In this chapter, the Landscape Character Types (LCTs), which were outlined in Chapter One, are discussed in more detail.

In this report, the team has used the term **Landscape Character Types**: this term is increasingly being accepted internationally as standard nomenclature and corresponds to the **Physical Units** referenced in the national draft guidelines on Landscape Character Assessment.

**Landscape Character Types** are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout any defined area. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical landuse. For example, blanket bog uplands are distinct landscape character types and are recognisable as such whether they occur in Monaghan or other counties.

The team took as its starting point LCT boundaries that were identified through GIS analysis. The team was of the opinion that identifying principal physical influences for each LCT would assist GIS analysis and contribute to LCT identification at a national level. Principal physical influences are considered to be the key criteria that have led to the creation of different LCTs. For example, in some LCTs such as raised bog, hydrology and geology tend to be the principal physical influences whereas LCTs such as those comprising drumlins are likely to have been largely influenced by the glacial processes that occurred within the area.

Despite specific physical influences being identifiable for particular LCTs, many common criteria can be identified that apply to all LCTs. Thus, universal landscape criteria have been identified, comprising topography, geology, landcover and landuse. This reflects current guidance at national and European level recommending the identification of LCTs principally in terms of landcover and landform.

**Figures 7a and 7b** illustrate the Landscape Character Types identified in County Monaghan.

These are presented in the following pages. Each LCT is described briefly, accompanied by their key characteristics and the forces for change acting upon each unit.
FIGURE 7a: Landscape Character Types

Landscape Character Types
1. Blanket Bog
2. Drumlin Farmland
3. Drumlin Foothills
4. Farmed Foothills
5. Farmed Lakelands
6. Flat Riverine Farmland
7. River Valley Farmland
8. Undulating Farmland
9. Upland Bog with Afforestation
10. Upland Drumlin Farmland
11. Upland Farmland with Afforestation
12. Upland Farmland with Rock Outcrops
13. Upland Plateau
14. Urban
FIGURE 7b: Landscape Character Types

Landscape Character Types
- Blanket Bog
- Drumlins Farmland
- Drumlins Foothills
- Farmed Foothills
- Farmed Lakelands
- Flat Riverine Farmland
- River Valley Farmland
- Undulating Farmland
- Upland Bog with Afforestation
- Upland Drumlins Farmland
- Upland Farmland with Afforestation
- Upland Farmland with Rock Outcrops
- Upland Plateau
- Urban
3.1 LCT no 1 – Blanket Bog

This landscape type occurs in only one location in the north western part of the County and is associated with the foothills of Sliabh Beagh.

3.1.1 Physical Data

- Elevation ranges from 240-360 m
- Geology comprises largely sandstones from the Dinantian period.
- The Landcover is principally blanket bog

3.1.2 Key Characteristics

- Elevated, flat and open, moorland landscape with extensive long range views.
- Peatland habitat cover throughout with no field pattern present or boundary subdivisions. Occasional Loughs.
- Presence of small mountain streams.
- Minor roads present, the edges of which can be lined with wind pruned native shrub species.
- Absence of settlements and few if any single dwellings. A remote wild landscape setting.

3.1.3 Description

This is an elevated relatively flat exposed landscape. The character of this landscape is largely represented by the characteristics associated with peat bog habitats. This moorland character is associated with the elevated mountain landscape of Slieve Beagh. In this peat land context, the main vegetation species located include heather (*Calluna spp*), deer sedge (*Carex hallii*), cotton grass (*Eriophorum virginicum*), wild cranberry (*Vaccinium spp*), various species of moss and lichen and bracken (*Pteris aquilina*). In terms of wooded vegetation, the principal species include hawthorn (*Crataegus spp*) and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and some naturalised pine species which are present within occasional roadside hedgerows. Growth of wooded vegetation is somewhat dwarfed owing to the effects of wind pruning. Occasional loughs are located in this landscape.
This landscape is dominated by the peat land habitat and as such has no defined pattern, field boundaries or hedgerows. There is little or no human settlement and the extent of human activity relates only to the appeal of this landscape as a visitor attraction and picnic spot.

3.1.4 Forces for Change

- The greatest force for change acting upon this landscape character type is as a result of forestry. Its open exposed character, with panoramic views, makes it quite sensitive to change. Extensive conifer plantations surrounding this area (LCT 9) provide a broken and irregular pattern to lower slopes. Further extension of forestry planting into this area is already beginning to occur and should be restricted.

- Peat cutting on upland blanket bogs remains an important source of fuel. Mechanical cutting, which is highly destructive to the bog vegetation, is seen in some areas on a small scale. There are some areas of intact bog and heather moorland remaining.

- Transmission masts and other antennae although not currently obvious in this area represent a force for change which potentially could affect this landscape in the future. These facilities and the access tracks and services they require can be damaging to peat land and blanket bog habitats. The elevated nature of these areas are such that adverse effects on landscape character are likely to arise from the introduction of tall structures owing to their visibility.

- A proliferation of foot paths, tracks and bridle trails combined with picnic sites are provided for use by visitors and hill walkers. Whilst activities that engage these users with the landscape are to be encouraged, a balance must be reached in regard to the provision of such facilities and the need to conserve the habitat that characterises this landscape type.
3.2 LCT no 2 – Drumlin Farmland

This landscape type represents a large portion of the northern part of the County and a smaller area located in the southern part of the County. The former is associated with low lying pasture north of Monaghan Town and the latter relates to the Carrickmacross environs.

