

Milton Abbot, Chillaton, Kelly (MACK)  
Neighbourhood Plan  
Appendix 2-2  
Environmental Study



**In Consideration of our Environment**

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## 1. Landscape and Environment

*“The residents of the MACKPLAN area have made it quite clear in recent surveys<sup>1</sup> that the maintenance of our rural environment and its landscape are of the utmost priority. The single most important reason that people voted for about living in the area was their appreciation of the rural environment.”*

### 1-1. Introduction

1.1.0 Current guidance maintains that “Where a neighbourhood planning group has been told by a Local Planning Authority that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) ‘Screening Opinion’ may be required”, the Local Authority will advise if this particular Neighbourhood Plan requires one. No such advice has been given to date.

1.1.1 However, it should be noted that much of the MACK Plan area is subsumed within the WDBC and DCC ‘Landscape Character Assessment’ (LCA) guidance ([www.LANDUSE.co.uk](http://www.LANDUSE.co.uk)). It is therefore assumed that an EIA or SEA (Strategic Impact Assessment) is not required as the core Local Government documents have already been subject to such scrutiny by recent Public Consultation and Adoption (April 2019)

1.1.3 Further, the team note that a significant proportion of the MACK Plan area also falls within the Tamar valley AONB, or is bordered by the TVAONB.

1.1.4 It is therefore felt that a ‘standalone’ ‘Landscape Character Assessment’, based upon the existing approved documentation from WDBC is appropriate, particularly bearing in mind the proposed re-designation, by the Glover Review, of raising the designation ‘AONB’ status to ‘National Landscape’ with greater planning scrutiny powers. For example, the Glover review Oct 2019 proposes that AONB’s (National Landscape) areas become Statutory Consultees with greater planning powers.

1.1.5 The West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) have recommended the inclusion of a Wildlife site resource map and species information covering the Neighbourhood Plan area. This was completed by the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre and can be found at Annex A to this study.

### 1-2. Extension of the TVAOND

1.2.0 A local environmental pressure group, MABRAKE, has surveyed communities in the MACK Plan area with a view to extend the TVAONB to include the whole MACK Plan area under the CROW Act 2000 (Countryside Rights of Way Act). Glover Review<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> MACK Plan Survey p.3. para2. 24/1/18 refers.

<sup>2</sup> Ref No.TO2018/24144 7/2/19 gov.uk

1.2.1 The proposal has received overwhelming community support, though DEFRA advises that possible implementation would be very slow. A full proposal will now be drafted to submit to Natural England (NE) and DEFRA.

1.2.2 If such a re-designation occurs within the lifespan of the MACK Neighbourhood Plan, it would have a significant impact upon MACK Plan recommendations made at this time.

1.2.3 With these considerations in mind, the following sections seek to offer a Landscape Descriptor of the MACK Plan area alone, derived and extracted from documents supplied with thanks and acknowledgements from:

**Land Use Consultants' Co. Bristol.**

Landscape Character Assessment for S.Hams and W Devon.

Draft Report by LUC for WDBC 2017. [www.landuse.co.uk](http://www.landuse.co.uk)

**West Devon Area**

Tamar Upland Fringe' Descriptor.

[www.devon.gov.uk/dca-54](http://www.devon.gov.uk/dca-54) WDBC.

**Strategic Planning Policies**

WDBC & DCC

Adopted April 2019.

## 2. Landscape Descriptor

### 2.1 Objective 1

“To have established clear policies governing development on the edge and outside existing settlements that reflect both local concerns and local needs”

### 2.2 Objective 2

“Where appropriate, to put in place effective measures to protect the local landscape.”

