

LANDSCAPE CAPACITY STUDY FOR COMMERCIAL FORESTRY – CO LEITRIM



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for Commercial Forestry – Co
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23 May 2023

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Appendix A Designated Nature Sites

1 INTRODUCTION

In September 2021, Leitrim County Council commissioned RPS to undertake a landscape capacity assessment for future commercial forestry in County Leitrim. The purpose of the landscape capacity assessment is to inform the policy framework for commercial forestry which will inform the County Development Plan 2023-2029. The objective of the study is to determine the suitability or capacity of landscapes to accommodate further commercial forestry. This study follows a number of landscape studies already undertaken in County Leitrim including the county landscape character assessment, designated landscapes, protected views and prospects all of which informed the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029.

The study has also been undertaken in order to provide clear guidance in the light of recent debate on the issue of commercial forestry in County Leitrim and the need to achieve a balance between demands for commercial forestry and conservation of landscape character and visual amenity including residential visual amenity.

1.1 Scope

The process followed a series of steps outlined below:

- Consultation with Leitrim County Council on the scope of the landscape capacity study;
- Mapped and written data gathering exercise to establish the baseline;
- Methodology, including definition of criteria for the landscape capacity study;
- Capacity Assessment – evaluation of the sensitivity of each landscape character type and its capacity to accommodate further commercial forestry in the future; and
- Outline design guidance for future commercial forestry.

1.2 Structure of this report

The remainder of this report is structured in two parts as follows:

- Approach and methodology; and
- Landscape capacity study outlining the baseline for each Landscape Character Type (LCT) followed by a sensitivity assessment of each LCT to commercial forestry. The capacity of each LCT to accommodate commercial forestry will be outlined, along with design guidance.

2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The approach to the landscape capacity study was informed by current good practice guidance including the following:

- 'Forestry and the Landscape Guidelines' The Forest Service, Department of the Marine and Natural Resources, July 2000;
- 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment' – to inform spatial planning and land management, 2019, Natural England; and
- 'Design techniques for forest management planning', Practice guide, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh, 2014.

Landscapes are sensitive to change brought about by aspects of commercial forestry especially where these result in a lack of fit with existing landscape character. The lack of fit in the landscape may be derived from factors including site location, choice of species, layout and size and orientation of plot and visual prominence. The baseline for each Landscape Character Type (LCT) in County Leitrim is considered and assessed for its sensitivity to commercial forestry as the basis for the capacity study and is explained in more detail below.

2.1 Capacity study

The capacity study methodology is outlined below. This includes an explanation of the related concepts of landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity drawing upon published guidance in 2019 by Natural England. This guidance is favoured over the more dated national guidance entitled 'Landscape and Landscape Assessment, Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities' published in 2000 by The Department of the Environment and Local Government as it specifically deals with the concept of landscape sensitivity in the context of landscape capacity studies.

This is followed by an outline of the criteria used to assess the sensitivity of the LCTs in Leitrim to commercial forestry and hence provide an understanding of the capacity of these LCTs to accommodate commercial forestry.

2.1.1 Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Landscape sensitivity assessment is a useful tool to inform strategic thinking on the location of future commercial forestry in County Leitrim. As defined by Natural England (NE) '*Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value – such as changes to valued attributes of baseline landscape character and the visual resource.*'

The NE guidance sets out the relationship between landscape sensitivity and capacity. Landscape sensitivity assessment identifies the relative sensitivity of a landscape to a particular development type (commercial forestry) applying typically a 5 point scale (very high, high, medium, low and very low). This in turn informs place based guidance concerning the capacity of that landscape to absorb a particular development type without undue negative effects on its character and qualities. This can help decision makers to set objectives concerning the amount of acceptable change in a particular area. It must be borne in mind however that, as stated in the guidance, '*when dealing with landscapes and change it is not easy to simply quantify exactly how much development a specific area can accommodate. Many important factors come into play, including professional judgement – informed by site visits*'

Landscape sensitivity assessment can be undertaken at any scale however for the purposes of this study, it has been undertaken at the level of County Landscape Character Type (LCT) using the 'County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment'.

2.1.2 Criteria – assessment of sensitivity of each LCT to commercial forestry

The following **criteria** have been developed for the landscape sensitivity assessment to commercial forestry. Each of the 17 LCTs in County Leitrim were evaluated with reference to the criteria below which include both natural, cultural and perceptual as well as valued attributes associated with each LCT as follows.

2.1.2.1 Natural Criteria

- Landform – Landscapes with complex landforms such as that associated with steep scree mountain slopes or hills with a distinctive profile are usually more sensitive to commercial forestry than landscapes with a simple, smooth and flowing landform. An exception to this may be in areas of moorland plateau which, although featuring simple smooth flowing landforms, parts of these landscapes often overlook steep sided valleys and hence present as a distinctive skyline in County Leitrim;
- Landcover – Landscapes where the landcover comprises heather, moor and bog and where water bodies are present as distinctive features and commercial forestry is generally absent are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of commercial forestry compared with farmed landscapes featuring woodland and some level of commercial forest cover. Where farmed landcover results in a distinct and small scale pattern such as that associated with old stone wall enclosure, these areas are likely to be more sensitive to commercial forestry than areas of farmland where field patterns are more fragmented.
- Size and scale – Landscapes which feature small scale field patterns or small scale landforms such as groups of hills that form a distinctive pattern may be more sensitive to commercial forestry especially of a size that might undermine these patterns as key characteristics in the landscape. By contrast, landscapes where field patterns and topography patterns are weak or absent may be less sensitive to commercial forestry.
- Landscape Context – The landscapes or LCTs that surround a particular landscape or LCT form the setting for that LCT and are relevant to its sensitivity to commercial forestry.

2.1.2.2 Cultural and Perceptual Criteria

- Perceptual Qualities – Landscapes which are perceived as highly tranquil and have a sense of wildness or remoteness are usually more sensitive to commercial forestry compared with busy active landscapes or landscapes with visible infrastructure or industrialised areas.
- Visual Characteristics – Landscapes which feature distinctive skylines, landmarks or focal points enjoyed in views by people will generally be more sensitive to commercial forestry than landscapes which do not feature important skylines and focal points visible from surrounding areas.

2.1.2.3 Landscape Value

- Presence of designations, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Areas of High Visual Amenity (AHVA) in County Leitrim and protected views and prospects are indicators of landscape value at county level in Leitrim. Such landscapes tend to be of higher sensitivity to commercial forestry whilst undesignated landscapes are usually of lower sensitivity.
- Landscapes with features of cultural interest and recreational assets such as promoted walking routes are valued landscape assets which are enjoyed by recreational visitors. Landscapes with these features are usually of higher sensitivity than landscapes which do not have these features. The setting of monuments, in particular where landscape is important to the understanding of that monument, would be highly sensitive to commercial forestry. The detailed examination of the monuments and settings is outside the scope of this study; and
- Landscapes which feature designated ecological assets which present as a distinctive landcover and are influential in the character of the landscape may be of higher sensitivity compared with undesignated areas. The ecological assessment of these European sites is outside the scope of this study but included in the mapped baseline to give context to their respective geographic locations within the various LCTs.

2.1.3 Sensitivity to commercial forestry

Each LCT is assigned a sensitivity ranking based on evaluation against the criteria referenced above. The ranking follows a 5 point scale ranging from very high to very low as described below. It is important to note that the sensitivity ranking is applied to each LCT on a case by case basis using professional judgement with the ranking below as a guide.

Very High – A landscape of exceptional landscape quality and scenic quality and for which, the natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics would be of very high sensitivity to commercial forestry. Landscape designation (AONB and or AHVA) applies to all or the majority of the area. Key elements and features within the landscape are the subject of many protected views and are well known to the public and are promoted as heritage attractions.

High – A landscape that is of high landscape quality and scenic quality where landscape detractors are generally absent. A landscape, the natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics of which would be of high sensitivity to commercial forestry. Landscape designation (AONB and or AHVA) applies to a large part of the area. Key elements and features within the landscape are the subject of protected views and are well known to the public and are promoted as heritage attractions.

Medium - A landscape that is of medium landscape quality and scenic quality where there are few landscape detractors. A landscape, the natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics of which would be of medium sensitivity to commercial forestry. Landscape designation (AONB and or AHVA) apply to part of the area. Protected views within the landscape are often focused on adjacent highly sensitive landscapes. The area is known and enjoyed by the public.

Low – A landscape which has limited or no distinctive characteristics and is of medium landscape quality and scenic quality. Landscape detractors are present. A landscape, the natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics of which would be of low sensitivity to commercial forestry. The landscape is generally undesignated. Protected views are generally absent and the features within are not the subject of protected views. The area is generally not promoted for visitors and recreation.

Very Low – Landscapes which have no particular scenic qualities or are in poor condition or altered by presence of intrusive manmade structures. No landscape designations or protected views are present.

2.2 Reporting

Section 3 presents the baseline and sensitivity assessment. For each LCT, the baseline landscape character description and relevant baseline data is presented including designated landscapes, protected views and prospects, heritage attractions and walks and trails. The baseline also includes data on existing commercial forestry as defined in Section 3 below.

This is followed by the sensitivity assessment, undertaken with reference to the criteria outlined in the methodology above. Each LCT is then assigned a sensitivity ranking using the 5 point score outlined above. The findings of the sensitivity assessment are used to inform the capacity of each LCT to accommodate commercial forestry which is then presented along with design guidance.

3 LANDSCAPE BASELINE AND SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

This section of the report presents the baseline and landscape sensitivity assessment for each of the 17 landscape character types (LCTs) in County Leitrim.

3.1 Baseline landscape character types

The baseline is presented, informed by data relating to landscape character, landscape designations and protected views and prospects documented in the County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 as follows:

- Written descriptions for each LCT from the report entitled ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’;
- Written data on landscape designations, including AONBs and AHVAs from the report entitled ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’; and
- Written data on protected views and prospects from the report entitled ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’.

The baseline also considered mapped data on existing commercial forestry from the following sources obtained from Leitrim County Council:

- The Department of Agriculture, Food and The Marine (DAFM) dated 2021, obtained through Leitrim County Council; and
- Data on existing commercial forestry from Coillte, obtained through Leitrim County Council.

In addition, data on recreational walking routes ¹ and heritage attractions ² in County Leitrim sourced in September 2021 from the Leitrim tourism website was considered.

The baseline is supported by a series of baseline maps covering the entire County of Leitrim as follows:

- Figure 3.1 - Landscape Character Types;
- Figure 3.2 – Landscape Character Types and Landscape Designations;
- Figure 3.3 - Landscape Character Types and Views and Prospects; and
- Figure 3.4 - Landscape Character Types and walking routes and heritage attractions.

Appendix A of this report contains Figure 3.5 Designated Nature Sites for reference only as this aspect is outside the scope of the landscape capacity study.

3.2 Commercial Forestry - Source Data

As referenced above, the landscape capacity study was informed by source data from both DAFM and Coillte in ESRI shapefile format as follows:

- Private forests 2021 - DAFM; and
- Forest Inventory – Coillte.

The landscape capacity study identified and mapped three categories of existing plantations from the two datasets referenced above as follows:

- plantations comprised primarily of spruce;

¹ <https://leitrimtourism.com/things-to-do/walks-and-trails/>

² <https://leitrimtourism.com/things-to-do/heritage/>

- plantations comprised primarily of a range of conifer species other than spruce; and
- plantations comprised of broadleaves.

Further detail on the composition of the above three categories and their influence on the baseline landscape character is outlined below.

3.2.1 Plantations comprised primarily of spruce

This category refers to plantations comprised primarily of spruce which present in the landscape as having the appearance of a single species crop or monocrop of uniform colour and appearance. In this regard, and as observed in the field, plantations featuring this species have been assessed, in many cases, to be at variance with the underlying landscape character of County Leitrim. These plantations are comprised of the following species with reference to the two datasets:

Private Forests 2021 – DAFM

- CMS – Conifer Mature Spruce (1998);
- CYS – Conifer Young Spruce (1998);
- NS – Norway spruce;
- SERBS – Serbian spruce; and
- SS – Sitka spruce.

Forest Inventory - Coillte

- SS – Sitka spruce; and
- NS – Norway spruce.

3.2.2 Plantations comprised primarily of a range of conifer species other than spruce

This category refers to plantations comprised primarily of conifers other than spruce. This includes Pine, Larch, Fir, Cypress and Mature Pine / Spruce Mix. These may vary in terms of their potential adverse influence on existing landscape character, for example, plantations comprised of single species or a mix of a small number of species of similar colour and appearance may be considered to be at variance with landscape character especially where these species are not locally occurring within the wider wooded vegetation cover as a key characteristic of the Leitrim Landscape. On the other hand, plantations, comprised of a diversity of species of varied appearance and changing with the seasons (autumn colour etc) may be generally perceived as being more easily accommodated within the landscape.

3.2.3 Plantations comprised of broadleaves.

This category refers to plantations comprised primarily of broadleaved species but also including plantations categorised as mixed forest. The broadleaf species are generally considered to be more easily accommodated in the Leitrim landscape especially where these match the species within the wider broadleaved woodland cover, found to be a key characteristic in the landscape.

3.2.4 Definitions used

This report to date has used the term '**commercial forestry**' in its broadest sense to refer broadly to the cultivation of trees and woodland for the purposes of timber production.

In regard to the 3 categories of planting referenced above, it is recognised that plantations comprised primarily of spruce have potential to have an adverse influence on the underlying landscape character in which they are located and this has been observed in the field. Plantations comprised primarily of a range of conifer species other than spruce also have potential to adversely influence landscape character especially where these comprise a limited number of non native species. Plantations comprised of broadleaves are likely to be more favourable in terms of landscape character fit. Based on this, the capacity study therefore makes the distinction between coniferous plantations and broadleaved plantations. In this regard, some

definitions are now set out below which are specific to the baseline and capacity study and the remainder of this report as follows:

The term 'commercial forest cover' used in the remainder of this report (mostly with reference to the baseline) is understood to refer to the three categories of existing commercial forest cover present in the Leitrim landscape referred to in Section 3.2 above. These are:

- plantations comprised primarily of spruce;
- plantations comprised primarily of a range of conifer species other than spruce; and
- plantations comprised of broadleaves.

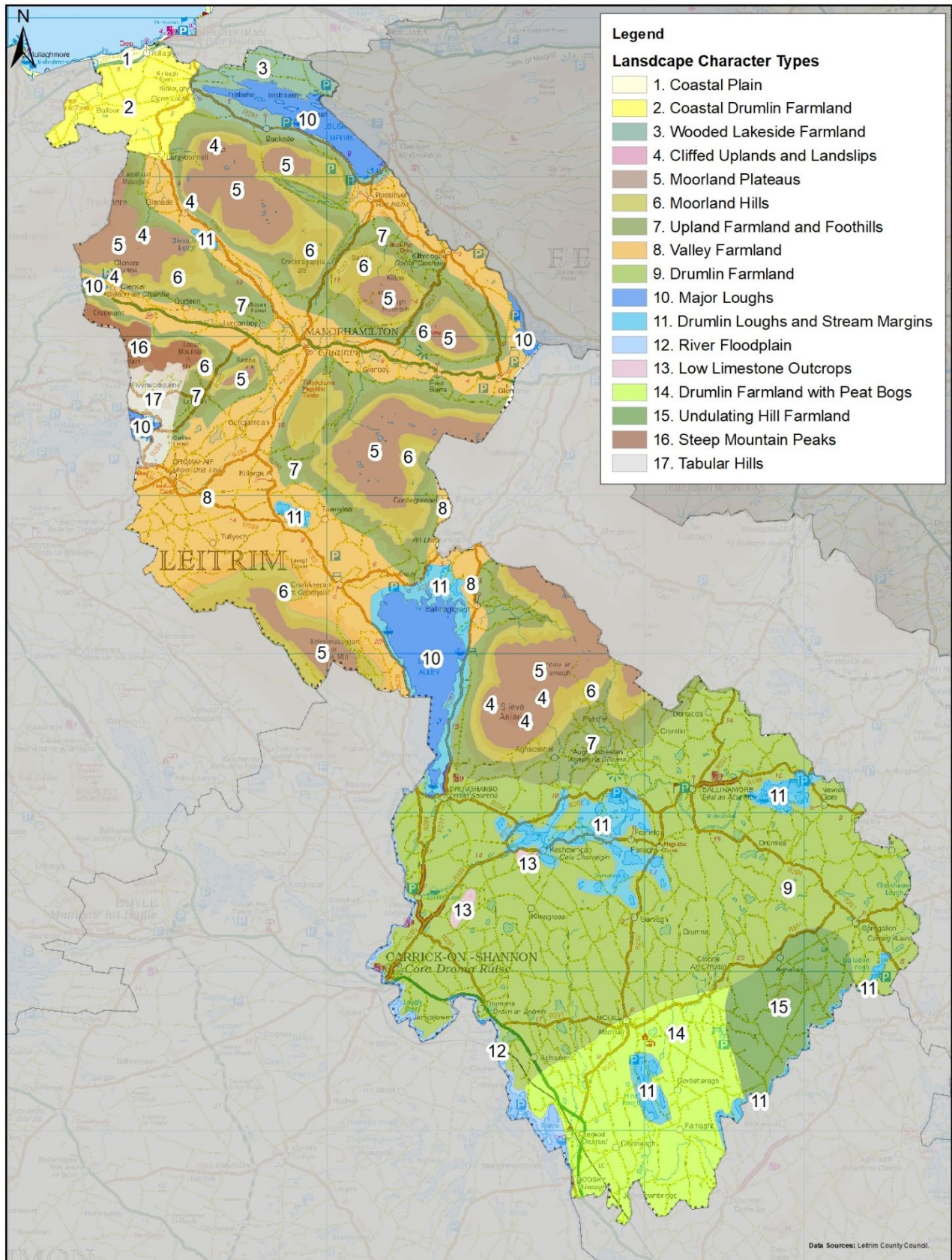
The term 'commercial coniferous forestry' used in the remainder of this report (mostly with reference to the sensitivity assessment, capacity study and design guidance) is therefore intended to refer to the following:

- plantations comprised primarily of spruce; and
- plantations comprised primarily of a range of conifer species other than spruce.

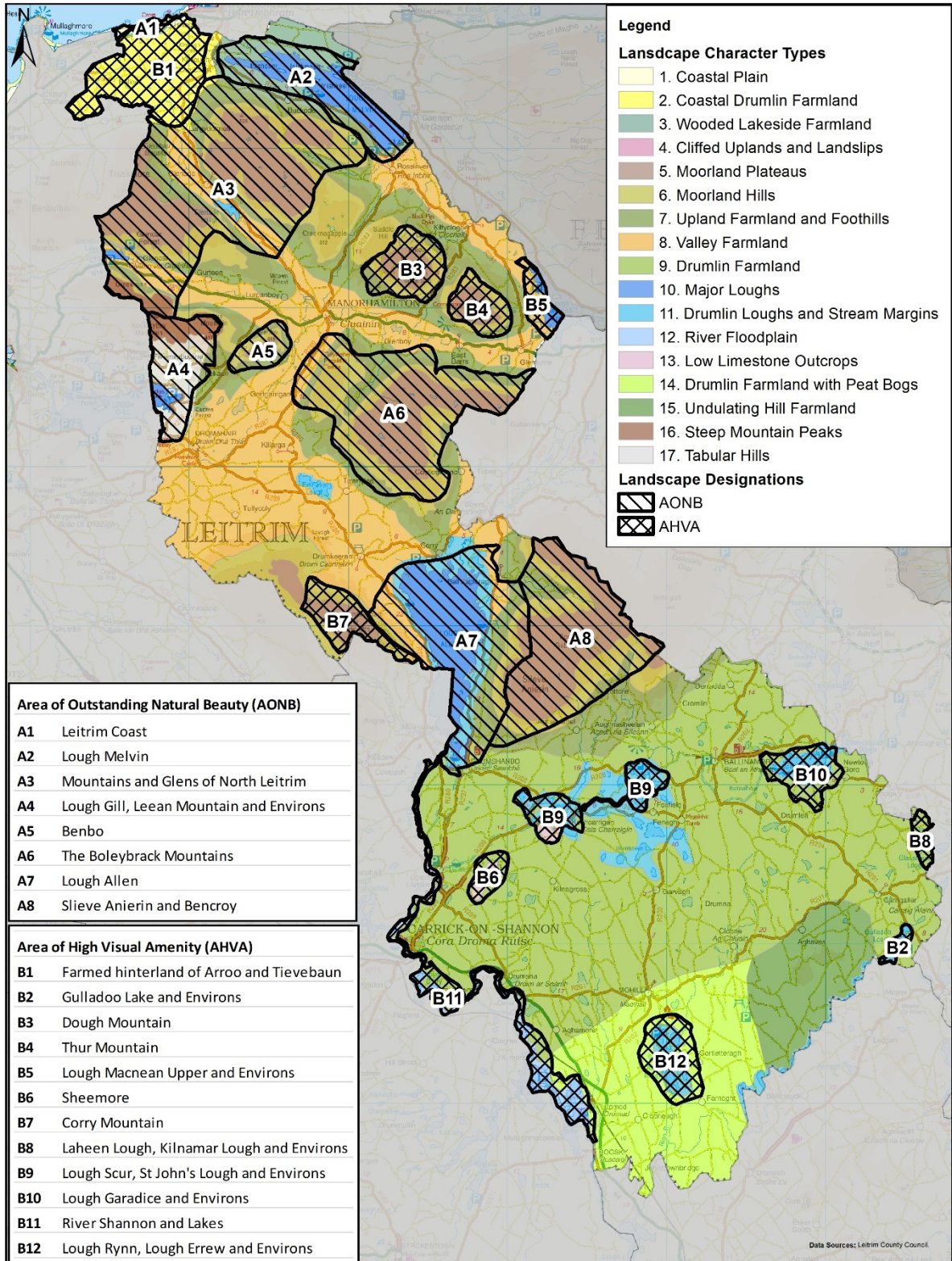
3.3 Landscape character types and assessment of sensitivity

The assessment of sensitivity of each LCT to commercial coniferous forestry was undertaken. The assessment of sensitivity of each LCT is documented below with a score or ranking in the range from very high, high, medium, low and very low applied. The sensitivity assessment informed the capacity of a given LCT to accommodate commercial coniferous forestry along with design guidance.

The sensitivity assessment and the landscape capacity study and design guidance is especially focussed on areas of commercial coniferous forestry comprised of conifer species which present in the landscape as having the appearance of a single species crop or monocrop of uniform colour and appearance and which is potentially at variance with the baseline landscape character including the more naturally occurring wooded areas which are a key characteristic of the Leitrim landscape. In this regard, and as observed in the field, the plantations of interest are those comprised primarily of spruce as plantations featuring this species have been assessed to be at variance with the underlying landscape character of County Leitrim. Plantations comprised of conifer species other than spruce are also of interest for their potential to be at variance with the underlying landscape character.



<p>Title</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 3.1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Landscape Character Types</p>	<p>Project</p> <p>Leitrim Landscape Capacity Study for Commercial Forestry</p>	<p>West Pier Business Campus, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Ireland. Tel: +353 (0) 1 480 2900 Email: ireland@rpsgroup.com Web Page: rpsgroup.com/ireland</p>	<p>Issue Details</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Drawn By: NR</td> <td>Project No. IE000116</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Checked By: EOC</td> <td>Date: 04/11/2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Approved By: EOC</td> <td>File Ref:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scale: 1:310,000 @ A4</td> <td>200916-RPS-00-XX-DR-2-ADD098</td> </tr> </table>	Drawn By: NR	Project No. IE000116	Checked By: EOC	Date: 04/11/2021	Approved By: EOC	File Ref:	Scale: 1:310,000 @ A4	200916-RPS-00-XX-DR-2-ADD098
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Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	
A1	Leitrim Coast
A2	Lough Melvin
A3	Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim
A4	Lough Gill, Lissan Mountain and Environs
A5	Benbo
A6	The Boleybrack Mountains
A7	Lough Allen
A8	Slieve Anierin and Bencroy

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

Figure 3.2
Landscape Character Types and Landscape Designations

Project
 Leitrim Landscape Capacity Study for Commercial Forestry

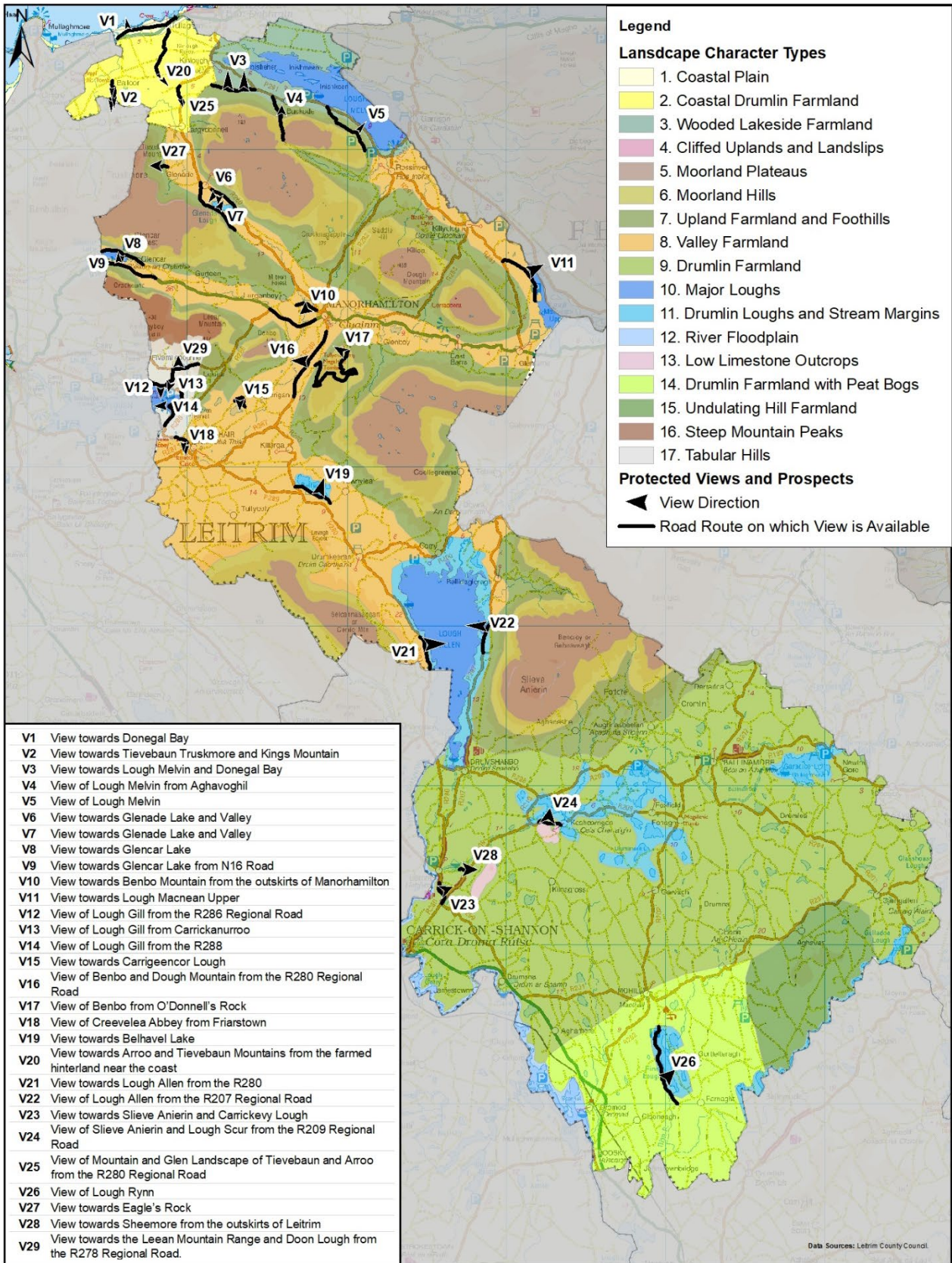
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Issue Details	
Drawn By: N/R	Project No: IE000116
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<p>Title</p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">Figure 3.3</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Landscape Character Types and Views and Prospects</h3>	<p>Project</p> <p>Leitrim Landscape Capacity Study for Commercial Forestry</p>	<p>West Pier Business Campus, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin, Ireland.</p> <p>Tel: +353 (0) 1 488 2900 Email: ireland@rpsgroup.com Web Page: rpsgroup.com/ireland</p>	<p>Issue Details</p> <p>Drawn By: NR Project No. IE000116</p> <p>Checked By: EDC Date: 05/11/2021</p> <p>Approved By: EDC File Ref:</p> <p>Scale: 1:310,000 @ A4 IE000116-RPS-00-XX-DR-2-AG0022</p>
	<p>Client</p> <p>Comhairle Chontae Leitrim Leitrim County Council</p>		<p>NOTE:</p> <p>1. This drawing is the property of RPS Group Ltd. It is a confidential document and must not be copied, used, or its contents divulged without prior written consent.</p> <p>2. Ordnance Survey Ireland License CVAL0173842 ©Ordnance Survey Ireland/Government of Ireland.</p>

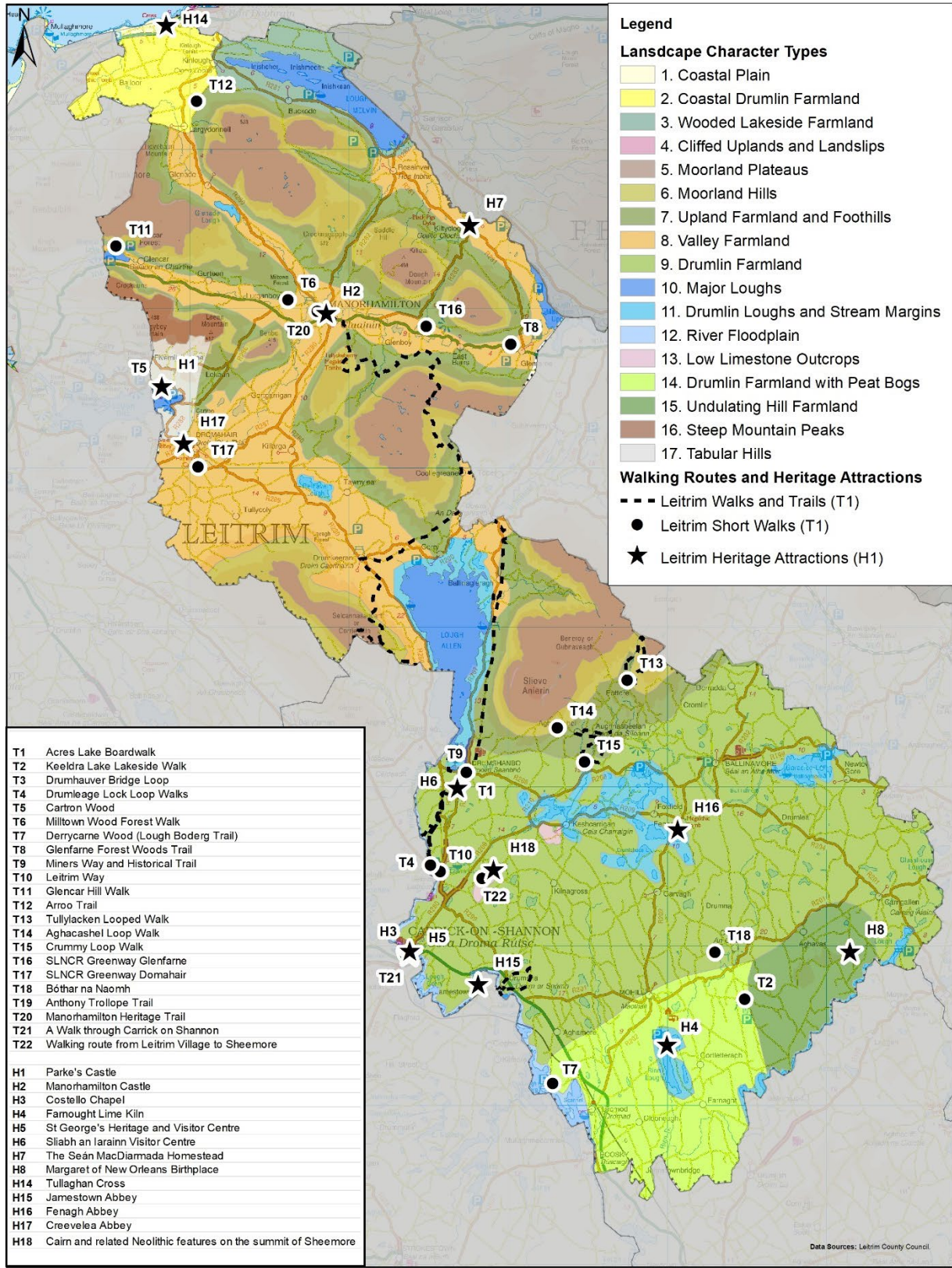


Figure 3.4
Landscape Character Types and
Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

Project
 Leitrim Landscape Capacity Study
 for Commercial Forestry

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Issue Details	
Drawn By: NR	Project No. IE000116
Checked By: EOC	Date: 10/03/2022
Approved By: EOC	File Ref:
Scale: 1:310,000 @ A4	8320016.rps.00.03.00.01.00.2.020202
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Distance Survey Ireland Ltd. 1000101, 1000102, 1000103, 1000104, 1000105, 1000106, 1000107, 1000108, 1000109, 1000110, 1000111, 1000112, 1000113, 1000114, 1000115, 1000116, 1000117, 1000118, 1000119, 1000120, 1000121, 1000122, 1000123, 1000124, 1000125, 1000126, 1000127, 1000128, 1000129, 1000130, 1000131, 1000132, 1000133, 1000134, 1000135, 1000136, 1000137, 1000138, 1000139, 1000140, 1000141, 1000142, 1000143, 1000144, 1000145, 1000146, 1000147, 1000148, 1000149, 1000150, 1000151, 1000152, 1000153, 1000154, 1000155, 1000156, 1000157, 1000158, 1000159, 1000160, 1000161, 1000162, 1000163, 1000164, 1000165, 1000166, 1000167, 1000168, 1000169, 1000170, 1000171, 1000172, 1000173, 1000174, 1000175, 1000176, 1000177, 1000178, 1000179, 1000180, 1000181, 1000182, 1000183, 1000184, 1000185, 1000186, 1000187, 1000188, 1000189, 1000190, 1000191, 1000192, 1000193, 1000194, 1000195, 1000196, 1000197, 1000198, 1000199, 1000200, 1000201, 1000202, 1000203, 1000204, 1000205, 1000206, 1000207, 1000208, 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3.4 LCT 1. Coastal Plain

3.4.1 Baseline

LCT 1 Coastal Plain is located along the coastline in North Leitrim.

3.4.1.1 LCT 1. Coastal Plain – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 1 Coastal Plain as follows.

‘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 dry stone 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 N15 can be faintly heard. The N15 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.’

3.4.1.2 LCT 1. Coastal Plain – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. The entire LCT is designated as tabulated below.

Table 3-1: LCT 1. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
A1	Leitrim Coast AONB – applies to the coastline within this LCT.
B1	Farmed hinterland of Arroo and Tievebaun AHVA – applies to the inland part of this LCT

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Those that occur within this LCT are tabulated below.

Table 3-2: LCT 1. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V1	View towards Donegal Bay

3.4.1.3 LCT 1. Coastal Plain – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-3: LCT 1. Coastal Plain - Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
-	The coast road is promoted as part of The Wild Atlantic Way. This is also the route for the North West Cycle Trail.
H14	Tullaghan Cross – located near the settlement of Tullaghan.

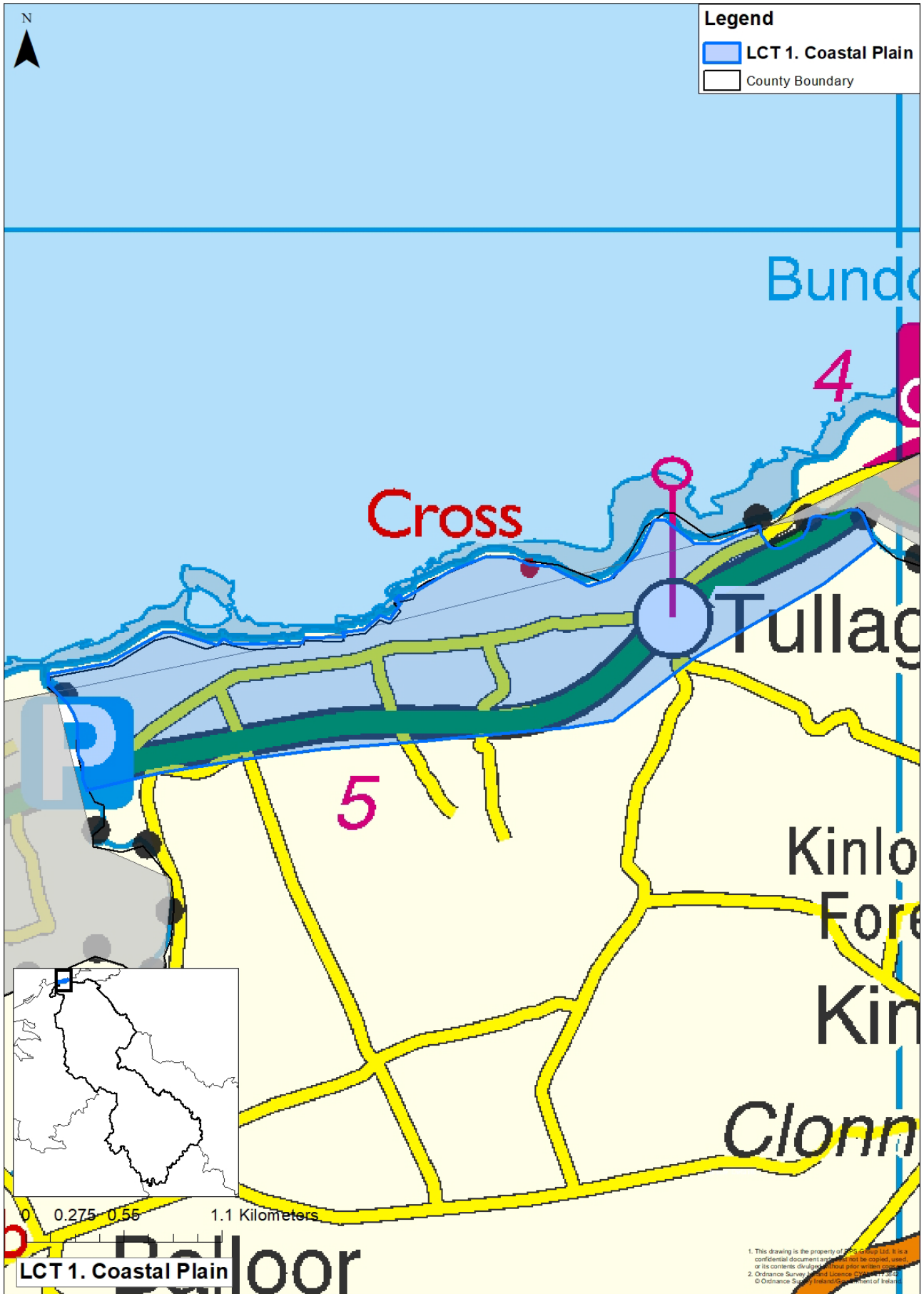
3.4.1.4 LCT 1. Coastal Plain – Existing commercial forest cover

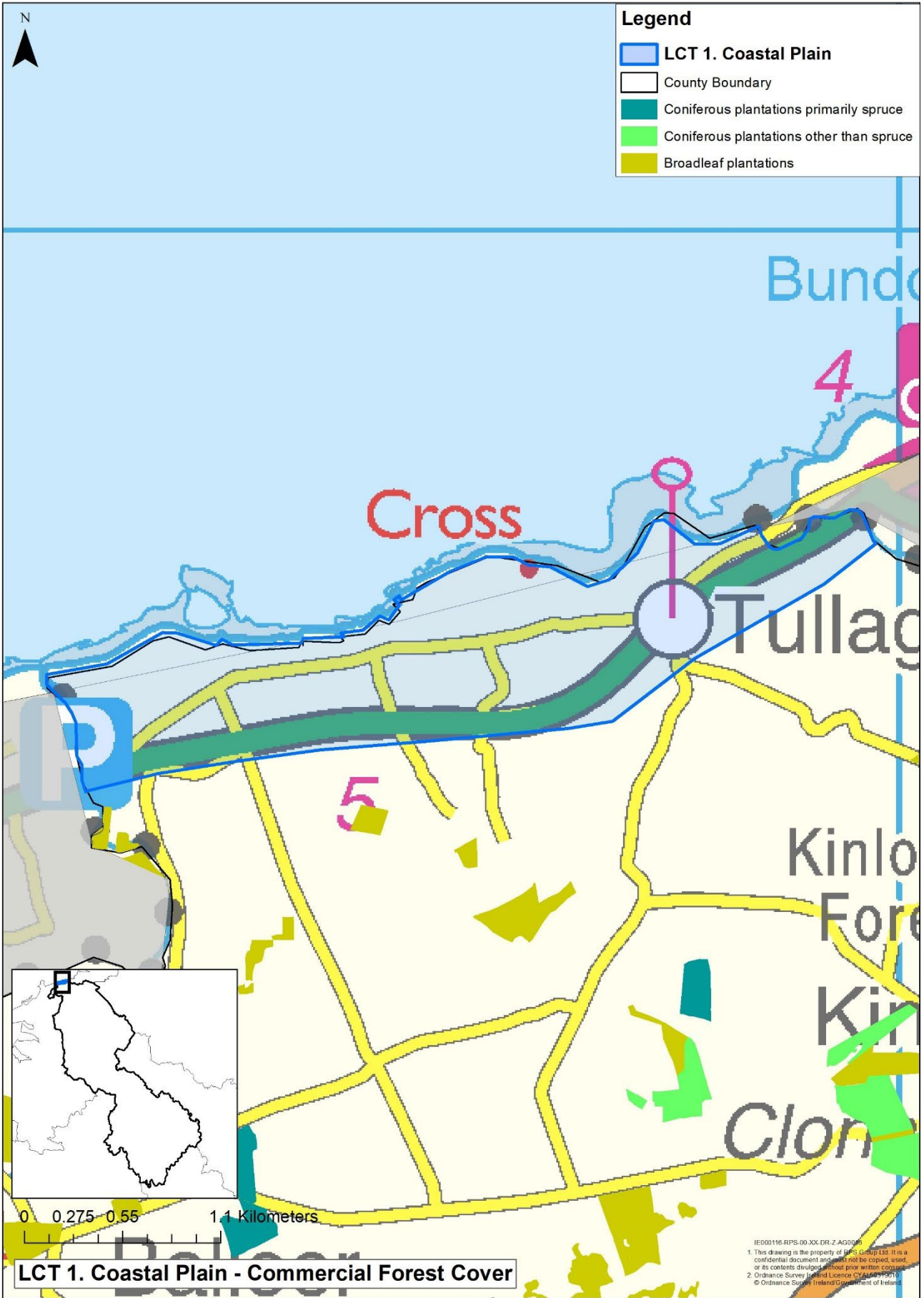
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate a general absence of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) in this LCT.

