

Landscape Designation Review for Fermanagh and Omagh



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Landscape designation provides a means of identifying those landscapes of particular value to communities and wider society. Designation of landscapes, and the identification of the qualities which makes them special, informs their future management and stewardship, through planning policy and management plans, and promotes recognition of their social, economic and environmental value.

Fermanagh and Omagh includes some of the most outstanding landscapes in Northern Ireland. The special qualities of parts of its landscape are recognised through the national level designation of the Sperrins AONB, while others are encompassed by local level designations. Other areas of commonly recognised landscape quality are not included within any form of landscape designation.

The purpose of this assessment is to undertake a review of local landscape designations to determine whether existing local landscape designations, in particular those defined as Areas of Scenic Quality (ASQ), properly identifies and defines the most valued landscapes within the Local Authority area and proposes amendments or new areas for potential designation when they do not. This includes clearly defining the special landscape qualities which might justify their designation.

2.0 EXISTING LOCAL LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

There are four areas within Fermanagh and Omagh defined in the *Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment* (NILCA 2000) as **Areas of Scenic Quality** (ASQ) in recognition of their local or regionally important scenic qualities.

These areas are shown on Figure 2 and are listed below:

1. **Lough Melvin** – encompassing the Garrison Lowlands landscape character area, as defined in NILCA 2000, which form the setting to Lough Melvin.
2. **Derrin Mountain** – encompassing the Croagh and Garvary River LCA north of Lower Lough Erne.
3. **Colebrooke Estate** – largely corresponding to the estate landscape at Colebrooke which is included in the register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes.
4. **Bessy Bell** – including the eastern slopes of Bessy Bell with Fermanagh and Omagh, adjacent to the Sperrins AONB.

Special Countryside Areas (SCAs) are regarded as exceptional landscapes and include areas such as stretches of coast or lough shores and certain views or vistas. The quality of the landscape and amenity value is such that development should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. The Islands of Lough Erne, Lough Macnean and Lough Melvin were originally identified in the 2007 Fermanagh Area Plan as Countryside Policy Areas (CPAs), and replaced by SCAs in the NI Department of the Environment (2010) PPS 21 *Sustainable Development in the Countryside*.

For the purposes of this review it is the ASQ definition which is subject to reassessment and possible revision, as there is little available information on the reasons behind their original establishment. The more recent regional level landscape character assessment provided in the *Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment* (NIRLCA) published in 2015, does not make reference to the Areas of Scenic Quality.

3.0 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS OVERVIEW

3.1 Landscape Character Assessment

All landscapes are important and regional landscape character assessments have allowed a broader ‘all-landscapes’ approach to be adopted in considering the planning and management of the landscape asset. This has been greatly assisted by the development of landscape character assessment techniques and the programme of national landscape character assessment which has covered all Northern Ireland and systematically characterised landscapes throughout the country in NILCA 2000¹.

In part to ensure that this designation review is based on an up to date landscape baseline, a review has been undertaken of the NILCA 2000 assessment, and the updated character assessment is presented in the separate report, *Fermanagh and Omagh Landscape Character Review* (Ironsides Farrar, 2018).

3.2 Landscape Designations

An all-landscapes approach is however not a substitute for designation and updating designations to ensure they reflect key trends and community aspirations to safeguard landscape quality and heritage.

The process of local landscape designation is well documented in Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) guidance. Current guidance dates from 2006², however draft guidance is currently under review³, and its principles are adopted for the purposes of this review. According to draft SNH guidance landscape designation is recognised as having three inter-linked roles:

¹ Both the 1999 *Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment* (NILCA) and the 2015 *Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment* (NIRLCA) are available at the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs website www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/landscape-character-northern-ireland.

² SNH (2006) *Guidance on Local Landscape Designation*

³ SNH/ HES (2016) *DRAFT - Guidance on Local Landscape Areas*

- **Recognising Quality - Accolades**

Designation recognises that a specific area has special importance. Celebrating these values raises awareness amongst communities and stakeholders.

- **As a means to identify policy priorities and objectives**

The designation process provides a useful opportunity to engage communities in identifying policy priorities and objectives. Landscapes continually evolve. This change is managed better if the values of a landscape are better understood. Designation helps to highlight landscape values that are important to communities, and inform this process.

- **As a tool for management**

Identification of specific geographic areas provides a useful means to concentrate effort and direct resources for management.

The process to be adopted in determining areas for designation should be systematic, consistent and transparent. The initial part of the process should involve the survey and description of local landscapes. This should be followed by a selection and validation process for designated areas.

Draft guidance identifies the importance of applying appropriate selection criteria to identifying landscapes with special qualities. These criteria typically relate to:

- Aesthetic or perceptual aspects;
- The type of landscape or place; and
- Scenic value.

Guidance describes the common criteria used to define these landscape qualities as those below.

Table 3.1. Selection Criteria for Designated Landscapes – from Table 1 SNH/HES 2016 Draft Guidance

Aspects of Landscape Character	Definition	Description
<i>Scenic</i>	Landscape that appeals primarily to the visual senses, appreciated for its natural beauty.	Landscapes with strong visual, sensory and perceptual impacts and experiential appeal. May contain a pleasing combination of features, visual contrasts or dramatic elements.
<i>Cultural</i>	Landscape with features of archaeological, historical or cultural interest, offering a time-depth to people's experience.	Landscapes rich in archaeology, built heritage, literary or artistic connections, consciously designed (parks and gardens), the scene of historic events (such as battles), other cultural associations and local history.
<i>Natural</i>	Landscape of strong natural or semi-natural character, with wildlife or earth science features.	Landscapes with extensive semi-natural habitat, distinctive topography or geology, a lack of human presence and perceived sense of 'wildness'.
<i>Enjoyment</i>	Landscape recognised for recreation and amenity, which evokes pleasure.	Landscapes valued as tranquil areas and/or for countryside recreation. May contain viewpoints and landmarks.
<i>Rarity or uniqueness</i>	The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or a rare landscape character type.	Landscape features or combination of features which are rare or unique within the assessment area as a whole. Landscapes that are distinctive with a strong 'sense of place'.
<i>Typicality</i>	A landscape that is a good example of a particular landscape type, and often relatively common within the assessment area.	Landscape features or combination of features that recur throughout the area.

These criteria are adopted for the purpose of this assessment. It should be noted that the last two criteria are oppositional, in that a rare or unique landscape is unlikely to be considered as strongly typical. The evaluation considers where a landscape might be rare/unique **or** strongly typical.

Providing the above information, and applying the criteria, should greatly assist the selection of defensible designated landscapes.

3.3 Revisiting Local Landscape Designations

Local landscape designations are not necessarily permanent fixtures. Neither the judgements made on the character of local landscapes nor the qualities for the selection of specific areas for local landscape designations remain unchanged over time. Both may need to be reviewed during subsequent community and development planning cycles. In particular, the effectiveness of the local landscape designation in landscape protection and the management of the area, and any role it may have in promoting wider social and economic objectives of the Local Authority, should be examined.

This assessment considers the relevance of areas identified as Areas of Scenic Quality (ASQ) in terms of their landscape qualities and the usefulness of their special recognition in managing landscape change.

3.4 Coverage of Local Landscape Designations

In terms of the extent of coverage by local landscape designations, a number of factors are important, including:

- The context for designation provided by the ‘all-landscapes’ approach developed by the Local Authority including current designations and the robustness of this assessment;
- The degree of overlap between the local landscape designations and other regional and local designations (e.g. Country Parks, Historic Parks and Gardens, Nature Reserves etc); and
- The extent of wider higher-level designations (e.g. AONB) within the Local Authority area and the relationship of designations across a Local Authority, or in the case of Fermanagh and Omagh, national boundaries.

