

Chapter 8

Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

“Protect and enhance the County’s unique heritage and biodiversity including sites designated at national and EU level, protected species and habitats outside of designated sites while recognising the potential for sustainable green infrastructure development within the County. Protection, management and enhancement of the landscape of the County is promoted to ensure the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.”

8 - Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

8.1 INTRODUCTION

County Louth boasts a rich natural heritage, which contributes substantially to the County's character, identity and sense of place, in addition to the well-being and the quality of life of those living in and visiting the County. Our heritage includes all that we have inherited from our ancestors and comprises valuable resources that can be used wisely to develop our society, environment, economy and people and to create a better future. In preparing the Plan and developing policy objectives the Council followed the principles of the Ecosystem Services Approach, to deliver sustainable and ecologically sound outcomes. Details of this approach are provided in Section 1.7.5.1 of the Plan and supported in Strategic Objective SO 6. These seek to conserve and enhance the County's Green Infrastructure and ecosystem services, supporting the sustainable management of natural assets and the biodiversity of the County's protected habitats and species, to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits to communities.

8.2 NATURAL HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

Natural heritage comprises the biological and geological underpinnings of our existence, our biodiversity and geodiversity, expressed through various mediums including farming, wildlife and landscapes. Biodiversity refers to the whole variety of life on earth including habitats and ecosystems, covering all plants, animals and micro-organisms both on land and in water.



County Louth is rich in biodiversity, due to its extensive coastline (stretching from Carlingford Lough to the Boyne Estuary), marine environments, wetlands, woodlands, rivers and upland habitats. Together, these habitats support a rich variety of plant and animal species.



The County of Louth is an internationally important destination for migratory wildlife, with Dundalk Bay being Ireland's top location for wintering wading birds.



An area equivalent to more than one seventh of the County is designated under Irish and European legislation for wildlife protection, (including marine and inter-tidal areas). Some of the upland areas in the Cooley Peninsula are recognised as being amongst the most unspoilt in the country.

Much of Louth’s biodiversity and natural heritage exists outside these formally designated areas and may be at risk of erosion or diminution.

Louth County Council is committed to conserving and enhancing our natural heritage and recognising the role it plays along with green infrastructure and biodiversity, in enhancing the quality of life for citizens by creating a sense of identity and well-being and promoting active and healthy living for those living in and visiting the County.

8.2.1 Heritage Plan

The National Heritage Plan 2002, was the first integrated plan that sought to conserve and protect all aspects of our national heritage, a key objective of which was for local authorities to prepare and adopt local heritage plans in consultation with the public. The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media is currently in the process of finalising ‘Heritage Ireland 2030’ which will replace the current National Heritage Plan. It is anticipated that it will *inter alia*; increase the value afforded to and the protection of heritage, raise awareness of its vital role in all aspects of society, provide guidance and enshrine shared responsibility.

The first *Louth Heritage Plan 2007-2011* was a strategic framework plan with the aim of co-ordinating the conservation, management and sympathetic development of the County’s heritage.

This has been reviewed and it is anticipated that the *draft Louth Heritage Plan 2021-2026* will be endorsed in the near future. It comprises a five year joint work plan devised by many individuals and organisations with an involvement and interest in Louth’s heritage.

Policy Objective	
NBG 1	To promote the implementation of the <i>draft Louth Heritage Plan 2021-2026</i> and any subsequent Louth Heritage Plan endorsed during the life of this Plan.

8.2.2 International, EU and Irish Policy on Biodiversity

The European Union’s (EU) first wildlife conservation legislation was the *Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)*, supplemented by the *Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)*, both of which have been updated periodically. Since then, the EU has built up a network of protected areas including marine sites, across all Member States. This vast array of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), known as the Natura 2000 Network of European Sites, - the largest coherent network of protected areas in the world, is a testament to the importance that the EU attaches to biodiversity. The Convention on Biological Diversity, which Ireland signed and ratified and the National Biodiversity Plan, aims to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2020.

The *National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021* is the third such plan for Ireland, whose objectives, targets and actions seek to achieve Ireland’s vision for biodiversity through the implementation of specified strategic objectives.

All local authorities are required to prepare Biodiversity Plans. Louth adopted its first Biodiversity Action plan in 2008. This was reviewed and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for County Louth 2021-2026 was endorsed in January 2021.

It provides a framework for the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity and natural heritage at a local level and aims to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of County Louth.

Policy Objective	
NBG2	To promote and implement the objectives of the <i>Local Biodiversity Action Plan for County Louth 2021 - 2026</i> and any subsequent Louth Biodiversity Action Plan published during the life of this Plan.

8.3 EUROPEAN SITES IN COUNTY LOUTH

In total, there are 11 designated European Sites, located wholly or partly in County Louth, which form part of the Natura 2000 Network of European Sites. This network includes both Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), representing the prime wildlife conservation areas in the County which are considered to be of significant importance at both European and Irish levels. The boundaries of the protected areas may alter during the lifetime of the Plan and additional areas may be designated.



“Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland; Guidance for Planning Authorities” (Department Environment Heritage and Local Government 2010), is intended to assist and guide local and planning authorities in the functions of undertaking Appropriate Assessment (AA) of plans and projects.

These guidelines highlight the responsibilities of all the agencies of the State including planning authorities, to act diligently, to ensure that their decisions in the exercise of their functions, as well as their actions, comply fully with the objectives of the *Habitats Directive (1992)*.



County Louth’s 6 SACs and 5 SPAs are listed in Tables 8.1 and 8.2 and illustrated on Map 8.1 and Map 8.2 respectively.

All projects and plans arising from this Planⁱ will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

ⁱSuch projects include but are not limited to those relating to: agriculture; amenity and recreation; contaminated sites; electricity transmission; flood alleviation and prevention; forestry; mineral extraction; renewable energy projects; roads; telecommunications; tourism; wastewater and discharges; and water supply and abstraction.

A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, screening for Appropriate Assessment, and subsequent Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that:

- The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European Site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or
- The plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European Site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must, nevertheless, be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or
- The plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European Site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

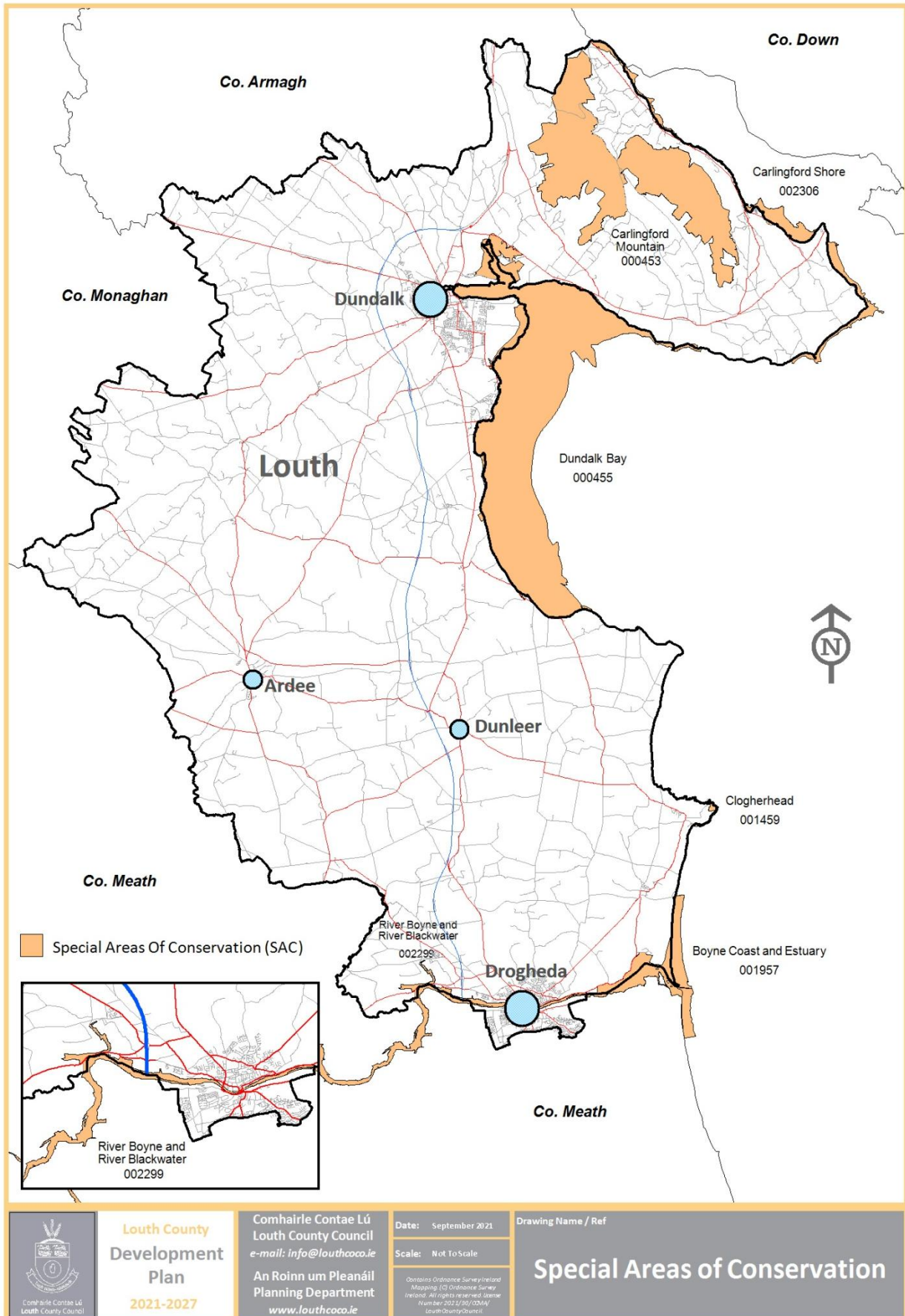
Table 8.1: Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Co. Louth

Reference Number	Name / Location
002306	Carlingford Shore
000453	Carlingford Mountain
000455	Dundalk Bay
001459	Clogherhead
001957	Boyne Coast and Estuary – Shared with County Meath
002299	River Boyne and Blackwater – Shared with County Meath

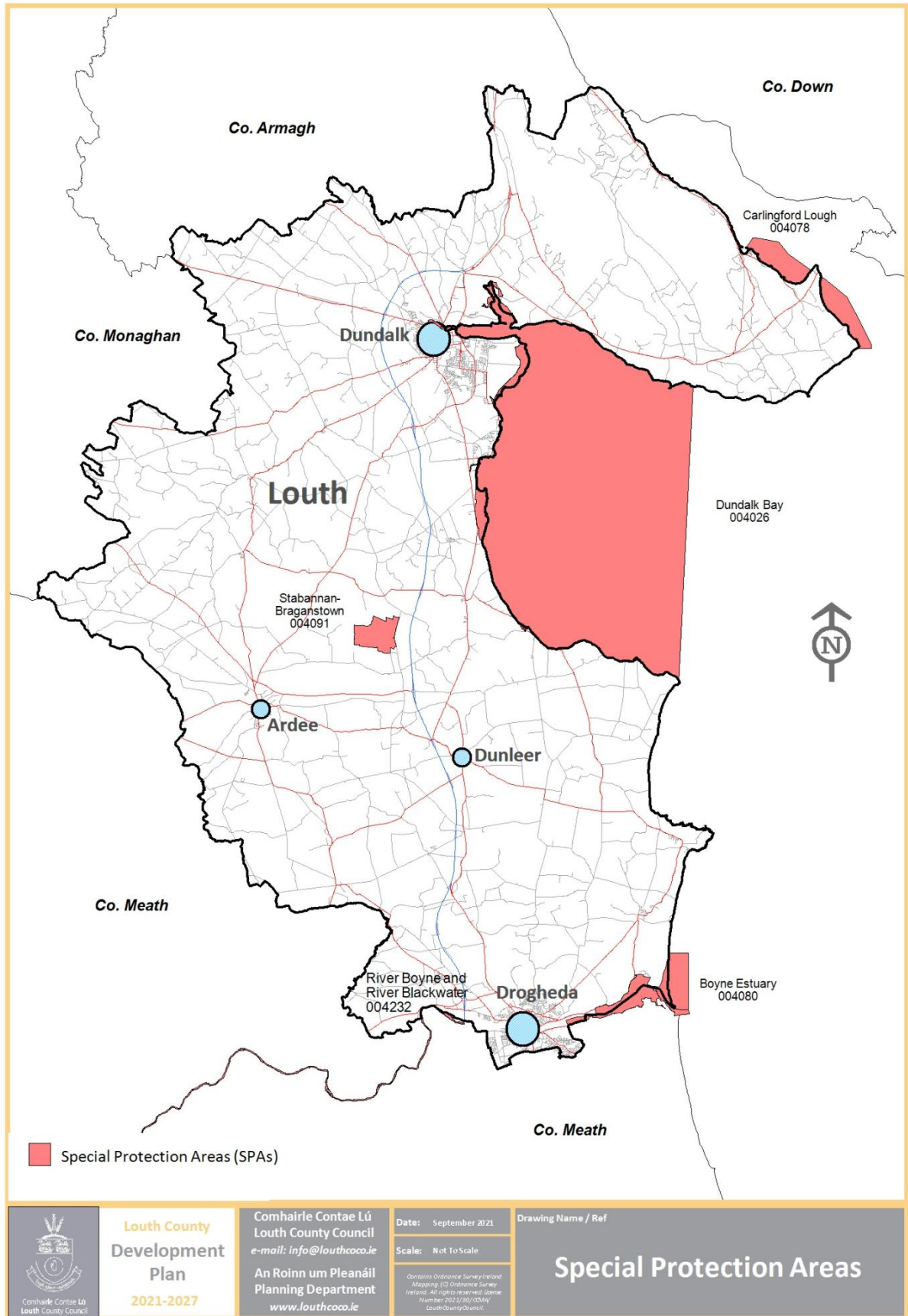
Table 8.2: Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Co. Louth

Reference Number	Name / Location
004078	Carlingford Lough
004026	Dundalk Bay
004091	Stabannon and Braganstown
004080	Boyne Estuary - Shared with County Meath
004232	River Boyne and River Blackwater – Shared with County Meath

Map 8.1: Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)



Map 8.2: Special Protection Areas (SPAs)



Policy Objective

NBG 3	To protect and conserve Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives.
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Policy Objective

NBG 4	To ensure that all proposed developments comply with the requirements set out in the DECLG <i>'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities 2010'</i> .
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Policy Objective

NBG 5	To ensure that no plan, programme, or project giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan, either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes or projects ² .
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Policy Objective

NBG 6	To ensure a screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) on all plans and/or projects and/or Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Report/ Natura Impact Assessment) where appropriate, is undertaken to make a determination. European Sites located outside of the County but within 15km of the proposed development site shall be included in such screenings as should those to which there are pathways, for example, hydrological links for potential effects.
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Policy Objective

NBG 7	To co-operate with the Regional Planning Assembly and adjoining local authorities, public agencies and community interests to protect regionally significant heritage assets, environmental quality, and to identify threats to existing environmental quality in a transboundary context throughout the region including Northern Ireland.
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² To ensure that no plan, programme or project giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan, either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes etc. or projects except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, where there must be no alternatives, imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed and adequate compensatory measures are in place.

