



**Blackdown  
Hills**  
National  
Landscape

# Have your say on the future of the Blackdown Hills: Summary of Results

The survey ran on our website from September 2023 to the end of January 2024. Some paper versions of the questionnaire were completed at local events over the same period. It was promoted in our newsletter, on social media, at events and through parish councils and parish magazines.

## Who took part?

We had 160 responses.

55% have lived in the Blackdown Hills for more than 5 years, 14% of responses are from people who have lived here for less than 5 years, and 24% live close by (within about 5 miles or a local town).

## The results

*We asked what do you value most about the Blackdown Hills National Landscape?*

The top 5 answers are;

1. Wildlife
2. Scenery and views
3. Hedgerows and wildflowers
4. Peace and quiet
5. Woodlands

*The 5 special features of the Blackdown Hills National Landscape that contribute most to its natural beauty;*

- A diversity of habitats and wildlife
- Wooded hillsides and valleys
- A patchwork of fields and hedges
- River valleys and streams
- Open hill tops and sweeping views

We asked people to prioritise a range of issues that should be of most concern to the organisations responsible for looking after the Blackdown Hills National Landscape.

*For Climate and Nature, the top 3 issues are;*

- Pollution and poor water quality in rivers and streams
- Degradation of wildlife habitats
- Loss of scenic beauty through changes to natural landscape features (Loss/neglect of woods, trees, hedgerows, grazing, etc.)

*For the theme of People, the top 3 issues are;*

- Decline in village facilities and services
- Insufficient sustainable transport options to and around the Blackdown Hills
- Lack of well-paid jobs and affordable housing to enable people to live and work in the Blackdown Hills

*In relation to Place, the top 3 issues are;*

- Impact of unsightly development (Poorly designed and located buildings, telecom masts, wind turbines, etc.)
- Uncertainties in farming and possible impact on the landscape
- Footpaths and bridleways are overgrown, eroded, or difficult to access

We then asked what is most important to do to protect and enhance the Blackdown Hills National Landscape and ensure the area is fit for the future in relation to those same four themes.

*For Climate and Nature, the 3 most important things are;*

- Helping mitigate the impacts of climate change through a range of nature-based approaches such as restoring heathlands and mires, planting more trees, and floodplain restoration
- Helping nature to recover through habitat creation and linking habitats
- Supporting more tree and hedgerow planting, so that there are more broadleaved woodlands, trees and hedgerows in the landscape

*When it comes to the People theme, the top 3 most important things are;*

- Supporting rural communities and local services (schools, shops, health, access to online communications and services)
- Helping more people to connect with wildlife, natural beauty and heritage to support their wellbeing
- Improving public and community transport availability

*The 3 most important things for Place are;*

- Supporting regenerative and sustainable farming
- Ensuring development is high quality, well designed, and in appropriate locations
- Protecting tranquillity and dark skies