

Landscape Character Assessment of County Donegal

**Planning and Policy Unit
Community, Enterprise and Planning Services
Donegal County Council
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**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council

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1.0 Introduction

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT OF COUNTY DONEGAL

This Landscape Character Assessment of County Donegal was actioned as a result of the following objective, NH-O-7, of the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018:

"To prepare a Landscape Character Assessment that shall provide a framework for the identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of the landscape (and including seascape) of County Donegal in accordance with current legislation and ministerial guidelines, and having regard to the European Landscape Convention 2000."

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

- Carry out a Landscape Character Assessment for County Donegal in accordance with National and Regional legislation and Guidelines, the European Landscape Convention 2000 and having regard to existing best practice.
- Incorporate the findings of the Seascape Character Assessment of County Donegal, the Settlement Assessment of County Donegal and the Historic Landscape Characterisation of County Donegal into the Landscape Character Assessment.
- Collaborate with adjoining planning authorities to ensure cross boundary (and cross-border) continuity of landscape designations.

1.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

1.2.1 EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION (ETS NO.176) 2000

Ireland signed and ratified the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention (2000) that requires actions to be taken on the landscape and European wide co-operation on landscape issues.

It marks a departure from traditional landscape value assessment and introduces a concept centering on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning, and describes landscapes as:

"'Landscape' means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors"

covering:

"... the entire territory of the Parties and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, inland water and marine areas. It concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as everyday or degraded landscapes."

Article 6 of this convention requires signatories to identify their landscapes and analyse their characteristics and values including the forces and pressures transforming them.

Guidelines for the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention 2008 set out a series of theoretical, methodological and practical guidelines for the implementation of the above mentioned European Landscape Convention at a national level.

1.2.2. NATIONAL

The Planning and Development Act 2011 requires that a development plan include objectives for landscape that provide *"a framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes and development having regard to the European Landscape Convention"*.

Planning Policy Statement, 2015 published by Department of Environment, Community and Local Government sets out key principles that should be used as a strategic guide in implementing planning legislation in Ireland in particular Key Principles numbered 7 and 8 as detailed below are pertinent to this LCA process.

- 7. Planning will enhance a sense of place within and between cities, towns and villages and rural areas by recognising their intrinsic character and individual qualities and implement actions to protect and enhance that character and those qualities.*
- 8. Planning will conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance, from statutorily designated sites to sites of local importance, and including the conservation and management of landscape quality to the maximum extent possible, so that these intrinsic qualities of our country can be enjoyed for their collective contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.*

'A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025' published by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in May 2015 that aims to *"Implement the European Landscape Convention in Ireland by providing for specific measures to promote the protection, management and planning of the landscape"*. There are six core objectives and 19 associated key actions, the objectives of the draft NLS align with those of the European Landscape Convention and are listed below:

National Landscape Strategy Objectives	European Landscape Strategy Objectives
1. Recognise landscapes in law	Articles 5 (a) and 6E
2. Develop a National Landscape Character Assessment	Articles 6C and D
3. Develop Landscape Policies	Articles 5(b) and (d); Article 9
4. Increase Landscape Awareness	Article 6A
5. Identify Education, Research and Training Needs	Article 6B
6. Strengthen Public Participation	Article 5(c)

The 19 Actions flow from the 6 Landscape Strategy Objectives and detail how the objectives of the National Landscape Strategy will be realised. The actions proposed are summarised below:

1. Examine complementary legislation and codes for gaps that may need to be addressed.
2. National GIS landscape data platform.

3. National Landscape Character Map ensuring evidence based consistency across areas and functions and incorporating an outline Historic Landscape Characterisation.
4. Formulation of statutory guidelines on local Landscape Character Assessments, incorporating Historic Landscape Characterisation and other appropriate assessment methodologies.
5. Preparation of Landscape Character Assessments at regional, local and intra-local authority level that will inform and guide landscape policy, action plans and local authority development plans.
6. Interdepartmental consistency with the National Landscape Strategy across policies, strategies and legislation.
7. Periodic 'state of the landscape' reports by local authorities.
8. Definitions, analytical tools and descriptions to describe the nature of landscape and that the processes forming it are dynamic and evolving.
9. Develop public awareness programmes to promote an understanding of the nature and value of landscape.
10. Provision of support for public participation initiatives.
11. Develop national landscape awards and encourage participation to the European Landscape Awards and encourage the inclusion of landscape awards in existing awards schemes.
12. Complete and publish the Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes Survey of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.
13. Audit gaps in landscape education, research and training and develop programmes and training across professions and academic disciplines to address them.
14. Identify the best landscape management and landscape policy in Ireland and Europe.
15. Organise multi-disciplinary conferences on landscape management/conservation via a working committee of relevant experts.
16. Facilitate the introduction of landscape education into the primary and secondary school system.
17. Develop methods of participation to achieve delivery of actions to encourage citizens, and the state in the sustainable management of the landscape.
18. Raise awareness and encourage direct involvement by civil society, voluntary organisations and the commercial sector in augmenting and analysing the information in local Landscape Character Assessments.
19. Encourage greater participation in the European Landscape Convention organisations of RECEP-ENELC, UNISCAPE AND CIVILSPACE.
20. Set in place an implementation programme to assist in the delivery of actions set out in the NLS.

1.2.3 REGIONAL

The Regional Planning Guidelines (2010-2022) of the Border Regional Authorities, section 6.4 sets out landscape policies and objectives detailed below:

Landscape Policy

ENVP7 Protect Conserve and manage the quality, character and distinctiveness of our landscape.

ENVP8 Local Authorities shall collaborate with adjoining Planning Authorities so that all development plan policies are consistent in the protection and management of landscape.

Landscape Strategic Objectives

ENVO6 Adopt policies and measures in County Donegal Plans to protect, manage and plan landscapes through the provision of Landscape Classification and Assessments, in accordance with adopted European (and contemporary National) Landscape Guidance documents such as 'Guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, February 2008.

ENVO7 Inclusion of policies in Development Plans to protect important views and prospects and special amenity areas, to facilitate passive enjoyment of the heritage of the landscape.

In addition, section 6.9 (Development Plan Implications) of the Guidelines sets out the following, of relevance here as this LCA has been actioned on foot of a development plan objective:

Landscape

Development Plans should incorporate policies and objectives which protect and manage the landscape of the Region, both within, and outside their jurisdiction. Planning Authorities shall collaborate with adjoining authorities in this regard.

A common approach to landscape management should be adopted throughout the Region. This approach should-

- Ensure that the quality and character of landscape areas are identified;*
- Ensure a common designation and description for areas that require protection;*
- Ensure that common policies are applied to areas that require protection.*

This approach should also identify the nature and scale of development that would be permitted within areas of different designations.

1.2.4 LOCAL

County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018

Chapter 6, The Natural and Built Heritage, of the County Donegal Development Plan sets out the following 'Aim' of the Council:

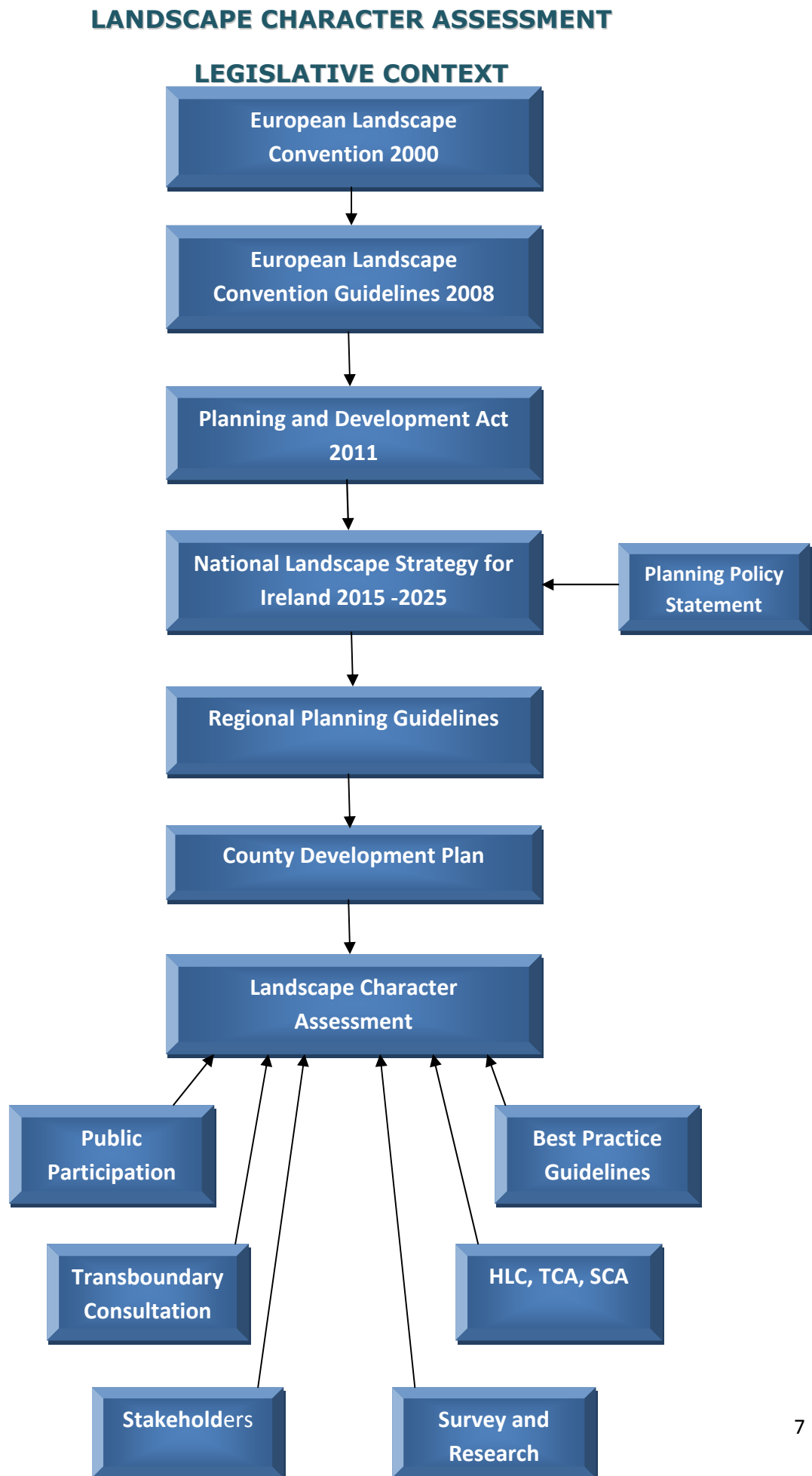
"To conserve, protect and enhance the County's built, natural and cultural heritage for future generations and encourage appreciation, access and enjoyment of these resources".

The plan contains areas within the County designated as 'Especially High Scenic Amenity' (EHSA), areas of the highest landscape quality, characterised by wilderness and few, if any man-made structures. The Environmental Report (SEA) accompanying the plan highlighted a potential impact on the 'landscape' by implementing some of the policies and objectives and resultantly recommended that a Landscape Character Assessment of the County be prepared, accordingly objective NH-O-7 (below) was included in the plan.

"To prepare a Landscape Character Assessment that shall provide a framework for the identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of the landscape (and including seascape) of County Donegal in accordance with current legislation and ministerial guidelines, and having regard to the European Landscape Convention 2000."

A flow chart of the legislative context for the preparation of the LCA illustrates how the legislated cascades from European to Local level thereby informing the nature and content of the LCA.

Figure 1.1 LCA Legislative Context Flowchart



2.0 Methodology

The National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015 – 2025 aligns closely with the EU Landscape Convention and EU Landscape Guidelines 2008. In addition to the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 best practice examples have been used that are also linked to the EU Landscape convention including 'An Approach to landscape Character assessment by Natural England, published October 2014 and best practice LCA examples in Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

2.1 COMPONENTS OF A LANDSCAPE

Below illustrates the universally accepted components of 'landscape' and the LCA process has considered all of these as a fundamental part of a process that together culminate in the identification of Landscape Character Areas.

Figure 1.2: Components of a Landscape.



Source: An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, October 2014, Natural England.

Donegal is a large coastal landscape of diametric types and terrain that has been changed by natural and man-made forces over time resulting in the landscape of the county today. In order to identify Landscape Character types and delineate areas with definitive similarities unique from adjacent areas as Landscape Character Areas, a project brief and methodology for carrying out the landscape Character Assessment was developed as set out in **Figure 1.3** on page 15.

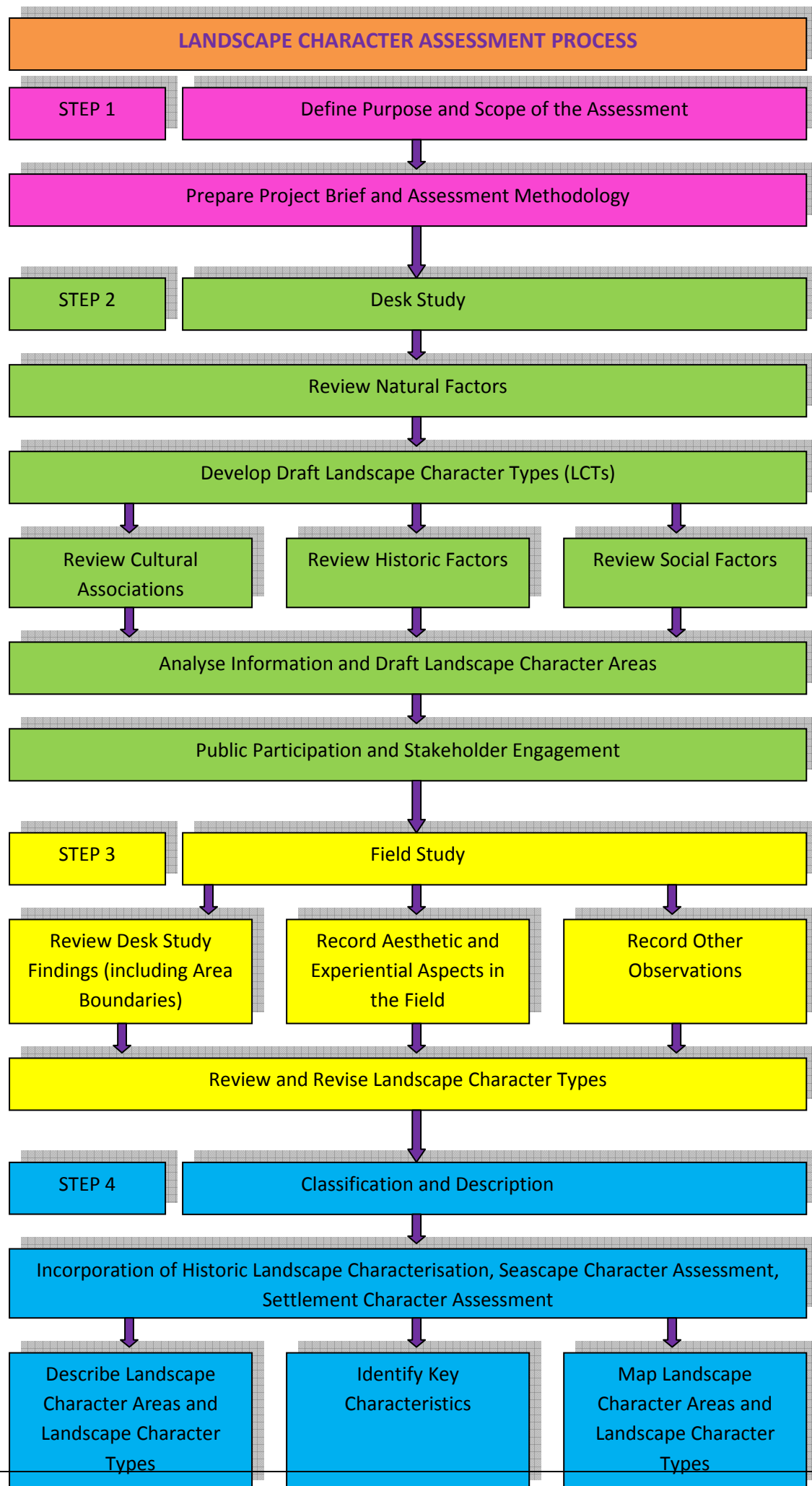
The landscape Character Assessment, in the defining of Landscape Character Areas, incorporated the research and findings of the following 3, separate but overlapping bodies of work. The 3 individual assessments commenced at the same time as the Landscape Character Assessment and have been carried out together as parallel and reiterative processes.

- Seascape Character Assessment (SA)
- Settlement Character Assessment (SCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)

The Landscape, Seascape and Settlement Character Assessments were carried out by an in-house team within the Central Planning Unit of Donegal County Council. The Historic Landscape Characterisation was carried out by a team of consultants 'MOLA-Museum of London Archaeologists', fulfilling an action of the Donegal Heritage Plan and funded by the Heritage Council.

2.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Figure 1.3 Landscape Character Assessment Process Flowchart is illustrated overleaf on page 15.



2.3 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT PROCESS (LCAP) STEP 1

2.3.1 SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

As illustrated in step 1 of figure 1.3, a scoping document was prepared in August 2013 that set out the content and procedure, scale and level of detail, the process and the resources and staff to be allocated to the project. The extract from the scope and terms of reference document copied below; sets out the parameters of the LCA for the County.

"It is the aim of the Council to prepare a Landscape Character assessment of the entire County at an appropriate level of scale and detail in accordance with national and international guidance and best practice. It is envisaged that the LCA shall inform numerous plans and projects including (inter alia) land use development plans, renewable energy strategies, integrated coastal zone management strategies, tourism product development and projects (including funding applications), infrastructural projects, mineral extraction projects and Strategic Environmental assessments of plans and projects.

Content and Procedure

It is Donegal County Council's intention to produce a comprehensive and robust Landscape Character Assessment. The Landscape character assessment (hereafter referred to as the LCA) shall include historic landscape assessment and seascape assessment for the entire County at a macro scale and shall incorporate a level of Settlement assessment. The process shall involve an objective assessment of landscape character types by layering spatial data using GIS in a technique already established on a smaller scale for assessing the environmental vulnerabilities of the County during the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018. This spatial data shall then be used to paint an objective picture of the landscape character types within the County. This work will include field work and stakeholder involvement.

The Council shall produce 4 separate parallel but interlinked assessments as listed below; the main findings of the historic landscape assessment, seascape assessment and settlement assessment shall inform and be integrated within the Landscape character assessment.

Landscape Character Assessment (incorporating the following)

- *Seascape Character Assessment*
- *Historical Landscape Characterisation*
- *Settlement Character Assessment.*

Scale level of detail

The LCA shall be carried out for the entire County at a strategic Countywide level, and shall be of a Regional scale and level of detail similar to that in both Northern Ireland (in their recently published Draft Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment) and County Leitrim (1:50,000 or 1:25000). This assessment will therefore provide a broad context of the overall landscape character of Donegal and more detailed character assessments could be carried out in individual town development plans and through the local area plan programme where more intimate assessment of a finer grain would be more appropriate.

The LCA identifies the individual components of the County's natural, cultural and built heritage and classifies the landscape into areas with succinct commonalities as individual landscape character areas.

Stages in the process

In accordance with the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 an approach to 'Landscape Character Assessment Guidance by Natural England published in October 2014. The steps and indicative timescale correlated with the stages and timescale for both the Seascape Character Assessment and Settlement Character Assessment and allowed for ease of data transfer throughout all steps of the three projects.

Appropriate Assessment

Pursuant to Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive a report was prepared entitled "Report on the requirement to carry out an Appropriate Assessment". The report recommended that "The Landscape Character Assessment, Seascape Character Assessment and Settlement Character Assessment of County Donegal are narrative descriptions of the individual elements that combine to inform the uniqueness and particular qualities of different areas within County Donegal and as such will have no direct effect on the environment.

These are not likely to be significant effects on the network of Natura 2000 sites as a result of the publication of the Landscape Character Assessment, Seascape Character Assessment and Settlement Character Assessment and therefore an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Pursuant to the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I.435 of 2004), a report was prepared entitled "Report on the requirement to carry out a Strategic Environmental Report".

The report concluded that "The Assessments (Landscape Character Assessment, Seascape Character Assessment, Settlement Character Assessment) are narrative descriptions of the individual elements that combine to inform the uniqueness and particular qualities of different areas within County Donegal and as such will have no direct effect on the environment.

2.4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT PROCESS (LCAP) STEP 2

2.4.1 DESK STUDY

This first step in step 2 of the process was to identify and classify the Landscape Character Types in County Donegal.

The Landscape Character Types are the physical attributes that make up a landscape; they are generic in nature and not specific to an area so are present throughout the County, for example 'Atlantic Blanket Bog' occurs in Inishowen to the north of the County and also within west Donegal, although they occur in different landscape character areas.

Landscape Character types were identified following a desk based examination of various layers of spatial data on the physical attributes of the County, in combination with historical mapping, photography surveys, 3D photography and aerial photography. A total of 23 different Landscape Character Types have been identified and these are shown as **Figure 1.4** Landscape Character Type Map of County Donegal below (page 20). Landscape Character Types are the **physical attributes** of the land.

GIS was used extensively in the initial stages of this element of the assessment, 'gsi' bedrock data was combined with 'Corine' soil, sub-soil and surface cover data to identify commonalities and predominant types within the landscape. This initial assessment was then proofed using a series of aerial and satellite photography to arrive at draft landscape character types that were subsequently verified during site survey work across the entire county.

2.4.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

The varying landscape character types are detailed in Figure 1.4 Landscape Character Types Map of Donegal (page 20) and Figure 1.5 Landscape Character Type Table (pages 21 – 31) below.

There are 23 different LCTs throughout the County; (6 types of agriculture) agricultural arable and pasture, agricultural riverine, agricultural coastal, agricultural drumlin and agricultural estuarine. Natural grassland, forestry/woodland, 3 types of bog, Atlantic, mountainous and highland blanket bog, urban fabric, golf courses, dunes and beach, inter-tidal flats, inland marsh, salt marsh, mountain peaks, bare rock, sparsely vegetated, heath, upland heath and moorland and water bodies.

Figure 1.4 Landscape Character Type Map of County Donegal

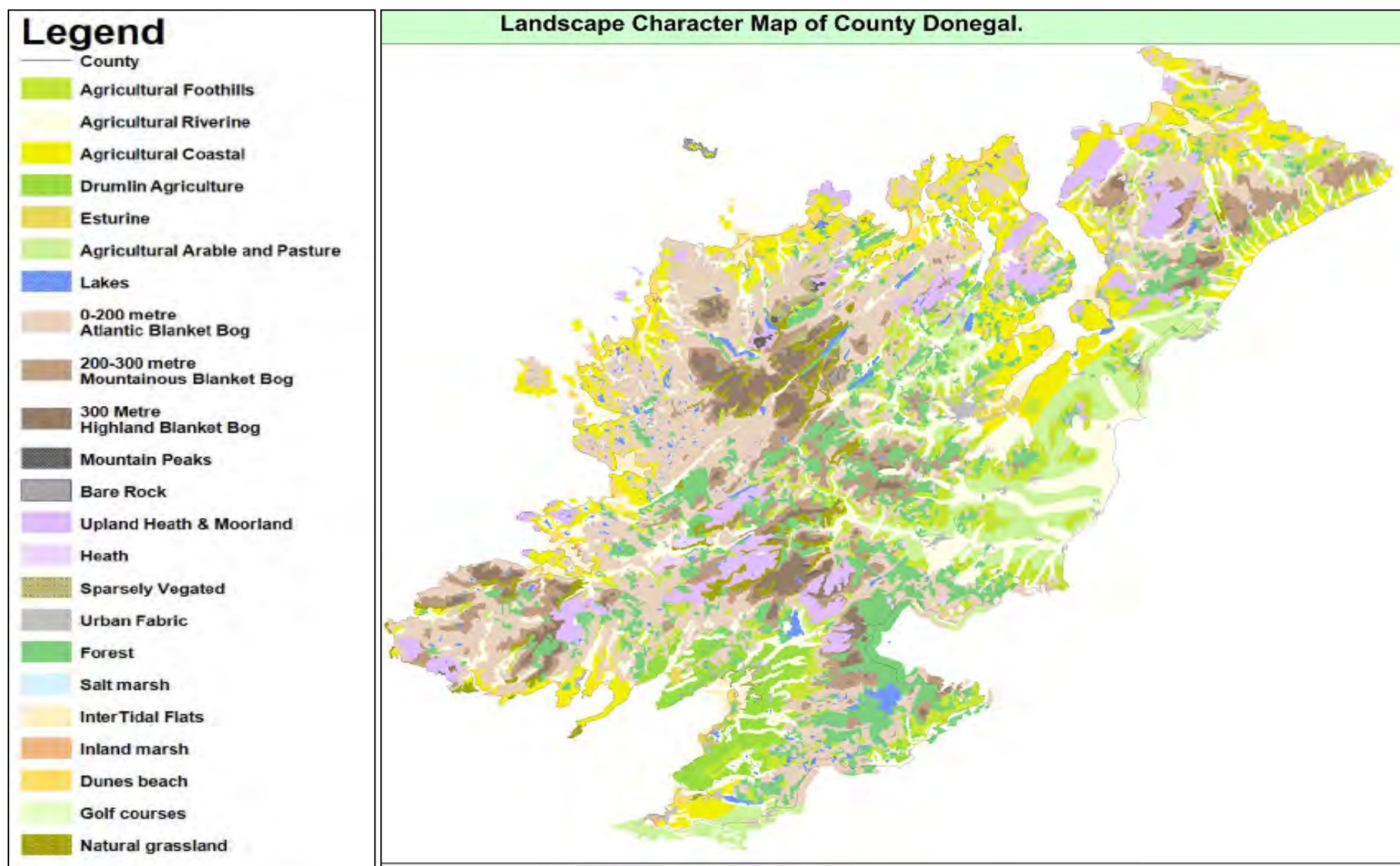
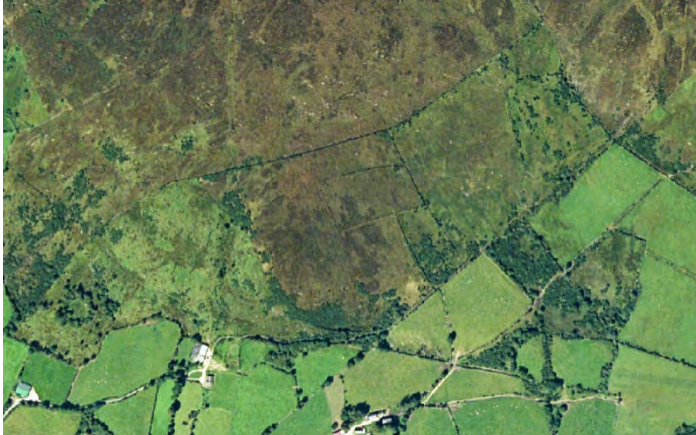


Figure 1.5 Landscape Character Type Table

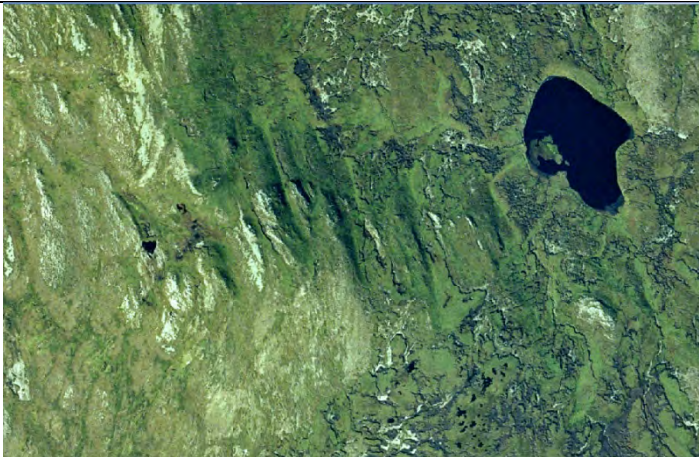
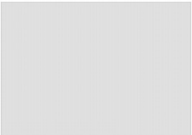
LCT code (Colour shown as per LCT map in figure 1.4)	Example	Brief description	County coverage (Ha)
A1 (Agricultural arable and pasture) 		Agricultural arable and pasture Areas of high quality arable land generally located to the east of the county around the Finn Valley and Foyle valley within an area colloquially known as the Laggan. Inland agricultural areas prevalent in the Lough Fern LCA (18) and in mid-Inishowen.	32,150 ha
A2 (Agricultural Riverine) 		Agricultural Riverine Farmland occurring within the arable plains within the many river valleys and glens.	62,240 ha

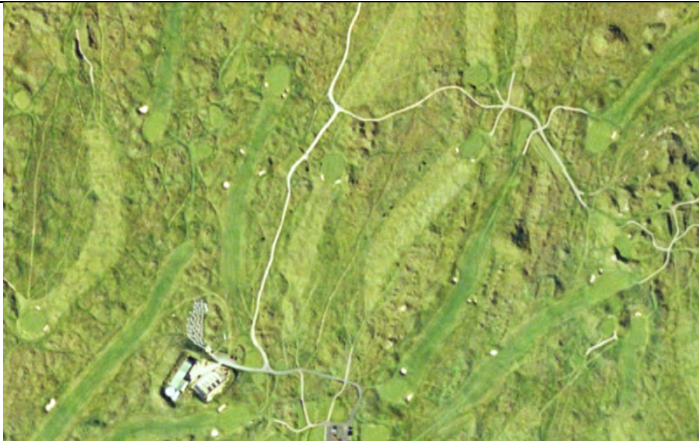
A3 (Agricultural Coastal) 		Agricultural Coastal Farmland occurring at coastal locations such as Donegal Bay and north east Inishowen.	52,130 ha
A4 (Agricultural Foothills) 		Agricultural Foothills Farmland at the bottom of mountainous areas, generally occurring below the 100m contour line.	38,770 ha

A5D (Agricultural Drumlin) 		Agricultural Drumlin Distinctive and characteristic drumlin agricultural landscape formed by retracting glaciers evident in the lands within the south west of the county inland of Donegal Bay.	12,830 ha
A6ES (Agricultural Estuarine) 		Agricultural Estuarine Coastal low lying agricultural areas inland from sea estuaries at various locations along the coast including Trawbreaga Bay in Inishowen and The Big Isle in Letterkenny.	2,795 ha

NG (Natural Grassland) 		Natural Grassland Natural and wild grasslands including areas of 'Machair' prevalent in the west of the county.	10,300 ha
FW (Forest/ Woodland) 		Forest/ Woodland This type includes both coniferous and deciduous forests.	56,760 ha

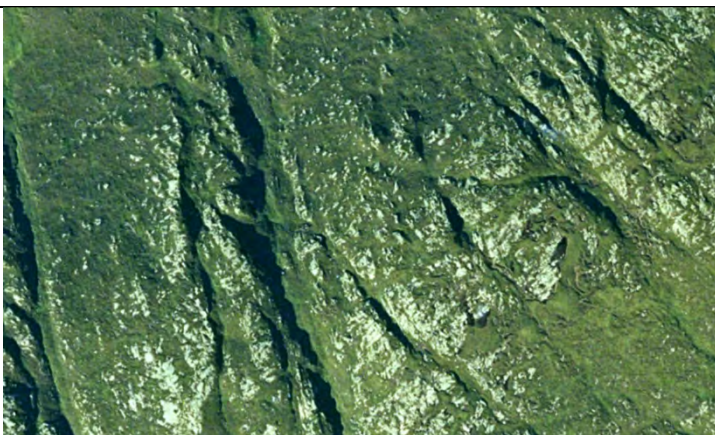
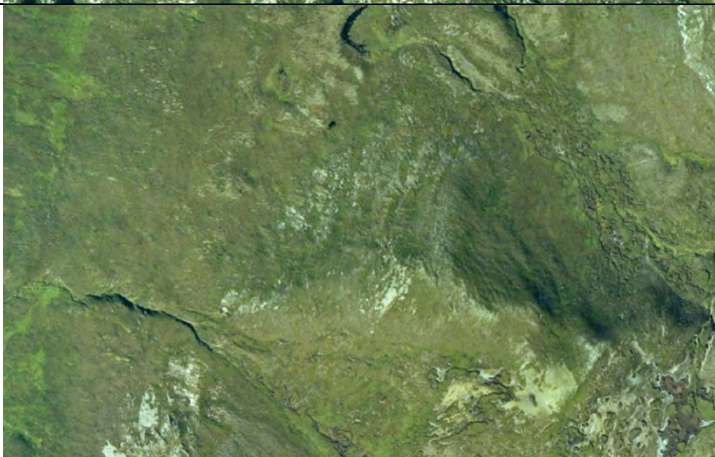
BG1 (0-200 metre Atlantic Blanket Bog) 		0-200 metre Atlantic Blanket Bog Atlantic bogs are within low-lying coastal plains and the lower slopes of mountainous valleys.	125,000 ha
BG2 (200-300 metre Mountainous Blanket Bog) 		200-300 metre Mountainous Blanket Bog Mountain blanket bogs are in relatively flat terrain in the mountain ranges occurring between 200-300m.	37,310 ha

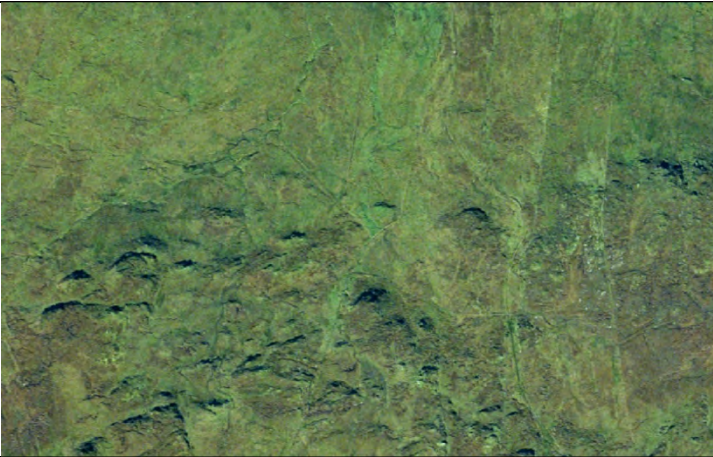
BG3 (300 metre Highland Blanket Bog) 		300 metre Highland Blanket Bog Highland blanket bog is blanket bog occurring above 300m.	16,010 ha
UF (Urban Fabric) 		Urban Fabric Towns, villages and other man-made features including leisure facilities and Carrickfinn Airport	5,701 ha

GC (Golf Courses) 		Golf Courses There are # Golf Courses in the county and an identifiable landscape type.	604 ha
DB (Dunes and Beach) 		Dunes and Beach There are numerous beaches and dune systems necklaced around the coast of the county.	5,147 ha

ITF (Inter-tidal Flats) 		Inter-tidal Flats Intertidal flats are areas of sea bed exposed at low tide prevalent in various inland estuaries along the coast alongside estuarine farmland.	11,950 ha
IM (Inland Marsh) 		Inland Marsh Inland marshes are ecologically important wetland areas covered in fresh water from rivers, lakes or springs	534 ha

SM (Salt Marsh) 		Salt Marsh Salt marshes are coastal wetlands flooded by (often tidal) seawater.	70 ha
MP (Mountain Peaks) 		Mountain Peaks These areas are contained to the extreme points of the Derryveagh and Blue Stack Mountain ranges.	438 ha

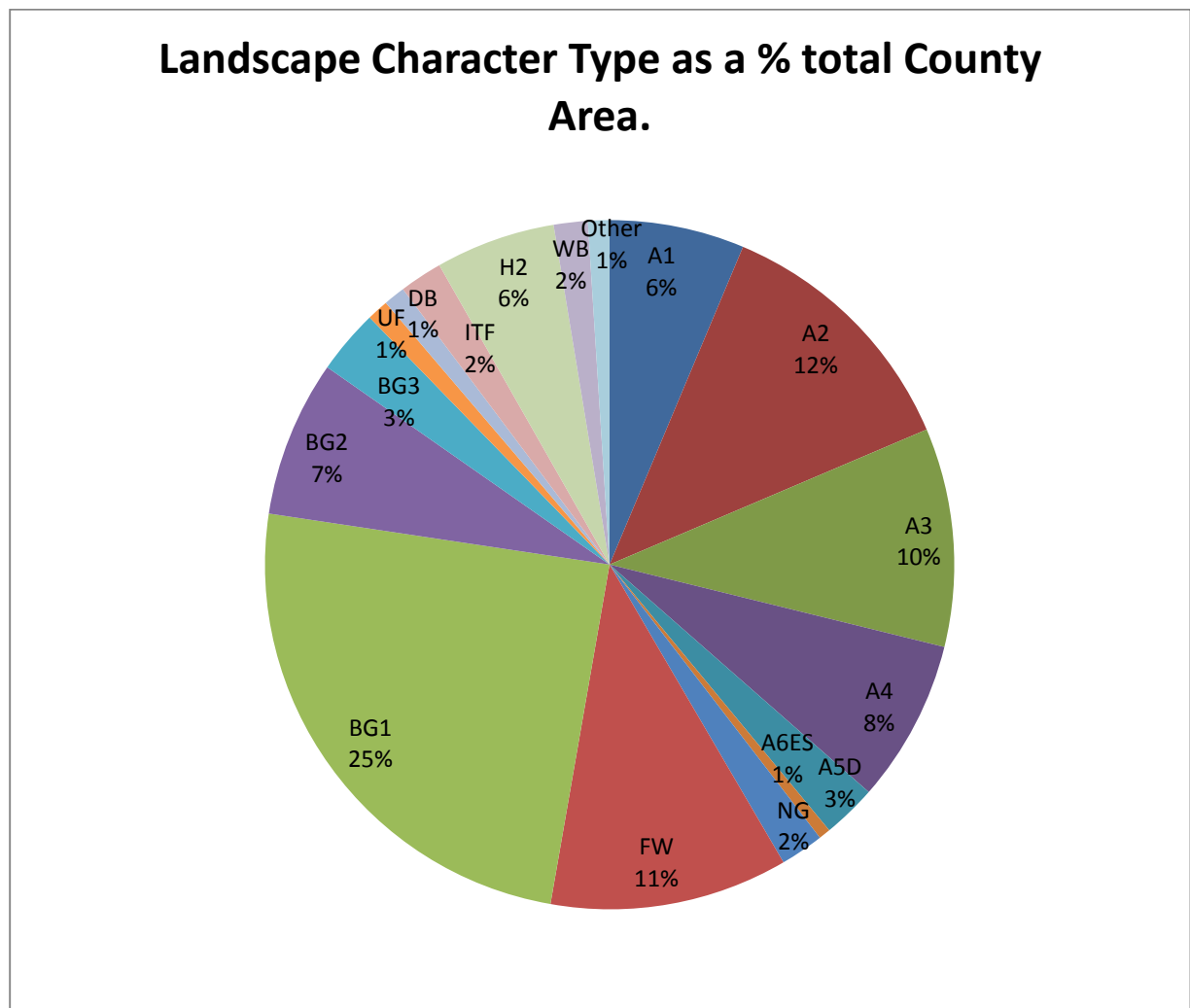
BR (Bare Rock) 		Bare Rock Areas of exposed bare rock which occur in very high elevations of the Derryveagh mountain ranges and also an area at Slieve League.	816 ha
SV (Sparsely Vegetated) 		Sparsely Vegetated Distinct sloped areas mainly within the high elevations of the Derryveagh mountains characterised by rock debris and limited vegetation.	1412 ha

H1 (Heath) 		Heath These are small pockets of low-lying uncultivated land that are characterised by vegetation such as heather, gorse and coarse grass.	2,261 ha
H2 (Upland Heath Moorland) 		Upland Heath Moorland Larger areas of uncultivated upland typically covered with heather.	28,610 ha

WB (Water Bodies) 		Water Bodies A mixture of fresh and salt water lakes and reservoirs.	8,076 ha
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Donegal's Landscape Character Types are the foundations of its rich and unique character; in both the variety of types and in their juxtaposition, giving a strong and vibrant contrast in many areas, with mountains and uplands overlooking beaches, estuaries, farmland and lakes, resulting in a dynamic and striking landscape of discernible scenic quality. The pie chart (**Figure 1.6**) below shows the breakdown of each landscape type as a percentage of the whole county area, clearly highlighting the rural nature of the county with only 1% urban fabric, 1% urban fabric, 40% (combined) agriculture and 35% (combined) bog, within this Atlantic Bog is the single largest Landscape Character Type covering a quarter of the County. Undisturbed peatlands act as long term sinks for atmospheric carbon dioxide and the 35% coverage in Donegal constitutes a substantial carbon sink in the County and nationally.

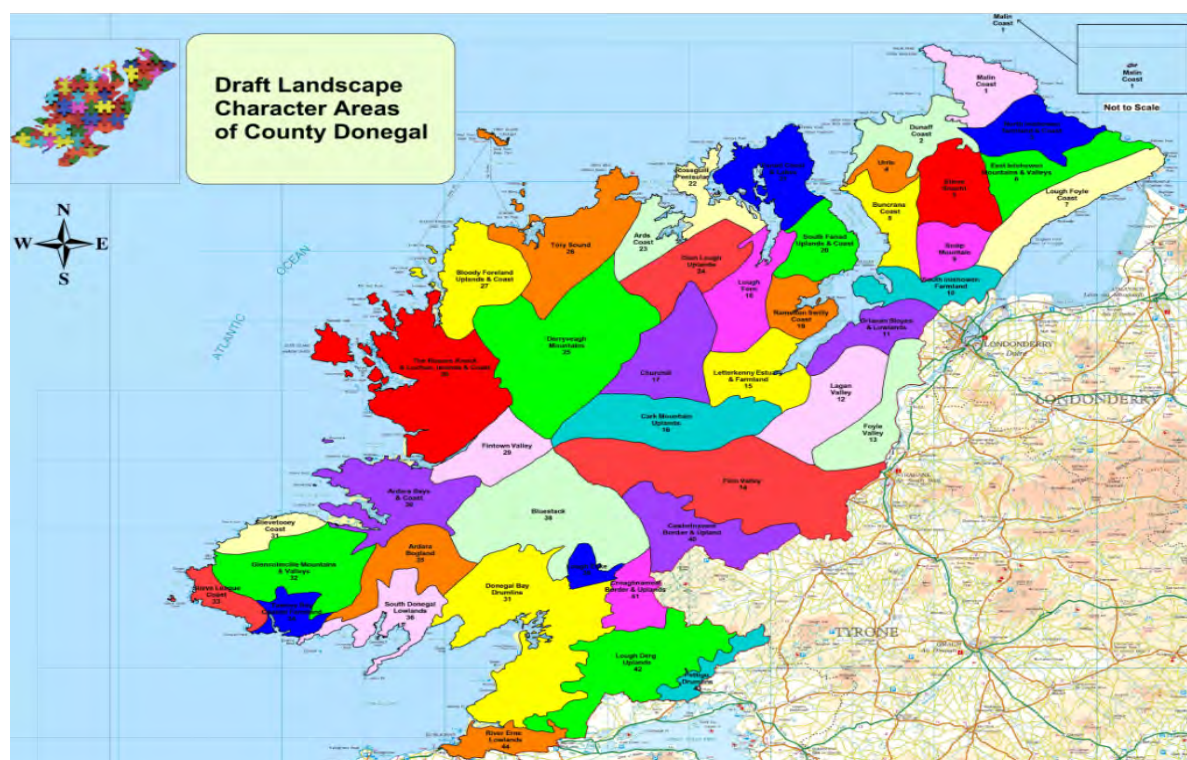
Figure 1.6 Percentage Breakdown of Landscape Character Type



LCT codes as per table above; GC,IM,MP,SM,BR,SV, HI, H2 and WB have been amalgamated and represented within the band 'other' as combined they relate to 1% of the total area of the county. (Actual Statistics available)

Further desktop research was carried out using GIS to examine layers of cultural, historic and social data. This was informed by further research including the findings of research from a Historic Landscape Study, the Seascapes and Settlement Character Assessments to delineate and identify 44 separate Landscape Character Areas. The first delineation of Landscape Characters is illustrated in **Figure 1.7** below.

Figure 1.7 Draft Landscape Character Areas of Donegal



2.4.3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

In accordance with the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland, current best practice and the principles of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) consultation was a key component throughout the LCA process that consisted of three distinct periods as detailed in **Figure 1.8** below.

Figure 1.8 - Stages of Public Participation/Consultation during LCA with Elements of each Stage

STAGE 1 Initial Consultation		
Method	Date	Audience
Initial stakeholder letter	July 2013	Targeted
Ongoing transboundary consultation with DoENI	Throughout process	Targeted
Website (publicised on Council's webpage)	Late Nov 2013	Countywide and beyond
Social media: - Facebook - Twitter - Donegal Council's Blog	Throughout process	Countywide and beyond
STAGE 2 Pre-Draft Consultation		
Circulation of LCA flyer/ information leaflet	January and February 2014	Targeted: • Councillors • Stakeholders • Secondary schools • Primary schools

		• Community groups • Libraries • Local Authorities
5 Newspaper advertisements	4 th -7 th Feb 2014	Countywide
6 Drop-in events	10 th -25 th February 2014	• Carndonagh • Donegal Town • Letterkenny • Dungloe • Milford • Ballybofey
Stakeholder meeting	26 th Feb 2014	Targeted
STAGE 3 Consultation on published Draft Landscape Character Assessment, Seascape Character Assessment and Settlement Character Assessment		
Newspaper advertisements	22 nd Jun 2015 – 7 th Aug 2015	Countywide
Social media	Throughout process	Countywide
Stakeholders		Targeted
Website (publicised on Council's webpage)	Throughout process	Countywide

Stage 1: Initial Consultation

The initial stage of consultation corresponds to the initial steps of the LCA process, after Step 1 and prior to Step 2 of the LCA Process as detailed in Figure 1.3 of this report. Initial targeted letters of request for stakeholders were sent out and transboundary consultation with the Chief Landscape Architect in Dept. of Environment, Northern Ireland began.

Stage 2: Pre-Draft Consultation

This was a period of intense public participation during a three month period beginning in January 2014 that used a number of established and emerging methods of interacting with and informing the general public. The LCA process was advertised in local press, on the council's website and on Facebook and Twitter. A letter and information leaflet, **Figure 1.9** below, were sent out to over 400 community groups throughout the County outlining the LCA process, detailing drop-in events and explaining how to make a submission and become involved in the LCA process. Similarly, a letter and information leaflet was sent out to all public libraries, primary schools and secondary schools in the County in order to target a younger age cohort in the consultation process. Targeted notification on the LCA was also sent out to all neighbouring Local Authorities. An interactive mapping tool was developed encouraging digital submissions that were localised to a geographical point and to which submissions and photographs could be attached, and all methods of submission including digital submissions were encouraged and welcomed, screenshot of this is illustrated in **Figure 1.10** below.

There were a series of 5 structured public 'drop in' events throughout the County during February 2014 and attended by members of the LCA team. There were a number of draft maps on display including those listed below in addition to rolling presentations and hand-out maps and documentation. The purpose of the public events was to encourage informed public participation and on the whole these events were well attended and had positive outcomes.

Draft maps on display at the public events were:

- Landscape Character Areas.
- Landscape Character Types.

- Historic Landscape Characterisation.
- Seascape Character Assessment.

Figure 1.9: ‘Have Your Say About Your Landscape’.

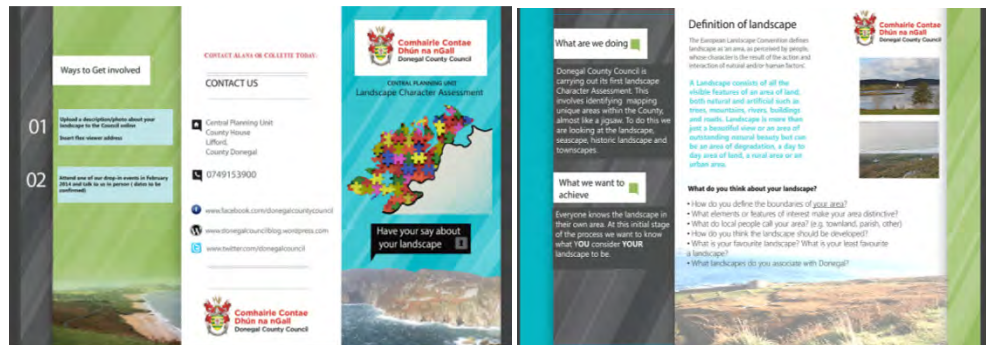
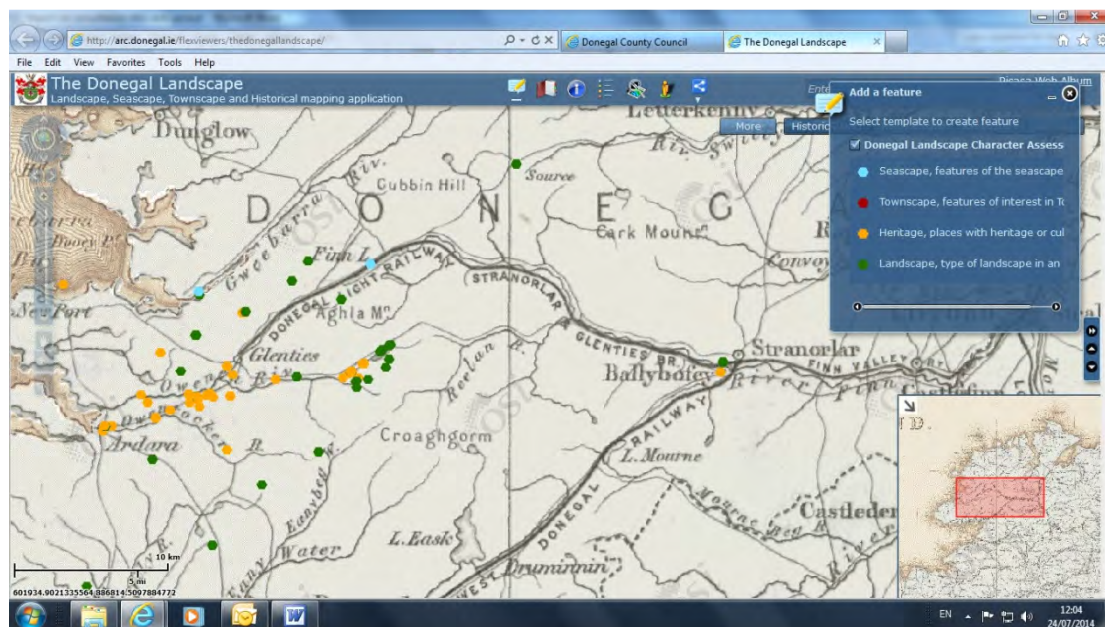


Figure 1.10: Screen shot from the interactive map based consultation method.



