



6. Conclusion

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The subdivision of the area into 12 landscape character types shows the Mid Devon District as having a diverse landscape, ranging from the intimate valleys and surrounds of the River Exe, to the Blackdown Hills with its unique geology, to the low lying flat prosperous agricultural area known locally as the Mid Devon Farming Belt. This pastoral landscape with its patchwork of mixed farming, parkland and native woodland are all typical elements that make up this distinctive Devon landscape. Within these landscapes are many attractive villages with historic buildings and parkland estates, which complement the natural environment and reflect its historic past.

The Mid Devon study area is centrally positioned between Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks with the area to the east recognised to be of national significance through inclusion of the Blackdown Hills AONB. These landscape designations are important in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, this document seeks to recognise the valued characteristic of each landscape regardless of its designation.

Whilst some elements of landscape character are static, such as soils and geology, land use and condition are likely to change. Many farmed landscapes are under pressure due to the intensification of arable cultivation and inevitable pressure of climate change. This assessment recognises the way the landscape has evolved and the way it needs to change and adapt to meet developing requirements and expectations.

The landscape character assessment is an important mechanism for maintaining and enhancing the rich and varied landscape of Mid Devon. By documenting landscape character as it is now, we have an important base-line which will help us assess future change and direct future projects.

This project will be a useful vehicle for bringing together information on the local landscape across the area as a whole. The principal applications of this assessment are to provide a robust and credible evidence base for the LDF; inform the landscape based policies of the emerging Development Management DPD; inform design guidance to promote high quality landscape design; provide a framework for more detailed studies and for targeting landscape enhancements; inform the emerging Mid Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy and finally provide guidance for assessing the impact of new developments on landscape character.

The characterisation information and guidelines for each Landscape Character Type are a useful reference source for planners, developers, land owners, landscape architects and other professionals. It will not only provide an overview for detailed assessments by developers in support of planning applications, but also provide a useful basis for local communities in carrying out more detailed assessments such as Parish Plans or Neighbourhood Development Plans.