



vol **7**

Landscape Character
Assessment

Wexford County

Development Plan

2022 - 2028

1.1 Introduction

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”*. Landscapes vary due to their underlying geology, soils, topography, land cover, hydrology, historic and cultural development and climatic considerations. The landscape gives a locality its ‘sense of place’ and is important for wellbeing and local identity. Landscapes also bring economic benefits in terms of the services and materials they provide and in tourism income which is most often linked to landscape quality.

Landscapes are constantly changing and the process of Landscape Character Assessment (hereon referred to as LCA) has an important role to play in managing and guiding that change. This assessment aims to build upon the work carried out during the preparation of previous development plans with the aim of protecting what is valuable in our landscapes while recognising that they are living landscapes which evolve over time.

1.2 Policy Context

The European Landscape Convention, also known as the Florence Convention, promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes. Ireland ratified the Convention in 2002. ‘A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025’ published by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in May 2015, aims to implement the Florence Convention by providing for specific measures to promote the protection, management and planning of the landscape.

The importance of landscape and the role of land use planning in its protection are recognised in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), 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.

NPO61 of the NPF aims to facilitate landscape protection, management and change through the preparation of a National Landscape Character Map and the development of guidance on the preparation of local landscape character assessments (including historic landscape characterisation) to ensure a consistent approach to landscape planning. The RSES notes that our region's diverse landscapes and seascapes are key assets which require careful protection.

The Landscape and Landscape Assessment: Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2000) provide guidance for planning authorities on the preparation of a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). This Strategy has been prepared in accordance with those guidelines.

2.0 Methodology

The previous Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 identified four main *landscape character areas*: Uplands, Lowlands, River Valley and Coastal and a fifth area known as 'Landscapes of Greater Sensitivity'. As both a National Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines for Planning Authorities on the preparation of Landscape Character Assessments are pending it was decided that it was prudent to wait until those documents emerge to carry-out a full review of the LCA.

A number of changes were made to the LCA from the LCA contained in the County Development Plan 2013-2019:

- 'Landscapes of Greater Sensitivity' have been renamed as 'Distinctive Landscapes' in the interests of clarity
- The description of the various landscape character areas, now known as Landscape Character Units (hereon referred to as LCU) was expanded to assist in interpretation.
- Sensitivity was assigned to each LCU and a sensitivity matrix was added.
- 'Other Landscape Considerations' were added. These include a wide variety of landscape elements/features (such as ecological and geological heritage sites) and their sensitivity will differ depending on its reason for designation. The sensitivity in these landscapes is most often not related to their visual quality.

- The landscape objectives were updated.

3.0 Landscape Character Assessment

LCA identifies areas of common character called landscape character areas or landscape character units (LCU). A LCU has a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that makes it different from its neighbouring landscape. Each LCU has its own distinctive character, based upon patterns of geology, landform, land use, cultural, historical and ecological features.

The objective of a LCA is to analyse the character, value, and sensitivity of landscapes identified within a particular area. By understanding how different landscapes developed and evolved from both a natural and social perspective, decisions relating to the management and planning of the landscape can be made from an informed basis. Outputs of the LCA include a map of LCUs and a description of each unit and an assigned sensitivity.

3.1 Landscape Character Units

The LCA is a broad level assessment and in reality there are no abrupt changes in landscape character at the boundaries of the various LCUs. As such the boundaries of a LCU are indicative only and all policies in the CDP which apply to any given unit may equally be applied to an area adjoining that particular unit. This can only be determined following a site visit and visual assessment by the Council.

The LCA identified 4 LCU. Within these LCU are also Distinctive Landscape features which, for policy purposes, are treated as another LCU. There are therefore 5 LCU in the LCA:

1. Uplands
2. Lowlands
3. River Valleys
4. Coastal
5. Distinctive

‘Distinctive Landscapes’ (e.g. rolling hills, kettle and kame landscape, sloblands, etc.) are different to the main LCU in which they are located. They generally represent features in the landscape and seascape which have visual interest and prominence. Certain landscapes also have particular values which communities or individuals attach to them e.g. historical, ecological, socio- cultural and/or religious interest. In some cases, landscapes may have more than one value attached to them.

