

Kingsbridge, West Alvington and Churchstow Neighbourhood Plan

Appendix B4a

Landscape Character Assessment -source Landscape Character Assessment for the South Hams and West Devon (LUC 2017)

The key landscape sensitivities within the plan area include:

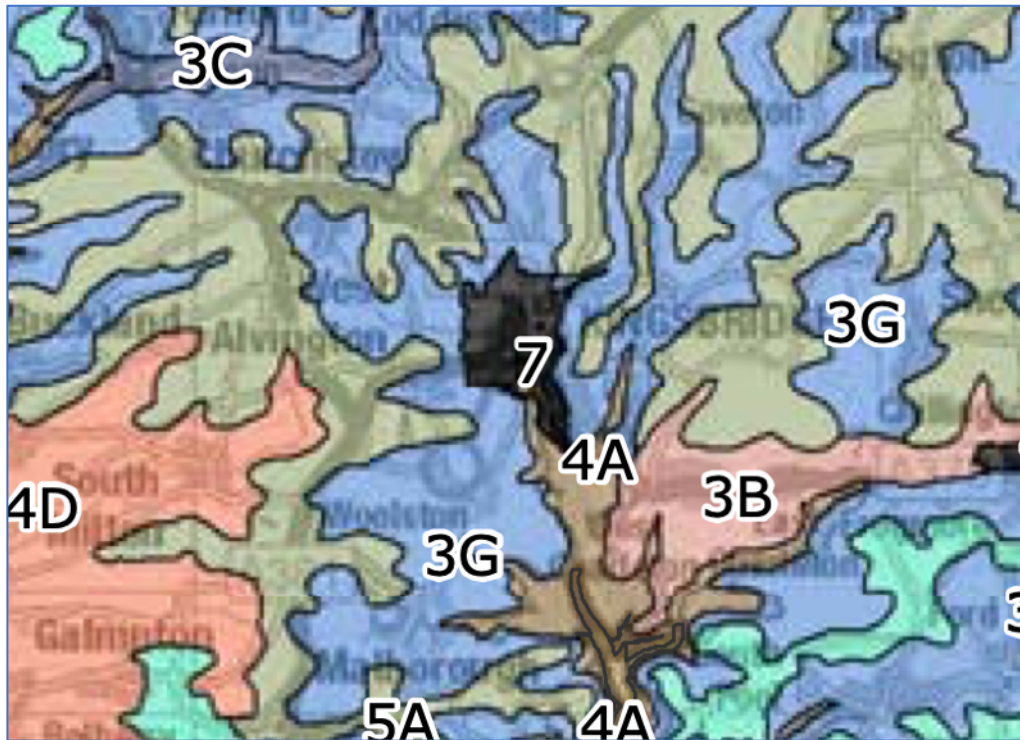


Figure types of Landscape Character in the Plan area

Estuary(4A)

- Expansive ria floor.
- Remote and tranquil, with high biodiversity value of international and national importance.
- The estuaries support very large numbers of passage and overwintering birds,.
- Distinctive and attractive large settlements on adjacent land including Kingsbridge.
- Relatively inaccessible with limited vehicle access.
- The landscape is popular with tourists and water-based recreation, providing for quiet enjoyment and ready access to the natural environment.
- Dark night skies in places.
- A visually dynamic landscape and seascape highly influenced by tides, weather conditions and seasons.
- Picturesque, with winding rivers, and overhanging woodlands extending to the water's edge.
- • Effect of adjacent terrestrial landscapes on the character of the estuaries, making them susceptible to change.

River Valley Slopes(3G)

- Secluded, rural tranquil valley landscape which is not interrupted by modern large scale development or roads;
- Extensive woodland cover, much of ancient origin retained on the valley sides;
- The local legacy of the soft fruit industry evident in numerous traditional orchards around farms and villages;
- The field boundaries of mature species-rich Devon hedge banks enclosing a mosaic of field patterns from medieval to modern;
- Diverse and connected habitat network including semi-improved and unimproved neutral grassland, plus areas of wet grassland and marshland on the lower slopes supporting rich wildlife;
- Intact historic settlement pattern of small nucleated villages and dispersed farmhouses, with distinct Devon vernacular; many settlements designated as Conservation Areas, and with distinctive rural and riverside settings;
- The intimate winding narrow roads and sunken lanes enclosed by hedge banks which contribute to the hidden, secluded and historic character;
- Spectacular views from upper valley slopes across the estuaries and rivers, as at Kingsbridge, contrast with the sense of seclusion along the lower valleys. This rapidly changing character is a distinctive South Hams characteristic;
- Dark skies which can be experienced within the area away from the major conurbations.

Inland elevated undulating land (5A)

- The seemingly remote and empty character, sparsely settled with high levels of tranquillity and experience of dark skies;
- Open windswept, largely unwooded, landscape with hilltop tree clumps, plus pine and beech roadside trees providing locally distinctive landmarks;
- The mosaic of arable and pasture fields with pastures grazed by distinctive Devon Red and South Devon cattle;
- The mixed pattern of field sizes and origins, including small irregular medieval fields on hillsides, and large modern fields on higher flatter ground;
- Small areas of deciduous woodland and semi-improved grassland which provide valuable habitats, with areas of moorland character on higher land;
- Steep sunken lanes which plunge into the valleys, bound by hedgebanks often covered with a profusion of wildflowers;
- Clusters of prehistoric hillforts and frequent ring cairns and bowl barrows forming highly visible features on the exposed ridgelines;
- Extensive rights of way of value for recreation and quiet enjoyment and ready access to the natural environment;
- The open skylines and long rural, estuarine or seascape views available within this high, open and expansive landscape, with limited urban development visible in occasional locations.