

# Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council Planning Committee

## Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council Local Development Plan – Preparatory Studies

To: Planning Committee

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015

### For Decision

<b>Linkage to Corporate Plan</b>	
<b>Strategic Priority</b>	Protecting and Enhancing our Environments and Assets
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Sharon Mulhern
<b>Cost: (If applicable)</b>	

#### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 An indicative 6 month Local Development Plan (LDP) Work Programme was agreed by Elected Members at the Planning Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015.
- 1.2 The work programme included the presentation of four topic-related preparatory papers to Elected Members, as follows:
- Population & Growth
  - Environment
  - Employment and Town Centres
  - Housing
- 1.3 The first three topic papers listed above have been presented and agreed at previous Committees. At the October Committee an amendment to the indicative 6 month work programme was agreed in relation to the presentation of the Housing Paper due to the need for further information and evidence gathering.
- 1.4 This Landscape Character paper is therefore being presented earlier than originally envisaged.
- 1.5 Key outputs of the paper are to provide Members with information on:
- The acknowledgment of the importance of landscape and seascape to the well-being of people as emphasised in the European Landscape Convention;
  - The use of Landscape & Seascape Character Assessments as a tool for decision makers;
  - The aims of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) in providing a framework for Councils to protect landscapes and seascape features; and
  - An outline of the Landscape and Seascape designations in the Borough.

- 1.6 This paper takes into account the recently adopted Northern Area Plan (NAP) 2016 and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

## **2.0 Financial Implications**

- 2.1 The production of a more detailed Local Landscape Character Assessment (inc Seascapes) will have implications for Council, most obviously in terms of determining if the necessary skills are presently available within Council or if consultants should be employed to undertake this work. This will be an additional cost to Council.

## **3.0 Other Implications**

- 3.1 As the Landscape Character Assessment should inform the production of the LDP, the work should be programmed into the timetable for the preparation and adoption of the LDP, which must be agreed with the DoE.

## **4.0 Recommendation**

- 4.1 **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Elected Members endorse the use of the information contained within this paper in the preparation of the Local Development Plan.

## **Appendix 1**

Discussion Paper 4: Landscape Character

**DISCUSSION PAPER 4:      LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**



View from southern slopes of Binevenagh towards the Roe Valley

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## Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this Landscape paper is to inform Members of:

- The acknowledgment of the importance of landscape to the well-being of people as emphasised in the European Landscape Convention;
- The use of Landscape Character Assessments as a tool for decision makers;
- The aims of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) in providing a framework for Councils to protect landscapes and landscape feature; and
- Some of the Landscape type designations in the Borough e.g. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Distinctive setting for the World Heritage site.

1.2 One of the key mission statements of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Strategy 2015 – 2019 is to:

*‘Improve the quality of life and well-being for all of our citizens and visitors by protecting and enhancing our unique natural environment and assets.’*

1.3 The landscape within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Area encompasses a wide variety of landforms and features including mountains and uplands which form dramatic cliffs and escarpments. There are river valleys that meet the sea in expansive estuaries at the Foyle and Bann, where there is the feeling of big wide open skies and the sounds of thousands of wading and wildfowl birds filling the air during the autumn and winter months. There are dune complexes behind beaches which are host to habitat specific plant and animal species. There are features that have been created by man such as coastal castles and inland forts and burial sites. The land has been extensively modified through farming activities and settlements that have expanded over time.

1.4 The Borough contains four Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB’s): The Causeway Coast; The Antrim Coast and Glens; Binevenagh; and Sperrins. The Causeway Coast has the iconic Giant’s Causeway which is set within the much wider volcanic landscape of the Causeway Coast with its cliffs and headlands. There are extensive upland areas within the AONB’s with dramatic features such as the western cliffs and landslips of Binevenagh which can be seen for many miles around. The Antrim Plateau is dissected by distinct glens. The highest summits in the Borough rise to 628 metres in the Sperrin AONB.

1.5 Landscapes are under pressure from the growth of wind energy and demand for mineral extraction. There are additional pressures for solar farms, housing and businesses. Landscape Character Assessments are a planning tool which can be used to respond to landscape threats and opportunities.

## 2.0 The European Landscape Convention 2000

2.1 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is an international treaty exclusively devoted to European landscape. It applies to all types of landscape whether considered outstanding, every day or degraded. The Convention is aimed at the protection, management and planning of landscapes. It was ratified by the UK in November 2006 and adopted for the UK in March 2007. The ELC advises that landscape is an area perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and or human factors and it embraces all landscape types.

2.2 The ELC perceives landscape as a combination of many factors, including: biodiversity; ecology; heritage; values and memories; and the experience we have of a place. It relates to areas of great beauty and degraded landscapes, both rural and urban. The Convention provides an important contribution to the implementation of the Council of Europe's objectives, by promoting the importance of landscapes and understanding how managing landscapes contributes to the population's quality of life and well-being.

2.3 The Convention states that the landscape:

- is a key element of individual and social well-being;
- contributes to the formation of local cultures and that it is a basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage; and
- is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere.

2.4 The Convention is a response to the public's wish to enjoy high quality landscapes and to play an active part in their development. The Convention focuses on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning and covers the entire territory, not just outstanding landscapes.

2.5 Article 1 of the Convention defines 'landscape protection' as:

*"actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape and 'Landscape management' as an action ensuring the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes within".*

2.6 Landscape planning is defined as a strong forward-looking action to enhance, restore or create landscapes. Article 3 provides that the aims of the treaty are to promote landscape protection, management and planning, and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues. Articles 5 and 6 state the general and specific obligations of the Parties, such as:

- Establishing and implementing landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning;
- Integrating landscape into their regional, town planning, cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies;
- Increasing awareness of the value of landscapes, their role and changes to them;
- Promoting training and education in landscape policy, protection, management and planning;
- Identifying and assessing the landscapes in their territories.

