

Local Development Plan (LDP) - Position  
Paper

## **Natural Environment**



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

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## Executive Summary

This Position Paper provides baseline evidence in relation to the natural environment of the Ards and North Down Borough Council area. This should assist in identifying the key future direction for the Local Development Plan (LDP) up to 2030.

It is important to stress that in compiling the Position Paper, the best information available has been used, however it may need to be revised in light of the release of any new data.

The paper will provide a foundation of evidence to bring forward proposals in the Preferred Options Paper (POP). The POP is the earliest stage of plan preparation and will form the basis for consulting with the public and stakeholders on a range of options for dealing with key issues in the Borough. It shall also allow consideration of how policies for the protection of the natural environment may be formulated within the context of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS 2035) and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

The evidence base on this topic will need to be further informed by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). Any necessary revisions to the evidence shall be presented as an addendum to this paper.

Any future decision making will need to be made within the context of the SA under the provisions of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011. This paper is therefore intended to generate members' ideas on how planning can best secure the protection, enhancement and sustainable use of the natural environment in the Ards and North Down Council Area.

## Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide baseline evidence to inform members and enable meaningful participation in the LDP workshops.
- 1.2 The paper sets out the regional context for the natural environment, which allows members to consider how environmental policy may be formulated within the context of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and other regional policy. This is followed by an assessment of the existing Development Plan context and potential for future policies or enhancement of existing policies. Finally, an overview of the environmental assets profile/baseline of the Borough is provided.

## Regional Policy Context

- 2.1 The regional policy context is provided by the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) and extant regional planning policy statements.

### [Regional Development Strategy \(RDS 2035\)](#)

- 2.2 The RDS 2035 provides a framework for strong sustainable economic growth across the region. Sustainable development is at the heart of the Regional Development Strategy. The RDS aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Our society and economies are completely dependent on the environment which encompasses them and are therefore bound to its limits and capabilities.
- 2.3 The RDS provides the following Strategy Guidance with respect to the Environment;

- Reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change whilst improving air quality.
- Manage our waste sustainably.
- Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment.
- Promote a more sustainable approach to the provision of water and sewerage services and flood risk management.

2.4 The RDS outlines that the natural environment directly supports all life and is essential to well-being. Human impacts on landscapes over the last century, as the result of increased development, have adversely affected biodiversity. The RDS recognises that ongoing land use intensification from agriculture and urbanisation has resulted in a reduction in the total area of semi-natural habitats.

2.5 Regional Guidance set out in the RDS<sup>1</sup> directs to ‘*Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment*’. The following aims are outlined with respect to the natural environment<sup>2</sup>:

- Sustain and enhance biodiversity
- Identify, establish, protect and manage ecological networks.
- Protect and encourage green and blue infrastructure within urban areas
- Protect and manage important geological and geomorphological features
- Protect enhance and manage the coast
- Protect, enhance and restore the quality of inland water bodies.
- Recognise and promote the conservation of local identity and distinctive landscape character
- Conserve, protect and where possible enhance areas recognised for

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<sup>1</sup> RDS 2035 Policy RG11, page 47

<sup>2</sup> RDS 2035 page 49-50

their landscape quality

- Protect designated areas of countryside from inappropriate development (either directly or indirectly) and continue to assess areas for designation
- Consider the establishment of one or more National Parks.

### Regional Planning Policy Statements

2.6 The RDS is complemented by Planning Policy Statements, the most relevant of which is **PPS 2 Natural Heritage** which sets out policies for protecting and enhancing the natural environment. The document contains specific policies for developments that impact upon international, national and local conservation importance, protected species, habitats and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. PPS2 has been incorporated into the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) which was published in September 2015.

2.7 The SPPS sets out the following regional policy objectives with respect to the natural environment:

- protect, conserve, enhance and restore the abundance, quality, diversity and distinctiveness of the region's natural heritage;
- further sustainable development by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, economic and environmental development;
- protect and enhance biodiversity, geo-diversity and the environment; and
- take actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change.
- to further sustainable development by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, economic and environmental development;

- assist in meeting international (including European), national and local responsibilities and obligations in the protection and enhancement of the natural heritage;
- contribute to rural renewal and urban regeneration by ensuring developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment;
- to assist in meeting international (including European), national and local responsibilities and obligations in the protection and enhancement of the natural heritage;
- to contribute to rural renewal and urban regeneration by ensuring developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment.

### The Role of Development Plans

- 2.8 The SPPS states that appropriate weight must be given to designated sites of international, national and local importance; protected species; priority habitats and priority species; and to other biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment.
- 2.9 In plan-making councils should take full account of the implications of proposed land use zonings, locations for development and settlement limits on natural heritage features and landscape character within or adjoining the plan area. Natural heritage features and designated sites should be identified as part of the plan-making process. Where appropriate, policies should be brought forward for their protection and / or enhancement. LDPs should also identify and promote the design of ecological networks throughout the plan area which could help reduce the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats through a strategic approach.



- 2.10 LDPs should seek to protect and integrate certain features of the natural heritage when zoning sites for development through 'key site requirements'. In addition, LDPs should seek to identify and promote green and blue infrastructure where this will add value to the provision, enhancement and connection of open space and habitats in and around settlements. LDPs should also consider the natural and cultural components of the landscape and promote opportunities for the enhancement or restoration of degraded landscapes, particularly those affecting communities. Incorporating biodiversity into plans for regeneration can help deliver economic and social growth by creating places where people want to live, work, invest in and visit. For example, by planning for nature and green space in our neighbourhoods we can improve our health and quality of life. Including biodiversity features into schemes adds to the attractiveness and appeal of regenerated areas.
- 2.11 The SPPS directs that Planning authorities should ensure that the potential effects on landscape and natural heritage, including the cumulative effect of development are considered. With careful planning and design the potential for conflict can be minimised and enhancement of features brought about.

### [Design and Placemaking](#)

- 2.12 Two of the core planning principles of the SPPS relate to the positive impacts of good design and place-making. In relation to the natural environment, good design can mean developments that minimise energy consumption and water usage, make best use of the assets of a site and its unique characteristics and promote landscape design to contribute to biodiversity. Higher standards of design will be expected where new developments impact upon designated natural landscapes such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). In the countryside, all proposals should be sited and designed to integrate sympathetically into their surroundings. The publication 'Building on Tradition' (DoE, May 2012) provides further guidance on appropriate design responses to rural settings.

- 2.13 Place-making refers to the way in which buildings and their surroundings have a significant effect upon the character and quality of a place. The approach seeks to ensure that new developments enhance the unique qualities of a place by identifying and working with its assets. It is therefore wholly relevant to the natural environment which is rich in natural assets, sensitive to inappropriate change.

## **Extant Area Plan Context**

[North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995 \(NDAAP\), Belfast Urban Area Plan, draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 \(dBMAP\) and Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 \(BMAP\)](#)

- 3.1 It should be noted that BMAP was adopted in September 2014 but was subsequently quashed as a result of a judgment in the Court of Appeal delivered on 18 May 2017. As a consequence of this, the North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995, the Belfast Urban Area Plan, and Bangor Town Centre Plan 1995 are now the statutory Development Plans for the North Down area with draft BMAP remaining a material consideration. These plans remain extant until replaced by the new Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Borough. The existing plans are an important consideration in the LDP process, as they provide a starting point for the review of our spatial planning options
- 3.2 Draft BMAP 2015 outlines the following with respect to the natural assets of North Down:
- The Plan recognises the natural environment of the Borough as a 'significant asset' especially at areas such as the Holywood Hills, Crawfordsburn Country Park, the Lough Shore coastal path and at the Boroughs beaches including Ballyholme.
  - The Plan further recognises the various landscapes within so as to protect them from undesirable development.
  - There are a number of important areas of nature conservation within the

council area. Part of the Belfast Lough shoreline lies within the northwest of the council area and this is recognised internationally as a Ramsar Site, a Special Protection Area (SPA) and an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI).

- There are several other ASSIs within the council area, and Local Nature Reserves at Balloo Wetland and Balloo Woodland.
- Craigtantlet Escarpment is an Area of High Scenic Value (AoHSV.)

**Photo 1: Cairn Wood, Forest Service Managed Woodland**



Source: Ards and North Down Borough Council

- 3.3 The Borough is characterised by a number of landscape types including the rocky coastline along the southern edge of Belfast Lough, an inland belt of gently rolling farmland and the wooded slopes of the Holywood Hills in the southern portion of the Borough and the Craigtantlet Escarpment, a steep escarpment to the south of Holywood, which forms a backdrop to east Belfast. The Borough also includes undulating farmland to the east which continues southwards to the Ards Peninsula and the outer Ards coast characterised by colourful rural coastal settlements and rocky coastal features.

## [Ards and Down Area Plan 2015](#)

- 3.4 The plan recognises that the Ards Borough is especially rich in varied landscapes, wildlife habitats and heritage features, which together make a positive contribution to its special character and identity.
- 3.5 The district is dominated by the important environmental resource of Strangford Lough, an enclosed tranquil stretch of marine water with an indented coastline of islands and half drowned drumlins and a smoother coastline to the east, both backed by wooded estates.

