

#### 4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS (IMAGE UNITS)

In this chapter, the Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), which were referred to in Chapter One, are discussed in more detail.

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

*Landscape Character Areas are the unique individual geographical areas in which landscape types occur. They share generic characteristics with other areas of the same type but also have their own particular identity.*

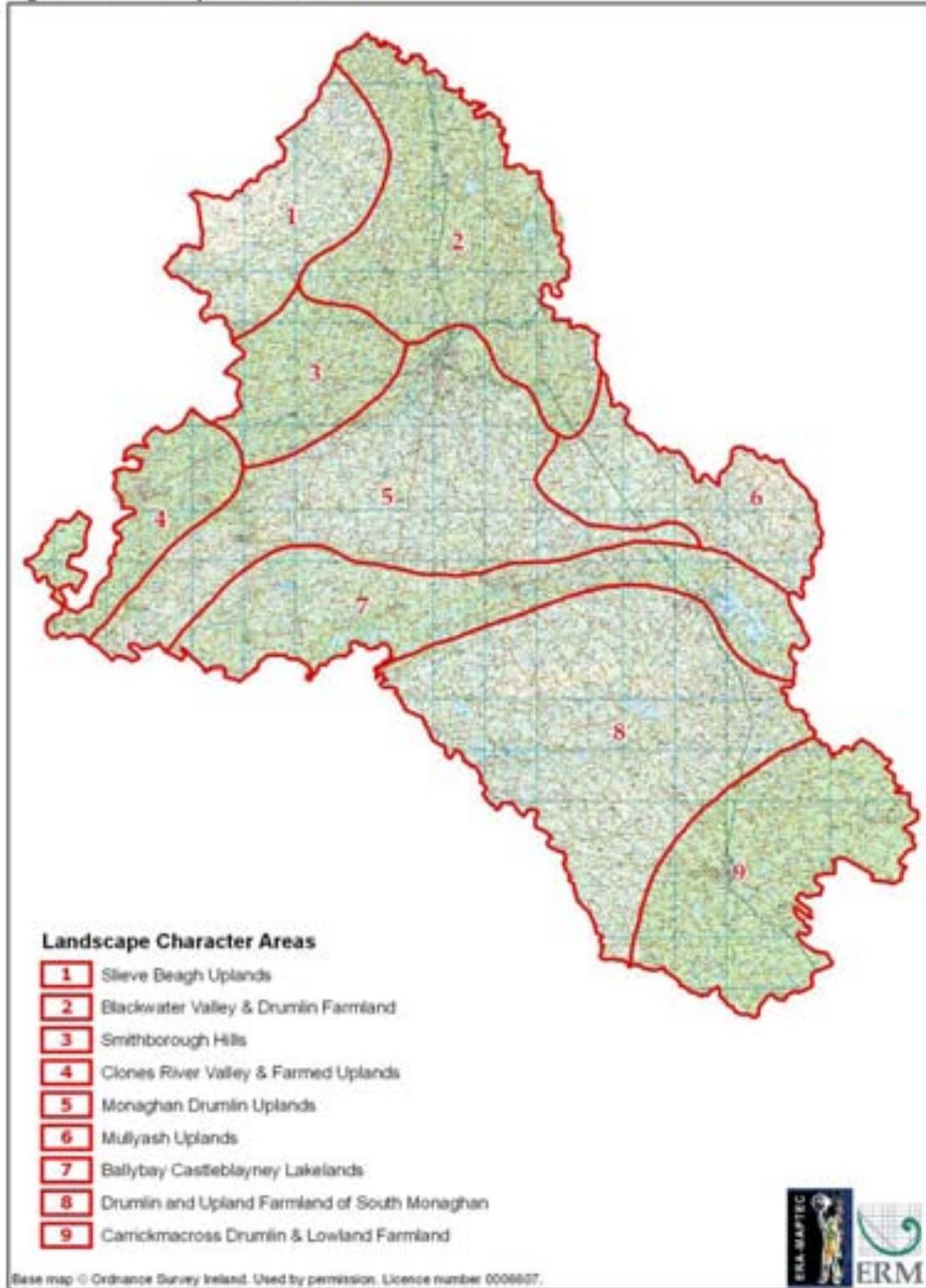
At the local authority level, landscape character areas (LCAs) are the individual areas where more detailed landscape character types occur. Landscape character areas are however unique and carry names that are geographically specific which may reflect the predominant landscape types contained therein. The geographically specific name is usually based on a place name or established locality. Names that are locally known are used as much as possible in order to confer a greater sense of identity or ownership of the areas by the local community. For example an area may be named after a well known hill range or lough. The table below identifies the landscape character areas of the county and the types or physical units contained therein.

Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

Landscape Character Area (LCA) Number	Landscape Character Area (LCAs) Description	Landscape Character Type (LCT) Number	Landscape Character Type (LCTs) Description
1	Sliabh Beagh Uplands	1 4 9	Blanket Bog Farmed Foothills Upland Bog with Afforestation
2	Blackwater Valley & Drumlin Farmland	2 7	Drumlin Farmland River Valley Farmland
3	Smithborough Hills	2 7 8	Drumlin Farmland River Valley Farmland Undulating Farmland
4	Clones River Valley & Farmed Uplands	6 7 8 14	Flat Riverine Farmland River Valley Farmland Undulating Farmland Urban Environment
5	Monaghan Drumlin Uplands	2 3 4 8 10 14	Drumlin Farmland Drumlin Foothills Farmed Foothills Undulating Farmland Upland Drumlin Farmland Urban Environment
6	Mullyash Uplands	3 10 11 13	Drumlin Foothills Upland Drumlin Farmland Upland Farmland with Afforestation Upland Plateau
7	Ballybay/Castleblayney Lakeland's	3 5	Drumlin Foothills Farmed Lakeland's
8	Drumlin and Upland Farmland of South Monaghan	3 4 5 12	Drumlin Foothills Farmed Foothills Farmed Lakeland's Upland Farmland with Rock Outcrops
9	Carrickmacross Drumlin & Lowland Farmland	2 3 6 8	Drumlin Farmland Drumlin Foothills Flat Riverine Farmland Undulating Farmland

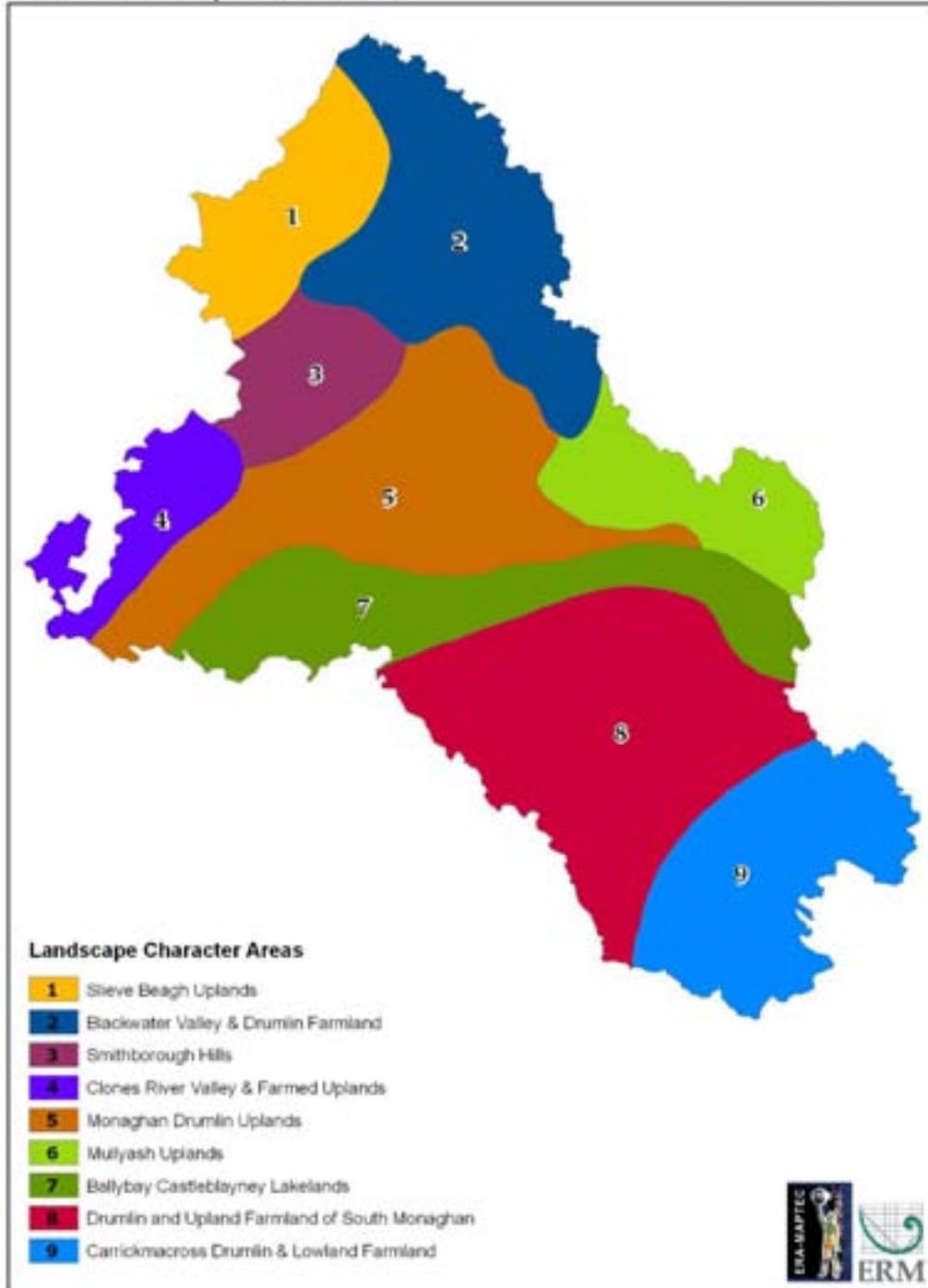
Figures 8a and 8b illustrate the Landscape Character Areas identified in County Monaghan. The geographic extent of these is presented in the following pages and each LCA is described.

Figure 8a: Landscape Character Areas



Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

FIGURE 8b: Landscape Character Areas



Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

4.1 LCA 1 Sliabh Beagh Uplands

4.1.1 Extent

Located to the north west, this LCA is located on the County boundary adjacent to the Counties of Tyrone and Fermanagh. It comprises essentially the upland bogland and upland farmland landscapes associated with Sliabh Beagh and Bragan Mountain.

4.1.2 Key Characteristics

- Remote, isolated and semi wild setting at highest elevations.
- Vast open peatland moorland landscape
- Presence of very large areas of commercial coniferous forestry
- Occasional loughs located in the upland peatland landscape.
- Rivers include the Mountain Water and Blackwater
- Traditional farmhouses present, some of which are derelict.
- Long ranging views



**Table 4.1 Landscape Data**

Landscape Character Types	Natural Heritage Designations	Archaeological Sites (SMR)	Landscape Designations	Scenic Routes
Blanket Bog	1 NHA 1 SPA	0	1	1
Upland Bog with Afforestation	1 NHA 1 SPA	2	1	5
Farmed Foothills	1 NHA 1 SPA	7	2	4

**4.1.3 Landscape Description**

At the highest elevations, this is an upland plateau like landscape dominated by gently undulating peatlands associated with the Eshbrack Bog site. The area contains scattered small to medium sized loughs and is dissected by rivers which flow in a south easterly direction down from the higher elevations to the farmed foothills below. Of these Mountain water and the River Blackwater are the principal watercourses although a variety of smaller streams are also present. It is a remote landscape with little vegetation and minimal road network. Below the 300 metre contour, the area is dominated by vast tracts of commercial coniferous forestry fringed by farmland at lower elevations. The main land use is pastoral and this can frequently be in poor condition where located in low lying marshy hollows. Hedgerows define field boundaries and occasional copses of deciduous woodland are located in this area.



*Landscape character – Viewpoint 30 (early autumn)*



*Landscape character – Viewpoint 29 (early autumn)*

**4.1.4 Landscape Condition and Sensitivity**

- This is a landscape of outstanding scenic quality. This together with the open flat nature of the topography and the availability of long ranging panoramic views renders this landscape highly sensitive to development. New larger scale developments would be difficult to site in a discrete and acceptable manner.
- This landscape has undergone substantial change owing to the abandonment of farming and the planting of substantial coniferous forests. In the highest elevations,

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

the moorland character is largely intact and access provided by way of small roads, picnic stops and viewing points have not substantially intruded upon the wild character of its setting. This upland area is visually very exposed and represents an ecologically sensitive habitat. For these reasons, this landscape is judged to be highly sensitive to change.

Specific sites that carry landscape and ecological designations are outlined below.

### *Areas of Primary Amenity Value*

- **PA 1:** Slieve Beagh and Bragan Mountain Areas.

### *Areas of Secondary Amenity Value*

- **SA 4:** Blackwater River Valley environs, the upstream part of which is located in this LCA.

### *Scenic Routes*

- **SV 2 – SV 8:** Scenic views of open countryside from Bragan Mountain (Routes LT 11354, LT 11355, LT 11356, LT50411, LT 10011, LS 05040, LP 01003).

### *Ecological Designations*

- Eshbrack Bog - Natural Heritage Area (NPWS site code 001603)
- Slieve Beagh - Special Protection Area (NPWS site code 004167)

#### **4.1.5 Principles for landscape Management**

- The conservation of the upland moorland together with its open character and expansive views of the lowland below is important. This is to include viewing points and the settings of any cultural heritage sites.
- Whilst there appears to be little signs of grazing, this regime would require to be monitored in order to reduce potential damage to this resource.
- Control of peat cutting, particularly if mechanised, is advised in the interest of preserving an intact bog.
- Opportunities are to be sought to improve forest layout and design where felling and replanting are due to take place. Good forest design would include for the planting of deciduous outliers to the edge of the forest crop to minimise visual impact of conifers. The introduction of firebreaks and the replacement of 'straight lines' with wavy or undulating edges to forest plantations will improve their appearance in the landscape generally.
- The Protection and enhancement of the rivers habitats is important.



