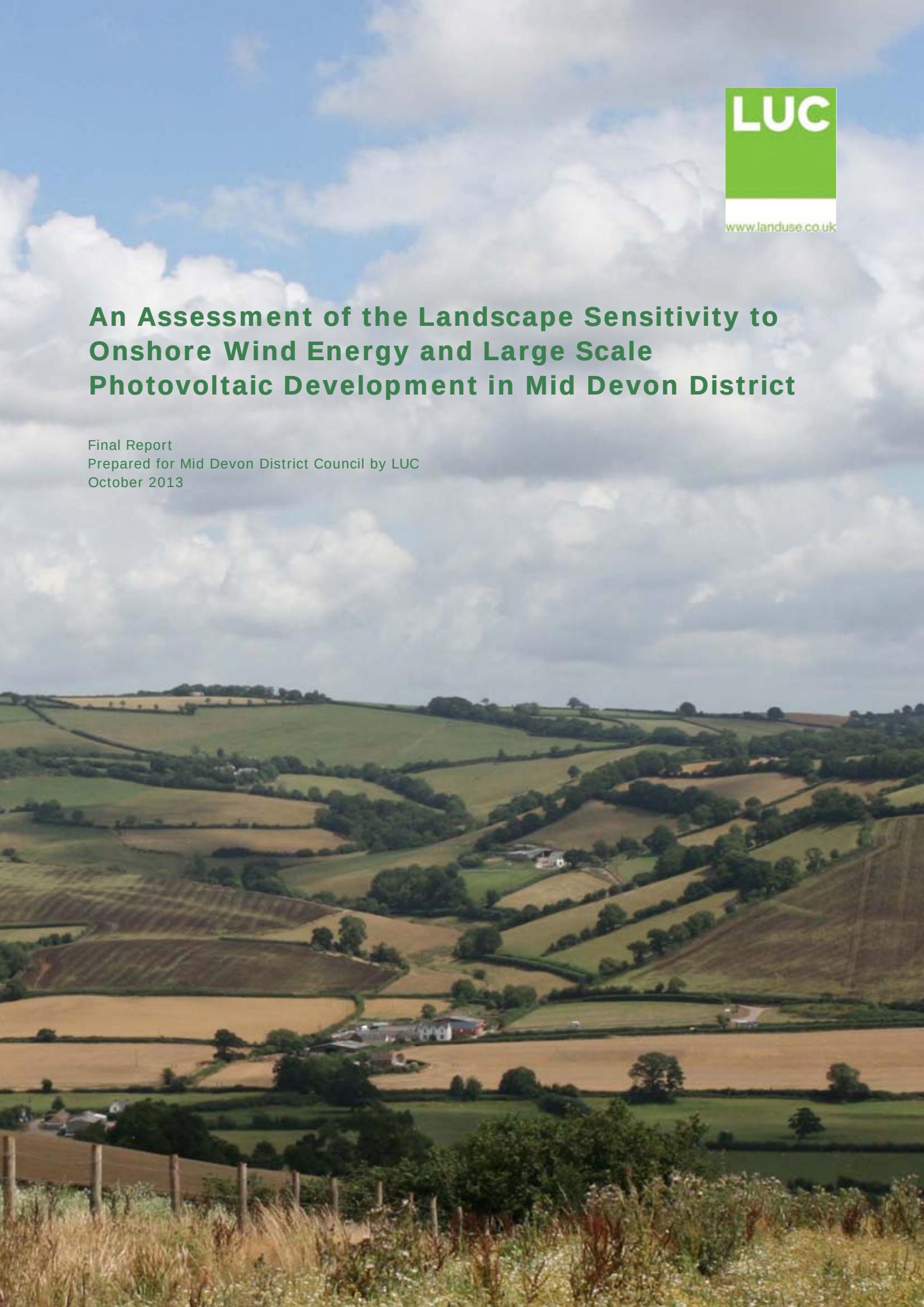

An Assessment of the Landscape Sensitivity to Onshore Wind Energy and Large Scale Photovoltaic Development in Mid Devon District

Final Report
Prepared for Mid Devon District Council by LUC
October 2013

Project Title: An Assessment of the Landscape Sensitivity to Onshore Wind Energy and Large Scale Photovoltaic Development in Mid Devon District

Client: Mid Devon District Council

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1.0	09.08.13	Draft final report circulated to the client	SP	RK	LC
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Contents

1 Introduction

Background to this study

1.1 Mid Devon District is faced with a wide range of challenges arising from a changing climate. Balancing the need to make a meaningful contribution towards reducing harmful emissions from our energy use (through cleaner energy production) with the management of Mid Devon's unique landscape being one of these challenges.

1.2 Mid Devon's landscape is vitally important to the local economy as well as parts being of national importance for its natural beauty: 6.5%[1] of the District falls within the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and 0.3% falls within Dartmoor National Park.

1.3 Mid Devon's landscape has a significant economic, social and community value, contributing to a sense of identity, well-being, enjoyment and inspiration and being a major contributor to a strong tourism industry. It also has an environmental value, as a home for wildlife and a cultural record of society's use of the land.

1.4 At the same time, Mid Devon District has good conditions to produce wind and solar energy. The descriptions for many of the Devon Character Areas within the District refer to renewable energy developments – including wind turbines and solar arrays – being a key force for future landscape change. As such, it is a timely opportunity to ensure that a thorough assessment of the sensitivity of Mid Devon's landscapes is undertaken to inform planning decisions on renewable energy proposals.

1.5 The Council recognises these opportunities and understands the need to maximise renewable energy generation (which can have environmental, economic, social and other benefits). However, the development of wind and solar electricity generating installations within Mid Devon needs to be managed carefully to achieve the greatest contribution towards our energy needs, while at the same time ensuring that the important characteristics of the landscape are not unacceptably harmed. With regard to considering multiple developments within the landscape, the Planning Practice Guidance for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (July 2013) notes that "*cumulative impacts require particular attention, especially the increasing impact that wind turbines and large scale solar farms can have on landscape and local amenity as the number of turbines and solar arrays in an area increases*".

1.6 In order to help understand how best to accommodate wind and solar electricity generation installations in the landscape Mid Devon District Council commissioned LUC to undertake an assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape to onshore wind and field-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) development[2] in the District.

Link to other studies

1.7 This study builds on the Devon Landscape Policy Group's (DLPG) Advice Note No. 2: *'Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape: Guidance on minimising harm to the distinctive character and special qualities of Devon's landscape through sensitive siting and design'*[3], providing a local supplement for Mid Devon District and building on the generic guidance presented in the Advice Note.

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1 http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/improving_our_services/facts_figures_and_statistics/factsandfigures/dff_environment/envdesignationsmid.htm

2 For the purposes of this report, we will use the shorter term 'solar PV development(s)'

3 http://www.devon.gov.uk/devon-guidance-v6-june-2013-final-report.pdf

1.8 This report relies on an understanding of the characteristics of wind energy development and solar PV development, and their potential landscape effects, as set out in the above DLPG Advice Note. This report is also consistent with the types and scales of development defined in the DLPG Advice Note.

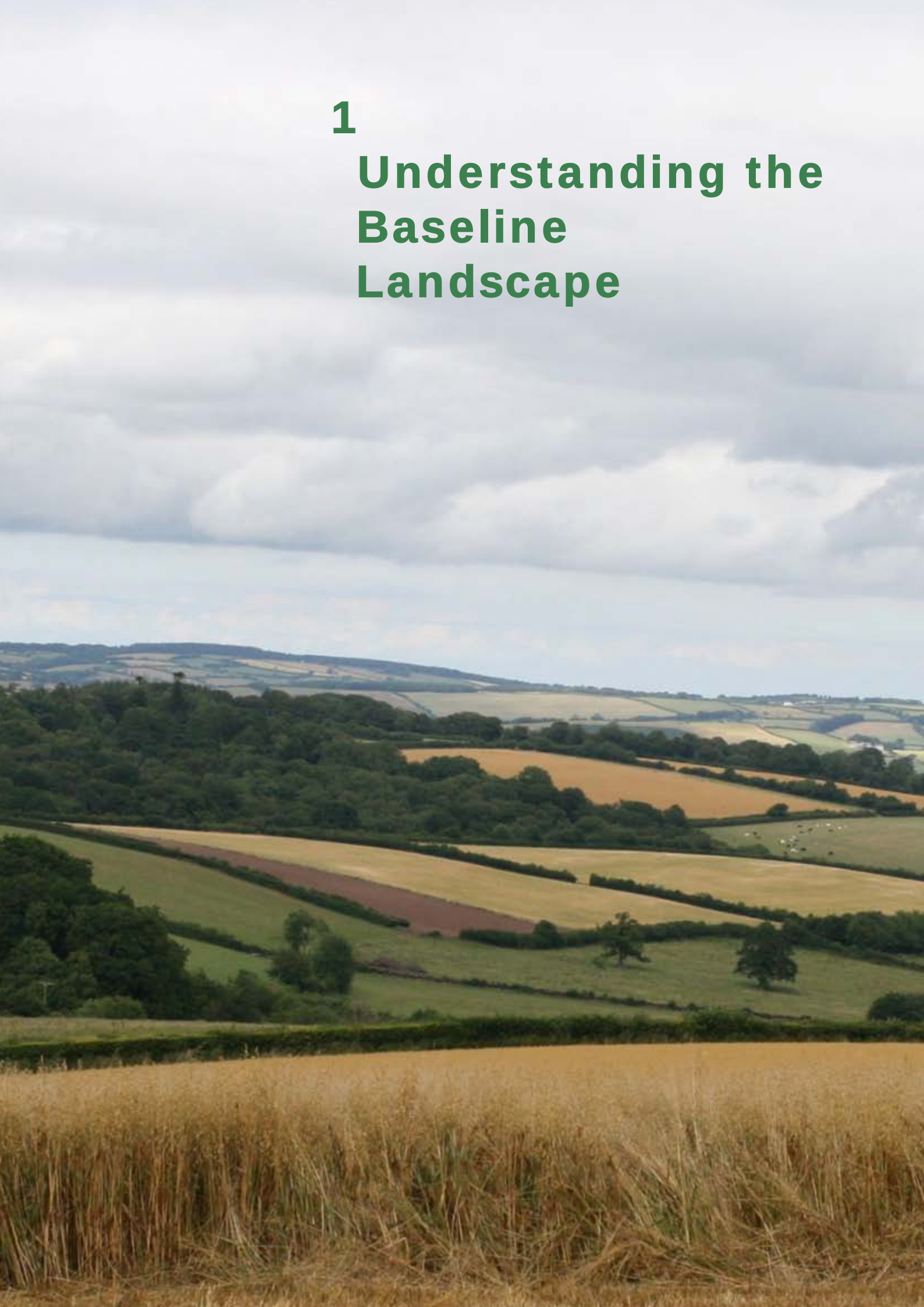
1.9 This report builds on and is consistent with the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment undertaken for Torridge District Council in November 2011[4]. The Torridge study was commissioned to form part of an evidence base to support the Torridge District Core Strategy and enable the local planning authority to make robust, well-informed decisions with regards to planning applications for wind and solar PV developments; as is the case for this study for Mid Devon District Council. The Torridge report was completed prior to the finalisation of the Devon-wide Landscape Character Assessment, which identifies county-wide Devon Character Areas (DCAs)[5]. Therefore this study for Mid Devon seeks to make reference to the DCAs in the guidance produced for the study. For those Landscape Character Types that are found within both Torridge and Mid Devon, where possible, consistent assessments of sensitivity have been sought to ensure compatibility across the districts. However, the results of the Torridge study have not constrained a thorough consideration of landscape sensitivity tailored to the Mid Devon landscape. Therefore some differences do occur in the sensitivity assessments undertaken for common LCTs found in the two districts.

1.10 In addition to the Torridge study, this report draws on work undertaken by LUC for the Blackdown Hills AONB in 2010, entitled *'Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'* prepared in 2010. It should be noted that the Blackdowns study took a broad scoping approach to considering the siting of a range of renewable energy types within the AONB, including biomass, anaerobic digestion, waste to energy, micro hydro, solar hot water, solar space heating, ground source heat pumps, air source heat pumps and micro district heating which are beyond the scope of this report. It also undertook more detailed Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for wind energy developments, which is considered as part of the evidence base for this study. The rest of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** presents the landscape character and quality baseline for Mid Devon;
- **Chapter 3** sets out a method for assessing sensitivity to wind energy development and field scale solar PV development within Mid Devon District;
- **Chapter 4** summarises the overall results of the landscape sensitivity assessment undertaken for the District;
- **Chapter 5** includes the individual landscape sensitivity assessments and guidance produced for each LCT found in the District;
- **Chapter 6** provides a summary and recommendations for emerging policy;
- **Appendix 1** provides a summary of the Devon Character Areas found within the District;
- **Appendix 2** presents a user guide to assist use of this report in designing and assessing proposals;
- **Appendix 3** is a map of the current distribution of permitted renewable energy developments in the District (based on data from September 2013).

[4] http://www.torridge.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=7340

[5] http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/natural_environment/landscape/landscapecharacter.htm



1 Understanding the Baseline Landscape

2 Understanding the Baseline Landscape

The Landscape of Mid Devon District

2.1 Mid Devon has a mixed and diverse landscape, from open exposed ridge tops and undulating hills (including part of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) to steep sided valleys enclosed by characteristic species-rich Devon hedges. The area also includes the 'hidden secretive landscapes' of the River Culm tributaries, with much of the wider district defined by a strong feeling of remoteness and high levels of tranquillity.

2.2 Tiverton is the largest conurbation in the district supported by small market towns including Cullompton, Crediton and Bampton. The landscape's strongly rural characteristics complement an historic sense of place – with medieval field patterns interspersed within the productive agricultural landscape, broken by tracts of internationally important Culm grasslands and scattered traditional settlements typically associated with Devon. Intervisibility with the uplands of Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park, particularly from higher ground, is a strong feature of the Mid Devon landscape.

Landscape Character Baseline

2.3 Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) form the spatial framework and evidence base for this Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (see **Figure 2.1**).

Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment (2011)

2.4 There are 11 Landscape Character Types (LCTs) falling within Mid Devon District, as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (2011) [6]:

LCT 1: Plateaux and Ridges

1A: Open inland planned plateaux

1E: Wooded ridges and hilltops

1F: Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland

LCT 2: Scarp Slopes

2A: Steep wooded scarp slopes

LCT 3: Valleys

3A: Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes

3B: Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes

3C: Sparsely settled farmed valley floors

3E: Lowland plains

3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes

3H: Secluded Valleys

LCT 5: Rolling Hills

5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land

2.5 The Landscape Character Assessment provides descriptive information for each of these LCTs, forming the primary evidence base for the assessments provided in Chapter 5.

[6] http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 2.1

The Landscape Character Assessment Framework

Mid Devon District Boundary

Landscape Character Areas

- DCA02 : Bampton and Beer Downs
- DCA05 : Blackdown Hills Scarp
- DCA06 : Blackdown Hills
- DCA12 : Clyst Lowland Farmlands
- DCA14 : Crediton Rolling Farmland
- DCA15 : Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys
- DCA16 : Cullompton Rolling Farmland
- DCA17 : Culm Valley Lowlands
- DCA24 : Exe Valley
- DCA25 : Exeter Slopes and Hills
- DCA26 : Exmoor Fringe
- DCA30 : High Culm Ridges
- DCA33 : High Taw Farmland
- DCA40 : Moretonhampstead Moorland Fringes
- DCA57 : Taw Valley
- DCA65 : Witheridge and Rackenford Moor
- DCA67 : Yeo Uplands and Slopes
- DCA68 : Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

Devon Landscape Character Assessment (2011)

2.6 Devon County Council's county-wide Landscape Character Assessment[7] identifies 18 Devon Character Areas (DCAs) that lie partially or wholly within Mid Devon District, shown alongside the LCTs mapped in **Figure 2.1**. **Table 2.1** below also shows how these fit with the District-scale LCTs. **Appendix 1** provides the character summaries for each DCA found within Mid Devon, using the same order as the table below.

Table 2.1 Landscape Character Areas within Mid Devon and their LCTs

Devon Character Area (DCA)	Landscape Character Types (LCTs) contained within the DCA
Devon Character Areas that are wholly contained within Mid Devon	
DCA 02 Bampton and Beer Downs	- LCT 1E Wooded Ridges and Hilltops - LCT 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes - LCT 3B Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes - LCT 3E Lowland Plains - LCT 3H Secluded Valleys
DCA 14 Crediton Rolling Farmland	- LCT 3B Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes - LCT 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors - LCT 3H Secluded Valleys - LCT 1E Wooded Ridges and Hilltops
DCA 16 Cullompton Rolling Farmland	- LCT 1E Wooded Ridges and Hilltops - LCT 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes - LCT 3B Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes
DCA 24 Exe Valley	- LCT 1E Wooded Ridges and Hilltops - LCT 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes - LCT 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors - LCT 3G River Valley Slopes and Combes - LCT 3H Secluded Valleys
Devon Character Areas that contain more than 60% of land within Mid Devon	
DCA 15 Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys	- LCT 1F Farmed Lowlands Moorland and Culm Grassland - LCT 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes - LCT 3G River Valley Slopes and Combes - LCT 3H Secluded Valleys
DCA 17 Culm Valley Lowlands	- LCT 3B Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes - LCT 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors - LCT 3E Lowland Plains

[7] http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/natural_environment/landscape/devon-character-areas.htm

Devon Character Area (DCA)	Landscape Character Types (LCTs) contained within the DCA
DCA 68 Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands	- LCT 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors - LCT 3E Lowland Plains
DCA 67 Yeo Uplands and Slopes	- LCT 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors - LCT 3G River Valley Slopes and Combes - LCT 5A Inland Elevated Undulating Land
Devon Character Areas that contain less than 60% of land within Mid Devon	
DCA 65 Witheridge and Rackenford Moor	- LCT 1F Farmed Lowlands Moorland and Culm Grassland - LCT 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes - LCT 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors - LCT 3H Secluded Valleys
DCA 25 Exeter Slopes and Hills	- LCT 1E Wooded Ridges and Hilltops - LCT 3B Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes - LCT 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors
DCA 06 Blackdown Hills	- LCT 1A Open Inland Planned Plateaux - LCT 2A Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes - LCT 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes - LCT 3B Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes - LCT 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors
DCA 33 High Taw Farmland	- LCT 1F Farmed Lowlands Moorland and Culm Grassland - LCT 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes - LCT 5A Inland Elevated Undulating Land
DCA 57 Taw Valley	- LCT 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes - LCT 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors - LCT 3G River Valley Slopes and Combes
DCA 12 Clyst Lowland Farmlands	- LCT 3B Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes - LCT 3E Lowland Plains
Devon Character Areas that contain less than 10% within Mid Devon	
DCA 26 Exmoor Fringe	- LCT 1E Wooded Ridges and Hilltops - LCT 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes
DCA 30 High Culm Ridges	- LCT 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes
DCA 05 Blackdown Hills Scarp	- LCT 1A Open Inland Planned Plateaux - LCT 2A Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes

Devon Character Area (DCA)	Landscape Character Types (LCTs) contained within the DCA
	- LCT 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes
DCA 40 Moretonhampstead Moorland Fringes	- LCT 5A Inland Elevated Undulating Land

2.7 The DCA descriptions provide an important additional evidence base for the individual LCT assessments and guidance included in Chapter 5 of this report.

Historic Landscape Character Assessment for Devon

2.8 Devon's Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), undertaken in 2005[8], maps historic landscape types found across Devon. The Historic Landscape Types (HLTs) used to inform this study are mapped in **Figure 2.2.**

2.9 For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that landscapes comprising medieval enclosures (including strip fields) have a higher sensitivity to the larger scale wind energy developments and larger scale PV developments than landscapes comprising larger post-medieval or modern enclosures or industrial/military historic landscape types (HLTs). This is due to the potential for the larger scale turbine developments to affect the coherence of these landscapes (including effects of access tracks on field boundaries) and the ability to appreciate them in the landscape. Historic Landscape Types such as rough ground, ancient woodland, other woodland[9], watermeadows and orchards also have a higher sensitivity to development of wind energy development and solar PV development of any size as a result of potential changes to the coherence of these HLTs.

2.10 It will be important that historic landscape character is conserved as far as possible when siting renewable energy development.

[8] http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/historic_environment/landscapes/landscape-characterisation/historiclandscapecharacterisationmethodology.htm

[9] Other woodland is defined as "*all other woodland including broad-leaved plantations, re-planted ancient woodland or secondary woodland that has grown up from scrub*" in the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation (2005).

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 2.2

Historic Landscape Types in Mid Devon

- Mid Devon District Boundary
- Rough ground (various)
- Medieval enclosures (various)
- Barton fields
- Post-medieval enclosures (various)
- Modern enclosures (various)
- Horticulture
- Orchard
- Former orchards
- Ancient woodland
- Conifers and other woodland
- Woodland with old field boundaries
- Public complex
- Military complex
- Airfield
- Former airfield
- Industrial complex
- Water
- Watermeadow (various)
- Quarries
- Historic settlements
- Modern settlements
- Park/garden
- Recreation

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

Landscape Quality Baseline

2.11 Parts of Mid Devon fall within the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and a very small part in the southern part of the district (within LCT 5A) lies within the Dartmoor National Park. Additionally, although not within Mid Devon District, Exmoor National Park includes land immediately to the north of the administrative boundary. The location of these protected landscapes in the context of the District is shown in **Figure 2.3**.

Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

2.12 The Blackdown Hills AONB is located to the eastern extent of Mid Devon, covering 5,978 hectares and just over 6.5% of the District. The remainder of the protected landscape falls within East Devon and Taunton Dean Districts.

2.13 The management of the protected landscape is underpinned by the current AONB Management Plan (2009-14)[10] . The vision for the AONB, as set out in the Plan, is as follows:

'The Blackdown Hills remains an ancient landscape of small villages and farms, deep valleys and high hedges shaped by its unique geology. Its sense of tranquil timelessness and lack of change provides reassurance in a polluted, overcrowded world and give a sense of well-being to residents and visitors alike. Its wildlife and heritage are thriving due to sympathetic management that is keeping alive traditional skills. Vibrant, diverse communities, with a strong sense of identity, live and work sustainably, supporting the local economy and conserving and enhancing the area's rich resources for future generations.'

2.14 The Management Plan also includes the 'Statement of Significance' which underpins the designation of the AONB (the Blackdowns were designated in 1991). This is extracted in **Table 2.2** below.

Table 2.2: Statement of Significance for the Blackdown Hills AONB

Statement of Significance
An isolated, unspoilt rural area: *The area is relatively undisturbed by modern development and so ancient landscape features, special habitats, historical and archaeological remains have survived intact. There is a sense of stepping back in time in the winding lanes, the hidden valleys and relatively remote villages. The traditional pattern of villages, hamlets, paths and roads remains largely unchanged and there is an identifiable and characteristic vernacular, pastoral landscape.*
Diversity of landscape patterns and pictures: *The visual quality of the landscape is high and is derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes. Although the scenery is immensely varied, particular features are repeated. Ancient, species-rich hedgerows delineate the fields and define the character of the landscape, enclosing narrow twisting lanes. There are long views over field patterned landscapes. The high plateau is dissected by steep valleys, supporting a patchwork of woodland and heath, and fine avenues of beech along the ridge. The history of medieval and parliamentary enclosures has resulted in an individual landscape of a patchwork of small fields in the valleys and larger fields with straight hedges on the plateau.*
A unique geology: *The geology of the Blackdown Hills together with the adjoining East Devon AONB is unique in Britain, and is one of the area's strongest unifying features. It has given rise to the distinct topography of a flat-topped plateau, sharp ridges and spring-lined valleys. The springs have created the characteristic pattern of rough grassland, mire and woodland vegetation on the valley sides. The nature of the Greensand rock has meant that plant communities are particularly diverse. Moreover the geology has provided a native building material, chert, which is uncommon elsewhere.*

[10] http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/modules/documents/documents/BHAONBManagementPlan2009-2014%20complete.pdf

Statement of Significance

A landscape with architectural appeal: *The landscape pattern is punctuated by a wealth of small villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads of architectural value and distinctive character. Devon and Somerset are recognised nationally for their fine rural architecture, but the Blackdown Hills contain a special concentration of buildings where the vernacular character is particularly well preserved. Predominant materials are chert and cob, with thatch, clay tiles and even corrugated iron roofs. The appeal lies in the way in which the buildings blend and fit into the surrounding working landscape. As well as their age, which is predominantly 14th to 17th century, there is a fascinating mixture of building styles and traditions. The lime-washed houses often directly front or butt gable-end onto the narrow roads.*

2.15 The AONB's 'timelessness and lack of change' and relative absence of modern development could be affected by wind energy and solar PV development. In addition, field scale solar PV development could alter the existing mosaic of rural land uses. The landscape sensitivity assessments for those LCTs falling within the AONB have taken account of those aspects of the Statement of Significance that could be affected by wind or solar PV development.

Dartmoor National Park

2.16 Only a very small part of the District (227.5 hectares or 0.3%) falls within Dartmoor National Park. This relates to a limited section of LCT 5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land, within part of Devon Landscape Character Areas 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes and 40: Moretonhampstead Moorland Fringes.

2.17 The current Dartmoor National Park Management Plan 2007-12[11] sets out a 'Vision' for the National Park, as follows:

"*Responsible use of natural resources and a commitment to generating energy in sustainable ways is fostered in order to minimise damage not only to Dartmoor but to the wider environment.*" And "*This vision for Dartmoor National Park is therefore one of balance, in which both stability and change are beneficial to local people and visitors alike, and the special qualities of Dartmoor are conserved and enhanced for future generations as well as for those who visit and live in the National Park today.*" [12]

2.18 The Management Plan also describes the 'special qualities' that have underpinned the designation of Dartmoor as a National Park since 1961. Because of the very small amount of the District within the northern fringes of the National Park, many of the National Park-wide special qualities do not relate to the specific land in question. However, those that are relevant include:

- ….broad sweeping horizons, vast skies, huge sunsets and extensive views across Devon and beyond to coasts and seas;
- one of the most important collections of archaeological landscapes in Western Europe revealing a chronology of human activity stretching back over 8,000 years…. *[including]* a strong medieval settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, hamlets, villages and towns set within enclosed farmland surrounding the open moor, linked by an intimate pattern of sunken lanes;
- an area where it is still possible to find absolute peace, dominated by the sounds of nature…;
- a timeless and unspoilt place spared many of the intrusions of modern life where villages continue to thrive.

Note the text above has been summarised for the purposes of this report.

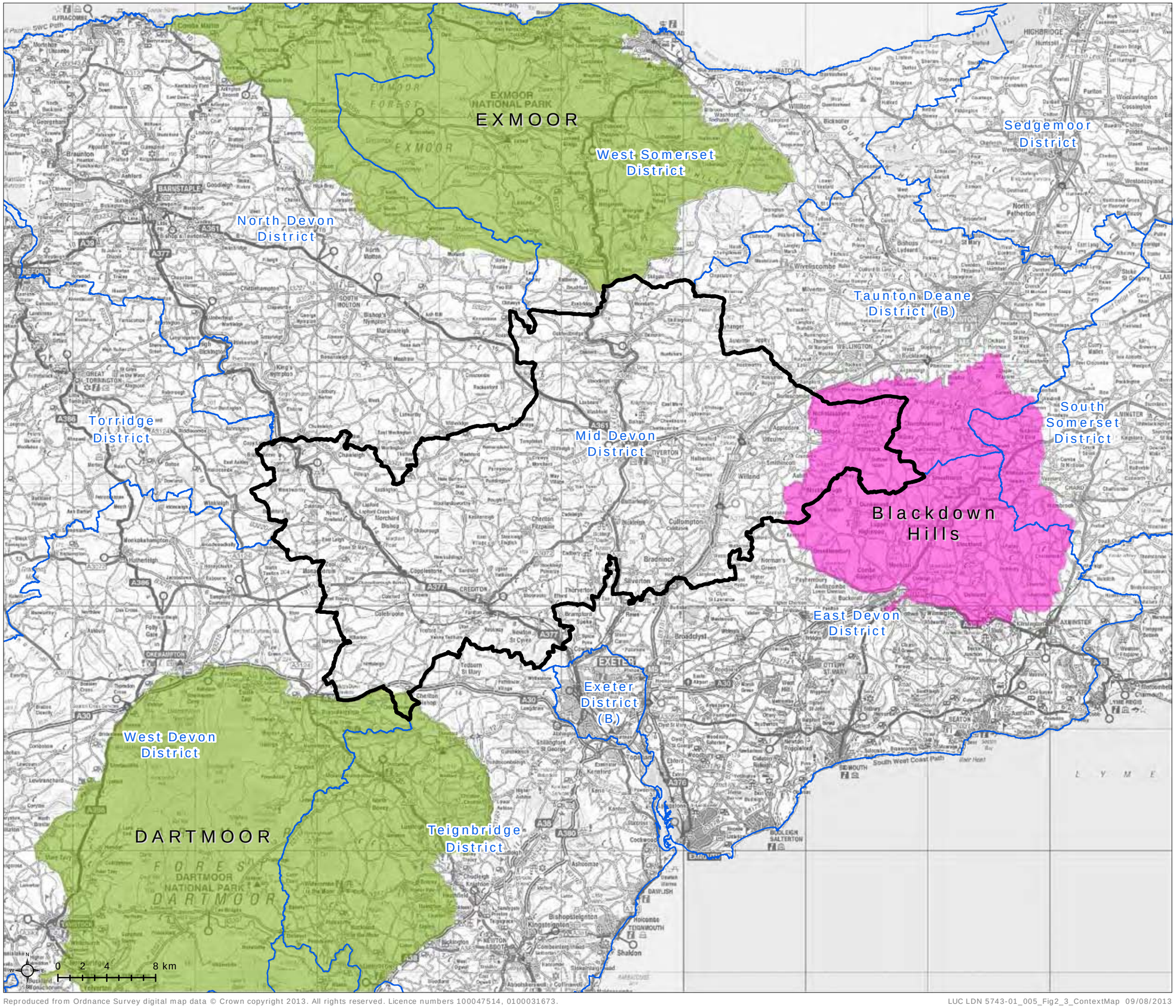
[11] Please note that the National Park Management Plan is currently under review, with consultation ending on 5 July 2013. Therefore for the purposes of this report we have used the information from the current 2007-2012 Management Plan.

[12] http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/43082/au_mp2007-2012_full.pdf

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 2.3

Mid Devon In The Context Of Nearby Protected Landscapes



Mid Devon District Boundary

Surrounding District Boundaries

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

National Park

Map Scale @ A3:1:300,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5743-01_005_Fig2_3_ContextMap 09/08/2013

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

2.19 It is important that the sensitivities of these special qualities are considered when making decisions on applications within or in close proximity to the National Park. For example, large scale development close to the National Park could be intrusive in views from Dartmoor if poorly sited and designed, and may affect the natural beauty of the Park and the special quality noted in the first bullet point above. This would need to be taken account of in siting any development close to the protected landscape.

Exmoor National Park

2.20 Although none of the District lies within Exmoor National Park, as **Figure 2.3** indicates, the very northern boundary directly abuts the administration boundary of the protected landscape (falling within Devon Landscape Character Area 26: Exmoor Fringe).

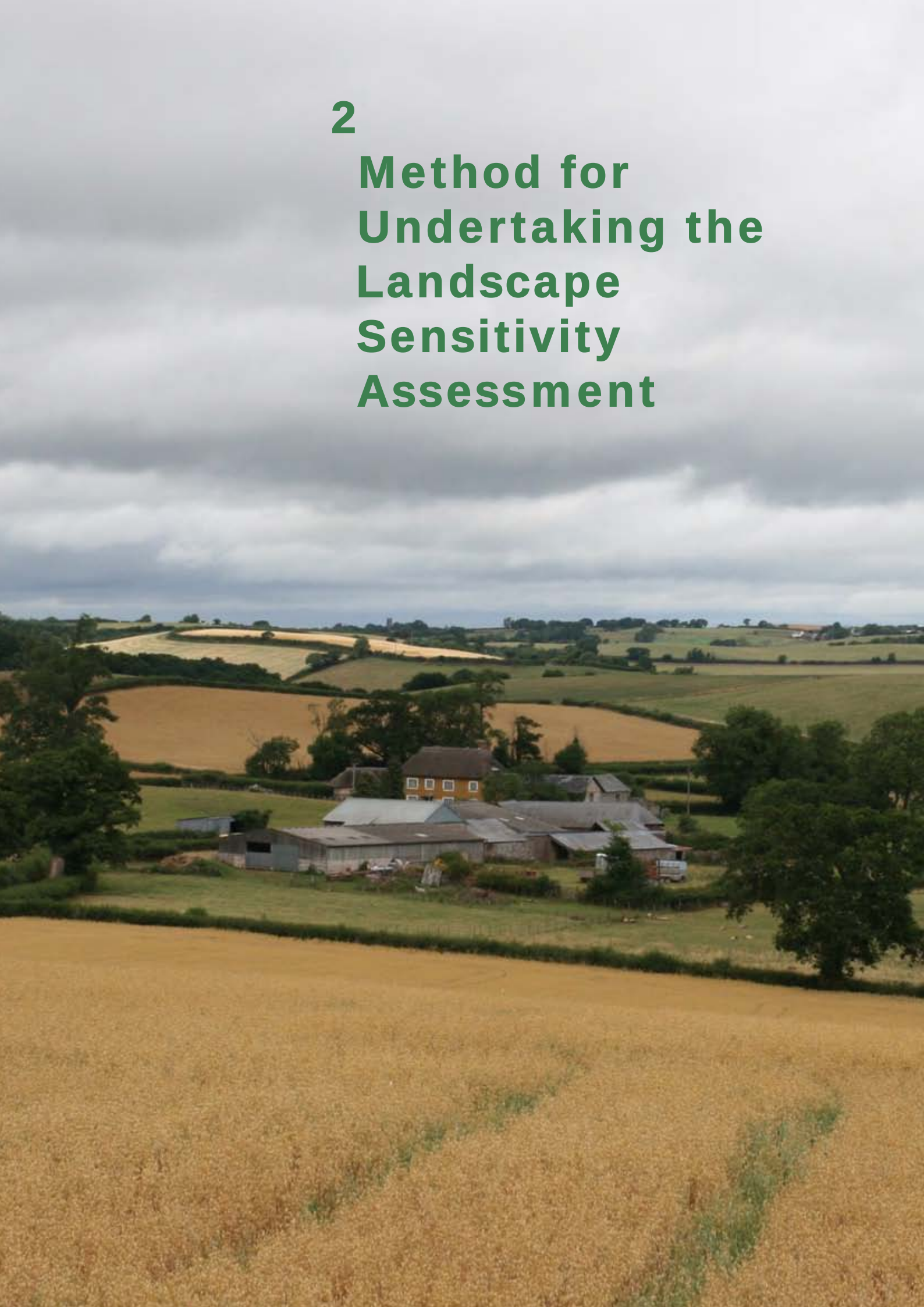
2.21 Like for Dartmoor National Park, it is important that special qualities for the National Park are taken into account when considering proposals which might impact upon them. Of particular relevance are the following (taken from the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17):

- a timeless landscape mostly free from intrusive development, with striking views inside and out of the National Park, and where the natural beauty of Exmoor and its dark night skies can be appreciated; and
- large areas of open moorland providing a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity rare in southern Britain.

2.22 Those LCTs with land abutting the National Park make reference to the above special qualities in their assessments.

2

Method for Undertaking the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment



3 Method for Undertaking the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Spatial and descriptive framework

3.1 Mid Devon's Landscape Character Types (LCTs) form the spatial framework and primary evidence base for this Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, as previously discussed and illustrated in **Figure 2.1**. A thorough desk-based study, drawing on other sources of spatial and descriptive information about the landscape, was supplemented by field survey work by a team of landscape professionals to verify and use professional judgement to produce the landscape sensitivity assessments.

3.2 Other key sources of information used to inform the assessment include:

- The Devon Historic Landscape Character assessment (HLC).
- The special qualities and spatial boundaries of the Blackdown Hills AONB, Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks.
- Ordnance survey base maps (1:250K, 1:50K and 1:25K).
- Aerial photography (Google Earth).

Development types considered

3.3 **Appendix 3** provides a map of the current location of permitted renewable energy schemes (wind and solar PV) within the District, based on information available at the time of writing from the Council's planning records. This shows that there are currently a total of 30 permitted wind turbine developments and eight solar PV schemes. The Council may update this map periodically to keep it up-to-date.

Wind turbines and field-scale solar photovoltaics (PV)

3.4 This Landscape Sensitivity Assessment applies to all forms of turbines, although it has been based on the most common horizontal axis three-bladed turbine, as described and illustrated in the DLPG Advice Note No. 2[13]. In terms of solar PV developments, the assessment is based on field scale developments, also described in the DLPG Guidance Note.

