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Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Landscape Character Review for Fermanagh and Omagh

IronsideFarrar
111 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NW

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The landscape character of Northern Ireland is described in the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment which was undertaken in 1999 (NILCA 2000). The assessment describes the Northern Irish landscape through 130 landscape character areas (LCAs). 26 LCAs are wholly or in part within Fermanagh and Omagh. The character assessment describes the character of each area, its sensitivity, condition and provides principles for landscape management. More recently, information on the biodiversity and geodiversity of each LCA was added to the assessment, and these are available on the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs websites, along with the character assessment.

In the years since the publication of the original assessment, parts of the landscape of Fermanagh and Omagh have been subject to change. In order for the character assessment to remain relevant to planning policy and the development management process, an update of the assessment is required to capture the current landscape character, its sensitivities and provide up to date development management guidance.

Ironside Farrar were commissioned in 2018 to undertake a review and update of the character assessment within Fermanagh and Omagh. The review also forms the basis for a separate but related assessment of local landscape designations within the Local Authority Area, the findings and recommendations of which are presented in the report *Fermanagh and Omagh Landscape Designation Review (Ironside Farrar 2018)*.

2.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

2.1 The Landscape Resource

The objective of assessing and understanding the landscape resource is to ensure that the distinct identity, the diverse character and the scenic quality of Northern Ireland's landscapes as a whole can be safeguarded and enhanced. Landscape assessment provides the starting point for Local Authorities to develop specific zonal policies for the care, enhancement and sustainable use of their landscapes. These spatial policies can be adapted for use in development plans, but also a range of other strategies, most notably wind energy, forestry, agriculture and design. Landscape character assessment has also been used as the starting point for more detailed assessment of the sensitivity of landscapes to specific types of development, and Historic Landscape Assessment (HLA) can be used in a similar way.

Understanding the landscape and relationship with change and landscape management is a critical part of landscape character assessment. Safeguarding the quality of landscapes and the adoption of an 'all landscapes' approach, as set out in the articles of the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which accepts the need to guide and manage change in accordance with broad principles:

- Landscapes evolve, but change should be guided

Landscapes are continually changing, but because of the increasing extent and pace of change, and the loss of distinctiveness resulting from it, a more proactive approach to landscape planning and management is required to ensure that the landscapes of tomorrow are of no less value than today's.

- Landscape change should be positive in effect

Most change in our landscapes should fit with and enhance existing landscape character, particularly where present character is highly valued. But the character of a landscape cannot always be retained: some landscapes will be changed through land uses and development; some valued landscapes may merit restoration; and some landscapes may be the focus of effort to create a new landscape character. In all these cases the objective should be to ensure that the landscape is recognisable and valued as distinctive and appealing.

- All landscapes deserve care

Safeguarding landscape has traditionally focused on designated areas (e.g. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)). Nevertheless, it is the countryside as a whole (including settlements) that provides the valued diversity of distinctive landscapes, as well as the settings for most people's lives. All landscapes are of value to those who live and work in them and are therefore deserving of care.

- Some landscapes warrant special safeguard

Even within a universal approach, some landscapes are widely recognised as being of particular value, are therefore more sensitive to change, and justify special effort to ensure they are safeguarded. Their designation is an important planning and management tool to ensure they continue to be given care when proposals for change arise.

- Quality should be the goal

In aiming for improvement in the care for Northern Ireland's landscapes, we need to place more emphasis on achieving higher standards of design and management, along with a more considered approach to the development and implementation of policies and actions which affect landscape.

- Landscapes are a shared responsibility

Northern Ireland's landscapes are important to us all. Many activities influence the landscape's appearance; their net effect is of legitimate concern to all those who live, work and seek recreation in these places. A more integrated and collective approach is therefore required, based on a broad agreement on the direction, nature, and extent of desirable landscape change.

2.2 The Landscape Character of Fermanagh and Omagh

Fermanagh and Omagh is an inland landscape, albeit at its closest no more than 7km from the west coast of Ireland. The total land area is approximately 3,000km^2, much of which is

a lowland pastoral landscape, centred around the historical county towns of Omagh to the north and Enniskillen in Fermanagh to the south, the two largest settlements within the Local Authority area. However, there is great diversity in the landscape, from the wild upland landscapes of the Sperrins to the north, the scenic 'lakelands' of Fermanagh, and karst limestone uplands which are unique to Northern Ireland.

To the south west of the Local Authority area, bordering the Republic of Ireland, are the 'Fermanagh Cavelands', a landscape of distinctive sandstone and limestone uplands including important landscape features such as Cuilcagh Mountain, the Cliffs of Magho, dramatic escarpments and other karst features resulting from the underlying limestone geology. The landscape is sparsely settled and valued for its scenic qualities and recreational value, and includes the UNESCO Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark.

To the north east of the 'cavelands', Upper and Lower Lough Erne lie within shallow and expansive lowland lough basins, set within drumlin farmland of the river Erne valley extending in an arc from County Cavan to the south east and Donegal to the north west. Enniskillen occupies a commanding position between the two loughs. This low-lying landscape is juxtaposed with the dramatic features of the more upland landscape to the west, including the Cliffs of Magho, adding to its scenic value. The area is important for recreation and tourism.

To the north east towards Omagh are low-lying pastoral landscapes characterised to a varying extent by rolling drumlins. Enclosed pastures, small woodlands and hedgerows often provide a strong sense of enclosure. This landscape is bounded by the extensive undulating sandstone plateaus of Brougher Mountain to the south, and the hills of West Tyrone to the north which extend into Donegal. The Brougher Mountain uplands separate the farmlands between Irvinestown and Omagh from the lowlands of the Clogher Valley to the south east, with the lowlands of Rosslea and Newtownbutler further separated to the south of the Local Authority area by the uplands of Slieve Beagh. These rolling upland landscapes are typically no more than 300m AOD, in places forested and sparsely populated, forming long, low horizons when seen from lowland areas.

To the north of Omagh the landscape changes dramatically, with the lowland farmland and sandstone plateaus giving way to more pronounced hill summits including Bessy Bell and Mullaghcarn which mark the gateway to the wilder and more dramatic upland landscape of the Sperrins, comprising a series of ridges separating lowland valleys aligned east to west, and extending northwards into neighbouring Strabane. Much of the landscape north of Omagh is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in recognition of its nationally important scenic value.

The broader landscape character of Fermanagh and Omagh is described in the 2015 Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment, 7 seven regions of which are located within Fermanagh and Omagh[1].Landscape character areas (from NILCA 2000) and regional character areas are shown on Figures 1 and 2 respectively.

2.3 The Need for Reassessment

Present day pressures for development and likely future trends are different to those from 20 years ago. Some development types, such as wind energy, had very limited presence in the landscape at the time, while in a number of places wind energy development is now a defining feature of the landscape. Economic changes have resulted in new trends such as increased house building in the countryside, leisure and tourism development.

For the landscape character assessment to remain relevant to planning policy and the development management process it is necessary that the contemporary landscape conditions and sensitivities are properly described, and that development management guidance is relevant to current and likely future pressures for change.

At the time of preparing NILCA 2000, the process of landscape character assessment in the UK was evolving and predated the publication of the 2002 *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* (Scottish Natural Heritage/ Countryside Agency), the very influential guidance on the subject in the UK[2]. There was, and currently is, no equivalent guidance specific to Northern Ireland.

Therefore, as well as ensuring that the assessment reflects current landscape conditions and trends, it is also of benefit to ensure the assessment corresponds with the established principles of landscape character assessment that have evolved since publication of the assessment.

Additionally, some landscapes of Fermanagh and Omagh have special qualities which are not currently recognised through formal landscape designation, while the basis of other designated areas is unclear. This review of landscape character forms the basis to a separate, but related, review of local landscape designations in Fermanagh and Omagh, discussed below.

3.0 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

All landscapes are important, and the 'all landscapes' approach recognises that all landscapes are a resource deserving of care irrespective of the presence or otherwise of

[1] Regional character assessments are provided at the Dept. of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs online portal:

https://daera-ni.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=dee491ff43c0415fbb986f74c92f39a9

[2] Natural England (2014) *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* provides and update to the original 2002 guidance in England, however the principles and processes remain largely unchanged.

formal landscape designation. However, several landscapes within Fermanagh and Omagh include landscape designations, including:

- the Sperrins Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) national level designation which encompasses the northern part of Fermanagh and Omagh;
- The local Special Countryside Area (SCA) plan designation which recognises the scenic qualities of the Lower Lough Erne, Lough Macnean and Lough Melvin Islands; and
- Four areas identified as Areas of Scenic Quality (ASQ) in NILCA 2000 but not formally designated through the plan process.

Landscape character assessment forms the basis for identifying landscapes with qualities potentially worthy of recognition and protection by landscape designation, although landscape character may not be the sole reason for designating a landscape.

This assessment provides the background to the separate review of local level landscape designations within Fermanagh and Omagh, which is described in the separate *Landscape Designations Review* report. In particular the review considers the validity and relevance of those areas currently identified as Areas of Scenic Quality (ASQ) and identifies other locations where recognition of landscape qualities by designation may be relevant.

4.0 WINDFARM DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

The *Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study for Fermanagh and Omagh* (Ironside Farrar, 2018) provides a detailed spatial strategy for the accommodation of wind energy development in the landscape. The NILCA 2000 landscape character assessment provides the background to the study, along with site visits to observe landscape character, with guidance provided for each of the 26 NILCA 2000 LCAs within Fermanagh and Omagh.

This landscape character review refers to wind energy, both in terms of its current influence on landscape character, landscape sensitivity and broad development management guidance, however the wind energy capacity study provides a comprehensive spatial strategy for cumulative wind energy development and more detailed siting and design guidance for various scales of wind energy development.

While the landscape character review includes some amendments to NILCA 2000 character areas, and some re-naming of areas, none of these changes have any material effect on the findings of the capacity study.

5.0 APPROACH TO LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The following landscape character assessment has not been carried out from first principles. It is essentially a review and update of the NILCA 2000 assessment for the parts of the assessment within the boundaries of Fermanagh and Omagh. It builds constructively on this and does not seek to challenge its principles and broad thrust.

The reassessment seeks to provide a more detailed record appropriate to the strategic planning uses which it will support. It has the following aims:

1) To review the NILCA 2000 assessments and identify significant change in the landscape that has taken place since the original assessment was carried out in the late 1990s.

2) To review the boundaries of the current LCAs and determine whether they reasonably correspond to the point of transition between one landscape type and another.

3) To identify where sub-division of existing LCAs may be appropriate where there is significant variation in character within LCAs.

4) To identify where simplification may be appropriate, for example through amalgamation of LCAs of similar landscape type.

5) To reappraise landscape sensitivities and forces for landscape change based on the updated assessment, taking into account the refined definition of landscape types, areas, their boundaries and the changes that have occurred since the original assessment was undertaken.

6) To provide revised landscape management guidelines based on the reassessment of sensitivities and forces for change.

7) To provide updated assessments and guidance for the key settlements within Fermanagh and Omagh.

The assessment has been carried out by means of a desktop review of the existing character assessment, study of OSNI mapping, the use of various digital mapping and written resources, aerial photography, and confirmation by site visits.

The NICLA 2000 assessment includes sections describing the geodiversity and biodiversity of each landscape character area, which have typically been updated between 2006 and 2010. The scope of this review does not include the updating of these sections, and they remain relevant accompaniments to the updated character assessment.

6.0 MAIN FEATURES OF THE REVISED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

6.1 Review of the NILCA 2000 Assessment

A number of observations on the assessment of NILCA 2000 have been made whilst undertaking this review and have resulted in changes to the revised assessment.

Landscape character types and areas

The 2002 guidance on landscape character assessment makes the distinction between landscape character types (LCTs) and landscape character areas (LCAs); LCTs are categories of landscape with broadly similar characteristics while LCAs are geographically specific landscape areas of a particular type. NILCA 2000 only identifies LCAs and does not provide categorisation of these into LCT.

Landscape character type categorisation is useful for better understanding and describing the landscape, and for identifying those landscape areas which may have similar sensitivities

or could benefit from common management approaches. Therefore, this update has provided a categorisation of landscape character areas into landscape character types.

LCA naming

NILCA 2000 often follows a largely geographical approach to the naming of areas, while guidance suggests that names for LCAs should reflect their geographic location and landscape character type, an approach which this assessment adopts. LCA numberings, corresponding the NILCA 2000 assessment, have been retained.

Landscape characterisation

Taken into consideration was whether the LCAs of the NILCA 2000 assessment were of a sufficiently uniform character to be considered single units of landscape character, taking into account that this assessment is a more local assessment than that of the broader 2015 NIRLCA. Some sub-division and amalgamation of NILCA 2000 LCAs have been made. In other cases, names have been used to better reflect variations in landscape character.

LCA boundaries

Given the dependency of planning policy and development management on existing LCAs the wholesale changing of LCA boundaries was not considered desirable unless absolutely necessary. While it was considered that some boundaries could be re-drawn to better reflect variations in landscape character, there have been no revisions to existing boundaries, other than when related to a sub-division or amalgamation of LCAs.

Boundaries of the NILCA 2000 assessment were noted to be intricately drawn, sometimes following particular landscape features, roads or contour lines, while in many cases the rationale is difficult to determine. Such detailed boundary demarcation implies a level of a precision not usually evident on the ground and does not reflect the often subtle nature of transition between one character type and another.

While simplification of LCA boundaries is desirable, to avoid ambiguity where planning policies and guidance have referred to NILCA 2000 character areas, no boundary simplifications have been undertaken. However, the transitional nature of landscape character change at LCA boundaries, and the inherent imprecision in drawing LCA boundaries, should be recognised.

Development management guidance

2002 guidance and common practice advocates an approach whereby landscape sensitivity, forces for change and development management guidance are provided by broad groupings of development type. This approach is adopted in the updated assessment under the development categories of:

- Trees and woodland;
- Agriculture;
- Development;
- Tall structures;
- Minerals; and
- Transport.

Settlement assessments

The original character assessments of NILCA 2000 included assessments of the principal settlements of Fermanagh and Omagh in terms of an analysis of their landscape settings, their capacity for accommodating new development and principles for the siting and design of new development. At the request of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council updated assessments are provided for the settlements of Enniskillen, Omagh, Fintona, Carrickmore, Irvinestown, Lisnaskea and Dromore.

6.2 Specific Changes

The broad changes to the updated assessment are described above, and these have resulted in the following specific changes to the NILCA 2000 assessment:

- Revised LCA names and types, as shown in Table 1;
- Updated development management guidance for the development types described above;
- Subdivision of the former LCA 14 Lough Braden to better reflect variations in its character;
- Subdivision of the former LCA 10 Slieve Russel, Derrylin and Kinawley to better reflect variations in its character;
- Substitution of the name Slieve Rushen with Slieve Russel in LCA 10a to reflect the naming convention for this hill shown on Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland mapping;
- Amalgamation of LCA 16 Brougher Mountain and LCA 44 Slievemore to reflect their similarity of character within the Fermanagh and Omagh area;
- Amalgamation of the southern part of LCA 13 Enniskillen with LCA 11 Upper Lough Erne; and
- The creation of the new LCA 2 Lower Lough Erne sub-unit (LCA 2b) in the northern part of the former LCA 13 Enniskillen, removing LCA 13 as a character area.

Updated landscape character areas are shown on Figure 3, while landscape types are shown on Figure 4. A comparison between the character areas of 1999 and the updated areas is provided in Figure 5.

Table 1: NILCA 2000 and Revised Landscape Character Areas

NILCA 2000 Character Area		2018 Landscape Character Review (Character type in bold)	
1	*Garrison Lowlands*	*1*	*Garrison Lowland Farmland*
2	*Lower Lough Erne*	*2a*	*Lower Lough Erne (North) Lough Basin*
3	*Croagh and Garvary River*	*3*	*Croagh and Garvary River Lowland Hills*
4	*The Lough Navar and Ballintempo Uplands*	*4*	*Lough Navar and Ballintempo Limestone Uplands*
5	*The Lough Macnean Valley*	*5*	*Lough Macnean Lough Basin*
6	*The Knockmore Scarpland*	*6*	*The Knockmore Scarpland Limestone Uplands*
7	*The Sillees Valley*	*7*	*Sillees River Broad Lowland Valley*
8	*The Arney Lowlands*	*8*	*Arney River Broad Lowland Valley*
9	*Cuilcagh and Marlbank*	*9*	*Cuilcagh and Marlbank Limestone Uplands*
10	*Slieve Russel, Derrylin and Kinawley*	*10a*	*Slieve Rushen Limestone Uplands*
		10b	*Derrylin and Kinawley Lowland Farmland*
11	*Upper Lough Erne*	*11*	*Upper Lough Erne Lough Basin (Part)*
12	*Newtownbutler and Rosslea Lowlands*	*12*	*Newtownbutler and Rosslea Lowland Farmland*
13	*Enniskillen*	*2b*	*Lower Lough Erne (South) Lough Basin*
		11	*Upper Lough Erne Lough Basin (Part)*
14	*Lough Braden*	*14a*	*Lough Braden Lowland Farmland*
		14b	*Lough Braden Sandstone Ridges and Plateau*
15	*Irvinestown Farmland*	*15*	*Irvinestown Lowland Farmland*
16	*Brougher Mountain*	*16*	*Brougher Mountain and Slievemore Sandstone Ridges and Plateau*
17	*Clogher Valley Lowlands*	*17*	*Clogher Valley Lowland Farmland*
18	*Slieve Beagh*	*18*	*Slieve Beagh Sandstone Ridges and Plateau*
21	*Fairy Water Valley*	*21*	*Drumquin Broad Lowland Valley*
22	*Omagh Farmland*	*22*	*Omagh Lowland Farmland*
23	*Camowen Valley*	*23*	*Camowen River Broad Lowland Valley*
24	*South Sperrin*	*24*	*South Sperrin Upland Hills and Valleys*
25	*Beaghmore Moors and Marsh*	*25*	*Beaghmore Moors and Marsh Lowland Hills*
26	*Bessy Bell and Gortin*	*26*	*Bessy Bell and Gortin Upland Hills and Valleys*
43	*Carrickmore Hills*	*43*	*Carrickmore Lowland Hills*
44	*Slievemore*	*-*	*Included in LCA 16*

7.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES AND AREAS

Limestone Uplands

4. Lough Navar and Ballintempo

6. Knockmore Scarpland

9. Cuilcagh and Marlbank

10a. Slieve Rushen

Lough Basin

2. Lower Lough Erne

5. Lough Macnean

11. Upper Lough Erne

Lowland Farmland

1. Garrison

10b Derrylin and Kinawley

12. Newtownbutler and Rosslea

14a Lough Braden (West)

15. Irvinestown

17. Clogher Valley

22. Omagh

Lowland Hills

3. Croagh and Garvary

25. Beaghmore Moors and Marsh

43 Carrickmore

Broad Lowland Valley

7. Sillees River

8. Arney River

21. Drumquin River

23. Camowen River

Sandstone Ridges and Plateau

14b. Lough Braden (East)

16. Brougher Mountain and Slievemore

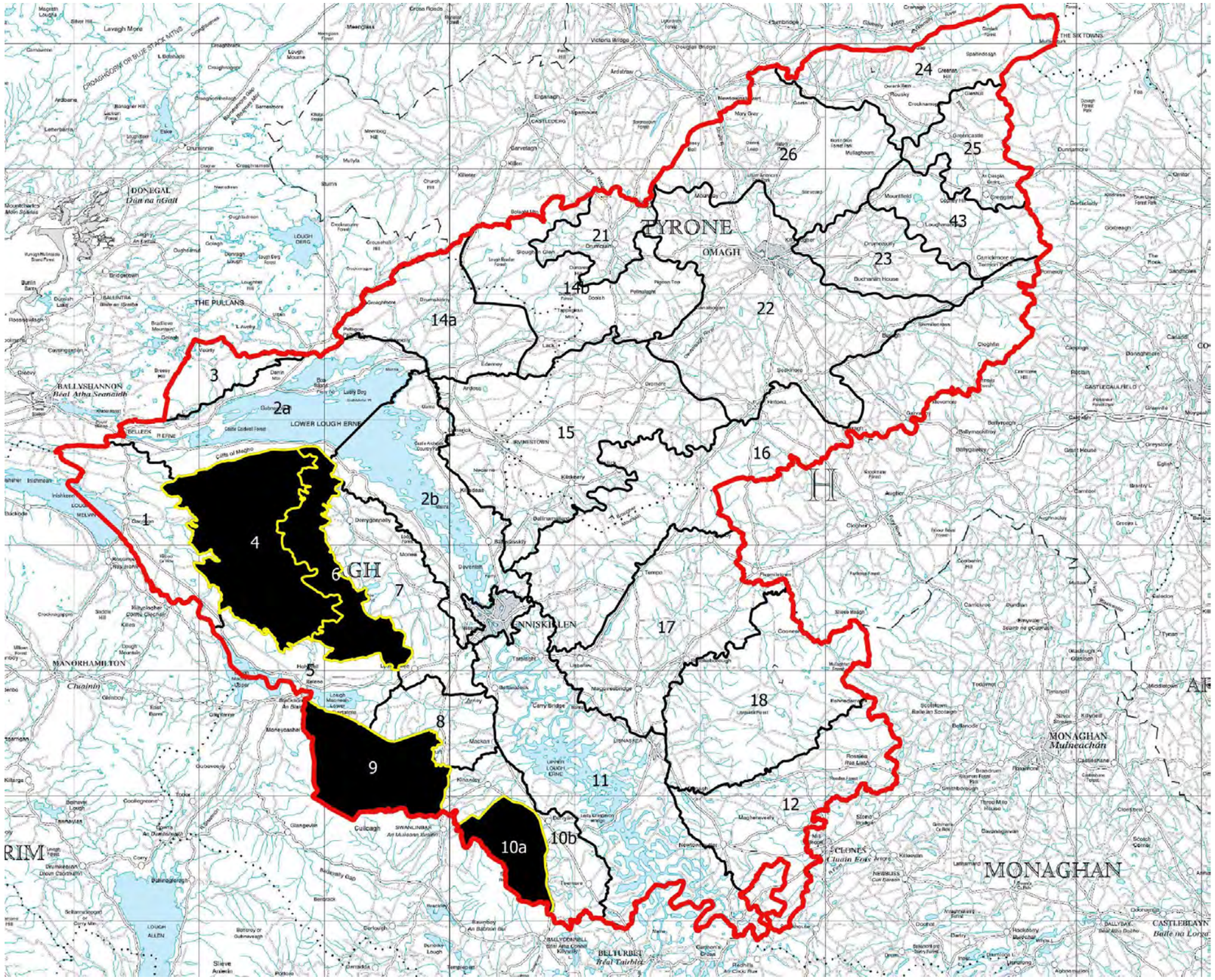
18. Slieve Beagh

Upland Hills and Valleys

24. South Sperrin

26 Bessy Bell and Gortin

1. Limestone Uplands Landscape Type



LCA 4 Lough Navar and Ballintempo

LCA 6 Knockmore Scarpland

LCA 9 Cuilcagh and Marlbank

LCA10a Slieve Rushen

LCA 4 Lough Navar and Ballintempo

Key Characteristics

- Broken plateau with rock outcrops, heath, intact blanket bogs, small loughs, valleys, and the dramatic Cliffs of Magho to the north.
- A sense of remoteness and a wildness of character.
- Dominant land cover of forestry plantations, with small areas of semi-natural woodland on rocky scarps and in valleys.
- A few surviving hill farms, with extensive rough grazing and small areas of improved grassland.
- Peat cutting on blanket bog.
- Few working farms and forestry houses; some derelict farm houses.
- Neolithic monuments are a particular feature of the rocky plateau.
- Tourist facilities such as picnic areas, footpaths and viewpoints, with panoramic views of surrounding lowlands and lough basins.
- Larger scale wind energy development has affected peripheral parts of the LCA.

Landscape Description

These exposed uplands of west Fermanagh, lying between 150 and 300 metres AOD, have been carved out of a broken and undulating sandstone plateau. Different layers of grits, shales and limestones form escarpments, lough basins, rock ridges and the distinctive rock pinnacles of Big Dog and Little Dog. Limestone forms steep escarpments to the north, east and south, cut by deep glens, but to the west the land slopes gently.

Conditions have favoured the formation of extensive blanket bog, which now covers much of the area. Much of this is planted with forestry in regular blocks of uniform age, masking the underlying features and varied terrain and enclosing farms. Unplanted areas are crucial in the appreciation of the landscape. These include turbary plots, nature reserves and hilltops unsuitable for the planting of trees. While much of the area is forested with commercial plantations, it includes considerable habitat diversity with ASSI sites including oakwood, ashwood, heath, bog and oligotrophic lakes (i.e. those with low nutrient levels), while to the south east is a SAC including limestone pavement which is a rare feature in Northern Ireland. The geodiversity of the area, along with its natural heritage interest, results in the inclusion of much of the LCA within the UNESCO Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark.

During the 19th century a significant farming population occupied sheltered valleys and patches of better soils. Many of these farms are now abandoned and the former field boundaries lost within forestry. Some continue to be worked, but overall the uplands are largely empty of settlement. More recently parts of the area have been promoted for outdoor recreation, with car parking, picnic sites and other visitor facilities, particularly to the north at the Big Dog, Conagher and Lough Navar Forests. To the northwest and south of the LCA larger scale commercial wind energy developments are present, but these do not exert a strong influence on the character of most of the LCA.

The area has a scattering of cultural heritage sites including standing stones, court tombs, raths and sweat houses, but these are infrequent compared to other parts of the Fermanagh and Omagh landscape.

The landscape is experienced as a large scale, remote and sparsely populated upland plateau and while blanket forestry covers much of the LCA, there is considerable interest provided through its varied topography, landscape features, and outward views, including the spectacular view over Lower Lough Erne from the crest of the Cliffs of Magho.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- The further domination of the landscape by forestry plantations obscuring features which contribute to landscape character;
- Potential pressure for future wind energy development; and
- Possible pressure from increased visitor numbers through the promotion of tourism, recreation and presence of the Geopark.

Trees and woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Blanket coverage of much of this area with forestry has resulted in the landscape being dominated by plantations, hence obscuring pre-existing variations in natural vegetation, topography and cultural features such as old farms, fields and ancient monuments. In open areas, the terrain is broken by rocky outcrops and loughs, creating a varied landscape with swathes of trees interrupted with heather-clad knolls, patches of native trees and loughs fringed by marsh and fen. Such unplanted areas are crucial to maintaining existing variety and interest in this landscape.

Trees and woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Improved siting and design of forestry plantations, favouring lower sites, smaller blocks and the inclusion of broadleaved species especially along edges and on stream sides, would be beneficial;
- The retention of open areas of moorland, rocky knolls and prominent higher ground is crucial to the conservation of the character of this upland area. Settings to ancient monuments, attractive areas of natural vegetation, old farmsteads and areas of distinctive field patterns would be lost if obscured by further blanket forestry; and
- The planting of broadleaved woodland should be encouraged.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

There is the potential for loss of existing pastures to commercial forestry. Pastures are often unimproved and species rich, with some importance to biodiversity. The presence of open pastures is important to the conservation of the character of the area, allowing appreciation of views and variations in landform.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming in more marginal areas, such as the retention of small herb rich meadows, would be beneficial; and
- Improvements to species rich and sensitive grassland habitats such as calcareous grassland should be avoided.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

Pressure for development in the area appears limited. However, this may increase with the promotion of the area for leisure and tourism, with increased pressure for holiday accommodation, car parking, and other tourist facilities.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Housing development within the area should be sympathetic to the small scale and style of traditional buildings found in this upland landscape;
- Native broadleaved planting around new built development would assist in its integration into the landscape;
- Areas of car parking should be sensitively sited and integrated within woodland to avoid its prominence in the landscape; and
- Where there is a requirement for signage or information boards a consistent signage strategy would assist in providing a unified identity to the area.

Tall structures: sensitivities and forces for change

As an upland plateau characterised by forestry, this LCA may come under pressure for larger scales of wind energy development. There is a risk that larger turbines and/ or large numbers of turbines would come to dominate the landscape and overwhelm adjacent smaller scale LCAs. Prominent topographic features are sensitive to the siting of masts or other tall structures.

Tall structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind energy development should be carefully sited to not dominate the plateau interior and it topographic features, nor the adjacent lowland landscapes;
- Skylining of electricity transmission lines as seen from the surrounding lowlands, should be avoided; and
- Telecommunications or radio transmission mast should be sited away from prominent topographic features.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

Access to the area is provided by a network of minor and unclassified roads which also provide pedestrian and cycle access for recreation. There may be pressure for access improvements to facilitate wind energy developments, including new roads, the easing of gradients, road widenings and junction upgrades.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

Ensure new roads or changes to road alignment respect the local terrain and grain of the landscape;

- Engineered features such as embankments, cuttings and bridge upgrades to facilitate abnormal loads associated with wind energy developments require careful design and integration into the landscape to maintain rural characteristics; and
- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

The area has historically been subjected only to a limited amount of quarrying. Due to the forested and undulating nature of the landscape, a level of quarrying activity could be accommodated if sensitively sited and managed, however such operations may risk disruption to the tranquil upland character of the landscape or important geological/ topographic features.

Minerals: planning and management guidance

- Quarries should be sited to take advantage of natural variations in topography in the undulating terrain to reduce landscape and visual impacts, utilising sympathetic bunding and tree planting;
- Quarries should be sited so as to avoid impacts recreational interests such as paths or cycle routes;
- There should be no impacts to the geological and topographic features which characterise the landscape and contribute to the UNESCO Global Geopark; and
- Quarrying operations should not be sited on the prominent outer edges of the character area, visible from nearby lowlands.

Undulating plateau of forestry and pasture at the western edge of the LCA.

LCA 6 Knockmore Scarpland

Key Characteristics

- Dramatic karst landscape of scarps, extensive cliff faces, gorges, caves, limestone pavements, woodlands and loughs.
- Rough grazing, small improved fields and hay meadows contribute to a landscape rich in ecological interest.
- Scarp woodlands are a characteristic feature while conifer plantations are present on Belmore Mountain.
- Older traditional stone houses, some in poor condition, alongside new housing developments.
- Important concentrations of archaeological sites.
- Panoramic views over lowlands from open scarp slopes.

