

# EUCHANHEAD RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Technical Appendix 7.3:  
SNH Baseline Landscape Character

10/2020

## A. Technical Appendix 7.3: Baseline Landscape Character

### A.1 SNH Landscape Character Assessment (2019)

A.1.1 SNH recently republished their National Programme of Landscape Character Assessments as a digital map based LCA in 2019. This data was reviewed to take account of intervening technical improvements in website mapping to produce a revised national suite of landscape character type at 1:50,000 scale. This information was created in collaboration and consultation with FLS and HES as well as all local authorities. This also included a more consistent baseline description across Scotland. As this is an online document, the following is an extract of the landscape character citations for each character area assessed.

A.1.2 Compiled within this document are the following SNH Landscape Character Type Baseline documents:

- LCT 073 - Upland Glen - Ayrshire (2019)
- LCT 081 - Southern Uplands - Ayrshire (2019)
- LCT 160 - Narrow Wooded Valley - Dumfries & Galloway (2019)
- LCT 165 - Upper Dale - Dumfries & Galloway (2019)
- LCT 166 - Upland Glens - Dumfries & Galloway (2019)
- LCT 175 - Foothills - Dumfries & Galloway (2019)
- LCT 177 - Southern Uplands - Dumfries & Galloway (2019)
- LCT 178 - Southern Uplands with Forest - Dumfries and Galloway (2019)



### Location and Context

The *Upland Glen- Ayrshire* Landscape Character Type occurs in three places in Ayrshire, focused to the far south and east; the valley of the Afton Water, immediately to the south of New Cumnock, and Glen Tig and Glen App, draining to the Ayrshire coast, close to the boundary with Dumfries and Galloway.

### Key Characteristics

- Distinctive profile comprising steep, often craggy valley slopes, and a rounded valley floor, containing a comparatively small 'misfit' river.
- Complex and prominent ridgelines along tops of steep valley sides.
- Pasture on the valley floors and lower valley slopes giving way rapidly to rough grassland and heather moorland on higher ground.
- Broadleaf woodland is scarce but small to medium scale coniferous forests are found on the valley slopes.
- Small scale landscape with some areas of remote and wild character.
- Views contained by the steep valley sides

### Landscape Character Description

#### *Landform*

The distinctive landscapes of the *Upland Glen- Ayrshire* Landscape Character Type have been created where glacial erosion has enlarged river valleys draining the Southern Uplands. The solid geology of the glens is similar to the enclosing Southern Uplands, comprising sedimentary greywackes and shales of the Ordovician period. The process of glacial erosion has created a dramatic, distinctive valley profile comprising steep, often craggy valley slopes, and a rounded valley floor, containing a comparatively small 'misfit' river. Fast flowing rivers cut into morainic deposits left by retreating ice sheets on the valley floor.

#### *Landcover*

Landcover is diverse. Valley floors, together with some of the shallower and lower valley

slopes, comprise improved pastures, enclosed within drystone dykes constructed from glacially rounded boulders. The pastures give way rapidly to rough grassland and heather moorland on slopes above the valley floor. Broadleaf woodland is scarce, usually comprising lines of riparian trees tracing the course of the river, a few field boundary trees and small farm woodlands. Small to medium scale coniferous forests are found on the valley slopes. However, Glen Tig is characterised by belts of semi-natural, broadleaf woodland along its lower slopes. There are more extensive mixed policy woodland and coniferous plantings, interspersed with semi-improved pastures and heather-flecked grass moorland on steep upper slopes

#### *Settlement*

Modern settlement is limited, mainly confined to a scatter of stone farmsteads, many of which are on historic sites. Most roads are minor. The valley of the Afton Water contains the Afton Reservoir and associated water treatment facilities.

#### *Perception*

The narrowness of these glens creates small-scale, intimate landscapes with a largely undeveloped, remote character. Glen Tig is particularly remote in character, accessible only on foot, although it can be seen from nearby minor roads. While retaining a 'wild' upland character, it is also quite intimate in scale. Views are contained by the steep valley side which rise to form complex and prominent ridgelines. Views from roads tend to focus on the heads of the glens.