3.5 The Mid Devon assessment considers the suitability of different turbine heights, cluster sizes, and different scales of solar PV development based on bandings that reflect those that are most likely to be put forward by developers (now and in the future). These are also consistent with the DLPG Guidance Note, and are set out in **Table 3.1** below:

Table 3.1: Development sizes/scales used for this assessment

Wind Turbines		Solar PV scales
Height (to blade tip)	Cluster size	
Very small (15-25m)	Single turbine	Very small (<1ha)
Small (26-50m)	Small (<5 turbines)	Small (>1-5ha)
Medium (51-75m)	Medium (6-10 turbines)	Medium (>5-10ha)

[13] DLPG Advice Note 2: Accommodating wind and solar pv developments in Devon's landscape: guidance on minimising harm to the distinctive character and special qualities of Devon's landscape through sensitive siting and design http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/natural_environment/landscape/landscape-policy-guidance.htm

Wind Turbines		Solar PV scales
Large (76-110m)	Large (11-25 turbines)	Large (>10-15ha)
Very large (111-150m)	Very large (>25 turbines)	Very large (>15ha)

Features as size comparators for wind turbines

3.6 In order to visualise how the different turbine heights set out above relate to features found in Mid Devon District, a list of comparable features/land marks is provided in **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Features as size comparators for wind turbines

Feature	Size
Domestic buildings	6-10 metres
Very Small Turbines	15-25m (see **Figure 3.1** below)
Mature deciduous trees (dependent on species)	10-25m
Cobbacombe Weather Station	20m (see **Figure 3.2** below)
Small Turbines	26-50m
Hill Farm Wind Turbines	34.4m tip height (see **Figure 3.4** below)
Telecommunications mast (e.g. Hukeley Hill)	30 metres (approx, see **Figure 3.5** below)
Coldharbour Mill Chimney	38.4m (see **Figure 3.6** below)
Standard 'lattice tower' pylons	46.5m (can be higher – see **Figure 3.7**)
Stoodleigh Beacon Radio Mast	50 metres (approx, see **Figure 3.7** below)
Medium Turbine	51-75m
Large Turbine	76-110m
Very Large Turbine	110-150m

Figure 3.1: Very small-scale wind turbines near Newbuildings

Figure 3.2: Cobbacombe Weather Station (20m – equivalent to a very small turbine)

Figure 3.3: Small-scale wind turbine at Hill Farm, Uplowman

Figure 3.4: Coldharbour Mill Chimney (within the same height band as a 'small' turbine)

Figure 3.5: Mast on Hukeley Knap (within same height band as a 'small' turbine)

Figure 3.6: Pylon near Morepath (just under the height of a 'medium' turbine)

Figure 3.7: Mast on Stoodleigh Beacon (just under the height of a 'medium' turbine)

Comparable features for solar PV developments

3.7 Table 3.3 below sets out a similar table for solar PV developments to provide size comparisons.

Table 3.3: Familiar Features as Size Comparators for Solar PV Schemes and Other Features

Feature	Size
Football pitch	0.6-0.8ha
Very Small Solar PV Scheme	**<1ha**
Small Solar PV Scheme	**>1-5ha**
Average size of medieval enclosures based on strip fields	1ha
Medium Solar PV Scheme	**>5-10ha**
Ellicombe Farm Solar Farm	5.81ha (see **Figure 3.9** below)
Large Solar PV Scheme	**>10-15ha**
Typical size of 'modern' field enclosures	5-15ha
Very Large Solar PV Scheme	**>15ha**
Ayshford Court Farm Solar Farm	16.53 ha (see **Figure 3.10** below)

Figure 3.9: Ellicombe Farm Solar Farm, Crediton (in the medium-scale category)

Figure 3.10: Ayshford Court Farm, Westleigh Solar PV site (in the 'very large' category)

Evaluating landscape sensitivity

3.8 There is currently no published method for evaluating the sensitivity of different types of landscape to renewable energy developments. However, the approach taken in this study builds on current guidance published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage including the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance[14] and Topic Paper 6[15] that accompanies the Guidance, as well as LUC's considerable experience from previous and ongoing studies of a similar nature.

3.9 Paragraph 4.2 of Topic Paper 6 states that:

'*Judging landscape character sensitivity requires professional judgement about the degree to which the landscape in question is robust, in that it is able to accommodate change without adverse impacts on character. This involves making decisions about whether or not significant characteristic elements of the landscape will be liable to loss... and whether important aesthetic aspects of character will be liable to change'*

3.10 In this study the following definition of sensitivity has been used, which is based on the principles set out in Topic Paper 6. It is also compliant with the third edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3, 2013) as well as definitions used in other landscape sensitivity studies of this type:

Landscape sensitivity is the extent to which the character and quality of the landscape is susceptible to change as a result of wind energy or solar PV developments.

Assessment criteria

3.11 In line with the recommendations in Topic Paper 6, this landscape sensitivity assessment is based on an assessment of landscape character using carefully defined criteria. Criteria for determining landscape sensitivity to wind energy and field-scale PV development are taken from the DLPG Advice Note No. 2.

3.12 These criteria are based on attributes of the landscape most likely to be affected by each development type. **Table 3.4** sets out the criteria that have been used for the assessment of landscape sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development (of any size); and **Table 3.5** for the assessment of landscape sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development (of any size). It includes guidance and examples for applying the criteria, which are then verified through professional judgement and field verification to apply to the particular landscape in question.

[14] The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland CAX 84

[15] The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2004) Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity.

Table 3.4: Criteria and guidance for assessing landscape sensitivity to wind energy

Landform and scale				
A smooth gently sloping or flat landform is likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than a landscape with a dramatic rugged landform, distinct landform features (including prominent headlands and cliffs) or pronounced undulations. Larger scale landforms are likely to be less sensitive than smaller scale landforms - because turbines may appear out of scale, detract from visually important landforms or appear visually confusing (due to turbines being at varying heights) in the latter types of landscapes. Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; Ordnance Survey basemaps; Topography data (Ordnance Survey Panorama); fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. an extensive lowland flat landscape or elevated plateau, often a larger scale landform	e.g. a simple gently rolling landscape, likely to be a medium-large scale landform	e.g. an undulating landscape, perhaps also incised by valleys, likely to be a medium scale landform	e.g.a landscape with distinct landform features, and/or irregular in topographic appearance (which may be large in scale), or a smaller scale landform	e.g. a landscape with a rugged landform or dramatic landform features (which may be large in scale), or a small scale or intimate landform
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features				
Simple, regular landscapes with extensive areas of consistent ground cover are likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than landscapes with more complex or irregular land cover patterns, smaller and / or irregular field sizes and landscapes with frequent human scale features that are traditional of the landscape, such as stone farmsteads and small farm woodlands[16]. This is because large features such as wind turbines may dominate smaller scale traditional features within the landscape. Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; Ordnance Survey basemaps; Google Earth (aerial photography); fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a very large-scale landscape with uniform groundcover and lacking in human scale features	e.g. a landscape with large-scale fields, little variety in land cover and occasional human scale features such as trees and domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with medium sized fields, some variations in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees, domestic buildings	e.g.a landscape with irregular small-scale fields, variety in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees, domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with a strong variety in land cover and small-scale / irregular in appearance containing numerous human scale features

[16] Human scale features are aspects of land cover such as stone walls, hedges, buildings which give a 'human scale' to the landscape

Tracks / transport pattern

Landscapes that are devoid of tracks will be particularly sensitive to wind energy development because it will be more difficult to absorb permanent new tracks into the landscape without change to character in these areas. In addition, if a Landscape Character Type has a rural road network which contributes to landscape character (e.g. winding narrow lanes bounded by high hedgebanks or sunken lanes), this aspect of character may be affected by access works to enable HGVs carrying turbines to a site. This characteristic therefore also influences sensitivity.

Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; Ordnance survey basemaps showing presence of tracks; fieldwork.

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a landscape containing existing roads and vehicular tracks, and no restrictions in terms of narrow hedged lanes	a landscape containing existing roads and vehicular tracks, and few restrictions in terms of narrow hedged lanes	a landscape containing some existing roads and vehicular tracks, including some restrictions in terms of narrow hedged lanes	a landscape containing few lanes or vehicular tracks, and these are predominantly narrow lanes bounded by high hedgebanks	a landscape devoid of roads or vehicular tracks

Skylines

Prominent and distinctive and/or undeveloped skylines, or skylines with important landmark features, are likely to be more sensitive to wind energy development because turbines may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape, or draw attention away from existing landform or landmark features on skylines. These include the skylines of elevated coastlines and coastal headlands. Important landmark features on the skyline might include historic features or monuments.

Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; fieldwork.

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a large-scale flat or plateau landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are no important landmark features on the skyline	e.g. a large-scale landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are very few landmark features on the skyline – other skylines in adjacent LCTs are more prominent	e.g. a landscape with some prominent skylines, but these are not particularly distinctive. There may be some landmark features on the skyline.	e.g. a landscape with prominent skylines that may form an important backdrop to views from settlements or important viewpoints, and/or with important landmark features	e.g. a landscape comprising prominent or distinctive undeveloped skylines or skylines with particularly important landmark features

Perceptual qualities				
Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil (due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a strong feel of traditional rurality with few modern human influences) tend to increase levels of sensitivity to wind energy development compared to landscapes that contain signs of modern development (as the development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness/ naturalness). Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; CPRE's Tranquillity and Intrusion mapping; Ordnance Survey basemaps (presence / absence of development, settlement, structures).				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity ⟷				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a landscape with much human activity and development such as industrial areas or a port	e.g. a rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development	e.g. a rural landscape with some modern development and human activity	e.g. a more naturalistic landscape and / or one with little modern human influence and development	e.g. a remote or 'wild' landscape with little or no signs of current human activity and development
Historic Landscape Character				
Due to intrinsic historic landscape character significance, or potential for preserved archaeological evidence, historic landscape types (HLTs) such as rough ground with earlier remains, prehistoric fields, watermeadows, and fields with a medieval historic character type such as strip fields, enclosures (strips) and enclosures – medieval have a higher sensitivity to larger scale wind energy development due to their strong historic qualities. Some more recent but discrete enclosed landscapes may also be sensitive, such as 'barton' fields. Lower sensitivity landscapes include industrial landscapes, coniferous plantations, airfields, and post medieval/modern enclosures. Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; Devon HLC.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity ⟷				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. majority of the landscape covered by least sensitive HLTs	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by lower sensitivity HLTs, but may include some small areas of higher sensitivity	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by medium sensitivity HLTs or a mixture of higher and lower sensitivity HLTs	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by higher sensitivity HLTs, but may include some small areas of lower sensitivity	e.g. the majority of the landscape covered by higher sensitivity HLTs

Scenic and special qualities				
Landscapes that have a high scenic quality (which may be recognised as a National Park, Heritage Coast or AONB) will be more sensitive than landscapes of low scenic quality. This is particularly the case where their special qualities (as recorded in the Landscape Character Assessment or designation documents) are likely to be affected by wind energy development. Scenic and special qualities may relate to landscapes that are not designated as well as landscape designated for their natural beauty. Information sources: National Park 'special qualities' and AONB 'Statements of Significance' in Management Plans; Landscape Character Assessment information on 'special qualities and features'.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity ⟷				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. landscape has low scenic quality such as an industrial area or despoiled land – special qualities will not be affected by wind energy development	e.g. landscape has low-medium scenic quality, or special qualities are unlikely to be affected by wind energy development	e.g. landscape has a medium scenic quality and some of the special qualities may be affected by wind energy development	e.g. landscape has a medium-high scenic quality – most of the special qualities are likely to be affected by wind energy development	e.g. area has a high scenic quality (likely to be recognised as National Park/AONB/ Heritage Coast) and the scenic qualities will be affected by wind energy development

Table 3.5: Criteria and guidance for assessing landscape sensitivity to solar PV

Landform				
A flat or gently undulating lowland landscape or extensive plateau is likely to be less sensitive to solar PV development than a landscape with prominent landforms and visible slopes, including coastal headlands. This is because arrays of solar PV panels will be less easily perceived in a flat landscape than on a slope, especially higher slopes. Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; contours from the Ordnance Survey basemaps; Topography data (Ordnance Survey Panorama); fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity ⟷				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a lowland flat landscape or extensive plateau	e.g. a gently undulating lowland landscape or plateau	e.g. an undulating landscape with hidden areas as well as some visible slopes	e.g. a landscape with many prominent, visible slopes or an upland landscape	e.g. very steep landform and exposed, visible slopes
Sense of openness / enclosure				
A landscape with a strong sense of enclosure (e.g. provided by land cover such as woodland or high hedgebanks) is likely to be less sensitive to solar PV development than an open and unenclosed landscape because the development will be less easily perceived, especially at a distance, in an enclosed landscape. Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; Google Earth / aerial photographs; fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity ⟷				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a very well enclosed landscaped – perhaps provided by thick, high hedgebanks and hedgerows, tree belts and woodland	e.g. relatively high levels of enclosure provided by hedgebanks and thick hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees	e.g. a landscape with some open and some more enclosed areas – likely to be a rural landscape with some hedgebanks and hedgerows and tree belts	e.g. an open landscape with little sense of enclosure (low, few or no hedgebanks or hedgerows, few trees)	e.g. an extremely open landscape such as an unenclosed plateau with no field boundaries or trees

Field pattern and scale

Landscapes with small-scale, more irregular field patterns are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of solar PV development than landscapes with large, regular scale field patterns because of the risk of diluting or masking the characteristic landscape patterns. This would be particularly apparent if development takes place across a number of adjacent fields where the field pattern is small and intricate (bearing in mind that the height of panels could exceed that of a hedge/ hedgebank).

Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation; Ordnance survey 1:25K basemap (showing field patterns); Google Earth (aerial photography); fieldwork.

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity ⟷				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a landscape with large-scale, regular fields of mainly modern origin	e.g. a landscape which is mainly defined by large, modern fields	e.g. a landscape with a mixture of large-scale, modern fields and some smaller, more historic enclosure	e.g. a landscape dominated by ancient, small-scale field patterns with a few isolated areas of modern enclosure	e.g. a landscape characterised by small-scale, ancient field patterns

Landcover

Since PV panels introduce a new land cover (of built structures) , landscapes containing existing hard surfacing or built elements (e.g. urban areas, brownfield sites or large-scale horticulture) are likely to be less sensitive to field-scale solar PV development than highly rural or naturalistic landscapes.

Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; Google Earth (aerial photography); fieldwork.

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. an urban or 'brownfield' landscape	e.g. an area of large scale horticulture	e.g. a rural landscape, perhaps with some brownfield sites or urban influences	e.g. a rural landscape , perhaps with some areas of semi-natural land cover	e.g. a landscape dominated by semi-natural land cover

Perceptual qualities

Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil (due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a strong feel of traditional rurality with few modern human influences) tend to increase levels of sensitivity to solar PV development compared to landscapes that contain signs of modern development (as the development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness/ naturalness).

Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; CPRE's Tranquillity and Intrusion mapping; Ordnance Survey basemaps (presence / absence of development, settlement, structures).

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity ⟷				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a landscape with much human activity and development such as industrial areas or a port	e.g. a rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development	e.g. a rural landscape with some modern development and human activity	e.g. a more naturalistic landscape and / or one with little modern human influence and development	e.g. a remote or 'wild' landscape with little or no signs of current human activity and development

Historic Landscape Character

Due to intrinsic historic landscape character significance, or potential for preserved archaeological evidence, historic landscape types (HLTs) such as rough ground with earlier remains, prehistoric fields, watermeadows, and fields with a medieval historic character type such as strip fields, enclosures (strips) and enclosures – medieval have a higher sensitivity to solar development. Some more recent but discrete enclosed landscapes may also be sensitive, such as 'barton' fields. Lower sensitivity landscapes include industrial landscapes, coniferous plantations, airfields, and post medieval/modern enclosures.

Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; Devon HLC.

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity ⟷				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. majority of the landscape covered by least sensitive HLTs	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by lower sensitivity HLTs, but may include some small areas of higher sensitivity	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by medium sensitivity HLTs or a mixture of higher and lower sensitivity HLTs	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by higher sensitivity HLTs, but may include some small areas of lower sensitivity	e.g. the majority of the landscape covered by higher sensitivity HLTs

Scenic and special qualities				
Landscapes that have a high scenic quality (which may be recognised as a National Park, Heritage Coast or AONB) will be more sensitive than landscapes of low scenic quality. This is particularly the case where their special qualities (as recorded in the Landscape Character Assessment or designation documents) are likely to be affected by solar PV development. Scenic and special qualities may relate to landscapes that are not designated as well as landscape designated for their natural beauty. Information sources: National Park 'special qualities' and AONB 'Statements of Significance' in Management Plans; Landscape Character Assessment 'special qualities and features' information.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
landscape has low scenic quality such as an industrial area or despoiled land– special qualities will not be affected by solar PV development	landscape has low-medium scenic quality, or special qualities are unlikely to be affected by solar PV development	landscape has a medium scenic quality and some of the special qualities may be affected by solar PV development	landscape has a medium-high scenic quality – most of the special qualities are likely to be affected by solar PV development	area has a high scenic quality (likely to be recognised as National Park/ AONB/ Heritage Coast) and the scenic qualities will be affected by solar PV development

The discussion on landscape sensitivity

3.13 Once the criteria have been assessed individually, the results are drawn together into a summary discussion on landscape sensitivity to the principle of the renewable energy development for that LCT. These are shown in Chapter 5.

3.14 If one criterion has a particularly strong influence on landscape sensitivity this is drawn out in the discussion (an example might be a landscape with prominent/ dominant skylines, or particularly high levels of tranquillity or remoteness).

3.15 In any given LCT there may be criteria that produce conflicting scores. For example, when considering sensitivity to wind energy development, a settled landscape, while containing greater human influence (indicating a lower sensitivity), will also include more human scale features that could be affected by large-scale wind turbines (indicating a higher sensitivity). Conversely, a more remote landscape will lack the human scale features but is likely to present a higher sensitivity from a perceptual point of view. When considering solar PV development, a landscape with a very small-scale field pattern and with a high sense of enclosure might score lower sensitivity for 'sense of enclosure/openness' but higher for 'field pattern and scale'. These issues are brought out in the overall discussion on landscape sensitivity.

3.16 The sensitivity assessment is not influenced by existing renewable energy developments in the landscape which pre-date this study.

Judging landscape sensitivity to different sizes of development

3.17 The next stage of the assessment is to come to a judgement on landscape sensitivity to different sizes/scales of development (height of wind turbines and size of solar PV development). In the case of wind turbines, notes are also provided in relation to sensitivity to different turbine cluster sizes.

3.18 Sensitivity is judged on a five-point scale as shown in **Table 3.6** below. These sensitivity ratings can apply to any landscape in England – they are not specific to Mid Devon.

Table 3.6: Sensitivity levels and definitions

Sensitivity Level	Definition
High (H)	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly sensitive to change from the type and scale of renewable energy being assessed.
Moderate-High (M-H)	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change from the type and scale of renewable energy being assessed.
Moderate (M)	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change from the type and scale of renewable energy being assessed.
Low-Moderate (L-M)	Few of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change from the type and scale of renewable energy being assessed.
Low (L)	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are robust and are less likely to be adversely affected by the type and scale of renewable energy development being assessed.

Presentation of Results

3.19 The full landscape sensitivity assessments for each of the landscape character types (LCTs) are presented in tabular format in **Chapter 5**. The tables provide:

- A summary description of the LCT against each of the assessment criteria, giving a landscape sensitivity assessment 'score' for each (on the coloured five-point scale as set out in **Table 3.6** above).
- An overall discussion on landscape sensitivity for the LCT.
- Sensitivity ratings for different scales of development (different turbine heights for wind energy development and different areas of panels for solar PV development).
- For wind energy development, a commentary on landscape sensitivity to different cluster sizes.
- A list of key sensitive features/characteristics within the LCT (this comes at the top of the subsequent 'Guidance' section provided at the end of each assessment).

3.20 A summary of the results of the landscape sensitivity assessment is presented and mapped in Chapter 4.

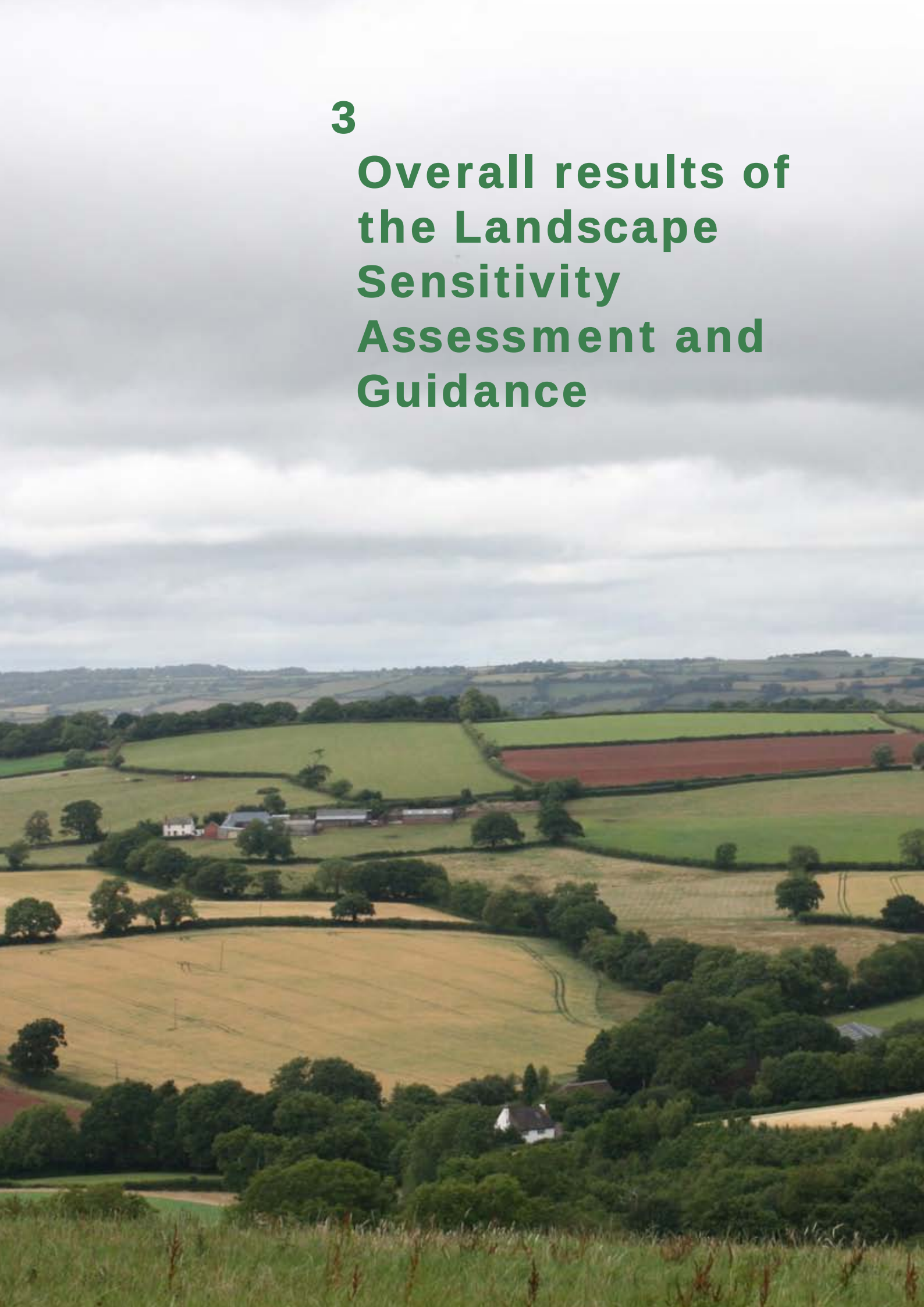
Limitations of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

3.21 While this Landscape Sensitivity Assessment provides an initial indication of the relative landscape sensitivities of different areas to wind energy and solar PV development and guidance for accommodating such developments in Mid Devon's landscape, it should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of a certain location for a particular development. All developments will need to be assessed on their individual merits. It is also unrelated to any Government targets for renewable energy development or studies of technical potential.

3.22 This Landscape Sensitivity Assessment is based on an assessment of landscape character using carefully defined criteria. As with all analyses based upon data and information which is to a greater or lesser extent subjective, some caution is required in its interpretation. This is particularly to avoid the suggestion that certain landscape features or qualities can be absolutely associated with certain sensitivities – the reality is that landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variables (or 'criteria'). We have sought to address this issue in our summary of overall landscape sensitivity given for each LCT – which considers how the criteria-based assessments combine to give an overall sensitivity result for different scales of development within an LCT. Because of the complexity of the criteria, and their subtle interrelationships with each other, we have purposefully not used a numeric scoring system in expressing sensitivity. The assessments are based on professional judgement, taking account of the interplay between criteria, as well as those which might be more important [to landscape character] in a particular LCT.

3.23 It is also worth noting that the assessment does not cover specific ecological issues associated with nature conservation designations or, in the case of wind turbines, bird flight paths; specific cultural heritage/archaeological issues associated with individual designated heritage assets and their settings; visual amenity issues (including residential visual amenity) or impacts on tourism or recreation (or other economic activities); or technical issues, such as the fact that trees and woodland can create turbulence making siting of turbines more difficult. These are all issues that will need to be taken into account in site selection by developers, and when reporting on impacts at the time when individual proposals are being put forward – e.g. through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process (required for proposals more than of local significance).

3 Overall results of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment and Guidance



4 Overall results of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment and Guidance

4.1 **Table 4.1** provides a summary of the overall landscape sensitivity results for wind energy development and solar PV development respectively, across LCTs within Mid Devon District. The full assessment matrices provided in Chapter 5 (which contain specific information relating to different sensitivities within the LCTs) should always be referred to when interpreting the summary tables.

4.2 These overall results are also mapped in **Figures 4.1** to **4.10**. The aim of the maps is to show visually the results of the landscape sensitivity assessment at the LCT level; they aren't intended to illustrate the visual impacts of individual developments on the surrounding landscape. That would need to be undertaken for individual schemes, aided by the use of computer generated 'Zones of Theoretical Visibility' (ZTVs).

Observations on landscape sensitivity across Mid Devon

4.3 Generally the landscapes across Mid Devon are relatively small scale (compared to other parts of the country), highly rural in character and frequently strongly undulating and intricate. In addition, the landscape features that characterise the area are also relatively small in scale, such as historic buildings, church towers, small-scale medieval fields divided by hedgebanks, windblown trees and woodland. This results in the whole district being assessed as being highly sensitive to the largest scales of renewable energy developments – which if introduced are likely to compete with the small scale elements of the landscape that create its existing character. Therefore the sensitivity of the District's landscape becomes progressively higher as you progress through the different sizes of development, as indicated in **Figures 4.1** to **4.10**. In addition, the landscape's frequently narrow, sunken lands bordered by Devon hedges are characteristic features which create a practical constraint to the delivery of large scale turbines to a development site, further increasing sensitivity to larger scale wind energy developments.

4.4 The LCTs in Mid Devon often contain areas of higher and lower sensitivity within them that vary from the overall sensitivity 'score'. It is therefore very important to take note of the content of the individual LCT sensitivity assessments and guidance in Chapter 5 as well as the additional information provided for the relevant Devon Character Areas and guidance on siting and design, both within this assessment for Mid Devon, and the Devon Landscape Policy Group advice note[17].

Landscape sensitivity to wind energy development

4.5 Sensitivity to wind energy and solar PV developments in the District tends to be higher in areas with higher scenic quality. This relates in particular to areas recognised at a national level through AONB and National Park designation (i.e. the Blackdown Hills AONB and Dartmoor National Park), but can equally apply to other areas that are also deemed to have a high scenic quality at a more local, Devon-wide level e.g. areas of 'archetypal' Devon farmland and 'secretive' secluded valleys. It is also important to note the role of parts of the District in providing a rural setting to Exmoor National Park (to the north) and Dartmoor National Park, as depicted previously in Figure 2.3.

4.6 Some LCTs have a slightly lower sensitivity to 'medium' and 'large' scale wind turbines (moderate sensitivity to medium scale turbines up to 75m and moderate-high sensitivity to large scale turbines from 76 to 110 metres high) due to their relatively larger scale landform and land cover patterns compared to other parts of the District. These include:

[17] LUC (June 2013) Devon Landscape Policy Group Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape*. Prepared for the Devon Landscape Policy Group. Available online at http://www.devon.gov.uk/devon-guidance-v6-june-2013-final-report.pdf

- 1F: Farmed Lowland Moorland and Culm Grassland
- 3A: Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes (outside and away from the Blackdown Hills AONB and away from Exmoor National Park)
- 3E: Lowland Plains
- 5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land (outside and away from Dartmoor National Park).

4.7 All LCTs, however, have a high sensitivity to the largest turbines (over 110m to tip).

Landscape sensitivity to solar PV development

4.8 Sensitivity to solar PV development increases with size of development – most LCTs within Mid Devon District have a moderate or low-moderate sensitivity to developments less than 5 hectares in size (therefore within the 'small' or 'very small' categories. The exceptions to this are as follows:

- LCT 1E: Wooded Ridges and Hilltops which has a moderate-high sensitivity to small schemes due to the distinctive and prominent landform of the hills and sensitive tracts of ancient woodland.
- LCT 2A: Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes which is highly sensitivity to any scale of solar PV development.
- LCT 3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes which has a moderate-high sensitivity to 'very small' schemes and a high sensitivity to 'small' schemes due the small scale, 'secretive' character of the landscape and large areas of ancient semi-natural woodland.
- LCT 3H: Secluded Valleys which has a moderate-high sensitivity to very small and small schemes due to the highly tranquil nature of the valleys with prominent slopes and valued scenic qualities.

4.9 In addition, locations within the Blackdown Hills AONB have a moderate-high sensitivity to 'very small' schemes and a high sensitivity to 'small' schemes; and the small area within the Dartmoor National Park (LCT 5A) which has a moderate-high sensitivity to both small and very small schemes.

4.10 Three LCTs have a moderate sensitivity to 'medium' scale developments (5-10ha in size) due to the presence of intensive agricultural production in medium-large fields, as well as areas of modern development. These are LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes, LCT 3E: Lowland Plains and LCT 5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land (outside Dartmoor National Park). These LCT are also the exception to the overall high sensitivity of the District's landscapes to 'large' (10-15 hectare) solar schemes. Although still containing areas of high sensitivity, the three LCTs are assessed as being of 'moderate-high' sensitivity to this scale of scheme. Overall though, the relatively small scale and highly rural character of the majority of the district results in large parts of the landscape being highly sensitive to solar PV developments over 10 hectares in size.

Areas of sensitive historic landscape character

4.11 In addition, areas within the LCTs which include sensitive Historic Landscape Types (HLTs) – namely areas of rough ground, ancient woodland, other woodland, watermeadows, park and garden and orchards (as shown in Figure 2.2) have a higher sensitivity to both wind energy development and solar PV development, as set out in the individual LCT assessments. The Council holds the GIS data for the Historic Landscape Types which can be queried at a site level to provide further fine-grained locational information on the presence of these sensitive HLTs.

Intervisibility between LCTs

4.12 The guidance provided at the end of each LCT assessment in the next chapter provides reference, where relevant, to views within and between the different LCTs at the Devon Character Area level that need to be borne in mind when siting development. This outlines the importance of not considering each LCT assessment in isolation; that a full picture of landscape sensitivity needs to be drawn from all of the relevant information for the site in question.

Interpretation of the landscape sensitivity assessment results

4.13 While the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment provides an initial indication of the relative landscape sensitivities within the District of different areas to wind energy and solar PV development, it should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of a certain location for a particular development. It is not a replacement for detailed studies for specific siting and design and all developments will need to be assessed on their individual merits, taking account of all material considerations. It is also unrelated to any Government targets for renewable energy development or studies of technical potential.

Guidance for accommodating wind energy and solar PV development across LCTs

4.14 The scale and spatial pattern of development that might be accommodated within an LCT will be informed by the guidance for wind energy development/ solar PV development set out in the tables in Chapter 5. These judgements are based on the results of the landscape sensitivity assessment. The guidance on accommodating multiple developments is informed by the degree to which a particular Landscape Character Type is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type[18]. However, as expressed above, each development proposal will need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

Guidance for wind energy development

4.15 For wind energy, the guidance for development included for each LCT suggests that – in general - single or small clusters of turbines will be most appropriate in the Mid Devon landscape. Scale of turbines will be dependent upon the scale of the landscape and multiple developments within the same LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. In many LCTs there may be opportunities for very small or small scale turbines associated with farm buildings (aiming for consistent scale and design of on-farm turbines) as well as occasional larger turbines either single or, in larger scale landscapes, in small groups (aiming for consistent scale and design of these larger schemes), and maintaining a distinct hierarchy between these two scales of turbine. In some of the larger scale landscapes it may be preferable to have fewer larger wind turbines than many small ones to avoid significant cumulative impacts and visual confusion. Guidance provided in the Devon Landscape Policy Group advice note[19] should be referred to in relation to assessing the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes.

4.16 The overall aim should be to make sure that wind energy developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape of the LCT or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscapes of Mid Devon.

Guidance for solar PV development

4.17 For solar PV development the guidance for development included for each LCT suggests that, generally, the most suitable forms of solar PV development will be up those of up to 10 hectares in size located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes. Multiple developments within the same LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. Existing screening features should be used to screen these developments and the overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape of the

[18] The Countryside Agency and SNH Topic Paper 6: Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity (2002) states that *"Landscape capacity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed".*

[19] LUC (June 2013) Devon Landscape Policy Group Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape*. Prepared for the Devon Landscape Policy Group. Available online at http://www.devon.gov.uk/devon-guidance-v6-june-2013-final-report.pdf

LCT or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of the landscapes of Mid Devon. Reference to the guidance provided in the Devon Landscape Policy Group advice note (referenced above) should also be referred to when considering landscapes with multiple solar PV developments.

Areas within the Blackdown Hills AONB and Dartmoor National Park

4.18 In the Blackdown Hills AONB and Dartmoor National Park wind energy development should generally be limited to very occasional 'very small'-scale single wind turbines (i.e. up to 25 metres to tip) linked to existing buildings (e.g. farm buildings) and solar PV development limited to very occasional 'very small' scale (less than 1 ha) solar PV arrays. This is to ensure conservation of the natural beauty for which these areas are nationally recognised.

Table 4.1: Overall results of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessments for wind and solar PV in the District's LCTs

Landscape Character Type	Landscape Sensitivity for Wind Energy Development		Landscape Sensitivity for Solar PV Development	
LCT 1A: Open Inland Planned Plateaux (100% in the AONB)	Very small (15-25m)	**M-H**[20]	Very small (<1 ha)	**M**
	Small (26-50m)	**H**	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**
	Medium (51-75m)	**H**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M-H**
	Large (76-110m)	**H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very large (111-150m)	**H**	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**
LCT 1E: Wooded Ridges and Hilltops				
	Very small (15-25m)	**M**	Very small (<1 ha)	**M**
	Small (26-50m)	**M-H**	Small (>1-5ha)	**M-H**
	Medium (51-75m)	**M-H**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (76-110m)	**H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very Large (115-150)	**H**	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**
LCT 1F: Farmed Lowland Moorland and Culm Grassland				
	Very small (15-25m)	**L-M**	Very small (<1 ha)	**M**
	Small (26-50m)	**M**	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**
	Medium (51-75m)	**M**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M-H**
	Large (76-110m)	**M-H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very large (111-150m)	**H**	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**
LCT 2A: Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes (100% in the AONB)				
	Very small (15-25m)	**H**	Very small (<1 ha)	**H**
	Small (26-50m)	**H**	Small (>1-5ha)	**H**
	Medium (51-75m)	**H**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (76-110m)	**H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very large (111-150m)	**H**	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**

[20] See Table 3.6 for the key to the colouring system.