Landscape Description

The Knockmore Scarpland limestone escarpment dominates the skylines in west Fermanagh. The rugged karst relief has been emphasised by glacial action and includes limestone pavements, cliffs, potholes, sink holes and gorges. At Knockmore, 100m cliffs descend into a fringe of ash and hazel woodland. To the south, Belmore Mountain has a broader landscape pattern and is capped by conifer plantations. The more enclosed, intimate glen landscapes have a mixture of small loughs, patchy fields, scrub woodland and scattered houses. Small streams disappear into the limestone at potholes, emerging at springs on the lower slopes. Larger rivers cut through the rock to form waterfalls, spectacular gorges and caves.

Several loughs lie along the scarp edge, fringed with reeds and alder. On the lower clay soils, wet meadows and flushes are common; many are rich in flowers or overgrown with alder. At higher elevations, native hazel woodland contrasts with the pale grey rock faces of the overhanging limestone cliffs. On the upper slopes, soil cover is thin and the short limestone grassland supports a wide diversity of lime-loving plants; acid grassland and heath is associated with sandstone outcrops. Much of the LCA is designated as a single large ASSI and SAC. The farmland is a mix of low intensity and improved pastures.

Fields are bounded with drystone walls and earth banks on higher slopes and overgrown hedges and ditches lower down. Tortuous roads and tracks link the clusters of houses which are at sheltered locations along the scarp. Most farms are small scale, with small farm houses, barns and other outbuildings. Settlement is more frequent at lower elevations to the east of the LCA, and more concentrated around Boho north of Belmore Mountain, although there are no towns or villages. New development in the open landscape is often out of character with the traditional dwellings.

Many Bronze Age and Neolithic archaeological monuments contribute to a strong sense of history, tradition and folklore. There are a small number of listed buildings near Boho towards the south.

This is a rugged and enclosed small-scale landscape which is strongly rural in character, with some high scenic qualities resulting from its underlying geology.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Conservation management to retain the diverse range of habitats which may be subject to pressure from grazing or agricultural improvement;
- Pressure for further development of coniferous forestry beyond the existing extents of Belmore Mountain;
- Dereliction of farmlands and the loss of field boundary features such as walls, earth banks and hedgerows; and
- Pressure for new housing development in the countryside.

Trees and woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

The LCA includes some significant examples of ashwood, hazel woodlands and oak woods which contribute to the character of the area. Coniferous forestry is already extensive on Belmore Mountain to the south, in the adjacent Lough Navar and Ballintempo Uplands to the west, and there may be pressure for further commercial woodland within the LCA.

Trees and woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Coniferous woodland within the area north of Belmore Mountain should be small scale only and well-integrated into the landscape with broadleaved planting;
- Coniferous planting should avoid masking important features of the scarp landscape, which are important in views from the wider landscape; and
- Existing broadleaved woodland should be retained, with the framework of broadleaved woodland strengthened with new planting where possible.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

There is some evidence of dereliction of pastures, with fields turning to rush and traditional field boundaries of stone and wooded banks in decline.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Restore and maintain traditional earth hedge banks and stone walls in favour of post and wire fencing where possible; improved pastures should retain their wooded enclosure;
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming in more marginal areas, such as the retention of small herb rich meadows, would be beneficial; and
- Improvements to sensitive grassland habitats such as calcareous grassland or wetland habitats should be avoided.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

New single houses in the countryside in the area are of varying style and in places prominently positioned in the landscape.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- New housing development should be of a scale in proportion to the small-scale farming landscape, with one or one and a half storey properties likely to be easier to integrate into the landscape;
- New housing development should be sensitively sited so as not to occupy prominent locations such as hill tops or open slopes in a landscape that is steeply undulating;
- Woodland planting around new properties would assist with their integration into the landscape; and
- It would be preferable to develop the sites of derelict farms and houses in favour of developing new sites.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

The small scale of the landscape and its varied terrain would be sensitive to all but the smallest scales of wind energy development, its associated infrastructure such as transmission lines and pylons, and other tall structures such as telecommunications or radio masts.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind energy developments should be only very occasional features of this landscape, associated with farms and properties;
- Telecommunications or radio masts should be sited away from the topographic features of the escarpment; and
- Large electricity transmission lines should be routed away from the area.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

This landscape would be highly sensitive to intrusion from minerals operations, which have the potential to disturb the geological features which characterise the area, and appear intrusive from adjacent enclosed lowland landscapes.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarrying within the character area should be avoided.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

The area is accessed by a network of minor and unclassified roads. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

View towards the Knockmore Cliffs from the east of the character area with two new build properties of contrasting style in view.

LCA 9 Cuilcagh and Marlbank

Key Characteristics

- Karst landforms of limestone cliffs, pavements, gorges and caves, with peat moorland on gritstone summits.
- Rough grazing on slopes; forestry and extensive peat cutting on moors.
- Rich botanical interest; limestone and blanket bog habitats of exceptional value and semi-natural gorge and scarp woodlands.
- Sparsely populated; small houses are associated with farms and buildings are prominent in the open landscape.
- Prehistoric field boundaries and important archaeological sites, including megalithic tombs, cairns, cashels and raths.
- Important area for tourism with impressive views from higher ground.

Landscape Description

The southwest corner of Fermanagh includes the only true mountain in the area (Cuilcagh at 665m) and has some of the most dramatic countryside in the district. Underlying carboniferous strata dip to the south and west and the Upper Limestone forms a magnificent escarpment, riddled with potholes and caves. There are also dry valleys, limestone pavements and gorges, with prominent rounded hills known as 'reef knolls' rising above the land surface. Impermeable flagstones and shales form the long broken slopes of the Cuilcagh Mountain.

There is a rich variety of vegetation, with montane grassland and blanket bog on the grits and fine species-rich dry grassland on the limestone. Poorly drained hollows on the limestone reflect the presence of boulder clay. Hazel scrub grows in irregular patches on steeper limestone slopes but there is a more luxuriant woodland cover at sink-holes. Agricultural activities and scrub clearance have resulted in some loss of the diversity of habitats. Heather, cotton grass and sedges predominate on the peat uplands and extensive areas of blanket bog have been cut mechanically. The wooded estate landscape at Florence Court adds another element of diversity to the landscape, contrasting strongly with open character of the much of the LCA, while there is some commercial forestry to the east of the LCA. Much of the area is designated as ASSI/ Ramsar/ SAC because of the importance of its bog, heath, and rock habitats. Part of the area is with the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark.

Field enclosures are traditionally small but most have been enlarged to incorporate the existing prehistoric boundaries. Most farmland is low intensity grassland or rough grazing, although there are some improved pastures in lower areas. Broken dry stone walls subdivide the limestone slopes, supplemented with post and wire fencing, with hedgerows lower down and open fenceless moors above. The area is sparsely populated with a number of farms on the lower scarp slopes. Minor roads provide access only to the lower slopes to the north and east

Various cultural heritage sites are found in the more lowland areas, including raths, cashels, standing stones and tombs. Florence Court is included in the Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes and adds to the visitor interest of the area alongside that of the Cuilcagh ‘stairway to heaven’ walkway, Marble Arch cave system and the Geopark visitor centre. It is landscape rich in historic interest, and the dramatic scenery, caves and the area's botanical interest have long attracted visitors.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Pressure for more commercial forestry in a landscape where alternative land uses are of relatively low productivity;
- Decline of characteristic landscape features such as stone walls or traditional buildings;
- Potential pressure on sensitive habitats from grazing or agricultural improvements; and
- Increased visitor numbers through promotion of the Geopark and other attractions.

Trees and woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Native woodland cover is limited, but with some very significant examples of upland oakwood, ashwood and hazel wood/ scrub. Native woodland cover tends to be restricted to scarp slopes, although mixed and ancient/ long established woodlands are associated with Florence Court. Coniferous plantings are uncharacteristic of most of the landscape.

Trees and woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Coniferous forestry should be limited, and not significantly increased beyond the current extents;
- Existing broadleaved woodland should be protected from grazing and managed; and
- Replacement or softening of existing coniferous plantations with native broadleaves would assist with their landscape integration.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Changes in agricultural practices, either improvements or dereliction, may lead to a decline in features which contribute to the character of the area.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Where possible stone walls, particularly along road sides, should be maintained and rebuilt;
- Improvements to sensitive grassland habitats such as calcareous grasslands should be avoided; and
- Limestone pavements should be protected from clearance.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

There have been some new single houses in the area, some of which contrasts in style to the older farm houses and other dwellings. Housing development has the potential to be quite prominent in

the exposed and relatively treeless landscape. Increased demand for tourism and recreation may result in other development pressures.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- New housing development should be of a scale in proportion to existing traditional farm houses and properties;
- New housing development should be located in sheltered sites avoiding hill tops or prominent slopes;
- Small-scale white stone cottages are characteristic of the area; new development which reflects these characteristics may be accommodated relatively easily on lower slopes, particularly if native hedgerow species or drystone walls are used to link boundaries with local field patterns;
- Car parking for tourism and recreation has the potential to be prominent in the landscape and should be sited to benefit from topographic containment and include vegetative screening;
- The siting and design of tourist facilities requires careful consideration in this sensitive landscape; the use of limestone in buildings and surfacing is recommended; and
- Where there is a requirement for signage or information boards a consistent signage strategy would assist in providing a unified identity to the area.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

Almost all scales of wind energy development, associated infrastructure and other tall structure have the potential to be highly prominent in this exposed landscape.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind energy developments of all scales should generally be avoided in this landscape, other than very small scale developments which could potentially be accommodated only at the lowland fringes of the LCA;
- Telecommunications or radio masts should be sited away exposed upland areas, hill tops, or escarpment features;
- Larger scale electricity transmission lines should be routed to avoid the area.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There are no past or current mineral workings of significance within the LCA. This landscape would be highly sensitive to intrusion from minerals operations, which have the potential to disturb the geological features which characterise the area, and are likely to be prominent on the elevated, exposed landscape.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarrying within the character area should be avoided.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

The area is accessed by a network of minor and unclassified roads. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

Pastures of variable quality divided by stones walls close to Crossmurrin National Nature Reserve.

LCA10a Slieve Rushen

Key Characteristics

- Steep-sided upland rising above low drumlin hills and damp lowland.
- Sloping enclosed pastures and ladder fields, derelict pastures and blanket bog in upland areas.
- Farming characterised by both intensification and dereliction.
- Semi-natural woodlands on the steeper slopes and glens, conifer plantations on hill slopes and small areas of woodland around farms and houses.
- Concentration of housing on lower slopes.
- Good range of archaeological sites including burial monuments.
- Limestone quarries, gravel pits and processing industries gives part of the area an industrial degraded character.
- Large wind turbines strongly characterise the upland landscape.

Landscape Description

The landscape comprises the northern and eastern flanks of flat topped Slieve Rushen, an isolated block of limestone, sandstone and shales, which rises to 404m just beyond the Northern Ireland border to the west. Its steep slopes are dissected by small glens which run down to complex glacial deposits on the lower slopes. The two major summits of Slieve Rushen and Molly Mountain are separated by the Owengarr River. The summit of the mountain is covered by blanket bog, which has been disturbed by peat cutting and erosion. There is a transition from open moor to rush infested rough grazing, which in places has been improved, while larger improved pastures are more commonplace at lower elevations.

There is a small amount of broadleaved woodland, often linear strips within the glens of minor watercourses such as at Derrylin Wood. The area includes no natural heritage designation except for a small isolated section of the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark at Derrylin Wood.

Ladder farms are a striking feature of the hillsides and the steeper slopes retain fragments of scrub woodland which blend into the larger conifer plantation of Derrylin Wood. On the lower slopes there is a mosaic of small fields and bushy hedgerows which contain outward views. Some are improved and others are cut for hay or silage. The slopes of the uplands are quarried for limestone, sand and gravels, and are processed in the Gortmullan area. Significant wind energy development is present in the uplands, aligned along the ridge defining the western extent of the character area. Quarrying, mineral processing and wind energy development give this LCA an industrialised and degraded character.

The density of settlement varies with topography; the upland farms often have small modern buildings and are strung out along roads which run perpendicular to the slopes. Rural properties in upland areas are mostly single storey, with occasional 2 storey farm houses at larger farms. There are a number of archaeological sites, including raths, cashels and cairns, mostly located to the west of the LCA around the Owengarr River.

This area is in poor condition owing to the complexity of discordant land uses in a visually prominent area, and the farmland which has fallen into disrepair and dereliction. However, from parts of the area there are good outward views towards the east across Upper Lough Erne.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Visual intrusion and characterisation of the area by quarrying and processing industries;
- Impacts to landscape character and visual amenity from larger scale wind energy developments; and
- Changes to rural characteristics through the loss of traditional farming patterns and the dereliction of farmland, and in places the adoption of more intensive farming methods.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Broadleaved woodland is a relatively minor feature in the landscape but could play an important role in improving the landscape structure and screening views to industry. There may be further demand for coniferous plantation, where derelict farmland is unlikely to be reclaimed.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- The landscape structure could be improved by tree planting on the hillslopes, using woodlands to unify the landscape and to screen views of the quarries and works; and
- The LCA has some capacity for coniferous forestry. Forestry plantations should be integrated into the landscape by the avoidance of strong geometrical forms, respecting terrain, and integration with broadleaved woodland planting.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Fields are often small and dominated by rushy pastures, with traditional field boundaries in disrepair, while locally there are larger improved pastures, resulting in a loss of cohesive character to the farming landscape.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the retention and enhancement of wooded field boundaries where possible;
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming in more marginal areas would be beneficial; and
- Encourage scrub clearance and the implementation of appropriate grazing regimes on areas of calcareous grassland.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be some demand for new single houses within the LCA, particularly on lower slopes which offer good views towards the west.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Housing development is not a feature of the exposed uplands and is best accommodated away from upper slopes;
- Modern housing developments, particularly in more elevated areas, should correspond to traditional styles and scales i.e. single or one and half stories with whitewashed walls; and
- Broadleaved trees and woodland planting would assist with integrating new housing into a relatively exposed landscape.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be further pressure for increasing wind turbine sizes which have the potential to dominate the LCA. Telecommunications or radio masts may contribute to visual clutter.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind turbine numbers, their size, siting and design should be carefully considered to not have an overly dominant effect on the Slieve Rushen ridge, particularly where seen from more sensitive parts of the landscape around Upper Lough Erne to the east;
- Siting and design should take into consideration the potential for undesirable cumulative effects resulting from intervisibility of small and large turbine typologies;
- Associated wind energy infrastructure such as transmission lines and transformer units should be sensitively sited, utilising variations in the landform, and tree screening for ground level features; and
- The proliferation of tall structures such as telecommunications or radio masts should be avoided. Given the presence of masts on Molly Mountain it may be preferable to cluster other tall structures here if required.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

Quarrying is an intrusive feature of the landscape, towards the south near Gortmullan and on the north western slopes of Molly Mountain. An expansion of mineral operations would have an adverse effect on landscape character.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarrying/ processing operations within the LCA should maintain its current relatively concentrated pattern of development so that extraction industries are not seen to proliferate throughout the LCA with undesirable cumulative effects; and
- Strong woodland frameworks around quarrying and processing sites should be implemented to assist with their integration into the landscape.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

Access to upland areas is provided by a network of single track unclassified roads. There may be pressure for access improvements to facilitate wind energy or mineral developments, including new roads, the easing of gradients, road widenings and junction upgrades.

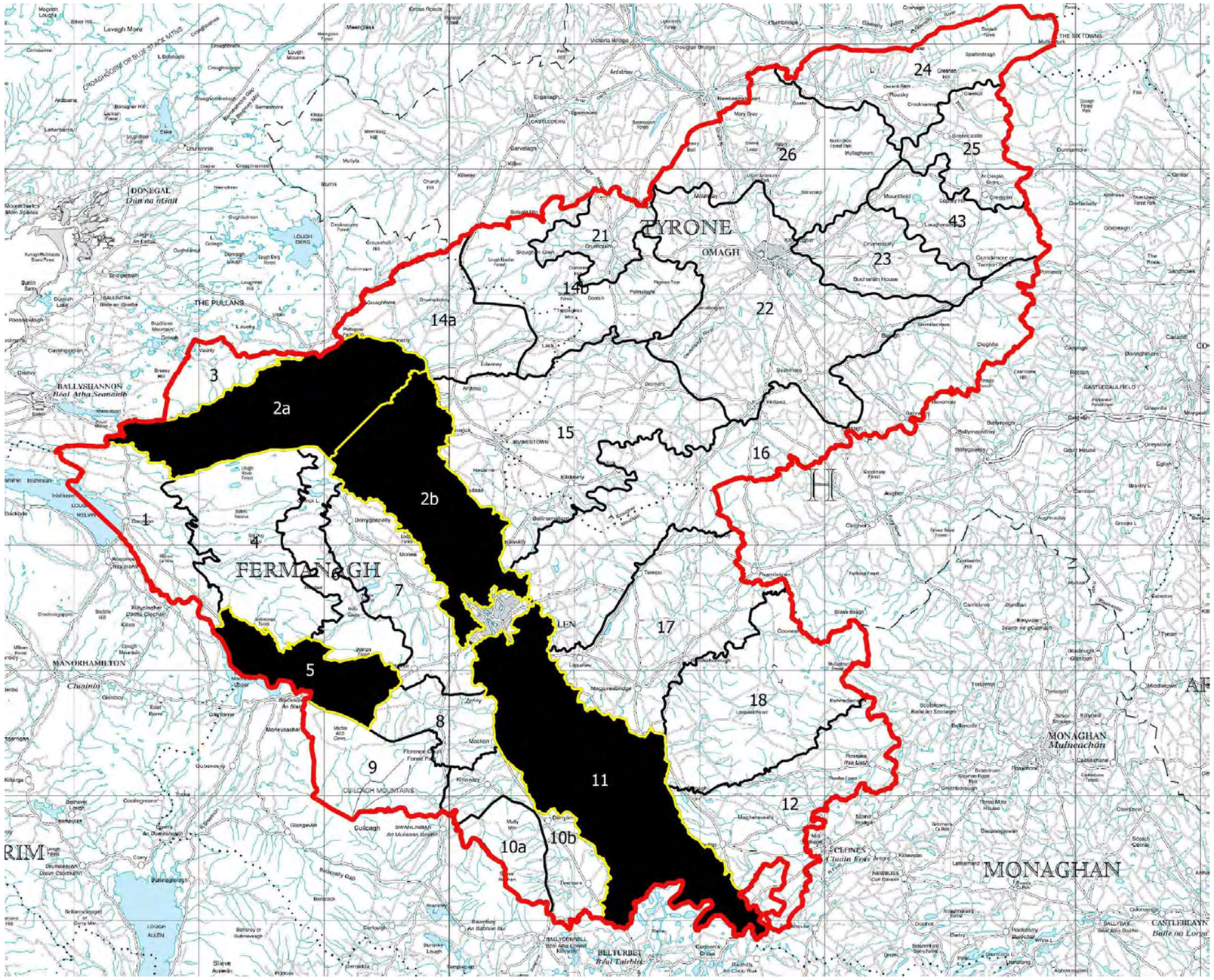
Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Ensure new roads or changes to road alignment respect the local terrain and grain of the landscape;
- New access tracks, for example for wind energy developments, should be sited to not appear on prominent outer facing hill slopes;
- Engineered features such as embankments, cuttings and bridge upgrades to facilitate abnormal loads associated with wind energy developments require careful design and integration into the landscape to maintain rural characteristics; and
  Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

Wind energy development and forestry on Molly Mountain.

Rush pastures of the more marginal upland farming landscape.

2. Lough Basin Landscape Type



LCA 2a Lower Lough Erne (North)

LCA 2b Lower Lough Erne (South)

LCA 5 Lough Macnean

LCA 11 Upper Lough Erne

LCA 2a Lower Lough Erne (North)

Key Characteristics

- A large scale open water body with a complex low-lying shoreline of promontories, bays and islands, fringed by farmland.
- Highly valued lakeland scenery of outstanding quality.
- Dramatic limestone cliffs and escarpment contain the lough on the south.
- Larger fields and better quality farmland near the lough margins and to the east, more marginal inland;
- Reedbed, wetland, meadow habitats important for wading birds.
- Prominent semi-natural woodland on lough shores and islands, plus extensive forestry plantations.
- Scattered, relatively small-scale settlement pattern along lough-side roads.
- Larger scale leisure and tourism related development including marina and caravan parks at Kesh. Holiday accommodation in lough side locations.
- Islands and lough shores rich in monuments and ecclesiastical sites, including raths, crannogs, ruined castles, numerous listed buildings and scheduled monuments.

Landscape Description

Lower Lough Erne is the more dramatic of the Lakeland loughs, with extensive open waters, offshore islands and the bold escarpment of the Magho Cliffs to the south. This character area covers the northern part of the lough, located approximately between Kesh and Rosscor. The lough lies in a deep glacial trough, the alignment of the shores and islands reflecting the direction of ice movement. On the southern shores ice-scored limestones and ancient quartzite rocks form prominent scarps, the Magho Cliffs, but further north the low streamlined ridges, bays and promontories of Boa Island and Castle Caldwell are less pronounced. Below the Magho Cliffs a narrow strip of farmland and alder woodland borders a boulder strewn shore. The lough fringes are a mix of woodland, rushy farmland and small fields, with larger improved fields on the drained ground of the drumlins. The northern part of the character area includes an area of blanket bog on Derrin Mountain.

Wooded islands and promontories are attractive features. In places such as Castle Caldwell, coniferous forestry plantations have been successfully integrated with broadleaved woodland, while elsewhere more monolithic forestry contrasts with woodland fringing the lough.

Several islands are designated as ASSI as recognition of their importance for birds, while the mixed ash woods on the slopes of the Cliffs of Magho are also ASSI. Castle Caldwell Forest is a National Nature Reserve.

Settlement is scattered, with Belleek, an old estate town, being the main centre, now popular with tourists. Elsewhere there is a mixture of traditional and more modern dwellings. Tourism development, particularly holiday accommodation is scattered along the roads either side of the lough, but particularly the A47 to the north. A large marina and two sizable caravan parks are located at Kesh in the east of the LCA.

The area includes a good number of scheduled sites including Raths, tree rings and ecclesiastical sites, while there are a small number of listed buildings. The wooded estate of Castle Caldwell is included in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

The landscape appears generally in good condition and under active management. The best views are available from the Cliffs of Magho where the full extent of the character area can be appreciated in a single panoramic view, while within the LCA views to the lough are often screened by woodland close to the lough shore.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- The increasing pressure of tourism development;
- Risk of development on the uninhabited islands and promontories which contribute to the character of the lough;
- Afforestation of farmland with coniferous plantations in the surroundings to the lough; and
- Pressure for wind energy development which may intrude upon the setting of the lough.

Trees and woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

A framework of broadleaved woodland contributes considerably to the character of the lough, while coniferous forestry plantations often have abrupt boundaries and geometrical patterns which contrast unfavourably with those of the broadleaved woodlands and disrupt the simplicity of the wooded lough margins and its islands.

Trees and woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Integrate coniferous woodland into the landscape through the encouragement of more organic woodland patterns and soften the impact of coniferous plantation by including broadleaved plantings both within and at the fringes of conifer plantations;
- Small wooded or wood fringed islands characterise the lough. Ensure that broadleaved woodlands are maintained and not replaced by conifer plantations;
- Maintain and enhance the woodland fringe to the lough including the estate landscapes/ parklands, however promote appreciation of the landscape with localised clearing at the lough edge where possible;
- The wooded character of islands and promontories should be retained, with coniferous woodland avoided or well-integrated with broadleaved plantings; and
- The conservation and management of undeveloped lough fringes including wet woodlands is important.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Hedgerows contribute to the wooded character of the lough basin fringes. Agricultural improvements may result in field enlargements and the loss of hedges, hedgerows and trees, or impacts to water quality.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- The retention and maintenance of hedgerows and trees should be encouraged;
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming such as the retention of small herb rich meadows or wet meadows, would be beneficial for biodiversity and may help to maintain water quality.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

The scenic qualities of the landscape lead to some pressure for leisure and tourism development. So far development has mostly been accommodated successfully, without undue intrusion or loss or character, however greater numbers or larger scales of tourism development may be difficult to accommodate without affecting key landscape characteristics. The wooded lough shore and islands are currently affected by larger scale developments only to a limited degree.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Shore line developments such as hotels, lodges or caravan sites should be located away from more prominent lough shore locations. Their scale should allow for their integration into the landscape with broadleaved woodland planting, and should typically be low rise developments;
- New developments, particularly those close to the shore line, should adopt sympathetic designs and materials to promote integration into the landscape;
- The undeveloped character of islands and promontories should be maintained; and
- Greater access to the lough shore via footpaths and cycle paths may be beneficial, while directing access to appropriate locations may help conserve sensitive habitats. However, car parking to facilitate such access should be well screened from views in an around the lough.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There are a number of existing and consented wind turbines in the area, and the area may come under pressure for the development of further small to medium sized wind turbines i.e. those associated with farms and domestic properties. The scenic qualities of this landscape could be compromised by a proliferation of wind turbines.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind energy developments should be limited to smaller typologies only;
- Wind turbines should appear as infrequent features in the landscape, sited away from the lough shore;
- Larger scale electricity transmission lines and pylons are likely to appear as very prominent features in this open landscape and should be routed away from the lough basin; and
- Smaller telecommunications or radio masts could be accommodated within the large scale landscape, however islands should remain free of intrusion from such structures.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There are no past or current mineral workings of significance within the LCA. There is little evidence of pressure for minerals development within the LCA. Quarrying in the immediate setting of the lough has the potential to be highly intrusive.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarrying within the character area should be avoided.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

Development pressures may result in demand for road upgrades and access improvements beyond the main A47 and A46 running to the north and south sides of the loughs respectively.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

The western part of Lower Lough Erne looking towards Rosscor from the Cliffs of Magho.

View to the wooded peninsula of Castle Caldwell from the northern lough shore at Rossharbour Bay.

LCA 2b Lower Lough Erne (South)

Key Characteristics

- Attractive lakeland with complex shorelines, promontories and wooded islands surrounded by drumlin farmland.
- The lough is more enclosed towards the south, becoming more open towards northern parts of the LCA, where it merges with LCA 2a.
- Good quality farmlands closer to the lough including some arable.
- Open views across expanses of water and along reed beds and carr woodland on lough fringes.
- Many former castles and historic sites on islands and adjacent to the shore.
- Wooded lough-side estate landscapes are important local features.
- Leisure and tourism development of a larger scale than elsewhere in the Fermanagh Lakelands.

Landscape Description

This landscape unit includes the southern end of Lower Lough Erne, north of the town of Enniskillen. It is a landscape of open water, wooded islands, promontories and richly vegetated shorelines, which is often invisible from the main roads which pass around the lough. The lough and river sides are dominated by grassy drumlins, with fields separated by bushy hedgerows, trees and numerous wooded off-shore islands. A low limestone ridge rising from the western lough shore provides a degree of enclosure in this direction, where elsewhere the lough fringes are low lying and undulating. There are several large wooded estate landscapes including Castle Archdale on the eastern shores. Coniferous forestry is limited to Castle Archdale Forest and the Riverdale Forest north of Ballycassidy. Parts of the shoreline include natural heritage designations, including National Nature Reserves, ASSI, and western parts of the lough shore are included within the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark.

The fringes of the lough are well settled, concentrated in small settlements and spread along roads and tracks. There are a variety of building styles including traditional dwellings, and more modern single properties and recent settlement expansions, for example at Kesh. With the better quality of farmland, farmhouses are often more substantial two storey buildings. The drumlins to the south of the LCA form the northern setting to Enniskillen, enclosing it to such a degree that the town remains concealed from view almost until the point of entering the settlement limits.

This part of the Lough Erne corridor includes a relatively high degree of larger scale development, mostly related to leisure and tourism in the form of caravan parks, holiday lodges and 'country house' style hotels, while to the west of Lough Erne, close to Enniskillen, is the Lough Erne Resort including a golf course. Pockets of more industrialised land uses are present, such as at Ballycassidy where there is an industrial estate and the small St Angelo airport, while to the north west of Enniskillen are operational and disused quarries.

The many historic church sites on islands and shorelines throughout the character area (including the monastic island site of Devenish) reflect the importance of travel by water, particularly in Early Christian times. Waterside landscapes at Castle Archdale and Ely Lodge are included in the Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes, while to the north of Enniskillen at Devenish is one of only two Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI) within the Local Authority area.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Pressure for intrusive leisure and tourism developments on the lough shore;
- Urban expansion of Enniskillen to the south of the LCA with loss of rural landscape character;
- Loss or decline in the quantity or quality of woodland which strongly define landscape character;
- Pressure for industrial land uses in some parts of the character area, particularly to the north of Enniskillen; and
- The intrusion of wind energy developments into the landscape.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

This area has a relatively high coverage of woodland, including a significant proportion of broadleaved or mixed woodland. Most islands are wooded or include a fringe of broadleaved woodland and there is wet woodland around the lough shore. Landscape character would be sensitive to the loss of woodland due to development or lack of management.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- The existing woodland framework of broadleaved woodland, mixed woodlands and estate landscapes should be maintained and enhanced;
- The wooded character of small islands and promontories should be retained, with coniferous woodland avoided or well-integrated with broadleaved plantings;
- Coniferous woodland plantings should be of small scale, and should be integrated into the landscape through the use of organic woodland patterns and the inclusion of broadleaved plantings both within and at the fringes of conifer plantations; and
- The conservation and management of undeveloped lough fringes including wet woodlands is important.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Hedgerows and hedges contribute to the wooded character of the lough basin fringes. Agricultural improvements may result in field enlargements and the loss of hedges, hedgerows and trees, or impacts to water quality.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- The retention and maintenance of hedgerows and trees should be encouraged; and
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming such as the retention of small herb rich meadows or wet meadows, would be beneficial for biodiversity and may help to maintain water quality.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

There is likely to be further significant pressure for leisure, tourism and housing development within the LCA. The lough shore landscapes and their associated semi-natural vegetation are sensitive to development. Elsewhere there is scope for change to be accommodated within areas with undulating topography and a robust landscape pattern of hedgerows and woodland.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- The design and location of marinas, caravan sites and other tourist infrastructure is important to ensure that they are not prominent and do not detract from the quality of the lough-side;
- New development should be integrated through carefully siting to minimise disruption to existing vegetation and accompanied with new native planting;
- Protection of the natural shoreline vegetation through controlled access to the shore would help avoid damage.
- Extended linear development is already intrusive along lough shores and roads within the basin; new development should be concentrated in clustered groups and related to existing settlements;
- New development should be integrated into the landscape with broadleaved planting; and
- There are no strong natural features to define the northern extent of Enniskillen, and linear developments along the main roads north of the town into the rural landscape should be avoided.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

The landscape is sensitive to intrusion from wind energy developments. While the enclosed character of the landscape beyond the lough shore has some capacity for smaller scale wind energy developments, wind turbines should be sited to not visually intrude into the lough.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind turbines to be of the smaller typologies only;
- Capacity for small scale wind energy development is greatest towards the south of the LCA in more developed locations, while scope for development to the north is very limited; and
- Wind turbines should be sited to not visually intrude upon the lough shore or islands through siting on prominent nearby hilltops or drumlins; and
- Larger scale electricity transmission lines and pylons are likely to appear as very prominent features in this open landscape and should be routed away from the lough basin; and
- Smaller telecommunications or radio masts should be accommodated within the large scale landscape, however islands should remain free of intrusion from such structures.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

Quarrying to the limestone ridge enclosing the LCA to the west currently has limited intrusion into the landscape, however quarrying elsewhere on the ridge has the potential to intrude into views across the lough from its eastern shoreline or from its islands.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Potential impacts to the landscape character and views from the wider lough basin should be considered with new minerals applications or the extension of existing consents. Impacts to landscape character and visual amenity can be limited when operations take advantage of the available topographic screening in this area, supplemented by existing or new woodland planting.
- The cumulative effects of multiple quarrying operations on views from the basin should be considered; and

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

Development pressures may result in demand for road upgrades and access improvements beyond the main A46 and A32 running to the west and east sides of the loughs respectively.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

View to Lower Lough Erne from north of Castle Archdale Forest.