Viewpoint 33 (early autumn)

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)****4.1.6 Principles for accommodating new development**

- The moorland has a very low capacity to accommodate development. This landscape is designated a Primary Amenity Area and as such should be safeguarded for sustainable recreation.
- The lower slopes that contain tracts of conifer forest may provide opportunities for the siting of transmission masts, the visual impact of which could be greatly reduced in the context of these plantations.
- Sensitive siting of dwellings could be considered on the lower farmed slopes and these would present best in this landscape if designed in a simple or unfussy style. Opportunities are present to renovate derelict or abandoned farmhouses and such renovations ought to be encouraged to enhance the character of the area

**4.1.7 Geology and Landform***Pre- Quaternary (Solid) Geology*

This landscape character area comprises an extensive area of rolling sandstone uplands, rising to the rounded summit of Sliabh Beagh. This summit features an interlaminated mudstones, sandstones and limestone bedrock geology (Meenymore Formation) dating back to the Carboniferous Period (Dinantian Epoch). The hard wearing and weather resistant nature of this rock type explains in part, the elevated nature of this summit. To the south of Sliabh Beagh, there is a prominent escarpment formed by the underlying Darty Limestone . The foothills or approaches to Sliabh Beagh are dominated by softer shale rocks with occasional sandstones bands also from the Dinantian Epoch. These rock types are more susceptible to weathering and this process has in part given rise to the more lower lying landscape at the foot of Sliabh Beagh.

*Quaternary (Drift) Geology*

This particular landscape character area contains large drift free upland areas such as Sliabh Beagh which are now blanketed in peat. These areas would have been overridden and scoured by ice in Late Midlandian times. These ice flows moved southeastwards across the County. This same ice flow left extensive areas of till on the flanking slopes of Sliabh Beagh and the surrounding lowlands.

**4.1.8 Landcover and Ecology**

This landscape character area contains extensive areas of blanket bog. Plant species featured include Deer Sedge (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Hare's – tail cotton grass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*) and a range of Sphagnum mosses. The blanket bogland areas also contains a number of acidic peatland or bog pools and lakes. These vary in species composition depending on depth and nutrient content.

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

Heathland habitats are located on the bog margins and on the slopes of some of the stream valleys. The lower lying areas feature a transition to wet grassland areas with small isolated pockets of hazel dominated scrub (*Corylys avellana*).

The site supports a relatively large number of important bird species including Greenland White-fronted Geese, Merlin, Golden Plover and Red Grouse. The Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) is also of international importance and is listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. The species is very much associated with upland blanket and lowland raised bogs as it feeds within these areas. It is therefore sensitive to the decline of bog habitats. The Hen Harrier, also listed on the Red Data Book as 'Endangered' is also found on the Eshbrack Bog site. The Hen Harrier is a ground-nesting bird that shows a strong preference for moorland habitats. The decline of the species is caused by the degradation of bog habitats all over Europe. The region is therefore designated as a Spatial Protection Area (SPA) owing to the presence of this species.

The adjacent area of Slieve Beagh Bog is one of the most extensive areas of intact blanket bog in Northern Ireland and also supports a number of species of international, national and regional importance.

In terms of human activity, signs of regeneration of plant habitats are evident in areas formerly subjected to peat cutting. The combination of grazing and heather burning have rendered an open structure to this habitat overall. Conifer plantations located typically below the 300m contour are perhaps the biggest cause of habitat loss and continue to effect negative impacts to the area by altering the natural drainage pattern.

**Eshbrack Bog** lies adjacent to the Slieve Beagh complex which is a designated SAC (Site Code: UK0016622) in Northern Ireland. Eshbrack Bog is an extensive area of blanket bog with a bedrock geology of Carboniferous sandstone. It is the last remaining relatively intact bog habitat in Co. Monaghan. It is a globally scarce resource and current coverage of bogland in Ireland generally is greatly reduced owing to the combined impacts of afforestation, overgrazing and peat cutting. Sensitive management is required to ensure their long term survival.

**Slieve Beagh** lies in the north western part of the County and comprises an upland moorland that surrounds Eshbrack Bog NHA. It extends across the border of the county into Northern Ireland and is an extensive area of undulating upland comprising 7130 Blanket bogs and heathland. Slieve Beagh is one of the most extensive areas of intact blanket bog in Northern Ireland. The plant species composition include Sphagnum-rich mire vegetation with cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and Sphagnum *papillosum*, together with deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum* and hare's-tail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum*. Shrub cover is also present and includes wind pruned hawthorn and gorse.

### 4.1.9 Human Influences

Settlement is very dispersed throughout this landscape character area. The physical constraints presented by the topography and land cover is such that a limited settlement pattern has developed over time. Where settlement occurs, the predominant housing style is

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)**

the traditional single/two storey farmstead, often accompanied by associated outbuildings with green corrugated tin roofs. There are a significant number of abandoned and derelict dwellings within this LCA, reflecting higher population densities in the past and greater reliance on agricultural production.

In common with many of the upland areas in Ireland, the pattern of field enclosure types changes with increased topography and changes in landuse. Therefore, in the lower farmed foothills, small formerly improved pasture fields are enclosed principally by hedgerows composed of hawthorn and blackthorn with some mature trees. As pasture gives way to increased coniferous plantations, older field patterns are no longer visible, and enclosure is commonly by post and wire fencing around the plantations perimeter.

A network of sparsely distributed tertiary roads, criss cross the lower elevations of Sliabh Beagh, around the westerly boundary of the County; these abruptly terminate in short lanes, as one climbs towards the uplands proper of Sliabh Beagh in the adjacent county of Tyrone. The R186 traverses north east through this LCA, connecting Monaghan town to Clogher. Nucleated settlements are uncommon, and are located once again, on the more accessible lower foothills. These include Knockatallan (the hill of salt), and Carrickroe (the red rock) located just on the boundary of this character area.



*Viewpoint 34 (early autumn)*

There is no visible evidence of prehistoric activity within this character area however, bog areas are known to have been the focus of ritual deposition of valuable hoards in prehistoric times, and the blanket bog areas in this LCA may contain artefacts as yet undiscovered. A small number of cashels, earthworks and enclosures are located along the lower elevations of this character area.

The frequent use of the name 'Derry', in Irish 'Doire', meaning 'oak grove' in respect of a number of townlands particularly on the south eastern foothills of Sliabh Beagh would suggest that extensive areas of oak forest did exist in earlier times. Sliabh Beagh itself has strong associations with St Davnet, whose feast day is the 30<sup>th</sup> June and whose name remains in the parish of Tydavnet. This character area lies straddles two historic baronies, that of Monaghan and Truagh.

Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

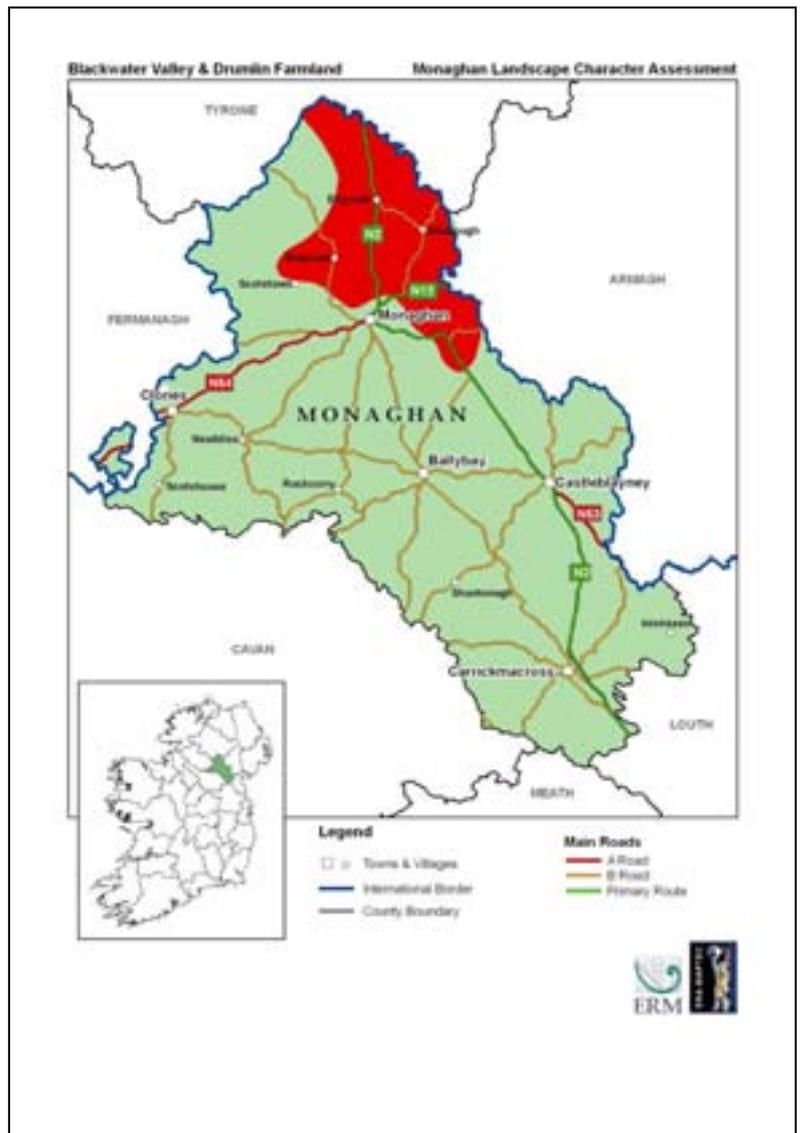
4.2 LCA 2: Blackwater Valley and Drumlin Farmland

4.2.1 Extent

This character area includes the Blackwater River valley environs which occupies the north eastern County boundary and a large lowland area extending from the County boundary to the south and west.

4.2.2 Key Characteristics

- Flat marshy areas and river corridors including the flat marshy vale and floodplain of the River Blackwater
- Relatively low lying drumlin farmland given over to pastoral uses and maintained in good condition.
- Neatly cut hedgerow as field boundaries featuring frequent mature hedge trees of ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)
- Isolated clumps of deciduous woodland. Occasional loughs some of which contain Crannogs.
- Attractive and well maintained villages featuring limestone buildings. These include the villages of Emyvale, Tullyree and Glaslough.
- Stone walled boundaries present as remnants of former estates, demesnes and larger Georgian Dwellings. Significant demesnes or designed landscapes include Castle Leslie and the Castleshane Demesne.



**Table 4.2 Landscape Data**

Landscape Character Types	Natural Heritage Designations	Archaeological Sites (SMR)	Landscape Designations	Scenic Routes
Drumlin Farmland	0 NHA, 5 pNHA	126	5	1
River Valley Farmland	1 pNHA	22	3	0

**4.2.3 Landscape Description**

The valley of the River Blackwater comprises a relatively flat marshy floodplain fringed at specific locations with occasional clumps of deciduous woodland. A part of this watercourse occupies the north eastern County boundary of Monaghan and crosses the southern part of this landscape character area. The river itself flows from the Clogher Valley into Lough Neagh. Small streams as river tributaries flow into the County in a south westerly direction some culminating in small to medium sized loughs, for example, Monmurry, Killycooly and Astrish Loughs. Around these tributaries are located areas of low lying and sometimes marshy land in between low lying drumlin hills.

The general landscape associated with this character area comprises largely farmland given over to pastoral uses. In terms of topography, this area features gently rolling drumlins and is relatively exposed in terms of views.

Field boundaries feature cut or managed hedgerows and occasional mature hedgetrees. Isolated clumps of mature deciduous woodland are located randomly throughout this landscape.



*Landscape character. Viewpoint 23 (early autumn)*

Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

Historic wooded designed landscapes including Castle Leslie are visually prominent at a localised scale and feature extensive stone boundary walling and acreage of mature woodland contained within.

Settlements include the villages of Emyvale, Tullyree and Glaslough, the village core, in each case, featuring traditional stone buildings and dwelling houses. A dismantled railway line extends from the County boundary around the settlement of Glaslough and thereafter extends south west towards Monaghan town.

Overall, this is a peaceful and unspoilt landscape with high scenic qualities.

4.2.4 Landscape Condition and Sensitivity

- The landscape is in very good condition and contains highly attractive and well maintained villages. Views can be gained over the short or medium range which would suggest that this landscape could accommodate small scale changes however large scale or extensive development could be intrusive.
- From an ecological and indeed scenic standpoint, the Blackwater environs would be highly sensitive to change brought about by development.

Specific sites that carry landscape and ecological designations are outlined below.

Areas of Secondary Amenity Value

- SA 1: Emy Lough and Environs
- SA 4: Blackwater River Valley
- SA 2: Mountain Water River Valley
- SA 6: Ulster Canal and Environs
- SA 7: Castleshane Woods and Environs

Views from Scenic Routes

- SV 1: Scenic Views along Emy Lough (Route LT12002).
- SV 10: View from Castleshane Brae (Route N2).
- SV 11: View northwards at Tullybuck (Route N2).

Ecological Designations – Proposed NHAs

- Emy Lough (NPWS site code 000558)
- Glaslough Lake (NPWS site code 000559)



Landscape character – Viewpoint 1 (early autumn)



Viewpoint 37 (winter)

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

- Killyhoman Marsh (NPWS site code 001782)
- Mullaghmore Lake (South) (NPWS site code 001785)
- Monmurray Grassland (NPWS site code 000562)

### 4.2.5 Principles for landscape Management

- The management of the River corridor is to include for the conservation of its ecological and landscape value. This includes protection of this habitat from undesirable run-off.
- Footpath and recreational access could be provided along the River Blackwater and this would serve to enrich the recreational value of the landscape.
- The hedgerow pattern is an important features that characterise this landscape and the protection of this existing vegetation is important in the interest of preserving landscape character and ecological habitat value. The replanting of new hedgerows is encouraged to replace wire fence boundaries.
- The management and ongoing planting of deciduous woodlands (containing native species) is encouraged and will preserve and enhance landscape character.

### 4.2.6 Principles for accommodating new development

- The landscape setting of historic features and estates should be considered when designing for new development. Design styles would preferably reflect the vernacular built character.
- Development that includes for the restoration of derelict buildings is beneficial.
- New development will require tree planting and hedge row planting to a layout scheme that matches local character and reflects the locally available native species.
- Built development along the lower edges of the river floodplain would not be recommended as it would be out of character.

### 4.2.7 Geology and Landform

#### *Pre- Quaternary (Solid) Geology*

This LCA belongs to an extensive lowland region which extends from the southern end of Lough Neagh along a Caledonian structural trend into the Monaghan – Clones depression. This low lying morphology is likely to be derived from the subsidence of the Lough Neagh Basin which occurred in the early part of the Tertiary period. The bedrock geology in this character area is almost exclusively comprised of impure limestones and shales from the Carboniferous Period (Dinantian Epoch) whose unconformity with the underlying older rocks of the Longford-Down inlier to the south is marked by the Fearnaght conglomerate.