8.4 PROTECTED PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES

Louth is home to and supports many plants, animal and bird species, some of which are special to the County.



Certain species that are deemed to be rare and threatened and which are known to exist outside of designated sites such as European Sites or Natural Heritage Areas are protected by law, as they require special measures to ensure their continued survival. These include plants listed in the Red Data Lists of Irish Plants, Flora (Protection) Order 2015 (or other such Orders) and their habitats, birds listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive, and birds and other animals listed in the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2012 and subsequent statutory instruments.

Many of these species are protected by law. In addition, strict protection under the Habitats Directive applies to the species listed in Annex IV of that Directive. Where Annex IV species are present, all possible measures to avoid damage and disturbance to them must be taken in the formulation of proposals for development.

Where the risk of damage or disturbance is unavoidable, an application for a derogation licence may be made to the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under Regulation 54 or 55 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477/2011).



The derogation licence should be obtained in advance of seeking planning permission for a proposed development. (Listings of specially protected species is available in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for County Louth 2021 – 2026. The planning process will seek to protect rare and threatened species, including species protected by law and their habitats. Proposals for development must demonstrate they will not have a significant adverse impact on such species and their habitats and ensure suitable avoidance and/or mitigation measures are implemented accordingly.

Policy Objective

NBG 8	To consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, taking account of their views and any licensing requirements, when undertaking, approving or authorising development, which is likely to affect plant, bird or other animal species protected by law.
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8.5 PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY VALUE IN NON-DESIGNATED SITES

There are numerous biodiversity sites dispersed throughout County Louth. These occur in our ordinary landscapes where their ecological value is of immense importance in the County, as they help to serve as stepping stones in a wider ecological network.



These include hedgerows, small wooded areas, ponds, streams and river banks all of which are vital links and essential to the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

These corridors and links are a critical component of a functioning ecological network and their protection is advocated in *Article 10 of the Habitats Directive* and in the *Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)*.

To this end, the Council has commissioned and will continue to commission surveys to further identify such sites, to ensure their value and conservation as they are critical to the overall ecological network and biodiversity value of the County. Identification of important elements undertaken to date include Wetland Surveys, 2011 to 2014, and a sample study of hedgerows. Other such studies may be carried out during the lifetime of this Plan.

Policy Objective

NBG 9	To ensure that proposals for development, where appropriate, protect and conserve biodiversity sites outside designated sites and require an appropriate level of ecological assessment by suitably qualified professionals to accompany development proposals likely to impact on such sites.
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Policy Objective

NBG 10	To ensure that development proposals, where relevant, improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 Network of European Sites and encourage the retention and management of landscape features as per <i>Article 10 of the Habitats Directive</i> .
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Policy Objective

NBG 11	Where feasible, ensure that no ecological networks, or parts thereof, which provide significant connectivity between areas of local biodiversity, are lost without remediation as a result of implementation of this Plan.
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8.6 INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive, non-native plant and animal species are species which can negatively impact on native species, transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems, resulting in serious problems for both the environment and the economy.

After habitat loss, invasive species are the second biggest threat to biodiversity worldwide. Prohibitions are in place in relation to the introduction or dispersal of certain invasive species as set out in the *Third Schedule of the EU (Birds and Habitats Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477/2011))*. Whilst there is a long list of freshwater, marine and terrestrial invasive species now present in Ireland, some plant species in particular pose a serious threat to the built environment. An example of this is the Japanese Knotweed, which has the ability to grow through concrete and tarmac.



It can take several years to ensure that a contaminated site is completely cleared of an invasive species, thus ensuring its non-return.

Policy Objective	
NBG 12	Prevent and control the spread of invasive plant and animal species within the County.

Policy Objective	
NBG 13	Development sites must be investigated for the presence of invasive species, which if present must be treated and/or eradicated in accordance with best practice. Where appropriate, Invasive Species Management Plans will be prepared for such sites.

8.7 NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS

The term 'Natural Heritage' covers wildlife (plants, animals and their habitats) in addition to geological and geomorphological sites. Wildlife sites of national importance including both ecological and geological sites are designated as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) under the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000*. Sites identified but not yet designated as NHAs are known as 'proposed Natural Heritage Areas' (pNHAs) and these are protected from development only by inclusion in a development plan.

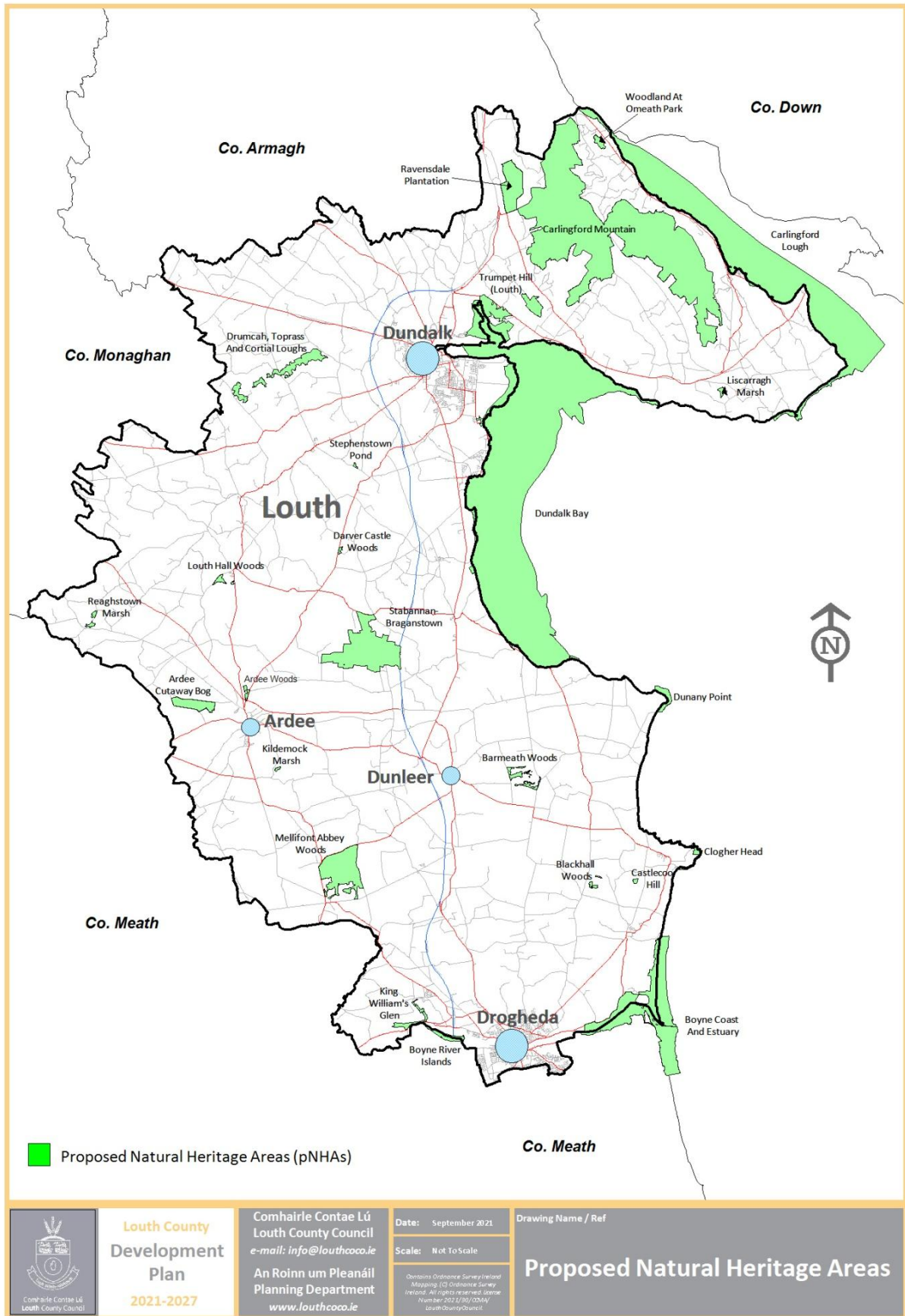
The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) proposed 24 Natural Heritage Areas in Louth, which are listed in Table 8.3 and identified on Map 8.3.

The process of designation of these sites is ongoing and it is anticipated that one or more of these pNHAs will be fully designated during the course of this Plan.

Table 8.3: Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)

Ref. No.	Name/Location
NH1454	Ardee Cutaway Bog
NH1801	Barmeath Woods
NH1293	Blackhall Woods
NH1957	Boyne Coast and Estuary
NH1862	Boyne River Islands
NH452	Carlingford Lough
NH453	Carlingford Mountain
NH1458	Castlecoo Hill
NH1459	Clogherhead
NH1461	Darver Castle Woods
NH1462	Drumcah, Toprass and Cortial Loughs
NH1856	Dunany Point
NH 455	Dundalk Bay
NH1806	Kildemock Marsh
NH1804	King Williams Glen
NH1451	Liscarragh Marsh
NH1616	Louth Hall and Ardee Woods
NH1464	Mellifont Abbey Woods
NH1805	Ravensdale Plantation
NH1828	Reaghstown Marsh
NH456	Stabannan- Braganstown
NH1803	Stephenstown Pond
NH1468	Trumpet Hill
NH1465	Woodland at Omeath Park

Map 8.3 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)



Policy Objective

NBG 14	To protect from inappropriate development and maintain the character, integrity and conservation value of those features or areas of ecological interest listed as pNHA or that may be designated as NHA, during the lifetime of this Plan.
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Policy Objective

NBG 15	To ensure that any development within or adjacent to a NHA or pNHA is designed and sited to minimise its impact on the ecological value of the site and to resist development that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats or a disturbance of species.
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8.8 SITES OF GEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Louth has a tremendously rich and interesting geological heritage, which the Council is committed to protecting. In 2013, Louth County Council commissioned, with funding from the Heritage Council, a study to identify and assess the most important geological sites in the County. This study was conducted in collaboration with a Geological Heritage Project being carried out by the Geological Survey of Ireland, which is currently compiling a list of nationally important geological sites.



Those worthy of designation as NHA but not yet designated, are referred to as proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs). Sites of more local value that were not selected for NHA designation are classified as County Geological Sites (CGS), which, although of lesser importance, nonetheless should be protected.



In the interim, the Council will, through inclusion of these sites in the Plan, protect and maintain the geological heritage of the County. These sites are listed in Table 8.4 and illustrated on Map 8.4. It is the intention of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, in conjunction with the Geological Survey of Ireland to designate geological sites of national importance as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs).

Note:

Site numbers are as given in the report of the Geological Heritage of Louth Survey of 2013.

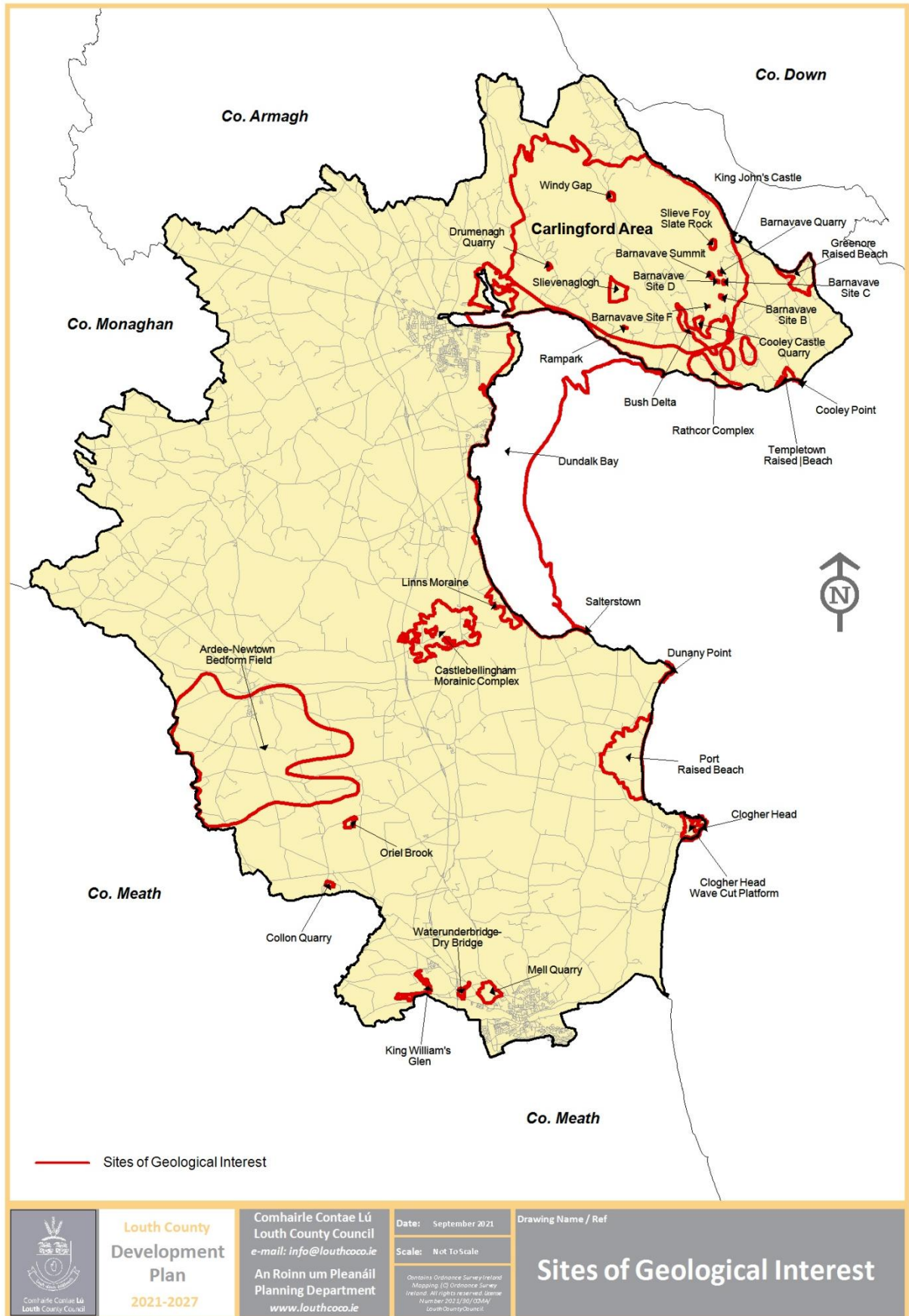
NHA sites are those considered to be worthy of designation as Natural Heritage Areas by the NPWS.

