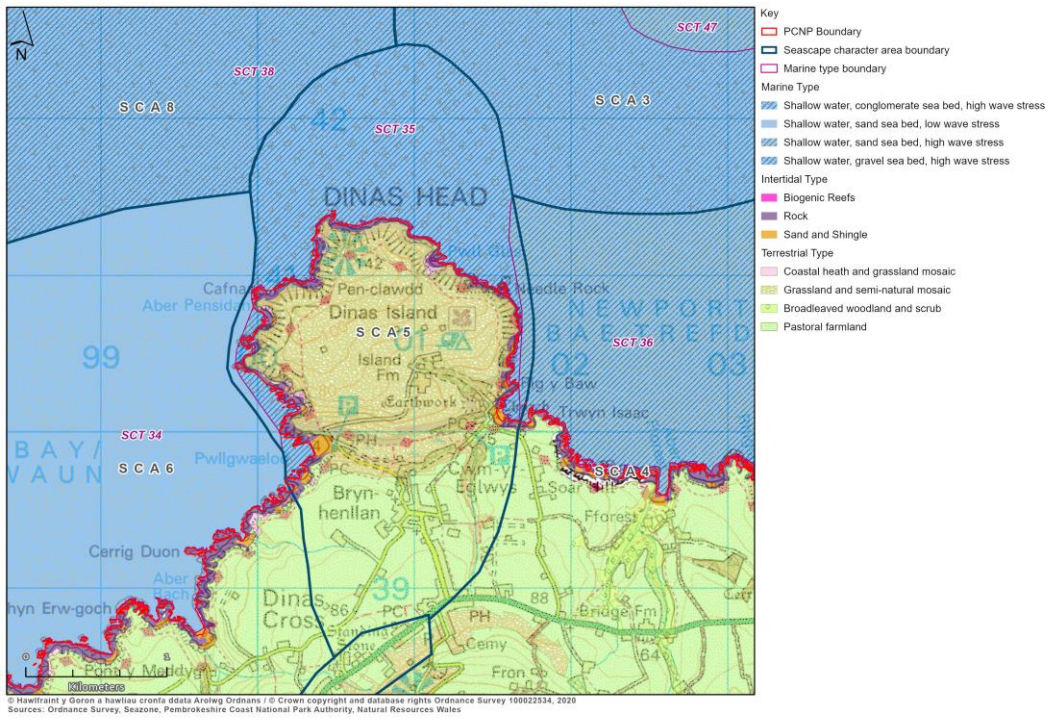


No: **5** Seascape Character Area Name: **Dinas Island**



SCA5:Dinas Island



Dinas Head from Newport Sands



Cliffs on Dinas Head



Looking north east from Dinas Head (note disturbed seas of headland)



Cwm-yr-Eglwys

Summary Description
<p>Dinas Head/Island is a distinctive whale backed headland dividing Newport Bay from Fishguard Bay. It is a sandstone headland separated from the mainland by a low narrow valley with beaches at either end, Cwm yr Eglwys and Pwllgwaelod. Between these beaches the headland has steep cliffs with open pasture sloping back towards the mainland.</p>
Key Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive prominent whale-backed headland dividing and containing Newport Bay and Fishguard Bay.</li> <li>• Conglomerate shallow seabed and currents lead to disturbed water and high wave action around headland with more sheltered waters to south especially in Newport Bay.</li> <li>• Sandstone 'island' divided from mainland by a glacial melt water channel, now a narrow wooded valley.</li> <li>• High vertical rock cliffs with very steep slopes above rising to high point at north, with tilted plateau to south.</li> <li>• Rocky foreshore with small beaches at each end of valley.</li> <li>• Large rationalised open fields on the island and smaller fields with hedgebanks on the mainland.</li> <li>• Small former fishing village at Cwm yr Eglwys with caravan park and Pwllgwaelod with pub and caravans now used for beach recreation and access to water for small boats including kayaks etc.</li> <li>• Pembrokeshire Coast path around the headland with panoramic views from high point at north of headland.</li> <li>• Use of water for sailing between bays and on route up Cardigan Bay and for kayaks and some fishing, mainly potting, but limited by sea conditions.</li> </ul>
Physical Influences
<p>The distinctive whale back geomorphology of Dinas Head rising to 142m AOD or Dinas Island (107m aod) through to the mainland is produced by a Quaternary glacial meltwater channel (Cwm yr Eglwys (Dinas) and Esgwrn Bottom GCR). The headland is composed of east-west striking Ordovician mudstones and sandstones. The steep rocky coast is indented by shallow coves strewn with rocks. The littoral zone around the headland is dominated by exposed rocky foreshore (85%), passing up into rocky coast above HWM. Sand beach inlets at Cwm yr Eglwys and Pwllgwaelod lie at both ends of the distinct wooded valley of the Quaternary glacial meltwater channel which 'divides' the island from the mainland. The headland is exposed to wind and wave erosion through hydraulic action, abrasion and attrition.</p> <p>The sea floor sediment of poorly sorted conglomerate, covering sandstones and mudstones, fans out around the headland on a shallow water (&gt;30m), moderate slope (1-10°). The sea is exposed to high wind and wave stress on the west side with a disturbed wave pattern. Tidal currents set northeast and southwest, with drafts into the bays. A tidal race may form off the NE of the headland with tidal flow to the west out of the bay. Tidal range is ~4.8m.</p> <p>The bay forms part of the West Wales Marine SAC. The cliffs are vegetated in parts with scrub and gorse and bracken on the steep slopes above precipitous cliffs. The south facing back slopes consist mainly of improved pasture with fences where hedgebanks appear to have been removed but with some low cut hedges. Deciduous woodland, bracken and some marsh lie in the valley between the beaches and associated with watercourses. This is designated as Cwm Dewi SSSI. A more established smaller scale field pattern with hedgebanks remains inland. Habitats include rocky shores with rock pools, sandy beaches, scrub, marshy grassland, maritime cliff and slope</p>

and lowland mixed deciduous woodland.

