

## Landscape Character Type 1: Plateaux

# LCT 1B OPEN COASTAL PLATEAUX

Constituent Land Description Units 03, 144, 156, 17, 39

### Location

Along the coast intermittently between Exmouth and Lyme Regis, separated by river valleys and dissected by combes, and extending up to 4km/2 miles inland.

### Description

High, open, gently undulating or rolling plateaux, dissected by deep combes and with notable coastal influence on windblown vegetation (especially dominance of blackthorn). The field pattern is of medium to large regular planned fields, delineated by dense low hedges (often elm) with occasional hedgerow oaks. Land use is mixed farmland, with arable dominant, and some localised recreational use. There is very little woodland except conifer shelterbelts and small deciduous woodland. The road network is sparse but this type is well provided with rights of way, with the South West Coast Path prominent along the coastal edge. The settlement pattern is very sparse, with isolated farms and small hamlets, often distinguished by their uniform appearance, and a few scattered small coastal resorts. The local geology is reflected in soil colour and texture, with Red Sandstone and flint between Exmouth and Sidmouth, often apparent in banks along sunken lanes, and paler chalk soils east of Sidmouth. From rights of way along the coastal edge of this type there are extensive views of the adjoining dramatic cliff landscapes.



### Key Characteristics

- High, open plateaux, separated by river valleys and dissected by combes
- Windblown vegetation
- Regular medium to large field pattern
- Dense low hedges (often elm) with occasional hedgerow oaks
- Mixed land use, mainly arable
- Little woodland
- Few roads but many rights of way
- Very low settlement density
- Influence of geology on soil colour
- Extensive views along coast



## Management Guidelines

### Boundaries: conserve and enhance by

1. Encouraging the appropriate maintenance of hedges, in particular to benefit elm hedgerows and ensure their survival in the face of Dutch Elm Disease.
2. Encouraging the planting and maintenance of hedgerow trees, using exposure-tolerant locally indigenous species.
3. Encouraging gapping up of hedges with locally indigenous species.

### Semi-natural habitats: conserve by

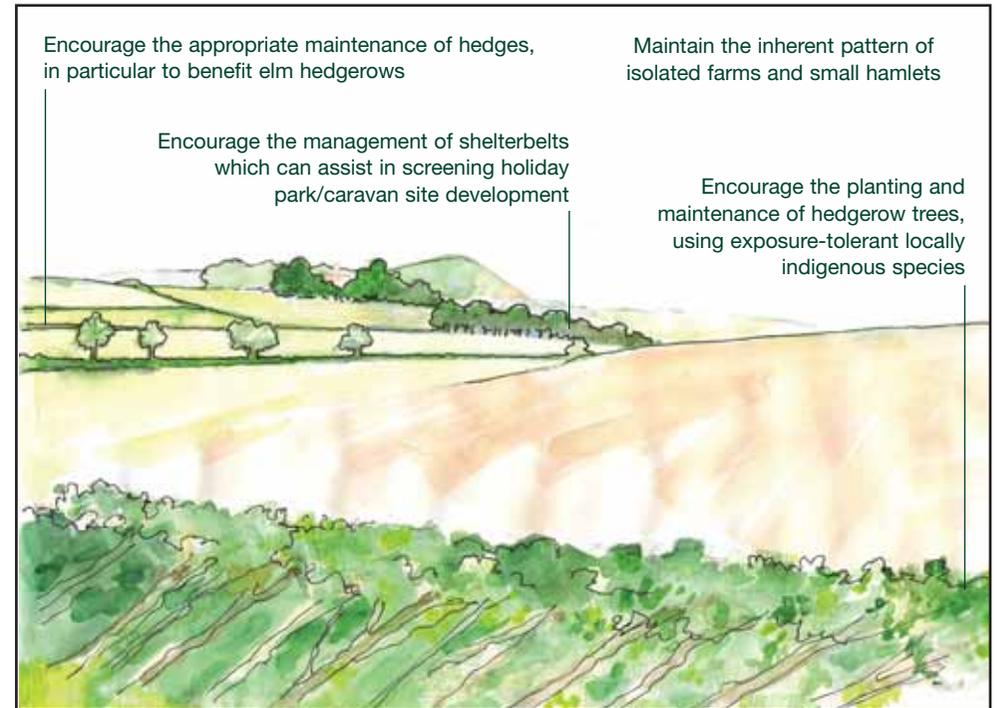
1. Managing chalk and coastal grassland, hedgerows, small copses and field margins for biodiversity interest.
2. Encouraging the maintenance and management of shallow stream corridors and their associated wetland habitats.

### Woodland: conserve by

1. Encouraging the management and restoration of conifer shelterbelts, which provide some visual diversity and can assist in screening holiday park/caravan site development within the wider landscape. Encourage the planting of a deciduous edge to reduce visual impact.
2. Encouraging the reversion of conifer plantations to heath at maturity or felling, where soils are appropriate.

### Settlement and development: conserve by

1. Maintaining the inherent pattern of isolated farms and small hamlets
2. Discouraging development that extends to the edges of Land Description Units, where it is more visible in the wider landscape.
3. Discouraging development in unsettled areas and ensuring that development around existing coastal settlements enhances local landscape character and contributes to screening recent development.
4. Encouraging caravan sites to enhance their landscape setting so as to conserve local landscape character.



*Management Guidelines Illustration*

## Recommendations for further action

**Boundaries:** Consider protection of non-hedged earth banks and evaluation of their historic importance.