**Photo 2: Strangford Lough**



**Photo 3: The Eastern coastline – Cloughey beach**



Source: Ards and North Down Borough Council

- 3.6 Strangford Lough is of outstanding value as a marine habitat and the conservation of its natural environment is secured by a variety of statutory designations made under European directives and regional legislation.

## Council Plans and Strategies

### [Ards and North Down Corporate Plan 2015-2019](#)

- 4.1 Under the strategic priority heading **PLACE**, the Council's Corporate Plan sets aims to 'invest in and promote the borough's rich cultural heritage and environment,' and to 'enhance our towns villages and coastlines.' These themes have direct relevance to the natural environment. Elsewhere in the Corporate Plan, the significant potential of the appropriate management and promotion of the natural environment is recognised in a more indirect way for example 'Increasing pride in the borough' under the topic heading **PEOPLE** and 'attract and promote economic investment' and 'enhance visitor experience and spend' in the **PROSPERITY** section.

### [The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032](#)

- 4.2 The Conservation and protection of our natural environment assets also supports the Community Plan (The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032) aspirations of 'All people in Ards and North Down benefit from a prosperous economy' (Outcome 4) and 'All people in Ards and North Down feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment.' (Outcome 5)

## Other Relevant Documents

### [Valuing Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020](#)

- 5.1 The strategy was produced by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and rural affairs (DAERA) and sets out how Northern Ireland plans to meet its international obligations and local targets to ensure that the environment

can continue to support our people and economy. It adopts a modern approach and emphasises that the correct management of biological systems will deliver the materials and services upon which people depend (the ecosystem services approach.) The document lists 20 targets under the five strategic headings of:

- address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss;
- reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use;
- improve the status of biodiversity;
- enhance the benefits of biodiversity to all; and
- enhance implementation through participatory planning.

5.2 The strategy highlights that the achievement of these goals requires cooperation from business, local government and the voluntary sector.

#### [Draft Strangford Lough Marine Protected Area Management Scheme](#)

5.3 This draft document (produced March 2017) by the Strangford and Lecale Marine Partnership with an aim to help statutory bodies meet their obligations and responsibilities with regard to the marine and coastal environment of the Lough. It sets a framework through which activities can be managed, so as to protect the environment while allowing it to be used sustainably. Twelve management goals are listed and these include eradication and control of damaging and invasive species, developing sustainable aquaculture, ensuring outdoor recreation and tourism are managed and developed sustainably and to improve water quality.

#### [The Northern Ireland Biodiversity Checklist](#)

5.4 The biodiversity checklist was produced by DAERA to act as a step by step tool to identify potential biodiversity impacts development proposals may have and what ecological assessments or surveys would reasonably be required to be submitted with planning applications. The checklist contains questions relating to designated sites, priority habitats and protected

species and should enable early consideration of biodiversity impacts and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.

#### [Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2013-2017](#)

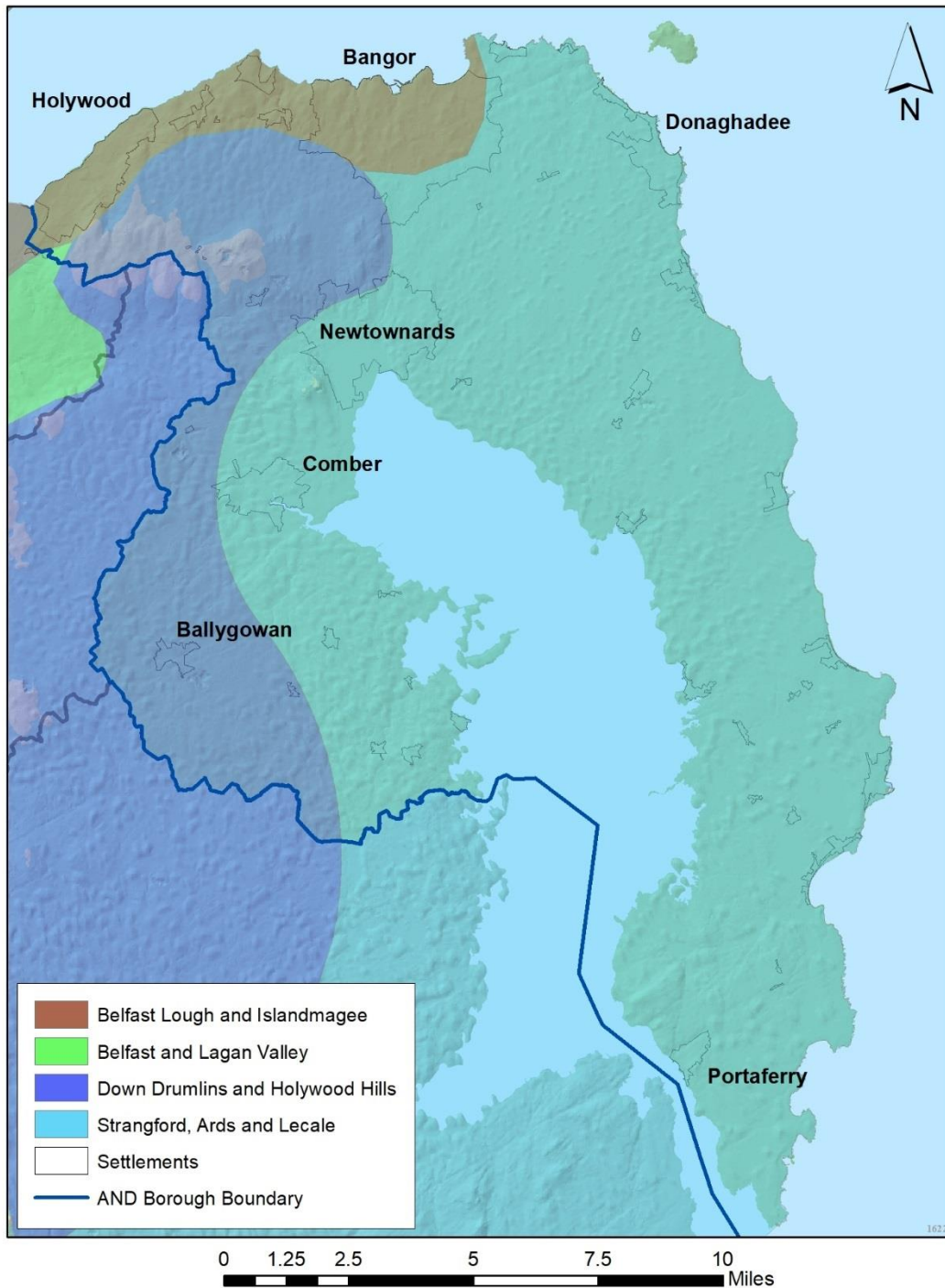
- 5.5 This document was produced by the legacy Ards and North Down Borough Councils in partnership with Action for Biodiversity in September 2013. It is intended to guide the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the area. It illustrates the richness of habitat types and biodiversity in the legacy Boroughs and the threats that face them, including invasive species, habitat loss, pollution and agricultural practises. The Council is now in the process of updating and revising this
- itfc,lc

#### [Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment \(draft\)](#)

- 5.6 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is the process of identifying and describing variations in the character of the landscape. LCA identifies and explains the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive by mapping and describing character types and areas. It also shows how the landscape is perceived, experienced and valued by people. LCAs can inform a wide range of activities including land management plans, sensitivity and capacity studies, forest and woodland management strategies and planning policies and decisions. They are also useful for monitoring change across the landscape and for capturing the characteristics of the landscape including topographic features, flora and fauna, land use and cultural associations.
- 5.7 The draft Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (NIRLCA) divides Northern Ireland into 26 discreet areas. It is intended that each of these areas is a recognisable landscape with its own distinct character

and sense of place. Of the 26 RCAs, three fall wholly or partially within the Ards and North Down Borough.

