



Final Report to The Heritage Council

Landscape Character Assessment in Ireland: Baseline Audit and Evaluation

Supplementary Information: LCA Review Forms

March 2006

Julie Martin Associates

The Round House

Swale Cottage, Station Road

Richmond

North Yorkshire

DL10 4LU

Phone 00 44 1748 826984

Fax 00 44 1748 829716

Email jmalandplan@btinternet.com

in association with

Alison Farmer Associates

50 Cambridge Place

Cambridge

CB2 1NS

Tel: 00 44 1223 461444

Fax: 00 44 1223 350010

Email af@alisonfarmer.co.uk

Basic Details

Title of LCA Landscape character assessment of County Clare

Date and status (draft, final etc) March 2004 Final Report

No of volumes, pages etc 1 Volume, 212 pages excluding annexes and figures

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) Hard copy, on CD and County Development Plan on website

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by Heritage Council

Prepared by ERM in association with ERA-Maptec Ltd, MOLAS and Julie Martin Associates

Cost to prepare (if known) Not known

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Not known

Content (tick those that apply):

● Method statement	Yes
● Physical and human influences	Yes
● Descriptions of landscape units	Yes
● Descriptions of seascapes units	Yes
● Review of forces for change	Yes
● Material on landscape sensitivity	Yes
● Material on landscape capacity	No
● Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change	Yes
● Landscape strategy material	No
● Material on landscape policy and/or designations	No

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) Follow-up study to County Clare Pilot Study, demonstrate importance of landscape to all activities that impact upon it, demonstrate integration of seascape assessment and HLC, demonstrate use of GIS data, reflect need for integrated approach to management in all landscape, to reflect local views, to reflect the principles enshrined in European Landscape Convention and draft guidelines.

Intended users All those who impact on the landscape

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Landscape architects and GIS specialists

Methods and information sources CA Landscape Assessment Guidance (1993), CA and SNH interim landscape assessment guidance (1999), DELG guidelines (2000) CCW Guidance on seascape assessment (2001)

Stakeholder consultation if any Yes – six workshops in different locations allowing input from local communities and numerous agencies

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 26 landscape types, 19 historic types, 21 landscape areas and 12 Seascape areas

How units defined (if known)

Types: are distinctive types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the county. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use.

Historic Types: a discrete landscape based on the 'scale and integrity of the archaeological features [that] reflect significantly on the human history and land use of that area'

Areas: are units of the landscape that are geographically specific and have their own character and sense of place. Each LCA has its own distinctive character, based upon patterns of geology, landform, land use, cultural, historical and ecological features.

How illustrated the types, historic types and areas where each shown in colour on separate maps but not on an OS base. The areas were also illustrated using colour photographs. Seascape areas were depicted using a single colour map (no OS base) and photographs. A series of oblique photographs are also included in the report.

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes but not in isolation i.e. CA and SNH guidance was also used. Assessment is characterisation only inc. guidelines but does not consider in detail issues of sensitivity or capacity. Development plan later develops assessment in association with earlier CAAS study to develop sensitivity zoning and policy.

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? Yes - OS vector and raster maps, geology and soils, digital terrain model, CORINE land use, historical landscapes, field boundaries, sites and monuments record, natural heritage areas and SACs, results of expert classifier.

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details Yes – a separate assessment was undertaken and fully integrated into the assessment process.

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Galway LCA was consulted during assessment to ensure consistency - good correlation. However, nothing was available for Tipperary and Limerick at the time. Completed Limerick assessment shows a good correlation with Clare LCA

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Yes

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Largest settlements (Ennis and Shannon) were identified separately in LCTs while historic types identified smaller settlements also (historic villages). For LCAs urban areas formed part of the character area but were described where they influence character.

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? Yes – based on desk review of relevant planning and policy documents, general literature and consultation with local stakeholders.

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? Yes in that they are clearly described under separate headings for each LCA. However the methodology does not explicitly set out how characterisation and evaluation of condition and sensitivity differ and are undertaken separately.

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? Yes. Contributed to assessment by assisting refinement of names, boundaries of LCAs and insight into local landscape values and forces for change.

Is the LCA readily available? Yes - can request copies

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Yes but quite a heavy read and technical in places.

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used e.g. county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Incorporated into development plan bringing it together with earlier CAAS evaluation.

Used by those who impact on the landscape as a basis for understanding landscape and thus a baseline against which change can be gauged and monitored. Used for wind farm strategy - provides a set baseline from which landscape change should be considered, SEA, as general base line data on landscape, land management advice and leaflets, preparation of Heritage Plan, tree publication, local area plans and village design statements but also now road schemes and quarry applications and preparation of EIAs. One off housing less so.