3.4.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.





3.4.2 LCT 1. Coastal Plain – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 1 Coastal Plain to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The absence of commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.4.2.1 LCT 1. Coastal Plain – Landform, landcover and scale

Landform at the coastal edge with its distinctive and complex cliff edges and beaches would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which could obscure or mask these features and the visual relationship with the sea including the distinctive headlands of Mullaghmore and Bundoran in County Donegal.



Complex undulating landforms along the coastline are highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

Areas where strong field patterns are present and strongly defined by hedgerows and stone walls would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which could erode or undermine these defining patterns of this landscape. This is especially true of the pattern of long rectangular fields close to the coastline.



Small scale field patterns defined by traditional stone wall boundaries are highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

This LCT is open due to the relative scarcity of wooded landcover, apart from field hedgerows. Commercial coniferous forestry does not feature within this LCT and the introduction of new commercial coniferous forestry in the future would be at variance with the key characteristics of this landscape.

3.4.2.2 LCT 1. Coastal Plain – Landscape context

This landscape forms an important foreground in the outlook towards Donegal Bay and the skyline of the Bluestack Mountains beyond. This aspect of the landscape would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would obstruct this visual relationship with the sea and mountain skylines beyond. The landscape further inland is also sensitive due to its outlook towards, and visual relationship with the mountains further south.



Outlook towards the coast and Donegal Bay.



Outlook towards mountains further south.

3.4.2.3 LCT 1. Coastal Plain – Visual and perceptual criteria

Most of this landscape is perceived as having a sense of remoteness and wildness with high tranquillity levels except at Tullaghan. There are limited detracting built elements apart from the N15 road and busy traffic. Views of the coast, Donegal Bay and Mountain skyline are highly scenic. All of these factors result in a very high sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry which could reduce the sense of remoteness, tranquillity and elemental character of this LCT and also obstruct highly scenic views of the coastline, headlands and mountains further afield.

3.4.2.4 LCT 1. Coastal Plain – Landscape Value

The entire LCT is designated, in part as AONB and in part, as AHVA. The designation reflects the outstanding natural beauty associated with this LCT. Protected views within are focussed on the coast and Donegal Bay. The area is promoted as part of the Wild Atlantic Way. LCT 1 Coastal Plain is therefore a highly valued landscape, the scenic quality and recreational value of which would be undermined by commercial coniferous forestry.

3.4.2.5 LCT 1. Coastal Plain – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **very high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. The entire LCT occurs within a AONB and a AHVA designation and this is reflective of the landscape and scenic quality therein. The natural and cultural and perceptual characteristics of this landscape along with its recreational and scenic value as outlined above are such that this area would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. The area is considered to have no capacity for further commercial coniferous forestry.

3.5 LCT 2. Coastal Drumlin Farmland

3.5.1 Baseline

LCT 2 Coastal Drumlin Farmland occupies a large area of marginal farmland near the coast in the north of County Leitrim.

3.5.1.1 LCT 2. Coastal Drumlin Farmland – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 2 Coastal Drumlin Farmland as follows.

‘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.’

3.5.1.2 LCT 2. Coastal Drumlin Farmland – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Almost the entire area is designated as tabulated below.

Table 3-4: LCT 2. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
B1	Farmed hinterland of Arroo and Tievebaun AHVA – applies to almost all of this LCT.

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Those that occur within this LCT are tabulated below.

Table 3-5: LCT 2. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V2	View towards Tievebaun Truskmore and Kings Mountain
V20	View towards Arroo and Tievebaun Mountains from the farmed hinterland near the coast
V25	View of Mountain and Glen Landscape of Tievebaun and Arroo from the R280 Regional Road

3.5.1.3 LCT 2. Coastal Drumlin Farmland – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-6: LCT 2. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
T12	Arroo Trail

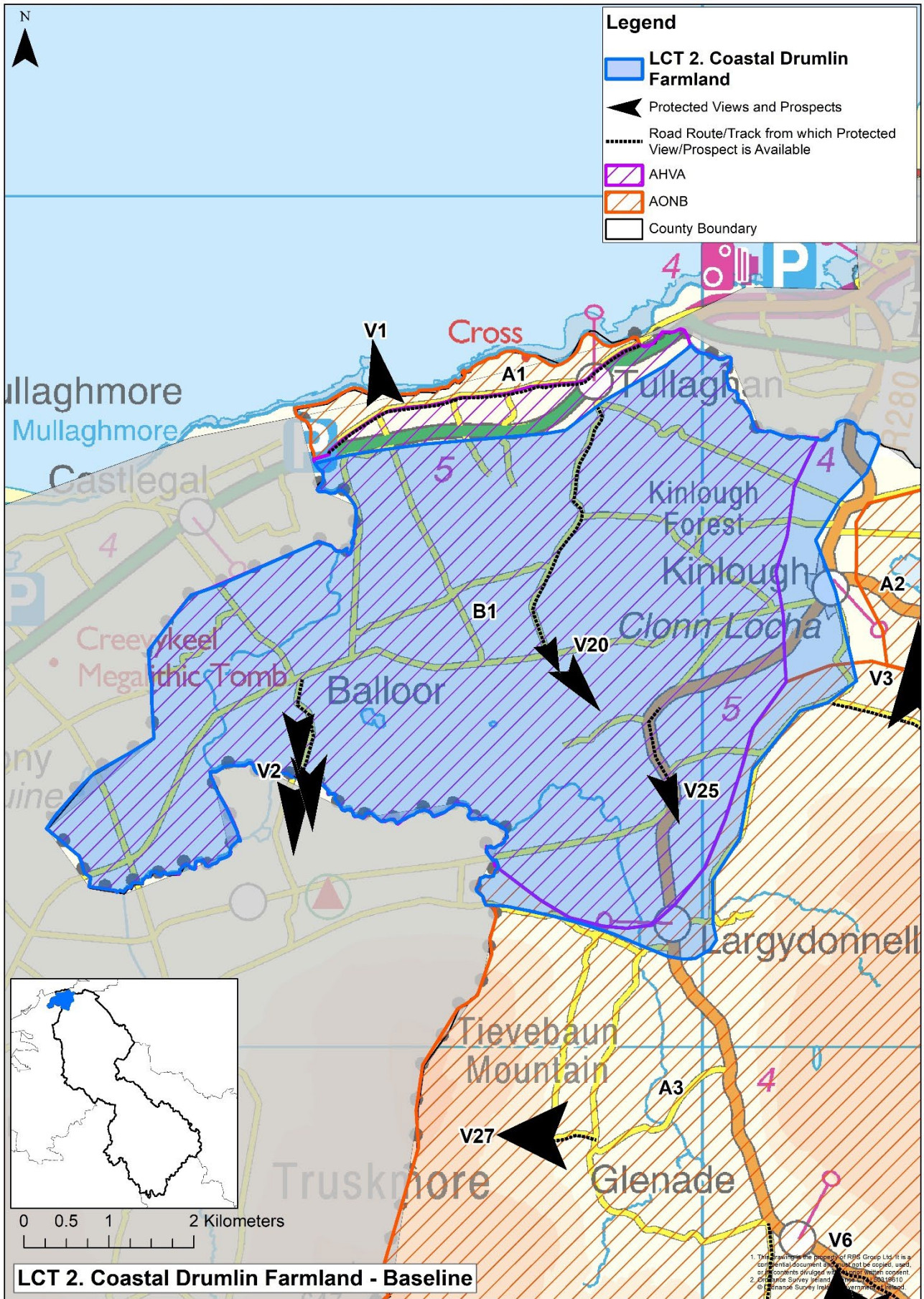
3.5.1.4 LCT 2. Coastal Drumlin Farmland – Existing commercial forest cover

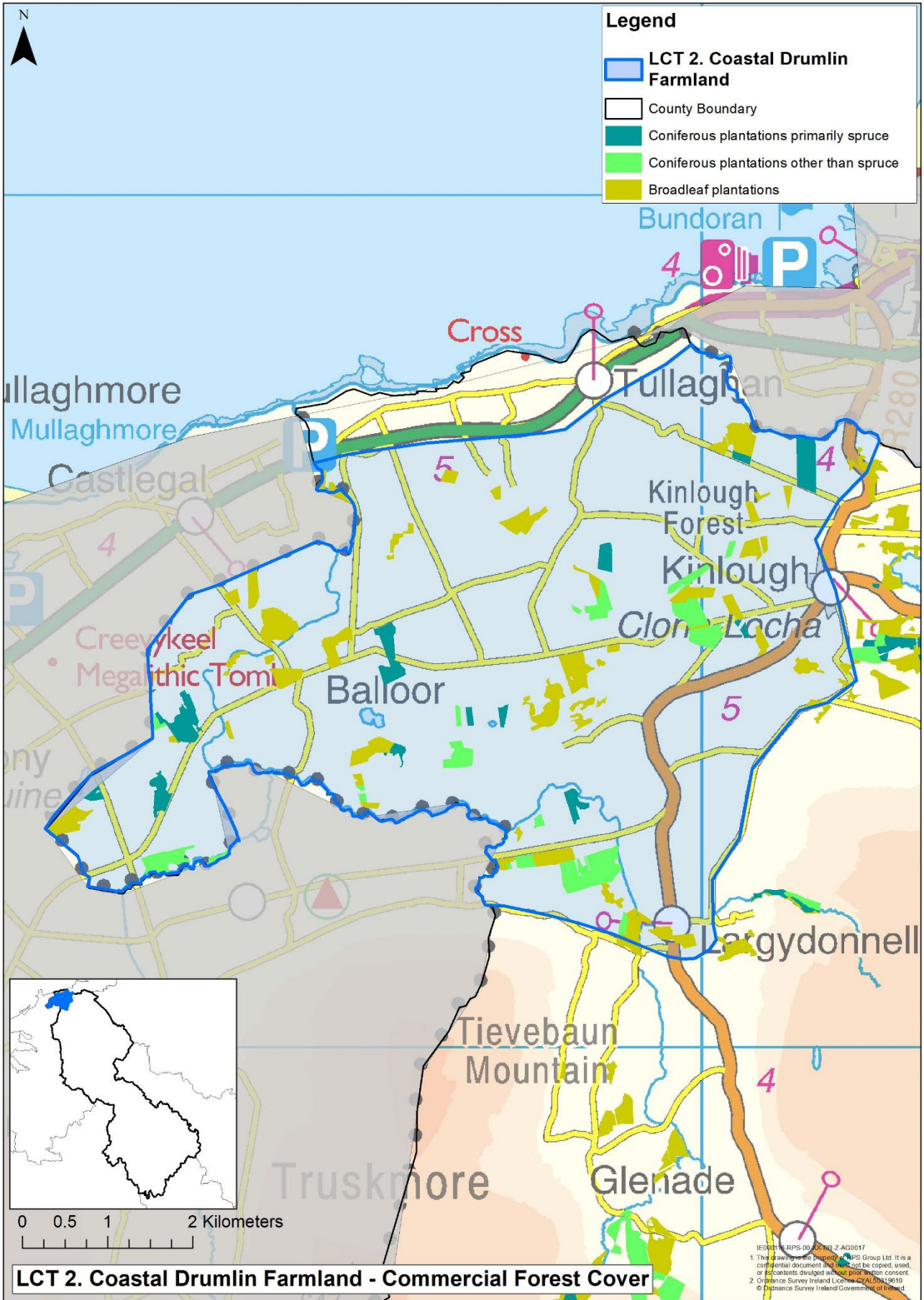
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate the presence of limited extents of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) of varying size dispersed throughout this LCT. These plantations are not a dominant landcover type in the landscape.

3.5.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.





3.5.2 LCT 2. Coastal Drumlin Farmland – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 2 Coastal Drumlin Farmland to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.5.2.1 LCT 2. Coastal Drumlin Farmland – Landform, landcover and scale

The landform is relatively simple, featuring gently rolling drumlin hills. Areas of this landscape which feature a simple landform and scarcity of field pattern as a scale reference would be less sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. In some areas where patches of woody vegetation and existing commercial coniferous forests are present, some commercial coniferous forestry of an appropriate small scale may be discreetly accommodated.



Areas featuring transitional woodland and scrub may have capacity to absorb commercial coniferous forestry of appropriate scale.

Much of the LCT features large tracts of bog and marsh which are visually open. These areas would be sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would contrast and conflict with their open character as well as displacing the sensitive bog landcover.

The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate limited extents of commercial coniferous forestry as randomly dispersed plantations of small scale. These plantations are apparent in the landscape but are not a dominant element and do not undermine the underlying landscape character. The LCT would be sensitive to further commercial coniferous forestry which, combined with that existing, may undermine the key characteristics of this landscape.

3.5.2.2 LCT 2. Coastal Drumlin Farmland – Landscape context

This LCT forms an important setting to the sensitive mountain landscape of Arroo and Tievebaun Mountains further south. This LCT overall would be sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry because of its important role as setting or foreground to these mountains. Commercial coniferous forestry could obstruct the visual relationship to the mountain landscape further south.



Mountain Skyline of Arroo near the settlement of Kinlough.



Tievebaun and Benwisikin – a complex and distinctive skyline viewed from remote farmland in the townland of Uragh.



The Arroo Mountain complex – a distinctive skyline viewed from remote farmland near the coast in Tawnytallan.

3.5.2.3 LCT 2. Coastal Drumlin Farmland – Visual and perceptual criteria

This landscape is perceived as having a sense of remoteness and wildness due to the large expanses of bog and wet grassland and the scarcity of detracting built elements. As a result, it is highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would undermine the remote and rural wilderness like character.

The landscape is visually open and has a strong visual relationship with the mountains further south. Scenic views could be obstructed by the introduction of commercial coniferous forestry.

3.5.2.4 LCT 2. Coastal Drumlin Farmland – Landscape Value

Almost the entire landscape is designated as AHVA apart from a small area in the east near Kinlough. This reflects the scenic quality and value of this landscape. Protected views within are focused on the distinctive and highly scenic mountain skylines.

3.5.2.5 LCT 2. Coastal Drumlin Farmland – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. Almost the entire area is designated. It is an open landscape with remote and wilderness like qualities which, combined with its visual relationship with the mountains further south would be highly sensitive to further commercial coniferous forestry.

3.6 LCT 3. Wooded Lakeside Farmland

3.6.1 Baseline

LCT 3 Wooded Lakeside Farmland occupies a large area of farmland around Lough Melvin in the north east of County Leitrim.

3.6.1.1 LCT 3. Wooded Lakeside Farmland – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 3 Wooded Lakeside Farmland as follows.

‘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.’

3.6.1.2 LCT 3. Wooded Lakeside Farmland – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. The majority of this LCT is designated as tabulated below.

Table 3-7: LCT 3. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
A2	Lough Melvin AONB – applies to most of this LCT
A3	Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB - applies to a small part of this LCT south of Lough Melvin

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Those of relevance are focused on Lough Melvin and are tabulated below.

Table 3-8: LCT 3. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V3	View towards Lough Melvin and Donegal Bay
V4	View of Lough Melvin from Aghavoghil
V5	View of Lough Melvin

3.6.1.3 LCT 3. Wooded Lakeside Farmland – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. There are none specifically located within this LCT although the lake scenery is enjoyed by visitors travelling generally through the area.

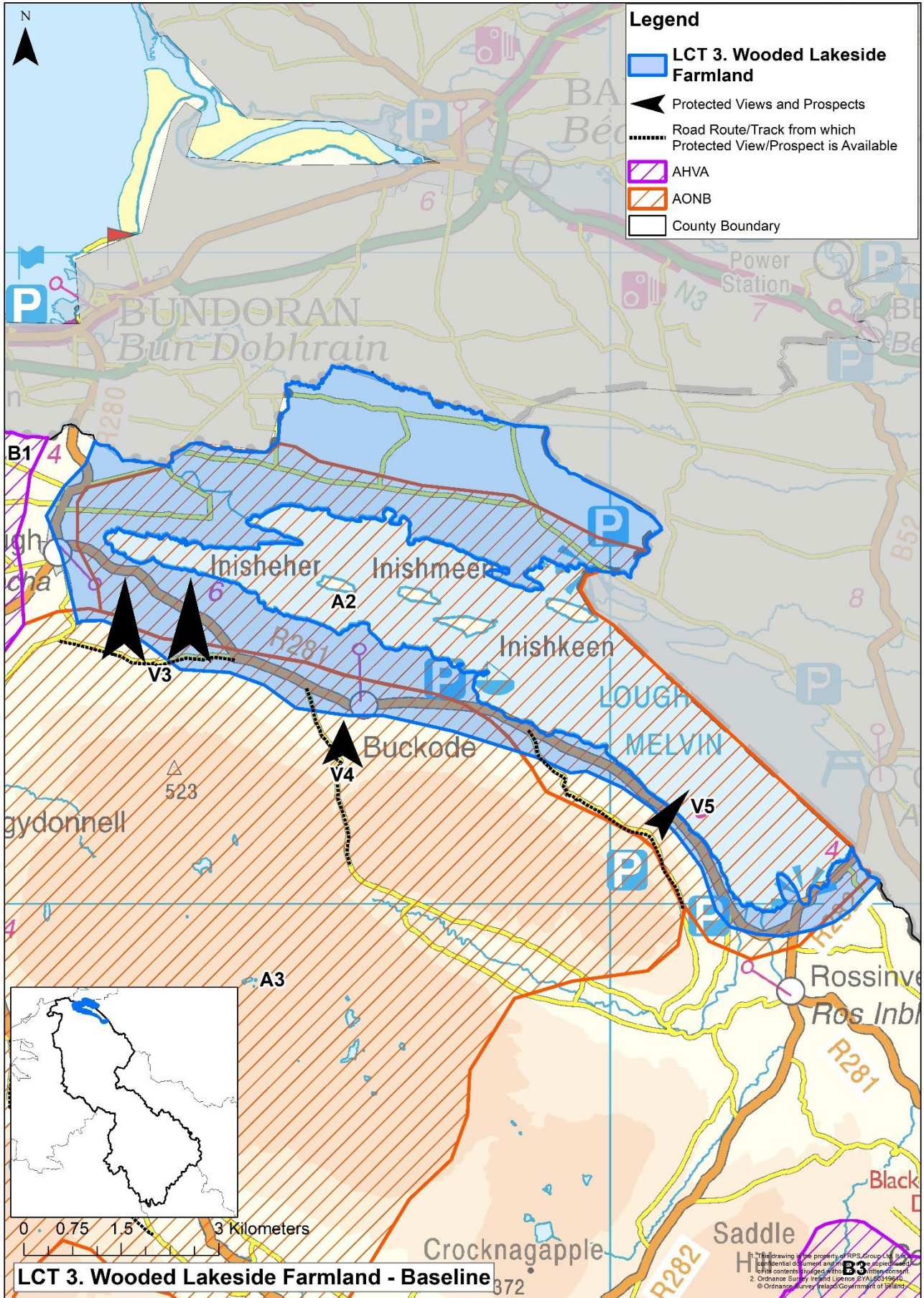
3.6.1.4 LCT 3. Wooded Lakeside Farmland – Existing commercial forest cover

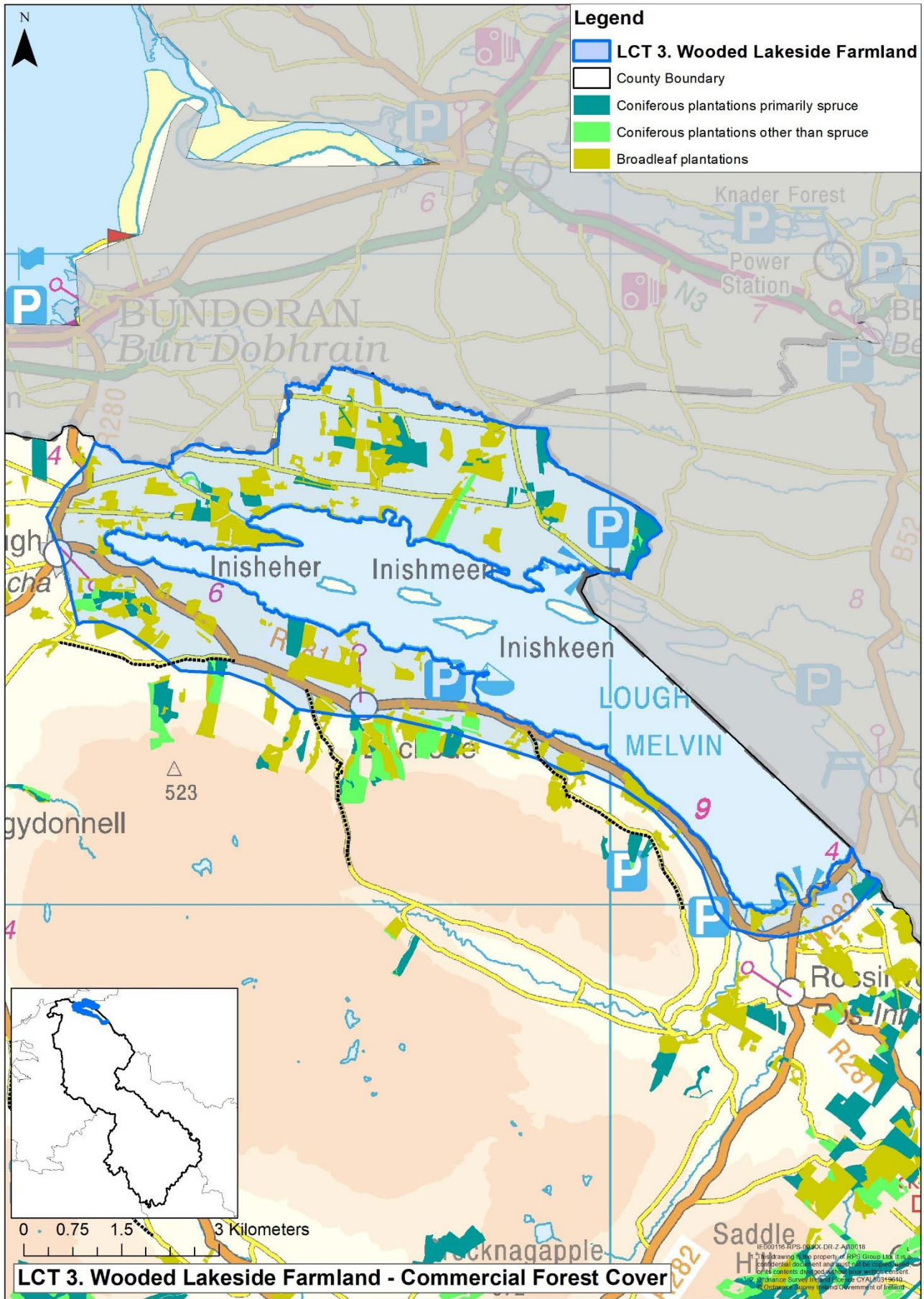
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate the presence of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) of varying plot size dispersed throughout this LCT. These plantations are a frequent occurrence and present as a noticeable landcover type in the landscape especially in the vicinity of Kinlough.

3.6.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.





3.6.2 LCT 3. Wooded Lakeside Farmland – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 3 Wooded Lakeside Farmland to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.6.2.1 LCT 3. Wooded Lakeside Farmland – Landform, landcover and scale

This landscape around Lough Melvin features an undulating relatively simple landform which would generally be less sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. Landform at the shoreline of Lough Melvin is however more complex, featuring promontories and islands within the lake and at the lake margin. These areas are generally more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.



Complex landform at Gubanummera Point and Inishtemple Island on the southern shoreline of Lough Melvin.

The landscape away from the lake with its mosaic of farmland and wooded areas is less sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. Frequent woodlands of varying size result in a visually enclosed landscape which would have some ability to absorb commercial coniferous forestry of an appropriate scale. The more open areas of this landscape along with areas featuring a well defined small scale field patterns in pasture would be more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate the presence of commercial coniferous forestry as plantations of varying scale. Some of these are located at the shoreline of Lough Melvin where they are in conflict with the more complex landscape character at this location. These areas of commercial coniferous forestry are apparent in the landscape generally and, to some extent, undermine the key characteristics of the LCT.

3.6.2.2 LCT 3. Wooded Lakeside Farmland – Landscape context

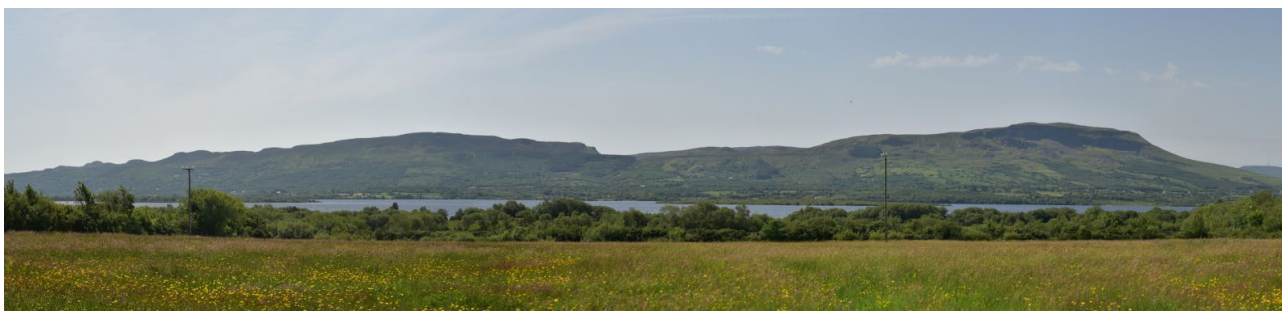
Parts of this landscape, especially in the south west overlook Donegal Bay in the distance and these areas would be sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would obstruct the visual relationship with the bay. The landscape at the shoreline of Lough Melvin would also be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would obstruct the visual relationship with the lake. The landscape along the southern shoreline of the lake is overlooked by the dramatic presence of Arroo Mountain. The landscape along the northern shoreline of Lough Melvin would also be sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which could potentially obstruct views of the wider mountain backdrop of Arroo and Sheenun.



Arroo Mountain overlooking the farmed landscape near the southern shoreline of Lough Melvin.

3.6.2.3 LCT 3. Wooded Lakeside Farmland – Visual and perceptual criteria

The farmed landscape is tranquil. The landscape close to Lough Melvin is tranquil and visually open and would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which could obstruct scenic views of the lake and the wider context of the mountain backdrop to the south. The farmed landscape away from the lake is more visually enclosed due to the presence of existing woodland and hedgerows and is of lower sensitivity.



The skyline of Arroo Mountain and Sheenun viewed from the northern side of Lough Melvin.

3.6.2.4 LCT 3. Wooded Lakeside Farmland – Landscape Value

The majority of this landscape is designated as AONB apart from an area of farmland to the north. This is reflective of the scenic quality of the area especially the lake and outlook to the mountains further south. The scenic value is also reflected in the protected views within.

3.6.2.5 LCT 3. Wooded Lakeside Farmland – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. The majority of this LCT is covered by AONB designations and this is reflective of the landscape and scenic quality in particular along the lakeshore.

3.7 LCT 4. Cluffed Uplands and Landslips

3.7.1 Baseline

There are six occurrences of LCT 4 Cluffed Uplands and Landslips within County Leitrim. These are located as follows:

- At the edge of the Moorland Plateau below Truskmore overlooking Glencar Lough;
- At the edge of the Moorland Plateau in the vicinity of Tievebaun and Truskmore where the cliffs overlook the glacial corries within the Glenade Valley;
- At two locations on the edge of the Moorland Plateau at Arroo Mountain; and
- At two locations on the edge of the Moorland Plateau at Slieve Anierin.

3.7.1.1 LCT 4. Cluffed Uplands and Landslips – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 4 Cluffed Uplands and Landslips as follows.

‘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.’

3.7.1.2 LCT 4. Cluffed Uplands and Landslips – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. The entire LCT is designated with the following tabulated below.

Table 3-9: LCT 4. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
A3	Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB – applies to this LCT at Arroo and Tievebaun Mountain ranges
A8	Slieve Anierin and Bencroy AONB – applies to this LCT at Slieve Anierin

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report also reflects the value of particular landscapes and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. None occur within this landscape and this is probably due to the relative inaccessibility of same. The distinctive features in this landscape are the subject of many protected views and prospects located outside its boundary. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-10: LCT 4. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V6	View towards Glenade Lake and Valley
V20	View towards Arroo
V25	View of Mountain and Glen Landscape of Tievebaun and Arroo from the R280 Regional Road
V27	View towards Eagle’s Rock

3.7.1.3 LCT 4. Cluffed Uplands and Landslips – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-11: LCT 4. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
T11	Glencar Hill Walk is a looped linear trail which approaches the cliff landscape in this LCT at the southern side of Truskmore and overlooks Glencar Lough.
N/A	Eagle’s Rock is a promoted heritage attraction and point of interest in this LCT in the vicinity of Tievebaun Mountain enjoyed from protected view V27.

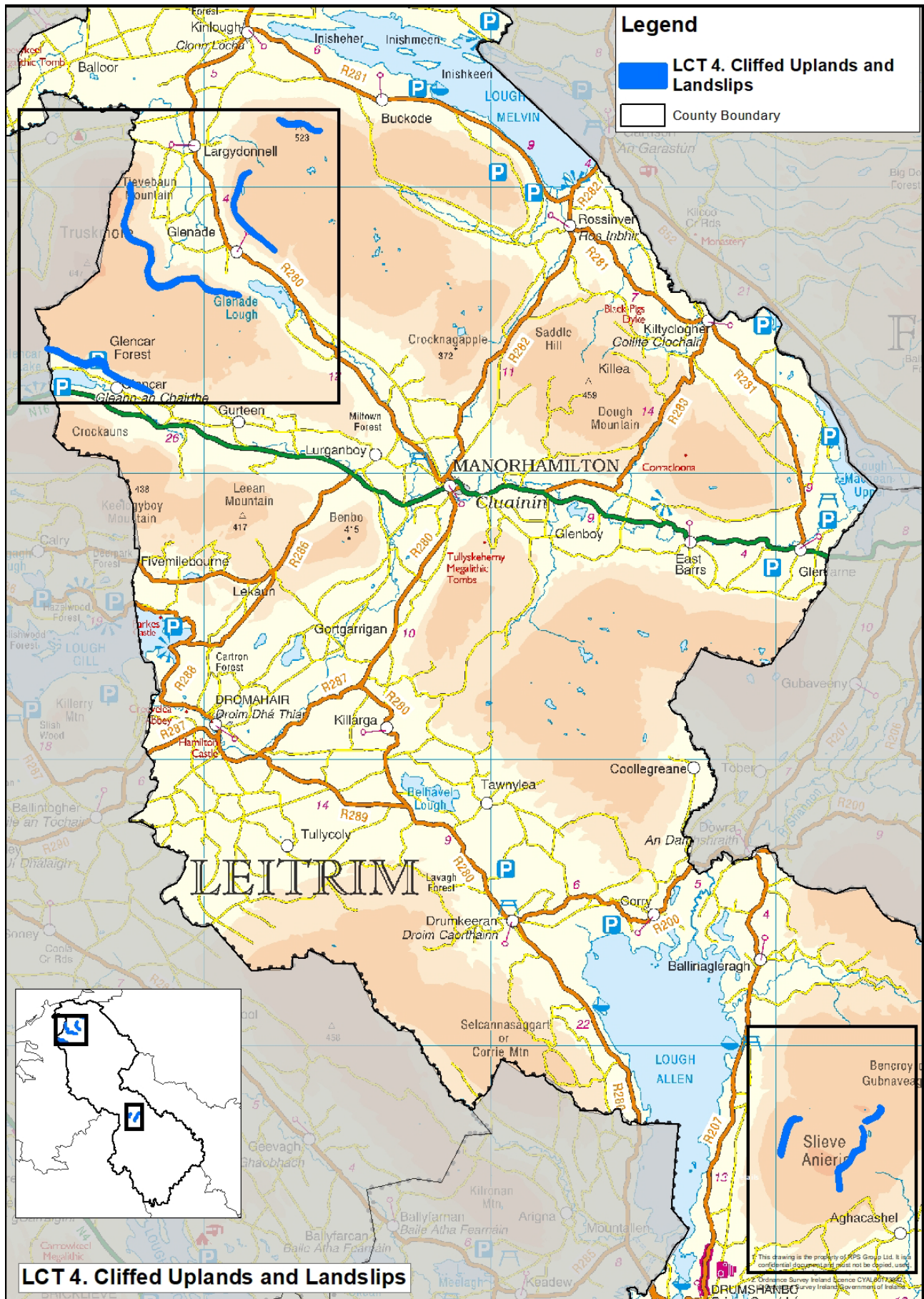
3.7.1.4 LCT 4. Cluffed Uplands and Landslips – Existing commercial forest cover

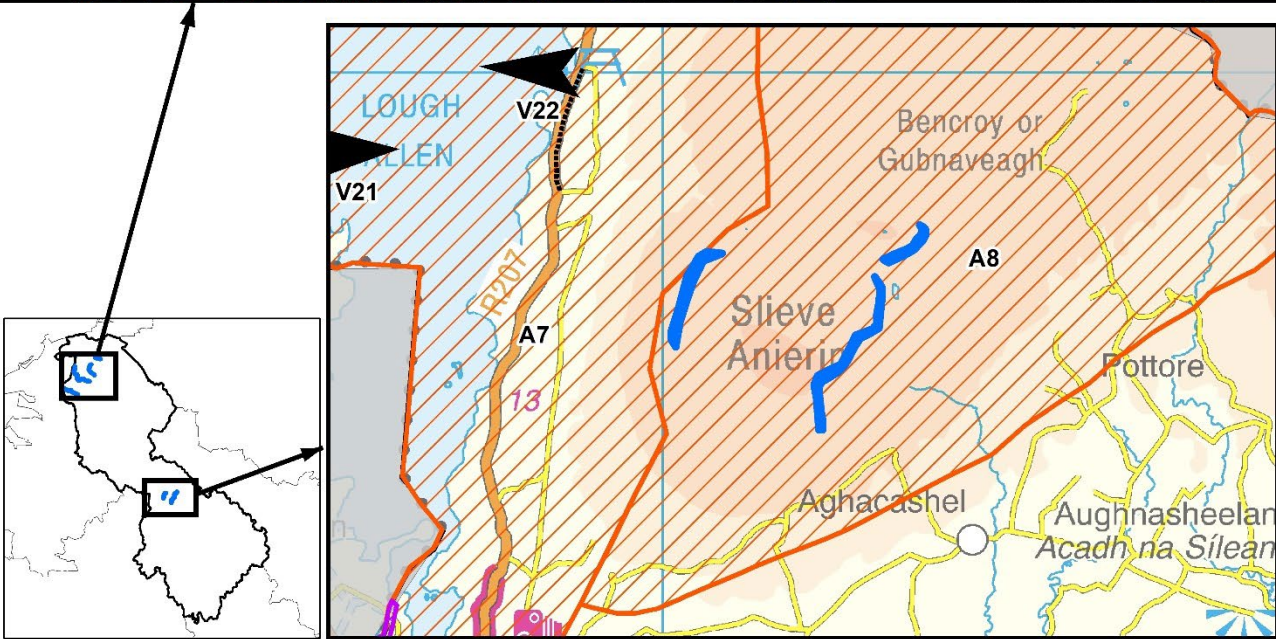
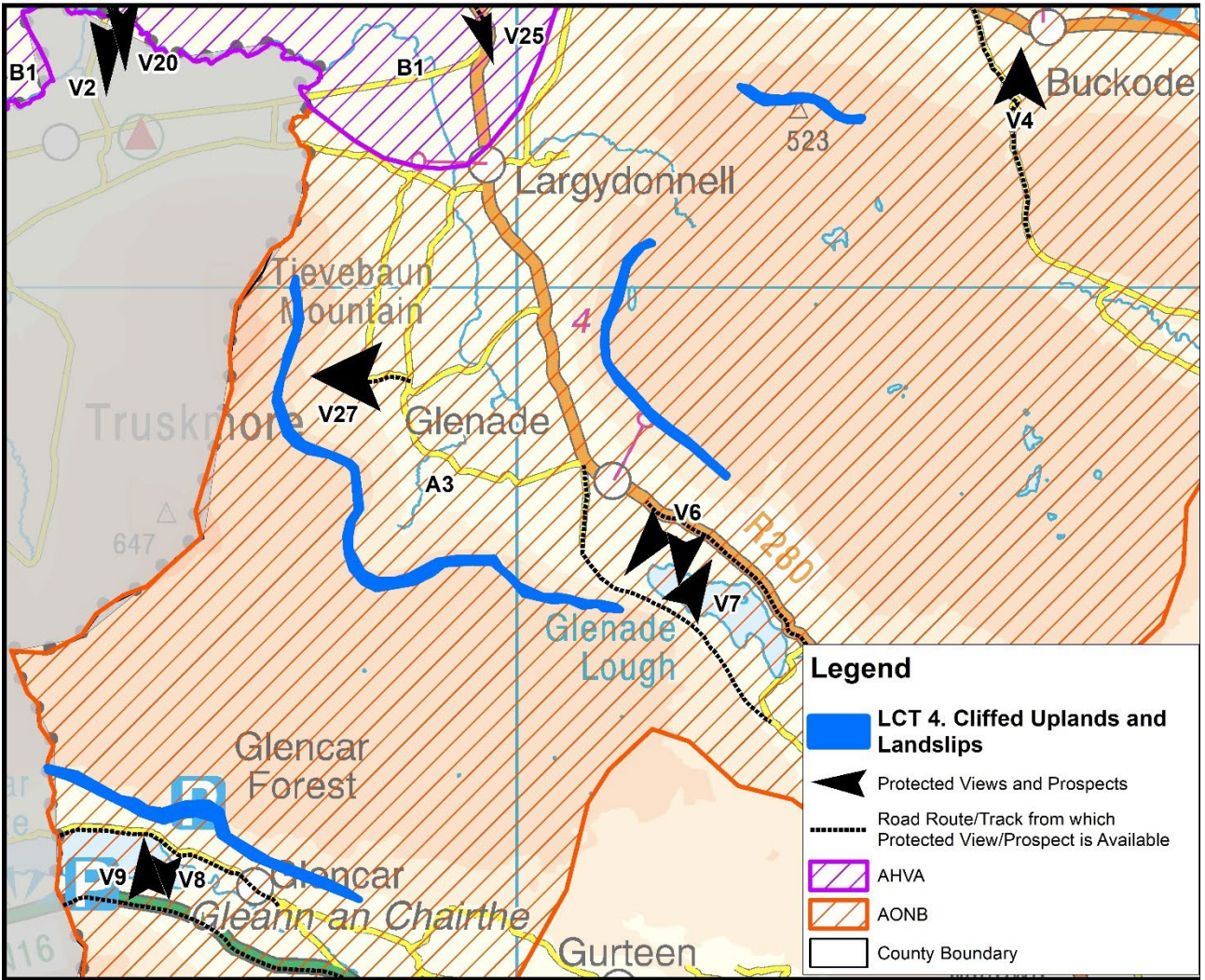
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate no commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) in this LCT and the absence of same reflects the natural conditions for which these types of plantings would not be feasible.