A number of well-defined hills on the edges of the glens form landmark features and are especially dramatic where the glens are contained by the high ground of the *Southern Uplands* Landscape Character Type.

This is one of 389 Landscape Character Types identified at a scale of 1:50 000 as part of a national programme of Landscape Character Assessment republished in 2019.

The area covered by this Landscape Character Type was originally included in the Ayrshire (Land Use Consultants), published 1998.



### Location and Context

The *Southern Uplands - Ayrshire* Landscape Character Type are focused on the mainland to the far south of Ayrshire, along the boundary with and extending into Dumfries and Galloway south-east of Glen App, south of New Cumnock and south of South Balloch.

### Key Characteristics

- Steep, smooth slopes rising to rounded summits.
- Series of distinctive valleys cut into the uplands created by glacial erosion, with U-shaped cross sections, precipitous side slopes, hanging valleys, waterfalls, crags and screes.
- Relatively simple landcover.
- Heather-flecked grassland on summits.
- Scarce semi-natural woodland is, limited to a few more sheltered glens, gullies and clefts.
- Occasional forested areas and shelterbelts on lower side slopes leaving the domed peaks exposed.
- Absence of modern settlement in these exposed uplands, it being concentrated in river valleys and the larger glens.
- Expansive, remote and largely untamed landscape, most parts of the uplands are accessible on foot only.
- Long distance and panoramic views encompass the settled Ayrshire lowlands to the north and west and remote Galloway Hills to the south and east.

### Landscape Character Description

#### *Landform*

Immediately south of the Southern Upland Fault lie a number of bold upland areas which have a character very different to the lower moorlands and hills to the north and west. This is derived from the hills' height (up to 575 metres), their geology (Ordovician rocks, predominantly more resistant greywackes) and the influence of glacial erosion.

The hills are characterised by steep, smooth slopes rising to rounded summits. Cut into the uplands are a series of distinctive glacial valleys, with u-shaped cross sections, precipitous side slopes, hanging valleys, waterfalls, crags and screes. The combination of these features, and the contrast with lower moorlands and the lowlands to the north, gives an impression of uplands which are more extensive, remote and higher than is actually the case.

#### *Landcover*

Many areas are little modified. Landcover in the *Southern Uplands - Ayrshire* is typically coarse grassland, though the highest areas often comprise heather moorland. Areas of rough grazing generally lack walled enclosures. Semi-natural woodland is scarce, limited to a few more sheltered glens, gullies and clefts. There are also occasional areas of conifer forest, particularly around the fringes of the higher hills leaving the domed peaks exposed. The coniferous forest is predominantly Sitka spruce, the main variations being in mixes with larch which provides colour contrasts between the dark green of spruce and the light greens to browns of larch. The rotational nature of forest management provides long term textural and colour changes related to the felling and replanting coupes.

#### *Settlement*

Modern settlement is absent from these exposed uplands, being concentrated in river valleys and the larger glens. It is likely that settlement was more extensive during milder periods in the past, and some evidence of prehistoric settlement survives across the areas. The hills do, however, form the backdrop to nearby settlements such as Dalmellington.

Wind farms have altered the character of the landscape from the Southern Uplands to the east of Ayrshire, south-west of New Cumnock, and to the far south of Ayrshire, to the west of the Duisk Valley.

Most parts of the uplands are accessible on foot only, though a minor road climbs up to the Nick of Balloch providing spectacular views and another runs along the valley of the Afton Water, south of New Cumnock.

#### *Perception*

This is an extensive, remote and largely untamed landscape. The *Southern Uplands - Ayrshire* often create landmark features when seen from adjacent hills and roads. The area south-east of New Cumnock is highly visible from settlement and roads within the *Upland Basin - Ayrshire* to the north, and peripheral hills form prominent hill summits when seen in views to the north-west. Views are long distance and panoramic and encompass the settled Ayrshire lowlands to the north and west. The area adjacent to Glenn App contains views to the extensive lower lying upland plateau in both South Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway.

