

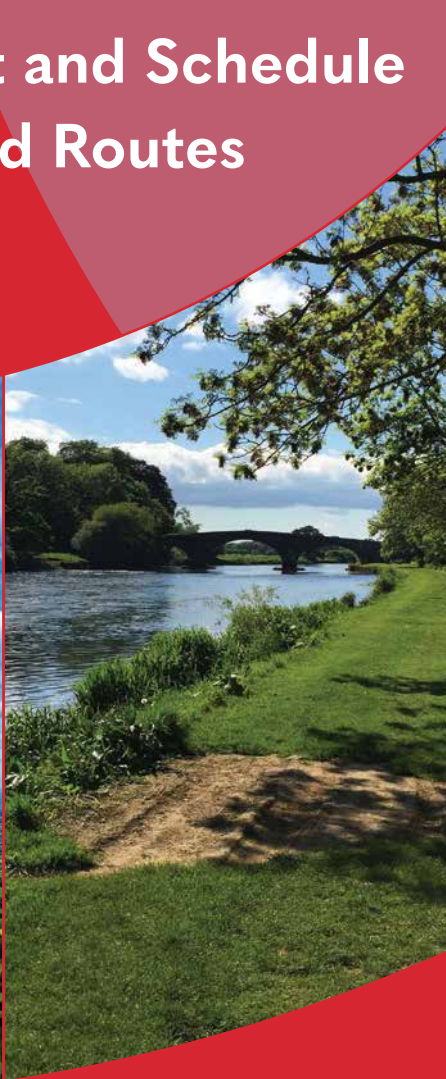


Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council

Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 – 2028

Appendix 3

Landscape Character Assessment and Schedule of Views and Routes



3

Volume 3 ~

August 2022



Shaping Our Future



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT OF TIPPERARY 2016

Tipperary County Council



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council



For: Tipperary County Council
By: CAAS Ltd.
2016



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1. TERMS OF REFERENCE



1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the Tipperary Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) 2016 prepared by CAAS Ltd for Tipperary County Council. Having consideration to the amalgamated county of Tipperary and the need to put in place a consistent approach to the classification of the landscape of the County it was decided to prepare this document. This Tipperary LCA 2016 will replace the existing South Tipperary LCA 2006 (Phase 1 Uplands) and the North Tipperary LCA 2006.

CAAS have undertaken to provide Tipperary County Council with *A Landscape Character Assessment of County Tipperary* using the methodology set out below, and having full regard to the existing LCA's prepared in 2006 for North and South Tipperary.

The **purpose of the LCA** is to develop a tool for identifying the landscape features of the County and establishing a basis for policies for the protection, management and planning of the landscapes having regard to those landscape features that give Tipperary its unique 'sense of place'.

Key stages and elements of the LCA processes included:

- Familiarisation with the existing LCA's for North and South Tipperary;
- LCA consisting of the analysis, description and delineation of:
 - Identification of preliminary **landscape character** units within the County
 - Classification of **landscape value and quality**
 - Classification of landscape character of areas and features, categorised by degrees of **landscape sensitivity**¹ and **capacity for change**
- Preparation of GIS based Landscape Character Maps to accompany text which details those items above, showing:
 - Preliminary landscape units within County Tipperary
 - Areas and features, categorised by degrees of sensitivity [Visual Absorption capacity]
 - Scenic Views
 - Scenic Drives

¹ Visual Absorption Capacity

1.2 LCA OUTPUTS PRODUCED

The brief prepared for this LCA process include a requirement for:

- LCA comprising text and all supporting maps and images.
- Review of the terminology used in the existing LCAs – with respect to LCA types, character areas, etc. with recommendations as to a standardised terminology for the new LCA covering the entire County;
- Identification of data gaps;
- Identification and classification of all relevant documentation/information of landscape images, values and descriptions of valued landscapes in Tipperary;
- Identification and classification of all relevant documentation/information about land uses [tourism, recreation, hotels, walks, drives etc. that depend upon landscape/scenic resources];
- ‘Windshield Surveys’ of all areas of parts of the County as required – having regard to survey work undertaken in compilation of the existing LCAs and likely focussing on transitional areas between the two existing assessments;
- Examination of all existing Views and Scenic Drives



Old Cashel Railway near Ardmayle (Photo -David Almond)

1.3 CONTENT OF THIS LCA

Table 1.1 Outputs supplied

No	Item, Requested	See Report Item number
1	Landscape Character Assessment consisting of the analysis, description and delineation of: Identification of preliminary landscape character units within the County	3. Landscape character assessment 3.1 Methodology 3.2 The Landscape Architypes 3.3 Tipperary – Consolidated LCA Description 3.3 Landscape Character Types 3.4 Landscape Character Areas
2	Classification of landscape value and quality	5 Landscape Sensitivity 5.1 Introduction to Landscape Sensitivity 5.2 Landscape Sensitivity Rating
3	Classification of landscape character of areas and features, categorised by degrees of landscape sensitivity and capacity for change	5.3 Generalises Objectives and Policies 5.4 Generalised Sensitivity Mapping 5.5 Landscape Character Area Sensitivity mapping 5.6 Sensitivity rating of Landscape Character Areas
4	Preliminary indication of landscape guidelines and objectives for each landscape unit	6 Objectives and Guidelines 6.1 Objectives and guidelines 6.2 Landuse Compatibility between LCAs & Landuse Types
5	Preliminary guidance for land-use types.	6.3 Land-use compatibility between landscape sensitivity factors and land-use types
6	Preliminary guidance for development management	

In 2006, LCA was carried out for North Tipperary by North Tipperary County Council. The objective of the study was to complete a thorough assessment of the character, value and sensitivity of the North Tipperary landscape in order to provide the basis for policy formulation and informed decision making regarding landscape management in the County.

In 2006, LCA was carried out by South Tipperary County Council for the uplands of South Tipperary. This assessed the character of the uplands including factors such as landscape character, values and ultimately sensitivity. In 2013, an assessment was carried out of the lowland areas of the county.

This review and consolidation of the LCA has considered the assessments previously carried out. For reference, the individual character areas are described in Appendix 1 of this LCA.

The Draft LCA was made available for public consideration on the 22nd April 2016 along with proposed Variation Number 3 of the North Tipperary County Development Plan (as varied) and proposed Variation No. 3 of the South Tipperary County Development Plan (as varied) – Incorporation of Renewable Energy Strategy for Tipperary. After consideration of submissions received the LCA 2016 was prepared and presented to the Elected Members for their endorsement at the Council meeting of the 12th September 2016.

1.3.1 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE STRATEGY FOR IRELAND 2015 – 2025

The national landscape strategy was produced by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and includes the following six core objectives:

- Recognise landscape in law
- Develop a National Landscape Character Assessment
- Develop Landscape Policies
- Increase Landscape Awareness
- Identify Education & Training needs
- Strengthen Public Participation.

It aims to seek a balance between management, planning and protection of a landscape. This LCA for Tipperary has been prepared having consideration to the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland.

1.4 LAYOUT OF THE LCA

This Tipperary LCA is set out in 6 sections including Introduction, the Landscape of Tipperary, LCA, Description of Areas, Landscape Sensitivity and Objectives and Guidelines. Two appendices are attached, these describe the LCAs of the county and a schedule of views and routes is set out as Appendix 2. Note all images that have been derived from Google Maps and Google Earth Content have been identified and acknowledged and each image is accompanied by a geo-referencing that provides a precise reference to the location of each image to enable an up-to-date attribution to the relevant data provider(s) of that image.

1.5 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The County Development Plan and Town Plans/Local Area Plans (and any review thereof), set out the statutory basis and the planning policy and objectives for the protection of the landscape of the county. This LCA is a technical support document for the planning framework and will give guidance to planning decision making and also the preparation and review of plans and strategies in the future. The LCA should be read in conjunction with the Development Plan framework for the county.

2. THE LANDSCAPE OF TIPPERARY



2.1 INTRODUCTION

Tipperary, acclaimed as Ireland's finest farmland; is a huge county of huge contrasts. At its heart lies large and fertile plains edged by uplands and wetlands. This is a working landscape, ancient and modern, that is dominated by settlements, farms and a dense network of roads.

Tipperary's lowlands connect the great farming counties of north Munster to those of south Leinster. These are also the routes that accommodate the country's busiest rail and road routes.

By contrast, the Shannon wetlands and lake shores of Tipperary's north-west as well as the steep, high uplands of the south offer containment, refuge and wildness.

The county, both a destination and a conduit, contains a great variety of types of landscapes and land-uses. Differences include transitions from busy modern motorways and windfarms to anciently rooted pasturelands rich in monuments, abbeys and castles.

Man-altered and constantly evolving productive farmlands are paralleled by nearby wetlands and uplands where natural processes dominate and where the rate of change is very slow. Tipperary has large-scale natural landscapes – such as the Shannon Callows and Galtees- that are unique, self-contained unchanging worlds.

This complexity can best be understood as consisting of four main types of landscape –the Plains, the Lakelands, the Foothills and the Uplands. The history, the forces of change and the likely futures of each of these are different. Understanding these

differences may help to improve efforts to manage these changes. This, in turn, will help to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future - that remains rooted in Tipperary's cultural and natural heritage – which confers its unique identity.



Figure 2.2 Location of Tipperary is a large fertile plain contained by uplands and wetlands – connected to other large fertile areas to the north-east and south-west.



Figure 2.1 Tipperary's landscapes range from ancient farmed lowlands to overlooking uplands with large areas of natural vegetation.

2.2 CHANGING LANDSCAPES -HISTORY AND THE FORCES OF CHANGE

All landscapes change, constantly, in response to human activities – as well as natural processes. Some places, such as fertile farmland, change more frequently and more quickly, while in other area, such as uplands, change very little and very slowly.

Tipperary's original forested landscape has been altered by human beings as evidenced by the megalithic tombs in the county – which were raised by the first major farming communities – who first cleared and cultivated the landscape over six thousand years ago.

Once established, agriculture has remained as the dominant shaper of the landscape. Over this long time changes in patterns of land-ownership and agriculture have altered the appearance and character.

The landscapes of Tipperary developed in eight major phases:

1. Neolithic [4000 - 2500BC] During this period the first farmers settled - initially on fertile but lighter free draining soils' – such as on hill flanks – leaving behind monuments such as the Court Tomb at Shanballyedmond. It appears that this resulted in an enclosed landscape with a



Figure 2.3 Neolithic landscape

very similar mixture of agricultural practice to those seen today – i.e. a mixture of cereal, tillage and cattle. Populations seemed to have expanded towards the end of this period - about 2,500 years ago.

2. Bronze Age- Iron Age [around 500 BC] This appears to have been a period of cooling climate that witnessed the spread of upland bogs while many woodland areas expanded. The same period witnessed a long slow contraction of population and agriculture perhaps as a result of the combination of a worsening climate combined with widespread and near-continuous inter-tribal warfare.

3. Early Christian [500 AD to 1000AD] About 1500 years ago the landscape began to change again. Early Christian sites created new centres of activity in the middle of a period of renewed farming and the building of the 'ring fort' farmsteads that are ubiquitous in Ireland's lowlands. Farming in this period appears to have been dominated by cattle-rearing on open pastures - with limited enclosures for crops immediately adjacent to settlements. These landscapes still contained considerable areas of woodland – which were important sources of timber as a building material and fuel.



Figure 2.4 Early Christian landscape

4. Medieval [1000AD to 1200 AD] Around 1,000 years ago the discontinuation of ringforts appears to signal a landscape that is more occupied by unprotected dwellings within an unenclosed landscape. This period coincided with the growth of monastic settlements - especially in better soils - leading to the re-establishment of areas for tillage.



Figure 2.5 Anglo-Norman Structures in Fethard (Photo - Clare S Brindley)

5. Anglo-Norman Settlement [1200 AD– 1500AD] The landscape of Tipperary changes again as a result of the waves of Norman and later English invasions which settled and fortified the most fertile landscapes and organised the landscape into the county, the 12 baronies and 'townlands' which is a unit of landscape that is still used today. This period saw the beginning of the construction of tower houses, and the enclosures of demesnes and early deer parks.

6. The Plantations [1500AD 1700AD] This period of massive land confiscation was the start of a period of new landlords who began to slowly improve and organise the landscape into the pattern of fields, villages, roads and parklands that shape today's landscape. This involved further enclosures and increases in tillage - as well as increased felling of woodlands - for reasons of economy and security.

7. Modern Landscapes [1700AD – 2000] This period began with an Age of Improvement that saw many landlords laying out country estates with large houses, as well as villages and many improvements such as bridges and roads. Many of the estates were laid out in accordance with renaissance 'Palladian' principles. This has left a legacy throughout Tipperary of large houses set in parklands surrounded by woodland belts and containing decorative features such as avenues and lakes as well as functional walled gardens, stables and yards.



Photo Tipperary Co Co

Figure 2.5 Palladian house & landscape

Agriculture determined the management of the landscape – with noticeably differences emerging. Permanent pasture was a feature of south-west Tipperary – mostly used for cattle fattening with some dairy farming along the borders of Cork and sheep fattening on the driest limestone soils of the south of the county. [Upland sheep grazing was not common at this time] Cattle fattening was also important north of Nenagh and along the Shannon.

The majority of the centre and east of the county was increasingly dominated by tillage in the lowlands. This generated investment in roads to transport goods – especially to Dublin – but also to

ports along the south coast. This growth of tillage also led to significant investments in mills, lime kilns, breweries, distilleries and storehouses – strengthening the economy of larger towns.

These tillage landscapes were very labour-dependent which led to significant levels of housing for agricultural labourers, in small one-room cabins around the perimeter of tillage farms.

These patterns changed dramatically and frequently in Tipperary throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries on account of waves of change caused by the Famine, the Land Wars, the Encumbered Estates. These saw rural populations decline dramatically after 1840. Throughout this period the number and size of fields grew, shrank and grew again – especially in tillage areas.

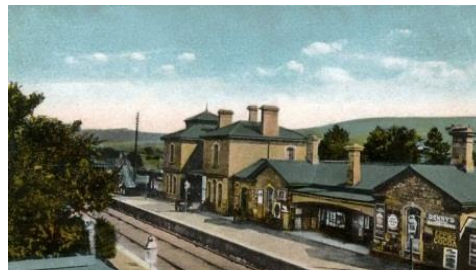


Figure 2.6 Clonmel Railway Station

The mid to late 19th century was also a period of large-scale infrastructure and public works – including canals, railways and water supply schemes. Much of the present day fabric of the towns and villages of the county – the shops, churches and courthouses were built during this period.



Figure 2.8 Emerging landscapes (Photo - John O'Loughlin)

8. Emerging landscapes [2000 – 2016]

Thus the landscape of Tipperary today can be considered as a tapestry - or mosaic – where the whole is the sum of many smaller distinctive parts – each derived from previous patterns of ownership and use. In general terms this pattern consists of larger, slower changing units in both uplands and wetlands – while the fertile lowlands, by contrast, change more rapidly and at a smaller scale – often farm by farm and settlement by settlement.

This pattern of change continues today as a number of factors create pressures to alter the appearance and character of the landscape. There are four major sources of pressure to change – these are sometimes called 'drivers of change' – for the purpose of trying to plan for the future.

2.3 CHANGING LANDSCAPES - HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

Parts of each of these seven phases remain throughout the county. In wetlands, bogs and less intensively farmed uplands and foothill areas there are greater concentrations of visible historic remains. This not because these areas are ‘more historic’ – but because they have been less used. So the remains of previous uses are less likely to be disturbed or destroyed by later uses.

Within the lowlands the situation is more complex. Here the greatest concentrations of protected structures are concentrated in the areas of the most productive soils [see Figure 2.7]. There are arguably, four main periods that have left large quantities of visible historic elements:

1. Early Medieval ‘Ringforts’
2. Monastic remains
3. Later Medieval Tower-houses
4. 18th and 19th Century Estates and landscape parks

These occur in different densities and combinations throughout the lowlands. The tower-houses may be the most visible – but the demesnes landscapes – sometimes with a surviving house – are the most extensive, Tipperary having one of the highest densities of landscape parks in Ireland. All lie within a dense networks of roads and field boundaries - which themselves constitute greater or smaller fragments of preceding periods of history. At a local level there can be extensive areas of ancient field patterns of different periods – sometimes largely undisturbed, often in foothills and marginal wetlands.

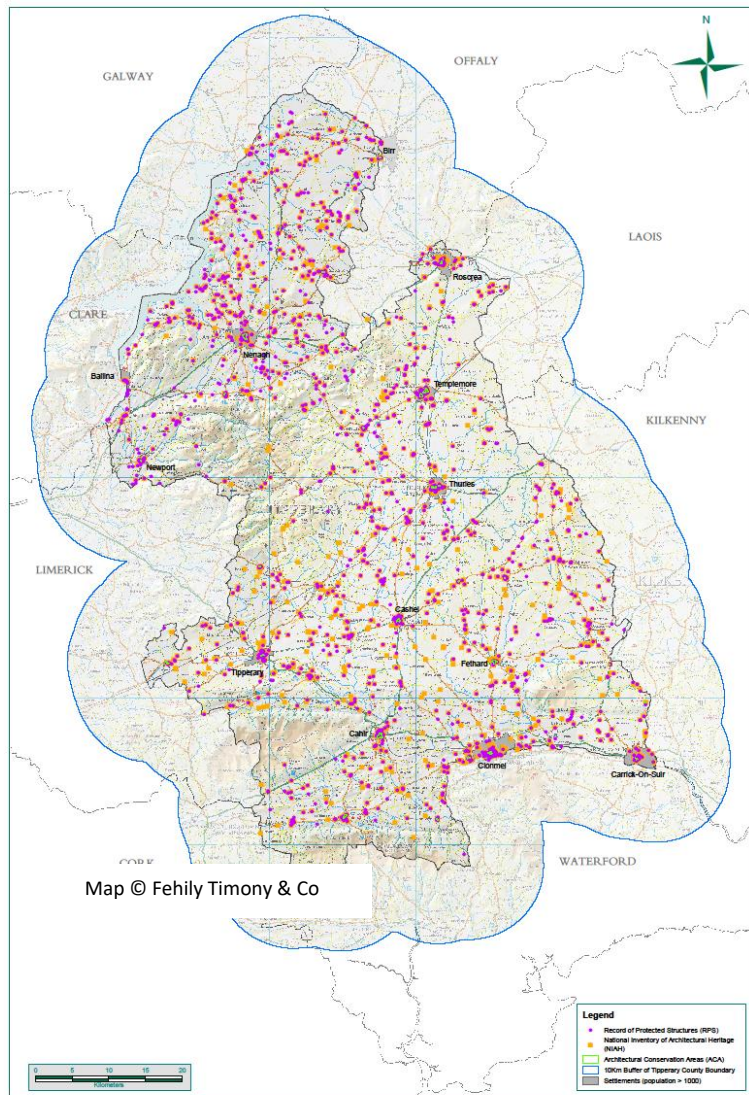


Figure 2.7 Historic Sites

This issue is made more complex by policies to protect the ‘context’ of historic remains. In these circumstances the original monument may be located in an area that contains features from many periods – often separated by centuries. For this reason, on a site by site basis, it can be extremely important not to conflate ‘rural’ with ‘historic’ because, as noted above, each part of an anciently farmed county like Tipperary is likely to consist of the results of many, many periods of use and change.

2.4 CHANGING LANDSCAPES- DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Table 2.1 Likely drivers of change and likely landscape effects

FACTOR	LIKELY DRIVER OF CHANGE	LIKELY LANDSCAPE EFFECTS			
		Uplands	Lakelands	Foothills	Plains
Agriculture	Agricultural Intensification	Very High	High	Moderate	Very Low
	Agricultural Diversification	Moderate	Low	Low	Low
	Agricultural Contraction	Very High	Very Low	High	Moderate
Settlement	Existing Rural Housing	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Very Low
	New Rural Housing	Very High	Very High	High	Moderate
Urbanisation	Urban Expansion	Very High	High	Very High	Moderate
	Urban Support Uses- Amenities	Moderate	Low	Low	Low
	Urban Support Uses- Extraction	Very High	High	Moderate	Low
	Urban Support Uses- Enterprise	Very High	Very Low	High	High
Infrastructure	Transportation	High	Very High	Moderate	High
	Energy - Large Transmission Lines	Very High	Very High	Moderate	Moderate
	Energy – Wind Farms	Very High	Very High	High	High
	Energy – Solar Farms	High	Moderate	Moderate	Low
	Water Services	Moderate		Low	Low

Sections 2.1 to 2.3 introduced the idea that the landscape has been subject to many periods of major change. It also introduced the idea that such change continues at present and that there are four major 'drivers of change' as follows:

1. Agriculture - *changes in the intensity and extent of farming practices as a result of the reform of the CAP*
2. Settlement – *changing patterns of rural settlement*
3. Urbanisation – *changes in rural land-uses near settlements*
4. Infrastructure – *projects and activities in rural areas to supply energy, water and transport*

Table 2.1 provides a generalised summary of the likely landscape effects of each driver of change on each the typical parts of a landscape. The analysis shows that the Uplands are the areas that are most sensitive to change – arising from almost every type of development. Lakelands are also sensitive while Foothills are more robust. The Plains emerge as the most robust general landscape types – being able to absorb a very wide range of types of development – without experiencing high levels of effects.

In Tipperary, the history of the landscape, as set out above, confirms that the Plains have been the area of greatest and most persistent change – while the Uplands have, generally, changed very slowly and occasionally. In general terms the history of the landscape is a good guide to the future – so this pattern of change is likely to persist.

2.5 AGRICULTURAL DRIVERS OF CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is likely to be, by far, the biggest driver that may change the appearance and character of the landscape. The drivers are considered in detail here – in order to inform and assist policy formulation to regulate and manage the emerging drivers that will change the countryside.

INTENSIFICATION

The reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy [CAP] is leading to a divergence in farming. On one hand the removal of former quota-based restrictions is likely to lead to an intensification of farming for major commodities, including beef, dairy and cereals. Food Harvest 2020, for instance, has ambitions to increase dairy and beef output by 50% and 40% respectively by 2020. This may lead to enlargement of farm holdings as well as associated structures and facilities. Agricultural intensification is planned to be accompanied by increases in value addition by food processors and food-manufacturing. Value-addition is likely to lead to large-scale enterprises closer to major sources of primary production especially in areas of north Munster, like Tipperary. It is also likely that there will be further enlargement, consolidation and intensification of professional equestrian operations – some of which are already very large. These larger and more professionally run farms may begin to demand better protection from conflicting adjacent land-uses – such as rural settlement and enterprise.

AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION

Tourism, amenities and leisure, specialist food production and retail – such as organic meats, eggs, fruit and vegetables - are all targets of incentives to increase income in rural areas from activities other than the traditional mainstream activities of beef, dairy and cereal production. Some of these types of uses may lead to increases in the number of new non-farm buildings in rural areas. Some, such as retail, amenities and recreation may lead to locally increased traffic, while food production may give rise to locally increased water or power demand as well as increased demands on waste water and solid waste facilities.

AGRICULTURAL CONTRACTION

Farming may contract on marginal lands – along wetlands, some foothills and especially in upland areas. When this occurs it leads to slow changes – initially less intensive land-management such as a cessation of tillage and dairy – leading to locally changing the type and mix of grassland cover and local drainage patterns. It can also increase the amount of dereliction or dilapidation of older structures, walls and gates. Some areas experience abandonment of grazing. This leads to a further change as hardy shrubs – such as hazel, willow, blackthorn and gorse – begin to colonise the open ground. This eventually leads to the establishment of a closed canopy of transitional scrub woodland of birch, hazel and holly. This contraction begins to significantly change the appearance and character of the landscape – hedgerow heights increase quickly – particular along road edges and views become more and more restricted.

2.6 OTHER USES DRIVING CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

Changes to agriculture will cause the most extensive and significant effects to the landscape. However a range of other uses will also give rise to changes. These uses may give rise to smaller individual effects – but collectively they are likely to form the most conspicuous ‘foreground’ elements that will have a big effect on the degree to which the landscape is perceived to have changed. The main change will be the perceived modernisation’ of the countryside – especially in the vicinity of settlements.

SETTLEMENT

Existing Rural Housing

Residents constantly adapt and improve their homes and gardens – adding extensions, renewing walls, roofs, paintwork and windows. These give rise to slow gradual effects that have a cumulative effect of change.

New Rural Housing

Though contentious, recent patterns suggest that there will continuous pressure to build more houses in rural areas to meet needs that range for family cohesion through to aesthetic preferences. This pressure is generally most intense along smaller rural roads with the hinterlands of the major settlements.

URBANISATION

Urban Expansion

The edges of established settlements are the most likely locations where new housing, commerce, retail, services and industry will occur. This is usually provided for by the zoning and services of these settlements. The advancing edge of settlements gives rise to other uses – located in rural areas that are not farming – these include amenities, extraction and enterprise.

URBAN SUPPORT USES- AMENITIES

Growing settlements give rise to increasing demands to recreational and sporting activities. These occur at the edges of settlements and include sports fields, golf courses, parks, water sports, fishing ponds, adventure sports and equestrian facilities. Some of these can include accommodation – such as hotels, hostels and holiday homes. Through dominantly grassed these areas create additional intensification and introduce traffic, parking, lights and signage – as well as demands for road-side paths that change the rural character of their environs.

URBAN SUPPORT USES- EXTRACTION

The viability of sand pits and rock quarries depends on minimising the travel distances to urban markets. Extractive facilities are constantly expanding and occasionally being replaced. Though necessary, these can give rise to a wide range of environmental effects – unless properly regulated.

URBAN SUPPORT USES- ENTERPRISE

A range of uses that need agricultural land also need to be close to urban markets – these include garden centres, nurseries, pick-your-own- fruit, petting farms, orchards, stables, camping and caravan parks. Through dominantly grassed these areas create additional intensification and

introduce traffic, parking, lights and signage – as well as demands for road-side paths that change the rural character of their environs.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation

Road upgrades – widening and junction improvements and associated signs, fences, verges, landscaping and lighting are likely to be the main activities in this section, especially along the NRA network. The effects are very localised, though cumulatively significant, leading to a spreading ‘modernisation’ of road-side appearances

Energy - Large Transmission Lines

The Grid 25 Programme of Grid reinforcement is likely to continue. These projects generally occur within lowlands, avoiding concentrations of settlement. Occasional new lines are required to connect to renewable energy projects. The effects are generally localised though cumulatively significant

Energy – Wind Farms

Tipperary is already one of the country’s leading producers of Renewables – this pattern is set to continue and is provided for in the Wind Energy Strategy that accompanies this LCA. To date these have been concentrated in uplands and cut-over bogs.

Energy – Solar Farms

This is an emerging form of renewable energy that favours large regular fields – principally in Foothills.

Water Services

Major investment programmes in water services have begun. These will lead to new and enlarged reservoirs, pumping stations and waste water treatment plants. Effects are localised.



Cows and wind turbine near Monaincha (Photo - Shauna Browne)

3. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



3.1 METHODOLOGY

All areas of the earth's surface can be classified into differently named landscapes.

These are named according to a series of increasingly specific names that are used for description, analyses and policy.

These range from 'Universal Landscape Archetypes' to 'Landscape Character Types' to 'Landscape Character Areas'.

Each of these can be thought as being a subset, or component of the more general type:

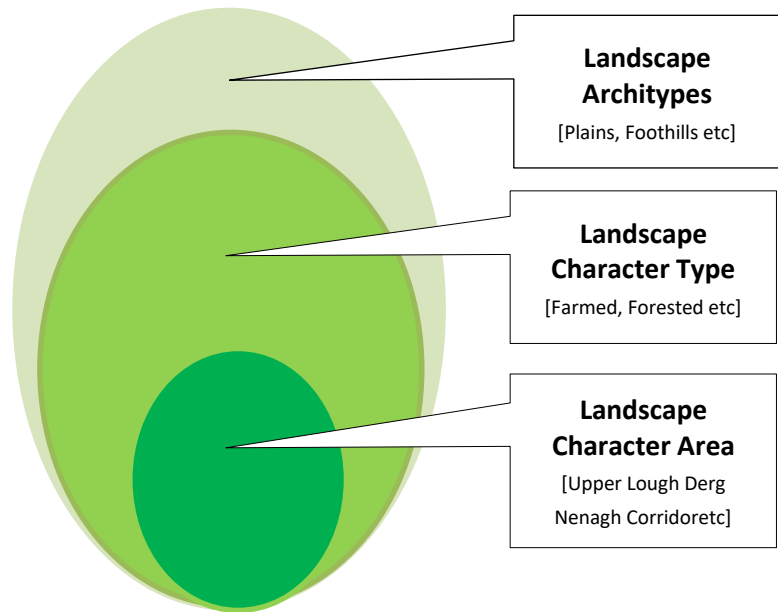


Figure 3.1 The hierarchy of landscapes from the Universal to the Local.

- **Universal Landscape Archetypes** is a name, commonly given to an element of the landscape without reference to any technical attribute or specialist knowledge. These are terms that have been used in all languages in all places throughout history.

Examples include words like plains, mountains, valleys, lakes, rivers and the sea. These are not specifically used for technical analysis – though the names are usually incorporated within a landscape character type – e.g. 'mountain moorland'

- **Landscape Character Types** are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature, in that they may occur in different areas or different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, often sharing even similar patterns of historical land use and settlement.

For example, drumlins and mountain moorlands are recognisable and distinct landscape character types.

- **Landscape Character Areas** are unique, geographically-specific areas of a particular landscape type. Each has its own individual character and identity, even though it shares the same generic characteristics with other areas of the same type. This distinction is reflected in the naming of types and areas: landscape character types have generic names, but landscape character areas take on the names of specific places.

Examples might be large areas like the south Wicklow Uplands, The Burren or smaller specific areas such as the Borrisokane Lowlands.

The identification and assessment of Landscape Character Areas is the objective of this report.

3.2 THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITYPES

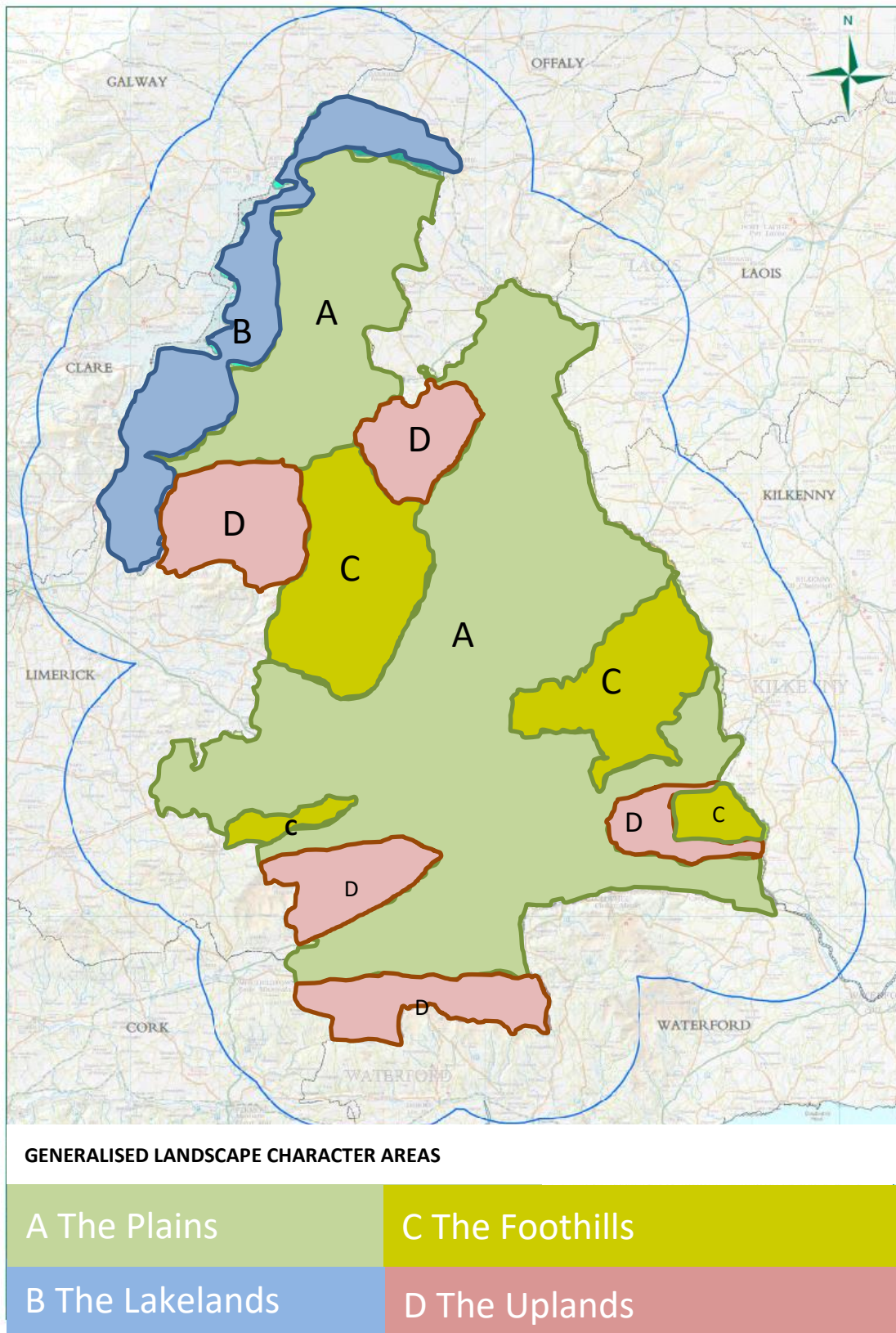


Figure 3.2 Generalised Landscape Character Areas

Tipperary consists of four Universal Landscape Architypes -Plains, Foothills, Uplands and Lakelands:



Figure 3.3 The Plains, River Suir near Newcastle

A. The Plains

These are working landscapes containing most settlements and services as well as large continuous areas used for pasture, tillage and peat harvesting. This landscape also contains major rivers and many historic sites.



Figure 3.4 The Lakelands Overlooking Lough Derg from Castletown on the R494

B. The Lakelands

These are working landscapes containing settlements that enclose and adjoin lake and river areas of national significance for tourism and recreation. This landscape also contains many historic sites.



Figure 3.5 The Foothills, north of Upperchurch

C. The Foothills

These are complex landscapes containing mixtures of settlements, forestry and farming that also contain extensive areas of semi-natural upland vegetation.



Figure 3.6 The Uplands The Uplands, south of 'The Vee'

D. The Uplands

These are mountain landscapes with limited range of uses or types of vegetation. There are very low levels of settlement, services or roads. These landscapes are being increasingly used for amenities as well as energy and telecoms infrastructure.



Figure 3.7 Universal Landscape Archetypes of Tipperary

3.3 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

The Landscape Archetypes, in turn, can be subdivided into seven Landscape Character Types.

Table 3.1 Derivation of Landscape Character Areas from Landscape Types and Archetypes	
Archetypes	Landscape Character Types
A. The Plains	A1 Lowland Pasture & Arable This is the most common type of landscape in Tipperary. It consists mainly of grasslands and tillage enclosed by hedges. These areas also contain areas of woodlands, rivers and settlements – as well as a dense network of roads, utility lines and farm buildings. The character and appearance of these areas can be significantly different depending on proximity to other landscapes such as uplands and hills.
	A2 Peatlands & Wet Mixed Farmland This type of landscape occurs in separate compartments within the plains. There is a lower intensity of farming in these areas – resulting in fewer houses and roads and more areas of natural vegetation.
B. The Lakelands	B1 Watersides The character of ordinary grasslands or woodlands can be profoundly altered when they adjoin or overlook waterbodies – such as lakes and rivers. Lough Derg among the most important landscape amenities of Tipperary - defining the majority of the County's western boundary.
	B2 Lakeland Enclosures Uplands – both in Tipperary and Clare define much of the southern part of Lough Derg – creating very distinctive and highly valued landscapes
C. The Foothills	C1 Farmed Higher elevation and imperfect drainage reduces the land-use capability in parts of east Tipperary leading to patterns of smaller farms, taller hedges, less tillage and more irregular fields. This varied landscape contains many tranquil, very scenic areas.
	C2 Forested The foothills of the west of the county are generally of higher elevations, steeper slopes and shallower soils with poorer drainage. This has resulted in significant concentrations of coniferous forestry – interspersed with smaller farms. These areas produce many fine views of the plains below – often framed by wooded foregrounds.
D. The Uplands	D1 Mountain & Upland Areas of solitude, dominated by natural vegetation, and harsh climate overlook the busy, fertile plains and settlements of Tipperary. Though seldom visited these areas viewed across wide expanses of lowlands form the backdrop to almost all of the most scenic areas of the county. A number of them – such as Devilsbit, Slievenamon, and Galtymore have very distinctive profiles that contribute to a unique sense of place in their vicinity.

3.4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

The Landscape Character Types of Tipperary can be sub-divided into 23 distinctive Landscape Character Areas.

Table 3.2 Derivation of Landscape Character Areas		
Architypes	Landscape Character Types	Landscape Character Areas
A. The Plains	A1 Lowland Pasture & Arable	1. Urban and Fringe Areas
		2. Thurles Hinterland
		3. Nenagh Corridor
		4. River Suir Central Plain / Nenagh Corridor
		5. Templemore Plains
		6. West Tipperary Farmland mosaic
	A2 Peatlands & Wet Mixed Farmland	7. Borrisokane Lowlands
		8. Littleton Raised Bog
		9. Littleton Farmland Mosaic and Marginal Peatland
B. The Lakelands	B1 Watersides	10. Upper Lough Derg
		11. The Shannon Callows
	B2 Lakeland Enclosures	12. River Shannon – Newport
		13. Arra Mountains – Lower Lough Derg
C. The Foothills	C1 Farmed	14. Slieveardagh Hills Farmland mosaic
		15. Linguan Valley Marginal and Farmland Mosaic
	C2 Forested	16. Slievenamuck Marginal Mosaic
		17. Upperchurch – Kilcomommon/ Hollyford Hills Mountain Mosaic
D. The Uplands	D1 Mountain & Upland	18. Silvermines – Rearcross
		19. Slievenamon Mountain Mosaic
		20. Glen of Aherlow Uplands [20[B]]
		21. Galtee Mountain Mosaic
		22. Devilsbit Uplands
		23. Knockmealdown Mountain Mosaic

The 23 Landscape Character Areas that were identified in the LCAs of Tipperary North and Tipperary South have been combined in the map below. Descriptions of the general characteristics and sensitivities of each are set out following. An update and review of the original detailed analysis, descriptions and recommendations of each section are set in Appendix 1 of this report – as Consolidated Landscape Character Areas of Tipperary.