Usefulness has been apparent in forward planning but not perhaps as useful for every day development control purposes

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Good baseline assessment - describes and records what exists
- Clear structure and layout
- Logical sequence of data and build up of information on landscape in County
- Full integration of HLC
- Good use of GIS data sets
- Presents seascape areas also – dealing with specifically coastal issues
- Incorporation of public perceptions
- Clear and detailed analysis of forces for change and guidance on future decision making and management

Weaknesses:

- Does not explain how assessment was undertaken in detail
 - Could set out difference between characterisation and evaluation more clearly
 - Consultation - never really engaged with people because there was not enough time to do this properly. This has been addressed to some degree in the preparation of local area plans.
 - The assessment did not include enough info on habitats and a habitat survey would have been useful.
 - Focused too much on topography and not enough on ecology - didn't present a dynamic picture
 - Needs a stronger electronic base i.e. better GIS modelling and more detailed analysis of individual features and components.
 - Lack of definitive criteria which help assess the value of features, not enough information on sensitivity
 - Use in development plan has been to focus on evaluation particularly in relation to individual landscape features
- an understanding of landscape as a whole can potentially be lost in decision making with this approach

Basic Details

Title of LCA Landscape Characterisation of County Cork

Date and status (draft, final etc) Final 2003

No of volumes, pages etc 1 volume, 23 pages

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) Digital and hard copy. Assessment forms part of County Development Plan but currently not available on website or as hard copy or CD.

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by Cork County Council

Prepared by MosArt - landscape architects and Macro Works (GIS)

Cost to prepare (if known) approx 30,000 euros

Cost to purchase (if applicable) N/A currently

Content (tick those that apply):

- Method statement Yes - good detail
- Physical and human influences Yes within each character type description only
- Descriptions of landscape units Yes of types only not areas
- Descriptions of seascapes units They are geographically defined as landscape areas but not described
- Review of forces for change No
- Material on landscape sensitivity No
- Material on landscape capacity No
- Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change No
- Landscape strategy material No
- Material on landscape policy and/or designations No - part developed by county subsequently but County wishes to further this work

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) In response to DELG guidelines and to ensure reference to landscape within development plan.

Intended users Planners and developers and all those who make decisions on the landscape

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Landscape architects

Methods and information sources DELG draft guidelines. Information had been collated by local authority and included contours, geodirectory, designations, scenic landscapes, forestry, landcover, county boundary, river catchments, 1:50,000 OS data, aerial photographs.

Stakeholder consultation if any None

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 76 character areas and 16 character types

How units defined (if known) Landscape areas defined by physical landscape and visual units. Landscape types are an amalgamation of areas to simplify the classification

How illustrated Map of character areas and map of character types. Each type is illustrated with colour photographs and described. Areas are not described or further illustrated. Areas and types are not shown on an OS based but local names and/or county outline help in orientation. Types are described under key characteristics, location, landform, geology and soils, land cover, land use and settlements and subjective sense of experience inc. enclosure, dynamic nature, naturalness.

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes Stages 1 -4 with the final output being definition of landscape character areas. Used earlier typology identified by same consultants for a wind energy project as a starting point. The DELG method was also developed as a result of GIS input and visibility analysis

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? Yes both in terms of raw data sets and analysis of visual units along the coast.

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Other counties did not have completed assessments at the time. However correlation with the completed Limerick assessment is good and with the Cork assessment is moderate.

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Yes - very good

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Not assessed

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? No

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? No because judgement material not included in assessment - some subjective analysis of character

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? No

Is the LCA readily available? No - currently very difficult to get hold of a copy

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Yes, simple style and presentation and good informative written descriptions

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used e.g. county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

- Incorporated into development
- Used to inform and refine wind energy strategy
- Referred to when there is a significant planning application to consider
- Development of rural housing guidelines
- Used in preparation of local area plans

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Valuable information and description of the landscape
- Coastal units defined and assessed and fed into character area definition
- Good presentation - clear and well written
- Good use of GIS

Weaknesses:

- No descriptions of character areas
- Names for character types are complex
- Assessment has not been developed further for evaluation purposes
- Not sufficient detailed information in landscape type descriptions when looking to build a case against or refinement of a planning application
- Not enough information on nature conservation, features of significance or cultural heritage
- Character areas are too detailed a classification for planners who prefer more broad brush types
- No incorporation of HLC

Basic Details

Title of LCA Landscape Character Assessment of Rural Area of the County

Date and status (draft, final etc) Final (incorporated into development plan - original assessment not reviewed)
 Undertaken summer 2001

No of volumes, pages etc 1 volume

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) LCAs, descriptions and policy available in development plan chapter 9 as hard copy or from website

Area covered Rural areas of county only

Commissioned by Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council

Prepared by Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council - in house planner

Cost to prepare (if known) No budget, done in house

Cost to purchase (if applicable) No one has wished to buy one

Content (tick those that apply):

● Method statement	Yes
● Physical and human influences	Not known
● Descriptions of landscape units	Yes
● Descriptions of seascapes units	No
● Review of forces for change	No
● Material on landscape sensitivity	No
● Material on landscape capacity	No
● Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change	Yes - but general
● Landscape strategy material	yes
● Material on landscape policy and/or designations	No

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) Heritage assessment done by planner. Realised that they didn't have an LCA and it would be useful therefore asked for it to be carried out

Intended users Planners and developers

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Planner

Methods and information sources Looked at DELG but found evaluation part difficult to understand therefore relied more on CA guidance and also reference to completed assessments such as Co Clare. Information sources included geological survey map, land use mapping from air photos, existing designation mapping.