2.7 Information regarding the ELC may be viewed at:

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/home>

### **3.0 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)**

3.1 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement, published in September 2015, places an emphasis on the protection of special landscapes from inappropriate development, overdevelopment and the need for councils to take into account Landscape Character Assessments. The SPPS advises;

*'In preparing Local Development Plans (LDPs) councils must take account of the Regional Development Strategy 2035, the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland, the*

*SPPS and any other policies or advice in guidance issued by the Department such as Landscape Character Assessments and conservation area design guides.'*

3.2 The SPPS also advises that,

*'in preparing LDPs, councils shall bring forward a strategy for sustainable development in the countryside, together with appropriate policies and proposals that must reflect the aims, objectives and policy approach of the SPPS, tailored to the specific circumstances of the plan area.'*

3.3 The SPPS guides councils to a policy approach of cluster, consolidate, and grouping development with established buildings, and promoting the re-use of previously used buildings. This sustainable approach can mitigate the potential adverse impacts upon scenic landscapes arising from the combined effect of one-off, sporadic development upon landscape character. Development in the countryside must be sited and designed to integrate sympathetically with their surroundings and must not have an adverse impact on the character of the area. The SPPS advises,

*'The LDP process will play an important role for councils in identifying key features and assets of the countryside and balancing the needs of rural areas and communities with the protection of the environment. This should include an environmental assets appraisal and landscape assessment which will provide the evidence base for the purposes of bringing forward an appropriate policy approach to development in the countryside. This should take into account Landscape Character Assessments.'*



The SPPS seeks to build in protection for landscapes such as the Legananam Pot and the slopes of Bendradagh within The Sperrins AONB from overdevelopment (above).

#### **4.0 What are Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs)?**

4.1 Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs) emerged as a technique in the 1980s. The most up to date published guidance is contained in an Approach to Landscapes Character Assessment (Natural England 2014). LCA is the process of identifying and describing variation in character of the landscape. LCA documents identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive by mapping and describing character types and areas. They also show how the landscape is perceived, experienced and valued by people.

#### **5.0 What LCAs are used for?**

5.1 LCAs can inform a wide range of activities, such as:

- planning policies and decisions
- sensitivity and capacity studies
- land management plans
- landscape and visual impact assessments
- local council studies
- minerals planning
- place making
- green infrastructure
- forest and woodland strategies
- waterways strategies
- renewable energy
- AONB and National Park management plans

5.2 LCAs are useful for monitoring change across the landscape and for capturing the characteristics of the landscape including:

- topographic features
- flora and fauna
- land use
- sights, sounds, touch and smells
- cultural associations, history and memories

5.3 The classification of the landscape can be used for making decisions about the condition/ quality of the landscape and identify how character can be maintained.

5.4 Landscape character goes beyond an appreciation of an area's visual attractiveness. It involves an understanding of how the landscape functions to support communities, cultural heritage and development, local and macro economies as well as the wildlife and natural resources of the area. Landscape Character Assessments are carried out according to accepted methodologies.





Landscape Character Assessments are used by decision makers to identify and protect special landscapes such as the slopes of Binevenagh with the Roe Estuary and Lough Foyle beyond (above).

## 6.0 The Existing Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (2000)

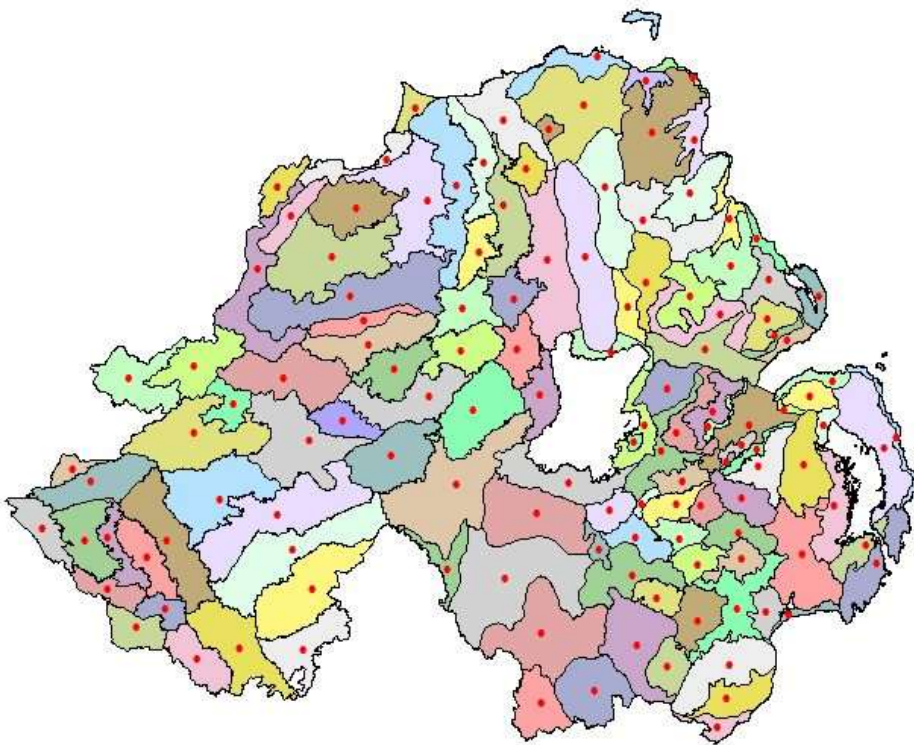
6.1 Northern Ireland is covered by an existing Landscape Character Assessment - the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (NILCA) 2000. This document is relatively detailed and defines 130 separate Landscape Character Areas in Northern Ireland each with a distinctive character. The document is available to view on the NIEA website ([www.doeni.gov.uk/niea](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea)). The NILCA also identifies Areas of Scenic Quality. They represent a second tier (below AONBs) in the hierarchy of landscape classifications. The Lower Bann Valley is the only Area of Scenic Quality within the Borough and this has been incorporated into the Binevenagh AONB.

6.2 The NILCA identifies the following 24 Landscape Character Areas within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. Some of these areas are wholly within the Council area and others are shared with the neighbouring Council areas of Derry City and Strabane District, Mid Ulster, and Mid & East Antrim.

LCA No	Name
29 -	Sperrin Mountains
30 -	Sperrin Foothills
33 -	Lough Foyle Alluvial Plain
34 -	Loughermore Hills
35 -	Magilligan Plains
36 -	Binevenagh
37 -	Roe Basin

- 38 - Eastern Binevenagh
- 39 - Glenshane Slopes
- 51 - Garvagh Farmland
- 52 - Lower Bann Valley
- 53 - Lower Bann Floodplain
- 54 - Coleraine Farmland
- 55 - Garry Bog
- 56 - Dervock Farmland
- 57 - Causeway Coast
- 58 - Long Mountain Ridge
- 59 - Cullybackey and Clogh Mills Drumlins
- 117 - Central Ballymena Glens
- 118 - Moyle Moorlands and forest
- 119 - Ballycastle Glens
- 120 - Fair Head
- 121 - Moyle Glens
- 122 - Garron Plateau

Map showing All 130 Landscape Character Areas in Northern Ireland



Source: NIEA



The upper reaches of the Glenedra River Valley, a tributary of the River Roe, in Landscape Character Area 29: Sperrin Mountains.