The LCU are shown on Map 7.1 and described in Table 7-1 and 7-2 below.

Table No. 7-1 Landscape Character Units

| Landscape Character Unit | Description |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Uplands | <p>The Uplands is mainly characterised by areas of higher ground, with some variations within, and relates to the north and west of the county. The higher ground has more rainfall, wind and poor drainage with a limited range of vegetation and land use. At the higher reaches, agriculture is generally low intensity with stock rearing, forestry plantations and some areas of transitional vegetation. Afforestation may become a more dominant land use in these areas in the future.</p> <p>On lower ground, fields are larger with low hedges and scattered smaller trees. The land is mostly used for stock rearing or mixed agricultural use. Some coniferous forestry, deciduous forestry and transitional woodland on steep slopes can be found within these areas. Recently constructed wind farms have become a feature in this landscape.</p> <p>This landscape contains elevated and steeper land, ridges and skylines, which are prominent in the overall landscape, and which are generally more sensitive to development.</p> |

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| | <p>Whilst having lower population densities than the lowland landscapes, the Upland LCU does accommodate significant living and working populations whose needs must be accommodated.</p> |
| <p>Lowlands</p> | <p>The Lowlands LCU is generally made up of gently undulating lands and relates to extensive areas of the county. The slopes and topography in this unit are shallower. There are generally higher levels of population and more intensive agriculture. Agricultural lands tend to be characterised by views across larger fields as a result of the generally low well-trimmed hedges. This landscape unit hosts the principle towns (except where transected by River Valleys) and major infrastructure such as the main roads and railways.</p> <p>There are a number of prominent hills within the Lowlands LCU which provide more enclosure and ‘punctuation’ within the overall landscape.</p> <p>The predominant agricultural use of most of the Lowlands LCU is expected to continue due, for the most part, to the high quality and fertility of the soils. Intensification of agricultural practices and expansion of urban settlements will be factors of change in this landscape.</p> <p>The Lowlands LCU generally has characteristics which have a higher capacity to absorb development without it causing significant visual intrusion although, care still needs to be taken on a site by site basis, particularly to minimise the risks of developments being visually intrusive.</p> <p>To the north and to the south-west of the lowlands there are</p> |

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| | <p>transitional areas where this landscape unit meets the Uplands LCU and the higher elevations adjacent to the Barrow River Valley. To the north much of the mountain and hill peaks of the Blackstairs and Uplands LCU are inter-visible. To the south west this land rises towards some notable peaks in the New Ross district. These parts of the lowlands have lower population densities and are more sensitive than the rest of the lowlands. They are moderately sensitive to development with capacity to accommodate development subject to appropriate siting and design and consideration of cumulative impacts.</p> |
| River Valleys | <p>The Slaney and Barrow River Valleys have similar characteristics to that of the Lowlands, but have a more scenic appearance due to the presence of the rivers and their associated topography and riparian and woodland habitats. This unit is sensitive to development.</p> |
| Coastal | <p>The east coast is generally characterised by long, relatively straight coasts of sand or shingle backed up by low cliffs and sand dune systems. Within this coastal landscape are the more distinctive land and seascapes of Wexford Harbour, Wexford Slobs and Cahore Polders and Dunes. The northern part of the eastern coast has more promontories and smaller bays. There are concentrations of sand extraction developments which form prominent features in the landscape, notably near Blackwater.</p> <p>The south coast also has long beaches and dune systems. Views to the Saltee and Keeragh Islands draw the eye in this landscape. There are a number of distinctive features within this unit including Lady's Island and Tacumshin Lakes, the Inish and Ballyteige Slobs, Carnsore Point, Ballyteigue Burrow and Bannow Bay. The Hook Peninsula has a variety of interesting and distinctive landscapes.</p> |