CGS refers to sites of lesser importance which should still be protected as County Geological Sites

Table 8.4: Sites of Geological Interest

Site No.	Site Name	Site Importance (proposed designation)
LH01	Ardee-Newtown Bedform Field	CGS
LH02	Barnavave Quarry	NHA
LH03	Barnavave Site B	NHA
LH04	Barnavave Site C	CGS
LH05	Barnavave Site D	CGS
LH06	Barnavave Site F	CGS
LH07	Barnavave Summit	CGS
LH08	Bush Delta	CGS
LH09	Carlingford Area	NHA
LH10	Castlebellingham Morainic Complex	CGS
LH11	Clogher Head	NHA
LH12	Clogher Head Wave Cut Platform	CGS
LH13	Collon Quarry	CGS
LH14	Cooley Castle Quarry	CGS
LH15	Cooley Point	CGS
LH16	Drumenagh Quarry	NHA
LH17	Dunany Point	CGS
LH18	Dundalk Bay	CGS
LH19	Greenore Raised Beach	CGS
LH20	King John's Castle	CGS
LH21	King William's Glen	CGS
LH22	Linns Moraine	CGS
LH23	Mell Quarry	CGS
LH24	Oriel Brook	CGS
LH25	Port Raised Beach	CGS
LH26	Rampark	CGS
LH27	Rathcor Complex	CGS
LH28	Salterstown	NHA
LH29	Slieve Foye Slate Rock	NHA
LH30	Slievenaglogh	CGS
LH31	Templetown Raised Beach	CGS
LH32	Waterunderbridge-Dry Bridge	CGS
LH33	Windy Gap	NHA

Map 8.4: Sites of Geological Interest



Policy Objective

NBG 16	Support the designation of qualifying sites of geological interest listed in Table 8.4 as Natural Heritage Areas.
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Policy Objective

NBG 17	In consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland, protect from inappropriate development and maintain the character, integrity and conservation value of those features or areas of geological interest listed in Table 8.4 of the Plan.
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Policy Objective

NBG 18	To promote awareness, where appropriate, of areas of geological interest, including the provision of access and interpretation where desirable and feasible.
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8.9 WETLANDS

Wetlands include watercourses and water bodies as well as other habitat types including marshes, fens, heathland, cutaway bog in addition to areas influenced by the marine – including coastal and estuarine salt marshes, dune slacks etc. They tend to have high biodiversity value supporting a variety of habitats and species and function in the protection of water quality and/or flood control, serve as important carbon stores contributing to climate resilience, filter pollutants and provide potential recreational opportunities.



While many protected areas include wetlands, most wetland areas occur outside protected sites. Globally, wetlands are protected by the Ramsar Convention. Within Louth, only Dundalk Bay is listed as a Ramsar site.

However, it should be noted that in County Down, the northern section of Carlingford Lough, which is a shared site, is also listed under the Ramsar Convention.

Many of the SACs and SPAs in County Louth, referenced previously and above, are wetlands.

Louth County Council, with funding from the Heritage Council, commissioned a survey of all known and potential wetlands in the County. This Louth Wetland Survey was a three year project ([2011](#), [2012](#) and [2014](#)), which determined the wetland status of in excess of 300 sites, considered likely to support wetland habitats on the basis of underlying soils, topography, historical mapping and aerial photography. The survey documented the location, extent, and threats facing and conservation ranking of virtually all the wetland sites in the County, in addition to presenting recommendations for their maintenance, management and conservation.

Planning legislation requires that work or development, which involves the drainage or reclamation of a wetland requires planning permission where the wetland is greater than 0.1ha.

For drainage or reclamation of wetlands greater than 2ha, an Environmental Impact Assessment is necessary.

The Council will require that an ecological assessment (including where necessary an Environmental Impact Assessment) is carried out at the appropriate level in relation to proposals for drainage or reclamation of wetlands.

Policy Objective

NBG 19	To ensure that an appropriate level of ecological assessment is carried out for proposals involving drainage, infill or reclamation of wetland habitats.
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Policy Objective

NBG 20	To protect and enhance wetland sites that have been rated A (International), B (National), C+ (County), C and D importance in the Louth Wetland Surveys and any subsequent versions thereof.
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Policy Objective

NBG 21	To support the implementation of recommendations included in the Louth Wetland Survey and any subsequent versions thereof.
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Policy Objective

NBG 22	To support the implementation of recommendations contained in the <i>National Peatlands Strategy 2015</i> and any subsequent strategies.
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8.10 LANDSCAPE

The National Landscape Strategy (NLS) 2015-2025 will ensure compliance with the European Landscape Convention, which Ireland ratified in 2002. It provides a high level policy framework and recognises the importance of landscape protection and its interconnectivity with biodiversity and climate change. One of its core objectives is to develop a National Landscape Character Assessment, providing consistency on how to characterise and connect with the landscape, and provide a framework for regional and local landscape character assessments. It is fully supported in both the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (EMRSES).

8.10.1 Landscape Character Assessment

A Landscape Character Assessment essentially describes, maps, and classifies landscapes providing an understanding of the value and sensitivity of the County's landscapes and its future management needs. It facilitates the identification of features, which endow a specific area with its sense of place whilst aiding the provision of policy recommendations.

In 2002 the Council, in accordance with the Government's *Draft Guidelines for Landscape and Landscape Assessment (2000)* prepared a Landscape Character Assessment for the County involving a 2 stage approach.

Stage 1 identified and classified nine Landscape Character Areas (LCA's) in County Louth, which represent specific geographical areas of a particular landscape type or types.

Stage 2 appraised the landscape character sensitivity and values, assigning key landscape values and corresponding objectives in addition to categorising each LCA as being of international, national, regional or local importance.

Criteria used in the evaluation was based on the following:

- Landscape Quality – interactions of the landscape and the condition of features and elements;
- Scenic Quality – landscapes which appeal primarily to the visual senses;
- Rarity – the presence of rare features and elements in the landscape;
- Conservation Interests – presence of features and particular wildlife, earth science, archaeological, historical and cultural interest which can add to the value of a landscape as well as having value in their own right;
- Wildness – presence of wild character within the landscape which makes a particular contribution to a sense of place;
- Recreational Opportunity – degree of open-air recreation within the landscape in proximity to centres of population;
- Cultural Association – with particular people, artists, writers, historical events, legends;

- Tranquillity – low levels of built environment, traffic, noise and where artificial lighting is at a minimum; and
- Stakeholder Representative – whether the landscape contains a particular character worthy of representation by stakeholders.

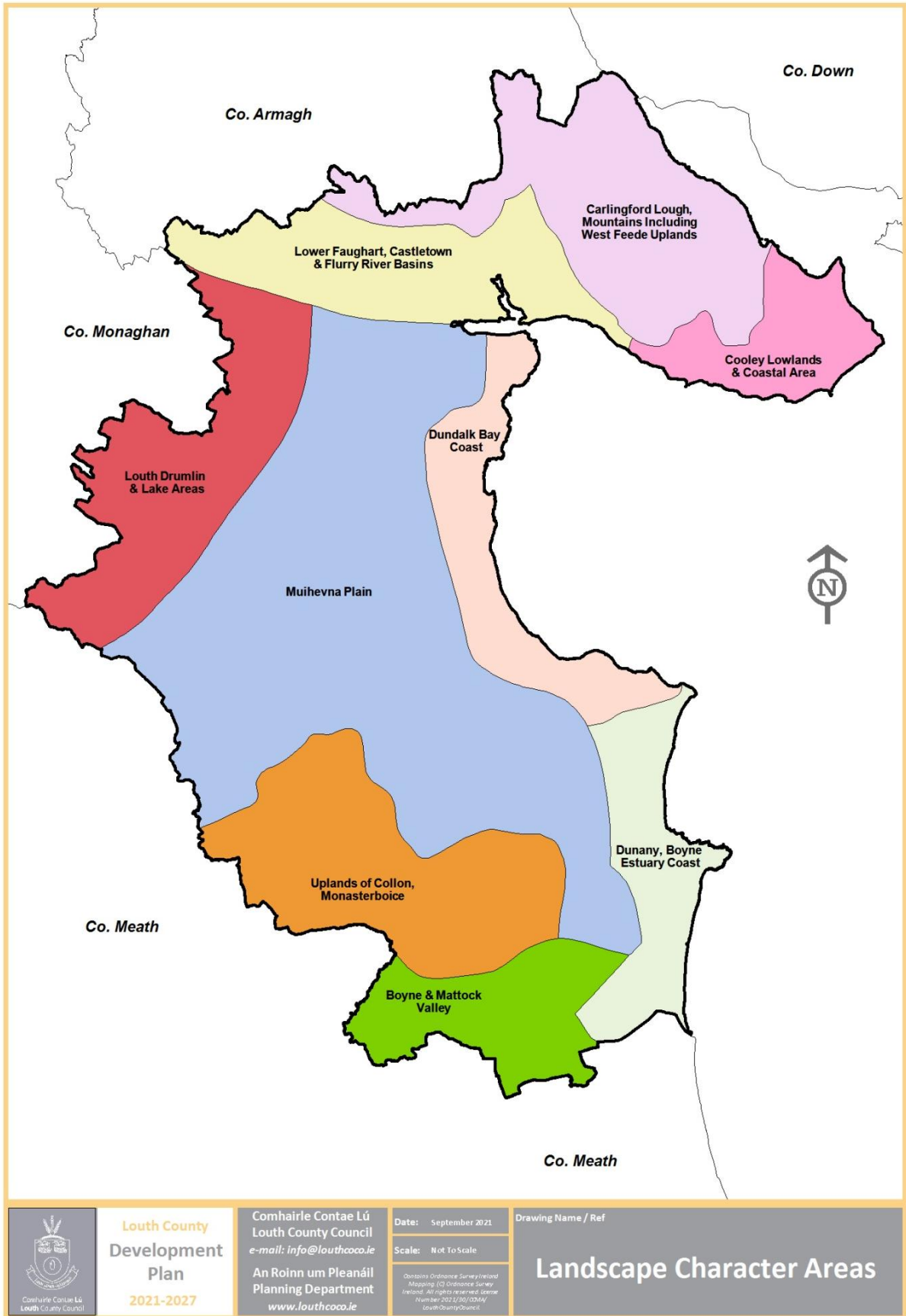
Louth’s nine Landscape Character Areas are identified in Table 8.5 and Map 8.5.

The potential landscape capacity of each LCA is based on indicative types of development that are likely to occur within the study area. The *Louth Landscape Character Assessment 2002* identified a range of forces for landscape change in the rural landscape and these included *inter alia*: agriculture, rural housing, wind farms, commercial development, quarrying etc. The *Louth Landscape Character Assessment 2002* is available at the following [link](#).

Table 8.5: Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Character Areas	Importance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlingford Lough and Mountains incl. West Feede Uplands 	International
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boyne & Mattock Valley 	National
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dundalk Bay Coast • Dunany to Boyne Estuary Coast • Uplands of Collon and Monasterboice 	Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooley Lowlands and Coastal Area • Lower Faughart, Castletown and Flurry River basin • Louth Drumlin and Lake Areas • Muirhevna Plain 	Local

Map 8.5: Landscape Character Areas



8.10.2 Landscape Conservation Area

Section 204 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) enables a Planning Authority, for the purposes of the preservation of a landscape, designate an area or place within its functional area as a Landscape Conservation Area. In so doing, the planning authority can prescribe certain developments which would normally be exempt but would not be exempt in a designated conservation area.

The *Louth Landscape Character Assessment 2002* recommended that consideration be given to the designation of Carlingford Mountain SAC as a Landscape Conservation Area.



The Council, during the lifetime of the Plan will, in consultation with the relevant department and stakeholders, explore the possibility of designating Carlingford SAC as a Landscape Conservation Area.

Policy Objective

NBG 23	To ensure the preservation of the uniqueness of a landscape character type by having regard to its character, value and objectives in accordance with national policy and guidelines and the <i>Louth Landscape Character Assessment</i> and by ensuring that new development meets high standards of siting and design and does not unduly damage or detract from the character of a landscape or natural environment.
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Policy Objective

NBG 24	To ensure development reflects and, where possible, reinforces the distinctiveness and sense of place of the landscape character types including the retention of important features or characteristics, taking into account the various elements, which contribute to their distinctiveness such as scenic quality, habitats, settlement pattern, historic heritage and land use.
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Policy Objective

NBG 25	Where appropriate, require that landscape and visual impact assessments prepared by suitably qualified professionals be submitted with development applications, which may have significant impact on landscape character areas, especially in highly sensitive areas.
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Policy Objective

NBG 26	To explore the designation of Landscape Conservation Areas as appropriate, in conjunction with the relevant Government Department and stakeholders to protect specific important landscapes and particularly in respect of Carlingford Mountain SAC.
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Policy Objective

NBG 27	To review and update, if necessary the <i>Louth Landscape Character Assessment 2002</i> on foot of a framework for regional and local landscape character assessments as outlined in the <i>National Landscape Strategy 2015-2025</i> .
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Policy Objective

NBG 28	To co-operate with adjoining local authorities, both north and south of the border, to ensure that the environment is maintained in a sustainable manner and to support the coordinated designation of sensitive landscapes and policy approaches with adjoining areas and on all aspects of environmental protection, particularly where transboundary environmental vulnerabilities are identified.
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8.11 TREES, WOODLANDS AND HEDGEROWS

Trees, woodlands and hedgerows contribute greatly to Louth's natural landscape character and biodiversity. They provide visual amenity in rural and urban environments, shelter and clean air, important habitats for many species of wildlife and as high biodiversity habitats they are key for both climate mitigation and adaptation measures, playing a significant role in carbon storage.



Ireland is the least wooded country in the EU. Louth's percentage forest area is one of the lowest in the country and in this context, the conservation of existing woodlands is increasingly important.

Many of Louth's surviving woodlands are located within large estates, where they were often planted as part of landscaping projects and contributed to designed landscapes.

