



South Devon
National
Landscape

Partnership Meeting

to be held at

10am on Friday 14 March 2025

Repton Room at Follaton House and via Zoom

Agenda & Papers

National Landscape Partnership Membership

Members nominated by local authorities

Devon County Council

Cllr Roger Croad

Cllr Jonathan Hawkins

(officer advising Doug Eltham)

tbc following restructure

Plymouth City Council

Cllr Georgina Allen

South Hams District Council

Cllr John McKay

(officer advising Chris Brook)

Torbay Council

Cllr Christine Carter

(officer advising Tracy Brooks)

Members nominated by statutory agencies

Environment Agency

Emma Magee

Forestry Commission

Joshua Bennett/Matthew Odgers-

Brown

Historic England

Ross Simmonds

Natural England

Eamon Crowe

Members co-opted by the Partnership Committee

Independent

Peter Sandover (Chair)

National Trust

Richard Snow

Plymouth University

John Martin (Vice Chair)

South West Coast Path Association

Ken Carter

Devon Campaign to Protect Rural England

Penny Mills

Community Representatives

Business community

Peter Moore

Coast and marine sector

Richard Stones

Community/voluntary groups

Jane Nichols

Environmental organisations (NGOs)

Ed Parr-Ferris

Landowning/farming community

Leah Harris

Parish Councils

Peter Hinchliffe

Tourism community

Laura Campbell

National Landscape team staff attending

Manager

Roger English

Estuaries Officer

Nigel Mortimer

Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer

Alice Wyness

Office Manager

Vanessa Gray

Agenda

Item 1	Public statements	
The formal meeting and live recording to YouTube will immediately follow any statements from members of the public.		
Item 2 (5 mins)	Introductions & apologies for absence	
Item 3	Declarations of Interests	
Item 4 (5 mins)	Minutes of the last Partnership Committee meeting (29 November 2024) for approval and any matters arising	Page 2
Item 5 (5 mins)	South Devon National Landscape Partnership matters 5a) Partnership Chair's report	Page 14
Item 6 (20 mins)	Partner updates – partner contributions to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the South Devon National Landscape and delivering on area of outstanding natural beauty Management Plan priorities – recent, current and planned.	verbal
Item 7 (20 mins)	National Matters 7a) Land Use Framework	Page 16
(5 mins)	7b) Independent Water Commission into the water sector and its regulation	Page 24
(5 mins)	7c) Local Government devolution and National Landscapes	Verbal
Item 8 (15 mins)	South Devon National Landscape Management 8a) Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme update	Page 26
(10 mins)	8b) Heritage at Risk and the South Devon Coastal Heritage project	Page 30
(10 mins)	8c) Yealm & Dart estuaries - saltmarsh projects	Page 37
(5 mins)	8d) Review of the area of outstanding natural beauty Management Plan	Verbal
(5 mins)	8e) Key Development Management matters for feedback	Verbal
Item 9	For Information 9a) Planning applications - consultations	Annex

ITEM 4 APPROVAL OF MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SOUTH DEVON NATIONAL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE AND VIA ZOOM
ON FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2024**

1. INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**Those present were:**

Doug Eltham	DE	Devon County Council
Cllr Georgina Allen	GA	South Hams District Council
Cllr John McKay	JM	South Hams District Council
Chris Brook	CB	South Hams District Council
Cllr Christine Carter	CC	Torbay Council
Tracy Brooks	TB	Torbay Council
Emma Magee	EM	Environment Agency
Matthew Odgers-Brown	MOB	Forestry Commission
Becky Hughes	BH	Natural England
Peter Sandover	Chair	Independent
Richard Snow	RS	National Trust
Ken Carter	KC	South West Coast Path Association
Penny Mills	PMi	Devon CPRE
Pete Moore	PMo	Representative: business community
Jane Nichols	JN	Representative: community or voluntary groups
Ed Parr Ferris	EPF	Representative: environmental organisations
Laura Campbell	LC	Representative: tourism

National Landscape staff attending:

Roger English	NLM	NL Manager
Vanessa Gray		NL Office Manager (meeting assistance & notes)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Cllr Roger Croad	Devon County Council
Cllr Jonathan Hawkins	Devon County Council
Chris Avent	Plymouth City Council
Eamon Crowe	Natural England, Becky Hughes attending
John Martin	Vice chair, Plymouth University
Richard Stones	Representative: coast and marine
Leah Harris	Representative: landowning and farming
Peter Hinchliffe	Representative: parish and town councils

Observers:

Observers were requested to follow the meeting live via YouTube.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No conflicts of interest declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE 19 JULY 2024 PARTNERSHIP MEETING FOR APPROVAL & ANY MATTERS ARISING

3.1. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD 19 JULY 2024

Proposed: Cllr Christine Carter

Seconded: Cllr John McKay

Resolved: No objections, the minutes were approved.

3.2. Matters arising:

- i. The report on farming and food production in South Hams was circulated with the minutes of the last meeting, on 22 August.
- ii. South Hams Festival has been put back to 2026. The timescale was very tight so putting the date back a year allows more time for collaboration, as well as to plan and organise the event.
 - Chair: There are overlaps with community work taking place as part of the Life on the Edge project.
 - Cllr Georgina Allen: Parish and Town councils had plans in place for next year with an environment theme; I am encouraging them to join with SDNL in this common theme.
- iii. Carried forward: The action for Tracy Brooks and Kate Jury to discuss what standing advice may be useful in planning matters, in respect of the Coastal Wildbelt - given both the SWCPA and National Trails UK are not statutory consultees. The project is still in the scoping phase and Kate Jury is exploring what advocacy and national guidance could look like.
- iv. Carried forward: The action for Elaine Hayes, National Marine Park CEO, to share slides and video from her presentation on Plymouth Sound National Marine Park and the Horizons project.

ACTION 1 (NLM): Follow up with Elaine.

Post meeting update, followed up on 13 December, response awaited.

- v. Carried forward: The action for Kate Hind to share a link to the DCC Local Nature Recovery Strategy mapping platform when available.
- vi. Carried forward: The action for the NL Manager to provide an overview of Farming in Protected Landscapes projects. The FiPL Officer Henry Lucas left on 11 October and his replacement is due to start on 6 January. In the meantime, you are able to read about FiPL funded projects via the South Devon National Landscape website¹.

ACTION 2 (NLM): Provide an overview of FiPL projects to Partnership at the March meeting.

- vii. Carried forward: The action for Elaine Hayes, National Marine Park, to provide the National Landscape Manager with a copy of their 'State of' report.

¹ [Farming in Protected Landscapes project \[southdevon-nl.org.uk\]](http://southdevon-nl.org.uk)

viii. Carried forward: The action for all members of the South Devon National Landscape Partnership to let the NL Manager know what they would like to be considered during the Management Plan review and to provide feedback on some particular asks. To date only the Partnership Chair has responded.

ACTION 3 (Chair): Management Plan review - Provide a copy of the initial thoughts provided to the NL Manager, for circulation to Partnership.

Post meeting update: circulated with these minutes.

4 PARTNERSHIP CHAIR'S REPORT

The report provided a summary of activity over the last few months undertaken on behalf of the National Landscape Partnership by the Chair, Peter Sandover.

Partnership members are recommended to note the report and are encouraged to provide brief reports where possible in advance of scheduled meetings to assist with the Partner updates agenda item.

4.1 A Chairs and Lead Officers meeting was held yesterday by the National Landscapes Association.

- i. There are funding challenges; NLA have attained coverage in The Guardian newspaper².
- ii. There were a number of briefings including one on what beauty means in our context. *Post meeting update: circulated with these minutes.*
- iii. There was also a presentation from CPRE on planning reforms. *Post meeting update: circulated with these minutes*

5 PARTNER UPDATES

An opportunity for Partners to update Partnership on their contributions to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the South Devon National Landscape and delivering on area of outstanding natural beauty Management Plan priorities. Partners are encouraged all to provide written reports prior to the meeting and requested those giving verbal reports to be reasonably brief, allowing more time for other items on the agenda.

5.1. The Chair welcomed new Partnership members and thanked those that had now stepped down. He requested new members give a brief statement on who they are, where they are from and what they bring to the Partnership. The Chair also requested new members are aware of their constituency, to be able to engage that constituency in these meetings.

5.2. Ken Carter, South West Coast Path Association, provided an update in advance of the meeting for inclusion in the meeting papers.

5.3. Doug Eltham, Devon County Council

- i. DCC advice note 2, accommodating wind and solar in all landscapes, is progressing. Chris at East Devon National Landscape is just finalising the report.
- ii. The Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy is still progressing with a draft version due out in the spring.
- iii. DCC's Tree Officer has now moved on; looking to replace on a fixed term contract until around Christmas 2026.

² [Guardian exclusive on budget challenges at National Landscapes \[theguardian.com\]](https://www.theguardian.com/national-landscapes/2025/mar/14/national-landscapes-budget-challenges)

5.4. Cllr John McKay, South Hams District Council

- i. Food hub at Dartington Cider Press Centre: lease received; negotiations ongoing.
- ii. Going through budget process for the next financial year.

5.5. Chris Brook, South Hams District Council

- i. Life on the Edge video was played at the Full Council meeting.
- ii. Continuing work on the Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest. We will buy land as it comes up and where there is a business case to do so.

5.6. Tracy Brooks, Torbay Council

- i. The Landscape Character Assessment is ongoing.

5.7. Emma Magee

- i. Bathing Waters consultation: is live until 23 Dec. – no further detail as there is a separate paper within the agenda.
- ii. River Basin Management Plan consultation
 - a) Live until 14 May.
 - b) “Working Together” consultation launched last week³. This is the first step in the process of updating the river basin management plans (RBMPs). It’s about letting everyone know what we are doing, when, and why it matters. Plus, it’s a great way to find out who wants to get involved in the process.
 - Over the last 15 years RBMPs have helped drive billions of pounds of investment into protecting and improving the water environment. The current plans, updated in 2022, are a key part of the framework for managing the water environment and underpin our regulatory activities. We are responsible for consulting on and updating the plans every six years, with the next update due in 2027. Caveat: the wider process that this sits under is currently under review, regardless of the outcome of that review we will be seeking partnership input and to work with others for any future shape this process might take so this will not be abortive effort.
- iii. Bathing Water status⁴.
- iv. Incident reporting: Devon and Cornwall are part of a trial of a new way to report environmental incidents to the EA. See details at this blog post⁵, note that I don’t think people can currently sign up to help with testing but that the current go live date is 2025.
- v. Winter readiness campaign - Public urged to prepare for floods after wettest 18 months on record⁶.
 - a) Check your long-term flood risk⁷. You can use this free service to find out the long-term flood risk for an area in England, the possible causes of flooding, and how to manage flood risk.
 - b) Sign up for flood warnings⁸ by phone, text or email.