Landscape Character Type	Landscape Sensitivity for Wind Energy Development				Landscape Sensitivity for Solar PV Development			
	Land outside the AONB		Land within the AONB		Land outside the AONB		Land within the AONB	
LCT 3A: Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes (11% in the AONB)	Very small (15-25m)	L-M	Very small (15-25m)	M-H	Very small (<1 ha)	L-M	Very small (<1 ha)	M-H
	Small (26-50m)	M	Small (26-50m)	H	Small (>1-5ha)	M	Small (>1-5ha)	H
	Medium (51-75m)	M	Medium (51-75m)	H	Medium (>5-10ha)	M-H	Medium (>5-10ha)	H
	Large (76-110m)	M-H	Large (76-110m)	H	Large (>10-15ha)	H	Large (>10-15ha)	H
	Very large (111-150m)	H	Very large (111-150m)	H	Very Large (>15ha)	H	Very Large (>15ha)	H
LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes (2% in the AONB)	Land outside the AONB		Land within the AONB		Land outside the AONB		Land within the AONB	
	Very small (15-25m)	L-M	Very small: (<1 ha)	M-H	Very small: (<1 ha)	L-M	Very small: (<1 ha)	M-H
	Small (26-50m)	M	Small (>1-5ha)	H	Small (>1-5ha)	L-M	Small (>1-5ha)	H
	Medium (51-75m)	M-H	Medium (>5-10ha)	H	Medium (>5-10ha)	M	Medium (>5-10ha)	H
	Large (76-110m)	H	Large (>10-15ha)	H	Large (>10-15ha)	M-H	Large (>10-15ha)	H
	Very large (111-150m)	H	Very large (111-150m)	H	Very Large (>15ha)	H	Very Large (>15ha)	H
LCT 3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors (3% in the AONB)	Land outside the AONB		Land within the AONB		Land outside the AONB		Land within the AONB	
	Very small (15-25m)	M-H	Very small: (<1 ha)	H	Very small: (<1 ha)	L-M	Very small (<1 ha)	M-H
	Small (26-50m)	M-H	Small (>1-5ha)	H	Small (>1-5ha)	M	Small (>1-5ha)	H
	Medium (51-75m)	M-H	Medium (>5-10ha)	H	Medium (>5-10ha)	H	Medium (>5-10ha)	H
	Large (76-110m)	H	Large (>10-15ha)	H	Large (>10-15ha)	H	Large (>10-15ha)	H
	Very large (111-150m)	H	Very large (111-150m)	H	Very Large (>15ha)	H	Very Large (>15ha)	H
LCT 3E: Lowland Plains								
	Very small (<1 ha)			L-M	Very small (<1 ha)			M
	Small (>1-5ha)			M	Small (>1-5ha)			M
	Medium (>5-10ha)			M	Medium (>5-10ha)			M
	Large (76-110m)			M-H	Large (>10-15ha)			M-H
	Very large (111-150m)			H	Very Large (>15ha)			H

Landscape Character Type	Landscape Sensitivity for Wind Energy Development				Landscape Sensitivity for Solar PV Development			
LCT 3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes	Very small (15-25m)			**M-H**	Very small (<1 ha)			**M-H**
	Small (26-50m)			**H**	Small (>1-5ha)			**H**
	Medium (51-75m)			**H**	Medium (>5-10ha)			**H**
	Large (76-110m)			**H**	Large (>10-15ha)			**H**
	Very large (111-150m)			**H**	Very Large (>15ha)			**H**
LCT 3H: Secluded Valleys								
	Very small (15-25m)			**M-H**	Very small (<1 ha)			**M-H**
	Small (26-50m)			**M-H**	Small (>1-5ha)			**M-H**
	Medium (51-75m)			**H**	Medium (>5-10ha)			**H**
	Large (76-110m)			**H**	Large (>10-15ha)			**H**
	Very large (111-150m)			**H**	Very Large (>15ha)			**H**
LCT 5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land (5% in Dartmoor National Park)	**Land outside the NP**		**Land within the NP**		**Land outside the NP**		**Land within the NP**	
	Very small (15-25m)	**M**	Very small (15-25m)	**M-H**	Very small (<1 ha)	**M**	Very small (<1 ha)	**M-H**
	Small (26-50m)	**M**	Small (26-50m)	**M-H**	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**	Small (>1-5ha)	**M-H**
	Medium (51-75m)	**M**	Medium (51-75m)	**H**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (76-110m)	**M-H**	Large (76-110m)	**H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**M-H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very large (111-150m)	**H**	Very large (111-150m)	**H**	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 4.1

Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development
Very Small (15-25m)

Mid Devon District Boundary

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks

Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Very Small Wind Energy Developments

- Low - Moderate
- Moderate
- Moderate - High
- High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5743-01_006_Fig4_1_VerySmall_Wind_LandSensitivity 09/08/2013

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 4.2

Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development
Small (26-50m)

Mid Devon District Boundary

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks

Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

1A : Open inland planned plateaux
1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
3E : Lowland plains
3G : River valley slopes and combes
3H : Secluded valleys
5A : Inland elevated undulating land
7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Small Wind Energy Developments

Moderate
Moderate - High
High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5743-01_007_Fig4_2_Small_Wind_LandSensitivity 09/08/2013

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 4.3

Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development
Medium (51-75m)

Mid Devon District Boundary

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks

Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Medium Wind Energy Developments

- Moderate
- Moderate - High
- High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

0 2 4 km

LUC LDN 5743-01_008_Fig4_3_Medium_Wind_LandSensitivity_Rev1 09/08/2013

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 4.4

Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development
Large (76-110m)

Mid Devon District Boundary

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks

Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Large Wind Energy Developments

- Moderate - High
- High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 4.5

Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development
Very Large (111-150m)

Mid Devon District Boundary

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks

Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

1A : Open inland planned plateaux
1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
3E : Lowland plains
3G : River valley slopes and combes
3H : Secluded valleys
5A : Inland elevated undulating land
7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Very Large Wind Energy Developments

High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

0 2 4 km

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 4.6

Landscape Sensitivity to Solar PV Development
Very Small (less than1ha)

Mid Devon District Boundary

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks

Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Very Small Solar PV Developments

- Low - Moderate
- Moderate
- Moderate - High
- High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5743-01_011_Fig4_6_VerySmall_SPV_LandSensitivity 09/08/2013

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 4.7

Landscape Sensitivity to Solar PV Development
Small (1-5ha)

Mid Devon District Boundary

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks

Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

1A : Open inland planned plateaux
1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
3E : Lowland plains
3G : River valley slopes and combes
3H : Secluded valleys
5A : Inland elevated undulating land
7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Small Solar PV Developments

Low - Moderate
Moderate
Moderate - High
High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

0 2 4 km

LUC LDN 5743-01_011_Fig4_7_Small_SPV_LandSensitivity 09/08/2013

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 4.8

Landscape Sensitivity to Solar PV Development
Medium (5-10ha)

Mid Devon District Boundary

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks

Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Medium Solar PV Developments

- Moderate
- Moderate - High
- High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5743-01_013_Fig4_8_Medium_SPV_LandSensitivity 09/08/2013

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 4.9

Landscape Sensitivity to Solar PV Development
Large (10-15ha)

Mid Devon District Boundary

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks

Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

1A : Open inland planned plateaux
1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
3E : Lowland plains
3G : River valley slopes and combes
3H : Secluded valleys
5A : Inland elevated undulating land
7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Large Solar PV Developments

Moderate - High
High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

0 2 4 km

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Figure 4.10

Landscape Sensitivity to Solar PV Development
Very Large (greater than 15ha)

Mid Devon District Boundary

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks

Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

1A : Open inland planned plateaux
1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
3E : Lowland plains
3G : River valley slopes and combes
3H : Secluded valleys
5A : Inland elevated undulating land
7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Very Large Solar PV Developments

High

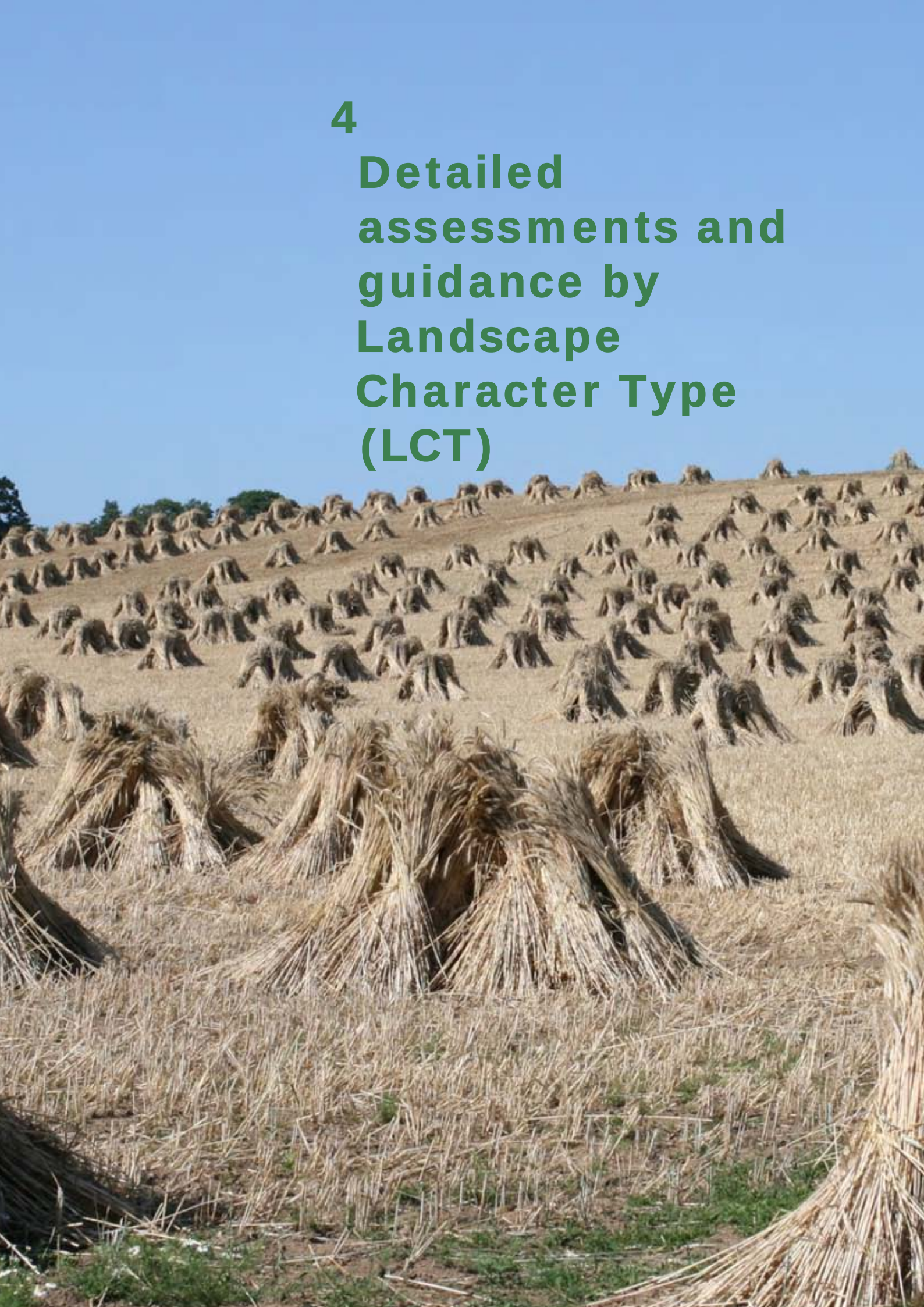
Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

4

Detailed assessments and guidance by Landscape Character Type (LCT)



5 Detailed assessments and guidance by Landscape Character Type (LCT)

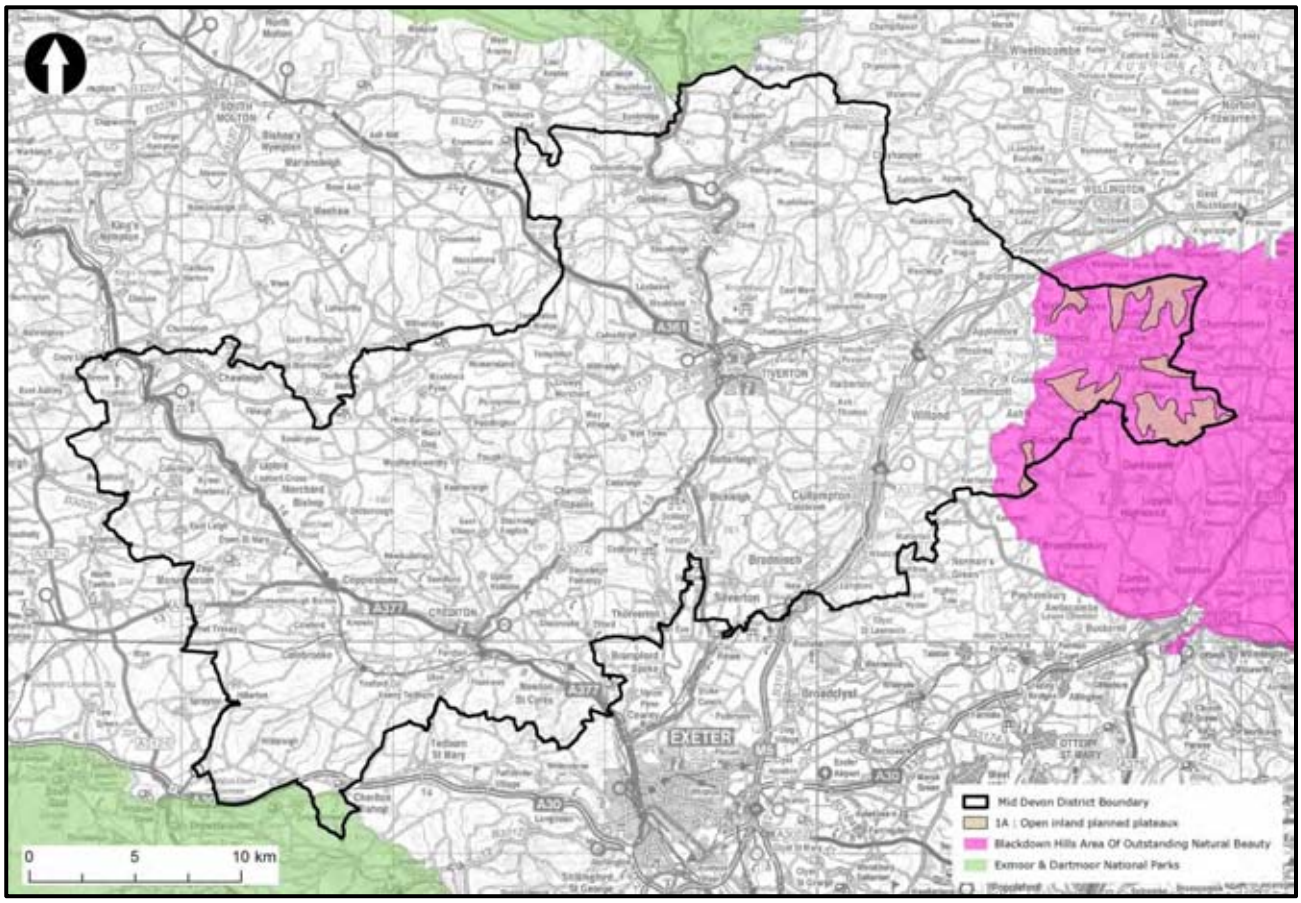
5.1 This Chapter contains the Landscape Sensitivity Assessments and Guidance tailored to each of the eleven Landscape Character Types (LCTs) found within Mid Devon District. Each document includes the following:

- A location map of the LCT as it occurs in Mid Devon.
- A list of the Devon Character Areas the LCT is found within (in the District).
- Key landscape characteristics taken from the Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment (2011)
- Landscape sensitivity assessment results for wind energy development
- Key sensitivities and guidance for development for wind energy development
- Landscape sensitivity assessment results for solar PV development
- Key sensitivities and guidance for development for solar PV development

5.2 The LCTs are arranged in numeric order, starting with 1A: Open Inland Planned Plateaux.

LCT 1A: Open Inland Planned Plateaux

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 06: Blackdown Hills

Key Landscape Characteristics[21]

- High open flat plateaux.
- A simple landscape type that has an open character with a strong sense of agrarian land use and a strong cultural history with traditional settlement patterns that are dispersed with isolated buildings and farms typical of the type.
- The main agricultural activity is the grazing of stock on pastoral improved pasture, with little arable use evident. There is some cultivation of land in rotation with ley grassland, supporting mixed farming patterns.
- Hedges are mature and thick, cut low forming medium to large scale irregular field patterns. The hedges are predominantly Beech planted on narrow earth banks and sparsely scattered hedgerow trees.
- Fields are medium to large in size, rectangular in shape, indicating 19th century enclosure of former common land, with some unenclosed areas and relic commons (now copses) and small conifer plantations.
- Some of the fields are vast with fencing as a field boundary feature between fields, suggesting field amalgamation has taken place in the past. There is a uniform appearance due to the regular field pattern and lack of woodland.
- Distinctive elements include windswept trees isolated in the landscape with some isolated discrete deciduous woodland.
- Extensive views of a large scale landscape with unified patterns where views allow, enclosed where hedgerows are high on narrow roads.
- There is a relatively sudden change to steeper valley slopes.
- This landscape tends to be devoid of much settlement with isolated houses and farms, small hamlets the dominant settlement size.
- Historically settlements have been infrequently developed in this landscape. Where they do occur it is limited to isolated farmsteads and occasional clusters of buildings usually at crossroads. There is a sense of exposure and prior to enclosure in the 19th century this would have been wild and remote.
- Traditional building materials are chert and thatch with some modern brick development representing 20th century development. Traditional farms are often of great antiquity and are listed buildings.
- Roads are straight and generally follow the plateau tops with wide grass verges with drains, with minor roads at right-angled junctions, winding and narrowing towards the plateau edge.
- Some of the most impressive and long-distance views afforded in the district across the landscape are seen from the edges of this type, although these may be obscured in places by woodland on the adjoining scarp slopes.
- The landscape is exposed to the prevailing wind and has an exposed and isolated character. Any localised enclosure by the hedge pattern has only a limited reduction to this open character, particularly as most of the hedges are laid or tightly trimmed.

12% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within South Somerset, Taunton Deane and East Devon districts.

[21] [21] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind Energy Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform and scale		L-M			
	A medium to large-scale gently rolling plateaux. The LCT comprises an elevated landform, varying between 210 and283m AOD.				
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features			M		
	A strongly agricultural landscape with medium to large scale regular field patterns enclosed by low thick hedgebanks. Land cover is dominated by pasture fields interspersed by occasional arable cultivation, relic commons (copses) and small conifer plantations. Very large fields enclosed by fencing are present in certain areas. Human scale features include occasional buildings, farmsteads, small hamlets, hedgerows, trees and woodland blocks.				
Tracks / transport pattern			M		
	Long straight roads lined by wide grass verges and hedges are present on plateaux. Minor roads are more winding and narrow in character and are bound by low hedges.				
Skylines			M		
	Wide and extensive skylines devoid of development and few features apart from isolated windswept trees and the occasional Triangulation pillars and communication masts. Important historical landmark features include the Culmstock Beacon, Wellington Monument (just outside the District boundary). The elevated plateaux form the backdrop to long distant viewsfrom across the Blackdown Hills and beyond the district boundary.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	This is a strongly rural landscape with some naturalistic areas (common land and rough ground). There is a lack of modern development, resulting in high levels of tranquillity and remoteness. In localised areas where there are recreation facilities and a disused military airfield some intrusion and disturbance will be experienced.				
Historic landscape character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that the majority of the landscape type is made up of post–medieval enclosure (29%), modern enclosure (18%) and airfield (3%) - generally of lower sensitivity to wind energy development. However there are areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (27%) as well as smaller areas of rough ground, medieval enclosure and Barton fields – all of which have a higher sensitivity.				
Scenic and special qualities	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	All of this LCT falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is nationally designated for its scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes; and long views over field patterned landscape. Some of these may be affected by wind energy development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the medium to large scale gently rolling landform with medium to large-scale post-medieval and modern enclosure might indicate lower sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development, the presence of human-scale features, narrow winding roads, undeveloped skylines, high levels of tranquillity and remoteness increase its sensitivity. As well as the above, the landscape's high scenic quality (recognised through AONB designation), and particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns and pictures (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of Significance') also increases sensitivity to wind energy development.				

Sensitivity to different turbine heights	Very Small (15-25m)	**M-H**
	Small (26-50m)	**H**
	Medium (51-75m)	**H**
	Large (76-110m)	**H**
	Very large (111-150m)	**H**
	The high scenic quality (recognised through AONB designation) along with the presence of human-scale features, narrow winding roads and undeveloped skylines means that this LCT would be highly sensitive to all but the smallest turbines.	
Commentary on different cluster sizes Single turbine Small (<5 turbines) Medium (6-10) Large (11-25) Very large (>25)	The high scenic quality (recognised through AONB designation) along with the presence of human-scale features, narrow winding roads and undeveloped skylines means that this LCT would be highly sensitive to any clusters of wind turbines.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 1A Open Inland Planned Plateaux LCT in relation to wind energy development is included below:

- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and long views over a diverse landscape patterns.
- Minor winding and narrow roads flanked by low hedgebanks that could be affected by delivery of turbines.
- Extensive undeveloped skylines with important historic landmarks, which form the backdrop to views from within and landscapes neighbouring the LCT.
- A lack of modern development contributing to the high levels of tranquillity and remoteness.
- The presence of sensitive historic land cover types including medieval enclosures, Barton fields and rough ground.

Permitted development in the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV development is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are two permitted wind energy developments in this LCT: a 6kW domestic wind turbine on a 9m mast at Graddage Farm and two turbines on 12m masts at Great Garlandhayes. Both schemes comprise turbines within the 'very small' size category and are located in close proximity to each other within DCA 06: Blackdown Hills.

Guidance for Development

In Mid Devon District, this LCT falls entirely within the Blackdown Hills AONB. The landscape will be highly sensitive to anything other than 'very small' single turbines, usually associated with farm buildings.

Multiple developments of on-farm turbines within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of, siting, style of turbine and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT.

When siting and designing wind energy developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 2 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Delivery of turbines does not adversely impact on the narrow roads flanked by low hedgebanks.
- Turbines do not detract from important historic landmarks on skylines.
- Turbines are linked to existing development and do not adversely affect the high levels of tranquillity and remoteness associated with this landscape.
- Turbines and their ancillary development do not adversely affect the historic integrity of medieval enclosures, Barton fields and rough ground.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and long views over a diverse landscape patterns, are conserved.

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas
This LCT falls entirely within DCA 06: Blackdown Hills therefore all of the guidance above applies to this area.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform		L-M			
	A medium to large-scale gently rolling plateaux. The LCT comprises an elevated landform, varying between 210 and283m AOD.				
Sense of openness / enclosure				M-H	
	The elevated rolling plateaux in combination with low hedgebanks, sparsely scattered hedgerow trees and lack of modern development heightens levels of openness, although some enclosure exists where woodland is present.				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	A diverse mix of field patterns with areas of modern and post-medieval enclosure, medieval enclosures based on strip fields and Barton fields. Generally the scale of the field pattern is medium to large, although areas of medieval fields are small-scale .				
Land cover				M-H	
	Strongly agricultural landscape dominated by pasture with small areas of arable farming, conifer plantations, relict commons (now copses), small ponds and rough ground. Relatively small areas of the LCT are occupied by a disused airfield at Smeatharpe and a recreation area. There are also a few scattered farmsteads, building clusters and isolated hamlets.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	This is a strongly rural landscape with some naturalistic areas (relict common land and rough ground). There is a lack of modern development, resulting in high levels of tranquillity and remoteness. These qualities are reduced in the locality around the disused military airfield and recreation area.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that the majority of the LCT is made up of post–medieval enclosure (29%), modern enclosure (18%) and airfield (3%) - generally of lower sensitivity to solar PV development. However there are areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (27%) as well as smaller areas of rough ground, medieval enclosure and Barton fields which have a higher sensitivity.				
Scenic and special qualities	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	All of this LCT falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is nationally designated for its scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes; and long views over field patterned landscape.. Some of these may be affected by solar PV development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the medium to large scale gently rolling landform and presence of hedges, woodland blocks and former airfield might indicate lower sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development, the high levels of openness, remaining sensitive field patterns, strong agricultural and tranquil character increases the LCT's sensitive. As well as the above the high scenic quality of the area (recognised through AONB designation), and particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') increases sensitivity to solar PV development.				
Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)	**M**			
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**			
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M-H**			
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**			
	Very large (>15ha)	**H**			

	The sense of openness, isolation and tranquil rural character and high scenic quality (recognised through AONB designation) means that this LCT would be highly sensitive to any scale solar PV developments larger than 'small' in scale.

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 1A Open Planned Plateaux LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character.
- Areas of sensitive small-scale medieval enclosures, rough ground and Barton fields.
- Its open character affording long views across the plateaux.
- An overriding lack of modern development and high levels of tranquillity and remoteness.

Permitted development in the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV development is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are currently no permitted solar energy developments in this LCT.

Guidance for Development

In Mid Devon District, this LCT falls entirely within the Blackdown Hills AONB. The landscape will be highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha). Even small developments should be located behind existing Devon hedges or in areas of existing development so that they do not affect the open undeveloped character of the landscape.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

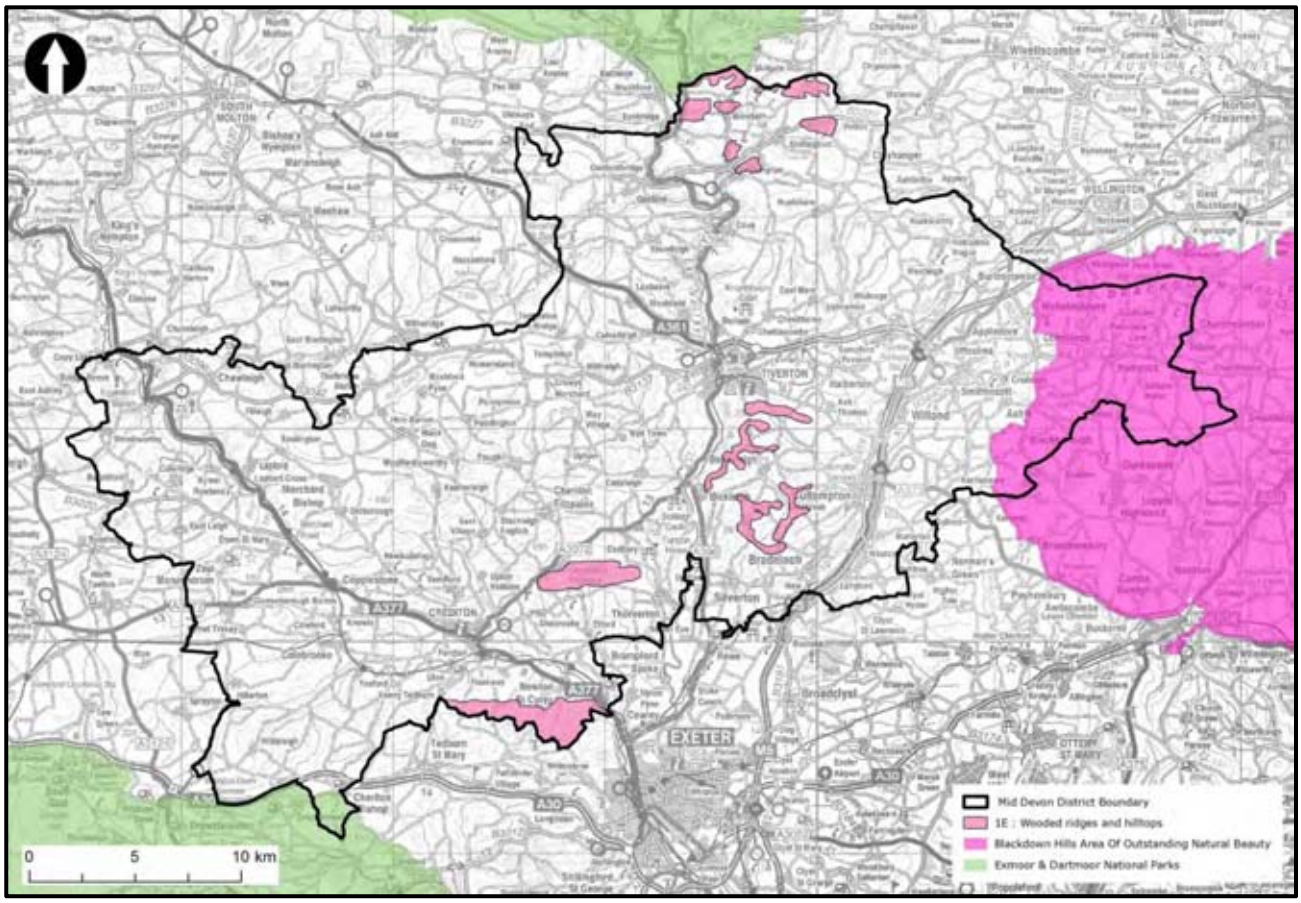
- Solar PV developments do not affect the historic integrity of small-scale medieval enclosures or Barton fields, and do not cover areas of rough ground.
- Developments are sited so that they do not affect the open character of the plateaux.
- Solar PV developments do not detract from the high levels of tranquillity and remoteness and apparent lack of modern development.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character, are retained.

Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas

This LCT falls entirely within DCA 06: Blackdown Hills therefore all of the guidance above applies to this area.

LCT 1E: Wooded Ridges and Hilltops

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs

DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland

DCA 16: Cullompton Rolling Farmland

DCA 24: Exe Valley

DCA 25: Exeter Slopes & Hills

DCA 26: Exmoor Fringe

Key Landscape Characteristics[22]

- This elevated, strongly undulating plateau, covers a wide range in heights over a small area and is some of the most undulating and steepest land in the district.
- The landform of the Knaps contrasts with the hills found elsewhere in the district due to their straight-sided nature, which makes the hills look conical.
- The landform is characterised by high, rounded land that is either exposed flattish or gently rolling. The slopes of these undulations are shallow and smooth with a ridge top that is narrow and rounded in form. The narrow nature of these areas means that in the main they only flatten sufficiently to form a small-scale plateau top that is not extensive enough to be perceived as a tableland. The plateau has a number of additional fingers of ridge extending above the valley heads that have carved into the land mass.
- This steeply sloping land is sometimes characterised with streams. These springs emerge from the upper slopes forming brooks and have a meandering form.
- Deciduous woodland and coniferous plantations are often the dominant land cover as in Newton Woods, Coombland Wood and Whipshill Wood south of Newton St Cyres. Stockleigh Wood is a large-scale coniferous plantation at the south-western tip of Raddon Hills. These woodlands and plantations can be dominating features creating a strong sense of enclosure.
- Whipshill Wood and patches of woodland on Raddon Hills are ancient woodlands dating back to at least 1600 AD and are habitats described as an irreplaceable natural resource.
- Remaining land is managed as ley grassland and tends to occur on the lower gentler slopes or on the higher land close to the plateau where again the slopes are gentler.
- Fields are medium to large scale, irregularly shaped improved and cultivated. Thick trimmed hedgerows are the dominant field boundary with some hedgebanks and ditches present. Large mature trees are typically found in the hedgerows and hedgebanks.
- There are enclaves of bracken and gorse, particularly within the large-scale woodland blocks and on field margins and within hedges.
- On the upper slopes a spine hedge is common being divided into 'ribs' along its length, to form regular parallel pairs of fields bounded on the lower side by a continuous hedge circling the hills. This main ridge-hedge is frequently defined by a double-hedged track way.
- There is a general lack of buildings in this landscape, with the exception of a few isolated houses and cottages. Very few modern buildings are present.
- Straight roads following the ridge-tops are a characteristic feature of this landscape type, but winding narrow roads are dominant. Forestry tracks meander through the plantations and woods, some of which have public access. Mostly public rights of way are infrequent within the landscape, limiting views from the majority of the type.
- This is a relatively remote area with an abundance of thatched rendered cob dwellings in isolation, with some stone.
- When well-wooded there are almost no long views within or out of this landscape. However the Knaps and Raddon Hills form prominent local landmarks and afford long extensive views.
- Recreational uses associated with forestry are often evident where woodland is prevalent.

44% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within East Devon and Teignbridge districts.

[22] [22] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind Energy Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity
Landform and scale	M-H Distinct landform of steeply undulating hills with small-scale plateau tops and narrow ridges. This is one of the most undulating and steepest landscapes in Mid Devon; the Knaps are of particular importance due to their steep sided nature and distinctly 'conical' shape. This is a relatively small-scale landform, compared to other landscape of Mid Devon, with a varied elevation between 100-297m AOD.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	M A medium to large-scale, varied land cover pattern including a mixture of ley grassland and woodland (deciduous and coniferous). There are also small patches of more naturalistic land cover including areas of bracken and gorse. Human scale features within the landscape include hedgebanks, hedgerows, trees and blocks of deciduous and coniferous woodland. The area is sparsely settled, with a few isolated houses and cottages scattered across the landscape.
Tracks / transport pattern	M-H The landscape contains few existing roads and tracks. Where present, roads on the ridge-tops (e.g.B3190) are straight with grass verges. Narrow lanes plunging down hillsides are winding and tightly enclosed by hedgerows.
Skylines	M-H The 'conical' hills and rounded ridges are predominately undeveloped and frequently marked by woodland, landmark mature tree specimens and large hedgerow trees. The Knaps and Raddon Hills in particular are recognised as prominent local landmarks in their own right, with summits often marked by triangulation pillars. Transmitters at Hukeley Knap and Gogwell form prominent man-made features on the skyline.
Perceptual qualities	M-H A remote, rural landscape which has areas of perceived naturalness with low levels of development contributing to high levels of tranquillity. The LCT is densely wooded in places which adds to its naturalistic character.
Historic landscape character	M 39% of the LCT is classified as modern enclosure and 13% as post-medieval enclosure, indicating lower sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development. In addition, 15% is woodland, with smaller areas (17%) of medieval enclosure based on strip fields, and Barton fields (13%), indicating a higher sensitivity. Very small areas of rough ground would be highly sensitive to the development of wind turbines.
Scenic and special qualities	M-H Although this landscape is not designated at the national level for its scenic quality, the Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment recognises its scenic quality. Special qualities which might be affected by wind energy development include areas of deciduous woodland; isolated, tranquil character created through the lack of buildings and modern development; distinctive hedgerow pattern, including on ridgetops; and exceptional views of the surrounding countryside, sometimes as far as Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Exe Estuary. Part of the LCT is immediately adjacent to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include: it being a timeless landscape mostly free from intrusive development, striking views inside and out of the National Park, and its sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity. These special qualities might be highly sensitive to development within adjacent areas and should be considered in any proposals.
Discussion on landscape	Although the medium to large-scale land cover pattern and large areas of modern and post-medieval enclosures, may indicate a lower sensitivity to wind energy development, the distinct landform with prominent skylines

sensitivity	(particularly the Knaps and Raddon Hills), narrow, winding and tightly hedged roads plunging down slopes, low levels of development and remote and tranquil qualities increase sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development.	
Sensitivity to different turbine heights	Very Small (15-25m)	**M**
	Small (26-50m)	**M-H**
	Medium (51-75m)	**M-H**
	Large (76-110m)	**H**
	Very large (111-150m)	**H**
	Due to the small-scale of the landform, the distinctiveness and visual prominence of the hilltops and ridges on skylines, human-scale features, narrow winding roads and rural and tranquil character this LCT is highly sensitive to 'large' and 'very' large heights of turbines.	
Commentary on different cluster sizes Single turbine Small (<5 turbines) Medium (6-10) Large (11-25) Very large (>25)	The relatively small-scale landscape and distinctive visually prominent landform and skylines, presence of human-scale features, narrow winding roads and rural and tranquil character means this LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to any clusters of wind turbines.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 1E Wooded Ridges and Hilltops LCT in relation to wind energy development is included below:

- The distinctive landform of steeply undulating hills (particularly the Knaps and Raddon Hills) with narrow ridges and conical tops forming local landmarks and prominent skylines.
- Areas of small-scale medieval field enclosures and intact hedgebanks and hedgerow field boundaries.
- The feelings of remoteness and tranquillity due to a lack of modern development and settlement.
- The narrow, winding lanes often plunging steeply down hillsides, which may be vulnerable to change as a result of delivering turbines.
- Areas of ancient woodland at Whipshill Wood and Raddon Hill which contribute to the perceived naturalness of the landscape.
- Locations within close proximity to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include striking views out of the protected landscape and a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. This shows that there are currently no permitted wind energy developments in this LCT.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT has moderate sensitivity to very small turbines (under 25m to tip), moderate-high sensitivity to small and medium size turbines (between 26 and 75m), and a high sensitivity to any large or very large turbines (over 75m in height). This high sensitivity is due to the small-scale of the landform, the distinctiveness and visual prominence of the hilltops and ridges on skylines, human-scale features, narrow winding roads and rural and tranquil character the LCT.

This analysis indicates that this landscape would be particularly sensitive to any turbines greater than 'very small' in scale and is unlikely to be able to accommodate turbines greater than 75m. Where possible, any single turbines should be associated with existing buildings and be of a similar scale and design (in terms of size and form) to maintain a simple image and design response within the LCT.

The overall aim should be to make sure that wind turbines do not become a key characteristic of the landscape of the LCT and that it is the distinctive landform of the hills themselves that draw the eye.

When siting and designing wind energy developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 2 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- The distinctive landform of the conical hills that form local landmarks draw the eye (particularly the Knaps and Raddon Hills) and turbines do not detract from this.
- Development does not result in loss of intact hedgebanks/ hedgerow field boundaries, and does not affect historic integrity of the small-scale medieval field

enclosures.