Stakeholder consultation if any None but consultation part of development plan process

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 12 LCAs, relatively small scale

How units defined (if known) based largely on topography and land use

How illustrated Colour map with no OS base but place names added. No photographs

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used eg county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Influenced the development plan and policy, referenced in Heritage Plan, and influenced the HLC.

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths

- Reasonable descriptions which note patterns and characteristics of the landscape
- Strategy and policies relate directly to the character of the landscape and provide clear guidance re landscape change and initiative to protect and enhance local character
- Provides a very useful resource of information on landscape and therefore helps decision making re zoning and planning decisions in urban fringe areas which are under pressure
- Detailed knowledge of the landscape is held in house because undertaken by one of the planners

Weaknesses:

- Planning dept not familiar with original document
- Strategy/ policy are general and simplistic in places
- No strategy for some character areas
- Evaluation is too subjective and less useful compared to character assessment which in itself can be used for zoning and planning control
- No use of GIS
- No integration of HLC

Basic Details

Title of LCA None - prepared for and incorporated into development plan

Date and status (draft, final etc) Undertaken in 1999 for development plan review

No of volumes, pages etc N/A

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) Website in development plan

Area covered Rural areas surrounding Dublin

Commissioned by Fingal County Council

Prepared by Planner in house and consultants Brady Shipman Martin as a collaborative approach

Cost to prepare (if known) Minimal budget

Cost to purchase (if applicable) N/A

Content (tick those that apply):

● Method statement	No
● Physical and human influences	No
● Descriptions of landscape units	Yes but brief
● Descriptions of seascapes units	Yes
● Review of forces for change	Some reference to but not explicit
● Material on landscape sensitivity	Yes for landscape groups
● Material on landscape capacity	No
● Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change	Yes 'principles for development' for each character area but they are relatively general.
● Landscape strategy material	No
● Material on landscape policy and/or designations	Yes - High Amenity Landscapes and pe groups

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) Review of rural policy for development plan. Assessment was to reassess development zonings, examine existing policy and local objectives re rural housing, develop a landscape strategy

Intended users Planners and developers

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Planner and landscape architect

Methods and information sources CA guidance on landscape assessment and knowledge of seascape assessment being developed in Wales. Information sources included air photos topography, land use, protected sites, designations, planning zoning.

Stakeholder consultation if any No - but some in relation to development plan process

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 7 LCAs, 16 landscape groups, 9 visual coastal compartments

How units defined (if known) Landscape character is distinctive, recognisable and consistent pattern of landscape which makes one landscape differ from another, rather than better or worse. Landscape groups are defined as areas where interrelationships between landscape areas give rise to particular sensitivities when considering development proposals.

How illustrated On a development plan map 'Landscape and Natural Heritage'. LCAs illustrated in colour on an OS base at 1:50,000.

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? No pre-dates them

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? No

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Good correlation with S. Dublin LCA but poor correlation with Meath

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Yes

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Yes

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Not covered

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? Not Known

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? No LCA descriptions immediately launch into judgements inc sensitivity and value

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? No but consultation would have taken place as part of the development plan process

Is the LCA readily available? Yes within the development plan

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used eg county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Incorporation into development plan and used to shape rural policy and meet the requirements of 2000 Planning Act. Used in development control. Informed landscape zoning. Informed the subsequent siting and design guide for development.

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- The 'principles for development' are useful in decision making
- Scale of assessment and character areas identified are good and reflect local variations in character - not too detailed which can put people off and not so general to be meaningless
- Has informed further studies on siting and design of new development
- Has raised the profile of landscape issues
- Is regularly used in development control

Weaknesses:

- Introduces landscape groups which are confusing and it is not clear how they were defined (although they appear to reflect character areas/and strong visual units but are not illustrated as such – form rectangular areas on plan).
- Confusion in terminology between areas and types - although character areas are said to have been identified the areas are in fact types
- The maps depicting landscape character are not clear and include references which are not keyed
- Landscape classification and associated planning and management guidance is not clear and is muddled – difficult to establish how guidelines have been derived
- Character descriptions need to be developed - currently too general and there is not enough detail overall in the assessment
- Little information on the issues affecting each character area and need to develop guidelines further
- Not clear how landscape zoning relates to the character areas i.e. how the zoning was derived
- No integration of HLC

Basic Details

Title of LCA Landscape and Landscape Character Assessment for Galway County; Results of Assessment

Date and status (draft, final etc) January 2002

No of volumes, pages etc 1 volume 55 pages plus appendices and illustrations

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) Assessment available as hard copy. Forms part of development plan which is available as hard copy, CD and on website