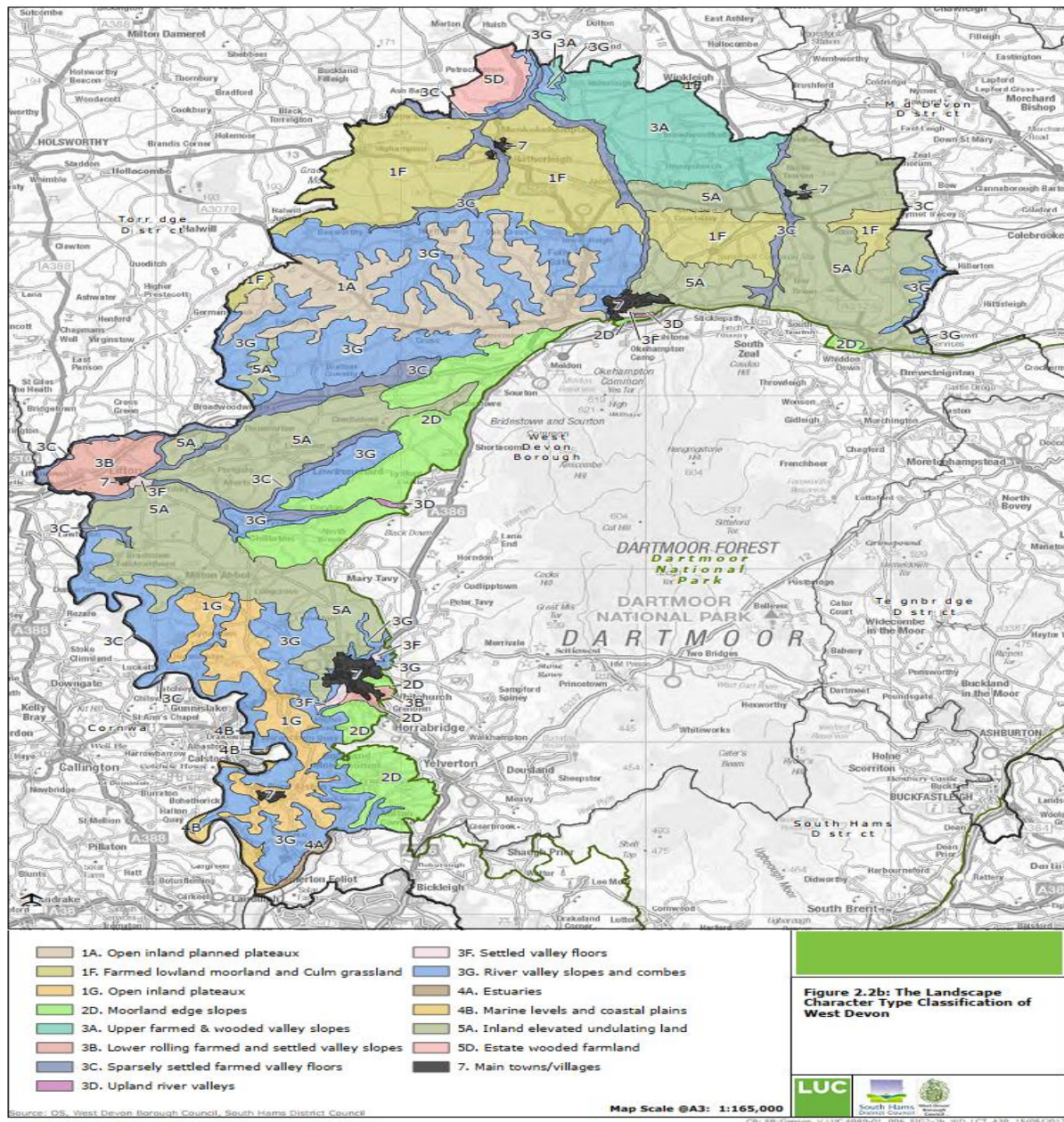
(66%<sup>3</sup> of local residents appreciated what they felt was a beautiful, peaceful, rural area.)

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<sup>3</sup> MACK Plan Survey p.3 para 2. 24/1/18 refers

## 2.3 Objective 3

Another proposal is to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment which would define the unique characteristics of this area and again help with policy formulation and future development plans, based upon WDBC's own recommendations.



### **3. Historical Environment**

#### **3.1 Sites of special scientific interest (SSSI)**

3.1.0 Whilst there are no identified SSSI's in the defined area, recent wildlife surveys indicate a rich fauna population, in particular rare bat species.