The robust and varied methods for encouraging public participation resulted in the receipt of a substantial amount of submissions; 18 public written submissions (30 via email, 16 at organised drop in events), and 203 online submissions via flexi viewer, the online interactive mapping tool. Of all these responses, only 11 were not associated with any particular area.

2.4.4 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

41 Stakeholders were consulted by letter at Stage 1 of the process in July 2013, requesting input from the earliest stage that would fully inform and help shape the project. The stakeholders were identified based on their specialist knowledge and particular interest in the Donegal landscape and in the LCA process and assistance invited that would provide access to relevant data, guidance, or observations that would enhance the quality of the process and project outputs. 9 of the 41 identified stakeholders responded formally whilst others maintained a more informal consultative role. On the basis of expressed interest a round table meeting took place on 26th February 2014 with 14 targeted stakeholders comprising a short presentation on the LCA methodology and work to date and detailing the work programme going forward. The

stakeholders were then asked to discuss the draft work to date and give a steer as to how the process could be improved upon and an indication of how it should shape up. All elements of the LCA and its process were up for discussion however the LCA team tried to focus the meeting to the regional scale LCA and the draft maps published to date. In particular the 4 areas below were focused on:

- Draft Landscape Character types
- Draft Seascape Assessment units
- Draft Historic landscape Characterisation
- Draft Landscape Character Areas

A number of issues were raised giving direction to the LCA at the meeting that have been incorporated in the process and 3 written submissions followed. Stakeholder consultation during Steps 2 and 3 raised no further issues or amendments.

Stage 3: Consultation on published Draft Landscape Character Assessment, Seascape Character Assessment and Settlement Character Assessment

The third and final stage of the public consultation followed the drafting of the Landscape Character Assessment (and accompanying Seascape Character Assessment and Settlement Character Assessment). These documents were made available for public inspection in the principal offices of Donegal County Council and digitally on Donegal County Council's website – donegalcoco.ie. Comments were invited between 22nd June 2015 and 7th August 2015 and notification of this was widely publicised in the local press and the Council's website, blog, Facebook and Twitter accounts. In addition, the 37 Elected Members of Donegal County Council, the 23 prescribed authorities and 43 identified stakeholders all received targeted notification via letter or email of this third stage of public consultation of the published Landscape Character Assessment (Seascape Character Assessment and Settlement Character Assessment).

Eleven submissions were received during this public consultation stage that resulted in five minor amendments to the Landscape Character Assessment document.

2.5 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT PROCESS (LCAP) STEP 3

2.5.1 FIELD STUDY

Extensive site survey work was undertaken during the summer and autumn of 2014 to verify the draft 'Landscape Character Types' and to verify and inform the 'Landscape Character Areas'. In accordance with best practice guidance, a site survey sheet was prepared to capture information on the landscape (attached in appendix 6.4). A minimum of three points within each LCA were surveyed and photographed and the landscape character and landscape types within that LCA were considered but also the views out into other LCAs where appropriate; all locations were recorded as GPS points.

This site survey work coincided with the survey work carried out for both the Seascape Character Assessment and the Settlement Character Assessment informing a complete and considered Landscape Character Assessment.

The LCA survey work considered landscape character areas as separate entities of a particular and unique character but also their interaction with other LCAs, the Seascape and the substantial adjoining boundary with Northern Ireland that intrinsically informs the landscape of County Donegal.

The site survey work also allowed consideration of the less tangible elements of landscape and seascape that are identified as perceptual and aesthetic in Figure 1.2 of this report 'Components of a Landscape'.

2.6 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT PROCESS (LCAP) STEP 4

2.6.1 CLASSIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION

The 'classification and description' is the last part in four of the methodology as set out in section 2.2 of the report. This stage in the process considers the entire landscape of the county in terms of all the layers of data identified and collated during steps 1-3 in the process and via the separate Seascape Character Assessment and Settlement Character Assessment processes.

The 'Landscape Character Types' and 'Landscape Character Areas' were amended slightly from the maps published during the initial public consultation stage in February 2014 as a result of recommendations made through the public consultation process, as have the names of some of the individual Landscape Character Areas, particularly those within the Gaeltacht.

A summary description of the landscape of County Donegal is contained in section 3.0 of this report and the 44 individual landscape character areas identified have been described in more detail as 'areas' in section 4.0 of this report. The purpose of this description is to highlight the components and characteristics within each area as identified in the landscape wheel in section 2.1 of this report that make it unique from other areas and contribute to its character. Various data sets and data sources including digital spatial data and written record were interrogated and presented as a narrative within this document to inform the sustainable development of the County in line with the EU Landscape Convention and the objectives and actions of the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025.

Interactive spatial digital mapping of the Draft Landscape Character Assessment, Draft Seascape Character Assessment and Draft Settlement Character Assessment of County Donegal are available on Donegal County Councils website www.donegalcoco.ie and enable examination in more detail of the defined Landscape Character Areas and their key spatial components.

3.0 Landscape Character Assessment

3.1 DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The landscape of Co. Donegal is dominated by a mountainous granite spine running northeast to southwest comprising the mountain ranges of Derryveagh. To the southwest of these ranges there is a 'massif' peninsula of hard quartzite mountains, known as the Blue Stacks, extending from Ballybofey to Glencolumbkille on the western coast. The west coast provides an indented coastline that includes the dramatic sea cliffs of Slieve League, spectacular beaches, tidal sheltered bays, extensive peninsulas and sea loughs in addition to numerous offshore islands, some of which remain inhabited.

Donegal has many distinctive attributes, unique landscapes and defining features; it is the most northerly county in Ireland with the most northerly landfall at Malin Head, the highest sea cliffs in Europe at Sliabh Liag and reputedly the oldest town in Ireland, Ballyshannon, to name but a few.

Donegal is the fourth largest County in Ireland comprising of 486,091 hectares or 6.9% of the total land area of the state with an extensive coastline of 1134km along the Atlantic Ocean to the north and west; the longest shoreline in the country. Donegal shares a 140km long border with Northern Ireland to the east, and only abuts the rest of the Republic of Ireland along a 9km stretch with County Leitrim at its most southerly point, and this proximity to Northern Ireland and the almost visually unperceivable border is an important factor in terms of landscape influences and interrelationships in this area.

3.2 GEOLOGY

Geologically Donegal is one of the most complex counties in Ireland, part of the north-west "Caledonian province" it is one of the 9 geological provinces in Ireland. Donegal has been sculpted from a conglomerate of bedrock geology and by glaciers of the last ice age that have carved the landforms out of the hard rocks they encountered. Drumlins mark the glacial retreat of ice sheets to the sea in Donegal Bay during the very last phase of the Ice Age, and a more consistent layer of glacial superficial deposits cover the area of the Laggan, whilst retracting ice sheets also sculpted the distinctive u shaped glacial valley at Glen Gesh. Lough Swilly is the longest of several glaciated inlets (fjords) along the long and indented coastline of Donegal and contrasts to Lough Foyle, a broad basin with a history of subsidence and a thick fill of sedimentary rocks and recent sediments.

A dominant feature of the county are its granite mountains and ridges, part of a series of granite ridges of the 'Grampian Orogeny' that run along a northeast-southwest axis, formed by the wrinkling of the earth's crust and extending from Mayo and Connemara through to Scotland, lending a geological unity of character to both the northwest of Ireland and the highlands of Scotland. The hard quartzite mountains of Derryveagh extend to the south and west and the sharp profile of Errigal with its hard quartzite core has links with other significant mountains such as Croagh Patrick and the 12 Bens (Pins) of Connemara; all also within the north-west geological "Caledonian province".

Common northeast-southwest axis of the rocks are evident as ridges of quartzite mountains, most notably the alignment of Muckish, Aghla Beg, Aghla More, Errigal and Crocknafarragh that have been divided into peaks by glaciers. Glaciated valleys are occupied by Dunlewey and Nancung Loughs to the southwest and Altan Lough to the northeast. Another distinctive quartz ridge runs from Raghtin More through the Urris Hills and crosses Lough Swilly to Knockalla Mountain. Other quartzite peaks include the dramatic sea cliffs at Sliabh Liag.

Major fractures along the rocks have been exploited by erosion, mainly ice to produce long straight valleys such as Glenveagh (separating the Derryveagh and Glendowan

mountains) that continues southwest to the Barra, Owenee and Gweebarra river valleys all in a straight line along the Gweebarra fault.

Barnesmore Gap is another dramatic valley formed along a fault through granite in the Bluestack Mountains, these lie to the south east of the Derryveagh Massif and have a complex geology of rock type including both quartzite and Granite. They form a formidable barrier dividing the east side of the county, north from south.

Granites of Donegal show contrasting landscape forms. Derryveagh mountains, the largest upland massif in the region are underlain by granite, but so is the Rosses area of low hummocky ground with many small loughs. The granites of Donegal are made up of three minerals, quartz, feldspar and mica. They show contrasting landforms, granite underlies the low coastal areas north of Ardara and around Dungloe and the granites of the Bluestack Mountains and Slieve Sneacht of the Derryveagh Mountains form the highest peaks of the South Donegal area.

These contrast to the lower gentler lands around Donegal Bay that consist of softer shales, sandstones and limestones, and were also an area of ice age deposition with drumlins and tills blanketing the area, and the fertile Laggan area in east Inishowen that is lower lying and covered in deposits of glacial till.

More recent notable (geological) changes to the landscape have been created by the shifting sands along the coast of the county and include the internationally rare habitat that is provided by the flat aeolian sand plains, or machair, (found in the west of Scotland and Ireland). Approximately half of Irelands machair shores fringe Donegal (Cooper 2013,50) and were formed as strong winds and waves migrated sands towards the beaches, initially forming dunes, the tops of which blew finer sands inland forming plains of sand over bedrock and peat. Whilst small modifications continue to be made by shifting sands and by the actions of humans, the fundamental creation of the Donegal landscape arose from the interactions of rock structure and glaciations over a long geological history.

Figure 1.11 Map of Geology of Donegal simplified into general rock types. GSI overlaid the basic geology with contours revealing a general geological basis for the main landscape features.

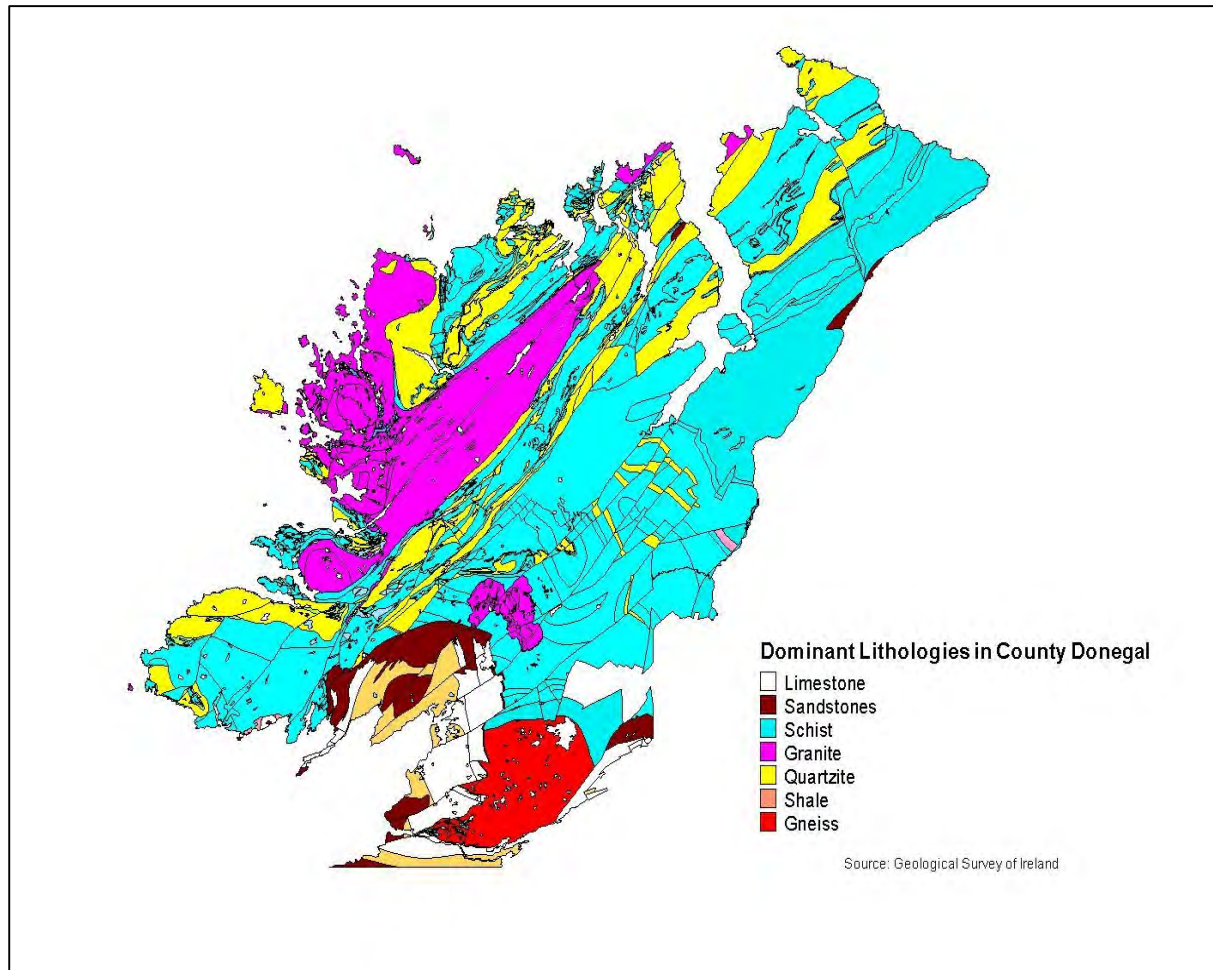
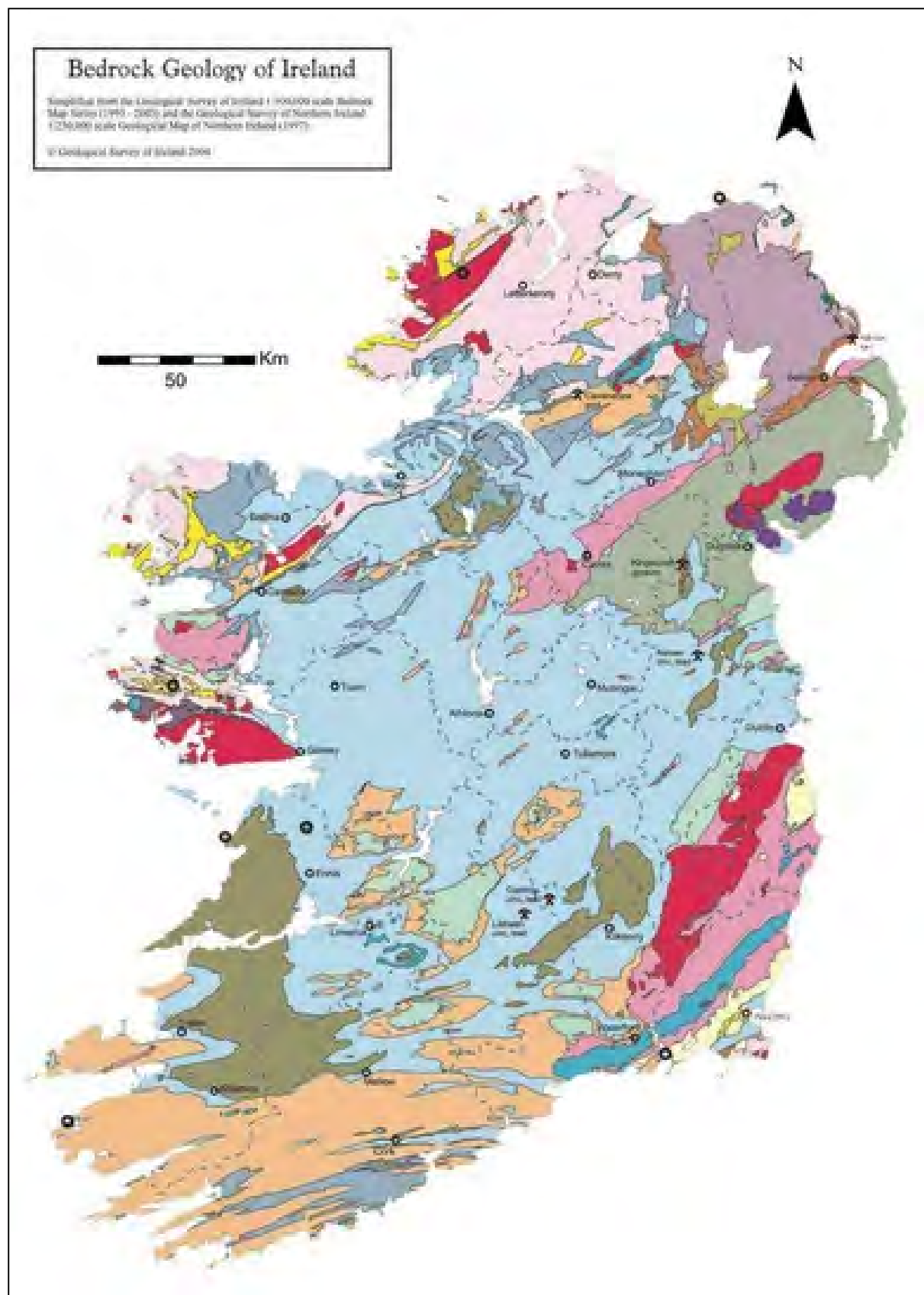


Figure 1.12 Bedrock Geology of Ireland – MAP WITH LEGEND



Source: www.gsi.ie

3.3 HYDROLOGY

The Hydrology of County Donegal is one of the fundamental elements and processes that shaped the physical geography over time and intrinsically informs the landscape of today, giving the county many of its unique and iconic features such as the sea cliffs at Sliabh Liag, Glenveagh, Lough Eske, Lough Derg, Falcarragh, Mulroy Bay, Lough Swilly and Lough Foyle to name but a few. As with all elements of the landscape there is a considerable association with the rivers, lakes, streams and coast of the county; historically related to sources of food and water as well as important primary access routes and more recently relationships that overlap physical, environmental, cultural, spiritual and social strata creating a strong local identity and in some cases an international identity, such as at Lough Derg and Donegal Bay.

3.3.1 NORTH WEST INTERNATIONAL RIVER BASIN DISTRICT

The county falls within the North Western International River Basin District, a cross border area based on river catchments, and serve as administrative areas for implementing co-ordinated water management in the context of the EU Water Framework Directive 2000. All of County Donegal falls within the NWIRBD, as do large parts of Fermanagh (NI), Cavan, Derry (NI), Monaghan and Tyrone (NI) along with significant parts of Leitrim and Longford and a small area of Sligo. The NWIRBD includes the catchments of the Foyle, Erne and Swilly rivers and Lakes Erne (upper and lower), Melvin, Macnean and Lough Swilly, and the coastline of Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo and Derry. All of the region's groundwater is also included.

As the NWIRBD falls within two different jurisdictions, there are also separate management plans; the North Western River Basin Management Plan (2009-2015) relates to the area that falls within the Republic of Ireland only.

Within Donegal the NWIRBD covers all surface waters, ground waters, heavily modified and artificial waters, and protected areas, and the NWRB Management plan is the result of identifying risks to waters, assessing the status of waters, setting objectives and developing measures to achieve those objective, all part of the overarching aim to protect existing areas of high water quality and achieve at least good water quality status on all waters by 2015 (and in some instances extended to 2021), with a second plan proposed for the period 2015-2021 and then a third from 2021-2027. The maps and details for the plan are contained digitally at www.wfdireland.ie

Pressures on the water quality of the area have been identified as agriculture, wastewater and industrial discharge, wastewater from unsewered properties, Forestry, Landfills, quarries, mines and contaminated lands, physical modifications and damage, water abstractions, dangerous substances, aquaculture, invasive alien species, cruising and boating, shared waters issues and climate change.

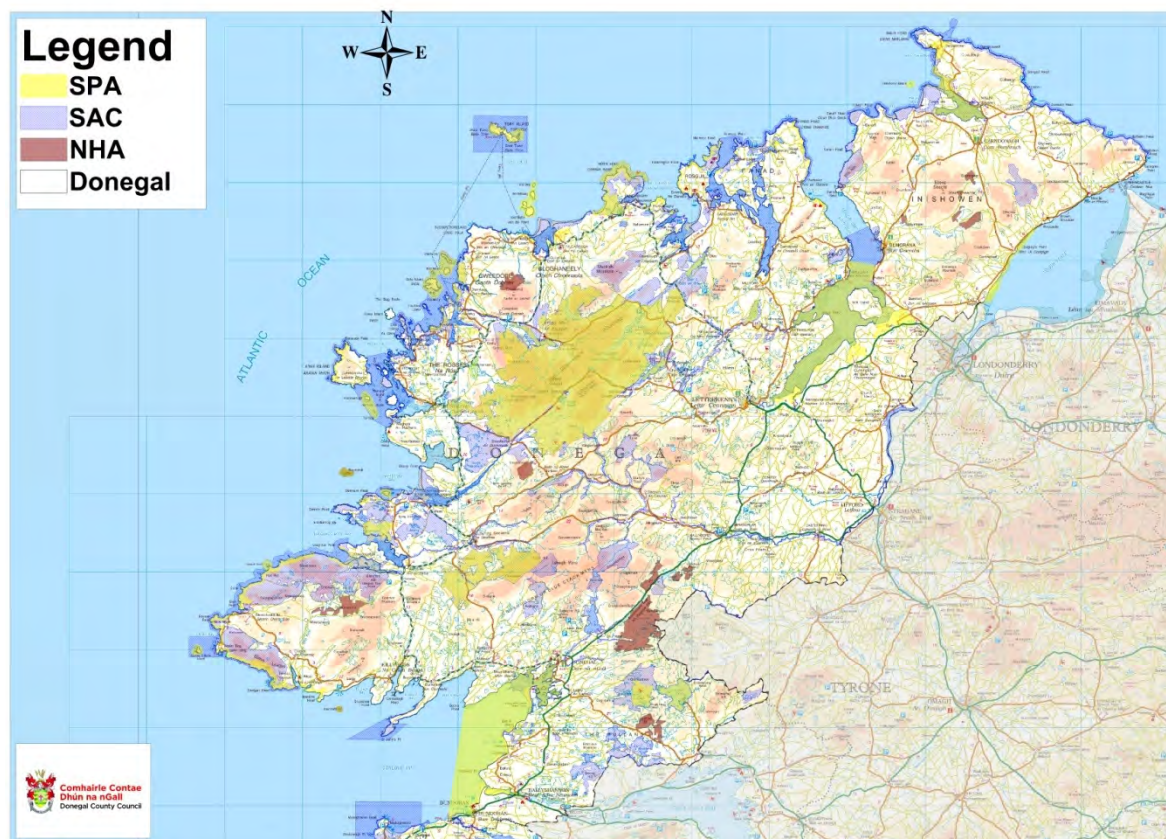
3.4 LANDCOVER

The varied landscape of Donegal contains a myriad of contrasting features as evidenced in the (23 types) Landscape Character types as detailed in Figure 1.4 of this report. The different landscape character types identified include agricultural arable and pasture, agricultural riverine, agricultural coastal, agricultural drumlin, agricultural estuarine, natural grassland, forestry/woodland, Atlantic blanket bog, mountainous blanket bog, highland blanket bog, urban fabric, golf courses, dunes and beach, inter-tidal flats, inland marsh, salt marsh, mountain peaks, bare rock, sparsely vegetated, heath, upland heath and moorland and water bodies.

3.5 ECOLOGY

Donegal has a number of ecologically important landscapes that are offered both national and international protection and these are illustrated on **Figure 1.13**

Figure 1.13 Site of Ecological Importance.



Natura 2000 sites are European designated sites of ecological importance and consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Within Donegal there are 46 SACs covering 122,900 hectares and 28 SPAs covering 26,650 hectares; these areas overlap at some locations but in total they cover 124,921 hectares equal to 25.7% of the County total, a higher than average percentage of the total country's share (14% of the country is designated Natura 2000). Donegal contains 41 of the 61 listed protected European habitats (EU Habitats Directive) including 9 of the 26 priority habitats. Source **annex 1 of habitats directive**.

There are 13 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and 74 Proposed NHAs (pNHAs) throughout the county that are afforded national protection as well as 7 Statutory Nature Reserves. Full details of all European and nationally designated sites can be found at www.npws.ie.

The full extent of the county's natural heritage of wild species, geological features, landforms and natural and semi-natural habitats extend to more than just those sites benefitting from statutory protection. Habitats outside those sites can also be key stepping stone habitats or biodiversity corridors linking sites of ecological value, for example waterways, woodlands and hedgerow.

The water and hydrology of the county are also of ecological importance and include designated shellfish waters, freshwater pearl mussel catchment areas and wetlands; 4 wetlands at Meenachullion Bog, Pettigo Plateau, Trawbreaga Bay and Lough Barra Bog are designated 'Ramsar Sites' and cover 2273 hectares of the county.

3.6 BUILT HERITAGE

Donegal's rich and varied built heritage has been informed by its landscape in terms of siting and location, and also in the construction materials, craftsmanship and design used; these structures have been influenced by the particular physical, climactic, technological, cultural and socio-economic circumstances of their creators at a point in time. This in turn has significantly contributed to the character of all aspects of the landscape, aesthetic, social and cultural. For example, in the vernacular, Roisin slates are particular to an area of Fanad, stone schist walls and curved thatched roofs to areas of Inishowen and the more prestigious buildings such as Glenveagh Castle built from Donegal Granite or Dunlewey Church made from local blue quartzite and white marble.

There is a wealth of such structures throughout Donegal that individually, and more so collectively, tell the tale of the landscape, people and culture of the county mirroring its chequered history.

The value of this built heritage cannot be overstated and the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht have recently published an Inventory of Architectural Heritage throughout the county (part of a National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, NIAH) which identifies a representation of the architectural heritage of the county, over and above the number of buildings on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) within the County that are afforded protection under the Planning and Development Act(s). The NIAH has identified over 3000 structures in Donegal ranging from country houses, churches, public buildings, industrial and infrastructural structures to vernacular buildings and farm buildings.

3.7 ARCHAEOLOGY

The archaeological heritage of the County is a unique resource, which has shaped our landscape and our cultural identity. Archaeological remains of special interest are included in the 'Record of Monuments and Places' and the National Monuments Acts 1930 – 1994 provides for protection of the archaeological heritage. There are 21 archaeological complexes and 2679 national monuments protected under the National Monuments Acts 1930-1994 and 13 of these are in state care. In addition the DEHLG have identified the Historic Towns of Ballyshannon, Donegal Town, Killybegs, Lifford, Ramelton, Rathmullen and St. Johnston for general protection. The County's archaeological heritage is not confined to sites and areas listed on the Record of Monuments and Places but also includes archaeological structures, artefacts and sites not yet discovered as set out in The National Monuments (Amendments) Act 1994.

3.8 HUMAN HISTORY

Human influences have been fundamental in determining the form and character of the Donegal landscape in even the most remote areas of the county. Human influences are evident from a plethora of features including archaeological remains, historic field patterns, access routes, historic monuments, location and layout of settlements, landscaping and built fabric as well as less tangible historic influences on the landscape such as poetry, music, language, oral history and local vernacular customs.

3.8.1 MESOLITHIC

The earliest known Mesolithic encampment in Ireland was east of Donegal at Mount Sandel in adjoining County Derry dating from c.7000 BC, and there are approximately 50 sites across Donegal dating from the later Mesolithic period following a trend of settlement over time marking a move from coastal resources to more inland locations. The migration of these hunter-gatherers inland marks the first modification of the landscape by people, with controlled burning of scrub from about 6,000 years ago.

3.8.2 NEOLITHIC

The Neolithic (new Stone Age) period started about 4,000BC and this transformation to a farming lifestyle was to have a profound effect on society and landscape. The change marked a more settled life with farms, communities and territories that passed on from generation to generation. The farms were carved out of a still largely wooded landscape and domestic animals would utilise wooded margins around cultivated "infield". Less extensive systems of pre-bog fields have also been found in Donegal indicating that the division of land into fields was widespread by the end of the Neolithic period.

The investment in place and resources changed the dynamic of the relationship between people and place, and a new expression of the family or community identity in a locality was found in the creation of communal tombs made of large stones ("megalithic" tombs). Donegal has 10% of all Ireland's megalithic tombs, including later Bronze Age tombs, 46 court tombs, 25 portal tombs and 13 passage tombs. These tombs are often set in prominent locations on hillcrests or slopes overlooking valleys; one such group on Croaghan and Kilmonaster Hill, investigated by Seán Ó Nualláin in the 1960s, overlooks the fertile Foyle river valley and is central to an area of upright standing stones, spreading across the fertile Laggan area up the cost of Foyle and Swilly Loughs as well as overlooking Mulroy Bay.

3.8.3 BRONZE AGE

There was increasing social complexity at the end of the Neolithic period and the early Bronze Age (c. 2,500BC) testified by wedge-shaped tombs and cist burials. There are greater concentrations of these tombs in the north of the county and it is possible that mineral deposits were attracting people to settle in new areas. Through the Bronze Age the accoutrements of warfare were adopted as signifiers of prestige. Small bronze axes were joined by swords and knives, as prized possessions and by the end of the Bronze Age, violence, competition and prestige had conspired to create new defended hilltop and promontory defended settlements or "hillforts". Notable examples including Grianán of Aileach, Croaghan, and Glasbolie probably date from this time and many hillforts and promontory forts built at this time would be periodically reoccupied throughout history and at times of conflict, emphasising the central importance of occupying and controlling key transport routes overland, along the coast and along rivers.

There are many examples of the ruined remnants of field systems throughout the county and notable examples are at Marfagh and Cloghernagh townlands, surviving as lines of walls on the ground. They appear as either a single line of stones, or two parallel lines of "orthostats" that enclosed earth or stone between them, and are generally small scale and curvilinear reflecting the local topography, and sometimes D-shaped fields.

3.8.4 PRE-CHRISTIAN IRON AGE

The pre-Christian Iron Age landscape (500BC-1200AD) is identifiable from literary sources as well as archaeological remains. Despite the reoccupation of hillforts from time to time, the default settlement pattern was dispersed, with small defended enclosures such as lios, ráth, dún, crannog, caiseal and cathaire scattered throughout a farmed landscape (c. 684 have been identified in Donegal). Organised roads passed through political territories and boundaries; the route of one is followed by the N15 today, which led from Connacht into western Ulster. The farming landscape of the time was divided by law tracts into 3 grades of land, top being free of persistent weeds and cultivable without regular inputs of manure, middle was upland areas still covered in woods and the lowest grade of uncultivable land included bog and heath.

Christianity was introduced very early to Donegal and both St. Patrick and St. Colmcille have strong associations with the county. The arrival of Christianity radically transformed earlier social and cultural systems in addition to elements of the landscape.

The early widespread adoption of monasteries provided, not just a literate educated elite but also a means of accumulating land and property alienated from individuals which contrasted with traditional family or community ownership that was subject to division or local feuds. In addition to their religious function, monastic settlements were involved in significant levels of trade and communication. In the absence of major concentrations of population, monasteries became the de-facto sponsors of markets and craft production, and thereby took on the character of towns in an otherwise rural landscape.

There are several literary references to the presence of Vikings in Donegal, and a number of archaeological finds that could be associated with Scandinavian Activity in the area, including a number of silver jewellery finds at locations around the north coast.

The presence of the Normans in Donegal is well documented and the annals of Ulster record the plundering of Inishowen in the 12th century; the castle characterises Norman expansion into Donegal and Northburg castle at Greencastle in Inishowen, built in 1305 by Richard de Burgh, is the largest castle ever built in the county on a prominent site overlooking Lough Foyle and Northern Ireland.

3.8.5 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY DONEGAL

A characteristic building of the 16th century was the tower house such as Doe Castle, although some were built earlier and some built in the 17th century. Increased tension and dynastic wars in England and the attempted expansion into Ireland led local lords to defend their lands and the 'nine years war' began in 1592, ending in 1601 at the battle of Kinsale. The treaty of Mellifont was signed in 1603 that signalled the beginning of British rule in Ireland, accompanied with the introduction of English law and the suppression of Brehon law, Gaelic language, culture, customs and religious beliefs.

The 'flight of the earls' from Rathmullan in 1607 marked the end of the old Gaelic Order and paved the way for the 'plantation of Ulster'; this had a profound impact on the culture, landscape, religion and politics of the county. The English Crown confiscated lands throughout Ulster that had been owned by the Irish chieftains, and divided them amongst English and Scottish settlers in order to achieve a loyal protestant English speaking population. The areas settled were the more fertile agricultural lands in the Laggan area, around Donegal Bay and in areas along the Swilly and in Inishowen. The 'Plantation' stimulated market relations and the Laggan was integrated into the Ulster Scots area of East Donegal, north Tyrone and County Derry west of the Sperrins, articulated through industrialised linen production and villages set round a market square or diamond, and a "Big House" offset in the outskirts with its own Demesne, which became a Designed Landscape in the 18th- or early 19th-century. The native population displaced as a result of the plantation led to an increased settlement in poorer marginal lands in west Donegal.

3.8.6 18th AND 19th CENTURY DONEGAL

In the west of the county, coastal subsistence-fishing, from small boats, predominated through the 17th- and 18th- centuries, whilst the foreign fleets dominated deep-sea fishing. The local catches of mackerel and herring were dependent on large shoals, and their non-appearance induced famines as severe locally as the later "Great Hunger". Economic life was dependant on small tenancies, landed estates and abundance of the shore. Remoter parts of the county that had increased in population as a result of dislocation by 17th century plantation subsequently increased in population as a result of the potato. In the late 18th and early 19th century in the areas not 'settled' during the plantation, the population lived in isolated rural dwellings and small nucleated clachans. These clachans were characterised by common rundale infield, periodically shared in strips, and wider outfield grazing Patches of meadow, cluain.

The Great Famine of 1847 impacted gravely on the people of Donegal, and many of the workhouses built to cater for the poor became filled to capacity, the plight of the famine on the poorer people in the county is well documented. The population of County Donegal fell over the period of the famine from 296,448 in 1841 to 255,160 in 1851.

During the 18th and 19th centuries the idea of sea-bathing arose from the combination of social gathering and health cures and contributed to the rise of an annual holiday for the wealthy transient population of the urban professional class, and small coastal towns such as Moville developed.

3.8.7 20th AND 21st CENTURY DONEGAL

One of the most profound changes in the county was the rail system, the arrival of the railway in Donegal provided a means and ease of access to previously remote areas of the county and opened up market opportunities to even the remotest small farm. The first railway line from Strabane to Stranorlar opened in 1863 before extending throughout the county as a widespread network before the last line finally closed in the 1950s. Many of the railway lines, stations and features are evident in the landscape today with many of the former rail lines adapted to use as walking routes. The railway lines and structures contribute positively to the character, and also the biodiversity (particularly along the old railway lines) of the county.

Railways were supplanted by widespread car ownership during the 20th century which continued to affect the growth of the annual holiday and day trips. The most profound effect on the Donegal landscape in the second half of the 20th century, and continuing apace in the 21st, has been that of trucks and cars. Good road communications has catapulted the growth of Letterkenny forged linkages with Derry City and the development of modern communications and internet shopping has revitalised delivery of goods to even the most distant destinations, including inhabited islands. An airport on the west coast of Donegal has a significant role in making the west of the county accessible to investors, as well as allowing the modern diaspora to return home on “flying visits”.

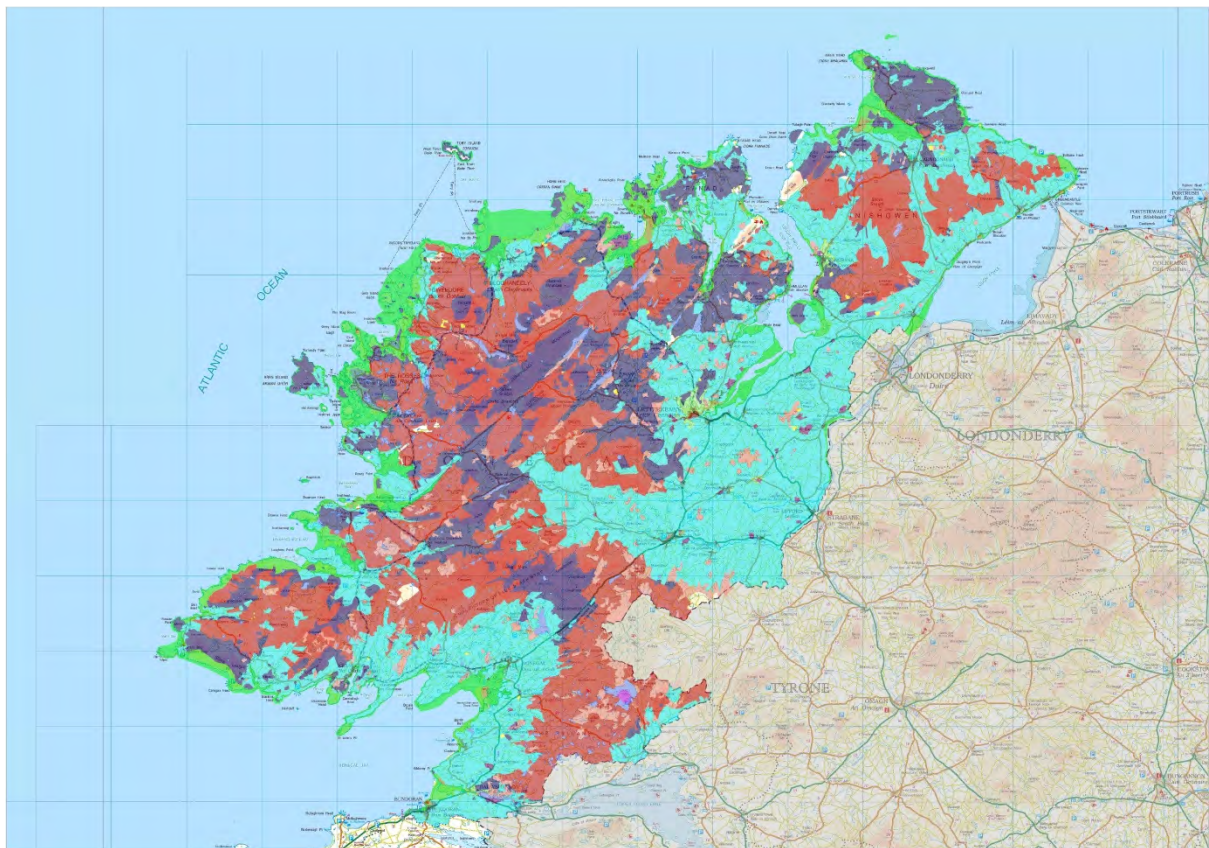
Donegal has become significantly more wooded though the 20th and 21st century as a result of Coillte plantations and also the regrowth of mixed broadleaved woods on marginal patches of land, particularly noticeable along the course of former rail lines. In areas with hedges, particularly in those areas marginal to the richer farms, some hedges have been left to grow out and now present as a line of small trees, reminiscent of the scrub woodland that occupied parts of Donegal in the distant past.

3.9 HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CONSIDERATION

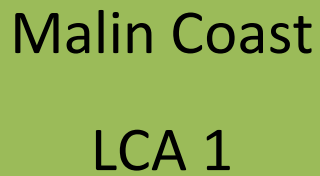
A background study of the Historic Landscape of Donegal was prepared as a separate but parallel project to the LCA. It was carried out as an action of the "Donegal Heritage Plan" by M.O.L.A consultants (Museum of London Archaeology) and follows methodology set out in Best Practice Guidance published by The Heritage Council in 2013 entitled "Historic Landscape Characterisation in Ireland".

The HLC mapped the county into 'Broad' and 'Generic' HLC types; this is reflective of the regional scale analyses of the LCA. The mapping in **Figure 1.14** below is extracted from a working draft Historic Landscape Classification and illustrates the time-depth of the landscape, that is, the historic fabric and patterns that are evident in the landscape today; it does not consider archaeology or history that is not visible.

Figure 1.14 Historic Landscape Characterisation Map



4.0 Landscape Character Areas



Inishtrahull Island within this LCA is geologically important with a unique geology, older than and unrelated to any other in Ireland. The island was inhabited until 80 years ago and has strong cultural and social associations with this area.

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Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units within the Malin Coast Landscape Character Area

Seascape Units 2, 3, 4 and 5 overlap the coast of this LCA.

Key characteristics uses: The north and east coastline of this LCA are predominantly a hard exposed rock whilst the west of this area is deeply indented and undulating with prominent headlands and long sandy beaches and sand dune systems. The key coastal uses are agriculture, aquaculture, maritime and tourism related uses.

Coastal edge: The coastal edge of SU2 comprises of high and low vegetated sea cliffs, extensive low rocky outcrops interspersed with stone, shingle and sand beaches. High seacliffs, rocky outcrops and sea stacks are features of the coastal edge in SU4, the northerly headland of the peninsula, whilst the western coast of the peninsula is softer having rocky outcrops interspersed with sand and shingle beaches, high vegetated seacliffs and the magnificent dune system and sandy beach at Lagg.

Visibility: Uninterrupted views from a plethora of sites and areas within this LCA including an almost 360 uninterrupted view for the headland at Bamba's Crown.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Highly important geological coastline with raised beaches, Ireland's most northerly point, Inishtrahull, coastal walkway, weather station, Hell's Hole and Devil's bridge, old clachans, shipwrecks, strategic military and communication structures and excellent location to view the northern lights.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Underlying geology of schist forming a peat covered mountainous ridge running northwest-southeast on the northern side of the LCA.
- More sheltered lower agricultural lands with an underlying quartzite geology within the south and west of the LCA.
- Geologically important 'Raised beach' from Midlandian Cold phase, sits 20m above modern sea level at Ballyhillin near Malin Head.
- Lagg Sand Dunes are an unusually tall and wide dune system, one of the largest in Europe, interesting not only for their geology but also the striking feature they constitute within the wider landscape.
- Inishtrahull Island north of Malin head is the most northerly landfall in Ireland and contains the oldest rock in Ireland. The Gneiss geology of Inishtrahull is 1.778 billion years old and unlike any other rock in Ireland; it has a similar geology to the island of Islay in the Scottish Hebrides and Greenland.

Settlements

Malin

Malin Town is a planned small coastal village dating from the 1600's, centred around a triangular lawn with 3 terraces broken on the west by the Church of Ireland. Malin Hall and demesne are located just outside the town to the west, part of the 10,000 acre estate of George Harvey in the 1700s; and set within mature gardens and woodland they inform



the plantation landscape. The town is accessed from the south by Malin Bridge; a 10 arch stone rubble bridge over the river Ballyboe on the east of Trawbreaga Bay; dating from the 1760s, the bridge forms a unique and impressive approach to the town.

History, Culture and Heritage

- Numerous archaeological structures and sites throughout the area, including Recorded Monuments.
- This LCA has a patchwork of fields of mixed origin, with some areas of distinctive “Ladder farms” or similar fields, and rougher open areas, including some commonage.
- Malin Head’s Napoleonic signal tower dates from the 1800s and is located on the very north of the headland, part of a chain of such towers around the Irish Coast used by the British against French attacks.
- Ruined Marconi wireless station historically significant.
- 3 shipwrecks off this coast.

Access and Recreation

- The R242 from Carndonagh (south) and the R243 from Culdaff are the main roads into this area and converge at Malin town, then continue northwest as the R242 towards Malin Head. A network of county roads of varying standards provides access throughout most of the remainder of the LCA, with laneways and tracks allowing access into higher boglands.
- Wild Atlantic Way loops around this LCA taking in ‘Bamba’s Crown’ the most northerly part on the island of Ireland.
- Tourism is a strong element of the local economy at this location based on the landscape and seascape with associated outdoor activities.

Biodiversity



- Ecologically important landscape containing 1,044ha of Natura 2000 (SAC & SPA) sites and 1,329ha pHNA sites.
- Internationally important Corncrake population.
- Patchwork of small to medium sized agricultural fields generally bound by deciduous hedgerow and trees.
- Large areas of deciduous woodland particularly along the coast and along river valleys.
- Forestry plantations on higher lands along the north-west of the landscape character area.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network
- Tourism related developments.
- Tourism related holiday home developments in both the rural landscape and within towns.
- Additional mobile homes/caravans.
- Potential for further development of Sailing and water based tourism activities
- Renewable energy development
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion



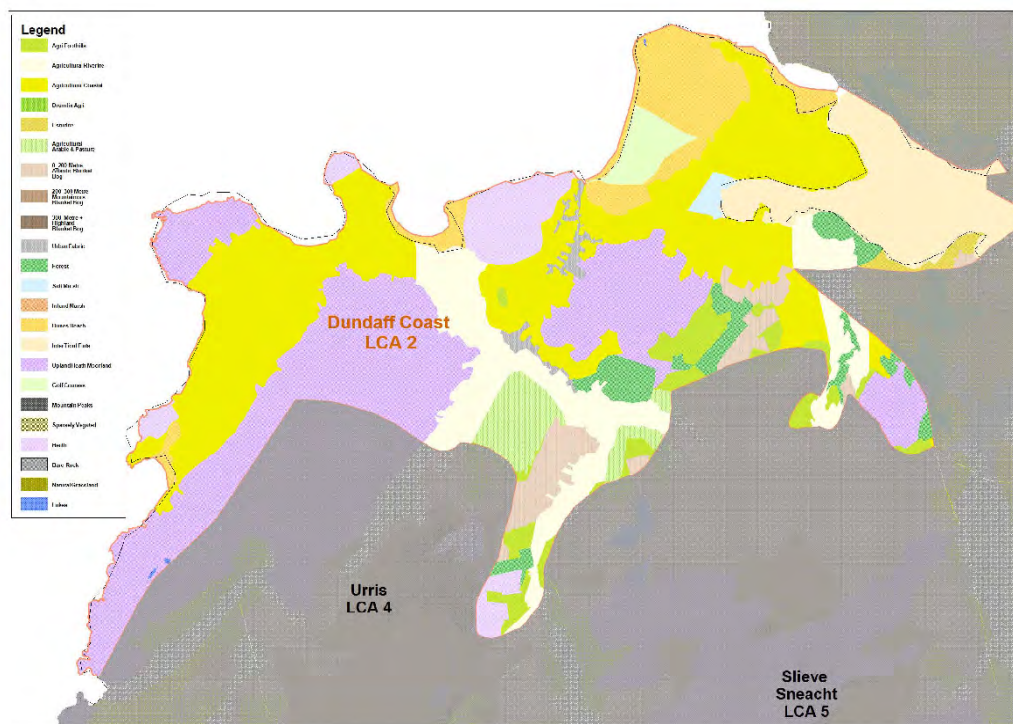
Dunaff Coast

LCA 2



Dunaff Coast LCA is characterized by its unique and varied coastline of unspoilt golden sandy beaches, deep pebble beaches, rocky coastal edge and sea cliffs. The towns of Ballyliffin and Clonmany serve a wider rural agricultural area with a dispersed rural settlement pattern. As well as agriculture and fishing, this is an area famed for tourism and recreation, having 2 championship links at Ballyliffin Golf Club, numerous hotels, guesthouses, caravan parks, and the popular tourist attractions of Doagh Famine Village and Glenevin waterfall to name a few. There is a wealth of archaeological monuments within this LCA as well as surviving examples of historic field patterns and historic structures including the rundale field system and clachans.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 5, Trawbreaga Bay and Seascape Unit 6 Lough Swilly overlap within this LCA.

Key characteristics uses: The western shore of this LCA forms part of the 'mouth' of Lough Swilly, a large inland glacial tidal fjord that separates the Inishowen and Fanad peninsulas. The northern coastline is a deeply indented and undulating area with prominent rocky headlands, sand dune systems and sandy and stony beaches. The large intertidal estuary of Trawbreaga Bay sits between the isle of Doagh and the Malin Coast LCA. Primarily a rural agricultural landscape with clusters of development and significant coastal fishing.

Coastal edge: The coast consists of cliffs and rocky outcrops intersected by shingle, sandy and stony beaches, silty mudflats and salt marshes around Trawbreaga Bay.

Visibility: High degree of uninterrupted views of the Atlantic Ocean, over Lough Swilly and across other headlands and seascape units.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Geological important landscape such as Knockalla Fault that runs through Inishowen, panoramic views at Mamore Gap, Maritime and defensive site at Lenan, , shipwrecks, rich archaeological heritage including Saint Patrick's High Cross, Carrickbrack Castle, clachans, rock art, Doagh Island Famine Village, old field layouts and old demense landscapes.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- There is a diverse underlying geology within this LCA comprising of granite, schist and quartzite creating a variety of landforms,
- Granite forms the low level agricultural plains of Dunaff, Leenan and Tullagh and high coastal granite hills shape the peat and moor covered headlands at Dunaff Head, Leenan Head and Tullagh Head.
- Clonmany sits at the convergence of 2 rivers and 4 shallow valleys within a generally undulating and fertile agricultural landscape of schist bedrock.
- Dune systems overlay a schist bedrock on the western half of Doagh Isle and Ballyliffin, including the 2 championship links courses at Ballyliffin Golf Club.
- Quartzite forms the Urris Hills (and Mamore Gap) that rise within the south of this LCA.
- There is an extensive coastline along this LCA comprising numerous bays and rocky headlands creating coves and the sandy beaches of Leenan, Tullagh Strand and Pollan Strand.

Settlements

- Ballyliffin: Coastal settlement located in close proximity to the coastal edge, and the white sandy 'Pollan Strand'. It is a traditional cross-road settlement and former railway town which has an important tourism role. Economic activity within the settlement is mainly associated with the Ballyliffin links golf course and the hospitality sector with a number of hotels providing a range of services for tourists and residents all year round.



- Clonmany: An inland village centred on a small market square adjacent to the Clonmany River is a local service centre serving the rural hinterland. Clonmany is also a foci for tourism during summer months with several local attractions and annual cultural and sporting events.