#### *Quaternary (Drift) Geology*

The Lough Neagh Basin was a major ice accumulation centre during the Pleistocene Period (Late Midlandian). This ice flowed in a south westerly direction and in doing so created extensive areas of north – south oriented drumlins. These are typically elongated in the direction of the ice flow. Some of these drumlins have sharp crests whilst others are more

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

whaleback in profile. The majority of these are comprised of glacial tills. A small number of these are referred to as 'drumlinoid features' and are rock cored and some are composed of sand or gravel. Where drumlins are rock cored, there may have been some frost shattering of rock prior to shaping by the ice flow. Tails of shattered debris can sometimes be identified within till leading away from the feature in the direction of flow. The inter drumlin hollows are likely to have held water derived from runoff during Pleistocene times. Whilst some of these remain present today as loughs, many have been infilled with sediment washed down from the surrounding drumlin hills during the Holocene Period. This has led to the creation of flat bottomed marshlands between the drumlins that are subject to seasonal inundation.

The drift geology for the Blackwater River area itself reveals an extensive floodplain containing extensive alluvial material which was also deposited from the ice flows of the past.

### 4.2.8 Landcover and Ecology

The Blackwater in Monaghan is one of the key ecological features within this Landscape Character Area. In general, the predominant habitat types of the north eastern 'Drumlin Farmland' comprise improved grassland underlain geologically by Dinantian Shales and Limestones which support the pastoral land use of this area although some areas have been prepared for arable use.

Designated or proposed sites within this area mainly comprise lakes such as Glaslough Lake and Emy Lough, the two principle lakes in this character area.

**Glaslough Lake** is associated with the Glaslough Demesne is valued for the lake, its adjacent wetland habitats and the mixed species (non coniferous) woodland which was planted. Wooded islands in the southern end of the site serve as Herony sites. This particular lake is noted for having the greatest number of wildfowl species of all the lakes in the Blackwater Catchment (total 17 number). In particular it is an overwintering site for Greenland White Fronted Geese.

**Emy Lough** has been proposed for ecological designation due to its significance as an overwintering ground for greylag goose. It is a moderately sized lake located in an inter drumlin hollow and fringed by carr woodland including species such as Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Willow (*Salix cinerea*).

**Monmurray Grassland** is located north of Glaslough, adjacent to the border to Northern Ireland within this character area. It is a small homogenous site comprising improved lowland grassland. Although insignificant in terms of botanical interest, this site is visited by the Greenland White Fronted Geese for the overwintering period.

**Killyhoman Marsh** is a small area of wet scraw comprising marshy vegetation with some tree cover. The site is located in an interdrumlin hollow. Wet woodland is dominated by Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and this grades into a wet marsh vegetation dominated by Purple Moor Grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Devil's Bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Common

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

Sedge (*Carex nigra*), Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) and Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*).

**Mullaghmore Lake (South)** is a shallow water body located in the south western part of this character area and is colonised by reedbeds of Club Rush (*Scirpus lacustris*), Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) and common Water Lilies (*Nymphaea spp*). Further back from the lake margins, woody vegetation forms a margin and comprises Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Willow (*Salix spp*). The site is in fact designated for the extent of floating vegetation located there. In addition, a better than average number and variety of waterfowl reside there.

### 4.2.9 Human Influences

The gentle topography of this character area combined with ease of access to the River Blackwater and indeed the easterly position, located relatively close to the key urban centres of Dublin and Belfast, are key factors that ensured that this LCA became more densely populated over time and as a consequence, its landscape was subjected to more active management in a historical sense.

By the 1800s most Monaghan towns and villages were linked by a network of basic roads, and this landscape character area had a number of what can be termed 'principal' roads (Livingstone, 1980). Such roads were marked with milestones to indicate the distances from marked points to Dublin Castle, an example of this is the Lagan Bridge to Emyvale route.

The importance of this LCA as part of a wider central communications spine, traversing south to north Monaghan is demonstrated by the presence of the N2 National Primary Route, linking Dublin to Derry, and also the two regional roads, radiating from Monaghan town and traversing this LCA northwards. Another notable feature, reflecting the transport and communications importance of this LCA is the Ulster Canal, which opened in 1839, providing services linking Belfast to Monaghan and Newry. Originally planned as a means to complete a water link between Belfast and Limerick and to provide much needed employment, the canal was never successful in transportation terms. The problems concerned the narrow width of the locks, the inadequate water supply and the ever increasing availability of railways as transport corridors. Whilst it was in operation, this canal transported coal, timber and fireclay. The last boat sailed on the canal in 1929, and use of the canal was abandoned finally in 1931. Plans to renovate and reopen a section of this canal near Clones as a recreational resource are planned for the near future.

This LCA lies predominantly within the barony of Truagh. Truagh, like Dartrey was a very Gaelic part of Monaghan, and did not prosper under the new English regime in the seventeenth century. Brian, the brother of the executed Red Hugh was killed and the bulk of his land around Glaslough was declared forfeit. This area eventually formed the nucleus of the Leslie estate which was to have such an influence on this area in years to come.

The development of Glaslough (Glaslough – the green lough), under the patronage of the Leslie family, contributed to the decline of Emyvale and also the village of Tullyree in the neighbouring townland. Glaslough developed on the edge of the Castle Leslie demesne. By

Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

1841, the majority of the houses had slate rooves and it developed further in the early nineteenth century as a marketing centre. Lewis, writing in 1841 notes the industrial activity in the town thus:

*“ An extensive flour mill has been built in the neighbourhood, for which an ample supply of wheat is obtained from Glaslough market; and mills have been erected for scotching and spinning flax; also a factory on a large scale for weaving linens by hand and power-looms, the whole, when in operation, affords employment to between 800 and 900 individuals”* (quoted in Livingstone, ibid, 570).

Castleshane, the seat of the Lucas family underwent agricultural improvements in the nineteenth century, with the introduction of the green crop system (planting of nutrient enriching clover in fallow period as part of crop rotation system) and improvements by way of drainage works for tenanted lands.

Emyvale (Scairbh na gCaorach – ford of the sheep) is another attractive, nucleated settlement within this LCA. By 1841 it had a population of 641, and in Lewis’ topographical survey, he notes the tributary of the Blackwater running to the west of the town, containing a flour mill and green stone quarry. Other notable industries around this settlement included ironworks factories which were involved in the manufacture of farm implements, and a flour mill. A combination of the increased development of Glaslough and a failure to keep apace with industrial developments elsewhere, resulted in Emyvale suffering particularly badly with the onset of the Great Famine; many who emigrated from the town went to Prince Edward Island in Canada and established a colony there.

Designed landscapes and estate towns such as Glaslough are a notable feature in this LCA, with visible features such as limestone boundary walls located around estate boundaries. Attractive, well designed villages are apparent and include Glaslough and Emyvale. Elsewhere, traditional farmsteads are common, generally being small in scale and simple in design. Dressed stone wall boundaries frequently align many of the roads, and combined with the dressed limestone bridges crossing the streams, contribute to an attractive and distinctive landscape.



Viewpoint 71 (early autumn)



Viewpoint727 (early autumn)

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)**

Land use is generally improved pasture, though some tillage is also apparent. Field sizes are generally medium, and commonly enclosed by hedgerows containing native species. A reflection of the estate influence is apparent in the planting of Beech and Ash as avenues to houses.

This LCA contains greater evidence of historical settlement, including the ubiquitous cashels and earthworks. There are a number of crannogs present around the numerous loughs that occur between the drumlins, and of course the designed landscapes around Castle Leslie.

Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

4.3 LCA 3 Smithborough Hills

4.3.1 Extent

This landscape character area extends across a lowland landscape located to the north west of Monaghan town and to the south of the upland landscape associated with Sliabh Beagh.

4.3.2 Key Characteristics

- Low lying landscape featuring undulating topography and low drumlin hills.
- Numerous small to medium sized loughs many of which contain crannogs.
- Small river tributaries and streams including the River Finn and the River Blackwater
- Occasional clumps of deciduous woodland
- Settlements of Smithborough, Scotstown and Bellanode.
- Extensive network of tertiary roads
- River Blackwater flows through this landscape character area, from north west to south east through the village of Bellanode.



**Table 4.3 Landscape Data**

Landscape Character Types	Natural Heritage Designations	Archaeological Sites (SMR)	Landscape Designations	Scenic Routes
Drumlin Farmland	8 pNHA	62	3	0
River Valley Farmland	0 NHA	5	0	0
Undulating Farmland	0 NHA	6	0	0

**4.3.3 Landscape Description**

This character area is largely comprised of a rolling landscape of low lying drumlin hills. It shares the same character type as that featured in the ‘Blackwater valley and Drumlin Farmland’ LCA, that character type being ‘Drumlin Farmland’. The low drumlin hills are interspersed with extensive areas of relatively flat farmland. Occasional marshy areas are located in the inter drumlin hollows and reflect the glacial boulder clay that was deposited and gave rise to poorly drained soil conditions. The landscape pattern is relatively strong. In many cases, the field pattern boundaries are defined by a mixture of neatly cut hedgerows and hedgerows with hedge trees, some of which are mature and some of which are juvenile and in poor condition. The condition of the hedgerows vary with some showing weaker growth and exhibiting gaps. Frequently the field pattern is less well defined in areas and boundaries comprise of post and wire fences. Occasional clumps of deciduous woodland are located in this pastoral landscape. Building types comprise a mixture of traditional farmhouses some of which are limestone built and modern dwellings of a range of design styles. The area is served by an extensive network of tertiary roads.



**4.3.4 Landscape Condition and Sensitivity**

- This is a relatively open and therefore visually exposed landscape. It is not a highly scenic landscape and hence could accommodate development which is discreetly placed, given the extent of potential visual exposure.
- Condition of the landscape is relatively poor in places owing to the abandonment of farms and the dereliction of buildings.
- Tall steel farm structures detract visually from this landscape in general.

Specific sites that carry landscape and ecological designations are outlined below.

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)***Areas of Secondary Amenity value*

- **SA 4:** Blackwater River Valley
- **SA 3:** Hollywood Lake

*Ecological Designations – Proposed NHAs*

- Killyvilly Lough (NPWS site code 001839)
- Kilcorran Lough (NPWS site code 001838)
- Mullaglassan Lough (NPWS site code 001837)
- Drumreaske Lough (NPWS site code 001602)
- Rosefield lake and woodland (NPWS site code 001784)
- Ulster Canal (Aghalisk) (NPWS site code 001611)
- Corgreeghy Lake and woodland (NPWS site code 001783)
- Lislannan Bog (NPWS site code 001840)

**4.3.5 Principles for landscape Management**

- The true character of this landscape depends on the retention of field boundary hedgerows and replacement of fence boundaries with these hedgerows containing native species.
- The rivers and lakes are deserving of particular attention in terms of their future management and conservation to include preserving their settings from development.
- Agricultural practices need to be managed in a way that safeguards the water quality of the lakes and rivers.

**4.3.6 Principles for accommodating new development**

- There is a need to introduce planting to accommodate built development. Dwellings that are designed to respond to the traditional or stone built dwelling types are best suited to this landscape type.
- Tall structures, for example, telecommunications masts or wind turbines would not be very easily accommodated in this landscape.
- There is scope for the re use of established dwelling sites which have now become derelict.

**4.3.7 Geology and Landform***Pre- Quaternary (Solid) Geology*

The geology of this area is similar to that located in the 'Blackwater Valley and Drumlin Farmland' landscape character area, being a western extension. This landscape character area is a low lying landscape which is likely to have been derived from the subsidence of the Lough Neagh Basin which occurred in the early part of the Tertiary Period. The principal

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

bedrock types comprise both shales and limestones from the Carboniferous period (Dinantian Epoch). These occupy the northern half of this LCA. The southern half of this LCA features older rocktypes, namely the pure bedded limestones and the sandstones and shales of the early Dinantian Epoch. The unconformity with the underlying older rocks of the Longford-Down inlier to the south is marked by the Fearnaght conglomerate.

### *Quaternary (Drift) Geology*

This ice flows from the Pleistocene period as previously described, gave rise to extensive areas of north – south oriented drumlins that are a feature of this character area. These drumlins are typically elongated in the direction of the ice flow. As outlined before, drumlins can vary in terms of characteristics, some having sharp crests whilst others being more whaleback in profile. The majority of these are comprised of glacial tills. The inter drumlin hollows are likely to have held water derived from runoff during Pleistocene times. Whilst some of these remain present today as loughs, many have been infilled with sediment washed down from the surrounding drumlin hills during the Holocene Period. This has led to the creation of flat bottomed marshlands between the drumlins that are subject to seasonal inundation.

The drift geology for the Blackwater River area itself reveals an extensive floodplain containing extensive alluvial material which was also deposited from the ice flows of the past.

### **4.3.8 Landcover and Ecology**

This area features 'drumlin farmland' as the main landscape character type. Ecologically this comprises a patchwork of improved grassland and neatly cut hedgerows with single mature trees such as beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and oak (*Quercus robur ssp.*).

Designated sites in Monaghan mainly comprise loughs of varying size, vegetation and water chemistry.

**Killyvilly Lough** is located on the Fermanagh border and as such only part of the lake is located in County Monaghan. It is a calcareous lake featuring stoneworts and freshwater marsh vegetation. Areas of intact fen vegetation are present in this site and further from the lake margin, areas of Alder dominated woodland are found. The site is used by a variety of birds including Mute Swan, Snipe and Pheasant.

**Kilkorran Lough** located west of the area has been designated as it contains a crannog as a significant historical feature of the Irish landscape. It is among the largest lakes associated with the Finn River system measuring 17ha. Swamp habitats featuring sedges are well developed at the lakeshore together with wet Alder dominated woodland which occupies one part of the shore. Cattle pasture and silage production are the main activities that feature in the fields that surround the lake and the heavy use of fertilisers poses a risk to the lake habitats which are dependant on waters of a low nutrient status.

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

**Mullaglassan Lough** is a small lake with scraw (floating vegetation) which grades into reedswamp vegetation. These plant populations are valued as ecologically important. In addition, a varied bird life including Mute Swan, Mallard, Snipe and Curlew use this site. The bedrock limestone is a factor influencing the good quality of the agricultural land in this area.

**Drumreaske lough** is a small calcareous lough which is surrounded by marshland and mixed woodland. The lough margins feature stoneworts and the Great Fen Sedge. The wet marshy areas feature the wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*) which is likely to have been planted here. The mixed woodland that surrounds the lough features both conifers and deciduous species as a mix of native and ornamental types. *Rhododendron ponticum* is also present, its invasive growth characteristics could be a potential threat to this area.

**Rosefield lake and Woodland** represents a small lakeland site containing reedbeds and surrounded by Alder woodland.

**Ulster Canal (Aghalisk)** is largely a dry channel although it is noted ecologically because of the influence of the Conawaly River which runs parallel to extensive sections of the canal. This river supports rare plant species including the Flowering Rush (*Butomus umbrellatus*). The dry canal bed supports Iris (*iris pseudacorus*) and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). Woodland associated with the canal includes Ash (*fraxinus spp*) and Beech (*Fagus spp*).