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| | <p>The coastal areas of Wexford experience greater pressure for tourism and residential development and are very sensitive to development and require protection both in their own right and for the services and economic benefits they bring.</p> |
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Table No. 7-2 Distinctive Landscapes

| Distinctive Landscape | Name | Description |
|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hills | Tara Hill | <p>Hills and ridges have a significant presence all across County Wexford, and there are often broad views across the surrounding landscape from them. In the lowland landscape, the important and prominent hills and ridges have been identified. A number of these hills, such as Oulart Hill, Lacken Hill, Vinegar Hill, Forth Mountain and Carrigbyrne have historical resonance.</p> <p>Where public access is possible, hills and ridges are often popular places for recreational activity such as walking, horse riding and cycling.</p> <p>It should be noted that there are numerous hills in the Uplands, and their exclusion from this section does not mean that they are not important, rather that they are protected under the Uplands LCU.</p> |
| | Ask Hill | |
| | Ballyminaun Hill | |
| | Boley Hill | |
| | Carrigroe Hill | |
| | Oulart Hill | |
| | Slievenagorea | |
| | Vinegar Hill | |
| | Bree Hill | |
| | Raheennahoon Hill | |
| | Camaross Hill | |
| | Carrickbyrne Hill | |
| | Lacken Hill | |
| | Camlin Hill | |
| | Creakan Hill | |
| | Slieve Coilte | |
| | Tinnacarrick | |
| Forth Mountain | | |

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| Waterbodies | <p>Lady's Island</p> <p>Tacumshin Lake</p> <p>Ballyteigue Burrow</p> <p>Bannow Bay</p> <p>Wexford Harbour</p> | <p>Lady's Island Lake, Tacumshin Lake and Ballyteigue Burrow are coastal lagoons, fully or partially separated from the sea by sandbanks, shingle and some rocks. The water features and the generally low-lying land in which they are set form Distinctive landscapes. All are of great ecological interest. Lady's Island Lake is also of significant religious and cultural importance and attracts many visitors, particularly due the summer pilgrim season.</p> <p>Bannow Bay and Wexford Harbour estuaries are subject to strong tidal forces. Retreating tides expose expanses of mudflats and sandflats. The low-lying dune systems and mature trees at the Raven and Rosslare Point form the mouth and frame the seascape of Wexford Harbour. Bannow Bay also has particular historical significance associated with the Normans.</p> |
| Coastal Promontories | <p>Forlorn Point (Kilmore Quay)</p> <p>Carnsore Point</p> <p>Rosslare Point</p> <p>Kilmichael Point</p> <p>Cahore Point</p> | <p>In South Wexford, Forlorn Point (Kilmore Quay), Carnsore Point and Rosslare Point are prominent features in the coastal land/seascape. Now dominated by wind turbines, Carnsore Point is of significance as it is the most south-easterly point on the island of Ireland. It is also of archaeological and geological interest. As the location for</p> |