This is one of 389 Landscape Character Types identified at a scale of 1:50 000 as part of a national programme of Landscape Character Assessment republished in 2019.

The area covered by this Landscape Character Type was originally included in the Ayrshire (Land Use Consultants), published 1998.



### Location and Context

The *Narrow Wooded River Valley – Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type occurs in areas of more resistant solid geology where the extents of glacial and fluvial erosion have been limited to narrow incised channels. These valleys can be found on 9 rivers – Cree, Palnure, Ken, Moneypool, Fleet, Urr, Kirtle, Liddel and Eskdale.

### Key Characteristics

- Narrow incised valleys with wooded slopes enclosing pasture floors.
- Small pastures and arable fields enclosed by hedges/fences in lower reaches and drystone dykes in upper reaches.
- Dominant broadleaf (semi-natural) woodland character with conifers on higher slopes.
- Lush trough-shaped river valleys with pasture/arable floors enclosed by deciduous wooded slopes.
- Riparian trees and woodlands following meandering river courses in lower reaches.
- Narrow lanes following valleys and linking isolated houses, occasional settlements and providing access to higher moorland.
- Clusters of prehistoric landscapes and settlement up some valleys, notably in Eskdale.
- Numerous arched stone bridges over the rivers.
- Intimate unspoilt landscape focussing on river views with some adjacent policy landscape.

### Landscape Character Description

#### *Landform*

The *Narrow Wooded River Valleys - Dumfries & Galloway* are clearly defined topographic features whose profiles change throughout their length. They are found in the west and



central parts of the region in association with the River Cree, Water of Fleet, Urr Water and Cairn Water. They sometimes occupy the narrow upper reaches of the watercourses, and sometimes including river mouths as they enter the sea. They also extend through a wide variety of other Landscape Character Types, from high hills of the *Southern Uplands – Dumfries & Galloway* to the *Drumlin Pastures* and *Coastal Plateau – Dumfries & Galloway*.

Within these valleys the flat floor is at about 50 metres above sea level, while the steep valley sides rise up to more than 100 metres. The proportions of these generally trough-shaped valleys can vary, with a wide flat valley floor dominating in the lower reaches while upper reaches are typically v-shaped. Generally, these are intimate, small-scale landscapes with enclosed views.

#### *Landcover*

The steep v-shaped upper reaches are dominated by wooded slopes. The lower reaches usually have flat valley floors, sometimes discontinuous, through which the river meanders. These flat sections have river meadows and riparian woodland: their side slopes are also steep and mostly wooded. Woodlands are an essential feature of this landscape character type, creating intimate enclosure and restricting views. They typically comprise a mixture of semi-natural woodlands, shelterbelts, and farm and policy woodlands with small to medium scale conifer forests extending from the higher slopes. The woodlands are separated by pastures of small scale that provide spatial interest and permit views across the valleys. The fields are divided by hedges and fences in the lower areas with stone dykes more prevalent in the upper reaches. These landscapes typically contain minor roads which follow the valley floor giving access to isolated houses, some of which have large gardens or designed parkland.

The flat land in the valley bottoms is generally given over to pasture or arable. These small fields are generally divided by either hedges or fences in lower areas and stone walls in upper reaches. The fields are found within the lower meanders of the river itself and the course of the river is frequently highlighted by riparian trees, tree lines and wetland areas. The extent and patterns of broadleaf woodland are essential components of this Landscape Character Type. The steep valley slopes are generally covered, with semi-natural woodland and conifer plantations may be evident on hill land above the valley.

#### *Settlement*

These valleys frequently contain lanes which use the valleys to gain access to open moorland above. These winding valley roads, lined by trees, walls, hedgerows and the rivers, have a special character generated by the variety of scene, light and shade and spatial enclosure. There are few settlements, although some have developed around bridging points, for example, the cluster of houses and former mill buildings at Bridge of Urr. Isolated houses are more common, often surrounded by large gardens with exotic species, and some valleys, for example Cairn Water, have policy landscape identified by areas of parkland and distinctive lodge houses.