#### **3.2 Monuments and historic landscape sites.**

3.2.0 Like much of the Tamar Valley, the area has been settled for thousands of years. From simple grazing on the upland heaths, emerged hill forts, villages and farmsteads. Later came rich mining enterprises, which left shafts and buildings amongst the fields. Some of the earliest of these mining works near Calstock have recently been discovered to be Roman.

3.2.1 Chillaton boasts extensive once bountiful mines at Narracott and Hogs Tor.

3.2.2 The original tribes, the 'Walla', or Dumnonii' later to be grouped as the 'Ancient Britons', left their mark on the local landscape as field boundaries and ancient trackways; such as that linking Tavistock, Lamerton, Milton Abbot, Bradstone and Launceston, now a National Footpath.

3.2.3 Early Celtic fields and habitations were subsumed into Saxon 'ranches' (Hoskins), and the prehistoric inhabitants driven out to settle in Brittany, or enslaved into serfdom by the Saxons. During this period there is evidence from place and field names that Viking settlers began to farm here. (Foghanger-'foghongra-Scandinavian). Also 'Rat Field'- 'rathfeld' –'the land belonging to the earth fort.' (See also Rathhaus-German-Townhall). Kelly- 'kealough'(Celtic) 'clearing in the forest'.

3.2.4 In the MACKPLAN area, many of these early settlements occur at the 220m ASL contour, where springs emerge from the Ramsdown aquifer.

3.2.5 Ramsdown is the site of Castle Park Earthworks, SX799422, a National Monument, dating from the Iron Age. Stone spindle whorls, a flint burin and an arrow head have been discovered near the site.

3.2.6 The settlement of Milton Abbot (Middletona-Medieval) is one such, tracing its ancient origins from an oval prehistoric earthwork with its own spring. (Waterhouse R. et.al. 'An archaeological dig near the church' MAD Archives.)

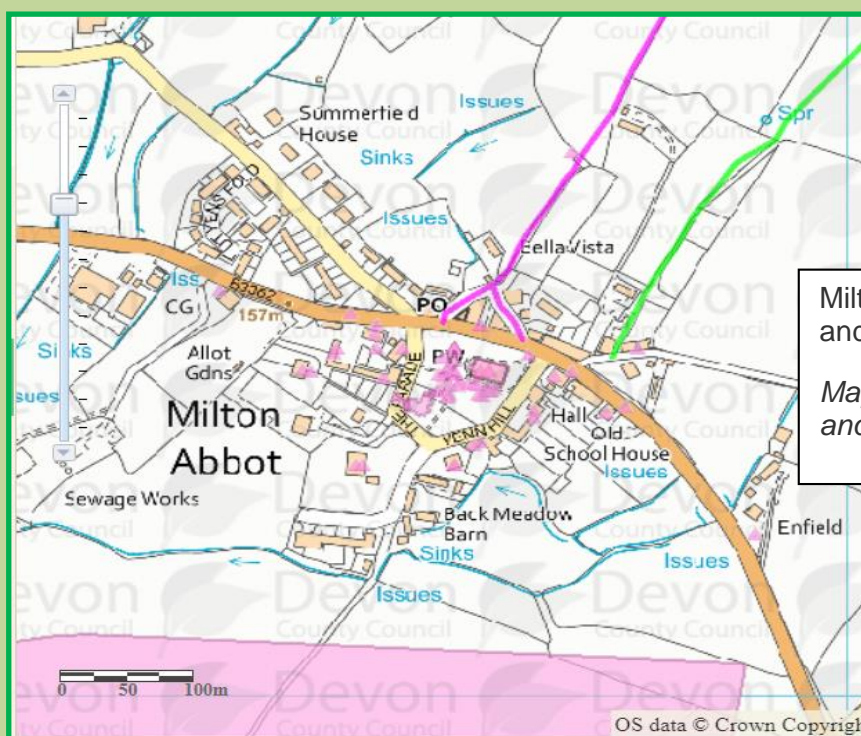
3.2.7 After the Norman invasion, Saxon settlements in turn were sequestered, with the inhabitants remaining as slaves, serfs, villeins or freedmen, owing their living to their Norman landlords. Kelly, by then an enormous estate, is one such example, where the Norman incomers took on the name of the original Anglo-Saxon owners.