3.2.1 Physical Data

- This is a low lying landscape with an elevation in the range of 50 – 90 m
- Geology comprises largely limestones and shales from the Dinantian Period in the northern part of the County. Further south the principal rock types include pure bedded limestones and impure limestones also from the Dinantian period.
- Principal Landcover is given over to pasture although some tillage uses exist. Large Loughs are also an occasional feature of this landscape.
- Principal settlements in this landscape are Scotstown, Bellanode and Smithborough to the west and Emyvale and Glaslough to the north and east.

3.2.2 Key Characteristics

- Low lying small to medium sized drumlins predominantly in a north to south orientation.
- A patchwork of predominantly medium sized fields defined typically by native hedgerows and used for pasture.
- Dispersed small to medium sized loughs.
- Extensive network of tertiary roads.
- Isolated and small clusters of farm and residential properties.
- Minor roads bounded occasionally by large estates, the boundary definition being cut limestone walling.

3.2.3 Description

This is a flat to undulating landscape featuring low drumlin hills throughout. Further north, these hills are more pronounced owing to their steep sided profile whereas to the west their
form is less pronounced and becomes more rolling as the land begins to rise in elevation. Although long distance views are infrequent this LCT is relatively open.

![View along Blackwater Valley and Drumlin Farmland. Viewpoint 70 (early autumn)](image)

The farmed field pattern presents itself at a medium scale and typically the field boundaries are defined by neatly cut hedgerows containing species such as hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Mature deciduous trees are a prominent feature of this character type and many of these are heavily clad with ivy. The principal species is Beech (*Fagus spp*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Clumps of deciduous woodland are present as a regular feature of this landscape and include some Beech (*Fagus spp*) and principally Oak (*Quercus spp*), frequently present on the summits of drumlins. In addition to these a number of small copses of coniferous forestry are located towards the northern part of the County.

Lower ground is occupied by pasture and occasional patches of marsh land. The principal Loughs are located on the east side of this character type and to the south of Carrickmacross. Of these Glaslough is located in the historic demesne of Castle Leslie. The River Blackwater also crosses this character type but is inconspicuous, particularly towards the south, where the river is deeply incised and screened from view by riparian vegetation.

In terms of built elements, this landscape contains a proliferation of individual and small clusters of rural housing, generally on a small scale and relatively simple in terms of design detail. These dwellings generally fit well into this landscape and many of these are well sited in lower lying areas. In a number of locations particularly on the approach to Monaghan and Carrickmacross larger developments are evident. A number of small, traditional stone built villages such as Emyvale and Glaslough, former winners of the Tidy Towns Competition are also prominent in this landscape. The picturesque village of Tullyree (to the south of Glaslough) is another notable dispersed settlement. Both Tullyree and Glaslough contain, more recently developed residential uses which are simple in design and rendered white. Dressed stone wall boundaries align many of the road routes and define the boundaries to larger estates including that of Castle Leslie and the Castleshane Demesne, the latter containing large plantations of coniferous forestry. This landscape features churches built in traditional stone.
The N2 is the principal road route that runs north to south through this LCT and the N54 crosses through a portion of this LCT to the west of Monaghan.
3.2.4 Forces For Change

- An increase in the number of individual residential properties could place pressure on the characterising features of this landscape. If inappropriately sited or designed, (housing which is located on hilltops or built to an unsuitable scale or style for its location) these may detract from and erode elements of the landscape.

- An aggregation of existing clusters of housing, resulting in development which is out of scale and/or character with its surroundings may also compromise the landscape. The pressure for housing is particularly great on the main arterial roads into Monaghan and Carrickmacross however further development around Emvyle or Glaslough, if poorly planned, may also impact upon this landscape negatively.

- Large farm silos and/or tall structures are evident in certain parts of this LCT which would indicate that an intensification of farming practices is a force for change.

- Recreational activities such as fishing, hunting and horse riding depend greatly on the ability to access the landscape resources of this character type. Overall the landscape is in good condition and would therefore indicate that these uses together with farming activities can be supported without unacceptable deterioration in landscape quality. An unplanned intensification of recreational activities may lead to some localised pressures on the landscape.

- Commercial coniferous forestry plantations present as elements that are out of character with the general landscape setting. In some locations,
these undermine the character of designed landscapes and their extension should be restricted.

- The extent of ivy present in the hedgerows throughout this character area if unchecked may ultimately threaten the longevity of many of the areas mature hedgerow trees.
3.3 LCT no 3 – Drumlin Foothills

This landscape type occurs in four locations throughout the County. Two of these areas represent the foothills located to the north and south of the upland landscape located south of Monaghan Town. A large area is also located to the east and south of the Lakeland landscapes associated with Castleblayney and represents the foothills to the upland landscape located in the south of the County. A small area is located on the eastern County boundary and represents the foothills to the upland landscape of the Carrigatuke Hills in the adjacent County of Armagh.

3.3.1 Physical Data

- Elevation is in the range of 100 – 200 m
- Geology comprises principally metasediments from the Ordovician Period to the north and west. Small pockets of Granite and other igneous rocks are located on the northern area of this character type. Further south, metasediments and volcanics from the Silurian period are present.
- Landcover is largely given over to pasture and small pockets of heath. There are some small to medium sized loughs present.