- The feelings of remoteness and tranquillity due to a lack of modern development and settlement are maintained.
- The character of the narrow, winding lanes often plunging steeply down hillsides, is maintained.
- Areas of ancient woodland at Whipshill Wood and Raddon Hill are miantained.
- Wind energy development does not adversely affect the sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity associated with the Exmoor National Park, or unacceptably impact on the striking views from the National Park into the district.

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. For DCAs 02: Bampton and Beer Downs and 26: Exmoor Fringe, special attention will be required to ensure development does not adversely affect the remote, wild and tranquil qualities of Exmoor National Park, and does not unacceptably impact on the striking views into Mid Devon from the National Park.

The profiles of the hills in DCAs 02: Bampton and Beer Downs and DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland are particularly distinctive. Therefore any wind turbine development would need to be very carefully located so as not to detract from the distinctive silhouette of these hills.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▬▬▬▬▬▶ Higher sensitivity
Landform	M-H This is one of the most distinct landscapes in the District, with a distinct steep and undulating landform with small-scale flat elevated hilltops and narrow ridges. The Knaps are of particular importance due to their unique 'conical' shape. Elevation varies between 100-297m AOD.
Sense of openness / enclosure	M Relatively high levels of enclosure provided by hedgebanks / hedgerows with frequent mature trees and large areas of woodland and plantation. However, on hilltops and ridges the landscape becomes more open.
Field pattern and scale	M Fields are generally medium to large-scale, predominantly comprising regular modern and post-medieval fields with some smaller-scale Barton fields and medieval enclosures based on strip fields.
Land cover	M-H A rural farmed landscape, mainly ley grassland and extensive blocks of woodland (including important ancient semi-natural woodlands and large conifer plantations). Enclaves of bracken and gorse are found within woodland blocks, hedgerows and hillsides contributing to a varied mosaic and naturalistic character.
Perceptual qualities	M-H A remote rural landscape which has areas of perceived naturalness with low levels of development contributing to high levels of tranquillity. The LCT is densely wooded in places, adding to its naturalistic character.
Historic Landscape Character	M 39% of the LCT is classified as modern enclosure and 13% as post-medieval enclosure, indicating lower sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development. In addition, 15% is woodland, with smaller areas (17%) of medieval enclosure based on strip fields, and Barton fields (13%), indicating a higher sensitivity. Very small areas of rough ground would be highly sensitive to the development of solar PV.
Scenic and special qualities	M-H Although this landscape is not designated at the national level for its scenic quality, the Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment recognises its scenic quality. Special qualities which might be affected by solar PV development include areas of deciduous woodland; isolated, tranquil character created through the lack of buildings and modern development; distinctive hedgerow pattern; and exceptional views of the surrounding countryside, sometimes as far as Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Exe Estuary. Part of the LCT is immediately adjacent to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include: it being a timeless landscape mostly free from intrusive development, striking views inside and out of the National Park, and its sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity. These special qualities might be highly sensitive to development within adjacent areas and should be considered in any proposals.
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although this LCT contains some flatter plateau tops and areas of enclosure provided by dense woodland cover, and it includes larger scale modern and post-medieval field patterns which could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the presence of steeply undulating landform and prominent slopes (including the landmark Knaps and Raddon Hills), open ridges, the landscape's rural and naturalistic characteristics and high levels of tranquillity and remoteness increase sensitivity.

Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)	**M**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M-H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very large (>15ha)	**H**
	The small-scale strongly undulating landform, open ridges and hilltops, prominent slopes and high levels of tranquillity indicates that this LCT would be highly sensitive to solar PV developments greater than 'small' in scale.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 1E Wooded Ridges and Hilltops LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- The distinctive landforms of steeply undulating hills (particularly the Knaps and Raddon Hills) which form local landmarks with prominent slopes.
- Areas of highly sensitive land cover including the ancient woodland at Whipshill Wood and Raddon Hill.
- The feelings of remoteness and tranquillity due to a lack modern development.
- Open nature of the ridges and plateaux tops.
- Locations within close proximity to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include striking views out of the protected landscape and a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are currently no permitted solar PV developments in this LCT.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT has moderate sensitivity to 'very small' solar PV development (less than 1ha), moderate-high sensitivity to 'small' developments (1-5ha), and a high sensitivity to any developments over 5ha.

This indicates that the landscape may only be able to accommodate 'very small' solar PV developments, and possibly 'small' developments of up to 5ha, sited on the flatter plateau tops in areas of enclosure where existing dense woodland or high hedgerows provide screening. Sites should avoid areas of steeply undulating landform, prominent slopes and open ridges (including the landmark Knaps and Raddon Hills).

The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of the LCT and that the landscape's open character and high levels of tranquillity/ remoteness remain.

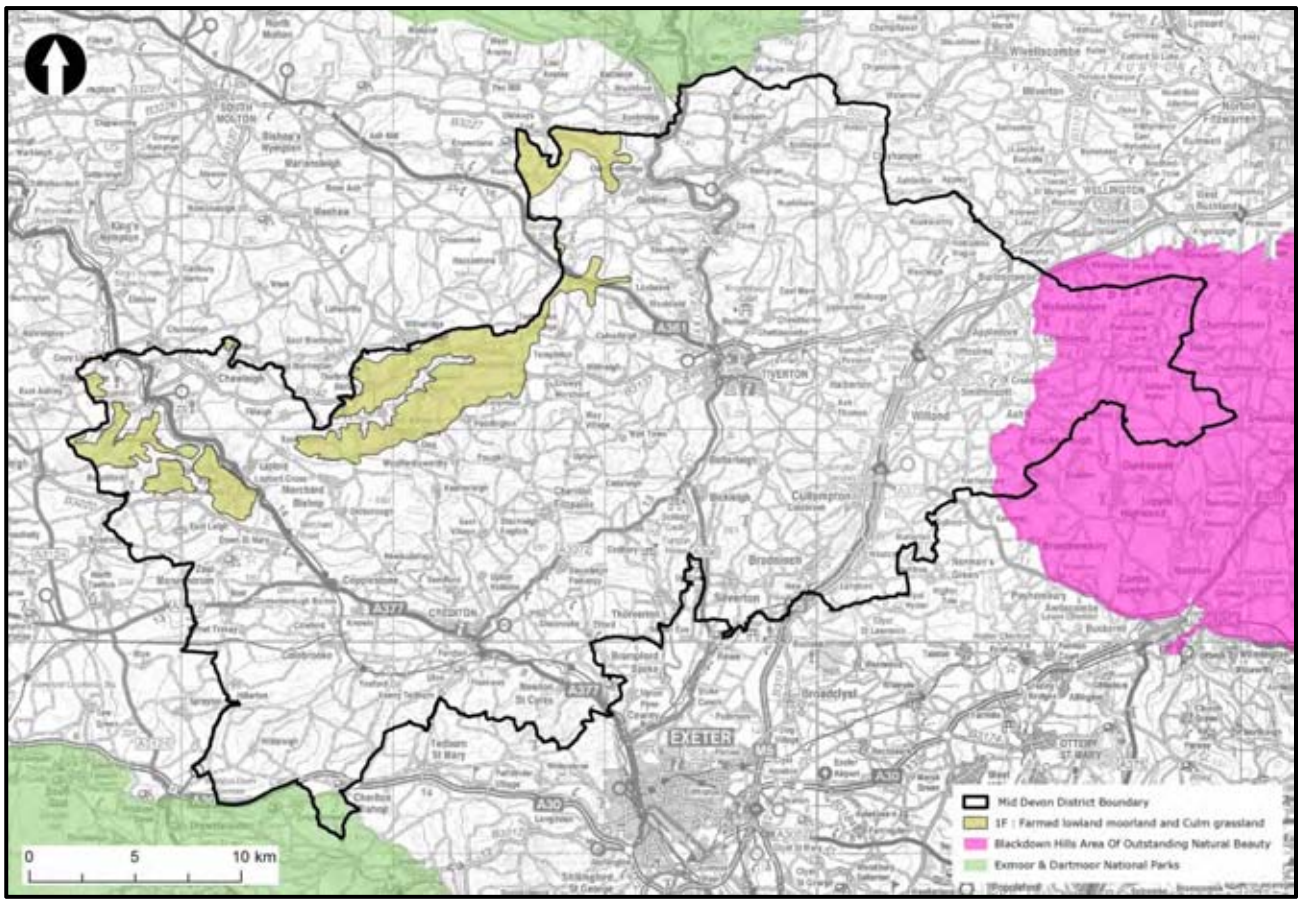
When siting and designing wind energy developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 2 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Development avoids visually prominent slopes and does not detract from the distinctive landforms of steeply undulating hills (particularly the Knaps and Raddon Hills) which form local landmarks.
- Development does not displace ancient woodland at Whipshill Wood and Raddon Hill.
- Development is sited so that it is well screened and does not detract from the feelings of remoteness and tranquillity and apparent lack modern development.
- Development avoids open areas so that the open character of the ridges and plateaux tops is retained.
- Solar PV development does not adversely affect the sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity associated with Exmoor National Park, or unacceptably impact on

the striking views from the National Park into the district.
Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas
This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. For DCAs 02: Bampton and Beer Downs and 26: Exmoor Fringe, special attention will be required to ensure development does not adversely affect the remote, wild and tranquil qualities of Exmoor National Park, and does not unacceptably impact on the striking views into Mid Devon from the National Park. The most open and visual prominent slopes should therefore be avoided within these DCAs.

LCT 1F: Farmed Lowland Moorland and Culm Grassland

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys

DCA 30: High Culm Ridges

DCA 33: High Taw Farmland

DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor

Key Landscape Characteristics[23]

- The land rises in a series of irregular rolling hills that are flattish, have undefined rounded peaks all of which are on a similar level.
- This is a pastoral and agrarian landscape defined by the Culm grasslands that are rich and species-diverse, disrupted in many places by intensive farming of drained and agriculturally improved land.
- Underlying landmass of Culm Measures, produces very fine soils that easily become waterlogged and have impeded drainage. These soils are difficult to farm, and have a less intensive red, ochre colour than the sandstones found elsewhere in the district.
- A prevailing damp character with streams, springs, wet ditches and rush dominated pasture are frequent features.
- The presence of ditches adjacent to many of the hedges and within road verges reflect the high levels of water impeded within the soils, that seep out into these channels.
- Small to medium scale deciduous woodlands give a strong, damp pastoral and well-wooded character to the landscape. These woodlands are invariably wet with impeded drainage.
- Relatively intact and repeated pattern of hedge and ditch with medium scale rectilinear field enclosures. The hedges tend to be low, thick, neatly trimmed with beech the predominant species and are abundant with trees.
- The regular hedgebank and hedge network were created through the late 19th century parliamentary enclosure of land, which before this time was open moorland and heathland. A few of the hedges near Witheridge Moor are dominated by single stands of beech. However, this characteristic is not widespread.
- The flattish landscape and higher ground give the area a rather unsheltered windswept appearance. Patches of bracken and gorse, as well as wind-sculpted beech trees, give an exposed feel to high locations.
- The dominant influence on the type is the heavy clay of the Culm Measures, giving rise in many places to poor wet soils, best suited to sheep and cattle grazing.
- Sparse settlement pattern with scattered farmsteads, small clustered hamlets and nucleated villages often sited on crossroads. Buildings have retained the traditional character in the main, with modern farm buildings generally fitting into the landscape, reflecting the siting of the original farms. The traditional buildings are frequently constructed from rendered cob with thatched or slate roofs, some of which are listed.
- There are a number of coniferous plantations present particularly on Witheridge Moor. These create dark, dense colours and a massive form that contrasts with the more open agrarian landscape.
- Villages and individual farmsteads are connected via a series of narrow, straight roads and lanes, with wide verges. This is an accessible landscape on foot and by small vehicle with generally a good network of lanes, metalled and unmetalled roads and public rights of way.
- Historic features include a number of hill forts and other defensive archaeological features including the remaining earthworks of the settlement at Burridge and tumuli on Witheridge Moor.
- Houses and farmsteads are often prominent in the landscape due to exposed nature of the landscape which often leads to wide, sweeping views interrupted only occasionally by wind-shaped trees and small copses.

24% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within North Devon, Torridge and West Devon districts

[23] [23] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind Energy Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity
Landform and scale	L-M A large-scale landform of gently rolling hills and plateaux with some with undefined rounded peaks. Elevation varies from 80m to 280m AOD.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	M A strongly agricultural landscape, predominately pastoral medium-scale rectilinear fields with some smaller fields of medieval origin in places. Tracts of Culm grassland, open lowland moorland and coniferous plantations add texture and break up areas of intensely farmed and agriculturally improved land and contribute to the naturalistic character. Although the landform scale is large, human scale features include low thick hedges frequently with trees, small to medium size deciduous woodlands and scattered settlement.
Tracks / transport pattern	M Although roads and vehicular tracks are a feature of this landscape, these are often narrow – either straight with wide verges (on elevated ground) or lined with hedgebanks.
Skylines	M-H This LCT is characterised in the Landscape Assessment by *'undefined roundish peaks*' which, although prominent due to elevation and therefore forming a backdrop to views, do not create particularly distinctive skylines. However, hillforts, other defensive archaeological features, wind sculpted beech trees and small copses create skyline landmark features. The skylines are largely undeveloped although masts are present in a few locations.
Perceptual qualities	M This is a landscape with a strong rural character with sparse settlements, areas of open Culm grassland and moorland which contribute to the perceived naturalness and feelings of tranquillity and remoteness. However there is some human influence including conifer plantations, the agricultural land use, the presence of the main A361 and small settlements (e.g. at Coldridge, Nymet Rowland and Nomansland).
Historic landscape character	L-M The Devon HLC indicates that the majority of the landscape type is made up of modern enclosure (40%) and some post-medieval enclosure (17%) - generally of lower sensitivity to wind energy development. However there are areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (21%) – as well as smaller areas of Barton Fields and medieval enclosure, which would be of higher sensitivity. Areas of rough ground, particularly Culm grassland, would be very sensitive to wind energy development.
Scenic and special qualities	M Although this landscape is not designated at the national level for its scenic quality, the Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment describes the special qualities of this LCT. Those which might be affected by wind energy development include the Culm grasslands – dominated by wide panoramic views and of high nature conservation importance, a variety of field patterns and visual accents given by the siting of settlements; little influence of development which is key to its high quality and value as well as high levels of tranquillity; remoteness with unbroken skylines; and dense species-rich hedgerows defining the open moorland..
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the large scale rolling landform, consistency in pastoral land cover, presence of existing human influence and roads in the landscape indicate lower sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development, the strong rural character, high levels of tranquillity and even remoteness in places, the predominately undeveloped skylines (with occasional historic landmark features), presence of valued tracts of Culm grassland, areas of small-scale medieval and Barton field patterns and the presence of human scale features increase sensitivity.

Sensitivity to different turbine heights	Very Small (15-25m)	**L-M**
	Small (26-50m)	**M**
	Medium (51-75m)	**M**
	Large (76-110m)	**M-H**
	Very large (111-150m)	**H**
	The often remote character of the landscape, with its pattern of medium-(and some small-scale) fields, presence of human-scale features and largely undeveloped skylines with historically important landmark features means that this landscape is likely to be highly sensitive to the larger sizes of turbines.	
Commentary on different cluster sizes Single turbine Small (<5 turbines) Medium (6-10) Large (11-25) Very large (>25)	The scale of the landform, strong pattern of medium-(and some small) scale fields and presence of human scale features, largely undeveloped skylines with historically important prominent landmark features means that it is likely to be highly sensitive to 'medium', 'large' or 'very large' clusters.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for the 1F Farmed Lowland Moorland and Culm Grassland LCT in relation to wind energy development is included below:

- Areas of open Culm grassland and lowland moorland which contribute to the landscape's high levels of perceived naturalness.
- Human-scale landscape features including low, thick hedgebanks and blocks of deciduous woodland.
- Its strong rural character, with high levels of tranquillity and remoteness and low levels of development.
- Predominately undeveloped skylines and historic landmark features including hillsforts.
- Presence of sensitive land cover types including medieval enclosures, Barton Fields and areas of rough ground.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are eight permitted wind energy developments in this LCT, six of which are of a domestic scale comprising single turbines (within the 'very small' size category), and one single turbine within the 'small' category at Upcott Farm, Wembury. No details are provided for a further single turbine scheme at Rackenford related to a new poultry unit. The data provides information on only one scheme in terms of turbine design – being a three bladed design. Four of the very small turbine schemes lie within DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor; one lies within DCA 33: High Taw Farmland; and the 'small' turbine is within DCA 30: High Culm Ridges. The scheme without information also falls within DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor. The turbines within DCA 65 are spaced apart but do occupy the same ridgeline.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT has a moderate sensitivity to small and medium sized turbines (between 26 and 75m), a moderate-high sensitivity to turbines between 76-110m and a high sensitivity to turbines over 110m to tip. The assessment notes that sensitivity to larger-scale wind turbines is higher due to the presence of human-scale features within the landscape and the LCT's prominent, undeveloped skylines. It also states that the landscape would be highly sensitive to 'large' or 'very large' clusters of wind turbines.

Therefore the landscape is particularly sensitive to turbines over 75m in height and clusters of more than 5 turbines, and is unlikely to be able to accommodate any wind turbines over 110m in height or developments of more than 5 turbines in any one cluster. Turbines should be located away from the most prominent unbroken skylines.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. This could include very small or small scale turbines associated with farm buildings (aiming for consistent scale and design of on-farm turbines) and occasional small groups of medium or large turbines in larger scale areas (aiming for consistent scale and design of these larger schemes), and maintaining a distinct hierarchy between

these two scales of turbine.

The overall aim should be to make sure that wind energy developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of that LCT (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

When siting and designing wind energy developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 2 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Wind energy development does not overwhelm the human scale of the landscape features associated with the LCT (e.g. hedgerows, trees and woodland).
- Valued naturalistic habitats are retained - including tracts of Culm grassland, heathland and wet woodland.
- Wind turbines do not prevent the appreciation and understanding of historic skyline/ landmark features including ancient settlement earthworks at Burridge, tumuli on Witheridge Moor and Iron Age hillforts.
- The siting of wind turbines respects the visual accents created by the siting of the landscape's sparse settlements.
- The characteristic narrow roads and tracks, often framed by species-rich hedgebanks, are not adversely affected by delivery of turbines.
- The strongly rural, frequently remote and tranquil character of the landscape is retained.

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. In addition, in DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moors, special attention will be required to ensure development does not adversely affect the remote, wild and tranquil qualities of Exmoor National Park (which lies to the north), and does not unacceptably impact on the striking views into Mid Devon from the National Park.

The development of turbines should also avoid impacting on the setting or integrity of nationally important historic landmark features characterising skylines within DCA 33: High Taw Farmland (e.g. Bury Barton Roman fort and camp) and DCA 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded & Farmed Valleys (e.g. three bowl barrows near Gibbet Moor Cross).

Wider roads within DCA 30: High Culm Ridges would be less sensitive to the delivery of turbines than the characteristic narrow roads and tracks characterising the LCT elsewhere.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform		L-M			
	An elevated landform of gently rolling hills and plateaux with some with undefined rounded peaks. Elevation varies from 80m to 280m AOD.				
Sense of openness / enclosure			M		
	Higher parts of this LCT have a sense of openness and exposure due to the areas of open Culm grassland and moorland. In lower areas some enclosure is provided by thick hedgerows and blocks of woodland (copses and coniferous plantations).				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	A landscape of predominately medium-scale rectilinear fields of modern enclosure and post-medieval enclosure, as well as some smaller areas of irregular smaller-scale fields of medieval enclosure based on strip fields, Barton fields and rough ground.				
Land cover				M-H	
	A rural pastoral landscape with valued areas of Culm grassland, moorland and deciduous woodland creating a sense of naturalness, and blocks of coniferous plantation. There are few areas of built development.				
Perceptual qualities			M		
	This is a landscape with a strong rural character with sparse settlement, areas of open Culm grassland and moorland which contribute to feelings of tranquillity and remoteness. However there is some human influence including conifer plantations, the agricultural land use, the presence of the main A361 and small settlements (e.g. at Coldridge, Nymet Rowland and Nomansland).				
Historic Landscape Character		L-M			
	The Devon HLC indicates that the majority of the landscape type is made up of modern enclosure (40%) and some post-medieval enclosure (17%) - generally of lower sensitivity to wind energy development. However there are areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (21%) – as well as smaller areas of Barton Fields and medieval enclosure, which would be of higher sensitivity. Areas of rough ground, particularly Culm grassland, would be very sensitive to solar PV development.				
Scenic and special qualities			M		
	Although this landscape is not designated at the national level for its scenic quality, the Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment describes the special qualities of this LCT. Those which might be affected by solar PV development include the Culm grasslands – dominated by wide panoramic views and of high nature conservation importance, a variety of field patterns and visual accents given by the siting of settlements; little influence of development which is key to its high quality and value as well as high levels of tranquillity and remoteness with unbroken skylines; and dense species-rich hedgerows defining the open moorland..				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the sense of enclosure provided by hedgerows and copses, presence of larger-scale modern and post-medieval fields, and presence of some human influence in the landscape could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, valued expanses of semi natural habitat on the higher ground (Culm grassland and moorland), smaller-scale medieval enclosures based on strip fields and Barton fields, high levels of tranquillity and remoteness and the strong rural character increase sensitivity.				
Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)	**M**			
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**			
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M-H**			
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**			
	Very large (>15ha)	**H**			

	This LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to ‘large’ and ‘very large’ scale solar PV developments due its naturalistic and often remote character, areas of highly valued Culm grassland, and the presence of small-scale medieval and Barton fields.

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 1F Farmed Lowland Moorland and Culm Grassland LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- Areas of open Culm grassland and lowland moorland which contribute to the landscape's high levels of perceived naturalness.
- Strong rural character, with high levels of tranquillity and remoteness and low levels of modern development.
- Presence of sensitive historic landscape types including small-scale medieval enclosures based on strip fields, Barton Fields and areas of rough ground.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there is one permitted solar PV development within the LCT, falling within the 'small' category. This site falls within DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moors.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT has a moderate sensitivity to 'very small' (<1ha) and 'small' (>1-5ha) solar PV developments, a moderate-high sensitivity to 'medium' developments (>5-10ha) and a high sensitivity to developments greater than 10ha. This indicates that the landscape would be particularly sensitive to any developments greater than 5ha in size and is unlikely to be able to accommodate developments greater than 10ha. Any solar PV developments should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and valued areas of semi-natural habitat and small-scale historic field patterns.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- The strongly rural, frequently remote and tranquil character of the landscape is maintained.
- Valued naturalistic habitats, including tracts of Culm grassland, heathland and wet woodland are not adversely affected.
- Solar PV development does not become a key characteristic of the panoramic views afforded from elevated ground.
- Development does not mask the pattern of small-scale medieval and historic Barton fields marked by dense species-rich hedgerows.

Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas

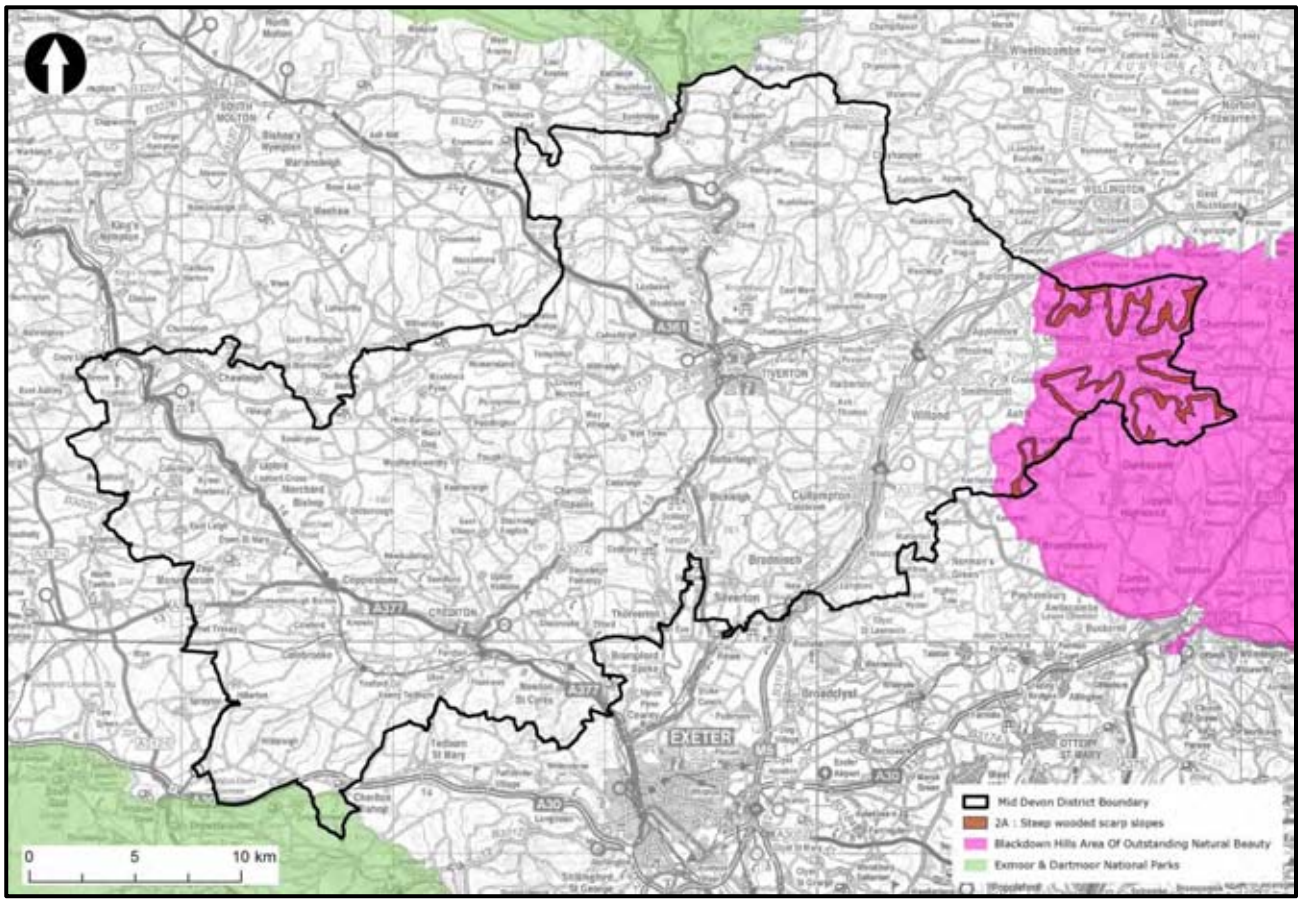
This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is

present. In addition, in DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moors, special attention will be required to ensure development does not adversely affect the remote, wild and tranquil qualities of Exmoor National Park (which lies to the north), and does not unacceptably impact on the striking views into Mid Devon from the National Park.

Development that avoids visually prominent elevated hill slopes and summits is less likely to affect these views from the National Park.

LCT 2A: Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 06: Blackdown Hills

Key Landscape Characteristics[24]

- The landscape forms the steep upper slopes which fall away from the adjacent tablelands plateau of the Blackdown Hills. Linear in form, this type is distinctive with a rugged surface.
- The slopes drop steeply where the clay and cherts have been undercut through the erosion of the softer underlying greensand. Over time these erosion patterns have created distinctive concave slopes, cutting away from the hilltops.
- The greensand layer underlying the landscape is deep enough for extensive springline mires to develop on the slopes. In these areas the landform is unstable and 'shifts'.
- Strong sense of dampness, with springs and areas of impeded drainage created through the geological phenomenon of a porous sponge-like layer of greensand being sandwiched between two outer crusts of impervious clay with cherts.
- Dense woodland, gorse and healthy vegetation are found growing on these steep slopes. There are long stretches of linear wet woodland, most notably surrounding Hackpen Hill, Combe Hill north of Hemyock and on Gotleigh Moor to the north of Smeatharpe.
- Some land within this type has been planted with coniferous plantations mainly in the ownership of the Forestry Commission, such as Newcombe Errish Plantation at Blackborough and on Clement's Moor on the edges of Culm Davy hill.
- Sometimes within these hanging woods the ground is frequently waterlogged and springline mires have become established. These mires are characterised by wet heathland and unimproved grassland intermixed with stands of alder carr woodland.
- The soils, where exposed in ditches and on the edges of roads are either peat-black and rich or occasionally appear as bands of pure pale greensand.
- Generally inaccessible landscape due to the steepness of its landform and its linear nature. However there are many public rights of way crossing the Blackdown Hills and in some areas the paths follow just below the plateau.
- This is a remote landscape with no settlements or hamlets, but a few isolated farmsteads located on the steep slopes below the plateau top.
- The hanging woodlands and forestry are enclosed and well-wooded and allow very few views out from the roads and track ways that traverse the slope. The roads in these locations tend to be sheltered, contained within the canopies of the surrounding trees. Views from the roads on the edges of the adjacent plateaus can be long-distance and impressive.
- The high and heathy land is highly visible in autumn when the heathland vegetation desiccates and turns bright orange typical of this type of vegetation, especially when viewed from the M5 motorway.
- The remnants of isolated farms and barns, long since abandoned, are a feature of this landscape.

18% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within East Devon and Taunton Deane districts.

[24] [24] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind Energy Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform and scale					H
	This LCT consists of narrow sinuous bands of steep upper valley slopes. The small-scale landform has distinctly rugged surface and concaved slopes. Elevation varies from 170-270m AOD.				
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features				M-H	
	Land cover pattern for this LCT consists of mainly small irregular fields and dense 'hanging' woodland. Additional variety is provided by patches of forestry, wet heathland, alder carr woodland, unimproved grassland, gorse and scrubby vegetation. Some field amalgamation has taken place in certain areas. Human scale features include isolated farmsteads, abandoned farms and barns, hedgerows, trees and woodland.				
Tracks / transport pattern				M-H	
	The area is generally inaccessible due to the steepness of the landform, but there are a few roads and tracks present which climb the steep slopes. Roads are generally contained by trees creating narrow and sometimes sunken lanes.				
Skylines					H
	The steep slopes form a prominent and distinctive skylines and important backdrops to views from across the AONB and landscapes within the adjacent districts. The Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan notes that '*The wooded edge to the plateau provides a relatively wild, uninhabited backdrop to the flatter, low-lying farmed and settled vale*.'				
Perceptual qualities					H
	This is a very remote landscape even 'wild' in places with no settlement or hamlets, little development and few roads. Due to the steep landform the area lacks modern human influences. The Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan describes the area as wild and remote due to there being very little development and human activity. Due to the steepness and extensive tree cover there is a perceived sense of naturalness.				
Historic landscape character				M-H	
	The Mid Devon HLC indicates that much of the landscape is comprised of rough ground (24%), which would be extremely sensitive to wind energy development. It also includes areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (14%) and woodland (16%) which would also be of high sensitivity. to wind energy development. Fields of post-medieval enclosure (16%) and some small areas of modern enclosure indicate a lower sensitivity. There are also small areas of ancient woodland (Knowles Wood), orchards, historic settlements and parks and gardens which would all be very highly sensitive to the development of wind turbines.				
Scenic and special qualities	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	All of this LCT falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is nationally designated for its scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes; and long views over field patterned landscape. Some of these may be affected by wind energy development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	The steeply sloping landform, high visual prominence of the steep slopes, distinctive, undeveloped skylines, presence of important ancient and alder carr woodland, general absence of modern development, feeling of remoteness or wildness and high scenic quality (as recognised through AONB designation) mean this LCT is highly sensitive to the principle of any wind energy development. The special qualities of the AONB, particularly its				

	isolated and unspoilt rural character further increases sensitivity	
Sensitivity to different turbine heights	Very Small (15-25m)	**H**
	Small (26-50m)	**H**
	Medium (51-75m)	**H**
	Large (76-110m)	**H**
	Very large (111-150m)	**H**
	The area's high scenic quality as recognised by it AONB designation along with its steep landform, prominent slopes, sensitive land cover, human-scale features, prominent and distinctive skylines and remote and wild character means this LCT would be highly sensitive to any size of turbines.	
Commentary on different cluster sizes Single turbine Small (<5 turbines) Medium (6-10) Large (11-25) Very large (>25)	The area's high scenic quality as recognised by it AONB designation along with its steep landform, prominent slopes, sensitive land cover, human-scale features, prominent and distinctive skylines and remote and wild character means this LCT would be highly sensitive to any clusters of turbines.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics
A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 2A Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes LCT in relation to wind turbine development is included below: • The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns. • The hidden, secret and inaccessible nature of the landscape. • The visually distinctive and prominent landform. • Rich and diverse naturalistic land cover with areas of ancient woodland, alder carr woodland, wet and dry heathland and unimproved grassland. • Inaccessible steep slopes with few roads which are tightly bound by tree lined hedgebanks. • Visually prominent and distinctive, undeveloped skylines which form the backdrop to views from the surrounding landscape.
Permitted schemes within the LCT
A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are no permitted wind turbine developments in this LCT at the current time.
Guidance for Development
The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT is highly sensitive to all sizes and scales of wind turbine development, and therefore is not likely to be able to accommodate any turbines.
Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas
N/A

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform					H
	Steep and rugged landform with exposed slopes visible from ther surrounding hills and from neighbouring LCTs (including within the surrounding districts). Elevation varies from 170-270m AOD.				
Sense of openness / enclosure		L-M			
	There is a high level of enclosure created by the presence of hedgebanks, dense tree cover and woodland blocks. Small areas of more open land do occur on slopes away from the main woodland blocks.				
Field pattern and scale				M-H	
	The field pattern is comprises mainly small-scale irregular fields of mixed historic origin. However there are some larger fields of more modern enclosure and areas of open semi-natural habitat.				
Land cover					H
	Land cover patterns are varied, comprising a mixture of pastoral fields and dense 'hanging' woodland. Additional variety is provided by patches of forestry, wet heathland, alder carr woodland, unimproved grassland, gorse and scrubby vegetation. There are also a few isolated farms and houses.				
Perceptual qualities					H
	This is a very remote landscape even 'wild' in places with no settlement or hamlets, little development and few roads. Due to the steep landform the area lacks modern human influences. The Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan describes the area as wild and remote due to there being very little development and human activity. Due to the steepness and extensive tree cover there is a perceived sense of naturalness.				
Historic Landscape Character				M-H	
	The Mid Devon HLC indicates that much of the landscape is comprised of rough ground (24%), which would be extremely sensitive to wind energy development. It also includes areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (14%) and woodland (16%) which would also be of high sensitivity to solar PV development. Fields of post-medieval enclosure (16%) and some small areas of modern enclosure indicate a lower sensitivity. There are also small areas of ancient woodland (Knowles Wood), orchards, historic settlements and parks and gardens which would all be very highly sensitive to the development of wind turbines.				
Scenic and special qualities	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	All of this LCT falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is nationally designated for its scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes; and long views over field patterned landscape. Some of these may be affected by solar PV development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt and naturalistic character.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	The steep, rugged and highly visible landform, presence of valued naturalistic land cover (ancient woodland, alder carr woodland, heathland and rough ground), absence of modern development, strong sense of remoteness and high scenic quality result in this LCT being highly sensitive to the principle of solar PV development. The special qualities of the AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character further increases sensitivity				