## **7.0 Supplementary Guidance to PPS 18: Wind Energy in Northern Ireland's Landscape.**

7.1 This comprehensive document accompanies Planning Policy Statement 18 (PPS 18): Renewable Energy. It describes the landscape features of Northern Ireland and acts as a guide for the development of individual wind turbines and wind farms within the Landscape. The document highlights features within the landscape which should be avoided by analyzing the sensitivity of each of Northern Ireland's 130 Landscape Character Areas to turbine development based upon the perceived scenic value of landscapes and features within the landscape. The guidance highlights landscape character areas which may have the capacity to accommodate wind energy development without significant detrimental visual impact. It also advises against siting turbines within landscapes of regional and national importance. As an example, the document advises that wind energy development should avoid the setting of Binevenagh Mountain.



Landscape Character Area: 118 Moyle Moorlands and Forest. Windfarms must avoid active peatlands as per Policy RE 1 of PPS 18 and designated sites such as the European tier - Antrim Hills Special Protection Area (above), designated for scarce breeding Birds of Prey the Hen Harrier and the Merlin

## **8.0 Northern Ireland's Landscape Charter – January 2014**

8.1 Northern Ireland's Landscape Charter, was launched by The Department of the Environment (DOE) in 2014. The Charter acknowledges that change in the landscape can be gradual or rapid, accelerated by new technologies and that understanding the landscape assets and the forces of change is key to making informed decisions.

8.2 The Charter has six guiding principles in decision making:

1. All landscapes matter and each of us has the right to derive the benefits of these places.
2. Each of us respects this in all places even when they are not our own because our landscapes are a shared asset for which we have to exercise care and responsibility.
3. Each distinctive sense of place collectively adds more value to the variety and uniqueness of Northern Ireland's landscape than the sum of each part.
4. Change is continuous however we can manage it by using evidence to inform policy and decisions that respect and enhance the character and value of our landscapes.
5. Transparency and communication about how the diversity, distinctness, history and character of our landscapes are considered engenders awareness and confidence.
6. Each of us is responsible and empowered to shape the future of our landscapes in the actions and decisions taken now by us and others on policy and development.

8.4 The Charter advises that the quality of decisions made by the new councils needs to be carefully considered in relation to their immediate impact upon the landscape and the impact for future generations. It can be viewed at: [http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/landscape\\_charter\\_document.pdf](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/landscape_charter_document.pdf)

## **9.0 The Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment (NIRLCA) – Consultation draft report, April 2015**

9.1 The NIRLCA – Consultation draft builds upon the Landscape Charter 2014. The consultation draft published on 28th April 2015 sets out the special character of each part of the landscape in Northern Ireland, drawing together information on people and place, and the combinations of nature, culture and perception which make each location. The DOE has made a commitment to producing the NIRLCA to underpin the new Local Development Plans to be prepared by the eleven new Councils. The aim of the NIRLCA is provide information which can be used by planners, developers and the public. The Assessment will provide an evidence base to make informed decisions about the management of Northern Ireland’s Landscapes.

9.2 The NIRLCA has separate descriptions for each Landscape area which includes the following information:

- Location and setting
- Landscape Character description
- Key Characteristics
- Natural influences
- Cultural influences
- Perceptual influences
- Past, Present and future forces for change
- Indicators of change
- Ecosystem Services

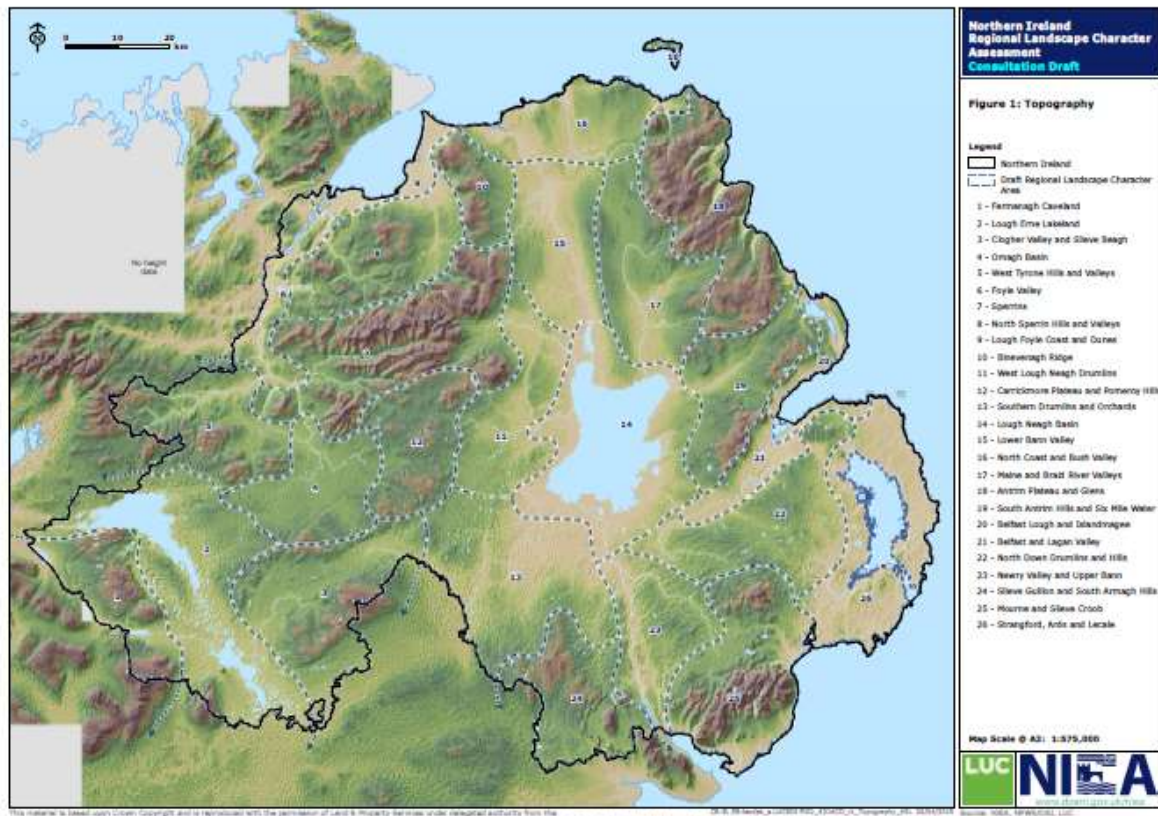
9.3 The NIRLCA acts on a strategic level and advises that it can be complemented by more detailed local studies in future.

