from:

Cllr Jonathan Hawkins		Devon County Council
Cllr Roger Croad		Devon County Council
Tracy Brooks		Torbay Council
Eamon Crowe		Natural England
Emma Magee		Environment Agency <i>does not work on Fridays</i>
John Martin	Vice-chair	Plymouth University
Ken Carter		South West Coast Path Association
Natasha Bradshaw		Representative: coast and marine

Observers

Observers were requested to follow the meeting live via YouTube

2. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

2.1 No public statements.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

3.1 No interests were declared.

4. MINUTES OF THE 11 MARCH 2022 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING FOR APPROVAL & ANY MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

4.2 Progress on Actions:

4.2.1 ACTION 1: AONB Manager to follow up obtaining copies of slides on the following presentations 'Plymouth Sound National Marine Park' and 'Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest' given by Kat Deeney. Not in minutes: obtain and circulate email addresses for each of these projects.

i. National Marine Park: NMPHorizon@plymouth.gov.uk

ii. Community Forest: PSDCF@plymouth.gov.uk

4.2.2 ACTION 2: Diane Lethbridge, AONB Communications Officer, to send key business contact details to Gary Jolliffe, representative for the business community. COMPLETE.

4.2.3 ACTION 3 (& 4): AONB Manager to draft and circulate a South Devon AONB Partnership Committee response to the Landscapes Review.

i. COMPLETE. The AONB Manager thanked everyone who sent him their thoughts and ideas.

4.2.4 ACTION 5: Nicy Bailey, AONB Community Projects Officer, to liaise with Liz Hitchens regarding providing a presentation on the Life on the Edge project.

i. UPDATE: Maxine Kennedy, co-ordinator for dementia friendly parishes around the Yealm, has joined the Life on the Edge working group.

5A STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT FROM AONB CHAIRS ON CLIMATE ACTION

The Chair referred to the meeting papers for this item.

5a.1 It was proposed that

- i. Climate action will be a substantive agenda item at the next partnership meeting taking place on 25 November.
- ii. A climate action workshop will follow the next partnership meeting to bring together those that are interested to explore what partnership committee members can do on top of what the organisations they represent are doing.
- iii. The Climate Action Framework and Toolkit will be circulated to committee members as soon as they are finalised.
- iv. Climate action will influence the next AONB Management Plan.

5a.2 In discussion

- i. PC: Bearing in mind the aspiration to develop an action plan this year, and the limited time available, it may be useful to know that Blackdown Hills have recently adopted something very similar quite recently.
- ii. EPF: Keen to be involved in climate action discussion at the next meeting. There is a lot of work going on regarding the climate generally so would like the partnership committee's work to be relevant to the local area. In particular, looking at estuaries and coast is very relevant to our area.

- iii. The wish is to add to what is already happening and to do something different where this aligns with the AONB primary purpose.
- iv. PS: Keen to see existing work linked up, particularly linking in to the Devon climate change initiatives, flagging the most appropriate for the AONB, so people know where to go for further information without duplicating effort.

5B NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AONBs WORK

The AONB Manager provided a verbal update. Main points:

- 5b.1 The NAAONB is focussed on ensuring the government's response to the consultation following the landscapes review, is delivered in full. It is understood a report on the findings is due mid-October.
- 5b.2 The NAAONB, with support and contributions from AONB lead officers, are developing a prospectus to be used to work with the new ministerial staff in post in Defra and beyond, and that can be used as an advocacy tool locally. Not yet finalised but hope to have something to share post conference.
- 5b.3 Rebranding of AONB, linked to outcomes the landscapes review was seeking, will be covered under item 6A.
- 5b.4 There will be an opportunity to hear from the new Secretary of State for the Environment at conference and to understand how the government is seeing the areas and work connected with AONB matters. Sion McGeever, senior Defra official with responsibility for AONBs, will be part of the discussion panel at conference next week.
- 5b.5 The NAAONB had a change of chief executive in September last year with John Watkins taking over from Howard Davies.

In discussion

- 5b.6 In response to what actions could be taken to help keep a focus on the landscapes review and help progress things
 - i. Unfortunately there have been a number of delays for a variety of different reasons.
 - ii. Elements of work have taken place, for example where small sums of funding have been offered at short notice. It is anticipated that we will soon start to see some medium to longer term focussed activity.
 - iii. Expecting to see clarity around some of the legislative elements of the proposals and whether any will appear in the Planning and Regeneration Bill or will form part of different legislation.
 - iv. Starting to see a shift in terms of the Grant Funding Agreement; including a move toward National Landscapes Outcomes Framework and National Landscapes Strategy that Natural England are working on, on behalf of Defra.
 - v. There will be a key opportunity when the government's response to the consultation comes out to work with MPs, and other influential stakeholders, to help advance this work at pace.

6A DRAFT SOUTH DEVON AONB COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Diane Lethbridge, AONB Communications Officer, took committee members through the item contained in the papers. The key objective of which is equality of access for all parts of society. Main points:

- 6a.1 Recommendation 24 of the Landscapes Review included for AONBs to rebrand as National Landscapes.
 - i. Some AONBs have already adopted National Landscapes rebranding on their logos.

- ii. Defra have very recently offered funding (to the NAAONB) for this financial year to support a rebranding programme. This is purely rebranding not a formal name change, as legislation would be required to change the name.
- iii. National Landscape branding will ensure consistency across AONBs and introduce a more modern look. Devon has five AONBs all with different branding. We find there is a lack of awareness of the number of AONBs in Devon but a great awareness of the number of National Parks.
- iv. Further information on this at the next partnership meeting.

Observations and in discussion

6a.2 It was suggested a regular column, perhaps monthly, in the local papers would help get brand out.

- Although the AONB Estuaries Officer regularly contributes to a Nature Notes, most AONB contributions have tended to be campaign or project related. This focus may perhaps mean that central work is missed. The AONB Manager added that with other options including digital output, it is important to assess what channel(s) would have the greater impact. Thoughts, ideas and suggestions for topics and channels to the AONB Manager are welcomed.

6a.3 Rebranding to National Landscapes is a very significant issue that will dominate, and this fundamental shift needs to be reflected in the communications strategy.

- The AONB will absorb and respond to materials produced by the National Association for AONBs as they emerge. Following that a plan will be drafted for presentation to Partnership Committee.

6B AONB PARTNERSHIP CHAIR SUCCESSION PLANNING

The AONB Chair provided an update, referring to the proposed process and timescales contained in the meeting papers.

Post meeting update, revised timescale circulated by email on 20th September, as follows:

Expressions of interest for the two roles of Partnership Chair and Vice Chair are invited from current Partnership Committee members. Your self-nomination should be sent via email to the AONB Manager by 9am Monday 3rd October.

Observations and in discussion

6b.1 Thanks was expressed to the Chair for his time in the role.

6b.2 Peter Chamberlain and Ed Parr Ferris endorsed the process.

6b.3 The AONB Manager drew everyone's attention to the draft landscapes prospectus that advocates an independent Chair as best practise. South Devon AONB Partnership's current and previous two Chairs have been independent.

6b.4 The AONB Manager asked the Chair to provide an opinion on the prospect of extending the Chair and Vice chair's two year term to match the Community representative term of three years.

The Chair responded that two years was a short period of time and agreed that three years would be sensible however there would need to be careful thought as to whether this could be extended by a further full term. Peter Chamberlain suggested any change to the initial term should be decided prior to seeking nominations and that potentially a full extension of a three year term would not necessarily be excessive.

Extending the term of the Chair and Vice chair was put to vote. By show of hands (physical and electronic)

IT WAS DECIDED THAT

Chair and Vice Chair terms be extended to three years, to take effect when current incumbents step down.

- 6b.5 Responding to a question on where the role and responsibility of the Chair could be found, the AONB Manager said a summary of the role is contained in the meeting papers and a full role profile would be circulated post meeting.

ACTION 1 (AONB Manager): circulate Chair role profile

6C CORE FUNDING GROUP AND SUMMARY OF RECENT MEETINGS

- 6c.1 The AONB Manager referred to the series of questions relating to the Core Funding Group that had been submitted for consideration by Partnership Committee in accordance with the terms of reference. The questions having been circulated with the meeting papers.

i. A written response will be returned on behalf of Partnership.

- 6c.2 A verbal update on the Core Funding Group was provided by the AONB Manager. Main points:

- i. The Core Funding Group is effectively the Executive Group for the South Devon AONB.
- ii. Primary responsibility is focussed on financial and staffing related matters. The Host Authority, South Hams District Council, and Devon County Council who aside from Defra are the two main funding contributors to the core element of the AONB form the majority of the Core Funding Group.

- iii. Current Core Funding Group Membership:

South Hams District Council

- Cllr Nicky Hopwood and Cllr Bernard Taylor (both also Partnership Committee members)
- Officer advising: Head of Placemaking.

Note that the role is currently vacant however the interim officer, Chris Shears Economic Development Officer, is currently acting Head of Placemaking.

Devon County Council

- Cllr Roger Croad and Cllr Jonathan Hawkins (Cllr Hawkins is also a Partnership Committee member)
- Officer advising: Peter Chamberlan

Partnership Committee Chair

- John Green

Support from the AONB Manager and Vanessa Gray, AONB Office Manager.

- iv. Torbay Council and Plymouth City Council make important but smaller Core funding contributions. As these local authorities do not share any risks and liabilities associated with their contributions, they do not presently have a seat on the Core Funding Group.
- v. Local Authority elected member representatives are appointed by the local authorities through their individual processes for appointing member representatives to outside bodies. The AONB Partnership/AONB Core Funding Group is once such 'outside body'.

- vi. There are usually two meetings of the Core Funding Group a year, February and September, with an optional third meeting. Dates are timed to fit the Defra claim cycle and programme development for the following financial year.
- vii. The optional meeting is generally in late April or early May and can be triggered if there is a late decision or substantial change of direction. This year the optional meeting was triggered due to the major Core funder, Defra, providing AONBs with late notification of the 2022/2023 grant funding allocation and provision of a new Grant Funding Agreement leading to revising the set budgets for the new financial year.
- viii. The Core Funding Group considers budgets associated with each AONB cost centre:
 - a. Core budget
 - b. Projects budget
 - The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme figures are presented separately, allowing a specific focus. This project has dedicated funding from Defra.
 - The Life on the Edge project is presented separately. The project has a contribution from the National Lottery and the Core Funding Group acts as the oversight body.
 - c. Estuaries Budget
- ix. Core Funding Group looks at the project pipeline, general programme and plan. Note the programme of activity is strongly governed by the Defra Grant Funding Agreement and the requirements that come from Defra in connection with that. This year's Grant Funding Agreement key asks are associated with
 - a. **Nature and Climate**
Increasing the role of protected landscapes to deliver nature based solutions to help address the biodiversity and climate crises
 - b. **People and Place**
Improving access to protected landscapes for all parts of society and supporting communities that live and work there.
- x. Staffing and staff related matters are also overseen by Core Funding Group.
- xi. This year Defra offered an additional £23,700 for the core budget, conditional on finding a further £8,000 to unlock that funding. In response to this, Core Funding Group has agreed to set aside a sum of money to support a 1.5 days a week AONB planning support officer role. Working jointly with other AONBs, we are looking to provide a 3.5 days a week role, with a day for North Devon AONB and the other additional day for East Devon AONB. Plans were progressing well however the proposed national pay award means the increased AONB staff costs will be brought back to the next Core Funding Group meeting taking place later this month and partner AONBs are reconsidering their available budgets.

Observations and in discussion

- xii. The Chair explained that an update will be provided at Partnership Committee meetings where a Core Funding Group meeting has taken place. The Chair encourages Partnership members to speak to him prior to any meeting of the Core Funding Group so that he can make comment based on what Committee members have said. The Chair is also a voting member of the Core Funding Group.

- xiii. It was added that the existing Partnership Constitution, in addition to setting out AONB Partnership membership, terms of reference, structure and operation also sets out the role and operation of the Core Funding Group.
- xiv. The question of timescale for planning support was raised. The AONB Manager responded that colleagues in the other two AONBs are finalising their budget over the coming 2-3 weeks. Following that the recruitment process starts with submission of the role to the District Council HR panel that has a 3-6 week turnaround. Following that an advert will go live. Given the salary and duration constraints and the current state of the job market, it will be important to ensure the position is as attractive as possible. This may entail offering a longer duration for example.

7A AONB STAFF UNIT PRIORITIES, 2022/23 ACTION PROGRAMME AND MANAGEMENT PLAN DELIVERY PLAN

The AONB Manager provided a verbal update for this item. Main points:

- 7a.1 Staff unit priorities are principally drawn from the AONB Management Plan and Defra's Grant Funding Agreement, that sets the direction and tone with activities that are eligible for Defra funding.
- 7a.2 A large proportion of the work undertaken in support of priorities for the designated area is undertaken by a wide variety of different organisations and projects. The contribution from the AONB staff unit on behalf of Partnership is a small but important component.
- 7a.3 The annual programme of work is picked up in the Delivery Plan¹. Staff unit priorities are a subset of the entirety of the AONB Management Plan delivery plan. The AONB Manager gave a presentation on staff unit key priorities for 2022/23.

Observations and in discussion

- 7a.4 Peter Sandover: A number of Neighbourhood Plans have identified non-designated heritage assets in their plan area. Possible opportunity to bring some of these into the Coastal Heritage project.

7B REVIEW OF 2019-2024 AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

The AONB Manager went through the information for this item circulated in the meeting papers.

- 7b.1 The Chair asked Partnership members to vote on the recommendations made in the meeting papers.

Delaying a substantive review of the Management Plan term was put to a vote. By show of hands

AONB PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE VOTED IN FAVOUR.

The AONB Management Plan is produced on behalf of the local authorities so the final decision rests with them.

ACTION 2 (AONB Manager): Inform the local authorities the South Devon AONB Partnership Committee have voted in favour of delaying the substantive review and request their decision on this matter.

8 PARTNER UPDATES

An opportunity for Partners to update Partnership Committee on their projects contributing to conserve and enhance the South Devon AONB and working towards AONB Management Plan priorities.

- 8.1 Ed Parr Ferris, representative for environmental organisations (NGOs)

¹ www.southdevonaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2022-23-South-Devon-AONB-Delivery-Plan-binder.pdf

- i. Early indications from this summer's drought and low water levels is that there is a low impact on invertebrates this year however there is likely to be impacts next year, for example due to the effect of the drought on food plants that support them.
- ii. Although fewer wildfires than feared, there is still a risk of this happening.
- iii. Five sites were put forward as Highly Protected Marine Areas, none are in the South West despite some sites being proposed. There is a consultation, closes 28 September.
- iv. Four successful projects in Devon from the Landscape Recovery Scheme (ELMS), none within South Devon AONB.
- v. Beavers became a protected species with effect from 1st October.
- vi. Work to develop the Devon Nature Recovery Network work is progressing. About to start the next phase of prioritisation, due to be complete by the end of the year. This will be helpful to the AONB with development and delivery of their Nature Recovery Plan.
- vii. Plymouth City Council and Exeter City Council are working together with DWT on bracken management and pesticide management. Learning from this can feed into Life on the Edge and the wider AONB/ JLP area.

8.2 Peter Chamberlain, Devon County Council

- i. The final version of the Devon Carbon Plan would be launched on behalf of the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership on 15th September.
Post meeting update: delayed to avoid clashing with the period of national mourning, however the plan is now launched ²
- ii. Climate Adaptation Plan, covering the local resilience forum areas of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, had been delayed however consultants have been appointed to assist the process.
- iii. There is a statutory requirement to produce Local Nature Recovery Strategies. One strategy document will be produced covering the whole of Devon. The responsibility to jointly develop this rests with Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council. Currently waiting for some final details on the regulations from government including confirmation that funding will be made available for the process. In the meantime some initial work is underway through Local Nature Partnerships. Will engage with wider range of groups later in the Autumn.

