



Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

APPENDIX VIII

County Leitrim Landscape Designations



Comhairle
Chontae
Liatroma | Leitrim
County
Council

COUNTY LEITRIM LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS



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County Leitrim Landscape
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1 INTRODUCTION

In June 2020, Leitrim County Council commissioned RPS Group to undertake a review of the designated landscapes and protected views published in the County Development Plan (CDP) 2015 to 2021. This commission followed the review of the County Landscape Character Assessment published in 2002.

This report focuses on the designated landscapes and presents the findings of a comprehensive review of these landscapes in County Leitrim. The output of this is intended to provide Leitrim County Council with the necessary material for them to undertake stakeholder consultation (outside of this scope) as a critical part of this aspect of the CDP review process. The approach and methodology has been informed by published guidance as follows:

- *DRAFT - Guidance on Local Landscape Areas*, 2017, Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Environment Scotland; and
- *Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England*, 2011, Natural England.

1.1 Scope

The process followed a series of steps outlined below:

- Consultation with Leitrim County Council on the purpose of the landscape designations. The purpose is related to the conservation of special qualities and guiding future management and change in these landscapes;
- Mapped and written data gathering exercise focussed on existing designated areas, informed by the county landscape character assessment review;
- Defining the criteria for designation, based on criteria pertaining to the natural beauty of the landscape which also takes account of human intervention in the landscape;
- Identifying and agreeing areas of search or evaluation areas focussed on the current designated areas within Leitrim;
- Describing the character and special qualities of the local landscape to inform the designation process. Identify and recommend changes to the designation boundary which may include or exclude particular areas according to the criteria (special qualities); and
- Preparation of draft statements of importance for each designated area. This comprises a short succinct and celebratory description of the landscape of the area and why it has been selected for designation. Each area will have a locally recognisable name. Identifying areas for designation will require the application of a boundary which may differ from that associated with the current designated areas. The choice of boundary may be tied to field pattern, topography, roads or important views into and out of selected areas.

1.2 Structure of this report

The remainder of this report is focussed on the designated landscapes in County Leitrim for consultation purposes as outlined above. The report is structured as follows:

- Approach and Methodology;
- Baseline - Designated Landscapes (CDP 2015-2021);
- Analysis and Recommendations – Designated Landscapes (CDP 2015-2021);
- Recommended designated landscapes County Leitrim, adopted in CDP 2023 - 2029; and
- County Landscape Character Types.

2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The approach to the review of the areas designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Areas of High Visual Amenity (HVA) began by first identifying the purpose of the designation as set out below. Following this, the methodology used to evaluate areas of landscape is presented.

2.1 Purpose of Designation

Landscape contributes to the nation's wellbeing. Today it is ever more important to recognise how special local landscapes can be to the people who live in them and those who visit. They are relevant to current initiatives in planning, the design of green networks, and in sustaining a greener, healthier lifestyle.

Local landscape designations are a valuable tool in the development plan process. These reflect the qualities attached to particular landscapes and also the values placed on them by local communities along with the large social, economic and environment asset they provide. Designation informs their care and management and contributes to future environmental stewardship.

Landscape designations are assigned to particular areas for the purpose of managing change whilst having regard for the full range of special qualities and natural and cultural values attached to these areas. The process of designation involves community engagement and thereby recognises people's involvement in, and appreciation of, locally valued landscapes.

Designation of an area serves a range of functions:

- **Accolade** - Designation recognises that a specific area has special importance. Celebrating these values raises awareness amongst communities and stakeholders and promotes understanding and awareness of the distinctive character and special qualities of the landscapes. Designation can influence the promotion of some of the most important places for recreation and tourism within a local authority area;
- **Conservation** - Designation can help clarify and therefore safeguard important and sensitive landscapes and landscape features which are particularly valued and may have limited capacity for change;
- **Policy** - The designation process can contribute to wider policies for guiding development, by specifically identifying and safeguarding areas of landscape which are of particular importance and sensitivity. Landscapes continually evolve. This change is managed better if the special qualities and values of a landscape are better understood. The designation process helps to highlight landscape values that are important to communities, and inform this process; and
- **Management** - Identification of specific geographic areas provides a useful means to concentrate effort and direct resources for management.

2.2 Methodology

Designating a landscape indicates that it is of merit or value. A clear statement of these values is a vital part of the designation. The statement is usually developed with reference to assessment criteria developed for the purpose of designation, resulting in a statement of why the landscape is important.

Assessment criteria used in the designation process generally include:

- aesthetic or perceptual aspects;
- the type of landscape or place; and
- scenic value.

These qualities are often interrelated, for example, landscapes valued for recreation will often have strong scenic appeal. Table 1 below sets out the criteria used to assess the special landscape qualities of the designated landscapes in Leitrim. The criteria used below to evaluate each designated area as identified in the previous CDP 2015-2021.

Table 1: Range of Evaluation Criteria

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

Source: DRAFT - Guidance on Local Landscape Areas, 2017, Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Environment Scotland

There are no definitions set out for AONB and HVA for County Leitrim in the previous CDP 2015-2021. In this regard, the analysis of each designated area using the criteria outlined is undertaken in the context of the following definitions for these two categories of landscape designation.

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) – A landscape of outstanding natural beauty attributed largely to natural characteristics such as landform, vegetation cover and habitat, geological features, scarcity or absence of development or man-made built elements and areas of wilderness.

HVA (High Visual Amenity) – A landscape of high visual amenity owing to a range of factors including natural, cultural and man-made influences. The previous designation acronym HVA (High Visual Amenity) in the 2015-2021 CDP, is changed to AHVA (Area of High Visual Amenity) as it applies to an area of landscape. This is consistent with the county plan objective which refers to an area of landscape.

Section 4 of this report presents an analysis of each of the designated landscapes in turn followed by recommendations which may include changes to the boundaries of a designated area and / or changes to the designation name to better reflect the special qualities therein. Finally the recommended designated landscape is documented in map and written format including short statement of importance and an account of the special qualities.

Note that the designated landscapes may include areas, for example, towns and settlements or other built up areas. In this regard, the purposes of the landscape designation will apply whilst also having regard to the land use zonings therein.

3 BASELINE – DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

The baseline comprises designated landscapes cited in the previous Leitrim CDP 2015-2021. The designated landscapes included Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Areas of High Visual Amenity (AHVA).

Objective 80 of CDP 2015-2021 pertains to AONBs and states *“It is an objective of the Council to protect the following Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.”*

Objective 81 of CDP 2015-2021 pertains to AHVAs and states *“It is an objective of the Council to protect the following Areas of High Visual Amenity.”*

The 2015-2021 CDP identified seven areas which carried the designation of AONB. In the absence of detailed data that led to their AONB status, the areas are assumed to have been designated as such based on their outstanding natural beauty. The locations of these are listed below and are illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

- A1 The Coast;
- A2 Lough Melvin North;
- A3 Arroo, Glenade, Truskmore, Glencar and Environs;
- A4 The Doons, Lough Gill and Environs;
- A5 Benbo;
- A6 O’Donnell’s Rock and Boleybrack; and
- A7 Sheemore.

The 2015-2021 CDP identified fourteen areas which carried the designation of AHVA. In the absence of detailed data that led to their HVA status, the areas are assumed to have been designated as such based on their visual amenity. The locations of these are listed below and are illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

- B1 The Coastal Plain;
- B2 Lough Melvin, Glenaniff River and Environs;
- B3 Dough Mountain;
- B4 Thur Mountain;
- B5 Lough Macnean Upper and Environs;
- B6 Cloonclare;
- B7 Corry Mountain;
- B8 Lough Allen, Sliabh an Iarainn, Bencroy and Environs;
- B9 Lough Scur, St. John’s Lough and Environs;
- B10 Lough Garadice and environs;
- B11 River Shannon, Derrycarne and Environs;
- B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Sallagh, Lough Errew and Environs;
- B13 Gulladoo Lake and Environs; and
- B14 Laheen Lake, Glasshouse Lake and Environs.

The 2015-2021 CDP also referred to the potential to designate, in the future, areas as Landscape Conservation Areas in appropriate locations in accordance with Section 204 of the Planning Act.

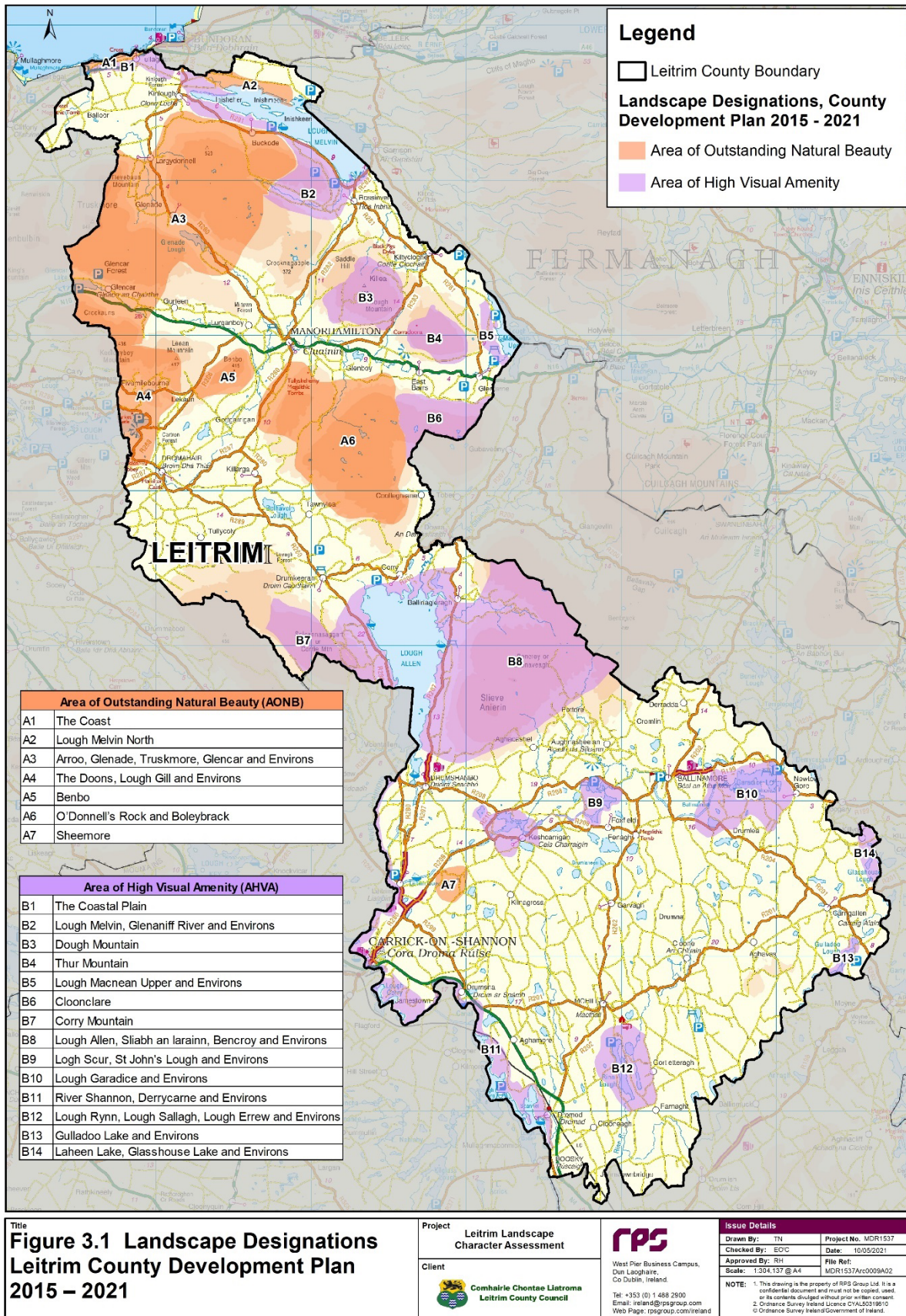


Figure 3-1: Landscape Designations – Leitrim County Development Plan 2015 – 2021

4 ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS – DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

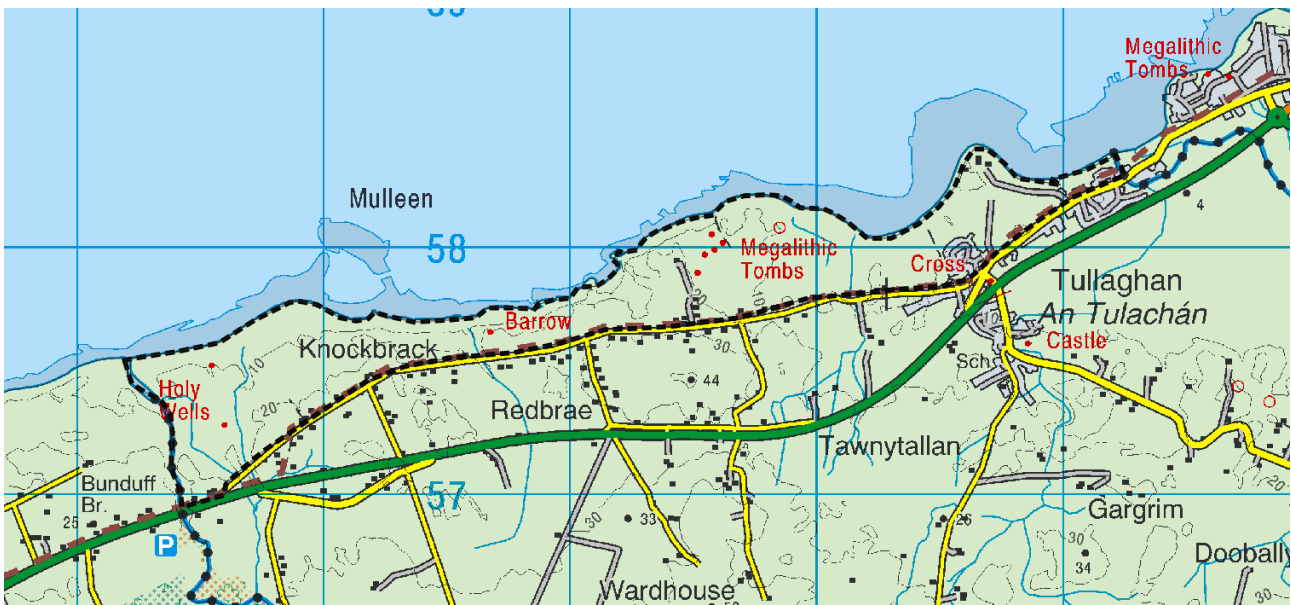
The designated AONBs and AHVAs are described below in terms of their extents and key characteristics with reference to available detail on landscape character types in the Landscape Character Assessment. Each designated area and its environs has been analysed with reference to baseline data and informed by field surveys to ascertain the qualities that merit designation in the first instance. The main qualities of relevance to their designation are outlined for each current designated landscape. Recommendations are made regarding name changes and changes to boundary extents along with the rationale that justifies these changes.

The summary findings of this analysis is presented below.

4.1 A1 The Coast AONB

4.1.1 Location and Landscape Character

A1 The Coast AONB is located in the north of County Leitrim and covers an area of land at the coast extending from Knockbrack in the west to the edge of Bundoran in the east and extends south to the minor road. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The AONB falls entirely within the Coastal Plain Landscape Character Type (LCT 1) which is described in section 6 below.

4.1.2 Key Characteristics

This landscape has a strong visual relationship with the coast and sea. Panoramic views are available over Donegal Bay and distant mountain skyline. An intact field pattern is present with traditional stone walls. The area is remote and tranquil especially away from roads.

4.1.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of A1 The Coast AONB is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: A1 The Coast AONB

Criterion	Evaluation – A1 The Coast AONB
Scenic	Outlook towards Donegal Bay and distant mountain skylines of the Bluestack and Derryveagh Mountains. This is of notable scenic quality further emphasised by the relative absence of built elements.
Cultural	Field patterns of historical interest along with traditional stone walls.
Natural	A landscape which has many natural qualities such as the characteristics of the coastline and the farmed small scale field pattern of the coastal plain which remain intact and relatively free of intrusive built development.
Enjoyment	National Walking Route along the minor road that defines the southern boundary of the AONB. The walking route is located based on the user enjoyment of the scenery and is promoted as a recreational facility, more recently incorporated into the Wild Atlantic Way. A landscape valued for recreational and amenity Tranquillity is remarkable, in particular away from settlements and roads.
Rarity or uniqueness	The coastline with rocky cliffs and areas of beach are of a unique profile along with the outlook towards Donegal Bay and mountain skyline. The outlook over the Bay with distant mountain skyline is unique.
Typicality	The farmed landscape of the coastal plain is a strong typical example of an older or historical field pattern with stone wall field boundaries which is in very good condition.

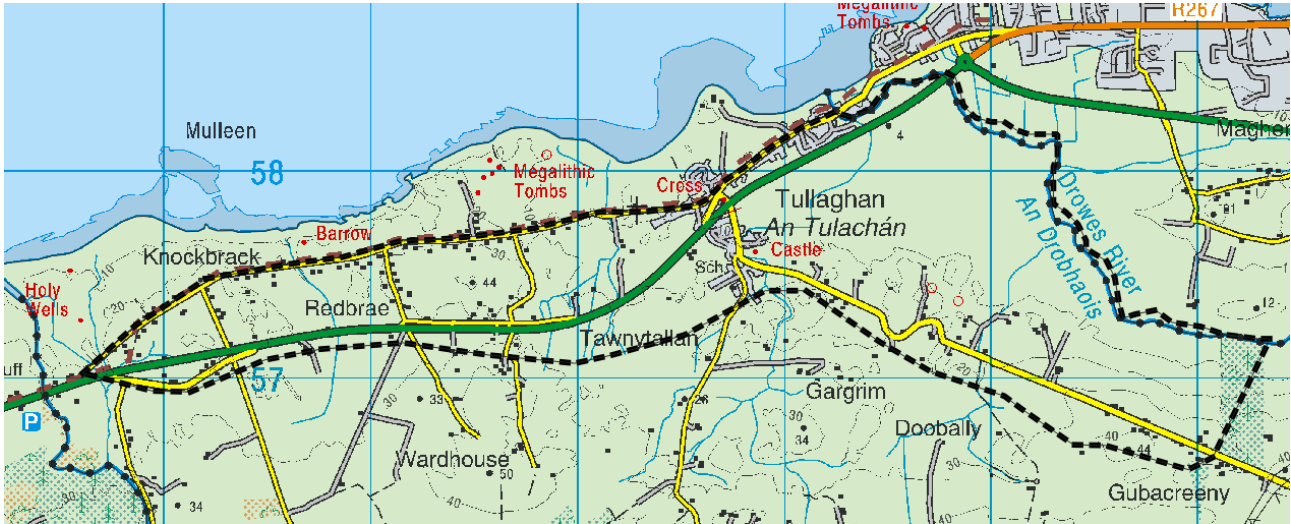
4.1.4 Recommendations

The designation of this area stands due to its key characteristics which are at the heart of the outstanding natural beauty. The area is renamed A1 Leitrim Coast AONB.

4.2 B1 The Coastal Plain AHVA

4.2.1 Location and Landscape Character

B1 The Coastal Plain AHVA is located in the north of County Leitrim and covers an area of land close to the coast extending from Knockbrack in the west to Tullaghan in the east and extending south towards Kinlough. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AHVA are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below.

- LCT 1 Coastal Plain; and
- LCT 2 Coastal Drumlin Farmland.

4.2.2 Key Characteristics

This is a remote landscape which is visually open due to the scarcity of woodland vegetation. The visual openness of this landscape facilitates long range dramatic views towards the mountain skylines of Arroo and Tievebaun. The landscape is relatively flat with big skies and has a rural and remote quality with high levels of tranquillity away from roads.

4.2.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of B1 The Coastal Plain AHVA is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: B1 The Coastal Plain AHVA

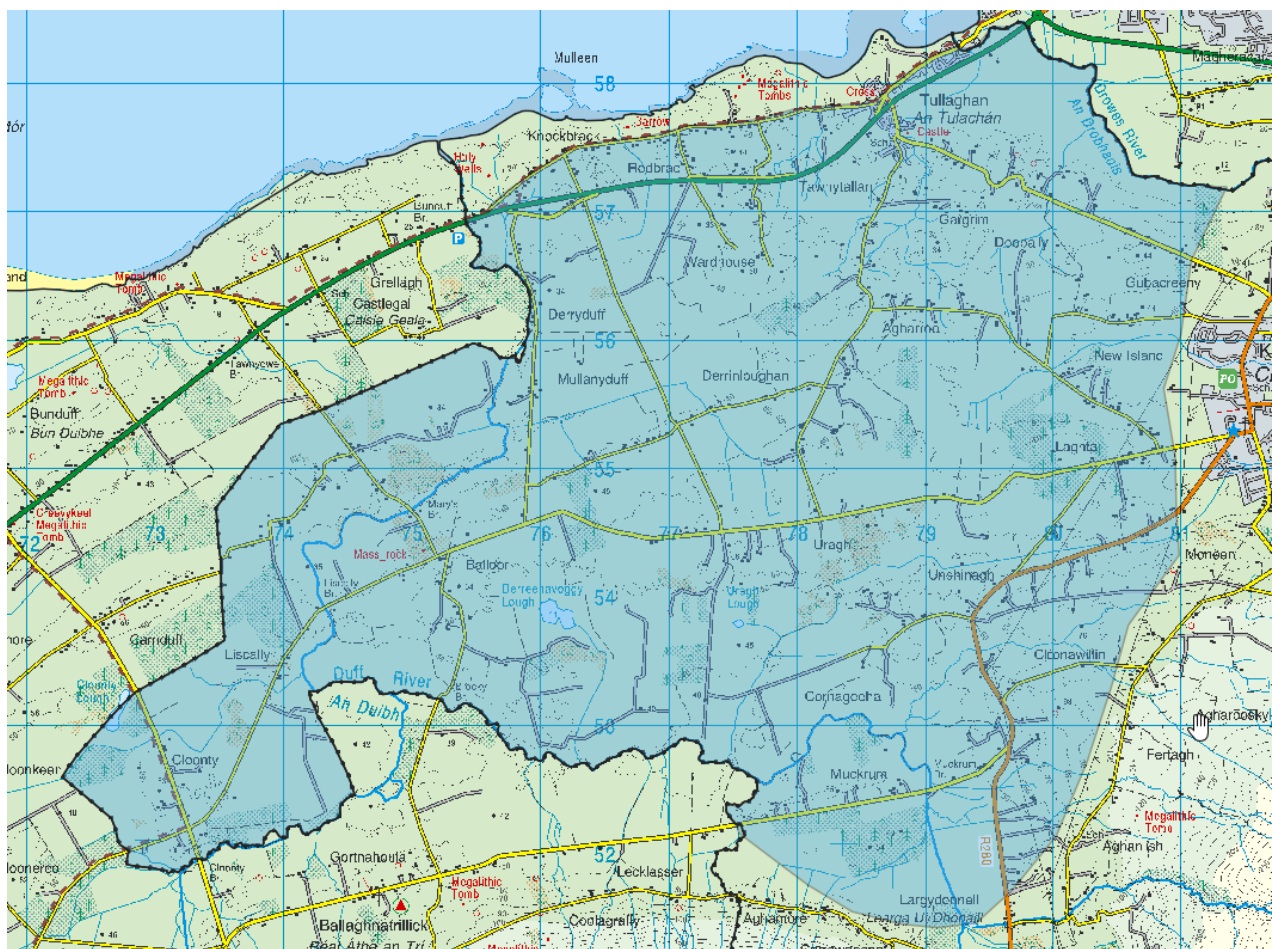
Criterion	Evaluation – B1 The Coastal Plain AHVA
Scenic	Outlook towards Donegal Bay and distant mountain skylines of the Bluestack and Derryveagh Mountains. This is of notable scenic quality further emphasised by the relative absence of built elements.
Cultural	Field patterns of historical interest along with traditional stone walls.
Natural	A landscape which has many natural qualities such as the characteristics of the coastline and the farmed small scale field pattern of the coastal plain which remain intact and relatively free of intrusive built development.
Enjoyment	National Walking Route along the minor road that defines the southern boundary of the AONB. The walking route is located based on the user enjoyment of the scenery and is promoted as a recreational facility, more recently incorporated into the Wild Atlantic Way. A landscape valued for recreational and amenity Tranquillity is remarkable, in particular away from settlements and roads.

