

East Ayrshire Local Landscape Area Boundary Review

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View from Dumfries House Estate northwest towards the Barony A-frame

LDĀDESIGN

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1.0 Introduction

LDA Design (LDA) were appointed by East Ayrshire Council (EAC) to review the Local Landscape Area (LLA) (previously defined as Sensitive Landscape Area (SLA)) within East Ayrshire. This review will provide an evidence base to inform landscape protection and will support the formulation and implementation of a policy framework within East Ayrshire's emerging Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2), which is programmed for adoption in Spring 2023.

The LLA encapsulates three distinct areas in East Ayrshire: Doon Valley, Uplands and Moorlands and River Ayr Valley. Collectively, they cover nearly 37% of the local authority area. See Drawing 1 – EAC Local Landscape Area and adjacent Local Landscape Areas.

All these areas have been affected, directly or indirectly, to various degrees by the changes associated with wind energy and surface coal mining as well as other development such as housing and infrastructure, which are either within the LLA or visible within the LLA from nearby areas.

As required by Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), the boundary of the LLA should be reviewed to consider whether the extent remains appropriate.

2.0 Purpose

In accordance with SPP 2020 (para 197) the purpose of LLAs should be to:

- safeguard and enhance the character and quality of a landscape which is important or particularly valued locally or regionally; or
- promote understanding and awareness of the distinctive character and special qualities of local landscapes; or
- safeguard and promote important local settings for outdoor recreation and tourism.

Government guidance and best practice suggest that the purpose of the designation should be clearly identified and defined, and the selection of each area justified with reasons for local designation. These should be clearly explained, with their function and continuing relevance taken into consideration when preparing plans.

Preparation of the new LDP has been the catalyst to review the boundaries of the LLA, the justification for selection and the rationale for boundaries and framing of appropriate policies.

Landscapes continually change and need to be planned and managed well. The review of the LLA, and particularly the boundaries, will determine if any changes to the extent are required. Changes may arise as a result of development requirements/pressures whether existing or proposed, and/or strengthening arguments that emphasise the need to retain and reinforce boundary configurations.

The review will also consider whether the LLA should be considered as the three separate areas, based on the geographical areas, characteristics and qualities, or remain as one LLA.

The Council will consider potential impacts, on the character and integrity of the LLA, when it makes decisions on planning applications or comments upon land-use changes. The conclusions in this report will help form the LDP2 spatial strategy, landscape policies and associated supplementary guidance.

3.0 Overview of Existing LLA Characteristics

Local landscape designations are a non-statutory but valuable conservation designation in the development plan toolkit for considering implications of development on landscapes. LLA's reflect the values that communities have for their local places and the social, economic and environmental assets they provide.

Local landscape designations have long been a part of the planning system with efforts focussing on applying siting and design principles to designated areas to encourage positive landscape management and secure enhancement through development, reflecting both on natural and cultural aspects.

An understanding and awareness of the landscape features and special qualities that make specific places distinctive is vital in giving communities a 'sense of place'.

LLAs are recognised primarily for their cultural and/or historic assets, or for scenic value or natural features such as their geology or landform or a combination of these.

Within East Ayrshire the principal characteristics of the EAC LLA are:

- Proximity to the Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park
- Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere (diverse countryside surrounding the Galloway Hills)
- Network of Core Paths and Natural Routes
- Gardens and Designed Landscapes
- Wild Land Areas
- Diversity of the landscape
- Panoramic Views

4.0 Methodology of Review

This assessment has been based on the procedures laid out in the Guidance on Local Landscape Areas, NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland (HES) (October 2020)) for designating LLAs and the previous review of LLAs (then SLAs) set out in EAC LDP Background Paper: Sensitive Landscape Areas, March 2015.

The existing LLA is a long-standing designation, and it has been assumed that the characteristics and qualities worthy of designation are still broadly relevant and therefore these will inform the starting point of the assessment and review.

The LLA assessment will involve:

- a desk-based study to review statutory landscape designations and other information of historic and cultural importance.
- a review of EACs plans, policies and guidance.
- a review of other supporting guidance documents.
- site appraisals to review key landscape features and characteristics, focussing on areas identified from the desk-based study where there are the likely greatest changes / pressures.
- Identifying any locations of viewpoints and vantage points from roads and paths within the LLA
- undertaking a series of public and stakeholder workshops and questionnaires to inform the decisions.
- identifying local landscape character, qualities and values of the LLA.
- a ranking of the LLA based on the established criteria.
- identifying areas which merit continued protection as LLA and areas that do not.
- setting out the findings to allow the recommendations to form part of EAC evaluation process for future projects and support the formulation and implementation of a policy framework within East Ayrshire's emerging Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2).

5.0 Desk-based study

This review has referred to other relevant studies, pertaining to East Ayrshire. This has included the following:

- NatureScot and HES Guidance on Local Landscape Designations (2020)
- NatureScot Landscape Character Assets (Type Maps and Descriptions)
- Spatial data related to the East Ayrshire Local Development Plan (2017)
- East Ayrshire Sensitive Landscape Area: Background Paper (2015)
- East Ayrshire Wind Capacity Study (2013)
- GIS environmental data
- East Ayrshire Local Development Plan (2017)
- Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan (1999)

- NatureScot environmental spatial datasets
- SEPA's environmental spatial datasets
- State of the Environment Report (2019)
- Coalfield Communities Landscape Study (2019) (available on the CCLP website)
- Forestry (Ayrshire and Arran Forest Woodland Strategy, 2014)

6.0 Planning Policy and Guidance

The European Landscape Convention recognises that all landscapes are of value whether they are designated or not. It also states the importance of Landscape Protection, which it defines as:

“measures to preserve the present character and quality of a landscape which is greatly valued on account of its distinctive natural or cultural configuration. Such protection must be active and involve upkeep measures to preserve significant features of a landscape.”

Although the UK is no longer bound by EU legislation the principles of recognising and protecting our landscapes remain pertinent and are covered by UK domestic legislation.

The following planning policies are those that help to guide and inform development where they relate to the environment. Understanding and recognising these will assist with understanding where there is the greatest need to strengthen the boundaries of the LLA or where there may be scope to examine the alignment of the current boundaries.

Scottish Planning Policy

The Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) is a statement of Scottish Government policy on how nationally important land use planning matters should be addressed across the country via a range of mechanisms, including statutory and non-statutory designations and planning policies with the aim of protecting and enhancing Scotland's landscapes.

Scottish Planning Policy states local authorities should aim to promote landscape through Local Development Plans, and supplementary policy by identification and justification of designations with an aim to promote understanding of the distinctive character and special qualities of the landscape.

East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2017

East Ayrshire does not contain any national landscape designations. However, there are a number of policies and issues that require to be taken into consideration when reviewing the boundaries of the LLA. These are:

Policy TOUR 4: The Dark Sky Park, East Ayrshire Council will support the Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park and will presume against development proposals within the boundaries of the park that would produce levels of lighting that would adversely affect its “dark sky” status.

Policy TOUR 5: Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere. Development is not precluded from these areas, but more support will be given where proposals provide an innovative

approach to sustainable living, the economy and an understanding and enjoyment of the area as world-class environment.

Spatial Framework for wind energy: applies to all proposals for wind energy development and is formulated by listing constraints to wind energy development in three distinct groups:

Group 1: Areas where development will not be applicable.

Group 2: Areas of significant protection.

Group 3: Areas with potential for development.

Policies RE1, RE3 and RE4: these pertain to renewable energy development, wind energy proposals over 50m in height and smaller scale wind energy proposals. The energy sector plays a large role in supporting local communities and the local economy but can also have significant impacts on the landscape.

Policy T4: Development and Protection of Core Paths and Natural Routes. The Council will seek to develop a comprehensive network of local footpath and cycle routes with priority given to the development of new circular routes and links between settlements, especially where they make use of disused railway lines, forestry access and minor country roads.

Policy INF 4: Green Infrastructure. Opportunities to be incorporated as an integral part of the design of developments to enhance and link to existing open spaces/green infrastructure and create new green infrastructure assets as appropriate.

Policy ENV 4: Gardens and Designed Landscapes. These are protected and their enhancement is encouraged. Development will not be supported where it will have significant adverse impacts on its character or important views whether to, from or within.

Policy ENV 5: Historic Battlefields. Those included in the National Inventory are protected, conserved, and managed. Development will not be supported where it will significantly impact upon the key landscape characteristics and important features that underpin understanding and appreciation.

Policy ENV 6: Nature Conservation. The importance of nature conservation and biodiversity will be fully recognised in the assessment of development proposals and will apply 'the precautionary principle' where there is sound evidence indicating that significant irreversible damage could occur.

Policy ENV 7: Wild Land and Sensitive Landscape Areas. These areas have little or no scope to accommodate new development and are safeguarded on the LDP maps. (Note: This is particularly the case with areas of Wild Land; there is greater flexibility for development within the LLA).

Policy ENV 8: Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape. The protection and enhancement of East Ayrshire's landscape character is a key consideration in assessing the appropriateness of development proposals in rural areas.

Policy ENV 9: Trees, Woodland and Forestry. The Council will support the retention of individual trees, hedgerows and woodlands within settlements and rural areas and there

will be a presumption against the felling of ancient semi-natural woodlands and trees protected by Preservation Orders.

EAC Minerals Local Development Plan (MLDP), 2020

This report sets out a vision of how East Ayrshire should be developed over the next 10-20 years in relation to minerals. The Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership (CCLP) is contained within the MLDP.

Further guidance

These following designations, local organisations and influences also help shape the qualities and values of the LLA:

Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership: By engaging with local communities the CCLP ensures the value of the landscapes' heritage is recognised and opportunities explored to reinvigorate landscapes, affected by former and current uses e.g., farming, coal and iron extraction, forestry and wind farms.

Dark Sky Park: Since 2009, Galloway Forest Park has been designated by the International Dark-Sky Association as only the fourth Dark Sky Park in the world, and the first in the UK, for its breath-taking and rare stargazing conditions.

The Dark Sky Park comprises a core zone, a buffer zone and an additional transition zone comprising of a 10-mile radius around the Park. Although the majority of the Dark Sky Park lies within Dumfries and Galloway, a small section falls within East Ayrshire, within the Doon Valley (see Drawing 3: LLA and other landscape designations).

UNESCO Galloway and Southern Ayrshire biosphere: As set out in EAC LDP (para 5.2.8) the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere was designated in July 2012 and includes the southern half of East Ayrshire. Biospheres are selected by UNESCO as being special areas and sites of excellence to promote conservation and sustainable development on a regional scale.

Core Paths and Green Networks / Green Infrastructure: Government initiatives and policy widely recognise the benefits of green space and green networks. SPP (2020) identifies the need to increase connections with path networks to support recreation and active travel.

7.0 Existing Local Landscape Area Boundary

The boundary for the existing LLA is shown on Drawing 1: EAC Local Landscape Area and adjacent Local Landscape Areas.

In 1999 the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan first identified, at a strategic level, the SLA based on the Ayrshire Landscape Character Assessment (SNH Review 111,1998).

In 2003, looking at natural and other topographical features, EAC refined the boundary of the SLA more precisely on the ground and this was included in the 2003 Local Plan.

In 2015 the boundary of the SLA was again reviewed to consider whether the extent remained appropriate. The review was again undertaken against the Ayrshire Landscape Character Assessment. At that time, the original assessment was considered to be largely valid, although the conclusions of the East Ayrshire Landscape Wind Capacity Study (2013), resulted in one small additional area to the extent of the SLA southwest of Patna. The conclusions of the 2015 review were carried forward into the 2017 Local Development Plan.

8.0 Review of the Local Landscape Area

The LLA is comprised of a mixture of landscape qualities and environmental assets that, in the main, align with associated Landscape Character Types (LCT). These are set out in the NatureScot 2019 LCT map along with associated descriptions, that are used for new development proposals, plans and strategies, superseding the 1998 landscape character descriptions and mapping.

Table 1, below, sets out the LCTs that make up the LLA and outlines their key characteristics and reasons for previous inclusion within the LLA. This review will consider whether the characteristics of the LCTs are still relevant to the LLA.

There are eight LCTs within the boundaries of the LLA. This is a slight change since the previous assessment, in 2015, when there were only seven Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). This is due to:

- the West of Doon Valley LCA now becoming part of Foothills – Ayrshire LCT
- part of Rugged uplands with lochs and forestry LCA now divided between Foothills – Ayrshire LCT and Rugged Upland – Ayrshire LCT
- Southern upland and southern upland with forestry LCA being divided into two separate LCTs; Southern Uplands – Ayrshire LCT and Southern Uplands with Forestry – Ayrshire LCT.

The LCTs are shown on Drawing 2: EAC Local Landscape Area and Landscape Character Types.

Table 1 Characteristics and Sensitivities of the Landscape Character Types within the Local Landscape Area

Landscape Character Type	Key Characteristics	Why is the area 'sensitive'?
68 Lowland River Valleys – Ayrshire (previously Lowland River Valley LCA)	Within the EAC LLA, it is the River Ayr, Lugar Water and the River Doon that are relevant. Incised, narrow river valleys bounded by steep slopes which cross the agricultural land.	The River Ayr, Lugar Water and River Doon are accessible to many settlements. The valleys contain a number of architecturally interesting settlements e.g. Sorn occupies a position where the River Ayr

	<p>Complex skylines formed by interlocking hills.</p> <p>Pastoral farming character with hedgerow field boundaries and valley slopes which are frequently wooded.</p> <p>Settlement is comparatively limited but with some mills often at bridging points.</p> <p>Rich woodland of the river valleys often incorporated into designed landscapes.</p> <p>Intimate small-scale landscapes which often lie hidden within the wider agricultural lowlands.</p> <p>Views are generally enclosed, short distance and focused along the diverse river valley landscape.</p>	<p>leaves the uplands and enters its lowland valley.</p> <p>Interesting and scenic lowland landscapes. The Ayr cuts through an area of sandstone creating a dramatic gorge-like valley.</p> <p>The rich woodland of the river valleys has been incorporated into designed landscapes e.g. Sorn Castle, Auchinleck House and Skeldon Estate.</p> <p>Small-scale landscapes which are hidden within the wider landscape, often coming as a surprise.</p> <p>Significant tracts of natural woodland give a sense of naturalness and seclusion.</p> <p>Variety and sudden, unexpected changes of views.</p>
<p>69 Upland River Valleys – Ayrshire (previously Upland River Valley LCA)</p>	<p>Within the EAC LLA, it is the areas along the River Doon (nr Patna) and River Nith (nr New Cumnock) that are relevant.</p> <p>Each has its own distinctive character, due to scale and sense of enclosure, but they also share characteristics.</p> <p>Varying river valley landform with broad open sections that contrast with steeper valley slopes and narrow, more enclosed valleys.</p> <p>Moorland vegetation, with increasing amounts of improved pasture on lower slopes and valley floors.</p> <p>Confined landscape scale.</p> <p>Often provide focus for open-cast coal mining activity</p>	<p>The Upper Doon Valley is comparatively broad in its upper sections with an open, flat, floodplain near Dalmellington, narrowing as it flows north to Patna. The river meanders, attractively, back and forth across a narrowing floodplain.</p> <p>It contains a wide range of landscape features; knolly hills, water bodies, wetlands and Craigengillan Estate.</p> <p>The east side of the Doon Valley has been affected by the coal industry. As such appropriate management is important for the remaining valley.</p> <p>The developed character contrasts with the more</p>