³ [River basin planning: working together \[GOV.UK\]](#)

⁴ [What are this year's bathing water classifications? \[GOV.UK\]](#)

⁵ [Reporting water pollution with new online service \[GOV.UK\]](#)

⁶ [Prepare for floods – wettest 18 months on record \[GOV.UK\]](#)

⁷ [Check long term flood risk for an area in England \[GOV.UK\]](#)

⁸ [Sign up for flood warnings \[GOV.UK\]](#)

- c) Taking steps to protect yourself from future flooding⁹ - including storing important documents in a secure, waterproof location, taking rugs and small furniture upstairs, checking how to turn off your electricity and water, preparing a flood kit.
- vi. Current year projects: Saltmarsh restoration and Dart/Erme catchment action plan progressing as well as Yealm and Erme non-farming landowners.
- vii. Future projects: Developing projects in Avon, Torbay around intertidal and source to sea habitats. As well as building on pipeline for 2024/25.

5.8. Becky Hughes, Natural England

- i. Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework: rollout. Supporting National Landscapes in the area with understanding and applying the new framework targets and interpretation in the context of Management Plan reviews. Moving into a phase where we can have 1 to 1 conversations and producing guidance to help with the process.
- ii. Questions and in discussion
 - Emma Magee: There is a target to get SSSIs into favourable condition by 2042. Is there a budget for survey effort on SSSIs?
Becky Hughes: This is a high level target nationally. The area team is looking at the programming, condition assessment and monitoring plan for SSSIs within protected sites in our area; looking at programming that in over the next 18-24 months. If you have particular sites that you believe are overdue a condition assessment, monitoring etc., or sites that support the River Basin Management Plan review process, please feedback as this may help with programming and prioritisation.

5.9. Richard Snow – National Trust

- i. Life on the Edge
 - The National Trust is a partner on the project. We now have three apprentices, two in my team. We are very pleased with the calibre of the candidates and their work.
 - Looking to identify new areas of land for over sowing as part of the LotE project.
- ii. Tree planting: Third and final phase of tree planting at Wembury. We identified an additional 70Ha of tree planting on top of the 30Ha of existing woodland to create 100Ha of woodland and wood planting. By the end of this three year tree planting scheme, we will have planted 120,000 trees. Elsewhere in South Devon on NT land, we have identified 108Ha of woodland and wood planting that we hope to start in winter 2025. A lot of this is woodland and wood pasture.
- iii. In partnership with the Environment Agency, we are looking at improving the quality of a stream at Wembury before it reaches the sea. The issues come from upstream of our land, but there is an opportunity on our land to improve water quality and create a wetland by the beach.

5.10. Ken Carter, South West Coast Path Association

- i. We have an opportunity to maximise the funding available for the King Charles III England Coast Path section Cremyll to Kingswear. There is funding available for improvements as well as creating the route. If it is possible for DCC to free up some staff time, to progress

⁹ [Prepare for flooding \[GOV.UK\]](#)

and application for funding from Natural England for the KCIIIECP for the parts that are in need of improvement.

ii. **ACTION 4 (DE): Liaise with KC regarding staff time availability to discuss accessing funds for Coast Path improvements**

5.11. Penny Mills, Devon CPRE

- i. Planning reforms and freeing up more land for development: Waiting to hear what this entails. Concern over the freeing up of more land for development and the speed in pushing renewables covering farmland. Devon lost 4.5k acres to solar farms; impactful to land and nature.
- ii. Concern over the proposed large wind turbine at Bigbury; will take up quite a bit of time next year.
- iii. CPRE nationally are still looking at updating tranquillity maps; useful for all the National Landscapes.
- iv. Requested an update on the planning role:
NL Manager: East Devon NL have pulled out of the arrangement, so a new Partnership Agreement is needed. In the interim both North Devon and South Devon NLs have temporary planning support in place. Changes at North Devon NL means there is an opportunity for them to look at budgets to see if they can increase their commitment. The funding from SHDC and DCC is secure. Recently met with the Director of Housing and Climate at Torbay Council along with Chair and Vice chair of the planning committee who jointly felt there may be potential for a ring fenced contribution towards the planning role.

5.12. Jane Nichols, representative for community or voluntary groups

- i. Sustainable South Hams initiated a project to produce a councillor climate and biodiversity support pack for parish and town councillors which has now grown to be a wider community support package. The ambition is to have a named contact on every parish/town council, community group and ideally in schools as well, to build a network sharing knowledge, information and projects. The key emphasis is on the network of contacts. If anyone has information to share we can do that immediately through our network through the newsletters etc. Our ambition for the community support package is to include the South Hams Festival and how that is propagated through community groups; keeping integrity of the climate and nature theme – a celebration of climate action for South Hams.

5.13. Ed Parr Ferris, representative for environmental organisations

- i. Pine martens are back on Dartmoor¹⁰. The reason to mention this is there should be an assumption they now are anywhere in Devon. There will be a project to provide advice to landowners and foresters.

5.14. Laura Campbell, representative for tourism

- i. The Tourism Management Institute conference took place a couple of weeks ago. Just received the presentations and currently collating useful information research on statistics and other pieces that I will share.

¹⁰ [Bringing back pine martens \[devonwildlifetrust.org\]](http://devonwildlifetrust.org)

- ii. Wild About Dartmouth: Met with Nicky Bailey, SDNL Community Projects Officer, last month to put together a Wild About Dartmouth package. Looking at modelling a 'Wild About' initiative together that Nicky has worked on before.
- iii. Met with the Salcombe Chamber and Salcombe Information Centre yesterday. Suggested South Hams towns get together regularly to share knowledge, resources and collaborate.
- iv. We are building more collaborations, and I will be contacting Pete Moore, representative for business; Tourism and Business have synergies as you cannot have one without the other.

6 RESTORING 30 PER CENT OF OUR LAND AND SEA BY 2030

The report introduced the national and international commitment to protect 30% of the UK's land and sea by 2030 (30by30) for which protect landscapes in England are considered to form an important backbone.

Partnership members are recommended to note the urgency and importance government and Defra attaches to this area of work, and reliance upon the protected landscape network and marine protected area network in England to deliver; note the constraints and opportunities in South Devon for both strands of 30by30 on land, and at sea and offer feedback on responding to this challenge; incorporating the response into activities of the Partnership; and the Management Plan review.

The NL Manager talked through this item; extensive information was provided in the meeting papers.

6.1 Feedback and questions

- i. Responding to a question on whether Coastal Wildbelt is included in the 30by30 targets, the NL Manager said that we have been tasked specifically with working within the Protected Landscape, so it is not included. We know how important the coastal corridor is and Coastal Wildbelt will be a great tool and project. The area of Coastal Wildbelt that will have the most additional impact will come from securing extra areas of land outside of current nationally designated protected landscapes.
- ii. We have an information gathering exercise; the timescale is relatively short and South Devon NL has a particular challenge. If wishing to compare to another protected landscape, South Downs would probably be a more realistic comparison.
- iii. EM: Happy to contribute datasets and rollback opportunities. Regarding the principles in the later item on Management Plan review, #2 the principle of highest possible ambition is a good approach to use, particularly when you consider the coastal environment.

ACTION 5 (EM): Share datasets and rollback opportunities with the NLM.

7 NATIONAL LANDSCAPES ASSOCIATION BRIEFING: APPLYING THE CROW ACT SECTION 85 DUTY "MUST SEEK TO FURTHER THE PURPOSE" IN NATIONAL LANDSCAPES

The report introduced the National Landscapes Association (2024), 'Applying the CRoW Act section 85 duty to 'seek to further the purpose' in National Landscapes (AONBs): Guidance for Local Planning Authorities' Briefing (Nov 2024) and explains how this guidance relates to the current South Devon AONB Management Plan and its Planning Guidance document.

Partnership members are recommended to note and endorse promotion of the Briefing and note the link between this matter and the ongoing work to update the Planning Guidance for the South Devon National Landscape and South Devon Heritage Coast.

The NL Manager talked through this item; extensive information was provided in the meeting papers

7.1 In discussion

- i. The Chair suggested Partnership *conditionally* endorse promotion of the National Landscape Association Briefing as it omits the instructive "...**must** seek to further the purpose..." which is now law.

TO ENDORSE THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPES ASSOCIATION (2024), 'APPLYING THE CROW ACT SECTION 85 DUTY TO 'SEEK TO FURTHER THE PURPOSE' IN NATIONAL LANDSCAPES (AONBS): GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES' BRIEFING (NOV 2024) SUBJECT TO THE INCLUSION OF 'MUST'

RESOLVED: NO OBJECTIONS, THE RESOLUTION TO ENDORSE THE GUIDANCE SUBJECT TO THE INCLUSION OF 'MUST' WAS APPROVED.

- ii. There was a general discussion on natural beauty, its interpretation, subjective nature of interpretation and that it is not strictly defined. Here are some points made during the discussion:
 - There was a good discussion at yesterday's conference on the definition of Natural Beauty and how this has changed in different documents over time. This will be shared with Partnership.
 - In essence, the Duty is about conserving and enhancing natural beauty; natural beauty has never been defined in law. There has been a huge body of case law over the years. Not having a definition may present some challenges but we need to say what this is in the context of South Devon NL; in the 2014 Management Plan we introduced special qualities - how natural beauty is perceived, not defined. There are components of our landscape that add to and strengthen natural beauty. There are also certain elements in our landscape that are adding to and strengthening character and they contribute to natural beauty; however this does not mean we should accept a design for anywhere.
 - Responding to the assertion that the challengeable element will be to demonstrate natural beauty has been considered, the NL Manager clarified that this is different. Before it we had 'was harm to or effect on natural beauty adequately considered' as part of the decision; now it is '**must** seek to further' and 'conserving and enhancing' – neutral status is not enough. This is why the briefing has been targeted at planners initially. It was felt that the briefing could also be targeted at members with joint work done on CROW Act duty for members.
 - Although there are subjective elements to natural beauty, it was felt that some elements are clear, for example the impact on biodiversity. Those that can be quantified should be pulled out to reduce subjectivity.
 - One idea was that every development within the National Landscape could be obliged to produce an environmental impact assessment.
- iii. *Post meeting update: long awaited guidance text from Defra was issued on the 75th anniversary of the 1949 National Parks Access to the Countryside Act¹¹.*

8 NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON BATHING WATER REFORMS

¹¹ [Defra guidance \[GOV.UK\]](#)

The report provided a brief overview of a live National Consultation by Defra on proposals for reforms to the bathing water regulations and brief observations from the National Landscape's Estuaries Officer.

Partnership members are recommended to note the scope of the consultation, offer views for incorporation into a response to be submitted on behalf of the National Landscape and take the opportunity to respond as organisations or individually as appropriate.

8.1 The NL Manager encouraged Partnership members to complete the consultation and also submit their views to the Estuaries Officer, Nigel Mortimer. The Estuaries Officer will collate these in order to help inform the SDNL consultation response.

ACTION 6 (all): Submit your comments on Bathing Water reforms to the SDNL Estuaries Officer.

9 INCREASING TREE CANOPY AND WOODLAND COVER WITHIN AND LINKED TO THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE AND ITS SETTING

The report provided a brief introduction to Target 8 of the protected landscapes targets and outcomes framework focused upon increasing tree canopy and woodland cover in addition to related plans and strategies.

