

Local Development Plan | 2030

Draft Plan Strategy

Evidence Paper 16: Landscape
Character Assessment

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Soltys Brewster Consulting provided professional landscape advice and guidance to officers during the authority's development of Landscape designation policy, including a constructive review of the methodology, the criteria used and the reporting approaches; and a critical review of the Landscape Character Assessment document.



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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following advice received in December 2017 from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), the Council has conducted a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) update. The Department expressed that it would be in the best interests of the Council to have updated data on the local landscape to help inform the Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 1.2 In response to this advice, the Council conducted a review and update of current LCA for the Borough. This LCA update established if there were any changes in landscape character or modern development pressures within the local landscape. The assessment examined the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (NICLA) 2000 and assessed how landscapes have evolved and been altered since inception. Additional examinations included, the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland, Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), and the legacy Antrim Area Plan and draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan. The results of the assessment enabled an analysis of the robustness of current approaches to landscape planning and management at protecting and enhancing important landscapes within the Borough. This LCA update has been prepared in association with Soltys Brewster Consulting.

Aims and Objectives

- 1.3 The aim of this LCA update, is to ensure the continuous protection and enhancement of sensitive landscapes from the impact of modern development by considering the following:
- Provide context for policies and proposals relating to Landscape within the Council's LDP for the Borough;
 - Inform and update the 16 LCAs identified in the NILCA 2000;
 - Provide a robust evidence base and data bank to help justify any future policy decisions; and
 - To help identify landscapes which have particular value and merit future special protection as local landscapes.
- 1.4 The objectives for the landscape assessment are to:
- Review the purpose, coverage and function of Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) LCAs;
 - Define and implement a clear methodology for the LCA process based on an approach acknowledged by the (NIEA);
 - Assess local landscape character and qualities of individual LCAs;
 - Provide guidance within the LCA report through establishing sensitivities and accommodating new development techniques; and
 - Inform then Council's LDP by helping to identify landscapes within the Borough that merit future protection.
- 1.5 The process of conducting the LCA update was undertaken in four stages:

- **Stage 1** involved, the generation of a methodology that would enable a robust assessment process, which would be deemed appropriate by a Chartered Landscape Architect;
- **Stage 2** comprised a detailed background and desktop study of the 16 LCAs located within the Borough. This stage involved the identification of key characteristics including: Geology; Hydrology; Landscape Cover; Land Use Pattern; Settlement Pattern; Built Heritage Assets; and Cultural Qualities. This stage provided the background context and descriptors for Stage 3 of the Assessment;
- **Stage 3** encompassed a detailed fieldwork study of 70 Fieldwork Study Sites from across the 16 LCAs. The fieldwork study was conducted with two Planning Officers in the field using an online survey linked to Arc GIS; and
- **Stage 4** entailed the analysis and coding of the data collected through the desktop studies and fieldwork studies. The analysis looked at the narratives of sensitivity, impact, change, environmental importance and cultural/heritage importance. The narrative themes provided the evidence for each of the LCAs and enabled the completion of the LCA update.

1.6 The study area was defined as the Council area. Where there are strong links with adjacent landscapes in neighbouring Councils (Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Belfast City Council), including views in and out of the area, these were considered.

1.7 This LCA update will enabled the identification of unique and important landscapes within the Borough that merit future protection measures to help maintain and enhance diverse characteristics of natural environment. It has also taken into account neighbouring Councils and cross boundary considerations.

1.8 This LCA update aims to:

- Provide easily accessible baseline information on all of the landscapes within the LDP area;
- Assist in detailed planning and landscape casework and in particular, to facilitate the monitoring of landscape change and highlight issues to be considered; and
- Recommend further work as part of the LDP Action Programme.

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

1.9 From the key findings of the LCA update it is evident that the Borough has a variety of contrasting landscapes, some of which are particularly sensitive to change due to their quality features and have low capacity to absorb the impact of new development. It is recommended a landscape approach focusing on the following areas be utilised and be brought forward through the LDP:

- Protect important upland hills and mountains for their landmark qualities, their setting and cultural/historical qualities;
- Identify the shoreline and islands of Lough Neagh and Lough Beg for protection from unsustainable development;
- Protect the landscape qualities and nature conservation attributes of the coastal area of Belfast Lough by protecting the urbanised coastal setting and sympathetic to the built form;
- Identify the areas of Donegore Hill, Drumadarragh Hill, Tardree Forest/Mountain, Carnmoney Hill, Belfast Basalt Escarpment and Carrickfergus Escarpment, as areas of significance. Development should be in keeping with the character of the area concentrating on scale, density, massing, height, landscape and layout. Future quarry proposals be restricted in these identified areas; and
- There should be an emphasis on integrating new rural dwellings into local landscape dynamics through appropriate siting, design characteristics and size.

1.10 It is recommended that future work should be undertaken to ensure the effectiveness and robustness of this assessment. These recommendations include:

- Ongoing work to monitor the effectiveness of the existing guidance on decision-making and identify developments or policy changes that may trigger changes to character descriptions and/or require further guidance.
- Additional work to improve or make the existing guidance more relevant and helpful.
- Over the lifespan of the LDP, to encourage communities, developers, landowners and other interested parties to support the principles identified within this LCA and to help maintain high quality distinct and diverse landscapes now and for future generations.

2 Introduction

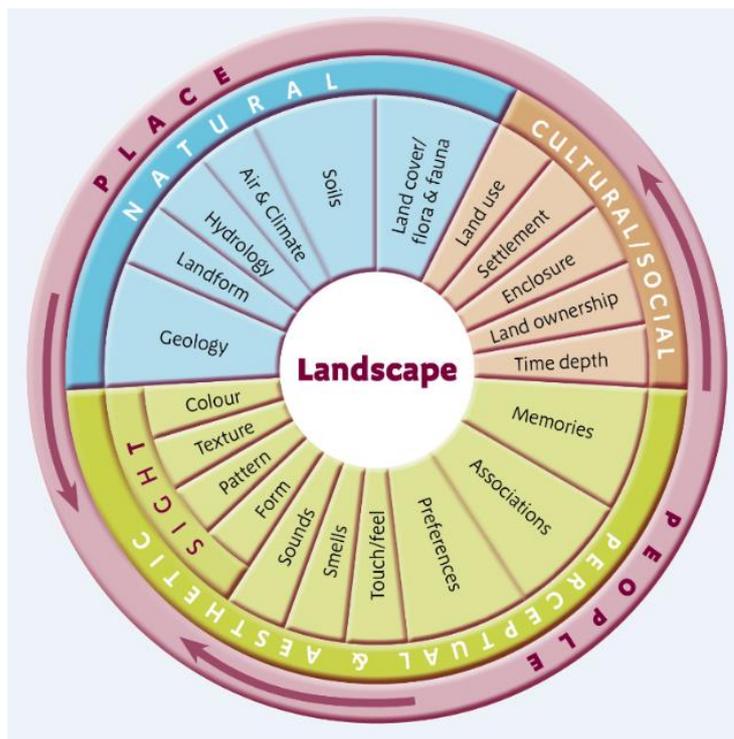
- 2.1 This is one of a series of background papers and studies being presented as part of the evidence base to inform the preparation of the Council's LDP. This paper draws together the evidence base used in relation to the topic of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). The evidence in this paper was collated at a point in time and may be subject to further updates. Evidence papers should be read collectively.
- 2.2 In line with Departmental guidance, the Council has updated its evidence base to inform the next stage of the LDP known as the Plan Strategy. This paper updates the 'Shaping Our Environment' baseline evidence paper, as it relates to Landscape, which accompanied the Preferred Options Paper (POP), published in January 2017.
- 2.3 It should be noted that the evidence base collected to inform the draft Plan Strategy also forms the basis for additional assessments and appraisals required as part of the LDP preparation process, most notably the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 2.4 Furthermore, this LCA update forms part of the Council's Countryside Assessment which includes the four related strands:
- A Settlement Evaluation (*Evidence Paper 2*);
 - A Landscape Character Assessment (*Evidence Paper 16*);
 - An Environmental Assets Appraisal (*Evidence Paper 7 and 17*); and
 - A Rural Development Pressure Analysis (*Evidence Paper 18*).
- 2.5 The countryside of Northern Ireland is an important and vital resource for its social, economic, environmental, scenic and historic qualities. The region boasts a richly diverse countryside ranging from farmland and forests, peatland and mountains to sea cliffs and strands. The region has considerably contrasting landscapes, which reflect its geology and topography, as well as a long history of settlement and land use. These contrasts create a range of unique and distinctive local landscape not only across the region but also within local authority areas.
- 2.6 Landscapes are a diverse resource that can have multiple understandings or can have different meanings for different people. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) 2000 defined landscape as:
- 'An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.'*¹
- 2.7 The scope of the ELC applies equally to natural, human induced, rural and urban areas and includes land, inland water and marine areas. The ELC 2000 acknowledges:

¹ European Landscape Convention: Preamble

*'The landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas.'*²

- 2.8 The 'Landscape Wheel'³ in Figure 1 assists as a useful guide to the definition of a landscape showing the natural, cultural and aesthetic/perceptual factors that go to make up the term. The most important factor that informs the LCA process is this composite nature of landscapes.

Figure 1: Landscape Wheel



Source, Natural England 2015

- 2.9 The patterns of distinctive landscapes have evolved gradually over thousands of years, through natural and anthropogenic progression. Today landscapes continue to be shaped by this progression, but the effects of negative transformations are becoming more evident. Landscapes should be enhanced to discourage erosion of landscape patterns or local identity.
- 2.10 The Borough contains a rich diversity of different landscapes, which combine to provide a unique resource of significant environmental and scenic quality. Metropolitan Newtownabbey and its surroundings have an impressive natural setting situated along the western shore of Belfast Lough, with the Carrickfergus Escarpment to the east and the Belfast Hills Escarpment to the southwest. These landscapes form a magnificent backdrop complemented by Carnmoney Hill, which is centrally located and surrounded by development. Antrim and its

² European Landscape Convention: Article 6 (C, E) Identification and assessment

³ Natural England : An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014)

surroundings contain very attractive and contrasting countryside, through the Main, Six Mile Water and Crumlin River valleys, to the shoreline, to the high ground northeast of Antrim and the Belfast Hills in the southeast.

- 2.11 In Northern Ireland, all landscapes have been classified by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) through Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment 2000 (NILCA). The systematic assessment subdivided the landscape of Northern Ireland into 130 landscape areas, evidenced by different distinctive characters based on geology, ecological features, landform and land-use. In each of the different areas, the LCA specifies the drivers for change and key issues that affect the landscape sensitivity. It also provides guidelines for landscape management and principles for accommodating development.
- 2.12 In 2015, NIEA examined landscapes from a strategic perspective and undertook a Regional Landscape Character Assessment (RLCA) for Northern Ireland. The process adopts a strategic view to the assessment and landscape quality and character.
- 2.13 In 2014, NIEA undertook a Regional Seascape Character Assessment (RSCA) for the entire coastal region of Northern Ireland, including inland sea loughs. The study provided a strategic understanding of different areas of regional seascape character and contributes to the aims of promoting the protection, management and planning of the seascape.

3 Legislative Context

The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

- 3.1 The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (hereafter referred to as the 2011 Act) is the principal planning legislation in Northern Ireland, which underpins the reformed two-tier planning system that commenced on 1 April 2015. It introduced the plan-led system, where the LDP is the primary consideration for decision making on all new development schemes and proposals will be required to accord with its provisions unless, exceptionally other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 Under the new Planning System introduced in 2015, the LDP will comprise of two documents, a Plan Strategy and a Local Policies Plan that will be prepared in sequence. It also requires the LDP to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal.

The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

- 3.3 These Regulations set out the sequence in which the Council's LDP is to be prepared and provides detail on the content and procedure of each stage in the LDP preparation process and independent examination.

The Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

- 3.4 These Regulations set out the sequence in which the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is to be prepared and provides detail on the content and procedures required. The Council published its SCI on January 2016 the purpose of which is to define how the Council will engage with the community in the delivery of the LDP. It is set within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and meets the requirements of the 2011 Act.

Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006

- 3.5 Section 25 of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 requires all Northern Ireland Departments and Councils, in exercising their functions, to act in the way they consider best calculated to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Section 5 of the 2011 Act copper-fastens this duty by requiring those who exercise any function in relation to LDPs to do so with the objective of furthering sustainable development.

Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

- 3.6 The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 introduced a statutory link between a Council's Community Plan and LDP, and requests that the preparation of the LDP must take account of the Community Plan.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

- 3.7 The Council has a statutory duty under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 as a public authority, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between the nine equality categories of persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; men and women generally; persons with a disability and persons without; and persons with dependants and persons without.
- 3.8 Council has engaged and will continue to engage with Section 75 groups throughout the LDP process, adhering to the Council's SCI.

Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

- 3.9 The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 provides a statutory duty on public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services and came into effect for Councils in June 2017.
- 3.10 Rural needs is an ongoing and integral component of the Council's LDP.

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004

- 3.11 It is a statutory requirement that all plans and programmes that are likely to have a significant environmental effect must be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The European Union Directive '2001/42/EC'

states that an SEA is mandatory and was transposed into local legislation in the form of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (the EAPP (NI) Regulations). The objective of the SEA directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the Council's LDP, with the view to promoting sustainable development.

- 3.12 The SEA is an ongoing process and must be carried out in conjunction with, and integrated into the LDP process. Under the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Regulations, an environmental report is published with the LDP document.

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995

- 3.13 The LDP is required to consider its impact on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites (these comprise Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and RAMSAR Sites) and will be subject to a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). Similar to the SEA the HRA is an on-going process, which will take place at key stages during the preparation of the LDP. The Regulations contribute to transposing the requirements of the EC Habitats and Birds Directives.

4 Regional Policy Context

Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-2021

- 4.1 The key aim of the draft Programme for Government (PfG) is to grow a sustainable economy through investing in the future, tackling disadvantage, improving health and wellbeing, protecting the people and the environment, building a strong and shared community and delivering high quality services.
- 4.2 While the delivery of many of the strategic outcomes will be the responsibility of central government, the LDP will play a supporting role in helping to deliver many of these. Particularly relevant are Outcome 2, 'We Live and Work Sustainably, Protecting the Environment', and Outcome 12, 'We Have Created a Place Where People Want to Live and Work, to Visit and Invest'.

Sustainable Development Strategy Northern Ireland 2010

- 4.3 One of the key principles outlined in the Everyone's Involved - Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) relates to 'Living within Environmental Limits'. This promotes the need to protect and improve the environment with emphasis on the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity and to ensure that finite resources are protected for future generations. One of the key priority areas relates to 'striking an appropriate balance between the responsible use and protection of natural resources in support of a better quality of life and a better quality environment'. This promotes sustainable land and marine management, better planning and management of development in ways which are sustainable and which contribute to creating a better environment.

- 4.4 This ensures that the Borough's built heritage is used in a sustainable way is recognised in the SDS as a contributing factor in the support of a better quality of life and a better quality environment.

Regional Development Strategy 2035

- 4.5 The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) aims to protect and enhance the environment for current and future generations. It recognises that Northern Ireland's environment is one of its greatest assets which has benefits in terms of the economy and quality of life.
- 4.6 The RDS acknowledges landscape and aims to promote the conservation of local identity and distinctive landscape character. Landscape character is what makes an area unique. It is defined as:

'A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements, be it natural (soil, landform) and/or human (for example settlement and development) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.'

- 4.7 Areas recognised for their landscape quality, where possible, should be conserved, protected and where possible enhanced. The RDS indicates:
- Regional Guidance 11- Conserve, protect and where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment – maintain the integrity of built heritage assets, including historic landscapes; recognise and promote the conservation of local identity and distinctive landscape character; conserve, protect and where possible enhance areas recognised for their landscape quality; consider the establishment of one or more National Parks.
 - As identified in Spatial Framework Guidance 5 – To protect and enhance the quality of the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets - protecting areas of high scenic value, undeveloped coastline, Belfast Lough, the Lagan Valley Regional Park and the hills around the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA) from development; and protecting and enhancing the network of open spaces in the BMUA.

Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012

- 4.8 The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for Northern Ireland 2002-2012 identifies strategic transportation investment priorities and considers potential funding sources and affordability of planned initiatives over the strategy period. The RTS is a 'daughter document' of the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2035, which sets out the spatial development framework for Northern Ireland up to 2035.
- 4.9 This Strategy was supported by three initiatives namely Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2004, Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 and the Sub-Regional Transport Plan 2007.

Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2004

- 4.10 The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTTP) 2004 is the local transport plan for the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) including Metropolitan Newtownabbey. This plan will deliver a phased and costed implementation programme of transport schemes to 2015. This plan takes forward the strategic initiatives of the RTS 2002-2012.

Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 (2005)

- 4.11 The former Department for Regional Development (DRD), now the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) prepared the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTN TP) 2015. The Plan is based on the guidance set out RDS 2035 and the RTS 2002-2012. The Plan presents a range of multi-modal transport initiatives to manage, maintain and develop Northern Ireland's Strategic Transport Network. The Regional Strategic Transport Network of Northern Ireland comprises the complete rail network, five Key Transport Corridors (KTCs), four Link Corridors, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Corridors and the remainder of the trunk road network.

Sub-Regional Transport Plan 2007

- 4.12 The Sub-Regional Transport Plan (SRTP) 2007 covers Antrim and takes forward the strategic initiatives of the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) for Northern Ireland 2002-2012. The SRTP deals with the transport needs of the whole of Northern Ireland with the exception of the BMA and the rail and trunk road networks, which are covered, in the BMA and RSTN TP.

Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – 'A New Approach to Regional Transportation' 2011

- 4.13 The Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future (ESTF) was developed to build on the RTS for Northern Ireland 2002-2012 and to refocus and rebalance the investment in future. Unlike the 2002 Strategy, the Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future (ESTF) does not include details of schemes or projects. Rather, the Department has set three High Level Aims for transportation along with twelve supporting Strategic Objectives, covering the economy, society and the environment. The ESTF complements the RDS 2035 and contains high-level aims and strategic objectives to support the growth of the economy, enhance the quality of life for all and reduce the environmental impact of transport. It sets out the approach to regional transportation and is used to guide strategic investment decisions beyond 2015. Work is progressing on the implementation of the ESTF and the Council will ensure that any future transportation projects affecting the Borough are appropriately reflected in the LDP.
- 4.14 The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) is working collaboratively with the Councils to produce a new family of Local Transport Plans integrated with the LDPs. The work is staged in nature and increases in level of detail from strategic direction through to specific local policies and schemes.

Forthcoming Transport Plans

- 4.15 The Department for Infrastructure is currently preparing new Transport Plans which will cover the Borough. This includes a new Regional Strategic Transport Network Plan for all of Northern Ireland and a new Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan which will cover Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Ards and North Down Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council as well as Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is represented on the Project Boards for both plans along with other Councils.
- 4.16 As part of the preparation for the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, the Department is preparing a Transport Study for the greater Belfast area and the Council has taken the emerging study into consideration in the preparation of its draft Plan Strategy. Work will also continue to bring forward the next stage of the LDP, the Local Policies Plan, alongside the Department's Transport Plans.
- 4.17 Further information on the Transport Study and Transport Plans is available on the Department of Infrastructure's website <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/>.

Sustainable Water – A Long-Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015-2040

- 4.18 'Sustainable Water – A Long-Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland (2015-2040)' sets out a range of initiatives to deliver the Executive's long term goal of a sustainable water sector in Northern Ireland. The Strategy recognises how planning can impact on flood risk and water quality and aims to ensure that existing water and sewerage infrastructure and investment proposals inform future planning decisions and the preparation of LDPs.
- 4.19 The Strategy sets out a number of matters that the Council's LDP will need to take into account which are summarised below:
- Ensuring planning decisions are informed by up to date information on the risk from all significant sources of flooding;
 - Prevention of inappropriate development in high flood risk areas and ensuring that future development does not increase flood risk;
 - Exceptional development within high flood risk areas must make provision for adequate mitigation measures;
 - Ensure surface water drainage is adequately addressed; and
 - Planning policy should promote sustainable water and sewerage services by making appropriate space for water and sewerage infrastructure including sustainable drainage systems.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement 2015

- 4.20 The SDS and RDS are supported in their application by the policy direction of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement 2015 (SPPS). The SPPS states:

*'Northern Ireland is a region of dramatic landscape contrasts and subtle transitions. The inherent diversity of the underlying rocks, landforms and soils has been augmented by centuries of settlement and land management, resulting in rich, varied and unique landscape patterns and features within the region. Our natural and cultural landscapes are an essential aspect of our sense of place and belonging and are part of our national and community identity. The diversity of Northern Ireland's habitats, species, landscapes and earth science features is an important and highly valued asset for society.'*⁴

4.21 In addition to the core planning principles outlined above, the SPPS also includes the following regional strategic objectives:

- Protect, conserve, enhance and restore the abundance, quality, diversity and distinctiveness of the region's natural heritage; and
- Further sustainable development by ensuring that natural heritage and associated diversity is conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, economic and environmental development.
- Assist in meeting international (including European), national and local responsibilities and obligations in the protection and enhancement of the natural heritage;
- Contribute to rural renewal and urban regeneration by ensuring developments take account of the role and value of natural heritage in supporting economic diversification and contribute to a high-quality environment; and
- Take actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change.

4.22 The SPPS identified that when preparing LDPs, Councils should take into account Departmental guidance in the form of LCAs. The output of the LCA helps to identify key features and assets of the countryside while providing a mechanism for balancing the needs of rural areas and communities, with the protection of the environment.

4.23 The SPPS identified a number of specific strategic policy directions of relevance to landscape that a Council must take into account in the preparation of its LDP. These policy directions state:

'Proposals for development in the countryside must be sited and designed to integrate sympathetically with their surroundings, must not have an adverse impact on rural character, and meet other planning and environmental considerations.'

⁴ Strategic Planning Policy Statement (2015)

Other Planning Policy

- 4.24 Current operational planning policy, in relation to aspects of the historic environment is primarily included within the following Planning Policy Statements (PPSs):
- PPS 2 Natural Heritage
 - PPS 6 Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage
- 4.25 Other policies in relation to landscape, primarily relate to protection from the adverse impacts of development and are contained within PPS 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 18 and 21.
- 4.26 These PPSs, as well as the SPPS, have been taken into consideration in the formulation of the detailed development management policies, which are contained within the draft Plan Strategy document.

Departmental Guidance

- 4.27 The LDP has been prepared taking account of Departmental policy and guidance, which is available by contacting the Department for Infrastructure.
- 4.28 The importance of the landscape of Northern Ireland is included in additional Supplementary Planning Guide issued by the former DoE through the 'Good Design and Place making Guide' and 'Preserving and Building on Tradition' - A Sustainable Design Guide for Northern Ireland (DoE, 2012).
- 4.29 The Development Plan Practice Note 7 'The Plan Strategy' published in 2015, guides officers and relevant users through the key requirements for the preparation of the Plan Strategy and deals primarily with procedures as well as good practice.

5 Local Policy Context

Legacy Development Plans

- 5.1 The following is a list of the legacy development plans that apply to the Borough:
- Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001 and its alterations (AAP);
 - Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP);
 - Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001⁵ (CAP);
 - Draft Newtownabbey Area Plan 2005 (dNAP); and
 - Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (dBMAP).

⁵ Insofar as it relates to that part of the legacy Carrickfergus Borough Council area at Greenisland that transferred to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough in 2015 under Review of Public Administration (RPA).

- 5.2 It should be noted that the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan adopted in September 2014 was subsequently quashed as a result of a judgment of the Court of Appeal delivered in May 2017. As a consequence, the BUAP is now the statutory development plan for the Metropolitan Newtownabbey area of the Borough, with dBMAP remaining a material consideration.

Community Plan – Love Living Here 2017

- 5.3 The Council's Community Plan, 'Love Living Here', sets out a shared vision and agreed outcomes for the area up to 2030. The successful implementation of the Community Plan will be marked by a demonstrable improvement in how services are delivered across the Borough and the quality of life its citizens experience. As such the Community Plan is an important document and has been taken into account in the preparation of the Council's LDP.
- 5.4 The Community Plan sets out four outcomes which are as follows:
- Our citizens enjoy good health and wellbeing;
 - Our citizens live in connected, safe, clean and vibrant places;
 - Our citizens benefit from economic prosperity; and
 - Our citizens achieve their full potential.
- 5.5 It also sets out one wildly important goal namely that the Borough's vulnerable people are supported.

Corporate Plan – Our Borough Your Vision 2019-2030

- 5.6 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out a vision for the Borough and identifies what it needs to do between now and 2030 to achieve this. The Vision for the Borough up to 2030 is defined as,

'A progressive, smart and prosperous place. Inspired by our people; Driven by ambition.'

- 5.7 The Corporate Plan sets out a number of objectives in relation to Place, People and Prosperity. The LDP has a key role to play under the objective of 'Place' and the Corporate Plan states:

'We will have succeeded if: People take pride in their surroundings. People feel safe. Our environment, natural habitats and built heritage are protected and enhanced. We have vibrant and welcoming towns, villages, neighbourhoods, and rural areas. We have an efficient planning process that promotes positive development and sustainable growth.'

Council Masterplans/Village Plans

- 5.8 Through the Village Renewal Scheme as supported by the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 the Council benefited from funding to devise and update plans for the development of villages in the Borough. Whilst these plans are non-statutory, they have prepared in close conjunction with local residents and identify a range of potential projects to improve the settlements. These range from short term goals to long-term aspirations. The village plans

alongside the masterplans relating to the Borough will be considered in the preparation of the LDP where relevant.

Cross Boundary Policy Context

- 5.9 In considering the local policy context, it is important to note that the Borough does not sit in isolation. The LCAs form and follow complex landforms and features that have naturally evolved. These area boundaries do not follow or Council boundaries. Accordingly, throughout this evidence paper, the position of the following neighbouring Councils has been considered: Belfast City Council; Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council; Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Mid Ulster District Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.
- 5.10 Neighbouring Council's Preferred Options Papers (POPs), supporting evidence base and draft Plan Strategies have been taken account of, as these are regarded as the main cross boundary documents to be considered in addition to regional guidance.
- 5.11 The Council has responded to neighbouring Council's POPs and LDP documents as they are published. In addition, the Council is also represented on a number of working groups and project boards to discuss cross boundary issues. This includes the Metropolitan Area Spatial Working Group and the Belfast Metropolitan Plan Project Board.
- 5.12 In terms of growth across the region, the Council view is that no neighbouring Council's growth strategy should have a negative impact on the Council's LDP in terms of resources for infrastructure provision delivered by statutory providers.
- 5.13 In the consideration of neighbouring Council's documents as well as regional policy, it is the opinion of the Council that it's draft Plan Strategy is sound and is not in conflict with neighbouring Council's emerging LDPs.

6 Preferred Options Paper

- 6.1 The Council's Preferred Options Paper (POP) was published in 2017 and was the first formal stage in the preparation of the LDP for the Borough and was designed to promote debate in relation to key strategic planning issues arising in the area. The POP set out a range of strategic options in relation to how and where development should be located within the Borough. It included options for the Borough's settlements, centres, employment land and housing locations, as well as a number of other key planning issues.
- 6.2 In addition, the Council asked the public for their views on a range of planning topics and issues. A total of 148 representations were received which were considered during the development of the draft Plan Strategy document and, where relevant, these will also be considered during the preparation of the Local Policies Plan. Details are set out in the Council's published 'Preferred Options Paper Public Consultation Report 2019'.

7 Soundness

- 7.1 The LDP is prepared to meet the tests of soundness as set out in the Department for Infrastructure's Development Plan Practice Note 6: Soundness (Version 2, May 2017).

8 LCA Update Methodology

- 8.1 The LCA update methodology employed an approach adapted from '*Landscape Character Assessment - Guidance for Scotland and England*', and '*An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*'. The first publication was developed by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency in 2002. The second publication was developed by Christine Tudor on behalf of Natural England in 2014. Additional guidance includes, the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland, '*Advice Note for Local Authorities on Landscape and Development Planning*' (2004), and '*Guidance on Local Landscape Designations*' (2015), issued by Scottish Natural Heritage.
- 8.2 From a Council perspective, there is an existing LCA derived from previous studies undertaken by the former Department of the Environment (now DAERA) through NILCA 2000, RLCA 2015, RSCA 2014, and Supplementary Planning Guidance on Wind Energy Sensitivity. As the main source of landscape data for the Borough was conducted in 2000, the information is considered out of date.
- 8.3 This LCA update therefore aims to provide a more detailed local LCA, with up to date information and data on each of the LCAs within the Borough.
- 8.4 The Council, in association with consultant and Chartered Landscape Architects, Soltys Brewster, undertook this LCA update. The appointment of the Landscape Architect was to act as a 'Critical Friend' throughout the LDP preparation process in areas relating to landscape. This was to ensure that work conducted by the Council was robust, sound, and up to the scrutiny of the LDP independent examination.

Baseline Desktop Study and Audit of Existing LCAs

- 8.5 The first stage in the Council's LCA update process was to undertake a baseline study and audit of existing landscape designations character and quality. The baseline audit was adapted from guidance on local landscape designations. The guidance calls on local authorities to describe their landscapes and identify both the character and qualities of the landscape considered to be of particular value in the local context.
- 8.6 The NILCA 2000 provided the baseline for the Council's LCA update through the exploration of the key characteristics of the landscape character including geology, land cover, landscape pattern, settlement pattern and biodiversity profile. The boundaries of LCAs were designated by NILCA 2000 and will form the basis of landscape units for the Borough.

- 8.7 Additional data was collected from the Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment (RSCA) 2014 and the Regional Landscape Character Assessment Northern Ireland (RLCA) 2015 to enhance the robustness of the desktop study.
- 8.8 The desktop study was primarily informed by previous designations identified in the Borough's legacy development plans; Antrim Borough Area Plan 1984-2001 and Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (insofar as it relates to the legacy Newtownabbey Borough area). The desktop study looked at the location and boundary of landscape related designations, the justification for designation, landscape character type and key qualities worth protecting.
- 8.9 The desk-based review was conducted utilising a range of available mappings and descriptive information relevant to landscape character. The data was interrogated in order to compile a baseline audit for each of the LCAs. The criteria framework for the LCA update is highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2: Assessment Criteria Framework

Main Dataset	Criteria
Visual and Sensory	Scenic Qualities
	Intactness and Condition
	Wilderness
	Rarity
	Settlement Setting and Fringes
	Views and Vistas
Place and People	Identity and Sense
	Community Assets
	Cultural Qualities
	Education
History and Heritage	Built Heritage Assets
	Archaeological Heritage
Ecology	Habitat and Biodiversity
	Land Cover and Pattern
Geology	Landform and Geomorphology
	Soil Conditions/ Drift

- 8.10 At this stage, other material relevant to the study was incorporated. This information included other designations from natural environment, built environment and cultural data. This data included ecological designations (Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs)), geodiversity, cultural heritage and the historic environment. An example of a completed desktop study is included in Appendix 2.

Fieldwork Study

- 8.11 The fieldwork component of the LCA update took place between April and May 2018. Primary data collection occurred in the field to help verify, refine and add information to the key characteristics and qualities of the appraisal of the desk based study. The field study enabled the attributes of the landscape

to be assessed on location capturing aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities of each of the LCAs.

- 8.12 For each of the LCAs, a standard evaluation sheet (as found in Appendix 3) was completed in the field to record information relating to each criterion. The sheet was created on Survey 123 through Arc GIS to enable the data to be effectively plotted on Arc Map and analysed through Microsoft Excel.
- 8.13 The field survey was also used to record information on views and vistas, visual connections between different LCAs, and perceptual qualities. Representative photographs of each LCA were taken during the study visits.
- 8.14 Council Officers in the field each conducted an informal LCA fieldwork survey individually. Once completed, the results were compared and contrasted and a formal online survey sheet was completed based on the discussions from the individual sheets. The rationale behind this approach was enhanced robustness in the surveying approach, as the results are not just based on the professional opinion of one Officer, but rather the combined professional opinions of multiple Officers. This helped to avoid bias in the approach and entry of results in the field.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 8.15 To enhance the analysis of the assessment process, a public questionnaire survey was introduced to enable comparative analysis with the qualitative data and enable public input into which landscapes people value or cherish.
- 8.16 An online survey was created which asked people to record their favourite landscapes and the reason why they value these places. The survey was hosted on the Council's website through Citizen Space and was advertised through the Council's quarterly household newsletter (Borough Life), along with the Council's social media platforms, and in local newspapers (Antrim Guardian and Newtownabbey Times). The public consultation exercise ran from Wednesday 4th April – Wednesday 30th May 2018.
- 8.17 The criteria for the survey was the same criteria used for the qualitative study. This aims to create a series of potential reasons for nominating a given landscape or place, whilst allowing people to define their own reasons. The public responses were classified using a scoring system that ranked the criteria from Step 4 based on the options of:
1. Strongly Agree;
 2. Agree;
 3. Neither Agree or Disagree;
 4. Disagree; or
 5. Strongly Disagree.
- 8.18 In addition, there was an area for the public to type in their own words to describe the importance of the landscape area to them.

8.19 The public consultation received 30 responses, with 25 through Citizen Space and 5 written responses. A summary of the responses identified that 32% of respondents strongly agree that their favourite landscapes were well managed and in a good state of repair, with 44% of respondents agreeing with this statement. Only 4% of respondents indicated that they disagreed with this statement. The responses were classified into different categories and analysed to aid the generation of the LCA update report.

Qualitative Assessment

- 8.20 The analysis stage of the LCA update involved the review of each landscape unit against the agreed assessment criteria. The process utilised both the desk study, field studies and results from public consultation. The combined results enabled a series of comparisons between studies on various landscape features, elements and evolution to explore how each LCA has evolved from the period of the NICLA 2000.
- 8.21 To provide a robust analysis for the study the data was coded using the narratives of sensitivity, impact, change, and environmental importance and cultural/heritage importance. The analysis of the desktop study and fieldwork studies helped identify if there was a pattern of change within the landscape character of the LCAs and helped to identify the dynamics of change that have shaped the landscape evolution. This enabled the sensitivities of each LCA to be reviewed in terms of condition and sensitivity, ability to accommodate new development and land management principles for the future.
- 8.22 The analysis of the study findings was based on a narrative scoring, which provided detailed descriptions of the different landscape, attributes (i.e. scenic quality) which helped to show if any change had been identified from the NILCA 2000 series to the present period. These narratives were developed based on coding looking at the key aspects of landscape descriptors that were visible within the desktop data and from officer's interpretation of the landscape character in the field. The effect of such an approach enabled a robust analysis based on the thematic areas of agriculture, field patterns, woodland, built heritage (archaeological), settlements, community assets, cultural qualities and sensitivity from modern uses.
- 8.23 This thematic approach enabled sensitive areas to be identified from across the different landscapes in the Borough. This was achieved through the identification of sensitivity/coping capacity of the LCAs concerning the influence of modern development, agricultural practices and environmental, geodiversity and local landscape importance going forward in the draft Plan Strategy.
- 8.24 These sensitive areas will be examined through the LDP process with a planning and management approach that aims to help enhance and restore areas that are deemed of '**Scenic Significance**' through appropriate landscape policy. This will further focus the output of this LCA update on the identification

of areas within the Borough that are existing or new sensitive landscapes that merit additional protection measures.

- 8.25 The output of the landscape analysis created draft LCA summaries which were prepared to indicate and highlight the changes from NICLA 2000. Further information was incorporated from the RLCA 2015, RSCA 2014, and environmental designations/biodiversity, built heritage, cultural qualities and perceptual qualities within the analysis review. The LCA assessment summaries for the 16 LCAs are included within Appendix 1 of this report.