LCA 5 Lough Macnean

Key Characteristics

- Dramatic limestone crags and long narrow loughs.
- Reed swamps, fen, semi-natural woodland and scrub on lough shores. Species rich grassland on limestone. Linear hillside plantations.
- Old dwellings being replaced by modern houses; some extended linear development.
- Important archaeological sites, including monuments, medieval churches and interesting vernacular farm buildings.

Landscape Description

The Lough Macnean valley is in the south-west of Fermanagh. Upper and Lower Lough Macnean, were formed as glaciers excavated deep basins in varied carboniferous rocks, creating impressive steep valley sides and rocky scarps, notably at Hanging Rock. To the east the valley opens out into the flat Arney Valley and to the north-west it connects with the Garrison Lowland Farmland. Limestone outcrops along the slopes of Belmore Mountain form a craggy escarpment, divided from the rest of the uplands by an attractive wooded valley including mixed ashwood designated as ASSI, with waterfalls marking the harder rock strata. To the south of Lower Lough Macnean is the limestone escarpment of Marlbank.

The loughs have contrasting characters. The larger Upper Lough Macnean has a shoreline which is broken by wooded promontories and sheltered bays with fringing reed swamps, fen and carr woodland. Surrounding fields tend to be rush infested with overgrown hedges. Lower Lough Macnean is confined by a steep limestone escarpment and has an outstanding landscape setting. It has a more developed agricultural shoreline, with open wet meadows contrasting with occasional thick woodlands. Limestone soils produce good quality grassland and the southern shores and lower slopes are farmed intensively. Farm units are smaller to the north of the loughs, but there is also intensive sheep and cattle grazing. Away from the lough shore woodland cover within the LCA is quite scattered but some conifer plantations extend downwards into the LCA from the more heavily forested plateau of the Lough Navar and Ballintempo Limestone Uplands (LCA 4) and Belmore Mountain.

Settlement is most concentrated at Belcoo, lying between Upper and Lower Lough Macnean, while outside of the settlement houses are spread along the two roads towards Garrison, and along the Lurgan valley north towards Boho. The older settlement pattern reflects the varied patterns of townland boundaries, with long narrow boundaries divided into ladder farms on upper slopes and irregular townlands encircling the drumlin hills. Some farmhouses on the higher slopes lie derelict, but in the valley, small farms with gardens are loosely clustered on low hills and there are some examples of traditional thatched cottages. Most properties in rural areas are bungalows with white washed or pale walls, with few sizeable houses.

The valley has been subject to some larger scale industrial developments, in particular the hard rock quarry at Kiltyfelan to the east of Belcoo, while wind turbines at Ora More overlook the character area from the north.

The valley has some significant archaeological sites, including raths and crannogs and a small number of listed buildings are present. The Gardenhill Estate lies to the north of Belcoo.

This is an area of attractive landscape features including loughs and shorelines, limestone cliffs, woodlands and limestone grassland. The varied landscape pattern and dense vegetation in the lowland areas ensure that they are relatively robust but special features such as lough shores are very sensitive. Elsewhere, marginal farmland has rush infested fields with overgrown hedges and scrub encroachment. Derelict field boundaries, including dry stone walls and banks, are being replaced with wire fencing. In some areas important limestone grassland has been damaged by scrub clearance and fertiliser application, reducing its value for wildlife. Hard rock quarrying is extremely prominent on the side of Belmore Mountain.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Mineral resources resulting in pressure for intrusive quarry developments;
- Demand for wind energy developments in neighbouring uplands, which have the potential to be intrusive in the smaller scale enclosed landscape of the LCA;
- Increasing tourism and recreation with demand for facilities which may affect key landscape characteristics;
- The decline in traditional farming practices which may result in the loss of characteristic landscape features such as enclosed fields, small farm buildings and stone walls; and
- Pressure for housing development leading to undesirable linear development and prominent housing in the countryside.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Most broadleaved woodland is located on the lough shores. The landscape would be sensitive to the loss of woodland, for example to accommodate lough side tourism development. There may be greater demand for coniferous forestry plantations in more upland locations where alternative land uses become unviable.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Coniferous forestry plantation should be limited to the upper slopes on the LCA;
- Coniferous forestry on the lough shores should be avoided;
- The maintenance and planting of broadleaved woodland should be encouraged;
- Improved siting and design of forestry on slopes would prevent it from blocking views and obscuring landscape features; and
- The wooded character of the shore line should be maintained, including conservation of wet woodland and other habitats, however the controlled opening up of access and views to the lough would be beneficial.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

A decline in traditional farming practices may result in the loss of elements and features which contribute to landscape character, including herb rich meadows limestone grassland, wooded field boundaries, small scale farm buildings and stone walls.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- The repair of broken limestone walls is preferable to the use of post and wire;
- Conservation of the existing patchwork of hay meadows, woodlands and hedgerows will help retain the existing landscape character;
- Where agricultural improvements are undertaken it is preferable that wooded field boundaries are retained; and
- A strategy of minimal disturbance will help conserve the limestone grassland; the correct level of grazing and avoidance of chemicals are critical factors.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

Rural housing developments occur frequently in the landscape. Larger scales of housing would be particularly intrusive, while linear housing development along the roads running through the LCA would have an adverse effect on landscape character. Tourism developments such as chalets, caravan parks and hotels have the potential to be intrusive to the setting of the loughs.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Small white painted stone cottages are characteristic of older settlement and new developments should be in keeping with traditional housing styles and scales.
- The siting and design of tourist infrastructure, such as car parks and caravan sites require careful consideration to avoid visual intrusion. Such developments should usually be accommodated within strong woodland frameworks, avoiding prominent shore line locations;
- Extended linear housing developments should be avoided;
- The protection of the distinctive lough-side setting to Belcoo is advisable; the hills to the north should also be kept free from development.
- Protection of the natural shoreline vegetation through controlled access to the shore would help avoid damage.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

This landscape character area has very limited capacity for wind energy developments of any scale and is sensitive to intrusion from larger wind turbines in neighbouring uplands. The southern enclosure to Lower Lough Macnean would be particularly sensitive to intrusion by tall structures such as radio or telecommunications masts.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind turbines to appear as infrequent features in the landscape, and typically of only domestic or farm scale;
- Larger scale wind energy developments in adjacent uplands should be designed and sited to not intrude into the landscape or appear out of scale;
- Intrusive taller structures such as telecommunications or radio masts should be sited to not intrude into the lough basin or appear prominently on containing horizons; and
- Larger electricity transmission lines and pylons are likely to appear out of scale within the contained setting of Lower Lough Macnean and should be routed away from the lough basin;

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

Quarrying to the south of Belmore Mountain intrudes into views from the south of Lower Lough Macnean/ Marlbank and is an industrialising feature in an otherwise rural and scenic landscape. Expansion of existing development or cumulative effects from multiple developments could significantly affect key landscape characteristics in this area.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- The landscape has a low capacity to accommodate further quarrying development;
- Landscape, visual and cumulative effects of any new quarry developments should be controlled to avoid significantly affecting key characteristics of the Lower Lough Macnean setting. Effects on views from the south of the Lough at Marlbank should be taken into consideration; and
- Phased restorations of quarries would limit the extent of landscape and visual impacts and the length of time across which they would occur.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

The A4 and B52 are the main routes passing through the area, with elsewhere a dense network of minor and unclassified roads. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

Lower Lough Macnean looking towards Belcoo as seen from Marlbank.

LCA 11 Upper Lough Erne

Key Characteristics

- A complex and secret landscape with a small scale intricate pattern of land and water.
- Rolling low drumlins and flooded hollows linked by streams and the River Erne.
- Mosaic of small pastures on drumlins, woodland and wetland.
- Thickly wooded shorelines, fields enclosed by low hedges, trees and in places dense hedgerows.
- Attractive wooded estates with grand historic buildings.
- Scattered small isolated settlements along twisting roads and on drumlin tops.
- Occasional waterside leisure development, more frequent towards Enniskillen.
- Occasional views across open water to wooded islands.

Landscape Description

Upper Lough Erne is a small scale intricate landscape in the south of Fermanagh. The landscape is dominated by water as the channel of the River Erne splits and joins, widens and narrows around islands of varying shapes and sizes. Low lying interconnected drumlins stretch across the lough from west to east providing linkages between the shorelines. The only prominent landmark in this vast and intricate network of wetlands is the hill of Knockninny which rises from the drumlin plain and commands excellent views of the northwest of the lough. There is a limestone quarry on its western side.

Views vary from enclosed inlets to wider reaches of open water which are scattered with islands. The shores are thickly wooded, and the surrounding drumlins are divided by a patchwork of fields and hedges. Between the drumlins are many small loughs, each fringed with reed beds, carr woodland and the occasional crannog. Pastures have been improved to a varying degree, from intensively manged to rush pasture and herb rich meadows. In some places pastures are bounded by dense hedgerows while elsewhere low hedges and less frequent trees allow more open views across the undulating landscape. Small blocks of broadleaved woodland are present away from the lough shores while at Crom there are substantial broadleaved and mixed woodlands. There is little coniferous planting within the LCA. The natural heritage significance of the lough is recognised through ASSI, SAC, SPA and RAMSAR designations.

The area is well populated and small settlements are scattered throughout the area along disorientating narrow twisting roads and on the higher ground of drumlin tops and sides. There are traditional small farms and cottages throughout alongside newly built single houses. The grand buildings (some derelict) of large wooded and parkland estates such as Crom Castle, are important local landscape features. Some shore line leisure and tourism development is present, such as the marina and hotel at Knockninny. Lisnaskea is the main town in the area, which is set well to the north of the lough with little relationship to the water body. A hard rock quarry is located at Knockninny Hill.

Cultural heritage interest is spread throughout the LCA, including numerous raths, crannogs, burnt mounds and fortifications. Estate landscapes at Crom to the south and Belle Isle to the north are included in the Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes. Clusters of listed buildings are located in Lisnaskea and Crom, while others are scattered within the rural landscape including traditional cottages, bridges and churches.

The intricate patchwork of waters, woodland and fields divided by hedgerows is generally in good condition, providing a strong structure and sense of enclosure to this landscape and increasing its capacity to absorb some change. Loughs and lough fringes are often in pristine semi-natural condition and would be sensitive to changes in local land uses, water quality or changing water levels. Views are often interrupted by the complex landform but there are occasional opportunities for longer views across open water.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Increasing pressure for tourism and leisure development potentially affecting the undeveloped and tranquil character of the landscape including river and lough side leisure marinas;
- Pressures for new housing development in the countryside; and
- Changes to farming practices which result in the loss of the enclosed wooded landscape character or more intensive practices affecting the water environment.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

The LCA has relatively high woodland coverage including the wooded lough shore and the presence of mixed woodlands at Crom and Belle Isle which contribute to landscape character. Coniferous plantation only accounts for a small proportion of woodland within the LCA. Lough shore development has the potential to impact lough side woodland and other semi-natural habitats.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Promote the active management of existing broadleaved woodland, including estate woodlands;
- Woodland and other semi-natural vegetation on the lough shores should be conserved, the loss of woodland as a result of lough shore developments should be avoided;
- Coniferous plantations are uncharacteristic of the LCA and should only be of small scale and integrated into the landscape within broadleaved woodland framework. Broadleaf coverage of islands should be retained; and
- The establishment of additional broadleaved woodland should be encouraged.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Agricultural improvements may lead to loss of character from removal of wooded field boundaries and the loss of wet and species rich meadows to less diverse improved pastures.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the retention and maintenance of wooded field boundaries/ hedgerows; and
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows and wet meadows would be beneficial.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

The enclosed and undulating character of the landscape provides some capacity for appropriately sited and designed developments, however its tranquil qualities could be compromised by inappropriate and intrusive developments for housing or leisure/ tourism. Traditional housing is small scale, typically with white washed walls.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- There is scope for scattered small scale development to be accommodated on low drumlins and in association with vegetation so that it does not intrude upon the quiet rural character of this landscape;
- Existing houses and farms occupy the higher ground of low drumlin tops. Small scale white painted cottages are characteristic;
- The design, size and location of tourist development requires care so that it does not become visually prominent; lough shores would be very sensitive to development;
- The historic landscape settings and characters of the many estate buildings in the area are sensitive to the construction of associated buildings and to work on repairs or alterations; planting plans, land management practices and the use of building materials should all reflect historic precedents;
- The estate landscapes at Castle Coole and Lisgoole Abby provide the southern setting to Enniskillen, significant urban development to the south of these landscapes should be avoided to maintain the rural characteristics of the lough basin.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be some ongoing pressure for domestic and farm scale wind energy development within this landscape. While the enclosed landscape character has some capacity to absorb a low level of wind energy development, the areas around the lough would be sensitive to intrusion from wind turbines or other tall structures

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind turbines to be of the smaller typologies only;
- Turbines, masts of other tall structures should be located at the fringes of the LCA and away from the water body;
- Turbines, masts and other tall structures should be sited away from locally prominent drumlin tops; and
- Large scale electricity transmission lines should be routed away from the area.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

This small scale and intricate landscape is sensitive to the effects of quarrying. There may be further pressure for quarrying at Knockninny Hill, which is an intrusive feature of this landmark hill.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarrying within the character area should be avoided; and
- There should be no substantial expansion of quarrying operations at Knockninny Hill if this landscape features is to remain substantially intact.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

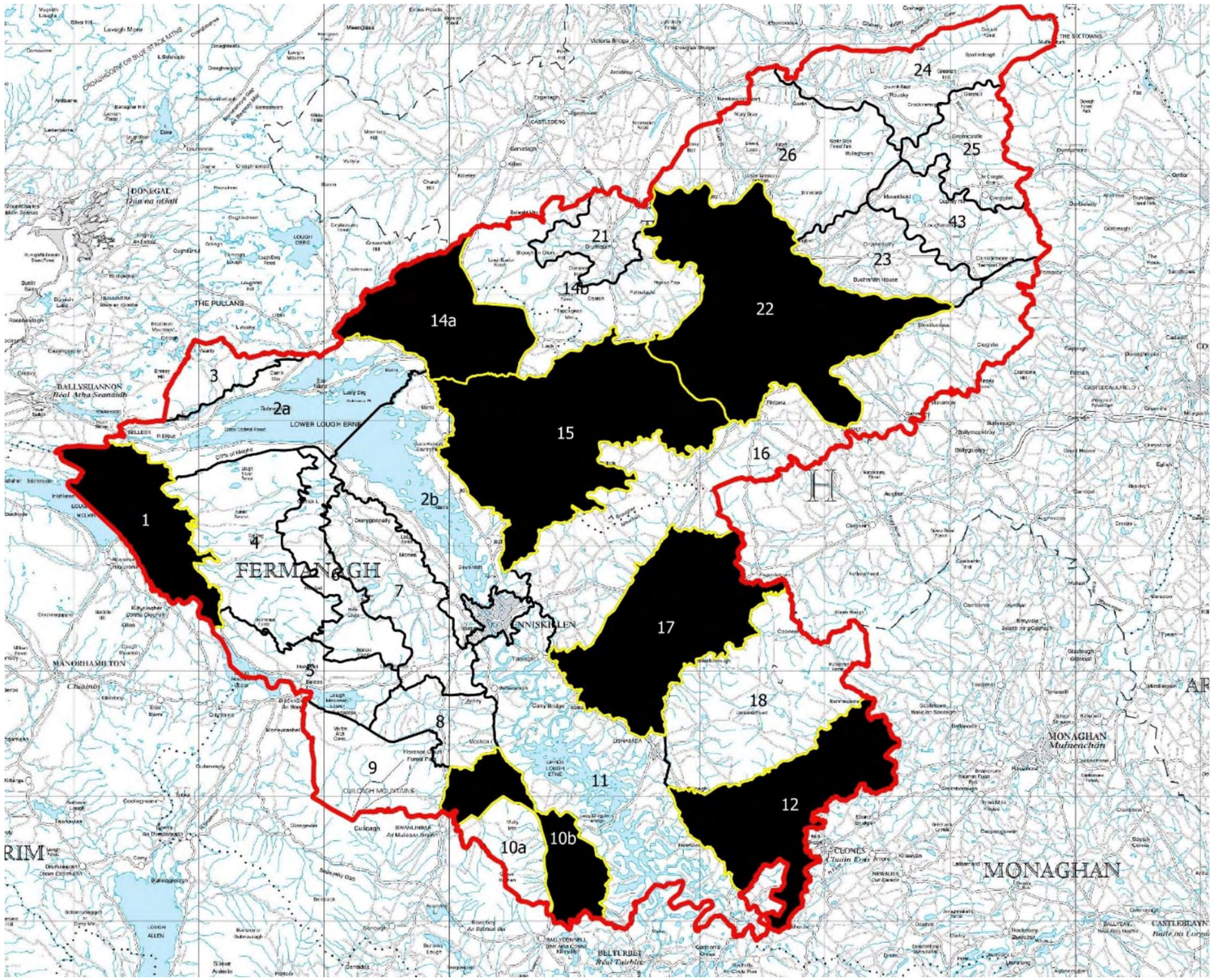
The busy B127 traverses the character area, but otherwise the landscape is accessed via a network of minor roads and tracks. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

Upper Lough Erne from the western shore at Geaglum.

3. Lowland Farmland Landscape Type



LCA 1 Garrison

LCA 10a Derrylin and Kinawley

LCA 12 Newtownbutler and Rosslea

LCA 14a Lough Braden (West)

LCA 15 Irvinestown

LCA 17 Clogher Valley

LCA 22 Omagh

LCA 1 Garrison

Key Characteristics

- Long rounded ridges of glacial deposits with small rivers between them.
- A patchwork of small enclosed fields, rushy pastures and herb-rich hay meadows, with declining agricultural activity particularly in the more upland areas.
- Declining turbary (peat which can be cut for fuel use only, not for sale) with former peat workings becoming overgrown.
- Fields separated by overgrown hedgerows, or earth hedge banks with low trees and shrubs, supplemented by post and wire fencing.
- Low native tree cover, except around farms, river valleys and on shores of Lough Melvin. conifers in shelterbelts, hedgerow planting and small woodland blocks.
- Frequent small scale housing and farm development in the countryside, including new build developments and some derelict properties.
- Occasional listed vernacular buildings including farmhouses and thatched cottages, often whitewashed.

Landscape Description

The Garrison Lowland Farmlands, in the far west of Fermanagh, are bounded by Lough Melvin and the County River. The land rises to the east, and a mixed geology has resulted in poorly drained lowland soils, with exposed sandstone on ridges. Long rounded ridges of glacial deposits, becoming flatter further west, are separated by small rivers which head west in narrow wooded gorges, through circular lakes, bogs and wet meadows. The north shores of Lough Melvin are low-lying and exposed with boulder and shingle beaches fringed by thickets and reed beds. Low ridges project into the Lough forming points and islands.

Land use is dominated by small, enclosed rush-infested pastures. Herb-rich hay meadows are common, due to traditional, low intensity farming methods. Fields are separated by overgrown hedgerows or, higher up, by earth hedge banks with low trees and shrubs, and post and wire fencing is widespread. There are modest scale blocks of coniferous planting, but only low native tree cover which is seen around farms, along river valleys and on the shores of Lough Melvin. The natural heritage value of loughs, bogs and grasslands is recognised through ASSI designation.

Small scale settlement, a mixture of modern houses and older housing including occasional thatched cottages, is dispersed along roads or clustered at junctions. The village of Garrison, a focus of recreational activity, lies in a picturesque setting at the head of Lough Melvin, where views southwards are dominated by distinctive 'ladder farms' on pronounced slopes.

Numerous raths are scattered throughout the area and there are a small number of listed buildings, including traditional thatched cottages, farm houses and road bridges.

The gently undulating terrain and limited tree cover affords good southerly views from more elevated parts of the landscape. These more upland areas, where decline in farming activity is more apparent, have a desolate and abandoned character in comparison to the more managed lowlands.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- The decline in traditional farming activity leading to the loss of the characteristic pattern of small scale herb rich meadows, overcome by scrub and rush;
- The impact of blanket forestry on the relatively open landscape;
- New single houses in the countryside eroding the influence of more traditional building styles;
- The sensitivity of the shores of Lough Melvin to leisure and tourism development; and
- The influence of wind energy development, both within the LCA itself and in the neighbouring uplands, including associated infrastructure and enabling development.

Trees and woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Native woodland cover is generally low, with trees and woodland mostly occurring alongside linear features such as field boundaries, roads, watercourses and the shore line of Lough Melvin, or clustered around farms and houses. More substantial forestry plantations have emerged in the landscape, and with the decline in active farming there may be increased pressure to convert abandoned pastures to commercial forestry.

Trees and woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Accommodate forestry within the more upland areas, associated with that of the neighbouring LCA 4 Lough Navar and Ballintempo Uplands;
- Integrate coniferous woodland into the landscape through the encouragement of more organic woodland patterns;
- Soften the edges of coniferous woodland with native planting; and
- Maintain existing patterns of broadleaved woodland cover alongside rivers and waterbodies and encourage the retention of broadleaved woodland around properties and along field boundaries.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Particularly in more upland locations, traditional farming activity appears in decline, with some fields and field boundaries falling to dereliction. There may be a trend for the amalgamation of small fields into larger units, and change in land use, with the loss of characteristic small-scale pastures.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Retain and enhance wooded field boundaries;
- Restore and maintain traditional earth hedge banks in favour of post and wire fencing where possible; and
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming in more marginal areas, such as the retention of small herb rich meadows, would be beneficial.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

Housing development is clustered at the settlement of Garrison, tending to spread outwards along the road network, beyond which housing and small farm developments are scattered frequently throughout the surrounding countryside, including newly built housing. The landscape would be

sensitive to the introduction of larger suburban style housing or linear housing developments beyond settlement limits. Lough Melvin includes some small-scale leisure and tourism development which can be accommodated within its wooded shore line. The lough and its shore line are sensitive to intrusion from larger scale developments.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- New housing developments in the countryside should to adopt traditional building styles and materials. Single or one and a half storey properties tend to be more in keeping with the small-scale landscape;
- Housing is best located within existing settlements or with existing groups of houses;
- The inclusion of native woodland planting with new development would assist in reducing its prominence in a relatively open landscape; and
- The existing woodland enclosure to Lough Melvin should be maintained and enhanced, and new development should be of a scale that can be absorbed with the woodland framework.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

The nearby LCA 4 Lough Navar and Ballintempo Uplands have some capacity for larger scale wind energy development, with an operational wind farm close to the boundary with the Garrison Lowlands. The small-scale features of the Garrison Lowlands have no capacity for larger scale wind energy developments and are sensitive to encroachment by larger wind turbines and tall electricity pylons.

Tall Structures: Development and management guidelines

- Commercial wind farm developments within neighbouring upland landscapes should be sited to not appear to encroach into or overshadow the smaller scale Garrison Lowland Farmland; and
- Large electricity transmission lines should be routed away from the area.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There are no past or current mineral workings of significance within the character area, however it is possible that the area may be subject to pressure for minerals development in the future. The sloping and relatively open character of the landscape would be susceptible to intrusion from minerals development.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarries should be sited to take advantage of natural variations in topography in the undulating terrain to reduce landscape and visual impacts, utilising sympathetic bunding and tree planting;
- Quarries should be sited away from the more exposed upper edges to the east of the character area; and
- The cumulative impact of quarries seen with wind energy development should be considered.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

The B52 is the main route through the character area, from which a network of minor and unclassified roads traverse the undulating terrain, which are in keeping with the small scale of the rural landscape. There may be pressure for access improvements to facilitate wind energy developments in adjacent upland areas, including the easing of gradients, road widenings and junction upgrades.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Ensure new roads or changes to road alignment respect the local terrain and grain of the landscape;
- Engineered features such as embankments, cuttings and bridge upgrades to facilitate abnormal loads associated with wind energy developments require careful design and integration into the landscape to maintain rural characteristics; and
- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

Herb rich meadows reverting to scrub and rush in upland areas, with coniferous woodland blocks.

Improved pastures and a mix of old and new properties in lowland areas.

LCA10b Derrylin and Kinawley

Key Characteristics

- Lowland farmland at the foothills of Slieve Rushen.
- Pastures set within shallow river valleys draining towards Upper Lough Erne.
- Flat river basins or widely spaced gently undulating drumlins.
- Mix of good quality pastures and relatively large fields with smaller poorly drained rush pasture.
- Well wooded field boundaries.

Landscape Description

This landscape sits at the foot of the flat topped isolated Slieve Rushen, the summit of which lies just beyond the Northern Irish border to the south west. The landscape comprises the flat, shallow river corridors of several watercourses that drain towards Upper Lough Erne. The southern parts of the character area include some small loughs.

In contrast the neighbouring uplands of LCA 10a Slieve Rushen, the landscape has a uniformly strong pastoral character. Beyond the river floodplains it is a landscape of low, wide and gently undulating drumlins. Much of the pastoral landscape is improved, with good quality grasslands cut for silage of haylage. Less well drained areas closer to watercourse corridors are often smaller, rushy and less productive. Fields are bounded by low hedges with trees and hedgerows providing the landscape with a well wooded and enclosed character, although larger areas of woodland are scarce. Bogs are found in the southern part of the area, most having been subject to peat cutting, and often fringed by trees. However, Monea bog to the south of the character area is designated as a SAC in recognition of its importance as a lowland raised bog. The Swanlinbar River towards the north is a SAC due to the presence of freshwater pearl mussel.

The main A509 passes through the character area, plotting a direct, undulating course through the drumlins. The more significant of the minor roads are often straight, with smaller roads and tracks curving around drumlins on higher ground to avoid the numerous stream and damp hollows. Farms and houses are spread throughout the character area, typically on the sides of drumlins or on low ridges, and there are concentrations of settlement at Kinawley and Derrylin, while a new settlement has recently expanded from an older core at Teemore. Some traditional thatched cottages with whitewashed walls are present in the landscape, along with red roofed farm outbuildings, however varying scales and styles of houses and farms are present, including new single houses. Some larger farm developments and small industrial units are present.

Various archaeological sites are in the area, including raths, burnt mounds and occasional crannogs, more concentrated towards the south.

The landscape appears largely as well managed farmland which is in good condition, however wind energy developments, quarrying and minerals processing affect the setting of the character area towards the south.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Visual intrusion from industrial land uses in the neighbouring character area LCA 10a;
- Changes to rural characteristics through the replacement of more traditional farming patterns with more intensive management;
- The presence of new housing development in the rural landscape; and
- Potential expansion of more industrial land uses due to good transport connections and the presence of other industrial land uses nearby.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Broadleaved woodland is a relatively minor feature in the landscape but could play an important role in improving the landscape structure and screening views to industry.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- The landscape structure could be improved by the planting of small woodlands or copses within the pastoral landscape; and
- Coniferous forestry is generally not characteristic in the lowland landscape and should be limited to small areas, integrated with broadleaved woodland.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Agricultural improvements may lead to loss of character from removal of wooded field boundaries and the loss of wet and species rich meadows to less diverse improved pastures.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the retention and maintenance of wooded field boundaries/ hedgerows; and
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows and wet meadows would be beneficial.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be continued pressure for housing and industrial developments including minerals processing. The low, undulating landscape has some capacity for absorbing new developments.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Housing development should aim to follow the traditional settlement pattern of farms and houses clustered around drumlins, extended linear housing developments along rural roads should be avoided;
- Housing developments should be focused around the existing settlement concentrations of Kinawley, Derrylin and Teemore;
- Broadleaved trees and woodland planting would assist with integrating new housing into a relatively exposed landscape; and
- Industrial units should be carefully sited to take advantage of screening provided by undulating terrain and woodland planting utilised to assist with its integration into the landscape.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be continuing pressure for smaller scales of wind energy development within this landscape, of domestic, farm or small commercial scale. There is some capacity for smaller turbines to be absorbed within this landscape type. The landscape has a greater capacity for accommodating larger scale electricity transmission lines than other more sensitive types.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind energy developments within this lowland area should be sited with consideration to cumulative effects arising with the larger scale commercial wind energy developments present on nearby higher ground;
- Turbines should appear as only occasional features within this landscape, and not be sited to dominate smaller scale landscape features; and
- Larger scale electricity transmission lines and pylons should, where possible, be sited to take advantage of backcloth provided by the slopes of Slieve Rushen, and routed away from the neighbouring more sensitive landscape of Upper Lough Erne.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

The area is free from minerals development except where close to the more heavily quarried LCA 10a Slieve Rushen. The rural landscape is susceptible to intrusion from quarrying, with the potential for cumulative issues arising with the more heavily quarried nearby Slieve Rushen LCA.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarries should be sited to take advantage of natural variations in topography in the undulating terrain to reduce landscape and visual impacts, utilising sympathetic bunding and tree planting.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

Beyond the main A509, the area is accessed by a network of minor and unclassified roads. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

LCA 12 Newtownbutler and Rosslea

Key Characteristics

- Broad expanse of widely-spaced drumlins with occasional small loughs, bounded by rivers.
- Larger improved grasslands with smaller unimproved fields.
- Pastures set within a framework of wooded field boundaries.
- Rivers in unmodified natural winding channels.
- Individual trees, parkland and tall unmanaged hedges give a well wooded character; small areas of semi-natural woodland on steeper drumlin slopes.
- Small scale traditional housing, larger farm buildings and new housing scattered throughout the area.
- Raths, crannogs and other cultural heritage sites found throughout the area.