**Map 1: Regional Landscape Character Areas**



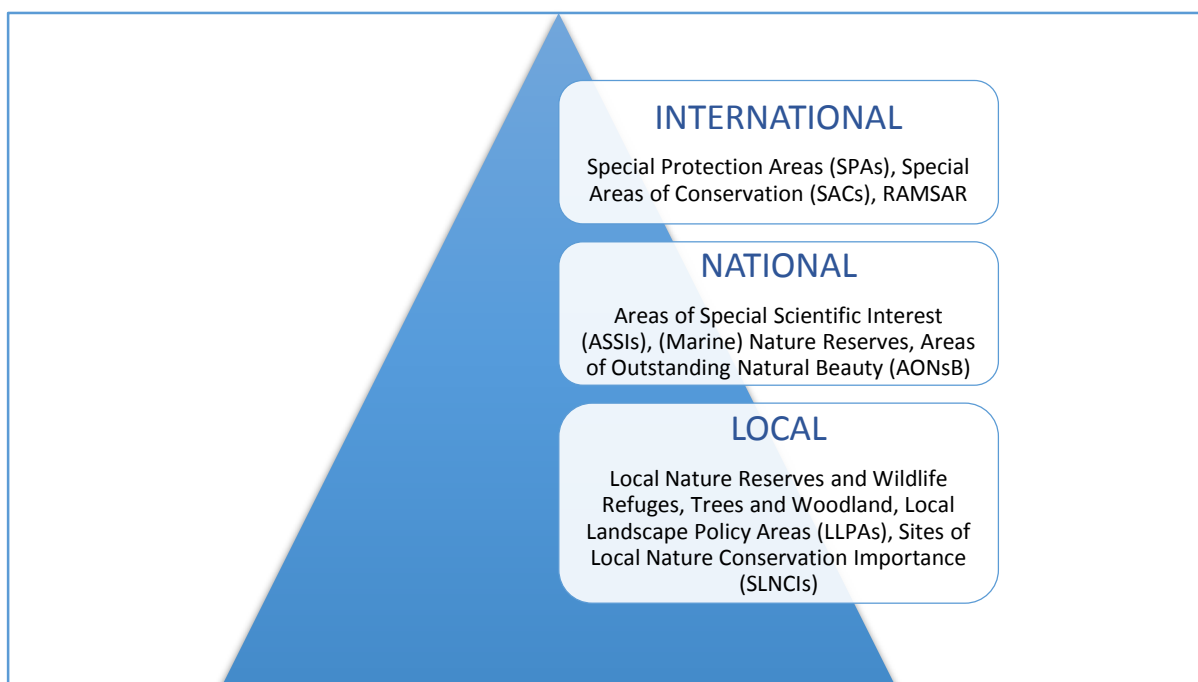
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- 5.8 LCA 20: Belfast Lough and Islandmagee: This LCA consists of the developed coast of Belfast Lough and extending out to Bangor. This area contains the most settled landscapes of Northern Ireland and is the focus of the main motorway and road corridors. It is a developed urban landscape, with an absence of tranquillity. Movement, noise and artificial lighting has a strong influence upon this area.
- 5.9 LCA 22: North Down Drumlins and Hills: This LCA consists of the eastern section of the wide drumlin belt, defined along its northern edge by igneous geology in contrast to the sedimentary rock of the Lagan Valley. The North Down drumlins and hills form part of the extensive drumlin field that extends across the counties of Armagh and Down. The area is crossed by a number of main roads connecting various market towns. Drumlins dominate the area, except on the upland pastures of the Holywood Hills.
- 5.10 LCA 26: Strangford, Ards and Lecale: The most easterly part of Northern Ireland, the Strangford, Ards and Lecale area lies to the south of Belfast Lough and east of the Mountains of Mourne. It includes the drumlin-strewn lowlands that surround Strangford Lough and the rocky coastline with distinctive headlands and bays. The area has an open, exposed and windswept character with a high degree of tranquillity.

# Profile of Natural Heritage Assets in Ards and North Down

**Fig. 1: Hierarchy of Nature Conservation Designations**



## International Designations

- 6.1 The United Kingdom has transposed the terms of the European Commission (EC) Birds and Habitats Directives, and both the Water Framework and Marine Strategy Framework Directives into UK law. It is also a signatory to the Ramsar Convention in relation to the protection of wetlands.

## Special Protection Areas

- 6.2 The Birds Directive provides for the selection of sites for their importance as areas for breeding, over wintering and migrating birds known as Special Protection Areas (SPA). The Directive also requires Member States to strive to avoid the deterioration of habitats for wild birds outside designated sites.

Belfast Lough, Strangford Lough, The Copeland Islands, and Outer Ards Special Protected Areas are located within Ards and Down Borough Council area.

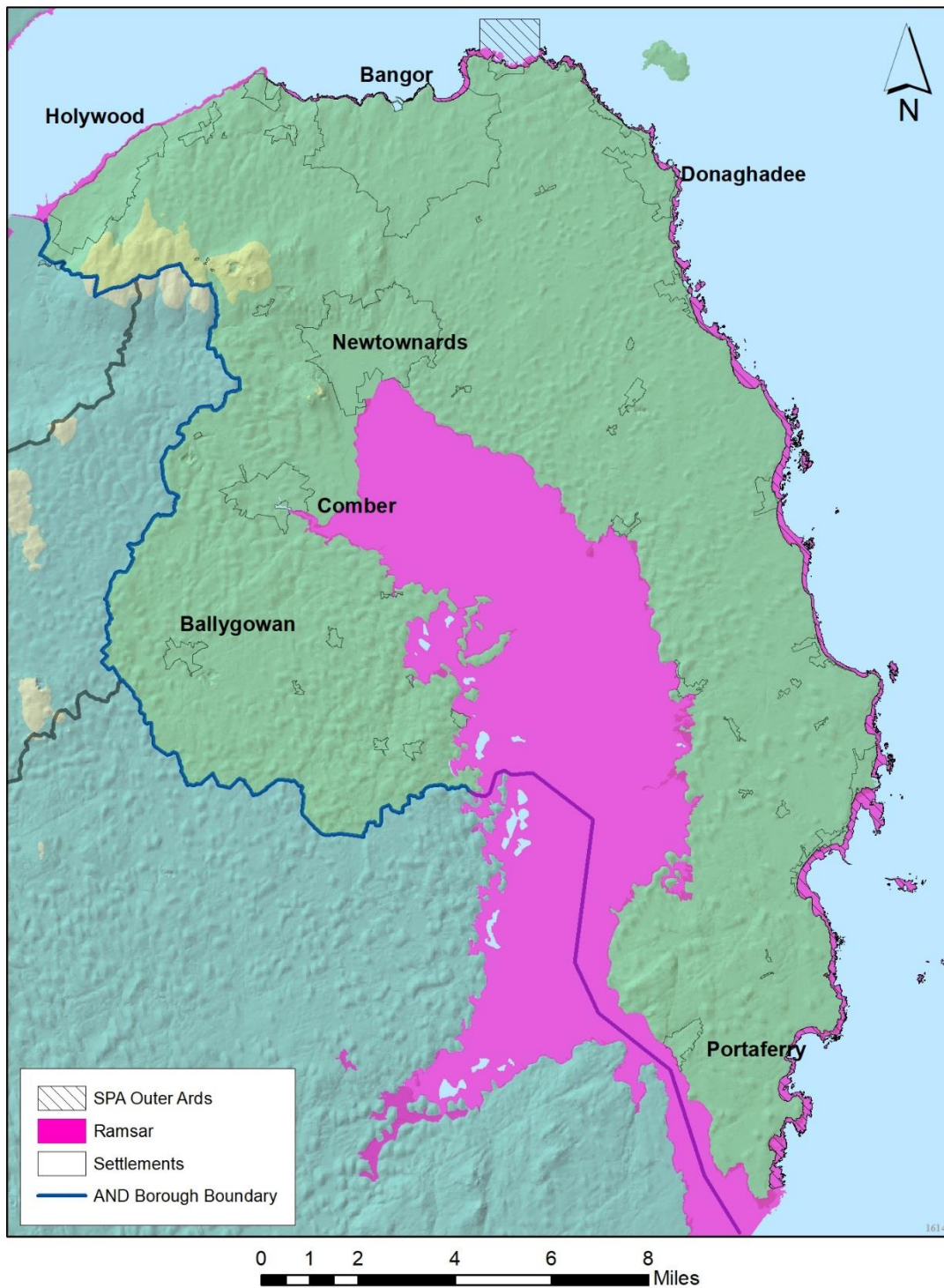
### Special Areas of Conservation

- 6.3 The Habitats Directive requires the protection of certain natural habitats through the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). It also requires the establishment of a system of strict protection for a list of species (other than birds) whose resting and breeding places and whose habitats must be protected to secure their survival, wherever they occur in the member state's territory. There are two Special Area of Conservation within Ards and North Down Borough Council area and they are Strangford Lough and Augnadarragh Lough (which straddles the boundary with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.) Members will also be aware of the recent confirmation of a Harbour Porpoise SAC in the North Channel (February 2017.)