Trees and in particular groups of trees can represent an important component of the local landscape and townscape, the setting of buildings and the means of providing successful integration of new development into the landscape. Development can, if not sensitively designed, sited and constructed, result in the loss or damage of trees. Thus, it is desirable that existing trees be considered in the formulation and assessment of development proposals. Where trees or groups of trees of particular value may be at risk from development or other activities, consideration may be given to the making of a Tree Preservation Order. New planting should be encouraged and promoted to ensure the continued regeneration of tree cover generally and avoid key groupings of trees becoming increasingly aged and unhealthy.

Hedgerows make an important contribution to the County, serving as important habitat and wildlife corridors for the movement and distribution of flora and fauna through the landscape (habitat for insects, nesting sites for birds, assist small mammals and bat species). They simultaneously contribute to the natural heritage and visual amenity of the area, in addition to preserving the rural character of an area and in screening development. A sample survey of Louth's hedgerows in 2014 found that Louth had the highest density of hedgerows in Ireland, slightly ahead of neighbouring County Monaghan. Other than in exceptional circumstances, there will be a presumption against the removal of trees and hedgerows.

Where the removal of trees and hedgerows is unavoidable, the Council will require their replacement or adequate substitution.

8.11.1 Tree Preservation Orders

Section 205 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)* allows planning authorities to make provision for the preservation of any tree, trees, groups of trees or woodlands by way of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) where it is carried out in the interest of expediency, amenity or the environment. Tree Preservation Orders made to date by the Council are listed in Table 8.6 and illustrated in Maps 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10.

Table 8.6: Tree Preservation Orders, County Louth

DROGHEDA		COUNTY	
Ref. No	Location	Ref. No.	Location
TPO 1	Bayview House	TPO 2	Fox Covert, Ardee
		TPO 3	Ardee Golf Club (TPO 2 falls entirely within this area)
		TPO 4	Red House, Ardee
		TPO 5	Mell, Drogheda
		TPO 6	One Mile Wood, Newtownstalaban

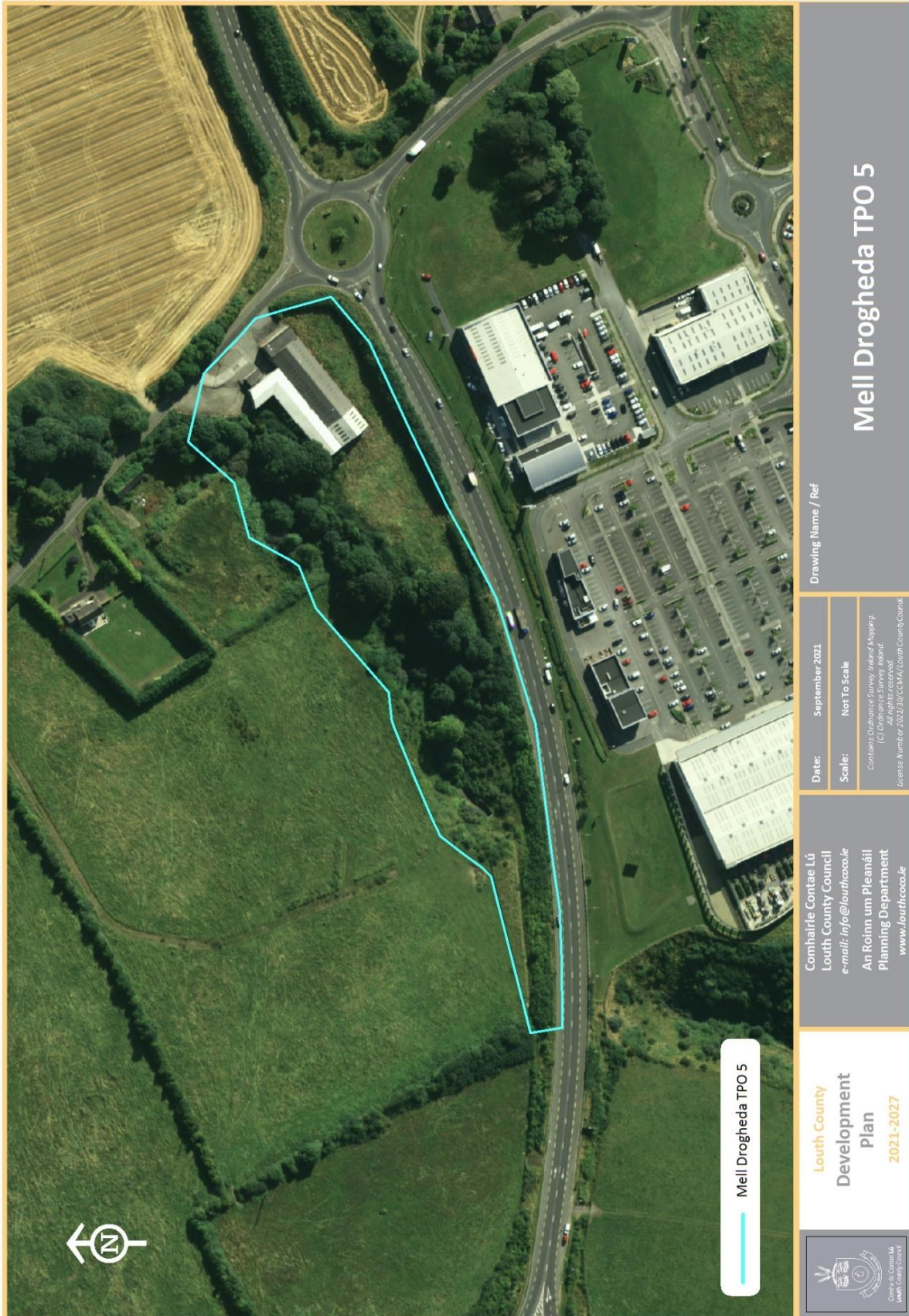
Map 8.6: TPO1 (Bayview House Drogheda)



Map 8.7: TPO 2 (Fox Covert, Ardee) and TPO 3 (Ardee Golf Club)



Map 8.9: TPO 5 (Mell, Drogheda)



Map 8.10: TPO 6 (One Mile Wood)



8.11.2 Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value

Having regard to the important role that trees and woodlands fulfil, the Council has identified and recorded trees and groups of trees considered to be of Special Amenity Value within the County. As such, and in recognition of the value of the trees, their conservation as part of any grant of planning permission will be required.

Any development permitted by the local authority which, in exceptional circumstances, permits the removal of trees or groups of trees shall contain a planning condition requiring the planting of replacement native, semi-mature trees

at a ratio of ten new trees per single tree removed in the County and at a ratio of five new trees per single tree removed in Drogheda and Dundalk.

The Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value within Drogheda, Dundalk, Ardee and the County have been identified in Tables 8.7, 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10 and illustrated on Maps 8.11, 8.12, 8.13 and 8.14 below. Tree surveys, for both Drogheda and Dundalk along with Guidelines for Tree Protection are detailed in Appendix 5 and Appendix 6 respectively, Volume 3.

Table 8.7: Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value in Drogheda

Reference No.	Location	Reference No.	Location
TWSAV1	Anneville Crescent	TWSAV23	Moneymore
TWSAV2	Ashfield	TWSAV24	Mill Lane
TWSAV3	Ballsgrove Hill	TWSAV25	Mount Sandford
TWSAV4	Broadmeadows	TWSAV26	North of Quarry
TWSAV5	Brookville	TWSAV27	Newfoundwell Road
TWSAV6	Bullys Acre	TWSAV28	Northstrand
TWSAV7	Boyne Valley Hotel	TWSAV29	Oaklawns
TWSAV8	Boyne View House	TWSAV30	Peters Hill
TWSAV9	Church Lane	TWSAV31	Poor House Lane 1
TWSAV10	College Rise	TWSAV32	Presbytery Poor House Lane
TWSAV11	Cromwell's Lane 1	TWSAV33	Ramparts Walk
TWSAV12	Dublin Road Railway Bridge	TWSAV34	Rugby Club
TWSAV13	Fisherman's Warf	TWSAV35	Sienna Convent
TWSAV14	Fountain Hill	TWSAV36	Stameen
TWSAV15	Glenmore Drive	TWSAV37	Stameen Roadside 1
TWSAV16	Greenhills College	TWSAV38	St. Dominick's Park
TWSAV17	Harmony Heights	TWSAV39	Mary Street –Gerrard's Church
TWSAV18	Hospital Dublin Road	TWSAV40	Waterunder Cottage
TWSAV19	Leonard's Cross	TWSAV41	Weirhope
TWSAV20	Marley's Lane	TWSAV42	Watery Hill
TWSAV21	Matsons Lodge	TWSAV43	Westcourt
TWSAV22	Marsh House Pub (former)	TWSAV44	Wheaton Hall

Map 8.11 *Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value in Drogheda*

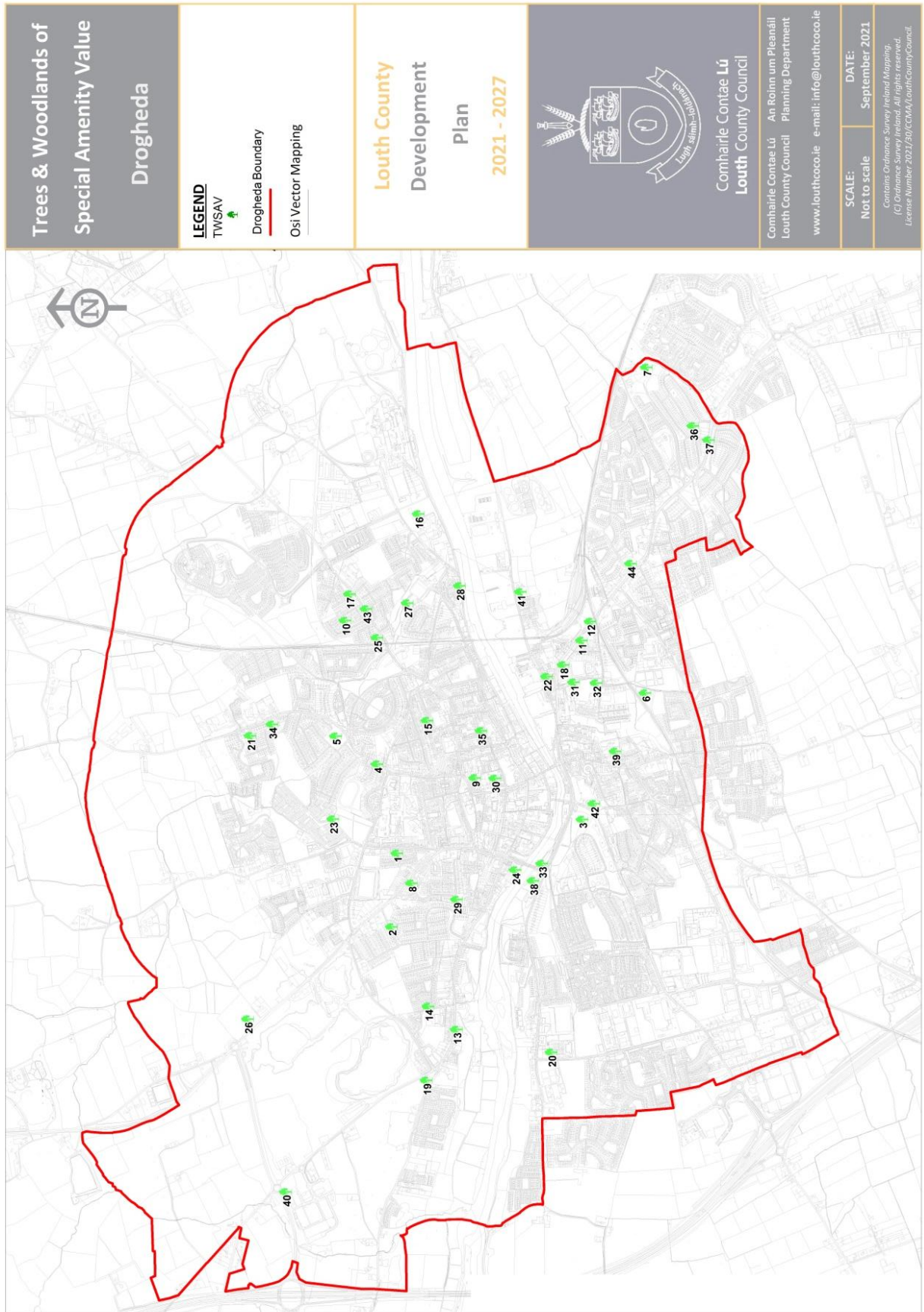


Table 8.8: Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value in Dundalk

Reference No.	Location	Reference No.	Location
TWSAV45	St. Helena's Park	TWSAV67	Dunmore/ESB , Avenue Road
TWSAV46	Marist Grounds, St. Mary's Road	TWSAV68	Ladywell Shrine, Dublin Road
TWSAV47	Derryhale Hotel, Carrick Road	TWSAV69	Opposite Ladywell Tce, Dublin Road
TWSAV48	Fairhill, Ardee Road	TWSAV70	Bayview House, Dublin Road
TWSAV49	Rath - Knockbridge Rd./ Ardee Road	TWSAV71	Muirhevna
TWSAV50	Lisnawully House, Carrick Road	TWSAV72	Grounds of DKIT, Dublin Road
TWSAV51	Brookfield, Ardee Road	TWSAV73	The Laurels
TWSAV52	Hilltop - Former St. Oliver's Hospital, Ardee Road	TWSAV74	Church of Ireland (Green Church) Church St.
TWSAV53	Mount Oliver Shrine, Ardee Road	TWSAV75	Carroll Village - Old De La Salle Field
TWSAV54	Carrick Road: Rucky Hill	TWSAV76	Long Walk
TWSAV55	Lisnawully, Mount Avenue	TWSAV77	Demesne
TWSAV56	Entrance to McArdles Brewery	TWSAV78	Park View
TWSAV57	The Crescent / Crescent Park	TWSAV79	Trees on Mount Avenue
TWSAV58	Grammar School, The Crescent	TWSAV80	De La Salle, Mill Road
TWSAV59	P.J. Carroll's, Dublin Road	TWSAV81	Fatima Church – Toberona – Rugby Club
TWSAV60	Hoey's Lane and District Park	TWSAV82	Grey Acre, Castleblaney Road
TWSAV61	Blackrock Road	TWSAV83	Castletown Cemetery
TWSAV62	St. Malachy's School, Anne St.	TWSAV84	St. Louis Convent / Castletown Castle
TWSAV63	Ice House Hill and surrounds	TWSAV85	The Paddock, Mount Avenue
TWSAV64	Brook Street/Ardee Terrace	TWSAV86	Farndreg Estate
TWSAV65	Mounthamilton House, Carrick Road	TWSAV87	Castle Park
TWSAV66	New Forest/Clarkes Forest	TWSAV88	Newry Road: Red Cow