8.3 Peter Sandover, representative for community and voluntary groups

- i. Engaging with more community and voluntary groups in area. The AONB Manager and Estuaries Officer will speak at a National Coast Watch Prawle Point station meeting on 11th October.
- ii. Two Neighbourhood plans have passed examination and should go to referendum soon. These both contain a number of green environment policies which both DWT and the AONB both contributed.
 - a. Dartmouth Neighbourhood Plan
 - b. Kingsbridge, West Alvington and Churchstow
- iii. Encouraging groups to use the My Place, My Views survey³. I understand the views and opinions gathered will help shape future conversations about the Joint Local Plan.

8.4 Penny Mills, representative for amenity groups

² <https://devonclimateemergency.org.uk/view-devon-carbon-plan/>

³ <https://pshwd.commonplace.is/>

- i. In regular contact with the Amenity Groups via email and Zoom. The following concerns have been raised:
 - a. Although a Friends of South Devon AONB Scheme, to raise awareness of the AONB, has been raised before, would like this to be considered and aware the Communications Strategy is currently under review.
 - b. The Freeport is a big concern. Seems to have gone under the radar but covers a large area of Plymouth, South Hams, West Devon and Dartmoor. What do you think might be the potential impacts, particularly on protected landscapes? It is difficult to understand it all, trying to find out more about it. Interested to hear Roger's views.

The AONB Manager responded:

In light of recent national coverage, and a flurry of email messages, the AONB Manager followed this up with local authority colleagues to find out what the position is, particularly if any impacts upon the AONB have been identified and how are those are planned for or mitigated in the business plans. Chris Brook, Director of Place and Enterprise at South Hams District Council, replied that there is no impact on the South Devon AONB. Development will be at three designated sites only, all outside of the AONB: South Yard Plymouth, Langan and Sherford. There are no plans to change the planning system. Other concerns that have been raised with the AONB Manager relate to the outside boundary line shown on freezone maps. Clarification on the intent of that outside line would be beneficial. A number of sources have said the outside line is effectively an exterior boundary within which another Freeport cannot be brought forward. The lack of detailed information in the public domain and lack of clarity has led to a lot of justifiable concern.

In discussion:

Penny Mills: A key phrase in the statements that have been released is the weakening of planning regulations. Could someone attend and address the next meeting?

ACTION 3 (AONB Manager): Explore the possibility of someone from the local authorities to come and address the next meeting to provide further information/clarification.

If any further information or clarification is obtained in between meetings, this should be shared promptly to provide clarity and hopefully some comfort that it is not as catastrophic as some fear given the absence of information to date.

Graham Swiss: Raised the question on potential implications for planning control and received advice back that there would be no related relaxation of planning requirements. The sites identified to date are geographically defined with the two in South Hams being employment at Sherford and extending existing employment development at Langan.

8.5 Liz Hitchins, representative for parish councils

- i. July visit to Stokenham Parish Council has had to be rearranged. Given a number of factors, this will now take place in early spring. Will contact Adam Davison and discuss this further.

In discussion:

Peter Sandover: Is a parish councillor at South Pool so they are covered.

8.6 Graham Swiss, South Hams District Council

- i. Commencing a review of the Joint Local Plan soon. A timetable for the formal review has not been published however it is expected to be well underway next year. Awaiting further national guidance to see what the government intends following the planning white paper.

8.7 Emily Browne, Plymouth City Council

- i. Will chase internally information to do with Freeports to feedback to the AONB Manager.

8.8 Richard Snow, National Trust

- i. Has been a persistent large fire at Bolberry Down, the hope is that after 2 months of burning and fire fighting this is now over. Lost 4-5 hectares of important SSSI coastal maritime cliff slope, with impacts on nature. This is also the only location to find Mediterranean oil beetle in the UK. Although not expected to be found on the slope the species is found in the Down and this area has been impacted by heavy vehicle traffic. Waiting to find full impact of this on ecology of the cliff and impact on the Down above. Looking to undertake an overseeding project on the down to introduce more species rich grassland. Hoping to engage university students to look at the impacts of the fire on the SSSI and how the habitat recovers.
- ii. Land, Outdoors and Nature agenda: South Down farm is now 3-4 years in on this project and is showing wonderful results with Cirl Bunting numbers increasing by 50% and the number of Skylarks also increasing. This approach has now started at Wembury; bio surveys are now complete so work can now progress.
- iii. Early stages of a woodland creation project at Wembury; an Environmental Impact Assessments are being prepared with the hope to create new woodland adjacent to the existing woodland around the estuary fringe.

8.9 Tracy Brooks, Torbay Council

- i. Avian Flu has emerged in Devon.

In discussion:

Ed Parr Ferris: South West is a hot spot for Avian Flu with a number of farms affected, mainly poultry units. A number of seabirds and other birds have now been affected. Do not handle dead birds and contact Defra / follow advice online (as appropriate)⁴

- ii. JLP: Regulation 18 consultation on Local Plan site options and housing policies will take place hopefully later this month; links will be circulated if the Partnership committee desires.
- iii. Part of the Local Plan update, expecting to review landscape evidence. Preparatory work now taking place.
- iv. AONB provided advice on the Upton Manor Farm planning application for over 100 dwellings. The application was refused, principally on AONB grounds.
- v. Hybrid meeting seems to have worked well.

NEXT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

- 25 November at 10am, hybrid meeting venue Repton Room at Follaton House. Includes an afternoon session on how the Partnership can add value on climate change action.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu>

ITEM 5 South Devon AONB Management

5A. Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy, National and Devon Nature recovery Networks

ITEM FOR	INFORMATION and FEEDBACK	REPORT BY	Roger English AONB Manager
SUMMARY	This report updates AONB Partnership members on a range of nature recovery activity in progress linked to the statutory requirement in the Environment Act 2021 and the nested approach being progressed in Devon.		
AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES	<p>PLACE: Natural resources & climate; Biodiversity & geodiversity; Farming and land management; Coast & marine; Rivers & estuaries; Landscape Character.</p> <p>All PEOPLE: Tourism, access & recreation; Planning & sustainable development; Transport & highways; Rural economy & services; Community & culture.</p> <p>All PARTNERSHIP: Awareness & communication; Management, organisation & partnerships.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Partnership members are recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. note the scope of nature recovery planning work being undertaken at a national, county and local level. ii. Provide views on elements of nature recovery work to be prioritised over the next six months and links to be made to other initiatives to ensure nesting and added value 		

This item will follow separately

5B. South Devon AONB Nature Recovery Plan

ITEM FOR	INFORMATION & FEEDBACK	REPORT BY	Adam Davison, AONB Projects Officer
SUMMARY	This report provides Partnership Committee members with an update on the development of Phase 2: Nature Recovery Plan ‘Live’ for the South Devon AONB.		
AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES	<p>PLACE: Natural resources & climate; Biodiversity & geodiversity; Farming and land management; Coast & marine; Rivers & estuaries; Landscape Character.</p> <p>ALL PEOPLE: Tourism, access & recreation; Planning & sustainable development; Transport & highways; Rural economy & services; Community & culture.</p> <p>ALL PARTNERSHIP: Awareness & communication; Management, organisation & partnerships.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Partnership members are recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Note the draft SDAONB Phase 2 Nature Recovery Plan ‘Live’ and view the key opportunities map to provide comments and support. Advocate for the Nature Recovery Plan in discussions with the area’s communities, farmers, landowners, stakeholders and businesses to drive engagement with its development. Advise the AONB Manager of any areas of activity the Partnership feels the AONB Unit should be prioritising or paying particular attention to developing collaborative actions in response to the wider issues of the climate and biodiversity crisis. Indicate to the AONB Manager your interest in joining the ongoing Partnership working group towards the production of a final iterative Nature Recovery Plan by March 2023. 		

Background

- [Item 6a, Nature Recovery of the 26/11/2021 Partnership Committee meeting](#), provided members with context and timetable detailing the phased development of a Nature Recovery Plan for the South Devon AONB. The following report introduces the next phase of Nature Recovery Plan development for the South Devon AONB. This is intended to nest within, link to and complement the Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Nature Recovery Network Mapping.

Phase 1- Draft AONB Nature Recovery Plan ‘Lite’

- A Phase 1 draft plan – Nature Recovery Plan Lite - has been developed with the support and involvement of partners and stakeholders and is included in the Annexes to these meeting papers. Partnership Committee members, key partners and stakeholders have all been working with AONB staff and external consultants to develop the plan through workshops and consultation rounds.
- The plan provides early thinking on an approach and priorities for nature recovery across and beyond the South Devon AONB. The draft Plan is underpinned by a zoomable map that spatially defines existing nature-first areas and identifies those areas that can further reverse the biodiversity crisis we face.

4. In addition to supporting our local authorities in the development of a statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the plan sets out South Devon's contribution to 30x30 commitments (30% of our land and sea to be connected and protected for nature's recovery by 2030) and the National Association for AONBs Colchester Declaration which commits AONBs to publish Nature Recovery Plans by March 2023.

Phase 2 - Draft AONB Nature Recovery Plan 'Live'

5. A Nature Recovery Plan 'Live' will be prepared for publication in March 2023 and will continue to be an iterative document responding to the emerging Devon Nature Recovery Nature Map, Devon State of Environment and State of Nature reports, Local Nature Recovery Strategy and National Nature Recovery Network.
6. Phase 2 seeks to further iterate the plan from its current position systematically addressing gaps and deficiencies. The proposed long term objectives for 2050 take us beyond the scope of many current and future strategic documents based on the need to address the biodiversity crisis and are intended to provide a transformational plan for the future.
7. The whole of the AONB will be incorporated through a 3 tier approach of 'nature-friendly, nature-rich, nature-first'. Nature positive action is required at all scales and from everyone to catalyse the large scale change needed to successfully recover nature.
8. The South Devon AONB Phase 2 Nature Recovery Plan 'Live' will nest together with plans, strategies and networks developed in tandem at various spatial scales, extending beyond the AONB boundary up to Dartmoor, across the whole of the South Hams and into Torbay and Plymouth.

Further work pre-March 2023 publication

9. Further work will be undertaken to improve on the Phase 1 draft document and companion mapping, in response to key areas identified as requiring further development. Actions include:
 - Developing clear metrics, setting realistic targets for 2030, 2040 and 2050, together with incorporating mechanisms to monitor and report on change.
 - Considering existing marine and wetland habitats in more detail to quantify opportunities, priorities and associated targets for recovery.
 - Fully reflecting responsibility for the Heritage Coast and better articulate the nature recovery opportunities and priorities for inshore waters, islands and coastal intertidal areas.
 - Developing additional mapping solutions to assist with refining targeting.
 - Quantifying mission critical gaps in data, understanding additional work required and taking interim decisions based on best-available information.

- Developing an Action Plan and project pipeline to accompany the Recovery Plan following an integrated approach, working closely with partners, landowners, land and water managers.
- Identification of projects and actions supporting nature recovery that will also contribute to natural flood management, carbon capture and storage and other forms of nature-based solutions to help tackle climate change.
- Highlighting opportunities and priorities for collaboration through the Catchment Based Approach, with Dartmoor National Park Authority, Devon's protected landscapes, AONBs and National Parks Coastal Cluster.
- Identification and quantification of opportunities for at-scale green finance investment, philanthropic support and corporate social responsibility contributions.
- Resolving accessibility of the plan and mapping to ensure that the material can be easily used and provide inspiration for new audiences to engage with nature recovery.

Item Ends

5C. Life on the Edge Project

ITEM FOR	FEEDBACK	REPORT BY	Rob Skinner, Life on the Edge Project Development Officer
SUMMARY	This report provides Partnership members with a Summer/Autumn 2022 update on progress with the Life on the Edge project led by the South Devon AONB in partnership with Buglife as a key delivery partner.		
AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES	<p>ALL PLACE: Natural resources & climate; Biodiversity & geodiversity; Farming and land management; Historic Environment & Local Distinctiveness; Coast & marine; Rivers & estuaries; Landscape Character.</p> <p>ALL PEOPLE: Tourism, access & recreation; Planning & sustainable development; Transport & highways; Rural economy & services; Community & culture.</p> <p>ALL PARTNERSHIP: Awareness & communication; Management, organisation & partnerships.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Partnership members are recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Note the scope of project work undertaken to date together with that in development, and take opportunities to engage in activities and offer feedback Assist with identifying and securing further sources of project funding recognising Delivery Phase budget pressures created by high inflation 		

Background

1. Life on the Edge is a Landscape Scale project that aims to restore viable populations of some of UK's most threatened invertebrates and plants living along the changing South Devon Coast involving the collaboration and support of whole communities.
2. This report builds on the last project update⁵ provided to the Partnership in March 2022. To avoid repetition here, please refer back to this earlier paper for background information or visit <https://www.southdevonaonb.org.uk/projects/life-on-the-edge/>

Summary

3. Since the project kick started in earnest in March this year there has been progress at a fantastic speed. On secondment from the National Trust, Rob Skinner now heads up the Life on the Edge project team as Project Development Officer.
4. Plans are shaping up well to involve a wider range of people; Partner organisations are stepping forward, to collaborate on the project. Progress with landowners and other organisations interested in land use is positive and we are finding that there is growing interest in what *Life on the Edge* has to offer. Our survey effort has already produced several new species for the area and our teams of volunteers are enthusiastic. Our rarest bee remains elusive but other species data is proving extremely valuable. Our community engagement work is focused on raising awareness and giving people the tools to make changes. Early evidence is that people find the information accessible and inspiring and that they will be open to taking

⁵ https://www.southdevonaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/AONB-PCM_AgendaPapers_11Mar22-FINALv2-for-web.pdf pages 26-34

action to help invertebrates. As our evaluation plans develop it will enable us to evidence this.

5. The following account sets out progress to date across the various work streams.

Land and Nature

6. The summer has been busy with ecological surveys within our five project hotspots. Significant activity has been with our two contracted surveyors, who have been busy monitoring plants and invertebrates in these areas. Significantly, our invertebrate surveyor, Andy Godfrey rediscovered a Brown-banded carder bee, which is the first record in South Devon since 2008. The very dry summer brought tricky growing conditions to our coastal flora, however Andy Byfield from Plantlife was able to accurately record over 72 significant plant species and identify 26 important microhabitats within our hotspots. Both these data sets will prove invaluable in increasing our baseline knowledge of our project's Devon Special Species.
7. Progress on farm management plans, laying the foundations for our special species conservation remains steady. Through an opportunity of a Farming in Protected Landscape project focusing on providing farm management advice we were able to inject Life on the Edge specialist knowledge, significantly enabling project exposure through to important landowners within our hotspots. It has been recognised that communicating our conservation message to the rural land management sector could be tricky and therefore we took the opportunity to facilitate a workshop with AONB staff and project partners to develop thinking around this topic. As a result plans are being made for a set of Life on the Edge land management resources, as well as a series of farmer-focused workshops and site visits in coming months.
8. South Devon AONB Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) officer is working well with the Life on the Edge project team, sharing prospective FiPL projects, and seeking specific input from the expertise of the project team. At present there are several active projects at various stages of development and delivery within LotE hotspots.
9. A very useful training session was held on 18 July, led by Simon Tomasso of Devon Wildlife Trust to share learning from DWT's long running successful programme of grassland restoration. This was attended by National Trust staff and covered many practical aspects of seed harvesting that they will be able to apply with the seed harvester shortly arriving on the South Devon coast. The harvester, enabled through funding from a FiPL project, will be owned and managed by the National Trust but made available for use by others. Plans are also being made for a 'grassland management resource' – a tool kit for sharing knowledge of grassland creation/enhancement and the practical application of land management techniques.
10. The project's Conservation Management Plan is being reviewed using data from the summer surveys. This is paving the way for development of a set of prescriptions to enhance habitats for species conservation. The Conservation Management Plan is an important tool to enable the targeting of resources and inform the preparation of year 1 and 2 Delivery Phase works.

11. Specialist training for project volunteers has been carried out. This has included butterfly transects, use of the Pollinator Monitoring Scheme, Oil beetle ecology and survey workshops (which were recorded and can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GFKAr0-Jz1E>) and specific Long horned bee/six banded nomad training days, and surveys of Prawle hotspots.

