

Draft Wicklow County Development Plan 2016 - 2022

Volume 3 (5) Landscape Assessment



This report sets out the methodology utilised for assessing, developing and ensuring the Landscape Categories for County Wicklow (which will form part of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022) are robust. The assessment aims to build upon previous work carried out on landscape assessment within the County, using this information as a strong basis from which to develop more robust landscape categories and landscape protection policies for the County.

The purpose of identifying landscape categories is to provide best management of the landscapes of the County. This assessment aims to enhance existing policy provision having regard to each area's sensitivity, identifying the key characteristics that make landscape areas distinguishable from each other, and from this developing appropriate policy that provides for the sustainable management of each area.

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Section 1: Landscape Assessment and Wicklow

1.1 Introduction to Landscape Assessment

All aspects of our natural, built and cultural heritage come together in the landscapes we experience every day. Landscapes give us a sense of place. We can all think of landscapes with which we identify strongly and positively and which therefore contribute to our well being. The Wicklow Mountains range, the largest continuous upland region in Ireland, alongside the Wicklow coastline and open countryside are a source of pride and inspiration for many residents and visitors alike.

Landscapes are also continually changing. Change can be driven by natural forces (e.g. climate) but is largely the result of the actions of many different people and agencies, which are often not co-ordinated. Increasing population growth, alongside greater levels of economic activity, including a rapidly growing outdoor tourism and recreational industry, create challenges to the management of our landscapes and it is essential that all agencies and actors involved in landscape management work to ensure that change is positive in its effects, protecting and enhancing the landscape which we value and those which have been degraded over time. Meeting this challenge is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Landscape Assessment is designed to assist in achieving this goal.

Ireland ratified the European Landscape Convention in 2002. The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as '*...an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*'. The Convention, under Article 5(d), requires landscape to be integrated into regional and town planning policies and in cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as any other policies with possible direct and indirect impacts on landscape. The Convention, in addition to the obvious environmental benefits from properly protecting, managing and planning landscape, highlights the economic and social benefits that accrue such as tourism potential, economic growth, employment and quality of life enhancement.

The importance of landscape and visual amenity and the role of planning in its protection are recognised in the Planning and Development Act 2000, which requires that Development Plans include objectives for the preservation of the character of the landscape, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 – 2022 state that policies and measures should be adopted at county level to protect, manage and plan landscapes through the provision of Landscape Classification and Character Assessments in accordance with adopted European (and National) Landscape Guidance Documents such as 'Guidelines for the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention' (Natural England 2009).

This Development Plan's Landscape Assessment aims to build upon and enhance the work carried out on landscape assessment in preceding County Development Plans, particularly the excellent work carried out in 1998-1999. This study involves an analysis of the history of landscape assessment in Wicklow, the methodology used to derive the current landscape character areas within the County and a further investigation into the current robustness of these existing landscape categories through the use of desktop and field work. The outcome of this study divides the County into 5 weighted landscape character areas with a value placed on each area's perceived sensitivity ranging from 'High sensitivity' to 'Low Sensitivity'. The sensitivity of each landscape area is defined as its overall ability to sustain its character in the face of change. A highly sensitive landscape is less likely to be able to absorb change whereas a landscape with a low sensitivity is more likely to be able to absorb change without impacting on the special characteristics of the

area. This study will help inform decision making in relation to the protection of the environment, natural resources and heritage and will be used to guide development over the lifetime of the County Development Plan.

1.2 Wicklow's Landscape

It is generally recognised that Wicklow, 'The Garden County', is one of the more attractive and scenic counties in Ireland with its mountains, rolling foothills, beaches, forests, lakes and attractive views and prospects. However there is an underlying problem of 'over familiarisation' with the landscape which results in it being taken for granted. In fact, whilst there may be certain parts of the Wicklow landscape that may be considered 'ordinary' when compared to other areas in Wicklow, such areas would probably be readily included in other counties as areas of particularly high amenity that warrant special protection. Even the area of land currently classified as 'rural' (the 'lowest' current landscape designation in Wicklow) is attractive in terms of its rural rustic nature and the contrast it provides against the higher mountain areas of the County. For this reason it is very difficult and indeed wrong to classify landscape types in terms of importance, as each category, in terms of interpretation works well both individually and when contrasted with other categories. This is a particularly distinctive quality of Wicklow and it is this quality which marks it apart from other counties.

The National Park and the Wicklow Mountain range dominate the County. With the exception of a narrow coastal strip and some low ground in the south, over two thirds of the County lies above the 200 metre contour. The backbone of the Mountains runs in a north east to south west direction across the County and is formed by granite, while the glaciation period in Wicklow has left attractive and unique glaciated "U" shaped valleys, moraines, corries and glacial lakes along with other important glacial and periglacial features and landforms.



Figure 1.1 View towards Glendalough Upper Lake

The coastal areas, extensive river valleys and reservoirs of the County, that complement the mountain region, are amongst the most sensitive and valuable resources in the County, both in terms of habitats, scenic beauty and recreation. They provide a destination for tourists and attractive settlement areas.

This contrast of landscapes, each of which are of equal importance, should be retained and reinforced by appropriate development policies and objectives. This goal is even more significant when one considers the fact that Wicklow is located at the doorstep of a city with a population in excess of one million people and therefore the pressure associated with development is even greater than that for other scenic counties. The sensitivity of the County's landscape to change should be given priority when assessing any development proposals and the concept of sustainability should be reflected in any policies arrived at.

1.3 Wicklow and Landscape Assessment

The following tables provide a brief synopsis of the background to Landscape Assessment within County Wicklow and how the landscape categories set out in the previous Wicklow County Development Plans have been formulated over time.

Year	1989 County Development Plan
Background	Landscape officially recognised in the 1989 County Development Plan following the 1970 European Conservation Conference of the Council of Europe which drew up guidelines for a European policy for management and improvement of the environment.
Outcome	<p>Policies were drawn up for areas of landscape, recreational, educational, scientific, architectural and historical value and interest in the County. The areas of special control consisted of (a) landscape areas, (b) villages and towns of high visual quality and civic design (c) the rarity of buildings and monuments listed for preservation or protection in the plan and (d) roads of importance.</p> <p>These landscape areas were grouped into three categories in descending order of importance and generally followed the boundaries as drawn up by An Foras Fobartha in an "Inventory of Outstanding Natural Landscapes". Class A included "Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Class B referred to "Areas of Scenic Importance" (e.g. the coastal area between Greystones and Wicklow) and Class C referred to "Other Rural Mountain Areas of Amenity Value" e.g. Carrick Mountain or Grangecon/Stratford area.</p> <p>Within these landscape areas of special control, various policies were drawn up. In general this approach sought to control development in landscape areas in order to maintain scenic values, recreational utility and existing character.</p>

Table 1.1

Year	1999 County Development Plan
Background	The 1999 County Development Plan saw a complete review of the work carried out in classifying Wicklow's landscape; it was clear during the lifetime of the 1989 plan that the three distinct categories chosen were too general, too wide ranging and not fine grained enough, invariably leading to problems with interpretation when considering planning applications. This review found that the topography varies considerably in landscape category A (i.e. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), but this was not reflected in how planning applications were treated at this time. Arising from this a more in-depth and realistic assessment of the landscape of Co. Wicklow was required which would allow a more variable response to development within the County.
Outcome	The approach proposed drew upon the guidance by An Foras Fobartha in their publications "Planning for Amenity, Recreation and Tourism" 1970 and an "Inventory of Outstanding Landscapes in Ireland" (1977) and advice provided by the English Countryside Commission in their then publication "Landscape Assessment Guidance" (1993). The methodology put in place involved the following:

	<p>A Desk Study: Involving the collation of a wide range of existing information relevant to the assessment of landscape character e.g. mapped, written and photographic. From the information gathered from the desk study 6 preliminary zones were identified 1) Core Mountain Area, 2) Lake Area, 3) Coastal Area, 4) Eastern Corridor Area, 5) Vale of Avoca Area, 6) Rural Area. The identification of these zones provided a basic framework within which the various preliminary landscape types could be assessed and refined during field surveys.</p> <p>Field Survey Work: The overarching aim of the field survey work was to confirm or revise the preliminary breakdown of the landscape zones identified, to refine boundaries of types according to perceived changes in the landscape character on the ground, to provide a written description of the character of each type (including perceptual qualities), to record the features critical to this character, to observe and record any evidence of pressure or change in the landscape, to delete any obsolete views/prospects and to note those worthy of inclusion.</p> <p>To carry out this work, field survey sheets were devised (see Appendix 3) in a manner suitable to assess the Wicklow environment, with the County being divided in 5km grid squares for assessment. This survey of the initial categories identified from the desk study allowed for further refining and amending of boundaries and also resulted in the addition of new landscape categories and the sub-division of others.</p> <p>In carrying out both the desk study and field work a subjective, but professional judgment was carried out. This was considered to be a common sense approach and resulted in the identification of the 7 major landscape types:</p> <p>1) The Mountainous Area, 2) Lake Area, 3) Access Corridors, 4) The Baltinglass Hills, 5) Rural Area, 6) Glencree /Glencullen and 7) The Coastal Area.</p>
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Table 1.2

Year	2004 County Development Plan
Background	Given the level of detail undertaken in the preparation of the 1999 County Development Plan landscape character assessment (as detailed above), it was considered that the need for any further work in this area was not warranted in the preparation of the 2004-2010 County Development Plan and the 1999 landscape categorisation was carried forward.
Outcome	The provisions of the 1999 County Development Plan were carried forward.

Table 1.3

Year	2010 County Development Plan
Background	While the review of the 2010 County Development Plan did not include a review of the existing landscape categories, the review process of the 2010 Development Plan did involve a re-assessment of all listed views and prospects within the County. The review involved on site assessments of all listed views and prospects within the County in order to establish 1) whether the view or prospect was still valid 2) whether the description was accurate and 3) to ascertain whether there was a need for additions / deletions to these lists. A complete update of all listed views and prospects was carried out with each being provided with an up to date description and mapped accordingly.
Outcome	The provisions of the 1999 County Development Plan Landscape Categories were carried forward.

Table 1.4

1.4 Wicklow's Existing Landscape Categorisation

The existing landscape characterisation for County Wicklow puts in place a hierarchy of landscapes ranging from lands with high vulnerability to development, to lands with a low vulnerability. The following table sets out briefly the existing landscape categories for County Wicklow with Map 1 demonstrating the spatial extent of these areas.

1. Mountain and Lakeshore Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ML-AONB)	
Vulnerability:	Very high
2. Coastal Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (C - AONB)	
Vulnerability:	Very high
3. Areas of Special Amenity (ASA)	
Vulnerability:	High
4. Access Corridor Area (ACA)	
Vulnerability:	Medium
5. Rural Area (RA)	
Vulnerability:	Medium
6. Urban Areas (UA)	
Vulnerability:	Low

Table 1.5 – Wicklow's existing Landscape Categories

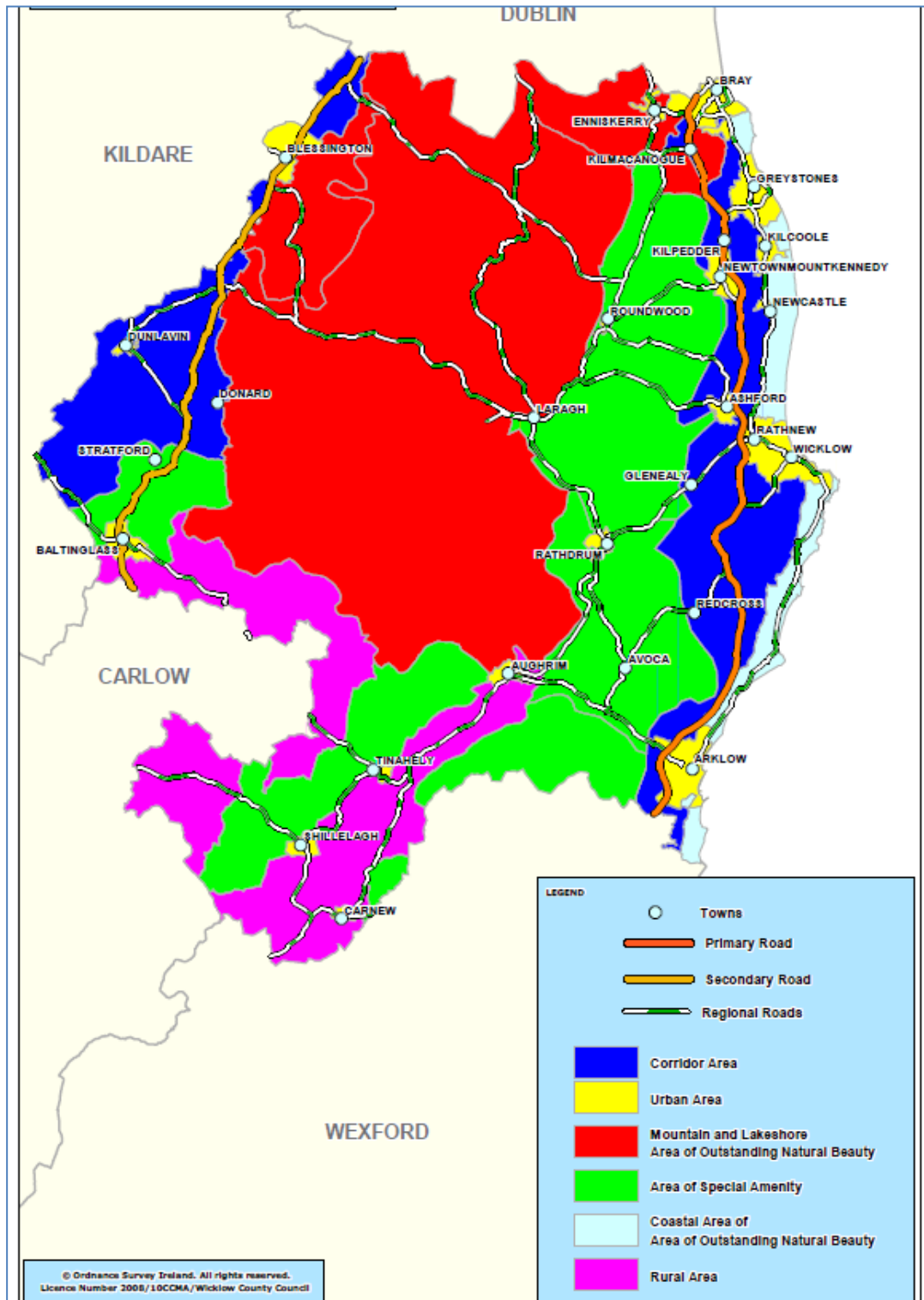


Figure 1.1 Wicklow's existing Landscape Classification Map

1.5 Wicklow's Landscape in 2016

The ever increasing development pressures on Wicklow's landscape has required the careful management and control over where and what type of developments are suitable and deemed sympathetic to particular areas within the County. In more recent years and since the adoption of the 2004 County Development Plan, this pressure has been increasing particularly within the housing, agriculture, telecommunications and energy sectors. The physical scale and nature of development, particularly within the telecommunications and energy sectors, has reached an unprecedented level and therefore appropriate siting of such infrastructure within the landscape is an ongoing topic of debate. In addition to the above, the pressures associated with the development of Wicklow's tourism industry, the scale and location of which creates its own separate impacts on Wicklow's landscape, must be taken into consideration.

In recognition of this and in order to ensure that Wicklow's landscape is managed in an appropriate manner into the future, this assessment aims to build upon the work carried out on landscape during the preparation of the 1999 County Development Plan and examine the robustness of the landscape categories set out in the current County Development Plan 2010-2016. This will be carried out through desk top and field research. The outcomes of the study will help inform the existing landscape categories for the County thereby ensuring that the landscape of County Wicklow is appropriately maintained and managed into the future.

Note: In carrying out this study and to provide clarity with the terminology used throughout this document it should be noted that 1) It is proposed that the existing landscape category of "Area of Special Amenity" be renamed "Area of High Amenity" in order to avoid any confusion with the terminology 'SAAO- Special Amenity Area Order' and 2) It is proposed to re-name the 'Rural Area' landscape category to 'Rolling Lowlands' in order to avoid any confusion with the terminology used in Chapter 4 'Housing in the Open Countryside' and the use of the term 'rural area'.

Section 2: An analysis of Wicklow's Landscape

2.1 Introduction

Following detailed evaluation of existing best practice, the timeframe for this study and a cost benefit analysis of required work, it was determined that in light of the work carried during the review of the last three County Development Plans, in particular the extent of the work carried out in 1999, the following methodology was determined as the most practical way of reviewing Wicklow's existing Landscape Categories. The overall objective of this is to test the robustness of the existing landscape category boundaries within County Wicklow rather than starting a completely new assessment of the County.

Step 1: Desk Research

Step 2: Field Work

Step 3: Proposed changes

Step 4: Amend the Landscape Map as necessary

Step 5: Policy Provision

2.2 Defining the study

The initial stages of this project involved an analysis of and detailed consideration as to what would be the most appropriate level at which to carry out this analysis. Following lengthy discussions and the preparation of a brief working paper it was determined that the use of GIS (Geographical Information Systems) and the development of a landscape sensitivity¹ map was the most appropriate method to use. The features considered in this study include both environmental/natural and cultural/social features of the landscape.

Having determined an appropriate level to commence the analysis the task of identifying the physical and cultural/social features within the County was undertaken. Given the large quantity of potential features which, when taken in isolation could be considered to be significant, it was decided to only identify features that were deemed to play a 'significant' role in the shaping of the County's landscape. For the purposes of this study 'Urban Areas', namely those settlements within Levels 1-6 of the settlement hierarchy of the County Development Plan, have been excluded from this study. The exclusion of these areas was considered appropriate given the level of existing development within these areas and their designation within the existing County Development Plan.