3.7.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover in the vicinity of this LCT is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

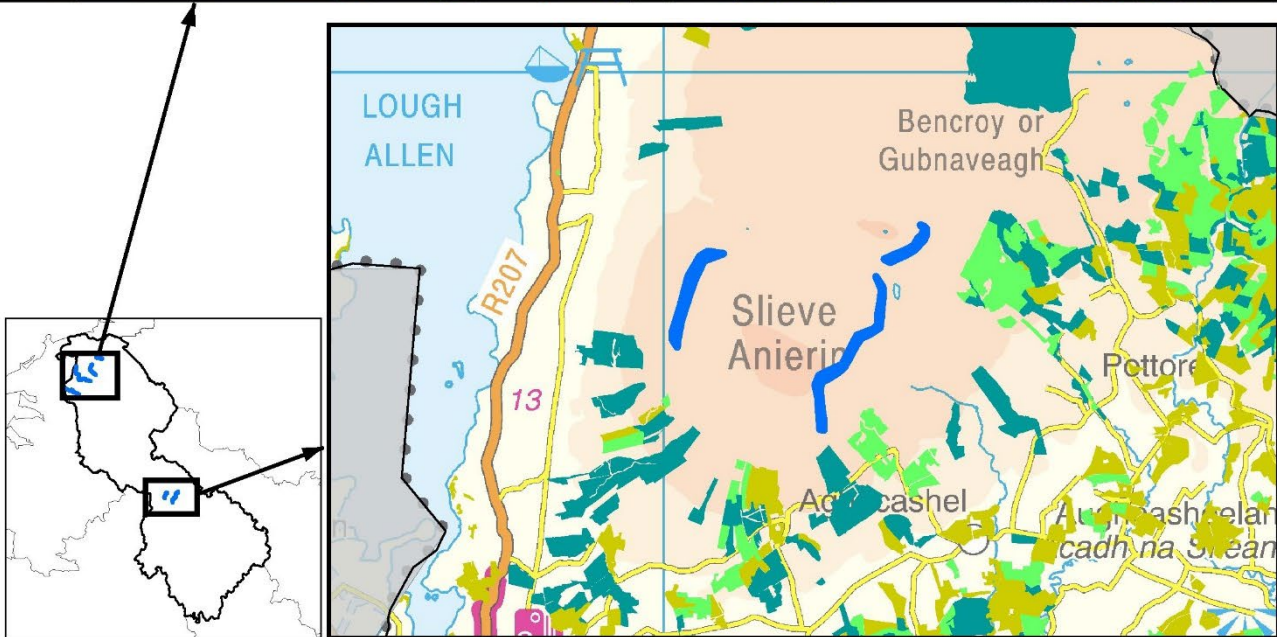
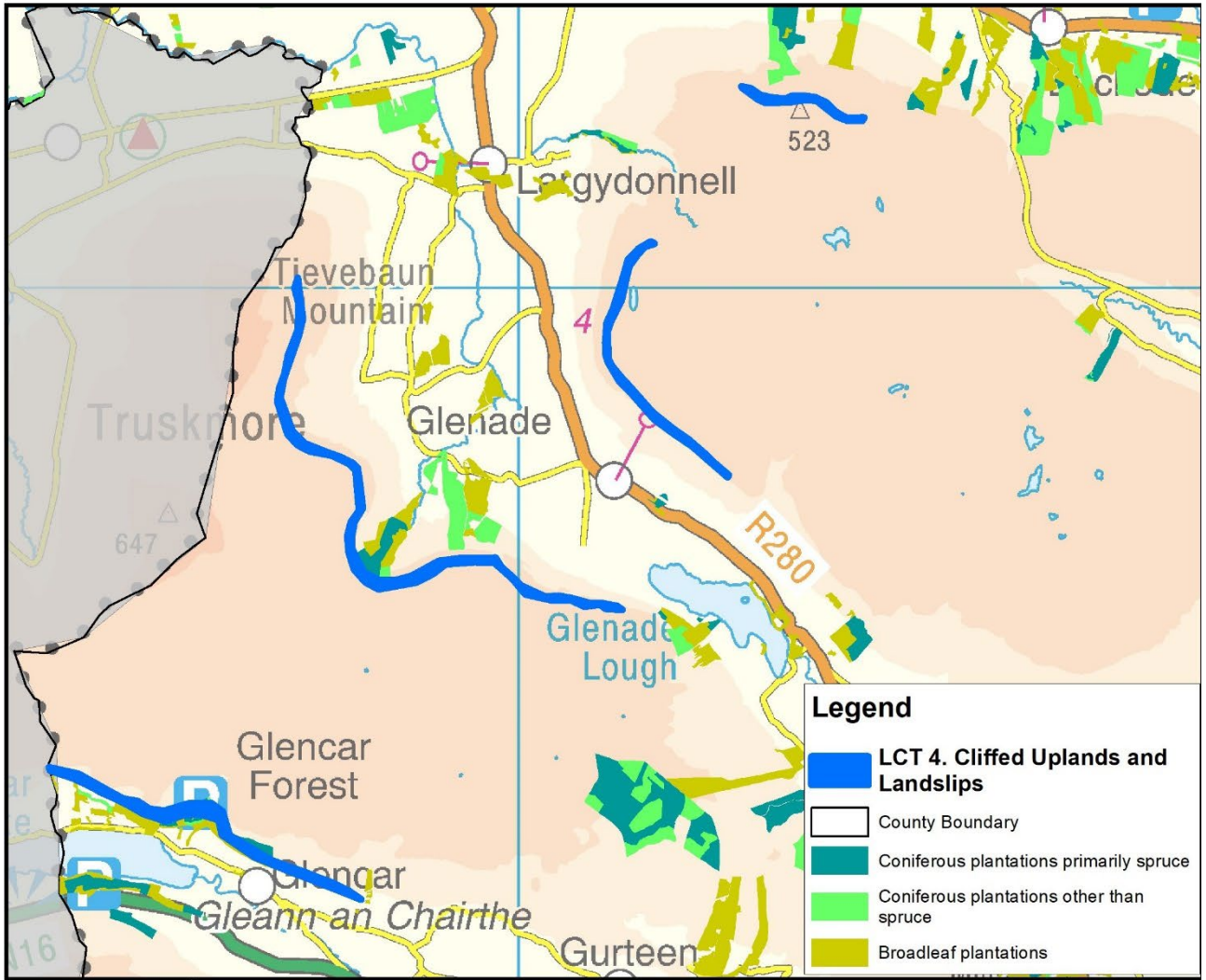
- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.





LCT 4. Cliffed Uplands and Landslips - Baseline

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LCT 4. Cliffed Uplands and Landslips - Commercial Forest Cover

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3.7.2 LCT 4. Cliffed Uplands and Landslips – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 4 Cliffed Uplands and Landslips to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.7.2.1 LCT 4. Cliffed Uplands and Landslips – Landform, landcover and scale

This landscape comprises steep to vertical cliffs located at the highest elevations in the county. These are distinctive complex landforms. These complex features are the focus of many views from valleys and lowland areas. They are highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would undermine their prominence and rugged character and which could obstruct scenic views of the features in the valleys.

The steep cliffs comprise mostly bare rock with limited, if any, scrub vegetation. The scale of these features varies with their location. The barren conditions are such that they are unlikely to be considered for commercial coniferous forestry.



Steep sides to the Glenade Valley overlooked by the Cliffs near Truskmore. These are distinctive landforms which are highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.



Cliffs at the Arroo Mountain Range overlook the Glenade Valley are also highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.7.2.2 LCT 4. Cluffed Uplands and Landslips – Landscape context

The cliffs and landslips are distinctive features that occur within or adjacent to LCT 5 Moorland Plateau. They also overlook lower lying landscapes including LCT 6 Moorland Hills and LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills. The context for this landscape is important in terms of safeguarding it from future commercial coniferous forestry in adjacent LCTs which would potentially mask the striking cliff features of this landscape. In this regard, areas within the adjacent landscapes of the Moorland Plateau and the Moorland Hills would be especially sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry because of its relationship or setting as the foreground to the Cluffed Uplands and Landslips.



Cliffs and glacial corries near Truskmore overlook the lower lying landscapes of the Glenade Valley.

3.7.2.3 LCT 4. Cluffed Uplands and Landslips – Visual and perceptual criteria

The cliffs and landslips are important focal points in views from valleys and lowland areas and are seen in many of the county protected views. A sense of wildness and tranquillity is generally perceived by the viewer. An outstanding scenic quality is associated with these bare areas of wilderness with little landcover and distinctive rugged profile and as a result are highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.7.2.4 LCT 4. Cluffed Uplands and Landslips – Landscape Value

The entire LCT 4 Cluffed Uplands and Landslips is designated as an AONB as outlined above. The designation reflects the scenic quality and outstanding natural beauty of these cliffs and landslips. They are also the subject of many protected views and prospects in the surrounding landscape. The distinctive feature of Eagle's Rock is promoted as a heritage attraction and the Glencar Hill Walk is routed to afford views of the cliffs and landslips. As a result, LCT 4 is a highly valued landscape, the scenic quality and recreational value of which would be easily undermined by commercial coniferous forestry.

3.7.2.5 LCT 4. Cluffed Uplands and Landslips – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **very high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. The entire landscape is covered by AONB designations. The natural characteristics, in particular the distinctive landforms associated with the cliffs and landslips are highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry and are important features in protected views from the surrounding lower lying areas. The cliffs and landslips form the distinctive skylines to many of the mountain views, including protected views attained from landscapes at lower elevations.

3.8 LCT 5. Moorland Plateau

3.8.1 Baseline

There are nine occurrences of LCT 5 Moorland Plateau within County Leitrim. These include:

- Mountain and hill ranges associated with Tievebaun, Arroo and Sheenun that frame the Glenade and Glenaniff Valleys in the north of the County;
- Benbo, located west of Manorhamilton;
- Dough Mountain and Thur Mountain, located east of Manorhamilton;
- The Boleybrack Mountains, located north of Lough Allen;
- Corry Mountain, located west of Lough Allen; and
- Slieve Anierin, located east of Lough Allen.

3.8.1.1 LCT 5. Moorland Plateau – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 5 Moorland Plateau as follows.

‘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.’

3.8.1.2 LCT 5. Moorland Plateau – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. The designations that occur within this LCT are tabulated below.

Table 3-12: LCT 5. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
A3	Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB - applies to the entire LCT in the north including Kings Mountain, Arroo and summit west of Sheenun
A5	Benbo AONB – applies to the entire LCT at Benbo
A6	The Boleybrack Mountains AONB – applies to the entire LCT in this mountain range
A7	Lough Allen – applies to the entire LCT within the Slieve Anierin Mountain range
A8	A8 Slieve Anierin and Bencroy AONB - applies to the entire LCT within these mountain ranges
B3	B3 Dough Mountain AHVA – applies to the entire LCT at Dough Mountain
B4	B4 Thur Mountain AHVA – applies to the entire LCT at Thur Mountain
B7	B7 Corry Mountain AHVA – applies to the southern part of this LCT at Corry Mountain

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. None occur within this landscape and this is probably due to the relative inaccessibility of this landscape. The distinctive features in this landscape are the subject of many protected views and prospects located outside this LCT including the following tabulated below.

Table 3-13: LCT 5. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V2	View towards Tievebaun, Truskmore and Kings Mountain
V6	View towards Glenade Lake and Valley – These views are attained against the backdrop of Tievebaun and Truskmore Mountains
V7	View towards Glenade Lake and Valley – These views are attained against the backdrop of The Arroo Mountain Range and along the lakeshore where the striking Glenade Valley is framed by the mountain ranges of Arroo and Tievebaun on opposing sides
V8	View towards Glencar Lake - These views are attained against the backdrop of Tievebaun and Truskmore Mountains
V9	View towards Glencar Lake from N16 Road - These views are attained against the backdrop of Tievebaun and Truskmore Mountains
V10	View towards Benbo Mountain from the outskirts of Manorhamilton
V17	View of Benbo from O'Donnell's Rock
V20	View towards Arroo and Tievebaun Mountains from the farmed hinterland near the coast
V21	View towards Lough Allen from the R280 - These views are attained against the backdrop of Slieve Anierin
V24	View of Slieve Anierin and Lough Scur from the R209 Regional Road
V25	View of Mountain and Glen Landscape of Tievebaun and Arroo from the R280 Regional Road

3.8.1.3 LCT 5. Moorland Plateau – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-14: LCT 5. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
T9	The Miner's Way long distance walking route extends through this LCT at Corry Mountain
T10	The Leitrim Way long distance walking route extends through this LCT in the Boleybrack Mountains
-	Bencroy is associated with the local history of the coal mining and a commemorative plaque is located on the south eastern face of this mountain dedicated to the local miners who worked there. Another commemorative plaque nearby is dedicated to the settlers from Ulster who lived on the mountain in the early 1800s

3.8.1.4 LCT 5. Moorland Plateau – Existing commercial forest cover

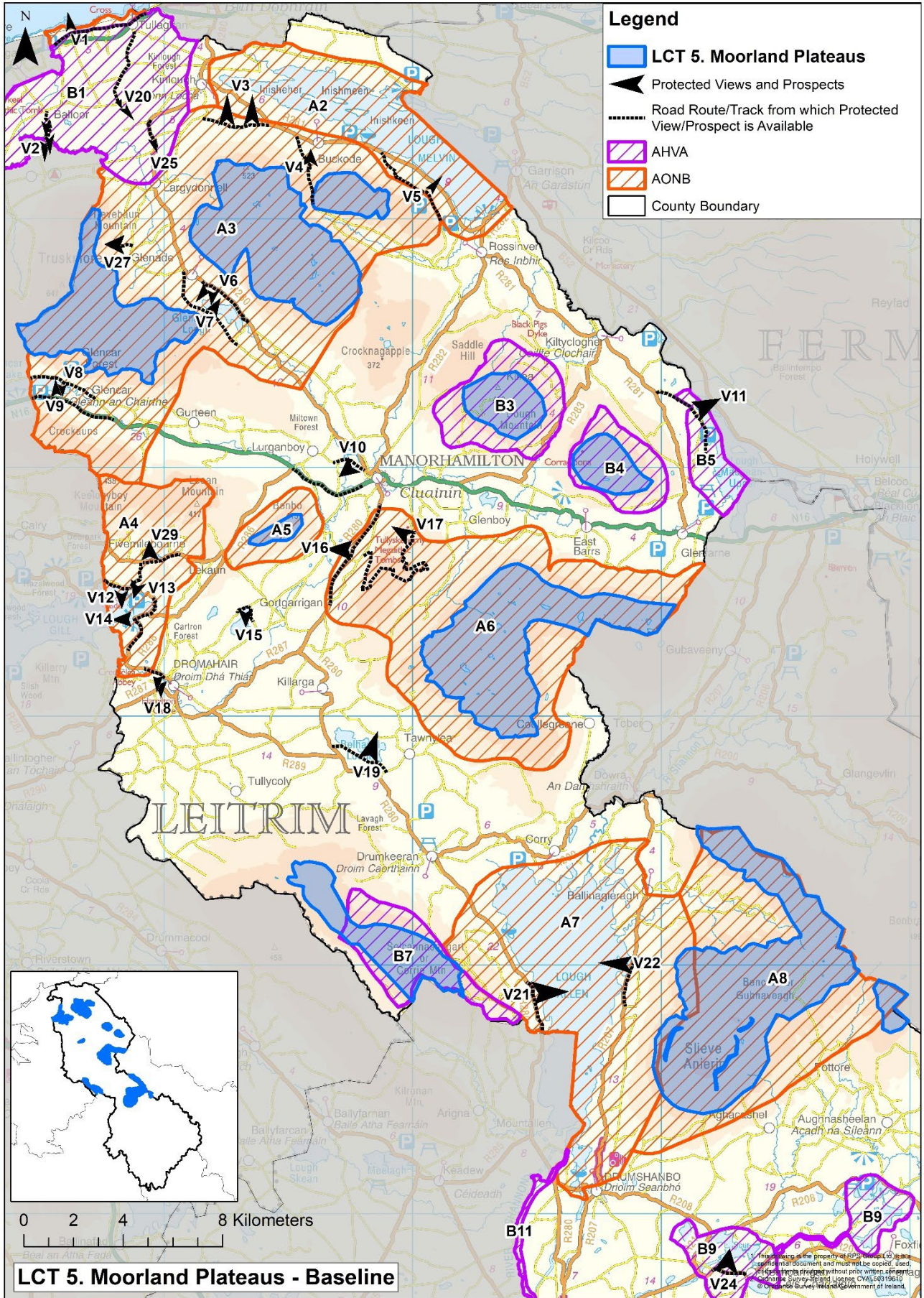
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate the presence of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above), mostly in the vicinity of Dough Mountain and to some extent, Thur Mountain along with Slieve Anierin and Bencroy.

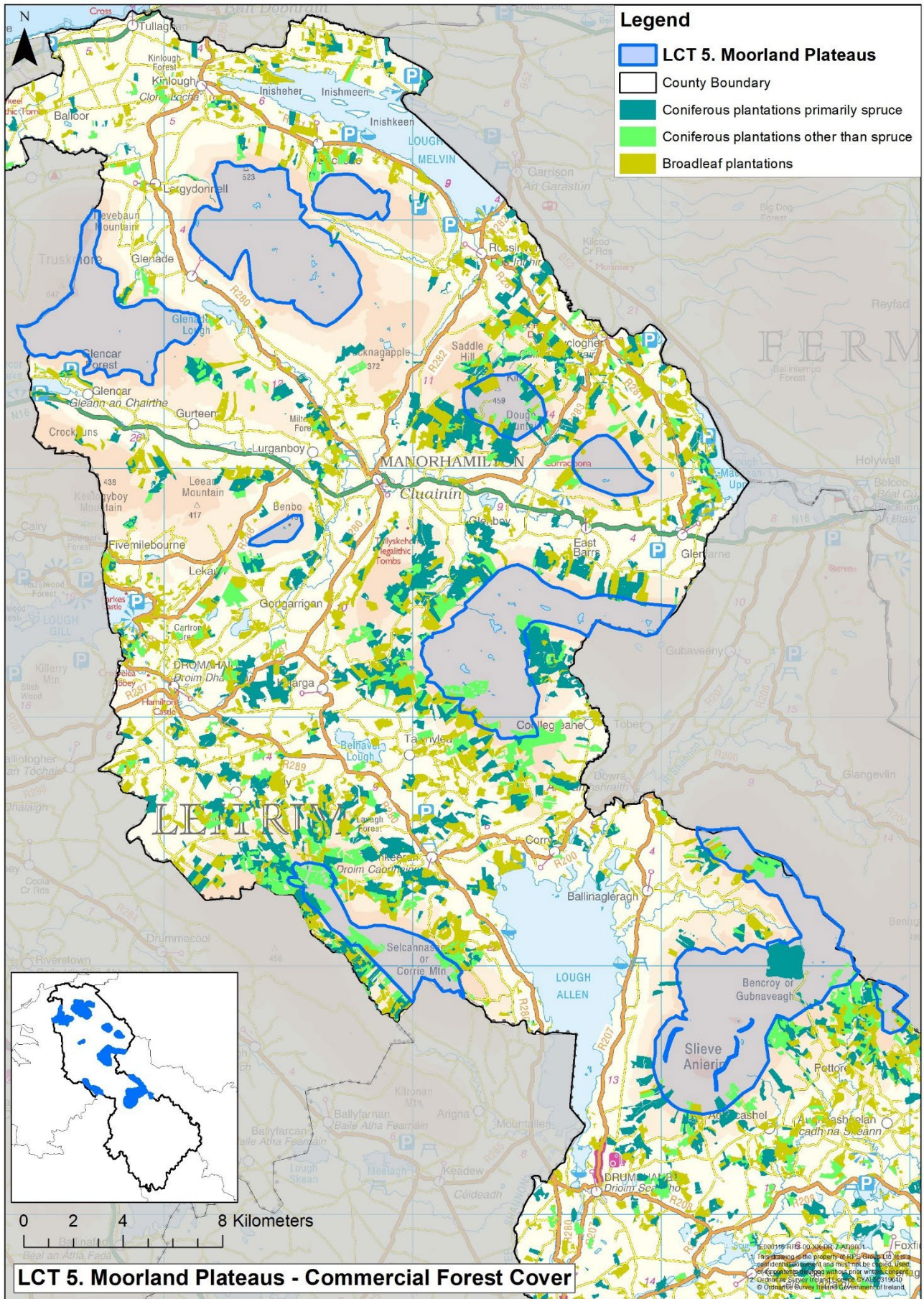
3.8.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.







3.8.2 LCT 5. Moorland Plateau – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 5 Moorland Plateau to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.8.2.1 LCT 5. Moorland Plateau – Landform, landcover and scale

The gently rolling landform associated with moorland is generally less sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry due to the simplicity of the landform compared with areas with more complex landforms with distinctive and prominent hills. An exception to this are the areas of moorland at the edges or boundaries of this LCT which overlook the steep cliffs and valley sides of the lowland glen landscapes. These along with the cliffs form important and distinctive skylines to the lower lying landscapes. The summit of Benbo is especially sensitive due to its distinctive cleft within the moorland plateau landscape which presents as a distinctive landmark that is highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. Also the steep sided slopes on the west side of Slieve Anierin which form the foreground to distinctive cliffs and landslips in the adjacent LCT 4 Cluffed Uplands and Landslips would be particularly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

The eastern and southern sides of Dough Mountain and the lower slopes of Slieve Anierin and Bencroy feature areas of commercial coniferous forestry of varying scale which is in contrast with the moorland landscape character. These areas would be especially sensitive to further commercial coniferous forestry which would continue to become the dominant landcover and would erode the original landcover (mosaic of grassland, bog and heath) as a key characteristic of this area.

The scale of this moorland landscape is vast with little by way of features such as field patterns as a scale reference. The openness and scarcity of wooded vegetation however is such that the introduction of commercial coniferous forestry would be in conflict with the open character of this landscape. Areas that feature moor and bog along with isolated small loughs are considered to be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.8.2.2 LCT 5. Moorland Plateau – Landscape context

This is one of the most elevated landscapes in the county. The edges of these large areas of moorland form the skyline and backdrop to adjacent lower lying landscapes including LCT 6 Moorland Hills and LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills. The edges or boundaries of this landscape along with the most elevated mountain summits are highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would obstruct their steep sided form and rugged character which presents as a distinctive scenic backdrop to the valley landscapes below. This landscape is especially important to the setting of LCT 4 Cluffed Uplands and Landslips as referred to above.

Benbo is a distinctive hilltop within a farmed valley and lowland setting and is sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would be in conflict with its distinctive profile and would undermine its prominence within the valley setting close to the town of Manorhamilton.



Outlook towards the mountain skyline of Benbo from Manorhamilton.

3.8.2.3 LCT 5. Moorland Plateau – Visual and perceptual criteria

This is a remote landscape with a definite sense of wildness and tranquillity. Important skylines are present and are viewed as being of considerable scenic quality and highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would obstruct views of these uplands including Arroo, King's Mountain, Truskmore and The Boleybrack Mountains enjoyed from the surrounding valleys and by users of the Leitrim Way. Commercial coniferous forestry would also undermine the wild and rugged character of this landscape.

3.8.2.4 LCT 5. Moorland Plateau – Landscape Value

LCT 5 Moorland Plateau is almost entirely designated apart from a small area north of Corry Mountain. The designations include AONBs and AHVAs and reflect the landscape quality and outstanding natural beauty of these moorland landscapes including natural features such as bog and heather moorland together with the sense of wildness and tranquillity. They are also the subject of many protected views and prospects in the surrounding lowland landscape. As a result, LCT 5 is a highly valued landscape, the scenic quality and natural character of which would be easily undermined by commercial coniferous forestry.

3.8.2.5 LCT 5. Moorland Plateau – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **very high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. Almost all of this LCT is covered by AONB and AHVA designations and this is reflective of the landscape and scenic quality. The nature of the landform and landcover and overall remote and wild qualities contribute towards the sensitivity ranking along with the scenic skylines enjoyed by viewers which feature in many protected views in adjacent LCTs at lower elevations.

3.9 LCT 6. Moorland Hills

3.9.1 Baseline

LCT 6 Moorland Hills is an extensive landscape of foothills to the following mountain ranges:

- Tievebaun and Truskmore;
- Arroo and adjacent mountains;
- Dough Mountain;
- Thur Mountain;
- LEEAN Mountain range (Doons and Crockauns);
- Benbo;
- The Boleybrack Mountains;
- Corry Mountain; and
- Slieve Anierin.

3.9.1.1 LCT 6. Moorland Hills – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 6 Moorland Hills as follows.

‘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.’

3.9.1.2 LCT 6. Moorland Hills – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. The designations that occur within this LCT are tabulated below.

Table 3-15: LCT 6. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
A3	Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB - applies to most of this LCT in the north in the vicinity of Kings Mountain, Arroo and Sheenun along with the lower slopes of The Doons and Crockauns
A5	Benbo AONB – applies to the entire LCT along the lower slopes of Benbo
A6	The Boleybrack Mountains AONB – applies to the majority of the LCT on the lower slopes of the Boleybrack Mountains
A7	Lough Allen AONB – applies to part of the LCT in the vicinity of Lough Allen
A8	Slieve Anierin and Bencroy AONB - applies to the majority of the LCT within the lower slopes of the Slieve Anierin Mountain range
B3	Dough Mountain AHVA – applies to most of this LCT on the lower slopes of Dough Mountain
B4	Thur Mountain AHVA – applies to most of this LCT on the lower slopes of Thur Mountain
B7	Corry Mountain AHVA – applies to the southern part of this LCT on the lower slopes of Corry Mountain

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. One of these occurs within this landscape as tabulated below.

Table 3-16: LCT 6. Views and Prospects

MAP ID Views and Prospects	
V17	View of Benbo from O'Donnell's Rock

3.9.1.3 LCT 6. Moorland Hills – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-17: LCT 6 Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID Walking Route / Heritage Attraction	
T9	The Miner's Way long distance walking route extends through this LCT at Corry Mountain
T10	The Leitrim Way long distance walking route extends through this LCT in the Boleybrack Mountains
T11	Glencar Hill Walk is a looped linear trail which approaches the moorland hills in this LCT at the southern side of Truskmore and overlooking Glencar Lough
T13	Tullylacken Loop Walk extends through this LCT on the eastern side of Bencroy
T14	Aghacashel Loop Walk extends through this LCT on the southern side of Slieve Anierin

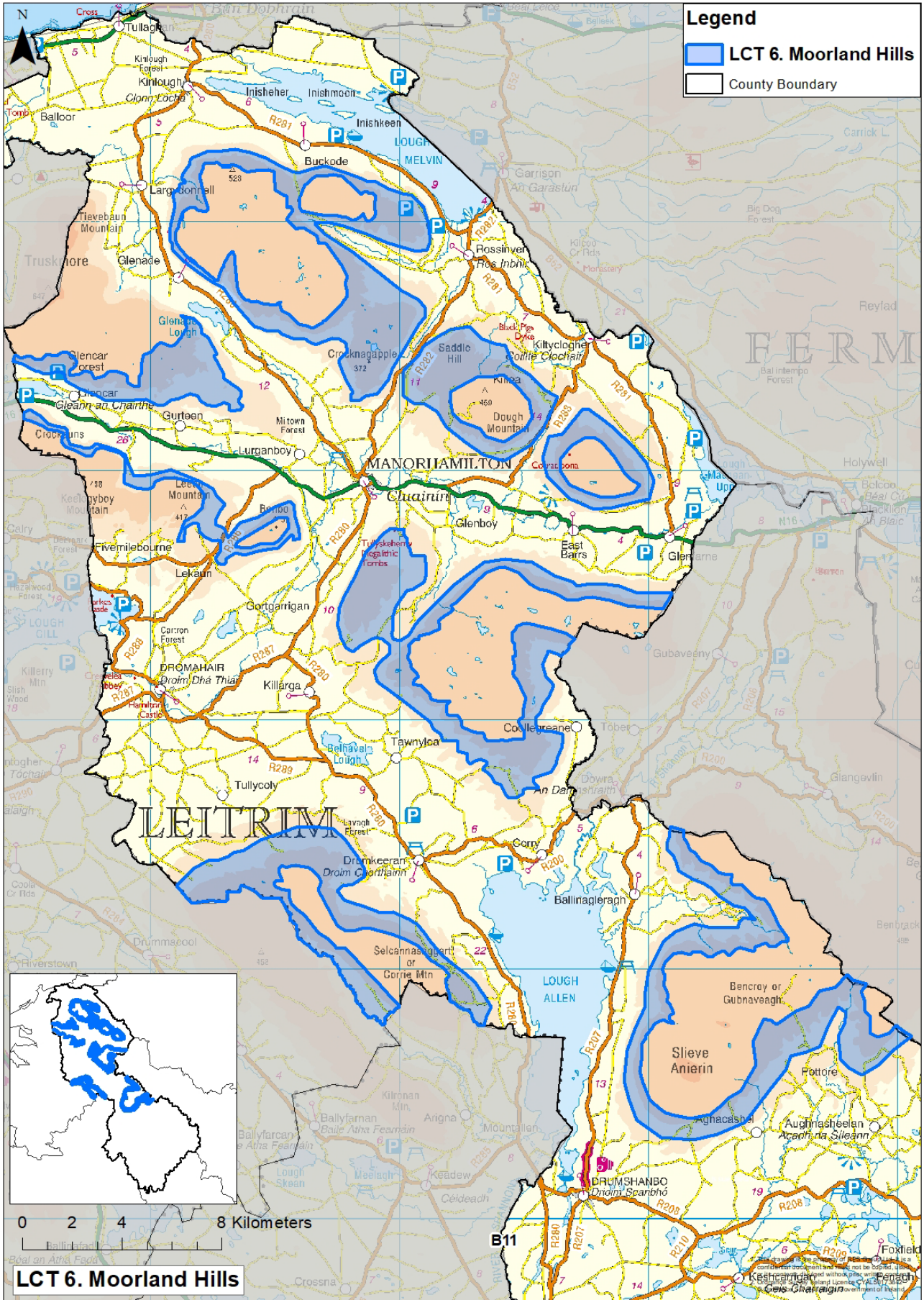
3.9.1.4 LCT 6. Moorland Hills – Existing commercial forest cover

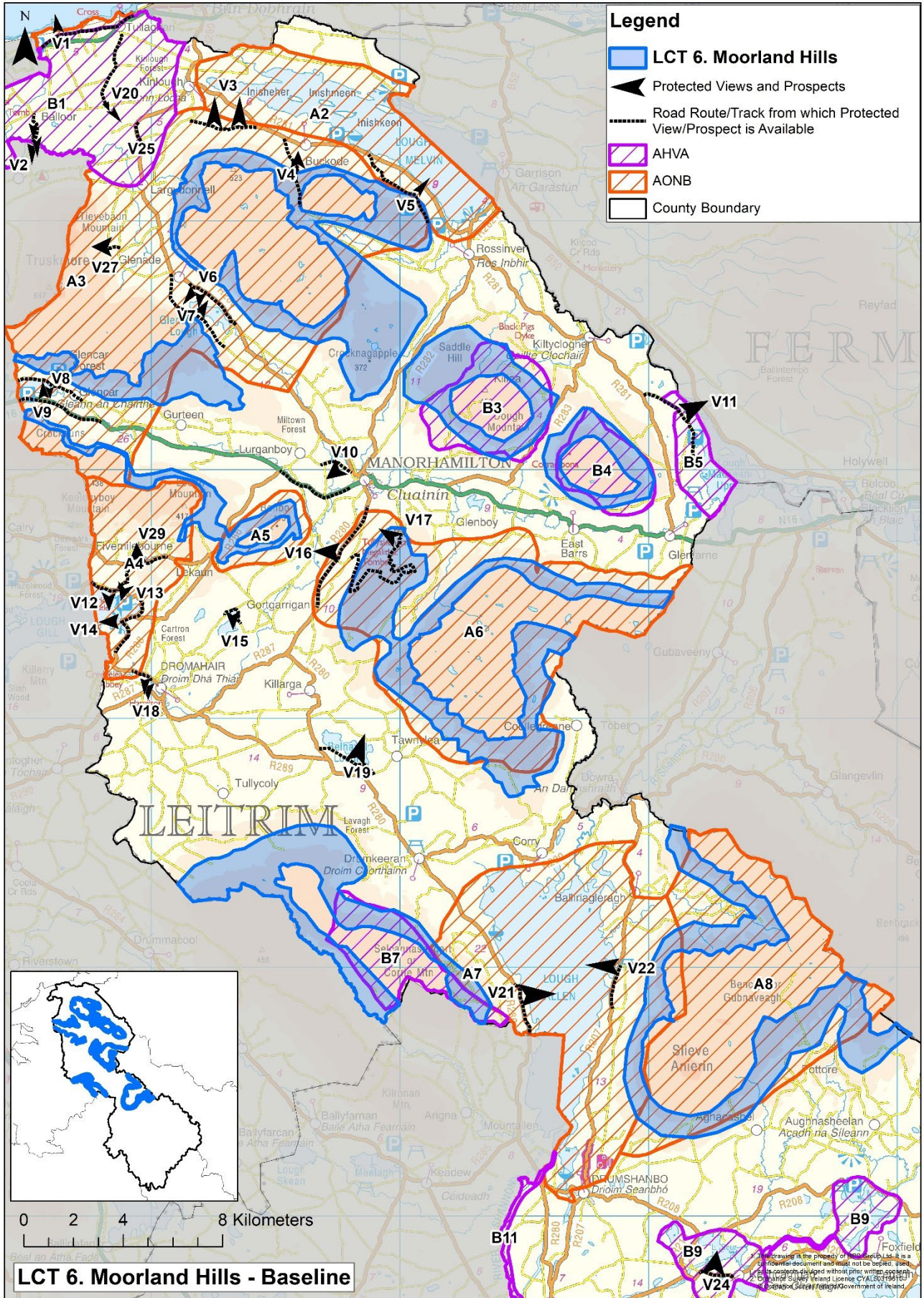
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate limited areas of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) in the northern part of this landscape in the vicinity of Arroo Mountain. Larger tracts of commercial forest cover occur in the vicinity of Dough Mountain and in the southern part of this landscape, in the foothills of the Boleybrack Mountains, Corry Mountain and Slieve Anierin.

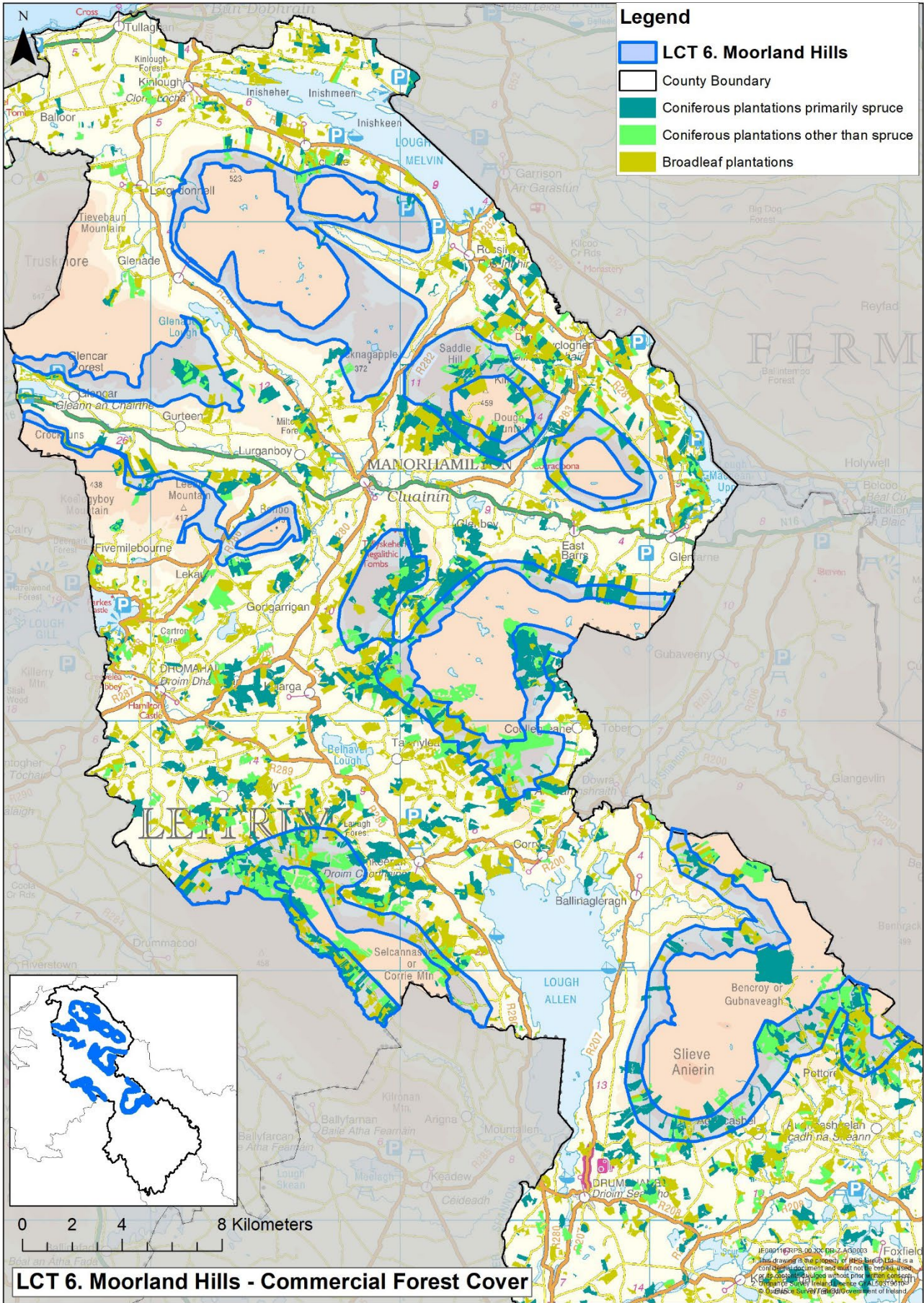
3.9.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.







3.9.2 LCT 6. Moorland Hills – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 6 Moorland Hills to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.9.2.1 LCT 6. Moorland Hills – Landform, landcover and scale

The landform and landcover within this landscape varies between open moorland at higher elevations to marginal farmland at lower elevations. The steep moorland and bog slopes with little hedgerow vegetation cover occur at higher elevations and are of higher sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry, for example, at the western side of Arroo Mountain and Tievebaun and Truskmore. This is due to their rugged and open character, the scenic quality of which would be undermined by the presence of commercial coniferous forestry. At lower elevations, landform is gently undulating with scrub and woodland cover and is of lower sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry which may be accommodated subject to choice of appropriate location and careful design. Areas where existing woodland and scrub is present may accommodate future commercial coniferous forestry of appropriate scale that would not undermine the key characteristics of this landscape.

The foothills of the Boleybrack Mountains, Corry Mountain, Dough Mountain, Bencroy and Slieve Anierin would be sensitive to further commercial coniferous forestry which combined with that existing, could result in erosion of original landcover as a key characteristic of this landscape.