9 LCAs in the Borough

- 9.1 The character of the Northern Ireland landscape has been identified and classified in the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment 2000 (NILCA 2000), which was published by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). This document subdivided the landscape of Northern Ireland into 130 different LCAs, each with a distinctive character; based upon local patterns of geology, landform, land use and cultural and ecological features. Each LCA has a detailed description of these features, and of where they can be located. The LCA report indicates for each area, the principal forces for change and the key issues influencing landscape sensitivity. It also suggests specific landscape guidelines for each area based either around landscape management or establishing principles for accommodating development.
- 9.2 In the Borough there are 16 LCAs which are identified in Figure 2. The key LCAs covering the Borough are 'Expansive Crumlin Farmland', 'Three and Six Mile Water Valleys', 'East Lough Neagh Points' and 'North Lough Neagh Shores'. Additional LCAs are the upland areas of Tardree to the north, Divis to the south and Carrickfergus to the east.
- 9.3 The LCAs form and follow complex landforms and features that have naturally evolved. These area boundaries do not follow or accord with local authority or other administrative boundaries. The details for all of the LCAs within the Borough are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Landscape Character Areas in the Borough

LCA	LCA Number
Lower Bann Valley	52
Long Mountain Ridge	58
River Main Valley	60
Ballymena Farmland	116
Tardree and Six Mile Water Slopes	115
Tardree Upland Pastures	125
Three and Six Mile Water Valleys	114
Carrickfergus Upland Pastures	98

Carrickfergus Farmed Escarpment	130
Carrickfergus Shoreline	129
Divis Summits	111
Derrykillultagh	110
Upper Ballinderry Plateau	109
Expansive Crumlin Farmland	113
East Lough Neagh Points	62
North Lough Neagh Shore	61

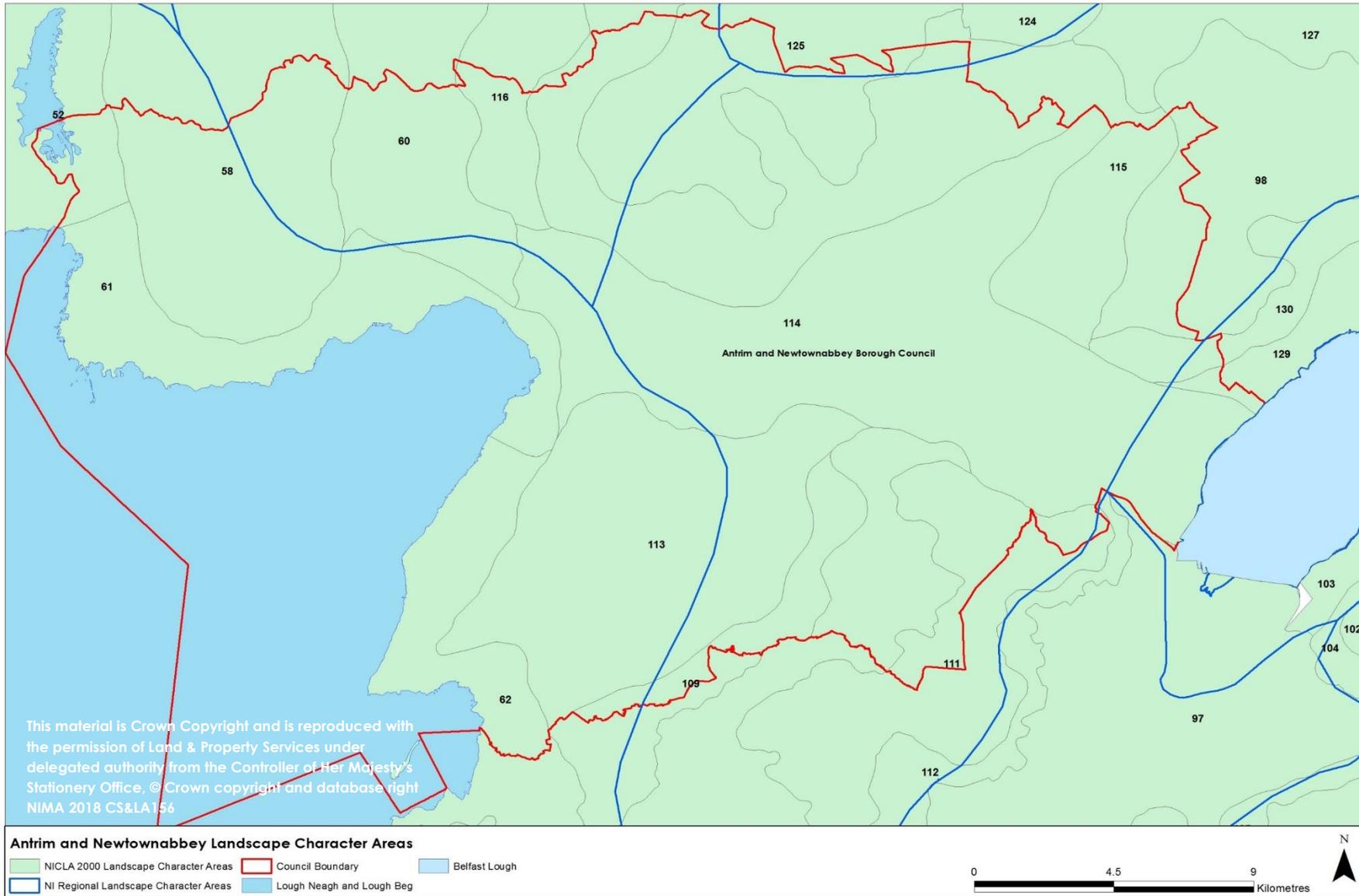
- 9.4 Areas of Scenic Quality identified in the NILCA 2000 are considered to be of regional significance and represent a second tier (below Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)) in the hierarchy of landscape classifications. They are characterised by visually pleasing patterns or combinations of landscape elements, and by their generally unspoilt character, free from major intrusion. In addition, they may include significant sites or features of nature conservation, historic or cultural importance. Often they are visually prominent landscapes such as ridge tops, scarp slopes above settlements, and lough shores, and therefore many of these areas are particularly sensitive to change.
- 9.5 The Areas of Scenic Quality identified, were used as a basis to designate Areas of High Scenic Value (AOHSV) in BMAP (2004 & 2014 versions) in order to protect the setting of the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area and other areas of particular landscape merit. The three AOHSV located within the Borough include:
- Carrickfergus Escarpment;
 - Carnmoney Hill; and
 - Belfast Basalt Escarpment.
- 9.6 The legacy Antrim Area Plan predates the NILCA and therefore there are no Areas of High Scenic Value designated through that development plan. However, NILCA 2000 identifies an Area of Scenic Quality along the Lough Neagh Shores and this study will inform the identification of additional designations as the Council's LDP is prepared.
- 9.7 As an update, NIEA published a draft Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment (NIRLCA) in April 2015. It identifies 26 regional RLCAs for Northern Ireland based upon information on people and place and the combinations of nature, culture and perception that make each part of Northern Ireland unique. It is intended to form a framework for the updating of local-scale assessments that will replace the NILCA 2000. In the Borough, the RLCAs within the Borough include:
- Lough Neagh Basin;
 - South Antrim Hills and Six Mile Water;

- Belfast Lough and Islandmagee;
 - Antrim Plateau and Glens; and
 - Maine and Braid River Valleys.
- 9.8 The Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment, 2014, provided a strategic understanding of different regional seascape character along the region's coasts. The objectives of the study included relating the description of each seascape character area to its neighbouring terrestrial LCAs (as in NICLA, 2000) and to take account of boundaries identified in relation to neighbouring seascape areas for the British and Irish coastline.
- 9.9 The Borough has a relatively small coastline stretching 7.5km between Hazelbank to the north and Metropolitan Newtownabbey adjoining Greenisland to the south. The character of the area resembles an urban developed coast with a diversity of mixed-use developments for residential, recreation and tourism. The coastline of the Borough is situated along Belfast Lough, which is a large intertidal sea lough located at the mouth of the River Lagan on the east coast of Northern Ireland. The only Seascape Character within the Borough is Belfast Lough.
- 9.10 The supplementary planning guidance, 'Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes' provides broad, strategic guidance in relation to the visual and landscape impacts of wind energy development in each of the 130 LCA's in Northern Ireland. While dealing more specifically with wind energy developments, it gives an indication of those LCAs which potentially are most impacted by development and their sensitivity to change.

Landscape Character Areas

- 9.11 LCAs are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. Each area has its own individual character and identity, even though it shares the same generic characteristics with other landscape types.
- 9.12 For the purposes of the Borough-wide assessment, emphasis is placed upon the definition, characterisation and evaluation of LCAs at a scale of 1:38,000. The LCAs were defined previously in the NILCA 2000 by the former Environment and Heritage Service and Environmental Resources Management.
- 9.13 The 16 LCAs each have a distinctive sense of place. The historic boundaries of the character areas worked well in practice and are therefore retained for this update, with no change to boundaries. The analysis of the study showed that boundaries of the NICLA 2000 are still adequate and fit for purpose to cover the landscape of the Borough. An overview map of the spatial distribution of LCAs is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: LCAs in the Borough



9.14 As recognised by Natural England's guidelines, landscape is a continuum and character does not in general change abruptly on the ground. More commonly, the character of the landscape will change slowly, and therefore boundaries drawn between LCAs are somewhat permeable and transparent on this ground.

9.15 The detailed and updated LCA profiles are presented in Appendix 1 of this report and are structured as follows:

- Topography, geology and drainage;
- Land cover and field patterns;
- Woodland cover;
- Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings;
- Agriculture;
- Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage;
- Geodiversity/ Biodiversity;
- Community Assets and Cultural Qualities;
- Access and Enjoyment of the landscape; and
- Views and Perceptual Quality.

9.16 For each of the LCAs a short profile of Landscape Characteristics, Sensitivity to Modern Influences and Principles for Accommodating New Development was included.

Landscape setting of Antrim

9.17 The area of Antrim is on the northeast fringes of the Lough Neagh Basin at a point where three major rivers flow into Lough Neagh. The rivers (Lower Bann, the Maine and Six Mile Water) have a distinctive character and each has eroded part of the Antrim Basalt Plateau to form a diverse range of wetland, valley and lowland landscapes on the fringes of upland moors.

9.18 The Six-Mile Water follows the alignment of a major fault-line in the underlying basalts. The fault has formed a long, straight valley, which extends into the Metropolitan Newtownabbey area and creates a corridor for an extensive network of infrastructure, including the M2 Motorway.

9.19 The basalt uplands create a backdrop to valley views throughout the area. The Borough includes an extensive and scenic length of the Lough Neagh Shoreline, from Lough Beg to Ram's Island. Lough Neagh can seem a vast and rather bleak sheet of water but the indented coastline of bays, inlets and headlands forms a tranquil and scenic water's edge.

Landscape setting of Newtownabbey

9.20 The urban area of Metropolitan Newtownabbey extends across much of the low-lying land at the head of Belfast Lough and is the dominant land-use. To

the north, a sheer basalt escarpment marks the southern limits of the Antrim Plateau. The summits of Cave Hill, Divis and Black Mountain tower over Belfast and Carnmoney Hill, an outlier from the principal escarpment, is a central landmark for Metropolitan Newtownabbey.

- 9.21 Newtownabbey, as a principal gateway to Belfast City has an important strategic location. Located on the northern shores of Belfast Lough, the metropolitan area has expanded along the Three Mile Water Valley and up onto the slopes of Carnmoney Hill. This rugged outlier geological feature in the centre of Newtownabbey has occurred due to the erosion of the escarpment by the Six Mile Water River.
- 9.22 The valley between Antrim and Metropolitan Newtownabbey is a broad, undulating lowland which acts as a corridor for the dense infrastructure. The valley is enclosed by undulating farmland landscape, which is a continuation of the basalt escarpment to the northeast of Carnmoney Hill. The upland landscapes on the summits of these farmland slopes include Tobernavreen Hill, Tardree Mountain, Drumadarragh Hill and Donegore Hill.

Sense of Place Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough

- 9.23 The sensitivity assessment identifies constraints and opportunities within each character type/sub-type. Although landscape context is considered as one of the key sensitivity criteria, the assessment essentially relates to specific landscapes and any effect on immediately adjacent types in isolation. It is important to also take into account the experience and appreciation of the landscape of the Borough as a whole and to 'stand back' from individual assessments and consider the wider implications of the combined conclusions of the individual assessments.
- 9.24 This LCA update has identified a number of distinctive landscape features across the Borough and have highlighted these in the sensitivity assessments of each landscape character area in this study. The study has focused on landscape features, which could potentially be significantly and adversely affected by the impacts of accommodating future development.
- 9.25 The Lough Neagh and Lough Beg shoreline are exceptionally sensitive landscapes, which are subject to differing pressures. The wooded landscape of the northern shore is influenced by modern commercial forestry management and the encroachment of rural single dwellings in the countryside adjacent to the shore. There is also pressure for recreational facilities near Antrim, which may risk the tranquil presence of the shore. The eastern shores are under pressure from the impact of sand and gravel extraction through the presence of Heavy Good Vehicles eroding the character of narrow roads.
- 9.26 The Six Mile Water Valley provides a setting for Antrim and Metropolitan Newtownabbey and is subject to the pressures of large-scale development and infrastructure, including housing, retail, outlets, manufacturing and industrial developments. There is an evident pressures associated with the

growth of rural single dwellings throughout the valley and on the fringes of settlements. Hedgerow degradation is occurring through over maturation and loss is apparent in the area.

- 9.27 There are a number of well-defined, steep-sided slopes and upland summits, which form prominent 'landmark' features. These areas are particularly sensitive to the visual impact of built development and changes to landscape pattern from neglected field boundaries and expansion of forestry. These uplands are Drumadarragh Hill, Shaws Hill, Tobernavveen Hill, Big Collin, Wee Collin, Tardree Mountain, Donegore Hill, Carnmoney Hill, Carrickfergus Escarpment, Divis and Black Mountain, Cavehill and Carn Hill. The archaeological sites on the fringes of uplands are vulnerable to the impacts of modern agriculture and traditional stone dwellings are frequently abandoned or in a state of disrepair. Quarrying is an additional pressure for change in these areas. Changes to the distinctive ladder pattern of fields on the prominent slopes of the Belfast Basalt and Carrickfergus Escarpments would be particularly disruptive. The development of transmission masts and other upstanding landscape elements is highly visible on the skylines of upland areas, escarpments and ridges enclosing urban areas.
- 9.28 There is intensive pressure for public access to all ridge-top and valley landscapes on the fringes of urban areas and plans to improve access to Carnmoney Hill may lead to more structured network of informal paths. The present ad-hoc pattern of access is causing problems with erosion, fly-tipping, poor quality fencing and signs, as well as an uncertainty amongst landowners and farmers, which may lead to a general lack of land management.
- 9.29 The Long Mountain Ridge is particularly sensitive to pressures for individual rural single dwellings. As the ridge forms a high point between two valleys, it is also under pressure from wind turbines, pylons and telecommunications masts. The impact of commercial peat extraction within this area has altered the landscape drastically by removing natural vegetation cover and destroying valuable moss and wetland.
- 9.30 The landscape between Metropolitan Newtownabbey and Antrim is most known as a transport corridor, providing strategic links between Belfast, Larne and Lough Neagh. Additionally, along the small coastal stretch in Metropolitan Newtownabbey, at dawn and night the settlements and fluid movement of maritime traffic provide an interesting visual experience. The coastal area along the shores of Belfast Lough provides a sense of place as part of Northern Ireland's most settled coastal landscape, closely linked to the identity of Belfast. As the principal gateway to Belfast City from the north, Metropolitan Newtownabbey serves an important strategic function.
- 9.31 The analysis of this LCA update, 2018, identified a list of pressures for each of the LCA areas; these are presented within the 'Sensitivity to modern Influences' section within each LCA. Throughout the LCAs, the pressures or vulnerabilities to modern development included the integration or proliferation of single

dwelling houses, the impact of road infrastructure upgrades and the changing pattern of modern farming altering local landscape dynamics in places. One of the most significant growing pressures from the NICLA 2000 was the growth in renewable energy projects and the impact of wind turbines/farms on sensitive areas within the landscape of the Borough. The LCA update includes an approach for accommodating new modern development within each of the LCAs and these are outlined in each LCA within Appendix 1.

Local Landscape Policy Areas

- 9.32 Through the operational policies contained in PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage, Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) were designated to help protect the features and areas within or adjoining settlements considered to be of the greatest amenity value, landscape quality or local significance which are worthy of protection from damaging or undesirable development. The features can include archaeological sites and monuments, listed or other locally important buildings, attractive vistas, areas of local nature conservation importance and riverbanks or shorelines.
- 9.33 Within the Borough, there are 38 LLPAs designated under the legacy Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP 2014 version) for the legacy Newtownabbey Borough Council Area. The legacy Antrim Area Plan predates the designation of LLPAs and therefore does not contain any of these designations.
- 9.34 The LCA update provides the strategic overarching framework for identifying areas of local landscape quality based on landscape integrity, scenic quality and enjoyment. It is the first point for the identification of potential LLPAs, followed by a more detailed study at the local level based on the features identified in PPS 6. It is acknowledged that the policy for LLPAs will be contained in the draft Plan Strategy, but the definitive boundary identification will be outlined in the Local Policies Plan.

Landscape Wedges

- 9.35 The RDS 2035 highlights under SFG 5: Protect and enhance the quality of the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets that the use of Landscape Wedges are to 'protect and enhance the network of open spaces in the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area'. These wedges consist of a buffer zone that consists of open areas that distinguish and maintain the separate identities of the Metropolitan Area. This is to prevent merging, provide protection to the setting of settlements and maintain rural character. The legacy Newtownabbey Borough Council has three Landscape Wedges designated through BMAP (2004 and 2014 versions). As the legacy Antrim Area Plan predates Landscape Wedge policy there are currently no designations.
- 9.36 The LCA update provides the strategic overarching framework for identifying areas of landscape quality. It is the first point for the identification of potential landscape wedges, followed by a more detailed study at the local level. It is acknowledged that the policy for Landscape Wedges will be outlined in the

draft Plan Strategy, but the definitive boundary identification will be conducted in the Local Polices Plan.

Landscape Setting of Settlements

9.37 The strategic assessment and analysis of the settings of settlements including landscape is included within evidence paper 2 - Settlement Evaluation. After the publication of the draft Plan Strategy, further detailed studies of the landscape setting of settlements will be conducted as part of the process of identifying LLPAs within the Local Polices Plan stage of the LDP.

10 LCA Conclusions and Recommendations

10.1 From the key findings of the Council's LCA update, it is evident that the Borough has a variety of contrasting landscapes, some of which are particularly sensitive to change due to their type, high visibility and have low capacity to absorb the impact of new development. These include Drumadarragh Hill, Tardree Forest, Donegore Hill, Carnmoney Hill, Belfast Basalt Escarpment and the Carrickfergus Escarpment. It is therefore recommended that these areas are afforded greater protection from development so that their natural environments are sustained and enhanced.

10.2 Thus, it is recommended a landscape approach focusing on the following areas be utilised:

- To protect important upland hills and mountains for their landmark qualities, their setting and cultural/historical qualities. Views of these hills recur across Antrim and Newtownabbey where they form highly visible and easily recognisable landmarks. Many also form visual 'buffers' to less prominent upland areas, or the backdrop to settlements, small scale valleys and the coast. Modern excessive development on or near these hills would be visually prominent and would detract from their distinct form and character;
- The sensitive and ecologically important shoreline, water body and islands of Lough Neagh and Lough Beg for protection from unsustainable development;
- Protect the landscape qualities and nature conservation attributes of the coastal area of Belfast Lough by protecting the urbanised coastal setting and enhancing the natural environment;
- The areas of Donegore Hill, Drumadarragh Hill, Tardree Forest/Mountain, Carnmoney Hill, Belfast Basalt Escarpment and Carrickfergus Escarpment, development should be in keeping with the character of the area concentrating on scale, density, massing, height, landscape and layout;

- Additionally, future quarry proposals should be restricted in all of the areas identified above; and
- The overall impact of rural single dwellings from across the entire landscape of the Borough. There should be an emphasis on integrating new rural dwellings into local landscape dynamics through appropriate siting, design characteristics and size.

10.8 Planning applications submitted for development proposals within designated Strategic Landscape Policy Areas (as identified within the draft Plan Strategy and brought forward within the Local Policies Plan), should be accompanied by a Landscape Visual and Impact Assessment. These assessments should consider how the impact of the development will affect or influence the local landscape characteristics. These assessments could additionally be required for all large-scale development within the Borough's countryside.

10.9 To ensure that the Council's LCA update is utilised, it is recommended that future work should be undertaken throughout the lifespan of the LDP. This ensures the effectiveness and robustness of evidence and development approaches are updated throughout the lifespan of the LDP. The recommendations for review and monitoring fall into three categories and are listed below:

1. Ongoing work to monitor the effectiveness of the existing guidance on decision-making and identify developments or policy changes that may trigger changes to character descriptions and/or require further guidance;
2. Additional work to improve or make the existing guidance more relevant and helpful including consideration of local design guides and supplementary planning guidance tailored to the countryside of the Borough; and
3. Over the lifespan of the LDP to encourage communities, developers, landowners and other interested parties to support the principles identified within this LCA and to help maintain high quality, distinct and diverse landscapes now and for future generations.

10.10 This Landscape Assessment forms part of the Countryside Assessment and will be taken into account when formulating the LDP.

Figure 3: Views towards Belfast Escarpment



Figure 4: View from the summit of Tobernavene Hill



Figure 5: View of Tildarg Reservoir



Appendix 1 - Landscape Character Areas

Audience and uses of information

This document is aimed at decision makers within the Council and any partner organisations, governmental departments and developers considering submitting planning applications for development proposals. This LCA update will assist both developers to ensure decision-makers in ensuring landscape character and quality is clearly considered in their proposals.

It is also hoped that the information contained within this report is of wider interest to the local community of Antrim and Newtownabbey. It should help to raise the profile of our landscapes and enhance a sense of pride and ownership in working together to strengthen the landscapes of the future.

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LCA- 52 Lower Bann Valley

Figure 6: Location Map

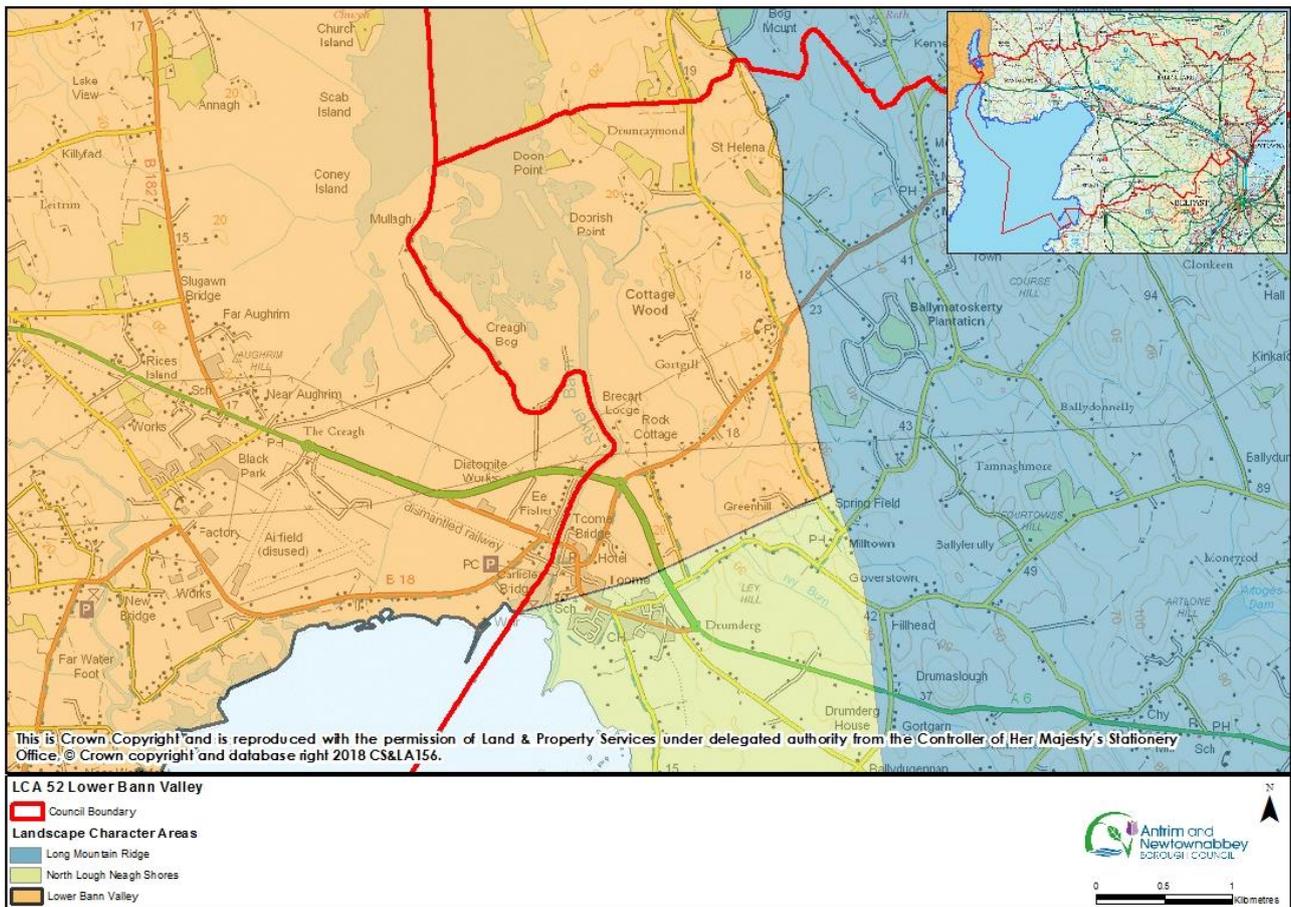


Figure 7: Representative Photographs

View of poor grassland/wetland.



View of the Toome Bridge.



This LCA covers relatively flat, expansive landscape on the lower reaches of large rivers and on the fringes of Lough Neagh and Lough Beg.

Table 4: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landscape extends along the wider floodplain of the Lower Bann. It is relatively low-lying, with transition from shallow drumlins on the edges of floodplains, to extensive flat grasslands, bog and wet woodlands on the fringes of Lough Neagh and Lough Beg. • The LCA is a north-south tract from Kilrea in the north to Toome in the south and comprises 99% Upper and Lower formations of the Antrim Lava Group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ In the northwest (outside of Council boundary), there is small outcrop of Tertiary Dolerite Intrusion. • River and drainage systems include Lough Neagh, Lough Beg, Lower Bann River and straight ditches along field boundaries. <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land cover is dominated by improved grasslands with low biodiversity quality. • Arable land accounts for a small amount of land cover which is often rotational with sown pastures rather than repeated cropping of cereals. • Areas of rough grassland are scattered through the LCA, sometimes associated with damper areas around cutover bog or regressing from pastures developed over reclaimed former bog land. • This LCA has one of the major concentrations of Lowland Raised Bogs in Northern Ireland. Structural features are evident including domed outline, pools and hummocks, and Sphagnum lawns. • Relatively flat, expansive landscape with large open fields on floodplain, often enclosed by straight drainage ditches. • Shallow drumlins are enclosed by flat open pastures that give a diverse, well-treed landscape pattern, with farmsteads and mature trees. • Evidence of well-connected hedgerows with scattered trees. These trees include oak which are prominent features. In areas around urban fringes, hedgerows are often poorly developed and gappy. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small-scale and sparse scattered woodland within the LCA and are mainly centred in areas outside of the Council boundary. • Birch Woodland is common and generally associated with cutover bogs and margins that surround uncut lowland bogs. • Coniferous Forest, dominated by Sitka spruce, Norway spruce and larch is common in the LCA and much is planted on cutover raised bog. • Areas of cut over peatland are wetter and less acidic, which enable wet woodlands of willows and alder to develop. • Scattered woodland planting along riverbank of Lower Bann and additional scrub and wetland trees screening peatbogs. These trees form an important constituent of the woodland cover. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farms and villages are concentrated on shallow drumlins. Examples include Toome which is a strategic crossing point of the Lower Bann and is dominated by through traffic. The village has a degraded landscape setting, with a scattered pattern of buildings, farms and industrial sites. • Pattern of single development has become overwhelmed by ribbon development, which includes some prestigious, large properties on the flat lands close to Lough Neagh and Lough Beg. • Rural single dwellings have become prominent features within the landscape with limited screening and design integration into the local landscape dynamics.

Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	Mixture of improved grassland with extensive management (fertiliser, slurry and cutting) and rough grassland. Often low biodiversity clustered pastures. Threats to agriculture include increased commercial development and extensive dumping in areas.
Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	Historic Core in Toome, industrial heritage related to Eel Fishery. Unscheduled, scheduled monument & Scheduled Zone. Listed Buildings in Toome. Defence Heritage and derelict Railway Line
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>Toome- Internationally important deposits of diatomite with changes in diatom species composition recording Holocene variations in water depth of Lough Neagh Basin.</p> <p>Lough Neagh and wetlands are of international importance to overwintering wildfowl, designated RAMSAR, Special Protection Area and Area of Special Scientific Interest. Rare plants including Pennyroyal and the Irish Ladies Tresses Important Grassland and Marsh (NI Priority Habitat). Important species: Lapwing, Curlew and Snipe, Pennyroyal and Irish ladies' tresses.</p> <p>Lough Beg National Natural Reserve part of Lough Neagh RAMSAR and SPA is important for migrating winter birds and breeding waders.</p> <p>NI Priority Habitat: Lough Neagh (Eutrophic Standing Water), wet woodland, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and Lowland raised bog.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	Commercial fishing of eels, fresh water herring and dollagahn (native brown trout) takes place. Eel originating from Lough Neagh has protected EU status. The Lough Neagh fishermen's cooperative and Eel Fishery is located in Toome along the River Bann. New bridge crossing over River Bann provides landmark views of the bridge.
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>Limited access points confined to the village of Toome and associated footpaths, parks and walkway along river. Although limited, well used by the Community, the Council and Toome TIDAL Group. This group has received grant aid to resurface paths along the river, install play equipment and reopen the Lough Keepers Cottage as a good recreation/tourism asset, as well as heavily promoting the recreational potential of Toome.</p> <p>Waterways Ireland provide input into the area with proposals for the Lower Bann and promotion of the recreational qualities of the River Bann.</p> <p>The bridge is in modern style and the colour provides a positive landmark within vistas of Toome.</p>
Views & Perceptual Quality	Views in this LCA are either short or framed by topography. There is mixed perceptual quality, with pleasant vistas on the fringe of Toome along the river but the influence of modern development has deteriorated the landscape.

Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	This LCA traverses the boundaries of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. From a cross boundary perspective, Lough Beg is a sensitive and important natural ecological habitat with a multitude of designations of which planning should enable a collaborative approach.
Summary of landscape characteristics	Sensitive landscape area adjacent to Lough Beg, Lower Bann and Lough Neagh with internationally and nationally important wetland habitats for wintering fowl and breeding waders and other NI priority habitats and species. Perceptually this area has some good hedgerows and screening but the impact of modern development is having an effect on the landscape quality.
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>Rural single dwellings are predominant features in the landscape which has become overwhelmed by ribbon development.</p> <p>Much of the bog land in the area around Lough Beg has been subjected to extensive peat cutting, transforming vast areas into featureless bleak expanses which have a profound impact on the local landscape character.</p> <p>The area around Toome has a particularly degraded character, with extensive loss of hedgerows and poorly sited, prominent industrial development close to the riverbank.</p> <p>Roads infrastructure works and the influence of electricity pylons within the aesthetic backdrop have a significant perceptual impact. Evidence of large scale dumping of hard rubble, general waste and white goods is extensive in the LCA.</p>
Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better integration and screening of new single rural dwellings into the local landscape dynamics. • New rural development should be encouraged into existing building clusters rather than extending ribbons. • Siting of new development away from the road will ensure ribbon development does not obscure views across the floodplain. • Maintain and enhance field boundaries. Hedgerows trees or shelterbelts may help to integrate new development within the landscape. • Plans for new bog exploitation should be discouraged. Appropriate restoration methods should be applied to commercial bogs to help restore aspects of the wetland habitat. • Prevent new forest planting on blanket bog. • This LCA has a wealth of nature conservation interest and areas of high scenic quality associated with Lough Beg and Lough Neagh. Overall, this LCA has a high sensitivity to wind energy.
Overall Sensitivity	Overall, the landscape has a High Sensitivity to modern development, especially around the fringes of the River Bann and Lough Beg.

LCA 58- Long Mountain Ridge

Figure 8: Location Map

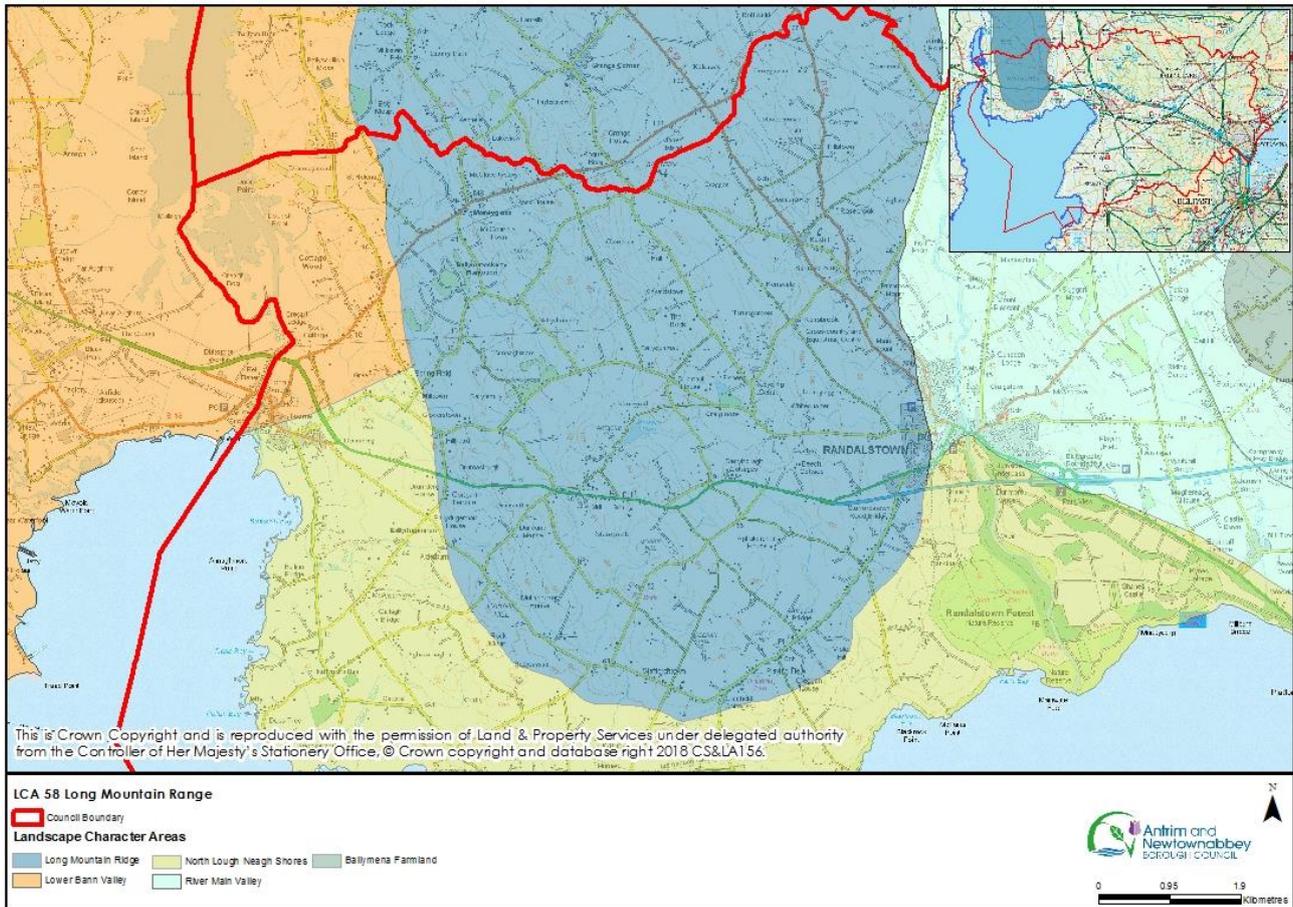


Figure 9: Representative Photographs

View of improved grassland



View of undulating grassland



This LCA comprises a long ridge of land, known as the 'Long Mountain', that runs from Ballymoney in the north to Randalstown in the south. The area has undulating side slopes and a broad rounded crest.