Landscape Description

This belt of lowland lies between the Finn and Lacky Rivers and the Slieve Beagh Hills to the north. Lines of drumlins form undulating ridges which extend across the area from west to east, influencing the pattern of rivers, lines of communication and settlement.

The drumlins form low rounded hills or ridges rising above wet intervening hollows which often have small loughs. Open views in all directions are bounded by low drumlins. North of the B36 the drumlins increase in height and are more tightly packed together with steep intervening valleys. The relatively wooded character of the thorn hedges gives the landscape a well vegetated appearance. At the foot of the Slieve Beagh hills there is a more pronounced valley and a chain of small loughs, with fringing reed beds, carr woodlands and wet meadows. Uninterrupted pastures, tall overgrown hedges, small farms and winding roads give this landscape a rural character. Woodlands tend to be small and infrequent and there are only small areas occupied by coniferous plantation. Some loughs and wetlands close to the border with the Republic of Ireland are recognised for their importance as habits through ASSI, RAMSAR and ASSI designation.

The scale of the farming and landscape pattern varies to reflect drainage and management. Small estates and fine houses are juxtaposed with the single storey farm houses scattered along the sides of drumlins. Most are reached by long tracks. Settlements include the plantation town of Newtownbutler and the village of Rosslea. Newer housing of varying styles is found throughout the rural landscape. Farm holdings vary in style according to their scale, with smaller traditional farm buildings, farming estates and larger scale enterprises with more industrial scale units.

There are very few listed buildings within the character area, but scheduled sites are found throughout, including raths, crannogs and burnt mounds. To the south of Rosslea is the Spring Grove Forest (Rosslea Manor), an area of predominantly coniferous woodland which is included within the Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes.

Outward views are constrained by terrain and vegetation, giving a strong sense of enclosure and unity to the landscape. The landscape mostly appears as a productive and actively managed farming landscape, although more intensive farming activities have in some places altered its traditionally small scale characteristics.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Loss of the landscape framework of wooded field boundaries through the intensification of farming practices;
- The small scale farming landscape affected by the presence of larger and more modern styles of farm units; and
- New rural housing developments not in keeping with the style and scale of more traditional dwellings.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Woodland cover within the LCA is low, the largest areas of woodland being the coniferous plantations of Rosslea Forest.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the planting of broadleaved woodlands;
- Encourage the management and regeneration of existing broadleaved woodlands and estates, for example through management of grazing or replanting; and
- Coniferous woodlands should be small scaled and integrated into the landscape through interplanting/ fringing with broadleaves and/ or set within the exiting framework of wooded field boundaries.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Agricultural improvements may lead to loss of character from removal of wooded field boundaries and the loss of species rich meadows to less diverse improved pastures.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the retention and maintenance of wooded field boundaries/ hedgerows; and
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows would be beneficial.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

The traditional small scale farming landscape strongly characterises the area, however more intensive developments including larger barns, livestock and poultry sheds have the potential to change key landscape characteristics when sited prominently. New houses frequently adopt styles more suited to an urban/ suburban context.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Larger scale agricultural buildings require careful integration into the landscape with woodland planting, taking advantage of topographic screening provided by drumlins. Larger scale developments should avoid drumlin tops or prominent slopes; and
- Smaller scale rural housing development of single or one and a half stories with pale or whitewashed walls are more in keeping with traditional building styles.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be pressure for further small scale wind energy development within the area, for example associated with farm enterprises. A level of wind energy development and other tall structures could be absorbed within the enclosed, undulating landscape, subject to careful siting and design.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind turbines should appear as infrequent features in the landscape and not dominate smaller scale landscape elements; and
- The prominent siting of wind turbines on the adjacent higher ground of LCA Slieve Beagh should be avoided.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There are no past or current mineral workings of significance within the LCA. There is little evidence of pressure for new quarry developments. The landscape would be sensitive to intrusion from minerals workings.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Any quarries should be sited to take advantage of natural variations in topography in the undulating terrain to reduce landscape and visual impacts, utilising sympathetic bunding and tree planting.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

The main A32 and several B roads traverse the LCA, beyond which the landscape is accessed via a dense network of minor and unclassified roads. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

Undulating improved pastures at the heart of the landscape area west of Rosslea viewed from a drumlin top.

LCA 14a Lough Braden (West)

Key Characteristics

- A relatively open undulating lowland of steep, large drumlins and valleys.
- Pastures, with rushes and moss within damp hollows.
- Forestry expanding on gley soils of lowland drumlin hills, with the incorporation of existing trees and hedges in plantations.
- Semi-natural woodland on cut-over bogs and steep valley and drumlin slopes.
- Relatively sparsely populated, housing on drumlin sides, away from damp hollows.
- Variety of archaeological features, including a stone circle at Drumskinny.

Landscape Description

This character area comprises the expanse of drumlin farmland between Lower Lough Erne and the sandstone hills which rise to the Lough Braden Forest and Tappaghan Mountain.

The landscape is characterised by valleys and steep drumlins, in an alternating pattern of forest and pastures, dissected by small rivers which link the areas of bog, damp woodland and meadow which lie between the drumlins. The main watercourse is the Glendurragh River, which takes a direct course from its source at Tappaghan Mountain westwards to become the Kesh River which flows into Lower Lough Erne. From the river's low lying, shallow and relatively flat valley to the south of the character area, a steeply undulating landscape rises gradually to the north and east, where larger drumlins take the form of low hills.

Land quality in the lowlands varies considerably. The well drained land around the Glendurragh valley is intensively farmed as grassland; it has a tidy, well managed appearance with clipped hedgerows. However, the sandstone soils are of poorer quality and forestry has become increasingly important, taking over former land uses. Farmland ranges from well managed large pastures to small scrappy and neglected rushy fields. Field boundaries vary from insubstantial hedges and wire fences to bushy hedgerows. Earth banks are a traditional form of field enclosure. Broadleaved woodland cover is relatively low and the landscape has an open character.

Settlement in the area is closely related to the alignment of local roads. The small villages of Ederney and Lack are within the Glendurragh valley but elsewhere, settlement density is low and there are scattered farmhouses, cottages and newer houses, often located on the sides of drumlins. Roads are often straight, cutting through the widely spaces drumlins, while tracks providing access to farms and houses curve around drumlins.

Some derelict buildings are found throughout the area, however there are also newly built properties. More traditional small whitewashed stone cottages and red roofed farm buildings are also present. The area retains its historic townland boundary patterns. There is a scattering of archaeological features, with a cluster at Drumskinny including a well preserved stone circle.

From the slopes of the larger drumlins long views across attractive rolling farmland are often possible. There is quietness and tranquillity to the landscape, with dark forestry on the horizons contributing to the sense of an enclosed and hidden rural landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- A landscape with a strong, undisturbed rural character which is sensitive to intrusive housing and other forms of development;
- Potential increased pressure for coniferous forestry extending into the lowland which would enclose the landscape and block views; and
- Intensification of farming practices resulting in the loss of species rich meadows and wooded field boundaries.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Woodland within the LCA is dominated by coniferous forestry plantations with broadleaved woodlands limited to smaller patches on hillsides, stream sides and glens. A further decline in broadleaved woodland cover would adversely affect the rural characteristics of the landscape.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Conifer plantations should ideally be designed to fit within existing broadleaved boundaries, with open areas retained to conserve the setting of local landscape features and archaeological sites. The design of the prominent lowland margins of forests merit particular attention and would often benefit from additional planting of broadleaf species, to soften and integrate the forest edges with the surrounding landscapes; and
- Encourage the planting of small broadleaved woodlands, copses and management of existing woodlands to help maintain the well wooded landscape character.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

There is a continuum in the quality of grazing land from intensively managed pastures to low intensity rush infested meadows. The area includes a relatively high proportion of less intensively managed pasture, and wet meadow, with greater species diversity. Hedges and trees may be lost to agricultural improvements or neglect with a loss of landscape character while more intensive management of herb rich meadows may result in a loss of biodiversity.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows and wet meadows would be beneficial;
- Wooded field boundaries enclosing the more intensively managed pastures should be retained where possible rather than replaced entirely by post and wire fencing; and
- The buildings of larger farm enterprises can best be accommodated within the undulating landscape when set within a framework of broadleaved woodland.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

The landscape includes a limited amount of new housing development, but so far the area retains the qualities of a largely undeveloped rural landscape. Frequent or poorly sited and designed rural properties have the potential to undermine existing landscape qualities.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Traditional buildings are typically painted white and associated with stands of trees; they are usually linked to farms. New forms of housing development should respect existing styles and scales;
- Extended linear developments of new housing along straight rural roads should be avoided; the clustering of developments would allow sections of rural road to remain largely free of housing, helping to maintain the perception of an infrequently populated landscape; and
- New housing developments should be incorporated within a framework of broadleaved planting, linked to the wider wooded framework of field enclosures.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There is a very low level of wind energy development within this landscape, however there may be pressure for domestic or farm scale developments, and pressure for larger commercial schemes to the north. The relatively undeveloped, small scale farming landscape would be sensitive to intrusion from large electricity transmission lines, which may be quite prominent from more open parts of the landscape.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- This landscape has capacity for a low level of smaller scale wind energy development which could be absorbed with the undulating landscape;
- Larger electricity transmission lines should be sited away from the area;
- Turbines should be sited away from prominent drumlin tops; and
- The landscape would be sensitive to the siting of larger turbines on the enclosing landform to the north.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There are no past or current mineral workings of significance within the LCA. There is little evidence of pressure for new quarry developments. The landscape would be sensitive to intrusion from minerals workings, but its strongly undulating character would allow for a level of development to be accommodated.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarries should be sited to take advantage of natural variation in topography in the undulating terrain to reduce landscape and visual impacts.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be pressure for access improvements to facilitate wind energy developments in adjacent upland areas, including the easing of gradients, road widenings and junction upgrades.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Ensure new roads or changes to road alignment respect the local terrain and grain of the landscape;
- Engineered features such as embankments, cuttings and bridge upgrades to facilitate abnormal loads associated with wind energy developments require careful design and integration into the landscape to maintain rural characteristics; and
  Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

Large improved pastures with coniferous forestry.

Lower intensity pastures within a framework of hedges, hedgerows and small woodlands.

LCA 15 Irvinestown

Key Characteristics

- Rolling drumlin lowlands with deep hollows and linear valleys. Broken rocky topography to the north of Irvinestown.
- Good quality grassland with tall hedges, prominent hilltop farms and scattered woodlands.
- Dense cover of trees in hedges and small woodlands. Mature woods and parkland of estates. Birch and willow scrub on cut-over bogs.
- Traditional siting and design in rural houses and farms. New development in and around farms.
- Several quarries on limestone rocks in the north.
- Wide variety of archaeological sites.

Landscape Description

Surrounding the small towns of Ballinamallard and Irvinestown, is a broad area of lowland farmland. The shores of Lower Lough Erne lie to the west and to the east the lowland stretches as far as the foothills to the south of the Sperrins. The lowlands are underlain by beds of Old Red Sandstone.

To the north of Irvinestown, ice movement has exposed harder limestone crags and eroded small lough basins, for example at Parkhill and Maghera. The landform is broadly aligned along a NW-SE axis, with elongated drumlin ridges divided by narrow stream valleys. The main channel and numerous tributaries of the Ballinamallard River link the linear hollows in a complex drainage pattern and the river valley is a local landscape feature.

Most of the farmland is managed for silage and grazing. On higher ground, farms are smaller and fields are often infested with rush. Throughout the area, field boundaries are marked by hedges; they are often thick and uncut, giving the countryside a well wooded appearance, although woodlands are small and infrequent. In bogs and damp hollows, there are areas of scrub which contrast dramatically with the grassland. Within Necarne Estate, a derelict castle is enclosed by a designed parkland landscape, dominated by mature broadleaved woodland, including the buildings of a now disused equestrian centre. The landscape includes very few designated natural heritage features, except for the SAC at Tonnagh Beg Bog which is a rare lowland raised bog, and a small part of the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark at the Necarne Estate.

The influence of the early 17th century Plantation settlement remains evident in the landscape today. Irvinestown is laid out formally around a square and there are several attractive large houses within small estates which are of historical interest. Many have imposing hilltop locations. In some rural areas housing density is higher, and buildings smaller. There is some dereliction of older properties and unfinished rural houses, while some traditional white painted stone cottages and farm buildings remain. The landscape is well populated, with concentrations at Irvinestown, Balllinamallard and Dromore. The main A32 winds through the landscape, circumventing the larger drumlins, linking Irvinestown to Enniskillen and Omagh and there is a dense interconnected web of minor roads providing local access.

The area includes a high number of raths, bunt mounds, enclosures and other sites of cultural heritage interest, but which are concentrated more towards western parts of the character area than the east.

The condition of the landscape is fair. Landscape elements which are in poorer condition include cut-over bogs, gappy, bushy and overgrown hedgerows. In general, it is the smaller farms which have a degraded character and there is evidence of abandoned plots and rush infestation.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Loss of the landscape framework of wooded field boundaries through neglect or loss from the intensification of farming practices;
- Variations in farmland quality and practices resulting in a lack of distinctive character to the farming landscape;
- The small scale farming landscape affected by the presence of larger and more modern styles of farm units;
- Pressure for housing outside settlement limits, with new rural housing developments not in keeping with the style and scale of more traditional dwellings; and
- Dereliction of properties.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

There are few woodlands within the LCA, either broadleaved or coniferous. Demesnes and parklands, such as those at Necarne and smaller estates such as Corkhill contribute much of the broadleaved coverage. Lack of management of estate landscapes may compromise their contribution to local landscape character. Larger scale coniferous forestry is uncharacteristic of this landscape.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the planting of broadleaved woodlands;
- Encourage the management and regeneration of existing broadleaved woodlands and parklands/ demesnes for example through management of grazing and replanting; and
- Coniferous woodlands should be small scaled and integrated into the landscape through interplanting/ fringing with broadleaves and/ or set within the existing framework of wooded field boundaries.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Agriculture is undertaken at a variety of scales, from small, enclosed, low intensity rush pastures found more frequently towards the north to larger and more improved pastures. Agricultural improvements may lead to loss of character from removal of wooded field boundaries which provide a framework to a farming landscape of variable character and quality.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the retention and maintenance of wooded field boundaries/ hedgerows; and

- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows would be beneficial.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

Ridge-tops and rounded summits are the most sensitive parts of this landscape as they form local skylines. The river corridors and their associated wetlands and loughs are also potentially vulnerable to the impact of landscape change. New housing, larger scale farm buildings and other rural developments have the potential to change rural characteristics of the landscape.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Traditional building styles, including distinctive red and green painted roofs of white farm buildings are features in this landscape. New development would fit in better if it respected traditional styles and locations;
- Development on sites of derelict housing is preferable to building on previously undeveloped land;
- The views from surrounding ridges and valley sides merit consideration when siting new development;
- Tree planting in association with new development would assist with its integration into the landscape and to retain the rural character of the area; and
- Changes in land uses would be less intrusive if accommodated within existing field boundaries.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be pressure for further small scale wind energy development within the area, for example associated with farm enterprises. A moderate level of wind energy development can be accommodated within the enclosed landscape. There may be pressure for larger scales of wind energy development in the adjacent upland landscapes, particularly those to the north. The undulating and wooded landscape has some ability to absorb taller structures such as masts or electricity transmission lines, subject to careful siting and design.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind turbines should appear as infrequent features in the landscape and not dominate smaller scale landscape elements; and
- Wind energy development in adjacent uplands should be sited and designed to not be overly prominent when seen from the lowland landscape.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

Mineral workings are present only at the limestone outcroppings near Ederney, elsewhere there is little evidence of pressure for new quarry developments. The rural landscape is generally sensitive to intrusion from quarry developments.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarries should be sited to take advantage of natural variations in topography in the undulating terrain to reduce landscape and visual impacts, utilising sympathetic bunding and tree planting;

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

The landscape area includes significant road corridors including the A32 and A35, away from which is an extensive network of B class and minor roads. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

Traditional white painted and red roofed farm buildings with the Irvinestown Farmland.

View from the ridge of higher ground to the north of the character area across the farming landscape to the south.

LCA 17 Clogher Valley

Key Characteristics

- Broad lowland corridor with small rounded hills and long ridges.
- Well farmed countryside with distinctive estate landscapes. Extensive grassland production on progressive farms.
- Relatively dense vegetation cover, with hedgerows, woods and tree belts. Large, mature trees on estates, around farms and along roads are a feature.
- Numerous winding rivers and streams, with meadows, mills, bridges and loughs.
- Many traditional buildings and small country houses of character. Older buildings on the slopes and tops of drumlins.
- Frequent new housing developments in the countryside.
- Concentration of raths and tree rings in valleys, crannogs in lakes and numerous listed buildings associated with estates.

Landscape Description

The Clogher Valley Lowland Farmland is confined between the sandstone ridges of Brougher Mountain to the north, and Slieve Beagh to the south. It is a broad distinctive corridor of undulating lowland, containing the Colebrooke and Tempo Rivers, while the low watershed with the River Blackwater is located close to the Fermanagh and Omagh border, from where it flows north east through the valley as it continues into Mid Ulster. The lowland is covered with boulder clay drumlins of varying sizes and long winding eskers of sand and gravel. There are also occasional solid rock outcrops. Between the drumlins and ridges are areas of flatter land, linked by streams and rivers. Most are pastures but some have pockets of bog and small loughs, such as Lough Eyes, Drumcor Lough and Clabby Lough. There is some peat-cutting but much of the peat from the bogs has been worked in the past and they have been colonised by birch and willow scrub. The Tempo river corridor is designated as an ASSI.

Farming is progressive, dominated by medium sized farm businesses, producing silage and hay for cattle rearing and dairy herds. Fields are relatively large and are bounded by hedges which are often overgrown with tall, mature trees. Tree groups occur around farms and at the hilltop raths, which are a particular feature of the Brookeborough and the Tempo river valleys. The lowland has notable estate landscapes at Colebrooke, Clogher and Tempo Manor. All are distinctive and attractive landscapes, with a mix of woodland, parkland and historic estate buildings.

Rural housing is scattered throughout the area with older houses on the top or sides of drumlins and ridges. Traditional housing designs still remain from small whitewashed thatched cottages to larger Georgian farm houses. Some of the larger dwellings have small parkland settings. Newer residential properties occur frequently in the countryside and are of varied scales and styles. New housing is often set within former pastures close to roads, with gardens and grounds lacking in mature vegetation to integrate new housing into the landscape. The lowland is criss-crossed with minor roads. Lisbellaw, Maguiresbridge and Brookeborough are important local centres along the principal A4 route from Belfast to Enniskillen. There is little industrialised development within the area with the exception of quarrying at Clabby.

The landscape is rich in cultural heritage features including raths, burnt mounds and crannogs, while the estates at Colebrooke and Tempo are included in the Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes.

The landscape is in good condition, with relatively intact field boundaries and a high degree of unity and enclosure. The area has a strong identity, rich historic landscape heritage and a detailed intricate landscape pattern. The lowlands are overlooked in views from the adjacent uplands and landscapes within these views are particularly sensitive. The wider corridor of the many rivers and streams, with their associated meadows, bridges, loughs and mill buildings are also vulnerable to landscape change. In addition, the Clogher Valley is considered to be a fine example of an undisturbed fluvio-glacial landscape and merits protection from mineral extraction.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Loss of the landscape framework of wooded field boundaries through neglect or loss from the intensification of farming practices;
- Pressure for housing outside settlement limits, with new rural housing developments not in keeping with the style and scale of more traditional dwellings; and
- Potential impacts to an important fluvio-glacial landscape from minerals extraction.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Woodland coverage within the LCA is variable, less towards the west but greater to the east including the estate landscapes at Colebrooke and Tempo Manor. Woodlands provide a robust framework within which the undulating improved pastures are set, and a loss of woodland cover due to changes in agricultural practice or lack of management would adversely affect landscape characteristics.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the planting of broadleaved woodlands and copses;
- Encourage the management and regeneration of existing broadleaved woodlands and parklands/ demesnes for example through management of grazing and replanting; and
- Coniferous woodlands should be small scaled and integrated into the landscape through interplanting/ fringing with broadleaves and/ or set within the existing framework of wooded field boundaries.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Agricultural improvements may lead to loss of character from removal of wooded field boundaries. and the loss of species rich meadows or wet meadows to less diverse improved pastures.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the retention and maintenance of wooded field boundaries/ hedgerows rather than replacement with post and wire fencing;

- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows or wet meadows would be beneficial.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

New housing development is prevalent in the landscape, and in contrast to older developments, is often sited close to the roadsides in gardens and grounds which include little or no vegetative screening, changing the traditional patterns of rural development.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Skylines and flat open bog areas should be kept open and free from development. Sites nestled amongst the hill-slopes and within established vegetation provide the best scope for development;
- Small scale dwellings with white washed facades are characteristic and are more easily integrated in to the landscape than larger houses of more urban/ suburban character;
- The settings to historic features, such as raths and estate landscapes, should be protected from development; and
- Broadleaved trees and woodland planting would assist with integrating new housing developments into the countryside.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be pressure for further small scale wind energy development within the area, for example associated with farm enterprises. A level of wind energy development can be accommodated within the enclosed landscape. Wind energy development sited prominently on adjacent uplands would have an adverse effect on landscape character. The undulating and wooded landscape has some ability to absorb taller structures such as masts or electricity transmission lines, subject to careful siting and design.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind turbines should appear as infrequent features in the landscape and not dominate smaller scale landscape elements; and
- Taller structures such as electricity transmission lines should be routed away from historic estate landscapes.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There are no past or current mineral workings of significance within the LCA. There is little evidence of pressure for new quarry developments. The fluvio-glacial landscape, recognised to be of some importance, is sensitive to disturbance from mineral extraction.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Minerals development should take consideration of sensitivities relative to geodiversity; and
- Quarries should be sited to take advantage of natural variations in topography in the undulating terrain to reduce landscape and visual impacts, utilising sympathetic bunding and tree planting.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

- The landscape area includes the significant road corridor of the A4, away from which is an extensive network of B class and minor roads. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

View across the Clogher Valley from the uplands to the north.

LCA 22 Omagh

Key Characteristics

- Lowland landscape densely packed with drumlins which create deeply undulating terrain with rounded slopes and a dynamic, quirky character.
- Numerous small, winding streams, with peaty marsh on some floodplains and occasional small, rounded loughs.
- Diverse, small-scale field pattern, with fields forming an even, geometric patchwork over the drumlins, but becoming irregular in shape on the flatter land in between; broader more open field pattern near Omagh.
- Dense hedgerows, many hedgerow trees and small broadleaved woodlands; often wire fencing on marginal farmland.
- Numerous farms, typically sited half-way up drumlin slopes; many small villages and settlements, generally at road junctions.
- New single houses in the countryside and close to settlements.
- Principal routes tend to be straight and deeply undulating, minor roads are tortuous; straight roads across small, marshy floodplains are embanked.

Landscape Description

The Omagh Lowland Farmland landscape is a drumlin landscape which extends from Omagh to Fintona and includes the river valley landscapes of the Camowen River to the north and the branching river systems of Drumragh River, Ballynahatty Water and Quiggery Water, which wind amongst the drumlins, to the south. The regional town of Omagh is sited at the confluence of the Camowen, Strule and Drumragh Rivers, within a natural bowl-shaped valley which is enclosed to the north by the summit of Mullaghcarn. The landform in this area is relatively broad, with the rivers flowing close to the foot of the Sperrins.

To the south of Omagh, the drumlins become the dominant influence on landform, with the sandstone ridges to the east of Fintona and the uplands of West Tyrone forming a distant backdrop. The drumlins are packed quite densely to form a deeply undulating lowland landscape with a distinctive character. Narrow river valleys tend to follow and widen slight gaps between the drumlins and minor tributaries wind around the small hills. There are often patches of marsh in low-lying areas between the drumlins. The drumlins are predominantly pasture but have a diverse, small-scale landscape pattern. Typically, each drumlin is divided evenly by straight hedgerows which continue right over the ridge of each hill. This pattern is repeated on most drumlins but is complicated by many small copses, isolated trees and woodlands. This results in a varied pattern giving each drumlin an individual identity and the landscape as a whole, a dynamic, secretive character. The area includes some important examples of lowland raised bog, at Tully Bog and Cranny Bogs, both designated as SAC.

There is a patchwork of woodland within the LCA, typically small and skirting the lower slopes of drumlins, or fringing areas of bog. Seskinore Forest is the only large area of coniferous forest.

Farms generally nestle in sheltered sites halfway up the slopes of the drumlins and are linked by narrow winding lanes. New single houses tend to be closer to the road, and are of varying styles and scale, with a greater concentration towards Omagh. Farms are relatively large, often incorporating larger and more modern styles of farm building. There are thirteen settlements within the area, including the major centre of Omagh. In common with other lowland farming landscape types cultural heritage sites are scattered through the landscape.

The principal communication routes are often straight and deeply undulating as they cross the grain of the landscape. There are no long views and the consistent size and shape of the drumlins can be disorientating.

Most farmland is in good condition, particularly in areas where drumlins are smaller, with relatively shallow slopes. However, the low-lying areas between the drumlins are often poorly-drained, with gleyed soils (soils starved of oxygen due to water saturation). Some fields are partially infested with rushes and there are patches of uncultivated land.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Loss of the landscape framework of small woodlands and wooded field boundaries through neglect or loss from the intensification of farming practices;
- Pressure for housing outside settlement limits, with new rural housing developments not in keeping with the style and scale of more traditional dwellings; and
- Inappropriately sited developments without landscape mitigation resulting in over-prominence.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Trees and woodland are an important contributor to local landscape character, however small woodlands are vulnerable to lack of management of damage through grazing. Larger scale coniferous planting is not characteristic of this landscape.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the planting of broadleaved woodlands;
- Encourage the management and regeneration of existing broadleaved woodlands for example through management of grazing and replanting; and
- Coniferous woodlands should be small scaled and integrated into the landscape through interplanting/ fringing with broadleaves and/ or set within the existing framework of wooded field boundaries.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

The river corridors and their associated wetlands are the most sensitive areas within this landscape; many of the inter-drumlin hollows support valuable fenland habitats. Changes in farming practice or neglect may result in the loss or decline of wooded field boundaries which provide a strong landscape framework or result in the loss of herb rich of wet meadows.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Management of riverside meadows and woodlands and incorporation of appropriate access points or picnic sites could help ensure these features are conserved and appreciated by the public; and
- The management and continued planting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees will conserve them as important features of the lowland landscape

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

Local skylines and ridges are often prominent and relatively sensitive, particularly if there is a striking landscape feature - a clump of trees, a farmhouse or even an attractive field pattern on the ridgetop. Poorly sited new housing development in the countryside may compromise these features of the landscape.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Siting new development away from the many river and stream corridors will ensure the survival of tranquil and often wooded riversides;
- New developments should avoid impacting upon local skylines;
- The lowlands close to Omagh are under particular pressure for built development. Development could be accommodated within this undulating, well treed landscape although there is a need for sensitive design appropriate to a rural situation; linear development, closely spaced along roads is not characteristic and should be avoided;
- Houses are traditionally sited away from the road and on the mid-slopes of drumlins; if new development follows this pattern, buildings need not be prominent on local skylines and could possibly be well-integrated into the landscape; and
- Broadleaved trees and woodland planting would assist with integrating new housing developments into the countryside.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be pressure for further small scale wind energy development within the area, for example associated with farm enterprises. A moderate level of wind energy development can be accommodated within the enclosed landscape. The undulating and wooded landscape has some ability to absorb taller structures such as masts or electricity transmission lines, subject to careful siting and design.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind turbines should appear as infrequent features in the landscape and not dominate smaller scale landscape elements.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There are no past of current minerals workings of significance within the LCA. There is little evidence of pressure for new quarry developments. The rural landscape is generally sensitive to intrusion from quarry developments.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarries should be sited to take advantage of natural variations in topography in the undulating terrain to reduce landscape and visual impacts, utilising sympathetic bunding and tree planting.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

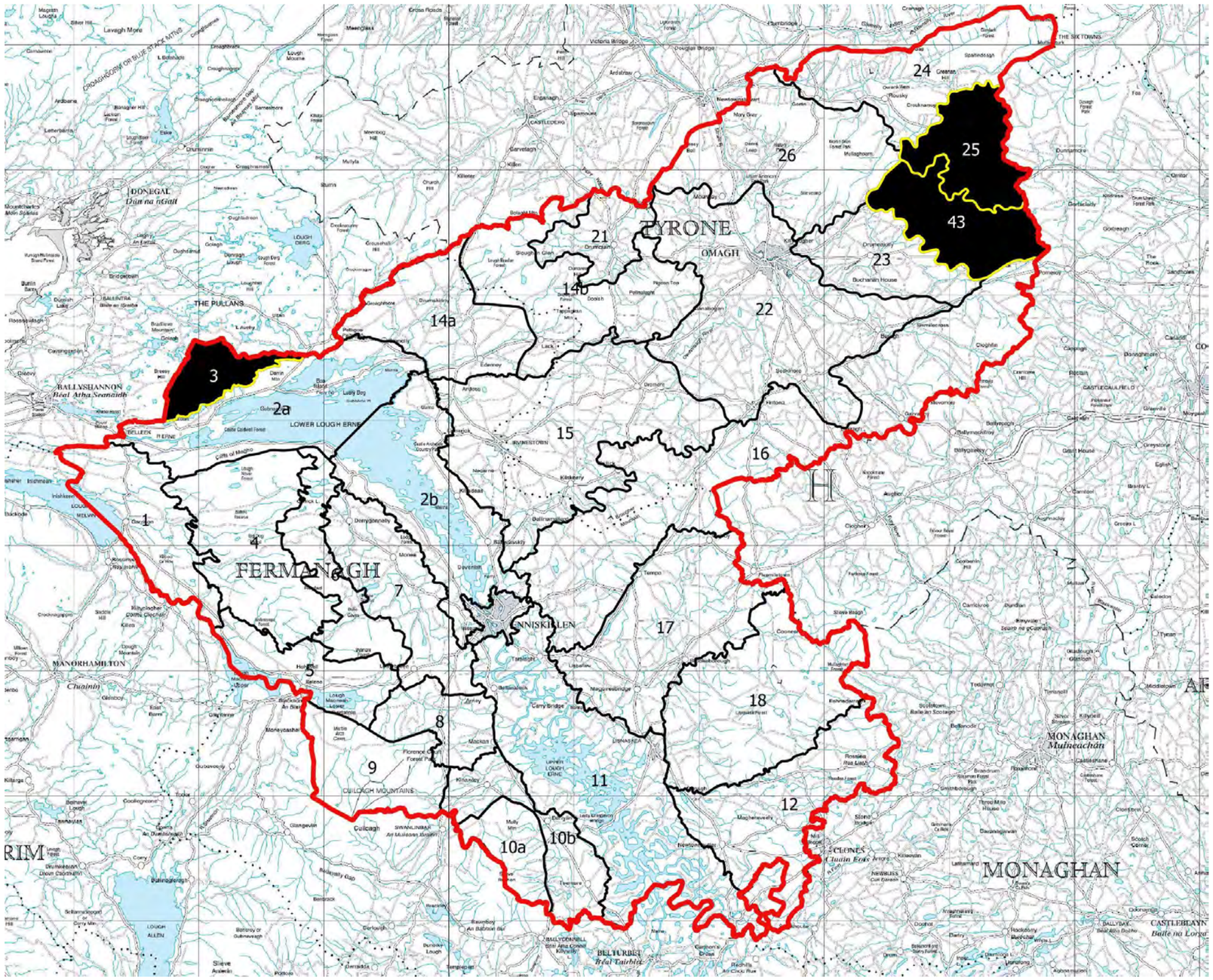
The landscape area includes significant road corridors which radiate from Omagh, away from which is an extensive network of B class and minor roads. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

River Strule to the north of Omagh with good quality improved pastures.