Criterion	Evaluation – B1 The Coastal Plain AHVA
Rarity or uniqueness	The coastline with rocky cliffs and areas of beach are of a unique profile along with the outlook towards Donegal Bay and mountain skyline. The outlook over the Bay with distant mountain skyline is unique.
Typicality	The farmed landscape of the coastal plain is a strong typical example of an older or historical field pattern with stone wall field boundaries which is in very good condition.

4.2.4 Recommendations

The designation of this area stands due to its key characteristics, in particular the importance of the area as the setting of the Arroo and Tievebaun mountain ranges and the outlook over Donegal Bay together with the remote and tranquil qualities of the landscape overall. These qualities are also present in the coastal drumlin farmland further south which also has a strong visual relationship with the mountain skyline. It is therefore recommended that the designated area extends south to the boundary of A3 Arroo, Glenade, Truskmore, Glencar and environs AONB. The area is renamed B1 Farmed hinterland of Arroo and Tievebaun AHVA.

The extent of the recommended designated landscape is indicated in the map below.

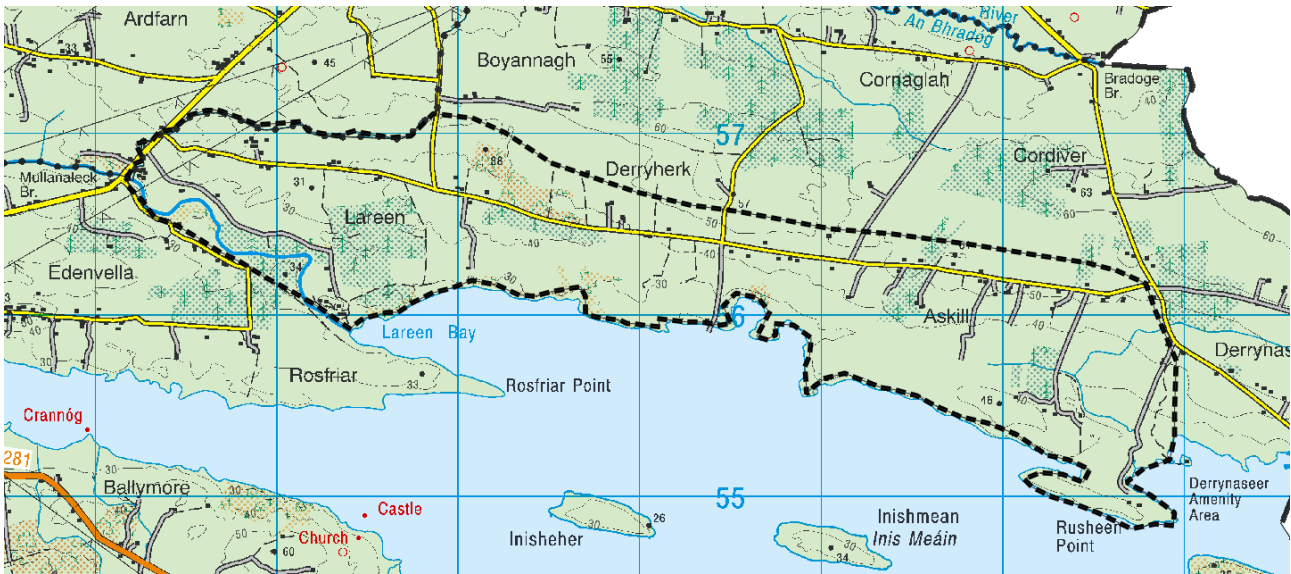


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4.3 A2 Lough Melvin North AONB

4.3.1 Location and Landscape Character

A2 Lough Melvin North AONB is located in the north east of County Leitrim and covers an area of land along part of the north shore of Lough Melvin extending from Lareen in the west to Derrynaseer in the east. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The AONB comprises a relatively small area of landscape located within the Wooded Lakeside Farmland Landscape Character Type (LCT 3). This LCT includes the entire lake and surrounding farmland and is described in section 6 below.

4.3.2 Key Characteristics

The key features of the designated area relate to the lake, crannogs and outlook towards the mountain skyline further south. Other relevant characteristics include the rural and partially remote character and levels of tranquillity.

4.3.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of A2 Lough Melvin North AONB is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: A2 Lough Melvin North AONB

Criterion	Evaluation – A2 Lough Melvin North AONB
Scenic	Outlook over Lough Melvin including islands and crannogs against the backdrop of Arroo Mountain and Tievebaun which is of considerable scenic quality. Promontory at Rosfriar Point is a focal point of interest.
Cultural	Crannogs and sites of former castles and megalithic tombs.
Natural	The natural elements in this landscape are associated with the Loch and native species woodland areas throughout. The Lough margin follows an intricate outline with small coves and beaches. The area has little or no man-made or built elements of a notable scale. Areas of commercial plantation forestry are a detracting element at a local level.
Enjoyment	The landscape is valued for recreational and amenity. It is enjoyed for its scenic quality and outlook to the Arroo Mountain Range together with use of the lake amenity by anglers. Tranquillity is notable, in particular away from minor roads.
Rarity or uniqueness	The shoreline, lake and islands are unique landscape elements along with the outlook over the mountains.
Typicality	Farmland surrounding the lake is a strong example of an intact field pattern with mature hedgerows which has remained relatively unchanged over time apart from occasional tracts of commercial plantation forestry. The road network is limited and comprises minor roads with intimate character derived from mature roadside hedgerows.

4.3.4 Recommendations

The current designation applies to the farmland at the edge of the lake however it is noted that the characteristics pertaining to its outstanding natural beauty are very much associated with the lake,

4.4 A3 Arroo, Glenade, Truskmore, Glencar and Environs AONB

4.4.1 Location and Landscape Character

A3 Arroo, Glenade, Truskmore, Glencar and Environs AONB is an extensive area located in the north of County Leitrim and covers mountain ranges of the same name in between which expansive glens are located. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AONB are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 4 Cluffed Uplands and Landslips;
- LCT 5 Moorland Plateau;
- LCT 6 Moorland Hills;
- LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills;
- LCT 11 Drumlin Lough and Stream Margins; and
- LCT 16 Steep Mountain Peaks.

4.4.2 Key Characteristics

The key relevant characteristics include the mountain skylines and moorland plateau which has a wildness and remote quality with high levels of tranquillity. In addition, the U shaped valleys between the mountain ranges are dramatic landscapes naturally formed due to glaciation over 10000 - 15000 years ago and

feature lakeland landscapes such as that at Glencar and Glenade. There is a strong visual relationship with the mountain landscapes incorporating moorland plateau and moorland hills and the U shaped valleys or glens.

4.4.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of A3 Arroo, Glenade, Truskmore, Glencar and Environs AONB is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: A3 Arroo, Glenade, Truskmore, Glencar and Environs AONB

Criterion	Evaluation – A3 Arroo, Glenade, Truskmore, Glencar and environs AONB
Scenic	The scenic quality of this area is derived from the individual and groups of unique mountain peaks and ridgelines that present as striking backdrop to the lower lying landscapes of the area. Scenic quality is also associated with the landform of the glens, comprised of expansive sweeping U shaped valleys enclosed by the surrounding mountains.
Cultural	Older small scale field patterns are present throughout. Ancient megalithic tombs and standing stones feature in the moorland plateau.
Natural	A landscape which has many natural qualities such as the mountain tops with cliffs, landslips and glacially formed corries. The topography is diverse ranging from mountain summits to long U shaped sweeping glens. Native species deciduous woodland is frequent at lower elevations. Occasional tracts of commercial plantation forestry are a detracting element.
Enjoyment	Promoted walking routes afford access to some of the mountainous areas. Access to this landscape along the road routes in the valleys or glens facilitates appreciation of many aspects of this landscape by visitors. Tranquillity is especially strong at higher elevations and away from settlements and roads.
Rarity or uniqueness	A unique landscape derived from the particular mountain and glen topography present within.
Typicality	The farmed landscape at lower elevations shows a typical intact farmed pattern comprised of a small scale field pattern. Little by way of large scale intrusive development has undermined the field pattern or resulted in field amalgamation and hedgerow loss.

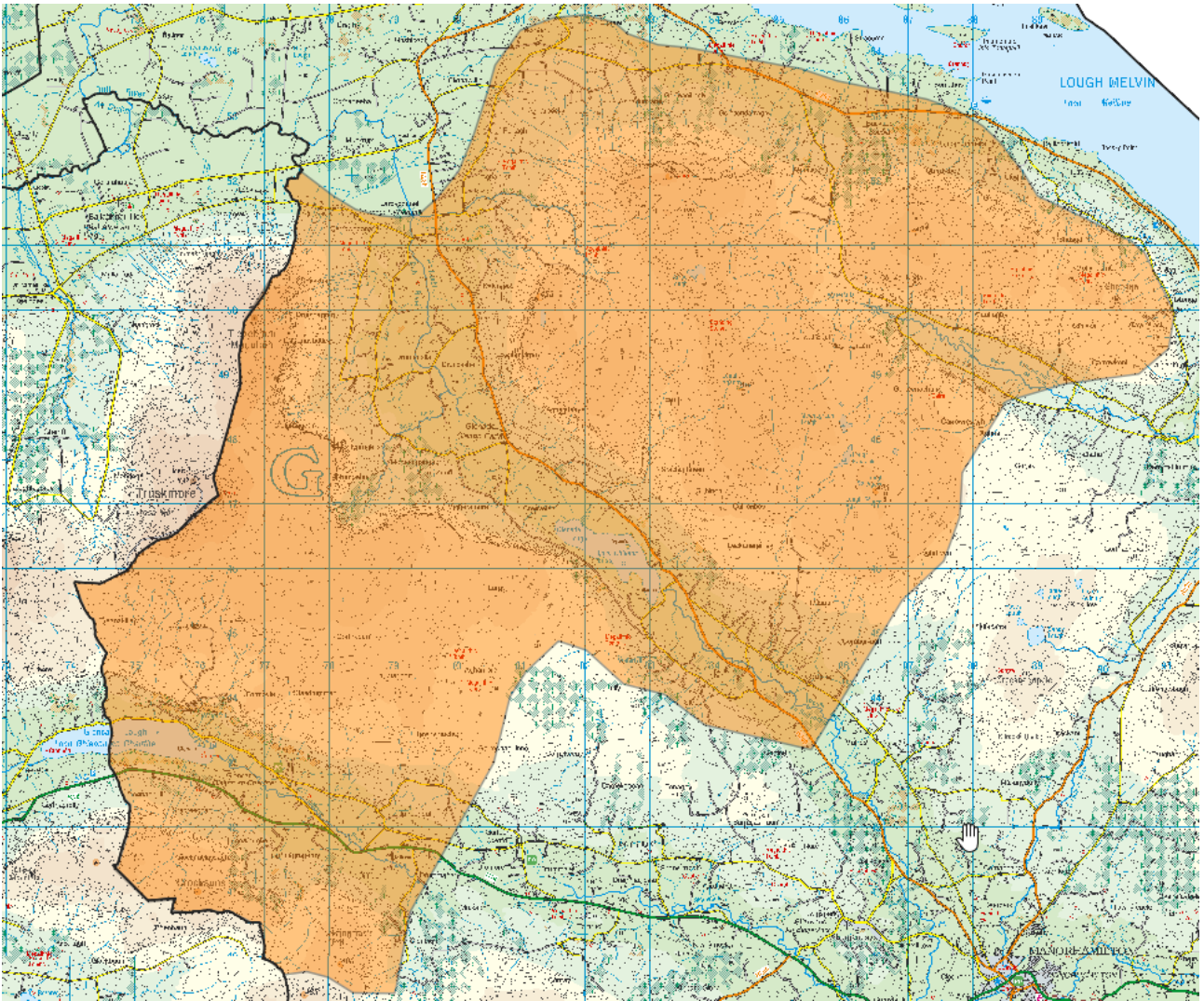
4.4.4 Recommendations

Adjustments to the boundaries of this designation are recommended as follows:

- Boundary extension to the east to include all of the moorland plateau landscape character type of Arroo Mountain as this is a key characteristic;
- Boundary extension to the south to include the Glenaniff Valley in recognition of the long U shaped sweeping valley characteristics which are one of the key characteristics of this mountain and glen landscape.

The area is renamed A3 Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB. This recognises locally known nomenclature in tourist literature that promotes this landscape in North Leitrim.

The extent of the recommended designated landscape is indicated in the map below.



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important as the basis for the designation. Much of this area is recommended for inclusion within A3 Arroo, Glenade, Truskmore, Glencar and Environs AONB.

The area also includes the fringe farmland around Lough Melvin which is more closely related to the landscape of A2 Lough Melvin North AONB and is recommended for inclusion in this particular AONB.

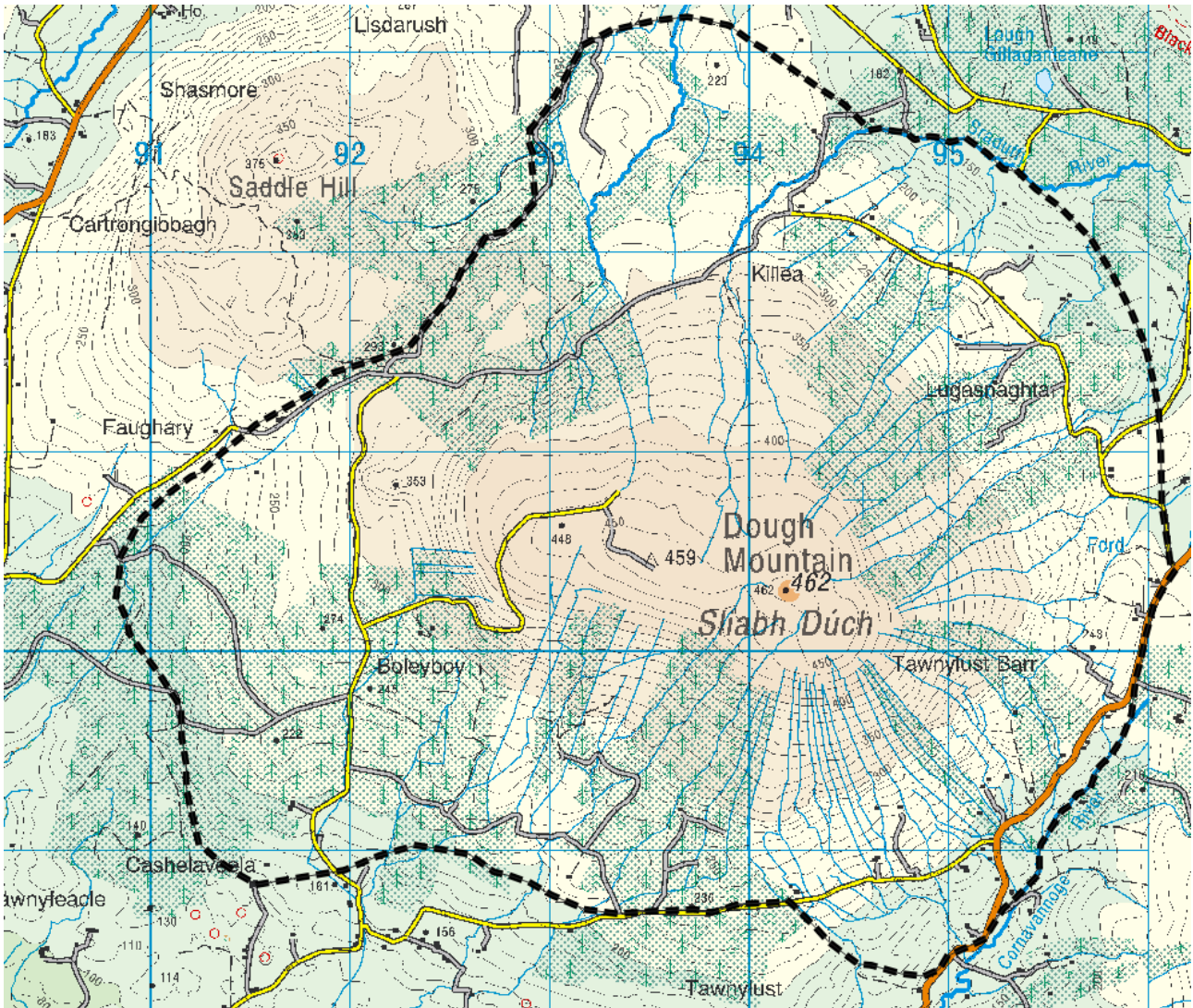
4.5.3 Recommendations

B2 Lough Melvin, Glenaniff River and Environs AHVA is considered to be more consistent with the adjacent designated landscapes in A3 AONB and A2 AONB as reflected in the evaluation of these areas. B2 Lough Melvin, Glenaniff River and Environs AHVA is therefore abandoned with the majority of the landscape therein to be included in the adjacent A2 AONB and A3 AONB.

4.6 B3 Dough Mountain AHVA

4.6.1 Location and Landscape Character

B3 Dough Mountain is located in the north east of County Leitrim, immediately north east of the town of Manorhamilton. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AHVA are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 5 Moorland Plateau;
- LCT 6 Moorland Hills; and
- LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills.

4.6.2 Key Characteristics

The moorland plateau associated with the summit of this mountain (above the 450m contour) is a remote and visually open area due to the scarcity of woodland vegetation. The main landcover is bog and there is very little built development thereby conferring a sense of wildness to this area. The summit of the mountain presents an important scenic skyline as backdrop to the surrounding valleys. The visual openness of this

landscape facilitates long range dramatic views towards adjacent mountain ranges. The landscape is rural and remote with high levels of tranquillity away from roads.

The landscape below the 450m contour features extensive plantation coniferous forestry which is a detracting element. The presence of an extensive network of small roads within the commercial plantation forestry and also wind turbines are detracting elements which undermine the scenic quality as purpose of the designation.

4.6.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of B3 Dough Mountain AHVA is presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: B3 Dough Mountain AHVA

Criterion	Evaluation – B3 Dough Mountain AHVA
Scenic	The rolling moorland landscape culminating at the summit of Dough Mountain overlooks the valley landscapes below to the south and the adjacent Saddle Hill and Thur Mountain. Panoramic views are attained of these surrounding areas from elevated areas up to 459m OD.
Cultural	Little if any known features of built heritage interest in this upland landscape
Natural	The moorland landcover comprises naturally occurring peat bogs at the higher elevations which are remote and feature little man-made elements apart from the occasional isolated track or minor road.
Enjoyment	Visitors to the area can enjoy panoramic views of the lowland landscapes from elevated locations. The skyline of Dough mountain is also enjoyed from the valleys and often with Saddle Hill in the foreground.
Rarity or uniqueness	Dough mountain has a rounded profile which is recognisable and confers a sense of place to the surrounding local area. A sense of remoteness and tranquillity is experienced away from minor roads, wind turbines on Saddle Hill and plantation coniferous forest.
Typicality	The moorland landscape at the higher elevations is fairly typical of the Leitrim uplands.

4.6.4 Recommendations

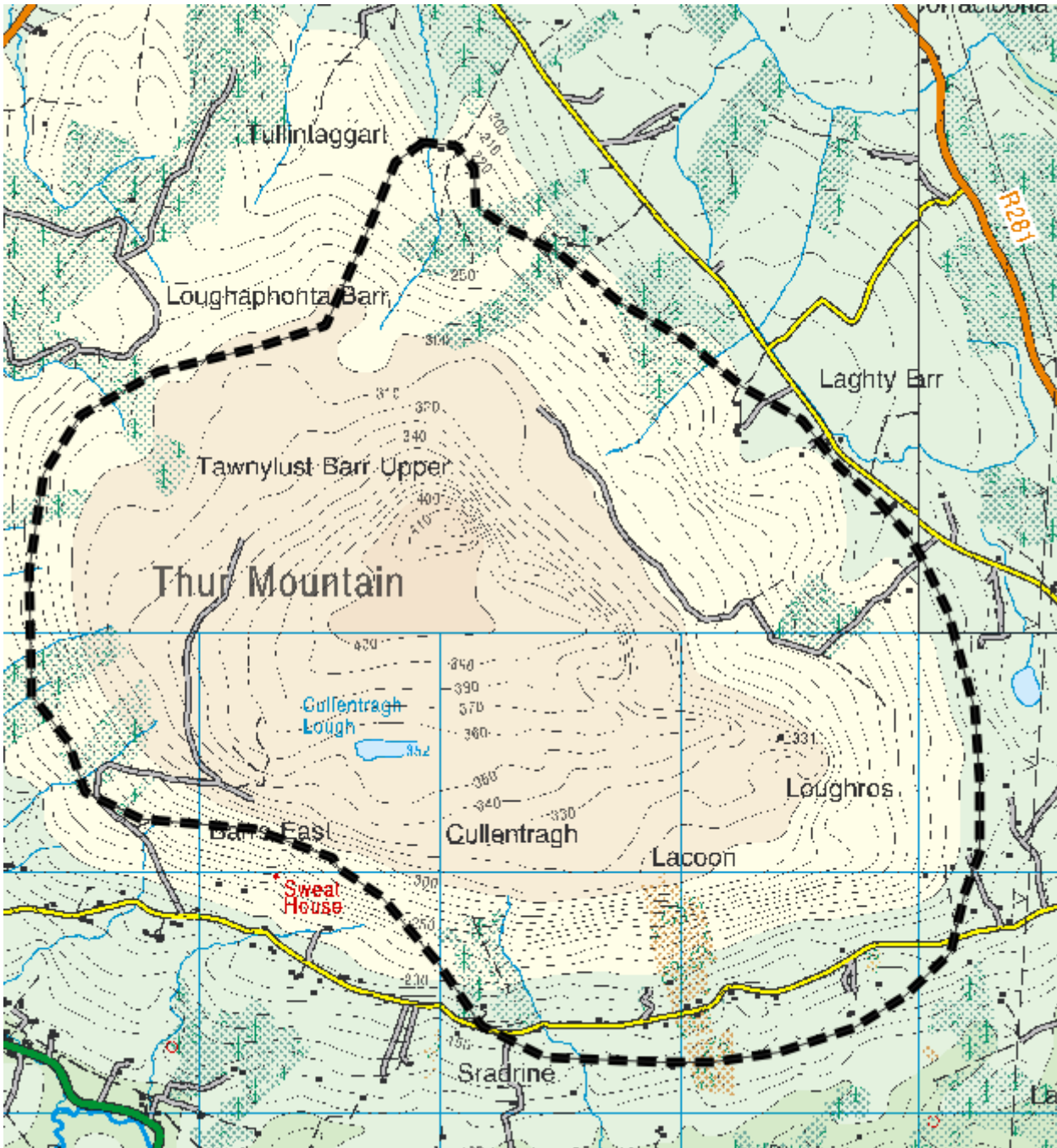
The designation of this area stands due to its key characteristics, in particular, the mountain summit and surrounding elevated areas with the outlook towards adjacent hills and valley landscapes.

