

Impact Assessment



Assessment of: Devon County Council's adoption of the Tamar Valley National Landscape Management Plan

Service: Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Head of Service: Meg Booth

Version / date of sign off by Head of Service: /2026

Assessment carried out by (job title): Environment Partnerships Officer

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

Devon is home to five National Landscapes, formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Each landscape has a partnership responsible for overseeing its management. The 'Tamar Valley Management Plan' is a statutory document.

A Management Plan provides a shared, long-term vision for the National Landscape and contains ambitions, targets and actions that seek to further the statutory purpose: to conserve and enhance the natural beauty. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW), it is a requirement for local authorities to produce Management Plans for their National Landscapes and to review every five years. The Review reflects significant changes to legislation, policy and the environmental context to ensure that the Plan remains valid and up to date.

2. Reason for change / review

National Landscape management plans are refreshed every five years.

3. Aims / objectives, limitations and options going forwards (summary)

Work and priorities for managing the National Landscape set out in the Management Plan are required to contribute to Defra's *Environmental Improvement Plan* (EIP23). This sets the goals for enhancing England's natural environment, including the targets to;

- protect 30% of our land and sea for nature through the Nature Recovery Network by 2030 ('30 by 30')
- restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites by 2042; and, halt the decline in species abundance by the end of 2030, increasing it above 2022 levels by 2042.

Specifically, a *Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework* (TOF) sets the ambition for how Protected Landscapes are expected to achieve 3 outcomes from EIP23 through a number of targets:

- Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife
- Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Goal 10: Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment

The *Levelling Up and Regeneration Act* (LURA) (2023) amended and strengthened the CRow Act in respect of Protected Landscapes, to:

- Require relevant authorities in England to 'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty' of the National Landscape. This replaces a 'duty of regard' to the purpose in previous legislation.

4. People affected and their diversity profile

Tamar Valley Community Insights

This section provides an overview of the people who live, work, and shape the Tamar Valley community, highlighting key demographic characteristics that inform planning and decision-making taken from Census data 2021.

Population and Demographics (Tamar Valley)

Indicator	Data
Population (Census 2021, Defra cut to edge)	11,755
Average age	49 (England: 40.5)
Population aged 65+	3,638
Population aged 19 and under	2,041
Ethnicity	98% White (England: 81%)
Average income (2021)	£25,200 per annum
Average income (2025, projected)	£27,816 per annum (England: £37,430)
Average mid-range house price	£200,000 – £340,000
House affordability ratio	10 (England average: 8)

Average earnings within the Tamar Valley National Landscape area were £25,200 in 2021. Applying an annual growth rate of 2.5% gives a projected average income of £27,816 in 2025.

Deprivation, Ethnicity and Language

Indicator	Tamar Valley	England
Households in deprivation	50.2%	48.4%
Average deprivation decile	6 (1 = most deprived, 10 = least)	5.5
Ethnic group: White	97.7%	81.0%
No religion	43.1%	36.7%

Main language: English	99.0%	90.8%
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5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

Numerous stakeholders have been involved in the iterative process informing the review of the Plan either through directing the review or taking part in stakeholder feedback, notably local authority partners who are responsible for the plan, other agencies such as Natural England, Historic England, Wildlife Trusts, as well as individuals from the local community and parish councils. The Management Plan is a shared strategy for the place that will have relevance to stakeholders in the following ways:

- **Local authorities:** The relevant authority organisations that are required to jointly prepare, adopt and review the *Management Plan*, and who carry out key functions, such as planning and highways, that affect the National Landscape. The *Management Plan*, in its entirety, establishes the management policy of these responsible authorities.
- **Tamar Valley National Landscape Partnership organisations:** These varied organisations will have a key role in delivering and championing the *Management Plan*.
- **Relevant authorities:** All public bodies and statutory undertakers (including local authorities, government and governmental organisations, parish councils, utility providers) have a duty to seek to further the purpose of the National Landscape; this *Management Plan* will guide them in fulfilling their statutory duties.
- **Landowners, land managers and developers:** Those who own and manage land in the National Landscape have a vital role to play; the plan aims to guide, support and attract resources for sensitive management of the National Landscape.
- **Local communities, businesses and visitors:** Everyone who lives, works or visits the Tamar Valley National Landscape can play an active role in caring for the National Landscape; the plan identifies some of the priorities for action and ways to become involved.
- **Others such as funding bodies, third sector, and voluntary groups and organisations** may refer to the plan or use it to gain a greater understanding of the issues affecting the area.