Three towns lie within the area: Gatehouse of Fleet, Newton Stewart, Creebridge and Creetown. These predominantly have linear layouts of one and 2-storey traditional houses with gabled slate roofs. The houses are normally built of the local stone (often granite or with



granite dressings), and painted a variety of colours. These towns and surrounding villages contain some former water mill buildings previously powered by the rivers. These include Mill of Fleet and Cumloden Waulkmill.

Some river valleys, most notably Eskdale, but also the Water of Fleet, Urr Water, Water of Ken and Kirtle Water have significant clusters of Ancient Monuments (Scheduled and undesignated) along their length. The majority of these are settlements, related structures such as cairns, burial mounds, stone circles and ruined churches, or defensive sites such as hill forts, Roman camps, mottes and tower houses. Particularly significant individual examples include Motte of Urr and Cardoness Castle.

Stone-arched bridges are a particular feature of this character area. The majority date from the late 18th and early 19th centuries and have a single arch, though there are also some important multi-arch bridges of the same period. The bridges are predominantly built of rubble masonry with ashlar arches, parapet copes and other dressings. Bridges in the western areas are often made entirely from granite, or have granite dressings.

### *Perception*

Generally, these are intimate, small-scale landscapes with enclosed views.

This is one of 390 Landscape Character Types identified at a scale of 1:50 000 as part of a national programme of Landscape Character Assessment republished in 2019.

The area covered by this Landscape Character Type was originally included in the Dumfries and Galloway LCA (Land Use Consultants), published 1998.



### Location and Context

The *Upper Dale – Dumfries & Galloway* areas are located in the upper reaches of two main river valleys in Dumfriesshire. They are narrower, and more enclosed in their transitions to *Middle Dales – Dumfries & Galloway* or *Flooded Valley*, but widen to larger scale further up. The areas identified as *Upper Dales - Dumfries & Galloway* are Upper Glenkens and Upper Nithsdale.

### Key Characteristics

- Wide valleys, enclosed by high peaks and moorland.
- Open with long views.
- Notable narrower section of Upper Nithsdale between Thornhill and Mennock.
- Improved valley pastures becoming rougher up the valley sides.
- Medium to large scale enclosures with dry stone dykes.
- Riparian woodlands along the main river and up tributary channels.
- Medium to large scale forests on the valley sides and extending over horizons from higher ground.
- Large scale wind farm development characteristic of some adjacent upland fringes and backdrop skylines.
- Mining settlements and remnants of industrial activity such as mine ruins and bings.

### Landscape Character Description

#### *Landform*

The *Upper Dale - Dumfries and Galloway* Landscape Character Type is found in the upper stretches of two of the main river valleys in the region – Upper Glenkens (the Ken/Deugh above Dalry) and Upper Nithsdale (the Nith above Mennock). These are contained by much higher hills, including the Southern Uplands and other upland Landscape Character Types. The gently undulating and flat valley floors give way to either uneven, but gently graded side slopes, or to more steep-sided and enclosing slopes. Outcrop hills form key pinch points within the valleys. The section of Upper Nithsdale between Thornhill and Mennock is

narrower than other stretches of this *Upper Dale - Dumfries & Galloway*, having some characteristics of the *Upland Glens – Dumfries & Galloway*. Much of the *Upper Dale – Dumfries & Galloway* landscapes are covered by Regional Scenic Area designations.

The *Upper Dale - Dumfries & Galloway* landscapes coincide with more resistant geology and differ in their profiles from the lower and middle dales, becoming a simpler u-shape with some flat areas on the valley floor. The effects of glacial erosion are more evident and the relationship with the uplands is stronger with upland peaks forming the main horizons.