9.4 The existing Landscape Character Assessment (2000) is a very detailed document outlining 130 landscape character areas, many of which are visually associated and interlinked. The NIRLCA draft document rationalises the number of Landscape Character Areas (from 130 to 26) and the number within the Borough has reduced (from 24 to 8). Each landscape character area is described as an area with its own distinct character and sense of place. The boundaries between each area may be obvious following physical landscape features and in other areas less defined.

9.5 The following Landscape Character Areas within this Borough are described in the NIRLCA;

<b>LCA No</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>7 -</b>	<b>Sperrins</b>
<b>8 -</b>	<b>North Sperrin Hills and valleys</b>
<b>9 -</b>	<b>Lough Foyle coast and Dunes</b>
<b>10 -</b>	<b>Binevenagh Ridge</b>
<b>15 -</b>	<b>Lower Bann Valley</b>
<b>16 -</b>	<b>North Coast and Bush Valley</b>
<b>17 -</b>	<b>Maine and Braid River Valleys</b>
<b>18 -</b>	<b>Antrim Plateau and Glens</b>

Map below shows the 26 Landscape Character Areas of Northern Ireland described within the NIRCA



Appendix 1 shows individual maps and introductions for the eight Landscape Character Areas within the Borough.



Landscape Character Area 7 – Sperrins. This area lies within the Causeway Coast and Glens, Mid Ulster and Derry City and Strabane District Council areas.

## 10.0 Ecosystem Services

10.1 People benefit in a many ways from ecosystems. Collectively, these benefits are becoming known as Ecosystem Services. Ecosystem Services are involved in providing clean drinking water and breaking down and processing wastes. The concept was popularised by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in the early 2000s. This grouped ecosystem services into four broad categories:

- provisioning, e.g. the production of food and water;
- regulating, e.g. the control of climate and disease;
- supporting, e.g. nutrient cycles and crop pollination;
- cultural, e.g. as spiritual and recreational benefits.

10.2 To inform decision-makers, many ecosystem services are being assigned economic values. The Draft NIRLCA is focused on the perception of the environment, however, it identifies opportunities for the protection of landscape that can protect ecosystem services. The Draft NIRLCA includes Ecosystem Services Benefits for each Landscape Character Area, and the SPPS recognises the importance of ecosystem services advising:

*‘Where appropriate, identifying the condition of ecosystems, the provision of services and their relationship to human wellbeing should be integrated into the plan making and decision taking processes. The requirement to subject LDPs to a sustainability appraisal (incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive) will assist in this process.’*

### 10.3 Examples of Ecosystem Services:

#### **The Garron Plateau/Dungonnell Dam Watershed – Landscape Scale Habitat Restoration.**

10.4 This project, a partnership between the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), Northern Ireland Water and the RSPB, has the dual purpose of recreating habitat for upland birds, animals and plant species whilst providing a natural filter for water before it arrives in Dungonnell Dam. The project is based around the catchment area above the dam where the land was previously eroded of natural vegetation and heavily grazed by sheep. Rainfall carried a significant amount of sediment straight into the dam with large costs to filter the water to make it fit for human use. The project team worked with local landowners and farmers. The numbers of sheep were reduced allowing the land to regenerate vegetation to grow. Small dams were installed to recreate bogland habitat. The effect of regeneration has significantly reduced the cost of removing sediment as the re-naturalised land above the dam now filters the water before it reaches the dam. This project also plays an important role in the absorption of Greenhouse gases.

#### **Ballykelly & Stonyford, Co. Antrim**

10.5 Wetland projects that provide a series of pools to process human waste can significantly change the character of an area by providing a sustainable, more cost effective means of processing the waste than a conventional waste water treatment works and providing a species rich wetland habitat. There is a current application by Northern Ireland Water for a waste water wetland at Ballykelly. The existing Project at Stonyford, Co Antrim in Lisburn City and Castlereagh District Council area has incorporated raised walkways providing an additional community resource. Projects which identify opportunities to link, complement or expand designated biodiversity sites with an emphasis on the role of natural processes in their management are to be welcomed. These projects have many benefits and help to plan for a landscape which meets the needs of both people and wildlife whilst providing a response to climate change.