The scale of this landscape is relatively large in terms of landform. Field patterns are fragmented or absent in many areas thereby contributing to an overall large sense of scale. These larger scale landscapes would generally be less sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry especially at lower elevations where some existing woodland and commercial forest cover is already present thereby facilitating subtle introduction of commercial coniferous forestry which would be more readily accommodated.

3.9.2.2 LCT 6. Moorland Hills – Landscape context

The moorland hills is a transition landscape, usually located adjacent and below LCT 5 Moorland Plateau and located adjacent and overlooking LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills. The more elevated parts of this landscape are important in forming the setting of mountain and glen landscapes at higher elevations within LCT 5 Moorland Plateau and LCT 4 Cluffed Uplands and landslips. For this reason, the more elevated areas of this LCT are especially sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would undermine the rugged character and obstruct views of scenic skylines.



Moorland Hills LCT on the north eastern side of Arroo Mountain overlooked by the more elevated Moorland Plateau LCT.



Outlook towards the mountain skyline of Benbo from the Leitrim Way on the lower slopes of the Boleybrack Mountains.



The Glens of North Leitrim viewed from the Leitrim Way in the Boleybrack Mountains.

3.9.2.3 LCT 6. Moorland Hills – Visual and perceptual criteria

The landscape has a sense of remoteness and wildness at higher elevations in particular and form part of the skyline of the moorland plateau in views which can be of some scenic quality. These more elevated areas are considered to be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.9.2.4 LCT 6. Moorland Hills– Landscape Value

The majority of this LCT is designated apart from isolated areas in the vicinity of Corry Mountain, Crocknagapple, Saddle Hill, the lower slopes of Leean Mountain and the lower slopes of the Tievebaun range. The designations include both AONBs and AHVAs and reflect the scenic quality and outstanding natural beauty of these upland landscapes. They are also the subject of many protected views and prospects in the surrounding lowland landscapes. LCT 6 offers spectacular panoramic views of Benbo and the mountains and glens of North Leitrim from protected view no 17 at O'Donnell's Rock. Two long distance walking routes cross this landscape and three shorter walks are located therein. As a result, LCT 6 is a landscape of considerable value, the scenic quality and recreational value of which would potentially be undermined by commercial coniferous forestry.

3.9.2.5 LCT 6. Moorland Hills– Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. A large part of this LCT is covered by AONB and AHVA designations and this is reflective of the landscape and scenic quality and its role as the setting for the upland mountain landscapes. The more elevated parts of this landscape are more sensitive than that at lower elevations due to their remote and wild nature with sensitive moorland landcover and their contribution to scenic skylines enjoyed by viewers.

At lower elevations, in the vicinity of the 200m contour line, this landscape is less sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. The presence of wooded landcover and relative scarcity of strong field patterns as a scale reference is such that commercial coniferous forestry of appropriate scale may be accommodated subject to detailed and careful analysis and design.

3.10 LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills

3.10.1 Baseline

LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills is an extensive landscape of farmland and low hills which form the foreground to LCT 6 Moorland Hills and the mountain ranges as follows:

- Tievebaun and Truskmore;
- Arroo and adjacent mountains;
- Dough Mountain;
- Thur Mountain;
- Leean Mountain range (Doons and Crockauns);
- Benbo;
- The Boleybrack Mountains;
- Corry Mountain; and
- Slieve Anierin.

3.10.1.1 LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills as follows.

‘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.’

3.10.1.2 LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. The designations that occur within this LCT are tabulated below.

Table 3-18: LCT 7. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
A2	Lough Melvin AONB – part of this LCT along the southern shoreline of Lough Melvin occurs within this designated landscape
A3	Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB - applies to part of this LCT in the vicinity of Kings Mountain and Arroo Mountain
A4	Lough Gill, Leean Mountain and Environs AONB – applies to a part of this LCT on lower slopes of The Doons and Crockauns
A5	Benbo AONB – applies to part of this LCT along the lower slopes of Benbo
A6	The Boleybrack Mountains AONB – applies part of the LCT on the lower slopes of the Boleybrack Mountains

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A7	Lough Allen AONB – applies to part of the LCT on the east side of Lough Allen
A8	Slieve Anierin and Bencroy AONB - applies to part of the LCT within the lower slopes of the Slieve Anierin Mountain range
B3	Dough Mountain AHVA – applies a small part of this LCT
B4	Thur Mountain AHVA – applies to a small part of this LCT

The 'County Leitrim Views and Prospects' report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Those that occur within this landscape are tabulated below.

Table 3-19: LCT 7. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V3	View towards Lough Melvin and Donegal Bay
V4	View of Lough Melvin from Aghavoghil
V5	View of Lough Melvin
V27	View towards Eagle's Rock

3.10.1.3 LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-20: LCT 7. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
T6	Milltown Wood Forest Walk extends through this LCT, near Manorhamilton.
T9	The Miner's Way long distance walking route extends through this LCT in the Boleybrack Mountains
T10	The Leitrim Way long distance walking route extends through this LCT on the southern side of Slieve Anierin
T11	Glencar Hill Walk is a looped linear trail which extends through this LCT at the southern side of Truskmore and overlooking Glencar Lough
T12	The Arroo Trail is located within this LCT on the northern side of Arroo Mountain
T13	Tullylacken Loop Walk extends through this LCT on the eastern side of Bencroy
T15	Crummy Loop Walk extends through this LCT on the southern side of Slieve Anierin

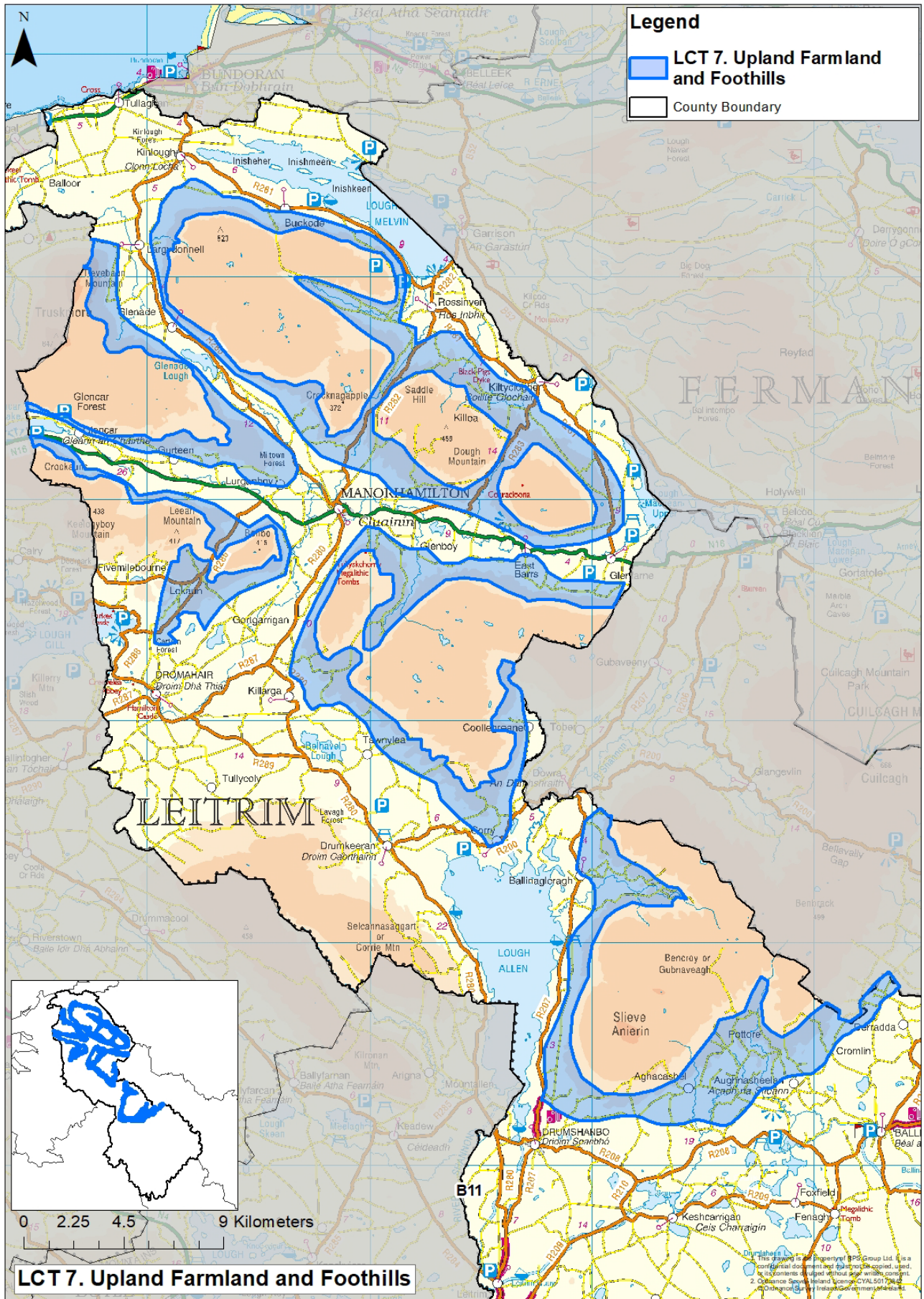
3.10.1.4 LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills – Existing commercial forest cover

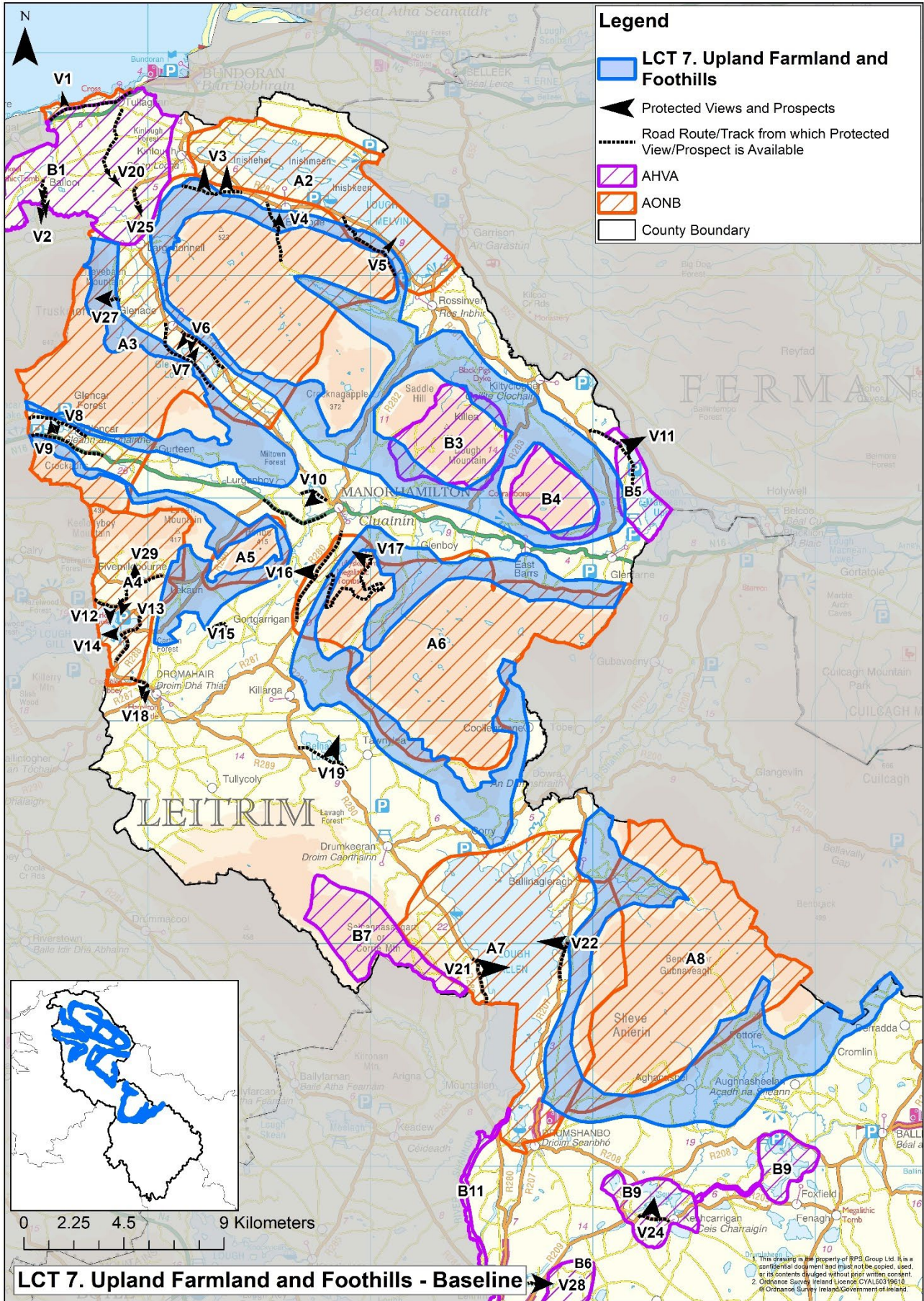
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate areas of existing commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) dispersed throughout this landscape. Larger scale plantations are more extensive in the eastern part of this landscape in the foothills of Dough Mountain, the Boleybrack Mountains, Slieve Anierin and Bencroy. Plantings are more scarce in the Glenade and Glencar valleys to the north west.

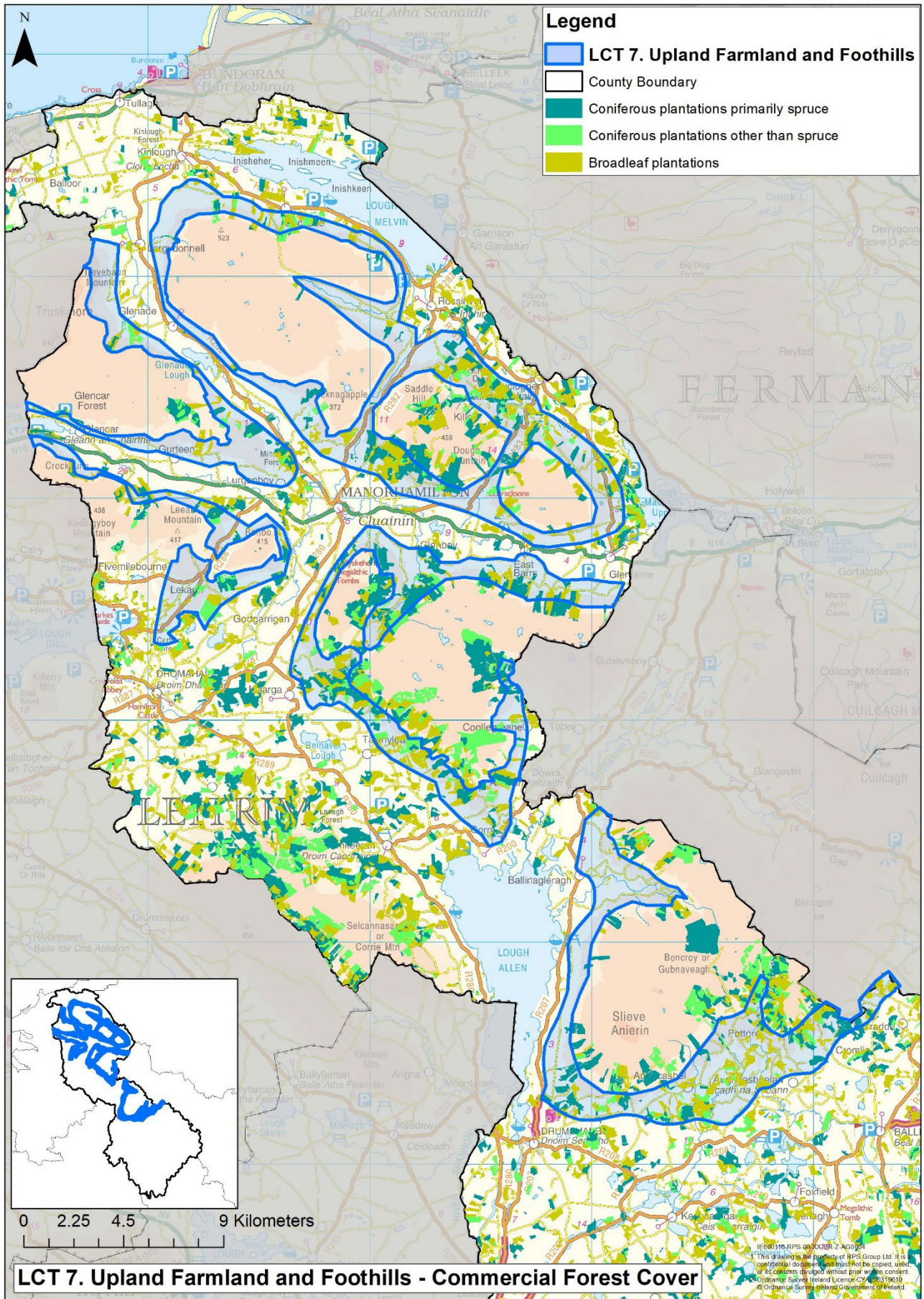
3.10.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.







3.10.2 LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.10.2.1 LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills – Landform, landcover and scale

This is a gently undulating farmed landscape which features woodlands, hedgerows and frequent tracts of commercial coniferous forestry. The wooded and hedgerow cover results in an enclosed landscape which is of lower sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. It is noted however that existing commercial coniferous forestry has in some cases, replaced the original pastoral farmed landscape character. Areas of this landscape would therefore be quite sensitive to further commercial coniferous forestry where this would result in widespread replacement of the characteristic pastoral farmland landcover and the strong pattern of same defined by hedgerows.

Commercial coniferous forestry is present as a large scale element on the southern sides of Dough Mountain and the southern side of Slieve Anierin and Bencroy where it has replaced former farmed field patterns which would have been a key characteristic of this landscape. The extensive plantations are in conflict with the underlying landscape character and field pattern in this LCA. These areas would be sensitive to further planting which would undermine the key characteristics of this landscape.

3.10.2.2 LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills – Landscape context

This landscape is a transition landscape located adjacent and below the Moorland Plateau (LCT 5) and Moorland Hills (LCT 6) and adjacent and overlooking the valley farmland (LCT 8) at lower elevations. Areas of this landscape form the setting of more elevated mountain moorland landscapes and these areas would be more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.



The Boleybrack Mountains captured in views south from the R281 Regional Road near the townland of Ardmoneen. The transition between LCT 7 and adjacent landscapes is captured in this view.

3.10.2.3 LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills – Visual and perceptual criteria

This is an active working landscape and not necessarily exceptionally tranquil. A sense of wilderness is not generally experienced. This landscape however forms the foreground to skylines of mountain tops experienced in many views and this aspect of the landscape results in some level of sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.10.2.4 LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills – Landscape Value

Parts of the landscape within LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills is designated as AONB and AHVA. The designations generally apply to the areas of the landscape which have strong visual links with scenic elements associated with upland mountain areas and also around lakes such as Lough Allen. The designations reflect the scenic quality and outstanding natural beauty of these particular areas which would be especially sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. A total of 4 protected views occur within the LCT and these are generally focussed on Lough Melvin and Eagles Rock. Parts of this LCT provide the foreground to protected views of the lake and cliff features and would be especially sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. Areas within LCT 7 are highly valued as reflected in their designation and assets of recreational value of which would be easily undermined by commercial coniferous forestry.

3.10.2.5 LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **medium to high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. A large part of this LCT falls within AONB and AHVA designations and this is reflective of its importance as the setting of the upland areas and mountains. The landscape in its own right is sensitive to further commercial coniferous forestry where implemented at a scale that would further erode the farmed landscape pattern. In this regard, there would be limited capacity for further planting in the foothills of Dough Mountain, the Boleybrack Mountains, Slieve Anierin and Bencroy as the underlying key characteristics such as field patterns would be eroded to the extent that the character type would change to commercial coniferous forestry. which could, in addition to that existing, undermine the character of these hillsides. The Glenade and Glencar valleys to the

north west would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry due to their importance as the setting or foreground to the elevated and highly scenic mountain landscapes.

3.11 LCT 8. Valley Farmland

3.11.1 Baseline

LCT 8 Valley Farmland is an extensive landscape comprised of glacial u shaped valleys that extend between the various mountain ranges in north Leitrim and along the western side of Lough Allen.

3.11.1.1 LCT 8. Valley Farmland – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 8 Valley Farmland as follows.

‘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.’

3.11.1.2 LCT 8. Valley Farmland – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. The designations that occur within this LCT are tabulated below.

Table 3-21: LCT 8. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
A3	Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB – applies to this LCT in the north of the county
A6	The Boleybrack Mountains AONB – applies to this LCT in the vicinity of the Boleybrack Mountains
A7	Lough Allen AONB – applies to this LCT in the vicinity of Lough Allen

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Those that occur within this landscape are tabulated below.

Table 3-22: LCT 8. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V6	View towards Glenade Lake and Valley
V7	View towards Glenade Lake and Valley
V8	View towards Glencar Lake
V9	View towards Glencar Lake from N16 Road
V10	View towards Benbo Mountain from the outskirts of Manorhamilton
V11	View towards Lough Macnean Upper
V15	View towards Carrigeencor Lough
V16	View of Benbo and Dough Mountain from the R280 Regional Road
V18	View of Creevelea Abbey from Friarstown

3.11.1.3 LCT 8. Valley Farmland – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-23: LCT 8. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
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T6	Milltown Wood Forest Walk is located in this LCT near Manorhamilton along with Manorhamilton Heritage Trail (not mapped)
T8	Glenfarne Forest Woods Walk is located within this LCT in Glenfarne, south of Thur Mountain
T9	The Miner's Way long distance walking route extends through this LCT in between Corry Mountain and Slieve Anierin
T10	The Leitrim Way long distance walking route extends through this LCT on the eastern side of Lough Allen and near Manorhamilton
T16 & 17	The SNLCR Greenway extends through this landscape near Glenfarne and Dromahair
H2	Manorhamilton Castle is a heritage attraction in the town of Manorhamilton
H7	The Sean Mac Diarmada Homestead is a heritage attraction near Kiltyclogher
H17	Creevelea Abbey is promoted as a heritage attraction located in this LCT west of Dromahair

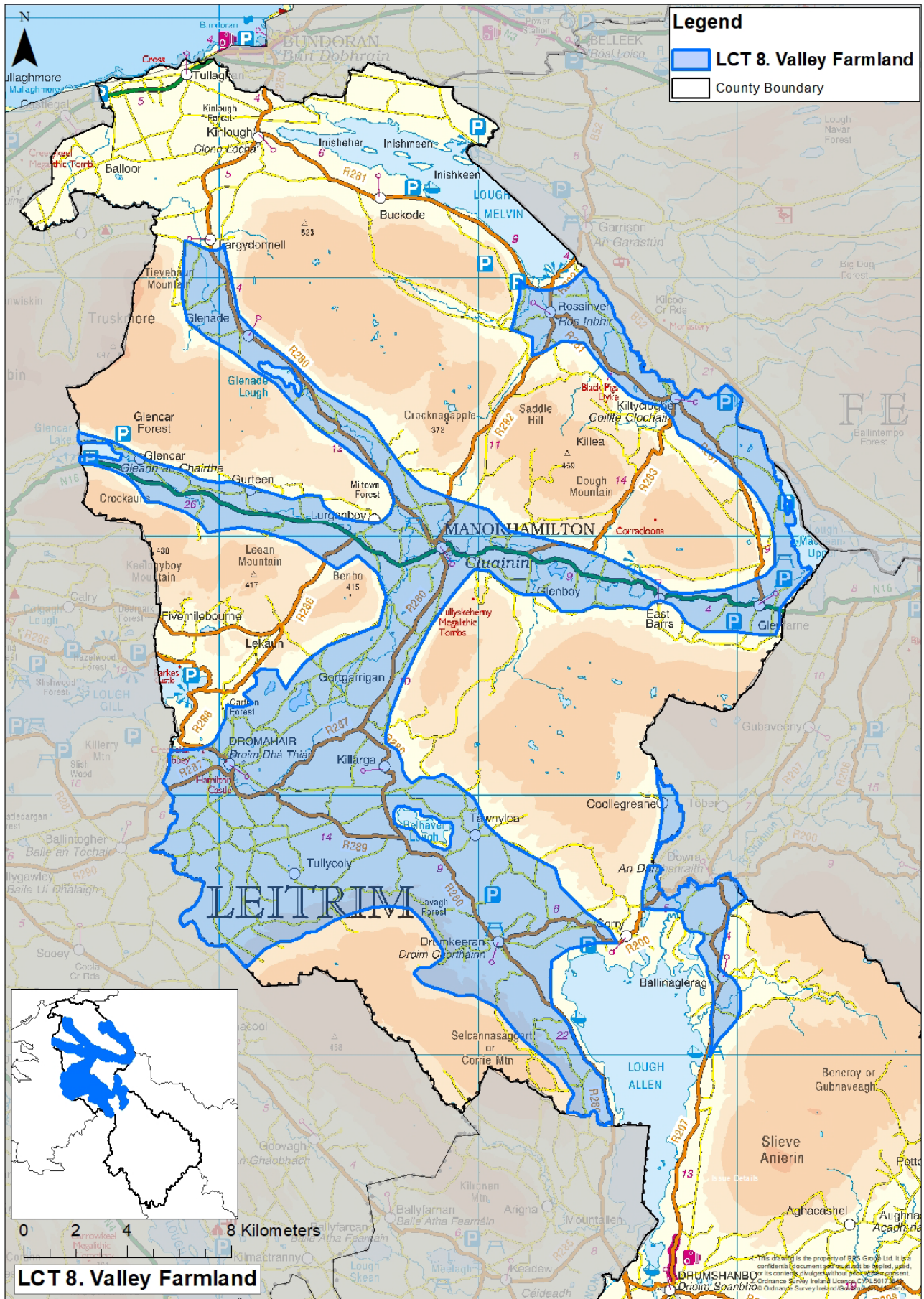
3.11.1.4 LCT 8. Valley Farmland – Existing commercial forest cover

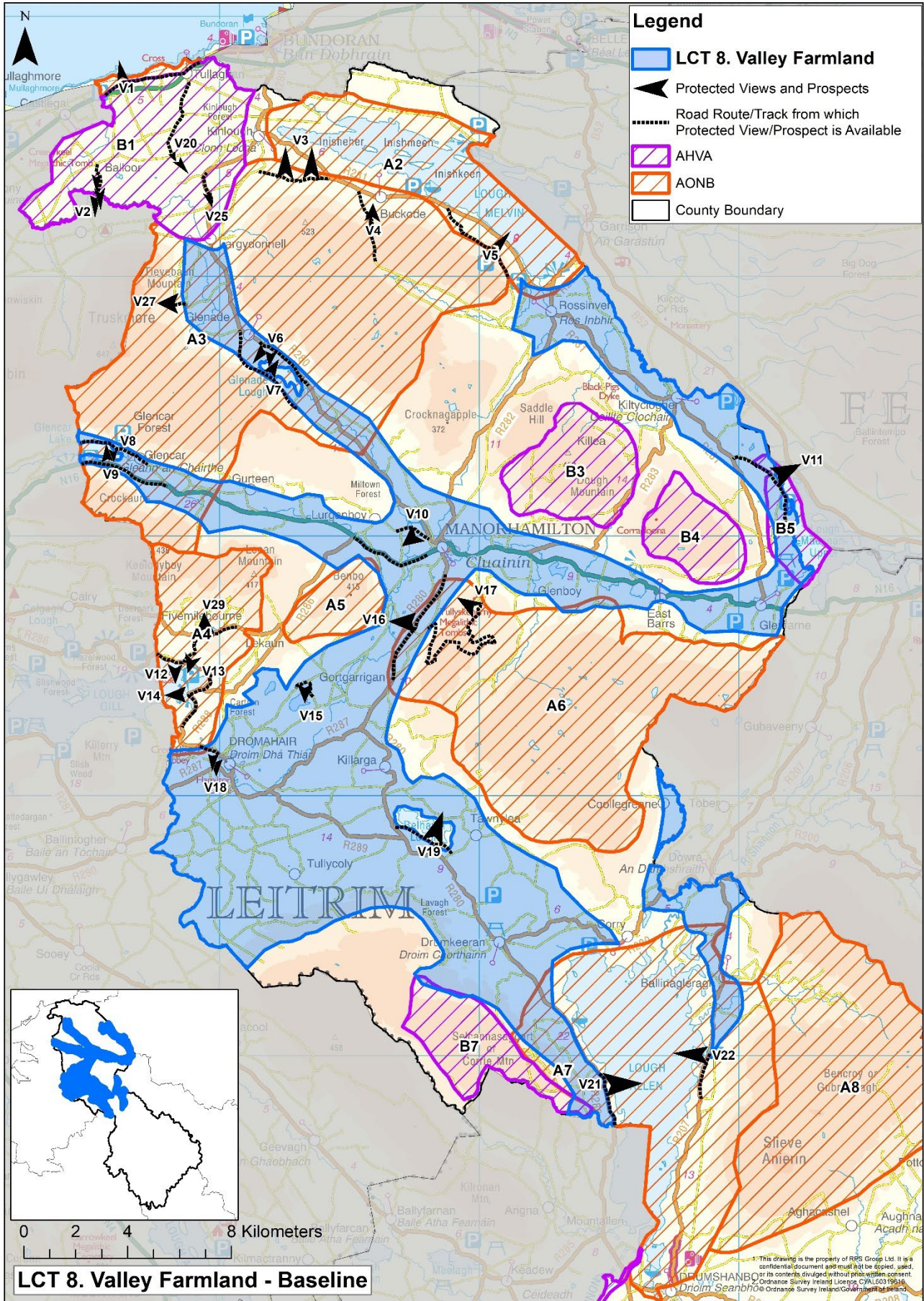
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate existing commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) of varying plot size throughout this LCT apart from the valleys Glenade and Glencar where planting is relatively scarce. Larger scale areas of planting are located in the valley farmland west and south of the Boleybrack Mountains.

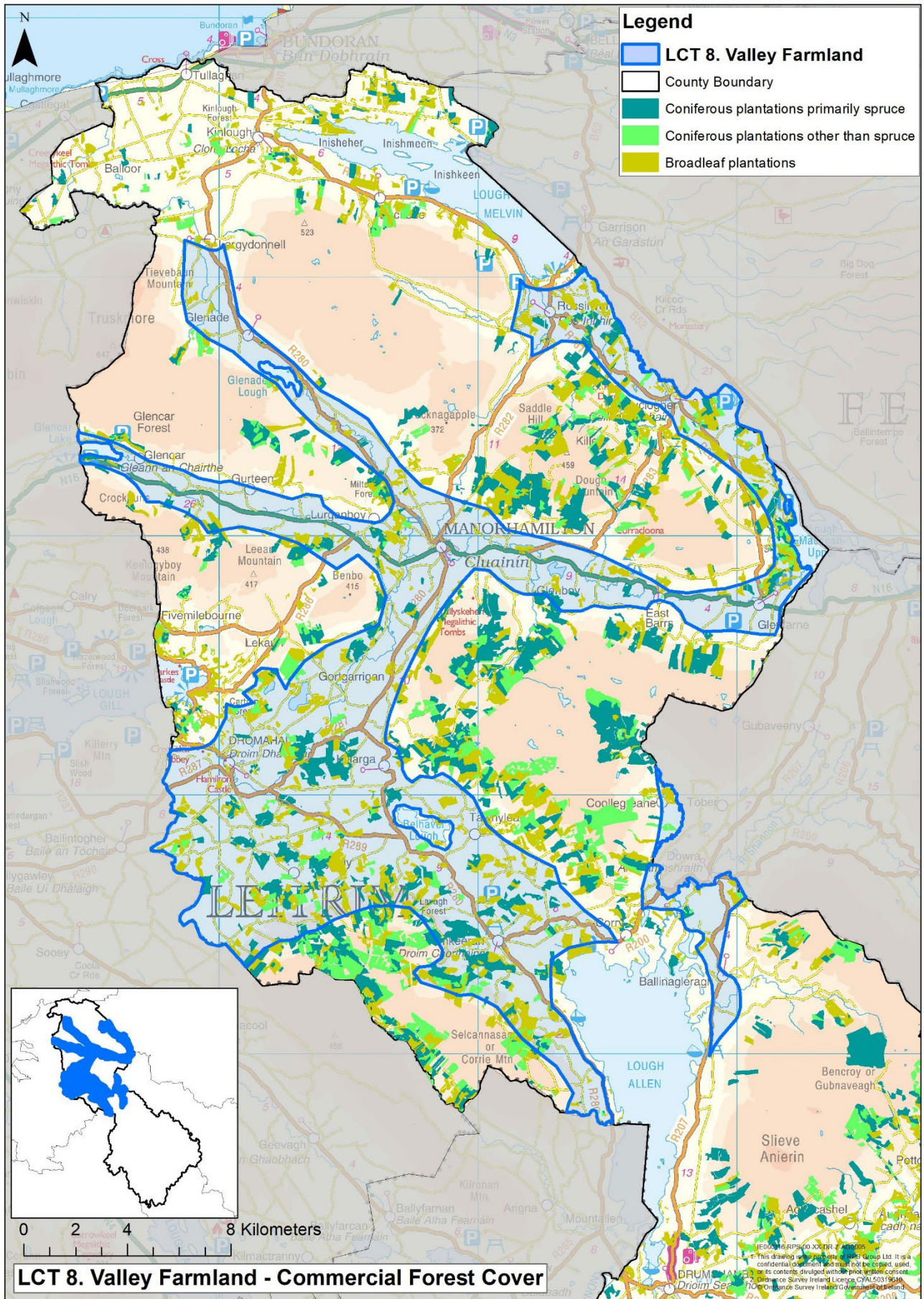
3.11.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.







3.11.2 LCT 8. Valley Farmland – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 8 Valley Farmland to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.11.2.1 LCT 8. Valley Farmland – Landform, landcover and scale

The undulating hill topography combined with mature hedgerows and woody vegetation results in an enclosed landscape which is generally of lower sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. There are areas where the field pattern is small in scale and strongly defined by hedgerows resulting in a clearly legible field pattern along the lower slopes or foothills. These areas would be more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would undermine or erode this field pattern as a key characteristic of this landscape.

3.11.2.2 LCT 8. Valley Farmland – Landscape context

This landscape occupies the valley floor within the u shaped valleys or glens of North Leitrim. Many areas within this landscape are overlooked by the more elevated landscapes including LCT 4 Cluffed Uplands and Landslips, LCT 5 Moorland Plateau, LCT 6 Moorland Hills and LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills. This landscape forms the setting for these upland areas which are generally more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. Care will be needed in the siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry so that this does not obstruct scenic views of the mountains, cliffs and valley sides.



The cliffs and the glacial corrie in the vicinity of Truskmore would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.



Arroo Mountain overlooks the valley farmland LCT in the north.



Outlook north towards the tabular hills from the North West Cycle Trail near Dromahair should be safeguarded from visual intrusion by commercial coniferous forestry.

3.11.2.3 LCT 8. Valley Farmland – Visual and perceptual criteria

The valley landscape is a busy working landscape. The active and busy characteristics are derived from farming activities and man made elements such as main road routes which extend along the length of some of these valleys along with overhead powerlines. The busy nature of the landscape results in a lower sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry however many areas within this landscape form the setting or foreground to the more elevated mountain skylines and cliffs along with highly scenic lakes. These areas are generally more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.



The distinctive mountain skyline of Benbo as viewed from Manorhamilton.



Glencar Lake with the steep mountain peaks (Doons and Crockauns) in the background.

3.11.2.4 LCT 8. Valley Farmland – Landscape Value

Most of this LCT lies outside the designated AONBs and AHVAs although the outlook from this valley landscape is towards many mountains which are designated areas. As the landscape forms the valley floor to the dramatic u shaped valleys, it plays a very important role in forming the setting of the uplands and mountains and this is recognised in the many protected views and prospects located within. The landscape designations, views and prospects reflects the scenic quality of this LCT and particularly the outlook towards other designated mountain landscapes. This LCT is the valley floor celebrated in tourism literature concerning the glens of North Leitrim and features sites of cultural heritage interest such as Creevelea

Abbey, the setting of which would need to be safeguarded from commercial coniferous forestry. The value of this LCT is further recognised by the presence of long distance walking routes and tourist attractions.



The siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry needs to have regard for the landscape setting of important heritage assets including Creevelea Abbey.

3.11.2.5 LCT 8. Valley Farmland – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. Part of this LCT falls within AONB designations and a total of 9 protected views and prospects are dispersed throughout. These aspects reflect the importance of this landscape as a foreground to the skylines of the mountains and setting of lakes many of which are designated. The northern part of this landscape is especially sensitive in areas where it forms an important setting to scenic views of upland mountain landscapes and also in more tranquil areas away from roads.

The southern part of this LCT, in particular that south of Dromahair may have some limited capacity for further commercial coniferous forestry. This however would be located away from lakes and rivers and would have to be of a scale that is appropriate to the existing farmed field pattern. Opportunities for new commercial coniferous forestry could be more easily integrated into areas of the landscape that feature deciduous or mixed species woodlands and areas of scrub. Future planting would have to take account of that existing in order to avoid adverse cumulative effects on landscape character.

3.12 LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland

3.12.1 Baseline

LCT 9 Drumlin Farmland occupies an expansive farmed landscape in south County Leitrim.

3.12.1.1 LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 9 Drumlin Farmland as follows.

‘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.’

3.12.1.2 LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Most of this LCT is undesignated. Small areas of this LCT are designated as tabulated below.

Table 3-24: LCT 9. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
A7	Lough Allen AONB – applies to a small area on the south eastern side of Lough Allen.
B2	Gulladoo Lake and Environs AHVA – applies to a small area in the vicinity of Gulladoo Lake in the south east of the county
B6	Sheemore AHVA – applies to a small area at the foot of Sheemore Hill
B8	Laheen Lough, Kilnamar Lough and Environs AHVA – applies to small areas around these lakes in the south east of the county.
B9	Lough Scur, St. John’s Lough and Environs AHVA – applies to small areas of landscape in the vicinity of these lakes.
B10	Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA – applies to small areas of this landscape in the vicinity of this lake.
B11	River Shannon and Lakes AHVA – applies to small areas of this landscape near the River Shannon.

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Those that occur within this LCT are tabulated below.

