

## Landscape

Mid Devon’s landscape is a valuable resource and one of our greatest assets. Protecting and enhancing the special character of the landscape that contributes towards local identity and distinctiveness is an important part of the planning process and our quality of life. Protected landscapes in Mid Devon include the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and the part of the district at Cheriton Bishop that is within the Dartmoor National Park. Other features include the Grand Western Canal (which is a Country Park and a Local Nature Reserve (LNR)), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 2 nature reserves managed by Devon Wildlife Trust and areas designated as Local Green Space.



## Local Green Space

Local Green Spaces are areas that are identified by communities as being of particular importance to them and which they feel should be protected. For an area to be designated it needs to be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; demonstrably special to a local community; hold a particular significance (e.g. because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife); and to be local in character, and not an extensive tract of land.

The district currently has 27 designated Local Green Spaces. The consultation provides an opportunity for you to let us know about areas in your community that you feel should be protected in the new Local Plan.

## Trees and hedges

Planting new hedges, trees and woodland is an effective and relatively simple method of helping to mitigate the effects of climate change and increase biodiversity. Trees in towns and cities are of great value and can have an important role in making city and town streets liveable and pleasant, attracting greater levels of footfall.

Current Local Plan policies give protection to ancient, veteran and mature trees, encourage onsite and offsite tree planting, and support Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Plan Mid Devon could take these policies forward and support them with supplementary planning guidance about how tree planting may best be achieved. This could include preferred species, siting, and arrangements for care, maintenance and replacement.

## Biodiversity

The current Local Plan has policies that protect, enhance and conserve biodiversity, support habitat creation, and discourage habitat fragmentation. Plan Mid Devon provides an opportunity to build on this by setting out policy to deliver net gains in biodiversity.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a concept that seeks to ensure that development leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. BNG is already part of the National Planning Policy Framework but this does not specify how much is required. A minimum mandatory national requirement of 10% BNG is expected to become law in 2023 through the Environment Act.



What do you think is the minimum level of BNG that the new Local Plan should set?