	<p>Act as a focus for transport routes.</p> <p>Open views in the broad valley sections, change to quite enclosed and intimate views within narrow sections.</p>	<p>remote, rural areas. The landform can also add to the sense of contrast with more open views in the broader valley sections changing to quite enclosed and intimate views within the narrow valley sections.</p> <p>Upper Nithsdale - glacial erosion has over-deepened the valley creating a distinctive u-shaped valley between steeply rising hills to the north and south. The river meanders freely across a broad, flat valley bottom.</p> <p>Settlement within Upper Nithsdale is scarce, but the valley is important for communication and provides a corridor between the Ayrshire lowlands and the Solway coast.</p>
73 Upland Glen – Ayrshire (previously Upland Glen LCA)	<p>Within the EAC LLA is the valley of the Afton Water, immediately to the south of New Cumnock.</p> <p>Distinctive profile comprising steep, often craggy valley slopes and a rounded valley floor, containing a comparatively small ‘misfit’ river.</p> <p>Complex and prominent ridgelines along tops of steep valley sides.</p> <p>Pasture on the valley floors and lower valley slopes giving way rapidly to rough grassland and heather moorland on higher ground.</p> <p>Broadleaf woodland is scarce, but small to medium scale</p>	<p>Glen Afton is the only Upland Glen LCT within East Ayrshire, making it an important landscape feature for the area.</p> <p>The narrowness of the glen creates a small-scale, intimate landscape, with a relatively remote and tranquil character.</p> <p>Modern settlement is limited. Most roads are minor.</p> <p>Diverse landcover comprise improved pastures enclosed with drystone dykes constructed from glacially rounded boulders.</p> <p>The high ridgelines and well-defined hills on the edges of the glens are visually prominent and the rugged upland landscape has a high</p>

	<p>coniferous forests are found on the valley slopes.</p> <p>Small scale landscape with some areas of remote and wild character.</p> <p>Views contained by the steep valley sides.</p>	<p>scenic value, attractive to walkers.</p>
<p>76 Foothills – Ayrshire (previously Foothills west of Doon Valley LCA and part of Rugged uplands with lochs and forestry LCA)</p>	<p>The areas within the EAC LLA are to the east, west and south of the Upland River Valley LCT within the Doon Valley.</p> <p>Dissected landform of incised valleys cut between rounded ridges.</p> <p>Variety of landcover types; pastoral, rougher grazing and summits dominated by moorland vegetation.</p> <p>Coniferous forest covers many of the rounded peaks.</p> <p>Very little settlement in the more upland areas.</p> <p>Remnants of historic settlement patterns still evident in unsettled and uncultivated areas.</p> <p>Remote, isolated feeling with forested areas foreshortening views.</p> <p>Simple, largely undeveloped landscape, with foothills providing scenic backdrops.</p>	<p>The relatively constrained band of upland landscape forms an important role in providing the backdrop and setting for the Doon Valley.</p> <p>The landmark hills in the southern part of the LCT form the backdrop to Dalmellington and Craigengillan Estate.</p> <p>The area running between Dalmellington, Waterside and Rankinston on the eastern side of the Doon Valley has many relics of coal, limestone and ore extraction.</p> <p>Modern settlement is generally very limited, and the building materials reflect the variations in underlying geology and the era of development.</p> <p>The interior areas are not readily visible from public roads.</p> <p>The remnants of historic settlement patterns based upon rig and furrow fields enclosed by turf dykes are still evident.</p> <p>Outwith areas affected by coal mining, this is a simple, relatively undeveloped landscape.</p> <p>The Foothills – Ayrshire provides scenic backdrops to</p>

		the settled valleys which surround them. Views tend to be long distance and panoramic and reveal the contrast between the remote character of the foothills and the surrounding settled valleys and lowlands.
78 Plateau Moorland – Ayrshire (previously Plateau Moorland LCA)	<p>Occurs on the higher ground extending along the Ayrshire-Lanarkshire boundary, from the Irvine Valley in the north to the Nith Valley at New Cumnock in the south.</p> <p>Topography is comparatively level with extensive plateau to soft contoured ridges.</p> <p>Covered by blanket bog, heather, grass moorland, extensive areas of mosses and peatland.</p> <p>Largely undeveloped with a sparse network of roads.</p> <p>Open, exposed and rather remote landscape, wild in character (although this is lessened in places by the presence of wind turbines and associated infrastructure).</p> <p>Views are open and medium to longer distance depending on undulation in the local topography.</p>	<p>The plateau moorland is a wide, open, upland landscape with landmark hills forming an important feature of East Ayrshire’s skyline.</p> <p>The open expansive nature contrasts dramatically to the rolling lowland landscape, contributing to the diversity of experiences when travelling.</p> <p>Views are open and medium to longer distance depending on undulations in the local topography.</p> <p>Largely undeveloped although there is some evidence of some medieval and post medieval farmsteads. However, there are extensive open-cast coal working around Cumnock, in particular, and wind farms are beginning to alter the landscape character.</p>
81 Southern Uplands – Ayrshire (previously Southern upland and southern upland with forestry LCA)	<p>Located to the south of New Cumnock and along the border with Dumfries and Galloway, the two areas are separated by the Upland Glen LCT.</p> <p>Steep, smooth slopes rising to rounded summits.</p> <p>Series of distinctive valleys cut into the uplands created by</p>	<p>Bold, upland, rugged, open hills form a dramatic backdrop and contrast to the adjacent low-lying upland basin and form an important part of East Ayrshire’s southern skyline.</p> <p>The combination of natural features and the contrast with the lower moorlands gives an</p>

	<p>glacial erosion with U-shaped cross sections, precipitous side slopes, hanging valleys, waterfalls, crags and screes.</p> <p>Relatively simple landcover.</p> <p>Scarce, semi-natural woodland limited to a few sheltered glens, gullies and clefts.</p> <p>Occasional forested areas and shelterbelts on lower slopes leaving the domed peaks exposed.</p> <p>Absence of modern settlement.</p> <p>Expansive, remote and largely untamed landscape.</p> <p>Long distance and panoramic views.</p>	<p>impression of uplands which are more extensive, remote and higher than is actually the case.</p> <p>Many areas have experienced little modification and semi-natural woodland and coniferous forest is scarce.</p> <p>Modern settlement is absent; concentrated in river valleys and larger glens.</p> <p>Most parts of the uplands are only accessible on foot.</p> <p>An extensive, remote and largely untamed landscape creating landmark features when seen from adjacent hills and roads. Views are long distant and panoramic.</p>
<p>82 Southern Uplands with Forest – Ayrshire (previously part of Southern upland and southern upland with forestry LCA)</p>	<p>Within the EAC LLA this LCT is located to the east of Dalmellington.</p> <p>Steep, smooth slopes rising to rounded summits.</p> <p>Relatively simple landcover with forestry dominating. Heather-flecked grassland in unforested areas. Scarce semi-natural woodland is limited to sheltered areas.</p> <p>Series of distinctive valleys cut into the uplands created by glacial erosion, with U-shaped cross sections, precipitous side slopes, hanging valleys, waterfalls, crags and screes.</p> <p>Absences of modern settlement.</p>	<p>Enclosure and foreshortened views created by forest cover contribute to create a remote, isolated character.</p> <p>A relatively remote landscape with most parts of the uplands accessible on foot only or by forestry and/or wind farm tracks.</p> <p>The uplands often create landmark features when seen from adjacent hills and roads.</p>
<p>83 Rugged Upland – Ayrshire</p>	<p>Located where the Merrick range of mountains crosses</p>	<p>Unique in East Ayrshire due to its remote and little modified nature with grand, large-scale,</p>

<p>(previously part of Rugged uplands with lochs and forestry LCA)</p>	<p>into Ayrshire near Loch Doon, from Dumfries and Galloway.</p> <p>Large, elevated and complex mountain ranges formed by granite intrusions which have been significantly modified by glacial erosion.</p> <p>Dramatic, craggy, mountainous scenery.</p> <p>Land cover dominated by heather moorland, rough grassland and areas of exposed rock outcrops.</p> <p>Woodland absent, except for areas of coniferous forest which has altered the character of some of the lower slopes.</p> <p>Scarce signs of human influence.</p>	<p>remote landscapes and wild character.</p> <p>Dramatic and extensive views in all directions from the mountain summits.</p> <p>Access limited to tracks and walker's footpaths – roads only around the fringes.</p> <p>Loch Doon is East Ayrshire's largest water body adding to the diversity and interest of the landscape.</p> <p>The sparsely settled landscape and lack of woodland gives a strong sense of wildness and naturalness.</p> <p>The most southern part of this LCT is designated as Wild Land (covered by EAC Policy ENV 7)</p> <p>High scenic value, important for recreation and tourism.</p> <p>It borders Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park and UNESCO Galloway and Southern Ayrshire biosphere.</p> <p>An essential characteristic of this landscape is the view of granite outcrops and of unforested peaks which are made distinctive by the contrasting colours of grey granite against dark heather / woodland and ochre grassland.</p>
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9.0 Stakeholder and Public Consultation

The stakeholder consultation occurred on 11 February 2021 with the aim of establishing the locations and extent of current and proposed development (likely to occur within the next 5 years) that may have any influences on the landscape character and special qualities of the LLA.

The consultation was facilitated by LDA Design and EAC and attended by the following organisations:

- Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership;
- EAC Development Planning and Regeneration;
- EAC Minerals Team;
- EAC Wind Energy Team;
- East Ayrshire Woodlands;
- Forestry and Land Scotland;
- NatureScot;
- Green Action Trust (GAT)
- Forestry Scotland

Following the consultation, LDA had separate discussions with Green Action Trust on 11 February and Forestry Scotland on 4 March.

Appendix 1: Stakeholder Feedback sets out the comments received. However, the majority of the feedback, with the exception of wind energy, pertains to areas outwith the LLA. Pressures likely to affect the LLA are shown on Drawing 4: Cumulative Issues and Pressures and Drawing 5: Map of Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership Projects. Forestry and woodland issues have been taken into consideration as part of the LLA boundary review, but areas of woodland and plantations are not plotted on the drawing due to continual change.

A separate public consultation, prepared by EAC, was undertaken by means of a questionnaire, via SmartSurvey over a four-week period, closing on the 26 March 2021. The survey set out a number of questions to the local public asking how they feel about the LLA and to what extent the public value the LLA for:

- Exercise;
- Recreation;
- Generally being outdoors;
- Health and wellbeing; and
- the landscape and views.

In addition, the public were asked whether they feel that:

- the quality of the landscapes are important for tourism and an economic resource.
- there has been erosion of the landscape quality and character within the LLA.
- there are areas that have been improved through development and/or community activities.

The full response to the consultation is in Appendix 2: Public Consultation Results. There were 69 responses, and the results clearly indicate that the landscapes within the LLA (and access to open spaces, in general) are very important to the public, particularly for exercise, leisure and mental well-being.

The areas of greatest interest, to visit within the LLA, are the areas around Dalmellington, Bellsbank and Loch Doon and along the River Ayr. This is likely to be due to the higher concentrations of places of interest e.g., Dark Skies Observatory (Dalmellington), Craigengillan Estate, Loch Doon, Benquat Hill and, further north, the variety of walks along the River Ayr. However, the walks to and around the Afton Reservoir are also popular. See Drawing 6: Public Consultation Feedback Reference Locations.

The public feedback also included several places around Stewarton, Kilmarnock, Galston, Mauchline and Auchinleck, including Dumfries House Estate, although these areas are not within the LLA.

The feedback from the consultation and the questionnaire will inform the process of determining the pressures and influences on the LLA and whether any changes to the boundaries are required. A follow up consultation with stakeholders took place on 28th April 2021, to discuss the conclusions.

10.0 Issues and Pressures

The consultation and feedback from the public questionnaire, along with information within the NatureScot 2019 LCT descriptions highlights the issues (positive and negative) and pressures on the LLA. They have been set out in Table 2: Issues and Pressures under the heading of each LCT and shown on Drawings 4 and 5.

Table 2: Issues and Pressures

Landscape Character Type	Issues and Pressures	Significance to LLA
68 Lowland River Valleys – Ayrshire (previously Lowland River Valley LCA)	<p>Hedges to field boundaries need to be managed and retained to avoid the character being eroded.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback – no specific issues raised. However, noted that former coal mining activities took place in and around the Dumfries House Estate.</p> <p>Questionnaire feedback –</p> <p>Q7. The Ayr Walk (from Muirkirk to Ayr), the Auchinleck Estate and areas around Mauchline are all considered particularly important.</p>	Important recreation areas attractive to locals and tourists.

Landscape Character Type	Issues and Pressures	Significance to LLA
	<p>Q11. Areas within LLA that have been enhanced: routes along the River Ayr Way.</p> <p>Q13. Areas that should be protected: all rivers, areas around Sorn, Catrine and Ochiltree.</p> <p>Q15. Development could be accommodated in Catrine (repurpose / make use of derelict buildings on main streets).</p>	
<p>69 Upland River Valleys – Ayrshire (previously Upland River Valley LCA)</p>	<p>The upland valleys often act as a focus for settlement and transport corridors and have been exploited for mineral extraction. The developed character can contrast with the more remote, rural areas.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback –</p> <p>new long-distance walk from Ness Glen to Patna in the Doon Valley, Dunaskin project assisting the heritage railway line, Coalfields for Pollinators project near the Doon Valley, the Pollinator Corridor down the Doon Valley.</p> <p>Residential development around Hollybush, although unlikely to have a significant impact on the LLA.</p> <p>EA woodlands have small areas of woodland management around Patna and historic involvement at Craigengillan, near the Doon Valley.</p> <p>Questionnaire feedback –</p> <p>Q7. Areas around Glenbuck, Muirkirk (not in LLA), Patna, Dalmellington all considered particularly important e.g. Dark Skies Observatory, Dalcairney Falls, Craigengillan Estate.</p> <p>Q11. Areas within LLA that have been enhanced: Dalmellington Moss</p>	<p>Important recreation areas attractive to locals and tourists.</p> <p>Contrast in landscape character to the plateau moorlands and foothills, being more intimate in character.</p>

Landscape Character Type	Issues and Pressures	Significance to LLA
	<p>and community orchard, Dalmellington. Glamping pods and stables at Craigengillan Estate, Rewilding at Knochshinnoch Lagoons, near New Cumnock at the Scottish Wildlife Trust site.</p> <p>Q13. Areas that should be protected: areas around Muirkirk, pristine moorlands, wind farms should be kept away from Doon Valley.</p> <p>Q15. Development could be accommodated in Dalmellington (repurpose / make use of derelict buildings on main streets), luxury lodges near New Cumnock</p>	
73 Upland Glen – Ayrshire (previously Upland Glen LCA)	<p>Forestry operations will periodically change the character due to felling and restocking regimes. Views of wind turbines in most views, both short and long distant.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback – no specific issues raised.</p> <p>Questionnaire feedback –</p> <p>Q7. Afton dam / reservoir is a popular walking area.</p> <p>Q13. Areas that should be protected: Afton Glen hills and around the Afton Dam/reservoir.</p> <p>Q15. Development could be accommodated in: the Afton valley e.g. luxury lodges to boost tourism.</p>	<p>Important recreation area, particularly attractive to locals with the walk to and around the reservoir and the views of the River Afton.</p> <p>Whilst forestry operations influence the landscape character, the wind turbines on the hilltops above the valley are very evident in many views.</p> <p>Scottish Water building, caravan site, farm buildings & Burns Cairn discreetly located in the valley.</p>
76 Foothills – Ayrshire (previously Foothills west of Doon Valley LCA and part of Rugged uplands with lochs and forestry LCA)	<p>Wind farm development, especially in the foothills to the south of the Water of Girvan and east of Loch Doon has altered the character of some locations.</p>	<p>Extremely popular recreation area for locals and tourists, with a number of visitor attractions. Loch Doon transitions between the Foothills and Rugged</p>