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| | | <p>the anti-nuclear festivals in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Carnsore Point also has socio-cultural interest.</p> <p>To the north of the county, the promontories of Kilmichael Point, Cahore Point and those in between are also prominent features in the coastal land/seascape. The promontories often enclose sandy bays which are popular with visitors.</p> |
| Peninsulas | Hook Peninsula | <p>The Hook peninsula is profoundly influenced by Waterford Harbour and Bannow Bay which enclose the peninsula on two sides. To the north, the peninsula is characterised by rolling undulating farmland with occasional views to the water and distant views to the Blackstairs Mountains and Forth Mountain.</p> <p>The peninsula's coastline is heavily indented by bays and coves and numerous sandy beaches. It is characterised by generally low and rocky cliffs, particularly midway between the north and south of the peninsula, e.g. at Baginbun Head. The coastline has a cluster of sites of geological interest.</p> <p>The southern tip of the peninsula has a very flat low lying distinctive landscape punctuated by agricultural and residential buildings, Loftus Hall being the most prominent, and culminates at the Hook</p> |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | <p>lighthouse at Hook Head. The area has a distinctive settlement and field pattern.</p> <p>There are sites of great historical interest throughout the whole of the peninsula, particularly associated with the Normans, the Hook lighthouse and with the historical use of Duncannon Port. The beaches, landscapes, villages and, in particular, the Hook lighthouse, are all popular with tourists and much of the development on the peninsula is consequently tourist-related.</p> |
| 'Kettle and Kame' landscape | Screen Hills | <p>Formed from the withdrawal of the Irish Sea glacier at the end of the Ice Age, the hills represent the largest raised ice contact delta in Ireland and possibly in Europe. Consisting of rounded 'hills' and the occasional 'kettle' lake, the Screen Hills landscape is distinctive from the general lowland landscape of south and east Wexford. Below ground, sand and gravel sediments, sometimes in excess of 30m thick, support distinctive flora and are also attractive to the extractive industry.</p> |
| Sloblands | <p>Wexford Slobs</p> <p>Inish Slobs</p> <p>Ballyteige Burrow</p> | <p>The slobs at Wexford, Inish and Ballyteige form distinctive, very low lying flat landscapes with straight drainage ditches and wetland areas, largely formed by land reclamation projects in the 1800s. These landscapes provide important habitats for wildfowl. The Inish and Ballyteige slobs landscape is backed by the dune landscape of</p> |

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| | | Ballyteigue and is punctuated by sand extraction activity and more recently by wind turbines. |
| Islands | Saltee Islands Keeragh Islands | The islands around the south coast of Wexford, the Saltees being the largest, are significant landscapes in themselves, as well as providing punctuation and focus to the seascape. |

3.2 Landscape Sensitivity

Following the identification of the LCUs, a sensitivity rating was developed for each unit. Landscape sensitivity is a measure of the ability of the landscape to accommodate change or intervention without suffering unacceptable effects to its character and value. Table No. 7-3 below also identifies the sensitivity rating for each landscape type.

Table 7-3: Sensitivity Rating

| | Landscape Sensitivity Rating | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|----------|------|
| | Low | Moderate | High |
| Uplands | | | |
| Lowlands | | | |
| River Valleys | | | |
| Coastal | | | |
| Distinctive Landscapes | | | |

Low sensitivity landscapes are more robust landscapes which are tolerant to change and have the ability to accommodate development without significant adverse impacts on the character of the landscape. These landscapes comprise the majority of the Lowlands.

The upper reaches of the lowlands have a Moderate sensitivity. Moderate sensitivity landscapes can accommodate development but with limitations in scale and magnitude. These transitional areas of the lowlands are where the lowlands meet the other LCU (see Table 7-1).

River Valley Landscapes are classed as having a Moderate to High sensitivity.

Uplands, Coastal and Distinctive Landscapes have a High Sensitivity to change and a limited ability to absorb new development. Development proposed within these areas must be shown not to impinge in any significant way upon their character, integrity or uniformity when viewed from the surroundings. Particular attention should be given to the preservation of the character and distinctiveness of these areas as viewed from scenic routes and the environs of archaeological and historic sites.

River Valley Landscapes are classified as having a Moderate to High Sensitivity. In Moderate and High Sensitivity areas development has the potential to have significant individual or cumulative impacts. Applications for development in these areas must demonstrate an awareness of these inherent limitations by having a very high standard of site selection, siting layout, selection of materials and finishes. Development in these areas which is likely to have an individual or cumulative visual impact on the landscape will only be permitted where the applicant has demonstrated an overriding need for the development, including transport and energy infrastructure, in the proposed location (refer rural housing section where such applications relates to rural housing).

4.0 Other Landscape Considerations

There are a number of other ecological, heritage, cultural and historical layers which help to shape the landscape and should be taken into consideration in future development proposals. Ecological, scenic and amenity designations reflect areas of elevated public awareness and as such may be considered also to have a significant landscape value. No sensitivity is assigned to these landscapes as the sensitivity will depend on the specific quality for which they are designated.