Table 5: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This LCA forms the low rolling ground of mid Antrim and the Antrim Plateau. • Despite variations in topography and character, the ridge reads as a single feature in the landscape and forms a distinctive skyline of distinct rounded ridge orientated north south with undulating side slopes and a broad rounded crest. • The geology comprises a mixture of tertiary Igneous Basalt formations with Lower Basalt formation accounting for 70% of the LCA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ North Lough Neagh has extensive drumlin swarms. • There are two small loughs and other smaller loughs associated with peatland. A number of tributaries flow into major rivers within the Borough. <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land cover is dominated by improved grasslands with 90% improved for agricultural improvement. • Arable accounts for approx. 9% of the land cover scattered throughout the LCA with notable arable land at Moneyglass. • Areas of rough grassland are scattered throughout the LCA, mixed with parts of heath and remnant bog. • In the North of the LCA Blanket Bog is extensive and although much has been cutover, reclaimed for grazing or forestry, there are some intact areas remaining. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lowland bog is present in Groggan and has been affected by past and recent cutting. ◦ Heath has developed in areas of bog that have been cutover or drained or where thin peat has extended from basins over a rock outcrop. • Field patterns vary in scale from undulating side slopes to the flatter terrain. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ On slopes, boundaries are small/medium and hedgerows are more extensive, whereas in flatter areas large field boundaries are present. • Small wooded estates on the lower slopes overlooking the River Main Valley are associated with stones walls, designed landscapes and avenues of beech trees. • Strong hedgeline geometry and numerous scattered trees with patches of moss on exposed ridge tops. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small-scale woodland cover scattered within LCA. • Moneyglass House has a large parkland with extensive planting of broadleaves that pre-date 1813. The avenue is of chestnut, beech, oak, larch and Scots pine. • However, there is abundant ash and willow that suggest a more semi-natural origin. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement is widespread on the sheltered side slopes, comprising small settlements including Moneyglass and small groups of dwellings. • The place of worship spire in Moneyglass is a particular landmark. • A complex network of roads with telegraph poles and electricity pylons add to the impression of a well-settled landscape. • Single rural housing development is frequent and dispersed on the ridge crest (outside of the Borough) and on the side of slopes, some of this development is rather intrusive. • There are good examples of scattered single dwellings which are well screened and integrated into the local landscape.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nevertheless, there are examples of modern, large single dwellings that from a design perspective do not integrate well into the traditional farming character of the landscape around the Rougery Road. 	
Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	Mixed medium/small grassland agriculture with improved grassland and rough grazing. On slopes, rough grazing and small-scale pasture are managed through grazing rotation. In larger flatter fields attached to big farm complexes the influence of modern management and machinery are evident (Slurry, Fertiliser, Spraying etc.).
Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	The church spire of Moneyglass is a particular historical landmark. Industrial heritage including historic mills, factories, creamery, bridges and chemical works. A number of listed buildings including rectories, farm buildings, churches, thatched cottage, school, gates and houses. There are scheduled and unscheduled monuments.
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>There are no areas of Geodiversity within the Borough's boundary of this LCA.</p> <p>Lough Beg has been designated an ASSI and contains one of the largest areas of wet grassland in Northern Ireland. The wet grassland in the ASSI is also notable for the rare plants, important invertebrate communities and breeding birds that it supports. The latter includes a large concentration of breeding waders (Snipe, Lapwing Curlew and Redshank). Lough Beg ASSI is a wintering site for large numbers of migratory water birds. As part of the Lough Neagh system it supports populations of Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Great Cormorant, Whooper Swan, Mute Swan, Greylag Goose, Shelduck, Wigeon, Teal, Gadwall, Mallard, Shoveler, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Scaup, Goldeneye, Coot, Lapwing and Golden Plover that are significant in an all-Ireland context.</p> <p>Patches of moorland, scrub and blanket bog occur on exposed ridge top especially towards the north. Craggy outcrops occur at the heads of streams.</p> <p>Rough Grassland with intermixed cover provides habitats for waders including Curlew and Irish Hare. Patches of fens are associated with small ponds. Streams and waterbodies do not have recorded priority species.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community assets include rural schools and places of worship, with attached graveyards. Others include associations with bigger towns including Randalstown. Key Gateway to the Northwest and Londonderry/Derry via the A6.</p> <p>The historic and traditional character of farm buildings is present throughout the aesthetics of the local landscape.</p> <p>Sense of place with the Antrim Plateau to the East towards the direction of Belfast.</p>

Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	Limited access throughout the LCA with no public right of ways. Overall, the LCA has an attractive or pleasant scale of enjoyment through the sense of place and views and vistas.
Views & Perceptual Quality	Aspirational and aesthetic views through wide, open rolling farmland of rounded drumlins; extensive westward views towards the Sperrins and panoramic views towards Lough Neagh.
Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	This LCA traverses the boundaries of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. There are no overarching cross boundary issues within this LCA. This will be continually reviewed and monitored throughout the lifespan of the LDP.
Summary of Landscape Characteristics	Mixture of open small/medium and large mixed grassland areas with mixed-use farm buildings and scattered single dwellings. The area has a managed look through hedgerows and fields for agriculture. In the distance, forestry (Tardree) provides a pleasant aesthetic view. Scattered small-established communities are interacting with the landscape. There are some prominent renewables on the bottom of slopes which slightly degrade the character. Parts of the LCA have stunning distant views of areas of scenic quality (including Slemish and the Sperrins). There are multiple other LCAs visible and overall these provide an inspiring view.
Sensitivity to Modern Influences	<p>There is a growing impact from development involving the massing, style and character of rural single dwellings within the landscape.</p> <p>The influence from electricity infrastructure including poles and pylons affect the perception of the LCA with lots of crisscrossing of wires.</p> <p>The peatlands have extensive evidence of machine peat cutting in Northern Ireland, with some hand cutting. Machine cutting leaves areas of bare peat that slowly become colonised.</p> <p>The moorland is quite fragmented and substantially undermanaged; its conservation is paramount to the local landscape character in the upland areas. Peat cutting, windfarms, pylons and telecommunication masts are pressures for change.</p> <p>The construction and new infrastructure associated with the realigned A6 is having a significant impact on the landscape with manufactured conifer screening and a single turbine near Randalstown.</p> <p>The estate woodlands on the eastern slopes are particularly prominent with views from the River Main Valley and are relatively sensitive to change.</p>
Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Houses in promontory locations should be carefully designed and sited to integrate into the local landscape character.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development should be concentrated in clusters on ridge tops to help retain its open and undeveloped character. • Large-scale windfarms are inappropriate in this landscape but small groups of turbines may create visual interest on ridge tops. • Telecommunications masts may also be accommodated. • The gentle convex shape of the ridge and its relative plainness of character tend to reduce this landscape's sensitivity to wind energy development; and although the area is visible over a wide area, close range views are generally filtered by existing vegetation. • Overall Medium Sensitivity to Wind Energy.
Overall Sensitivity	Overall, the Landscape has a Medium Sensitivity to modern development due to the simplicity of the character of the LCA

LCA 60- River Main Valley

Figure 10: Location Map

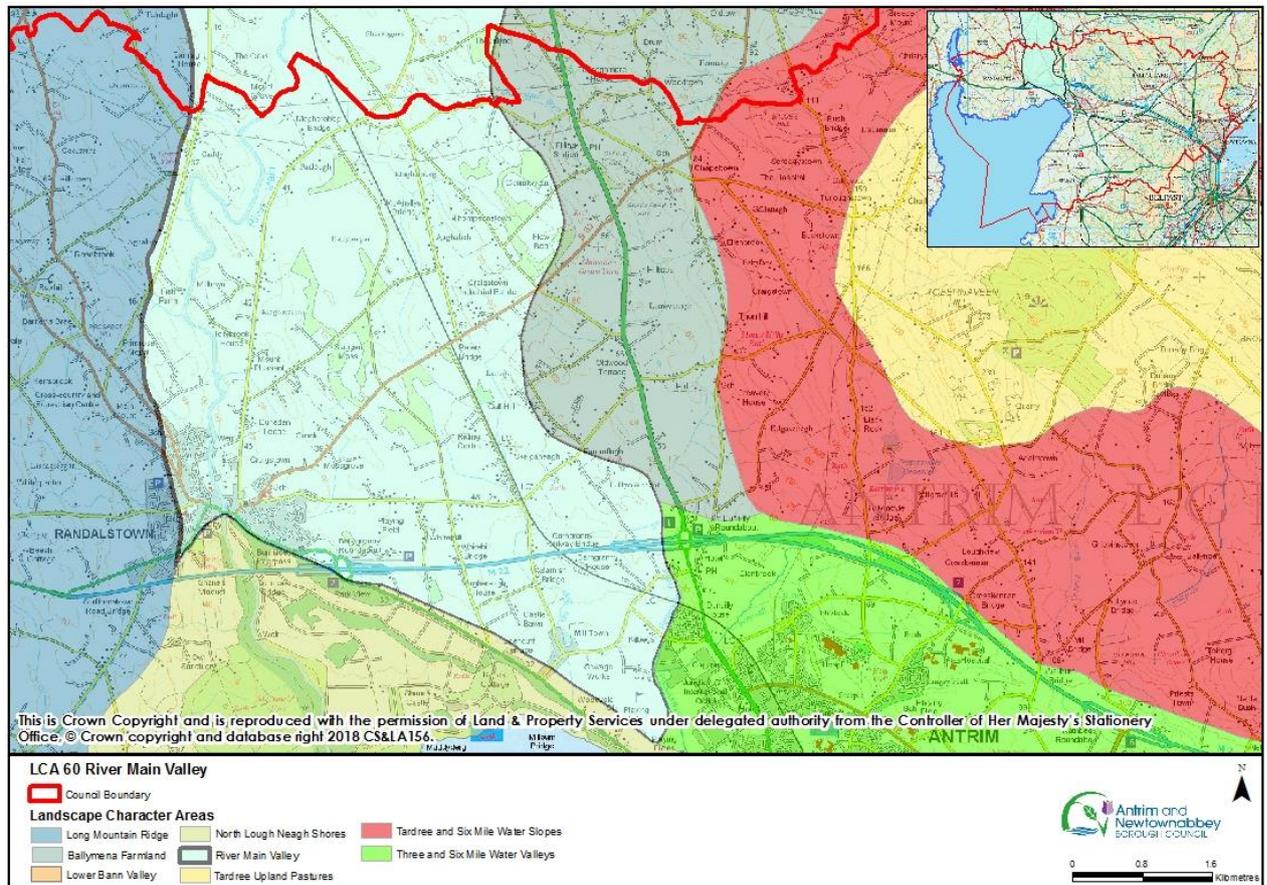


Figure 11: Representative Photographs

View of improved grassland with Sluggan Moss in the background.



View of rural single dwellings outside Randalstown



this LCA covers the relatively flat, broad floodplain of the southern part of the River Main, which lies between the Long Mountain ridge to the west and the Ballymena Farmland to the east.

Table 6: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics	
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA lies within the region described as the Central Lowlands. • The landscape is almost uniformly flat and is set within, and is quite distant from, the undulating ridges on either side of it and the drumlins that flank the valley floor. • The LCA is a north-south tract from the southern outskirts of Ballymena in the north to the west of Antrim in the south. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The LCA comprises Upper and Lower Basalt Formations of the Antrim Lava Group. ◦ Cullybackey and Clogh Mills Drumlins to the North (outside of the Borough). • Rivers within the LCA include the River Main, Braid River and Kells Water. • The River Main, Braid River and Kells Water all have river water crowfoot. • Otter is also found on the Braid River. <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassland accounts for 74% of the land cover, slightly higher than the Northern Ireland average (71%), improved grasslands account for 68%. Nevertheless, there are scattered damp grasslands along the River Main and Kells Water. • Arable land accounts for about 7% of the land cover and is concentrated mainly to the north of the Kells Water. • Extensive areas of lowland bogs are mostly found in areas to the east of the River Main at areas including Sluggan Moss, Sharvogues, Ballylurgan and Flow Bog. All of these sites have been cut over and disturbed. Heath has developed mainly in areas of cutover bog. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is little woodland, accounting for just 1%, the majority of which is located in lowland woodland pastures at Glagorm Castle (outside of Local Authority). • Along the banks of the River Main there is scattered broadleaf woodland planted to help enhance the overall landscape character of the area. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The valley floor is densely settled, with numerous farmhouses and small single dwellings prominent across the flat terrain. There is evidence of rural single dwelling development pointing towards a proliferation of different design styles which is beginning to influence the landscape's local character. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Within the rural fringe outside of Randalstown, rural single dwellings are increasing along the main B road, with modern designs that have limited integration with the landscape. • Vertical features such as pylons and telegraph poles are particularly prominent within the landscape and skyline to the south. 	
Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	Medium to large sized grassland fields managed with modern machinery to increase grass production yields for grazing and silage. In areas within the River Main floodplain, grassland is in good condition for grass production, but this has lowered the biodiversity quality. In areas around wet woodland and on the fringe of peat bogs, extensive agricultural improvement schemes have drained fields to improve grass quality.

Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	<p>Unscheduled, scheduled monument & Scheduled Zone are designated areas by the Department for Communities. These include sites and monuments (Raths & Enclosures), historic buildings/listed buildings (Places of worship and listed houses) and industrial heritage (bridges).</p>
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>Sloggan Bog has Earth Science importance for Peat and related stratigraphy. This area is important for dendrochronology, tephrochronology and Late-Glacial and Holocene pollen records.</p> <p>Area of lowland raised bog found mostly to the east of the River Main. Lowland raised bog is a rare habitat in the UK. Sluggan Moss, located in the south of the LCA is an extensive area of mostly cutover bog. Although disturbed by commercial peat extraction this area remains important for wading birds such as Lapwing, Curlew and Snipe and the Marsh Fritillary Butterfly. Birch woodland fringes the site.</p> <p>Biodiversity in this LCA is often concentrated in hedgerows in areas outside of peatland. The different arrays of land cover from woodland to damp grassland pastures provide habitats for farmland birds including Bullfinch and Song Thrush.</p> <p>Raised bogs are of national and international importance, but only uncut bogs remain.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community Assets and facilities in the south of the LCA are often associated with Randalstown, including a place of worship and school on the edge of town. There are other small-scale community facilities scattered around the countryside area, including community halls, sports pitches and other facilities.</p> <p>From a cultural perspective, historic peat extraction for household fuels traditional farming and rural folk will have an importance in the cultural evolution of the rural landscape. The smells and aroma of turf-fuelled fires in this area would have been very prevalent historically.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>In the rural areas of this LCA, there are limited access points with limited public rights of way and extensive privately owned lanes and tracks. Within urban areas, including Randalstown footpaths enable small-scale informal recreation. In Randalstown, there are two public rights of way. These include along the riverbank at Bridge Street and along Main Street to Neilsbrook Lane. There is a Council agreed public right of way along the Randalstown Viaduct.</p> <p>The area along the banks of the River Main provides an enjoyable and picturesque setting of rural tranquillity with limited noise and calm movement within the area.</p>
Views & Perceptual Quality	<p>This LCA provides pleasant distant views of the sloping sides of Tobernaven Mountain and Tardree Forest. In some areas of the LCA, views are limited to topography and the influence of modern development and land uses.</p>

	<p>This LCA has a mixed perceptual quality from inspiring around the banks of the River Main in the tranquil countryside, to unpleasant/ uninteresting from the influence of commercial peat extraction degrading the landscape. The impact of modern rural development has influenced the perceptual landscape quality. The railway viaduct provides a magnificent backdrop to the town with distant views of the River Main towards Lough Neagh. The Viaduct built in 1856 for railway traffic was converted into a walking/cycling path in the 1990s. The viaduct is a prominent feature in the landscape and is part of the Highway to Health.</p>
Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	<p>This LCA traverses the boundaries of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. There are no overarching cross boundary issues within this LCA. This will be continually reviewed and monitored throughout the lifespan of the LDP.</p>
Summary of landscape characteristics	<p>Large-scale, open and expansive flat landscape within the River Main Valley with extensive grassland, sensitive woodland, some peatland and extensive single dwellings along road frontages. Robust hedgerows and trees are prominent and help to enhance the biodiversity quality of the area. The landscape provides a picturesque setting along the banks of the River Main and at the Randalstown Viaduct.</p>
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>The valley floor has suffered considerable degradation through peat cutting; those areas of moss that remain are particularly vulnerable to human induced pressures. The impact of commercial peat extraction has completely degraded the perceptual landscape quality and altered the evolution of naturally wetland habitat to one that has extensive drainage and scrub clearance.</p> <p>The pattern of hedgerows and trees which enclose most fields provide an important landscape structure; they are vulnerable to removal and under management. In areas of the LCA are being extensively cleared in favour of modern post and barbed wire fencing.</p> <p>The rural countryside is becoming densely populated single dwellings with affluent single dwellings. These houses have affluent modern design qualities, with limited uniformity and integration. Along rural lanes outside of Caddy there are examples of a proliferation of rural single housing development which is influencing the setting of the river valley.</p> <p>The river corridor itself should be considered a priority for management action. It is important as a visual focus in the landscape and an important wildlife habitat. The viaduct in Randalstown is a prominent landscape feature and backdrop to the urban area.</p>
Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better integration and screening of new single rural dwellings into the local landscape dynamics. This should follow simpler architectural designs and patterns to help avoid proliferation of varied housing styles. This

	<p>should be based on traditional vernaculars and sensitivity fenestration of buildings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New rural development should be encouraged into existing building clusters rather than extending ribbon development. • Maintain and enhance field boundaries. Hedgerows trees or shelterbelts may help to integrate new development within the landscape. • Plans for new bog exploitation should be discouraged. Appropriate restoration methods should be applied to commercial bogs to help restore aspects of the wetland habitat. • Opportunity for effective management of hedgerows to enhance landscape aesthetics and help improve biodiversity. • Opportunity to increase woodland within the valley floor and towards to the rivers to help with greater screening of existing development. • The relatively flat and uniform topography of this landscape suggest that there might be some scope for wind energy development. • The central and southern parts of this LCA are more wooded and somewhat less sensitive to wind energy development. • Overall sensitivity Medium to High to wind energy.
Overall Sensitivity	Overall, the Landscape has a Medium to High Sensitivity owing to its flat, open character and the remaining fragmented areas of moss.

LCA 61- North Lough Neagh Shores

Figure 12: Location Map

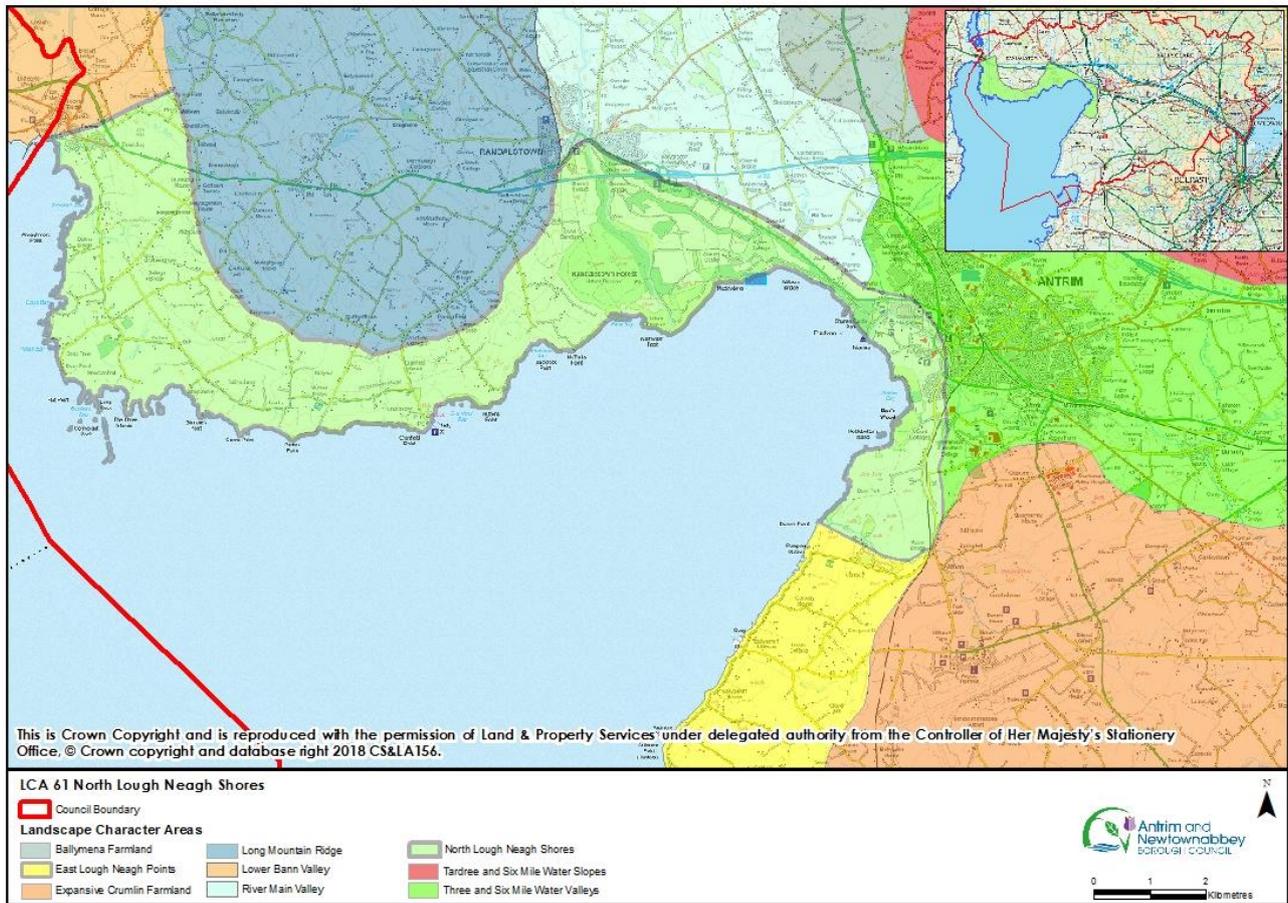


Figure 13: Representative Photographs

View of Lough Neagh from Cranfield



View of tomb within Shane's Castle



A rolling agricultural landscape with relatively small fields and overgrown hedges on the fringes of Lough Neagh. It comprises a 2km to 3km wide belt of flat land that fringes the northern shores between Toome and Antrim.

Table 7: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA lies within the region described as the Central Lowlands. • The Upper Basalt Formation comprises over 60% of the LCA in a strip along the shore of Lough Neagh. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Two areas south of Toome and north of the airport contain Lower Basalt Formations. ◦ An intra-Upper Basalt andesite is recorded in Randalstown Forest. • The eastern area is underlain by clays and lignites of the Lough Neagh Group, north of Ardmore Point. • The lough banks are carved into localised troughs and hummocks with incised streams but remain predominantly flat. • Flat, open land rising from Lough Neagh into gentle sloping hinterland. • The main water body in this LCA is Lough Neagh. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Rivers within the LCA include the River Main and the Six Mile Water River that enter Lough Neagh in this LCA. Both are salmonid rivers and both have river water- crowfoot <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassland accounts for 53% of the land cover, with arable land covering 22% of the land (including grass re-seeding). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Almost all the grassland is improved, although there is some rough and damp grassland alongside streams and around the Loughshore. ◦ Heavily managed grassland through grazing, silage, spraying and slurry. ◦ These improved pastures have low biodiversity. ◦ This mix of land cover provides habitats for farmland birds (Song Thrush, linnet, tree sparrow and spotted bullfinch). • Diverse irregular pattern of land cover, including marsh, moss, grassland, rough grassland and reed beds at the lough edge. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlands occupy 10% of the land cover, with almost three quarters in broadleaved or mixed woodland. • Small conifer plantations at Randalstown Forest and within the grounds of Shane's Castle. Woodland at Shane's Castle is dominated by Oak, Beech, Ash, Sycamore and Scots Pine; Birch and Alder dominate around the Loughshore. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement and roads are set on higher, better-drained land around the basin, and the Loughshore is not settled. • The shoreline is sparsely populated but behind the shoreline, the countryside is regularly populated with settlement comprising either single farms or small communities in clusters. • Single dwelling encroachment is beginning to occur on the fringes of the Loughshore which are quite large and affluent. • Townlands such as Churchtown, Knockaphort and Dostree have open aspects overlooking the expanse of the lough.

Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	Large grassland fields in good managed condition with mixed-use grassland grazing and livestock rotation. Some hedges provide biodiversity qualities for wildfowl near Lough Neagh. In some areas, (Shane's Castle) wildflowers are encouraged along verges of fields and parkland. Threats from single dwellings encroaching further towards the Loughshore, water quality threat from farming and pollution from increased boating activities.
Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	Unscheduled, Scheduled Monument & Scheduled Zone are designated areas by Department for Communities. These include sites and monuments (Raths, Enclosures, Fortification, Mass sites, Ecclesiastical site, Well, Cross, AP (archaeological potential) site and Souterrian), historic buildings/listed buildings (Places of worships, Old Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church and listed houses, Ballealy Cottage) and industrial heritage (Mill pond, Mill sites, Boat House and railway heritage). Additionally, defence heritage with WW2 era bombing target, Magazines and torpedo loading jetty. This LCA is steeped in history with numerous sites of archaeological interest with Shane's Castle Historic Park, Gardens and Demesne, and Cranfield Ecclesiastical Site.
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>Within the Lough Neagh area, there are multiple national and international environmental designations. Lough Neagh and Lough Beg are designated a RAMSAR Site for internationally Important Whooper Swan and for supporting breeding Terns and Great Crested Grebes. As well, the Lough is designated an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and Special Protection Area for overwintering wildfowl. Lough Neagh and Lough Beg regularly supports 20,000 waterfowl in winter. The ASSI supports beds of submerged aquatic vegetation with marginal swampy woodland and wet grassland.</p> <p>Shane's Castle is an ASSI for its parkland habitat and associated species, including Bats. The parkland is characterised by a landscape of improved and semi-improved grassland interspersed with open-grown trees, which occur at various densities. The site supports one of the largest concentrations of open-grown ancient and veteran trees in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>There are National Nature Reserves at Farr's Bay and Reas Wood. Excellent examples of wet woodland where alder, willow and birch are dominant. The priority species of narrow small-reed and Irish lady's tresses are also recorded at sites near the shore. Woodland moving inland become drier with Ash, Hawthorn and Blackthorn and provide habitats for several rare invertebrates.</p> <p>The southern end of Randalstown forest has been designated a National Nature Reserve, where it extends to the edge of Lough Neagh. Over the past 150 years, the water level has been adjusted to improve drainage and</p>

	<p>provide more agricultural land. Below the bank, the exposed land has been naturally colonised by vegetation which is now gradually changing from an alder wood to ash as the land further dries out. Nearer the water's edge, younger woodland dominated by willow and alder illustrates the colonisation of land exposed only 30 ago. The National Nature Reserve was designated to protect this semi-naturally changing woodland.</p> <p>The Pollan is a whitefish native to Ireland's Loughs and it is only commercially fished in Lough Neagh. Lough Neagh Pollan has been awarded protected status by the European Commission in 2018.</p> <p>Semi-natural oak and hazel wood with a well-developed flora occur along the south bank of the Glenavy River (outside of the Borough).</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community Assets and facilities are generally associated with the town of Antrim. There are recreational facilities at Randalstown Forest (World of Owls), Loughshore Park in Antrim and at the Toome Canal. Shane's Castle provides a private parkland with seasonal activities open to the public. There is a historic Ecclesiastical Site at Cranfield with parking, toilet, slipway and jetty facilities. Outside of these, there are Bed and Breakfasts, rural pubs and routes from the Northern Ireland Regional Cycle Path. Existing rural bus routes and stops service the rural community.</p> <p>Lough Neagh has a cultural history of eel fishing and this was awarded EU Protected Name status in 2011, the first product from Northern Ireland to receive the accreditation. Other historic practices include sand extraction and historic landing points for barges.</p> <p>There is a wealth of mythology and folklore associated with this LCA and Lough Neagh. One of the best known is the story of the creation of the Lough by Finn McCool, scooping up earth and throwing it at a rival during a fight, the area left filled with water became the Lough and the earth thrown is said to have formed the Isle of Man.</p> <p>An alternative legend to the creation of Lough Neagh is derived from a well that stood in the centre of the land covered by Lough Neagh. An old woman that tended the well forgot to close the gate, as a result the water overflowed from the well onto the land as far as Toome. Due to the disastrous flooding, the local people threw her into the water for being so forgetful and she drowned. The floodwater that remained became known as Lough Neagh.</p> <p>A fourth legend indicates that a long time ago, Ireland had many kingdoms of fine houses, strong castles and tall towers. Deep within one of these kingdoms was a magical spring of bright fresh water. The local people became greedy and began to rob and cheat their neighbours. At first, the spring watched and did nothing, but then it rose up</p>

	<p>in anger and drowned the entire kingdom. Even now on certain days, it is said that the towers of the lost land can be seen shimmering far beneath the waves of what became known as Lough Neagh.</p> <p>Shane's Castle is said to have its own Banshee, when evil threatened the family, her banshee shriek could be heard along the Loughshore and from the walls of the ruined castle. Legend even blames the Banshee for the fire which destroyed Shane's Castle in 1816. As well, on the eastern walls there is a curious female figurehead carved in stone, called the Black Stone Face. Folklore says that the O'Neill family will come to an end if ever the face should fall.</p> <p>On the shores of Lough Neagh at Churchtown Point, Cranfield Point, lie the ruins of a 13th Century church and St Olcan's Holy Well. The amber pebbles contained within the well are believed to have great healing powers bestowed by St Olcan.</p> <p>Over the past 10 years, Northern Ireland has become the principle filming location for the global phenomenon TV series Game of Thrones. Scenes have been filmed throughout the Borough in the environs of Shane's Castle, Lough Neagh and Moneyglass.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>Throughout the LCA, the Lough and recreational features of the landscape are more accessible. Formal forest parks, Council facilities and Loughshore paths are scattered across areas around Antrim. In these formal facilities, there are jetties, bird hides, paths and slipways. These represent important tourism assets to the Council. Shane's Castle has limited access to public open days. Outside of these parks and demesnes, access becomes more limited with no public rights away across private farmland.</p> <p>The LCA has an attractive landscape around the fringes of Lough Neagh. The farmed interior does not have a wild character but is strongly rural; the fringed lough shores, inlets, bays and headlands have a tranquil character. Lough views are perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of this landscape.</p>
Views & Perceptual Quality	<p>This LCA provides distant and long views across Lough Neagh and into the Sperrins AONB. There are other distant views towards Mid-Ulster and attractive views of the meandering shoreline.</p> <p>This LCA has an attractive visual perceptual quality with relatively undisturbed and restrained of modern development pressures. In the west of the LCA, the area merges seamlessly with the lower slopes of the Long Mountain Ridge. The area of Shane's Castle provides a wonderful perceptual quality with the mix of the historic castle, the stately home, parkland and semi-traditional farming approaches.</p>

	Overall, the landscape is dominated by the presence of the vast sheet of open water, with views of the water being relatively featureless.
Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	This LCA transverses the administrative boundaries of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid Ulster District Council. The key cross boundary issue is a collaborative planning approach for the sensitive environs and Landscapes of Lough Neagh.
Summary of landscape characteristics	<p>Flat, exposed and open area within the fringes of Lough Neagh with mixed grassland agricultural and important historic, cultural and societal features for the Borough. The area provides a wide array of environmental and natural heritage importance with Northern Ireland priority species and habitats. Shane's Castle with ruined castle, stately home, historic courtyard, and parkland, is relatively undisturbed and is commercially managed for sustainable farming and forestry. There are magnificent views across Lough Neagh to the Sperrins and value in the distant vistas in and out of LCA.</p> <p>This landscape has a high sensitivity and adds to the overall characters the lough.</p>
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>The shores of Lough Neagh are extremely sensitive and are classified as an 'Area of Scenic Quality' by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.</p> <p>There is a risk that large structures and large-scale development would be particularly prominent in this rural landscape setting. The shoreline is a more fragile environment which benefits from its open aspect and diverse edge and land cover.</p> <p>There is growing pressure from overdevelopment in the countryside, particularly from inappropriately designed single dwellings (due to their scale, massing and character) encroaching towards the Lough Shore. These dwellings fail to sympathetically integrate into the landscape surroundings and leads to the loss of essential openness and degradation of the undeveloped shoreline character.</p> <p>Water quality is a key issue for Lough Neagh, which drains a large area of land and is relied upon for drinking water and fishing. The Lough is susceptible to eutrophication and algal blooms which affect ecosystems.</p> <p>Sand and gravel extraction has led to the erosion of the character of narrow roads by Heavy Good's Vehicles (HGV's).</p>
Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restriction of linear development along ridge-top roads and along roads close to the shoreline will prevent the development of continuous ribbon development of houses. • Development should be clustered in existing building clusters to ensure that open countryside is retained.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open views may be maintained by prohibiting any development at the Lough edges, unless associated with existing settlements and designed to reflect their pattern and form. • Rural single dwellings should be carefully designed and sited to integrate into the local landscape character. • Hedgerow restoration and management will enhance the character of the homogeneous farmed landscape. • The flat landform, large-scale pastures and degree of woodland enclosure within this LCA suggest some scope for wind energy development. • This narrow band of land along the lough shores with its complex form and many small-scale landscape features, expansive views and wide range of valued natural, cultural and recreational features is unspoilt and highly sensitive in most respects. • Wind energy development could easily be out of scale with the landscape and be very intrusive. • Overall Sensitivity - High to Medium for wind energy development.
Overall Sensitivity	Overall, the Landscape has a High Sensitivity to modern development owing to the natural and built heritage character of the area, added with the open expanse of Lough Neagh.

LCA 62- East Lough Neagh Points

Figure 14: Location Map

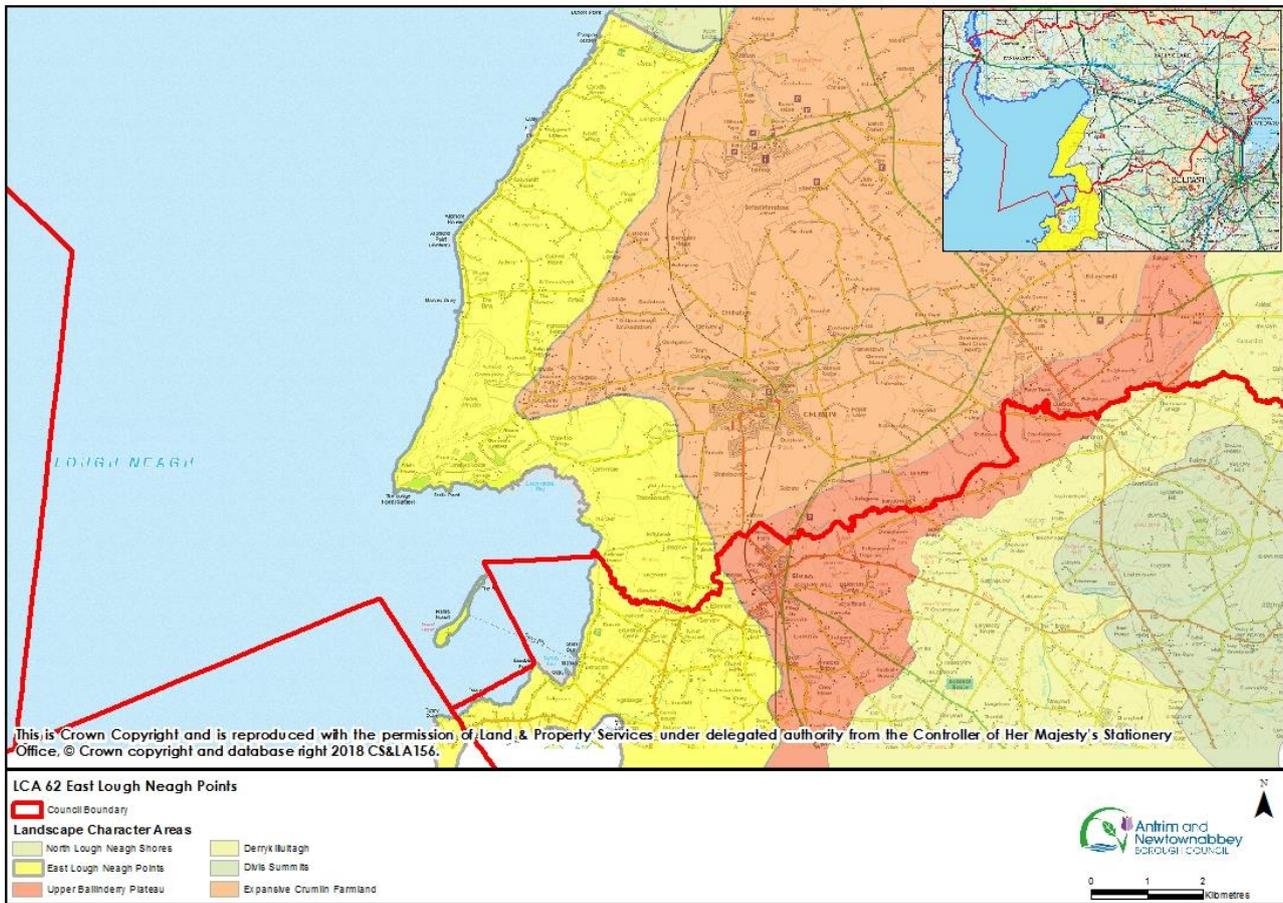


Figure 15: Representative Photographs

Rough Grassland beside reservoir from historic lignite tester quarry.

View of abandoned farm on the shore.



A rolling agricultural landscape with relatively small fields and overgrown hedgerows on an area underlain by Lough Neagh Clays on the eastern fringes of Lough Neagh.

Table 8: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA lies within the region described as the Central Lowlands. • The Upper and Lower Basalt Formation comprises over 60% of the LCA. The remainder being an outcrop of Tertiary Lough Neagh Group mudstones and lignites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The southern outcrops of Lough Neagh Group sediments form Rams Island. • This LCA is a rolling, relatively small-scale farmland landscape agricultural landscape with relatively small fields and overgrown hedges on an area underlain by Lough Neagh Clays on the eastern fringe of Lough Neagh. • The main water body in this LCA is Lough Neagh. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Rivers within the LCA include the Crumlin River, Glenavy River and the Blackburn flow into Lough Neagh. These rivers have recorded river water-crowfoot. ◦ There are also some major drains- the Navvie Drain, Selshan Drain and Tunny Cut. <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassland dominates 75% of the land cover, with four fifths improved with low biodiversity value. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ This grassland is heavily managed through grazing, silage, spraying and slurry. • Arable land is scattered through the LCA with some concentrations in areas relatively well drained to the west of Crumlin and west of Glenavy (outside of the Borough). • This mix of land cover provides habitats for farmland birds (song thrush, linnet, tree sparrow and spotted bullfinch). • Large-scale farmland with arable fields with a more open character are witnessed on the flatter land towards the south of the LCA. • Many of the fields have a scruffy character, with patches of rushes and hedgerows with dense stands of willow. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlands accounts for 4.5% of the land cover, with almost four fifths in broadleaved woodland principally around the Loughshore and is wet woodland. • Only extensive example of estate planting is in Gartree Townland (Langford Lodge) where there are extensive plantations along the shore as well to the south of Gartree House. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a linear pattern of settlement, with some derelict farm buildings and tiny cottages along the ridgetop roads, as well as much new development. • Settlements are concentrated along roads and are always sited on rising land. • The landscape becomes more sensitive to change along the ridge-top roads between Aghalee and Ballymacrevan (outside of the Borough) where pressure for linear development is most intensive and where there is relatively little tree cover.

Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	<p>Agricultural land is in a mixed condition between improved pastures and rough grazing. Grassland is extensively managed by modern farming techniques and livestock rotation. Rough grassland has extensive rushes and wet field conditions. Agriculture produces some threats to the water quality of Lough Neagh from run-off from over slurring and fertiliser.</p> <p>Current land management approaches are having an impact on the quality of habitats for over wintering and migratory bird habitats associated with Lough Neagh. Under management of shoreline scrub and young woodland is having a negative impact on the environmental designations.</p>
Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	<p>Unscheduled and Scheduled Monuments (Bean Fort) are designated areas by the Department for Communities. These include sites and monuments (Raths, Fortification, designated landscape features, AP Sites, Barrow, Cairn, Souterrain and Enclosure), defence heritage (search light battery, material dump, airfield and buildings, light and heavy anti-aircraft guns and other WW2 Military sites). In addition, there are historic buildings including Langford Lodge Hangers, listed houses and Places of Worship and industrial heritage (Mill sites and bridges).</p> <p>Historic Park, Garden and Demesne on Rams island with the Rams Island Monastery and Round Tower.</p> <p>Langford Lodge opened in 1942, was an air depot for the United States Army Air Forces, as such thousands of aircraft were processed on their way to active service during World War 2. Langford Lodge was a target in Operation Grün (Ireland), a second front to Operation Sea Lion, which was the planned Nazi invasion of Great Britain. German paratroopers were to capture Langford Lodge, Aldergrove and Nutts Corner.</p>
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>The Lagan Valley Deglacial Complex occurs on the southern end of the LCA outside of the Borough. The complex is important for deglacial processes, as streamlined landforms along the margins of the valley and glacially moulded bedforms indicate ice advance and fast flow ice from the west.</p> <p>An area off the Aghnadarragh Road has been designated an ASSI due to its geological features and accordingly needs to be specially protected.</p> <p>The excavation of a pit for the purposes of extraction of Tertiary lignite, some 30 million years old, revealed the most complete stratigraphy known from the Midlandian Cold Stage (c. 120,000 - 10,000 years ago) in Ireland. The site is of importance in the context of the British Isles as its stratigraphic complexity and length of record is unique. It is the only site documenting climatic oscillations during the last (Midlandian) cold stage, while the range of date</p>

	<p>determinations provide a framework for Late Midlandian events in Ireland.</p> <p>Within the Lough Neagh area, there are multiple national and international environmental designations. Lough Neagh and Lough Beg are designated a RAMSAR Site for internationally Important Whooper Swan and for supporting breeding terns and great crested grebes. In addition, the Lough is designated an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and Special Protection Area (SPA) for overwintering wildfowl. Lough Neagh and Lough Beg regularly supports 20,000 waterfowl in winter. The ASSI supports beds of submerged aquatic vegetation with marginal swampy woodland and wet grassland.</p> <p>Lowering of the Lough has led to a sequence of vegetation types from reed beds to gradually colonising woodland. Willows tend to be concentrated in narrow bands along lower, wetter edge of the shore, but also intermixed alder and birch on the landward side.</p> <p>The pollan is a whitefish native to Ireland's Loughs and it is only commercially fished in Lough Neagh. Lough Neagh pollan has been awarded protected status by the European Commission in 2018.</p> <p>Semi-natural oak and hazel wood with a well-developed flora occur along the south bank of the Glenavy River (outside of the Borough).</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community Assets and facilities are generally associated with the town of Crumlin in this area. In the rural countryside, there are multiple Bed and Breakfasts, and a rural pub on the Longview Road. The roads are part of the recreational Northern Ireland Regional Cycle Path and informal rambling along the Loughshore. There are rural bus routes and stops servicing the rural community. There is a Water Treatment Works at Dunmore Point which provides drinking water to a significant area of Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Lough Neagh has a cultural history of eel fishing, which was awarded EU Protected Name status in 2011, the first product from Northern Ireland to receive the accreditation. Other historic practices include sand extraction and historic landing points for barges.</p> <p>From a cultural perspective, there is a wealth of mythology and folklore associated with this LCA and Lough Neagh. One of the best know is the story of the creation of the Lough by Finn McCool, scooping up earth and throwing it at a rival during a fight, the area left filled with water became the Lough and the earth thrown is said to have formed the Isle of Man.</p> <p>An alternative legend to the creation of Lough Neagh is derived from a well that stood in the centre of the land covered by Lough Neagh. An old woman that tended the</p>

	<p>well forgot to close the gate, as a result the water overflowed from the well onto the land as far as Toome. Due to the disastrous flooding, the local people threw her into the water for being so forgetful and she drowned. The floodwater that remained became known Lough Neagh.</p> <p>A third Legend explained that a long time ago, Ireland had many kingdoms of fine houses, strong castles and tall towers. Deep within one of these kingdoms was a magical spring of bright fresh water. The local people became greedy and began to rob and cheat their neighbours. At first, the spring watched and did nothing, but then it rose up in anger and drowned the entire kingdom. Even now on certain days, it is said that the towers of the lost land can be seen shimmering far beneath the waves of what became known as Lough Neagh.</p> <p>Over the past 10 years, Northern Ireland has become the principle filming location for the global phenomenon TV series Game of Thrones. Scenes have been filmed throughout the Borough in the environs of Shane's Castle, Lough Neagh and Moneymore.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>Throughout the LCA, there are limited access points with no public rights of way and extensive privately owned lanes, tracks and jetties. The regional cycle path passes through the LCA around the fringe of Lough Neagh. There are limited footpaths along the British Road and at Aldergrove.</p> <p>The LCA has an attractive landscape around the fringes of Lough Neagh. The landscape is peaceful in nature and away from major roads, with only intermitting sounds. The combination of managed field boundaries and the open expanse of Lough Neagh add to the enjoyment of this LCA. In the area beside Dunmore Point where the Water Treatment Plant is located, the landscape quality degrades as a result of the harsh noise and limited screening of the infrastructure site.</p>
Views & Perceptual Quality	<p>This LCA provides distant and long views across Lough Neagh and into the Sperrins AONB. There are other distant views of the Belfast Hills and towards the Lagan Valley Regional park.</p> <p>The landscape is dominated by the presence of the vast sheet of open water, with views of the water being relatively featureless. The LCA away from roads has a rather remote and wild character. There is an exposed feel with rough water and windy conditions associated with storms. The majority of the LCA has an attractive and colourful framed perception through the wildness of the shoreline and the scattered farmsteads. Perception is slightly degraded in areas with ribbon single dwelling development (Loughview Road), the impact of modern agricultural buildings (steel slurry storage tanks) and the Water Treatment works.</p>

Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	This LCA transverses the administrative boundaries of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. The key cross boundary issue is a collaborative planning approach for the sensitive environs and Landscapes of Lough Neagh.
Summary of landscape characteristics	This LCA is a rolling, semi-enclosed area of mixed grassland conditions and sporadic populated single dwellings and farms. Throughout the LCA, there is a uniformed and peaceful feel with evidence of gorse and wetland helping to encourage wild fowl. The LCA is expansively covered with young and mature scattered broadleaf trees along field boundaries, but some slight decline in hedgerows. This landscape is sensitive and adds to the overall characters of the lough.
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>Many of the fields have a scruffy character, with patches of rushes and hedgerows with dense stands of willow. The condition of large-scale farmland on the flatter margins of Lough Neagh is better, although hedgerows have been removed.</p> <p>The shores of Lough Neagh are extremely sensitive and are classified as an 'Area of Scenic Quality' by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.</p> <p>There is a growing impact from development from the massing, style and character of rural single dwellings within the landscape encroaching towards the Lough Shore. These developments do not integrate well with the local dynamics of the landscape.</p> <p>The lignite outcrop on the edge of Crumlin and on the shores of Lough Neagh could potentially be established as a viable regionally important fuel source in the future. This could have a negative impact on the safeguarding and environmental integrity of Lough Neagh.</p> <p>Water quality is a key issue for Lough Neagh, which drains such a large area of land and is relied on for drinking water and fishing. The lough is susceptible to eutrophication and algal blooms which affect ecosystems.</p> <p>Sand and gravel extraction has led to the erosion of the character of narrow roads by heavy lorries.</p>
Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restriction of linear development along ridge-top roads and along roads close to the shoreline will prevent the development of continuous ribbon development of dwellings. • Development should be clustered in existing clusters to ensure that open countryside is retained. • Rural single dwellings should be carefully designed and sited to integrate into the local landscape character. • Hedgerow restoration and management will enhance the character of the homogeneous farmed landscape. • Introduction of planting/screening along ridge-top roads, in areas of recent development will help

	<p>replace hedgerow trees and integrate new buildings into the wider landscape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shores of the lough are very sensitive, as are the ridge tops inland, with their smaller scale landscape patterns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Along the lough shore, the area's considerable ecological and historic resources and its recreational role are key constraints. ○ The southern part of the LCA is most sensitive due to its more complex shoreline and accessibility. ○ However, there might be some areas of lower sensitivity, especially in the flat clay farmland landscapes in the northern part of the LCA, away from the lough's edge. ○ These are relatively large-scale landscapes with limited access and visibility; the surrounding trees and shelterbelts might offer opportunities to integrate appropriately scaled wind energy development into the landscape. • Areas in close proximity to the shoreline and ridge tops are of Very High Sensitivity to wind energy development. • Areas in flat clay farmland to the north of the LCA are Medium Sensitivity to wind energy development.
Overall Sensitivity	<p>Overall, the Landscape has a High Sensitivity to modern development owing to the natural, built heritage and cultural character of the area, added with the open expanse of Lough Neagh.</p>

LCA 98- Carrickfergus Upland Pastures

Figure 16: Location Map

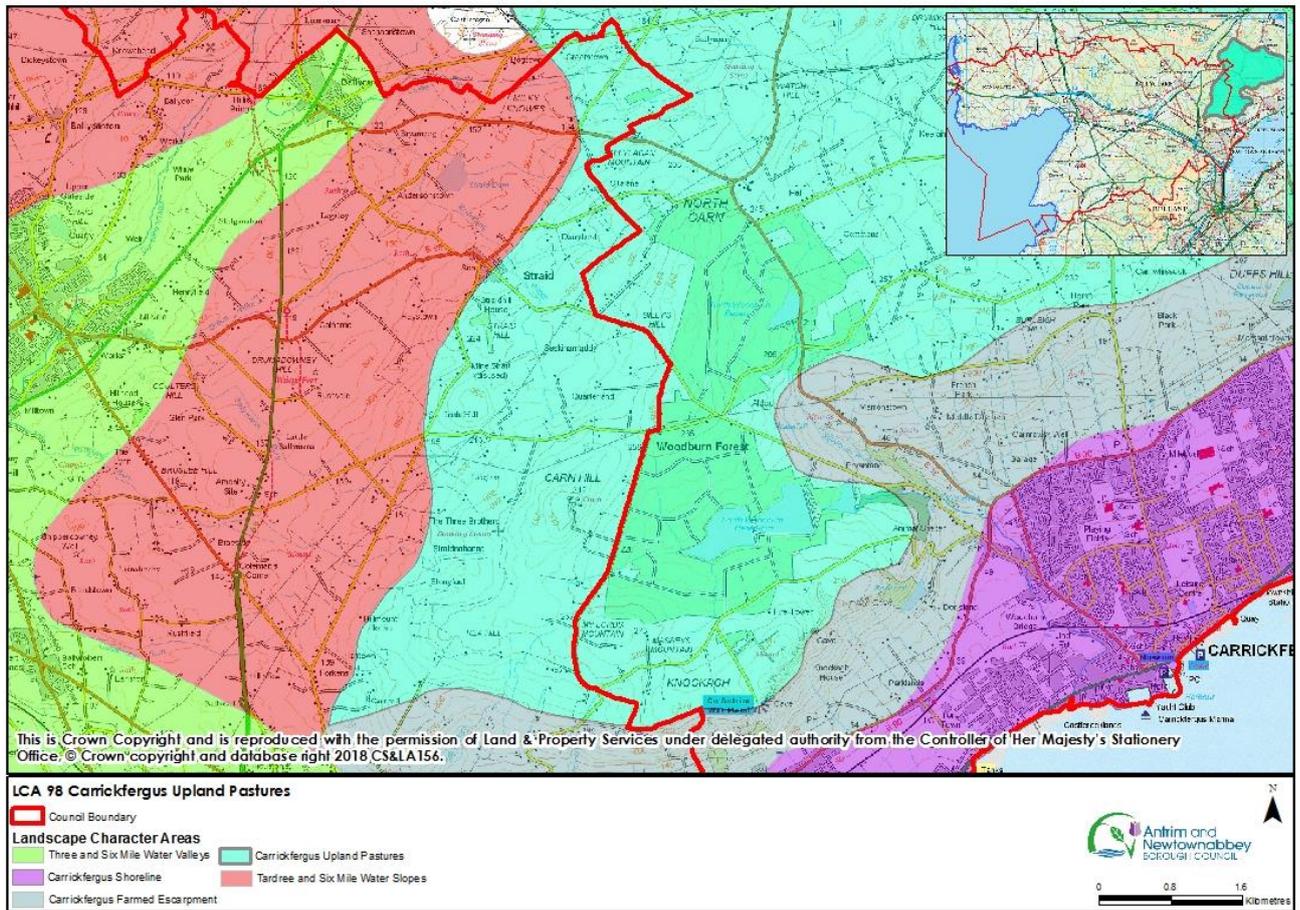


Figure 17: Representative Photographs

View of Pylons from the Irish Hill Road



View of Hills in the distance from Straid



The landscape reaches an elevation of 200-250m above sea level. The area is underlain by basalt, but the shallow soils, rocky exposures and wet climate create less productive farmland than elsewhere.

Table 9: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This LCA lies within the region described as the Antrim Plateau and Glens, which is dominated by a series of structural plateaux that dip gently in towards the Lough Neagh Basin. • The geology comprises a mix of Mesozoic sedimentary and Tertiary igneous rock in faulted and unconformable contact. • The landscape of this LCA reaches an elevation of 200-250m. Shallow ridges extend from the basalt escarpment to the south to create an undulating plateau. • Detailed topography is largely controlled by a succession of Tertiary basalt lava flows that define successive plateaux, large-scale steps within the landscape. • The undulating landscape of this upland area is reflected in a drift cover that is interspersed with numerous ridges of drift free bedrock. • Rivers and drainage systems within this LCA include Lough Mourne, South Woodburn Reservoir and North Woodburn Reservoir, which are all outside of the Borough. <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassland occupies approximately 75% of the LCA. The quality of this can vary depending on management and locations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Without intensive management, the pastures become invaded by rushes. ◦ Field hedges provide habitats for birds and other wildlife. • Peatland is not extensive and any remaining is in small patches, on hills. This peat is not intact and are eroded or cut over. • Undulating landscape of low ridges and shallow valleys. Small field boundaries of grassland enclosed by gappy hedges, earth banks and neglected stonewalls. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Beech and conifer shelterbelts along roads. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlands occupy approximately over 10% of the LCA and are majority coniferous. • Woodburn State Forest contains species of Sitka Spruce, Norway Spruce and Japanese Larch. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Biodiversity is low. • Within Glenoe, in Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, the dominant woodland is Ash with scattered beech, sycamore and horse chestnut. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The uplands are relatively remote, although the transmission line from Kilroot Power Station and telecommunications mast exert a strong presence along the skyline. • Existing settlement is scarce but new houses, often in exposed locations, contrast with the sheltered locations and unassuming styles of traditional, vernacular stone farm buildings. • The design of future housing is especially sensitive in an upland landscape through non-integrated design and affluent curtilages.

Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	Mixture of agriculture with rough grazing and scattered improved grasslands. Improved grassland is located on the lower slopes of the upland area. Fields are managed through livestock rotation and machinery land management. Hedgerow and trees replaced by modern wire fencing. Threats to this agricultural land include encroachment of single dwellings on land, and the impact of bigger modern machinery as evident from damage to the condition of the roads and verges.
Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	<p>Unscheduled and Scheduled Monuments are designated areas by the Department for Communities. These include sites and monuments (Raths, Fair Site, AP Sites, Barrow, Standing Stone, Cairn, Souterrain and Earthworks), defence heritage including small arms rifle range and industrial heritage (Flax Mill, Mill sites, Carntall and bridges). Evidence of historic field boundaries with traditional stonewalls marking field boundaries.</p> <p>Other Notable Historic Buildings include Straid House and Straid Congregational Church.</p>
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>Lough Mourne is a Priority Habitat mesotrophic lake; NI Priority Species beaked beardless moss is recorded in Lower South Woodburn and North Woodburn.</p> <p>Within rough and damp grassland Curlew, snipe and lapwing have been recorded; Irish Hare is also recorded from the rougher grasslands.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community facilities are associated with urbanised areas within this LCA There are a few visitor facilities through public parking and picnic spots within the upland areas of this LCA towards Woodburn Forest.</p> <p>From a cultural perspective, Straid House Folklore- Hurricane blew down prominent trees around the Stately Farm House and to this day, the gap within the shelterbelt of trees remains. Other cultural qualities include archaeological heritage through standing stones and cairns visible within the landscape.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>In the rural areas of this LCA, there are limited access points with no public rights of way and extensive privately owned lanes and tracks. Some of the smaller settlements, have footpaths enabling small-scale informal recreation.</p> <p>This LCA is a pleasant and hilly upland area of mixed grassland that has distant attractive views of the Carrickfergus Escarpment. Although pleasant, the impact of modern development degrades the attractiveness of this land use through electricity infrastructure and rural single dwellings.</p>

Views & Perceptual Quality	<p>This LCA provides pleasant distant views of the Carrickfergus Escarpment, the Antrim Plateau (including Slemish) and views over Belfast Lough towards the Craigtantlet Hills south-east of Belfast.</p> <p>This LCA has a mixed perceptual quality from interesting to challenging. Interesting aspects of scenic landscape quality are witnessed through the attractive distant views and the remote nature of the landscape character. Challenging perceptions are encountered through the impact of modern development integration within the landscape. In some parts of this LCA, the overall picture seems to be a much-cluttered landscape.</p>
Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	<p>This LCA traverses the boundaries of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. The significant cross boundary issue for this LCA is a collaborative planning approach for the Area of High Scenic Value on the Carrickfergus Escarpment. This planning approach needs to take into account issues that are identified in both the MEABC and ANBC LDPs.</p>
Summary of landscape characteristics	<p>Pleasant and hilly area of mixed grassland dominated by small/medium field boundaries with mature trees in hedgerows. It is becoming evident that modern development is beginning to erode the perceptual quality; the overall picture seems to be a much-cluttered landscape. There are attractive distant views into LCA 130 of the Carrickfergus Escarpment and distant views of Antrim Plateau.</p>
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>The Southern edge of this LCA is part of the Carrickfergus Escarpment Area of Scenic Quality and has been designated as an Area of High Scenic Quality within BMAP (2004 and 2014 versions).</p> <p>Recent examples of new rural single dwellings are often sited in exposed locations, detracting from the more traditional settlement pattern of stone buildings sheltered by trees. The design of proposed housing is especially sensitive in an upland landscape.</p> <p>Transmission lines and electricity infrastructure from the Kilroot Power Station extend up from the coast and, with a telecommunications mast, exert a strong presence along the skyline. Prominent industrial units scattered within the LCA are not well integrated into the landscape with colour and design detracting from the local landscape. Most of the hedgerows in this LCA have been neglected, and are being removed and replaced with wire fences.</p>
Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scattered rural single dwelling development with disparate and incongruous styles should be avoided. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Existing new houses may be sheltered and integrated within the landscape by blocks of woodland.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The repair and management of hedges, walls and shelterbelts should be encouraged to conserve the landscape structure. • Careful analysis should accompany any plans to site new windfarms or pylons in this upland landscape. • This landscape has characteristics that suggest suitability, in parts, for wind energy development, while other parts of the LCA would be highly sensitive and much less suitable. • The north western and northern parts of the area are least sensitive as they lie away from the escarpment edge and Belfast Lough, are partly enclosed by forestry, and are already affected by intrusive influences. • The southern and eastern parts of the LCA are much more sensitive, due primarily to their extreme visual prominence. • Overall Sensitivity of this LCA is between a High to Medium sensitivity to wind energy development.
Overall Sensitivity	Overall, the Landscape has a Medium Sensitivity , as this type of upland grassland farming landscape is not rare in Northern Ireland

LCA 109- Upper Ballinderry Plateau

Figure 18: Location Map

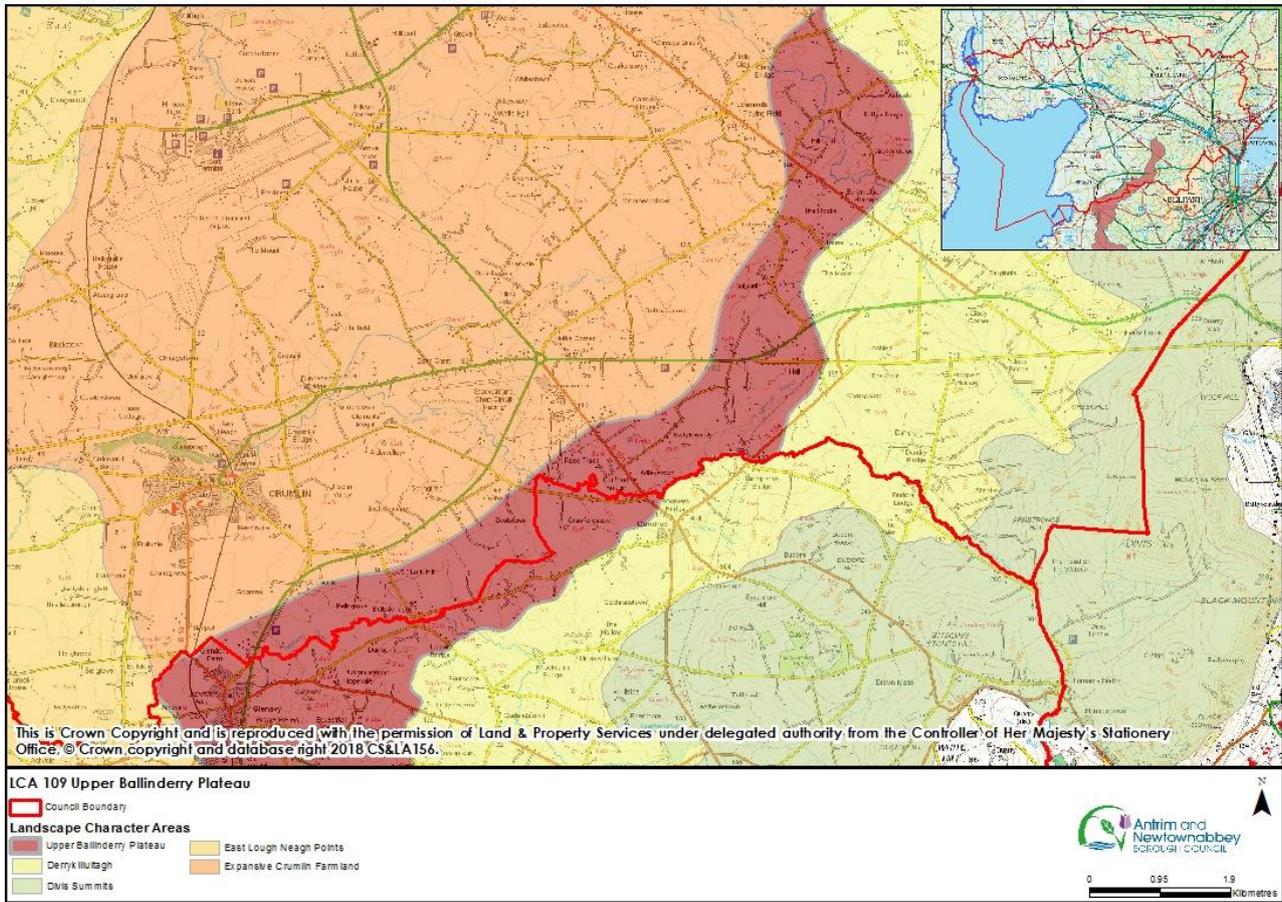


Figure 19: Representative Photographs

View of Arable on the northern tip.



View of Seven Mile Straight towards Belfast.



This LCA is a rolling farmland landscape, with numerous hedgerow trees and copses on the southern and western fringes of Derrykillutagh.

Table 10: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA lies within the region described as the Central Lowlands. • The Upper Ballinderry Plateau is a rolling, relatively prosperous farmland landscape on the southern and western fringes of Derrykillultagh which extends to the edge of the River Lagan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ There is steep escarpment along the southern margins of the landscape overlooking the broad Lagan Valley. • The north of the LCA corresponds approximately to the lower dip slope of the South Antrim basalt escarpment. • The LCA comprises 80% Lower Basalt Formation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Outside of the Borough, there are small outcrops of Triassic Sherwood Sandstone Formation sandstone along the Lagan Valley. ◦ As well as Cretaceous limestone and greensand in areas in linear, fault bounded exposure. • Rivers within the LCA include Crumlin River, Glenavy River, Ballinderry Clady River and the Broad Water Lake. <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassland accounts for 77% of the LCA boundary, including areas outside of the Borough. These have been extensively for grassland production. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ These grasslands have a low biodiversity reducing flora and fauna. ◦ There are areas in the North of the LCA with damp/wet grassland where biodiversity has a greater impact. • Arable land accounts for 12% of the LCA area (almost double NI average). This is mainly in Lisburn and Castlereagh District around Moira. • Field pattern vary from generally medium to large in size but the scale is quite small. • Views are relatively short or contained through topography. There is a consistent patchwork of fields and hedgerows. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland cover only accounts for 2% of the LCA land cover, which is broadleaf. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ There is no woodland within the Borough, only associated with screening along road fringes and around large farms. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This LCA has a land ownership pattern with fewer larger farmsteads and many estates. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ There are consequently fewer roads and the built development has a more clustered character, with houses concentrated into nuclear villages. ◦ Due to historic development practices along A26 Moira Road, single dwelling developments are limited in the open countryside and reserved for settlements and villages. ◦ These often have grand landscaped avenues of beech trees. • The clustered settlements have vistas of church spires and avenue of trees. • Linear development along roads is not a characteristic of the area. • In the area around the periphery of Nutts Corner Sporadic single dwellings, particularly along main Dundrod Road have some concentrations of small commercial/light industrial activity.

Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	Medium to large improved grassland related to production and agriculture. Low biodiversity quality due to extensive management with slurry and fertilising. Agricultural land used for both pasture (grassland) and arable. In some areas moving towards the Derrykillultagh LCA fields are wetter and more characterised by rough grassland with mixed rushes.
Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	A number of listed buildings including a farmhouse and historical bridge. There are Scheduled and Unscheduled Monuments; these include raths, mounds, fort, stone and mound. These date from the early Christian period.
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>The Lagan Valley Deglacial Complex occurs on the southern end of the LCA outside of the Borough. The complex is important for deglacial processes, as streamlined landforms along the margins of the valley and glacially moulded bedforms indicate ice advance and fast flow ice from the west.</p> <p>Areas of Earth Science Importance include Clarehill Quarry with exposed paramoudras of Ballymagarry Chalk member and the Broad Water lake as a glacial drainage channel.</p> <p>Hedgerows are an important wildlife habitat, becoming a refuge for many woodland and farmland plants and animals. Hawthorn hedges are generally well managed, dense and treed with ash. In less productive areas, hedgerows are less well maintained, some however are tall and heavily treed with Ash, Willow and Alder.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community Assets in this LCA are limited within the Borough. There are recreational facilities linked to the fringe of Nutts Corner with a motor sport tracks, a vehicle testing track, the market site and the DVA weighbridge.</p> <p>Cultural qualities include associations with Early Christian settlements that are widely visible throughout the landscape. Vistas of Large Farmsteads, country houses, avenues of beech trees and church spires are important local cultural landmarks.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>Throughout this LCA, there are limited access points with no public rights of way and extensive privately owned lanes and tracks. There are some footpaths on the Seven Mile straight that enable informal recreation.</p> <p>The impact of the A26 Moira Road and the Seven Mile Straight detract from the enjoyment of the landscape with harsh sounds.</p>
Views & Perceptual Quality	The LCA has a number of distant pleasant views of the East Lough Neagh Points and the Divis Summits. There are attractive long distant views to the west of Lough Neagh and Sperrins. With prominent upland forestry towards the summits of Divis.

	<p>This LCA has an overall uninteresting perceptual quality due to the impact of the main A roads of Moira, Dundrod and Antrim. In addition, the impact from modern agricultural improvement is detracting from the landscape's visual quality with the construction of industrial style agricultural sheds.</p> <p>Towards Lyles Hill, the perception improves and becomes attractive with a restrained influence of modern development and impressive views of Lough Neagh.</p>
Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	This LCA traverses the boundaries of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. There are no overarching cross boundary issues within this LCA. This will be continually reviewed and monitored throughout the lifespan of the LDP.
Summary of landscape characteristics	Flat and semi open farmed grassland used for extensive agriculture production. Area is relatively restrained, with sporadic single dwellings and small-scale light industrial, apart from the influence of the A26 and modern industrial agricultural shed buildings. The area is relatively restrained with good use of scattered deciduous hedges and trees for screening of development sites.
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>The farmland (improved grassland) is in good condition, particularly in areas which are under large estates. There are some patches of degradation on the northern fringes of Maghaberry (outside of the Borough) from impact of poultry farm and the prison.</p> <p>The changing nature of the agricultural sector brings with it pressures of large-scale agricultural buildings across the Borough. If these types of developments are not appropriately designed and sited, it can lead to unsightly, industrial-scaled buildings throughout our countryside which can detrimentally alter the character of our landscapes, especially those which are particularly sensitive to change due to their quality, features and low capacity to absorb new development.</p> <p>Future threats include growing commercial land encroaching extensively into agricultural land on the periphery of Nutts Corner.</p> <p>Rural single dwellings are restrained apart from small areas of development along road fringes. The slightly undulating nature of the land within the LCA allows single buildings to have relatively little visual impact.</p> <p>Overall, the landscape has a low to medium sensitivity for modern development.</p>
Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linear developments along roads are not characteristic of this LCA. • Clustered settlements are characteristic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important that the majority of new rural single dwelling development should be site on the fringes of nucleated settlements. This retains the relationship between the built

	<p>form of the village and the designed rural landscape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale planting and screening of new and existing agricultural developments would help to integrate with the local landscape character. • In some areas of the LCA, hedgerows have become gappy and are being replaced by modern post and barbed wire fencing. • This landscape is of medium sensitivity to wind energy development with relatively few important settings or views and a pattern of large farms, estates and nucleated settlements. Although its condition is generally good, it is not of special scenic quality and has few significant natural or cultural features. • Areas to the South outside of the Borough have a high sensitivity to wind energy,
Overall Sensitivity	Overall, the Landscape is Low Sensitivity to modern development.

LCA 110- Derrykillultagh

Figure 20: Location Map

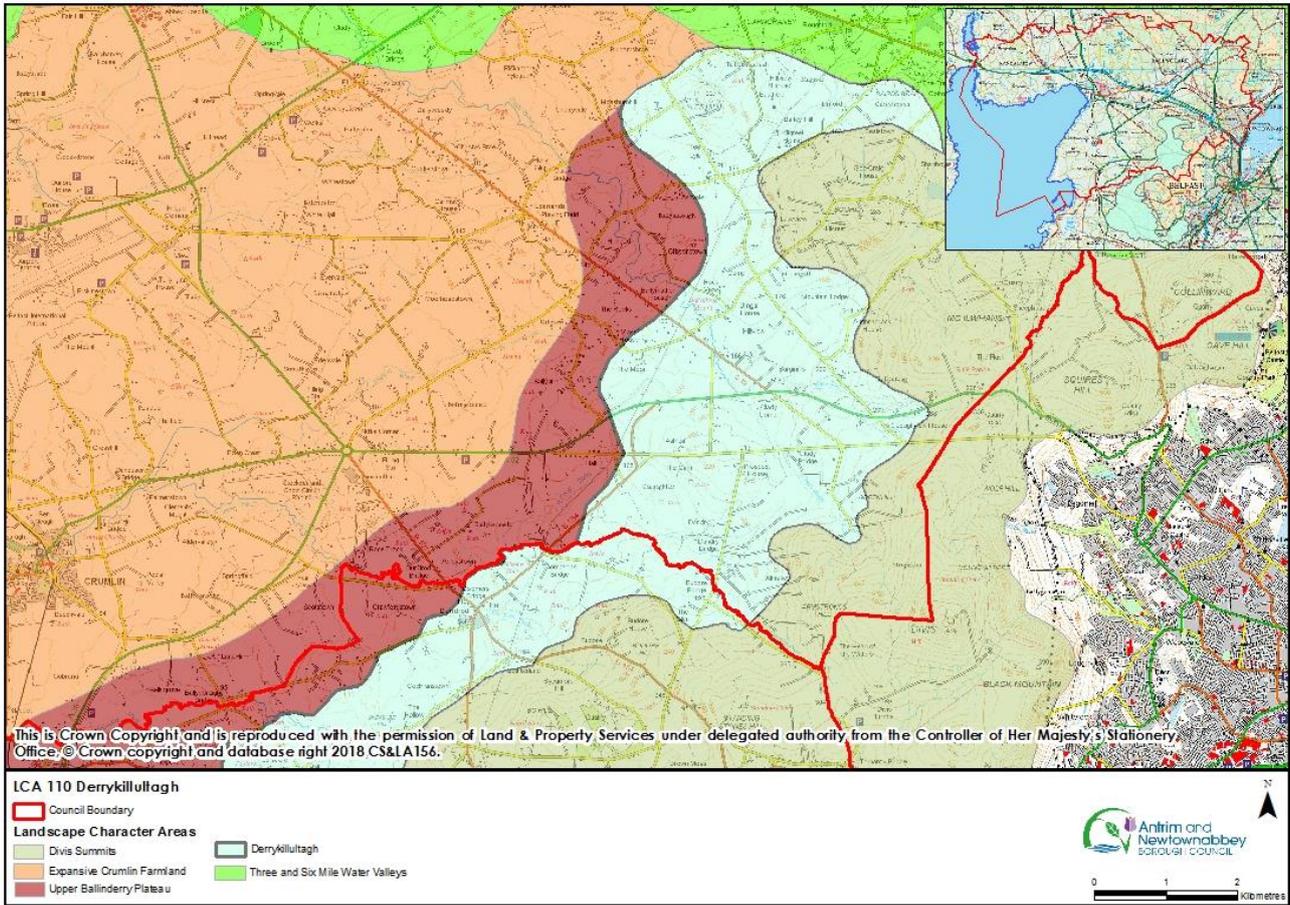


Figure 21: Representative Photographs

View of trees screening rural road



View of scattered trees - Printshop Road.



This LCA covers a rolling, relatively elevated farmland landscape on the margins of the Antrim basalt plateau.

Table 11: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA lies within the region described as the Central Lowlands. • The area is characterised by rounded hills and shallow slopes, although there are some gullies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The southern boundary of the LCA is marked by a steeper escarpments slope. ○ Many slopes are divided. • Tertiary Basalt formations dominate the LCA, including Upper Basalt (North of LCA), Lower Basalt and Interbasaltic Formations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small outcrops of the Cretaceous succession within the Ulster White Limestone Group. ○ 5% of the LCA Triassic Sandstones Group. ○ 5% of the LCA has Triassic Mercia Mudstone Group in the south towards Lagan Valley. • Drainage for the LCA includes three rivers, the Glenavy River, Clady Water and Stoneyford River. • As well, there are three Reservoirs- including Stoneyford Reservoir (outside of Borough). <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassland occupies 82% of the LCA, of which three quarters, is improved grassland. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These are generally low biodiversity and are managed through high levels of grazing, silage production, high input of fertilisers and slurry. • There is less than 4% arable land within the LCA. • Rough/damp grasslands are associated with damp areas in the east and west of the LCA, including around Stoneyford Reservoir, which contains a wide diversity of plants (outside of the Borough). • Varied farmland pattern with small paddocks on valley sides and more open character on summits. • Straight roads and tracks cross the LCA with numerous scattered houses, smallholdings and farms. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland occupies less than 2% of the LCA area. Most often, woodland is located within the southwest of the LCA in small patches on the outskirts of Belfast. • Small remnant woodlands also occur at Magherlave and Derrriaghy Glen (outside of the Borough). <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are typically small farms and smallholdings with scattered barns, although there is a gradual transition to a landscape of larger field, trees and improved grassland. • Most farmsteads are small, white rendered buildings on the mid-slopes or local ridges and connected to roads by straight right-angled tracks. • The impact of modern single dwellings development is apparent with the majority of traditional dwelling derelict or replaced. This generally has no abrupt relationship with the surrounding landscape. Older farmsteads often provide focal points in the landscape. • Ribbon development already forms a continuous line of buildings along some local roads, blocking views from the roads and introducing a suburban character to extensive area of the rural countryside.

Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	Mixed quality grazing with fair to good agricultural grasslands. Used for mixed rotation grazing and low yield rough grazing. Extensively managed by modern agriculture. Threats - influence of modern and bigger machinery. In some rough grazing areas, there are opportunities to conserve scrub and brush for wildlife by preventing further drainage.
Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	Unscheduled and scheduled monuments are designated areas by the Department for Communities. These include sites and monuments (Rath, mound, A.P Site, standing stone, settlement, Cairn and Barginns Mound), historic buildings/listed buildings (Places of worship and listed houses) and industrial heritage (bridges, mills, and millponds).
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>The Lagan Valley Deglacial Complex occurs on the southern end of the LCA outside of the Borough. The complex is important for deglacial processes, as streamlined landforms along the margins of the valley and glacially moulded bedforms indicate ice advance and fast flow ice from the west.</p> <p>The small-scale woodland and scrub of fragmented alder/ash are important constituents of complex habitats that includes moderately species-rich wet grassland. Threats from expansion of housing.</p> <p>Farmlands birds including yellow hammer thrive in areas of arable land cover. Biodiversity in areas of improved grassland are often concentrated in hedgerows.</p> <p>To the northeast of the LCA at the foothills of the basalt plateau, the grasslands become diverse with areas of acidic mat grass and purple moor grass.</p> <p>Rushy and damp grassland fields where management is limited to summer grazing there is greater diversity of plants. There are few areas of fen within the LCA, which are usually associated with damp grasslands.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community Assets and facilities in the south of the LCA are often associated with Randalstown, including a place of worship and school on the edge of town. There are other small-scale community assets scattered around the countryside area, including community halls.</p> <p>There are cultural associations with Early Christian settlements that are widely visible throughout the landscape.</p>

<p>Access and Enjoyment of the landscape</p>	<p>Throughout this LCA, there are limited access points with no public rights of way and extensive privately owned lanes and tracks. On the fringe of Mallusk on the Bernice Road there are some footpaths enabling small-scale informal recreation.</p> <p>The area around Boghill has scattered mature trees along the road frontage, creates an impressive tunnel effect within the aesthetics of the landscape. Overall, the LCA has a pleasant level of enjoyment.</p>
<p>Views & Perceptual Quality</p>	<p>The views from this LCA are often dictated by topography. Nevertheless, there are mixed views into the Upper Ballinderry Plateau and pleasant views of Big Collin in the Tardree Upland Pastures. These views are a pleasant one of an agricultural landscape, but are degraded through industrial style agricultural sheds and pylons in the distance.</p> <p>This LCA has a pleasant landscape perception with pleasing agricultural vistas in and out of the area. Scattered tree and hedgerow screening of rural single dwellings help to integrate these developments into the local landscape.</p>
<p>Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary</p>	<p>This LCA traverses the boundaries of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Belfast City Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. There is greater sensitivity to modern development on the steeper slopes of this LCA. In the case of cross boundary issues, the siting and massing of renewable energy projects needs to take into account the landscape principles from neighbouring Councils.</p>
<p>Summary of landscape characteristics</p>	<p>Rolling plateau type area on the margins of the Basalt Summits with shallow slopes and steep escarpment to the south. The area is predominantly grassland with some scattered single dwellings. The perception of the area is quite pleasant despite extensive single dwellings, as these are well screened into the landscape. The impact of modern development is relatively restrained. The impact of modern farming is beginning to change the historical agricultural aesthetics of the landscape.</p>
<p>Sensitivity to modern Influences</p>	<p>Some parts of the landscape have many derelict buildings and patches of waste ground, while others have a prosperous character.</p> <p>There is extensive evidence of hedgerow and scattered tree removal, which has resulted in unusually large fields and a disconnected field pattern. Other examples include hedgerows removal from road frontages and replaced by modern post and wire fencing.</p> <p>The landscape is more sensitive in the more open, elevated parts of the LCA and on the steeper slopes to the south. Pressure on new built development on the fringe of linear villages has a detrimental impact on the landscape character of many parts of the plateau.</p>

<p>Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the area is of medium sensitivity to modern development, single dwellings and renewable energies should be carefully sited to avoid the elevated parts of the plateau and should be restrained. • Ribbon Development already forms a continuous line of buildings along some local roads, blocking views from the roads and introducing a suburban character. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional linear development will have a detrimental effect. • This medium scale, rolling, elevated landscape is in theory suited to wind energy development, at least in some areas, due to its rounded landform, marginal character, sparse settlement, relatively low visual prominence and limited scenic and heritage value. • These qualities prevail particularly in the northern parts of the LCA, which is visually in the lee side of the Belfast Hills when viewed from Belfast and Lisburn. • The portion of the LCA within the Borough is Medium Sensitivity to wind energy development.
<p>Overall Sensitivity</p>	<p>Overall, this landscape is of Medium Sensitivity for accommodating new modern development. Elevated parts of the plateau and steeper slopes are more sensitive.</p>

LCA 111- Divis Summits

Figure 22: Location Map

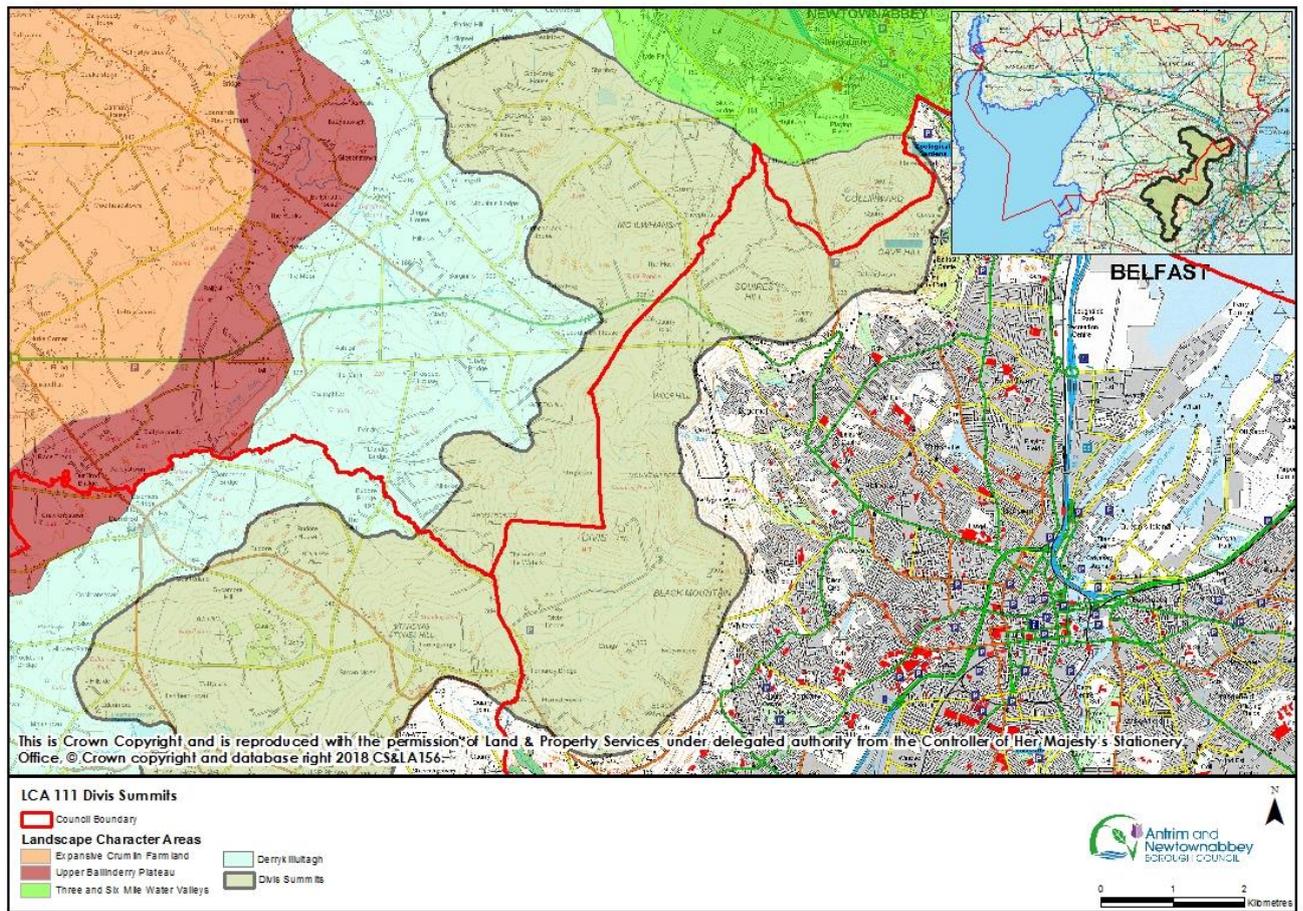


Figure 23: Representative Photographs

View from the Upper Hightown Road.

View of the Valley towards Newtownabbey.



This LCA covers broad, rounded summits on the edge of the Antrim basalt plateau with a distinctive and dramatic escarpment overlooking Belfast.

Table 12: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics	
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad, rounded summits on the edge of the Antrim Basalt Plateau with distinctive and dramatic escarpment overlooking Belfast. • This LCA lies within the region described as the Antrim Plateau and Glens. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ This upland area is dominated by a series of structural plateaux that dip gently towards the Lough Neagh Basin. • Topography is controlled by a succession of tertiary basalt lava flows that define successive, large-scale steps within the landscape. • The geology comprises a mix of Mesozoic sedimentary and Tertiary igneous rocks. Tertiary Basalt Formation makes up 85% of the LCA. • Rivers within this LCA include the upper reaches of the Flush River, the Forth River, the Stoneyford River, the Rushyhill River and Crumlin River. • There is one lake, Boghill Dam located in the north of the LCA. <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassland is the dominant land cover in this LCA. Rough grassland is found extensively in the centre and north of this LCA. Improved grassland is found scattered throughout the area. Largest areas located at Brown Moss and Leathemstown (outside of the Borough). Areas of shrub heath are found largely on the summits of hills. • An area of thin hagged peat is located on the summit of Divis Mountain (Outside of the Boundary). Eroded peat towards Wolf Hill. There are no extensive areas of wetland in this LCA. • Open, windswept marginal farmland, with expanses of moss on flat, waterlogged plateau. Angular straight field boundaries and narrow roads. • Valley slopes have a more framed character, with straight, overgrown hedgerows, belts of mature trees and are reached by straight tracks raised on embankments as they cross the moss. • The landscape has a rather irregular, patchy pattern, with areas of scrub and wasteland which are often associated with abandoned mineral workings, derelict farmsteads and areas of waterlogged or unfarmed land. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadleaved woodlands are scarce in this LCA with just over 1%, mainly consist of small-scattered areas of streamside hazel, and scrub woodland. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derelict buildings, quarries, both active and abandoned. Many farmsteads are sheltered by stands of mature trees. There is little scope for new development in this area, with the possible exception of existing derelict sites for restoration purposes. • Radio masts are situated on the highest summits where they are prominent in views from surrounding areas. 	
Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	An extensive area of dominate rough grassland and heath, with improved grassland scattered throughout the LCA. The majority of agriculture in this LCA is rough livestock grazing with areas managed if accessible through modern spraying, fertiliser and slurry. Some drainage in upland has led to improved grassland which improves grass production. There is a significant problem of fly tipping around the Belfast Hills area.

Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	<p>Unscheduled and Scheduled Monuments are designated areas by the Department for Communities. These include sites and monuments (Rath, Mound, Enclosure, Megalithic Tomb, Mound, Stone circle, historic Cairn and Battle Site), wide array of defence heritage including small arms rifle range and industrial heritage (bridges, and millponds).</p> <p>Evidence of traditional 18th century farmhouses. In addition, there are important archaeology remains, particularly on the summits of Cave Hill (outside of the Borough).</p>
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>There are two areas of Geodiversity Interest identified in the Earth Science Conservation Review at Carr's Glen and Crow Glen. In Carr's Glen, there are exposures of sections of Mesozoic rocks (Mercia Mudstone Group and Waterloo Mudstone Group, Hibernian Greensand and Ulster White Limestone Formations). In Crow Glen, there are exposures of sections through Mesozoic and Palaeogenic rocks (Mercia Mudstone Group and Hibernian Greensand, Ulster White Limestone and Lower Basalt).</p> <p>Several Priority species have been recorded on Black Mountain and Divis (outside of Borough) including red grouse, juniper, moschatel and pink meadow cap. Cavehill - owls, kestrels and sparrowhawk, wall brown butterfly and Irish Lady tresses.</p> <p>Areas of shrub heath provide areas of species rich unimproved wet grasslands with a wide array of plant communities. Hedgerows throughout the LCA are important for butterflies, moths, farmland birds and plants. Fly tipping is a problem around the Belfast Hills.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community Assets and facilities in this LCA are generally associated with the greater Belfast area and towards Newtownabbey. Cave Hill Country Park provides a recreational facility, as well as walking areas on Divis and Black Mountains. Key historic and archaeology sites have a cultural historical effect of the evolution and shaping of the landscape in the area. Divis Mountain and Black Mountain are managed by the National Trust and are popular walking/rambling destinations.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>Access within this LCA is relatively good for the public with walkways and tracks on Divis Mountain, Black Mountain and the Cave Hill Country Park. These paths and tracks are managed by Belfast City Council or the National Trust. Outside of where official recreation areas access becomes more limited due to the lack of footpaths and public rights of way. Although informal recreation along roads is evident.</p> <p>The upland summits of this LCA provide an attractive, peaceful and calm area on the fringe of busy metropolitan towns and city. The area is distinguished by steep slopes and is overly devoid of major uses.</p>

Views & Perceptual Quality	<p>This LCA offers a mixture of pleasant and attractive views and vistas. Towards steeper upland summits, there are long distance views or panoramic views of multiple counties, Belfast Lough, Lough Neagh and towards the Sperrins AONB. Within lower slopes of the LCA views are often restricted by topography but still provide pleasant views of Belfast Lough, Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus.</p> <p>Although this LCA has multiple attractive and pleasant views, the perceptual quality of the LCA is mixed. Within the upland areas of the LCA, there is an interesting perception with distant views towards Lough Neagh which contribute to the wide-open feel. As the area has limited active uses, the landscape has a calm, open and exposed effect. Nevertheless, human-induced interaction has spoiled the perceptual quality through the impact of extensive fly-tipping, the development of electricity infrastructure (pylons are dominant in some places) and some roads are highly visual in the landscape.</p>
Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	<p>This LCA traverses the boundaries of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Belfast City Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. There is greater sensitivity to modern development on the steeper slopes of this LCA. In the case of cross boundary issues, the collaborative management of the Belfast Basalt Escarpment AoHSV and the siting and massing of renewable energy projects needs to take into account plans from neighbouring Councils.</p>
Summary of landscape characteristics	<p>An upland and open area that is part of the Antrim Plateau, distinguished by steep slopes. Rough grazing/scrub/gorse, with large and irregular exposed field patterns. This LCA is generally attractive and peaceful with extensive rough land grazing. The landscape has distant views of Belfast Lough, Lough Neagh, Sperrins and Newtownabbey. The LCA has been adversely impacted by electricity infrastructure, fly tipping and hedgerows degradation and replacement with wire fencing.</p>
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>Much of the farmland is in a partially abandoned condition and there is much evidence of fly tipping and derelict farmsteads.</p> <p>There is much evidence of hedgerow removal and the character of roads has been eroded by a combination of neglect and ongoing minor road improvements.</p> <p>The landscape of the Divis Summits is generally in poor condition, particularly on the summits and in areas where there has been history of mineral extraction. The impact of quarry extraction is often prominent in the landscape due to its location.</p>
Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is little scope for new built development. • A possible exception is within existing derelict sites, where there may be opportunities for restoration. • Restoration of abandoned quarry sites would improve the views within this landscape. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority should be given to those in the most prominent positions on escarpment slopes

	<p>and those close to important archaeological sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New hedgerow planting with native trees on the fringes of new dwellings, farmsteads, mineral sites and along roads on lower summits will screen development and reinforce the landscape character. • Minor road character may be improved by enhancing and conserving hedgerows and lines of new trees on lower slopes. • The Belfast Hills, of which this LCA forms the highest point, is intrinsically the most sensitive of all the upland and escarpment landscapes around Belfast because of their iconic character. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each individual summit is a landmark in its own right and together the summits have a strong influence on the settings of almost all parts of the city as well as Lisburn, Newtownabbey and Belfast Lough. • Wind energy development on these summits would not only fundamentally alter their landscape character but would also be very widely visible indeed. The scenic, natural, cultural and recreational values associated with this LCA further heighten its sensitivity. • Overall, this LCA has a High Sensitivity to wind energy development.
Overall Sensitivity	Overall, this LCA is High Sensitivity to the influences of modern built development.

LCA 113- Crumlin Expansive Farmland

Figure 24: Location Map

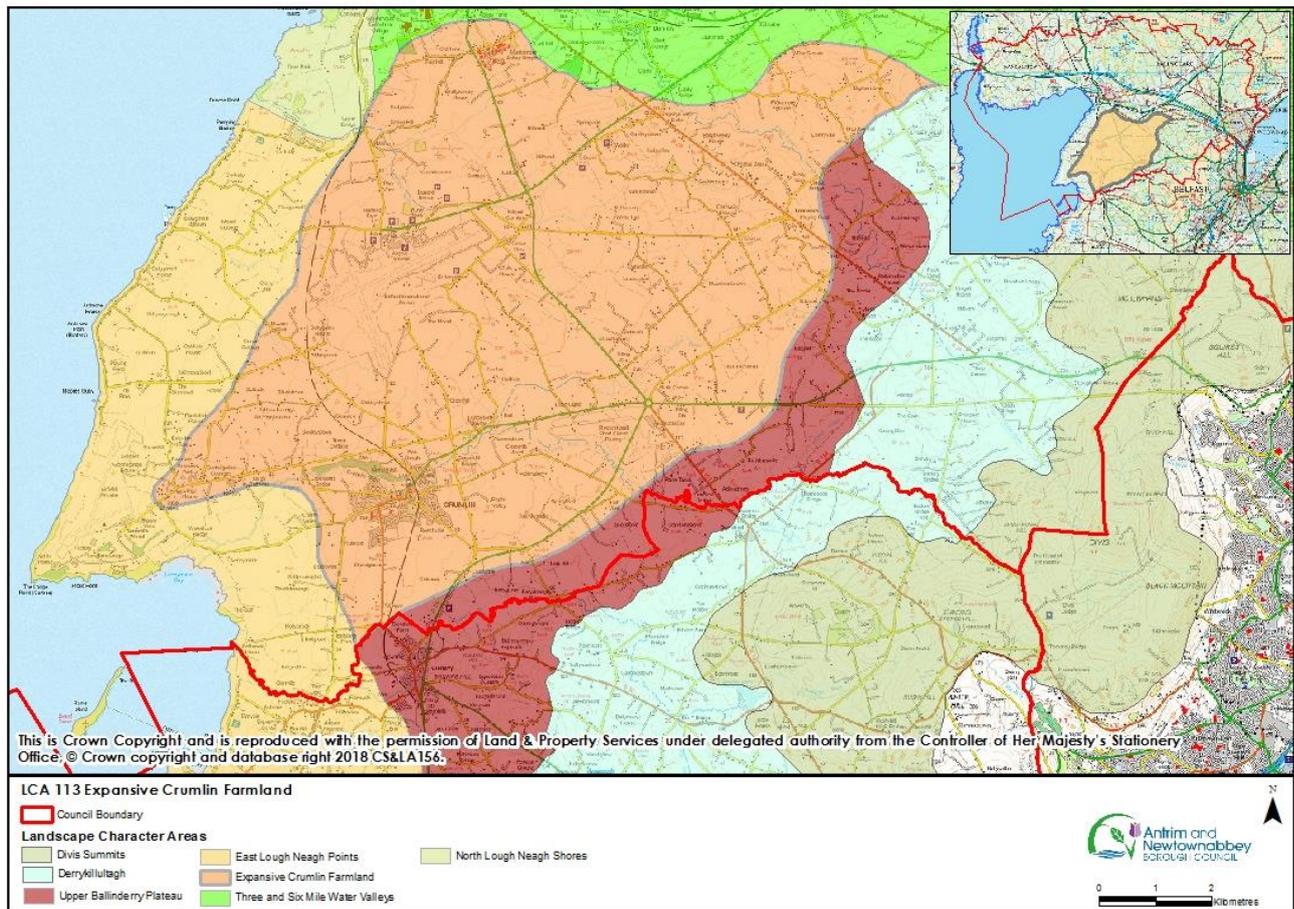


Figure 29: Representative Photographs

View of Nutts Corner along Moira Road.



View from Seacash Road adjacent to the Belfast International Airport.



This LCA occupies a relatively flat area underlain by rocks of the Upper Basalt Formation. The land slopes gently from the lower slopes of the Belfast Hills to the fringes of Lough Neagh to the west.

Table 13: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This LCA lies within the region described as the Central Lowlands. • This LCA lies near the eastern shores of Lough Neagh, occupying a relatively flat area underlain by rocks of the Upper Basalt formation. The land slopes gently from the lower slopes of the Belfast Hills to the fringes of Lough Neagh. • The two primary geology formations are of Upper and Lower Basalt. In the north of the LCA, these formations are separated by palaeoweathered beds and ashfalls of the Interbasaltic Formation. • The drift geology for this LCA shows it to be predominantly underlain by Late Midlandian Till associated with the large ice mass that was centred on the Lough Neagh Basin. The movement of ice created a hummocky terrain of mixed drifts. • There are some exceptions with areas of drift free bedrock in the north and small area of glaciofluvial sand and gravel in the south. • The Clay Eater, Dunmore River and the Crumlin River flow from the hills across the farmland but do not have a strong presence in the landscape. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Clady and Crumlin Rivers are narrow and steep-sided so the water channels are relatively inconspicuous. • Three small ponds at Ballynadrentagh (Maybe associated with old lignite extraction testing sites). <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of the land cover is grassland. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The majority of this is improved grassland with small vegetation of rough grazing and other poor grasslands around the BIA airport boundary, Nutts Corner and the higher land in the Northeast. ◦ Flat land near streams is poorly drained and has damp grassland dominated by rushes. • Improved grasslands are dominated by ryegrass; management includes grazing, silage cutting, high input of fertiliser and slurry. • Arable land accounts for 6% of the land cover. • Large, geometric and open fields of pasture bounded by overgrown hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees. • A clear hierarchy of straight roads is evenly distributed, criss-crossing the flat plain. • Airfields occupy the flattest area. The area around Nutts Corner has been transformed through a historical airfield and is a relatively expansive area of degraded and derelict land. (Some new industrial units are present). <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1% of the land cover is occupied by woodlands through occasional shelterbelts and small plantations (no conifer woodland). • Majority is in Crumlin Glen. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scattered farms and small villages for the main settlements, farms are typically sited at the end of straight tracks at a distance from the road, while recent single dwelling development tends to be sited adjacent to the road. • The largest settlement is the small town of Crumlin. • The flat and open landscape character makes it an ideal location for airfields. The Belfast International Airport is located in this LCA as was the historic disused Nutts Corner airfield.

Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	<p>Large geometric field patterns with mixed rough grazing and improved grasslands. Improved grassland is managed through modern machinery, slurry, fertiliser and grazing patterns. On the periphery of BIA airport operational area, rough grassland with small scale grazing this farmland is poor quality and very wet and rushy. In the periphery of Nutts Corner agriculture lands predominately for silage production and chicken sheds. Higher intensity of chicken farming is evident within the old airfield. Threats from agriculture include increases in machinery size, overgrazing and increased drainage to improve grassland quality.</p>
Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	<p>Unscheduled, Scheduled Monument & Scheduled Zone are designated areas by the Department for Communities. These include sites and monuments (Raths & fort), historic buildings (Places of worship and listed houses) and industrial heritage (bridges). In addition, there are aspects of defence heritage relating to the old WW2 airfield at Nutts Corner, including bunkers, stores and blast shelters.</p> <p>Other pieces of built heritage include Glendarragh farm and house.</p>
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>Some patches of hazel and scrub plantations along river valleys and some beech plantations to the northeast. Most extensive woodland is at Glendarragh (or Crumlin Glen), wooded with natural and artificial timber of oak, fir, larch, beech and hazel. This woodland area represents at least 'long-established' woodland of potential biodiversity interest.</p> <p>Biodiversity in areas of improved pastures and arable is often concentrated in hedgerows. There are limited semi-natural habitats in this area.</p> <p>The Crumlin River is a salmonid river and contains a Northern Ireland Priority Species in river water-crowfoot.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community Assets and facilities in this LCA are generally associated with the small settlements (Killead), towns (Crumlin) and facilities within the Belfast International Airport. At Nutts Corner there are recreational facilities including a motor racing track, motor testing track and a commercial Sunday market.</p> <p>Cultural Qualities within this LCA include notable air crashes associated with the old Nutts Corner military and civilian airport. Nutts Corner was the site of the worst air disaster in Northern Ireland, when on 5th January 1953 a British European Airways (BEA) Vickers Viking crashed after striking landing lights and then a building at the airfield, killing 27 people out of 35 on board the aircraft. Additionally, on 21st August 1942 the World War I air ace Harry King Goode was killed on a demonstration flight with a 120 Squadron B-24 Liberator stationed at the base.</p>

	<p>Some of the scheduled monuments of Rath's are associated with Irish folklore of the Fairy Fort, an example of this is behind the Nutts Corner Market site adjacent to the industrial complex.</p> <p>Within the Crumlin Glen is a little gothic-arched rubble stoned building, according to folklore it was built facing Mecca as a Muslim temple for the landowner's servant.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>In the rural areas of this LCA, there are limited access points with limited public rights of way and extensive privately owned lanes and tracks. There is a public right of way on Canning Lane in Crumlin. On the fringes of towns and some smaller settlements there are footpaths enabling small-scale informal recreation.</p> <p>The majority of this LCA has a limited amount of enjoyment due to the influence of modern development. There are challenging influences from renewable energy development, single rural housing, infrastructure and the influence of Belfast International Airport.</p>
Views & Perceptual Quality	<p>Due to the influence of topography from field boundaries and modern development views within this LCA are relatively limited. There are some views towards the rolling ridges of the Three and Six Mile Water Valleys.</p> <p>This LCA has mixed perceptual quality with pleasant, attractive and challenging perceptions. The impact of modern development, renewables, Nutts Corner and the airport create a challenging perspective within the landscape quality. The extensive infrastructure associated with the airport has significantly alerted the landscape aesthetics. In the area around Loanends the rural countryside provides pleasant perception with a restrained impact from development.</p> <p>The only notable area of attractive landscape is between Nutts Corner and Crumlin, adjacent to the Crumlin Glen. The mixed deciduous forestry lining the Crumlin River provides an impressive backdrop on the Largy Road. The area in the periphery of BIA gives a pleasant atmosphere watching the planes.</p>
Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	<p>This LCA boundary is contained within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough. There are considered to be no cross boundary issues with neighbouring Councils.</p>
Summary of landscape characteristics	<p>Flat expansive area with grassland and mixed modern development. Modern development has detracted from the landscape perception of the area. In Nutts Corner the large and open expansive area dominated by industrial warehouses and the A26 Moira Road. Perception shows historic past of airfield with tramway and concrete surrounding the entire area. Landscape has been vastly altered through development. In the periphery of the BIA the landscape is severely degraded due to infrastructure development and perimeter fencing.</p>
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>The disused airfield has altered the scale and structure of the landscape and areas such as this require landscape enhancement and restoration to help enhance its original character.</p>

	<p>The small-nucleated villages are sensitive to expansion and sprawl would affect their character.</p> <p>Neglect and limited management of hedgerows has led to the gradual degradation of the hedgerow network and the over-maturing of hedgerow trees.</p>
<p>Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are considerable pressures from scattered rural single dwelling development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural single dwellings should be carefully designed and sited to integrate into the local landscape character. • Views to Lough Neagh from the western fringes may be retained by ensuring new development does not intrude or obstruct important views. • Conservation of the settings of clustered settlements will prevent overspill of built development and protect their nucleated form. • Airfields are a major feature of the area, causing an expansion of landscape scale and loss of vegetation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration or redevelopment of disused airport sites may result in the enhancement of the landscape character and restoration of landscape pattern. • New hedgerow planting with native trees on the fringes of new dwellings, farmsteads, mineral sites and along roads on lower summits will screen development and reinforce the landscape character. • This landscape is of large to medium scale, its simple, open, horizontal composition and the presence of existing man-made influences tend to reduce its sensitivity to wind energy development. • Sensitivity is lowest on the southern fringes of the LCA where the former airfield has led to landscape degradation and where turbines would be screened against the western slopes of the Belfast Hills. • Overall Sensitivity – Low to Medium for Wind Energy Development.
<p>Overall Sensitivity</p>	<p>This LCA is low sensitivity to the influences of modern built development. Apart from the Crumlin River Valley and Glen which is High Sensitivity.</p>

LCA 114- Three and Six Mile Water Valleys

Figure 26: Location Map

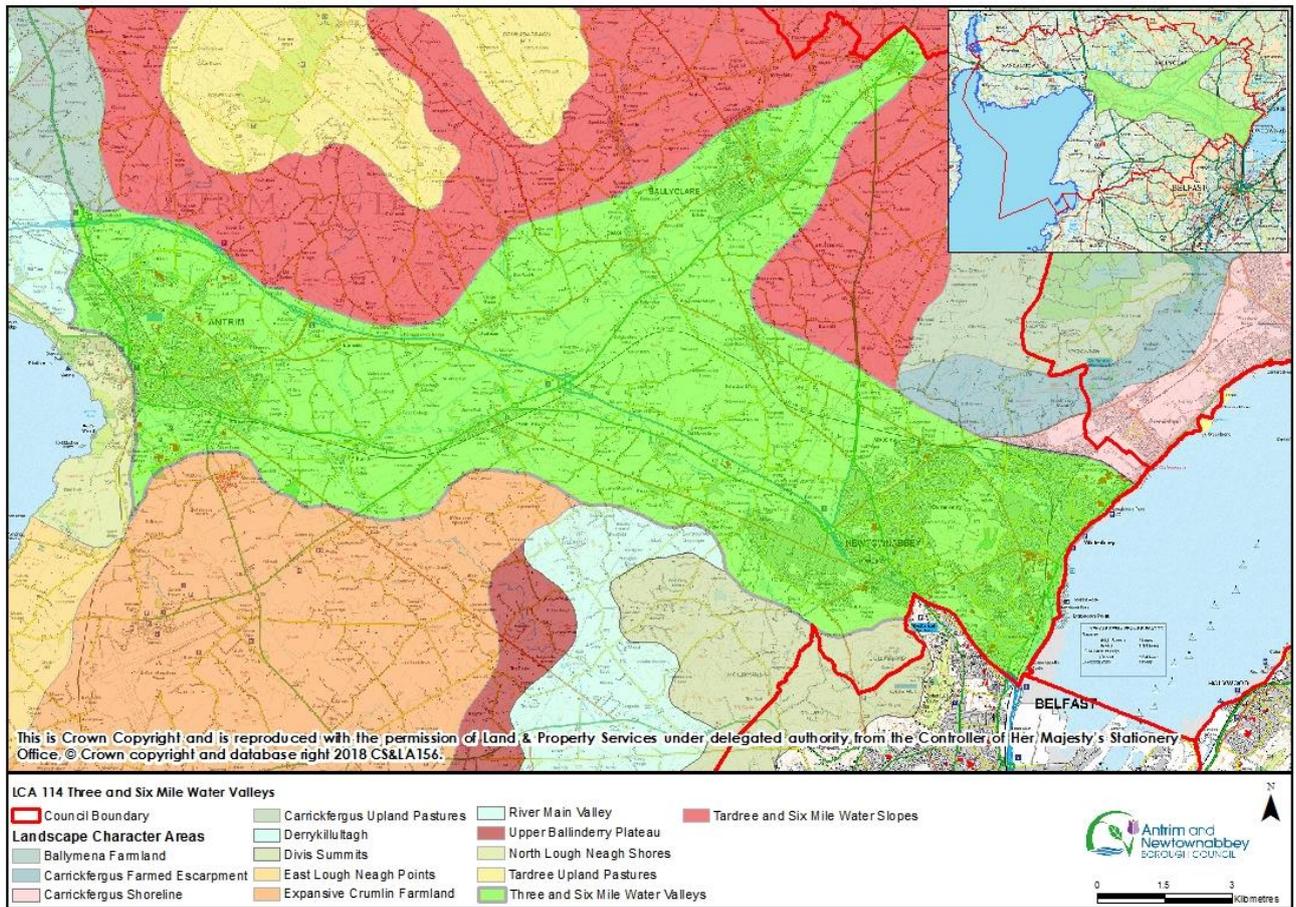


Figure 27: Representative Photographs

View of farmland on the fringe of Ballyclare



View of Antrim Town Centre



This LCA covers an area of gently rolling ridges within the broad lowland valley of the Three Mile Water and Six Mile Water. This area acts as a corridor for the dense infrastructure linking Antrim and Ballyclare.