Despite the detracting influence of the wind turbines on Saddle Hill and plantation coniferous forest on the lower slopes which have partially altered the character of the landscape, the boundary of the AHVA remains in recognition of the skyline of the mountain summit which is deserving of protection.

4.7 B4 Thur Mountain AHVA

4.7.1 Location and Landscape Character

B4 Thur Mountain is located in the north east of County Leitrim, specifically south east of Thur Mountain. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AHVA are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 5 Moorland Plateau;
- LCT 6 Moorland Hills; and
- LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills.

4.7.2 Key Characteristics

This landscape shares many characteristics associated with the elevated areas of Thur Mountain. The moorland plateau occupies an extensive area at the summit of this mountain and is a remote and visually open area due to the scarcity of woodland vegetation. The main land cover is bog apart from Cullentragh Lough. There is very little built development apart from the occasional mountain track thereby conferring a sense of wildness to this area. Occasional roads occur at lower elevations. The summit of the mountain presents an important scenic skyline as backdrop to the surrounding valleys and lowland areas to the south east. The visual openness of this landscape facilitates long range dramatic views towards adjacent mountain ranges. The landscape is rural and remote with high levels of tranquillity away from roads.

4.7.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of B4 Thur Mountain AHVA is presented in Table 7 below.

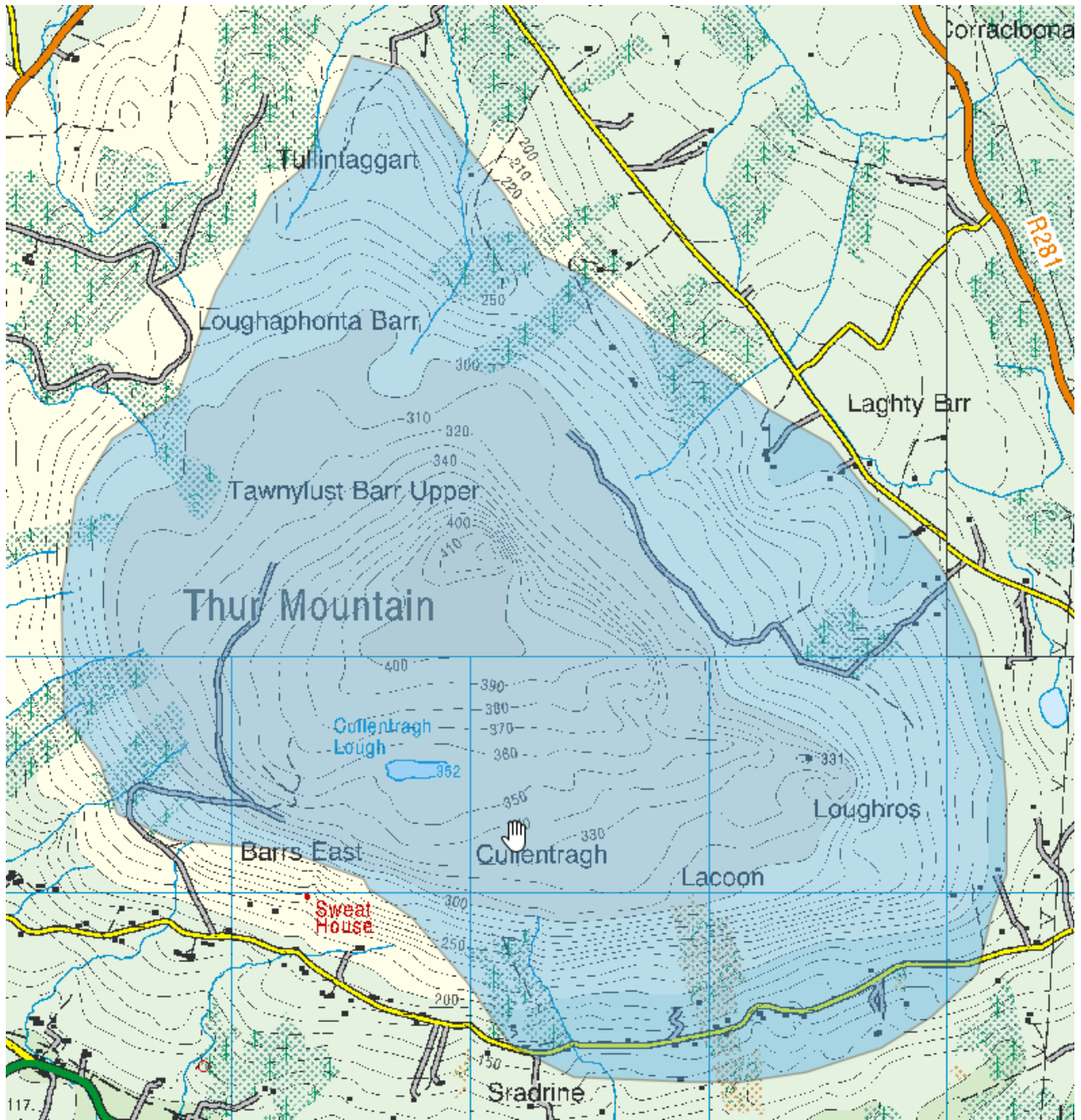
Table 7: B4 Thur Mountain AHVA

Criterion	Evaluation – B4 Thur Mountain AHVA
Scenic	The rolling moorland landscape culminating at the summit of Thur Mountain overlooks the valley landscapes below to the south and the adjacent Thur Mountain. Panoramic views are attained of these surrounding areas from elevated locations.
Cultural	Little if any known features of built heritage interest in this upland landscape
Natural	Thur Mountain is almost entirely covered in naturally occurring peat bog with a small patch of heathland on the east facing slopes. Cullentragh Lough is located within the upland moorland area. At lower elevations to the south, the land cover transitions to pasture with mature hedgerows and woody vegetation. The higher elevations are remote and feature little man-made elements apart from the occasional isolated track or minor road.
Enjoyment	Visitors to the area can enjoy panoramic views of the lowland landscapes from elevated locations and the skyline of the adjacent Dough Mountain.
Rarity or uniqueness	Dough mountain has a rounded profile which is recognisable although without distinctive cliffs or landslips.
Typicality	The moorland landscape at the higher elevations is fairly typical of the Leitrim uplands.

4.7.4 Recommendations

The designation of this area stands due to its key characteristics which are at the heart of the area of high visual amenity. The boundary of the AHVA is extended to the north to include areas that exhibit the key characteristics of this AHVA.

The extent of the recommended designated landscape is indicated in the map below.



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4.8.2 Key Characteristics

The Lough and associated islands are the key components of this landscape. The farmland along the edge of the Lough has a strong visual relationship with the lough itself and provides opportunities for recreational visitors to stop and park to admire the views. Minor roads cross the farmed shoreline which in turn features older small scale field patterns. Clumps of semi natural woodland and individual trees are dispersed throughout. The area is remote and tranquil away from roads. The farmland further inland from the lake is somewhat eroded in terms of field pattern and vegetation cover due to extensive areas of plantation coniferous forestry.

4.8.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of B5 Lough Macnean Upper and Environs AHVA is presented in Table 8 below

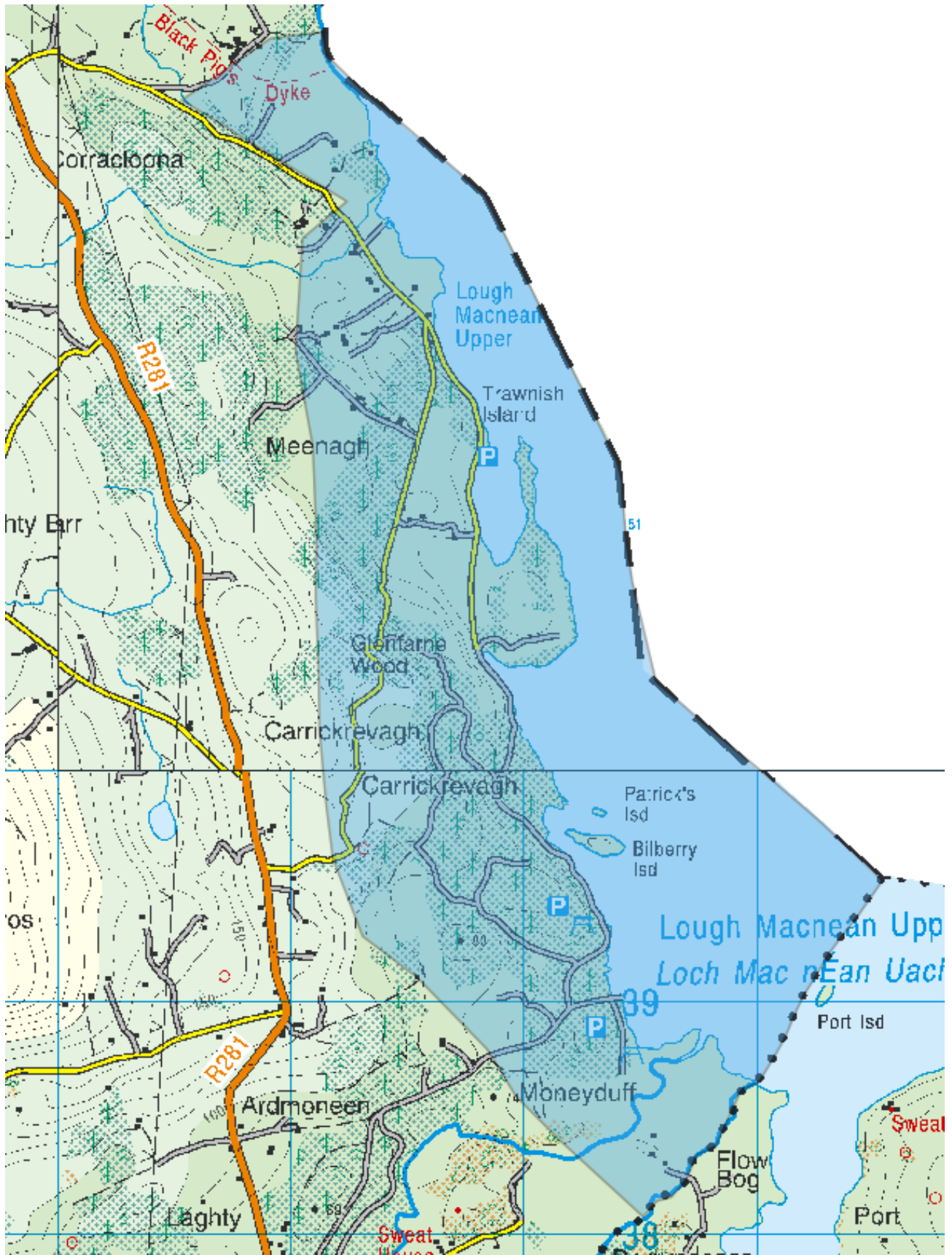
Table 8: B5 Lough Macnean Upper and Environs AHVA

Criterion	Evaluation – B5 Lough Macnean Upper and Environs AHVA
Scenic	Scenic quality associated with the lake and islands and farmed setting together with small pockets of transitional woodland and scrub on the lake margin.
Cultural	The Black Pig’s Dyke extends to the northern edge of the lake.
Natural	Lough Macnean together with islands and promontories is the main natural element along with native species woodland. Plantation coniferous forestry is a detracting element.
Enjoyment	Quiet winding roads along the lakeshore provide access for the visitor along with parking at point locations. Although a working farmed landscape surrounds the lake, a strong sense of tranquillity is experienced along the narrow winding roads and in particular close to the lake.
Rarity or uniqueness	The Lake, lake margin and islands are the main unique landscape element.
Typicality	Lough Macnean is not typical of Leitrim Lakes and shares its extents with the adjacent County Fermanagh. The lake fringe farmland shares some characteristics with that adjacent to other Leitrim lakes.

4.8.4 Recommendations

The boundary of the AHVA is extended to include the full extent of the lake where this occurs within Leitrim County.

The extent of the recommended designated landscape is indicated in the map below.

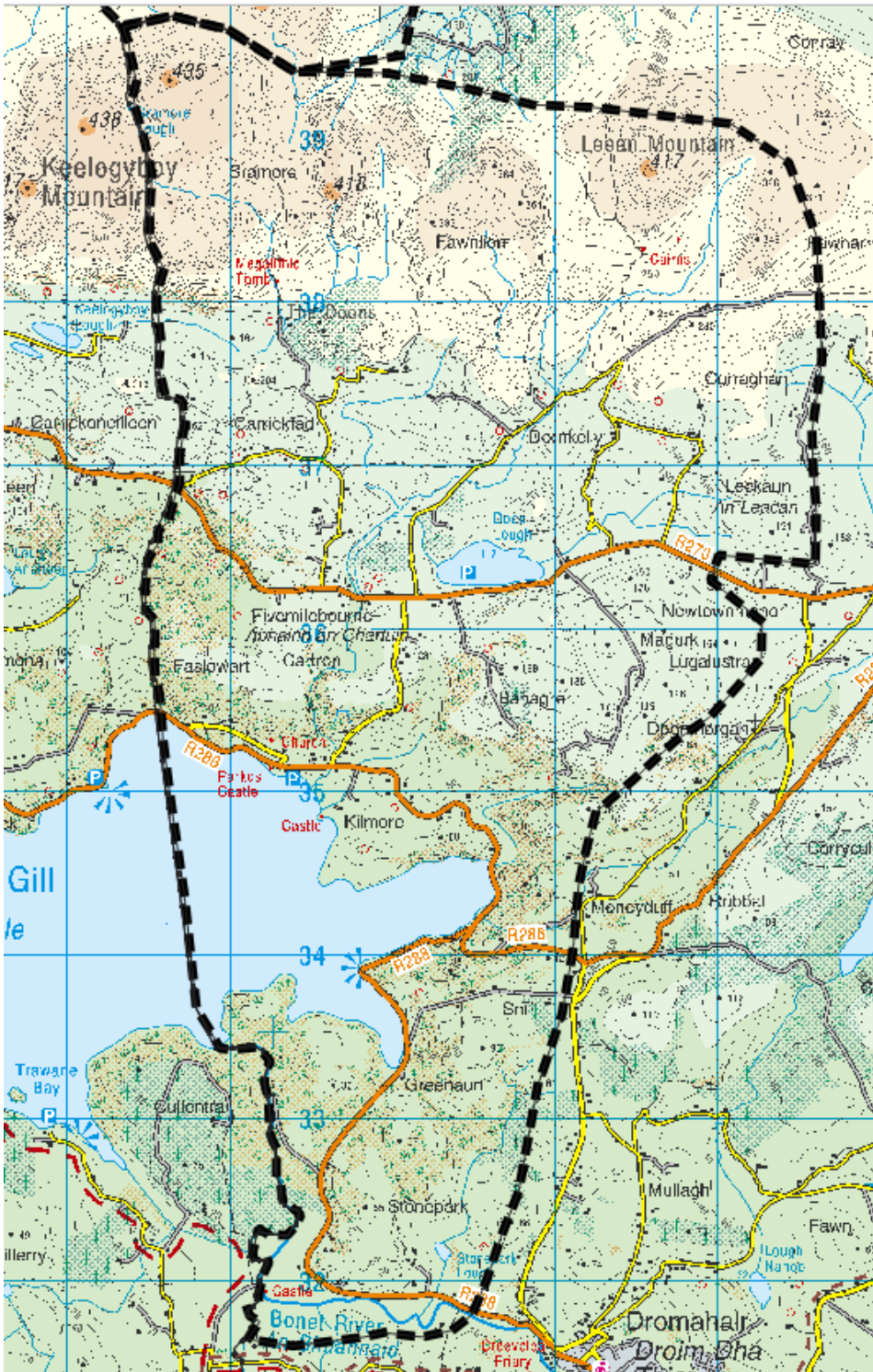


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4.9 A4 The Doons, Lough Gill and Environs AONB

4.9.1 Location and Landscape Character

A4 The Doons, Lough Gill and Environs AONB is located in the north west of County Leitrim and covers the Lakeland landscape of Lough Gill and adjacent farmland extending south towards Dromahair. The area also includes the Tabular Hills, north of Lough Gill, including the foothills of Keelogyboy (summit in County Sligo) and Lean Mountain. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AONB are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 10 Major Loughs;
- LCT 16 Steep Mountain Peaks; and
- LCT 17 Tabular Hills.

4.9.2 Key Characteristics

Lough Gill is a key element of this designated area. The setting of the lake is very much influenced by the tabular hills and mountains to the north, reaching a maximum elevation of 417m OD. The smaller Doon Lough is concealed deep within the tabular hills landscape character type. The expansiveness and scale of the lakeland landscape is such that the viewer can attain excellent views of the mountains and hills to the north, the skylines of which present as a unique profile backdrop to the lake. There are few man-made elements in this landscape apart from narrow winding roads which are quickly concealed in between hilly terrain resulting in a wildness and remote quality with high levels of tranquillity. The area is generally in very good condition with little by way of detracting elements which would undermine the true landscape character. The special beauty of this AONB is attributed to the combination and juxtaposition of the mountain and lakeland landscape.

4.9.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of A4 The Doons, Lough Gill and Environs AONB is presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9: A4 The Doons, Lough Gill and Environs AONB

Criterion	Evaluation – A4 The Doons, Lough Gill and Environs AONB
Scenic	The scenic quality is derived from the Tabular Hills, the particular landforms of which resulted from weathering over geological time. The scenic quality is also attributed to the Lakeland landscape at Lough Gill fringed with deciduous woodland and with mountain backdrop of the Tabular Hills and larger mountains in County Sligo. The smaller Doon Lough is enclosed within the tabular hills landscape.
Cultural	Parkes Castle, plantation house and smaller scale field patterns are apparent.
Natural	The natural qualities of this landscape are attributed to the mountains and hills with native species scrub and extensive mixed species woodland at lower elevations together with Lough Gill and its setting. Tracts of commercial plantation forestry are a detracting element but are infrequent. The quality of the landscape is maintained intact and free from notable large scale intrusive built development.
Enjoyment	Parkes Castle and Lough Gill are well promoted visitor attractions. The landscape of the Tabular Hills is enjoyed by visitors on minor roads. Tranquillity is notable, in particular away from settlements and roads.
Rarity or uniqueness	Lough Gill with its woodland margins and undulating shoreline with local promontories and focal points are unique along with the outlook towards the mountain and hill skyline.
Typicality	The landscape fringing the lough comprises a mosaic of pastoral farmland with mixed species woodland which is in relatively good condition.

4.9.4 Recommendations

The boundary of this designated area is expanded to fully include Leean Mountain as this is a key element in this landscape.

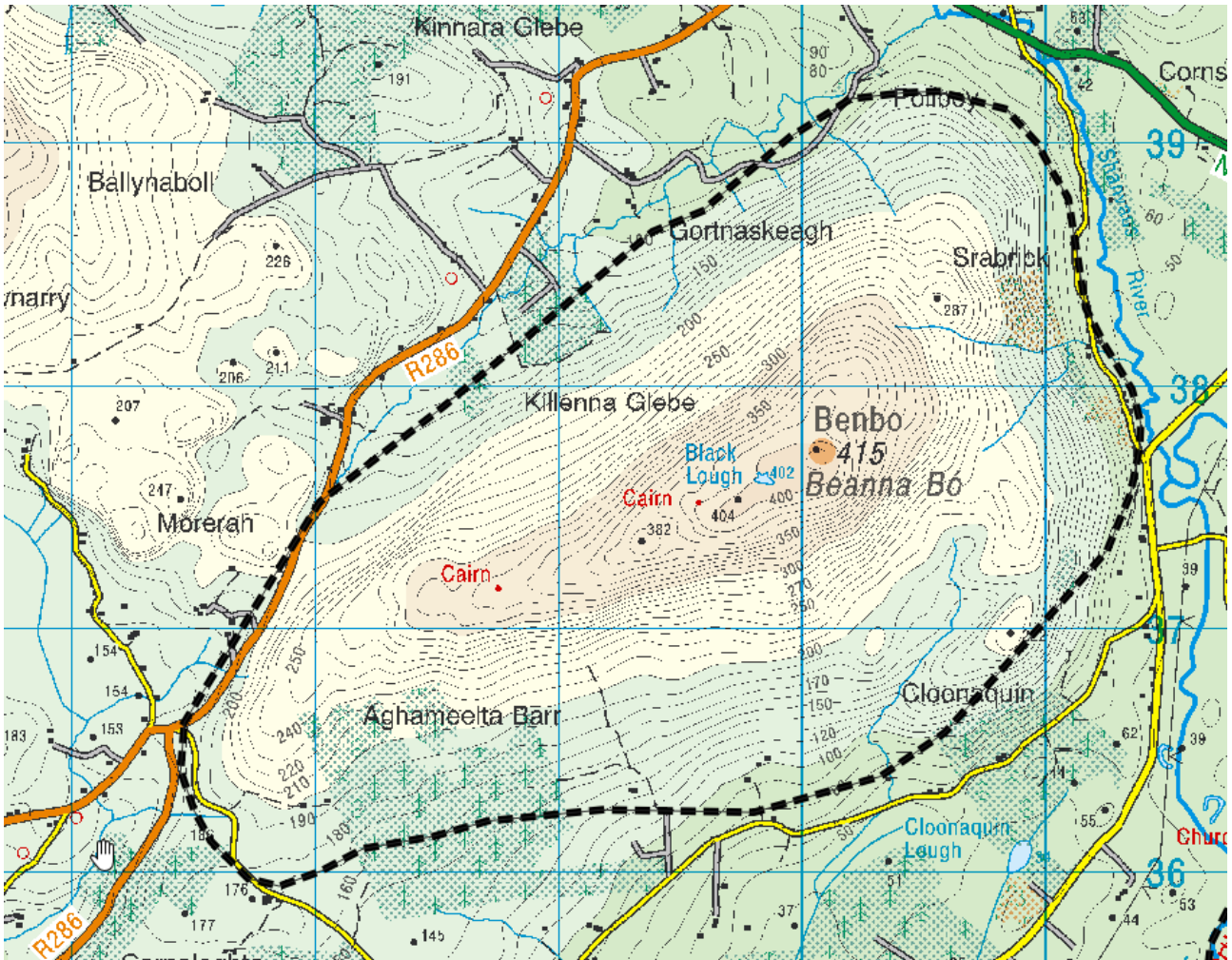
The area is renamed A4 Lough Gill, Leean Mountain and Environs AONB reflecting locally known nomenclature in tourist literature that promotes this landscape albeit subject to verification by public consultation.

The extent of the recommended designated landscape is indicated in the map below.

4.10 A5 Benbo AONB

4.10.1 Location and Landscape Character

A5 Benbo AONB is located south west of the town of Manorhamilton. The Mountain of the same name overlooks the valley of the Bonet River that extends in a south west direction. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AONB are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 5 Moorland Plateau;
- LCT 6 Moorland Hills; and
- LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills.