Area covered Whole county

Commissioned by Galway County Council

Prepared by WS Atkins

Cost to prepare (if known) 60,000 Irish punts

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Cost of Printing

Content (tick those that apply):

● Method statement	Yes but brief
● Physical and human influences -	No
● Descriptions of landscape units -	Yes
● Descriptions of seascapes units -	Yes
● Review of forces for change - Some in relation to doubling coniferous forestry to meet national targets and to pressures for further wind farm development	
● Material on landscape sensitivity -	Yes
● Material on landscape capacity -	Yes
● Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change	Yes
● Landscape strategy material -	Yes
● Material on landscape policy and/or designations -	Yes

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) Response to need for direction on development pressures created by wind farm applications, forestry and housing

Intended users Planners – source of information on landscape issues and to help in the preparation of planning polices relating to proposed development e.g. residential dwellings, commercial and industrial buildings, forestry and wind farms. Main focus of assessment is on the capacity of landscape to accommodate wind farm development.

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Team of 6 - Landscape architect, planners and ecologist

Methods and information sources DELG method. Combined desktop studies backed up by fieldwork. No clear method statement provided on assessment of character, value or sensitivity particularly in relation to attributing ratings.

Sources inc. publications on forestry policy and guidelines and wind farm policy and guidelines, landscape, nature conservation and heritage designations, tourist guidebooks. MapInfo data sets provided by Council

Stakeholder consultation if any Yes written correspondence to main organisations and local community groups.
Public meetings to discuss values were not held due to time constraints on project

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 25 areas.

How units defined (if known) Identified through an understanding of physical, visual and image units as defined in DELG guidelines. In the development plan landscape character is described as a combination of landform, land cover and visual units which are attractive in the landscape - conflates character with value.

How illustrated 1 photograph per area, on general map at a large scale with no OS base information.

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes but consultants found them unworkable particularly aspects relating to visual units and values which took a long time to assess and contributed little to the results. No reference to CA/SNH guidelines

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? Yes - information provided by County

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No but reference to SMR and other sites known to be of interest/value

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable) Were asked to look at other counties - no LCAs for them at the time but did not get cooperation from counties adjacent in defining extent of character areas across administrative boundaries. Poor correlation with Offaly assessment which comprises a typology and sensitivity assessment. Completed Clare assessment now shows good correlation and correlation with Mayo is moderate - reasonably similar areas identified with Galway being more detailed in places.

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Reasonable but appear rather broad brush

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Highlighted as separate from landscape.

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? Some background data relating to pressures for forestry and wind farm development but otherwise no discussion on broader forces for change such as housing development or agricultural policy/trends.

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? No. Character description leads immediately into assessment of landscape value and sensitivity and capacity of landscape to accommodate wind farm development.

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? Galway County Council Forward Planning Dept. was consulted on the landscape values attributed to each LCA.

Is the LCA readily available? Yes can request copies from planning department

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Could be used by prospective developers and by forestry professionals.

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used eg county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Policy development and the location of wind farm development, forestry and protecting areas of greatest scenic value.

Used in the development plan - refers back to the character area descriptions. However policy focuses on value and sensitivity and the character area map in the development shows land use with character areas indicated in thin black lines (easily missed). The policy on character is a direct extract from the Planning and Development Act 2000. No reference is made to the protection of character for its own sake.

Assessment used to shape rural housing guide

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths

- Gathered together a range of data sources which are influential in understanding landscape character
- LCAs identified form a reasonable framework for further work and more detailed character assessment
- Highlighted sensitive landscapes
- Tool to ensure appropriate and sensitive development
- Use of GIS data sets

Weaknesses

- Maps do not run in numerical order and make it difficult to find information
- LCAs are not plotted on an OS base and number references are small and hard to find – plans are therefore difficult to interpret and vague
- LCA descriptions are very brief and do not identify the key characteristics of an area, its location or principle factors which determine its definition
- Methodology used and way in which judgements are reached particularly on value, sensitivity and capacity is not clear and simplistic
- Utilised the DELG which made for a confusing process
- Project tries to take on too much - character assessment is lost by need to determine sensitivity of landscape for development - could perhaps have been completed more successfully as separate studies
- Edges - where one character area becomes another are transitional - boundaries are not exact
- Lack of consistency across administrative boundaries
- Landscape zoning did not reflect reality on the ground - too broad brush and does not reflect local sensitivities
- Method statement is not detailed or clear enough
- Character is the poor relation of sensitivity zoning
- Need for better integration of HLC and biodiversity in characterisation
- Need for better evaluation and integration of settlements into assessment

Basic Details

Title of LCA Kerry Landscape Character Assessment

Date and status (draft, final etc) Final completed in May 2004

No of volumes, pages etc Five Volumes – one for each electoral area: Dingal, Killarney, Killorgin, Listowel, Tralee. Approx 70 pages in each volume (inc. photographs and plans)