Reference No.	Location	Reference No.	Location
TWSAV89	Dowdallshill, Newry Road	TWSAV99	Catholic Church, Blackrock
TWSAV90	Motte and Bailey Doylesfort Road / Brickfields / Newry Rd.	TWSAV100	Haggardstown House / Bellfield, Dublin Road
TWSAV91	Riverside Crescent	TWSAV101	Church Road, Haggardstown
TWSAV92	Fairgreen	TWSAV102	Marl House, Church Road, Haggardstown
TWSAV93	Point Road	TWSAV103	Seafield House, Seafield Road
TWSAV94	The junction of Bothar Maol and the Blackrock Road	TWSAV104	East Side of Seafield Road
TWSAV95	Northern Boundary of Bunker Lodge, Sandymount	TWSAV105	Fairy Mount, Seafield Road
TWSAV96	Field House, Sandymount	TWSAV106	Cockle Hill Road
TWSAV97	Sandymount /Rockmount	TWSAV107	Cú Chulainn Castle (Castletown Mount)
TWSAV98	The Crescent		

Map 8.12: Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value in Dundalk

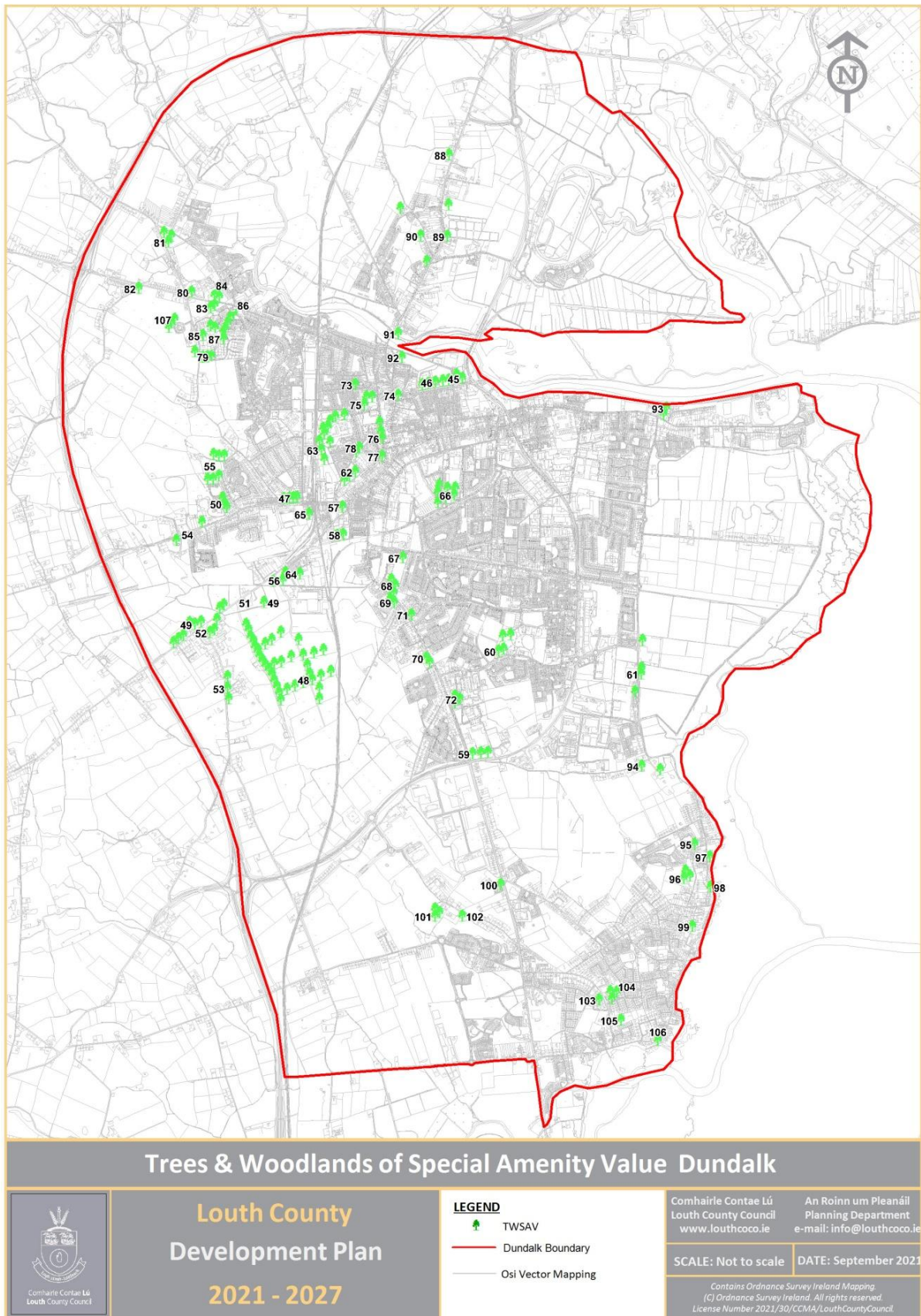


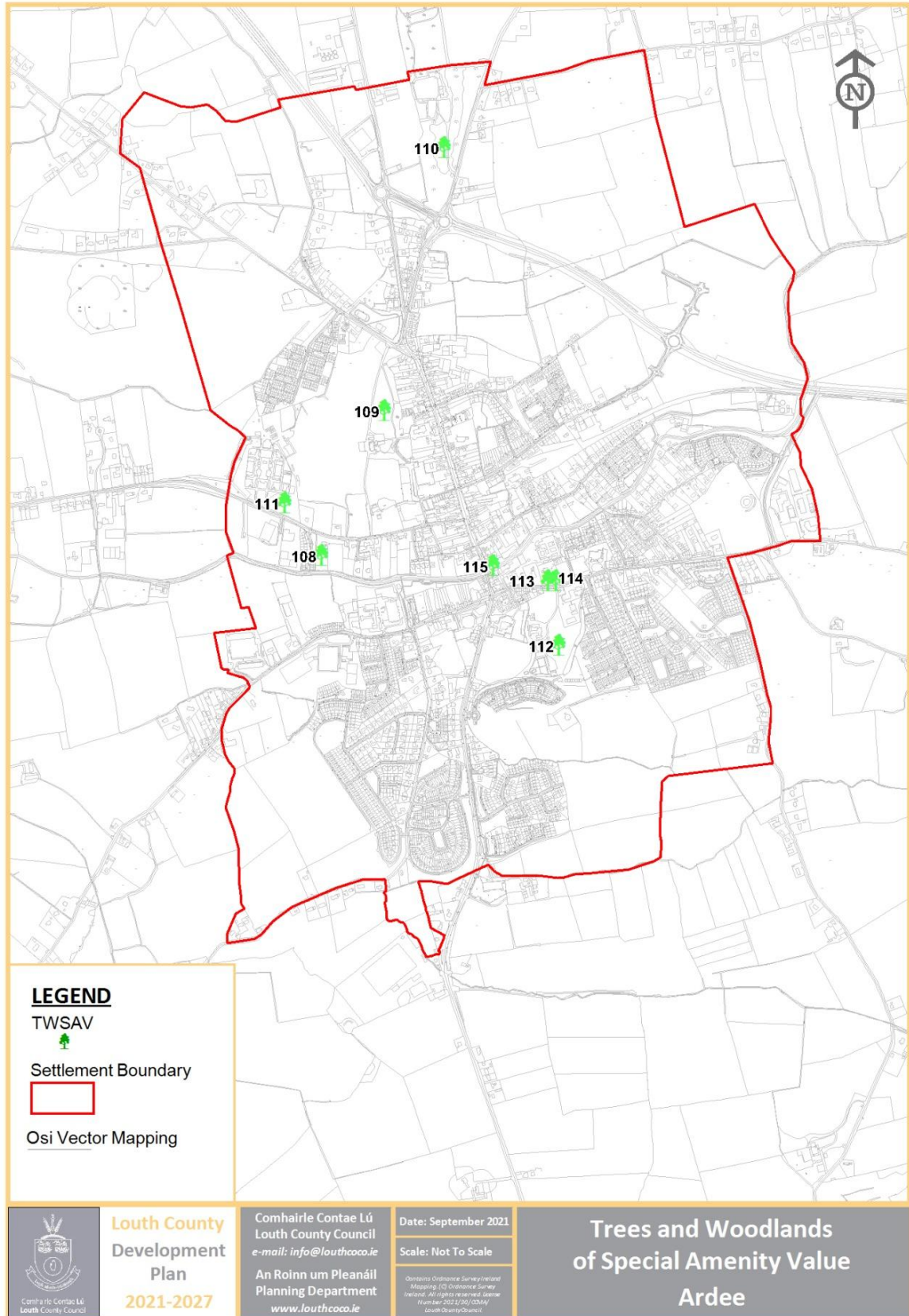
Table 8.9: Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value in Ardee

Reference No.	Location	Reference No.	Location
TWSAV108	The Rectory, Ardee	TWSAV112	Convent of Mercy, Hale Street
TWSAV109	St. Joseph's, Ardee	TWSAV113	Moorehall (De la Salle Monastery, Hale St.)
TWSAV110	Red House Ardee	TWSAV114	Parochial House (Hale St.)
TWSAV111	St. Bridget's, Kells Road	TWSAV115	The Island, Bridge Street

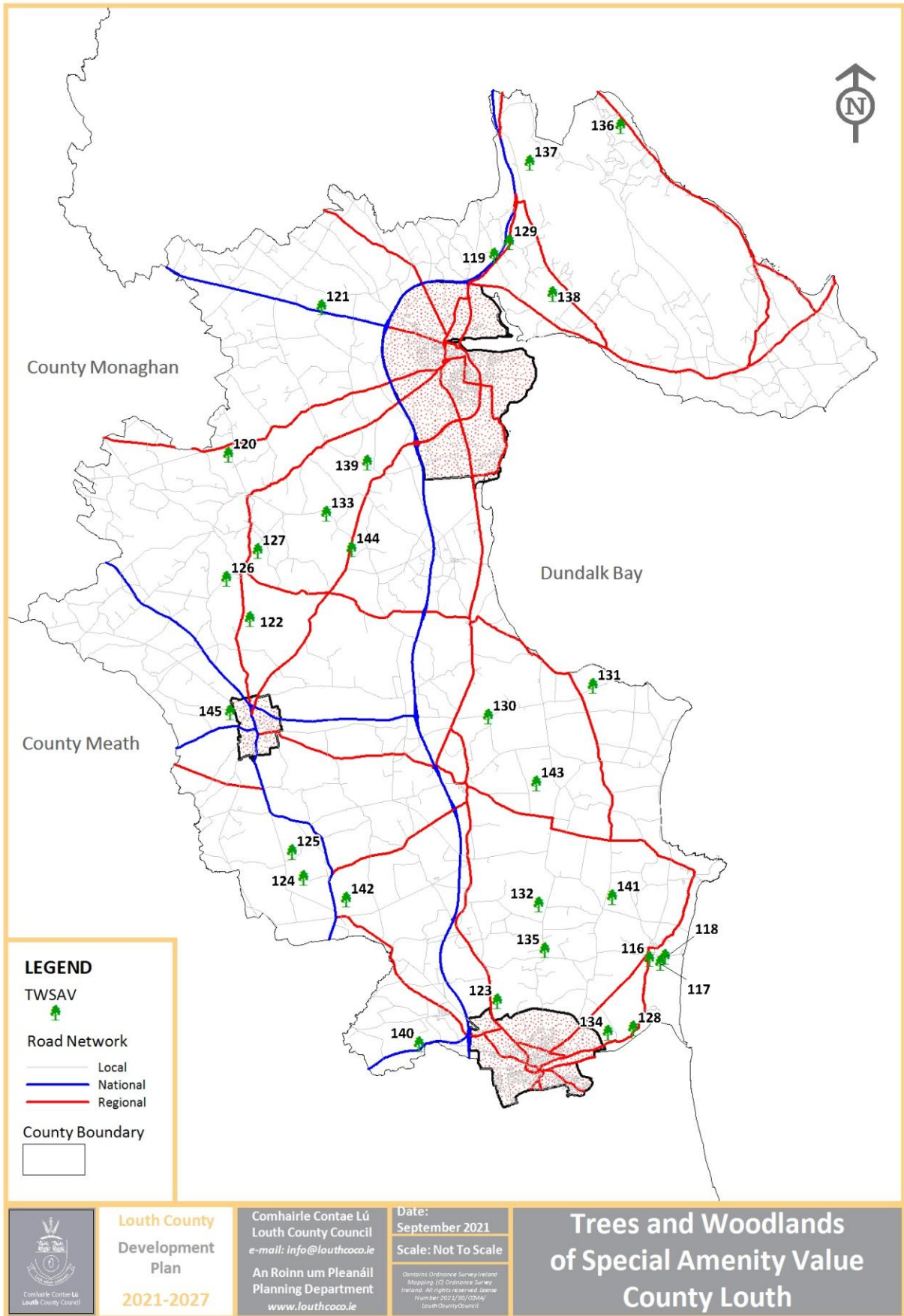
Table 8.10: Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value in County Louth

Reference No.	Location	Reference No.	Location
TWSAV116	Termonfeckin Village	TWSAV131	Salterstown
TWSAV117	Newtown House (An Grianán)	TWSAV132	Piperstown House
TWSAV118	Trees East Of Termonfeckin	TWSAV133	Corderry House, Ready Penny
TWSAV119	N1 North of Greenore Junction (Junction 18)	TWSAV134	Beaulieu
TWSAV120	Monvallet East of ESB station	TWSAV135	Ballymakenny Church
TWSAV121	Church at Milltown	TWSAV136	Woodlands at Omeath Park
TWSAV122	Lisrenny House, Tallanstown	TWSAV137	Ravensdale Plantation
TWSAV123	South of Killineer	TWSAV138	Trumpet Hill
TWSAV124	North of Mount Oriel	TWSAV139	Stephenstown Pond
TWSAV125	Mullaghesh, Collon	TWSAV140	Townley Hall / King Williams Glen
TWSAV126	Louth Hall	TWSAV141	Blackhall Woods
TWSAV127	Rathbrist House	TWSAV142	Mellifont Abbey Woods
TWSAV128	Drogheda - Baltray Road	TWSAV143	Barmeath Woods
TWSAV129	N1 at Aghnaskeagh	TWSAV144	Darver Castle Woods
TWSAV130	Drumcar	TWSAV145	Fox Covert, Ardee

Map 8.13: Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value in Ardee



Map 8.14: Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value in County Louth



8.11.3 Champion Trees of Louth

The Tree Council of Ireland in conjunction with the Irish Tree Society initiated the Tree Register of Ireland (TROI) project with the aim of compiling a database of trees in Ireland. The publication of ‘*Champion Trees – A Selection of Irelands Great Trees*’ identified twenty one Champion Trees in Louth.