¹ *Landscape sensitivity refers to the inherent sensitivity to change of the landscape resource, in terms of both its character as a whole and its individual elements, as well as the visual sensitivity of the landscape in terms of views, visibility, number and nature of viewers and scope to mitigate visual impact. "Scenic Landscape Feasibility Study – Bord Failte 2007"*

Tables 1 and 2 below identify both the natural landscape and cultural/social features considered in this study.

Natural Landscape	Feature
	Topography
	Reservoirs
	River Valleys
	Coastal Zones and Beaches
	European Designated Sites
	Wicklow National Park and Nature Reserves
	NWPS Designations
	Bray Head and Sugar Loaf Mountains
	County Geological Sites
	Listed Views
Listed Prospects	

Table 2.1 – Environmental/Natural Landscape Features

Cultural/Social Landscape	Feature
	Corine Mapping/Land Uses
	Rural Housing ²
	Record of Protected Structures
	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)
	National Monuments
	Tree Preservation Orders
	NIAH Gardens Survey (Estate Gardens)
	Disused railway lines
	Significant tourism walking routes
Significant tourism driving routes	

Table 2.2 - Cultural/Social Landscape Features

The features in Tables 1 and 2 were deemed sufficient to cover the most significant natural and cultural elements of Wicklow's landscape. This list was further broken into individual items providing a total of 64 features to be mapped and weighted according to perceived sensitivity to change. The application of weightings was carried out based on a professional evaluation of the perceived sensitivity to change for each individual feature.

A breakdown of the weightings applied to each geographical feature is set out in Appendix 1.

2.3 GIS and the Sensitivity Map

A weighting system applied through Geographical Information Systems (GIS) software was used in order to calculate the overall sensitivity of the landscape. This system required the application of weightings to all 64 features derived from tables 1 and 2 above. For each category, a simplistic weighted scaling range from 1 (least sensitive) to 10 (most sensitive) was used for all categories. Furthermore for features such as rural housing, Tree Preservation Orders, National Monuments, the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) the occurrence or concentration of such features over 5km² grid squares was calculated and then scaled using the range 1 – 10 also.

² Rural Housing Concentrations – The density of rural housing in over a 5km² radius – this excludes urban areas within Levels 1-6 of the Wicklow settlement hierarchy.

This process was carried out in order to produce an overall landscape sensitivity map for the entire County as set out in Figure 2.1 below.

Given the wide ranging scales of sensitivity found within the County and in order to create a more simplified map it was decided to scale the level of sensitivity for each area into the following five categories. In order to appropriately scale the level of sensitivity within each of these categories a downward sliding scale from 40+ (high sensitivity) was used.

Range	Landscape Sensitivity	Range
1	Low Sensitivity	0-25
2	Low to Medium Sensitivity	25-30
3	Medium Sensitivity	30-35
4	Medium to High Sensitivity	35-40
5	High Sensitivity	40+

Table 2.3 Scaling range applied to landscape sensitivities

2.4 Analysis of the Sensitivity Map

The sensitivity map as set out in Figure 2.1 below generally highlights the following:

- A concentration of highly sensitive areas within the central mountainous upland areas of the County including the Poulaphouca Reservoir, the eastern coastline and a number of significant river valleys.
- A medium level of sensitivity on lands around the periphery of the more mountainous uplands areas with medium to highly sensitive locations situated to the south west of the County in the vicinity of Baltinglass, lands surrounding the Poulaphouca reservoir and to the south of the County in the vicinity of Coolattin estate and Tomnafinnogue Wood.
- A distinct pattern of low to medium sensitivity on lands located along the foothills of the more mountainous lands
- Areas of low sensitivity on lands
 - located to the south of the County, west of Tinahely and Shillelagh,
 - to the west of the County surrounding the Dunlavin and Kilbride areas following the line of the N81 and
 - toward the south east of the County, close to Arklow and following the route of the M/N11 running in a north south direction along the east coast.

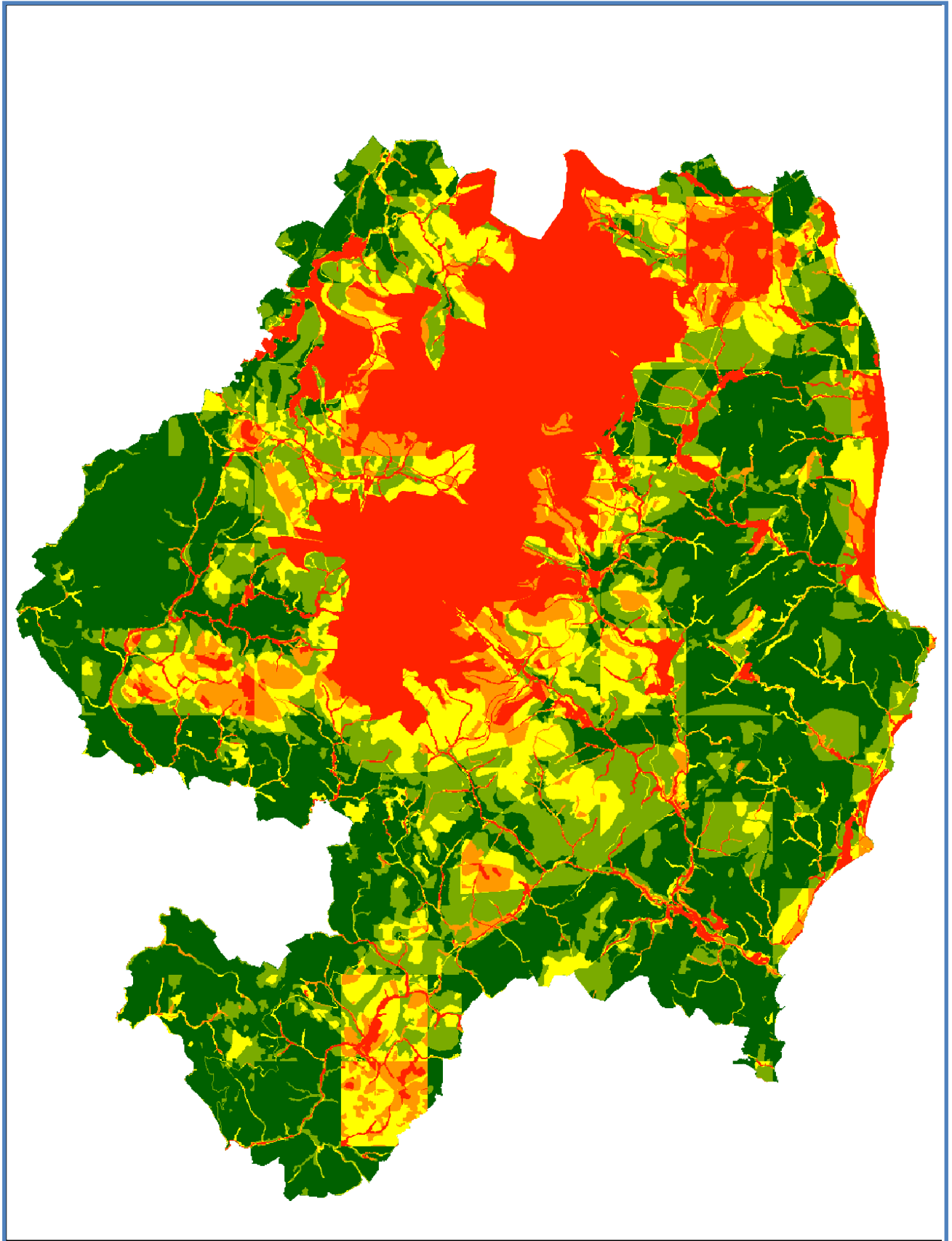


Figure 2.1: Landscape 'sensitivity' map for County Wicklow

Section 3: Analysis of the existing Landscape Categories and the sensitivity map

3.1 Introduction

Having developed a landscape sensitivity map for the County, the study needed to establish whether or not the existing landscape categories generally corresponded with the results produced in this map. To carry out this task an overlay of the existing landscape category boundaries on top of the sensitivity map was used. This map is set out in Figure 3.1 below and was used to identify key areas that require further analysis in order to ascertain whether any changes to the landscape category boundaries might be necessary.

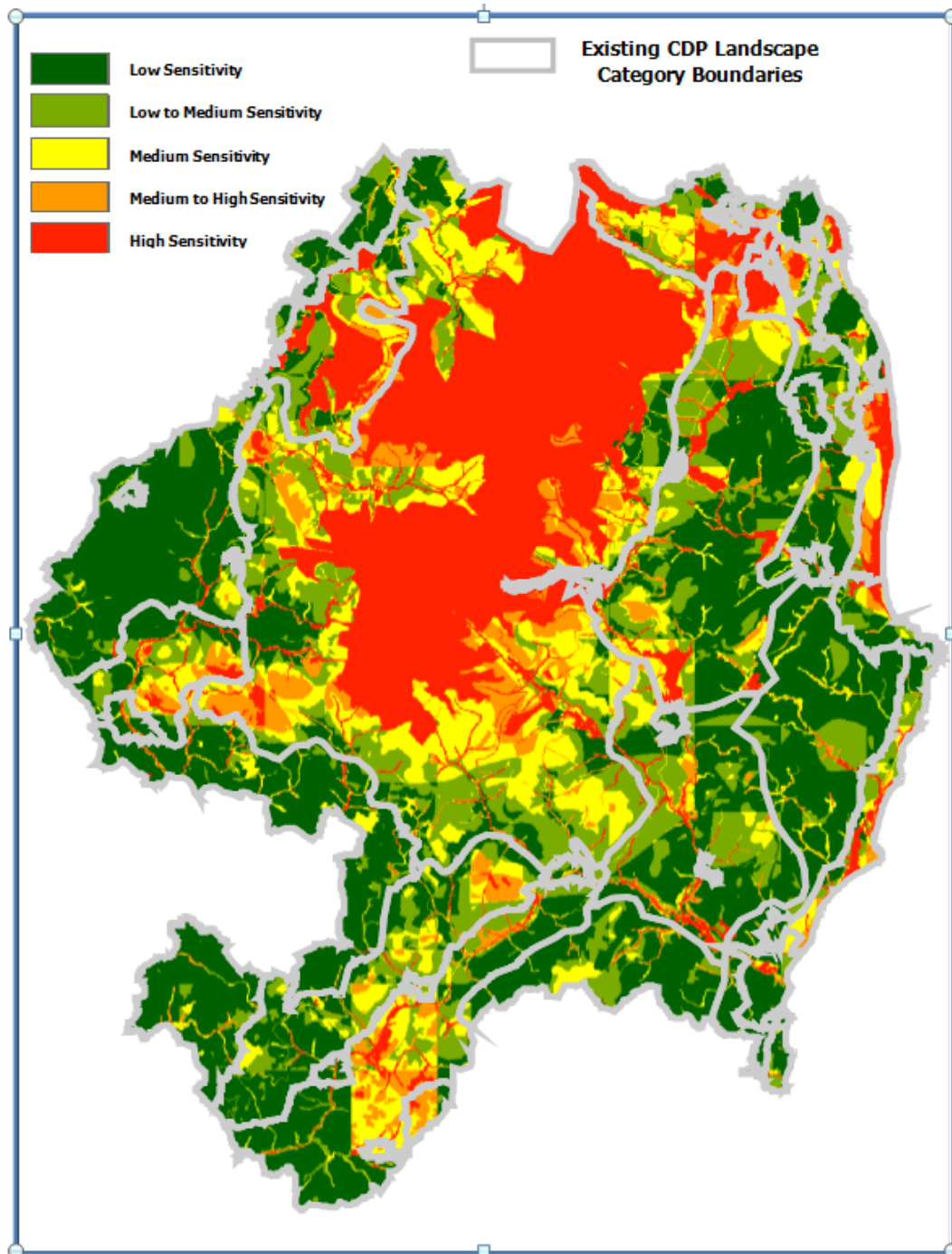


Figure 3.1 – Landscape Categories overlay with Sensitivity Mapping

3.2 Overlay Mapping Analysis

As set out in Section 2 above, the existing Landscape Categories set out in the County Development Plan range from a high to low sensitivity. By placing the outline of the existing landscape category boundaries on top of the sensitivity map we are able to identify where clear differences occur between the existing map and the sensitivity map produced. The remainder of the study focuses only on the areas where clear differences were identified.

Figure 3.1 above clearly identifies 4 areas requiring further assessment. This further assessment helped to ascertain whether the inclusion of these areas within a certain landscape category should remain in place or whether certain areas of the County should be re-classified. In order to do this, an analysis of the factors influencing the sensitivity map was required.

In addition to the above mapping analysis it was clear from the existing landscape map that 1) there was a need for a more natural transition between lands within the more sensitive areas such as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other less sensitive landscapes and 2) the extent of the 'Corridor Area' landscape category in both the east and west of the County required analyses and amendment in order to provide a more rational approach to the extent of both of these landscape areas.

3.3 Areas identified as requiring further analysis

3.3.1 Area 1 – Lands north of Carnew at Coolattin and Tomnafinnogue

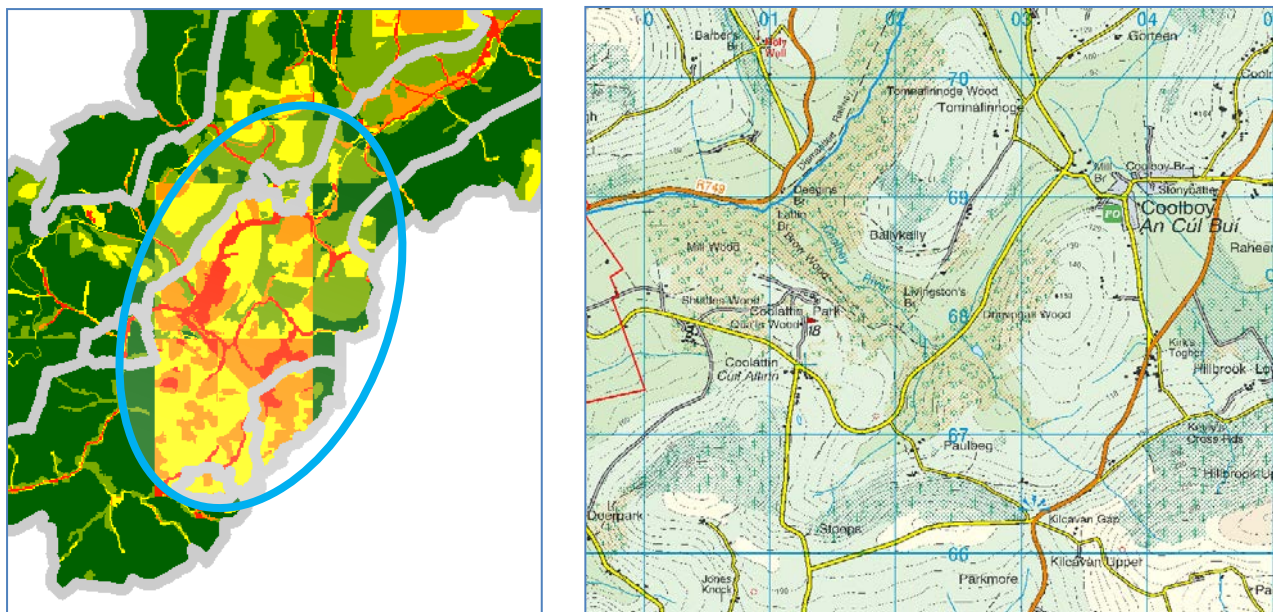


Figure 3.1 – Landscape Categories overlay with Sensitivity Mapping

Area Description: Lands in close proximity to the south mountain lowlands falling between Kilcavan Upper and Cronlea.

Current Landscape Categorisation: Rural Area (low sensitivity)

Sensitivity Mapping: Medium

Reason for sensitivity score: Rolling hills, presence of historic Coolattin Park, Tomnafinnogue Wood, views from Kilcavan cross road, Cultural Heritage.

Analysis Conclusion: Further field work required (see Section 3.4.1 to follow).

3.3.2 Area 2 Lands falling mainly to the south of the L-3260 Rathdangan to Aughrim Road

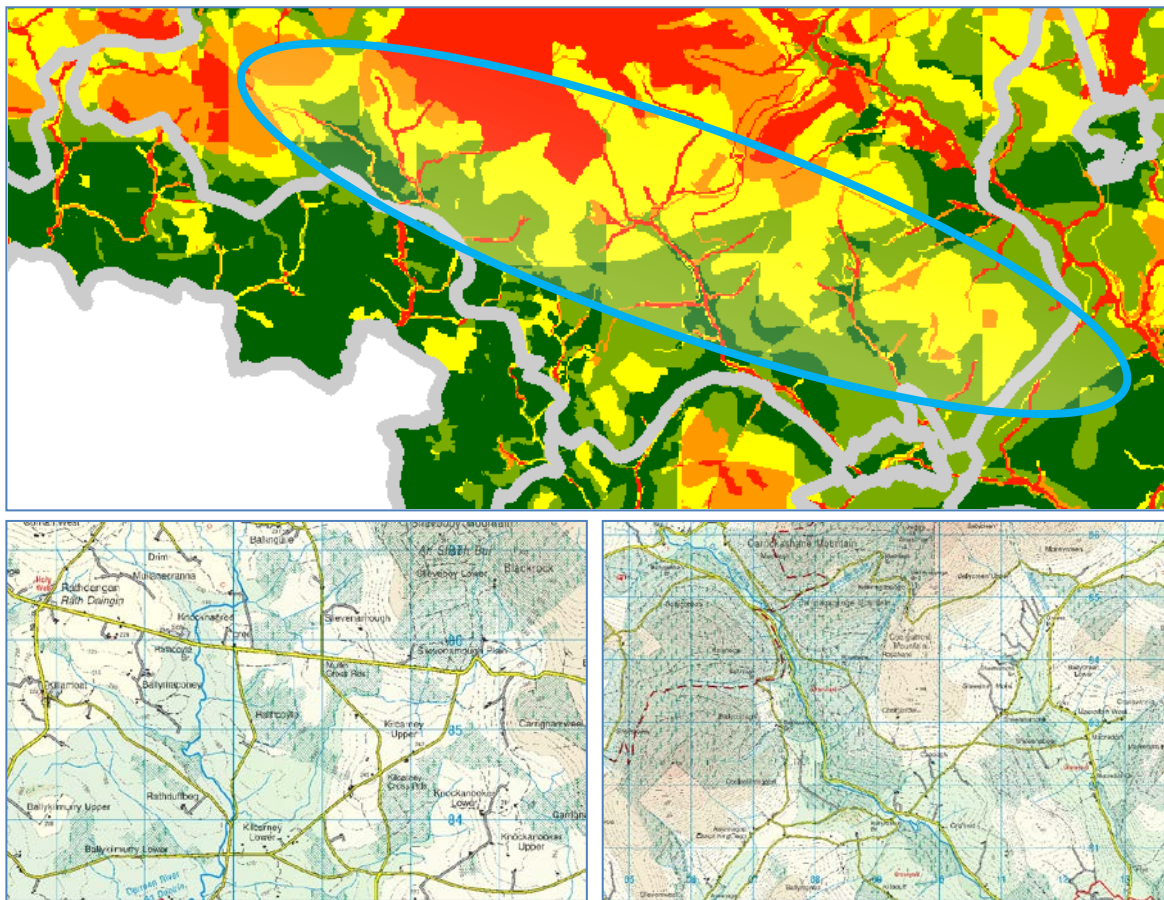


Figure 3.3 – Area 2 Sensitivity and OS Map

Area Description: Lands falling along the L-3260 between Rathdangan and Aughrim. This areas comprises of mountain lowlands, areas of forest cover enclosing the Ow River Valley and north of Aughrim within the Macreddin Area.

