NELMS target statement for *Exmoor*

Your application is scored and a decision made on the points awarded. Both top priorities and lower priorities score points but you should select at least one top priority.

Scoring is carried out by...

Choosing priorities

To apply you should choose at least one of the top priorities, and you can choose lower priorities - this may help with your application.

Top priorities

Priority group	Priority type
Biodiversity	Priority habitats
	Priority species
Water	Water quality
	Flood and coastal risk management
Historic environment	Designated historic and archaeological features
	Undesignated historic and archaeological features of high significance
Woodland priorities	Woodland management
	Woodland planting
Landscape	
Climate Change	
Multiple environmental benefits	

Lower priorities

Priority group	Priority type
Lower priorities	Water quality

	Archaeological and historic features
	Woodland

Biodiversity - top priorities

Priority habitats

You should carry out land management practices and capital works that maintains, restores and creates priority habitats.

Maintain priority habitat such as:

- Blanket Bog
- Upland Heathland
- Upland Fens, Flushes and Swamps
- Purple Moor grass and Rush pasture
- Lowland Heath
- Lowland Acid Grassland
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Coastal Flood Plain Grazing Marsh
- Coastal Sand Dune
- Western Oak Woodland
- Wet Woodland

Restore priority habitats (especially proposals which make existing sites bigger or help join up habitat networks) such as:

- Upland Heathland
- Blanket Bog
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture
- Lowland Grasslands
- Western Oak Woodlands

Create priority habitats – to extend or link priority habitat to increase connectivity and reduce fragmentation. Defra is looking for proposals to create priority habitat that will also contribute significantly to improvements in:

- water quality
- air quality
- flood and coastal risk management

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Proposals to maintain or restore Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs including SACs) with eligible features are a priority, and both on-site and off-site options (such as to reduce diffuse water and air pollution impacts on SSSIs) are relevant.

Priority species

For the majority of priority species found on the priority habitats listed above, their ecological requirements can be met through good generic habitat management. Managing for those essential elements associated with priority habitats - in particular bare ground, areas of scrub, varying sward structures will allow these species to thrive.

A number of priority species associated with the area require specific and tailored management and advice. You should carry out land management practices and capital works that meet the specific needs of the following priority species:

- Lapwing
- Turtle Dove
- Willow Tit
- Marsh Fritillary
- High Brown Fritillary
- Pearl-bordered Fritillary
- Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary
- Heath Fritillary
- A lichen (Anaptychia ciliaris subsp. ciliaris)
- Greater Horseshoe Bat
- Lesser Horseshoe Bat
- Cornflower
- Deptford Pink
- Pennyroyal
- Whitebeam

Further guidance on the priority species in this area that require more tailored targeted management and advice, as listed, can be found:

- maintain/enhance conditions for woodland birds

Parts of this area are targeted for their woodland bird assemblage, i.e. they contain area(s) assessed as being nationally significant for four or more species (of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Tree Pipit, Redstart, Pied Flycatcher, Spotted Flycatcher, Wood Warbler, Marsh Tit, Lesser Redpoll and Hawfinch). Where your land includes such areas, you should carry out land management practices and capital works that:

This area has also been identified as a hotspot for wild pollinators, farmland birds and other wildlife associated with the wider countryside – through the Wild Pollinator and farm Wildlife package implement these options to make sure these species thrive all year around:

- option 1
- option 2

Water - top priorities

Water quality

The area has particular issues with:

- nitrate in West Somerset Streams, Tone, Taw, North Devon Streams and Exe main catchments -
- phosphate in the West Somerset Streams, Tone, Taw, North Devon Streams and Exe main catchments
- sediment in the catchment to Tone, Taw, North Devon Streams and Exe main river
- faecal bacteria on land upstream of Coombe Martin, Instow, Illfracombe bathing water and or Taw Torridge Estuary and Exe shellfish water
- pesticides in Tone, Taw, North Devon Streams and Exe main catchment to Exe, Leigh Reservoir and Barnstaple Yeo drinking water source

You should consider options and capital works that address these issues. These are detailed in X guidance document. These options help to improve water quality by controlling the source or the movement of potential pollutants. For this area, this includes all of the following:

- nutrients from fertilisers and manures
- sediment problems from soil erosion and run-off
- faecal bacteria from both manures and livestock
- pesticides from their use and disposal

Flood and Coastal Risk Management

Applications that select options to address flood risk issues within the area will also be welcomed, primarily within the flood risk priority areas; the upper reaches of the River Caen which flows through Braunton and minor watercourses to the east and west of Braunton, land in the Coney Gut catchment, north east of Barnstaple and areas draining the Muddlebrook, land draining to small streams to east and west of River Umber and Combe Martin. The Croyde stream catchment extending eastward from the sea (7.5 km^2) and small watercourse from land south of Croyde village. Land south of the village of Fremington. – East & West Wilder Brooks and Challacombe Stream catchments south of Ilfracombe and Hele area around Lee Bay (nr Ilfracombe) draining to the Lee Stream catchment east of the village and land south of Yelland. Applications will also be

welcomed from West Somerset Streams – draining north into the Bristol Channel including those associated with natural flood risk associated with the Holnicote estate.