6. Research used to inform this assessment

Different methods of research were used to inform the review of the management plan, and this has been used to inform this assessment:

- a. Literature review/other plans and strategies – national guidance on National Landscape management plan reviews was referenced alongside learning best practice from other protected landscapes (National Parks and National Landscapes management plans recently or concurrently undergoing review). Various other plans and strategies were reviewed, such as the Devon Carbon Plan, the Cornwall and West Devon World Heritage Site Management Plan, the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Management Plan, and The Cornwall and Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategies for example.
- b. Data collection and statistical analysis -
 - Working collaboratively with other National Landscapes, engagement in research projects provided us with data from Cranfield University on soil carbon
 - DEFRA/Natural England provided a set of national statistics to support the targets and outcomes framework/and monitoring

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

Key consultation phases in the review process:

- The TVNL Partnership has carried out a series of consultations with statutory consultees, stakeholders and the communities of the Tamar Valley from February 2024 to April 2026. There was over 9 weeks of consultation in 2024, including 12 face-to-face events in and around the Tamar Valley, engaging with over 200 people. Over 300 verbal, written and online responses were received, 300 people engaged in the online survey and a series of presentations and talks were given at parish council meetings, other meetings and events, from Bere Apple Fest to Tavistock Library's Mother & Baby Group.
- Following publication of the guidance on Management Plan issued by Defra in June 2025, further consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders and statutory consultees, concluding in December 2025. A final draft of the Management Plan was then created, reflecting feedback received and this was subsequently the version that was taken through independent Strategic Environmental Assessment between

January and April 2026, and for which a Habitat Regulations Assessment has also been carried out.

8. Equality analysis

Giving Due Regard to Equality and Human Rights

The local authority must consider how people will be affected by the service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where relevant, we must take into account the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. This means considering how people with different needs get the different services they require and are not disadvantaged, and facilities are available to them on an equal basis in order to meet their needs; advancing equality of opportunity by recognising the disadvantages to which protected groups are subject and considering how they can be overcome.

We also need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).
- The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are:
 - Informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.
 - Proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision)
 - Fair
 - Necessary

- Reasonable, and
- Those affected have been adequately consulted.

<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>In what way will you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (to meet needs/ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'), if possible. • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
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<p>All residents (include generic equality provisions)</p>	<p>People with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 often face barriers to accessing the countryside, which can lead to indirect discrimination and social exclusion.</p> <p>For example, people with disabilities may encounter physical obstacles such as stiles, uneven paths, or a lack of accessible toilets and signage, making many rural areas difficult or impossible to navigate. Ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ individuals may feel unwelcome or unsafe in predominantly white, conservative rural communities due to experiences or fears of prejudice. Women and older people may also feel vulnerable in isolated areas due to concerns about personal safety.</p> <p>A lack of inclusive representation in promotional materials and decision-making bodies can reinforce the perception that the countryside is not for everyone. These barriers contribute to underrepresentation and reduced wellbeing among affected groups. Addressing these</p>	<p>The Tamar Valley National Landscape Management Plan places people at its core, recognising the essential role of residents, visitors, businesses, and landowners in its delivery. One of the three sections of the plan is called 'People and Place'. It has policies and actions aligned to it.</p> <p>To help eliminate or reduce potential disadvantage and improve accessibility, the plan aligns with the government's PLTOF target to "Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using metrics based on those in the Defra Access for All programme." For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a co-ordinated, strategic approach to the management of public rights of way and publicly accessible land to achieve an accessible well-connected network. • Promote high quality access with as wide a range of users and possible. • better communicate accessibility information with the public through digital and other media • Support initiatives that contribute to a sustainable future for communities.
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	issues requires inclusive planning, investment in accessible infrastructure, and community engagement to ensure that everyone can enjoy the benefits of nature equally.	
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Age	See above	See above
Disability (incl. sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people	See above	See above
Culture and ethnicity: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin/race, skin colour, religion and belief	See above	See above
Sex, gender and gender identity (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)	See above	See above
Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership	See above	See above

Other relevant socio-economic factors such as family size/single people/lone parents, income/deprivation, housing, education and skills, literacy, sub-cultures, 'digital exclusion', access to transport options, rural/urban	See above	See above
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9. Human rights considerations:

There are no human rights considerations arising from the review of the Tamar Valley National Landscape management plan in relation to the Human Rights Act (1998).

In what way can you support and create opportunities for people and communities (of place and interest) to be independent, empowered and resourceful?