Landscape Character Type	Issues and Pressures	Significance to LLA
	<p>Stakeholder feedback – no specific issues raised.</p> <p>Questionnaire feedback –</p> <p>Q7. Ness Glen Walk and areas around Loch Doon are popular for recreation.</p> <p>Q11. Areas within LLA that have been enhanced: Hedge planting at Dalcairney, Dark Sky Observatory, Caravan site at Loch Doon, footpaths within Craigengillen Estate.</p> <p>Q13. Areas that should be protected: areas around Loch Doon protected from windfarms to keep its wildness, Craigengillen Estate, keep dark skies around Dalmellington and the observatory. Avoid development, generally, around Loch Doon.</p> <p>Q15. Development could be accommodated in: the Doon valley e.g. luxury lodges, better trails and pathways, trail biking, white water canoeing to boost tourism (but prevent track vehicles access walking paths).</p>	<p>Uplands. The Foothills are an important backdrop and enclosing features to the loch and the lowland River Doon valley.</p> <p>The natural landscape is an important juxtaposition to the neighbouring, developed River Doon valley and the dark skies are an important extension to the Galloway Dark Skies Park.</p> <p>Some visual distractions caused by views of wind turbines and the Dark Sky Observatory is very visible in the landscape and views.</p>
<p>78 Plateau Moorland – Ayrshire (previously Plateau Moorland LCA)</p>	<p>Frequent extensive areas of coniferous forest of uniform age has significantly modified the original character of the area in terms of colour, texture and views. Incremental spread of Sitka spruce forest with blocky outlines, but these are increasingly being replaced by restructured forests designed along more sympathetic lines. The dense tree cover has significantly modified the original character in terms of colour, texture and length of views. Newly planted</p>	<p>Important to defining the eastern area of East Ayrshire and forms both physically and within views.</p>

Landscape Character Type	Issues and Pressures	Significance to LLA
	<p>forests appear as dark speckled landscape from a distance. The open and surrounding moorland contrast in their mosaics of brown and ochre colours.</p> <p>Wind farm development on the north-eastern margins (within South Lanarkshire) is beginning to alter the landscape character.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback – Pressures from Penbreck, Lethans, Hare Craig and Galawhistle windfarms.</p> <p>Questionnaire feedback –</p> <p>Q7. Blacksidend Hill (which gives views to Arran and the Paps of Jura).</p> <p>Q13. Areas that should be protected: Blacksidend should be protected from further damage. Pristine moorland should be protected. Areas around Muirkirk should be protected from larger type development that would have visual impacts.</p> <p>Q15. Development could be accommodated in: Muirkirk Hills</p>	
<p>81 Southern Uplands – Ayrshire</p> <p>(previously Southern upland and southern upland with forestry LCA)</p>	<p>Windfarms have altered the character of the landscape from the Southern Upland to the east of Ayrshire, south-west of New Cumnock.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback – confirmed issues with windfarms</p> <p>Increasing pressure from windfarm developments, particularly in the Southern Uplands area between the Doon part of the LLA and the Southern Uplands part of the LLA.</p>	<p>Wind turbines visible in the landscape, both in views of the hilltops (when travelling south) and when looking across the landscape from Southern Uplands with Forestry LCT. However, turbines smaller and access tracks and associated infrastructure not as visible.</p>

Landscape Character Type	Issues and Pressures	Significance to LLA
	<p>Questionnaire feedback –</p> <p>Q7. Hills above /around Afton Reservoir</p>	
<p>82 Southern Uplands with Forest – Ayrshire</p> <p>(previously part of Southern upland and southern upland with forestry LCA)</p>	<p>Wind farms occur in some parts of this LCT, and some can be seen from neighbouring areas. The presence of wind turbines has reduced the sense of isolation.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback – confirmed issues with windfarms</p> <p>Increasing pressure from windfarm developments, particularly in the Southern Uplands area between the Doon part of the LLA and the Southern Uplands part of the LLA.</p> <p>Noted pressures from the North Kyles, South Kyles and Overhill developments.</p> <p>Questionnaire feedback –</p> <p>Q9. Windfarms around Dalmellington destroying the quality of the landscape</p>	<p>Wind turbines visible in the landscape, both in views of the hilltops (when travelling south) and particularly when walking in the hills (between Blackcraig Hill and Enoch Hill).</p> <p>Access tracks, OHLs, substations, associated buildings and compounds as well as forestry operations all highly visible and have significantly affected the natural landscape.</p> <p>Robert the Bruce trail no longer clearly visible.</p> <p>Note: neighbouring Dumfries and Galloway Council do not consider that this LCA qualifies as a LLA.</p>
<p>83 Rugged Upland – Ayrshire</p> <p>(previously part of Rugged uplands with lochs and forestry LCA)</p>	<p>Areas of coniferous forest which has altered the character of some of the lower slopes. Wind turbines can occasionally be seen from neighbouring areas. Slightly reducing the sense of isolation.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback – no specific issues</p> <p>Questionnaire feedback –</p> <p>Q7. Areas around Loch Doon are popular for recreation, and the wild open spaces.</p>	<p>Backdrop of the rugged uplands are a dramatic setting for Loch Doon with the most southerly area being designated as Wild Land.</p> <p>The dark skies are an important extension to the Galloway Dark Skies Park.</p> <p>Some visual distractions caused by views of wind turbines.</p>

Landscape Character Type	Issues and Pressures	Significance to LLA
	<p>Q11. Areas within LLA that have been enhanced: Safety aspects and signage for walks around Loch Doon.</p> <p>Q13. Areas that should be protected: Loch Doon and surrounding hills, Galloway Forest Park, to retain the wildness and unspoilt character.</p> <p>Q15. Development could be accommodated: around Loch Doon e.g. better trails and pathways, trail biking, white water canoeing to boost tourism (but prevent track vehicles access walking paths).</p>	Forestry changes not overly distracting and, in the future, will have higher percentage of broadleaves and natives which will be positive.

The table has included specific locations, within each LCT, that were noted from the stakeholder and public consultations. More general issues, pertinent to the LLA, that arose from the questionnaire feedback were:

Q7: Areas or attractions that are particularly important - wild, open spaces, designated landscape areas, local hills, lochs, views.

Q9. Development that is spoiling / damaging areas within the LLA – windfarms, particularly around Dalmellington and New Cumnock destroying the quality of the landscape, haulage companies working out of farms creating noise and heavy lorry traffic, 4*4 and quads needs better control possibly with specific areas identified, visual impacts of former opencast coalmining on the wider landscape areas.

Q11. Areas of the LLA that could be enhanced through development – settlements along the River Ayr Way could be utilised more for hospitality and accommodation, wildlife preservation and re-wilding of areas, the Coalfield Initiative will have a very beneficial impact on the physical environment in the Dalmellington area and the Forestry Commission has enhance woodland walks.

Q13. Areas of the LLA that should be protected – pristine moorland and woodlands, peatlands and bogs, scenic views, all river ways. The LLAs should not be damaged with additional power lines, historic sites and environmental areas. Local hills and skylines should be protected from windmills.

Q15. Areas within the LLA where development could be accommodated – walking routes supported by sensitively designed parking, brownfield sites and ex industrial areas, former

areas of opencast mining and windfarms could have network of path, cycleways and bridleways, encourage employment in villages.

Q17. Areas that should be included in the LLA. The list below are those locations that border the current LLA and could reasonably be considered:

- Upper Irvine Valley from Galston to Darvel – currently a rural protection area
- Loudoun Hill
- Glen Water through to Loudoun Castle
- Mauchline hilltop path and surrounding area
- Lagoons and reservoir in and around New Cumnock
- Lugar Water and Burnock Water corridors
- Dumfries House Estate
- Area above Lethanhill along to Benquhat Hill (note: these already within the LLA)
- Corridor between Dalmellington and New Cumnock

Q19. Areas that should be removed from the LLA:

- Sorn and Catrine
- Small villages

11.0 Evaluation of proposals on the Local Landscape Area

The LLA is recognised not only for the cultural and/or historic assets, or for scenic value or natural features such as geology or landform, as separate entities, but also for the combination of these elements. It is important to understand and appreciate the significance of the landscape when evaluating the existing LLA boundaries.

As set out in NatureScot / HES 'Guidance on Designating Local Landscape Areas' the requirement to review the boundaries of the LLA are due to one or more of the following:

- New development
- Subsequent other local designations
- New reasons or emphasis for designation e.g., historic environment, natural heritage or health and well-being
- Need for a clearer statement of the qualities and values of the LLA.

The evaluation of the LLA will refer to the LCTs and will consider a set of criteria as used to identify those landscapes with special qualities, representing a systematic, criteria-based assessment of the relative values of each of the landscape character types.

The evaluation stage has involved the review of the LLA against the following assessment criteria, which collectively are the elements that define the characteristics of an LLA:

- Identity and sense of place
- Rarity
- Intactness and condition

- Wildness
- Scenic qualities
- Enjoyment
- Built heritage assets
- Cultural qualities
- Naturalness and natural heritage assets
- Settlement setting
- Views

These have been developed from the range of evaluation criteria set out in NatureScot and HES Guidance on Local Landscape Designations (2020), Table 1, p21.

The results are set out in Table 3 below and are based on the desk study, outcomes from the stakeholder and public consultations and field surveys that were undertaken on:

- the 15th of April to Afton Glen, the hills above the reservoir, Loch Doon and the area between Dalmellington and Hollybush; and
- the 23rd of April to Dumfries House Estate, the landscape between Ochiltree and Muirkirk, the moorlands to the south and north of Muirkirk and the road corridor between Priestland and Galston.

Table 3: Potential criteria for the evaluation of the Local Landscape Area

Criterion	Definition	Assessment
Identity and sense of place	Extent to which: - the landscape is representative of the study area as a whole. - contributes to community identity. - provides a sense of place or promotes an image of East Ayrshire at a local, regional or national level	Desk-based (key landscape characteristics, tourist literature) Field work
Rarity	Landscapes which are unique to East Ayrshire or uncommon elsewhere	Desk-based (key landscape characteristics) Field work
Intactness and condition	Landscapes that are intact & distinctive, in a good state of repair, have been unaffected by development over a considerable period of time OR are experiencing development pressure	Desk-based (key landscape characteristics) Field work Consultation results
Wildness	Degree of perceived naturalness, lack of modern interventions, rugged or	Desk based (NatureScot Wildness dataset)

Criterion	Definition	Assessment
	physically challenging landform and remoteness / inaccessibility	
Scenic qualities	Extent to which the landscape contains pleasing combinations of features or prompts strong sensory appeal	Desk-based (key landscape characteristics) Field work Consultation results
Enjoyment	Landscapes which provide access & recreation opportunities for local people and visitors	Desk-based (key landscape characteristics) Consultation results
Built heritage assets	Landscapes in which built heritage assets have a significant influence on character or landscape which provide key views, in to & away from, important heritage assets	Desk-based (key landscape characteristics) Field work Consultation results
Cultural qualities	Landscapes which provide cultural associations such as with literature, music, art or local history or which have spiritual associations	Desk-based (key landscape characteristics) Consultation results
Naturalness and natural heritage assets	Perceived importance to the landscape of features of natural heritage interest, including important habitats, protected sites & features of geodiversity value	Desk-based (key landscape characteristics) Field work Consultation results
Settlement setting	Landscapes of particular importance to the setting of settlements, as a whole, or particular aspects of the settlement, including green corridors between settlements & the countryside & significant open spaces within settlements	Desk-based (key landscape characteristics) Field work Consultation results
Views	Extent & importance of views in & out of the landscape from key routes & locations	Desk-based (key landscape characteristics) Field work

Each criterion will be considered through a ranking process; 'High, Medium or Low' based on a series of evaluation questions, as set out in Table 4: Evaluation Criteria.

It should be noted that the rankings of High, Medium and Low have been defined for this assessment and relate only to the landscape characteristics for the East Ayrshire Local Landscape Area. As indicated in Table 3, above, the ranking results have been considered through a combination of desk top research, field work, stakeholder and public consultation and considers the quality of the landscape, how it is appreciated, economy, tourism and development issues and pressures.

Based on the desk- top research, consultation and site visits, it is clear that the landscape characteristics, features, attractions, pressures and issues vary significantly across the LLA such that to ensure a fair assessment and evaluation, the LLA has been divided into the following areas, which broadly follow the LCT boundaries, the characteristics and of the relevant LCTs and the area of International or National Nature Conservation Interest:

- EAC LLA1: River Ayr Valley – complex and intricate mix of rolling landform, river corridor landscapes, small settlements, deciduous and mixed woodlands, open farmland, and designed landscape of Dumfries House Estate, with the associated range of landscape colours (blues, dull greens, bright greens and annual changes of the farmland colours – ploughed, fresh grasslands, crops). This gives rise to a more intimate landscape character and set of qualities. The boundary is consistent with the Lowland River Valleys, Ayrshire LCT (River Ayr and Lugar River).
- EAC LLA2: Uplands and Moorlands – in the main a bold and large-scale but simple, rolling landscape of open, rounded top hills that form the backdrop to the eastern parts of East Ayrshire, the yellow and ochre colours of the moorland areas contrasting with the dark greens of the coniferous and plantation woodlands. The combination of natural features and the lack of roads and access gives an impression of landscapes that are more extensive, remote and higher than is actually the case. The boundary encapsulates the Southern Uplands, Ayrshire LCTs and Plateau Moorland, Ayrshire LCT and also takes in the majority of the area designated as Sites of National Nature Conservation Interest.
- EAC LLA3: Doon Valley – a grand and dramatic landscape of mountains and large water bodies, large-scale, and a sparsely settled landscape with a lack of woodland gives a strong sense of wildness and naturalness. This area is also important as it encompasses part of the Dark Skies Park and the UNESCO Galloway and Southern Ayrshire biosphere. The LLA boundary is distinct and does not bound either of the other two EAC LLAs.

Separating the LLA into these three defined areas serves to provide more accurate judgements and help to provide more specific development and planning recommendations for each area. This ensures that the criteria for the evaluation can be specifically discussed and considered against the distinctly different character areas. Appendix 3: Evaluation of Criteria for LLA1, LLA2 and LLA3 set out the criteria, considerations and rankings for each of these areas, which have been summarised below in Table 4.