You should carry out land management practices and capital works to help towards managed realignment or wetland creation, where this will not increase flood risk, within the following areas:

- The tidal floodplain of the River Taw and tributaries

You should consider options that:

- reduce the amount and rate of surface water run-off
- reduce soil erosion
- slow the movement of floodwaters on floodplains
- manage the coastline

  These are detailed in X guidance document.

Historic environment - top priorities

Active management is important for the long term survival of historic environment remains and to protect them against damage and decay brought about through cultivation, scrub growth, burrowing animals or poor maintenance. These features cannot be recreated once they have been lost.

In this area there are a number of designated heritage features and other historic environment features reflecting the influence of man over millennia. Evidence for extensive early occupation is seen in scatterings of Neolithic remains, surviving standing stones, stone rows, geometric stone settings and circles; Bronze Age barrows form prominent features in the open moorland. Iron Age hillslope enclosures, hillforts and settlements overlook river valleys, along with a group of promontory forts. The Roman period saw iron working and the formation of coastal forts and signal stations. The land surrounding the moor and across the western plateau has an agricultural heritage principally from the medieval period; including features such as farmsteads, hedgebanks and boundaries, mills, leats and gutter systems, lime kilns and other small-scale industrial remains, with evidence for silver mining and manganese quarries, cloth industries and cider production. Transport by pack horse across the area to ports and harbours, has left a legacy of ancient routes, fords and pack horse bridges. The harbours also served an important fishing industry. Braunton Great Field is a unique survival of the medieval common open fields of the coastal lowlands. Post medieval enclosures are echoed in regular fields, drainage features, and farmsteads linked by straight roads. There are also several 19th century parklands. Characteristic farm buildings include threshing barns; multi-functional barns and ranges including stables, cowhouses and cider houses; bank barns; shelter sheds and open-fronted linhays; and field barns. Traditional architecture is dominated by Devonian sandstones, slates and shales, with minor

amounts of limestone. Thin render coats and limewash is commonly used resulting in prominent white buildings. There is some survival of thatch as a roofing material. Cob wall construction persists in some traditional agricultural buildings and farmsteads.

The 2014 Heritage at Risk 2014 survey has identified 30 SAMs of designated features as being 'at risk', particularly from *bracken and scrub growth; both unmanaged woodland and commercial forestry practice; and erosion by livestock is an increasing risk factor.*

The following historic environment features are a high priority for active management in this area:

- Designated Features - archaeological features of national significance Scheduled Monuments (SM) and, Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG)
- Designated and undesignated traditional farm buildings and non-domestic historic buildings on holdings
- Undesignated historic and archaeological features of high significance which are part of the Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England (SHINE)

You should carry out land management practices and capital works that:

- revert archaeological sites under cultivation to permanent grass
- reduce damaging cultivation and harvesting practices through minimum tillage or direct drilling where this offers a suitable level of protection
- remove scrub and bracken from archaeological or historic features
- maintain below-ground archaeology under permanent uncultivated vegetation or actively manage earthworks, standing stones and structures as visible 'above ground' features
- maintain and restore historic water management systems, including those associated with water meadows and designed water bodies
- restore historic buildings that are assessed as a priority in the area.
- address the condition of Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, through the proactive maintenance or restoration of structures or features that make a major contribution to the design intentions or feel of the parkland, provide for their biodiversity and amenity value**.**
- deal with specific issues that are causing damage or decay to archaeological and historic features, but which are not covered by standard options.

Woodland - top priorities

Woodland management

Management of all woodland to improve structure and species mix is important for biodiversity and to make them more robust in relation to future threats such as climate change, pests and diseases.

Certain types of woodland are a high priority for bringing into management, including:

- protected woodland – those designated for their national biodiversity value

- priority woodland habitat – other unmanaged broadleaved woodland
- priority species – all woodland within current red squirrel range, or within areas important for woodland butterfly and woodland bird species
- Planted Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) restoration – conversion of conifer plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites to broadleaf woodland where they are in close proximity to existing broadleaf woodland
- United Kingdom Forestry Standard – unmanaged conifer woodland within catchments subject to eutrophication and acidification, both to reduce pressures on the water environment and improve biodiversity

Woodlands not included in the categories above are a lower priority for management.