The extent of land designated is a matter for the Local Authority, although Local Authorities with a high proportion of their area designated by others (e.g. AONB) should consider carefully the purpose and extent of their local landscape designations. Equally, all Local Authorities should explore the relationship between local landscape designations and other national and local designations. The fit with Local Authority-wide landscape policies may also be important in determining coverage of local landscape designations, particularly if a significant number of these policies are essentially protective in nature.

3.5 Local Titles for Designated Areas

The naming of locally designated landscapes should be more consistent across Northern Ireland and would generally help to make the development plan system more comprehensible to all users. In Scotland SNH recommend the naming of local landscape designations as:

[Name of place] e.g. Upper Lough Erne **Local Landscape Area (LLA)**

A common approach to the naming of local landscape designations can also assist where Local Authorities agreed to jointly designate an area which crosses the administrative boundary between them. Some of Fermanagh and Omagh’s most valued landscapes are adjacent to the international border with the Republic of Ireland, and this may be a consideration when finalising the names of designated areas.

Area of High Scenic Value (AoHSV) is a commonly used term for local landscape designations in Northern Ireland and is referred to in the 2015 Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS). It is the preference of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council to adopt this name. It is important to note that areas for potential designation are identified based on a number of criteria, not solely on their scenic qualities, as described later in this report.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Review Process

The 2016 draft guidance recommends a process for review of local landscape designations that is based on a ‘bottom-up’ approach. This starts by establishing the key qualities and characteristics of the landscape and develops areas of designation in a staged process together with stakeholder consultation. The following key steps are defined:

- 1) **Define scope of study** – role and need of designations, objectives.
- 2) **Identify stakeholder engagement** – consultation method, timing, resources.
- 3) **Agree assessment criteria and method** – how candidate areas are to be identified.
- 4) **Research and desk studies** – existing and/ or new studies.
- 5) **Undertake field survey** – survey & evaluation, draft statements of importance.
- 6) **Select candidate AoHSV** – finalise selection, statements of importance, boundaries, consultation.
- 7) **Designate AoHSV & establish policy** – LDP policy/ Supplementary Guidance.

Post designation: Raising awareness and ‘adding value’ – promotion and enhancement of designated landscapes.

Whilst recommending this process the guidance emphasises that it is not always necessary for these stages to be followed exactly by Local Authorities, depending on the other processes they are committed to and the resources they have available. Examples of different approaches are provided in the 2016 SNH draft guidance.

4.2 Fermanagh and Omagh Review Process

This landscape designation review is being undertaken in parallel to the updating of the parts of the 1999 *Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment* (NILCA 2000) that fall within the boundaries of Fermanagh and Omagh. Parts of the Fermanagh and Omagh landscape have undergone significant change since the publication of NILCA 2000, for example through wind energy development. Landscape character assessments and development management guidance require updating to reflect this and other landscape change. Proposed revised landscape character areas are shown on Figure 1 of this report, but it should be noted that they do not differ greatly from those of the original 1999 assessment.

It has also been recognised that the basis for identification of Areas of Scenic Quality (ASQ) in the NILCA 2000 is unclear. Existing ASQs do not have statements of importance and the criteria applied to their selection are not fully described in NILCA 2000. Furthermore, these designated landscapes do not clearly correspond to areas in Fermanagh and Omagh with the most obviously special landscape qualities.

The objective of this review is to provide a consistent and objective basis for identifying landscapes meriting designation as part of an 'all landscapes' approach to managing landscape change. Areas suited to designation are to be clearly defined 'on the ground', and their special qualities well understood. The areas adopted for designation, along with their statements of importance, will support the policies and objectives of the Council, as expressed in the Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance. Consultation on proposed designated areas will be included in the wider LDP consultation exercise.

Shortcomings of the existing local landscape designations leads to an approach which looks beyond existing designated areas. The updating of the NILCA 2000 landscape character assessment provides an opportunity to undertake a review of all areas of landscape character, and to consider their qualities against designation criteria.

The designation criteria adopted for this assessment are those described in Table 3.1, and scores against criteria are made using a simple 5-point assessment from low to high. Evaluation is undertaken on the basis of landscape character areas, identifying those which might form the core of a designated area.

Landscape character areas with attributes making them potentially suited to designation are identified according to the degree to which they fulfil selection criteria. In general, these are areas scoring 'high' or 'medium/ high' in 3 or more of the assessment criteria. It should be noted that a rigid mathematical 'scoring' is not adopted, as the weighting applied to a single criterion may vary depending on the qualities of the landscape in question. The final evaluation and shortlisting of candidate AoHSVs is made with a narrative justification.

Landscape character areas form a convenient and well understood basis for undertaking the designation review. However, it is recognised that designated areas often encompass more than one area of landscape character, and parts of otherwise unexceptional landscapes may contribute to wider special landscape qualities. This is taken into account in the drawing of AoHSV boundaries, which do not necessarily correspond to those of LCAs, and when designation boundaries require clear on the ground definition to avoid ambiguity.

The assessment of LCAs against designation criteria is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

5.0 PROPOSALS FOR REVISED DESIGNATED AREAS

The reassessment of the local landscape designations has been informed by the updated landscape character assessment undertaken in response to the Local Plan requirements (*Fermanagh and Omagh Landscape Character Review, 2018*). In addition to recording changes in the landscape that have taken place since the 1999 assessment, this has provided information that has allowed a finer grained analysis of landscape character and qualities.

5.1 Existing Areas of Scenic Quality (ASQs)

Existing landscape designations, including ASQs, are shown on Figure 2 of this report.

Derrin Mountain and Lough Melvin ASQs

The Derrin Mountain and Lough Melvin ASQs incorporate LCA 1 Garrison Lowland Farmland and LCA 3 Croagh and Garvary Lowland Hills respectively.

These ASQs are identified on the maps accompanying the NILCA 2000 assessment. It is of relevance to note that these ASQs adjoin a proposed Fermanagh Caveland AONB which extended from the Cliffs of Magho in the north to Cuilcagh in the south. This AONB was proposed in the 1990's but never adopted, but its boundaries are shown on the drawings accompanying the NILCA 2000.

Given that these ASQs are at the fringes of the proposed AONB, it is deduced that at the time of their designation they were identified as landscapes of secondary quality, perhaps contributing to the setting of the proposed AONB, rather than having special landscape qualities of their own.

Perversely, in the absence of the AONB designation, it is the lesser quality landscapes which are designated, while the higher quality landscapes included within the proposed AONB remain undesignated.

Assessments for LCAs of the ASQ areas are provided Appendix 1. While the shore line of Lough Melvin has a high scenic and recreational value, this comprises only a minor part of the character area (LCA 1), the majority of which is commonplace farmland. Much of Derrin mountain (LCA 3) comprises commercial forestry, farmland and rough grazing, and does not contribute greatly to the setting of Lower Lough Erne.

It is assessed that these landscapes do not have qualities which might justify their designation at a local level.

Bessy Bell ASQ

This ASQ is within the Bessy Bell and Gortin Upland Hills and Valleys LCA (LCA 24). The ASQ lies to the immediate west of the Sperrins AONB and may have been designated as a result of its contribution to the Strule valley setting, and as part of the AONB setting. The

designated area is relatively small, incorporating the south eastern flanks of Bessy Bell Hill. At the time of NILCA 2000 and identification of the ASQ Bessy Bell wind farm, within Derry and Strabane, was operational. However, Bessy Bell 2 windfarm, located close to the centre of the designated area, was constructed and became operational in 2008.