## 11.0 Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment (NIRSCA)

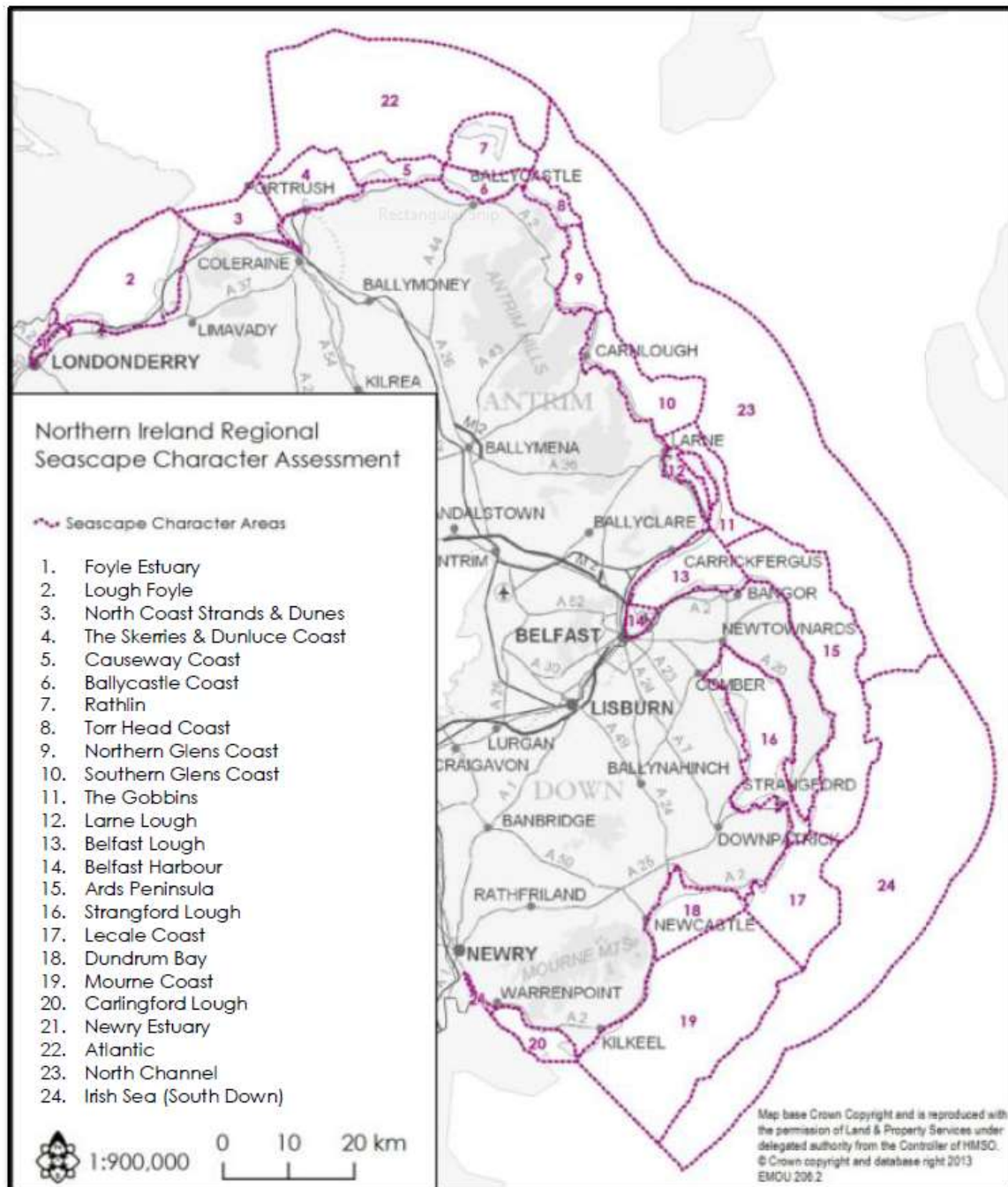
11.1 The Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Assessment (NIRSCA) published in 2014 is similar to the Landscape Character Assessment (NIRLCA). There is some overlap as the Seascape Assessment describes the coastline and some areas slightly inland which are heavily influenced by the sea. It also areas which are exclusively offshore such as the Atlantic and North Channel.

11.2 The aim of the NIRSCA document is to provide a strategic description of different areas of regional seascape character along the entire Northern Ireland coast, in line with similar assessments undertaken elsewhere in the UK. The NIRSCA contributes to the aims of the European Landscape Convention through promoting the protection, management and planning of the seascape, and to support European co-operation on landscape issues. The NIRSCA can help inform the planning, design and management of a range of changes and other projects taking place on and around the coastline.



The Coastline at Portstewart Promenade within Seascape Character Area 3 North Coast Strands and Dunes.

The Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment (NIRSCA) can be viewed at: [www.doeni.gov.uk/niea](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea)



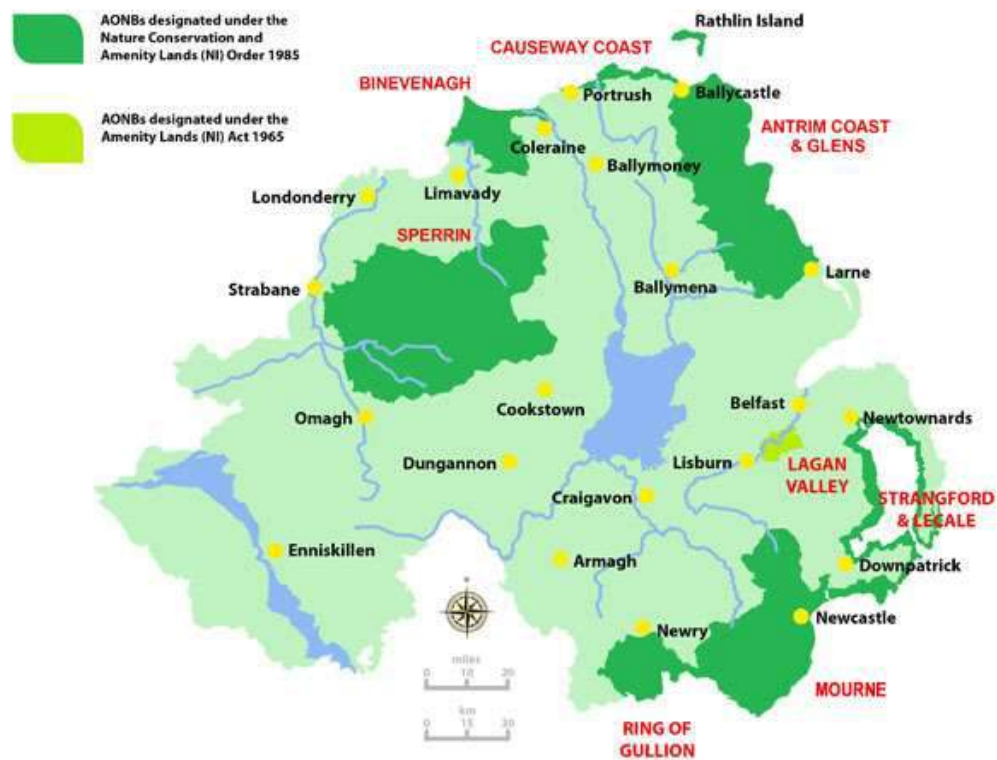
Map showing the Seascape Character areas around Northern Ireland's Coast

## 12.0 Existing Scenic Landscape Designation - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

12.1 The Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area contains the following AONBs with landscapes of national importance:

- Binevenagh
- Sperrins
- Causeway Coast
- Antrim Coast and Glens

### Map showing AONBs within Northern Ireland



12.2 AONBs are designated by Department of the Environment (DOE) for their high landscape quality, wildlife importance and rich cultural and architectural heritage under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985 (NCALO). The DOE has the responsibility to designate the finest landscape areas as AONBs and takes steps to manage them for conservation and recreation purposes.

12.3 The purpose of AONB designation is to ensure that policies are created and action taken to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty or amenities of that area;
- conserve wildlife, historic objects or natural phenomena within it;
- promote its enjoyment by the public;
- provide and maintain public access to it.

12.4 The value in a landscape can be attributed to a mix of natural features and social and cultural history, which resonates with and is important to people. The value of landscape can be outwardly

reflected in art, poetry and song, and inwardly in a sense of pride, belonging and wellbeing, all reinforcing this feeling of 'value'. Increasingly, this value is also being realised in economic terms with the marketing of landscapes for tourism and as a pleasant place for recreation.