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) CD

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by Kerry County Council

Prepared by Colin Buchanan & Partners and Wardell Armstrong

Cost to prepare (if known) Approximately 70,000 euros

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Not known

Content (tick those that apply):

● Method statement	Yes
● Physical and human influences	No
● Descriptions of landscape units	Yes of physical and visual units
● Descriptions of seascapes units	No
● Review of forces for change	Only those identified during consultation
● Material on landscape sensitivity	Yes in relation to physical units (types) and therefore provides a picture of sensitivity for a visual unit (area)
● Material on landscape capacity	Confused with sensitivity
● Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change	Yes but very brief in relation to each visual unit
● Landscape strategy material	No
● Material on landscape policy and/or designations	No

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) To identify different levels of landscape sensitivity across the County in a consistent manner. Output is an assessment of the capacity of different types of landscape character to accommodate change.

Intended users All those who influence change in the landscape

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Landscape Architects

Methods and information sources Used concept of environmental capital when determining sensitivity. Followed the DELG guidelines closely. Information sources included topography, soils, landcover, land use, aerial photography, designations, existing development plan.

Stakeholder consultation if any Yes both public consultation (workshop seminars) and stakeholder consultation

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units Physical units (landscape types) and

How units defined (if known) Definitions are taken from the DELG guidelines

How illustrated Types are described generally and any variations across the county are outlined. They are illustrated on a colour plan with no OS base. Physical units are illustrated on a colour map and also with photographs

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes. It followed the basis approach of defining character, values and sensitivity. In terms of character physical units and visual units and image were defined

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? Yes

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Poor correlation with Limerick character areas (Kerry physical units are more detailed but also do not show changes in character at the same place) and poor correlation with Cork. More significantly the physical units identified do not match up across the electoral area within the County itself.

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Yes for physical units but not for visual units. Definition of visual units relies overly on topography and vegetation. In contrast the definition of character areas combines all aspect of landscape that contributes to character. Therefore it is questionable if the visual units truly reflect landscape character. The photography for each visual unit demonstrates the variety of character within each.

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Urban areas are identified as a separate physical unit or type.

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? No

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? Yes. Methodology clearly sets out two separate processes.

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? Yes public consultation undertaken as workshops to establish landscape values and provide information on landscape pressures

Is the LCA readily available? Difficult to get hold of a copy.

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Documents are well presented but there is considerable technical terminology which makes the essence of character within the county difficult to access

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used eg county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Fed into county development plan, will be used to determine development applications, will be used as a basis for more detailed local assessments and EIAs.

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Identifies character types and areas and draws out the relationship between the two – areas more general, types are detailed.
- Clearly set out with good use of graphics
- Used GIS

Weaknesses:

- Seascape units are not identified despite the importance of the coast in Co Kerry
- Assessment contains a lot of detail on methodology relating to sensitivity, capacity and values but does not go on to provide guidance or strategy.
- Wind farm development is singled out and discussed and type of large scale development but other developments are not discussed
- Review of forces for change is not retained and pressures on landscapes are only noted from public consultation
- Identification of visual units does not appear to be a good reflection of character areas
- Historical evolution of the landscape not considered
- Descriptions of visual units are informative but not detailed
- Physical units do not match up across electoral areas within the County

Basic Details

Title of LCA Landscape Character Assessment of County Kildare

Date and status (draft, final etc) Final Dec 2003

No of volumes, pages etc 3 documents. The LCA is Doc 1 and 84 pages excluding illustrations and appendices,

Doc 2 = Landscape Policies and Doc 3 = Sectoral Working Papers

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) Hard copy and as appendix in county development plan on website

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by Kildare County Council

Prepared by CAAS Environmental Services Ltd

Cost to prepare (if known) Not known

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Not known

Content (tick those that apply):

● Method statement	Yes
● Physical and human influences	Yes
● Descriptions of landscape units	Yes
● Descriptions of seascapes units	Not applicable
● Review of forces for change	No
● Material on landscape sensitivity	Yes
● Material on landscape capacity	Yes in relation to above
● Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change	Maybe in later Docs 2/3
● Landscape strategy material	Maybe in later Docs 2/3
● Material on landscape policy and/or designations	Yes in Doc 2

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) To identify and describe the landscape character of each part of the County i.e. its physical and visual characteristics. Then to evaluate the capacity of each are to accept change and to develop policies to protect the general character of the landscape and assist in development plan preparation and development control decisions

Intended users Planners

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Landscape architects and planners

Methods and information sources Data sources inc: OS maps, scenic areas, CORINE land cover, 10m contours map,

slopes of Kildare map, geology, subsoils, soils, sites and monuments and other designations, forestry, administrative boundaries, photographic views, tourist attractions, walking routes.

Stakeholder consultation if any Yes – workshop sessions with relevant agencies and organisations

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units Three main character areas/zones: lowlands, water corridor and uplands (these are in fact types). Also 10 landscape character units/areas and 7 landscape units within landscapes.