4.1 Designated Sites

Natura 2000 sites are a network of sites of the highest biodiversity importance in Europe designated under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). They are comprised of Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). Special Protection Areas (SPA), established under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), provide for the protection and conservation of Annex I (rare and threatened bird species), regularly occurring migratory species and for bird habitats (particularly wetlands). Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), established under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), provide for the protection and conservation of habitats and species listed in Annex I (habitats) and Annex II (species – not birds) of the Habitats Directive.

The Natural Heritage Areas are designated under the Wildlife Amendment Act, 2000. They are comprised of areas of national biodiversity or geological importance. Environmental sensitivities means it is imperative to ensure that development in these areas is carefully managed. The onus will be on the individual to demonstrate that any development in this area will not have an impact on natural heritage. While their value is primarily ecological/geological, these areas add to the visual quality of our landscapes.

4.2 Ecological Networks and Wildlife Corridors

In accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) the Planning Authority is required to include objectives in its development plan to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems for marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

Ecological networks are a network of core habitats linked by linear and continuous structures such as rivers, hedgerows or stepping stones such as ponds or small woods. These networks are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

Wildlife corridors are made up of hedgerows, riparian zones, tree lines and wetlands and are an important feature of the landscape. These corridors provide a vital habitat for many species and also function as a corridor for animals, birds, bats, insects and other species to move through. It is particularly critical that these wildlife corridors are retained to allow for the free movement of species for purposes of feeding, nesting and breeding within their wider habitat. These networks facilitate the dispersal and reduce the risk of extinction of a species due to excessive habitat fragmentation and the isolation of small fragmented population.

4.3 Geological Sites

The GSI have published 'The Geological Heritage of County Wexford – An Audit of County Geological Sites for County Wexford' which identifies 42 sites of geological and geomorphological importance in the county. These sites are identified as County Geological Sites and are protected under the objectives of the County Development Plan. Some of these sites have been recommended to be proposed NHAs and are considered to be of national importance as best representative examples of particular geological formations or features. The sensitivity of these landscapes and features vary (some may be robust and benefit from change which would reveal new exposures) and reference should be made to the site reports in the audit and the views of the GSI sought.

4.4 Ancient and Long Established Woodlands

These woodlands are important in terms of their biological and cultural value. Ancient woodland sites often contain communities of animals and plants which are confined to, and dependent for their existence upon, ancient semi-natural woodland. Ancient woodland can also contain historical landscape and archaeological features which are important in their own right. Ancient woodland also plays a role in preserving natural topographical features such as undisturbed relic soils and unaltered watercourses. It has been widely recognised that woodlands with a long history of woodland cover exhibit a more diverse complement of plant and animal species than woodlands of recent origin, and hence are considered to be of higher conservation value. Careful management of these woodlands is vital. These areas are ecological and visually sensitive.

4.5 Historical and Cultural Elements

The landscapes of County Wexford have evolved over thousands of years and continue to evolve and change today as a result of human and natural interaction. Over time, new components are added to the landscape, whilst older features are modified or replaced. Past land use, management and associated settlement patterns, as well as pattern and type of fields and enclosure, often contribute to distinctive local and regional patterns in the landscape. Cultural associations may relate to art, literature, events, myth, music, people, legends and folklore.

There are important features in the landscape, e.g., hedgerows and trees which line fields and roads, woodlands, wetlands and old demesne walls. The contribution that these landscape features make towards the site specific and overall character of the county's landscape is recognised and should be taken into account in the assessment of future development proposals.

The Record of Monuments and Places also shows the spread of historic settlement. This historic pattern of settlement influences the cultural landscape features of the county. These features have visual and cultural heritage value.

4.6 Battlefields

The Council recognises the importance and value of the wider historic landscape and environment, including battlefields. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is currently undertaking an Irish Battlefields Project. The aim of the project is to assist in identifying the appropriate statutory protection that should be extended to battlefield sites. The Council will have regard to the Irish Battlefields Project as it becomes available. It will be an objective of the Council to protect historic and archaeological landscapes, including battlefields, and promote access to such sites provided that this does not threaten the feature.