Current Landscape Categorisation: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Sensitivity Mapping: Ranging from Low to Medium

Reason for sensitivity score: While these lands are in the central mountainous zone, elevations are generally in the less extreme 200-300m range and landforms and uses do not present such a contrast with the rolling farmland adjacent, as the more central mountain block. The landscape is hard to perceive as an area of outstanding natural beauty, one for example that visitors would make a point of visiting. That said, there are still attractive landscapes within this area, such as the picturesque Ow River valley, but overall the area does not comprise of a large number of the environmental/natural/social or cultural factors considered in the development of the Sensitivity Map.

Analysis Conclusion: Further field work required (see Section 3.4.2 to follow).

3.3.3 Area 3 - The Hollywood/Donard/ Glen of the Imaal Area

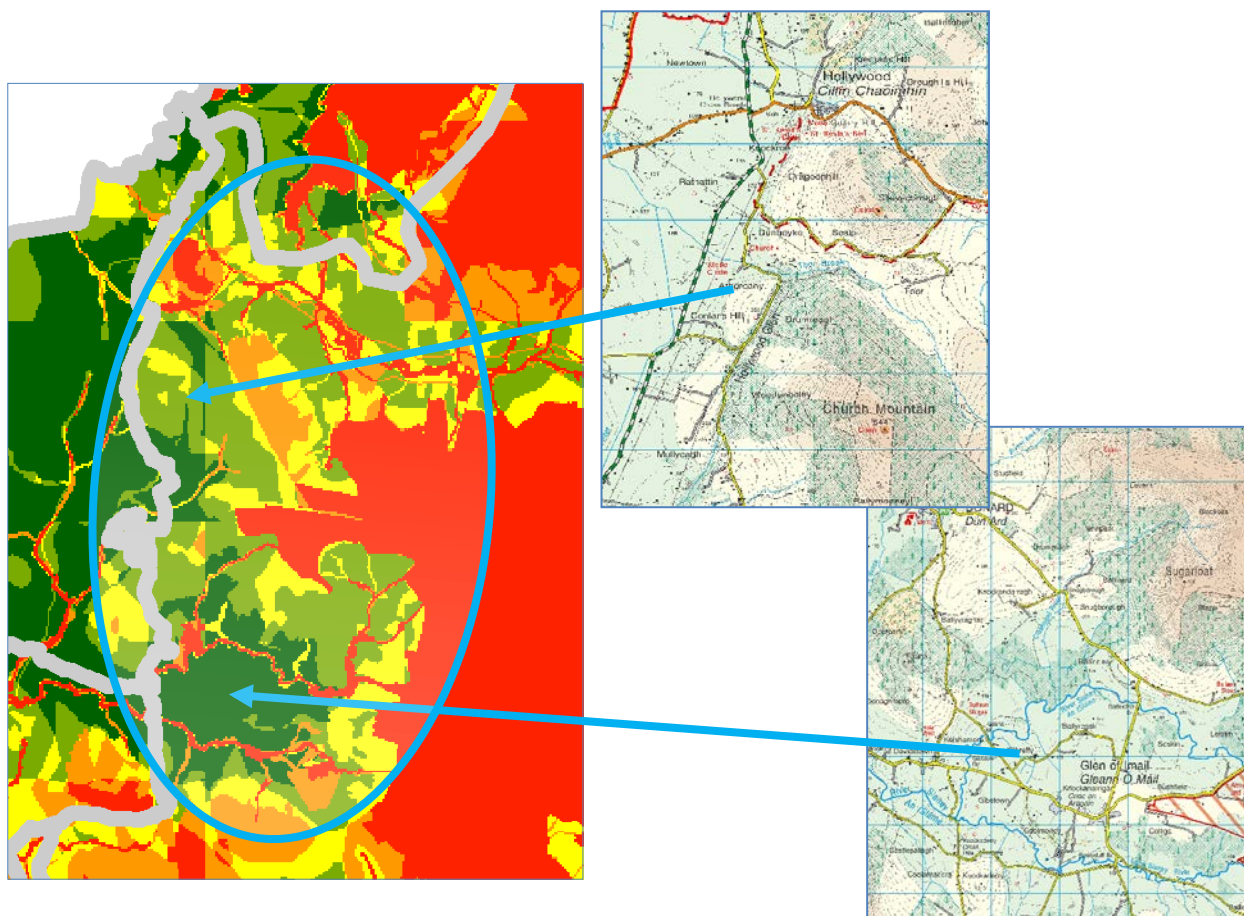


Figure 3.4 – Area 3 Sensitivity and OS Map

Area Description: Lands located between the N81 and the higher mountainous areas between Hollywood/Slievecorragh and south towards Donard and the Glen of Imaal

Current Landscape Categorisation: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (high sensitivity)

Sensitivity Mapping: Generally Low to Medium/Medium

Reason for sensitivity score: This area is located to the east of the N81 extending from Hollywood as far as Donard and the Glen of Imaal. The area generally comprises of relatively low lying agricultural lands which act as a natural transition between the lower more rural lands and more elevated lands such as Keadeen mountain, Lugnaquilla and Church mountain south of Hollywood village.

With the exception of the path of the River Slaney and the more mountainous upland areas to the south, east and north, lands to the east of the N81 do not exhibit a large number of the environmental/natural/social or cultural factors considered in the development of the sensitivity Map.

Analysis Conclusion: Further field work required (see Section 3.4.3 to follow).

3.3.4 Area 4 - The north west of the County and lands surrounding Manor Kilbride/Ballyfolan

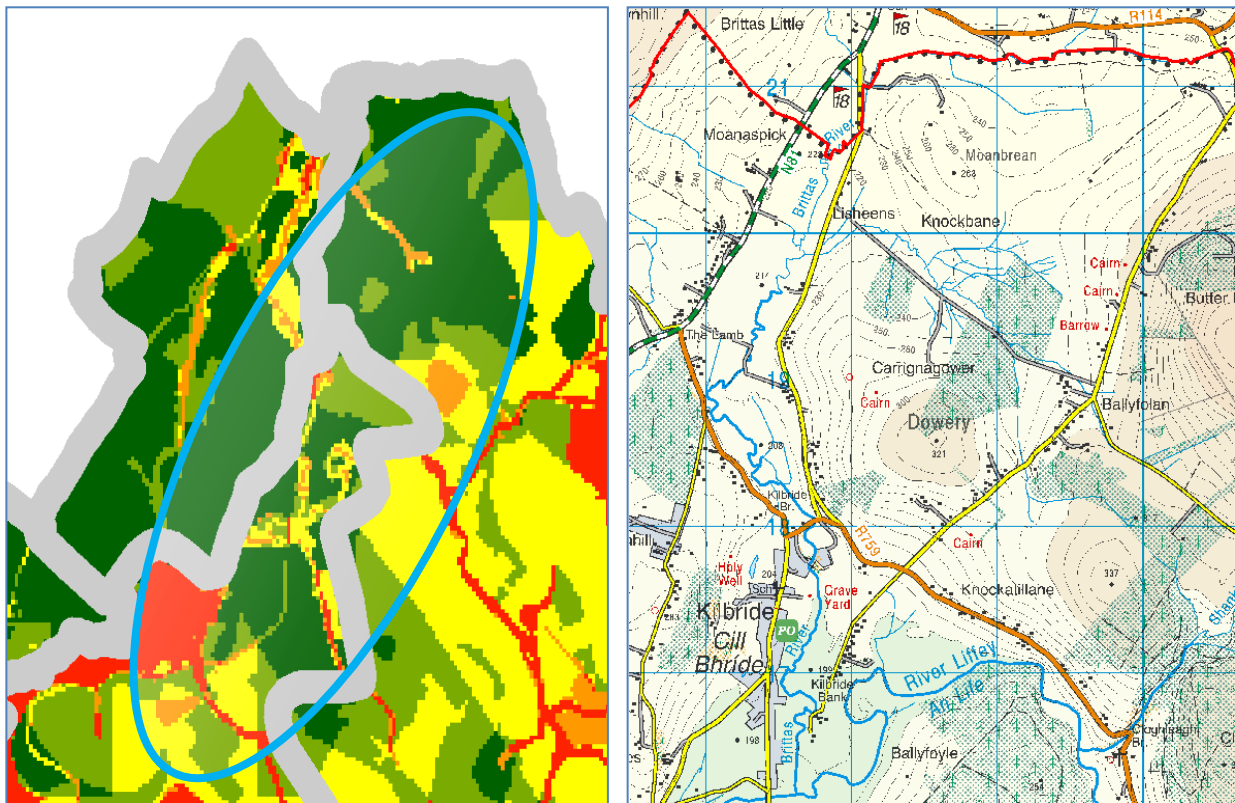


Figure 3.4 – Area 4 Sensitivity and OS Map

Area Description: Lands located to the north west of the County, to the north and east of Manor Kilbride including land falling between Ballyfolan and Lisheen. The subject lands provide a natural transition between the N81 Corridor Area and higher mountainous areas beginning at Butter Mountain/Seefinn and Ballysmuttan.

Current Landscape Categorisation: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (high sensitivity)

Sensitivity Mapping: Generally Low to Medium/Medium

Reason for sensitivity score: This landscape generally falls within the 200-300m contour line comprising of clustered type development at Ballyfolan/Kilbride Bank and do not comprise of a large number of the environmental/natural/social or cultural factors considered in the development of the Sensitivity Map.

Despite the presence of the River Liffey to the south and the area's proximity to the Poulaphouca reservoir, the sensitivity map produced does not indicate that this area comprises of any significantly distinctive landscape features that would merit recognition as an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Analysis Conclusion: Further field work required. (See Section 3.4.4 to follow).

3.4 Further Assessment and Field Work

Having examined the sensitivity map for the County and in overlaying the existing landscape boundaries, a more focused approach can be taken to assess the adequacy of the existing landscape categories for the County. The four areas detailed above were identified as areas where further analysis would be required. Through the use of field work a more detailed site specific analysis was carried out in order to ascertain if the sensitivity mapping is robust.

In order to fulfil this objective the four areas identified and analysed above were subject to a wind shield and walkover survey on the 23rd of April 2015 at a time when weather conditions were maximised in order to carry out this analysis.

In carrying out this task the central upland/highly sensitive areas of the landscape were used as a 'barometer' for the assessment of whether lands within the County should be included within the 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'.



Figure 3.5: *The AONB 'Barometer' - Views across the AONB Landscape at Lough Tay*

3.4.1 – Lands north of Carnew at Coolattin and Tomnafinnogue – Field Work

Figure 3.6 displays the views from Kilcavan cross roads across Area 1. Within the photo a clear view of Tomnafinnogue wood and the rolling lowlands surrounding the Coolattin estate can be seen distinguishing this area from the surrounding lands. The extent of the most sensitive landscapes was deemed to include the Coolattin Estate lands and its extensive trees and

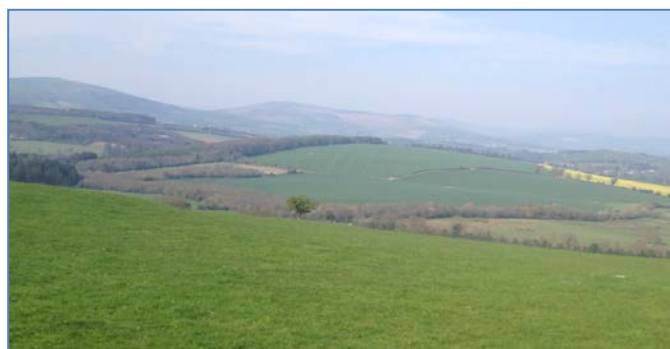


Figure 3.6: *Scenic lands with Area 1*

historical houses, Tomnafinnogue wood and the brow of the hill at Drimingall Wood.

Proposal: Landscape within Area 1 to move from 'Rural Area' to 'Area of Special Amenity' (now renamed 'Area of High Amenity')

3.4.2 Area 2 - Lands falling mainly to the south of the L-3260 Rathdangan to Aughrim Road

Through the wind shield survey and walkover field work on these lands it was clear that this area provides for varying types of landscape.

Rathdangan Area

Surrounding the village of Rathdangan it was considered that this area provided for a scenic natural lowland landscape that merited a higher landscape classification than that of 'Rural Area'. The reclassification of this area also facilitates a natural transition between the less sensitive rural lands to the south and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Proposal: Rathdangan Village and lands surrounding the village move from the 'Rural Area' to 'Area of High Amenity' following the 200-250m contour line surrounding the village to the north, south and east along the L-3260



Figures

3.7- 3.9



Barnamelia and the Ow River Valley Area

This section of Area 2 extends south of Carrickshane Mountain across the Ow River Valley towards the Askanagap/Barnamelia area. This landscape comprises more steeply sloping lands rising between the 300-500m contour line to the south of the Ow River and panoramic views over the more low lying landscape towards the Baltinglass Hills, Keadeen Mountain and long distance views of the low lying lands of County Kildare to the extreme west. The area also comprises of extensive forestry, creating an enclosed river valley area along this route leading towards Aughrim, with a section of the Wicklow Way walking route to the east.

Proposal: These lands should remain in the AONB area

Lands North of Aughrim at Macreddin

This section of Area 2 comprises of lands to the north and northwest of Aughrim currently located within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The subject lands generally comprise of low lying rolling hills which act as a transitional area between the higher mountain ranges at Coolgarrow, Ballincor, Cushbawn Mountain and Aughrim. This landscape includes Macreddin village and golf club, with sporadic areas of forestry. The landscape of this section of Area 2 has been significantly altered through the development of the hotel, ancillary buildings and golf course with a clear distinction being visible between this area and the more mountainous lands to the north forming a more natural landscape.



Figure 3.10 - Photo demonstrating the transitional nature of this landscape

Proposal: These lands be reclassified from AONB to an Area of High Amenity.

3.4.3 Area 3 - The Hollywood / Donard / Glen of the Imaal Area

This area extends from Hollywood running parallel to the N81 as far as the Baltinglass Hills to the south and extends in an eastern direction to include Donard and the Glen of Imaal. The landscape in this area currently falls within the 'Corridor Zone' along the N81 with the AONB landscape classification applying to Hollywood Glen, the more eastern parts of Donard and the Glen of Imaal Area as far as the foothills of Keadeen Mountain. The wind shield and walkover survey of these lands highlighted the low lying nature of these lands when compared to the more elevated lands to the east, forming a natural transitional area between the man made influence of the N81 corridor zone and the more elevated mountainous areas. The majority of the lands within this area comprise of undulating lowlands at the foothills of the mountains ranging between the 200m and 280m contour forming a clearly distinct landscape from the more elevated mountain areas and the lands adjoining the N81 which fall below the 200m contour.



Figures 3.11 & 3.12 - Lands currently within the AONB proposed to be reclassified to transitional AHA lands



Proposal: Lands east of Hollywood Glen extending as far as east of Donard and the Glen of Imaal be re-classified as a Areas of High Amenity acting as a natural transition between the corridor zone formed by the N81 and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

3.4.4 Area 4 - The north west of the County (lands surrounding Manor Kilbride/Ballyfolan)



Figure 3.13 & 3.14 Views across lands to the east from the N81 and views from Ballyfolan road facing west



A clear difference between the landscape in this area and the more upland areas was identified in the sensitivity mapping for the County. The results of this were confirmed through the wind shield and walkover survey of these lands. Lands to the east of the Lisheen road generally following the 240m contour line extending to the east as far as Ballyfolan road were distinctly different from the lands further to the east at Butter Mountain. It was also noted that the areas of Cloughleagh and Ballyward provided a more scenic landscape than that provided by the more built up area immediately surrounding Manor Kilbride village and the Kilbride Bank area. In this regard revisions to the corridor area and AONB appear to be the most rational approach to re-classifying these lands.

Proposal: Lands to the east of Manor Kilbride Village and Lisheen Drive along the 240m contour line be re-classified from an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to an Area of High Amenity including lands at Kilbride Bank to the south and along the Ballyfolan road to the north.