Table 4: Evaluation of Criteria

Criterion	Consideration	Explanation of ranking	Rank	River Ayr Valley	Uplands & Moorlands	Doon Valley
Identity and sense of place	To what extent does the landscape contain features, or combinations of features, that are distinctive to East Ayrshire, making a positive contribution to its wider identity, image and sense of place?	The landscape contains features which are highly distinctive or iconic of East Ayrshire and these features make a strong positive contribution to identity and sense of place.	High			X
		The landscape contains some features which are distinctive of East Ayrshire or which make a strong positive contribution to identity and sense of place.	Medium	X	X	
		The landscape contains few or no features which are distinctive of East Ayrshire and these do not make a strong positive contribution to identity or sense of place.	Low			
Rarity	To what extent does the landscape contain features or a combination of features which are rare or unique within East Ayrshire, or which are known to be uncommon elsewhere?	Large number of landscape features which are unique within East Ayrshire and may be rare across Scotland	High			X
		Some landscape features which are rare or unique within East Ayrshire.	Medium	X	X	
		Few or no landscape features which are rare or unique within East Ayrshire.	Low			
Intactness and condition	Is the landscape intact or has it experienced a decline in quality (since the last LLA assessment)? Are present and future changes likely to lead to a decline?	The landscape shows little or no signs of past, present or potential decline in quality and / or the landscape is clearly well managed and maintained. Overall is in a good state or repair.	High			X
		The landscape has experienced some past decline in quality but is not currently or potentially subject to further decline and/or the landscape is generally in a good state of repair, although there are some elements which have been less well maintained and managed.	Medium	X		
		The landscape has experienced past decline in quality and is potentially subject to further decline and/or the landscape is not in a	Low		X	

Criterion	Consideration	Explanation of ranking	Rank	River Ayr Valley	Uplands & Moorlands	Doon Valley
	Are the landscape features or combinations of features in a good state of repair?	good state of repair, with many elements which have been less well maintained.				
Wildness	To what extent does the landscape display characteristics of wildness, including perceived naturalness, lack of modern artefacts or structures, rugged or physically challenging landform or remoteness / inaccessibility?	The landscape has a high degree of wildness.	High			
		The landscape has some degree of wildness.	Medium		X	X
		The landscape has no or limited wildness	Low	X		
Scenic qualities	To what extent is the landscape of scenic value in its own right or to what extent does it contribute to the scenic qualities of the wider area?	Pleasing combination of features, visual contrasts and / or dramatic elements. Visual, sensory, perceptual and experiential qualities which contribute to the setting of an adjacent area of high landscape quality.	High	X	X	X
		Some pleasing features, visual contrasts and / or dramatic elements, or visual, sensory, perceptual and experiential qualities. A landscape which contributes to the setting of an adjacent area of high landscape quality.	Medium			
		The landscape does not contain particularly pleasing features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements, and has more limited visual, sensory, perceptual and experiential qualities.	Low			
Enjoyment	To what extent is the landscape enjoyed by local	The landscape is well-used and is important as a greenspace or recreation area, with provision of access routes, key viewpoints and recreational facilities.	High	X		X

Criterion	Consideration	Explanation of ranking	Rank	River Ayr Valley	Uplands & Moorlands	Doon Valley
	people and visitors e.g., walking, cycling, horse riding	The landscape has some importance as a greenspace or recreation area. Some provision of access routes, key viewpoints and facilities, potentially less well-used.	Medium		X	
		The landscape has little or no greenspace or recreational value, and limited provision of access routes, etc.	Low			
Built heritage assets	Do the built heritage assets have a significant influence on the character of the landscape? Does the landscape provide key views, in to and away from, important built heritage assets?	The landscape is rich in visible features of built heritage, which make an important contribution to landscape character and/or the landscape has many key views to or from heritage assets.	High			
		The landscape has some visible features of built heritage, which make a lesser contribution to landscape character and/or the landscape has some key views to or from heritage assets.	Medium	X		X
		The landscape has few visible features of built heritage and /or the landscape has few key views to or from heritage assets.	Low		X	
Cultural qualities	To what extent does the landscape have specific historic or cultural associations (e.g., literature, music, art, local history or spiritual associations) or does it contribute to the wider cultural heritage of the area?	The landscape is rich in well-known literary or artistic associations or direct associations with major historical events.	High			
		The landscape has some literary, historical and artistic associations; these may be less well-known or less direct.	Medium			
		The landscape has fewer literary, historical or artistic associations; these may be little-known or of principally local interest.	Low	X	X	X
Naturalness and natural heritage assets	Extent features of natural heritage interest, including important habitats, protected sites and features of	Natural heritage features are a key aspect of the character of this landscape.	High	X	X	X
		Natural heritage features are of some importance to the character of this landscape.	Medium			

Criterion	Consideration	Explanation of ranking	Rank	River Ayr Valley	Uplands & Moorlands	Doon Valley
	geodiversity value contribute to the landscape?	Natural heritage features are not significant to the character of this landscape.	Low			
Settlement setting	How important is the landscape in providing the setting for settlements as a whole or particular aspects of a settlement?	The landscape performs a key function in providing the setting of settlement(s) or contributes strongly to settlement identity.	High	X		X
		The landscape performs some function in providing the setting of settlement(s) and/or makes some contribution to settlement identity.	Medium		X	
		The landscape is isolated from or does not perform a function in relation to the setting of settlement(s) and does not make a strong contribution to settlement identity.	Low			
Views	To what extent does the landscape provide key views into and out of the landscape?	The landscape is important in views from recognised key viewpoints, settlements or transport routes and/or includes key landmarks.	High		X	
		The landscape is important in some views from settlements or transport routes and/or includes landmarks.	Medium	X		X
		The landscape does not perform a key function in relation to views from viewpoints, settlements, transport routes or landmarks.	Low			

12.0 Further Evaluation Consideration

In conjunction with desktop research and site visits, the feedback from the Stakeholder workshop and public consultation questionnaire has been vital and important in understanding the pressures and issues associated with the LLA and the landscapes within East Ayrshire that are important to local people.

In addition, the public were asked which areas should be considered for inclusion or exclusion within the LLA.

The questionnaire asked (Q9) where development is spoiling / damaging the LLA; identifying that windfarms, particularly around Dalmellington and New Cumnock are negatively impacting upon the quality of the landscape. The site visit, to the hills above Afton Reservoir, confirmed that the number and extent of wind turbines, along with access tracks, OHLs, large substations and other supporting infrastructure are impacting negatively on the upland landscape, particularly to the west of the Afton Glen.

Q13 asked which areas of the LLA that should be protected. The responses highlighted pristine moorland and woodlands, peat lands and bogs, scenic views, all river ways and that LLAs should not be damaged with additional power lines, historic sites and environmental areas. Local hills and skylines should be protected from windmills.

The results of the public questionnaire (Q17) highlighted the importance of Dumfries House Estate to local people for regular recreation. The House is A-listed, and the Estate is designated within (HES) Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. It is situated between Cumnock, Auchinleck and Ochiltree and the eastern boundary of the estate is only 5km from the boundary of the LLA.

The site visit determined that the character and qualities of the estate landscapes and the area between the estate boundary and the LLA boundary was comparable to the qualities of the River Ayr Valley. In addition, the Barony A frame (the last remaining example of its type in Britain), is located between Dumfries House Estate and the LLA boundary, and is an important landmark in the landscape and recreational resource.

The responses to Q17 also highlighted a number of other locations that the public suggested should be considered for inclusion within the LLA. Further to the site visits and desktop consideration, it was concluded that it was appropriate to extend the LLA boundary to include Dumfries House Estate, the stretch of the Lugar Water between Ochiltree and Cumnock and the stretch of Burnock Water that lies within the Lowland River Valley LCT.

The following areas were suggested for inclusion within the public consultation but deemed not appropriate for the following reasons:

- Upper Irvine Valley from Galston to Darvel – the A71 is a main road and infrastructure corridor, with larger settlements set within an intensively managed landscape that strongly influence the character. The proximity of the Whitelee

Windfarm impacts on views with turbines visible on the hills to the north. The area does not meet the boundary of the Uplands and Moorlands LLA, and the quality of the intervening landscape does not meet the required criterion on rarity, naturalness and sense of wildness for an LLA.

- Loudoun Hill - a striking natural feature and an important recreation destination. However, the quality of the intervening landscape (between Loudoun Hill and the LLA) does not meet the qualities and characteristics that define an LLA – main infrastructure corridor and surrounded by managed landscapes (agriculture)
- Glen Water through to Loudoun Castle – issues as identified for the Upper Irvine Valley
- Mauchline hilltop path and surrounding area - important local recreation destination. However, the quality of the intervening landscape does not meet the qualities and characteristics that define an LLA – rail and road infrastructure, residential development, managed landscapes (agriculture, golf course).
- Lagoons and reservoir in and around New Cumnock (Knockshinnoch Lagoons) – an attractive combination of open water, islands, marshland, reedbeds and willow carr and partially vegetated coal spoil heap. Although an attractive nature reserve, it is not located immediately adjacent to the LLA boundary and the intervening landscape does not meet the criteria for inclusion in and LLA – housing, managed landscapes (agriculture, cemetery).
- Hollybush House historic landscape and garden – this is now a Care Home and not open to the public.
- Corridor between Dalmellington and New Cumnock – this corridor defines the boundary between the Foothills and Upland Basin LCTs and the Southern Uplands with Forest LCT. Part of the latter LCT is proposed to be removed from the LLA due to the increasing influences and pressures associated with windfarms and the former LCT does not meet the criteria for and LLA and is under increasing pressures from windfarms.

Lastly the questionnaire asked (Q19) which areas should be removed from the LLA. Sorn and Catrine were particularly identified. Removal would affect the integrity of the River Ayr Valley area of the LLA as part of the character of this part of the LLA is the relationship of smaller settlements within the valley corridor.

13.0 Summary

The designation of LLA is an appropriate means of ensuring East Ayrshire's most valuable landscapes are fully respected in preparing and assessing development proposals. The LLA designation does not preclude development, rather it requires development proposals to

fully consider the qualities that make the landscape valuable and to seek sites and design solutions that respect these qualities and minimise adverse impacts.

This review upholds these values and as such recommends that, going forward, the LLA is considered as the three distinct areas, as used to undertake the evaluation and based on their differing characteristics (Drawing 7 – LLA Boundary Review Recommendations).

This will allow a more nuanced consideration of development that is appropriate for the landscape character, qualities and elements for each EAC LLA area:

- EAC LLA1: River Ayr Valley – complex and intricate mix of rolling landform, river corridor landscapes, small settlements, deciduous and mixed woodlands, open farmland, and designed landscape of Dumfries House Estate, with the associated range of landscape colours (blues, dull greens, bright greens and annual changes of the farmland colours – ploughed, fresh grasslands, crops). This gives rise to a more intimate landscape character and set of qualities. The boundary is broadly consistent with the Lowland River Valleys, Ayrshire LCT (River Ayr and Lugar River).

The intricate and complex landscape and landform does potentially allow for greater consideration of development, but the scale, materials and colours require to be respective of the intimate nature of the landscape.

- EAC LLA2: Uplands and Moorlands – in the main a bold and large-scale but simple, rolling landscape of open, rounded top hills that form the backdrop to the eastern parts of East Ayrshire, the yellow and ochre colours of the moorland areas contrasting with the dark greens of the coniferous and plantation woodlands. The combination of natural features and the lack of roads and access gives an impression of landscapes that are more extensive, remote and higher than is actually the case. The boundary encapsulates the Southern Uplands, Ayrshire LCTs and Plateau Moorland, Ayrshire LCT and also takes in the majority of the area designated as Sites of National Nature Conservation Interest.

LLA 2 contains some features of large-scale development i.e., wind farms but remains largely open and undeveloped. The higher ground and open, rolling moorlands and uplands mean that development can be highly visible and seen over long distances. Any development needs to take into consideration the extent of potential visibility.

- EAC LLA3: Doon Valley – a grand and dramatic landscape of mountains and large water bodies, large-scale, and a sparsely settled landscape with a lack of woodland gives a strong sense of wildness and naturalness. This area is also important as it encompasses part of the Dark Skies Park and the UNESCO Galloway and Southern Ayrshire biosphere. The LLA boundary is distinct and does not bound either of the other two EAC LLAs.

This LLA is characterised by its sense of wildness, particularly to the south of Loch Doon and lack of development with minimal visual impacts from wind turbines. Any development would need to be of appropriate scale and designed to respect the characteristics of the area and the colours and tonal range of the landscape.

Considering the LLA as the three areas has helped guide the proposals to omit a section of the LLA to the south (within EAC LLA2) and the extension of the LLA within EAC LLA1. By assessing and ranking the three areas separately, it has allowed a more refined understanding of the current and future pressures and issues on the landscape. See Drawing 7 – LLA Boundary Review Recommendations.

As such, the recommendations of this report, are to:

- **remove an area of EAC LLA2** – removal is recommended due to the current and proposed changes to the qualities and sense of remoteness of this part of the LLA. The significant number of windfarms that are operational, under construction and consented along with the associated access tracks, overhead lines (OHLs), supporting infrastructure (e.g., substations, compounds) and on-going forestry operations, all have significantly diminished the sense of wildness and remoteness. As such the criterion required to meet the necessary qualities and characteristics of an LLA can no longer be met for this area: naturalness and natural heritage, intactness and condition, wildness and views are all diminished due to the concentration and intensity of development. The area of the LLA to be omitted is consistent with a portion of the Southern Uplands with Forest, Ayrshire LCT and a part of the Southern Uplands, Ayrshire LCT. The area of the LLA to be omitted lies to the west of the Upland Glen, Ayrshire LCT, which would form the new boundary of EAC LLA2.
Should this area remain, it would undermine the credibility of the LLA as a whole and LLA2 could be assessed more negatively against the particular criteria, set out and described in Table 4, that collectively establish the qualities of an LLA.
- **extend EAC LLA1 to incorporate Dumfries House Estate** – the results of the public questionnaire highlighted that the estate was not part of EAC LLA1 and the site visit further determined that the qualities and characteristics, of the estate and the section of the Lowland River Valley, Ayrshire to the southeast of Ochiltree are consistent with other areas of EAC LLA1. As such EAC LLA1 will be extended along the Lugar River valley, following the Lowland River Valley LCT, and take in the full extent of the Dumfries House Estate and include the Barony A frame, which is an important historical reference in the landscape, being the last remaining example of its type in Britain.

LLAs are a flexible designation that are influenced by development pressure, both positive and negative. Future development should be assessed against the characteristics of the relevant LLA, and care should be taken to ensure development is appropriate to the LLA, respecting the qualities and characteristics that define the LLA.

Representative views of each Local Landscape Area



Figure 1: Representative view of LLA 1- looking south from Mauchline Road.



Figure 2: Representative view of LLA 2 – looking towards Afton reservoir, Afton windfarm and Blackcraig Hill.



Figure 3: Representative view of LLA 3 – looking south over Loch Doon.

Further photographs are set out in Appendix 4: Representative Views of the LLAs.