History, Culture and Heritage

- Rich archaeological heritage throughout this LCA with a number of Recorded Monuments.
- Isle of Doagh has a nationally high concentration of late Neolithic and early Bronze Age rock art.
- Carrickabraghy castle located on the coast of the Isle of Doagh is an iconic landmark structure visible from miles around. It dates from the 16th century and there is evidence of earlier structures on this site, first mentioned in the Annals of the Four Masters.
- Leenan Fort is an abandoned British army base encompassing most of Leenan Head, a jagged edged wide peninsula on the coast of Lough Swilly near the Atlantic. The fort was last used in the 1950s following transfer back into Irish control in 1946, and has become derelict and subsumed within the landscape to such an extent that it is barely discernable as a feature when viewed from nearby roads.
- The Railway line travelled through this LCA and connected Buncrana with Carndonagh via Clonmany and Ballyliffin; the railway stations remain and are now used as domestic dwellings.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 3 RPS structures and 75 on the NIAH.
- Vernacular dwellings and outbuildings within this LCA have characteristic thatched roofs with rounded eaves.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation highlights that Doagh Isle (*Dumhaigh*– sand banks or dunes) is one of the coastal areas that has been settled since Neolithic or early Bronze Age times, and rockart of the period is found on the local bedrock. The area has a complex farmed landscape of ladder farms and sinuous and irregular-bounded small fields some of the latter may be of considerable antiquity. There are many stretches of sandy beach and tidal inlets which would have facilitated light fishing boats, such as curragh and support a considerable dispersed settlement. The western edge of the Dunaff coast continues into the mouth of Lough Swilly towards Leenan, a strategic harbour from medieval times and with historic contacts internationally, becoming a Treaty Port of the British following Irish independence. Dunaff Head formed part of a chain of strong points that have been refortified a number of times, latterly to defend the Treaty Port. It marks the entry point to Lough Swilly, is inter-visible with other strongpoints such as Fanad and Lenan Heads and was used for coastal navigation as well as defence. Leenankeel Townland is a surviving fragment of unenclosed common field (Rundale) and it has the remains of the clachan settlement with it. This has become an iconic landscape that was largely lost during the 19th century.

Access and Recreation

- R238 and a network of county roads provide access and penetration into this otherwise remote part of Inishowen.
- Wild Atlantic Way courses along the coast of this LCA following the Regional, then county road networks.
- Inishowen 100 route skirts around the coast of this LCA.
- Ballyliffin Golf club contains 2 championship golf courses.

- An equestrian centre, local walking, cycling and surfing clubs.
- Strong tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape and their use, including hotels, guesthouses and mobile home and touring caravan parks.

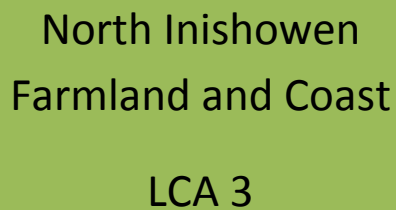
Biodiversity



- Ecologically important landscape containing 2,578ha of Natura 2000 site (SAC & SPA) and 2585 pNHA.
- Important biodiversity links through the area are created by the riverine corridors and network of hedgerows and trees that bound the patchwork of small to medium sized agricultural fields and roads.
- Complex dune systems along the coast, the upland peat areas and the estuary at Trawbreaga Bay are all important areas of biodiversity.
- Inland, hedges lanes and roadways tend to be bound by deciduous hedgerow and trees.

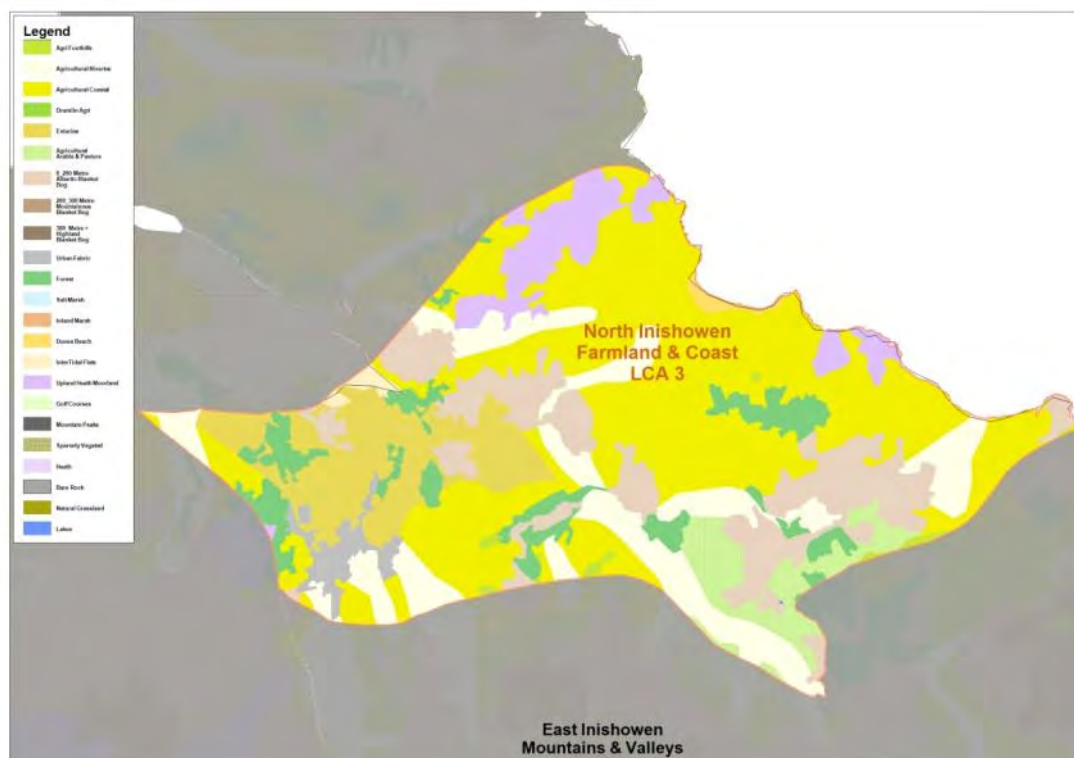
Forces for change

- Caravan parks.
- Linear development along the rural road network
- Tourism related holiday home developments in both the rural landscape and within Ballyliffin and Clonmany.
- Golf tourism
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Afforestation on higher ground within the west of the landscape unit.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Possible Irish Open and other championship golf tournaments.



North Inishowen Farmland and Coast LCA is a diverse and varied landscape area that extends west from the northeast Atlantic coast of Inishowen towards the sheltered estuary of Trawbreaga Bay. The area stands alone within the Inishowen peninsula in part due to the expanse of fertile agricultural land containing a variety of farm types and features, historic stone bound field patterns along the coast, surviving clachans, and easily accessible and diverse coastline. There is a long history of settlement and particularly monastic settlement within this LCA and there are many important features and structures that remain in the landscape including the iconic Cloncha Church and St. Buadan's Cross.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape units 2, Kinnagoe Bay, and 3 Inishowen Sea Cliff Coast overlap along the coast of this LCA

Key characteristics uses: The edge of this LCA is characterised by a hard, rocky exposed coastline open to the sea with high mountainous bog punctuated by agricultural river valleys flowing to the sea with mainly agricultural, maritime and tourism related uses.

Coastal edge: High and low vegetated sea cliffs, extensive low rocky outcrops interspersed with stone, shingle and sand beaches.

Visibility: Varying degrees of visibility to the open sea are mainly obtained from river valley areas.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Culdaff (Blue Flag) beach, old clachan settlement and farming practices remain in the landscape.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Underlying and varied tapestry of geology comprising of schist, quartzite, limestone and shale bedrock informing a generally undulating and rolling landscape.
- This Landscape Character area is predominantly agricultural with isolated upland bog, peat areas and pockets of coniferous plantations. The west of this LCA contains the large sheltered intertidal area of Trawbreaga Bay whilst the north-eastern Atlantic coast has a mostly rocky coast and a large dune system and beach at Culdaff.
- A number of rivers and streams traverse this area, including Culdaff River that flows out to the ocean at Culdaff.
- Carrowmenagh and Ballymagaraghy are archetypal clachans located within the east of this LCA, quite near to the coast and within an area characterized by stone bound fields.

Settlements

- There are 5 discernible settlements within this LCA including Carndonagh, the principle market town serving the wider north Inishowen area, Culdaff, a coastal village functioning as a holiday focus on the north eastern coast, Gleneely, a small rural village and the clachans of Carrowmenagh and Ballymagaraghy.



History, Culture and Heritage

- Rich archaeological heritage throughout this LCA that has a number of Recorded Monuments.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 10 RPS structures and 133 on the NIAH.
- Ballymagaraghy and Carrowmenagh are important exemplars of traditional clachans within a historic 'rundale' rural landscape.
- Substantial legacy of megalithic, pre-Christian and early Christian settlement within this LCA as evidenced by the many surviving archaeological structures including the Carndonagh crosses, remains of Bocan Stone circle and the Temple of Deen among others.
- Upland is primarily blanket bog, hand cut for centuries for fuel, as well as potential upland summer grazing (Booleying). Good farmland has been improved in the valley slopes and includes a patchwork of straight-sided rectilinear fields reminiscent of richer lands to the south. This was a productive area of strategic value given Inishowen's distinct political history.



Access and Recreation

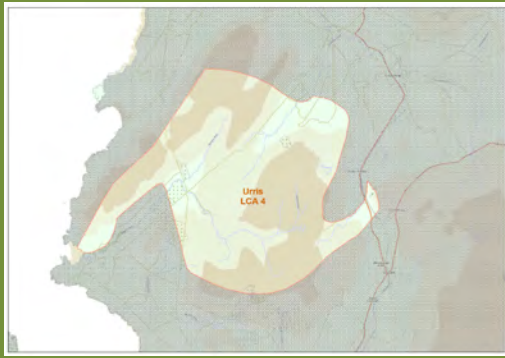
- A network of County and Regional roads is laced throughout this area affording excellent accessibility and penetration into the LCA.
- Fishing boats and leisure craft use the pier at Bunagee, outside Culdaff.
- The Wild Atlantic Way cuts through this LCA

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 281.7ha of Natura 2000 (SAC and SPA) and 268.6 pNHA as well as the important biodiversity links of the riverine corridors.
- Trawbreaga bay is a large sheltered estuary and is designated as an SPA.
- Culdaff beach is within an SAC, pNHA and a SPA buffer and is designated as a 'Blue Flag' beach.
- Patchwork of small to medium sized agricultural fields generally bounded by deciduous hedgerow and trees, save areas along the coast.

Forces for change

- Tourism related holiday home developments in both the rural landscape and within Culdaff.
- Proposed improvement works at Bunagee pier.
- Potential for further development of Sailing and water based tourism activities at Culdaff.
- Renewable energy development.
- Afforestation on higher ground.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Further suburban developments within the hinterland of Carndonagh.
- Protection of aquifer at Carndonagh.

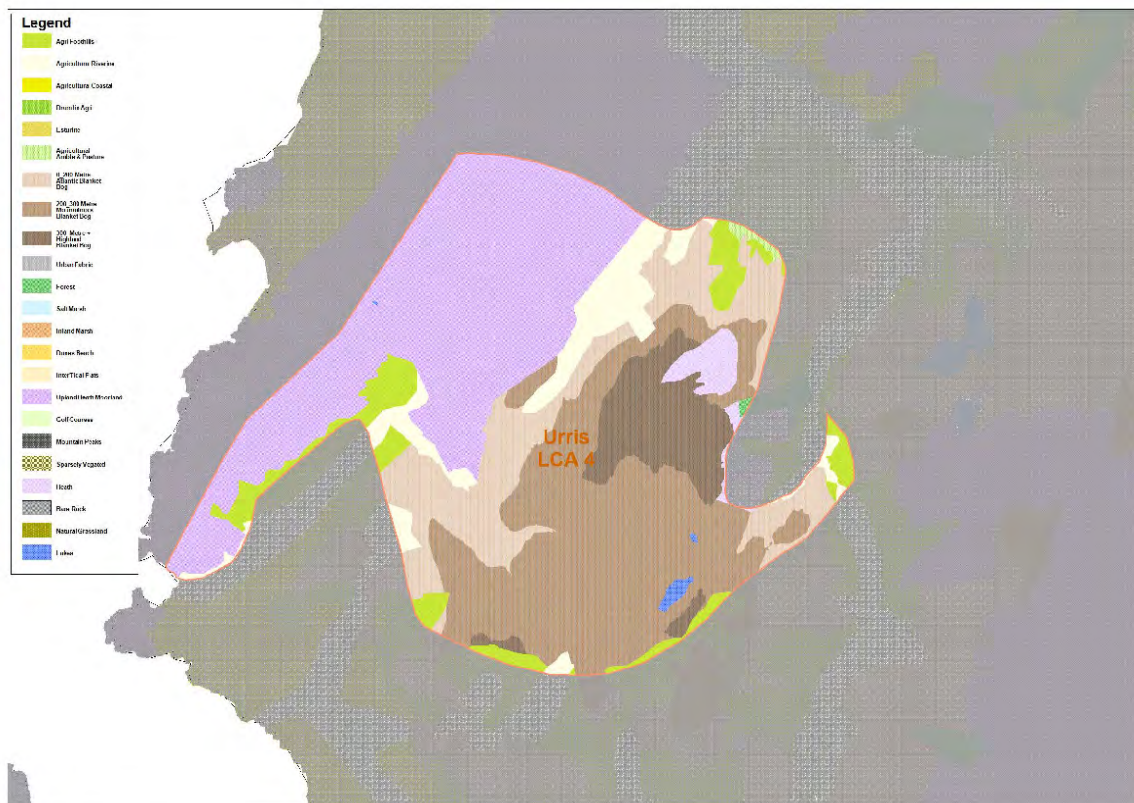


Urris LCA 4



Urris LCA is characterised by the upland mountainous and peat covered Urris Hills and Mintiaghs, Mamore gap is an iconic natural pass through the Urris Hills affording panoramic views over the surrounding landscape. A wide river valley segregates the two higher areas of land through the middle of this LCA and this is primarily natural grass with some agricultural areas near to the river to the west of the area. There are some isolated areas of commercial coniferous forestry within and immediately adjacent to this area that are visually dominant from this area and a 28 turbine windfarm is located within the East of this LCA adjacent to Lough Doo.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 6, Lough Swilly extends into this area.

Key characteristics uses: Lough Swilly is a large inland glacial tidal fjord that separates the Inishowen and Fanad peninsulas. This LCA includes a narrow area of the seascape unit extending inland along the Urris Hills.

Coastal edge: High cliffs and rocky outcrops.

Visibility: High degree of uninterrupted visibility of the lough, north over Dubnaff and out towards the Atlantic ocean.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Geological important landscape; the Knockalla Fault that runs through this LCA and important views at Mamore Gap.

Settlements

There are no towns or villages within with the LCA

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Quartzite forms the Urris Hills that run along the top of this LCA along a Southwest-northeast axis and mirror the orientation and formation of the Knockalla Mountains across Lough Swilly within LCA 20, an extension of the Knockalla Fault. The primary landcover is heath and bog and with frequent rocky outcrops
- Bulbin and the Mintiaghs are mountains within the south of this LCA across the agricultural river valley, and are for the most part peat and heath covered but there are some areas of commercial forestry plantation.
- There is a large windfarm within the east of this LCA, dominating the skyline and horizon when viewed from Mamore Gap.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There is only one recorded monument within this upland, inhospitable LCA of mountainous rugged terrain.
- This area is renowned for its scenic qualities and as such is designated as an area of Especially Highly Scenic Amenity in the County Donegal Development Plan (EHSA).
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies Mamore Gap as a devotional Ceremonial landscape, the location of both a holy well and traditional mass site.

Access and Recreation

- The mountainous topography of this area restricts ease of access. Vehicular access through this LCA is limited to a county road that cuts through Mamore gap along a north-south route and a mountain road running between the Urris Hills and Bulbin, along southwest-northeast access connecting Dunree Head and Clonmany.
- Wild Atlantic Way follows the county road network and passes through Mamore Gap, also a discovery point on the Wild Atlantic Way.
- There are a number of marked mountain walks through the hills and mountains within this area.

- Mamore Gap is a popular tourist destination for day trippers with panoramic views out over the surrounding landscape and seascape in both a northerly and southerly direction.



Biodiversity

- Lands within the west of this LCA are designated SAC and much of the remainder is within a 1,797.3ha pNHA and within a 15km buffer of a Natura 2000.
- The Owenerk river than runs through the valley creates a biodiversity corridor through the LCA.

Forces for change

- Renewable energy development (windfarms), new and extensions of existing.
- Afforestation on higher ground within the west of the landscape unit.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development

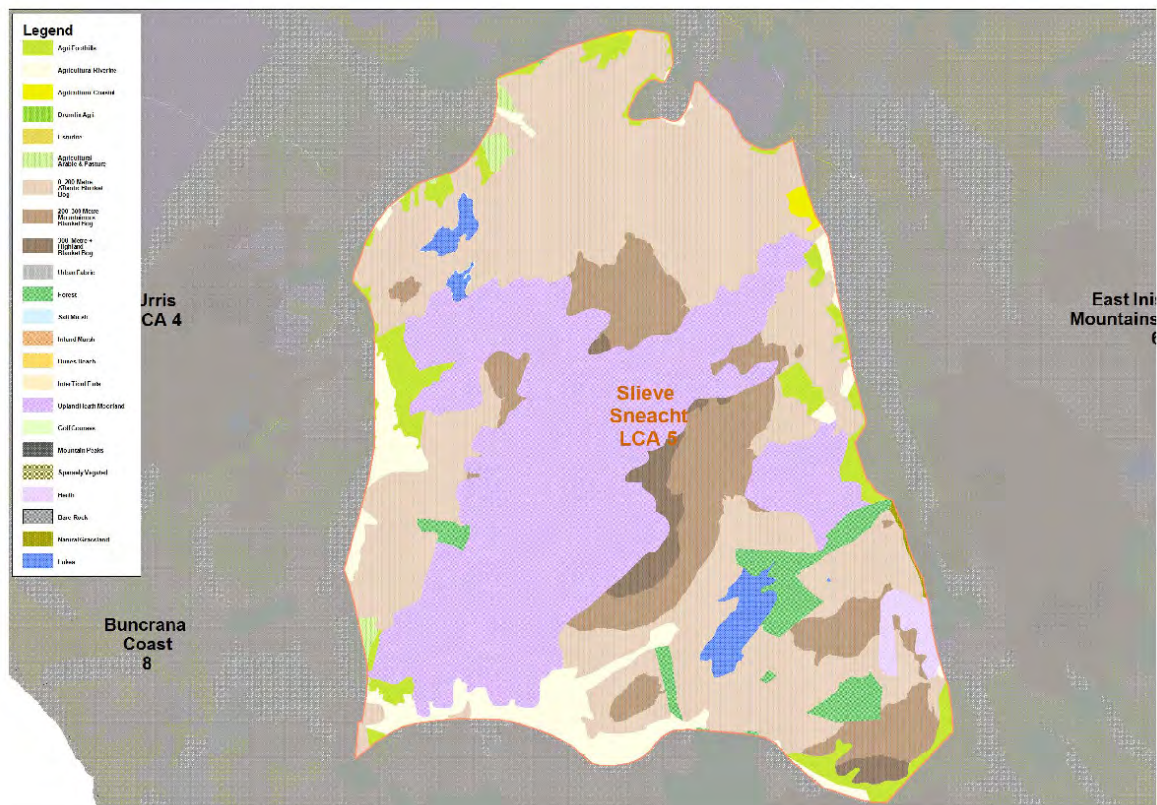


Slieve Sneacht LCA 5



Slieve Sneacht LCA is primarily a mountainous upland area covered in heath and defined by Slieve Sneacht – a high bog mountain with a rocky summit. Lough Fad and Lough Namina are either side of the R244 in the north of this LCA and the smaller Mintiagh Lough is located nearby to the south of these. The river Pollan was dammed in 1991 creating a large freshwater reservoir within the southeast of this LCA. Slieve Sneacht dominates this LCA and indeed the wider landscape of Inishowen and Donegal being visible as far away as Northern Ireland. The LCA is sparsely populated with clusters of dwellings and isolated rural dwellings scattered throughout lower agricultural lands.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

No Seascape Character Units fall within this LCA however the Mountains are a large, iconic and imposing feature that would be within the visibility splay and form the backdrop of a number of Seascape units.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- A quartzite geology forms the bog and peat covered Slieve Sneacht Mountains, with quartzite exposed at the peak of Slieve Sneacht.
- The south eastern section of this LCA comprises more level upland areas of peat/bog with some commercial forestry plantations.
- A number of rivers traverse the LCA and 2 large shallow river corridors and associated significant tracts of agricultural lands are within the south of this LCA.
- Pollan Dam, a freshwater reservoir constructed in 1997 is situated within the south of this LCA on a schist bedrock, and Lough Fad and Mintiaghs Lough are within the northwest of this LCA.

Settlements

- There is a dispersed scatter of rural one-off residential development within this LCA, primarily within the agricultural lands in the south and northwest, but also in small pockets throughout.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There are a number of Recorded Monuments located within this LCA and for the most part these are located on lower more fertile and easily accessible land.
- Stone cairn sits atop the summit of Slieve Sneacht.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 10 structures on the NIAH.

Access and Recreation

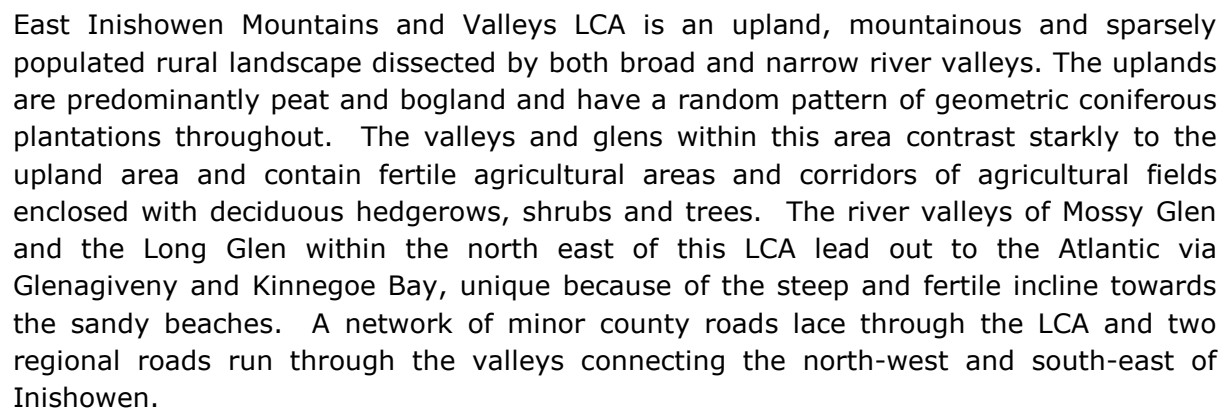
- R238 Regional road and 2 county roads traverse this LCA along naturally formed passes through the mountains.
- Recreational fishing on the lakes.
- Rambling and hill walking are popular activities within this LCA.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 509.6ha NHA and 42.31ha of pNHA as well as the important biodiversity links of the riverine corridors.
- Lough Fad and Lough Namina contain Brown trout and Arctic Char (designated species)
- Patchwork of small to medium sized agricultural fields in lower lying areas along river valleys are generally bounded by deciduous hedgerow and trees.
- Forestry plantations

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Afforestation on higher ground.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development

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Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape unit 2, Kinnegoe Bay is within this Landscape Character Unit.

Key characteristics uses: Predominantly high mountainous bog punctuated by agricultural river valleys that have a strong connection to the sea with mainly agricultural, maritime and tourism related uses.

Coastal edge: High sea cliffs contrast with lower rocky outcrops and sandy beaches.

Visibility: Varying degrees of visibility to the open sea are mainly obtained from river valley areas.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: The valleys of Mossy Glen and Glenagiveny, Kinnagoe Bay are unique landscapes that are an iconic element at this location. Old clachan settlement and farming practices remain in the landscape.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Underlying geology of schist forms most of the upland areas within whilst quartzite underlies the two main valleys through this area that generally run along a NW-SE axis.
- The mountainous uplands are mostly covered in a blanket of peat and bog with some encroachment of commercial forestry, whilst the river valleys are lush and fertile and easily discernible within the wider landscape unit due to the proliferation of deciduous trees and hedgerow that contrast vividly with the barren peat landscape.
- Smaller deep-sided river valleys run along a NE-SW axis from the high schist mountains NE to the Atlantic Ocean via 'The Long Glen' and 'Mossy Glen' towards the iconic sandy beaches of Kinnagoe Bay and Glenagiveny beach.

Settlements

- There are no settlements per se within this landscape character area, but rather isolated groupings of residential dwellings and one off rural dwellings.

History, Culture and Heritage

- Significant historic rundale field patterns on Crockbrack hill.
- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 2 RPS structures and 47 on the NIAH.
- Spanish Armada shipwreck off Kinnagoe Bay and associated history.
- Historic Landscape Characterization described this LCA as predominantly an area of open upland heath, moor and bog, punctuated by farmed valleys. One of these valleys provides the route for the R240 to Carndonagh; this mountain pass is a strategic route that has been secured by major lineages through history. At Crockbrack Hill there is a notable example of Rundale farming and areas of commonage that were cut for turf and may include areas of former booleying.

Access and Recreation

- R238 and R240 Regional roads traverse this LCA connecting Quigleys Point to Carndonagh and Moville to Culdaff.
- Network of tertiary county and local roads throughout the area.
- Line fishing in the mountain lakes.
- Tourism in the area is landscape based and Kinnagoe Bay is popular with day trippers and recreational divers.
- Wild Atlantic Way continues through the coast and length of this LCA and there is a 'Discovery Point' at Kinnagoe Bay.
- The Inishowen 100 is an established tourist route that follows the entire coast and falls within the northeast of this LCA.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 915.8ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 635.1ha of pNHAs sites.
- There are numerous biodiversity corridors alongside the streams and rivers traversing this area and in particular along the glens.
- Freshwater mountain lakes in the south of this LCA.

Forces for change

- Telecommunications structures.
- Wind farms.
- Ribbon development.
- Suburban scale and designed dwellings.
- Removal of deciduous hedgerow and native trees.
- Commercial forestry.



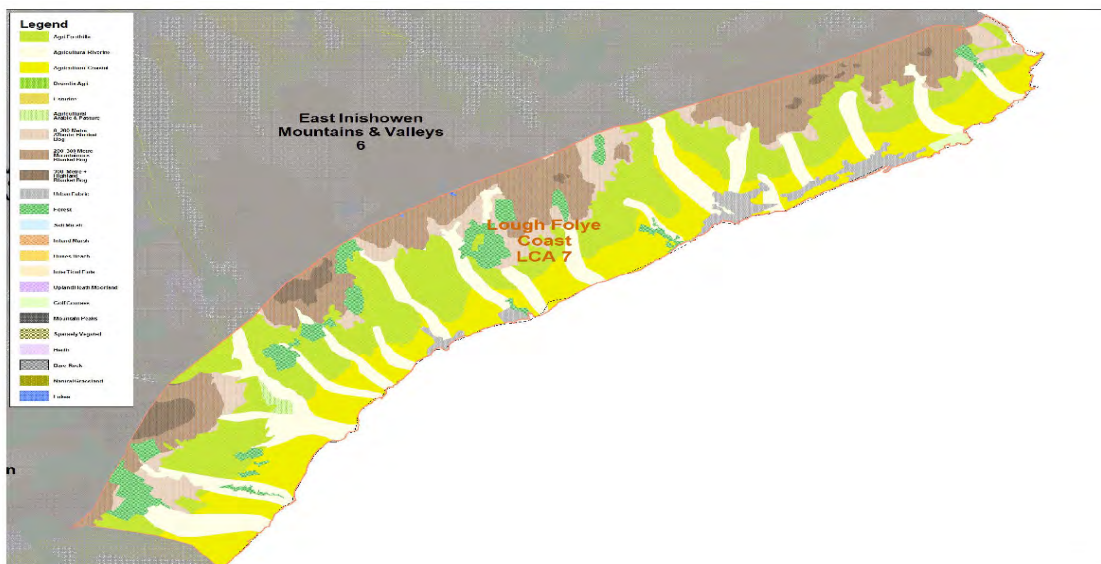
Lough Foyle Coast LCA 7



Foyle Coast LCA is characterized by rolling fertile agricultural lands trimmed in hedgerow and trees intersected by a network of minor county roads. The western edge of the landscape character area is a high mountainous area that slopes towards the western shore of Lough Foyle. A Regional road follows the shoreline of Lough Foyle and runs through the bustling market town of Moville, the vibrant fishing village of Greencastle and other smaller villages huddled alongside the coastal edge.

The lower half of the landscape character area is characterized by a silty shoreline whereas north towards Greencastle the coast consists of exposed rock and sandy beaches including Stroove, a blue flag beach, and adjacent lighthouse. At Inishowen head the shoreline veers west onto the Atlantic Ocean displaying a completely different hard, treacherous and inaccessible coastline consisting of high vegetated sea cliffs that fall sharply directly into the ocean below from a high, barren, mountainous peat covered landscape. There is a very strong visual and physical connection to Northern Ireland as it forms most of the view out of this area; the international boundary runs through Lough Foyle.

Landscape Character types



Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 1 covers all of the coastal area within this LCA whilst and there is a small degree of overlap at Inishowen Head.

Key characteristics uses: Lough Foyle is a large, tidal and shallow estuary with predominantly agricultural, marine and tourism related uses.

Coastal edge: Soft mudflat edge to the south with mixture of rocky outcrops and beaches in the centre of the unit and a cliff edge north at Inishowen Head.

Visibility: High intervisibility with Northern Ireland and unobstructed views to the sea.

Sensitivity/vulnerability: Visually and ecologically sensitive landscape.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Stroove lighthouse, fishing villages, golf courses, ferry, aquaculture, Greencastle, remains of Redcastle. Mortello tower and visual link to one on the opposite side of Lough Swilly in Northern Ireland, archaeological structures and recorded monuments.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Underlying geology of schist forming a mountainous ridge running along a NE-SW spine that falls towards Lough Foyle.
- Coastal landscape of generally sloping agricultural lands that begin at the foothills of the mountains and fall gently towards a low, silty shoreline and scattered with associated residential and agricultural buildings
- Series of biodiversity rich river valleys flowing across the landscape character area into Lough Foyle.
- Recent encroachment of residential buildings higher up the slopes on poorer land and visible from the Lough and Northern Ireland across the bay.

Settlements



- Five picturesque towns and villages with distinctive characteristics and unique built fabric are situated along the coastal edge of the landscape character area and surrounded by a dispersed rural settlement pattern.
- The picturesque market and coastal town of Moville retains a lot of historic built character and street layout including a number of RPS and NIAH structures including the impressive Victorian terrace and Shore Green.
- Strong fishing industry with commercial fishing operating from Greencastle harbour, the second busiest port in the county and the home of the National Fisheries Training College.

History, Culture and Heritage



- Significant historic maritime culture along this international border with the United Kingdom, evidenced in the Martello Towers either side of Lough Swilly and a fleet of German u-boats scuttled in Lough Foyle at the end of WW2.
- Numerous archaeological structures and sites throughout the area, including a number of Recorded Monuments.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation sets out that Lough Foyle has had an important international harbour since at least the days of Viking incursions. Whilst the area looks towards Derry, and may in some regards be considered the city's hinterland, Moville has also been used as a port of departure to Scotland and (sometimes) even America. Its pier now is more often used for coastal fishing boats. At the beginning of the 19th century Moville parish (and probably wider coastal area) was held under Rundale and the large unenclosed fields were without hedges. The straight-side (rectilinear) fields and ladder farms that dominate the countryside today are more modern following subdivision of fields to provide better drainage. The proximity to Derry and use of Moville as a resort for the city may have encouraged greater agricultural investment along the Lough than other areas of Inishowen. It is still a popular area for leisure activities and caravan, and chalet, parks.

Access and Recreation

- Close visual connection with Northern Ireland on the opposite side of Lough Swilly, and a ferry connection between the two that runs from Greencastle to Magilligan in Northern Ireland.
- Wild Atlantic Way starts at Muff in the South of this landscape character area and continues along its length.
- The Inishowen 100 is an established tourist route that follows the entire coast within this LCA.
- Two golf courses at Greencastle and Redcastle.
- Strong Tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape and their use.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing #ha of SAC, SPA and pNHA as well as the important biodiversity links of the riverine corridors.
- Patchwork of small to medium sized agricultural fields generally bounded by deciduous hedgerow and trees.
- Large areas of deciduous woodland particularly along the coast and along river valleys.



- Forestry plantations on higher lands along the north-west of the landscape character area.



Forces for change

- In the past there was considerable pressure for urban generated housing development from the city of Derry in neighbouring Northern Ireland, due to a number of varying factors including its proximity to the border of the landscape character area (an international border).
- Linear development along the rural road network
- Tourism related holiday home developments in both the rural landscape and within towns.
- Potential for further development of Sailing and water based tourism activities, particularly in light of the recent and planned clipper festivals along the banks of the Foyle.
- Golf tourism
- Renewable energy development.
- Afforestation on higher ground within the west of the landscape unit.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Important intervisibility and connection to Northern Ireland.

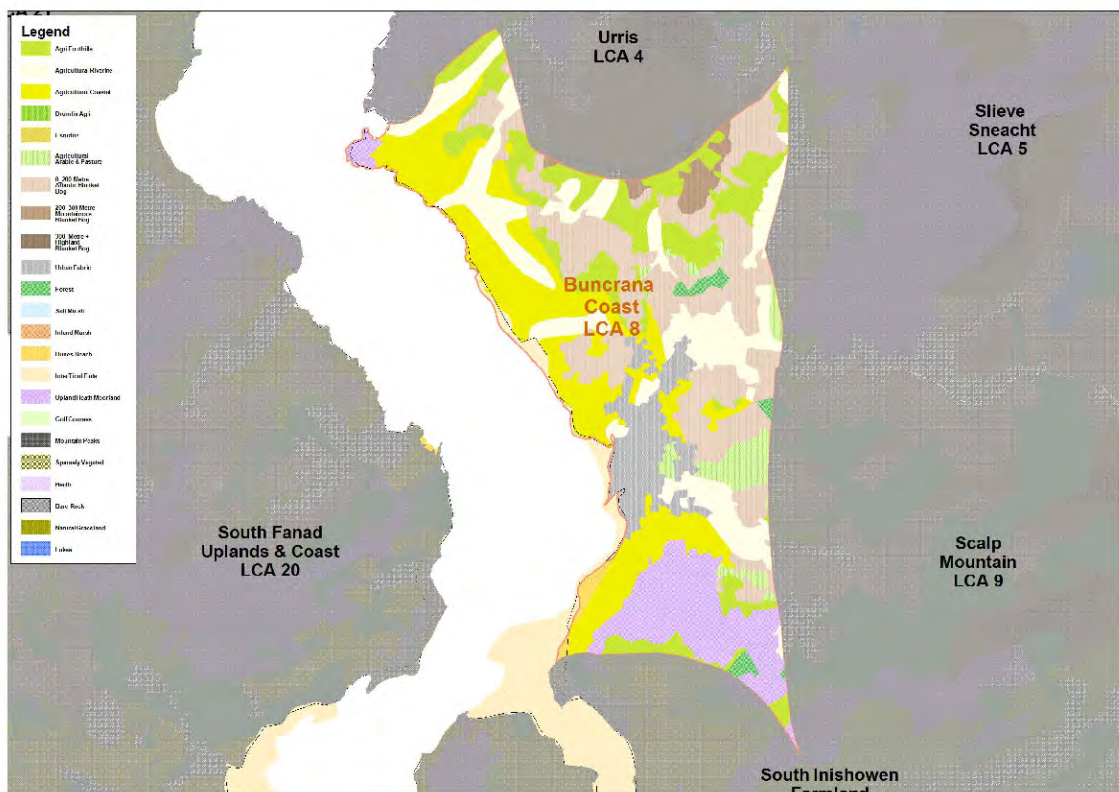


Buncrana
Coast
LCA 8



Buncrana Coast LCA is located on the west of the Inishowen peninsula and is defined by Buncrana Town, a long stretch of sandy coastline along the Swilly and the surrounding mountains that encircle this fertile agricultural landscape. This is a historic landscape intrinsically associated with Lough Swilly as evident from the plethora of recorded monuments and protected structures in the landscape including enclosures, middens, cairns, promontory forts, Napoleonic forts, a castle and seaside Victorian architecture. Buncrana LCA is an interesting and active landscape with a synergy of land uses that contribute to the unique character of this area.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 6, Lough Swilly overlaps substantially with this LCA

Key characteristics uses: Lough Swilly is a large inland glacial tidal fjord that separates the Inishowen and Fanad peninsulas with high elevated bog and low-lying fertile fields and a range of uses including agriculture, tourism, forestry, and multiple sea uses including fishing, aquaculture, sailing, swimming, watersports and diving.

Coastal edge: The coast is predominantly low-lying with silty edges and areas of salt marsh and salt meadows.

Visibility: High degree of uninterrupted visibility of the lough from many points along the shore and coast.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Blueflag beaches of Lisfannon and Lady's Bay, the defensive forts at Dunree head and Ned's Point, a plethora of protected structures and structures identified on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage as well as a rich archaeological heritage and old demense landscape.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Undulating, fertile agricultural landscape with underlying schist geology, framed by uplands to the north, east and south and Lough Swilly to the west (one of only three glacial fjords in Ireland).
- Dunree head, at the northern extent of this LCA is an elevated quartzite promontory, housing a lighthouse and disused military barracks (formerly a Napoleonic fort). The lands undulate towards the shore between Dunree and Buncrana, and consist of generally medium to large agricultural fields bound for the most part by lush native hedgerow interspersed with clumps of trees and isolated deciduous trees.
- The higher Schist Mountains of Luddan Hill and Mouldy Hill, define the southern boundary of this LCA, and contain a large working quarry and some coniferous forestry plantations on the lower northern and eastern slopes.
- The coastline has a low rocky edge along the northern section of the LCA with a softer sandy shoreline towards the south from Lady's Bay along Buncrana Beach towards the Blue Flag beach at Lisfannon.

Settlements

- **Buncrana:** Buncrana is the 2nd most populated town in the county, located between the River Crana and River Mill, it boasts a rich history and heritage, with many fine examples of architecture and urban planning throughout the town. This area was, historically, the home of the O'Doherty clan and O'Doherty's Keep, located at the mouth of the Crana River in Swan Park, is all that remains of a 14th Century Castle. Buncrana was a traditional Irish linear settlement, modified during the 'Plantation' to create a planned main street and market square. Buncrana Railway



Station operated from 1864-1953 connecting Buncrana to Derry to the south-east and north towards Clonmany, aiding the growth and vitality of the town as a quality seaside resort. More recently it has experienced a rise and fall in the textiles industry whilst continuing to be a key service centre for Inishowen and wider Donegal County.

History, Culture and Heritage

- This LCA has a significant maritime and defensive history owing to it's strategic location alongside the large glacial Fjord that is Lough Swilly, and surviving structures include:
 1. Lighthouse at Dunree Head
 2. Dunree Military Fort
 3. Porthaw Fort
 4. Buncrana castle
 5. Lighthouse along Buncrana Shore
- Dunree head has been a strongpoint from prehistory to it being a 'Treaty Port' of the British during the early years of Irish independence.
- Numerous archaeological structures and sites throughout the area, including a number of Recorded Monuments.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 5 RPS structures and 137 on the NIAH.
- Buncrana had a major textiles industry through the years and the Swan Mill and Tullyarvan Mills and associated structures inform the character of areas of Buncrana today.

Access and Recreation

- The R238 regional road, one of the primary routes into west and central Inishowen, and a network of county roads permeate this area allowing easy vehicular access throughout.
- A seasonal ferry runs from Buncrana to Rathmullan on the opposite side of Lough Swilly operating from the large pier at Buncrana.
- A RNLI lifeboat and slipway is located at Porthaw, just north of Buncrana.
- The Wild Atlantic way follows the length of the Swilly coastline in this LCA.
- The Inishowen 100 is an established tourist route that follows the entire coast within this LCA.
- 18 hole golf course at Lisfannon on the south-western shore.
- Strong Tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape and their use.
- The Lough Swilly Railway ran from Derry and Letterkenny through this LCA and north into Inishowen, closing in 1953.
- Fort Dunree Military Museum is a prime tourist attraction on the coast of this LCA.

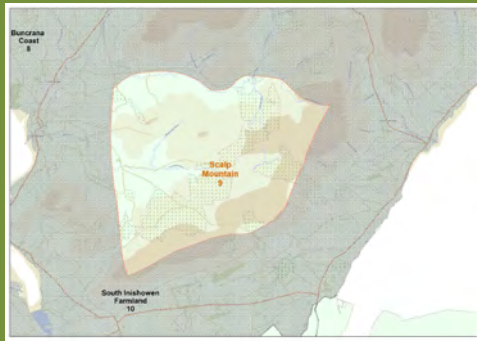
Biodiversity



- Ecologically important landscape containing 171.4ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA), 61.74ha of NHA sites and 80.11ha pNHA sites as well as the important biodiversity links of the riverine corridors, and the old railway line.
- Large fluid sand dune system and coast along the south
- Patchwork of medium to large sized agricultural fields generally bounded by native hedgerow and deciduous trees.
- Large areas of deciduous woodland particularly along the coast and along river valleys.

Forces for change

- Further consolidation and development of Buncrana.
- Linear development along the rural road network
- Tourism related holiday home developments.
- Potential for further development of Sailing and water based tourism activities.
- Golf tourism
- Renewable energy development).
- Afforestation on higher ground..
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Tourism Product Development of the coast, Ned's Point and Fort Dunree.



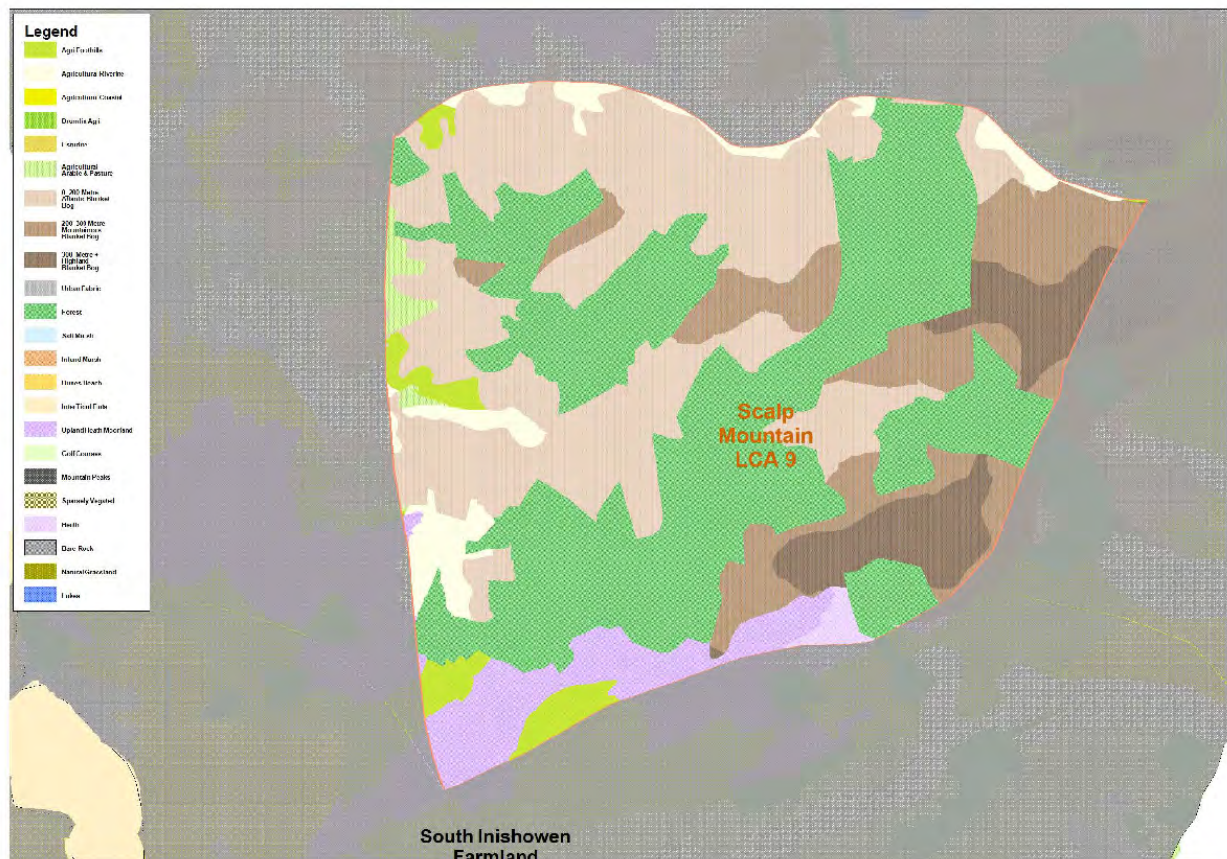
Scalp Mountain

LCA 9



Scalp Mountain LCA is characterised by widespread upland blanket bog and dominated by the imposing Scalp and Iskaheen mountains. Substantial areas of commercial forestry extend throughout the area and 22 wind turbines are located in 2 groupings of 10 and 12 in the west of this LCA. There are pockets of agricultural land and dispersed rural dwellings on the periphery of this area and alongside the Owenkillew and Barnahone Rivers.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

- There are no seascape units within this LCA, however this upland mountainous area is in the centre of the Inishowen peninsula and forms a backdrop to views from SCA 1 and SCA 6 when viewed from the sea.

Settlements

There are no towns or villages within this LCA.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- This LCA is generally divided with shale geology on the upland areas in the west and schist geology forming the eastern mountainous spine including Scalp Mountain and Iskaheen Mountain. A pocket of limestone bedrock is situated just north of Scalp Mountain.
- Blanket bog and forestry cover most of this LCA punctuated by small agricultural riverine corridors.
- A windfarm is located within the western, Buncrana side of this LCA and a large telecommunications mast sits atop the peak of Scalp Mountain.
- Numerous coniferous forestry plantations are located throughout the LCA with no cohesive pattern.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There are a number of Recorded Monuments scattered in the west of this LCA.
- Isolated vernacular cottages dotted along the river corridors.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 2 structures on the NIAH.
- This LCA is elevated, dominant and highly visible from many parts of Donegal and Northern Ireland and a large area along the south and east is designated EHSA.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies this LCA as a high point of upland bog that dominates all points on Inishowen. As elsewhere, at accessible levels this was used for hand-cut turf, and in sheltered locations or dryer slopes there may have been some upland summer pasture, or small spade-cultivated areas. On the whole though, it was unsuited to settlement. Together with the neighbouring "East Inishowen Mountains and Valleys" Slieve Sneacht is a formidable barrier between settled areas to north and south.

Access and Recreation

- A network of county roads and service roads provide limited vehicular access into and through the LCA.
- Walks and trails throughout this area offer long uninterrupted views across the landscape.

Biodiversity

- The entire LCA falls within an SPA buffer and some of this is also within a SAC buffer.
- The rivers through this LCA are important biodiversity corridors, in particular the Crana river that flows west towards Buncrana.

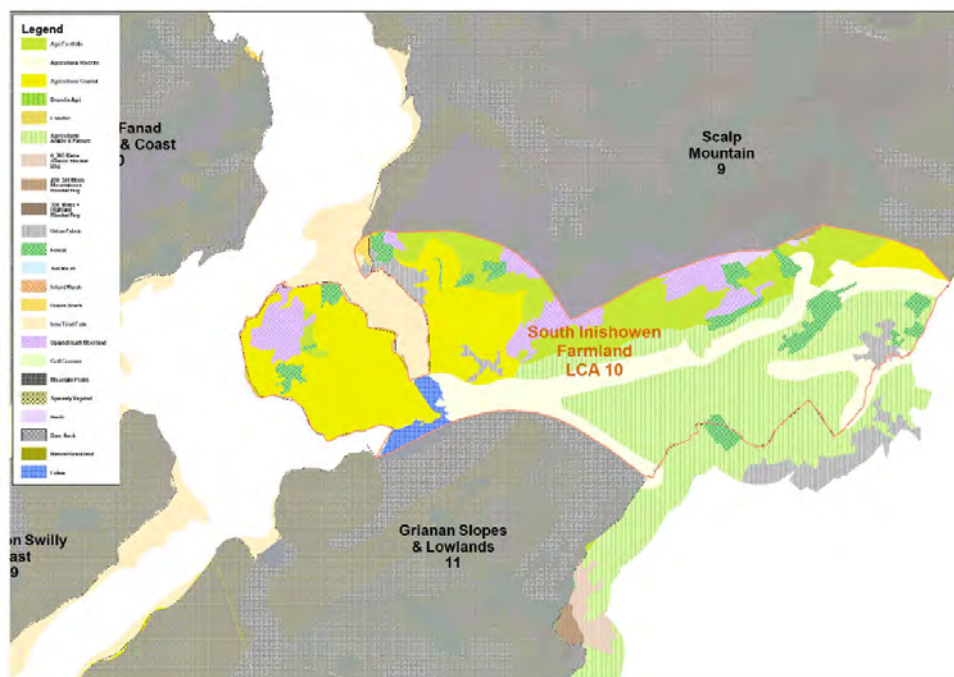
Forces for change

- Windfarm development
- Forestry
- Poor river water body status.



South Inishowen farmland LCA spans the bottom of the Inishowen peninsula from Lough Swilly to Lough Foyle. It is characterized by good quality agricultural land in a pattern of medium to large sized fields separated by hedgerow and deciduous trees against the backdrop of Scalp Mountain to the north and the suburbs of Derry City (Northern Ireland) to the south-east. Inch Island is connected to the mainland by 2 embankments created to hold water drained from the adjoining flat agricultural re-claimed land that has, in turn, created Inch Lake. One of these causeways constitutes the only vehicular access into the island from the mainland. The area is well connected to adjoining areas by a Regional road that cuts right through the length of the LCA and a network of county roads that provide permeability throughout the area and linkages between the settlements. This area has been settled for millennia, and there are many remaining national monuments evident in the landscape.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 1 extends into the east of this LCA and Seascape Unit 6 into the west.

Key characteristics uses: On the eastern side of the LCA, the coast is predominantly agricultural land that slopes from the silty edge of Lough Foyle and the western edge is characterised by good quality agricultural lands, beaches, Inch Island and the Fahan Marina.

Coastal edge: Soft mudflat edge with some rocky outcrops and beaches.