4.10.2 Key Characteristics

The key characteristic of this AONB is the distinctive mountain profile of Benbo which forms an important skyline and backdrop in views from the surrounding valleys. The mountain is a key focal point which contributes to the setting of the town of Manorhamilton.

The moorland plateau and moorland hill landscapes of Benbo feature scarcely any man-made influence by way of built development and as such, retain their true character with little or no detracting elements. The result of this is an upland landscape that exhibits qualities of wildness and tranquillity.

4.10.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of A5 Benbo AONB is presented in Table 10 below

Table 10: A5 Benbo AONB

Criterion	Evaluation – A5 Benbo AONB
Scenic	The scenic quality is attributed to the unique profile of Benbo Mountain. This is emphasised by its position, overlooking the valley farmland to the south and west.
Cultural	Limited if any features of cultural heritage importance are present
Natural	Natural characteristics of this area include the distinctive landform associated with the peak at Benbo along with the undulating valley farmland. Other characteristics include the moorland plateau landscape featuring peat bogs, heathland and patches of semi natural grassland. Occasional small streams are present descending from the mountain slopes. There is little or no settlement on the mountain. Some Commercial Plantation Forestry occurs within the south west which is a detracting element locally.
Enjoyment	The scenic quality of Benbo is enjoyed by visitors and also as the setting or backdrop to the town of Manorhamilton. The summit is visited by hillwalkers from which panoramic views are available of the mountains further north (Arroo range and Truskmore along with Lough Gill and mountain landscapes further afield in Sligo. Tranquillity is experienced especially away from roads and settlements.
Rarity or uniqueness	The profile of Benbo is unique and serves as a key landmark and point of reference in the middle of the County.
Typicality	The undulating farmland surrounding Benbo is quite typical of the area and is in good condition with intact field pattern defined by mature hedgerows.

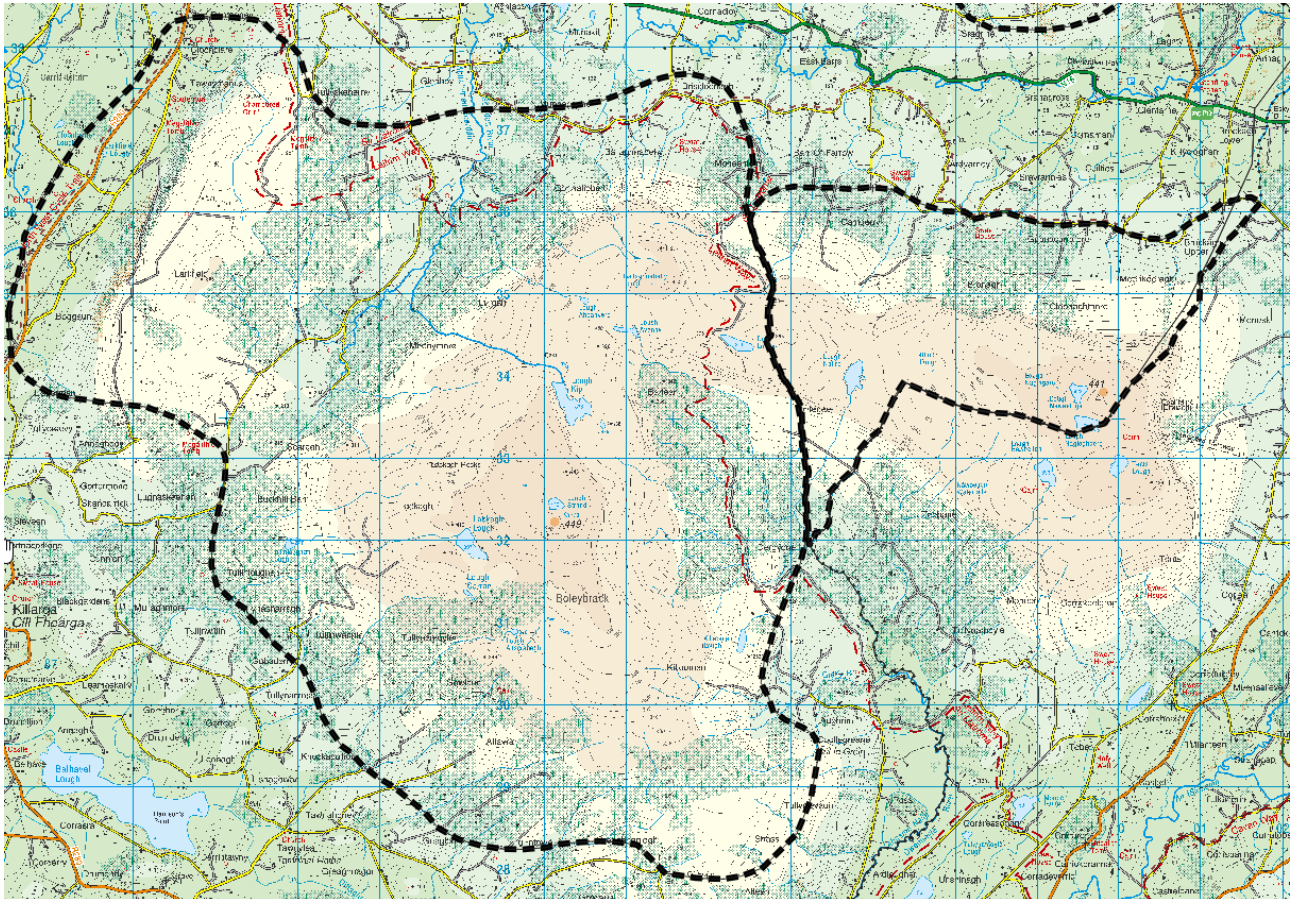
4.10.4 Recommendations

The designation of this area stands due to its key characteristics which are at the heart of the outstanding natural beauty.

4.11 A6 O'Donnell's Rock and Boleybrack AONB

4.11.1 Location and Landscape Character

A6 O'Donnell's Rock and Boleybrack AONB is located in the east of Co. Leitrim and occupies the eastern side of the valley of the Bonet River south of the town of Manorhamilton. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AONB are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 5 Moorland Plateau;
- LCT 6 Moorland Hills; and
- LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills.

4.11.2 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics are associated with the Boleybrack Mountain Range, in particular the more elevated areas of moorland plateau and moorland hills. These form a distinctive skyline and backdrop in views from the lower lying valley landscapes. O'Donnell's Rock is a smaller elongated ridge in the townland of Larkfield which overlooks the valley farmland to the west. The moorland plateau features small lakes amongst extensive areas of bog. The mountain landscape forms a ridge aligned north east to south west as it overlooks the valley. From this ridge, a further two ridgelines extend in a west to east orientation with a broad sweeping valley in between which is mostly planted with coniferous forestry. The most northerly of these two ridgelines is associated with B6 Cloonclare AHVA. The upland area features almost no built development apart from occasional minor roads and, as a result, exhibits qualities of wildness and tranquillity. The lower slopes of the mountains are somewhat eroded of their true character due to extensive areas of plantation

coniferous forestry. Wind turbines are present among plantation coniferous forestry in the foothills to the south.

4.11.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of A6 O'Donnell's Rock and Boleybrack AONB is presented in Table 11 below.

Table 11: A6 O'Donnell's Rock and Boleybrack AONB

Criterion	Evaluation – A6 O'Donnell's Rock and Boleybrack AONB
Scenic	The scenic quality is attributed to the extensive mountain uplands which comprise areas of blanket bog and heath along with occasional loughs. These are exposed, bleak and have a sense of wildness due to the absence of development. The scenic quality of the AONB is also attributed to the mountain skyline which forms the backdrop to the surrounding valley landscapes.
Cultural	Limited features apart from an iron works smelter at the southern edge of the AONB
Natural	Natural characteristics are associated with the mountain landforms, the relative scarcity of development in the moorland plateau LCT and the upland habitats such as bog and heath. Other characteristics include occasional loughs and streams. Commercial Plantation Forestry is a dominating landcover type at lower elevations and a wind farm (Tullanamoyle) is located in the south western part of this landscape.
Enjoyment	The scenic quality of the area is largely enjoyed from the valleys that surround the mountain range. Some opportunities for mountain hiking, where available, would provide the visitor with a valued experience of a vast wilderness with panoramic views. Tranquillity is experienced especially away from roads and settlements.
Rarity or uniqueness	The profile of the Boleybrack Mountains is unique and serves as a key landmark and point of reference.
Typicality	The valley farmland and associated field pattern is largely eroded over much of this landscape due to large scale commercial plantation forestry.

4.11.4 Recommendations

The boundary of this designated area is extended to include the moorland plateau and moorland hills landscape character types in B6 Cloonclare AHVA due to the shared characteristics between this area and the Boleybrack Range.

The area is renamed A6 The Boleybrack Mountains AONB in recognition of this as the main mountain range that occupies the area and O'Donnell's Rock being a specific point of interest.

The extent of the recommended designated landscape is indicated in the map below.

4.12 B6 Cloonclare AHVA

4.12.1 Location and Landscape Character

B6 Cloonclare AHVA is located in the north east of County Leitrim and comprises a mountain ridge which is connected to the Boleybrack Range that extends east to the county boundary.

The landscape character types that occur within this AHVA are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 5 Moorland Plateau;
- LCT 6 Moorland Hills; and
- LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills.

4.12.2 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics of this landscape relates to the ridge comprised of moorland plateau and moorland hills which is connected to and extends east of The Boleybrack Range. It shares many of the characteristics outlined above for the A6 O'Donnell's Rock and Boleybrack AONB.

4.12.3 Recommendations

B6 Cloonclare AHVA is considered to be more consistent with the designated landscape of A6 AONB as reflected in the evaluation of these areas. B6 Cloonclare AHVA is therefore abandoned with all of the landscape therein to be included in the adjacent A6 AONB.

4.13 B7 Corry Mountain AHVA

4.13.1 Location and Landscape Character

B7 Corry Mountain AHVA is located in the west of County Leitrim, immediately west of Lough Allen. It comprises a mountain ridgeline with a north west to south east orientation. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AHVA are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 5 Moorland Plateau; and
- LCT 6 Moorland Hills.

4.13.2 Key Characteristics Recommendations

The key characteristics of this landscape relates to the ridge comprised of moorland plateau and moorland hills which overlooks Lough Allen from the west. Much of the original character of this landscape which is assumed to have been the basis for its designation is associated with the moorland plateau and moorland hills landscape character types. Wind turbines are a detracting element.

4.13.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of B7 Corry Mountain AHVA is presented in Table 12 below.

Table 12: B7 Corry Mountain AHVA

Criterion	Evaluation – B7 Corry Mountain AHVA
Scenic	Scenic qualities are associated with the mountain moorland landscape with its extensive cover of peat bogs and the distinctive skyline that this presents to the viewer in the surrounding lowlands. The scenic quality is also derived from the outlook towards surrounding mountain areas and Lough Allen.
Cultural	The Miner’s Way & Historical Trail crosses this landscape and is associated with the history of travelling miners in the area.
Natural	Extensive areas of peat bogs are found at the summit and elevated areas of the Corry Mountain Landscape
Enjoyment	The landscape of Corry Mountain is enjoyed by viewers in the surrounding lowland areas and in the vicinity of Lough Allen. It is also enjoyed by users of The Miner’s Way & Historic Trail.
Rarity or uniqueness	The profile of Corry Mountain is unique and is a key landmark and point of reference from the surrounding area.
Typicality	The mountain moorland landscape and the bleak, elemental and tranquil quality associated with Corry Mountain is partly undermined by the presence of wind turbines.

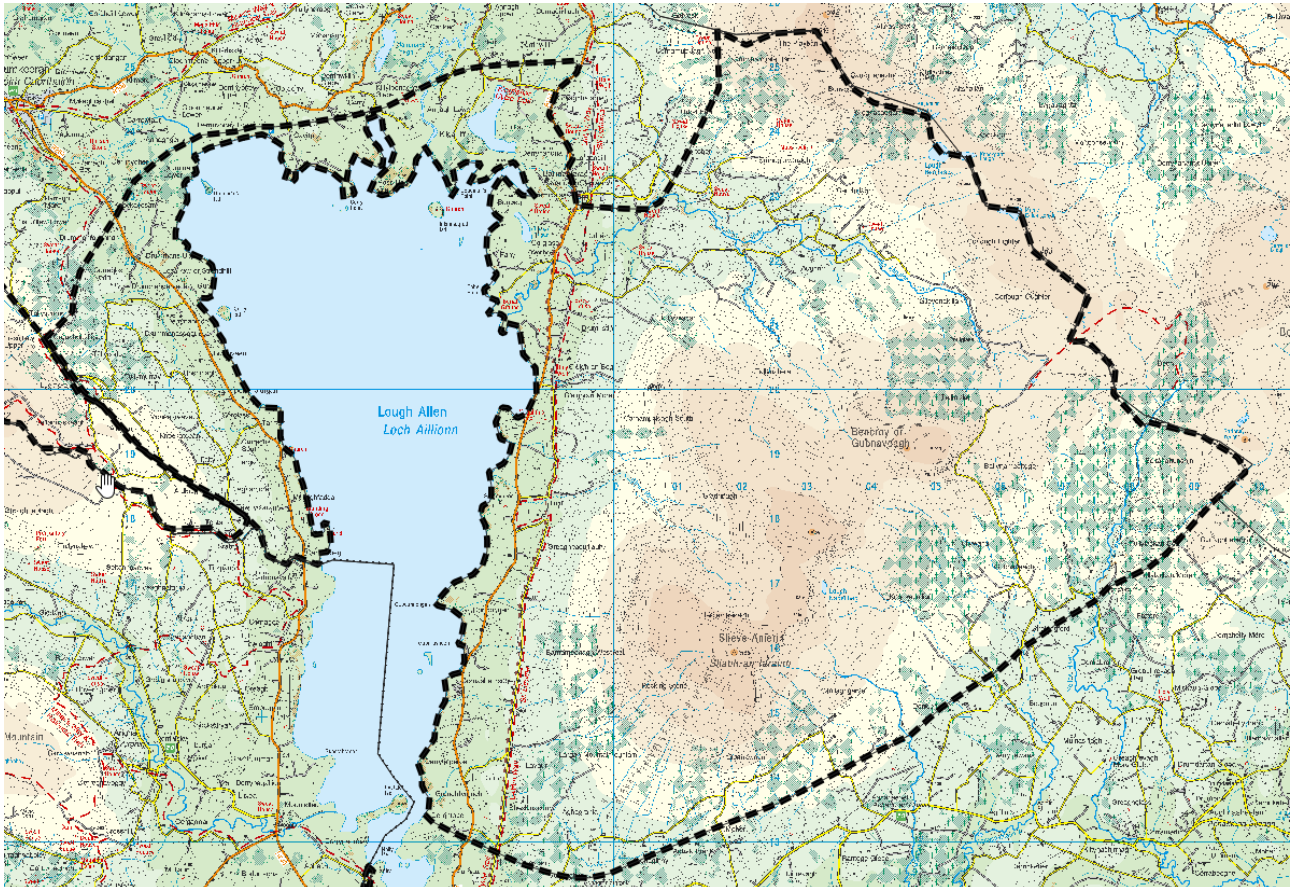
4.13.4 Recommendations

The designation of this area stands due to the key characteristics, in particular the mountain summit and elevated areas and also the visual relationship with adjacent landscapes including Lough Allen and Slieve Anierin. Despite the presence of wind turbines, the ongoing management of change in this landscape will continue to be important in the future due to its visual relationship with adjacent landscapes and its influence over the valley farmland and settlements including Drumkeeran.

4.14 B8 Lough Allen, Sliabh an Iarainn, Bencroy and Environs AHVA

4.14.1 Location and Landscape Character

B8 Lough Allen, Sliabh an Iarainn, Bencroy and Environs AHVA is located in the middle of County Leitrim. It is an extensive area comprised of the mountain ridge with summits at Sliabh Anierin and Bencroy which overlook the vast expanse of Lough Allen from the east. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AHVA are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 4 Cluffed Uplands and Landslips;
- LCT 5 Moorland Plateau;
- LCT 6 Moorland Hills;
- LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills;
- LCT 8 Valley Farmland;
- LCT 10 Major Loughs; and
- LCT11 Drumlin Lough and Stream Margins.

4.14.2 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics of this landscape relates to the large lake and mountain skyline for which there is a strong visual connection. Panoramic views are available from many locations of the lakeland landscape and occasional islands with mountain backdrop of Slieve Anierin which is vast and large in scale to the viewer.

The lake fringes by contrast comprise intimate farmed landscapes with winding minor roads, farmland with hedgerows and areas of woodland.

The mountain skyline is a unique focal point with cliffs and landslips as distinctive features near the summit. The moorland plateau and moorland hills are almost devoid of any development apart from an isolated minor road to the east and some telecommunications infrastructure. This results in an upland landscape which has wilderness like qualities and is tranquil.

4.14.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of B8 Lough Allen, Sliabh an Iarainn, Bencroy and Environs AHVA is presented in Table 13 below

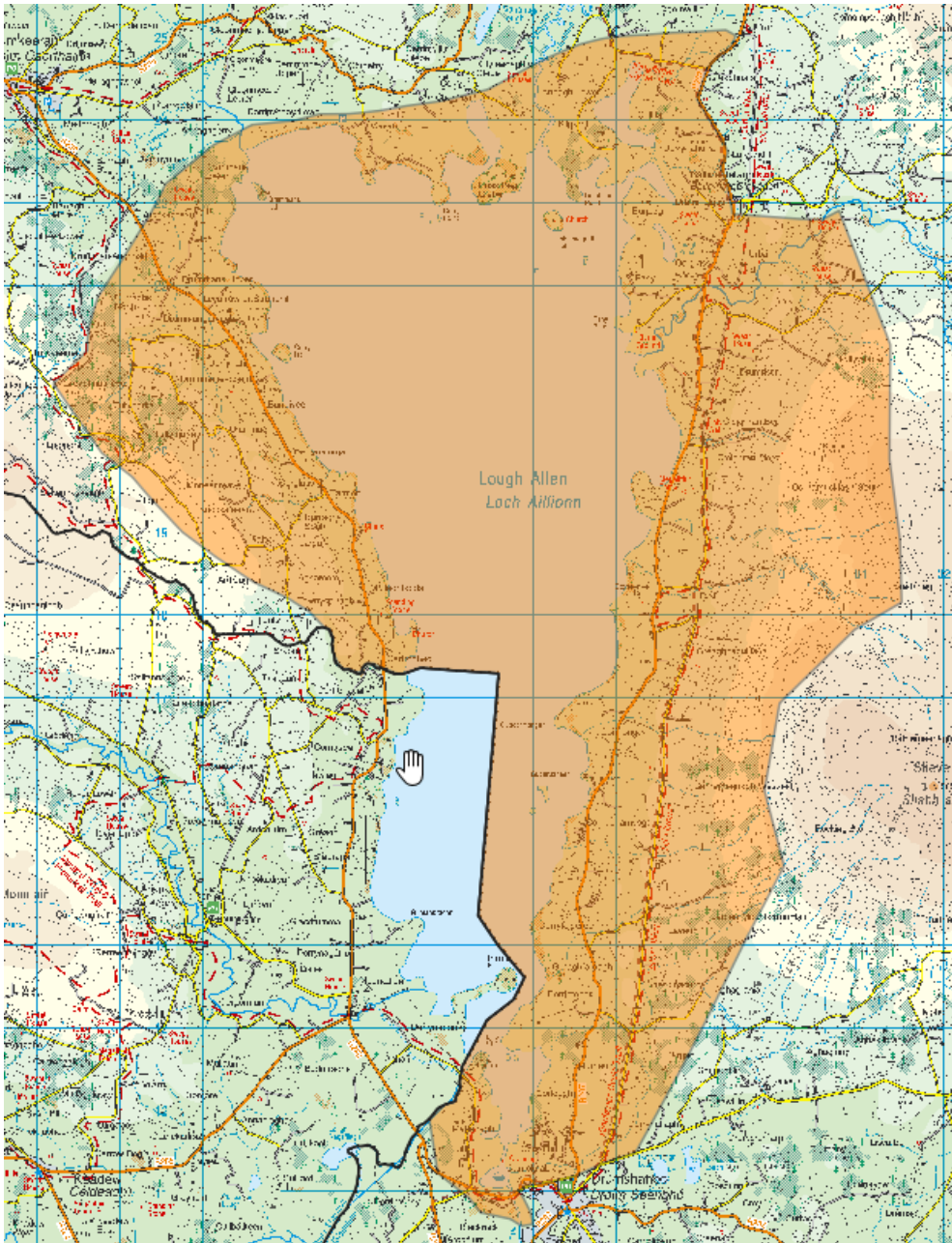
Table 13: B8 Lough Allen, Sliabh an Iarainn, Bencroy and Environs AHVA

Criterion	Evaluation – B8 Lough Allen, Sliabh an Iarainn, Bencroy and Environs AHVA
Scenic	A scenic quality is derived from the expansiveness of the large Lough Allen affording both wide ranging and far reaching views of the lake and landscapes beyond. A scenic quality is associated with the mountain skyline of Slieve Anierin and Bencroy along with the distinctive profile which confers a strong sense of place.
Cultural	Ancient remnants include crannogs, churches and megalithic tombs located along the edge of Lough Allen. Slieve Anierin and Bencroy in particular are noted for historical mining activities and a commemorative plaque is in place dedicated to those who worked in the Bencroy Mines.
Natural	The lake is a vast naturally occurring waterbody fringed with gently undulating farmland and overlooked by part of the upland landscape of Slieve Anierin. The upland areas of Slieve Anierin and Bencroy have distinctive mountain skylines and mountain moorland landcover primarily comprised of peat bogs.
Enjoyment	The Lakeland landscape is enjoyed by walkers on The Leitrim Way long distance footpath, anglers and visitors on surrounding roads. The various walking routes in Slieve Anierin and Bencroy are enjoyed by visitors and locals.
Rarity or uniqueness	Lough Allen is a unique feature and part of the River Shannon catchment, the longest river in the country. A waterbody of this size is relatively rare. Tranquillity levels are high in remote pockets of the landscape close to the lake and away from minor roads. The sense of remoteness and tranquillity is reduced in areas where wind turbines (outside of this area) are visible. The mountain skyline of Slieve Anierin and Bencroy is a unique and distinctive landmark seen from the surrounding lowland areas. A strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity is associated with the upland moorland areas where there is a general absence of man-made elements apart from a telecommunications masts and access road.
Typicality	Lakeland landscapes are quite typical in Leitrim however one of this scale is unusual. The upland landscape of Slieve Anierin and Bencroy is quite typical of upland areas in Leitrim in terms of the mountain moorland and bog landcover present.