### Ramsar Sites

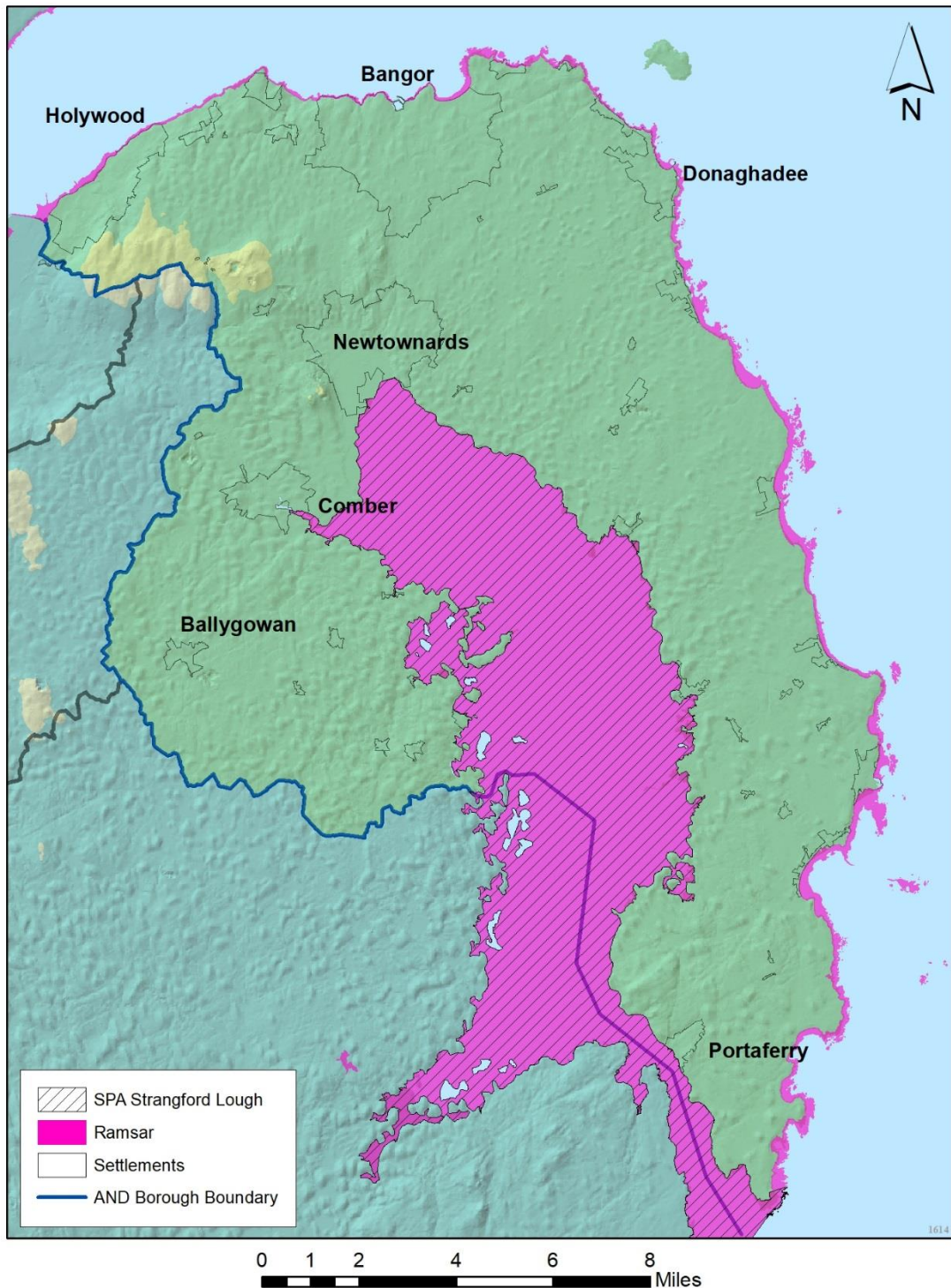
- 6.4 These are wetlands listed under the Ramsar Convention to protect those of international importance. It requires signatories to formulate and implement planning for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. As a matter of policy, the UK Government has chosen to apply the procedures under the Habitats Regulations in respect of Ramsar sites. Belfast Lough, Strangford Lough and Outer Ards are designated as Ramsar sites.

**Map 4: Outer Ards Special Protection Area and Ramsar site**



Source: Ards and North Down Borough Council

## Map 5: Strangford Lough Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site



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Source: Ards and North Down Borough Council

## National Designations

### The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended)

- 6.5 This prohibits the intentional and reckless killing, taking, injuring or disturbance of all wild birds and of certain animals and any person who knowingly causes or permits this to be done shall be guilty of an offence. It also prohibits the intentional and reckless destruction, uprooting or picking of certain wild plants. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (NI) Act 2011 (WANE) in addition places a statutory duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity when exercising any functions. Nature conservation sites selected as European sites under the Birds and Habitats Directives may also be underpinned, either wholly or in part, by sites selected at national level. These are the key pieces of legislation at a National Level.

### Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs)

- 6.6 ASSIs are given legal protection under the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 (as amended) which provides powers to designate, protect and manage them. These sites are of special interest by reason of their flora, fauna, geological and/or physiographical features and are designated under part IV of the Order. There are 17 Areas of Special Scientific Interest within the council area, a full list of which can be found in Appendix A on page 31.
- 6.7 Under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, other statutory designations include:

### Nature Reserves and National Nature Reserves

- 6.8 Nature reserves can be of national (and sometimes international) importance. They are usually managed by DAERA or by agreement with

another Department, a District Council or a voluntary conservation body. Within the council area there is Ballyquintin National nature reserve, and North Strangford.

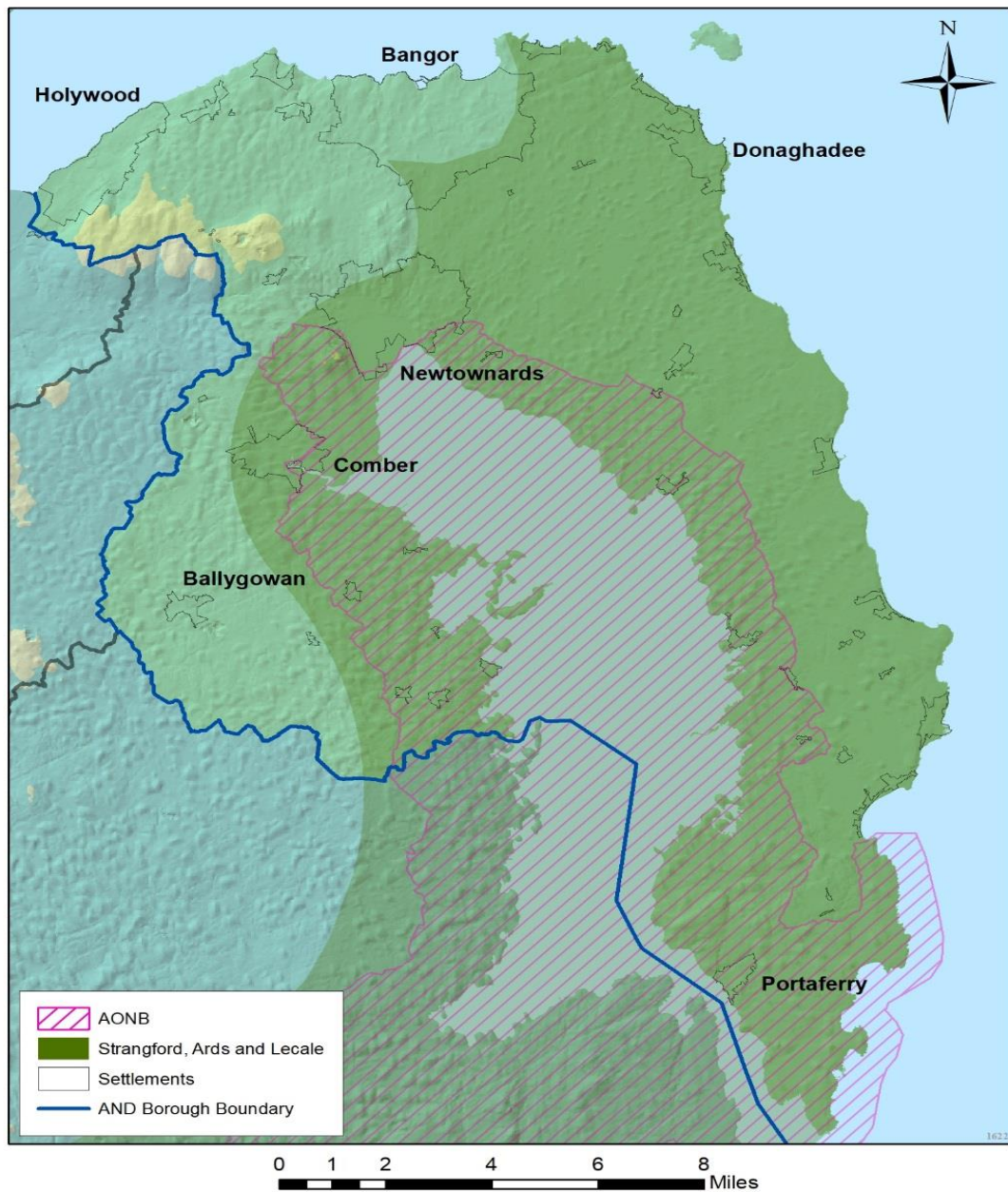
**Map 6: Nature Reserves in Strangford Lough**



## Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

6.9 AONBs were designated by the former Department of the Environment primarily for their high landscape quality, wildlife importance and rich cultural and architectural heritage. Within the council area, Strangford and Lecale AONB is noted as an important designation.