People and communities

12. Two consultants have been instructed to conduct our evaluation:
- White Rook – Robin Clutterbuck: project evaluation. Along side ongoing guidance Robin has created an Evaluation Framework in which we can test the effectiveness of the project.
 - Phil Collins Associates: audience and activity development - to research our priority community engagement groups, namely isolated older people and disconnected young people across our geography, with a special focus on the urban areas of Plymouth and Torbay.
13. Two workshops have been held to explore barriers for these groups, which provided useful insights. Transport emerged as a significant barrier, as did the need for activities in areas local to the groups. The findings from this phase of research are informing a) the next phase of trial activities in late winter 2022/spring 2023; and b) the Delivery Phase Activity Plan.
14. A series of community events have been well attended throughout the summer with over 1000 children and adults involved with the project so far. Events ranged from Country shows to ‘marvellous minibeasts workshops’ at Torre abbey and The Box Plymouth, to a schools day at Dartmouth Food festival. We’ve also conducted focused activities for our target audiences with Devon Young Carers. Future activities will involve King Edward VI Community College Totnes and Wembury Primary School to plan trial activities for later in the academic year.
15. We have also been working with More Meadows to set up online talks and training as part of the ‘South Devon Meadow Makers’ package which will include talks (online and in-person), provision of an online Life on the Edge forum area, mapping small meadow land owners on their interactive map and an Open Meadows event in Spring 2023.
16. With the support of The Box, Plymouth a film was commissioned about climate change and its impact on the South Devon coastline, its habitats and species in which Hayley Herridge, our Conservation Officer was interviewed. A link to the short film can be found at - <https://youtu.be/uWPNe4KBCA4>
17. Good progress has taken place in talking with partners and training providers on developing our Life on the Edge Apprenticeships. These will be hosted within Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust and National Trust teams through the Delivery phase of the project. Apprentices will gain skills and work across the whole Life on the Edge project landscape.

18. There has been a fantastic response to the trial of our 'Life on the Edge Pollinator Plans' - with enthusiastic involvement so far from Chivelstone Parish Council, Holbeton environment sub-committee and Exeter dioceses (Eco-churches). There are also plans to include a keen school, in greening their grounds. These plans will pave the way to creating small or large cohesive biodiversity projects which will be eligible for our community grant scheme through the delivery phase.

Governance, Contractors & Staffing

19. Following a successful recruitment process a Communications Assistant Intern has been secured through Exeter University. Jowan Albon started just a few weeks ago and will be working part time on the Life on the Edge Project and part time on wider AONB communications. Jowan comes with a wealth of knowledge from previously writing his own online content and is enthusiastically getting stuck in. He will help us shape our communications plan for the project along with trialling communication techniques and methods.
20. Five contracts were awarded through this period of activity. In addition to the four already mentioned in this report, Dominic Acland was awarded the critical friend and project support contract.
21. Project Advisory Board meetings have been well attended by represented groups. The membership currently sits at 25, involving farmers and landowners, representatives from Devon County Council, local NGO representatives, Parish Councillors. To date we have held 3 very useful meetings - two online and one in person.
22. Further to the Project Advisory Board, we have a highly engaged Project Management Team, which meet to discuss on the ground issues and gain learning from main project delivery partners. The group comprises working representatives from the South West Coast Path Association, National Trust and Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust.

Fundraising and budgets

23. Year to date, the project budget is running slightly below forecast. However, committed spend on the four large contracts that are nearing completion or key payment stages are likely to be invoiced for in the coming quarter which will bring us back on target.
24. In-kind time is currently running above budget and gives a good reflection on the level of professional engagement in developing this project. Volunteer engagement is slowly starting to pick up, and as expected with a project at this stage of development. We expect to increase the number of skilled volunteers and their corresponding time contributions as the project progresses.
25. The fundraising outlook for the delivery phase is looking particularly strong for a development project at this stage. Against current delivery phase budget projections we only require a further c.£15k to reach the target for match funding. We will be working with our delivery partners, Buglife, and their access to charitable fundraising

streams to explore funding streams to plug this gap. At this stage we feel confident to meet this match fund target.

26. However, the project's National Lottery Investment Manager and Project Monitor have highlighted rising inflation rate and the likely impacts on project costs and contingencies. This translates into a requirement for us to review Delivery Phase costs and corresponding budget forecast with an expectation that the overall Delivery Phase budget will rise.
27. The National Lottery Heritage Fund will not allow an increase in our grant spend ceiling which was submitted at Round 1 stage, however we can change amounts within budget lines as long as it does not have a profound effect on our defined purpose and/or add additional match funding. The expectation at this stage is that additional sources of match funding will be required to be secured in order to make up any forecast shortfalls.

Item Ends

5D. South West Coast Path – National Trail 50th Anniversary

ITEM FOR	FEEDBACK	REPORT BY	Ken Carter, SW Coast Path Association Trustee
SUMMARY	This report introduces Partnership members to the South West Coast Path Association's 'Trailblazing for 50 Years' 2023 programme of events and activities along the South West Coast Path National Trail to celebrate this important milestone for the Charity and the SW Coast Path.		
AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES	<p>ALL PLACE: Natural resources & climate; Biodiversity & geodiversity; Farming and land management; Historic Environment & Local Distinctiveness; Coast & marine; Rivers & estuaries; Landscape Character.</p> <p>ALL PEOPLE: Tourism, access & recreation; Planning & sustainable development; Transport & highways; Rural economy & services; Community & culture.</p> <p>ALL PARTNERSHIP: Awareness & communication; Management, organisation & partnerships.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Partnership members are recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Note the scope of the programme and attend as many of the events and activities as you are able. Assist with identifying '50 Trailblazers' to attend the celebratory walks to provide special interest and to make each walk a unique experience 		

Background

1. The SWCPA Charity was established in 1973 and will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2023. It aims to use the year to increase the profile and awareness of the Charity and the SWCP. It intends to create a fundraising campaign to celebrate the 50th that can raise over £50,000 to support its work in breaking down barriers to accessing the national trail. It would like to collaborate with AONB partners around the region on a programme of events and activities along the Trail, stimulating engagement and promoting the SWCP. It would also like to take the opportunity to recognise the value that many volunteers and its members have made over the years. The theme and brand for the year will be 'Trailblazing for 50 Years.'

End to End Walk and Trailblazers

2. Named as The Trailblazer Walk with a dedicated logo, the Association intends to organise a relay walk starting in Minehead on the 12th May and at South Haven Point on the 27th May, with the finish at Royal William Yard (RWY), Plymouth (the Charity Office HQ) on the 15th June. It is hoped that a celebration Coastal Forum event can be organised at RWY and that all stakeholders with an interest in the SWCP will be invited. The itinerary for the southern section of walks is attached to this report and will pass through the South Devon AONB between 8th June for Brixham to Kingswear and 14th June for Wembury to Mountbatten. We hope that as many of the AONB Partners and AONB Unit can attend these walks, with half day options also available. Participants will be expected to arrange their own shared transport.
3. We would like to identify '50 Trailblazers' to attend these walks to provide a special interest and to make each walk a unique experience. These can be individuals who are ambassadors and celebrities with strong affinity to the SW or the section of walk,

who can tell their stories to draw people to attend the walks and make donations to support the Trail. The Association is currently seeking suggestions from its volunteers and members to identify these Trailblazers. It would particularly welcome suggestions from the AONB Partnership.

4. Walks will be identified if suitable for Mobility Scooter/tramper and follow the easy, moderate, strenuous, severe grading. Ticketing for each section (am and pm walks) will be via Eventbrite. Changeover at lunch spot. Coast Path Connectors project/teams will be invited to become involved with their sections. Walks are planned to be led by SWCPA Path Representatives and supported by members of the SWCP team, DCC PROW managers, National Trust and hopefully the AONB Unit. Coast Path friendly event organisers and walking tour providers will also be invited to be involved.

SWCP Photographer of the Year Exhibition

5. On the evening of 15th June the launch of the exhibition will take place at Ocean Studios RWY. Photographs will be displayed through the café area and possibly on the hoardings outside the front of the café. The Exhibition will be for 6 weeks and provide an opportunity for other special events e.g. a donors evening, auction off the photographs etc. Judges are in place and St Austell Brewery will be sponsoring while the Real Ideas Organisation, who manage Ocean Studios, are keen to work with us on some collaborative opportunities to engage the local community and work with the print-making studios at RWY in response to the photography exhibition. There could also be a photographic walking trail around RWY, the creation of a SW Coast Path large lino print and photography talks. The activities could be promoted to university and school groups, and other organisations to promote the exhibition.

Programme of Events

6. The Charity plans to hold a Coastal Forum on Friday 16th June at RWY Ocean Studios along with its formal AGM. It is hoped to also establish a more informal celebration with a 'festival vibe' with music and additional events held in a marquee on 15th. Three mini events are planned during the trailblazer walk at the starts in Minehead, South Haven and also at Jubilee Pool in Penzance. We would welcome ideas for other events from AONB's that can be promoted in their activity programmes.

Fundraising Campaign

7. The Associations Membership and Fundraising team are aiming to raise the target of £50k from a range of sources including Corporate Fundraising, tiered levels of sponsorship & Coast Path Friendly events. Others include the Trailblazing Campaign and advertising with business members 'Waymakers' plus Individual Giving, Community Fundraising. A major Donor fundraising event is planned and new tiers of membership are being considered for families and youth categories.
8. It is proposed that joining the walks should be free to all but a donation and fundraising contributions encouraged when booking through Eventbrite. A Target of

3,000 participants has been set for fund raising activities during the whole year with some walk number restrictions for practical management and safety reasons.

9. A Virtual Challenge Fundraiser for completing the whole path is to be launched early 2023 utilising the fundraising platform GivePenny for this campaign. In the meantime testing of their platform with the 12 Miles of Christmas campaign. A Just Giving Page for 50th is already set up for South West Coast Path Challenge. Two walking poles are being made and donations sought for carrying them along the north and south coasts.
10. A range of sponsorship opportunities are being developed and include a Headline 50th Anniversary Sponsor, a sponsor for the 50th edition of the SWCP Complete Guide and 50th edition of the Trail walking Passport. A sponsor is being sought for each of the 7 major colour coded sections in the guide.

PR & Media Campaign

11. Meetings are currently taking place with Media and Publishing companies to provide exposure in some of their titles. It is suggested that Communication staff within the AONB teams around the region make contact with Aletha Mays in order to help coordinate messages and timing.

Conclusion

12. 'Trail Blazing for 50 Years' the 50th Anniversary presents an opportunity to show case the work being undertaken by the family of Protected Landscape partnerships around the Region, through which the National Trail passes. It is hoped that the AONB Unit will use the opportunity of the 'End to End Walk' and the Programme of Activities to raise awareness of the tremendous amount being achieved for Cultural Heritage, Nature Recovery and Access to the Coastal corridor.

Item Ends

Appendix 1 to Item 5d



SOUTH HAVEN POINT - ROYAL WILLIAM YARD			
Date	Route	Miles	Grading
Sa 27 May	South Haven Point-Worth Matravers	14	Moderate then severe
Sa 27 May am	South Haven Point-Swanage	7.5	Moderate
Sa 27 May pm	Swanage-Worth Matravers	6.5	Moderate then Severe
Su 28 May	Worth Matravers-Lulworth Cove	14	Strenuous then Severe
Su 28 May am	Worth Matravers-Kimmeridge Bay	7	strenuous
Su 28 May pm	Kimmeridge Bay-Lulworth Cove	7	Severe!
M29 May	Lulworth Cove-Ferrybridge	14.5	Strenuous then Moderate
M 29 May am	Lulworth Cove-Osmington Mills	6	Strenuous
M 29 May pm	Osmington Mills-Ferrybridge	8.5	Moderate
Tu 30 May	Ferrybridge - Portland Bill	13	Moderate
Tu 30 May am	Ferrybridge-Portland Bill (east side)	7.5	Moderate
Tu 30 May pm	Portland Bill-Ferrybridge (west side)	5.5	Moderate
W 31 May	Ferrybridge-Abbotsbury	11	Easy
W 31 May am	Ferrybridge-Langton Herring	6	Easy
W 31 May pm	Langton Herring-Abbotsbury	5	Easy
Th 1 Jun	Abbotsbury-West Bay	9.5	Moderate then Strenuous
Th 1 Jun am	Abbotsbury-West Bexington	4	Moderate
Th 1 Jun pm	West Bexington-West Bay	5.5	Strenuous
F 2 Jun	West Bay-Charmouth	7	Strenuous then Moderate
F 2 Jun am	West Bay-Seatown	3	Strenuous
F 2 Jun pm	Seatown-Charmouth	4	Moderate
Sa 3 Jun	Charmouth-Seaton	10	Moderate
Sa 3 Jun am	Charmouth-Lyme Regis	3	Moderate
Sa 3 Jun pm	Lyme Regis-Seaton	7	Moderate
Su 4 Jun	Seaton-Sidmouth	10.5	Strenuous then Severe
Su 4 Jun am	Seaton-Branscombe	6.5	Strenuous
Su 4 Jun pm	Branscombe-Sidmouth	4	Severe!
M 5 Jun	Sidmouth-Exmouth	12.5	Strenuous then Moderate
M 5 Jun am	Sidmouth-Budleigh Salterton	7	Strenuous
M 5 Jun pm	Budleigh Salterton-Exmouth	5.5	Moderate
Tu 6 Jun	Starcross-Babbacombe	14.5	Easy then Strenuous
Tu 6 Jun am	Starcross-Teignmouth	8	Easy
Tu 6 Jun pm	Teignmouth-Babbacombe	6.5	Strenuous

W 7 Jun	Babbacombe-Brixham	13	Moderate
W 7 Jun am	Babbacombe-Paignton	7.5	Moderate
W 7 Jun pm	Paignton-Brixham	5.5	Moderate
Th 8 Jun	Brixham-Kingswear	11	Strenuous
Th 8 Jun am	Brixham-Scabbacombe Head	5.5	Strenuous
Th 8 Jun pm	Scabbacombe Head-Kingswear	5.5	Strenuous
F 9 Jun	Dartmouth-Torcross	10.5	Strenuous then Easy
F 9 Jun am	Dartmouth-Stoke Fleming	4.5	Strenuous
F 9 Jun pm	Stoke Fleming-Torcross	6	Strenuous then Easy
Sa 10 Jun	Torcross-East Portlemouth	12.5	Strenuous
Sa 10 Jun am	Torcross-Prawle Point	8	Strenuous
Sa 10 Jun pm	Prawle Point-East Portlemouth	4.5	Strenuous
Su 11 Jun	Salcombe - Hope Cove	8	Strenuous then Moderate
Su 11 Jun am	Salcombe-Bolberry Down	5.5	Strenuous
Su 11 Jun pm	Bolberry Down-Hope Cove	2.5	Moderate
M 12 Jun	Hope Cove-River Erme (Wonwell)	9.5	Moderate
M 12 Jun am	Hope Cove-Bantham	5	Moderate
M 12 Jun pm	Bigbury (Cockleridge)-R. Erme (Wonwell)	4.5	Moderate
Tu 13 Jun	R. Erme (Mothecombe)-Noss M. (ferry)	10.5	Strenuous then Easy
Tu 13 Jun am	River Erme (Mothecombe)-Stoke Point	5	Strenuous
Tu 13 Jun pm	Stoke Point-Noss Mayo (Yealm Ferry)	5.5	Easy
W 14 Jun	Wembury (Yeal ferry)-Mountbatten	7.5	Easy
W 14 Jun am	Wembury (Yealm Ferry)-Bovisand	4.5	Easy
W 14 Jun pm	Bovisand-Mountbatten	3	Easy
Th 15 Jun	Mountbatten-RWY	7.5	Easy
Th 15 Jun am	FINISH		