3.3.2 Key Characteristics

- Rising ground with small to medium sized drumlins predominantly in a north to south orientation.
- Mid to long ranging views.
- A patchwork of predominantly small sized well drained fields defined typically by native hedgerows and used for pasture.
- Patches of heath (*Calluna spp*) and gorse (*Ulex spp*).
- Isolated farm and residential properties.
3.3.3 Description

This landscape comprises a mixed topography of rising ground interspersed with chains of drumlins of a low height albeit located in this elevated context. This landscape comprises a transition from the pastoral lowland of the Drumlin Farmland (LCT 2) or Farmed Lakelands (LCT 5) to a better drained pastoral upland. The field pattern is strong with well defined boundaries comprising predominantly cut or managed hedgerows containing frequent mature trees albeit many of these are covered in the growth of the common Ivy (*Hedera helix*). Hedgerow species include Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and the more mature species include ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Fields tend to decrease in size with elevation and pockets of gorse (*Ulex spp*) and heath (*Calluna spp*) are evident in certain places.

Typically there are few loughs or rivers present with the notable exception of the area directly to the south of Monaghan which has an abundance of small loughs and streams and the River Bunnoe to the north of the Farmed Lakelands area (LCT 5). The Bunnoe River occupies low lying ground in an east west orientation and meanders between larger steep sided drumlins. In terms of the loughs, the largest lough in this LCT is Annaghmakerig Lough which has an attractive local lake landscape fringed with wetland and wooded tree species including Birch (*Betula spp*) and Alder (*Alnus spp*). Some mature oak trees are also located in the Lakeland local landscape. Sizable tracts of coniferous forestry located in the vicinity of the lough are a major detractor from landscape quality.
Marshland is present but is not a dominant feature of this landscape. It occurs in small patches in the lower lying areas and is characterised by the presence of wetland grasses and rushes (*Juncus spp*) often located in poor pastoral land.

There are no larger settlements or discrete urban areas in this landscape type although individual houses are located in the farmed setting generally together with farm buildings. These are served by tertiary roads and tracks. The occasional designed landscape is present and includes the site of the Tyrone Guthrie Centre adjacent to Annaghmakerig Lough.

### 3.3.4 Forces For Change

- This LCT exhibits frequent single rural houses in remote locations, some of which are inappropriately sited or designed, (housing which is located on hilltops or built to an unsuitable scale or style for its location). Development, if allowed to increase in this way may compromise the character of the landscape.
- Large farm silos and the presence of enclosed polytunnels and piggeries are evident in certain parts of this LCT which would indicate that an intensification or diversification of farming practices is a force for change.
- Commercial coniferous forestry plantations present as elements that are out of character with the general landscape setting. In some locations, these undermine the character of designed landscapes and their extension should be restricted.
- The extent of ivy present in the hedgerows throughout this character area if unchecked may ultimately threaten the longevity of many of the areas mature hedgerow trees.
3.4 LCT no 4 – Farmed Foothills

This landscape type occurs in four locations throughout the County. These include the foothills to Slieve Beagh in the north west, the hilly farmland located to the west of Newbliss, and that located to the south west of the Farmed Lakelands area (LCT 5) and a large area located to the North West of Carrickmacross.

3.4.1 Physical Data

- Elevation ranges from 130 – 180 m
- Geology is varied and includes sandstones, shales and limestones from the Dinantian period in the vicinity of Sliabh Beagh. The area west of Newbliss features metasidements from the Ordovician Period. Further south metasidements and volcanics from the Silurian period are present.
- Landcover features a mix of pasture, woodland, scrub and peatbogs.
- The town of Newbliss is located in the north eastern corner of this character type.

3.4.2 Key Characteristics

- Rising ground comprising rolling hills, and occasional drumlins.
- Localised valleys featuring streams.
- Mid to long ranging views and views towards higher upland pasture and/or moorland.
- A patchwork of predominantly small sized well drained fields defined typically by hedgerows containing native species and used for pasture and small scale forestry.
- Patches of heath (Calluna spp) and gorse (Ulex spp).
- Tracts of peat and/or bog.
- Isolated farm and residential properties.
3.4.3 Description

This landscape type has a rolling topography generally with occasional steep sided hills and scattered or isolated drumlins. Long ranging views are available as are views towards higher upland pasture and moorland. Where landuses are given over to pasture, the scale of the field sizes is small. Marshy areas are located in low lying ground and are often associated with the margins of peatbogs. Small to medium sized tracts of commercial coniferous forestry are also present particularly in the north of the County. Field boundaries are generally defined by uncut hedgerows, comprising Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and containing occasional mature trees. Some of these larger hedgerow trees are in poor condition and covered in Ivy (*Hedera helix*). Gorse (*Ulex spp*) is common in the hedgerows across this area.

To the north of the County the Mountain Water River is the principal watercourse running west to east and features riparian wooded vegetation along its course. Traditional stone arched bridge crossings feature along this watercourse.

Settlements are very small and farm buildings tend to be old and in places these are derelict. The corrugated tin green roofs of these structures render them less visually obtrusive in this landscape. By contrast more modern forms of farm buildings and structures are more conspicuous and in places detract from the landscape. Tall steel silos are particularly prominent where these occur. Single residential properties located in remote areas also detract from landscape quality.

Around Newbliss this LCT presents as a series of closely spaced low hills in which pasture is the main landuse. Fields are bounded by hedgerows, many of which are cut of managed to facilitate farming activities. Generally the field pattern is of a small scale. Hedgerow species include Hawthorn (*Crataegus spp*), Gorse (*Ulex spp*) and ash (*Fraxinus spp*). Scattered mature trees or hedgerow trees are present across the area, ash (*Fraxinus spp*) being the
dominant species. Occasional small crops of commercial forestry are located in this landscape and contrast strongly with clumps of deciduous woodland (beech and oak) and scrub vegetation also present here. This landscape type contains few permanent loughs although streams and smaller watercourses are present and lower lying areas contain marshy wetland grasses.