A ‘champion tree’ is the tallest, oldest or enormous example of its species or kind in a given region. These trees are of significant environmental value to the County and should be protected from development where necessary. Champion Trees located in County Louth are as identified in Table 8.11.

Table 8.11: Champion Trees, County Louth

Champion Trees – County Louth		
Species	Location	Dimensions
<i>Cedrus libani</i> (Cedar of Lebanon)	Red House, Ardee	7.41 @ 1.5 m × 36 m
<i>Fagus sylvatica - Atropurpurea</i> (Copper Beech)	Red House, Ardee	4.91 @ 1.3 m × 29.5 m
<i>Juglans regia</i> (Walnut)	Red House, Ardee	4.50 @ 0.6 m × 22 m
<i>Abies procera Glauca</i> Group (Noble Fir)	Red House, Ardee	4.48 @ 1.5 m × 39 m
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> (Tulip Tree)	Red House, Ardee	4.46 @ 1.5 m × 23 m
<i>Cedrus deodara</i> (Deodar Cedar)	Red House, Ardee	.81 @ 1.5 m × 31.3 m
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> (Holly)	Red House, Ardee	31 @ 1.5 m × 21.3 m
<i>Ulmus minor var. minor</i> (Elm)	The Rectory Ardee	3.53x15.7m – 2 nd tallest of its kind in Ireland
<i>Ulmus minor var. minor</i>	The Rectory Ardee	2.98 x 22m
<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i> <i>Elegans</i> Group (Japanese Red Cedar)	Castlebellingham	3.17 @ 0.8 m × 17.7 m
<i>Quercus Robur ‘Pendula’</i>	Beaulieu, Drogheda	3.35 x 42.5m
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> (Holly)	Kilineer House, Drogheda	1.94 x 16.5m
<i>Juglans regia</i> (Walnut)	Clermont Park, Dundalk	3.49 @ 1.4 x 17.5m
<i>Ilex aquifolium ‘Albomarginata’</i> (Holly)	Clermout Park, Dundalk	2.17@ 1 x 15.5m
<i>Castanea Sativa</i> (Sweet/Spanish Chestnut)	Barmeath Castle, Dunleer	5.63 x 21m

Champion Trees – County Louth

Species	Location	Dimensions
<i>Abies alba</i> (Silver Fir)	Barmeath Castle, Dunleer	3.38x42.5m
<i>Acer Pseudoplatanus</i> (Sycamore)	Knockabbey	6.43x24m
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> (Tulip Tree)	Knockabbey	6.25x18m
<i>Sequoiadendron giganteum</i> (Wellingtonia Giant Sequoia)	Knockabbey	6.05 x19.5m
<i>Taxus baccata</i> (Yew)	Knockabbey	5.42x13.5m
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> (Locust Tree/False Acacia)	Knockabbey	2.96x17m

Policy Objective

NBG 29	To protect trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders and seek to designate additional Tree Preservations Orders (TPO), where appropriate.
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Policy Objective

NBG 30	To protect trees and woodlands of special amenity value. Review and where appropriate make Tree Preservation Order(s) in relation to trees of special amenity value.
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Policy Objective

NBG 31	Where in exceptional circumstances, trees and or hedgerows are required to be removed in order to facilitate development, this shall be done outside nesting season and there shall be a requirement that each tree felled is replaced at a ratio of 10:1 with native species and each hedgerow removed is to be replaced with a native species. In Drogheda and Dundalk, replacement trees will be required at a ratio of 5:1 where the removal of trees is required in order to facilitate development.
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Policy Objective

NBG 32	To investigate the identification and addition of suitable trees and woodlands of special amenity value for inclusion in Tables 8.7, 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10 where appropriate, during the lifetime of the Plan.
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Policy Objective

NBG 33	To assess the implications of proposed development on significant trees and hedgerows located on lands that are being considered for development, seeking their incorporation into design proposals where appropriate and in compliance with procedures detailed in Appendix 6.
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Policy Objective

NBG 34	To increase native tree coverage in the County to also act as carbon sinks by promoting the planting of suitable native trees and hedgerows along public roads, residential streets, parks and other areas of open space.
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Policy Objective

NBG 35	To encourage initiatives supporting private and community driven native tree and woodland planting schemes throughout the County, utilising available funding schemes.
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8.12 ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES

County Louth has a number of important areas of outstanding beauty and high amenity value in addition to views and prospects that require protection.

**8.12.1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

Within County Louth, two distinct areas were identified as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) by reason of their unspoiled natural landscape, special character and spectacular scenic quality. As both of these areas are extremely sensitive environments, they have been afforded a high degree of protection in the Plan to preserve their uniqueness and amenity value for the benefit and enjoyment of existing and future generations. The two areas identified as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are listed in Table 8.12 and illustrated on Map 8.15.

Table 8.12: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Reference No.	Location
AONB 1	Carlingford and Feede Mountains
AONB 2	Clogherhead and Port Oriel

The larger of the two areas is found in the north of the County and encompasses the Carlingford and Feede Mountains. Slieve Foye at 588m O.D and Black Mountain at 508m O.D are the highest points in the range. Much of the area remains in a semi-natural condition, used for low intensity sheep and horse grazing and covered in gorse, bracken and heather.

Parts of this area are designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) under European and Irish legislation.

Spectacular views are available from a number of vantage points over Carlingford Lough to the Mourne Mountains AONB in County Down and the Ring of Gullion AONB in County Armagh and over Dundalk Bay to central and south County Louth.

The second AONB is located at Clogherhead and encompasses Port Oriel and the surrounding headland. Although less rugged and remote than the Carlingford and Feede Mountains, this area nevertheless, contains equally spectacular views eastwards to the Irish Sea, southwards towards the Boyne Estuary and County Meath and northwards over Dundalk Bay to the Carlingford and Mourne Mountains. Most of the headland is also designated as a SAC, much of which, is in the ownership of Louth County Council, and which is managed as a de facto Nature Reserve, while also allowing recreational access by the public.

8.12.2 Areas of High Scenic Quality

The Areas of High Scenic Quality (AHSQ), whilst not quite possessing the exceptional natural beauty and landscape quality of the AONB, nevertheless add significantly to the stock of natural scenic landscapes within the County. They are listed in Table 8.13 and illustrated on Map 8.15.

All of the AHSQ are currently farmed, although the quality of the land for farming purposes varies considerably from area to area. The Council considers it important that AHSQ are protected from excessive development, particularly from inappropriate, one-off, urban-generated housing, in order to preserve their unspoiled rural landscapes.

Table 8.13: Areas of High Scenic Quality (AHSQ)

Reference No.	Location
AHSQ 1	Feede Mountains and Cooley Area
AHSQ 2	Monasterboice
AHSQ 3	Boyne Valley / King Williams Glen
AHSQ 4	Collon Uplands
AHSQ 5	Dunany
AHSQ 6	Ardee bog



8.12.3 Views and Prospects of Special Amenity Value

Louth has many areas of high quality landscape particularly along the coast, the river valleys and its upland areas. As a result, the County boasts many vantage points from which views and prospects of great natural beauty are available. The scenery and landscapes of the County are of enormous amenity value to tourists and residents alike, contributing to quality of life and constituting a valuable economic asset. The protection of this asset is therefore of importance in developing the potential of the County.

The challenge is to manage the landscape so any change is positive in its effects thereby ensuring that the landscape is protected.

There is a need therefore to preserve views and prospects for the enjoyment of future generations.

It is not proposed that this should prohibit development, but rather, where development is permitted that it should not hinder or obstruct these views and prospects and be designed and located to minimise impact. A list of the protected Views and Prospects in County Louth, Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee, in addition to those included in Carlingford, Clogherhead and Tullyallen are listed in Tables 8.14, 8.15, 8.16, 8.17 and 8.18 and illustrated on Maps 8.16, 8.17, 8.18 and 8.19. Mapped Views and Prospects for Carlingford, Clogherhead and Tullyallen are available on their respective Composite Maps in Volume 2. Comprehensive details of the protected Views and Prospects in the County including Level 3 Settlements are listed in Appendix 7, Volume 3.

Table 8.14: Views and Prospects, County Louth

Reference No.	Location
VP 1	Drummullagh – view towards Narrow Water
VP 2	Clermontpass Bridge
VP 3	Clermont Cairn RTE Mast
VP 4	Windy gap
VP 5	Carlingford Lough
VP 6	Slieve Foye
VP 7	Spelickanee
VP 8	Glenmore – Mountains and Valley
VP 9	Barnavave and Carlingford Mountain
VP 10	Jeninstown Hill
VP 11	Jeninstown
VP 12	Ballymakellett
VP 13	Faughart Hill
VP 14	Dungooly Crossroads
VP 15	Views of Castle Roche
VP 16	Hackballscross – views of mountains towards Forkhill
VP 17	Killin Golf Course - views of mountains towards Forkhill

Reference No.	Location
VP 18	Dromiskin - sea views across to Dundalk, Cooley and Mourne Mountains
VP 19	North of Annagassan - sea views across to Cooley and Mourne Mountains
VP 20	Salterstown - sea views across to Dundalk Bay towards Cooley and Mourne Mountains
VP 21	Corstown - sea views across to Dundalk Bay towards Cooley and Mourne Mountains
VP 22	Lurganboy - sea views across to Dundalk Bay towards Cooley and Mourne Mountains
VP 23	Callystown to Clogherhead
VP 24	Dardisrath towards coast and Clogherhead
VP 25	Brownstown southwards over AHSQ towards Drogheda
VP 26	Newtown Monasterboice towards Monasterboice Tower
VP 27	Townley Hall Nature Walk view of Battle of the Boyne site
VP 28	Drybridge Escarpment view of Battle of the Boyne Site
VP 29	Waterunder Plateau overview of Battle of the Boyne Site (Williamite Army)
VP 30	Mount Oriel
VP 31	N2 Funshog
VP 32	Millockstown
VP 33	Townparks
VP 34	Anaglog

Table 8.15: Views and Prospects, Dundalk

View	Location
VP 35	Views of the town, Dundalk Bay and towards Cooley and Mourne Mountains
VP 36	Views northward on the Point Road between the Coe's Road and Soldiers Point
VP 37	Views from Castletown Mount
VP 38	Views of the town from the Ardee Road
VP 39	Views of the town from Bothar Blinne, Ard Easmuinn
VP 40	Views north to the Cooley Mountains and south over the town from the former Dundalk-Greenore railway line
VP 41	Views north east and south from Soldier's Point and views of the Cooley Mountains
VP 42	Views of the town, Dundalk Bay and Cooley Mountains from the Navy Bank – Shore Road
VP 43	Views from lands east of the racecourse
VP 44	Views of Dundalk Bay and the Cooley Mountains from the Coast Road between McGuigan's Rock and Dundalk Town Council's Boundary
VP 45	Views of Dundalk Bay and Cooley Mountains from the Crescent to Main Street
VP 46	Views out to sea from the Cackle Hill Road
VP 47	Views of the Cooley Mountains from the car park at St. Fursey's Church, Haggardstown
VP 48	Views of the Cooley Mountains from St. Mary's Road and junction with Inner Relief Road

Table 8.16: Views and Prospects Drogheda

View	Location
VP 49	Views of the town from Millmount
VP 50	Views of the town from Ballsgrove
VP 51	Views of Millmount from the West
VP 52	Views of Millmount looking southward from the Town Centre
VP 53	Views of the Boyne and the Loughboy Callows from Loughboy
VP 54	Views of the Boyne East and West from vehicular and pedestrian bridges
VP 55	Views of the town from the Rathmullen Road
VP 56	Views of Millmount and the Presbytery from Donor's Green
VP 57	Views of the railway viaduct from the town centre, the bridges along the Boyne and the Termonfeckin Road from the west

Note: VP29 on map – refer to Table 8.14

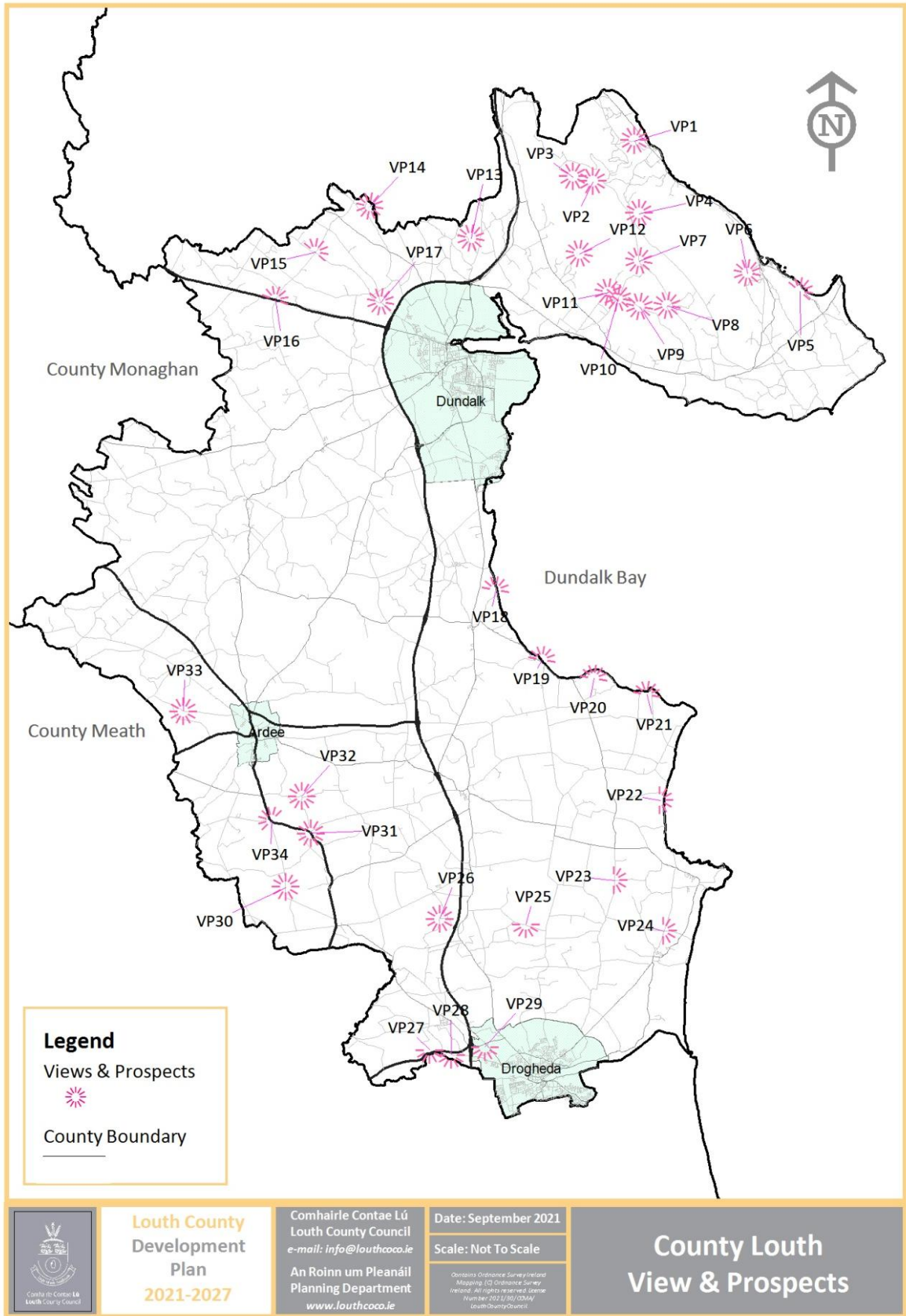
Table 8.17: Views and Prospects in Ardee