ITEM 6. National AONB Matters

6A. 'National Landscape' Prospectus and Branding

ITEM FOR	FEEDBACK	REPORT BY	Roger English, AONB Manager
SUMMARY	To introduce to AONB Partnership members the recently launched National Landscape prospectus and provide an opportunity for feedback		
AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES	Partnership - principally Awareness and Communication theme Others – underpins and links to all other Management Plan themes		
RECOMMENDATION	Partnership members are recommended to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide their feedback on the National Landscape prospectus 		

Background

1. The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) working closely with the AONB network has developed and published '*National Landscape: The designation for the 21st Century and beyond*'. The prospectus draws together the various threads from the 24 Landscape Review proposals and presented them as an integrated renewal of the AONB model.
2. The prospectus can be viewed in a web-based flip-book form or downloaded from <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/designation/>

National Landscape Prospectus

3. The final report of the Landscapes Review recommended in 2019 that AONBs be: '*Strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources; and renamed National Landscapes.*' The Government response provides the compass directing change that will deliver for nature, climate, economy and a greater diversity of people. The prospectus sets out a vision of what this will feel like and the roadmap to get there, including:
 - a renewal of the AONB mission,
 - new powers to create sustainable communities driven by the democratically derived management plan,
 - representative and expert governance,
 - and investment in delivery.
4. National Landscapes – the place and a 21st Century designation delivering for Nature Climate and People, supported by small teams working as nature does – through networks and across boundaries – to deliver impactful solutions to our time's most complex and pressing issues of nature recovery, climate change and citizenship.
5. The Vision covers:
 - National Landscapes - A forward thinking brand to match the ambition of the network

- Renewing the mission – new legal purposes
 - The power to create sustainable places
 - Representative and expert governance
 - Investing in delivery
6. Each section includes and accompanying vision. The vision for the forward-thinking brand is summarised on page 9 as:
- AONBs relaunched as National Landscapes, providing a ‘moment’ to demonstrate Government’s commitment to recovering nature, tackling climate change, and expanding access to improve health and wellbeing.
 - National Landscapes are recognised nationally and internationally as setting the standard for designated landscapes.
 - The values underpinning National Landscapes: inclusion, expertise, collaboration, innovation and accountability drive all the actions of the network of National Landscapes.
 - The modern look and feel presents a unified offer which unlocks green finance from organisations who have a clear understanding of the scale of National Landscapes and what they do and stand for.
 - Younger people and previously underrepresented groups are engaged with and aware of these places and they are a destination of choice. This feeling of belonging has resulted in wider representation on teams and Boards.
 - More consistent visual identity and a higher profile means National Landscapes have a familiar feel, people know what to expect from a visit and plan trips around visiting National Landscapes across the country

Rebranding the Association and AONBs

7. Research by the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty with key stakeholder groups revealed that the concept of a full rebrand was welcomed.
8. A rebrand is more than a rename: a rebrand is a package of meaningful change, not just a new label on the same product. Changing the way AONBs (Designation, National Association, Boards, Partnerships and Staff Units) present externally is symbolic of expanded powers and purposes, changes in governance and a more creative approach to engaging new audiences.
9. The legal title of designated areas will remain, but a branding shift to National Landscapes will introduce a forward-thinking brand to match the ambition of the network.

10. A report⁶ was considered on 13th October 2022 by the National Association for AONBs Board of Trustees. The board and subsequent AGM of the Charity approved the proposed rebrand programme linked to the Landscapes Review, underpinning the National Landscapes Prospectus.
11. Defra funding has been secured to take this work forward at a National Association level.

Summary

12. Strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources; and renamed National Landscapes, this uncontested transformational change can deliver a meaningful impact with a lasting legacy.

Item Ends.

⁶ [National Landscapes: Rebranding the Association \[NAAONB\] and AONBs](#)

6B. Heritage Coasts Review

ITEM FOR	CONSIDERATION & FEEDBACK	REPORT BY	Roger English (AONB Manager)
SUMMARY	This item introduces AONB Partnership members to the findings from the England review of Heritage Coasts undertaken during 2022		
AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES	<p>ALL PLACE: Natural resources & climate; Biodiversity & geodiversity; Farming and land management; Historic Environment & Local Distinctiveness; Coast & marine; Rivers & estuaries; Landscape Character.</p> <p>ALL PEOPLE: Tourism, access & recreation; Planning & sustainable development; Transport & highways; Rural economy & services; Community & culture.</p> <p>ALL PARTNERSHIP: Awareness & communication; Management, organisation & partnerships.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	<p>AONB Partnership members are recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Note the scope, conclusions and recommendations arising from the review Offer their views on priorities to be responded to through nature recovery, State of AONB monitoring, AONB Management Plan Review or other opportunities 		

Background

- Heritage Coasts are a landscape definition applied to the finest stretches of our most scenic and undeveloped coast. There are 32 in England covering around a fifth of the coastline. Heritage Coast objectives are to conserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty of the coasts; facilitate and enhance their enjoyment, understanding and appreciation by the public; and maintain and improve (where necessary) the environmental health of inshore waters affecting heritage coasts. Together with AONBs and National Parks they are part of our national family of most valued and protected landscapes. The South Devon Heritage Coast was defined in 1984.
- Visit <https://youtu.be/e6HqJccCtH8> for a short (4min) video introducing the Heritage Coasts review 2022. The full report, including a 7 page Executive Summary is available at https://www.coastalcommunities.co.uk/knowledge_hub_files/Heritage%20Coast%20Review%20-%20Final%20Report%20and%20Appendices%20July2022_WFNf.pdf

South Devon AONB and Heritage Coast

- The South Devon Heritage Coast has the third largest terrestrial area of England's Heritage Coasts and substantively overlaps (27%) with the South Devon AONB. The definition importantly includes inshore marine areas, islands, coastal foreshore additional to the AONB and a small terrestrial area to the west of Slapton that is defined as part of the Heritage Coast but that does not fall within the AONB itself. The South Devon AONB Management Plan also serves as the management plan for the South Devon Heritage Coast.



Review Summary⁷

- The review was the first 'stocktake' of English Heritage Coasts since 2005. Evidence on the delivery of Heritage Coast objectives, the value of these definitions, the influence of changes in policy and their future opportunities was collated via online questionnaires, a series of workshops and some targeted one to one conversations. New analysis of data provides some fascinating and helpful information about the collective of Heritage Coasts, the areas they cover and the communities that they relate to.
- The study showed that Heritage Coasts have retained their high national landscape quality, their objectives remain extremely relevant, and they are highly valued as a brand and as places to live, work and visit. They remain unique in that they straddle land and sea.
- The consultants drew conclusions and made recommendations to help boost the potential of Heritage Coasts. These are being considered by Natural England and partners.

⁷ <https://www.coastalcommunities.co.uk/knowledge-base/category/reports/heritage-coast-review-2022>

Conclusions

- i. Heritage Coasts continue to be coastlines of exceptionally fine scenic quality, rich in nature and cultural heritage, and highly valued as places to live, work and visit.
- ii. The objectives of Heritage Coasts, last updated 30 years ago, remain highly relevant to new national policy priorities. This is particularly the case at the terrestrial-marine interface where Heritage Coasts are unique as a spatial definition.
- iii. Notwithstanding the continuing relevance of its national objectives, the Heritage Coast definition is no longer referenced in national policy reviews and statements such as the Landscapes Review. An exception to this is the planning protection provided to Heritage Coasts through paragraph 178 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- iv. Activities that deliver most of the national objectives of Heritage Coasts continue to take place, supported by a wide range of partners. But the definition's omission from recent national landscape policy means that these can be ad hoc and lack the benefit of a stated shared ambition, coordinated and channelled through the recognition of the nationally important and valued coast.
- v. There is no current national monitoring of Heritage Coasts, leading to the risk that actions may be less joined up and outcomes less effective than they could be.
- vi. Planning policy appears to be effective in maintaining their undeveloped nature on land, but there is ambiguity over their status in marine and national infrastructure planning.
- vii. In most areas, the Heritage Coast definition itself is becoming lost and is receiving little dedicated attention within the designated landscapes in which most Heritage Coasts occur. A past strength of Heritage Coasts as a mechanism for engaging in practical environmental and recreational management with business and communities appears to have fallen out of favour, in part due to reduced funding.
- viii. Despite these shortcomings, the definition offers significant new capacity, reflecting national policy priorities, as a voluntary place-based status that complements designated landscapes.
- ix. Its key potential is in recognising coastal landscapes of high scenic and other environmental value which in turn provide opportunities for sustainable economic development, the growth of social capital within communities, and enhancement of personal health and wellbeing.
- x. Unless there is reconfirmation by Government of the role of the Heritage Coast definition, and new national guidance on how this role can be delivered by local authorities alongside the designated landscapes, it is likely that the Heritage Coast definition will continue to decline, diminishing the valuable opportunities it offers to the nation's stretches of finest coastline.

Recommendations

The current status of Heritage Coasts

- A. Defra should reaffirm the status of Heritage Coasts in the family of national protected landscapes, including their importance as defined areas of England's finest stretches of undeveloped coast and their distinctive role in delivering national policy priorities in these areas.
- B. There should be liaison between Natural England and local planning authorities, following local authority reorganisation or the creation of designated landscapes, to ensure Heritage Coast agreements and commitments are reaffirmed.
- C. The alignment between the boundaries of Heritage Coasts and designated landscape boundaries should be given a priority in Natural England's designations review, ensuring that designation boundaries encompass all parts of the Heritage Coast they are associated with.
- D. Defra, through Natural England, should consider whether the status of Heritage Coasts as internationally recognised IUCN Category V protected landscapes/seascapes should be reconfirmed and, if so, should support the relevant local authorities in achieving this.

The role of Heritage Coasts in delivering national policy priorities

- E. The role of Heritage Coasts in the delivery of the national Nature Recovery Network (and for example the 30by30 target) should be clarified, including the ways in which Heritage Coasts should be recognised and supported through Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- F. Priority should be given in Environmental Land Management schemes, particularly the Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery schemes, for projects in Heritage Coasts to protect and enhance their exceptional scenic quality and features of special significance and interest.

Planning protection of Heritage Coasts

- G. In view of the ambiguous references to Heritage Coasts in the Marine Policy Statement (2011) and the National Policy Statements, the status of Heritage Coast as a material consideration in Marine and National Infrastructure Planning should be clarified so that it matches that in the NPPF.
- H. Technical guidance to local authorities should be provided on how and where the 'special character' of Heritage Coasts should be described so that it can be used effectively in planning decisions, including on a non-statutory basis in NSIPs through Natural England's advice.

The Delivery of Heritage Coast objectives

- I. Guidance should be prepared for designated landscape bodies on how Heritage Coast should be recognised, and their objectives included in their statutory

Management Plans, and in the preparation of specific Heritage Coast documentation where appropriate.

- J. Guidance should be provided to local authorities and designated landscape bodies on how they can use their influence to support Heritage Coast objectives outside their LA / landscape designation boundaries - including and particularly offshore.
 - K. Guidance to national agencies, statutory partnerships (e.g. Regional Flood and Coastal Authorities) and utility companies should be provided on how they can support the delivery, with local authorities, of Heritage Coast objectives. This is particularly relevant to the third objective (health of inshore waters), which relies on their involvement.
 - L. Consideration should be given to how any new national funding that becomes available to local authorities, AONB teams and National Parks can be directed to 'on-the-ground' delivery of Heritage Coast objectives, recognising their broad environmental, economic, social and health benefits and their high value and profile with local communities and visitors.
 - M. Progress towards achieving Heritage Coast objectives should be included in existing national monitoring frameworks, for instance as spatial subsets of the indicators in the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Outcomes Framework for Protected Landscapes and the People and Nature Survey.
 - N. Natural England should consider how a regular programme of networking amongst organisations and lead staff working in Heritage Coasts could be developed.
7. Note: The Heritage Coast review was commissioned to provide Natural England with evidence and analysis. These independent recommendations are not agreed actions.

Next steps

- 8. The review findings are being carefully considered by Natural England and others, including coastal protected landscapes. It is likely that new guidance from Natural England on AONB Management Plans (anticipated Spring 2023) will respond to the review's recommendations and incorporate new asks of coastal AONBs with Heritage Coast relationships. The South Devon AONB Partnership will need to take any new guidance into consideration when reviewing the extended 2019-24 AONB Management Plan. South Devon AONB will continue to adopt a best practice approach in this respect, including early work on State of AONB monitoring and Nature Recovery planning as covered in other parts of this agenda.

Item Ends

6C. All England Assessment & Strategic Landscape Mapping

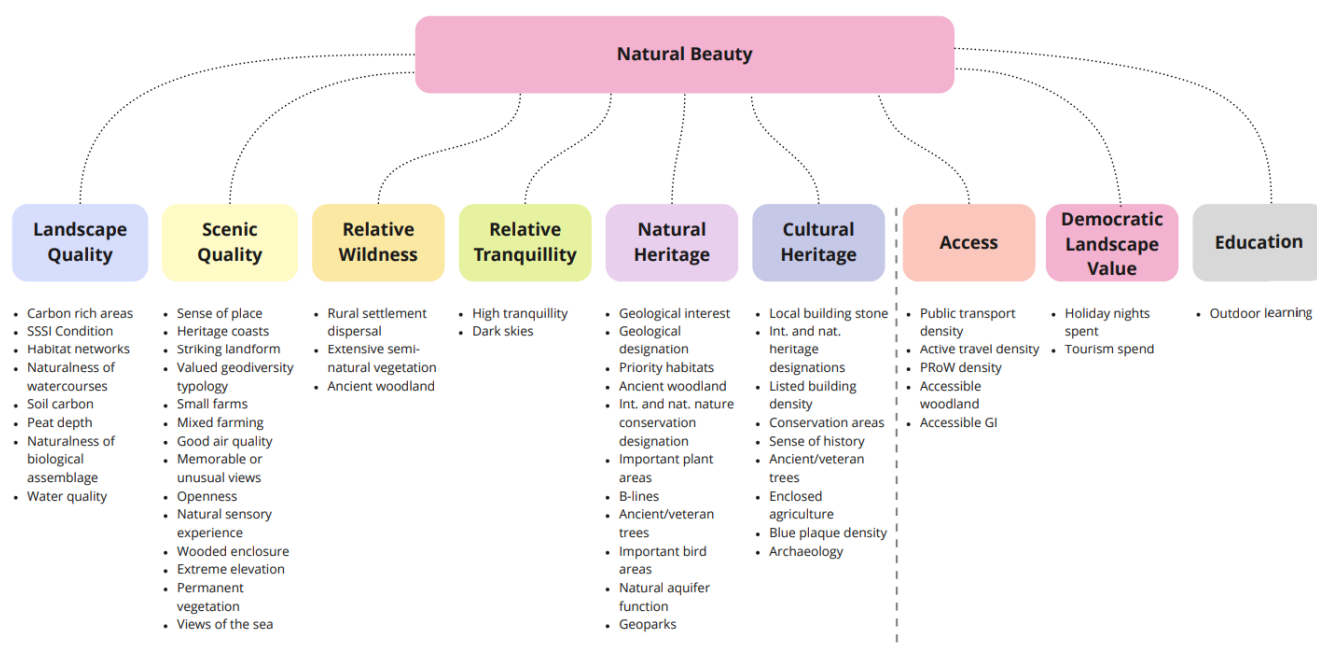
ITEM FOR	INFORMATION & FEEDBACK	REPORT BY	Roger English (AONB Manager)
SUMMARY	This item introduces the All England Assessment and Strategic Landscape Mapping undertaken by Land Use Consultants on behalf of Natural England to inform new and alternative forms of designations.		
AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES	<p>ALL PLACE: Natural resources & climate; Biodiversity & geodiversity; Farming and land management; Historic Environment & Local Distinctiveness; Coast & marine; Rivers & estuaries; Landscape Character.</p> <p>ALL PEOPLE: Tourism, access & recreation; Planning & sustainable development; Transport & highways; Rural economy & services; Community & culture.</p> <p>ALL PARTNERSHIP: Awareness & communication; Management, organisation & partnerships.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	<p>AONB Partnership members are recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarise themselves with the new assessment and mapping tool noting next steps Offer observations and feedback for consideration in project work in support of the AONB Management Plan and during early work on State of the AONB and its setting. 		