14.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Stakeholder Feedback

Appendix 2: Public Consultation Results

Appendix 3: Evaluation of Criteria for LLA1, LLA2 and LLA3

Appendix 4: Representative Views of the LLAs

Appendix 5: Supporting Drawings

Drawing 1 – EAC Local Landscape Area and adjacent Local Landscape Areas

Drawing 2 – EAC Local Landscape Area and Landscape Character Types

Drawing 3 – EAC Local Landscape Area and Other Landscape Designations

Drawing 4 – Cumulative Issues and Pressures

Drawing 5 – Map of Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership projects

Drawing 6 – Public Consultation Feedback Reference Locations

Drawing 7 – LLA Boundary Review Recommendations

APPENDIX 1

Stakeholder Consultation

Date of meeting: 11 February 2021

Stakeholder	Comments / Feedback
Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided a map of CCLP projects which can be found in Appendix 5: Supporting Drawings. Drawing 5 – Map of Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership projects - CCLP have 22 projects, not all of which are land based. Their main projects include a new long-distance walk from Ness Glen to Patna in the Doon Valley, a new and as yet unspecified area for a mountain biking project, and the Dunaskin project assisting the heritage railway line. - Project 17 (refer to Drawing 5), a former open cast site was noted at House of Water. - Further projects include the Coalfields for Pollinators project near the Doon Valley, the Pollinator Corridor down the Doon Valley, peatland restoration projects within landscape partnership areas outwith the LLA, a river quality project starting in September 2021, the Coalfields to Wild Woods project (5yrs) which may include sites within the Doon Valley.
EAC Development Planning and Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core development pressures would be residential pressures around Hollybush, although suggests this would not have a significant impact on the LLA. - Highlighted further pressures from development at Dalrymple and Skeldon Mills, within the west of the Authority area near the border of the LLA. - A plan is being prepared within the council looking at settlement boundaries and future extensions, this is not expected to infringe on the LLA, with most of the pressure on northern developments and prioritising brownfield sites and sustainable extensions.
EAC Minerals Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided a plan of current open cast mining operations included within Appendix 5 and on Drawing 4: Cumulative Issues and Pressures. Ran through the open cast mining projects on this plan and noted some were partially within sensitive landscape areas. - Noted 'House of Water' was the last active project within EA and it is not anticipated that any more will come forward. - Highlighted the lack of funding for restoration schemes such as those near Chalmerston and Dalmellington. - Noted the restoration of areas near Glenbuck are predominantly complete. - Highlighted the desire for Spires Park Canyon to become a geo park.
EAC Wind Energy Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted their main concern for the LLA was increasing pressure from windfarm developments, particularly in the Southern Uplands area between the Doon part of the LLA and the Southern Uplands part of the LLA. - Provided a map of wind development which can be found in Appendix 5 and on Drawing 4: Cumulative Issues and Pressures. - Noted pressures from the North Kyle, South Kyle and Overhill developments. - Expects onshore wind will be a key feature within East Ayrshire.

Stakeholder	Comments / Feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stated the pressures from Penbreck, Lethans, Hare Craig and Galawhistle, highlighting these as the main significant pressures on the LLA.
East Ayrshire Woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted there are no plans for development as part of the Council. - EA woodlands have small areas of woodland management around Patna and historic involvement at Craigengillan, near the Doon Valley. - Most of their activity lies outwith the LLA. - East Ayrshire Woodlands provide support for individual landowners and activities on the fringes of the LLA. - Primarily involved in smaller community / native woodland schemes.
Forestry and Land Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted there is a large area of previous open cast coals mines within the North Kyle block of the LLA, with active remediation plans ongoing, especially N, W and S of Skares. - Large areas of landscape remediation are occurring especially around open cast sites. - Restructuring (felling and replanting) is occurring at the North Kyle bock, Forestry and Land Scotland are looking to purchase land for commercial forestry and woodland within this area. - South of New Cumnock there is an extensive land holding around Penclow Forest, with an expansion underway/planned. Wind farm application are present in this area with plans to expand. - Currently operating on land near Burnside. - Along the River Ayr corridor there is an active program of remediation on former open cast coal sites - Currently looking to remove forest planting on areas of deep peat and restore as peat/bog. - Notes many positive projects coming forward in the near future.
NatureScot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes the key pressure will be striking a balance between landscape, forestry and renewables.
Green Action Trust (GNT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlighted the role of the Green Action Trust in undertaking environmental regeneration projects, noting these are largely within settlement boundaries. - Many projects involve forestry, woodlands, natural and wild habitats. - Given the particular pressures on the southern section of the LLA suggests looking at neighbouring councils to check the extents of LLAs within those areas.
Forestry Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advised that the LLA boundaries should be overlaid onto the Forestry and Woodland Strategy for Arran and Ayrshire. - No advice on any specific areas where there will afforestation or deforestation as the FS role is to oversee applications and work being undertaken by others. - FS will be interested in any changes to the LLA boundary that could have a bearing on meeting Scotland's strategy for increasing forestry and woodland and the climate change targets.

APPENDIX 2

Review of East Ayrshire Local Landscape Boundary – Consultation

25 February 2021 to 26 March 2021

EAC set out why the consultation was being undertaken.

1. Why we're doing this consultation

The current East Ayrshire Local Development Plan (2017) includes a large Local Landscape Area (LLA), previously described as Sensitive Landscape Area.

The LLA is considered a valuable and important landscape within East Ayrshire. In total it covers nearly 37% of the local authority area and takes in the Doon Valley, Southern Uplands and much of the River Ayr.

East Ayrshire Council is now preparing a new Local Development Plan in conjunction with LDA Design and is reviewing the LLA (see Drawing 1: EAC Local Landscape Area) to see if it should:

- remain as it is;
- be expanded;
- be reduced;
- be amended.

Wind energy, surface coal mining and other development, such as housing and infrastructure are affecting the character and integrity of the LLA.

We want to know how local people feel about the local landscape area. For this reason, we are asking for your comments on the existing LLA area and to what extent you value the LLA for:

- exercise
- recreation
- generally being outdoors
- health and wellbeing
- the landscape and views

And we want to know if you feel that:

- the quality of the landscapes is important for tourism and an economic resource.
- there has been erosion of the landscape quality and character within the LLA.
- there are areas that have been improved through development and/or community activities.

This survey closed on Friday 26 March 2021

Consultation Results

69 Responses

For locations of the places mentioned refer to Drawing 5: Public Consultation Feedback Reference Locations

Q1. Do you visit the countryside within the LLA for exercise / recreation / simply enjoying the outdoors?

Yes 67 (go to Q2)

No 2 (go to Q3)

Q2. If yes, how often do you visit?

Every day	24
Weekly	31
Monthly	8
Every few months	3
Less often	1

Q3. What do you like about the LLA? (please select all that apply)

Views	61
Paths / Walking Routes	56
Escape from towns/urban areas	51
Wildlife	54
Type of landscape	44
Other (please specify)	8

1. We don't view the LLA as a nice place to get away as those from the larger towns do. We live in the middle of it/are surrounded by it in Dalmellington.

2. It is so important for people to spend time in a natural environment, amongst nature.

3. The fact that there is a place for nature here, that it is a refuge.

4. I love the countryside where I live and feel so blessed to have it. It has some of the most amazing scenery in Scotland and for many years has been let untouched so shows the landscape at its rawest and finest. I can do mindfulness within it and find it very relaxing and calming.

5. Opportunity to cycle on and off road. Also being able to walk away from others

6. The variety and contrast of the connected landscape. One minute you can be in former opencast and the next you can be in an area that attracts tourists. The geology and history is awesome too, from basaltic rock to Mesolithic canoes.

7. I would have said paths but some areas that should be accessible to people are not.

I use a heavy duty all terrain mobility scooter and like to go on the open cast site in Dalmellington but can no longer do it because of access.

8. It includes some important and fascinating historical sites - often underplayed in promoting the area. Some amazing wild and open land very close to the major towns of East, North and South Ayrshire.

Q4. Is the quality of the landscape important to you as an individual or a business?

Yes 63 (go to Q5)

No 6 (go to Q6)

Q5. If you answered yes to question 4, please explain why the quality of the landscape is important to you.

Good for mental health / well-being
Diverse, quality countryside (although some responses consider currently lacking in this regard)
Need for good quality and accessible paths
Need for clear information on routes and attractions
Safe walking environment
Undisturbed and varied landscapes good for exercise and escapism
Important asset for the next generation (concerns over the loss of too much of the countryside)
Part of the local heritage, including opportunities to reconnect with previously hidden heritage
To be as natural / unspoilt as possible for people, flora and fauna – concerns over loss to wind farms and landfill
Opportunity for education and people to engage with ‘rewilding’ / maintaining
Variety of views and scenery
Peaceful
Preference for living in rural rather than urban area
Livelihoods and businesses
Tourist attraction

Q6. Do you think the landscapes of, and places within the LLA are important for tourism and the economy?

Yes 61 (go to Q7)

No 8 (go to Q8)

Q7. If yes, to question 6, are there any areas or attractions that you think are particularly important?

Wild, open spaces (a great attraction for walking)
Shift to working from home
Attracting people which in turn boosts the economy
Easy access and quality, well-maintained paths for walking and cycling
A wealth of history (but not mapped well or with good access)
Dumfries House and Estate
Boswell Estate
Auchinleck Estate
Sorn / River Ayr
Galston trail
Local hills
Designated landscape areas
The Ayr Walk from Muirkirk to Ayr and Blackside End are vital to the local Sorn area
All coast areas in Ayrshire, all the lochs, and surrounding areas
Keeping areas wild for nature

Views

Galloway Forest Park – would like something like this in EA
Loch Doon (especially the osprey viewing at the Roundhouse)
Dalcairney Falls
Nessglen Walk

Craigengillan Estate
Dunaskin Heritage Site
Benquat (Benwhat)
Forest Walks at Patna
Lethanhill

Blacksidend Hill from the summit gives view all the way to Arran and the Paps of Jura (concerns over windfarm application at the base of Blacksidend Hill)

The Boswells, Burns connection, William Murdoch, Dumfries House, local poets eg. Lapraik, Tibbie, Glenbuck, Cairn Table, cup and ring markings, local caves, Mauchline Viaduct

The Burns Monument and Kay Park in Kilmarnock

Dean Castle Country Park

Lainshaw Woods area in Stewarton

Important to preserve Dark Sky Park at Dalmellington

Mauchline / Cumnock area

Afton Dam

Whitelee windfarm: nature & green energy in harmony (East Renfrewshire)

Parks and recreational spaces generally, particularly within towns etc

Dark Skies Observatory, Dalmellington

Camlarg, Dalmellington.

Q8. Do you think development is spoiling / damaging any areas within the LLA?

Yes 49 (go to Q9)

No 20 (go to Q10)

Q9. If yes, to question 8, where and what types of development?

Windfarms (particularly around Dalmellington and New Cumnock) destroying quality of the landscape

Open cast coalmining areas (but noted these are historic)

Housing development (concerns that it is using up all the green spaces)

Development within Lugar

Incineration plant at Killoch

Haulage companies working out of farms creating noise and heavy lorry traffic

Green lane driving for 4*4 and quads needs better control possibly with specific areas identified.

Q10. Do you think there are any areas of the LLA that have been enhanced through development / environmental projects?

Yes 48 (go to Q11)

No 21 (go to Q12)

Q11. If yes, to question 10, where and what types of development / projects?

In and around Skares and New Cumnock which lost farms, house etc, the old brick works and old mine surface areas should be allowed to develop to encourage new business and employment

River Ayr Way - settlements around the River Ayr Way could be utilised much more as hospitality and accommodation services.

There is the expectation that the Coalfield Initiative will have a very beneficial impact on the physical environment in the Dalmellington area.

The little park in Dunlop.

Craigengillan Estate and stable. The increase in footpaths and foot bridges on the estate has attracted many walkers to the area.

Dumfries House Estate and some surrounding linked attractions such as Barony A-Frame; although more work needs to be done is improving the quality of the pathways to link the areas; similarly to link to Auchinleck Estate.

Only on a small scale. The designation of conservation / wildlife areas can be seen as positive. I would not regard the "restoration" of the upland areas in the wake of open cast mining as a good example.

Knochshinnoch Lagoons (The Bing) near New Cumnock is really coming on in strides with rewilding. Birds overwintering from the Arctic Circle here, deer, wild orchids increasingly popping up. It is going well and well visited by friendly locals. The local gardening group in New Cumnock do litter picking in the lagoons sometimes even though it is a Scottish Wildlife Trust site.

Glamping Pods at Craigengillan Estate

Stables at Craigengillan Estate

Jubilee Walk at Dalmellington

Wildlife Preservation

New Primary school and Community Facility at Bellsbank

New Academy at Dalmellington (pending)

Renovation of Bellsbank Housing (painted and roughcast)

Dalmellington Community Centre renovation

Dark Skies Observatory

The Dean park in Kilmarnock has greatly improved due to the recent development. This is proved by the greater numbers taking enjoyment in the visits to the area.

The Kay Park is also an improvement but teen of today are missing out on the former pitch and putt facility.

The River Ayr Way

In Stewarton the building of the path along the river makes it safer to enjoy walks along the whole route.

Mauchline Hilltop Path

Failford Gorge which is part of the River Ayr Way

The trails at Galston are good.

Forestry Commission have enhanced our woodland walks.

Environmental projects - Damming of drainage of Dalmellington Moss, sowing of wildflower seed at junction of B741/A713, hedge planting B741 to Dalcairney, planting of community orchard, Mainhill, Dalmellington.

Craigengillen Estate in particular have improved and installed many small bridges, hedgerows and walks. Our local councillor Drew Filson has worked around the loch Doon area on safety aspects and signage for walks etc.

Opencast restoration, sympathetic tree planting.

Introduction of Caravan site to try to control caravans at Loch Doon.

Q12. Are there any areas of the LLA that you think should be protected from development?

Yes 62 (go to Q13)

No 7 (go to Q14)

Q13. If yes, to question 12, please tell us where these areas are and why they should be protected.

Pristine moorland and woodlands should be protected as once developed on they can never be returned to their natural state for the benefit of future generations.

Peat lands, and bogs

All areas (a number of comments concerned about the rate of loss of the landscape / green spaces)

Everywhere should be protected, unless it ADDs something to the area. Housing developments in particular seem to take no notice of the houses/area already there, spoiling views and privacy etc. These should only take place in very large areas that don't spoil others views and enjoyment of the property.

All areas which allow for walking / cycling / outdoor activities / scenic views.

All river ways - Irvine, Ayr, Kilmarnock

The LLA areas should not be damaged with additional power lines. They should be buried or added to existing lines.

Historic sites and environmental areas should be protected at all costs.

Loch Doon should be shielded from windfarms, especially, and villages should not become engulfed by turbines looming over them.

Muirkirk / Sorn / Catrine/ Mauchline/ Ochiltree surrounding areas - they should be protected from larger type development that would have an impact on their visual appearance, increase in noise pollution and limited housing development; focus should be on redeveloping existing buildings and supporting small businesses to thrive in these local areas to support communities.

Upland moorland, indigenous woodland, waterways, lochs and wildlife habitats should all be protected. These are for the most part situated in the south and east of the LLA, such as the Doon Valley, Muirkirk moorland, Afton Glen hills.

Dean park

Stewarton area, the infrastructure is at bursting point. The Medical Practice has already needed to refuse new clients or move existing clients to other practices to make room for new. A new Medical Practice facility is required.

The sewerage system is old and in severe need of replacement.

A new school campus is required, Stewarton keeps getting patchwork rooms added, taking away land that children used to have as play areas. Both primary schools are full and Stewarton Academy is at bursting point.

Land is available and landowners have indicated that they are prepared to sell, just NO more houses until the infrastructure is in place to take more residents.

Local hills and skylines should be protected from windmills. Opencast mines are also eating away at the environment.

Areas essential to the character, heritage and sustaining wildlife should be protected.

Wildlife preservation in Craigengillan Estate and on natural riverbanks and land, around the Dalmellington area should be protected due to rare, low numbers or dying species of flora and fauna. The Dark Skies Observatory to be able to show the night sky at its best, without artificial lighting spoiling it.

Wind farms should be far away from the small towns within East Ayrshire especially around the Cumnock & Doon valley areas. There are a number of these already and should be taken into consideration when erecting more.

Blacksidend generally should be a place protected from further damage; Tincornhill Quarry is a blight on the landscape. No further industrialization should be permitted in an area of special scientific interest, the sheer variation of raptors and wildlife in this area merits protection.

Loch Doon, Afton Dam they are very beautiful, and development would ruin them.