#### *Landcover*

The landscape is less cultivated and woodlands less extensive, although forming key features. The agricultural landscape is dominant. Pastures are generally improved on the valley floor but become rougher on the valley sides. Fields are of medium to large size enclosed by dry stone dykes which reinforce the upland character. The topography of the lower slope moraines is undulating but long views are frequently possible in this open and rather exposed landscape. Narrow riparian woodlands are features of the tributary channels on the valley sides, as are policy woodlands and more recent forestry. This forestry is mostly large scale, with less geometric boundaries than earlier estate forests. Heather clad upland slopes are particularly distinctive when in flower. Management of this through muirburn helps to retain nature conservation interest and creates an interesting patchwork in the landscape.

#### *Settlement*

The *Upper Dale – Dumfries & Galloway* areas contain settlements, dispersed houses and farmsteads on their valley floors, with isolated farmsteads a characteristic of upper slopes and side valleys. Carsphairn is more remote in the Upper Glenkens, and the villages of Upper Nithsdale are notably lively and well-populated. The legacy of coal mining is evident in the buildings of settlements and in the remains of mining activity, forming part of the cultural heritage of this landscape. Hydro schemes, power lines and communication routes are also a feature of this landscape. Large scale windfarms are characteristic features of the upland fringes and backdrop skylines of the upland dale. They are prominent in areas of Upper Nithdale where the influence of wind energy development has an imposing effect.

There are numerous archaeological sites of outstanding significance and distinctiveness, some of which are promoted for public benefit. There is also the largest designed landscape in Dumfries and Galloway, as well as three Archaeologically Sensitive Areas.

#### *Perception*

The upland nature of this landscape and the legacy of discontinued industrial development have created quite a rough and abandoned character in places, contrasting with and at times in close juxtaposition with productive and well cared-for farmland and estates (e.g. Drumlanrig) and with the settlements of Kirkconnel, Sanquhar, Carsphairn and St John's Town of Dalry.

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### Location and Context

The *Upland Glens - Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type contains the upper reaches of rivers within the *Foothills – Dumfries & Galloway* and upland Landscape Character Types in northern and eastern Dumfriesshire. They occur in nine locations; Castlefairn, Dalwhat, Shinnel, Scar, Mennoch, Dalveen, Evan, Moffat and Ewes.

### Key Characteristics

- Deep u-shaped (and partially v-shaped) valleys with steep sides and narrow flat valley floors.
- Enclosed and often narrow, contained by steep sides which rise to form irregular ridgelines
- Features of traditional upland farming, with isolated farmsteads surrounded by trees, small to medium sized fields and enclosures with drystone dykes, fanks, stells and shelterbelts.
- Rough grassland and moor above improved pastures.
- Medium scale conifer forests (or parts of larger forests) on the glen sides.
- Single track road access.

### Landscape Character Description

#### Landform

The *Upland Glens – Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type is found along the upper reaches of rivers which cut through upland areas, which are largely in the north and north-east of Dumfries and Galloway. These landscapes form exemplary glacial features whose geomorphology can be readily interpreted. All eight of the *Upland Glens - Dumfries & Galloway* are covered by Regional Scenic Area designations.

The floors of the upland glen landscapes generally lie at above 100 metres. The glen is the pronounced 'u'-shape of glaciated upland valleys. The height to the glen sides (rising to over 300m) creates, in places, dramatic enclosure. Views are funnelled along the glen, taking in

the glen sides and slopes. These are frequently contained where the glens are sinuous, but more extensive elsewhere, especially in linear sections or where tree belts are less common. The watercourses are small in scale but in places are prominent elements within the landscape. Some tributary burns flowing from high ground are noticeable in their incised channels and create strikingly attractive features (e.g. within Dalveen Glen).

### *Landcover*

The landcover is mainly rough grassland on the side slopes with grass and heather moor above. Some improved pastures occupy the glen floor and are distinctive in the contrast of their lush greens to the surrounding yellow-greens, ochres and darker browns of moorland grasses, rushes and heather. Drystone dykes are important characteristic features of the lower pastures. The size of their enclosures is sometimes determined by the width of the glen floor but is generally of medium scale. Forests have been introduced into parts of the Upland Glen landscape usually across the side slopes leaving the glen floor clear. A number of the Upland Glens retain remnants of semi-natural and ancient woodlands, including birch woods.