Background

- This new tool aims to reflect the spirit of the 1947 Hobhouse Map which led to the establishment of the first National Parks and AONBs 70 years ago. It seeks to:
 - help identify areas which may have potential to be new or extended National Parks and/or AONBs;
 - and identify places where alternative forms of landscape action or approaches may be more appropriate.
- The All England Assessment responds to the Landscapes Review 2019 and forms part of Natural England's ambitious, forward looking landscape designation programme exploring new approaches to improve landscapes for people and nature.
- A number of requests from community groups for modifications to the South Devon AONB boundary were passed to Natural England in 2013. An additional proposal was submitted directly to Natural England from the South Hams Society for a substantive expansion of the AONB boundary and change in type of designation to National Park. These requests were logged by Natural England on a national register alongside many others relating to different parts of the county.
- The AONB Partnership and South Hams Society were written to in June 2021 by Natural England notifying intent to develop a visionary map for England in order to inform the development and introduction of both further and new forms of wildlife, landscape and heritage designations. The All England Assessment contributes to this work.

All England Assessment

5. A mapping tool has been created to share the analysis undertaken as part of the All-England Strategic Landscape Mapping Project. Further information on the project can be found on a Mapping Hub⁸ in the form of a report⁹, mapping tool¹⁰ and video¹¹ of a 'show and tell' explanatory session are available. Links are provided in the footnotes.
6. The final mapping tool includes 55 layers grouped into the six Natural Beauty factors and three additional factors considered important:
 - Landscape quality
 - Scenic quality
 - Relative wildness
 - Relative tranquillity
 - Natural heritage
 - Cultural heritage
 - Access diversity and inclusion (additional)
 - Democratic landscape value (additional)
 - Education (additional)



Reproduced from <https://all-england-strategic-landscapes-mapping-hub-luc.hub.arcgis.com/>

⁸ [Mapping Hub](#)

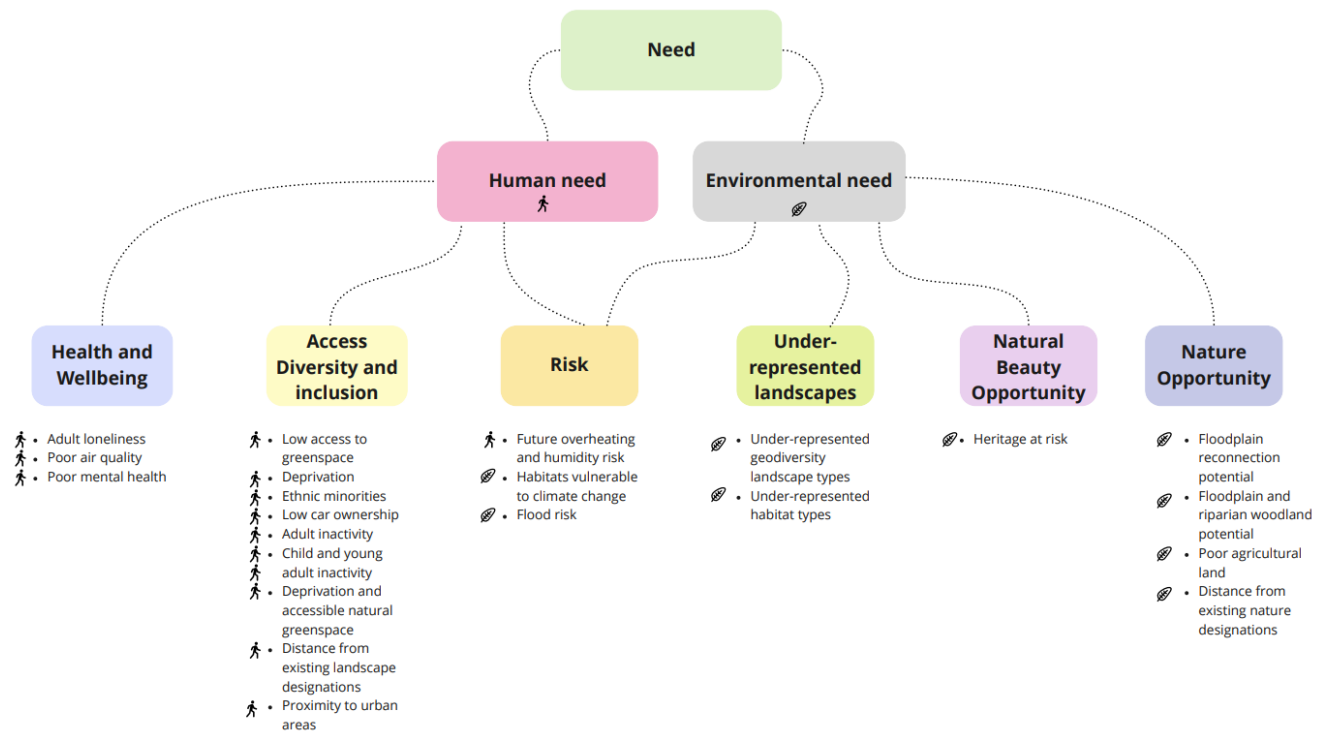
⁹ Report <https://luc.maps.arcgis.com/sharing/rest/content/items/53564c0ea14d41e4b0da6066f4af581a/data>

¹⁰ Mapping Tool <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/58d17072b1454b73b94db50ea53d8f1a/page/Home/>

¹¹ Video <https://youtu.be/nlL3Bu5pw9M>

7. To inform the ‘Need’ for alternative landscape approaches are 22 layers, grouped by two themes and six sub-factors:

- Health and wellbeing
- Access, diversity and inclusion
- Risk
- Under-represented landscapes
- Natural beauty opportunity
- Nature opportunity



8. The tool can be used in a variety of different ways to explore not only where designations and alternative approaches could be located, but also the best approach for a specific location.
9. The tool allows users to interpret visually the areas of potentially high natural beauty, high need and, crucially, where the two overlap. Further analysis of the mapped layers allows National Character Areas (NCAs) to be ranked by their overall scores. This provides one starting point for prioritising areas of search. In addition, it is possible to look at the pattern of scores across England for the individual factors (for example Landscape Quality or Cultural Heritage). This illustrates how aspects of natural beauty differ regionally and could be the starting point for tailoring how specialised approaches to regional contexts.

Next Steps

10. Natural England is currently considering this research evidence, alongside various earlier commissions including, the 2021 Alternative Landscape Approaches report, and internal papers, to formulate a clear way forward for the development of an alternative approach to designations.

Meeting dates in 2023

- Friday 10 March, Repton Room Follaton House and online via Zoom
- Friday 23 June, Repton Room House and online via Zoom
- Friday 24 November, Repton Room House and online via Zoom

South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

AONB Partnership Committee Meeting

to be held at

10am on Friday, 25 November 2022

Hybrid Meeting

Repton Room at Follaton House and via Zoom

Annexes to Meeting Papers



South Devon AONB Staff Unit, Follaton House, Totnes, TQ9 5NE
Telephone 01803 229 330 Email enquiries@southdevonaonb.org.uk

Annex 1 to Agenda item 5b: South Devon Nature Recovery Plan

South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Nature Recovery Plan

Phase 1, November 2022

DRAFT

Please take a few moments to zoom into those areas that you know and consider what future potential they have for nature recovery.

This map is designed to help farmers, landowners and stakeholders make decisions about the management of their land. It is **not** a prescriptive tool nor does it create any new designations. It is intended to act as a guide for decision-making to help create coherent and resilient ecological networks and help nature recover.

We would like everyone to take positive action for wildlife everywhere – not just in the mapped priority areas as fantastic opportunities may well arise outside these should be grasped!

Where possible we need to allow for change and let habitats evolve and change within the landscape whilst maintaining important wildlife habitats such as ancient hedges and woodland, species rich meadows and our intertidal estuaries.



A1L_Oct21_v3.pdf

Please double click this icon to view the map.

The Nature Recovery Opportunities Map explained.

The map is still work in progress, is based on available data and there will unfortunately be mapping errors. If you spot anything significant, please do let us know by emailing adam.davison@southdevonaonb.org.uk. Please do not assume that if a parcel of land is not mapped as a Core Nature Area / Nature Area that it does not support Priority Habitat or rare species.

Core nature areas – These areas have been identified by the Devon Local Nature Partnership and provide an understanding of where our most precious and our richest wildlife habitats. They include Priority Habitats (excluding hedges and arable margins) and statutory and non-statutory designated sites such as National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves and Ancient semi-natural woodlands.

Other nature areas - Nature Areas are existing habitats which have wildlife value (or potential value) but which are not Priority Habitats or designated sites. These currently include: *Other Sites of Wildlife Importance, Local Authority green spaces, non-priority woodland habitats from the NVI, non-priority habitats from former OSWIs and non-Priority Habitats on the National Forest Inventory

Lower-grade farmland with strong potential to achieve high nature value - All of the Grade 4 and 5, plus steeply sloping Grade 3 land considered in this document as “Least Productive Farmland”.

High grade farmland with strong potential to achieve higher nature value - Grade 3 or higher land that many farmers and landowners want to explore changes to farming practices that could deliver nature recovery.

Other areas with potential to achieve high nature value – All areas within the AONB still have great nature potential and this plan anticipates that farmers and land managers could focus changes on these areas to further connect and extend existing nature areas.

Nature connectivity in the setting and outside the SDAONB designation boundary These corridors are mapped by stacking core nature areas, nature areas and areas considered as least productive agricultural land.

Contents

1. Executive Summary	7
2. Background and Context	10
2.1 Why is this plan needed?.....	10
2.2 Scope of the Plan	11
2.3 How the Plan was produced	11
3. Principles and Purpose	12
3.1 Principles.....	12
3.2 Purpose.....	12
4. The State of Nature in the AONB.....	13
4.1 Habitats.....	14
4.1.1 Farmland.....	14
4.1.2 Woodland and wood pasture	14
4.1.3 Maritime grasslands, cliffs and slopes.....	14
4.1.4 Intertidal and marine habitats and communities.....	14
4.1.5 Rivers and wetlands.....	15
4.2 Champion Species.....	15
4.2.1 Cirl bunting	15
4.2.2 Invertebrates	15
4.2.3 Bat species	16
4.2.4 Strapwort.....	16
4.2.5 Seagrass meadows.....	16
5. Forces for change	16
5.1 Climate change	17
5.2 Social change	17
5.3 Agricultural change.....	17
5.4 Habitat fragmentation.....	18
5.5 Management of Core Nature Areas	18
5.6 Hedgerows, Trees and Woodlands.....	18
5.7 Invasive non-native species	18
6. Priorities for nature	19
6.1 What habitats/wildlife should we prioritise?	19
6.2 Where should we target our resources?	19
6.3 How much land is needed to create resilient and functioning ecosystems for nature?.....	22
6.4 What will be the impact on the area of specific habitats?	22
6.5 What could the network of Nature Areas look like in 2050?	23

7. Opportunity mapping	233
7.1 Least Productive Farmland	233
7.2 More Productive Farmland.....	244
8. Delivery mechanisms	24
9. Action Plan.....	24
10. Appendices	24

1. Executive Summary

The South Devon AONB is one of Britain's finest protected landscapes - loved for its significant and irreplaceable landscape features including rugged cliffs, sandy coves, peaceful countryside, picturesque villages, rolling hills, wooded valleys, colourful hedge banks, and secretive estuaries. It is an ancient countryside with strong links to the sea and generations of human activity etched into the landscape. It has 97km of coastline, five river estuaries, and just over 28,000 hectares of agricultural land representing 83% of its total land area.

The South Devon AONB is recognised as nationally and internationally important for an exceptionally wide range of species and habitats. It is also strategically located supporting migratory species in their life cycles, and many species that are adapting to climate change. The AONB has an essential contribution to make to a national nature recovery network creating strategic links for wildlife through neighbouring landscapes and beyond.

However, in common with much of the rest of the country, the South Devon AONB has suffered significant declines in its biodiversity. Many factors have contributed to this decline with agricultural intensification, built development, increased visitor pressures, climate change and invasive species being the most damaging. One of the impacts of these pressures has been the fragmentation of a previous network of connected nature-rich sites, which are now all too often stranded as isolated islands of biodiversity surrounded by unsuitable habitat. Another has been the loss of quality of those remaining sites.

Professor John Lawton's influential 2010 report "Making Space for Nature" established a set of principles to tackle these challenges which have become widely adopted in England and further afield. This Plan follows the Lawton Principles, namely that to establish a coherent and resilient ecological network in England we need to:

- Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management.
- Increase the size of current wildlife sites.
- Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through 'stepping stones'.
- Create new sites.
- Reducing or eliminating pollution, pesticides and unsustainable agriculture.
- Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites.

This Plan focuses on a vision for nature in the AONB, to be achieved by 2050:

Let's make south Devon a flagship for ecological recovery and climate resilience by creating landscape-scale restoration where whole ecosystems are restored that bringing back natural processes and a wealth of wildlife.

The South Devon AONB will have a robust and species-rich Nature Recovery Network, featuring a rich mosaic of ecosystems that fit within the landscapes' character, sustain livelihoods and wellbeing inspiring local pride and active support amongst our communities.

Rich and dynamic ancient woodlands, wildflower meadows, arable field margins, scrubland, wooded combs, Devon hedges, tidal and marine habitats, rivers and wetlands, along with the species that depend on them, will all thrive in a nature-rich landscape that provides plentiful space and sanctuary for wildlife whilst providing ecosystem services such as food and nature connection opportunities for everyone.

A robust nature recovery network is not only good for wildlife, but it also provides a range of “ecosystem services” such as clean water or food or a beautiful place to get away from it all and enjoy some peace surrounded by nature. These ecosystem services are critically important to the wellbeing and economy of people living in and around the South Devon AONB. A robust nature recovery network can help solve some of the issues faced by wider society, particularly concerning climate change and health and wellbeing.

The Nature Recovery Plan identifies the current State of Nature in the AONB and the trends that have affected nature in recent decades. Visit the website page

<https://www.southdevonaonb.org.uk/state-of-nature/> and link to the StoryMap.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f16bd19fd2ce4f1486787827c441b5c0>

It also sets out the strengths and weaknesses of nature in the South Devon AONB. Having done so it sets, and answers, a series of key questions that are at the heart of this Plan:

- Which ecosystems and natural processes need our support the most?
- Where should we target our resources?
- What targets do we set ourselves around nature recovery to be ambitious but realistic?
- What will be the impact on the area of specific habitats?
- What could the South Devon AONB look like in 2050?

Our conclusions are that:

- 83% of the AONB land area is farmed and this is where the main opportunity lies for nature recovery on a landscape scale. Recovery for most of our special species and priority habitats needs to happen on farmed land and will be in the main delivered by farmers. Creating more nature-rich farmland habitats is therefore the over-riding priority for this plan.
- Nature-friendly farming should happen across the whole of the AONB, but it is most likely to be achievable on lower-grade agricultural land that produces less profit from food production. This less-productive land currently makes up about 20% of farmland in the AONB.
- On this land, and across the AONB’s farmed estate, we hope to see farmers, land managers and stakeholders:
 - Creating large areas of extensively grazed grasslands including some scrub.
 - Managing wildflower grassland margins around arable fields.
 - Restoring and creating new Devon banks and hedgerows.
 - Integrating trees into agriculture through agro-forestry and allowing hedgerows to grow taller and thicker.
 - Establish new copses to link, buffer and extend existing woodland
 - Establish open grown in-field trees that can become the veteran trees of the future
 - Increase management of the existing woodlands to ensure better outcomes for wildlife whilst achieving a sustainable harvest of timber
 - Managing arable fields to encourage arable flowers such as poppies.
 - Overwintering stubble to provide a winter food source for farmland birds.
 - Providing stubbles and cover crops to conserve soils.
 - Using hardy local breeds of cattle— like Devon Reds – that can thrive on rough pastures.
- Our targets for 2050 are to increase the area of specific priority habitats by 50% above current levels. This will mean:

- Creating **442 ha** of species rich grassland.
- Expanding maritime cliff and slope habitats inland by an additional **683ha**.
- Creating **1005 ha** of broadleaved woodland by extending and linking existing woods selecting species that will be resilient to the future climate
- Creating **xx km** of new hedgerows.
- Creating an additional **67ha** of traditional nut and fruit orchards.