While the area does contribute to the setting of the scenic Strule valley, it is a relatively small area, and the principal feature of the designated area is the wind farm. The area is not considered to have special qualities which might justify its designation.

Colebrooke Estate ASQ

The Colebrooke Estate lies within the Clogher Valley Lowland Farmland LCA (LCA 17). This is the smallest ASQ which is restricted largely to the area included in the register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes. The estate landscape is important in its own right and a component of the wider Clogher Valley landscape, however it is unclear why this estate landscape in particular was selected for ASQ designation, as no other estate landscape within Fermanagh and Omagh includes such a designation.

Estate landscapes throughout the Local Authority area contribute significantly to the landscape, but typically as features which contribute to wider landscape qualities. It is also of note that the estate is private, and not generally accessible to the public for recreation or enjoyment, one of the key selection criteria. The area is not considered suited to a local landscape designation, its special qualities largely recognised through its inclusion in the register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes, and with specific management plans related to its cultural heritage importance likely to be of greater value to its long term protection.

5.2 Proposed Revisions

As described above, none of the current ASQs are considered suited to local landscape designation. However, based on the appraisal of landscape character areas, as summarised in Appendix 1, a number of LCAs are considered to have qualities potentially suited to local landscape designation.

Wholly or substantially included within the Sperrins AONB are the following LCAs:

- South Sperrin **Upland Hills and Valleys 24**
- Beaghmore Moors and Marsh **Lowland Hills 25**
- Bessy Bell and Gortin **Upland Hills and Valleys 26**

There is considered little benefit to attributing local designations in addition to the national level AONB designation and so these areas are not considered further.

The following landscape areas are identified with qualities which potentially suit them to landscape designation.

LCA 2a and 2b Lower Lough Erne Lough Basin

These areas are selected as a candidate AoHSV, which are discussed in the following section.

LCA 4 Lough Navar and Ballintempo Limestone Uplands

The upland plateau differs in character from other upland landscapes within Fermanagh and Omagh and was included within the proposed Fermanagh Caveland AONB. The landscape has some good natural heritage interest, geodiversity and opportunities for enjoyment. However, the scenic qualities of the landscape are compromised through the presence of large scale forestry which results in a relatively uniform landscape, particularly to the west, masking underlying landscape features. The area includes two commercial wind farms. The landscape is considered important as a backdrop to other landscapes. Only the northern fringes of the LCA are included with the Lower Lough Erne candidate AoHSV due to its contribution to the setting of the lough.

LCA 5 Lough Macnean Lough Basin

The Lough Macnean basin has a diverse character, more open towards the west while becoming smaller scale and enclosed to the east. It is the eastern part of the lough which has landscape qualities potentially suited to designation, in particular because of its relationship with the Cuilcagh and Marlbank Limestone Uplands. This is discussed in further detail in the following section.

LCA 6 The Knockmore Scarpland Limestone Uplands

The special qualities of this landscape area relate to its underlying limestone geology, resulting in karst landscape features which are unusual to Northern Ireland and which contribute to visitor interest and scenic qualities of the wider landscape. The landscape area is relatively small, with the areas of particular interest and value considered too limited in extent for designation alone, with much of the character area comprising relatively commonplace farmland. However, parts of the landscape are included within the wider candidate AoHSV encompassing Lower Lough Erne where they contribute to views and setting.

LCA 9 Cuilcagh and Marlbank Limestone Uplands

This area is selected to form the core part of a candidate AoHSV, which is discussed in the following section.

LCA 11 Upper Lough Erne Lough Basin

This area is selected the core part of a candidate AoHSV, which is discussed in the following section.

LCA 43 Carrickmore Lowland Hills

The western parts of this character area, incorporating the Murrins, are included within the Sperrins AONB. The Carrickmore Hills are a distinctive landscape feature and there is significant archaeological/ heritage interest including the Creggandevsky candidate ASAI. However, the area has been subject to quarrying and wind energy development, affecting scenic qualities, while visitor interest is limited. Designation of the parts of the LCA beyond AONB boundaries is not considered justified.

6.0 PROPOSED AREAS OF HIGH SCENIC VALUE

The following sections provide statements of importance for proposed Areas of High Scenic Value (AoHSV). Each section describes one area and has the following format:

1) Name and Location of the AoHSV

2) Landscape Character Types within the AoHSV

Each landscape character type and sub-type within the proposed AoHSV is listed, with those most critical to the designation highlighted in bold. This requires reference to the updated Landscape Character Assessment report.

3) Overview

A summary of the key characteristics and qualities of the proposed AoHSV.

4) Landscape Description

A more detailed description of the landscape including its cultural history and recreational potential.

5) Choice of Boundary

A detailed description of the boundary and its rationale.

6) Opportunities for Change

A list of opportunities for landscape or recreational management and improvement.

Each area is illustrated by a graphic showing its location in Fermanagh and Omagh.

1. Cuilcagh, Marlbank and Lower Lough Macnean

Name and Location

Cuilcagh, Marlbank and Lower Lough Macnean

Located to the south of Fermanagh between Belmore Mountain and the Northern Irish border with County Cavan, incorporating Lower Lough Macnean and Cuilcagh mountain.

Landscape Character Areas and Types

LCA 5 Lough Macnean Lough Basin

LCA 9 Cuilcagh and Marlbank Limestone Uplands

LCA 6 Knockmore Scarpland Limestone Uplands

LCA 8 Arney River Broad Lowland Valley

Overview

This area incorporates the contrasting, complimentary, landscapes of the Lower Lough Macnean basin east of Belcoo and the exposed upland slopes of Cuilcagh, including the limestone karst landscape of Marlbank which lies in between. The area includes significant parts of the Marble Arch Caves European Geopark, with the Geopark visitor centre and Marble Arch Caves at its heart. The estate landscapes of Florence Court provides additional diversity to the landscape character.

Landscape Description

The landscape character is defined by two contrasting broad landscape types. Towards the north is the basin of Lower Lough Macnean, of the *Lough Basin* landscape character type. This landscape is of a relatively small scale. The lough is approximately 3km in length, with an irregular and well wooded shore line, beyond which are small enclosed pastures and the small town of Belcoo at its western end. The lough is confined to its south by the Marlbank limestone escarpment, a limestone karst landscape, which is unusual in Northern Ireland. The craggy terrain of this escarpment is mostly wooded but includes limestone outcroppings, most notably at hanging rock where an imposing cliff face overlooks the lough. Towards the north of the lough the pastures rise smoothly to the forested plateau of Belmore Mountain which provides the northern containment to the lough and its wider landscape setting. The Arney river flows from the eastern end of the lough, winding through a broad shallow valley of drumlin farmland, while to the west the small settlement of Belcoo overlooks the lough.

By contrast, the southern part of the area is of upland character. Beyond the Marlbank escarpment the uneven limestone landscape rises gradually via a series of irregularly shaped low hills and ridges. Pastures on these lower slopes have a more rugged character, eventually giving way to unenclosed rough pastures and bog which climb across an undulating landscape until an abrupt

steepening to reach the elongated flat-topped sandstone ridge including the summit of Cuilcagh at the boundary of Fermanagh and County Cavan. Cuilcagh is the highest point in the county, but other notable rounded hills are located to the east of this area including Mullaleam and Benaughlin.

Scarp woodland, gorges, limestone grasslands and blanket bog contribute significant natural heritage value to the Cuilcagh and Marlbank landscape. The forested estate landscape at Florence Court, managed by the National Trust, is included within the Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes and adds further to the considerable landscape diversity and interest of the area.