Derryvilla Lake in Tipperary (Photo - Christy Bracken)

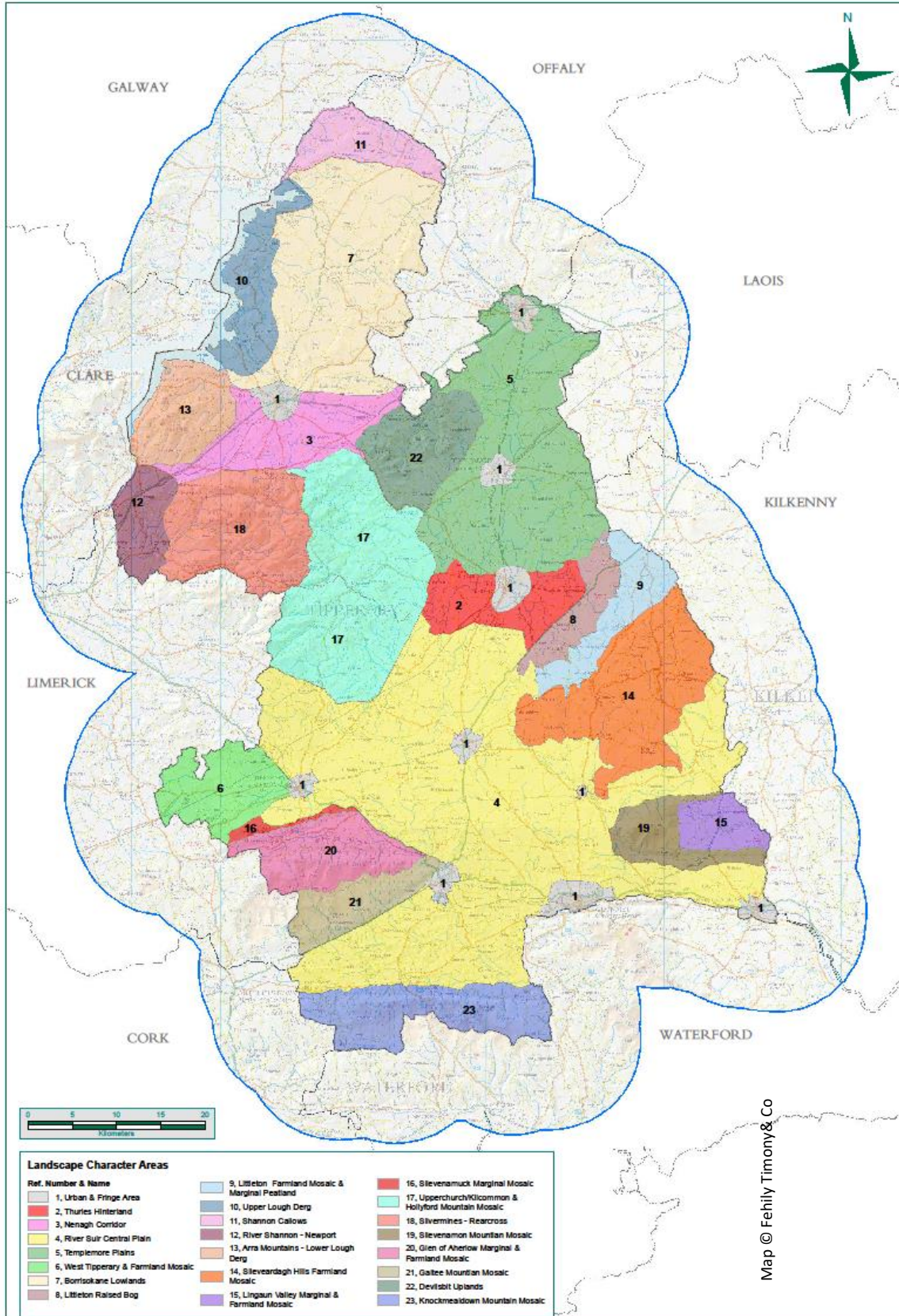


Figure 3.8 Map of Landscape Character Areas of Tipperary from existing LCA processes

4. GENERALISED DESCRIPTIONS OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides generalised descriptions of each of the Landscape Character Areas and provides a classification under seven types of each landscape with four Universal Character Areas – Plains, Lakelands, Lowlands and Uplands. This in turn provides the basis for a high-level characterisation of the general sensitivity of each four main Character Areas landscapes – to facilitate the development of consistent county-wide plans, objectives, policies and development management guidelines.

Appendix 1 contains a very detailed description of each Landscape Character Area – these are derived from the original Landscape Character Assessments for the two parts of the county. They have been edited to increase the consistency of each description – while also attempting to ensure a high level of continuity.

Table 4.1 Generalised Descriptions of Landscape Character Areas of Tipperary

Type	No	Name	Description
Plains Lowland Pasture and Arable	1.	Urban and Fringe Area	These towns represent the largest settlements of the county and due to their size relative to the smaller county settlements, they are considered to have an urban character that sets them apart from the surrounding rural hinterland. It is also notable that each of these settlements is very much integral to the character of the Plains (as are the smaller villages) and thus are considered to be Sub- areas of their respective LCAs.
	2.		
	3.	Thurles Hinterland	The Thurles hinterland forms a flat open landscape lying below the rolling hills of Kilcommon and Upperchurch to the west. This landscape character area is well drained, being bounded by the Clodiagh River in the west, which drains southwards to the River Suir.
	4.		
	5.	Nenagh Corridor	The Nenagh Corridor runs eastwards from the Devilsbit Mountains, incorporating the town of Nenagh and running to the north of the Silvermines Mountains. It forms a flat to gently undulating lowland enclosed by the Arra Mountains to the north, by the Silvermines Mountains to the south and by the Devilsbit Mountains to the east.
	6.		
	7.	River Suir Central Plain	This area is also known as part of the 'Golden Vale'. It is the most extensive and coherent landscape area in the county. It forms the large central area of the county where it is associated with the River Suir and also extends west along the tributaries of the Multeen, Thonouge and Tar and eastwards along the Anner. It is characterised by its rich and productive agricultural lands and rolling landscape. It also incorporates the large towns of
	8.		

				the County and many settlements and villages. The M8 Motorway transverses the central plain in a neat east – west divide. The six main towns and urban areas are sub-areas of this LCA – see 1,2,3.
	9.	10	Templemore Plain	The Templemore plain form a large, gently undulating lowland area framed by Devilsbit and Borrisnoe Mountain to the west and extending to Roscrea in the north and the county boundary with Laois to the east.
	11	12	West Tipperary Farmland Mosaic	This area is considered distinctive in its character as a lowland character area of the county due to its subtle differences and its sense of removal from the richer and more densely populated River Suir Central Plain. Agriculture in the area is often less productive and farms are often smaller and retain a vernacular character.
Plains Peatlands and Wet Mixed Farmland	13	14	Borrisokane Lowlands	This large, generally low lying area contains good quality pasture though there are also quite extensive pockets of tillage, largely in the southern part of this LCA. Towards the north, the landcover starts to share characteristics with the Shannon Callows LCA as well as a number of raised bogs.
	15	16	Littleton Raised Bog	A distinctive raised bog area, this extends eastwards from the N8 where it meets the county boundary with Kilkenny. The raised bog is set within an overall landscape not dissimilar to the undulating lowland of the Thurles hinterland.
	17	18	Littleton Farmland Mosaic and Marginal Farmland	This area is considered distinctive in its character as a lowland character area of the county due to its subtle differences and its sense of removal from the richer and more densely populated River Suir Central Plain. Agriculture in the area is pastoral based and productively varies greatly throughout this LCA. In the vicinity of Grange and Kilcooley the land is rich and productive, yet as one travels towards the peatlands to the North West the quality of the land is poorer.

Type	No	Name	Description
Lakeland Waterside	19.	Upper Lough Derg	This LCA extends from the northern bays of Lough Derg, east of Portumna, following the lake southwards to Youghal Bay. Thereafter, it extends inland, with the eastern boundary defined by the lower contours of the drumlin belt. Landcover is dominated by pasture but there is a higher percentage of land under tillage within this LCA compared to the peaty soils within the Callows LCA. Upland or rough grazing can be seen in the elevated parts of the drumlins and there are occasional small coniferous plantations. Deciduous woodland is notable along the shoreline, with birch, willow, ash and hazel dominating.
	20.	Shannon Callows	This area is predominantly composed of pasture, with pockets of arable land. Within the river plains, the landcover is a mixture of raised bog such as Redwood Bog, wetlands subject to seasonal flooding, and scrub frequently composed of wet loving shrub and tree species including birch and ash Landcover is largely wet grassland and meadows with semi-natural woodland at the fringes, composed of birch and alder in wetter areas, and willow in drier locations.
Lakeland Enclosure	21.	River Shannon - Newport	This is largely a flat open landscape at the southern and western including the Shannon floodplain and associated meadows at the Lough Derg shores as well as raised bogs at Newport. The northerly part comprises an undulating hilly landscape with well-maintained pasture. Extensive low, density, rural settlement nucleated settlements are limited to Newport town and Birdhill.



Ardfinnan (Photo- John O' Neill)

	22.	Arra Mountains-Lower Lough Derg	<p>A Lakeland enclosure that is a mixture of upland lowland and lake areas.</p> <p>The uplands contain blanket bog habitats on the upper western slopes extensive coniferous plantations as well as areas of scrub and rough grazing, On the lower slopes and foothills, there is improved grassland and pasture with deciduous lake side vegetation.</p> <p>Settlement concentrated close to lake shore and the lowlands beneath Arra mountains include the town of Ballina, representing an important crossing site of Lough Derg and smaller villages including Newtown and Portroe.</p>
Farmed Foothills	23.	Slieveardagh Hills Farmland Mosaic	<p>A foothills zone of varying pasture, tillage and private forestry. The Anner River 'bowl' which forms the source of the river in the southern hills of the upland can also be described as a visual unit, and is considered a sub-area of the LCA.</p> <p>The northern slopes of Slievardagh form a steep escarpment that overlooks and shelters the villages of Ballinunty, Gortnahoe, Ballysloe and Grange. In turn these villages overlook the Littleton mixed farm and peatlands to the north.</p>
	24.	The Lingaun Valley Marginal and Farmland Mosaic	<p>A foothills zone of moorland, forestry and varying pasture. This area comprises the valley of the Lingaun River extending eastwards from the peak of Slievenamon, including the inner slopes of the hills defining the northern and southern edge of the upland. [See 19]</p>
	25.	Slievenamuck marginal mosaic	<p>A foothills zone of forestry and marginal pasture. This area comprises the almost entirely forested northern face of Slievenamuck.</p>
	26.	Hollyford Hills mountain mosaic	<p>A foothills zone of moorland, forestry and marginal pasture. The Cahernahallia and Multeen River valleys, are both visual units in which a distinct sense of enclosure is perceived. These are considered sub-areas of the LCA.</p>

Type	No	Name	Description
Upland	27.	Silvermines - Rearcross	A predominantly upland zone of moorland, forestry and varying pasture. The higher areas included Keeper Hill (694m OD) and Silvermine Mountain (479m OD). The lower slopes are dominated by pasture. In some areas improved pasture is evident. Elsewhere within these elevations, a mixture of rushy pasture, improved pasture, pockets of bog and smaller scale coniferous plantations are apparent. The area includes a cluster of prehistoric graves around Rearcross and Kilcommon and an industrial legacy around Silvermines village. Settlements are confined to lower slopes with small nucleated settlements at Silvermines and Rearcross.
	28.	Slievenamon Mountain Mosaic	An upland zone of moorland, forestry and marginal pasture. This area includes the primary and lesser peaks of Slievenamon at the western extent of the upland, as well as the outer slopes of the hills enclosing the Lingaun river valley to the east of the peak. These outer slopes are considered sub-areas of the LCA. [See 15]
	29.	Glen of Aherlow Marginal and Farmland mosaic	A predominantly upland zone of moorland, forestry and varying pasture. This area includes the Aherlow River valley, narrow strip of flat to undulating farmland mosaic between the northern face of the Galtees and the southern face of Slievenamuck, which are included in the area.
	30.	Galtees Mountain Mosaic	An upland zone of moorland, forestry and marginal pasture. This area comprises the southern face of the Galtee mountains including an extensive area of cSAC designated land, the Galtee Mountains SAC. This area of upper slopes and peaks is considered a sub-area of the LCA.
	31.	Devilsbit Uplands	An upland zone zone of moorland, forestry and marginal pasture punctuating the surrounding lowlying landscape with limited settlements on lower slopes. This area comprises an extension of Silvermines to Slieve Bloom upland range. It includes a distinctive ridgeline of Devilsbit with associated folk mythology.
	32.	Knockmeal down Mountain Mosaic	An upland zone of moorland, forestry and marginal pasture. This area includes a sub-area comprised of the Araglin River Valley, which straddles the County boundary with Waterford, south of and parallel to the mountain range. The lesser peaks to west and east of the range are also considered sub-areas of the LCA.

4.2 THE PLAINS

The Plains contain most of the county’s settlements - set within very extensive areas of farms both large and small, as well as less populated landscapes of lakes, rivers, wetlands and peat bogs.

LOWLAND PASTURE & ARABLE OF THE PLAINS

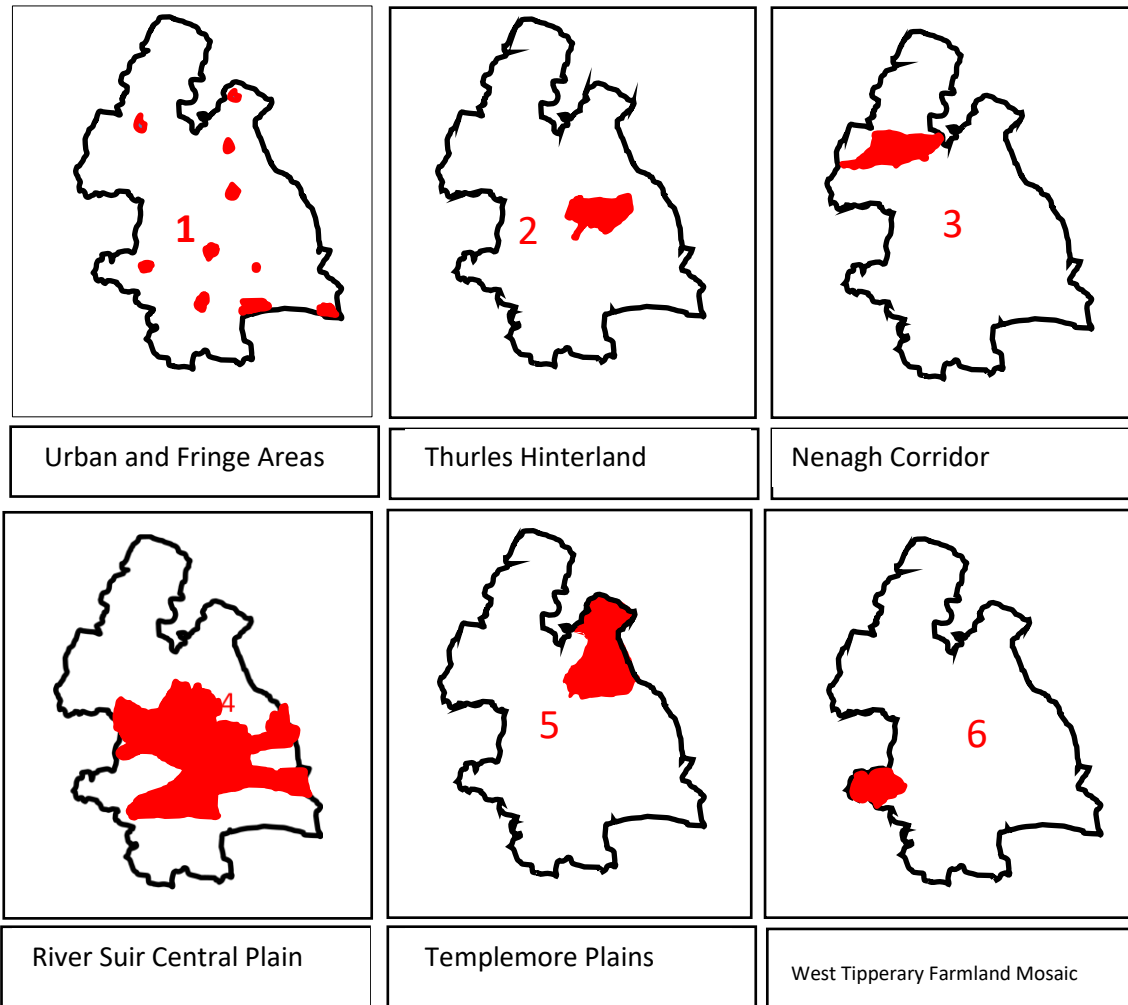


Figure 4.1 The level lowland plains of Tipperary contain some of Ireland’s most fertile lands in large and small farms - as well as most of the main settlements and services.

The Plains also include extensive lowland areas that are heavily influenced by peat-forming processes. These lead to extensive areas of less intensive agriculture as well as areas of raised bog [often cutover] interspersed with areas of farming.

PEATLANDS AND WET MIXED FARMLANDS OF THE PLAINS

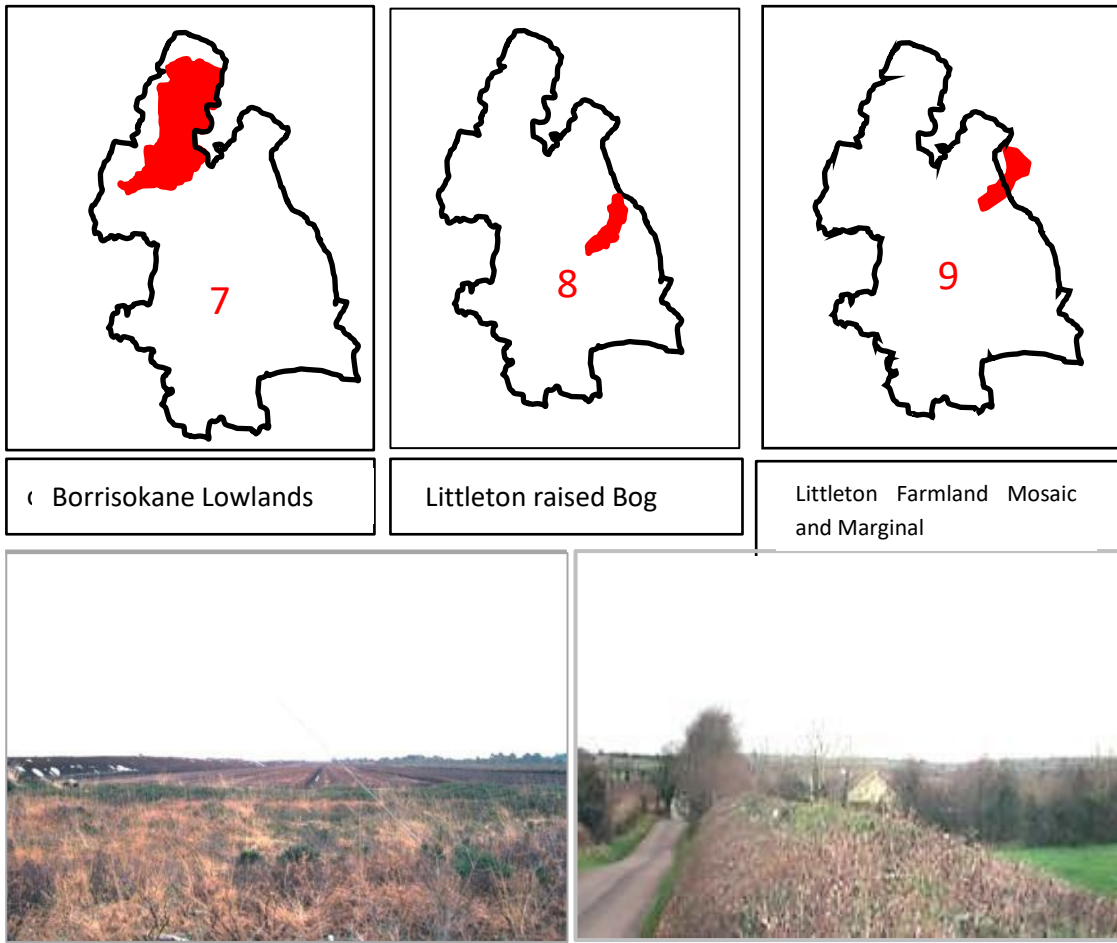


Figure 4.2 Peatlands and wet mixed farmlands of the plains. The plains also contain large areas where impeded drainage and peat formation give rise to less densely inhabited areas and more marginal agriculture with very open vistas.



The Devil's Bit (Photo – Shauna Browne)

4.3 THE LAKELANDS

Tipperary contains some of Ireland’s most important and cherished large lake scenery and recreation areas.

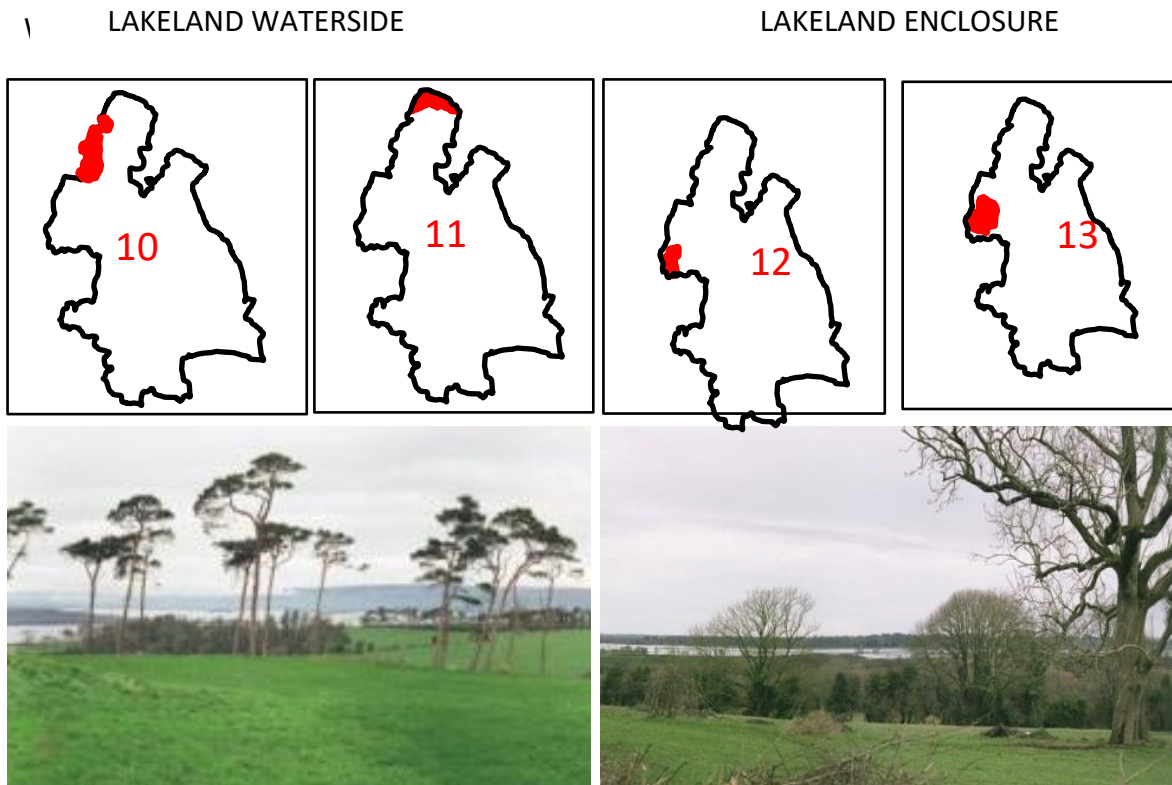


Figure 4.3 The Lakelands are defined both by the shores and the hills that enclose them



Lough Derg (Photo - Tom McKeogh)

4.4 THE FARMED AND FORESTED FOOTHILLS

The transition between the Plains and the Uplands are occupied by Foothills that support a range of activities that are dominated by farming and forestry. The mixture of these uses combine with topographic variety to provide areas that combine valued scenery and amenities with working landscapes and small communities.

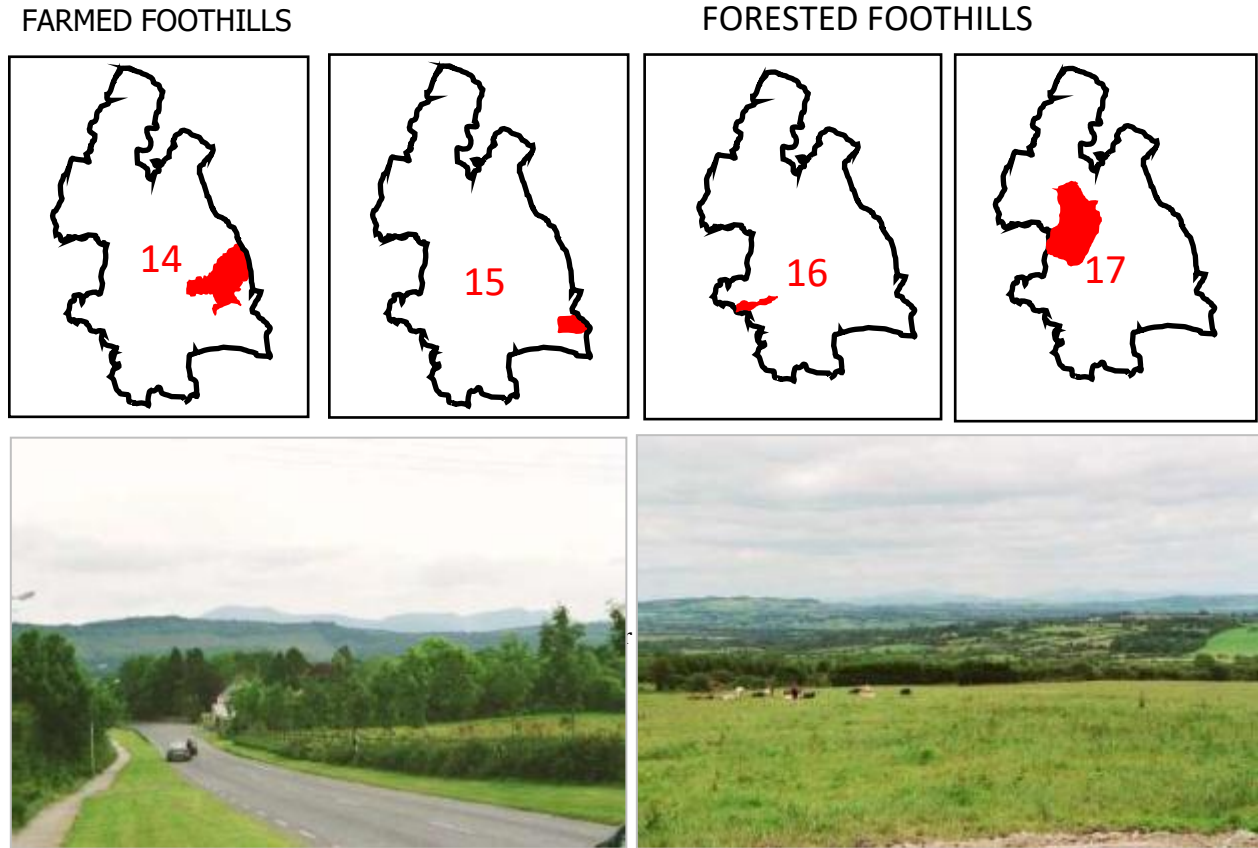


Figure 4.4 The Foothills contain a wide variety of scenery that often changes considerably over short distances



Upperchurch (Photo - Andrew Shakespeare)

4.5 THE UPLANDS

The Upland Areas of Tipperary – combined with the Lakelands in the west and the bogs in the east provide important definitions of the County’s boundary and distinctive identity.

MOUNTAIN AND UPLAND

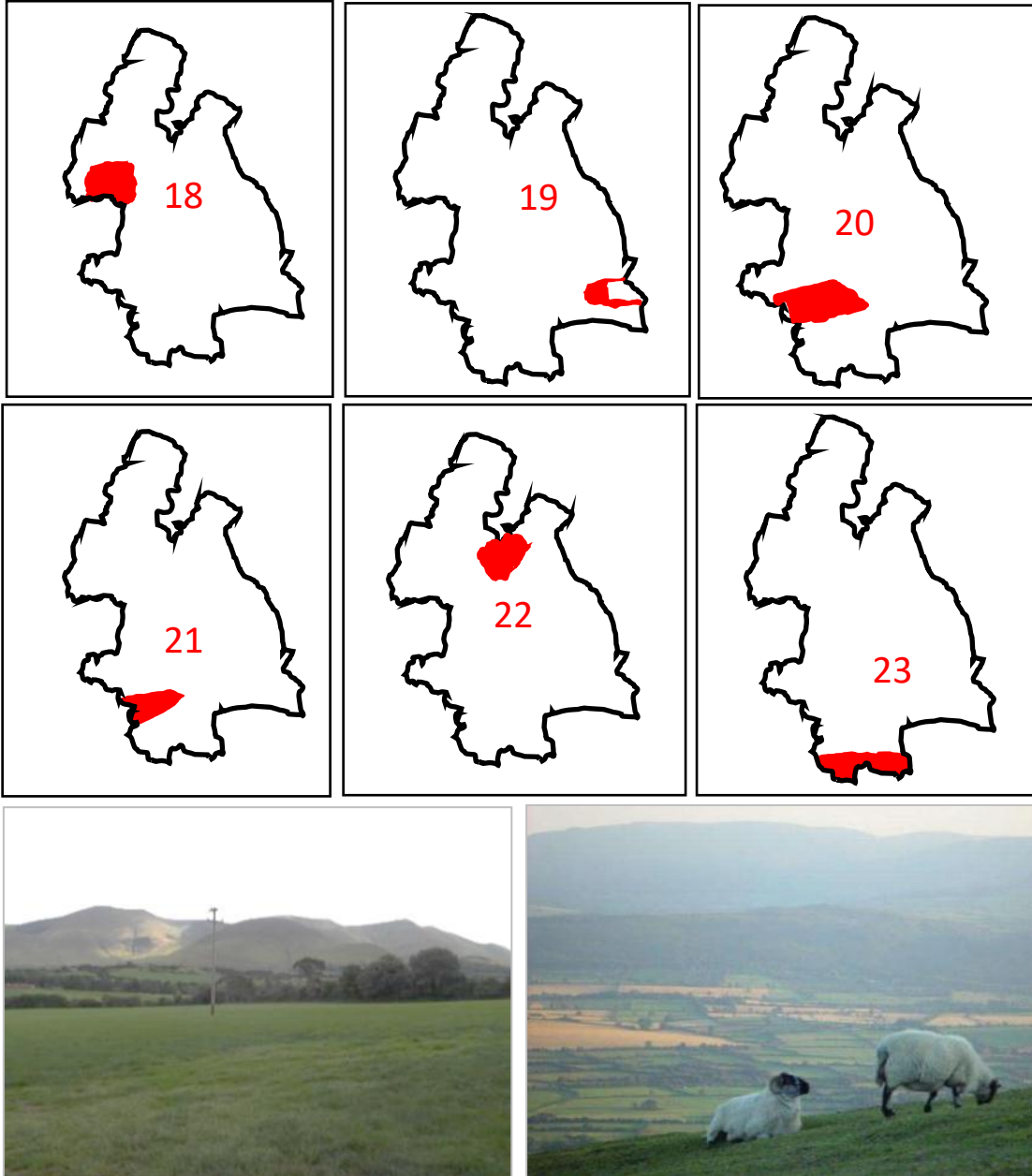


Figure 4.5 Mountain and Upland. The Uplands provide framing backgrounds the contain and define the plains of Tipperary – providing important backdrops to all of the major settlements of the county.

5. LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY



5.1 INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY



Figure 5.1 Landscape Sensitivity Classification can improve the consistency of planning policies and decisions.

An understanding of the sensitivity of different landscapes is central to many tasks in planning. Policy formulation needs to be able to anticipate which parts of the County are likely to be able to accommodate new types of development. This task can be facilitated by having a prior classification of whether an area is a robust or sensitive landscape type.

This section establishes a general method and framework that is used to map the ‘Sensitivity Rating’ to each part of the County. This information is then used to assign a general sensitivity to each Landscape Character Area. Finally this understanding of landscape sensitivity is used to provide very high level Guidelines on the most appropriate objectives for each Landscape Character Area.

To further assist, the sensitivity rating for each LCA is used to provide a general indication of the likely landscape compatibility with of a range of the most common land-use types, as well as with the principle landscape sensitivity factors. The latter are provided to allow applicants to be better able to anticipate the likely responses during the development management process. It can also be used by planners to increase consistency between decisions about similar types of development proposals in similar types of landscapes.

5.1.1 *Landscapes of adjoining counties*

This Landscape Character Assessment seeks to identify the unique landscape values of County Tipperary. However, it is important to note that landscapes and landscape values do not cease at county boundaries. This Landscape Character Assessment should be considered in conjunction with the landscape character assessments and landscape protection policies of the adjoining counties of Tipperary. In addition, the protection of the landscapes of adjoining counties will be a key consideration of the Council in the assessment of the impact of new development in Tipperary.

5.2 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY RATING

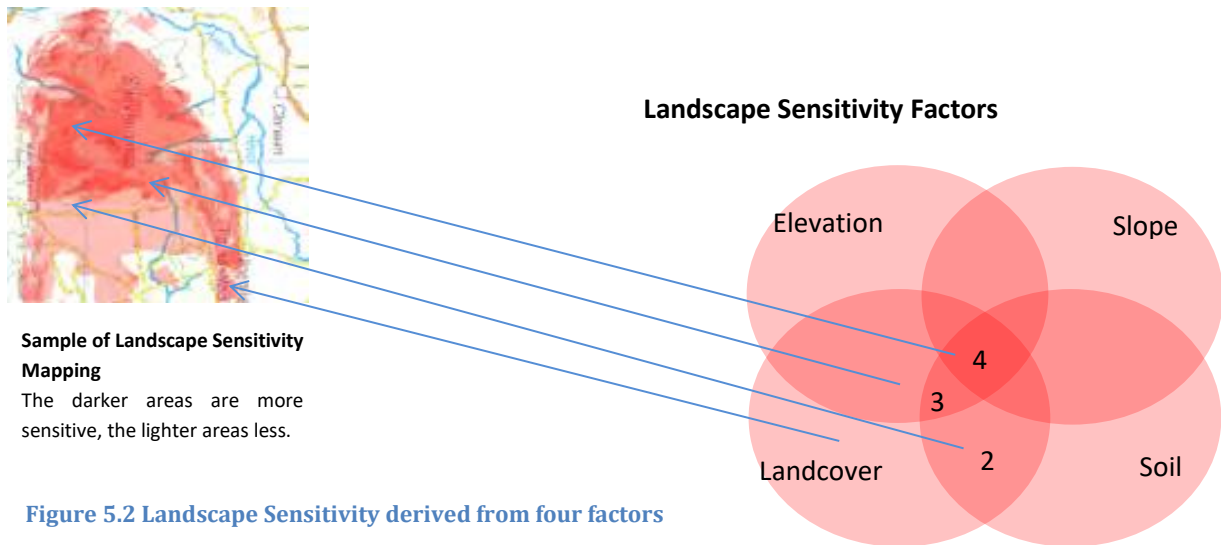


Figure 5.2 Landscape Sensitivity derived from four factors

Landscape Sensitivity

A landscape's capacity to absorb new development, without exhibiting a significant loss of character or change of appearance is referred to as its 'sensitivity'. This depends on factors that include elevation, slope, as well as the types of land-cover and soil. The area is classified as being increasingly sensitivity as more of these factors are present in the same place.

Sensitivity Factors

The following factors are readily available in maps and can be combined to produce indications of the ability of a landscape to accommodate change – as shown in Figure 5.2.

SLOPE - Areas with a slope greater than or equal to 15°

ELEVATION higher than 200m

LANDCOVER Areas with land cover in the following categories (based on CORINE 2012 data):

- *Continuous urban fabric*
- *Discontinuous urban fabric*
- *Broad-leaved forest*
- *Mixed forest*
- *Natural grassland*
- *Moors and heaths*
- *Transitional woodland scrub*
- *Inland marshes*
- *Peat Bogs*
- *Water bodies*

SOILS Areas with soils having the following classification:

- *Acid Shallow Well Drained mineral*
- *Blanket Bog*
- *Cutover Peat*
- *Lacustrine*
- *Scree*

The rating reflects how many sensitivity factors occur in the same area. More factors cause more sensitivity. These range from most areas that are 'Normal' [1 factors] to a very small number of areas that are 'Vulnerable' [4 factors]. There are two additional Classes. Class Zero Landscapes that have largely lost their original natural character – due to urbanisation, peat harvesting or quarrying – for

example. Class 5 Landscapes are those that are both vulnerable and so rare or unique as to be unable to accommodate any change.

Arising from this analysis – and having regard to the National Guidelines on Landscape Character Assessment – the following five Sensitivity Class have been defined and assigned to each LCA. These are considered in further detail in the following section.

Class Zero	<i>Could be improved by change</i>
Class One:	<i>Low sensitivity to change</i>
Class Two:	<i>Moderate sensitivity to change</i>
Class Three:	<i>High sensitivity to change</i>
Class Four:	<i>Special Landscape – Very low capacity for change</i>
Class Five:	<i>Unique – Change would alter the character to the landscape</i>

These sensitivities refer to characteristics that occur over a wide area. The applicability of sensitivity also needs to have regard to the relative size of the area. A number of other more specific factors are also relevant for more detailed site-specific assessments; these are considered further in Section 6 and include:

- Major Rivers and Water bodies
- Ridgelines
- Scenic View
- Scenic Route

Furthermore developments will also need to be considered in terms of specific features in the more immediate environs which are not part of this assessment, but that can include;

- Historic and archaeological sites and their settings and context
- Areas of local cultural, historic or even folklore significance
- Specific views from adjoining properties

5.2.1 SPECIFIC/LOCALISED SENSITIVITY FACTORS

The wide-area landscape sensitivity factors set out an overall picture of the sensitivity of the landscape on a county wide basis. However, these county level factors are supported by consideration of the local and individual characteristics of each landscape character area. These refer to local features such as cultural landmarks, folklore, features etc. These are identified and discussed in Appendix 2 for each of the landscape areas and have informed the landscape sensitivity rating set out. It is expected that consideration of local landscape features will be carefully integrated on a case by case basis for individual projects as they may arise during the development management process.