All management should comply with the United Kingdom Forestry Standard and other relevant guidance such as 'Managing Ancient and Native Woodland in England'.

Woodland planting

High priority areas for the planting of new woodlands include:

- biodiversity – planting to buffer and link existing woodlands and other semi natural open habitats within priority woodland habitat networks
- water quality – planting designed to reduce and intercept diffuse pollution from agriculture
- flood risk – planting designed to increase infiltration of heavy rain into the ground, reduce erosion, or slow the flow of floodwaters on floodplains

In order to provide the required biodiversity and/or water benefits, new woodland planting needs to be in the right part of the landscape and to the right design.

Landscape – top priorities

High priorities are the management, restoration or re-creation of landscape features that contribute significantly to the local character by reinforcing the overall pattern and scale of the landscape, together with other important features that give an area its unique and distinctive sense of place.

Top priority in *Exmoor* is the restoration of these features:

- Hedgerows
- Stonewalls and Earth Banks
- Hedgerow trees
- Valley woodlands and Copses
- Parklands

Climate Change

Climate change will pose variable threats and opportunities in different landscapes. Priority should be given to targeted features and issues that are particularly vulnerable to or affected by climate change.

You should carry out land management practices and capital works that help to:

- make existing priority habitat sites bigger
- extend or link priority habitat to increase connectivity and reduce fragmentation
- reduce the impacts of climate change on local communities, for example by targeted planting of woodland to reduce flood risk
- reduce loss of carbon and emissions of other greenhouse gases
- increase carbon uptake, for example better habitat management
- increase carbon storage, for example by converting arable land to permanent grassland

Multiple environmental benefits

Opportunities for multi-objective agreements

You should look to provide for multiple priorities by selecting options that achieve multiple environmental benefits.

In Exmoor you have the greatest opportunity to achieve multiple objectives with:

- establish new wetland habitat within sub-catchments where they're likely to improve water quality, reduce run-off rates into watercourses, add to biodiversity and landscape character and protect historical features

- manage moorlands to restore the ecology of blanket bog, wet heath and upland mire habitats, which will benefit flood risk, carbon storage, water quality, biodiversity, drinking water resources and historic features

- maintain woodland and expand where appropriate and in keeping with the landscape character, to support woodland plants, birds, bats and butterflies etc. increasing connectivity of the woodland itself for species movement but also connectivity with the wider landscape through linking with hedgerows, parkland, orchards and grassland providing benefits for biodiversity, reducing water flow, improving water quality and regulating climate change

- establish new wet woodland within the floodplain of the river *Tone* to benefit biodiversity, landscape character, water quality, flood risk and historic features

- change arable cropping systems to low-intensity grassland within *the Braunton area* where the management system will protect historical features and benefit farmland birds, water quality, landscape character, groundwater resources, flood risk and biodiversity

- restore historic hedgerows to manage water flow, decrease soil erosion, create wildlife habitats and corridors, and strengthen the local landscape

- select options such as the use of rural sustainable drainage systems, buffer strips and erosion control in the *Caen* catchment to improve both water quality and support flood risk management

- create and maintain intertidal coastal habitat close to *Braunton and Barnstaple* to support flood and coastal risk management and benefit biodiversity

- maintain managed oak woodland in the valleys to support species in the wider landscape

Lower priorities

You should select one of the top priorities. However, you can also select lower priorities as well as this will attract points used to score your application.

You should consider the following other priorities that are of specific interest in this area.

Water quality - lower priorities

Water quality

In addition to the top priorities, this area has particular issues with:

- nutrients from fertilisers and manures
- sediment problems from soil erosion and run-off
- faecal bacteria from both manures and livestock
- pesticides from their use and disposal

You should consider options and capital works that address these issues. These are detailed in X guidance document. These options help to improve water quality by controlling the source or the movement of potential pollutants.

Historic environment - lower priorities

The Historic environment features set out below are a lower priority.

- Maintain designated and undesignated traditional farm buildings.
- Undesignated SHINE features of medium and low Significance
- Priority Undesignated Historic Parklands

Woodland – lower priorities

Woodland Management

Woodlands not included in the top priority categories listed above are a lower priority for management but may still be supported.

Woodland Planting

Areas are prioritised for new planting based on their potential to create biodiversity and water benefits. Woodland planting schemes are scored depending on where the proposed scheme is in relation to the opportunity maps for woodland planting in England and how well the planting design will benefit biodiversity and water.

Lower priorities for appropriately designed biodiversity schemes exist across the whole of England. Opportunities for new woodland planting for water only exist in certain parts of England.