

Area of LDU within AONB: 7.4 hectares

% of LDU within AONB: 5%



Date surveyed: 2 March 2010

Survey points: SS421290, SS437305

Summary of landscape character

This LDU comprises the western edges of Westward Ho!, extending into the AONB along the base of a prominent coastal headland. The landscape is dominated by development, mainly hotels, holiday parks, a leisure centre and brightly coloured beach huts with expansive views across Northam Country Park (its wide beach and sand dunes) and the distant coastline beyond the Taw & Torridge Estuary. Eastward views from within the LDU are dominated by the built form of Westward Ho! which has spread along a prominent ridgeline, along with views of the settlement of Appledore in the distance. Although the elevated cliff-side location of the LDU affords long views northwards across the scenic coastline of the AONB, the overriding perceptions are of a developed landscape strongly associated with leisure and tourism.

LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

LANDFORM / TOPOGRAPHY

Landform description	Flat cliff 'ledge' backed by the steeply sloping ridgeline of Cornborough Cliff and Kipling Tors. The LDU is fronted by Westward Ho! Cliffs, nationally designated as a SSSI based on their valued Quaternary rock deposits and geomorphology demonstrating past changes in climate and sea levels.
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LAND USE AND PATTERNS

Agriculture	<i>Main agricultural land use</i>	<i>Other agricultural land use(s)</i>	
	N/A	N/A	
Field patterns and boundaries	<i>Field patterns and origins</i>	<i>Size (note variations)</i>	<i>Boundary type / description</i>
	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other land uses (e.g. recreation)	The whole LDU is developed, with some small areas of greenspace around holiday parks, including a small children's play area.		

WOODLAND AND SEMI-NATURAL HABITATS

Trees / woodland cover	<i>Size and distribution within landscape</i>	<i>Type and species(broadleaved / conifer)</i>
	Limited to scrubby woodland at the base of Cornborough Cliff, backing the southern LDU boundary.	Scrub and secondary woodland.
Semi-natural habitats	<i>Description and location within landscape</i>	
	Aside from the patches of scrub, bracken and woodland at the base of Cornborough Cliff, which form an ecological link with a wider County Wildlife Site outside the LDU, there are no other semi-natural habitats within this developed landscape.	

SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Settlement pattern	<i>Settlement size, type, density and relationship to landscape</i>		
	The flat cliff-ledge contains a high density of tourism-related development; primarily holiday chalets and caravans as well as large hotels and a modern leisure complex.		
Transport pattern (including Public Rights of Way)	<i>Road pattern, character and relationship to settlement / landscape</i>		
	Unmarked surfaced roads provide access to the holiday parks and hotels, as well as a public car park at the LDU's western extent. This car park serves the South West Coast Path which loops around the coastal headland, as well as the historic greenspace of Kipling Tors (owned by the National Trust).		
Local vernacular styles and materials	<i>Predominant traditional building materials</i>	<i>Any local variations</i>	<i>Other built features reflecting vernacular</i>
	Multi-coloured painted wooden beach huts, with pitched roofs. Grand Victorian hotels painted white or cream, with tiled roofs.	There is a large isolated house in the west of the LDU, incorporating 'mock Tudor' timber panelling over peach-painted walls with red brick detailing and terracotta roof tiles (estimated to be from the Victorian period)	N/A
Modern development styles / materials	White or creamy-peach render with grey or brown tiled roofs, often mimicking Victorian architectural styles. A new leisure centre complex includes a domed grey roof with window inlays. Large modern buildings dominate the seafront.		

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Key historic features	<i>Description</i>
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visible in the landscape	None.		
VIEWS / PERCEPTUAL QUALITIES			
Views	<i>Key views / landmark features</i>	<i>Intervisibility with LDUs</i>	
		<i>From this LDU</i>	<i>To this LDU</i>
	<p>This LDU is framed to the north by the coastal scenery of Northam beach and sand dunes, beyond which is the Taw & Torridge Estuary. Distant northerly views are defined by Saunton Sands and Braunton Burrows, with the white building of the Saunton Sands Hotel standing out in the distance.</p> <p>Views to the east are dominated by the white/bright colourwashed housing and hotel developments of Westward Ho! and Appledore.</p> <p>The large-scale development within this LDU is highly visible from the AONB coastline, exacerbated by the further spread of development along the adjacent prominent ridgeline (LDU 835).</p>	<p>835 (Westward Ho! ridgeline)</p> <p>362 (Northam Beach)</p> <p>361 (mudflats fringing the estuary)</p> <p>358 (Braunton Burrows)</p> <p>360 (Saunton Sands)</p> <p>088 (Braunton Marsh)</p> <p>382 (ridgeline/cliff above Saunton)</p> <p>399 (ridge above Braunton Marsh)</p> <p>526 (ridge up to Saunton Down)</p> <p>403 (elevated ridge/downland including Saunton Down)</p>	<p>835</p> <p>362</p> <p>361</p> <p>358</p> <p>360</p> <p>088</p> <p>382</p> <p>399</p> <p>526</p> <p>403</p> <p>842 (landscape to the south)</p> <p>693 (Clovelly coast)</p>
Perceptual qualities (description)	The overriding perceptions are of a developed landscape strongly associated with leisure and tourism. This contrasts starkly with the scenic and undeveloped qualities of the adjacent coastline along Cockington Cliffs and towards Clovelly.		

LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

Designation	Number	% of LDU land area that is within the AONB
NATURE CONSERVATION		
SSSI	1	14.46%
County Wildlife Sites	1	0.02%

UK BAP PRIORITY HABITATS

UK BAP Priority Habitat	Area (ha)	% of LDU land area
Maritime cliff and slope	0.96	13.01%

KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING LANDSCAPE CONDITION

Perceptual qualities	The wildness of the adjacent cliffs, along with long views along the AONB coastline, contrast greatly with the developed nature of the LDU – which forms a perceived hard edge to the protected landscape. Views to sprawling settlement to the east also reduce the landscape’s sense of tranquillity.
Views	As above. The development within this landscape is also visually prominent in views from other landscapes, particularly sections of undeveloped AONB coastline.
Land use	Areas of undeveloped land are few and far-between in this LDU.
Field patterns	N/A
Field boundaries	N/A
Trees and woodland	Secondary woodland and scrub softens the southern fringes of the LDU, forming a transition to the steep slope behind.
Semi-natural habitats	Semi-natural habitat is restricted to the scrub / woodland on the southern slopes backing the LDU. It is important to retain this both as a buffer to development, and as an ecological link to the wider County Wildlife Site of Cornborough Cliff, managed by the National Trust.
Settlement and development	The settlement of Westward Ho! has extended westwards from its historic core to cover much of this LDU in the form of holiday-related development.
Local vernacular	Modern hotels and other buildings consistently use white and cream/peach coloured render and tiled roofs, mimicking some of the architectural details from the Victorian period. However, many of the buildings are large and out of scale in their highly visible landscape setting.