4.7 Specific Landscape Features

The LCA cannot, and is not intended to, identify specific landscape features on a field by field or site by site basis. There are important features in the landscape, such as hedgerows

and trees which line fields, roads and woodlands, which cannot all be plotted on a LCA map. However, the contribution that these features make towards the site specific and overall character of the county's landscape is recognised and will be taken into account in the assessment of development proposals.

5.0 Scenic Routes and Protected Views

A Development Plan must contain objectives for 'the preservation of views and prospects'.¹

This plan does not designate specific routes but notes that scenic routes may fall into a number of categories:

- Routes through Upland, Coastal, River Valley and Distinctive Landscapes.
- Trails such as the Eurovelo, Norman Way, Greenways and Wexford Walking Trails where sightseeing visitors are more likely to be concentrated along these routes.

Other scenic views include might include:

- Views to the sea and views towards land from the sea and rivers in locations which may host tourism or amenity/journeys arrivals by boat.
- Planned views and vistas such as those associated with planned settlement and heritage properties and gardens.

The CDP recognises the fact that all landscapes are living and changing, and therefore in principle a development on such a route would not necessarily be prohibited, but development, where permitted, should not hinder or obstruct these views and prospects, should not have significant negative impacts either individually or cumulatively and should be designed and located to minimise their impact.

6.0 Assessing Visual Impacts

6.1 Visual Impacts

The capacity of an area to visually absorb development is also influenced by a combination of the following factors:-

¹ Mandatory objective 2(e) of Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

1. Topography - development in elevated areas will usually be visible over a wide area; development in enclosed areas will not.
2. Vegetation - areas which support (or which have the potential to support) trees, tall hedges and woody vegetation can screen new development from view. Areas which cannot easily sustain such vegetation will be unlikely to screen new development.
3. Development - New development is less likely to be conspicuous in the context of existing development in the landscape.

Impacts may be individual or cumulative, resulting in the gradual erosion of the scenic quality of the area. They may be extensive or cover a small area but be significant. They may be temporary, short, long term or permanent and their significance depends on both the nature of the development, the capacity of the landscape to absorb and the value that is placed on the specific landscape.

Impacts may be due to the siting of a development or they may be due to the scale or design. They may also be because the resulting development is alien to the environment in which it is situated.

There will be a presumption against developments which are located on elevated and exposed sites. The impacts associated with such developments are further increased when the development, when viewed in context, will break the skyline.

6.2 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

In general, the visual impacts of most development will be assessed by the Council in the normal course of the assessment of the planning application. In some instances the Council may require an applicant to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to assist in the assessment of a given development on the landscape due to either the scale, siting or design of the development or the sensitivity of the landscape.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the effects of change resulting from development on the landscape as an environmental resource and on people's view and visual amenity. An LVIA should identify the significance

and magnitude of effects that are expected to occur as a result of a proposed development. The LVIA should be prepared in accordance with best industry standard/practice.

Proposals for significant development (e.g. renewable energy projects, telecommunications infrastructure and the extractive industry) should be accompanied by a LVIA which includes Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) which indicate the areas over which the proposed development may be seen. Representative assessment viewpoints should also be identified. The number of viewpoints required will vary with the location and scale of the proposal. Priority should be given to views from sensitive locations (e.g. residential areas, areas popular with visitors or areas used for outdoor recreation), scenic routes and views from elevated locations. Photomontages should be included from each viewpoint showing the proposed development with and without any proposed screen planting. The LVIA should also include an assessment of the cumulative visual impacts of the proposed development in combination with other significant developments and structures existing and permitted in the area, as well as other live planning applications.

The Council may occasionally require the submission of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Reports for smaller developments than those mentioned above where there is a concern that a given proposal may have a significant negative impact on the landscape. LVIA may assist the planning authority in assessing the visual impact of the proposal and potential for mitigation and this may result in a more favourable outcome for a planning applicant.