Both the lowland lough basin of Lower Lough Macnean and uplands of Cuilcagh and Marlbank have individually special landscape qualities, however it is the interrelationship between their contrasting landscape characters which provides a special quality to the wider landscape, in particular the contribution of the more rugged uplands to the setting of Lower Lough Macnean, and to views from around the lough basin.

The significance of Cuilcagh, Marlbank and Lower Lough Macnean relates to:

- **The contrasting landscapes of the enclosed lough basin, the more exposed uplands, and the rugged limestone escarpment which lies between them;**
- **The dramatic escarpment features at Marlbank forming the immediate backdrop to Lower Lough Macnean, contributing to its highly scenic qualities;**
- **The considerable natural heritage interest deriving from the limestone geology which is unusual to Northern Ireland, including the Marble Arch Cave system, limestone grasslands and other semi-natural habitats;**
- **The recreation and tourism interest present in the area including walking paths to Cuilcagh, the Marble Arch Caves and visitor centre; and**
- **Numerous archaeological sites and sites of cultural heritage significance including the Florence Court Estate.**

Choice of Boundary

The choice of boundary considers the visual envelope and setting of the Lower Lough Macnean basin and the extent of the upland landscape north of the Cuilcagh summit. The southern and much of the western boundaries of the area are defined by the national boundary between Northern Ireland and the Republic until reaching the settlement of Belcoo where it follows the settlement boundary, excluding the settlement from the designated area. The boundary follows a minor road to the west of the Lurgan River and thereafter the forestry edge, until meeting a tributary of the Lurgan River which is followed eastwards until meeting a minor road via a field boundary. The boundary follows the minor road until Belmore Forest, where the boundary is formed by a minor watercourse and the southern edge of Belmore Forest. From south of Belmore Mountain, the boundary largely follows the road network, but including short sections of field boundary and watercourse, until Florence Court. Florence Court is included with the area, with the boundary following a minor road east, and then turning south along the A32 to the border with the Republic of Ireland.

Opportunities for Change

The following positive opportunities for change have been identified:

- Encourage the maintenance and planting of broadleaved wooded field boundaries, woodlands and copses on the lower pastures around Lower Lough Macnean;
- Promote views across the lough by localised clearances of the shoreline;
- Improve access/ views to the lough from Belcoo;
- Encourage the maintenance and rebuilding of the limestone walls which are characteristic of the more upland farming landscape;
- Develop footpath access throughout the area;
- Consider the development of a signage strategy to promote a unified identity;
- Carefully integrate new forms of development into the landscape, such as housing, car parks or tourism development, respecting traditional building styles and with consideration to the often exposed landscape;
- Continue to avoid visually intrusive developments at the shores of Lower Lough Macnean;
- Promote the protection and regeneration of sensitive limestone, bog and woodland habitats; and
- Take steps to limit the visual intrusion of quarrying operations on the southern slopes of Belmore Mountain through appropriate restoration plans, mitigation schemes and avoidance of cumulative effects in the event of new extraction sites being opened.

Cuilcagh, Marlbank and Lower Lough Macnean Proposed AoHSV



2. Upper Lough Erne

Name and Location

Upper Lough Erne

The upper reaches of the Lough Erne basin to the east of Enniskillen until the border with County Cavan in the Republic of Ireland to the south.

Landscape Character Areas and Types

LCA 11 Upper Lough Erne Lough Basin

LCA 8 Arney River Broad Lowland Valley

LCA 10b Derrylin and Kinawley Lowland Farmland

LCA 17 Clogher Valley Lowland Farmland

Overview

The part of the Lough Erne Lakeland east of Enniskillen, where the wide sunken river basin has a complex and unique character.

Landscape Description

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

The shores are thickly wooded and the surrounding drumlins are divided by a patchwork of small fields often including herb rich pastures and bounded by dense planting of hedgerows and trees. Between the drumlins are many small loughs, each fringed with reed beds, carr woodland and the occasional crannog, and these marginal semi-natural habitats are often in pristine condition. European natural heritage designations (SAC, RAMSAR and SPA) signify the importance of the lough for its various wetland habitats, supporting overwintering whooper swans and migrating breeding birds. The lough is a stronghold for otter in Northern Ireland and the wider United Kingdom.

The landscape is highly enclosed, easily absorbing the scattered farms, houses and small scale waterside leisure developments. The lough is usually visible only from the shore or from the few bridge crossings. However, when available, views across the water reveal a uniquely complex waterscape which appears little influenced by manmade intervention and retains a strong sense of naturalness.

The Lough is perhaps best appreciated from a kayak, canoe or other small craft, where the bewildering complex of islands, promontories and inlets of the sheltered waters can be explored.

Further landscape interest is provided by the wooded estate landscapes at Crom to the south and Belle Isle to the north, while Castle Coole lies adjacent to the designated area near Enniskillen. All estates are included within the Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes.

The significance of Upper Lough Erne relates to:

- **The complex waterscape which is unique within Northern Ireland;**
- **The enclosed, tranquil and natural characteristics of the lough;**
- **Its natural and cultural heritage interest;**
- **Its potential for non-intrusive small-scale leisure and tourism development; and**
- **Its important estate landscapes and other cultural heritage features.**

Choice of Boundary

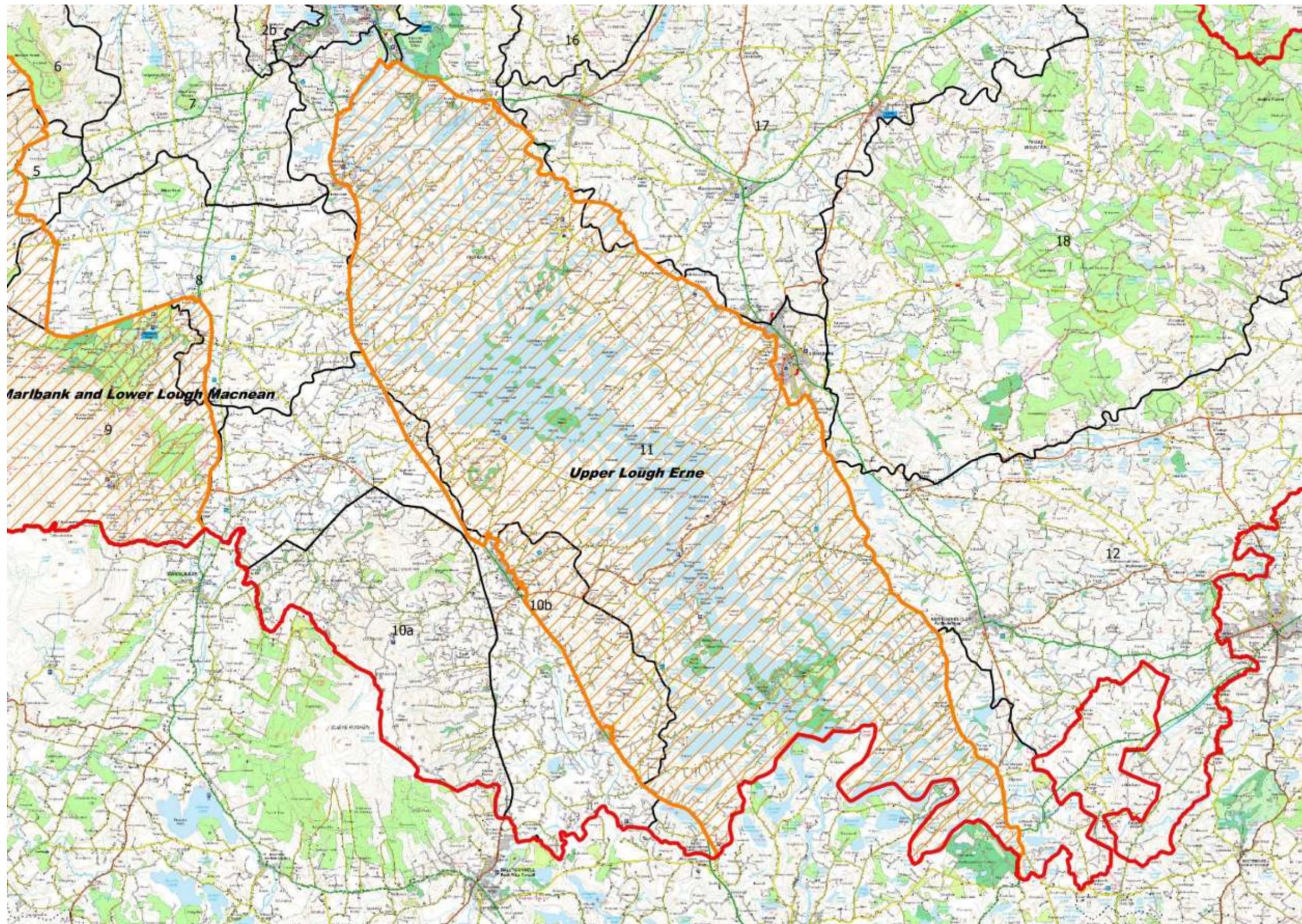
The extent of the boundary is defined by the hinterland of the water body which is considered to form the landscape setting to Upper Lough Erne, and the availability of features which might form a recognisable boundary. As a result, the designated area boundary is defined largely by the A509 to the west, and various minor roads to the east, encompassing Upper Lough Erne and the wider complex of smaller loughs, watercourses, wetlands and farmland which contribute to the character of the designated area. To the north the boundary is formed by the river to the south of Lisgoole Abbey and the southern boundary of Castle Coole, as defined by the A4. The A4 and then B514 form the eastern boundary until Lisnaskea, then following a minor road south until the border with County Cavan. The Northern Irish border forms the southern boundary. The A509 forms most of the western boundary with the exception of some limited diversions along minor roads and around settlements. The AoHSV includes the landmark feature of Knockninny Hill. Near Enniskillen the boundary follows the western bank of the Upper Lough Erne waterway until a field boundary marks the crossing point of the waterway to meet with the Enniskillen settlement boundary.