**Corcreeghy lake and woodland** is a relatively undisturbed area featuring marsh margins at the lough shore and further from the shoreline there is extensive areas of wet woodland featuring Willow (*Salix spp*) and Alder (*Alnus spp*). The rare marsh fern (*Thelypteris palustris*) is thriving in this location. This lake is so designated as a fine example of intact transition from open water to wet woodland together with the rare species contained within. Other habitat types include bog and marshland sites and one such designated site is the

**Lislannan Bog** located near Clones. This is an area of floating marsh and fen vegetation and is so designated for these characteristics.

### 4.3.9 Human influences

In common with its northern neighbour, this LCA has an extensive network of tertiary roads meandering around and between the extensive drumlin belt. In addition, the N54 traverses this LCA as well as the R167. A 'principal' road connecting Monaghan to Enniskillen via Smithborough was developed in the early 1800s in this LCA.

Evidence of prehistoric activity in this LCA is found in the presence of two megalithic tombs on the southern boundary, in the townlands of Cloghernagh and Killina (both called the Giant's Grave) – this is part of a wider cluster of prehistoric sites that runs southwesterly from Three Mile House to north of Newbliss in the Monaghan Drumlin Uplands LCA. A significant number of crannogs are located around the numerous small loughs indicating settlement within the Early Christian period ( 500 to 1200 AD).

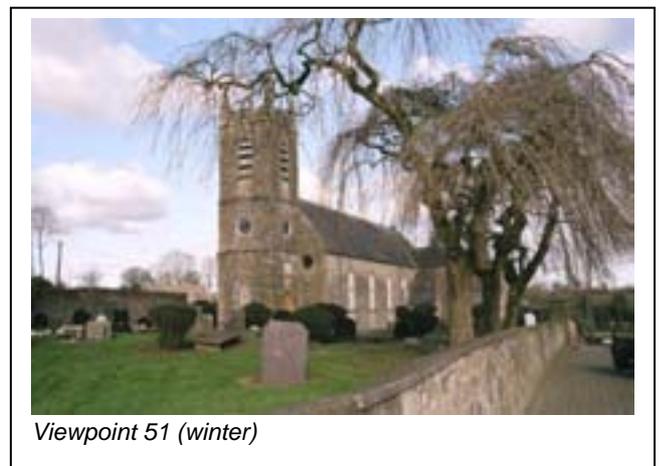
**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)**

Smithborough is a typical example of a nucleated settlement found within this character area. According to Lewis (1841), this town was founded by a landed gentleman called Smith who established monthly fairs in the late eighteenth century. The fair for black cattle became particularly popular and was held on Whit Monday. The Irish name, na Mallai translates as 'the heights', and is likely to have been named as such based on the older topographical description for this site.

Other settlements include Scotstown (Baile an Scotaigh), described in the Ordnance Survey Memoirs in 1834 as a small village, comprising six houses with slated rooves. Scotstown Bridge, which crosses the Blackwater was built in 1821 and consisted of a semi circular stone arch. This bridge replaced an earlier one dating from 1791.

The seat of St. Lua/Molua is located towards the west of this LCA and was a church and burial site until 1800. It was desecrated by Whiteside of Selloo and afterwards used as a burial site for unbaptised children (cillin).

Landuse is principally pasture, and fields are commonly enclosed by hedgerows, with hedgetrees. The management regime of such hedgerows varies, and in some places, hedgerows are weak in terms of growth exhibiting frequent gaps. Post and wire fences are also evident in some locations.



Building types comprise a mixture of traditional farmhouses and modern dwellings of a range of design styles. A number of derelict houses are noted, particularly along the River Blackwater. This landscape character area lies within the historical barony of Monaghan.

Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

4.4 LCA 4 Clones River Valley and Farmed Uplands

4.4.1 Extent

This area of low lying farmland is located in the west of the County. It extends to the County boundary and lies adjacent to the foothills of the Drumlin Upland of Monaghan, this upland being orientated in a north east to south west orientation.

4.4.2 Key Characteristics

- This is a low lying undulating farmed landscape comprising a series of low rolling hills. To the south west of Clones, the terrain becomes noticeably flatter owing to the influence of the substantial Lough Erne lake system in the adjacent County of Fermanagh.
- Pastoral landscape pattern is reinforced with hedgerows containing occasional hedgetrees.
- The River Finn is the principal watercourse extending from the north east to the south west. Occasional small loughs are also dispersed throughout this landscape.
- Remnants of an industrial past include the disused Ulster Canal which extends from the north east towards Clones. Also a dismantled railway line extends from Clones towards Newbliss. The Black Pig's Dyke is also located near the southern County boundary.
- Designed landscapes include the Hilton Demesne which contains mature deciduous woodland, loughs and streams.
- National and regional road routes feature in this landscape linking the towns of Clones and Newbliss to Monaghan.



Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

**Table 4.4 Landscape Data**

Landscape Character Types	Natural Heritage Designations	Archaeological Sites (SMR)	Landscape Designations	Scenic Routes
Flat Riverine	0 NHA	4	1	0
Farmland	0 SAC*			
River Valley	1 pNHA*	15	1	0
Farmland				
Undulating	2 pNHA	48	1	0
Farmland	1 cSAC*			
Urban	1 pNHA	18	0	0
	1 cSAC*			

\* includes candidate Special Areas of Conservation

**4.4.3 Landscape Description**

This landscape is comprised of gently rolling low lying hills which are largely given over to pastoral uses. Vegetation includes hedgerows as field boundaries with occasional mature trees. Occasional small pockets of deciduous woodland and scrub are located throughout. Low lying areas between hills feature areas of marsh. The main waterbodies and watercourses include the River Finn and occasional small loughs. Dwellings of a traditional type with white wash render or stone built are located in parts of this character area. It is a relatively open landscape owing to the low lying topography.

Further west, near the county boundary, the landscape is almost flat and contains extensive areas of marshland. The pastoral areas are in somewhat poorer condition with hedgerow boundaries that exhibit weak growth, multiple gaps and undermined misshapen ash trees. Run down farmsteads are evident in locations by the condition of the animals and the broken down fence boundaries.



*Viewpoint 13 (winter)*

The remnants of the industrial past referred to above are not especially conspicuous except at a localised level, for example, occasional viaduct sections of the dismantled railway line. The woodland associated with named designed landscapes is an important feature locally and enhances landscape character.

#### 4.4.4 Landscape Condition and Sensitivity

- Most of this landscape is in reasonable condition although isolated areas of low lying poorly drained farmland are currently supporting some impoverished and run down farmsteads towards the west.
- The low lying nature of the topography renders this landscape quite visually exposed and the tops of hills in particular would be sensitive to development.

Specific sites that carry landscape and ecological designations are outlined below.

##### *Areas of Secondary Amenity value*

- **SA 6:** Ulster Canal and Environs

##### *Ecological Designations*

- Kilroosky Lough Cluster – candidate Special Area of Conservation (NPWS site code 001786)
- Lisabuck Lough (NPWS site code 001835)
- Annagheane Lough (NPWS site code 001836)

#### 4.4.5 Principles for landscape Management

- The rivers and lakes are deserving of particular attention in terms of their future management and conservation to include preserving their settings from development.
- Agricultural practices need to be managed in a way that safeguards the water quality of the lakes and rivers.
- The industrial heritage items and indeed the designed landscapes are elements whose upkeep and management is recommended in order that they may be retained as focal points at a local level. These will also include the stone arch bridge crossings over the River Finn and the round tower in Clones which is a local landmark of interest.
- Replacement of wire fences with hedgerows would serve to maintain and enhance landscape character.



*Viewpoint 45 (early autumn)*

#### 4.4.6 Principles for accommodating new development

- This landscape has little capacity to accommodate development types involving tall structures.
- New development in terms of dwelling houses would ideally be designed to match the locally found farm houses referenced above.
- Use of the leeward or low lying locations at or near the foot of a hill is preferable.
- New developments should be accompanied by deciduous native species plantings in order that they may be successfully absorbed into this landscape.

#### 4.4.7 Geology and Landform

##### *Pre- Quaternary (Solid) Geology*

The low lying nature of the Clones farmed landscape is likely to be attributed to the subsidence of the Lough Neagh basin as previously described. In terms of bedrock geology, there are a range of rock types, the strata of which are oriented in a south west to north east strike direction. These rock types all date back to the Carboniferous Period with the oldest (early Dinantian sandstones) located to the south and the youngest (Dinantian limestones and shales) located to the north. The Carboniferous rock strata, after having been formed or laid down horizontally, are now tilted in a northerly direction. The resulting exposure has resulted in a weathering down of soft shales and impure limestones to form the present day lowlands.

##### *Quaternary (Drift) Geology*

The ice flows associated with the Pleistocene period have resulted in the deposition of glacial till in this character area which are present today as low hills distributed throughout a broadly low lying landscape. These differ from the distinctive drumlin hills located further north in that they do not assume an overall distinctive pattern or are not identifiable as groups of hills. The orientation of these hills is also less uniform or distinct in terms of direction.

#### 4.4.8 Landcover and Ecology.

This area is dominated, in terms of landcover, with improved grassland interrupted by hedgerows with mature trees. Pockets of wet grasslands, loughs and lough clusters and pockets of broadleaved woodlands are dispersed throughout.

This character area contains the candidate designated **Kilroosky lough cluster** which extends from near Clones across the border to Northern Ireland and comprises a series of calcareous clean water lakes with marginal fen vegetation.

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

The lough cluster includes Kilroosky, Burdautien, Summerhill and Dummy's Lough. It is of ecological interest due to its classic marl water chemistry and associated plant communities. Lakes of this type are overall rare in Europe. They are highly sensitive to pollution and are listed on Annex I of the Habitats Directive. The site supports a number of internationally, nationally or regional important species such as Round-leaved Wintergreen (*Pyrola rotundifolia*), Great Fen-Sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) and in terms of fauna, the White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) is found here and being listed in the Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive has been the basis for the designation of this site.

The White-clawed Crayfish is recorded as Globally Threatened by the IUCN. According to Thomson Ecology Limited ([www.thomsonecology.com](http://www.thomsonecology.com)) the species has some isolated populations in Ireland and is also protected in the UK. The waterbody of the lake system is enclosed by wet woodland, reedswamp/fen and marsh. Woodland species include Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*).

**Lisabuck Lough** is situated less than 0.5km south of the Finn River, about 4km south of Clones. The vegetation of the lough is similar to that found in small lakes in the area: The aquatic vegetation comprises Yellow Water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*) and Canadian Pondweed (*Elodea canadensis*). There are well developed swamps, comprising Bulrush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*), Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*). Wet grasslands and freshwater marshes surround much of the lake.

**Annagheane Lough** is a small acid lake located on the Cavan/Monaghan border. It is surrounded by dense woodland comprising Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*). Purple Moor Grass (*Molinia caerulea*) has developed on cutaway bog surrounding the lake. The open water is fringed by an area of Bulrush (*Typhas latifolia*) swamp which grades into freshwater marsh containing Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*), Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*), Marsh Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*) and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). The nationally rare plant species, Frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*), has been recorded from the lake recently.

### 4.4.9 Human Influences

The earliest evidence of human activity in this LCA, is the megalithic tombs found around Anoire, to the east of Clones. The Iron Age earthwork known as the Black Pigs Dyke traverses the southern part of this LCA and has been described in Chapter Two of this report. In common with the other drumlin areas of the County, this LCA supports a number of crannogs from the Early Christian period in the frequent small lakes such as Aghafin Lough.

The principal settlement is the town of Clones, which has the longest history of settlement than any of the Monaghan towns. The megalithic tombs referenced above indicated a long settlement history within this area, though it was with the arrival of St Tiarnach (470 to 548) that the settlement entered recorded history. The monastery established by St Tiarnach was the most important site in Monaghan for centuries after (Livingstone, *ibid*). The Clones monastery in turn encouraged other monastic settlements including those associated with St

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)**

Eachaidgh. Other monastic sites within this LCA include that of Annalore/Anoire, which translates as ford of the lepers, and was the site of another early Christian monastery. The monastic site was to become an Augustinian monastery in the twelfth century and the arrival of the Normans resulted in the construction of a castle on Clones Fort in 1212. Unfortunately, it was destroyed a year later by the O'Neills and the MacMahons shortly thereafter displaced the Normans.

Although an important monastic site and one can argue a proto-urban centre, Clones was formally laid out and established post 1600. Parks were laid out and in 1623 permission was granted to hold weekly markets and fairs. Evidence from 1739 suggests that many of the inhabitants were of Planter stock and a period of expansion commenced in this century. A new road to Monaghan was built and the Scothouse road was rerouted in 1768. For nearly a century, Clones was an important railway junction, linking Dundalk to Enniskillen. The accessibility of this area is evidenced in the development of transportation routes, including the Ulster Canal which flowed just south of Clones, and also the N43 and a number regional roads that radiate from Clones. The stone arched crossing of the River Finn is a fine example of masonry work within the area, as are the numerous smaller cutstone bridges that traverse the Finn and its tributaries.

This LCA also contains a number of former estates and associated demesnes, most notably the Hilton estate. These former Mac Mahon lands had been purchased by Sir William Temple before the 1641 rising, and thereafter, the lands were purchased by Dr Samuel Madden . Dr Madden was the rector of Drummully and was greatly interested in agricultural improvements, he had strong ties with the Dublin Society, later to become the Royal Dublin Society.

Once again, land use is predominantly pastoral with declining quality as one travels west reflecting poorer drainage and lower levels of agricultural improvements. Fields are commonly enclosed with hedgerows with some mature hedgetrees whilst the demenses associated with some of the former estates present another distinctive landscape feature.

Dwellings of a traditional type with white wash render or stone built are located in parts of this character area. This LCA lies within the barony of Dartrey.



Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

**Table 4.5 Landscape Data**

Landscape Character Types	Natural Heritage Designations	Archaeological Sites (SMR)	Landscape Designations	Scenic Routes
Drumlin Farmland	1 pNHA	7	3	1
Drumlin Foothills	1 pNHA	47	2	1
Farmed Foothills	0 NHA	34	0	0
Undulating Farmland	1 NHA	29	0	0
Upland Drumlin Farmland	3 pNHA	78	0	0
Urban	0 NHA	13	3	0

**4.5.3 Landscape Description**

This is a farmed upland landscape which is relatively remote, being distant and elevated topographically from major and minor towns or settlements. Nonetheless human activity in the form of farming and presence of farmsteads is quietly evident. The landscape pattern is relatively strong and takes the form of cut or managed hedgerows mostly with some hedge trees abounding pastoral fields. On the east side, many of these hedgerows feature gorse. Occasional clumps of deciduous woodland are located in this landscape. Small watercourses and streams are present albeit flow is very slow and sometimes stagnant. Occasional patches of marshland and areas of localised flooding are located in low lying areas. Dwellings are frequently well located in secluded locations on the lower slopes of the drumlin hills. Many of these are traditional or indeed of a modern simple design that sits well in this landscape setting. Occasional industrial heritage remnants observed include a disused waterwheel and associated millrace.