Reference No.	Location
VP 58	Mulladrillen Hill and Mullaghash from the Town Centre
VP 59	Ardee Castle
VP 60	Castleguard Motte

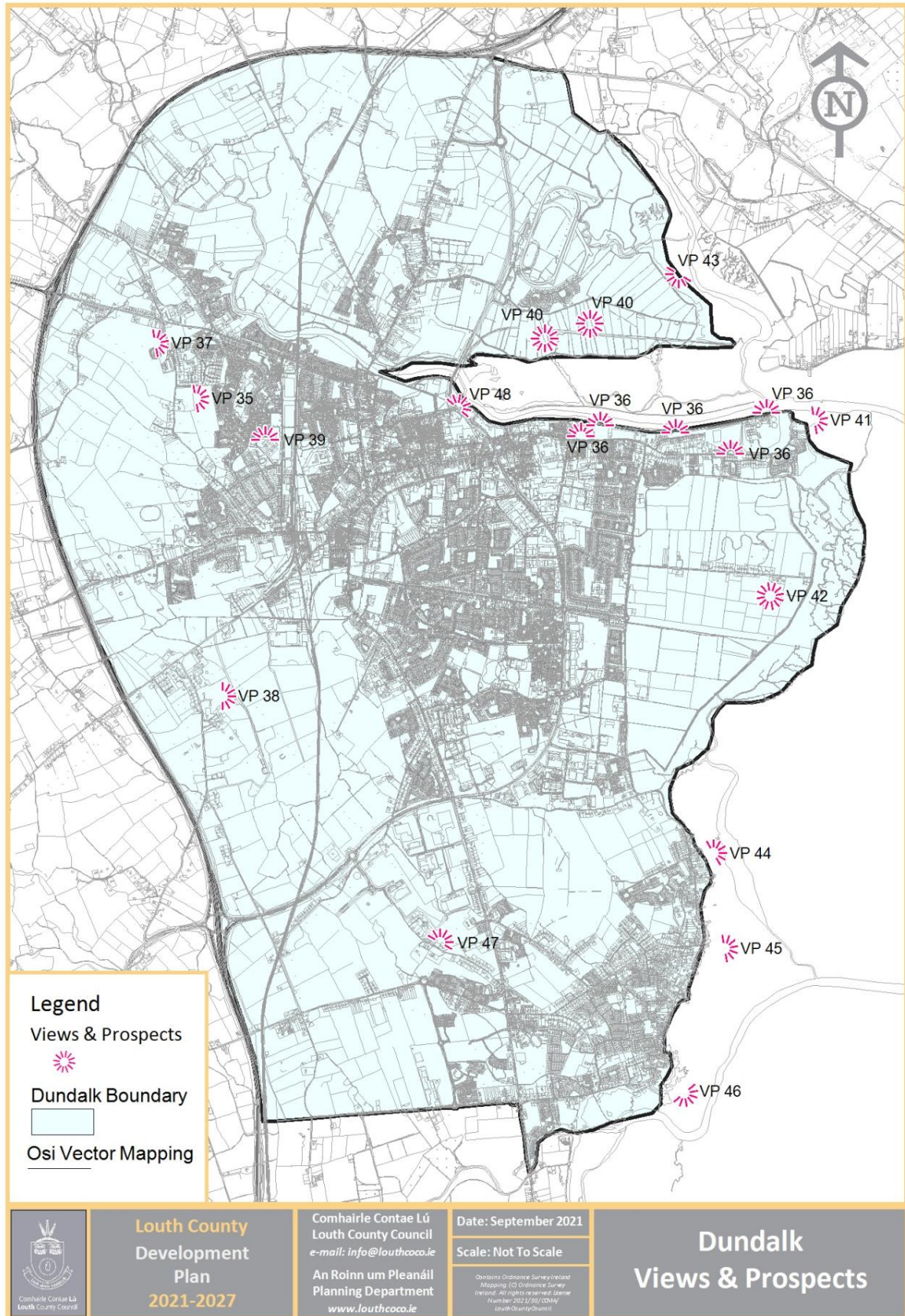
Table 8.18: Views and Prospects in Level 3 Settlements

Reference No.	Location
VP 61	King John's Castle, Carlingford
VP 62	Taaffe's Castle, Carlingford
VP 63	Holy Trinity Church, Carlingford Heritage Centre
VP 64	Dominican Friary, Carlingford
VP 65	Coast and Harbour, Carlingford
VP 66	Clogherhead Harbour
VP67	Old Church Lane, In front of Tullyallen Graveyard
VP68	Between 2 houses along the east of Old Church Lane, Tullyallen

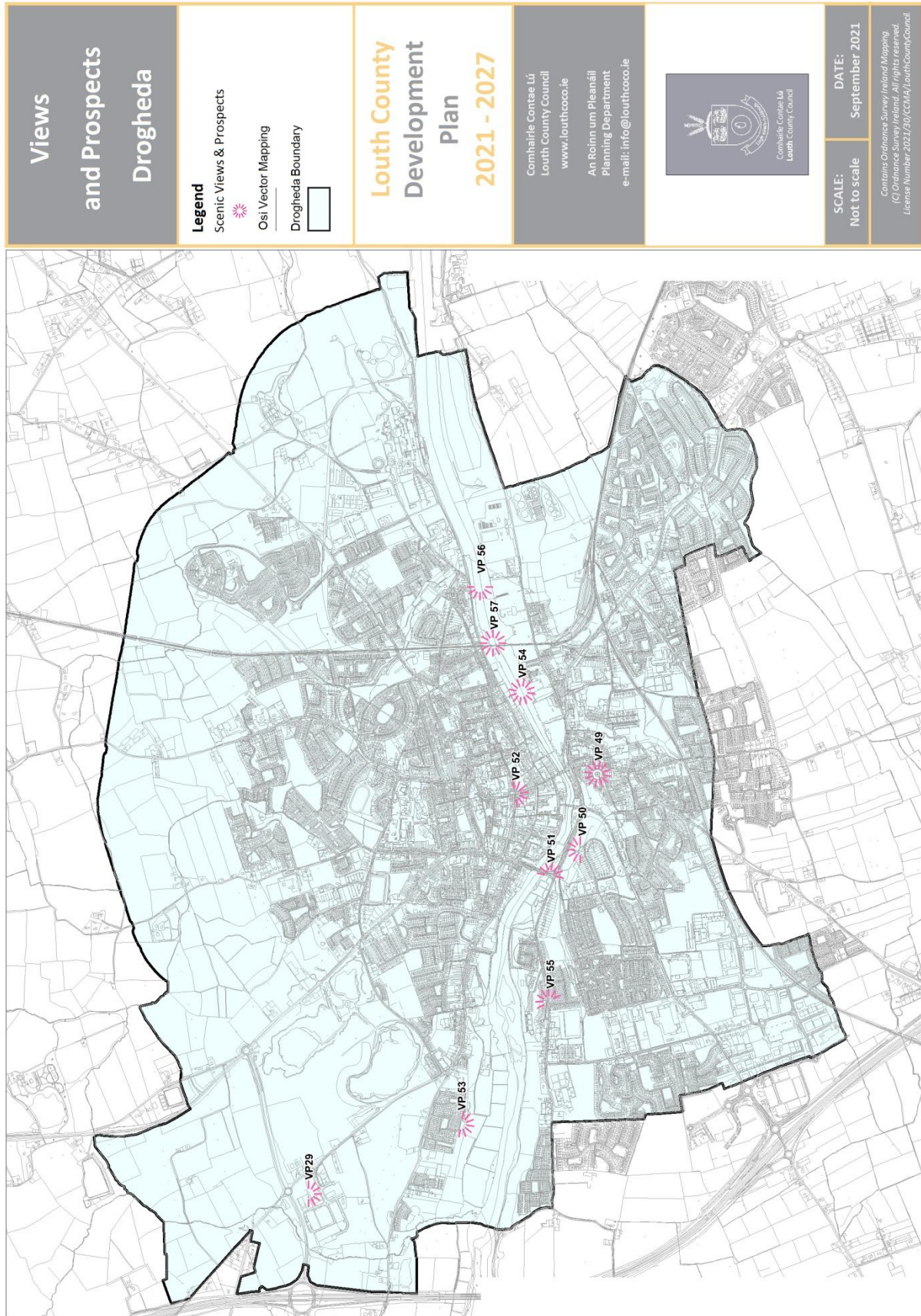
Map 8.16: Views and Prospects, County Louth



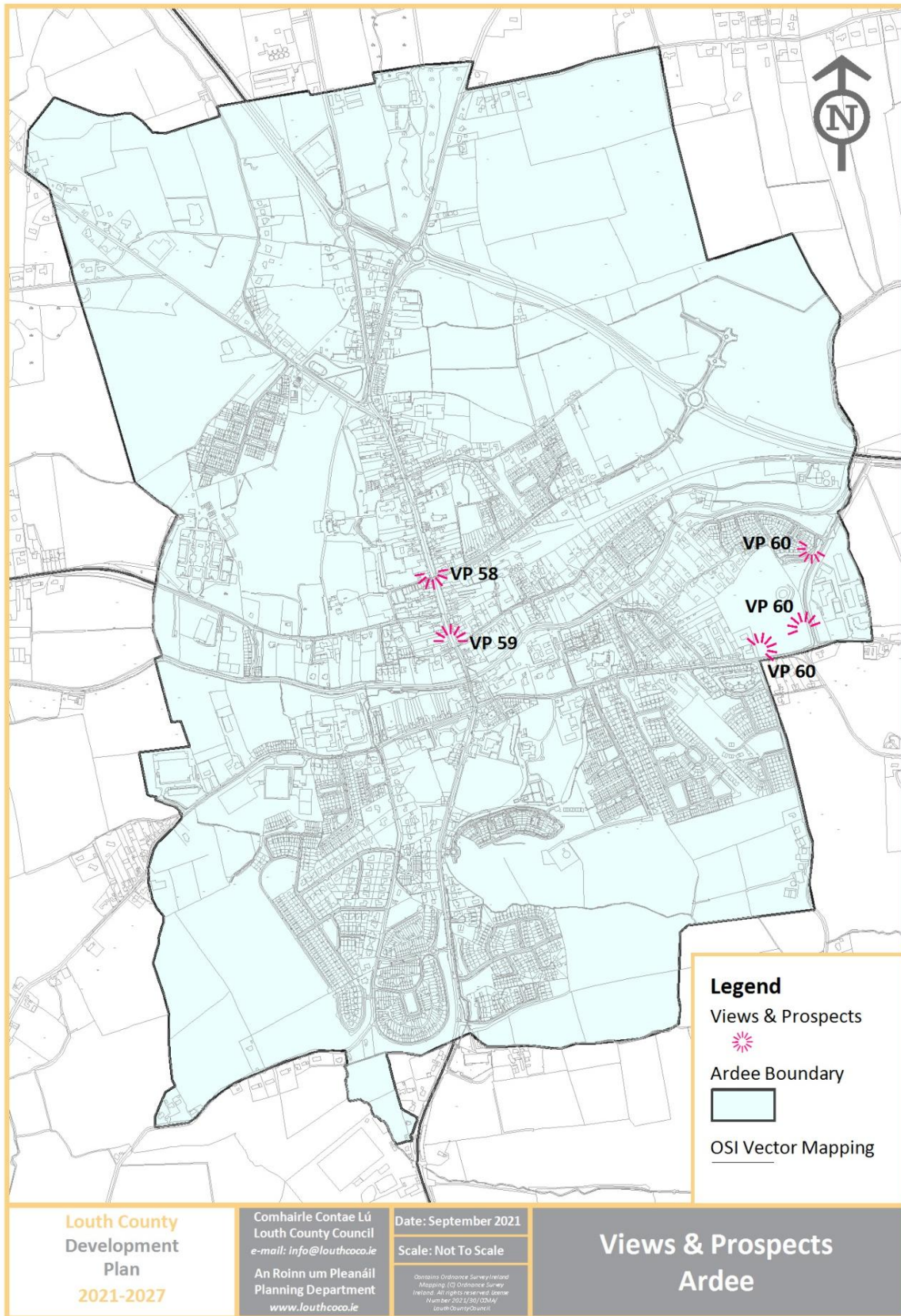
Map 8.17: Views and Prospects, Dundalk



Map 8.18: Views and Prospects, Drogheda



Map 8.19: Views and Prospects, Ardee



Policy Objective

NBG 36	To protect the unspoiled natural environment of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) from inappropriate development and reinforce their character, distinctiveness and sense of place, for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.
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Policy Objective

NBG 37	To protect the unspoiled rural landscapes of the Areas of High Scenic Quality (AHSQ) from inappropriate development for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.
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Policy Objective

NBG 38	Protect and sustain the established appearance and character of views and prospects listed in Tables 8.14 – 8.18 of this Plan that contribute to the distinctive quality of the landscape, from inappropriate development.
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Policy Objective

NBG 39	To improve, where necessary, public access to viewing points, subject to availability of resources.
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8.13 SCENIC ROUTES

Louth is fortunate to have many areas of high quality landscape especially along the coast, upland areas and river valleys reflected in the aforementioned Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Areas of High Scenic Quality and Views and Prospects. In association with these high quality, natural landscapes a series of important Scenic Routes have been identified which are of an amenity and tourism value, and which require protection.

