



Blackdown Hills AONB

Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty Partnership

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Dear Liz

Mid Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy – Initial Consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute at this early stage to a Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy for Mid Devon.

Introduction

The primary purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area; this includes the distinctive landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage. An AONB also encourages social and economic well-being of its local communities and promotes sustainable forms of development.

Five Mid Devon parishes are within or partly in the Blackdown Hills AONB – Clayhidon, Culmstock, Hemyock, Kentisbeare and Uffculme. The part of the AONB in Mid Devon extends to around 60km².

Key Principles for a GI strategy for Mid Devon

The Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership advocates the following general principles:

- Physical connectivity between different parts of a GI network is vital
- New and enhanced green spaces and networks are important in rural areas as well as urban settings
- GI assets and opportunities are not confined to district boundaries: cross border working is important
- GI should be considered as an essential element of the infrastructure requirements of new development
- The scope of the strategy needs to be clear: GI is an all embracing concept, with some of the potential benefits and objectives not directly related to the spatial planning process.

Specific Comments

In defining a list of assets, it would be helpful to clarify whether some of the identified features are existing or potential assets, i.e. quarry and landfill sites.

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The Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is managed by a partnership of national agencies, local authorities, conservation organisations and community groups, who work together to protect this special place.

The work of the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership is funded by Natural England, Devon and Somerset County Councils, East Devon, Mid Devon and South Somerset District Councils and Taunton Deane Borough Council.

Also mentioned are 'cycle routes Bampton-Tiverton-Willand-Hemyock...' while there is a cycle route to Willand, a continuation of this linking Uffculme, Culmstock and Hemyock along the old railway line is aspirational at this stage. We very much welcome its inclusion in the GI strategy as potentially a very beneficial GI opportunity; providing access to the AONB from Tiverton and beyond, health and wellbeing, sustainable travel, and tourism.

Will production of this strategy involve undertaking new or further studies or be based on existing evidence? In particular in respect of climate change mitigation and adaptation, renewable energy opportunities, woodfuel and non-traditional crops are major topics of wider interest and relevance.

I trust that the above comments are helpful at this stage, and the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership would welcome continued involvement in the development of the strategy.

Yours sincerely

A large, dark, irregular redacted area covering the signature of Lisa Turner.

Lisa Turner
AONB Planning Officer