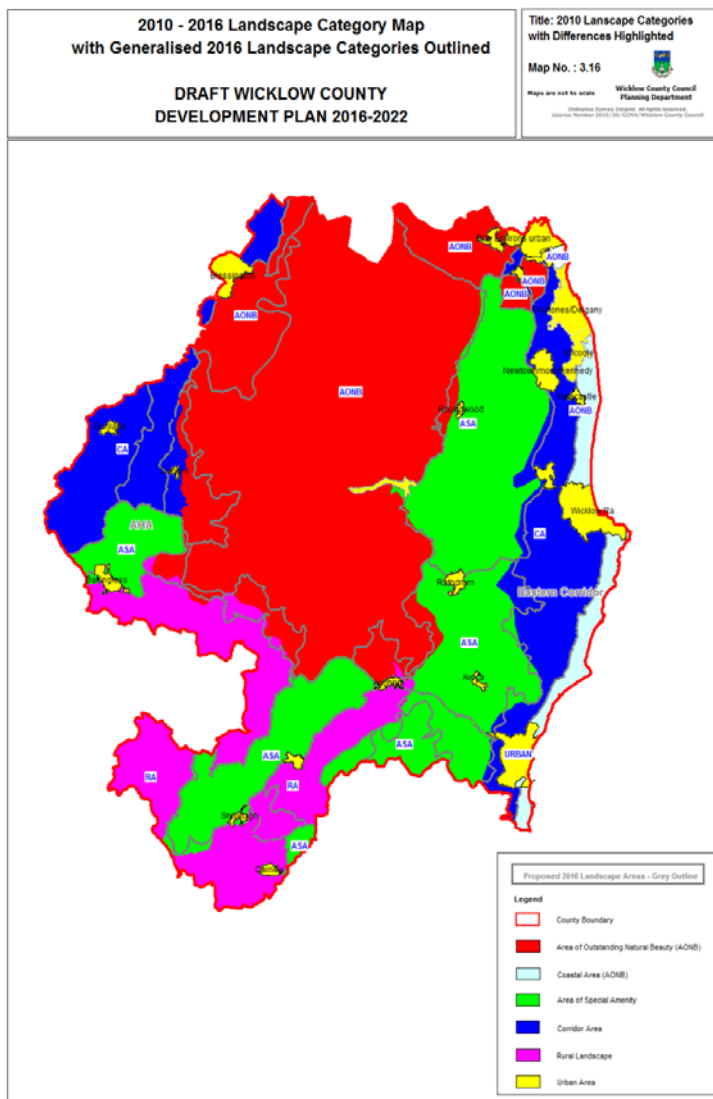
3.5 The transitional lands

Within the areas highlighted above in sections 3.4.1 – 3.4.4 it was clear that significant confusion was arising in cases where one section of land was falling within a 'high sensitivity' landscape category and the adjoining lands were falling within a 'low sensitivity' landscape category. This situation was particularly evident within the west and south west of the County where the AONB landscape category was directly adjoining either the 'Corridor Area' or 'Rural Area' both of which were identified as having a medium to low vulnerability.

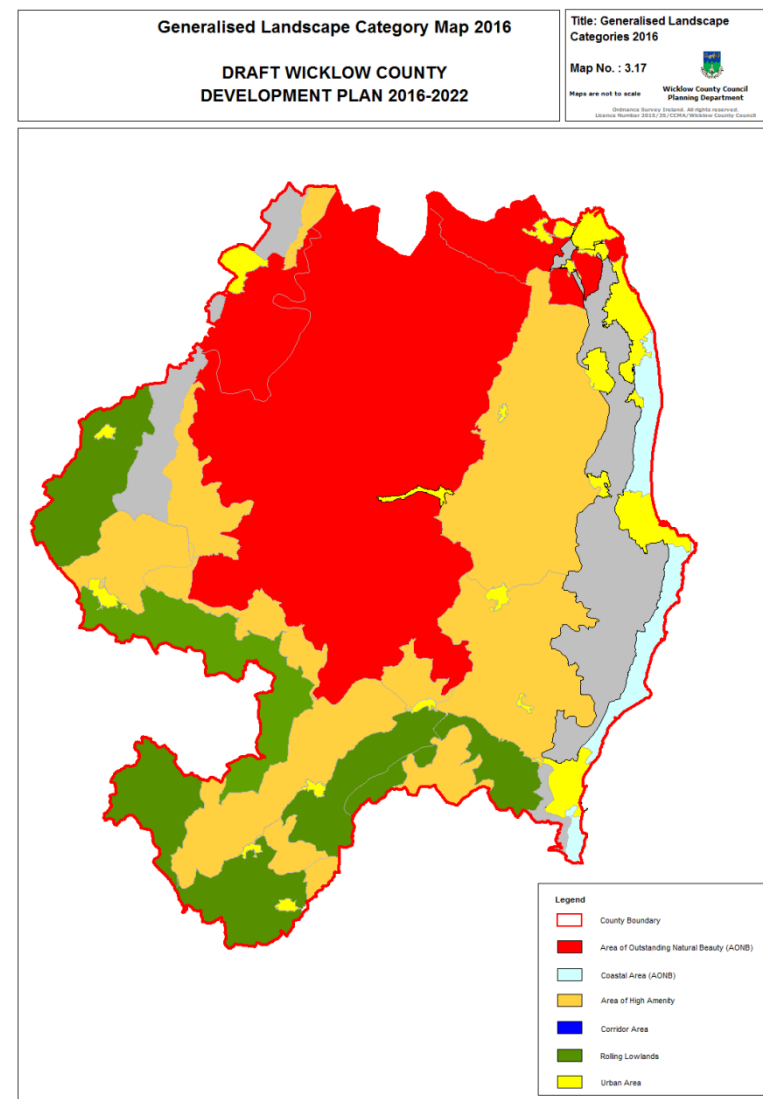
In order to address this situation the windshield and walkover survey of lands carried out during the fieldwork provided the opportunity to identify areas where a more logical and reasoned transition between differing landscape categories could be identified. The proposed changes to these areas mainly occur along the corridor area to the north of Blessington at Manor Kilbride, south of Hollywood and within the Rathdangan area. Within each of these areas the Area of High Amenity landscape category has been used to provide a more natural transition between the least of most sensitive landscapes within the County. These changes are reflected in the proposed landscape category map set out below in Figure 3.15.

3.6 The Proposed Landscape Category Map

Having carried out field work in relation to the areas where anomalies between the existing landscape categories and the sensitivity map were highlighted and in recognition of the need for clearer transition between lands most sensitive to change, Map 3.16 below was produced. This map details the extent of the existing 2010 County Development Plan landscape categories alongside the outline of the proposed revised landscape categories. Map 3.17 provides a generalised outline of the proposed Landscape Categories for the County.



Map 3.16 CDP 2010 – 2016 Landscape Categories with the outline of the Generalised Landscape Categories 2016 - 2022



Map 3.17 Generalised Landscape Categories 2016 - 2022

Section 4: The updated Landscape Categories Map

4.1 Introduction

Having tested the robustness of the landscape categories set out in the 2010 – 2016 County Development Plan and in updating this map where deemed necessary, the opportunity to further expand on this work was presented. The current descriptions set out in the 2010 plan for each landscape category provide a broad overview of the reasoning behind each area’s landscape designation; however the existing designations do not provide any reasons why a particular portion of land falls within each landscape category. The reasons for this can vary somewhat and therefore it is considered that a more detailed breakdown of the County would facilitate a greater understanding of the key variables that influence why lands fall within each broad landscape category.

4.2 The existing Landscape Categories

The 2010-2016 Wicklow County Development Plan divides the County into a hierarchy of 6 distinct landscape categories with the overall aim being to ensure that “the environment and heritage generally are maintained in a sustainable manner, while at the same time enabling a proactive approach to development”. The existing landscape categories are detailed below in Table 4.1 with a brief description of the broad components that make up each of these areas. A vulnerability range is applied to each area in accordance with the hierarchy i.e. 1 - high vulnerability on a sliding scale to 6 - low vulnerability.

Hierarchy	Landscape Category	Category Description
1	Mountain and Lakeshore AONB	Upland areas, the Wicklow Mountains National Park and the Poulaphouca Reservoir
2	Coastal Areas AONB	The County’s coastline extending from Bray to south of Arklow
3	Areas of High Amenity	Lands adjoining the AONB which act as a form of gateway to the more remote and wild upland areas
4	Corridor Area	Comprising lands either side of the main transport routes within the county the N11 and N81
5	Rural Area	Land lying under the 130m (400ft) contour line
6	Urban Area	Lands located within Local Area and Town plan development boundaries

Table 4.1: Wicklow County Development Plan 2010 Landscape Hierarchy.

Each of the above categories provides a broad overview of the key landscape components that merit each landscape’s inclusion within a certain level of the hierarchy. While this provides a generalised picture of the County’s landscape, it should be noted that within each level there may be varying natural / environmental or cultural / social reasons why distinctly different lands fall within the same category.

4.3 The case for greater detail

In order to make the landscape categorisation of the County more easily understandable for both practitioners and the public, an analysis of the County at a more detailed level is required.

An example of this can be seen within the Area of High Amenity (AHA) landscape category which comprises of 4 blocks of land extending the full length of the County from west of Kilmacanogue to the west of Arklow,

north east of Carnew, south west of Aughrim and to the south west of Shillelagh, with a small pocket of lands to the north east and west of Baltinglass. This designation encompasses a total of c. 495km²; however the broad AHA designation on the map makes it unclear as to why all of these areas have been included within the same landscape category, with each having varying and distinctive characteristics.

Figure 4.1 below presents the existing broad brush approach to the Area of High Amenity landscape categorisation; however within this block there are a number of distinct features which merit the inclusion of these lands within this category. The sensitivity map produced in section 2 of this study can now be used in order to identify the distinct features that make up a particular landscape within the AHA category. A simplistic example of the varying characteristics of the AHA landscape category is provided as follows:

To the west of the County AHA lands comprise of the rolling undulating terrain of the hills around Baltinglass where the sensitivity of this area is increased by the presence of important archaeological remains and monuments which must be protected for their heritage, as well as tourism potential, while the northern mountain lowlands AHA are so identified as they act as a transitional area between the Corridor Zone/Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, comprising of Devils Glen and a number of views and prospects in particularly those surrounding the Vartry Reservoir.

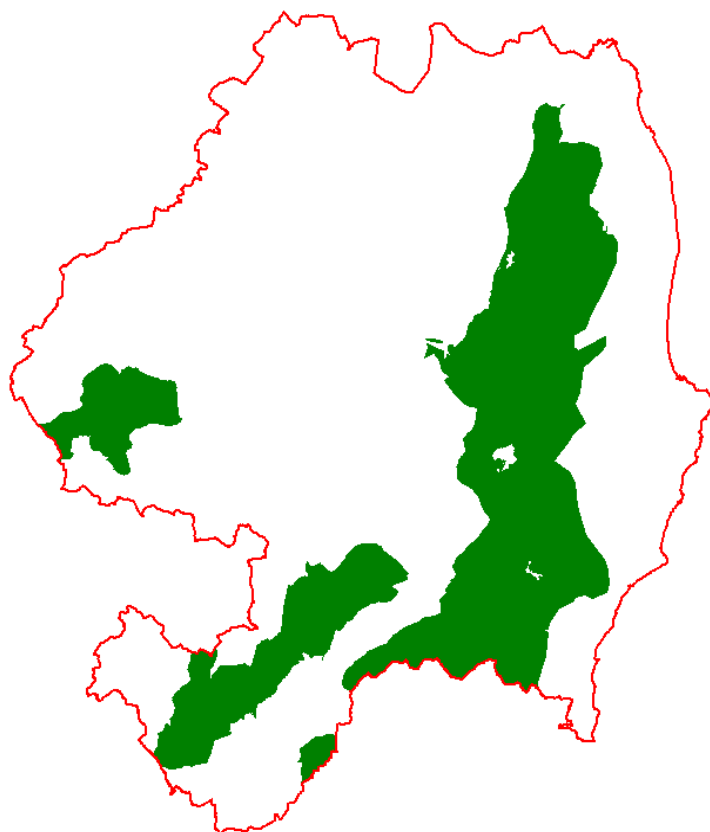


Figure 4.1 The existing Area of High Amenity mapping. A broad brush approach to Landscape Characterisation.

Tables 4.2 – 4.7 below demonstrate how the landscape sensitivity map has been used in order to provide a more detailed description of the existing Area of High Amenity. The use of more detailed and area specific descriptions for lands within the Area of High Amenity help to create more area focused planning policy which in turn will ensure the more sustainable management and greater protection where necessary of each of these landscapes.

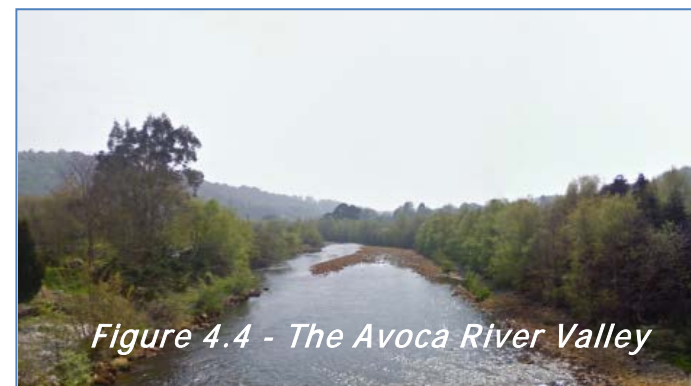
Landscape Category	Landscape Area	Description
Area of High Amenity	North East Mountain Lowlands	Transitional lands located between the corridor zone and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This area comprises of rolling undulating terrain including Trooperstown hill, large tracts of forestry lands including Devils Glen, a listed County Geological site and a number of views and prospects in particularly those surrounding the Vartry Reservoir.

Table 4.2 North East Mountain Lowlands



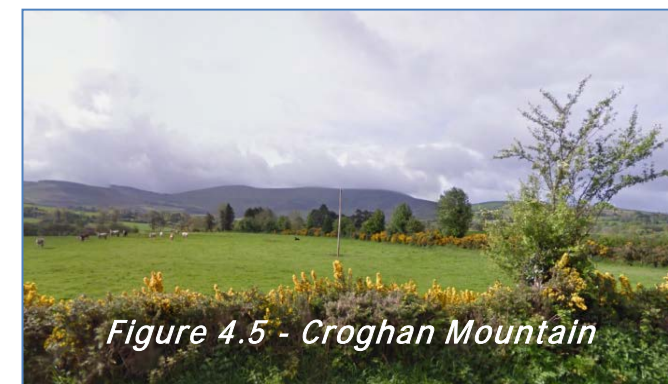
Landscape Category	Landscape Area	Description
Area of High Amenity	South East Mountain Lowlands	Transitional undulating lands bordering the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and surrounding the distinctive features of the Vale of Avoca, lands surrounding the village of Avoca, the Aughrim River Valley, a number of views and prospects and significant cultural heritage in the form of the Avoca Mines County Geological Site and Avondale House.

Table 4.3: South East Mountain Lowlands



Landscape Category	Landscape Area	Description
Area of High Amenity	Southern Hills	<p>Lands generally following the 300m contour line comprising of 1) the mountainous leg from Moylisha running north-west of Shillelagh, Tinahely and Aughrim 2) the Croghan Mountain area south of Aughrim and Woodenbridge and 3) the Kilcavan Gap and Hillbrook area.</p> <p>This area comprises of a large proportion of elevated transitional lands, forestry lands including Tomnafinnogue Wood, the Coolattin Estate a number of views and prospects. This area also includes sections of the Wicklow way walking route.</p>

Table 4.4: The Southern Hills



Landscape Category	Landscape Area	Description
Area of High Amenity	Baltinglass Hills	<p>The rolling undulating terrain of the hills around Baltinglass, characterised by the existence of important archaeological remains and monuments. This area is of significant heritage value while also forming a key tourist attraction within this area.</p>

Table 4.5: The Baltinglass Hills

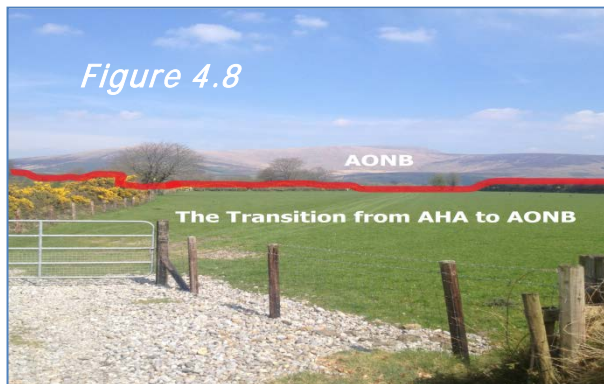


Landscape Category	Landscape Area	Description
Area of High Amenity	Transitional Area	<p>The Area of High Amenity - Transitional Area comprise of lands which act as a natural buffer and provide a clear distinction between the less sensitive landscapes within the County and the landscape areas primarily identified as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.</p> <p>These lands are located at Manor Kilbride, south of Hollywood moving towards Donard and lands extending from the Glen of Imaal towards Aughrim.</p>

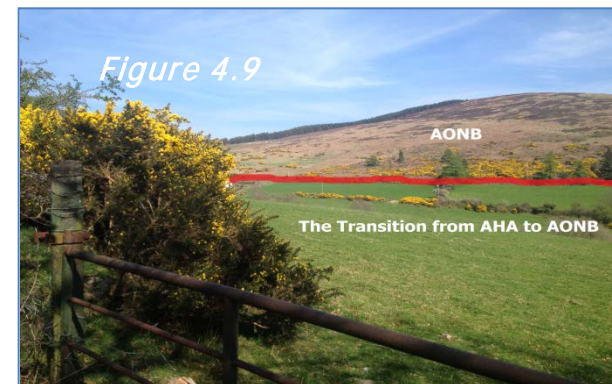
Table 4.6 The Area of High Amenity Transitional Lands



The transition between the Area of High Amenity lands and the AONB lands at Donard/The Glen of Imaal Area



The transition between the Area of High Amenity lands and the AONB lands between Rathdangan and Aughrim



The transition between the Area of High Amenity lands and the AONB lands at Macreddin