4. Lowland Hills Landscape Type



LCA 3 Croagh and Garvary River

LCA 25 Beaghmore Moors and Marsh

LCA 43 Carrickmore

LCA 3 Croagh and Garvary River

Key Characteristics

- Isolated area of barren Pettigoe Plateau broken by small river valleys.
- Open moorland, small loughs and marginal agricultural land, concentrated to the south of the LCA and along river valleys.
- Often farmed by traditional practices including, low intensity pastures, rough grazing with some improved pasture. Former grasslands are dominated by rush.
- Extensive blanket bogs of international importance.
- Scattered small trees and shrubs in hedges. Coniferous forestry on Derrin Mountain.
- A mix of older traditional farm houses and more recently built houses.

Landscape Description

This small area to the north east of Belleek has a rough and rugged appearance, despite being less than 150m AOD. It lies on the edge of the Pettigoe Plateau and is underlain by ancient metamorphic rocks. The plateau is scoured with many small loughs and rocky knolls, with the rounded summits of Croagh and Mallybreen Hill rising above. Blanket bog covers much of the landscape. The two principal rivers, the Garvary and the Woodford Rivers, have cut through small rounded glacial hills and terraces of sand and gravel. Lough Scolban and Keenaghan Lough lie on the southern boundary of the area and mark a change in the underlying geology between schist and limestone.

Farming is concentrated on the boulder clay soils of the lower slopes and valleys, where there is a dense pattern of hedged fields and small farms. Fields are often bounded by earth banks with gappy hedgerows, supplemented with post and wire fencing. On the plateau, patches of boulder clay are associated with old enclosures and clumps of trees around ruined farmsteads. Many farms continue to be worked at low intensity, with a predominance of rough grazing and small meadows. Beyond the enclosed fields blanket and raised bog remain intact and form important habitats. Forestry covers a large part of Derrin Mountain. These areas of blanket bog include RAMSAR, SPA, SAC and ASSI designation.

There are no villages within the areas and houses are loosely clustered in the valleys and around Lough Scolban. While the area includes derelict farms and farm buildings there are also newly built residential properties, often bungalow or one and half storey houses. Large parts of the character area include no habitation.

There is an absence of notable archaeological sites, apart from a few crannogs, raths and other infrequent features.

Large tracts of moorland, unmanaged fields and occasional derelict farm properties promote a sense of remoteness and abandonment, particularly in more northerly parts of the character area, while the undulating terrain of small rounded hills tends to limit outward visibility.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Potential increased pressure for commercial forestry on areas of marginal farmland;
- Changes in the landscape pattern through the decline of traditional farming in more marginal areas, and more intensive methods elsewhere, involving loss of wooded field boundaries;
- New single property housing development in the countryside changing the character of rural development; and
- Potential pressure for wind energy development due to the upland character of parts of the landscape and limited economic viability of traditional land uses.

Trees and woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

There is low native woodland cover within the LCA, with most woodland comprising large coniferous forestry plantations towards the east of the character area, with broadleaved woodland concentrated at Garvary Wood and along river corridors. The smaller scale farmland areas to the south would be sensitive to blanket afforestation.

Trees and woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Coniferous forestry could be best accommodated in the landscape when in smaller organically shaped plantations and fringed by broadleaved woodland;
- Coniferous woodland should avoid impinging upon the open character of the upland landscape, and should be sited away from rivers and loughs; and
- Existing pockets of broadleaved woodland should be retained and enhanced where possible.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Agricultural improvements in more lowland locations and dereliction of upland areas may lead to the loss of the traditional pattern of the farming landscape.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- The wooded framework to the more lowland farming areas should be maintained where possible, for example by enhancing retained boundaries when others are lost to field enlargements; and
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming in more marginal areas, such as the retention of small herb rich meadows, would be beneficial.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

- While some older traditional farms have become derelict, there has been some development of single residential properties in the countryside. The small scale rural character of the landscape would be sensitive to intrusion by larger more suburban styles of housing.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- New housing development in the countryside should respect the traditional building styles of farms and cottages; and

- Native trees and woodland would assist in integrating new development into the landscape.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

While parts of the site have an upland character, the landform of the LCA is not particularly elevated or large scale, and larger scales of wind energy development would tend to dominate this landscape, and affect the setting of Lower Lough Erne, for example as experienced from the Cliffs of Magho. Large electricity transmission lines would be prominent in this landscape.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Large scale wind farm developments could not be accommodated within this landscape area;
- There is a limited capacity for smaller scale energy developments. The more uniform forested area to the east of the LCA has the greater capacity for wind turbine development, but not large scale wind energy development;
- The siting of radio or telecommunications on the bare summits should be avoided; and
- Larger scale electricity transmission lines should be routed away from the area.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There are no past or current mineral workings of significance within the LCA. There is little evidence of pressure for new quarry developments. Developments within the LCA have the potential to affect the setting to nearby Lower Lough Erne, for example as experienced from the Cliffs of Magho.

- Quarrying within the character area should be avoided.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

The area is accessed by a network of minor and unclassified roads. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

The landscape character area forming the wider setting to Lower Lough Erne, with Derrin Mountain seen to the left of the image.

LCA 25 Beaghmore Moors and Marsh

Key Characteristics

- Shallow low ridges and hills of glacial moraine separated by extensive peaty marsh.
- Numerous winding small rivers and tributary streams flow in open channels with scrubby margins.
- Pasture predominates on higher land, with exposed moorland on some ridgetops and extensive conifer plantations on shallow slopes.
- Most fields enclosed by wire fences or broken scrubby hedgerows.
- Small conifer shelterbelts are prominent around most farmsteads.
- Few settlements but many farmsteads on higher land, connected by straight, embanked roads.
- Bronze Age sites.

Landscape Description

A relatively elevated, rolling plateau of wide shallow valleys and broad, rounded ridges and hills to the south and east of the Sperrin Mountains. Extensive glacial deposits form irregular ridges and mounds throughout the area. Slopes typically have shallow, smooth profiles. Here the landscape contains the broad shallow valleys of the upper reaches of the Owenreagh River and Owenkillew River which flow west to meet just east of Gortin, beyond the character area. This landscape forms part of the low foothills to the Sperrins and most of the character area is within the AONB designation.

This is an expansive landscape of improved pasture, rough grazing, forestry and bog. Dark coniferous shelterbelts and larger plantations occur frequently but the landscape retains a sense of openness. The pastures on the lower slopes are divided by open, straight drainage channels; in more elevated areas they are often enclosed by low stone walls supplemented by post and wire fencing. Scrubby, stunted hedgerows and wire fences surround fields where stone walls are absent. Broad, peaty marsh extends across the shallow valley floors. Black Bog is an extensive area of raised bog, one of the largest sites in Northern Ireland, and designated as ASSI, SAC and RAMSAR.

Extensive conifer plantations on the shallow valley slopes often mask the landform. The plantations have hard, geometric edges and sometimes form an abrupt transition at the edges of the valley marsh. There are some broadleaved woodlands in gullies on valley sides and the incidence of woodland increases towards the slopes of the Sperrins to the north west. Roads crossing the valley marshes are generally straight and raised on embankments, crossing the many streams at stone, hump-backed bridges.

Small concentrations of settlement are found at Creggan, Greencastle and Glenhull. Elsewhere farms, cottages and more recently built houses are scattered along the roads skirting the hills and valleys. The buildings are typically white-washed and stand out clearly when set against the dark green backdrop of the shelterbelts. Traditional farm buildings often have red metal roofs. The farmsteads are prominent and form a visual focus throughout the area. Sand and gravel quarrying has been undertaken in the area, with an active quarry at Greencastle.

Sites of cultural heritage interest are thinly scattered throughout the area, however there is a notable concentration of Neolithic and pre-historic sites at Crockynell, which would be incorporated into the proposed expansion of the Beaghmore ASAI.

The mosaic of pastures, rough grassland, bog and forestry result in a landscape of variable quality, and in the more marginal farmlands the condition is relatively poor, with broken stone walls and gappy, stunted hedgerows. However, the less developed, open and more remote character of the landscape contrasts with that of the more populous lowlands nearby.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- The decline in parts of the farming landscape alongside the adoption of more intensive practices in elsewhere, changing the character of the farming landscape;
- The dereliction of traditional features of the farming landscape including stone walls and traditional buildings;
- Potential expansion of coniferous forestry with loss of the more open characteristics of the landscape;
- The impacts of sand and gravel quarrying in a landscape of open views; and
- Potential pressures for wind energy development within a more upland landscape, potentially affecting scenic qualities of the Sperrins AONB.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Conifer plantations are a strong pressure for change. They form a large-scale, irregular patchwork which fits fairly comfortably with the extensive valley bogs and marshes and forms a backdrop to the scattering of farmsteads and shelterbelts. There may be further pressure for the planting of new plantations or the expansion of existing ones, and the potential for indirect effects on adjacent bogs e.g. through self-seeding of conifers, increased nutrient levels or the acidification of watercourses.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- The abrupt boundaries of conifer plantations may be softened by forming indented edges and planting some broadleaves as forests are progressively felled and replanted; and
- The relatively open character of the landscape should be retained, ensuring that conifer plantations do not dominate the landcover or obscure wider outward views.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Farming intensities and practices are variable throughout the character area, from more improved actively managed pastures to low intensity grasslands and rough grazing. This divergence in the quality of the farming landscape may continue.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- The structure of the landscape would be improved by the restoration of stone walls, particularly near the slopes of the Sperrins to the north;

- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows would be beneficial; and
- Hedges and hedgerows bounding the more intensively management pastures should be retained where possible.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

Newly built housing development can appear prominently in the relatively open landscape. The adoption of diverse scales and styles of single rural housing development may contribute to a lack of coherence to the rural landscape.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Much of the area is unsuitable for larger scale development as it is low-lying and marshy; such development would also be out of character with the existing scattered farmsteads;
- There are opportunities to restore existing derelict buildings; new development in such locations should be relatively low in height;
- Buildings, and their associated conifer shelterbelts, are generally prominent on low ridges and new buildings could be more carefully integrated using broadleaf trees as well as conifers to form shelter; and
- The siting of new housing developments should be carefully considered in relation to their prominence in the landscape, and broadleaved planting/ shelterbelts should be integrated into their design where necessary.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

The upland and expansive characteristics of the landscape, the presence of forestry and relatively low population may result in some pressure for wind energy development, both of smaller farm/ domestic scale and also smaller commercial schemes. However, the landscape has little capacity for larger scale development due to the small scale of its hills and the presence of smaller scale farmland features. Large electricity transmission lines also have the potential to be prominent in the open landscape. Other tall structures such as telecommunications or radio masts could typically be accommodated on low hills.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind energy developments should appear as infrequent features in the landscape and be of smaller typologies only. The siting of wind turbines directly on hill tops should be avoided;
- Telecommunications or radio masts should be of a minor scale in relation to hills on which they may be sited, clusters of masts in a single location is preferable to the siting on multiple hills; and
- Larger scale transmission lines should preferably be routed to avoid the area.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be pressure for sand and gravel quarrying in the area. The plant, machinery and spoil heaps associated with these quarries can have a wide visual influence in this relatively expansive, rolling landscape.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- It is important that new quarry developments include appropriate landscape treatments to mitigate their landscape and visual effects; and
- Phased restorations of quarries would limit the extent of landscape and visual impacts and the length of time across which they would occur.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

The busy A505, along with the B46 and other minor roads provide comprehensive access through the character area. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

View across Black Bog towards the Carrickmore Hills to the south.

LCA 43 Carrickmore

Key Characteristics

- Steep, rocky summits with a crinkled ridge-top profile, separated by extensive moss and small, rounded loughs. Irregular, deeply undulating landform in areas of glacial moraine.
- On higher land, small, rough pastures are enclosed by gorse hedgerows and wire fences or by granite boulders and earthbanks form the margins to some fields.
- Rolling lowland landscape of poor quality farmland with patches of marsh and rush-infested pastures in low-lying areas.
- Narrow, twisting roads link scattered farms on lower slopes; small settlement clusters are concentrated at junctions.
- Scrubby woodland on margins of marsh; tree cover becomes sparse and the landscape more exposed on elevated land.
- Extensive sand and gravel quarrying.

Landscape Description

The Carrickmore Hills are a distinctive upland landscape to the south of the Sperrins. The area is underlain by a variety of igneous rocks which form an elevated plateau, with numerous steep, rocky granite summits, including Mulnafye, Cregganmore and Loughmacrory Hill. Parts of the plateau are raised bog and there are numerous rounded loughs, particularly in an area known as The Murrins. The landform of the plateau is undulating, with ridges of glacial moraine and rocky outcrops giving the landscape an irregular pattern and scale. The summits have a more irregular, rocky landform and distinctive, crinkled silhouettes which are landmarks for miles around. The hills form part of the southern foothills of the Sperrins and northern parts of the LCA including the Murrins are included within the Sperrins AONB designation.

Fields on the fringes of the uplands have a more even scale and form but become increasingly irregular and deeply undulating on the steep slopes of the rocky summits. Most are partially enclosed by hedges and wire fencing, with rough stone walls made of large boulders in some areas. Gorse predominates in the hedgerows, giving them a distinctive, lumpy character. Scrubby, regenerating birch/alder woodlands give an irregular, patchy landscape pattern in poorly drained hollows. The uplands are exposed, with relatively few hedgerow trees, except at the entrances to farms. There are some blocks of conifers but no extensive forestry plantation. Hedgerow ash trees are common around fields at lower elevations. Natural heritage interest is concentrated to the north west of the character area, including at National Nature Reserve at Murrins Forest, with ASSI designations at the Murrins and Lough Macrory.

Housing and farms are closely spaced in the lower lying parts of the landscape to the south while housing is sparse in more upland locations to the east and north. The expansive bog pockmarked with small loughs located in the Murrins (Murrin Forest ASSI) is almost uninhabited, although the main A505 cuts across the area. Loughmacrory and Carrickmore are the main centres of population, with other concentrations of housing at road junctions, in linear groups and clusters along the minor road network. Small farms are set back from the road and reached by narrow, angular tracks, and sometimes new housing is clustered with older farm buildings. Traditional red roofed farm buildings are still present in the landscape, but other more modern and larger styles of farm building are also present. Newer single rural housing development is of varying scales and style, however more traditional rural properties tend to be low in height with whitewashed walls.

Wind energy development is prevalent within the landscape and with larger scales of wind turbine found on higher ground to the north and east and occasional domestic and farm scale machines throughout.

The upland landscape to the east is encompassed by the Creggandevesky candidate ASAI. This area and the Murrins hold the main concentrations of sites of cultural heritage interest, but there is a notable absence of listed buildings.

This is a landscape of marginal farmland, which has a rough character and is in relatively poor condition and field boundaries are often incomplete in more upland areas. The upland summits are relatively small in comparison to the surrounding uplands and their rocky skylines are distinctive landmarks from a wide area.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- The dilution of traditional building styles through new styles of housing development, compromising rural landscape characteristics;
- The decline in parts of the farming landscape alongside the adoption of more intensive practices elsewhere, changing the character of the farming landscape;
- The dereliction of traditional features of the farming landscape including stone walls and traditional buildings;
- Potential expansion of coniferous forestry with loss of the more open characteristics of the landscape;
- Potential development of sand and gravel quarrying within a relatively open landscape; and
- Potential pressures for wind energy development within a more upland landscape, potentially affecting scenic qualities of the Sperrins foothills.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

There is a low coverage of woodland within the LCA. Both broadleaved and coniferous woodlands tend to be small. This diverse, irregular landscape pattern would easily be masked by extensive commercial forestry.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the planting of broadleaved woodlands and copses;
- Encourage the management and regeneration of existing broadleaved woodlands, for example through management of grazing;
- Coniferous woodlands should be small scale and integrated into the landscape through interplanting/ fringing with broadleaves and/ or set within the existing framework of wooded field boundaries; and
- The masking of the irregular outline of the small scale hills with commercial forestry should be avoided.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Farming intensities and practices are variable throughout the character area, from more improved actively managed pastures to low intensity grasslands and rough grazing. This divergence in the quality of the farming landscape may continue.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows would be beneficial;
- Hedges and hedgerows bounding the more intensively managed pastures should be retained where possible; and
- The restoration of earth banks and stone walls, using local boulders, would conserve this unique landscape feature.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

The adoption of a range of newer housing styles in rural areas, some of which are more in keeping with a more suburban context, set alongside more traditional housing/ farm building styles, risks the erosion of rural landscape qualities. The wilder character and small-scale undulating landform of upland areas could be eroded by built development, particularly if the buildings are of a substantial scale.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Whitewashed buildings and red-roofed barns are characteristic features of the landscape. New housing developments should be sympathetic to traditional building styles and scales to help maintain rural characteristics;
- Substantial landscape planting should be included within new housing development to assist with its integration into the landscape; and
- The siting and design of larger scale farm buildings and other developments in the more upland parts of the landscape should avoid undue prominence, utilising screening provided by terrain and include mitigation planting.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be pressure for greater levels of wind energy development, particularly within the more upland parts of the landscape to the north and east which already include some commercial wind energy development. Large typologies of wind turbine or large wind farms, risk overwhelming the small scale of the hills of the character area. Other tall structures have the potential to be prominent in the relatively open landscape, and potentially out of scale with the low relief of the hills.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- The scale and extent of wind energy development in the upland parts of the landscape should be limited and in keeping with the relatively small scale of the landforms;
- Other tall structures such as telecommunications or radio masts should be sited so as not to dominate low hills or disrupt their craggy outlines. Clustering of masts is preferable to their dispersal on numerous hills; and
- The routing of larger electricity transmission lines through the area should be avoided.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

The surrounding landscape has been subject to significant minerals extraction, particularly for sands and gravels. Quarrying operations within the LCA, and associated processing operations, have the potentially to be visually prominent due to the limited tree cover and undulating terrain providing outward views.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Minerals development should be sensitively sited and designed to minimise outward views, with appropriate mitigation planting included, consideration should be given to phased restorations to minimise landscape and visual impacts;
- Quarrying operations on outward facing hillside slopes of the key hills within the area should be avoided, particularly in the Murrins, as this would have the potential to adversely affect the landscape qualities of the Sperrins as perceived from within the LCA; and
- Significant architectural heritage may be at risk from quarrying operations particularly at Creggan conroe.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

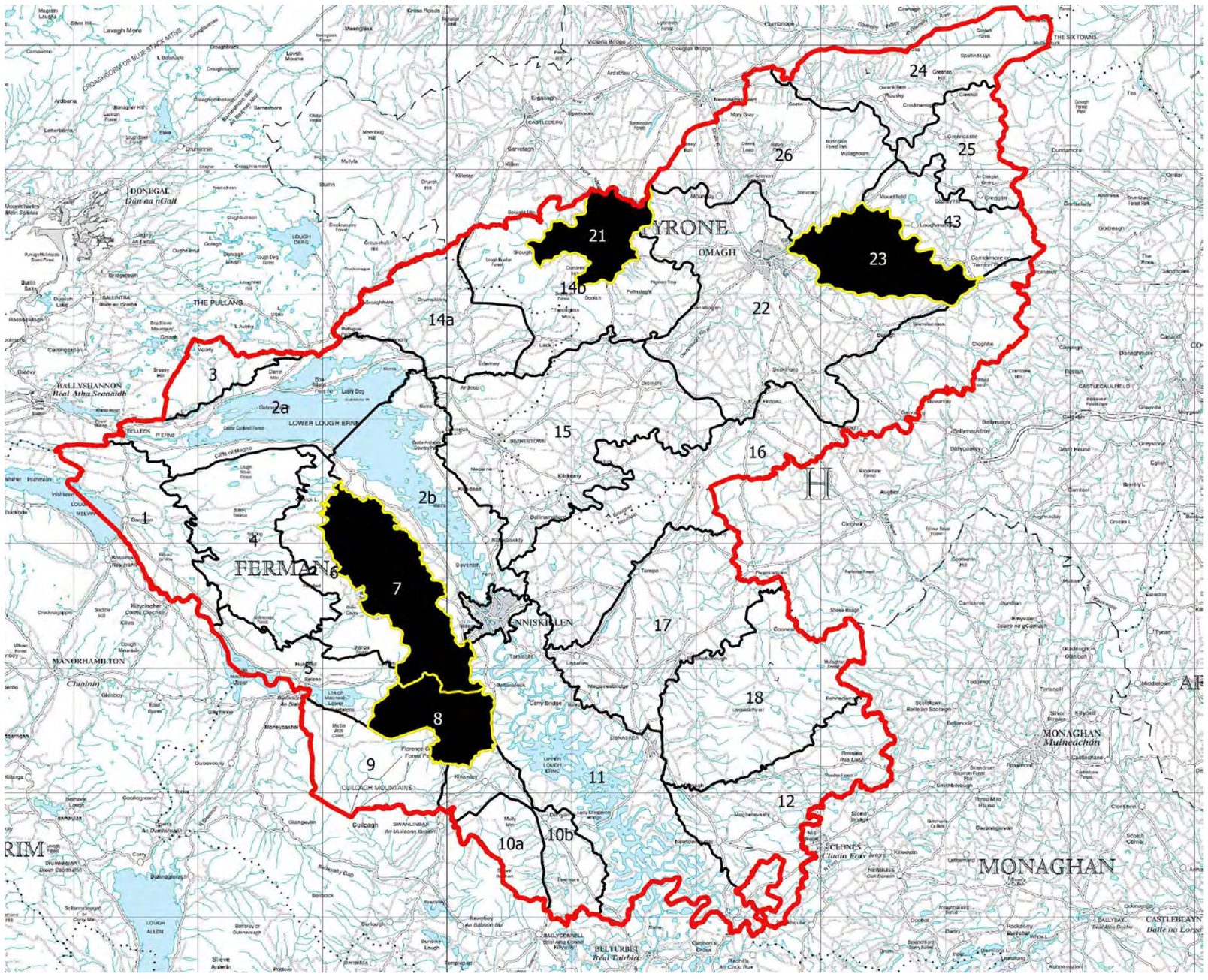
Beyond the B46 and B4, access through the LCA is provided largely by a network of minor roads. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

Wind energy development at Carricknagapple is a prominent landscape feature.

5. Broad Lowland Valley Landscape Type



LCA 7 Sillees River

LCA 8 Arney River

LCA 21 Drumquin River

LCA 23 Camowen River

LCA 7 Sillees River

Key Characteristics

- Wide valley of the Sillees River filled with steep sided drumlin hills.
- Intricate pattern of small fields, tall hedges, traditional farms, small loughs and forest plantations.
- Variation between intensive farming on some farms to herb rich meadows, rush-infested pasture and rough grazing.
- Woodland limited in extent but bushy hedgerows and hedgerow trees give sheltered character.
- Forestry occurs in intermediate sized blocks.
- Small villages and dispersed traditional housing in rural areas; replacement dwellings close to main roads. A more substantial settlement at Derrygonnelly.
- Many historic features including numerous raths and the fine Plantation Castle at Monea.

Landscape Description

In west Fermanagh, the Sillees Valley is a distinct and well defined lowland area. It is separated from Lough Erne by a ridge of limestone which rises to 200m at Cullen Hill and is bound to the west by the dramatic cliffs of the Knockmore Scarpland. The lowlands of the river valley are choked with steep-sided drumlins which rise higher and are packed tighter towards the north-west. The Sillees River passes through the landscape from its source in the scarplands to the north west, winding around drumlins to ultimately join Upper Lough Erne near Enniskillen.

The drainage pattern is intricate. The striking pattern of the drumlin hills creates a strong sense of enclosure which is emphasised by the small fields, tall hedges and abundant trees; gaps between drumlins reveal views over flat wet areas to hills beyond. Poor drainage impedes agriculture and in some places farm units remain subdivided into small rush infested fields. Elsewhere, improved drainage has led to the development of larger fields and good grassland, although seasonal flooding has allowed the retention of flowery meadows beside the river.

Forest plantations and woods are dispersed across the area adding variety to the landscape pattern. Small conifer plantations are absorbed into the landscape when incorporated within existing hedges and broadleaved woodland. The LCA holds few natural heritage designations however Ross Lough is a Nature Reserve.

There are a few settlements including Monea, where there is an impressive castle, and Derrygonnelly. Elsewhere, settlement is dispersed along winding roads and usually occupies the higher ground of the drumlin tops and sides. There is characteristically more development on the higher ground of the ridge to the east of the lowland than in the damp valley bottom to the west.

Traditional single storey houses are often associated with groups of farm buildings. There is some evidence of the dereliction of older properties and their replacement with new developments along roadsides, including linear developments of new housing near Derrygonnelly.

There are substantial numbers of scheduled monuments in the area including raths, burnt mounds and crannogs. There are a small number of listed buildings including those at Monea Castle, the grounds of which are on the Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes.

The landscape is generally in good condition with a robust framework of pastures set within bushy hedgerows. The landscape is well enclosed, but with longer outward views sometimes available from drumlin tops and from lough shores, including views to the dramatic scarp slopes to the west.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Pressure for new housing development in rural locations;
- The traditional pastoral landscape character affected by conifer plantations;
- Changes to farming practices which result in the loss of the enclosed wooded landscape character, species rich and wet meadows; and
- Demand for smaller scale renewable energy projects, in particular wind energy development.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Much of the woodland within the LCA is coniferous forestry, but with some ashwood, hazel wood and wet woodland around the lough shores. Extensive coniferous plantations would change the existing character of a pastoral landscape enclosed by hedgerows.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Broadleaved woodland cover to be maintained and enhanced;
- New broadleaved woodland could be accommodated within existing fields or in individual drumlin sized patches, retaining hedgerows and planting broadleaved species to soften edges; and
- Some coniferous forestry of limited extent can be accommodated on drumlins but fringed by broadleaved woodland. The extent of forestry should be limited so as not to become a prevent feature of the landscape.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Agricultural improvements may lead to loss of character from removal of wooded field boundaries and the loss of wet and species rich meadows to less diverse improved pastures.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the retention and maintenance of wooded field boundaries/ hedgerows; and
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows and wet meadows would be beneficial.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

The enclosed and undulating character of the landscape provides some capacity for appropriately sited and designed developments. There may be continued pressure for new single houses in the

countryside, and housing not in keeping with traditional styles may affect key landscape characteristics.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Scattered farms and associated settlement traditionally occupies the higher ground of the drumlins and ridge tops, new development should conform to existing patterns;
- Extended linear housing developments beyond settlement edges should be avoided;
- Old derelict houses could be restored, or the sites used for new housing in preference to housing developments at new sites; and
- Traditional houses are white painted, one or one and a half storey stone cottage, and new single property developments should be in keeping with traditional building styles.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be some ongoing pressure for domestic and farm scale wind energy development within this landscape. While the enclosed landscape character has some capacity to absorb a low level of wind energy development, the small scale landscape is vulnerable to intrusion from wind turbines and other tall structures.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind turbines to be of the smaller typologies only;
- Wind turbines should be sited away from prominent drumlin tops. Turbines sited on the eastern enclosing ridge have the potential to be particularly prominent;
- The siting of taller telecommunications or radio masts on enclosing hill tops should be avoided; and
- Large electricity transmission lines should be routed away from the enclosed valley landscape.

The view into the Sillees Valley from the upland landscape to the north.

LCA 8 The Arney Lowlands

Key Characteristics

- Broad flat glacial trough between the hills of west Fermanagh.
- Farms with small fields are grouped on low hills above surrounding damp lowland bog.
- Varied pattern of land holdings: intensive grassland on large improved fields; rough grazing on small rush-infested fields and bog margins; small meadows.
- Important raised bogs and mixed habitats.
- Small mixed woods around farm houses, birch and willow on cut-over bogs and small conifer plantations.
- Scattered traditional farmhouses with replacement buildings along roads.

Landscape Description

The Arney River meanders through a wide, flat glacial trough between the uplands of Belmore and the Cuilcagh Mountains. The steep sided drumlins of the Sillees Valley are to the north and the wetlands of Upper Lough Erne lie to the east.

The valley is characterised by wide flat lowlands enclosed by low hills. Much of this lowland has damp peaty soils and is farmed or covered with scrub woodland and raised bogs, including the ASSI designated site at Tattenamona Bog. The shallow hills form islands of pasture surrounded by bushy, gappy hedgerows. The farmland is a mix of improved pastures, species rich and rush infested meadows.

Viewed from higher ground the valley appears as a dense mosaic of greens speckled with white houses. The pattern of hedgerows gives the impression of a wooded countryside, although woodland only accounts for a small proportion of the land cover.

The remaining raised bog is often cut-over but some still provides excellent habitats. The patchwork of small meadows, improved fields, bog and woodland gives the landscape an attractive, intricate pattern and a relatively well wooded appearance.

Each hill accommodates a dispersed group of small farmhouses linked by straight roads which are often raised above the level of the surrounding wetland. Communities are small and the hills typically represent a separate townland. The main concentrations of development are found at Arney and within the townland of Mackan where most housing is concentrated at crossroads or dispersed as linear developments strung out along straight roads.

New housing development is common throughout the area and new roadside houses and bungalows are often out of character with the traditional buildings. Other than housing and agriculture, there are no other significant development types, and there is almost no wind energy development.