**Map 7: Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**



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- 6.10 Strangford and Lecale AONB is a coastal AONB (designated in 2010), which tells the story of our glacial past. It covers a varied landscape including drowned drumlins, mudflats, rocky bays, sweeping sandy strands and soft low cliffs. At the northern end, Scrabo Hill, capped by its tower forms a prominent landmark. Although much of the area has been designated as an AONB since the late 1960s, the re-designation in 2010 allows voluntary management plans to be drawn up for this landscape for the first time. Planning policy relating to development in AONBs is contained within PPS 2.

### Local Designations

#### Local Nature Reserves and Wildlife Reserves

- 6.11 Local Nature Reserves can be provided by Councils for nature conservation under powers conferred to them under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. They are particularly appropriate for educational, recreational or public information services. Local nature reserves in the council area include Balloo Wetland Nature Reserve and Balloo Woodland Nature Reserve.

#### **Photo 3: Balloo Wetland**



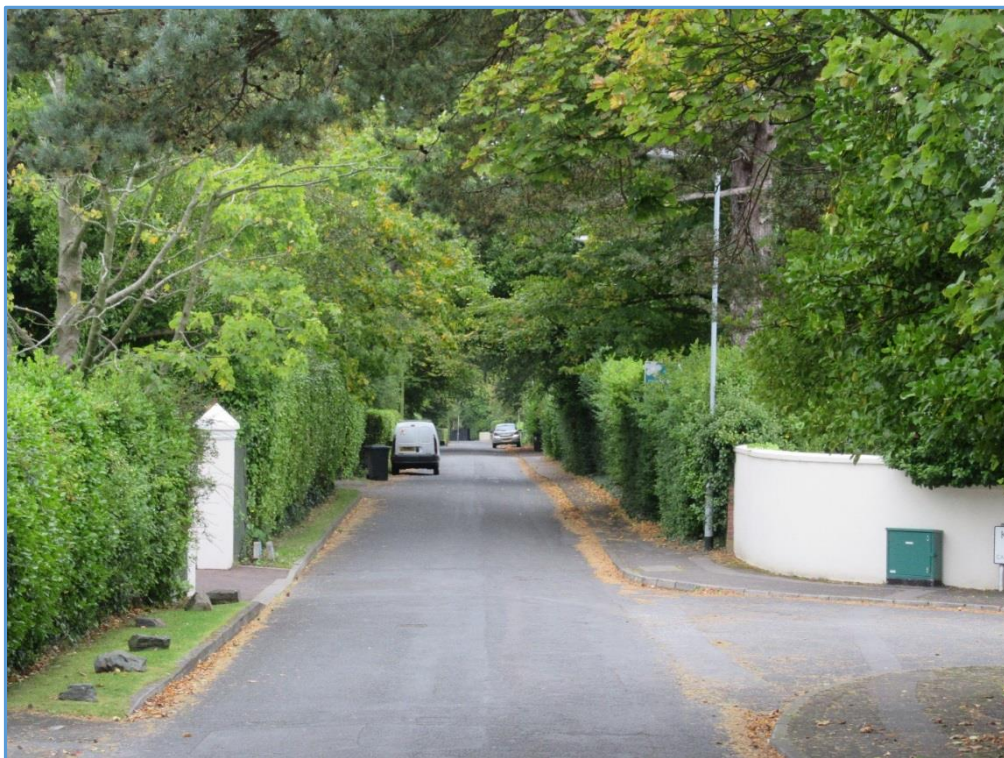
Source: Ards and North Down Borough Council

Balloo wetland has several habitats, including woodland, scrub, grassland, pond and reedbeds which provide a sanctuary for a range of plants, birds, butterflies, dragonflies, newts and frogs.

## Trees

- 6.12 Trees can be protected through Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) under The Planning (Trees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. A TPO provides protection for trees considered to be of special value in terms of amenity, history or rarity. It makes it an offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy a protected tree, or to permit these actions, without first seeking the local planning authorities consent to do so. There are 138 confirmed TPOs in the Borough, a full list of which can be found in Appendix B.

### **Photo 4: Kathleen Avenue TPO, Helen's Bay**



Source: Ards and North Down Borough Council

- 6.13 Trees within Conservation areas are afforded protection under Article 127 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. It makes it an offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot, or wilfully damage or destroy a tree or permit these actions without first seeking the Councils consent to do so. All trees within a Conservation Area are covered by this Article and not just those subject to a TPO. There are three conservation areas in the Borough, in Donaghadee, Portaferry and Holywood.

### Woodland

- 6.14 Sustainable forest management, as set out by the Forestry Standard, is a fundamental part of forest policy in Northern Ireland. One of the purposes of the Forestry Act (NI) 2010 is to manage forests to help protect the environment and biodiversity. Unless otherwise exempt, the Forestry Act and associated subordinate legislation, regulates the felling of trees in private woodland.
- 6.15 There is approximately 360.6ha of Forest Service controlled woodland within the council area (143.8ha of broadleaf, 132.9ha of coniferous & 46.8ha of mixed woodland). See Appendix C for further details.

### Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs)

- 6.16 LLPAs are designated within or adjoining settlements on lands considered to be of greatest nature conservation or heritage interest, amenity value, landscape quality or local significance. There are 101 LLPAs within the council area. (See Appendix D for further details)

### Landscape Wedges

- 6.17 Landscape wedges within the urban area which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure, in particular where they follow river valleys, afford

routes for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species.

Landscape Wedges also serve to protect important landscapes, these are shown on map overleaf on page 26. (See Appendix E for a full list of Landscape Wedges in the Borough). It should be noted that some of these are located adjacent to or cross over the boundaries with neighbouring council districts.

- 6.18 Rural Landscape Wedges are designated between Bangor and Crawfordsburn (Designation ND 04) and between Bangor and Groomsport (Designation ND 06) to distinguish and maintain the separate identities of Bangor and those villages.
  
- 6.19 Newtownards Rural Landscape Wedge defines and protects the setting of Dundonald and Newtownards and also maintains the rural character of the countryside. Comber Rural Landscape Wedge defines and protects the setting of Dundonald and Comber and maintains the rural character of the countryside.

**Map 8: Landscape Wedges in Ards and North Down (only occur in the northern section of the Borough)**



**Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs)**

- 6.20 SLNCIs are designated in accordance with PPS 2: Natural Heritage. Sites are identified on the basis of their flora, fauna or earth science interest. There are 28 SLNCIs within the Ards and North Down council area (See Appendix F for further details).

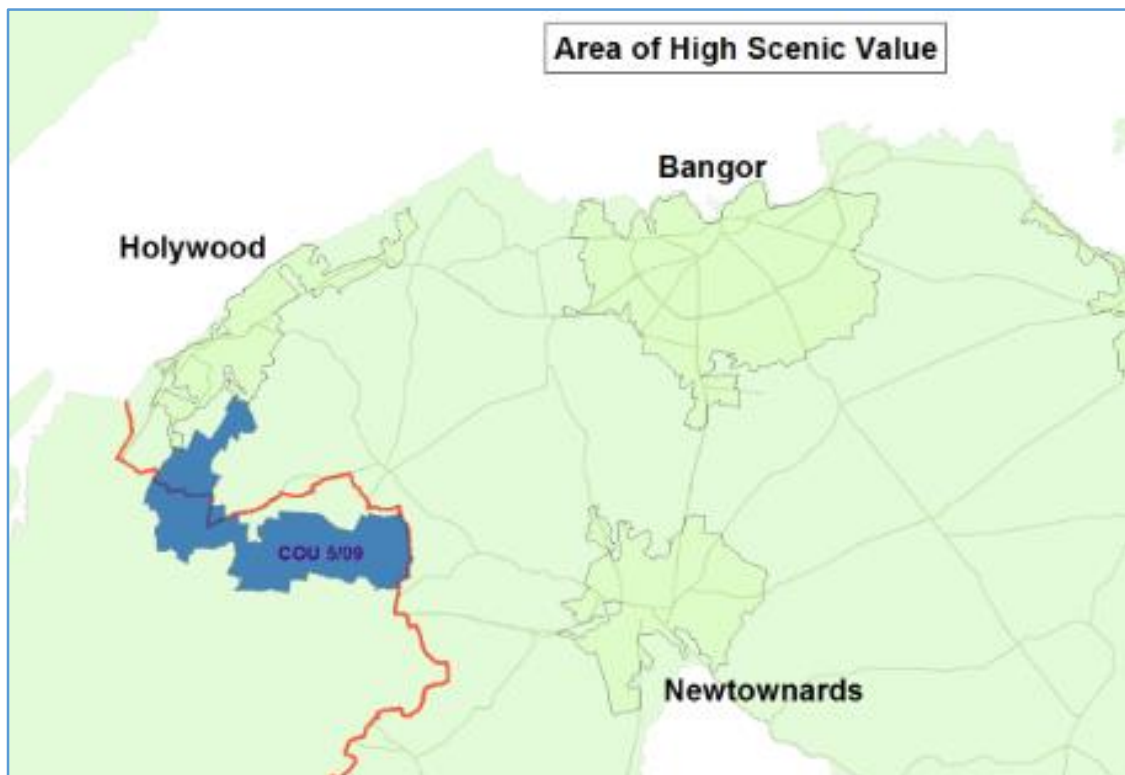
**Areas of High Scenic Value (AOHSV)**

- 6.21 The Diversity of landscapes in the council area combine to provide a unique resource of significant environmental quality. Areas of High Scenic Value are designated to protect the setting of Urban Areas and other areas of particular landscape merit. All AOHSV are also designated as Areas of Constraint on Mineral Development. This will restrict new or extended mineral operations to those locations and

proposals, which will minimise conflict with amenity, recreation and conservation interests in the council area.