### 3.4.4 Forces For Change

- Commercial coniferous forestry plantations present as elements that are out of character with the general landscape setting. In some locations, these undermine the character of designed landscapes and their extension should be restricted.
- This LCT exhibits frequent single rural houses in remote locations, some of which are inappropriately sited or designed, (housing which is located on hilltops or built to an unsuitable scale or style for its location). Development, if allowed to increase in this way may compromise the character of the landscape.
- Large farm silos and/or tall structures are evident in certain parts of this LCT which would indicate that an intensification of farming practices is a force for change.
- The extent of ivy present in the hedgerows throughout this character area if unchecked may ultimately threaten the longevity of many of the areas mature hedgerow trees.
- Occasional metal scrapyards are located in this landscape type and these, whilst undermining the visual quality of the countryside are likely to be environmentally damaging generally.
3.5 **LCT no 5 – Farmed Loughlands**

Three areas of the County are identified as belonging to this landscape character type. The principal area identified comprises a corridor that crosses the entire County from the western boundary to Lough Muckno and Castleblayney in the east. A further smaller lakeland landscape type is also located in the upland part of South Monaghan. The third area is centred on Lough Egish, also located in South Monaghan.

All three areas feature pastoral landuses and are dominated by the presence of frequent large loughs.

### 3.5.1 Physical Data

- Elevation is generally at 70-90 m in lower lying areas with drumlin summits in this LCT ranging from 110 – 140 m and 120 – 150 m further south.
- Geology comprises primarily metasediments and volcanics dating back to the Silurian period and metasidements from the Ordovician period principally in the north western part of the larger lakeland area.
- Landcover is predominantly pasture. Presence of loughs of varying sizes is a key feature and the lakelands further south feature abundant woodland.

### 3.5.2 Key Characteristics

- The Lakeland corridor between Lough Muckno and the County boundary at Cootehill is essentially a low lying farmed landscape containing large Loughs punctuated by prominent drumlins. This low lying landscape is enclosed physically and visually by upland drumlin farmlands located to the north and south of the area. The Lakeland area further south is associated with a more elevated open landscape setting.
- The Landcover is predominantly pasture, although there are tracts of forestry and woodland around the loughs to the south and to the west in the vicinity of Drumlona Lough and Inner Lough.
- Crannogs are common features in the lakes.
Regional and minor roads are located in the Lakeland area, connecting Ballybay and Castleblayney, both principal County towns. The Lakeland further south also contains major and minor roads but no towns or villages are present.

3.5.3 Description

The Castleblayney Lakeland area is a complex lowland landscape containing loughs, small rivers and low elevation drumlin hills. It is bounded to the north and the south by landscape types which are more elevated topographically and therefore this area takes on many of the characteristics of a broad valley like landscape. The immediate topography around the loughs is relatively flat although further back from the shoreline drumlin hills, some of which are steep sided and quite visually prominent, are present. The largest of these loughs are located at the eastern and western ends of this area, namely Inner Lough, Drumlona Lough and Lough Muckno for example. A number of the loughs are linked by small rivers or streams which in turn feature occasional attractive stone bridge crossings. Crannogs are another feature of note visible throughout this area. In terms of vegetation, this occurs in concentrated areas, for example, the loughs located west of Ballybay have patches of dense deciduous woodland around their margins whereas further east around Lough Muckno for instance, the loughs and summits of surrounding drumlins feature small plantations of coniferous forestry planting. Fields are pastoral and are well defined by native species hedgerows typically containing hedgerow trees. Principal hedgerow species include hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), gorse (Ulex spp) and ash trees (Fraxinus excelsior).
Further back from the water margin, riparian woodland species include willow (*Salix spp*) and alder (*Alnus spp*). This area is bisected by a Regional Road Route, the R183 which links the settlements of Castleblayney and Ballybay. Further west, the village of Rockcorry, built in stone and brick dates back to the 1800s and is a well maintained and visually attractive settlement. Farm buildings are few in number and many are well concealed by the variable topography and discreet shelterbelts. Occasional derelict farms are located in this landscape and detract from the quality and condition of the area at a localised level. Occasional remnants of former designed landscapes are present including the Fairfield Demesne, the boundary wall of which remains albeit much of the lands are now used for commercial coniferous forestry. Large red brick houses further east near Cootehill also feature in this area.

The South Monaghan lakelands is a complex landscape comprising drumlin hills and frequent small to medium size loughs, some of which contain crannogs. This area is more elevated topographically and well drained than the Castleblayney Lakeland landscape, although areas of marshy ground do occur in the low lying areas between hills. Many of the loughs have woody vegetation along their shorelines and to the west around Black Lough woodland completely conceals the loughs altogether and indeed frequent tracts of deciduous woodland are common throughout this area. Generally the lough margins feature only woody riparian vegetation and do not feature reeds at the lough shore. This is exemplified by Shantonagh Lough whose margin features birch (*Betula spp*), alder (*Alnus spp*) and gorse (*Ulex spp*).