Opportunities for Change

The following positive opportunities for change have been identified:

- Promoting small scale tourism such as walking, cycling, kayaking and canoeing;
- Promoting natural and cultural heritage assets, for example for birdwatching;
- Facilitating access around the lough via footpaths and cycle routes and limiting the effects of motorised traffic from car parking or upgrades to minor roads;
- Maintaining the enclosed character of the rural landscape through tree planting and maintenance of hedgerows;
- Supporting low intensity farming to retain herb rich pastures and to help maintain water quality;
- Ensuring that residential, tourism and other forms of development are carefully designed to be non-intrusive to maintain existing rural characteristics; and
- Consider the development of a signage strategy to promote a unified identity.

Upper Lough Erne Proposed AoHSV



3. Lower Lough Erne

Name and Location

Lower Lough Erne

The Lower Lough Erne water body and its surrounding landscape setting between Enniskillen and Belleek. The area includes parts of the neighbouring upland landscape to the west which contribute to the setting of the lough.

Landscape Character Areas and Types

LCA 2a Upper Lough Erne (N) Lough Basin

LCA 2b Upper Lough Erne (S) Lough Basin

LCA 4 Lough Navar and the Ballintempo Limestone Uplands

LCA 6 The Knockmore Scarpland Limestone Uplands

LCA 7 The Sillees River Broad Lowland Valley

LCA 3 Croagh and Garvary River Lowland Hills

Overview

Lower Lough Erne is an expansive water body to the north west of Enniskillen extending to Rosscor, from where the River Erne discharges into the Atlantic at nearby Ballyshannon. Its setting includes the imposing escarpment at the Cliffs of Magho which overlook the lough close to its western end. In contrast to Upper Lough Erne, the lough is a more defined body of open water with extensive panoramas. A complex and broken shoreline formed by wooded promontories, inlets and islands add to its character. The lough is a centre for tourism and recreation.

Landscape Description

Lower Lough Erne is an enormous waterbody stretching from Enniskillen to Rosscor, arcing around the forested upland plateau to the west, set within a landscape of wooded low pastures.

The character of the lough is not uniform. The section immediately north of Enniskillen is more greatly characterised by open water than the fragmented Upper Lough Erne, but remains a relatively enclosed landscape of open water, wooded islands, promontories and richly vegetated shorelines, and the lough is often invisible from the main roads which pass close to its shores. The lough sides are dominated by grassy drumlins, with fields separated by bushy hedgerows and hedgerow trees and there are numerous wooded off-shore islands. A low limestone ridge rises from the western lough shore, beyond which is the higher forested upland plateau, providing a degree of enclosure in this direction, while to the east the farmland is low lying and undulating. There are several large wooded estate landscapes on the lough shores including Castle Archdale, which is now a Country Park.

The lough opens dramatically towards the north, with extensive open waters, large streamlined islands and promontories, and the bold escarpment of the Cliffs of Magho to the south. The lough

lies in a deep glacial trough, the alignment of the shores and islands reflecting the direction of the ice movement. The lough fringes are a mix of woodland and pastures which to the north rise gradually to the empty uplands of the Pettigoe plateau in Donegal. The lough drains towards the west, with the broad River Erne passing through the attractive settlement of Belleek which straddles the border with the Republic of Ireland. The estate landscape at Castle Caldwell lies close to the western end of the lough.

The adjacent limestone uplands contribute significantly to the setting of the lough and are a feature of views available from the northern lough shores. From the Cliffs of Magho the northern part of the lough can be appreciated in a magnificent sweeping panoramic view.

The lough is a haven for wildlife, including ASSI designations and a National Nature Reserve. The western part of the lough shore is included within the UNESCO Marble Arch Caves European Geopark while Devenish Island is the centre of an Area of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI). The lough is a focus for leisure and tourism development, with its shores including holiday resorts, marinas and caravan parks, but which so far only have a limited intrusion into the tranquil landscape.

Choice of Boundary

The choice of boundary considers the immediate landscape setting to the lough, but also includes

The significance of Upper Lough Erne relates to:

- **The scenic qualities of the vast open water body set within a tranquil wooded setting;**
- **The juxtaposition of the towering Cliffs of Magho and the low-lying lough basin, adding to scenic qualities;**
- **The importance of the landscape to existing and future tourism and recreation interest;**
- **Wide recognition of its landscape qualities which, for example, are appreciated from the popular viewpoint and paths of the Cliffs of Magho; and**
- **Its natural and cultural heritage interest.**

the more elevated landscape to the west, including the enclosing limestone ridge east of the Sillees Valley, rugged features of the Knockmore Scarpland, and the upper parts of the Lough Navar Forest including the Cliffs of Magho.

From Enniskillen the boundary follows the A32 and then B82, close to the eastern lough shore, diverging from the A82 to exclude St Angelo airport from the designated area. Further north the boundary encompasses Castle Archdale Forest. From Kesh the boundary follows the A35 west towards Pettigoe until the border with the Republic of Ireland. The boundary encompasses the minor waterbodies to the north of the main lough, following the A47 west towards Belleek, diverting northwards to include Lough Scolban, after which it heads south across the Rosscor Viaduct and rises to the western edge of the Cliffs of Magho, following forest tracks, roads and forestry boundaries to Derrygonnelly. From Derrygonnelly the boundary continues to follow minor roads, with the AoHSV encompassing the limestone ridge which forms part of the western setting to Lower

Lough Erne. The boundary meets and follows the A46 south to Enniskillen. The southern boundary of the AoHSV follows the northern Enniskillen settlement edge, until reaching the A32.