- 6.22 The unique landform of Craigantlet Escarpment was identified in the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment as an area of scenic quality and is designated in this Plan as an Area of High Scenic Value. The landform of is a prominent ridge stretching from East Belfast to Holywood. The Craigantlet Escarpment Area of High Scenic Value also extends across council boundaries into Belfast City Council and Lisburn Castlereagh City Council Districts.

**Map 9: Craigantlet Area of High Scenic Value**



## Key Findings

- 7.1 A summary of the key findings are as follows:
- 7.2 The Ards and North Down Borough contains a rich diversity of environmental assets, each providing unique habitats for an abundance of flora and fauna. These sites are protected using various landscape designations (a summary of which is provided in Appendix G) to ensure that the natural environment retains its special characteristics and unique biodiversity. The highlights include Strangford Lough (one of Europe's most important natural heritage features), the Copeland Islands, the North Down Coastal Path and Crawfordsburn Country Park. These, along with a host of other wild places, provide many opportunities to explore and enjoy the richness of our natural environment.
- 7.3 There is a need to manage and plan for the future development within Ards and North Down Borough Council area in a sustainable manner, taking account of the multiple array of natural heritage features.

## Conclusions

- 8.0 The Council may wish to explore opportunities for extending access and circulation to the Comber Greenway and Coast and environs that have the potential to become more important as routes for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 8.1 Our unique natural environment can be used for cultural, educational and leisure purposes, supporting our tourism industry and economy and enhancing the life of our citizens. Care must be taken to ensure that development is achieved in a sustainable way, which does not cause harm to designated areas.

- 8.2 The new LDP should recognise the physical and economic importance of the natural environment and explore opportunities for further enhancement or designation.
- 8.3 Through the new Local Development Plan process, the Council will have the opportunity to review and update our policies with respect to the identification and protection of features of the natural environment. These will be tailored to cover our unique natural assets and should aim to achieve a balance between preservation and development. The core planning principles of good design and place-making should be employed to ensure that the unique features of our natural environment are recognised and integrated into any new developments in these sensitive areas.
- 8.4 A number of the environmental designations in the Borough straddle council boundaries, for example Strangford Lough Ramsar, SPA and SAC which partly falls within Newry, Mourne and Down Council Area, Belfast Lough Ramsar, SPA and SAC which crosses the boundary to Belfast City Council. There are two ASSIs that straddle the boundary with Newry Mourne and Down also. Similarly, some sites designated by the existing area plans take in lands that are outside of Ards and North Down Borough including Craigantlet Area of High Scenic Value (which falls partly in Lisburn Castlereagh and Belfast City Council areas) and Comber and Newtownards Rural Landscape Wedges.
- 8.5 The ongoing management and protection of these areas will require a sensitive and appropriate approach from council in the case of any proposed new designations that cross or adjoin its boundaries.



## References and Useful Links

### **Regional Development Strategy**

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/regional-development-strategy-2035>

### **Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 (ADAP)**

[https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/dev\\_plans/devplans\\_az/ardsdown\\_2015.htm](https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/dev_plans/devplans_az/ardsdown_2015.htm)

### **Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP)**

[https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/development\\_plans/devplans\\_az/bmap\\_2015.htm](https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/development_plans/devplans_az/bmap_2015.htm)

### **Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland**

<https://www.planningni.gov.uk/spps>

### **Planning Policy Statement 2: Natural Heritage**

[https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/planning\\_statements\\_and\\_supplementary\\_planning\\_guidance/pps2.htm](https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/planning_statements_and_supplementary_planning_guidance/pps2.htm)

### **Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership**

<http://www.strangfordlough.org/>

### **NI Draft Regional Landscape Character Assessment**

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/ni-regional-landscape-character-assessment>

### **Building on Tradition**

[https://www.planningni.gov.uk/building\\_on\\_tradition\\_-\\_a\\_sustainable\\_design\\_guide\\_for\\_the\\_northern\\_ireland\\_countryside\\_.htm](https://www.planningni.gov.uk/building_on_tradition_-_a_sustainable_design_guide_for_the_northern_ireland_countryside_.htm)

### **Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/>

## Appendix A:

### List of Areas of Special Scientific Interest in Ards and North Down

Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)	
ASSI	DEA
Outer Ards	Bangor East & Donaghadee, Ards
Inner Belfast Lough	Holywood & Clandeboye
Outer Belfast Lough	Holywood & Clandeboye
Copeland Islands	Bangor East & Donaghadee
Whitespots	Newtownards
Strangford Lough Part 1	Ards Peninsula, Newtownards,
Strangford Lough Part 2	Ards Peninsula
Strangford Lough Part 3	Ards Peninsula
Ballymacormick Point	Bangor East & Donaghadee
Lough Cowey	Ards Peninsula
Scrabo	Newtownards
Ballyquintin Point	Ards Peninsula
Heron and Cargullion Lough	Comber
Tievehilly	Ards Peninsula
Blaeberry Bog	Bangor East & Donaghadee
Augnadarragh Lough	Comber
Blaeberry Bog	Bangor East and Donaghadee

## Appendix B:

### Designated Tree Preservation Orders within Ards and North Down

REFERENCE	ADDRESS
TPO/2009/0001	Lands at 5 Comber Road, Balloo, Killinchy
TPO/2009/0010	Lands at Manse Road, Brooklands Road, Brooklands Park, Newtownards
TPO/2009/0016	Lands at the Rectory, 52 Parsonage Road, Kircubbin, Co Down
TPO/2009/0026	Lands to the south of Newtownards Road, Moat Street and North of Cannyreagh, Donaghadee
TPO/2009/0031	43 North Road, Newtownards
TPO/2009/0038	Lands North of 100 Whitechurch Road, Ballywalter
TPO/2009/0046	Lands at 2-8 Cloughey Road, Portaferry
TPO/2009/0048	Lands at 46 Dunover Road, Ballywalter
TPO/2009/0049	Lands at 1 North Street and 2,4, 6 & 8 Church Street, Greyabbey
TPO/2009/0050	Lands at Mourne View House, 1 Manse Road, Carrowdore
TPO/2009/0052	Lands at New Road, Carnathan Lane, Carshaulton Road, The Trees and Park Avenue, Donaghadee
TPO/2009/0076	Lands at Bangor Road, Newtownards
TPO/2009/0108	Lands at 2 Belfast Road, Newtownards
TPO/2009/0124	Lands at Killinchy Parish Church, Whiterock Road, Killinchy
TPO/2009/0129	Lands to the rear of 2 & 2a Ballydrain Road, Comber
TPO/1997/0002	Lands at North Road, Newtownards
TPO/1981/0280	Ardmore House, The Brae, Ballygowan
TPO/1984/0563	The Highwayman Inn, Carnesure, Killinchy Road, Comber

TPO/1987/0335	Lisnevin House, Kiltonga, Belfast Road, Newtownards
TPO/1998/0011	55 Crawfordsburn Road, Newtownards
TPO/1990/0213	Mountain Road, Newtownards
TPO/2000/0018	Adjacent to 24 Ballyatwood Road, Ballywalter
TPO/2003/0007	Crawfordsburn Road, Newtownards
TPO/2004/0037	18 Killinchy Road, Comber
TPO/2004/0067	Mountpleasant, Newtownards
TPO/2005/0082	Lands adjacent to 57a Gransha Road, Kircubbin
TPO/2005/0115	Lands at 3 and 5 Ballydrain Road, Comber
TPO/2006/0006	Lands at and adjacent to 6a Cunningburn Road, Newtownards
TPO/2006/0007	Lands at Tullynagardy Road, Newtownards
TPO/2006/0113	8 Mountain Road, Newtownards
TPO/2007/0015	Lands to the rear of 2 Mountain Road, Newtownards
TPO/2007/0040	3 Belfast Road, Newtownards
TPO/2007/0061	15 Ballybunden Road, Balloo, Killinchy
TPO/2007/0063	St Annes Primary School, Millisle Road, Donaghadee
TPO/2007/0122	Lands at 15 Dunover Road, Ballywalter, Co Down
TPO/2008/0002	5 Reagh Island, Comber
TPO/2008/0010	Lands at Ballygowan House, Ballygowan, Co Down
TPO/2008/0040	2 New Road, Donaghadee
TPO/2008/0041	Lands to the rear of 274 Main Street, Cloughey
TPO/2008/0064	Junction of Bowtown Road, and Eastmount, Newtownards