Partnership members are recommended to note the apportionment process being undertaken for Target 8, consider tree canopy and woodland cover as an example to work through when considering the following item 8b on the review of the Management Plan and provide advice and insight to the National Landscape team and colleagues from the Defra agencies to assist in arriving at ambitious yet achievable targets for tree canopy and woodland cover that enable other priorities to be delivered alongside.

A lot of detail was included in the meeting papers.

9.1 Matthew Odgers-Brown gave a presentation, a copy of which was provided for distribution with these minutes.

- i. Chair: Regarding landscape character of our estuaries, we have lost a lot of the area of woodland that goes down to the waters edge. If we could get landowners to reinstate some of those, areas that are not economically farmed, it would help us achieve additional canopy.
MOB: the Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be looking at estuarine woodlands and expansion and protection of these.
- ii. Becky Hughes: The canopy target within the framework is one of the three that will be apportioned. Hope to see the apportionments in a week or so from Natural England. We will expect National Landscapes to respond to the apportionments so these are not necessarily set in stone; instead, a conversation can take place before the final agreed figures are set.
- iii. Emma Magee: Estuary edges do need more woodland trees; this buffering between water and land is crucial and is also part of the character of the landscape. It is worth also bearing in mind that there may be low lying places that in future may be suitable for other habitats including intertidal rollback. There has been effort from a number of organisations and funding streams to try to increase tree cover. It would be interesting to understand what the barriers have been and continue to be. We need to recognise that largely this is still not being seen as a business as usual activity for commercial land owners and users.

Note that a number of people left the meeting around this point, the scheduled end time of the meeting, due to other commitments.

10 REVIEW OF THE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY MANAGEMENT PLAN & SOUTH DEVON NATIONAL LANDSCAPE 'RELEVANT AUTHORITIES'

The item built upon information in earlier reports provided to the Partnership on an overview on the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023, the Targets and Outcomes Framework for Protected Landscapes (PLTOF) and Natural England's mandatory Additional guidance note on developing Management Plans. It brings these together, explaining how they interrelate to inform the Management Plan Review process and to underpin the structure and purpose of the Management Plan. It also briefly introduces two early-stage tasks of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which run in parallel to early review tasks. The report also introduces work on identifying the 'relevant authorities' for the South Devon National Landscape.

Partnership members are recommended to consider the review process as a whole; note the step change in Management Plan requirements already in place and remain mindful of the further step changes explicit in forthcoming regulations (to be made under LuRA 2023). Partnership members of relevant authorities are requested to consider which of their functions 'are exercised or performed in relation to or so as to affect land in the designated area'; how they can modify them to seek to further the purpose; and what type of policy and advice framework would be useful to assist them in furthering the purpose through their functions. Partnership are also requested to consider and provide data and evidence that should underpin the Management Plan; feedback on the challenges facing the natural beauty of the NL with a focus on those which the NLMP is best placed to respond to; feedback on creating the Vision for the National Landscape and feedback on identifying further relevant authorities for engagement with during the review and, any relevant authority functions with significant impacts on natural beauty which the NLMP would be best placed to address. Partnership is also requested to assist with identifying management actions and functions which contribute to the delivery of protected landscape targets and outcomes and to explore where and how particular functions of their organisations could be changed to contribute more ambitiously to the PLTOF as well as to endorse continuing including the South Devon Heritage Coast within the Management Plan.

Extensive information was provided in the meeting papers.

ACTION 7 (NLM): Circulate a copy of the meeting slides.

Post meeting update: a copy of the presentation slides were circulated with these minutes

10.1 Proposed initial engagement

- One to one conversations between the NL Manager and Partnership members
- Series of meetings with groups of councils
- Online public survey
- Online survey for relevant authorities.

Workshops will be held in the first quarter or so next calendar year.

ACTION 8 (NLM/Chair/PH): Start to talk about clusters of parishes and engagement as well as how to include Torbay and Plymouth.

10.2 The NL Manager emphasised the need to hear from all stakeholders and members of the Partnership.

ACTION 9 (all): Noting the recommendations and requests in the meeting papers for this item, the NL Manager would like your feedback by 13 January 2025.

10.3 Observations and in discussion

i. Becky Hughes:

- Natural England are endeavouring to make clear that the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework is not for National Landscapes to deliver on their own, this is a collaborative framework for all stakeholders and organisations in the National Landscapes to deliver.
- In the new guidance for Management Plans, Natural England is encouraging National Landscapes to use the term 'principles' rather than 'policies' in the planning context. I am interested to see whether clear expression of principles around wildlife rich habitats and around woodland creation may be a useful way of setting out the National Landscape position really clearly for land managers. For example, for estuarine woodlands, the Management Plan could say these are our principles for woodland expansion and canopy creation etc. It could also articulate the type of woodland and canopy that would not be appropriate for the National Landscape.

11 SOUTH DEVON NATIONAL LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE COAST PLANNING GUIDANCE

The report introduced work on the *South Devon AONB Planning Guidance*, and factual updates to its *Addendum* and its *Planning for South Devon National Landscape (AONB): Key Principles for plan-making and decision-making*.

Partnership members are recommended to note and endorse the updated Addendum to Planning Guidance and the updated *Key Principles for plan-making and decision-making*, note the link between this matter and the ongoing Management Plan review; endorse work on the updating of Planning Guidance for the South Devon National Landscape and South Devon Heritage Coast and provide feedback on this and other themes, matters or audiences that ought to be considered for inclusion in the revised suite of planning guidance.

11.1 All material was provided in the meeting papers.

TO ENDORSE THE UPDATED ADDENDUM TO PLANNING GUIDANCE AND THE UPDATED KEY PRINCIPLES FOR PLAN-MAKING AND DECISION-MAKING.

RESOLVED: NO OBJECTIONS, THE ADDENDUM TO PLANNING GUIDANCE AND THE UPDATED KEY PRINCIPLES FOR PLAN-MAKING AND DECISION-MAKING WILL BE REVISED AS PROPOSED.

12 KEY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT MATTERS FOR FEEDBACK

The item provides Partnership with a brief update on the most recent Core Funding Group meeting.

Partnership members are recommended to note the update.

12.1 The NL Manager went through a few key development management matters.

- i. The first major test of 'must seek to further the purpose': Manningtree, Dedham Vale
- ii. Appeal: Land off Copythorne Road, 77 dwellings on the edge of Brixham. Site lies within the SDNL, is outside of the settlement boundary of Brixham and in open countryside and not allocated for housing. Seen as another test case.

iii. Proposed 89.5m turbine Bigbury: The current maximum height within the SDNL is 35m and South Hams is 45m. The zone of theoretical visibility map suggests intervisibility with approaching a third of the SDNL and a substantial part of the setting. This is the only wind turbine scheme, nationally, in a National Landscape or National Park since 'must' was introduced towards the end of last year.

In discussion

- NLM: This is likely to end up in one of two routes:
 - The council apply the policies that exist and refusing the application, Octopus Energy appealing the decision and the Planning Inspectorate dealing with it **or**
 - If consented, given the enhanced Section 85 duty and so on, it is highly likely that there will be a legal challenge and this will either be called in by the Secretary of State or end up through Judicial Review and sat in front of the Planning Inspectorate anyway.
- CB: In correspondence with the local MP, we set out that we may be very pro green energy and also pro South Devon National Landscape - it is possible to be both at the same time. We have to follow national policies.

12.2 The consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system closed on 24 September.

ACTION 10 (NLM): Circulate the National Landscapes Association response to the NPPF consultation.

Post meeting update: NLA response to the NPPF consultation was circulated with these minutes.

13 SUMMARY OF NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CORE FUNDING GROUP SEPTEMBER 2024

13.1 The NL Manager gave a brief verbal update from the last Core Funding Group meeting and shared an organisation chart showing current and approved positions and names.

14 PLANNING UPDATE

This is a 'for information' item. A planning annex paper was circulated prior to the meeting.

8. PARTNERSHIP MEETING DATES

Remaining meeting date in 2025

- Friday 14 March
- Friday 18 July
- Friday 28 November

9. AOB

None.

MEETING CLOSED

ITEM 5 South Devon National Landscape Partnership Matters

5A. Partnership Chair's Report

ITEM FOR	INFORMATION & FEEDBACK	REPORT BY	Peter Sandover, South Devon NL Partnership Chair
SUMMARY	This report provides a summary of activity over the last few months undertaken on behalf of the National Landscape Partnership by the Chair, Peter Sandover		
MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES	All PARTNERSHIP: Awareness & communication; Management, organisation & partnerships. Others – underpins and links to all other Management Plan themes.		
RECOMMENDATION	Partnership members are recommended to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note the report and are encouraged to provide brief reports where possible in advance of scheduled meetings to assist with Item 6 Partner updates. 		

Parish Council Meetings

1. This quarter I met Parish Councils at West Alvington, South Milton, Aveton Gifford, and Stoke Gabriel, I am scheduled to meet South Huish and Blackawton shortly. My involvement this year will focus on engagement of all the parishes on the management plan review. Issues discussed with PCs continue to be on sensitive planning applications and also exemptions from planning such as Shepherd's Huts in sensitive locations in the National Landscape and requests for ongoing funding support from FipL. The latter is a good example of how effective this programme has been to our rural parishes.
2. All the parish meetings have been well represented by District and County Councillors and common discussion points raised with them and us are the impact of development in rural areas through the reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the effect of the Devolution White Paper on Devon, and Government's consultation on new Land Use Frameworks. On all these matters we continue to be grateful to the National Landscape Association who provided comprehensive and coordinated responses on behalf of all NLs.
3. One significant factor we have brought to the attention of local councillors we engage that will reduce any impacts is the significant legislation change to the enhanced duties of all relevant authorities including ourselves and all councils that we 'must further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape in all our decisions'. We are in the process of suggesting text that councils may wish to refer to when making planning and other recommendations affecting the SD National Landscape.

Management Plan Review

4. Over the coming months we plan to hold a series of management plan workshops with clusters of parishes and run online surveys/ questionnaires covering:
 - What goes into a Management Plan?
 - What has changed since the last plan, e.g. new legislation
 - What qualities, (good and bad) that are important in the National Landscape?

- The single legal purpose to '*further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (National Landscape)*'.
- Is there scope for a second purpose focussing on Nature Recovery?
- The current priorities and policies of the Plan and what should we change?

5. The six clusters we envisage are:
 - Western edge bordering Plymouth and around the Yealm and Erme
 - Around the Avon / Alne Valley
 - Around the Kingsbridge Estuary
 - Start to Stoke Fleming including the Slapton Line
 - Around the River Dart
 - Eastern edge bordering Torbay including Brixham
6. We shall draft a timetable of events and venues shortly.

Item Ends.