By 2050 we hope that a nature-rich network will exist across the whole of the South Devon AONB. It is visualised in our new **Nature Recovery Opportunity Map**. This map is designed to help farmers and landowners make decisions about the management of their land. It is not a prescriptive tool nor does it create any new designations. It is intended to act as a guide for decision-making to help create coherent and resilient ecological networks.

This plan is working towards generating an Action Plan for the future, helping to coordinate the work of multiple partners and agencies to deliver our shared ambition. Delivering the Nature Recovery Network for the South Devon AONB will involve everyone with an interest in the future of South Devon in particular those who manage the land, national agencies, local authorities, local communities, businesses, interest groups, the voluntary sector and those people who visit the AONB.

The overall target is for the nature recovery network described in this plan to be fully in place by 2050. Intermediate targets are to be set at 5 yearly intervals as a roadmap towards the overall target. Achieving these targets will depend on many strategies and delivery mechanisms delivering for the South Devon AONB. The production of this plan is timed to influence these delivery mechanisms, in particular but not exclusively:

- Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Environmental Land Management Schemes
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Payment for Ecosystem Services
- Devon Tree Strategy

This plan is about nature recovery but it is not about turning back the clock. We do need to look back and learn from traditional land management uses and practices but we also need to look forward and apply these lessons in our modern and changing context. Above all we need to create the conditions for wildlife to increase in abundance and spread across the landscape and we need to do it in ways that are embedded in the economy and support livelihoods in a lasting way. This will create new landscapes full of wildlife that reflect the distinctive character of the South Devon AONB but are also dynamic and changing.

2. Background and Context

2.1 Why is this plan needed?

This plan reflects a new focus on nature recovery in the South Devon AONB. This is part of a wider movement with all AONBs undertaking the production of Nature Recovery Plans as a shared commitment under the Colchester Declaration. This declaration was in turn a response to the finding that AONBs need to be doing more for nature within the Landscapes Review undertaken by Julian Glover in 2019.

It is proposed that this plan will be adopted as guidance by the South Devon AONB Partnership Committee and form part of a suite of documentation that is supported by the statutory Management Plan for the South Devon AONB. While this Nature Recovery Plan focuses on nature recovery the Management Plan takes a policy-led more holistic look at the social, economic and environmental factors operating within the South Devon AONB landscape.

Statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are being developed over coming years and, whilst we do not yet know all the details, they will be important in guiding nature recovery. LNRS development is taking place on a Local Nature Partnership/unitary or county local authority boundary basis and this Nature Recovery Plan will help inform the application and development of the Devon LNRS.

The plan is also a response to the growing ecological and climate crises, with species and habitat loss occurring on a shocking scale here and abroad. Reversing these trends is a huge task and requires concerted, planned effort by the whole of society. Land managers, funders, communities, businesses and individuals will all benefit from having access to a plan that can guide conservation effort towards 2050.

The plan also follows the Lawton Principles which provide an underlying framework. [Professor Lawton's report](#) of 2010 had a great impact on British nature conservation and since then his approach has been widely adopted, summarised by the phrase "more, bigger, better and joined". His report stated that to establish a coherent and resilient ecological network in England we need to:

- Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management.
- Increase the size of current wildlife sites.
- Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through 'stepping stones'.
- Create new sites.
- Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites.

2.2 Scope of the Plan

This plan focuses on nature recovery within the AONB but extends its approach beyond the boundary of the AONB because species and habitats do not respect human boundaries. Wherever possible we have shown how the principles applying within the AONB can be extended beyond our boundary.

The urban communities of Plymouth and Torbay and the extensive uplands of Dartmoor National Park have a strong influence on the AONB and are themselves influenced by it, not least through forming a major part of several river catchments. This plan connects with and aims to shape initiatives in these locations. To understand the AONB in full context, please refer to the statutory [Management Plan](#) and its Appendices.

2.3 How the Plan was produced

This plan has been developed as a partnership project between the South Devon AONB Staff Unit and various groups and individuals representing organisations including local authorities, community organisations, landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations. It has been developed under the guidance of a working group drawn from the Partnership Committee and has been consulted on in order to provide a consensus view on the best things we can do to aid nature recovery in the South Devon AONB and beyond.

The plan was developed through a series of steps, as follows:

- Production of the South Devon State of the AONB report
- A “South Devon AONB State of Nature” report was commissioned by the AONB Staff Unit in 2021. This describes the current biodiversity and natural capital of the AONB using open source data and data from the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (DBRC). The findings of this report are summarised below.
- One to one discussions were held with nature conservation organisations active in the AONB, to research current priorities and programmes.
- A nature recovery network opportunity mapping exercise was undertaken to identify potential areas that could connect or expand existing priority habitats in line with the Lawton principles.
- An online workshop was held in February 2022 with representatives of nature conservation organisations active in the South Devon AONB, to share the initial findings of the opportunity mapping and explore the principles and priorities for future action.
- Based on the outcomes of the workshop the opportunity map was further refined and this draft Nature Recovery Plan was written.

3. Principles and Purpose

3.1 Principles

This plan is based on a set of principles that have been developed by the National Association of AONBs, designed to provide a common foundation for all Nature Recovery Plans. These are:

- **Iterative** - an iterative plan towards 2050 with an action plan to 2030 and longer-term targets for 2040 and 2050, aligned with statutory AONB Management Plan review cycles.
- **Integrated** - with the Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the National Nature Recovery Network
- **Nature first** – prioritising nature recovery but where possible achieving wider ecosystem services such as carbon capture, flood management, cleaner air and water, pollination, climate change resilience, enhanced landscape character, and improved connection between people and nature
- **Resilient** - designed around Lawton’s principles of bigger, better and more joined up
- **Collaborative** - adopting a collaborative approach at the core of ways of working
- **Inclusive** – encouraging and supporting all land managers to along a spectrum of positions ranging from intensive to semi-wilderness.

3.2 Purpose

The National Association of AONBs also identified a series of key questions that the plan should try to answer and will guide its future evolution, which frame its purpose.

- What habitats/wildlife should we prioritise?
- Where should we target our resources?
- How much land is needed to create resilient and functioning ecosystems for nature?
- What will be the impact on the area of specific habitats?
- What shape, configuration and proximity should the habitat blocks be to one another?

These questions are answered in the following sections.

4. The State of Nature in the AONB

The South Devon AONB consists predominantly of a mixed agricultural, open, plateau landscape with an extensive network of hedgerows and ancient sunken lanes, marked by richly wooded valleys and coombes interspersed with hamlets, villages and small towns. Its southern edge is bounded by a wild rugged coastline, dissected by five estuaries – each with their own different and special character.

Significant habitats in this landscape include:

- Cereal field margins
- Coastal reefs
- Flower-rich meadows and pastures including limestone grassland
- Freshwater lagoons with marsh and reed beds
- Maritime cliffs, slopes and caves
- Maritime grassland and heathland
- Mature species-rich Devon hedges
- Mud flats and submerged sediment flats
- Oak and wet woodlands
- Ancient woodlands of mixed species
- Salt marsh and tidal reedbeds
- Seagrass meadows
- Sheltered estuarine waters
- Coastal waters
- Shingle and sand dunes
- Rocky foreshore – sheltered and exposed

These priority habitats, which include designated nature conservation sites, account for 30.5% of the area of the AONB and are described in this report as our “Nature Areas”. The limited data available indicates that the condition of these habitats is not generally favourable. It has been said that the South Devon AONB is “feature-rich, yet condition-poor”.

The wealth of wildlife that depends on these habitats is reflected in the statistics. South Devon AONB comprises 15% priority habitat, with 22% of the South Devon AONB covered by a combination of statutory and non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation. Of these statutory designated sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest cover 5.8% of the South Devon AONB; however, only 55.5% of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest are in favourable condition, and the condition of priority habitats and non-statutory sites is currently unclear.

The range of habitats, and their complex associations, together with the southerly location of the AONB, also supports rare species assemblages and the South Devon AONB includes parts of internationally recognised Important Plant Areas and Important Invertebrate Areas.

The natural capital of South Devon AONB is similarly rich. Marine and inter-tidal habitats are important for fisheries, and, together with woodland and other semi-natural habitats, can also comprise our most significant important carbon sinks and long-term stores.

4.1 Habitats

4.1.1 Farmland

South Devon's landscape is primarily a farmed landscape and farmland accounts for 83% of land use. Many of the area's most valued habitats are maintained by farming activity including species-rich hedgerows, flower-rich meadows and pasture and cereal field margins. Changes in farming practices have seen field sizes increase, with the consequent loss of boundary features like hedges and stone walls, the reduction of grazing on marginal land, allowing scrub to dominate, and the intensification of farming on the better land, resulting in the loss of unimproved grasslands.

4.1.2 Woodland and wood pasture

8% of the AONB is covered by woodland, which equates to 2982 Ha. By contrast this is well below the average for England (10%) and the other AONB's (15%). Of this woodland 24% is ancient

Of the wooded areas ¾ of this has been classified as broadleaved woodland and in 2017 42% of broadleaved woodlands were actively managed. Areas are classified as under active management by the Forestry Commission (FC) if they operate grants schemes and initiatives, felling licenses or are managed by the FC. From 2013 to 2017 the percentage of woodland under management changed from 34% to 42%, an 8% increase.

There is also a general absence of hedgerow and in-field trees across the inland plateau.

4.1.3 Maritime grasslands, cliffs and slopes

The South Devon coast has been designated an Important Invertebrate Area and also forms part of an Important Plant Area, on account of the rare species to be found here. These specialist species, and the specialist plants found here, have become confined to a narrow coastal strip between the sea and the farmed plateau. They are therefore extremely vulnerable and the Six-banded nomad bee (*Nomada sexfasciata*) has not been recorded for at least 3 years (see below for further details).

4.1.4 Intertidal and marine habitats and communities

The South Devon AONB estuaries and coast support a rich diversity of habitats and communities dictated by the habitat's local conditions. These range from the lower energy upper intertidal communities of saltmarsh, seagrass meadows, mud flats and rocky shore found within the estuaries to the high energy sandy, rocky and shingle shores of the open coast and tidal current swept rocky reefs and mixed sediment beds below. All of the South Devon AONB estuaries and most of its coast are now designated as Marine Protected Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)

All South Devon's estuaries are ria-type, drowned river valley formed estuaries with their classic long deep channel and steep sided form. The Salcombe-Kingsbridge Estuary is a text-book example of a dendritic ria but unusual in the trickles of streams that now flow where once its forming rivers once flowed. Today, the Salcombe Harbour – Kingsbridge Estuary is more of a saline dominated, sheltered tidal marine inlet.

The estuaries and coast support several rich, rare, unusual and special marine communities and species, and many are important for their blue carbon vaulting as well as their exceptional biodiversity. Marine community examples include Salcombe's seagrass meadows, Berry Head's Sea caves and inshore East Rutts rocky reefs. Marine species examples include both species of British seahorses and seagrasses, unusually shallow water fan mussels and several exotic marine worms.

The estuaries are highly productive areas which, together with other intertidal habitats, support large numbers of birds and fish including feeding and resting areas for migrant and wintering waterfowl and nursery areas for many fish.

The estuarine habitats and communities have generally survived but may be a poor representation of their historic extent, with a history of commercial and recreational pressures, water quality and invasive non-native species affecting their extent and health.

4.1.5 Rivers and wetlands

South Devon AONB is very much dominated by the tidal mouths of the rivers that drain through them - the estuaries, apart from the River Avon that flows through the AONB as far upstream as Avonwick.

Our rivers are generally in reasonable health but there is much room for improvement – in particular, in the awareness and care of the health of the watercourses (mostly streams) that flow into and make up these rivers. Naturally, there is a one-way, down-hill flow of water and everything the water carries and washes downstream so that all too frequently, the effects of upstream issues are unseen by those causing them.

4.2 Champion Species

Champion Species have been selected for all 34 AONBs in England as part of the wider Colchester Declaration process. The 8 species/assemblages selected for the South Devon AONB are:

4.2.1 Cirl bunting

South Devon is a stronghold for the Cirl bunting, *Emberiza cirlus* which is associated with a low-intensity mixed farming landscape. They are predominately seed and grain feeders in the winter, foraging over stubble fields, but feed on invertebrates during the summer months within unimproved grasslands. Hedgerows also play a vital role year-round for the species, providing both foraging and nesting habitat in the summer months and providing shelter in the winter months. Cirl bunting are a sedentary species, meaning they do not migrate and will often spend their entire lives within the same couple of square kilometres. It is therefore crucial that all these different but equally important habitats are available within a short distance of each other.

Close to extinction in the UK in the 1990's, the species has since recovered substantially thanks to a long-lasting campaign led by the RSPB to secure suitable farmland habitats. By 2016 50% of the national population was to be found in the South Devon AONB and today the national population exceeds 1000 pairs.

4.2.2 Invertebrates

The South Devon coast is of national importance for its *hymenoptera* (bees and wasps). Three indicative species of the Important Invertebrate Area have been chosen as champion species for the South Devon AONB. These are the Long horned mining bee *Eucera longicornis*, the Six-banded nomad bee *Nomada sexfasciata* and the Mediterranean oil beetle *Meloe mediterraneus*.

The Six-banded nomad bee is a cuckoo parasite on the Long horned mining bee, a species found on predominately coastal sites along the south coast of the UK where they survive on soft rock cliffs, flower rich grasslands and coastal grazing marsh. Their preferred foodplant species are members of the pea family such as meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria* and bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*. The six banded nomad bee will patrol areas where the long horned mining bee is nesting waiting for an opportune time to enter the host nest and lay an egg in the nest cell of the host bee. Only 6 records are present for long horned mining bee since 2010 within the AONB, with only 2 records present for Six banded nomad bee since 2010, at Prawle Point and Slapton Ley.

Mediterranean oil-beetle is a very rare invertebrate, confined to coastal grasslands along the south coast of the UK, and until recently (within the last 10 years) was thought extinct from the AONB. The female Mediterranean oil-beetle seeks out bare ground to dig nest burrows to then lay her eggs. The larvae, once hatched, ascend nearby flowers and await a bee to attach themselves to using their hooked feet. The unwitting bees transport the larvae back to their nests where the larvae feed on the bees' eggs and pollen nectar stores. Only 2 records of Mediterranean oil-beetle have been recorded since 2010 within the AONB.

4.2.3 Bat species

The Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* is one of the UK's rarest bat species, typically associated with livestock grazing, as well as being heavily reliant on woodland fringe habitats for foraging. The Greater Horseshoe Bat Project (2016- 2021) identified core areas for the species in the Avon Valley, around Berry Head and towards Dartmouth. The South Hams has the largest known Greater horseshoe maternity roost in the UK and foraging areas and commuting linkways from this roost, as well as summertime and satellite roosts within the AONB, are recognised as important to the long-term favourable conservation status of the Greater horseshoe bat.

The Grey long-eared bat *Plecotus austriacus* is one of the UK's rarest bat species and is one of the conservation target species for the Back from the Brink Project which aims to save 20 of the rarest species within the UK from extinction. Grey long-eared bats have one of the more restricted distributions, with only a few known colonies present in the UK some of which are along the coast of South Devon AONB. Grey long-eared bats are associated with species rich grasslands and meadows, along with woodland fringe habitat, with their diet including moths, crane flies and beetles. 4 records are present for grey long-eared bat since 2010 within South Devon AONB; the difficulty of distinguishing grey from brown long-eared bats in the field means that records are often sparse and this species is likely under-recorded.

