

Area of LDU within AONB: None

% of LDU within AONB: None



Date surveyed: 26 February 2010

Survey points: SS478358, SS473356

Summary of landscape character

This is an open, flat and exposed landscape which lies outside of the AONB (but within the North Devon Heritage Coast) directly to the south of the settlement of Braunton. The area covered by the LDU includes Braunton Great Field; a nationally important ancient open strip field system of sheep and cattle grazed wet pasture with larger areas under arable cultivation. It is sparsely settled but strongly influenced by Braunton to the north and north east. There is a strong physical and visual relationship with the Braunton Marshes (LDU 088) which define the western boundary of this LDU. Views to the north are also framed by the ridge of downland (LDU 403), upon which the masts at Long Lane are dominant features. This is a landscape with a strong historical relationship with cultivation and land management.

LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

LANDFORM / TOPOGRAPHY

Landform description	Flat, expansive Fen-like landscape with big skies.
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LAND USE AND PATTERNS

Agriculture	<i>Main agricultural land use</i>	<i>Other agricultural land use(s)</i>	
	Pasture (including wet pasture) grazed by sheep and cattle	Some large fields of arable cultivation. Pony keeping is associated with the area around Broadlands Farm in the north-eastern corner of the LDU.	
Field patterns and boundaries	<i>Field patterns and origins</i>	<i>Size (note variations)</i>	<i>Boundary type / description</i>
	Regular rectilinear fields, including rare surviving examples of open strip fields of medieval origin, although their distinctive pattern is not	Generally small to medium scale fields, although drainage ditch boundaries give a sense of larger	Drainage ditches often fringed by reeds, and low-cut thorn hedgerows – some higher, grown out hedgerows bounding

	obvious at ground level.	open fields. Fields are generally larger on the fringes of Braunton.	fields in the centre of the LDU (Gallowell, Lower Thorn, Middle Thorn and Upper Thorn fields). Landsherds (small earth banks) and furlong boundaries (tracks), which historically divided the strip fields, survive in places.
Other land uses (e.g. recreation)	N/A – the LDU is a predominantly agricultural landscape		
WOODLAND AND SEMI-NATURAL HABITATS			
Trees / woodland cover	<i>Size and distribution within landscape</i>		<i>Type and species(broadleaved / conifer)</i>
	The landscape is generally treeless, with occasional hedgerow trees and secondary woodland / scrub, particularly around Gallowell field. Groups of trees around farmsteads provide shelter from the elements.		Hedgerow trees are mainly hawthorn. Occasional broadleaved tree groups are associated with farmsteads.
Semi-natural habitats	<i>Description and location within landscape</i>		
	Extensive networks of drainage ditches and areas of wet pasture and marsh are important wetland habitats. The Greenaways and Freshmarsh SSSI covers lengths of drainage ditch in the south west of the LDU.		
SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT			
Settlement pattern	<i>Settlement size, type, density and relationship to landscape</i>		
	This is largely an unsettled landscape. A couple of small farms lie on the boundary in the north west and south east. Velator Quay is also located on the south eastern boundary, comprising a small linear hamlet facing boats moored on the water. The settlement edge of Braunton forms the LDU boundary to north and east and is influential in views.		
Transport pattern	<i>Road pattern, character and relationship to settlement / landscape</i>		
	The LDU is encircled by one narrow, open rural lane which forms its boundary. The South West Coast Path and Tarka Trail follow the eastern boundary. A number of footpaths also cross the LDU, linking Braunton to the marshland beyond to the south and west.		

Local vernacular styles and materials	<i>Predominant traditional building materials</i>	<i>Any local variations</i>	<i>Other built features reflecting vernacular</i>
	Farmsteads of white/cream render with grey slate roofs.	Range of building styles displayed at Velator Quay including local stone with red brick detailing.	Small stone bridges cross large drainage ditches and the River Caen (Velator Bridge)
Modern development styles / materials	Some 20 th century buildings within farms including bungalows and large modern sheds constructed of corrugated iron (e.g. Broadlands Farm).		

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Key historic features visible in the landscape	<i>Description</i>
	This is a strongly historic landscape reflecting its important role in agriculture since the medieval period. The network of wet ditches remains, defining the historic strip and furlong field pattern. This was created in the 16 th century as a result of a change of management from a communal ("Braunton Great Field") to individually farmed landscape. The names which were given to identify new fields created in this period remain today e.g. Higher and Lower Thorne and Gallowell. Braunton Great Field is one of only two examples of a surviving open field system in the country.

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>
	Extensive views to the north are dominated by settlement at Braunton and the downland beyond. Masts at Long Lane (within LDU 403) form key features in views to the north. Views to the east are dominated by Braunton and Braunton Down and woodlands in the far distance. The Church tower at Heaton Punchardon (also out of AONB) forms a key feature on the eastern skyline. The Saunton Sands Hotel is visible to the west (LDU 382).	088 (the adjacent Braunton Marsh) 403 (elevated downland to the north) 526 (to the north) 399 (to the north) 382 (to the north west)	088 403 526 399 382
Perceptual qualities (description)	This is a tranquil landscape owing to its largely unsettled character and sense of exposure. Open fields display a strong sense of time-depth associated with the historic landscape structure of drainage ditches and narrow subdivided furlongs. Big skies within this horizontal landscape add to a sense of openness and exposure.		

LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

Designation	Number	% of LDU land area that is within the AONB
NATURE CONSERVATION		
SSSI	1	1.07%
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Listed Building	1 (grade II)	

UK BAP PRIORITY HABITATS

UK BAP Priority Habitat	Area (ha)	% of LDU land area that is within the AONB
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	1.33	0.76%
Fens	1.97	1.13%
Reedbeds	1.97	1.13%

KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING LANDSCAPE CONDITION

Perceptual qualities	The narrow winding lane which defines much of the LDU boundary is well used as a result of people accessing the neighbouring LDUs (notably car parks within Braunton Marsh (LDU 398). Overall though, limited access and development means the LDU retains a strong relative sense of tranquillity.
Views	The settlement edge of Braunton dominates views to the north. Hangers at Chivenor Airfield (outside the AONB) to the south west are key features within views, as are the masts on Long Lane (LDU 403) to the north.
Land use	Areas of pony paddocks at Broadlands Farm detract from the historic agricultural landscape, although their impact on landscape character is localised.
Field patterns	The medieval strip fields are retained as a strong feature of this historic landscape.
Field boundaries	Well managed networks of wet ditches define traditional strip fields and furlongs. Hedgerows are largely well maintained and stock proof although grown out in places (e.g. around Gallowell, Lower Thorn and Middle Thorn fields).
Trees and woodland	Some areas of secondary woodland and scrub can give the landscape an unkempt appearance in parts, detracting from its open, strongly agricultural character.
Semi-natural habitats	Networks of well maintained drainage ditches are important semi-natural habitats – those within the Greenaways and Freshmarsh SSSI are assessed as in favourable condition by Natural England
Settlement and development	Although outside the LDU, the settlement edge of Braunton is a strong feature along the north and eastern boundaries.
Local vernacular	Modern bungalows and farm sheds built from corrugated iron are out of keeping with the traditional scale and vernacular of the landscape's farm buildings.