Opportunities for Change

The following positive opportunities for change have been identified:

- Promoting non-intrusive development around the lough shore to retain the well wooded setting to the lough;
- Facilitating access around the lough via footpaths and cycle routes and limiting the effects of motorised traffic from car parking or upgrades to minor roads;
- Allowing appreciation of the lough through limited clearances along the lough shore;
- Maintaining the fabric of the rural landscape setting through tree planting and maintenance of hedgerows;
- Supporting low intensity farming to retain herb rich pastures and to help maintain water quality; and
- Consider the development of a signage strategy to promote a unified identity.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

This review has considered the appropriateness of existing local landscape designations in defining those landscapes with the highest qualities in Fermanagh and Omagh and identified other landscapes which may be suited to local designation.

It is concluded that the ASQ designation is not fit for purpose in terms of the areas designated and lack of transparency in its application. The location and extent of the Lough Melvin and Derrin Mountain ASQs are assumed to relate to the unrealised Lough Erne and Fermanagh Caveland AONBs. Subsequent landscape developments have compromised the Bessy Bell ASQ, while the reasons for designation of the Colebrooke Estate ASQ are simply unknown. Meanwhile landscapes of significantly higher quality in several respects remain undesignated.

A number of possible landscape areas have been identified with qualities potentially justifying local landscape designation, but it is only those landscapes which have outstanding qualities across a range of criteria which are selected for potential designation, thereby ensuring a robust and unambiguous reason for their special recognition.

Three separate areas are proposed for landscape designation, incorporating Upper Lough Erne, Lower Lough Erne and Cuilcagh, Marbank and Lower Lough Melvin. Given the historical proposals for AONB designations incorporating the Fermanagh Lakelands and Cavelands, and their well-recognised landscape and other qualities, their potential inclusion within local landscape designations should not preclude their consideration for national level designations in the future.

SNH guidance stresses the importance of consultation in the process of landscape designation, and therefore these areas should be subject to review by communities and stakeholders before any eventual adoption.

Appendix 1 – Landscape Character Area Evaluations

Landscape Character Area/ Character Type		Scenic	Cultural	Natural	Enjoyment	Rarity/ Uniqueness or Strong Typicality	Overall Evaluation of Landscape Qualities
1	<i>Garrison Lowland Farmland</i>	Drumlin farmland, but higher scenic qualities at Lough Melvin including views towards uplands beyond the lough. Some larger wind energy nearby. Medium	Collection of archaeological sites, but no particular interest. The area includes the settlement of Garrison. Medium	SAC designation at Lough Melvin. Low native woodland cover, coniferous forestry. Limited wildness. Low/ Medium	The shores of Lough Melvin are a focus for smaller scale recreation and tourism, but otherwise a farming landscape. Includes cycle routes and Ulster Way sections. Medium	Relatively commonplace pastoral farmland, although Lough Melvin is a unique feature. Medium	The landscape has some locally good scenic qualities, particularly outward views, and some recreational interest, but much of the areas is of lower quality unremarkable pasture. The landscape qualities. Medium
2a	<i>Lower Lough Erne (North) Lough Basin</i>	Highly scenic lakeland landscape, to which the neighbouring uplands at LCA4 contribute. High	Various archaeological sites, Castle Caldwell estate, Belleek has some cultural interest with pottery. Medium/ High	Expansive waterbody fringed by woodland has a sense of naturalness. The lough is important to wildlife, recognised by internationally natural heritage designation. Medium/ High	The lough is a focus for recreation with its shores including tourism and leisure development. Excellent views from the Cliffs of Magho. Tourism interest at Belleek. High	One of the most notable lakeland landscapes in Northern Ireland. High	A highly scenic lakeland landscape with strong visitor interest. The landscape is one of the most notable lakeland landscapes in Northern Ireland. Medium/ High
2b	<i>Lower Lough Erne (South) Lough Basin</i>	Highly scenic lakeland landscape of open water, wooded islands, shoreline. High	ASAI site focused around Devenish Island. Historic landscapes at Castle Archdale and Ely Lodge. Other archaeological sites. High	The areas includes parts of the Marble Arches Geopark, nature reserve and designated sites. The landscape has good qualities of naturalness. Medium/ High	The lough is a focus for recreation with its shores including tourism and leisure development. Some significant developments including the Lough Erne Resort. High	One of the most notable lakeland landscapes in Northern Ireland. High	A highly scenic lakeland landscape with strong visitor interest. The landscape is one of the most notable lakeland landscapes in Northern Ireland. Medium/ High
3	<i>Croagh and Garvary River Lowland Hills</i>	Relatively low scenic qualities, mostly rough pastures, bog and coniferous forestry, although the landscape does form the wider setting to Lower Lough Erne. Low/ Medium	Scattered archaeological sites. Low/ Medium	Some qualities of wildness in the more upland areas, but often more commonplace farmland. Important bog habits in the upland areas. Medium	Cycle routes pass through the landscape via roads, otherwise visitor interest/ opportunities for enjoyment are low. Low	The landscape has qualities in common with other upland landscapes in Fermanagh and Omagh. Low/ Medium.	This landscape does form part of the setting to Lower Lough Erne but does not contribute greatly to its landscape qualities. The landscape comprises a mix or relatively unremarkable pastures of varying quality. Low/ Medium
4	<i>Lough Navar and Ballintempo Limestone Uplands</i>	Upland plateau with extensive forestry, some wind energy development. Scenic qualities relate to views to other character areas. Medium	Scattered archaeological sites. Low/ Medium	Various ASSI designations (scarps and lakes), UNESCO geopark, nature reserves. Some sense of wildness but modification by extensive forestry and wind energy development. Medium/ High	A focus for recreation, including walking, picnic sites, cycling, Ulster Way quality sections. High	The rugged upland plateau is unusual within Fermanagh and Omagh. Medium/ High	The upland plateau differs in character from other upland landscapes within Fermanagh and Omagh, and has some good natural heritage and visitor/ enjoyment. However, the scenic qualities of the landscape are compromised through the presence of large scale forestry and some wind energy. Medium/ High
5	<i>Lough Macnean Lough Basin</i>	High scenic qualities of the enclosed Lower Lough basin seen with surrounding uplands. Upper lough basin also has good scenic qualities from the lough shore. High	A collection of archaeological sites and listed buildings. The area includes the settlement of Belcoo. Medium	Limited natural heritage interest from ASSI woodland. Includes sections of the UNESCO geopark. Low/ Medium	Tranquil lakelands landscapes, includes cycle route. Opportunities for enjoyment via waterborne activities, camping. High	Enclosed lough basin juxtaposed by enclosing uplands is a rare landscape within the context of Fermanagh and Omagh. Medium/ High	The Lough Macnean Lough Basin is an attractive landscape with visitor interest and opportunities for enjoyment. The Lower Lough Macnean basin has some high scenic qualities resulting from its relationship to the neighbouring uplands of Cuilcagh and Marlbank. Medium/ High