### *Settlement*

Development is sparse consisting of isolated farmsteads and occasional houses. Evidence of earlier occupation is present in the form of sheepfolds and ruins of prehistoric settlements, pre-modern townships and shielings. Single roads give access to most upland glen landscapes, often leading to dead ends, and occasionally larger roads as through routes (e.g. A7). Some of the Upland Glen landscapes provide awe-inspiring views of great scenic value (e.g. the A702 Dalveen Pass). Large scale wind farms are occasional features on the upland backdrops and skylines of some of the glens, although set back in a neighbouring Landscape Character Type.

### *Perception*

The distinctive landforms, scenic qualities and heritage interests of these glens are the main assets in attracting visitors, encouraging various forms of informal recreation. Some of the valleys are relatively remote, especially where they are dead-end valleys.

This is one of 390 Landscape Character Types identified at a scale of 1:50 000 as part of a national programme of Landscape Character Assessment republished in 2019.

The area covered by this Landscape Character Type was originally included in the Dumfries and Galloway LCA (Land Use Consultants), published 1998.





### Location and Context

The *Foothills – Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type occurs in nine general areas across Dumfries and Galloway – Cairnharrow, Fleet, Dalmacallan, Keir, Tynron, Nithsdale, Beattock, Annandale and at Muck Burn by Loch Doon. Along with their counterpart *Foothills with Forest*, the *Foothills* areas associate with the main valleys of the Esk, the Annan, the Glenkens, the Fleet and the Cree / Wigtown Bay.

### Key Characteristics

- Generally undulating land between 170 and 250 metres, with rounded peaks. Higher in the west, up to nearly 550 metres with craggier peaks.
- Foothills dissected by incised valleys.
- Semi-improved pasture enclosed in medium-large fields by stone walls. Grazed by sheep and cattle. Some rough pastures and heath on higher ground.
- Trees in sheltered pockets with some copses on top of hills.
- Many scattered farmsteads and small settlements.
- Network of minor roads.
- Numerous archaeological sites particularly Bronze Age funerary and ritual sites and Iron Age settlements and forts.

### Landscape Character Description

#### *Landform*

The *Foothills - Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type is generally found at heights of between 170 and 250 metres, although in the western areas can rise to nearly 460 metres. They are generally undulating with gently rounded summits in the east and craggier peaks in the west, for example, around Cairnharrow and the Fleet valley. In these western areas the influence of the underlying granite creates more complex landforms with occasionally intimate scale features juxtaposed with the dramatic craggy peaks. This landscape is dissected by many streams, which have cut incisions into the landscape and a few plateau areas and upland basins are found among the *Foothills- Dumfries & Galloway*.

### *Landcover*

The *Foothills – Dumfries & Galloway* are predominantly agricultural in character, but are adjoined by significant forested areas. The land cover of this landscape type is generally semi-improved pasture with areas of rough pasture and heath. Enclosures are generally large and the land grazed by sheep and occasionally by cattle. Field boundaries are typically stone dykes although some roads are locally lined with hedges and hedgerow trees. Belts of mixed woodland are found in lower more sheltered areas, most notably along rivers, and in association with modest designed landscapes. Small plantations or copses are found on top of some of the lower hills. More extensive policy woodlands forming part of the designed landscape of Drumlanrig Castle extend into the foothills west of Nithsdale. The edges of this landscape often extend into areas of large conifer plantations. These forested areas have been identified separately as *Foothills with Forest - Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type.

### *Settlement*

There are a number of scattered farmsteads and small settlements throughout this landscape, especially in the east where the landscape has a settled character. A network of minor roads traverses this Landscape Character Type and gives access to forests, farms and settlements. Numerous archaeological sites are contained within this landscape, with relict agricultural landscapes of various periods showing significant continuity of settlement and land use. Concentrations of prehistoric monuments occur in some areas, including Bronze Age cairns and ritual monuments. Later prehistoric settlements and forts are particularly concentrated in the eastern foothills, most notably on the summits around Corrie Common and near Beattock, west of Annandale. The Cairnharrow, Fleet and Beattock areas have Archaeologically Sensitive Area designations.