Table 3-25: LCT 9. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V23	View towards Slieve Anierin and Carrickey Lough
V24	View of Slieve Anierin and Lough Scur from the R209 Regional Road
V28	View towards Sheemore from the outskirts of Leitrim

3.12.1.3 LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-26: LCT 9. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
T1	Acres Lake Boardwalk
T18	Bothar na Naomh
H16	Fenagh Abbey

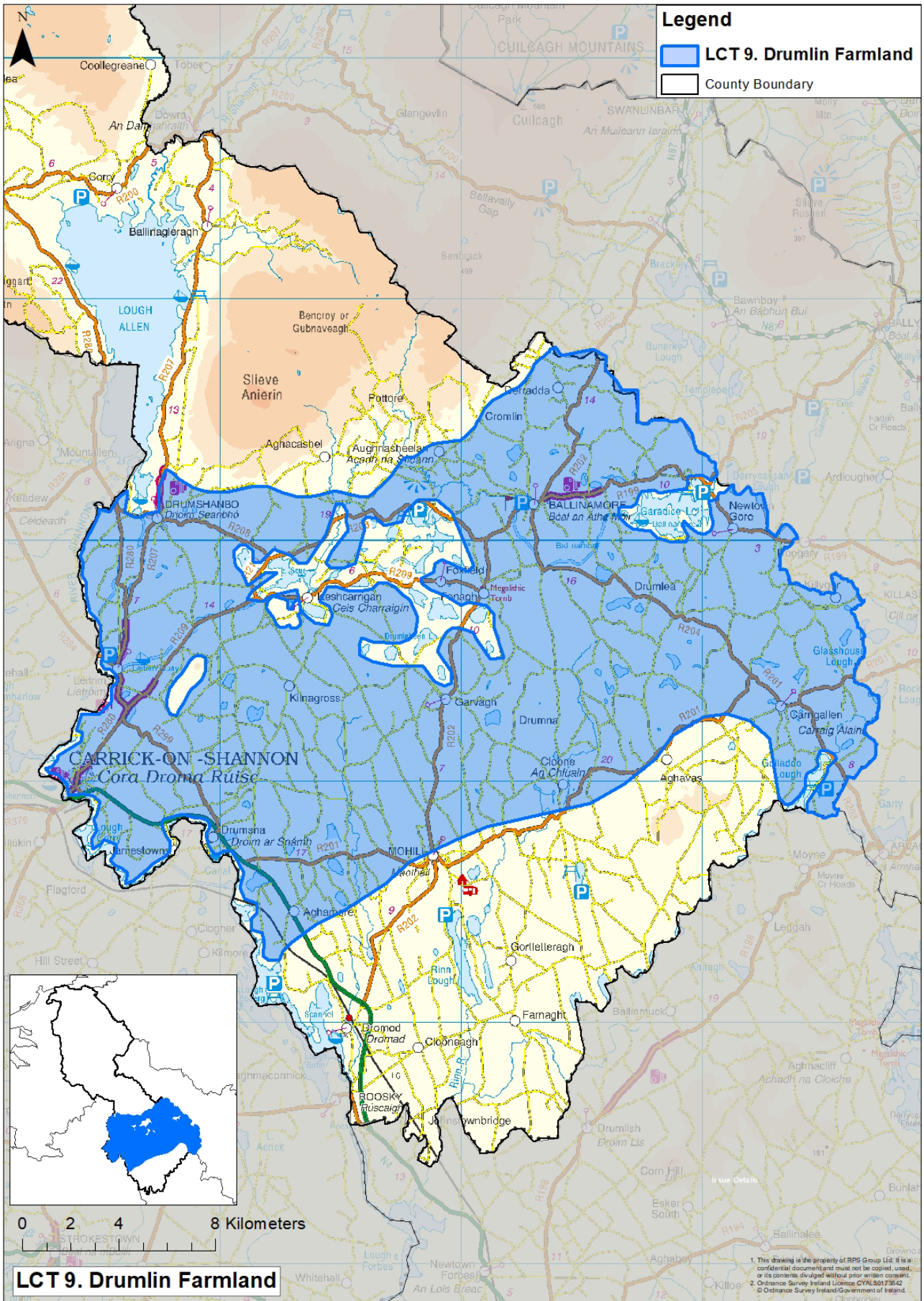
3.12.1.4 LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland – Existing commercial forest cover

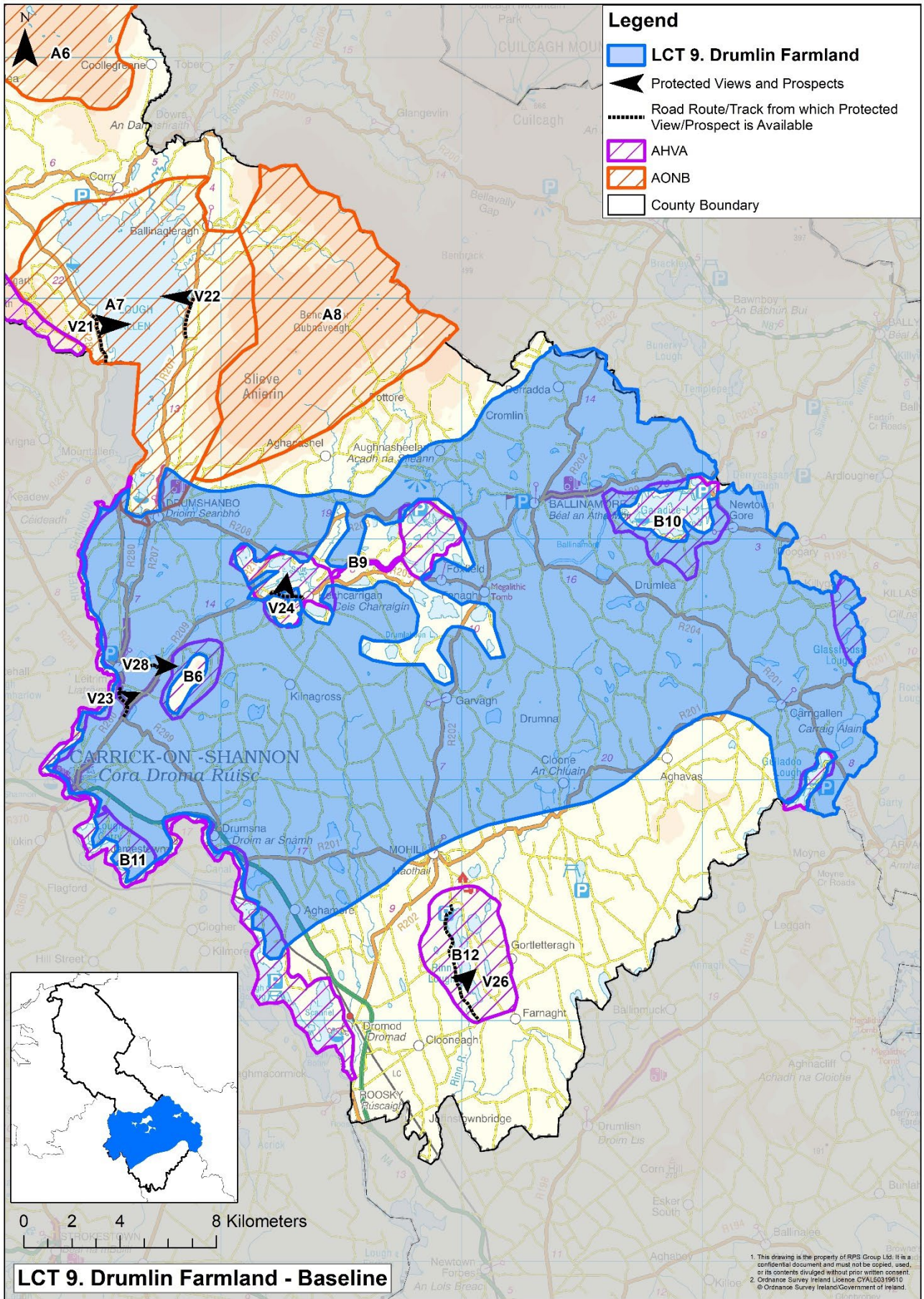
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate the presence of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) of varying size dispersed throughout this LCT. These plantations are relatively abundant throughout.

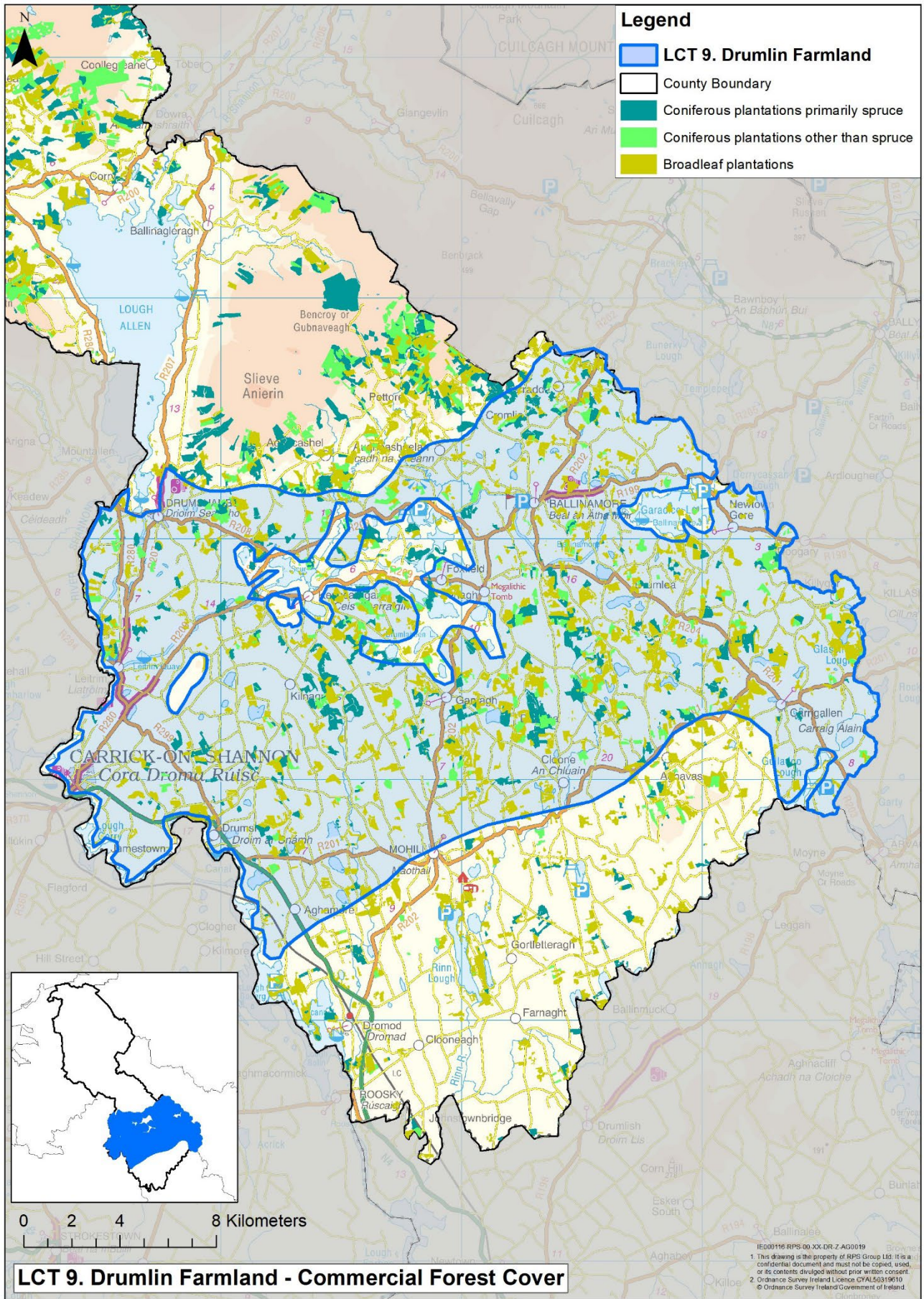
3.12.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.







3.12.2 LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 9 Drumlin Farmland to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.12.2.1 LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland – Landform, landcover and scale

The topography and landcover in this LCT, comprised of drumlin hills and mature hedgerows results in an enclosed landscape which is of lower sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. The relative scarcity of distinctive mountain peaks or more complex landforms also results in a lower sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. Parts of this landscape in the north, however, are within the setting of Slieve Anierin and as a result, these areas would be more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would potentially screen or obstruct views of the mountain skyline. There are areas within this landscape where a strong and distinctive pastoral farmland pattern is present and strengthened by the presence of hedgerows. These areas would be more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would undermine the scale and pattern in the landscape as key characteristics. The pastoral farmland landcover has and could continue to be eroded by introduction of commercial coniferous forestry as a large scale plantation and there is evidence of this in the landscape of today.



Areas of farmland with strongly defined field patterns are more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.12.2.2 LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland – Landscape context

This landscape comprises an extensive area of the lowlands of South Leitrim. The northern part forms part of the setting or foreground to the mountain landscape further north of Slieve Anierin. Areas of this landscape in the west form the setting of the hill landscapes of Sheemore and Sheebeg. The landscape also serves as a hill farmland context to many of the smaller lakes in South Leitrim along with the River Shannon. Many of these water bodies are designated landscapes (AHVAs). The areas within the setting of Slieve Anierin, Sheemore and Sheebeg and areas that surround the lakes along with margins of the River Shannon are more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.



Sheemore with Carrickevy Lough in the foreground, south of Leitrim village – areas within the setting of lakes and distinctive hills are highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.12.2.3 LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland – Visual and perceptual criteria

The landscape features few distinctive skylines however it does form the setting of the mountains further north including Slieve Anierin. This LCT is also important to the setting of Sheemore as an important hilltop focal point of cultural heritage value and AHVA. A sense of wilderness is not apparent in this working farmed landscape however it is rural with little by way of detracting built elements apart. In this regard it is sensitive to further commercial coniferous forestry.



Views towards Slieve Anierin are available near Eslinbridge.

3.12.2.4 LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland – Landscape Value

The landscapes associated with the lakes and the River Shannon are designated AHVAs and this reflects the high landscape and scenic quality of these areas. The protected views within this LCT reflect the value of particular features such as lakes and the hilltop at Sheemore. The landscape is valued by recreational walkers on trails and visitors at points of interest. The settlement of Fenagh features the ruins of an old Abbey and graveyard. The small settlement along with the lake is promoted as a point of interest. The settlement and its wider setting would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.



Ruins of Fenagh Abbey. The settlement and wider setting and lake would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.12.2.5 LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **low** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. A relatively small proportion of this LCT falls within AONB and AHVA designations and a total of 3 protected views and prospects are located with the setting of the designated areas. The majority of the LCT is undesignated. The landform and landcover in many areas of this LCT results in an enclosed landscape which has capacity to accommodate further commercial coniferous forestry. The extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry as referred to in the baseline, needs to be carefully considered in the planning of future forestry to avoid undermining the pastoral landcover and drumlin hills as key characteristics of this LCT. The areas within the vicinity of Sheemore, Slieve Anierin and areas surrounding the lakes and along river margins would be of higher sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.13 LCT 10. Major Loughs

3.13.1 Baseline

There are 5 occurrences of LCT 10 Major Loughs within County Leitrim. These include:

- Lough Melvin;
- Lough Macnean Upper;
- Glencar Lake;
- Lough Gill; and
- Lough Allen.

3.13.1.1 LCT 10. Major Loughs – Landscape Character Description

The 'County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment' described LCT 10 Major Loughs as follows.

'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.'

3.13.1.2 LCT 10 Major Loughs – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The 'County Leitrim Landscape Designations' report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. The entire LCT comprises a series of water bodies which are designated as tabulated below.

Table 3-27: LCT 10. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
A2	Lough Melvin AONB
A3	Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB - applies to Glencar Lake
A4	Lough Gill, Lissan Mountain and Environs AONB – applies to Lough Gill
A7	Lough Allen AONB
B5 -	Lough Macnean Upper and Environs AHVA

The 'County Leitrim Views and Prospects' report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Those of relevance to the lakes are tabulated below.

Table 3-28: LCT 10. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V3	View towards Lough Melvin and Donegal Bay
V4	View of Lough Melvin from Aghavoghil
V5	View of Lough Melvin
V8	View towards Glencar Lake
V9	View towards Glencar Lake from N16 Road
V11	View towards Lough Macnean Upper
V12	View of Lough Gill from the R286 Regional Road
V13	View of Lough Gill from Carrickanurroo
V14	View of Lough Gill from the R288
V21	View towards Lough Allen from the R280 - These views are attained against the backdrop of Slieve Anierin

3.13.1.3 LCT 10. Major Loughs – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-29: LCT 10. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
-	The lakes are enjoyed by visitors travelling through the landscapes associated with these water bodies.

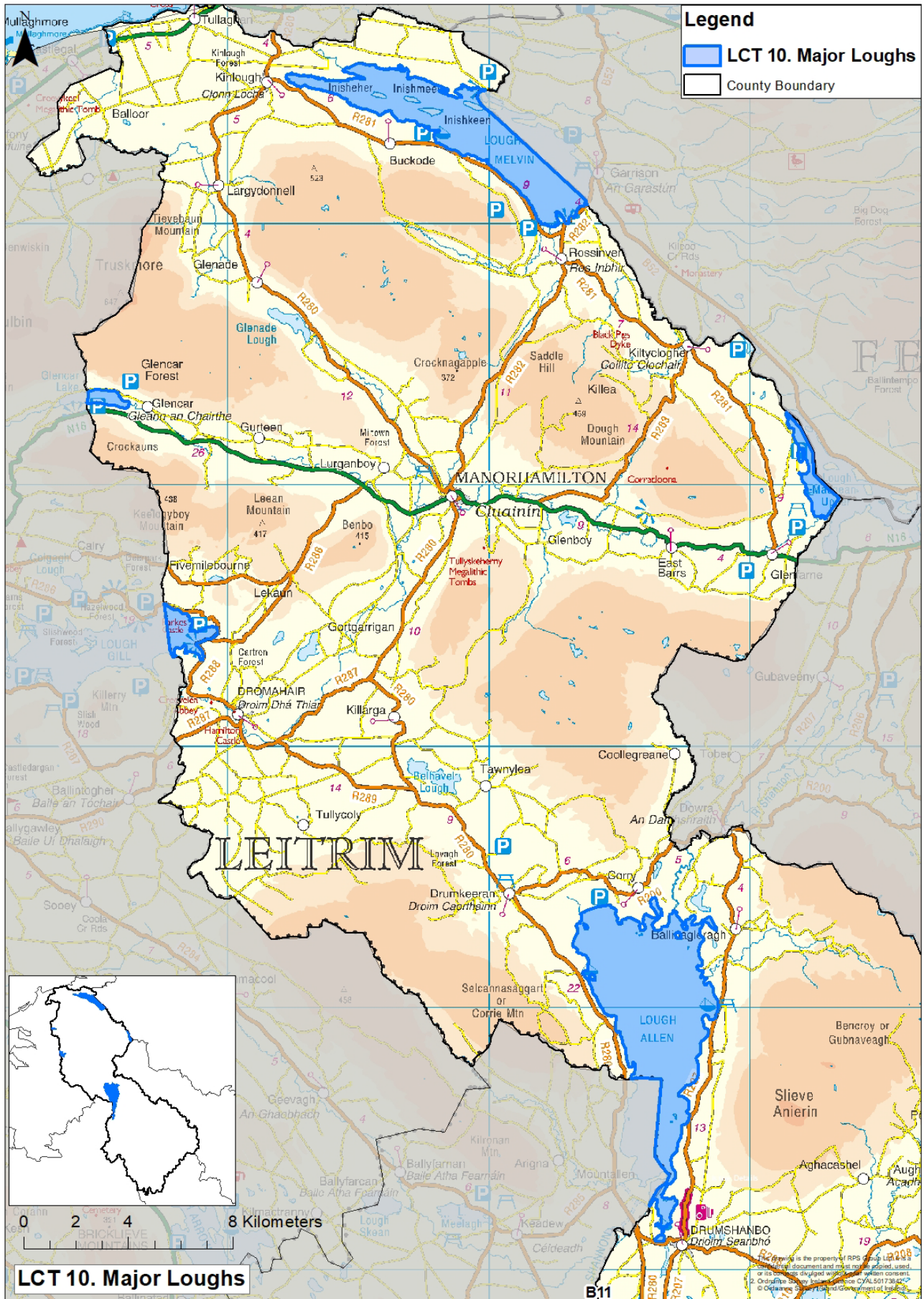
3.13.1.4 LCT 10. Major Loughs – Existing commercial forest cover

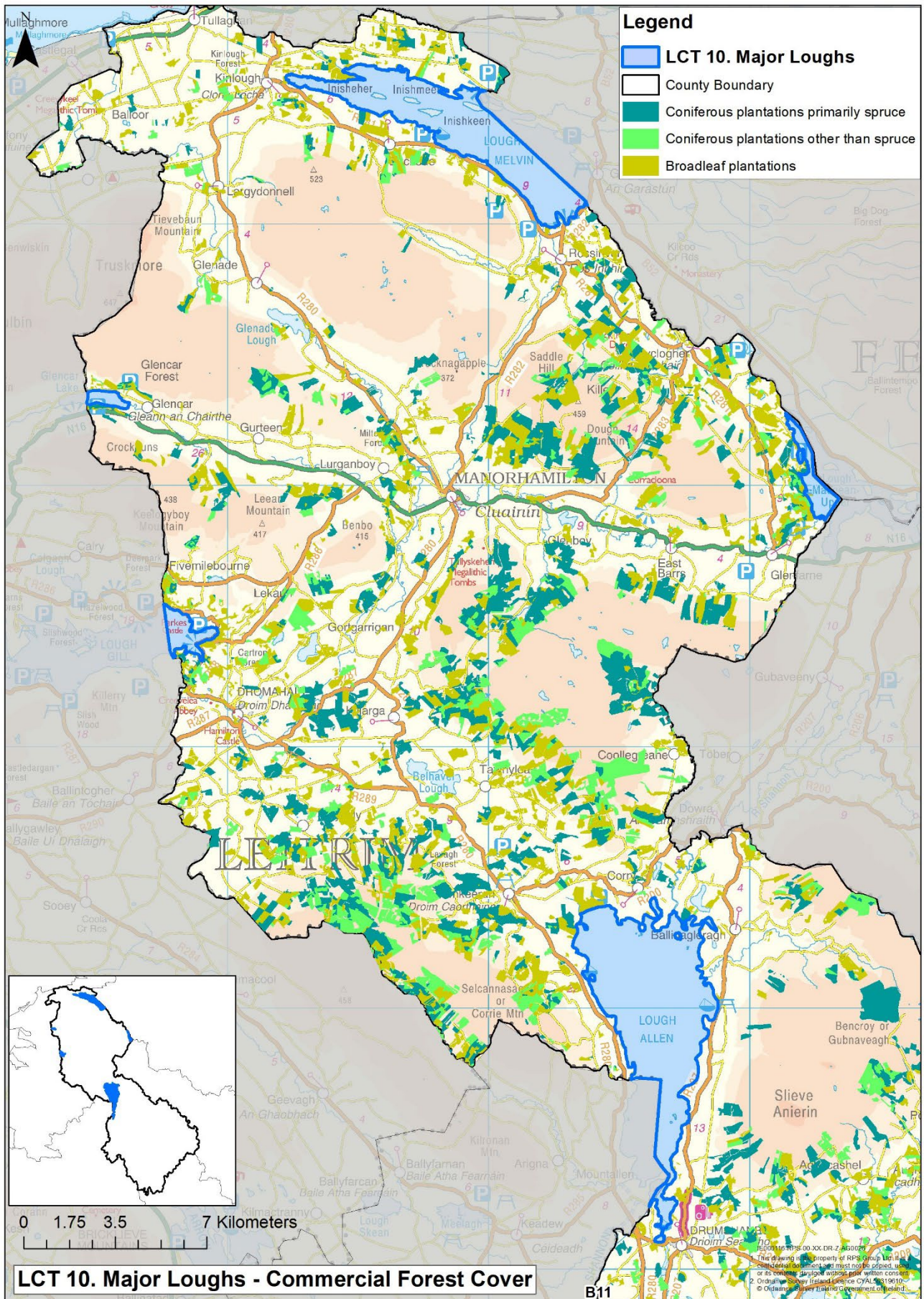
This LCT relates specifically to the water bodies associated with the lakes where commercial forest cover is absent. The presence of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) in the adjacent LCTs is described under each individual LCT and is of relevance to these LCTs and their connection with the various lakes in County Leitrim.

3.13.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover adjacent to these waterbodies is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.





3.13.2 LCT 10. Major Loughs - Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

This LCT specifically includes the water bodies associated with Lough Gill, Lough Allen and Lough Melvin which are not directly relevant to the planting of commercial coniferous forestry and are excluded from further consideration. The lakes are important landscape features in the context of adjacent LCTs which form the setting and outlook to these water bodies and are considered in terms of sensitivity and the landscape capacity study overall in the context of the adjacent LCTs.

3.14 LCT 11. Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins

3.14.1 Baseline

There are 6 occurrences of LCT 11 Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins within County Leitrim. These include farmed landscapes in the vicinity of lakes as follows:

- Belhavel Lake, west of the Boleybrack Mountains;
- Lough Allen;
- A complex of lakes including Lough Scur and St John’s Lough;
- Lough Garadice;
- Lough Rynn; and
- Gulladoo Lough.

3.14.1.1 LCT 11. Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 11 Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins as follows.

‘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.’

3.14.1.2 LCT 11. Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Almost all of this LCT in the vicinity of Lough Allen falls within a designated AONB and all of this LCT in the vicinity of Lough Garadice falls within a designated AHVA. The relevant designations are tabulated below.

Table 3-30: LCT 11. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
A7	Lough Allen AONB – applies to nearly all of the LCT around Lough Allen
B9	Lough Scur, St. John’s Lough and Environs AHVA – applies to part of this landscape in the vicinity of these lakes.
B10	Lough Garadice and Environs AHVA – applies to the entire LCT in the vicinity of this lake

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Those located within this LCT are tabulated below along with V24 located outside this LCT but focused on Lough Scur.

Table 3-31: LCT 11. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V19	View towards Belhavel Lake
V21	View towards Lough Allen from the R280
V22	View of Lough Allen from the R207 Regional Road

V24	View of Slieve Anierin and Lough Scur from the R209 Regional Road
V26	View of Lough Rynn

3.14.1.3 LCT 11. Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-32: LCT 11. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
T10	The Leitrim Way long distance walking route extends through this LCT south of Lough Allen
T15	Crummy Loop Walk – in the vicinity of Lough Scur
H4	Farnought Lime Kiln – in the vicinity of Lough Rynn
H16	Fenagh Abbey - in the vicinity of Fenagh Lough

3.14.1.4 LCT 11. Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins – Existing commercial forest cover

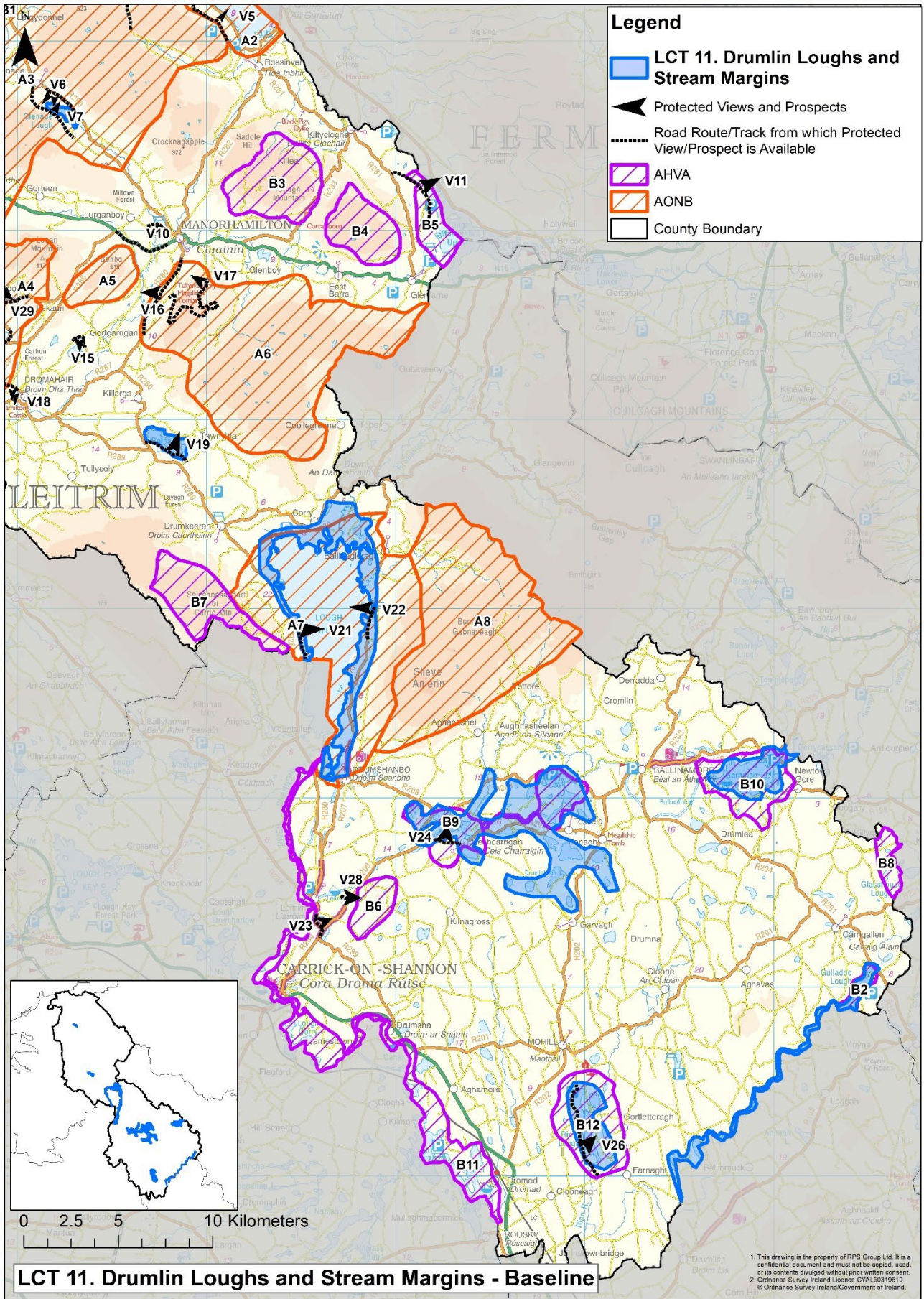
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate the presence of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above), mostly in the vicinity of Lough Scur and St John’s Lough. Very limited extents of commercial forest cover are located around Lough Rinn, Garadice Lough and Gulladoo Lough. Commercial forest cover is present in the vicinity of Glenade Lough and Belhavel Lough. Some plantations occur on the northern fringes of Lough Allen.

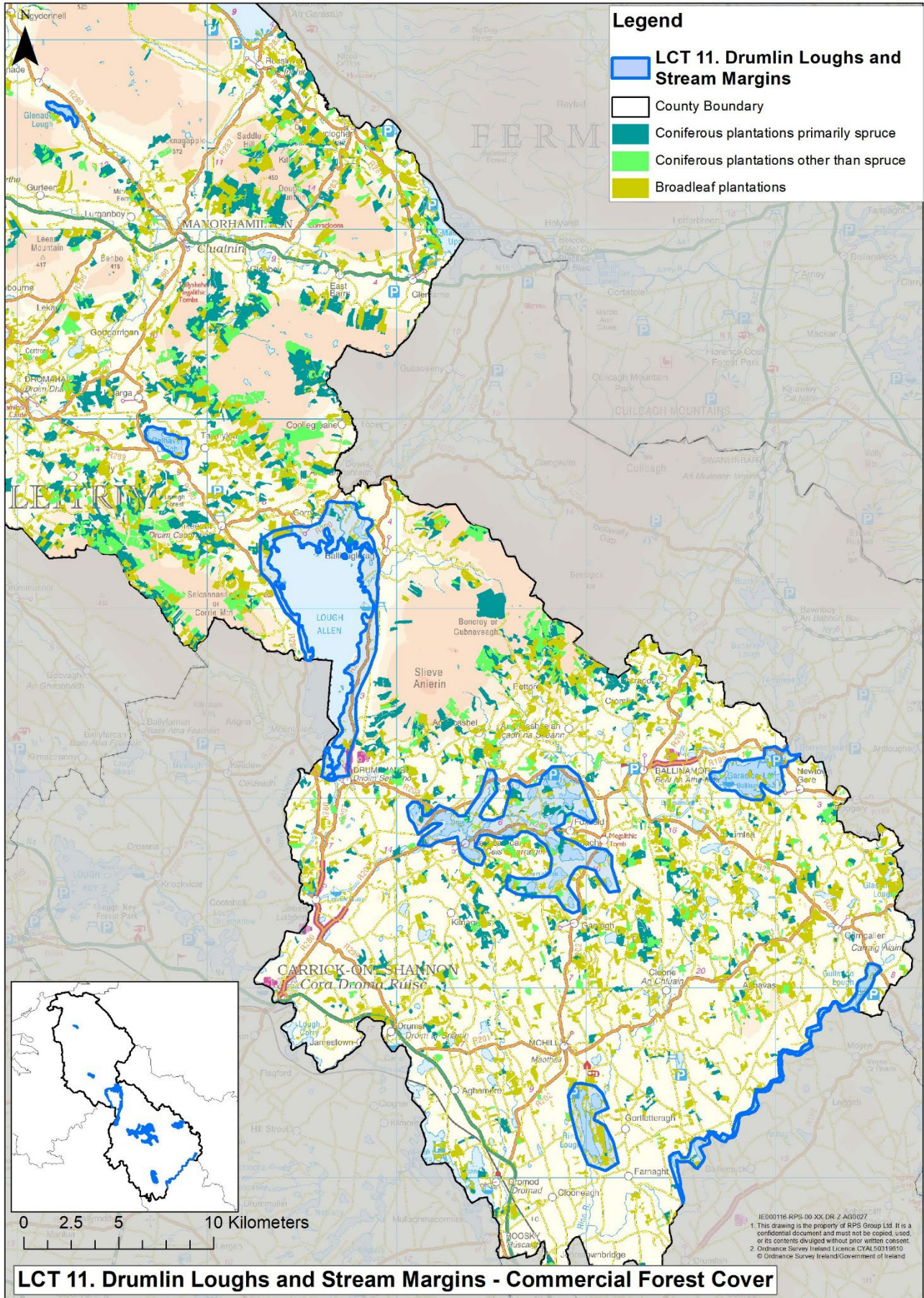
3.14.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover within and adjacent to this LCT is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.







3.14.2 LCT 11. Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 11 to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.14.2.1 LCT 11. Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins – Landform, landcover and scale

The gently undulating landform and wooded landcover are characteristics that are associated with a lower sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. In regard to this particular LCT, the gently undulating farmland is usually located close to the margins of a lake which would be more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. The lakes feature undulating margins, with distinctive promontories islands and crannogs. These landforms are complex and are highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. Open areas of bog and marsh are also of higher sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry.



Lough Garadice is a designated AHVA for which, further commercial coniferous forestry is not recommended in proximity to the lake.



Margins of Lough Sallagh are sensitive to the introduction of additional commercial coniferous forestry.

3.14.2.2 LCT 11. Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins – Landscape context

Areas within this LCT, especially in the vicinity of Belhavel Lake and Lough Allen are visually connected with nearby mountain landscapes. Belhavel Lake is within the setting of The Boleybrack Mountains and Lough

Allen is located in between Corry Mountain and Slieve Anierin. The margins of these lakes would be more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which might obscure the mountain back drop of these lakeland landscapes.



Lough Allen and the mountain skyline of Slieve Anierin.



Belhavel Lough, near Killarga and the mountain skyline of the Boleybrack Mountains.



The farmed landscape within B9 Lough Scur, St John’s Lough and Environs AHVA is overlooked by the mountain skyline further north and is highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.14.2.3 LCT 11. Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins – Visual and perceptual criteria

This LCT has a sense of tranquillity away from busy roads resulting in a higher level of sensitivity. This LCT has strong visual links with a number of lakes of varying size including Lough Allen. These present as focal points and, with the surrounding drumlin farmland, are highly scenic and enjoyed by visitors. The setting of the lakes is highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.



Gulladoo Lake and surrounding drumlin farmland, enjoyed by visitors, is highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry

3.14.2.4 LCT 11. Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins – Landscape Value

The lake margins associated with Lough Allen, Lough Scur and St John’s Lough and Lough Garadice are designated landscapes for the most part. This reflects the landscape and scenic quality of these areas which would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. All of these lakeland areas are enjoyed by visitors passing through on minor roads as well as users of The Leitrim Way and local walks. Rinn Castle on the shores of Lough Rynn including walled garden is a point of interest albeit currently run as a private hotel.



Rynn Castle and walled garden on the shores of Lough Rynn. The lake margins would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.14.2.5 LCT 11. Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **very high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. The lake margin around Lough Allen is designated as an AONB. AHVA designations apply to the margins of some of the larger lakes. These lake landscapes are the subject of 4 protected views and prospects. These designations, views and prospects reflect the landscape quality and scenic quality of this LCT. Most of the farmed landscape is in very close proximity to a lake margin and is strongly linked visually to a lake, thereby assuming an important role in the setting of the lake. Further commercial coniferous forestry would therefore not be recommended in such areas which are in close proximity to the lakes as it would obstruct these scenic features as focal points in the landscape.

3.15 LCT 12. River Floodplain

3.15.1 Baseline

LCT 12 River Floodplain occurs along the River Shannon in the south west of County Leitrim.

3.15.1.1 LCT 12. River Floodplain – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 12 River Floodplain as follows.

‘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.’

3.15.1.2 LCT 12. River Floodplain – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. The entire LCT falls within a designated AHVA as tabulated below.

Table 3-33: LCT 12. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
B11	River Shannon and Lakes AHVA – applies to the entire LCT.

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. None occur within this landscape and none outside this LCT which are focused on particular features within this landscape.

3.15.1.3 LCT 12. River Floodplain – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below. Additionally the River Shannon in Leitrim is well recognised as a recreational asset for water based activity and boating.

Table 3-34: LCT 12. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
T3	Drumhaver Bridge Loop Walk – near Battlebridge, west of Leitrim Village
T4	Drumleague Lock Loop Walk – near Battlebridge, west of Leitrim Village
T7	Derrycarne Wood, Lough Boderg Trail
T19	Anthony Trollope Trail – near Drumsna
T21	Walk through Carrick On Shannon
H3	Costello Chapel
H5	St George’s Heritage and Visitor Centre
H15	Jamestown Abbey

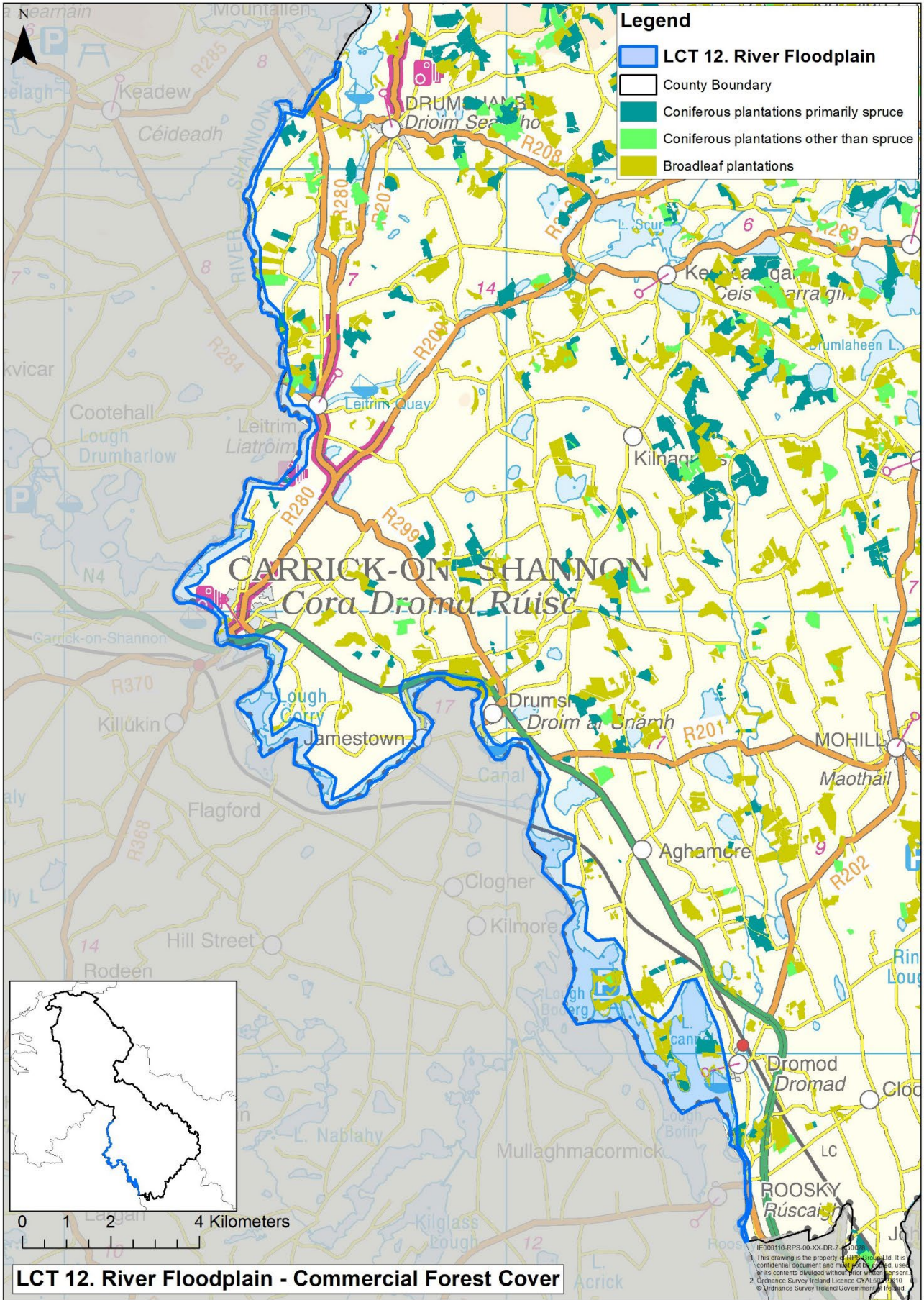
3.15.1.4 LCT 12. River Floodplain – Existing commercial forest cover

The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate limited extents of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) along the River Shannon. Commercial forest cover is more prevalent along the River Shannon floodplain between Leitrim and Drumshambo and in the vicinity of Lough Boderg near Drumod.