How units defined (if known) Landscape areas/types/units – characterised by physical factors such as landform and landcover inc topography, water, vegetation, settlements which result from geological and geomorphological history as well as history, tradition and or culture.

How illustrated Colour plans (not on OS base) and photographs of each LCA. At the start of each LCA description there is a small map extract illustrating the extent of that area.

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? Yes

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No but brief chronological background to evolution of the landscape is given

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Moderate correlation with County Wicklow - similar scale and areas identified but river typology not identified in Wicklow assessment. Poor correlation with Offaly assessment which is a typology and evaluation study.

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Yes to a degree although landscapes within landscapes appear to have been identified based on existing designations rather than specifically character

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Ignored

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? No

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? No – although separated out in methodology descriptions of landscape character fall into describing sensitivity and vulnerability

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? Yes

Is the LCA readily available? Yes within county development plan - significant quantity of data in appendix

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? No - technical

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used e.g. county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Used in the preparation of the development and is well integrated - separate section

Tool used in planning decisions

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Provides initial characterisation before undertaking evaluation
- Based on scientific data and provided a useful source of data
- Successful tool in decision making rather than just a tool to stop development
- Good set of maps and use of GIS data

Weaknesses:

- Confusion in use of terminology – uses landscape units, areas and types interchangeably and does not provide a clear definition of each
- Landscapes within landscapes are confusing and perhaps should have been classified as LCAs the same as tier above. These character areas appear to have been picked out because separate policies will need to apply to them i.e. their boundaries often relate to existing designations.
- No HLC assessment
- Sensitivity assessment does not relate to landscape character areas but is based on CORINE land classification and results in landscape zoning
- Assessment identified areas which are degraded and this down grades the value of these landscapes where as a character based approach would describe what is there perhaps highlighting characteristics which should be retained
- Policy developed for broad landscape types e.g. upland areas and not character areas.

Basic Details

Title of LCA Landscape appraisal of County Kilkenny

Date and status (draft, final etc) Final October 2003

No of volumes, pages etc 74 pages Document 1. Two other documents exist – Doc 2: Hypothesis testing and Doc 3: landscape policies

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) CD

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by Kilkenny County Council

Prepared by CAAS

Cost to prepare (if known) 27,000 euros

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Cost of printing or CD

Content (tick those that apply):

● Method statement	Yes
● Physical and human influences	Yes
● Descriptions of landscape units	Yes
● Descriptions of seascapes units	N/A
● Review of forces for change Very general in relation to constantly changing landscape	
● Material on landscape sensitivity	Yes
● Material on landscape capacity	Yes
● Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change	No
● Landscape strategy material	No
● Material on landscape policy and/or designations	Yes

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) Commissioned in response to the DELG guidelines. Objectives were to identify and describe the landscape character of each part of the County. To determine the capacity of each area to accept change and prepare a set of policies to guide developments in each type of landscape to help protect the landscape and inform development planning decisions.

Intended users Planners – Forward planning as well as development control

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Landscape architects and planners

Methods and information sources Data sources inc: OS maps, scenic areas, CORINE land cover, 10m contours map, slopes of Kilkenny map, geology, subsoils, soils, groundwater protection scheme maps, sites and monuments and

other designations, forestry, administrative boundaries, photographic views, tourist attractions, walking routes.

Stakeholder consultation if any Yes – workshops held with relevant agencies and organisations within the County

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units Four broad landscape types (uplands, lowlands, river valleys and transitional) and 14 character units or areas (which are in fact types)

How units defined (if known) Landscape areas/types/units – characterised by physical factors such as landform and landcover inc topography, water, vegetation, settlements which result from geological and geomorphological history as well as history, tradition and or culture.

How illustrated Colour maps illustrating geographical location and relationship to other character areas and photographs

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes Used the approach for identifying character areas, values and defining sensitivity. Character areas have been defined based on physical influences, visual influences and image units. Sensitivity has not been undertaken in accordance with the guidance. The criteria set out in the guidance have not been used and instead reliance has been placed on topographic variation and the CORINE land use mapping. Categories of vulnerable, sensitive, normal and robust have been used instead of low sensitivity, moderate sensitivity, high sensitivity, special or unique.

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? Yes

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No but chronology of historic evolution is given and reference to sites and monuments record.

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Poor correlation with earlier assessment for county Wexford (based on information provided in Co. Wexford development plan only).

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Yes although a mixture of areas and types. River LCAs have been defined largely on subsoils rather than visual valley unit and the category of transitional landscape is weak – as if to imply it lacks character of any distinction – better to have called them foothills or lower slopes or margins.

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Ignored

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? No

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? Yes in that characterisation and sensitivity are contained in separate parts of the document however the descriptive texts does drop into making judgements in places i.e. an area is ‘not perceived as having special landscape or scenic amenity values and is therefore considered suitable for development’.