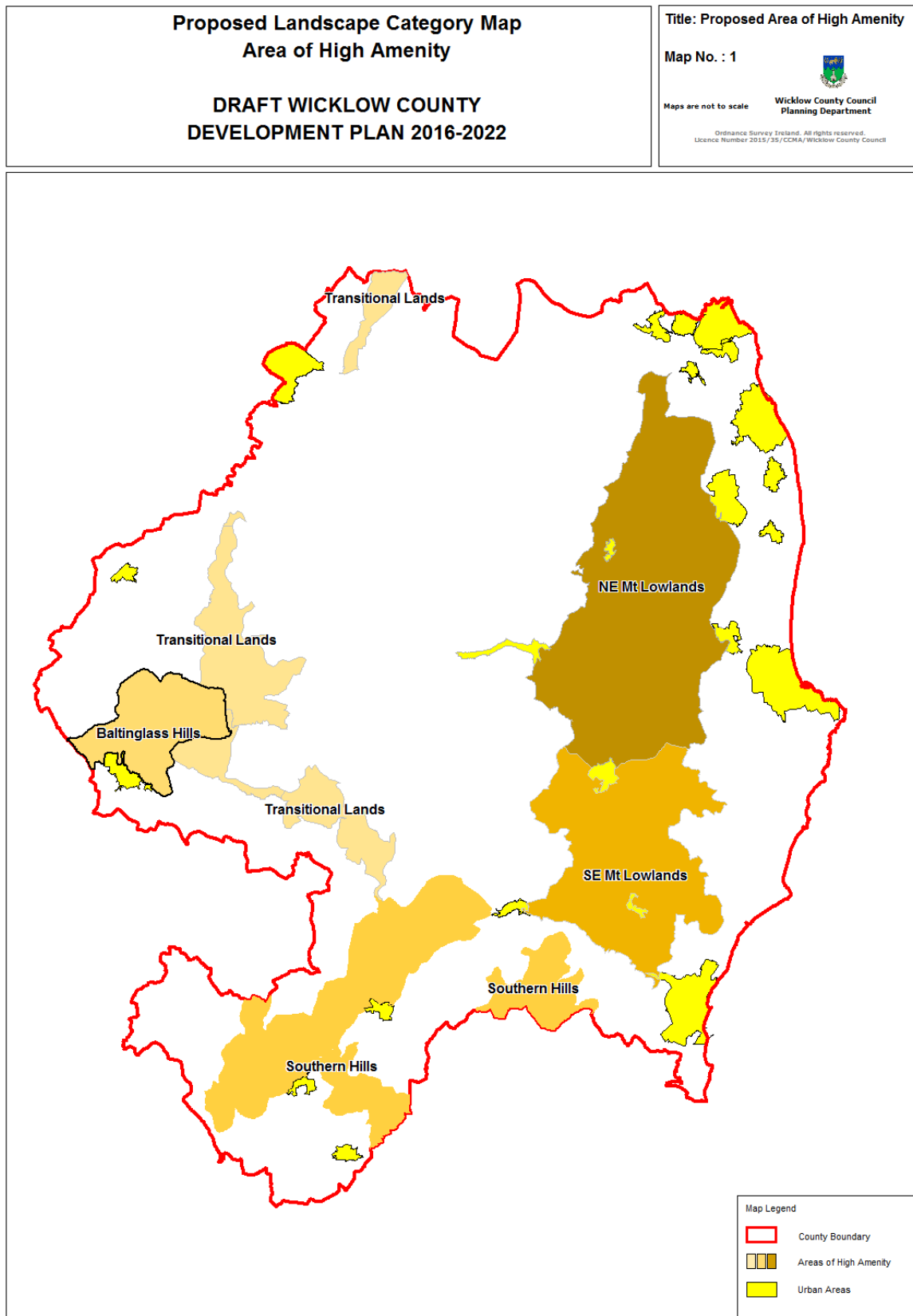


Figure 4.10: A more area specific approach dividing the Area of High Amenity into 5 distinct character areas.

4.4 A County Wide Landscape re-classification

Having regard to the above it is proposed to divide the County into the following 15 landscape character areas.

Hierarchy	Landscape Category	Landscape Area
1	Mountain and Lakeshore AONB	The Mountain Uplands
		The Blessington Lakes Area
		The Bray Mountains Group
		The North Eastern Valley
2	Coastal Areas AONB	Northern Coastal Area
		Southern Coastal Area
3	Areas of High Amenity	North East Mountain Lowlands
		South East Mountain Lowlands
		Southern Hills
		Baltinglass Hills
		Transitional Lands
4	Corridor Area	The N11
		The N81
5	Lowlands	Rolling Lowland Areas 1-6
6	Urban Area	All towns ranging from Levels 1-6 of the Wicklow Settlement Hierarchy

Table 4.7: A County Wide re-Classification

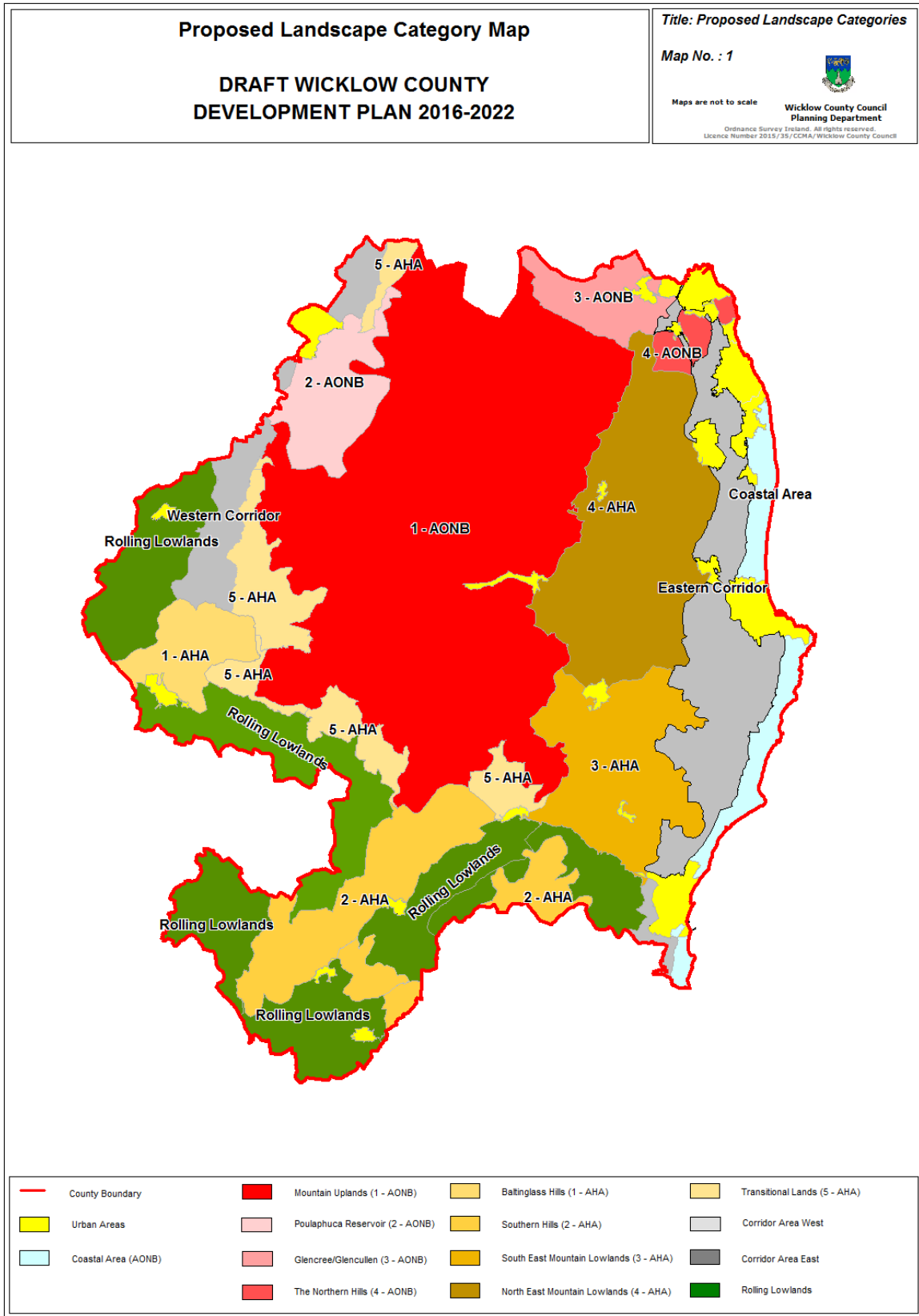


Figure 4.11: The Proposed Landscape Category Map 2016 - 2022

4.5 Wicklow's Landscape Areas

4.5.1 *The Mountain and Lakeshore Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*

1(a) - The Mountain Uplands

The central mountain upland area extends from the Dublin border in the north of the County at Kippure towards Aghrim in the south and from east of the Glen of Imaal as far as west of Roundwood Village. A key characteristic of this area is mountainous topography with U-shaped valleys, lakes and glacial topography. This area generally relates to lands immediately surrounding and above the 300+ contour line.

1(b) - The Poulaphouca Reservoir

This category generally relates to the area around Blessington known locally as the 'Blessington Lakes' and extends into Sorrell Hill. The lakes area is dominated by the reservoir, views onto and from the reservoir. To the east and south, land is more mountainous with attractive views and vegetation.

1(c) - The Bray Mountains Group/Northern hills

The area of land covering the Great and Little Sugarloafs and Bray Head, comprising of the mountainous region surrounding the town of Bray. These areas are important locations for recreation amenity both locally and for visiting tourists with Bray Head having a 'Special Area Amenity Order' designation.

1(d) - The North Eastern Valley/Glenree

This area is situated along the northern extremities of the County and is based around the drainage pattern of the Glenree and Dargle Rivers and the surrounding road network. This area is very scenic, with attractive views and number of tourist attractions such as Powerscourt House and Demesne, Charleville Demesne and Glenree Drive. This landscape provides for extensive forested areas made up of both coniferous and deciduous woodlands.

4.5.2 *Coastal Areas Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*

2(a) - The Northern Coastline

The northern coastline comprises of the lands between Wicklow Town/Rathnew and Greystones. The northern coastline provides intermittent views of the sea from the coast road with this area being somewhat more developed than the southern coastline. This landscape category includes a number of key environmental features such as the Murrough SAC/SPA (a designated Natura 2000 site) and Natural Heritage Area (NHA). While this section of the Wicklow coastline is not as heavily utilised from a tourist perspective compared to the southern coastline, it does act as a significant recreational resource to the local residential population the use of which must be managed in an appropriate manner.

2(b) - The Southern Coastline

The southern coastline comprises of lands south of Wicklow Town extending as far as south of Arklow Rock. This area comprises of the main sandy beaches of Brittas and Clogga and provides for a continuous prospect and numerous views from the coast road out to sea. Sand dunes are dominant in sections of the area forming a number of important environmental designations such as Maherabeg Dunes and Buckroneys Brittas Dunes and Fen (NHA and SAC) and Arklow Rock/Askintinny NHA. These areas are important not just from a

landscape or habitat perspective, but also are increasingly important for recreational activities, the development and promotion of which must be managed appropriately.

4.5.3 Area of High Amenity

3(a) - The North East Mountain Lowlands

Transitional lands located between the corridor zone and the AONB, comprising of Trooperstown Hill, large tracts of forestry lands, including Devils Glen (a listed County Geological site) and a number of views and prospects in particular those surrounding the Vartry Reservoir.

3(b) - The South East Mountain Lowlands

Transitional undulating lands bordering the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and surrounding the distinctive features of the Vale of Avoca, lands surrounding the village of Avoca and the Aughrim River Valley. The area includes a number of designated views and prospects and significant cultural heritage in the form of the Avoca Mines County Geological Site and Avondale House.

3(c) - The Southern Hills

Lands generally following the 300m contour comprising of 1) the mountainous leg from Moylisha running north-west of Shillelagh, Tinahely and Aughrim 2) the Croghan Mountain area south of Aughrim and Woodenbridge and 3) the Kilcavan Gap and Hillbrook area.

3(d) - The Baltinglass Hills

The rolling undulating terrain of the hills around Baltinglass, characterised by the existence of important archaeological remains and monuments. This area is of significant heritage value while also forming a key tourist attraction within this area.

3(e) – Area of High Amenity Transitional Area

The Area of High Amenity Transitional Area comprise of lands which act as a natural buffer and provide a clear distinction between the less sensitive landscapes within the County and the landscape areas identified as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These lands are located at Manor Kilbride, south of Hollywood moving towards Donard and lands extending from the Glen of Imaal towards Aughrim.

4.5.4: Corridor Area

4(a) - The N11

This area covers the main access corridor area along the east of the County. The boundary of the eastern access corridor generally follows what is considered to be the areas upon which the greatest influence is exerted by this primary access route. This route, for the most part, runs through the more low lying and accessible tracts of land, dissects the Glen of the Downs wood in the north of the County and provides expansive coastal views north of Wicklow Town. This landscape area acts as the main connection between the majors towns along the east coast of the County.

4(b) - The N81

This landscape area covers the main access corridor along the west of the County. The boundary of the western corridor generally follows what is considered to be the area upon which the greatest influence is exerted by this secondary access route. This route, for the most part, runs through the more low lying and accessible tracts of land, providing expansive views of the Wicklow Mountain Range, intermittent views of the Blessington lakes, south of Blessington, with its primary function being the connection between the towns of Blessington and Baltinglass in the west of the County.

4.5.5 *Rolling Lowlands*

The gently rolling and undulating countryside best described as low-lying when compared to the rest of the terrain in Co. Wicklow. These landscape areas are generally located adjacent to the corridor zone or surrounded by more elevated lands within the 'Area of High Amenity'. The rolling lowlands are made up of the following 6 areas:

- West of the N81 including lands surrounding Grangecon and Dunlavin,
- South east of Baltinglass extending as far as south of Knockananna,
- The extreme south west of the County surrounding the Rathwood and Coolkenna areas and adjoining County Carlow,
- South of Shillelagh, surrounding the Carnew area and adjoining the more elevated lands within County Wexford,
- Lands located to the east of Tinahely and Aughrim adjoining the Area of High Amenity to the south, and
- Lands west of Arklow adjoining the foothills of Croghan Mountain

4.5.6 *Urban Areas*

All locations designated as 'settlements' in the County settlement hierarchy (i.e. areas falling within Levels 1-6) are considered 'urban' areas for the purpose of landscape classification. In terms of landscape classification, these settlements have already been deemed suitable for development (of the type allowed by the settlement strategy and the development standards of this plan) and the impacts on the wider landscape of such development has already been deemed acceptable. Therefore it will not be necessary for developments in urban areas to have regard to the surrounding landscape classification or to carry out landscape or visual impact assessment.

Section 5 Policy Provision

5.1 Introduction

Following on from the analysis carried out on the landscapes of County Wicklow and the existing landscape categories, the final step is to ensure that the key features of each of these areas are protected and enhanced, through appropriate policy provision.

5.2 Landscape Objectives

Appendix 2 Table 1 provides a description of the key features and characteristics that make up each of the 15 distinct landscape categories within County Wicklow. The characteristics/description for each area builds upon the factors influencing the sensitivity of each of these areas.

5.3 Key Development Considerations

The following Key Development Considerations (KDCs) build upon the key features and characteristics set out Appendix 2 Table 1 for each landscape area. It should be noted that the key development considerations provided are not intended to be a comprehensive list of all the factors / sensitivities that should be taken into account in the design and assessment of any development (as there may be other site specific factors which will influence the design and siting of a particular development) but these KDCs will be particularly used as an assessment tool in any application for permission.

The overall aim of this section is to outline the key considerations that should be taken into account in order to ensure the adequate protection and management of the key features that make up each of these varying landscape areas within the County.

5.3.1 General Development Considerations (GDC)

1. Applications for permission within open or highly scenic areas may be required to be accompanied by a Visual Impact Assessment. A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) should include the following:
 - An evaluation of the visibility and the prominence of the proposed development in its immediate environs and in the wider landscape; this assessment should include the erection of profiles of the house and / or the production of photomontages of the proposed development from clearly identified vantage points
 - An evaluation of impacts on any listed views / prospects and an assessment of vegetation / land cover type in the area (with particular regard to commercial forestry plantations which may be felled thus altering character / visibility).
2. Listed views and prospects will be protected from developments that would either obstruct the views / prospect from the identified vantage point or form an obtrusive or incongruous feature in that view / prospect. Due regard will be paid in assessing development applications to the span and scope of the view / prospect and the location of the development within that view / prospect.

3. The preservation and enhancement of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees will be encouraged as part of the development management process and the planting of native, and appropriate local characteristic species will be required in all new developments.
4. New development shall be required to be visually integrated into the landscape by ensuring the retention, conservation and enhancement where possible of local characteristics such as stone walls, hedgerows, entrances and field boundaries.

5.3.2 The Mountain Uplands KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(b))

1. All developments within the Mountain Uplands AONB landscape area shall be accompanied by a detailed justification of the need for the proposed development at this location.
2. Where development is to be permitted within the Mountain Uplands AONB landscape area a very high standard of siting, design and landscaping will be required in order to ensure that the proposed development will be assimilated into the existing landscape.
3. To ensure that developments on steep slopes (i.e. 10%) will not be conspicuous or have a disproportionate or dominating visual impact on the surrounding environment as seen from relevant scenic routes and settlements.
4. To maintain the favourable conservation status of existing natural habitats including Natura 2000 sites (SACs and SPAs) and Annex I-Habitats and Annex II-Animal and Plant species within this Mt. Uplands AONB landscape area.
5. To support and facilitate in co-operation with relevant bodies, the provision of amenity routes within and adjoining the Mountain Uplands AONB landscape area in a manner which does not detract from the scenic nature of the area.

5.3.3 The Phoulaphuca Reservoir KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(b))

1. To protect listed views / prospects and to resist development proposals that would negatively impact on the skyline and other key vantage points in the area, in particular views from the Lake Drive down to and across the reservoir and to the west towards the mountains.
2. Development proposals within this area should aim to locate within existing clusters of structures / tree stands and avoid locating new development in open fields.
3. Development proposals surrounding the reservoir should respect the more traditional and vernacular building patterns and materials of the area. A particular emphasis on the more traditional built and vernacular form will be applied within the Ballyknockan and Lackan area where developments should be of a design which assimilates easily into the existing landscape.
4. To support and facilitate the provision of amenity routes around the Phoulaphuca reservoir in a manner which does not detract from the scenic nature of the area and ensure that new

development is sited in such a manner that would not interfere with existing or potential amenity routes.