ITEM 7. National Matters

7A. Land Use Framework

ITEM FOR	CONSIDERATION & FEEDBACK	REPORT BY	Roger English, National Landscape Manager
SUMMARY	This item introduces the current national consultation on a vision for Land Use in England and how to deliver it.		
MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES	<p>All PLACE: Landscape character; Natural resources & climate; Biodiversity & geodiversity; Historic environment; Farming and land management; Coast & marine; Rivers & estuaries.</p> <p>All PEOPLE: Tourism, access & recreation; Planning & sustainable development; Transport & highways; Rural economy & services; Community & culture.</p> <p>PARTNERSHIP: Awareness & communication.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Partnership members are recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note the urgency and importance government and Defra attaches to this area of work, relevance to the protected landscape network and Management Plan priorities ii. Offer your feedback on responding to the current consultation and implications for the Management Plan review process 		

Background

1. The Government is consulting on a vision for land use in England and how to deliver it. This consultation is intended to inform the development of a Land Use Framework. The public consultation¹² opened on 31st January 2025 and closes on 25th April 2025.
2. A Land Use Consultation document¹³ containing explanatory text, evidence and questions and a Land Use Analytical Annex¹⁴ are available.
3. The Land Use Framework is scheduled to be published later in 2025 following an analysis of consultation responses and will include:
 - i. Principles that Government will apply to policy with land use implications.
 - ii. A description of how policy levers will develop and adapt to support land use change.
 - iii. A release of land use data and analysis to support public and private sector innovation in spatial decision making, and the development of tools to support land managers in practice.
4. The full question set for this consultation has been provided as Appendix 1 to this item, however Q10 is spotlighted below as this specifically relates to protected landscapes given their role as the backbone to protecting 30% of land for nature by 2030. The preamble to this question also makes reference to "... a package of measures to ensure they [protected landscapes] are able to deliver the objectives for nature, water, rural housing and climate in the Land Use Framework."

¹² [Land Use Consultation – Overview \[Defra GOV UK\]](#)

¹³ [Land Use Consultation – Document \[Defra GOV UK\]](#)

¹⁴ [Land Use Consultation – Analytical Annex \[Defra GOV UK\]](#)

QUESTION 10: What changes are needed to accelerate 30by30 delivery, including by enabling Protected Landscapes to contribute more? Please provide any specific suggestions.

- *Strengthened Protected Landscapes legislation (around governance and regulations or duties on key actors) with a greater focus on nature*
- *Tools: such as greater alignment of existing Defra schemes with the 30by30 criteria²³*
- *Resources: such as funding or guidance for those managing Protected Landscapes for nature*
- *Other (please specify)*

5. This question also links to a government news release on 16th December 2024 marking the 75th anniversary of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, with the title "*National Parks and National Landscapes empowered to deliver more for people and nature with new legislation pledged*" with new legislation and the possibility of a new legal purpose contained within the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. In the last few days this has been further added to by news in Planning magazine that MHCLG will consult this spring on "*a set of national policies for planning decisions*" on "*managing development affecting protected landscapes*" and the Planning and Infrastructure Bill due to be introduced to Parliament this week.

6. The estimated type and magnitude of land use change considered to be needed by 2035 and 2050 are summarised in graphics figure 4 and figure 5, replicated below for ease:

Figure 4: The approximate percentages of England's total agricultural land area that our analysis shows may need to change in use or management by 2050¹².

Category 1 – Land management change

Changes in the way the land is farmed, without introducing new habitats or planting trees. It falls outside of the scope of land use change discussed in this document.

Examples: Planting cover crops to reduce soil loss, or reducing fertiliser use to prevent water pollution.

Not in scope

Category 2 – Small changes maintaining the same agricultural land use

Introducing nature within fields, in margins and / or small portions, providing environmental and climate benefits alongside food production.

Examples: Arable field margins, riparian features such as river buffer strips.

1%

(50kha)

Category 3.1 – Changes in agricultural land use, for both food and environmental / climate benefits

This is mainly about incorporating more trees alongside food production.

4%

(370kha)

Category 3.2 – Changes in agricultural land use, mainly for environmental and climate benefits with limited food production.

The land is being farmed mainly for other benefits than food.

Examples: Creation / restoration of species-rich grassland habitats; responsible management of peat; planting of short rotation coppice.

5%

(430kha)

Category 4 - Change away from agricultural land, for environmental and climate benefits.

Land use becomes non-agricultural. Land is fully dedicated to delivering environmental and climate benefits.

Examples: Restoration and maintenance of peat-forming and peat-dependent habitats; creation of woodland; creation / restoration of coastal and lowland heathland habitats.

9%

(760kha)

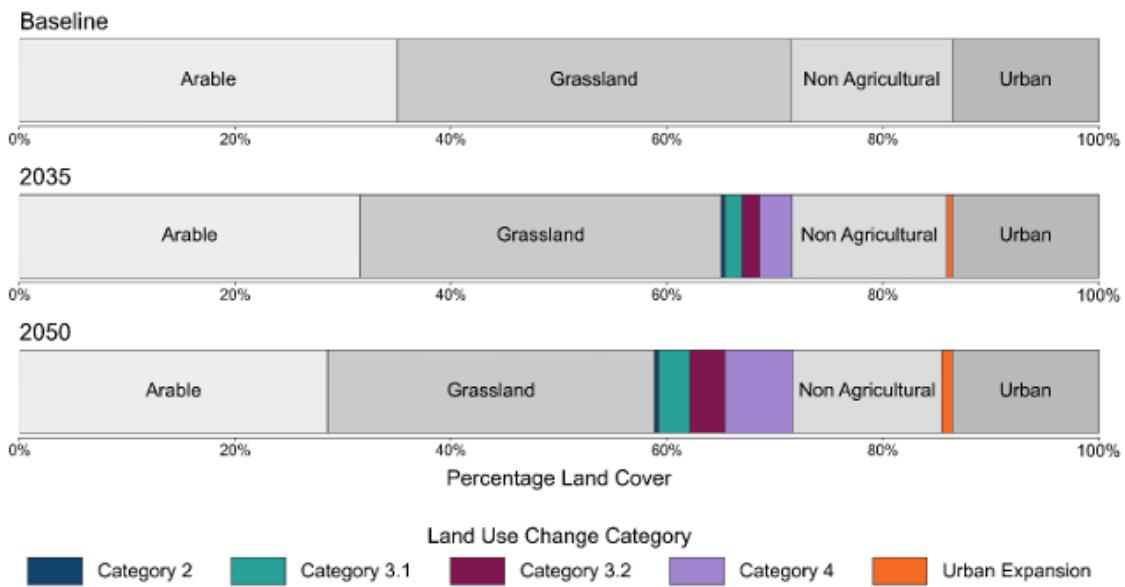


Figure 5: Estimated type and extent of land use changes needed to 2035 and 2050. Categories of land use change are defined in Figure 4 and the Analytical Annex¹⁷.

Responses

7. The National Landscapes Association will be making a submission on behalf of the National Landscape network. The National Landscape Manager is contributing to this response through the '*Planning and Placemaking*' and '*Climate and Nature*' national Panels.
8. All partners are encouraged to take the opportunity to respond separately in addition to providing thoughts and feedback to the National Landscape Manager both in the Partnership meeting and separately to follow.

Item Ends.

Appendix 1 to Item 7a

Land Use consultation questions

QUESTION 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our assessment of the scale and type of land use change needed, as set out in this consultation and the Analytical Annex?

[Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / I don't know]

Please explain your response, including your views on the potential scale of change and the type of change needed, including any specific types of change.

QUESTION 2: Do you agree or disagree with the land use principles proposed?

[Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / I don't know]

Please provide any reasons for your response including any changes you believe should be made.

QUESTION 3: Beyond Government departments in England, which other decision makers do you think would benefit from applying these principles?

- Combined and local authorities (including local planning authorities)
- Landowners and land managers (including environmental and heritage groups)
- Others (please specify)

QUESTION 4: What are the policies, incentives and other changes that are needed to support decision makers in the agricultural sector to deliver this scale of land use change, while considering the importance of food production?

QUESTION 5: How could Government support more land managers to implement multifunctional land uses that deliver a wider range of benefits, such as agroforestry systems with trees within pasture or arable fields?

QUESTION 6: What should the Government consider in identifying suitable locations for spatially targeted incentives?

QUESTION 7: What approach(es) could most effectively support land managers and the agricultural sector to steer land use changes to where they can deliver greater potential benefits and lower trade-offs?

QUESTION 8: In addition to promoting multifunctional land uses and spatially targeting land use change incentives, what more could be done by Government or others to reduce the risk that we displace more food production and environmental impacts abroad? Please give details for your answer.

- Monitoring land use change or production on agricultural land
- Accounting for displaced food production impacts in project appraisals
- Protecting the best agricultural land from permanent land use changes
- Other (please specify)

QUESTION 9: What should Government consider in increasing private investment towards appropriate land use changes?

QUESTION 10: What changes are needed to accelerate 30by30 delivery, including by enabling Protected Landscapes to contribute more? Please provide any specific suggestions.

- Strengthened Protected Landscapes legislation (around governance and regulations or duties on key actors) with a greater focus on nature
- Tools: such as greater alignment of existing Defra schemes with the 30by30 criteria
- Resources: such as funding or guidance for those managing Protected Landscapes for nature
- Other (please specify)

QUESTION 11: What approaches could cost-effectively support nature and food production in urban landscapes and on land managed for recreation?

QUESTION 12: How can Government ensure that development and infrastructure spatial plans take advantage of potential co-benefits and manage trade-offs?

QUESTION 13: How can local authorities and Government better take account of land use opportunities in transport planning?

QUESTION 14: How can Government support closer coordination across plans and strategies for different sectors and outcomes at the local and regional level?

QUESTION 15: Would including additional major landowners and land managers in the Adaptation Reporting Power process (see above) support adaptation knowledge sharing? Please give any reasons or alternative suggestions
[Yes / No / I don't know]

QUESTION 16: Below is a list of activities the Government could implement to support landowners, land managers, and communities to understand and prepare for the impacts of climate change. Please select the activities you think should be prioritised and give any reasons for your answer, or specific approaches you would like to see.

- Providing better information on local climate impacts to inform local decision making and strategies (for example, translating UK Climate Projections into what these mean in terms of on-the-ground impacts on farming, buildings, communities and nature)
- Providing improved tools and guidance for turning climate information into tangible actions (for example, how to produce an adaptation plan for different sectors)
- Developing and sharing clearer objectives and resilience standards (for example, a clear picture and standards of good practice for each sector under a 2°C climate scenario)
- Supporting the right actions in the right places in a changing climate (for example, prioritising incentives for sustainable land uses where they will be most resilient to climate change)
- Other (please specify)

QUESTION 17: What changes to how Government's spatial data is presented or shared could increase its value in decision making and make it more accessible?

- Updating existing Government tools, apps, portals or websites
- Changes to support use through private sector tools, apps or websites
- Bringing data from different sectors together into common portals or maps
- Increasing consistency across spatial and land datasets
- More explanation or support for using existing tools, apps or websites
- Greater use of geospatial indicators such as Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs) and INSPIRE IDs to allow data to be more easily displayed on a map
- Other (please specify)

QUESTION 18: What improvements could be made to how spatial data is captured, managed, or used to support land use decisions in the following sectors? Please give any reasons for your answer or specific suggestions.