There are only a relatively small number of sites of cultural heritage interest, and a handful of listed buildings including churches, white painted farm buildings and bridges.

Overall, the landscape is in a fair condition. The low, undulating landform and dense vegetation cover contribute to a robust landscape structure. Bushy overgrown hedgerows are characteristic, along with mature hedgerow trees, although fencing is increasingly being used to replace hedges.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Continuing pressure for new housing development in rural locations;
- Changes to farming practices which result in the loss of the enclosed wooded landscape character, and dereliction of more marginal farm land; and
- Demand for smaller scale renewable energy projects, in particular wind energy development.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Woodland cover is low, but broadleaved native trees contribute to the wooded enclosed character of the landscape. The presence of coniferous woodland would disturb this characteristic.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the planting of small broadleaved woodlands, copses and management of existing woodlands to help maintain the well wooded landscape character; and
- Conifer plantations are uncharacteristic of the landscape. Any coniferous planting should be small scale and fringed/ interplanted with broadleaved species.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Agricultural improvements may lead to loss of character from removal of wooded field boundaries and the loss of species rich meadows to less diverse improved pastures, while more marginal farmland falls into dereliction.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- It would be beneficial to retain the existing varied pattern of land use, with low lying wetlands separating areas of better drained farmland;
- Changes in land use which are small in scale and contained within the existing field boundaries may be accommodated with relative ease;
- The laying, pruning and replanting of hedgerows would ensure their long term retention;
- The replacement of hedgerow trees, allowing new saplings to grow to maturity would help conserve the well vegetated character of the area; and
- The remaining raised bog habitats would benefit from conservation.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

More recent house building has tended to result in extended linear developments along roadsides and adopted housing styles and scales are varied. New housing often does not benefit from

screening by trees and woodland. Continuation of these trends may result in changes to the traditional development pattern and loss of rural characteristics.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Small scale white painted one or two storey cottages are characteristic and it would be beneficial to landscape character if new housing respected traditional styles and scales;
- New development may be integrated within the landscape if it is accommodated within existing hedgerows and in sites in sheltered, undulating locations; and
- The re-use of former housing sites/ restoration of derelict properties is preferable to building upon new sites.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be some pressure for smaller scale domestic or farm scale wind energy developments within this landscape area. Taller structures, such as electricity transmission lines, could potentially be absorbed within the landscape.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- This landscape has capacity for a low level of smaller scale wind energy development which could be absorbed with the wooded undulating landscape. Wind turbines should be sited away from prominent drumlin tops; and
- The main A32 road corridor is likely to be the most appropriate routing for larger scale electricity transmission lines.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There are no past or current mineral workings of significance within the LCA. There is little evidence of pressure for new quarry developments. The small scale and enclosed landscape is sensitive to intrusion from quarry developments.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarries should be sited to take advantage of natural variations in topography in the undulating terrain to reduce landscape and visual impacts, utilising sympathetic bunding and tree planting.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

The A32 and A4 are main routes bisecting the LCA, from which a network of minor and unclassified roads provide access to the character area. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond the main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting and signage.

LCA 21 Drumquin Valley

Key Characteristics

- Undulating pastures transitioning from uplands to a boggy river floodplain.
- Enclosed, small scale farming landscape.
- Well wooded, with mature bushy hedgerow, small copses and woodlands.
- Enclosing hills providing contrast and intimacy.
- Bogs and marshes with natural heritage interest.
- Widespread single rural housing development in the countryside.
- Large scale wind energy development on the enclosing uplands.

Landscape Description

The Drumquin River is a tributary of the Fairy Water which flows eastwards from the foot of Bolaght Mountain in West Tyrone to meet the Strule near Omagh. Tributaries of the Drumquin River rise from the rounded hills enclosing this landscape area to the south, including the Black Water which tumbles through picturesque waterfalls at Sloughan Glen. Watercourses wind through large gently sloping drumlins, converging at Drumquin, whereupon the river flows northwards through a flat boggy floodplain to confluence with the Fairy Water near Priests Bridge at the boundary with Derry and Strabane. The valley landscape setting of Drumquin with its backdrop of larger hills is highly scenic, albeit now affected by commercial wind energy development.

The Drumquin valley has a flat floor and undulating valley slopes, with a small-scale, irregular patchwork of pastures. It is on the margins of the drumlin lowlands and the rounded landforms reflect this influence. Fields are enclosed by a mixture of hedgerows and stone walls, which are sparser and gorse ridden at the upland margins, become bushy and dense lower down. In more improved pastures post and wire fences have come to replace more traditional field boundaries.

The farmlands of the Drumquin valley floor comprise flat, relatively large, irregularly shaped fields of improved pasture, however as the river flows northwards the valley becomes more poorly drained and bog predominates, including ASSI/ SAC designated Fairy Water Bogs. Beyond the valley floor on the sloping drumlins the pastures are of variable quality, ranging from semi-derelict and rush infested to good quality improved grasslands.

The landscape has a well wooded and enclosed quality as a result of well vegetated field boundaries and the presence of numerous small woodlands and copses. Blocky coniferous plantations are located on the slopes towards the south and west of the character area and their dark outlines occasionally feature in views, but otherwise coniferous woodland is limited.

Settlement is concentrated at Drumquin and nearby Milltown (Derry City and Strabane District), the only settlements within the area. Single houses in the countryside and farms are prevalent throughout the landscape with the exception of the boggy lower reaches of the Drumquin River towards the north of the character area. Farms are closely spaced. A traditional vernacular building style is not a strong characteristic of the landscape, although some older stone, occasionally whitewashed buildings are present. Rural house building is a more recent feature of the landscape ranging from small bungalows to substantial houses, set along the winding network of minor roads, and often lacking in mature vegetation to assist with their integration into the landscape. There is a scattering of raths, enclosures and other cultural heritage sites, and a small number of listed buildings. Large commercial wind farm developments overlook the valley from the hills to the south and west, while the eastern slopes of Dunnaree Hill have been subject to quarrying.

This rural landscape is a well settled and mostly in good condition. The contrasting backdrop of upland hills provides a sense of intimacy and enclosure, contributing to its scenic qualities.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- The industrialising effects of wind energy development and quarrying on enclosing uplands;
- The proliferation of new single houses in the countryside and an absence of common or strong traditional building styles; and
- The wooded and enclosed character of the landscape diminished by agricultural improvements which result in the loss of wooded field boundaries.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Woodland is scattered throughout the character area within farmland, steep sided river valleys and on hillsides, including hazel woods, mixed ash woods and wet woodland at the fringes of bogs. The presence of woodland contributes to the enclosed and intimate landscape character and should be retained and enhanced where possible.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the planting and ongoing maintenance of broadleaved woodlands and copses; and
- Conifer plantations are uncharacteristic of the landscape. Any coniferous planting should be small scale and fringed/ interplanted with broadleaved species, while larger scale plantations are more suited to the outer hill slopes.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Improved pastures characterise much of the landscape, there may be pressure for enlargement of fields and the neglect or removal of wooded hedgerows or stone field boundaries which contribute to landscape character. Agricultural inputs of fertilisers on improved pastures may impact important bog habitats.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Encourage the retention and maintenance of wooded field boundaries/ hedgerows;
- Monitoring and maintenance of water tables within the bogs and associated wetlands and management in accordance with the ASSI Schedules will conserve the diversity of species within these valuable habitats; and
- The restoration and on-going management of stone walls will ensure the conservation of these important local landscape features.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be pressure for development at the fringes of the character area including quarrying and wind farm development which may adversely affect the setting to the landscape. Ongoing pressure for single rural housing developments may result in a lack of coherence to the rural landscape, through the frequency of development and adoption of contrasting building styles.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- More clustered forms of housing development for example at road junctions or related to landscape features would be preferable to extended linear developments along roadsides; and
- New housing development should incorporate appropriate landscape treatments, preferably including broadleaved native species, to provide enclosure and maintain the well wooded character of the landscape;

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be continuing pressure for wind energy development in the uplands adjacent to the landscape character area. The small scale and enclosed landscape is sensitive to intrusion from large wind turbines at its fringes, and from the industrialising influence of related infrastructure such as large transmission lines.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Cumulative wind farm development should be carefully monitored to ensure wind turbines are not seen to dominate the valley from the enclosing uplands;
- The landscape has only a low capacity for small scale wind energy developments, typically of a domestic or farm scale only. Cumulative issues arising from smaller lowland turbines seen together with larger commercial machines should be considered;
- Larger electricity transmission lines should be routed away from the enclosed valley landscape; and
- The siting of telecommunications or radio masts on surrounding hill tops should be mindful of clutter and cumulative effects with nearby wind turbines.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

Southern parts of the character area have been subject to hard rocky quarrying, and there may be ongoing pressure for further minerals extraction. Mineral workings on the enclosing hill slopes of the character area are an intrusive industrialising feature, the landscape and visual effects of which are difficult to mitigate.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- The siting of minerals operations on exposed hillsides requires careful consideration in order to avoid widespread landscape and visual effects. Existing quarry operations east of Dunnaree Hill benefit from a relatively enclosed location; and
- The cumulative impact of multiple quarry operations, or quarrying seen with wind energy development, should be considered with the siting of new minerals operations.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

The B84 and B50 passes through the valley, from which a network of minor roads provide access to the character area. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network although it is possible that widenings, junction upgrades and easing of gradients could be required to facilitate access to wind energy developments in neighbouring uplands.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond the main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting and signage.
- Engineered features such as embankments, cuttings and bridge upgrades to facilitate abnormal loads associated with wind energy developments require careful design and integration into the landscape to maintain rural characteristics.

New rural housing development plus larger scales of wind energy development at the fringes of the character area.

View west from the centre of the character area towards Drumquin.

LCA 23 Camowen River

Key Characteristics

- Broad, shallow valley with winding rivers and numerous branching streams.
- Glacial moraine, deposited within the valley, has produced an undulating, complex landform
- Patchy large-scale mosaic of pasture and bog.
- Extensive bog, marsh and scrubby birch/willow woodland in low-lying areas throughout the local area
- Small pastures with scrubby hedgerows on more elevated land, larger improved pastures lower down.
- Narrow lanes form a network of routes; winding on undulating land and straight, often embanked across marshes.
- Farms and smallholdings and housing developments occupying the more elevated ground around bogs and marshes.

Landscape Description

The broad valley of the Camowen River and its tributaries lies to the south of Mullaghcarn and to the west of the granite outcrop of Cregganconroe. Much of the valley is underlain by sandstones, minor outcrops of granite and Quartz Porphyry where rounded deposits of glacial moraine form minor ridges within the lowland. The valley is enclosed, to the north and east, by higher land which provides an overall sense of containment. The crinkly silhouettes of the granite outcrops of Cregganmore are a local landmark.

The landscape is a complex, patchy mosaic of pasture, bog, woodland and small conifer plantations. There are numerous branching streams and peaty marsh extends across the low-lying parts of the valley floor. Small-holdings, farms and domestic properties are confined to shallow ridges and skirt around bogs on a network of roads which radiate from Drumnakilly. The landscape pattern varies in scale, according to the landform. Parts of the valley with a more undulating character, such as the Drumnakilly area, have a higher proportion of pasture, while bogs are more prevalent in the low lying areas to the south, including the Deroran Bog ASSI and SAC, one of the largest remaining areas of raised bog in Northern Ireland.

Areas of marsh are a finely-grained, irregular mosaic of bog, water, rushes, scrub and carr woodland. The conifer plantations, by contrast, have straight edges and blocky, angular shapes. There are typically straight roads along the margins of the valley and across the marshes but the lanes linking the farms are tortuous. Roads crossing the low-lying marshes and streams are raised on embankments.

Pastures in the lower lying landscape beside the Camowen River tend to be improved, quite large and divided by hedges, wire fences with occasional trees and here the landscape is quite open. North of the B4 which bisects the areas from west to east the field patterns become somewhat more complex, particularly in the more undulating landscape toward the west, with smaller fields and more variation in the quality of pastures. The landscape remains relatively open, and field boundaries are often sparse, gorse ridden, or defined only by post and wire fences.

New housing is frequent in the landscape with no distinctive settlement pattern beyond Drumnakilly. Houses range from more traditionally styled bungalows to more imposing 2 storey houses set within large lawned gardens, there are also some derelict farms. There is little evidence of a strong traditional or vernacular building style in the landscape although the one listed house within the LCA is a small whitewashed stone cottage. Farm units tend to comprise collections of medium sized buildings, typically with more traditional style curved roofed barns, rather than larger scales of more industrialised units.

Cultural heritage interest is relatively sparse in comparison to many other more lowland landscapes, with a scattering or raths and other sites.

The landscape is in a variable condition, with better quality improved pastures and areas of more scrappy and marginal farmland, but which have an attractive wildness of character. Parts of the landscape are scarred by quarrying, including a large sand and gravel quarry north of Drumnakilly and a hard rock quarry immediately south of Carrickmore.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- A confusion of contemporary rural housing styles, compromising rural landscape characteristics;
- The decline in parts of the farming landscape alongside the adoption of more intensive practices in elsewhere, changing the character of the farming landscape;
- Potential expansion of coniferous forestry with loss of the more open characteristics of the landscape; and
- Potential pressure for sand and gravel quarrying to become an intrusive industrialising feature in an otherwise rural landscape.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Woodland cover within the character area is relatively low, while extensive forestry or woodland would have a detrimental effect on the open character of the landscape, copses and small woodlands provide structure to the landscape of otherwise patchy tree and woodland cover.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Small conifer woodlands are appropriate and may enhance the characteristic mosaic pattern of the valley landscape provided they are not too extensive and do not block views; they should be designed to add to local landscape diversity rather than smother it;
- Ensure that small patches of wet woodland are retained and not lost by drainage, land-fill or clearance; and
- Encourage the planting of broadleaved woodlands and copses, and the maintenance of existing ones through the control of grazing, replanting etc.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

There is a continuum in the quality of grazing land from intensively managed pastures to low intensity rush infested meadows and rough grazing. Hedges and trees may be lost to agricultural improvements or neglect with a loss of landscape character.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows would be beneficial and
- Hedges and hedgerows bounding the more intensively managed pastures should be retained where possible.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

Newly built housing development is commonplace can appear prominently in the relatively open landscape. The adoption of diverse scales and styles of single rural housing development may contribute to a lack of coherence to the rural landscape. Large two storey houses can appear incongruous when sited in exposed locations with little screening. The proximity of western parts of the character area to Omagh may result in continued pressure for housing development.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- New development should complement and extend the existing landscape pattern;
- Native hedges and broadleaved tree planting should be incorporated into new housing developments to provide screening and integration into the landscape; and
- The development of derelict sites is preferential to building on green field previously undeveloped sites.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

The area may be subject to pressure for domestic of farm scale wind energy developments. There is some capacity to absorb other tall structures such as larger scale electricity transmission lines.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Occasional wind turbine developments can be accommodated within this area, however the open character and frequent housing would be constraints; and
- Larger scale electricity transmission lines are best accommodated along main road corridors, such as the B4.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be ongoing pressure for sand and gravel quarrying within the landscape, which has the potential to be quite prominent when sited upon low rounded landforms in an open landscape.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Sand and gravel quarries should usually include perimeter landscape mitigation planting when sited in exposed locations; and
- Phased restorations of quarries would limit the extent of landscape and visual impacts and the length of time across which they would occur.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

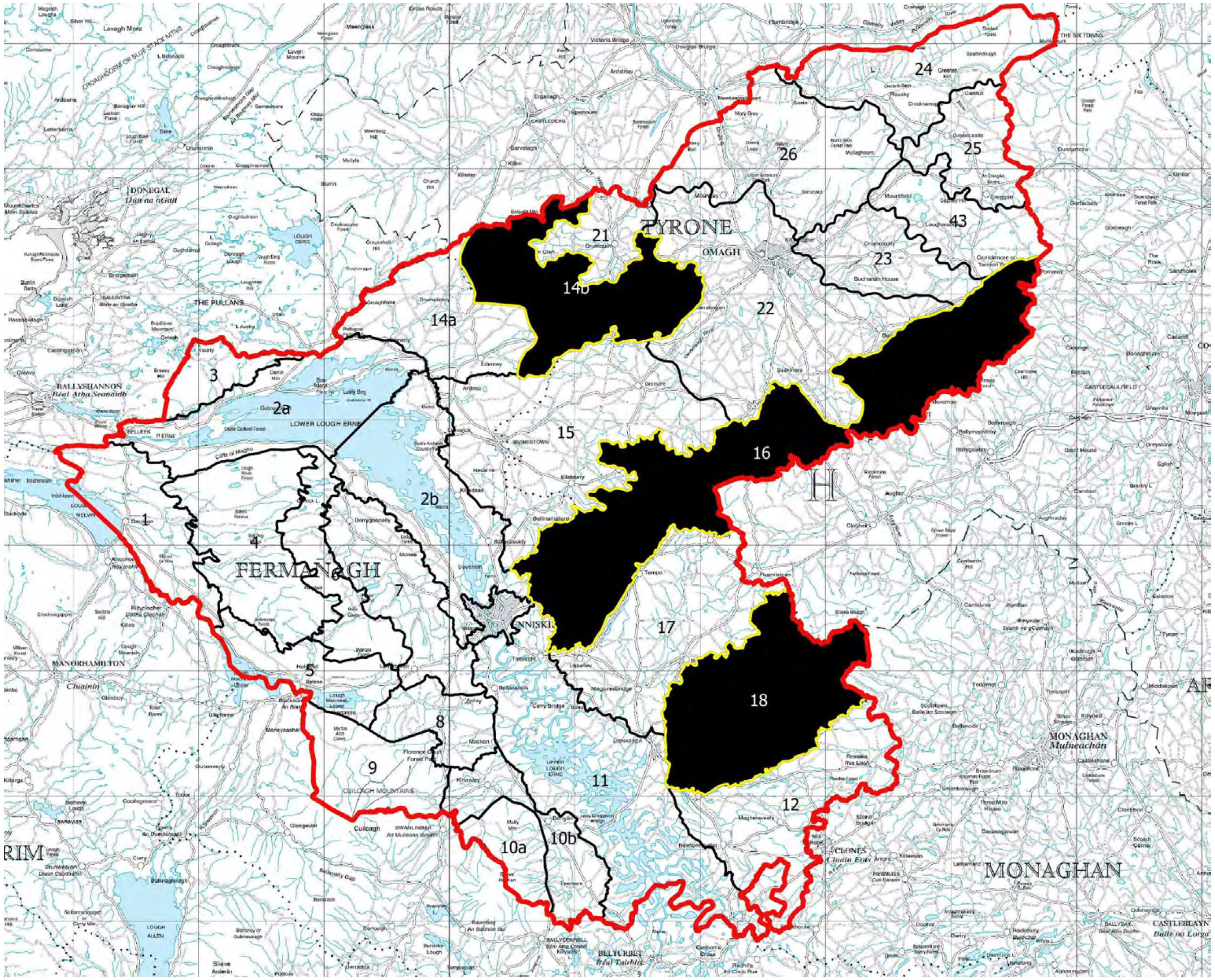
The B4 passes through the valley, from which a comprehensive network of minor roads provide access to the character area. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Beyond the B4, maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting and signage.

Marginal pastures within the LCA, including derelict farm properties.

6. Sandstone Ridges and Plateau Landscape Type



LCA 14b Lough Braden (East)

LCA 16 Brougher Mountain and Slievemore

LCA 18 Slieve Beagh

LCA 14b Lough Braden (East)

Key Characteristics

- An undulating sandstone plateau and rolling moorland on rounded upland summits.
- Large scale forestry plantations blanketing the upland plateau.
- Rough grazing on moorland tops.
- Sparsely populated with habitation limited to enclosed valleys and lower hill slopes.
- Large scale wind farm development throughout much of the character area.

Landscape Description

The Lough Braden (East) character area is an extensive upland of rounded sandstone hills and upland plateau, at its highest point rising to approximately 340m at Dooish which overlook the lowlands of the Omagh Basin to the south. The broad, smooth sided hill of Pollnalaght forms an easterly outpost overlooking Omagh and containing the Drumquin valley to the north.

Contrasting with the rounded hills to the east is an undulating forested plateau on which is situated the Lough Braden Forest. Fingers of this plateau extend outwards into the drumlin lowlands to the west. The plateau contains several loughs, including Lough Braden. Lough Braden is the source of one of the tributaries of the Black Water which flows eastwards towards Drumquin, while a myriad of small streams drain the plateau in other directions. Away from the blanket forestry of Lough Braden Forest, the landcover is divided largely between pasture and coniferous woodland. The quality of pastures varies becoming more intensively managed in the lowland locations on south facing slopes, decreasing in quality at higher elevations until giving way to scrubby rough grazing at the hill tops. The area includes a small number of natural heritage designations, including the National Nature Reserve at Meenadoan, (raised bog), and the ash woodlands on the slopes of Dunnaree Hill.

The landscape is mostly sparsely settled, with housing and farms confined to the more sheltered valleys, and to the shallow south facing slopes of Pollnalaght and Tappaghan Mountain as the landscape transitions to the lowlands of the Omagh basin. New housing developments are set amongst farms in the more favourable locations including the valley between Dunnaree Hill and Dooish and on the lower slopes to the south. Scales of farm enterprise vary with the elevation, with larger farms closer to the Omagh basin transition, including more industrial scale farm units and some poultry farming.

There are a limited number of archaeological sites and few listed buildings. Listed buildings tend to be white painted stone cottages, farm houses and road bridges.

Commercial scale wind energy development is sited on all of the larger hills with the exception of Dooish and is a characterising feature of the landscape. The Galantas open pit gold mining operation is located within the character area, on the lower slopes of Pollnalaght west of Omagh.

The landscape is of varied use and condition, and land has often been left unmanaged and allowed to degenerate to moorland. Remnant hedgerows and derelict buildings on the upper slopes suggest that these areas have been farmed more intensively in the past.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Continuing pressure for larger scales of wind energy development at new sites and repowering or expansion of existing sites;
- Quarrying and mining within the area visible from nearby lowland landscapes;
- Single houses of varying scales and styles in more lowland locations and along valleys; and
- The potential for further forestry developments to appear prominently on hill slopes and to change the open character of the upland landscape.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Blanket forestry dominates the northern part of the character area, with broadleaved woodland restricted to small patches on hillsides, streamsides and glens. While the plateau landscape to the north is suited to forestry development, the more prominent outer slopes and enclosed valley have greater sensitivity to insensitively designed forestry developments.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Conifer plantations on outer slopes and enclosed valleys should be of limited size so that the relatively open landscape character is retained;
- New plantations should be integrated with local topography, avoiding geometrical patterns;
- Coniferous woodlands should be integrated into the landscape through interplanting/ fringing with broadleaves; and
- The planting of small broadleaved woodlands, copses and management of existing woodlands should be encouraged.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Farming intensities and practices are variable throughout the character area, from more improved actively managed pastures and larger farm units to low intensity grasslands and rough grazing. This divergence in the quality of the farming landscape may continue, with loss of traditional features in the lowland areas and the dereliction of more marginal pastures.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming in the more marginal upland areas would be beneficial;
- The buildings of larger farm enterprises on lower slopes can best be accommodated when set within a framework of broadleaved woodland; and
- Wooded field boundaries enclosing the more intensively managed pastures should be retained where possible rather than replaced entirely by post and wire fencing.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

Parts of the landscape have been subject to new housing developments of varied styles and scales, often not in keeping with traditional rural building styles. Pressure for new housing development may continue. The presence of extensive forestry may lead to demand for buildings associated with timber processing.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- Traditional buildings are typically painted white and associated with stands of trees; they are usually linked to farms. New housing developments should be encouraged to respect existing traditional scales and styles of development;
- The clustering of new housing development would be preferable to extended linear developments along roads;
- Native broadleaved species should be used to integrate housing into the landscape framework; and
- Any large buildings associated with the forestry and saw mill industry should be carefully integrated into the smaller scale landscape such as enclosed valleys, with the used of robust woodland screening.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

The area is likely to be subject to further pressure for wind energy developments, either on new sites or the repowering of older sites, while cumulative issues may arise from the presence of larger scale commercial schemes and more lowland domestic or farm scale developments. Hill top locations may be required for the siting of telecommunications or radio masts.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind energy developments should be sited and scaled to not dominate adjacent lowlands or appear out of scale with the landforms on which they are situated. The Lough Braden Forest has the capacity for larger scale wind energy developments;
- Visual impacts, including cumulative impacts from wind energy from population centres such as Omagh require careful consideration;
- The cumulative effects of views to smaller lowland turbines and larger upland machines should be considered;
- Larger scale electricity transmission lines should not be routed through the smaller scale enclosed populated valleys or appear prominently on skylines from neighbouring lowlands; and
- The visual clutter associated with telecommunications or radio masts on open skylines may be minimised by grouping masts/ equipment such that their effect is localised to a single hill top;

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

Quarry and mining operations on the outer hill slopes have the potential to be intrusive across the more lowland landscapes of the Omagh Lowland Farmland, Irvinestown Lowland Farmland and Drumquin Broad Lowland Valley. On sloping sites new planting may not provide effective mitigation.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- The landscape, visual and cumulative effects of quarry operations on outer hill slopes require careful consideration in relation to their effects on adjacent lowlands; and
- Quarry operations within the smaller scale enclosed valley landscapes of the LCA should be avoided.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

Access to upland areas is provided by a network of single track unclassified roads. There may be pressure for access improvements to facilitate wind energy developments, including new roads, the easing of gradients, road widenings and junction upgrades.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Ensure new roads or changes to road alignments respects the local terrain and grain of the landscape;
- New access tracks, for example for wind energy developments, should be sited to not appear on prominent outer facing hill slopes;
- Engineered features such as embankments, cuttings and bridge upgrades to facilitate abnormal loads associated with wind energy developments require careful design and integration into the landscape to maintain rural characteristics; and
- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting and signage.

View towards the Drumquin Valley from Dunnaree Hill across marginal, rushy pastures.

LCA 16 Brougher Mountain and Slievemore

Key Characteristics

- Broad, rounded sandstone ridges dissected by short, steep glens, steep summits and rounded loughs to the south.
- Varied patchwork of land uses on the hills, with bog, improved grassland and rough grazing, contrasting with improved agricultural fields.
- Mix of small and medium sized farms, with land reclaimed from bog or moor. Hedgerows and in places stone walls separate fields.
- Isolated patches and strips of coniferous trees on hill slopes; mixed planting around farm buildings; willow and birch scrub on cut over bogs and around loughs.
- Active peat cutting in some upland areas.
- Small and larger scale wind energy developments;
- Megalithic sites on uplands and a concentration of raths at lower altitudes, some traditional buildings.

Landscape Description

Brougher Mountain and Slievemore is an upland area of broad sandstone ridges which extends from Cloghtogle Mountain (near Enniskillen) to the valley of the Camowen River east of Carrickmore. The landform of the ridges is complex. Brougher Mountain (316m) is the highest point, with deeply undulating slopes and rounded summits. Topped Mountain and Knockmany are also prominent. To the south, the ridge becomes broken and subdivided to form a crumpled plateau with numerous loughs and rounded summits. To the north, a series of wide ridges are divided by steep sided valleys, draining towards Omagh.

To the north, the ridge is lower, with a well-defined escarpment to the south east and a dip-slope to the north west and is dissected by steep valleys. The escarpment has steep plummeting slopes and long views out over the Clogher Valley to the south and east. The lower slopes have a more convoluted landform, with broken ridges of glacial moraine in valleys and at the foot of slopes. Blanket peat covers the summits, with a transition to marginal pastures on lower slopes.

There are some extensive blocks of conifers on the upper slopes and stands of mixed woodland on the steep escarpment. Recent reclamation has extended improved fields at higher elevations and there is a strong contrast between the bright green improved fields and areas of rough grassland, heath and bog. On lower slopes, field boundaries are varied with stone walls of local sandstone, earth banks with gorse and low hedges. There are scattered trees in the valleys, with woodland (including some conifer blocks) on the steeper valley sides, along streams and around farms. The character area includes only two small areas designated as ASAI. In part this is because blanket bogs and raised bogs in the area have been subject to extensive peat cutting but cut-over bogs that result from former hand cutting have importance to biodiversity. Mesotrophic and eutrophic lakes found in the areas are also relatively rare.

Farms are scattered along narrow roads with small to medium scaled farm buildings of both new and more traditional style, and new single houses are frequent and only the highest parts of the landscape are free from settlement. To the north settlement is more closely aligned to the larger valleys which define the topography of the area. Small numbers of derelict properties are located in the more marginal upland areas. There are some small estates on the slopes near to Enniskillen, with red sandstone estate houses, and at Aughentaine, near Fivemiletown. Traditional drystone walls are in decline, while new bungalows and houses are often not in keeping with more traditional building styles of low white painted stone cottages, however the undulating landscape, often with woodland enclosure, provides it with some capacity for absorbing a level of housing and other smaller scale development types.

Wind energy development strongly characterises the landscape around Donaghey's Bridge, Slievedivena and the Altmore Forest while small to medium sized wind turbines are scattered elsewhere. While there are no wind turbines on Brougher Mountain, there is a cluster of transmission masts, making the hill easy to recognise at some distance. Quarrying has been undertaken in the area. To the south extraction sites area of a relatively small scale, however larger scale quarrying is present to the north with large sites at Altamuskin, and close to Carrickmore. Some areas of blanket bog are being actively cut for peat.

The area is rich in cultural heritage, including the ASSI site around Topped Mountain, megalithic tombs, cairns and standing stones on higher ground and raths on the lower slopes, particularly those overlooking the Tempo Valley.