Getting into the landscape – AONBs provide recreational opportunities such as long distance walking. A marker post for the Moyle and Ulster Way in the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB.

12.4 Assessing proposed development within AONBs requires particular care where the features and character for which the area is designated needs to be protected from proposals which would damage its attributes. Maintaining the special character of these areas is key to their continued success in attracting visitors and the sense of wellbeing and pride these landscapes give to residents of and visitors to the Borough. Protection is also afforded to designated sites within AONBs such as Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites. Visual impacts upon historic buildings and historic demesnes such as that at Downhill and the Mussendun Temple, require careful consideration.

12.6 The SPPS advises that:

*‘Development proposals in AONBs must be sensitive to the distinctive special character of the area and the quality of their landscape, heritage and wildlife, and be in the accordance with relevant plan policies’.*

*‘In assessing proposals, including cumulative impacts in such areas, account will also be taken of the Landscape Character Assessments and any other relevant guidance including AONB Management Plans and local design guides’.*

12.7 There are individual AONB management plans for three of the Boroughs AONBs:

- Antrim Coast and Glens AONB Management Plan 2008 – 2018
- Binevenagh AONB Management Plan 2010 – 2020
- Causeway Coast AONB Management Plan 2013 – 2013 (Draft)

12.8 The Management Plans aim to protect and enhance these special areas and promote a coordinated approach to the protection, enhancement and promotion of AONBs. The Causeway Coast AONB Management Plan 2013 – 2023, advises that people want better protection from policy makers, with the following challenge for the future of the AONB: *'better protection of the AONB in regional policies to protect the environment, preserve biodiversity and conserve the natural assets of the AONB'*.

12.9 They may inform Local Development Plan policies to help protect the whole or specific portions of AONB landscapes from development which would damage the character of these special areas.

### **13.0 Settlement Settings - Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) - Northern Area Plan (NAP) 2016**

13.1 Settlements are part of and add to the visual aesthetics of landscapes. There are views from settlements to iconic landscape features, for example the view towards Lurigethan Mountain within Cushendall, and the view of Benbradagh from Dungiven. These views are part and parcel of settlements and create a sense of place. Settlements have natural features which come right into the heart of urban areas such as the River Bann with the parkland and wooded banks of Coleraine. The Northern Area Plan (NAP) 2016 has identified landscape features and spaces in and around settlements which are visually important and provide a setting and features which enhance the settlements in the Borough. These LLPAs may contain landscape features such as mature trees, parkland or river corridors. NAP also contains policy and guidance on the protection of the main features contained within each designated LLPA.



Coleraine within its Bann Valley setting from Mountsandel Fort. This area is designated as a Local Landscape Policy Area (CEL 15 Mountsandel Woods). The Northern Area Plan advises that this LLPA will generally be protected from development.

## 14.0 The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site Landscape Setting

14.1 The Northern Area Plan 2016, contains specific policies to protect the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site and its wider landscape setting from excessive development. Policy COU 2 does not allow any development within the World Heritage Site unless it is essential for visitors and does not affect the integrity of the site. Designation COU 3 sets out a Distinctive Landscape Setting for the World Heritage Site. This setting provides a wider landscape designation on approaches to and in views to and from the World Heritage Site. Associated Policy COU 4 restricts development within the Distinctive Setting to reflect the importance of the Setting to the World Heritage Site and the historic character and form of buildings in this area.



The Causeway Headlands from Hamilton's Seat, Benbane Head, part of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage site.

## 15.0 Area of Significant Archaeological Interest

15.1 The Borough has one designated Area of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI) which is focused on Dunluce Castle and the land that forms its setting. Dunluce Castle is a landmark historic feature representing a fine example of a defensive location on the North Coast. The Castle is an iconic feature distinctively located on top of a crag surrounded on three sides by the sea. Recent excavations on the landward area opposite the castle have revealed a settlement dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are plans to provide further interpretation and visitor facilities in relation to the heritage surrounding the castle.

15.2 Policy BH 1 of Planning Policy Statement 6, Planning Archaeology and Built Heritage states:

*'The Department will operate a presumption in favour of the physical preservation in situ of archeological remains of regional importance and their surroundings. These comprise monuments in State Care, scheduled monuments and other important sites and monuments which would scheduling. Development which would adversely affect such sites of regional importance or the integrity of their settings will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances.'*

15.3 Proposed development in the wider Dunluce Castle ASAI should be carefully considered to protect the integrity of the castle's landscape setting.



Dunluce Castle is the focus of a wider Area of Significant Archeological Interest (ASAI).

## **16.0 Conclusion**

16.1 The landscapes and seascapes of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area are an extremely important asset that underpins the value and the draw of residents and visitors to the Borough. The European Landscape Convention emphasises the importance of landscapes and seascapes to the wellbeing of people. Regional planning guidance within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement places importance on the protection of landscapes and seascapes from overdevelopment and advises that Local Development Planning can identify and plan for their protection within the Council areas. Landscape and Seascape Character Assessments are a useful tool for decision makers in determining the immediate and future use of land through a methodical assessment of the features in any given area.

16.2 AONB designated Landscapes are of national importance providing opportunities for recreation and a source of pride for residents of the Borough. Protection and enhancement of AONBs can ensure their continued success.

16.3 The Northern Area Plan (NAP) 2016 identifies Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) around settlements; The Distinctive Setting for the Giant's Causeway World Heritage Site; and the Area of Significant Archaeological Interest at Dunluce Castle, all of which provide a layer of protection to these important landscapes.