5.3 Generalised Objectives and Policies for Types of Landscape Sensitivities

This table provides high level guidance on the types of objectives and policies that are likely to be most appropriate in areas of different sensitivity. This generalised guidance can be difficult to apply to specific mapped areas – owing to the nature of the factors used to map sensitivity. For this reason the Sensitivity mapping is followed by tables that assign a dominant sensitivity classes to each Landscape Character Area.

Table 5.1 Objectives and Policies for Types of Landscape Sensitivities						
Factor	Sensitivity	Capacity	Key	Description	Objective	Guideline
-1	<i>Robust</i> Class 0	Very High		Areas lacking normal features with disturbance, brownfield and significant development	Improve	Encourage development that will improve the appearance and character of the area.
1	Normal Class 1 Low Sensitivity to Change	High		Working landscapes with no sensitivities and established patterns of use and settlement	Continue	Facilitate development that continues established patterns of use and settlement
2	<i>Transitional Sensitivity</i> Class 2: Moderate sensitivity to change	Reduced		Areas requiring additional care during design and assessment to continue established patterns of use and settlement	Enhance	Facilitate development that with capacity to continue and enhance established patterns of use and settlement without significant change to appearance or character
3	Sensitive Class 3 High sensitivity to change	Limited		Areas requiring significant additional care during design and assessment of alternatives to determine how established patterns of use and settlement can be accommodated	Wise Use Best Choice	Facilitate development that conclusively demonstrates wise use and best choices to continue and enhance established patterns of use and settlement without significant change to, or loss of, appearance or character.
4	<i>Transitional Vulnerability</i> Class 4: Special Landscape – Very low capacity for change	Low		Areas requiring significant care during design and assessment – including consideration of alternatives - to determine whether development or use can be accommodated without causing significant change of appearance or character	Control	Control unavoidable new developments or uses unless it can conclusively demonstrate capacity to conform to existing appearance and character. Control the unavoidable intensification or expansion of established patterns of use and settlement to sustain existing appearance and character
5	Vulnerable Class 5 Unique – Change would alter the character to the landscape	Very Low		Areas to be avoided on account of a very significant potential for change of appearance or character due to the presence of development or use.	Control	Control unavoidable new developments or uses, or the intensification or expansion of established patterns of use and settlement - unless they can demonstrate capacity to sustain existing appearance and character

5.4 GENERALISED SENSITIVITY MAPPING

This map shows areas that contain combinations of sensitivity factors. The darker colours indicate areas with more factors in one area – and therefore higher sensitivity.

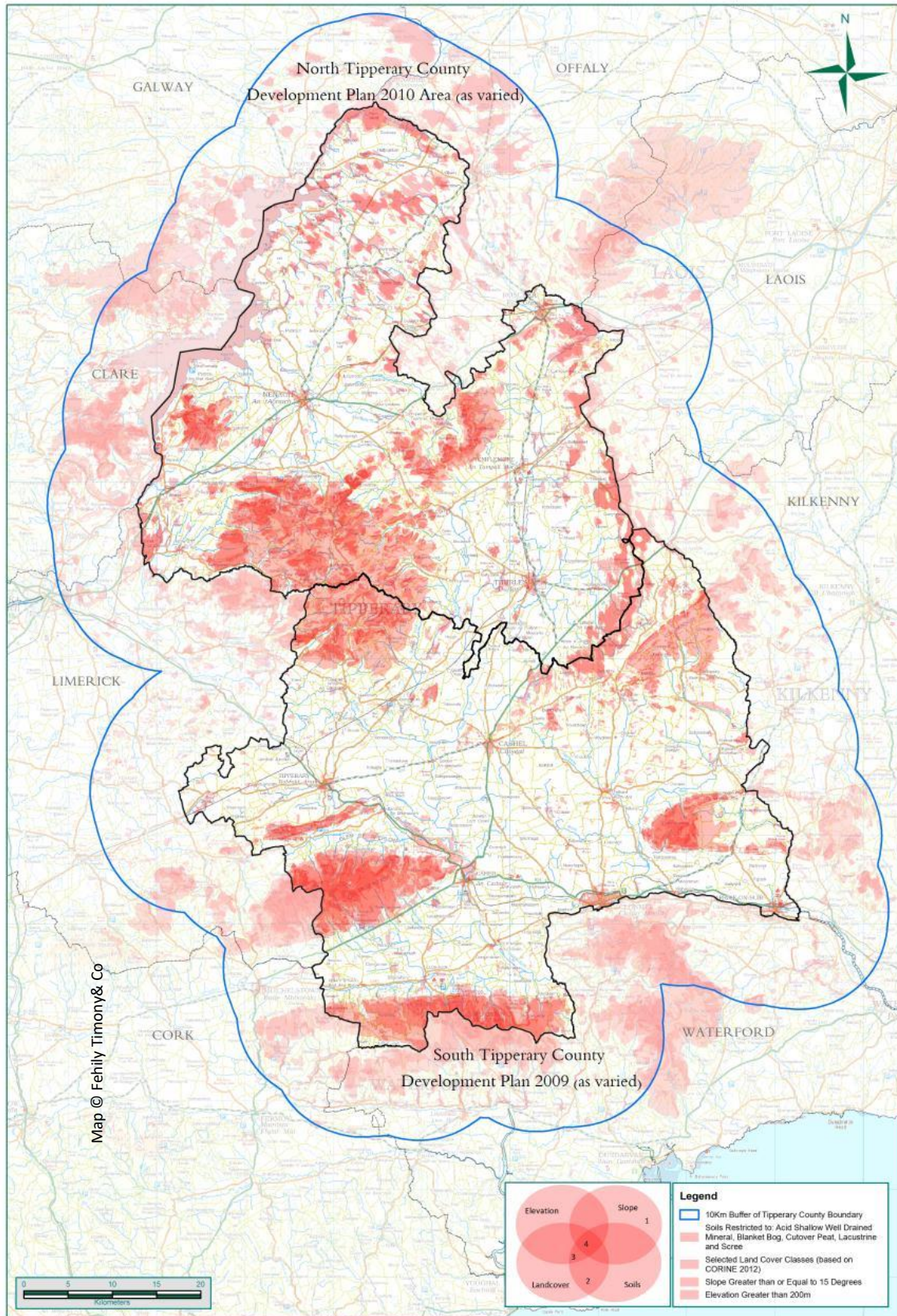


Figure 5.3 Generalised Sensitivity Mapping

5.5 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA SENSITIVITY MAPPING

The Generalised Sensitivity Rating is overlain on the LCAs. This helps to determine the dominant sensitivity rating within each LCA. The table on the following page examines this topic in further detail.

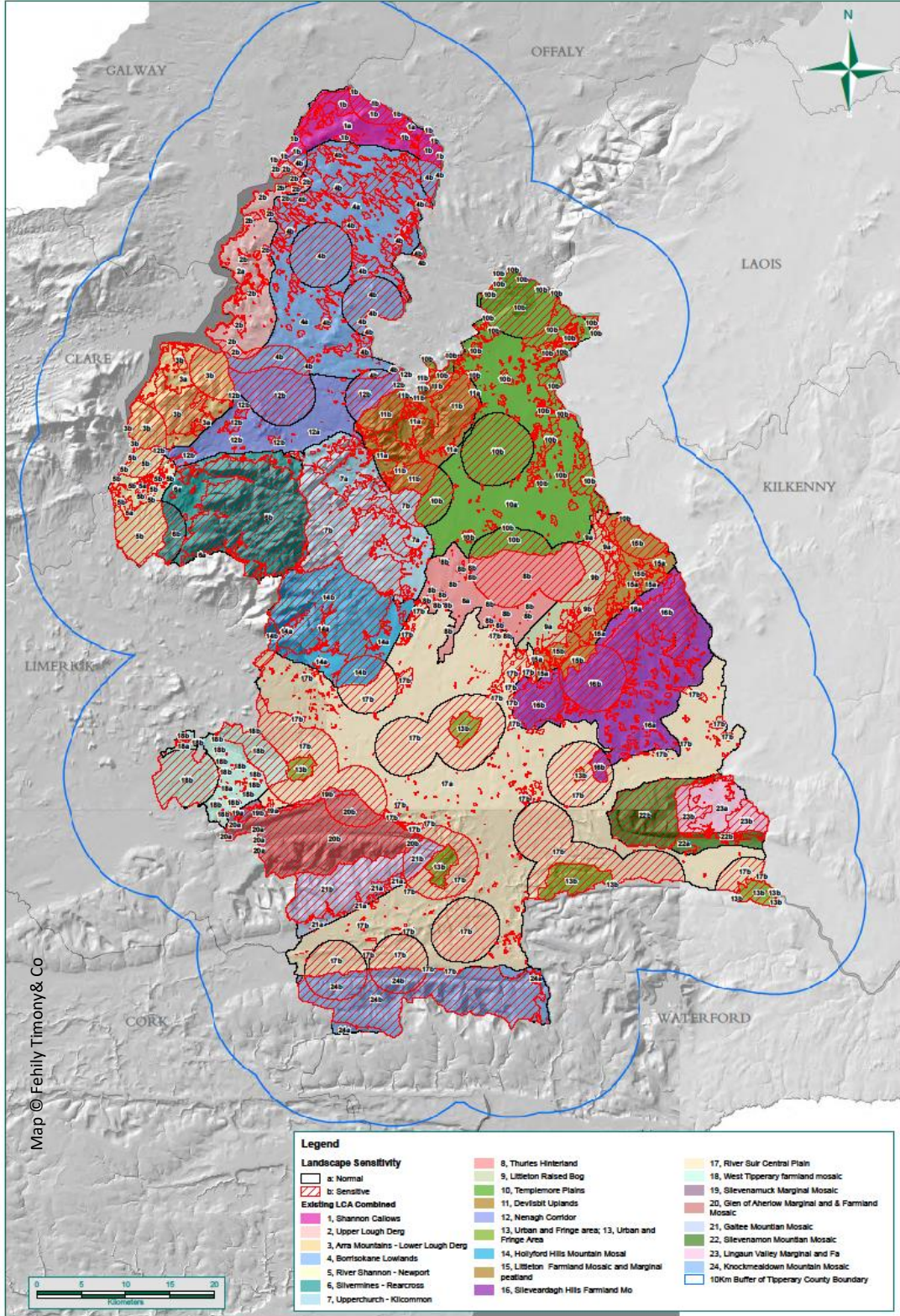


Figure 5.4 Landscape Character Area Sensitivity mapping

5.6 SENSITIVITY RATING OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Landscape Character Areas generally contain a mixture of sensitives – as described in detail within Section 14. However, for the formulation of generalised development management objectives and policies it can be useful to identify the ‘**Dominant Sensitivity Rating**’ within each LCA. The table below illustrates both the range [each colour] as well as the dominant sensitivity [dark outline and text].

It should be noted that individual projects in any landscape area, notwithstanding its dominant sensitivity rating, may have greater or lesser impacts on the visual quality and character of the landscape depending on the details of the project design and the characteristics of the site and its context.

Therefore, this section should be read in conjunction with the policy and development management standards of the Plan. The planning authority will consider the sensitivity rating as set out below, and may, depending on the nature of the development including its siting and design in the landscape, require the applicants to demonstrate that the proposed development addresses the objectives and guidelines set out in Section 6. In this respect, applicants may be required to prepare Visual Impact Assessment, photomontages etc. to the satisfaction of the Council prior to the making of any decision in respect to a planning application.

Table 5.2 Sensitivity Rating of Landscape Character Areas							
		Range of sensitivity with a dark outline for the dominant sensitivity					
		Robust	Normal	Transitional Sensitivity	Sensitive	Transitional Vulnerability	Vulnerable
A. The Plains							
Lowland Pasture & Arable	Urban and Fringe Areas [1]	Class 0					
	Thurles Hinterland [2]		Class 1				
	River Suir Central Plain / Nenagh Corridor [3,4]		Class 1				
	Templemore Plains [5]		Class 1				
	West Tipperary Farmland mosaic [6]		Class 1				
	Glen of Aherlow Farmland [20]			Class 2			
Peatlands & Wet Mixed Farmland	Borrisokane Lowlands [7]			Class 2			
	Littleton Raised Bog [8]				Class 3		
	Littleton Farmland Mosaic and Marginal Peatland [9]		Class 1				
B. The Lakelands							
Waterside	Upper Lough Derg				Class 3		
	The Shannon Callows				Class 3		
Lakeland Enclosure	River Shannon – Newport					Class 4	
	Arra Mountains – Lower Lough Derg					Class 4	
C. The Foothills							
Farmed	Slieveardagh Hills Farmland mosaic			Class 2			
	Linguan Valley Marginal and Farmland Mosaic			Class 2			
Forested	Slievenamuck Marginal Mosaic				Class 3		
	Upperchurch – Kilcomommon/ Hollyford Hills Mountain Mosaic				Class 3		
D. The Uplands							
	Silvermines – Rearcross				Class 3		
	Slievenamon Mountain Mosaic						Class 5
	Glen of Aherlow Uplands [20[B]]						Class 5
	Galtee Mountain Mosaic						Class 5
	Devilsbit Uplands						Class 5
	Knockmealdown Mountain Mosaic						Class 5

6. OBJECTIVES AND GUIDELINES



6.1 OBJECTIVES AND GUIDELINES

This section sets out guidelines for the protection of the landscape that may be applied in the development management process. It is expected that the guidance set out in relation to landscape will assist in the assessment of planning applications and should be read in conjunction with the relevant policy and development management standards as set out in the Plan.

Development Management Policy and Guidelines for each LCA can be guided – *inter alia* – having regard to High-level Objectives and Guidelines –as set out in the Table below. More detailed consideration of the compatibility between land-uses and projects can be considered in more detail by referring to the Compatibility Tables on the following pages.

Table 6.1 Land-Use Compatibility between LCAs and Land-Use Types

Landscape Types	Principle Landscape Character Areas	Sensitivity Class	Objectives	Guideline
A1 Lowland Pasture & Arable	1. Urban and Fringe Areas	0	Improve	Encourage development that will improve the appearance and character of the area.
	2. Thurles Hinterland	1		
	3. Nenagh Corridor	1		
	4. River Suir Central Plain / Nenagh Corridor	1	Continue	Facilitate development that continues established patterns of use and settlement
	5. Templemore Plains	1		
	6. West Tipperary Farmland mosaic	1		
A2 Peatlands & Wet Mixed Farmland	7. Borrisokane Lowlands	2	Enhance	Facilitate development that with capacity to continue and enhance established patterns of use and settlement without significant change to appearance or character
	8. Littleton Raised Bog	3		
B1 Watersides	9. Littleton Farmland Mosaic and Marginal Peatland	1	Wise Use Best Choice	Facilitate development that conclusively demonstrates wise use and best choices to continue and enhance established patterns of use and settlement without significant change to, or loss of, appearance or character.
	10. Upper Lough Derg	3		
B2 Lakeland Enclosures	11. The Shannon Callows	3	Control	Control unavoidable new developments or uses unless it can conclusively demonstrate capacity to conform to existing appearance and character. Control the unavoidable intensification or expansion of established patterns of use and settlement to sustain existing appearance and character
	12. River Shannon – Newport	4		
C1 Farmed	13. Arra Mountains – Lower Lough Derg	4	Enhance	Facilitate development that with capacity to continue and enhance established patterns of use and settlement without significant change to appearance or character
	14. Slieveardagh Hills Farmland mosaic	2		
C2 Forested	15. Linguan Valley Marginal and Farmland Mosaic	2	Wise Use Best Choice	Facilitate development that conclusively demonstrates wise use and best choices to continue and enhance established patterns of use and settlement without significant change to, or loss of, appearance or character.
	16. Slievenamuck Marginal Mosaic	3		
D1 Mountain & Upland	17. Upperchurch – Kilcomommon/ Hollyford Hills Mountain Mosaic	3	Control	Control unavoidable new developments or uses, or the intensification or expansion of established patterns of use and settlement - unless they can demonstrate capacity to sustain existing appearance and character
	18. Silvermines – Rearcross	3		
	19. Slievenamon Mountain Mosaic	5		
	20. Glen of Aherlow Uplands [20[B]]	5		
	21. Galtee Mountain Mosaic	5		
	22. Devilsbit Uplands	5		
23. Knockmealdown Mountain Mosaic	5			

6.2 LAND-USE COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN LCAs AND LAND-USE TYPES

Table 6.2 Land-Use Compatibility between LCAs and Land-Use Types

Landscape Character Areas	Sensitivity Class	AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY		HOUSING	URBANISATION			INFRASTRUCTURE	EXTRACTION		ENERGY	
		Agriculture	Forestry	Rural Housing	Urban Expansion	Industrial Projects	Tourism Projects	Major Powerlines	Sand/Gravel	Rock	Windfarm ²	Solar
		Compatibility Key		Most	High	Medium	Low	Least				
1. Urban and Fringe Areas	0											
2. Thurles Hinterland	1											
3. Nenagh Corridor	1											
4. River Suir Central Plain / Nenagh Corridor	1											
5. Templemore Plains	1											
6. West Tipperary Farmland mosaic	1											
7. Borrisokane Lowlands	2											
8. Littleton Raised Bog	3											
9. Littleton Farmland Mosaic and Marginal Peatland	1											
10. Upper Lough Derg	3											
11. The Shannon Callows	3											
12. River Shannon – Newport	4											
13. Arra Mountains – Lower Lough Derg	4											
14. Slieveardagh Hills Farmland mosaic	2											
15. Lincan Valley Marginal and Farmland Mosaic	2											
16. Slievenamuck Marginal Mosaic	3											
17. Upperchurch – Kilcomomon/ Hollyford Hills Mountain Mosaic	3											
18. Silvermines – Rearcross	3											
19. Slievenamon Mountain Mosaic	5											
20. Glen of Aherlow Uplands [20[B]]	5											
21. Galtee Mountain Mosaic	5											
22. Devils Bit Uplands	5											
23. Knockmealdown Mountain Mosaic	5											

²Individual wind turbines for auto-producers may be compatible depending on size, location and setting

This table provides generalised guidance on the likely compatibility – based on landscape sensitivity –between the LCAs of the county and the most common types of land-uses that are likely to occur within the county. ‘Compatibility’ refers to the likelihood that a particular development has the potential to give rise to significant visual effects on the landscape [Least Compatible] versus developments that have a low potential [Most Compatible]. These estimates are provided to assist in policy formulation. Guidance for development management should refer to table 9 in Section 6.3, and also the policies and objectives of the Plan.



Liam Lynch Monument, Goatbridge (Photo- John O’Neill)

6.3 LAND-USE COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY FACTORS AND LAND-USE TYPES

Table 6.3 Principle Landscape Sensitivity Factors compatibility with Principle Land Use Types

KEY 5 – likely to be very compatible in most circumstances 4 – likely to be compatible with reasonable care 3 – likely to be compatible if sited and designed with great care 2 – compatible only in certain circumstances 1 – compatible only in exceptional circumstances 0 – very unlikely to be compatible	LAND USE TYPES											
	AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY		HOUSING		URBANISATION			INFRASTRUCTURE	EXTRACTION		ENERGY	
	Agriculture	Forestry	Rural Housing	Urban Expansion	Industrial Projects	Tourism Projects	Major Powerlines	Sand & Gravel	Rock	Windfarm	Solar Farm	
	Major Rivers and Water bodies	5	5	2	2	2	3	2	1	0	1	0
	Ridgelines	5	5	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0
	Broad Leaved Foresty	3	5	2	2	2	4	3	2	3	1	2
Mixed Forestry	3	5	2	2	2	4	3	2	3	1	2	
Natural Grasslands	5	2	2	1	1	4	2	1	1	2	2	
Moors and Heathlands	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	2	1	
Agricultural Land with Natural Vegetation	5	5	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	2	
Peat Bogs	1	1	0	0	2	3	2	2	0	3	1	
Scenic View	5	5	2	1	1	5	1	3	0	0	2	
Scenic Route	5	5	2	1	1	5	1	3	0	0	2	

This table provides guidance on the likely compatibility between the Principle Landscape Sensitivity Factors and the Principle Land use types that are likely to occur. This guidance is intended to complement the estimation of compatibility provided in section 6.3. It provides more detailed guidance to support development management decisions about individual planning applications. In general, projects located within 300m of these sensitivity factors are more likely to give rise to landscape effects than those in other areas. These estimations are provided for guidance only – the actual visual impacts will depend on details of the project, including site layout, local landscape factors – such as topography, vegetation and existing structures. The planning authority may request more detailed analysis if necessary to determine visual impact on sensitivity factors.

APPENDICES

This document is accompanied by the following

Documents:

APPENDIX 1

Landscape Character Areas of Tipperary

APPENDIX 2

Scenic Routes and Views of Tipperary



APPENDIX 1

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS OF TIPPERARY



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council



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INTRODUCTION

This is Appendix 1 of the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of county Tipperary, describing the landscape character areas of the county. It is based on the 2004 Landscape Character Assessment carried out for North Tipperary and the 2013 the Landscape Character Assessment for South Tipperary. These are presented using standardised terminology for the new LCA covering the entire county, insofar as possible while still retaining the original outputs of the LCA processes – and associated consultation and adoption already undertaken by each authority. The sensitivity classification and Scenic Views and Routes of each LCA are also described.

THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

The general landscapes, in turn, can be subdivided into seven landscape types which are then further subdivided into 23 LCAs. Each of these is described in significant detail within this Appendix. The classification of landscape value and quality as well as the classification of landscape character of areas and features, categorised by degrees of landscape sensitivity and capacity for change are contained in the Main Report and Scenic Routes and Views are described in Appendix 2.

Table 1: Schedule of Landscape Types and LCAs

A. The Plains	
A1 Lowland Pasture & Arable	1. Urban and Fringe Areas
	2. Thurles Hinterland
	3. Nenagh Corridor
	4. River Suir Central Plain / Nenagh Corridor [including part of LCA 20 Glen of Aherlow Lowlands]
	5. Templemore Plains
	6. West Tipperary Farmland mosaic
A2 Peatlands & Wet Mixed Farmland	7. Borrisokane Lowlands
	8. Littleton Raised Bog
	9. Littleton Farmland Mosaic and Marginal Peatland
B. The Lakelands	
B1 Watersides	10. Upper Lough Derg
	11. The Shannon Callows
B2 Lakeland Enclosures	12. River Shannon – Newport
	13. Arra Mountains – Lower Lough Derg
C. The Foothills	
C1 Farmed	14. Slieveardagh Hills Farmland mosaic
	15. Linguan Valley Marginal and Farmland Mosaic
C2 Forested	16. Slievenamuck Marginal Mosaic

	17. Upperchurch – Kilcomommon/ Hollyford Hills Mountain Mosaic
D. The Uplands	
D1 Mountain & Upland	18. Silvermines – Rearcross
	19. Slievenamon Mountain Mosaic
	20. Glen of Aherlow Uplands [20[B]]
	21. Galtee Mountain Mosaic
	22. Devilsbit Uplands
	23. Knockmealdown Mountain Mosaic

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

The 23 Landscape Character Areas that were identified in the Landscape Character Assessments of Tipperary North and Tipperary South have been combined in the map below. Detailed analysis, descriptions and recommendations of each section are set hereafter.

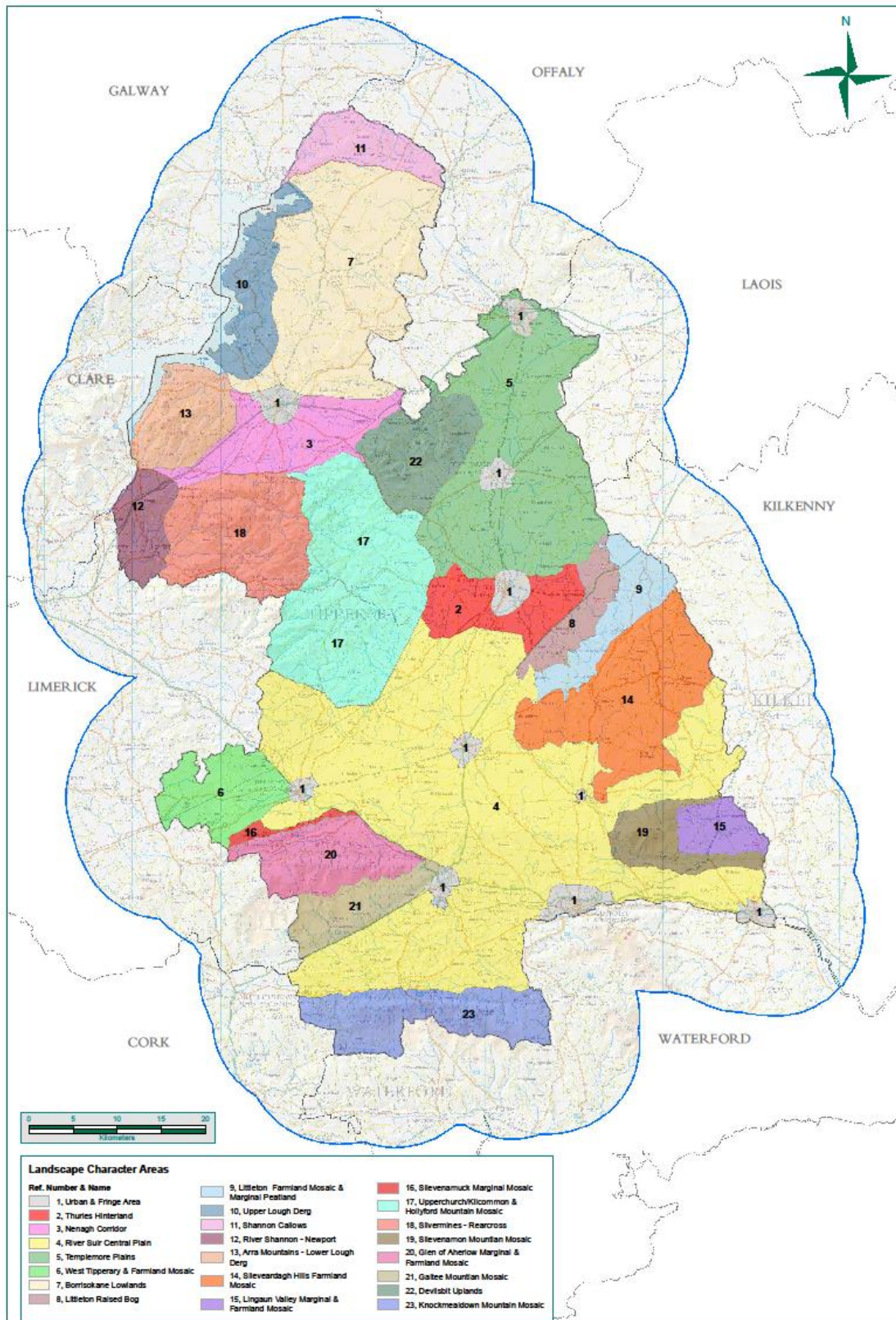


Figure 1: Map of Landscape Character Areas of Tipperary

THE PLAINS

The Plains contain most of the county's settlements - set within very extensive areas of farming, both large and small, as well as less populated landscapes of lakes, rivers, wetlands and peat bogs.

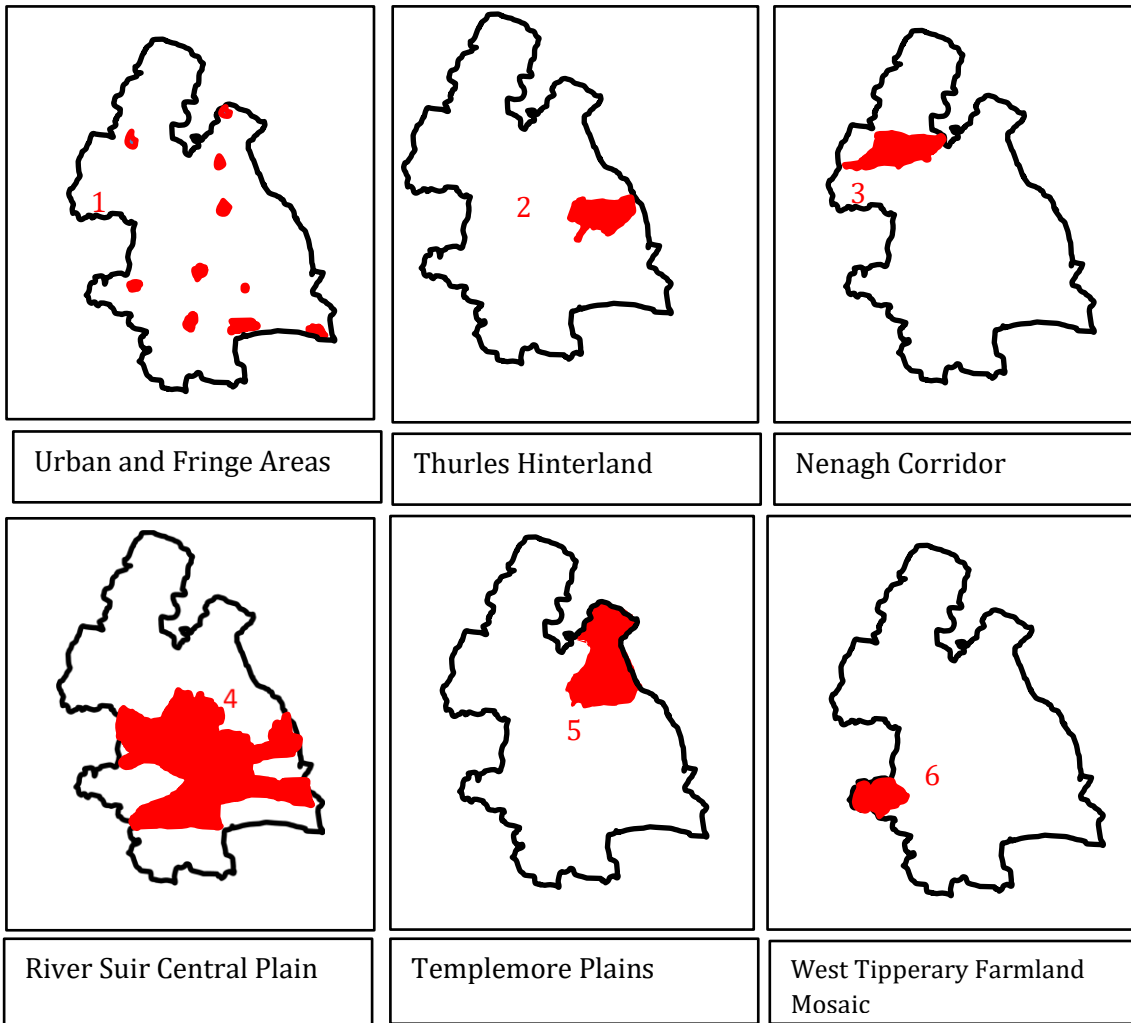
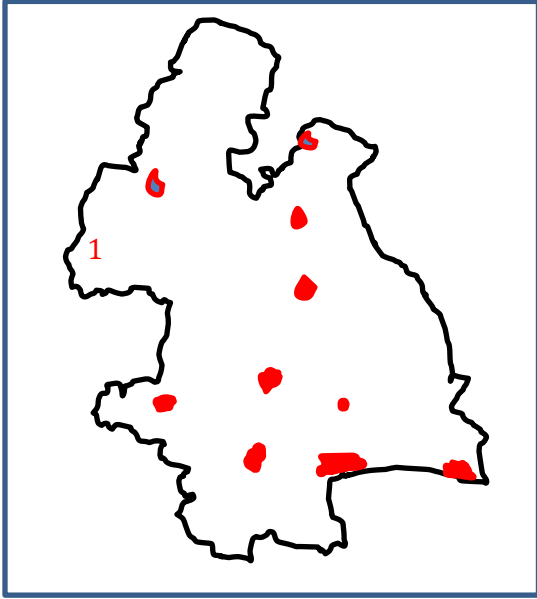


Figure 2: The level lowland plains of Tipperary contain some of Ireland's most fertile lands in large and small farms – as well as most of the main settlements and services.

LCA 1 TOWN AND URBAN FRINGES (SUB-AREA OF RIVER SUIR CENTRAL PLAIN)



Extent

These towns represent the largest settlements of the county and due to their size relative to the smaller county settlements, they are considered to have an urban character that sets them apart from the surrounding rural hinterland. It is also notable that each of these settlements is very much integral to the character of the Central Plain (as are the smaller villages) and thus are considered to be Sub-areas of their respective LCAs. These settlements include Nenagh, Thurles, Roscrea, Templemore, Tipperary, Cashel, Cahir, Clonmel, Carick-on-Suir

Landscape Characteristics

The settlements identified above share many very similar characteristics notably their locations on areas of level topography. Many of the towns also have fortified structures and Castles associated with this age. These settlements have all grown in population in recent years and form the service centre for the surrounding population.



Figure 3: Clonmel Town with views towards the Comeragh Mountains

Landscape Values

Socio-cultural (Conservation Values)

- The historical architectural features of the towns and especially the central areas are highly valuable to the character of the towns and should be maintained and made accessible where possible.
- Accessibility to public areas and locally important sites and monuments.
- *Ecological (Conservation Values)*
- Green linkages and open spaces, where relevant tree stands and natural areas.
- *Socio-economic (Enhancement / Development Values)*
- Centres of community, employment and services for the county. The towns contribute to the sense of identity of the county.
- Junctions on the key transport infrastructures in the county.
- The towns of the county are capable of adsorbing development and change without affecting their character. Development and growth can have a positive effect on the character and sense of place of these settlements. Key to positive change will be the focus on the protection of transport links, historical sites, the vitality of the town centres educational facilities etc.

Landscape Character Types

- Urban Fringe
- Urban and Built-up areas

Principals for Management

The County Development Plan settlement strategy sets out a framework for growth for each of these towns. This is based on a full assessment of the potential for growth and the role of each settlement. It also assesses the environmental capacity of the hinterlands of these settlements to accommodate growth. Growth should be achieved in line with the settlement strategy.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

The growth and development of the towns is an integral element of the character of the county. In general the towns have a robust capacity for growth and development and are, generally, classified as being **Robust Class 0** with very high and low sensitivity – subject to the observance of general planning objectives and policies.

LCA 2: THURLES HINTERLAND

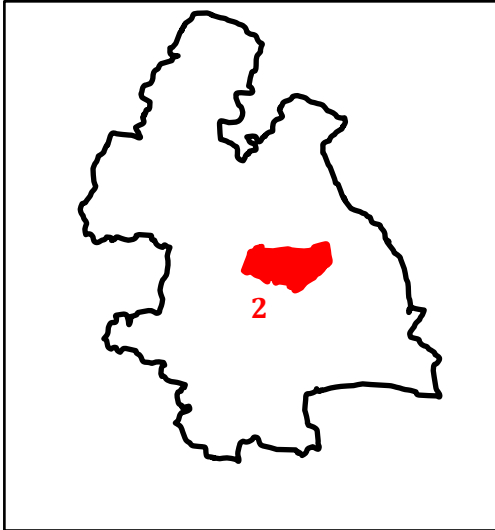


Figure 4: Typical character

Extent

A gently undulating area stretching eastwards from the Clodiagh River towards Littleton and extending northwards along the R498 to the west and north above the Drish River valley.

Landscape Characteristics

- A flat and gently undulating agricultural plain with views dominated by western hills.
- Significant communication routes evident by national roads and the railway line.
- Thurles is the principal town, but several other settlements reflect the long settlement history in this LCA.
- Holycross Abbey, a well-known Cistercian Abbey, located on the Suir River, close to the county boundary.

Landform and Geology

The Thurles hinterland forms a flat open pastoral landscape lying below the rolling hills of Kilcommon and Upperchurch to the west. The landform ranges from flat to gently undulating and is underlain by Carboniferous Calp Limestones and Carboniferous Waulsortian Limestones. The highest points in the landscape rise to between 110m OD and 120m OD.

This landscape character area is well drained, being bounded by the Clodiagh River in the west, which drains southwards to the River Suir. The Suir traverses the character area and is fed by numerous other streams and tributaries, including the Drish River in the eastern part of the LCA. The Drish River runs down into a valley from higher ground to the east of Thurles.

Landcover and Ecology

Pastoral farmland is the predominant landcover in the Thurles hinterland, with a relatively large proportion of arable land also. Smaller amounts of scrub, peat bog and coniferous forestry exist. There is one designated SAC in the area, and one NHA.

The SAC is the Lower River Suir, which consists of the freshwater stretches of the River Suir immediately south of Thurles, the tidal stretches of the river as far as its confluence with the Barrow/Nore, and many tributaries of the River Suir (including the Clodiagh River). This SAC has been designated due to the presence of the EU Habitats Directive Annex I priority habitat 'alluvial wet woodlands'. Parts of the site have been identified as of ornithological importance for a number of Annex I (EU Birds Directive) bird species, which add to the ecological interest of the site.

The NHA in the Thurles hinterland is the Cabragh Wetlands. These are situated close to the River Suir near Thurles, with areas of Common Reed and peaty fen. North of the town are reedbeds fed by springs of lime-rich groundwater. The Cabragh wetlands support good numbers of wildfowl.

Human Influences

This area has a long settlement history due in part to the less accessible uplands to the west, and the extensive eastern bog zone. Furthermore, the strategic importance of the River Suir and the soil capability of the land facilitated both arable and pastoral production. The N8 and N62, as well as a number of regional roads (including the Angelsey Roads) traverse this area. Many radiate from Thurles, the largest town within this LCA.

Outside the nucleated settlements, this LCA remains a heavily settled area with a considerable number of houses sited on the roadside of the tertiary roads or accessed via narrow lanes. With the Suir draining through this area and a number of tributaries, cut stone bridges are a key landscape feature with a particularly fine arched bridge at Holycross.

Field enclosures within this LCA are less robust than elsewhere, reflecting some of the land rationalisation that has occurred and the removal of hedgerows to create larger fields and permit the use of larger machinery for tillage. Nonetheless, hedgerows remain the dominant enclosure system, with hawthorn and ash being the principal species.

Housing styles vary within this LCA. Older dwellings are usually two storey Georgian Big Houses often accessed via an avenue. In addition, there are a number of smaller two storey and single storey farmsteads, commonly with outbuildings close to the residence. There is a significant amount of new

build, usually single storey and heavily concentrated on the rural areas surrounding towns such as Thurles and Borrisoleigh.