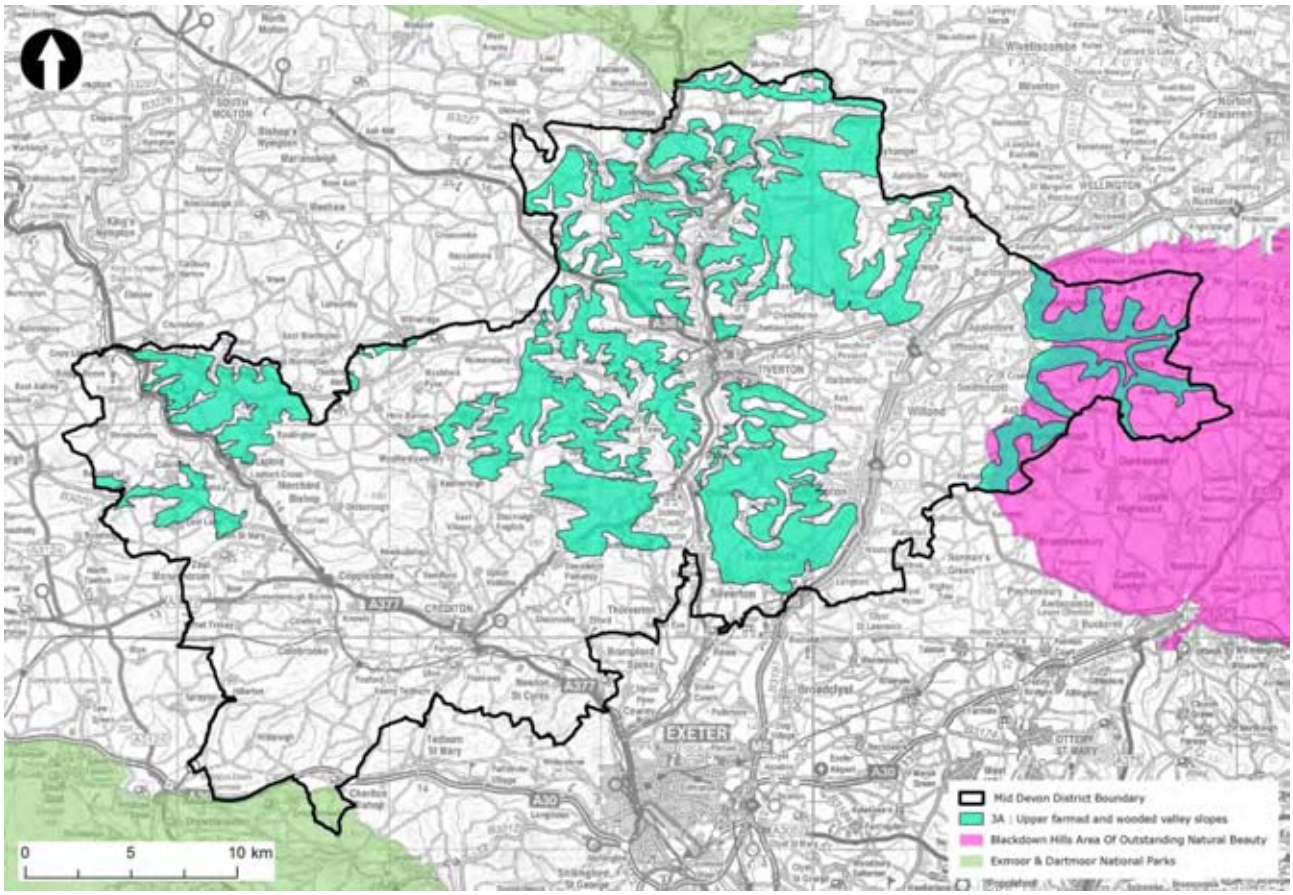
Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)	**H**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very large (>15ha)	**H**
	This LCT would be highly sensitive to any scale of solar PV development due to its high scenic quality and recognised by the areas AONB designation and the steeply sloping, highly prominent landform, presence of naturalistic land cover types and very remote and 'wild' characteristics.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics
A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 2A Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below: • The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape pattern and pictures. • The visually distinctive and prominent landform and slopes. • Rich and diverse land cover with areas of ancient woodland, alder carr woodland, wet and dry heathland and unimproved grassland. • The absence of modern development, with no hamlets and only isolated farms and houses contributing to the LCT's sense of remoteness and 'wildness'
Permitted schemes within the LCT
A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are no permitted solar PV developments in this LCT at the current time.
Guidance for Development
The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT is highly sensitive to all scales of solar PV development, and is therefore not likely to be able to accommodate any development.
Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas
N/A

LCT 3A: Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes

LCT Location Map



Devon Character Areas

DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs

DCA 06: Blackdown Hills

DCA 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys

DCA 16: Cullompton Rolling Farmland

DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands

DCA 24: Exe Valley

DCA 26: Exmoor Fringe

DCA 30: High Culm Ridges

DCA 57: Taw Valley

DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor

Key Landscape Characteristics[25]

- The tops of the hills tend to be convex and rounded forming ridges with gently dipped valley slopes, which in a few places become sheer steep slopes.
- The landscape is defined by moderately dry, fertile smooth slopes running into small-scale vales with a damp character.
- The landscape is characterised by lush and fertile land giving rise to extensive tracts of medium-scale fields of permanent pasture. Many of these grasslands are semi-improved, particularly where the land is sufficiently steep to prevent any agricultural operations that might be employed to increase productivity. Most of the pastures are grazed in summer with cows being the predominant livestock. Many fields on the slopes and flatter hilltops are cultivated for arable crops.
- On the lower slopes there is often a damp character and wet flushes and springs are both frequent and characteristic. Within the Blackdown Hills east of the district bogs are a feature of the landscape, with some fields waterlogged in winter following prolonged heavy rain. Consequently, rough pasture and smaller areas of carr woodland are also a characteristic as is wet grass heathland.
- On the steeper slopes often deciduous woodland presides. There is the occasional coniferous plantation, otherwise mostly deciduous copses. Coniferous plantations include Huntsham Wood and Mere Down at Huntsham.
- There are also patches of semi-natural vegetation including stands of gorse and bracken.
- Notable estates include Holcombe Court, Huntsham Court and Hockworthy Court. Huntsham Castle, a former settlement and Bampton (motte and bailey) Castle are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and important landmarks within the type.
- Beech hedgerows are well-managed and dense bounding regularly shaped, medium to large-scale enclosures of pasture. Trees are abundant in hedgebanks and hedgerows, and mature specimens are often present within centres of fields.
- Ridge-top hedgebanks that run along the highest ground with field compartments dropping away from the ridge, separate the landform into regular fields. Some of these boundaries are of great antiquity and often form parish boundaries. Many of these hilltop hedges are historically formed trackways with parallel hedges defining their routes.
- There are extensive conservation areas covering the historic cores of many of the villages and settlements found within this landscape. There are a high number of listed buildings, with some traditional farmsteads being intact and displaying fine examples of traditional Devon longhouses, linhays, barns and cobb or stone walls.
- The isolated farms, rural cottages and farm buildings are located on the hillsides and tend to be visually prominent in the landscape. They are often connected by tracks or lanes which add to the simple and repeated patterns. Larger settlements are connected by winding, bending narrow roads.
- There are a number of long-distance views from one hilltop to another in this landscape.
- Roads are generally absent from the slopes, being sited in the main on the hilltops, where they cross the gentler slopes.
- The hilltop enclosures tend to be more regular in shape and form and are characteristic of late 19th century parliamentary enclosures. Some of this late enclosure land was formerly managed as open heathland and down, as reflected in hill and place names, as Mere, Beer and Bampton Downs.

67% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within East Devon, Taunton Deane, North Devon and South Somerset Districts.

[25] [25] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▬▬▬▬▬▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform and scale			M		
	Rolling landform of rounded convex hills forming ridges with gently dipped valley slopes, which become sheer in places. The scale varies from large-scale landform on hill tops to small-scale within the valleys. Elevation varies from 40m – 280m AOD.				
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features			M		
	The landscape is characterised by extensive tracts of medium to large-scale fields of permanent pasture and areas of cultivated arable crops. Further land cover variation is provided by a diverse and textured mixture of naturalistic rough pasture, wet heathland, wet flushes, springs, patches of gorse and bracken as well as areas of carr woodland. Deciduous woodland and blocks of coniferous plantation are also present. Human scale features are frequent and include hedgebanks, trees, settlements and estate landscapes including Hockworthy Court Hall and Huntsham Court and Holcombe Court.				
Tracks / transport pattern				M-H	
	The landscape contains some existing roads and tracks – these are predominantly, winding narrow roads enclosed by high Devon hedges, although the A361 and A3072 also cross the area.				
Skylines			M		
	This LCT includes some elevated hill summits and upper hillsides often provide a backdrop to views from adjacent LCTs. Ridge top hedgebanks (and landmark historic features such as Cadbury Castle, Huntsham Castle and Bampton Castle form valued skyline features.				
Perceptual qualities			M		
	This is a landscape has a strong rural character (described as *'small, picturesque, archetypal 'Devon' farmland'* in the LCT evaluation), although it also contains some areas of modern development and human activity.				
Historic landscape character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that the LCT predominantly comprises a mixture of 36% medieval enclosure based on strip fields and Barton fields (11%) (likely to be of high sensitivity to wind turbines) and 29% modern enclosure (lower sensitivity). There are also areas of medieval enclosure, rough ground and park/gardens likely to be of higher sensitivity.				
Scenic and special qualities				M-H	
	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	Just under 11% of the eastern section of this LCT falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is nationally designated for its scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes; and long views over field patterned landscape. Some of these may be affected by wind energy development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character. Part of the LCT is also immediately adjacent to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include: it being a timeless landscape mostly free from intrusive development, striking views inside and out of the National Park, and its sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity. These special qualities might be highly sensitive to development within adjacent areas and should be considered in any proposals. The remainder of the area has scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which could be affected by wind energy development include the organic, textured, visually interesting landscape pattern; important ancient woodland and copses; secluded and historic green lanes; small-scale historic settlements and farms; and the small, picturesque, archetypal 'Devon' farmland.				
Discussion on	Although the large scale landform of many of the hills, largely medium-scale				

<table>
<tr><td>landscape sensitivity</td><td>field patterns, presence of existing roads and tracks, and existing locations of modern development and human activity may indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development, the small scale valleys, presence of semi-natural habitats, narrow lanes, frequent human scale features, historic skyline features, strong rural character and important scenic qualities increase sensitivity.

Within the AONB the isolated and unspoilt rural character of the landscape and its diversity of landscape patterns (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') further increase sensitivity. Areas close to the AONB are likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitivity to different turbine heights</td><td>
<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Land outside the AONB</th><th colspan="2">Land within the AONB</th></tr>
<tr><td>Very Small (15-25m)</td><td>L-M</td><td>Very Small (15-25m)</td><td>M-H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Small (26-50m)</td><td>M</td><td>Small (26-50m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium (51-75m)</td><td>M</td><td>Medium (51-75m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Large (76-110m)</td><td>M-H</td><td>Large (76-110m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Very large (111-150m)</td><td>H</td><td>Very large (111-150m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
</table>
The difference in scale between the hills and the valleys indicates that sensitivity of wind turbines will be higher in the more intricate valleys that on the hills. The landscape would be highly sensitive to 'very large' turbines as well as those within the upper end of the 'large' category.

Outside the AONB, the scale of the landform and land cover pattern means that the LCT will have a higher sensitivity to large turbines and will be highly sensitive to very large turbines. The area of the LCT within the Blackdown Hills AONB will be highly sensitive to any except the smallest wind turbines due to the high scenic quality that is recognised at a national level. Areas close to the AONB are likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Commentary on different cluster sizes

Single turbine
Small (<5 turbines)
Medium (6-10)
Large (11-25)
Very large (>25)</td><td>Outside the AONB, the scale of the landform and land cover pattern means that this LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to any clusters greater than 'small' in size.

The area of the LCT within the Blackdown Hills AONB will be highly sensitive to anything other than single turbines.</td></tr>
</table>

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes LCT in relation to wind energy development is included below:

- The human scale of the landscape and its landscape features.
- The strong rural character of the landscape (the 'small, picturesque, archetypal 'Devon' farmland').
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns.
- The historic skyline/ landmark features including Cadbury, Huntsham and Bampton Castles.
- The historic parkland estates.
- Valued naturalistic habitats including rough pasture, wet heathland, stands of gorse and bracken and carr woodland.
- Narrow lanes and dense beech hedgebanks that could be affected by the delivery of turbines to site.
- Locations within close proximity to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include striking views out of the protected landscape and a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are five permitted wind energy developments in this LCT, all of which are of a domestic scale comprising single turbines (within the 'very small' size category). All but one of the schemes comprises standard three-bladed turbines, with the exception being a two-bladed 15 metre turbine at Higher Park near Pennymoor. The site of this turbine is in very close proximity to another (of standard three-blade design). Four of the turbine sites lie within DCA 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys and one within DCA 16: Cullompton Rolling Farmland.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that, outside the AONB, this LCT has medium sensitivity to 'small' and 'medium' size turbines (between 26 and 75m), a medium-high sensitivity to turbines between 76-110m and a high sensitivity to turbines over 110m to tip. The assessment also notes that landscape sensitivity to wind turbines will be higher in the more intricate valleys that on the hills, and that the LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to any clusters greater than 'small' in size. This indicates that the landscape will be particularly sensitive to turbines higher than 75m and be unlikely to be able to accommodate turbines over 110m to tip, or in groups of more than 5 turbines.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. This could include very small or small scale turbines associated with farm buildings (aiming for consistent scale and design of on-farm turbines) and occasional small groups (under 5) of larger turbines in larger scale areas (aiming for consistent scale and design of these larger schemes), and maintaining a distinct hierarchy between these two scales of turbine.

The overall aim should be to make sure that wind energy developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of that LCT (i.e. developments would not result in a significant

cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

In the Blackdown Hills AONB the landscape will be highly sensitive to anything other than very small single turbines, usually associated with farm buildings. Areas close to the AONB are likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).

When siting and designing wind energy developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 2 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Wind energy development does not overwhelm the human scale of the landscape and its landscape features.
- The strong rural character of the landscape (the 'small, picturesque, archetypal 'Devon' farmland') is retained.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns, are retained.
- Wind turbines do not prevent the appreciation and understanding of historic skyline/ landmark features including Cadbury, Huntsham and Bampton Castles.
- The heritage value of the historic parkland estates is conserved.
- Valued naturalistic habitats are retained - including rough pasture, wet heathland, stands of gorse and bracken and carr woodland.
- The characteristic narrow lanes and dense beech hedgebanks are not adversely affected by delivery of turbines.
- Wind energy development does not adversely affect the sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity associated with the Exmoor National Park, or unacceptably impact on the striking views from the National Park into the district.

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. In addition, in DCA 06: Blackdown Hills, which forms part of the Blackdown Hills AONB, it will be particularly important to respect the unspoilt rural character of the landscape. Here the landscape will be highly sensitive to anything other than very small single turbines, usually associated with farm buildings.

For DCAs 26: Exmoor Fringe, 02: Bampton and Beer Downs and 24: Exe Valley, special attention will be required to ensure development does not adversely affect the remote, wild and tranquil qualities of Exmoor National Park, and does not unacceptably impact on the striking views into Mid Devon from the National Park.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform			M		
	Rolling landform of hills, ridges and valleys with hidden areas as well as some highly visible steep slopes.				
Sense of openness / enclosure			M		
	Devon hedges and woodland provide enclosure. However, higher slopes and hill tops are more open with sparse tree/woodland cover.				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	Medium scale irregular fields, with some larger, regular fields of arable cultivation on higher ground. Dense beech hedgerows are well managed and create a strong regular pattern across the landscape.				
Land cover				M-H	
	This LCT is a rural pastoral landscape with some areas of semi-natural land cover and isolated farms and estates. It has a mixed land cover of predominately pasture and semi-improved grassland with areas of arable crops, rough pasture, wet heathland, areas of carr woodland and woodland which contribute to the area's perceived sense of naturalness.				
Perceptual qualities			M		
	This is a landscape has a strong rural character (described as *"small, picturesque, archetypal 'Devon' farmland"* in the LCT evaluation), although it also contains some modern development and human activity.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that the LCT predominantly comprises a mixture of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (36%) and Barton fields (11%), which are likely to be of high sensitivity to solar PV, whilst 29% is defined by modern enclosure (lower sensitivity). There are also further areas of medieval enclosure, as well as patches of rough ground and park/gardens likely to be of very high sensitivity to the introduction of solar PV developments.				
Scenic and special qualities				M-H	
	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	Just under 11% of the eastern section of this LCT falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is nationally designated for its scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes; and long views over field patterned landscape. Some of these may be affected by wind energy development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character. Part of the LCT is also immediately adjacent to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include: it being a timeless landscape mostly free from intrusive development, striking views inside and out of the National Park, and its sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity. These special qualities might be highly sensitive to development within adjacent areas and should be considered in any proposals. The remainder of the area has scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which could be affected by solar PV development include its organic, textured, visually interesting landscape pattern; important ancient woodland and copses; small-scale historic settlements and farms; and small, picturesque, archetypical 'Devon' farmland.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the presence of some hidden and enclosed areas (on lower slopes), regular modern field patterns, and presence of some development/human activity might indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the presence of visible slopes, valued areas of semi-natural habitat, strong rural character, undisturbed nature of				

	the landscape, the high visual quality derived from the '*complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes'* and the picturesque, archetypal 'Devon' farmland character increase levels of sensitivity. Lower slopes and hidden areas will be less sensitive than upper slopes that form a backdrop to views. Within the AONB the isolated and unspoilt rural character and its diversity of landscape patterns (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') further increase sensitivity. Areas close to the AONB are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).

Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development

Land outside the AONB		Land within the AONB	
Very Small (<1ha)	**L-M**	Very Small (<1ha)	**M-H**
Small (>1-5ha)	**M**	Small (>1-5ha)	**H**
Medium (>5-10ha)	**M-H**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
Large (>10-15ha)	**H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
Very large (>15ha)	**H**	Very large (>15ha)	**H**

As a result of the varied landform with some visually prominent slopes, strong rural character and sensitive land cover types, this LCT will have a higher sensitivity to larger-scale solar PV developments.

Areas within the AONB would be highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in scale.

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- Its strong rural character (the *'small, picturesque, archetypal 'Devon' farmland'*).
- The pastoral character of the landscape and its strong landscape pattern produced by well-managed, dense beech hedgerows.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns.
- Open extensive views from elevated ground.
- The historic parkland estates.
- Valued naturalistic habitats including rough pasture, wet heathland, stands of gorse and bracken and Carr woodland.
- Locations within close proximity to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include striking views out of the protected landscape and a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are two permitted solar PV developments within the LCT, both within the 'small' category. The two sites both fall within DCA 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys, but are located a large distance apart.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that, outside the AONB, this LCT has a medium sensitivity to 'small' solar PV developments (>1-5ha), a medium-high sensitivity to 'medium' developments (>5-10ha) and a high sensitivity to developments greater than 10ha. This indicates that the landscape will be particularly sensitive to any developments over 5ha and is unlikely to be able to accommodate any over 10ha in size. Any solar PV developments should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and valued areas of semi-natural habitat.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of the LCT (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

Within the AONB the isolated and unspoilt rural character and its diversity of landscape patterns (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') make it highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha). These should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes. Areas close to the AONB are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this

LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- The strong rural character (the 'small, picturesque, archetypal 'Devon' farmland') character of the LCT is maintained.
- The pastoral character of the landscape and its strong landscape pattern produced by well-managed, dense beech hedgerows, are retained.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns, are conserved.
- Solar PV development does not become a key characteristic of the open extensive views from elevated ground.
- The heritage value of the historic parkland estates is conserved.
- Valued naturalistic habitats including rough pasture, wet heathland, stands of gorse and bracken and Carr woodland are not adversely affected.
- Solar PV development does not adversely affect the sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity associated with the Exmoor National Park, or unacceptably impact on the striking views from the National Park into the district.

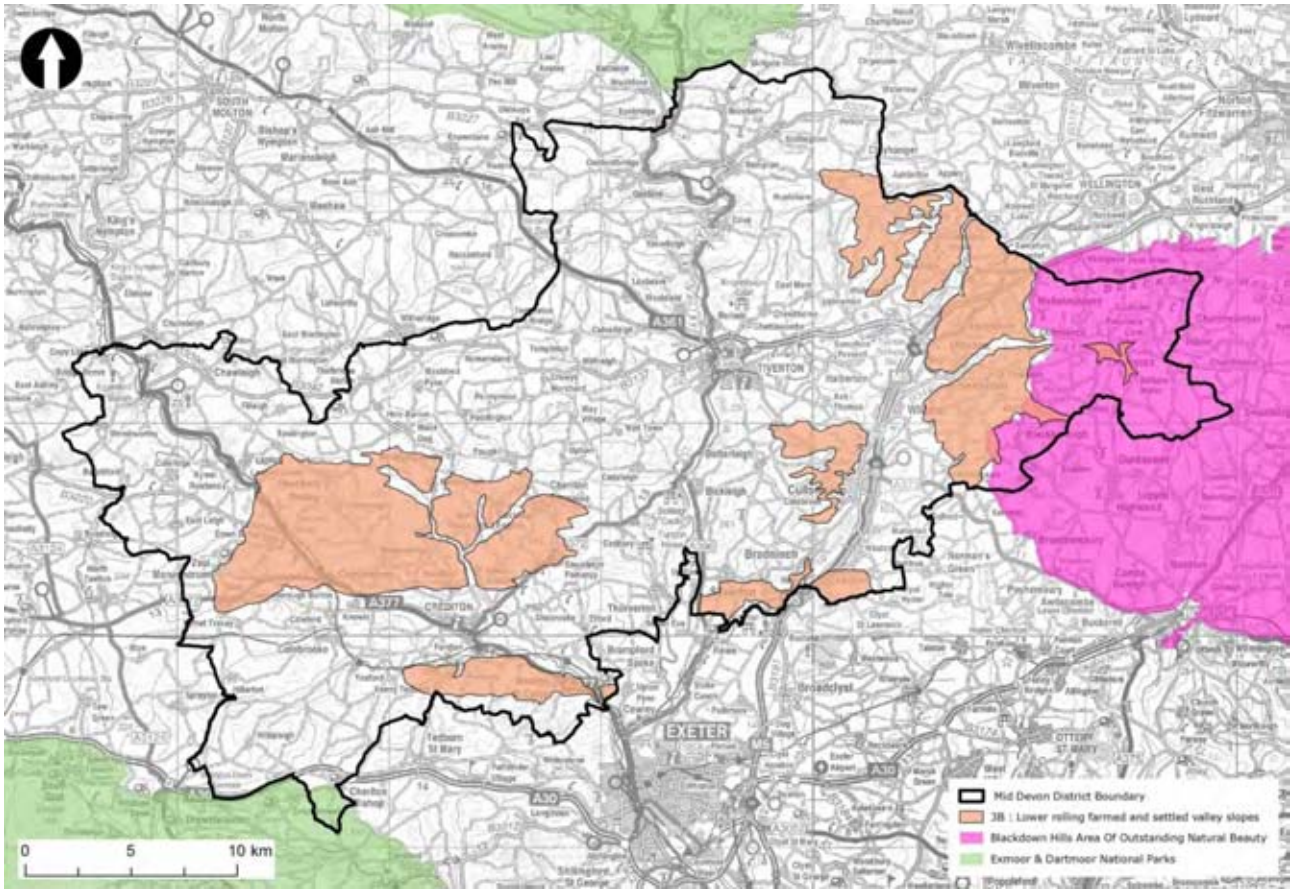
Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. In addition, in DCA 06: Blackdown Hills, which forms part of the Blackdown Hills AONB, it will be particularly important to respect the unspoilt rural character of the landscape. This area will is highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha).

For DCAs 26: Exmoor Fringe, 02: Bampton and Beer Downs and 24: Exe Valley, special attention will be required to ensure development does not adversely affect the remote, wild and tranquil qualities of Exmoor National Park, and does not unacceptably impact on the striking views from the National Park into the district. Development that avoids visually prominent elevated hill slopes and summits is less likely to affect these views.

LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs

DCA 06: Blackdown Hills

DCA 12: Clyst Lowland Farmlands

DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland

DCA 16: Cullompton Rolling Farmland

DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands

DCA 25: Exeter Slopes and Hills

DCA 68: Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands

Key Landscape Characteristics[26]

- This is a gently rolling and strongly undulating landscape with low-lying land adjacent to the rivers in a series of irregular rolling hills.
- Characterised by a tightly rolling, medium to small scale landform. The landscape has generally been carved away by tributaries of the River Exe, Taw, Creedy and Culm to create smooth convex slopes with a uniformity of slope angle and scale of the resultant hills.
- The drainage patterns within this landscape are defining characteristics key to both the resultant landform and vegetation patterns. The sources of rivers create a lush damp character with rushes in the valleys and lower slopes. The stream channels emerging from the valley heads are small in scale and are little more than field ditches that are seasonally wet.
- Woodlands are mixed with dense scrubby undergrowth, giving a well wooded character. Where this well-wooded characteristic is found there is a strong sense of enclosure. Towards the south and west of the district, woodland cover is extensive.
- Hedgerows are well-managed and dense bounding regular and irregular shaped, medium to large-scale enclosures of pasture.
- This is primarily a pastoral fertile farmland, predominantly improved pasture with some arable. The more improved and intensively managed areas have undergone field amalgamation, disrupting the intimate scale of this landscape.
- Much of this landscape is characterised by the Red Devon Sandstone giving great soil fertility for arable farming.
- Tightly clipped wide hedgerows unify the landscape creating distinct and harmonious patterns when viewed from distant vantage points.
- There are a mixture of buildings styles present from traditional cob render, slate or thatched roofs to Victorian and modern.
- Roads are mostly winding with bends that are frequently sunken.
- Historically there are a number of important features within this landscape such as Hemyock Castle which is an important village centre landmark and Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- Notable visible features include stone walling remnants, allotments and smallholdings. Sometimes intermittent hedgerows with wooden fencing or wire and post boundary treatments are also present.
- Tree rows enclosing fields and within open fields add interesting vertical rhythms and make a varied textured landscape.
- This is a landscape with high degrees of variation in terms of the levels of visual containment. Open vistas and also framed views can be obtained from many routes. However, within the valleys the level of enclosure is high, and consequently there are very few open views within or out, due to the dense hedge network, extensive woodland and the incised form of the landform, creating intimate spaces.
- There are medium to large scale commercial and intensive farms with modern buildings and isolated farmsteads.

89% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within East Devon District.

[26] [26] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform and scale			M		
	This LCT has a small to medium landform with rolling hills, at a range of elevations from lower valley slopes at 20m AOD to elevated land reaching a maximum of-266m AOD. Slopes have a generally convex and uniform slope angle.				
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features			M		
	Medium to large-scale fields are a mix of regular and irregular shapes (with some field amalgamation in more intensively managed areas) and bound by dense well managed hedgerows. The land use is predominantly pastoral with some areas of arable farmland, mixed woodland and rushes in valleys. There are frequent human scale features including hedgerows, trees and isolated farmsteads evenly distributed across the LCT.				
Tracks / transport pattern			M		
	This LCT contains existing roads and tracks including sections of the M5, A38, A3072 and A377. However, away from the main roads their character becomes more winding, tightly hedged and frequently sunken.				
Skylines			M		
	This LCT has some prominent skylines due to the hilly and sometimes elevated nature of the landscape. Although skylines are not specifically mentioned in the LCT description, the 'special qualities' section notes that there is little or no development on top of the hills. The LCT description also notes the important landmark feature of Hemyok Castle and notable visible features including Langham Hill Plantation, church spires and triangulation pillars/masts.				
Perceptual qualities			M		
	The LCT evaluation describes this as a 'remote landscape'. However, it is a working agricultural landscape with a number of small settlements and crossed by some main roads (including the M5). In these locations levels of tranquillilty and remoteness are reduced.				
Historic landscape character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that the LCT predominantly comprises a mixture of modern enclosure (38%) and post-medieval enclosure (8%), which are likely to indicate lower levels of sensitivity to wind turbines. Significant areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (26%) and Barton fields (13%) would be of higher sensitivity. Small areas of estate parkland (Budlake Estate) and orchard would be highly sensitive to the development of turbines.				
Scenic and special qualities			M		
	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	Just over 2% of the eastern section of this LCT falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is nationally designated for it scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes; and long views over field patterned landscape. Some of these may be affected by wind energy development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character. The areas outside the AONB are also recognised for their scenic quality, as described in the 'special qualities' section of the Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which might be affected by wind energy development include its combination of regular patterns of dense hedges containing permanent, grazed pastures and deciduous woodlands; strong and distinct landscape patterns which look unified and harmonious, particularly when viewed from distant vantage points; distant views with no or little development on top of hills and a remote landscape character. The absence of development hilltops and and the remote nature of the				

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>landscape would be particularly vulnerable to the principle of wind energy development.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Discussion on landscape sensitivity</td><td>Although the gently rolling nature of the landform, presence of intensively managed areas, presence of existing tracks/roads (including main roads and the M5), working nature of the agricultural landscape and presence of human activity could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development, the presence of undeveloped hill summits, frequent human scale features, winding hedged and sunken lanes, and sense of relative remoteness all increase sensitivity.

Within the AONB the high scenic quality of the area (recognised through AONB designation), and particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and its diversity of landscape patterns and pictures (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') also increases sensitivity to wind energy development. Areas close to the AONB are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitivity to different turbine heights</td><td>
<table>
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<tr><td>Small (26-50m)</td><td>M</td><td>Small (26-50m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium (51-75m)</td><td>M-H</td><td>Medium (51-75m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Large (76-110m)</td><td>M-H</td><td>Large (76-110m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Very large (111-150m)</td><td>H</td><td>Very large (111-150m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
</table>
The small to medium scale of the hills, presence of varied land cover, human scale features and sunken, winding roads and the remote character means that this LCT would be highly sensitive to 'large' and 'very large' turbines, as well as larger turbines within the 'medium' category.

Areas within the Blackdown Hills AONB would be highly sensitive to any except the smallest wind turbines due to the high scenic quality that is recognised at a national level. Areas close to the AONB are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Commentary on different cluster sizes

Single turbine
Small (<5 turbines)
Medium (6-10)
Large (11-25)
Very large (>25)</td><td>The small to medium scale of the hills, presence of varied land cover, frequent human scale features and its remote character means that this LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to any clusters greater than 'small' in size.

The area of the LCT within the Blackdown Hills AONB will be highly sensitive to anything other than single turbines due to the high scenic quality that is recognised at a national level.</td></tr>
</table>

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3B Lower Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes LCT in relation to wind energy development is included below:

- The undeveloped nature of the hill tops.
- The human scale of the landscape as a consequence of the presence of hedgerows, trees, stone walls and isolated farmsteads.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns.
- The winding hedged and sunken character of the lanes.
- Important landmark features on skylines such as Hemyok Castle.
- The sense of remoteness and overall lack of modern development.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are 11 permitted wind energy developments in this LCT, all of which are in the 'very small' size category. These are: a 10kW, 12m high turbine at Rudge Farm, Lapford; a 11kW, 18m high turbine at Elston Farm, Copplestone; a 2.5kW, 6.5 metre turbine at Furlongs Long Barn, Sandford; an 11kW, 18.3m high turbine at Thornes Farm Shop, Stockleigh Pomeroy; a 6kW, 15m high turbine at Besley House, Holcombe Rogus; two turbines approx 25m high at West Pitt Farm, Whitnage; a 6kW, 15m high turbine at Newhill Farm, Uplowman; a 15m turbine at Fair Oak Farm, Uplowman; a 50kW (25m) turbine at Hill Farm, Uplowman; and another two schemes for which there are no details (at Homeleigh, Kentisbeare and Binneford Farm, Woolfardisworthy).

Five of the turbine schemes fall within DCA 2: Bampton and Beer Downs (two within close proximity to each other); five are within DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland and one is within DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that, outside the AONB, this LCT has low-moderate sensitivity to very small turbines (under 25m to tip), moderate sensitivity to small turbines (26-50m), moderate-high sensitivity to medium and large size turbines (between 51m and 110m), and a high sensitivity to turbines over 110m to tip. The assessment also notes that the LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to any clusters greater than 'small' in size.

This indicates that the landscape will be particularly sensitive to developments other than single 'very small' or 'small' turbines and occasional single larger turbines (no higher than 110m in height). In exceptional circumstances there may be an opportunity for a small group of turbines (no more than 5) in larger scale areas of the LCT as long as it can be shown that the location can accommodate a scheme of that scale and the scheme does not conflict with guidance for this LCT as well as the relevant DCA.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. This could include 'very small' or 'small' scale turbines associated with farm buildings (aiming for consistent scale and design of on-farm turbines) and occasional larger turbines, either singly or in small groups, located in larger scale areas (aiming for consistent scale and design of these larger schemes). A distinct hierarchy should be maintained between these two scales of turbine.

In the Blackdown Hills AONB the landscape will be highly sensitive to anything other than very small single turbines, usually associated with farm buildings. Areas close to the AONB are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).

The overall aim should be to make sure that wind energy developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

When siting and designing wind energy developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 2 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- The generally undeveloped nature of the hill tops within the LCT is conserved.
- Turbines do not overwhelm the human scale of the landscape.
- Delivery of turbines does not result in road amendments that would adversely affect the winding, hedged and sunken character of the lanes.
- Wind turbines do not compete with important landmark features on skylines (such as Hemyok Castle) for prominence.
- The sense of remoteness and overall lack of modern development across the LCT is retained.

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present.

In addition, in DCA 06: Blackdown Hills, which forms part of the Blackdown Hills AONB, it will be particularly important to respect the unspoilt rural character of the landscape. Here the landscape will be highly sensitive to anything other than very small single turbines, usually associated with farm buildings. This LCT includes Hemyok Castle which is an important historic landmark feature. In addition, areas of this LCT that occur in the east of DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands are overlooked by the Blackdown Hills and therefore the planning of any development in this area will need to take careful account of views from the AONB.

Much of DCA 14 Crediton Rolling Farmland is classified as this LCT. This area is inter-visible with DCA 65 Witheridge and Rackenford Moor and views from DCA 65 will therefore need to be taken into account when planning any development in DCA 14.

The small area of this LCT that occurs in DCA 12: Clyst Lowland Farmlands is close to main roads and the M5 motorway which might lower sensitivity slightly in areas close to this infrastructure.

Areas of this LCT that occur in DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs are uncharacteristically elevated and therefore prominent in views from other parts of the district (and beyond).

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform			M		
	An undulating landscape with hidden areas as well as some visible slopes (particularly on higher ground), situated at a range of elevations between 20m-266m AOD.				
Sense of openness / enclosure			M		
	High degrees of variation in terms of the level of visual containment: open character on upper slopes, but within the valleys the level of enclosure is high due to the dense hedge network, extensive woodland and surrounding landform.				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	The majority of the area is comprised of medium to large-scale fields which are a mix of regular and irregular shapes bound by dense well managed hedgerows, creating a strong pattern.				
Land cover			M		
	An agricultural landscape of predominately improved pasture with some areas of arable farmland, mixed woodland, dense scrubby undergrowth and rushes in valleys contributing to a varied landscape pattern. The area includes a number of small settlements.				
Perceptual qualities					
	The LCT evaluation describes this as a 'remote landscape'. However, it is a working agricultural landscape with a number of small settlements and crossed by some main roads (including the M5). In these locations levels of tranquillilty and remoteness are reduced.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that the LCT predominantly comprises a mixture of modern enclosure (38%) and post-medieval enclosure (8%), which are likely to indicate lower levels of sensitivity to solar PV development. Significant areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (26%) and Barton fields (13%) would be of higher sensitivity. Small areas of estate parkland (Budlake Estate) and orchard would be particularly sensitive to the development of solar PV.				
Scenic and special qualities			M		
	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	Just over 2% of the eastern section of this LCT falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is nationally designated for it scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes; and long views over field patterned landscape. Some of these may be affected by solar PV development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character. The areas outside the AONB are also recognised for their scenic quality, as described in the 'special qualities' section of the Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which might be affected by solar PV development include its combination of regular patterns of dense hedges containing permanent, grazed pastures and deciduous woodlands; strong and distinct landscape patterns which look unified and harmonious, particularly when viewed from distant vantage points; distant views with no or little development on top of hills and a remote landscape character. The remote nature of the landscape and its distinctive landscape patterns would be particularly vulnerable to the principle of solar PV development.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the presence of some hidden areas, high sense of enclosure in the valleys, and the presence of human activity could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the presence of visible slopes, undeveloped hill tops, well-wooded and pastoral character, harmonious landscape pattern; and 'remote' qualities heighten levels of				

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4">sensitivity.

Within the AONB the high scenic quality of the area (recognised through AONB designation), and particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and its diversity of landscape patterns and (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') increase sensitivity to solar PV development. Areas close to the AONB are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="8">Sensitivity to different solar PV development</td><td colspan="2">Land outside the AONB</td><td colspan="2">Land within the AONB</td></tr>
<tr><td>Very Small (<1ha)</td><td>L-M</td><td>Very Small (<1ha)</td><td>M-H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Small (>1-5ha)</td><td>L-M</td><td>Small (>1-5ha)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium (>5-10ha)</td><td>M</td><td>Medium (>5-10ha)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Large (>10-15ha)</td><td>M-H</td><td>Large (>10-15ha)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Very large (>15ha)</td><td>H</td><td>Very large (>15ha)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">The presence of visually prominent slopes, some sense of openness, sensitive land cover types and high levels of remoteness indicates that this LCT would be progressively more sensitive to developments greater than 'medium' in scale.