3.2.8 Many of these estates were themselves to become either owned or beholden to the 'new' monastery in Tavistock, only to become confiscated during the Reformation when Henry VIII handed them to his favourites. Thus much of the MACK Plan area was owned by the Dukes of Bedford up until the 1950's.

3.2.9 The Settlement of Milton Abbot provides an historical locus and rationale for many other sites in and around the Parish. The early origins of the settlement site have been explained elsewhere in this document. However, its importance is further emphasised when examining local archaeological and monumental sites within some seven kilometres of the settlement centre.

3.2.10 The evolving shape of field boundaries, and a close study of field names can be as revealing as an archaeological dig, and this is no less true of the Parish of Milton Abbot.

3.2.11 The MACKPLAN area is rich in Listed Buildings G1 and G2, with many settlements of historic interest. The Milton Abbot National Monuments list itself runs to four pages.



Milton Abbot and nearby Historic sites and monuments. (Shown in pink).  
*Map also shows Bridleways (Green) and footpaths (purple)*

Local important archaeological sites include

#### **Roman.**

- Lawhitton - Fort.

#### **Celtic-Iron Age.**

- Dunterton - Hill fort, Castle Head.

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- Dunterton - Site.
- Carthamartha Woods Dunterton.- Settlement.
- Dunterton-Site of possible earth fort.
- Carthamartha Woods Dunterton- Single defensive bank.
- Uppaton - Hill fort. Ramsdown.
- Ramsdown - Hill fort. Castle Park.
- Hardstone - Hill fort.
- Lawhitton Barton - Settlement.
- Townlake - Site of Iron Age round house.

### **Bronze Age.**

- Milton Abbot Pophlet.- Bronze Axe

### **Medieval.**

- Milton Abbot.- village. Many sites.
- Dunterton - Castle.Leigh.- Chapel. 2.2.km.
- Kelly - Ancient house etc.
- Bradstone - Manor.

## **3.3 Ancient Parklands.**

### **Kelly House and Estate. SX815395.**

3.3.0 Dating from before 666AD, and mentioned in the Domesday book, the Kelly estates once encompassed virtually half of the MACK Plan area as far as Lewdown at one time. The other half being owned by the Dukes of Bedford.

3.3.1 Remnants of the Kelly parklands still exist in field boundaries, a possible deer park, walled gardens, avenues of trees and woodland plantings. Some mine shafts and associated trackways remain from the Kelly Estate mining enterprises in the 18/19C.

### **Bradstone Manor and Gatehouse. SX810382**

3.3.2 Also recorded in the Domesday book, this ancient Manor is G2 listed, and with its remarkable Jacobean G1 listed gatehouse, sits within a planted landscape of woodland, streams and wetlands.

### **Endsleigh House and Gardens. SX786391**

3.3.3 A remarkable holiday cottage designed and built by Wyattville for the Duke of Bedford between 1810 and 1816. The grounds, designed by Repton, feature designed landscapes, graced

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by picturesque cottages, an arboretum, planted woodlands and rides, all with beautiful views along the deep valleyed Tamar river. A carriage drive was constructed from Gunnislake to Endsleigh along the river for Queen Victoria's visit for afternoon tea.

3.3.4 The estate also encompassed Milton Abbot, itself now a conservation area. Much of the village centre was designed by Lutyens, and built by the Bedford Estates.