- Development and planning: such as environmental survey data
- Farming: such as supply chain data and carbon or nature baseline measurements
- Environment and forestry: such as local and volunteer-collected environmental records
- Recreation and access: such as accessible land and route data
- Government-published land and agricultural statistics

QUESTION 19: What improvements are needed to the quality, availability and accessibility of ALC data to support effective land use decisions?

QUESTION 21: What gaps in land management capacity or skills do you anticipate as part of the land use transition? Please include any suggestions to address these gaps.

- Development and planning
- Farming
- Environment and forestry
- Recreation and access
- Other (please specify)

QUESTION 22: How could the sharing of best practice in innovative land use practices and management be improved?

QUESTION 23: Should a Land Use Framework for England be updated periodically, and if so, how frequently should this occur?

- Yes, every 5 years
- Yes, every 3 years
- Yes, another frequency or approach. Please provide details.
- No
- I don't know

QUESTION 24: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed areas above? Please include comments or suggestions with your answer.

[Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / I don't know]

7B. Independent Water Commission into the water sector and its regulation

ITEM FOR	CONSIDERATION & FEEDBACK	REPORT BY	Roger English National Landscape Manager
SUMMARY	Given the continued importance to the National Landscape of all aspects of the water environment including water quality and water quantity, this item introduces the Independent Water Commission (Cunliffe review) into the water sector and its regulation.		
MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES	<p>PLACE: Natural resources & climate; Biodiversity & geodiversity; Farming and land management; Coast & marine; Rivers & estuaries.</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"> i. Note the scope of the Cunliffe review ii. Feedback views and insight on the call for evidence where this aligns with national landscape management priorities iii. Take the opportunity to contribute to the consultation/call for evidence and advocate for the South Devon National Landscape, its catchments, waterbodies and the South Devon Heritage Coast. 		

Background

1. The Independent Water Commission¹⁵ was established in October 2024 to deliver recommendations to government on reforms to the water sector. It is chaired by Former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, Sir Jon Cunliffe. The task of the Commission is to stand back from the system and explore, with an open mind, potential changes. Its task is to make recommendations on how to equip and reform the system to meet the challenges of the future and, crucially, restore over time the trust that has been lost.
2. The Commission is focused on ensuring there is a sufficiently robust and stable regulatory framework to:
 - attract the investment needed for the future
 - speed up infrastructure delivery
 - restore confidence in the sector
3. Led by Policy Lab on behalf of Defra, one of six regional research workshops focusing on water governance was held in Totnes at Follaton House on the 26th February to feed in knowledge and experience from organisations involved in the Dart and wider Devon and Cornwall area. A number of SDNL Partnership members and wider catchment partners were in attendance on the day to share insights from the Art and wider South Devon area and play a part in shaping future models.

¹⁵ [Independent Water Commission \[GOV UK\]](#)

4. The public, environment groups, investors and others are now invited to share their views on future changes to the water sector with a wide-ranging Call for Evidence¹⁶ open to all interested parties until 23 April 2025.
5. The Independent Water Commission will make its final recommendations to both UK and Welsh Governments this summer.
6. There are six key areas where the Commission is seeking views currently. These are:

The strategic management of water. This seeks views on how to manage the many competing pressures and demands on the water system, and how strategic direction and management can be set at both national and regional levels.

The overarching regulatory system. This covers the volume and complexity of legislation in the water sector, and the overall functions and responsibilities of the four regulators (Ofwat, Environment Agency, Drinking Water Inspectorate, Natural Resources Wales).

Economic regulation. This seeks views on the five-yearly Price Review process and the weight placed upon industry-wide benchmarking. It also covers customer protections, financial resilience and investor returns. This includes how to attract the necessary finance for future investment, with a fair balance between risk and reward.

Environmental and drinking water regulation. This covers how regulation can better protect the environment, public health and the country's finite water resources. It seeks views on how water companies are held to account for non-compliance.

Water company ownership models. This includes the impact of public listing versus private ownership and how to ensure financial resilience.

Asset health and supply chains. This seeks views on improving the resilience of water company infrastructure – its pipes, water treatment plants, reservoirs and pumping stations. It also covers the capacity and robustness of water industry supply chains.

Item Ends.

¹⁶ <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/independent-water-commission/independent-commission-on-the-water-sector-regulat/>

8A. Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme update

ITEM FOR	CONSIDERATION & DISCUSSION	REPORT BY	Alice Wyness, SDNL Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer
SUMMARY	This report summarises the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme as so far implemented in South Devon National Landscape. It reports on staffing appointments, programme extension of one year and programme achievements so far. The FiPL farm Engagement Officer will be present at the meeting to provide further detail on funded projects and their impacts.		
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 Committee members are invited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Note the scope of the delivery to date and continuing opportunity for the South Devon National Landscape, its farmers and land managers; Advocate for the programme in discussions with the area's farmers and landowners to drive high quality, innovative and well developed proposals. 		

Background

1. The Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme was created by Defra and forms part of the Future Farming & Countryside Programme, the Government's Agricultural Transition Plan. The FiPL programme provides funds to allow farmers and land managers to work with National Landscape teams and National Park Authorities in order act on management plan priorities. The programme was initially set to run over three financial years from mid-2021 to the 31st of March 2024. An extension was previously issued to the 31st of March 2025 and a further extension was announced on the 26th February 2025 to continue the grant programme on until 31st March 2026. Farm advice will be provided through the programme until the end of March 2027.
2. The programme funds projects that:
 - Support **nature** recovery;
 - Mitigate the impacts of **climate** change;
 - Provide opportunities for **people** to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage;
 - Protect or improve the quality and character of the landscape or **place**.
3. The previously advised in-year operating budget of £595,231 was confirmed by Defra on 23 April 2024 and this increased over the year to £1,079,864 with the addition of specific Historic Buildings Restoration Grant funding, Access funding and National pot allocations.

Staffing

4. New FiPL Farm Engagement Officer Alice Wyness joined the National Landscape team in January 2025. Alice replaces our previous FiPL Officer Henry Lucas, who moved on in October 2024. Julia Bastone of 5Farming temporarily rejoined our FiPL team to work again as interim FiPL advisor and is continuing to support Alice until she settles fully into the role.

Projects

5. In total there have been 279 FiPL enquiries from landowners to date over the 4 years.



6. FiPL has funded many different projects with wide reaching aims. Some of the key themes which have emerged include:

a. **Species**

One of the main focus areas for many year 4 projects was to improve biodiversity, particularly targeting specific species that are important within the National Landscape. This has ranged from relatively simple projects, such as utilising traditional stone walling techniques to creating more habitat for glow worms (Hillside Farm), to far more complex and involved projects such as water vole reintroductions. Species such as water voles are priority species in the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan and is a keystone species for many wetland predators including otters, stoats and heron whilst their burrows provide refuge and protected breeding sites for other small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, so this has been a really exciting project (River Gara, Water Vole Reintroduction) to support with the committed landowners and volunteers of The Habitat Group.

b. **Habitat**

Many projects have also focused on creating rich wildlife habitats, benefiting a wide range of species, such as wetland creation (Ham Farm) and meadow creation (Ramsland Farm). Meadow creation will provide essential habitat for pollinators through an abundance of flowering plants, whilst also improving soil structures and allow the continuation of livestock grazing. Wetland habitats can provide pools and slower flowing water for different species, as well as reducing downstream flooding, storing carbon and removing sediment and nutrient from the water at the same time as providing essential drought time grazing. Allowing these pockets of special habitat to be present on farms, whilst not impacting farming practices or impeding profits.

c. Nature Friendly Farming

FiPL has funded equipment to help farmers move towards a more regenerative way of farming (South Devon Arable Group), which will help to ensure a better environment for our special species. This has included things such as leaf removers for a vineyard which has removed the need to use pesticides by removing diseased leaves (Bantham Estate). Multiple composting systems have also been funded (Fox-Harris Farming), allowing a reduction in the use of artificial fertilisers, using waste and improving soil health. A shallow cultivator and drill were also funded to help reduce soil erosion into the Kingsbridge estuary (Croft Farm). All of the machinery items funded will help moving local farming techniques towards being more sustainable and environmentally conscious as well as helping to create a more sustainable business and ensuring the continuation of the smaller family run farms that are so characteristic of the South Devon landscape.

d. Rural Business Intelligence

Other initiatives that have been funded that will contribute towards more stable farm businesses include elements such as campsite infrastructure (Woodhouse Farm) and the creation of a new mobile micro-dairy with its own ice cream parlour and vending machine (Mount Folly Farm). Projects such as this not only help rural businesses by drawing in tourism but also provide more jobs and leisure opportunities for local people. Stable and resilient farm businesses are typically more able to implement and sustain environmentally beneficial on farm actions.

e. Access

The contribution to everyone enjoying our spectacular landscape can also be seen in the projects that have funded new and improved access to the landscape. These have included the creation of new footpaths, improvements of existing footpaths (Burton Farm) and the purchase of a beach wheelchair for Bantham beach (Bantham Estate). This infrastructure is allowing more people to connect with their landscape, and this is furthered by the installation of a variety of interpretation boards (Kingston Farm), to help members of the public learn about the nature and management of this rural area. Education has also been furthered by the facilitation and funding of many educational visits and open days, being attended by both schools (Barnfield) and the public (Damerells Coombe). All these projects help create a better understanding and awareness of the landscape, enable people to be more environmentally conscious and further their enjoyment.

f. You can find further information on the projects mentioned above and see all the projects that FiPL has funded to date across the South Devon National Landscape on the FiPL pages of the SDNL website¹⁷.

Year Five

7. A further extension was announced on the 26th February 2025 to continue the programme on until 31st March 2026 - £30 million total for National Landscapes and National Parks has been committed the project nationally¹⁸.
8. The total allocation for the South Devon National Landscape FiPL scheme is set to be around £400,000, which is comparable to year 3 programme funding.

¹⁷ [Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme \[South Devon NL website\]](#)

¹⁸ [Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme extended \[GOV UK\]](#)

9. Staffing contracts have been confirmed as having been extended until 31st March 2027 for the FiPL Officer (Alice Wyness) and until 31st March 2026 for the Administrator (Phoebe Rhead).
10. The FiPL Local Assessment Panel (LAP) has been a valued and integral part of programme and will remain with the same membership continuing into year 5. Members are:
 - John Yeoman - Chair / Farmer
 - Jo Rogers - Farmer
 - Leah Harris - Farmer
 - Vicci Camp - Farmer
 - Matt Darke - Farmer
 - David Camp - Farmer
 - Richard Foss - Farmer
 - Johnny Haimes - Plympton NFU Chairman / Farmer
 - Bernard Taylor - Relevant Farming Knowledge
 - Becky Hughes / Eamon Crowe - Natural England
 - Gary Rumbold – Environmental consultant
 - Emma Magee - Environment Agency
 - Roger English - SDNL Manager
11. The focus of the grants will continue to support projects with themes of Nature, Climate People and Place.
12. Grants will also continue to help support action working towards Management Plan priorities, particularly nature recovery and achieving 30by30.
13. With this 'bonus' year of FiPL we are particularly aiming to support and engage with those farmers and land managers that are seldom heard or have not benefitted from the programme to date.
14. As with earlier years there may be additional funding/opportunities made available at very short notice such as Historic Buildings Restoration Grant, Access, National Pot etc. There are no details available at this time, but we shall be identifying suitable opportunities and working with potential applicants over the course of the year to maximise the benefits to the national landscape and its farm businesses.