The plan provides a focus for partnership working and collaboration among agencies, with a clear geographical emphasis. Part of the plan's Vision statement is 'Nature and People are entirely connected in a living and working environment, enjoying clean air, clean water, wholesome food, tranquillity, good health and resilience to a changing climate.' All three strategic themes are intrinsically linked and this holistic approach to managing the Landscape will see benefits across all user groups, giving more support and opportunities for those people and communities in and around the landscape to thrive. This is backed by objectives and policies that help to provide the framework for supporting and creating such opportunities.

In what way can you help people to be safe, protected from harm, and with good health and wellbeing?

The plan includes numerous objectives and actions centred around health and wellbeing, including:

Communities and Culture:

- Policy CC1: Work with communities towards an improved understanding of locally distinctive features and encourage them to widely communities those special qualities (NL)
- Policy CC3: Encourage and support local communities to celebrate their cultural identity and sense of place through events and activities that reinforce the cultural traditions the National Landscape.
- Policy CC4: Support initiatives for sustainable, joined up, public transport, consistent with the National Landscape's purposes.
- Continue to promote creativity inspired by the landscape.
- Encourage community participation in decisions making through forums like parish councils, and local environmental partnerships.

In what way can you help people to be connected, and involved in community activities?

In addition to the vision statement, objectives and policies described in the sections above, the following objectives also contributes to this:

10. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 4c, otherwise complete the environmental analysis table):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	
Planning Permission	
Environmental Impact Assessment	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	X

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost:		
Conserve and enhance wildlife:		
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:		
Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:		
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:		
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):		
Contribute to reducing water consumption:		
Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):		
Other (please state below):		

11. Economic analysis

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Impact on knowledge and skills:		<p>The Plan wants a thriving rural economy that is sustainable and in harmony with the natural environment. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Plan promotes farming, and will provide farm advice and support to access agri-environment schemes and diversification models, as well as encouraging the principles of local markets and local produce where they add value to the local economy and contributes to the National Landscape purpose of designation. ○ Sustainable tourism is encouraged. ○ Renewable energy deployment is encouraged where appropriate. <p>These initiatives will lead to new skills, employment levels and business productivity in the area. There are also many other cross-cutting objectives and policies that will support these agendas.</p>
Impact on employment levels:		See above
Impact on local business:		See above

12. Describe the linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts (Combined Impacts):

The management plan is structured around three key areas—people and place, climate, and nature—recognising their interconnectedness and the ways they can support and challenge each other. It seeks a balanced approach, such as using nature-based solutions that provide crosscutting holistic solutions to the wider challenges facing society, such as food security, economic uncertainty and climate resilience.

13. How will the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area be improved through what is being proposed? And how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement be secured?

The National Landscape Management Plan enhances the well-being of the area by focussing on environmental conservation whilst considering community needs and economic sustainability.

- Environmental: Conservation is central to the plan, ensuring biodiversity, natural beauty, and climate resilience are enhanced. Measures are in place to promote sustainable land use and safeguard the landscape for future generations.
- Social: By improving access to nature, supporting community initiatives, and preserving cultural heritage, the plan enhances quality of life, health, and well-being.
- Economic: The plan supports sustainable local businesses, tourism, and employment, ensuring economic activity aligns with the conservation of the landscape. It also promotes renewable energy initiatives that meet climate change goals but are sensitive to the special qualities of the Landscape

All procurement will follow Cornwall Council procedures and will seek to obtain environmental and social value.

14. How will impacts and actions be monitored?

A role of the Tamar Valley National Landscape Partnership is to monitor and evaluate the actions that happen as a result of the implementation of this plan to demonstrate where management actions are making a difference on the ground - but without the monitoring process being overly burdensome. There are two main strands to this monitoring:

1. National Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework

This defines the contribution that Protected Landscapes (as areas) should make to national targets and certain Environmental Improvement Plan outcomes. The Framework contains 10 targets. Each target is accompanied by an indicator which will measure progress towards it and its related outcome. Natural England will evaluate progress towards the targets and outcomes in the Framework.

2. Management reporting

Qualitative and quantitative monitoring of action is relatively straightforward; partners regularly report to the Tamar Valley National Landscape Partnership Group. This is the opportunity to highlight the work they are doing throughout the year. In addition, the Partnership's Annual Review is the mechanism for reporting on implementing the Management Plan and the Tamar Valley National Landscape website highlights a range of project work.

The Tamar Valley National Landscape team will develop a programme to identify appropriate, effective and proportionate mechanisms to measure or judge progress towards local priorities that may not be covered elsewhere or require local knowledge and research (could be related to diversity and inclusion and engagement, or specific species, or hedgerows, for example), and will seek to work with wider partners to secure a long-term programme of monitoring along with appropriate resources.