The Afton dam in new Cumnock as the forestry there is absolutely stunning alongside the rolling hills and mountains along the road to the reservoir.

Any with historical interest unless it is to enhance it or make more accessible for folk with disabilities.

All greenbelt areas

Galloway Forest

There should always be an area around every town or village that allows people to walk, run or cycle that does not require transport.

Loch Doon & surrounding hills must be preserved as much as possible.

Loch Doon area in general to keep its wilderness appeal to visitors and because of the Osprey nest.

Loch Doon to be protected from windfarm developments, this area must remain unmolested. During this current pandemic this area has become a mecca for walkers and families, and this must be encouraged.

I like the turbines & we all know that green energy is essential, but impact must be considered.

Glen Trool (Galloway) is a national treasure & must not be overdeveloped.

Any part of this landscape where the views/environment would be adversely affected.

Muirkirk SPA, Loch Doon, Blacksidend, Sorn, Glen Afton.

Scenery and wildlife attract tourism that will be essential for our local economy.

All of the land south and west of Dalmellington - to include all land surrounding Loch Doon down to the area currently designated Wild Land. This is open unspoilt, unpopulated land that is very close to large populations in Ayrshire who can really benefit from exploring it. Osprey nesting at Loch Doon must be protected with little disturbance from development. A big tourist draw and gives easy access for people to be introduced to the key native species and conservation. Areas contained within the Dark Sky Park in order to maintain this designation.

Q14. Are there any areas where you think more development could be accommodated?

Yes 31 (go to Q15)

No 38 (go to Q16)

Q15. If yes, to question 14, please tell us where these areas are, and what type of development you think could work there.

Walking routes with small and sensitively designed car parking to encourage people to explore the natural environment.

On old opencast mines, old surface workings, brick work sites and around small villages like Skares where there were miners rows should be allowed to develop and flourish, also small industry in the country, SMEs should be allowed to develop and diversify away from centralised business parks which are over developed and high risk of pollution and poor health. We need to grow in the country to stop traveling and transport costs to centralised areas of industry and work. Covid proves we can work at home and reduce traffic and therefor costs to upkeep infrastructure etc.

There is a huge area of scrub land on the A76, just after the Bellfield interchange this should be replanted with trees to counter the huge area of pollution from the overhead electric pylons, then surrounding areas would be safer for new housing / development.

The village of Dalmellington and many others would benefit from town centre regeneration.

Not more new development but development and redesign of existing buildings for housing, education or retail to support communities.

In the settlements on the periphery of the areas described, to facilitate tourism and sustainable activity.

Town centre. Nice parks

Brownfield sites, ex industrial areas, underutilised industrial areas, ex-military sites. Stuff that has already been ruined.

The recent local development plan indicated land that was available for development.

Medical Practice

School Campus

Sewage system upgraded.

More use of brownfield sites for housing

New Cumnock, Afton Hills, Muirkirk Hill

More accessible walking paths.

Campervan overnight parking in scenic areas to encourage tourists.

The Doon Valley area needs an injection of finance and TLC to rebuild the individual areas and bring employment back into the villages. A lot of people stop off at Dalmellington to go to Loch Doon or the Dark Skies Observatory and it would be good if there was something interesting for these tourists to stop at and have a meal and get some facts about the village and surrounding areas. There is somewhere like this to go to in Kilmarnock and Cumnock, but not so much for the Doon Valley. We could also have a workplace alongside the Zone and the BTTC Centre to help our younger members with computing, childcare, hospitality, joinery, and electrical training so they can have better prospects than they have just now for the world of employment.

Only if development could result in increased protection, for example by increasing cycle paths and other zero carbon access.

I think there is room for improvement in providing better trails and pathways around Loch Doon. In a comparison with Glentrool area there is great scope for better pathways on the hills and around the eastern shore of Loch Doon. Trail biking, white water canoeing and something to prevent 4 track vehicles gaining access to the walking paths. This I feel could increase tourism from afar to East Ayrshire. It can only benefit the area.

Although developments that has improved villages there are still some eyesores. Empty derelict building on main streets.

Cumnock, Auchinleck, Catrine, Muirkirk and Dalmellington to name a few.

More development in the C&D area would help the area grow again.

Maybe luxury lodges near the Afton dam, New Cumnock or Loch Doon would be a great boost for the area.

Cumnock

Industrial estates should be refurbished to encourage employment back to the area.

More development should be encouraged within the Kilmarnock town area, particularly regeneration of what were previously industrial sites.

Maintaining some of the road surfaces. The road to the Observatory in the Dark Sky Park just beyond Dalmellington as well as repair works to the road between Dalmellington and New Cumnock. These are maintenance issues rather than development opportunities.

More windfarms should be moved to Edinburgh area.

Town Centres large and small where areas have been demolished due to the unsafe old rotten buildings. Too many town centres have old unattractive areas and as shops are constantly closing, please develop nice attractive houses for town centres. Preferably not flats.

Former opencast and windfarm areas could be developed into paths, cycle paths and bridleways.

Why don't we blow our own trumpet about the hydro generation & how long we've been doing this, it shows forward planning which seems to be absent just now.

A tourist trail & visitors centres would be a high-profile asset.

North Kyle forest will be an area of massive development due to windfarm projects already granted consent to build and this should be taken advantage of when all this machinery and manpower is there.

Some brownfield sites and areas close to Motorway links.

Q16. Do you think there are other areas that should be included within the LLA?

Yes 28 (go to Q17)

No 41 (go to Q18)

Q17. If yes, to question 16, please tell us where they are and why you think they should be included?

Heritage trails around Kilmarnock, Kilmaurs, Stewarton etc

Darvel walks and Loudoun Hill areas

Mauchline hilltop path and surrounding area

Lagoons and reservoir in and around New Cumnock

Loch Doon and surroundin

I note that the area of the Upper Irvine Valley from Galston east beyond Darvel is listed on the more detailed map (EALPD) as a rural protection area. I am of the opinion that this area should be considered as part of the Local Landscape Area. It of course includes the iconic feature of Loudoun Hill, one of Scotland's ancient volcanic plugs and a very popular destination for visitors and walkers, offering superb views across the adjacent moorland and the valley of the River Irvine.

When the Forestry land has deciduous trees planted as part of their woodland strategy this land should be added to the LLA.

The biggest problem with further developments / housing within the LLA areas is the A76. It is like a B-road but has no hard shoulder. It should be dual carriageway at the least, the volume of heavy lorries, traffic is unbelievable, and it cuts right through small villages and towns.

It is ridiculous that the trains run right through these areas but hardly stop, I feel for sure that they would reduce traffic if there were more stations /car parking.

Areas and roads that lead into villages should be enhanced to encourage tourists to stop and spend time in them.

I am thinking here about smaller pockets which are too many to mention but might include the likes of the upland area to the west of Patna (bordering South Ayrshire) after commercial deforestation has ended.

As many as possible.

Areas all appear to be located to the South - perhaps opportunities to the North-West

As many as possible. Loudon Hill, Glen Water through to Loudon Castle - and the Irvine River in general. The more populous northern East Ayrshire is lacking LLA's. Whitelee gets lots of visitors from Glasgow - it would be good if there was more than just a wind farm, visitor centre and paths

A real crackdown on flytipping, perhaps remote camera's in areas that are known as trouble spots for this. Litter picking around the roadside verges could also be improved, and heavy fines imposed on the litterers.

I would like to see further protection in the north of the County.

Shocking lack in the north of the region. Is there a link between attractiveness of development for housing i.e Stewarton area? The main areas identified are more deprived areas with less demand for housing.

More green space (farms and their fields etc) should be included in order to help protect this and would also encourage safe routes through these fields to be accommodated.

North Stewarton, Dunlop, Lugton areas.

Round Dunlop and Stewarton. Paths could be put in place to encourage active travel and walking.

Benbrack area, beautiful countryside and walking.

Dumfries House and the whole estate including the walled garden and the property of the estate should 100 percent be a part of the LLA that including the barony a frame and ground about it.

New rail hubs for the area.

The gap in between Dalmellington and Burnside on the map comprising Clawfin, Mainhill, Maneight etc. They are rural and at present form a disconnect from Dalmellington to New Cumnock where there is potential for at least a cycle path and form part of a wider network.

Lugar Water and Burnock Water corridors should be protected and enhanced.

Expand the LLA to include a corridor from Dalmellington to New Cumnock to provide a link and impetus for walking and cycling routes. Possibly horse riding too.

Extend the LLA in the Doon valley to include more of the land above Lethanhill along to Benquhat (which should be included in the LLA). Again, more walking and cycling routes.

Grounds at Hollybush House as a Historic landscape and garden.

Q18. Do you think there are areas that should be removed from the LLA?

Yes 8 (go to Q19)

No 61 (go to Q20)

Q19. If yes, to question 18, please tell us where they are and why you think they should be removed?

Any area with potential to develop and help business grow.

Small villages, as these would feel the impact most of any developments & have the least space. Improving what is already there for small villages is a much better use of resources.

Only if they can be replaced by more ecologically valuable & scenic areas.

All abandoned buildings

Cumnock, Auchinleck, Muirkirk, Sorn, Catrine.

If the area is too large, there would be an impact on tourism, tourists need focal points & not just a wide swath of a county.

Kilmarnock and surrounding districts, they are a drain on resources as very little is spent elsewhere, the Council is East Ayrshire not Kilmarnockshire.

Q20. Do you have any other points you would like to make about the extent and boundaries of the LLA?

Please take the responses seriously and don't just decide what is best according to your own views/plans. Give people a say again when you do make any plans about their areas & be open and transparent about it. Don't make any final decisions without seriously considering local people's opinions/comments etc. Small villages are being eroded enough with no local schools etc. without anymore. There's little enough community, about communities, without doing more damage.

Extending the LLA to include the upper valley of the River Irvine.

The visual impact of power lines etc crossing LLA should be brought into the planning consent discussions more. They have a huge impact and the Doon Valley is now covered in telegraph and power lines.

Good housing for all is a must but not at the cost of our environment, a play park or money into council coffers is NOT enough, to justify damaging our countryside /wildlife, Small measures can easily counterbalance the cost of development.

I would really like to see every urban area having an area replanted with Forest Farming a. it will help our environment and b. can feed people for free with very little maintenance required once established.

NO

There has to be balance and a third of the area works. Any more can stifle development which I appreciate needs to happen. Making development add more to their plans for better mental health and making buildings more sympathetic within the local environment is more important.

In general, I would like consideration to be given to expanding the boundaries as much as is reasonably possible.

Too big

The boundaries should not be increased in the Stewarton area.

Improved pathways and access to the River Doon from Dalrymple to Patna would be a bonus, especially as the owners of Skeldon Estate and some farmers would appear to try and make access rather awkward. I do appreciate they are combatting the anti-social elements of society at times.

I think East Ayrshire should stay as it is.

Access to LLA is important, it would be ideal if Kilmarnock (our largest population centre) had better carbon-free access to LLA's via uninterrupted cycle paths into various LLAs, and closer LLAs.

We need to look after landscape and wildlife and look for ways to reduce waste and produce more food. Need to stop building so many houses and removing native hedges.

I am happy with the boundaries as they are. It has given the ability to exercise close to home but with a variety of places.

When plans are made (large or small areas) all local residents and C. Councils should be consulted to enable all local residents have their say if it involves their neighbourhood.

Local parks should be looked after properly to enable residents and children in flats can made full use of nice safe play areas for their well-being and country walks for all other residents to get out, blow away the cobwebs and enjoy the walks and picnics for young and old.

This area is a precious gift and should be maintained not just for now, but for future generations too. No housing estates or factories needed!

Development outside an LLA can impact areas inside an LLA. A strategic plan should be visionary. The future for the area is not in heavy industry. Our landscape can provide jobs, income and enjoyment. We should look to increasing the boundaries.

As the boundary of Dumfries and Galloway runs right up to the other shore of Loch Doon it is obviously key that D& G are brought on board to share a common vision of the Dark Sky Park and Galloway Forest Park.

Responses from individuals or organisations

Individuals - 66

Organisations - 3

APPENDIX 3

Evaluation of Criteria for LLA1, LLA2 and LLA3

LLA 1	Criterion	Consideration	Rank	Justification
LLA1: River Ayr Valley	Identity and sense of place	To what extent does the landscape contain features, or combinations of features, that are distinctive to East Ayrshire, making a positive contribution to its wider identity, image and sense of place?	Medium	The combination of woodland, rivers and streams, agriculture, valleys and settlements is significantly different to other areas of East Ayrshire. The area also includes a number of heritage features and visitor attractions.
	Rarity	To what extent does the landscape contain features or a combination of features which are rare or unique within East Ayrshire, or which are known to be uncommon elsewhere?	Medium	The combination of woodland, rivers and streams, agriculture, valleys and settlements is significantly different to other areas of East Ayrshire. The Ayr River valley is strongly influenced by former mining, although so are other areas of East Ayrshire.
	Intactness and condition	Is the landscape intact or has it experienced a decline in quality (since the last LLA assessment)? Are present and future changes likely to lead to a decline? Are the landscape features or combinations of features in a good state of repair?	Medium	Former mining and coalfields have influenced the natural landscape, but the area is not in a state of decline.
	Wildness	To what extent does the landscape display characteristics of wildness, including perceived naturalness, lack of modern artefacts or structures, rugged or physically challenging landform or remoteness / inaccessibility?	Low	Too settled and cultivated to be wild. Landscape intertwined with development (historic and current).
	Scenic qualities	To what extent is the landscape of scenic value in its own right or to what extent does it contribute to the scenic qualities of the wider area?	High	Rich combination of woodland, rivers and streams, agriculture, valleys and settlements with some localised high points offering panoramic views and particularly to the moorlands and upland areas.
	Enjoyment	To what extent is the landscape enjoyed by local people and visitors e.g. walking, cycling, horse riding	High	Rich combination of woodland, rivers and streams, agriculture, valleys and settlements with the River Ayr Way, Dumfries House Estate, Auchinleck Estate and area around the Barony A-frame enjoyed by local people and visitors.

LLA 1	Criterion	Consideration	Rank	Justification
	Built heritage assets	Do the built heritage assets have a significant influence on the character of the landscape? Does the landscape provide key views, in to and away from, important built heritage assets?	Medium	Dumfries House and Estate, Barony A-frame particularly have a positive influence in and on the landscape. The A-frame being a very striking feature in views.
	Cultural qualities	To what extent does the landscape have specific historic or cultural associations (including literature, music, art, local history or particular spiritual associations) or does it contribute to the wider cultural heritage of the area?	Low	The area is heavily influenced by forming and current mining and quarrying.
	Naturalness and natural heritage assets	To what extent do features of natural heritage interest, including important habitats, protected sites and features of geodiversity value make a contribution to the landscape?	High	Combinations of landform, deciduous woodland, rivers, water courses, agriculture, pasture, lowland moorland make for a rich and diverse landscape and intricate landscape.
	Settlement setting	How important is the landscape in providing the setting for settlements as a whole or particular aspects of a settlement?	High	Settlements are nestled into the landscape, contained by landform, hedges and woodland
	Views	To what extent does the landscape provide key views into and out of the landscape?	Medium	Some high points giving rise to panoramic views, but views are mostly constrained by valley landform, hedges and woodland.