Table 14: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This LCA lies within the region described as the Antrim Plateau and Glens. • The geology comprises a mix of Mesozoic sedimentary and Tertiary igneous rocks in faulted and unconformable contact. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tertiary Lower Basalt Formation makes up 65% of the LCA. ○ Outer Belfast Lough is a structurally defined feature, possibly marking the continuation of the major Southern Uplands Fault from Scotland to Ireland. ○ The site is important for the Ordovician series of spilitic lavas, black shales and greywackes. • Geomorphologically, an important element in the landscape is a series of glaciofluvial deposits that occur along the northern banks of the Six Mile Water. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is in turn aligned along a bedrock depression in Tertiary Lower Basalts controlled by the Six Mile Water fault. • Detailed topography is largely controlled by a succession of Tertiary basalt lava flows that define successive, large-scale steps within the landscape. • The topography is gently rolling ridges within the broad lowland valleys of the Three Mile Water and Six Mile Water. <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassland occupies approximately 60% of the LCA; the majority is improved grassland. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rough grazing and poor grassland is often located around the edge of urban areas. ○ Grasslands are often enclosed by overgrown and gappy hedges, but tend to be better managed in the Six Mile Water Valley. • Arable land is scattered through the LCA, accounting for about 6% of the area. • Almost 20% of the LCA is urban, including Metropolitan Newtownabbey, Antrim, Ballyclare, Doagh, Ballyrobert, Ballynure, Parkgate, Burnside and Dunadry. • Large open pastures are divided by hedgerows with numerous hedgerow trees. • Densely settled, with many large farms and a variety of architectural styles. • The Six Mile Water River flows within a broad, gently undulating valley which acts as a corridor for the dense infrastructure linking the towns of Antrim and Ballyclare. • The west of the area borders the Lough Neagh lowlands to the southwest and the Antrim plateau that rises to the north and south. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlands occupy approximately 3% of the LCA and almost all of this is broadleaved. • It is confined mainly to former demesnes such as Upton Park (Templepatrick), Loughanmore, Holestone House and Hazelbank (Lowland woodland pasture and parkland). • In most of these demesnes, mature broadleaves dominate, principally beech, with oak, lime, some sycamore and horse chestnut, but there are occasional conifers intermixed and some small conifer plantations. There are no remaining areas of peat bog in the LCA. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale built development and infrastructure is prominent in some areas, particularly on the fringes of Antrim and Newtownabbey. • The traditional settlement pattern, of small-clustered towns and villages on the lower slopes of the valley, and small settlements on the upper slopes alongside tributary streams, is still very evident. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Although there is a scattering of industrial premises, factories, landfill sites and housing throughout the area, connected by a good infrastructure network.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The variety of scales and styles of built development emphasises its presence in the landscape and does not always encourage a coherent relationship between settlement and landscape context. • The settings of built development are often quite open and incoherent, leading to a rather degraded visual character in some areas. • Communication masts are found on many hills, with pylons and electricity lines, prominent on local skylines. 	
Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	Large open improved grassland management for silage and livestock grazing. Fields enclosed by hedgerows, with numerous hedgerow trees and fences. Poor quality rough grazing is often located around the edge of urban areas or sites that could represent potential expansion.
Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	<p>Unscheduled and Scheduled Monuments are designated areas by the Department for Communities. Archaeological remains include Rath, Standing stone along Six-Mile River, Mottos, Cairns, Battle Site, AP Sites, Barrow, megalithic tombs, Souterrains, enclosures. There is a wide array of industrial and farming heritage through historical mill sites, traditional farmsteads and industrial heritage.</p> <p>Antrim Town Centre is a Conservation Area, with listed buildings. Additionally, there are the ruins of Antrim Castle with associated Castle Gardens, Clotworthy House War memorial and Round Tower.</p> <p>The White House is Newtownabbey's oldest building and can trace its history back to 1569. The White House tells both the story of the Williamite and Jacobite Wars from a European perspective and the story of this historic building's past right up to the present day. Sentry Hill, near Newtownabbey is a uniquely intact 19th century farmhouse. Built in 1835 in the townland of Ballyvesey, Sentry Hill replaced the existing thatched farmhouse. In the 1880s, it was improved with the addition of front porch and conservatory, bathroom and kitchen. The contents of Sentry Hill have survived almost intact. A wealth of artefacts and archival material was amassed down the years. The site is Council owned and operates as a museum. There is also a Conservation area in Merville Garden Village.</p> <p>In Templepatrick, Castle Upton has its earliest roots dating back to medieval times, when it was a fort and chapel built by the Knights of St John, parts of which are still evident in the basement today. A large part of the castle was built before 1611 by Captain Humfred de Norton, and then in 1625 Captain Henry Upton bought the house and lands of Castle Norton, as it was then called, and give it the name of Castle Upton.</p> <p>Other historic/listed buildings include the farmhouse on the entrance to Doagh Village. The most distinguished house in Doagh, Fisherwick Lodge was built at the beginning of the 1800s for the Marquess of Donegall and used by him as a hunting lodge and country retreat. Fisherwick Lodge was</p>

	<p>admired by travellers for its architecture and for the fine grounds that had been developed around it.</p> <p>Dunadry has a deep traditional and historical background associated with mill workings and listed building associated with past industrial heritage.</p> <p>Ballyrobert Cottage Gardens is a unique Ulster Cottage garden designed around a historic 17th-century landscape, with original cottage and barn features.</p> <p>There are historic and traditional abandoned farmhouses between Ballyclare and Ballynure and the historic site of Dunsilly House. Along the Six Mile River, there is defence heritage through defence nodal points and prepared demolition schemes.</p>
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>The Six Mile Water Glaciofluvial Complex has limited scientific importance. The complex provides the only evidence in the region of ice pressure from the direction of the Lough Neagh lowlands during the last glacial period and indicates that the Lough Neagh Basin formed a lowland centre of ice decay.</p> <p>There are Earth Science Conservation review areas in Ballypalady, Carnmoney Plug, Craig Hill Quarry and Glas-Na-Bradán.</p> <p>Woodland planting has taken place at Rathfern Wood on Carnmoney Hill; this is a Community Woodland of ash, hazel and oak interspersed with footpaths and ponds on a 25ha site. At Monkstown, a 9ha site beside the Three Mile Water has been planted with ash, cherry, Scot's pine and hazel.</p> <p>Carnmoney Hill is a prominent outlier of the Belfast basalt escarpment which forms a landmark for Newtownabbey. This feature has been identified as an Area of Scenic Quality and was designated an Area of High Scenic Value in BMAP (2004 and 2014 versions).</p> <p>Rushy fields at the bottom of valleys have some examples of breeding waders including curlew, lapwing and snipe. Areas that have thin soils on upland parts (e.g. Carnmoney Hill) may also have gorse.</p> <p>The LCA adjoins the designations on Belfast Lough including, RAMSAR, SPA, Outer Belfast Lough ASSI and the Inner Belfast Lough ASSI. The habitat range includes open mud flats, boulder and rock shore, extensive mussel beds and important feeding/roosting sites for wintering waders and wildfowl. These sites support internationally important bird numbers.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community Assets and facilities in this LCA are generally associated with the settlements, villages and towns. This contains the two main metropolitan towns of Antrim and Newtownabbey. Antrim Area Hospital, single turbine and Hollywell Hospital are prominent features in the landscape. The rivers and forest provide recreational facilities along the Six Mile River for angling and for walking around Ballyboley Forest. There are further leisure spots at Ballyrobert Cottage</p>

	<p>Garden, Sentry Hill and along the Ulster Way. This LCA is known for its busy transport corridors along the valleys with the M2 motorway, railway and several major A roads. The valleys are a communications corridor with prominent pylons and communications masts.</p> <p>This LCA is steeped in cultural qualities and influences; an accepted story of the etymology of the Six Mile Water name originates from a name given by Norman soldiers who forded the river after travelling six miles from Carrickfergus Castle.</p> <p>The Round Tower in Antrim is all that remains of a great Monastic Settlement in Antrim. Local legend tells of a witch who was so unhappy over the building of the Round Tower that she jumped off the top to express her annoyance. She landed on a large boulder, leaving the impressions of her knee and elbow on it. To this day, it is known as the witch's stone.</p> <p>In Kilbride graveyard in Doagh, there was a large stone vault built in the early 1830s. This was a time that the threat from body snatching was at its height. The architectural quality building was known as the Corpse House. It was used to store bodies until they were no longer fresh enough for body snatchers to make money from them.</p> <p>According to tradition, Monkstown Abbey is where Fergus, the Ulsterman who became the first King of Scotland, was buried over 1500 years ago. Fergus suffered from Leprosy and travelled back to Monkstown in search of a cure, His boat got caught in a storm and sank. Fergus drowned and his body washed up in the shore and he was buried at Monkstown Abbey,</p> <p>In Newtownabbey, the White House's most famous story is associated with 1690 when William of Orange landed at Carrickfergus on the 14th June. William's army landed at the ancient quay near the White House and William rode from Carrickfergus where he met with General Schomberg and other people of note.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>This landscape is relatively accessible with busy transport corridors along the valleys, popular walking and cycling routes accessible from Belfast. The Six Mile Water is popular for angling and the Ulster Way long distance path runs through the LCA.</p> <p>There are public rights of way at Kings Avenue, Ladysmith Lane and Glen Park in Newtownabbey. In Mallusk there is a public right of way at Trench Lane and on the old Ballymena Road in Doagh. In Antrim, there are four at Moylena Grove, the Fisherman's path at Moylinney Banks, two on the Belfast Road. There is a public right of way on Carnmoney Hill.</p> <p>The majority of this LCA has a limited amount of enjoyment due to the influence of modern development. The evolution</p>

	<p>of development within this LCA has created a landscape which can be defined as cluttered.</p> <p>Some pockets of landscape provide enjoyment through tranquillity in the valley landscapes away from major transport infrastructure and development. As well as in areas like Carnmoney Hill which provide prominent attractive vistas.</p>
Views & Perceptual Quality	<p>This LCA covers a vast area of the Borough between Antrim and Newtownabbey. As a result, there are a wide array of distant views into the upland areas around the fringe of Belfast, towards Tardree Upland Pastures and towards the Antrim Plateau and Glens. These views are often pleasant showing the transition from the valley floor to the upland slopes with distinctive features. Additional views include distant vistas of Lough Neagh towards the Sperrins and across Belfast Lough from Newtownabbey. The area of Carnmoney Hill provides attractive views of Belfast City, Belfast Lough and the coast.</p> <p>Human induced intrusion has spoiled and degraded the perceptual quality of the LCA through major infrastructure development including roads, railway, electricity pylons, communication masts and rural single dwellings. There is widespread large scale industrial development scattered throughout the valleys and especially on the outskirts of Newtownabbey and Antrim. Occasional areas of quarrying and landfill. The impact of modern development has left a landscape with a general lack of visual coherence.</p> <p>This LCA provides a sense of place, most known as a transport corridor and a strategic link between Belfast, Larne and Lough Neagh.</p>
Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	<p>This LCA boundary is contained within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough. There are considered to be no cross boundary issues with neighbouring Councils.</p>
Summary of landscape characteristics	<p>This LCA is mixture of agricultural grasslands and urban areas. The LCA is rolling with some relatively flat grasslands with large open pastures divided by hedgerows and numerous trees. The LCA is densely populated with distinctive urban areas and large farms in the countryside. This LCA is heavily influenced by modern development from infrastructure and transport.</p>
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>The landscape condition is generally poor due to incomplete hedgerow network and the decline of mature trees. The wooded estates at Greenmount and Upton Park add to the diversity and sensitivity of the landscape. The settings of built development are often open and incoherent, leading to a rather degraded visual character in some areas. The area is relatively sensitive to large-scale development. The impact of modern development has significant impact on the sensitivity of the landscape.</p> <p>The variety of scales and styles of built development emphasis its presence in the landscape and does not always encourage a coherent relationship between settlement and landscape context.</p>

	<p>Carnmoney Hill is a prominent feature of the landscape with a rugged hill, natural landscape and plummeting escarpment to the south. This is an important landscape feature of High Sensitivity.</p> <p>River profiles banks are important local landscape features through Six Mile River and River Maine. There are important local habitats and important local angling. These areas have a higher landscape sensitivity to modern development.</p>
<p>Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further built development may be satisfactorily accommodated through a coordinated landscape approach with screening and landscaping to help mitigate against the impacts on the landscape character. • A unified building approach using a coherent architectural style which draws on vernacular features should be encouraged. • Clear zones of development may be established using woodland or landform to create a distinctive landscape setting for large-scale urban development. • Although the often degraded quality of this landscape makes it less sensitive to wind energy development, the extent of the long views across the area, the area's role as a gateway to Belfast, and the fact that it is overlooked by adjacent higher land, all increase its sensitivity. • The general lack of visual coherence makes it difficult to identify areas for wind energy development in this landscape without creating further visual confusion. There are many scale comparators in this landscape and turbines could dwarf existing built structures which are widespread. • Overall Sensitivity to wind energy development is Medium to High
<p>Overall Sensitivity</p>	<p>This LCA has a low sensitivity to the influences of modern built development. Apart from the river profiles and associated environs.</p>

LCA 115- Tardree and Six Mile Water Slopes

Figure 28: Location Map

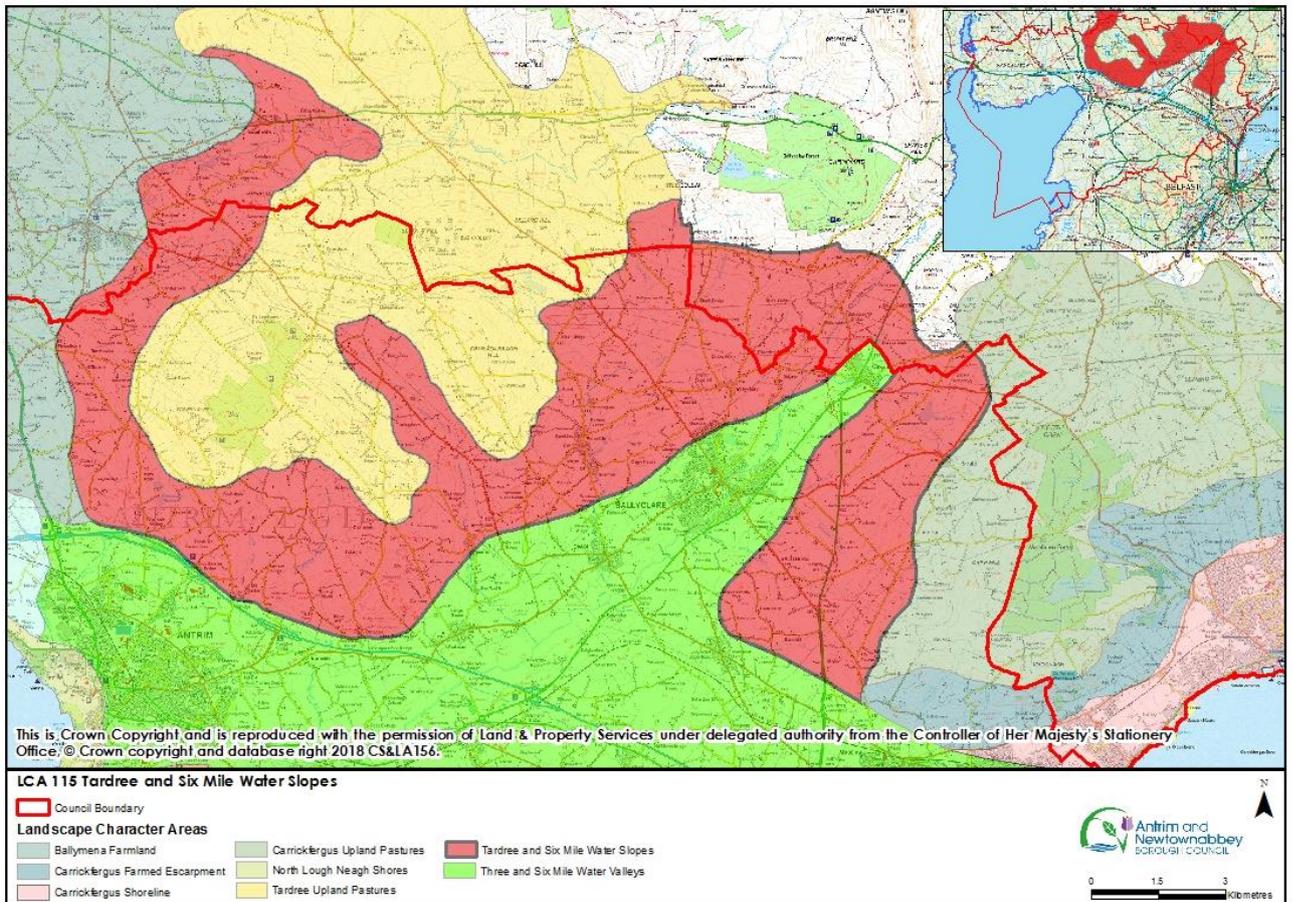


Figure 29: Representative Photographs

View of the transitional area to the Tardree Upland Pastures.



Vista towards Donegore Hill from motorway footbridge.



This undulating LCA wraps around an area of high basalt moorland between the high ground of the Tardree Upland Pastures and Three and Six Mile Water Valleys.

Table 15: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This LCA lies in the area known as the Antrim Plateau and Glens. • The LCA is dominated by a series of structural plateaux that dip gently in towards the Lough Neagh Basin. • The geology comprises a mix of Tertiary igneous formations embedded, faulted and unconformable contact. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Tertiary Basalt makes up 60% of the LCA with remainder being other formations. • The western part of the LCA that runs down to the River Main characterised by a series of approximately north – south orientated drumlins. • The drift geology map for this LCA shows it to be a complex mix of glacial, de-glacial and postglacial sediments. • Detailed topography is largely controlled by a succession of Tertiary basalt lava flows that define successive, large-scale steps within the landscape. • Several reservoirs occur in this LCA, of these Black Rock Reservoir and Straid Dam are nutrient enriched and contain small fen. • Many streams flow throughout the LCA, most feeding the Six Mile Water River. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The most notable drainage systems are the Doagh River and Six Mile Water River. <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasslands account for 80% of the LCA, with the majority considered as improved. Nevertheless, there is a tendency for these grasslands to revert readily to rushes, even at low altitudes as around Ross and Castlegore. • A further 9% of the LCA land cover is considered as arable and this includes some grass reseeded. • There is neither lowland raised bog nor blanket bog in this LCA. Heath covers the peaty soils north of Dickeystown (outside of the Borough). • This LCA has a mixed pattern of fields and woodlands of differing scales, with woodland cover increasing to the east. • The area is characterised by an area of relatively degraded undulating farmland with overgrown, leggy hedgerows and rushy grasslands. • The landscape appears rather degraded due to the neglect of field boundaries and grasslands, especially towards the valley floor. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlands occupy only 1% of the LCA; along the Connor Burn (outside of the Borough), narrow bands of hazel and ash are found on the steep sides of incised streams. Small patches of open treed areas with beech and Scots pine along the Doagh River are remnants of plantings around former mills and associated large houses. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no major settlements in the area, but many small settlements clusters, farms and smallholdings are scattered across the lower valley slopes where they are sheltered by landform and well connected by a dense network of roads. • A network of lanes and minor roads cross the landscape and permit some long and sweeping views into the Six Mile Water Valley. • Scattered housing in the countryside may detract from its rural character. There is some scope to accommodate a variety of development, as long as it is well screened within the local landscape dynamics. • The multitude of electricity pylons, in areas like Hillhead, where they converge at a power station, intrude into the rural setting.

Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	Mixed condition between poor rough grazing and improved grassland. Agricultural activities are based on scattered farms and smallholdings using modern management (slurry and fertiliser). Evidence of drainage works in lower fields to improve grass production. Threats to the landscape include bigger machinery and increasing field boundary sizes. Opportunity in some rough grasslands to maintain gorse for wildfowl (pheasants).
Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	<p>Unscheduled and Scheduled Monuments (Bean Fort) are designated areas by the Department for Communities. Archaeological remains, such as Wiley's Fort (outside of Borough), raths, souterrain, motte, mount and standing stones. Other historic/listed buildings include a wide array of deep industrial heritage through the industrial revolution with historical mills and related buildings. As well, there is evidence of historic vernacular stone built farmsteads.</p> <p>The area of Donegore Hill was the site of main camp of the United Irishmen prior to the Battle of Antrim, in the Irish Rebellion of 1798. The hill contains fortified earthworks and other archaeological remains, both ancient (including a Neolithic causewayed enclosure) and mediaeval (Motte and Souterrain).</p>
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>Although small pockets of fen and marsh occur, most of these areas have been reclaimed for pasture and are invaded by rushes. In some cases, breeding waders have been recorded (curlew, lapwing and snipe).</p> <p>The area of Ballypalady has been designated an ASSI due to important geological features and accordingly needs to be specially protected. Ballypalady is the best known, best documented and botanically the richest of the Tertiary Interbasaltic fossil plant localities in Ireland. Ballypalady is also the site most suitable for future studies.</p> <p>Both the Six Mile Water and Doagh River have river water crowfoot. The north central part of this LCA (outside of the Borough) includes a very limited area of the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB, this designation is indicative of the scenic quality of the landscape.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community Assets and facilities in this LCA are generally associated with the settlements, hamlets and villages. In the rural areas of this LCA there are halls and churches that act as community facilities.</p> <p>Historic field patterns are remarkably intact within the Braid Valley, and are marked by stonewalls in contrast to hedges elsewhere.</p> <p>The Donegore Hill area is associated with a wide array of traditional deep history dating from early settlement times to the 18th century Irish battles, including the Battle of Antrim. The Hill Weaver poet, James Orr wrote a poem entitled <i>Donegore Hill</i> on the subject.</p>

	<p>The area is well known in Antrim and Newtownabbey and in Ulster Scots culture for poetry.</p> <p>The origins of Donegore Hill may date back to an ancient Burial Mound built around 5000 years ago. The meaning of the name is unclear but in local folklore, it means 'The Bloody Fort'. This name comes from a belief that people suffering from the plague were driven there to die to prevent disease from spreading.</p> <p>Another important cultural and historical artefact within this LCA is the Holestone monument. The legend says that couples looking for eternal love and happiness undertake a traditional ceremony at the Holestone in Parkgate. In this, the woman puts her hand through the circular hole and her partner takes it. By doing so, they make a commitment to love each other forever.</p> <p>Archaeological remains, such as Willeys Forts, raths and standing stones, indicate the long history of settlement on the accessible slopes.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>In the rural areas of this LCA, there are limited access points with limited public rights of way and extensive privately owned lanes and tracks. On the fringe of Randalstown and some of the smaller settlements, have footpaths enabling small-scale informal recreation. There is a public right of way in Ballyeaston at Raa Hill.</p> <p>The perceived enjoyment of this landscape is mixed between pleasant/attractive and challenging. There is a pleasant transition within the rurality of the area from semi enclosed lower slopes to open and expansive upper slopes in the Tardree Upland Pastures.</p> <p>Challenging influences within the LCA are linked to the impact of modern development from electricity infrastructure (pylons), the influence of modern and affluent rural single dwelling development and removal of semi-traditional hedgerow field boundaries. In some areas, the impact from electricity infrastructure has created an unpleasant landscape due to the dominance of wires, poles and generators. Additionally, the constant humming from production makes the area more unpleasant.</p>
Views & Perceptual Quality	<p>Within this LCA, there is mixture of pleasant and challenging views and vistas of other Landscape Character Areas. There are pleasant views of Tardree Forest, Big Collin, Wee Colin and Tardree Mountain as the LCA transitions into the Tardree Upland Pastures. The windfarm adjacent to Big Collin provides a visible landmark for the area within the hills in the distance.</p> <p>On the hillside overlooking the M2 at Donegore Hill there are stunning and spectacular views of Belfast Hills/Lagan Valley Regional Park.</p> <p>There are challenging views in the distance within some parts of the Tardree Upland Pastures from the impact of</p>

	<p>wind energy development and from the presence of pylons from the Kilroot Power Station in Carrickfergus.</p> <p>This LCA has a varied landscape perception from interesting to challenging. The relatively wild nature on more sparsely settled areas moving towards the uplands provide an interesting perception through the feeling of exposure from wind sculpted trees and sappy hedgerows.</p> <p>These perceptions change due to the impact of modern built development within the countryside and on the lower slopes of the Six Mile Valley. Farmland in this area is characterised as relatively degraded with overgrown, leggy hedgerows and rushy pastures. The impact of rural single dwellings adds to the challenging perception within this LCA.</p> <p>Donegore Hill is located within this LCA and is an important cultural and heritage site for heritage, archaeology, folklore and poetry. The area provides an interesting/inspirational perception due to its sense of place.</p>
Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	This LCA traverses the boundaries of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. There are no overarching cross boundary issues within this LCA. This will be continually reviewed and monitored throughout the lifespan of the LDP.
Summary of landscape characteristics	The LCA is a transitional area between the uplands of the Tardree Upland Pastures and valley floor of Three and Six Mile Water Valleys. The land cover is predominantly grassland with mixed rough grazing and pasture. The overall perception of the countryside in this LCA is relatively tame and is quite traditional following the pattern of the historic road. Significant issues arise from prominence of electricity infrastructure, wind turbines, roads infrastructure and the influence of affluent rural dwellings altering the dynamic of the landscape character. There is an overall historic character within the LCA from the influence of historic mills and heritage/cultural monuments and Donegore Hill.
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>The landscape appears rather degraded towards the valley floor due to the neglect of field boundaries and grasslands. The further cumulative impact of hedgerow and scattered tree removal, with replacement by wire fences adds to the neglect.</p> <p>The presence of a multitude of electricity pylons especially Hillhead intrude into the rural setting. This is further echoed by the presence of major electricity substations and the convergence of wires from the Kilroot Power Station.</p> <p>Scattered countryside housing may detract from the rural character of this LCA. Housing style could be better unified and integrated with the local landscape dynamics.</p> <p>Donegore Hill is a landscape of high sensitivity and importance due to its heritage, historical and cultural importance, plus its general sense of feel.</p>

<p>Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural single dwellings should be carefully designed and sited to integrate into the local landscape character. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would unify housing styles by drawing on vernacular details. • Further accommodation of development could be provided by associated tree planting for landscape screening. • Farm buildings could be designed to integrate into the landscape by using building materials and colours that match the traditional styles of the rural setting. • Although Donegore Hill has been influenced by modern development, the area is of such cultural and heritage importance that further enhanced landscape protection should be employed. • This is a visually prominent landscape, the upper slopes of the LCA forming important skyline ridges, particularly when viewed from adjacent lower-lying areas. • The outlier hill of Donegore is especially sensitive. • The dispersed settlement pattern, dense lane network, scattering of archaeological sites, varied topography and landscape features eg loughs and rocky outcrops increase the sensitivity of this landscape to wind energy development. • The LCA is not broad in scale and could be overwhelmed by inappropriate wind energy development. • Land away from ridgelines and key views might be somewhat less sensitive. • Overall Sensitivity High to Wind Energy Development.
<p>Overall Sensitivity</p>	<p>This LCA is Medium Sensitivity to the influence and accommodation of modern development. There is a small section of the LCA which is of high sensitivity at Donegore Hill.</p>

LCA 116- Ballymena Farmland

Figure 30: Location Map

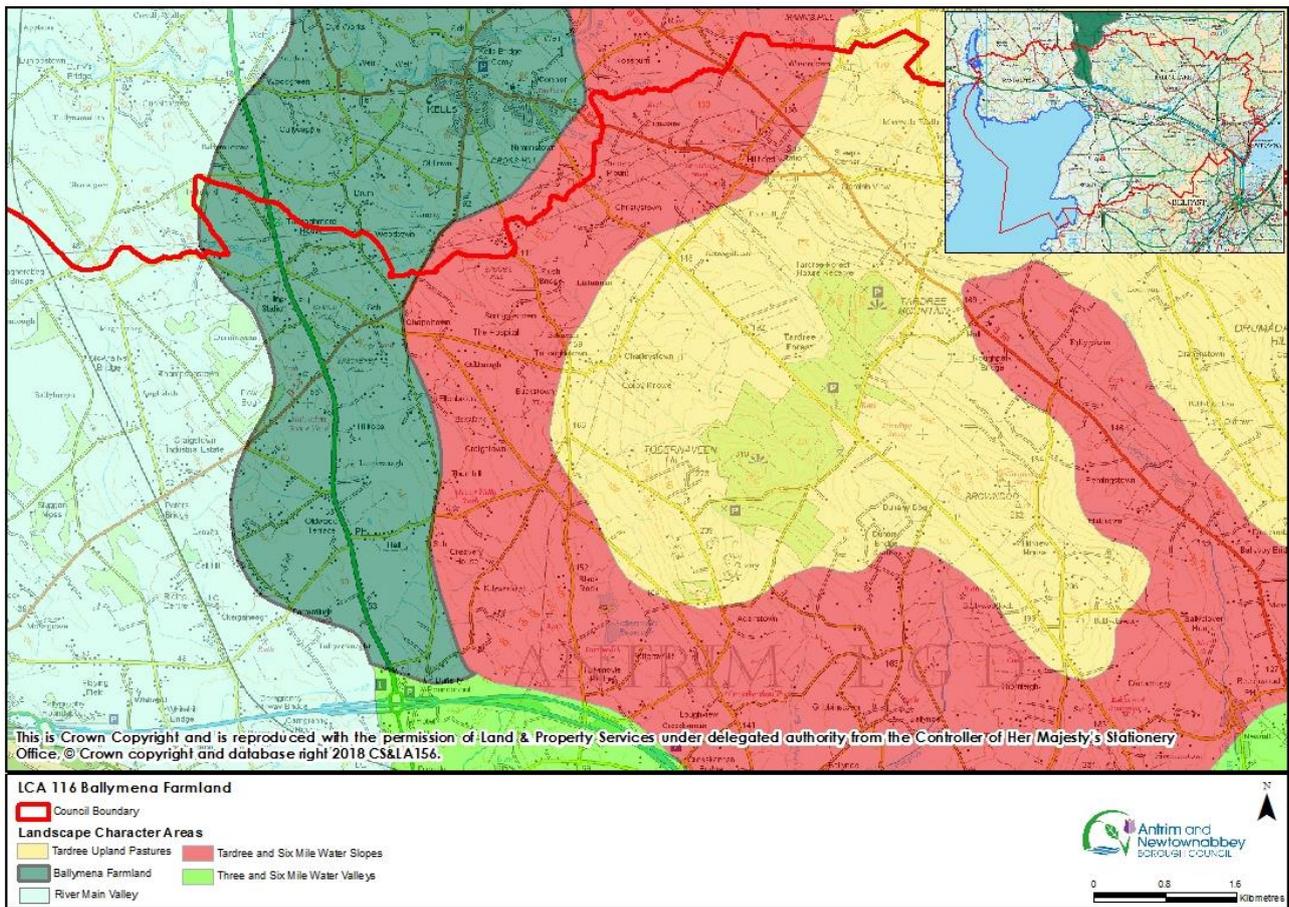


Figure 31: Representative Photographs

View of linear rural dwellings.



Scattered Oak trees along field boundaries.



This LCA is an extensive area of gently undulating farmland within a wide, open vale east of the River Main corridor.

Table 16: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics	
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This LCA lies in the central lowlands, which owes its morphology to the early Tertiary subsidence of the Lough Neagh Basin into the magma chamber from which the basalt that underlies most of the landscape originated. • The area is underlain by rocks of the Lower Basalt formation and is bordered to the east by the open basalt ridges of the Larne Basalt Moorland. • The geology comprises a mix of Tertiary igneous with 70% made of Lower Basalt Formations and the rest Interbasaltic formation and Rhyolite. • To the east gentle undulations are prominent. It must be noted that North of Ballymena (outside of Borough) glacial action has produced a landscape of drumlins. • Drainage and rivers within the LCA include the River Main, corridor and drainage area; the Kells Water and Braid River. <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasslands account for 74% and arable 6% of the LCA land cover. Grassland is often improved pastures, which account for four fifths of this grassland. • These have generally low biodiversity and are extensively modern managed through fertiliser and slurry. Other grasslands have been converted to improved pastures through management. • Rough grazing are generally found in damp areas of the LCA towards Ballymena and Broughshane (outside of Borough). • Rolling farmland within a wide, gently undulating vale. Field boundaries are medium-large grassland with a good network of hedgerows and scattered trees, with some deciduous woodland. • Shelterbelts of mature trees and beech avenues are distinctive local features and draw attention to traditional farmsteads. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland accounts for less than 2% of the LCA area. Most woodland are in small patches as remnants of former parklands that are more extensive or along riverbanks or on steep slopes. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, whitewashed settlements stand out as distinctive features in the landscape and their clustered form is characteristic of the settlement pattern in this area. • Modern single dwelling development is becoming evident with ribbon developments along local roads. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Single dwellings do not integrate into the landscape character with differing styles of design, heights and screening. • The town of Ballymena (not in LA) is sited within the flat floodplain of the River Braid and a network of rivers and roads radiate out from this nucleus. 	
Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	<p>Good/fair condition used for general livestock rotation and silage production. Threats to agriculture include, enhanced electricity infrastructure and encroachment from single dwellings.</p> <p>In some areas, there are opportunities to enhance biodiversity particularly on farmland.</p>

Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	<p>Unscheduled, Scheduled Monument & Scheduled Zone are designated areas by the Department for Communities. These include sites and monuments (Raths, enclosure and mound), historic buildings (Places of worship) and industrial heritage (bridges). Viewed on DFC Map Viewer.</p>
Geodiversity/Biodiversity	<p>Although outside of the Borough the scenic and landscape value of the north east part of the LCA is recognised by the inclusion of a limited area within the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB.</p> <p>Rough grassland to the east of Ballymena (not in LA) is important for breeding waders, including lapwing and the Irish Hare flourishes in this habitat.</p> <p>Examples of mixed damp grassland, arable and hedges provide habitats for a range of farmland birds (song thrush, bullfinch, skylark and spotted flycatcher).</p> <p>Biodiversity in areas of improved pastures and arable are often concentrated in hedgerows. Hedgerows are generally well managed, dense with some trees and represents the most significant wildlife habitat.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community assets and facilities are scattered across the rural area of this LCA from a primary school, shop, dual carriageway and telecommunication/mobile phone mast.</p> <p>Cultural qualities are aligned with archaeological heritage assets associated with early Christian era settlements and historic bridges.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>In the rural areas of this LCA, there are limited access points with no public rights of way and extensive privately owned lanes and tracks. There are limited footpaths around the LCA, with often footpaths relating to linear single dwelling developments.</p> <p>The impact of the dual carriageway between Antrim and Ballymena detracts from the landscape quality with harsh traffic sounds. Built development and roads infrastructure have created an unpleasant character.</p> <p>Throughout the LCA, there are impressive scattered Oak and Alder trees which provide pleasant views along rural roads and provide an impressive prominent view.</p>
Views & Perceptual Quality	<p>Due to the undulating nature of this LCA, views are often limited to topography and roads screening. Although there are distant views of pylons in the Tardree and Six Mile Water Slopes.</p> <p>Due to the influence of modern development and human interaction within the natural aesthetics of the landscape, this LCA generally has an unpleasant perception. These influences make the landscape perception seem very complex and fragmented. There are some areas around farms where hedgerows and scattered trees provide a pleasant perception.</p>

Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	This LCA traverses the boundaries of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. There are no overarching cross boundary issues within this LCA. This will be continually reviewed and monitored throughout the lifespan of the LDP.
Summary of landscape characteristics	Gentle sloped/ undulating landscape with medium grassland mixed with a wide array of clustered single dwellings and transversed by a busy dual carriageway. Modern development has shaped the landscape which spoils the perceptual quality of the area. Although in areas of farmland there are prominent aesthetic views of impressive mature deciduous trees (Beech and Oak) which enhance the quality of the landscape.
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>The Ballymena Farmland is a well-maintained and productive farming landscape. Farms are large and there are diverse range of housing styles.</p> <p>The landscape is sensitive to sporadic single dwelling development and to sprawling ribbon development as settlements are often small clusters.</p> <p>The presence of a good hedge network and of beech avenues are important to the character of the landscape, they are vulnerable to removal and under management. In some areas hedgerows and scattered trees are being extensively cleared in favour of modern post and barbed wire fencing.</p>
Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The characteristic nucleated form of settlement may be maintained by ensuring that new ribbon development does not continue along road frontages. • New avenues and shelterbelt screening may help integrate development into the landscape • The topography of this LCA does enable some forms of integration of development into the landscape. • The moderately enclosed character of this landscape with its hedgerow trees and shelterbelts helps to reduce its sensitivity to wind energy development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the south, the river valley of the Kells Water is especially sensitive due to its small intimate character and landscape features. • Areas away from settlements, key ridgelines and existing pylons might be less sensitive, as might the principal transport corridors. • Overall Sensitivity – Medium within the Borough.
Overall Sensitivity	This LCA is low to medium sensitivity due to the impact of modern development on the naturalness of the landscape. Medium sensitivity areas are related to impressive scattered broadleaf trees within field boundaries.

LCA 125- Tardree Upland Pastures

Figure 32: Location Map

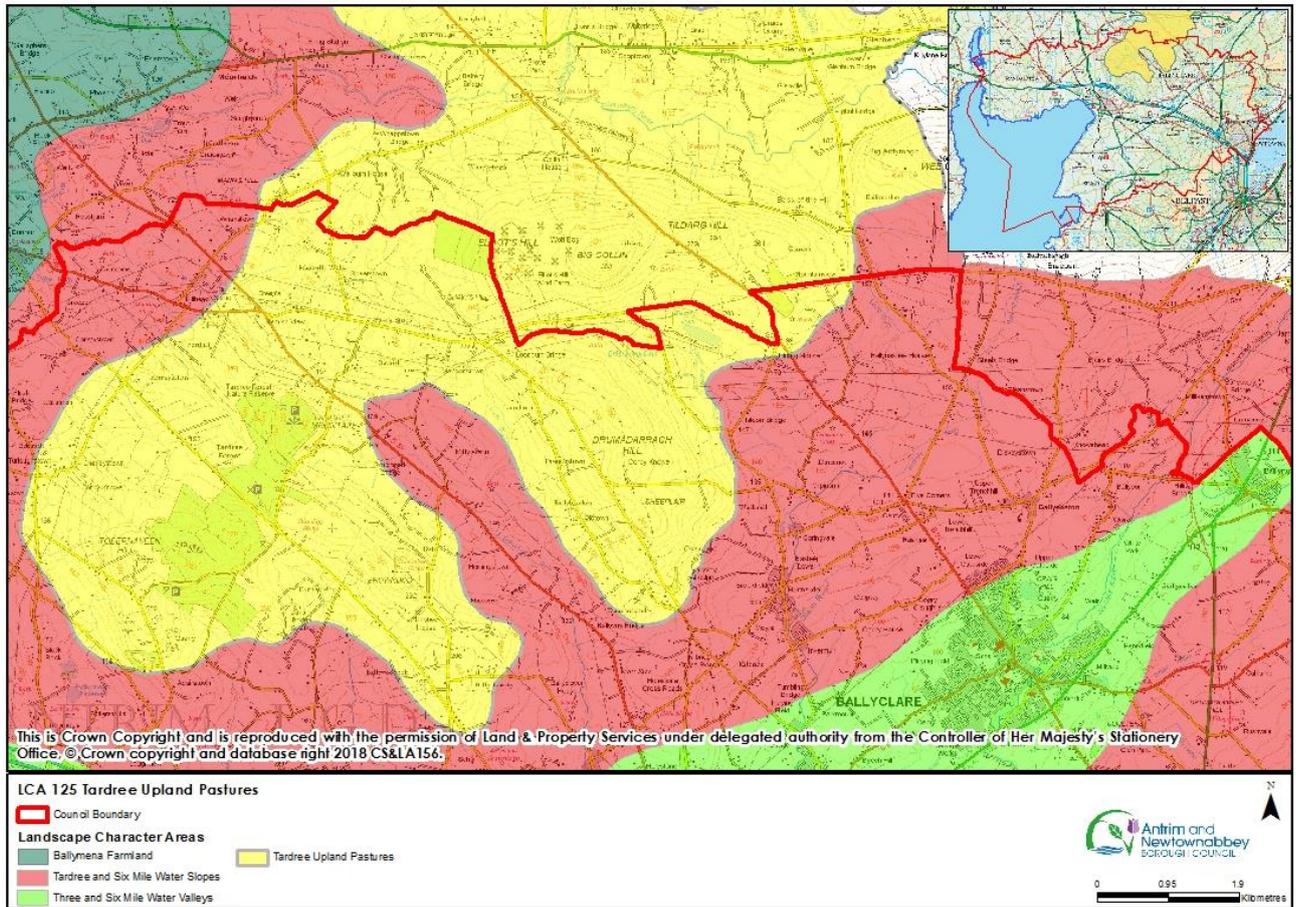


Figure 33: Representative Photographs

View of the summit of Drumadarragh Hill



View from the summit of Tobernavreen Hill



The Tardree Upland Pastures are found on the broad, rounded summits of upper basalt to the south-west of the Larne Basalt Moorland.