TPO/2008/0070	West of Ardara Grove/Ardara Elms, Comber
TPO/2009/0070	Lands at 1, 3, 3a, 3b & 3c Killinchy Road, Comber
TPO/1995/0016	Laurelbank Lane, Comber, Co Down
TPO/2010/0033	Land at Killard House School, North Road, Newtownards
TPO/2004/0038	28 Portaferry Road, Newtownards
TPO/1992/0576	Land at Crawfordsburn Road, Newtownards
TPO/2009/0114	Lands at Holy Trinity Church and Vicarage, Whitechurch Road, Ballywalter
TPO/2012/0064	95 & 97 Donaghadee Road, Millisle
TPO/2009/0003	Lands at 35 & 39 Glen Road, Cultra
TPO/2009/0009	Lands at 3, 3a, 5, and 7 Alexandra Park and 3 Norwood Lane, Holywood
TPO/2009/0019	Land at Brook House, 17 Croft Road, Holywood, Co Down
TPO/2009/0029	3 Seahill Road, Holywood
TPO/2009/0035	Lands to the North West Boundary of 1-4 Woodland Manor, Helens Bay, Co Down
TPO/2009/0053	Land North of 32 Downshire Road, Bangor (Thalassa Phase 3)
TPO/2009/0078	102a & 102b Bangor Road, Holywood
TPO/2009/0080	Lands at 42 Victoria Road, Holywood
TPO/2009/0091	Lands at Bridge Road, Helens Bay
TPO/2009/0116	Lands at 141 Bangor Road, Holywood
TPO/2009/0143	Lands 10m south of 45 Glen Road, Cultra
TPO/2009/0167	Lands at 16-18 Victoria Road, Holywood
TPO/1996/0007	Lands adjacent to 10 Whinney Hill, Holywood
TPO/1995/0004	Woodbank, Croft Road, Holywood
TPO/1996/0017	Adjacent to 11 Whinney Hill, Holywood
TPO/1980/0159	Tree Tops, Whinney Hill, Holywood
TPO/1990/0384	Killaire House, Killaire Road, Bangor

TPO/1991/0359	Knocknatten, Whinney Hill, Holywood, Co Down
TPO/1991/0433	Dromkeen House, My Ladys Mile, Holywood
TPO/1992/0369	Plas Merdyn, Church Road, Holywood
TPO/1993/0343	Croft House, Croft Road, Holywood
TPO/1993/0348	Lands at Whinney Hill, Holywood
TPO/1993/0399	Cultra House, Cultra
TPO/2001/0018	Land to the rear of 63 Station Road, Craigavad, Holywood
TPO/2002/0001	Beechfield Avenue, Conlig, Bangor
TPO/2004/0025	Seacourt, Bangor
TPO/2004/0017	To the rear of 43 Station Road, Craigavad
TPO/2004/0068	The Rectory, 2 Raglan Road, Bangor
TPO/2004/0084	Lands to the south of 5, 21, 23 & 25 Carneyhill, Seahill
TPO/2004/0073	67 Station Road, Craigavad
TPO/2004/0085	Worcester Avenue, Bangor
TPO/2005/0021	Lands at St Columbanus, adjacent to 57 Craigdarragh Road, Helens Bay
TPO/2005/0064	The Beeches, Gransha Road, Bangor
TPO/2006/0013	159 Groomsport Road, Ballyholme, Bangor
TPO/2005/0086	Lands at 83a Victoria Road and 44 Glenview Road, Holywood
TPO/2005/0105	Lands at 14 Seafront Road, Cultra
TPO/2006/0065	Lands at 15 Morningside Ballyholme, Bangor
TPO/2006/0097	16 Glen Road, Cultra, Holywood, Co Down
TPO/2006/0096	Lands at 1 Kathleen Drive, Helens Bay, Co Down
TPO/2007/0006	Lands from 20-46 Ballymenoch Road & 19-21 Whinney Hill, Holywood
TPO/2007/0002	Lands at 32 Bridge Road, Helen's Bay
TPO/2007/0020	Lands at 18 Ailsa Road, Cultra, Holywood

TPO/2007/0017	Trees in the grounds of 126 Bangor Road, Holywood
TPO/1978/0001	Knocknatten, Whinney Hill
TPO/2014/0008	Lands at 1, 1A, 3, 3A Glen Road & 1-6 Glen Cottages Holywood
TPO/2013/0022	Downshire House, 13 Maxwell Road, Bangor
TPO/2007/0035	Land to the rear of 49 Ballyrobert Road, Crawfordsburn
TPO/2007/0044	Lands at 4 Bennet Wood, Helens Bay, Co Down
TPO/2007/0039	Lands at 73, 75 & 77 Victoria Road and to the rear of 22, 24, 26 & 28 Church Avenue, Holywood
TPO/2007/0047	Lands at Ardavon, 16 Glen Road, Holywood
TPO/2007/0015	Lands adjoining Fruithill Park, Bangor
TPO/2007/0092	2 Circular Road East, Cultra
TPO/2007/0019	Lands North East of 165 Groompsort Road, Bangor
TPO/2008/0016	Lands at and adjacent to Woodside Cottage, 103 Main Street, Conlig
TPO/2008/0015	Lands at Kathleen Avenue, Helen's Bay
TPO/2008/0012	48 Station Road (Cedar Lane), Craigavad, Holywood, Co Down
TPO/2008/0006	Land at 8 Killaire Avenue, Ballykillaire, Bangor, Co Down
TPO/2008/0038	Lands at Ballykillaire, Old Belfast Road, Bangor
TPO/2008/0039	15 Farnham Road, Bangor
TPO/2008/0029	3,5 & 7 Croft gardens, Holywood
TPO/2008/0072	21 Windsor Avenue, Bangor
TPO/2010/0005	Lands at Cultra Avenue, Old Cultra Road, Cultra Lane, Cultra Terrace, Farmhill Road, Farmhill Lane,
TPO/2010/0023	Land at 21 bridge Road, Helens Bay
TPO/2010/0024	9 Bridge Road, Helens Bay
TPO/2010/0066	Land between Inn Car Park& Crawfordsburn River, Crawfordsburn
TPO/2011/0020	239, 241 & 243 Bangor Road, Seahill
TPO/2011/0064	67-83 Victoria Road, Holywood

TPO/2011/0063	93-95 Victoria Road, Holywood
TPO/2002/0001	Lands North of 11-14 Wood End , Holywood
TPO/2001/0030	Lands at Garrycloyne, 2 Ballymenoch Road, Holywood
TPO/2001/0024	Land at Church lane, off 75 Church Road, Holywood
TPO/1993/0473	Land at Glen Road, Craigavad, Holywood
TPO/2002/0003	16 Raglan Road, Bangor
TPO/2007/0021	Land at 18 Old Seahill Road, Seahill
TPO/2004/0019	Lands between 70-120 main Street, Conlig
TPO/2006/0097	Lands at 16 Glen Road, Cultra
TPO/2013/0019	Lands at 39 Broomhill Park & to the rear of no. 29 Grandmere Park and no's 25-39 Broomhill Park,
TPO/2013/0043	Lands at Sharman, Old Windmill Road, Bangor
TPO/2013/0044	Lands at Bangor Leisure Centre, Castle park Avenue, Bangor
TPO/2013/0015	Lands at Castle Lodge and Gate Lodge Apartments, Bangor
TPO/2013/0039	143 & 145 Groomsport Road, Bangor
TPO/1993/0473	Lands at Glen Road, Craigavad, Holywood
TPO/2014/0025	Lands at and including no's 1-27 Ballymullan Road & 2-40 Ballymullan Road, 1A Meadow Way and 67
TPO/1996/0010	Land South of 8 Carolhill Drive /Rear of 51-57 Ballymaconnell Road
TPO/1995/0015	Lands at 34 Glen Road, Cultra
TPO/1996/0010	Lands SE of 8 Carolhill Drive and rear of 51-57 Ballymaconnell Road, Bangor
TPO/1992/0369	Land at Church Road, Holywood
TPO/1979/0001	Seymour Road, Carnalea, Co Down
TPO/2007/0022	25 Crawfordsburn Road, Bangor
TPO/2009/0116	141 Bangor Road, Holywood



## Appendix C:

Forest Service Managed Forests within Borough Council Area

Forest	Block number (Ref)	Block name	Area (ha)
<b>Clandeboy Forest total Area</b>			101.4
Clandeboy	01	PORTAVOE	18.9
	02	CLANDEBOYE	82.5
<b>Mount Stewart Forest total area</b>			97.5
Mount Stewart	02	BELLS HILL	1.9
	03	MOAT HILL	25.7
	04	CASTLEREAGH OAKWOOD	4.4
	05	DALZELLS HILL	65.5
<b>Ballysallagh Forest total area</b>			161.7
Ballysallagh	01	CAIRN WOOD	72.7
	02		50.6
	04		3.2
	05		1.0
	06		16.7
	07	CREIGHTONS GREEN	12.1
	08		2.4
	09		3.0

Source: DAERA/Forest Service.