Item Ends.

8B. Heritage at Risk and the South Devon Coastal Heritage project

ITEM FOR	INFORMATION, CONSIDERATION & FEEDBACK	REPORT BY	Nicky Bailey – Community Projects Officer
SUMMARY	This report provides an overview of work and achievements to date through the South Devon Coastal Heritage Project. Special thanks to the many volunteers, South Devon National Trust team, Andy Crab of Historic England, Oxford Archaeology and Bill Horner of Devon County Council for their support, guidance and making the project possible.		
MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES	<p>PLACE: Historic Environment & Local Distinctiveness; Coast & marine; Rivers & estuaries; Landscape Character.</p> <p>PEOPLE: Community & culture.</p> <p>PARTNERSHIP: Awareness & communication.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Partnership members are recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note the scope of designated heritage features within the National Landscape and focus of Target 10 to the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework; ii. Note the scope of partnership work achieved through the South Devon Coastal Heritage Project with primary funding from Historic England's Repair Grant for Heritage at Risk and provide feedback iii. Endorse continuation of South Devon Coastal Heritage project work focused upon keeping sites off the Heritage at Risk Register and improving the condition of sites currently on the register so that they may be removed for positive reasons. 		

Background

1. South Devon's historic environment makes an important contribution to the National Landscape and features within one of its ten special qualities:

"A landscape with a rich time depth, wealth of historic environment features, historic cores to picturesque villages and towns and well-known historic and cultural associations."

2. Over the past 25 years, National Landscape Management Plan programmes and activities have typically supported and involved communities in the identification, protection and active conservation of the area's cultural and historic environment.
3. Target 10 of the Targets and Outcomes Framework for Protected Landscapes is focused upon decreasing the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes.
4. The following indicators are used to measure progress on Target 10:

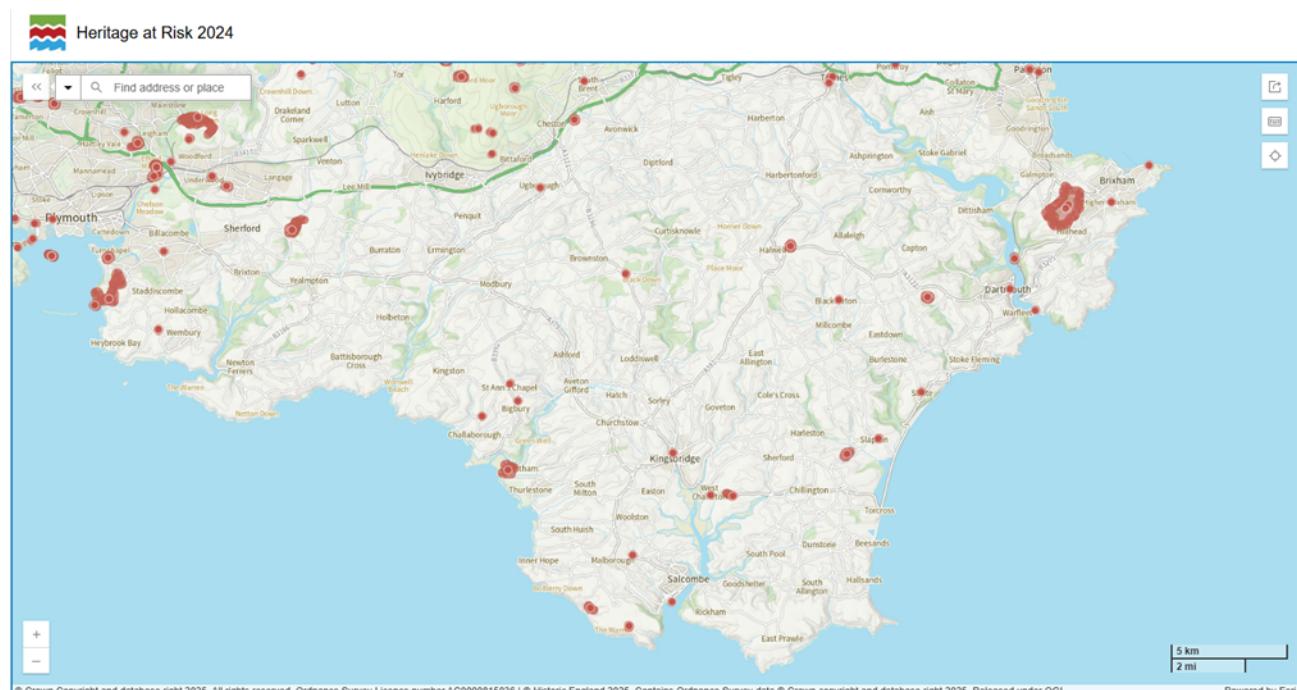
Number and percentage of nationally designated heritage assets in Protected Landscapes to be deemed at risk. To separately cover the categories of:

- scheduled monuments
- registered parks and gardens
- registered battlefields
- listed buildings (grade I or II*)
- protected wreck sites

5. The figures in the table below provide data published in November 2024 by Historic England for each of Devon's five National Landscapes together with national totals for reference.

National Landscapes	Listed Buildings				Scheduled Monuments	Registered Parks and Gardens				Registered Battlefields	Protected Wreck Sites
	Grade I	Grade II*	Grade II	Total		Grade I	Grade II*	Grade II	Total		
Blackdown Hills	13	47	710	770	26	0	0	0	0	0	0
inc At Risk	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Devon	14	62	790	866	59	1	0	3	4	0	0
inc At risk	0	0	0	0	9	1	0	0	1	0	0
North Devon	6	22	388	416	25	0	0	1	1	0	0
inc At risk	1	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Devon	39	59	1,224	1,322	55	0	3	4	7	0	2
inc At risk	2	5	2	(0.7%)	13 (23.6%)	0	1	0	1 (14.3%)	0	0
Tamar Valley	29	46	569	644	27	2	2	0	4	0	0
inc At risk	1	1	0	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Totals	1,176	2,670	45,243	49,089	4,634	36	100	165	301	7	13

6. Three entries were added to the Heritage at Risk register in November 2024 for the South Devon National Landscape:
 - Grade I Listed Building of The Butterwalk, Duke Street, Dartmouth
 - Grade II* Church of All Hallows, Ringmore
 - Scheduled Monument - Slapton chantry college, Slapton
7. Additional protected wreck sites fall within the inshore element of the South Devon Heritage Coast but do not form part of the dataset above or Targets and Outcomes Framework for Protected Landscapes.



South Devon Coastal Heritage Project

8. The South Devon National Landscape team successfully secured £14,000 funding from Historic England in 2021 for a pilot phase to the South Devon Coastal Heritage Project. This supported baseline assessments, drone surveys, aerial footage, geophysical surveys, work with volunteers and local land owners / land managers, to draw up a list of proposals to drive future works. This included practical conservation works needed on site as well as appropriate and innovative interpretation – both physical and virtual.
9. In 2022 a further repair grant for Heritage at Risk of £40,944 was secured from Historic England for a three-year project with additional funding coming from South West Coast Path Association, Natural England and National Trust. The total project has also benefitted from around £50,000 value of in-kind contributions and volunteer time. This delivery phase of the project will run until March 2025 and involve real on the ground improvements including consolidation of structures, vegetation control and management, interpretation, events and community digs.
10. In 2024, additional funding was secured from FiPL, Devon County Council and the National Trust.

Project Area

11. The project area covered two areas within the South Devon National Landscape: Bolt Head to Bolt Tail coastline around to Salcombe; and Dart Estuary area around Dartmouth and Kingswear. It covers 11 Scheduled Monuments (SMs) as well as other designated sites.

A. Bolt Head to Bolt Tail (BH-BT) and Salcombe

This area includes monuments from a huge time period ranging from an Iron Age Hillfort at Bolt Tail, Bronze Age barrows, prehistoric hut circles on the coast along from Soar, medieval farmsteads at Middle Soar, a Napoleonic signal station at West Soar and a civil war castle at Salcombe.

B. Defending the Dart – mouth of the Dart Estuary

These archaeological features/sites cover 600 years of history- concentrating on Scheduled sites such as the C15th chain tower at Gomerock in Kingswear, the civil war encampment, at Gallants Bower, Dartmouth Castle complex, Bayard's Castle, the WW2 battery at Froward point and D Day landing craft maintenance ramps at Noss on Dart.

Project Achievements

12. This project has allowed us to work with our partners at the National Trust to carry out works to bring some of the Scheduled Monuments which were on the At Risk register, back into better management. In some cases this has meant they are to be removed from the register and their status lowered to Vulnerable. Many of these sites were at Risk due to a number of contributory factors: coastal erosion, poor vegetation management, damage from farming - specifically ploughing, visitor erosion.
13. Many of the sites in the Bolt Tail to Bolt Head section were also SSSIs so it was important to learn more about the archaeology in order to inform the vegetation management that was needed to the wildlife and landscape.

14. Works carried out have included:

Cross cutting works

- Drone footage of the entire Bolt Head to Bolt Tail area to give an overhead view of the SMs and allow them to be seen in the context of the landscape and with each other. This will be used in our website Story Map.
- Podcasts and walk routes for 3 of the areas in the BH-BT section. These were done with Bill Horner, the DCC Archaeology. You can listen to them on the website¹⁹.

Site works:

- Bolt Tail Hillfort – geophysics and LIDAR, path consolidation and waymarking to reduce visitor erosion and vegetation management; excavations on rectilinear features and ramparts to investigate and ground truth geophysics. Additional OSL dating carried out on ramparts.
- **Warren Barn medieval settlement**, Middle Soar - path works to address braiding on SWCP; bracken control and vegetation management; consolidation and lime mortaring of the barn
- **West Soar Signal station** – 3D model, geophysics and LIDAR
- Mousehill Brake (near Soar Mill cove) - bracken control and vegetation management on round house remains.
- **Middle Soar hilltop enclosure** – geophysics and LIDAR, arable reversion under CS agreement, plans for further community dig
- Middle Soar medieval farmstead - geophysics and LIDAR, bracken control and vegetation management
- **Little Goat Bronze Age roundhouses**- geophysics and LIDAR, bracken control and vegetation management
- **East Soar Pound**, Starehole Valley, bracken control and vegetation management, soft capping on the walls to consolidate.
- **Bolberry Down** – Lithic scatter investigations and reporting
- **Starehole Bottom** - bracken control and vegetation management
- **Fort Charles** – Structural survey, photogrammetry and 3D model, archaeological investigation and recording of spoil heap on inner remaining wall
- **Gomerock Tower**, Kingswear – structural survey and recording, photographic record
- **Gallants Bower** – waymarking, bracken control and vegetation management, interpretation to be completed Summer 2025. Also possible future community dig and path reparations.
- **Brownstone Battery** – investigate possibilities for further works and designation

Community engagement

- Programmes of guided walks across the 2 areas led by Bill Horner, over the 3 years – subjects including WW2 defences at Brownstone Battery; Civil War defences at Dartmouth; Dartmouth Castles; sectional walks on BH-BT area focusing on different historical features including Bolt Tail Hillfort, Bronze age barrows; Middle age

¹⁹ [Coastal Heritage Project webpage \[southdevon-nl.org.uk\]](http://southdevon-nl.org.uk)

farmsteads, Bronze Age Orthostats, Napoleonic signal station, East Soar Pound, Warrens and Bronze Gae Roundhouses at Little Goat.