Visibility: High intervisibility with Northern Ireland and unobstructed views over Lough Foyle from the eastern shore of this LCA and a high degree of uninterrupted visibility of Lough Swilly and the Fanad area from the Western coast of this LCA.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Many important archaeological structures and recorded monuments including St Mura's Cross and former Monastery site at Fahan, and battery/fort on Inch island. Blueflag Lisfannon beach, Fahan Marina and ecologically important Inch lake and levels, EU lands designated as Special Protection Areas.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Inch Island has a schist bedrock with a small pocket of limestone. It is located in Lough Swilly and connected to the mainland by a man made causeway at a point that was previously one of 2 ferry crossing areas. It's gently sloping agricultural fields fall from higher ground in the centre of the island towards a low silt and sandy shore. The island a dispersed rural settlement pattern and a small established housing estate on the eastern shore. The island and its setting are an iconic image of Donegal and constantly reproduced as one of the main views from An Grianan in the adjoining LCA11. Another causeway is located further south that was constructed to reclaim the large swathe of agricultural lands for agriculture, these are the flat lands (slab lands) located between Burt and Inch. The freshwater lake formed by the causeways and the surrounding lands are important feeding grounds for a number of important bird populations, part of the Inch Levels wildlife foul reserve and Lough Swilly SPA (004075).
- Fahan village and Fahan Marina are across the bay from Inch island and connected to Burnfoot and Muff by regional roads that run west to east through a long established undulating farming landscape with a primarily schist geology.
- A Columban Monastic site dating from the 6th century is in the centre of Fahan near the site of the graveyard that includes St Mura's cross, a decorated cross slab of national importance, and the ruins of an early church remain.
- Scalp Mountain slopes southwards into this LCA and is covered in blanket bog, some forestry and agriculture on the lower slopes.

Settlements



- Burnfoot: This small village developed relatively recently as a 'crossroads' settlement beside a bridge crossing on the Burnfoot River; no village is mapped on the OS series from 1837-42, yet is mapped on the subsequent OS from the early 20th century. The settlement has some local services and also a number of light industries and small business enterprises.
- Fahan: A small village on the banks of Lough Swilly, adjacent to a large sandy bay and more recently the Foyle Marina. There has been a settlement here since at least the 6th Century, evidenced by the remains of 6th Century monastery of St Colmcille. The Londonderry and Lough Swilly railway line ran through Fahan from 1853 until the 1950s when the line shut and this period saw the development of Fahan as a commuter town and as a seaside daytrip location.
- Muff: Muff is a small village located on the border with Northern Ireland. It has experienced significant growth in residential development since 2000 due to the urban influence of Derry and resulting pressure for housing within commuting distance of the city. The village has positively developed in a compact manner and has a good range of local services and facilities located along the main street.

History, Culture and Heritage

- This area has a strong defensive and maritime history, the ruins of O'Doherty's Castle can be seen on the southern shore of Inch Island and a Napoleonic fort on the north.
- Early monastic site and St. Muras Cross at Fahan.
- Lough Swilly Railway line ran along the western coast of this LCA.
- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA - illustrating early settlement within this area and including ceremonial and religious use.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 4 RPS structures and 82 on the NIAH.
- Birdstown is a large demesne (house, outbuildings and gardens) with unusually large fields in the in the centre of this LCA on the NIAH.
- The Historic Landscape Characterisation has predominantly mapped the mainland fields as Sinuous bounded and irregular (Generic HLC-type) primarily because they are often quite small and irregular, rather than for their "sinuosity". Inch Island is divided into two; lowland patchwork of straight-sided rectilinear and surveyed fields (Generic HLC-Type) and a more rugged higher area of "Semi-open rough ground" traditionally used for grazing.

Access and Recreation

- Regional roads radiate from Burnfoot in the centre of this LCA towards Derry, Letterkenny, Buncrana and Muff.
- Network of county roads lace through the area making it easily accessible.
- Inishowen Inch Wildfowl Reserve is managed by the NPWS as a wildfowl reserve of international importance and is located on lands within this and adjacent LCA 11 to the south. There is a looped walkway around the reserve.
- Fahan Marina is between the village of Fahan and Inch Island and is the base for Lough Swilly Yacht club.
- Wild Atlantic Way follows the road network along the west and east coast of this LCA.

Biodiversity

- Inishowen Inch Wildfowl Reserve is of international importance for a number of protected species.
- Ecologically important landscape containing 421.7ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 1,040ha pNHA sites.
- Both the east and west coasts of this area are designated SPA.

- Areas along the west coast, Lough Swilly are designated SAC.
- Hedge and deciduous tree bound fields are a predominant feature in this landscape providing biodiversity corridors throughout.

Forces for change

- In the past there was considerable pressure for urban generated housing development from the city of Derry in neighbouring Northern Ireland; this LCA forms the natural rural hinterland of Derry city and abuts the border with Northern Ireland.
- Linear development along the rural road network
- Tourism related holiday home developments.
- Potential for further development of Sailing and water based tourism activities.
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Afforestation on higher ground within the north and west of the landscape unit.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Further tourism development – building on the history, culture, ecological and recreational qualities of the area.



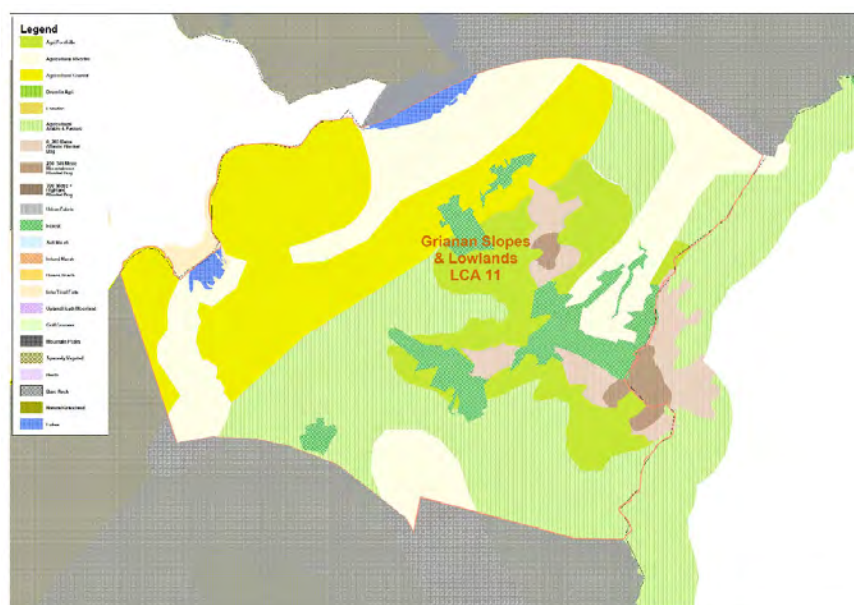
Grianan Slopes and Lowlands

LCA 11



Grianan Slopes and Lowlands LCA is a fertile green agricultural landscape of great environmental, historical and archaeological importance, with an extensive boundary along the border with Northern Ireland to the east and along the shores of Lough Swilly to the west. The topography is such that higher lands within the centre east of this area slope downwards on all sides to an undulating lower agricultural landform affording extensive and panoramic views out over the surrounding landscape and Lough Swilly, and conversely this area is highly visible from a wide area of Donegal and adjoining County Derry in Northern Ireland. A large swathe of low lying lands on the edge of Lough Swilly in the northwest of this area are of especially high ornithological value and these feeding and wintering grounds form part of Inch Wildlife reserve, an area designated as SPA. The range of landscape assets and the location along the Wild Atlantic Way with good transport connections by air and road make this landscape area a popular area for tourists to visit and stay. Similarly these same assets have fuelled recent rural and urban population expansion within this LCA.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 6 is within the Grianan Slopes and Lowlands LCA, and the key characteristics of this seascape unit that fall within this LCA are listed below.

Key characteristics uses: Low-lying fertile fields and reclaimed flat lands of primarily agriculture use. Grianan Fort and O'Doherty's Castle are iconic historic hilltop prominent structures in this LCA and visible from the route of the Wild Atlantic way that follows the route of the N56 through this seascape unit.

Coastal edge: The coast consists of predominantly low-lying silty edges with areas of salt marsh and salt meadows.

Visibility: A degree of uninterrupted views out over Lough Swilly from points within this area; this seascape unit falls within the panorama from the Grianan of Aileach fort .

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Reclaimed agricultural land, rich archaeological heritage including Burt Castle, ruined Abbey and clachans.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Grianan Mountain is one of a series of high hills in the south of this LCA that dominate over this otherwise gently undulating landscape of primarily schist geology.
- Reclaimed lands at Blanket Nook and Inch levels form flat, large, straight sided fields that are a disparate but complementary feature within this contrasting landscape where the remaining agricultural land consists of medium, mostly hedge rimmed fields that fall from higher ground towards a wider agricultural hinterland and continue to the silty edged coastline to the west.
- Low hills and low lying gently undulating fields are an interesting feature on the western, Lough Swilly, side of the National Primary road, highlighted by Burt castle atop a rounded hill in the townland of Grange.
- Large pockets of deciduous woodland and clumps of deciduous trees are characteristic of the lower slopes of Grianan Mountain including Burt woods located near St Aengus Chapel and Bogay within the south of this LCA.
- 110kv ESB line runs through this area along a southwest-northeast axis.

Settlements



- **Bridgend** is a strategically important town on the border with Northern Ireland approximately 2.5km from the edge of Derry City along the Letterkenny-Derry economic corridor. Historically a small rural settlement, it has evolved as a result of

cross-border influences into a commuter village with a mismatch of functions for a settlement it's size, including a higher than average amount of petrol stations, gambling establishments and amusements.

- **Killea** "*Fiach's Church*" is a commuter village straddling the border with Northern Ireland within the hinterland of Derry. Historically an agricultural rural settlement with no distinguishable centre, the last decade has seen rapid residential development.
- **Newtowncunningham** is a small 17th Century plantation town in the south of this LCA, equidistant to Derry and Letterkenny. Once bisected by the main Derry-Letterkenny road, it was bypassed in 1985 by the main N13 that passes close by to the north. It's proximity to Derry has fuelled recent residential expansion over the past decade.

History, Culture and Heritage

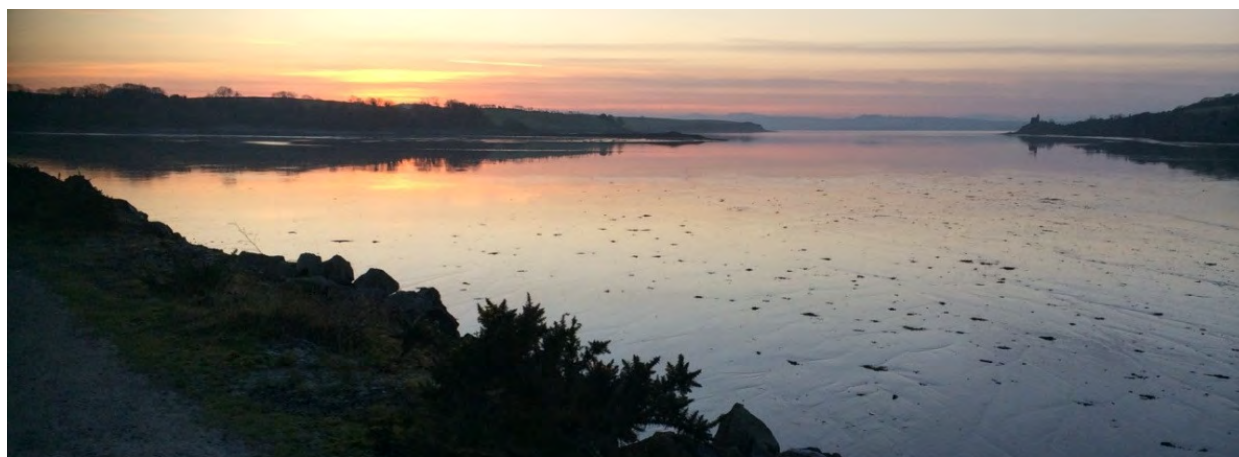
- Grianan of Aileach Fort is a stone ringfort dating from the 1st Century on the site of the earlier Bronze Age fort and sits atop Grianan Hill between Lough Foyle to the east and Lough Swilly to the west and affords unobstructed 360° views for miles around. It was an extremely important site through history, being the royal capital of the O'Neil dynasty from 5th to 12th Centuries.
- Burt Castle, a 16th Century castle located on a natural round hill in the west of the LCA.
- Castle ruins at Newtoncunningham are located among a cluster of archaeological monuments.
- St Aengus Chapel Burt is a landmark structure situated at the foot of Grianan Mountain, the main route up to Grianan of Aileach. Designed by architect Liam Mc Cormick and constructed in 1969 mirroring nearby Grianan of Aileach, it was voted "Building of the Century" in an RIAI award in 1999.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 10 RPS structures and 47 on the NIAH.
- Plantation landscape as evidenced in the field formation and Newtoncunningham plantation village.
- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA, dating from at least Neolithic times illustrating early settlement within this area including ceremonial and religious use.
- The railway line.
- The Historic Landscape Characterisation denotes a strong contrast between the south edge of this area of rectilinear square-shaped fields of improved farmland and the more varied, smaller-scale fields to the north. In part this reflects the "historically recent" drainage of Inch Level (Intake), drained 1840-59. These would otherwise have been coastal mudflats within Lough Swilly and the development was co-ordinated with railway expansion (that used the Trady Embankment to provide a route and trackbed). As a consequence of a series of embankments, an area of Lough was cut off to form "Inch Lough" the waters of which are less briny than the sea Lough. The large square fields were a product of the 1950s reorganisation of the Grianán Estate, and so is a recently-created landscape. Inch Lough and surrounding wet grasslands are leased by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, with conservation priorities guiding their management. Whilst other fields in this LCA Area are smaller and older, they share a familiar patchwork pattern of squarish fields, often with hedge boundaries, that continues in a broad sweep from this point south through the Laggan and characterises the former plantation areas that were improved during the 18th- and 19th-centuries.
- The HLC also identifies Grianan of Aileach as a site of particular cultural and visual impact and amenity that dominates slopes to both Lough Foyle and Lough Swilly; a dry-stone ringfort / cashel with a solar aligned entrance. It was the seat of an important royal lineage that had an historic role in forging a distinct Ulster identity.

The cashel, mound and well are regarded as a Ceremonial Generic HLC-type, along with wider slopes of the hill that may have accommodated large assemblies. The hill is surrounded by a succession of ramparts that may date back to the Late Bronze Age. The hill therefore also functions as "Military Fortifications and Batteries HLC-type". The location and topography is crucial. Command of a highpoint between sea loughs, as well as dominating productive land has led this to become an evocative location with far-wider landscape impact than merely the area covered. It may be viewed at a distance from across the border, framed in silhouette on the skyline and from Lough Swilly. Likewise it is a popular destination that affords widespread views of the landscape, framed by a historical perspective. Part of the comprehension of the wider landscape is informed by the location of the viewing point.

Access and Recreation

- National Primary road (N13) cuts through this LCA, bypassing the village of Newtoncunningham and continuing north through Bridgend towards Derry. Regional roads spur north from this towards Inishowen and east towards Killea.
- Network of county roads permeate the area.
- Wild Atlantic Way follows the route of the National Primary Road through this LCA.
- Inishowen Inch Wildfowl Reserve is managed by the NPWS as a wildfowl reserve of international importance and is located on lands within this and adjacent LCA 10 to the north. There is a looped walkway around the reserve.

Biodiversity



- Inishowen Inch Wildfowl Reserve is of international importance for a number of protected species.
- Ecologically important landscape containing 1,124ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 1,040ha pNHA sites.
- Hedge and deciduous tree bound fields are a predominant feature in this landscape providing biodiversity corridors throughout.
- Dispersed clumps of deciduous woodland in this LCA including Burt Woods and Bogay.

Forces for change

- In the past there was considerable pressure for urban generated housing development from the city of Derry in neighbouring Northern Ireland; this LCA forms the natural rural hinterland of Derry city and abuts the border with Northern Ireland.
- Linear development along the rural road network
- Potential for further fishing tourism activities.
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).

- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion.
- Potential for development of further historical, cultural and ecology based tourism developments.

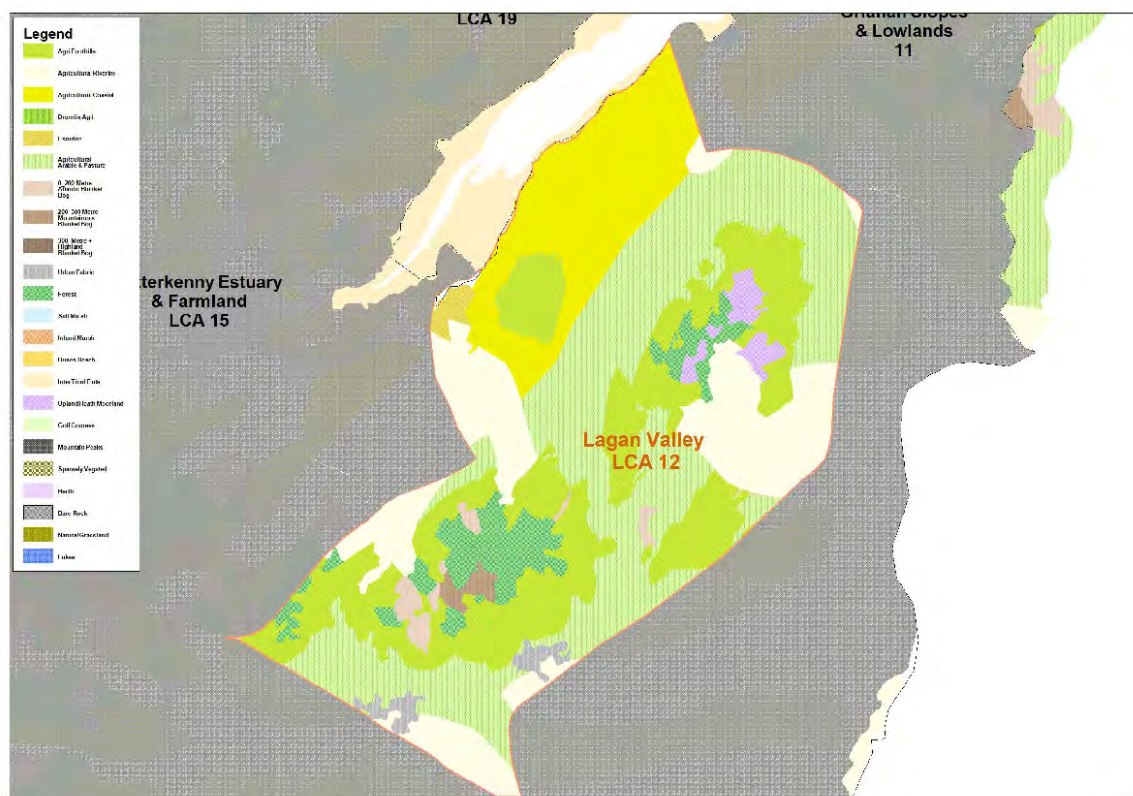


Laggan Valley LCA 12



Laggan Valley LCA is a vast undulating agricultural landscape of good quality pasture and arable land characterised by large, geometric, hedge trimmed agricultural fields extending over a wide geographical area, with a long shore along Lough Swilly. Often described as a 'Plantation Landscape', this good quality farming land was confiscated from Gaelic Lords in the early 1600s and colonised by settlers from England and Scotland as part of the wider colonisation of Ulster. This LCA is permeated by a network of national, regional and county roads that connect the large farms and plantation towns of Manorcunningham, Convooy and Raphoe to each other and to the wider hinterland.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 6 falls within a very small area of the Laggan Valley LCA just east of Manorcunningham.

Key characteristics uses: The area of seascape unit that falls within this LCA is primarily good quality agricultural land.

Coastal edge: This LCA has no coastal edge.

Visibility: Restricted visibility of the shore from within this LCA.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: none within the area of overlap between the seascape unit and LCA.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Schist and Quartzite bedrock underlie this undulating fertile agricultural landscape.
- Consistent layer of glacial superficial deposits are spread over the underlying rock.
- Agricultural lands slope gently in a rolling form from the N13 towards the shore of Lough Swilly along the north of this LCA, and have a primarily schist bedrock with small areas of limestone to the west around Manorcunningham.
- Mongerry Hill is a schist mountain north-west of Raphoe covered with peat and heath vegetation and large areas of forestry. The main Letterkenny to Raphoe road cuts over this mountain in a straight line (on plan), resulting in a very steep road.
- Dooish Mountain is part of schist formed, peat and heather clad upland area in the north centre of this LCA equidistant from the shores of Lough Swilly to the west and Lough Foyle to the east, like the other upland area of Mongerry in this LCA, there is extensive forestry plantation.
- Dominant pattern of straight sided rectilinear hedgerow bound fields over an undulating and rolling working agricultural landscape interspersed with farm houses and farm buildings.

Settlements



- **Convoy:** Convoy is a small town in the south of this LCA on the River Deele, it has a defined Main Street and adjoining estate house and lands, Convoy House (RPS structure). Convoy House and demesne were the estate lands of the Montgomery landowners and this and Convoy Mills at the opposite end of the village inform its character.
- **Drumoghill:** Drumoghill is a small rural settlement that has developed around a cross roads, parish church and in more recent times a National school.

- **Manorcunningham:** Manorcunningham is a small 17th Century plantation town located within a wider area of good quality agricultural land. Like nearby Newtowncunningham, the town takes its name from James Cunningham, who was granted these lands during the plantation of Ulster. The main Letterkenny-Derry road once divided the Main Street, but this was bypassed in 1985 by the upgrade of the N13.
- **Raphoe:** Raphoe is a plantation town imposed on a medieval centre with an abundance of archaeological, historical and architectural assets, in itself and in the rural hinterland and is identified as a Heritage Town. Raphoe is also a thriving market town servicing the wider rural area and retains a high level of services (commercial, economic, social and religious) comparative to other centres of its size.

History, Culture and Heritage

- Large concentration of archaeological monuments dating from as far back as Neolithic and early bronze-age.
- An early monastic settlement existed in Raphoe in the 6th century AD; the site is where St Eunan's Cathedral now stands and this and the surrounding area are protected archaeological zones in the Record of National Monuments.
- Plantation history is evident in the field formation within this LCA and the plantation towns and villages of Convoy, Manorcunningham and Raphoe.
- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA, illustrating early settlement within this area and including ceremonial and religious use.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 28 RPS structures and 47 NIAH.
- The Historic Landscape Characterisation report identifies that this highly productive agricultural area was "improved" in the 18th and 19th centuries following 17th-century plantation. It is characterised by a patchwork of square fields (Straight-sided and surveyed fields Generic HLC-type), with hedges, and late 20th-century plantation woods and forest on the higher ground. To the south of the area is the historic market town of Raphoe. This was where Gaelic kings were inaugurated in the later medieval period and St Eunan's church has parts dating to the 13th-century. The Bishops Palace, surrounded by designed Parks and Garden (Generic HLC-type) and Demesne Farmland (Specific HLC-type), dates to the 17th century. It was a focus for the protestant ascendancy and the Bishop held a Consistory Court in the Cathedral. The Second Raphoe Presbyterian Church (now Recreation Hall), with neo-classical façade, and the Hiberno-Romanesque Roman Catholic Church punctuate the streetscape, whilst new housing spreads along roads leading out of town.

Access and Recreation

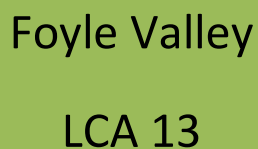
- The N13 and N14 National Primary roads cut through this LCA,
- R236 and R264 traverse this LCA.
- Network of county roads permeate the area.
- Wild Atlantic Way travels the route of the National Primary Road through the north west of this LCA and there is a 'WAW' discovery point at 'Manorcunningham Viewpoint', overlooking Lough Swilly.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 154.8ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 98.6ha of pNHA sites.
- Hedge and deciduous tree bound fields are a dominant feature in this landscape providing biodiversity corridors throughout.
- Dispersed clumps of deciduous woodland and demesne woodland in this LCA

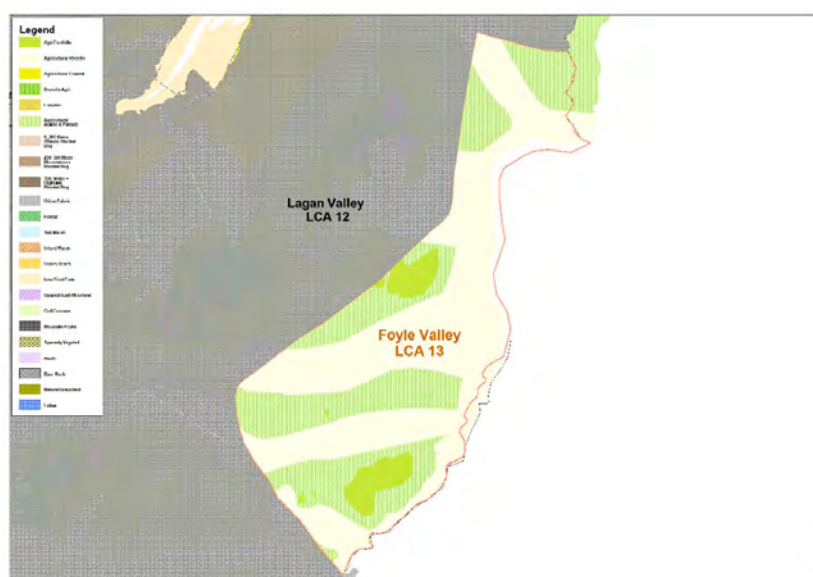
Forces for change

- Degree of pressure for urban generated housing development from Letterkenny and Derry in neighbouring Northern Ireland.
- Linear development along the rural road network
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development



Foyle Valley LCA is a broad river valley extending along the River Foyle from outside Lifford in the south of the area to the border with Northern Ireland on the outskirts of Derry City in the north of this LCA including the 'border villages' of Ballindrait, Carrigans, Lifford and St. Johnston. This LCA is characterised by undulating fertile agricultural lands with a regular field pattern of medium to large geometric fields, bound by deciduous trees and hedgerow. There is a dispersed scatter of rural residential development within this LCA comprising of farmsteads and one off rural dwellings along with areas of ribbon development along the county road network; there are a number of large detached historic houses and associated grounds within this landscape, particularly along the Foyle. This LCA has a strong visual connection to its mirror landscape on the opposite side of the River Foyle in Northern Ireland in terms of the similar landscape type and also that the Northern Ireland landscape inherently informs the views within and without of this LCA. The River Foyle is an ecologically, strategically and historically (including the fishing economy) important feature in this landscape.

Landscape Character types



Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Undulating rural agricultural landscape with underlying schist geology in the north and Quartzite in the south that consists of one half of a large broad river valley that slopes gently towards the Foyle, the other half being in Northern Ireland.
- Interesting convergence of the rivers Finn, Mourne, Dee, Swilly Burn, and Foyle in the east of this LCA that flow north as the River Foyle into Lough Foyle; mirrored on the east bank of the River Foyle in Northern Ireland. There is an alluvial plain in the middle of the River Foyle that has formed a long flat island extending from Lifford north towards Porthall within the jurisdiction of Ireland
- The landscape is physically shared with Northern Ireland to the east of this LCA; the River Foyle defines the border with Northern Ireland and the 2 jurisdictions share its catchment.
- Regular shaped medium to large, arable and pasture fields bound in hedgerow interspersed with deciduous trees and clumps of trees are characteristic to this 'plantation landscape'.
- The topography of this LCA lends a wide aspect over the surrounding landscape and of particular note are the many wind farms in Northern Ireland that are visually prominent within this landscape.

Settlements



- **Ballindrait:** Ballindrait is a rural plantation village situated on a crossing of the Dee River, with an 'atypical' plantation layout of terraces facing onto a triangular 'diamond'. Ballindrait railway station was a stop on the Strabane to Letterkenny railway line, that operated from 1909-1960.
- **Carrigans:** Carrigans is a small plantation village on the Carrigans River close to the border with Northern Ireland that was formerly part of Dunmore Estate. Dunmore House and Demesne are on the National Record of Protected Structures and inform the landscape setting and character of Carrigans.
- **St Johnston:** St Johnston is a small linear settlement within the Laggan District. There is a strong historic core within the village which retains much of its original layout and many original buildings. St Johnston railway station east of the town was a stop on the Londonderry to Enniskillen railway line that followed the River Foyle and which ceased to operate in 1965.
- **Lifford:** Lifford is a small historic town on the border with Northern Ireland, it first developed around the site of Lifford Castle, built in 16th Century at a strategic crossing point on the River Foyle. The centre of Lifford is a designated zone of archaeological interest and protected as a National Monument; other important structures include the Lifford Courthouse and Church of St. Lugadius.

History, Culture and Heritage

- Large concentration of Recorded Monuments dating from the Neolithic and early bronze-age including 'Beltany Stone Circle' outside the town of Raphoe, a large archaeological complex at Killymonaster and Croaghan.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 19 RPS structures and 28 NIAH including a number of small 'big houses' and demesnes.
- Railway line along the shores of River Foyle and west towards Letterkenny.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies a predominantly agricultural landscape of straight-sided and surveyed fields (Generic HLC-type) bounded by hedgerow; this is typical of areas that were improved during the 18th- and 19th centuries as in surrounding areas. Previously, much of the Foyle valley was cultivated for a variety of crops but much of it is under grass now. Beltany Ring, a Ceremonial Generic HLC-type, was used as a meeting place in Prehistoric times. It still commands wide views across fertile valleys.

Access and Recreation

- National Primary road (N13) links Lifford to Letterkenny and Lifford to Ballybofey, Regional roads to Derry and Raphoe branch from the N13.
- Network of county roads permeate the LCA.
- River Foyle and its tributaries have one of the largest stocks of Atlantic Salmon in Europe and fishing is an important recreational activity in this LCA.
- Monreagh Ulster Scots.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 456.8ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 310.1ha pNHA sites.
- Hedge and deciduous tree bound fields are a dominant feature in this landscape providing biodiversity corridors throughout.
- River Foyle and tributary rivers within this LCA are important for their populations of Atlantic Salmon (Annex 1 species), one of the largest populations in Europe.
- Large areas of deciduous woodland particularly along the coast and along the river valleys.

Forces for change

- In the past there was considerable pressure for urban generated housing development from the city of Derry in neighbouring Northern Ireland; this LCA forms the natural rural hinterland of Derry city and abuts the border with Northern Ireland.
- Linear development along the rural road network
- Potential for fishing tourism activities.
- Potential for heritage and history tourism product development.
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Afforestation on higher ground within the north and west of the landscape unit.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion



Finn Valley

LCA 14



Finn Valley LCA is dominated by the River Finn, its tributaries and associated valleys carved from the surrounding uplands. The LCA has 3 distinct areas within that change from west to east following the meandering River Finn through this LCA.

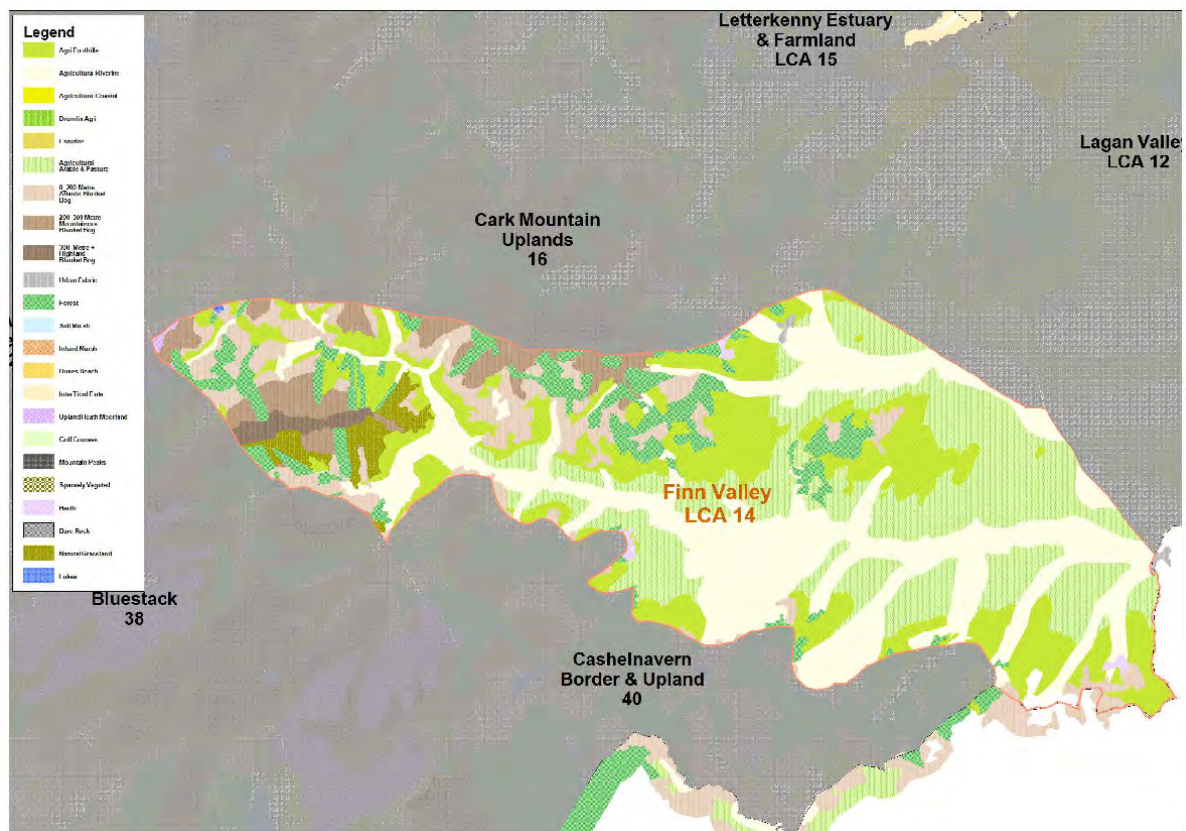
In the west of this LCA the Rivers Finn and Reelan cut through highland bog areas creating 2 steep narrow river valleys that have an interesting rectilinear field pattern of strips extending from the river edge into the upland bog in a 'rundale' fashion.

These smaller rivers converge as the River Finn close to Cloghan into a notably broader and more level valley of larger square agricultural fields overlooked by mountainous areas of upland bog. The landscape eastwards from Ballybofey Stranorlar towards Castlefinn is a fertile agricultural plain alongside the river within a wider gently undulating agricultural landscape of large square fields similar to the adjoining Laggan Valley and Foyle Valley LCAs.

Finn Valley LCA borders Northern Ireland at its eastern extremity and abuts 2 separate LCAs within NI sharing a similar landscape type and character area. The local road network affords multiple physical linkages with the adjoining landscape in Northern Ireland.

The eastern edge of this LCA borders Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Areas Foyle Valley (27) and Derg Valley (20), a continuum of the landscape type of the Finn Valley, namely good quality agricultural riverine lands of semi-improved geometric fields, with scattered farms, farmsteads and one off rural dwellings served by a number of rural villages and towns.

Landscape Character types



Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Overall Geology of Quartzite but with small peripheral areas of Schist and limestone.
- The River Finn system flows through high peat covered mountains within the west of this LCA eastwards through a more rolling and then gently undulating agricultural landscape of varying quality, tying this landscape character area together.

Settlements



- **Ballybofey-Stranorlar:** Ballybofey-Stranorlar are two separate towns co-joined by a bridge over the River Finn at a key point along the N15/N13 North South Transport Corridor (part of the wider Atlantic Corridor); collectively they comprise the 3rd largest urban centre in Donegal and function as a service centre in the heart of the

Finn Valley, offering high level retail, commercial, social, cultural and recreational centre facilities.

- **Castlefinn:** Castlefinn is a planned market town characterised by a diamond in the centre surrounded by several NIAH listed and protected structures and accessed from the south over the River Finn by an impressive 18th century 12 arch bridge stone rubble bridge. This bridge was constructed using stones from an earlier castle nearby on the banks of the river that belonged to Sir Neil Garbh O'Donnell prior to 'The Flight of Earls', and from whence the town is named. The Finn Valley railway crossed the south of the town connecting it to Lifford and Ballybofey and the town had until recently an active textile industry. The town retains local level retail, social and community services.
- **Killygordon:** Killygordon is a small crossroads settlement along the main Lifford to Stranorlar road, north of a bridge crossing on the River Finn, located within a fertile rural agricultural landscape. The Finn Valley railway line had a station here from 1863 to 1960

History, Culture and Heritage

- This area has a long history of settlement as evidenced by the many archaeological sites and monuments throughout. There are a number of Recorded Monuments in this LCA. The excellent fishing, fertile river valleys and the fact that the River Finn was navigable towards the Foyle and out into sea made this landscape attractive to early settlers.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 37 RPS structures and 215 NIAH.
- The eastern portion of this LCA is closely associated with the adjoining LCAs of the Laggan and Foyle valleys and Northern Ireland, in terms of both it's landscape 'type' and it's plantation history and heritage.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies that this area is characterised by a patchwork of straight-sided and surveyed fields, indicating 18th- and 19th-century agricultural improvements and the remains of a windmill at Croaghan, itself a landmark. This landscape is overlooked by Raphoe, Beltany Ring and Croaghan (though only the latter is within this area), and was a major route through history (now taken by the N15 road).

Access and Recreation

- Ballybofey-Stranorlar is in the middle of this LCA and the point where a number of radial routes from this LCA link to the wider County and beyond including the N15 east to Co. Tyrone, N15 south to Donegal Town, N13 north to Letterkenny and Derry and Regional roads west to Glenties, Fintown and Dungloe and north-east to Raphoe.
- Salmon and Sea trout angling is popular within this LCA, particularly along the faster flowing stretches of the Finn west of Ballybofey-Stranorlar.
- Finn Harps football stadium is currently located in the centre of Ballybofey, and a new stadium is presently under construction adjacent to a cluster of other sporting facilities in Stranorlar.
- 18-course Ballybofey Golf Club is situated north of Ballybofey-Stranorlar.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 1,019ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 80.33 ha of pNHA sites as well as the important biodiversity links created by the River Finn and tributaries and other river corridors that flow through this area.
- Tree and hedgerow bound roads and laneways and the overgrown disused railway line all form important biodiversity corridors and linkages.

- Clumps and clusters of native deciduous trees and woodland are dispersed throughout this LCA and of note are the important and historic woodlands of Drumboe and Dunwiley in Ballybofey-Stranorlar.
- Agricultural fields within this are mostly bound by native deciduous hedgerow and trees.
- Forestry plantations are sporadically located on higher lands throughout this landscape character area.

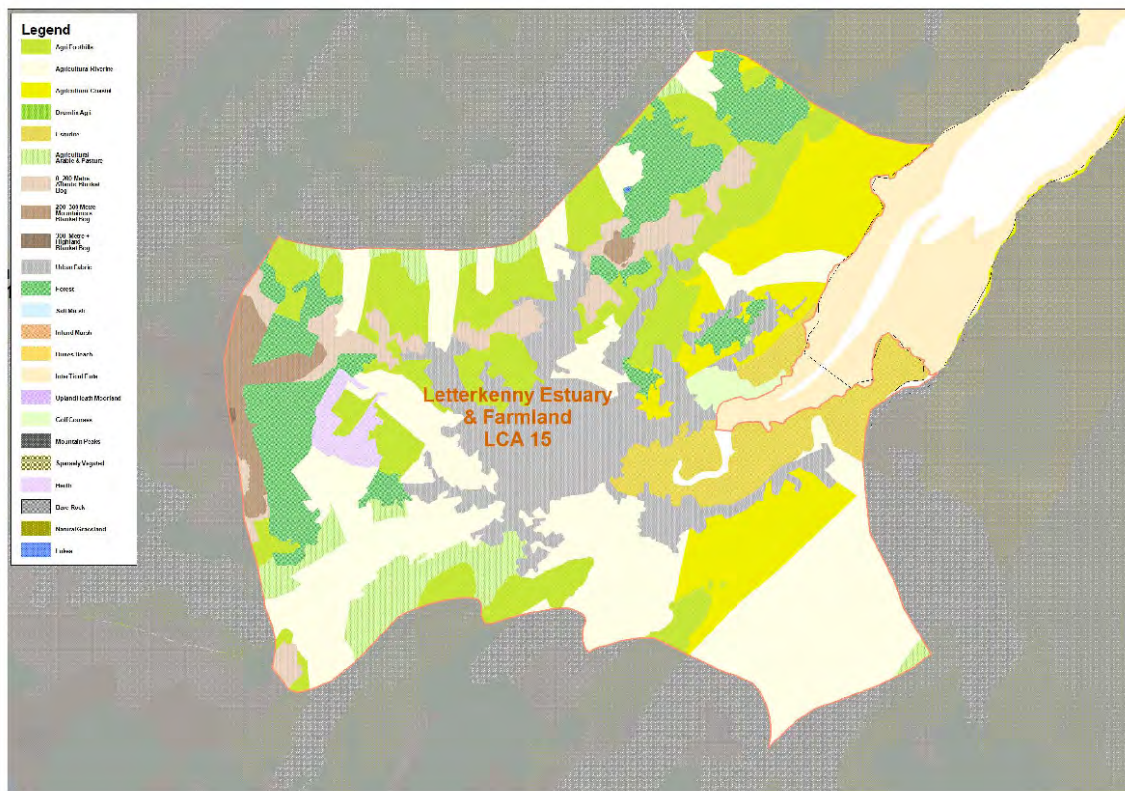
Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Afforestation in upland areas.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Development within the floodplains.
- Windfarm development in Northern Ireland forms part of the views of and from this LCA.
- Expansion and development of the twin towns of Ballybofey and Stranorlar.



Letterkenny Estuary and Farmland LCA is characterised by a wide, fertile valley of the River Swilly flowing through heath and bog covered uplands east towards Lough Swilly, a large intertidal estuary encircled by higher hills and mountains to the north and south and rolling arable lands in the east. Letterkenny is the largest town in the County and dominates much of this LCA; the town sprawls out from its historic core in the centre of this LCA in all directions, only somewhat curtailed by the floodplains of the River Swilly and steep rugged land to the north and west of the town. The area is accessible from all directions via a good network of National Primary, Regional and county roads.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 6 is within the Letterkenny Estuary and farmland LCA.

Key characteristics uses: Letterkenny sits on the River Swilly, within the Letterkenny Estuary and Farmland LCA which shores Lough Swilly for a stretch along the eastern boundary. The primary use in this area is agricultural although there is a proliferation of isolated rural dwellings within this landscape.

Coastal edge: Primarily a silty estuarine edge.

Visibility: High degree of visibility of the lough from points along the road network.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Reclaimed agricultural flat lands and flat estuarine lands are a significant feature within this part of the seascape unit, as is the mature demense landscape of Castlegrove house and Letterkenny Golf club on the western edge of Lough Swilly.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Schist bedrock underlies much of Letterkenny town, the western shore of Lough Swilly, and the northern and southern extremities of the LCA. The surrounding upland and mountainous areas are primarily quartzite save for a fringe of limestone along the southern shore of Lough Swilly.
- Large primarily agricultural floodplains extend inland along the river Swilly through Letterkenny town and beyond into Newmills. Some of the floodplains within the town area have been developed for commercial and retail use.
- The agricultural lands within this LCA are of varying quality ranging from good quality arable land along the shores of Lough Swilly, river valleys and arable land to the east, to upland grazing and pasture on peripheral uplands.
- There is a substantial amount of residential sprawl radiating from Letterkenny and a considerable amount of one-off rural dwellings and linear development along the local road networks.

Settlements

- **Letterkenny:** Letterkenny is the largest town in the county with a population of 19,588 (Letterkenny urban boundary; CSO 2011) and part of the linked Letterkenny-Derry Gateway as identified in the National Spatial Strategy, 2020. The town is located west of the Swilly estuary on the banks of the Swilly River; in recent times the town has expanded south across the river whereas the historic town fabric is located on higher lands just north of the river. Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015 (as varied) sets out a strategy for development within the defined plan boundary, although much of the rural surround is visually and physically associated with the town. Historically, Letterkenny was connected by railway from the west coast of the county towards Derry and Strabane in the east. The railway services ceased to operate in the 1960s,



however a number of remaining railway structures and features remain in and inform the landscape, including old railway arches.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage - 23 RPS structures and 95 NIAH including Castlegrove house and demesne, Ballymacool house and Rockhill house, important local landmarks that give distinctiveness to this landscape.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies that Letterkenny, like many towns, is located at the first significant river crossing inland of an estuary (Lough Swilly), and thereby over time became a travel node, with roads converging on the river crossing. Letterkenny may have been a centre for trade and commerce since the Plantation, although a castle once stood near the Cathedral of St Eunan and St Columba. Lough Swilly was of international maritime importance (Treaty port) and also a source of fish, the relative calmness of the Lough water in contrast to the open Atlantic, allowed inshore fishing in a variety of weather and sea states.

Access and Recreation

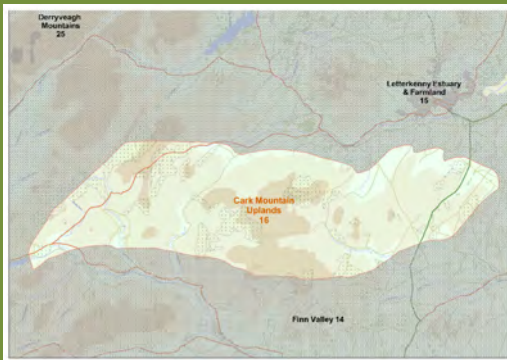
- The N13 and N56 National Primary roads cut through this LCA,
- R245 and R250 traverse this LCA.
- Network of county roads permeate the area.
- Wild Atlantic Way travels the route of the National Primary Road through this LCA.
- Letterkenny Golf Course sits on the west bank of Lough Swilly creating a visual greenway when viewed from the opposite side of the Lough.
- Letterkenny has a high level of social and cultural facilities including two town parks, a leisure centre, museum and a theatre.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 315.4ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 368.7ha of pNHA sites.
- Lough Swilly, designated as SPA (004075) and lush fertile valleys carved out by various tributaries and streams flowing towards the River Swilly create important biodiversity corridors.
- Hedge and deciduous tree bound fields are a predominant feature in this landscape providing biodiversity corridors throughout.
- Dispersed clumps of deciduous woodland, demesne woodland and important historic woodlands in this LCA.
- Lands on and around the estuary at Big Isle are an important wintering feeding ground for internally important species of Geese, and much of this tidal estuary is designated as SPA (004075).

Forces for change

- Degree of pressure in the rural area of this LCA for urban generated housing development from Letterkenny.
- Linear development along the rural road network
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Flooding
- Development and consolidation of Letterkenny urban area.

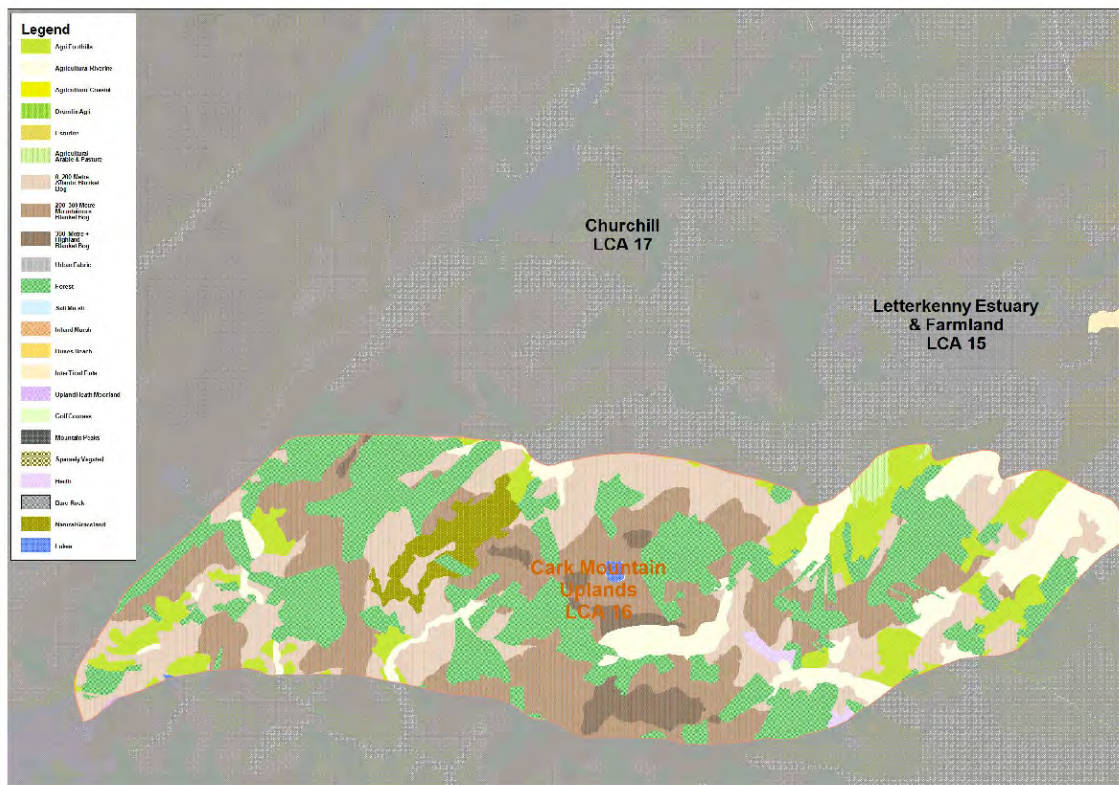


Cark Mountain Uplands LCA 16



Cark Uplands LCA is a sparsely populated area of primarily upland mountainous blanket bog, carved by meandering rivers creating small fertile valleys of small irregular shaped fields with hedgerow boundaries. This mountainous area forms a backdrop to the towns of Letterkenny and Ballybofey-Stranorlar, and is visible due its topography and elevation, from surrounding LCAs. More recently, the landscape has been encroached by large coniferous forestry plantations and commercial windfarms.

Landscape Character types



Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- High peat and forest covered granite mountains in the centre and west of this LCA are crossed by narrow river valleys, county roads and the Main Letterkenny-Glenties Regional road.
- A mixed geology of granite, schist and quartzite underlie the lower lands within the east of this LCA with a pocket of limestone in the northeast; the roads follow the paths of the rivers along valleys through this LCA.
- Tributaries of the Swilly, Finn and Deelee rivers originate from this upland area creating fertile agricultural river valleys where the scatter of one-off residential developments and farm buildings are concentrated.
- The higher exposed areas within this LCA are host to a number of wind farms.