5. To maintain the favourable conservation status of existing natural habitats within or surrounding the Poulaphuca Reservoir.

5.3.4 Glencree/Glencullen KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(b))

1. To protect listed views and vantage points across the valley and to resist development proposals that would negatively impact on the valley setting and views from the west at Glencree towards the Great Sugar Loaf.
2. To maintain and preserve views across the valley towards the Wicklow Mountains.
3. Through appropriate siting and design to ensure that developments along local roads will not be conspicuous or have a disproportionate or dominating visual impact on the surrounding environment as seen from the local scenic routes and settlements.
4. To protect and facilitate the conservation of structures, sites and objects which are part of the County's cultural heritage, whether or not such structures, sites and objects are included on the Record Protected Structures.

5.3.5 Northern Hills KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(b))

1. To protect the built and cultural heritage of the Northern Hills
2. 'Sites of Geological Importance' will be protected from inappropriate development at or in the vicinity of the site, such that would adversely affect their existence, or interpretation
3. To ensure the protection of archaeological sites and features within the northern hills landscape area.
4. To preserve existing areas of heathland, maritime grassland and woodland areas.
5. To support and facilitate in co-operation with relevant bodies and landowners the enhancement of the local recreational amenity.
6. Proposals for development at Bray Head shall have regard to the policies and objectives of the Bray Head Special Amenity Area Order.

5.3.6 Northern Coastal Area KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(b))

1. To promote the opening up of views from the coast road to the sea and to restrict development on the sea-ward side of the road where it would be injurious to the beach setting or injurious to tourism or where it would be visible between the road and the sea except where settlements

already exist. Particular protection will be afforded to the coastal areas - The Breaches, Newcastle Beach, the East Coast Nature Reserve and the northern section of The Murrough.

2. To take cognisance of and respect historical development patterns in the area, in particular the historical layout and building form of demesnes along the coast road between Newcastle and Rathnew.

5.3.7 Southern Coastal Area KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(b))

1. To promote the opening up of views from the coast road to the sea and to restrict development on the sea-ward side of the road where it would be injurious to the beach setting or injurious to tourism or where it would be visible between the road and the sea except where settlements already exist. Particular protection will be afforded to the coastal areas of Maherabeg, Brittas Bay, Ennereilly and Clogga Beach.
2. To facilitate the enhancement of recreational amenities and facilities in this area to the extent that it is consistent with maintaining the capacity of the area (including its beach and bathing water quality, sand dunes) and in a manner that does not diminish its unique rural, scenic and recreational amenities.

5.3.8 Baltinglass Hills KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(c))

1. To protect the important archaeological remains and monuments located within the Baltinglass Hills.
2. In order to protect views towards the natural hill formations, development within or surrounding the Baltinglass Hills landscape area should be sited in a manner which avoids intrusions on ridge lines or impacts negatively on the natural sky-line.

5.3.9 Southern Hills KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(c))

1. To ensure the protection of natural and cultural heritage within the southern hills landscape area.
2. In order to protect views towards the southern hill formations, development within this landscape area should be sited in a manner which avoids intrusions on ridge lines or impacts negatively on the natural skyline.
3. Development proposals within the Southern Hills landscape area shall respect the more traditional and vernacular building patterns of the area. A particular emphasis on the more traditional built and vernacular form and materials will be applied within the area surrounding the Coolattin Estate where developments should be of a design which assimilates easily into the existing cultural landscape.
4. To encourage the preservation and enhancement of native species surrounding the Coolattin Estate and native species within Tomnafinnogue Wood.

5. To support and facilitate the provision of amenity routes, such as the Wicklow Way, in a manner which does not detract from the scenic nature of the area and ensure that new development is sited such that any impacts on the recreational amenity of any such route is minimised.

5.3.10 South East Mountain Lowland KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(c))

1. To protect and facilitate the conservation of structures, sites and objects within the south east mountain lowlands which are part of the County's cultural heritage, whether or not such structures, sites and objects are included on the Record of Protect Structures.
2. To protect the historic and distinctive landscape associated with former mining activity at Avoca.
3. To encourage the preservation and enhancement of native species surrounding Avondale House and forest park.

5.3.11 North East Mountain Lowlands KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(c))

1. To protect and facilitate the conservation of structures, sites and objects within the north east Mt. lowlands which are part of the County's cultural heritage, whether or not such structures, sites and objects are included on the Record of Protect Structures.
2. To encourage the preservation and enhancement of native species within and surrounding the Devil's Glen area and the Vale of Clara.
3. To support and facilitate the provision of amenity routes, in a manner which does not detract from the scenic nature of the area and ensure that new development is sited such that any impacts on the recreational amenity of any such route is minimised.
4. Through appropriate siting and design to ensure that developments along local/regional roads in particular those bordering the Mountain Uplands AONB will not be conspicuous or have a disproportionate or dominating visual impact on the surrounding environment as seen from the local scenic routes and settlements.

5.3.12 Transitional Lands KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(c))

1. To maintain the visual integrity of transitional lands, which have retained a dominantly undisturbed upland character.
2. Development proposals within this area should aim to locate within existing clusters of structures / tree stands and avoid locating new development in open fields.
3. Through appropriate siting and design to ensure that developments along local roads will not be conspicuous or have a disproportionate or dominating visual impact on the surrounding

environment as seen from the local scenic routes and settlements within the transitional area landscape.

4. To encourage the preservation and enhancement of native species surrounding the Glen of Imaal and Hollywood Glen.

5.3.14 Corridor Area KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(d))

1. To protect views and prospects from the corridor area towards the surrounding landscape areas from development that would either obstruct the views / prospect from the identified vantage point or form an obtrusive or incongruous feature in that view / prospect. Due regard will be paid in assessing development applications to the span and scope of the view / prospect and the location of the development within that view / prospect.
2. Development proposals within this area should aim to locate within existing clusters of structures / tree stands and avoid locating new development in open fields.

5.3.15 Rolling Lowland KDC (see Appendix 4 Map 10.13(e))

1. Development proposals within this area should aim to locate within existing clusters of structures / tree stands and avoid locating new development in open fields.
2. Throughout the rolling lowlands field patterns, intact hedgerows should be conserved and where possible enhanced.

5.4 Conclusion

The aim of this report from the onset was to set out a process for assessing and developing the Landscape Categories for County Wicklow that will form part of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022. The assessment aimed to build upon previous work carried out on landscape assessment within the County using this information as strong basis from which to develop more robust landscape categories for the County.

The processes carried out involved both desk top and field research in order to develop the revised landscape categories for the County. This methodology provided a more detailed breakdown of the County into 15 distinct landscape categories. The key features of each of these landscape categories have been used to provide an overall description of the characteristics that make up each area which should be considered in the preparation of any application within a particular landscape area.

The revised landscape categories have been incorporated into the Wicklow County Development Plan with the overall aim being to facilitate appropriate development within the County which ensures the robust protection and management of the Wicklow's landscape into the future.

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 – Landscape Assessment Weightings



Wicklow Landscape Assessment 2015

Draft Wicklow County Development Plan 2016 - 2022

Wicklow County Council – Forward Planning

9/18/2015

Landscape Assessment Weightings – Feb 2015

Number	Category	Sub-Categories	Weighting applied ranging 1 (Least sensitive to change) to 10 (Most sensitive to change)											
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Topography													
1		600m+												10
2		300 – 600m											9	
3		200-300m							6					
4		<200m		2										
	Landscape Features													
5		Reservoirs/River Valleys									8			
6		Coastal Zones									8			
	Flooding													
7		Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) 1:100									8			
8		Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) 1:1000				4								
	Corine Mapping													
9		Pastures				4								
10		Natural Grassland						6						
11		Complex Cultivation Patterns						6						
12		Agricultural with Natural Vegetation					5							
13		Non-Irrigated arable land				4								
14		Mixed forest						6						
15		Broad Leaved forest								8				
16		Coniferous forest				4								
17		Transitional woodland scrub				4								
18		Sparsely vegetated areas					5							
19		Moors and heaths						6						
20		Peat Bogs								8				
21		Beaches, dunes, sand									8			

Appendix 1 – Landscape Assessment Weightings

22		Inland marshes									8		
23		Coastal lagoons									8		
24		Salt Marshes									8		
25		Water Bodies									8		
Number	Category	Sub-Categories	Weighting applied ranging 1 (Least sensitive to change) to 10 (Most sensitive to change)										
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	<i>European Designations</i>												
26		SAC											10
27		SPA											10
	<i>Other Environmental Designations</i>												
28		NHA									8		
29		Nature Reserves/National Park									8		
30		NPWS – Designated Fens						6					
31		Native Woodland, Ancient Woodlands, Coastal Lagoons, Slatmarsh Monitoring Study, Sea Cliff Survey, Semi Natural Grasslands.						6					
32		Wetland Surveys						6					
33		Bat Landscape Mapping (score 30 +)						6					
34		Bat Landscape Mapping (Score 10 – 30)				4							
35		Rivers/Surface Water Bodies (10m Buffer)				4							
	<i>Planning designations</i>												
36		Bray Head SAAO									8		
37		Sugar Loaf Mountains SAAO (Preliminary Boundary)									8		

Appendix 1 – Landscape Assessment Weightings

58		R752 Rathdrum to Avoca					5					
59		R747 Arklow to Aughrim				4						
60		L5011 - Sally Gap to Enniskerry						6				
61		R750 Coast Road Wicklow to Arklow						6				
		Wilds of Wicklow Route N81 to R747 etc		2								
	Tourism (Recreational Beaches)											
62		Brittas Bay									8	
63		Bray						6				
64		Greystones						5				

Estate Gardens List (NIAH Feature richness index Rating 6+ only)

Appendix 1 – Landscape Assessment Weightings

Number	Name	NIAH Richness Rating	Other Info	Landscape Weighting	Mapped
1	Ballinacor House	7		5	√
2	Ballyfree House	6		5	√
3	Ballyward House	6		5	√
4	Charleville House	8		5	√
5	Dunran Demesne	7		5	√
6	Derrybawn house	6		5	√
7	Glendalough House	6		5	√
8	Grangecon Demesne	8		5	√
9	Glanmore Castle	6		5	√
10	Hollywood House	6		5	√
11	Humewood House	8		5	√
12	Kilbride House	6		5	√
13	Kilquade House	8		5	√
14	Kilruddery	11		5	√
15	Lakeview	6		5	√
16	Laragh House/Lodge	6		5	√
17	Powerscourt	9		5	√
18	Russborough	6		5	√
19	Saundersgrove House	6		5	√
20	Seapark House/Maghermore	6		5	√
21	Avondale House	7		5	√

Concentrations of Housing Units over a 5km square area outside Levels 1 – 6 Settlements

Range derived = 0 – 526 housing units

Scaling for purpose of assessment to be in ranges of 30. (0 – 30 being most sensitive areas (Weighting 10) and 300+ being least sensitive (Weighting 1))

Range	Weighting
0-30	10
31-60	9
61-90	8
91-120	7
121-150	6
151-180	5
181-210	4
211-240	3
241-270	2
271-300	1
300+	0

Tree Preservation Orders:

Range	Weighting
1-2	2
2-4	4
4-6	6
6-8	8
8+	10

NIAH – National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

Range	Weighting
0	0
1-2	1
3-4	2
5-6	3
7-8	4
9-10	5
11-12	6
13-14	7
15-16	8
17-18	9
19-20	10

RPS – Record of Protected Structures

Range	Weighting
0	0
1-2	1
3-4	2
5-6	3
7-8	4
9-10	5
11-12	6
13-14	7
15-16	8
17-18	9
19-20	10

National Monuments

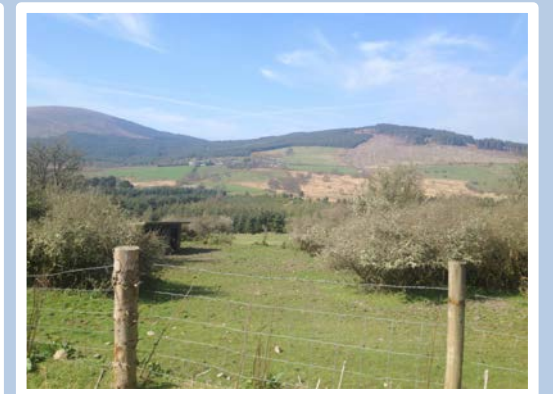
Range	Weighting
0	0
1-8	1
9-17	2
18-26	3
27-35	4
36-44	5
45-53	6
54-62	7
63-71	8
71-79	9
80+	10

River Valleys Included in the Study:

Slaney River Valley, Ow River Valley, Vartry River, Avonbeg River, Avoca River, River Dargle, Derry River