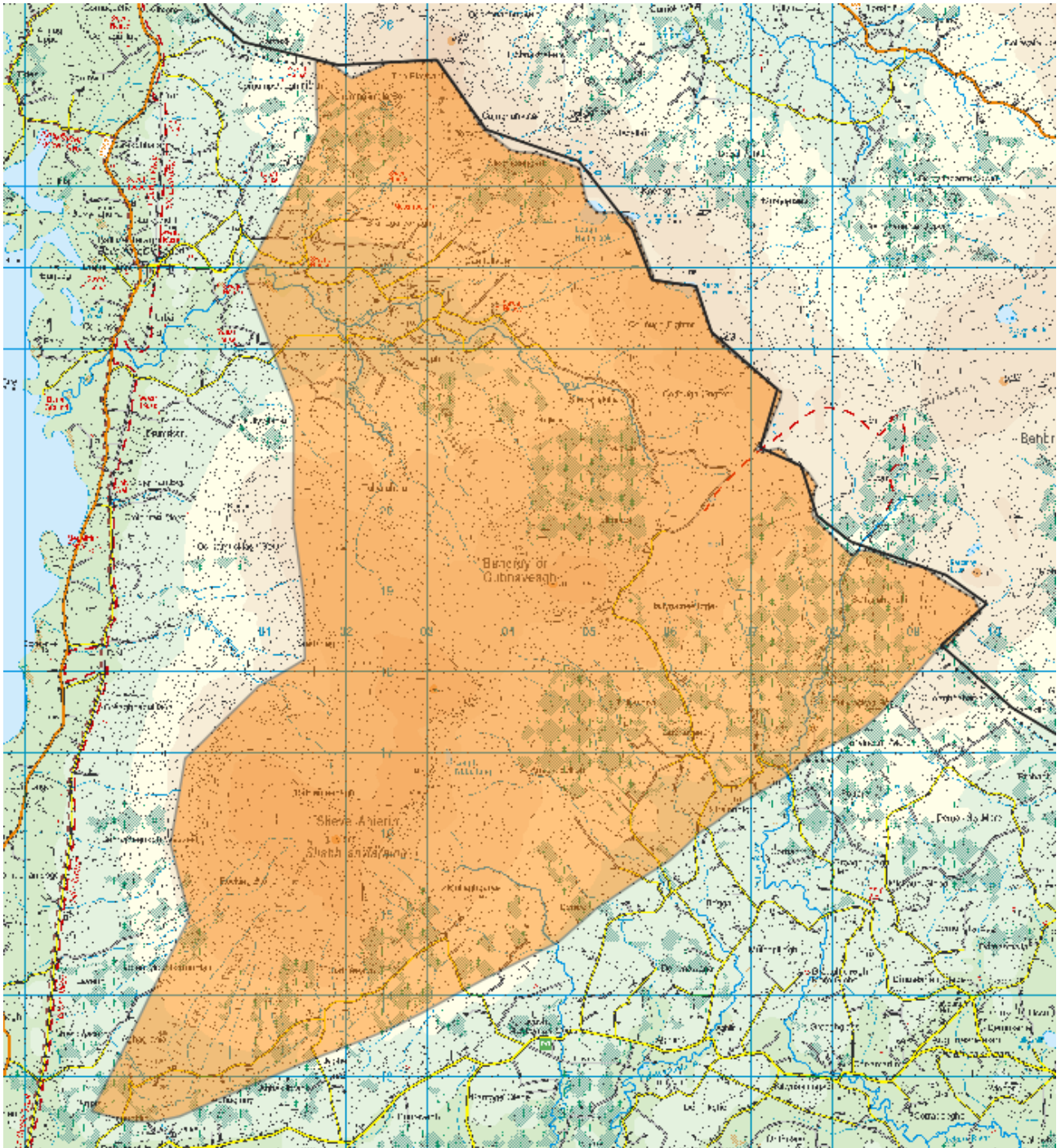
4.14.4 Recommendations

B8 Lough Allen, Sliabh an Iarainn, Bencroy and Environs AHVA is subdivided into two separate designated landscapes and re-categorized as AONB. The recommended designations are Lough Allen AONB and Slieve Anierin and Bencroy AONB. This reflects the distinct differences between the large lake landscape of Lough Allen and the upland landscape of Slieve Anierin and Bencroy and the outstanding beauty of each.

The extent of the recommended designated landscapes are indicated in the maps below.



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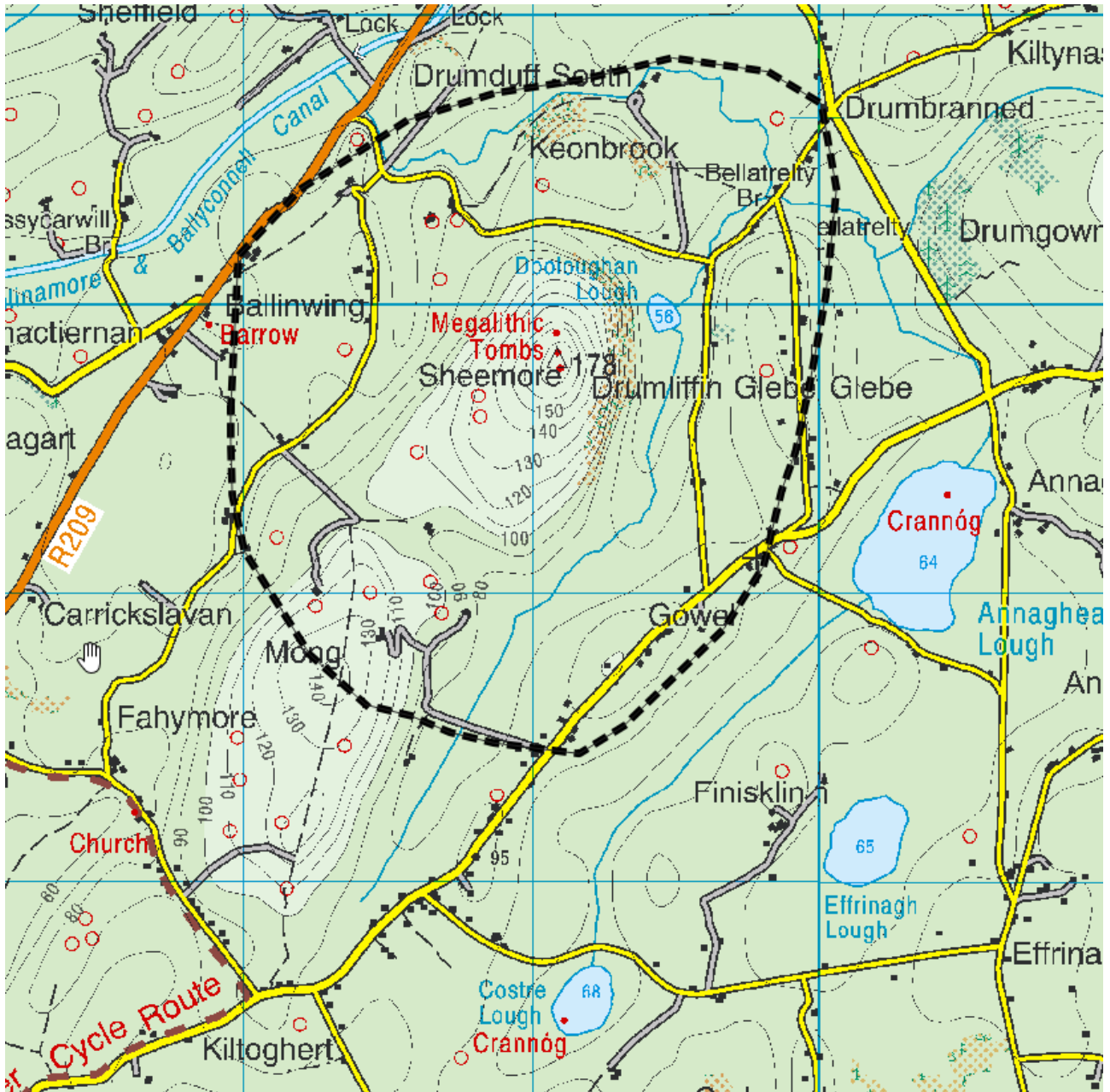


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4.15 A7 Sheemore AONB

4.15.1 Location and Landscape Character

A7 Sheemore AONB is located in the south west of the County and occupies a small area of hill farmland east of the town of Leitrim. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AONB are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 9 Drumlin Farmland; and
- LCT 13 Low Limestone Outcrops.

4.15.2 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics of this landscape relates to the limestone outcrop which as a landform rises up in contrast to the lower lying drumlin farmland that surrounds it. The summit, identifiable by the cairn structure on the summit is a reminder of ancient settlement. This landmark can be seen from the surrounding area at distances of up to 4km. It forms the setting of the town of Leitrim, the eastern edge of which affords views of Sheemore.

4.15.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of A7 Sheemore AONB is presented in Table 14 below.

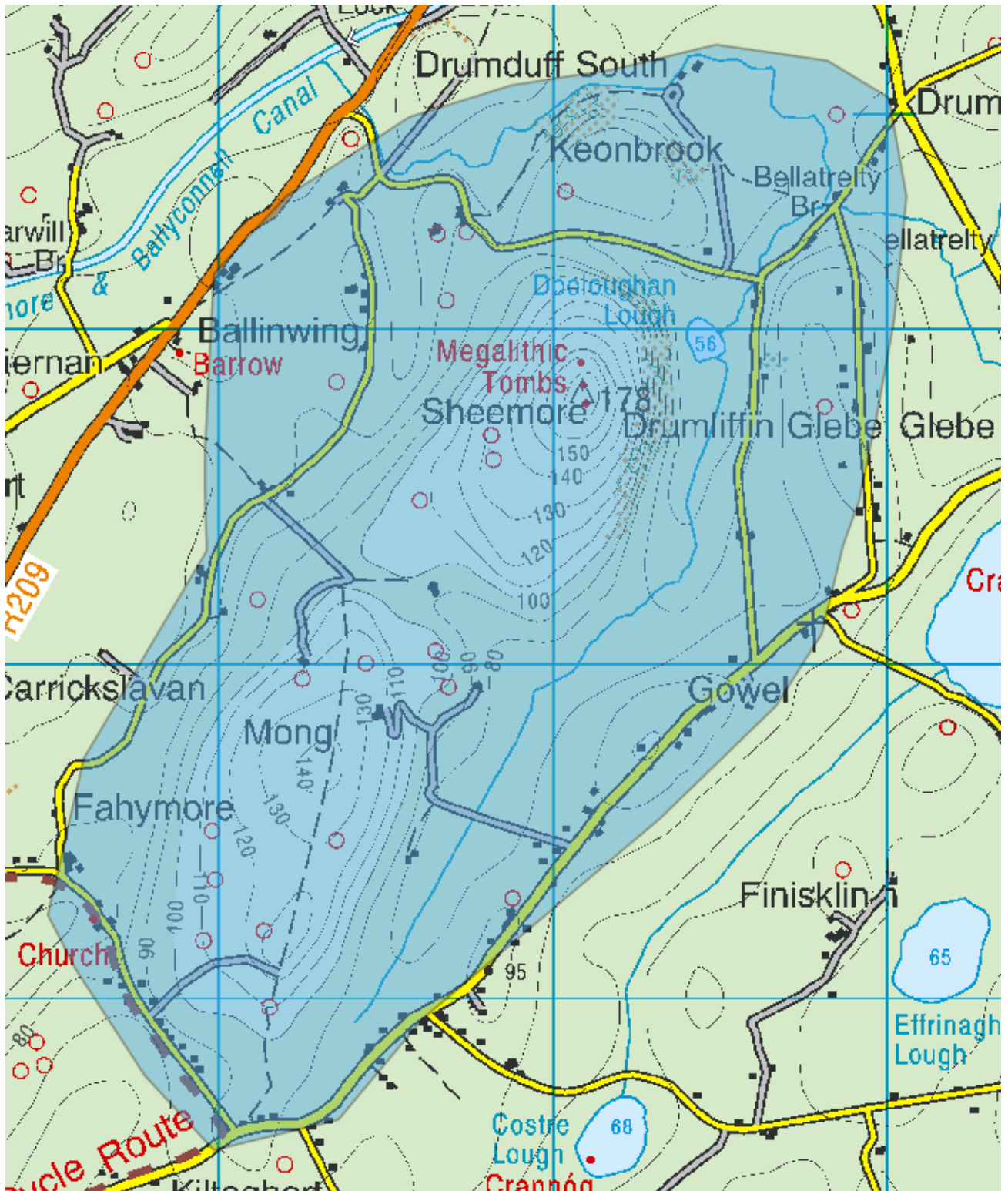
Table 14: A7 Sheemore AONB

Criterion	Evaluation – A7 Sheemore AONB
Scenic	The scenic quality is derived from the distinctive limestone hill topography which overlooks the surrounding lowland farmland. Sheemore presents as a notable landmark and focal point with a wide ranging influence over the surrounding farmland as far west as the outskirts of and further afield to the south and west for distances of up to 4km.
Cultural	The summit of Sheemore features an ancient megalithic tomb, identifiable as a point location on the summit in views from the surrounding area. The site may be celebrated in the song entitled ‘Sheebeg and Sheemore’, composed by Turlough O’Carolan, a travelling harpist and bard in Leitrim during the 1700 to 1800s.
Natural	Natural characteristics are associated with the mountain landforms, the relative scarcity of development in the moorland plateau LCT and the upland habitats such as bog and heath. Other characteristics include occasional loughs and streams. Commercial Plantation Forestry is a dominating landcover type at lower elevations and a wind farm (Tullanamoyle) is located in the south western part of this landscape.
Enjoyment	The scenic quality and wider farmed setting of Sheemore is enjoyed by many travelling on minor roads in the surrounding area and those travelling by boat along the River Shannon to the west. Sheemore is also experienced in views attained by recreational users of the Kingfisher Cycle Route to the south and recreational hillwalkers on local tracks in the area and on the summit. The site is relevant to the setting of the eastern edge of the Town of Leitrim. Tranquillity is experienced especially away from roads and settlements.
Rarity or uniqueness	Sheemore presents as a unique landform. The megalithic tomb on the summit is an especially good example of this cultural heritage element in terms of its presence and contribution to the uniqueness of the hill and its landscape character.
Typicality	This hill as a low limestone outcrop is apparent in many areas throughout lowland landscapes in Ireland. It is however one of only two examples of this types of topography and landscape character type in Leitrim. The second example, Sheebeg, located north east of Sheemore, is less prominent. It does not present as a notable landmark and has limited influence on the surrounding landscape.

4.15.4 Recommendations

The boundary of this designated landscape is extended to capture the entire limestone outcrop at this location. The area is renamed B6 Sheemore AHVA reflecting this hill farmland area together with its ancient cultural heritage history as being of high visual amenity.

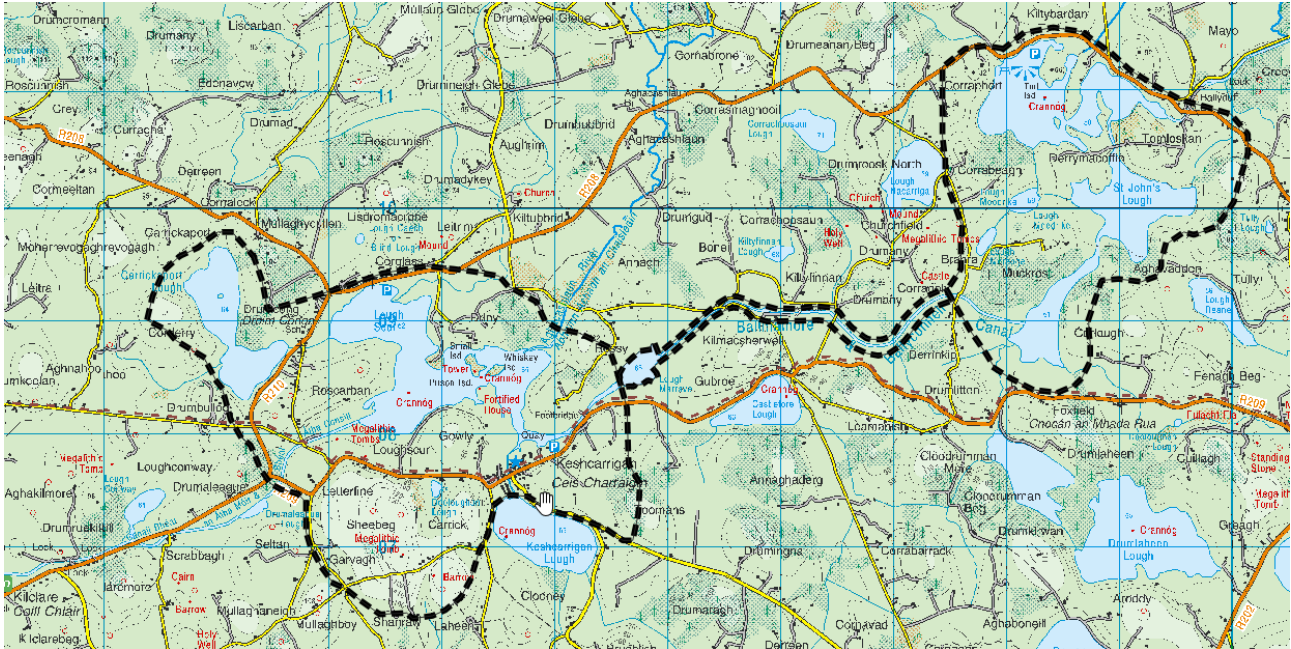
The extent of the recommended designated landscape is indicated in the map below.



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4.16 B9 Lough Scur, St. John’s Lough and Environs AHVA

B9 Lough Scur, St. John’s Lough and Environs AHVA is located between Drumshambo and Ballinamore in South Leitrim. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AHVA are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 9 Drumlin Farmland;
- LCT 11 Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins; and
- LCT 13 Low Limestone Outcrops.

4.16.1 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics of this landscape relate to the network of lakes of varying size along with the surrounding drumlin farmland and glimpse views to the mountains further north. This particular area includes the more elevated limestone outcrop associated with Sheebeg which as a landform rises up in contrast to the surrounding lower lying drumlin farmland.

4.16.2 Evaluation

The evaluation of B9 Lough Scur, St. John’s Lough and Environs AHVA is presented in Table 15 below.

Table 15: B9 Lough Scur, St. John’s Lough and Environs AHVA

Criterion	Evaluation – B9 Lough Scur, St. John’s Lough and Environs AHVA
Scenic	The network of loughs are central to the scenic quality and visual appeal of this landscape. The surrounding landscape, comprised of drumlin farmland with mature hedgerows and clumps of semi natural deciduous woodland, form an important backdrop to the loughs and stream margins. Occasional Lakeland views are available against part of the mountain skyline of Slieve Anierin to the north.
Cultural	The lakes feature crannogs and occasional small islands. Other elements include a fortified house, tower and the megalithic tomb at the summit of Sheebeg together with barrow on lower slopes. Canail Bheal, a canal waterway, is linked to Lough Scur. Protected structures include Reynolds Castle on the shore of Lough Scur, a church and belfry and a former narrow gauge train station and level crossing.

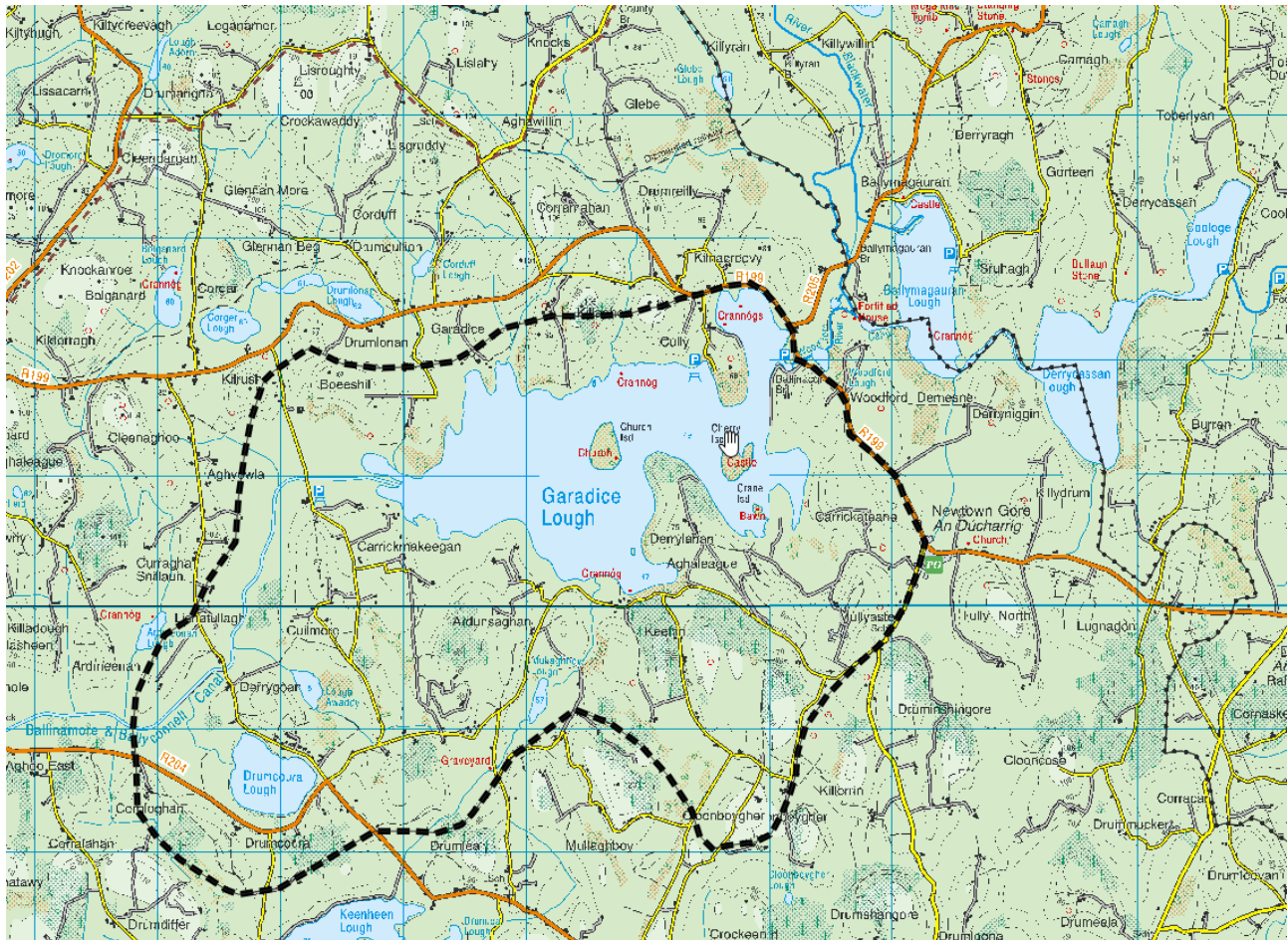
Criterion	Evaluation – B9 Lough Scur, St. John’s Lough and Environs AHVA
Natural	Natural drumlin topography is intact, relatively unchanged and in good condition. The network of loughs and waterways are natural features which remain intact. Carrickaport Lough is a proposed NHA.
Enjoyment	The landscape is enjoyed by users of The Kingfisher Cycle Trail on the R209 south of Lough Scur. A promoted viewpoint south over St John’s Lough facilitates enjoyment of this landscape by visitors. The lakes are currently enjoyed by recreational anglers.
Rarity or uniqueness	Elements in this landscape are not especially rare in Leitrim but a distinct sense of place is derived from the individual loughs, stream margins and drumlin hill setting with occasional mountain backdrop.
Typicality	Lakeland landscapes are typical of South Leitrim of which this is a good example due to its intactness and good condition.

4.16.3 Recommendations

No changes are recommended to this designation in terms of the boundary extents and naming of the AHVA.