The condition of the landscape is highly variable, with derelict farmland and gorse ridden hedges in the upper regions often seen alongside pastures which have been subject to improvement and are in productive use. Upper parts of the landscape are relatively open, from which there are attractive long views across the lowlands.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Pressure for single houses in the countryside which may undermine landscape characteristics;
- Changes in farming practices, including intensification in some areas and dereliction in others, with loss of traditional farming features;
- Pressure for new wind energy developments, from commercial schemes to smaller scale domestic or farm turbines;
- Potential trend for greater land cover by commercial forestry, altering the open character of the landscape and screening views; and
- Quarrying, including large developments to the north of the character area.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Small scale woodlands and copses are located in many parts of the character area, and while coniferous forestry can be accommodated within the undulating landscape, widespread extensive coniferous plantation would enclose views, and result in the loss of the varied small scale land cover.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Small-scale scattered forestry is more appropriate than large blocks of planting and there is scope to improve the integration of existing forest margins with local landforms. The conservation of open ridge-lines would conserve the characteristic long views;
- Coniferous forestry should be fringed and interplanted with broadleaved species; and
- Broadleaved woodland and copses should be protected, with new broadleaved planting encouraged.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Changes in agricultural practices and agricultural improvements have resulted in the loss of traditional wooded field boundaries and stone walls, replaced by wire fences, while more marginal farmland is in places derelict.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- It would be beneficial to conserve the small scale field pattern and existing walls and hedges, avoiding their removal or replacement with wire;
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows would be beneficial; and
- Peat cutting on a small scale scattered across the area would be less damaging than its concentration in one area.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

Much of the landscape have been subject to new single rural housing developments of varied styles and scales, often not in keeping with traditional rural building styles. Pressure for new single houses may continue.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- New housing developments in the countryside should be sympathetic to traditional building styles and materials. Single or one and a half storey properties tend to be more in keeping with the small-scale landscape, particularly in the more upland locations;
- The inclusion of native woodland planting with new development would assist in reducing its prominence in a relatively open landscape;
- New development is best accommodated on lower slopes, reflecting the pattern of existing development and making use of shelter from existing vegetation and landform; development on skylines or prominent hill tops should be avoided.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

The upland character of parts of the landscape may result in ongoing pressure for larger scales of wind energy development, however the landscape scale is not suited to the larger and more extensive commercial wind farms. There may also be ongoing pressure for smaller scale domestic and farm developments, resulting in undesirable cumulative effects. Hill top locations may be sought for the siting of telecommunications or radio masts.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Only limited locations in the uplands are suited to commercial wind energy development, and development needs to take into account the proximity of smaller scale lowland landscapes, which larger wind turbines would tend to dominate;
- Wind turbines should be of a size which does not appear to dominate the relatively low landform as seen from lowland areas;
- The cumulative effects of views to smaller lowland turbines and larger upland machines should be considered;
- The visual clutter associated with telecommunications or radio masts on open skylines may be minimised by grouping masts/ equipment such that their effect is localised to a single hill top; and
- Larger scale electricity transmission lines should be routed to not be skylined or occupy prominent hills or ridgelines.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be further pressure for quarrying within the landscape area. The landscape has some capacity for absorbing quarrying developments due to the undulating nature of the topography, however existing quarry developments form prominent scars on the more open outward facing slopes.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarries are best suited within the internal folds of the undulating landscape while quarrying on outer slopes may be more obtrusive, particularly on the steep scarp slopes towards the south of the character area;
- Clusters of quarrying operations in well screened locations would be preferable to the proliferation of separated developments throughout the landscape;
- Sympathetic bunding and tree planting are likely to provide effective mitigations within the undulating landscape; and
- Phased restorations of quarries would limit the extent of landscape and visual impacts and the length of time across which they would occur.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

Access to upland areas is provided by a network of single track unclassified roads. There may be pressure for access improvements to facilitate wind energy or mineral developments, including new roads, the easing of gradients, road widenings and junction upgrades.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Ensure new roads or changes to road alignment respect the local terrain and grain of the landscape;
- Engineered features such as embankments, cuttings and bridge upgrades to facilitate abnormal loads associated with wind energy developments require careful design and integration into the landscape to maintain rural characteristics; and
- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting and signage.

Improved pastures set within the core of the undulating plateau west of Tempo.

Peat cutting with the more upland parts of the character area.

LCA 18 Slieve Beagh

Key Characteristics

- Extensive area of rolling hills deeply dissected by long river valleys and bounded by a prominent escarpment on the south; the massive rounded summit of Slieve Beagh is dominant at the northern extent of the character area.
- A mosaic of improved pastures, rushy pastures, transitioning to rough grazing, blanket bog and forestry.
- Forestry is a major land use. Fragmented plantations with open spaces, different age groups and broadleaved species.
- Traditional housing is modest in scale, new housing is present on lower hill slopes and within enclosed valleys.
- Panoramic views over adjacent lowlands.
- Some wind farm development.

Landscape Description

Between Fivemiletown and Rosslea there is an extensive area of rolling sandstone uplands, rising to the rounded summit of Slieve Beagh (380m) at the boundary with Mid Ulster. To the south of the summit, there is a prominent escarpment of Upper Limestone capped by gritstone, which outcrops below the sandstone.

The northern edge of the uplands has a broken surface, with flat-topped hills and rounded ridges separated by deep valleys and punctuated by attractive small rounded lakes. The southern escarpment comprises a long line of hills and summits which command tremendous views of the lowlands, for example at Carnrock viewpoint. Steep, south facing slopes are interrupted by small streams in steep wooded glens.

The southern escarpment slopes were historically in agricultural use, with fields extending from the lower valleys up the slopes. Ladder field patterns on the escarpment are a local feature. However, some of these small farms are now derelict and lie within rushy fields at the end of green lanes. The extensive blanket bog on the summit hills and flat ridges has been subject to agriculture, peat cutting and afforestation. The latter has occurred in a piecemeal manner as various farms have sold up, leading to a broken, irregular forestry pattern. The plantations become more extensive to the north, where they completely clothe the slopes of Slieve Beagh. Forestry now accounts for two fifths of the area; in most cases it is a positive landscape feature, adding shelter and enclosure. Approximately half of the area is covered by a SPA designation due to its importance as a habitat for hen harrier, while the Slieve Beagh RAMSAR/ SAC intrudes to the northern part of the area, being a good example of undisturbed blanket bog.

Active farming continues on the slopes around the uplands, with newly drained land juxtaposed with rush infested grassland. New housing developments are feature of the landscape, to some extent countering the dereliction of abandoned farmland. Housing and farms are typically restricted to the lower slopes and more enclosed valleys running to the landscape area's interior, with much of the plateau devoid of population. Housing styles vary from small traditional style cottages, larger farm houses and contemporary single houses of varying sizes and styles. On the southern slopes, houses are traditionally distributed along lanes which run parallel to the slopes and a few larger houses have a markedly individual character. Agricultural buildings are typically of the more traditional and smaller styles rather than more industrial larger units except at the lowland transition. Peat cutting remains evident in the landscape, and in some locations is quite exposed, but with many cut-over areas revegetating. A small wind farm is located at Teiges Mountain.

Prehistoric monuments and archaeological sites are located around the edges of the area, with raths on prominent sites.

This landscape has an open exposed character, from which there are attractive and panoramic views. The condition of the landscape is variable and has been undergoing a process of change owing to the changes in farming practices, afforestation, wind energy development and single houses in the countryside.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Single houses of varying scales and styles within the farming landscape;
- The potential for further forestry developments to change the open character of the upland landscape; and
- Pressure for further wind energy development within the landscape area.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be a further trend for the afforestation of marginal farmland with the potential for the area to become characterised by blanket forestry, with the loss of views and smaller scale farmland features.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Further forestry on the lower hills should mimic the small scale irregular patchwork which has occurred in the past, with a good proportion of the trees being broadleaved;
- Irregular edges and a varied age structure will help prevent the creation of large uniform blocks in the countryside; coniferous plantations should be fringed and interplanted with broadleaved woodland; and
- Forestry should be disposed in the landscape to not obscure outward views along valleys or from key viewpoints and higher moorland summits.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Changes in agricultural practices and agricultural improvements have resulted in some amalgamation of fields, with new field boundaries defined by wire fences or lower hedges, while elsewhere there are derelict fields and dilapidated boundaries.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- The retention and planting of trees along field boundaries should be encouraged;

- The control of peat cutting, particularly where mechanised techniques are used, is advisable to prevent total destruction of the raised bog and to avoid adverse effects to landscape character and views from more open parts of the landscape;
- Where derelict pastures are not to be reclaimed, regeneration of broadleaved scrub/ woodland would be preferable to coniferous forestry; and
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows would be beneficial;

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

Much of the landscape have been subject to development of new single houses of varied styles and scales, often not in keeping with traditional rural building styles. Pressure for new housing development may continue.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- New houses in the countryside should to be sympathetic to traditional building styles and materials;
- The inclusion of native woodland planting with new development would assist in reducing its prominence in a relatively open landscape;
- Clustered developments of single rural properties would be preferable to extended linear developments along road sides;
- New development is best accommodated on lower slopes and along enclosed valleys, reflecting the pattern of existing development and making use of shelter from existing vegetation and landform; development on skylines should be avoided; and
- The restoration of some of the older derelict dwellings would prevent their complete loss from the landscape.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

It is likely that this landscape may come under pressure for larger scales of wind energy development because of its upland character, low population and the presence of a level of commercial wind farm development. The more steeply sloping escarpment to the south of the character area is more susceptible to intrusion by tall structures.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Only limited locations in the uplands are suited to commercial wind energy development, and development needs to consider the proximity of smaller scale lowland landscapes, which larger wind turbines would tend to dominate;
- Wind turbines should be of a size which does not appear to dominate the relatively low landform as seen from lowland areas;
- The cumulative effects of views to smaller lowland turbines and larger upland machines should be considered; and
- Larger scale electricity transmission lines should be routed to not be skylined or occupy prominent hills or ridgelines when seen from neighbouring lowlands.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

Western parts of the character area have been subject to quarrying, and further quarry development has the potential to be an intrusive industrialising feature within the rural landscape.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarries should be sited to take advantage of natural variations in topography in the undulating terrain to reduce landscape and visual impacts, utilising sympathetic bunding and tree planting; and
- Quarrying is generally more suited to lower slopes where the landscape is less open, rather the more open upland locations of wilder and less developed character.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

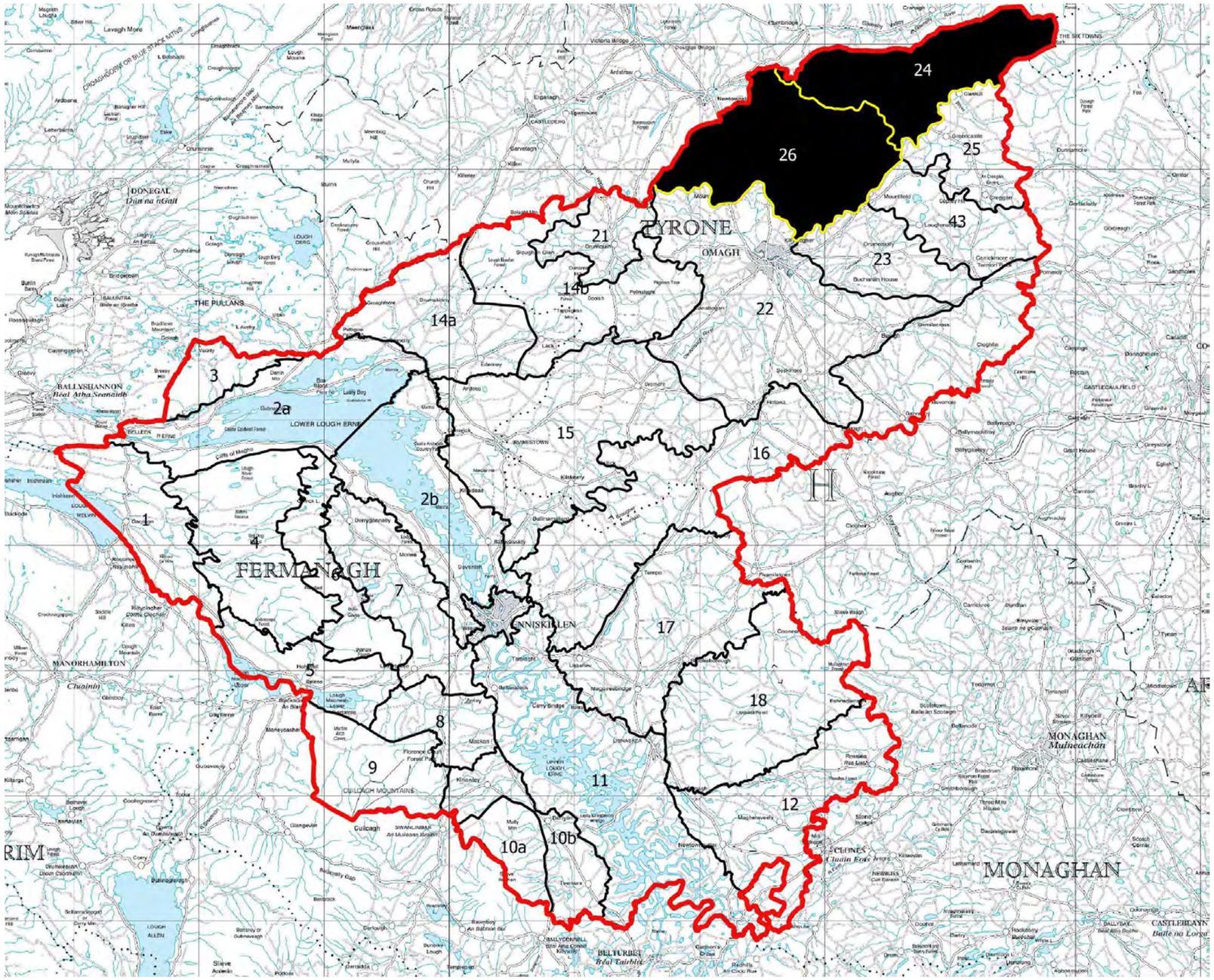
Access to upland areas is provided by a network of single track minor roads. There may be pressure for access improvements to facilitate wind energy developments, including new roads, the easing of gradients, road widenings and junction upgrades.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Ensure new roads or changes to road alignment respects the local terrain and grain of the landscape;
- New access tracks, for example for wind energy developments, should be sited to not appear on prominent outer facing hill slopes;
- Engineered features such as embankments, cuttings and bridge upgrades to facilitate abnormal loads associated with wind energy developments require careful design and integration into the landscape to maintain rural characteristics; and
- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

Small scale farms and houses of varying style towards the centre of the character area.

7. Upland Hills and Valleys Landscape Type



LCA 24 South Sperrin

LCA 26 Bessy Bell and Gortin

LCA 24 South Sperrin

Key Characteristics

- Broad rounded ridges with deep, branching gullies and fast-flowing upland streams.
- Meandering rivers are a focus for views - the narrow floodplain of the Owenkillew River is often subdivided by irregular mounds of glacial till.
- Patches of peaty marsh in low-lying areas between ridges of moraine and valley sides.
- Marginal farmland, with scrub, rushes and moorland vegetation on upper slopes of stream valleys.
- Hedgerows and stone walls on lower slopes follow historic townland boundaries and emphasise the undulating landform.
- Narrow lanes along margins of river floodplains - stone bridges at crossing points are local landscape features – narrow roads climbing steeply from the valley floor.
- Qualities of remoteness and wildness towards the east of the character area, with good scenic qualities.

Landscape Description

South Sperrin includes the upland river valley of the Owenkillew and Owenreagh Rivers and the broad ridges to the south of the Glenelly valley, including the summits of Spaltindoagh (410m) and Mullaghmore (554m) to the north of the Owenkillew River and Crocknamoghil (335m) to the south. The broad upland ridges of the Sperrins in this area form a backdrop to the valley landscapes. The mountain skyline is open, with upland grasses and rocky screes on the slopes leading to the summits. The valley slopes are deeply undulating and dissected by tributary burns flowing in rocky, open channels. The lower slopes of Spaltindoagh and Mullaghmore, in the remote eastern parts of the uplands, have conifer plantations with bold, dark shapes. Elsewhere, the river valleys have a diverse pattern of hedgerow trees, small copses and woodlands, with the largest broadleaved woodlands, such as Drumlea Wood, on the margins of the Owenkillew River floodplain. Small blocks of conifers have often been planted to shelter farmsteads. Tree cover becomes progressively sparser and more stunted towards the upper slopes, where patches of scrub and coarser grasses form a textured, open mosaic on the edge of the moor.

The character and pattern of the landscape changes gradually from the valley floor to the upper moorland slopes. The slopes of the upper Owenkillew and Owenreagh River valleys are characterised by a patchy mosaic of derelict pastures and scrub, with broken stone walls, earthbanks and gappy remnant hedgerows marking the former pattern of fields. Poorly-drained land is often infested with rushes. This more upland landscape has qualities of wildness, remoteness and tranquillity.

The lower river valleys, to the west of the confluence of the Owenkillew and Owenreagh Rivers, have a more secluded, pastoral character. Here the historic field pattern remains intact. The village of Gortin is sheltered by the steep slopes of Mullaghcarn to the south, and by the woodlands associated with the Beltrim Castle estate.

The Owenkillew River is designated as a SAC for the importance of its habitats and species, having a notable physical diversity and rich plant and animal communities, including sessile oak woodlands that are rare to Northern Ireland, and a significant fresh water pearl mussel community. The northern slopes of Mullaghcarn intrude into the area which include an ASSI designation for a range of habitat types including blanket bog, wet and dry heath, oakwood and dystrophic lakes. The small Boorin National Nature Reserve lies to the south of Gortin, important for its heath and woodland habitats.

There is a linear settlement pattern, with small farmsteads strung out at regular intervals along the valley roads, interspersed with single houses, typically of small cottages and bungalows, but also including more sizable properties. Towards the upper valley reaches there is a higher rate of farm dereliction. Farms enterprises are small to medium sized, with larger farms including more modern larger collections of farm building found in the valley floors towards the west.

The slightly larger settlements, such as Greencastle and Scotch Town are typically sited at the junctions of roads and near to river crossing points. There are prominent raths, and standing stones on the margins of the river floodplains. Lisdoo Rath is a striking example. The small stone bridges at river crossing points are also important local landscape features. Gortin is the main settlement, a substantial village, situated in a sheltered location near the river to the west of the character area, and some newer housing developments have resulted in some expansion of the village towards the east along the B46. A small number of medium sized wind turbines punctuate the landscape, tending to appear quite prominently on open valley floors.

The landscape condition is largely good but deteriorating somewhat in the more elevated upper valley reaches with the dereliction of farm buildings and farmland. The river valleys are overlooked by viewpoints from roads on the surrounding ridgetops and the meandering Owenkillew River near Gortin is particularly prominent in views from the popular picnic sites on the ridgetop roads above Gortin. There are long, scenic views available from upland areas with few intrusive man-made features.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Potential pressure for larger scale commercial wind energy development due to the upland, forested character of eastern parts of the area; impacts from smaller scale schemes within the enclosed valley;
- Potential pressure for industrialising developments such as minerals extraction;
- Increasing land coverage by uniform coniferous forestry;
- Abandonment of farming in the more upland areas resulting in a deterioration of landscape condition;
- Pressure for new single houses in rural locations; and
- Pressures of tourism in this much visited and scenic area.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Commercial forestry characterises the upper reaches of the Glenlark Valley and there may be pressure for afforestation of unproductive pastures. The larger scale upland areas have suitability for commercial forestry development, however there is a risk that blanket afforestation of would

significantly alter the open moorland character. The LCA has important broadleaved woodlands which may be subject to further loss.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Coniferous forestry in the upper Glenlark Valley and valley of the Coneyglen Burn should remain partial, allowing open views moorland hills to be retained;
- The establishment of broadleaved woodland would be favourable to further conifer plantations and shelterbelts;
- Broadleaved species should be used to help integrate conifer shelterbelts and plantation woodlands into the landscape;
- Coniferous forestry should be designed to be sympathetic to the landform and landscape features; hard geometric patterns should be avoided;
- Coniferous plantations in the lower valley reaches, towards the west, should be of limited size; and
- Protect broadleaved woodlands for example through control of grazing or replanting.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

In more favourable locations, particularly to the west, agricultural improvements may result in the loss of traditional field boundaries of trees and hedgerows. The condition of the farmland in more upland locations may continue to deteriorate, but with benefits to habit and species diversity.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- Where pastures have fallen out of use planting or regeneration of broadleaved scrub/ woodland would be preferable to coniferous forestry;
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows would be beneficial;
- The restoration of stone walls and earthbanks on the upper slopes would help conserve the historic landscape pattern; and
- The retention of traditional wooded field boundaries in the more lowland locations should be encouraged.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

Continued pressure for new housing developments within the LCA may detract from rural landscape characteristics. Pressures of tourism have the potential to introduce intrusive features into the landscape such as car parking.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- New development of suburban character should be avoided. It would be out of place and extremely prominent in this scenic and historic landscape setting;
- Lowland locations, closer to Gortin, are more suited to single rural housing development than the more remote upland areas, and development within the settlement is preferable to further rural housing;
- Careful siting and design of tourism facilities, including the use of use of local materials, will be important in minimising any negative impact; and
- The identity of the area could be promoted with the use of a unified signage strategy, helping to avoid signage clutter.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

- The landscape is sensitive to intrusion from tall structures. Wind turbines in more lowland locations have the potential to be very prominent features within the enclosed valleys of the LCA. Wind farms and tall structures would be intrusive on ridges and skylines, affecting the undeveloped and empty character of the upland locations. Larger scale electricity transmission lines have the potential to dominate enclosed valley and appear prominently on skylines.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind turbines should in general not be sited on the valley floor, particularly when sited near small scale lowland features, against which they can be scaled;
- The more upland landscape has a very low capacity to accommodate larger scale wind energy developments which has the potential to undermine its remote and undeveloped character and sense of wildness;
- The more enclosed valleys to the south of the LCA may have a limited capacity for wind energy, where smaller scale turbines could be accommodated within parts of the landscape which provide backclothing and topographic screening; and
- Telecommunications or radio masts are more suited to the hill tops to the south of the character area rather than the ridge south of the Glenelly Valley towards the interior of the wider Sperrins landscape. Masts should be clustered rather than appearing on multiple hill tops; and
- Larger scale electricity transmission lines should be routed to avoid this area.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There are no past or current mineral workings of significance within the character area, albeit there are proposals for gold mining at Curraghinalt. The landscape has high sensitivity to minerals developments, which have the potential to be intrusive features on sloping hill sides and within enclosed valleys, introducing industrialisation into a landscape largely unaffected by obtrusive man-made elements.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Developments in the more remote, simple, upland landscapes to the east of the character area should be avoided;
- Any quarry developments should be designed to take advantage of topographic screening. Tree planting may assist with integration into the landscape in more lowland areas to the west.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

The B46 is the main route through the area, however much of the LCA is served by minor roads and tracks. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network, however wind energy or mineral developments may require upgrades to the road infrastructure.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Ensure new roads or changes to road alignment respect the local terrain and grain of the landscape;
- Engineered features such as embankments, cuttings and bridge upgrades to facilitate abnormal loads associated with wind energy developments require careful design and integration into the landscape to maintain rural characteristics.
- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

The simple upland landscape to the east of the character area.

The broad valley floor to the west of the character area near Gortin.

LCA 26 Bessy Bell and Gortin

Key Characteristics

- The imposing, simple upland landscape of Mullaghcarn contrasting with the enclosed smaller scale Strule valley.
- Scenic, accessible landscape on the western fringes of the Sperrins; steep mountain of Mullaghcarn to the east and rounded moorland summit of Bessy Bell to the west containing the Strule River valley.
- The Strule flows within an incised, wooded valley, with roads following the course of the river on terraces alongside.
- Diverse landscape pattern, with a transition from steep, wooded river banks to farmland to open moor within relatively short distances.
- Low hedges with trees on the valley floor, bushy field boundaries enclosing the more intensively managed pastures; stone walls in areas of higher land close to the Sperrins.
- Relatively dense tree cover, with hedgerows and small copses; landscape becomes more open on elevated slopes.
- Long scenic views from mountain slopes and along the valley.
- Prominent wind energy development on the slopes of Bessy Bell, radio masts on Mullaghcarn.

Landscape Description

The Bessy Bell and Gortin landscape is a distinctive, scenic and much visited part of the north west; the twin peaks of Bessy Bell and Mary Gray form a gateway to the south of the Sperrins. The high summits of Mullaghcarn (542m), Slieveard (419m) and Bessy Bell (420m) are outliers to the south west of the principal Sperrins range. They are divided by the scenic valley of the River Strule, which flows northwards from Omagh towards the Foyle.

In common with the rest of the Sperrins, the high summits of Mullaghcarn and Slieveard have a dramatic, mountainous appearance, with distinct, sharp ridges and rocky summits. The slopes are littered with grey scree and carved by steep, fast-flowing burns, which flow in deep gullies. A long ridge extends from the main mountain block to the north west, enclosing the undulating valley of Cappagh Burn and its branching tributaries. Its sequence of lower summits, Ballnatubbrit Mountain, Beauty Mountain and finally, Mary Gray, form a scenic backdrop to views along the Strule Valley. The lower slopes of the Mullaghcarn mountains have a striking landscape pattern, with stone walls and earthbanks following the historic townland boundaries. The stone farmsteads on these slopes are an attractive element in most views. The western slopes of Mullaghcarn are covered by the extensive conifer plantations of the Gortin Glen Forest, which forms a prominent blocky pattern on the steep slopes. The open eastern slopes of Mullaghcarn include a huge area designated as ASSI for its range of upland habitat types.

To the west of the Strule, Bessy Bell, and the neighbouring smaller summits of Deer's Leap and Forster's Mountain, have a more rounded character, in common with the foothills to the north of the Sperrins. The open summits are capped with moorland, with a transition to marginal pastures and richer farmland on the lower slopes. From the confluence with Cappagh Burn to Newtownstewart, the Strule River meanders within a deeply incised, wooded channel, with the road on a river terrace alongside. To the south, the river is more visible as it winds between relatively large fertile fields and the woodlands of the Mountjoy Estate. On the valley floor fields typically have clipped hedge boundaries, and the landscape is quite open.

Settlement is aligned to the more orderly pattern of roads along the valley floor and along the smooth slopes of Bessy Bell. On this side of the river some roads are remarkably straight along which farms, houses and cottages are strung out. Farm units close to the valley floor are quite large, often with modern building styles, while elsewhere farms are smaller with a mix of old and new building. The road network to the east is denser, responding to the more complex topography, and farms and houses are correspondingly more frequent and clustered into the small settlements of Dunmullan and Tircur.

Archaeological sites are few, and the small number of listed buildings are mostly bridges and traditional whitewashed cottages.

The landscape within the Strule valley is productive and appears mostly in good condition, with many improved pastures. The area offers scenic views and opportunities for outdoor recreation at Gortin Glen Forest Park. The Ulster American Folk Park is a popular tourist destination, contributing further to visitor interest in the area. Wind turbines at Bessy Bell are intrusive features into this sensitive landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity and Managing Landscape Change

Key Issues

- Intrusion of forestry and wind farm developments from upper slopes;
- Pressure for new single houses in the countryside; and
- Dereliction of more marginal pastures and the intensification of lowland areas with the loss of features important to landscape character.

Trees and Woodland: sensitivities and forces for change

Woodland cover is relatively high within the character area due to the presence of extensive coniferous plantations, and there are some valuable broadleaved woodlands, including the woodland at the Boorin NNR near Gortin and some remnant estate woodland around Old Mountjoy. An increase in broadleaved woodland coverage would be beneficial to landscape character, while expansion of coniferous planting would be undesirable.

Trees and Woodland: planning and management guidelines

- Broadleaved species may be used to soften harsh edges of plantations and to integrate them with the neighbouring upland and valley landscapes;
- Hedgerows and riverside woodlands are important in defining the landscape pattern and should be priorities for conservation and restoration; and
- The planting of small broadleaved woodlands and copses should be encouraged in preference to coniferous plantations.

Agriculture: sensitivities and forces for change

Agriculture is undertaken at variable intensities, in more lowland locations agricultural improvements has resulted in larger fields, with new field boundaries defined by wire fences or lower hedges, while elsewhere there are derelict fields and dilapidated, scrubby boundaries, resulting in changes to the character of the farming landscape.

Agriculture: planning and management guidelines

- The retention and planting of trees along field boundaries should be encouraged;
- Where pastures have permanently fallen out of use planting or regeneration of broadleaved scrub/ woodland would be preferable to coniferous forestry;
- Retention and restoration of stone field boundaries should be encouraged; and
- Policies and environmental initiatives able to support low intensity farming, such as the retention of herb rich meadows would be beneficial.

Development: sensitivities and forces for change

Single houses in the countryside of varying styles and scales are prevalent in the landscape, with a risk to undermining rural characteristics.

Development: planning and management guidelines

- While the undulating and enclosed character of the lowland areas has some capacity for absorbing development, separation should be maintained between areas of housing, with the clustering of houses preferable to extended developments along road sides;
- Siting new development within the existing nearby settlements of Newtownstewart (Derry City and Strabane) and Gortin will help to retain the rural, scenic qualities of this special landscape; these settlements have distinctive and robust landscape settings and may accommodate some sensitively designed development;
- The undulating glacial landforms and existing tree cover within parts of the valley may offer some opportunities to shelter new development;
- Compact two-storey farms with red-roofed outbuildings are characteristic and it would be beneficial if new housing was sympathetic to traditional building styles; and
- Broadleaved woodland screening, linked to the wider framework of trees, hedgerows and woodland, would assist with integrating new development into the countryside.

Tall Structures: sensitivities and forces for change

There may be further pressure for development of both larger scale wind energy developments or repowering of existing schemes, such as at Bessy Bell, and demand for smaller scale domestic or farm scale schemes in lowland areas. The enclosed Strule valley is sensitive to the siting of tall structures, which would tend to dominate the enclosed valley and its small scale features, and tall features would appear prominently on surrounding hillsides.

Tall Structures: planning and management guidelines

- Wind energy developments should appear as infrequent elements within the Strule valley, and are likely to be best sited against the surrounding hills where they would benefit from a degree of backclothing;
- Mullaghcarn should remain free of wind energy developments to help retain its wildness of character;
- Larger or more extensive wind energy developments at Bessy Bell would need to be carefully considered due to their potentially dominating effect on the adjacent lowland landscapes;
- Telecommunications or radio masts should be clustered so as to avoid undue cumulative effects from tall features appearing on multiple surrounding landforms;
- Larger scale electricity transmission lines are best sited nearer the valley floor where they can benefit from backclothing, however the scale that can be accommodated is constrained by the more enclosed valley landscape to the north.

Minerals: sensitivities and forces for change

There is a small amount of quarrying to the east of the character area. There is little evidence of pressure for new quarry developments elsewhere. The Strule valley and surrounding slopes would be sensitive to intrusion from quarry developments.

Minerals: planning and management guidelines

- Quarrying within the character area should be limited and not allowed to expand to the more sensitive parts of the landscape around the Strule river valley; and
- Quarries should be sited to take advantage of natural variations in topography in the undulating terrain to reduce landscape and visual impacts, utilising sympathetic bunding and tree planting.

Transport: sensitivities and forces for change

The A5 is the main route through the area, with much of the LCA accessed by minor and unclassified roads. There is little evidence of pressure for change to the existing network.

