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Landscape Character Assessment

Guidelines for landscape planning and management, as well as broad assessments of the character and condition of Dorset National Landscape.

Landscape Types and Character Areas

Dorset National Landscape is grouped into landscape types, shaded using the same colour on the interactive map below. These landscape types contain between one and five individual character areas. Each character area has its own webpage, with detailed information. You can navigate to the

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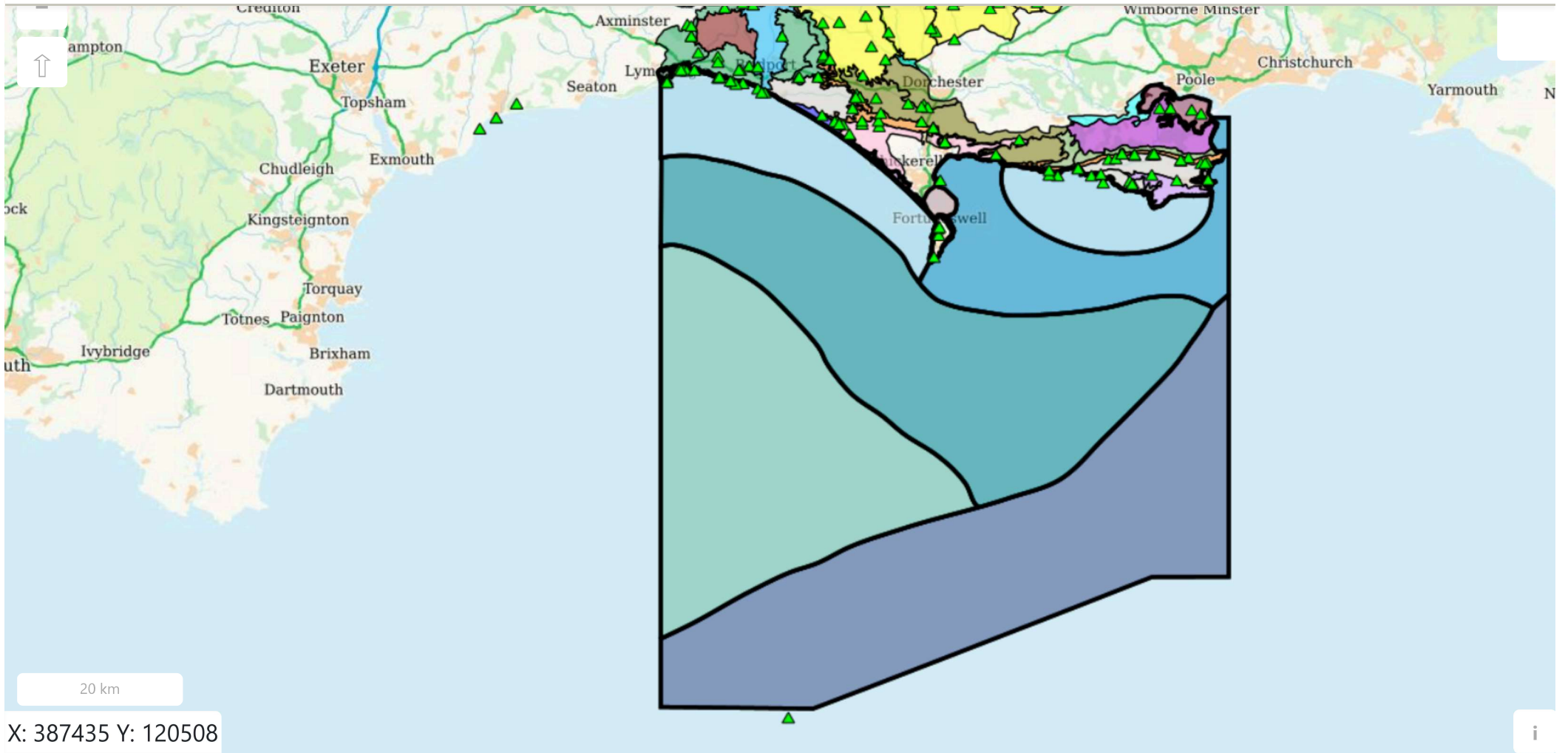
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The beautiful landscapes we see today have been shaped by thousands of years of human activity with the environment. Impressive geological formations and natural processes have created landforms which people have helped shape into distinctive landscapes. Farming, forestry, and local industries have all left their mark, giving a unique sense of place and character to our countryside. Many of the patterns and features of past use have survived through centuries of change. Into the 21st century, the pace of social, economic and environmental change is increasing. Without careful planning and management, the quality and condition of the landscape could irreversibly decline.

Landscape Character Types

The following types are used to group Dorset National Landscape's character areas

Chalk Ridge / Escarpment

The North, West and South Escarpments and the Purbeck Ridge form dramatic backdrops to, and

Chalk Upland and Valleys

The distinctive, secluded chalk valleys of the National Landscape drain the

Clay Vale

The clay vale landscape type is represented by the intimate and rural Marshwood, Blackmore and Halstock Vales.



Clay Valley

The sweeping landscapes of the Kimmeridge Coast, Corfe, and Bride valleys each have its own unique identity.

[Read more](#)

Coastal Grassland

Characteristic coarse grasses, exposed by the full force of the coast, are backed by the southern escarpment and dividing it from the inland landscapes.

[Read more](#)

Limestone Hills

Although found elsewhere around the northern part of the county, the only limestone hills type within the National Landscape is found at Melbury Park.

[Read more](#)

Limestone Plateau

The Purbeck Plateau is the only limestone plateau in Dorset. It has a simple but striking character

Lowland Heath

The internationally important lowland heathland landscape of the South Purbeck Heaths, similar to many other heathland landscapes around the Poole Basin, is a complex and diverse mosaic of open dry...

Open Chalk Upland

The open chalk uplands of the Chaldon Downs, Dorchester Downs and South Dorset Downs are notable areas of the National Landscape.



Ridge and vale

The ridge and vale landscape type covers two character areas to the east and west of Weymouth.

[Read more](#)

Rolling wooded Pasture

The rolling wooded pasture landscape type is found around the margins of the Dorset Heaths.

[Read more](#)

Tidal water

The internationally important Poole Harbour, with its intricate and sinuous coastline and numerous wooded islands, is a highly valued component of the Dorset National Landscape.

[Read more](#)

Undulating River Valley

The undulating river valleys of the Brit and Axe are centred on the floodplains and surrounding branching valleys and undulating hills.

[Read more](#)

Valley Pasture

The valley pasture landscape type is found along the lower reaches of the Stour and Frome, formed from alluvial deposits.

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Wooded Hills

Significant areas of the western end of the Dorset National Landscape form the intimate wooded hills landscape type, with several clusters of conical shaped hills formed around the Marshwood Vale.

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Dorset National Landscape
c/o Environment, Colliton Park
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XJ