4.2.4 Strapwort

Strapwort *Corrigiola litoralis* is an exceptionally rare plant in the UK with the only known naturally occurring UK site being Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve and very small populations nearby. It is found in shingly freshwater pool margins where water levels fluctuate.

4.2.5 Seagrass meadows

Seagrass meadows are rare, vegetated littoral and sub-littoral biological habitats that occur within at least two of the estuaries of South Devon AONB, the Yealm and the Salcombe-Kingsbridge estuaries. These meadows include dense stands of the Common eelgrass *Zostera marina* and/or Dwarf eelgrass *Zostera noltei* intertidally. The subtidal meadows support highly important invertebrate and fish assemblages, buffer wave action, and sequester and lock away significant amounts of carbon.

5. Forces for change

The following section summarises the trends that are affecting the nature of the AONB, in either positive or negative ways.

5.1 Climate change

- Warmer and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers and extreme weather events, including higher intensity rainstorms and flash floods, will occur more frequently at all times of year.
- Rising sea levels and extreme storm events will increase coastal erosion and squeeze coastal and estuarine habitats against our manmade and naturally steep sloped shores.
- Wildfires will become more frequent and damaging.
- Flooding, soil erosion and land runoff will become more extensive.
- Low summer river levels and high water temperatures will stress river wildlife.
- The timing of natural events is shifting, causing disconnects between natural cycles like invertebrate breeding and food-plant availability.
- As the climate envelope moves northwards and upwards to higher latitudes and altitudes, some species will be forced to move with it, which could see the seminatural arrival of more continental species in South Devon and the departure of other species. Northern limit species such as little egrets, curlew and horseshoe bats may benefit in their range. Some native tree species may become less viable leading to a reduction in diversity of the wooded areas
- Land managers may be forced to make changes that impact on habitats, for example growing different more drought-resilient crops.

5.2 Social change

- The population of the AONB continues to grow, and demand for housing with it. This puts pressure on land use and can also impact on water quality and flooding.
- Recreation pressures are growing, as adjoining urban populations grow and tourism increases. This has the potential to increase disturbance of sensitive wildlife and livestock and trigger conflicts with local communities and farmers.
- + People are becoming more aware of environmental issues and this is triggering positive change, such as volunteering or reducing consumption of damaging products.
- + Income from tourism can help maintain good natural habitats.
- + Funders are supportive of work to address declines in biodiversity and programmes like [Life on the Edge](#).

5.3 Agricultural change

- + New post-Brexit arrangements for support for agriculture are targeted on “public money for public goods”, a move that promises much for the themes of this plan.
- However, some farmers may not take up this support and choose instead to intensify management to remain profitable. Without strong regulation and enforcement this could result in environmental damage, e.g., by diffuse and point source water pollution, atmospheric pollution, further habitat losses, soil compaction and erosion and increasing use of biocides.
- Another response to the changes in agricultural funding may be for farmers to retire or sell their farms. This tends to result in a reduction in the numbers of medium-sized small farms suited to mixed farming systems and the expansion of more intensive systems.
- + This does provide an opportunity to reconsider the most appropriate land use going forward and the conversion from agricultural to woodland (instead of increased intensity agriculture) can see a significant increase in biodiversity

- + Diversification enterprises are predicted to provide a greater percentage of farm business income. This diversification could have significant environmental effects, e.g. viniculture, campsites, novel crops.
- Without ongoing support extensive grazing systems that maintain diverse grasslands and scrubby ecosystems are likely to be reduced
- + Programmes like Life on the Edge and Cirl Country offer targeted support for extensive mixed farming.
- + There is growing demand amongst consumers for higher quality conservation-grade produce, which could favour extensive agricultural systems.

5.4 Habitat fragmentation

- As farming and development pressures have intensified, nature-rich areas have been squeezed to the margins and into the smaller, fragmented and isolated oases of protected sites. This fragmentation is ongoing and is one of the most significant barriers to nature recovery.

5.5 Management of Core Nature Areas

- The condition of our primary designated sites and priority habitats is declining, primarily because of reducing levels of investment in their management combined with increasing pressures from climate change, population growth and agriculture.

5.6 Hedgerows, Trees and Woodlands

- + There is growing demand for planting trees as a measure to combat climate change and generate the multiple benefits that woodlands can offer including acting as carbon sinks, removing CO₂ from the atmosphere, natural flood management, improving water quality, increasing biodiversity, protecting livestock and crops, recreational space and sustainable building materials.
- + This is a powerful tool for delivery of many of this plan's core components including new woodlands and hedgerows.
- + Well planned and managed woodland creation may provide new, effective and vital green wildlife corridors. Ensuring all new woodland is compliant with the UK Forest Standard gives assurance that the Right Tree is in the Right Place.
- However, whilst well-planned tree-planting is normally to be embraced, landowners tend to select their less-productive land for this purpose. This land often has high nature potential and there is a risk that the creation of other nature-rich ecosystems such as extensive grasslands is made more difficult. Using the principles of the UK Forest Standard will help prevent negative impacts.

5.7 Invasive non-native species

- Invasive non-native species (INNS), pests and diseases are occurring more frequently.
- Particularly within the marine environment, prevention may be the only option rather than cure – freshwater INNS must often be tackled upstream first to prevent their downstream return.

6. Priorities for nature

We identified above a series of questions that this Nature Recovery Plan seeks to answer, in order to realise our Vision. These are:

- Which ecosystems and natural processes need our support the most?
- Where should we target our resources?
- What targets do we set ourselves around nature recovery to be ambitious but realistic?
- What will be the impact on the area of specific habitats?
- What could the South Devon AONB look like in 2050?

This and the following section (Opportunity Mapping) tackle these questions.

6.1 What habitats/wildlife should we prioritise?

83% of the land area of the AONB is farmed and this is where the main opportunity lies for nature recovery on a landscape scale. Recovery for most of our special species and priority habitats needs to happen on farmed land and will be in the main delivered by farmers. Some examples to note here are species-rich unimproved grasslands, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, rush pasture, circl buntings, greater horseshoe bats, barn owls and small pearl-bordered fritillaries, all of which require specific management that is provided by a range of farming techniques.

Creating more nature-rich farmland habitats is therefore the over-riding priority for this plan. This provides the greatest opportunity to enhance the biodiversity value of the SDAONB and realise our vision towards 2050.

Aquatic and marine ecosystems will invariably enjoy the benefits of improved water quality. We will prioritise those ecosystems where we can have most beneficial effect – so much is necessarily prevention of damage and disturbance and allowing systems to re-heal through natural processes rather than active restoration.

The key habitats and champion species of the AONB are described in section 5 above. These provide a broad-brush framework for our work in building resilient ecosystems. Actions that deliver functioning habitats and ecosystems that sustainably support these species (which also benefitting many other species and processes) are most likely to deliver our Vision and provide a nature-rich landscape across the AONB.

6.2 Where should we target our resources?

The approaches to creating a resilient ecological network set out in the Lawton Report are, in no order of priority:

- Improve the quality of existing Nature Areas by better habitat management.
- Increase the size of existing Nature Areas.
- Create new Nature Areas.
- Enhance connections between, or join up Nature Areas, either through physical corridors, or through 'stepping stones'.
- Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering Nature Areas.

The first of these approaches targets resources at existing priority habitat areas including designated sites. Our target is that by 2030 all Nature Areas will be in favourable or recovering condition¹ and by 2050 all Core Nature Areas (CNA) will be in favourable condition.

The remaining approaches all require land outside of the Nature Areas to be managed better for nature. This involves a targeted approach that expands, buffers or links existing CNAs and creates new CNAs, alongside a non-targeted approach that seeks improvements across the wider landscape.

Realising our vision means supporting and expanding mixed farming systems that allow plentiful space for nature and maintain diverse ecosystems whilst continuing to provide high quality food.

In most cases nature-rich habitats depend on ongoing management using farming techniques. This is because wildlife has evolved over thousands of years alongside agriculture and has only become threatened relatively recently as some farming practices have intensified impacts on nature.

Removing land from food production in order to provide more space for nature is likely to happen in some limited circumstances (mainly in the creation of new woodlands). The following farming techniques are some of those that have proven value in generating nature-rich farmland:

- Creating large areas of extensively grazed grasslands including some scrub.
- Managing wildflower grassland margins around arable fields.
- Restoring and creating new Devon banks and hedgerows.
- Integrating trees into agriculture through agro-forestry and allowing hedgerows to grow taller and thicker.
- Creation of riparian woodlands to actively buffer the watercourses from agricultural pollution
- Increase the management of existing woodland to deliver a sustainable resource and improve outcomes for biodiversity
- Managing arable fields to encourage arable flowers such as poppies.
- Overwintering stubble to provide a winter food source for farmland birds.
- Providing stubbles and cover crops to conserve soils.
- Using hardy local breeds of cattle– like Devon Reds – that can thrive on rough pastures.

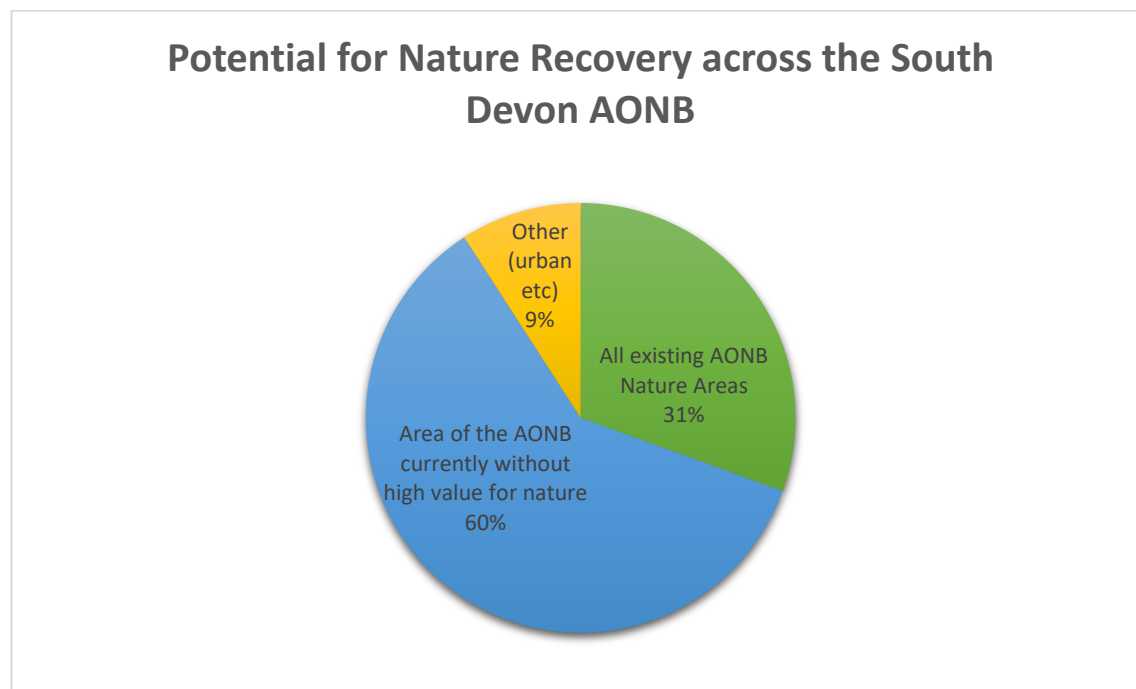
This plan recommends nature-friendly farming across all farmed land in the AONB at the same time as targeting this approach specifically on the **least productive land in the AONB**. This is because prioritising nature on this land will have the least impact on food production and is therefore most achievable and realistic for the majority of farmers and land managers who still need to grow food to make a profit from their business. In the following Section we explore how this approach can provide a roadmap that farmers, landowners and the conservation sector can use to target changes to create a resilient ecological network across the AONB.

6.3 How much land is needed to create resilient and functioning ecosystems for nature?

The area of the South Devon AONB is 33,987ha. Of this, 3,087ha (9.1%) is urban or other built development.

There is a total of 10,380ha of Nature Areas (consisting of priority habitats, designated nature sites and other identified sites of nature conservation interest), representing 30.5% of the total area of the AONB. This land is the focus for Lawton's first principle of improving the quality of current sites.

This leaves 20,508ha (60.3%) of land that is not currently identified as having high value for nature.



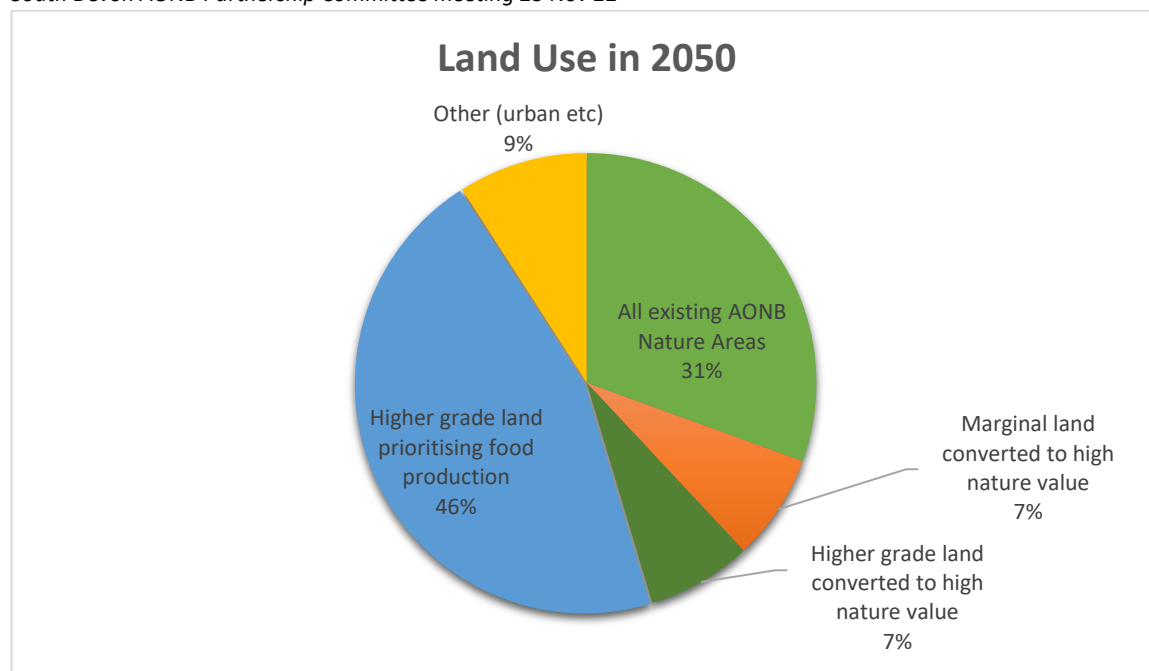
We have focused most of our attention on the land in the AONB that is of poorest agricultural value according to the national agricultural land classifications. Approximately 10% of the AONB's farmland is of grade 4 and 5 (i.e. "poor or very poor quality, with severe limitations"), 80% is of Grade 3 ("good to moderate quality"), and 10% is Grade 2 ("very good quality"). Our analysis in Section 8 below identifies 2,545ha of lower-grade agricultural land (Grade 4 and 5 along with some marginal Grade 3) outside of the Nature Areas. This would be the priority for realising the remaining Lawton principles (bigger, more and joined up).

In addition, higher-grade land adjacent to existing Nature Areas and the lower-grade, less productive land, is a priority for nature enrichment. Allowing a 200m zone within higher-grade land.

Our ambitious targets for 2050 are:

- 2,545ha of marginal land will be dedicated to nature-rich land management.
- 2,500ha of higher-grade land will be dedicated to nature-rich land management
- As a result, 5,000ha of farmed land representing 15% of the total area of the AONB will adopt nature-friendly farming practices
- This means that the total Nature Area of the AONB will increase in size by nearly 50%.