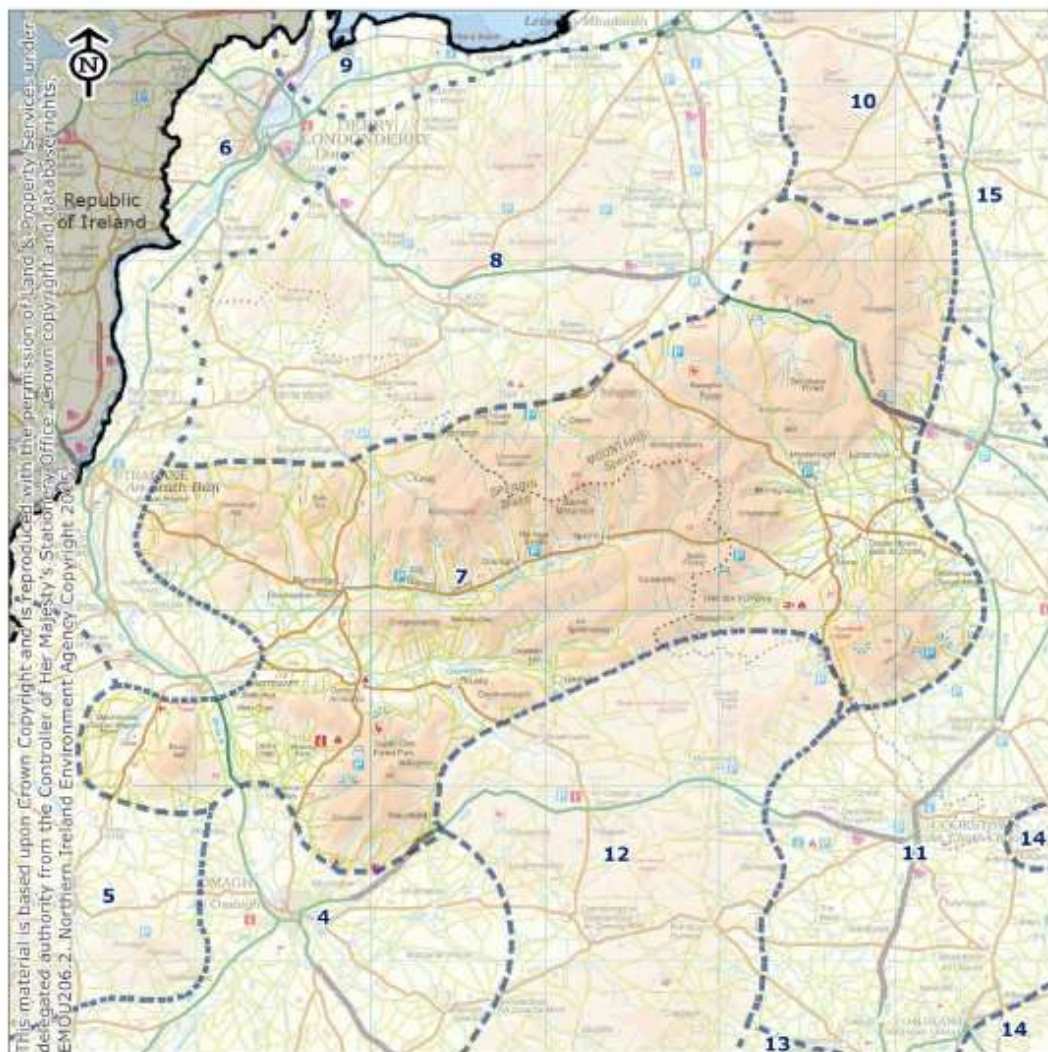
## Appendix 1

Maps showing Landscape Character Areas within Causeway Coast and glens Borough Council area.

# 7 Sperrins

### Introduction

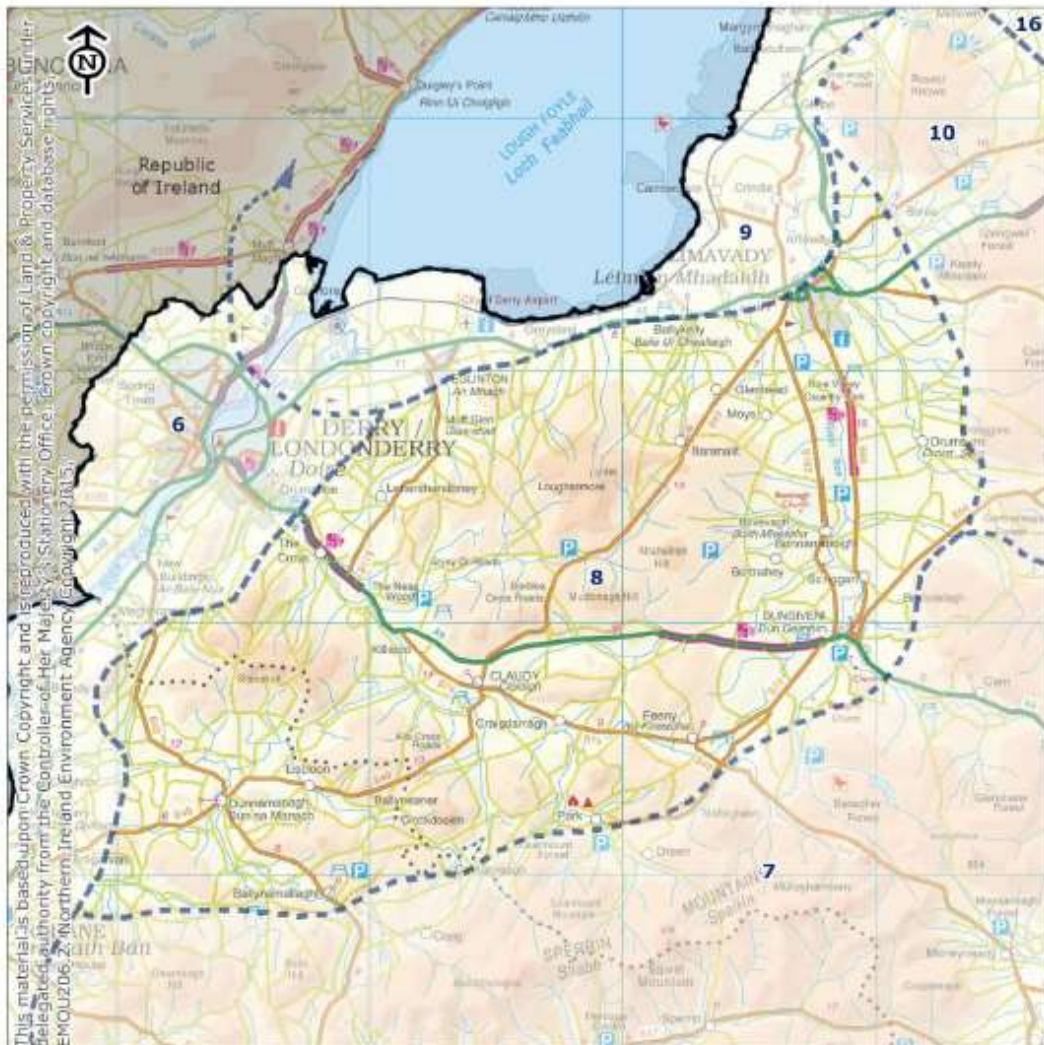
The principal mountain range of the north-west, the Sperrins comprise some of the wildest and most rugged terrain in Northern Ireland. The main ridges, divided by the scenic Glenelly valley, are surrounded by a series of outliers including Bessy Bell and Mullaghcarn above the River Strule, Slieve Gallion in the east, and Benbradagh across the Glenshane Pass. The boundaries follow the main east-west ridges of the Sperrins, separating them from the lower hills to north and south.