In addition to Thurles, there are a number of nucleated settlements, some of which contain a number of linear new buildings such as Twomileborris and Holycross. Thurles itself was largely established by the Norman Theobald Walter who was granted huge swathes of territory in 1185. Theobald made provision for a town around his castle and it may be concluded that he intended for Thurles to become a significant settlement with extensive demesne lands for use by the manor castle (Empey, 1985). Following the dissolution of Cashel as the diocesan seat in Tipperary during the Reformation, Thurles developed as an alternative diocesan site and further reaffirmed its importance by becoming the residence of the archbishops of Cashel and Emly. Combined with the educational institutions established by the Ursuline Sisters, the Presentation Sisters and the Christian Brothers, Thurles can be regarded as the successful embodiment of increased Roman Catholic confidence and wealth as the nineteenth century progressed (Whelan, 1985).

In contrast to the western uplands, this LCA contains a number of big houses and small estates including Farney Castle and Castlefogerty, located close to the chapel village of Ballycahill and formerly containing a demesne of 430 acres. A significant number of these houses are found on the approach to the village of Holycross. The high number of castles (commonly rectangular towerhouses) reflects the settlement tradition and strategic importance of this area. This LCA lies within the barony of Eliogarty and was under the influence of the powerful Butler family.

Landscape Condition

This is an open working landscape which is in good condition but is relatively unremarkable in terms of scenic quality. The influence of the foothill landscape type associated with the Upperchurch and Kilcommon area, viewed from the Thurles hinterland is an enhancement to this landscape character. The presence of regional, national and local road infrastructure together with an abundance of settlements and dwellings render this a landscape that reflects high levels of human intervention. This has led to a landscape in which the natural characteristics are less dominant. This need not be regarded as a sensitive landscape other than the specific environs of the River Suir for habitat value reasons. The presence of commercial forestry further impacts on the nature of this landscape and indeed the removal of hedgerows has also had a significant impact on landscape character.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity, this is a high capacity/ low sensitivity, **Class 1 Landscape** i.e. Change or Development generally acceptable – subject to all other relevant objectives and policies - as it may beneficially alter, enhance or reinforce landscape character and value (e.g. the landscape is robust in its character, undergoing change or the precedent for such and similar development is set and the landscape is capable of absorbing considerable change without detriment).

Forces for Change

- Commercial coniferous forestry
- New building in the countryside
- Hedgerow removal.

Principals for Landscape Management

- Sensitive siting and design of individual buildings and groups of buildings as well as site treatment appropriate to the area will be of importance in this landscape. Specific design guidance should be provided to facilitate these outcomes.
- Design guidance in respect of commercial forestry in upland areas should be provided in order to integrate this land use into the landscape.
- Habitat and landscape character value of the wetlands of the River Suir are of great importance and the designated status requires that these areas are maintained and enhanced.

LCA 3: NENAGH CORRIDOR

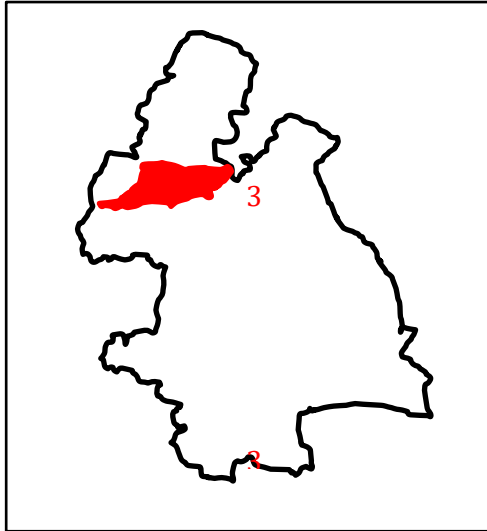


Figure 5: Typical Photograph

Extent

The Nenagh Corridor runs eastwards from the Devilsbit Mountains, incorporating the town of Nenagh and running to the north of the Silvermines Mountains. It forms a flat to gently undulating lowland enclosed by the Arra Mountains to the north, by the Silvermines Mountains to the south and by the Devilsbit Mountains to the east.

Key Characteristics

- Broad glacial valley framed by Arra Mountains to the North and Silvermines range to the south.
- Predominantly pastoral landscape with associated features.
- Key communications corridor facilitating access to the River Shannon and Lough Derg.
- Nenagh, the county town is located within this LCA.
- Number of castles and fortified houses in addition to crannogs at Lough Duff, close to Rathurles fort, are indicators of long settlement history.

Landform and Geology

The Nenagh Corridor is largely underlain by Carboniferous Waulsortian Limestone and lower limestone shales with Old Red Sandstone at the perimeters, reflecting the commencement of the adjoining upland areas of Arra and Silvermines.

This is a broad u-shaped glacial valley, created as the ice sheets flowed south-westerly, scouring the broad valley of softer limestone, whilst it met the resistance of the harder and older upland rocks. Post glacially, the Nenagh, Ballintotty and Kilmastulla rivers, which rise in the surrounding uplands have reinforced this broad valley through fluvial processes as they meander through the valley floor. These rivers drain in a south-westerly orientation (with the exception of the Nenagh River, which flows north-westerly) before entering the Shannon.

Landcover and Ecology

The dominant landcover is good quality pasture on either side of the N7, with some arable land and scrub. There are no areas designated for nature conservation in the Nenagh Corridor.

Human Influences

This LCA in common with the Templemore Plains and Thurles Hinterland represents a key communication corridor of good limestone pasture land enclosed by historically less accessible uplands or wetlands. The ancient Sli Dala route is now aligned by the N7, and a number of regional roads (R494, R500, R495, R445 and R491) radiate from the county town of Nenagh. In addition, the N52 links Nenagh to Birr while one of the Angelsey Roads (R498) connects Nenagh with Thurles. Once again, the railway link supports the importance of this accessible communications corridor within the County.

Settlement is concentrated in and around the nucleated towns of Nenagh and to a lesser degree Toomevara. Elsewhere, settlement remains scattered and dispersed around the rural landscape, but it is also quite densely settled nonetheless. Some 'Big Houses' are present within this LCA although not as visible as the northern Borrisokane Lowlands LCA. Traditional dwellings are single storey or two storey farmsteads, with adjacent farm buildings of rounded hay barns that fit in well with the receiving landscape.

Hedgerows remain the dominant enclosure system, though some earth banks were noted with ferns, Norway spruce and dead trees strangled by ivy north of the N7, at the start of the Arra foothills. In the valley proper, the hedgerows are of varying quality and there is evidence of boundary removal in some areas, with subsequent new enclosures composed of post and wire fencing. This LCA contains Rathurles, a Bronze Age fort from 3,000 years ago and inhabited until 12th century. It is composed of three large earthen rings and stone gate piers. The O'Kennedy's took it over in the 15th century and built a stone church in the centre with a small castle (O Corrbui, 1991). Nearby Lough Duff contains a number of crannogs, partly or wholly artificial islands, developed in Ireland during the early historic period (500 – 1170 AD) but sometimes inhabited for a number of centuries.

Nenagh, as its Irish name suggests An tAonach, was the site of the great fair of East Munster. Another Butler town, the Butlers brought the Augustinians to Nenagh in the thirteenth century, where they settled at Tigh Eoin (St John's House) on what is now the southern edge of the town. Further land was given to the Augustinians at Cloughprior and Carney in Lower Ormond. The Franciscans were introduced to Nenagh by the O'Kennedys although their arrival date is uncertain. The success of the Franciscans in creating strong bonds with the surrounding community is evidenced by the later siting of the Catholic chapel in the site of the former Franciscan monastery (Whelan, 1985). Nenagh Castle,

the first castle built in the County by the Butler family around 1220, was built by Theobald Walter, who also developed Thurles. Under Norman rule, Nenagh was identified as one of the four manors for the region which served as the 'caput' or capital manor of the surrounding lands. Hence one can see the emerging urban centre at Nenagh developing from the early thirteenth century.

A number of Big Houses are scattered around the Nenagh area, reflecting in part the attractiveness to settlers of being close to an administrative and urban centre. Bushfield is identified by Nolan (1985) as a 'Big House' cluster, meaning in this term, an unplanned development associated with a landlord or developed due to the labour requirements of the Big House. Lissenhall, south of Nenagh was built in the mid eighteenth century with a demense of 160 acres. The house is now in ruins. The Olitrim River, a tributary of the Nenagh River, was modified to provide water features throughout the demesnes of Donnybrook, River Lawn, Castle Willington, Mount Pleasant and Rathurles in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Nolan, 1985).

Landscape Condition

The Nenagh Corridor LCA is a lowland landscape given over to pastoral use and is generally in good condition. The western part of this LCA takes the form of a glacial valley located between the Arra and Silvermine mountains. This broad u-shaped valley commands long range views and the scenic quality is high due to the somewhat dramatic profile of the valley set against an attractive mountain backdrop. This scenic quality together with the high degree of visual exposure renders this a sensitive landscape in terms of development. Commercial coniferous forestry together with new housing development are the main elements that impact on the integrity of the scenic quality of this area.

More generally, the low lying hinterland of Nenagh comprises large scale pastoral farming as the principal landuse and this working landscape is generally in good condition. Commercial coniferous forestry together with new housing development also impact on this area but this part of the LCA is not particularly scenic or visually exposed. This landscape is not particularly sensitive and indeed has the capacity to accommodate development that is correctly sited and sensitively designed.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity, this is a high capacity/ low sensitivity, **Class 1 Landscape** i.e. Change or Development generally acceptable – subject to all other relevant objectives and policies - as it may beneficially alter, enhance or reinforce landscape character and value (e.g. the landscape is robust in its character, undergoing change or the precedent for such and similar development is set and the landscape is capable of absorbing considerable change without detriment).

Forces for Change

- Commercial forestry planting.
- New building in the countryside.

Principals for Landscape Management

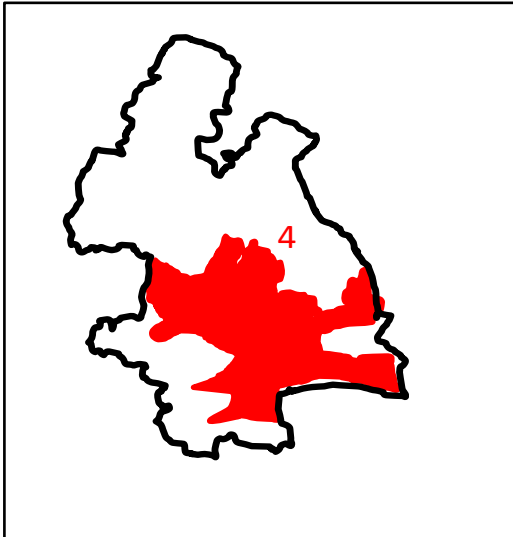
- Sensitive siting and design of individual buildings and groups of buildings as well as site treatment appropriate to the area will be of importance in this landscape. Specific design guidance should be provided to facilitate these outcomes with particular reference to the scenic quality of the valley.
- Design guidance in respect of commercial forestry should be provided in order to integrate this landuse into the landscape. Any large scale infrastructural developments will be difficult to mitigate against in the valley location specifically. As it is a working landscape (not a remote

wilderness landscape), renewable energy in the form of wind turbines need not be prohibited. However, the design and siting and particularly the visual mitigation of such infrastructure will need careful consideration.

- The intensity and scale of farming needs to be managed in a manner that prevents further hedgerow removal. Management of existing native species hedgerows and hedge trees therein will enhance this landscape.

LCA 4 RIVER SUIR CENTRAL P LAIN (INCLUDING SUB-AREAS)

* See also Glen of Aherlow LCA 20 which is an extension of the Central Plain but is also part of the Uplands



Extent

The River Suir Central Plain extends from the west of the county where it adjoins the county boundary with Limerick and Cork, and also to the south and west of the county where it adjoins the county boundary with Kilkenny. It is the most cohesive and extensive LCA in the county, forming a wide fertile band that continues northwards into where it meets the fertile hinterlands of Thurles. The LCA is characterised by fertile agricultural lands used for both arable and pastoral farming and its rolling topography.

The Suir Central Plain is fringed frequently by the significant mountain ranges of the south of the county which overlook the plains and by the more gradual hills of the north of the county.

The Suir Central Plain is also characterised by the prominence of settlement and infrastructure inter-dispersed throughout the county. The county towns are located in the LCA and were thus located to avail of the River Suir as a resource; these towns of Clonmel, Carrick-on-Suir, Tipperary, Cashel, Cahir and Fethard are considered sub-areas of the LCA. Outside of the main settlements, small towns and villages are connected by the extensive road network of the LCA. The M8 Motorway forms a distinct feature that transects the area in a north to south direction

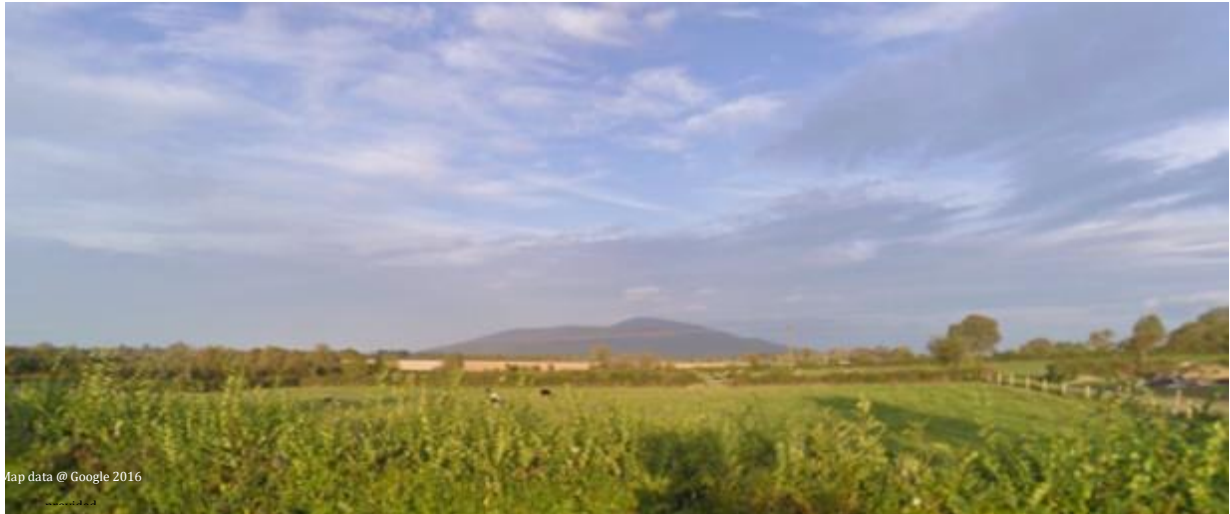


Figure 6 Fertile and undulating Central Plain

Landscape Characteristics

- Wide rolling vistas with large fertile fields, surrounded by dense hedgerows. Agriculture is intensive, and the equine industry is especially noticeable. Biodiversity in the landscape is less conspicuous than in some of the other county LCAs, and very little natural landscape or habitats remain.
- Strong settlement network built on an extensive transport network that includes, the M8 Motorway, the national Rail Line, the N24 and N76 and the regional and local road network. The large towns of Clonmel, Carrick-on-Suir, Tipperary, Cashel and Cahir are located in the LCA along with the smaller settlements and villages. A pattern of one-off housing occurs along local roads in many areas especially the urban hinterlands of the larger towns.
- The existence of views towards the Galtee Mountains, the Comeraghs, the Knockmealdowns and Slievenamon. Views towards one or more of these ranges can be found almost anywhere in the LCA.

Distinctive Features

- Certain man-made features form prominent and immediately recognisable features in the landscape. These include: The Rock of Cashel, The steam clouds from the Medite Wood Products factory in Clonmel, the M8 Motorway and the tower of Rockwell College at New Inn.
- An established and extensive equine industry and associated infrastructure and employment base. The equine industry is attracted to the River Suir Central Plains due to the rich limestone based soils in the area.
- Rich and established arable and pastoral agriculture with focus on dairying and open field of tillage crops.
- It is notable that the landscape has been heavily influenced by man's activities i.e. the network of field enclosures and the transport and settlement network.
- Actively growing larger towns. Villages that have to some extent stagnated in their levels of growth, especially those removed from the larger settlements and transport networks.
- The term the 'Golden Vale', is often applied to the rich agricultural landscape of the area.

- The numerous settlements in the LCA have strong associations with sport and especially the GAA. Playing fields are apparent. The county association with the horse can also be seen by the location of its two public racing tracks at Clonmel and Limerick Junction.
- Visual Units: The LCA encompasses a number of visual units in the county these visual areas include the South West Plain, The North East Plain, The Rock of Cashel Plain, and the Anner Valley.

Landscape Character Types

- Mixed arable and pasture lowlands
- Urban Fringe
- Urban and Built-up areas.

Landscape Values

Socio-cultural (Conservation Values)

- The LCA is built around a strong and coherent settlement structure. This contributes to a significant extent to the character of the LCA. The maintenance and growth of the settlement structure of the County in the Suir Central Valley is critical to the stability of the county.
- Protection of the rich architectural heritage of the area especially the large demesne houses and estates.
- Recognition of the role of the Suir and the milling industries as part of the industrial past of the Suir Central
- The LCA has certain amenities and facilities that greatly contribute to public well-being.
- These include the River Suir and its Tow Path, the public sporting facilities, community halls, St Declan's Way, the racecourses etc. Certain public facilities have been lost i.e. the disused railway line from Clonmel to Thurles. It is critical to the wellbeing of the population that facilities and amenities are retained.

Ecological (Conservation Values)

- The protection of the water quality of the River Suir (cSAC and Natura 2000 site) and its tributaries. The protection of the ground water quality of the limestone geology and aquifers of the Suir Central Plain.
- The quality of the agricultural lands and soils and protection of the viability of these lands. The loss of hedgerows in favour of open land and more intensive farming practices will alter the character of the landscape and reduce biodiversity.
- Socio-economic (Enhancement / Development Values)
- Support for consolidation and growth of the settlement pattern in the area in line with the settlement strategy of the County Development Plan.
- Maintenance and active use of the railway line and the preservation of the railway stations located in Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel, Cahir and Tipperary Town.
- Protection of the agricultural viability of the LCA through the appropriate location of new settlement and industry.
- Avoidance where possible of the need for new infrastructure i.e. roads, through the appropriate use and management of existing infrastructure.

- Recognition of the social economy of tourism and the ability of the Suir Central Plain and its towns to act as the framework within which the greatest assets of the county lie, i.e. the Rock of Cashel.

Principals for Management

The River Suir Central Plain is an actively worked and highly productive environment and new development would sit comfortably in the landscape and not interfere with or eliminate its character and values subject to appropriate siting and design. Outside of the settlements the land is intensively farmed and highly productive in line with its reputation as the 'Golden Vale' of the county. Notwithstanding this, the visual aspect of the landscape is remarkable especially in the south of the county where views towards the Knockmealdown and Commeragh Mountains are breath-taking in places and form distinctive visual units. Elsewhere the landscape is more robust in its capacity to absorb development due to the rolling nature of the topography. The protection of the agricultural viability of the Suir River Valley and the water quality of the River Suir itself must be key considerations in future growth of the county.

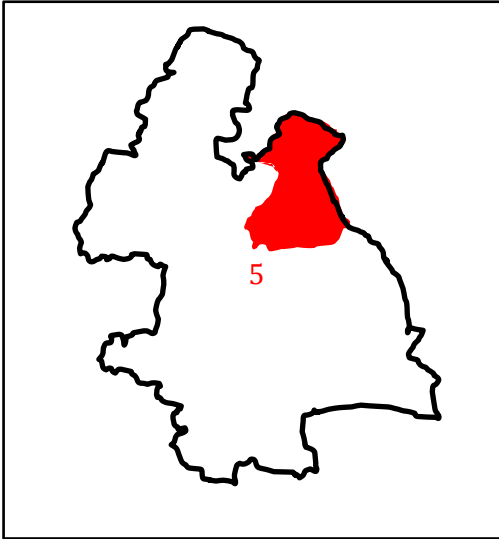
Facilitation of the optimal use of the area's agricultural and settlement development values should be the ultimate objective in the management of this area, along with the conservation and improvement of the visual and environmental quality of the area.

Landscape Condition

The landscape of the Suir Central Plain has been heavily influenced by man's activities since early times and the LCA offers a rich palimpsest of layers of agriculture and settlement activity. It is considered that in general the Suir Valley Central Plain is robust in its ability to absorb change and especially change associated with the existing agricultural uses outside of settlements and change associated with development and growth in the larger towns and smaller villages. As stated above a widespread change in farming practices to intensive open plan farming with the removal of field patterns would alter the character of the landscape as would unregulated urban generated housing in the open countryside or the urban fringes of the settlements.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity, this is a high capacity/ low sensitivity, **Class 1** Landscape i.e. Change or Development generally acceptable – subject to all other relevant objectives and policies - as it may beneficially alter, enhance or reinforce landscape character and value (e.g. the landscape is robust in its character, undergoing change or the precedent for such and similar development is set and the landscape is capable of absorbing considerable change without detriment).

LCA5: TEMPLEMORE PLAINS**Extent**

The Templemore plains form a large, gently undulating lowland area framed by Devilsbit and Borrishoe Mountain to the west and extending to Roscrea in the north and the county boundary with Laois to the east.



Figure 7: Typical Landscape Character

Landscape Characteristics

- Undulating pastoral limestone plain framed to the west by the Devilsbit range.
- Long settlement history evidenced by castles and nucleated settlements.
- Roscrea and Templemore are the key towns.
- Communication centre for the eastern part of the county with number of communication routes such as the N7 and the railway corridor.

Landform and Geology

This is a gently undulating landscape, with some low hills along the eastern boundary of the County adjacent to County Laois. These hills rise to 223m OD and 228m OD (Black Hill). The area is underlain predominantly by Carboniferous Lower Limestone Shales, interspersed with Devonian Old Red Sandstone in the north and Carboniferous Waulsortian Limestone in the south.

The River Nore drains this area to the east, whilst the River Suir drains southwards towards the Thurles Hinterland LCA. Numerous streams feed into these rivers and include the Finawn River. A small number of lakes occur in the raised bogs east of Roscrea and include Butlers and Forked Loughs.

Landcover and Ecology

Landcover on the Templemore plains is dominated by pasture land. Smaller amounts of arable land exist, with some coniferous forestry, scrub, upland grazing and peat bog. There is also a small proportion of mixed and broadleaf forestry.

Part of the Lower River Suir SAC (described previously in LCA 8, Thurles Hinterland) falls within the Templemore Plains LCA. The Lower River Suir is designated primarily due to the presence of the EU Habitats Directive Annex I priority habitat 'alluvial wet woodlands'. Numerous other Annex I habitats and species add to the ecological interest of the site. Areas of raised bog and intact marsh exist along the Nore River Valley (designated as an NHA), with areas of woodland along a portion of its northern bank. Part of the Cabragh Wetlands NHA also occur within the Templemore Plains.

Other features of ecological interest in the area include the Sheehills Eskers just outside Roscrea. Most of these ridges are wooded but some support grasslands and contain a number of locally uncommon plant species. The Monainchar/Ballaghmore Bog, 6km east of Roscrea, is designated as an NHA. The site is of considerable conservation significance, comprising as it does, a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of the true Midland Raised Bog type, consisting of Ling Heather, cottongrass and Carnation Sedge. The site supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats including hummock/hollow complexes, and a large soak system. Roosts of Leisler's, Natterer's and brown long-eared bats, all of which are protected in Ireland, exist in buildings in Roscrea and Templemore and add to the ecological interest of the Templemore Plains area.

Human Influences

This central plain supports a long settlement history, providing good agricultural capability due to the limestone pasture and has proved attractive to human settlement since prehistoric times. A number of nucleated towns reflect the popularity of this area, with Roscrea, Templemore and Templetuohy being the principal nucleated settlements. The number of principal communication routes underpin the strategic importance of this area, with the N7 traversing the northern part of this LCA, in addition to the N62, two regional roads and a railway line.

Field enclosures vary throughout this large LCA. To the west of the N62, there are many stone walls, some containing bramble and ivy and commonly enclosing quite small fields. Elsewhere, hedgerows remain the dominant enclosure system, some gappy, whilst others show evidence of management and contain a number of hedgetrees. Earthbanks, though not extensive were also noted within this LCA accompanied by hedgerows elsewhere. To the east of the N62, there is more rough pasture, and the field sizes are generally bigger, again largely contained by hedgerows with limited stone walls present.

Settlement styles vary between single storey traditional buildings in the rural landscape, some 'Big Houses' and a number of recently constructed dwellings, particularly around Roscrea. Traditional dwellings are commonly well maintained and frequently are enclosed by cutstone walls on the road frontage. These are generally single storey dormer dwellings.

This LCA lies principally within the Barony of Ikerrin, which had strong links to the Ely O'Carroll family. The northern part of this LCA has strong links with Offaly, lying within the same Barony of Ikerrin.

The links between Roscrea and Birr are longstanding and are reflected in the Regional Planning Guidelines (2004). Dunkerrin (just over the Offaly border) was the seat of Norman rule in Ely, whilst prior to Norman rule, the O'Meaghers were the dominant Gaelic family within the barony of Ikerrin (O'Corrbui, 1991).

The town of Roscrea remains an important nucleus within the County, providing a number of key services to the surrounding area. The name comes from Ros Cre, or the Wood of Cre. Cre was the wife of Dala, after whom the Sli Dala was named. The Sli Dala is an ancient route, one of five that emanated from Tara. The current N7 still largely follows this alignment. The town has strong links with St. Cronan who originally founded his monastery at Sean Ros outside the current town of Roscrea. However, it proved difficult to access this site so St. Cronan relocated to a new site along the Sli Dala and this is where the town developed from. The Book of Dimma, a copy of the Four Gospels was said to have been written in the monastery in the eight century. The Round Tower, now in Church Street, was built to offer protection from Viking raids and was originally believed to have been 80 feet high. It was later used in the 1798 Rebellion by the insurgents who took advantage of the height of the tower to overlook the barracks. The consequence of this was the reduction of the tower by the barrack soldiers to a quarter of its former height (O'Corrbui, 1991).

The Butler presence remains within this part of the LCA, with a restored Butler castle present within Roscrea. Templemore, a garrison town, largely built with a wide central street in 1824 is now the location for the training college of the Garda Síochána. The Cardens were the chief landlords within the Templemore area and the town park is formerly part of the Carden estate (O'Corrbui, 1991). Timoney Park south east of Roscrea, is identified as a Big House by Nolan (1985) and contained an 800 acre demense, a Glebe house, Church of Ireland Church and barracks.

A number of historic features are scattered throughout this LCA, not least the extensive number of rectangular tower houses, commonly associated with the Butler family. Monahincha (the island bog) near Roscrea was also known as Inis na mBeo (island of the living). Monahincha was a renowned place of pilgrimage and Cainneach, the saint of Kilkenny settled there for a time in the sixth century, in addition to St. Cronan. The Augustinian church remains today as a ruin. Originally a lake with two islands, an improving landlord drained the area in 1800, and today the site is a low hill with marshy surrounding land (O'Corrbui, 1991).

Another notable landscape feature, is the Timoney Stones, approximately 250- 300 stones spread over 100 acres. These form no regular pattern (with the exception of 16 stones) and their sockets are loosely set in the ground. There appears to have been extensive land clearance from this area in the mid- nineteenth century and the stones are considered to be of recent origin (Raleigh 1985) 1985). Another togher has been identified traversing Timoney bog and has been dated as between 1280 – 1520AD (Feehan, 1996).

Landscape Condition

The hinterland of Roscrea is a working farmed landscape of variable condition. Some evidence of run down farmsteads was found in this area and these adversely affect landscape condition. This part of the LCA extending to and including the eastern side of Borrisnoe Mountain has a scenic quality and presents as quite a diverse landscape. The area to the south east of Roscrea owes its scenic quality to the presence of enhancing features including the ridgeline / esker topography and the open views commanded of this higher ground. The large tracts of raised bog (Timoney Bog and Monaincha Bog) confer maximum sensitivity on this immediate landscape outside Roscrea for ecological reasons. In terms of visual quality, this bog hinterland has been substantially impacted on by the extension of the residential areas of Roscrea and indeed the presence of large tracts of commercial coniferous forestry which encroach on this area. The hinterland located to the south west of Roscrea

is quite a different landscape. Its condition is partly affected by some dereliction and abandonment of farmsteads. However, the scenic quality is positively enhanced by the presence of vernacular architectural features and landscape patterns. These enhancing elements relate to the smaller scale field sizes, the stone wall boundaries, the traditional stone buildings and castle or church ruins and the unobtrusive and small scale road transport system, itself lined with stone walls which further reduce visual impact.

The majority of this LCA which surrounds the town of Templemore is intensively farmed with little deciduous vegetation other than the highly managed hedgerows that define the field boundaries. This confers a very man made and mechanised quality to this landscape and therefore renders it as quite unremarkable in terms of scenic quality. Coniferous forestry is very conspicuous in such a visually open setting and further impacts on the scenic quality.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity, this is a high capacity/ low sensitivity, Landscape i.e. Change or Development generally acceptable – subject to all other relevant objectives and policies - as it may beneficially alter, enhance or reinforce landscape character and value (e.g. the landscape is robust in its character, undergoing change or the precedent for such and similar development is set and the landscape is capable of absorbing considerable change without detriment).

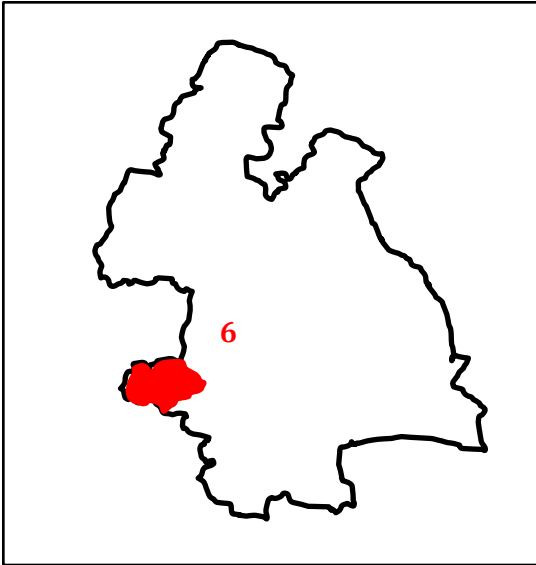
Forces for Change

- Commercial coniferous forestry in the potentially more scenic parts of this LCA.
- The continuing expansion of urban settlements into their surrounding hinterlands.
- New building in the countryside.

Principals for Landscape Management

- Farm management practices should recognise and protect the built vernacular and traditional field patterns.
- Monitoring and management of ecological and landscape value of raised bog areas will be an ongoing requirement.
- The wider LCA, being intensively farmed, will depend on the retention and proper maintenance of deciduous hedgerow systems in order to preserve some of its original character.
- Sensitive siting and design of individual buildings and groups of buildings as well as site treatment appropriate to the area will be of importance in this landscape. Specific design guidance should be provided to facilitate these outcomes.
- Design guidance in respect of commercial forestry in upland areas should be provided in order to integrate this landuse into the landscape

LCA 6 WEST TIPPERARY ROLLING LOWLANDS



Extent

The West Tipperary Lowlands are located west of Tipperary town and extend southwards to the forested slopes of Slievenamuck and northwards to the low lying lands adjoining the N24. The Cork to Dublin rail line neatly cuts the LCA into two along a northeast to southwest line. The West Tipperary Lowlands adjoin Limerick County and its LCAs entitled 'Agricultural Lowlands' to the north west and 'Ballyhoura-Slievereagh' to the south west, and the West Tipperary Lowlands reflect predominantly the landscape characteristics of the Ballyhoura/Slievereagh areas of Limerick.

Landscape Characteristics

This area is considered distinctive in its character as a lowland character area of the county due to its subtle differences and its sense of removal from the richer and more densely populated River Suir Central Plain. Agriculture in the area is pastoral based and less productive and farms are smaller and retain a vernacular character. The LCA is sheltered by the Slievenamuck ridge and is characterised by its undulating and slightly elevated topography and its poorer agriculture lands. The settlements of Emly, Kilross, Cullen, Lattin provide local services to the area, and to some extent feel isolated from the remainder of the county. This has helped engender a sense of community in the LCA and this is most notable in Emly where an active tidy towns group has put the village on the national map.



Figure 8 Traditional Farmstead in West Tipperary

Distinctive Features

- The character, appearance and community spirit of the tidy town of Emly.
- A sense of detachment from the remainder of the county and the choice for the community of Limerick City for shopping and recreational needs as an alternative to Clonmel and Tipperary.
- Small rural farmsteads that have retained their vernacular character and the integration of farming and settlement, i.e. in Cullen where the central of the village has a strong association with an active working farm.
- Evidence of poorly productive lands especially in the northern part of the LCA where lands are wet with rush growth.

Landscape Values

Socio-cultural (Conservation Values)

- The landform of the area is not particularly dramatic or of significant *aesthetic* and / or *recreational amenity* value. Extensive views southwards towards Slievenamuck and in the extreme west of the area southwards towards the Galtees are afforded in places.
- The integrity and unity of the traditional *landscape pattern*, i.e. pastoral farmland mosaic on an undulating landform has remained unchanged by modern farming practices and marginal pastoral agriculture remains the dominant land cover type.
- The *settlement pattern* is scattered in the area relative and the villages such as Cullen and Lattin have stagnated and lost services such as post offices and public houses. Notwithstanding this, there has been significant development of one-off house outside of the villages and along local roads.
- The area's *sense of place* or identity is limited and landform and landscape pattern are unremarkable and the transition between the area and the surrounding plains of Limerick and Tipperary are subtle.

- The area's *historic value* is however high, with numerous prehistoric sites, most notably around Emly and Lattin, where there is a dense concentration of barrows, earth-built burial monument from the Bronze and Iron Ages (c. 2400 BC – AD 400).
- *Ecological (Conservation Values)*
- Except for small boggy areas at the margins of pastoral lands and the small streams that drain the area, there are no remnants of significant natural habitats. Biodiversity is therefore low. There is an almost blanket coverage of agricultural land use and there are no designated areas.
- There are no standing water bodies but numerous streams, mostly feeding the River Ara.
- Socio-economic (Enhancement / Development Values)
- The brown and grey podzolics and poorly drained gleys predominant in the area result in limited land capability in parts and the farmland is generally of marginal quality when compared with the Suir Central Plain.
- Visual Units: There are no specific unit units evident in this landscape character area.

Landscape Character Types

- Lowland Marginal Mosaic
- Farmed Foothills

The LCA's conservation values are generally limited to a local level of importance. There are no environmental designations and very limited aesthetic or recreational amenity value associated with this area. The sense of community and the historic value derived from the numerous sites and monuments in particular, emerge as being of greatest value, lending the area a distinctive sense of place / identity locally.

A continued facilitation of the existing agricultural uses in the area along with consolidation and enhancement of settlement in the villages in order to retain their self-sufficiency should be the ultimate objective in the management of this area, along with the conservation of the numerous sites and monuments in the area.

Landscape Sensitivity Capacity

The West Tipperary Rolling Lowlands is a working landscape without distinct visual or image characteristics and it is clear that a wide range of developments associated with rural and agricultural development would sit comfortably in the landscape and not interfere with or eliminate its character and values subject to appropriate siting and design.

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity classes, this is of high capacity/low Sensitivity, **Class 1** i.e. Change or Development generally acceptable as it may beneficially alter, enhance or reinforce landscape character and value (e.g. the landscape is robust in its character, undergoing change or the precedent for such and similar development is set and the landscape is capable of absorbing considerable change without detriment).

PEATLANDS & WET MIXED FARMLANDS

The Plains also contain large areas where impeded drainage and peat formation give rise to less densely inhabited areas and more marginal agriculture with very open vistas.

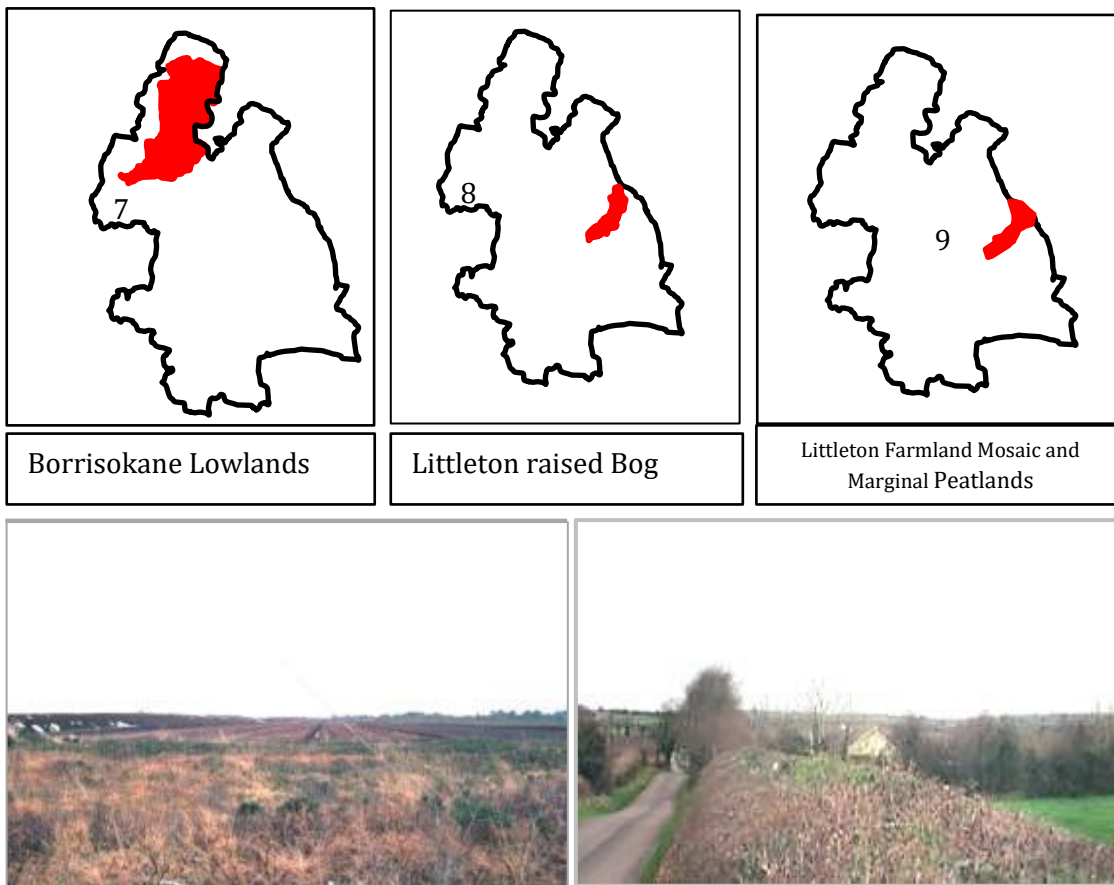
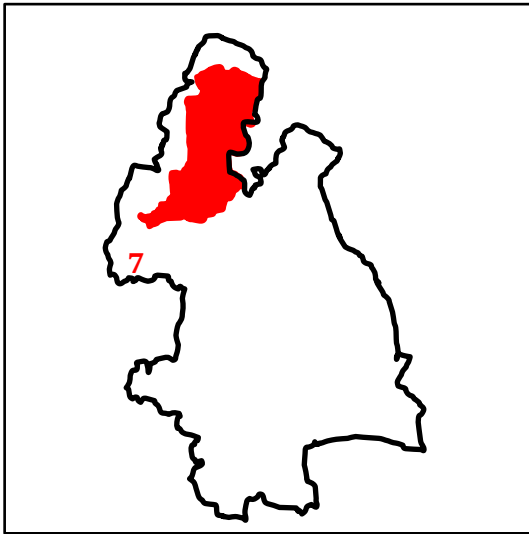


Figure 9: The plains also contain large areas where impeded drainage and peat formation give rise to less densely inhabited areas and more marginal agriculture with very open vistas.