The sense of openness, isolation and tranquil rural character and high scenic quality (recognised through AONB designation) means that the parts that fall within the AONB would be highly sensitive to any scale solar PV developments.</td></tr>
</table>

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3B Lower Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- Visually prominent upper slopes which are frequently open in character.
- Lack of development of hill tops.
- The intimate scale and remote character of the LCT in places.
- The diverse land cover patterns, including valued areas of semi-natural habitat and woodland.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns.
- Sensitive historic land cover types including medieval enclosures, Barton fields, small patches of orchard and historic park and garden.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are three permitted solar PV developments within the LCT, a 4.24ha solar farm at Broadgate, Morchard Bishop; a 3ha development at Higher Pirzwell, Kentisbeare; and a 4.53ha site at Barton Farm, Burlescombe. These are all within the 'small' category. The first scheme falls within DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland with the other two lying within DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands (but spaced far apart). In addition there is a 'small' operational scheme at Ellicombe Farm near Down St Mary, covering 5.81 hectares – also within DCA 14.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that, outside the AONB, this LCT has a low-moderate sensitivity to very small and small developments (up to 5ha), a moderate sensitivity to medium size developments (>5-10ha), a moderate-high sensitivity to large PV schemes (10-15ha) and a high sensitivity to developments greater than 15ha. This indicates that the any solar PV developments in this area should be less than 10ha in size and located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and valued areas of semi-natural habitat.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

Within the Blackdown Hills AONB the isolated and unspoilt rural character and its diversity of landscape patterns (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') make it highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha). These should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes. Areas close to the AONB are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Solar PV schemes are not located on visually prominent upper slopes, especially those that are open in character.
- Open hill tops remain free of development.
- The intimate scale of the landscape is maintained by ensuring schemes are in scale with the area in which they are located.
- Locate development on brownfield sites or near existing settlement/ development so that the most remote areas remain free of development.
- The diverse land cover patterns that characterise this LCT are maintained and solar PV development does not dominate any one area.
- Solar PV development does no adversely affect areas of valued areas of semi-natural habitat and woodland.
- Solar PV development does not adversely affect the integrity of areas of medieval enclosures, Barton fields, orchards, or historic parks and gardens.

Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present.

In addition, in DCA 06: Blackdown Hills, which forms part of the Blackdown Hills AONB, it will be particularly important to respect the unspoilt rural character of the landscape and diversity of landscape patterns. This area will is highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha).

Much of DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland is classified as this LCT. This area is inter-visible with DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor and views from DCA 65 will therefore need to be taken into account when planning any development in DCA 14.

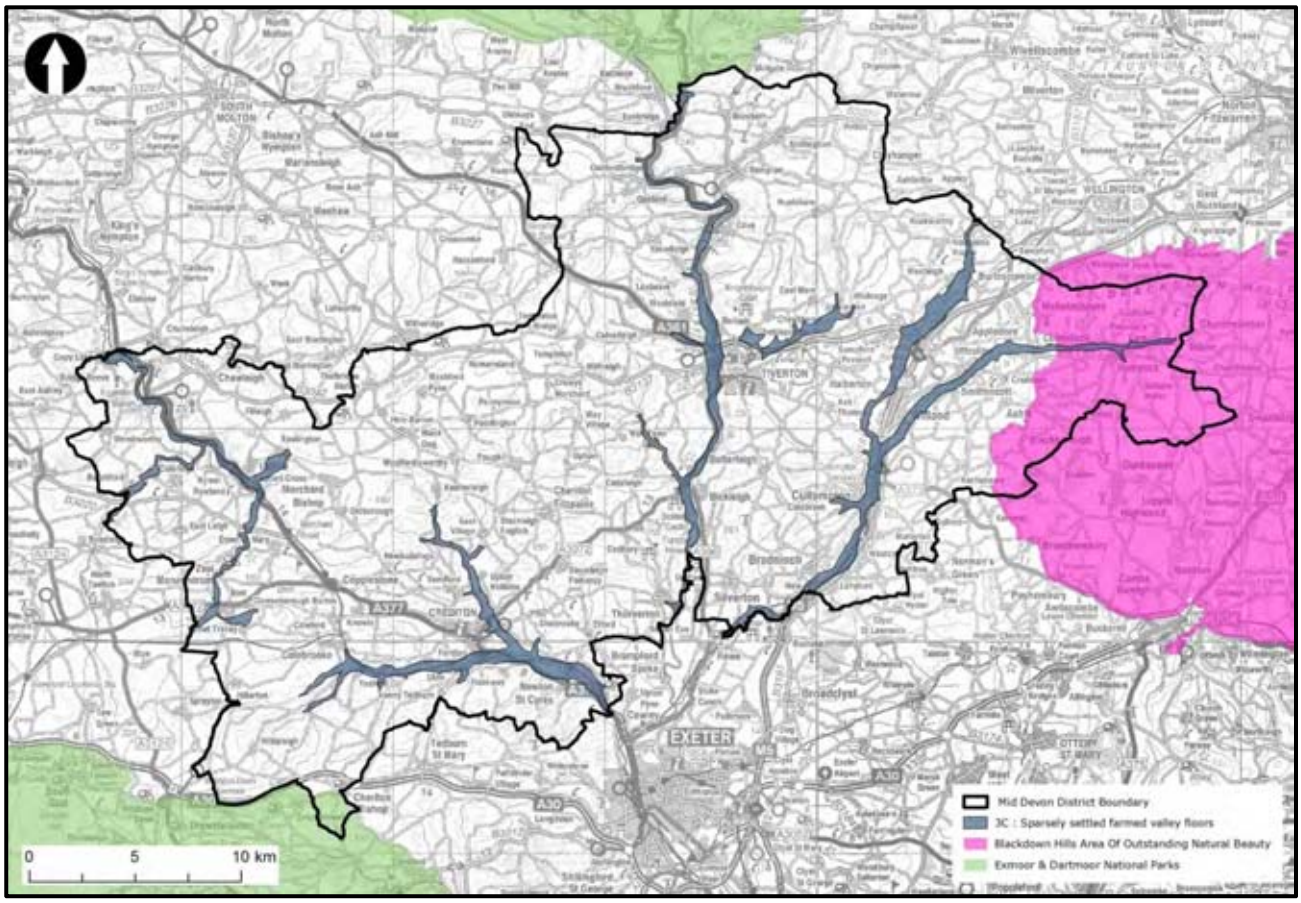
The small area of this LCT that occurs in DCA 12: Clyst Lowland Farmlands is close to main roads and motorway which might lower sensitivity a little in areas close to these features.

Areas of this LCT that occur in the east of DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands are overlooked by the Blackdown Hills and therefore siting will need to take careful account of views from the AONB.

Areas of this LCT that occur in DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs are particularly elevated and are therefore likely to be more sensitive than lower slopes. There will be a need to particularly avoid located solar PV on visually prominent upper slopes in this DCA.

LCT 3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 06: Blackdown Hills

DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland

DCA 16: Cullompton Rolling Farmland

DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands

DCA 24: Exe Valley

DCA 25: Exeter Slopes and Hills

DCA57: Taw Valley

DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor

DCA 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes

DCA 68: Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands

Key Landscape Characteristics[27]

- Low-lying flood plains of the lower reaches and broader parts of the river valleys. A medium to small scale landscape, characterised by relatively narrow strips of gently sloping or level land with a smooth surface topography.
- This landscape has an inherently damp character. In places this damp character becomes wet, with sinuous rivers meandering across the plains. Some streams diverge, and the split channels create wetland, and a number of water bodies.
- The soils and surface geology strongly relate to the presence of the rivers, with alluvium and valley silts, gravels and sands.
- Towards the south of the district the landscape is agriculturally improved with extensive arable cultivation in fields of a larger scale due mainly to field amalgamation.
- The woodland patterns tend to be sinuous, with small-scale scattered deciduous stands. Tree cover along the riverbanks creates a sense of spatial enclosure, with species, including alder, ash, oak and hawthorn.
- This is a pastoral landscape with locally improved grasslands within a mosaic of generally grazed and rough meadows. The field vegetation tends to be mixed with marshy areas of rushes, which become more scattered on the drier, better-drained land.
- This landscape experiences greater levels of enclosure due to woodland and the rising landform. Hedges and hedgerow trees further reduce the level of visibility particularly on the narrower sections. Where the valleys broaden towards the south, the levels of visibility and available views increase and the landscape has a more open and exposed character.
- The hamlets and roadside cottages are linked by a network of winding lanes narrowly contained by high hedges on banks. Some are sunken lanes. There are some public rights of way, however this is an inherently inaccessible and isolated landscape.
- Settlements within this landscape tend to have developed over time by spreading up onto higher land away from the rivers, rather than along their banks. Historically building materials are stone and cob with thatched roofs which have often been replaced by either slate or tile.
- There are a number of prominent land uses adjacent to the river such as paper and feed mills at Thorverton, Cullompton and Uffculme, the textile factory, school and college at Tiverton, the fish farm at Exebridge and Upton as well as the mills and industrial estate at Fordton.
- Villages and hamlets are also characteristically found alongside the rivers. Where these ribbon developments and hamlets line the rivers, such as at Eggesford on the Taw, there are small-scale pastures that have a domesticated and garden character.
- Transport routes through this landscape are highly visible. Characteristically roads follow the valley floor edge, above the risk of flood. Some of the minor roads have stonewalls or hedges separating the valley from the valley sides and there are many stone bridges crossing the rivers.
- The mainline train from Penzance to London runs through the Culm Valley within the district and the Tarka line runs through the Taw valley from Bury Bridge. Bridges, weirs and stone-faced cuttings of historic railway interest, create consistent and repeated patterns throughout this type.

52% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within North, East and West Devon, as well as Torridge and Exeter Districts.

[27] [27] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▬▬▬▬▬▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform and scale				M-H	
	Distinctly flat or gently sloping flood plains forming narrow strips of land of a small, often intimate scale, enclosed by steep valley sides.				
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features			M		
	A landscape with diverse land cover patterns including wetlands, rivers, meadows, woodlands, fields of pasture and arable, and industrial land uses including mills, factories, and fish farms. Fields are of a medium to large scale, becoming smaller towards the valley heads. Frequent human scale features include hedges, hedgerow trees, woodland, bridges, settlements and isolated houses.				
Tracks / transport pattern			M		
	Main roads (M5, A396 & A377) and railway lines (the Penzance to London main line and the Tarka Line) follow the river corridors along with winding narrow often sunken lanes which are bound by stone walls or hedges. There are many road crossing points along bridges, provided by stone bridges.				
Skylines		L-M			
	Predominately, skylines are undeveloped and not visually prominent or distinctive due to the low elevation of the landscape. In localised areas, however, historic buildings including mills form distinctive features on the local skyline.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	Away from the main roads this is an inherently isolated landscape with a high sense of tranquillity. In places it is also a naturalistic landscape (including flood meadows and woodlands), although there is some modern human influence in proximity to the main towns of Cullumpton and Tiverton.				
Historic landscape character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that 45% of the LCT is comprised of modern enclosure and 22% of post-medieval enclosures (generally of lower sensitivity to wind energy development), with smaller areas of medieval enclosures (9%) which would be of higher sensitivity. Areas of watermeadow (9%) and woodland would be particularly sensitive to wind turbines.				
Scenic and special qualities			M		
	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	A very small part of this LCT (less than 3%) falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, recognised at a national level for its scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; and its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes. Some of these may be affected by wind energy development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character. The remainder of the area has scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. These include it being a landscape that is often perceived to be both impressive and interesting; a strong sense of harmony; its typically tranquil character, being both still and silent away from roads; high number of locally valued features present bridges and ancient settlements; both local people and tourists using the road (the A396 in particular), appreciate the tranquillity and isolation; the historic Culm valley railway; and trees and woodlands tracing the watercourses' sinuous patterns. The tranquil character and presence of valued historic features would be particularly sensitive to the				

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4">development of turbines.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Discussion on landscape sensitivity</td><td colspan="4">Although the flat landform, presence of main roads, and non-prominent skylines might indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development, the relatively small-scale narrow and often intimate landscape, overlooked by steep valley sides, highly tranquil character away from main roads, presence of diverse land cover patterns including areas of watermeadow and other semi-natural habitats, locations of small-scale medieval fields and important scenic qualities heighten sensitivity.

Within the AONB the isolated and unspoilt rural character and its diversity of landscape patterns and (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') further increase sensitivity.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Sensitivity to different turbine heights</td><td colspan="2">Land outside the AONB</td><td colspan="2">Land Within the AONB</td></tr>
<tr><td>Very Small (15-25m)</td><td>M-H</td><td>Very Small (15-25m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Small (26-50m)</td><td>M-H</td><td>Small (26-50m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium (51-75m)</td><td>M-H</td><td>Medium (51-75m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Large (76-110m)</td><td>H</td><td>Large (76-110m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Very large (111-150m)</td><td>H</td><td>Very large (111-150m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">This small-scale landscape with intimate areas, high levels of enclosure, isolation and tranquillity result in higher levels of sensitivity to larger turbine sizes. Areas within the AONB will be highly sensitive to all turbines.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Commentary on different cluster sizes

Single turbine
Small (<5 turbines)
Medium (6-10)
Large (11-25)
Very large (>25)</td><td colspan="4">The narrow intimate nature of the valley floors, high levels of enclosure, isolation and tranquillity means that this LCT would be highly sensitive to any clusters of wind turbines. It is likely that only single turbines would be able to be accommodated within the LCT outside the AONB. Areas within the AONB will be highly sensitive to all turbines.</td></tr>
</table>

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors LCT in relation to wind energy development is included below:

- The narrow intimate nature of the valley floors, enclosed and overlooked by steep valley sides.
- The presence of frequent human scale features.
- The lack of access tracks and roads (away from main roads) and the sense of isolation and tranquillity in these areas.
- Sunken winding lanes bounded by high hedgebanks and hedgerows.
- Naturalistic land cover including grasslands, watermeadows, wetlands and woodland which provide valued wildlife habitats.
- Important historic features relating to the area's ancient development and long industrial history including chimney stacks, stone walls, stone bridges and weirs.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. There is only one permitted wind energy development in this LCT: a 6kW, 10.6 metre high turbine at the Tesco on Whitton Way, Cullompton. This site falls within DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands, with the turbine falling below the threshold of the 'very small' size category used in this assessment.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that, outside the AONB, this LCT has moderate-high sensitivity to very small, small and medium size turbines (up to 75m) and a high sensitivity to turbines over 75m, due to the small-scale nature of the landscape. It also notes that the narrow intimate nature of the valley floors, high levels of enclosure, isolation and tranquillity means that this LCT would be highly sensitive to any clusters of wind turbines. This analysis indicates that this LCT is only likely to be able to accommodate single 'very small' or 'small' turbines associated with existing buildings (or smaller turbines within the 'medium' category in exceptional circumstances).

These single farm turbines should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of size and form) to maintain a simple image and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that wind turbines do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of the LCT.

In the Blackdown Hills AONB the landscape will be highly sensitive to anything other than very small single turbines, associated with existing buildings.

When siting and designing wind energy developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 2 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Turbines are in scale with the narrow intimate nature of the valley floors, and the human scale of the landscape.

- Areas with a high sense of isolation and tranquillity are maintained.
- Delivery of turbines does not affect the sunken winding lanes or the high hedgebanks and hedgerows that border these lanes.
- Development does not adversely affect naturalistic land cover including grasslands, watermeadows, wetlands and woodland.
- Development (including road amendments associated with delivery of turbines) does not adversely affect the important historic features relating to the area's long industrial history including chimney stacks, stone walls, stone bridges and weirs.

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present.

In addition, in DCA 06: Blackdown Hills, which forms part of the Blackdown Hills AONB, it will be particularly important to respect the unspoilt rural character of the landscape. Here the landscape will be highly sensitive to anything other than very small single turbines, associated with existing farm buildings.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform		L-M			
	Distinctly flat or gently sloping flood plains forming relatively narrow strips of land of a small, often intimate-scale enclosed by steep valley sides.				
Sense of openness / enclosure		L-M			
	This LCT has a significant degree of enclosure, due to surrounding valley sides which are often steep and well wooded, tree lined hedges bordering fields and roads and blocks of woodland along the stream and river corridors. There is an element of openness where the river floodplains widen, becoming more managed and less vegetated.				
Field pattern and scale		L-M			
	The majority of the LCT is defined by regular fields of a large scale. Small-scale fields also are present where historic field patterns exist to the west of Tiverton and at higher elevations.				
Land cover				M-H	
	This is a predominately rural and naturalistic landscape comprising watermeadows, carr woodland, pasture and arable farmland crossed by numerous streams and rivers. However there are some areas of settlement and urban influences.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	Away from the main roads this is an inherently isolated landscape with a high sense of tranquillity. In places it is also a naturalistic landscape (including flood meadows and woodlands), although there is some modern human influence in proximity to the main towns of Cullumpton and Tiverton.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that 45% of the LCT is comprised of modern enclosure and 22% of post-medieval enclosures (generally of lower sensitivity to solar PV development), with smaller areas of medieval enclosures (9%) which would be of higher sensitivity. Areas of watermeadow (9%) and woodland would be particularly sensitive to solar PV.				
Scenic and special qualities			M		
	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	A very small part of this LCT (less than 3%) falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, recognised at a national level for its scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; and its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes. Some of these may be affected by wind energy development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character. The remainder of the area has scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. These include it being a landscape that is often perceived to be both impressive and interesting; a strong sense of harmony; its typically tranquil character, being both still and silent away from roads; high number of locally valued features present bridges and ancient settlements; both local people and tourists using the road (the A396 in particular), appreciate the tranquillity and isolation; the historic Culm valley railway; and trees and woodlands tracing the watercourses' sinuous patterns. The tranquil character, valued areas of woodland and trees and presence of important historic features would be particularly sensitive to solar PV development.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the distinctly flat topography, presence of medium to large-scale field pattern, areas human activity and the enclosed nature of the valley floors could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the landscape's high levels of perceived naturalness, important scenic qualities, varied land cover including areas of highly sensitive watermeadows, areas of open floodplain and high levels of				

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4">tranquillity heighten levels of sensitivity.

Within the AONB the isolated and unspoilt rural character and its diversity of landscape patterns (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') further increase sensitivity.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development</td><td colspan="2">Land outside the AONB</td><td colspan="2">Land within the AONB</td></tr>
<tr><td>Very Small (<1ha)</td><td>L-M</td><td>Very Small (<1ha)</td><td>M-H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Small (>1-5ha)</td><td>M</td><td>Small (>1-5ha)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium (>5-10ha)</td><td>H</td><td>Medium (>5-10ha)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Large (>10-15ha)</td><td>H</td><td>Large (>10-15ha)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Very large (>15ha)</td><td>H</td><td>Very large (>15ha)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">The relatively small-scale, intimate nature of the valley floors, naturalistic land cover and high levels of tranquillity means that this LCT would be highly sensitive to solar PV developments of medium scale or larger.

Areas within the AONB will be highly sensitive to all scales of solar PV development, with very small schemes being slightly less sensitive.</td></tr>
</table>

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- Strong feelings of isolation and tranquillity found away from areas of settlement, development and main roads.
- Naturalistic land cover including grasslands, watermeadows, wetlands and woodland which provide valued wildlife habitats.
- The intimate nature of the valley floors and the presence of small scale, historic fields.
- Important historic features relating to the area's ancient development and long industrial history including chimney stacks, stone walls, stone bridges and weirs.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. There is only one permitted solar PV development in this LCT: a 5MW scheme at Ayshford Court Farm, Westleigh, which occupies 16.53ha (a 'very large' scheme). It should be noted that the site of this development, although located in LCT 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors according to the Mid Devon classification, is actually more like LCT 3B Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes in character. It is also located adjacent to the M5.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that, outside the AONB, this LCT has low-moderate sensitivity to very small schemes (less than 1ha) and a moderate sensitivity to small schemes (1-5ha). It is highly sensitive to any schemes over this size due to the relatively small-scale intimate nature of the valley floors. This analysis indicates that the landscape is unlikely to be able to accommodate any schemes greater than 5ha in size. Any proposals should be located outside the floodplain/ wetland areas, and preferably on brownfield sites or in areas with existing settlement or man-made features.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

Within the AONB the isolated and unspoilt rural character make it highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha). These should be located in more enclosed areas where they will not intrude into the open floodplain landscape.

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Strong feelings of isolation and tranquillity found away from areas of settlement, development and main roads are maintained.
- Development does not result in loss of any naturalistic land cover including

grasslands, watermeadows, wetlands and woodland.

- Any development respects the intimate nature of the valley floors and small scale of the landscape (including small scale, historic field patterns).
- Development does not adversely affect chimney stacks, stone walls, stone bridges and weirs that represent the long industrial history associated with the LCT.

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas

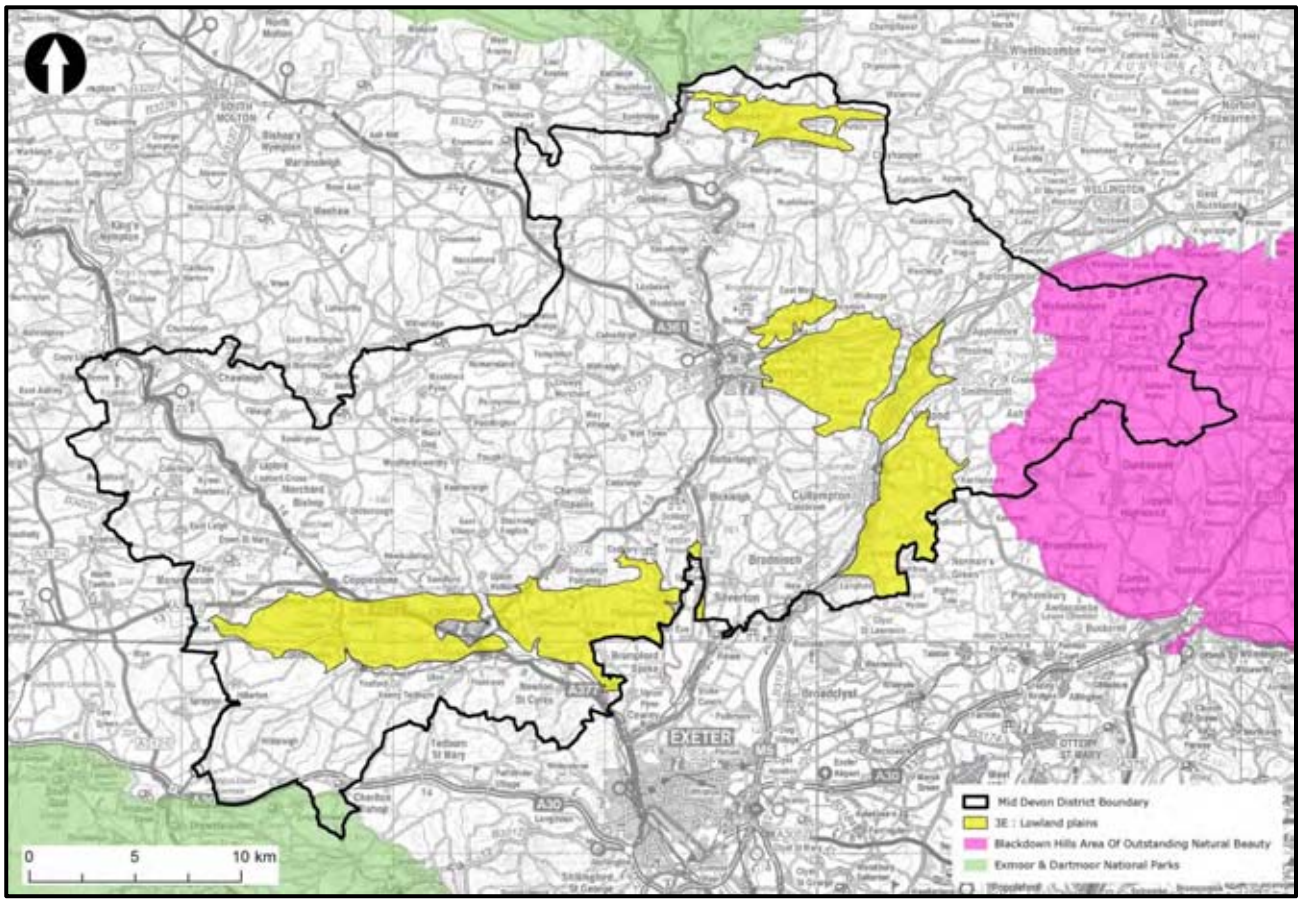
This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present.

In addition, in DCA 06: Blackdown Hills, which forms part of the Blackdown Hills AONB. Here the landscape will be highly sensitive to anything other than very small developments located in enclosed areas away from the open floodplain where they will not affect the unspoilt rural character of the landscape and diversity of landscape patterns that exist in the AONB.

DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands contains the M5, mainline railway and overhead electricity lines which affect the perceptual character of the landscape. There may be some opportunities for small scale developments in these locations if they satisfy other guidance for the LCT outlined above.

LCT 3E: Lowland Plains

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs

DCA12: Clyst Lowland Farmlands

DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands

DCA 68: Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands

Key Landscape Characteristics[28]

- Gently rolling middle ground to lowland with smooth, rounded hilltops that have concave lower and convex upper slopes.
- Primarily managed as arable farmland with some areas of improved grassland. Mixed farming is the main agrarian pattern, with ley grassland forming an important part of the rotation of crops including barley, wheat, cabbage, corn and oil seed rape.
- For the most part it is characterised by the Red Devon Sandstone giving great soil fertility for arable farming resulting in Grade 1 and Grade 2 agricultural land classification.
- An agrarian landscape with medium to large scale field patterns.
- Fields are divided by hedgerows and hedgebanks, with the hedges forming spines along the rolling hills, with rib-like hedges crossing the convex slopes down into the valleys. These hedges are distinctive in their regularity and simplicity.
- Hedgerow trees are infrequent within the type. Individual trees within amalgamated fields indicate the positions of lost hedges.
- Copses and discrete woodlands are characteristic. In some areas the fields are defined by hedgerow trees with isolated clumps of trees on hillsides or ridge lines. Posbury Clump, a hilltop group of trees, is particularly visually prominent, forming a local landmark.
- Whilst there are a number of outlying, regularly distributed farms and villages, hamlets and small groups of houses, this is generally a sparsely populated area.
- Some orchards, once typical of the area, remain and there are small areas of market gardening.
- The landscape is dotted with large-scale farmsteads which tend to be located on the rolling sides of the land, above the valley floor. Villages tend to be located either near to valley crossing points or on the higher ground. Modern steel framed farm buildings are sited alongside the more traditional farm building style of cob and thatch.
- The tree cover is enriched by parks around small manor houses. There are two notable estates at Crediton present within the landscape, Creedy Park and Shobrooke Park. To the east of the district there are two parklands including Bridwell Park and Bradfield House, Uffculme. These have a parkland and large-scale pastoral character created through the absence of hedges and are characterful of clump tree planting within extensive shelterbelts.
- Views are highly variable. The landscape is semi-open with some long extensive views afforded from on top of hilltops. Where hedges are high views are mostly framed or confined with glimpses into and out only present from field gate openings.
- Historic features include Cadbury Castle between and to the west of Thorverton and Tiverton, hill clumps and the parklands near Crediton, as well as historic village centres with conservation area status.
- Roads are straight or very gently winding in nature and characterised by narrow routes that are lined with traditional hedgebanks. Land is traditionally highly valued for agriculture, and very little waste in the form of verges and wide roads.
- The landscape typically has short vistas terminated by a backdrop of curving hills with occasional long views from prominent locations, giving rise to a patchwork of irregular shaped fields with green pastures.

54% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within East Devon District

[28] [28] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity
Landform and scale	L-M This is a gently rolling middle ground to lowland with smooth, rounded hilltops that have concave lower and convex upper slopes. It is a medium to large-scale landscape with some areas of smaller scale, more intimate landform associated with incised tributary valleys. Elevation varies from 20-165m AOD.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	M This is a diverse, mixed agricultural landscape including fields of pasture, arable cropping, market gardening and important areas of traditional orchards. Parkland estates, areas of Culm grassland and equine enterprises also contribute to the varied land cover patterns. Medium to large-scale field patterns are divided by hedgerows and hedgebanks which have few well-spaced trees. Human scale features include individual trees, copses, discrete woodland and isolated tree clumps as well as small groups of houses, farmsteads, manor houses, small settlements and caravan/camping sites.
Tracks / transport pattern	M Existing roads and tracks are present across the landscape. These are straight or very gently winding, generally wider than the characteristically narrow, Mid Devon lanes found elsewhere in the district. They are also frequently lined by grass verges and high hedgebanks. The M5 motorway crosses a small part of the eastern extent of the LCT.
Skylines	L-M Isolated clumps of trees sometimes form prominent features on hillsides and ridgelines, of note is Posbury Clump which is seen as a local landmark. Curving hills act as a backdrop for short vistas from within the LCT, but the skylines are generally lower than those of surrounding landscapes (and therefore are not particularly prominent). Other landscape features which appear on the skylines of this LCT include pylons and church towers (e.g. St Andrew's Church, Colebrooke).
Perceptual qualities	L-M This LCT is generally sparsely populated with small groups of houses, farmsteads (including modern agricultural buildings) and villages. It also includes land on the fringes of Tiverton and Crediton, and is cut through by main roads (e.g. the A361, A377 and M5) with localised impacts on levels of tranquillity. Although the landscape is relatively well developed, it retains a strong traditional rural character away from the main roads and settlements. In the east it is influenced by managed estate parkland, evoking an historic sense of place.
Historic landscape character	L-M The HLC classifies 43% of the LCT as modern enclosure, and 10% as post-medieval enclosure, indicating a lower sensitivity to wind energy development. Barton fields account for around 17% of the LCT, and medieval field enclosures based on strip fields 15% - which would be of higher sensitivity.
Scenic and special qualities	M Although not designated at a national level, the LCT includes valued scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which could be affected by wind energy development include its attractive textured patchwork of mixed farming; notable estates and manor houses within the area with important visual relationships to the broader landscape (including through designed vistas); and intact traditional orchards. Part of the LCT is immediately adjacent to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include: it being a timeless landscape mostly free from intrusive development, striking views inside and out of the National Park, and its sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity. These special

	qualities might be highly sensitive to development within adjacent areas and should be considered in any proposals.	
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	The medium to large-scale rolling landform, modern field patterns and presence of existing modern development and infrastructure may indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development, while the presence of frequent human scale features and varied land cover, including mixed agriculture, areas of Culm grassland, traditional orchards and historic smaller-scale field patterns increases sensitivity.. Although not within a nationally designated landscape, the special qualities noted for the landscape – particularly its strong patchwork agricultural character and historic vistas relating to the area's parkland estates heighten levels of sensitivity.	
Sensitivity to different turbine heights	Very Small (15-25m)	**L-M**
	Small (26-50m)	**M**
	Medium (51-75m)	**M**
	Large (76-110m)	**M-H**
	Very large (111-150m)	**H**
	Although the flat to gently undulating landform and medium to large field pattern results in a relatively large scale landscape, the presence of human scale features such as hedgebanks, individual and small clumps of trees, settlements and estate parkland mean this LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to 'large' and 'very large' turbines.	
Commentary on different cluster sizes Single turbine Small (<5 turbines) Medium (6-10) Large (11-25) Very large (>25)	Despite the relatively large scale of the landscape compared to other parts of Mid Devon and the mainly flat to gently undulating landform, the presence of frequent human scale features and valued tracts of historic parkland estate mean that this LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to any clusters greater than 'small'.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for the 3E Lowland Plains LCT in relation to wind energy development is included below:

- Visual relationship between estates and the wider landscape (including through designed vistas), and the setting of important areas of historic parkland.
- The diverse land cover pattern with a patchwork texture including areas of remaining intact orchards, Culm grassland, Barton fields and medieval enclosure based on strip fields and estate parkland.
- Isolated trees and copses on hillsides and ridgelines which form prominent features on skylines and are characteristic of the landscape.
- Locations within close proximity to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include striking views out of the protected landscape and a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are two permitted wind energy developments in this LCT: a 12.4m turbine at East Manley Farm, Halberton; and a small group of three 17.5m turbines at Manley Farm, Halberton. The group of three fall within the 'very small' turbine category, with the single turbine falling at a height below the lower threshold for this category. Both schemes are within DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands and are located adjacent to each other.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT has a low-moderate sensitivity to 'very small' turbines (under 25m), a moderate sensitivity to 'small' and 'medium' turbines (25-75m), a moderate-high sensitivity to 'large' turbines (76-110m) and a high sensitivity to turbines over 110m to tip. The assessment also notes that the LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to any clusters greater than 'small' in size. This indicates that the landscape will be particularly sensitive to turbines over 75m and unlikely to be able to accommodate turbines over 110m in height. It also concludes that there should be no more than 5 turbines in any one group. Larger turbines and groups should be located in areas of larger scale landscape (indicated by landform/ field size).

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. This could include very small or small scale turbines associated with farm buildings (aiming for consistent scale and design of on-farm turbines) and occasional small groups of medium or large turbines in larger scale areas (aiming for consistent scale and design of these larger schemes), and maintaining a distinct hierarchy between these two scales of turbine.

The overall aim should be to make sure that wind energy developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of that LCT (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

When siting and designing wind energy developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 2 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In

addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Consideration is given to the visual relationship between estates and the wider landscape (including through designed vistas), and the setting of areas of historic parkland to ensure heritage significance of these assets is maintained.
- Development does not adversely affect intact orchards or areas of Culm grassland.
- Barton fields and medieval enclosures based on strip fields remain as features of the landscape.
- Isolated trees and copses on hillsides and ridgelines continue to form prominent features on skylines.
- Wind energy development does not adversely affect the sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity associated with the Exmoor National Park, or unacceptably impact on the striking views from the National Park into the district.

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present.

This LCT within DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs occupies valley slopes and is more sensitive to larger turbines than within other DCAs due to a more intimate scale, wooded character, undulating landform and tranquil 'backwater' character. When developing in this area views from the Exmoor National Park will also be of relevance.

This LCT in DCA 68: Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands is more strongly undulating and elevated than other areas. This means that the choice of scale of turbine and size of groupings will need careful thought to ensure they do not overwhelm the scale of the landscape and avoid the most prominent, elevated locations. It is also overlooked by the Raddon Hills (LCT 1E in DCA 14) and therefore views from these hills will be important to consider when locating and designing the layout of any turbines and ancillary development.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform			M		
	The landform of this LCT is generally low-lying and flat, with some rounded hilltops in parts. Some elevated areas contain visible slopes which rise up from the surrounding flatter landform.				
Sense of openness / enclosure			M		
	The character of this farmed landscape is generally semi-open with some long extensive views owing to the landform. Where high hedges and woodland copses exist they confine and restrict views creating a localised sense of enclosure.				
Field pattern and scale		L-M			
	Predominately a mixed agricultural landscape with medium to large-scale fields, including some larger, amalgamated fields. There is a mixture of field shapes although rectilinear fields are most common.				
Land cover				M-H	
	This is a diverse, mixed agricultural landscape including fields of pasture, grassland, arable cropping, market gardening and important areas of traditional orchards. Parkland estates, areas of Culm grassland and equine enterprises also contribute to the varied land cover patterns.				
Perceptual qualities		L-M			
	This LCT is generally sparsely populated with small groups of houses, farmsteads (including modern agricultural buildings), nucleated historic villages and hamlets. It also includes land on the fringes of Tiverton and Crediton, and is cut through by main roads (e.g. the A361, A377 and M5). Although the landscape is relatively well developed, it retains a strong traditional rural character with influences of managed estate parkland away from the main roads and settlements.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The HLC classifies 43% of the LCT as modern enclosure, and 10% as post-medieval enclosure, indicating a lower sensitivity to solar PV development. Barton fields account for around 17% of the LCT, and medieval field enclosures based on strip fields 15% - which would be of higher sensitivity.				
Scenic and special qualities			M		
	Although not designated at a national level, the LCT includes valued scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which could be affected by solar PV development include its attractive textured patchwork of mixed farming; notable estates and manor houses within the area with important visual relationships to the broader landscape (including through designed vistas); and intact traditional orchards. Part of the LCT is immediately adjacent to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include: it being a timeless landscape mostly free from intrusive development, striking views inside and out of the National Park, and its sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity. These special qualities might be highly sensitive to development within adjacent areas and should be considered in any proposals.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	The low-lying undulating landform, mixed field patterns with areas of intensive farming, presence of modern development and lack of national landscape designation may indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, although the landscape's open nature and rural character (away from settlements and roads), presence of medieval enclosures based on strip fields and valued areas of historic estate parkland and traditional orchards increases sensitivity.				

Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)	**M**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**M-H**
	Very large (>15ha)	**H**
	The scale of the landscape, sensitive field pattern and estate parkland means that this LCT is likely to be sensitive to 'large' and 'very large' solar PV developments. Areas of medieval field patterns and more prominent slopes may also be sensitive to medium-scale schemes.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3E Lowland Plains LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- Visual relationship between estates and the wider landscape (including through designed vistas), and the setting of important areas of historic parkland.
- The diverse land cover pattern with a patchwork texture including areas of remaining intact orchards, Culm grassland, Barton fields and medieval enclosure based on strip fields and estate parkland.
- Areas of open and strongly rural character.
- Locations within close proximity to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include striking views out of the protected landscape and a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there is one permitted solar PV development in this LCT: a 1.8MW (6.15ha) scheme at Langlands Farm, Uffculme Road, Willand. This would be classed as a 'medium' scale development according to this assessment.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT has a moderate sensitivity to developments up to 10ha in size, a moderate-high sensitivity to large developments (>10-15ha) and a high sensitivity to developments greater than 15ha. This indicates that the landscape would be particularly sensitive to developments over 10ha in size and is unlikely to accommodate any developments over 15ha in size. Any proposals should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and avoiding sensitive landcover types such as intact orchards and Culm grassland.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character), and that the rural patchwork is retained.