**4.5.4 Landscape Condition and Sensitivity**

- Most of this landscape is in good condition. The summit or highest point along the ridgeline is likely to be highly sensitive to development because it is visually exposed for many kilometres.

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

- In general, this landscape would not be regarded as highly scenic and hence, the capacity to accommodate development without undue compromise to the farmed landscape pattern is good.

Specific sites that carry landscape and ecological designations are outlined below.

### *Areas of Secondary Amenity Value*

- **SA 5:** Rossmore Forest Park and Environs
- **SA 6:** Ulster Canal and Environs

### *Views from scenic routes*

- **SV 9:** View of St Macartens Cathedral Monaghan from Berry Brae (Route R162).

### *Ecological Designations – Proposed NHAs*

- Wrights Wood (NPWS site code 001612)
- Lisarilly Bog (NPWS site code 001781)
- Rafinny Lough (NPWS site code 001606)
- Cordoo Lough (NPWS site code 001268)
- Drumcor Lough (NPWS site code 001841)

#### **4.5.5 Principles for landscape Management**

- Some dereliction is present in the form of abandoned buildings and spoil heaps created in the form of site clearance for development. The rescue of such sites for the purpose of development (dwellings) which will be lived in and maintained is encouraged.
- The character of this landscape is dependant on the retention of vegetation in the form of farm hedgerows.
- Summit locations that afford panoramic views are deserving of special treatment in terms of restricting development.
- The clumps of gorse shrubbery located in the eastern part of this area enhance landscape character especially when in flower. The spread of this vegetation must be monitored in order to minimise risk of forest fires.

#### **4.5.6 Principles for accommodating new development**

- New developments in terms of dwellings could be accommodated in the lower slopes of the drumlin hills.
- This landscape character area may be a good location for telecommunications masts owing to its elevated nature. Such development types may be accommodated by this landscape albeit subject to careful design and siting. The summit of the ridgeline must be avoided as the negative visual impact of tall structures viewed on a hilltop against the skyline is substantially greater. Further downslope, these structures may be

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

camouflaged against the backdrop of the landscape pattern and even judiciously placed wooded clumps.

### 4.5.7 Geology and Landform

#### *Pre- Quaternary (Solid) Geology*

The principal geological feature in this character area is the elevated ridgeline associated with the Longford Down Inlier. This is subdivided into the Ordovician belt or northern belt and the Central and Southern belts. The former and part of the latter belts are located in this character area. This extensive belt of rocks extends SW into County Longford and NE through County Down and across the Irish Sea in to the Southern Uplands of Scotland. The southern margin of the northern belt is a major transverse fault (the Orlock Bridge Fault) with upto a 1km wide zone of deformation within the rocks.

The rock types associated with the northern comprises hard wearing Ordovician greywackes and turbidites which were derived from continental crust to the north west and deposited in deep ocean waters along an active tectonic margin. The central and southern belts are composed sandstones, shales and turbidites with occasional volcanic rocks formed a fore arc basin. A volcanic arc would have separated the two belts during the time of deposition but this belt has now been lost during the closure of the Iapetus Ocean. This occurred approximately 400 million years ago. The Ordovician rock of the northern belt, under the influence of the mountain building process, came under pressure and formed a series of folds and were thrust southwards over the younger rocks of the central belt. The peaks or anticlines are represented by the elevated ridgeline that we see today in this landscape type. These Ordovician rocks represent some of the oldest rock types in the County. They are highly weather resistant as a result of the metamorphic processes that took place during the mountain building period. Their durability and resistance to weathering explains their continued presence today as the bedrock that supports the elevated landscape that we see today.

#### *Quaternary (Drift) Geology*

The glacial deposits in this area are largely present in the form of drumlin hills and these exhibit considerable diversity in terms of profile, pattern and particularly orientation, thereby suggesting that the direction of ice flow on this more elevated landscape began to change from the north south pattern which occurred further north in the county.

### 4.5.8 Landcover and Ecology

The area is dominated by improved grassland used as pasture, interrupted by hedgerows which are overall dominated by the use of native species such as Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Pockets of broadleaved trees and coniferous plantations also occur in this area. Mature trees associated with the hedgerows are often overgrown with Ivy (*Hedera helix*). This habitat complex or combination of habitat structures provides breeding sites for a wide range of birds while bats use hedgerows for feeding and

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)**

roost sites during the winter and the summer season. Concentrations of small sized loughs are recorded south of Monaghan Town.

Due to the intensive agricultural use of this area, the establishment of diverse habitat types including wetlands and marshes, which typically occur in wet lowland areas, have been restricted. Pockets of broadleaved trees and woodland are rare and an increase in non-native forestry plantations is apparent. Sizable tracts of single species woodlands located near Lough Annamakerig and comprise Sitka spruce plantations. Due to the dense canopy, habitats of this type are typically species poor and increase the acidity of soils beneath.

Uplands clusters of small sized loughs fringed with reeds occur south of Monaghan town to the west of this Landscape Character Area. With regards to the species diversity the lake shores are typically dominated by *Phragmites* reeds associated with single willow (*Salix sp.*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and elder (*Alnus glutinosa*). Reeds that are established along the shore of rivers and lakes are of enormous significance in regards to their function as buffer eco systems for water bodies and associated water quality therein.

Both Rafinny Lough and Cordoo Lough are proposed for designation.

**Wrights Wood** is a hilltop woodland which is noted for its species content, comprising very old Goat Willow trees (*Salix caprea*) and younger coppiced ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The woodland is likely to have been planted as it appears to be even – aged. The open canopy nature of it is such that a diverse range of species have developed as ground flora. These include Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*) and Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*). Wrights Wood is one of the best examples of coppiced ash woodland in Monaghan County.

**Lisarilly Bog** is a candidate for designation. It comprises a damp or wet hollow containing acid scraw (floating plant material). It is a fen area which is in transition, developing slowly as a raised bog. Species include Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*), Bog Bean (*menyanthes trifoliata*), Bog Moss (*Sphagnum spp*) and a range of sedges. Willow woodland is scattered around the site. Parts of the site have been cut for the harvesting of peat and are regenerating with ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*). Most of the bog is undisturbed and is recognised for this in terms of candidate status. Its survival, however, is dependant on being in a nutrient poor state which has implications for agricultural activity in the area.

**Rafinny Lough** is a peat stained waterbody containing three species of pondweed and willow moss, sedges and reed species. In terms of plant life, it is noted for its diversity, specifically the wet grassland and the marginal marshy vegetation.

Where the ground water conditions do not allow the outflow of precipitation water thin layers of peaty soils have been recorded associated with the typical plant communities dominated by rushes (*Juncus sp.*) and mosses within the upland areas in the western stretch of the area. Of these Lisarilly bog is a good example.

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

**Cordoo Lough**, now substantially drained features a peaty environment fringed with the Common Reed (*phragmites communis*). This in turn merges into meadow containing species such as Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*). The lake is fed by a small stream.

**Drumcor Lough** is a small linear lake located 4km east of Redhills on the Cavan-Monaghan border.

This lake was identified as being of scientific importance in a lake survey of the Finn-Lacky catchment in 1983 because of the high water quality. Thus a notable diversity of aquatic communities are present and a good development of lakeside wetland plant communities is evident especially marsh dominated by small sedge species (*Carex* spp).

### 4.5.9 Human Influences

A number of megalithic tombs are present to the south of Monaghan town, around the townland of Skeagarvey; this site is most probably a wedge tomb, dating from the late Neolithic to early Bronze Age. In common with much of the rest of the County there are a number of cashels, and crannogs present around the small loughs.

Monaghan, as the county town, supports a fairly extensive road network that radiates from the town, connecting to the N2, the N54 and a number of regional roads. The site was chosen for the county town, some time after the county came into being in 1585. The site had a long association with the MacMahons, had been a Franciscan monastic site until 1540, and was quite central to the smaller kingdoms of the McKennas and smaller MacMahons which were uniting to form the new county.

This LCA lies within the barony of Monaghan and by 1640, the majority of the land had left Irish hands. The nucleus of the Castleshane estate, bought by Mary Lucas in 1657 came via a number of purchasers. The estate which the Blayneys were granted in 1606 formed the centre of what was to become to Rossmore Estate.

Monaghan town remained in Irish hands during the Nine Year War but following the Irish defeat in 1603, the new town was developed under English rule. Monaghan prospered in the late eighteenth century, once again as an important linen centre. In 1846 the town had four banks and held markets on four days of the week. Much of the produce was purchased by dealers from Belfast and northern towns, as Monaghan had close commercial links with these centres.

The opening of the Ulster Canal in 1839, linking Monaghan with Belfast and Newry led to the creation of more streets and development activity in the town. The Ulster Railway opened in 1863, linking Monaghan to Belfast. This further emphasised the links of the town to the north east.

Pasture remains the dominant landuse within this LCA, with fields enclosed by hedgerows. Outside of the county town, settlement is dispersed and commonly composed of single

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)**

storey traditional style dwellings, many of these are accessed via narrow lanes off tertiary roads.

Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

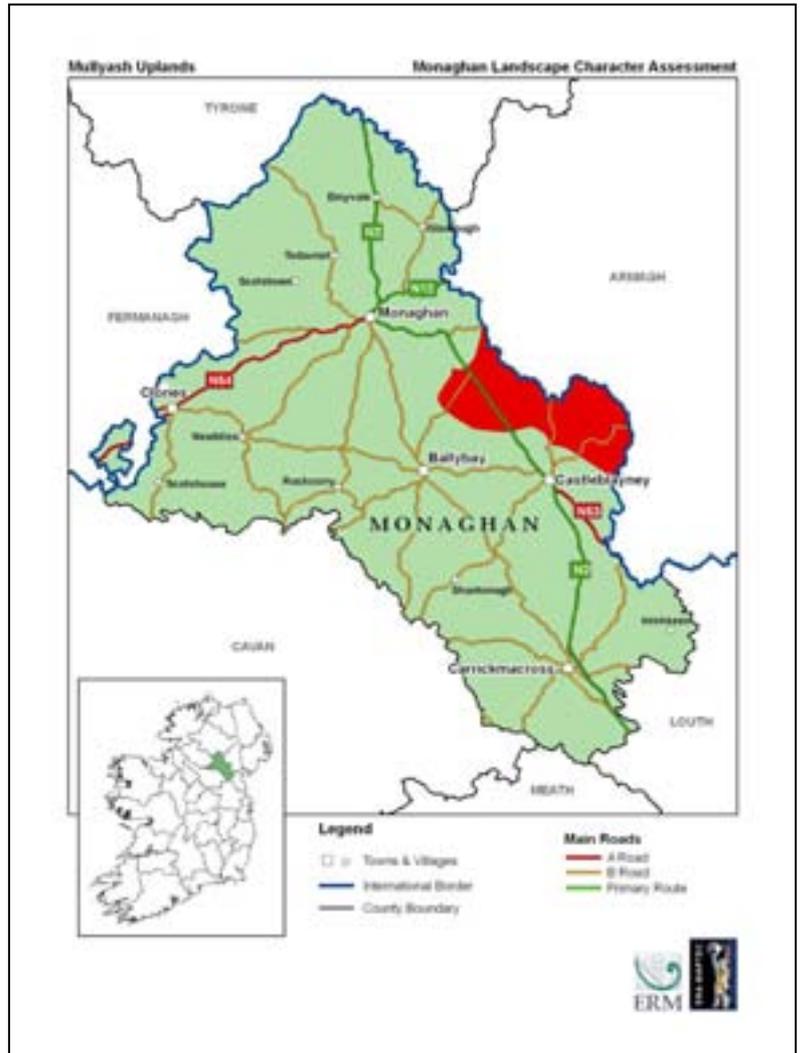
4.6 LCA 6: Mullyash Uplands

4.6.1 Extent

This landscape character area is located on the eastern side of the County. It extends from the Monaghan drumlin uplands as an elevated plateau and series of foothills leading up to and including the unique summit of Mullyash Mountain.

4.6.2 Key Characteristics

- A variable topography comprising a flat plateau area in the western part of this LCA which extends eastward towards the drumlin foothills leading to the summit of Mullyash Mountain.
- Drumlins in this LCA are steep sided and are strongly aligned in a north west to south east orientation thereby reflecting the direction of ice flow during the ice ages.
- Loughs and watercourses are almost absent from this landscape apart from a larger lough featuring a crannog near Drumleck.



- Landscape pattern is strongly defined as small to medium scale pastoral fields bounded by cut hedgerows with occasional mature trees. This pattern is obliterated and replaced with solid coniferous forest at Mullyash
- Large tracts of commercial coniferous forestry are present and reach up to the summit of Mullyash Mountain.
- Long range views towards this Mountain can be gained from many locations.
- Views of the Mourne Mountains can be gained from the eastern side of Mullyash Mountain.

Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

**Table 4.6 Landscape Data**

Landscape Character Types	Natural Heritage Designations	Archaeological Sites (SMR)	Landscape Designations	Scenic Routes
Drumlin Foothills	0 NHA	6	0	0
Upland Drumlin Farmland	0 NHA	9	0	1
Upland Farmland with Afforestation	0 NHA	1	1	3
Upland Plateau	1 pNHA	26	0	0

**4.6.3 Landscape Description**

This is an open pastoral landscape located in an elevated plateau like setting with views towards Mullash mountain as a major focal point in the area. This landscape features a small scale field pattern bounded by neatly cut hedgerows. Farming activities and farm dwellings are present although overall, this is a quiet, tranquil and relatively remote landscape setting. The open plateau renders it visually exposed.

Mullash is a distinctive landmark mountain with a somewhat linear ridgeline summit which presents against the skyline. Unfortunately the beauty of this is greatly compromised by the presence of extensive coniferous forestry which is very much out of character with the area generally.

A network of small roads permeate this landscape. Settlements are very small and often occupy intersecting roads or crossroads. Many of the dwellings are very traditional and feature white render or stone and many are well sited on the lower slopes of rolling hills or drumlins.



**4.6.4 Landscape Condition and Sensitivity**

- The landscape is in good condition and exhibits an intact pastoral field pattern. The upland flat areas together with the summit of Mullash Mountain are highly sensitive to development owing to both their scenic quality and visual exposure.

Specific sites that carry landscape and ecological designations are outlined below.

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

### *Areas of Secondary Amenity Value*

- **SA 12:** Mullyash Mountain

### *Views from Scenic Routes*

- **SV 12 – SV 14:** Scenic drive and views of open countryside from Mullyash (Routes LS07631, LS03603, LS07650).