The open *Foothills – Dumfries & Galloway* around Annandale are influenced by wind energy development, both directly in the Landscape Character Type itself and indirectly in the adjacent *Foothills with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway* and *Southern Uplands with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway*. However, undeveloped ground in this area provides important separation between individual windfarms and emerging clusters of development. Wind energy development has avoided more sensitive areas of this Landscape Character Type to the west of Dumfries and Galloway.

### *Perception*

Views within this landscape are not usually extensive, although summits and upper edges provide panoramic views.

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The area covered by this Landscape Character Type was originally included in the Dumfries and Galloway LCA (Land Use Consultants), published 1998.





### Location and Context

The *Southern Uplands – Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type is typical of the higher parts of the Southern Upland range. It occurs mainly on the northern and eastern fringes Dumfriesshire, in nine different areas, and extends into neighbouring Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire.

### Key Characteristics

- Large, smooth dome/conical shaped hills, predominantly grass-covered.
- Open and exposed character except within incised valleys.
- Dramatically sculpted landforms and awe-inspiring scale.
- Distinctive dark brown/purple colour of heather on some of the higher areas.
- Pockets of woodland in incised valleys.
- Stone dykes occasionally define the lower limit.
- Legacy of lead and other mining activity, with extensive archaeological remains around the former mining village of Wanlockhead.
- Wind farms locally characteristic, away from the more dramatic, scenic and sculptural slopes and skylines.

### Landscape Character Description

#### *Landform*

The *Southern Uplands – Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type ranges between 200 and 500 metres and is characterised by large smooth domed or slightly conically shaped hills. The hills have a strong relief, dissected by steeply sided clefts and glens, many of which have been enlarged by glacial erosion. This forms areas of dramatic landform and exemplary geomorphological features. This is a large scale landscape, although there is some confinement between the peaks. The hill slopes are generally smooth but there are some incised gullies, rock outcrops, and screes.

### *Landcover*

The majority of this landscape type is covered by coarse grassland but the highest areas also have heather moorland which is distinctive in appearance. The mosaic of grasses, bracken, rushes and heather contribute to this character. Heather moorlands create an important element of diversity in this landscape type, contrasting with green pastures on lower slopes and emphasising the relief. The Southern Uplands generally lack walled enclosures and have an exposed remote quality. There are few trees, these mostly confined to the more sheltered courses of incised burns.

### *Settlement*

The *Southern Uplands – Dumfries & Galloway* are very sparsely populated, although the former mining village of Wanlockhead is a notable exception and feature of local distinctiveness in the Lowther Hills. Its rows of miners' cottages and important early subscription library lie at the heart of a once intensively-worked, industrial landscape of the 17<sup>th</sup> to early 20th Centuries. Large parts of this landscape are recognised for its national archaeological importance. Wanlockhead is known as Scotland's highest village and is now a centre for heritage tourism and a stopping point for walkers on the Southern Upland Way. The lower fringes of this landscape type in some areas contain the remains of pre-improvement farmsteads and agriculture, and occasional prehistoric monuments. In the hills northwest of Moffat, monuments connected with the Roman military occupation of southern Scotland are aligned along well-preserved sections of a former Roman road. The Southern Uplands landscape has been subject to mineral extraction for generations and its legacy is an important cultural feature. Tunnels, chimneys, spoil heaps and mine tracks are important local features in some areas of this landscape.

Large-scale wind farms are locally characteristic of the open *Southern Uplands - Dumfries and Galloway* in upper Nithsdale and around Carsphairn and Langholm, away from the more dramatic, scenic and sculptural slopes and skylines. The defining strong areas of sculptural and dramatic landform, and landmark hills remain the dominant presence. Wind turbines are at times key defining characteristics of adjacent Landscape Character Types (such as *Foothills with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway* and *Southern Uplands with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway*) which can be felt strongly as nearby backdrops in the *Southern Uplands – Dumfries and Galloway*.