LLA 2	Criterion	Consideration	Rank	Justification
LLA2: Uplands & Moorlands	Identity and sense of place	To what extent does the landscape contain features, or combinations of features, that are distinctive to East Ayrshire, making a positive contribution to its wider identity, image and sense of place?	Medium	Contains striking moorland character but they are not unique to EA as they extend into Dumfries and Galloway and South Ayrshire. Contains some elements of past and present industrial use which also extend across neighbouring Council areas.
	Rarity	To what extent does the landscape contain features or a combination of features which are rare or unique within East Ayrshire, or which are known to be uncommon elsewhere?	Medium	Contains striking moorland character but they are not unique to EA as they extend into Dumfries and Galloway and South Ayrshire. Contains some elements of past and present industrial use which also extend across neighbouring Council areas.
	Intactness and condition	Is the landscape intact or has it experienced a decline in quality (since the last LLA assessment)? Are present and future changes likely to lead to a decline? Are the landscape features or combinations of features in a good state of repair?	Low	Has already been impacted by wind farms and further pressures will continue with more in the planning system. Quite a state of change although the underlying landscape is not in decline. Subject to numerous large-scale planning applications which will shape the qualities and characteristics of the landscape.
	Wildness	To what extent does the landscape display characteristics of wildness, including perceived naturalness, lack of modern artefacts or structures, rugged or physically challenging landform or remoteness / inaccessibility?	Medium	Some perception of wildness as more difficult to access due to lack of footpaths but modern interventions (wind turbines, OHLs) impinge on views and qualities, significantly affecting the sense of remoteness.
	Scenic qualities	To what extent is the landscape of scenic value in its own right or to what extent does it contribute to the scenic qualities of the wider area?	High	Dramatic, large-scale, simple rolling hills which act as the backdrop to East Ayrshire in the east and south, contrasting strongly with the valleys and open agricultural areas.
	Enjoyment	To what extent is the landscape enjoyed by local people and visitors e.g. walking, cycling, horse riding	Medium	Not as popular a destination due to lack of easy access across much of these areas.
	Built heritage assets	Do the built heritage assets have a significant influence on the character of the landscape? Does the landscape provide key views, in to and away from, important built heritage assets?	Low	Few built assets - only Robert Burns Cairn, near Laight. However, it is tucked away in the landscape and does not influence the landscape character.
	Cultural qualities	To what extent does the landscape have specific historic or cultural associations (including literature, music, art, local history or particular spiritual	Low	Robert Burns Cairn (built in 1973 to mark the 50th anniversary of the New Cumnock Burns Club) and Robert the Bruce Way, although the latter is not well used (in disrepair in places) and appears to have been affected by the windfarm access tracks.

LLA 2	Criterion	Consideration	Rank	Justification
		associations) or does it contribute to the wider cultural heritage of the area?		
	Naturalness and natural heritage assets	To what extent do features of natural heritage interest, including important habitats, protected sites and features of geodiversity value make a contribution to the landscape?	High	Dramatic, large-scale, simple rolling hills which act as the backdrop to East Ayrshire in the east and south, contrast strongly with the valleys and open agricultural areas.
	Settlement setting	How important is the landscape in providing the setting for settlements as a whole or particular aspects of a settlement?	Medium	Fewer settlements but backdrop is important to defining the eastern and southern extents of East Ayrshire.
	Views	To what extent does the landscape provide key views into and out of the landscape?	High	Elevated and panoramic views, but forestry does restrict some views.

LLA 3	Criterion	Consideration	Rank	Justification
LLA3: Doon Valley	Identity and sense of place	To what extent does the landscape contain features, or combinations of features, that are distinctive to East Ayrshire, making a positive contribution to its wider identity, image and sense of place?	High	The rich combination of hills (forested, open moorland), lochs, streams, wild land areas with extensive views is very scenic and attractive to visitors who come to enjoy nature. A pleasing balance of natural and managed landscapes.
	Rarity	To what extent does the landscape contain features or a combination of features which are rare or unique within East Ayrshire, or which are known to be uncommon elsewhere?	High	There is only one are of wild land within East Ayrshire, located to the south of Loch Doon, which is a freshwater loch and is the largest inland loch in southern Scotland at around seven miles long.
	Intactness and condition	Is the landscape intact or has it experienced a decline in quality (since the last LLA assessment)? Are present and future changes likely to lead to a decline? Are the landscape features or combinations of features in a good state of repair?	High	The landscape and combinations of elements are generally in a good state of repair. Some damage to verges around Loch Doon, by cars, due to insufficient parking space / passing places. Some encroachment of wind turbines within some views detracts slightly from the natural landscape around Loch Doon. The observatory dome is very visible in the landscape, but only locally around Loch Doon. Changes will occur as part of forestry felling and restocking (over time) but the requirement to include greater mix of native, deciduous species will be beneficial. Currently, no wind farms or other infrastructure projects within the planning system.
	Wildness	To what extent does the landscape display characteristics of wildness, including perceived naturalness, lack of modern artefacts or structures, rugged or physically challenging landform or remoteness / inaccessibility?	Medium	This LLA includes an area designated as wild land, where it borders Dumfries and Galloway / Galloway Dark Skies Park. Some encroachment of wind turbines within some views detracts slightly from the natural landscape around Loch Doon.
	Scenic qualities	To what extent is the landscape of scenic value in its own right or to what extent does it contribute to the scenic qualities of the wider area?	High	The rich combination of hills (forested, open moorland), lochs, streams, wild land areas with extensive views is very scenic and attractive to visitors who come to enjoy nature. Some encroachment of wind turbines within some views detracts slightly from the natural landscape.

LLA 3	Criterion	Consideration	Rank	Justification
	Enjoyment	To what extent is the landscape enjoyed by local people and visitors e.g. walking, cycling, horse riding	High	A landscape that is highly valued by locals and tourists for walking (a number of Core Paths), cycling, horse riding, fishing, bird watching, simply enjoying nature, including dark skies.
	Built heritage assets	Do the built heritage assets have a significant influence on the character of the landscape? Does the landscape provide key views, in to and away from, important built heritage assets?	Medium	Doon Castle, Dark Skies Observatory, Dunaskin Heritage Centre, Craigengillan Estate. Attractions within the landscape but they do not significantly influence the character of the landscape. Views to and from are constrained by landform. The observatory is the most prominent but only from around Loch Doon.
	Cultural qualities	To what extent does the landscape have specific historic or cultural associations (including literature, music, art, local history or particular spiritual associations) or does it contribute to the wider cultural heritage of the area?	Low	Doon Castle, Dark Skies Observatory, Dunaskin Heritage Centre, Craigengillan Estate. These places attract locals and tourists. This are built heritage assets rather than cultural associations.
	Naturalness and natural heritage assets	To what extent do features of natural heritage interest, including important habitats, protected sites and features of geodiversity value make a contribution to the landscape?	High	Loch Doon and other smaller lochs, River Doon valley, Dalcairney Falls, proximity to Galloway Forest Park/Dark Skies park, Ness Glen, relationship of hills to lochs and rivers and SSSI's. These all combine to create a rich and diverse landscape appreciated by locals and tourists.
	Settlement setting	How important is the landscape in providing the setting for settlements as a whole or particular aspects of a settlement?	High	Settlements nestle in the landscape and sit within the valley corridor. Rising higher ground provides enclosure and setting.
	Views	To what extent does the landscape provide key views into and out of the landscape?	Medium	Higher ground and wild land area provide panoramic viewpoints, but there are no specific/special viewpoints noted. Within the Doon Valley and around/across Loch Doon, views are contained by landform. Views of turbines encroach into some views.

APPENDIX 4

Representative Views of the Local Landscape Areas.

Selected photographs from site visits on 15th and 23rd April 2021.

Representative views of LLA 1: River Ayr Valley



View northeast from Mauchline Road



Arable, hedgerow & woodland characteristics



Lugar Water – river & riparian woodlands



Mixed deciduous woodlands



Barony A – frame – heritage & recreation



Dumfries House Estate – heritage & recreation

Representative views of LLA 2: Uplands and Moorlands.



Afton Glen looking northeast towards Hare Hill



View southeast over Afton Reservoir



River Afton, looking north



Forestry felling and OHLs at Pencloe Windfarm



Looking east towards Afton Reservoir & Blackcraig Hill with the turbines on Windy Knowes Hill – the boundary between the area of LLA 2 to be retained and the area recommended for removal from the LLA, due to the influences of the wind turbines and access tracks

Representative views of Uplands and Moorlands recommended for removal from LLA2 due to the influences of wind turbines, access tracks, forestry felling, overhead lines and other buildings and infrastructure.

Afton Glen looking northeast towards Hare Hill



View southeast over Afton Reservoir



Afton Windfarm at White Knowes Hill



Forestry felling and OHLs at Pencloe Windfarm



View of Afton Windfarm on White Knowes Hill

Afton and Pencloe Windfarms



Boundary between LLA2 retained and area to be omitted that is influenced by wind turbines

Representative views of LLA 3: Doon Valley



Loch Doon looking south – East Ayrshire’s largest water body.



Loch Doon looking east – towards Benbrack, Lamford Hill & Black Craig



Moorland and hills surrounding Loch Doon



Wildland characteristics around Loch Doon

Loch Doon is a popular tourist location with the Scottish Dark Sky Observatory that opened in October 2012. Loch Doon Castle was built by the Bruce earls of Carrick in the late 1200s. The Roundhouse Cafe by the dam, Ospreys nest by the cafe, new Touring Caravan Park, and free camper van and camping spots that are patrolled by a Ranger. The area has a popular riverside walk and four hill ranges with hills from 1,000 ft to 2,766 ft. Five hills are above 2,500 feet.

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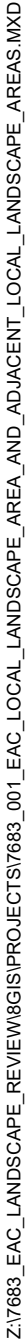
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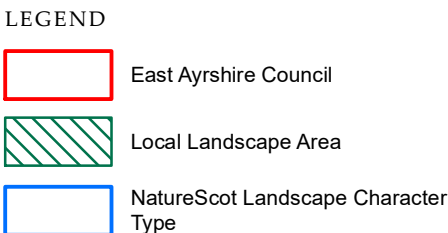
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Drawing 1



 East Ayrshire Council

 Local Landscape Area



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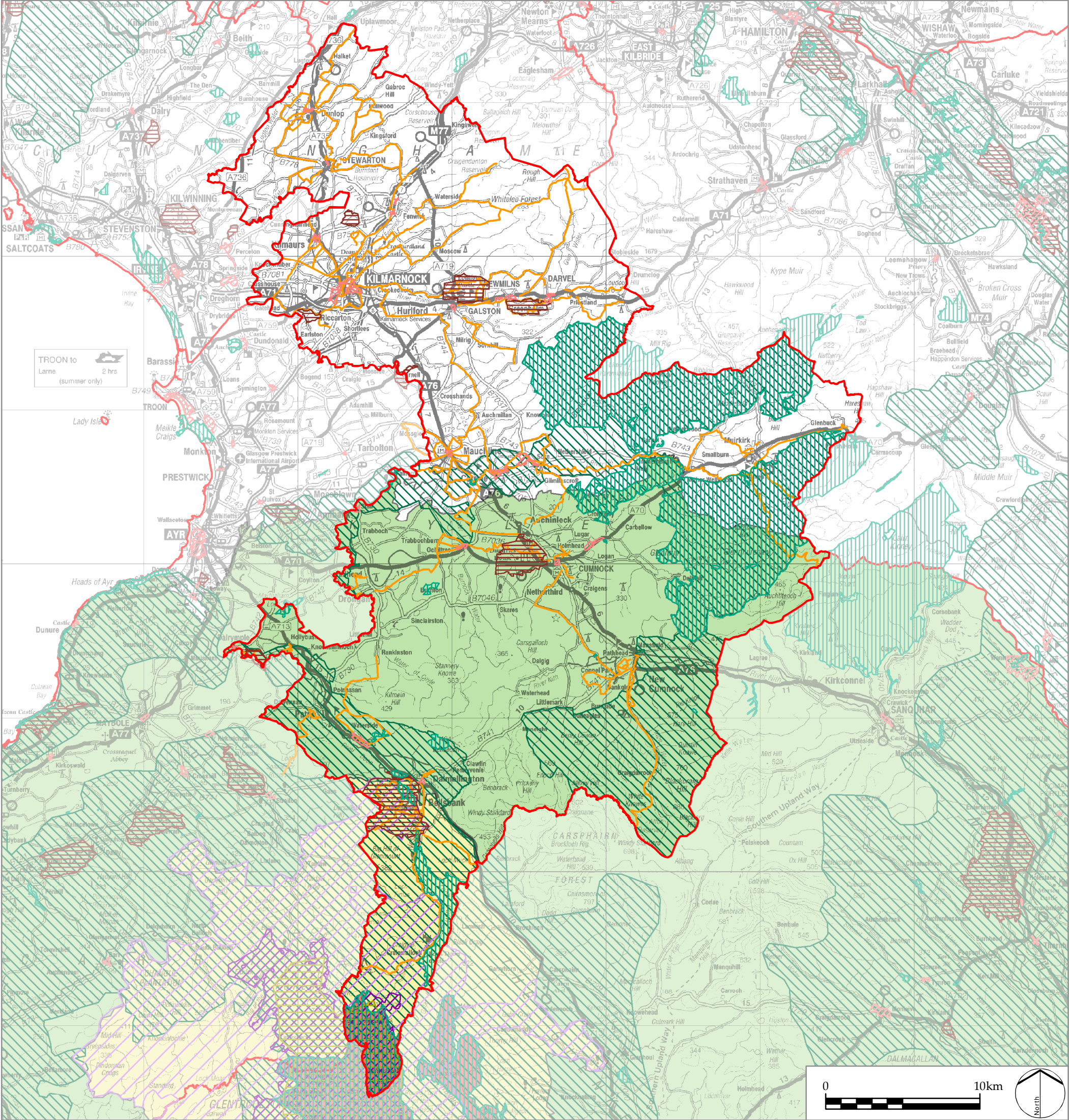
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EAC Local Landscape Area and
Other Landscape Designations