Table 17: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This LCA lies in the area known as the Antrim Plateau and Glens. • The topography of the area is undulating, rising to 353m above sea level at Big Collin. Sheep grazing dominates as the major land use within this highly textured landscape and the rough grassland divided by stonewalls. • The area includes the southern fringes of the Antrim uplands and the northern slopes of the Six Mile Water Valley. The summits and south facing slopes of Tobernaveen Hill, Donegore Hill and Drumadarragh Hill are prominent in views towards Antrim and the valley. • The geology comprises a mix of Tertiary igneous formations overlying one another. The three formations cover roughly equal areas. The basalts are extensively quarried for construction materials, especially roadstone. • The LCA comprises Upper Basalt Formation, Interbasaltic Formation and Tardree Rhyolite Lower Basalt Formation • Open standing water is confined to small reservoirs- Tildarg Dam and the smaller Breckenhill Dam. <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasslands account for 80% of the LCA with mixed grassland conditions accounting for more than half. These grasslands are variable between rough and fair conditions. • In the flat valley floor of the Glenwherry River, damp rough grasslands are widespread and are infested with rushes. On the slopes unless well managed, pasture fields merge gradually into rough grasslands. The damp rough grasslands dominate the many slopes and low plateau surfaces. • At lower altitudes where hedges form the dominant field boundaries, they are generally poorly maintained. • On the slopes, extensive tracts of thin peat have been drained and dominated by coarse gorse. • This is a transitional landscape, with characteristics of both upland moorland and lowland farmland; the pronounced open valley of the Glenwherry River is an important local landscape feature. • Field boundaries of well-maintained stonewalls or simple, unobtrusive post and wire fencing. • Straight roads and electricity pylons cross the landscape, cutting straight paths at an angle to the grain of the landscape. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlands occupy 3% of the LCA with coniferous forest. The majority of Tardree State Forest is in the southwest, extending from Tardree Mountain to just south of Tobernaveen Hill. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Sitka spruce is the dominant tree species followed by Norway spruce and Japanese Larch. Intimate broadleaf mixtures account for 4% of the planting. Broadleaf and mixed woodland scarce, a notable example is Longmore Wood. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no distinct settlements, but existing built development is scattered across the countryside and traditional small stone farmhouses provide shelter within the exposed landscape. • Settlement is concentrated in the Glenwherry Valley (outside of the Borough) where a more sheltered aspect provides a setting for infrastructure, including roads and disused railway.

Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	<p>Upland and exposed areas of medium to large sized fields of mixed grassland and rough grazing. Sheep grazing is the main agriculture in this LCA. Rough grazing is dominant, but there is evidence of field drainage to increase production of grazing. Overall, there are no major issues as gorse and heath flourish within the agricultural management approach.</p> <p>On the lower slopes, agricultural improvement and drainage have improved rough grazing land into better grassland, with a transition into more productive land with heath and gorse decreasing.</p>
Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	<p>Unscheduled and Scheduled Monuments (Bean Fort) are designated areas by the Department for Communities. Archaeological heritage include Rath, Standing Stones, Souterrain and historic enclosures. Other historic/listed buildings include abandoned historical stone farm building which is evidence of the farming past. These buildings use distinctive local stone and are dotted across the landscape.</p> <p>Historic field boundaries are visible through dry stonewalls which show the intact field patterns.</p>
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>Sandy Breas has been designated an ASSI due to earth science interest. There is an exposure of Tardree Rhyolite Complex, with major vent complex consisting of a range of obsidian and rhyolite tuffs and agglomerates bounded by Lower Basalts.</p> <p>Tardree Quarry has been declared an ASSI because of its earth science interest. The site provides excellent access to an exposure of columnar jointed rock known as rhyolite (NIEA, 2008).</p> <p>Red Squirrel is the only priority species recorded in Tardree Forest, although there is a diversity of bird life. Otters present on rivers within the LCA.</p> <p>On the slopes, extensive tracts of thin peat have been drained and dominated by coarse gorse; Marsh fritillary butterfly has been recorded. In addition, in these upland areas breeding waders have been recorded such as lapwing, curlew, redshank and snipe. On open slopes, Irish Hare and pheasant wildfowl have been recorded.</p> <p>The north-western fringe of the LCA overlaps the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB (Outside of the Borough).</p>

Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community Assets and facilities are limited within this LCA as it is an extremely rural area with no distinct settlements. There are some informal recreation activities through cycling and walking in the hills. The only formal recreational area is the Tardree Forest Park and related tracks. In the Upland areas around Drumadarragh Hill and the Old Ballybracken Road there is an informal Wildfowl refuge for fowl.</p> <p>From a cultural perspective, historic field patterns are remarkably intact within the Braid Valley, and are marked by stonewalls in contrast to hedges elsewhere. Archaeological heritage contributes to a particularly scenic landscape as well as the cultural folklore attached to Big Collin.</p> <p>The historic evolution of electricity and infrastructure growth is considerably evident within this landscape with pylons, masts and poles prominent across the skyline.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>In this rural LCA, the summits of Hills are quite accessible with informal walking and cycling on rural roads. However, there are no official public rights of way through farmland.</p> <p>Tardree Forest comprises 336 hectares, and is one of Northern Ireland's oldest state forests. The forest is an important scenic and recreational facility, providing opportunities for walking, with views of Belfast Hills and Slemish Mountain and old Rhyolite Quarry (ASSI).</p> <p>The upland areas around Tobernavven Hill, Drumadarragh Hill, Tardree Forest and Tardree Mountain provide an attractive and beautiful landscape with the open and exposed uplands and the limited impact of modern development.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the impact of electricity infrastructure is heavily present with pylons and poles blighting parts of this upland area, degrading the landscape quality heavily. Areas adjacent to the Tildarg Road have completely lost the local landscape quality and character.</p>

Views & Perceptual Quality	<p>This LCA provides some of the most stunning views and vistas in Antrim and Newtownabbey with the summits of Tobernavreen Hill, Donegore Hill and Drumadarragh Hill providing prominent views from the town of Antrim and the Valley. The field patterns are a distinctive component of views from the M2. On the summits of hills the vistas are panoramic showing Lough Neagh, the Sperrins, Slemish, the Belfast Hills and towards the Lagan Valley Regional Park. On the slopes of valleys there are long, distant views into other prominent scenic landscape features including Tardree Forest and Mountain, and surrounding ridges.</p> <p>The windfarms on the slopes of Big Colin provide a local landmark and are visible for miles.</p> <p>The perception of the LCA is mixed between Attractive/Pleasant and Challenging. The upland areas and summits have a rather restrained impact from modern development and are tranquil with a tamed semi-natural emphasis. However, on some valley slopes and on lower slopes the impact of electricity infrastructure (pylons and poles) and affluent single dwelling development has created a challenging perspective.</p>
Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	<p>This LCA transverses the jurisdictions of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. The strategic cross boundary issues relate to the potential siting and massing of renewable projects on the Council's Boundary adjacent to Drumadarragh Hill. This issues relates to the identification of Drumadarragh Hill and Tardree Mountain as important and sensitive landscapes within the Borough.</p>
Summary of landscape characteristics	<p>The LCA is a transitional landscape with upland summits and lower slopes. The upland areas are attractive, open and exposed with rough scrub, gorse and rough grazing. Area contains some important wildfowl habitats. The impact from single dwellings is minimal with scattered development. On the lower slopes, there is a transition towards improved pastures mixed grassland and rough grazing. The overall impact from modern development increases in these areas with growing concentrations of single dwellings, the impact of turbines and pylons and small-scale commercial activities.</p>
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>The condition of the landscape varies; in some areas there are intact stone walls and well maintained fencing, but elsewhere it is degraded due to the presence of quarries, electricity pylons and prominent development.</p> <p>The relatively low grazing pressures ensure that varieties of habitat types are supported.</p> <p>The landscape is fairly sensitive to change due to its relatively elevated position and the long, open views from surrounding ridges. The summits of uplands are more sensitive to built development and it would be particularly</p>

	<p>conspicuous on the slopes of Big Colin, Donegore Hill and Drumadarragh Hill that form the prominent ridgeline.</p> <p>All new development of the summits of Drumadarragh Hill and Tardree Mountain could be considered a threat within the landscape due to the uniformity and semi natural environment of the area. This includes the development of wind turbines and the cumulative impacts they would have in these sensitive landscapes.</p> <p>Additional threats on upland areas would include the development of new pylons and the decommissioning of pylons if not required in the future.</p>
<p>Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration and enhancement of old quarries will ensure they do not permanently scar the landscape and would have the potential to improve nature conservation. • New development should be carefully considered, with modern development of single dwellings and renewables being discouraged from the summits of upland areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rather focus on the small upland valleys and lower hillsides that could help to create settings for new development. ○ Development which is set back from road fringes and is concentrated in small areas will ensure ribbon development does not dominate. ○ Restoration of traditional small stone cottages will help to maintain the landscape character. • Conifer forestry should be sensitivity sited to ensure that it does not change the character of the landscape or block important views across ridges. • The visually exposed character of this LCA suggests some sensitivity to wind energy development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The southern slopes form a setting to Antrim and are particularly visible from the M2, while the northern slopes and ridges protrude into the lower-lying landscape of the Ballymena Farmland (LCA 116) and form part of the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB. • However, there are some locations where the ridges have a smooth profile, visibility is reduced by dips in the landform or by forestry, and the landscape has already been affected by manufactured influences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In these areas, landscape sensitivity might be less. • On the Upper Summits of Glendarragh Hill, Big Colin, Tobernaveen Hill and Tardree Mountain there is a High Sensitivity. • On other areas of the LCA towards the lower slopes and dips, there is a Medium Sensitivity.

Overall Sensitivity	The upland areas of this LCA and Tardree Forest have a High Sensitivity <i>within the local dynamics of landscape importance</i> . On lower slopes, there is medium sensitivity to modern development.
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Table 18: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This LCA can be considered as an extension of the region described as the Central Lowlands, although it derives its character from proximity to and the visual impact of the escarpment of the Antrim Plateau. • The LCA has Cretaceous greensands and limestones or Tertiary basalts which rest on a range of older Mesozoic rocks. Sherwood Sandstone Group strata occur at Greenisland. Above basal greensands, there are limestones of the Ulster White Limestone Group. • This LCA is a narrow flat coastal plain, fringing the lough and framed by rising ground which forms steep prominent hills. • The drift geology map for the LCA shows extensive deposits of late Midlandian Till. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are extensive alluvial deposits associated with the present day floodplain of the River Maine. ○ In addition, there is a very important extent of raised beach deposits along most of the coastline. • The main source of drainage in this LCA is Belfast Lough and there some small streams, tributaries and storm drains which flow into the Lough. <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominated by the urban areas of Carrickfergus, Greenisland and the fringe of Metropolitan Newtownabbey. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Characterised by urban expansion and urban sprawl. Biodiversity on the landward side of the coastline is relatively weak. • Grassland accounts for 40% of the LCA. This grassland is extensively outside the Antrim and Newtownabbey boundary, to the east of Carrickfergus there is improved pastures. • Elsewhere there is a mix of golf courses, playing fields and brownfield sites awaiting urban development. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlands are scarce in the LCA; the only extensive area is around Daleways Bawn and the Castle Dobbs estate (outside of the Borough). <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relief of the LCA has been utilised by extensive development that runs more or less continuously along the length of the shore and extends westwards to the outskirts of Newtownabbey. • The LCA is emphasised by roads, railways and transmission lines. Prominent industrial structures include the stack of Kilroot Power Station (outside of the Borough). • The landscape has been subject to extensive recent development, especially between Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey. Other ribbon development extends along the A2 and B90. • The development approach has detracted from the identity and uniqueness of separate existing communities and has degraded the character of the natural rocky shoreline and views of the sea. • In Whiteabbey, there is extensive leisure and recreation development along the shoreline between Greenisland and Hazelbank. • There has been considerable fabricated modification of the shoreline over the past 100 years, most of the coastal road system is on 'made ground'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shoreline extensions have overstepped existing sediments and have required the construction of coastal defences.

Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	Within the Council's boundary of this LCA there is limited agriculture due to the urban nature of the area. There is improved grassland around Neill's Lane managed with mixed grazing rotation and modern management (fertiliser, slurry and mowing).
Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	Unscheduled, Scheduled Monument & Scheduled Zone are designated areas by the Department for Communities. These include, sites and monuments (Fortification, Souterrian and Flint Scatter), historic buildings/listed buildings (Places of worship, gate lodge Dalriada House, railway lines etc...) and defence heritage (Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gun). Additional historic buildings include Carrickfergus Castle Norman Castle and industrial heritage- WW2 Tank and armament building through Harland and Wolff in Carrickfergus.
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>There is an Earth Science Conservation Review in the area of Greenisland for exposures of folds of Sherwood Sandstone and Mercia Mudstone Groups.</p> <p>Belfast Lough has a RAMSAR site (designated 1998) and was designated a Special Protection Area. Benthic habitats comprise mainly sandy mud, fine mud and sand. The Lough has been designated as an ASSI in both the Inner Lough and Outer Lough. Open mud flats, boulder and rocky shores help to support internationally important areas for bird life. The water's edge of the shoreline is particularly sensitive.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community assets and facilities in this LCA are generally associated with the metropolitan hubs of Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus. Notable community assets within this LCA and the Borough are the Loughshore Park Complex (caravan park, play park and café) and the cycle path between Carrickfergus and Belfast. Additionally, there are multiple sports pitches and facilities associated with the Ulster University and local Sports Clubs.</p> <p>This LCA represents Northern Ireland's most settled coastal landscape, closely linked to the identity of Belfast (Sense of Place).</p> <p>Within Carrickfergus is the historic medieval Carrickfergus Castle Norman Castle and the Kilroot Power station, which provides a prominent landmark focus for miles.</p> <p>The railway between Belfast and Larne follows the edge of the shoreline east of Carrickfergus and provides excellent views across the Lough.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>In the metropolitan areas and fringes there are excellent opportunities for access to landscape through Council recreational facilities and parkland, cycle/tow path between Belfast and Carrickfergus and on footpaths within Urban Areas. In agricultural land, there is limited access with no public rights of way.</p> <p>The landscape has a mixed enjoyment due to its location within urban areas adjacent to Belfast Lough. Areas along the coastline and on towpaths are attractive proving</p>

	<p>enjoyable recreational facilities and the ability to watch the boats going in and out of Belfast Port. To the west of the LCA, the enjoyment is pleasant through the outstanding presence and views of the Carrickfergus Escarpment Area of Scenic Quality.</p> <p>Unpleasant feelings within this LCA can be attributed to the impact of affluent development along the shoreline, with some apartments blocking the views and vistas of Belfast Lough. Additionally, the presence of the main A2 coast road (four lane carriageway) can lower the enjoyment of the area through the volume of traffic and associated noise. Additionally, the cycle path along the M5 towards Belfast has unpleasant smells associated with the Belfast City Council dump and there is evidence of fly tipping along this path.</p>
Views & Perceptual Quality	<p>Views in this LCA are long and distant across Belfast Lough towards Bangor/ Holywood and the Craigantlet Hills. To the south there are views of Belfast Harbour with the landmark features of the twin shipbuilding gantry cranes of 'Samson and Goliath'. To the west there are short views of the Carrickfergus Escarpment AoHSV and Area of Scenic Quality, with the Knockagh War Memorial in the distance. In the north the chimney stack of Kilroot Power Station provides a long landmark view.</p> <p>Overall, the perceptual quality of this LCA is rather interesting due to combination of Belfast Lough, design and setting of urban areas and the importance of landmark vistas. At night along the coastal fringes, the settlements and fluid movement of maritime traffic provide an interesting visual experience and outline of intensive use. An aspect of perceptual degradation is from the impact of modern infrastructure development and the demolition of large detached dwellings within a well-established landscape curtilage. This loss represents a change for the local landscape characteristics.</p>
Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	<p>This LCA traverses the boundaries of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. There are no overarching cross boundary issues within this LCA. This will be continually reviewed and monitored throughout the lifespan of the LDP.</p> <p>However, it must be noted that coastal development from neighbouring Councils within Belfast Lough could have the potential to affect the overall landscape coastal setting.</p>
Summary of landscape characteristics	<p>Extensive urban area with large industrial and commercial developments along the coastal edge. Along the coast there is an almost continuous belt of development including, Whiteabbey, Greenisland and Carrickfergus. The residential development is uniformed and helps add to the pleasant setting of the area with multiple textures between built and Natural heritage. The community facilities of parkland, cycle path and towpath help to create an enjoyable and accessible landscape.</p>
Sensitivity to modern Influences	<p>The landscape has been subject to extensive recent development, especially between Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey. This has detracted from the identity and of</p>

	<p>separating communities which has depleted the natural character of rocky shoreline and sea vistas.</p> <p>As the population of settlements within commuting distance to Belfast continue to rise, there is likely to be pressure for expansion of Newtownabbey.</p> <p>The ASSI designations within Belfast Lough make the water's edge particularly sensitivity to the impacts of change.</p> <p>Climate change could have an impact on the LCA through rising sea levels and increased coastal erosion on beaches and softer foreshores. These events could affect communities, key infrastructure and threaten cultural heritage along the shore.</p> <p>Eutrophication of water, as a result, of drainage of wastewater form pipelines, storm drains and water treatment works in the periphery of the Loughshore.</p>
<p>Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban development of dwellings should be carefully designed and sited to integrate into the local landscape character. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This includes the size, design and curtilage of the development. ○ In order to prevent the degradation of characteristics of the shoreline and to help avoid loss of setting the proliferation by apartments should be avoided. • Existing landscape elements such as hedgerows, stone walls and woodlands may provide structural edges to individual settlements and help reinforce settlement identity. • Local features and built elements may be used to establish gateways to existing settlements, enhancing their distinctive character. • This LCA is generally not sensitive in landscape terms due to the existing extent of manmade influence but is of higher sensitivity visually as it forms the foreground to views of the Carrickfergus Escarpment and is very open to views from Belfast Lough and its southern shores. • There might be some opportunity for wind energy development associated with existing industrial sites, where sensitivity is less. • Overall Sensitivity high to medium sensitivity to wind energy development.
<p>Overall Sensitivity</p>	<p>Overall, this LCA within the Council's boundary has a Medium Sensitivity to the impact of modern development.</p>

LCA 130- Carrickfergus Farmed Escarpment

Figure 36: Location Map

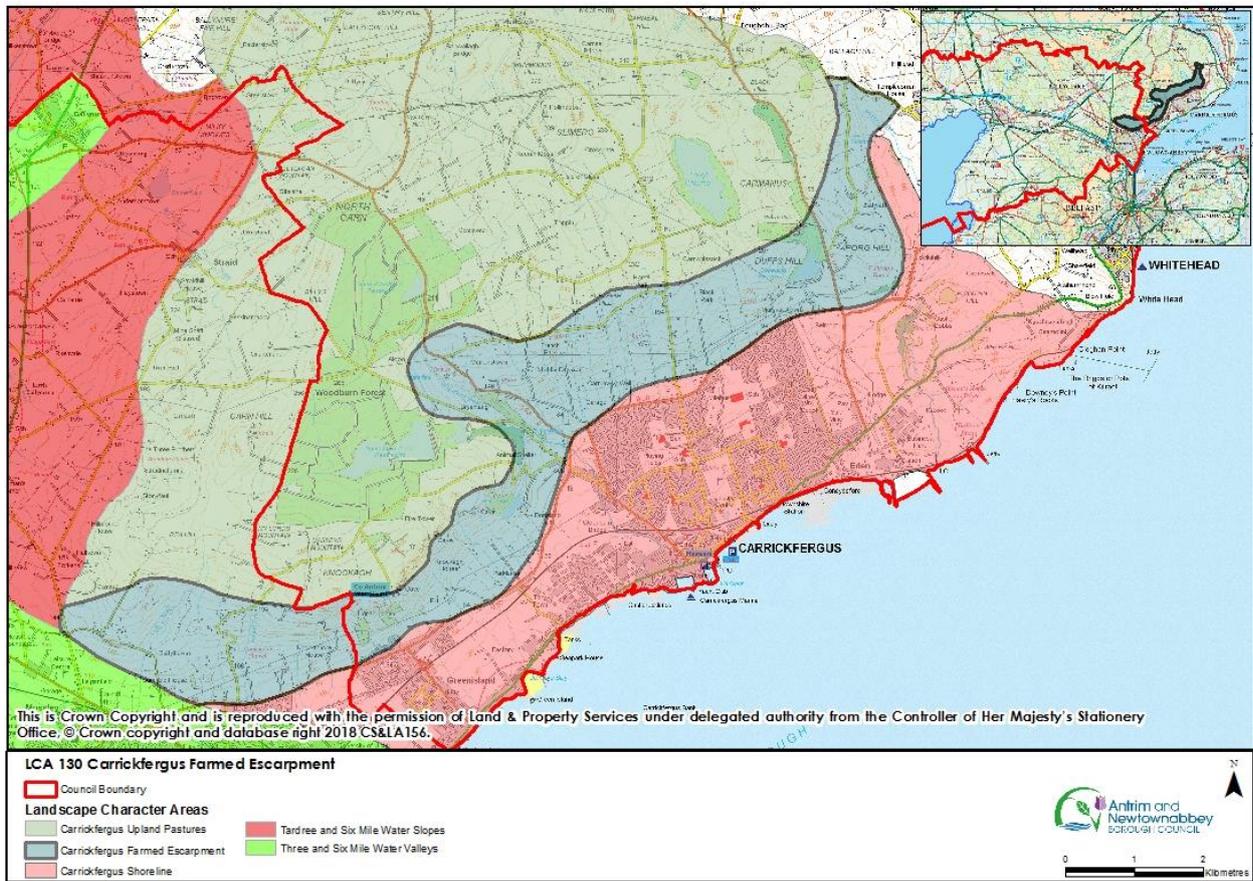


Figure 37: Representative Photographs

View from the top of Knockagh Hill.



(Source: Ireland before you die, 2017)

View of the escarpment from valley floor.



(Source: TripAdvisor, 2018)

This landscape forms a transition between the flat coastal fringe of the Carrickfergus Shoreline and the Carrickfergus Upland Pastures. It is a fairly narrow apron of undulating land which leads from the high pasture to the coastal plain.

Table 19: Summary of Landscape Character

Physical Characteristics	
<p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This LCA lies within the region described as the Antrim Plateau and Glens, which is dominated by a series of structural plateaux that dip gently in towards the Lough Neagh Basin. • This LCA is faulted Cretaceous greensands and limestones or Tertiary basalts which rest uncomfortably on a range of older Mesozoic and Palaeozoic rock units. • The drift geology map for the LCA shows the drift free crestline of the basalt escarpment above Greenisland and identifies large areas of landslip below the Knockagh escarpment. • Below the escarpment, the lower slopes are generally mantled with a cover of Late Midlandian till, which itself can be subject to slope failure when locally saturated. • This LCA forms a transition between the flat coastal fringe of the Carrickfergus Shoreline and the Carrickfergus Upland Pastures. • <i>The drainage within this LCA is concentrated on two reservoirs- Copeland and Dorisland (outside of the Borough), which have limited biodiversity interest and no priority species recorded.</i> <p><i>Land cover and field patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassland occupies 77% of the LCA, most of this is improved grassland in a grid of small rectangular fields enclosed by hedges. • Hedges, some have scattered Scots Pine, are often poorly maintained and gappy, especially towards the steeper slopes of the basalt plateau. • Urban land currently occupies 3% of the LCA, but there is ribbon development on both the east-west roads and north-south lanes that pose a potential threat to biodiversity in the LCA. • Gently rolling landform on the margins of the basalt plateau. Small regular grid pattern of grasslands defined by hedges, which are generally gappy and poorly maintained. • Panoramic views over Belfast Lough and its northern and southern shores. <p><i>Woodland Cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland only occupies 2% of the LCA. • From the North Woodburn Glen ASSI, hazel and scrub are located on steep slopes and broadleaf in small pockets around golf courses and rural dwellings. <p><i>Settlement/s setting, fringes and single dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although there is a strong rural character, new houses form an incongruous addition to the area with a wide range of design and styles and bear little relation to traditional vernacular stone farmhouses. • Consolidation has occurred through ribbon development on both the east-west roads and north-south lanes that poses a potential threat to the landscape. • The landscape has experienced significant encroachment from adhoc housing, the boundary of the coastal settlement is currently well contained south of the B90 but pressure is high. • Numerous transmission lines extend from Kilroot and encroach intrusively over the slopes and on to the upland pasture. 	
Landscape Features and Attributes	
Agriculture	Agricultural activities within this LCA are associated with mixed rough and improved grasslands. These are managed through modern techniques using modern machinery. Field boundaries are marked in a grid of small rectangular fields enclosed by hedges; these are often poorly maintained and gappy.

Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage	<p>Unscheduled, Scheduled Monument & Scheduled Zone are designated areas by the Department for Communities. These include sites and monuments (AP Sites, Mounds, Souterrain, Rath and Linear Bank), historic buildings/listed buildings (Orient House, Place of Worship and other listed house dwellings) and defence heritage (Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gun).</p> <p>Outside of the Borough Carrickfergus Castle is an imposing Norman Castle located on the northern shores of Belfast Lough. The County Antrim War memorial is located on the top of Knockagh Hill and at 390m AOD, is the largest war memorial in Northern Ireland.</p>
Geodiversity/ Biodiversity	<p>There is an important herb layer with some locally important species, including toothwort, wood vetch and a rich moss and lichen flora.</p> <p>Scots Pines area a characteristic feature in hedgerows on the steeper slopes. Elsewhere biodiversity is overly poor and limited within the dynamics of the LCA.</p> <p>In the North Woodburn Glen ASSI (outside of the Borough) important, broadleaf of upland Mixed Ashwood and hazel, dominate with willows alongside the stream. Small part of Woodburn Forest extends into LCA.</p>
Community Assets & Cultural Qualities	<p>Community assets and facilities in this LCA are generally associated with the metropolitan hubs of Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus. There are very limited community facilities within this LCA and within the Borough. Facilities include a cattery, animal sanctuary and football golf leisure facility.</p> <p>Cultural associations within this LCA align with the Landmark Kilroot Power Station stack (outside of the Borough) at Carrickfergus which forms a focus within its industrial setting. The war memorial at Knockagh provides deep cultural/historical association with the impact from two World Wars.</p> <p>There is a cave called 'O'Haughan's Cave' at the foot of the Knockagh cliffs above Greenisland, This was one of the hideaways of a band of outlaws led by the O'Haughan Brothers, who had terrorised the lowland farms around the Commons of Carrickfergus in the early 18th century. In about 1710, John O'Haughan, was being evicted by his landlord for non-payment of rent when a bailiff was killed by one of his four sons. These four went on the run, along with a foster brother and joined an outlaw band of 'freebooters' led by a 'Captain' McAllister, himself from near Ballynure. Not long after the O'Haughan brothers joined the outlaw band, Captain McAllister was captured by troops from Carrickfergus and executed. Neese O'Haughan, one of the sons, was unanimously chosen leader in his stead. They raided - almost always at night - farms and houses not only around the Commons and the mid-Antrim valleys of the Braid and Glenwherry, but occasionally ventured as far as</p>

	<p>Ligoniel on the northern outskirts of Belfast, hiding out when necessary on Divis, the Black Mountain or the back of Cave Hill. Stories of the O'Haughans 'robbing the rich to help the poor' became almost as numerous and legendary as their cleverness in outwitting their military and bounty-hunting pursuers.</p>
Access and Enjoyment of the landscape	<p>In the rural areas of this LCA, there are limited access points with no public rights of way and extensive privately owned lanes and tracks. There is public access to open space at the Knockagh World War Monument (Outside of Borough). Moving from the flat coastal plain to the Carrickfergus Escarpment there are informal recreational access points through cycling and hill walking in the areas around Woodburn.</p> <p>Due to the scenic nature of this LCA, transitioning from Metropolitan Newtownabbey into the rural countryside the enjoyment of the landscape is beautiful and attractive. The combination of rural slopes and the magnificent views and vistas combine to provide a considerably enjoyable landscape. Additionally, the recreational potential in this area from cycling and hill walking adds to the adventure of exploring this LCA.</p>
Views & Perceptual Quality	<p>This transitional LCA has enjoyable views that are considered pleasant and attractive. The slopes provide long distance views of Belfast Lough towards Holywood and the Craigantlet Hills. There are additional views and vistas of landmark buildings in Carrickfergus (Kilroot chimneystack) and Belfast (Harland and Wolff Cranes). There stunning panoramic views from the Knockagh Memorial and Hill (outside of Borough). From this point, there are long distance views of the Mourne Mountains AONB and many of the counties of Northern Ireland.</p> <p>This LCA has a mixed perceptual quality from interesting to challenging. Interesting aspects of scenic landscape quality are witnessed through the attractive distant views across Belfast Lough and into the surrounding countryside of Belfast, towards Bangor and Carrickfergus. Watching the ships going in and out of Belfast Lough provides a pleasant perception.</p> <p>Challenging perceptions are encountered through the impact of modern development integration within the landscape. This includes the encroachment of rural single dwellings and turbines on the transitioning slopes from the coastal plain.</p>
Jurisdiction and LCA Boundary	<p>This LCA traverses the boundaries of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. The significant cross boundary issue for this LCA is a collaborative planning approach for the Area of High Scenic Value on the Carrickfergus Escarpment. This planning approach needs to take into account issues that are identified in both the MEABC and ANBC LDPs.</p>
Summary of landscape characteristics	<p>Magnificent expanse of upland medium to small mixed grasslands with small rectangular boundaries. The area has a semi-natural character through the influence of medium forestry and irregular hedgerow boundaries. The rural setting is not overly encroached by rural single dwellings but this</p>

	<p>pressure is growing, as well as the pressure from renewable energy developments. This area has a distinctive landscape character associated with Carrickfergus Escarpment AoHSV.</p>
<p>Sensitivity to modern Influences</p>	<p>The landscape has experienced significant encroachment from single dwellings. The boundary of the coastal settlements is currently well contained but pressure is growing.</p> <p>Hedges are not well managed and have generally become gappy and relatively untidy, in places leading to a decline in the distinctive small-scale pattern often grasslands and hedges.</p> <p>The escarpment slope is sensitive due to its prominent position within the landscape and then encroaching pressures from housing developments on lower slopes. The gradual transition from small-scale pastures on the lower slopes to the broader, more wooded landscape pattern on the ridgetop is particularly sensitive and constitutes an Area of Scenic Quality. The area has been designated as the Carrickfergus Escarpment AoHSV by BMAP (2004 and 2014 versions).</p> <p>The distinctive landscape pattern is important in visual terms as it conserves the integrity of the ridge as a strong feature in the landscape and provides an attractive setting for Metropolitan Newtownabbey.</p>
<p>Capacity and Principle for Accommodating New Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better integration and screening of new single rural dwellings into the local landscape dynamics. This should follow simpler architectural designs and patterns to help avoid proliferation of varied housing styles. • The edges of recent development could be softened through additional planting and by integration with existing field patterns. • Further development should be designed to fit with existing landscape pattern and should avoid the horizontal line along the B90. • Maintain and enhance field boundaries. Hedgerows trees or shelterbelts may help to integrate new development within the landscape. • Notwithstanding some intrusive influences, this LCA is intrinsically highly sensitive to wind energy development in landscape and visual terms, sharing many of its characteristics and sensitivities with other escarpment landscapes around Belfast, notably the Belfast Basalt Escarpment, of which it is the geological continuation. It has distinctive small scale field patterns, notable skylines and settings and is visually very exposed, with a relatively wild character. • Wind energy development could easily dominate landscape character, be visually very prominent, intrusive, and difficult to access. • Overall Sensitivity is High to wind energy development.
<p>Overall Sensitivity</p>	<p>This LCA has a distinctive landscape pattern which closely aligns with the Carrickfergus Escarpment. As a result, this LCA has a High Sensitivity for accommodating new development.</p>

Appendix 2 – Exemplar Desktop Study Sheet – LCA 116

<p>Geology of Study Site- Landform/geomorphology</p>	<p>This LCA is an extensive area of gently undulating farmland within a wide, open vale east of the River Main Corridor.</p> <p>This LCA lies in the central lowlands, which owes its morphology to the early Tertiary subsidence of the Lough Neagh Basin into the magma chamber from which the basalt that underlies most of the landscape originated.</p> <p>The area is underlain by rocks of the Lower Basalt formation and is bordered to the east by the open basalt ridges of the Larne Basalt Moorland.</p> <p>To the east gentle undulations are prominent. It must be noted that North of Ballymena (different LA) glacial action has produced a landscape of drumlins.</p> <p>The geology comprises a mix of Tertiary igneous with 70% made of Lower Basalt Formations and the rest Inter basaltic formation and Rhyolite.</p>
<p>Soil Conditions of Study Site/ Geological Drift</p>	<p>The drift geology of this LCA is predominately underlain by Late Midlandian fill associated with large ice mass that was centred in the Lough Neagh Basin. This has left a legacy of drumlins covering lowland areas.</p> <p>Class 1 Basalt Till Class 2 Basalt Till Gleyed Ranker Basalt Class 2 Organic Alluvium Class 3 Alluvium Brown Earth Basalt Till Peat</p>
<p>Ecology of Study Site- Habitat and Biodiversity</p>	<p>Rough grassland to the east of Ballymena (not in LA) are important for breeding waders, including lapwing and the Irish Hare flourishes in this habitat.</p> <p>Examples of mixed damp grassland, arable and hedges provide habitats for a range of farmland birds (song thrush, bullfinch, skylark and spotted flycatcher.</p> <p>Biodiversity in areas of improved pastures and arable are often concentrated in hedgerows. Hedgerows are generally well-managed, dense with some trees and represents the most significant wildlife habitat.</p>
<p>Rivers and Drainage Systems</p>	<p>The River Maine and associated river corridor and drainage catchment area. The Kells Water Braid River</p>
<p>Land Cover/ Vegetation</p>	<p>Grasslands account for 74% and arable 6% of the LCA land cover. Grassland is often improved pastures, which account for four fifths of this grassland. These have generally low biodiversity and are extensively modern managed through fertiliser and slurry. Other grasslands have been converted to improved pastures through management.</p>

	<p>Rough grazing are generally found in damp areas of the LCA towards Ballymena and Broughshane (outside of the Borough). Woodland accounts for less than 2% of the LCA area. Most woodland are in small patches as remnants of former parklands that are more extensive or along river banks or on steep slopes.</p>
Land use patterns: e.g. field patterns	<p>Rolling farmland within a wide, gently undulating vale. Field boundaries are medium-large grassland with a good network of hedgerows and scattered trees, with some deciduous woodland.</p> <p>Shelterbelts of mature trees and beech avenues are distinctive local features and draw attention to traditional farmsteads.</p>
Settlement Pattern (If Applicable)	<p>Small, whitewashed settlements stand out as distinctive features in the landscape and their clustered form is the characteristic of settlement pattern in this area.</p> <p>Modern single dwelling development is becoming evident with ribbon developments along local roads.</p> <p>The town of Ballymena (not in LA) is sited within the flat floodplain of the River Braid and network of rivers and roads radiate out from this nucleus.</p>
Built Heritage / Archaeological Interest	<p>Unscheduled, scheduled monument & Scheduled Zone are designated areas by DfC. These include sites and monuments (Raths, enclosure and mound), historic buildings (Places of worship) and industrial heritage (bridges). Viewed on DfC Map Viewer.</p>
Cultural Influences	<p>Archaeological heritage assets associated with early Christian era settlements.</p>

Appendix 3 – Exemplar Blank Fieldwork Assessment Sheet

Antrim and Newtownabbey Landscape Character Assessment

As part of the ongoing work for the LDP 2030, the Forward Plan team are reviewing the current Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) that fall within the Council boundary. Officers are required to complete this questionnaire for each of our field study sites within said LCA.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Date:

Time:

What LCA are you in?

<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 52	<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 58	<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 60
<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 61	<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 62	<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 98
<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 109	<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 110	<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 111
<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 113	<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 114	<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 115
<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 116	<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 125	<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 129
<input type="checkbox"/> LCA 130		

Field study site ref:

In each LCA we will be visiting 4 sites, the ref no. will be between 1-4

Photograph of the field study site

Press here to choose image file. (<10MB)


Site Location

What are the current weather conditions?

1000 

PHYSICAL FEATURES**What is the landform of the site?**

Landforms together make up a given terrain, and their arrangement in the landscape is known as topography. Typical landforms include hills, mountains, plateaus, canyons, valleys etc.

<input type="checkbox"/> Steep Slopes	<input type="checkbox"/> Gentle Slopes	<input type="checkbox"/> Flat
<input type="checkbox"/> Undulating	<input type="checkbox"/> Drumlins	<input type="checkbox"/> Escarpment
<input type="checkbox"/> Plateau	<input type="checkbox"/> Cliffs	<input type="checkbox"/> Hills
<input type="checkbox"/> Broad Valley	<input type="checkbox"/> Narrow Valley	<input type="checkbox"/> Shallow Valley
<input type="checkbox"/> Deep Valley	<input type="checkbox"/> Smooth	<input type="checkbox"/> Rough e.g. Rocky
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

What is the elevation of the site?

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50m	<input type="checkbox"/> 50-100m	<input type="checkbox"/> 100-200m
<input type="checkbox"/> 200m or above		

Are there any water/hydrology features within the site?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> No

If yes, please select the most appropriate

A lough has multiple inlets from rivers and tributaries, whereas a lake has one inlet into and out.

<input type="checkbox"/> River	<input type="checkbox"/> Stream	<input type="checkbox"/> Tributary
<input type="checkbox"/> Lough	<input type="checkbox"/> Lake	<input type="checkbox"/> Reservoir
<input type="checkbox"/> Engineered or Artificial	<input type="checkbox"/> Drainage Ditches	<input type="checkbox"/> Springs
<input type="checkbox"/> Pond	<input type="checkbox"/> Wetland	<input type="checkbox"/> Peatland
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

If River/Stream/Tributary has been selected, please describe the speed and clarity and anything else that may be appropriate:

1000

What is the current land use of the site?