Applications for development must carefully consider the siting, design and landscaping of the proposed development to ensure that there are no significant alterations to the character of the area. Any development proposals, which would interfere with or adversely affect these Scenic Routes, will not be permitted.

The Scenic Routes within County Louth are identified in Table 8.19 and illustrated on Map 8.20.

Table 8.19: Scenic Routes, County Louth and Dundalk

Reference No.	Route
SR 1	Faughart Hill, Faughart Upper
SR 2	Ravensdale Road (Rockmarshall to Drumad)
SR 3	Deerpark Road
SR 4	Dromad via N1, Broughattin to Doolargy
SR 5	Annaverna
SR 6	Doolargy
SR 7	Jeninstown (Minor and Hill)
SR 8	Ballymakellett
SR 9	Jeninstown to Piedmont
SR 10	Jeninstown to Omeath via Windy Gap

Reference No.	Route
SR 11	Piedmont-Benagh-Spellickanee
SR 12	Bush-Windy Gap-Edentober
SR 13	Bush-Carlingford incl. Commons
SR 14	Greenore-Carlingford- Omeath
SR 15	Coast Road-Whitestown-Ballagan-Ballytrasna
SR 16	Coast Road, Dromiskin
SR 17	Townparks, Ardee
SR 18	Castlebellingham-Annagassan-Clogherhead-Termonfeckin
SR 19	Baltray-Queensborough-Beaulieu
SR 20	Slane Road, Townley Hall
SR 21	King William's Glen
SR 22	Mount Oriel (Collon-Belpatrick)
SR 23	Coastal Road, Blackrock Village

Policy Objective

NBG 40	To prohibit inappropriate development which would interfere with or adversely affect the Scenic Routes as identified in Table 8.19 and illustrated on Map 8.20.
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8.14 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

8.14.1 Introduction

Green infrastructure is an interconnected network of green spaces that help conserve natural ecosystems, in both urban and rural locations, and provide benefits to human populations through water purification, flood control, carbon capture, food production and recreation. Such spaces include woodlands, coastlines, flood plains, hedgerows, urban parks and street trees. Green Infrastructure incorporates green spaces (or blue if aquatic ecosystems are concerned) and other physical features in terrestrial (including coastal) and marine areas.



Green infrastructure provision is an essential element in delivering a high quality of life for both existing and new communities and creating a high quality environment with a distinct sense of place. The protection, enhancement, creation and connection of green infrastructure is crucial to the sustainable development of the County. Green infrastructure by its nature is multi-functional in terms of uses. These include but are not limited to wildlife, recreational, cultural and heritage experiences in addition to delivering environmental services such as sustainable water drainage and flood protection.

It can include uplands, wetlands, woodlands, rivers, lakes, and coastal areas. Green Infrastructure can also refer to landscape elements at all spatial scales including parks, open spaces, farmland, private gardens, hedgerows, green corridors, and the open countryside. It is capable of delivering a wide range of economic, environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities including:

- Supports habitats for wildlife, biodiversity and fragile ecosystems allowing them to flourish;
- Promotes recreation, tourism and culture;
- Increases outdoor physical activity, social interaction and access to nature, improving health and well-being;
- Attracts business and inward investment by creating an attractive environment;
- Creates a sense of place and local distinctiveness;
- Assists in climate change adaptation including flood alleviation;
- Increases environmental education and awareness; and
- Provides places for local food production through agriculture, allotments and gardens.



The European Union's Biodiversity Strategy 2011, seeks to halt biodiversity loss in Europe by 2020 including a target to ensure that by 2020, 'ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing Green Infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems'.

In 2013 the EU published *Building a Green Infrastructure for Europe* alongside *Green Infrastructure: Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital*, to provide a framework and strategy to promote and facilitate green infrastructure projects in policy promotion, support of projects, access to finance and promotion of information and innovation. The multiple benefits of Green Infrastructure are recognised in a range of national policy documents including, but not limited to, the *National Biodiversity Plan (2017-2021)*, the *Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (2019-2021)*, *Creating Green Infrastructure for Ireland (2010)* and *Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009)*.

The NPF and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) identify and support key Guiding Principles for Green Infrastructure Strategies to be incorporated by Local Authorities in the preparation of their strategies.

This includes support for the provision of green and blue infrastructure, the development of Strategic Green Infrastructure and an associated network of walking and cycling routes, which will aid in mitigating climate change impacts through carbon sequestration and the delivery of alternative energy supply.

8.14.2 Planning for Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure planning is a proactive approach to the sustainable development of natural resources and biodiversity and recognises that connectivity and multi-functionality are key concepts therein. Protected natural areas cannot thrive in isolation. Maintaining and re-establishing connectivity between these natural areas is needed to restore the health of ecosystems and allow species to thrive across their entire natural habitat. Connected green spaces provide greater benefits to both people and wildlife rather than isolated green spaces.



The Council recognises that Green Infrastructure planning involves a holistic approach, as an integral part of sustainable development, alongside other infrastructure such as utilities and transport networks in order to maximise the benefits of our natural assets, while performing key functions for our communities.

The conservation of ecological infrastructure such as hedgerows and riparian corridors facilitates and promotes the development of a 'network of sites' which strengthen and enhance our green infrastructure and facilitate the migration and exchange of species between conservations areas.

To this end, and with a view to improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 Network, the Council will encourage the management of features of the landscape, which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna. In addition, the Council will identify sites of local biodiversity value through implementation of the Draft *Louth Heritage Plan 2021-2026* and the *Local Biodiversity Action Plan for County Louth 2021-2026*.

8.14.3 Louth’s Green Infrastructure Strategy

A Green Infrastructure Strategy (GIS) has been incorporated into the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027. The principles of a green infrastructure approach to land use planning have been embedded as a cross cutting theme in the policies and objectives of this Plan.

The Strategic Objectives of Louth’s Green Infrastructure Strategy are outlined below:

- Flood Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation;
- An Ecological Framework;
- A Sustainable Movement Network;
- A Sense of Place;
- River Corridor and Coastal Management;
- Support for Urban Regeneration; and
- Community, Health and Enjoyment.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy and associated development management guidance is included in Appendix 8, Volume 3. Louth’s Green Infrastructure Network is illustrated on Map 8.21.

Policy Objective

NBG 41	To support the green infrastructure network of County Louth and ensure its implementation in the assessment of all development proposals to prevent adverse impact on the ecological connectivity of County Louth’s Core Areas.
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Policy Objective

NBG 42	To require the use of and develop the green infrastructure network, and support re-establishing connectivity to ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and as a supplementary guide for the protection and conservation of the European Sites in County Louth.
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Policy Objective

NBG 43	To utilise all information available on the Louth Baseline Assessment as evidence based decision making in the Louth Core Strategy.
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Policy Objective

NBG 44	To protect, maintain, and enhance the natural and organic character of the watercourses in the County, including opening up to daylight where safe and feasible. The creation and/or enhancement of riparian buffer zones will be required where possible. All proposed coastal walkways will be required to comply with the Habitats, EIA and SEA Directives
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Policy Objective

NBG 45	To prepare specific Green Infrastructure Strategies for the Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk and integrate into the local area plan for each settlement.
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Policy Objective

NBG 46	To develop linear parks, particularly along waterways, and to link existing parks and open spaces in order to provide green chains that promote permeability for pedestrians and cyclists in the Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk.
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Policy Objective

NBG 47	To support the existing features of interest in the Level 3 and 4 Settlements of County Louth and promote and facilitate any areas identified for green infrastructure enhancement.
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Policy Objective

NBG 48	All future development proposals shall require within the overall design scheme the integration of environmental assets and existing biodiversity features including those identified in Table 9 of the Green Infrastructure Strategy Appendix 8, Volume 3, to enhance the quality, character and design of the proposal.
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Policy Objective

NBG 49	To require the integration of green infrastructure and inclusion of native planting schemes in all development proposals in landscaped areas, open spaces and areas of public space.
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Policy Objective

NBG 50	To incorporate all identified stone walls into development proposals. Where retention of the stone wall is not feasible there shall be a requirement to rebuild the stone wall at an alternative, suitable location.
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Policy Objective

NBG 51	To require the integration of climate change mitigation measures in any future spatial plans and climate change adaptation measures in proposed developments.
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Policy Objective

NBG 52	To develop and support the implementation of a Regional Green Infrastructure approach by working collaboratively and in partnership with the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, adjoining local authorities and other key stakeholders to identify, protect, enhance and manage existing green infrastructure within the County and to provide additional GI where possible.
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Policy Objective

NBG 53	To support and increase investment in the on-going maintenance of existing, and provision of additional green infrastructure by accessing relevant EU funding mechanisms and national funding opportunities, including tourism related funding.
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Policy Objective

NBG 54	To ensure the protection, enhancement and maintenance of Green Infrastructure in recognition of its health benefits in addition to the economic, social, environmental and physical value of green spaces, through the integration of Green Infrastructure planning and development in the planning process.
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Policy Objective

NBG 55	To create an integrated and coherent green infrastructure for County Louth by ensuring compliance with the objectives listed in the Green Infrastructure Strategy outlined in Appendix 8, Volume 3, to improve pedestrian and cycle access routes within this green infrastructure network while ensuring that ecosystem functions and existing amenity uses are not compromised and existing biodiversity and heritage is protected and enhanced.
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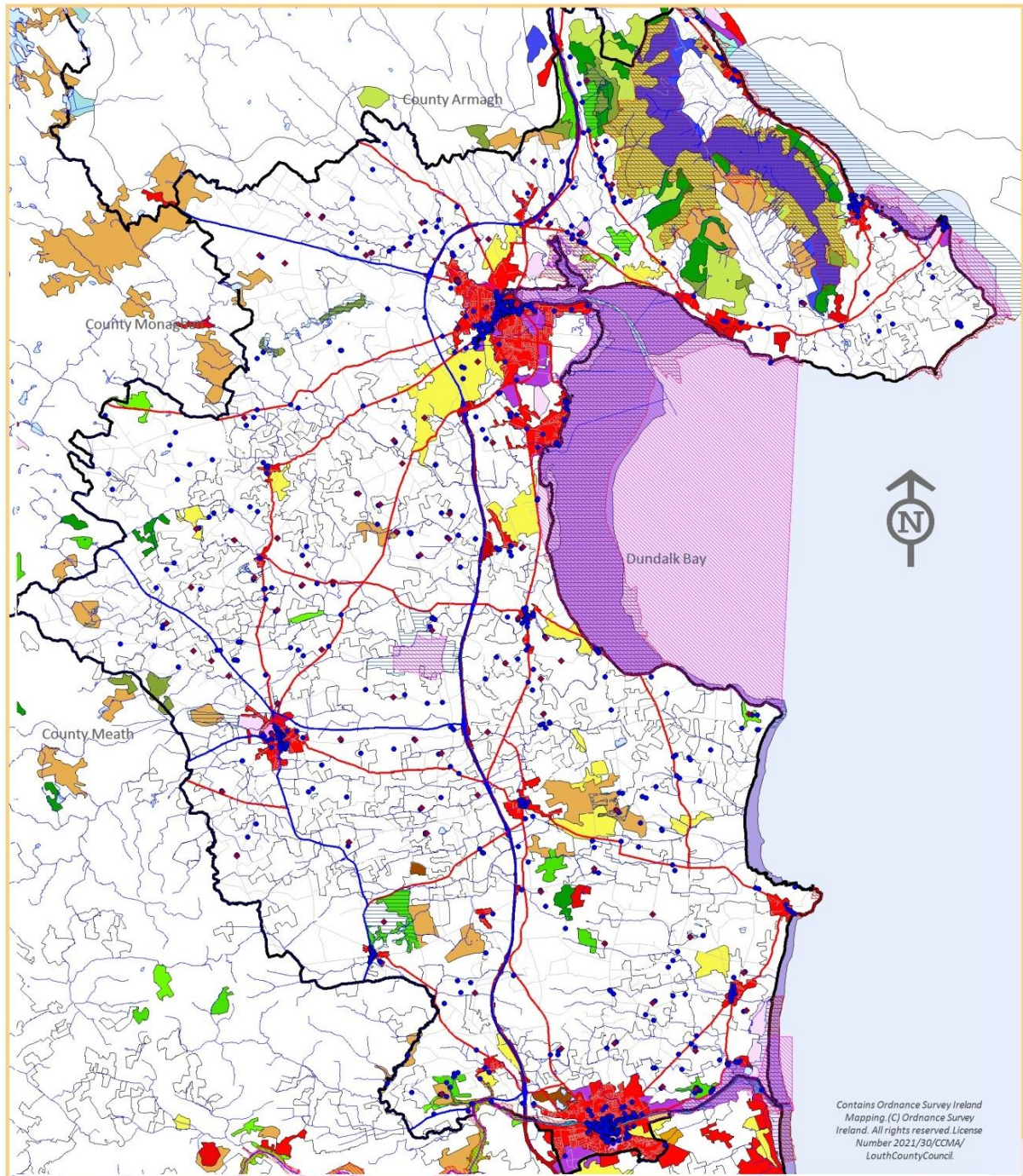
Policy Objective

NBG 56	To focus on ‘greening’ key streets in the Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk and key towns and villages by way of higher standards for planning and amenity along key routes.
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Policy Objective

NBG 57	To ensure that no development, including clearing or storage of materials, takes place within a minimum distance of 10m measured from each bank of any river, stream or watercourse.
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Map 8.21: Green Infrastructure Network in County Louth



LEGEND

Corine Land Cover 2018

- Continuous urban fabric
- Discontinuous urban fabric
- Industrial or commercial units
- Road and rail networks
- Mineral extraction sites
- Dump sites
- Green urban areas
- Sport and leisure facilities
- Non-irrigated arable land
- Fruit trees and berry plantations
- Pastures
- Complex cultivation patterns
- Land principally occupied by agriculture
- Broad-leaved forest
- Coniferous forest
- Mixed forest
- Natural grasslands
- Moors and heathland
- Transitional woodland-shrub
- Inland marshes
- Peat bogs
- Salt marshes
- Intertidal flats
- Water courses
- Water bodies
- Estuaries
- Sea and ocean

Special Protection Areas

- Special Areas of Conservation
- Proposed NHA's

Road Network

- Local
- National
- Regional
- Rivers EPA
- Lakes EPA

NIAH Garden Survey

- Protected Structures

Louth County
Development
Plan
2021-2027

Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council
www.louthcoco.ie

An Roinn um Pleanáil
Planning Department
e-mail: info@louthcoco.ie

Date: September 2021
Scale: Not To Scale

**Green Infrastructure
Network**