Lough Egish is one of the larger loughs to be found in the lakeland landscape character type, set within a pastoral landscape of drumlin hills. This area differs from the other Lakeland types in that the environs are much more developed, featuring frequent dwellings and the Lakeland Dairies Factory which is a prominent built element that detracts dramatically from the landscape setting due to its scale and visual prominence. Woodland and riparian vegetation is limited in the immediate surrounds of the lough. Instead native hedgerows, thickets of gorse (*Ulex spp*) and blackthorn scrub (*Prunus spinosa*) and small pockets of marshland featuring wetland rushes (*Juncus spp*) are present.
3.5.4 Forces For Change

- Expansion of the settlements of Ballybay and Castleblayney attributed to increased residential development.
- An increase in the number of individual residential properties located throughout the area, such as lough side holiday homes. If these are inappropriately sited or designed, (housing which is located on hilltops or built to an unsuitable scale or style for its location) they may compromise the character of the landscape.
- A proliferation of recreational activities such as boating, fishing, lough side foot paths, tracks and bridle trails combined with picnic sites for visitors. An increase in these activities may provide both benefits and disbenefits in terms of their impact on habitat value.
- Further expansion of industry around Lough Egish such as the Lakeland Dairies.
- Large farm silos and/or tall structures are evident in certain parts of this LCT which would indicate that an intensification of farming practices is a force for change alongside a decline in other areas evidenced by the presence of derelict farm buildings and abandoned farmsteads.
3.6 LCT no 6 – Flat Riverine Farmland

Two small areas of the County are identified as having the characteristics associated with this landscape type. The first is located in the south east of the County and surrounds the village of Inniskeen. The second is located south west of Clones, near to the County boundary.

3.6.1 Physical Data

- Elevation is generally below 70 m
- Geology is principally comprised of metasidements from the Silurian period in the Inniskeen environs. Shales and limestones from the Dinantian period feature in the western part of this LCT.
- Landcover is principally given over to pasture.

3.6.2 Key Characteristics

- A flat, and gently undulating landscape associated with the flood plains of the Fane River to the east and the Finn River to the west.
- Pastoral landuses combined with frequent areas of marshy ground
- Minor roads and settlements few in number and very small.

3.6.3 Description

The Inniskeen environs is a flat landscape through the centre of which, the River Fane flows. The area comprises low lying flat or gently undulating pasture defined by cut or managed hedgerows comprising principally of hawthorn (Crataegus spp) and occasional mature ash trees (Fraxinus spp). Pockets of marshy and wet ground are found scattered throughout this area and these frequently feature riparian vegetation namely alder (Alnus spp) and birch (Betula spp). This landscape is permeated by minor roads and a section of a dismantled railway which runs close to and
parallel to the route of the River Fane. The principal settlement is the attractive village of Inniskeen, the homeland of the poet Patrick Kavanagh.

Like the landscape around Inniskeen, the area located west of Clones is also relatively flat and gently undulating in terms of topography. This landscape is associated with the River Finn to the south of this area. The area contains a farmed pattern of field systems defined, in part by hedgerows, many of which are cut and also by fences.

Farm buildings are more visible in this open landscape and a notable number of these are in a state of disrepair. In the eastern part of the County, the overall condition of this landscape is variable, evidenced in some locations, by poor quality pasture, the presence of broken fence boundaries, and hedgerows in poor condition containing many gaps. Run down or derelict farm buildings are also a feature of this landscape type.

The village of Drumsloe/Connons is noted for its attractive setting and a prominently visible stone church.

3.6.4 Forces For Change

- This LCT exhibits frequent single rural houses in remote locations, some of which are inappropriately sited or designed, (housing which is located on hilltops or built to an unsuitable scale or style for its location). Development, if allowed to increase in this way may compromise the character of the landscape.

- Large farm silos and/or tall structures are evident in certain parts of this LCT which would indicate that an intensification of farming practices is a force for change alongside a decline in other areas evidenced by the presence of derelict farm buildings and abandoned farmsteads.
3.7 LCT no 7 – River Valley Farmland

Two areas of the County are identified as belonging to this character type. The first of these is located on the western side of the County and is associated along the River Finn and the second is located in the North eastern part of the County and is associated along the River Blackwater.

3.7.1 Physical Data

- Elevation is generally below 70 m throughout.
- In the River Blackwater corridor, the geology is varied and comprises shales and limestones from the Dinantian Period in the north with Ordovician metasidements located further south. The River Finn environs features primarily sandstones from the early Dinantian Period.
- Landcover is predominantly pasture although areas of peat bog are located further west near the Fermanagh Border. The Rivers Blackwater, Cor and Finn cross this landscape type as principal features.

3.7.2 Key Characteristics

- Flat to undulating pastoral landscape.
- Rivers Finn, Blackwater and Cor are principal landscape elements.
- The landscape is permeated by minor roads, with few settlements.
- Winding minor roads edged with earthen banks affording restricted views.

3.7.3 Description

The River Finn environs is a pastoral landscape which represents one of the more low lying areas in the County. The topography is, for the most part, almost flat although isolated pockets of undulating farmland featuring very low hills can be seen in places. The River Finn is the principal watercourse in this landscape type. There are also occasional small loughs and

The Finn River south of Clones. Viewpoint 12 (winter).
streams dotted throughout this area. The river features a number of settlements and crossings along its length including the Annaghmolin Bridge which crosses the River Finn via a broad spanned stone arch. In addition to the river, remnants of the disused Ulster Canal can be seen both here and in the Blackwater Valley area. Surrounding landuse is predominantly pasture defined by well managed native hedgerows containing a significant number of mature trees. Woodland is sporadic but when it does occur it tends to be deciduous and riparian in terms of species composition.