LCA 7 BORRISOKANE LOWLANDS



Extent

This large, generally low lying area extends southwards from the R489, eastwards to the County boundary with Offaly, westwards to the drumlin belt of LCA 2 Upper Lough Derg and southwards to the R491, north of Nenagh.



Figure 10 Typical Photograph

Landscape Characteristics

- Farmed landscape dominated by limestone pasture interspersed with major communication routes to Portumna and Birr in adjoining Counties.
- Occasional farmed ridges and gently undulating areas add landscape diversity to this large area.
- Long settlement history spanning from the Neolithic tombs at Ardcroney, and Dominican priory at Lorrha to the Cromwellian development of Cloughjordan and Borriskane.
- Very high density of 'Big Houses' with tree lined avenues and cut stone outbuildings.
- Scattered settlement with principal nucleated settlement of Borriskane located at junctions of major and regional roads.
- Due to generally low lying landform, long views are afforded from occasional ridges across to Offaly, the western drumlin belt and the Silvermines.

Landform and Geology

In common with much of the northern part of the County, this area is largely underlain by both Carboniferous Calp and Waulstorian limestone. The exceptions to this are the ridged hills at Knockshigowna, underlain by Old Red Sandstone and Silurian Greywacke and Shale, thus sharing geological characteristics with the northern uplands of the county. Knockshigowna is the highest point in this LCA, rising to 212m OD.

The area is predominantly low lying with some undulating landforms rising to the ridged hills that run in an east-west orientation from Knockshigowna southwards to Screggaun, west of Cloughjordan. In contrast to Knockshigowna, these southern ridges are composed of limestone as evidenced by occasional limestone outcrops.

The Ballinfinboy River drains through the southern part of this LCA, whilst the Little Brosna River provides a natural county boundary with Offaly in the northernmost part of this LCA. In addition, a small number of lakes such as Lough Eorna, Lough Duff, Lough Nahinch and Friars Lough are contained within this area.

Landcover and Ecology

Generally good quality pasture dominates this area, though there are also quite extensive pockets of tillage, largely in the southern part of this LCA. Towards the north, the landcover starts to share characteristics with the Shannon Callows LCA. This is most notable through a number of raised bogs and wetlands such as the area between the N52 and R438 including the townlands of Walshpark, the Island (a common name attached to domes in bogs) and Clonfinane.

There are limited coniferous plantations, and more commonly, there are copses of deciduous woodland, and standard trees within the treelined avenues associated with the 'Big Houses'.

There are a number of NHAs within this LCA, largely related to wetlands, fens and bogs. NHA sites include Schooboy Bog, and Lough Nahinch, east of Borrisokane. SAC designations include Kilcarron and Clonfinane Bogs, considered important examples of active raised bogs.

Human Influences

This LCA has long been subject to human influences, offering as it does an accessible and often good quality agricultural capability. In conjunction with the other northern LCAs in Tipperary, this area was strongly associated with the O'Kennedy family until the plantations, when the Lower and Upper Ormond baronies were reserved for Cromwellian soldiers. The towns of Cloughjordan and Borrisokane were developed by Cromwellian Colonel Harrison and Captain Stopford respectively (Nolan, 1985).

Nowadays, settlement is scattered around the rural landscape, and is commonly a mixture of Big Houses or single storey farmsteads. Frequently, traditional houses are accessed via an avenue or narrow lane. Contemporary houses are often facing the road, a particular feature noted along the regional roads. Within the northern part of the area, the evidence of wetlands and bogs can be seen by the limited road or lane access through these areas. Elsewhere, the N52, linking Nenagh to Birr and the N65 linking Nenagh to Portumna offer key access routes through this LCA. The links between this part of Tipperary and Offaly, is further evidenced by the short lived railway link that ran from a terminal on the Tipperary bank of the river and Birr, 22 km to the east. This line was not a commercial success and went into receivership in 1871.

Hedgerows again dominate field enclosures which are generally geometric and could reflect land restructuring in the 19th century. However, cut stone walls particularly defining the roadside limits and farmyard enclosures are also a distinctive feature. In the areas where tillage production is evident, there has been more boundary modification and the removal of hedgerows. Whilst on the limestone ridge around Knockshigowna, stonewalls composed of large limestones are also apparent.

There is also evidence of this area having been settled from the Neolithic period. A portal tomb was discovered in Ardcroney in the late 1970s, consisting of a cairn of stones and containing the unburnt remains of two males, accompanied by highly decorated pottery bowls. Close by at Ashleypark, a comparable site was excavated in 1980, with two circular ditches. Another potential site is identified by Raleigh (1985) is also located close by at Lisgarriff. These sites are dated to the late Neolithic, hence pre 2000BC, but radiocarbon dating suggests even earlier provenance, 3300 to 3600BC (ibid). Cumulatively, these sites suggest a continuity of prehistoric activity within this area.

The continuity of human settlement within this accessible and relatively good quality land is evidenced elsewhere within this LCA. The village of Lorrha, was established by the Normans under the Bishop of Killaloe (Empey, 1985). This area was considered to be the frontier of the Ormond domains and the Earl of Ormond commonly utilised close kinsmen to man these frontier settlements. However, the Early Christian settlement associated with St. Ruadhan's monastery is the earliest known settlement in the Lorrha area, and was founded in approximately 550AD (Murphy, 1997). A common Norman practice was to be built on existing or former early Christian settlements and this is the case in Lorrha, with the Norman Mottle located within the monastic enclosure. The Church of Ireland Church, built in the early nineteenth century is located on the site of the parish's pre-Reformation Church and has been dated to the tenth or eleventh century. Again this is located within St. Ruadhan's monastic enclosure.

Elsewhere in the village, there are the ruins of a Dominican priory dating from 1268. Augustinians, following the Butler bequests, also settled in Lorrha in the twelfth century and their building is partly incorporated into the Church of Ireland church today. (Corrbui, 1991).

A noticeable characteristic of this area is the high number of Big Houses, particularly in Lower Ormond, a trait that was identified in contemporary accounts (see Nolan, 1985). These are generally Georgian two or three storey houses, commonly with associated stone cut outbuildings and often accessed by a treelined avenue. During this time of demesne creation (1780 to 1840), landscape features such as a turret at Knockshigowna Hill were built to enhance the enjoyment of the vista (Nolan, 1985). The folk beliefs surrounding Knockshigowna, namely that it is a fairy hill with associations to the Ely O'Carroll families also led to a number of residences in the vicinity being named Fairy Hill, or Fairy Mount.

A fine example of this type of house was at Portland Park in Lorrha parish, located on the gravel surfaces overlooking Lough Derg and capturing the western views over the Sliabh Bernagh Mountains in County Clare. This house was burnt in 1920. However,

"Mansions and farmsteads of this quality formed the centrepieces of holdings with carefully contrived field networks, enclosed by means of neatly clipped quicksets of thorn, and it is possible that the distribution of such quickset hedges, as they have survived, may offer a means of identifying the extents of those areas which were most radically transformed by their planter owners from the eighteenth century." (Jones Hughes, 1985, 252).

Nolan (1985) notes that whilst demesne creation was at its height with considerable expenditure on dams and lakes in the wealthier South Tipperary, Lower Ormond settlers such as Falkiner were draining wetlands of 180 acres to create excellent arable and pasture land. This may reflect the

differing perceptions and wealth levels between the Ormond settlers and those who were granted land in the more prosperous South Tipperary (Nolan, 1985).

Landscape Condition

This is a flat open landscape which, in particular locations commands long range views to adjacent mountainous areas namely the Arra mountains and Borrishoe. It does not have a sense of remoteness, being a working landscape given over to both pastoral and tillage uses. It is not a striking landscape in terms of scenic quality. This is largely due to the flat planar topography and the intensity of use as indicated by the larger field sizes (created by hedgerow removal). Characteristics which enhance the scenic quality of this landscape are the presence of ridgelines comprised of chains of small hills (Knockshigowna and Screggaun complexes) on the western side. These present as a distinct and visually attractive landscape feature in the overall flat terrain. Other enhancing features relate to the presence of pockets of mature deciduous woodland and tree lined routes and avenues to dwellings. Traditional settlement (e.g. the village of Lorrha), larger houses and farmsteads and the presence of ruined castles and churches confer a strong sense of architectural vernacular in localised parts of this landscape. In general, this is not a sensitive landscape albeit that its capacity to accommodate future development is a function of good design as this is a flat and really quite visually exposed landscape. The sensitivity of this landscape increases in locations where the enhancing landscape elements already outlined are present.

Activities that detract from the scenic quality of this landscape relate to the presence of occasional parcels of coniferous forest, especially the juxtaposition with raised bog areas.

There are no amenity related landscape designations or protected views in this area. The Natural Heritage Area relates to the raised bogs.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity classes, this is a landscape of high capacity/low Sensitivity, **Class 2** i.e. Transitional Sensitivity, having a moderate sensitivity to change. These areas have reduced capacity to accommodate change without detriment. Such landscapes require additional care during design and assessment to continue established patterns of use and settlement

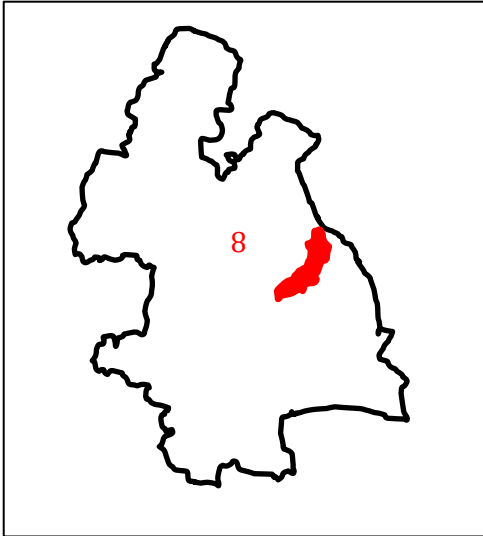
Forces for Change

- Declining population on the eastern side of the LCA with reductions in agriculture.
- Commercial coniferous forestry.
- Some abandonment and dereliction of dwellings

Principals for Landscape Management

Sensitive siting and design of individual buildings and groups of buildings as well as site treatment appropriate to the area will be of importance in this landscape. Specific design guidance should be provided to facilitate these outcomes. Agricultural and forest cropping practices should be such to not impact on the integrity and visual setting of the raised bog areas or indeed the water quality of the Rivers Nenagh and Ballinfinboy.

LCA 8: LITTLETON BOGLANDS



Extent

A distinctive raised bog area, this extends eastwards from the N8 where it meets the county boundary with Kilkenny.



Figure 11: Typical Photograph

Landscape Characteristics

- Small LCA dominated by extensive raised and commercially extracted bog.
- Littleton village the only nucleated settlement.
- Important monastic site at Bog Island in Bog Island at Derrynaflan.
- Cultural and communication links to Kilkenny.

Landform and Geology

The Littleton Boglands form a distinctive landscape character area in the north-east of the county. The raised bog is set within an overall landscape not dissimilar to the undulating lowland of the Thurles hinterland. The area is underlain predominantly by Carboniferous Waulsortian Limestone with some Carboniferous Lower Limestone Shales. The area is drained by a number of small rivers including the Breagh River, the Black River and the Ballyley River.

Landcover and Ecology

Raised bog is set within pasture land, which is the dominant landcover. There are no sites designated for nature conservation in the Littleton Boglands, however, the best examples of raised bog in Ireland

are protected as a habitat of international importance under the EU Habitats Directive. This is due to their increasing rarity. Pockets of arable land, rough grazing, coniferous and scrub also exist in the landscape character area.

The areas of raised bog support a dense growth of birch scrub with gorse and heather as an understorey. Where commercial turf extraction has taken place, areas are devoid of vegetation and present an evenly exposed surface of peat which has an industrial character.

Human Influences

Littleton is the only nucleated settlement within this LCA which is profoundly influenced in recent times by the Bord na Mona workings of Littleton Bog. A small network of roads span away from the N8 although there are a few routes through the raised bog area. Settlement is scattered with a relatively low density of settlement along the roads.

Traditional settlement remains single storey generally and big houses are not apparent within this small LCA, reflecting the lack of comparative commercial interest in the raised bog compared to the good soils to the west and north.

Littleton Bog itself has revealed information on prehistoric settlement with pollen analysis revealing an intensification of agriculture in this area around 1800BC with renewed forestry clearance of elm and hazel. This expansion was intensified again in 1400BC when these cleared areas were expanded further (Raleigh, 1985). Evidence of Late Bronze Age activity is also revealed via the discovery of two bronze swords.

St Ruadhan of Lorrha founded a monastery on the raised island of Derrynaflan in Littleton bog and a significant hoard was found in 1980 from this site, containing the Derrynaflan Chalice, paten, stand and strainer. A church and mound are still present at Derrynaflan.

During the nineteenth century, clusters of settlement occurred on this wet and marginal land, reflecting the pushing of poorer and landless farmers onto more remote locations. A number of toghers (bog tracks, often quite ancient in origin) have been identified in Littleton bog (Feehan, 1996). Interestingly, a high proportion of the townlands in this area have Irish names reflecting their remoteness and lack of settler influence (Nolan, 1985).

Littleton itself originated as a small planter settlement, which deliberately disassociated itself from the pre-reformation parish centre at Thurles, to a new strategic location at the Dublin-Cork road (Jones Hughes, 1985).

As part of the third development programme by Bord na Mona, a briquette factory was developed for Littleton Bog and this came into production in 1981. The infrastructural development associated with the extraction of peat commercially has created a number of narrow gauge railways and the briquette factory just over the County Boundary. Travelling through this area, one is struck by the ongoing sense of remoteness and the mosaic of habitats created by the cutaway bog and the raised bog that remains intact. This LCA contains one of the few industrial type landscapes within the County. This LCA lies within the barony of Eliogarty.

Landscape Condition

The remote and somewhat wild quality and condition of this landscape continues to be maintained today largely due to the very limited road access and the scarcity of rural based dwellings in parts of this LCA. The condition of the bogland landscape, where subjected to turf cutting activities and the infrastructure associated with this activity has been greatly altered and is now industrial in character.

By contrast, the natural character and scenic quality is greater for the tracts of raised bog that remain intact with birch, gorse and heather scrub layer. Commercial coniferous forestry presents itself in very large scale crops which are also have substantial landscape impacts.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity classes, this is a Sensitive landscape i.e. **Class 3** having a high sensitivity to change and limited capacity to accommodate change without detriment. Such landscapes require significant additional care during design and assessment of alternatives to determine how established patterns of use and settlement can be accommodated.

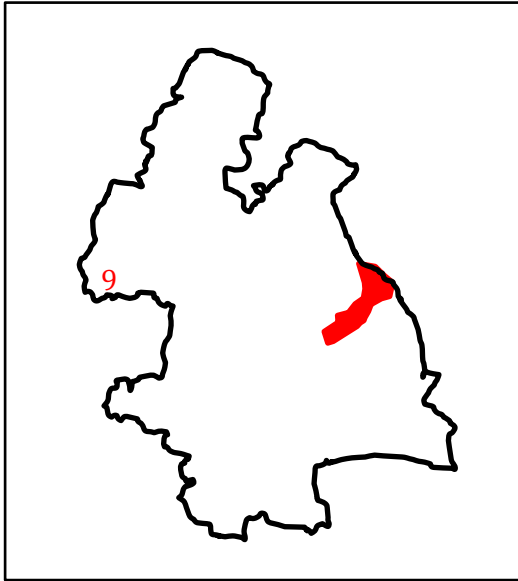
Forces for Change

- Commercial coniferous forestry continues to increase as a landuse in this area.
- Loss of natural bog habitat as a result of turf cutting activities.
- New building in the countryside as well as the expansion into its immediate hinterland of the village of Littleton.

Principals for Landscape Management

- Sensitive siting and design of individual buildings and groups of buildings as well as site treatment appropriate to the area will be of importance in this landscape. Specific design guidance should be provided to facilitate these outcomes.
- Design guidance in respect of commercial forestry in upland areas should be provided in order to integrate this landuse into the landscape.
- Clear felling practices regarding commercial forestry should be revised to mitigate against negative visual impact.
- The untouched raised bog habitat is a valuable asset. All land use management Principals need to consider the protection and enhancement of same.
- A village design statement for Littleton and its environs would assist in retaining and enhancing the settlement character of the area.
- Farming practices should be such as to minimise hedgerow removal.

LCA 9 LITTLETON FARMLAND MOSAIC AND MARGINAL PEATLAND



Extent

The Littleton Farmland Mosaic and Marginal Peatland LCA is located in a long narrow strip that extends in a north east direction from Ballinunty to Grange. The LCA adjoins the 'Littleton Raised Bog' to the north east and the County Kilkenny LCAs to the north west entitled the 'Slieveardagh Transition Zones'. The LCA is characterised by the location of the steep escarpment of the Slieveardagh Hills and the flat landscape of the Littleton peatlands to the north west.



Figure 12: Typical Photograph

Landscape Characteristics

This area is considered distinctive in its character as a lowland character area of the county due to its subtle differences and its sense of removal from the richer and more densely populated River Suir Central Plain. Agriculture in the area is pastoral based and productively varies greatly throughout this LCA. In the vicinity of Grange and Kilcooley the land is rich and productive, yet as one travels towards the peatlands to the North West the quality of the land is poorer. The settlements of Gortnahoe and Grange provide local services to the area. When in this LCA there is a sense of facing towards the plains of north Tipperary and Littleton as views southwards are blocked by the imposing Slieveardagh escarpment.

- The view northwards towards the level and extensive Littleton peatlands.

- The view southwards which is truncated by the steeply rising and visually outstanding Slieveardagh escarpment.
- The extremes in quality of lands from poorly productive marginal peatland to rich pastoral land.
- **Distinctive Features**
- The Littleton Peat Briquette Factory and the infrastructure including the rail line associated with peat harvesting.
- The Kilcooley Abbey Complex.

Landscape Values

Socio-cultural (Conservation Values)

- The landform of the area is not particularly dramatic or of significant *aesthetic* and / or *recreational amenity* value. Extensive views northwards to the Slieveardagh escarpment confer a significant added value to this LCA.
- The integrity and unity of the traditional *landscape pattern*, i.e. pastoral farmland mosaic and marginal peatland on a level landform has remained unchanged by modern farming practices and pastoral and marginal agriculture remains the dominant land cover type.
- The area's *sense of place* or identity is limited and landform and landscape pattern are unremarkable and the transition between the area and the surrounding plains are gradual. Whist peat is harvested in the area; there is little sense of local ownership or local harvesting of turf in the area.
- The area's *historic value* is moderate, with the most significant site by far being Kilcooley Abbey. This abbey dates from 1182 when Donal Mor O' Brien granted lands to the Cistercians, to build an abbey here. The abbey which is a sister house to both Jerpoint Abbey and Holy Cross Abbey, is considered to be a hidden gem, tucked away in this remote corner of Tipperary.

Ecological (Conservation Values)

- Except for the peatland areas which have not been cutover and the small streams that drain the area, there are no remnants of significant natural habitats. There are no *designated areas*; however, areas of cutover bog in the LCA have good ecological value.
- There are no standing water bodies or substantial rivers in the area but numerous streams, mostly flowing northwards towards the peatland basin.
- *Socio-economic (Enhancement / Development Values)*
- The mix of acid brown earths and gleys predominant in the area result in a mixed land productivity in parts.
- To the north west of the LCA there are extensive patches of *Basin Peat*, naturally very limited in terms of land capability.
- The processing of peat briquettes still occurs in the Littleton Plant; however, this industry may have limited long term viability.
- Where agricultural lands are poor and on areas of cutover bog, forestry plantations have occurred.
- Visual Units: The *Slieveardagh Plain* is a visual unit due to its relationship with the Slieveardagh escarpment and the flat peatlands to the north.

Landscape Character Types

- Lowland Marginal Mosaic

- Raised Bogland

Principals for Management

The LCA's conservation values are generally limited to a local level of importance. There are no environmental designations and limited aesthetic or recreational amenity value associated with this area other than with the complex of Kilcooley Abbey. The Slieveardagh Escarpment forms a dramatic backdrop to the entire LCA and to Kilcooley Abbey in particular.

A continued facilitation of the existing agricultural uses in the area along with consolidation and enhancement of settlement in the villages in order to retain their self-sufficiency should be the ultimate objective in the management of this area. The greatest potential for change to the character of this LCA could occur through change to the Slieveardagh Escarpment, especially change that that would dramatically alter the skyline.

Landscape Sensitivity Capacity

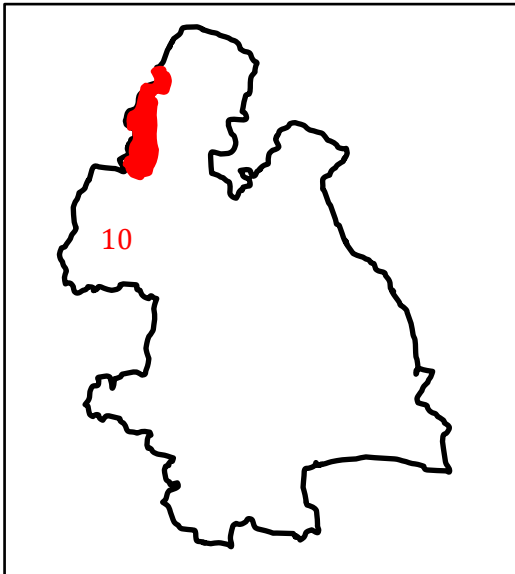
In the context of the County Landscape Capacity classes, this is of high capacity/low Sensitivity, **Class 1** i.e. Change or Development generally acceptable as it may beneficially alter, enhance or reinforce landscape character and value (e.g. the landscape is robust in its character, undergoing change or the precedent for such and similar development is set and the landscape is capable of absorbing considerable change without detriment).

THE LAKELANDS

Tipperary contains some of Ireland's most important and cherished large lake scenery and recreation areas.



Figure 13 The Lakelands are defined both by the shores and the hills that enclose them.

LCA 10: UPPER LOUGH DERG LCA**Extent**

This LCA extends from the northern bays of Lough Derg, east of Portumna, following the lake southwards to Youghal Bay. Thereafter, it extends inland, with the eastern boundary defined by the lower contours of the drumlin belt.



Figure 14 Typical Photograph

Key Characteristics

- Highly scenic area with recognised ecological and cultural values.
- A number of well-maintained villages including Dromineer and Terryglass, that support recreation and tourism activities evidenced by a number of jetties and small harbours.
- Settlement quite sparse on shoreline with small lanes accessing houses from the main road. This settlement pattern is interspersed with a number of 'Big Houses' and former estates including Drominagh, Belle Isle and Slevoir, reflecting the popularity of siting large dwellings with lake views from the eighteenth century onwards.
- The importance of the lake as an economic resource is evidenced by a number of mills such as the woollen mill at Dromineer and corn mill on Ballinfinboy River close to Ballinderry.
- Lake shores commonly fringed by broadleaved woodland including Oak and Yew. The area is drained by a number of rivers with drumlin belt containing numerous small lakes.

- Long views afforded across the Lake to the Sliabh Bernagh and Sliabh Aughties in Clare and Galway. The lake and lakeside views are highly scenic and reflect management regimes in these adjacent counties.

Geology and Landform

This LCA is underlain by Carboniferous Calp and Waulstorian limestone. However, glacial deposition and the resulting drumlin belt create a distinctive landform from the contiguous low lying areas in the north and east. A number of streams and rivers flow around the hollows in the drumlin areas while a cluster of lakes such as Lough Aran and Scarragh Lough provide surface water features that are uncommon in the rest of the County. The drumlins, with occasional limestone outcrops generally rise gently from the lake shore. Some exceptions exist such as Urra Hill, which rises quite steeply to approximately 90m OD, adding to the scenic quality of this area. Ballinfinboy and Nenagh Rivers drain through this area entering Lough Derg at Drominagh and Dromineer respectively.

Landcover and Ecology

Once again, landcover is dominated by pasture but there is a higher percentage of land under tillage within this LCA compared to the peaty soils within the Callows LCA. Upland or rough grazing can be seen in the elevated parts of the drumlins and there are occasional small coniferous plantations.

Deciduous woodland is notable along the shoreline, with birch, willow, ash and hazel dominating. Lough Derg is designated as an SPA and NHA, containing nationally important numbers of bird populations such as the Cormorant. Aquatic species including Sea Lamprey and Pollan are also recorded from Lough Derg. A draft Species Action Plan has also been recently published for the Pollan. Significant habitats within this designation include *Cladium* fen and swamp vegetation. Of particular interest is the yew and juniper woodland located on limestone pavement/rubble at Cornalack, whilst the former estate of Bellevue contains oak woodland. The pockets of wetlands, with associated reed and wet loving tree species are found around the small lakes that are scattered amongst the drumlins. Cumulatively these lakes and lakeside vegetation are of considerable ecological and biodiversity value and their significance is evidenced by a number of NHA designations at Newchapel Turlough and Clareen Lough.

Human Influences

This area is more densely populated than its northern neighbour as evidenced by the number of villages such as Terryglass, Coolbawn, Dromineer and Ballinderry. Furthermore, there is a higher number of houses in the countryside, commonly single storey farmhouses with outbuildings. New build are generally single storey, often with dormer roofs. A significant number of older Georgian 'Big Houses' are located within this LCA, though they are rarely visible from the roadside, being accessed via long avenues and taking advantage of views towards Lough Derg.

The number of streams and rivers draining through this area into Lough Derg are commonly crossed by dressed limestone bridges, a distinctive and attractive landscape element. An exceptional example is Drominagh Bridge, which crosses the Ballinfinboy River and separates the townlands of Gurthallowha and Drominagh. The Cutstone Bridge contains two covered recesses, thought to be utilised previously for tolls. The bridge dates from 1776 and is close to the entrance of Gurthallowha House. Once again, hedgerows are the predominant enclosure structure although cut stone walls are frequently associated with the boundaries of Big Houses. Around Terryglass there is an increase in limestone walls, reflecting the proximity of bedrock to the soil surface.

This area is within the Lower Ormond barony and in common with the Callows LCA had more recent and strong links to the former Gaelic landownership regime and structure than the rest of the County. A number of castles on strategic positions overlooking the lough have associations with such families as the O’Kennedys including Dromineer Castle, Knight Castle and Ballycolliton.

Nonetheless, the current landscape shows significant evidence of landlord regimes up to the 1850s. Within this LCA, there are a large number of ‘big Houses’. Many of which were built by descendants of the Cromwellian plantation, of which the Ormond baronies were heavily subjected to. In conjunction with the ‘Big House’, associated demesnes were commonly developed and took advantage of the scenic opportunities offered by a presence close to Lough Derg. Bellevue, Annaghbeg, Drominagh Demesnes are such examples. These belt of villas developed along the Lough shore in the nineteenth century, bearing such names as Bella Villa, Shannon Hall, and Hazel Point (Nolan, 1985).

Other settlements within this LCA included Ballycommon, which developed during the nineteenth century and Puckaune with its Grotto containing stones from three Marion Shrines,

The popular tourist villages of Dromineer and Terryglass provide recreational facilities and contribute to the economic importance of the lake. The latter village won the Tidy Town competition in 1983 and increased the profile of the town. The town itself was a place of renown in previous centuries, particularly when St. Colum’s monastery was a centre of great learning from approximately 548 to 1225. It was here that the Book of Leinster is thought to have been compiled (Murphy, 1997). The town’s proximity to the River Shannon, though doubtless attractive for the monastic community, also facilitated raids by the Vikings and records show it was attacked, and burnt six times between 805 and 1164. Whilst the village of Lorrha in the adjacent LCA shows a continuity of Early Christian to medieval settlement, the religious settlement at Terryglass was all but demolished and only the outline of the monastic settlement can be noted from aerial photography.

The Ordnance Survey maps of 1840 show the town as a small settlement, west of the bridge. However it has grown since that time. The Hickie Church was commenced in 1850 and built by the patronage of the Hickie family, residents of Slevoir House. It is a gothic style church, and contains an ornate interior not common in rural churches of that period. Another feature of interest is the relic of the True Cross, verified as such by Pope Pius IX in 1863, and placed in a specially designed side chapel. Another important ritual feature, St Augh’s Holy Well, is located close to the Quay, and is believed to improve eye ailments.

Terryglass’ position as an important tourism and recreation centre in the Lough Derg area is evidenced today by the holiday home villages, the facilities at Terryglass Quay including boat hire, lakeside walks and a number of pubs providing food.

Landscape Condition

This landscape is generally in good condition. The Lough Derg environs form an open landscape affording longer range views over the lake as described above. Many of these views are already scheduled as protected and contribute to the high scenic quality of this area. This landscape is remote and relatively unspoilt or affected by development and road infrastructure. Overall, the shoreline part the upper Lough Derg LCA is a valuable natural resource that is highly sensitive to any form of development.

Further inland, the drumlin landscape is clearly a working landscape featuring both tillage and pastoral uses. The current management of these landuses is such that the landscape is in good condition. The visual quality of this landscape is enhanced by a range of factors including varying topography, the presence of ruined castles and churches, villages as mentioned above, together with

the well maintained protected thatched villages of Puckaun and Coolbaun. Plantations of commercial coniferous forestry occupy the drumlin slopes at various locations and are the principal degrading element in this landscape, in which the naturalised vegetation cover features broadleaf species including beech and ash. Overall this is a more enclosed landscape than the Lough Derg area and would be less sensitive to development.

In terms of designated landscapes, the western side of the drumlin part of this landscape is scheduled as an Amenity Area and sections of the route that follows the lake shoreline are designated in terms of protected views.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity classes, this is a Sensitive landscape i.e. **Class 3** having a high sensitivity to change and limited capacity to accommodate change without detriment. Such landscapes require significant additional care during design and assessment of alternatives to determine how established patterns of use and settlement can be accommodated

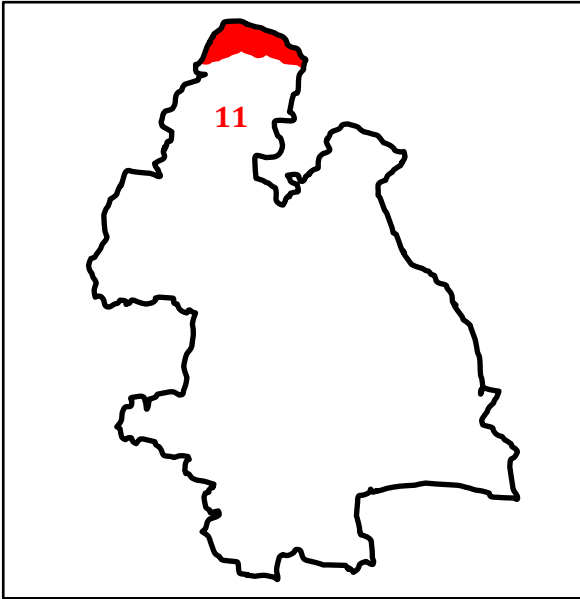
Forces for Change

- Pressure from tourism associated with the entire area generally. Siting and design of tourism facilities should be carefully developed and have due regard for the character of the area.
- Commercial Forestry in terms of character and scenic quality.
- Species Actions Plans for the Pollan will have management implications for land users adjacent to the lake.

Principals for Landscape Management

- The continued protection and enhancement of the scenic quality and habitat value of the Lough Derg environs will require specific restrictions on development.
- Farming practices should continue to be managed in a manner that safeguards the water quality associated with the streams and lakes in the drumlin landscape together with Lough Derg.
- Forest cropping practices should be introduced to minimise the visual impact caused by these crops in the drumlin farmland area of this LCA.
- Monitoring and management of the Lough Derg Way as a walking route will be required to minimise erosion and to protect adjacent habitats and vegetation, whilst continuing to serve as an important recreational resource in the area.
- Future development should be of a sensitive and appropriate design that maximise the screening capacity of the drumlin hills.

LCA 11 SHANNON CALLOWS



Extent

This northernmost LCA is bounded to the north east by the Brosna River, and to the west by the River Shannon. The southern boundary follows the R489 that traverses from Portumna in County Galway to Birr in County Offaly. Essentially a fluvial plain, this area is composed of the Shannon Callows, raised bogs and occasional limestone ridges.



Figure 15 Typical Photograph

Key Characteristics

- Strongly rural area much influenced by Rivers Shannon and Brosna.
- Historical importance of River Shannon crossing evidenced by siting of Redwood Castle, where one of the Annals of the Four Masters was written and Donal O’Sullivan Beara crossed the Shannon in 1603.
- Extensive raised bogs, river flood plains and nationally recognised ecological value of Shannon Callows.
- Isolated and rural character with settlement constrained by callows and raised bogs.
- Dispersed settlement with limited number of nucleated settlements (the villages of Rathcabbin and Riverstown present within the character area.
- Extensive views afforded southwards across flat plains towards Silvermines from regional road.
- Limestone ridges afford good views over to Counties Offaly and Galway and the meandering rivers Shannon and Brosna.

Geology and Landform

This area is underlain by Carboniferous limestone, mostly Calp limestone but Waulstorian limestone is also present in the northern and southern sweeps of this LCA. The landform is overwhelmingly low lying, particularly around the callows with spot heights of around 34m OD around Redwood Bog. Moving south from the callows, the landform becomes slightly more undulating, and the limestone ridges extending from Grangepark towards Coolrosa, despite being low lying hills, provide landform interest within the surrounding low lying area.

Landcover and Ecology

This area is predominantly composed of pasture, with pockets of arable land. Within the river plains, the landcover is a mixture of raised bog such as Redwood Bog, wetlands subject to seasonal flooding, and scrub frequently composed of wet loving shrub and tree species including birch and ash. The ecological significance of this area is demonstrated through the high number of SAC and SPA designations. The Middle Shannon Callows and Little Brosna Rivers are designated SPAs and represent the largest area of lowland semi- natural grassland and associated aquatic habitats in Ireland. Moreover, the relative lack of human intervention for drainage ensures that seasonal flooding still occurs, contributing to an increased ecological diversity.

Landcover is largely wet grassland and meadows with semi-natural woodland at the fringes, composed of birch and alder in wetter areas, and willow in drier locations. These meadows are of international importance for a number of wintering waterfowl including Whooper Swans. The area is also well known for containing the endangered Corncrake (40% of the national population). Specific management regimes have been developed with local farmers regarding the cutting of the callows meadows within the Corncrake breeding season. Recently, draft Species Action Plans (National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2005) have been published for a number of species including the Corncrake and will have further management implications for this area. Redwood Bog is an active raised bog (i.e. peat formation is currently occurring), though it also includes areas of cutover, and represents an increasingly scarce example of a floodplain bog. Part of this complex is a state- owned nature reserve.

Human Influences

Settlement is dispersed throughout this LCA; the physical constraints presented by the flood plains and raised bogs reflected in the limited number of roads allowing access northwards towards the

county boundary. The villages of Rathcabbin and Riverstown (on the Offaly border) being the only nucleated settlements present. A network of narrow roads radiates from the R489 and R438, but rarely penetrates the callows area, reflecting the hydro geological constraints presented by these extensive wetlands. Small lanes allow limited access to this callow area, and were likely developed in order to facilitate turbury rights.

Generally, houses are single storey farmsteads, with associated outbuildings. Modern dwellings commonly are of single story design also. In the areas around Rathcabbin and Redwood, considerable dereliction of single storey farmsteads was noted. Fields are generally rectangular with hedgerow enclosure.

There is no visible evidence of prehistoric activity within this LCA, although similar raised bog areas are known to have been of focus of ritual deposition of valuable hoards in prehistoric times.

This LCA lies within the Lower Ormond barony and the settlement around Graigue is identified by Nolan (1985) as being of medieval origin. Elsewhere Rathcabbin is identified as a chapel village, lying to the west of Gurteen House and Demesne. Nolan also identified a 'Big House' cluster around the Redwood area, usually associated with landlord development or labour requirements associated with the demands of a 'Big House'. The presence of Big Houses is not as marked in this LCA reflecting the poorer quality land compared to the surrounding limestone lowlands.

Today, Redwood Castle, (built around 1210 by the Normans), strategically located on a low hill overlooking the Callows, has been restored and is open to the public. This castle has strong associations with a Brehon family, the MacEgans. During their occupation of the castle between 1350 and 1640, the Leabhair Breac was written, one of the Annals of the Four Masters. Redwood is also remembered as the point at which Donall O'Sullivan Beara crossed the Shannon on his way to Breifne in 1603.

Whilst not heavily settled, this area nonetheless represented an important location to cross the River Shannon. Until the original timber bridge was built at Portumna in 1796, a ferry was the only means of traversing the Shannon and this is reflected in the name 'Ferry Inn'. The nearest bridge to the east was at Banagher in County Offaly, some 17 km away.