Transport: planning and management guidelines

- Maintain the small scale rural character of the existing road network beyond main routes through limiting urbanising features such as concrete kerbing, road paint, lighting, signage.

The broad Strule valley as seen from the lower western slopes of the Mullaghcarn.

8.0 SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENTS

The following part of the assessment describes, analyses and provides development management guidance for the following key settlements in Fermanagh and Omagh in relation to their landscape setting:

- Enniskillen;
- Omagh;
- Fintona;
- Irvinestown;
- Lisnaskea;
- Carrickmore; and
- Dromore.

The locations of settlements are shown on Figure 6.

The assessment considers:

- the contribution of the surrounding rural landscape to the setting of the settlement;
- the strength of weakness of the settlement edge based the form of development at the settlement edge and the landscape features which provide containment;
- the way in which the rural landscape contributes to the settlement 'gateways';
- how development, particularly at the settlement edge, could affect key characteristics of the neighbouring landscape; and
- how the siting and design of new development should retain or enhance the setting to the settlement, creating a robust and defensible settlement edge.

Enniskillen

Landscape Setting

Enniskillen is the second largest settlement within Fermanagh and Omagh and developed in a commanding position on the River Erne between Upper and Lower Lough Erne.

Enniskillen has a unique and very distinctive landscape setting. The town is sited on a series of prominent drumlin islands between Upper and Lower Lough Erne. The settlement edge is defined at various points by loughs, the Lough Erne waterway and various drumlin features of the surrounding farmland, while elsewhere it has expanded outwards, typically along the main road corridors, with the result that the settlement has a very irregular and fragmented pattern, with the more outlying parts of the settlement having little relationship to the core. From within the settlement, the wider landscape settings of Upper and Lower Lough Erne are hardly perceived, with outward views soon curtailed by drumlins, often topped by development, although internally the broad waterway is a key feature of the settlement.

Towards the south and south east Castle Coole, Lisgoole Abbey, the Lough Erne waterway and the Sillees River provide relatively strong landscape elements at or beyond the settlement edge.

West of the river, to the south west, recent housing development has spread along the main A4, occupying some drumlin tops and sides, while a series of developments spread to the north west along the A46 to Silverhill. In both cases drumlins provide containment, including on the approaches to the settlement along these two major routes, with rising ground further west generally restricting development in this direction.

East of the river, the northern parts of the settlement are contained by Racecourse Lough, Black Lough and drumlins, resulting in some separation between the settlement and Lower Lough Erne, with development including the new hospital, spread along the main A32 road corridor.

To the east the settlement appears to have expanded in a piecemeal fashion, including substantial suburban areas at Chanterhill, newer pockets of housing, industrial developments at the Lackaghboy Industrial Estate, with the Killyvilly housing estate at the settlement edge partly contained by a rise in the landscape, beyond which the landscape rises gradually towards the east.

Analysis

To the south, strong and logical settlement boundaries are formed by the Lough Erne waterway, Sillees River, Lisgoole Abbey and Castle Coole estate, while Racecourse Lough is a well-defined feature to the immediate north. However, elsewhere features to form strong and logical settlement boundaries are largely absent, resulting in development extending along roads and into open countryside towards the east, with settlement contained only by local landscape features, typically drumlins and former field boundaries. Continued outward expansion would compromise the rural characteristics of the attractive countryside forming the immediate setting to the settlement. The shores and setting of Lower Lough Erne are particularly vulnerable to intrusion from urban developments, which is likely to compromise its tranquil rural character.

Principles for the Siting and Design of Development

- It is important that the southern setting to Lower Lough Erne is protected and should be contained to the rear of adjacent drumlins. There is little scope for development beyond the existing settlement envelope[3] in this direction;

- To the north east the settlement envelope adjoins open countryside defined by drumlins and weak field boundaries, and it is recommended that this edge is reinforced with woodland planting should development extend to this limit;

[3] The term settlement envelope is used to refer to the boundaries of the settlement as defined in the Local Development Plan, rather than the extent of built development.

- Towards the east of the settlement it is recommended that development should 'infill' existing undeveloped areas rather than extend further to the east;

- Development should not be allowed to 'leapfrog' the estate landscapes to the south of the settlement and encroach into the setting of Upper Lough Erne;

- To the west of the settlement, drumlins increase in height and elevation beyond the settlement limits and therefore there appears to be very little scope for settlement expansion in this direction;

- Development along road corridors including north of Silverhill (A46), south of Drumawill (A4), east of Killyvilly (B80), and north of the hospital (B82) should be limited to ensure that extensive linear developments do not establish. Current settlement extents take advantage of minor landform features to provide containment, and settlement limits should be reinforced by woodland planting, which would also contribute to the settlement gateway along key routes;

- In general housing development should be avoided on drumlin tops, particularly at the outer extent of the settlement, and should be sited on drumlin sides facing inwards to the settlement;

- The siting of trees and woodland on drumlin tops would provide backclothing to developments and avoid undesirable ridge lining effects; and

- Consideration should be given to the landscape treatments of undeveloped steep drumlin slopes or those subject to earthworks to mitigate against adverse visual effects.

Omagh

Landscape Setting

Omagh sits within a shallow bowl of gently undulating drumlin farmland at the confluence of the Drumragh and Camowen Rivers, flowing out of the town along a broad, winding flood plain towards the north west. The historical core of the settlement lies on the southern banks of the Strule, and over time the settlement has developed outwards in all directions into adjacent farmland. The landscape setting to the settlement is relatively indistinct with the exception of the attractive Strule River valley and nearby Mountjoy Forest towards the north. Farmland along the Strule valley to the north west, and towards the south of the settlement, is attractive and well managed, while that towards the north and east is more marginal. Much of the settlement is low lying, but to the north east the settlement has extended upwards to an extent along the Killyclogher Burn as the landscape rises towards the Sperrins.

Beyond the historical settlement core, defined by the river to the north and the A5 to the south, the settlement has expanded in all directions into a series of suburban housing developments. Commercial developments are concentrated close to the town centre and to its immediate south, while most industrial development is located towards the north west and extreme south east. Beyond the settlement core, the town's suburban landscape lacks a coherent character, comprising housing developments of differing ages and styles, with varying degrees of integration between them.

With the exception of the occasional woodland, stretch of river or bog there are few strong features to define the settlement envelope, and the settlement edge is by and large defined by field boundaries in all directions. Development towards the settlement fringes becomes more fragmented, including smaller pockets of housing development and industrial units, separated by fields and woodland. Beyond settlement limits small collections of housing are found along rural roads.

Gateways along the main routes into the settlement including the A32, A5, B48, A505 and B158 are typically indistinct, with the entrance into the settlement signified by the presence of newer housing and industrial developments. In these locations housing developments are often of varying styles and ages, with a lack of unity to the townscape character, while industrial units are poorly screened.

Analysis

The more sensitive parts of the landscape setting to the settlement lie towards the north west, within the Strule valley and in the areas of the Mountjoy Forest. Elsewhere the setting to the settlement is defined by relatively common place drumlin farmland which provide few features to contain the settlement or provide a robust and defensible settlement edge, although rising ground towards the north east provides more of a constraint. In many locations there may be a trend for the outward expansion of the settlement, resulting in piecemeal and fragmented developments towards the outer urban edge, further contributing to poor townscape character beyond the settlement core.

Principles for the Siting and Design of Development

- There is a need for a strategic landscape framework to provide a setting for existing urban areas and further development. This may include the allocation of land within the urban area for green networks/ woodland;

- Where existing or further urban development is bounded only by weak features such as field boundaries, structural planting should be included to create a robust settlement edge;

- The layout, open space structure, density and building materials of new housing areas should be utilised to promote a more distinct identity to the settlement, or areas within the settlement;

- Extended linear development on rural roads on the outskirts of Omagh is a detrimental influence on local landscape character and should be restricted. Future development should be concentrated in existing villages rather than along roads. These expanded villages will require substantial advanced planting to provide a distinctive landscape setting;

- The river corridors may be developed as linear parks and areas for informal recreation. Wherever possible, cycleways should be incorporated to link outlying settlements with the town centre;

- The entrances to Omagh are sometimes marred by varied housing styles and some unsightly industrial developments. Gateways require special attention: carefully designed buildings,

walls and/or tree planting schemes could create positive gateways. Extensions to existing housing developments should be carefully designed to be of compatible style, with the aim of creating a coherent townscape character at the settlement edge. Effective landscape treatments should be included with industrial developments;

- Development should not spread onto the upland slopes of the Gortin area on the fringes of the Sperrins, to the north east of the town; and

- The lower parts of the Strule valley to the north of the settlement, including the Mountjoy Forest, should remain largely free from the effects of urban development.

Fintona

Landscape Setting

Fintona is a minor settlement located towards the south of the *Omagh Basin Lowland Farmlands* close to the transition with the more upland landscape of the Brougher Mountain and Slievemore plateau. The settlement is situated along the shallow valley of the Quiggery Water which drains from high ground to the south, northwards towards Omagh.

The settlement occupies a relatively well enclosed position in the landscape, set amongst a series of drumlins, with the somewhat higher ground to the south occupied by woodland of the Seskinore Forest. The town forms a nodal point in the local road transport network and is at the complex junction of six B roads as well as several minor roads.

The town has mostly developed towards the north of the river, with the south occupied by the Ecclesville Estate, the woodland of Seskinore Forest, a golf club and Ecclesville Equestrian Centre, however pockets of newer housing development are located south of the river. The main roads thread around the larger drumlins, and linear developments of housing occupy this lower lying ground at the outskirts of the settlement as well as some of the lower drumlins, leaving the larger landforms free from development. The settlement is set amongst small pastures enclosed by trees and woodland, with the landscape rising gradually towards the south.

The southern parts of the settlement are well contained by the Seskinore Forest, with the sports pitch and cemetery to the south east providing a well defined settlement edge, experienced on the approach from the B80. To the north west, the settlement skirts around the base of the drumlins at Lisky and Castletown, with the outer extents of the settlement defined by reasonably robust woodland features. Tattyreagh Road (B122) and woodland beyond demarcates most of the eastern boundary until the Seskinore Forest to the south.

The entrance to the settlement is often marked by small housing developments of varying style, forming an indistinct settlement edge. The approach from the north west via the Carnalea Road bridge provides a more defined sense of arrival into the settlement.

Analysis

The settlement benefits from a well contained and enclosed setting, nestled within large drumlins and backdropped by uplands. Woodland of the Seskinore Forest also contributes to a sense of enclosure. Developments to the east of the settlement are more prominent where they are located on drumlin tops either side of the river corridor. The settlement edge is defined by reasonably robust features which should assist in maintaining the relatively compact and contained form of the settlement, however development along the main gateway roads requires careful design to ensure that extended linear developments do not occur, and that positive gateways to the settlement are created.

Principles for the Siting and Design of Development

- To the east the area around Carnalea Bridge makes an attractive entrance to the town and the development limit should not be permitted to impinge upon the setting of the old bridge and its adjacent mature beech trees;

- The stream valley should be promoted as a green corridor, extending from Carnalea Bridge through the town. By and large, the development within the town turns its back on the river, however there may be opportunities to promote riverside access or create new developments which take advantage of the riverside setting;

- To the south of the town, the golf course and Ecclesville Estate between the B80 and the B122 should be conserved as part of the distinctive setting to the town;

- To the north east of the town centre, the steep banks of the river valley, the flood meadows and the woodland along the tops of the banks should remain free of development, ensuring the conservation of views across the town from this higher ground;

- Particular care is required at the fringes of the town, especially in areas zoned for housing and industry. Development in these areas should be sensitively designed and located so that is does not detract from the character of the town and its landscape setting. Tree planting should be used to help screen recent development which have been located at prominent junctions and edges;

- Beyond settlement limits housing developments along roadsides should be controlled so that there is a clear distinction between the town and the more built up urban area; and

- The town is surrounded by attractive hills and clumps of trees and woodlands. These should all be conserved as attractive settings to the existing settlement. Any new development should be carried out without damage to existing hedgerows and trees.

Irvinestown

Landscape Setting

Irvinestown is an attractive, lively small market town with a distinctive, formal central square. The town is set amongst relatively large drumlins, with the historical core around the central elongated square occupying low lying ground. Development has radiated outwards in all directions from the town centre, with housing developments typically occupying the tops and sides of surrounding drumlins. The settlement is a focal point in the road network, where the A32, A35 and several lesser roads converge at the town centre. Housing and other forms of development extend alongside these roads, giving the town a somewhat dispersed form.

The large wooded Necarne Estate lies to the south of the settlement, including the former equestrian centre and Necarne Castle, beyond the settlement edge. In other directions a succession of drumlins extend to open countryside, none of which form well defined or obvious settlement limits, and the settlement envelope is largely defined by relatively weak field boundaries, with areas of more recent housing often forming abrupt urban edges with minimal landscape treatment.

Along the main routes into the town, settlement edges are often marked by newer housing developments or small industrial/ commercial units, often lacking in landscape planting, which continue towards the town centre in broadly linear developments.

Analysis

The landscape setting to Irvinestown provides little containment and the pattern of roads converging on the town tends to promote outward growth of the town rather the consolidation towards its core. The landscape framework to the town is relatively weak, with newer developments including little in the way of landscape treatments which may assist with defining settlement boundaries or gateways. The settlement envelope is therefore quite weak, with the exception of the Necarne Estate to the south which provide a robust and defensible boundary feature.

Principles for the Siting and Design of Development

- There is scope for extensive development, building on the strong character of the town's central core, provided development is planned strategically and associated with a well-designed landscape setting;
- Linear development along approaches to the town already has a degrading influence on the wider landscape setting and should be restricted in future. Instead, new development should be concentrated in designated areas, with new access roads being built to provide links between the existing radial routes, in favour of development along the radial routes;
- New developments towards the settlement limits should include robust landscape treatments to strengthen the weak field boundaries which often define the settlement envelope. Housing development sited on drumlin tops should be set amongst woodland to reduce its prominence in the landscape;
- In most areas it would be appropriate to continue the natural pattern of development, with housing on higher land and linear open spaces along the minor valleys with footpaths and cycleways to the town centre;
- New housing developments at the settlement limits should be carefully considered in terms of their design, layout and landscape treatments. Development styles sympathetic to the historical market town character of the settlement may help to promote the identity of the settlement; and
- Necarne Castle is already treated as a Country Park by local people and provides a strong focus for informal recreation. Access to the estate should be maintained and promoted with the future development of the estate and town.

Lisnaskea

Landscape Setting

Lisnaskea is located on a limestone outcrop to the north of Upper Lough Erne. The historical core of the settlement is located at the foot of the outcrop, backed by its steep sites, aligned along the main A34. The landform occupied by the settlement envelope is highly irregular. In broad terms, the settlement has extended along the main road, taking on a linear form. However, parts of the settlement have expanded onto drumlin tops and onto flatter land towards the north west of the settlement at Drumbrughas North. A substantial suburb of the settlement is located on the ridge immediately south west of the main settlement core.

The remains of Balfour Castle lies slightly detached from the settlement core towards the south but has become partly enveloped by more recent development. The town has an attractive centre, with a sequence of distinctive small market squares and many buildings of architectural character. There are long views over Upper Lough Erne from the ridge to the south of the main street. The church and castle are prominent local landmarks.

The limits to the settlement envelope appear somewhat arbitrary, incorporating the piecemeal developments that have been undertaken over the years; in some places the settlement envelope is restricted to lower ground between hills and ridges, in other located incorporating whole hill tops.

The main ridge to the east of the settlement provides containment in this direction, although some newer housing development at Killygullan is located prominently on the ridge top. Higher landforms along road corridors provide containment to the south. The ridge south of the castle which has been substantially developed for housing is a distinct landform, and development is largely contained north of the Newbridge Road. Elsewhere the settlement limits are defined by field boundaries beyond which are undulating pastures. Lough Head lough lies to the west of the settlement, however the main waterbody of Upper Lough Erne lies some distance to the west, and while from places visible, does not contribute significantly to the setting of the settlement.

From the north the gateways to the settlement are defined by relatively stark new housing and commercial developments, while from the south there is a more gradual transition from rural to low density housing at the settlement edge.

Analysis

The settlement has a highly irregular form and the settlement has expanded considerably from its previously contained core onto higher ridges, hill tops and into less contained countryside towards the north. The parts of the settlement to the north have been subject to more recent development and in the absence of a robust landscape framework and containing topography development has the potential to appear quite prominently in the landscape.

Principles for the Siting and Design of Development

- Developments on the scarp slope east of the settlement core should be carefully considered to ensure the historical settlement setting is retained and that developments do not appear prominently on top of the enclosing landform;
- There is limited scope for further development within the historic core as the town is constrained by steep slopes and historic sites to the north east and by the prominent slopes to the south;
- It would be beneficial to maintain the existing broad pattern of development to the south of the settlement, where housing is mostly restricted to the lower slopes between ridge tops, thereby avoiding prominent development on skylines;
- The rounded landform west of Newbridge Road is a relatively large undeveloped area within the settlement envelope. Development of this area would benefit from a masterplan approach to ensure its successful integration to the settlement and to avoid unduly prominent development; and
- An overarching landscape framework encompassing development to the north of the settlement around Drumbrughas North would assist with its integration into the surrounding landscape.

Carrickmore

Landscape Setting

Carrickmore is located on the northern fringes of the Camowen Valley on an outcropping of gabbro. The core of the settlement is located on a small saddle between high ground to the north, which the eastern and western settlement suburbs rise towards. The settlement extends north eastwards aligned along a ridge, to another focal point formed by the church and school. There is a level difference of approximately 60m between the highest and lowest parts of the settlement within a short distance. Excellent views both north and south are possible from near the church close to the highest point of the settlement. The rock outcropping to the south of the settlement is currently being quarried.

The settlement has developed around the junction of several B roads and minor roads, and settlement limits are broadly aligned to the road corridors which radiate from the centre. As a result the settlement has a relatively dispersed form. Away from the historical core, newer areas of housing are located within an enclosed setting to the south east, and also along the western approach to the settlement from Aghnagreggan Bridge. Houses extend along the high Rockstown Road to the north east and are scattered around the settlement fringes.

Settlement limits are defined by relatively weak features, typically field boundaries, with developed areas confined to the less steeply sloping terrain.

The settlement is surrounded by pastures, with flatter farmland to the south and more undulating rugged pastures to the north. To the north there is only limited woodland cover, however to the south and east there is more substantial woodland, including the estate landscape at Termon just east of the settlement.

Analysis

The settlement occupies a commanding position in the landscape however development is not particularly prominent, often benefiting from landform enclosure. The most prominent parts of settlement are those to the north. Here the form of the settlement is less well defined, with low density development both inside and outside of the settlement limits, including newer larger single houses. While some of these are fairly well integrated into the landscape with planting, newer large housing is in places quite prominent.

Principles for the Siting and Design of Development

- Development within the settlement should focus upon consolidation towards the core and around the more substantial pockets of housing development east of Aghnagreggan Bridge and either side of Ballintrain Road;
- New developments in these locations should be set within wooded frameworks to assist with their integration into the landscape;
- Development within the settlement envelope is preferable to single houses close to its fringes, as seen along Rockstown Road, which tend to extend the settlement into its landscape setting;
- Larger single houses, particularly those to the north at the settlement fringes, should include appropriate landscape treatments, including broadleaved woodland planting integrated with existing field patterns to reduce their prominence and promote their integration into the landscape;
- Key outward views from upper parts of the settlement, for example as experienced from near the church to the north of the town, should remain unimpeded by development;
- The B46 and B4 (east and west) form the principal gateways to the settlement. Careful consideration should be given to the design, layout and landscape treatments of developments at the settlement edges to promote positive gateways to the settlement.

Dromore

Landscape Setting

Dromore is a small settlement located at the heart of the farming landscape between Irvinestown and Omagh. The settlement is at a nodal point in the road network, where the A2 meets the B84, B46 and other minor roads

The settlement is set amongst a number of drumlins, with the core of the settlement occupying low lying ground. Beyond the centre of the settlement, housing development largely occupies the inner slopes and ground between drumlins, with drumlin tops typically free from development. It is only to the very north west that a small part of the settlement along St Dympnas Road, spills beyond this topographic containment. The settlement has a somewhat elongated form, extending to the north east in the shelter of the ridge which provides northerly containment to the settlement. Older parts of the settlement to the south are relatively compact, while a newer extension to the north extends alongside the A32 but is well contained by the surrounding road network. The settlement envelope is defined mostly by field boundaries, with few other strong landscape features available, and this boundary often extends only to the tops of the inner most drumlins.

From the A32 travelling north the church ruins form an attractive gateway feature, which benefits from a wooded setting. Nearby housing development is of a relatively uniform character which contribute positively to the gateway here. From the north the gateway is defined by commercial units and dispersed housing, creating a less favourable settlement entrance. Elsewhere, the entrance to the settlement is typically marked by lower density housing and some industrial/ commercial units.

Beyond settlement limits are frequent farms and single rural properties lining minor rural roads.

Analysis

Dromore is a well contained settlement with a relative compact core. If development extends to the settlement envelope (i.e. the boundary defined by the LDP) the settlement should remain well contained. Rural housing developments close to settlement edge risk undermining the contrast between the town and its rural context.

Principles for the Siting and Design of Development

- Developments towards the settlement edges should incorporate woodland buffer planting to provide a robust and defensible urban edge;
- The settlement envelope often ends on drumlin tops. Prominent developments on hill tops should be avoided, with trees/ woodland planting used for backclothing and screening from inward views;
- The good quality settlement gateway from the A32 travelling north should be maintained. Housing development should not be allowed to encroach upon the setting of the ruined church;
- Housing development within the settlement is preferable to frequent single rural houses developed close to the settlement edge; and
- Careful consideration should be given to the design, layout and landscape treatments of developments at the settlement edges to promote positive gateways to the settlement.

Ironside **Farrar**

Legend

- FODC Boundary
- NICLA 2000 LCAs (1999)

REF	1999 LCA NAME
1	The Garrison Lowlands
2	Lower Lough Erne
3	Croagh and Garvary River
4	The Lough Navar and Ballintempo Uplands
5	The Lough Macnean Valley
6	The Knockmore Scarpland
7	The Sillees Valley
8	The Arney Lowlands
9	Cuilcagh and Marlbank
10	Slieve Russel, Derrylin and Kinawley
11	Upper Lough Erne
12	Newtownbutler and Rosslea Lowlands
13	Enniskillen
14	Lough Bradan
15	Irvinestown Farmland
16	Brougher Mountain
17	Clogher Valley Lowlands
18	Slieve Beagh
21	Fairy Water Valley
22	Omagh Farmland
23	Camowen Valley
24	South Sperrin
25	Beaghmore Moors and Marsh
26	Bessy Bell and Gortin
27	Foyle Valley
28	Glenelly Valley
43	Carrickmore Hills
44	Slievemore

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Fermanagh & Omagh Landscape Character Review

Figure 1
NICLA 2000 Landscape Character Areas (1999)

September 2018

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 km

50201_QGIS

Ironside **Farrar**

Legend

- FODC Boundary
- Regional Character Areas

50201_QGIS

Sperrins

West Tyrone Hills and Valleys

Sarricmore Plateau and Pomeroy H

Omagh Basin

Lough Erne Lakeland

Fermanagh Cavelands

Clogher Valley and Slieve Beagh

TYRONE

FERMANAGH

DONEGAL
Dún na nGall

MONAGHA

ENNISKILLEN

OMAGH

LOWER LOUGH ERNE

THE PULLANS

BALLYSHANNON
Béal Átha Seanaidh

BELLEEK

MANORHAMILTON
Cluainín

CUILCAGH MOUNTAINS

CROAGHGORM OR BLUE STACK MTNS

THE SIX TOWNS

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Landscape Character Review

Figure 2

Regional Character Areas (NIRLCA 2015)

September 2018

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 km

Ironside **Farrar**

Legend

FODC Boundary

2018 Landscape Character Areas

50201_QGIS

REF	2018 LCA	LCT
1	Garrison	Lowland Farmland
2a	Lower Lough Erne (North)	Lough Basin
3	Croagh and Garvary River	Lowland Hills
4	Lough Navar and Ballintempo	Limestone Uplands
5	Lough Macnean	Lough Basin
6	Knockmore Scarpland	Limestone Uplands
7	Sillees River	Broad Lowland Valley
8	Arney River	Broad Lowland Valley
9	Cuilcagh and Marlbank	Limestone Uplands
12	Newtownbutler and Rosslea	Lowland Farmland
14a	Lough Bradan (West)	Lowland Farmland
15	Irvinestown	Lowland Farmland
17	Clogher Valley	Lowland Farmland
18	Slieve Beagh	Sandstone Ridges and Plateau
21	Drumquin River	Broad Lowland Valley
22	Omagh	Lowland Farmland
23	Camowen River	Broad Lowland Valley
24	South Sperrin	Upland Hills and Valleys
25	Beaghmore Moors and Marsh	Lowland Hills
26	Bessy Bell and Gortin	Upland Hills and Valleys
43	Carrickmore	Lowland Hills
10b	Derrylin and Kinawley	Lowland Farmland
10a	Slieve Rushen	Limestone Uplands
11	Upper Lough Erne	Lough Basin
2b	Lower Lough Erne (South)	Lough Basin
14b	Lough Bradan (East)	Sandstone Ridges and Plateau
16	Brougher Mountain and Slievemore	Sandstone Ridges and Plateau

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Fermanagh & Omagh Landscape Character Review

Figure 3

2018 Revised Landscape Character Areas

September 2018

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 km

Ironside **Farrar**

Legend

- FODC Boundary

LCTs

- Broad Lowland Valley
- Limestone Uplands
- Lough Basin
- Lowland Farmland
- Lowland Hills
- Sandstone Ridges and Plateau
- Upland Hills and Valleys

50201_QGIS

REF	2018 LCA	LCT
1	Garrison	Lowland Farmland
2a	Lower Lough Erne (North)	Lough Basin
3	Croagh and Garvary River	Lowland Hills
4	Lough Navar and Ballintempo	Limestone Uplands
5	Lough Macnean	Lough Basin
6	Knockmore Scarpland	Limestone Uplands
7	Sillees River	Broad Lowland Valley
8	Arney River	Broad Lowland Valley
9	Cuilcagh and Marlbank	Limestone Uplands
12	Newtownbutler and Rosslea	Lowland Farmland
14a	Lough Bradan (West)	Lowland Farmland
15	Irvinestown	Lowland Farmland
17	Clogher Valley	Lowland Farmland
18	Slieve Beagh	Sandstone Ridges and Plateau
21	Drumquin River	Broad Lowland Valley
22	Omagh	Lowland Farmland
23	Camowen River	Broad Lowland Valley
24	South Sperrin	Upland Hills and Valleys
25	Beaghmore Moors and Marsh	Lowland Hills
26	Bessy Bell and Gortin	Upland Hills and Valleys
43	Carrickmore	Lowland Hills
10b	Derrylin and Kinawley	Lowland Farmland
10a	Slieve Rushen	Limestone Uplands
11	Upper Lough Erne	Lough Basin

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Fermanagh & Omagh Landscape Character Review

Figure 4

2018 Landscape Character Types

September 2018

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 km

Ironside **Farrar**

Legend

- FODC Boundary
- 2018 LCAs
- 1999 LCAs

50201_QGIS

REF	2018 LCA	LCT
1	Garrison	Lowland Farmland
2a	Lower Lough Erne (North)	Lough Basin
3	Croagh and Garvary River	Lowland Hills
4	Lough Navar and Ballintempo	Limestone Uplands
5	Lough Macnean	Lough Basin
6	Knockmore Scarpland	Limestone Uplands
7	Sillees River	Broad Lowland Valley
8	Arney River	Broad Lowland Valley
9	Cuilcagh and Marlbank	Limestone Uplands
12	Newtownbutler and Rosslea	Lowland Farmland
14a	Lough Bradan (West)	Lowland Farmland
15	Irvinestown	Lowland Farmland
17	Clogher Valley	Lowland Farmland
18	Slieve Beagh	Sandstone Ridges and Plateau
21	Drumquin River	Broad Lowland Valley
22	Omagh	Lowland Farmland
23	Camowen River	Broad Lowland Valley
24	South Sperrin	Upland Hills and Valleys
25	Beaghmore Moors and Marsh	Lowland Hills
26	Bessy Bell and Gortin	Upland Hills and Valleys
43	Carrickmore	Lowland Hills
10b	Derrylin and Kinawley	Lowland Farmland
10a	Slieve Rushen	Limestone Uplands
11	Upper Lough Erne	Lough Basin
2b	Lower Lough Erne (South)	Lough Basin
14b	Lough Bradan (East)	Sandstone Ridges and Plateau
16	Brougher Mountain and Slievemore	Sandstone Ridges and Plateau

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Fermanagh & Omagh Landscape Character Review

Figure 5

1999 and 2018 Character Area Comparison

September 2018

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 km

Ironside **Farrar**

Legend

- FODC Boundary
- 2018 Landscape Character Areas
- Key Settlements

50201_QGIS

REF	2018 LCA	LCT
1	Garrison	Lowland Farmland
2a	Lower Lough Erne (North)	Lough Basin
3	Croagh and Garvary River	Lowland Hills
4	Lough Navar and Ballintempo	Limestone Uplands
5	Lough Macnean	Lough Basin
6	Knockmore Scarpland	Limestone Uplands
7	Sillees River	Broad Lowland Valley
8	Arney River	Broad Lowland Valley
9	Cuilcagh and Marlbank	Limestone Uplands
12	Newtownbutler and Rosslea	Lowland Farmland
14a	Lough Bradan (West)	Lowland Farmland
15	Irvinestown	Lowland Farmland
17	Clogher Valley	Lowland Farmland
18	Slieve Beagh	Sandstone Ridges and Plateau
21	Drumquin River	Broad Lowland Valley
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23	Camowen River	Broad Lowland Valley
24	South Sperrin	Upland Hills and Valleys
25	Beaghmore Moors and Marsh	Lowland Hills
26	Bessy Bell and Gortin	Upland Hills and Valleys
43	Carrickmore	Lowland Hills
10b	Derrylin and Kinawley	Lowland Farmland
10a	Slieve Rushen	Limestone Uplands
11	Upper Lough Erne	Lough Basin
2b	Lower Lough Erne (South)	Lough Basin
14b	Lough Bradan (East)	Sandstone Ridges and Plateau
16	Brougher Mountain and Slievemore	Sandstone Ridges and Plateau

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Fermanagh & Omagh Landscape Character Review

Figure 6

Key Settlements

September 2018

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 km