To the north east of the County the River Blackwater is a prominent landscape feature, forming in places the boundary between Monaghan and Armagh. As with the river Finn environs the landscape around this river is generally flat and undulating although hills, where these occur are steeper and more pronounced then those adjacent to the Finn River. The river features a number of settlements and crossings along its length although a number of individual buildings are currently lying derelict. The scale of the field pattern in this area is larger than that associated with the River Finn although defined by a similar mix of cut or managed hedgerows containing occasional mature trees. The condition of the farmed landscape is marginally better and the extent of vegetation is greater in terms of mature deciduous native tree species which occur as individual specimens or as small wooded groups.

In addition to the River Blackwater, the River Cor located to the south of the Blackwater is also associated with this landscape and has similar characteristics thereby influencing wider landscape character in a similar way.

### 3.7.4 Forces For Change

- An aggregation of existing clusters of housing, resulting in development which is out of scale and/or character with its surroundings. The pressure for housing is particularly great in these areas as land is generally flat.
- Flood defences may have to be considered in the future as a result of climate change and rising water levels.
- Recreation, namely fishing and walking ought to be provided for in a manner that safeguards river habitats.
- Further development of roads may threaten the wetland low lying and riverine habitats.
- Loss of hedgerows is a feature of farm intensification.
3.8 LCT no 8 – Undulating Farmland

Undulating farmland occurs as two large areas located in the south of the county. Two smaller areas are also located on the western part of the county near Newbliss.

3.8.1 Physical Data

- A low lying landscape with elevation not exceeding 80 m generally.
- Geology comprises a range of rock types. In the south, these comprise Silurian metasidements and Permo-Triassic sandstones. Further north, the rocks are arranged in bands oriented in a south west to north east alignment. These rock types include pure bedded limestones from the Dinantian period in the north and a mix of shales and limestones also from the Dinantian period. Metasidements and volcanics from the Silurian Period feature in the south east and limestones from the Dinantian Period in the south.
- Landcover is predominantly pasture.

3.8.2 Key Characteristics

- A patchwork of predominantly medium sized fields defined typically by native species hedgerows and used for pasture.
- The town of Clones represents a significant urban settlement located in an elevated or hilly position.
- Numerous ring and fairy forts identified by wooded crests to prominent hills to the west of Inniskeen.
- Isolated farm and residential properties.

3.8.3 Description

This landscape type is low lying and has a smooth rolling topography with occasional small hills and drumlins in between which a number of small loughs of streams are a regular occurrence. Many of these loughs contain crannogs.

Hedgerows containing mature trees define predominantly pastoral fields and these include species such as ash (Fraxinus spp), and hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna). Mature individual trees feature in this landscape such as beech (Fagus sylvatica) and occasional clumps of trees are also evident. In the east of the County many of these tree groups are seen on the
crests of individual hills and signify the presence of historic ring and fairy forts. Scrub features in the more low lying areas, alongside large tracts of wet ground containing wetland grass species. Commercial forestry is present to the west of the County although this is low key and fits well into the landscape.

The principal settlement in this Landscape Character Type is the town of Clones to the west of the County, which developed around its lace making industry. Clones is located in an elevated hilltop setting overlooking the surrounding countryside and its two churches which are located on opposite hills provide a prominent landmark within this area. Older built features located in or near the town include a round tower and an attractive stone arched bridge as a river crossing.

Roads for the most part are tertiary roads or tracks. A notable exception is the N54 which links Clones with Monaghan crossing the landscape in a south west to north east orientation. Remnants of a dismantled railway line present as prominent built features in localised pockets of this landscape. Parts of the dismantled Ulster Canal area also present in this landscape although in its current overgrown state this feature is relatively inconspicuous.
3.8.4 Forces For Change

- This LCT exhibits frequent single rural houses in remote locations, some of which are inappropriately sited or designed, (housing which is located on hilltops or built to an unsuitable scale or style for its location). Development, if allowed to continue in this way may compromise the character of the landscape.
- Large farm silos and/or tall structures are evident in certain parts of this LCT which would indicate that an intensification of farming practices is a force for change alongside a decline in other areas evidenced by the presence of derelict farm buildings and abandoned farmsteads.
3.9 LCT no 9 – Upland Bog with Afforestation

This landscape type occurs in one area of the County and lies adjacent to the blanket bog (LCT 1) at the foothills of Sliabh Beagh.

3.9.1 Physical Data

- Elevation ranges from 220-300 m
- Geology comprises primarily pure sandstones although further south a mixed rocktype occurs which includes shales, sandstones and limestones. All of these date back to the Dinantian period.
- The Landcover is primarily peatbog with large tracts of coniferous forestry.

3.9.2 Key Characteristics

- Large tracts of commercial coniferous forestry dominate this landscape type.
- Poor quality pastoral farmland with wetland grasses present. Fields bounded by hedgerows.
- Pockets of peatland habitat present in between large areas of coniferous forest.
- Presence of small rivers including the Mountain Water River and occasional loughs.
- Minor roads and infrequent dwellings.
- Elevated, open hills and, moorland landscape with extensive long range views across the wider landscape.