<input type="checkbox"/> Farmland	<input type="checkbox"/> Forestry or Woodland	<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Parkland
<input type="checkbox"/> Residential	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Heavy	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Light
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesiure and Recreation Formal	<input type="checkbox"/> Lesiure and Recreation Informal	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Workings Small Scale	<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Workings Large Scale
<input type="checkbox"/> Semi-Natural	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Open Space
<input type="checkbox"/> Paddock		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

What is the land/vegetation cover of the site?

Grassland- Managed for Silage.

Meadow- Area managed for Hay (Put in other box, not many examples in ANBC).

Scrub- Unmanaged area where native tress and shrubs have naturally regenerated.

<input type="checkbox"/> Arable	<input type="checkbox"/> Pasture	<input type="checkbox"/> Rough Grazing
<input type="checkbox"/> Grassland	<input type="checkbox"/> Conif Plantation	<input type="checkbox"/> Decid Woodland
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Woodland	<input type="checkbox"/> Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/> Wetland or Bog
<input type="checkbox"/> Hedgerows	<input type="checkbox"/> Scattered Trees	<input type="checkbox"/> Gorseland
<input type="checkbox"/> Scrub	<input type="checkbox"/> Upland Heath	<input type="checkbox"/> Blanket Bog
<input type="checkbox"/> Paddock	<input type="checkbox"/> Gardens	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

What are the ecosystems within the character area?

Ecological character is the combination of the ecosystem habitats and biodiversity that characterise the land at a given point in time.

1000

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS**What are the landscape man-made features of the site?**

In other box, if quarry is present please describe the type? i.e opencast or pit.

<input type="checkbox"/> Motorway	<input type="checkbox"/> Dual Carriageway	<input type="checkbox"/> A Road
<input type="checkbox"/> B Road	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural Road	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural Lane/Track
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunken Lane	<input type="checkbox"/> Footpath	<input type="checkbox"/> Railway
<input type="checkbox"/> Farm Buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> Park land	<input type="checkbox"/> Landmark Building
<input type="checkbox"/> Mill	<input type="checkbox"/> Place of Worship	<input type="checkbox"/> Fortification or Castle
<input type="checkbox"/> Hill Fort	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Earthworks
<input type="checkbox"/> Mottes	<input type="checkbox"/> Ancient Burial Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Hamlet
<input type="checkbox"/> Village	<input type="checkbox"/> Town Edge	<input type="checkbox"/> Suburb
<input type="checkbox"/> Nucleated Settlement or Cluster	<input type="checkbox"/> Linear Settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural Single Dwelling
<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Workings	<input type="checkbox"/> Masts or Poles	<input type="checkbox"/> Telecom Infra

<input type="checkbox"/> Solar Farm	<input type="checkbox"/> Wind Turbine	<input type="checkbox"/> Quarry
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

What is the character of the man-made features of the site?

Are there any physical elements on the land, if so, are they:

<input type="checkbox"/> Subtle	<input type="checkbox"/> Evident	<input type="checkbox"/> Conspicuous
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

In your own words, describe the built character of the site:

1000

Please input 1,000 characters at most

What is the fixed boundary pattern of the site?

Looking for 4 bits onf information-

1. Type and materials of the boundary.
2. The Shape of the boundary (sinuous, regular, geomatric or irregular).
3. 3. The size if noticeable.

<input type="checkbox"/> Banks	<input type="checkbox"/> Ditches	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural Walls
<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Walls	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural Fence	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Fence
<input type="checkbox"/> Hedge	<input type="checkbox"/> Hedgerows Trees	<input type="checkbox"/> Geometric
<input type="checkbox"/> Sinuous	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> Irregular
<input type="checkbox"/> Small	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Large
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

What are the aesthetic views and vistas of the site? Distant/ Long Short views Framed by topography Panoramic Other**What is the scale of the site?**

Question is assessing sense of space experienced.

 Intimate Small Large Neither/Medium as dictated by topography Other**What is the enclosure of the site?**

Boundary/surround of the site

 Confined Enclosed Semi-Enclosed Open Exposed Other**What is the variety of the site like?**

Composition of the site

 Uniform Simple Diverse Complex Other

What is the texture of the site?

<input type="checkbox"/> Smooth	<input type="checkbox"/> Textured	<input type="checkbox"/> Rough
<input type="checkbox"/> Very Rough		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

What is the colour of the site?

<input type="checkbox"/> Monochrome	<input type="checkbox"/> Muted	<input type="checkbox"/> Colourful
<input type="checkbox"/> Garish	<input type="checkbox"/> Bland	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

What is the movement of the site?

Movement of all features, elements and objects.

<input type="checkbox"/> Calm	<input type="checkbox"/> Gently Active	<input type="checkbox"/> Active
<input type="checkbox"/> Very Active		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

What is the unity of the site?

How do all features, elements and objects combine together?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unified	<input type="checkbox"/> Interrupted	<input type="checkbox"/> Fragmented
<input type="checkbox"/> Chaotic		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

What is the naturalness of the site?

Has the site been influenced by man?

<input type="checkbox"/> Undisturbed	<input type="checkbox"/> Restrained	<input type="checkbox"/> Tamed
<input type="checkbox"/> Disturbed		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

What is the sound like within the site?

Use peaceful for areas with intermittent noises from a distance.

<input type="checkbox"/> Tranquil	<input type="checkbox"/> Distant	<input type="checkbox"/> Discordant/Harsh
<input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

Please list the sources of sounds that can be heard:

1000 //

Describe the level sound and its consistency:

1000 //

Is there a footpath within the site?

Yes

No

If yes, please outline its condition:

Excellent

Good

Average

Poor

Is there access to and from a water source within the site?

Yes

No

If yes, please outline the access condition:

Excellent

Good

Average

Poor

MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Please highlight the condition/survival, threats/opportunities, threats/pressures, fragility/vulnerability, management issues and opportunities of the following:

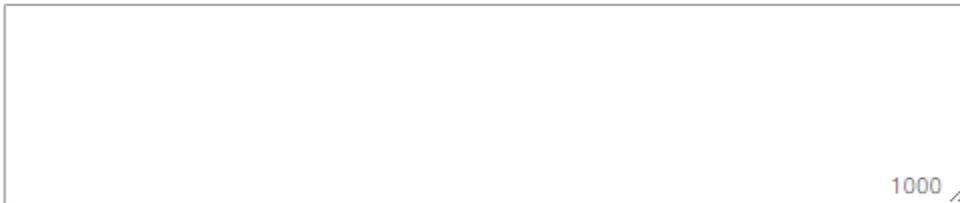
1. Agriculture



2. Field patterns/boundaries

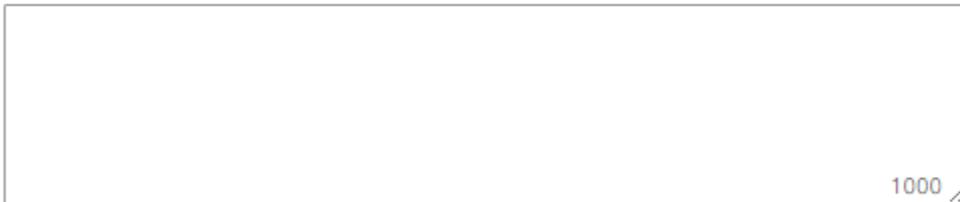


3. Trees and Woodland



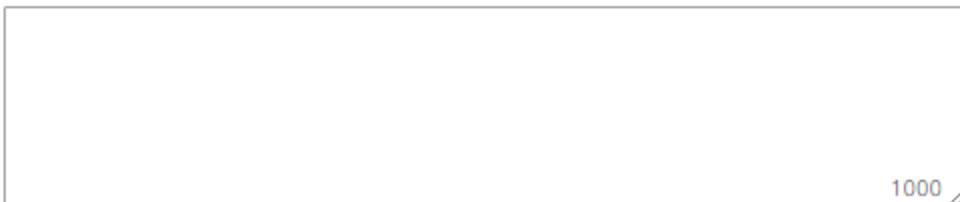
4. Built Heritage Assets and Archaeological Heritage

Informed by desk study.



5. Settlements/Setting and Fringes/Single Dwellings

Comment as appropriate.



6. Community Assets

Informed by desk study.

1000

7. Cultural Qualities

Informed by desk study.

1000

8. Impact of modern uses on the sensitivity of the landscape

Examples- Turbines/ motorways/ modern land management.

1000

CONCLUSION

Please provide a brief paragraph summary of the landscape characteristics of the fieldwork study site.

- Overall Comments-
- Describe the landscape in a sentence.
- Comment on sensitivity.
- Comment of impacts of adjacent LCA.

1000

Appendix 4 – Soltysbrewster LA Signoff for LCA Update 2018

9th October 2018

soltysbrewster
CONSULTING

Mr Simon Thompson
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Mossley Mill,
Carnmoney Road North,
Newtownabbey,
BT36 5QA

Landscape Architects
Assessment
Planning
Design

Belfast
Cardiff
Dublin
Reading

Dear Mr Thompson

Landscape Character Area Review

Soltys Brewster Consulting was commissioned by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to act as a 'Critical Friend' during the review of relevant Landscape Character Areas undertaken in advance of the production of the new Area Plan.

Soltys Brewster Consulting
The Mount
2 Woodstock Link
Belfast
BT6 8DD

Specifically, Soltys Brewster Consulting was commissioned to review both existing relevant documentation and the methodology proposed prior to an advisory discussion with the survey team to agree the way forward. Following the work being carried out by the planning office team, SBC would review the resultant document to check that it was consistent with the agreed approach.

T 02890 737 284
belfast@soltysbrewster.co.uk
www.soltysbrewster.com

SBC were content that the LCA Review methodology was consistent with latest guidelines including among others '*An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' October 2014 Christine Tudor, Natural England*'.

Director
Simon Brewster
BA(Hons) DipLA CMLI

A request for two days attendance on the survey team 'on site' was facilitated by SBC in order to ensure that this methodology was proving appropriate for a Northern Ireland context and also that the assessment was being carried out in a consistent manner across the council area. The issue of 'boundaries' was explored and the impact that one character area might have on another. The need for cross council reference and discussion was apparent to ensure that initiatives or protections implemented by one council was not unwittingly diminished in value by the decisions of another.

Principal
Jackie Harte
DipLA CMLI

Review of the final draft document showed that the planning staff detailed to carry out the review of earlier landscape assessment had respected the importance of the issues raised. Each earlier character area had been tested for change and considered in the light of significance and sensitivity to change.

ISO 9001 + ISO 14001
A Carbon Neutral Company

SBC was not commissioned to test each assessment in the field but to advise on the methodology to allow others to carry out a robust review. Study of the document produced indicates that this methodology was applied with care and respect for the variety of different landscapes found across the council area and might confidently be used a supporting evidence for the production of the new Local Development Plan

Registered Office:
4 Stangate House, Stanwell Road
Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan
United Kingdom CF64 2AA
Registration No: 6262312

Yours sincerely

Soltys Brewster Consulting is the
trading name of Soltys Brewster
Consulting Ltd

Members of the Landscape Institute
IEMA and the Urban Design Group

Jackie Harte

Appendix 5 – Statements of Significance

A Statement of Significance is an assessment of what is important about a specific landscape area, why it is important and how important it is at multiple levels. Additionally it established who values the landscape area and why the landscape is valued. The statements of significance provide a justification for the identification of specific landscape areas that demonstrate particular merit within the context of the Borough and provides the rationale for enhancing their protection within the LDP process.

Contents

The Statement of Significance are presented in the following order:

Statement of Significance	Page Number
Drumadarragh Hill	140
Tardree Forest	141
Donegore Hill	142
Belfast Basalt Escarpment	143
Carnmoney Hill	145
Carrickfergus Escarpment	147

Proposed Drumadarragh Hill Statement of Significance

Figure 38: Location Map

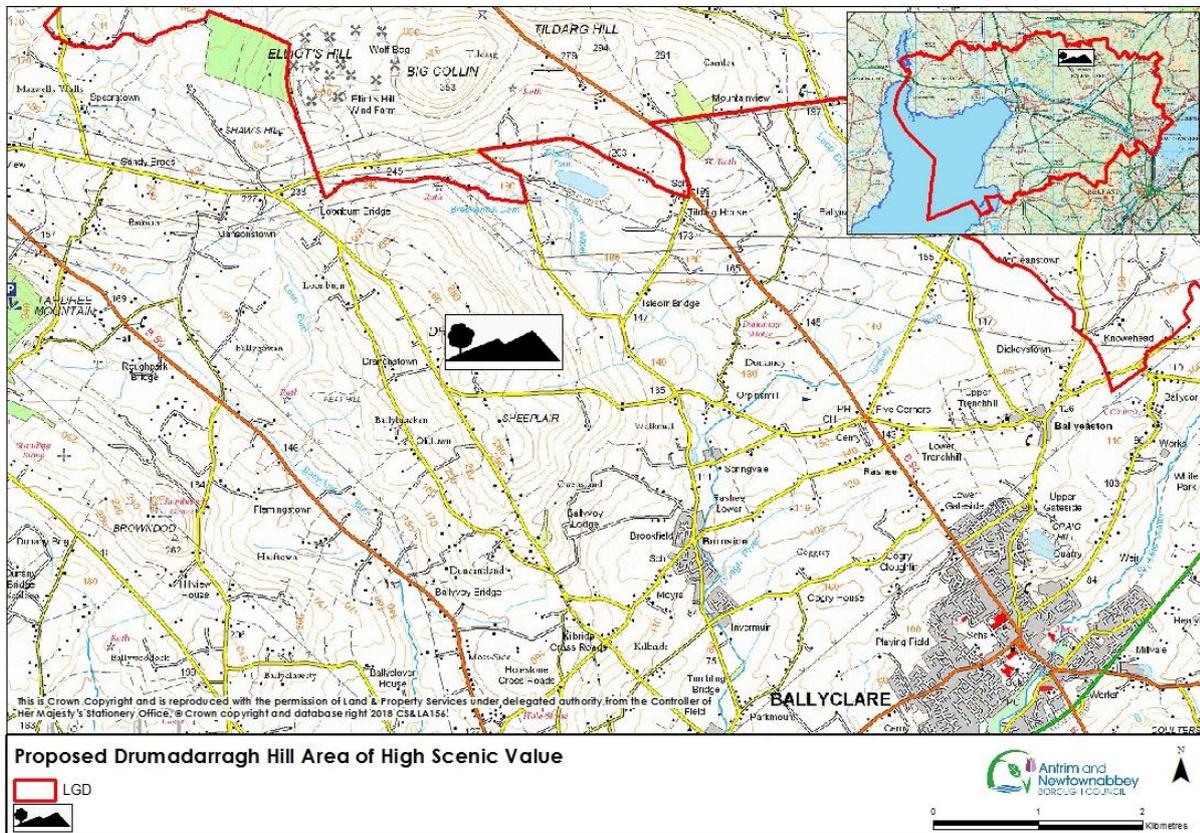


Figure 39: Representative Photographs

Views from the Summit of Drumadarragh Hill



Statement of Significance

A series of heather moors on an extensive plateau with peaty soils and covered by coarse grassland. The summit and south facing slope of Drumadarragh Hill are visually prominent when viewed from Antrim and the valley floor. There is a perception of remoteness, isolation and wildness due to the character of a uniformed and semi-natural landscape, whilst a sense of non-habitation exists from the limited influence of rural development and dwellings on the summit.

Proposed Tardree Forest and Mountain Statement of Significance

Figure 40: Location Map

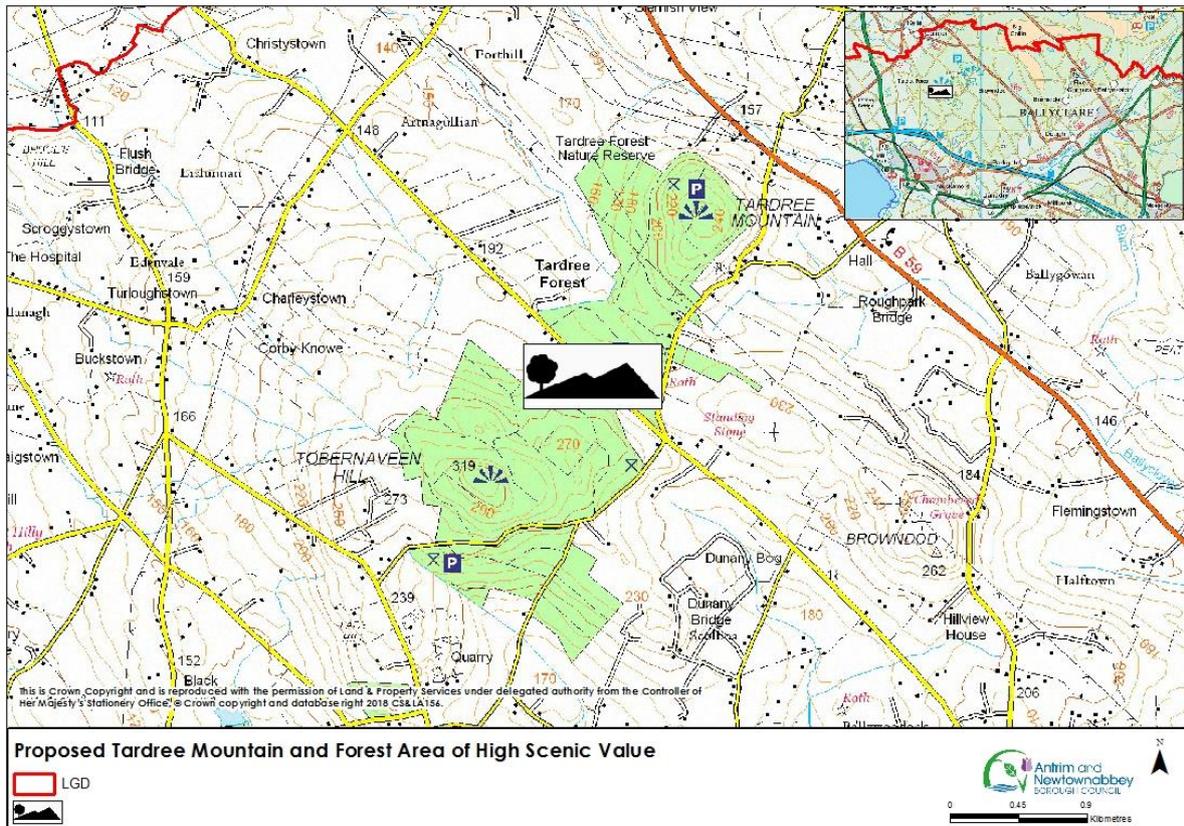


Figure 41: Representative Photographs

Summit of Tobernavreen Hill.



View of rural road cutting across Tardree Forest



Statement of Significance

Tardree Forest is a 336-hectare state forest located between the Tardree Mountain and Tobernavreen Hill. Approaching the upland area there is a gradual transition in landscape character from lowland valley farmland to a more open moorland fringe character with rough grazing and conifer plantations at Tardree Forest. There is a perception on the transitional slopes and summits of long distance views into other prominent scenic landscapes (i.e. Drumadarragh Hill). There are additional panoramic viewpoints over the Antrim countryside and Lough Neagh from the Tardree Forest. The forest represents an important landscape for visual amenity and recreational purposes.

Proposed Donegore Hill Statement of Significance

Figure 42: Location Map

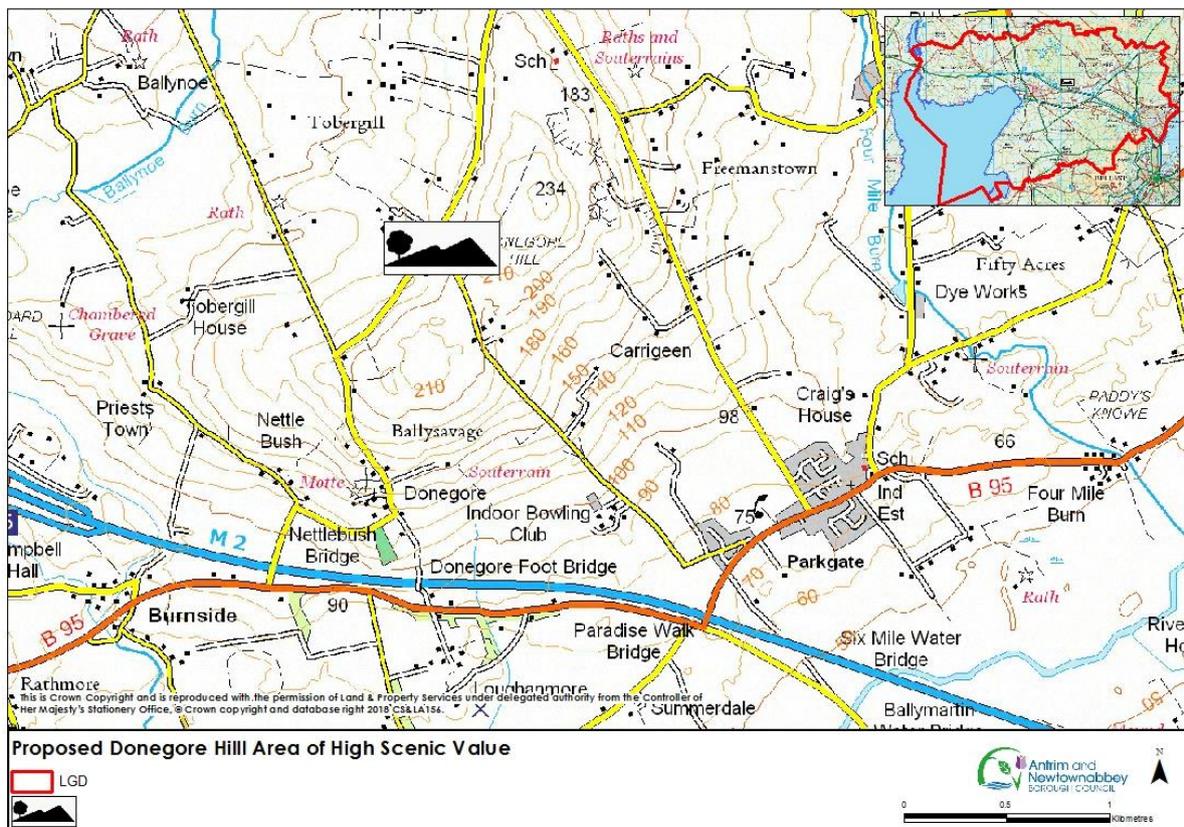


Figure 43: Representative Photographs

View of Donegore Hill Scheduled Monuments



Statement of Significance

The twin peaks of Donegore Hill is a distinctive outlier hill located on a basalt outcrop, rising to the heights of 210m and 234m above sea level, providing a prominent landmark to the northeast of Antrim town. The Hill overlooks the Three and Six Mile Water Valleys and across to Lyle' Hill, with distant views of Lough Neagh and the Sperrins to the west. The hill provides a perception of heritage and cultural with a long history of diverse human activity, dating over 5000 years, with Neolithic Sites, to the 18th Century United Irishmen Rebellion. Additionally, the area is renowned for Ulster Scot's culture. The influence of historic interaction within this landscape and the prominent outlier feature as a landmark, justify the protection of this important site.

Belfast Basalt Escarpment Statement of Significance

Figure 44: Location Map

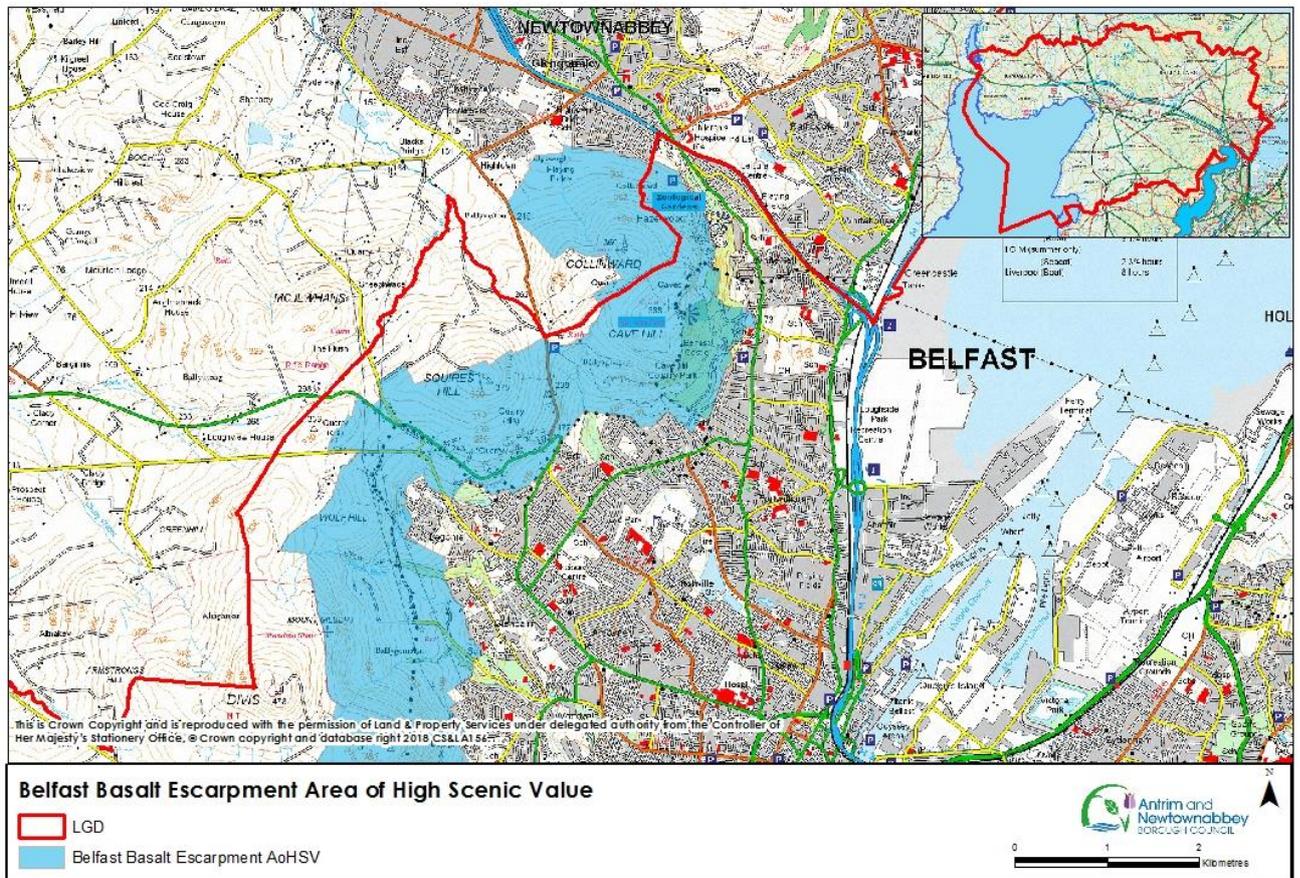


Figure 45: Representative Photographs

View towards the summits of the Belfast Hills



Statement of Significance

The edge of the Antrim basalt plateau is well defined by a steep scarp slope, which wraps around and contains the northwest edge of Belfast. The black basalt outcrops have a distinctive, sheer profile, which is broken by a series of steep, wooded glens. The basalt edge provides an opportunity for panoramic views over the city of Belfast. The scarp slope is a prominent landmark of the area and its open character, distinct profile

and high visibility render it particularly sensitive to change. Despite some degraded conditions in areas, it creates a distinctive setting for Belfast which merits conservation and management. The entire area therefore is classified in NISLA (2000) as an 'Area of Scenic Quality'. This area of scenic quality was designated as an Area of High Scenic Quality in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2004 and continued in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015. As identified in the Preferred Options Paper 2017, this AoHSV will be carried forward into the LDP.

Carmoney Hill Statement of Significance

Figure 46: Location Map

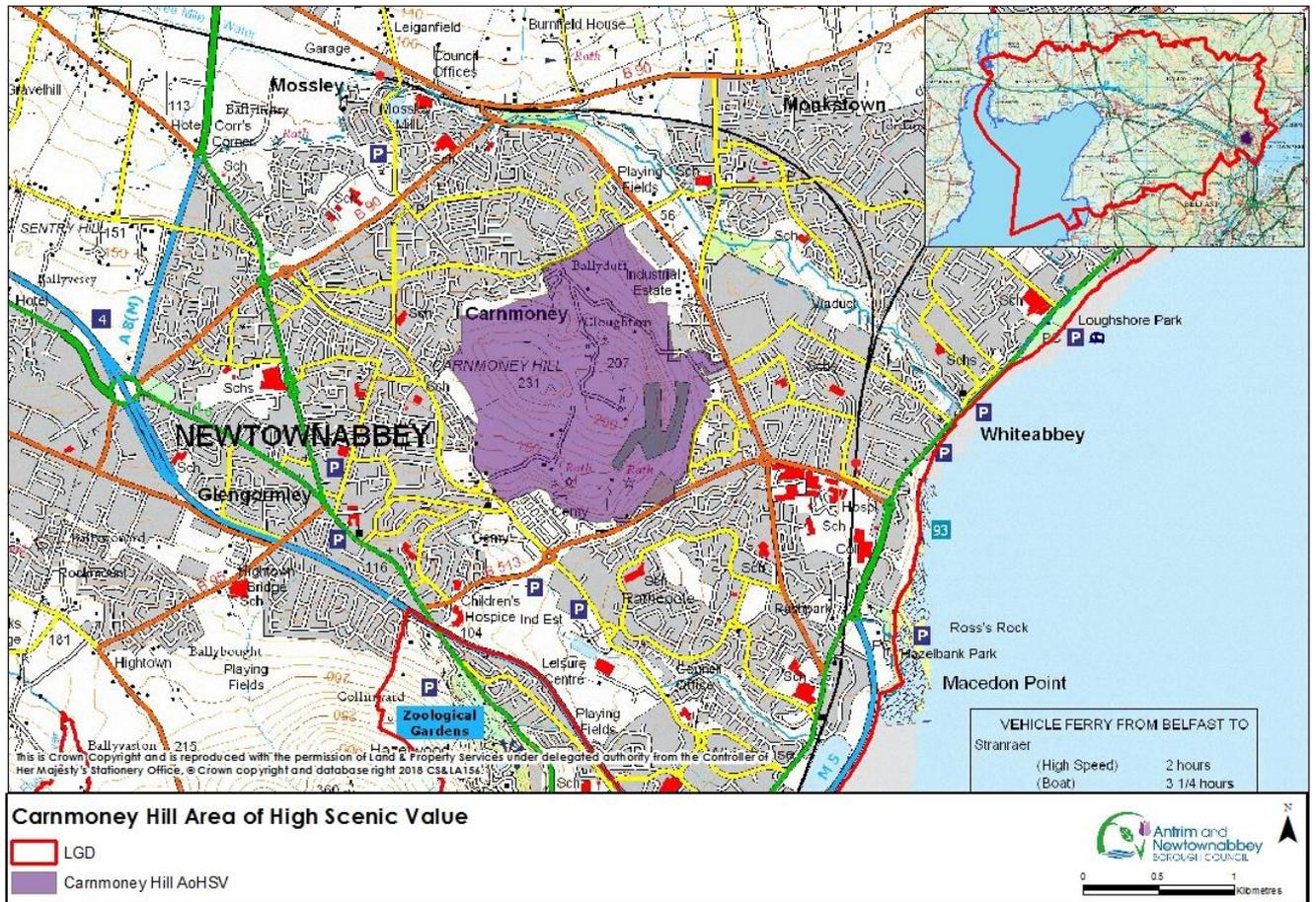


Figure 47: Representative Photographs

Views of Newtownabbey and Mallusk from the Summit of Carmoney Hill



Statement of Significance

Carnmoney Hill is a prominent outlier from the Belfast Basalt Escarpment, which forms a landmark for Newtownabbey. The hill has a rugged, natural landscape, with a plummeting escarpment to the south. Carnmoney Hill is a unique landform, surrounded by development on all sides. The Hill is a visual link between the Belfast Basalt Escarpment and Carrickfergus Escarpment and is characterised by woodland, wetland and agricultural land. There are long views from the M2 motorway along the Three Mile Water Valley to Metropolitan Newtownabbey and to Belfast Lough. The distinctive landform of Carnmoney Hill was identified in the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (2000) as an 'Area of Scenic Quality'.

This area of scenic quality was designated as an Area of High Scenic Quality (AoHSV) in the Council's legacy Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015. As identified in the Council's Preferred Options Paper 2017, this AoHSV will be carried forward into the LDP.

Carrickfergus Escarpment Statement of Significance

Figure 48: Location Map

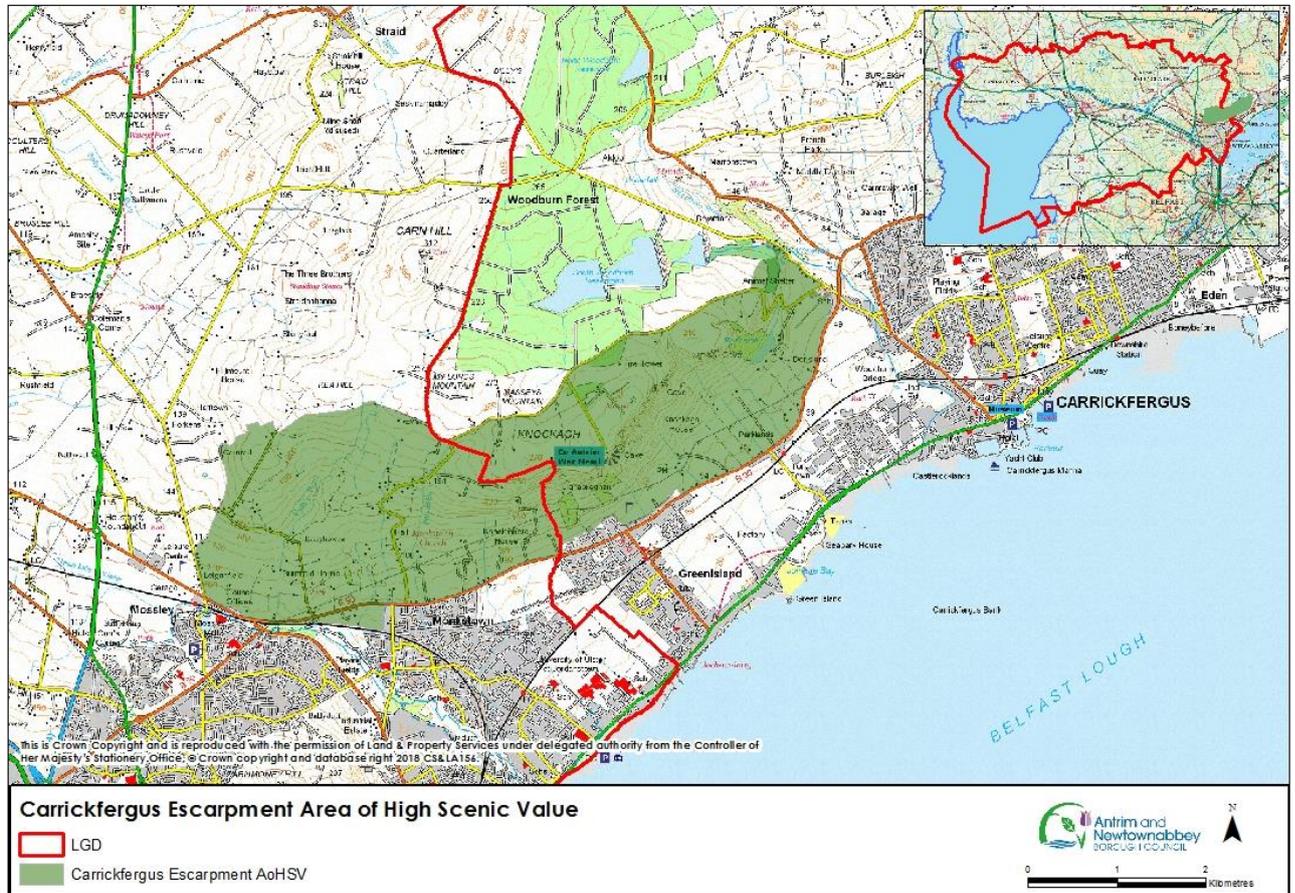


Figure 49: Representative Photographs

View from Escarpment over Greenisland towards Metropolitan Newtownabbey.



Statement of Significance

The Carrickfergus Escarpment is a sensitive slope due to its prominent position within the landscape and the encroaching pressures from modern development on the lower slopes. The gradual transition from small-scale improved grassland on the lower slopes to the broader more wooded landscape pattern on the ridgetop is particularly sensitive. This distinctive landscape pattern is important in visual terms as it conserves the integrity of the ridge as a strong feature in the landscape. The Escarpment forms a magnificent backdrop to the Metropolitan Area, creating a distinctive landscape setting for the wider Belfast Metropolitan Area. The Woodburn Glen (outside of the Borough) is a sensitive feature and is designated an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). The distinctive landform of the Carrickfergus Escarpment was identified in the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (2000) as an 'Area of Scenic Quality'.

This area of scenic quality was designated as an Area of High Scenic Quality (AoHSV) in the Council's legacy Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015. As identified in the Council's Preferred Options Paper 2017, this AoHSV will be carried forward into the LDP.



**Antrim and
Newtownabbey**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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