Landscape Condition

This Landscape Character Area is generally in good condition. The Rivers Shannon and Brosna environs are rural, quite remote and relatively undisturbed. The landscape that is associated with this floodplain extends inland for an approximate range of 2 to 3 km and represents a relatively undisturbed area of land that has a high habitat value owing to the presence of flood meadows, wetland scrub and woodland vegetation together with discrete and recognisable areas of raised bog. The condition of these is relatively intact and is not threatened by development associated with infrastructure or settlements. Both of the rivers together with the areas of raised bog carry designations of ecological importance. This renders this part of the Shannon callows LCA as a landscape of the highest sensitivity

Further south, the low lying farmed landscape is a working landscape which is more developed in terms of farming patterns and the presence of settlements and dwellings. The condition of this farmed landscape is generally good apart from the immediate environs of the villages where signs of dereliction reduce the landscape quality. This is a landscape which, while not remarkable in terms of scenic quality, is visually very exposed due to the open flat nature of its topography. The limited presence of vegetation (largely managed hedgerows with occasional copses) acts to serve as a natural screen for development.

While this landscape character area carries Natural Heritage Area designation and a small part, near the edge of the River Shannon is recognised as a Special Area of Conservation.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity classes, this is a Sensitive landscape i.e. Class 3 having a high sensitivity to change and limited capacity to accommodate change without detriment. Such landscapes require significant additional care during design and assessment of alternatives to determine how established patterns of use and settlement can be accommodated

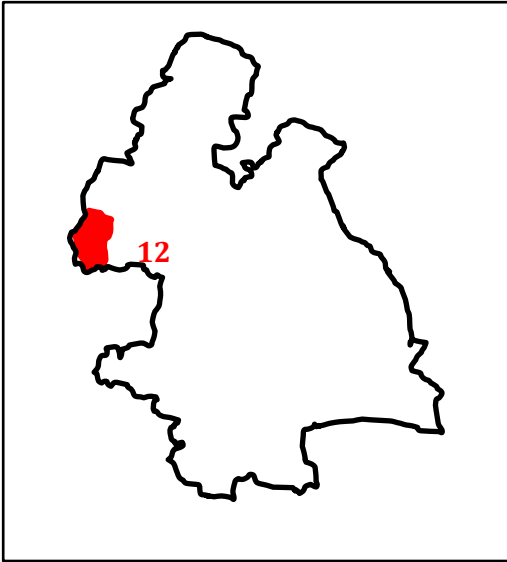
Forces for Change

- Peat extraction in areas of raised bog which, where conducted, will reduce habitat value and result in a loss of naturalised birch woodland.
- Tourism related pressures associated with the Shannon navigation and possible water quality impacts relating to agriculture.
- Expansion of commercial coniferous forestry which, owing to the visually exposed nature of this landscape, would lead to deterioration in landscape quality.
- Species Actions Plans for the Corncrake will have land management implications for farmers.

Principals for Landscape Management

- Protect and enhance the vegetated landscape that occupies the 1-2km fringe that defines the River Shannon edge. This includes the wetland habitat and birch woodland scrub. Tourism and boating activities, in particular, to be managed and controlled in the context of the protection of this landscape and the waterway itself.
- Sensitive siting, and design of buildings as well as site treatment appropriate to the area will be of particular importance in this visually exposed landscape. Policy in this area could include measures to encourage the re use and renovation of traditional houses and structures which currently lie derelict.
- Commercial forestry should focus on the use of broadleaves as these are more appropriate to this landscape character area. Where coniferous plantations do occur they could be enhanced visually by introducing a boundary of birch and ash woodland in order to mitigate the visual impact of the coniferous crop.

LCA 12: RIVER SHANNON - NEWPORT LCA



Extent

This LCA extends southwards from the Arra Mountains, eastwards from the River Shannon towards the foothills of the Silvermines and extends towards the Limerick border encompassing the town of Newport and the village of Birdhill.



Figure 16: Typical Characteristics

Landscape Characteristics

- Diverse landforms with rolling hills, broad valley, river plain and raised bogs creating a varied landscape.
- Strong westwards orientation towards County Limerick and the River Shannon.
- Long history of providing access with N7 alignment following ancient Sli Dala route; the access is further reinforced by the alignment of the Dublin to Limerick railway corridor.
- Proximity to Limerick results in quite heavy settlement and noticeable amount of new buildings, however nucleated settlements are limited to Newport town and Birdhill.
- Undulating hills create an intimate landscape with occasional views from elevated points afforded eastwards to the Silvermines and Arra Mountains.
- Lower boggy areas create remote landscape offering contrast with more heavily settled hilly areas.

Landform and Geology

This LCA is underlain by a variety of geological strata and this is reflected in the diverse landforms identified. There is a pocket of Carboniferous Waulstorian Limestone adjacent to the Shannon below Lough Derg and this is surrounded by lower limestone shales. Devonian Old Red Sandstone is found in the foothills of the surrounding Arra and Silvermine uplands.

The landscape contains stretches of flat, rushy and boggy areas, particularly close to the River Shannon and to the west of Newport. Thereafter, the landform becomes more undulating and is composed of a series of small hills north of N7, and more rolling foothills east of Newport, rising towards the uplands proper of the Silvermines range.

Drainage in this area is dominated by the River Shannon with the Kilmastulla River entering the Shannon above Birdhill. The Newport river, a tributary of the Mulkear also flows southwest through this area before entering the Shannon at Annacotty in County Limerick.

Landcover and Ecology

West of Newport and towards the River Shannon, the area is generally poorly drained and is a mixture of raised bog, rushy pasture and some small coniferous plantations. Annaholty Bog, to the west of Newport, contains a mosaic of raised bog, cutover, some rough grazing and small coniferous plantations are present. At the bog edges, birch and gorse are present.

The landcover on the rolling hills is predominantly pasture, some rushy and some improved. There are also small coniferous plantations. There are significantly more trees within the hedgerows of this LCA, creating a greater sense of deciduous tree cover.

The number of nature designations within this area is relatively low, with two SACs, and no NHAs or SPAS. The principal candidate SAC designation is the Lower River Shannon. This is a very large site stretching along the Shannon Valley from Ballina to Loop Head/Kerry Head. In addition to the freshwater reaches of the River Shannon, the site encompasses the Shannon, Feale, Mulkear and Fergus estuaries. Therefore, many of the habitats for which the cSAC is designated will not occur within the Shannon River/Newport LCA. However, the relevant habitats listed within this SAC include alluvial wet woodlands and floating river vegetation. A number of fish listed on Annex II of the same directive are also found in the River Shannon including Brook Lamprey and River Lamprey.

Human Influences

This area has historically been part of a significant communications corridor with the current N7 alignment based on the ancient Sli Dala route from Tara in County Meath. The landform has also facilitated the development of communication routes, offering an accessible corridor between the upland Arra and Silvermine ranges and the strategically important Lough Derg and River Shannon. The number of regional roads and the railway line further reinforces the accessibility and transport element that has greatly influenced human settlement within this area.

Limerick city is only 16km from the most eastern section of this LCA and the economic pull of Limerick is evident today by the high number of new build within this LCA particularly around the Newport area. A network of roads transects this area and much of the dispersed settlement is commonly located on or close to the roadside of the tertiary roads within this LCA. The wet peaty areas are identifiable by the lack of dwellings and the presence of tracks offering access to the bogs for turbury extraction in recent times.

Field enclosures are generally composed of hedgerows, with some earth topped stone walls evident in the hillier areas. The hedgerows particularly in these landforms tend to contain a high number of standard trees and this feature creates the impression of a quite robust hedgerow network. In the lower lying areas, there is an increase in post and wire fencing especially notable around recent coniferous plantations. The boggy areas are frequently bounded by wet loving species such as birch.

House styles vary considerably throughout this LCA, with traditional single storey dwellings with outbuildings present in the rural landscape. There are also two storey farmsteads commonly located on the more hilly areas. Dereliction of the single storey dwellings is a notable feature. The large number of new buildings display a variety of finishes and styles, though they are generally single storey or dormer structures.

This LCA lies within the barony of Owey and Arra. Prior to the Cromwellian plantations, this area was closely aligned to the Gaelic Ryan family and the presence of this surname remains strong today within this LCA. Thereafter, much of the land was given to the Waller and Shrimpton families and Newport developed as a bustling market town and an important fair venue for the Munster Region. The Waller family had strong links to Limerick port and this further reinforced the economic association between this area and Limerick (Nolan, 1985). The landscape setting of Newport is highly scenic, as it nestles in the foothills of the Silvermines and the broad Mulkear River bisects the town. The impressive Catholic Church offers a vertical landmark on western approaches to the town.

Landscape Condition

This is largely a flat open landscape at the southern and western end which has, as natural resources, a range of valuable and scenic landscape habitats. These range from the floodplain and associated meadows at the Lough Derg shores to the raised bogs at Newport. The presence of these resources raises the scenic quality of this area. Factors that impact on the landscape condition include buildings that are not appropriately incorporated in to the landscape, fly tipping on the bogs and the removal of acid scrub to facilitate turf harvesting. The northerly part of this LCA comprises an undulating hilly landscape with well-maintained pasture in overall good condition. This northerly part is less sensitive owing to the absence of the particular habitats noted in other areas. The scenic quality is good and such a landscape is deserving of good guidance in terms of design for future development.

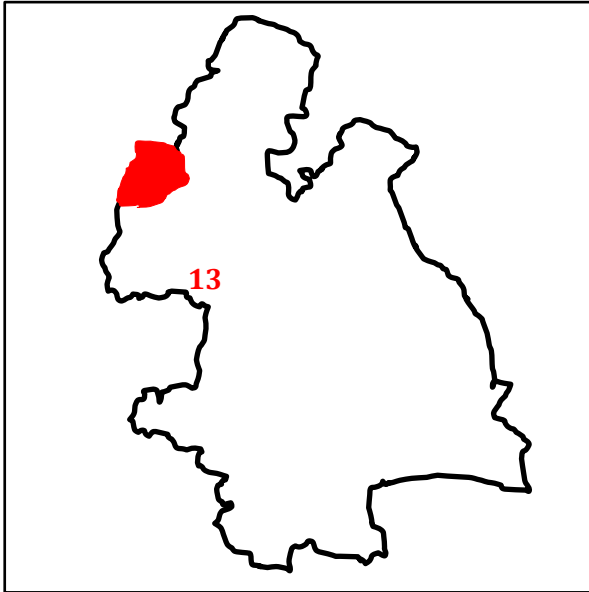
Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity classes, this is a Transitional Vulnerability **Class 4: Sensitive Landscape**– with very low capacity for change without detriment. Such landscapes require significant additional care during design and assessment of alternatives to determine how established patterns of use and settlement can be accommodated.

Forces for Change

- Commercial coniferous forestry
- New buildings in the countryside.
- Road routes in the hinterland of Newport used as ‘rat run’ access to Limerick.
- Fly tipping on Annacolty bog.
- Species Actions Plans for the Pollan will have management implications for land users adjacent to the River Shannon
- Planned new construction of N7 dual carriageway and associated road networks.
- Principals for Landscape Management
- Design guidance in respect of commercial forestry should be provided in order to integrate this landuse into the landscape.
- Sensitive siting and design of individual buildings and groups of buildings as well as site treatment appropriate to the area will be of importance in this landscape. Specific design guidance should be provided to facilitate these outcomes.
- In terms of towns, the landscape impacts of the expansion of Newport need careful consideration given the scenic landscape setting of this town as a whole.
- The ecological and amenity value of waterways (Lough Derg and Newport River) needs to be managed in a positive way.
- The ecological and amenity value of the bog areas needs to be preserved.
- A need to improve on the management of these habitats is evident.

LCA 13 ARRA MOUNTAINS LCA



Extent

This southern part of Lough Derg extends south from Youghal Bay to Newtown and follows the rising contours of the Arra Mountains, extending southwest to include the town of Ballina.



Figure 17: Typical view of the Lakelands from the Arra Mountains LCA

Key Characteristics

- Highly scenic landscape dominated by Arra Mountains and Lough Derg.
- Extensive views afforded from uplands across the lake and over to the Sliabh Bernagh and Sliabh Aughties mountains in Clare and Galway.
- Lough Derg Walking route traverses this area.
- Variety of land uses ranging from Lough shore broadleaf woods to blanket bog.
- Cultural heritage features include the Graves of the Leinstermen and numerous links to the slate quarries around the Portroe area, including Castletown graveyard with decorated 'folk' slate graves.

- Settlement concentrated close to lake shore and the lowlands beneath Arra Mountains include the town of Ballina, representing an important crossing site of Lough Derg and smaller villages including Newtown and Portroe.
- Isolated and remote character in upland areas, contrasting with more settled and active character on lower slopes around Ballina.

Landform and Geology

The upland areas of this LCA are underlain by Old Red Sandstone at the perimeter and older Palaeozoic rocks including Silurian Greywacke and Shale. These harder rocks are more resistant to both glacial and fluvial erosion, and explain the presence of this upland zone that is part of the wider Sliabh Bernagh to Silvermines Sandstone and Silurian range.

Generally this area is more elevated than the Upper Lough Derg LCA, with the highest point at Tountinna rising to 457 m OD. The uplands also rise within a narrow distance of the lake shore. The Youghal and Newtown rivers, rise in the Arra mountains and flow down the northern slopes of the mountains. A number of streams, tributaries of the Kilmastulla River, drain from the southern slopes. In addition, there are a number of small waterfalls on both the southern and eastern slopes of this range.

Landcover and Ecology

As the first proper upland on eastern Lough Derg, the Arras contain blanket bog habitats on the upper western slopes where steep contours have presented constraints to drainage and land use changes. Within the upland zone, there are quite extensive coniferous plantations and areas of scrub, notably rough grazing with rushes and gorse present.

On the lower slopes and foothills, there is improved grassland and pasture while south of the Laghtea hills, long views are afforded eastwards over good hilly pastureland. There is also deciduous lake side fringe with riparian vegetation along the some of the stream networks. There is particularly good wet riparian vegetation with a high number of moss species present along the Youghal river corridor.

Aside from the Lough Derg SPA designation, there are currently no other designations but the existing blanket bog and riparian vegetation may be considered collectively to contribute to the ecological value of this LCA.

Human influences

There is no evidence of settlement on the upper summits of the Arra Mountains, while settlement remains occasional on lower slopes around the 300 m contours. Settlement increases over the largely pasture based broad valley, east of Laghtea hill towards Lackamore East. Ballina is principal settlement within this LCA, with its arched bridge providing a key crossing over the River Shannon. Recognised as two separate towns, with Ballina in Tipperary and Killaloe in Clare, the settlements essentially straddle the river and are attractive centres for recreation including boating and fishing. Urban sprawl however, does detract from the setting of the towns when viewed from upland areas.

Once again, single storey houses are most common, with some traditional dormer style houses present on the middle slopes. Many of the older houses are at the roadside. Occasional tree lines of Scots Pine can be seen in the more elevated areas, suggesting shelterbelts around dwellings. Reflecting the

pastoral traditions of the area, the associated outbuildings are commonly galvanised roofed sheds and hay barns, painted in red oxide.

The upper slopes are generally enclosed with geometric fields rising in a vertical pattern against the mountain slopes, though coniferous plantations have masked these patterns elsewhere. On these upper slopes, there are occasional stone walls, with some post and wire fencing, particularly around forestry plantations. On the lower slopes, hedgerows are dominant on the northern and western slopes, whilst in the area north of Boher there is an increase in earth banks in addition to hedgerows.

This LCA contains a number of prehistoric features, mostly on the south eastern slopes of the Arra Mountains. This density of ritual features including standing stones, and stone circles, may reflect the use of the uplands for ritual activities, whilst agricultural production occurred within the more accessible and better soils of the lowlands (Raleigh, 1985). The Graves of the Leinstermen, close to the summit of Tountinna, are associated with the slaying of the forces loyal to Maolmara, King of Leinster by Brian Boru's soldiers at the end of the tenth century.

Historically, the slate quarries in this area, attracted adventurers to the area (Nolan, 1985), and the western slopes and northern slopes of the Arra mountains contains a density of clustered, and frequently transient settlements up to 1850. The extraction of slate has led to the distinctive Killaloe slate being used quite extensively in vernacular housing within the area, with the former settlements at the Gap and Englishtown developing into distinctive industrial based clusters which used slate extensively as the principal construction material. The ruins of such houses can be seen around this area. The extant village of Newtown still retains strong associations with the slate quarries, reopened by JB O'Driscoll in the 1920s and employing up to 200 workers a decade later. Close to Newtown, a former cornmill 'An Muilleán Uisce', is a reminder of other former industrial activities within this LCA.

Again, Big Houses remain a notable landscape feature, most notably the former Parker residences at Landsdown with its slated front, and Castlelough House and Demesne. This LCA lies within the barony of Owey and Arra. Castlelough Woods are now an amenity area with woodland walks.

Garrykennedy, a village on the shores of the lake, provides an illustration of the interactions between the lake as an economic resource and the increased value placed by wealthy landowners on the scenic quality of the lake. Garrykennedy was formerly an important port for the export of slate from the surrounding area, and import of products including turf, Guinness and coal. A number of steam boats that travels the lake also used the port at Garrykennedy as a boarding and disembarking point for passengers.

Within the wider Garrykennedy townland, there were lead and silver mines, worked up to 1857, however these mines are now submerged. The importance of Garrykennedy as a port is reflected in proposals in 1845 for a railway link between the port and Nenagh town (Murphy, 1997). However this did not come to fruition. Whilst commercial trading declined in the village in the 1950s, nowadays, Garrykennedy serves as an important boating and recreation centre, with the former commercial port extended and now serving the recreational needs of a variety of pleasure crafts including cruisers, yachts and smaller boats. The name of the village comes from one of the dominant Gaelic families in this part of the County, the O'Kennedys, and their tower house from the fifteenth century close to the shore, reflects the strategic importance of this settlement.

Landscape Condition

In general, this is a highly scenic landscape which is in overall good condition. The high scenic quality is derived from both the lake side setting, commanding long range views towards mountain ranges in Counties Clare and Galway and the Arra mountain environs.

In terms of condition and sensitivity, there is a distinction between the Lough Derg environs and the Arra mountain areas of this LCA. In the Lough Derg area, the landuse is pasture which presents as a well-managed landscape in good condition. Development in the form of housing, particularly in the hinterland of Ballina is the principal contrasting element in this landscape.

By contrast, the Arra mountain area is more remote. There is little development by way of settlements, intensive agricultural land uses or infrastructure (roads or tracks). The scenic quality of this landscape is enhanced by the mountain topography and the deciduous scrub wooded areas at lower elevations. The presence of substantial tracts of commercial coniferous forestry particularly on the higher summits, for example, Tountinna, detracts from the scenic quality and sense of remoteness in these areas. Other detracting factors relate to the presence of derelict dwellings and or farm buildings particularly on the lower mountain slopes.

In respect of landscape related designations, the Arra mountain complex is classed as an Amenity Area while the Lough Derg environs are designated as a Natural Heritage Area. The views across the lake gained from the R494 route are protected.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity classes, this is a Transitional Vulnerability **Class 4: Sensitive Landscape**– with very low capacity for change without detriment. Such landscapes require significant additional care during design and assessment of alternatives to determine how established patterns of use and settlement can be accommodated

Forces for Change

- Tourism pressure associated with visitor demands placed on the scenic Lough Derg area.
- The development of one off rural housing or inappropriately designed housing clusters.
- Changing agricultural practices leading to the removal of hedgerows in this area. This is very noticeable owing to the very distinctive hedgerow pattern associated with the smaller field sizes adjacent to the water edge.
- Commercial coniferous forestry in the Arra mountains area.
- Species Actions Plans for the Pollan will have management implications for land users adjacent to the lake.

Principals for Landscape Management

- Sensitive siting and design of individual buildings and groups of buildings as well as site treatment appropriate to the area will be of particular importance in this landscape. Specific design guidance should be provided to facilitate these outcomes. Tourism uses require monitoring and management in order to minimise erosion and degradation on landscape resources. This specifically applies to the use of the Lough Derg walking route and the four scheduled viewpoints (which include parking and picnic facilities) at the edge of the lake. The impact of similar activities

in the adjacent County of Clare in the form of the East Clare Way need to be considered as this route is linked to the Lough Derg Way.

- Agricultural practices should be managed in a manner that safeguards the water quality associated with Lough Derg.
- Design guidance in respect of commercial forestry in upland areas should be provided in order to integrate this landuse into the landscape.
- Monitoring and management regime for protection and enhancement of the blanket

THE FOOTHILLS

The transition between the Plains and the Uplands are occupied by Foothills that support a range of activities that are dominated by farming and forestry. The mixture of these uses combine with topographic variety to provide areas that combine valued scenery and amenities with working landscapes and small communities.

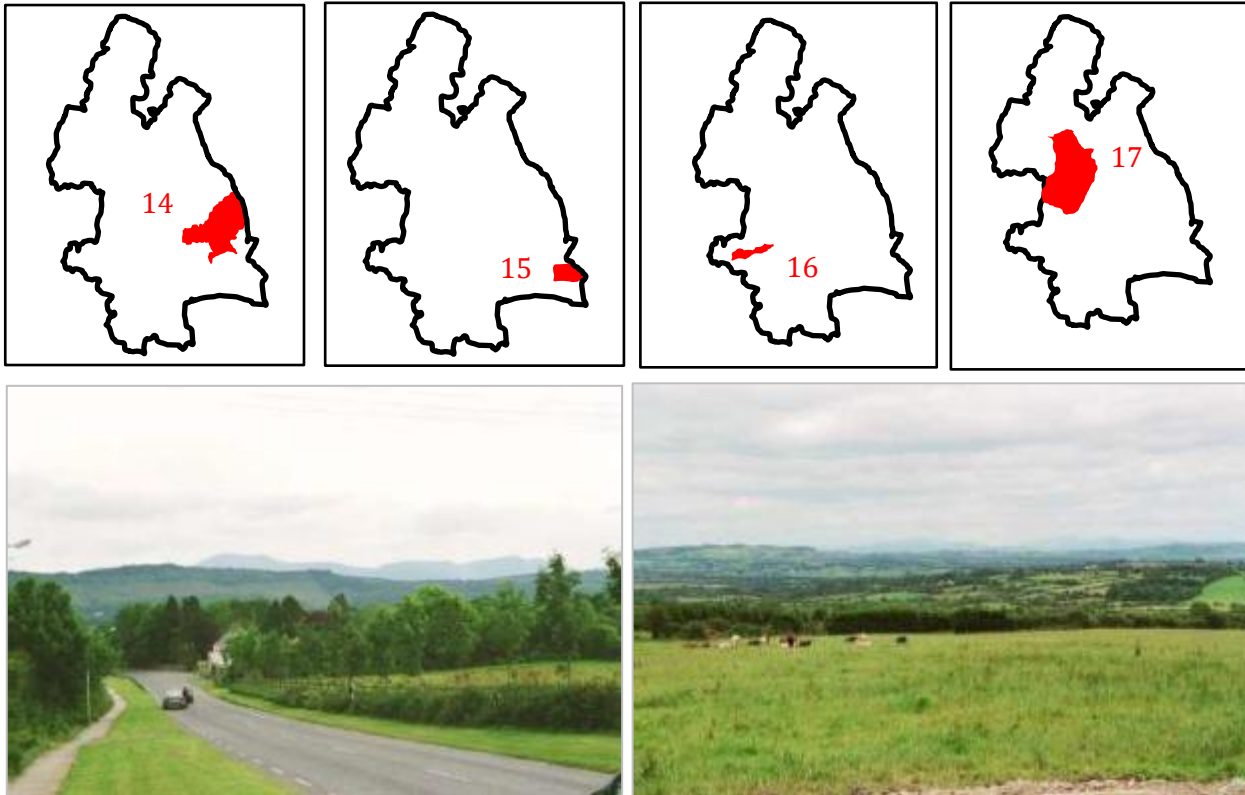
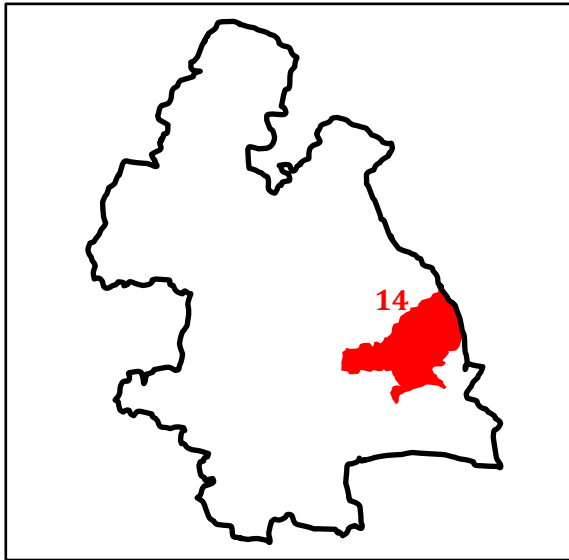


Figure 18: The Foothills are characterised by forestry, lower intensity farming and many areas of valued scenery

LCA 14: SLIEVEARDAGH HILLS FARMLAND MOSAIC



Extent

The area is situated in the north east of the County, extending across the border into neighbouring County Kilkenny. Although the Hills as such occupy a larger area, only the north eastern portion has been delineated as an upland landscape character area. The boundaries of the area are the County boundary to the north east, the R689 (between Fethard / Clonmel and Urlingford) and a lesser road (3rd class - 397, 374, 411) that skirt the north western base of the Hills, and the R691 to the south.

Landscape Character

The Hills arise as undulations in the central plain of the County, east of the River Suir, and increase in height towards the north east, where Knocknamuck, just within the County boundary, reaches an altitude of 340m. The NNE - SSW orientation of the Hills is most evident in the scarp slope that separates the Hills from the plain to the north and west. Behind the crest of the steep scarp slope, the row of elongated, flattened hilltops sloping gently to the south, forms (the impression of) a plateau broken by the valleys of small streams, before the land falls away at varying gradient towards the plains to the south. The transition between the upland area and plains thus varies between very abrupt (to the north) and relatively imperceptible, depending on the orientation of one's approach and / or view. The transport and rural settlement pattern is typical in density of the agricultural lowlands of the County, pastoral agriculture being the primary land use in the area. However, the area's history of coal mining, which came to an end in the eighties, has left a visible impact on the landscape, both in the form of mining infrastructure and in the layout and architecture of the planned mining settlements.



Figure 19: Evidence of mining history in Slieveardagh

Landscape Characteristics

- Steep scarp slope to the NW behind which the flattened hilltops form a plateau that descends into undulating hills and valleys that merge gradually with the plains to the South and West.
- Accordingly, a varying degree of enclosure in the landscape
- *farmland mosaic*, however, distinctly marginal in places, with the beginnings of incremental afforestation of private lands visible
- Fields generally large and marginal in appearance, separated by low hedgerows, but with smaller fields and broadleaf-dominated hedgerows in the valleys

Distinctive Features

- The scarp slope separating the Hills from the bog plains to the north of the area is distinctive locally.
- The remaining mining infrastructure, in the form of air shafts, are very distinctive built features.
- The mining villages, such as at Commons, being planned settlements, are distinctive features of the landscape.
- The spectacular view towards the north over the bogs on the plains from the top of the northern scarp slope are unique in the County context.
- Visual Units: The LCA and especially the escarpment influences the Slieveardagh Plains to the North.

Landscape Character types

- Marginal Mountain Mosaic
- Farmed Foothills

Landscape Values

Socio-cultural (Conservation Values)

- Except for the steep north western scarp slope, the landform of the area is not particularly dramatic or of significant *aesthetic* and / or *recreational amenity* value. Extensive views, northwards in particular, are afforded in places, e.g. the Reen viewing point near New Birmingham.
- The integrity and unity of the blanket coverage of the traditional *landscape pattern*, i.e. pastoral farmland mosaic on an undulating landform, has been altered recently by isolated, mostly conifer plantations on privately owned lands. Isolated elements or features of other land use (e.g. mining infrastructure and telecommunications towers) also characterise the landscape pattern. However, mostly marginal pastoral agriculture, remains the dominant land cover type.
- The *settlement pattern* is dense relative to both the plains and other upland areas, the agricultural population having been bolstered by a mining community. Villages such as Commons, New Birmingham and the now abandoned Mardyke, are examples of planned industrial (coal mining) settlements. Villages such as Ballingarry and Killenaule have also been affected by planned housing for a non-agricultural element of the population.
- Apart from certain locations e.g. those in close proximity to coal mining infrastructure / settlements and particular viewpoints, the area's landscape generated *sense of place* or identity is limited (landform and landscape pattern are unremarkable and the transition between the area and the surrounding plains is mostly indistinct).
- The area's *historic value* is however high, with numerous prehistoric sites, a medieval settlement at Grange near Kilcooley Abbey, a history of Palatine settlement in the 18th Century, a long history of mining, the site of the 1848 warehouse (and associated Tricolour monument), etc.

Ecological (Conservation Values)

- Except for small boggy areas at the margins of pastoral lands and the small streams that drain the area, there are no remnants of habitat survival. *Biodiversity* is therefore low. There is an almost blanket coverage of fairly intensive agricultural land use and there are no *designated areas*.
- There are no standing water bodies but numerous streams, mostly feeding the Kings River to the south and the Munster River forming the area's (and County's) eastern border, contribute to the *presence of water* in the area.

Socio-economic (Enhancement / Development Values)

- The relatively poorly drained acid brown earths predominant in the area result in limited land capability and the farmland is generally of marginal quality.

Principals for Management

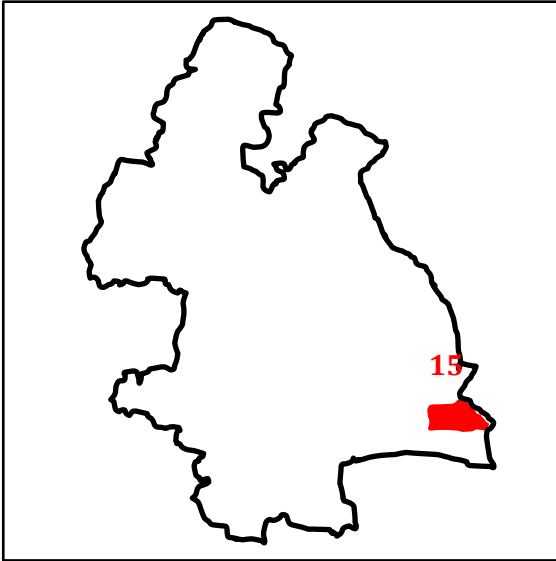
The LCA's conservation values are generally limited to a local level of importance. There are no environmental designations and very limited aesthetic or recreational amenity value relative to the southern upland LCAs. The settlement pattern (specifically villages) and the historic value derived from the numerous industrial features in particular, emerge as being of greatest value, lending the area a distinctive sense of place / identity locally. The area has an historic association with energy production, having been mined for coal up until the 1980s. Numerous physical remnants of this land use remain.

Facilitation of the optimal use of the area's enhancement / development values should be the ultimate objective in the management of this area, along with the conservation and improvement of the historic character of productivity.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity classes, this is a landscape of high capacity/low Sensitivity, Class 2 i.e. Transitional Sensitivity, having a moderate sensitivity to change. These areas have reduced capacity to accommodate change without detriment. Such landscapes require additional care during design and assessment to continue established patterns of use and settlement

LCA 15 LINGUAN VALLEY MARGINAL AND FARMLAND MOSAIC



Landscape Character

The area is characterised by an undulating landscape of farmland patchwork with a high degree of tree cover in the form of mature hedgerows. The mostly pastoral fields are interspersed with areas of tilled lands. While this is typical of the County's lowland plains, the enclosure of the area by a rim of hills and Slievenamon (which together separate the area from the plains), its resulting elevation and isolation, as well as the undulating landform, lend it a particular character and quality. The land capability deteriorates towards the west and north, where forestry is now encroaching on the farmland patchwork, causing a subtle change in character. The settlement pattern is dispersed and relatively unaffected by modern development. Traditional farm houses and associated buildings, in traditional architectural style, are a feature of the landscape.



Figure 20: Lowland Marginal Mosaic in the Lingaun Valley

Landscape Characteristics

- Enclosure and relative isolation from surroundings
- typical farmland patchwork
- distinctly wooded appearance due to density and maturity of hedgerows
- relative lack of modern built features

Distinctive Features

- Enclosure caused by Slievenamon and rim of hills to north and south
- Numerous hamlets or 'marginal agricultural clusters', as well as relatively few modern residential developments
- "secret" or undiscovered character
- Visual Units: The *Lingaun Valley* is a self-contained visual unit.

Landscape Character Types

- Lowland Marginal Mosaic
- Farmed foothills

Landscape Values

Socio-cultural (Conservation Values)

- The enclosure of the area by Slievenamon and the rim of hills to north and south, the scenic views within the area and the intimacy and scale of the area's landscape pattern, result in a significant *aesthetic amenity*.
- These characteristics contribute to a potential *recreational amenity* value, as yet untapped.
- The integrity and unity of the traditional *landscape pattern* and scale (field patterns and hedgerow vegetation) are predominantly intact but have been compromised to an extent by recent land cover change (forestry) in isolated but growing patches in the north and west, potentially threatening the whole.
- The traditional *settlement pattern* and vernacular architecture of the area are largely intact.
- A vernacular architecture is visible in the agricultural clusters of farm houses and related buildings and the area is relatively unaffected by modern development.
- Two hillforts on the rim hills, numerous enclosures, two castle sites in the valley (beyond the County boundary) and the ecclesiastical site including two high crosses at Ahenny are testament to a long *history* of settlement and constitute the area's significant cultural- historic value.
- The scenic combination of the dramatic scale of the mountain landscape (Slievenamon) and the relative intimacy of scale of the enclosed Lingaun valley, along with the area's rural community result in a *distinct image and sense of place*, although a recognisable, marketable identity is lacking.

Ecological (Conservation Values)

- The dense pattern of mature hedgerows with abundant tree cover and the *presence of water* in the Lingaun River and numerous streams contribute to the area's *biodiversity* value. There are no *designated areas*.
- Socio-economic (Enhancement / Development Values)
- The land capability is wide for the most part, with significant areas of tilled land in the south and east of the area (south of the Lingaun River). However, in the north and west the land capability is more limited.
- The combination of socio-cultural and ecological values of the area create the potential for enhanced tourism in the area.

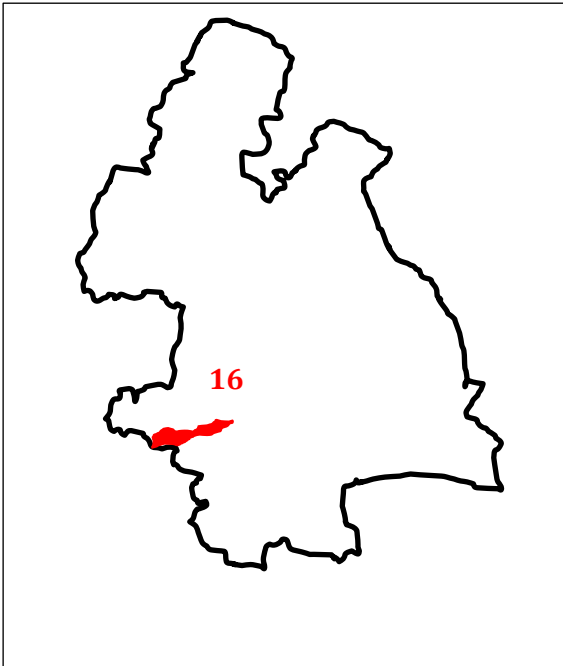
The conservation values of the Lingaun Valley LCA are consistently of a high level of importance at a local level. Its enclosure by Slievenamon and the rim of hills to north and south, the scenic views within the area and the intimacy and scale of much of its landscape pattern, result in significant aesthetic, and potentially recreational amenity value, as yet un-tapped. Due to a lack of recognition and thus active conservation and development of these values, the area has not yet realised its potential for the development of a regional landscape and amenity resource.

Due to the area's visual enclosure, there is an opportunity for the establishment of a strong area identity, potentially by employing its development value and 'working landscape' characteristics to its advantage. Any significant alteration of the landscape should take into account the landscape sensitivities of the neighbouring Slievenamon LCA.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

In the context of the County Landscape Capacity classes, this is a landscape of high capacity/low Sensitivity, Class 2 i.e. Transitional Sensitivity, having a moderate sensitivity to change. These areas have reduced capacity to accommodate change without detriment. Such landscapes require additional care during design and assessment to continue established patterns of use and settlement

LCA 16: SLIEVENAMUCK MARGINAL MOSAIC



EXTENT

This area lies against the north western boundary of the county, extending into the adjoining County Limerick. It incorporates a narrow, tapering upland ridge – Slievenamuck – associated with the Glen of Aherlow to the South and the more massive Galtees further south. Its boundaries are clearly defined by transitions in geology, soils and topography. The northern boundary is made up of a combination of local roads at the base of Slievenamuck, the southern boundary being south facing ridge which forms the edge of the Glen of Aherlow LCA.

There is a clear interconnectedness of physical landscape character between the Glen of Aherlow and its defining uplands (the Glen consists in part of the northern facet of the Galtees and the southern facet of Slievenamuck), the variation in cultural character requires that the area be divided into distinct LCAs to allow for more specific landscape management. The north facing slopes of Slievenamuck are one of these areas.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Projecting into the central plain of the County from its western boundary, Slievenamuck is a narrow, steep-sided sandstone ridge, rising to 370m, north of and parallel to the Galtees. The area is characterised by almost completely forested slopes and valleys rising up from the surrounding plains. Due to the area's limited land capability (shallow, nutrient poor soils), the once typical marginal mountain mosaic of pasture and moorland has almost completely been replaced by coniferous forestry, although there are significant areas of broadleaved woodland present.



Figure 21: Views towards Slievenamuck with Galtee Mountains in background

Landscape Characteristics

- Low but steeply rising forested slopes

Distinctive Features

- Main viewpoint for elevated views south over the Glen of Aherlow and north over the plains to Tipperary town.
- Forms a scenic and heavily afforested backdrop for Tipperary Town.
- Visual Unit: No specific visual unit, however, the backdrop to Tipperary Town is visually important to the character of the town.

Landscape Character Types

- Upland Forestry Plantation
- Marginal Mountain Mosaic

Landscape Values

Socio-cultural (Conservation Values)

- The change in landform of Slievenamuck, the scenic views that they offer, and the extensive woodland contribute to the area's *aesthetic amenity*, and related *recreational amenity* value.
- The unity of the traditional *landscape pattern* and scale (moorland, field patterns and hedgerow vegetation) has been completely changed, giving rise to a new, upland forestry land cover.
- Although devoid of identifiable settlement cores or significant focal points of activity / destinations the relatively low lying prominence of the area and its location relative to the Glen of Aherlow and the Galtees, lend the area a distinct *sense of place*, as a gateway to these more recognised and dramatic scenic locations.
- The associations of legends and stories with Slievenamuck give a historic or cultural value.