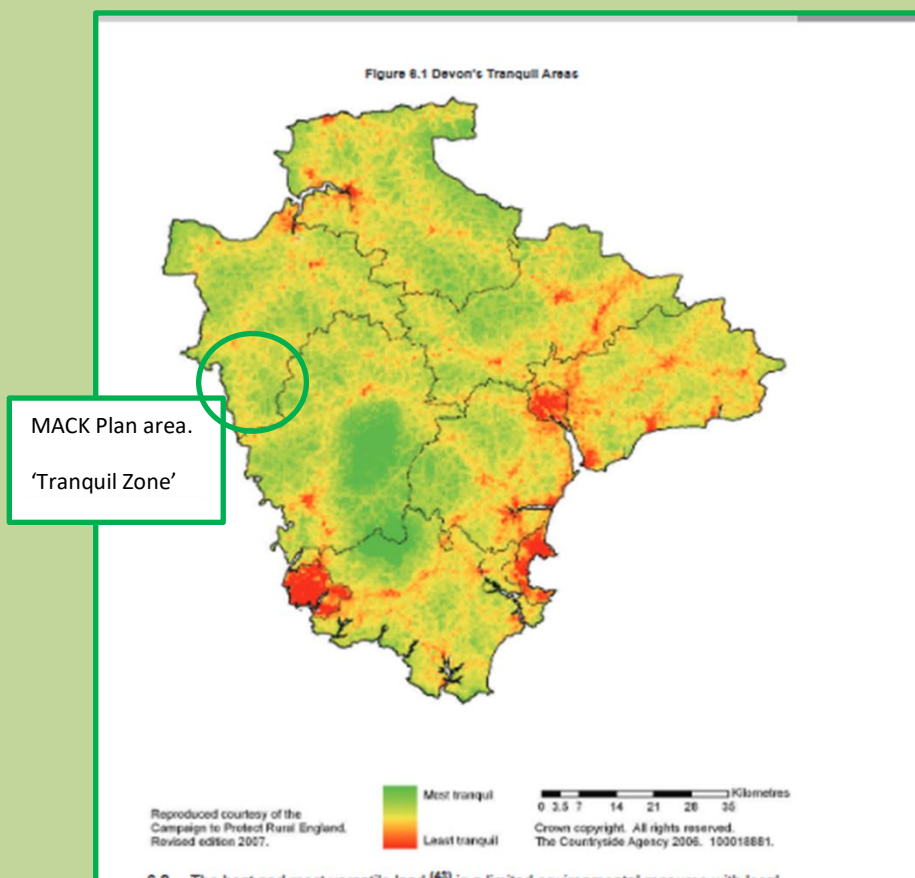
## 4. Landscape Descriptor.

### 4.1 Preamble

4.1.0 The topography, geology and drainage of the MAGPC Parish may be best described as LCT (Landscape Character Type): LCT 2D, LCT 5A, LCT 1F and LCT 3A.

4.1.1 Consisting of gently rolling open upland plateaux and ridge, running east-west sloping gradually towards neighbouring river valleys. It ranges widely from 60m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) near Greystone Bridge to 286 metres ASL (Above Sea level) near Ramsdown.

4.1.2 The region is a quiet, rural landscape, with dark night time skies with little light pollution, as can be seen from the 'Tranquillity map' below. The MACK Plan area is predominantly green i.e. 'Most tranquil'.



4.1.3 The landscape is characterised by long sweeping views to and from Dartmoor. Indeed, this region provides an essential setting for an appreciation of the swell of the upland moorlands viewed from the west, and until 2009 was protected as an Area of Great Landscape Value. (AGLV).

4.1.4 This landscape, particularly from the Lyd and Lew valleys to the north of the Parish and Ramsdown near Milton Abbot, (a Conservation Area) with Brentor Church in the foreground, offers a unique and essential visual setting for an appreciation of Dartmoor from the west.

4.1.5 Further, to the centre of the Parish, the high downs and hills offer long sweeping views to the north almost as far as the Bristol Channel whilst to the south-west, the views encompass the Tamar Valley to the sea at Plymouth.

4.1.6 A deep valley cuts north-east through the centre of the Parish to the settlement of Chillaton. This valley has been the site of intensive mining activity during the 18th and 19th centuries. Numerous redundant quarries are evident, once providing road aggregate and building material.

4.1.7 Regretfully, a medieval mining village, designated as a National Monument at Pophlett SX794429 was illegally bulldozed during the 1980's. The ancient spring there still survives where a Bronze Age axe was discovered a few years ago.

## **4.2 Farmland**

4.2.0 Farmland is mostly situated on rounded hills, interspersed by deep valleys. Many farms are ancient, some exhibiting early Celtic and later Saxon field pattern characteristics, with distinct medieval field-scapes defined by the long plough. Square towered parish churches provide landmarks and scale to some hamlets. On higher ground, 17C enclosures divide up ancient open upland moorland.