3.9.3 Description

Large tracts of commercial coniferous forestry are the dominant feature of this landscape. These forests are large in scale and are angular in outline in many locations. The landscape is scarred in places by regular cropping and replanting. Views towards higher stretches of moorland are possible where gaps in the forestry permit views. Forested areas are interspersed with areas of rough pasture. Field sizes are small in scale and are defined by uncut hedgerows.
some of which have many gaps. Typical species include hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and gorse (*Ulex spp*). Small watercourses or streams cross this area, flowing down from the moorland towards lower lying pasture to the east. Occasional loughs are located in the northern part of this LCT including Killybern and Lough More although these are isolated and relatively small in scale. Some of these loughs are fringed with large conifer plantations, for example, Lough More however else where the pastoral landcover extends to the water margin around which scattered clumps of birch woodland are located.

Settlements are scarce in this character type and individual dwelling houses are spread sparsely reinforcing this areas remote character.

3.9.4 Forces For Change

- Commercial coniferous forestry is the greatest force for change acting upon this landscape character type. Extensive conifer plantations provide a broken and irregular pattern to lower slopes, however further extension of forestry planting into this area is already beginning to occur and should be restricted.

- Peat cutting on upland blanket bogs remains an important source of fuel, but mechanical cutting, which is highly destructive to the bog vegetation, is seen in some areas on a small scale. There are some areas of intact bog and heather moorland remaining.

- Transmission masts and other antennae although not currently obvious in this area represent a force for change. If this industry needs to expand their network coverage in this area high ground such as this LCT, present ideal locations for additional masts. These facilities and the access tracks and services they require can be significantly damaging to peat land and blanket bog habitats.

- A proliferation of foot paths, tracks and bridle trails combined with picnic sites for visitors and hill walkers are provided for. An increase in the current facilities may provide both benefits and disbenefits in terms of their impact on habitat value.
3.10 LCT no 10 – Upland Drumlin Farmland

This landscape type occurs in two places in the County, one right at the centre of the County associated with the hills that overlook Monaghan Town, and the latter is located to the east near Mullyash.

3.10.1 Physical Data

- Elevation ranges from 110 to 190 m generally
- Geology comprises metasidements from the Ordovician Period in the Monaghan environs. Near the east, the principal rock types are metasidements and volcanics from the Silurian Period.
- Landcover comprises predominantly pasture.

3.10.2 Key Characteristics

- Elevated, rolling hills and drumlins with extensive long range views across the wider landscape.
- Poor to moderate quality pastoral farmland with wetland grasses. Fields bounded by hedgerows and fences.
- Small tracts of commercial coniferous forestry.
- Pockets of peatland habitat and scrub present throughout pasture.
- Proliferation of minor roads and individual farms and dwellings.

3.10.3 Description

The elevated landscape located around the foothills of Mullyash Mountain presents as an undulating or sometimes rolling plateau of large drumlin hills, from which significant and long ranging views across the wider landscape are available. The principal landuse is pasture, although the quality of land is at best moderate, with patches of scrub, gorse and peatbog present throughout the area. Fields are generally small and are defined with hedgerow boundaries.
reinforced in places by simple fencing. The hedgerows are generally cut or managed and contain both beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and oak (*Quercus spp*) some of which are maturing well. Many of the hedgerows and hedgerow trees in the higher parts of these area show signs of wind pruning and in places grazing by livestock.

Small scale deciduous and coniferous woodlands occur in localised areas, the later of which tends to occur as either shelterbelts or small forestry crops. Neither is a dominant force within the landscape, the main tree cover of which is provided by hedgerow trees.

A multitude of small streams and small loughs occur throughout this LCT. Streams tend to be narrow, steep sided and fast flowing as they flow from their source catchment across this elevated area north and southwards towards lower lying areas.

Farms and individual properties are for the most part well spaced and located sensitively as local topography and small shelterbelts provide screening. In addition to buildings, a number of transmission masts and pylons are present.

### 3.10.4 Forces For Change

- Commercial coniferous forestry is the greatest force for change acting upon this landscape character type. Extensive conifer plantations provide a broken and irregular pattern to lower slopes, however further extension of forestry planting into this area is already beginning to occur and should be restricted.
- Transmission masts and other antennae although not currently obvious in this area represent a force for change that could affect this landscape in the future. The more elevated and visually exposed locations would be highly sensitive to this change. Particular care is needed to ensure that the setting of Mullyash Mountain is not adversely affected by such developments either visually or materially.
- A decline in the quality of farmland and buildings is evidenced by the presence of derelict farm buildings and abandoned farmsteads in a number of locations.
3.11 LCT no 11 – Upland Farmland with Afforestation

This landscape character type occurs in one small area of the County, specifically the environs of Mullyash Mountain at the eastern County boundary.

3.11.1 Physical Data

- Elevation range is 200-300 m
- Geology comprises metasidements and volcanics from the Silurian period.
- Landcover comprises large areas of coniferous forestry and pasture

3.11.2 Key Characteristics

- Well elevated and steep rising ground up to Mullyash and gently rolling hills surrounding the summit, with a predominantly pastoral landuse.
- Large tracts of commercial forestry at the summit of Mullyash Mountain.
- Occasional long range views to the Mourne Mountains to the east and wide ranging views westwards.

3.11.3 Description

This is an elevated landscape which is made up of rolling hills that surround Mullyash Mountain which is the highest point topographically in this character area. Apart from Mullyash itself, the landscape has a gentle topography overall however due to its elevation and openness long range views are possible. These views are particularly scenic on the eastern side where the distant Mourne Mountain range is visible. The principal landuses are coniferous forestry and pasture which, in this area, is grazed by both cattle and sheep. The scale of the field pattern varies from medium to small and typically these are bounded by hedgerows containing mature trees including birch (*Betula pendula*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and alder (*Alnus spp*). A number of these hedgerows are well maintained however a significant number are uncut and show signs of weak growth containing many gaps in the hedgerow line. Some of the hedgerows contain gorse and isolated thickets of gorse occur in a number of locations. Occasional shelterbelts of ash are found in this landscape type and generally the larger deciduous species such as oak and beech, are not present.