3.15.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover within and adjacent to this LCT is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.



3.15.2 LCT 12. River Floodplain – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 12 to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.15.2.1 LCT 12. River Floodplain – Landform, landcover and scale

The landform and features are highly distinctive owing to the unique sinuous course of the River Shannon and margins with promontories, lakes and islands present. This results in a complex landform which would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. The river margins would also be highly sensitive to future commercial coniferous forestry due to their wet grassland landcover which, as a key characteristic of this landscape, would be eroded by commercial coniferous forestry.



River Shannon at Lough Scannal. River margins or callows are sensitive due to their distinctive sinuous form and landcover of wet grassland and woodland.

3.15.2.2 LCT 12. River Floodplain – Landscape context

This LCT is located within a wider low lying farmed landscape. The outlook towards the mountains further north is particularly focused on Slieve Anierin as a focal point of interest along with the more local hill of Sheemore near Leitrim Village. Parts of this LCT which are visually connected with this mountain and hill would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.15.2.3 LCT 12. River Floodplain – Visual and perceptual criteria

Most of this LCT has a strong visual relationship to the River Shannon with shoreline, promontories and islands which would be very sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. A strong sense of tranquillity is experienced away from busy roads which contributes to the sensitivity.

3.15.2.4 LCT 12. River Floodplain – Landscape Value

The landscape associated with the River Shannon and floodplain is entirely designated as an AHVAs and this reflects the high landscape and scenic quality of this area. The landscape is valued for its scenery and outlook towards landmarks such as Sheemore and Slieve Anierin. The landscape is valued by recreational visitors including many travelling by boat.



Recreational boating facilities at Carrick on Shannon.

3.15.2.5 LCT 12. River Floodplain – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **very high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. Almost all of this LCT falls within B11 River Shannon and Lakes AHVA reflecting the scenic quality of the River Shannon and Callows at this location. Most of the LCT is sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry due to the strong visual links with the river, promontories, crannogs and islands and the high levels of tranquillity.

3.16 LCT 13. Low Limestone Outcrops

3.16.1 Baseline

There are 2 occurrences of LCT 13 Low Limestone Outcrops within County Leitrim. These include:

- Shemore; and
- Sheebeg.

3.16.1.1 LCT 13. Low Limestone Outcrops – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 13 Low Limestone Outcrops as follows.

‘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.’

3.16.1.2 LCT 13. Low Limestone Outcrops – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. The entire LCT is designated as an AHVA.

Table 3-35: LCT 13. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
B6	Sheemore AHVA – applies to the entire hill landscape of Sheemore.
B9	Lough Scur, St John’s Lough and Environs - Applies to the hill at Sheebeg which overlooks this lake system.

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. None occur within this landscape. The distinctive hilltop associated with Sheemore is the subject of one protected view located outside this LCT tabulated below.

Table 3-36: LCT 13. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V28	View towards Sheemore from the outskirts of Leitrim.

3.16.1.3 LCT 13. Low Limestone Outcrops – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-37: LCT 12. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
T22	Walking route from Leitrim Village to Sheemore

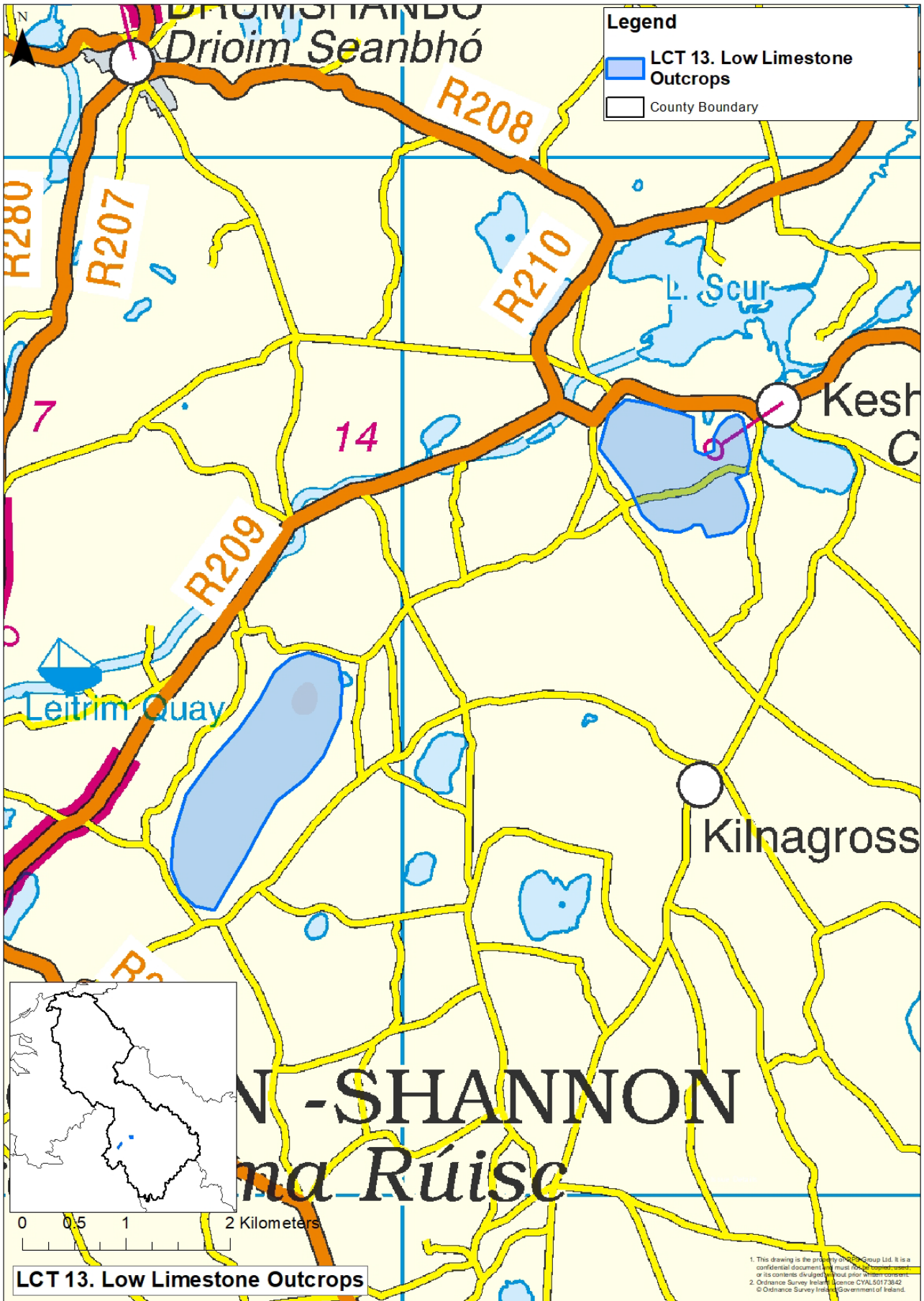
3.16.1.4 LCT 13. Low Limestone Outcrops – Existing commercial forest cover

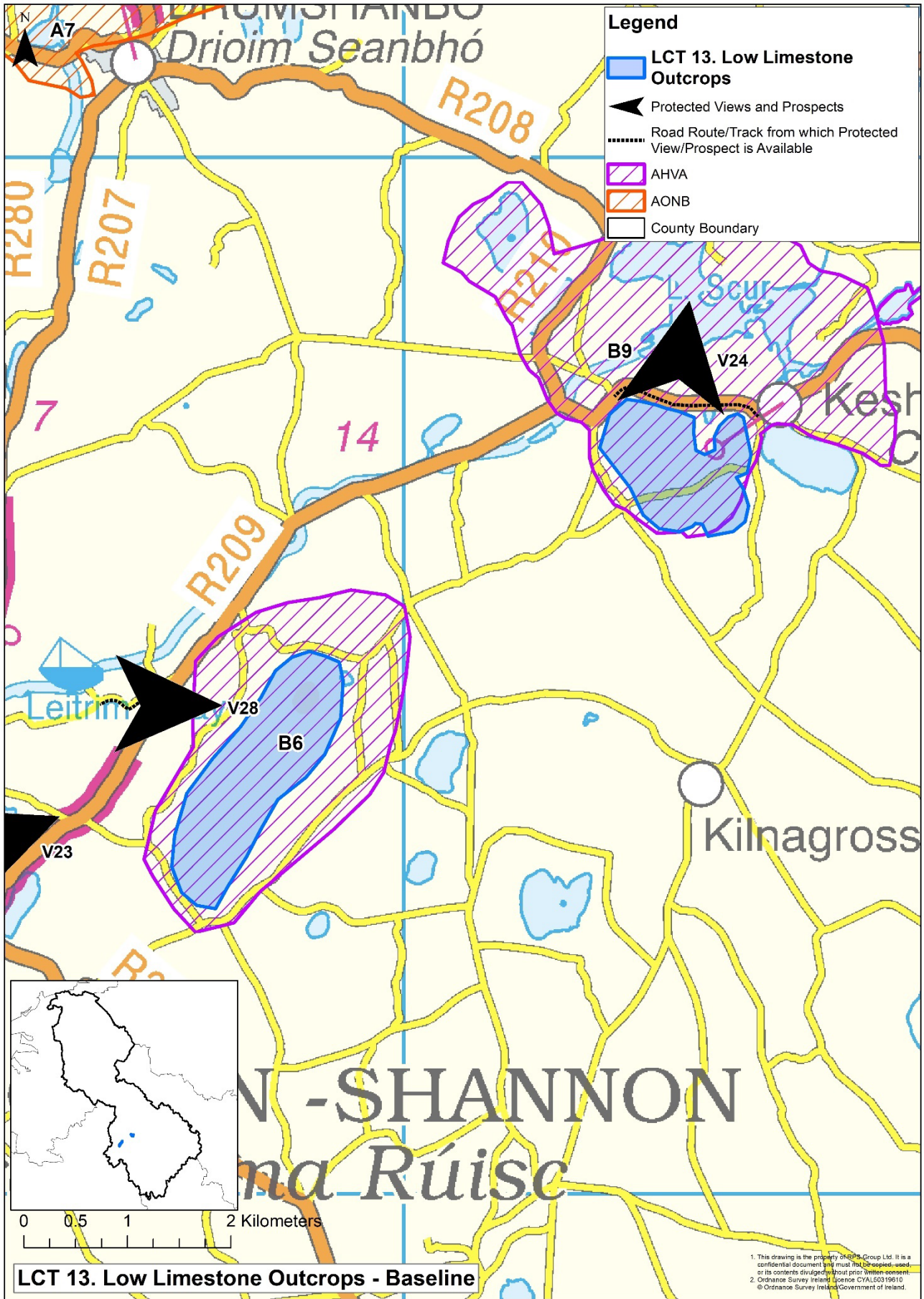
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate very limited areas of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) within this LCT. A small linear broadleaf plantation occurs on the north eastern edge of Sheemore along with two small broadleaf plantations on the western side of Sheebeg.

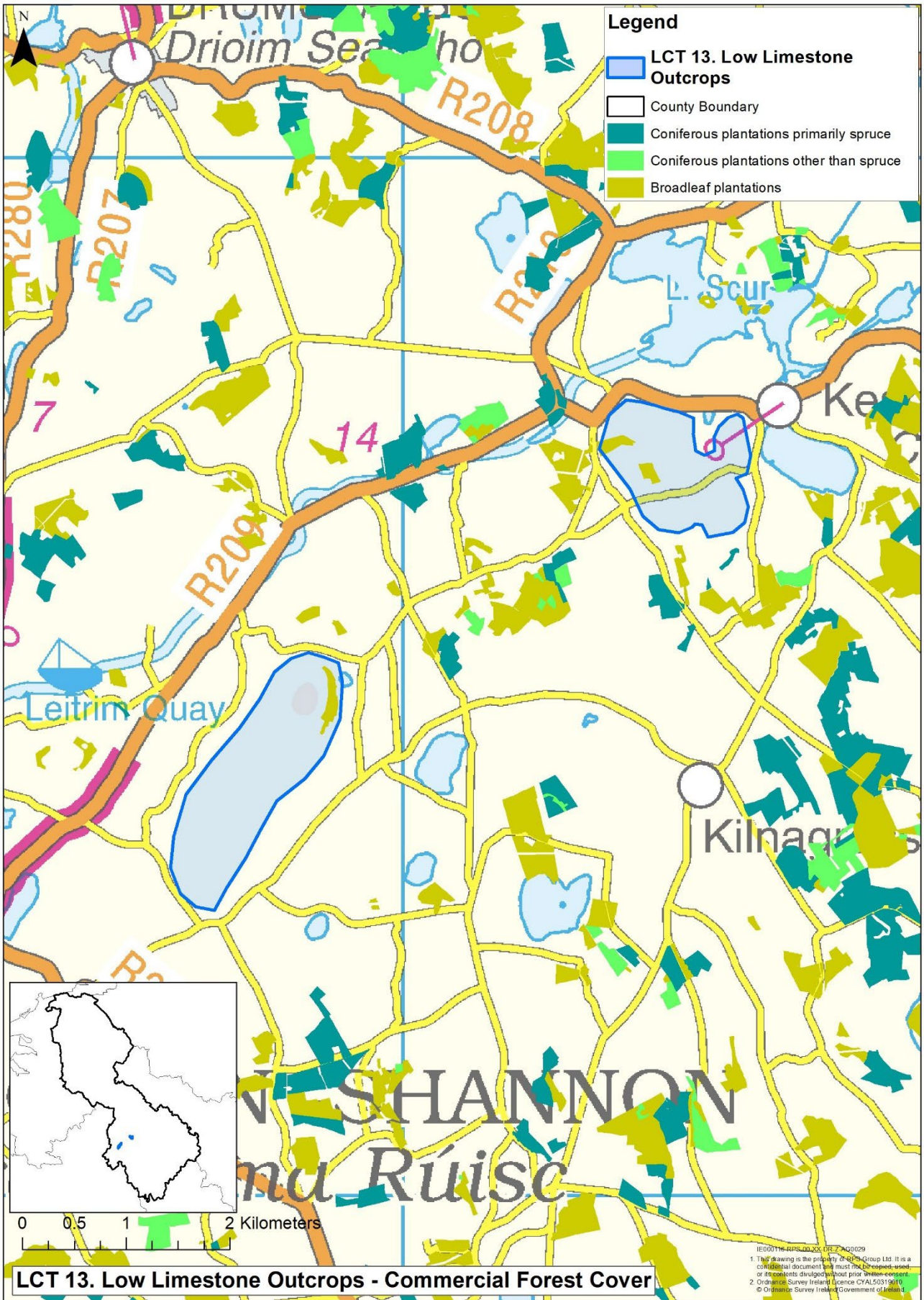
3.16.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.







3.16.2 LCT 13. Low Limestone Outcrops – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 13 to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.16.2.1 LCT 13. Low Limestone Outcrops – Landform, landcover and scale

These limestone hills with pastoral landcover and megalithic tomb at the summit, in particular, Sheemore, are highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry due to their distinctive profile. The open pastoral landcover is present throughout most of this landscape and this would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would be in conflict with the open grassland landcover as a key characteristic.

3.16.2.2 LCT 13. Low Limestone Outcrops – Landscape context

These hills, in particular Sheemore stand proud above the surrounding low lying drumlin farmland (LCT 9) which also features areas of woodland and mature hedgerows. Part of the drumlin farmland LCT 9 is important in that it forms the setting or context to these hills as outlined above for LCT 9.

3.16.2.3 LCT 13. Low Limestone Outcrops – Visual and perceptual criteria

These hills form important and culturally significant focal points enjoyed by many in the surrounding lowlands. Sheemore is the subject of a protected view, V28 View towards Sheemore from the outskirts of Leitrim.



Sheemore with its distinctive profile is a landmark and focal point of interest.

3.16.2.4 LCT 13. Low Limestone Outcrops – Landscape Value

LCT 13 is a designated landscape. This reflects its landscape quality and scenic quality associated with the distinctive hilltop features and relationship of one of these to the lakes.

3.16.2.5 LCT 13. Low Limestone Outcrops – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **very high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. The entire landscape is designated as AHVA. The hill at Sheebeg is less prominent than Sheemore however it overlooks Lough Scur, serving as a backdrop to that lake landscape. Sheemore is the subject of a protected view, V28 View towards Sheemore from the outskirts of Leitrim. The LCT is sensitive due to the distinctive landform and also

the scarcity or near absence of woodland cover. Hence commercial coniferous forestry would be very much in conflict with the key characteristics of this landscape.

3.17 LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs

3.17.1 Baseline

LCT 14 Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs occupies an area of low lying wet farmland in the south of the county.

3.17.1.1 LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 14 Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs as follows.

‘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.’

3.17.1.2 LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. The designations that occur within this LCT are tabulated below.

Table 3-38: LCT 14. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
B11	River Shannon and Lakes AHVA – applies to a small part of this LCT at The River Shannon.
B12	Lough Rynn, Lough Errew and Environs AHVA – applies to a small part of this landscape in the vicinity of Lough Rynn.

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Those that occur within this LCT are tabulated below.

Table 3-39: LCT 14. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V26	View of Lough Rynn

3.17.1.3 LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-40: LCT 14. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
T2	Keeldra Lake Lakeside Walk

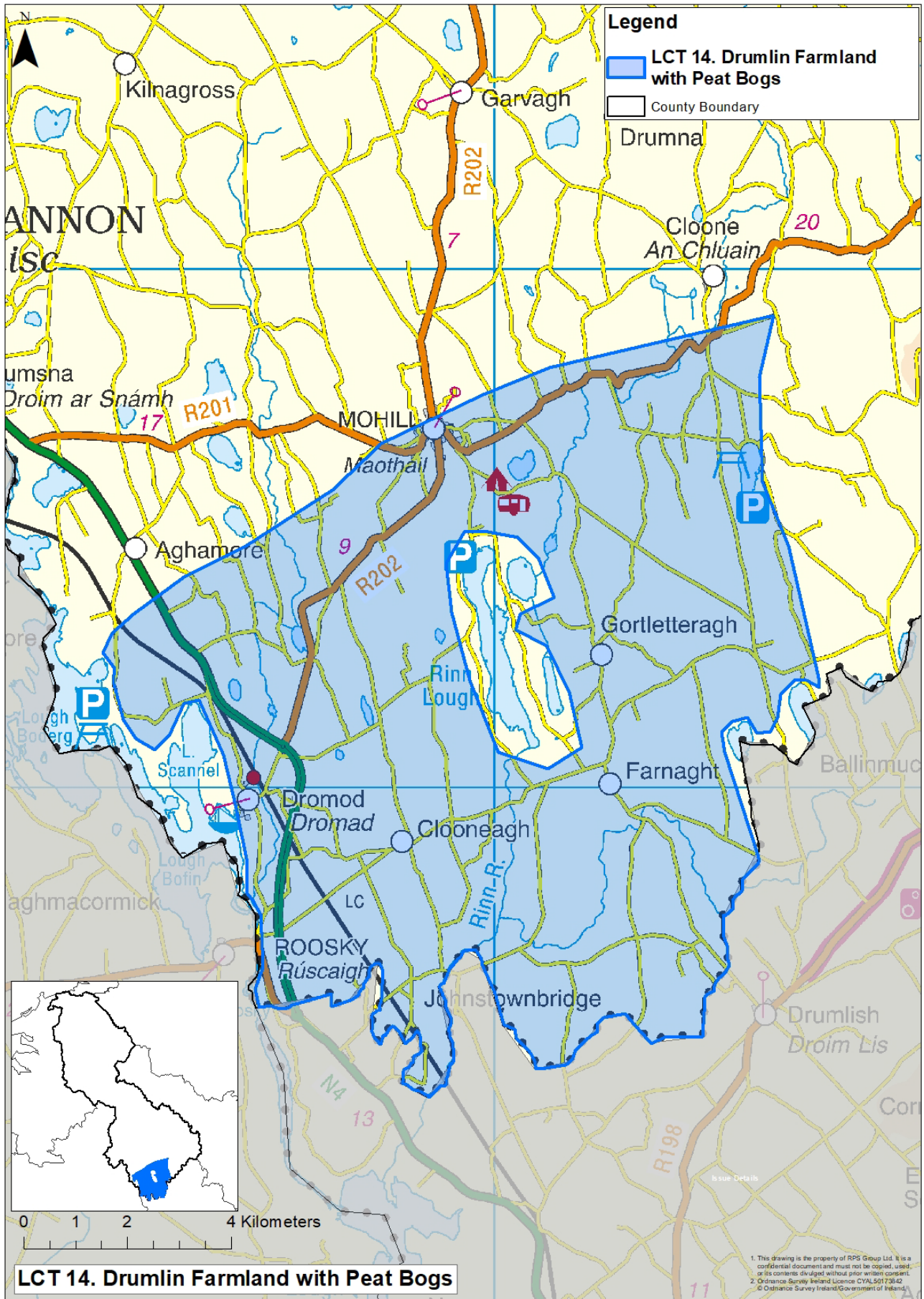
3.17.1.4 LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs – Existing commercial forest cover

The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate the presence of some commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) dispersed throughout this LCT. These plantations are not a dominant landcover type in the landscape and are relatively small. Plantations are more frequent in the north of the LCT.

3.17.1.5 Baseline Maps

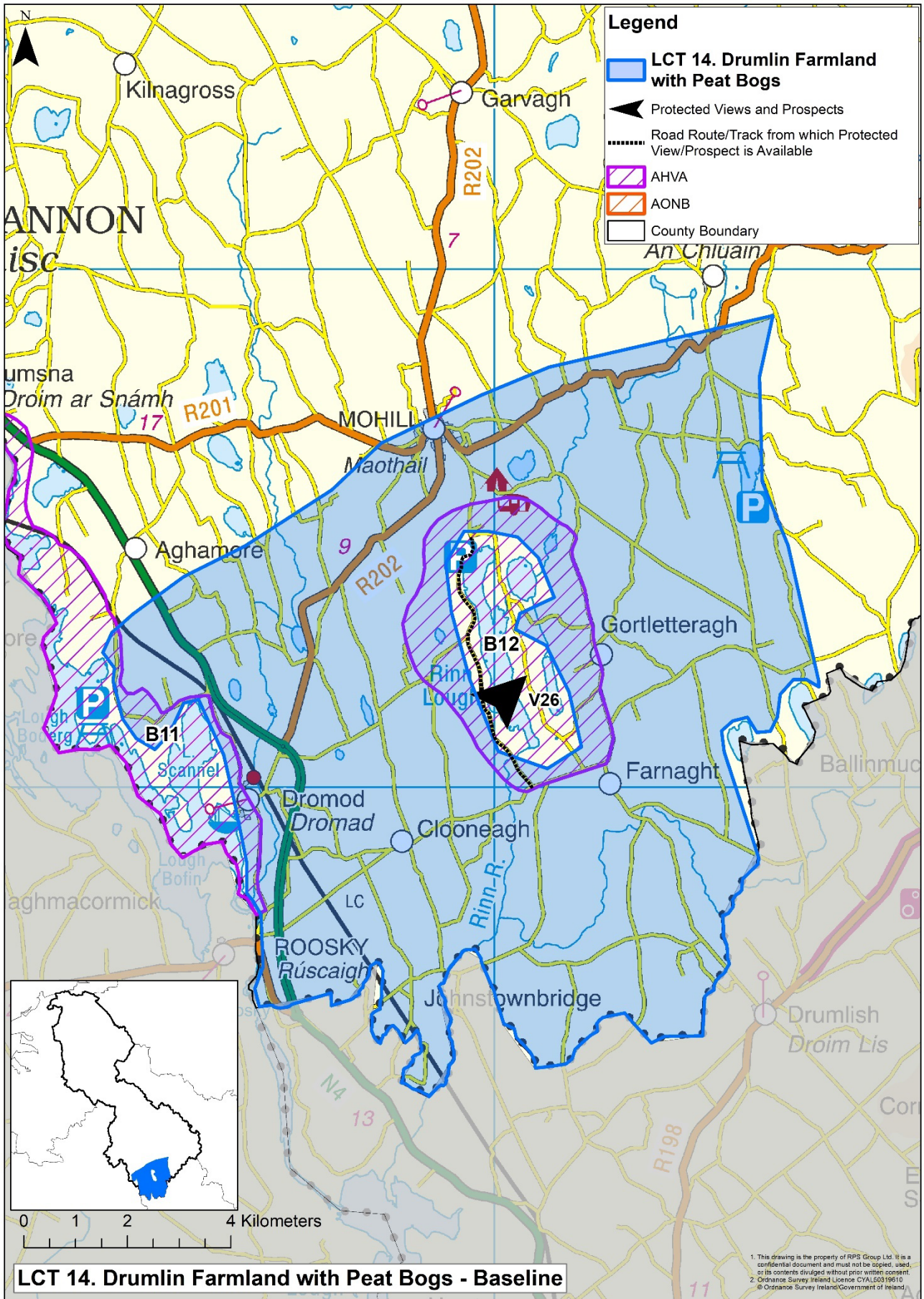
The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

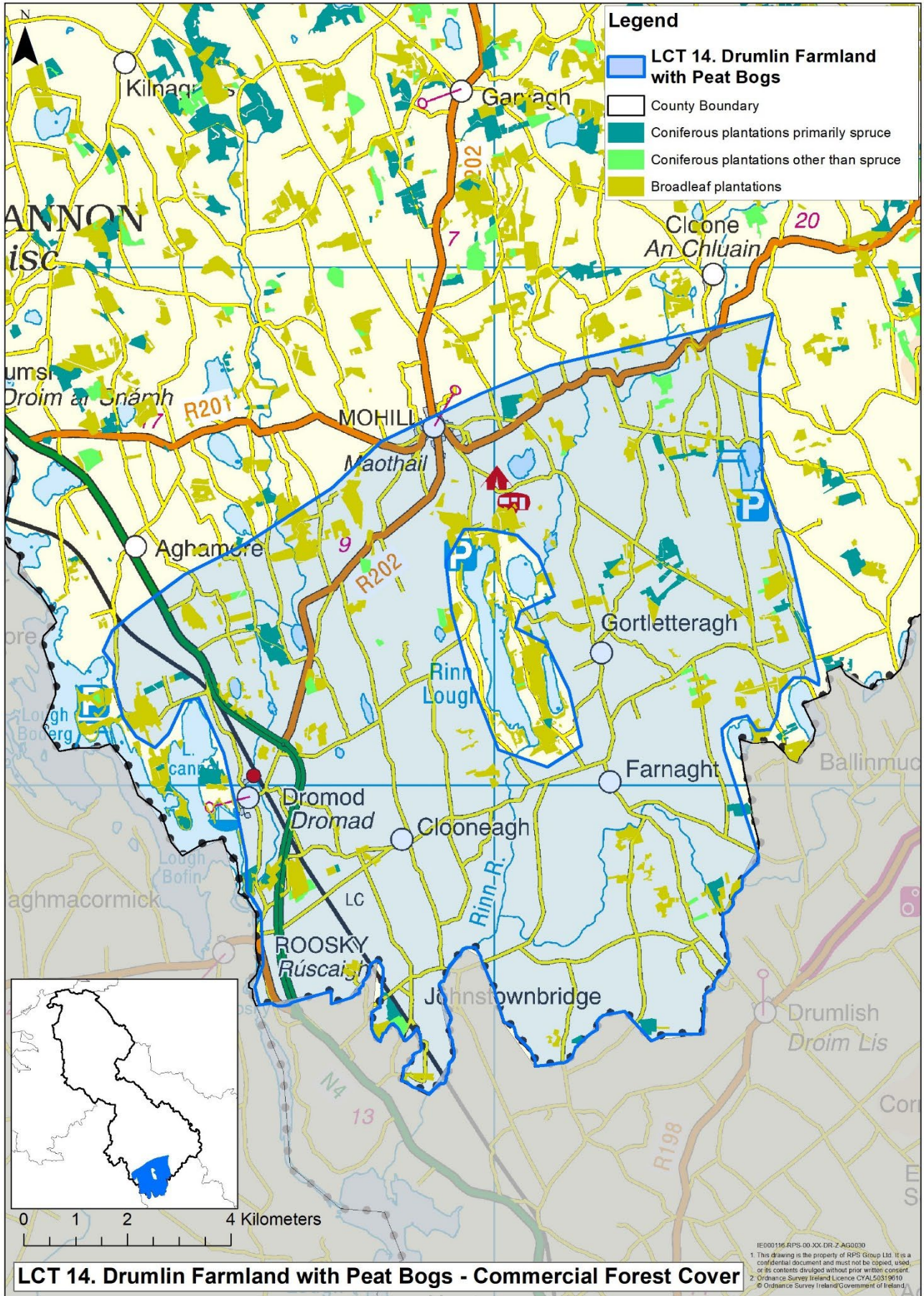
- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.



LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs

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3.17.2 LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 14 to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.17.2.1 LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs – Landform, landcover and scale

Areas of this landscape that feature gently undulating lowland landform with woodland and hedgerow cover may be of lower sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. Areas with a distinct, small scale field pattern would be more sensitive as this characteristic could be easily eroded by new commercial coniferous forestry. Areas of this landscape comprised of bog and wetland areas with loughs would be of highest sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry together with areas in close proximity to lakes.



Farmed landscape with woodland has some capacity for commercial coniferous forestry.



Areas of farmland with small scale field patterns are more sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.17.2.2 LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs – Landscape context

This landscape along with part of the adjacent LCT 11 Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins contributes to the setting for the River Shannon, Lough Rynn along with a number of small lakes. These areas of farmland would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would undermine their character and the backdrop that such areas contribute to the lakes and rivers.

3.17.2.3 LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs – Visual and perceptual criteria

This is a working landscape, albeit relatively tranquil away from busy roads. It is especially tranquil close to lake margins. Lakes are important focal points and the landscape around these is of some scenic quality and sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.17.2.4 LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs – Landscape Value

LCT 14 in the vicinity of the River Shannon and Lough Rynn is a designated AHVA and this reflects the landscape quality and scenic quality of these areas which would be sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.17.2.5 LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **low** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. The majority of this LCT lies outside any of the designations apart from small areas around the margin of Lough Rynn and the River Shannon. The LCT is highly sensitive in the vicinity of these water bodies and smaller lakes along with open areas of peat bog.

3.18 LCT 15. Undulating Hill Farmland

3.18.1 Baseline

LCT 15 Undulating Hill Farmland occupies a large area of farmland in south County Leitrim.

3.18.1.1 LCT 15. Undulating Hill Farmland – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 15 Undulating Hill Farmland as follows.

‘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.’

3.18.1.2 LCT 15. Undulating Hill Farmland – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. There are none within this LCT. Similarly, the ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029 of which none occur within this landscape.

3.18.1.3 LCT 15. Undulating Hill Farmland – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-41: LCT 15. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
H8	Margaret of New Orleans Birthplace

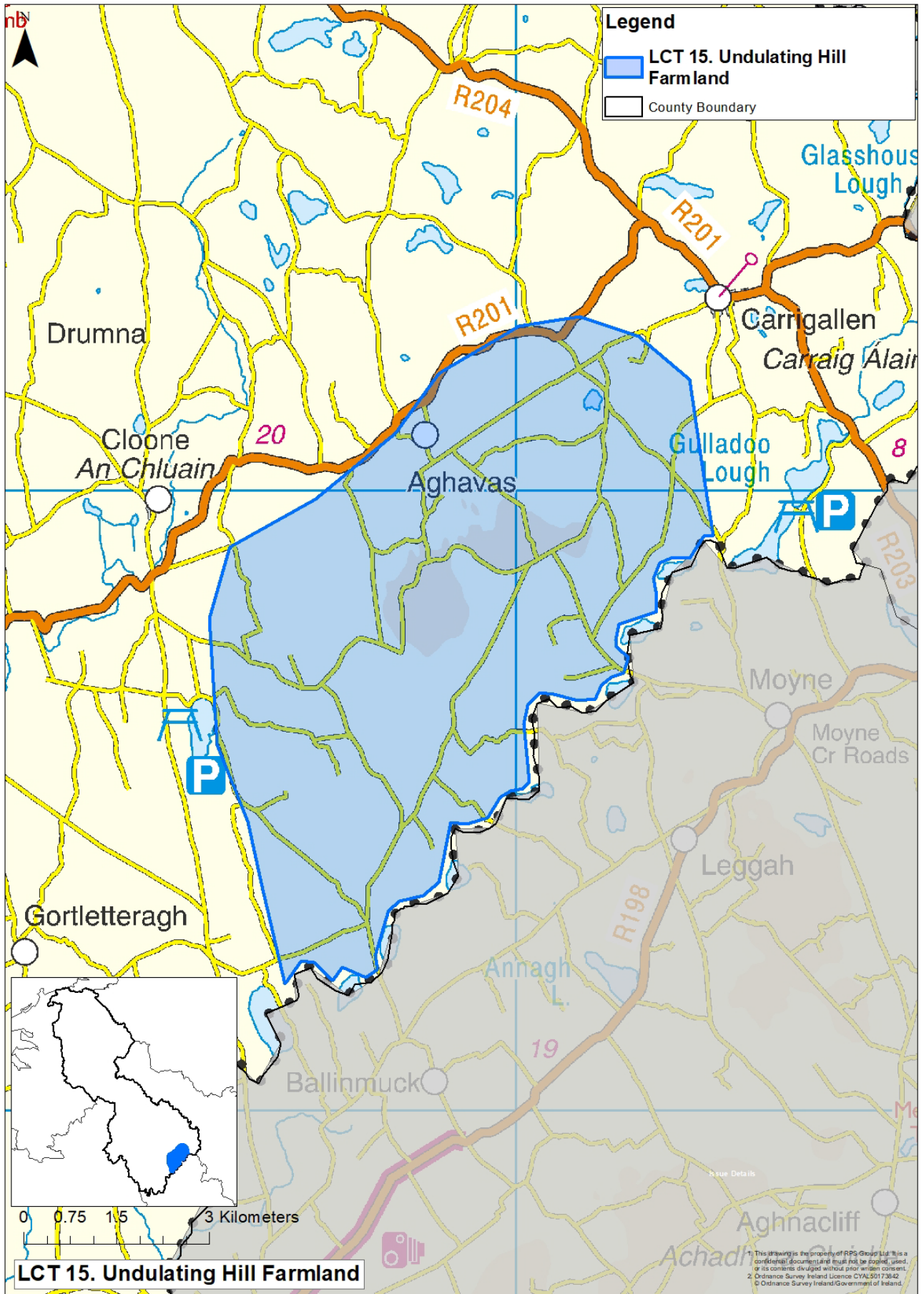
3.18.1.4 LCT 15. Undulating Hill Farmland – Existing commercial forest cover

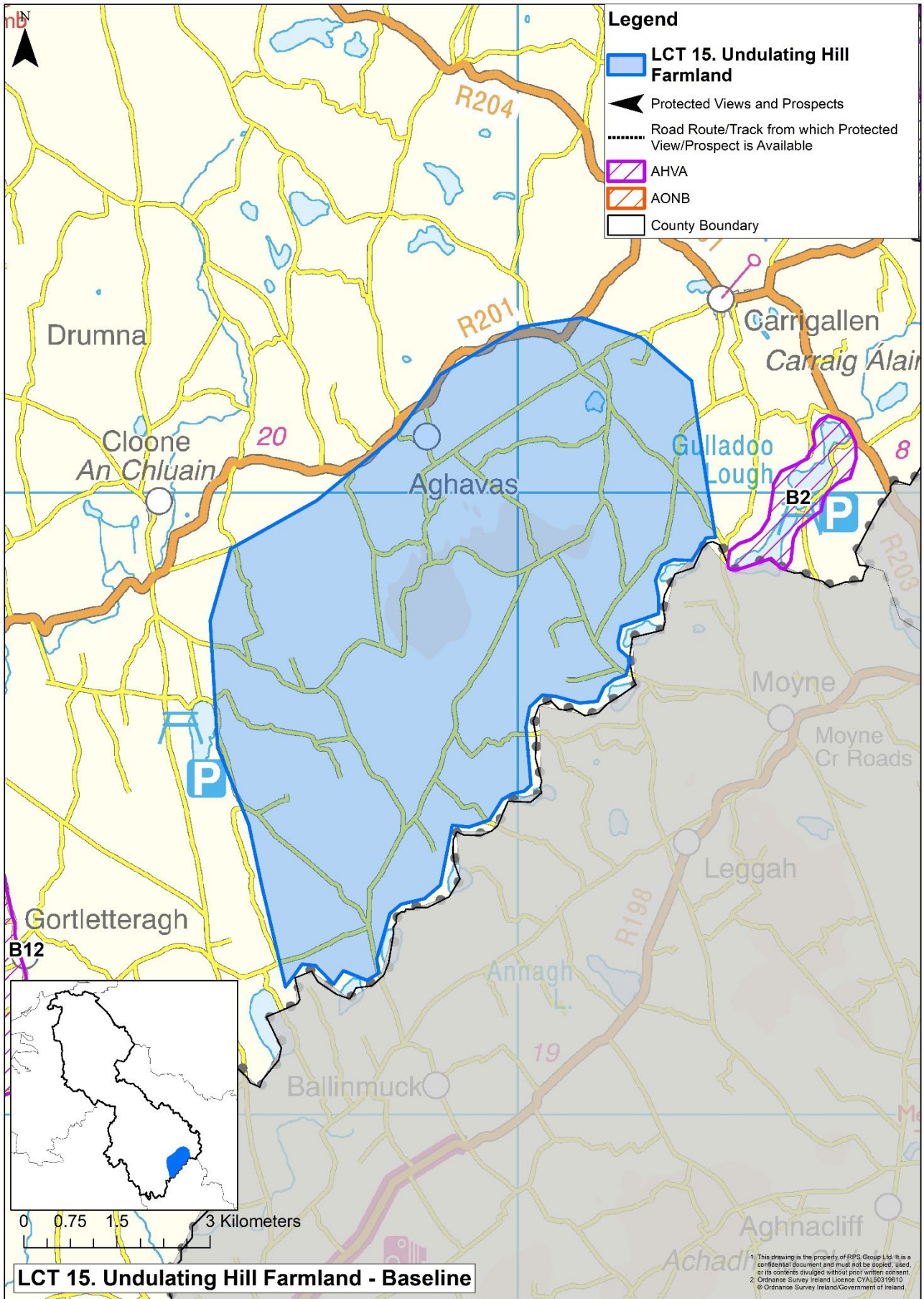
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate the presence of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) especially in the northern part of this LCT. Some of these are extensive and are noticeable elements in the landscape in the vicinity of Corriga and Aghavas. Some limited extents of commercial forest cover occur in the western and southern parts of this LCT.