4.2.1 Much of the pastoral farmland is divided up into small to medium scale areas of arable, rough ground and orchards. Fields tend to be larger on flatter ground away from settlements.

4.2.2 Field boundaries are typically low hedgebanks with ditches and verges, and some estates are defined by areas of regularly spaced and even-aged oaks. Some banks are denuded with no hedge remaining.

4.2.3 This agricultural landscape is typified by farms, estates, and small hamlets, with Milton Abbot and Chillaton being the largest settlements.

4.2.4 Some 'horsiculture' and equestrian development has introduced fencing instead of hedges, usually in close association with settlements or larger properties.

4.2.5 Ramsdown is the site of Iron Age Castle Park, a National Monument consisting of a circular earth bank fortification. This ancient settlement is believed to be one of the principal sites of local settlement generation over the millennia. Old records of the Bedford Estates mention other earthworks and ridge and furrow cultivation.

4.2.6 Some gorse in hedges gives an upland feel to the landscape, with Culm grasslands on this higher ground.

### 4.3 Geology

4.3.0 Many springs originate on the higher ground at around 220 metres ASL principally around Ramsdown, the major aquifer for the Parish, resulting in numerous streams, ponds, and wet rush pasture and ditches. It would appear that most ancient farms in the Parish owe their origins to the presence of a generous spring; indeed, Milton Abbot, Kelly and Bradstone rely on these springs for their water supply. These springs feed the Tamar and the Lyd in particular.

4.3.1 The Geology of the Parish is underlain by Devonian/ Carboniferous mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, creating poor quality soils with some locally exposed granite.

4.3.2 Mining legacy, particularly in southern areas is often obscured by woodland, but also visible in settlements. The Parish borders the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site.

4.3.3 This ancient geology is rich in minerals; manganese in particular. Indeed the Parish was characterised by intensive mining during the 18C and 19C, with many mineshafts and adits tunnelling under the downs.

4.3.4 Chillaton was mined heavily during this period particularly at Narracott and Hogs Tor mine, whilst other shafts are evident around Ramsdown and Foghanger. Many of these earlier mines were once owned by the Chichester and Kelly estates.

### 4.4 Woodlands

4.4.0 Fragments of ancient managed deciduous woodland still survive around the Parish, whilst clumps and copses stand alongside the fields and sinuous lanes, with hilltop beeches and relic pine shelterbelt adding interest.

4.4.1 Some conifer plantations and mixed woodland are found on upper slopes of the river valleys near the Landscape Type Characteristic (LTC) boundaries. In localised areas “tunnels” are created along sinuous lanes and roads by dense avenues of trees, typically beech.

4.4.2 The Parish is bounded by the busy B3362 Tavistock to Launceston road, running through Milton Abbot and the B3257 running north-west through Chillaton to Lifton. Footpaths and bridle

ways crisscross the Parish. The nationally important long distance Tamar Valley Discovery Trail footpath cuts diagonally across the Parish from north-west to south-east.

## 4.5 The Milton Abbot Conservation Area

4.5.0 The Milton Abbot Conservation Area is considered to be of special architectural or historic interest, in character and appearance which should be preserved or enhanced.



4.5.1 Much of the special character of this Conservation Area derives from the historically and architecturally important redesign of the village centre by Lutyens for the Duke of Bedford around 1900. Whilst the character and design of the individual buildings is important, other elements are also important, including:

- The historic layout of paths, roads and boundaries
- Characteristic materials used in the buildings, paving and street furniture
- The character and layout of spaces, and the "mix" of uses for example, houses, shops and public houses.
- Vistas and viewpoints along streets and between buildings
- The designation is not to prevent development but to make sure that any changes are sympathetic to the special architectural and historic character of the area. This is particularly important in terms of scale, design, materials and the space between buildings.

- Demolition of all or part of a building or structure (including walls, chimneys and outhouses)
- Minor developments - including alterations to roofs or the cladding of buildings
- Tree works- cutting, uprooting, lopping or topping of trees
- Installation of satellite dishes and solar panels for example.

4.5.2 It is also important to emphasise that because this site was cleared before its redevelopment by Lutyens, there are many important historical artefacts, foundations and alignments buried under the existing Conservation Area. This multilayered archaeological evidence is further proof of the importance of this site.