Settlements

- There are no settlements within this LCA.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There are relatively few recorded sites and Recorded Monuments within this LCA compared to neighbouring LCAs however a number of ring forts and enclosures on higher ground within the east of this LCA overlook Lough Swilly and the Lower agricultural lands surrounding Raphoe.
- Ruins of vernacular cottages scattered throughout the area.
- The Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies this area as predominantly blanket bog and open upland heath (generic HLC-types) and suggests historically this landscape may have been used for Booleying (summer pasture) and at times of highest population pressure; some may have been brought into cultivation, using sand and seaweed. Ultimately, though, it was always an area of low productivity.

Access and Recreation

- The N13 traverses the east of this LCA connecting Letterkenny to the north of this area to Stranorlar in the south, and the R250 Regional road from Letterkenny to Fintown crosses the western edge of this LCA, the area is also traversed by a few County Roads; all the roads generally follow lower contours and meandering river valleys.
- Drumkeen Gun Club use uplands within the west of this LCA for recreational purposes.
- Seasonal angling on Lough Deelee and along the Deelee and Finn rivers.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 1,266ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 1,028ha of pNHA sites as well as the important biodiversity links created by the rivers that originates within this upland area.
- There are populations of brown trout and summer salmon in the Deelee River which rises in this LCA.
- Forestry plantations are sporadically located on higher lands throughout.

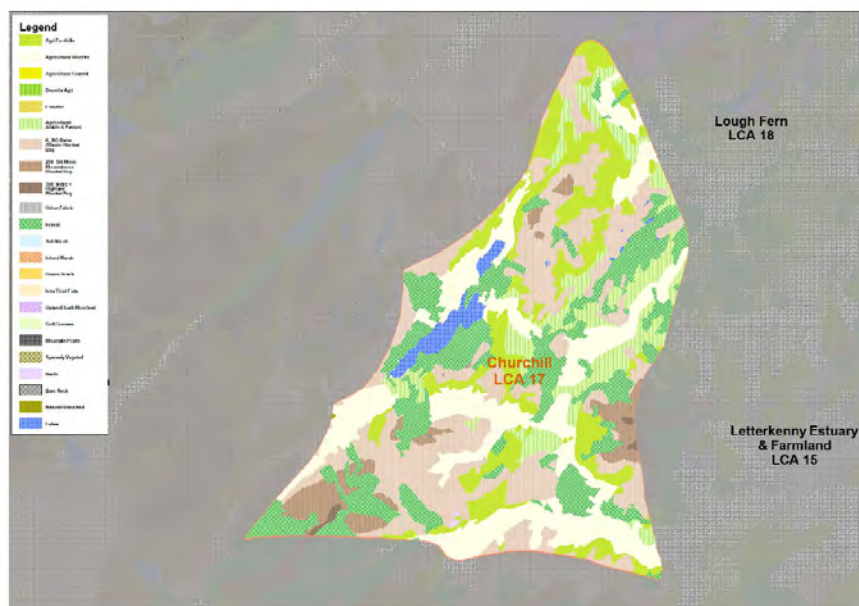
Forces for change

- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Afforestation in upland areas.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development



Churchill is a wholly inland LCA that extends eastwards from the foot of the Derryveagh Mountains along its boundary over the large still Lough Gartan and undulating fertile agricultural lands and lush river valleys towards Letterkenny and northeast towards Lough Fern, through higher bog covered lands. The area is framed along the south by Carik Mountains and along the east by Croaghmore Mountain. Lakes Nacally and Akibban sit just north of Gartan Lough, and all 3 are surrounded by large agricultural hedge and tree bound fields; the shores of Gartan Lough retain many elements of a previous estate landscape, of note are Glebe House and gardens and at Gartan recreation Centre, both of which are set within 'estate' parklands. Agriculture is the dominant land use within this area of good quality soils and the landscape is peppered with buildings and houses associated with farming. Four of the main routes to the west from Letterkenny pass through this LCA and connect to a network of county roads that afford good permeability and access to the many tourism and recreational facilities within the area, such as Glebe House, Fishing on the Lough and the Colmcille Heritage Centre.

Landscape Character types



Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Churchill LCA has a patchwork geology of quartzite, granite and schist underlying a rolling, fertile and agriculturally productive landscape.
- Gartan Lough is a large Lough covering of 506 acres within the west of this LCA that sits below the gentle slopes of the Derryveagh Mountains, serving as a backdrop to many views into and out of this area.
- This undulating, fertile area of hills and valleys has a strong pattern of rectilinear improved tree and hedgerow bound fields and roads, with a scattering of associated farm buildings and one off residential development that for the most part sit comfortably within the landscape.
- Large pockets of deciduous woodland particularly around Gartan Lough, and scattering of coniferous plantations on higher poorer quality lands.

Settlements

Churchill is a small, rural, linear settlement straddling both sides of the R251 east of Gartan Lough.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There is a heavy concentration of Recorded Monuments in this LCA – of particular importance is Doon Rock, an inauguration site of the ancient chieftains of Donegal.
- St Colmcille, one of the patron Saints of Ireland and an important figure in early Christianity in Ireland and Scotland was born near Lough Gartan within this LCA. He founded over 60 monasteries and churches in Ireland including one at Gartan built inside a hillfort. A number of important remains on this site include the foundations of a 10th Century abbey, the ruins of the 16th century St Colmcille's chapel, a holy well, graveyard and two ancient stone crosses.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 8 RPS structures.
- Glebe House and Gallery are situated on a small projection on the north of Lough Gartan in the west of this LCA and set within 25 acres of woodland. The Regency house dating from 1828 was home to the artist and art collector Derek Hill from 1954 until 1981, when he gave it and his art collection to the Irish state; the house, gallery and gardens are now run by the OPW.

Access and Recreation

- Good vehicular permeability into and throughout this area with the N56 cutting through the north, the R255, R251 and the R250 radiating westwards through this LCA from nearby Letterkenny. A network of good quality, county roads offer local access to the rest of the LCA, particularly within the eastern more fertile area.
- The Old Donegal Railway line ran north-south through this area, connecting Letterkenny to the Coast.
- Gartan outdoor recreation centre is an outdoor all age learning and training facility with onsite accommodation, set in an 87 acre woodland estate located on the southern shores of Gartan Lough.
- The Colmcille Heritage trail loops around most of this area and the Colmcille Heritage centre is on the shore of Gartan Lough.
- The River Leannan runs northeast from Gartan Lough towards Lough Fern, part of the 'River Leannan fishery' (Salmon and Brown Trout).

Biodiversity

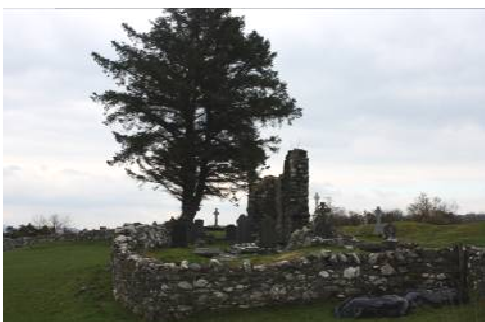
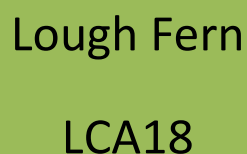
- Important ecological landscape containing 1,388ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA), 1,446 of pNHA sites and FWPM catchments.
- The lush hedgerow and tree bound fields, lanes, and roads together with the long stretches of river and streams create important biodiversity corridors throughout this

area, that in addition to the areas of mature deciduous woodland and many deciduous trees and tree copse, add significantly to the high ecological value of this landscape.

- Lough Gartan and the River Leannan have a high water quality that sustains populations of Atlantic Salmon and Brown Trout and which also fall within the catchment of internationally important Fresh Water Pearl Mussel population.

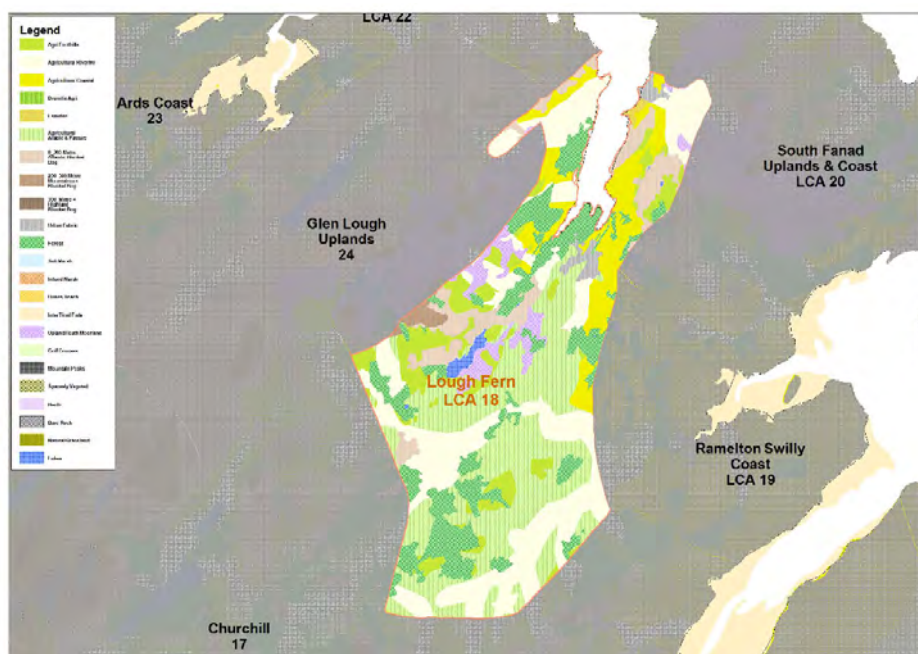
Forces for change

- Further tourism and recreational developments building on the established base of Lough Gartan and the areas of history, culture and ecology.
- Further one off rural dwellings could be accommodated within the landscape subject to LSD.
- Any developments would have to have careful consideration to the important ecological issues as well as the many historical and cultural features that contribute to this unique LCA.



Lough Fern Landscape Character Area is predominantly a low-lying gently undulating agricultural rural landscape with a large coastal edge along Broadwater, a sheltered tidal inlet south of Mulroy Bay peppered with small vegetated islands, extending to Kerrykeel on the eastern shore and Cranford on the west. The LCA is contained by Loughsalt Mountain to the west and Crockanaffrin Mountain to the east and is defined by Lough Fern and Lough Keel; two large freshwater Loughs in the centre of the area surrounded by fertile agricultural land with straight sided hedgerow bound fields. The River Leannan an important salmon river, flows south from Lough Fern towards Kilmacrennan, and east towards Ramelton, whilst Maggie's Burn flows north from Lough Fern towards Milford. Lough Keel Burn flows north from Lough Keel along a vegetated valley, wooded in parts, towards Bunlin Bay, a silty inlet off Broadwater.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

The southern section of Seascape Unit 7 overlaps the north of this Landscape Character Area.

Key characteristics uses: Low-lying land around the coast of Broadwater has a range of uses including agricultural, tourism, fishing, woodland, aquaculture and residential.

Coastal edge: low silty and estuarine edge.

Visibility: intermittent views over Broadwater.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Islands on Broadwater, estuary, holiday park development at Kerrykeel.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Underlying geology of schist follows the orientation of the 'Leannan Fault' in bands along a southwest to northeast axis, informing an undulating and low-lying, rich and fertile agricultural landscape with patches of scrub and forest throughout, and dominated by the large Lough Fern and Lough Keel in the centre of the LCA.
- A deep u-shaped shoreline hugs Broadwater, a still tidal estuary with a scattering of small vegetated islands overlooked by agricultural fields and deciduous woodland.
- A number of Rivers rise in the inland Loughs, including the River Leannan, an important salmonoid river, and flow through valleys of fertile riverine land swathed in a patchwork of geometric shaped hedgerow bound fields.
- Farms and farm buildings pepper this working agricultural landscape that also has as a scattering of one-off rural dwellings along the county road network, and on the outskirts of the main settlements.

Settlements



- **Kerrykeel:** Kerrykeel is a small rural village located on the east of Broadwater, formally a simple crossroads settlement; it now serves a small local community and has a strong tourism function centred on a large holiday park and activity centre on the bay.
- **Kilmacrennan:** Kilmacrennan village is centred on a crossroads between the River Lennon and Lurgy; it has a well defined setting and compact centre and displays both urban and rural characteristics, set as it is within an agricultural landscape with deciduous trees and hedges and clumps of deciduous woodland. The main street straddles the N56 connecting Letterkenny to the south with the northern Donegal coast. Historically Kilmacrennan has links with St. Colmcille and the establishment of

the early Christian church and there are a number of recorded monuments in the vicinity including nearby 'Doon Well'.

- **Milford:** Milford is a small town strategically positioned on a river crossing at the entrance to both the Fanad and Rosguill peninsulas serving a significant rural hinterland. The town has an identifiable 18th Century linear core with surviving historic buildings and street pattern that contribute significantly to its unique character along the R245.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There are a number of Recorded Monuments throughout this LCA, including ring forts, raths and a crannog on Lough Fern. The area has a particularly high amount of Standing Stones and there are examples of rock art within this area.
- Kilmacrennan was of particular importance in the early Christian period with an association to St. Colmcille.
- Significant industrial heritage in this landscape that had a considerable number of mills throughout the name of Milford town (previously known as *Baile na nGallóglach*) is reflective of this.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 2 RPS structures.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies a patchwork of ladder farms (Historic fields of distinct character) surrounding Lough Fern, straight-sided surveyed and rectilinear fields and Semi-open rough ground (Generic HLC-types) throughout the rest of the area and Coastal lowland and soft-rock character (Generic HLC-type) at the end of Mulroy Bay. Purports that Mulroy Bay may have been used for tidal forms of fish traps and static nets in former times, similar to those found on Lough Swilly.

Access and Recreation

- N56 road travels through the south of this LCA in a north-westerly direction through the town of Kilmacrennan; the R249 spurs off this eastwards towards Ramelton. The R245 and R246 connect Milford to Cranford and Kerrykeel along the shores of Broadwater. A network of county roads branch off these providing a good level of access throughout the area.
- The River Leannan Fishery extends over this area, comprising the River Leannan, Lough Fern (and Lough Gartan on adjoining LCA 17). The Leannan is a 30-mile long river, flowing from the heart of the Glendowan Mountains to Lough Swilly at Ramelton, with populations of salmon and trout. The Milford & District Fly Angling Club and have a clubhouse located on the North Western shore of Lough Fern and Letterkenny and District Anglers offer boat hire from the Lough shore.
- Rockhill Holiday Park and Activity Centre in Kerrykeel is a substantial year round tourism facility on the shores of Broadwater.

Biodiversity

- The lakes and rivers in this area are ecologically important particularly those that host Atlantic salmon and Fresh Water Pearl Mussel, Annex 1 species.
- Ecologically important landscape containing 597.3ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 389.9ha of pNHA sites.
- Important woodlands throughout this area
- Network of hedgerow and tree bound fields, lanes, and roads together with the long stretches of river and streams create important biodiversity corridors throughout this area. There are also sections of deciduous woodland, including the NHAs Ballyarr Wood and Kilmacrennan, and scrub vegetation which further significantly add to the high ecological value of this landscape.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network particularly in the south of the area on the outskirts of Letterkenny.
- Tourism related holiday home developments in the north adjacent to Broadwater and adjacent to lakes.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Afforestation.
- Leisure opportunities in relation to angling and water recreational pursuits both of the lakes and to the north at Broad Water.

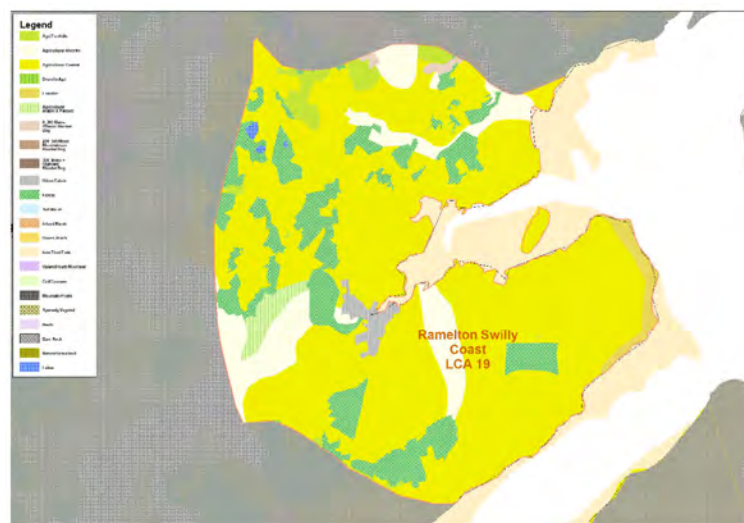


Ramelton Swilly Coast LCA 19



Ramelton Swilly Coast LCA is characterised by undulating agricultural lands crisscrossed by valleys formed by streams and rivers rising in higher inland areas, flowing over rolling more fertile agricultural lands towards the silty coastal edge of Lough Swilly. The urban focus in this area is the heritage town of Ramelton; an historic strategically located port town of archaeological and historical importance that has been the hub of society and commerce within this area for centuries. The rural landscape within this LCA is lush and fertile with miles of hedgerow interspersed with deciduous trees lining roads, laneways, rivers, streams, the coastal edge and framing fields. Native and ancient woodland are evident throughout this landscape including substantial wooded areas outside Ramelton and at Ray, whilst isolated conifer plantations are sparingly located on higher less fertile lands within this area. Owing to the topography and vegetation cover, the scatter of farmhouses and farm buildings, one off residential dwellings tend to integrate well into the landscape. There is a strong visual association with adjoining LCAs, most of the views out are framed by higher mountainous lands in other areas including views out over Lough Swilly towards Inishowen and beyond.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 6 is within the Swilly Coast LCA.

Key characteristics uses: Ramelton town is located in a natural estuary off Lough Swilly; the landscape has a range of uses including agriculture, tourism, forestry, multiple maritime uses including fishing, aquaculture.

Coastal edge: Predominantly low-lying silty edges with areas of salt marsh and salt meadows.

Visibility: Pockets of visibility over the coast throughout this undulating coastline area.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Ramelton town and a number of demense landscapes and historic buildings.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Much of this LCA is hard quartzite rolling rural landscape in a 'U' shape around the estuary and coast, whilst schist underlies better quality agricultural land in the south of this area
- A large tidal shallow estuary indents the east of this area, and all the surrounding lands slope towards it; the River Leannan flows out through Ramelton, a natural port, through the deep Ramelton channel out to the Lough Swilly.
- 6 freshwater lakes punctuate the undulating upland area within the north west of this LCA, part of a wider landscape of agricultural river valleys carved out by numerous streams and rivers.
- Fertile agricultural lands swathe the southern lower lying lands and the low sloping shore towards Lough Swilly display a pattern of farms with a 2 storey farmhouse and associated outbuildings surrounded by large rectilinear shaped hedgerow bound fields, whilst lands on 'rougher' higher ground in the north of this area tend to have a tighter pattern of smaller more irregular shaped fields, also hedgerow trimmed.
- There is a heavy dispersal of deciduous and ancient woodland throughout the area, most notable along the shore and river valleys, the hillside to the north of Ramelton and at Ray wood on the northern shores of the LCA.

Settlements

- **Ramelton:** Ramelton is a historic town of immense heritage, architectural and archaeological value and was designated a 'Heritage Town' by Donegal County Council in September 2000. Ramelton was founded as a town in the early 1600s on the site of the 'O'Donnell Castle' and was an important port located at a point where the River Lennon flows into Lough Swilly. Ramelton was a prosperous town during the 18th and early 19th century during which most of its distinctive Georgian architecture was built, and continued to be the centre of governance for County Donegal until the late 19th Century. Ramelton is a vibrant town serving a wider rural hinterland and has a wide range of services, functions and facilities as well as a high quality built environment and natural setting.



History, Culture and Heritage

- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA.
- Ruins of 15th Century Killydonnell friary on the western shore of Lough Swilly stand on the site of an earlier 10th Century church.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 40 RPS structures.
- Demesne landscape at Fortstewart on the eastern coast and at Ballyarr House to the west of Ramelton.
- The Historic Landscape Characterisation explains that Ramelton is surrounded by productive land farmed since the Neolithic period, and this combined with Lough Swilly's strategic role encouraged the medieval development of the O'Donnell Stronghold including the Franciscan Friary built by the O'Donnells at Killydonnell in the 16th century. The area is covered in straight-sided surveyed and rectilinear fields (south), a patchwork of sinuous-bounded and irregular fields and semi-open rough ground to the north (Generic HLC-types), speculatively, this may partly reflect former Ulster Plantation lands (more likely to be reorganised in the 18th and 19th centuries) and more traditionally farmed areas on poorer land.

Access and Recreation

- Regional and county roads radiate from Ramelton in all directions providing excellent permeability throughout the area and linkage to the rest of the county.
- Wild Atlantic Way follows the R245 from the south, through Ramelton and along the coast northwards through this LCA.
- Strong tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape and their use.
- River Leannan is a popular fishing river for Brown Trout and Salmon.
- Formerly one of the most important ports in Donegal, Ramelton remains navigable by boat from Lough Swilly.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 160.6ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 128.9ha of pNHA sites.
- Stretch of the Leannan River is designated as a Freshwater Pearl Mussel Catchment area.
- Lough Swilly is designated as SPA (004075) and lush fertile valleys carved out by various tributaries and streams flow towards the Lough creating important biodiversity corridors.
- Hedge and deciduous tree bound fields are a predominant feature in this landscape providing biodiversity corridors throughout.
- Dispersed areas of deciduous woodland, demesne woodland and important historic woodlands in this LCA.
- Regional and county road network extensively lined in native hedgerow and deciduous trees.

Forces for change

- Degree of pressure for urban generated housing development from Letterkenny.
- Linear development along the rural road network
- Holiday home development
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion (former agricultural lands as identified in the historic maps are now intertidal mudflats)
- Flooding
- The high quality built environment and natural setting of Ramelton as well as its historical and archaeological heritage give it strong potential to grow within the tourism sector.



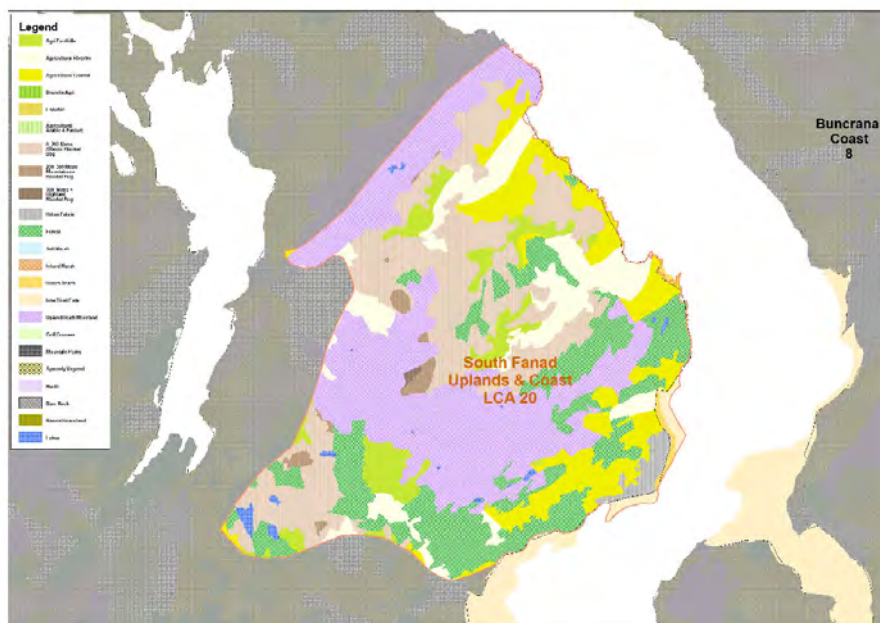
South Fanad
Uplands, Coast
and Gaeltacht

LCA 20



South Fanad Uplands, Coast and Gaeltacht LCA is located within the Gaeltacht in the south east of the 'Fanad Peninsula'. It is a rural area with a long coastal edge extending north along Lough Swilly. This area shares geology with areas across both Mulroy Bay to the west and Lough Swilly to the east. There is a high degree of intervisibility from the LCA out over the surrounding landscape and seascape and also as an end view particularly from the eastern shores of Lough Swilly along the western Inishowen coast. Most of this area consists of rolling agricultural lands of predominantly pasture but also arable use made up of a patchwork of hedge and stonewall bound fields of varying shapes and sizes. In contrast, the higher mountain areas are covered in blanket bog and have an open aspect whilst there is a heavy dispersal of deciduous and ancient woodland along the south and east. Rathmullan sits on the coast, an historic town with many fine buildings and structures including Rathmullen Abbey and Coastguard cottages. It is the location of 'Flight of the Earls', a defining point in Irish history.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 6 is within the South Fanad Uplands and Coast LCA.

Key characteristics uses: Primarily agricultural use, with a strong tourism use.

Coastal edge: Stony and sandy beaches, rocky outcrops and low-lying silty edges with areas of salt marsh and salt meadows.

Visibility: High degree of uninterrupted visibility of the lough and Inishowen.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Rathmullen with its Carmelite Friary, Rathmullan House and dense landscape, mature deciduous woods and coastal drive.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- The Knockalla Mountains form a spine along the northern boundary of this LCA; part of the 'Knockalla Fault', they are a band of quartzite rock that continue from the south west through this LCA as Knockalla mountain, under Lough Swilly and through Inishowen as the Urris Hills.
- Another quartzite mountain range in the south of the LCA, Crieve Mountains also constitute a defining and dominant feature.
- Much of the upland area within this LCA is covered in bog, heath and moorland, fragmented by fertile agricultural river valleys with a mixture of field types and sizes. Generally, the larger rectilinear hedgerow bound fields are on low lying high quality lands of river valleys, foothills and undulating agricultural lands that overlie a schist geology whilst the sinuous stone-wall bound fields are on higher poorer quality lands.
- There is a heavy dispersal of deciduous and ancient woodland throughout the area, particularly along the south and east.
- This rural landscape hosts a dispersed scatter of one-off residential dwellings, farmhouses and associated farm buildings and outhouses as well as numerous ruined traditional cottages.
- A 6 turbine windfarm is situated on the Crieve Mountains visible within and without this LCA.

Settlements

- **Rathmullan:** Rathmullan is a bustling and vibrant seaside, fishing village on the south eastern coast of this LCA adjacent to a long sandy beach and at a point on Lough Swilly where there is a deep channel. Historically this made the location strategically important and there has been a settlement here for a considerable time. The imposing ruins of Rathmullan Friary still stand in the centre of the village, built in 1508, part of it remained in use as a church until 1814. This was also the location of the Flight of the Earls in 1607 and the town has been identified as a Historic Town for general protection (zone of archaeological potential) by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local



Government in its record of Monuments and Places. Today the town functions as a service centre for the local population and also a tourism hub; there is seasonal ferry that operates between Rathmullan and Buncrana, a public beach and play park as well as qualitative local accommodation including 'Rathmullan House' a country house and demesne landscape.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA.
- Strategically important coastline throughout history particularly evidenced at Rathmullan through various recorded monuments including the impressive ruins of Mc Swynes Castle and the Mortello tower at the shore dating from the Napoleonic wars. Another Mortello tower (1 of 6 along Lough Swilly), Knockalla fort, is located on steeply sloping lands in the north-east of this area, that along with the fort at Dunree on the opposite side of the Lough, guarded the entrance to the Swilly.
- The "Flight of the Earls" is a significant event in Irish history and of international importance; the Earls departed from Rathmullan in 1607 and this is commemorated by a statue in the town. There is also a link between Rathmullan and Wolfe Tone, the leader of the 1798 Irish Rebellion who was captured here in 1798.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 2 RPS structures.
- The Historic Landscape Characterisation has identified important patches of "Ancient and mixed Woodland Generic HLC-type on the northern slopes of the Knockalla mountains, as well as areas of Blanket bog. To the south an area of Ladder farms (Historic fields of distinct character) are identified and to the north fields of mixed origin, which may be of significant antiquity. It appears a more "evolved" rather than imposed landscape.

Access and Recreation

- Wild Atlantic Way follows the R245 from the south, and along the entire coast of this area.
- A seasonal ferry operates between Rathmullen and Buncrana across Lough Swilly
- This area is accessible by a network of county roads that weave through the undulating landscape, along river valleys and around the coast offering a good level of permeability though the area however the upland and mountainous areas have only limited accessibility via tracks and lanes.
- Strong tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape and their use.

Biodiversity



- Ecologically important landscape containing 546ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 389.9ha of pNHA sites.

- Large expanse of deciduous and ancient woodland in the south at Rathmullan Wood (also a nature reserve) and along the east coast of the LCA.
- Lough Swilly, designated as SPA (004075) and lush fertile valleys carved out by various tributaries and streams flowing towards the Lough create important biodiversity corridors.
- Hedge and deciduous tree bound fields are a predominant feature in this landscape that, along with hedge and tree trimmed laneways and roads, provide biodiversity corridors throughout.
- Dispersed areas of deciduous woodland, demesne woodland and important historic woodlands in this LCA.
- Regional and county road network extensively lined in native hedgerow and deciduous trees.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network and particularly along the coast.
- Holiday home development
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Flooding
- Consolidation and development of Rathmullan.
- Tourism development.



Fanad Coast, Lakes and Gaeltacht LCA 21



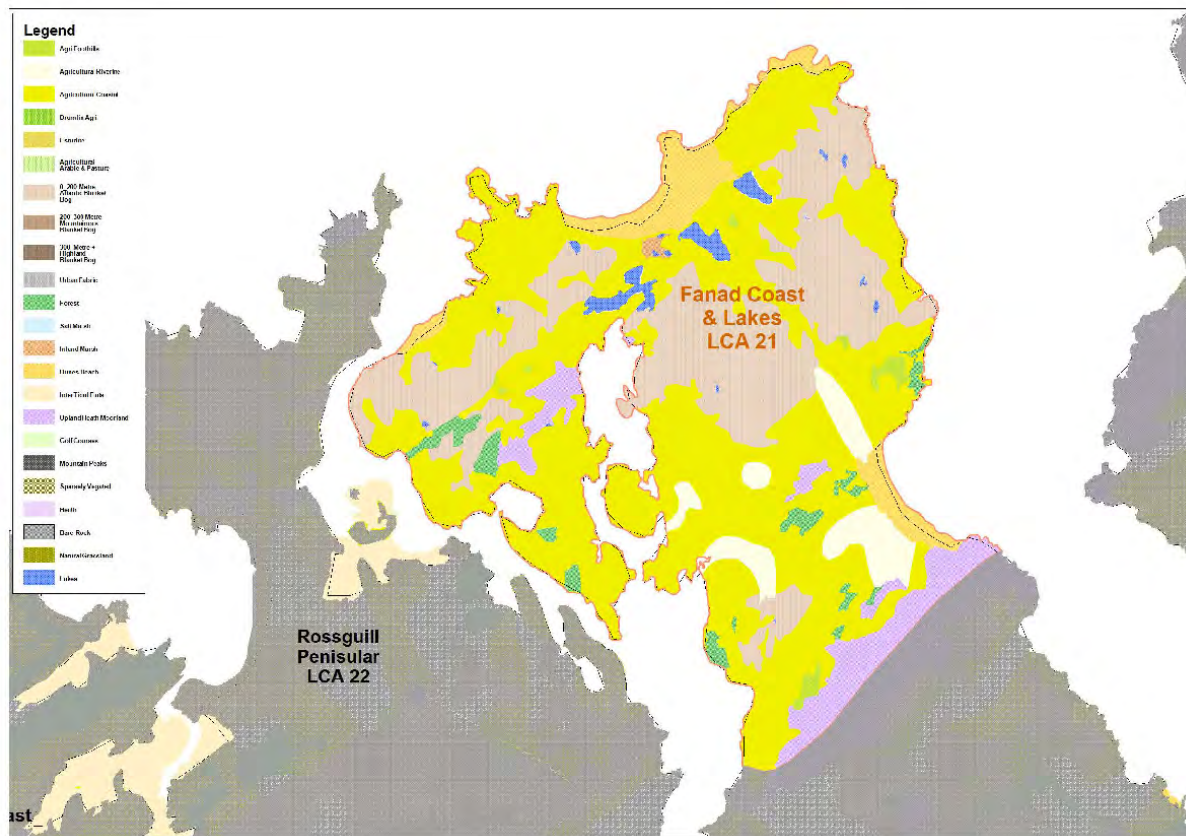
Fanad Coast, Lakes and Gaeltacht LCA 21 is a horseshoe shaped peninsula on the north Donegal coast enveloped by Mulroy Bay on the West, Lough Swilly to the east and the Atlantic ocean along the north. A diverse and complex landscape of mountains, plains, valleys, lakes and a heterogeneous coastline, yet unified by the dispersed rural community that was historically remote from the rest of Donegal as primary access into the area was via a lowland route around Kerrykeel, the only other access was over the difficult terrain of Knockalla Mountain that has more recently been crossed on the east by a coastal road that hugs the cliff or by water along the long shore. Another unique attribute of this area are the multiple upland lakes, particularly in the north of the LCA from whence many streams and rivers rise and flow out to Mulroy Bay, Lough Swilly and to the Atlantic Ocean.

The long and varied coast has a cliff-faced rocky edge along Lough Swilly interspersed with sandy and stony beaches including the 'Blue Flag' Portsalon beach and a low rocky edge; the coastal edge along the Atlantic is characterized by low and gently undulating agricultural fields that meet the shore as sandy and stony beaches, cliffs and low rock outcrops and is the home of the iconic Fanad Lighthouse. This early 19th-century Knockalla Fort was one of six built to defend against a possible French invasion and its history is told at its companion, Fort Dunree across Lough Swilly.

This rural area within the Donegal Gaeltacht is steeped in history and the landscape retains many idioms of character including stone walls, evolved clachans, thatched houses and vernacular dwellings that nestle into the landscape contributing to the character of the area. The historic strategic location of this area is evidenced by the impressive Napoleonic fort at Knockalla on Lough Swilly and the ruined castle at Moross on Broadwater.

There is a very close visual association with the adjoining LCAs and in particular Rossguil, the peninsula to the west of this LCA across Mulroy Bay that shares many Landscape Character Types, but which is culturally and socially different due to its location across a water body and associated historical distance.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Units 6 and 7 extend significantly into this peninsula and include a small area of overlap with seascape unit 8.

Key characteristics uses: This LCA has a long and varied edge due to the peninsular shape with a coastline onto Lough Swilly, the Atlantic Ocean, Mulroy Bay and Broadwater. The use within this area is also varied and includes uses such as agriculture, tourism, forestry and multiple maritime uses such as fishing, aquaculture, sailing, swimming, watersports and diving.

Coastal edge: Complex coastal edge is reflective of the varying interfaces including: cliffs and rocky outcrops, stony and sandy beaches, low-lying silty edges with areas of salt marsh and salt meadows.

Visibility: High degree of uninterrupted visibility from various points within this LCA of Lough Swilly, Atlantic Ocean, Mulroy bay and beyond. Substantial intervisibility between this area and other headlands along the North western coast of the county.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Fanad lighthouse and major fishing industry and aquaculture uses within this Gaeltacht, Mulroy Bridge and Island Roy.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- The Knocalla Mountains form a spine along the southern boundary of this LCA; part of the 'Knockalla Fault', they are a band of quartzite rock that continues from the south west through this LCA as Knockalla mountain and across the Swilly and through Inishowen as the Urris Hills.
- Undulating landscape with a series of lakes in a band running along a southwest-northeast axis through the entire LCA. Cooladerry Mountain and Ballymagaghy Mountain are quartzite mountains separated by a river valley. Other isolated upland areas with a quartzite bedrock are Crocknamona and Trusk More on the west and Ballynabrick on the NE.
- Quartz bedrock on the eastern 'peninsula' has a granite band along the Atlantic coast and a quartzite and limestone peninsula south into Mulroy Bay Broadwater
- There are 28 lakes in this LCA, larger lakes are located in an informal alignment along a southwest to northeast axis within the north of this LCA

Settlements

Portsalon: Portsalon is a small linear seaside settlement just north of Portsalon beach that strings out along a county road with no discernible centre. The first edition Ordnance Survey maps (1837-1842) show a number of clachans in the vicinity of this area including 'Croaghross' that had a coastguard station, whilst the 2nd edition show a hotel, post office, and pier at the location of the pier today. Portsalon Golf course is located just south of the settlement boundary, a links course that has been played since the 1880s. There are a plethora of holiday home developments in the settlement and 2 mobile home parks.



History, Culture and Heritage

- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA.
- Fanad lighthouse is a unique and important historical, heritage and cultural feature.
- This landscape has been relatively undeveloped in recent times and the historic pattern of Clachan and rundale farming is still evident and contributes to the uniqueness.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 6 RPS structures.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation describes this area as biologically productive in terms of sustenance for humans and was typically the terrain that Ireland's first inhabitants exploited. The enclosed bays were suitable for the characteristic paddle-currach, as well as lines of static nets or basket traps (fish pounds and salmon walls) that added greatly to the capacity of the land to sustain a population. The Mac Sweeney clan settled on the Swilly side of the peninsula from their native Scotland, providing a coastal and maritime defence to the local polity. Their varied relationship with the Norse or Norse-aligned "Lord of the Isles" meant that they were familiar with both shifting alliances and highly mobile maritime warfare. They also could exact tolls on visiting fishing fleets of international significance.
- The Ordnance Survey first series six-inch maps indicate that large areas were occupied in dispersed settlements (clachans), and some areas of sinuous-bounded small-area fields may be of considerable antiquity.

Access and Recreation

- Vehicular access into the LCA is via the R246 along the shore of Mulroy Bay or since 2009, via Mulroy Bridge providing a direct connection into the Rossguill peninsula. A network of county roads and laneways permeate from these affording a good degree of accessibility into and throughout the area.
- Wild Atlantic Way follows the R245 from the south, and along the entire Swilly and Atlantic coast of this area then across Mulroy Bay via the new 'Mulroy Bridge' into the Rossguill peninsula.
- Strong tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape and their use; focused in particular at Portsalon beach and Portsalon Golf Club on the Swilly coast.

Biodiversity



- Ecologically important landscape containing 1,421ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 1,220 ha of pNHA sites.
- Lough Swilly is designated as SPA, Mulroy Bay and Broadwater are designated (in parts) as Sac, NHA and pNHA and lush fertile valleys carved out by various tributaries and streams flowing towards the Lough and Bay create important biodiversity corridors.
- Hedge and deciduous tree bound fields are located in areas within this LCA that with hedge and tree trimmed laneways and roads, provide biodiversity corridors throughout.
- The south and south east of this LCA have a patchwork of tree and hedgework trimmed fields, lakes and roads whilst the northern coastal agricultural areas are notably void of boundary vegetation.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network and particularly along the coast.
- Holiday home development
- Renewable energy development
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Coastal development
- Flooding
- Tourism development
- Aquaculture



Rosguill Gaeltacht LCA 22

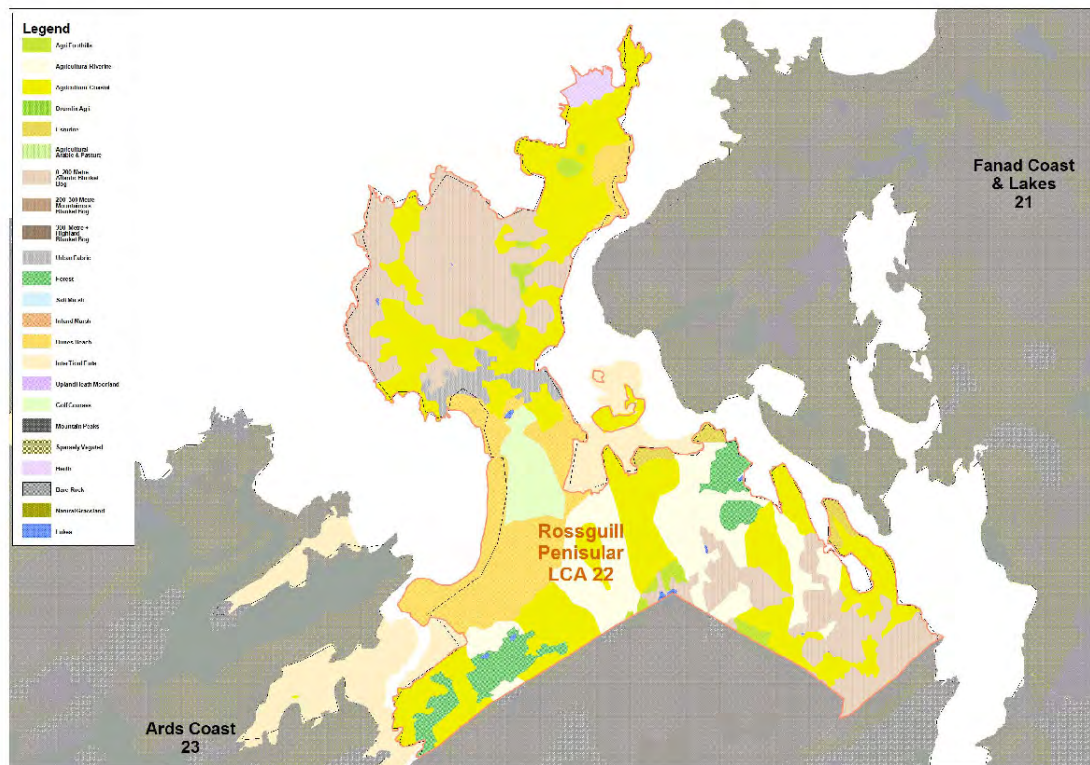


Rosguill Gaeltacht LCA is a distinctive rural peninsula that projects north into the Atlantic Ocean between Sheephaven Bay to the west and Mulroy Bay to the East, and is characterized by a diametric landscape consisting of mountains, plains, dunes and agricultural lands encompassed by a long and varying costal edge. Intervisibility between this LCA and the adjoining peninsulas and bays adds an exceptionally unique dimension to the character of this area with many views out; extending as far as Inishowen over Fanad from the east of this LCA and over Sheephaven bay towards Horn Head from the west. Traditionally a sparsely populated rural area sustained by farming and fishing with a significant fishing port at Downings that also had a successful herring fishing fleet until the outbreak of the 1st World War, trading with Russia and Germany. More recent development in the area has been linked to tourism and leisure with the expansion of Downings around the blue flag beach, and the development of one-off and small schemes of holiday homes and caravan parks.

The sheltered, fertile agricultural landscape character type in the south of this LCA contrasts significantly from the exposed more windswept north. A unique patchwork of rectilinear hedgerow bound fields on good quality agricultural arable lands are at variance to that of the rest of Rossguill. This area includes estate lands of the infamous 'Lord of Leitrim' including 'Mulroy House' (RPS) and estate, on the eastern shore at Rawross, his Donegal residence, and the picturesque village of Carrigart that was 'improved' and planned by the Leitrim estate in the late 1800s on an existing cluster settlement. This LCA comprises of succinctly different landscape character types but there is a cohesive character and association within this area (and parish) uniting it.

Rossguill LCA is within the Gaeltacht with a third of all people citing Irish as their first language. (To be clarified)

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape units 7 and 8 overlap with each other accross most of northern part of this LCA, seascape unit 7 extends into the south east of this LCA and seascape Unit 8 into the south west.

Key characteristics uses: Low-lying agricultural lands throughout most of the area, with intermittent sections of elevated bog in the north and centre of Rossguill. Tourist area focused on the seascape and landscape with numerous holiday homes and mobile homes peppered through the seascape units.

Coastal edge: High sea cliffs with large rock outcrops, stone and sand beaches along the north of Rosguill with low-lying sandy beaches, and silty estuaries and edges onto Mulroy Bay and Sheephaven Bay.

Visibility: High degree of uninterrupted visibility of Mulroy Bay and Broad Water to the south with high level of uninterrupted views of the sea to the north.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Gaeltacht, major fishing industry and aquaculture uses, Mulroy Bridge, Island Roy, extensive dune systems and 'tombola' linking Rosquill to the mainland.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Rosguill LCA has a unique and complex geology; the northern portion has a hard, granite, upland edge along the Atlantic Ocean along a southwest-northeast axis, that meets the sea as a rough and rocky coastline shielding lower inland pasture areas. The spur off to the north east of the main peninsula towards Melmore Head has a coastal edge of rocky projections separated by numerous sandy beaches. Historically this northern part of Rosguill had a sparse rural population huddled in clusters within low lying sheltered areas and much of this character has been retained, despite a considerable amount of holiday home developments and mobile home parks scattered throughout the landscape, particularly in and around Downings Bay.
- A band of quartzite along a generally west to east axis separates the north of Rosguill LCA from the south.
- South of this, on the western side of the peninsula overlooking Sheephaven Bay, a long substantial dune system meets the waters edge as a pristine sandy beach. Rosapenna Hotel and Golf Resort course are situated here.
- The eastern side of the peninsula overlooks Mulroy Bay and Fanad, and for the most part the schist, quartzite and granite edges meet the shore as a silty soft edge to adjoining agricultural and pasture lands.
- The contrasting geology gives rise to a varying degree of Landscape Character Types within this LCA ranging from upland areas of peat, bog and heath in the north interspersed with poor quality agricultural land; a large sand dune system below Downing's around Sheephaven Bay and a band of better quality agricultural land running horizontally along the base of this LCA.
- Of particular note is that the satellite imagery shows a greater area of land at the north of this peninsula than that in the historic OSi maps.

Settlements



- **Carrigart:** Carrigart is a small coastal Gaeltacht village that functions as a centre for the rural hinterland and also offers a tourism function, with an adjoining beach, shoreline walkway and public garden. The first edition Ordnance Survey Maps (1837-1842) show Carrickart as a small linear settlement with a church, school house and Corn Kiln, Mill and Pond; the second edition illustrates the village after 'planned improvements' by the Earl of Leinster's estate in the 1800s, including the row of cottages on the west side of the street with a village green, hotel and a Presbyterian church and manse to the south of the village, more reflective of Carrigart today.
- **Downings:** Downings is a small seaside Gaeltacht village overlooking Downings Bay and near to Rosapenna Golf Club. Downings marks the beginning and end of the

'Atlantic Drive' a looped scenic route around Rosguill peninsula, its main function is tourism and there are a substantial number of mobile home and holiday home developments in the area. Downings began as a clachan settlement near an old fort to the west of the Bay, growing as a fishing port following construction of the pier at the end of the 19th Century and more recently as a tourism destination.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA focused mostly around the coast evidence of a long settlement history in the area.
- This coastal location was historically of strategic importance and the ruins of Melmore Signal tower, a Napoleonic watch tower and remains of WW2 lookout are important landmarks within Melmore Head.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 9 RPS structures.
- A large area of land within this LCA formed part of the Leitrim Estate and Mulroy House (RPS) and demesne within the southeast of this area were the Donegal home to the infamous 3rd Earl of Leitrim, whilst Carrigart was 'planned and improved' by the estate in the 1800s. His heir the 4th Earl of Leinster was involved in the establishment of the nearby Rosapenna Golf club designed by Old Tom Morris from St.Andrews in Scotland.
- The HLC identifies that this LCA is formed of a patchwork of Coastal lowland and soft rock, on the bay sides and Coastal Upland and hard rock Generic HLC-type to the Atlantic coast. The latter is typified by eroding cliffs topped with sea thrift and small beaches. The tidal inlets of Sheephaven and Mulroy bay are highly productive biologically and attract migrant birds, as well as formerly providing "shore foods". Salt spray from storms limits the productivity of agriculture and the growth of trees, giving the landscape an open aspect that is attractive to holiday makers. Long-distance views and coastal landmarks are an essential feature of these types of headlands.

Access and Recreation

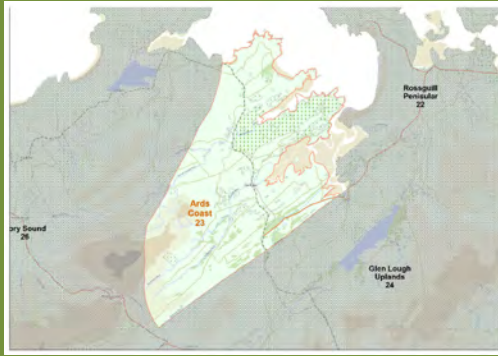
- The R245 goes east-west through the south of this area and the R248 spurs northwards off this to Downings. A network of county roads radiate from these including the looped 'Atlantic Drive' that circuits the Rosguill peninsula, the 'Wild Atlantic Way' also follows this route and includes 'Discovery Points' at the head of Rosguill Peninsula and at Island Roy.
- There is a very strong tourism and leisure industry within this LCA focused on this landscape and seascape and in particular around the Blue Flag beach at Downings. Activities in the area include golf, fishing, sea angling, mountain walks and watersports.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 1,250ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 1,346ha of pNHA sites; most of the coast of the area, Melmore, and the dune system below Downings are designated Natura 2000 sites.
- Mulroy Bay and Broadwater are designated (in parts) as SAC, NHA and pNHA.
- The majority of this LCA north of Carrigart is exposed to the Atlantic and has a marked lack of trees with boundaries defined more by stone walls.
- In the south of this LCA, landscape pattern of deciduous hedgerow trimmed small and medium irregular and irregular shaped fields, contrasts starkly to the more barren north.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network and particularly along the coast.
- Further inappropriate Holiday home development
- Caravan parks
- Renewable energy development.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Coastal development
- Flooding
- Tourism and tourism product development.



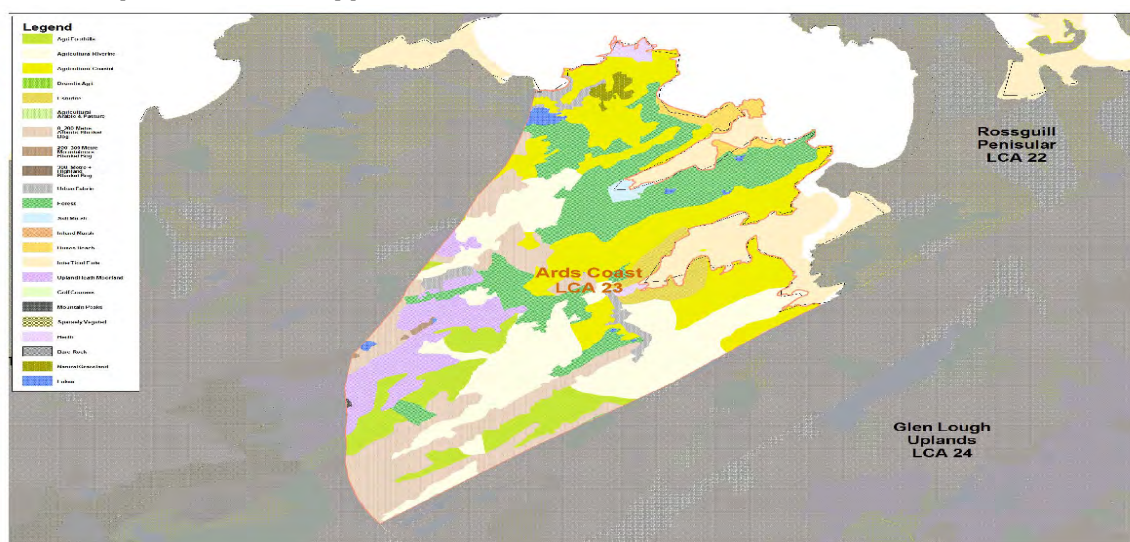
Ards Coast LCA 23



Ards Coast LCA extends from the bog covered foothills of Muckish, in a north east direction across rolling agricultural lands where it meets Sheephaven Bay as three peninsulas separated by large, long estuaries. Kill Mountain and the upland areas around Muckish are covered in upland bog and have a number of lakes where many rivers rise before flowing to sea through meandering valleys. The N56 traverses this LCA near to the coast and forms part of the Wild Atlantic Way, Creeslough straddles this road in the south of this LCA as does Portnablagh in the north. Whilst the area is predominantly agricultural, there is a strong tourism, amenity and recreational aspect focused on the beaches, coast, Ards Forest Park and fishing.

Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway ran for a period during the first half of the 20th century through this area and there were stops and stations at Creeslough and near Portnablagh where the line then turned around Muckish. There are remnants of the stone viaducts visible from along the N56 that follows the route of the old line through the south of this LCA. A small area within the south of this LCA is designated as Gaeltacht.

Landscape Character type



Seascape Character Areas

Map/list Seascape units

Small parts of seascape 8 overlap this LCA, however the intervisibility between this LCA and the coast extends further inland towards Lough Salt Mountain and Stragaddy Mountain, informing views both of and from this area from land and sea.

Key characteristics uses: Two prominent bog and heath headlands slope down and around the large and diverse Sheephaven Branched Bay which is framed by the Derryveagh mountains with predominantly agricultural, forestry, tourism, quarry and multiple maritime uses.

Coastal edge: High sea cliffs to the north to low long winding sandy estuaries with salt marshes to the south.

Visibility: There is high uninterrupted visibility to the sea and surrounding area to the north with intermittent views of Sheephaven Bay in the south.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Doe Castle, Ards Forest Park, three blue flag beaches, viewing areas at Hornhead, extensive dune systems, New Lake, freshwater pearl catchment, Duntaly Wood, multiple archeological and heritage sites including the Crannog in Sessiagh Lough, cultural heritage of mills and workhouses, military and defensive history evident along the coastline as well as religious sites such as Ards Friary.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Undulating landscape that falls from Muckish Mountain towards an indented estuarine coastline onto Sheephaven Bay.
- The northern area has a Quartzite bedrock whilst the remainder has a schist geology.
- The upland areas at Kill Mountain and east of Muckish are covered in blanket bog, whilst the remainder of the area is predominantly agricultural lands of varying sizes.
- Extensive area of deciduous woodland at Ards Forest Park the middle of three peninsulas that extend into Sheephaven Bay. Contrasts with the other two promontories that are devoid of screening vegetation and have an open aspect.

- Sporadic one off rural and holiday home development littered throughout the landscape.

Settlements

- **Creeslough:** Creeslough is a small village of traditional linear form straddling the N56 road, and which takes its name from Crees Lough, a small lake set within a small wooded area within the settlement envelope. This self sustaining village has a good range of local services and amenities, and has experienced recent consolidated growth in the form of housing developments behind the Main Street. Creeslough also functions as a local service centre to the immediate rural hinterland of good quality agricultural lands.
- **Portnablagh:** Portnablagh is a built up seaside area with no discernible centre comprising primarily of holiday homes developments and a mobile home park that extend along the local road network.



History, Culture and Heritage

- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA.
- Doe castle is an iconic landmark within Sheephaven Bay sited on a small peninsula that extends into the bay. Dating from the 16th century, the castle was a stronghold of the Sweeney Clan, and transferred hands a number of times since then. The remains of a church and graveyard are nearby as well as an earlier court tomb.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 6 RPS structures.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies that Ards Forest Park is an interesting example of a Designed Parks and Gardens HLC-type that utilised the coastal bay and co-opted its open views to inform its own landscape design. Inland to the south is an area of 'Fields of mixed origin' and a small area of strip fields (Straight-sided... Generic HLC-type) whilst inland to the north is Semi-open Rough Ground Generic HLC type. These lower slopes of mountains are used for extensive poor grazing, and have been given over to sheep walks in more recent times, but may have been more mixed formerly.

Access and Recreation

- The main national Primary Road N56 dissects this LCA coming from Kilmacrennan in the south east and travelling northwest towards Creeslough, along a natural pass through the higher ground, and the R255 meets the R251 before threading in and out of the western boundary. There is a network of county roads and laneways throughout the remainder of this area but providing very limited access.
- The Wild Atlantic Way tourist route follows the route of the N56 through this area
- Ards forest park is a large nationally owned park on a peninsula extending onto Sheephaven Bay. The park has a number of beaches, signposted walks, archaeological and historical sites as well as a children's play park, and is an important tourism, recreation and amenity area within and for the County.
- Recreational and commercial fishing.
- Local walking groups in the area, a waymarked walk follows the old railway line that linked Creeslough to Burtonport.

Biodiversity



- Ecologically important landscape containing approximately 124.4 ha of SAC sites and approximately 128.9ha of pNHA sites.
- Ards forest park is an exceptionally important area consisting of deciduous trees vegetation and rivers. The entire coastline at this location abuts Sheephaven SAC (001190), designated for a multitude of features of interest.
- Many of the fields, laneways and county roads are lined with deciduous hedgerow and trees providing important biodiversity corridors.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network.
- Renewable energy development.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal development.
- Tourism, recreational and activity related.

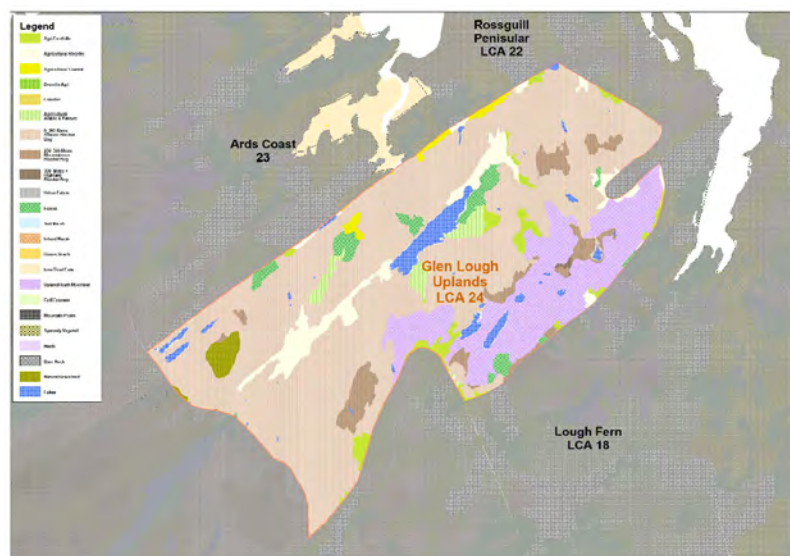


Glen Lough and Uplands Gaeltacht LCA 24



Glen Lough and Uplands LCA is a rural, sparsely populated Gaeltacht area defined by the high Straggraddy Mountain and Loughsalt Mountain, the many loughs along the Southeast of this LCA, and the lower Cashal, Garvary and Clack mountains along the North West boundary. A long, wide Glen orientated along the geologically important 'Gweebarra fault' connects these two areas of high mountain bog and is dominated by the large still Glen Lough, the mountain slopes and the contrasting hedge and tree bound agricultural lands surrounding Glen village at the northeast edge of the lake. Lough Salt Drive is a waymarked tourist route through the mountains and lakes in the south east of this area and there are several marked viewing areas and parking bays that have panoramic views out over this LCA, across the lower coastal lands and peninsulas of Ards, Rosguill and Fanad, towards the Atlantic Ocean. The Wild Atlantic Way skirts in around the edge of this LCA at the estuarine bottom of Sheephaven Bay. The N56, national primary road cuts through the western side along a naturally low corridor through the mountain ranges and generally follows the route of the old Donegal railway line. The remains of the Owencarrow viaduct constitute a striking and dominant feature in this very natural and undeveloped landscape. Glenveagh national park is in the south western portion of this LCA and the main route to the park would be from this road.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Small parts of seascape units 7 and 8 overlap with the fringes of this LCA and only a small part of this LCA meets the coast of Sheephaven Bay, however the intervisibility between this LCA and the coast extends further inland towards Lough Salt Mountain and Stragaddy Mountain, informing views both of and from this area.

Key characteristics uses: Predominantly low-lying agricultural land within the north of this LCA within seascape unit 8 and higher peat covered land in the east of this area that overlaps with seascape unit 7.

Coastal edge: Low silty edge onto Sheephaven Bay.

Visibility: High degree of intervisibility between this and other adjoining LCAs and seascape units.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Silt estuary, railway Viaduct, views, mountains.

Land Form and Land Cover

- The majority of this LCA is elevated exposed peat bog, broken by lakes, rivers and pockets of agricultural land, with a few isolated rural dwellings. The area is comprised of hard granite situated on the north-eastern edge of the 'Main Donegal Granite' area along the 'Gweebarra Fault', with only a small area of Quartzite and schist forming Stragaddy Mountain and Lough Salt Mountain along the southern boundary.
- Glen Lough is a large fresh water lake in the centre of this LCA from which the Owencarrow, Lackagh and Glen Rivers rise; these together with Lough Beagh on to the west of this LCA form the Lackagh fishery, a source of Brown Trout, Sea Trout, Salmon and Arctic Char.
- Lough Salt in the south of this LCA is a large deep freshwater lake and the main source of drinking water for Letterkenny and its environs. It is a protected water body under the Water Framework Directive.

Settlements

- Glen is a small crossroads settlement to the north of Glen Lough, set within a pocket of more fertile agricultural landscape dotted with isolated rural dwellings.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies that Glen Lough marks the northern end of a fold dividing the Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains. It forms a watershed with drainage of extensive blanket bog into a series of upland lakes including Glen Lough. Whilst the majority is upland heath, it is punctuated by numerous lochs and some modern plantation woodland.
- The remains of the Owencarrow viaduct are visible within this landscape, the railway line closed in 1947.

Access and Recreation

- The main national Primary Road N56 dissects this LCA coming from Kilmacrennan in the south east and travelling northwest towards Creeslough, along a natural pass

through higher ground, and the R255 meets the R251 before threading in and out of the western boundary. There is a network of county roads and laneways throughout the remainder of this area but providing very limited access.

- The Wild Atlantic Way tourist route skirts inside the northwest boundary.
- Lough Salt drive is a tourist route off the national primary and around Lough Salt offering panoramic unobstructed views out to sea over 3 peninsulas.
- Lackagh fishery and Lough Beg control fishing and fishing permits within this area including Glen lough, a source of Brown Trout, Sea Trout, Salmon and Arctic char.
- The Donegal Railway ran through this area from Viaduct and railway

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 3,984ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 3,259ha of pNHA sites.
- Large area within the south and west of this LCA is of exceptionally high environmental importance, being as it is within a FWPM catchment area and also designated as SPA, SAC and pNHA.
- The primary landcover within this area is Atlantic Blanket Bog with areas of riverine and foothill agriculture. There is a dispersed scatter of isolated rural dwellings within the agricultural areas and particularly around the north east of Glen Lough, an uncharacteristically wooded and lush landscape contrasting with the upland bog remainder.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network
- One off rural dwellings.
- Renewable energy development.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development.



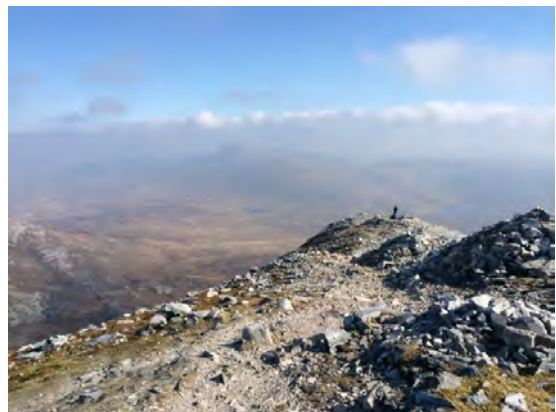
Derryveagh Mountains Gaeltacht LCA25



Derryveagh Mountains LCA contains many iconic images and unique landscapes that are instantly recognizable and have a strong association with the Donegal image. The Derryveagh mountains dominate this LCA; a chain colloquially known as the 'Seven Sisters' extends from Mount Errigal, the highest mountain in Donegal, northeast towards Mouckish Mountain. The Glendowan Mountain range to the south is separated by a long river valley following the Gweebarra fault line and via Owenrea River, river Barra and Lough Beagh. Glenveagh castle sits on the southern shore of Lough Beagh and forms the foci of Glenveagh National park that extends to almost 170km².

The Gweebarra fault runs along a northeast-southwest axis through the area with the Derryveagh Mountains on the upper side and Glendowan Mountains on the lower side of the river valley of Lough Beagh.

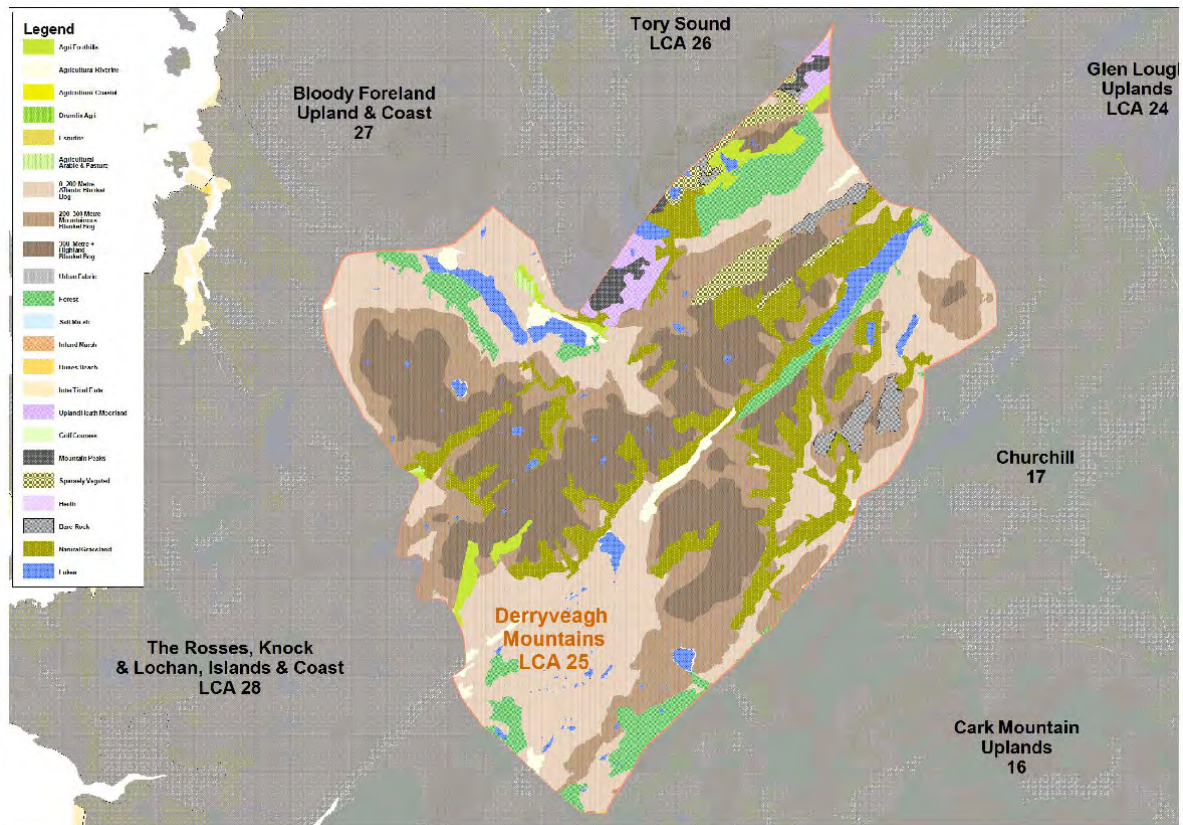
Within the north of this lca, the broad flat bogland river valley of the Calaber River sits between Muckish mountain to the north and the rest of the Derryveagh mountains to the south, large areas of bog on the lower areas have been 'cut' whilst the higher lands to the north are swathed in coniferous forestry plantations at varying stages of growth. The R251 runs south west along this valley towards Dunlewey, past Dunlewey Lough, Lough Nacung Upper and onwards to Bloody Foreland.



The Poison Glen is another iconic still landscape within the County. It extends north west from the Derryveagh Mountains, centred around Lough Nacung. Small areas of riverine agriculture here and throughout the LCA, are peppered with isolated one off rural dwellings; stone wallsteads and boundary walls are a particular feature within the southwest.

Intervisibility within, inward and outward is an important consideration within this LCA as the vista of many of the long term views from this area extends out over the county; equally this mountainous area forms a backdrop to many of the views from adjoining nearby LCAs, informing their character and sense of place; Mount Errigal and Muckish in particular are visible for miles around.

Landscape Character types



Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- The entire area has an underlying granite geology save a band of quartzite and schists in the north east; there are many areas of exposed rock on higher grounds, of particular note is the quartzite, scree covered Mount Errigal
- Gweebarra fault defines the landscape at Glenveagh and Lough Beagh
- Bogland is the primary and dominant landcover in this landscape characterized by mountains, Loughs and Glens.
- Geometric coniferous plantations are an alien feature in this landscape in terms of colour and texture against the red brown bog and peat.
- Dominating prominence of the Derryveagh Mountains and in particular Mount Errigal and Muckish, within this LCA and the County.
- Large Glacial valley at the 'Poison Glen'.

Settlements

- **Dunlewey:** Dunlewey is a small linear settlement at the foot of Mount Errigal on the shores of Dunlewey Lough. A relatively recent settlement, the first edition Ordnance Survey maps show 'Dunlewey' as a clachan to the east of the Lough before the bridge was constructed crossing the Loughs.

- **Doochary:** Doochary is a small Gaeltacht village on the crossing of the Gweebarra River. There are several historic and protected structures located within the centre of the village, including a fort, an ice house, a holy well and a bridge which predates the village itself, the bridge is a prominent feature within the overall setting and the relationship between it and the bridge contribute positively to the quality of the village.



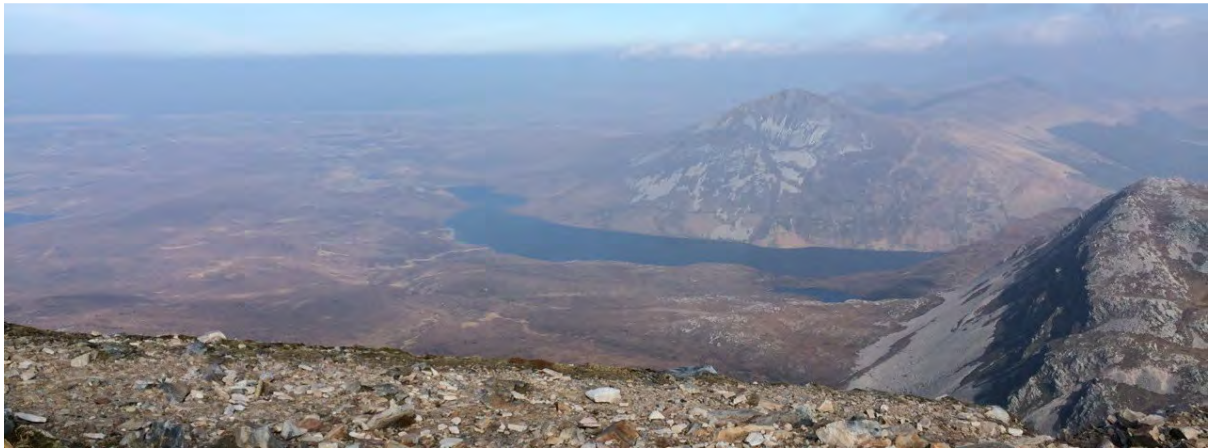
History, Culture and Heritage

- This LCA is wholly within the Gaeltacht.
- There are small clusters of Recorded Monuments within this LCA, within the north and North West on lower easily accessible lands; there is no record of any structures on the higher inhospitable mountainous bogland.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 3 RPS structures.
- The 'Derryveagh evictions' a notorious chapter in the history of Donegal played out within this LCA. Large areas of land in Glenveagh and Gartan were purchased by Captain John George Adair from 1857-1859, creating an estate of 28,000 acres. Shortly after, in April 1861 following a dispute with locals over fishing and grazing rights where the local steward was murdered, 244 tenants were forcibly evicted from their homes by over 200 local police and magistrates and their homes razed to the ground. Most of the evictees made their way to Australia whilst others went to family members or the workhouse in Letterkenny.
- Glenveagh Castle was built in 1870 and Mr Adair died in 1885 leaving the castle and estate to his wife until her death in 1921. The IRA briefly occupied the castle in 1922 until it was taken over by the Irish Free State Army who used it as a garrison for 3 years. The estate remained in private ownership for 1929 until 1975 when the state purchased the lands at Glenveagh and the National Park created; the castle and gardens remained in private ownership until 1981 when they were presented to the Irish Nation by the then owner Mr McIlhenny.

Access and Recreation

- R251 cuts through the north of this LCA following the river along the valley floor past Dunlewey Lake and Lough Nacung Upper where it meets the N56.
- R254 follows the river southwest towards Glenveagh then takes a right turn along the river valley towards Churchill.
- Otherwise limited vehicular access into and within this LCA due to the difficult terrain.
- The Old Donegal Railway line skirted around the edge of this LCA and a small section along the north at Lough Nacung.
- The N56; the main route through to west cuts through the North West of this LCA.
- There are a number of designated walks along mountain paths throughout this area.

Biodiversity



- Ecological landscape of exceptional importance containing a plethora of national and internally designated sites including 26,090ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 25,670ha of pNHA sites.
- The Golden eagle was reintroduced into this area in 2001 and has established a habitat and thriving naturally in the wild.
- Glenveagh estate was planted with imported species including Rhododendron from the slopes of the Himalayas, this 'invasive species' dominates over the indigenous natural plant communities and the National Park has worked to control their spread.

Forces for change

- One off residential development.
- Historic and tourism development
- Renewable
- Consolidation of existing settlements.
- Infrastructural works.



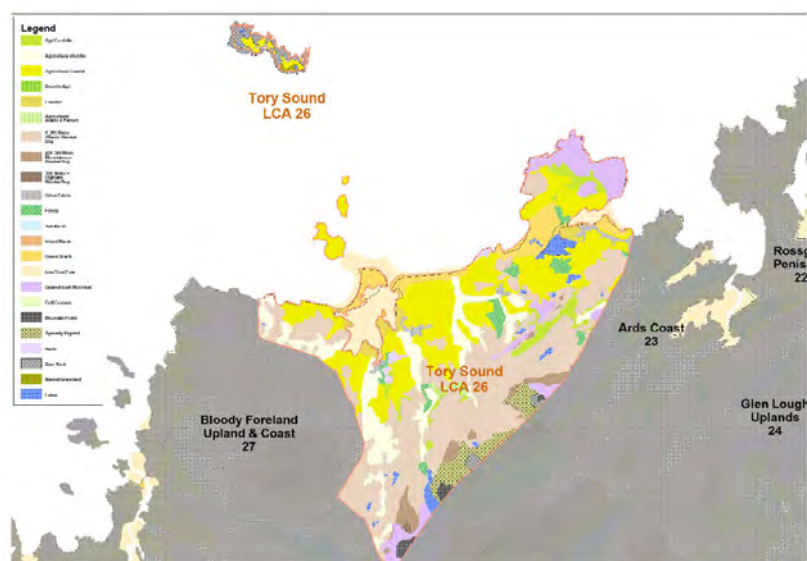
Tory Sound Gaeltacht LCA26



Tory Sound Gaeltacht Landscape Character Area 26 is a Gaeltacht area defined by an extensive coastline fronting the Atlantic Ocean including Horn Head peninsula and the offshore islands of Inishboffin, Inishdooley, Inishbeg and Tory to the north and the dominant Derryveagh Mountains and iconic Muckish Mountain to the south and east.

Undulating agricultural lands lie between the bog covered mountains and uplands and the coast. A number of rivers including the Gleanna River, flow through fertile valleys into Ballyness Bay contributing to the unique estuarine inlet at Falcarragh. The patchwork of hedgerow bound fields varies between different locations within this LCA, with tighter sinuous fields to the west and along rivers, ladder farms evident in areas around Falcarragh and larger geometric shaped fields around Dunfanaghy. There is a dispersed pattern of one off residential dwellings peppered throughout the agricultural lands within this LCA and a degree of linear development along County roads. The coastal location and long sandy beaches make this area an attractive tourist destination and there are associated holiday home developments throughout.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Most of Seascape Unit 9 and part of Seascape Unit 8 extend within the Tory Sound Landscape Character Area, overlapping at Horn head.

Key characteristics uses: Agriculture, Tourism and maritime uses.

Coastal edge: High seacliffs at Hornhead and Tory Island, low seacliffs, long sandy beaches, sandy and silty estuary of Ballyness Bay and the spit beach at Falcarragh.

Visibility: Uninterrupted visibility between the mainland and islands, from island to island and headland to headland.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Gaeltacht area; offshore islands of Tory, Inishbofin, Inishdooney and Inishbeg are hugely significant within this seascape unit, Wild Atlantic Way follows the coast.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- There is a varied underlying geology within this LCA: quartzite along the eastern edge of the LCA, schist at Dunfanaghy and Hornhead and small areas of granite to the west with a band of Limestone near Gortahork.
- The mainland has an undulating coastal landscape of predominantly agricultural land that slopes from the Derryveagh Mountain range, with distinctive field patterns including ladder farms bound by hedge and stone walls, to the north and open bog with areas of commonage to the south.
- Series of biodiversity rich river valleys flow from the Derryveagh Mountains towards the coast.
- Tory island sits 9km northwest of the mainland within this Landscape Character Area, this sparsely vegetated island of primarily pasture land and natural grasslands overlies a geology of hard granite and quartzite. An inhabited Gaelic speaking island rich in culture, history and tradition, it has many distinguishing archaeological and historical features including the bell tower from a 6th century monastery on the island.
- Inishbofin, Inishdooney and Inish beg are a group of three islands, descending in size seawards from the coast. Inishbofin, the largest of the three is a small seasonally inhabited island with a cluster of buildings around a small beach and pier. The three islands have a similar type of sparsely vegetated grasslands with open exposure to the elements. Inishdooney and Inish beg are not inhabited but Inishdooney has the stone remains of a church, graveyard and walled surrounds.

Settlements

- **Dunfanaghy:** Dunfanaghy began as a coastal market town and fishing port, and still consists of a wide range of local level services and facilities with an identifiable core around Main Street. It performs a local function in terms of service provision and also has a significant tourism role, notable in the extent of holiday home developments



in the area, and the existing level of hospitality and leisure services including a golf course. The town is located approximately 2 km from Portnablagh, which consists of dispersed pattern of residential units and a significant holiday home element.

- **Falcarragh:** Falcarragh is a vibrant market town in the heart of the Gaeltacht, centred around a crossroads and offering a wide and varied range of facilities and services, both to the town and the wider rural Gaeltacht hinterland. The town is centred on a 'crossroads' of a County road and the N56 National Road that forms the 'Main Street' of the town and has an identifiable 'town centre' within which most of the retail and service offer are located.



- **Gortahork:** Gortahork is a small coastal Gaeltacht village and town land, situated within the Gaeltacht region of Donegal along the N56, evolved from a small clachan settlement named 'Bedlam' in the first edition OSI maps, at a river crossing on the Glenna River.

History, Culture and Heritage

- Strong Gaeltacht area throughout.
- Tory island artists are an important 'primitive' art movement associated with the English artist Derek Hill.
- Numerous archaeological structures and sites throughout the area, including a number of Recorded Monuments.
- Clachan layouts remain in the landscape.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 11 RPS structures.
- Hornhead house and Ballyconnell House evidence the history of occupation and landlords.
- Railway line extended through this LCA with stations at Falcarragh and Cashelnagor.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies 'ladder farms' on Tory and where the rundale system of farming can be seen in the landscape, which divided the land into infields and outfields. A belt of straight-sided and rectilinear fields with patches of ladder farms adjacent stretch along the mainland coast at Ballyboe and Falcarragh and south of this agricultural land is a belt of 'Blanket Bog and Upland'.

Access and Recreation

- Tory Island has ferry services from Magheraarty and Bunbeg as well as a regular helicopter service.
- Wild Atlantic Way follows the route of the N56 through this area with a discovery point at Hornhead.
- Strong Tourism and leisure industry focused on the Irish language, Gaeltacht culture, landscape, seascape, mountains and Islands.
- Long sandy beaches including the blue Flag beach at Dunfanaghy.

Biodiversity

- There is a high biodiversity value of special habitats and birds along the coastline, islands and on the southern mountainous area. This ecologically important landscape contains 5,086ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 4,915ha of pNHA sites as well as the important biodiversity links of the riverine corridors.
- Patchwork of small to medium sized agricultural fields generally bounded by a mixture of stone walls, drainage ditches and hedges with sections of ladder farms around Gortahork and Falcarragh.
- Small sections of conifer forestry mainly to the northeast of the LCA between Dunfanaghy and Gortahork.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network
- Tourism related holiday home developments in both the rural landscape and within towns and islands
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Quarrying
- Dereliction in both the towns and rural areas
- Turf cutting



Bloody Foreland Uplands, Coast & Gaeltacht LCA 27



Bloody Foreland Uplands, Coast & Gaeltacht Landscape Character Area is located within An Gaeltacht on the northwest corner of Donegal. This dramatic landscape is defined by Cnoc Fola Mountain in the north and Ardsmore Mountain in the east that looms over a landscape of excessively worked low-lying Atlantic bog interspersed with lakes and open rural landscape with isolated occurrences of trees or hedgerow, towards a rugged and windswept coastline.

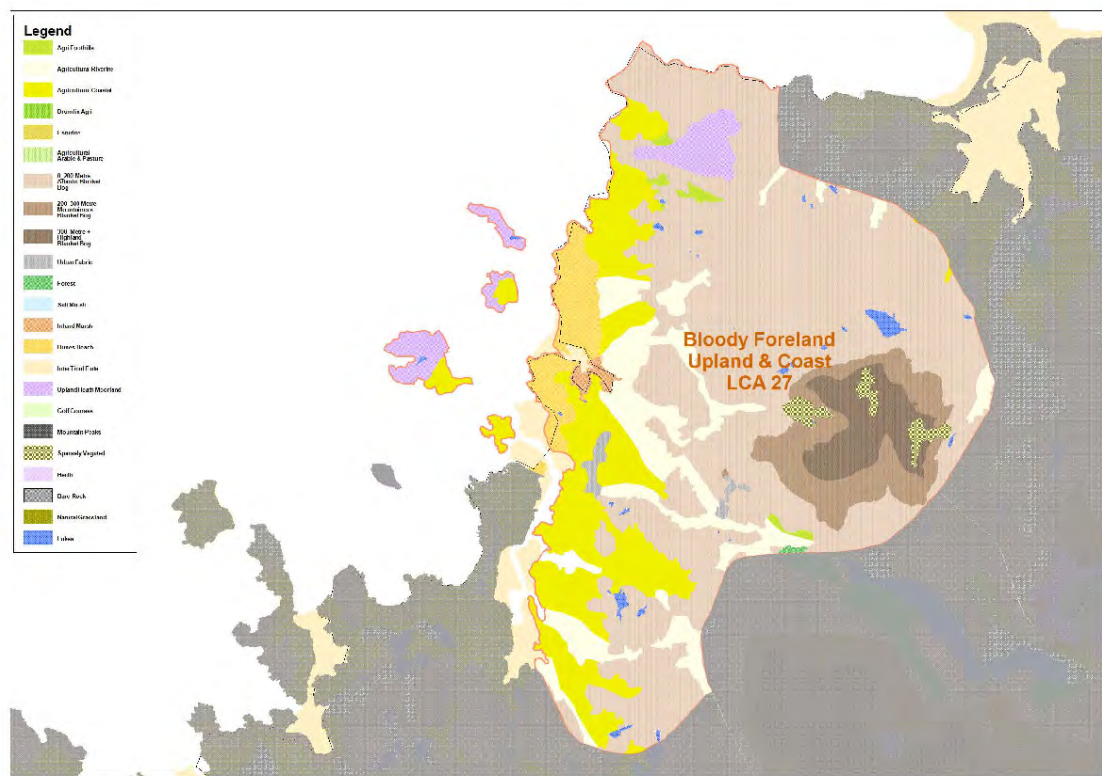
Rivers rise in the inhospitable bog covered mountains within the east of this landscape and flow north and west along small valleys towards the sea, creating fertile riverine agricultural corridors through bog and poor quality rural lands along the coast.

The N56 skirts around the east of this LCA and the three regional roads R250, R257 and R258 spur off it within the south of this area, continuing as the R257 northwards around the coast and informing the route of the 'Wild Atlantic Way' within this area.

The coastal landscape within the north west of this landscape unit consists of a distinctive and historic local field pattern of small sinuous fields bound by historic stone walls of rounded dry stone, and known colloquially as 'Bloody Foreland' owing to the colours of the landscape from the setting sun.

Further south, the more populous coastal area has clusters of houses amongst copses of trees within a more undulating agricultural landscape behind a sandy and sand dune coastal edge with tidal estuaries.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Most of Seascape Unit 10 and part of Seascape Unit 9 and 11 are within the Bloody Foreland Uplands and Coast Landscape Character Area.

Key characteristics uses: The land slopes down from Cnoc Fola to a low-lying coast with ripples of exposed rock, scattered lakes, offshore islands, indented coastline with fishing, tourism, agricultural and industrial uses.

Coastal edge: Exposed cliffs to the north change to a rocky shoreline with boulders, shingle, inter-tidal areas with sandy estuaries and intermittent areas of salt marsh..

Visibility: Good visibility throughout the north of this area with a high degree of uninterrupted views of the sea and islands and more intermittent views of the coast from the south of the sea and islands to the west.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Elevated worked bog at Bloody Foreland, distinct off shore Islands, beaches, dune complexes and lakes, long distinct gravel beaches at Bloody Foreland of geological importance, intertidal area, fish farm industry, lagoons, light houses, main port of Burtonport with ferry service, reef communities, lakes, shipwrecks. Pattern of stone wall bound fields along the coast at Bloody Foreland.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Underlying geology of almost exclusively granite save the quartzite Cnoc Fola Mountain. This area has numerous features of geological interest including disused quarries, gravel beaches extending more than 20 metres above sea level within the north of this LCA and a series of moraines visible in the landscape along Bloody Foreland which record successive ice blocks.
- The north and west are generally low and undulating and rise towards Cnoc Fola Mountain to the north and Ardsmore Mountain to the east.
- Inland this landscape has extensive cut bog, bog lakes and a series of river valleys creating pockets of agricultural land with individual isolated rural dwellings; an 8 turbine windfarm is located on the southern slopes of Ardsmore, just north of Gweedore.
- Coastal landuse is generally agricultural with small areas of bog littered by a concentration of one-off houses along the county road network.
- The indented coastline along the north of this LCA has a rocky edge and stony beaches whilst the south has more sandy beaches some of which are protected by dune systems and Machair grassland.
- Inishirrer, Inishmeane, Gola and Inishinny (listed north to south) are offshore islands within this LCA. Inishinny has a rocky western coast, surrounded on the other sides by sandy beaches and covered in a sand dune complex; a spur to the south has some ruined cottages, a pier and a modern dwelling. Gola is a granite island, the west has exposed rock and peat and the east pasture land. Last fulltime habitation of Gola was in the 1960s, the old cottages and buildings remain, some have been renovated as holiday homes for seasonal use. A seasonal ferry operates to Gola ferrying tourists and rock climbers to the island. Inishmeane is another granite sparsely vegetated island with ruined cottages and some seasonal holiday homes. Inishirrer, the most northerly of the islands is of similar character to the other three islands in this group in that they are sparsely vegetated with the remains of clachans and farming lands.

Settlements



- **Annagary:** Annagary is a quiet linear coastal village with low density development within the Rosses area. Economic activity is mainly at a local enterprise level with a range of services provided to accommodate local residents.
- **Bunbeg-Derrybeg:** Bunbeg-Derrybeg is a linear townland within an area colloquially known as Gweedore; a dispersed settlement serving a large hinterland with more functions than similar sized towns. Contained by the Atlantic Coast to the west and the Derryveagh mountains to the East, the wider area is characterised by its dispersed settlement pattern, a range of commercial and social facilities including Udarás na Gaeltachta Business Park at Ard na gCeapairí. A vibrant commercial fishing industry operates from Bunbeg harbour, also the location of the coastguard and ferries to Tory Island.

History, Culture and Heritage

- Gaeltacht area with associated strong Gaeltacht culture and heritage, both on the mainland and also the offshore islands.
- Tweed and woollen industry remain strong in this area.
- Relatively few archaeological structures and sites in this area concentrated around the coast, including a number of Recorded Monuments, an archaeological complex on Cnoc Fola and a promontory fort on the headland with views both to Tory and Aran Island.
- Strong historic association with the sea; multiple shipwrecks located offshore.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 1 RPS structure.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies that the fields in this area are generally small-sized and high-walled with marked differences between areas of small fields with sinuous boundaries ('Irregular enclosure small fields' Specific HLC-type) and those areas with distinct "Ladder Farm" shaped fields (Specific HLC-type) with long straight, narrow divisions interrupted by perpendicular "rungs". High-walled fields were essential to combat exposure to western gales. The HLC proffers that sinuous-bounded fields are likely to have developed piecemeal over time and may be of considerable antiquity. Ladder Farms and similar narrow rectilinear fields are likely to be a mid-to-late 19th-century division of formerly open fields. Large areas of 'Blanket bog' and 'Open Upland' Generic HLC-types lie inland and on the north coast of Bloody Foreland a thin patch of Blanket bog continues to the rocky foreland, which has been hand-cut for a considerable time.
- HLC notes that settlement is particularly dense for a rural area and follows the roads in a linear fashion.

Access and Recreation

- Main access is from R257.
- Close visual connection with the islands and the Derryveagh Mountain Range.
- Wild Atlantic Way stretches around the coastline with discovery points at Cnoc Fola and Bunbeg Harbour.
- Two golf courses located at Cruit Island and at Derrybeg.
- Strong Tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape and their use.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 1,239ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA), 423.6ha of NHA sites and 1,203ha of pNHA sites in relation to the islands, the coast and the intertidal area with its reefs as well as the important biodiversity links of the riverine corridors running towards the coastline and the lakes within this area.
- This coastline has important machair and sand dunes as well as shingle banks and a host of other important habitats for sea birds.
- River streams and lakes are valuable fishing resources both for tourists and residents.

Forces for change

- Continued dispersed settlement
- Holiday home developments along the coast.
- Potential increase in coastal and marine tourism uses in environmentally sensitive areas including sand dunes and islands.
- Renewable energy development (windfarms, hydro schemes) and the effects on the landscape and on biodiversity.
- Afforestation on higher ground within the west of the landscape unit.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Tourism pressures on sand dunes

- Historic stone walled field systems under threat from encroaching development.



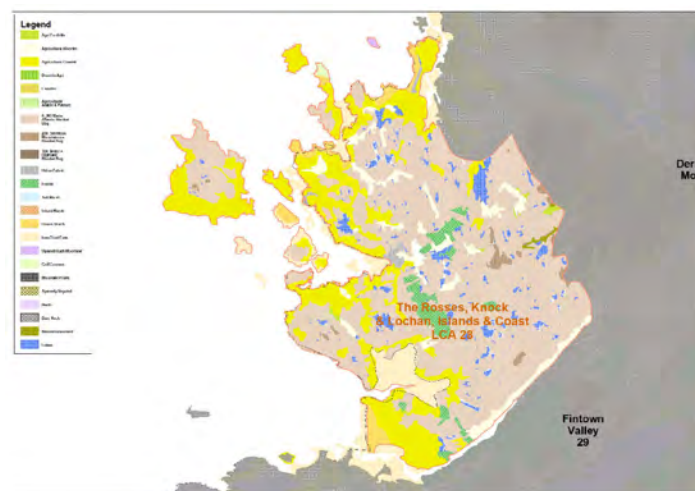
The Rosses Knock & Lochan, Islands & Coast LCA 28 An Gaeltacht



The Rosses Knock & Lochan Islands & Coast Landscape Character Area has a long indented shoreline and the offshore islands of: Inishfree Lower, Owey, Cruit, Inishkeeragh, Rutland, Inishfree Upper and Donegal's largest inhabited island, Arranmore. The mainland area has a distinctive 'knock and Lochan' landscape, and is known locally as 'The Rosses'. An undulating glacial landscape of bog covered hills and eroded hollows containing small lakes with distinctive rock outcrops, contained and framed by the Derryveagh Mountains to the east. This predominantly bog landscape is interrupted by isolated occurrences of more fertile landscapes dotted near lakes, along rivers and along the coastline, and also by geometric areas of planted forestry.

A low rocky coastal edge extends to sea in parts and is interspersed with soft sandy beaches and large tidal estuaries at Carrickfinn, Kincasslough, Cruit Island, Travenagh Bay and south of Lettermacaward extending into Gweebarra Bay. Excellent connectivity to, from and within this area including Carrickfinn Airport and Burtonport harbour, the N56 that bisects the area from north to south, the R259 and R252 that follow the line of the coast in the north of this area connecting to a network of county roads.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 10 is located on the very northern section of the Landscape Character Area overlapping considerably with Seascape Unit 11, Dungloe and Islands, and Seascape Unit 12, Gweebarra Bay.

Key characteristics uses: Heavily indented coastal edge to a low-lying glacially scoured landscape of peat and rocky hills, eroded hollows and small lakes and a multitude of off shore islands. Principle uses are fishing, tourism, marine leisure, marine industry, agriculture, quarries and turf cutting.

Coastal edge: Indented coast of bays and islands formed by rocky outcrops and stony edges divided by estuaries and intertidal mud flats. Significant dune systems on some of the islands, including Cruit and at Maghera.

Visibility: There is good visibility in this area with uninterrupted views to and from the sea and islands.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Off shore islands, intertidal area, fish farm industry, lagoons, light houses, Blue flag beach at Nairn, main port of Burtonport with ferry service, reef communities, lakes, shipwrecks, cultural connection to Scotland.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Underlying geology of granite with small localised quartzite and limestone areas on the southern coast.
- Undulating bog and lake landscape unique to this area sloping east from the Derryveagh Mountain Range to the north.
- Patches of fertile areas within the bog, around lakes and rivers and along the coast.
- Physically and visually strong connection with the offshore islands. The islands are close to the mainland and separated by channels through the wide estuaries set amongst an indented coast. The islands are a continuum of the mainland landcover strengthening the homogeneity of this landscape Character area.
- Aranmore island is the largest inhabited island in County Donegal with a permanent population of 514 recorded in the 2011 census, that rises significantly during the summer months. Most of the population live along the south and east coast, clustered along the county road network and also around the main settlement Leabgarrow. The Island has a quartzite bedrock, with higher peat covered uplands and mountain lakes in the northeast and centre and lower pasture lands along the west, south and east coasts.
- Owey Island has a hard granite bedrock exposed around the coast and most of the north of the island. The island was last inhabited full time in the 1970s and now has a small seasonal population located on the south of the island.
- Inishfree lower is an uninhabited low flat island with a rocky coast,
- Cruit Island is an inhabited island with a granite bedrock connected to the mainland by a bridge at its southern end; the island has a scattering of single rural dwellings, and a golf course covering most of the north.
- Rutland island is flat granite island covered in sand dunes with long beaches along the west coast and a rocky coastline along the east. In the 1700s the island had a street with school, post office, homes and businesses and a fish processing plant.

The population gradually fell and the island was last inhabited full-time in the 1960s although a few seasonal holiday homes remain in use. Inishcoo island north from Rutland across narrow channel has the same landscape type and is closely visually related, part of a chain of other small islands between Aran Island and the mainland.

- Inishkeeragh is a flat grassy island just south of Aran with a distinctive rectilinear field pattern surrounded by stone walls. The remains of a terrace of buildings are located along the northern shore, where the last residents of the island lived before moving to the mainland in the 1950s. The island has a seasonal tourist use.
- Inishfree upper and Inishmeane, in common with the other islands have a granite bedrock, relatively flat, poor ground and a number of abandoned cottages. There is one remaining permanent resident on Inishfree upper, and a number of holiday homes in seasonal use.

Settlements

- **Burtonport:** Burtonport is a fishing village, active port and harbour and one time terminus of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly railway line. Functioning as a service, community and civic centre for the surrounding hinterland and an employment centre for the marine industry. Key landmarks include the Coast guard station, port buildings and the Arranmore Ferry terminal.
- 
- **Dungloe:** Dungloe is strategically positioned in the north-western sub region of the county functioning as a key service centre to the surrounding area. The town has a strong number, range and level of services and facilities concentrated primarily along Main Street. In addition, the town provides for higher level activities including Dungloe Community Hospital, Garda Station, Donegal County Council Public Service Centre and secondary level education, demonstrating the role of the town as serving not only its own population but that of the rural towns and surrounding countryside. The settlement can be identified as a strategic support town which serves as a key service centre for the North West of the county. It is the largest town in the Gaeltacht region and also provides focus for the strong local tourism industry owing to location and distinctive character. Historically, the town had a traditional linear form, and today the town has a clear core and structure.
- 
- Kincasslagh, Lettermacaward and Maghera are small rural clusters of development that act as local service foci for their rural environs.

History, Culture and Heritage

- Sparse scattering of archaeological structures and sites mainly located on peninsula heads, including a number of Recorded Monuments.
- This Gaeltacht area is colloquially known as 'The Rosses' with a unique and strong Gaeltacht culture.

- Londonderry and Lough Swilly railway connected Burtonport with Crolly and the east of the County 1903 until 1940.
- Strong, unique island heritage and culture.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 6 RPS structures.
- Historic Landscape characterisation identifies patchworks of 'sinuous-bounded and irregular fields' surrounding nucleated settlements and surrounded by 'open lowland commonage' and/or 'semi-open rough ground' at Maghery and Crohy, that have all the hallmarks of an evolved landscape of some antiquity, with field boundaries that developed around settlements, rather than imposed, and common "outfield" extensive grazing.

Access and Recreation

- Close visual connection to the islands with Burtonport providing a ferry access to Arranmore Island and Tory.
- Strong Tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape, islands and in particular the Irish language and culture of the Gaeltacht.
- Wild Atlantic Way runs along the coast and has three discovery points at Carrickfinn, Burtonport harbour and Inishfree Upper Island.
- Hill walking and hiking are popular outdoor pursuits in this area.
- Cruit Island Golf Club.
- Fly Fishing and sea fishing within this area.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 7,649ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 5,858ha of pNHA sites along the coastline as well as the important biodiversity links of the riverine corridors.
- Islands are especially important ornithologically.
- Small intermittent patches of fields with mainly stone field boundaries.
- Geometric conifer plantations on bogland within the east.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network.
- Tourism related holiday home developments particularly along the coast and on the offshore islands.
- Potential for further development of sailing and water based tourism activities.
- Afforestation on higher ground within the east of the landscape unit.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development.
- Coastal erosion.
- Balanced development of Gaeltacht.



Fintown Valley

LCA 29

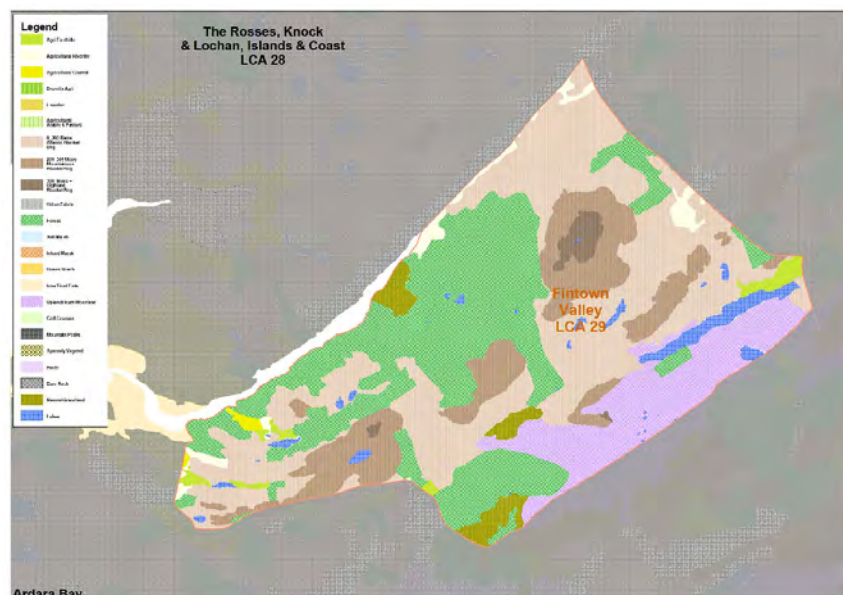
An Gaeltacht



Fintown Valley Landscape Character Area is a distinctive inland LCA defined by a chain of mountains in the North West and framed by Aghla and Screig Mountains along the south east, these upland areas are separated by Lough Finn and the River Finn on the valley floor mirroring the orientation of Gweebarra Fault. The R252 through Carra Gap connects Doochary to the northwest via the R250 to Fintown on the shore of Lough Finn in the southeast of this LCA.

High bog covered mountains overlook Lough Finn creating a dramatic and emotive landscape, particularly when viewed from the R250 along the Lough and the old Fintown railway, Donegal's only operational narrow gauge railway. This sparsely populated area has isolated residential dwellings on the fringe of agricultural land and along the regional roads with most of the development contained within the village of Fintown.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Part of Seascape Unit 12 encroaches on the very west of the landscape character area adjacent the Gweebarra River.

Key characteristics uses: Agricultural, tourism, forestry and fishing.

Coastal edge: There is no coastal edge within this LCA.

Visibility: There are intermittent views from the coastal road.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Gweebarra salmonoid river, fresh water pearl mussel catchment area.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Underlying geology of granite with a range of stratified softer rocks along the south west consisting of limestone, schist and marble. The Gweebarra Fault runs through the area and consequently landforms within follow its orientation.
- Elevated mountain bog with exposed rock throughout is punctuated in parts by peat lakes and isolated areas of forestry.
- The Finn River drains east through this LCA providing a historic access route across the county.