Appendix 2

Appendix 2 - Table 1 – Key Landscape Features and Area Characteristics



Hierarchy	Landscape Category	Landscape Area	Key Features	Area Description - Characteristics
1	Mountain and Lakeshore AONB	The Mountain Uplands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wicklow Mountains National Park, • Topographic heights c. 300m+ • Significant mountain ranges: Seefingan Mt, Kippure Mt, Djouce Mt, Mullaclevaughan, Lugnaquilla, Keadeen Mt • Environmental Designations • Peaty soils • Wetland Survey • Sporadic Housing • Views and Prospects 	<p>The central mountain upland area extends from the Dublin border in the north of the County at Kippure towards Aughrim in the south and from east of the Glen of Imaal as far as west of Roundwood Village. A key characteristic of this area is mountainous topography with U-shaped valleys, lakes and glacial topography. This area generally relates to lands immediately surrounding and above the 300+ contour line.</p> <p>The Wicklow Mountains National Park makes up the vast majority of the Mountain Uplands. The upper slopes and rounded peaks are blanketed with heath and bog. The open vistas are interrupted only by forestry plantations and the winding mountain roads. Fast-flowing streams descend into the deep lakes of the wooded valleys and continue their course into the surrounding lowlands. The primary purpose of Wicklow Mountains National Park is the conservation of local biodiversity and landscape. The Park is also an invaluable and heavily used recreational space for locals and visitors alike. There are a number of way marked trails in the National Parks and both the Wicklow Way and the St. Kevins Pilgrim path walks traverse this area.</p> <p>The Early Christian and Medieval monastic complex centred around the Glendalough Valley is of International significance and is included as part of Ireland's tentative World Heritage Site list. The sphere of interest of this complex extends over the mountains to Hollywood along the former St. Kevin's Pilgrim Path. The Seefin passage tomb on the summit of Seefingan Mt is a prominent prehistoric monument and together with the Church mountain passage tomb south of Hollywood, The Pipers Stones at Athgreany and the Castleruddery Stone circle add to the cultural heritage significance of this area.</p> <p>To the south east of the National Park, the upland area is made up of the Croaghanmora Mountain, Carrickshane Mountain with Ballinacor Mountain making up the south eastern finger of the Mountain Uplands north of Aughrim. The South western finger of the Mountain Uplands area is formed by the mountain range surrounding Wicklow's highest peak Lugnaquilla and includes Keadeen Mt. To the immediate north, the glacial valley at Glenmalure located along the Avonbeg River and a section of the Wicklow Way complete this section of the Mountain Uplands.</p> <p>The remnants of historic 19th century mining activity is visible as building ruins scattered among the valleys of Glendalough, Glenealo, Glendasan and Glenmalure and as heaps of spoil material on the slopes, most visibly along the Wicklow Gap road descending to Glendalough.</p> <p>West of the National Park provides for a gradual decrease in the extent of the mountain ridges with panoramic views across the west of the County and the adjoining lands in County Kildare.</p> <p>The north western extent of the Mountain Uplands is made up of Seefingan, Butter Mountain, Sorrell Hill and Black Hill in Lacken with the area dissected by the glacial valley formed by the River Liffey and Ballydonnell Brook.</p> <p>All proposals for development within this landscape area shall have regard to the above characteristics and ensure views, prospects, environmental designations and the extent of the Wicklow Mountains National Park are preserved. Please refer to the MU Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
		The Poulaphuca Reservoir /'Blessington Lakes Area'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Bodies/Reservoir • Views • Prospects 	<p>The Poulaphuca Reservoir landscape area is characterised by the valley containing the large water body locally known as the Blessington Lakes. The reservoir is man made, formed in 1944 by the flooding of the river Liffey. The reservoir is the most extensive inland water body in Wicklow, covering an area of over 20 square kilometres, surrounded by rising hills and</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Designations – NHA/SPA • Wetland Survey 	<p>dominated by the backdrop of the Wicklow Mountains to the east. While the undulating topography, hills and forestry plantations can obscure views, there are strong and distant vistas available from ridgelines in many locations and these are more prominent than the restricted viewing positions.</p> <p>The Lakes are of international importance for overwintering bird species which typically feed in the wet grasslands surrounding the lakes.</p> <p>The character area contains the following landscape types: rolling rough grazing, farmed ridges, farmed lowland, and narrow river valleys. The narrow river valleys are associated with a more enclosed landscape as are the farmed lowlands. Higher levels of visibility occur on rolling rough grazing and farmed ridges.</p> <p>The Blessington Lakes area has a rich cultural history, an important part of which is the long- standing granite stone cutting and quarrying tradition. Evidence of this history is visible in the local architecture with a fine array of granite cut-stone decorative and functional features to be found in the village of Ballyknockan as well as in the surrounding area and in Blessington, Lacken, Vallemount and Manor Kilbride.</p> <p>Evidence of 18th Century demesne planting and landscape design can be seen in the field patterns, stone walls and mature tree planting surrounding Russborough House.</p> <p>Development proposals within this landscape area should be evaluated to ensure that the siting and design of development proposals protect and do not unduly impact on the scenic setting and views of this landscape area. Please refer to the PR Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
		<p>Glencree/Glencullen Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Designation – NHA • Mixed Forestry • River Valleys • Views and prospects • Varying Topography • Sporadic Housing • Cultural Heritage 	<p>Bordering the county boundary for Dun Laoighaire Rathdown, the landscape of the Glencree and Glencullen area is shaped by the glacial valley following the path of the Glencree and Dargle River providing an enclosed landscape surrounded by the Wicklow Mountains in particular Kippure, Tonduff Mt and Djouce Mt. The landscape area has a good variety of upland river and boggy flushes interspersed with mixed deciduous woodland and coniferous plantations. There are, extensive views and prospects in particular the central prospect of the mountain area around Glencree Drive, Prince William Seat, Glencree River and Sugarloaf Mountain and the southern prospect of Tonduff Mountain and Glencree river valley with views east to Sugarloaf mountain.</p> <p>The Military Road traverses the area, running from Rathfarnham in South County Dublin, southwards to Glencree and further south towards Laragh and Aughavannagh. This is a unique engineering feat built between 1800-09 and designed to allow passage by horse drawn carts through the previously inaccessible mountain terrain. The impressive 19th Century barracks at Glencree is one of four such structures built along the road.</p> <p>Development proposals within this landscape area should be evaluated to ensure that scenic setting and views of this landscape area are preserved. Please refer to the GG Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
		<p>Northern Hills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Designation – NHA • Great and little Sugar Loaf • County Geological Site • Bray Head SAAO • Wetland Surveys 	<p>Separated from the Wicklow Mountain Range by the Vartry Plateau/ North East Mountain Lowlands is the hill formation comprising of the Great Sugar Loaf, Little Sugar Loaf and Bray Head.</p> <p>The Great Sugar Loaf is a very distinctive hill overlooking the village of Kilmacanogue on the N11 Dublin – Wexford road. Conical and pointed with rock strewn steep upper slopes the summit provides views across the coastal area towards Wicklow to the east, the Wicklow Mountains to the south and south west and the Dublin area to the west.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Heritage • Views and prospects • Peaty Soils in parts 	<p>The Little Sugar Loaf Mountain also known as Giltspur Mountain is situated to the east/northeast of the Great Sugar Loaf separated by the N11 corridor area landscape. The smaller of the Sugar Loaf formations, it is distinguished by its rocky double summit, which stands in stark contrast to the other hilltops in the region.</p> <p>Bray Head situated along the east coast completes the northern hills and has the designation of a Special Amenity Area Order (SAAO). The SAAO is designed to protect the area due to its particularly high amenity value which is sensitive to intense development pressure. This hill formation has a strong rural character, with large areas of existing heathland, maritime grassland and wooded areas and provides for expansive sea views to the north and south east and to the west towards the Great and Little Sugar Loaf and the Wicklow Mountains National Park.</p> <p>These peaks are of national geological importance and collectively form an iconic visual 'gateway' to county Wicklow. The area contains a number of features of archaeological significance and may have been the focal point of a wider ritual landscape. The area is widely used for walking and other recreational uses.</p> <p>Development proposals within the northern hills should be evaluated to ensure the setting, views, natural and cultural heritage are protected. In the case of Bray Head, the provisions of the SAAO are to be strictly implemented in order to protect and maintain the high amenity value of this sensitive landscape. Please refer to the NH Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
2	Coastal Areas AONB	Northern Coastal Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views • Prospects • The Murrough SAC/SPA • Kilcoole nature reserve/beach 	<p>The Northern Coastline comprises of lands north of Wicklow Town/Rathnew extending south of Greystones. The northern coastline provides intermittent views of the sea from the coast road with this area being somewhat more developed than the southern coastline. This landscape category includes a number of key environmental features such as the Murrough SAC/SPA a designated Natura 2000 site and Natural Heritage Area (NHA). The area is best described as a 'Coastal Plain' comprising of flat and relatively low lying lands adjacent to the seacoast. The Murrough forms the largest wetland complex on the East coast of Ireland, stretching for approximately 15 km along the coast. This landscape area contains a mosaic of habitats which are of high biodiversity significance, including salt marshes, mud flats, reed beds, wet grasslands, fen and wet woodland.</p> <p>While this section of the Wicklow coastline is not as heavily utilised from a tourist perspective compared to the southern coastline it does act as a significant recreational resource to the local residential population the use of which must be managed in an appropriate manner.</p> <p>Development proposals within this landscape area should be evaluated to ensure natural heritage, views, prospects are adequately protected in accordance with relevant requirements of statutory authorities. Please refer to the NCA Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
		Southern Coastal Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views • Prospects • Wicklow Head/Kilpoole • Brittas Bay • Arklow Head/Clogga Beach 	<p>The southern coastline comprises of lands south of Wicklow Town extending as far as south of Arklow Rock. The coastal area is dominated by low boulder clay headlands interspersed with small shingly coves and extensive sandy beaches and dunes, the most well known being at Brittas and Clogga. Along the way are rocky cliffs at Wicklow, Mizen and Arklow Heads. The area provides for a continuous prospect and numerous views from the coast road out to sea. Sand dunes are a dominant feature of the 'soft' coastline. The area has a rich coastal biodiversity of habitats and species protected through National and EU designations at Maherbeg Dunes and Buckroney Brittas Dunes and Fen (NHA and SAC) and Arklow Rock/Askintinny NHA. This landscape area is important not just from a landscape or habitat perspective, but also as an increasingly important area for recreational activities, the development and promotion of which must be managed</p>

				<p>appropriately.</p> <p>Development proposals within this landscape area should be evaluated to ensure natural heritage, views, prospects are adequately protected in accordance with relevant requirements of statutory authorities. Please refer to the SCA Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
3	Areas of High Amenity	Baltinglass Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Heritage • Topography • Peaty Soils 	<p>The rolling undulating terrain of the hills around Baltinglass is characterised by a rich cultural heritage which includes prehistoric and Iron Age archaeological remains and monuments. There is a passage tomb on the summit of Baltinglass Hill and an important collection of Hillforts which includes at Rathcoran, Rathnagee, Spinians Hill and Brusselstown This area is of significant heritage value with significant tourism potential within this area.</p> <p>This area can be best described as a heritage landscape where development proposals should be evaluated to ensure that both monuments and their settings are protected to the standards required by the relevant statutory authorities. Please refer to the BH Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
		Southern Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wicklow Way walking route • Elevated agricultural/transitional lands • Tomnafinnogue Wood • The Coolattin Estate • Views • Prospects 	<p>The southern Hills are characterised by the hill formation extending from the south of the County at Aghowle in a northern direction through Cronelea, Ballycumber and Ballymanus. This hill formation is further extended to the southeast via Kilcavan Gap leading to Hillbrook Upper while Croghan Mountain stands along rising above the rolling lowlands to the south of Auhgrim.</p> <p>The area provides for undulating topography, hills and forestry plantations including Tomnafinnogue Wood, an important remnant of the native oak woodland which at one time extended over much of south Wicklow. . The woods are afforded protection through inclusion in the Slaney River Valley candidate Special Area of Conservation as the River Derry a tributary of the Slaney, flows through the woods.</p> <p>While the undulating topography, hills and forestry plantations can obscure some views, this area provides a designated prospect south and east along R749 towards the Derry valley and Tomnafinnogue Wood. This area also provides for extensive views at Holts Way at Killaveny and at Kilcavan Gap to the North East and North West.</p> <p>The character area contains the following landscape types: rolling rough grazing, farmed ridges, farmed lowland. This landscape has a locally distinctive historic character owing to the influence of the 17th century Fitzwilliam estate which was centered at Coolattin House and Park but extended throughout much of South County Wicklow The built heritage is of good quality and includes a variety of stone cut estate cottages, workers houses, outbuildings, mills and associated structures, field walls and wrought iron gates. The wooded character is enhanced by tree lined local roads within the former estate and groups of mature trees, a number of which are the subject to 'Tree Protection Orders'.</p> <p>Development proposals within this landscape area should be evaluated to ensure the above characteristics are maintained and the listed views/prospects and their settings are protected. Please refer to the SH Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
		South East Mountain Lowlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Avoca River 	<p>The South East Mountain Lowlands are characterised by undulating topography generally extending from south of</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Aughrim River • The Avoca Mines • Elevated lands bordering the AONB • Cultural Heritage 	<p>Rathdrum through the valley of Avoca north east of Aughrim. The valley follows the path of Avonbeg and Avonmore rivers providing for an enclosed landscape created by the presence of the above hill formation to the north east and the rising lands to the west towards Cushbawn.</p> <p>The Avonmore and Avonbeg rivers join to form the Avoca river at the Meetings of the Waters. This a picturesque spot has historically attracted tourism, due in no small part to its immortalisation by the 18th century poet Thomas Moore and assisted by the development of the railway in the mid 19th century which made the wooded valley widely accessible.</p> <p>Avondale House and forest park the grounds of which are traversed by the Avonmore River is of historical and natural interest, being the ancestral home of Charles Stewart Parnell and previous to that, was built by one of the pioneers of Irish Forestry Sameul Hayes. The legacy of tree planting continues around the estate, and this area is also a high amenity value recreational amenity.</p> <p>The wide scale industrialisation of the landscape at West Avoca in the 19th Century through mining activity dramatically altered the area, leading to the construction of numerous structures including engine houses, chimney stacks, adits and a tramway. The remnants of these can be seen in the landscape today dotted amongst the 20th century open mine pits and spoil heaps. The iron stained disturbed ground, in parts colonised by tree cover provides for a locally distinctive and unique character.</p> <p>Development proposals within this landscape area should be evaluated to ensure natural heritage, views, prospects are adequately protected. Please refer to the SML Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
		<p>North East Mountain Lowlands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevated lands bordering the AONB • The Vartry Reservoir • Devils Glen – County Geological Site • Forestry • Views • Prospects 	<p>The North East Mountain Lowlands are characterised by undulating topography generally extending north of Rathdrum, east of the village of Laragh towards the Village of Roundwood as far as The Great Sugar Loaf. The area provides for varying hill formations and forestry plantations most notably at Devil’s Glen.</p> <p>The Glen provides for a dramatic landscape that was fashioned at the end of the Ice Age when the melt waters of the ice sheets created the valley. The resultant gorge affords a swift decent for the Vartry River as it makes it way from the Vartry Reservoir to Ashford Village. The site hosts a mixture of broad leaf and coniferous forest with fine stand of beech, Spanish chestnut and Ash and is a recreational amenity of value. The historic 18th century demesne legacy can be seen in the roadside planting of mature trees, boundary walls and entrances.</p> <p>In addition to the above the area is further characterised by the extensive views over and from the Vartry Reservoir to the east of the village of Roundwood.</p> <p>Development proposals within this landscape area should be evaluated to ensure natural and cultural heritage, views, and prospects are adequately protected. Please refer to the NML Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
		<p>Transitional Lands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hill formations • The Glen of Imaal • Woodlands • Views • Agricultural lands 	<p>The Transitional landscape refers to lands which act as a natural buffer and provide a clear distinction between the less sensitive landscapes within the County and the landscape areas identified as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These lands are located at Manor Kilbride, south of Hollywood moving towards Donard and lands extending from the Glen of Imaal towards Aughrim.</p> <p>Manor Kilbride area – characterised by undulating lands generally following the 240m contour line extending from Lisheen road as far as Ballyfolan including low lying lands east of Manor Kilbride along the Brittas River and Kilbride Bank.</p>

				<p>Hollywood south to the Baltinglass Hills and east to Donard and the Glen of Imaal - the majority of the lands within this area comprise of undulating lowlands at the foothills of the mountains with these lands ranging between the 200m and 280m contour. The area provides for mainly undulating agricultural lands which form a distinct landscape to that of the more elevated mountain areas and the lands adjoining the N81 within the Corridor Area which fall below the 200m contour.</p> <p>Rathdangan to north of Knockananna – this transitional area provides for a scenic natural landscape of undulating lands and the rolling foothills of Keadeen and Slievemaan Mountain areas. The area also provides for sporadic forestry plantations which add to and differentiate this area from the adjoining AONB and Rolling Lowland landscapes.</p> <p>Lands north of Aughrim at Macreddin – This generally comprises of low lying rolling hills which act as a transitional area between the higher mountain ranges at Coolgarrow, Ballincor, Cushbawn Mountain and Aughrim. This landscape includes Macreddin village and golf club with sporadic areas of forestry.</p> <p>Development proposals within the transitional area should be evaluated to ensure natural and cultural heritage, woodlands, field patterns, views and the natural setting of this landscape are adequately protected. Please refer to the TL Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
4	Corridor Area	The N11		<p>Corridor area landscape category relates to lands adjoining, surrounding or considered to be influenced by the man made features of the N11 and N81. These lands generally fall between the 80m and 150m contour line following the path of the more low lying and easily developable lands for such road infrastructure.</p>
		The N81		<p>Development proposals within the western and north eastern corridor landscape area should not unduly impinge on any views or prospects in these areas. Please refer to the CA Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
5	Rural Area	The Rolling Lowlands		<p>The Rolling Lowlands generally have a higher capacity to absorb development than other landscape areas. It is important that development in these areas be integrated into their surroundings in order to minimise the effect on the landscape and to maximise the potential for development.</p> <p>In particular the design of any new development within this landscape category should take due cognisance of the surrounding environment in which it is located in order to ensure it is fully integrated into rolling lowlands nature of these lands. Please refer to the LRL Key Development Considerations for further details.</p>
6	Urban Area	All Towns ranging from Levels 1-6 of the Wicklow Settlement Hierarchy		<p>As per the provision of the County Development Plan and the provisions of any Local Area, Town or Settlement plan for each area.</p>

Appendix 3

Sample Survey Sheet



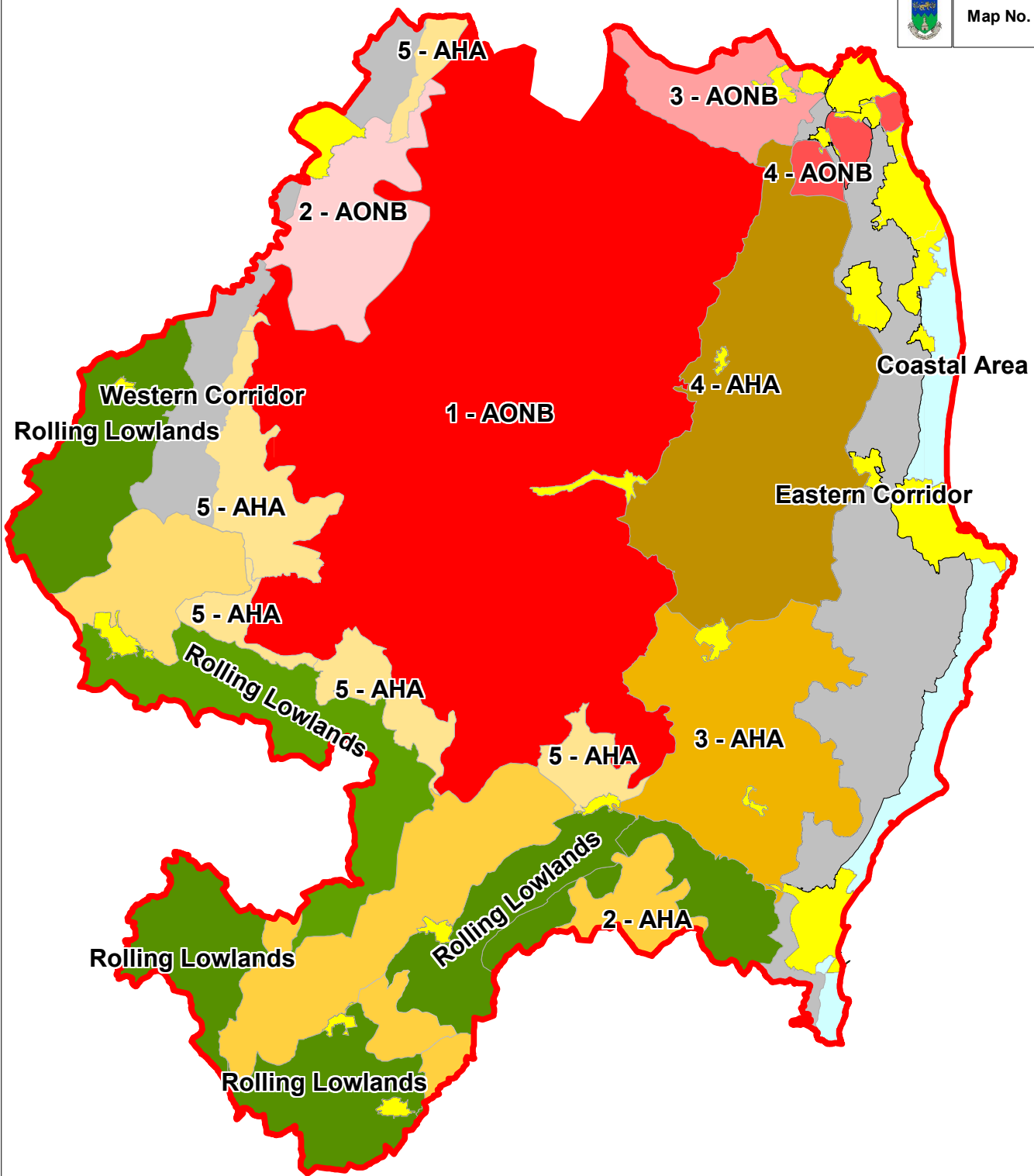
SAMPLE SURVEY SHEETS OF EACH LANDSCAPE CATEGORY

Date:	O.S. Grid Ref.:	Photo No.:
Time:	Viewpoint Number:	Zone: Coastal
Weather:	Direction of View:	Road No.:
<p>1. Brief description of character, elements and features of landscape including any significant seasonal differences:-</p> <p>Coastal Road - Glimpses and views of sea - Sand dunes - Parts of land undulating, but main area flat and low lying. Number of settlements on coast - Housing dominant.</p>		
<p>2. Vulnerability to change (notes on condition of landscape elements, pressures affecting the countryside):-</p> <p>View of sea and proximity to beaches lead to pressure for housing development which contributes to deterioration in landscape - Sand dunes under pressure from over use.</p>		
<p>3. Other comments:-</p> <p>Sandy beaches and sand dunes prominent in southern section of coastal area.</p> <p>Housing pickles this area.</p> <p>Number of holiday homes and caravan developments obvious.</p> <p>Views of sea more exploited as one moves further north.</p> <p>Land seaward side mainly farmed, enclosed by hedgerow and fences, where not used for one-off housing.</p> <p>N.H.A. obvious in these areas.</p> <p>Main part of "coastal route" does not have any particular spectacular view of sea.</p>		