### *Ecological Designations – Proposed NHAs*

- Tassan Lough (NPWS site code 001666)

#### **4.6.5 Principles for landscape Management**

- The retention and indeed restocking of hedgerows is to be encouraged to retain character.
- Forest felling and restocking practices should be conducted in a manner that minimises visual impact. In this regard avoidance of large geometric shapes when undertaking felling and replanting should be avoided.

#### **4.6.6 Principles for accommodating new development**

- The upland flat areas of this landscape would be sensitive to most forms of development owing to the extent of visual exposure. These areas together with the summit of Mullyash should be avoided for any form of large scale development or indeed tall structures.
- The drumlin foothills of Mullyash are more steep sided and there is scope for accommodating small scale development, for example, dwellings successfully owing to the capacity for these hills to hide such development.
- The restocking of commercial forestry on Mullyash mountain ought to take advantage of the introduction of deciduous species as outlier or boundary planting in order to enhance this landscape setting. Conifer plantations should not be placed at the very top as these visually detract from the skyline.
- Control of development generally is recommended on the eastern side of Mullyash Mountain in order to preserve scenic views.

#### **4.6.7 Geology and Landform**

##### *Pre- Quaternary (Solid) Geology*

The western part of this landscape character area is an elevated plateau landscape that commands long ranging views. It is associated with the central belt of the Longford Down Inlier, specifically an anticlinal fold or 'peak', hence the elevated nature of this landscape. In general the bedrock geology of this landscape character area comprises the hard weather

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

resistant metasediments of the Silurian Period and hence the elevated nature of this landscape has remained up to the present day.

Several metallic mineral deposits occur in this LCA and are hosted in north-north west trending veins. The principal minerals are Lead-Zinc-Silver and Antimony-Gold.

### *Quaternary (Drift) Geology*

The western part of this character area exhibits similar characteristics to that described in the Monaghan Drumlin Uplands landscape character area. Further east, apart from the bedrock associated with Mullyash Mountain, the pattern of drumlins is more strongly present, these being aligned in clusters and broadly assuming a north west south east orientation. This indicates a distinct change in the flow of ice in the Pleistocene Period from a north south orientation in the north of the County to a north west south east orientation further south.

### **4.6.8 Landcover and Ecology**

The Mullyash Uplands Landscape Character Area is in general, an exposed upland landscape which supports improved grassland as the main habitat type. The improved grassland cover is interrupted by afforestations comprising conifer plantations and occasional pockets of broadleaved woodland dominated by beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). Conifer plantings within the area are overall typically species poor due to their dense canopy which does not facilitate growth of understorey plantings as shrub and herbaceous layers.

Other habitat types include hedgerows with mature trees. Species typically comprise Beech (*Fagus spp*). These hedgerow and treelines are important habitats for bats, birds and invertebrates. Vegetation cover also reduces the extent of erosion by wind and water especially on slopes and exposed hill summits. The condition of the tree lines and hedgerows are generally good and these have an important contribution to make in supporting habitat types generally.

Aquatic habitat types are represented by rivers, streams and lakes together with wet grassland meadows. These are limited in the Mullyash Uplands and comprise a small number of lakes and upland streams.

The small water body of **Tassan Lough** is listed as a proposed Natural Heritage Area. It is noted for its bedrock geology, comprising Silurian outcrops which support particular habitats which include some rare plant species. The lough is fringed with common reeds and further back from the shoreline, where the rock outcrops are located, areas of grassland and sphagnum mosses are thriving.

### **4.6.9 Human Influences**

Settlement is relatively sparse and scattered throughout this Landscape Character Area. There are no clustered settlements on the slopes of Mullyash Mountain. A number of tertiary roads meander around the lower lying areas and frequently, single dwellings are accessed

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)**

by narrow lanes. Building styles are traditional and commonly feature white render or stone cladding. Some dereliction of farm buildings and dwellings is evident at higher elevations. In addition to the tertiary road network, the N2 traverses the northern part of this landscape character area, and the R182 runs north eastwards from the town of Castleblayney.

Whilst not heavily populated today, this landscape character area contains a number of significant historical sites. The earliest is that of Mullyash cairn itself, located on the summit of Mullyash and built around 4000 years ago. This site would have been chosen as it commands extensive views over Monaghan, Armagh and Tyrone. Folklore associated with the cairn (and possible passage tomb) relate to a princess who was buried there. Another megalithic tomb is located at Croaghan, and contains seven separate chambers.

Another important site is located at Clontibret, the scene of one of the earliest Battles of the Nine Year War, led by the Earl of Tyrone, Hugh O'Neill in 1695.

At this battle the English, led by Lord Bagenal were defeated and this battle was significant in that it was one of the first that Hugh O'Neill himself was directly involved in.

As previously stated, nucleated settlements are very sparse within this LCA, and include Annyalla (Eanaigh Gheala – the bright swamps), this village formerly was the site of an iron foundry; and Clontibret which supported a lead mine for some time. In addition to most of the county, weaving remained an important industry in the early nineteenth century. This LCA lies principally in the barony of Cremorne.

Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

4.7 LCA 7: Ballybay Castleblayney Lakelands

4.7.1 Extent

This is a low lying lakeland landscape which extends across the width of Monaghan County. It is present as a channel located between two upland ridgelines.

4.7.2 Key Characteristics

- Low lying pastoral landscape with frequent widely spaced drumlins.
- Numerous loughs, some of which are substantial in size and are among the largest in the County.
- Regional road route follows the line of the low lying channel in an east west orientation and links the towns of Ballybay and Castleblayney.
- Rivers and smaller watercourses follow an east west orientation and frequently link the loughs.



- Scattered designed landscapes include the Fairfield demesne and Dartrey House.
- Remnants of the industrial past include a dismantled railway line which extends across the landscape from Cootehill (outside the county) to Castleblayney and thereafter extending northwards.

Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

**Table 4.7 Landscape Data**

Landscape Character Types	Natural Heritage Designations	Archaeological Sites (SMR)	Landscape Designations	Scenic Routes
Drumlin Foothills	4 NHA	65	3	1
Farmed Lakelands	4 NHA	34	4	2
Urban	1 NHA	1	1	0
Farmed Foothills	0 NHA	3	0	0

**4.7.3 Landscape Description**

This is a low lying pastoral landscape which is present as an east west channel located or enclosed between two upland landscapes located to the north and the south. The landscape contains widely spaced drumlin hills which, on the west side, exhibit in part, an east west pattern or alignment. On the east side, these drumlin hills are strongly aligned in a north west to south east pattern and are reflecting the orientation of ice flow which has moulded these hills accordingly. This character area contains numerous loughs, the majority of which present as highly scenic landscapes. The largest of these is Lough Muckno which is linked to the town of Castleblayney on the east side. Further west, near Rockcorry, loughs of a substantial size include Inner lough and Drumlona Lough which are located near the well wooded demesnes of Fairfield and Dartry. Crannogs are a feature of many of these loughs and in the more low lying areas these are fringed with large areas of marsh supporting reeds. Rivers and smaller watercourses extend through this landscape in an east west orientation, the most important of these being the Dromore River which links many of the loughs. Traditional stone bridge crossings feature occasionally on these rivers. A regional road route links the principal towns of Ballybay and Castleblayney and a dismantled railway line, which indeed is not especially visible in this landscape, also follows the same orientation. The pastoral landscape pattern comprises small to medium sized fields bounded by hedgerows which vary in form, some presenting as cut managed hedge rows and some presenting as uncut hedges comprising many maturing trees.



*Viewpoint 78 (winter)*

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

### 4.7.4 Landscape Condition and Sensitivity

- This is a highly scenic landscape. The farmland is generally in very good condition and the variable drumlin topography and inter drumlin hollows is a key contributing factor to character and high scenic quality.
- The lough and lough shore landscape settings comprising reeds and riparian vegetation are highly scenic and ecologically valuable. These would be highly sensitive to any form of development.

Specific sites that carry landscape and ecological designations are outlined below.

#### *Areas of Primary Amenity Value*

- **PA 2:** Lough Muckno and Environs

#### *Areas of Secondary Amenity Value*

- **SA 8:** Annagmakerig Lake, Woodlands and environs
- **SA 9:** Dartry Demesne and Environs
- **SA 10:** Dromore River and lake system including White Lake and Bairds Shore
- **SA 11:** Lough Major and Environs

#### *Views from Scenic Routes*

- **SV 15 – SV 17:** Scenic drive along Lough Muckno (Routes LS 03700, LS 08400, LS03720).

#### *Ecological Designations – Proposed NHAs*

- Drumgole Lough (NPWS site code 001601)
- Lough Smily (NPWS site code 001607)
- Muckno Lake (NPWS site code 000563)
- Drumakill Lough (NPWS site code 001600)
- Dromore Lakes (NPWS site code 000001)
- Lough Ross (NPWS site code 001495)



Viewpoint 101 (early autumn)

### 4.7.5 Principles for landscape Management

- The designed landscapes and remnants of same serve to enhance landscape character and scenic quality. Management plans should include for the replacement of conifer planting with deciduous species or the use of such species as outliers to screen conifer plantings from view.

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)**

- The planting of commercial coniferous forestry near the shorelines of the lakes should be avoided.
- The maintenance of the hedgerows as an integral part of the farmed field pattern is encouraged. Wire fence boundaries should be replaced with hedgerow plantings.
- The lake ecological and water quality environment will require protection from sources of pollutants and inappropriate development.

**4.7.6 Principles for accommodating new development**

- Small scale developments including dwellings can be accommodated discreetly on the lower slopes of the drumlin hills. These ideally ought to be accompanied by planting of native species as hedgerows or woodlands.
- The lake and lakeshore habitats specifically ought to be protected from almost all forms of development. The visual catchment or geographic areas around each lake from which the lake and associated wetland can be seen would be regarded as highly sensitive to development. Further development on the immediate lakeshore is not recommended.
- Commercial coniferous forestry is out of character with this landscape especially near the loughs and the remnants of former designed landscapes. Restocking activities should include for the planting of deciduous crops, as outliers at a minimum in order to reduce the visual impact of the conifer plantations.
- Tall structures will be difficult to site in this 'almost valley' like landscape as these will be visible over a long range.

**4.7.7 Geology and Landform***Pre- Quaternary (Solid) Geology*

This is a low lying channel comprising numerous lakes. The underlying bedrock geology comprises sandstones, siltstones and shales from the Ordovician and Silurian periods which, as described previously, have undergone metamorphic change caused by the mountain building period. These rocks are associated largely with the Central belt of the Longford Down Inlier and the low lying nature of this landscape character area would imply that it is associated with a geological syncline or 'trough' formed in the series of 'folds' that are associated with the mountain building period.

*Quaternary (Drift) Geology*

The glacial deposits which manifest themselves as drumlins are aligned in a strongly north west to south east orientation in the Castleblayney Lakeland area specifically. This pattern could be seen as a continuation of that exhibited near Mullyash Mountain. Further west the drumlin pattern is less distinct in terms of orientation. A common feature throughout this landscape is the striking proximity of pronounced and steep sided drumlins close to the shorelines of lakes. Relative to other character areas, the drumlin hills are more sparsely distributed resulting in large areas of inter drumlin hollow.

#### 4.7.8 Landcover and Ecology

This Landscape Character Area features a combination of extensive and frequent lake systems covering low lying flat areas of land and complexes of low drumlin hills which feature predominantly improved grasslands. The lake systems are important ecologically as they support a wide range of species and habitats. Habitats, additional to improved grassland, and widespread within the area comprise reeds dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), pockets of rushes (*Juncus sp.*) typically associated with small sized areas of wet woodland and open water bodies. A combination of these habitat types support a range of fauna including bats, amphibians and breeding birds.

This pastoral areas feature predominantly improved grassland and rushy pasture. The use of land for arable crops is apparent also in this character area. Due to the low elevations generally, blanket bog and peatland habitats tend not to occur. Wetland pockets featuring rushes and wet grassland species are associated with the numerous streams and rivers present in this area. Smaller plantations of coniferous forestry are apparent on the more elevated areas. A change of land cover type or habitat is apparent with increasing altitude. Improved pasture occurs on the lower slopes combined with pockets of wetland and riparian vegetation. As elevation increases, the extent of rough grazing increases and plantations of coniferous forestry become apparent.

**Drumgole lough** is surrounded by rolling pastoral countryside and is so designated for its extensive water margin habitats which include reedswamps and wet grasslands. It is not of outstanding ecological interest, however it is noted for its attractive landscape setting.

**Lough Smily** contains a good diversity of habitats dispersed over a large area. The lough contains an area of floating marsh fringed by Willow (*Salix spp*). Bulrush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*), Reeds (*Phragmites australis*), Reed Canary grass (*Phalaris arundinaceae*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) are the dominant species in this wetland vegetation. Small pockets of raised bog are located in this area and overall the habitat diversity is good.

**Muckno Lake** is the largest lake in County Monaghan. Pastoral farmland slopes steeply down to the lake edge and frequent areas of wet woodland are growing at or near the shore. Species include Willow (*Salix spp*) and Birch (*Betula pubescens*). The common reed occupies the water margin (*Phragmites australis*). The area supports a number of species of waterfowl including Swans, Mallards and Teals together with a diverse range of invertebrate fauna. Muckno Lake occurs as the largest lake within the Ballybay / Castleblaney Lakelands. It is considered as important for water flea and breeding birds and provides wintering fowl for wild fowl.

**Drumakill Lough** is located in an area of undulating lowland. Drumlin hills are located close to the lake margin. The most ecologically valued part of this site is the vegetation that surrounds the lake. Wet grasslands, reedswamps and some wetland scrub are the principal vegetation groups. The fresh water margin vegetation is also ecologically important.

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

Unfortunately, discarded machinery located at this site represents a threat to the quality and intactness of this habitat.

**Dromore Lakes** comprises a series of approximately ten inter drumlin lakes together with some smaller water bodies stretching along the River Dromore between Cootehill and Ballybay. The interest in this site, from an ecological standpoint, was originally derived from the Bellamont Demesne and adjacent lakes although this is now not included in the pNHA as it has been largely replanted with conifers. Some areas in the demesne contain regenerated small woodlands featuring native species. Marsh and wet grassland are among the habitat types here and the lake is especially recognised for its wintering waterfowl population. Species include Whooper Swan, Wigeon, Great Crested Grebe, Cormorant and Grey Heron.

**Lough Ross**, part located in Co Monaghan and part located in Co Armagh is an alkaline lake featuring reedswamp vegetation and many varieties of pondweed.

### 4.7.9 Human Influences

This low lying landscape features a significant number of megalithic tombs, several of which are located on elevated sites, between Ballybay and Castleblayney. A small number of stone rows and standing stones are also present in this landscape character area. The area generally would have been attractive for early settlers owing to the availability of water and gently accessible topography. Whilst their ritual sites were constructed on elevated locations, in all probability, their everyday dwellings constructed of wood, were located in the lower lying areas of land.