Settlements

- **Fintown:** Fintown is a linear village on the north of Lough Finn offering local level services. Fintown has several historic buildings and an original narrow gauge rail line that operates during summer months providing a three mile round trip along the shores of Loch Finn.



History, Culture and Heritage

- This LCA is within the Gaeltacht.
- There are seven Recorded Monuments within this LCA at locations around the periphery.
- Donegal Railway's Glenties to Stranorlar line passed by the shores of Lough Finn from 1895 to 1959, along a narrow gauge track with a stop at Fintown station. A remaining feature in the landscape today, a 3 mile section of the original railway is restored and operates on a seasonal basis; it is the only operational railway in Co. Donegal.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies this area as predominantly 'Blanket bog' and 'Open upland rough ground' (Generic HLC-types). HLC states that although this area was never greatly settled the drier slopes were likely to have been utilised for extensive summer grazing.

Access and Recreation

- The R250 follows the valley floor, the river and the railway line along a southwest-northeast axis, branching north towards Doochary at Fintown as the R252.
- County road provides access along the Gweebarra river within the north of this LCA.

- Donegal Railway's Glenties to Stranorlar line passed by the shores of Lough Finn from 1895 to 1959. A portion of the line re-opened in 1995 and operates seasonally, popular with tourists and railway enthusiasts.
- The mountains, lakes and scenery popular for hill walking and rambling.

Biodiversity

- This ecologically important landscape contains 752.4ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA), 325.9ha of NHA sites and 752.8ha of pNHA sites.
- Ecologically important mountain lakes.
- A number of conifer plantations on the mountain bog and along the Gweebarra River.
- Sensitive eco-systems such as red grouse strongholds, golden eagle territories and fresh water pearl mussel catchments are in this area.
- Cro na mBraonain Habitat & Red Grouse Sanctuary.
- River Finn is a salmonoid river.

Forces for change

- Potential for further development of the railway line and station at Fintown.
- Potential for fishing and other tourism associated with Lough Fin and the Mountain lakes.
- Intensification of afforestation.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development



Ardara Bays & Coast

LCA 30

An Gaeltacht



Ardara Bays, Coast and Gaeltacht Landscape Character Area is a low lying undulating area with an open aspect, framed by the higher uplands of the surrounding LCAs and by a long and varied coastline indented by long sandy tidal estuaries.

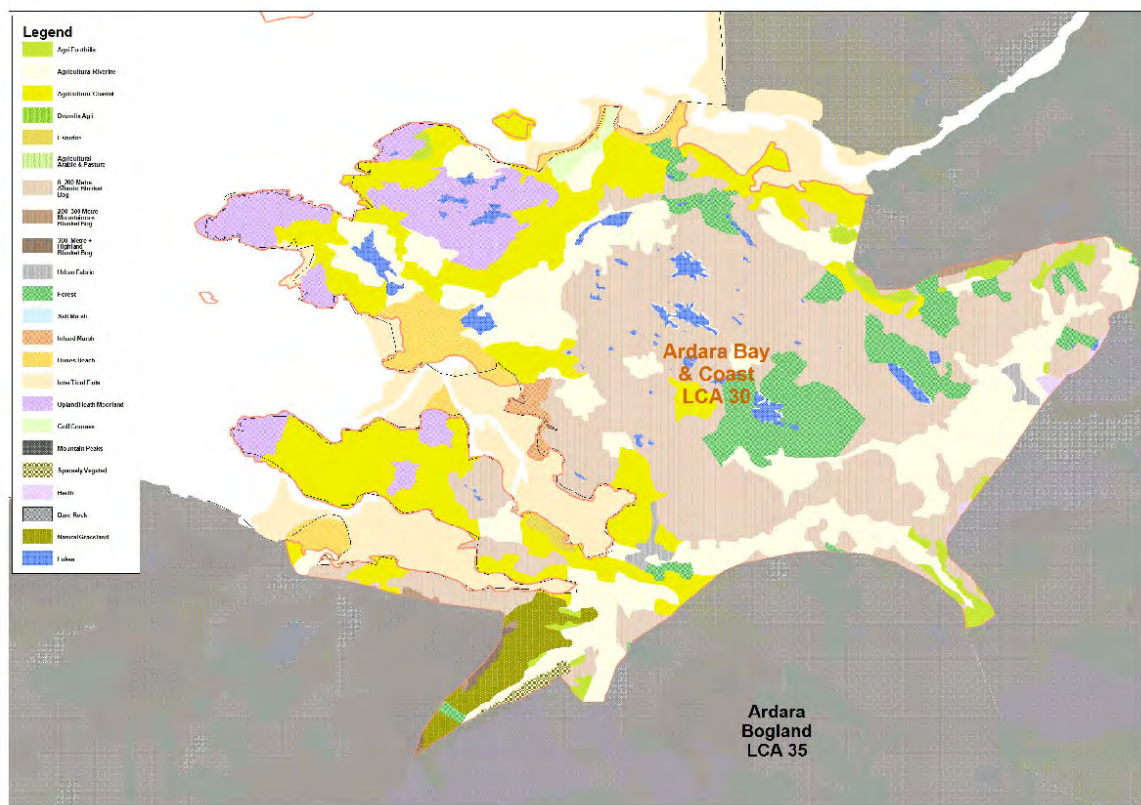
The area has a myriad of landscape types; the inland landscape is pre-dominantly bog and lake interspersed with fertile riverine agricultural corridors to the south following the Owenea and Owentocker Rivers and large commercial coniferous forestry plantations within the east. Agricultural lands along river valleys and in the hinterland of Ardara and Glenties are characterised by larger hedgerow bound geometric fields, at variance with the coastal farmland of a more open nature with historic fields patterns of note at Loughros and Portnoo.

The coast extends from within the tidal estuary at Gweebarra bay, past Inishkeel island, around Dawross Head and into Loughros More Bay and estuary before following the shore around Loughros Point and Loughros Beg Bay and estuary.

The Wild Atlantic Way extends through this area along the route of the R261, skimming the north coast that already has an established tourism and recreation base at Nairn and Portnoo.

This area has been settled throughout history and many important historic sites and monuments remain, including Doon Fort, an island crannog dating from the 4th Century, and the ruins of a 6th century monastery and church on Inishkeel island.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 12 and Seascape Unit 13 are within the Ardara Bays, Coast and Gaeltacht Landscape Character Area.

Key characteristics uses: Predominantly low-lying bog and lakes with agricultural, tourism, forestry, marine and aquaculture uses.

Coastal edge: Rocky cliffs off Dunmore Head, tidal estuaries, intertidal, sandy beaches and dune systems.

Visibility: There are intermittent uninterrupted views of the bays and sea from stretches of the coastal road network and viewing areas along the headlands.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Gweebarra salmonoid river, shell fish, fresh water pearl mussel catchment area, sand beaches, large dune complexes, Inishkeel island, Ardara (Heritage Town).

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Underlying geology of schist, with areas of granite and quartzite further east in the LCA.
- The primary landscape type inland is bog and lakes with large areas of coniferous forestry concentrated around Lough Machugh, Lough Ananima and a succession of smaller lakes at Ballyriston.
- A series of rivers dissect this landscape, including the Owentocker, Owenea and Gweebarra rivers that flow through fertile agricultural valleys to the sea via inimitable tidal estuaries to Loughros Beg Bay, Loughros More Bay and Gweebarra Bay respectively.
- Convergence of agricultural corridors with a geometric pattern of hedge and tree trimmed fields around Ardara are notably different from the surrounding open and untamed landscape.
- Extensive sand dune system at Sheskinmore of considerable ecological importance.
- Dispersed pattern of isolated rural dwellings and holiday homes dotted throughout the area and along the road network. Three mobile home parks, one at Sheskinmore and two in Portnoo, a seasonal tourism location.
- Inishkeel Island faces onto Portnoo beach and is accessible on foot at low tide across a sand spit; it is uninhabited but the ruins of a 6th century Monastery, cross-slabs, 2 churches and a graveyard remain.
- 9 turbine wind farm on bog land within the north of this LCA.

Settlements

- **Ardara:** Ardara is a heritage town with a long association with the tweed and knitwear industry. It is located to the west of Donegal and has a high tourist value owing in part to its location on the banks of River Owentocher, and near to the coast. It has a good range of services and facilities and a strong identifiable main street with a steady growth in residential development since 2000. The town provides a range of local services and functions to a wide geographic rural hinterland.
- **Glenties:** Glenties is a vibrant, medium sized town in the heart of the Gaeltacht that offers a wide and varied range of facilities and services, both to the town and the wider rural Gaeltacht hinterland. The town has a strong 'town centre,' within which most of the retail and service offer are located with small scale local level commercial activity.
- Nairn and Portnoo are popular seaside settlements on the northern coastline facing Gweebarra Bay and located near soft sandy beaches.



History, Culture and Heritage

- Numerous archaeological structures and sites throughout the area, including a number of Recorded Monuments.
- Doon Fort is an oval stone fort (crannog) on Doon Lough, south of Portnoo. The fort dates from the 4th century, it is 4.8m high and 3.6m wide with passages either side of the entrance, and of a similar construction method to An Grianan of Aileach in LCA 11.
- Inishkeel island is accessible during low tide from Portnoo beach and was the location of a 6th century monastery founded by St Conal, 2 churches and a graveyard; the

ruins of these structures remain and the island is also the location of two important carved cross slabs.

- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 6 RPS structures.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies historic field patterns along the coast at Portnoo and on Loughros peninsula, consisting of predominantly ladder farms on lands settled by farmer fishermen.

Access and Recreation

- N56 links Ardara in the south to Glenties on the east then Maas on the north at the Gweebarra River crossing where it continues north to Dungloe. R261 extends from Ardara north to Portnoo.
- Wild Atlantic Way follows the route of the R261 through the west of this area with a discovery point at Narin/Portnoo.
- Golf courses at Narin/Portnoo and Cloughaneely located along western coast.
- There is a strong tourism sector in this area and the leisure industry is focused on the landscape, seascape and their use as well as the rich historical and cultural assets of the area.
- Ardara area and the surrounding glens and mountains contain many scenic walks and drives.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 4,328ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA), 53.68ha of NHA sites and 4,475ha of pNHA sites as well as the important biodiversity links of the riverine corridors and bog lakes.
- Forestry plantations on higher lands along the east side of the landscape character area.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network.
- Tourism related holiday home developments.
- Potential for further development of sailing and water based tourism activities.
- Intensification of afforestation.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development.
- Coastal erosion.
- Housing and holiday home developments.
- Mobile home park developments/ extension.

Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 13 covers all of the coastal area within the Slievetooley Coast Landscape Character Area, and seascape unit 14 overlaps at the western edge of the coast.

Key characteristics uses: High elevated bog with mountain pass, fishing at Port harbour.

Coastal edge: High sheer sea cliffs, caves, vegetated cliffs, sea stacks, stony beach and bay.

Visibility: The only coastal access is at Port on a natural bay along this cliff edge coast offering visibility out to the ocean. The area is highly visible from the coast northwards, informing the views out from Loughros, Dawros Head as far as Aran Island. The area is visible from the south also, at Rossan point.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: The undeveloped nature of the undisturbed bog is a unique and valuable feature as is the abandoned fishing village at Port.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- High undulating landscape of bog covered mountains and lakes with an underlying schist geology, a wide valley cuts through the west following a meandering river to the Atlantic Ocean at Port. Pockets of farmland within the southern side of the valley have an underlying quartzite and limestone geology.
- Most of the coastal edge is inaccessible due to the high vertical sea cliffs, and vegetated sea cliffs that drop directly to the Atlantic Ocean below.

Settlements

There are no settlements within this remote rural area.

History, Culture and Heritage

- An abandoned clachan near the small harbour of Port has unique stone walled field enclosures, access is from a county road that follows the river from the east towards the sea at Port although historically there was an access track south over the mountain towards Glencolmcille.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 1 RPS structures and 1 NIAH.

Access and Recreation

- Access into the area is via a county road that crosses west over the LCA towards Port.
- The area is popular with walkers and ramblers.

Biodiversity

- This ecologically important landscape contains 23.77ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 3,824ha of pNHA sites.
- Undisturbed blanket bog and high sea cliffs contain rare plants and fauna.

Forces for change

- Renewable energy development
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Quarrying
- Forestry
- Roads infrastructure



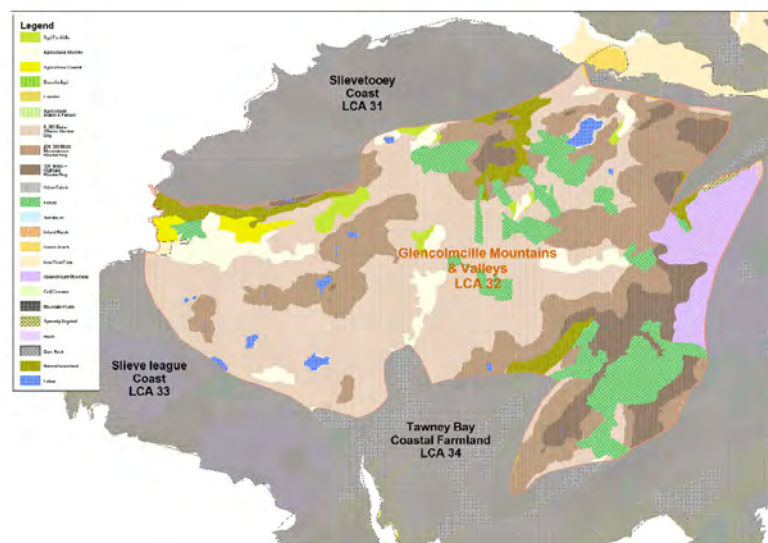
Glencolmcille Mountains, Bogs, Valleys and Gaeltacht LCA 32



Glencolmcille Mountains, Bogs and Valleys Landscape Character Area is an area of elevated upland bog with river valleys and glacial valleys including the iconic Glencolmcille in the west and dramatic Glengesh in the east. This remote area has been historically isolated from the rest of the county owing in part to the physical boundary created by the mountain chain that runs from the north to south along the east of this LCA. Access to the area is via low lands along the south coast of the LCA and via Glengesh in the north.

Glencolmcille is an archaeologically, historically and culturally important settlement in the far west of this Landscape Character area. There is a significant cluster of archaeological monuments in and around the settlement including a number dating from the Neolithic period. The area also has strong links to Christianity being the location of a monastery of St Colmcille in the 6th century, links that have continued through history to the present day where there is still an annual turas of St Colmcille. All of this area is within the Gaeltacht, with associated strong cultural and linguistic qualities.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Portions of Seascape Unit 14 and 15 overlap in the west of this landscape character area.

Key characteristics uses: Highly elevated rugged mountainous area with high vegetated cliffs, tourism, agriculture and religious use.

Coastal edge: High vegetated sea cliffs falling to a lower rocky edge in the middle of the bay.

Visibility: Uninterrupted views of the sea from points along the R263.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Turas and cultural associations with St Colmcille, concentration of archaeological monuments with excellent examples of court tombs and portal tombs and Napoleonic signal tower.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Large mostly inland LCA of upland mountain bogs and lakes with an underlying schist geology dissected by fertile agricultural valleys with quartzite bedrock and pockets of limestone geology at Glencolmcille and the north of this LCA. This area is surrounded by higher lands in all directions, except at Glencolmcille where it has a coastal edge, and along the south where the Glen River flows seawards from this area through lower fertile lands on adjoining LCA 34.
- The coastal edge at Glen Bay adjacent to Glencolmcille is sandwiched between coastal cliffs to the north and south with rugged rocky outcrops and sea stacks. The bay curves into a low-lying sandy beach backed by sand dunes, low-lying fields beyond continue east into the valley of Glencolmcille.
- Dispersed pattern of individual rural dwellings along the county road network located on and adjacent to fertile agricultural land along the river valleys.
- Glengesh is a scenic and unique u-shaped glacial valley formed by retreating ice sheets during the last ice age, and is an important landscape feature of the county.

Settlements

- **Glencolmcille:** Glencolmcille is a distinct dispersed coastal Gaeltacht settlement of immense cultural vitality, located in low lying valley basin and enclosed by surrounding hills and mountains. The settlement is named after St. Columba, who set up a monastery in the area during the 6th Century. Rich in archaeological history, there are 23 recorded monuments, church ruins and turas throughout area, and also court tombs and portal tombs from the Mesolithic period. Glencolmcille is a strong tourism resource in this area, based on the culture, history and landscape.



History, Culture and Heritage

- Concentration of archaeological structures and sites within the west of the area, including a number of Recorded Monuments, date from the Neolithic period when the

first farmers settled here and include examples of court tombs at Mainnéar na Mortlaidh and An Clochán Mór and portal tombs at Málainn Mhóir.

- Strong cultural association with St Colmcille who reputedly lived and had a monastic centre in Glencolmcille valley in the 6th century. Turas Colmcille is dedicated to St. Colmcille and takes place each year on the 9th of June, it is the longest turas still practiced in Ireland consisting of 15 stations.
- Irish language and cultural courses run throughout the year in this Gaeltacht area.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 2 RPS structures and 29 NIAH.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies linear villages along road sides, that are partly a product of land re-organisation in the 19th century, when 5-acre farms were set out on mearing lines at right-angles to the roads. There are also some areas of strip fields set out from the main areas of settlement, indicating intake of former rough ground. The HLC also references the 'Turas CholmCille', a traditional pilgrimage route or round as of international significance, reinforcing the identity of the valley as a special "place apart". This also links the valley in a chain of significant places associated with the life of Colmcille including (but not limited to) the Galway Aran Islands, Derry and Iona (in Scotland)

Access and Recreation

- The main access to the area is via Glengesh valley from the east and the R263 from the south.
- Wild Atlantic Way follows the road network through this area from Ardara, west through Glengesh, where there is a viewing point, towards Glencolmcille and then southeast along the R263 towards Carrick.
- Walking trails and routes throughout the landscape.
- Strong tourism and leisure industry focused on the natural, cultural and historical elements of the landscape.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 64.12ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA), 646.1ha of NHA sites and 5,856ha of pNHA sites.
- Biodiversity links created along the river network.
- Important undisturbed bog landscape containing bog lakes.

Forces for change

- Linear one off residential development along the rural road network within the valleys.
- Tourism related holiday home developments in both the rural landscape and within Glencolmcille.
- Renewable energy development
- Afforestation.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Under management of land.
- Quarrying.



Sliabh Liag Coast

LCA 33

An Gaeltacht



Sliabh Liag Coast Landscape Character Area is a remote, iconic landscape containing the most westerly point in Donegal, on Rathlin O'Birne Island. This mountainous bog landscape boasts the highest sea cliffs in Europe on the southern edge of the Sliabh Liag Mountains; these dramatic sheer cliffs fall from a height of 600 metres into the Atlantic Ocean below.

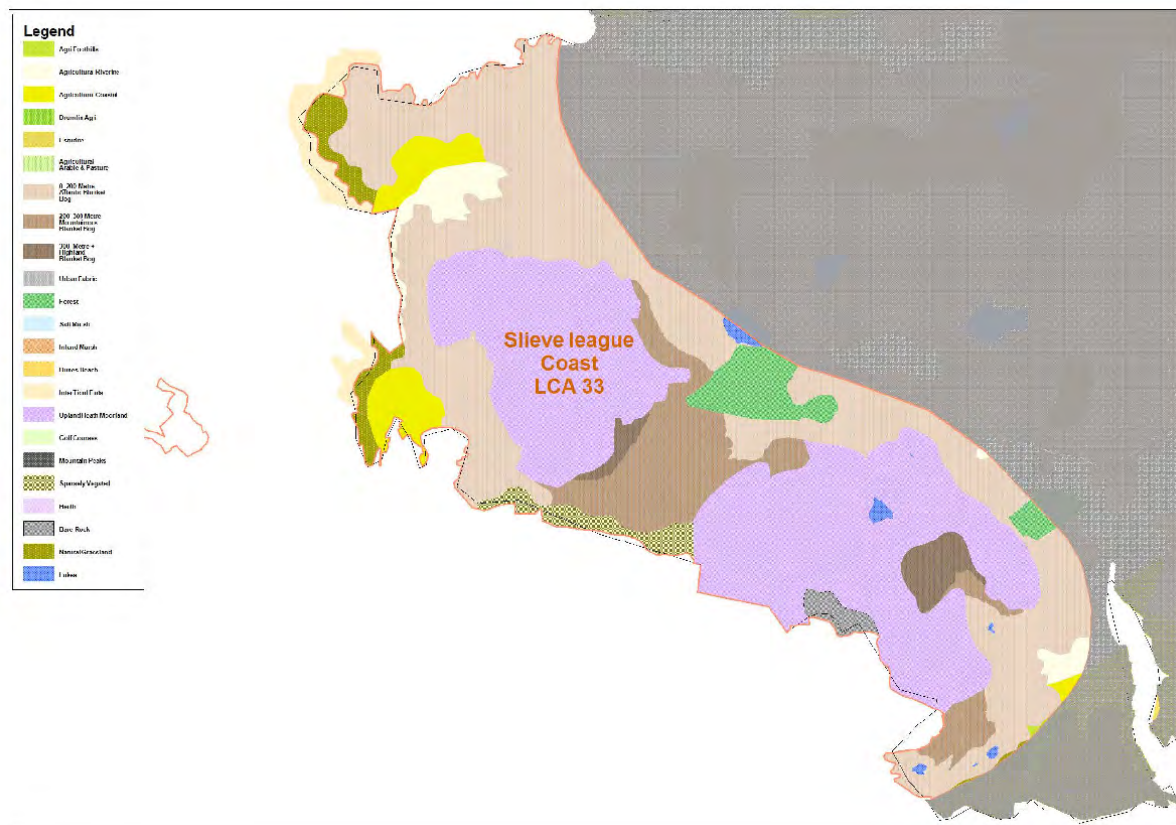
This upland landscape of mountainous bog and heath is punctuated by lakes, areas of bare rock, patches of commercial coniferous plantations, and the Owenwee river that drains from an upland area between Malin Beg and Sliabh Liag south east through a wide valley towards Teelin Bay.

Lands around Malin Bay in the northwest of the LCA have a lower coastal edge than the rest of this LCA and include the large sheltered sandy beach at Malin Beg; accessibility to the sea coupled with better quality soil contributed to this area being settled from the earliest times.

There is evidence of settlement within this area from the Bronze Age through to the arrival of Christianity to the present day, early Christian sites in this landscape include a monastery on Rathlin O'Birne island, and church remains on Sliabh Liag and Malin Beg. This area has strong religious and cultural linkages with Glencolmcille to the north.

Most of the development in this area is concentrated at Malin More and Malin Beg in the north and at Teelin in the south with a dispersed pattern of residential development along the roads.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Units 14, 15 and 16 overlap within the Sliabh Liag Coast landscape character area.

Key characteristics uses: Sliabh Liag bog and lake covered mountain range and sea cliffs and agricultural area in the north west and south, tourism, agricultural and forestry uses and offshore island with lighthouse.

Coastal edge: High vegetated cliff edges at Sliabh Liag, lower rocky edge and sandy beaches at Malin Beg and Malinmore.

Visibility: High degree of visibility from certain view points within the seascape such as Sliabh Liag and Malin Beg, tourist boat trips to view the cliffs operate from this area.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Rathlin O'Birne and its lighthouse, White Strand at Malin Beg, archaeological complex in Malinbeg, walking trails in Sliabh Liag and signal towers.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- This upland coastal landscape has an underlying geology of primarily schist and quartzite, visible in the distinctive quartzite sea cliffs of Sliabh Liag.

- Rathlin O' Birne Island sits 2km west of Malin Beg within this LCA, it has a flat felstone geology covered with light soil and grass and is unrelated to the adjoining geology on the mainland. This uninhabited island has an automated lighthouse on the west coast and the ruins of a monastery.
- Three succinct agricultural areas sit on the fringe of this mountainous landscape of upland bog and lakes; these areas are also the location of the three settlements of Malin More and Malin Beg on the North West coast and Teelin in the southeast of this LCA.
- Agricultural lands around Malin Beg and Malin More have an interesting strip field pattern, bound by ditch and stone walls
- Picturesque curved sandy beach at Malin Beg sits at the foot of vegetated cliffs and is accessible by foot only.

Settlements

- Malin More, Malin Beg and Teelin are small rural coastal settlements situate on lower lying agricultural areas on the fringe this LCA.

History, Culture and Heritage

- Historic maritime focused culture in the settlements of Malin More, Malin Beg and Teelin.
- Napoleonic signal towers on Malin Beg head and Carrigan Head are two of a series of defensive towers that by the British military in the early 1800s around the Irish coast.
- Archaeological structures and sites are mainly clustered in the North West at Malin Beg and Malin Mor. There are a number of Recorded Monuments in this LCA including a series of bronze-age portal tombs.
- The summit of Sliabh Liag was an early Christian monastic site and is the location of 2 recorded monuments.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 1 RPS structure and 5 NIAH.
- The Historic Landscape Characterisation report identifies bands of 'Coastal upland and hard rock', including high cliffs, 'Semi open rough ground', 'Open upland rough ground' and 'Blanket bog' Generic HLC-types with limited coastal settlement around Malin Bay within this LCA.

Access and Recreation

- The north of the area is accessed from the R263 and ends at the settlement of Malin Beg; a county road forks from this regional road at Malin More travelling south east through a natural valley before rejoining it on its southward route to Carrick. Access to Carrigan Head and the viewing point for the Sliabh Liag Cliffs is via a county road from Teelin in the south.
- The Wild Atlantic Way follows the route of the regional and county roads through this area and there is a signature point at Sliabh Liag and a discovery point at Malin Beg.
- A number of walking and hiking routes through this area include 'One Mans Pass' and the 'Pilgrims Route' at Sliabh Liag.
- Strong tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape and their use.

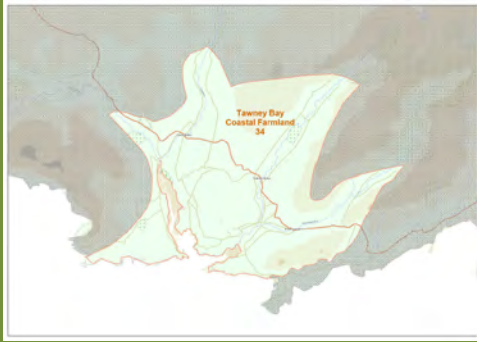
Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 0.6ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 2,916ha of pNHA sites.
- Ecologically important bog lakes.
- Exposed linear coastal field patterns to the north.
- Rich fertile valleys to the south with patches of historic forestry.

- Forestry plantations on higher lands to the east of the landscape character area.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network to the south of the landscape character area adjacent Teelin.
- Potential tourism development at Sliabh Liag.
- Tourism signage.
- Renewable energy development.
- Afforestation.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development.
- Coastal erosion.



Tawney Bay Farmland and Coast LCA 34 An Gaeltacht



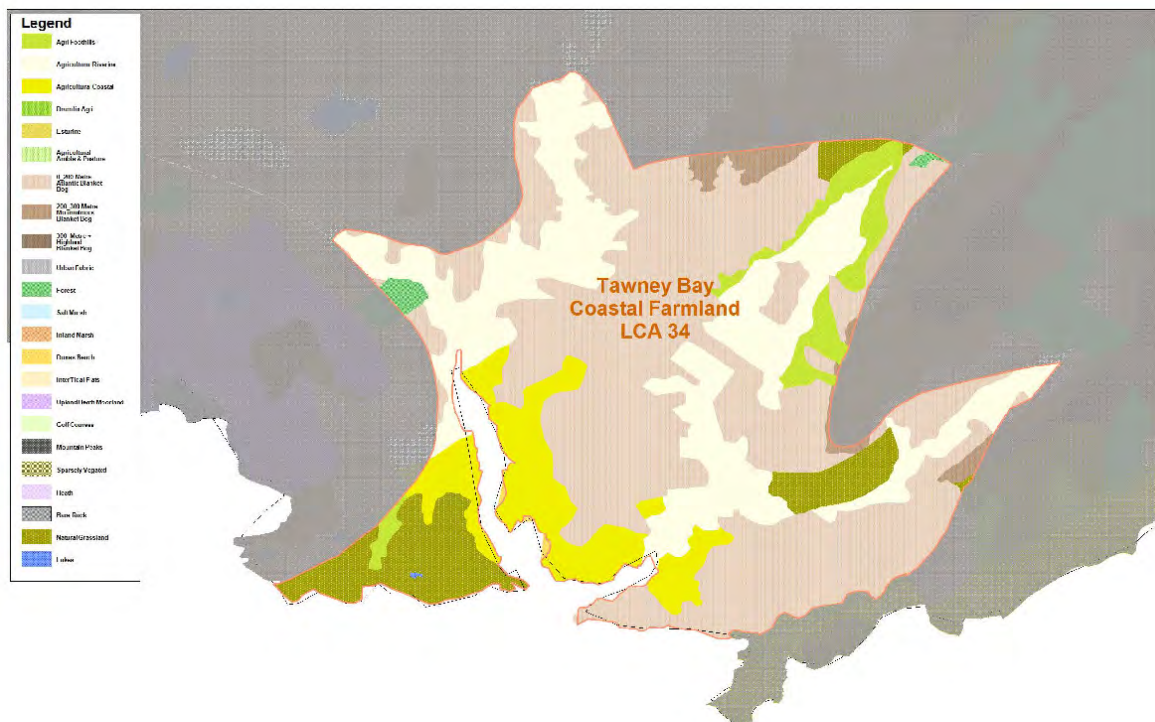
Tawney Bay Farmland and Coast is an area characterized by low fertile agricultural river valleys that meander through an undulating landscape of peat and heather covered hills before meeting the Atlantic Ocean via Tawney Bay and Teelin Bay. The land is lower than the surrounding LCAs and the area is sheltered to an extent by the higher surrounding mountains and uplands.

Agriculture is the primary land use in this area; the sheltered fertile river valleys have a mainly linear field pattern bound by hedgerow interspersed by trees, whilst the coastal agricultural land, exposed to the winds and spray coming from the Atlantic Ocean has a more open field pattern consisting of stone wall bound fields and open natural grassland.

Carrick and Kilcar are vibrant villages that also offer a range of functions to the large dispersed rural population that live within this and adjoining areas. They sit within a geographically remote and rural area of considerable antiquity, particularly evident in the historic field patterns remaining in the landscape. Historical and archaeological features are dominant in localised areas particularly along the river valleys and the coast.

The Wild Atlantic Way follows the road network through the rugged seascape and landscape in this Gaeltacht area of significant cultural and historic offer. The wealth of these assets contributes to the strong and vibrant tourism sector within this area.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 17 covers the entire coast of this LCA with a degree of overlap with adjoining Seascape Units 16 and 18.

Key characteristics uses: Undulating upland bog and heath separated by lower-lying fertile river valleys of primarily agricultural use but also strong tourism, fishing and marine uses; napoleonic signal tower at Carrigan Head, a pier at each side of Teelin Bay.

Coastal edge: Rocky outcrops and low cliffs to the west with soft edges of silt, sand, stone and salt marsh in the bays.

Visibility: Excellent uninterrupted visibility along stretches of the coastal roads over the bays and to the sea.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Sliabh Liag, Teelin harbour, strong fishing culture, coastguard station at Teelin, signal tower and archaeological complex.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Undulating landscape of peat and heather covered hills and good quality agricultural river valleys sheltered by the surrounding higher mountainous areas with an underlying geology of quartzite and small pockets of area of schist, limestone and shale.

- Distinct low coastal edge with exposed rocky outcrops, sea stacks, a few sandy beaches, open natural grassland, and layers of sandstone and shale paving. The coastal agricultural areas are exposed with little to no trees or hedgerow and the characteristic fields are bound by traditional dry stone walls in a linear and organised fashion.
- The coastal area has a dispersed scatter of individual rural dwellings; inland there is a more pronounced pattern of one-off rural dwellings and a degree of linear development along the road network.

Settlements



- **Carrick:** Carrick is a small rural Gaeltacht village with local service functions at a crossing on the Glen River, it was formerly a traditional crossroads settlement and has a distinctive traditional village core
- **Kilcar:** Kilcar is a small Gaeltacht village located within the wider Kilcar parish, the village centre is defined by an historic church and two protected textile factories. The village is nestled in a valley of the Glenaddragh River, giving an aspect of hidden depth and uniqueness.

History, Culture and Heritage

- Historic maritime culture stemming from at least the 14th century with a strong fishing industry operating from the sheltered Teelin harbour.
- Archaeological complex on Dundawoona Point.
- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA, located in proximity to the rivers and coast.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 7 RPS structures and 37 NIAH.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies that this area has a predominance of ladder Farms ('Historic fields of distinct character' Generic HLC-type), indicating centralised conversion of former common fields to enclosed farms. This area also shared outfield grazing, mapped as 'Open Lowland Commonage'.

Access and Recreation

- R263 forms part of an important coastal road network in West Donegal and it dissects this area connecting the villages of Kilcar and Carrick. Branching from this is a network of county roads that permeate this agricultural landscape.
- Wild Atlantic Way runs along this coastline following the route of the R263 and county road network connecting to the iconic Sliabh Liag sea cliffs.
- Strong Tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape and their use.
- Recreational uses including angling, scuba diving and boat trips from Teelin to Sliabh Liag.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 134ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 400.1ha of pNHA sites as well as the important biodiversity links of the riverine corridors.
- Patchwork of small agricultural hedgerow bound fields within the more sheltered riverine valleys. Areas of historic deciduous woodland adjacent to Teelin Bay
- Isolated strips of forestry plantations are on higher lands along the north-west boundary of the landscape character area.

Forces for change

- One-off rural dwellings and particularly along the rural road network.
- Holiday home development.
- Potential for further development of sailing and water based tourism activities.
- Renewable energy development.
- Afforestation on higher ground.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion

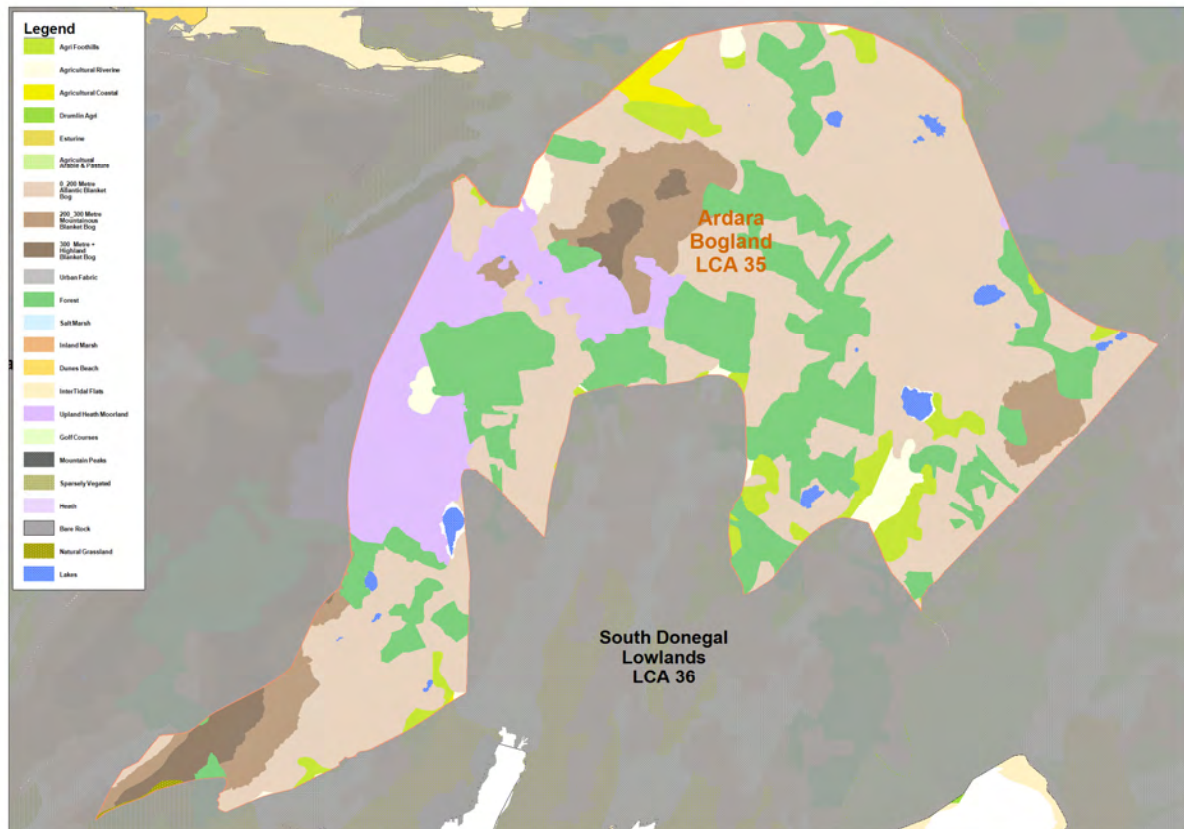


Ardara Bogland LCA 35 An Gaeltacht



Ardara Bogland Landscape Character Area is a Gaeltacht area that is characterised by a large expanse of elevated heath and worked bog dotted with mountain lakes and separated by narrow tracts of riverine agricultural land that extend along valleys containing southward bound rivers. Multiple commercial forestry plantations are scattered throughout this upland area overlooked by the Bluestack and Glencolmcille mountains. The Higher lands in the north of this LCA form the hinterland of Ardara town and informs the landscape of the adjoining LCA to the north.

Landscape Character type



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

- Only a small section of Seascape Unit 13 extends into the north of the Landscape Character Area over a low-lying agricultural fertile area and area of upland peat .

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- This upland area consists predominantly of bog dotted with bog lakes and intersected by large tracts of commercial forestry, it has an underlying geology of mostly schist with a narrow band of quartzite to the north.
- The area could be considered a 'basin' that slopes from Mulmosog Mountain in the north of the LCA, the Bluestack Mountains to the east and the Glencolmcille Mountains to the west into a central riverine landscape, from whence a series of rivers flow southwards.
- The area is drained by a network of ditches dividing areas of land into strips running from north to south.

Settlements

- There are no settlements in this area; the settlement pattern consists primarily of dispersed rural dwellings along riverine agricultural land.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this area and these generally tend to be located on the lower-lying land to the south of the area.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies this landscape as predominantly 'Blanket bog' with some 'Open upland rough ground' and 'Semi-open rough ground', with more recent 'Plantation woodland' (Generic HLC-types). There are some areas of 'Straight-sided and surveyed rectilinear fields', partly reflecting the more extensive fields required to be productive in this area.

Access and Recreation

- The N56 travels north through this area connecting Killibegs to the south and Ardara to the north, and the R262 skirts along the east. A network of county roads provides access on the lower-lying land with only limited vehicular access to higher mountain areas.
- Recreational fishing in the mountain lakes and rivers.

Biodiversity

- There are 6 NHAs within this area.
- The riverine corridors are also important biodiversity links.
- There are areas of large straight edged agricultural fields which are predominantly defined by drainage ditches.
- There are a number of commercial coniferous forestry plantations throughout this area.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network.
- Renewable energy development.
- Further afforestation.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development.



South Donegal Lowlands LCA 36

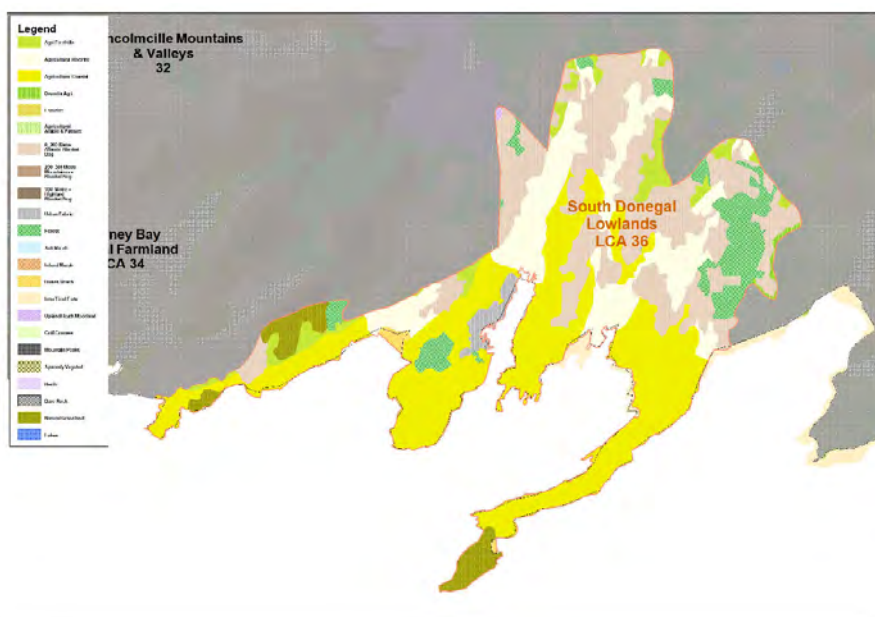


South Donegal Lowlands Landscape Character Area is a rolling coastal agricultural landscape of wide fertile river valleys between higher bog covered uplands orientated along a northeast-southwest axis, with a long indented coastline of peninsulas and inlets that face south onto Donegal Bay.

Killybegs, the largest port in Ireland, is situated in McSwyne's Bay, a sheltered deep fjord-like inlet of deep water, and is a thriving and bustling harbour town of considerable antiquity with a multitude of historic and archaeological fabric. Fintragh Beach, west of Killybegs at the mouth of Fintragh Bay, has a substantial dune system and long sandy blue flag beach making it popular with tourists and day-trippers alike.

St John's Point, a narrow low-lying peninsula of mostly limestone agricultural land extends into Donegal Bay and informs the seaward view from a large section of the coast; the cut granite lighthouse and surrounding walled complex at the end of the peninsula dates from the 1830's forming an iconic landmark.

Landscape Character type



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 18 extends over most of the coastline of this LCA this is overlapped substantially by Seascape Unit 19

Key characteristics uses: Undulating coast sloping towards Donegal Bay characterised by four peninsulas, predominantly bog to the west and more fertile agricultural land to the east. Killybegs, the largest port in Ireland, is situated on the coast that also has marine, aquaculture, tourism, agriculture, quarry and forestry uses.

Coastal edge: Long indented coastal edge of peninsulas and inlets of rock, stone, sand and silt edges.

Visibility: High uninterrupted views of the sea from the coastal road to the west with intermittent views of Killybegs and Fintragh along the coastline to the east. Views in from the bay and particularly Killybegs harbour are important having regard to the amount of vessels including cruise liners that use these heavily trafficked waters.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: Deep water harbour of Killybegs, fishing industry, blue flag beach, lighthouse, estate landscapes, carpet manufacturing in Killybegs and archaeological complexes.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Upland undulating areas of mountain bog are interspersed by a series of rivers flowing south through this area along fertile agricultural valleys towards the Atlantic Ocean via Fintragh Bay, McSwynes Bay and Inver Bay.
- This area has an amalgamation of underlying geology orientated in bands along a northeast-southwest axis that extend to sea along four southern peninsulas. The geology within the north is mostly quartzite with bands of schist and a large band of sandstone north of Killybegs. A limestone area extends west towards Muckros head and south as St.Johns point, which has a sandstone tip. Projections to Drumanoo Head and Carntullagh head are schist.
- The varied coastal landscape consists of low-lying coastal farmland at Muckros Head, a sandy beach and dune system at Fintragh, rocky edge and stony and silty outcrops around McSwyne's Bay and the low lying agricultural peninsula of St John's Point, which has a unique and distinctive limestone paving edge.
- A series of rivers flow along lush and fertile agricultural river valleys typified by hedgerow and tree bound fields, lanes and county roads.

Settlements

- **Bruckless:** Bruckless is a small historical coastal village and former railway village that developed around Bruckless House and estate, built in the mid 18th century by a Scottish planted family (Nesbitts). Other important historical structures are Bruckless Harbour and Round Tower.
- **Dunkineely:** Dunkineely is a small traditional linear village located at the top of St. John's Point that also offers local level functions to the rural hinterland. The settlement derives its name from the fort of Conneely located on the western edge of the village dating from the late Iron Age; the circular mound remains and informs the streetscape of the village.

- **Killybegs:** Killybegs is the largest and busiest port in Ireland, located on what was a natural harbour in the north of Donegal Bay, it has developed over time from a fishing village to an important economic hub in the county. The strong local economy is centred on the port, and its key industry fishing, contributes to the towns distinctive character. The historic centre of Killybegs is focused around the harbour and has retained its unique quality in tandem with significant infrastructural and industrial investment.



History, Culture and Heritage

- There are a number of Recorded Monuments scattered at locations within the south of this LCA with notable concentrations around Killybegs and along St. Johns point. Killybegs is a 'Historic Town' containing a delineated Zone of Archaeological Potential where intense archaeology is present.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 11 RPS structures and 95 NIAH.
- Donegal railway operated a service from 1893-1960 along the south coast of this LCA connecting Donegal town in the east with stations in Bruckless, Dunkineely and Killybegs (terminus station).
- Christianity arrived in the area around the 4th Century with the arrival of St. Colmcille, and many early Christian monuments remain in the landscape.
- Contested history of occupation and control within this area including occupation during the plantation of Ulster on the fertile agricultural riverine and coastal lands.
- The Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies a predominance of 'Straight-sided and surveyed rectilinear fields' in the east, and larger patches of 'historic Ladder Farms' to the west which have remained unchanged in the landscape for generations.

Access and Recreation

- The N56 from Donegal town to the east connecting Dunkineely, Bruckless and Killybegs along the coast of this LCA where it splits before veering north towards Ardara as the N56 and southwest as the R263 towards Fintragh Bay. A network of county roads permeates the remainder of the area offering good connectivity with the landscape.
- Wild Atlantic Way follows the national road through this area as far as Killybegs before following the route of the R263 westwards along the coast; there are points at Muckros Head and the blue flag beach at Fintragh Bay.
- Strong tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape and their use including fishing, sea angling, scuba diving and boat trips from St John's Point.
- Killybegs deep harbour is a cruise ship destination.

Biodiversity

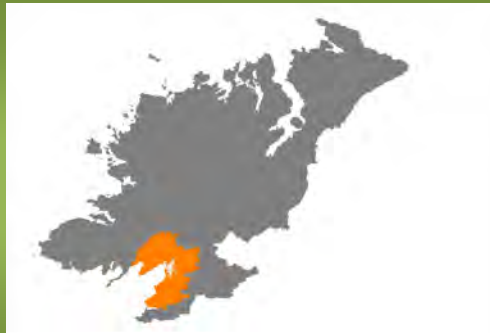
- Ecologically important landscapes to the south of St John's Point and along the Muckros Head coastline which contains 216.6ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 177.8ha of pNHA sites.
- Patchwork of small agricultural hedgerow bound fields along the river valleys which get more regular to the east and along St. John's Point. The coastal agricultural land along Muckros Head is very exposed to the force of the Atlantic Ocean and westerly storms and is typified by stone wall bound fields built to protect them from the full force of the elements.
- Riverine corridors, hedge and tree bound lanes' roads and fields provide important biodiversity links throughout the area.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network between the settlements of Killybegs, Bruckless and Dunkineely.
- Tourism related holiday home developments in both the rural landscape and within towns.
- Potential for further development of sailing and water based tourism activities, using existing ports, piers and other infrastructure in the area.
- Renewable energy development (windfarms, off shore).
- Afforestation.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development.
- Coastal erosion.



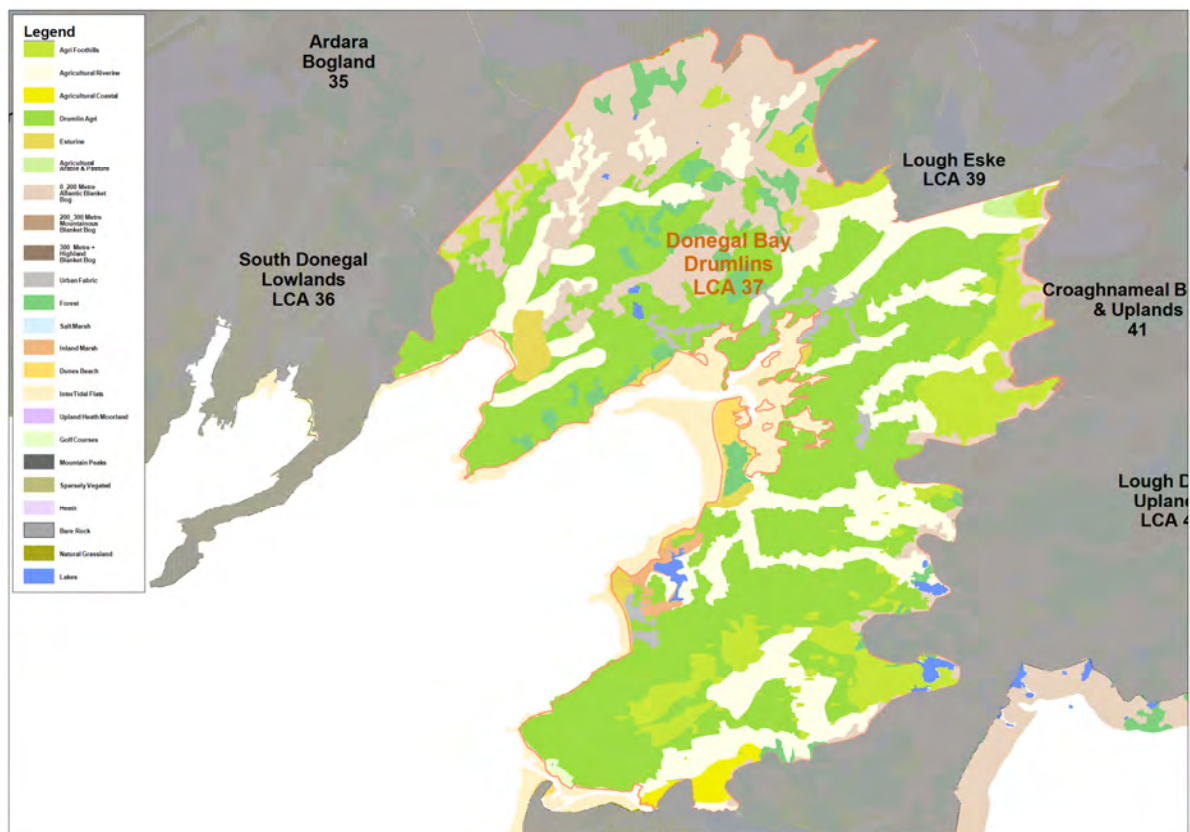
Donegal Bay Drumlins LCA 37



Donegal Bay Drumlins Landscape Character Area consists of a large distinctive drumlin belt that flow along a northeast-southwest axis from the Blue Stack Mountains and the Pettigo Plateau east towards Donegal Bay. The drumlin formation is more prominent in the north converging at the head of Donegal Bay becoming less prominent and obvious towards the south. The drumlins are draped in a patchwork of fertile agricultural fields of various sizes bound by deciduous hedgerow and trees that are interspersed with patches of woodlands and conifer plantations. Loughs are a common feature amongst the drumlins and a large number of streams and rivers rise in higher lands to the north and east and course along valleys through the drumlins towards the sea.