Landscape Character Area/ Character Type		Scenic	Cultural	Natural	Enjoyment	Rarity/ Uniqueness or Strong Typicality	Overall Evaluation of Landscape Qualities
6	<i>The Knockmore Scarpland Limestone Uplands</i>	Rugged karst landscape of cliffs, escarpments, loughs, gorges which offers scenic views from within the landscape and from neighbouring landscapes. Belmore Mountain of more uniform character. Medium/ High	Concentration of archaeological sites, with a particular concentration around Boho. Medium	Large parts are included within the West Fermanagh Scarplands SAC. Some sense of wildness and naturalness to the more upland parts of the landscape. Medium	Views to the landscape can be enjoyed from the north in particular. Some interest from caves or other features related to the geology of the area. Walking on Belmore Mountain Medium	Karst landscape and features is unusual to Fermanagh and Northern Ireland. High	The special qualities of this landscape area relate to its underlying limestone geology, resulting in karst landscape features which are unusual to Northern Ireland and which contribute to visitor interest and scenic qualities of the wider landscape. Medium/ High
7	<i>Sillees River Broad Lowland Valley</i>	Rural landscape of drumlin farmland, some views to adjacent scarp contribute to scenic qualities. Medium	Castle Monea including Historic Park and Garden, main centre at Derrygonnelly, relatively high concentration of archaeological sites. Medium/ High	Limited natural heritage designations, landscape is rural farming landscape with limited sense of naturalness. Low/ Medium	Landscape is not notable for visitor interest or enjoyment. Low	The landscape has much in common with other lowland farming landscapes within Fermanagh and Omagh. Low	An attractive rural farming landscape, but which does not include qualities to merit consideration for landscape designation. Low/ Medium
8	<i>Arney River Broad Lowland Valley</i>	Broad lowland landscape of Drumlin Farmland Low/ Medium	Scattered archaeological sites. Low/ Medium	One ASSI bog habitat, otherwise lowland farming landscape of limited naturalness. Low/ Medium	Landscape is not notable for visitor interest or enjoyment. Low	Landscape is commonplace lowland farmland. Low	Commonplace drumlin farming landscape which does not include qualities to merit consideration for landscape designation. Low/ Medium
9	<i>Cuilcagh and Marlbank Limestone Uplands</i>	Limestone escarpment rising to uplands at Cuilcagh result in a landscape with strong and well recognised scenic qualities. High	Includes the Florence Court Historic Park and Garden and concentrations of archaeological sites in lowland areas. Medium/ High	Upland landscape has a sense of naturalness and wildness. Includes UNESCO geopark. Includes RAMSAR, nature reserves, ASSI sites. High	The landscape is a focus for recreation, including walking to the Cuilcagh summit, Marble Arch Caves visitor centre, Florence Court. High	Flat topped sandstone hill summit and limestone karst landscape are distinctive and rare. High	The landscape is distinctive and highly scenic, with strong geodiversity, natural heritage and cultural heritage interest. The landscape is a key focus for recreation and tourism within Fermanagh and Omagh. High
10a	<i>Slieve Rushen Limestone Uplands</i>	Low scenic qualities due to extensive wind farm developing and quarrying. Low	Scattered archaeological sites. Low/ Medium	No natural heritage designations but small areas of UNESCO Geopark. Sense of naturalness/ wildness compromised by industrialisation. Low/ Medium	Cycle route/ Ulster Way passes through the area, there is a viewpoint. Medium	An upland landscape, differing in type to the more common sandstone uplands found elsewhere. Medium	This landscape has a semi-upland character but which has been compromised by industrial development. Low/ Medium
10b	<i>Derrylin and Kinawley Lowland Farmland</i>	Lowland landscape of drumlin farmland, views to quarrying and wind energy development. Low	Archaeological sites throughout the areas. Two main areas of settlement. Low/ Medium	ASSI bog habit, otherwise undesignated. Lowland landscape as a limited sense of naturalness. Low/ Medium	Cycle route and Ulster Way passing through the area, otherwise limited opportunities for enjoying the landscape. Low	Landscape is commonplace lowland farmland. Low	Commonplace drumlin farming landscape which does not include qualities to merit consideration for landscape designation. Low/ Medium
11	<i>Upper Lough Erne Lough Basin</i>	Enclosed and secluded waterscape, views across open water to small islands, promontories with limited intrusion from urbanisation. Medium/ High	Historic Park and Garden landscapes, various archaeological sites and listed buildings. Medium/ High	The LCA includes international natural heritage designations. The enclosed landscape has a strong sense of naturalness. High	The lough has significant value for low intensity recreation, such as wildlife watching, boating, kayaking etc. High	A waterscape unique to Fermanagh and Omagh and uncommon elsewhere in Northern Ireland. High	A unique landscape to Fermanagh and Omagh and rare in Northern Ireland. Strong qualities of tranquillity and naturalness, significant recreational interest. Medium/ High
12	<i>Newtownbutler and Rosslea Lowland Farmland</i>	Good quality farming landscape, some scenic qualities but not high scenic value. Medium	Historic Park and Garden at Rosslea, archaeological sites found throughout. Settlements at Newtownbutler and Rosslea. Medium/ High	Limited natural heritage designations. Farming landscape does not have strong qualities of naturalness. Low/ Medium	Cycle route passes through the landscape, some fishing, but otherwise limited enjoyment attributable to landscape qualities. Low	Landscape has much in common with other lowland drumlin farming landscapes. Low	Commonplace drumlin farming landscape which does not include qualities to merit consideration for landscape designation. Low/ Medium

Landscape Character Area/ Character Type		Scenic	Cultural	Natural	Enjoyment	Rarity/ Uniqueness or Strong Typicality	Overall Evaluation of Landscape Qualities
14a	<i>Lough Braden Lowland Farmland</i>	Lowland landscape of drumlin farmland, variable quality, with some attractive rural views. Low/ Medium	Various sites of cultural heritage interest, archaeological sites, Drumskinny Stone Circle. Medium	Farming landscape, commercial forestry and therefore limited naturalness, but a strong sense of tranquillity. Small number of ASSI and a nature reserve. Medium	Cycle routes and Ulster Way, along which the tranquil rural landscape can be appreciated. Medium	Landscape has much in common with other areas of lowland drumlin farmland. Low	A quiet, tranquil lowland landscape, but lacking in special qualities which might be worthy of designation. Medium
14b	<i>Lough Braden Sandstone Ridges and Plateau</i>	Bare rounded upland hills with an undulating forest plateau, including some attractive views across the uplands, however wind energy development tends to detract from scenic qualities. Medium	Small number of listed buildings and archaeological sites. Low/ Medium	Upland landscape has a sense of naturalness and wildness but lessened by blanket afforestation and extensive wind energy development. A few scattered natural heritage designations. Medium	Quality sections of the Ulster Way pass through the landscape, opportunities to enjoy the landscape on quiet roads, some viewpoints, but generally not strong recreational or leisure interest. Medium	Upland landscapes of similar character are present elsewhere in Fermanagh and Omagh. Low	An upland landscape with some scenic qualities and views to neighbouring lowlands. However, wind energy development and extensive forestry tend to detract from landscape qualities. Medium
15	<i>Irvinestown Lowland Farmland</i>	Lowland drumlin farming landscape of limited scenic quality. Low/ Medium	Various population centres, Historic Parks and Gardens at Corkhill and Necarne. Archaeological sites found throughout. Medium/ High	Few natural heritage designations. Farming landscape does not have strong qualities of naturalness. Low/ Medium	Landscape is not especially valued for opportunities for enjoyment. Designated cycle route passes through the landscape. Low	Landscape has much in common with other areas of lowland drumlin farmland. Low	The landscape comprises relatively commonplace drumlin farmland. Low/ Medium
16	<i>Brougher Mountain and Slievemore Sandstone Ridges and Plateau</i>	Semi-upland landscape of rolling sandstone hills, significant forestry and larger scales of wind energy development. Some good views to adjacent lowlands. Medium	ASSI site at Topped Mountain, traditional buildings, archaeological sites. High	Few sites of natural heritage interest, however the upland areas do have some sense of naturalness. Medium	Landscape can be appreciated from some viewpoints such as Topped Mountain, quiet roads for walking/ cycling but no significant visitor interest. Medium	Upland landscapes of similar character are present elsewhere in Fermanagh and Omagh. Low	Much of the landscape has an attractive semi-upland character, but without exceptional scenic qualities. Wind energy development is common place to the north. Significant cultural heritage interest with the ASAI site. Medium
17	<i>Clogher Valley Lowland Farmland</i>	Good quality farming landscape, some scenic qualities but not high scenic value. Medium	Historic Park and Garden at Colebrook, archaeological sites found throughout. Settlements at Newtownbutler and Rosslea. Medium/ High	Limited natural heritage designations. Farming landscape does not have strong qualities of naturalness. Recognised as an important fluvo-glacial landscape. Low/ Medium	Limited enjoyment attributable to landscape qualities. Low	Landscape has much in common with other lowland drumlin farming landscapes. Low	Commonplace drumlin farming landscape which does not include qualities to merit consideration for landscape designation. Low/ Medium
18	<i>Slieve Beagh Sandstone Ridges and Plateau</i>	Semi-upland plateau of rolling sandstone hills, low intensity farming, some larger wind energy development. Some good views to adjacent lowlands. Medium	Scattered archaeological sites. Low/ Medium	Some qualities of naturalness and wildness of character, but the landscape is affected by significant forestry. The landscape has natural heritage importance, including an extensive SPA designation. Medium/ High	Quiet roads accommodate walking and cycling. Ulster Way quality section passes through the area. Carnmore Viewpoint is well known. Medium	Upland landscapes of similar character are present elsewhere in Fermanagh and Omagh. Low	An upland landscape with some scenic qualities, tranquillity, views to neighbouring lowlands. Wind energy development and forestry affect part of the landscape. Medium