In terms of development patterns, this landscape is relatively remote, containing few dwellings and farmsteads, some of which lie derelict. Access is facilitated by minor roads only.
3.11.4 Forces For Change

- Coniferous forestry is probably the most prominent activity that continues to effect change to the natural character of this landscape.
- The pattern of decline in farming is evident from the presence of abandoned and derelict buildings which in turn affect the character of the landscape.
- Transmission masts and other antennae although not currently obvious in this area represent a force for change that could affect this landscape in the future. The more visually exposed areas and indeed the setting of Mullyash Mountain would be highly sensitive to this type of change.
3.12 LCT no 12 – Upland Farmland with Rock Outcrops

This landscape type occurs in the uplands region in the southern part of the County. These upland rocky landscapes are associated with the highest elevations of this upland area and are present as a series of pockets of land arranged as a semi circular chain. The chain is comprised of one large area and two smaller areas.

3.12.1 Physical Data

- Elevation exceeds 200 m and can reach a maximum of 270 m
- Geology comprises metasidements and volcanics from the Silurian Period.
- Landcover is given over to pasture although the conditions are relatively poor and farming potential is marginal.

3.12.2 Key Characteristics

- Rising ground comprising undulating to rolling pastoral farmland of variable quality and condition.
- Irregular ridges with outcrops of rock on or near the summits.
- More elevated areas have a smaller scale field pattern, sometimes this pattern is broken.
- Fields bounded by hedgerows at lower elevations and by dry stone walls at higher elevations.
- Occasional loughs
- Occasional tracts of commercial coniferous forestry
- Medium to long range views in relatively open landscape.
- Remote. Few dwellings and or farm buildings.
- Access is by minor roads only.

3.12.3 Description

This landscape type has a rolling topography created by the irregularly shaped hills contained therein. The ridgelines associated with these hills are irregular and jagged in profile. A number of rock outcrops occur on or near the summits along these ridges. It is a relatively open landscape and medium to long range views are possible in certain locations. Views north east can be gained and extend as far as Mullyash Mountain. The landuse featured is pasture, much of which is in poor condition owing to the poor and often thin soil cover. Occasional crops of coniferous forestry are present although these are well
distributed and blend into the landscape effectively. Deciduous woodland is scarce, mature trees being limited to individual trees, hedgerow trees and shelterbelts. Occasional clumps of birch (*Betula pendula*) woodland are present. Hedgerows form the field boundaries in lower lying areas and these feature species such as hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and gorse (*Ulex spp*). Gorse also occurs in small thickets which increase in number with elevation. In the most elevated locations, the scale of the field size becomes dramatically smaller and dry stone walling features as a field boundary.

This landscape features a few medium sized to large loughs in which crannogs are present. Pockets of marsh are located in the low lying areas between hills and a number of small streams and field ditches are also evident.

In terms of settlement pattern, this landscape is remote containing few dwellings or farms. Some of these are unoccupied and derelict.

### 3.12.4 Forces For Change

- Coniferous forestry is probably the most prominent activity that continues to effect change to the natural character of this landscape.
- The pattern of decline in farming is evident from the presence of abandoned and derelict buildings which in turn affect the character of the landscape.
- Transmission masts and other antennae although not currently obvious in this area represent a force for change that could affect this landscape in the future.
3.13 LCT no 13 – Upland Plateau

This landscape character type occurs in one area of the county, specifically an elevated landscape located to the west of Mullyash Mountain.

3.13.1 Physical Data

- Elevation is in the range 130-150m
- Geology comprises metasidements and volcanics from the Silurian period.
- Landcover is principally pasture and marsh with occasional areas of scrub.

3.13.2 Key Characteristics

- A flat to slightly undulating elevated landscape
- Pastoral landuses represented as a series of fields bounded by hedgerows.
- Clumps of deciduous scrub woodland.
- Pockets of peatland and marsh.
- Occasional small loughs
- Access is facilitated by minor roads
- Generally an open or exposed landscape commanding medium to long range views.

3.13.3 Description

This is an upland farmed landscape. There is little variation in topography and hence medium to long ranging views are available. Towards the east, views can be gained of Mullyash Mountain. The field pattern is highly variable in scale ranging from small to large and is fragmented and often broken in places by large areas of marsh, peatbog or scrub. Pasture is generally in a poor condition, being badly drained and exposed. Field boundaries are usually defined by uncut hedgerows with occasional mature trees, namely ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). Hedges tend to show weak growth, containing many gaps in the hedgerow line generally and are replaced in some areas by fencing.

A number of small to medium sized loughs are locally important as are occasional coniferous forestry plantations, although these are not a dominant feature in their own right.
Settlement patterns are limited to isolated farmsteads and individual houses served by a network of minor roads and tracks. The N2 bisects the area in half in a north west to south eastern direction, linking Monaghan to Castleblayney.

3.13.4 Forces For Change

- The continuing pattern of decline in farming is evident from the presence of abandoned and derelict buildings which in turn affect the character of the landscape.
- The landscape is somewhat degraded and of poor quality in particular locations. Loss of hedgerow vegetation and hence pattern has contributed to this decline.