This LCA is framed by the Bluestack Mountains to the north, the bog covered uplands to the east, and the meandering coastal edge curled around the mouth of Donegal Bay, with Donegal Town in the centre. The good soils, coupled with ready access to fresh water and proximity to the sea have meant this area has been settled for a long period of history as evidenced by the many archaeological and historic sites throughout the landscape. Agriculture and fishing remain a dominant land use in this area, however tourism also contributes significantly to the local and wider economy. The tourism product is based on the landscape, seascape, history and cultural qualities of the area with a focus around the coast including the 'Wild Atlantic Way' that follows the route of the N56.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Map/list Seascape units

Seascape Unit 19 is located within this Landscape Character Area

Key characteristics uses: Substantial, deeply indented Donegal Bay is framed predominantly by low-lying agriculture lands surrounding an extensive estuary system. Long sandy beaches line the bay fronting a distinctive drumlin landscape formation. Land uses include agriculture, forestry, tourism, sport and quarrying whilst marine uses include tourism, fishing and aquaculture.

Coastal edge: Silt and marsh edging around Donegal Town continues north around Donegal Bay whilst there are stretches of sandy beaches and dune systems to the south.

Visibility: Intermittent uninterrupted views of the sea along the coastal roads over the undulating Drumlin landscape. Principle views to sea from headlands and beaches.

Special features significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features: This LCA and coastal seascape unit are characterised by the rolling drumlin landscape and associated ovoid islands whilst the notable geology includes a cream dimension stone and sandstone. The blue flag beaches at Murvagh and Rossnowlagh are renowned for their surf.

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Soft underlying geology of limestone with small pockets of sandstone further inland from the coast and large peat covered uplands with a Schist geology at the foot of the Bluestacks in the north of this LCA.
- Distinctive drumlin landscape flowing from the Bluestacks and Pettigo Plateau, part of the wider 'Drumlin Belt' along the south of Ulster that stretches east into Northern Ireland towards County Down on the east coast.
- Fertile agricultural landscape of geometric shaped fields informed by the drumlins, generally bound by deciduous trees and hedgerow. Isolated instances of deciduous woodlands and conifer plantations.
- Loughs are a common feature amongst the drumlins and a plethora of streams and rivers rise in higher lands to the north and east and course along fertile valleys through the drumlins towards the sea.

Settlements

- There are multiple settlements within this area including the smaller settlements of Inver and Mountcharles to the north and Donegal Town, one of the main heritage settlements in the County. The smaller settlements of Laghy, Bridgetown, Ballintra and Rosstown are small settlements located in the centre of the area.

Ballintra: Ballintra is a small village characterised by a long linear main street, it was once the main road into Donegal from the south before the N15 was constructed which bypasses the village to the west, and Ballintra railway station was located just west of the village along the main Donegal to Ballyshannon railway (operational from 1905-1960). This vibrant village offers a range of local level services for the surrounding rural area.

Donegal Town: Donegal Town is strategically located at the head of Donegal Bay at a key point along the N15 North South Transport Corridor (part of the wider Atlantic Corridor) at the junction with the N56 National Primary route which serves the west of the county. The town acts as the key retail, commercial, social and recreational centre for the southern part of the county and in particular attracts a significant number of tourists on a seasonal basis. There are many archaeological and historic structures within the town, including Donegal Castle; during the plantation era, a new wing was added to castle and the town was planned and built around the 'diamond' at the core of the settlement, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has identified Donegal Town as a Historic Town for general protection.



Inver: A rural cluster of dwellings and buildings are centred near Inver beach at a point where Eany Waters River flows onto Inver Bay, with a dispersal of rural dwellings in the vicinity. There are also a considerable number of archaeological and historical buildings and sites within the area surrounding Inver and within the townland of Inver Glebe

Laghy: Laghy is a small linear village; it straddles what was once the main road into Donegal from the south before the N15 was constructed bypassing the village to the

west. Laghy Train station was located just west of the village along the main Donegal to Ballyshannon railway (operational from 1905-1960). The village retains much of the character of the original settlement, streetscape and buildings, with more recent development occurring on the fringes outside of the village core, including an industrial quarry to the south.

Mountcharles: Mountcharles is a bustling village with a linear historic core based around the Main Street, built in the 17th Century by Charles Conyngham, the landlord of the area during the Plantation and from whom the town takes its name. His estate including a large house and wooded demesne sit south of the village between it and a sheltered sandy bay. The Donegal railway passed along the south of the village but closed in 1960. The village offers a range of services and functions for the village and surrounding area and as well as visitors and tourists. The village has experienced steady growth in residential development since 2000 together with terraced housing in the centre of the village and low density housing on the edges.

Rossnowlagh: Rossnowlagh is a coastal village with a strong summer tourism industry; it has no discernible centre and the expansive beach and Sand House Hotel are the village's focal point, with caravan parks and holiday home developments in the vicinity. In common with the other coastal settlements in this LCA, the railway passed through before closing in 1960.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There is a very high concentration of Recorded Monuments within this LCA including defensive fortifications around the coastline and multiple rafts and ring forts throughout.
- Long history of mining dating back to at least the late-twelfth century, evidenced at Assaroe Abbey near Ballyshannon. Important public buildings, including the National Museum of Ireland, the National Library and Leinster House (the Dáil) as well as Sligo Town Hall used Drumkeelan stone in their construction.
- Workhouses were located in Donegal Town and Ballyshannon.
- The Donegal Railway ran through this area from 1905-1960 and had 14 stops; the Donegal railway heritage centre is in Donegal town.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 254 NIAH structures.
- 'Estate' landscapes within the area include 'Salthill Demesne' and 'Hall Demesne' near Mountcharles and 'Brown Hall Estate' east of Ballintra.
- Historic Landscape characterisation identifies a landscape of straight-sided and surveyed rectilinear fields, defined by the characteristic drumlin landform, with areas of designed parks and gardens including Brownhall and Coxtown. Relatively good farmland, together with access to wider markets through Donegal town and port has meant that this area became a comparatively prosperous agricultural area.

Access and Recreation

- The N56 links Inver and Mountcharles within the west of this LCA to Donegal Town in the centre where it meets the N15 from Ballyshannon, through Ballintra and Laghy before continuing north east as the N15 through Barnesmore towards Letterkenny.
- Regional roads spur off the national primary network connecting to a network of county roads that permeate this LCA affording excellent accessibility.
- Wild Atlantic Way follows the route of the national primary and regional roads curving around Donegal Bay; four discovery points along this route are located at Mountcharles Pier, Murvagh, Rossnowlagh Beach and Tullan Strand.
- Strong tourism and leisure industry focused on the landscape, seascape and their use.

- Blue flag beaches at Murvagh and Rossnowlagh coupled with Murvagh links Golf Course are important foci for local tourism.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 1,317ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA), .3144ha of NHA sites and 1,259ha of pNHA sites. Important habitats include loughs, turloughs and coastal lagoons, and important protected species include Fresh Water Pearl Mussel.
- Concentrated network of important rivers and green networks throughout this area which significantly add to the high ecological value of this landscape.
- Donegal Bay and Inver Bay have Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes.

Forces for change

- Linear dispersed development along the rural road network.
- Holiday home development particularly along coast.
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Flooding
- Tourism development



Bluestack

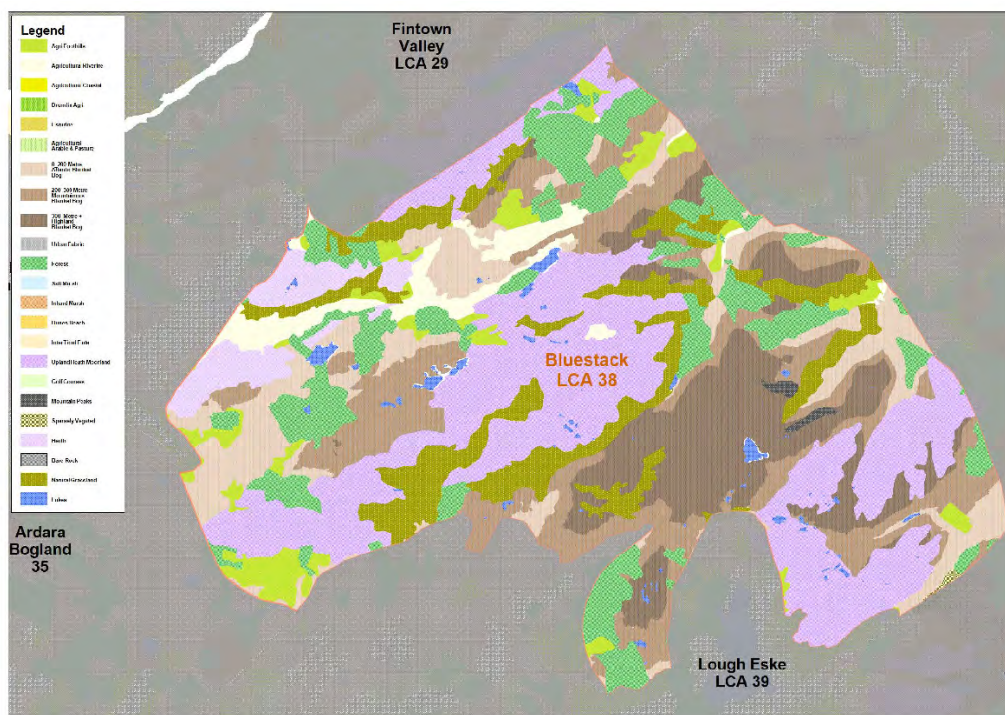
LCA 38

An Gaeltacht



Bluestack LCA is a wholly inland landscape within the Gaeltacht dominated by the Bluestack Mountain Range, a vast area of upland mountains, bogs and lakes with dramatic and wide river valleys that form and frame all of the views into and within this LCA. A dispersed low density rural population live in isolated one-off dwellings on the lower slopes of the mountains and within the North-western area of this LCA on agricultural river plains.

Landscape Character types



Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- High mountainous upland hard rock area with an underlying geology of quartzite along the north, granite to the east and a schist band through the centre. Breccia, a composition unique to the area, underlies the southern area of the Bluestacks.
- Loughs of various sizes are nestled among the Bluestack Mountains and Tawnawully Mountain, and rivers rising in the uplands flow through valleys carved from the rocks in all directions out of this upland area.
- Much of the upland landcover is thin peat and exposed rock whilst the river valleys and lower slopes have marshy areas and deeper peat soils, some of which have been improved for farming over the years.
- The Owenea River flows west through a large, flat, broad, agricultural valley in the west of the LCA towards Glenties. Large square, hedgerow bound fields define this section of the LCA contrasting with the predominant upland bog landscape type.
- A patchwork of coniferous forestry plantations at various stages of growth cover the lower mountain slopes throughout the area.
- Dispersed scatter of one-off residential dwellings and isolated farmsteads throughout the area but concentrated in the west.

Settlements

- There are no settlements within this LCA

History, Culture and Heritage

- Within the Gaeltacht.
- There are a number of Recorded Monuments within this LCA including a fortified island cashel on Lough Anna in the North West and other isolated archaeological monuments on lower lying lands around the periphery of the LCA.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 3 NIAH structures.
- The Historic Landscape Characterisation maps the majority of this landscape as 'Open upland rough ground' (with frequent small lakes). Blanket bog covers the lower slopes to the north, west and east. Historically the area has been used for extensive rough grazing, with very low stocking levels.

Access and Recreation

- The N15, Letterkenny to Donegal Town road crosses south west through the eastern edge of this LCA, whilst the R53 Glenties to Letterkenny road travels through this area along an east-west axis.
- Numerous walking trails and marked ways through this LCA offer extensive and panoramic views out over the area (some to sea) and the surrounding Donegal landscape.
- The many mountain lakes and rivers in this area offer excellent fishing; the Owenea River is one of the best salmon rivers in the County.
- Iconic mountain landscape framing views into the landscape and offering unobstructed views from the area, many from existing paths and roadways.

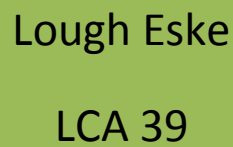
Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 5,827ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA), 200.9ha of NHA sites and 5,231 of pNHA sites.
- A portion of this LCA is a catchment area for the Fresh Water Pearl mussel (FWPM) and the Owenea River has significant adult and juvenile populations.
- The river valleys and tributaries constitute important biodiversity links along with the hedgerow lined fields, roads, lanes and pathways.

- A grouse sanctuary is located within and to the north of this LCA

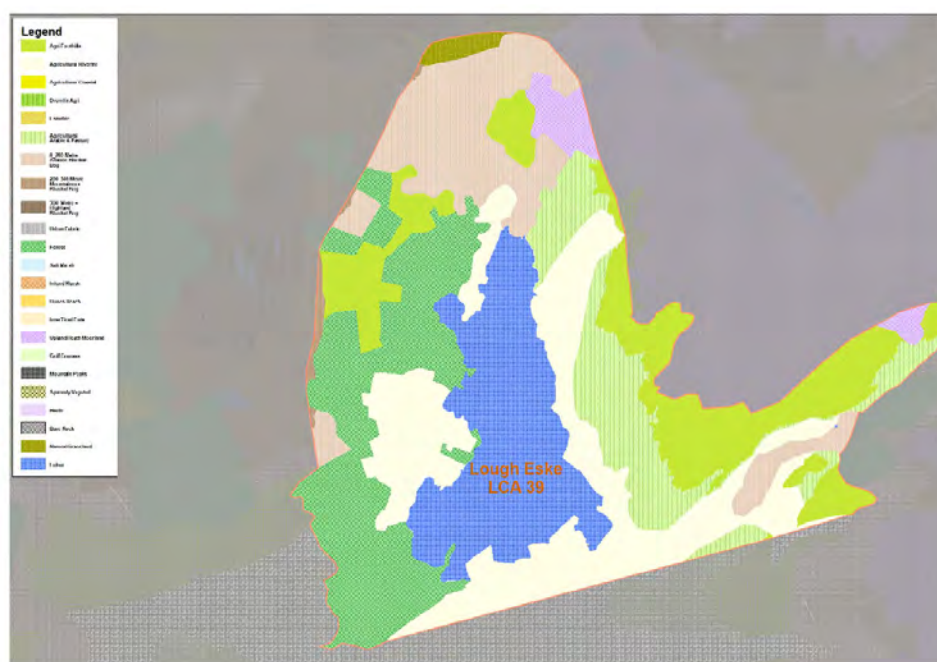
Forces for change

- Windfarms
- One off residential dwellings
- Afforestation/deforestation



Lough Eske LCA 39 is characterized by rolling fertile agricultural lands trimmed with deciduous hedgerow and trees intersected by a network of minor county roads that fall inwards towards the large inland lake of Lough Eske, set against the backdrop of the Bluestack Mountains. Ancient deciduous woodland covers a large area set back from Lough Eske within the north and west of the area, whilst the area adjacent to and surrounding the lake is primarily good quality agricultural lands of both regular and irregular shaped hedge trimmed fields. There is much evidence of historic activity within this landscape not least the large demesne landscape and castle within the south west of this LCA that has been recently extended and converted to use as a hotel, one of two lakeside hotels within this LCA.

Landscape Character types



Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Complex geology of schist, limestone, sandstone and Breccia underlie a 900acre freshwater lake and surrounding rolling, fertile agricultural lands and upland areas of peat and heath.
- This sheltered LCA is surrounded on three sides by Burns Mountain, Bluestack Mountains and Tawnawully Mountains and faces south over a fertile drumlin agricultural landscape towards Donegal Bay.
- Small islands within the Lough are covered in dense deciduous trees and foliage, O'Donnell Island within the south of the lake is the site of a castle and bawn.

Settlements

There are no settlements within this LCA

History, Culture and Heritage

- Numerous archaeological structures and sites throughout the area, including a number of Recorded Monuments.
- Site of a friary from the 17th Century on the western shores of the Lough.
- Lough Eske Castle is now a hotel and was a manor house of the 'Brooke estate' that sits within a large demesne landscape dating back to the 17th century.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 3 RPS structures and 24 NIAH.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies Lough Eske as a large natural inland water body (Generic HLC-type), with an important area of ancient and mixed woodland on its northern and western shores, surrounded by Straight-sided and surveyed rectilinear fields. It highlights the importance of fishing on the Lough historically and today, for salmon, sea trout and char.

Access and Recreation

- The N15 cuts through the east of this LCA along a northeast-southwest axis from Barnesmore Gap towards Donegal Town; from this a county road almost completely circumnavigates the lake off which lanes, tracks and walkways radiate.
- Strong Tourism and leisure industry focused on the aesthetic and physical landscape.
- Fishing, angling centre and jetty on pier in the Lough with restricted boat access for anglers.
- Established hotels alongside the Lough.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 711.4ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 569.9ha of pNHA sites.
- A number of rivers flow into and from Lough Eske and these along with the tree and hedge lined fields, lanes and roadways form important biodiversity links.
- Ancient woodlands to the north and west of this LCA are extremely important ecologically and are designated SAC.

Forces for change

- Linear development along the rural road network
- Tourism related developments
- Impact of any telecommunications and infrastructural development in the nearby Bluestack Mountains.
- Renewable energy
- Maintaining the view from designated viewpoint at Barnesmore Gap.

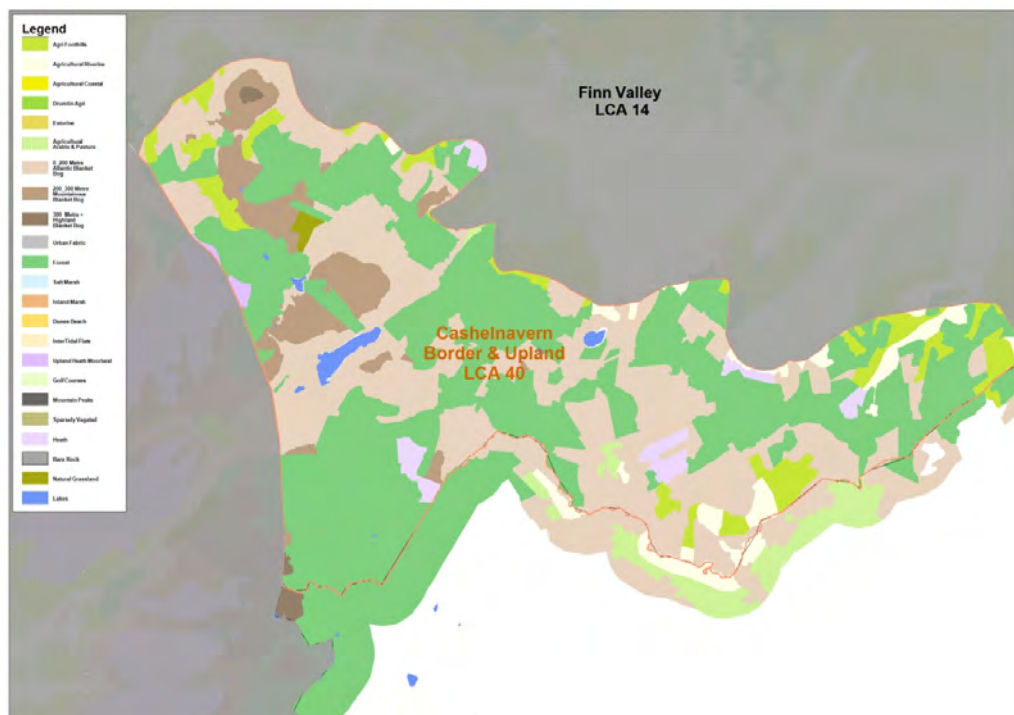


Cashelnavern Border & Uplands LCA 40



Cashelnavern Border & Uplands LCA is a vast, mountainous, remote and undeveloped upland area bordering Northern Ireland characterized by peat covered hills and the mountain lakes of Lough Mourne and Lough Carn. The N15, one of the major routes into and through the county travels along the valley floor of Barnesmore gap alongside the freshwater Lough Mourne which providing water to much of east Donegal. There are isolated areas of semi-improved farmland nestled with single rural dwellings throughout this LCA, contrasting greatly with the many large swathes of geometric commercial forestry plantations on the lower slopes and shoulders of the hills.

Landscape Character type



Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- This upland hilly landscape comprises a varied mosaic geology of schist, breccia and quartzite beneath a primarily peat and upland bog landscape.
- Lough Mourne freshwater lake is in the centre of this LCA at the north of Barnesmore gap and within the broad river valley.
- Croaghonagh Bog Special Area of conservation is within this LCA and supports some of the best examples of wet lowland blanket bog in the county. The SAC site adjoins two good examples of oligotrophic lake habitat namely Lough Mourne and Lough Carn.

Settlements

- There are no settlements within this LCA.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There is 1 Recorded Monument in this area, however a recent excavation at the north end of Lough Mourne uncovered a court tomb and a wedge tomb from the early Bronze Age period along with a cairn and other relics and artefacts, evidencing the importance of the site and this route through the Bluestacks, from pre-history.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 7 NIAH structures.

Access and Recreation

- The N15 traverses this site south towards Barnesmore Gap and alongside Lough Mourne. Limited access to the remainder of the area is via a limited county road network leaving much of the remote uplands inaccessible.
- Disused County Donegal Railway line runs alongside the N15.
- Adjoins Northern Ireland's LCA 19, 'Killeter Uplands Landscape'.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies this area as overwhelmingly Blanket bog overlaid with large areas of Plantation woodland and forest (Generic HLC-types).
- Network of way-marked walks used by walkers and ramblers.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 311.6ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA), 451.7ha of NHA sites and 126.2ha of pNHA sites.
- Croaghonagh Bog Special Area of conservation is near to the oligotrophic lake habitats of Lough Mourne and Lough Carn, it supports some of the best examples of wet lowland blanket bog in the county and is the subject of a conservation project.

Forces for change

- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Afforestation
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Extension to Lough Mourne to facilitate water supply

Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Upland rolling mountainous landscape with bedrock consisting mostly of breccia, areas of Schist and pockets of quartzite. Land cover for the most part is Blanket bog with isolated lakes and numerous streams and rivers flowing west towards Donegal Bay and South into Lough Derg.
- Extensive commercial forestry within the eastern area of the LCA, similar to land use and landscape type on the Northern Ireland side of this seamless border.

Settlements

- There are no settlements within this LCA.

History, Culture and Heritage

- There is only one recorded monument, a standing stone on an upland area within the centre of this LCA.
- Scattering of vernacular houses on lower lands and along river valleys blend into the landscape within the area.

Access and Recreation

- Remote area of the county with restricted access, only one county road and a number of tracks traverse the area rendering much of the area inaccessible.
- Fishing rivers and lakes.
- Adjoins Northern Ireland's LCA 19, 'Killeter Uplands Landscape'.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 757.1ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA), 2,098ha of NHA sites and 751ha of pNHA sites as well as the important biodiversity links created by the rivers that rise within this upland area.
- Fresh Water Pearl Mussel catchment areas at points within this LCA.
- Geometric forestry plantations are clustered on higher lands along the eastern boundary of this landscape character area.
- Portion of Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve and Ramsar site along the southern boundary of this LCA.

Forces for change

- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Afforestation encroaching westwards in upland areas.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development



Lough Derg Uplands and Lakelands LCA 42



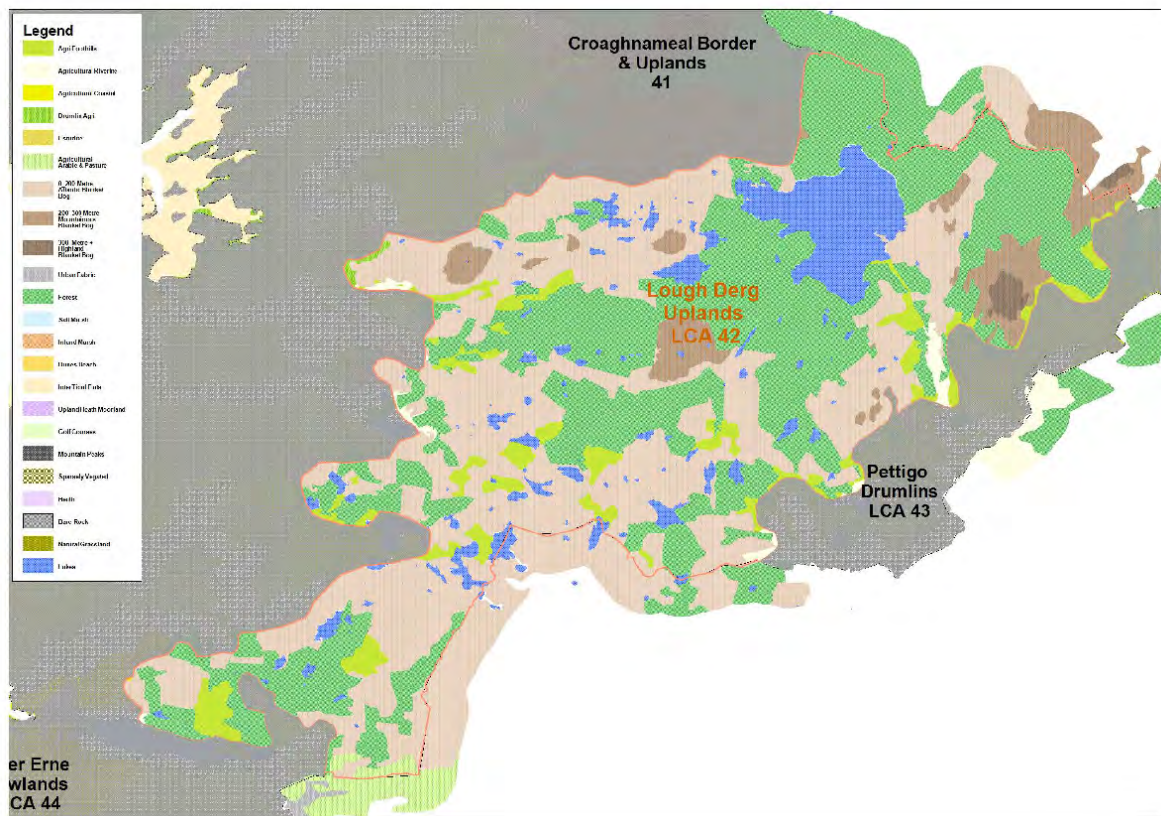
Lough Derg Uplands and Lakelands LCA is a sparsely populated area of primarily upland mountainous blanket bog and a myriad of mountain lakes with significant areas of commercial forestry. The north east of this LCA is defined by Lough Derg, a large freshwater lake with over 30 small islands and an important location for Christian pilgrimage spanning over 1000 years, that has left a multitude of archaeological sites and structures both in the lake and the surrounding area. St Peter's Basilica and ancillary buildings sit on Station Island, and are an imposing focal point on this large lake when viewed from the shore.

West of Lough Derg is the Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve; 900 hectares of Blanket Bog and Wet Heath formerly of the Leslie Estate. This uninhabited landscape is home to a range of native flora and fauna and accessed via a track providing access to the remains of 2 cottages and plots last used in the 1800s.

In the south west of this LCA, south of the R232 is an area defined by an open expanse of upland bog and small lakes; and adjacent to this are 'The Pullans' an underground stream and cave network.

This LCA shares an extensive boundary with Northern Ireland, bordering County Tyrone along the northeast and County Fermanagh along the south. As in the other border LCAs there is a seamless landscape character type and a great degree of intervisibility and shared and informed 'character'.

Landscape Character type



Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Upland rolling mountainous landscape with a bedrock of mostly psammitic paragneiss, a younger rock than the rest of the county and informing the unique landscape. A band of Schist along the northern boundary and a band of Breccia stretching from the north of Lough Derg towards LCA 41, Croaghnameal Border and Uplands.
- Upland bog landscape dotted with over 100 upland lakes of varying sizes, the largest being Lough Derg.
- Lough Derg is the largest of the lakes at over 2000 acres with a shoreline of some 13 miles; with St Patrick's purgatory on Station Island, Lough Derg forms the foci of the LCA.
- Extensive commercial forestry throughout the LCA.
- Limited isolated one-off rural residential dwellings are peppered throughout this area; the majority of these are on the site of previous older rural dwellings.

Settlements

- There are no settlements within this LCA.

History, Culture and Heritage

- Internationally important pilgrimage site at Lough Derg dating from early Christian times with a strong historical association with St. Patrick. Important since at least medieval times, the area is referenced in texts from the 12th Century and shown on maps of Europe since the 14th century.

- Ancient road, south from Saints Island on Lough Derg and through LCA, is marked on old OS maps and part of this is still used for pilgrimage,
- The Pullans (Pettigo plateau) is a large area of bog and lakes with a cave system underneath.
- Concentrations of archaeological sites and monuments throughout this area including many associated with early Christianity.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 4 RPS structures and 21 NIAH.
- Brownhall House and Demesne, near Ballintra within the south west of this LCA, are recorded on the Record of Protected Structures as National and Regional importance. The older part of the building dates from the 17th century and the house and estate have been in the ownership of the same family (Hamiltons) since then to the present day.
- Scattering of vernacular houses on lower lands and river valleys blend into the landscape within the area.

Access and Recreation

- The R232 dissects the LCA connecting Laghy to the northwest with Pettigo to the southeast where it meets the R233 going north to Lough Derg. Northeast of the R232 there is limited access into the landscape save for lanes and forestry tracks whilst in the south west of the LCA there is a network of county roads providing a good degree of access.
- Adjoins Northern Ireland's LCA 19, 'Killeter Uplands Landscape'.
- Lough Derg is a Religious Retreat that attracts thousands of pilgrims every year during spring and summer.
- Pullan cave network attracts small numbers of visitors.
- Fishing in local rivers and loughs; by line from the shore and also from boats that can be taken out on some of the many Loughs.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important lake and bog landscape containing 4,206ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA), 541.1ha of NHA sites and 3,389ha of pNHA sites and important biodiversity links created by the rivers that rise within this upland area.
- Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve and Ramsar site on lands to the west of Lough Derg along the northern boundary of this LCA.
- Geometric forestry plantations are scattered on primarily higher lands within this landscape character area.

Forces for change

- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Afforestation.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development



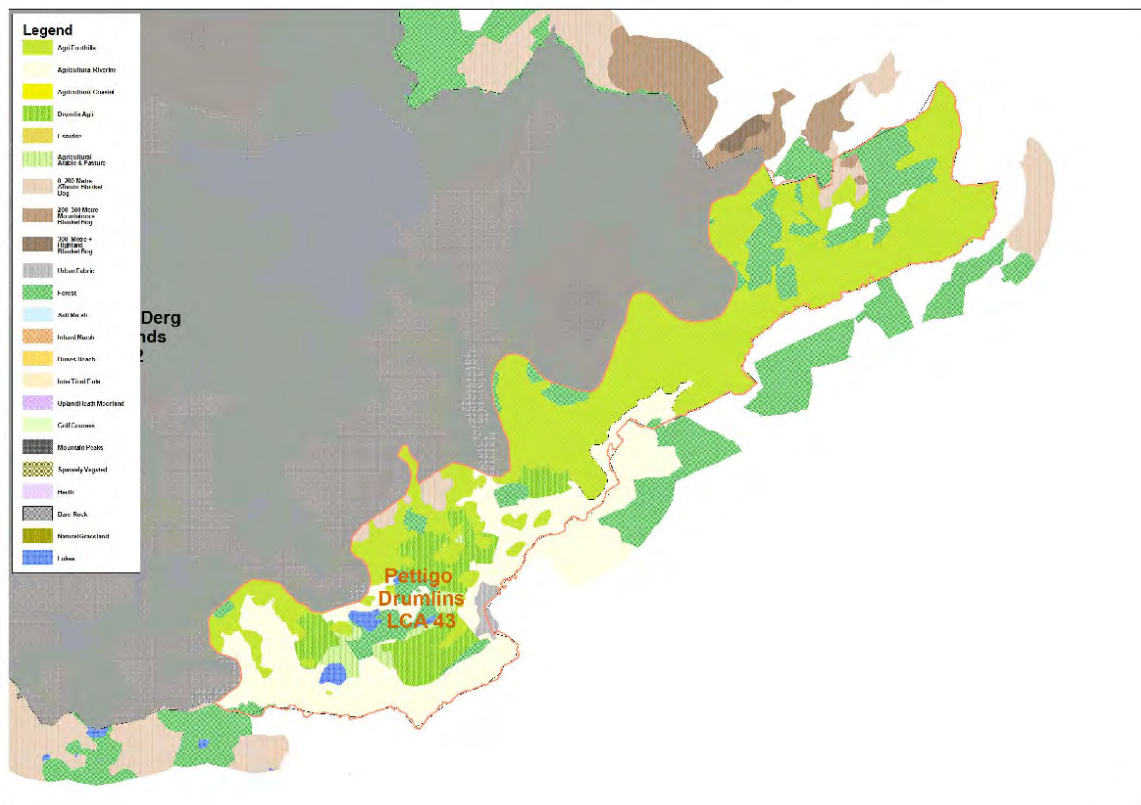
Pettigo Drumlins LCA 43



Pettigo Drumlins LCA is a low lying rolling landscape of high quality fertile agricultural lands forming part of a wider drumlin landscape flowing westwards towards Donegal Bay and continuing eastwards through the south of Ulster and Northern Ireland. The area is wedged below the higher bog covered landscape of the Lough Derg Uplands to the north west and the Northern Ireland border than runs along the southern length of this LCA. The border with Northern Ireland follows for the most part the river Termon which also creates an international border within the town of Pettigo. A small portion of this LCA meets Lower Lough Erne at Aghnahoo Glebe, south west of Pettigo Village, a historically important area that once formed part of the medieval estate associated with Lough Derg and on which Termon Mc Grath castle still stands within a landscape characterized by large geometric hedge and tree bound fields, rivers, laneways and roads. There is a dispersed scatter of rural dwellings throughout this area, integrating into the farming landscape, although in places some suburban style development ribbon development lines the county roads.

This Landscape Character area shares a border with Northern Ireland on 3 sides and adjoins the following 4 of Northern Ireland's Landscape character areas: Killeter Uplands 19, Lough Braden Landscape 14, Lower Lough Erne 2, and Croagh and Garvary River 3

Landscape Character type



Landscape Characteristics

Land Form and Land Cover

- Pettigo fault follows a southwest-northeast axis through this LCA and adjoining Lough Derg Upland LCA, continuing up towards Lough Foyle. The fault defines the boundary between the different underlying geologies within this LCA; primarily limestone in the west of this LCA, save a pocket of gneiss and primarily sandstone in the east of this LCA with small schist bands.
- The area is dominated by drumlins, part of the wide (Ulster) Drumlin belt that stretches across south Ulster from County Down in the east of Northern Ireland towards Donegal Bay.
- Primarily good quality agricultural farming land with deep soils.
- Coniferous forestry plantations cover vast areas of higher lands within the northeast of this LCA.
- There are large lakes in the hollows of the Drumlin landscape within the west and east of this LCA and smaller lakes dotted at locations throughout. A crannog (Cashelenny) sits on an island in one of the larger lakes within the east of this LCA, Lough Nageage.

Settlements

- **Pettigo:** Pettigo is a small former market town that straddles both sides of the international border with Northern Ireland, the River Termon flows through the town and defines this border. The town is centred around a 'diamond' surrounded by high quality historic buildings. 6 structures in the village



are protected, including the train station, Pettigo Mill and Castle McGrath and a further 8 listed on the NIAH. Pettigo was a popular destination on the Enniskillen/Bundoran line, closed in 1957 due to an end in cross border rail travel. The closure of the railway and subsequent 'troubles' in Northern Ireland negatively affected the vitality of the town.

History, Culture and Heritage

- Numerous archaeological structures and sites throughout the area, including a number of Recorded Monuments.
- Archaeological complex at Aghnahoo Glebe on the shores of Lower Lough Erne and adjacent lands across the river and border in Northern Ireland are at a location of strategic importance at the junction of the River Termon and Lower Lough Erne. These lands were associated with the rights to Lough Derg pilgrimage site and the Ulster McGrath chieftains from the 13th century until they were taken by Cromwellian forces in the 17th century. The ruins of Termon McGrath castle remain at this site along with forts in this landscape.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 7 RPS structures and 44 NIAH.
- The Leslie family from Monaghan controlled Pettigo estate, and ran Pettigo Mill, on the Termon River until the 20th Century
- Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies that in common with the Donegal Bay drumlin field, this area is predominantly straight-sided and surveyed rectilinear fields.

Access and Recreation

- The area is accessed from the west by the R232, south west by the R234 and from the east by the A35 (NI), as well as a network of good quality county roads. The R235 connects Lough Derg to the north of this area with Pettigo on the southern border.
- The Eniskillen and Bundoran railway connected to Pettigo in 1866, the partition of Ireland affected the railways viability and it closed in 1957. The railway station and house are in use today as a private residence.
- Pettigo history trail.
- Termon complex is a cross border European funded purpose built centre for sport and entertainment within the heart of Pettigo offering a plethora of cultural and recreational as well as sporting programmes.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 217ha of pNHA sites in the North east around a group of large loughs. Important biodiversity links created along rivers and streams and biodiversity corridors maintained by the prevalence of deciduous tree and trimmed hedgerow, fields, laneways and roads.
- Geometric forestry plantations are scattered on primarily higher lands within this LCA.
- Regionally important karst aquifer within the southern area of this LCA.

Forces for change

- Farming structures
- One-off rural housing
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Afforestation.
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Opportunities for cross border tourism based on the history and landscape, considering proximity to Lower Lough Erne



River Erne Lowlands LCA 44



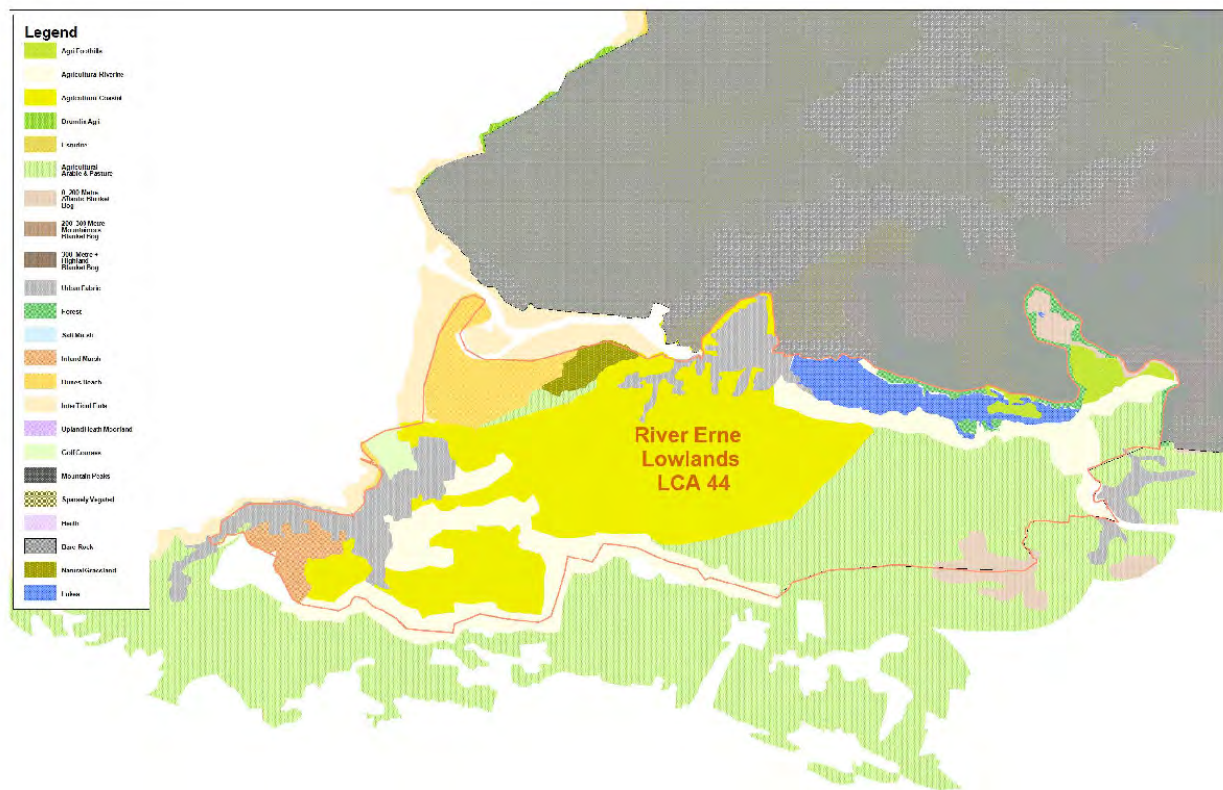
The River Erne Lowlands LCA 44 is the southernmost in the County and borders both County Leitrim and Northern Ireland. It is the only part of County Donegal that has a border with the remainder of the Republic of Ireland, just south of the tourist resort of Bundoran. It is a low lying gently undulating drumlin landscape pattered with deciduous hedgerow and tree bound regular rectilinear fields framed by Tievebaun Mountains in Sligo to the South and the Cliffs of Magher and uplands in Fermanagh to the east. Outside of the main towns, a dispersed scattering of one off houses sit within an organised and attractive working rural landscape .

A large peninsular sand dune system and beach, Tullagh Strand, extend north from the N15 road narrowing the estuarine mouth of the Erne River, and the large military base 'Finner Camp' is located on the dune system close to the road.

The River Erne was dammed to the east of Ballyshannon in the late 1940s and further east up river at Cliff in Northern Ireland creating Cathleen's Falls hydroelectric system, the first major cross-border co-operation project since the partition of Ireland.

The southeast of this LCA borders 2 Landscape Characters in Northern Ireland, Lower Lough Erne 2 and The Garrison Lowlands 1; and borders 2 Landscape Character Areas in adjoining County Leitrim to the south west, Tullaghan Coast Character Area and Lough Melvin Lowlands Character Area.

Landscape Character types



Seascape Character Units

Seascope Unit 19 extends into the west of this LCA covering more than half of the area and the key points within this area are listed below:

- **Key characteristics uses:** Donegal Bay seascape unit extends into this LCA; there are agricultural, , tourism, marine, fishing, sporting, and military uses in this area.
- **Coastal edge:** Sandy beaches, dunes systems and unique limestone shelving stoney inlet with hexagonal shaped rocks at Bundoran.
- **Visibility:** Uninturpted views of the sea along sections of the coastal roads, with main views to sea from headlands and beaches.
- **Special featureess significant buildings, landmarks, biodiversity and cultural features:** Surf at Tullagh Strand Bundoran, limestone paving at Bundoran, blue flag beach, established seaside resort, army camp at Finner, and heritage town of Ballyshannon.

Land Form and Land Cover

- The LCA is a mostly low lying landscape of 'Ballyshannon Limestone formation' save for a narrow band of Gneiss along north eastern boundary and punctuated with pockets of sandstone and shale along the west coast.
- Primarily agricultural landscape of rectilinear deciduous tree and hedge trimmed fields throughout the LCA with areas of rundale system still evident east of Bundoran.

- Bundoran has an interesting coastal edge of rock slabs extending to sea and two sheltered sandy bays, just north the large peninsular sand dune system and Tullagh Strand,
- Hydroelectric power station and dam at Ballyshannon are a prominent and dominant element in the landscape within the north of this LCA.

Settlements

- **Ballyshannon:** Ballyshannon is an important heritage town of significant historical, architectural and archaeological importance and designated as both a historic and heritage town. Ballyshannon has a designated archaeological complex and there is also a large concentration of monuments in the vicinity of the town reflecting the continual occupation of these fertile lands since Neolithic times, owing to its location on the strategically important River Erne. Assaroe falls was prized for fish yields and the river provided the link between Lough Erne and the sea. The crossing of the Erne by road made this an important transport node, for military control, trade and commerce. The architectural heritage of Ballyshannon forms an intrinsic part of the character of the town particularly the town centre streetscape and the Church of Ireland dominates and informs the skyline of the town and the wider surrounding landscape.
- **Bundoran:** Bundoran is situated along the strategic N15 National Primary Route linking Donegal with Leitrim and Sligo. The town has developed in a linear form along a main axis route parallel to the coast. It retains a strong tourism function and character based on its seaside location and natural amenity and serves as a gateway to the County providing a strong accommodation and touring base for visitors. The tourism industry in the town is well established with its origins as a nineteenth century seaside retreat and is largely based on the high quality natural coastal environment with sandy beaches, surfing waves and a coastal golf course. The urban core has a unique character of historical and architectural merit, with 8 protected structures and 14 NIAH listed buildings and an Architectural Conversation Area includes Bayview Terrace, a row of eight two-bay, three storey Victorian houses fronting the promenade.



History, Culture and Heritage

- Rich archaeological heritage throughout this LCA with a number of Recorded Monuments.
- Ballyshannon is designated as an archaeological complex and there is a large concentration of monuments in the vicinity of the town reflecting the continual occupation of these fertile lands since Neolithic times, owing to its location on the strategically important River Erne. Assaroe falls was prized for fish yields and the river provided the link between Lough Erne and the sea. The crossing of the Erne by road made this an important transport node, for military control, trade and commerce.
- Important vernacular and imposed built heritage including 33 RPS structures and 134 NIAH.
- Most of the LCA consists of straight-sided and surveyed rectilinear fields, with an area of Ladder farms (Historic fields of distinct character Generic HLC-type) near Bundoran.
- History of estate lands within this area, still strongly evident in the landscape.

Access and Recreation

- The N15 forks southward at Ballyshannon continuing as the N15 into Leitrim and eastwards as the N3 towards Beleek; a good network of county roads permeate this low lying, rolling agricultural area.
- The Wild Atlantic Way runs south along the coast of this LCA following the N15 through Ballyshannon and then Bundoran to the Leitrim Border.
- Tourism is a major industry in this area particularly around the seaside resort of Bundoran that has a plethora of water sports, gaming centres and a vibrant entertainment scene including the internationally acclaimed Sea Sessions.
- The Enniskillen and Bundoran Railway line opened in 1868 connecting Bundoran to Ballyshannon, Beleek and into the west and continued until 1957.

Biodiversity

- Ecologically important landscape containing 237.6ha of Natura 2000 sites (SAC & SPA) and 100.1ha of pNHA sites.
- Important biodiversity links through the area are created by the riverine corridors, deciduous tree and hedgerow bound fields.
- Large salmon deaths at dam, caught in trap (to be expanded)

Forces for change

- Caravan parks.
- Linear development along the rural road network
- Tourism related holiday home developments in both the rural landscape and within Bundoran.
- Golf tourism
- Renewable energy development (windfarms).
- Telecommunications and infrastructural development
- Coastal erosion
- Expansion of Finner Camp
- Development of historic properties

5.0 Appendices

5.1 SITE SURVEY SHEETS

Field work survey sheet

Area name & number:	Weather:
Location:	Photograph numbers:
Date:	
Time:	
Character type:	

Describe existing landscape character:

PHYSICAL FEATURES			
GEOLOGY			
ELEVATION			
Lowland	Transitional	Upland	
LANDFORM			
Flat	Steep slopes	Escarpment	Broad valley
Shelving	Gentle slopes	Knoll	Narrow valley
Rolling	Coastal	Plateau	Shallow valley
undulating	hills	Scarp/cliffs	Deep valley
WATER/HYDROLOGY			
River	Stream/ tributary	Lake	Drainage ditches
Speed	River meanders	Pond	Engineered/artificial
Clarity	spring	bog	other

LAND COVER			
LAND USE			
Farmland	Residential	Commercial	Natural
Forestry/woodland	Industrial	Transportation	Military
Historic parkland	Leisure/recreation	Mineral working	other
LAND/VEGETATION COVER (%)			
Arable	Amenity	Shelterbelts	Scrub
Pasture	Conif plantation	Copse/clumps	Wetland/marsh
Semi-improved	Decid woodland	Scattered trees	Grass
Improved	Mixed woodland	Hedgerow trees	common
Rough grazing	Parkland	Hedgerow	Wet/dry meadow
Bog	heath		
LANDSCAPE ELEMENT FEATURES (Subtle Evident Conspicuous)			
Motorway	Farm buildings	Hill forts	Village
Rural road	Parkland	Ruins	settlement
Rural tracks	Landmark building	Earthworks	Mast/poles
Footpath	Mills	Fortifications	wind farms

railway	Church	Clachan	other
BUILT/ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER			
Timber-frame	Brick-traditional	Sandstone	Tile
rendered	Brick-modern	slate	Thatch
	stone	siting	
Notes on built/settlement character			
FIELD PATTERNS			
Banks	Fence	Geometric	Small
Ditches	Hedgerow	Sinuuous	Medium
Stone walls	Trees	Regular	Large
P&w		irregular	other

AESTHETIC					
VIEWES	distant	framed	intermittent	Panoramic/sweeping	channelled
SCALE	intimate	small	medium	large	
ENCLOSURE	confined	enclosed	Semi-enclosed	open	expansive
COMPLEXITY	complex	diverse	simple	uniform	
TEXTURE	smooth	textured	Rough	Very rough	
COLOUR	monochrome	muted	colourful	garish	
LINE	Horizontal/flat	angular	Curved/rounded	sinuous	
PATTERN	random	organised	regular	formal	
BALANCE	harmonious	balanced	discordant	chaotic	
MOVEMENT	remote	calm	peaceful	active	
UNITY	unified	interrupted	fragmented	chaotic	
REPETITION OF ELEMENTS					
PERCEPTION					
stimulus	uninteresting	featureless	interesting	challenging	inspiring
tranquility	inaccessible	remote	Unsettled/calm	Settled/busy	
pleasure	unpleasant	pleasant	attractive	beautiful	

Landscape description and additional notes:

LANDSCAPE CONDITION

Management Issues and Opportunities (highlight conditions/survival, threats/pressures, fragility/vulnerability, management issues and opportunities)

Agriculture

Field patterns/boundaries

Trees and woodland

Archaeology/historic components

Building/settlement/development

Linear features

Other land uses

General