Ecological (Conservation Values)

- A pNHA of woodland at the eastern extent of Slievenamuck, contribute to the area's significant *biodiversity* value.
- Numerous mountain streams, all feeding the Suir River, contribute to the *presence of water* in the area.

Socio-economic (Enhancement / Development Values)

- Notwithstanding the very limited land capability (shallow, nutrient poor soils), the area is productive, with its extensive coniferous forests contributing to the local economy.
- Benefits are also derived from the area's natural/environmental amenity potential.

Principals for Management

The LCA's cultural values are high primarily as a result of its location relative to the neighbouring Glen of Aherlow. Slievenamuck is a gateway to the Glen from Tipperary Town to the north. The ridgeline contributes substantially to the sense of natural enclosure within the Glen. The area has ecological value of national importance in the Bansha Wood pNHA at the eastern extent of the area. These values remain intact despite blanket afforestation of the LCA. Due to the upland's relatively small scale the LCA's socio-economic values are limited except in the already optimised forestry sector. Ongoing management and intervention to safeguard and enhance those components that generate the area's conservation value should be the ultimate objective in its management. The scenic and recreational amenity value of the LCA, specifically in relation to provision of physical and visual access to the Glen of Aherlow should be retained and enhanced.

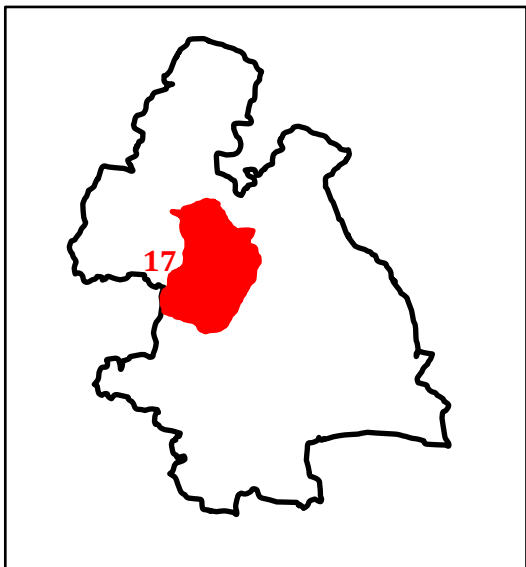
Landscape Capacity

The Slievenamuck area is of High Sensitivity, Class 3 i.e. the landscape character is established and capable of absorbing material change that reflects or enhances the current condition.



Figure 22: Slievenamuck taken from Tipperary Hills, note the Galtees in the background

LCA 17 UPPERCHURCH-KILCOMMON AND HOLLYFORD HILLS MOUNTAIN MOSAIC



Extent

The area, comprising the southernmost extent of the Slievefelim mountain range, is situated in the west of the County, adjoining County Limerick to the west, the area boundary follows the roads that skirt the lower slopes of the hills namely, the R505 between Cappawhite and Dundrum, and the R661, which heads north from Dundrum, becoming the local road LP 420 EXTENDING westwards along the R497 and the River Bilbao, and includes Templeberry to the north and Upperchurch. It is bounded by the R498 on the eastern side as far as Borrisoleigh.



Figure 23: Typical Photographs showing rolling uplands with interspersed human influence

Landscape Characteristics

The non-linear arrangement of the hills and valleys that constitute the area, resulting in a less abrupt transition from uplands to plains than elsewhere in the County. Conversely, the landform of the central portion of the area is complex. The area was previously more extensively farmed and is relatively accessible by local road, but the limited land capability has resulted in a change in land cover from the once typical marginal mountain mosaic of pasture and rough grazing towards the contemporary equivalent, incorporating forestry

- complex arrangement of rounded hills and steep sided valleys becoming less pronounced and enclosed towards the south and east

- mountain marginal mosaic, in the north
- linear uplands to the south
- Sparsely populated particularly in central area with remote character.
- Extensive views eastwards from elevated points across to Kilkenny and the south of the county.
- Cluster of prehistoric graves around Rearcross-Kilcommon creating a distinct archaeological landscape of significant value.
- Principal settlements on perimeter of LCA at Templederry and Borrisoleigh

Distinctive Features

The Bilboa River drains southwards, whilst the other principal rivers, the Clodiagh drains south easterly before joining the Cromoge River and eventually joining the Suir

- varying degree of enclosure / exposure in the landscape, but distinctly more contained than elsewhere in the County, especially towards the north and west
- Upland Forestry Plantation
- Marginal Mountain Mosaic
- Otherwise random land cover / use pattern, with forestry at lower altitudes than pasture in some areas
- plantations extending right over the hilltops, thus excluding the moorland areas found elsewhere
- spectacular views towards the south taking in most of the County, from the area's southern hilltops
- Visual Units: Cahernahallia and Multeen Valleys located within the area

Landscape Values

Socio-cultural Values

The principal nucleated settlements are located at Borrisoleigh, Templederry and Upperchurch. Single storey dwellings are the dominant style, commonly sharing similar design elements to those described for the Silvermines- Rearcross LCA. The number of derelict single storey dwellings is also noticeable. The medium scale of the topographical elements and the landscape pattern somewhat diluted by the landform, do not create a distinct sense of place or identity in any more than the local context (e.g. the village of Hollyford in the setting of the Multeen River valley creates a sense of place locally).

The settlement pattern otherwise is sparse and concentrated adjacent to the roads following the lower slopes of the Hills. The villages are well defined and recent industrial development has led to, and provides potential for further development of settlement cores.

There is a greater presence of stone walls within this area. These are frequently earth topped and support a variety of vegetation. A fine cut stone wall with mature treelines is present along the R503 east of Milestone. In the more elevated areas, high earthbanks are present, such as around Gortatooda. Fields are usually quite large and geometric. There are several good examples of small cut stone bridges, a distinctive feature in this LCA. The Kilcommon-Rearcross complex supports a significant cluster of prehistoric features. A number of stone circles, associated with the Early Bronze Age are located around Kilcommon, at Reisk, Rardnogy More and Bauraglana. A later Iron Age hillfort exists at Ballincurra Hill, the hillfort enclosing the cairn may also suggest a continuity of settlement in this area from Neolithic to Iron Age.

- The distinctive undulating landform of the Hills, although not particularly dramatic or of significant *aesthetic amenity* and *recreational amenity* value, is dominant in the characterisation of the area. Some views south and eastwards over the County are afforded in places, e.g. the Red Hill viewing point near Cappawhite.
- The integrity and unity of the traditional *landscape pattern* and scale (moorland, field patterns and hedgerow vegetation), although not prominent relative to the distinctive landform, has been significantly altered by recent land cover change (forestry), giving rise to a new, equally recognisable mountain mosaic of land use.
- The relatively dense pattern of historic features including standing stones, megalithic tombs, moated sites and holy wells, as well as more contemporary features such as the Anglesey Road, RIC barracks and the memorial to local deceased of the 1916 uprising, lend the area a significant historic *value*.
- *Ecological (Conservation Values)*
- Environmental values in the Hollyford Hills are high although the particular features generating this importance are limited in extent. There are three SACs and four pNHAs
- Small areas of peatland and several stretches of semi-natural vegetation on the steep valley sides of watercourses, constitute the remnants of natural habitat and contribute to the area's *biodiversity value*. Four such areas are designated, one cSAC and three pNHA.
- There are no standing water bodies but numerous mountain streams contribute to the presence of water in the area.

Socio-economic (Enhancement / Development Values)

This is a working landscape featuring pasture as the dominant landuse in the north and forestry in parts of the south. The nature of the varying topography is such that there is a capacity to accommodate development without undue deterioration in the scenic quality. The principal contrary factor in this landscape is the coniferous forestry. Its location on hilltops causes the maximum negative visual impact. In addition, single dwellings of inappropriate design which are poorly sited, reduce the scenic quality of this landscape in localised areas.

Principals for Management

Forces for change include commercial coniferous forestry, further development of wind energy as well as residential development as single houses or groups. Facilitation of the optimal use of the area's enhancement / development values should be the ultimate objective in the management of this area, along with the conservation and improvement of the historic settlement pattern and the enhancement of the area's environmental value.

The area is of Medium Sensitivity so Change or Development is generally acceptable as it may beneficially alter, enhance or reinforce landscape character and value (e.g. the landscape is somewhat degraded, undergoing change or the precedent for such and similar development is set and the landscape is capable of absorbing considerable change without detriment). Design guidance in respect of commercial forestry in upland areas should be provided in order to integrate this landuse into the landscape. Criteria for the wind energy development and layout should be provided.

Sensitive siting and design of individual buildings and groups of buildings as well as site treatment appropriate to the area will be of importance in this landscape. Specific design guidance should be provided to facilitate these outcomes.

Specific guidance for development in areas in the vicinity of the Rivers Owenbeg and Bilboa should be developed.

THE UPLANDS

The Upland Areas of Tipperary – combined with the Lakelands in the west and the bogs in the east provide important definitions of the County’s boundary and distinctive identity.

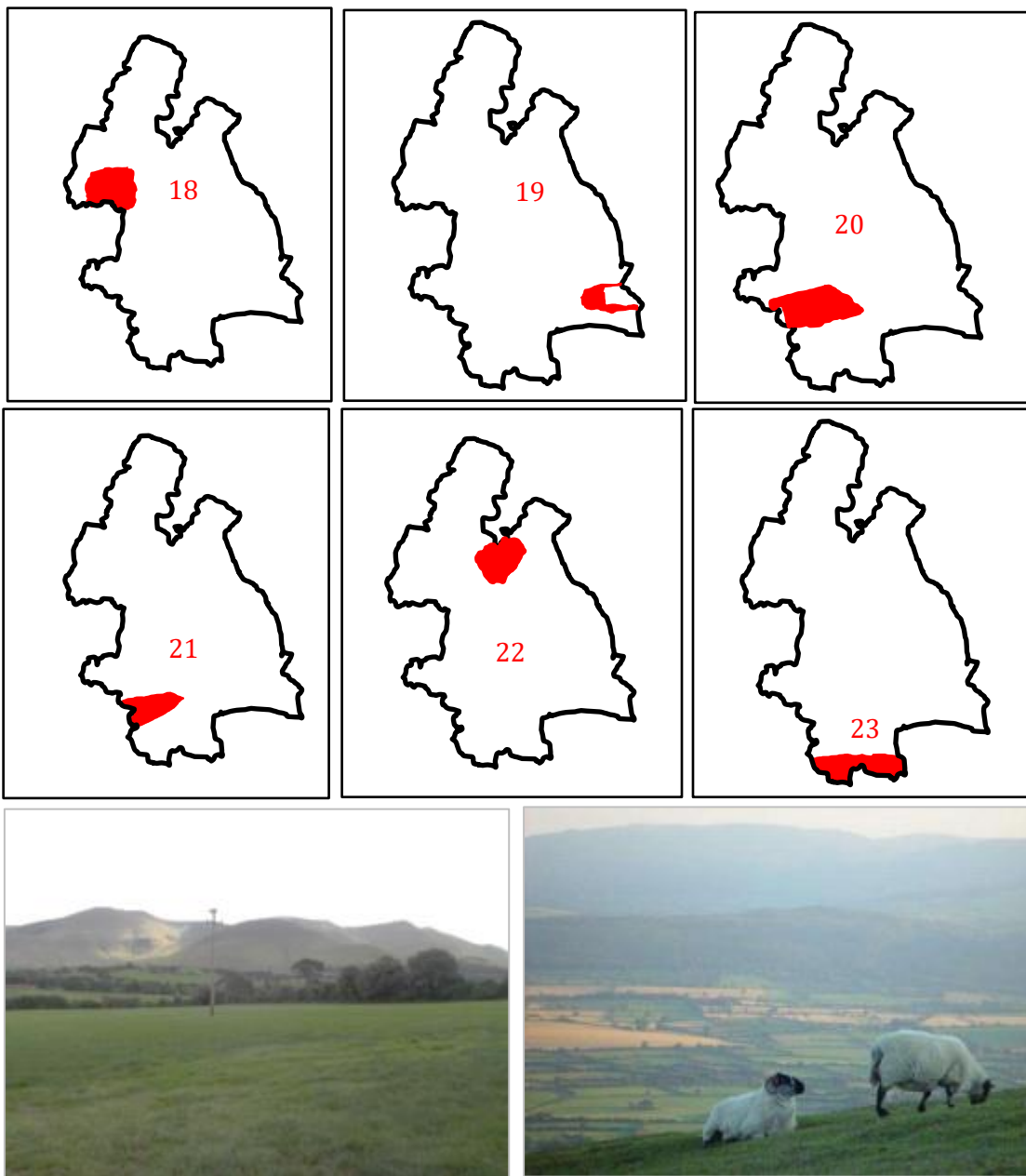


Figure 24: The Uplands provide framing backgrounds the contain and define the plains of Tipperary – providing important backdrops to all of the major settlements of the county.

Note that this section also includes the Glen of Aherlow LCA 20 – which also share properties with the Plains.

LCA 18: SILVERMINES – REARCROSS UPLANDS

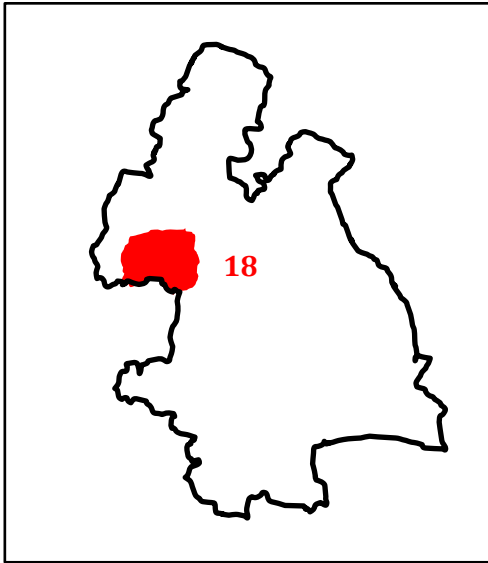


Figure 25: Typical photograph

Extent

This upland mountainous area includes the Silvermines foothills and the Mulkear River and extends southwards from the R499 over Keeper Hill, to the County boundary along the R503. Another regional road, the R497 marks the eastern boundary.

Key Characteristics

- Highly scenic upland area with extensive views afforded from elevated locations towards the River Shannon and the northern lowlands around Nenagh.
- Continuum of landuses noticeable with increased elevation.
- Cluster of prehistoric graves around Rearcross and Kilcommon.
- Industrial legacy evident around Silvermines village.
- Highest mountain in the north of the county at Keeper Hill (694 m OD)
- Settlement confined to lower slopes with small nucleated settlements at Silvermines and Rearcross.

Landform and Geology

In common with the other upland ranges in the north of the county, this area is predominantly underlain by Old Red Sandstone and Silurian Greywackes and Shales. On the very lower western slopes, Carboniferous Lower Limestone Shales occur, supporting good limestone pasture. Thereafter the perimeter of the uplands is dominated by the sandstone and the highest slopes and summits are composed of the greywackes and shales. The sharply rising contours on slopes of Keeper Hill (694m OD) and Silvermine Mountain (479m OD) in particular create a dramatic landform, a legacy of the differential composition of the perimeter sandstone, a softer more easily eroded rock and the harder Palaeozoic greywackes and shales.

Between these two summits, glacial erosion combined with fluvial processes has created a clearly defined narrow river valley as the Mulkear changes its northwards course after rising at Glenduff and traverses westwards and onto the Shannon. There are a number of corries, a legacy of the glacial scouring in the last ice age and these are located on Moher Mountain at Lough Beg and Lough Duff, and on Keeper Hill. The Clare River also rises at Moher Mountain and as it meanders through the lower areas, provide a natural county boundary for some distance with Limerick. Numerous small streams rise in the uplands, generally draining into the Mulkear, such as Doonane River and Glananglanna Stream.

The landform is quite distinctive with a graduation from undulating farmed foothills and more open moorland hills on the lower elevations towards a more irregular and sharply undulating upland fringe. The summits and steeply sided upper slopes are generally composed of blanket bog and coniferous plantation and are frequently inaccessible

Landcover and Ecology

A mosaic of habitats are found within this LCA, reflecting the diversity of landuses. The lower slopes, in common with much of the County are dominated by pasture. In some areas, such as the warmer western slopes of Keeper Hill, improved pasture is evident. Elsewhere within these elevations, a mixture of rushy pasture, improved pasture, pockets of bog and smaller scale coniferous plantations are apparent. The high number of streams and rivers that incise the slopes provide narrow strips of riparian, deciduous vegetation.

Due to its remote and sometimes inaccessible areas, this LCA has a significant number of nature designations and is currently under consideration as a Special Protection Area (SPA) due to the presence of Hen Harriers. Derrygareen Heath (SAC), Keeper Hill (cSAC), Bolingbrook Hill (cSAC), and the northern and western slopes of the Silvermines (cSAC) are the principal SAC designations within this area. The principal habitats associated with these designations relate to blanket bog, heath and unimproved grassland

Human Influences

Settlement is extremely sparse on slopes above 200m in this LCA, due to the physical constraints of the landscape. Consequently, the limited tertiary roads generally traverse around the mountains on lower elevations. Where such settlement does exist, a common vernacular style is apparent, namely single storey farmsteads with associated outbuildings, often forming an L shape and offering some protection within the upland area. Modern dwellings within this upper area commonly remain single storey, frequently with dormer windows. Derelict farmsteads are a noticeable feature in this landscape, a reminder of historically greater population densities in this area.

Field enclosures vary throughout this LCA. Generally, the lower slopes are enclosed by bushy hedgerows with some post and wire fencing. An increasing elevation is associated with a combination

of earthbanks, soil capped stone walls, and post and wire around coniferous plantations. Field boundaries on the uplands proper run parallel upslope and may be a legacy of ladder townlands. Close to the river valleys, ditches reinforced with stone slabs or very high earthbanks are also apparent and support mosses and lichens.

There are also number of fine examples of cut stone bridges and fords crossing the Mulkear and Clare rivers and their tributaries.

This LCA contains one of the most significant cluster of prehistorical features in the County. The earliest evidence for Neolithic settlement in Tipperary comes from the large megalithic tomb at Shanballyedmond (Raleigh, 1985). Elsewhere wedge tombs from the Bronze Age are located at Cooleen, near Silvermines village. A number are also spread across the Rearcross- Kilcommon area on the lower foothills. Stone mauls found within this area also suggest that these settlers were involved in mining the copper deposits within this area. The exploitation of silver and copper deposits in this LCA continued with the Silvermines being 'redeveloped' in the seventeenth century by New English settlers, using a highly skilled imported workforce (Smyth, 1985).

Following the political and social upheavals associated with the declining fortunes of Gaelic families and the allocation of land to Cromwellian settlers, this area became a refuge for disposed Gaelic families and impoverished farmers. The Angelsey roads which divide the wider uplands into four sections, linking Thurles to Newport and Nenagh with Tipperary were built. Their key objective according to Lewis (1837) *"was to open a communication into the mountains through which they extend which had been for many years the asylum of outlaws and of robbers; they also afford the means of agricultural improvement to the whole district, by the introduction of lime from the surrounding quarries."* (quoted in Nolan, 1985). This LCA lies within the barony of Kilnamanagh Upper.

Big Houses, such a key landscape feature in the Ormond Baronies already discussed, are noticeable by their absence here, reflecting the inaccessibility of this area, its reputation for providing refuge to dispossessed Gaelic families and the generally poor quality land. However, this LCA did support significant populations in pre-famine times. The upheavals of the seventeenth century were accompanied by a massive population increase in the upland and bog areas of the county, and this echoed into the nineteenth century (Smyth, 1985). Although many of the dwellings constructed by the poorer and or landless inhabitants of the county are long disintegrated, there remains a noticeable amount of derelict buildings within the lower slopes of this LCA.

Today, this upland area offers a number of indications of the previous mining heritage with a sweat house located at Doonane and an old mining shaft visible just past Silvermines village. A number of walking routes and drives are signed within this LCA including the Slieve Felim Way, Keeper Hill Cycle and Drive and Ballyhourigan Woods.

Landscape Condition and Sensitivity

This generally mountainous landscape is highly scenic and, at higher elevations, commands distant views. The high scenic quality of this LCA as a whole is derived from the variety of landscape features. In brief, these are the mountain moorlands, the steep sided river valleys and the pastoral foothills. Elements which detract from this landscape at higher elevations relate to the plantations of commercial coniferous forestry. These crops occupy large tracts of land and detract principally from the blanket bog covered mountain summits. Indeed, forests are often the dominant feature in the landscape (Keeper Hill and Moher Mountain). In many cases, the bog and the steeply rising topography are screened from view by mature forest crops. A gradation in the presence of forest crops is apparent in the Silvermine range, the easterly side being occupied by large tracts and the westerly side containing less planting thereby affording distant views of the mountain blanket bog habitat. Evidence of mining in this area

presents as a series of spoil heaps, causing localised damage to the Silvermine landscape, both physically and visually. Other degrading elements in this landscape include the presence of derelict farm buildings and dwellings particularly towards the southern end of this LCA.

Below mountain moorland elevation, the landscape changes quite dramatically to high foothills occupied by pasture. This results, virtually, in quite an enclosed landscape visually due to this topography. The landscape is in good condition overall. However, the presence of coniferous forestry plantations detracts from both condition and scenic quality. The forestry plantings in these foothills are generally smaller but tend to occupy hilltops and are thus visually more intrusive.

In terms of landscape designations, scenic views which are protected are gained on the R503 road route in the south western corner of this LCA.

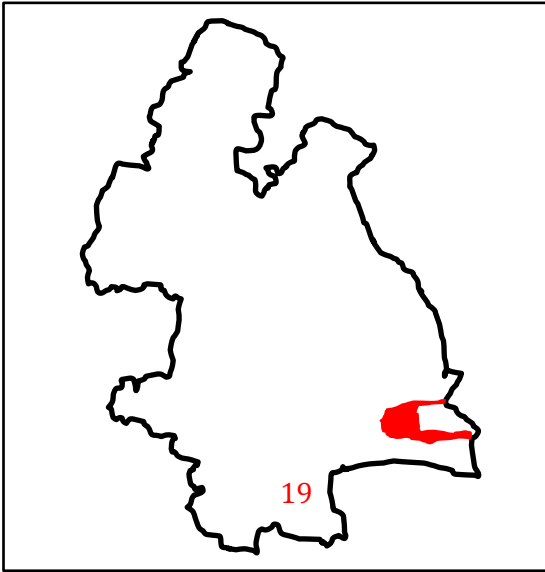
Forces for Change

- Abandonment and dereliction of dwellings and farms.
- Commercial coniferous forestry planting.
- Declining population causing changing patterns in agricultural practice.
- New building in the countryside.
- Wind energy potential.

Principals for Landscape Management

- Design guidance in respect of commercial forestry in upland areas should be provided in order to integrate this landuse into the landscape.
- Management and monitoring of blanket bogs to include measures to reduce their being screened from view by forest crops.
- Design policies and guidance are required in respect of residential development particularly in the vicinity of Rear Cross and Newport which are currently expanding in a somewhat sporadic manner.
- Investigate possibilities for rejuvenation of particular areas where dereliction is evident. This applies to the local landscape along the R503 road route.
- Eliminate illegal dumping / fly-tipping as witnessed, for example, along the Killoscully Road.
- Management of the Slieve Felim Way walking route to protect the wider landscape from erosion by foot traffic.

LCA 19: SLIEVENAMON MOUNTAIN MOSAIC



EXTENT

This area adjoins the eastern boundary of the county, extending into County Kilkenny. Its boundaries are clearly defined by transitions in geology, soils and topography. The boundary of the area is defined by the perimeter roads of the upland to north and south, local roads that roughly follow a contour at the base of the mountain slopes, and by the Anner River that skirts the base of the upland to the west. The Linguan Valley LCA is encircled on three sides by the Slievenamon LCA.

Despite the interconnectedness of physical landscape character between the Lingaun valley and its defining uplands (Slievenamon to the west and the outer slopes of the ridgeline to north and south of the plateau / valley), the variation in cultural character requires that the area be treated as separate LCA to allow for more specific landscape management.

Landscape Character

The peak of Slievenamon, rising steeply to a height of 720m above the surrounding lowland plains at the western extent of the upland, is possibly the most distinctive upland feature of the County. Although the plateau to the east of the peak (Linguan Valley LCA) is flat, its outer slopes, continuous with the lower slopes of Slievenamon, are uniformly steep and of similar character to Slievenamon. Due to the area's limited land capability (shallow, nutrient poor soils), the once typical marginal mountain mosaic of pasture and moorland has largely been replaced by the contemporary equivalent, incorporating forestry. A broad forest belt around the mountains' lower and mid slopes now separates the remaining marginal fields on the lower slopes from the combination of peatbogs and moorland of the upper slopes and crests. Apart from dispersed farm houses on the lower slopes, the area is devoid of built features other than forest tracks.



Figure 26: Gentle slopes of Slievenamon

Landscape Characteristics

- Typical mountain marginal mosaic
- Steep, forested slopes
- A massive peak covered with peat and moorland
- Lack of built features on the mountain slopes *Distinctive Features*
- Distinctive form and relative isolation of Slievenamon and the folklore associated with the Mountain
- Spectacular views from the mountain particularly to the west over the Golden Vale
- Visual Unit: Slievenamon directly influences the *Anner Valley* and the *South East Plain*.
Landscape Character Types
- Marginal Mountain Mosaic
- Mountain Peatland/Moorland
- Upland Forestry Plantation Farmed Foothills

Landscape Values

Socio-cultural (Conservation Values)

- The dramatic and distinctive landform of Slievenamon, the scenic views provided by the peak, and the extensive natural area and remoteness (moorland and peatland on the upper slopes and crests), comprise the area's *aesthetic amenity* and *recreational amenity* value.
- The integrity and unity of the traditional *landscape pattern* and scale (moorland, field patterns and hedgerow vegetation) has been compromised by recent land cover change (forestry), giving rise to a new, and equally recognisable mountain mosaic of land use.
- The *settlement pattern* is sparse, limited to the lower slopes, where there has been little recent development.
- Although devoid of significant settlements or focal points of activity / destinations (other than the peak) the physical prominence and distinctive form of Slievenamon lend the area a distinct *sense of place* and identity.
- There are several clusters of cultural-historic features / monuments in the vicinity of rural settlement clusters still in existence, suggesting a long history of agriculture and settlement on the lower slopes of the uplands.
- *Ecological (Conservation Values)*

- The extensive, relatively un-intensively farmed heath and peatland areas on the upper slopes and peaks of Slievenamon contribute to the area's biodiversity. However, there are no *designated* sites in the area.
- There are no standing water bodies but numerous mountain streams, most feeding the Anner River (according to the EPA), which flows around the north and west of the upland and forms the area's western boundary, contribute to the *presence of water* in the area.
- *Socio-economic (Enhancement / Development Values)*
- The marginal quality of the uplands (shallow and nutrient poor soils) result in limited land capability.

Principals for Management

The cultural value of Slievenamon is particularly high. Its distinctive landform and central location contribute to a high degree of visual exposure, generating an image value of regional importance. The LCA's aesthetic and recreational amenity value is high at the local level but un-tapped relative to other upland areas in the County. Although the environmental value of the LCA benefits from the limited human intervention / production on the upper slopes and peaks, it has been compromised by primarily conifer afforestation on the mid- and lower slopes. Environmental / biodiversity values are recognised by the designation of the mountain as a Natural Heritage Area (NHA).

Landscape Condition

The cultural value of the LCA, generated by its unique topographical character and location, has withstood the impact of land use and land cover alteration. However, ongoing intervention to safeguard and enhance these values should be the objective of all further management of the LCA.

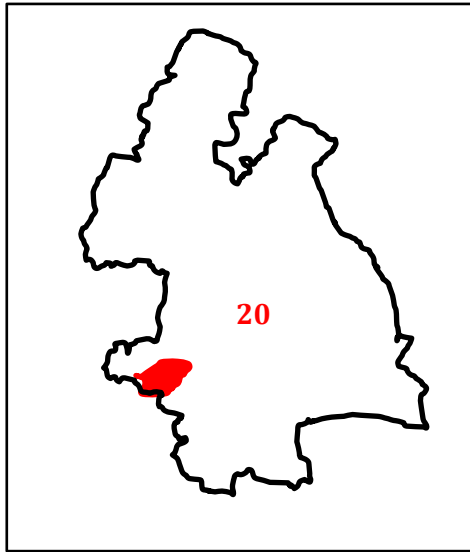
Landscape Capacity

This LCA is classified as having a dominantly vulnerable sensitivity Rating of Class 5 Unique –which means that change would alter the character to the landscape – on account of the upland areas . This area has a very low capacity to accommodate change without detrimental effects. However there are sub-areas comprising the lower slopes that enclose the Linguan Valley plateau where sensitivity is less. However Development Management should note these areas are still highly sensitive but capable of absorbing limited development that complements the existing values and character of the area.



Figure 27: Dramatic view from Slievenamon southwest towards the Golden Vale and the Comeragh Mountains.

LCA 20: GLEN OF AHERLOW MARGINAL & FARMLAND MOSAIC



Extent

The Glen of Aherlow is a tapering plain enclosed by and incorporating the steep northern aspect of the Galtee mountain range and the southern slope of Slievenamuck, two parallel sandstone upland features protruding from the County's western boundary into the vast Suir River valley. The secluded but not isolated Glen is roughly 5km in width at its eastern extent and 2km at its narrowest and constitutes a distinctive area in association with the neighbouring Galtee Mountains and Slievenamuck character area.



Figure 28: Views across the Glen towards the Galtee Mountains

Landscape Characteristics

The area is characterised by typical marginal mountain mosaic of heathland above a forest belt and marginal agriculture on the upland slopes and peaks enclosing a partly wooded farmland mosaic of fields and hedgerows of an intimate scale. The Glen is drained by the cSAC designated river Aherlow, which although not a visually prominent landscape feature, is of regional ecological importance. The juxtaposition of the two landscape types (upland and plain) and their physical,

visual and cultural interrelationship, results in a distinctive local identity and a scenic and recreational amenity of national significance.

- small scale partly wooded fields on the valley plain
- typical *mountain marginal mosaic*
- steep, forested slopes with dramatic open slopes in places
- towering peaks covered with peat and moorland
- Distinctive Features
- Ireland's highest inland mountain range
- Extensive mountain heathland habitat, designated cSAC
- Aherlow river designated cSAC
- Dramatic viewpoints of valley from adjacent uplands and "frame" provided by those uplands, the 'Christ the King' Viewpoint towards the Galtee Mountains is particularly impressive.
- Relationship between lowlands and adjacent upland areas.
- Visual Units: The *Glen of Aherlow* is a self-contained visual unit.

Landscape Character Types

- Marginal Mountain Mosaic
- Mountain Peatland/Moorland
- Upland Forestry Plantation
- Lowland Marginal Mosaic
- Farmed foothills.

Landscape Values

Socio-cultural (Conservation Values)

- The dramatic enclosure of the Glen by the Galtees and Slievenamuck, the scenic views within and across the area, the extensive natural area and remoteness of the Galtee slopes coupled with the intimacy of the Aherlow valley landscape, result in a significant *aesthetic amenity*.
- These characteristics contribute to the nationally acknowledged *recreational amenity* value.
- The integrity and unity of the traditional *landscape pattern* and scale (field patterns and hedgerow vegetation) has been compromised by recent land cover change (forestry), giving rise to a new, and equally recognisable mountain mosaic of land use on the Glen's enclosing slopes. The process has begun on the valley floor, with the enlargement and / or plantation of fields, potentially threatening the quality of the whole.
- The traditional *settlement pattern* and vernacular architecture of the Glen has been compromised by recent non-agricultural rural housing development and by alternative farm enterprise development (e.g. pig farms).
- The scenic combination of the dramatic scale of the mountain landscape and the relative intimacy of scale of the enclosed valley floor, along with the Glen's rural community result in a *distinct Identity / image and sense of place*.

Ecological (Conservation Values)

- Aside from the designation of the Galtee mountain heathland and Slievenamuck woodland, the Aherlow River is designated cSAC (a management plan is currently under development). These *designated areas*, along with extensive areas of moorland in the uplands and mature

hedgerow vegetation on the valley floor, contribute to the area's significant *biodiversity* value.

- The designated Aherlow River, along with the Galtee Corries and mountain streams, indicates the contribution of water to the character of the area.
- The marginal quality of the uplands (shallow, nutrient poor soils) and the relatively limited land capability of the valley floor, creates limited potential for agricultural development.
- The area has nationally acknowledged recreational amenity value. The combination of socio-cultural and ecological values of the area create the potential for further, focused development of the area's *tourism economy*.

Principals for Management

The LCA's conservation values are consistently high. The Glen is of national importance in terms of image, aesthetic and recreational amenity. Its environmental value is of international importance (Galtee Mountain and Aherlow River cSACs). These values are not sufficient or substitutable. A certain amount of compromise of these values, particularly in relation to image/ sense of place, has resulted from recent landscape changes including forestry, farming intensification / diversification and rural housing. This has illustrated the LCA's vulnerability to landscape change that alters the perception of scale and traditional land use and settlement patterns.

Ongoing management and intervention to safeguard and enhance those components that generate the area's conservation value should be the ultimate objective in the management and development of this area. No changes that might reduce the scenic value and cultural-historic value of the Glen's still largely traditional landscape pattern should be allowed, nor changes that might affect the drainage regime of the Aherlow catchment. Consolidation of settlements is required to ensure that villages develop as viable service centres to support the community and tourism industry.

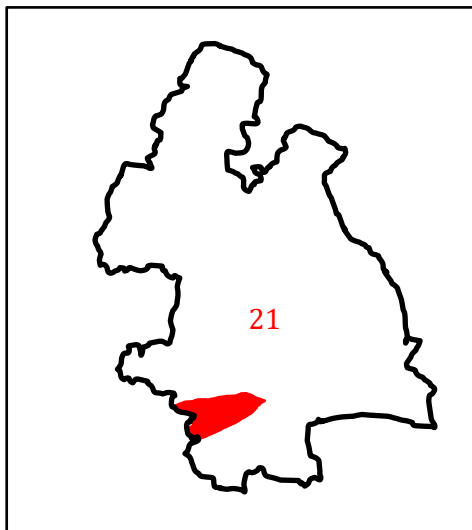
Landscape Condition

The conservation values of the Glen of Aherlow are of consistently high value and support the significant local tourism economy. They should, however, be managed in tandem with the neighbouring character areas of Galtees and Slievenamuck and the pressures for change in the wider area thus ensuring the sustainable development of the areas significant natural assets for the benefit of all.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

The Glen is of national importance in terms of image, aesthetic and recreational amenity and is classified as having a dominantly vulnerable sensitivity Rating of Class 5 Unique –which means that change would alter the character to the landscape – on account of the upland areas . This area has a very low capacity to accommodate change without detrimental effects.

LCA 21: GALTEE MOUNTAINS MOSAIC



EXTENT

This area lies against the south western boundary of the county, extending into the adjoining County Limerick. It consists of the massive Galtee Mountains to the south and its boundaries are clearly defined by transitions in geology, soils and topography. The former N8 national Road (now a regional road after the opening of the M8 Motorway) Road skirts the southern slopes of the Galtees along the abrupt transition in gradient and forms the character area's southern boundary of the character area with the northern facing slopes to the Glen of Aherlow forming its northern boundary.

Whilst there is a clear interconnectedness of physical landscape character between the Galtee Mountains, the Glen of Aherlow and the Slievenamuck ridge further north (the Glen consists in part of the northern face of the Galtee's and the southern face of Slievenamuck), the variation in cultural character requires that the area be divided into three distinctive areas to allow for more specific landscape management. Therefore, this section should be read in conjunction with Sections 2.3 and 2.4 which describe the neighbouring landscape character areas.

Projecting into the central plain of the County from its western boundary, the Galtee Mountain range is a linear range of Sandstone Mountains reaching a height of 919m (Galtymore), the highest inland mountain range in Ireland. The mountains become gradually less pronounced in height and gradient to the east of Galtymore, with a more abrupt transition some way to the west in County Limerick.

The area is characterised by steep, forested slopes and glacial valleys rising up from the surrounding plains towards towering peat and moorland covered peaks. Due to the area's limited land capability (shallow, nutrient poor soils), the once typical marginal mountain mosaic of pasture and moorland has largely been replaced by the modern equivalent, incorporating forestry. A broad forest belt around the mountains' lower and mid slopes now separates the original land cover types. The extensive mountain peatland habitat along the crest of the Galtee Mountains is designated a SAC.



Figure 29: Mountain Mosaic on the Galtees

Landscape Characteristics

- typical mountain marginal mosaic
- steep, forested slopes
- glacial valleys
- towering peaks covered with peat and moorland
- Distinctive Features
- Ireland's highest inland mountain range
- extensive mountain peatland habitat, designated SAC
- Visual Units: The LCA influences and forms the northern boundary of the *South West Plain*.
- *Landscape Types*
- Marginal Mountain Mosaic
- Mountain Peatland/Moorland
- Upland Forestry Plantation
- Farmed Foothills

Landscape Values

Socio-cultural (Conservation Values)

- The dramatic landform of the Galtees, the scenic views that they offer, and the extensive natural area and remoteness (moorland and peatland on the upper slopes and crests), contribute to the area's *aesthetic amenity*, and related *recreational amenity* value.
- The integrity and unity of the traditional *landscape pattern* and scale (moorland, field patterns and hedgerow vegetation) has been compromised, particularly by recent land cover change (forestry), giving rise to a new, and equally recognisable mountain mosaic of land use.
- The traditional *settlement pattern* and vernacular architecture has been compromised by recent non-agricultural rural housing development.
- Although devoid of identifiable settlement cores or significant focal points of activity / destinations the physical prominence of the area and its location relative to the Glen of

Aherlow and the proposed N8 motorway, lend the area a distinct *sense of place*, if not a recognisable identity (except when seen in the context of the Glen of Aherlow).

Ecological (Conservation Values)

- A large cSAC designated area of mountain heathland habitat and a pNHA of remnant oak wood in the Galtees, contribute to the area's significant *biodiversity* value.
- Numerous mountain streams, all feeding the Suir River, contributes to the *presence of water* in the area.