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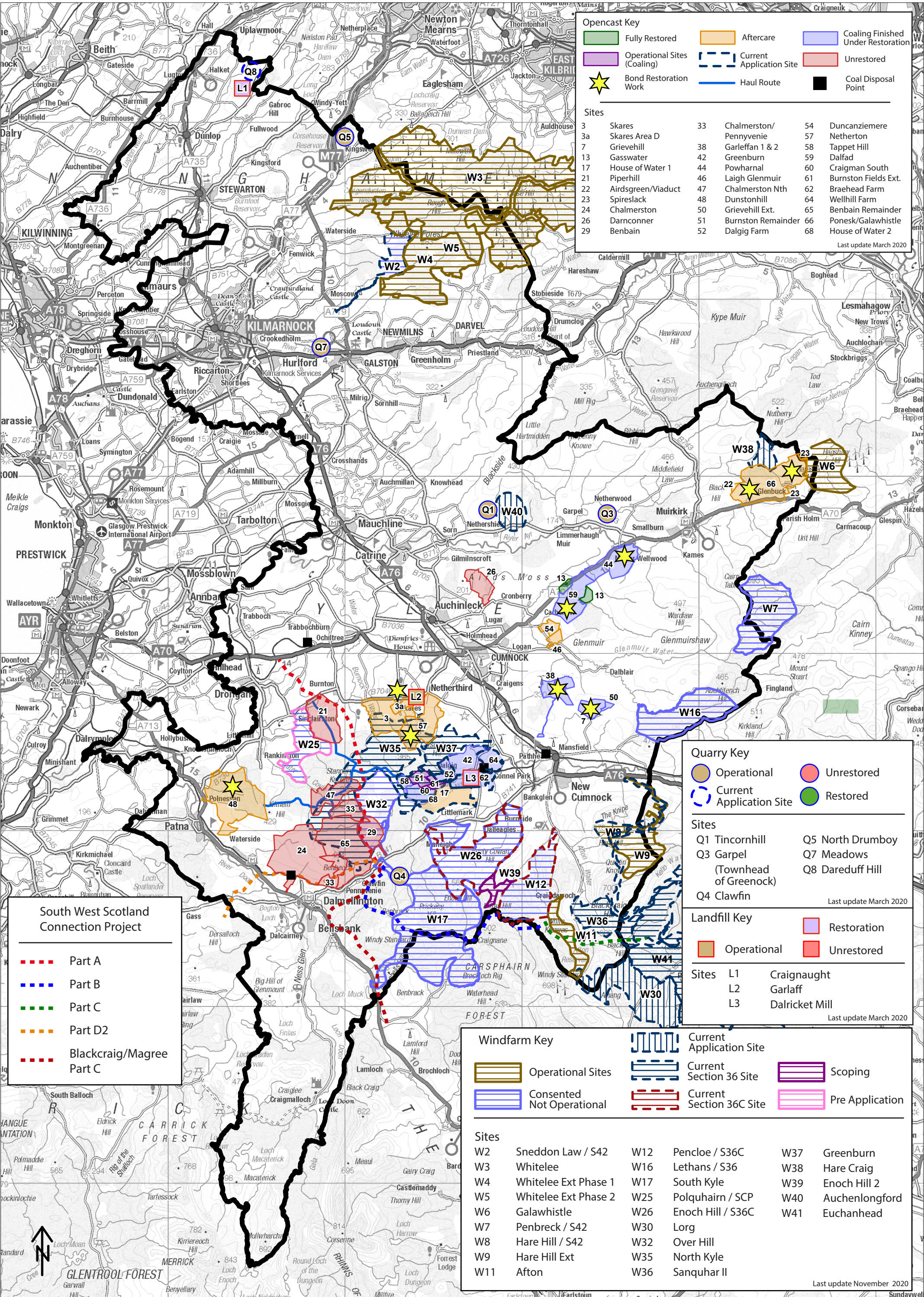
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Drawing 3

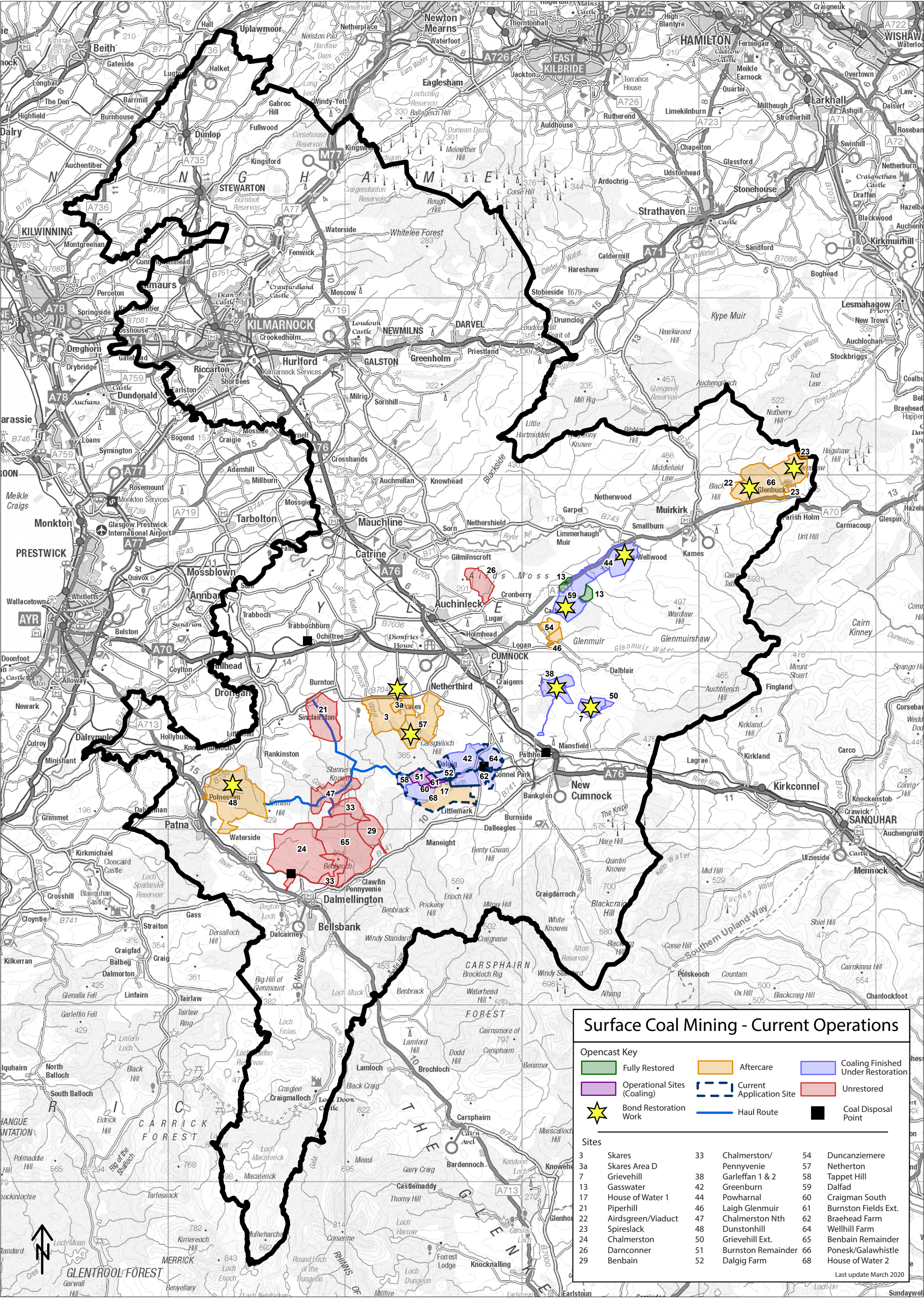


LEGEND

East Ayrshire Council	Sites of International or National Nature Conservation Interest (SPA, SAC & SSSI's)	Conservation Area	<p>UNESCO Galloway and Southern Ayrshire biosphere</p> <table><tr><td> Core Area</td><td rowspan="3"> Dark Sky Park</td></tr><tr><td> Buffer Zone</td></tr><tr><td> Transitional Area</td></tr></table>	Core Area	Dark Sky Park	Buffer Zone	Transitional Area
Core Area	Dark Sky Park						
Buffer Zone							
Transitional Area							
Local Landscape Area	Wild Land	Historic Gardens & Designed Landscapes					
	Core Path Routes						



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PROJECT TITLE
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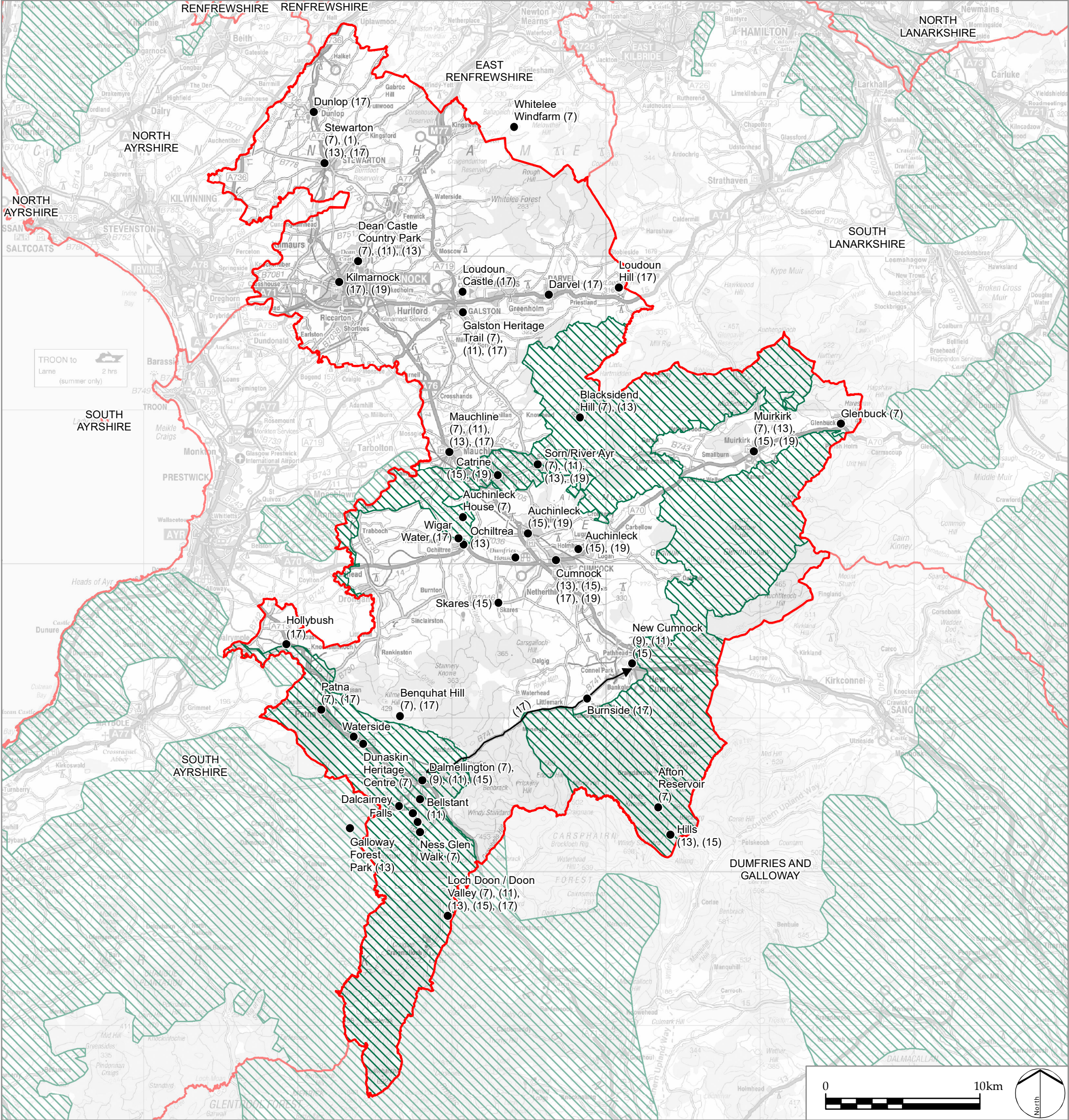
DRAWING TITLE
Public Consultation Feedback
Reference Locations

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Drawing 6



- LEGEND
- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|
| | East Ayrshire Council | | Questionnaire results |
| | Local Landscape Area | | |
- (7) = Areas or attractions that are particularly important?
(9) =Where and what development is damaging the LLA?
(11) = Areas of LLA enhanced by development?
(13) =Areas of the LLA that should be protected?
(15) =What development and where more could be accommodated?
(17) =Other areas that should be included in the LLA?
(19) =Areas that should be removed from the LLA?

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PROJECT TITLE
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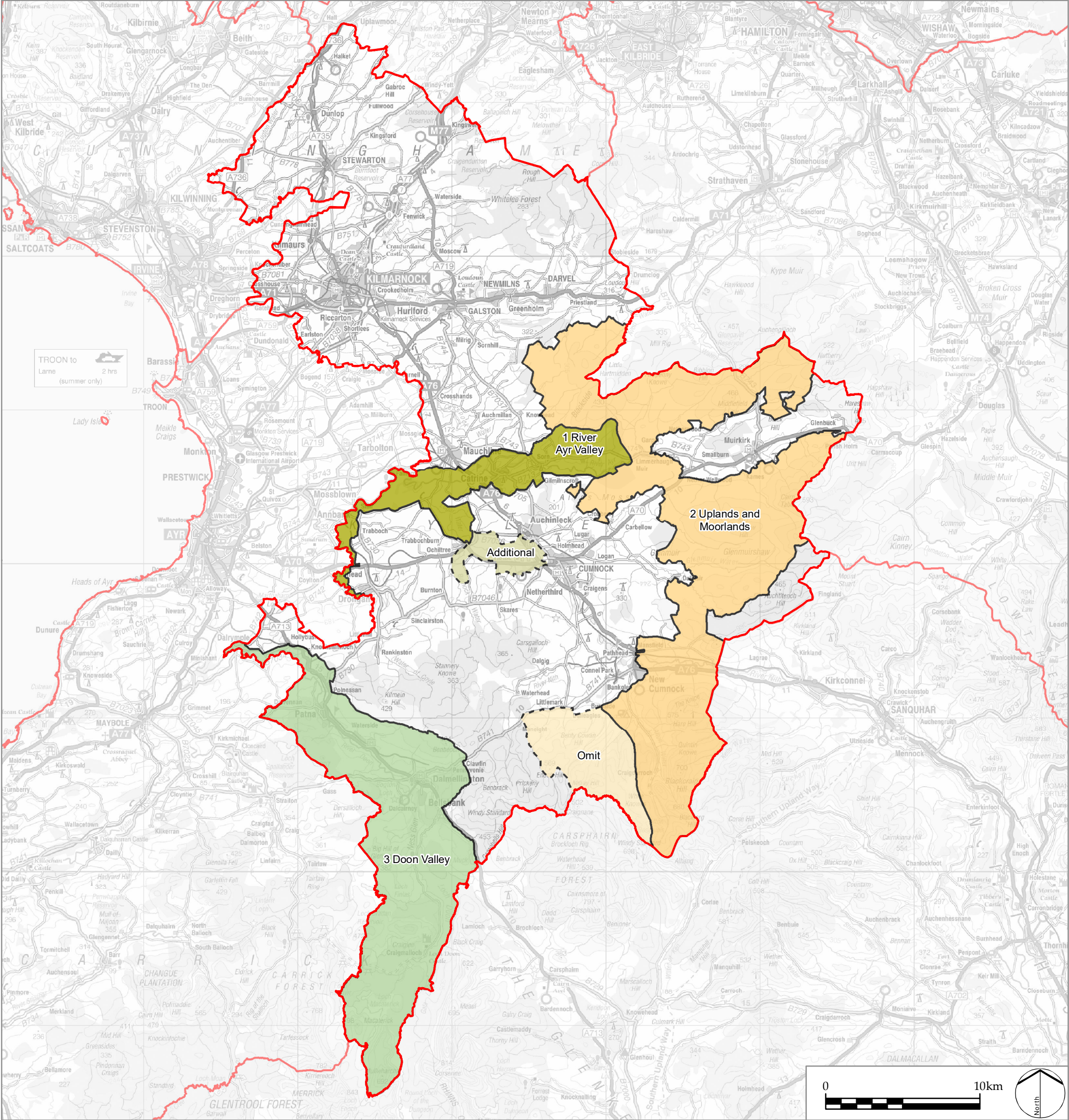
DRAWING TITLE
LLA Boundary Review Recommendations

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Drawing 7



LEGEND	
<div></div>	East Ayrshire Council
LLA Boundary Review Recommendations	
<div></div>	LLA 1: River Ayr Valley, Retain
<div></div>	LLA 1: River Ayr Valley, Additional
<div></div>	LLA 2: Uplands and Moorlands, Retain
<div></div>	LLA 2: Uplands and Moorlands, Omit
<div></div>	LLA 3: Doon Valley, Retain