4.17 B10 Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA

B10 Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA is located near Ballinamore in the south east of County Leitrim. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AHVA are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 9 Drumlin Farmland; and
- LCT 11 Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins.

4.17.1 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics of this landscape relate to the larger Lough Garadice and nearby Drumcoora Lough and surrounding drumlin farmland setting. The loughs feature islands, crannogs and are fringed in deciduous woodland with native species.

4.17.2 Evaluation

The evaluation of B10 Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA is presented in Table 16 below.

Table 16: B10 Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA

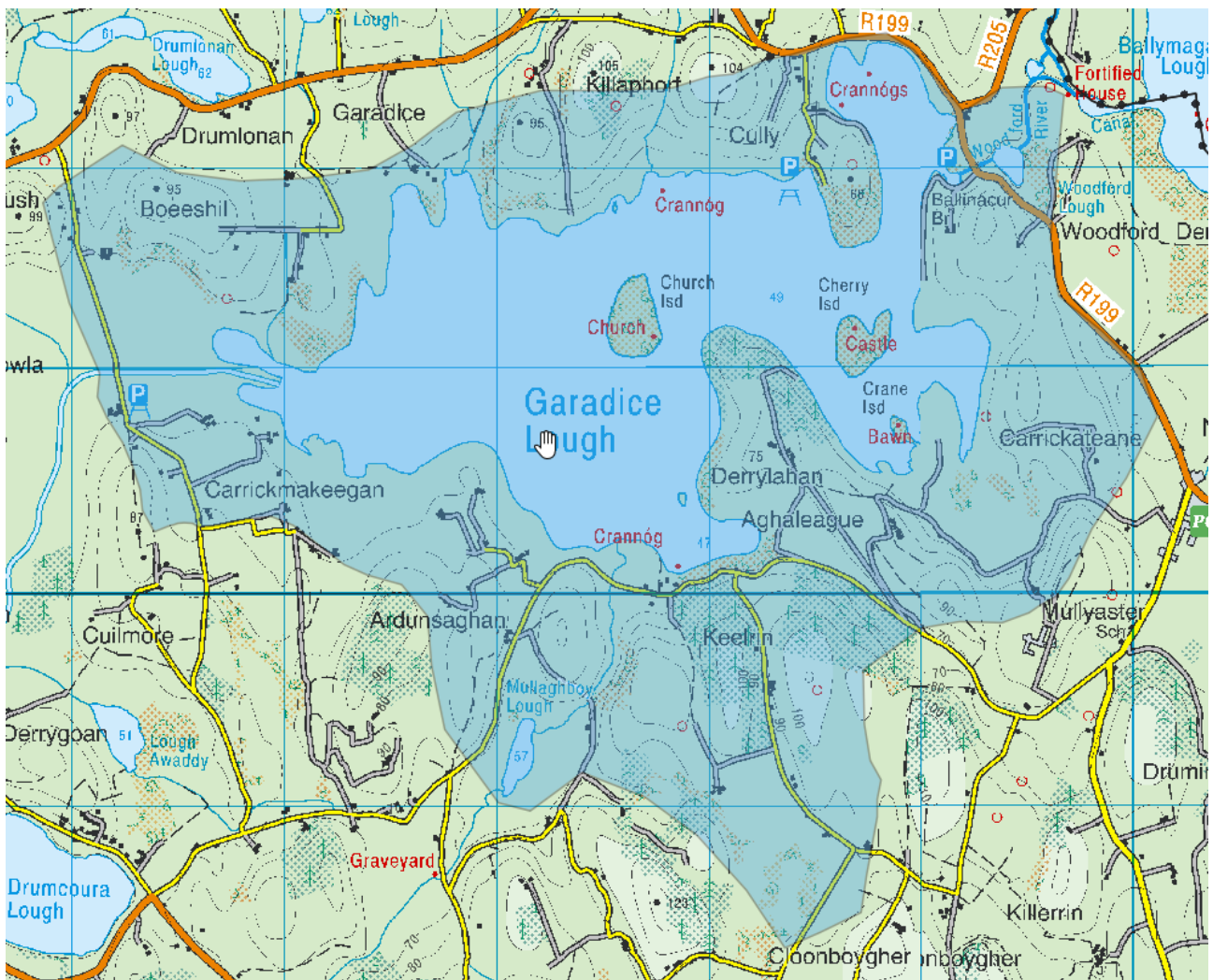
Criterion	Evaluation – B10 Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA
Scenic	This landscape is of considerable scenic quality and appeals to the senses due to its natural beauty with the large Lough Garadice and islands as the main focal point. The setting for the lake comprises drumlin farmland which is intact and in good condition and features hedgerows and

Criterion	Evaluation – B10 Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA
	clumps of deciduous natural and semi natural woodland. Occasional views of the lake are available against the mountain skyline of Slieve Anierin further north.
Cultural	Lough Garadice features Islands, crannogs along with remains of built elements of cultural heritage interest including a church, bawn and castle. Protected structures include a church and Garadice House and farmyard.
Natural	Natural drumlin topography is intact, relatively unchanged and in good condition. Garadice Lough is a natural feature which remain intact. An area of deciduous woodland on the margin promontory of Garadice Lough is a proposed NHA.
Enjoyment	The lakes are currently enjoyed by recreational anglers. Promoted picnic sites with parking facilities feature at three locations to facilitate visitor enjoyment of the scenery.
Rarity or uniqueness	Although lakeland landscapes are a frequent occurrence in South Leitrim, there is a distinct sense of place associated with this landscape derived from Lough Garadice in particular and the drumlin hill setting and occasional mountain backdrop.
Typicality	Lakeland landscapes are typical of South Leitrim of which this is a good example due to its intactness and good condition.

4.17.3 Recommendations

The boundary of the AHVA is amended to fully include Lough Garadice and link to The Woodford River. The boundary changes also exclude the settlement of Newtown Gore and areas of farmland to the south which are not within the setting of the lake.

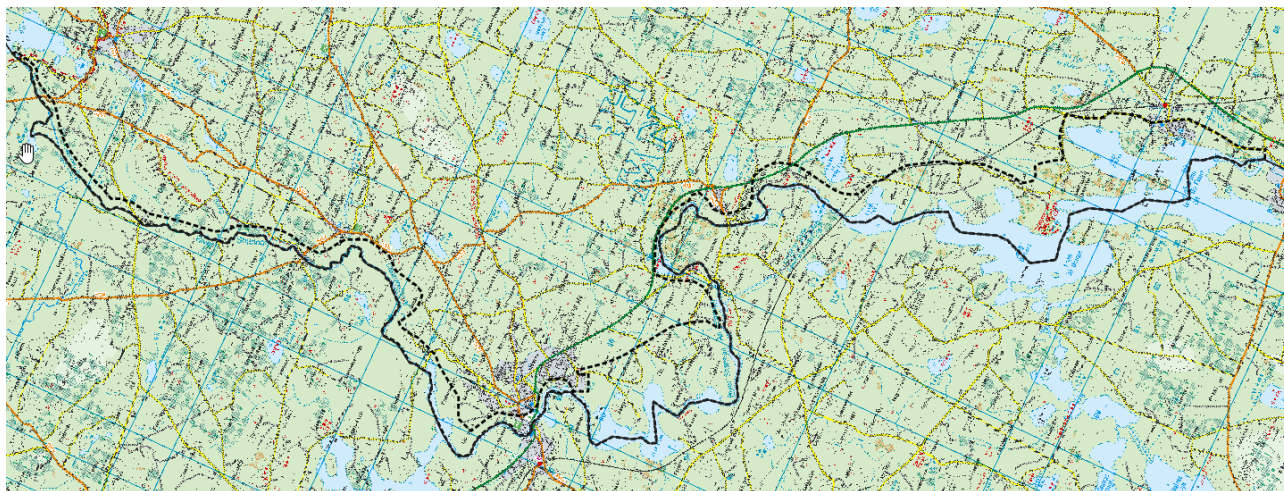
The extent of the recommended designated landscape is indicated in the map below.



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4.18 B11 River Shannon, Derrycarne and Environs AHVA

B11 River Shannon, Derrycarne and Environs AHVA comprises an elongated river landscape which extends along the western county boundary from Drumshambo to Roosky. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AHVA are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 9 Drumlin Farmland;
- LCT 12 River Floodplain; and
- LCT 14 Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs.

4.18.1 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics of this landscape relate to the River Shannon and surrounding farmland along with the canalised section near Leitrim Town. Further south, the River Shannon expands to include Lough Curry near Carrick On Shannon, Lough Tap and Lough Boderg, near Drumod.

4.18.2 Evaluation

The evaluation of B11 River Shannon, Derrycarne and Environs AHVA is presented in Table 17 below

Table 17: B11 River Shannon, Derrycarne and Environs AHVA

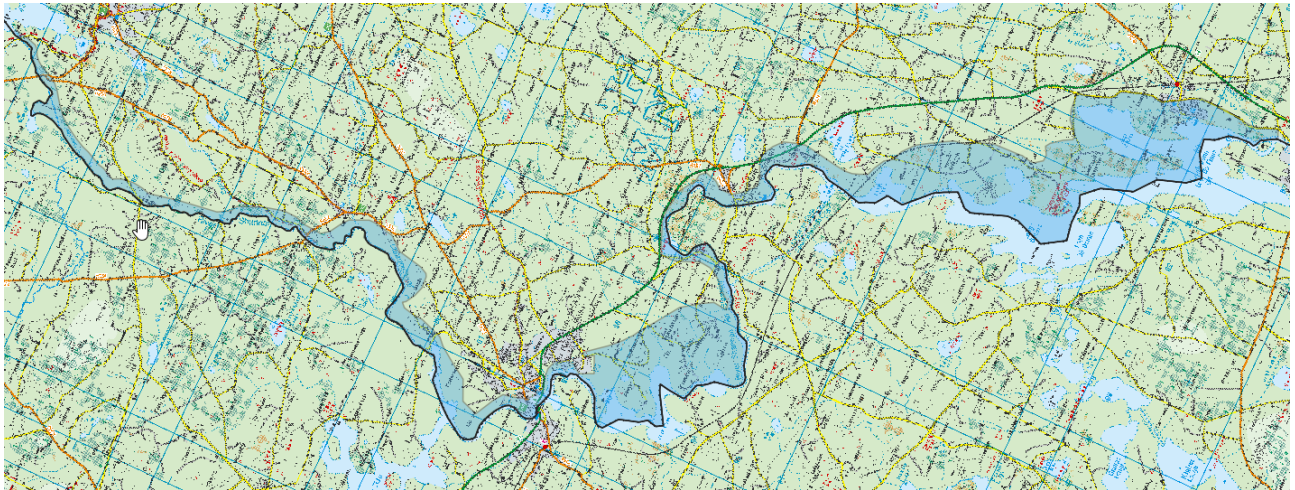
Criterion	Evaluation – B11 River Shannon, Derrycarne and Environs AHVA
Scenic	The scenic quality and sensory appeal is derived from the River Shannon as focal point within the immediate gently undulating farmed landscape. This riverine landscape follows a narrow winding course and as it extends further south, it expands to form the two large lakes of Lough Boderg and Lough Bofin which are of considerable scenic quality. The river margin or callows features wetland grasses and bulrushes. The scenic quality is also attributed to the openness of the landscape from which intermittent views of the distant upland skyline of Slieve Anierin are available along with Sheemore.
Cultural	A canal tributary links the river at Battlebridge to Acres Lough and Lough Allen further north. The Jamestown Canal crosses the landscape extending west from Lough Nanoge to rejoin The Shannon south of Jamestown Bridge. Protected structures include Shannon Bridge, an arched train viaduct over the river, Nesbitt Mausoleum and nearby church, Drumsna Quayside, Jamestown Bridge along with a number of built elements within Carrick On Shannon overlooking the river.
Natural	The river including narrow winding sections and expansive sections with lakes is a unique natural element within a gently undulating farmland setting. The landscape of the Shannon Catchment has been shaped over time by man with the introduction of the canals.

Criterion	Evaluation – B11 River Shannon, Derrycarne and Environs AHVA
	There are many areas that are designated as pNHA, in particular the larger lakes in the southern section of the river.
Enjoyment	The Shannon is widely promoted as a visitor attraction well documented in the Shell Guide to the River Shannon. Activities include recreational boating and angling. Promoted walking routes include The Lough Boderg trail at Derrycarne. The Kingfisher Cycle Trail extends along the canal tributary near Battlebridge.
Rarity or uniqueness	The AHVA is uniquely a part of the longest river in Ireland. A strong sense of place is attained by the visitor especially when travelling by boat and due to the experience of the diversity and length of the river landscape ranging from large lake systems to the narrow, winding intimate watercourse with wetland margin and farmland setting.
Typicality	The lakes within the River catchment are of a scale and have an outline margin profile that shares similarities with the lakes occurring in South County Leitrim.

4.18.3 Recommendations

Changes to the boundary of the AHVA are recommended to fully include Lough Curry, Lough Tap and Lough Boderg as key elements of the Shannon Catchment. The area is recommended to be called River Shannon and Lakes AHVA.

The extent of the recommended designated landscape is indicated in the map below.



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4.19 B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Sallagh, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA

B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Sallagh, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA is located in the south of the county, near the settlement of Mohill. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this AHVA are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 11 Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins; and
- LCT 14 Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs.

4.19.1 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics of this landscape relate to Lough Rynn and Lough Errew along with surrounding wooded farmland. Other features include islands and crannogs as well as the site of the castle of the same name and designed landscape.

4.19.2 Evaluation

The evaluation of B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Sallagh, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA is presented in Table 18 below

Table 18: B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Sallagh, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA

Criterion	Evaluation – B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Sallagh, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA
Scenic	The scenic quality is attributed to Lough Rynn and associated islands and crannogs, the appreciation of which is experienced along its full length from the adjacent minor road to the west. Views of the lake are attained on an intermittent basis in between mature vegetation within the drumlin farmland setting. Lough Errew is of smaller scale and features Duck Island and crannogs.
Cultural	Rinn Castle and designed landscape is located in a wooded setting on the margin of Lough Rynn and is a focal point of interest visible from the minor road along the west side of the lake. A number

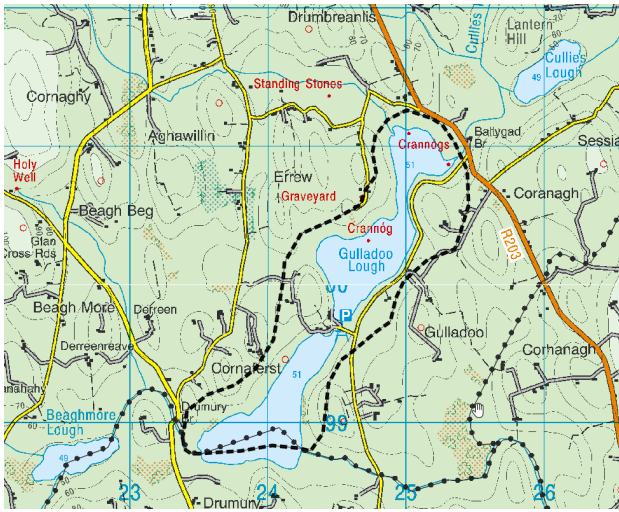
Criterion	Evaluation – B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Sallagh, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA
	of protected structures are associated with the Rinn Castle site and the wider estate which extends along the length of the lake. Cloncoe House is also a protected structure along with a church at Farnaght.
Natural	The lakes are natural elements connected by the River Lurga and surrounded by undulating farmland in good condition. Both lakes are pNHAs
Enjoyment	Lough Rynn is enjoyed by anglers and visitors travelling by boat as well as watersport such as rowing. A parking, caravan and camping facility is located north of Lough Rynn for visitor enjoyment of the scenery along with water based activities.
Rarity or uniqueness	There is a distinct sense of place associated with this landscape derived from the unique quality and character of each of the two loughs and their farmland setting. Rinn Castle and designed landscape is a distinct unique focal point with lake in the foreground.
Typicality	Lakeland landscapes are typical of South Leitrim of which this is a good example due to its intactness and good condition.

4.19.3 Recommendations

It is recommended to change the name of this AHVA to be Lough Rynn, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA which more accurately reflects the names of the lakes within.

4.20 B13 Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA

B13 Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA is located in the south east of County Leitrim. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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The landscape character types that occur within this area are as follows and descriptions of these are presented in section 6 below:

- LCT 9 Drumlin Farmland; and
- LCT 11 Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins.

4.20.1 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics of this landscape relate to Lough Gulladoo and surrounding drumlin farmland with deciduous woodland featuring native species. Crannogs are a feature in the lake.

4.20.2 Evaluation

The evaluation of B13 Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA is presented in Table 19 below.

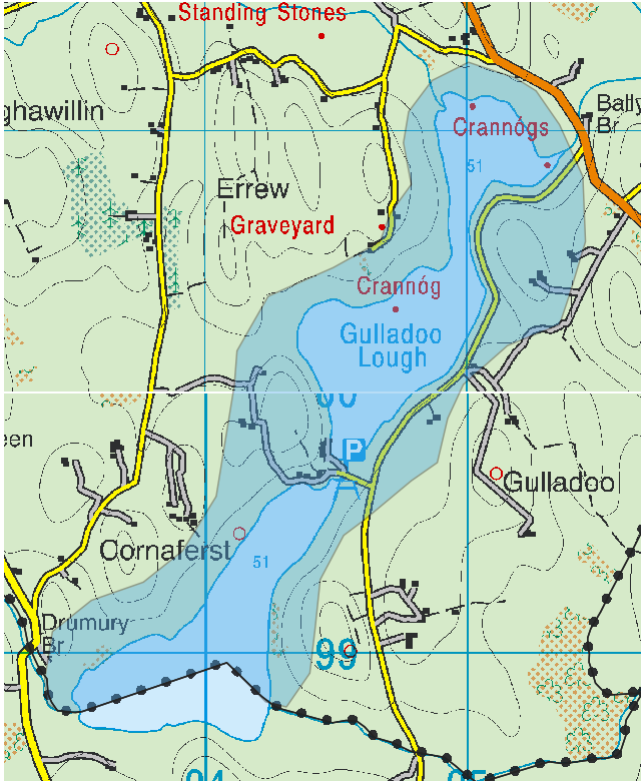
Table 19: B13 Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA

Criterion	Evaluation – B13 Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA
Scenic	The natural beauty is largely associated with Lough Gulladoo as the main focal point albeit experienced within a drumlin hill farmland setting which is in good condition. The drumlin topography is especially characteristic and contributes to the lake’s scenic quality.
Cultural	The lake features a number of small crannogs. There are no protected structures.
Natural	The lake and surrounding drumlin hill topography are natural features which are intact and in good condition. No nature designations are located within.
Enjoyment	Access to much of this lakeland landscape is available from the minor road on the eastern side which in turn bridges over the lake at a narrow point in the centre. The area is promoted as a visitor attraction with parking and picnic facilities close to the bridge.
Rarity or uniqueness	There is a distinct sense of place associated with this landscape derived from the unique quality and character of Gulladoo Lake and drumlin farmland setting.
Typicality	Lakeland landscapes are typical of South Leitrim of which this is a good example due to its intactness and good condition.

4.20.3 Recommendations

An extension of the current boundary of the AHVA is recommended to include farmland to the north which is very much in the setting of the lake. This area includes road access thereby facilitation visitor appreciation of the lakeland landscape. The boundary to the south is adjusted also to align with the county boundary.

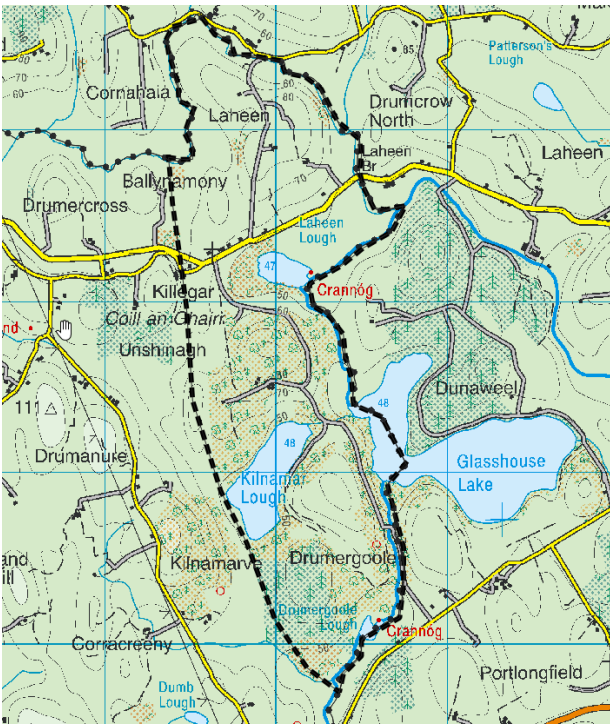
The extent of the recommended designated landscape is indicated in the map below.



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4.21 B14 Laheen Lake, Glasshouse Lake and Environs AHVA

B14 Laheen Lake, Glasshouse Lake and Environs AHVA is located in the south east of County Leitrim. The extent of the designated landscape is indicated by the black dashed line in the map below.



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This AHVA is located within LCT 9 Drumlin Farmland and a description of this LCT is presented in section 6 below.

4.21.1 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics of this landscape relate to Laheen Lough, and Kilnamar Lough and surrounding drumlin farmland.

4.21.2 Evaluation

The evaluation of B14 Laheen Lake, Glasshouse Lake and Environs AHVA is presented in Table 20 below

Table 20: B14 Laheen Lake, Glasshouse Lake and Environs AHVA

Criterion	Evaluation – B14 Laheen Lake, Glasshouse Lake and Environs AHVA
Scenic	The natural beauty is associated with Kilnamar Lough and Laheen Lough and surrounding deciduous woodland as the main focal point. These lake landscapes are experienced as tranquil places mostly enclosed in woodland.
Cultural	Laheen lake features a crannog and protected structures include Killegar House and a church on the minor road north of Laheen Lough. Killegar House is also included on the record of designed landscapes held by the NIAH. This site has not been surveyed for condition or intactness.
Natural	The lakes and surrounding woodland and drumlin hill topography are natural features which are intact and in good condition. The margin of Glasshouse Lake, in the adjacent county is a pNHA.
Enjoyment	Access to Kilnamar Lough is limited with only small tracks approaching the lake margin from the east. There are no parking or picnic facilities. Laheen Lake is scarcely visible from the minor road to the north due to visual screening by mature woodland.
Rarity or uniqueness	The sense of place is attributes to the remoteness and tranquillity of this wooded farmed landscape with few public roads and access mostly by narrow tracks. The lakes are unique features and focal points glimpsed on occasion by the visitor where vegetation screens are absent.