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? Regard was given to their views when preparing the final landscape characterisations

Is the LCA readily available? Yes in digital form - can be requested.

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? No - technical

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used e.g. county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Incorporation into the development plan - this process is about to begin, other forward planning documents, and use in development control and determining development applications. Has been used specifically to inform a wind energy strategy and will be used to inform local area plans. The assessment will also be used to determine the boundaries of Landscape Conservation Areas

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Undertook stakeholder workshops to establish consensus on the character areas identified and also the value of the landscape. These findings were incorporated into the study.
- A detailed assessment which does identify the main differences in landscape character found within the County
- Descriptions for each character area are relatively detailed and give a reasonable flavour of the key components and resulting overall character and identity.
- Provides a body of research to build on
- Uses GIS data sets

Weaknesses:

- Uses landscape units, types and areas interchangeably and does not provide a clear definition of each
- Methodology is complex and not easy to follow
- States that method is in close accordance with guidance but goes beyond guidance in defining sensitivity and corresponding policy areas
- The classification of different types of development into significant, normal or beneficial impact on landscape character is over simplistic and open to challenge.
- Landscape sensitivity and capacity to accept different forms of development is based on the CORINE classification and has little relationship with the character areas identified.
- Capacity of a landscape is determined by topography, vegetation and existing development – this is over simplistic.
- Policies developed in Doc 3 relate to the 4 broad character types and not the finer grain landscape areas
- Policies focus on encouraging development in the most robust landscape and protecting the most sensitive and valued landscapes – the data collected is used to create constraints maps
- No integration of HLC

Basic Details

Title of LCA Landscape Assessment of County Leitrim

Date and status (draft, final etc) Nov 2002 Final

No of volumes, pages etc One Vol, 97 pages excluding figures (need to check where sensitivity mapping included in development plan has come from? additional follow on study or diff volume)

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) On website (but plans/illustrations are not available) and as hard copy

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by Leitrim County Council

Prepared by ERM

Cost to prepare (if known) Not known

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Free on internet or at cost charges for printing

Content (tick those that apply):

● Method statement	Yes – but brief
● Physical and human influences	Yes
● Descriptions of landscape units	Yes
● Descriptions of seascapes units	No – ref to coast and sea views in Tullaghan Coast CA otherwise not relevant
● Review of forces for change	Yes
● Material on landscape sensitivity	Yes – general at the end of each LCA description
● Material on landscape capacity	No
● Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change generic guidelines and area specific guidelines	Yes for land management and built form -
● Landscape strategy material	No
● Material on landscape policy and/or designations	No

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) provide an agreed assessment of landscape character, value and sensitivity to inform preparation of development plan, involve stakeholders in the process of assessment, provide clear, reasoned policy advice on extent of new wind farm development, new forestry development and potential Landscape Conservation Areas, to give strategic guidance on priorities for landscape conservation and management.

Intended users Planners and developers, other consultants for follow on studies or related studies

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Landscape architects

Methods and information sources Deskwork and site work. Data sources included: geology, soils, topography, drainage, landcover, historical publications, publications on buildings and architecture, agri-environmental specifications for REPS 2000, Conservation plans Natura 2000, environment and heritage audits, County Development Plan 1997-2000, design guides, forestry and rural development study.

Stakeholder consultation if any Yes – with local communities and relevant agencies who work in the area and influence landscape character. Comprised 2 phases – firstly informal interviews with agencies, secondly two workshops for local community and voluntary groups and a weeklong exhibition

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 14 character types (physical units) and 14 character areas (image units)

How units defined (if known) LCT: a generic term for a landscape with a consistent, homogenous character. Landscape character types may occur in different parts of the County, but wherever they occur, they will share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation or human influences

Character areas: A unique geographic area with a consistent character and identity

How illustrated Overall LCT and LCA plans (not included on website), small key plans in black and white for each LCA and photographs.

Sensitivity mapping also provided in Development plan – uses types as basis for evaluation

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes along side CA/SNH guidance on landscape character assessment (1993 and 1999). Used terminology of landscape physical units and image units. Went on to undertake sensitivity assessment but no evidence of this in document download from website and no method statement – assume this is in accordance with DELG

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? No

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No - not requested in brief but did make reference to historical elements and designations

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Existing assessment for Fermanagh was consulted. Poor correlation with Sligo and Roscommon assessments

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Yes

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Incorporated into assessment – not drawn out separately

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? Yes

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? Yes – by providing better understanding of the landscape, refinement of LCA boundaries, key features and what is of value, identification of the forces for change, solutions to addressing the forces for change and thus helping to ensure planning policies were more robust and acceptable. Forestry and wind farm evaluation carried out once characterisation was complete.

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? Yes - used to refine and inform the characterisation process and also highlight issues and forces for change

Is the LCA readily available? Yes on the website but illustrations are missing

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Yes, plain English, definition of technical terms given, good structure and easy to follow.