Socio-economic (Enhancement / Development Values)

- Notwithstanding the very limited land capability (shallow, nutrient poor soils), the area is productive, with its extensive coniferous forests and to a lesser extent the remaining pastoral farmland, contributing to the local economy.
- Where farmland is uneconomic there may be potential for forestry to take its place, should the land prove capable of economic production.

Principals for Management

(Galtees cSAC) and despite significant afforestation of the area, have remained largely intact. The contribution of the uplands in terms of image, aesthetic and recreational amenity and ecological value at the local and regional scale is significant. However, this value is largely perceived and appreciated in the neighbouring Glen of Aherlow LCA. Ongoing management and intervention to safeguard and enhance those components that generate the area's conservation value should be the ultimate objective in the management and development of this area. As such the upper slopes and peaks of the range comprising the Galtee SAC have been identified as a sub-area with Special sensitivity. The ridge line of the range as perceived from the Glen of Aherlow should also be protected.

Landscape Condition

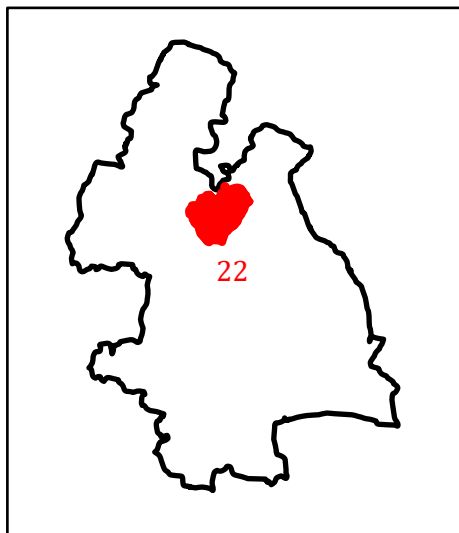
The LCA's conservation values (ecological and cultural) have a consistently high level of importance ranging from local to international significance. The conservation values of the southern slopes of the Galtees are more sufficient and substitutable than the northern slopes which form part of the Glen.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

This landscape is classified as having a dominantly vulnerable sensitivity Rating of Class 5 Unique –which means that change would alter the character to the landscape – on account of the upland areas. These areas have a very low capacity to accommodate change without detrimental effects.

However, development management should have regard the less sensitive lower transition areas that are less sensitive– with capacity to facilitate the continuation of the established uses– providing that this does not affect the appearance and character of the setting of this unique landscape feature.

LCA 22: DEVIL'S BIT MOUNTAINS



Extent

This upland and hilly area encompasses the Devilsbit and Borrisnoe mountains and extends north-eastwards from the R498 to Borrisoleigh, and then northwards along the 200m contour line of the mountain range up to the County border with Offaly and westwards towards Toomevara

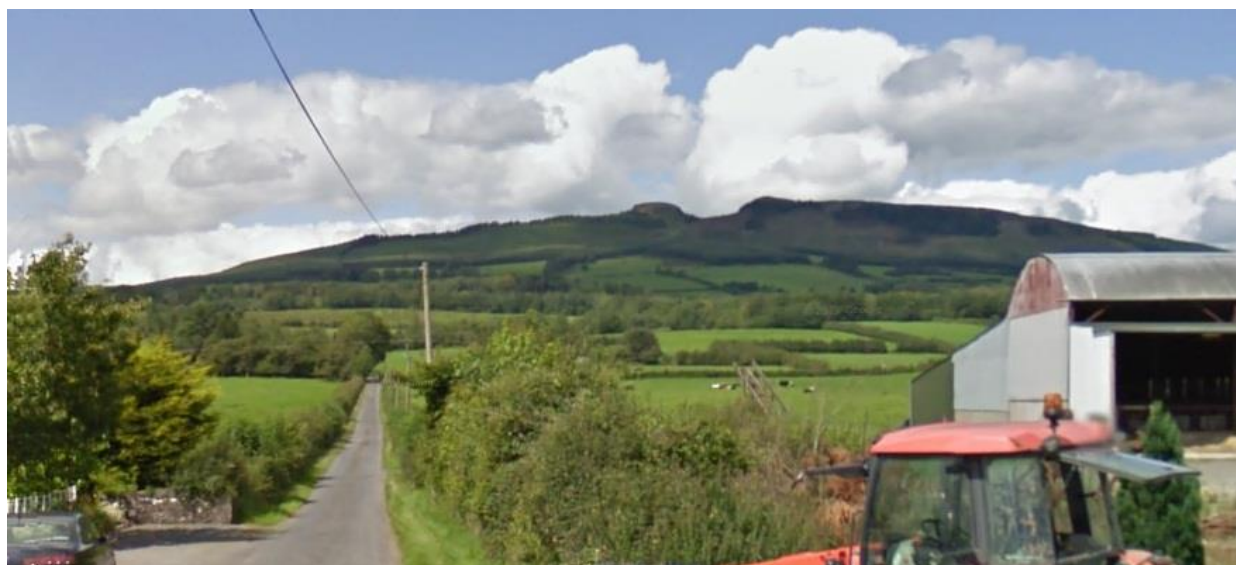


Figure 30: Typical landscape view of the area

Landscape Characteristics

- Upland zone punctuating the surrounding low lying landscape.
- Extension of Silvermines to Slieve Bloom upland range.
- Distinctive ridgeline of Devilsbit with associated folk mythology.
- Rural in character with limited settlements on lower slopes.

Geology and Landform

The Devilsbit Mountains rise dramatically between Toomevara to the west and Templemore and Roscrea to the southeast and northeast respectively. The mountains rise up above the surrounding lowlands to peaks of 480m OD (Devilsbit Mountain), 445m OD (Kilduff Mountain) and 442m OD (Borrisnoe Mountain). Below the mountain summits, the upland fringe forms an irregular and sharply undulating landscape. The altitude lowers to foothills towards Toomyvara in the west and Borrisoleigh in the south.

The Devilsbit area is underlain by Silurian Greywackes and Slates. The source of the River Suir is found on the northern plateau of Borrisnoe Mountain at Benduff, and other small streams run down the mountain sides in various directions. The Ollatrim River runs along the county boundary with Offaly to the north.

Landcover and Ecology

The mountain summits are covered with large tracts of coniferous forestry, scrub and some blanket bog. Upper slopes, or the upland fringe, contain coniferous forestry and upland grazing. In lower lying areas and in the foothills of the Devilsbit Mountains, pasture is dominant with some arable land.

The summit of Devilsbit Mountain and a ridge on the eastern side running north to Kilduff Mountain is designated as the Devilsbit SAC. The main habitats found in the Devilsbit Mountain area are upland grassland, heath and woodland. Grassland is largely confined to mineral soils on lower slopes. Heath dominates the upper slopes, with woodland on the upland fringe. Small groves of mature beech and oak persist on higher slopes. Protected species present in the area include the rare Small-white Orchid and Peregrine Falcon.

Human Influences

Settlement is sparse in this LCA, with most dwellings concentrated below 200m OD. There are no nucleated settlements within this LCA. The houses in the foothills share similarities with the other upland zones in the County, namely single storey dwellings, sometimes in an L-shape and contained by stone and managed hedges. There are also some two storey farmhouses. These dwellings are commonly accompanied by outbuildings such as low cattle sheds and hay barns.

Field enclosure alters with increasing elevation. In the foothills, hedgerows are present often with a good number of hedgetrees providing screening opportunities. Hedgerows give way to less managed enclosure such as post and wire and occasional old stone walls formed from small to medium stones.

This LCA lies largely within the Barony of Ikerrin. Big Houses are not a feature within this LCA, as the thin soils were less attractive to settlers than the higher quality lower plains. There is little evidence of

prehistoric settlement within this LCA, although a gold bowl from the late Bronze Age may suggest ritual use of this upland area. The Norman manor at Inch is one of only two motted castles in Tipperary (the other located at Thurles). The development of this motted castle suggests the need for a defensive settlement close to the upland area, but also indicates that the forested slopes of the Devilsbit was a factor in the economy of the Norman manorial system in this area (Empey, 1985).

It is important to note the cultural significance of the Devilsbit Mountains to the surrounding population and the County at large. There is a large number of folk traditions and rituals associated with the distinctive ridgeline of the mountain, principally the involvement of the Devil in biting a chunk off the mountain, finding it to be particularly hard and spitting it out as he travelled over the southern plains, creating the Rock of Cashel. The Devilsbit is also known as the Rock of Barnane, and has an annual pattern day, 'Rock Sunday' in July. The route involves first climbing to the cleft that gives the mountain its distinctive name and then onto the summit. In former times, games used to be held on the summit on Rock Sunday between different factions known as 'Blackfeet', 'Whitefeet', 'Cummins' and 'Darrigs' (O'Corrbui, 1991).

Landscape Condition

This area is characterised by mountain moorland and upland hills. The mountain area associated with Devil's Bit has a definite sense of remoteness and wildness which contributes positively to the scenic quality of this area. This quality is added to by the presence of natural habitats, namely upland grassland, heathland and wooded areas together with the scarcity of settlements and infrastructure. At lower elevations, the landscape is a working farmed landscape albeit comprised of gently rolling hills of significant height and scale. This landscape carries no sense of remoteness, being well developed in terms of road infrastructure and settlements. The impact of farm intensification has led to enlarged field sizes and hedgerow removal.

A transitional landscape is identified and located between the mountain areas and the rolling hills. Typically characterised by the presence of scrub, rough grazing and poorly maintained hedgerows, this part of the LCA is perhaps in poorest condition.

Landscape Significance and Capacity

This is a sensitive landscape, not solely because of the unique characteristics of Devil's Bit Mountain but also because of the relatively undeveloped nature of the area thereby preserving scenic quality. The principal intervention that impacts on scenic quality is the presence of large tracts of coniferous forestry particularly on Borrishoe Mountain.

This landscape is classified as having a dominantly vulnerable sensitivity Rating of Class 5 Unique – which means that Change would alter the character to the landscape – on account of the upland areas. These areas have a very low capacity to accommodate change without detrimental effects.

However, development management should have regard the significantly less sensitive lower transition areas that are intrinsically more robust – with capacity to facilitate the continuation of the working farmed landscape – providing that this does not affect the appearance and character of the setting of this unique landscape feature.

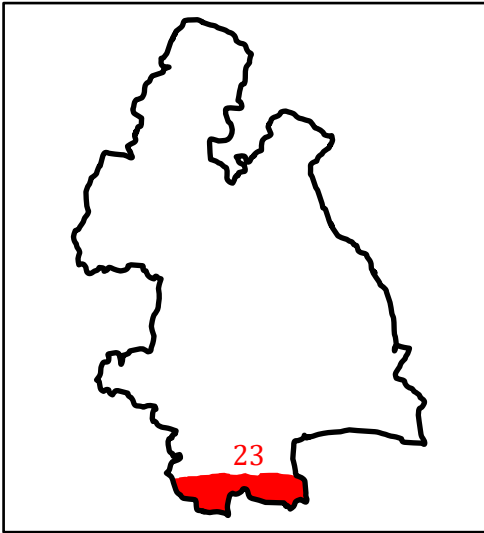
Forces for Change

- Commercial coniferous forestry.
- Development of wind energy.
- Changes in agricultural practices owing to decrease in population.

Principals for Landscape Management

- Natural habitats (upland grassland, heathland and wooded areas) that contribute to landscape character and scenic quality should be safeguarded.
- Design guidance in respect of commercial forestry should be provided in order to integrate this landuse into the landscape
- Introduction of new planting to rejuvenate hedgerow boundaries of poor condition.

LCA 23: KNOCKMEALDOWN MOUNTAIN MOSAIC



EXTENT

The LCA comprises the northern face of the linear range of mountains, the highest of which, Knockmealdown, is 794m. The County boundary, which follows the ridgeline of the range for some distance, forms the western, southern and eastern boundaries of the LCA. The northern boundary follows the Duag River and a local road along the base of the mountain slopes. Also included in the LCA is the southern face of the Araglin River valley, which lies south of and parallel to the mountain range. This area and the areas of lesser peaks and slopes at the western and eastern extents of the mountain range are considered sub-areas of the LCA. The Araglin River Valley is considered to be a visual unit in its own right.

Landscape Character

The area is characterised by steep, forested slopes and glacial valleys rising up from the County's southern plains to peat and moorland covered peaks. Except in the western and eastern extents of the range, where the landform (including elevation) is less pronounced and marginal farmland mosaics remain and along the northern foothills, there is no human settlement. Due to the area's limited land capability, the once typical marginal mountain mosaic of marginal pasture and moorland has largely been replaced by a contemporary equivalent, incorporating forestry, which now separates the original land cover types with a broad band around the mountains' lower and mid slopes.



Figure 31: Lake at the Vee surrounded by Mountain Peatland/Moorland

Landscape Characteristics

- Rolling uplands.
- Dramatic topography of moorland on the upper slopes.
- Forest plantations and marginal agriculture on the lower slopes.
- Minimal built development.

Distinctive Features

- The Vee viewpoint.
- Large scale simple landscape components.
- Small mosaics of pastoral land in valleys and plateaus contrasting with large landscape elements.
- Dramatic west to east elevation change where the South West Plain meets the Knockmealdown Mountains
- Visual Units - *Araglin Valley* within the LCA and *South West Plain* extends to the north towards Cahir.

Landscape Types

- Marginal Mountain Mosaic
- Mountain Peatland/Moorland
- Upland Forestry Plantation
- Farmed Foothills

Landscape Values

Socio-cultural (Conservation Values)

- The dramatic landform of the mountains, the scenic views that they offer, and the extensive natural area and remoteness (moorland and peatland on the upper slopes and crests), comprise the area's *aesthetic amenity* and contribute to the area's significant *recreational amenity* value.
- The integrity and unity of the traditional *landscape pattern* and scale (moorland with marginal fields on the lower slopes), has been compromised by recent land cover change (forestry), giving rise to a new, equally recognisable mountain mosaic of land use.
- The *settlement pattern* is very sparse.
- Although devoid of *settlements* and community, the physical prominence of the mountains, and the well-known waymarked walks, scenic drive and viewpoints, lend the area a distinct *sense of place and identity*.
- The mosaics of farmland on the sheltered slopes provide continuity of human activity and a *historical value*.



Figure 32: Upland Forestry Plantation on Knockmealdown Mountain

Ecological (Conservation Values)

The extensive peatland areas on the upper slopes and peaks, and the *presence of water* in two corries and numerous mountain streams, contribute to the area's *biodiversity* value. There are however as yet no designated areas. Many of the valleys have been afforested and are choked by invading rhododendron, threatening the integrity of the ecosystems and thus the area's biodiversity. Overgrazing of the moorlands, and the traffic along the waymarked walks in the area of viewpoints accessed by road in particular, may lead to further depletion of the soil quality locally, potentially affecting biodiversity.

Socio-economic (Enhancement / Development Values)

The marginal quality of the uplands (shallow and nutrient poor soils) result in limited land capability. Much of the area that is capable, has been converted to forestry and the extensive Coillte owned plantations produce significant volumes of timber.

Principals for Management

The LCA's conservation values (ecological and cultural) have a consistently high level of importance ranging from local to national significance (Glenboy pNHA) and despite significant afforestation of the area, have remained largely intact. Its amenity value is acknowledged and harnessed by the Avondhu and East Munster Ways that traverse the area, and by the usage of the Vee as an amenity area. Although the environmental value of the LCA benefits from the limited human intervention / production on the upper slopes and peaks, it has been severely compromised by primarily conifer afforestation on the mid- and lower slopes. Glenboy Wood pNHA is the only designated habitat requiring particular conservation measures.

Ongoing management and intervention to safeguard and enhance those components that generate the area's conservation value should be the ultimate objective in the management and development of this area. Knockmealdown and the other central peaks of the range should be preserved.

Landscape Significance and Capacity

This landscape is classified as having a vulnerable sensitivity Rating of Class 5 Unique –which means that Change would alter the character to the landscape. The area has a very low capacity to accommodate change without detrimental effects.

The central sub-area west of and including the Gap (now defined by the R668 between the peaks of Knockshanahullion and Knockmealdown) are too sensitive to absorb more than limited change due to their natural character and elevation.

APPENDIX 2

SCENIC ROUTES AND VIEWS OF TIPPERARY



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council



For: Tipperary County Council

Introduction

Proposed scenic views and routes in Tipperary are described below in Table A: Schedule of Scenic Routes and Views. All scenic routes/views are designated a Reference number i.e. V1, V2, V3 etc. There are 63 designated routes and views in total.

All images: Courtesy of Mapdata @Google 2016

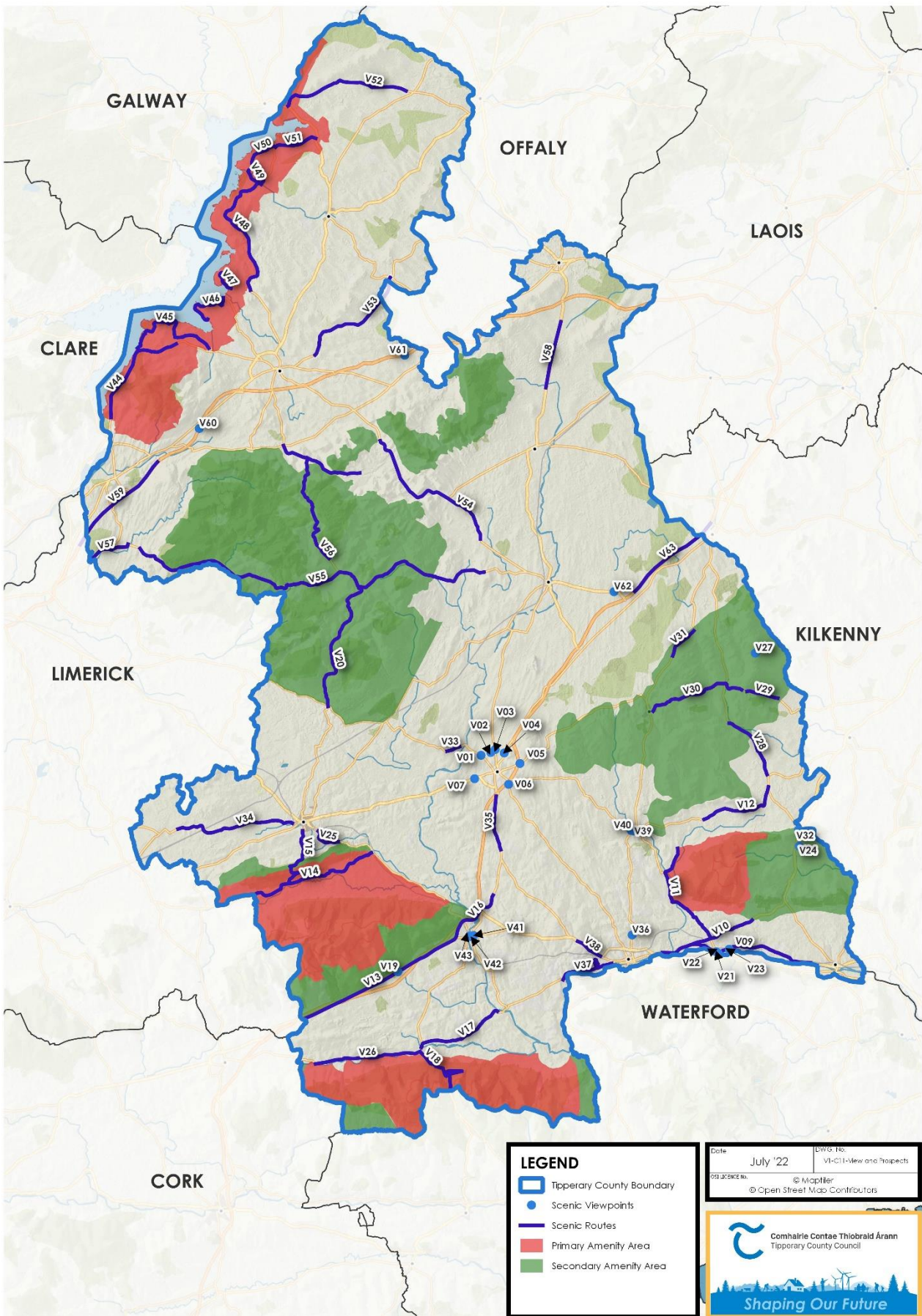


Figure 1: Location of Scenic Routes and Views (In the event of a discrepancy, Table A will take precedent)

Table A: Schedule of Scenic Routes and Views	
Map Reference	Description
V01	View towards the Rock of Cashel from Dundrum Road
V02	View towards the Rock of Cashel from Ardmayle Road
V03	View towards the Rock of Cashel from Boherlahan Road
V04	View towards the Rock of Cashel from Dublin Road
V05	View towards the Rock of Cashel from Dualla Road
V06	View towards the Rock of Cashel from Clonmel Road
V07	Views from N74 at Deerpark, Cashel
V08	Views around Marlfield Lake, Clonmel
V09	Views over River Suir Valley along Clonmel - Carrick-on-Suir road (N24)
V10	Views to Slievenamon along Clonmel - Kilkenny road (N76), from Kilhefferan - Clashinisky
V11	Views to Slievenamon along Seskin - Killusty road (R706)
V12	Views to Slievenamon along Cloneen - Mullinahone road (R692)
V13	Views to Galtees along Cahir - Kilbehenny road (N8)
V14	Views to Galtees and Slievenamuck along Bansha - Lisvernane road (R663)
V15	Views to Galtees along Ballyglass - Newtown road (R664)
V16	Views along M8 West and South of Cahir
V17	Views south along Ardfinnan - Clogheen road (R665)
V18	Views along Clogheen - Mount Mellerary road (R668)
V19	Views south to Knockmealdown Mountains from Kilcoran
V20	Views in all directions from Ironmills to Milestone Road (R497)
V21	Views south to Comeragh foothills from Kilsheelan
V22	Views north to Slievenamon from Kilsheelan
V23	Views north to Slievenamon and south to the Comeraghs, east of Kilsheelan (N24)
V24	Views to Slievenamon and the Comeraghs
V25	Views along road from Tipperary Town - Kilshane (N24)
V26	Views south towards Knockmealdown Mountains along the regional road (R665)
V27	War House Hill, views east and west
V28	Views south to Slievenamon along R690

V29	Views to the south along road R691.
V30	Views to the west and south along road R691.
V31	Views to the west between Glengoole and Ballysloe, along road R689.
V32	Views north at junction of N76 and R690.
V33	Views south along road R505 at Drehideenglashanatooha Bridge.
V34	Views to the south and south-east from Shronell crossroads (R515)
V35	Views of the Comeragh Mountains looking south on the R639 from Cashel
V36	Views of the Comeragh Mountains looking south on the approach R689 from Fethard
V37	Views South over River Suir Valley from Marlfield - Knocklofty Road
V38	View on the Cahir approach road to Clonmel looking southeast to lands north of Marlfield and west of the town.
V39	View over Clashawley River to the south from quay west of Watergate Street, Fethard
V40	Views north-west and south-east from bridge at west end of Main Street, Fethard
V41	Views to the south and to the west at the junction of Old Church Street and Market Street, Cahir
V42	View to the west up Castle Street from The Square, Cahir
V43	Views to the north and south from Bridge Street, Cahir
V44	Views west and sections of the Road to the east of the R494
V45	Views along lakeside roads north of Portroe
V46	Views west south of Dromineer
V47	Views west to lake north of Dromineer
V48	West of R493 Puckane to Ballinderry
V49	West of L5080 north of Ballinderry
V50	Views west of the L1091 south west of Terryglass
V51	West of the R493 north of Terryglass
V52	South on the R489 east of Lorrha
V53	Views east on the R491 Cloughjordan to Nenagh
V54	Views from the R498 from Bouladuff through Borrisoleigh
V55	North and south of the R503 from Newport to Ballycahill
V56	East and west of the R497
V57	View west on the Cork Road approach to Newport

V58	West on the N62 north of Templemore
V59	Views of surrounding landscape from M7 including Annaholty and Rosssfinch
V60	Views of landscape from M7 at Gortmore southwest of Nenagh
V61	Views of the landscape from the M7 at Clash
V62	Views from the N75 in Borris, east of Thurles
V63	Views from M8 near Longford's Pass

*Extracted with MapInfo Table for amalgamated data for County, corresponding routes and views are mapped.

View 1: View towards the Rock of Cashel from Dundrum Road



View 2: View towards the Rock of Cashel from Ardmayle Road



View 3: View towards the Rock of Cashel from Boherlahan Road



View 4: View towards the Rock of Cashel from Dublin Road



View 5: View toward the Rock of Cashel from Dualla Road



View 6: View towards the Rock of Cashel from Clonmel Road



View 7: Views from N74 at Deerpark



View 8: Views around the Marlfield Lake area.



View 9: Views over River Suir Valley along Clonmel – Carrick-on-Suir Road



View 10: Views to Slievenamon along Clonmel to Kilkenny road (N76) from Kilhefferan-Clashinisky



View 11: Views to Slievenamon along Seskin – Killusty road



View 12: Views to Slievenamon along Cloneen – Mullinahone Road



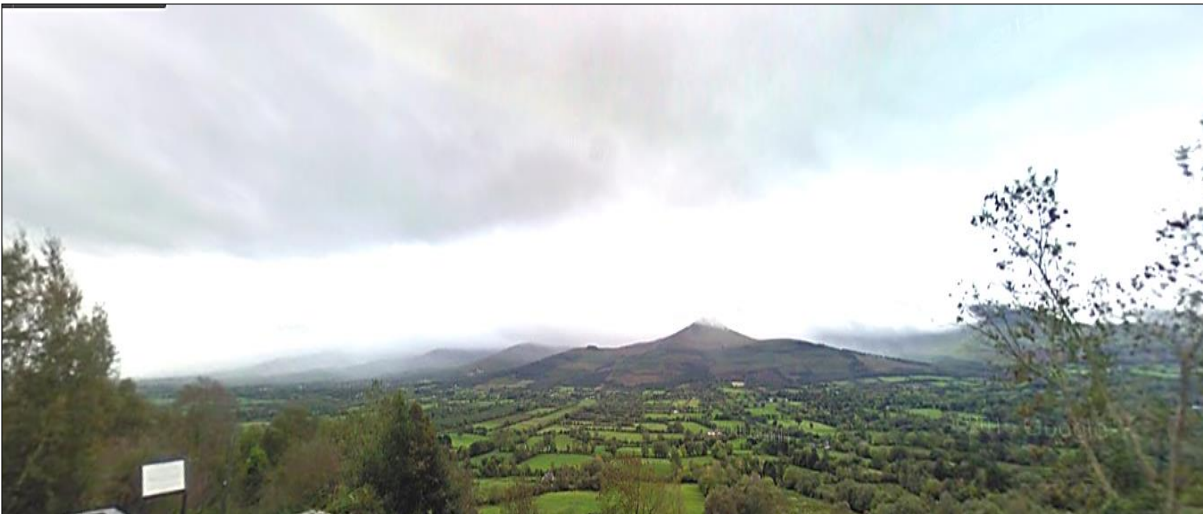
View 13: Views to Galtees along Cahir – Kilbehenny road (N8)



View 14: Views to Galtees along Bansha – Lisvernane road (R663)



View 15: Views to Galtees along Ballyglass – Newtown Road (R664)



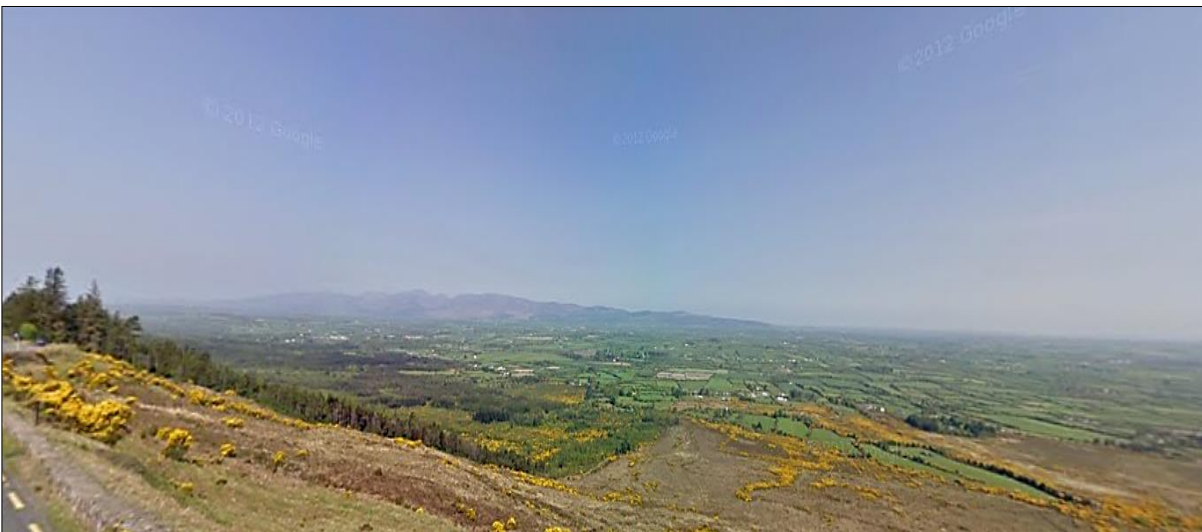
View 16: Views along M8 West and South of Cahir



View 17: Views south along Ardfinnan – Clogheen road (R665)



View 18: Views along Clogheen – Mount Mellary road (R668)



View 19: Views south to Knockmealdown Mountains from Kilcoran



View 20: Views in all directions from Ironmills to Milestone Road



View 21: Views south to Commeragh foothills from Kilsheelan



View 22: Views north to Slievenamon from Kilsheelan



View 23: Views north to Slievenamon and south to the Commeragh, east of Kilsheelan (N24)



View 24: Views to Slievenamon and the Commeragh Mountains



View 25: Views along the Road from Tipperary Town to Kilshane (N24)



View 26: Views south towards Knocklmealdown Mountains along the regional road (R665)



View 27: War House Hill, views east and west



View 28: Views south to Slievenamon along R690



View 29: Views to the south along road R691



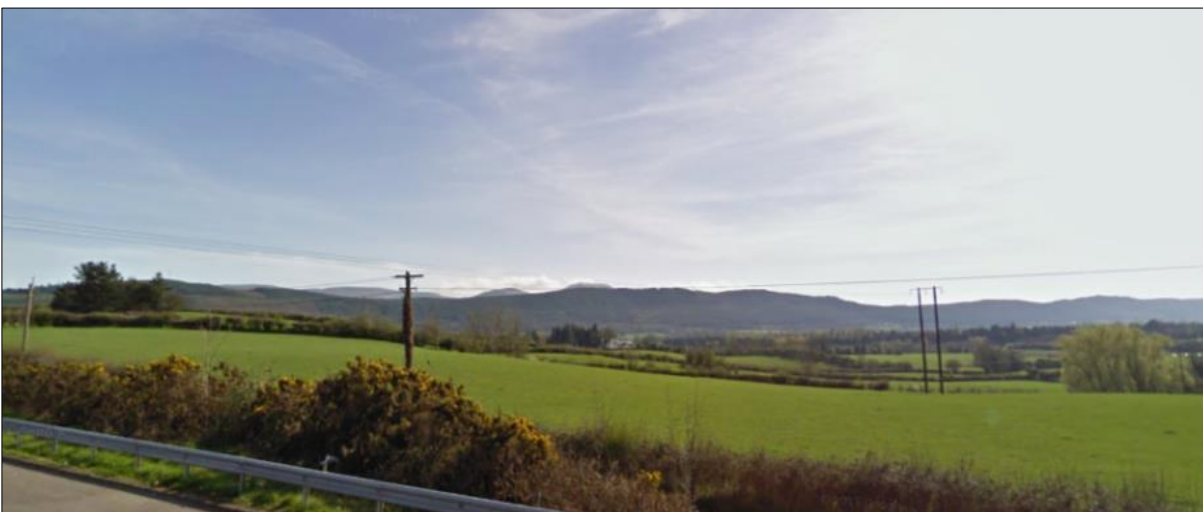
View 30: Views to the west and south along road R691



View 31: Views to the west between Glengoole and Ballysloe, along R689.



View 32: Views north at junction of N76 and R690



View 33: Views south along road R505 at Drehideenglashanatooha Bridge.



View 34: Views to the south and south-east from Shronell Crossroads



View 35: Views of the Commeragh Mountains looking south on the approach road (R688) from Cashel



View 36: Views of the Commeragh Mountains looking south on the approach R689 from Fethard



View 37: Views south over River Suir valley from Marfield-Knocklofty road



View 38: View on the Cahir approach road to Clonmel looking southeast to lands north of Marfield and west of the town



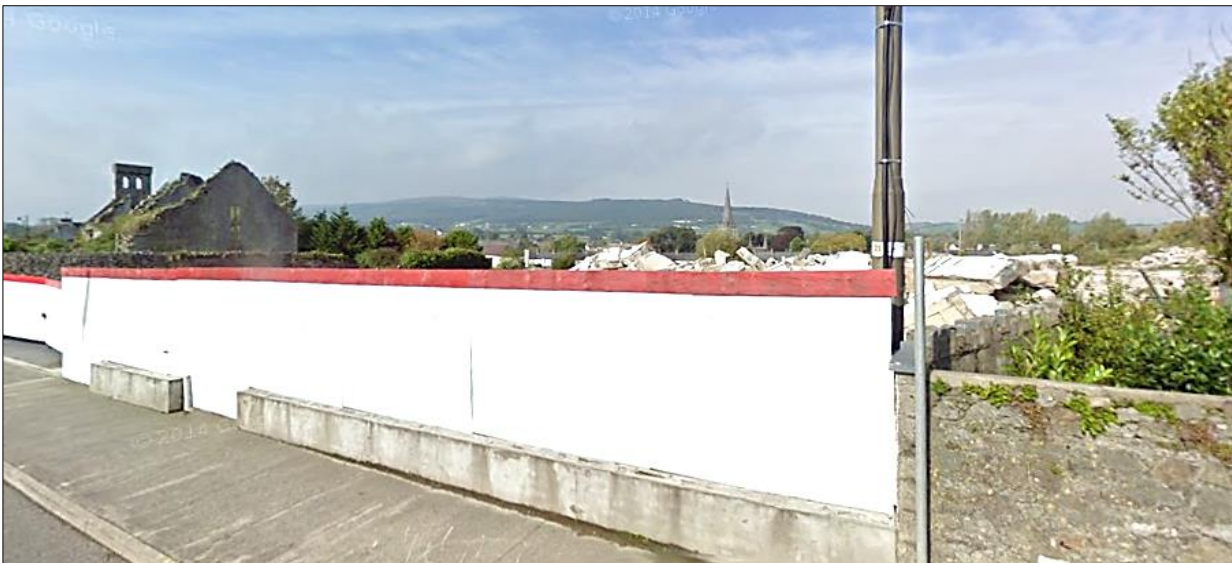
View 39: View over Clashawley River to the south from quay west of Watergate Street, Fethard



View 40: Views north-west and south-east from bridge at west end of Main Street, Fethard



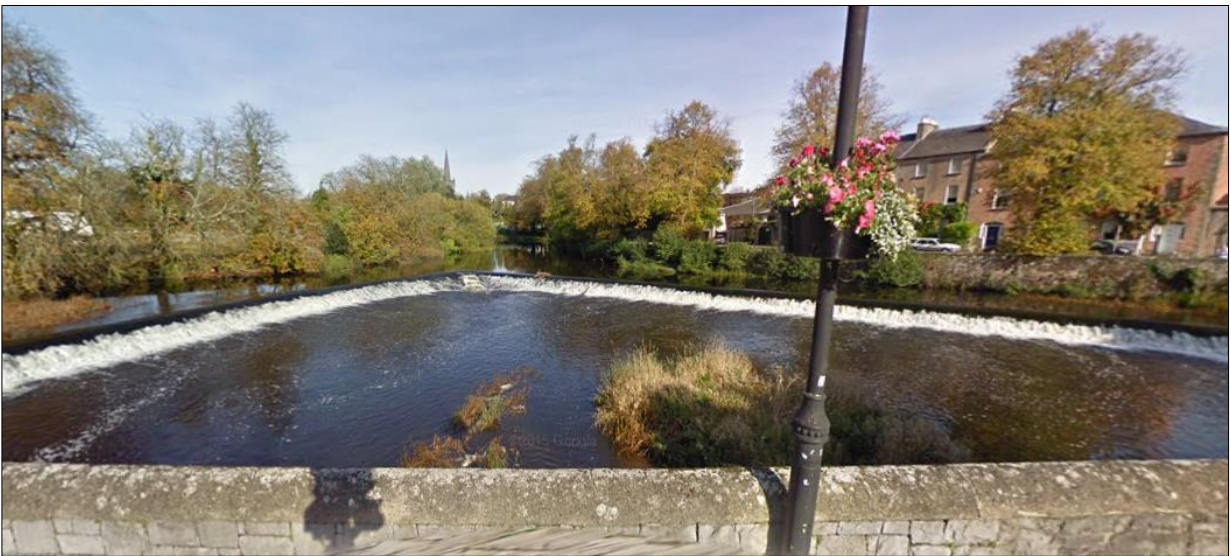
View 41: Views to the south and to the west at the junction of Old Church Street and Market Street, Cahir



View 42: View to the west up Castle Street from The Square, Cahir



View 43: Views to the north and south from Bridge Street, Cahir



View 44: Views west and east of the R494 road from Ballina to Portroe



View 45: Views north and west of the L6037 and L6056 west of Portroe



View 46: Views west of the L1023 south of Dromineer



View 47: Views west of the L1026 north of Dromineer



View 48: Views west of the R493 north of Puckane to Ballinderry



View 49: Views west of L5080 north of Ballinderry



View 50: Views west of the L1091 south west of Terryglass



View 51: Views west of the R493 south west of Terryglass



View 52: Views south on the R489 east of Lorrha



View 53: Views east on the R491 Cloughjordan to Nenagh



View 54: Views north and south of the R498 from Bouladuff through Borrissleigh to Latteragh



View 55: Views north and south on sections of the R503 from Newport to Ballycahill



View 56: Views east and west of the R497





View 57: Views along the R503 western approach road to Newport



View 58: Views west on the N62 north of Templemore



View 59: Views of surrounding landscape from M7 including Annaholty and Rossfinch



View 60: Views of landscape from M7 at Gortmore southwest of Nenagh



View 61: Views of the landscape from the M7 at Clash



View 62: View from the N75 in Borris, east of Thurles



View 63: View from M8 Longford's Pass North



All images: Courtesy of Mapdata @Google 2016



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