### Cultural influences

Historic marine uses include fishing, exemplified by the quay at Cwm yr Eglwys and the one wreck on the seaward edge of the area, the *Summertime*, a fishing vessel. Herring was traditionally fished from small open wooden boats in a wide area off Dinas. These also caught mackerel and lobster. The *Oak* was lost nearby- this was a wooden sloop registered at Belfast transporting cargo of culm in 1862.

Dinas Island is a sub-rectangular enclosure, measuring 60m by 50m, set on the promontory overlooking Cwm-yr-Eglwys, with an entrance on the north. There are traces of a sub-divided rectangular building. Cwm yr Eglwys itself is a former fishing village. There is a scheduled monument- PE 543 (Dinas Island promontory fort): community: Dinas Cross. The pub-name 'Sailors Safety' at Pwllgaelod on the west facing coast tells its own story.

Cwm yr Eglwys has a sandy beach, associated with a small settlement and churchyard, and small caravan park tucked into the valley form. Pwllgaelod is a more exposed sandy west facing beach with a small pub and some caravans with a beach which is a popular site for launching kayaks to explore the rocky shoreline and has a slipway. The beaches are linked by a path which allows holidaymakers to access and choose the most sheltered beach. Caravans and a linear settlement lie inland on the narrow lane approaches to this coastline.

The rugged cliffs and inlets are popular for kayaking. Transient cruising yachts and powered craft pass the headland and local sailors may sail between Fishguard and Newport Bays. The beach at Cwm-yr-Eglwys is popular for sheltered bathing and there is a slipway sometimes used to launch sailing dinghies. Coastal walking on the Coast Path is a popular activity with stunning views across the bays to the east and west. A small beacon is located at the high point of Dinas Head, which is also a marked viewpoint.

Fishing in the area comprises of set nets, lobster and crab potting and there is potential for light otter trawling. The waters around the foot of the cliffs are popular for potting.

### Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities

A large scale rugged and unspoilt headland with a distinctive 'whale back' shape in profile when viewed from the east or west. It is exposed with a rough, angular texture of high rocky cliffs and bracken plus the smaller scale and more diverse beaches and valley contrasting with rationalised farmland of the 'island' southern slopes enclosed. Colours are muted but seasonally affected by boats and visitors to the beaches. This area varies between the exposed and threatening exposed cliff edges, to the safe and more tamed environment of the settlements and relatively sheltered beaches. There are sea and seaweed smells on the beaches. The headland is highly tranquil on calm days.

There are panoramic views over the sea and mainland and along the coast from the coastal path, and wide views over Newport Bay and further west to Fishguard Bay.

The sea would feel choppy and uncomfortable at times and would be dominated by the landform of the headland.

### Cultural benefits and services

The area contributes significantly towards leisure and recreational services in the form of walking, marine recreation and beaches, to natural heritage in the form of the rugged cliffs and prominent headland with diverse natural habitats and superb views, and to cultural and spiritual services in respect of the sense of spaciousness and wildness at the headland contrasting with the contained beaches and historical time depth at Cwm-yr-Eglwys.

Forces for change								
Summary	Key forces for change							
<p>Slow coastal erosion of resistant rocky cliffs. SMP states do nothing around the headland but indicates threat to sea walls and properties at Cwm-yr-Eglwys recommending hold the line here.</p> <p>Apparent loss of field boundaries/hedgebanks and increase in field sizes eroding distinctive landscape character on Dinas Island although further adverse change may be significantly reduced by National Trust ownership.</p> <p>Intensification of recreational uses and development pressure for holiday accommodation in valley, beaches and hinterland.</p> <p>Bracken dominating coastal semi-natural vegetation.</p>	<b>Special Qualities</b>	Natural processes/ climate change	Visitor pressure	Marine use- commercial and fishing	Offshore energy	Development pressure	Land management changes	MOD use
	Coastal Splendour							
	Islands							
	Diversity of Landscape							
	Remoteness, Tranquillity and Wilderness							
	Diverse Geology							
	Richness of Habitats and Biodiversity							
	Rich Archaeology							
	Distinctive Settlement Character							
	Cultural Heritage							
	Accessing the Park							
	Space to Breathe							
	<b>Key</b>		Change occurring in the area affecting the selected special quality					
Key factors to be taken into account when assessing sensitivity to change								
<p>Prominent high point and tilted plateau of headland is a focal point and highly visible from many sea and land views.</p> <p>Panoramic unspoilt sea views and across Newport Bay.</p> <p>Historic character of settlements.</p> <p>Sensitivity of wetland landscape of valley to changes in management regime.</p> <p>Coast Path and marked viewpoint as a receptor.</p> <p>Biodiversity, historic and landscape designations.</p> <p>Presence of established recreational use at beaches and valley.</p> <p>Caravan development.</p> <p>Extensification of farmed landscape.</p>								