## 8 North Sperrin Hills and Valleys

### Introduction

This complex series of hills, plateaux and valleys occupies the area between the Sperrins and Lough Foyle. The broad Roe Valley lies below the basalt ridge to the east, and gives access to the smaller and more intricate valleys around Claudy and Dunnamanagh. To north and west the hills overlook the Foyle with Donegal beyond.



## 9 Lough Foyle Coast and Dunes

### Introduction

The unique coastal flats fronting Lough Foyle include Maquilligan Point and the reclaimed 'polders' around the lough shore. This area is defined by the lough and the backdrop of the Inishowen peninsula to the north, and by the Binevenagh Ridge which rises to the east forming an essential relationship recognised by AONB designation. A predominance of arable land makes this area stand out, as well as its use as a key route along the north coast.



## 16 North Coast and Bush Valley

### Introduction

The north coast is justly famous for the Giant's Causeway, but includes a wealth of dramatic basalt cliffs and headlands, as well as sandy bays and picturesque villages. Rathlin Island and the fishing villages have their own distinct character, and the area is a popular holiday destination for visitors from Northern Ireland and beyond. Also included in this area are the tidal parts of the River Bann, and the shallow valley of the River Bush which flows through Bushmills of whisky fame.



## 17 Maine and Braid River Valleys

### Introduction

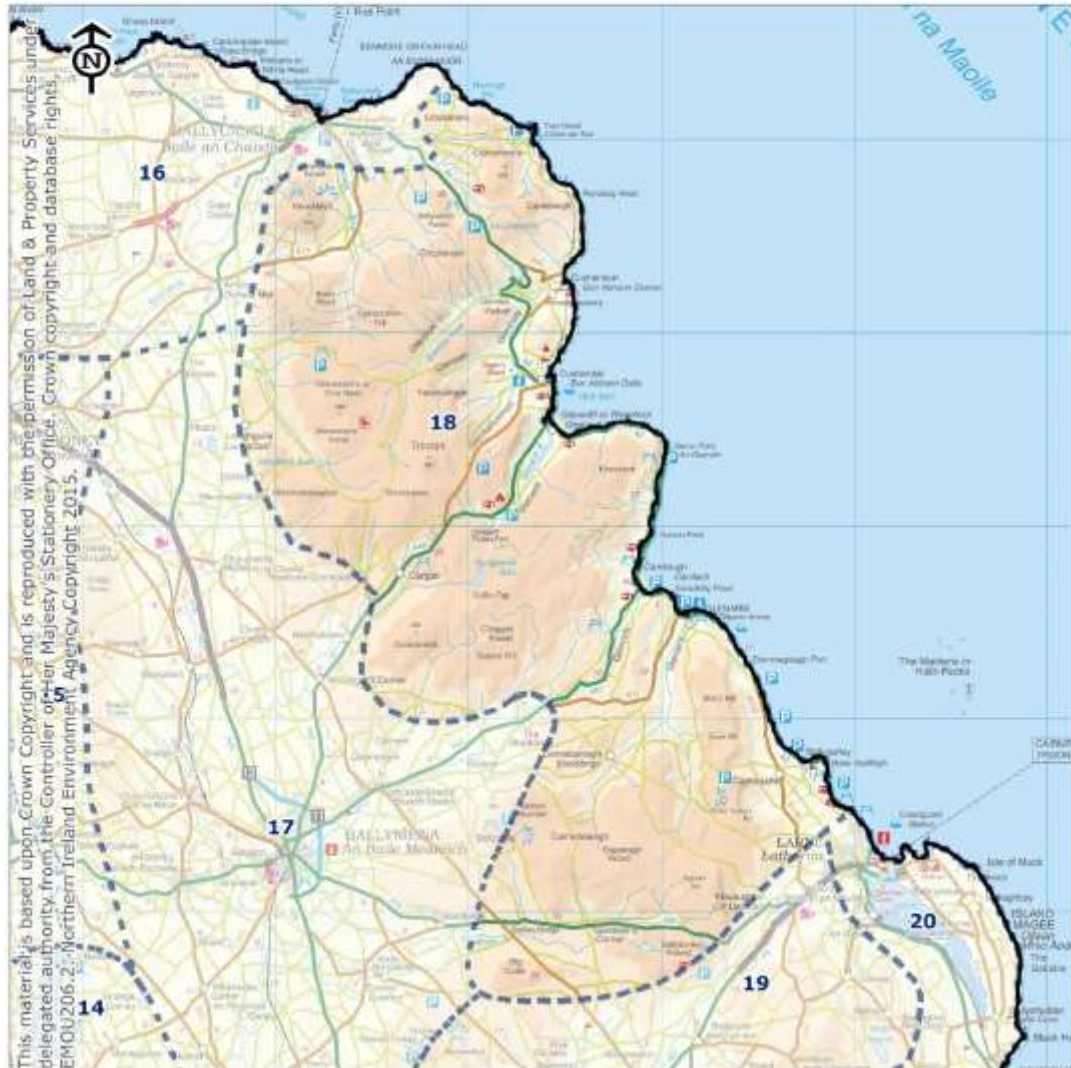
A broad farmed valley flanked by the Antrim Plateau, separated from the Lower Bann and Bush valleys by watersheds following the ridge north from Randalstown to Long Mountain. The eastern slopes of the Antrim Plateau, including Slemish are contained within the Maine Valley, as they form the skyline and setting to it, and because the historic sites in this area relate strongly to the tributary Braid Valley in particular.



## 18 Antrim Plateau and Glens

### Antrim Plateau and Glens

Upland plateau and hills, with glens and cliffs along the coast, closely culturally associated with the west coast of Scotland. Includes the whole of the higher parts of the Antrim plateau as having a distinct character from the pastoral River Maine r valley to the west. Relates to seascape character areas 8, 9 and 10.



Appendix 2: Map showing the Distinctive and Supportive settings for the Giant's Causeway World Heritage site