Landscape Character Area/ Character Type		Scenic	Cultural	Natural	Enjoyment	Rarity/ Uniqueness or Strong Typicality	Overall Evaluation of Landscape Qualities
21	<i>Drumquin Broad Lowland Valley</i>	Intimate lowland landscape of pastoral farmland enclosed by uplands. Some good scenic qualities, including waterfall at Sloughan Glen. Medium/ High	Settlement at Drumquin, scattering of cultural heritage sites. Low/ Medium	Lowland landscape has limited qualities of naturalness. Some important bog habitats on the valley floor. Wind energy on adjacent uplands is an intrusion. Medium	Sloughan Glen is a popular visitor location, quiet roads for walking/ cycling Medium	Enclosed valley landscapes are not common in Fermanagh and Omagh. Medium/ High.	The landscape has some special landscape qualities owing to its tranquil and enclosed character, which is relatively unusual within Fermanagh and Omagh. Medium
22	<i>Omagh Lowland Farmland</i>	Lowland drumlin farming landscape of limited scenic quality. Low/ Medium	Cultural interest focussed at Omagh. Archaeological sites found throughout. Medium	Scattered natural heritage designations. Farming landscape does not have strong qualities of naturalness. Low/ Medium	Landscape is not especially valued for opportunities for enjoyment. Designated cycle route passes through the landscape. Low	Landscape has much in common with other areas of lowland drumlin farmland. Low	The landscape comprises relatively commonplace drumlin farmland with few notable landscape qualities. Low/ Medium
23	<i>Camowen River Broad Lowland Valley</i>	Undulating farmland of variable quality, some quarrying. Limited scenic value, but some views to more upland landscapes. Low/ Medium	Scattered archaeological sites, small settlement. Settlement at Drumnakilly. Low/ Medium	Limited qualities of naturalness. Single ASSI designation at Deroran bog. Low/ Medium	Landscape not notable for recreation or visitor interest. Low	Landscape has much in common with other areas of lowland drumlin farmland. Low	The landscape comprises relatively commonplace drumlin farmland with few notable landscape qualities. Low/ Medium
24	<i>South Sperrin Upland Hills and Valleys</i>	Scenic qualities from contrasting upland ridges and lowland valleys, more remote landscape to the east. Medium/ High	Settlement at Gortin (see LCA 26), low concentration of archaeological sites Low/ Medium	Some sense of naturalness/ wildness to the east but affected by blanket forestry in some areas. Natural heritage interest associated with Owenkillew River Medium/ High	Landscape provides opportunities for enjoyment of the countryside through cycling and walking. Designated cycle routes pass through the area, along with Quality Sections of the Ulster Way. Medium	Landscape is unusual to Northern Fermanagh and Omagh. Medium/ High	Good scenic qualities and sense of naturalness/ wildness to parts of the landscape. The landscape type is found only to the north of Fermanagh and Omagh. Medium/ High
25	<i>Beaghmore Moors and Marsh Lowland Hills</i>	Northern more remote parts of the area have some good scenic qualities, lesser scenic value to the more marginal farmlands. Medium	Significant cultural heritage interest with the candidate Beaghmore ASAI to the north east, thinly scattered archaeological sites elsewhere. An Creagan Visitor centre promotes cultural interest in the landscape. Medium/ High	Sense of naturalness and remoteness to parts of the landscape. Black Bog is a significant natural heritage site (SAC/ RAMSAR), however some large areas of forestry. Medium	An Creagan is a focus for recreation and exploration of the landscape. Cycle routes cross the landscape via quiet roads. Medium	Landscape is not commonplace within Fermanagh and Omagh. Medium	A tranquil semi-upland landscape with visitor interest related to culture and natural heritage, and a significant site of natural heritage interest. Medium/ High
26	<i>Bessy Bell and Gortin Upland Hills and Valleys</i>	Rounded upland hills surrounding the enclosed Strule Valley has good scenic qualities Medium/ High	Landscape setting contributes to Ulster American Folk park, scattered archaeological sites. Medium	Lowland landscape has limited naturalness, qualities of wildness in upland areas are compromised by forestry and wind energy. Large ASSI site at Mullaghcam. Medium	Visitor interest at Gortin Glen Forest Park, Ulster American Folk Park. Includes cycle routes, picnic sites, Ulster Way Quality Sections and viewpoints. High	Landscape is unusual to Northern Fermanagh and Omagh. Medium/ High	Good scenic qualities and significant visitor interest found in the landscape. Medium/ High

Landscape Character Area/ Character Type		Scenic	Cultural	Natural	Enjoyment	Rarity/ Uniqueness or Strong Typicality	Overall Evaluation of Landscape Qualities
43	<i>Carrickmore Lowland Hills</i>	Irregular rocky low hills forming distinctive landmarks within a farming landscape. Landscape affected by wind energy and some quarrying, affecting scenic qualities. Higher scenic qualities to the west. Medium	Creggandevsky candidate ASAI is located to the east of the character areas in Fermanagh and Omagh, the settlements of Carrickmore, Loughmacrory and Mountfield are in the area. Scatterings of archaeological sites. Medium/ High	Much of the landscape is farmed, but some sense of naturalness to the more upland areas to the north and east, albeit in some locations compromised by wind energy. Murrins ASSI and nature reserved is in the area. Medium	Cycle routes pass through the area, and the landscape can be appreciated on foot via quiet roads, but no significant visitor interest. Medium	Much of the landscape is unremarkable farmland however hills are quite distinctive features of the landscape. Medium	Landscape with some good scenic qualities, particularly to the west at the Sperrins foothills. Significant cultural heritage interest. Medium/ High