- Interpretation panels at Bolt Tail and Fort Charles; displays at Kingsbridge Show
- Community Digs for volunteers and Open days for the general public.

Volunteer Time

15. Volunteers were invited to join us on some training test pit digs at Bolberry Down, outside of the Scheduled area in 2022. Six days of digs were held over two sessions. These trained volunteers reached a level of competency that enabled them to join the formal dig team on the Scheduled monument at Bolt Tail Promontory Hillfort. Test pit digs were carried out in April 2023 followed by a full five day community digs in September 2023, April 2024 and September 2024. The community digs were overseen by Oakford Archaeology²⁰.

16. In all volunteers have given a total of **206 days** of their time to the project

Finds

17. During the digs, a number of archaeological artefacts and features were unearthed - finds - some such as the large walls, revetments, postholes and ditches have been drawn, photographed and recorded, before being carefully covered up once more.

18. Flints found at Bolberry, date back to the Mesolithic era, up to 11,000 years ago. They included a hand adze, microliths, which may have been inserted into sticks or spears to make fiercer weapons and many pieces of worked flints and flint waste. This would have been carried with people and made into tools when needed. The flint isn't found locally so would have been brought in, likely from other parts of Devon including Beer.

19. At Bolt Tail we found possible Medieval pottery on the first test pit digs. When excavating the ramparts we found Black-burnished ware which dates from 1st - 4th century AD, just after the Iron Age. Optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) was carried out on the soil under the ramparts which revealed that the ramparts were built between 1400BCE-800BCE, therefore could have been constructed during the Iron Age or the Bronze Age. Project finds showed it was modified or perhaps rebuilt over several centuries as 3 definite phases of construction were found during the dig.

The Next Phase

20. We hope to secure further funding to continue this important and engaging work on the historic landscape of South Devon, learning more about how earlier people shaped this landscape over time and the marks they left upon it.

21. Unfortunately, we understand that Historic England will not be continuing to support the post of Andy Crabb, Heritage at Risk Project Officer for our area after September 2025. It is important to recognise that we would not have been able to undertake this work without his invaluable guidance, advice and enthusiasm. We will use what we have learned and the contacts we have made to try to gain additional support where we need it.

²⁰ [Oakford Archaeology website \[oakfordarch.co.uk\]](http://oakfordarch.co.uk)

22. We are planning on applying to the 25/26 FiPL fund for a final community dig in this phase, with our 50 volunteers in August this year and have secured match funding and landowner agreement to enable this.
23. Scheduled Monuments on the At Risk register are now being assessed as we come to the conclusion of our Heritage At Risk repair grant. As a consequence of the project work undertaken, some of the sites will be downgraded to Vulnerable.
24. We are working with Andy Crabb to develop a plan for continuing works in new areas with our partners, landowners and volunteers. This may include a further hillforts project with more inland sites, further works at Gallants Bower and other At Risk sites (see Appendix 1 to this item for the current full list of Heritage at Risk register entries for the South Devon National Landscape). We have also been talking to colleagues at the National Lottery Heritage Fund about possible grant applications for new projects.
25. During 2025 we will be creating a new Story Map resource on the SDNL website to share all of the reports, 3D models, photos, geophysics, information and artefacts we have uncovered during the Coastal Heritage project. Finds will be deposited with the local museum and all data is being uploaded to the Historic Environment Record and OASIS - the online system for reporting investigations into the historic environment and linking research outputs and archives.

Item Ends.

Appendix 1 to Item 8b

2024 Heritage at Risk Register entries for the South Devon National Landscape

Heritage Category	Published Site Name
Listed Buildings	II* Garden wall, steps and gate piers south of Langdon Court Hotel, Langdon
	II* Pair of garden houses south of Langdon Court Hotel, Langdon
	I Yarde Farmhouse, Malborough - South Hams
	I The Butterwalk, 12 Duke Street, Dartmouth
	II* Lupton House (Gramercy Hall School)
	II* Church of All Hallows, Ringmore
	II* Church of St Lawrence, Bigbury
	II Church of St Mary, West Charleton
	II Church of St Michael, Strete
Scheduled Monuments	Fort Bovisand, Wembury
	Watch House battery and ditch, Wembury
	Medieval holy well known as St Ann's Well, 120 metres south of Holwell Farm, St Ann's Chapel
	Roman settlement site at Bantham Ham
	Fort Charles, Salcombe
	Hilltop enclosure 380 metres east of Middle Soar
	Two hut circles and associated field systems and enclosure at Mousehill Brake, Malborough
	Three bowl barrows 310 metres west of Home Farm, forming part of a round barrow cemetery
	Hillfort known as Slapton Castle, Stokenham
	Slapton chantry college, Slapton
	Gomerock Tower, Kingswear
	D-Day landing craft maintenance site on the River Dart immediately to the south of Lower Noss Point
	Two ring cairns 330 metres south east of Coldharbour Cross, Loddiswell
Registered Park & Garden	II* Lupton Park, Torbay

Items in **bold** type were added to the register in 2024.

8C. Yealm & Dart estuaries - saltmarsh projects

ITEM FOR	INFORMATION & FEEDBACK	REPORT BY	Nigel Mortimer NL Estuaries Officer
SUMMARY	This item introduces partnership work on the saltmarsh resource found within the Dart and Yealm estuary systems aimed at improving the extent and condition of this important and often overlooked estuarine habitat.		
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>PEOPLE: Community & culture.</p> <p>PARTNERSHIP: Awareness & communication; Management, organisation & partnerships.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Partnership members are recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note and endorse the collaborative project work underway to better understand, celebrate and improve the extent and condition of saltmarsh habitat within South Devon's estuary systems ii. Feedback on future project considerations and opportunities 		

Background

1. To understand our saltmarshes, we need to remind ourselves of what an estuary is at their most basic – they are the final downstream extent of a river where they meet the sea, the geographic area over which the freshwater meets with the tidal saltwater of the coast. This means that where the waters meet physically rises up and down with the tides, exposing parts of the shore to the weather twice a day; this is the intertidal zone and despite the obvious diversity of life found here, a very challenging environment for wildlife to thrive. The actual extremes of the intertidal zone vary with the lunar cycle as the moon's pull acts with or at an angle to that of the sun, giving us our springs and neap tides.
2. The main intertidal zone, that flooded with every tide, is really the domain of the seaweeds and a rare few plants such as the seagrasses. Right at the very top or even above this intertidal shore, where it is normally too dry for the seaweeds and too salty for most terrestrial plants, is a zone that is the domain of the saltmarsh. Saltmarshes are a wildlife community that are supported by a number of specialist terrestrial plants that have evolved and adapted to the extra-challenging conditions of this zone of the upper shore, so-called salt-tolerant plants. [The biology and variety of the strategies of how these plants achieve this salt-tolerance is truly fascinating ... but outside the word-limit of this report!] Saltmarshes actually have further zones within them, the lower saltmarsh flooded by most tides and the upper saltmarsh flooded only by the highest spring tides ... with just enough toxicity of the salt to keep the non-salt-tolerant land plants from out-competing them.

So saltmarshes are a bit special ... so what?

3. A healthy saltmarsh also tends to support a rich diversity of animal life too, some terrestrial animals that are salt-tolerant themselves and some marine animals that are hardy to the conditions found there. However, at high tide, a saltmarsh of any size also become very significant spawning and transient nursery habitat for many species of fish, and many of them commercially important. [Just recently, we have come to learn that the overhanging twigs and

branches of the trees along their banks, so much a feature of our SW ria-type estuaries, are also a transient extension of this high tide fish nursery].

4. What has really put saltmarshes on the global pillar of importance, however, is how much carbon they naturally trap and store on a long-term timescale of 100s to 1000s of years. Like almost all plants (& seaweeds), salt-tolerant plants fix some of the carbon dioxide from the atmosphere using the sun's energy to make their own food and some of this will be trapped within the sediment beneath the saltmarsh on their death. However, due to the physical structure of a saltmarsh above the estuary bed, they help calm the water flowing through them causing the water to further drop their load of organic-detritus rich sediment. The microbial induced and anoxic conditions within the accreting sediment breaks down and recycles the organic carbon very slowly, and together with the mudflats sometimes 10s of metres deep and probably the seagrass meadows, trap carbon in such quantities that their disturbance and reoxygenation would be globally harmful. [By some measurements, second only to tropical mangrove forests and that to the ocean bed ooze].
5. Saltmarshes have long been known for their special qualities but for a variety of reasons, have not really had the attention they deserved. Seagrasses have seahorses and are an easier sell, and the Climate Emergency has refocused our attention to all carbon stores – even comparably short-term ones like tree planting.
6. Saltmarshes make an important contribution to the South Devon National Landscape's natural beauty, it's special qualities, feature within the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework as SSSI, priority habitat or wildlife rich habitat depending upon site status, contribute to carbon storage, and have the potential to count toward 30 by 30 if areas of saltmarsh meet the criteria for purpose, protection and management.

The Dart Saltmarsh Restoration Project

7. Through our wider South Devon National Landscape (then AONB) Estuaries Partnership, and the greater assistance of our EA Catchment Coordinator colleagues through their support, contacts and funding securement, we now have a Dart Saltmarsh Restoration Project that encompasses a range of sub-projects. The common theme being to protect, enhance and/or restore the health and extent of the saltmarshes around the Dart Estuary through best science, raising awareness and understanding, and Dart Estuary community lead conservation management. Critically, many saltmarshes straddle the line of 'land'-ownership between terrestrial land and estuary bed, and in the main has been fully recognised for its act local global benefits.
8. The South Devon National Landscape's role has been to assist and facilitate most aspects of the project with a level of local geographic and ecological knowledge, facilities and contacts, as well as supplying the initial baseline listing of most known, suspected and potential future saltmarshes. With the geography and nature of our estuaries, some of our 'saltmarshes' are right at their fringe of being between tide and tree shading.
9. Many of the Dart's more significant saltmarshes have now been surveyed in terms of their apparent environmental health and resilience, both botanically by the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (DBRC) and healthwise by the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH), and with an initial report on their condition and options for their 'restoration'. It should be noted that again due to the nature and form of our estuaries, our saltmarshes will never be that extensive over the foreshore so the cost : benefit will sometimes be questionable but against a

background of their cumulative worth, trialling where and when we can may greatly help us all learn – as with many aspects of estuarine and conservation management, it is about getting the conditions right for nature to find the way and take over.