## Appendix D:

Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) in Borough Council Area

Designation	LLPA
<b>Bangor</b>	
BR18	Balloo
BR19	Ballycrochan
BR20	Bangor Central
BR21	Bangor Cemetery
BR22	Brice Park
BR23	Carnalea
BR24	Clandeboye
BR25	Clandeboye Cemetery
BR26	Kilcooley Wood
BR27	Lukes Point
BR28	Rathgael
BR29	Stricklands Glen
BR30	Whitehill
BR31	Wilson's Point
<b>Hollywood</b>	
HD11	Ballymenoch
HD12	Folk Park/Creighton
HD13	Glenlyon/Twiselburn
HD14	Marino/Cultra
HD15	Maryfield
HD16	Redburn
HD17	Seapark
<b>Crawfordsburn</b>	
CFN05	Crawfordsburn River
CFN06	Crawfordsburn/Helens Bay
<b>Groomsport</b>	
GT05	Donaghadee Road
GT06	Bangor Road

GT07	Groomsport Shoreline
GT08	Main Street
<b>Helens Bay</b>	
HY04	Crawfordsburn Country Park
<b>Seahill</b>	
SL06	Seahill Coastal Area
SL07	Holy Trinity, Glencraig
<b>Craigantlet</b>	
CT02	Whinney Hill
CT03	Hollywood Road
OK02	West of Orlock
Ok03	South of Orlock
OK04	Orlock Lane
OK05	Coastguard Lane
<b>Six Road Ends</b>	
SS 002	Six Road Ends
<b>Newtownards</b>	
LLPA1	Kiltonga and surrounding vegetation
LLPA2	Lieutenant Hill, slopes and properties on Belfast Road.
LLPA3	Whitespots, Lead mines, Golden Glen, and Associated Lands
LLPA5	Scrabo Tower and Landform
LLPA6	Drumlins and Slopes on Bowtown Road
<b>Comber</b>	
LLPA1	Euler River corridor and Mount Alexander
LLPA2	Comber Non-subscribing Presbyterian Church and Surroundings
LLPA3	Clattering Ford and surroundings

LLPA4	Comber River and former settlement
<b>Donaghadee</b>	
LLPA1	Portavo House and demesne
LLPA2	Donaghadee Parish Church, Moat Farm, and surrounding lands
LLPA3	Water Tower and associated land
LLPA4	Croagh Patrick Nursing Home, St Patricks Graveyard, standing stone, and associated vegetation.
LLPA5	Donaghadee Motte
LLPA6	Listed Buildings and gardens
LLPA7	Lands to the south of Newtownards Road
LLPA8	The Commons and coastline.
<b>Balloo</b>	
LLPA1	Killinchy Non-subscribing Presbyterian Church, River Blackwater And Rath
LLPA2	Killinchy Presbyterian Church, River Blackwater and surrounding lands
<b>Ballygowan</b>	
LLPA1	Magherascouse Lough and Ballygowan River
<b>Ballyhalbert</b>	
LLPA1	Motte, Standing Stone and Church Site,
<b>Ballywalter</b>	
LLPA1	Ballywalter Park and coastline
LLPA2	Holy Trinity Church and Setting
LLPA3	Dwellings in Dunover Road and Vegetation

LLPA4	Harbour Area and Shoreline
<b>Carrowdore</b>	
LLLPA1	Carrowdore Castle and Christ Church
<b>Cloughey</b>	
LLPA1	Kirkiston Castle, Windmill, Rath and Associated lands
LLPA2	Landform between Portavogie and Cloughey
LLPA3	Presbyterian Church, shoreline and headland
LLPA4	Caravan Park and adjoining lands
<b>Greyabbey</b>	
LLPA1	Greyabbey House/Rosemount, Abbey, Church and Demesne.
LLPA2	Cottage Hill and surroundings
LLPA3	Hill behind Main Street
<b>Killinchy</b>	
LLPA1	Fields North West of Killinchy Parish Church
LLPA2	Killinchy Parish Church and Surroundings
LLPA3	Windmill on rath and surroundings.
<b>Kircubbin</b>	
LLPA1	Monaghan Bank
LLPA2	Nunsquarter and associated lands.
LLPA3	Tubber na Carrig and associated lands
LLPA4	Rectory and Grounds
<b>Millisle</b>	

LLPA1	Woburn House and wooded estate
LLPA2	Shoreline and amenity area
<b>Portaferry</b>	
LLPA1	Portaferry House, grounds and associated plantings
LLPA2	Windmill Hill and environs
LLPA3	Rectory and large houses and associated vegetation.
<b>Portavogie</b>	
LLPA1	Area of rough grassland south of New Harbour Road
LLPA2	Landform between Portavogie and Cloughey
<b>Ballyboley</b>	
LLPA1	Mourne View
<b>Ballycranbeg</b>	
LLPA1	St Joseph's Rc Church parochial house and surroundings.
<b>Ballydrain</b>	
LLPA1	Ringneill House and river corridors
<b>Ballystockart</b>	
LLPA1	Ballystockart River
<b>Glastry</b>	
LLPA1	Presbyterian Church, Glastry House and surroundings
<b>Kilmood</b>	
LLPA1	St Marys Church, graveyard old courthouse and school.

**Appendix E:  
Landscape Wedges**

Designation	Landscape Wedge	DEA
ND 03	Hollywood	Hollywood & Clandeboye
ND 04	Helens Bay	Hollywood & Clandeboye
ND 05	Seahill & Cultra	Hollywood & Clandeboye
ND 06	Groomsport	Bangor East & Donaghadee.
ND 07	Clandeboye	Hollywood & Clandeboye
ND 08	Seahill	Hollywood & Clandeboye
CR 05	Newtownards	Newtownards
CR 06	Comber	Comber

## Appendix F:

### Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI) in Ards and North Down Borough Council Area

Designation	Site
BR17/01	Carnalea Glen and Slopes
BR17/02	Clandeboyne Estate
BR17/03	Glenganagh Estate
BR17/04	Rathgael
<b>Hollywood</b>	
HD10/01	Ballymenoch Park
HD10/02	Belfast Harbour Estate
HD10/03	Croft Burn
HD10/04	Glen Lyon
HD10/05	Redburn
HD10/06	Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and Cultra Glen
<b>Crawfordsburn</b>	
CFN04	Crawfordsburn
<b>Seahill</b>	
SL05/01	Blackhill
SL05/02	Royal Belfast golf Course and Camphill
SL05/03	Rockport Coast and St Columbanus
<b>Countryside and Coast</b>	
ND02/01	Ballygrainey Dismantled Railway
ND02/02	Ballymacormick Point ASSI
ND02/03	Ballysallagh
ND02/04	Cairn Wood and Reservoir
ND02/05	Clandeboyne Avenue
ND02/06	Creighton's Green Reservoir
ND02/07	Edith of Lorne's Glen
ND02/08	Hollywood Reservoirs



ND02/09	Ladies Drive to Westland Wood
ND02/10	Portavoe Reservoir
<b>Newtownards</b>	
NS39/01	Ballyharry
NS39/02	Golden Glen
NS39/03	Gregstown
NS39/04	Kiltonga

**Appendix G:  
Summary of Total Natural Environment designations  
within Ards and North Down Council Area**

<b>Ramsar Site</b>	3
<b>Special Protection Area</b>	4
<b>Special Area of Conservation</b>	2
<b>Areas of Special Scientific Interest</b>	17
<b>National Nature Reserves (NNRs)</b>	2
<b>Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI)</b>	28
<b>Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPA)</b>	101
<b>Landscape Wedge (Rural &amp; Urban)</b>	8
<b>Area of High Scenic Value</b>	1

## **Appendix H: Key Environmental Legislation**

### **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

Many projects which are likely to affect designated sites will be covered by the EIA Directive, which is transposed into domestic law in Northern Ireland through the **Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017**. These regulations ensure that the likely effects of new development on the environment are fully understood and taken into account before planning permission is given for a proposed development to proceed. As such its purpose is to improve the quality of decision making by identifying potential environmental issues early in the project process.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

European Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”, commonly referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, is transposed into Northern Ireland law by the **Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (NI) 2004**. The objective of SEA is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental consideration into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The common principle of both directives (EIA and SEA) is to ensure that plans, programs and projects likely to have significant effects on the environment are made subject to an environmental assessment, prior to their approval or authorisation. Consultation with the public is a key feature of environmental assessment procedures.

The **Environmental Liability Directive and Regulations 13** establish a framework for environmental liability based on the "polluter pays" principle, with a view to preventing and remedying environmental damage.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment**

Under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations<sup>14</sup>, plan-making authorities are required to undertake an Appropriate Assessment for any development plan (or development proposal) which either individually, or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to significantly affect a European Site.