Appendix 4

Landscape Category Maps




















Wicklow

Landscape Category Map

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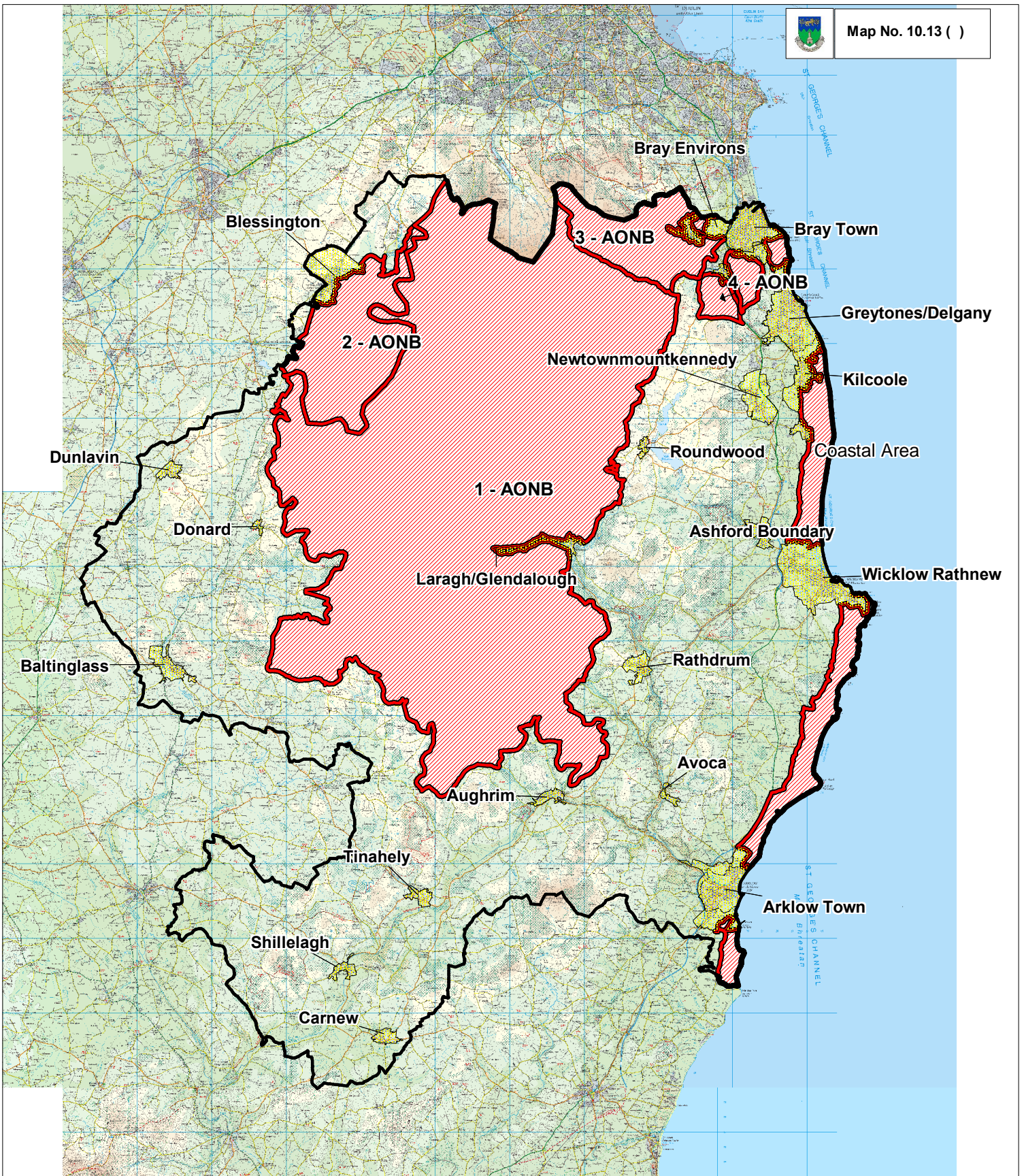
LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|------------------------------|
|  | Mountain Uplands (1 - AONB) |  | Transitional Lands (5 - AHA) |
|  | Poulaphuca Reservoir (2 - AONB) |  | Corridor Area West |
|  | Glencree/Glencullen (3 - AONB) |  | Corridor Area East |
|  | The Northern Hills (4 - AONB) |  | Rolling Lowlands |
|  | Baltinglass Hills (1 - AHA) |  | Urban Areas |
|  | Southern Hills (2 - AHA) |  | Coastal Area (AONB) |
|  | South East Mountain Lowlands (3 - AHA) |  | County Boundary |
|  | North East Mountain Lowlands (4 - AHA) | | |



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Maps Not To Scale









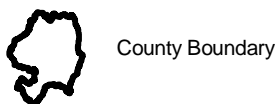
Wicklow

Landscape Category Map

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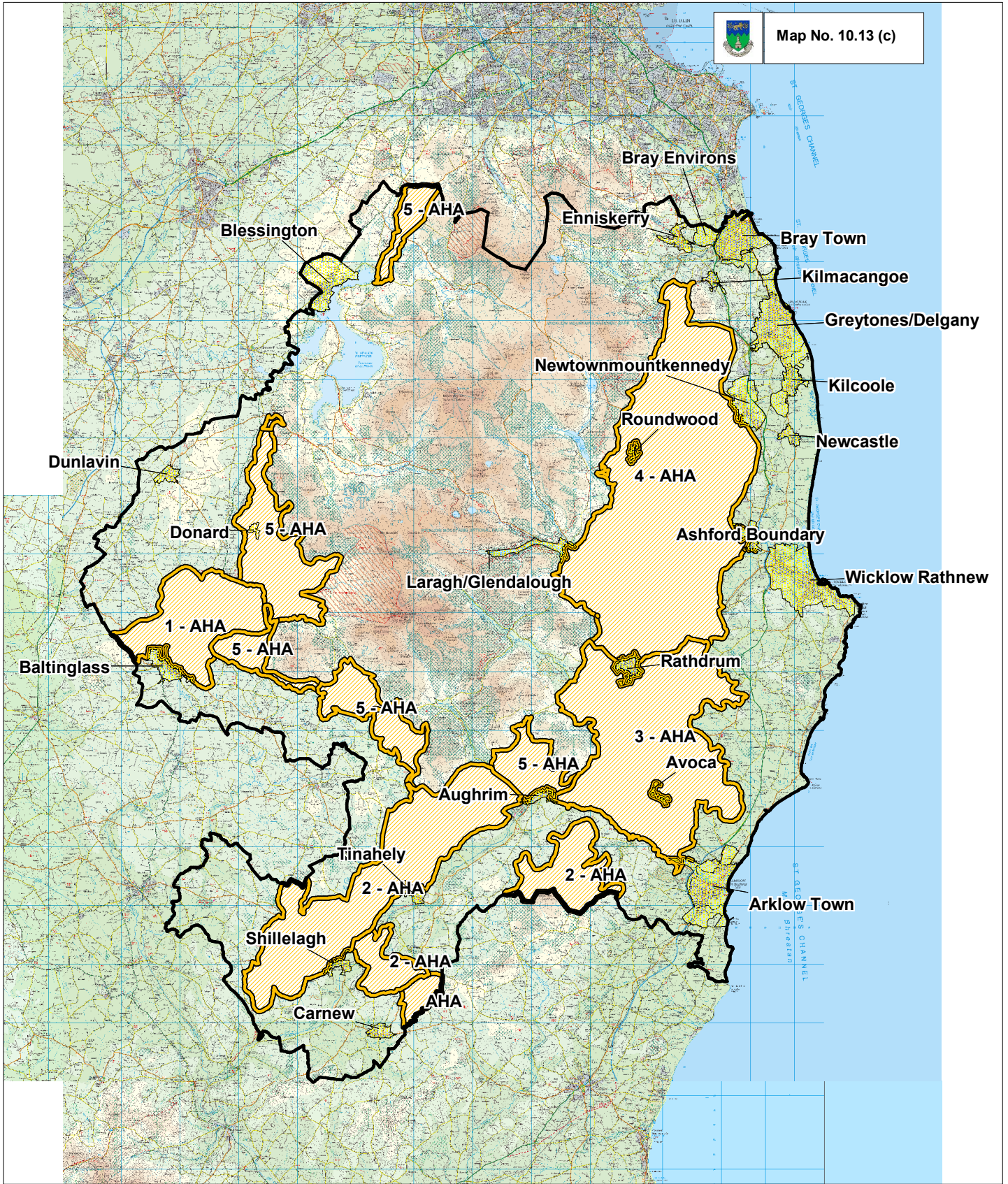
LEGEND - AONB LANDSCAPE CATEGORIES

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
|  | Mountain Uplands (1 - AONB) |  | The Northern Hills (4 - AONB) |
|  | Poulaphuca Reservoir (2 - AONB) |  | Coastal Area (AONB) |
|  | Glencree/Glencullen (3 - AONB) |  | Urban Areas |



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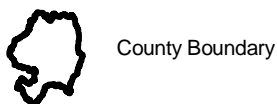
Wicklow

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LEGEND - AHA LANDSCAPE CATEGORIES

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
|  | Baltinglass Hills (1 - AHA) |  | North East Mountain Lowlands (4 - AHA) |
|  | Southern Hills (2 - AHA) |  | Transitional Lands (5 - AHA) |
|  | South East Mountain Lowlands (3 - AHA) |  | Urban Areas |

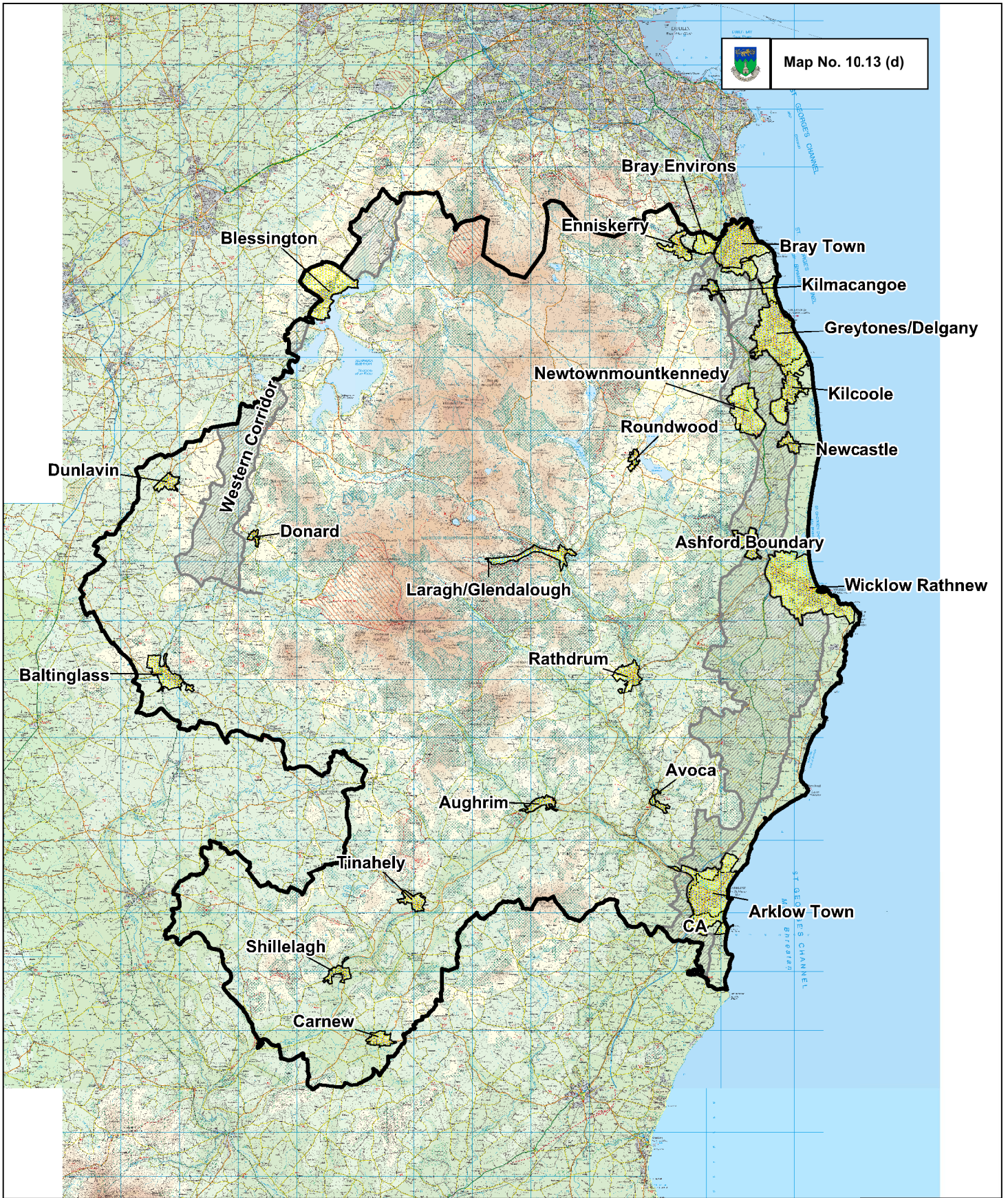


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Map No. 10.13 (d)




Wicklow


Landscape
Category Map


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LEGEND - CORRIDOR AREA LANDSCAPE CATEGORIES

 Western Corridor

 Eastern Corridor

 Urban Areas

 County Boundary



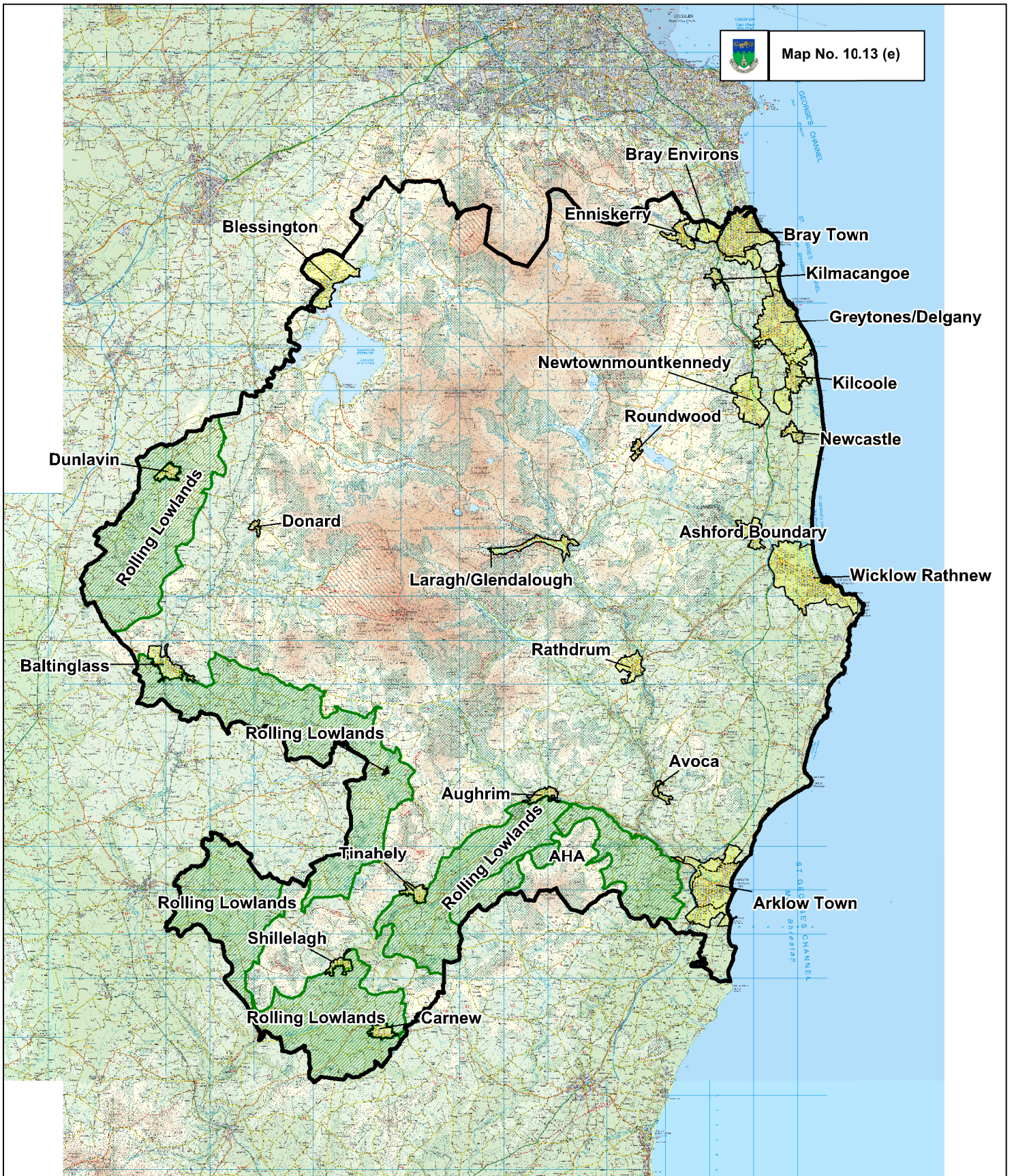
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Map No. 10.13 (e)



Wicklow


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LEGEND - ROLLING LOWLANDS LANDSCAPE CATEGORIES

 Rolling Lowlands

 Urban Areas

 County Boundary



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