Overall land use in the AONB will then be as follows:



An interesting feature of the approach using agricultural land classification as a means of targeting conservation effort is that most lower grade land lies along watercourses. This indicates a topography for the nature recovery network of interconnected and generally sheltered valleys where a wide range of habitats can be created including wetland, woodland and grassland communities. With higher-grade land tending to lie on the plateaux between the valleys, nature-rich corridors and stepping-stones can be targeted across this more productive land to connect river valleys and strengthen the resilience and effectiveness of the network.

6.4 What will be the impact on the area of specific habitats?

Current data on priority habitats in the AONB² provides the following areas for the key habitats identified in this plan:

Main Habitat	Area in Ha. 2022	Area in Ha. 2050
Grasslands		
Good quality semi-improved grassland	750	1500
Lowland calcareous grassland	16	32
Lowland dry acid grassland	76	152
Lowland meadows	42	84
Sub-total	884	1768
Maritime cliff and slope	1366	2732
Deciduous woodland	2010	4020
Traditional orchard	135	

30_____

² Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory

Our targets are to increase the area of each priority habitat by 50% above current levels by 2050. It is important that ensure that creating one habitat does not compromise another, in particular retaining coastal grassland

This will mean:

- Creating **442 ha** of species rich grassland.
- Expanding maritime cliff and slope habitats inland by an additional **683ha**.
- Creating **1005 ha** of nature rich woodland by extending and linking existing woods.
- Creating an additional **67ha** of traditional orchard.
- Creating **xx** km of new hedgerows
- Create **xx** ha of wetland habitat in estuaries, coombes and river valleys.
- Bring **xx** ha of arable land into schemes with environmental measures.

6.5 What could the network of Nature Areas look like in 2050?

Our Opportunity Mapping has been based on a realistic approach to use lower grade agricultural land to connect and expand existing Nature Areas, supplemented by targeted work to extend the network across more productive farmland.

We have used a buffering approach around the lower grade land to visualise how connections could be made across higher-grade land to create bridges between Nature Areas or isolated elements in the network.

In all cases the goal has been to secure physical connection between elements or, at the very least, to minimise any island effects.

Please note: our approach is a model based on agricultural land classifications. It needs to be used as a guideline and adapted to each individual farm or land holding. The model does not proscribe the actual interventions recommended on any parcel of land, simply the potential for change. The **Devon Nature Recovery Habitat Suitability Map (HSM)**, which is available on the [Devon Environment Viewer](#), is a separate tool that can be used to identify what types of habitats are best to create in any location. For example, different soils will naturally support different species of flora and, when selecting species to plant or seed, the HSM can guide decisions.

7. Opportunity mapping

We have developed a “**Nature Recovery Opportunity Map**” (NROM) for the AONB. As described above, this targeted the least productive agricultural land as having the greatest opportunities and economic feasibility for increasing its nature value.

7.1 Least Productive Farmland

Agricultural Land Classification is not mapped field by field, and land has been mapped to their most prevalent grade, so that we could build up our opportunity map on a field by field basis which could be more useful for farmers and landowners when planning changes to their management. On this basis we mapped all of the **Grade 4 and 5** agricultural land, to see how this might help develop our understanding of the potential for more coherent and resilient ecological networks. This land covers 3,163ha.

We also mapped **steep Grade 3** land, on the basis that this land is likely to be difficult to farm and less productive as a result. We selected a slope of 20 degrees or more and any field that has such a slope across at least 25% of its area was added to the map. This land covers 147ha.

We have described the resulting fields (Grade 4 and 5, plus steeply sloping Grade 3) as “**Least Productive Farmland**”. The total area of Least Productive Farmland within the AONB is 3,310ha, almost exactly 10% of the total area of the AONB. 770ha of this land is already within a Nature Area, leaving 2,545ha with potential for nature enrichment.

Our rationale is that these areas of land are likely to be the least productive and therefore the land where a farmer or landowner could most readily make changes to make more space for nature, whilst having the least impact on the farm’s overall productivity. Obviously, each farm is unique and assessing these opportunities on the ground would have to be undertaken on a farm-by-farm basis, but the approach is useful for generating a strategic overview of opportunities.

7.2 More Productive Farmland

Substantial areas of farmland remain that separate the emerging networks of Nature Areas and Least Productive Farmland. These are, in the main, Grade 3 and are therefore likely to be making an important contribution to farm incomes. However, the Nature Recovery Plan aims to encourage and stimulate a nature-rich landscape across the whole of the AONB and wherever there are opportunities to improve farmland (or any other land) for nature.

We know that many farmers and landowners want to explore changes to farming practices that could deliver nature recovery on their Grade 3 or higher land. These changes could include targeted work on specific corridors that would help to build coherent and resilient ecological networks. The NRP should provide a framework for these decisions, by showing how these changes fit with the creation of ecological networks and where links could best be made between otherwise disconnected nature-rich sites.

We have therefore mapped a 200m buffer around all existing Nature Areas and Least Productive Farmland to show where work on Grade 3 land could have the greatest impact, either by expanding existing Nature Areas or by connecting otherwise isolated sites of potential. Where these buffer sites came close to each other, we mapped connections across the gaps. We have called these “**Nature Buffers and Bridges**”.

The remaining area beyond these Buffers and Bridges does still have great nature potential and this plan anticipates that farmers and land managers could focus changes on these areas to further connect and extend existing nature areas.

8. Delivery mechanisms

How can these changes be realised? New funding, new partnerships, machinery rings, new markets, new thinking. Talking to partners and landowners in next stage will help to generate full NRP that will drive land use change to achieve our ambitious vision.

To be developed through consultation with partners

9. Action Plan

Integrated approach, including specific tasks / goals for different organisations. Timeline, costs, lead organisations.

To be developed through consultation with partners

10. Appendices (to be added)

1: RSPB - Cirl Country - Saving cirl buntings and mixed farmland wildlife in the West Country

2: Species data

3: Links to South Devon Important Invertebrate Areas and Important Plant Areas

4: Life on the Edge Conservation Management Plan

To be added at publication stage through consultation with partners

Annex 1 to Agenda item 9a: Summary of Development Management and other Planning Activity *updated 14 November 2022*

Purpose

1. This report provides a brief update on Local planning authority development management consultations since the September 2022 AONB Partnership meeting pertinent to the South Devon AONB.

Key Activity

Planning Caseload

2. To date in 2022/2023 (to 14.11.22), Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) formally consulted the AONB Unit on 32 applications. In addition, the AONB Unit was consulted on six felling licences, five woodland creation proposals, a screening opinion and six pre-applications.
3. There have been 15 new consultations since the last update.
4. Summary of activity since the last update:
 - 6 cases that LPAs have determined
 - 16 completed responses on cases that LPAs/MMO are yet to determine
 - 20 cases under consideration with responses currently in development
 - 6 pre- application responded to / response in development
5. Note the 34 applications with completed responses and an LPA decision as at the September PCM are treated as closed and are not reported again in the table below. Wording in 'normal' text signifies this appeared on the last planning update, with any changes/updates noted in '**bold**' text
6. The following table lists the planning cases relevant to the period:

App Ref	Application Type	Decision	In accordance with AONB advice / guidance	AONB Major	Comments
6 Applications - LPA decision made					
3119/21/FUL	Development site Norton Cross to Townstal Road Dartmouth 32 residential units	Conditional Approval	No comments	N	
4763/21/ARM	Site at SX775424 East of Creek Close Frogmore Application for reserved matters: access, appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale following outline approval 3880/17/OPA for the erection of 8 dwellings	Withdrawn	Holding objection	N	Resubmission of 1430/21/ARM) Committee date 6.7.22, approved
MLA/2022/00167	SALCOMBE - The proposed replacement/rehabilitation of 19 sewer lateral connections on the foreshore sewer	Completed (Discharging conditions)	No objection with conditions	N	
P/2021/1238	Land off Northfields Lane, Brixham Split land from holiday accommodation use, and construction of single storey dwelling with private gardens and on-site parking	Refusal	-	N	Appeal lodged Oct22 APP/X1165/W/22/3299600
2468/22/VAR	Telecommunication Mast Wembury Point Application for variation of condition 2	Conditional Approval	-	N	of planning consent 3612/19/FUL
1577/22/FUL	Atlantic Marine Drive Bigbury On Sea Demolish existing property and build three apartments	Refusal	-	N	
16 Applications - Response submitted - LPA still to determine					

App Ref	Application Type	Decision	In accordance with AONB advice / guidance	AONB Major	Comments
2167/19/FUL	Gara Rock Hotel East Portlemouth READVERTISEMENT (Revised plans received) 3 additional holiday units within Gara Rock Resort	-	Objection	N	Application re-advertised, number of units reduced. Revisions and further information on compliance with earlier landscape conditions awaited
1159/21/FUL	Land at West End Garage, Salcombe 22 dwellings	-	Objection	Y	Revised plans Jul 2022
P/2021/0658	Brokenbury, Churston Ferrers Formation of a solar farm & associated equipment to include installation of fencing, CCTV, landscaping & ecological mitigation.	-	No objection	N	
2817/21/ARM	Noss Marina Details of reserved matters and discharge of conditions	-	Advice provided	Y	
3053/21/ARM	Noss Marina Approval of reserved matters	-	Advice provided	Y	
3054/21/ARM	Noss Marina Approval of reserved matters	-	Advice provided	Y	
3335/21/FUL	Site at land west of Collaton Park Newton Ferrers 125 homes	-	Objection	Y	Committee date 25.5.22, approved
3953/21/FUL	101 Yealm Road Newton Ferrers Demolish two-storey detached buildings & garage. Erect 2 four bed family homes and extension of quay to east of site providing new landing ramp for dwelling 2	-	Objection	N	
0141/22/FUL	Vipers Quay, Dittisham Repair jetty, including rebuild stone wall on northface and parts on east and west sides, remove and replace concrete base, remove part concrete slab on north end to drainage channel to facilitate work and replace afterwards	-	No objection - subject to conditions	N	Reconsulted on 29 Mar
2786/20/FUL	West Buckland Barn Bantham READVERTISEMENT (Revised plans and amended development description) Erection of new agricultural store	-	Objection	N	
22/00086/FUL	Land At Bovisand Lane Staddiscombe Demolish 2 agricultural buildings and erect 2 dwellings (bungalows)	-	Objection	N	
P/2021/1180	Land To The North Of, Totnes Road, Collaton St Mary Reserved Matters relating to Outline Application P/2019/0604. Matters for approval: Details of appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale, as stated in Appeal Condition 01.	-	Neutral	N	Major Reserved Matters Application
P/2022/0339	Site Adjacent To Brixham Cricket Club Change of use from agricultural land to outdoor football pitch.	-	Objection	N	
2254/22/HHO	Waterside East Portlemouth Replace lean-to with single storey side extension; build 2-storey rear extension and extend guest annexe plus new swimming pool	-	Holding objection	N	Awareness raised by SHS
3334/22/HHO	Curlew Point Curlew Drive West Charleton Householder application for improvements to Slipway/Foreshore Access & repairs to Lime Kiln	-	No objection subject to conditions	N	
2928/22/FUL	71 Yealm Road Newton Ferrers	-	Objection	N	

App Ref	Application Type	Decision	In accordance with AONB advice / guidance	AONB Major	Comments
	Proposed boatshed and reinstatement of Landing (Resubmission of 0370/22/FUL) (Retrospective)				
20 Applications - Responses in development					
0868/20/ARM	Development Site SX612502 North Of Church Hill Holbeton Application for approval of reserved matters construct 14 dwellings	-	-	N	Following outline approval 25/1720/15/O; resubmission of 0127/19/ARM READVERTISED – Revised plans Aug
2089/20/FUL	Fish Hoek South Town Dartmouth Alter and extend 2 dwellings and erect 2 new dwellings	-	-	N	Related to withdrawn application no. 2781/18/FUL
4158/19/FUL	Development Site At Sx 734 439, Land to Northwest of junction between Ropewalk and Kingsway Park Ropewalk Kingsbridge 15 dwellings	-	-	N	READVERTISED – Revised plans
MLA/2021/00454	Dittisham Pier repair work	On Hold	-	N	
4774/21/FUL	Burgh Island Hotel, Bigbury On Sea Extend and refurbish Hotel and associated buildings; develop new staff accommodation, extend Pilchard Inn, extend Bay View Cafe	-	-	N	Poss Heritage Coast NPPF 177 Major Reconsulted 9May22 - readvertised, revised plans
0510/22/VAR	Bovisand Harbour (Fort Bovisand), Wembury Application for variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning consent 3814/20/VAR	-	-	N	
0915/22/FUL	Land off Bantham Beach Road Bantham Erection of replacement beach shower/toilet block, replacement village sewage treatment plant, new residents/mooring holders car park and newparking, ANPR system and associated signage on the beach road and car park	-	-	N	Reconsulted 11Oct22
1178/22/ARM	Land Off Townstal Road Dartmouth Application for approval of reserved matters following outline approval 15_51/1710/14/O (Appeal APP/K1128/W/15/3039104) as varied by application reference 2609/19/VAR and 0479/21/VAR relating to access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the construction of 46No. apartment extra care/assisted living scheme (Class C2) with provision of parking, gardens, access and associated works	-	-	N	
2982/21/FUL	Land Opposite Butts Park Newton Ferrers Erection of 20 residential units	-	-	Y	READVERTISED – Revised plans, (AONB Objected to original plans)
1516/22/CLP	Salcombe Retreat Malborough Proposed Siting of 52 Static Caravans	-	-	N	Raised by member of the public Resubmission of 1485/21/CLP
2305/22/FUL	Battisborough Point Battisborough Cross Replacement dwelling	-	-	N	Revised plans October 22
P/2021/0658	Land At Brokenbury Farm, Galmpton Formation of a solar farm & associated equipment to include installation of fencing, CCTV, landscaping & ecological mitigation (revised plans received 1 September 2022)	-	-	N	
3012/22/FUL	Land at SX 8955 5095 Castle Road Kingswear Proposed new livestock building & associated works (Resubmission of 1602/21/FUL)	-	-	N	
DCC/4317/2022	Land at Ngr 283449 45549, Strete, Relocation of Slapton Monument approximately 1.4km north east on land north of A379 to preserve the monument from storm damage and restoration of existing site	-	-	N	

App Ref	Application Type	Decision	In accordance with AONB advice / guidance	AONB Major	Comments
3421/22/ARC	"Allocated Site K5" Land at SX 729 440 West Alvington Hill Kingsbridge Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 4 (Wildflower), 5 (Grassland), 6 (Play Areas) and 9 (Energy Statement) of planning consent 2434/18/ARM	-	-	Y	Outline consent already established, now reserved matters
2831/22/FUL	Land Adjacent To Stonehanger Court Devon Road Salcombe Construction of a two storey house	-	-	N	
2643/22/VAR	Thurlestone Hotel Application for variation of conditions 2 (approved plans) & 8 (tree protection) of planning consent 1720/19/FUL	-	-	N	
3388/22/FUL	Efford House Holbeton New ground mounted photovoltaic panels	-	-	N	
P/2022/1119	Land To The South Of White Rock Aka Inglewood Paignton Major Reserved Matters application relating to outline consent P/2017/1133 for approval of (i) layout, (ii) scale, (iii) appearance, (iv) landscaping for the construction of 373 dwellings (Use Class C3), provision of serviced land for primary school and nursery school, internal access roads including vehicular and pedestrian/cycle access, the provision of public open space (formal and informal) and strategic mitigation.	-	-	N	Outline consent already established, now reserved matters
P/2022/1159	Post Office 1 Cambridge Road Brixham Single storey extension to create tea-shop / cafe and relocation of waste bins and access off public highway.	-	-	N	

Recommendations

7. The Partnership Committee is recommended to:
 - i. Note the level of resource commitment currently applied to the type of development management consultations, bearing in mind the recently updated AONB Planning Protocol (adopted March 2020), in addition to strategic and neighbourhood plan demand across the local planning authority areas. Keep this under review.
 - ii. Continue to provide early notification of significant planning matters to the AONB Manager to enable timely and appropriate action to be taken.