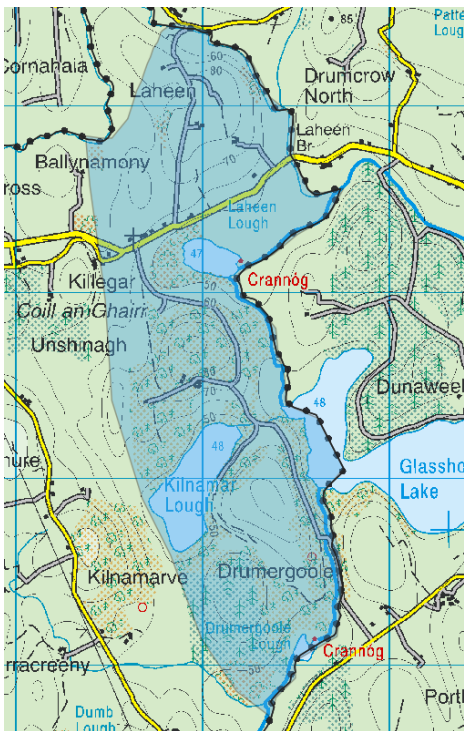
Criterion	Evaluation – B14 Laheen Lake, Glasshouse Lake and Environs AHVA
Typicality	Lakeland landscapes are typical of South Leitrim of which this is a good example due to its intactness and good condition.

4.21.3 Recommendations

The current boundary of the AHVA is recommended to be reduced to exclude areas of landscape which are not within the setting of the lake.

It is recommended to change the name of this AHVA to B8 Laheen Lough, Kilnamar Lough and Environs AHVA thereby reflecting the names of the lakes within. Glasshouse Lake is excluded as most of it lies outside the county.

The extent of the recommended designated landscape is indicated in the map below.



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4.22 - Designated Landscapes - Summary Recommendations

Table 21 below provides a summary of the recommendations regarding the current designated landscapes in Leitrim.

Table 21: Designated Landscapes – Summary Recommendations

Designation Name	Recommended Name	Recommended changes to boundary extents
A1 The Coast AONB	A1 Leitrim Coast AONB	No change
B1 The Coastal Plain AHVA	B1 Farmed hinterland of Arroo and Tievebaun AHVA	Yes – extend boundary south to include farmed setting to Arroo and Tievebaun.
A2 Lough Melvin North AONB	A2 Lough Melvin AONB	Yes – extend to include full extent of lake. Also include lakeshore farmland formerly in B2.
A3 Arroo, Glenade, Truskmore, Glencar and Environs AONB	A3 Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB	Yes – extend southwards to fully include moorland plateau and Glenaniff Valley currently within B2
B2 Lough Melvin, Glenaniff River and Environs AHVA	-	Abandon designation – areas meriting designation are recommended to be included in both A2 and A3 AONBs
B3 Dough Mountain AHVA	No change	No Change
B4 Thur Mountain AHVA	No change	Yes – small extension to include moorland hill landscape character type to the north east.
B5 Lough Macnean Upper and Environs AHVA	No change	Yes – extend boundary to fully include the lake.
A4 The Doons, Lough Gill and Environs AONB	A4 Lough Gill, Leean Mountain and Environs AONB	Yes – extend boundary to the north east to fully include Leean Mountain.
A5 Benbo AONB	No change	No change
A6 O'Donnell's Rock and Boleybrack AONB	A6 The Boleybrack Mountains AONB	Yes – extend boundary to include mountain ridge within B6 Cloonclare AHVA.
B6 Cloonclare AHVA	-	Abandon designation – areas meriting designation are recommended to be included in A6 AONB
B7 Corry Mountain AHVA	No change	No Change
B8 Lough Allen, Sliabh an Iarainn, Bencroy and Environs AHVA	A7 Lough Allen AONB	Yes – B8 to be subdivided into 2 designations A7 Lough Allen AONB A8 Slieve Anierin and Bencroy AONB.
	A8 Slieve Anierin and Bencroy AONB	Yes – B8 to be subdivided into 2 designations A7 Lough Allen AONB A8 Slieve Anierin and Bencroy AONB.
A7 Sheemore AONB	B6 Sheemore AHVA	Yes - extend boundary to incorporate the full extent of the limestone outcrop landscape.
B9 Lough Scur, St. John's Lough and Environs AHVA	No change	No change
B10 Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA	No change	Yes – extend boundary to north and east to fully include the lake and farmed setting.
B11 River Shannon, Derrycarne and Environs AHVA	B11 River Shannon and Lakes AHVA	Yes – extend boundary to fully include the lakes as part of the Shannon Catchment.
B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Sallagh, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA	B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA	No change
B13 Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA	No name change – renumbered only as B2 Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA	Yes – extend boundary to north to fully include the farmed setting of the lake.
B14 Laheen Lake, Glasshouse Lake and Environs AHVA	B8 Laheen Lough, Kilnamar Lough and Environs AHVA	Yes – reduce extents to exclude extensive areas of landscape that are not within the setting of the lake.

A summary of the recommended landscape designations is presented in Table 22 below.

Table 22: Summary – Recommended Designated Landscapes

Current Designation	Recommended Designations
A1 The Coast AONB	A1 Leitrim Coast AONB
B1 The Coastal Plain AHVA	B1 Farmed hinterland of Arroo and Tievebaun AHVA
A2 Lough Melvin North AONB	A2 Lough Melvin AONB
A3 Arroo, Glenade, Truskmore, Glencar and Environs AONB	A3 Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB
B2 Lough Melvin, Glenaniff River and Environs AHVA	Abandoned
B3 Dough Mountain AHVA	B3 Dough Mountain AHVA
B4 Thur Mountain AHVA	B4 Thur Mountain AHVA
B5 Lough Macnean Upper and Environs AHVA	B5 Lough Macnean Upper and Environs AHVA
A4 The Doons, Lough Gill and Environs AONB	A4 Lough Gill, Leean Mountain and Environs AONB
A5 Benbo AONB	A5 Benbo AONB
A6 O'Donnell's Rock and Boleybrack AONB	A6 The Boleybrack Mountains AONB
B6 Cloonclare AHVA	Abandoned
B7 Corry Mountain AHVA	B7 Corry Mountain AHVA
B8 Lough Allen, Sliabh an Iarainn, Bencroy and Environs AHVA	A7 Lough Allen AONB A8 Slieve Anierin and Bencroy AONB
A7 Sheemore AONB	B6 Sheemore AHVA
B9 Lough Scur, St. John's Lough and Environs AHVA	B9 Lough Scur, St. John's Lough and Environs AHVA
B10 Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA	B10 Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA
B11 River Shannon, Derrycarne and Environs AHVA	B11 River Shannon and Lakes AHVA
B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Sallagh, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA	B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA
B13 Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA	B2 Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA
B14 Laheen Lake, Glasshouse Lake and Environs AHVA	B8 Laheen Lough, Kilnamar Lough and Environs AHVA

5 RECOMMENDED DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES COUNTY LEITRIM

Following the adoption of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 by Elected Members at a Special Meeting of Leitrim County Council on the 7th of February 2023, the recommendations contained within this review of landscape designations in Leitrim have also been accepted. For completeness, the landscape designations which feature in the Leitrim CDP 2023-2029 are listed below and illustrated on Figure 5.1.

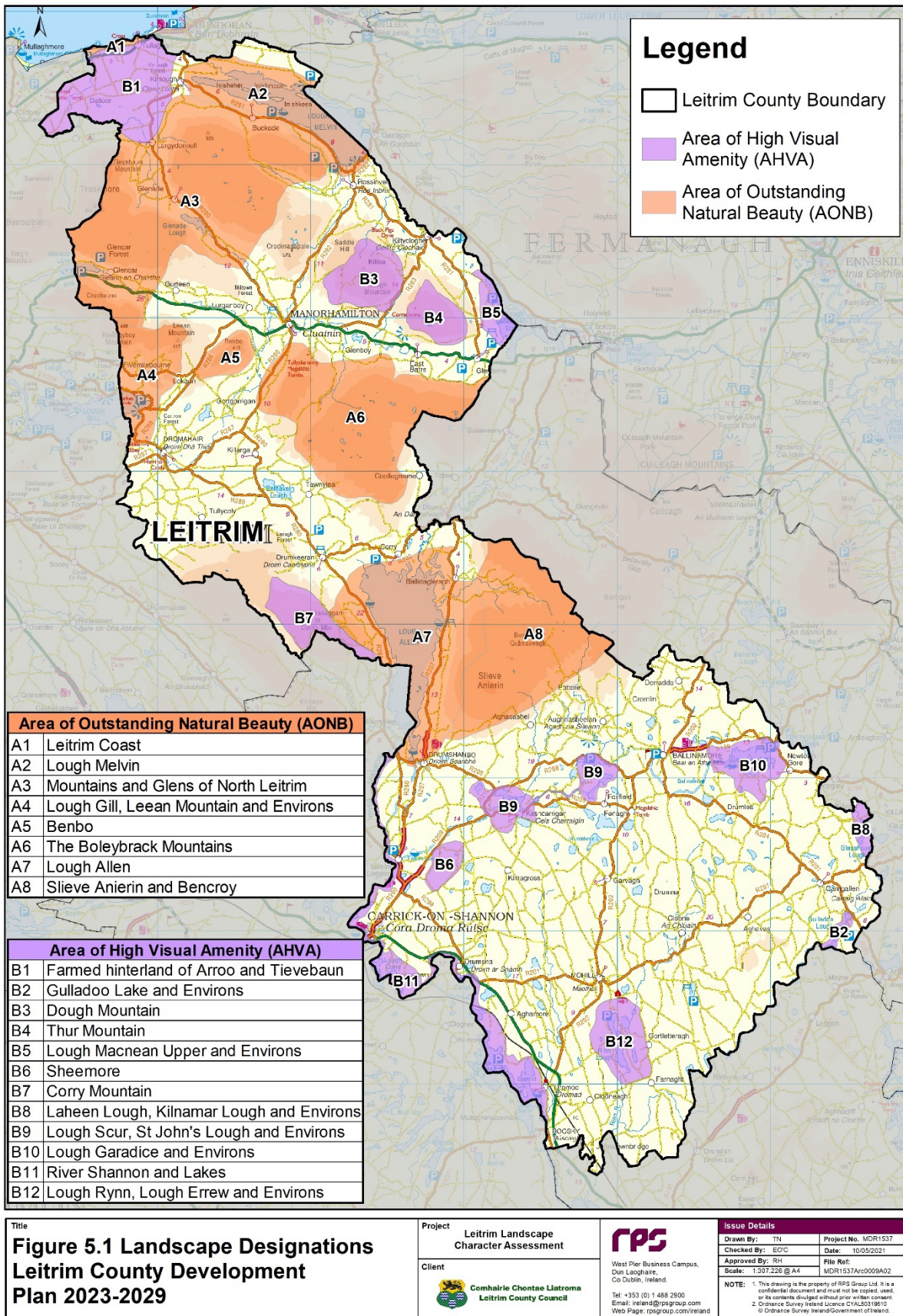
These comprise Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as follows:

- A1 Leitrim Coast AONB;
- A2 Lough Melvin AONB;
- A3 Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB;
- A4 Lough Gill, Lissan Mountain and Environs AONB;
- A5 Benbo AONB;
- A6 The Boleybrack Mountains AONB;
- A7 Lough Allen AONB; and
- A8 Slieve Anierin and Bencroy AONB.

Additionally, Areas of High Visual Amenity (AHVA) as follows:

- B1 Farmed hinterland of Arroo and Tievebaun AHVA;
- B2 Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA;
- B3 Dough Mountain AHVA;
- B4 Thur Mountain AHVA;
- B5 Lough Macnean Upper and Environs AHVA;
- B6 Sheemore AHVA;
- B7 Corry Mountain AHVA;
- B8 Laheen Lough, Kilnamar Lough and Environs AHVA;
- B9 Lough Scur, St. John's Lough and Environs AHVA;
- B10 Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA;
- B11 River Shannon and Lakes AHVA; and
- B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA.

The statement of importance and special qualities for each of the recommended landscape designations is documented in the following sections.



**Figure 5.1 Landscape Designations
Leitrim County Development
Plan 2023-2029**

Title Figure 5.1 Landscape Designations Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029	Project Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment	Client Comhairle Chontae Leitrima Leitrim County Council	Issue Details Drawn By: TN Checked By: EJC Approved By: RH Scale: 1:307,226 @ A4 Project No: MDR1537 Date: 10/05/2021 File Ref: MDR1537Arc0009A02
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Figure 5-1: Landscape Designations – Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

5.1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The following sections provides the statement of importance and special qualities of the eight AONBs identified.

5.1.1 A1 Leitrim Coast AONB - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

The Leitrim Coast AONB comprises coastal farmland with a strong visual relationship to the sea at Donegal Bay and the skyline of the Derryveagh and Bluestack Mountains further afield in Co. Donegal. Traditional field patterns are strong features in the land cover and high levels of tranquillity are experienced over most of the area thus conveying a sense of remoteness. The relatively low elevation of the farmland and scarcity of wooded vegetation screens results in a landscape with big skies as a dominating feature in many views. Traditional field patterns and the outlook over Donegal Bay and distant mountain skyline are at the heart of the outstanding natural beauty associated with this landscape. In addition, the sense of remoteness and tranquillity contributes to the special quality of the area. This tranquillity is experienced in areas closer to the coast, away from settlements and road routes.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AONB designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Small scale field patterns defined by traditional stone wall boundaries;
- Strong visual relationship with the sea;
- Headlands at Bundoran (Co. Donegal) and Mullaghmore (Co. Sligo) are unique scenic focal points visible along the coast;
- Narrow roads with earthen banks and occasional wind pruned hawthorns;
- Outlook to the distant mountain skyline of the Bluestack and Derryveagh Mountains in Co. Donegal;
- General absence of built structures of a scale which represent detractors that undermine the quality of the landscape; and
- High levels of tranquillity and sense of remoteness away from settlements and roads.

5.1.2 A2 Lough Melvin AONB - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

The Lough Melvin AONB comprises a rural and relatively remote landscape centered around the large lake of the same name which, together with islands and promontories is appreciated against the backdrop of Arroo Mountain and Tievebaun from the northern side. The southern side of the lake (currently outside the AONB) is appreciated against the occasional distant backdrop of mountains in south west Co. Donegal. The surrounding farmland features an intact small scale field pattern defined by mature hedgerows and has a strong visual relationship with the lake. The traditional field patterns are strong features in the land cover and high levels of tranquillity are experienced over most of the area thus conveying a sense of remoteness. The sense of remoteness and tranquillity is apparent in locations away from busy roads and where commercial plantation forestry is absent.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AONB designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Small scale field patterns defined by mature native species hedgerows;
- Strong visual relationship between Lough Melvin and surrounding farmland;
- Promontories, crannogs and islands within the lake are notable focal points;
- Narrow roads lined with mature hedgerows have intimate and secluded quality;
- Outlook from the northern side to Arroo and Tievebaun Mountain ranges;
- General absence of built structures or man-made elements of a scale which represent detractors that undermine the quality of the landscape; and

- High levels of tranquillity and sense of remoteness away from settlements, roads and tracts of plantation coniferous forest.

5.1.3 A3 Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

A3 Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB is a landscape of contrasting mountain skylines interspersed with sweeping broad U shaped valleys or glens and areas of lakeland. The juxtaposition of mountain, glen and sometimes lake results in a highly dramatic and scenic landscape due in part to the contrast between the distinctive profile of the mountains and cliffed landslips and the lower lying glens.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AONB designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Unique and distinctive mountain skylines associated with the Arroo Mountain Range and the Truskmore and Tievebaun Mountain Range. The skylines of these have a wide ranging influence and form the backdrop to many views within the AONB;
- Moorland plateau at or above the 300m contour is open, exposed, bleak and has some sense of wildness where roads or other built elements are absent. This is especially true of Arroo and also much of the moorland near Truskmore despite the telecoms mast on Truskmore;
- Long dramatic sweeping U shaped valleys between mountain ranges from which long range views to mountain summits are afforded;
- Geological features such as the cliffs, landslips and corries, some of which are visitor attractions such as Eagle's Rock;
- Loughs at Glenade and Glencar situated within the valleys and viewed against mountain backdrop;
- The AONB approach to the coastal plain further north is framed by the Arroo complex and Tievebaun;
- Panoramic views from elevated locations towards the coast and Donegal Bay; and
- High levels of tranquillity and sense of remoteness at higher elevations in the mountain moorland away from settlements and roads.

5.1.4 A4 Lough Gill, Leean Mountain and Environs AONB - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

Lough Gill, Leean Mountain and Environs AONB is a rural and remote landscape comprised of distinctive mountains and hills some of which overlook the expansive Lough Gill. The mountains and hills have a very distinctive profile and are remote with little by way of built development and general absence of strong field patterns. The lake features a number of Islands (visible albeit within County Sligo) and has a distinctive profile with sinuous shoreline and promontories. Woodland including native species occurs at various points along the shoreline. Narrow winding roads extend along the lake margin from which views of the lake and farmland beyond are attained. Parkes Castle is a historic focal point located on the shoreline on the northern side of the lake.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AONB designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Distinctive landform associated with the Tabular Hills landscape type and Leean Mountain;
- Lakeland landscape of Lough Gill with islands, promontories and fringed with tracts of deciduous woodland and overlooked by Leean Mountain and hills;
- Doon Lough is nestled in between the hills and presents as a surprise to the viewer travelling along the minor road;
- Outlook towards the mountains from the lake; and
- Parkes Castle and demesne is a focal point on the northern side of the lake.

5.1.5 A5 Benbo AONB - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

A5 Benbo AONB comprises a mountain with a distinctive profile featuring cleft division in the summit. Benbo is a landmark and point of reference which is enjoyed by viewers in the surrounding valley landscapes and from the edge of the town of Manorhamilton and which confers a strong sense of place in this surrounding area.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AONB designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Distinctive Mountain profile of Benbo with cleft in the summit;
- Moorland landscape at higher elevations with peat bogs and heathland habitats;
- Relative absence of development on the mountain summit resulting in high levels of tranquillity;
- Panoramic outlook towards the lowland valleys from elevated areas within the mountain landscape; and
- Mountain forms the backdrop to many views and contributes to the setting of the town of Manorhamilton.

5.1.6 A6 The Boleybrack Mountains AONB - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

A6 The Boleybrack Mountains AONB is an extensive mountainous area featuring moorland landcover with isolated small loughs. The landscape is exposed, bleak and has a remote and elemental quality. The mountains have a distinctive profile enjoyed by viewers from the surrounding valleys. The area includes the steep sided O'Donnell's Rock from which, panoramic views are available of the valley landscape and mountains further west and Lough Gill in the distance.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AONB designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Distinctive mountain skyline associated with the Boleybrack Range and O'Donnell's Rock;
- Moorland plateau landscape with a strong sense of wildness, high levels of tranquillity and remoteness;
- Peat bogs and heathland habitats at higher elevations;
- Relative absence of development on the mountain summit resulting in high levels of tranquillity;
- Panoramic outlook towards the lowland valleys from O'Donnell's Rock reaching as far as Lough Gill; and
- Mountain skyline forms the backdrop to many views attained from the surrounding valleys.

5.1.7 A7 Lough Allen AONB - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

A7 Lough Allen AONB is a large scale vast expansive lakeland landscape. The lake margin features gently undulating farmland with mature hedgerows and intermittent small areas of woodland near the lake margin. Small minor roads pass through the farmed landscape and as these approach the lake, a sense of surprise and drama is experienced as the open nature and vast expansiveness of the lakeland landscape is suddenly experienced by the viewer at many locations. Such views have a wide range and are far reaching towards other landscapes outside this area.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AONB designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Vast expansive lakeland landscape of unusually large scale compared with others in Ireland and forming part of the catchment of the River Shannon (longest river in Ireland);
- Gently undulating farmland sweeps down to the lake margin;
- Crannogs and islands are focal points in the lake;
- Elements of historic built heritage interest including churches, standing stones and other built features;

- Isolated clumps of deciduous woodland at the lake margin featuring native species;
- Minor roads in secluded woody landscapes approach the lake margin where expansive views of the lake and surrounding landscape are revealed leading to a sense of surprise;
- The Leitrim Way long distance walking route is enjoyed by visitors and locals; and
- High levels of tranquillity and sense of remoteness away from settlements and roads.

5.1.8 A8 Slieve Anierin and Bencroy AONB - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

The distinctive mountain skyline of Slieve Anierin and Bencroy together with the mountain moorland are the main natural characteristics that are celebrated in this AONB. The uniqueness of the mountain profile and distinctive rock outcrops contribute to scenic quality and a strong sense of place. Areas of remote and wilderness like landscape are to be found in the uplands away from roads or other built elements.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AONB designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Distinctive scenic mountain skyline associated with Slieve Anierin and Bencroy confers a strong sense of place;
- Mountain moorland landcover of peat bog and heathland;
- Panoramic views to the lowland and valley landscapes from elevated areas;
- General absence of built structures of a scale which represent detractors that undermine the quality of the landscape except a telecommunications mast on the south facing slopes of Slieve Anierin and some tracts of plantation coniferous forest at lower elevations; and
- High levels of tranquillity and sense of remoteness in the upland areas away from roads and where there are no built elements.

5.2 Areas of High Visual Amenity (AHVA)

The following sections provide the statement of importance and special qualities of the twelve AHVAs identified.

5.2.1 B1 Farmed hinterland of Arroo and Tievebaun AHVA - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

B1 Farmed hinterland of Arroo and Tievebaun AHVA comprises a farmed hinterland, the northern part of which has a strong visual relationship to Donegal Bay and the skyline of the Derryveagh and Bluestack Mountains in Co. Donegal. The landscape further inland is visually open and views towards the distinctive mountain skyline of Arroo and Tievebaun are attained throughout. The landscape features gently undulating drumlin farmland along with extensive areas which are relatively flat and featuring a random mosaic of wet grassland interspersed with occasional clumps of woodland and scrub. High levels of tranquillity are experienced throughout thus conveying a sense of remoteness especially away from minor roads. The relatively low elevation of the landscape and scarcity of wooded vegetation screens results in a landscape with big skies as a dominating feature in many views.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AONB designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Strong visual relationship with the mountain skylines of Tievebaun and Arroo. This AHVA forms an important setting to the appreciation of these mountain areas;
- Outlook to the distant mountain skyline of the Bluestack and Derryveagh Mountains in Co. Donegal in the northern part of this AHVA;
- Visually open landscape with big skies where wooded vegetation is scarce or absent;
- Small scale field patterns associated with the gently undulating drumlin farmland;
- Areas of relatively flat landscape featuring a mosaic of wet grassland and occasional clumps of wooded vegetation. The absence of a strong field pattern in these areas contributes to the sense of remoteness;
- Narrow roads with earthen banks and occasional wind pruned hawthorns;
- General absence of built structures of a scale which represent detractors that undermine the quality of the landscape; and
- High levels of tranquillity and sense of remoteness away from settlements and roads.

5.2.2 B2 Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

B13 Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA is a scenic tranquil landscape centered on Lough Gulladoo as a narrow elongated open waterbody together with islands and crannogs surrounded by wooded drumlin farmland. The appreciation of this lake and drumlin farmland is available to the visitor from the adjacent minor road on the eastern side which in turn bridges over the lake at the narrowest point thereby affording the viewer dramatic views of the waterbody and wooded farmland.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AHVA designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Unique elongated lake landscape associated with Lough Gulladoo with associated crannogs surrounded by drumlin hill farmland;
- Drumlin hills surrounding the lakes feature strong pattern of mature hedgerows. Drumlin farmland setting of considerable scenic quality and in good condition;
- Elongated narrow tracts of mature woodland fringe the lake margin;
- Lake margins feature wetland grasses which have striking seasonal colour;
- High levels of tranquillity and sensory appeal away from regional and busy minor roads; and

- Absence of detracting built elements of a scale that would undermine the quality of this landscape.