4.5.3 Tithe maps, site excavations (See: Waterhouse-MAD. Dig) aerial and Lidar surveys further reinforce this view.

## 5. Concerns

5.1.0 Many farms rely on subsidy, and any change in agricultural grants is a matter of concern.

Other forces for change may be identified such as:

5.1.1 Changes in land ownership or agricultural intensification (pastoral to arable), which may lead to a loss of traditional medieval field boundaries and a change to existing landscape pattern as well as a gradual decline in wildlife species and their habitats. Decline in livestock numbers leading to of scrub encroachment onto pastoral land.

5.1.2 Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread particularly phytophthora pathogens and ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*). Loss of trees within hedgerows would be particularly noticeable in this landscape type.

5.1.3 Continuing decline in traditional rural skills such as hedge-laying resulting in under management of hedges and verges in some areas.

5.1.4 Continuing pressure for development particularly due to the LCT's proximity to the urban fringes of Tavistock, Lifton and Launceston. Further expansion of these settlements adjacent to the LCT, onto the upper slopes would be highly visible within this elevated landscape.

5.1.5 An increase in traffic levels on narrow rural lanes is likely to diminish levels of tranquillity and add pressure to widen roads, thereby eroding the rural character. This concern may be exacerbated by 'Class 'Q' (a+b) permitted development which allows rural barns to be converted to dwellings.

5.1.6 Pressure for new masts for mobile phones, pylons and potentially wind turbines (if government subsidies are renewed), which would be conspicuously visible on prominent skylines.

Hayedown Police Mast, the Hayedown Industrial site and Tredown Compost recycling facility raise concern over visual, noise, light and dust intrusion, potentially leading to further ‘creeping’ development, and pollution.

## 6. Recommendations<sup>4</sup>

6.1.0 To protect the strong historic character of the Moorland Edge Slopes, where ancient sites and features are scattered across a remote rural landscape of small-scale medieval and post-medieval fields enclosed by intact Devon hedges.

6.1.1 Manage and enhance areas of semi-natural habitat including heathlands to build resilience to climate change.

6.1.2 Plan for long-term restructuring of conifer plantations with a move towards their gradual reversion to locally indigenous broadleaf woodland, encouraging management to create and maintain a diverse age structure, to reverse the ‘amenity’ aspect of some recent plantings.

6.1.3 Pursue opportunities to extend and link woodland and semi-natural habitats, utilising native climate-resistant species.

6.1.4 Restore lost Devon hedge banks, encouraging the development of further beech hedgerow trees and avenues. Respect any local variation in Devon bank construction and topping hedgerow species, utilising local materials where possible. Ensure that ditches and verges are managed to maximise their biodiversity potential.

6.1.5 Conserve and appropriately manage and protect the integrity of valued semi-natural habitats including broadleaf woodland, lowland moorland and acid grassland, rush pasture and mire.

6.1.6 Encouraging the retention and appropriate management of areas of rough ground and wet pasture through livestock grazing at appropriate levels to enhance biodiversity.

6.1.7 To protect and manage the landscape’s historic sites and features including the prehistoric hill fort at Castle Park Camp, Ramsdown.

6.1.8 Ensure development respects the current scale of the landscape, its underlying landform, historic field patterns and existing landscape features including trees and scattered buildings.

6.1.9 Protect the landscapes sparsely settled character and control new development outside the existing footprints of the landscape’s small historic hamlets.

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<sup>4</sup> From West Devon Borough Council (LUC Report WDBC & SH)

6.1.10 Seek to ensure opportunities for access and enjoyment of the countryside including links to the long distance routes such as the Two Castles Trail, West Devon Way and Tamar Valley Discovery Trail.

6.1.11 Protect open views to Dartmoor and across the West Devon countryside.

6.1.12 Protect the wider setting the landscape provides to Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley AONB. Ensure that any development does not detract from the special qualities of these protected landscapes.

Milton Abbot, Chillaton, Kelly (MACK)

Neighbourhood Plan

Appendix 2-2

Environmental Study

Annex A

Wildlife site resource map and species  
information for neighbourhood planning