The LVIA should be applied in a manner that is proportionate to the complexity, scale and likely significance of landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.

The planning authority will also use all tools available to it such as slope analysis and DTM and will add these to their GIS systems and use them in assessment as they are developed by the Council.

Landscapes Objectives

It is the objective of the Council to:

Objective L01

To have regard to the Landscape Character Unit and their assigned Landscape Sensitivity, the Draft Landscape and Landscape Assessment-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2000) and any updated versions of these guidelines published during the lifetime of the Plan, and any National Landscape Character Assessment prepared when assessing planning applications or when carrying out local authority own development.

Objective L02

To review the Landscape Character Assessment and the landscape objectives in the Plan, after the publication of future Landscape Assessment Guidelines issued by a Minister of the Government with respect to landscape. The revised Landscape Character Assessment will address historic and cultural landscape and seascape character analysis.

Objective L03

To carry out landscape characterisation and sensitivity analysis to inform local area plans.

Objective L04

To require all developments to be appropriately be sited, designed and landscaped having regard to their setting in the landscape, ensure that any potential adverse visual impacts are minimised and that natural features and characteristics of the site are retained.

Objective L05

To ensure that developments are not unduly visually obtrusive in the landscape, in particular, in or adjacent to the Upland, River Valley, Coastal or Distinctive Landscape Character Units.

Objective L06

To ensure that, where a development will have a negative impact in the Upland, River Valley, Coastal, or Distinctive Landscape Character Unit, an overriding need is demonstrated for that particular development and ensure that careful consideration is given to site selection. The development should be appropriate in scale and be sited, designed and landscaped in a manner which minimises potential adverse impacts on the subject landscape.

Objective L07

To encourage appropriate development which would enhance an existing degraded landscape and/or which would enhance views to or from an Upland, River Valley, Coastal or Distinctive Landscape Character Unit from public viewpoints.

Objective L08

To seek to minimise the individual and cumulative adverse visual impacts that rural housing may have on Upland, River Valley, Coastal and Distinctive Landscape Character Units. In this regard, in locations where the Council considers that there is a risk of individual or cumulative adverse impacts, the Council will only consider proposals for housing developments where a need for the dwelling has been demonstrated in accordance with the criteria contained in Table No. 4-2 in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing, Volume Written Statement.

Objective L09

To protect views worthy of protection, including views to and from sea, river, landscape feature, mountains, tourism sites, landmark structures such as bridges and urban settlements from inappropriate development that by virtue of design, scale, character or cumulative impact would block or detract from such views.

Objective L10

To protect planned views and vistas, such as those that might be associated with planned settlements, heritage properties and monuments and ensure that that new development does not detract from such views as may be identified within towns, formal settings and

designated landscapes. In evaluating planning applications for development in the foreground of such views and vistas, consideration shall be given to the effect such development may have on the view or prospect.

Objective L11

To consider the special qualities of the landscapes listed in Section 4.0 *Other Landscape Considerations* when assessing development proposals in these areas. In assessing impacts the Council will consider the specific landscape qualities for which they have been designated.

Objective L12

To adopt a presumption against developments which are located on elevated and exposed sites and where the landscape cannot accommodate such development with appropriate mitigation.

Objective L13

To adopt a presumption against the siting of telecommunications equipment in prominent locations in Upland, River Valley, Coastal and Distinctive Landscape Character Units unless an over-riding need is demonstrated to the Planning Authority.