The network of lakes draining the southern part of this LCA support a number of crannogs from the Early Christian period, such as those at Inner Lough, which contains two crannogs, located at the northern and southern ends of the lake.

Ballybay was a landmark before it became a town, due to its location as the site where the roads from Coothill, Clones, Monaghan and Dundalk met. It was not a town by 1663, as the hearth money roll indicated (tax levied in Ireland based on the number of hearths in each house) that only one taxpayer was living here. It is likely that this taxpayer was a refugee from the dissolved Franciscan house, carrying out priestly duties within the area (Livingstone, *ibid*). The establishment of Ballybay proper was under the auspices of Hugh Jackson, who decided to lay out a new linen town in the mid eighteenth century. He modelled the town on the Plantation pattern of a square in the centre, installed new machinery in the many flax mills in the area and the town grew as a marketing centre. A contemporary report of 1801 (*quote below from Livingstone*) describes the town thus:

*“The mountain of Crieve is in this barony, and within one mile of which is the town of Ballybay, which of late years since the establishment of the linen industry, is greatly improved, and several new houses are building, two stories high and slated.”*

Whilst the town expanded and was successful for a period, it lost over 8% of its population in the Famine, whilst the surrounding countryside lost nearly 30%.

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

The Ballybay estate was purchased by Reverend Henry Leslie in 1750 and his son undertook considerable work on the demesne, planting thirty acres in one plot, overlooking the lake and building a new church. The Leslies were the landlords in this part of Monaghan until the 1920s when the castle was destroyed and in 1926 the demesnes was sold in lots to local people.

Other estates within this LCA include Fairfield Demense, where the family of Corry resided. These were descendants of Cornet William Corry who received lands in a number of parishes in the Barony of Dartrey during Cromwellian time. The Corrys also gave their name to Rockcorry.

As mentioned above, a number of megalithic sites are present along the Ballybay to Castleblayney corridor and Castleblayney itself is nestled in ancient surroundings. When Edward Blayney was granted 32 townlands across Lough Muckno, and later granted further land, he commenced building a castle and a plantation town. However, it was his descendant Andrew Blayney, who was responsible for the significant expansion and development of the town, in the later part of the eighteenth century, again with the linen industry as a key driver.

Whilst Blayney encouraged significant works in the town, Coote writing in 1801 was most impressed by the work undertaken in the demesne (*quote below from Livingstone*):

*“Blayney demesne is far superior to the other improvements I have spoken off. A very excellent house has lately been built contiguous to the site of the old mansion. Part of the walls of the old castle still stand”*

The importance of this LCA as a communications route is illustrated by the ‘principal’ roads that ran through it: of the thirteen roads listed by Livingstone as ‘principal’, five included either Ballybay or Castleblayney. A number of coach lines also traversed this area, being later replaced by the railway network. The railways also served Ballybay and Castleblayney. Today, the N2 traverses the eastern part of this LCA, whilst regional roads connect the main settlements at Rockcorry, Ballybay and Castleblayney.

The landuse is principally improved and rushy pasture, with medium sized fields enclosed by hedgerows of varying quality. The numerous streams and the River Dromore are often crossed by cut limestone bridges, an attractive landscape element in this character area. This LCA lies within the barony of Cremone and Farney.

Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

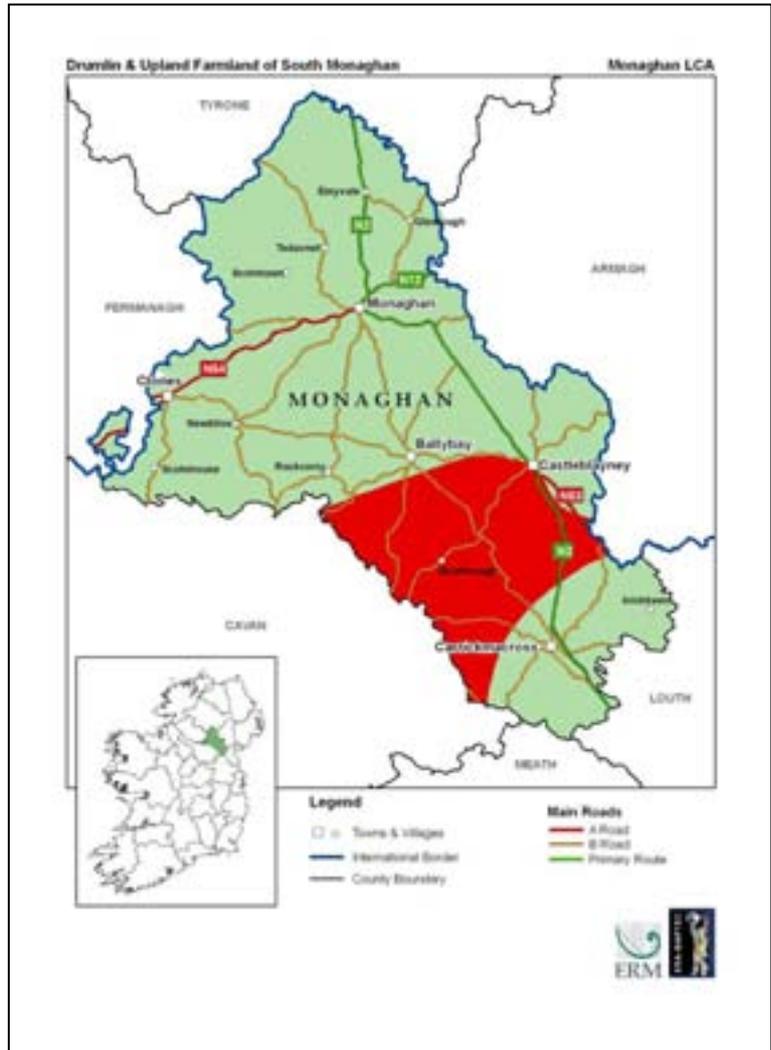
4.8 LCA 8: Drumlin and Upland Farmland of South Monaghan

4.8.1 Extent

This is an upland landscape which extends across the width of the County. It is located immediately south of the Ballybay Lakeland Landscape and extends southward covering a relatively large geographic area that overlooks the lowlands of Carrickmacross.

4.8.2 Key Characteristics

- An elevated landscape containing drumlin hills that are given over to pastoral uses. Strong field pattern evident as defined by hedgerow boundaries
- Areas of rock outcrops are present at the highest elevations. These areas feature more impoverished pasture. Field boundary pattern is broken or lost in these locations.
- Plenty of clumps of gorse located in the higher more impoverished areas.
- Frequent medium to large sized loughs, the largest being Lough Egish.
- The Clarebane River which flows out of Lough Muckno is aligned with the County Boundary.
- Long range views can be gained from the more elevated parts of this landscape towards adjacent low lying areas to the north.
- No major settlements. Extensive regional and minor road system.



Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

Table 4.8 Landscape Data

Landscape Character Types	Natural Heritage Designations	Archaeological Sites (SMR)	Landscape Designations	Scenic Routes
Drumlin Foothills	2 pNHA	126	1	5
Farmed Foothills	1 NHA	166	0	1
Farmed Lakelands	4 pNHA	39	1	0
Upland Farmland with Rock Outcrops	0 NHA	19	0	2

4.8.3 Landscape Description

This upland landscape is associated with the Longford Down Inlier and its elevated topography arises from the folding of rock strata and mountain building period in the geological past. The majority of this area comprises smooth drumlin hills used as pasture. Hedgerows are for the most part uncut and contain many mature deciduous trees. The loughs range in size and the largest of these is Lough Egish. The majority are fringed with reeds and riparian vegetation. Large areas of marshland feature in the inter drumlin hollows and these areas support willow (*Salix spp*) and alder (*Alnus*) tree species. Occasional traditional farmhouses are located in this landscape, some rendered in white and some built of stone.

The most elevated parts of this landscape are highly remote and feature rock outcrops. Although grazed in part by sheep, the farmland is impoverished and there is no strong field pattern. Boundaries to fields are somewhat fragmented and in many places, hedgerows are replaced by stone walls in variable condition. Occasional plantations of coniferous forestry are located in this landscape.



Viewpoint 106 (early autumn)

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

### 4.8.4 Landscape Condition and Sensitivity

- The landscape at lower elevations is in good condition and would be regarded as only moderately sensitive to development.
- The lakes and lake environs in particular have a high scenic quality and carry statutory designations and are judged to be highly sensitive to any development changes.
- In terms of the higher rocky remote landscapes, these would be highly sensitive to any changes involving large developments or tall structures. The relative exposure and scarcity of vegetation is such that sizable developments cannot be easily accommodated here without generating negative visual impacts albeit this area is in somewhat poor condition in terms of quality.

Specific sites that carry landscape and ecological designations are outlined below.

#### *Areas of Secondary Amenity Value*

- **SA 13:** Billy Fox Memorial Park and Environs

#### *Views from Scenic Routes*

- **SV 18 - SV19:** Distant views of Lough Muckno and Slieve Gullion (Routes LS 07830, LS 08141).
- **SV 20:** Views of Slieve Gullion at Taplagh, Broomfield (Route N2)
- **SV 21:** Scenic Views of Lough Egish (Route LP04121)
- **SV 22:** Scenic drive at Beagh, Shantonagh and Corlat (Route LT 40431)
- **SV 23:** Views of Lough Bawn and County Cavan (Route LT 71111)
- **SV 24:** Scenic drive Tattybrack (Route R190)

#### *Ecological Designations – proposed NHAs*

- Black and Derrygooney Loughs (NPWS site code 001596)
- Gibson's Lough (NPWS site code 001604)
- Loughbawn House Loughs (NPWS site code 001595)
- Lough Egish (NPWS site code 001605)

### 4.8.5 Principles for landscape Management

- Occasional abandonment of metal waste (scrapped cars and farm machinery) is evident. Such sites are in need of attention by way of clearance of these forms of waste.
- The renovation of derelict farms and properties is seen as a positive act towards reinstating landscape character.
- A way forward for Lakeland Dairies

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)****4.8.6 Principles for accommodating new development**

- Development in the form of dwellings would ideally match the traditional styles found in this landscape character area. Dwellings can be accommodated with a relative degree of success in the lower slopes of the drumlin hills. Retention and replacement of hedgerows and introduction of some tree planting would be an advantage.
- Coniferous forest crops are somewhat out of character in this landscape. Their screening with the planting of deciduous outliers is recommended. The exposed rocky outcrop areas are unsuitable for coniferous forestry.
- There are many locations where long range scenic views can be gained. Development needs are to be guided in recognition of the need to maintain these views.

**4.8.7 Geology and Landform***Pre- Quaternary (Solid) Geology*

This character area is an elevated landscape and geologically is associated with the central and southern belts of the Longford Down Inlier. The rock types, from the Silurian Period, comprise hard wearing shales and other 'metasidements' or rock types that have undergone chemical change or metamorphosis due to the impact of heat and pressure associated with the mountain building period that occurred 500 million years ago. This elevated landscape remains today, having endured millions of years of weathering owing to the resilience of the rock types.

*Quaternary (Drift) Geology*

The north west to south east orientation of the drumlins seen further north is more strongly evident in large parts of this landscape character area.

**4.8.8 Landcover and Ecology**

The Drumlin and Upland Farmland of South Monaghan contains a variety of mostly water dependent habitat types. At highest elevations, rocky outcrops occur in a broadly u-shaped ridge formation opening in a westerly direction. The area contains a number of depressions which support the development of peaty soils and associated vegetation communities.



*Viewpoint 115 (early autumn)*

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

Improved grassland is recorded as the predominant habitat type in this area in addition to the Lakeland and upland peaty habitat types associated with the rock outcrops. At lowland areas, hedgerows containing native woody species are the dominant enclosure type whilst in more elevated locations, the hedgerow pattern is overall interrupted or indeed lost. A range of farmed lakelands are currently proposed Natural Heritage Areas.

**Black & Derrygooney Loughs** provide roosting, feeding and nesting sites for waterfowl. Established habitat types comprise reed beds dominated with Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and rushes (*Juncus* sp.) adjacent to the water body. The lake system is located adjacent to steep sided drumlin hills and hence the extent of flat or gently sloping land at the lake margin is relatively narrow. As a result reed beds have established themselves typically along these narrow flat margins following the shoreline. Pockets of wet woodland comprising species such as Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Willow (*Salix spec.*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) are present. The areas of reed swamp serve as cover and nesting sites for wildfowl.

**Gibson's Lough** is an example of one of the smaller loughs in the County that features a floating marsh. These smaller loughs are gradually being inundated by this type of vegetation which features a range of plant communities which differ according to the extent of waterlogging or distance from the shoreline.

### Loughbawn House Loughs

**Lough Egish** is a medium to large sized lake which is open and relatively bleak in terms of aspect. The south west portion of the lake is owned by Lakeland Creamery and this dairy facility presents as a large scale factory close to the lake shore. Interest in this lake ecologically is derived from the range of bird life thriving there. Species include Whooper and Bewick's Swans, Black headed Gull, Common Sandpiper, Lapwing and Great Crested Grebe amongst many others. The north western part of the lake features plant species associated with a raised bog and this bog habitat is in good condition.

Lough Egish central to this Landscape Character Type contains the foremost wintering habitat for wild fowl in the County.

#### 4.8.9 Human Influences

Neolithic settlement is evidenced in this LCA in a broad circular sweep around Lough Egish – a barrow, three cairns and three megalithic tombs are present, concentrated particularly in the north east. In common with other lake series within the County, a number of crannogs are also present, particularly around Lough Bawn and Black Lough.

A church is also present on the edges of Lough Egish, with a possible associated holy well.

There are no major settlements within this LCA, although the area supports an extensive network of tertiary roads and is bisected by two regional roads – The R180 to Ballybay and R162, linking Shercock in County Cavan to Ballybay. The N2 also traverses this LCA to the east.

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)**

This LCA lies within the baronies of Cremone and Farney to the south. Cromwellian soldiers and adventurers were given possession of a number of former Colla MacMahon lands in Cremone, and three significant estates emerged – the Shantonagh estate, which James Corry purchased; the Tennison estate, granted to the Cromwellian soldier Captain Edward Carey and the nucleus of the Leslie estate at Ballybay, referred to in the description of the Ballybay Castleblayney LCA.

A number of minor settlements provide services such as a post office and some were more heavily populated formerly; Laragh, south of Lough Egish, means the site or sanctuary in Irish (Laithreach). In the early years of the nineteenth century, this village supported a population of 300, many engaged in the linen and jute industries, and the village contained some 60 slate rooved houses.