### *Perception*

The dramatically sculpted landforms and the awe-inspiring scale of this landscape are of particular scenic value, valued for hill walking with some popular and iconic summits, and with strong wild character. Regional Scenic Area designation is extensive over this Landscape Character Type.

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## **SOUTHERN UPLANDS WITH FOREST – DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY**



### **Location and Context**

The *Southern Uplands with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type predominantly occurs on the northern and eastern fringes of Dumfriesshire, and extends into neighbouring Scottish Borders and South Ayrshire. It is found in four locations, at Carsphairn, Ken, Eskdalemuir and Ewe Hill.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Large, smooth dome-shaped hills with large scale dark green forests on slopes and over lower summits.
- Predominantly simple, gently rolling landform.
- Some areas of more complex and smaller-scale landscapes, with steep slopes enclosing heads of valleys and/or where uplands remain open.
- Changing landscapes with large scale forestry operations and wind farm development.
- Forested areas dominated by Sitka Spruce, interspersed with mixed conifers and broadleaf planting, and undergoing felling and replanting in large coupes.
- Wind farms are a key characteristic in some areas.
- Expansive scale.

### **Landscape Character Description**

#### *Landform*

In topographic respects, the *Southern Uplands with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type is the same as the *Southern Uplands – Dumfries & Galloway*. Altitude ranges between 200 and 500 metres and is characterised by large smooth domed or slightly conically shaped hills. The hills have a strong relief, dissected by steeply sided clefts and glens, many of which have been enlarged by glacial erosion. This forms areas of dramatic landform and exemplary geomorphological features. This is a large scale

landscape, although there is some confinement between the peaks. There are some incised gullies, rock outcrops, and screes.

### *Landcover*

Its character is, however, considerably different due to the dominant forestry landcover. Indeed, the visual influence of these forests extends over considerably larger areas than those mapped. The forestry is predominantly Sitka Spruce, the main variations being in mixes with Larch which provides colour contrasts between the dark green of Spruce and the light greens to browns of Larch (although larch is being lost to disease in some areas). The forests generally extend over the summits or are concentrated on the side slopes leaving the domed peaks exposed. The rotational nature of forest management provides long term textural and colour changes related to the felling and replanting coups.

There are some areas of more complex and smaller scale landscapes, with steep slopes enclosing heads of valleys, and/or where uplands remain open. These areas contribute diversity, local drama and scenic interest within the wider forest cover. Remaining open hill ground used for sheep grazing and such areas are essential parts of this landscape, providing tracts of open ground between forests and showing remnants of historic settlement and farming practice. Although generally less frequent than in the adjacent foothills, relict landscapes do occur in the lower fringes of this landscape, with a particular concentration of evidence for late prehistoric settlement and agriculture in the hills east of the Water of Ken, together with some medieval to post-medieval shieling grounds. Areas of heather moor are particularly distinctive in their vibrant colour changes. Drystone dykes are infrequent, but nevertheless are important features in this landscape. Several late prehistoric forts, again more common in the surrounding foothills, are located in the lower fringes of this landscape.

### *Settlement*

The landscape is very sparsely populated and not readily visible from the wider landscape, being sited away from settled areas and public roads. Forest tracks, trails and core paths, including the Southern Upland Way, extend through the area. In Eskdalemuir, a well-preserved section of Roman road crosses a series of hillocks and bogs from Craik Cross Hill to Mid Raeburn, and serves as the basis for later tracks and hollow ways.

Large scale wind farms are key and at times defining characteristics of this Landscape Character Type. In local areas of more complex and smaller scale landscapes, such as steep slopes enclosing heads of valleys, and/or where uplands remain open, large scale wind farms in terms of turbine height or extent tend to dominate the local drama and scenic interest.

This is one of 390 Landscape Character Types identified at a scale of 1:50 000 as part of a national programme of Landscape Character Assessment republished in 2019.

The area covered by this Landscape Character Type was originally included in the Dumfries and Galloway LCA (Land Use Consultants), published 1998.