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Consideration is given to the visual relationship between estates and the wider landscape (including through designed vistas), and the setting of areas of historic parkland to ensure heritage significance of these assets is maintained.
- The diverse land cover pattern with a patchwork texture including areas of remaining intact orchards and Culm grassland is maintained.
- Areas of Barton fields and medieval enclosures based on strip fields are maintained and remain recognisable in the landscape.
- Areas of open and strongly rural character are maintained.

- Solar PV development does not adversely affect the sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity associated with the Exmoor National Park, or unacceptably impact on the striking views from the National Park into the district.

Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas

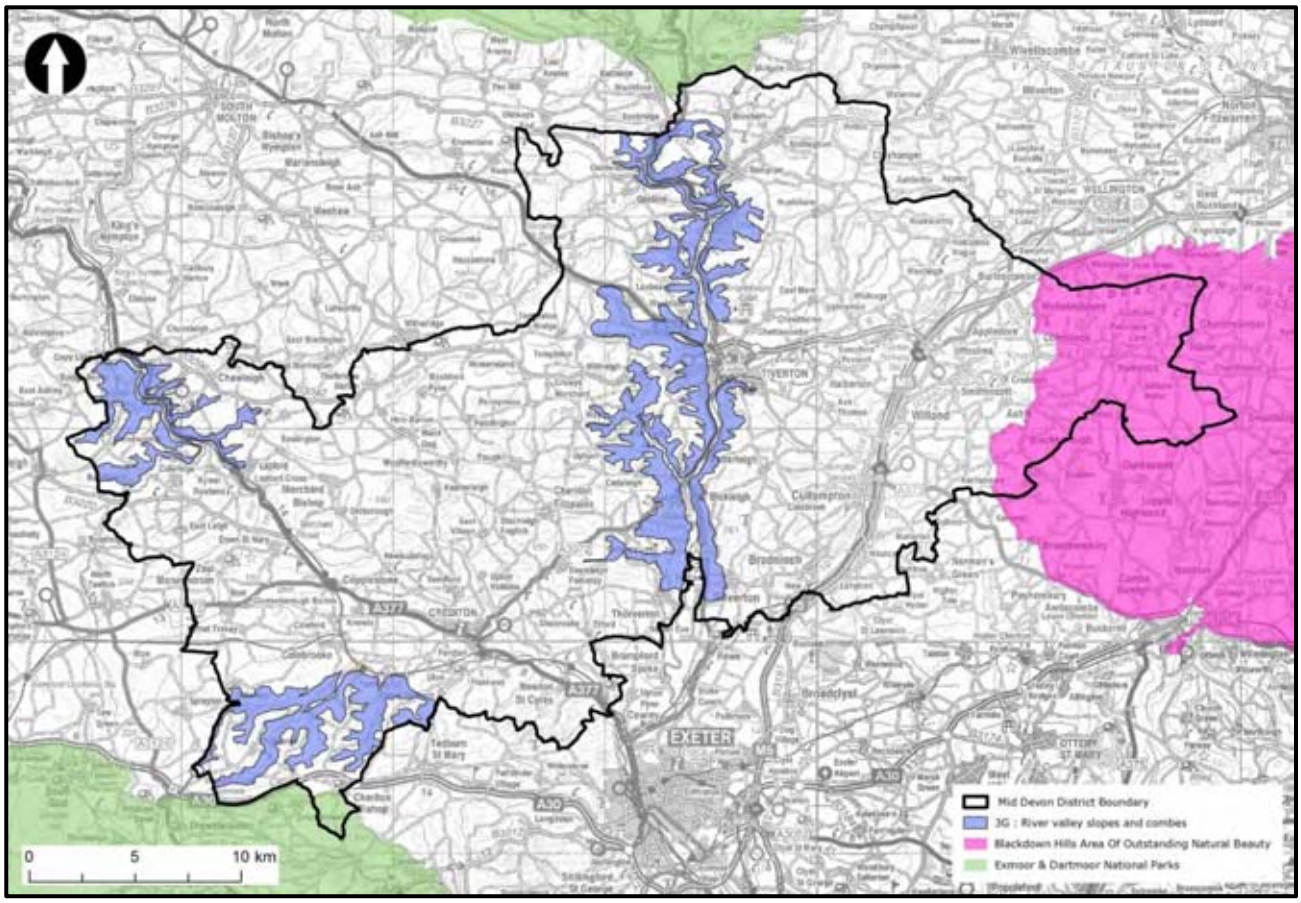
This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present.

This LCT within DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs is likely to have a higher sensitivity to larger scale developments due to the more intimate scale of the landscape compared to the LCT in other DCAs. When developing in this area views from the Exmoor National Park will also be of relevance.

This LCT in DCA 68: Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands is more strongly undulating and elevated than other areas. This means that the landscape is likely to be more sensitive than in other DCAs due to more visually prominent and elevated slopes. It is also overlooked by the Raddon Hills (LCT 1E in DCA 14) – therefore locations visible from these hills will also be more sensitive. Areas closer to development at Tiverton are likely to be less sensitive.

LCT 3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys

DCA 24: Exe Valley

DCA 57: Taw Valley

DCA 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes

Key Landscape Characteristics[29]

- This landscape of valley sides and valley floors, is strongly undulating with a variety of sloping land, sometimes incised, steeply rising and sometimes more gradual in character. A tightly rolling, medium to small scale landform, this landscape has generally been carved away by tributaries of the Rivers Exe, Taw and Creedy.
- Well-wooded and pastoral character created by the combination of regular patterns of dense hedges containing permanent, grazed pastures and deciduous woodlands, often ancient woodland (woodland aged 300-400 years old). Dark green swathes of coniferous woodland are also a dominant feature.
- The drainage patterns are defining characteristics key to both the resultant landform and vegetation. The sources of rivers in the incised valley heads are characterised by a lush damp character. The stream channels emerging from the valley heads are small in scale and have a meandering dendritic form. The landscape is defined by the moderately dry, fertile smooth slopes running into small-scale vales with a damp character.
- Woodlands are predominantly characterised by oak and extensive deciduous tree species. Backs Wood is a notable example of ancient woodland. Other ancient woodlands found within this type include patches of woodland such as Westbrook Wood adjacent to the River Exe stretching from Bolham to Oakford Bridge. These ancient woodlands are frequently very diverse and often contain rare or unusual species due to the low level of physical disturbance.
- Copses with a dense scrubby undergrowth are widespread. Where a well wooded characteristic presides, there is a strong sense of enclosure and the landform characteristics are emphasised by the wooded outlines of the hills.
- The scale is small to medium and the combination of the incised landform and repeated medium scale and field patterns give the landscape a relatively enclosed character.
- Hedgerows are often untrimmed and dense bounding regularly shaped, variable scale enclosures of pasture. Some fields are smaller and narrow, giving a linear form.
- Hedges are often tall and thick with intermittent trees that frame the narrow winding sunken roads and restrict views in and out of the landscape. Views are also generally limited due to vegetation and the typography of the landscape, providing only odd glimpses across the valley slopes.
- Soil erosion with red sandstone soil exposed is sometimes a feature on steeper slopes. The underlying red soils are apparent through buildings and the infrequent stone walls. However, there is a general lack of cultivation due to the steep landform profiles.
- Settlements are small and are not a visually dominant feature, as they tend to be nestled into the rolling landform.
- Rushes in the valley bottoms and lower slopes with characterful stone bridges and open water are all characteristics of this landscape.
- This is a landscape with high degrees of variation in terms of the levels of visual containment. Within the valleys and stream heads the enclosure is high, and consequently there are very few open views within or out of the type. Across the river valleys some longer views are afforded to the opposite slopes. A few of these vantage points have historic features located on the hilltops, indicating the defensive value of these vantages in protecting the surrounding farmlands.

92% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with remaining areas within Teignbridge and West Devon Districts.

[29] [29] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind Energy Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity
Landform and scale	M-H A landscape of valley sides and valley floors, which is strongly undulating with a variety of sloping land, sometimes incised, steeply rising and sometimes more gradual in character. Overall, it is a tightly rolling, medium to small scale landform.
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features	M-H A varied land cover pattern with areas of ancient semi natural woodland, conifer plantation, copses with dense scrubby undergrowth and tree lined and often untrimmed hedges, resulting in a well wooded and naturalistic character. Woodland is broken up by hedged pastoral fields of variable scales, including some locations of small, narrow fields. Human scale features include small settlements, isolated farmsteads, hedgerows, stone bridges and the landscape's extensive tree/woodland cover.
Tracks / transport pattern	M-H There are relatively few roads in this landscape, with main roads tending to follow rivers (A377 & A396) while narrow, often sunken winding lanes framed by hedges cross the valleys via stone bridges and traverse slopes.
Skylines	M-H Woodland on hilltops emphasise the undulating character of the landform creating distinctive skylines which are seen as glimpsed views from across the narrow valleys. Important historic features are located on hilltops such as Heywood, Eggesford and Cranmore Castles. Other landscape features which appear on localised skylines include church spires and telegraph lines.
Perceptual qualities	M-H This LCT has a strong rural character with discreet settlement which is nestled within the landscape, including historic nucleated hamlets and villages (e.g. Bickleigh) at river crossing points. The remainder of the LCT is sparsely settled, with occasional farmsteads and individual properties linked by minor roads. Parts of the LCT lie on the fringes of Tiverton and Bampton, with levels of tranquillity diluted in these locations. Overall though, there is a strong sense of tranquillity created by the intimate and secretive feel of the small valleys. Due to the steepness of the valley slopes there are few human influences in these areas, creating a feeling of perceived naturalness.
Historic landscape character	M The HLC classifies 26% of the LCT as modern enclosure and 9% post-medieval enclosure indicating a lower sensitivity to wind energy development. Medieval enclosure based on strip fields accounts for around 24%, and Barton fields 5%. Small areas of highly sensitive ancient woodland, rough ground and parks and gardens are also found within the landscape.
Scenic and special qualities	M-H Although this landscape is not designated at the national level for its scenic quality, the landscape has scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which could be affected by wind energy development include strong and distinct landscape patterns, looking unified and harmonious, particularly when viewed from distant vantage points; the lack of extensive settlements and the relative isolation of farms and small-scale villages, creating a strong sense of serenity; an impressive and 'beautiful' landscape that is colourful and has textural variety in the land cover and traditional land uses; woodlands which are highly valued for their colours and textures and give an intimate, secretive feel to the landscape.

Discussion on landscape sensitivity	The small to medium scale landform, strongly undulating, incised valley slopes, diverse land cover patterns, presence of human scale features and high levels of tranquillity all increase levels of sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development.	
Sensitivity to different turbine heights	Very Small (15-25m)	**M-H**
	Small (26-50m)	**H**
	Medium (51-75m)	**H**
	Large (76-110m)	**H**
	Very large (111-150m)	**H**
	This LCT is highly sensitive to all turbine heights above the 'very small' category due to its small scale landform, presence of human scale features, valued areas of ancient woodland, rough ground and distinctive skyline landmark features.	
Commentary on different cluster sizes Single turbine Small (<5 turbines) Medium (6-10) Large (11-25) Very large (>25)	This LCT is highly sensitive to all wind energy development due to its small scale landform, presence of human scale features, valued areas of ancient woodland, rough ground and distinctive skyline landmark features. It would be less sensitive to single turbines.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3G River Valley Slopes and Combes LCT in relation to wind energy development is included below:

- Steeply undulating landform and incised valley slopes with strong rural and isolated character.
- Highly sensitive land cover patterns including ancient semi-natural woodland, rough ground, parks and gardens
- Important historical features in prominent, elevated positions.
- Frequently sunken, winding and narrow lanes.
- Well wooded hillsides and skylines which emphasise the undulating character of the landform.
- The landscape's high levels of tranquillity.

Permitted development in the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV development is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are two permitted wind energy developments in this LCT: a 10kW domestic wind turbine on the boundary with LCT 5A (with no information on height, but assumed to be in the 'very small' category) and another 15 metre single turbine on the boundary with LCT 3A. The former is in DCA 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes and the latter in DCA 24: Exe Valley.

Guidance for Development

The landscape will be highly sensitive to anything other than very small single turbines, usually associated with farm buildings. Multiple developments within the LCT should aim for consistent scale and design of on-farm turbines to avoid visual confusion.

When siting and designing wind energy developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 2 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure that:

- Wind energy development does not overwhelm the generally small scale of the complex landform and its frequent human scale features.
- The delivery of turbines does not adversely impact on the character of the landscape's sunken winding lanes framed by hedges.
- Turbines do not detract from the characteristically wooded skylines with important historic landmark features.
- Turbines and their ancillary development do not adversely affect the historic integrity of medieval enclosures, Barton fields, areas of ancient woodland and rough ground.
- The heritage value of the historic parkland estates is conserved.
- Turbines are linked to existing development and do not adversely affect the high levels of tranquillity and remoteness associated with this landscape.

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas
This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. In addition, intervisibility with elevated land above the LCT in DCA 24: Exe Valley (particularly areas of LCT 3A in the same DCA) and between the LCT in DCA 57: Taw Valley and the high ground overlooking it within DCA 30: High Culm Ridges (to the west) and DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor (to the east) should be taken into account when planning new wind turbine schemes.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform				M-H	
	Varied landform including much sloping land and prominent, incised valley sides rising steeply from the valley floors.				
Sense of openness / enclosure		L-M			
	The small-scale landform, well wooded steep valley slopes and untrimmed hedges creates high levels of enclosure.				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	In between extensive areas of woodland are hedged pastoral fields of variable scales, including some locations of small, narrow medieval strip fields.				
Land cover				M-H	
	This landscape is predominately covered with areas of woodland and coniferous plantations interspersed with areas of pastoral fields and pockets of rough ground creating a strong sense of naturalness.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	Outskirts of large towns on the fringes of this LCT (Tiverton and Bampton) provide an influence of modern development, although away from the settlements where the landform is steeper there is a strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness with little built development aside from occasional farmsteads and houses. The densely wooded character with remote areas of rough ground adds an element of perceived naturalness.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The HLC classifies 26% of the LCT as modern enclosure and 9% post-medieval enclosure indicating a lower sensitivity to solar PV development. Medieval enclosure based on strip fields accounts for around 24%, and Barton fields 5%, which would indicate higher sensitivity. Smaller pockets of ancient woodland, rough ground and parks and gardens would be particularly sensitive.				
Scenic and special qualities				M-H	
	Although not designated at a national level, the LCT includes valued scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which could be affected by wind energy development include strong and distinct landscape patterns which look unified and harmonious particularly when viewed from distant vantage points; the lack of extensive settlements and the relative isolation of farms and small-scale villages creating a strong sense of serenity; it being an impressive and 'beautiful' landscape that is colourful and has textural variety in the land cover and traditional land uses; woodlands which are highly valued for their colours and textures giving an intimate, secretive feel to the landscape.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although much of the landscape is enclosed by extensive tree cover and untrimmed hedges which could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the steep landform, high visibility of the slopes, high levels of tranquillity and remoteness, naturalistic character and important areas of ancient woodland and rough ground all increase levels of sensitivity.				
Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)				**M-H**
	Small (>1-5ha)				**H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)				**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)				**H**
	Very large (>15ha)				**H**
	This LCT is highly sensitive to all sizes of solar PV development due to its small scale landform, extensive woodland cover, presence of small narrow fields of medieval origin and strong sense of tranquillity and naturalistic character.				

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3G River Valley Slopes and Combes LCT in relation to wind energy development is included below:

- Small-scale steeply undulating landform with incised and visually prominent slopes.
- Little human influence contributing to the strong rural and 'secretive' character.
- Its scenic qualities, including the textures and patterns produced by the variety in land- and woodland cover.
- Highly sensitive land cover patterns including ancient semi-natural woodland, rough ground, parks and gardens.
- Areas of small-scale medieval strip fields, of historic landscape importance.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are no permitted solar PV developments within the LCT at the present time.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that the landscape's small-scale landform and tranquil, naturalistic character make it highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha). Any future schemes of this scale should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and valued areas of semi-natural habitat (including ancient semi-natural woodland).

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not change the character of the landscape.

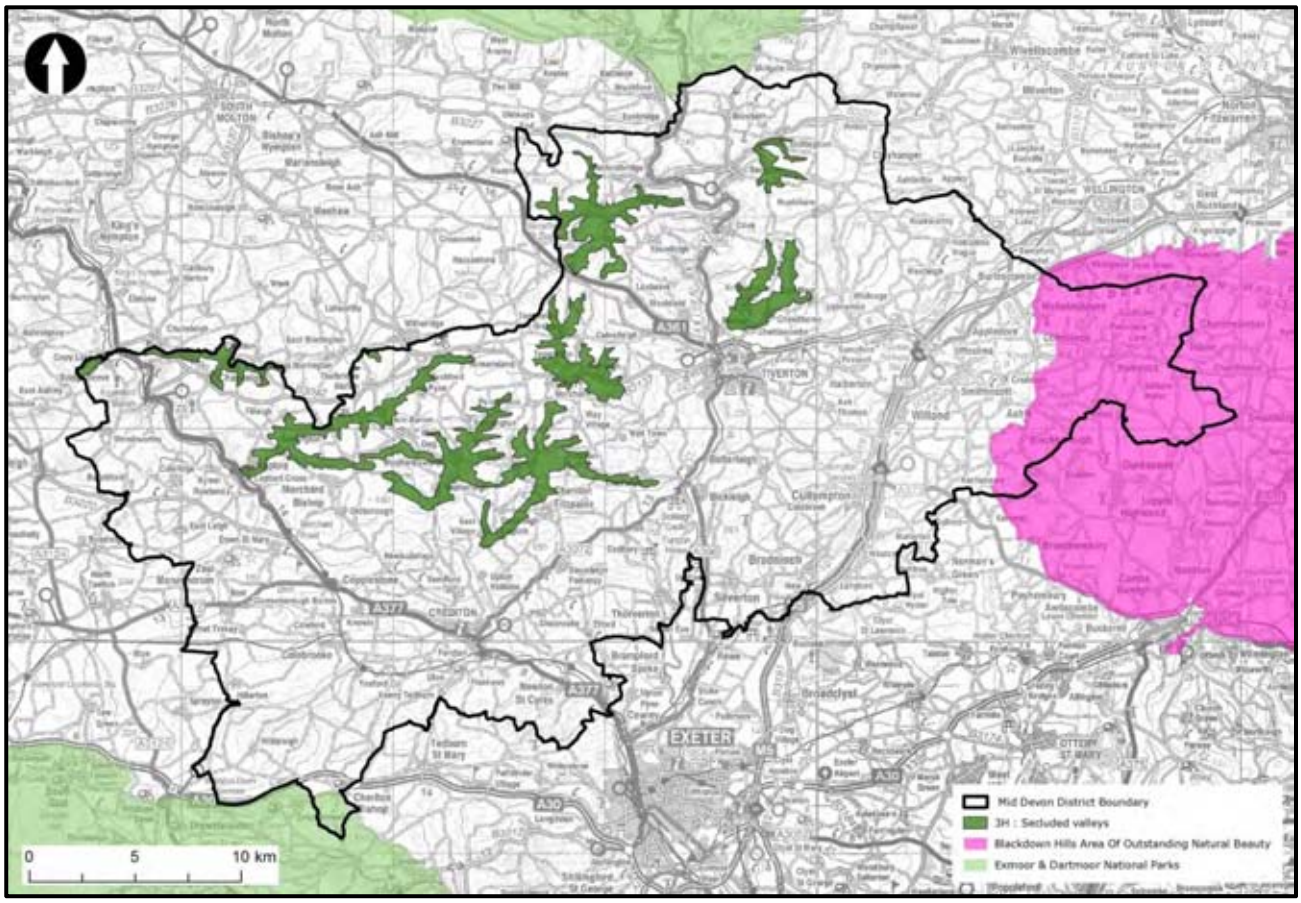
When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Solar PV schemes are not located on visually prominent upper valley slopes, especially those that are open in character.
- The small scale of the landscape is maintained by ensuring schemes are in scale with the area in which they are located.
- Locate development near existing settlement/ development so that the most remote and 'secretive' areas remain free of development.
- The diverse land cover patterns that characterise this LCT are maintained and solar PV development does not dominate any one area.
- Solar PV development does no adversely affect areas of valued areas of semi-natural habitat, particularly tracts of ancient semi-natural woodland.
- Solar PV development does not adversely affect the integrity of areas of medieval strip field enclosures, Barton fields, rough ground or historic parks and gardens.

Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas
This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. In addition, intervisibility with elevated land above the LCT in DCA 24: Exe Valley (particularly areas of LCT 3A in the same DCA) and between the LCT in DCA 57: Taw Valley and the high ground overlooking it within DCA 30: High Culm Ridges (to the west) and DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor (to the east) should be taken into account when planning new solar PV schemes. In these locations care must be taken to avoid the most visually prominent upper slopes of the valleys when siting new development.

LCT 3H: Secluded Valleys

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs

DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland

DCA 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys

DCA 24: Exe Valley

DCA 54: Taw Valley

DCA 65:Witheridge and Rackenford Moor

Key Landscape Characteristics[30]

- Valley side and valley floor, strongly undulating and steeply sloping variety of sloping land, sometimes very steep, sometimes with a more gradual variable character.
- The valleys are characterised by a convex and round form towards the tops that become concave at the bottoms of the slopes. In places the slopes are as steep as 1:2 and exposed rock is sometimes evident.
- Valley bottoms are narrow with a wet and damp character. Drains are often present at the bottom of the relatively narrow spaces with meandering small streams. There tends to be little or no defined floodplain or valley bottom.
- Scrub and woodland dominate the steep slopes and narrow bottoms of the valleys. Heathland is occasionally present on the higher slopes within fields that generally have a pastoral character. On the lower slopes and within the valley bottoms, rushes and riparian species are common within a mosaic of scrub woodland and unimproved grassland.
- Woodland is extensive and characterised by upland oak woodlands such as Skilgate Wood at Beer Down in Huntsham and the Knightshayes parkland environs. A notable wet woodland can be found at Huntsham Castle.
- Coniferous plantations are widespread within the landscape. In the east of the district conifers wrap round the valley sides and include Huntsham Wood. Whilst it continues the theme of the well-wooded character, this land cover creates a dark and massive form that contrasts with the more traditional and lighter outlines of the indigenous oak woodlands.
- Tree lines on hedgebanks and sinuous lines of streamside trees add to the well-wooded and enclosed character.
- The woods at Cruwys Morchard and Templeton are notable examples of ancient oak woodland. Other examples of ancient woodland include the Great Wood west of Oakford, large tracts of woodland west of Stoodleigh, tracts of woodland adjacent to Little Dart River (near Chawleigh) and woodland adjacent to the Iron Mill Stream. These ancient woodlands are home to rare and threatened species, more than any other UK habitat.
- The settlement pattern is simple and dispersed with isolated dwellings tucked into the valley sides. Villages and hamlets tend to be linear in form, following the roads that frequently are located above the floodplain.
- Bridges and fords cross the watercourses and roads run up through the bottoms of the larger valleys, and create a break in the otherwise isolated nature of the landscape.
- Minor lanes crossing the valleys are steep and winding, with hairpin bends, and are enclosed by woodland and trees in adjacent hedgebanks. The landscape is generally not very accessible due to the steepness of the landform and vegetation with few public rights of way.
- There are a number of notable archaeological features within the landscape such as Huntsham Castle which has strong visual and physical connections, overlooking the valley.
- Many of the isolated farms and dwellings are of local historical importance, frequently constructed from local materials including stone, cob and thatch. They are typically traditional Devon farmhouses with outbuildings and barns, reflecting the agrarian nature of the district.
- Overhanging trees frequently frame the narrow winding road and restrict views creating a tunnel effect. Views tend to be small scale and confined, only allowing odd glimpses across the valleys.

62% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within North Devon and Torridge Districts

[30] [30] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind Energy Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform and scale				M-H	
	This is a small to medium scale landscape compromising narrow, steep sided valleys. Landform has distinct features including strongly undulations, some very steep slopes and exposed rock faces in places.				
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features				M-H	
	A complex and irregular land cover with small to medium-scale unimproved and pastoral fields, extensive areas of woodland (ancient, deciduous and conifer plantation), areas of scrub vegetation on slopes, heathland on higher slopes and rushes and riparian areas in the valley bottoms next to the meandering streams. There are some human scale features including tree lined hedgebanks, isolated farms and dwellings, linear villages and hamlets and bridges.				
Tracks / transport pattern				M-H	
	Mainly small rural roads cross the valleys which are steep, winding in nature with hairpin bends and enclosed by hedgebanks and woodland. Some larger roads follow the valley bottoms, e.g. the B3227and B3137.				
Skylines			M		
	The tops of the valleys form prominent skylines, which are largely wooded and undeveloped. Important historic features occupying prominent positions on the skyline including Berry Castle and other defensive features.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	This LCT has a peaceful and secluded nature as a result of the steep inaccessible landform and lack of development, with dense woodland covercreating a naturalistic character. Away from the roads the levels of isolation and tranquillity are increased.				
Historic landscape character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that the LCT predominantly comprises modern enclosure (27%) and post-medieval fields (8%) - likely to be of low sensitivity to wind turbines and medieval enclosure based on strip fields (25%) and Barton fields (6%) which would be of higher sensitivity. Areas of woodland (15%) and small patches of rough ground (4%) would be particularly sensitive to wind energy development.				
Scenic and special qualities				M-H	
	Although not designated at a national level, the LCT includes valued scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which could be affected by wind energy development include its generally peaceful and secluded character; the presence of a number of valued historic features; an area of scenic beauty; it being a traditional Devon landscape with distinct hedgerows and woodland, hedges, small fields and narrow sunken lanes; high levels of enclosure from woodland and hedge boundaries giving a secretive, intimate feeling to the landscape; tranquil and remote landscape with isolated farmsteads and small-scale villages.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although there are some areas of medium-scale modern enclosure which could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of wind energy development, the distinct landform with its imitate scale, diverse landcover with large areas of naturalistic woodlandand its sense of isolation and high levels of tranquillity, all increase levels of sensitivity.				
Sensitivity to different turbine heights	Very Small (15-25m)	**M-H**			
	Small (26-50m)	**M-H**			
	Medium (51-75m)	**H**			
	Large (76-110m)	**H**			
	Very large (111-150m)	**H**			
	The relatively small scale of the landform, presence of human scale features				

	and high levels of tranquillity mean that this landscape is likely to be highly sensitive to turbines greater than small in size.
Commentary on different cluster sizes Single turbine Small (<5 turbines) Medium (6-10) Large (11-25) Very large (>25)	The isolated and tranquil nature of the valley landscapes with their steep landforms mean that this landscape it is likely to be highly sensitive to any clusters of wind turbines.

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for the 3H Secluded Valleys LCT in relation to wind energy development is included below:

- Historic features occupying prominent skyline positions including Berry Castle.
- Diverse land cover including valued areas of ancient woodland, historic medieval and Barton fields and small patches of rough ground.
- Narrow and winding lanes (often sunken) with tree lined hedgebanks.
- Its high levels of tranquillity and perceived naturalness.
- Its valued scenic qualities and archetypal Devon character.

Permitted development in the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV development is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there is one permitted wind energy development in this LCT: a 10kW domestic wind turbine of 10.25 metres in height at Redgate House, Lapford. This falls below the 'very small' category defined for this assessment and lies within DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor.

Guidance for Development

The landscape will be highly sensitive to anything other than 'very small' or 'small' single turbines, usually associated with farm buildings. Multiple developments within the LCT should aim for consistent scale and design of on-farm turbines to avoid visual confusion.

When siting and designing wind energy developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 2 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure that:

- Wind energy development does not overwhelm the generally small scale of the steep valleys with their frequent human scale features.
- The delivery of turbines does not adversely impact on the character of the landscape's steep winding and frequently sunken lanes tightly enclosed by hedgebanks and woodland.
- Turbines do not detract from the characteristically wooded and undeveloped skylines or affect the setting or appreciation of important historic landmark features.
- Turbines and their ancillary development do not adversely affect the historic integrity of medieval enclosures, Barton fields, areas of woodland and rough ground.
- Valued naturalistic habitats are retained – including extensive areas of woodland (including ancient woodlands), scrub, heathland and riparian vegetation.
- Turbines are linked to existing development and do not adversely affect the peaceful and seclude nature of the valleys.

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. The larger scale, more intensively farmed landscape around Upham (DCA 15:

Cruwys Morchard Wooded & Farmed Valleys) would be slightly less sensitive to turbines within the higher height bands of the 'small' category than other parts occurrences of this LCT.

In addition, care should be taken when siting turbines to avoid impacting on the setting of prominent historic features often occupying elevated skyline positions above valleys, including Berry Castle in DCA 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded & Farmed Valleys, an Iron Age hillfort and defended settlement within DCA 24: Exe Valley, and a caste near Stone Barton in DCA 57: Taw Valley.

In all DCAs where this LCT occurs, intervisibility with surrounding elevated land should be taken into consideration, particularly with areas of LCT 3A in DCAs 2: Bampton and Beer Downs, 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded & Farmed Valleys and 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor; and areas of LCT 1F also above the valleys found in DCA 65.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform				M-H	
	Narrow steep-sided valleys with strong undulations, very steep in places with exposed rock and prominent slopes. Streams and rivers follow the valley floors.				
Sense of openness / enclosure		L-M			
	A landscape which is well wooded with extensive areas of ancient, deciduous and coniferous woodland, areas of scrub and tree lined hedgebanks which provide high levels of enclosure (particularly when combined with the enclosed nature of the landform).				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	This LCT is defined by a pattern of small to medium-scale fields, irregular in shape, including historically important medieval and Barton fields.				
Land cover					H
	The area is covered extensively with woodland (including ancient, deciduous and coniferous plantations) which cloak the valley sides. Areas of pastoral farmland, scrub and heathland break up the woodland blocks as do stretches of rushy meadows along the streams and patches of wet woodland along the valley floors.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	This LCT has a peaceful and secluded nature as a result of the steep inaccessible landform and lack of development, with dense woodland covercreating a naturalistic character. Away from the roads the levels of isolation and tranquillity are increased.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that the LCT predominantly comprises modern enclosure (27%) and post-medieval fields (8%) - likely to be of low sensitivity to wind turbines and medieval enclosure based on strip fields (25%) and Barton fields (6%) which would be of higher sensitivity. Areas of woodland (15%) and small patches of rough ground (4%) would be particularly sensitive to wind energy development.				
Scenic and special qualities				M-H	
	Although not designated at a national level, the LCT includes valued scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which could be affected by wind energy development include its generally peaceful and secluded character; the presence of a number of valued historic features; an area of scenic beauty; it being a traditional Devon landscape with distinct hedgerows and woodland, hedges, small fields and narrow sunken lanes; high levels of enclosure from woodland and hedge boundaries giving a secretive, intimate feeling to the landscape; tranquil and remote landscape with isolated farmsteads and small-scale villages.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the high level of enclosure provided by dense woodland cover and high hedgebanks which could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the prominent visible slopes, naturalistic land cover, imitate scale and small-scale field patterns in the valleys, in addition to the LCT's sense of isolation and high levels of tranquillity, all increase levels of sensitivity.				
Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)	**M-H**			
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M-H**			
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**			
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**			
	Very large (>15ha)	**H**			
	The intimate and small-scale nature of the valleys and field patterns means that this LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to medium, large and very large scale developments.				

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for the 3H Secluded Valleys LCT in relation to wind energy development is included below:

- Its exposed and prominent valley slopes, defined by their naturalistic character.
- Diverse land cover including valued areas of ancient woodland, historic medieval and Barton fields and small patches of rough ground.
- Its high levels of tranquillity and perceived naturalness.
- Its valued scenic qualities and archetypal Devon character.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are no permitted solar PV developments within the LCT at the present time.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that the landscape's small-scale landform and secluded, naturalistic character make it highly sensitive to anything greater than 'small' in size. Any future schemes should be at the smaller end of the size bracket (and no larger than 5ha) and located in enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and valued areas of semi-natural habitat (including ancient semi-natural woodland).

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not change the character of the landscape.

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Solar PV schemes are not located on visually prominent upper valley slopes, especially those that are more open in character (i.e. between blocks of woodland).
- The small scale of the landscape is maintained by ensuring schemes are in scale with the area in which they are located.
- Development is located near existing settlement/ development so that the most remote and secluded areas remain free of development.
- The diverse land cover patterns that characterise this LCT are maintained and solar PV development does not dominate any one area.
- Solar PV development does no adversely affect areas of valued areas of semi-natural habitat, including areas of semi-natural woodland, rushy meadows and riparian vegetation.
- Solar PV development does not adversely affect the integrity of areas of medieval strip field enclosures, Barton fields and sensitive tracts of rough ground.

Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas

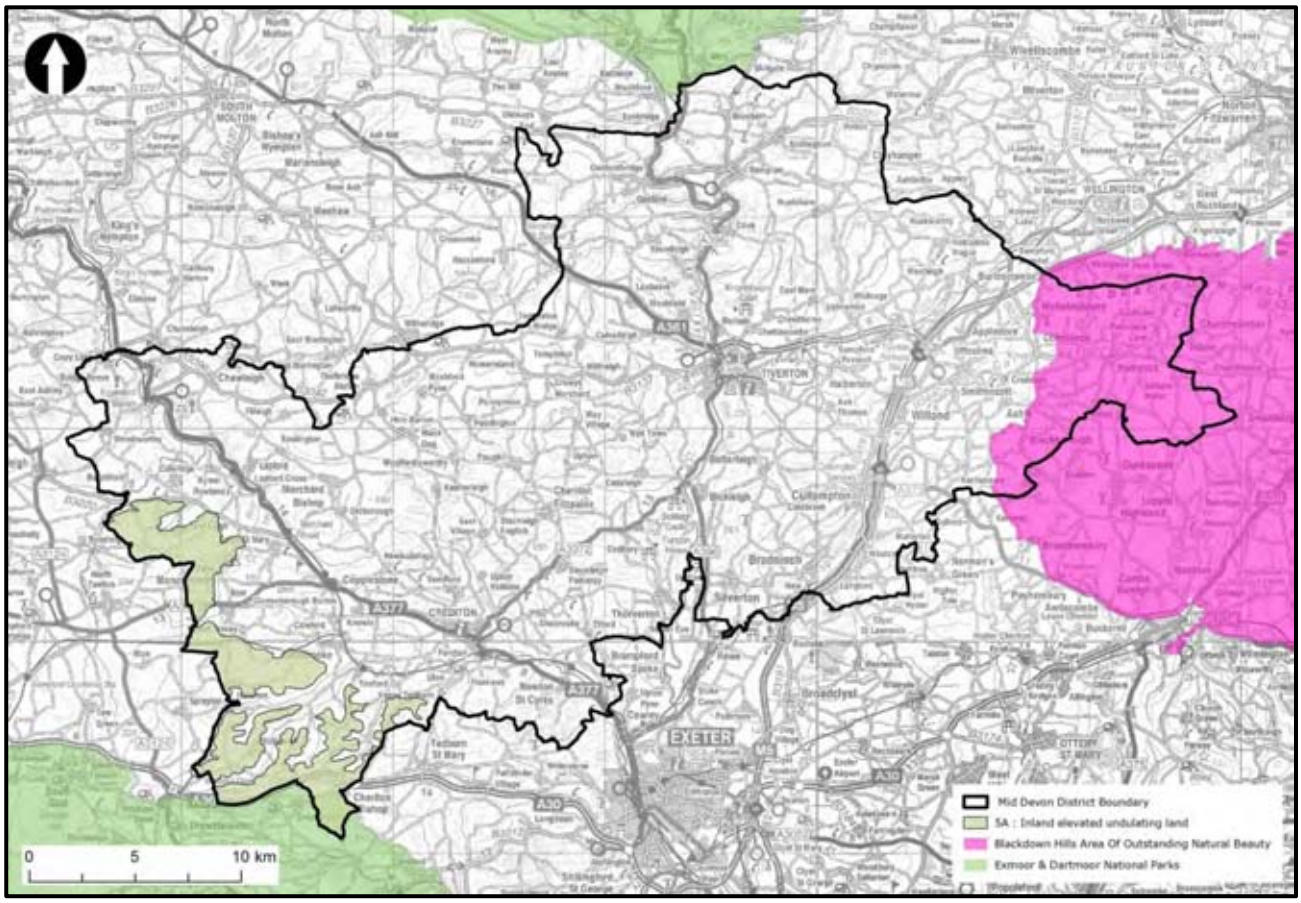
This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is

present.

In addition, in all DCAs where this LCT occurs, intervisibility with surrounding elevated land should be taken into consideration, particularly with areas of LCT 3A in DCAs 2: Bampton and Beer Downs, 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded & Farmed Valleys and 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor; and areas of LCT 1F also above the valleys found in DCA 65. In these locations care must be taken to avoid the most visually prominent upper slopes of the valleys when siting new development.