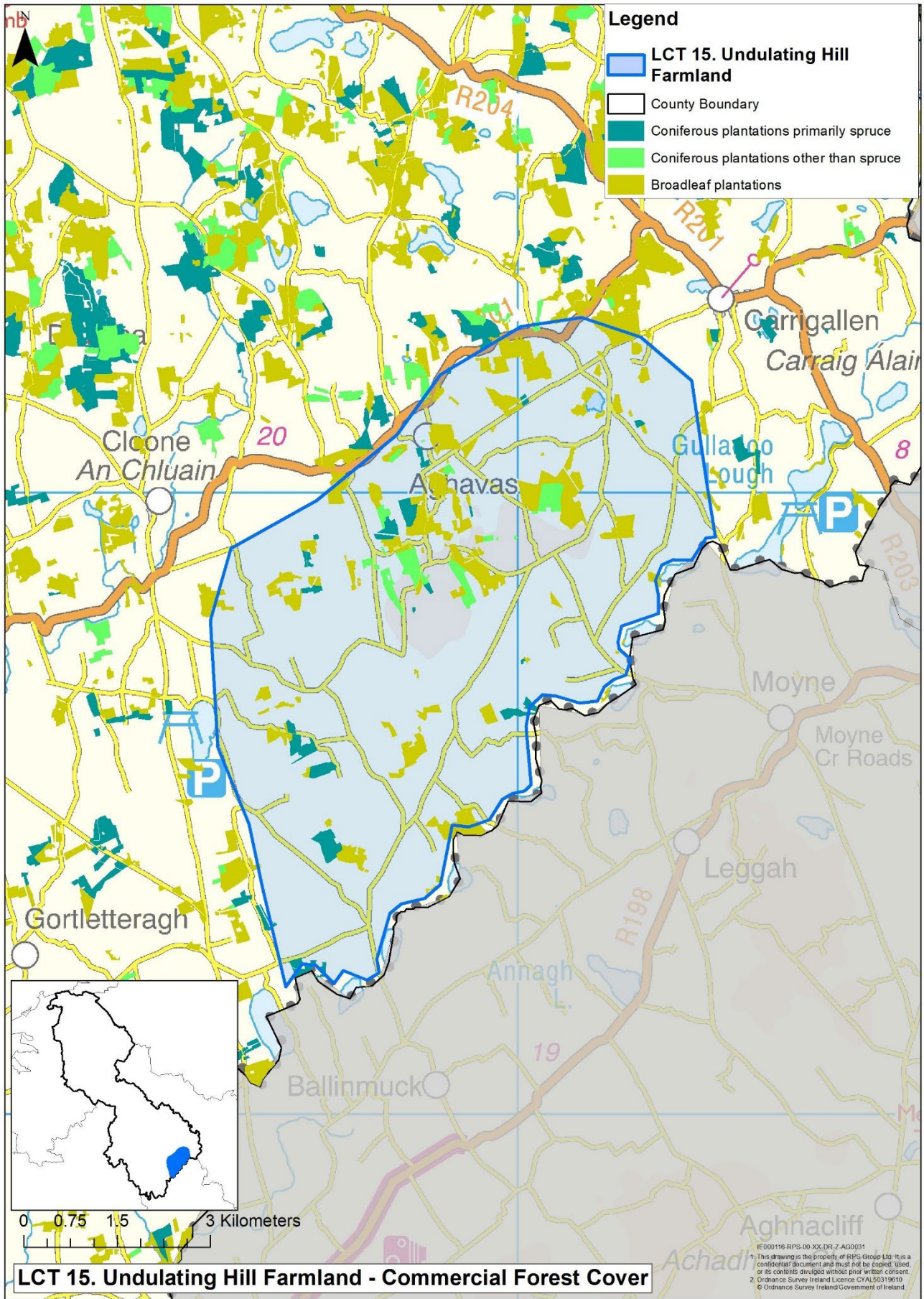
3.18.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.







3.18.2 LCT 15. Undulating Hill Farmland – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 15 to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.18.2.1 LCT 15. Undulating Hill Farmland – Landform, landcover and scale

The gently rising landform combined with wooded cover would be of lower sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry due to the ability of this landscape to absorb plantings of an appropriate scale. The landscape at the highest elevations may be more sensitive due to the potential for commercial coniferous forestry to be seen rising up these hillsides and appearing discordant with surrounding farmland. The summit of the ridgeline, at highest elevation of c.190m would be particularly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would be visually prominent and in conflict with the character of the surrounding landscape.

3.18.2.2 LCT 15. Undulating Hill Farmland – Landscape context

This LCT is located adjacent and south of LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland. The southern part of this landscape is overlooked by the more elevated hill farmland landscape further south in the neighbouring County Longford along with the mountains further north in Leitrim. These areas are considered to be sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry due to the visual link with the nearby hills in County Longford which are appreciated from within this LCT.



Mountains of north Leitrim are seen as focal points from the more elevated part of this LCT near Corriga.



Hills further south (in County Longford) are seen as focal points from the more elevated part of this LCT near Corrigan.

3.18.2.3 LCT 15. Undulating Hill Farmland – Visual and perceptual criteria

The landscape is perceived as a working farmed landscape which is relatively tranquil away from busy roads. There are limited distinctive skylines or unique specific focal points enjoyed as scenic views and for which commercial coniferous forestry would be in conflict apart from the nearby hills in County Longford and the lakes and small rivers at the southern county boundary.

3.18.2.4 LCT 15. Undulating Hill Farmland – Landscape Value

LCT 15 is undesignated. It has limited features by way of walking routes and promoted points of interest for visitors. The landscape is considered to be of some value to locals and passing visitors generally due to the rural quality, tranquil nature and overall good condition of the area. It is considered to be capable of absorbing some commercial coniferous forestry where sensitively designed.

3.18.2.5 LCT 15. Undulating Hill Farmland – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **low** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. It is undesignated. The uniformity of the landform and presence of wooded landcover is such that commercial coniferous forestry of an appropriated scale could be absorbed into most of this landscape apart from the more elevated ridgelines.

3.19 LCT 16. Steep Mountain Peaks

3.19.1 Baseline

LCT 16 Steep Mountain Peaks applies to a landscape of distinctive hills in the north west of the county.

3.19.1.1 LCT 16. Steep Mountain Peaks – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 16 Steep Mountain Peaks as follows.

‘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.’

3.19.1.2 LCT 16. Steep Mountain Peaks – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Almost the entire LCT falls within the following designated AONBs.

Table 3-42: LCT 16. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
A3	Mountains and Glens of North Leitrim AONB - applies to the northern part of this LCT.
A4	Lough Gill, Leean Mountain and Environs AONB – applies to the southern part of this LCT.

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. None occur within this landscape. The distinctive features in this landscape are the subject of one protected views in particular tabulated below.

Table 3-43: LCT 16. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V29	View towards the Leean Mountain Range and Doon Lough from the R278 Regional Road.

3.19.1.3 LCT 16. Steep Mountain Peaks – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. There are none specifically located within this LCT although the mountain scenery is enjoyed by visitors travelling generally through the area.

3.19.1.4 LCT 16. Steep Mountain Peaks – Existing commercial forest cover

The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate that there are very small amounts of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) within this LCT. A small area of commercial forest cover is located in the valley between Hangman’s Hill and Leean Mountain. Part of this plot lies within the adjacent LCT 6 Moorland Hills. Small amounts of commercial forest cover are located south of Keelogyboy Mountain.

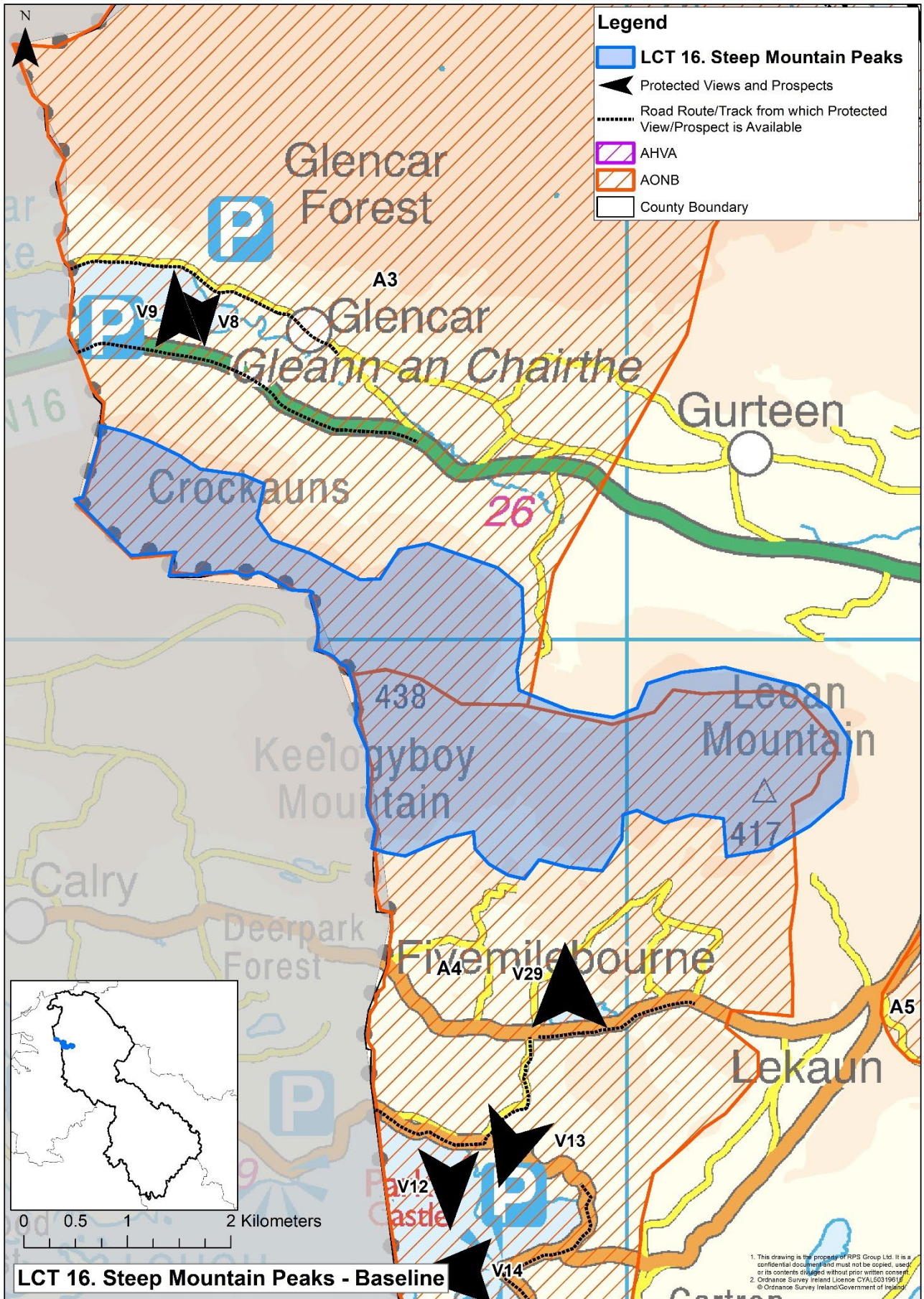
3.19.1.5 Baseline Maps

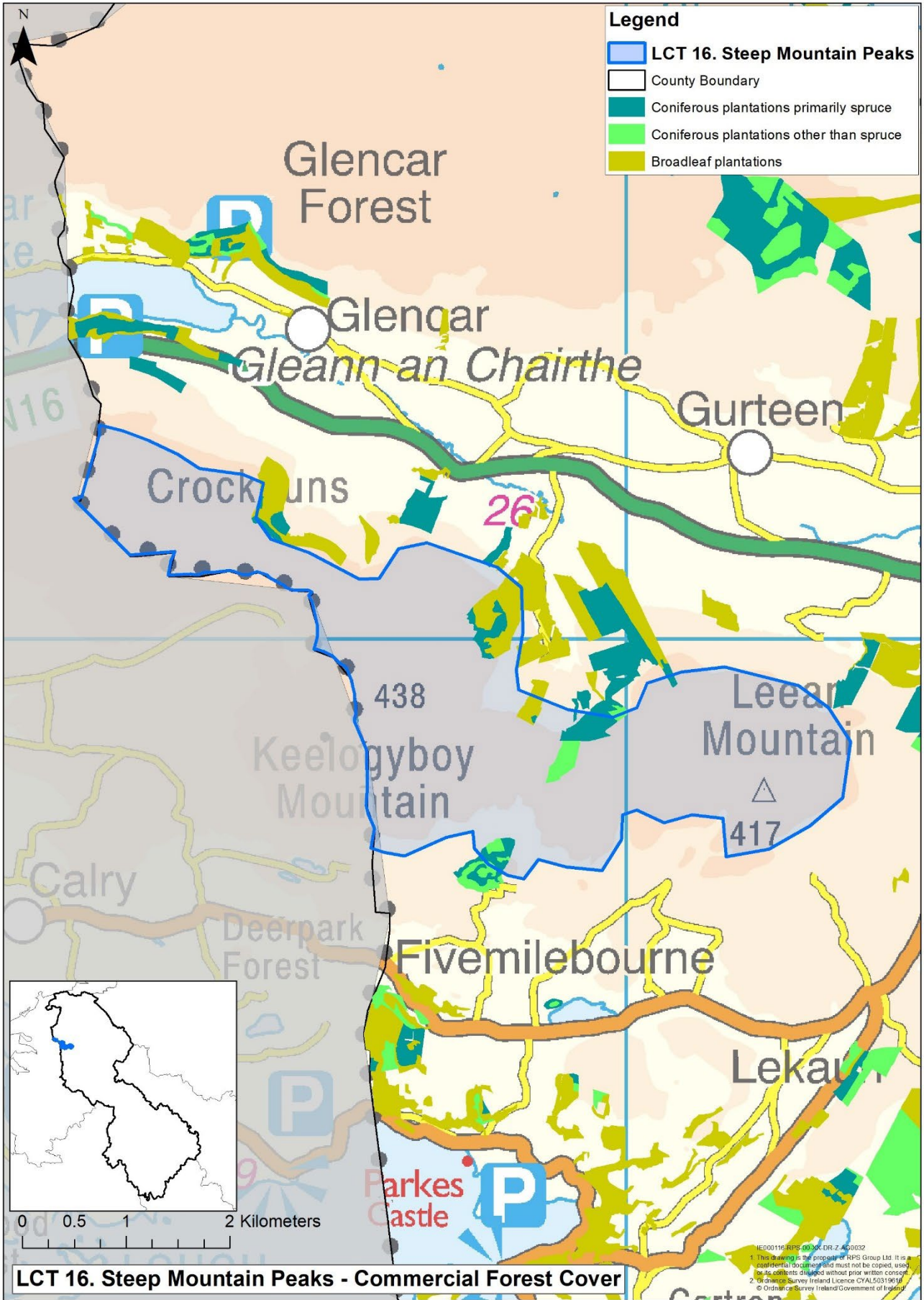
The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map

illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.







3.19.2 LCT 16. Steep Mountain Peaks – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forest Cover

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 16 to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.19.2.1 LCT 16. Steep Mountain Peaks – Landform, landcover and scale

This LCT features a complex landform of distinctive peaks and scree slopes which present as a unique skyline from the surrounding lower lying areas. The complexity of the landform is such that it would be highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. The more elevated summits and exposed areas of moorland are especially sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would be in contrast and at variance with the character of this LCT. At lower elevations where some woody cover is present, there may be some limited capacity to accommodate commercial coniferous forestry where this would not interfere with important skylines. Areas featuring bog and heath are highly sensitive.



Distinctive landforms associated with the steep mountain peaks LCT, from the N16 Road approaching Glencar.

3.19.2.2 LCT 16. Steep Mountain Peaks – Landscape context

This landscape of distinctive peaks overlooks the adjacent lower lying tabular hills to the south and lower lying farmed landscape in the surrounding valleys including that at Glencar. These landscapes are important in that they form the setting for the steep mountain peaks in this LCT. In this regard, the LCT is overall very highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which would be prominent in this upland landscape and which would have an adverse influence on the surrounding valleys, hills and lakes.

3.19.2.3 LCT 16. Steep Mountain Peaks – Visual and perceptual criteria

This LCT is remote and tranquil. The mountains form distinctive unique skylines. The LCT is highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which, if introduced could potentially undermine the sense of wildness and tranquillity and also obstruct important skyline views.

3.19.2.4 LCT 16. Steep Mountain Peaks – Landscape Value

Almost the entire LCT is designated as AONB. The mountain peaks form the backdrop to protected view no 29 focussed on Doon Lough. The designations reflect the landscape quality and scenic quality of the area which is generally enjoyed by visitors and would be very highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.19.2.5 LCT 16. Steep Mountain Peaks – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **very high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. Almost all of this LCT falls within AONB designations and this reflects the outstanding beauty of the landscape. The LCT is sensitive due to the remote, tranquil and wilderness like qualities as well as the distinctive and complex mountain skylines which would be highly sensitive to change. The moorland and bog landcover and scarcity of wooded vegetation results in a visually exposed landscape dominated by grassland and heath in which, commercial coniferous forestry would be in conflict and would undermine the key characteristics.

3.20 LCT 17. Tabular Hills

3.20.1 Baseline

LCT 17 Tabular Hills occurs in the north west of the county. It applies to a complex of hills that surround Lough Gill.

3.20.1.1 LCT 17. Tabular Hills – Landscape Character Description

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment’ described LCT 17 Tabular Hills as follows.

‘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.’

3.20.1.2 LCT 17. Tabular Hills – Designated landscapes, views and prospects

The ‘County Leitrim Landscape Designations’ report reflects the value of particular landscapes in County Leitrim and are recognised as such in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Almost all of this LCT falls within a designated AONB as tabulated below.

Table 3-44: LCT 17. Designated Landscapes

MAP ID	Designated Landscapes
A4	Lough Gill, Leean Mountain and Environs AONB – applies to most of this LCT.

The ‘County Leitrim Views and Prospects’ report in the County Development Plan 2023 - 2029. Those that occur within this LCT are tabulated below.

Table 3-45: LCT 17. Views and Prospects

MAP ID	Views and Prospects
V12	View of Lough Gill from the R286 Regional Road
V13	View of Lough Gill from Carrickanurroo
V14	View of Lough Gill from the R288
V29	View towards the Leean Mountain Range and Doon Lough from the R278 Regional Road

3.20.1.3 LCT 17. Tabular Hills – Promoted walking routes and heritage attractions

Other indicators of landscape value are the promoted walking routes and heritage attractions where landscape is an important part of the experience. These are tabulated below.

Table 3-46: LCT 17. Walking Routes and Heritage Attractions

MAP ID	Walking Route / Heritage Attraction
T5	Cartron Wood Trail is located on the northern shoreline of Lough Gill
H1	Parkes Castle is located on the northern shoreline of Lough Gill

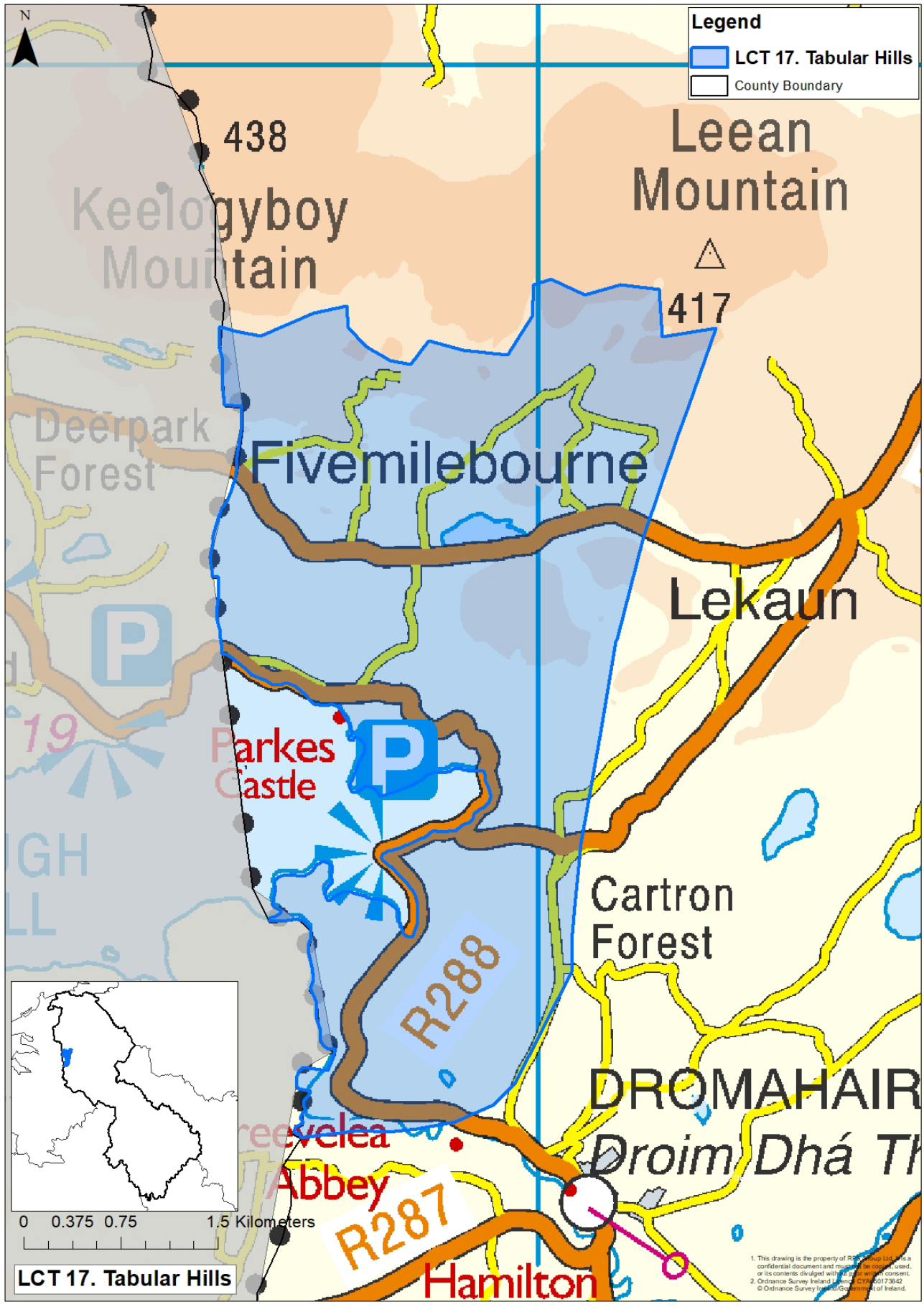
3.20.1.4 LCT 17. Tabular Hills – Existing commercial forest cover

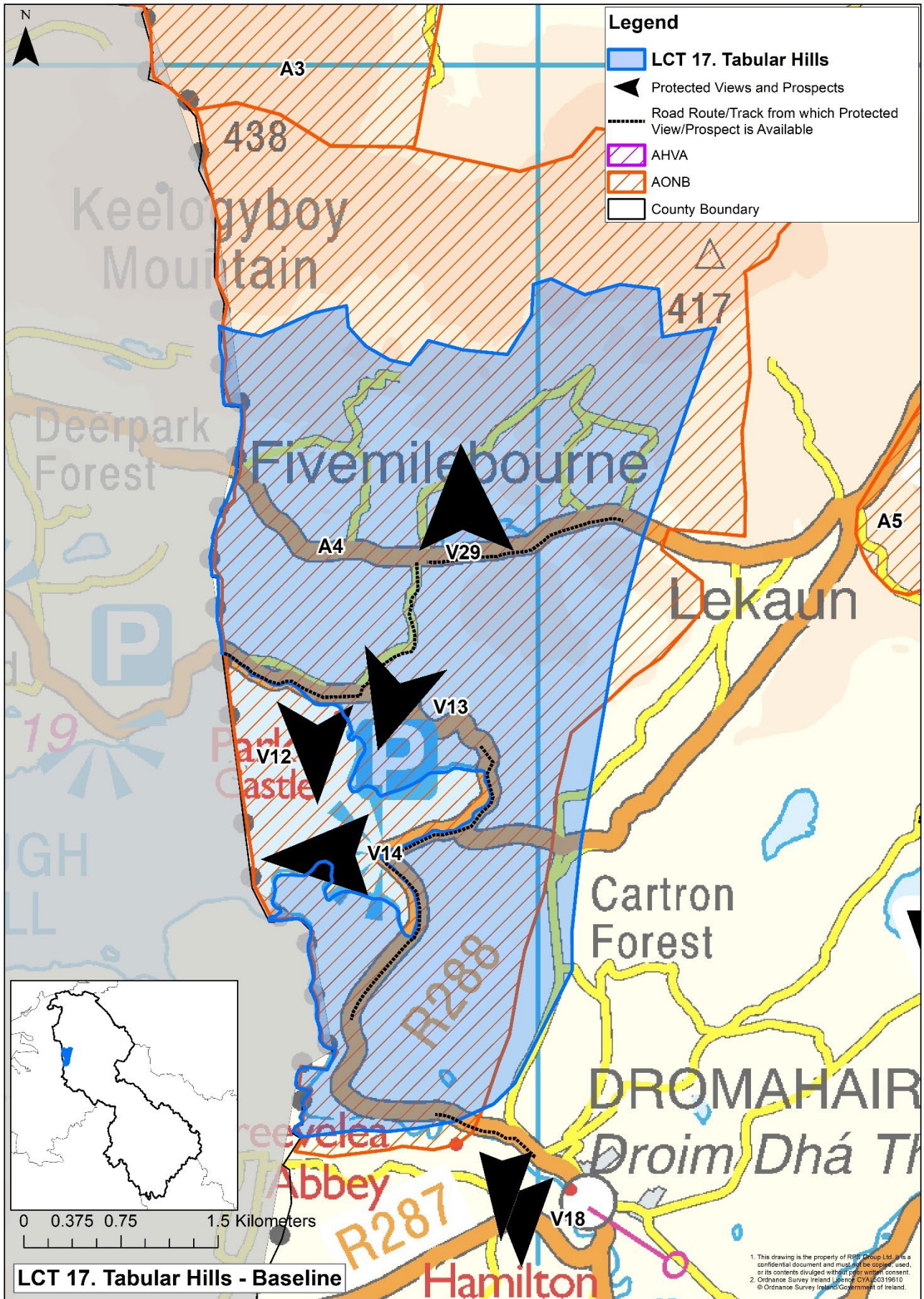
The data from DAFM and Coillte indicate the presence of commercial forest cover (refer to section 3.2 above) in the southern part of this LCT, in the hills that overlook Lough Gill from the south. Some of these plantations are located close to the shoreline of the lake. Some limited areas of commercial forest cover occur near Fivemilebourne in the western part of the LCT.

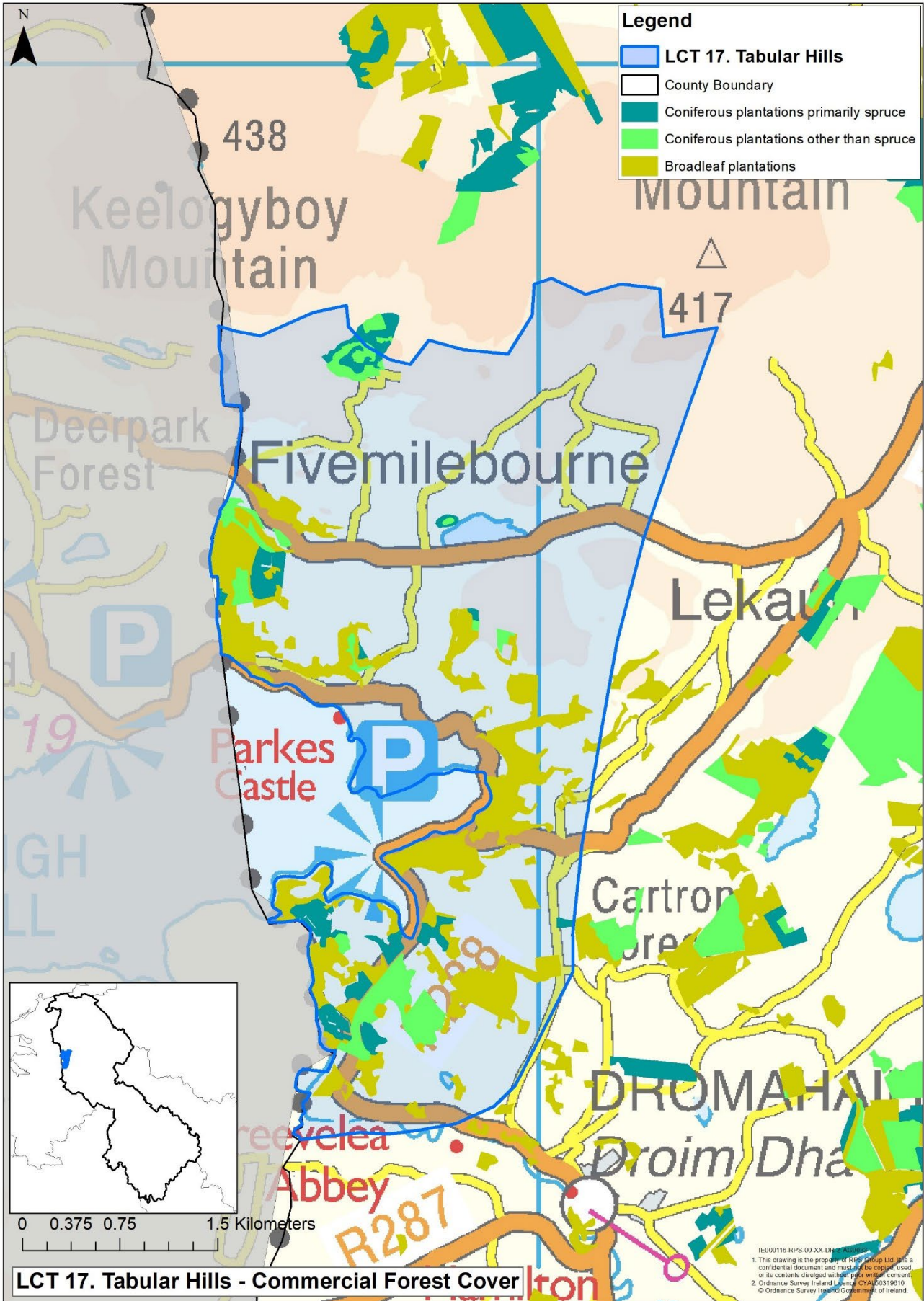
3.20.1.5 Baseline Maps

The baseline for this LCT is illustrated in the following three map figures. A detailed location map is presented and this is followed by a baseline map indicating the location of landscape designations, protected views and prospects. Finally, a map illustrating existing commercial forest cover is also presented. This map illustrates the three categories of planting referred to above in Section 3.2 informed by the data sourced from DAFM and Coillte as follows:

- Coniferous plantations primarily spruce;
- Coniferous plantations other than spruce; and
- Broadleaf plantations.







LCT 17. Tabular Hills - Commercial Forest Cover

3.20.2 LCT 17. Tabular Hills – Assessment of Sensitivity to Commercial Coniferous Forestry

The assessment of the sensitivity of LCT 17 to commercial coniferous forestry is presented below and takes account of natural criteria (including landform, landcover, scale and landscape context), visual and perceptual criteria and indicators of landscape value such as presence of designations, protected views and promoted walking routes and heritage attractions. The presence and extent of existing commercial coniferous forestry is also considered in the sensitivity assessment.

3.20.2.1 LCT 17. Tabular Hills – Landform, landcover and scale

This LCT features distinctive tabular hills which, due to their unique profile and the highly scenic skyline that they present, are deemed to be very highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. The summits and higher slopes feature rough pasture and limited wooded cover which results in a relatively exposed landscape that would be sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. At lower elevations where woody landcover is more abundant, there is some limited capacity to accommodate commercial coniferous forestry of an appropriate scale.

3.20.2.2 LCT 17. Tabular Hills – Landscape context

These hills perform an important role in forming the setting to Lough Gill. These hills also form the foreground or setting to the adjacent more elevated LCT 17 Steep Mountain Peaks. The visual relationship between this landscape and the adjacent Lough Gill and the steep mountain peaks is clearly apparent to the visitor travelling through the area. It is therefore highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry which could intrude upon key scenic views of this landscape and undermine the key characteristics and scenic context.



Distinctive landforms and their relationship with Doon Lough are highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.20.2.3 LCT 17. Tabular Hills – Visual and perceptual criteria

This LCT is remote and very tranquil away from roads. The LCT is a transition landscape between the steep mountain peaks further north and the lake landscape of Lough Gill and forms the setting for many scenic

views towards mountain skyline and lakeland. The scenic context along with the tranquillity and sense of wildness is such that this LCT is very highly sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry. Commercial coniferous forestry would be at variance with the character of the landscape and could potentially undermine the sense of wildness and tranquillity in many scenic views.

3.20.2.4 LCT 17. Tabular Hills – Landscape Value

Almost all of the LCT is designated as AONB and this reflects the outstanding landscape quality and scenic quality of the area. The landscape of hills also forms the backdrop to protected views of Lough Gill referenced in the baseline above. The area is enjoyed by visitors and locals with available local walking routes and promoted viewing points and heritage points of interest such as Parkes Castle on the shoreline of Lough Gill. These heritage attractions are indicative of a highly valued landscape which would be sensitive to commercial coniferous forestry.

3.20.2.5 LCT 17. Tabular Hills – Sensitivity ranking

This LCT is considered to be of **very high** sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry. Nearly all this LCT falls within the AONB designation A4 Lough Gill, Leean Mountain and Environs. A total of 4 protected views and prospects are located within the LCT. These are focused on Doon Lough and Lough Gill with the backdrop of the tabular hills landscape. These aspects reflect the scenic quality of this transitional landscape and its importance as the setting for the mountain skylines further north and the setting of Lough Gill to the south.



The tabular hills overlook Lough Gill and the mountains further south west including Killery Mountain in Co. Sligo. Commercial coniferous forestry is not recommended in these areas.

4 CAPACITY STUDY AND DESIGN GUIDANCE SUMMARY

The landscape capacity study has considered the sensitivity of all the LCTs to commercial coniferous forestry with summary findings tabulated below.

Table 4-1: Landscape Sensitivity to commercial coniferous forestry - Study Findings

ID	Name	Sensitivity	Capacity for commercial coniferous forestry
LCT 1	Coastal Plain	Very High	None
LCT 2	Coastal Drumlin Farmland	High	Limited
LCT 3	Wooded Lakeside Farmland	High	Limited
LCT 4	Cliffed Uplands and Landslips	Very High	None
LCT 5	Moorland Plateau	Very High	None
LCT 6	Moorland Hills	High	Very limited capacity at higher elevations and on steep sided mountain slopes.
LCT 7	Upland Farmland and Foothills	Medium to High	Yes
LCT 8	Valley Farmland	High	Very Limited
LCT 9	Drumlin Farmland	Low	Yes
LCT 10	Major Loughs	Not applicable	Not applicable
LCT 11	Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins	Very High	None
LCT 12	River Floodplain	Very High	None
LCT 13	Low Limestone Outcrops	Very High	None
LCT 14	Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs	Low	Yes
LCT 15	Undulating Hill Farmland	Low	Yes
LCT 16	Steep Mountain Peaks	Very High	None
LCT 17	Tabular Hills	Very High	None

4.1 LCTs recommended for exclusion from future commercial coniferous forestry

The landscape capacity study recommends the exclusion of 8 LCTs from consideration for future commercial coniferous forestry. These are deemed to have no capacity for further planting of this type for the reasons outlined below. Additionally LCT 10, comprised entirely of waterbodies is excluded. The lakes are important landscape features which have been considered in this landscape capacity study in the context of the adjacent LCTs.

4.1.1 LCT 1. Coastal Plain

LCT 1 Coastal Plain is considered to have no capacity for commercial coniferous forestry due to the highly scenic and sensitive nature of this landscape and the visual relationship with the coastline and Donegal Bay.

4.1.2 LCT 4. Cliffed Uplands and Landslips

LCT 4 Cliffed Uplands and Landslips is considered to have no capacity for commercial coniferous forestry due to the highly scenic and sensitive nature of this landscape and its importance in mountain skylines viewed from many locations. Furthermore it is unlikely to be considered for this purpose for practical reasons.

Guidelines in terms of the siting and design of future commercial coniferous forestry, outlined for adjacent LCTs, in particular, LCT 6 Moorland Hills, LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills and LCT 8 Valley Farmland must take account of the particular sensitivities of LCT 4 Cliffed Uplands and Landslips.

4.1.3 LCT 5. Moorland Plateau

LCT 5 Moorland Plateau is considered to have no capacity for commercial coniferous forestry due to the highly scenic and sensitive nature of this landscape and its importance in mountain views experienced from many locations. Furthermore it is unlikely to be considered for this purpose for practical reasons.

Guidelines in terms of the siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry, outlined for adjacent LCTs, in particular, LCT 6 Moorland Hills, LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills and LCT 8 Valley Farmland must take account of the particular sensitivities of LCT 5 Moorland Plateau. In this regard, LCT 5 is to be avoided and a careful approach to the siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry in the adjacent lower lying LCTs will have regard for the sensitivities of this moorland plateau LCT.

4.1.4 LCT 11. Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins

LCT 11 Drumlin Lough and Stream Margins is considered to have no capacity for commercial coniferous forestry due to the highly scenic and sensitive nature of this landscape and its visual relationship to the various rivers and lakes within.

4.1.5 LCT 12. River Floodplain

LCT 12 River Floodplain is considered to have no capacity for commercial coniferous forestry due to the highly scenic and sensitive nature of this landscape and its visual relationship to the river, promontories, crannogs and islands along with the overall high levels of tranquillity.

4.1.6 LCT 13. Low Limestone Outcrops

LCT 13 Low Limestone Outcrops is considered to have no capacity for commercial coniferous forestry due to the highly scenic and sensitive nature of this landscape comprise of distinctive hills which are important focal points in views from the surrounding lowlands.

4.1.7 LCT 16. Steep Mountain Peaks

LCT 16 Steep Mountain peaks is considered to have no capacity for commercial coniferous forestry due to the highly scenic and sensitive nature of this landscape comprise of complex and distinctive mountain and hill landforms which present as important focal points in views from the surrounding areas.

4.1.8 LCT 17. Tabular Hills

LCT 17 Tabular Hills is considered to have no capacity for commercial coniferous forestry due to the highly scenic and sensitive nature of this landscape comprised of distinctive hills which also form the setting to Lough Gill. High levels of tranquillity contribute to the outstanding scenic quality of this area.

4.2 Siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry - guidelines

Guidelines for the siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry is outlined in this section of the report for the LCTs which are considered to have varying capacity to accommodate future planting of this type. In addition, the guidance also makes reference to broadleaved plantations as these also feature in the forest datasets referred to in Section 3.2 above. A map summary of the capacity findings is presented below in Figure 4.1 Leitrim Landscape Capacity for Commercial Coniferous Forestry.

The map indicates the LCTs which are considered to have no capacity for commercial coniferous forestry as follows:

- LCT 1 Coastal Plain;
- LCT 4 Cluffed Uplands and Landslips;
- LCT 5 Moorland Plateaus;
- LCT 10 Major Loughs (excluded as waterbodies);

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- LCT 11 Drumlin Loughs and Stream Margins;
- LCT 12 River Floodplain;
- LCT 13 Low Limestone Outcrops;
- LCT 16 Steep Mountain peaks; and
- LCT 17 Tabular Hills.

The landscape capacity study concludes the following LCTs to have some capacity for commercial coniferous forestry as follows and as illustrated in Figure 4.1 above:

- LCT 2 Coastal Drumlin Farmland;
- LCT 3 Wooded Lakeside Farmland;
- LCT 6 Moorland Hills;
- LCT 7 Upland Farmland and Foothills;
- LCT 8 Valley Farmland;
- LCT 9 Drumlin Farmland;
- LCT 14 Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs; and
- LCT 15 Undulating Hill Farmland.

The landscape capacity study recommends the following general guidance for the LCTs listed above which are considered to have some capacity for commercial coniferous forestry. Although the capacity study and design guidance is focussed on commercial coniferous forestry, some of the guidance below pertains to broadleaved forestry recognising the presence of same as evidenced in the baseline presented above.

- The layout or shape of commercial coniferous forestry often presents as a geometric block. This results in adverse visual impacts especially where present on mountain sides. Future commercial coniferous forests should avoid angular geometric outlines. Instead, forest edges should have sinuous outlines and curved corners. Forests should be shaped to have projections and recesses. Broadleaved species should be planted as outliers.
- Plantations comprised of mixed conifer species and including broadleaved species may be more readily accommodated in the above referenced LCTs especially where these feature existing woodland and also where the underlying landscape pattern or openness is not undermined;
- Future commercial coniferous forest plantings will limit the planting of single species which had the potential to present as a monocrop in the landscape thereby undermining landscape character and visual amenity. This is especially recommended in regard to the planting of Spruce which is a relatively frequent occurrence in the County of Leitrim presenting with the appearance of a monocrop.
- The creation of areas of open space within the canopy is especially important for commercial coniferous forests or broadleaved forests located on hill or mountain sides. Areas within the plot should be left unplanted for diversity;
- Commercial coniferous forestry should be linked to surrounding landscape elements, for example, adjacent areas of deciduous woodland and hedgerows;
- Commercial coniferous forestry should ideally be set back from the edges of roads and tracks in order to maintain scenic diversity from these routes. The planting should be set back on one or both sides of the road at varying distances;
- The planting of native deciduous species outliers is recommended to provide colour contrast to offset the often dark green monochrome colour of commercial coniferous forestry. These can take the form of a randomly spaced native deciduous trees which appear loosely scattered thereby providing a natural or diffuse edge instead of a geometric boundary;
- Commercial coniferous forestry should merge with existing deciduous woodlands where present and should feature deciduous native species outliers to mask the dark green monochrome conifer planting and to integrate same into an existing wooded setting. Outliers should comprise similar native species to that occurring in the nearby deciduous woodlands;
- The planting of broadleaved native species would more easily be accommodated in the landscapes of Leitrim without undue and adverse change to the baseline landscape character especially in areas which feature woodland and hedgerow cover;
- Future plantings with broadleaved species will need to be carefully designed in terms of plot size, shape and extents especially in visually open landscapes where panoramic views of the mountains and glens are available;

- The margins of loughs along with areas of heathland and bog should be avoided;
- Commercial coniferous forestry should be set back from the edges of rivers and streams at varying distances. The plantations should assume a natural and informal layout. The planting of native riparian species at the edges of the forest plot is recommended in the vicinity of watercourses. Proximity to rivers and watercourses to be considered on a case by case basis, having regard for landscape and ecological sensitivities at a local level. Further detailed design in the vicinity of catchments should be guided by an ecologist on a case by case basis;
- The siting and design of proposed commercial coniferous forestry needs to carefully consider walking routes and the maintenance of scenic diversity and openness of scenic views of mountains, valleys and lakes;
- Broadleaved plantations will favour native species;
- Plot sizes and outline shapes for broadleaved plantations will mimic the patterns of existing woodland in the surrounding landscape;and
- The siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry will need to carefully consider existing commercial forestry in order to avoid adverse cumulative effects on landscape character and visual amenity.