10. Funded as a local partnership by the EA et al, and partly coordinated by the local Bioregional Learning Centre, we (as the partnership) looked at a number of projects to take the greater awareness and conservation of the Dart's saltmarshes forwards:
11. Longmarsh Totnes – the marsh itself naturally grades from freshwater to saltmarsh but we have simply opened up the sluice to allow slightly greater tidal flooding of the marsh to benefit the saltmarsh. To benefit the marsh area further, the footpath around its edge has been upgraded to give Access for All, so that we can signpost the marsh and with interpretation, give visitors a close hand look and experience of a saltmarsh without directly impacting upon it – encouraging users (and 4-legged companions) to keep to the new boardwalk. It is a challenge to enthusiastically interpret and raise awareness of saltmarshes but at the same time, due to the relative fragility of saltmarsh to cumulative trampling, ask people to keep their distance from something we have tried to get them excited about.
12. Saltmarshes south of Totnes – many of the channel facing edges of out saltmarshes exhibit some level of erosion, some of this is likely to be natural from wind-waves, some semi-natural from stormwater flows and some from the wake of boat traffic. There are also some tidal gullies within the saltmarshes, some will be a natural feature and some will be kept open by the flow of water with each tide. The Dart saltmarsh report suggested the trialling of staking tied woodland brash bundles across the gullies and saltmarsh faces to trial how they may benefit the marshes? The idea is to buffer wave action and calm the flow of water behind them – this should help reduce any wave erosion and encourage the water to drop its load of sediment, gradually building up the height of the sediment and bring the level up to a height on the shore that will support the growth or regrowth, of saltmarsh. A vital part of this trial is its monitoring and simple 'gauges' have been placed within the marshes to monitor the growth or erosion of the saltmarshes, and the accretion or erosion of the sediment. There are some indications of some success, but we have to expect seasonal variations and even some over different years. This will all help us in the future to make more informed decisions of where, when and why to intervene. A huge benefit of this project has been the wider community involvement of groups coppicing trees, collecting and bundling the brash, etc. and has been highlighted on the regional TV and the national Ocean Futures conference.
13. The saltmarsh of The Gut – a slightly distanced project is looking to trial the actual restoration of an area of saltmarsh believed to have been lost historically through the disturbances of very large freight vessels navigating the channel there. The options of how to encourage this restoration is part of the project and will consider the 'trapping' of sediment by a greater use of brash and bundles, but also the potential 'beneficial use of dredged sediment' i.e. sediment from a dredging project that is transported and graded over the shore.

The Yealm Estuary Saltmarsh Restoration Project

14. Following the initial learning from the Dart project, we were invited by the EA to coordinate a similar project for the Yealm Estuary but also to include a consideration of the climate and financial benefits of the carbon trapped and stored by the saltmarshes. This project is ongoing, but the first saltmarsh condition assessments were survey recently at the end of February.

15. The initial and informal findings suggest that the Yealm has many similarities and several differences too – the upper Yealm Estuary (not the Newton & Noss creek) is far quieter of boating traffic, the estuary is generally smaller with smaller saltmarshes but were generally healthy with saltmarsh growing wherever the habitat and conditions would support them.
16. There is one, more significant area of saltmarsh where there may be some opportunity to restore its extent but we will need to await the conclusion and recommendations of the completed report later in the year and of course the agreement etc. of the landowner.

Our Other Estuary Saltmarshes

17. Very recently, we have had news that the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre are hoping to secure funding and partnership clearance to carry out botanical surveys and condition assessments of the saltmarshes of our local Erme, Avon and Salcombe-Kingsbridge Estuaries. This would rather excitingly round up an assessment of all our estuarine saltmarshes and finally place our saltmarshes alongside the worth of our seagrass meadows and mudflats.

Our Other Estuarine Ecosystems

18. Over this year, we are also intending to carry out trials to reseed some of our estuaries with one of our dwarf seagrasses, taking advantage of their seemingly annual floating of plants when in seed; and to trial the controlling management of Pacific oysters that are worrying thriving with an area of dwarf seagrass meadow within the Salcombe-Kingsbridge Estuary.

Footnote

19. Please note that this report has been prepared to be informative of our wider partnership saltmarsh conservation work and the names of the many partners and the details of the different funding sources has been omitted for purposes of brevity only. Saltmarsh project activity would not have been possible without the collaboration and cooperation of many different partners, landowners, agencies and bodies.

Item Ends.

Diary dates

Remaining meeting dates in 2025

- Friday 18 July
- Friday 28 November



South Devon
National
Landscape

Partnership Meeting

to be held at

10am on Friday 14 March 2025

Repton Room at Follaton House and via Zoom

Annex to Meeting Papers

South Devon National Landscape team, Follaton House, Totnes, TQ9 5NE
Telephone 01803 229330 Email enquiries@southdevon-nl.org.uk

Agenda item 9A: Planning applications consultations updated 10 March 2025

ITEM FOR	INFORMATION	REPORT BY	Roger English, National Landscape Manager
SUMMARY	This report provides a brief update on Local Planning Authority development management consultations since the November 2024 Partnership meeting pertinent to the South Devon National Landscape.		
MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES	<p>All PLACE: Landscape character; Natural resources & climate; Biodiversity & geodiversity; Historic environment; Farming and land management; Coast & marine; Rivers & estuaries.</p> <p>All PEOPLE: Tourism, access & recreation; Planning & sustainable development; Transport & highways; Rural economy & services; Community & culture.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Partnership members are recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note the level of resource commitment currently applied to the type of development management consultations, bearing in mind the South Devon National Landscape Planning Protocol, 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 National Landscape Manager to enable timely and appropriate action to be taken. 		

Key Activity

Planning Caseload

1. In the rolling year 2024/2025 to date, Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have formally consulted the National Landscape team on 33 applications plus 3 appeals. In addition, the National Landscape team has been consulted on 6 pre-applications, 2 Marine License applications, a listed building consent, 5 woodland creation or felling/restocking licences, a communications installation application, a planning application validation checklist, 2 transformer refurbishment consultations, **an** IFCA consultation and **a** Water Act land disposal consultation.
2. In total, there have been **15** new consultations since the last update.
3. Summary of activity since the last update:
 - 9 cases that LPAs have determined
 - 5 completed responses on cases that LPAs are yet to determine
 - 7 cases under consideration with responses currently in development
 - 3 pre- applications responded to / response in development
 - 1 Appeal response in development
 - 3 woodland creation or felling/restocking applications
 - 2 transformer refurbishment consultations
 - 1 IFCA consultation
 - 1 Water Act land disposal consultation
4. Note the 10 applications with completed responses and an LPA decision as at the November Partnership meeting 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
5. The following table lists the planning cases pertinent to the period:

App Ref	Application Type	Decision	In accordance with NL advice / guidance	NL Major	Comments
9 Applications - LPA decision made					
P/2023/0553	Land Off St Mary's Road, Brixham Demolish industrial buildings, erect 28 residential dwellings	Refusal	Y	N	
DCC/4366/2023	Land adjacent to Malborough Waste Water Treatment Works Install additional & replacement infrastructure and change of use from undeveloped land to an operational site	Withdrawn	-	N	Extends the operational site area on land at (and adjacent to) Malborough Waste Water Treatment Works
3053/21/ARM	Noss Marina Approval of reserved matters	Approved	-	Y	Advice previously provided. Readvertised (amended plans)
P/2024/0462	35 Wall Park Road, Brixham Change Hipped to Gable Roof, Dorners, Single Storey Extension & Remove Conservatory.	Approval	-	N	
2294/24/FUL	Wragmoor Bantham Proposed replacement of 2 dwellings	Approved	-	N	
2317/24/FUL	6 Waltacre Yealmpton Replacement dwelling	Approved	-	N	
P/2024/0461	39 Wall Park Road Brixham Outline application for detached dwelling	Withdrawn	-	N	
2887/24/FUL	Bantham Boathouse Bantham Proposed conversion of first floor of boathouse into holiday let	Refused	Y	N	Revised scheme to 2605/22/FUL Related application 2888/24/LBC
0007/25/CCN	Waterfoot Aveton Gifford Caravan Club Notification of proposed exempted campsite to accommodate a Glamping site	Refused	Y	N	
5 Applications - Response submitted - LPA still to determine					
P/2022/0339	Site Adjacent To Brixham Cricket Club Change of use from agricultural land to outdoor football pitch.	-	Objection	N	Part retrospective. Respond by 26.4.23 Reconsulted 3.4.23
2798/23/FUL	North Embankment Dartmouth Proposed new slipway	-	Holding Objection	N	
3451/24/FUL	Maudelayne 4 Ravensbury Drive Warfleet Dartmouth Creation of new retaining wall & sea wall to shore up & reinforce damaged riverbank, improvement of quayside area & replacement of septic tank	-	Objection	N	
0345/24/FUL	Stoke Gabriel Boating Association Clubhouse Construct accessway & secure concrete 'bridge head' on foreshore for onshore connection to gangway linking a new permanent pontoon	-	No objection	N	
0259/25/ARC	Curlew Point, Curlew Drive, West Charleton Application for approval of details reserved by condition 6 (CEcoMP) and 7 (CEnvMP) of planning consent 3334/22/HHO	-	No Objection	N	
7 Applications + 1 Appeal - Responses under consideration					
2982/21/FUL	Land Opposite Butts Park Newton Ferrers Erection of 20 residential units	-	-	Y	Revised plans Sep'23 (NL objected to original plans) Awaiting legal agreement

App Ref	Application Type	Decision	In accordance with NL advice / guidance	NL Major	Comments
3995/23/FUL	Baltic Wharf Boatyard St Peters Quay Totnes Mixed-use development comprising marine workshops (Use Class B2) and boat storage, offices (Use Class E), care home (Use Class C2), houses and apartments (Use Class C3), mixed commercial uses (Use Class E).	-	-	N	Development as a whole was NL major development
P/2024/0562	Land Off Pilgrim Close Brixham Outline application for up to 20 dwellings	-	-	N	
2666/24/FUL	Land At Sx 534 496, Wembury Creation of a multiuser trail	-	-	N	
P/2024/0720	Landscope Holiday Village, Brixham Part demolish existing facility building & remove swimming pool. Single storey extension for new swimming pool, gym and plant room. Alteration of roofline from hip to gable, new raised terrace, new openings, new maintenance building and altered electrical building + 8 new parking spaces.	-	-	N	
0492/25/HHO	Ferncliff House East Portlemouth Householder application for erection of boathouse & retaining wall with associated landscaping enhancements	-	-	N	
0467/25/FUL	Pebble Cove, Hallsands Installation of timber, pedestrian access steps to property	-	-	N	Retrospective
AP/2024/0074	Land To The Southwest Of Copythorne Road Brixham Outline planning application for 77 dwellings with all matters reserved apart from access. This application is a departure from the Development Plan.	Appeal in progress	-	Y	Appeal Hearing set for 7 th /8 th May 2025. Evidence in preparation. Related application P/2023/0480

Item Ends.