LCT 5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 33: High Taw Farmland

DCA 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes

Key Landscape Characteristics[31]

- Medium to large scale gently rolling to steeply sloping landform with high points of over 220m above the valley bottoms.
- Variable shaped field patterns, with low tightly clipped hedgerows as the dominant field boundary. Species rich hedgebanks include honeysuckle, wild rose, chestnut, oak, ivy, bramble, willow and bracken.
- Hedge patterns are highly visible, being seen from the roads within the type as they meander across the hillsides and slopes.
- Permanent grassland is the dominant land use pattern. Ley grassland and small areas of cultivated land tend to occur on the lower, gentler slopes and on the higher land close to the plateau where again the slopes are gentler. Sheep are the predominant livestock.
- Some of the grassland, particularly on the steeper slopes, contains stands of semi-natural vegetation, including areas of bracken and gorse, within the mosaic of fields and on field margins and within hedges.
- Springs emerge from the upper slopes forming brooks flowing northerly into a number of tributaries of the River Yeo, which lies to the north of the type. These watercourses have a meandering form and dendritic pattern.
- There is generally a lack of visually prominent buildings, with isolated houses and cottages sited sympathetically into the landscape. Traditional building style includes brick, cob, thatch and slate roofs.
- Trees are sparse, with little woodland and copses.
- The absence of hedgerows is obvious where wooden fencing is present on turf banks.
- Open and exposed landscape where hedgebanks allow views into and out with extensive views from plateaux and higher slopes. Windswept stunted trees on hilltops in hedgerows are a key characteristic.
- This landscape is highly visible from land to the north and from the edge of Dartmoor, and the higher peaks within the main mass of the moor. The A30 is both adjacent to and passes within the type, from which some views are afforded.
- Settlement patterns defined by villages and hamlets are connected by winding narrow roads with isolated farms well-sited within an isolated landscape.

34% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within West Devon and Teignbridge Districts

[31] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind Energy Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform and scale			M		
	This is a medium to large-scale landscape with finger-like elevated rolling to steep hills situated in the south west corner of Mid Devon. Elevation varies from 80m to 230m AOD.				
Land cover pattern and presence of human scale features			M		
	Medium scale land cover pattern with variable shaped field patterns enclosed by tightly clipped hedgerows. Land cover is predominately pastoral with some patches of bracken and gorse, and areas of woodland along lower slopes adjacent to streams. Human scale features present in the landscape include hedgebanks, trees, isolated houses and cottages.				
Tracks / transport pattern			M		
	Existing roads and tracks enclosed by hedgebanks are gently winding in character and traverse ridges. The landscape also includes some main roads, such as the A3072, A30 and railway line.				
Skylines				M-H	
	The landscape includes high points of over 220m with windswept stunted trees, triangulation pillars/masts and historic features (e.g. Posbury at Castle Down) forming features on hilltops. The LCT is highly visible from the surrounding landscape including from Dartmoor National Park.				
Perceptual qualities			M		
	The landscape has a strongly rural character and a strong sense of isolation owing to a lack of modern development and dominance of traditional pastoral farming. However, most of the landscape is farmed and the presence of the A30 and scattered development contribute to human activity.				
Historic landscape character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that a large part of the landscape type is made up of modern enclosure (39%) and post-medieval enclosure (14%) - generally lower sensitivity to wind energy development. However there are areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (28%) that have a higher sensitivity, as well as smaller areas of Barton fields and other woodland (higher sensitivity).				
Scenic and special qualities				M-H	
	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP
	5.5% of this LCT lies with the Dartmoor National Park. The Dartmoor National Park Management Plan includes special qualities which may be affected by wind energy development. Relevant to this LCT (including land outside the National Park), these include its broad sweeping horizons with extensive views across Devon, vast skies, strong sense of remoteness and isolation, strong medieval pattern of scattered farmsteads, hamlets and villages linked by an intimate pattern of sunken lanes, and its value as a timeless unspoilt and tranquil place. The remainder of the area has scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. These include the traditional and inherent patterns of this landscape type are strongly evident and have been altered far less over the last century than other landscape types; quiet and exposed working rural landscape; strong sense of isolation with far reaching views from higher areas; the repeated patterns of the irregularly hedge-enclosed fields creating inherent pastoral patterns that are clear and discernible; its strong cultural association with the adjacent landscape of Dartmoor that physically dwarfs its foothills; it forming part of the setting of the moor – very important to the value and appreciation of Dartmoor.				
Discussion on landscape	The medium-scale irregular fields, elevated rolling hills, rural character and high visibility from Dartmoor National indicate a higher sensitivity to the				

<table>
<tr><td>sensitivity</td><td>principle of wind energy development, although the medium to large scale landform and presence of existing roads and development reduces the levels of sensitivity.

Within the National Park the special qualities including its strong sense of remoteness, wildness and isolation, broad sweeping horizons, vast skies and extensive views and sense of timelessness further increase sensitivity. Areas close to the National Park are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensitivity to different turbine heights</td><td>
<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Land outside the NP</th><th colspan="2">Land within the NP</th></tr>
<tr><td>Very Small (15-25m)</td><td>M</td><td>Very Small (15-25m)</td><td>M-H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Small (26-50m)</td><td>M</td><td>Small (26-50m)</td><td>M-H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium (51-75m)</td><td>M</td><td>Medium (51-75m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Large (76-110m)</td><td>M-H</td><td>Large (76-110m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Very large (111-150m)</td><td>H</td><td>Very large (111-150m)</td><td>H</td></tr>
</table>
The scale of the landform and fields mean that this landscape is likely to be highly sensitive to ‘very large’ turbines, and those within the higher end of the ‘large’ category.

Areas within Dartmoor National Park will be more sensitive to any wind energy development, and areas close to the National Park are likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Commentary on different cluster sizes

Single turbine
Small (<5 turbines)
Medium (6-10)
Large (11-25)
Very large (>25)</td><td>The scale of the landform and fields means that this LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to ‘medium’, ‘large’ or ‘very large’ clusters of wind turbines. Areas within the National Park would be sensitive to all cluster sizes.</td></tr>
</table>

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for the 5A Inland Elevated Undulating Land LCT in relation to wind energy development is included below:

- Strongly rural and isolated character with sensitive historic land cover types including medieval enclosures based on strip fields and Barton fields.
- The presence of human scale features including clipped hedgerows, trees and isolated houses.
- Important historic features on elevated skylines.
- The strong cultural associations with Dartmoor, and the landscape's role as a setting to the National Park.
- Special qualities of Dartmoor National Park including the strong sense of remoteness and wildness, broad sweeping horizons, vast skies and extensive views and its sense of timelessness.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are three permitted wind turbine schemes within the LCT, all of which fall within DCA 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes. All are assumed to be single domestic turbines within the 'very small' category – with one 10kW turbine at Barton Farm, Hittisleigh (straddling the boundary with LCT 3G; no height or design information available); a 6kW development at Crossways Farm near Cheriton Bishop (no height or design information available) and a 19.8 metre three bladed turbine at Sunrise Farm, also near Cheriton Bishop (but situated some distance from the previously listed scheme).

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT, outside the National Park, has a moderate sensitivity to 'very small', 'small' and 'medium' sized turbines (between 15 and 75m), a moderate-high sensitivity to turbines between 76-110m, and a high sensitivity to turbines over 110m to tip. The assessment notes that sensitivity to larger-scale wind turbines is higher due to the scale of the landscape, and also states that the landscape would be highly sensitive to 'medium', 'large' or 'very large' clusters of wind turbines. This indicates that the landscape would be particularly sensitive to turbines over 75m and is unlikely to be able to accommodate any turbines over 110m in height.

Areas within Dartmoor National Park will be highly sensitive to anything other than very small or small single turbines associated with farms. Areas close to the National Park are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. This could include very small or small scale turbines associated with farm buildings (aiming for consistent scale and design of on-farm turbines) and occasional small groups of medium or large turbines in larger scale areas (aiming for consistent scale and design of these larger schemes), and maintaining a distinct hierarchy between these two scales of turbine.

The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. developments would not result in a significant

cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

When siting and designing wind energy developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 2 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Wind energy development does not overwhelm the human scale of the landscape features associated with it (e.g. hedgebanks, stunted trees on skylines and isolated buildings).
- Valued naturalistic habitats are retained - including tracts of bracken, gorse and stream-side woodlands.
- Wind turbines do not prevent the appreciation and understanding of historic skyline/ landmark features including Posbury Camp on Castle Down.
- Winding tracks and lanes enclosed by hedgebanks are not adversely affected by delivery of turbines.
- The strongly rural and often isolated character of the landscape is retained.
- Wind energy development does not adversely affect the strong sense of remoteness and timelessness associated with Dartmoor National Park, or unacceptably impact on the broad sweeping horizons and extensive views across Devon from the Park (including the district).

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. In addition, in DCA 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes, special attention will be required to ensure development does not adversely affect the remote and timelessness qualities associated with Dartmoor National Park, and does not unacceptably impact on the sweeping horizons and extensive views into Mid Devon from the National Park.

The development of turbines should also avoid impacting on the setting or integrity of nationally important historic landmark features characterising skylines, including Posbury Camp in DCA 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes; and an ancient henge, barrows, ring ditches and enclosures near Lower Hampson in DCA 33: High Taw Farmland. Intervisibility with adjacent valleys and lower lying land should be taken account of when siting development (particularly LCT 3G in DCA 67 and LCT 3C within adjacent DCA 14: Crediton Rollling Farmland.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform				M-H	
	This is a medium to large-scale landscape with finger-like elevated rolling to steep hills situated in the south west corner of Mid Devon. Elevation varies from 80m to 230m AOD and includes some highly visible, elevated slopes.				
Sense of openness / enclosure			M		
	Relatively open, particularly on higher, more exposed ground. Some enclosure is provided by hedgebanks / hedgerow trees and woodland within tributary valleys. Small farm woods, occasional conifer blocks and avenues of beech provide some enclosure elsewhere.				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	Medium to large-scale irregular fields of mixed agricultural farmland predominately modern enclosure with areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields and some Barton Fields.				
Land cover			M		
	Land cover is predominately pastoral with some patches of semi-natural land cover including bracken and gorse, and areas of woodland along lower slopes adjacent to streams. There are also isolated settlements (houses and cottages), hedgebanks and trees.				
Perceptual qualities			M		
	The landscape has a strongly rural character and a strong sense of isolation owing to an overall lack of modern development and dominance of traditional pastoral farming. However, most of the landscape is farmed and the presence of the A30 and scattered development contribute to human activity.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that a large part of the landscape type is made up of modern enclosure (39%) and post-medieval enclosure (14%) - generally lower sensitivity to solar PV development. However there are areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (28%) that have a higher sensitivity, as well as smaller areas of Barton fields and other woodland (higher sensitivity).				
Scenic and special qualities			M		
	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP
	5.5% of this LCT lies with the Dartmoor National Park. The Dartmoor National Park Management Plan includes special qualities which may be affected by wind energy development. Relevant to this LCT (including land outside the National Park), these include its broad sweeping horizons with extensive views across Devon, vast skies, strong sense of remoteness and isolation, strong medieval pattern of scattered farmsteads, hamlets and villages linked by an intimate pattern of sunken lanes, and its value as a timeless unspoilt and tranquil place. The remainder of the area has scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. These include the traditional and inherent patterns of this landscape type are strongly evident and have been altered far less over the last century than other landscape types; quiet and exposed working rural landscape; strong sense of isolation with far reaching views from higher areas; the repeated patterns of the irregularly hedge-enclosed fields creating inherent pastoral patterns that are clear and discernible; its strong cultural association with the adjacent landscape of Dartmoor that physically dwarfs its foothills; it forming forming part of the setting of the moor – very important to the value and appreciation of Dartmoor.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	The mixed land cover patterns with areas of woodland and naturalistic bracken and scrub, elevated land with some prominent slopes, rural character and high visibility from Dartmoor National Park indicate a higher sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, while the medium to large scale landform, strongly farmed character and presence of existing				

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4">human influence reduce the levels of sensitivity.

Within the National Park the special qualities including its strong sense of remoteness, wildness and isolation, broad sweeping horizons and extensive views and sense of timelessness further increase sensitivity. Areas close to the National Park are also likely to be more sensitive (but this would need to be judged on a case-by-case basis).</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development</td><td colspan="2">Land outside the NP</td><td colspan="2">Land within the NP</td></tr>
<tr><td>Very Small (<1ha)</td><td>M</td><td>Very Small (<1ha)</td><td>M-H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Small (>1-5ha)</td><td>M</td><td>Small (>1-5ha)</td><td>M-H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium (>5-10ha)</td><td>M</td><td>Medium (>5-10ha)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Large (>10-15ha)</td><td>M-H</td><td>Large (>10-15ha)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td>Very large (>15ha)</td><td>H</td><td>Very large (>15ha)</td><td>H</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">The scale of the fields in this LCT indicate that it is likely to be highly sensitive to ‘very large’ scale solar PV developments, as well as those at the top of the ‘large’ size band.

Areas within Dartmoor National Park will be more sensitive to solar PV development, and areas close to the National Park are likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis)</td></tr>
</table>

Key Sensitivities and guidance for wind energy development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for the 5A Inland Elevated Undulating Land LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- Steeply sloping land form with visible slopes.
- Its strongly rural and isolated character.
- Sensitive historic land cover types including medieval enclosures based on strip fields and Barton fields.
- The strong cultural associations with Dartmoor, and the landscape's role as a setting to the National Park.
- Special qualities of Dartmoor National Park including the strong sense of remoteness and wildness, broad sweeping horizons, vast skies and extensive views and its sense of timelessness.

Permitted schemes within the LCT

A map showing the locations of permitted sites for wind and solar PV developments is at **Appendix 3**, though this reflects Council records at the time this study was produced and the Council may publish updated maps which supersede this. The data shows that there are currently no permitted solar PV developments within this LCT.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT has a moderate sensitivity to developments up to 10ha in size, a moderate-high sensitivity to large developments (>10-15ha) and a high sensitivity to developments greater than 15ha. This indicates that the landscape would be particularly sensitive to developments over 10ha in size and unlikely to be able to accommodate developments greater than 15ha without introducing a significant change to landscape character. Any proposals should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and avoiding sensitive landcover types such as woodland and historic medieval or Barton fields.

Within Dartmoor National Park, the landscape would be highly sensitive to anything other than 'very small' or 'small' sensitively sited schemes. Areas close to the National Park are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of this strongly rural landscape.

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields and Barton fields are maintained and remain recognisable in the landscape.
- The landscape's strong patchwork pattern of traditional pastoral fields is retained.
- Development is located near existing settlement/ development so that the most isolated and strongly rural areas remain free of development – particularly those

locations that form a setting to Dartmoor National Park.

- Solar PV development does no adversely affect areas of valued areas of semi-natural habitat, including areas of bracken, gorse and streamside woodlands.
- Solar PV development does not adversely affect the strong sense of remoteness and timelessness associated with Dartmoor National Park, or unacceptably impact on the broad sweeping horizons and extensive views across Devon from the Park (including the district).

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. In addition, in DCA 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes, special attention will be required to ensure development does not adversely affect the remote and timelessness qualities associated with Dartmoor National Park, and does not unacceptably impact on the sweeping horizons and extensive views into Mid Devon from the National Park. The most prominent, open slopes within and visually linked to the wider designated landscape should be avoided when siting new development.

Valued tracts of naturalistic Culm Grassland, forming a wider ecological network with nearby locations of LCT 1F Farmed Lowland Moorland and Culm Grassland, should be avoided in DCA 33: High Taw Farmland.

5 Recommendations for Emerging Policy

6 Recommendations for Emerging Policy

6.1 This section provides a review of Mid Devon's existing landscape and renewable energy policies and provides a recommendation for emerging Local Plan Policy.

Review of existing landscape and renewable energy policies

6.2 There is policy support at a local level to the principle of renewable energy development as long as potential impacts are addressed satisfactory; including effects on landscape character or heritage. Climate change is now widely accepted as a major issue which has the potential to contribute to landscape change. Relevant policies have been taken from Mid Devon District Council's Mid Devon Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2026[32] and Local Plan Part 3: Development Management Policies[33], and are summarised in **Table 5.1** below – bold text indicating those of particular relevance.

Table 5.1: Relevant local planning policies

Planning Policies taken from Core Strategy 2026	
COR 2 Local Distinctiveness	Development will sustain the distinctive quality, character and diversity of Mid Devon's environmental assets through: a) high quality sustainable design which reinforces the character and legibility of Mid Devon's built environment and creates attractive places, b) the efficient use and conservation of natural resources of land, water and energy, **c) the preservation and enhancement of the distinctive qualities of Mid Devon's natural landscape, supporting opportunities identified within landscape character areas. Within the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or adjoining the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks, the primary objective will be to protect the special environmental qualities of that landscape and its setting, COR 2 Core Strategy 2026 : Adopted 28** d) the protection and enhancement of designated sites of national and local biodiversity and geodiversity importance. Development will support opportunities for protecting and enhancing species populations and the restoration, recreation, enhancement and linking of habitats to contribute toward the delivery of Biodiversity Action Plan targets, and e) the preservation and enhancement of Mid Devon's cultural and historic environment, and the protection of sites, buildings, areas and features of recognised national and local importance.
COR 5 Climate Change	Measures will be sought which minimise the impact of development on climate change, and contribute towards national and regional targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, including:

[32] Mid Devon Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2026, Adopted July 2007: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7872&p=0

[33] Local Plan Part 3 Development Management Policies, Proposed Submission. September 2012. TCV 22.04.13: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=19504&p=0

Planning Policies taken from Core Strategy 2026	
	a) the development of renewable energy capacity will be supported in locations with an acceptable local impact, including visual, on nearby residents and wildlife. b) energy efficiency improvement measures will be supported with an acceptable impact on historic interest. c) it is intended that all new development will be carbon neutral in development and use as soon as a detailed approach can be developed through the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on this subject. This is likely to be through appropriate choice of materials, energy efficiency measures, transport management, renewable energy generation and carbon fixing. Until such time as the SPD is adopted all development should take positive measures to reduce carbon emissions to a realistic minimum.
COR 18 Countryside	Development outside the settlements defined by COR13 -COR17 will be strictly controlled, enhancing the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside while promoting sustainable diversification of the rural economy. Detailed development control policies will permit agricultural and other appropriate rural uses, subject to appropriate criteria, as follows: a) affordable housing to meet local needs, gypsy accommodation, replacement dwellings, housing essential to accommodate an agricultural or forestry worker and accommodation ancillary to a dwelling; b) appropriately scaled retail, employment, farm diversification and tourism related development (including conversion of existing buildings); c) appropriately scaled and designed extensions and other physical alterations to existing buildings; d) agricultural buildings; e) community facilities, such as educational facilities, buildings associated with public open space, development required to support or enhance biodiversity or geodiversity interests, transportation and infrastructure proposals, horse riding establishments and golf facilities; and **f) renewable energy and telecommunications.**
Planning Policies taken from Local Plan Part 3	
DM/2 High Quality Design	Designs of new development must be of high quality, based upon and demonstrating the following principles: **a) Clear understanding of the characteristics of the site, its wider context and the surrounding area;** b) Efficient and effective use of the site, having regard to criterion (a); c) Positive contribution to local character including any heritage or biodiversity assets and the setting of heritage assets; Visually attractive places that are well integrated with surrounding buildings, streets and landscapes, and do not have an unacceptably adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of the proposed or neighbouring properties and uses, taking account of:

Planning Policies taken from Core Strategy 2026	
	i) Architecture ii) Sitting, layout, scale and massing iii) Orientation and fenestration iv) Materials, landscaping and green infrastructure
DM/5 Renewable and low carbon energy	**The benefits of renewable and low carbon energy development will be weighed against its impact. Proposals for wind turbines, solar power installations and other forms of renewable or low carbon energy will be permitted where they do not have significant adverse impacts on the character, amenity and visual quality of the area, including cumulative impacts of similar developments within the parish or adjoining parishes.** Where significant impacts are identified through Environmental Impact Assessment, the Council will balance the impact against the wider benefits of delivering renewable and low carbon energy. Development must consider: **a) Landscape character and heritage assets;** b) Environmental amenity of nearby properties in accordance with Policy DM/7; c) Quality and productivity of the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a); d) Biodiversity (avoiding habitat fragmentation).
DM/30 Protected landscapes	Development proposals within or affecting the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Dartmoor National Park, Exmoor National Park and the North Devon Biosphere Reserve must demonstrate that: a) Cultural heritage and the character, appearance, setting and other special qualities of the landscape will be conserved or, where possible, enhanced; and b) Biodiversity will be conserved and enhanced where possible through improved linking of habitats, appropriate landscaping and habitat creation. **Major developments within protected landscapes or adjoining the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Dartmoor or Exmoor National Parks will only be permitted in exceptional cases.**

Recommendations for emerging local planning policies

6.3 This study reveals that Mid Devon is generally highly sensitive to large scales of wind energy and solar PV developments, due to the overall small scale and strongly rural character of much of the district's landscape. Although existing policies outlined in Table 5.1 provide an adequate framework for ensuring landscape character is considered in development proposals, future policies should make reference to the information contained within this Landscape Sensitivity Assessment as a material consideration for future applications for wind or solar PV schemes. Cross-reference to this assessment should therefore be provided at the earliest opportunity to the relevant policies when they are next reviewed.

6.4 In developing local plan policy some overall recommendations include:

- Using the results of the landscape sensitivity assessment to guide development to the least sensitive parts of the district's landscape, whilst thoroughly responding to the detailed guidance in the individual assessments (as indicated by the comparative sensitivities of LCTs as set out in Table 4.1, Figures 4.1-4.10 and the individual assessments at Chapter 5).

- Avoiding significant harm to the key characteristics of a Landscape Character Type whilst accepting that some change might be required in order to accommodate renewable energy generation.
- Maintaining the diversity of landscapes (i.e. ensuring that the design of any scheme responds to landscape character and local distinctiveness).
- Retaining important areas of undeveloped landscape in Mid-Devon (for example within the more secluded valleys and combes).
- Allowing continued experience of the strongly rural character and often highly tranquil parts of the landscape in-between wind energy and field-scale photovoltaic developments.
- Maintaining the natural beauty and protecting the special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB and Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks.

Appendix 1: Devon Character Area summary descriptions

Summary descriptions for each Devon Character Area with land in Mid Devon District is included in the table below for reference. This information is taken from the full descriptions available on Devon County Council's website[34] and is arranged in descending order in terms of area falling within the district.

DCA	Devon Character Area	Character Text
DCA02	Bampton and Beer Downs	This is a remote and quiet landscape with few through-routes, and is rarely visited by non-locals, giving it a remote, peaceful, timeless quality. Steep lanes run between high hedgebanks rich with colourful flowers. The flat hilltops have a sense of airy spaciousness, with long views towards the Blackdowns to the south and east, and an almost aerial aspect over the lush, deep green woodlands of the Exe valley to the west. In contrast to the open hilltops, the valleys feel enclosed and secretive. In the south, the historic parkland of Knightshayes Court adds seasonal colour and exotic species to this pastoral Devon landscape.
DCA14	Crediton Rolling Farmland	A 'typical' Devon landscape characterised by a harmonious patchwork of fields, thick hedges, red soil, deep lanes and attractive villages. This productive, settled agricultural landscape contrasts with the looming mass of Dartmoor, which forms the southern horizon in many views, particularly from the south of the area. Views are often restricted by hedgebanks, but where they occur they are often panoramic. The landscape is diverse, with irregular, often rounded hills dissected by small but well-marked valleys, lending a small scale and intimate appearance to the landscape. The long east-west ridge of the Raddon Hills forms a distinctive landmark, particularly in views from the southern part of the Exe valley.
DCA16	Cullompton Rolling Farmland	Situated between the valleys of the Exe and the Culm, this is an area of quiet, peaceful countryside, largely undisturbed by the roads and settlements on its periphery. Its steeply undulating hills and serene valleys have seen relatively few modern changes. Sunken lanes and tracks, a colourful patchwork of hedged fields, and numerous historic farmsteads remain a part of the fabric of today's landscape, giving the area a strong sense of changelessness and time-depth, despite its proximity to Exeter. The red soils and sandstone buildings give the area a colourful and warm quality which is enhanced by the deciduous trees in hedgerows and alongside streams.
DCA24	Exe Valley	The River Exe meanders through a deep and dramatic wooded valley lined with lush oak woodlands displaying changing seasonal colours. Its side valleys are particularly quiet and secretive, with a very strong sense of enclosure. The historic town of Tiverton sits on the banks of the river, its red sandstone churches, castle, bridges, school and impressive early19th century textile mill dominant in the scene. South of Tiverton, the Exe valley landscape opens out into a patchwork of fields, woodlands and copses with a much gentler character.
DCA15	Cruwys Morchard Wooded and	A landscape characterised by its deep valleys and extensive and varied woodland, interspersed with more open, pastoral landscape. The valley

[34] http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/natural_environment/landscape/devon-character-areas.htm

DCA	Devon Character Area	Character Text
	Farmed Valleys	of the Iron Mill Stream (a tributary of the Exe) is spectacularly deep and wooded, almost gorge-like in places. The combination of steep slopes, thick woodland, and the sights and sounds of the Iron Mill Stream create an atmosphere which is quiet, secretive, remote and isolated. The enclosed, wooded valleys contrast with the high, airy and spacious pasture above. This higher land is patterned with hedges and punctuated by copses and larger woods, with long-range views in all directions, Exmoor especially catching the eye in views from the northern part of the area.
DCA17	Culm Valley Lowlands	The colourful patchwork of fields, thick hedgerows and distinctive red soils visible in this area combine to form a quintessential 'Devon' scene. The area is the 'gateway' into Devon when viewed from the major transport corridors (road and rail) which pass through it. Its sense of history as a transport corridor is apparent in the Grand Western Canal, which flows serenely through the area, crossed by distinctive bridges. Despite the presence of busy transport routes and several large settlements, the valley of the River Culm retains a peaceful atmosphere, with the tree-lined river meandering through a wide floodplain.
DCA68	Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands	A settled and farmed lowland landscape, which gives the impression of being a fertile and prosperous agricultural area. The patchwork of fields and hedgerows is characterised by red soils, a wide variety of crops and numerous orchards, giving the area a rich variety of colours and textures, particularly in spring and late summer. The tree-fringed rivers Yeo, Creedy, Culm and Exe snake in meandering courses across their wide floodplains, past historic mills, bridges and weirs, all of which contribute to the time-depth of the landscape. The numerous prehistoric barrows hint at earlier phases of the landscape's evolution. Crediton, with its historic town centre and splendid red stone parish church gives its surroundings a more developed character.
DCA67	Yeo Upland and Slopes	This is a rolling upland landscape, which sits above surrounding areas offering spectacular and extensive views into adjacent landscapes, including the Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands, Haldon Ridge, Teign Valley and Dartmoor. Although elevated it is incised by a series of river valleys (most of which drain northwards into the Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands) which creates strong variations in topography. The highest ridges and slopes are generally open providing long distance views and orientation, with linear blocks of mixed and broadleaved woodland along the small valley sides providing strong interconnections and a sense of enclosure which contrasts with the elevated ridges. This is a historically rich landscape with an intact medieval field pattern and sparse settlement comprising isolated stone farmsteads linked by ridge top lanes radiating from the nucleated village of Tedburn St. Mary. The lanes are often sunken, narrow and sinuous, lined with tall hedgebanks and mature trees. Overall the sense of tranquillity is strong. The close proximity of Dartmoor, sparse population, elevated panoramic views and intimate wooded valleys combine to give this area its sense of place.
DCA65	Witheridge and Rackenford Moor	An elevated, open landscape with long views to Dartmoor and/or to Exmoor. Within the patchwork of pastoral fields are extensive areas of rough Culm grassland and heathland. These Culm 'moors' have a strong sense of remoteness, even wildness, which is accentuated by the relative lack of settlement and the wind-sculpted trees and hedgerows;

DCA	Devon Character Area	Character Text
		they give an impression of how large areas of Devon might have looked before agricultural improvements such as drainage, ploughing and fertilizers. The presence in the landscape of numerous clusters of prehistoric barrows adds to this sense of history and changelessness. The strong textures of plantations, beech hedgerows, heathland and grasses contrast with the smooth improved agricultural land which surrounds them. Patches of colour in the landscape change with the seasons – golden, brown and green grasses, purple heather and bright yellow gorse.
DCA25	Exeter Slopes and Hills	This area has a varied topography, rising to the north-west to around 248m around Waddles Down Cross. This landscape feels elevated above surrounding areas, offering views across Exeter city and the Exe estuary as well as to Crediton, Dartmoor and Haldon Ridge in the distance. Areas of steep slopes, particularly those that face northwards, are well wooded with plantation and ancient semi-natural woodland – Stoke Wood being particularly important for recreation. Within the narrow and tightly enclosed valleys the character is more intimate. Distinctive views, strong topography, notable woodland and proximity to Exeter contribute to a strong sense of place. Despite the proximity to Exeter this landscape has a strongly rural character with increasing tranquillity and sense of remoteness in the small intimate valleys as well as further west away from the urban fringe and A30 corridor.
DCA06	Blackdown Hills	This landscape at its core comprises a central plateau landscape which is elevated, exposed and open in character and which fans out into narrow ridges at its edges where it is fringed by steeply sloping wooded greensand edges and farmed slopes which descend into river valleys. The interplay of open, elevated plateau (with its regular enclosure pattern and beech hedges, outgrown beech hedges and pine shelterbelts), the steeply sloping fringes (which are cloaked in woodland), and the farmed valleys (with small scale irregular enclosures) gives this landscape its distinctiveness. The expansive plateau and prominent beech shelterbelts, in particular, distinguish this area from the East Devon Central Ridge found further south and east. In places there is a sense of bleakness about the longer views across unbroken stretches of plateau.
DCA33	High Taw Farmland	Centred on a watershed in the very heart of Devon at the junction of numerous character areas, this typical Devon farmed landscape comprises lush green pastoral farmland, visually dominated by the brooding mass of Dartmoor to the south. Rounded hills covered in hedged fields are separated by secretive valleys where rivers meander along their tree-lined courses. There is a strong perception of time-depth, with the landscape reflecting thousands of years of human history from the Neolithic to the present day. The landscape presents a rich tapestry of medieval features, including churches, villages, farms, field boundaries and narrow lanes with ancient wayside crosses.
DCA57	Taw Valley	This is an intricate, complex and varied landscape within a dramatic valley, which contrasts with the surrounding open, elevated farmland. Woodland and slopes combine with bends and spurs in the valley to hide views onward and create constant surprises. Tightly wooded sections unexpectedly open out to display wide vistas across the valley. Around Eggesford, the steep valley sides and mixture of broadleaved and coniferous woodland is evocative of continental Europe. Elsewhere,

DCA	Devon Character Area	Character Text
		tranquil parkland gives the valley a soothing atmosphere.
DCA12	Clyst Lowland Farmland	This is a low lying, intensively farmed landscape with a uniformity to its undulating topography except in the north where there are a couple of outliers of higher ground. The uniform topography and pattern of hedgerows and hedgerows trees mean that there are few distinguishing features and this coupled with winding rural lanes results in a landscape which can feel quite disorientating. A distinguishing element of the area are 'Clyst' place names which mean 'clear water' and the numerous small steams which drain the area, along with the more prominent Clyst and Tale valleys, are defining characteristics. This is a settled landscape with a dispersed pattern of villages and farmsteads and includes modern communications and infrastructure, namely the A30 corridor, railway lines, pylons and more recently Exeter Airport. It also includes the town of Honiton.
DCA26	Exmoor Fringe	This landscape of rolling, interlocking ridges, deeply incised by river valleys and patterned by beech hedges, provides an important setting and transition to Exmoor. The upland river valleys drain southwards from the high moorland, forming deep clefts in the landscape that contain clean, fast-flowing water and are clothed in ancient oak woodlands. The Bray valley is the major landscape feature of the western part of the area; further east the valleys are shorter, steeper and narrower. Tree features and hilltop clumps form notable landmarks. The area is sparsely settled, with individual farmsteads and small hamlets and vernacular buildings that are mainly of sandstone and slate. Seen from the south, the area forms the foreground landscape to Exmoor. Seen from the north it forms a diverse and strongly patterned patchwork of fields and wooded valleys.
DCA30	High Culm Ridges	An open, elevated landscape, where the long views out make an important contribution to the sense of place. The high land of Exmoor (to the north) and Dartmoor (to the south) provide orientation, and a backdrop of seasonally-changing colour. In the north, views out to sea and across the north Devon coast lend a strong maritime influence. Views across and into the neighbouring Taw and Torridge valleys emphasise the contrast between this open farmland and the wooded, enclosed and intimate valley landscapes on either side. Skylines are very important, with clumps of trees and square church towers acting as prominent features and landscape focal points. Woodland and occasional patches of unimproved grassland contribute to the seasonally-changing colour and texture of the landscape.
DCA05	Blackdown Hills Scarp	This landscape forms a wide band of scarp woodlands and farmed slopes which are orientated east-west, and which face northwards over the Vale of Taunton. Historically this area has divided the counties of Somerset and Devon. This is a dramatic landscape that is very prominent, particularly in views from the north. It stands out from the land that surrounds it; and has considerable visual interest and texture due to its diverse land use and woodland cover. The Wellington Monument, a key landmark, is located on the north-facing slopes which are gently undulating, rising to Staple Hill. The western end of the scarp is most pronounced; to the east the slopes become broader and gentler. There is dense semi-natural woodland cover on the steepest slopes, along with patches of gorse and scrub. Vegetation patterns are often irregular, reflecting variations in the underlying landform,

DCA	Devon Character Area	Character Text
		although in some areas these variations are masked by conifer plantations. The wet pastures associated with spring lines add further interest and texture to this landscape.
DCA40	Moretonhampstead Moorland Fringes[35]	The landscape includes an extensive area of moorland fringe comprising rolling hills, many of which contain pockets of open heathland commons, and in the west an area of distinct plateau. The plateau land is dominated by conifer plantations associated with the Kennick, Tottiford and Trenchford reservoirs, around which is a gently undulating mixed farmed landscape interspersed by belts of woodland and rough heathy grassland. Here the enclosure pattern, where it is evident, is medium to large in scale and regular in form, which contrasts with the intricate pattern of medieval and post-medieval fields further west. The landscape is sparsely settled and crossed by a network of minor lanes and there is a strong sense of history presented through a rich scattering of archaeological sites and stone crosses. The generally open character of the area in the west affords long views, including views to the high Dartmoor moorland.

[35] Please note that this Devon Character Area is referred to on Devon County Council's website as East Dartmoor Moorland Fringe.

Appendix 2: User Guide

This brief User Guide is designed for both developers and decision-makers to help them consider landscape character and sensitivity when making proposals for wind energy or solar PV developments. It is arranged under three key stages, and sets out a series of questions as prompts to assist in using available information to shape proposals / assist in planning decisions.

Stage 1 – Landscape sensitivity

- What size development is proposed (number/height of turbines for wind energy development, or footprint for solar PV)?
- Which Landscape Character Type (LCT) is the proposed development in?
- Is the site characteristic of the wider LCT (included in the LCT documents provided in Chapter 5)?
- What is the sensitivity rating for the LCT and type/scale of development being proposed?

Stage 2 – Detailed siting and design considerations

- Is the number/height of turbines (for wind energy development) or footprint (for solar PV development) consistent with the 'Guidance for Development' provided for the relevant LCT, including the 'Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas', as set out in Chapter 5? If not how does it differ?
- Does the development accord with the generic guidance for that type of development contained in the DLPG Advice Note 2*('Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape: Guidance on minimising harm to the distinctive character and special qualities of Devon's landscape through sensitive siting and design'*[36])? If not, what aspects of the proposed development conflict with which parts of the guidance?
- Does the siting and design of the scheme accord with the 'Guidance for Development' for the relevant LCT, as set out in Chapter 5? If not, what aspects of the proposed development conflict with which parts of the guidance?
- If the development conflicts with any guidance can the impacts be mitigated?

Stage 3 – Cumulative impact

- Is the development in line with the guidance on 'designing for multiple developments' set out in the DLPG Advice Note 2 and the 'Guidance for Development' set for the relevant LCT, as set out in Chapter 5?
- If not, which guidance does it conflict with?
- Will wind energy/solar PV developments have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of that LCT?

[36] http://www.devon.gov.uk/devon-guidance-v6-june-2013-final-report.pdf

Mid Devon Landscape Sensitivity Study

Appendix 3

Permitted Major Wind and Solar PV Developments in Mid Devon District

- Mid Devon District Boundary
- Major Solar PV Development
- Major Wind Farm Devlopment

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5743-01_016_Renewables_Points 20/09/2013

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council