Objective L14

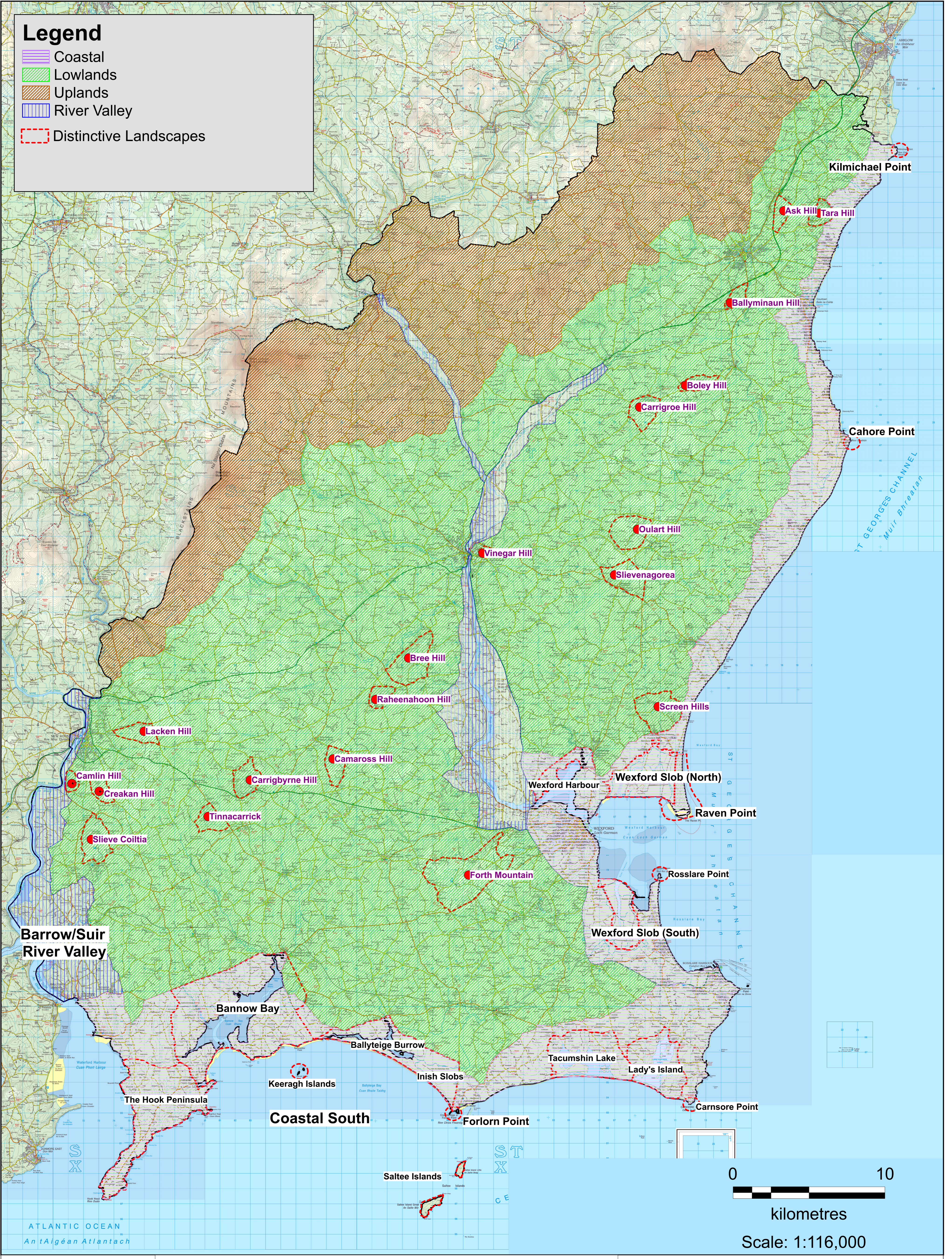
To require Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Reports to be submitted for developments which may have a significant negative impact on the landscape.

Objective L15

To produce a DTM, slope analysis and 3d visualisations as resources allow and make them available alongside CDP landscape designations to be used by applicant and the Council alike in the assessment of visual impacts.

Legend

-  Coastal
-  Lowlands
-  Uplands
-  River Valley
-  Distinctive Landscapes



kilometres
Scale: 1:116,000



Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment

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Title: Landscape Character Units

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| Drawn by: NK | Checked by: DK |
| Date: 13.06.2022 | Map No: 7.1 |