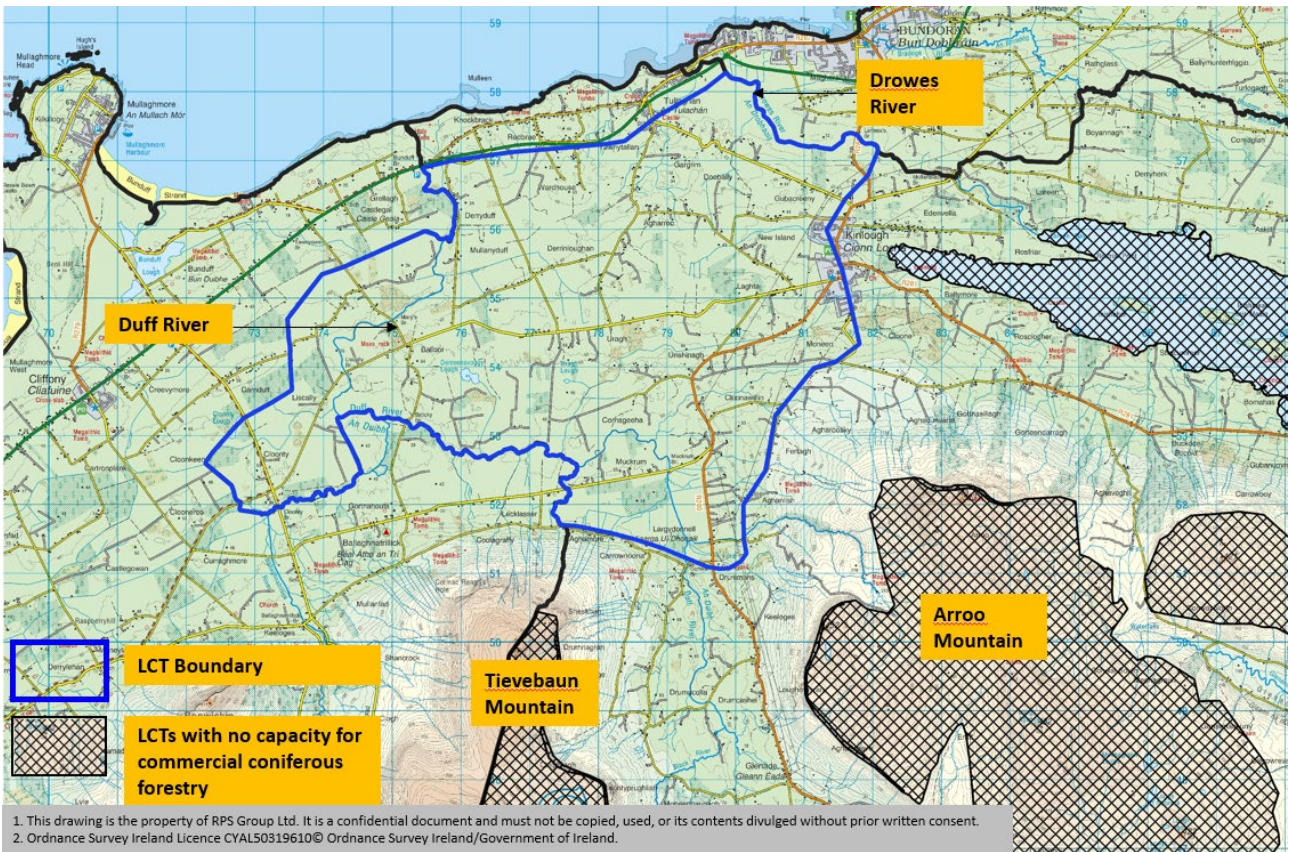
4.2.1 Siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry – specific guidance for each LCT

Specific guidance is outlined below for each LCT which is considered to have capacity for commercial coniferous forestry. In addition, the guidance also makes reference to broadleaved plantations as these also feature in the forest datasets referred to in Section 3.2 above. Some of the location specific guidance is indicated in supporting map extracts also presented below.

4.2.1.1 LCT 2. Coastal Drumlin Farmland – Capacity for commercial coniferous forestry and design guidance

LCT 2 Coastal Drumlin Farmland is considered to have limited capacity for further commercial coniferous forestry. Guidelines in terms of the siting and design of future plantations in this LCT are as follows:

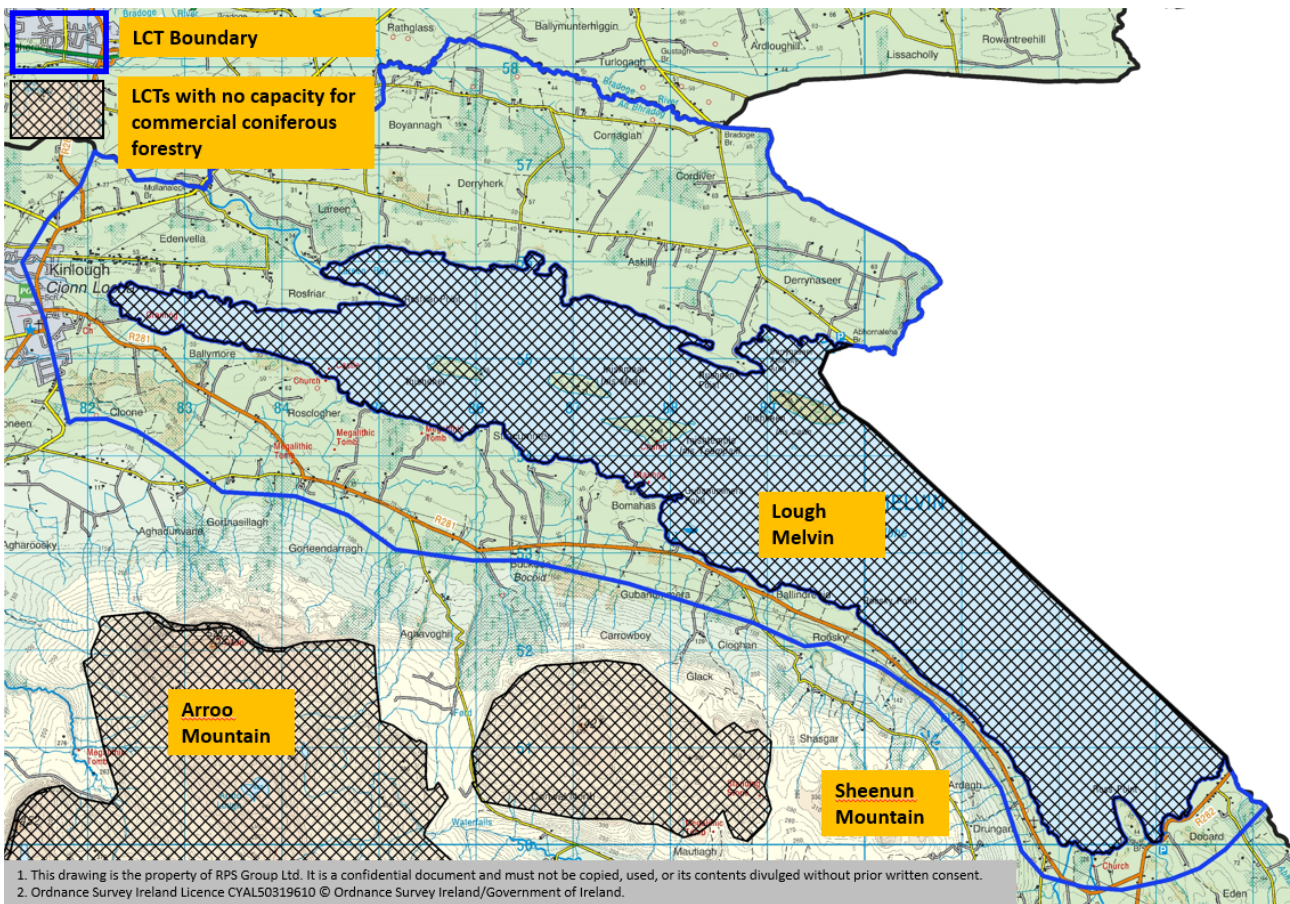
- Avoid open areas which form the setting of, and are visually linked to the mountains further south including the Arroo and Tievebaun mountain ranges;
- A very limited amount of small scale plantations may be accommodated in the isolated locations where transitional woodland scrub is present. Plantings should be merged with native species scrub in order that the native species would provide some screening of the commercial coniferous forestry thereby integrating same into the landscape. These small scale plantations would ideally feature broadleaved species which would mask the coniferous species;
- The introduction of commercial coniferous forestry will have to consider the mature height of the planting in order that this would not obstruct scenic mountain views. Future plantings are to be sited in a manner that preserves protected views within this LCT.
- There is some limited capacity for small scale broadleaved plantations. These would have to be carefully designed not to undermine the open nature of the landscape; and
- Areas within the immediate vicinity of the Duff River, the Drowes River and tributaries are to be avoided. Proximity to rivers and watercourses to be considered on a case by case basis as referenced in the general guidance above.



4.2.1.2 LCT 3. Wooded Lakeside Farmland – Capacity for commercial coniferous forestry and design guidance

LCT 3 Wooded Lakeside Farmland is considered to have limited capacity for further commercial coniferous forestry. Guidelines in terms of the siting and design of future plantations in this LCT are as follows:

- Care will be needed to avoid adverse cumulative effects with existing commercial coniferous forestry which, when combined with new plantings, could become the dominant landcover thereby eroding key landcover characteristics associated with the original landscape character.
- Areas in the vicinity of Lough Melvin and the Arroo Mountain Range and Sheenun are especially sensitive. Any new coniferous plantings or indeed broadleaf plantings should take account of the need to preserve views and intervisibility between lake and mountain in this area;
- The lake margins are to be avoided where possible. A careful approach to the siting and design of coniferous and or broadleaf plantings will be required on the northern side of Lough Melvin in order to maintain views of the lake and mountain skylines of Sheenun and Arroo Mountain; and
- Plantings are to be sited in a manner that preserves existing views of Lough Melvin. Plantings are to be sited in a manner that preserves protected views within this LCT along with the protected views outside of this LCT which are focussed on the lake.



4.2.1.3 LCT 6. Moorland Hills, LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills and LCT 8. Valley Farmland – Capacity for commercial coniferous forestry and design guidance

LCT 6. Moorland Hills, LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills, and LCT 8. Valley Farmland are very closely related along with LCTs 4 and 5. The context for each LCT lies in the adjacent LCTs at higher and lower elevations and this is due to the nature of the landscape in North Leitrim where all of these LCTs combine to present as one mountain and glen landscape. Thus the mountain skylines with cliffs (LCT 4) and moorland plateau (LCT 5) sweep down along steep mountain sides onto moorland hills (LCT 6) and further down along the smooth glens with upland farmland (LCT 7) and further down to the valley floor (LCT 8). The design guidelines are therefore very strongly influenced by the overall context for each LCT and its relationship to adjacent LCTs. The guidelines in terms of the siting and design of future plantations that apply collectively to LCT 6, LCT 7 and LCT 8 are outlined below:

- Careful siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry is required in the more sensitive areas of North Leitrim. This includes the Glenaniff Valley between the Arroo Mountain Range and Sheenun where the introduction of new plantations would need to have regard for maintaining the character of the sweeping valley and the characteristic floodplain associated with this river valley. Small scale plantations may be accommodated at lowest elevations where these tie in with existing broadleaf and riparian woodlands;
- The areas of this LCT that overlook the Glenade and Glencar valleys are to be avoided in the interests of the high scenic quality associated with these areas as reflected in the AONB designation. These valleys are among the most sensitive areas of this LCT to commercial coniferous forestry because of their scenic quality, sense of remoteness and dramatic location as foreground to nearby mountains. Commercial coniferous forestry would be in contrast with the open and elemental character and would mask the steep rugged valley sides and obstruct views of mountain skylines; and
- Many road routes, pass through LCT 7 and 8 in particular, extending along the length of the various valley landscapes. The introduction of commercial coniferous forestry within these landscapes generally should have regard for the maintenance of the protected views and prospects along with the general scenic diversity and mountain skylines enjoyed from these routes.

Guidance specific to each of the individual LCTs 6, 7 and 8 are outlined in the following sections.

4.2.1.3.1 LCT 6. Moorland Hills – Capacity for commercial coniferous forestry and design guidance

LCT 6. Moorland Hills is considered to have very limited capacity for further commercial coniferous forestry at higher elevations. Guidelines in terms of the siting and design of future plantations in this LCT are as follows:

- The more elevated areas of this LCT are to be avoided. These include the steep moorland slopes associated with Tievebaun, Benbo Mountain, the Arroo Mountain range, The Doons and Crockauns and Slieve Anierin in particular. These steep slopes should be kept open in order to conserve their landscape character and the mountain skylines of the adjacent Moorland Plateau LCT 5 and the Cluffed Uplands and Landslips. Note earlier guidance regarding the exclusion of LCT 4 and 5 from future commercial coniferous forestry;
- The glacial corries and steep mountain sides of Tievebaun and Truskmore are not recommended for commercial coniferous forestry;
- The ridgeline of Sheenun should be avoided as it forms an important backdrop to Lough Melvin;
- Areas within the vicinity of the Black and Duff Rivers are to be avoided. Proximity to rivers and watercourses to be considered on a case by case basis as referenced in the general guidance above;
- Commercial coniferous forestry may be accommodated at lower elevations on lower hill slopes typically below the 200m contour line within landscapes which feature smooth flowing simple landforms. Use of broadleaved species as outliers to visually screen conifer plantations is recommended;
- Small hills with distinctive or complex landform should be avoided such as Sheenun and Crocknagapple;

- Commercial coniferous forestry should be sited away from watercourses and associated floodplains where these present as key features in the local landscape;
- Careful siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry is required in proximity to roads and tracks in order to maintain scenic views, for example views towards Benbo from O'Donnell's Rock (V17) and views of Benbo from the town of Manorhamilton. Plantings are to be sited in a manner that preserves protected views which are focussed on landscapes and features within this LCT; and
- The cumulative effects of multiple commercial coniferous forestry plantations within this LCT needs careful consideration especially in the vicinity of Dough Mountain, The Boleybrack Mountains and the south facing slopes of Slieve Anierin.

4.2.1.3.2 LCT 7. Upland Farmland and Foothills – Capacity for commercial coniferous forestry and design guidance

Guidelines in terms of the siting and design of future plantations in this LCT are as follows:

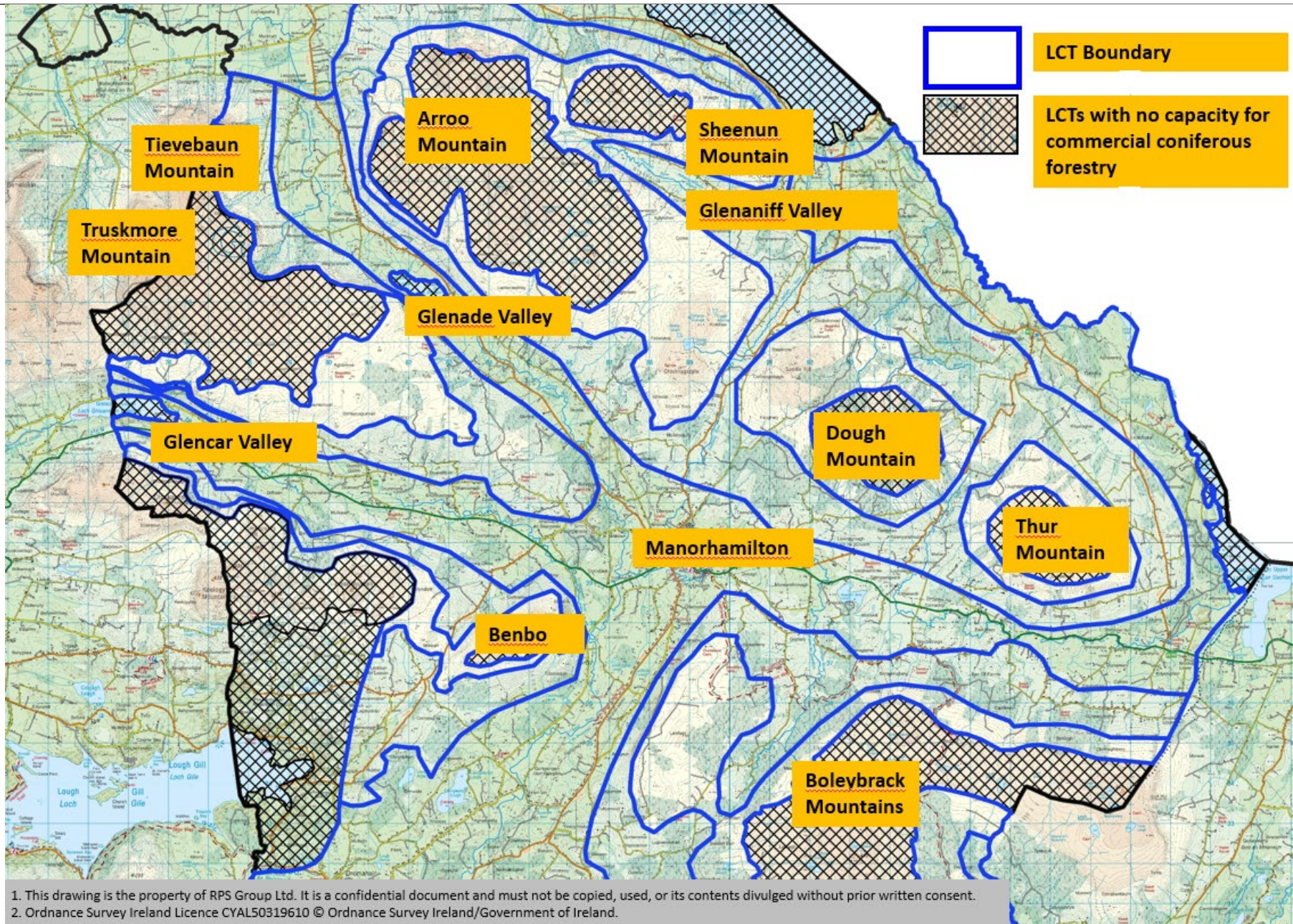
- Commercial coniferous forestry of appropriate scale may be accommodated within lower lying farmland areas within this LCT however this will need to have regard for the maintenance of field patterns where these present strongly in the pastoral landscape. The planting of broadleaves as outliers is recommended;
- The introduction of commercial coniferous forestry will have to consider the mature height of the planting in order that this would not obstruct scenic mountain views. Plantings are to be sited in a manner that preserves protected views which are focussed on landscapes and features within this LCT and adjacent LCTs;
- Areas within the setting of lakes and rivers, including the Rivers Ballagh and Cornavannoge are to be avoided. Proximity to rivers and watercourses to be considered on a case by case basis as referenced in the general guidance above;
- Benbo is an important focal point in views from the town of Manorhamilton and surrounding area which are to be safeguarded; and
- The cumulative effects of multiple commercial coniferous forestry plantations within this LCT will need careful consideration especially in the vicinity of Dough Mountain, The Boleybrack Mountains, the south facing slopes of Slieve Anierin and Saddle Hill.

4.2.1.3.3 LCT 8. Valley Farmland – Capacity for commercial coniferous forestry and design guidance

Guidelines in terms of the siting and design of future plantations in this LCT are outlined below:

- There is very limited scope overall for the introduction of new commercial coniferous forestry within this LCT. Future plantations of modest scale may be considered on a case by case basis and will have to be carefully designed such that, at maturity, scenic views of the wider glen landscape and the mountain skylines would not be obstructed. Plantings are to be sited in a manner that preserves protected views which are focussed on landscapes and features within this LCT and adjacent LCTs
- Commercial coniferous forestry of appropriate scale may be accommodated within lower lying farmland areas within this LCT however this will need to have regard for the maintenance of field patterns where these present strongly in the pastoral landscape. The planting of broadleaves as outliers is recommended;
- Areas of this landscape within the setting of lakes such as Belhavel Lake and Lough Allen are sensitive and are to be avoided;
- The siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry needs to have regard for the landscape setting of important heritage assets including Creevelea Abbey;
- Areas within the setting of lakes and rivers, including the Rivers Bonet, Glenaniff, Shanvaus and Cornavannoge are to be avoided. Proximity to rivers and watercourses to be considered on a case by case basis as referenced in the general guidance above; and

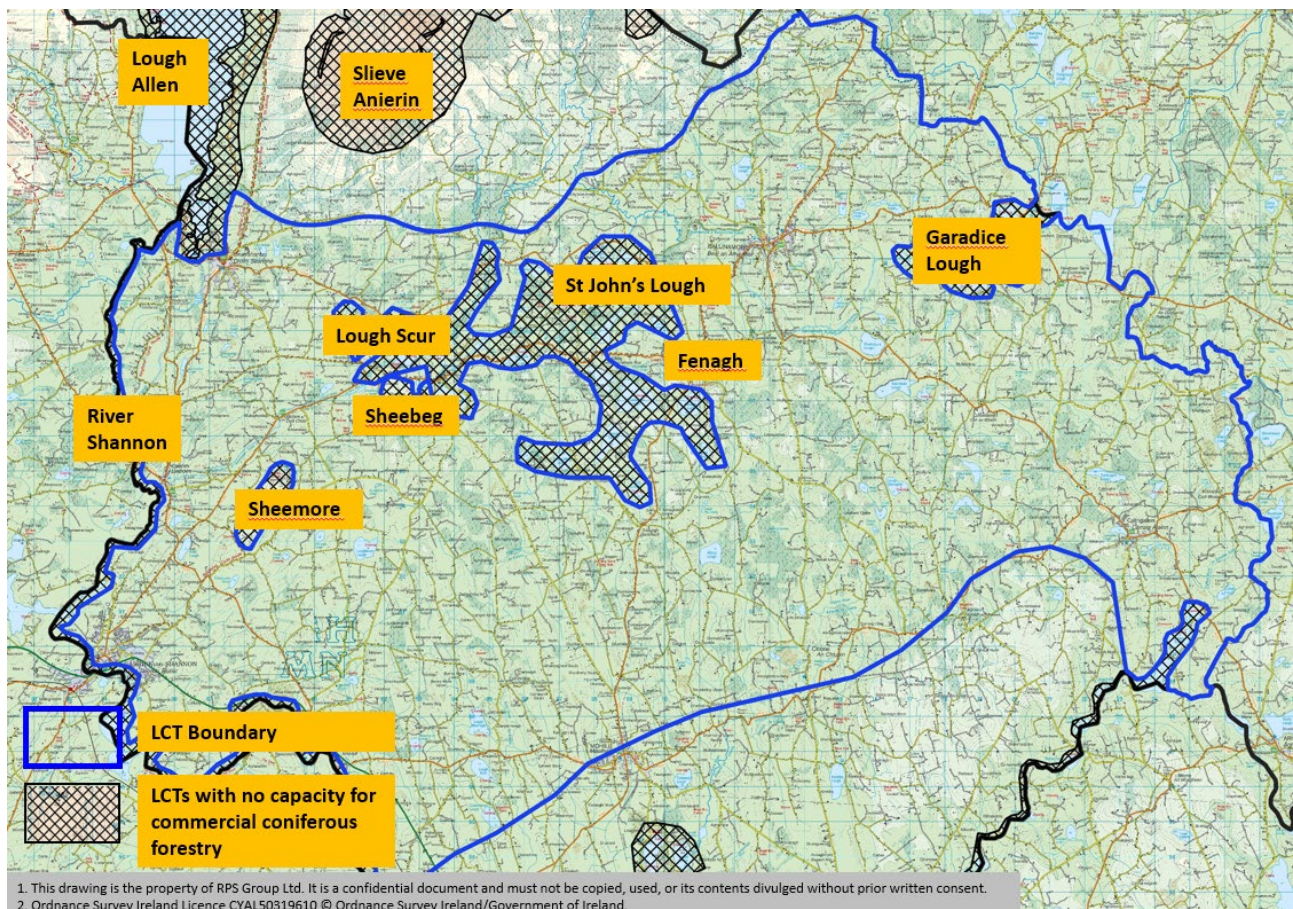
- The cumulative effects of multiple commercial coniferous forestry plantations within this LCT will need careful consideration especially in the vicinity of The Boleybrack Mountains and Corry Mountain.



4.2.1.4 LCT 9. Drumlin Farmland – Capacity for commercial coniferous forestry and design guidance

Guidelines in terms of the siting and design of future plantations in this LCT are as follows:

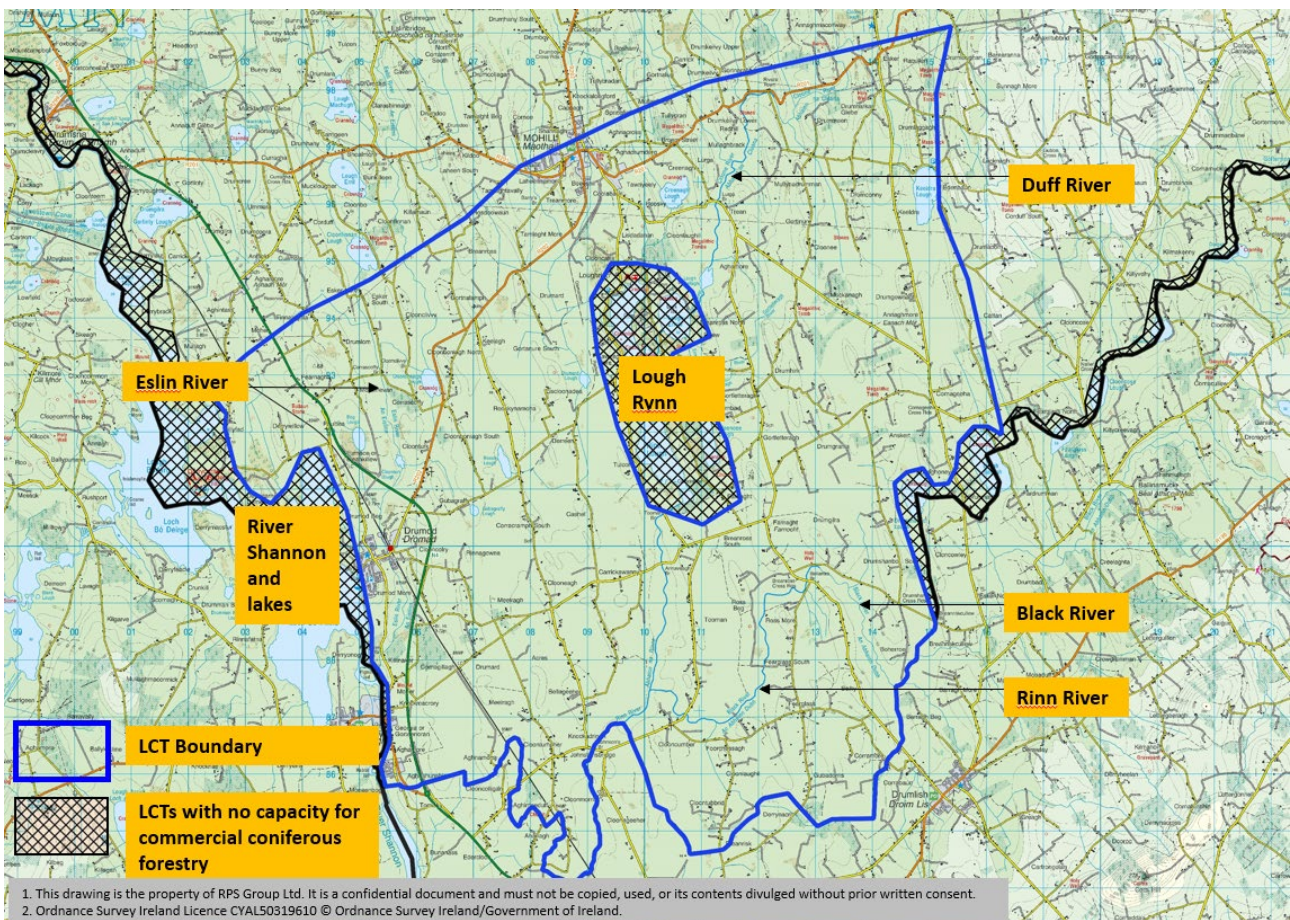
- Subtle integration of commercial coniferous forestry into existing wooded landscapes is recommended in order to preserve the pastoral drumlin hills as a key characteristic;
- Areas within the setting of lakes and rivers, including the River Shannon and Lough Allen are to be avoided. Proximity to rivers and watercourses to be considered on a case by case basis as referenced in the general guidance above;
- Areas within the setting of Sheemore and Sheebeg are to be avoided. Commercial coniferous forestry would mask views of these distinctive hills and also undermine their wider setting in an expansive lowland landscape;
- Commercial coniferous forestry should be carefully sited and designed to maintain views towards Slieve Anierin from the local landscape including that near Eslinbridge;
- Limit further plantations on the south facing slopes of Slieve Anierin in order to avoid adverse cumulative effects;
- Areas within the setting of Fenagh, including lake, Abbey ruins and other features of historical interest are to be avoided; and
- Plantations are to be sited in a manner that preserves existing views of Slieve Anierin along with the protected views within this LCT. These are to be sited in a manner that preserves protected views which are focussed on landscapes and features within this LCT and adjacent LCTs.



4.2.1.5 LCT 14. Drumlin Farmland with Peat Bogs – Capacity for commercial coniferous forestry and design guidance

Guidelines in terms of the siting and design of future plantations in this LCT are as follows:

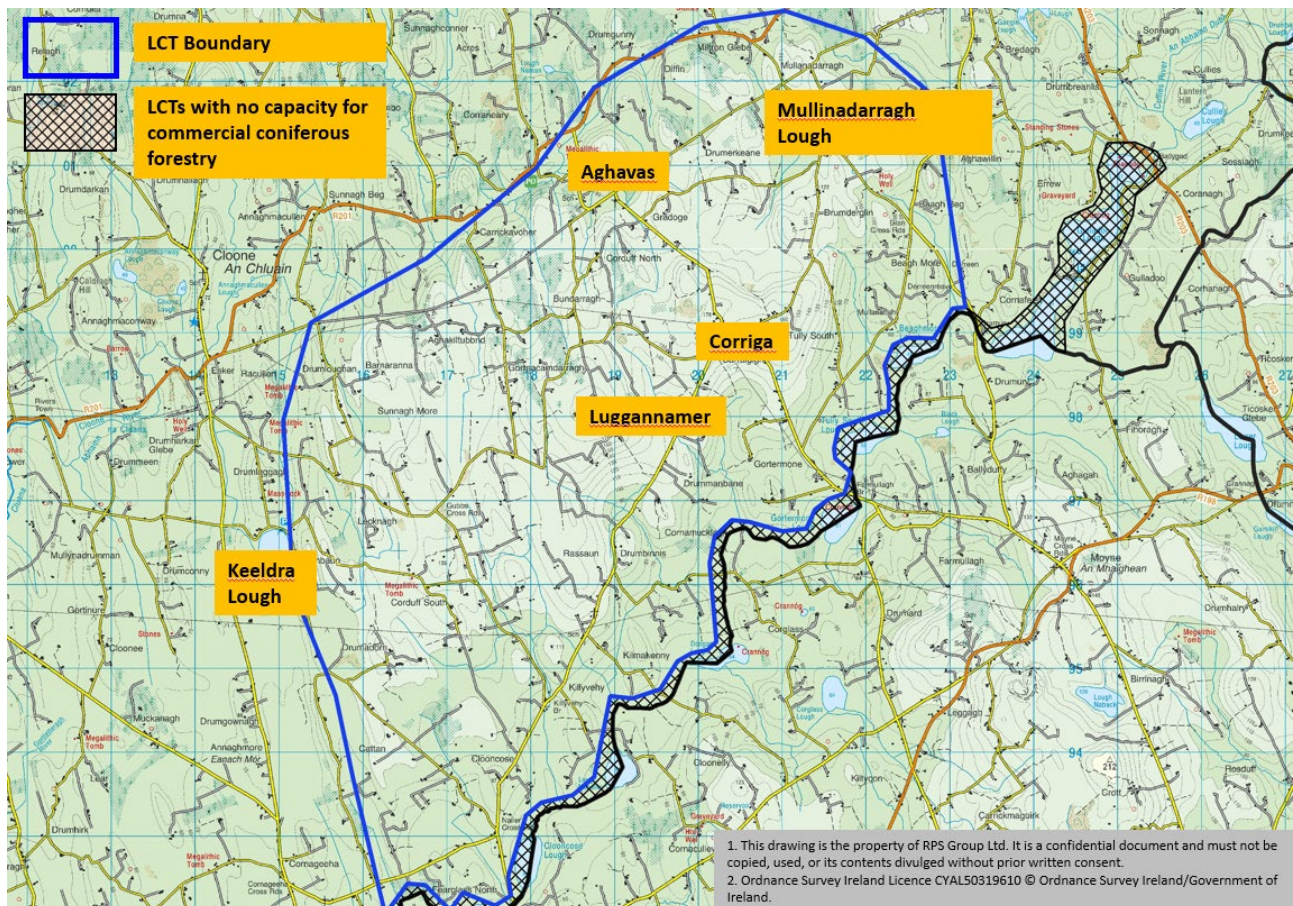
- Careful siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry will be required in terms of the scale and extent of planting in order to avoid adverse cumulative effects, in the northern part of this LCT;
- The siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry will take account of the need to maintain pastoral landcover and field pattern where present as dominant key characteristic of the landscape at a local level. The planting of broadleaves as outliers is recommended;
- Commercial coniferous forestry should ideally be set back from the edges of roads and tracks in order to maintain scenic diversity. This is especially important in this relatively flat LCT in which views from the road or track are of very short range and often focused on the nearest farmed fields;
- The immediate vicinity of the lakes along the River Shannon together with Creenagh Lough, Keeldra Lough, Roosky Lough and a number of other small water bodies is to be avoided;
- Areas in the immediately vicinity of Lough Rynn in the adjacent LCT 11 are to be avoided; and
- Areas within the immediate vicinity of the Shannon River, the Black River, the Rinn River, the Eslin River, the Cloone River and tributaries are to be avoided. Proximity to rivers and watercourses to be considered on a case by case basis as referenced in the general guidance above.



4.2.1.6 LCT 15. Undulating Hill Farmland – Capacity for commercial coniferous forestry and design guidance

Guidelines in terms of the siting and design of future plantations in this LCT are as follows:

- The ridgeline and the most elevated areas of this LCT are to be avoided. The ridgeline extends in a broadly east west direction through the townlands of Lugganammer, Corduff North and Corriga. Commercial coniferous forestry is to be sited at lower elevations in order not to be visually prominent in views of the ridgeline;
- Careful siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry is required in terms of the scale and extent of commercial forestry in order to avoid adverse cumulative effects with existing planting especially in the north of the LCT in the vicinity of Aghavas;
- The siting and design of commercial coniferous forestry must take account of the need to maintain pastoral landcover and field pattern strongly defined by mature hedgerows where present as dominant key characteristic of the landscape at a local level;
- Future commercial coniferous forestry is to be sited carefully in order not to obstruct views of elevated ridgelines to the south in County Longford and views of the mountains in North Leitrim; and
- Areas in close proximity to streams are to be avoided together with areas in the immediate vicinity of Keeldra lake in the adjacent LCT and Mullnadarragh Lough within this LCT. Proximity to rivers and watercourses to be considered on a case by case basis as referenced in the general guidance above.



Appendix A

Designated Nature Sites

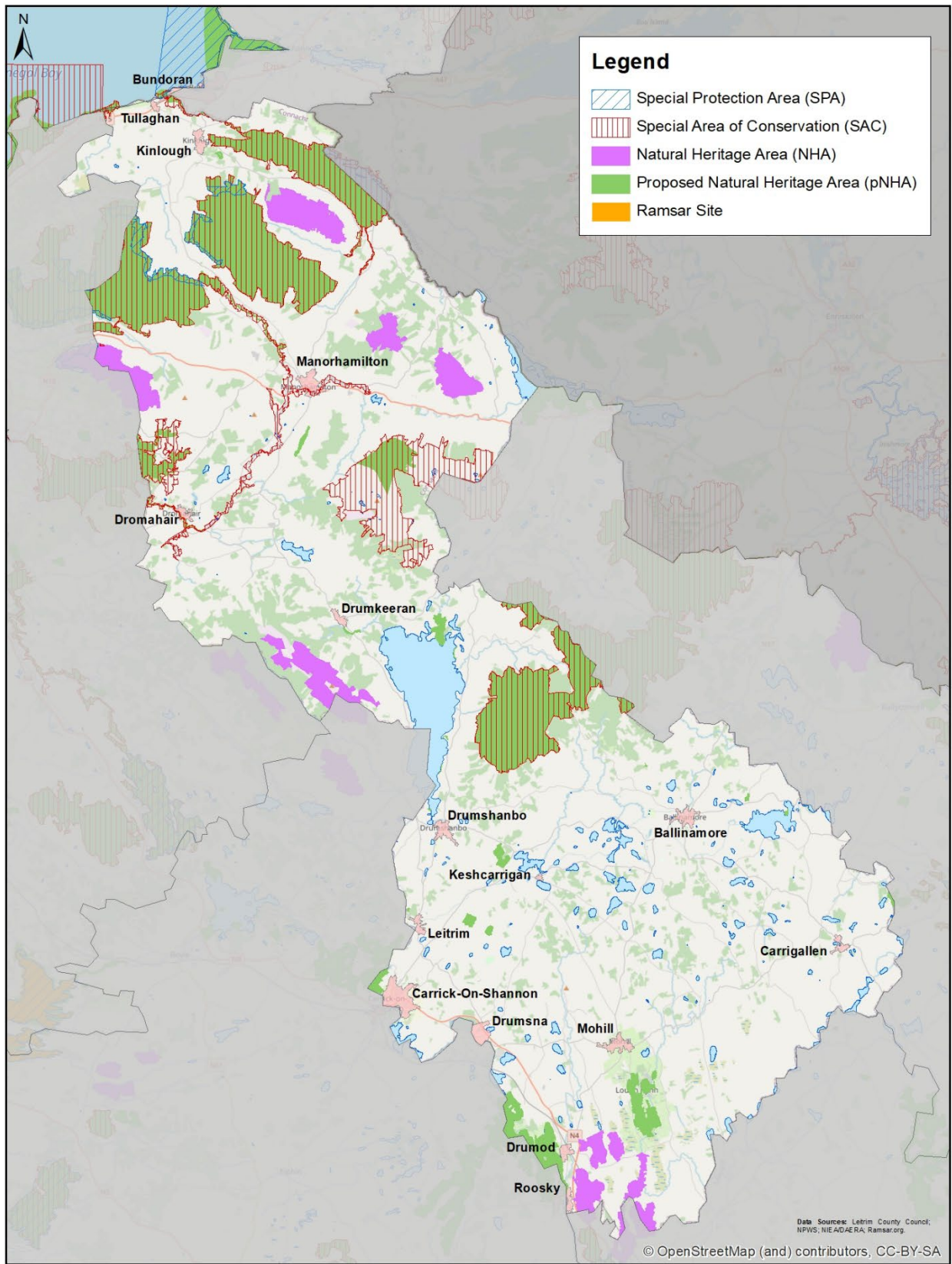


Figure 3.5
Designated Nature Sites

Project
Leitrim Landscape Capacity Study
for Commercial Forestry

Client
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