Another former significant settlement is at Bellatrain (Beal Atha Trein- mouth of the ford of the strong person). Folklore alleges that the giant Treain, who ruled from the triple ring fort above the village was stoned to death by the villagers and buried in Coraghy, where a megalithic tomb remains (Livingstone, *ibid*). Prior to its decline post Famine, Ballatrain had a number of shops, distillery, tanyard, and lace making industry, as well as flax and corn mills. This village was situated on the old road between Ballybay and Shercock and held a number of fairs throughout the year.

Traditional housing styles are present, often rendered in white or stone. Landcover type comprises pasture, both rushy and improved. Hedgerows with hedgetrees remain the dominant enclosure style. On more elevated slopes, these are replaced by stone walls, reflecting the closer proximity of the bedrock to the soil.

Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

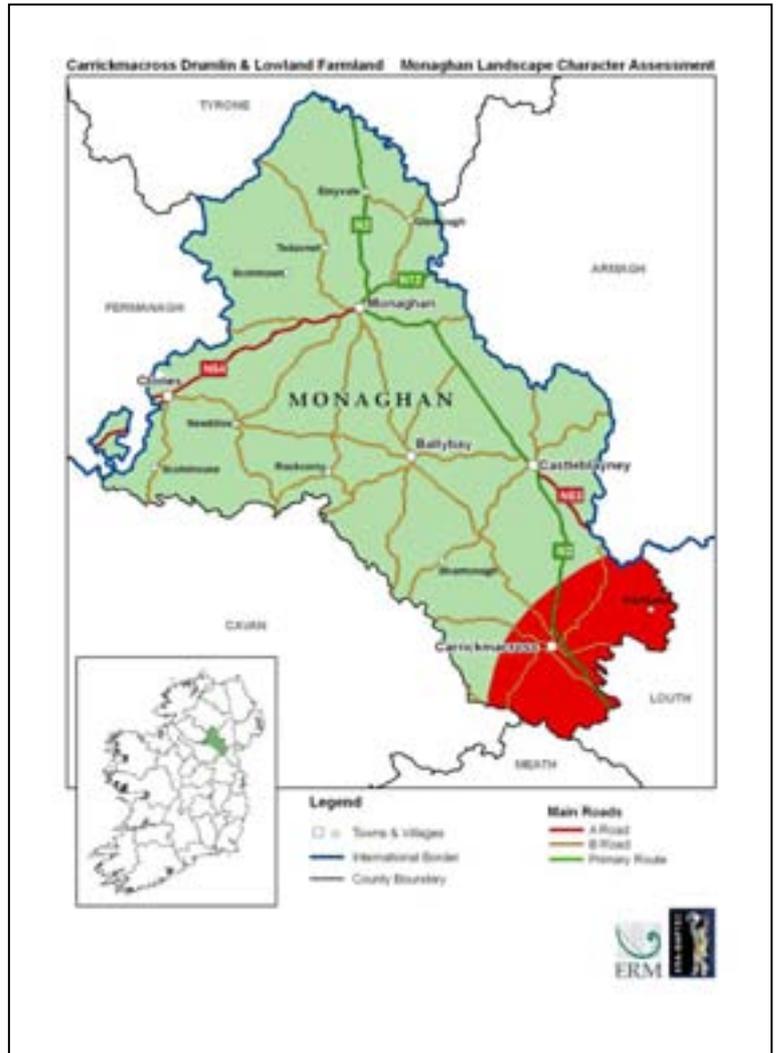
4.9 LCA 9: Carrickmacross Drumlin and Lowland Farmland

4.9.1 Extent

This character area is located in the southern end of the County and comprises lowland farmland which surrounds the town of Carrickmacross.

4.9.2 Key Characteristics

- Topographically, this landscape comprises a mixture of undulating farmland and low lying drumlins. The drumlins are more strongly aligned in an north west-south east orientation in the northern half of this character area.
- The River Fane flows in the same orientation as the strongly aligned drumlin groups and flows through the town of Inniskeen on the eastern side of the County.
- Frequent loughs are located in this landscape and range from small to medium in size. Some of these feature crannogs.
- Large areas of mature deciduous woodland are located to the south of Carrickmacross. Occasional clumps of mature deciduous woodland are located throughout.
- Coniferous forestry plantations are located in this character area including one particularly large plantation located to the south.
- Intact hedgerow pattern comprising a mix of managed and unmanaged hedgerows.
- Remnants of industrial heritage in the form of a dismantled railway line are present.
- Carrickmacross is the principal settlement.



Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

**Table 4.9 Landscape Data**

Landscape Character Types	Natural Heritage Designations	Archaeological Sites (SMR)	Landscape Designations	Scenic Routes
Drumlin Farmland	5 pNHA	140	2	0
Drumlin Foothills	0 NHA	26	0	0
Flat Riverine Farmland	0 NHA	35	0	0
Undulating Farmland	2 pNHA	68	1	0
Farmed Foothills	0 NHA	11	0	0
Urban	2 pNHA	6	1	0

**4.9.3 Landscape Description**

This is a mixed landscape type topographically comprising low drumlin hills and undulating farmland. Field patterns are strongly defined by hedgerows which comprise a mixture of cut or managed hedges and uncut hedges containing mature deciduous trees. Large areas of marshy land are located at lower lying elevations.

The River Fane is the principal watercourse and much of the farmland located around this river is remarkably flat. In this area, the scale of the field pattern is larger than those generally found in Monaghan’s landscapes. Boundaries are generally defined by cut hedgerows. The line of the dismantled railway line follows the line of the river and viaduct sections are well vegetated with woody native shrub species. Attractive traditional stone arch bridges associated with this rail line feature as crossings over minor roads.



**4.9.4 Landscape Condition and Sensitivity**

- Much of the farmed drumlin landscape is in good condition although there are isolated areas where the local landscape is in poor condition owing to the presence of run down or derelict farm facilities and the presence of broken or fragmented

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

hedgerows with mature trees strangled with the native ivy climber. It is a moderately scenic landscape and would not be considered to be highly sensitive to change.

- The loughs are plenty in number but are often not highly visible being fringed by riparian vegetation. These together with their vegetated edges would be highly sensitive to change.

Specific sites that carry landscape and ecological designations are outlined below.

### *Areas of Secondary Amenity Value*

- **SA 14:** Lisanisk Lake
- **SA 15:** Lough Naglack
- **SA 16:** Rahans Lake

### *Ecological Designations – Proposed NHAs*

- Creevy Lough (NPWS site code 001599)
- Spring and Corcrin Loughs (NPWS site code 001671)
- Lough Fea Demesne (NPWS site code 000560)
- Nafarty Fen (NPWS site code 002077)
- Monalty Lough (NPWS site code 001608)
- Lough Naglack (NPWS site code 000561)
- Ballyhoe Lough (NPWS site code 001594)

#### **4.9.5 Principles for landscape Management**

- The dismantled rail line is an attractive landscape element and may present the opportunity to develop a rural recreational walk based on the use of this.
- The special environments associated with the rivers and lakes are deserving of protection from pollution and inappropriate development.
- Opportunities ought to be taken to redevelop and reuse derelict farm and dwelling sites.

#### **4.9.6 Principles for accommodating new development**

- The drumlin hill landscape is one which can accommodate development where sited on lower slopes thereby concealing same with the natural topography.
- The environs of the River Fane, owing to its relatively flat topography, is highly visually exposed and could be unsuited to large scale development. Smaller scale development would have to be accompanied by appropriate planting in order to accommodate same in a discreet manner in this landscape.

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)****4.9.7 Geology and Landform***Pre- Quaternary (Solid) Geology*

Much of this landscape character area on the western side is associated geologically with the Kingscourt Inlier. The rock types of the Kingscourt Inlier are associated with the Carboniferous Period (300 million years old). The folded rocks which were formed during the Ordovician and Silurian Periods became submerged by inundating seawaters and in this marine environment, sedimentary rock types were formed or bedded down on top of the older Ordovician rocks during the Carboniferous Period. These Carboniferous rock types comprise Dinantian and Namurian limestones and sandstones and Westphalian shales. Later, in the Permo Triassic period (250 million years ago), rock types formed in this location included Sandstones, mudstones and gypsum.

During the Tertiary Period (65 million years ago), a north-south fracture or fault developed along the western face of this inlier and the recent rock formations associated with this same inlier began to dip westwards into a half graben. Hence at this time, the part of this landscape associated with this fault lay at a lower level than the general level of the surrounding landscape. Weathering of the softer rocks associated with the more elevated landscape eventually resulted in an overall lowering of levels thereby resulting in the low lying farmland that we see today. As a consequence of this weathering, evidence of both the fault and the change in level are not apparent in the topography as seen today. The process of faulting has resulted in the younger Permo Triassic rocks surviving in the inlier being protected from weathering by the drop in level created by the fault. The Carboniferous rocks (Dinantian pure bedded limestones) that cover a large part of this area represent the elevated landscape of 65 million years ago from which all recent Permo Triassic depositions were eroded by weathering.

*Quaternary (Drift) Geology*

The pattern of drumlins assuming a north west to south east orientation continues further south in this landscape character area. In this more low lying landscape the hills are not so tightly packed featuring large areas of interdrumlin hollows.

**4.9.8 Landcover and Ecology**

The underlying Dinantian Pure Bedded Limestone within the Carrickmacross area provides overall good conditions for farming in the southern part of Monaghan. Due to the described geology the predominant habitat type of this area comprises improved grassland and, very occasional, small areas prepared for arable land use. Rushes are overall sparsely established within the area due to intensive agricultural land uses and associated drainage systems and, in particular, the use of lime fertilisers which reduces the spread of rushes.

The dominant tree species in hedgerows and treelines comprise beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) associated with Ivy (*Hedera helix*). The combination of the above mentioned plant species is typical for County Monaghan.

## Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)

The six proposed Natural Heritage Areas listed for Carrickmacross comprise different types of loughs which differ from reed dominated and species rich lakes to the less typical reed free lakes.

**Creevy Lough** is an example of a reedless lake system. The lake is lacking the typically established reed bed dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*). The shoreline is very open, attracting picnic users and anglers. Common spike rush and a variety of sedges are the main thriving plant types.

**Spring & Corcrin Loughs** are two calcareous lakes located east of Carrickmacross. Both feature the White Water Lily (*Nymphaea alba*) inside a fringe of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*). Between the two loughs, an acidic grassland community is located together with a drainage channel that connects the two loughs.

**Nafarty Fen** comprises a hollow or low lying area that has been colonised with vegetation comprising a mixture of sedges, rushes and reeds. The area is fringed with Willow wooded vegetation (*Salix spp*). The Common Reed occupies the centre of the hollow, which has been disturbed in part (excavated).

**Monalty Lough** is located near Carrickmacross and is set in a drumlin landscape featuring pastoral land uses. The lough is underlain by limestone bedrock. The lough is fringed with reeds which in turn are surrounded by a belt of wet woodland species. Birdlife is rich and has been the basis for the candidate designation of this lough.

**Lough Naglack** is a calcareous lake located south east of Carrickmacross. It is deemed ecologically important for the calcareous marshland habitat together with grassland and mixed woodland habitats associated with the lake. Most of the lough is fringed with trees and the principal species include Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) together with some Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and some coniferous species. Bone remains of Irish Giant Deer (*Cervus giganteus*) has also been found in the mud floor of the lough.

**Lough Fea Demesne**, the largest pNHA site within this landscape character area, comprises large areas of limestone grassland which are extremely rich in numbers and varieties of orchids. Rock outcrops are present and these support unusual or uncommon plant communities. The area also features an ecologically valued woodland which includes magnificent Beech specimens (*Fagus sylvatica*) The site also includes a cave, the Kilmactrashna Cave contains a sloping passage within that terminates in a chamber.

**Ballyhoe Lough**, an acidic peaty lake on the border to County Meath, which also supports a range of wild fowl and as such is ecologically valuable. Remains of the Irish giant deer (*Cervus giganteus*) have also been found in this lake.

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)****4.9.9 Human Influences**

A number of crannogs are located around the small lakes throughout this landscape character area and represent the earliest indication of human settlement in this area. Another significant Early Christian site is the round tower at Inniskeen. Daig mac Carell, who died in 578 AD, founded a church at Inniskeen. The site is located on the north edge of the village, close to the Fane River. In the Middle Ages, this site was also where the parish church was located.

The Norman influence is more apparent in this eastern LCA, demonstrated by the higher number of mottes and baileys: at Inniskeen, a motte and bailey, called Candlefort, was constructed as the Normans attempted to penetrate further north into Ulster in the thirteenth century. A bawn, sited to the northeast of the bailey dates from later period.

Another Norman feature is Mannan Castle, now in Donaghmoynne Golf course, which commands extensive views over south east Ulster. The construction of the castle (probably wooden) commenced with Peter Pipard, an Anglo-Norman knight about 1193. In 1244 a stone castle was constructed and a motte was joined to the castle. The castle was subsequently leased to other Anglo-Norman families but had been abandoned by the fifteenth century. It is now covered in trees, hence concealing the remains of the motte, bailey and castle.

This LCA lies within the Barony of Farney, which was largely owned by the Earl of Essex (with the exception of church lands at Magheraclone, Inniskeen and Cullaville). Following the death of the third earl of Essex, the estate was divided between his heirs – Thomas Thynne and Robert Shirley. The descendants of Thynne owned the Bath estates in Farney and the descendants of Shirley retained the Shirley estate. The largest landlord in the county was Evelyn Philip Shirley who owned over 26,000 acres; the second largest landlord was the Marquis of Bath, who owned over 22,000 acres.

Carrickmacross is the largest town within this landscape character area. There was an ecclesiastical presence in this area, associated with St Finbarr until the twelfth century. A branch of the MacMahons settled in the area in the late fourteenth century. These MacMahons maintained good relations with their neighbours in the Pale but the town itself did not develop fully until the early seventeenth century. As mentioned above, the third Earl of Essex owned the barony and was encouraged by Sir Edward Blayney, the governor of Monaghan to take an active interest in the Farney estate and in 1630 Essex Castle was built at Carrickmacross. Carrickmacross always had a sizable Catholic population and hinterland which led to the settlers feeling more threatened than in other urban centres in the County. This presence led the construction of the first Catholic church in the County in post-penal times.

The pastoral farmland around the River Fane contains large field patterns compared to those found elsewhere in the County. Again, hedgerows remain the dominant field enclosure, with varying degrees of management.

**Chapter 4: Landscape Character Areas (Image Units)**

The principal nucleated settlements are Carrickmacross and Inniskeen, and a number of regional roads radiate from the former town. In addition, the N2 traverses this LCA, and the whole area supports a network of small tertiary rounds to serve the otherwise dispersed settlement pattern.



*Viewpoint 117 (early autumn)*