5.2.3 B3 Dough Mountain AHVA - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

Dough Mountain is an upland landscape with a smooth rounded mountain skyline which overlooks the valley landscape to the south presenting a recognisable skyline and conferring a sense of place on the local area. Visitors at elevated locations can enjoy panoramic views of the adjacent hills and lowlands. The mountain summit and surrounding elevated areas features a landcover of peat bog and is generally remote and tranquil.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AHVA designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Mountain moorland landscape at higher elevations is remote and tranquil away from minor roads;
- Panoramic views of the valley landscapes and surrounding hills from elevated locations;
- Moorland landscape features naturally occurring peat bog landcover; and
- High levels of tranquillity and sense of remoteness away from settlements and roads and wind turbines on the adjacent Saddle Hill.

5.2.4 B4 Thur Mountain AHVA - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

Thur Mountain is an upland landscape which is almost entirely covered in peat bog and also features small areas of heathland. Cullentragh Lough is a single isolated waterbody naturally occurring in this upland landscape. Thur Mountain has a relatively smooth rounded profile which overlooks the valley landscape to the south conferring a sense of place on the local area. Visitors at elevated locations can enjoy panoramic views of the adjacent lowlands and Thur Mountain. The mountain summit and surrounding elevated areas are generally remote and tranquil.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AHVA designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Mountain moorland landscape at higher elevations is remote and tranquil away from minor roads;
- Panoramic views of the valley landscapes and surrounding hills, including Dough Mountain from elevated locations;
- Moorland landscape features naturally occurring peat bog landcover throughout along with small areas of heathland;
- Cullentragh Lough is a naturally occurring lake in the upland moorland landscape; and
- High levels of tranquillity and sense of remoteness away from settlements and roads.

5.2.5 B5 Lough Macnean Upper and Environs AHVA - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

Lough Macnean AHVA is a rural and remote farmed landscape centered on the elongated lake of the same name. The lake features a number of Islands and native species woodland and scrub occupy various locations along the lake margin. Distinctive promontories feature throughout at Trawnish Island and Copse Point. Narrow winding roads extend along the lake margin from which views of the lake and farmland beyond are attained.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AHVA designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Large lakeland landscape centered around Lough Macnean, featuring islands and promontories;
- Native species transitional woodland and scrub along the lake margin;
- Gently undulating valley farmland in the immediate lake setting;

- Narrow winding roads some of which extend parallel to the lake margin and from which panoramic views of the lake are attained; and
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from roads and from tracts of plantation coniferous forest.

5.2.6 B6 Sheemore AHVA - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

B6 Sheemore AHVA comprises an elongated limestone outcrop with smooth profile and featuring pastoral farmland landcover which rises above the surrounding lowland farmland presenting as a distinctive landmark in stark contrast to the surrounding lowlands. The summit and historic remnants of megalithic tombs and cross serve to reinforce the uniqueness of this hill feature in the landscape.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AHVA designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Distinctive hill skyline associated with Sheemore limestone outcrop with cairn and cross on the summit;
- An important landmark and point of reference in views from the surrounding lowland at distances of up to 4km;
- Sheemore is a relevant landmark to the setting of the eastern edge of Leitrim Town;
- Relative absence of development on the summit resulting in high levels of tranquillity;
- Panoramic outlook towards the lowland drumlin farmland;
- Megalithic tomb and cultural heritage association; and
- Locally valued by recreational walkers, visitors in the surrounding area and people travelling by boat on The River Shannon.

5.2.7 B7 Corry Mountain AHVA - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

B7 Corry Mountain AHVA comprises a mountain moorland landscape, the summit of which is Seltannasaggart or Corry Mountain which presents as a distinctive landmark overlooking the surrounding lowlands to the east and Lough Allen. The landscape with its bleak moorland landcover has some qualities of wildness and tranquillity albeit these qualities are somewhat eroded due to the presence of wind turbines.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AHVA designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Extensive mountain moorland landscape;
- Panoramic views of Lough Allen and adjacent mountain range associated with Slieve Anierin;
- Minor roads winding through the mountain moorland landscape from which dynamic changing views of distant mountainous areas are attained further afield;
- The Miner's Way & Historic Trail walking route crosses the southern edge of this area and is enjoyed by visitors and locals; and
- High levels of tranquillity and sense of remoteness away from settlements, roads and wind turbines.

5.2.8 B8 Laheen Lough, Kilnamar Lough and Environs AHVA - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

B14 Laheen Lough, Kilnamar Lough and Environs AHVA is a tranquil rural and somewhat remote landscape with abundant woodland and mature hedgerows in the drumlin farmland that surrounds the two lakes within. Laheen Lough and Kilnamar Lough are scenic but highly secluded, enveloped in woodland. Access is limited with occasional glimpsed views available to the visitor.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AHVA designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Unique lake landscape associated with Laheen Lough and Kilnamar Lough with associated crannog and mature woodland setting;
- The landscape surrounding the lakes feature a mosaic of farmland with strong pattern of mature hedgerows;
- Extensive tracts of mature woodland fringe the lake margins;
- High levels of tranquillity and sensory appeal away from regional and busy minor roads; and
- Absence of detracting built elements of a scale that would undermine the quality of this landscape.

5.2.9 B9 Lough Scur, St. John's Lough and Environs AHVA - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

B9 Lough Scur, St. John's Lough and Environs AHVA is a scenic lakeland tranquil landscape centered on Lough Scur, St John's Lough and associated waterways as focal points of interest together with drumlin farmland setting.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AHVA designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Unique lakeland landscapes of Lough Scur and St John's Lough with visible heritage features such as islands and crannogs;
- Drumlin farmland setting of considerable scenic quality and in good condition;
- High levels of tranquillity and sensory appeal away from regional and busy minor roads;
- Occasional mountain backdrop of Slieve Anierin; and
- Absence of detracting built elements of a scale that would undermine the quality of this landscape.

5.2.10 B10 Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

B10 Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA is a scenic tranquil landscape centered on Lough Garadice as a large open waterbody and focal point of interest. The lake is located within a characteristic drumlin hill farmland with mature hedgerows and clumps of deciduous woodland. Occasional views of the mountain skyline of Slieve Anierin to the north are available.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AHVA designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Unique larger scale lake landscape associated with Lough Garadice with associated islands and crannogs surrounded by drumlin hill farmland;
- Individual mature trees within meadows and wider farmland, including large very fine specimens of Beech and Oak;
- Drumlin farmland setting of considerable scenic quality and in good condition;
- High levels of tranquillity and sensory appeal away from regional and busy minor roads;
- Occasional mountain backdrop of Slieve Anierin; and
- Absence of detracting built elements of a scale that would undermine the quality of this landscape.

5.2.11 B11 River Shannon and Lakes AHVA - Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

B11 River Shannon and Lakes AHVA is centered on a section of the River Shannon from Lough Allen in the north to Lough Bofin in the south and is part of the Shannon catchment as the longest river in Ireland. The northern section from Lough Allen to Leitrim comprises an intimate and almost secretive tranquil landscape

centered on the river which follows a narrow and winding, almost mysterious course between Lough Allen and Leitrim Town. Further south, the river widens as it passes through a relatively flat landscape and soon expands to meet the large lakes at Lough Boderg and Lough Bofin. The openness of the gently undulating tranquil farmland that surrounds the river allows for intermittent views of mountain and hill landscapes further afield such as that at Slieve Anierin and Sheemore.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AHVA designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Unique Shannon River as longest river in Ireland;
- Intimate and tranquil river landscape in the north as the Shannon follows a winding narrow course;
- River expands southwards featuring the large lakes at Lough Boderg and Lough Bofin;
- Surrounding gently undulating farmland setting of some scenic quality and in good condition;
- High levels of tranquillity and sensory appeal away from regional and busy minor roads and settlements;
- Intermittent open views towards hills and mountains including Sheemore and Slieve Anierin;
- River margins or callows feature wetland grasses which have striking seasonal colour; and
- General absence of detracting built elements of a scale that would undermine the quality of this landscape.

5.2.12 B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA- Special Qualities and Statement of Importance

B12 Lough Rynn, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA is a scenic tranquil landscape centered on Lough Rynn as a large elongated open waterbody together with islands and crannogs surrounded by wooded farmland. The smaller scale Lough Errew is also a focal point of interest nestled within wooded farmland. Built heritage features visible from surrounding minor roads include Rinn Castle and surrounding designed landscape located on the lake margin.

The importance of this landscape and hence its inclusion in an AHVA designation is attributed to the following special qualities:

- Unique larger scale lake landscape associated with Lough Rynn with associated islands and crannogs surrounded by drumlin hill farmland;
- Smaller scale lake landscape at Lough Errew of a more intimate quality with gently undulating farmland;
- Farmland surrounding the lakes feature strong pattern of mature hedgerows;
- Clumps of mature woodland dispersed throughout. Elongated tracts of deciduous woodland close to lake margins;
- Lake margins feature wetland grasses which have striking seasonal colour;
- High levels of tranquillity and sensory appeal away from regional and busy minor roads;
- Rinn Castle and designed landscape as focal point; and
- Absence of detracting built elements of a scale that would undermine the quality of this landscape.

6 COUNTY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

The descriptive data on the landscape character types referenced above is presented in the tables below.

Table 23: LCT 1 Coastal Plain

Description

This LCT comprises a narrow strip of land located on the coastline which marks the County boundary to the north. It comprises marginal farmland some of which is established on grassy coastal sand dunes overlooking Donegal Bay. The coastal edge follows a sinuous line and is comprised of low sandy, rocky cliffs. An extensive crescent shaped beach area extends from the eastern end near Tullaghan. A further stretch of coastline at the western end features beach extending from the mouth of the Duff River to the east. The outlook over the sea is relatively undeveloped in terms of visible marine activity and infrastructure. Views to sea are open and expansive with large skies and the distant views of mountain skylines associated with Derryveagh and Blue Stack Mountains in Donegal.

At a local level, the views to sea are framed by the headlands associated with Mullaghmore Head to the west in County Sligo and Kildoney Point to the east in Donegal. In this regard, this particular seascape, as it occurs within Leitrim, could be considered, to sit within the broader seascape character type no. 8 Large Bay as defined in the seascape character assessment undertaken for the whole of Ireland, published in the SEA of the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan. No. 8 Large Bay extends around Donegal Bay, the Leitrim Coastline and part of the Sligo Coastline. The coastal plain LCT in Leitrim lies adjacent to Seascape Character Unit 19, Donegal Bay in the County Donegal Seascape Character Assessment which extends from St John's Point to Bundoran.

The landward component comprises undulating rough pastoral farmland with a small-scale field pattern often comprised of long narrow rectangular fields aligned at right angles to the coast. Generations of farmers removing boulders from the fields has resulted in a drystone wall landscape which is visually open due to the scarcity of trees, hedgerows and woodland. Woody vegetation comprises mainly short hedgerows and windblown hawthorns. Individual dwellings are dispersed throughout this landscape. Tranquillity is high except in the vicinity of Tullaghan where the noise of the traffic on the N16 can be faintly heard. The N16 runs through this landscape carrying traffic constantly. It provides access to the area for recreational visitors in the locality and those touring the Wild Atlantic Way.

Table 24: LCT 2 Coastal Drumlin Farmland

Description

This LCT comprises a mosaic of cutover bog and farmland located between the coastal plain and the upland landscapes of Tievebaun and Arroo. The topography comprises gently rolling drumlin hills. The area features large tracts of bog and marsh interspersed with rough pasture and abundant areas of woody scrub vegetation including Willow and Birch. Areas of cutover bog have an abundance of Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) infestation. Isolated patches of plantation coniferous forest are dispersed throughout. Pastoral farmland is present as a small to medium scale field pattern defined by hedgerows or post and wire fences. Some signs of dereliction are apparent in terms of dwellings, farm buildings and roads in poor condition. The landscape is relatively flat and visually open where wooded vegetation is absent affording views of big skies. The more open areas of this landscape are overlooked from the south by Tievebaun Mountain and in the east, by Arroo Mountain.

Table 25: LCT 3 Wooded Lakeside Farmland

Description

A gently undulating drumlin farmed landscape surrounds Lough Melvin. The farmland comprises mostly pasture with a small to medium scale field pattern usually defined by mature hedgerows. Tracts of deciduous woodland are dispersed throughout along with occasional large tracts of commercial forestry. The deciduous woodland is abundant and usually occurs as long linear tracts interspersed with farmland. Few roads penetrate this landscape and these tend to be straight and narrow, lined with hedgerows or low grass banks and in some cases, mature woodland or commercial forest. The extent of the woody vegetation cover is such that the landscape is quite visually enclosed in many places. In areas which are more open, where woodland cover is absent, views are afforded over Lough Melvin. Distant views are available to the skyline of Arroo Mountain.

Table 26: LCT 4 Cluffed Uplands and Landslips

Description

The Cluffed Margins, detached masses and landslips associated with this LCT were formed by the erosive action of glaciers and these are present in the landscape of today as distinctive and dramatic features such as that at Eagle's Rock. They usually occur below the moor topped uplands and can be seen as distinctive rock formations from within the major glens. Huge sections of the upper parts of the cliffs have broken off in places and have either slipped downwards leaving extensive scree and colluvial slopes, bare rock faces and cliffs which hang above the agricultural landscapes below. In other locations, the wear and tear of glaciation has resulted in the forming of hollowed out rockfaces or corries,

of which fine examples are to be seen at Tievebaun Mountain in the north west. Land cover is typically sparse in these locations, although grassland has colonised some of the stabilised scree slopes.

Table 27: LCT 5 Moorland Plateau

Description

The Moorland Plateaus is one of the most remote, elevated exposed and expansive landscape character types in Leitrim. It is generally characterised by smooth rolling landform with isolated steep escarpments and rocky cliffs at elevations exceeding 300 m AOD. Land cover is predominantly a mosaic of upland blanket bog and heath, with occasional sheep grazing. In some cases, the blanket bog is active in terms of peat formation whilst in other areas, it is degraded as a result of cutover activities and drainage. Localised erosion gives rise to crags and peat hags exposing the underlying rocks. Small upland loughs drained by streams are located throughout. The plateaus have a sense of wilderness and remoteness. These areas are visually open and their expansiveness is enhanced by the dominance and enormity of the sky. Few roads or tracks are present. Patches of commercial coniferous forestry feature in this landscape and in some locations, these plantations have eroded the moorland landscape character. Wind turbines are a recent feature in this landscape character type in the Corry Mountain area in particular. The mosaic of upland habitats are of significant nature conservation value. Colours are muted and monochromatic.

Table 28: LCT 6 Moorland Hills

Description

The Moorland Hills are generally located between 200 and 300 m AOD and comprise relatively steep sided slopes leading up to the plateaus areas or mountain tops. These comprise marginal land with little or no hedgerow enclosure or field pattern. Hillsides generally allow long views across the surrounding lowlands except where woodland cover is extensive. Land cover is typically upland blanket bog, heather moor and unimproved grassland extensively grazed by free roaming sheep. Some field patterns are discernible as low earth banks and post and wire fences. Large tracts of plantation coniferous forest are dispersed throughout. Some deciduous woodland and scrub occupies the lower slopes. Fast rocky streams draining the upper peat bogs descend down through the hills and offer secluded steep sided valleys and ravines in which scrub and trees can thrive. The moorland hills are generally sparse in terms of settlement although tracks and roads are more frequent in this LCT than in the wilder moorland plateaus. Roads and tracks are often fringed by post and wire fences.

Table 29: LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills

Description

This Upland Farmland and Foothills is located generally between 100 and 200m AOD and comprises a transitional landscape between the Moorland Hills and the more intensively farmed lowlands. This transitional landscape usually occupies the sides of the long U shaped valleys that lie between the mountain uplands. Landform is diverse, ranging from gentle sloping foothills to steeper hillsides. Pastures are grazed within a patchwork of hedged fields which stretch up the hillsides often within distinctive linear formations. This hedgerow field pattern tends to become weaker with increasing elevation. Tree cover is sporadic. Plantation coniferous forests are located on many slopes, replacing marginal pastures. Many streams draining the hillsides cut narrow valleys which are often colonised by scrub and trees. Waterfalls are found where the streams cross harder layers of geology. Road routes extend along the length of the valley sides and afford views of opposite sides of valleys and mountain tops. A sparse network of minor, narrow roads wind through the hills extending from these routes. A higher proportion of settlement is located in these farmed areas when compared to the upper slopes of the Moorland Hills. Isolated farmhouses are often located at the end of long winding lanes.

Table 30: LCT 8 Valley Farmland

Description

This LCT occupies the valley floor of the U shaped glacial valleys associated with the glens in the northern half of the county. The local topography of the valley floor comprises drumlin hills although in some cases, the valley floor presents as a series of glacially formed terraces such as that associated with the Glenaniff River. Land cover comprises pastoral farmed with a strong field pattern defined by mature hedgerows. A small number of medium to large elongated lakes feature in these valleys. Occasional waterfalls empty into the valleys from the upland landscapes. Road routes, including regional roads extend along the length of the valleys linking towns and settlements. Open views towards dramatic mountain skylines are frequently available.

Table 31: LCT 9 Drumlin Farmland

Description

The Drumlin Farmland occupies a large part of the southern part of the county and features a distinctive drumlin hill topography. The consistent orientation of the hills gives the landscape a uniform grain and has its origins from the direction of ice flows during glaciation. The pattern or grain can be difficult to appreciate, being masked largely by the

abundant mature hedgerows which race up and down the hillsides forming a patchwork pattern usually of small-scale. The drumlins have steep sides with broad rounded tops although their size and shape vary considerably throughout. Land cover is generally pasture with marshy areas within the inter drumlin hollows. Patches of commercial coniferous forestry are dispersed throughout this landscape, some areas being fairly extensive in size. The plantation coniferous forest is a frequent feature and has become influential in the local landscape character.

Table 32: LCT 10 Major Loughs**Description**

The county features a number of large lakes, of which the largest ones include Lough Allen and Lough Melvin. These are generally located within lowland farmland. Regional roads and long distance footpaths follow closely the shoreline of Lough Allen from which panoramic views of this lake are attained along with the mountain backdrop of Slieve Anierin. The regional road south of Kinlough follows the margins of Lough Melvin from which panoramic views are available. The lakes are expansive featuring marginal wetland vegetation and wooded crannogs remain from ancient settlement.

Table 33: LCT 11 Drumlin Lough and Stream Margins**Description**

This area comprises a gently undulating landscape with low rounded drumlin like hills interspersed with numerous small loughs and crossed by minor streams and ditches (drumlinised ribbed moraine). The loughs and streams are bordered by extensive areas of boggy, poorly drained pastures formed from clays deposited by streams. Areas of common reed, reedmace and bulrush occupy the margins of the loughs. These landscapes are particularly popular for passive recreation and a number of loughs are fringed by car parks and picnic sites. Crannogs occur within the larger loughs. The farmed land cover comprises pasture defined mainly by mature hedgerows but occasionally post and wire fences in lower lying wetter ground. Occasional views towards the mountain landscape of Slieve Anierin to the north are available. Tracts of commercial coniferous forestry are dispersed throughout and are a frequent feature in the landscape.

Table 34: LCT 12 River Floodplain**Description**

This LCT comprises a flat, low lying pastoral river landscape associated with the Shannon. The river system comprises a number of loughs mostly connected with sluggish river sections. The drainage pattern features small feeder channels which drain the surrounding drumlin swarms and mountains. Water, both in the river channel and loughs, is an important landscape element. The meandering course of the Shannon is bordered by flat floodplains, gently sloping grazed banks, meadows and rough grazing. Landform is typically flat although slight undulations are present. Occasional floodplain trees such as Alder, Ash and Willow stand out as features. Pasture, grazed by cows in drier months, occurs in open fields bordering some stretches of the river. Field boundaries are typically defined by post and wire fences, often colonised by scrub species and ranker growth, giving the appearance of established hedgerows. There is virtually no settlement within this LCT. Roads are also generally absent. A small number of isolated houses do exist, occupying small undulating areas of land to escape flooding. These isolated dwellings tend to be accessed by narrow winding lanes and often enclosed by tall species rich hedgerows.

Table 35: LCT 13 Low Limestone Outcrops**Description**

The hill farmlands of Sheebeg and Sheemore comprise distinctive limestone hills which rise above the surrounding lowlands. These are low in comparison to the mountainous areas but have a distinctive hilly profile when viewed from the surrounding lowlands thereby serving as focal points in the wider landscape. Shallow soils support grazing within fields defined by a network of stone walls in contrast to the surrounding lowlands where hedgerows are dominant. Woodland is restricted to steep slopes although hedgerow trees and isolated trees within pasture and scrub provide some cover. Historically these sites provided important vantage points and clusters of Megalithic tombs indicate that they had some form of ritual or strategic significance. The outcrops are largely unsettled. Houses are strung out along the roads fringing the lower slopes and isolated farmhouses and derelict farms at the end of narrow winding lanes can be found in sheltered areas on some hillsides. The distinctive ridge is the natural location for communication masts which gain visual prominence in this location.

Table 36: LCT 14 Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs**Description**

This LCT comprises a gentle, undulating landscape of grazed lowlands with elongated areas of raised bog. Many areas of pasture are overtaken by rushes due to under grazing. Long, narrow stretches of raised bog and elongated loughs occupy the hollows between low drumlin hills. Stands of Scots pine and other coniferous species occur, often on reclaimed/cutover peat bogs and on the margins of loughs. Road and settlement patterns are sparse and contrast strongly with the Drumlin Farmland LCT. The main arterial routes follow the top of hills and are lined with clustered small

traditional farmsteads, often surrounded by small copses. Narrower roads bordered by drainage ditches cross the raised bogs and link the main arterial routes. These tend to be sparsely settled.

Table 37: LCT 15 Undulating Hill Farmland

Description

The topography of this landscape comprises a ridgeline oriented in an east west direction at slightly higher elevation (c. 150m AOD) than the surrounding drumlin farmland. The distinctive rolling nature of the summit gives way to sloping sides fretted by numerous streams draining the uplands. Soils tend to be poorly drained. The land cover comprises pasture with a field pattern strongly defined by dense mature hedgerows. Minor roads cross the landscape and settlement is generally sparse with individual dwellings located along long winding lanes, fringed with tall rambling hedges. Where landform and land cover allow, extensive views over the surrounding lowlands or towards mountains are afforded. Occasional tracts of plantation coniferous forest occur within this landscape.

Table 38: LCT 16 Steep Mountain Peaks

Description

These steep sided mountain peaks have a smooth profile and small scree slopes create a distinctive, notched skyline. These occur as a result of particular geological conditions where a largely chert free form of limestone exists as mud banks forming rounded hummocky hills. Natural grassland is the predominant land cover with heath and plantation coniferous forests occupying gentler slopes. This LCT is remote with little or no access although viewed and enjoyed from the valley landscapes below.

Table 39: LCT 17 Tabular Hills

Description

This LCT features distinctive tabular hills formed from karstic weathering of cherty limestones in horizontal beds. Rough pasture and scrub occupy the tabular hills and grazing is located within the increasingly rush infested fields on gentler lower slopes. Scrub is most visible where it has colonised the flat top of the tabular hills and disguises the distinctive bedding planes. Deciduous woodlands and coniferous plantations are numerous on the gentler undulations. Settlement is sparse and restricted to a small number of isolated farms off main routes on narrow tracks and lanes.



**Leitrim County
Development Plan
2023-2029**

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