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used e.g. county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Used to form basis of forestry and wind farm strategies which have been incorporated into development plan sections 2.06.03 and 3.03.10 and has included the preparation of sensitivity mapping.

Has also been used to review and alter the boundaries of the High Amenity Areas and views and prospects which have been incorporated into the local development plan; informs studies commissioned by consultants including Upper Shannon Water Corridor Study, urban Framework Plans (analysis of setting of settlement and capacity for growth); various bits of it have found their way into policy in the development plan inc capacity assessments for forestry and wind farm development.

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Clearly written, good structure and well presented

- Included public consultation

- Considered adjacent LCAs in different counties to ensure degree of compatibility

- Good analysis of forces for change and resulting guidelines are clear and concise

- Useful background information on landscape resource

- Useful in defining in a robust way those areas requiring greatest protection

- Has strengthened planners ability to make good robust decisions particularly in upland areas

- Scale considered to be about right - not too detailed and not too general

Weaknesses:

- Has not found its way into the development plan except in passing reference and specifically in relation to sensitivity and capacity for wind farm and afforestation

- Bad timing - was undertaken/completed at time when bad feeling between council and developers over a particular scheme - resulted in LCA not being adopted/approved by the councillors

- Does not consider sufficiently what is going on in adjacent administrative areas

- No integration of HLC

- No use of GIS data sets

Basic Details

Title of LCA Development Plan - no original assessment document sent

Date and status (draft, final etc) Not know but between 2000 and 2005

No of volumes, pages etc Not known

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) Hard copy and web site for extracts in development plan

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by Limerick County Council

Prepared by In house

Cost to prepare (if known) Not known

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Not known

Content (tick those that apply):

- Method statement No

- Physical and human influences No

- Descriptions of landscape units Yes but very brief

- Descriptions of seascapes units No

- Review of forces for change No

- Material on landscape sensitivity Yes - views and prospects and Areas of Special Development Control

- Material on landscape capacity No

- Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change Yes in relation to each LCA

- Landscape strategy material No

- Material on landscape policy and/or designations Yes

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) To respond to 2000 Planning and Development Act and to identify differing landscape areas and how development can successfully be incorporated into them. Assessment undertaken specifically in relation to wind farm developments.

Intended users Planners

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Done in house

Methods and information sources Not known

Stakeholder consultation if any Not known

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 10 character areas defined

How units defined (if known) Not specifically defined but infers they are areas of differing character

Map indicates that character has been defined as unique and geographically specific character areas

How illustrated Colour map showing location of character areas but not on OS base, although townland boundaries and names are given to help orientation

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes Appears to have followed identification of physical and visual units and value in defining character areas - inferred from descriptive text only

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? Not known

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details Not known but is not apparent in material in development plan

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Good correlation of with Counties Cork and Clare and moderate correlation with County Kerry.

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Yes but quite broad brush

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Not referred to. Urban areas form part of character units

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? Not known - nothing discussed in development plan in association with landscape character

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? Not known although character descriptions in development plan tend to include descriptive and judgement material i.e. evidence on 'value' of the landscape

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? No

Is the LCA readily available? Not original assessment but LCAs identified are incorporated into the development plan

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Yes in that is simply set out and follows familiar format of a development plan

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used eg county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Incorporation into County Development Plan March 2005 and informed landscape policy

Desire to develop character areas for use in local area plans also

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Good identification of landscape character variation in county although broad brush
- Clear presentation of character areas on coloured map
- Descriptions and policy reflect uniqueness of character and need to conserve it
- Good correlation with adjoining LCAs

Weaknesses:

- Character descriptions are brief and analysis lacks detail
- Some policies are general
- No evidence of forces for change analysis
- No information on methodology or data sources
- No seascape analysis - identifies Shannon Estuary/hinterland only
- No evidence on integration of HLC
- Character descriptions include comparative and value judgements

Basic Details

Title of LCA Landscape Character Assessment

Date and status (draft, final etc) December 2002

No of volumes, pages etc One Volume, 61 pages (excluding colour photopanel and maps)

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) Hard copy

Area covered Whole County

Commissioned by Louth County Council

Prepared by Retired senior planner

Cost to prepare (if known) Not known but considered value for money

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Not known

Content (tick those that apply):

- Method statement Yes

- Physical and human influences No

- Descriptions of landscape units Yes

- Descriptions of seascapes units No

- Review of forces for change Yes – includes climate, population, farming, forestry, rural housing, roads, industrial and commercial, tourism and recreation, overhead lines, telecommunications masts, wind turbines, quarrying, and contaminated sites.

- Material on landscape sensitivity Yes

- Material on landscape capacity Yes – indirectly – associated with sensitivity

- Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change No

- Landscape strategy material Yes value assessment leads to objectives for conservation, enhancement, restoration and creation

- Material on landscape policy and/or designations Yes considered landscapes of international, national, regional and local value

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) Objective: to provide a baseline inventory and description of landscape character in Co Louth to assist in decision making and raise awareness of landscape issues. To meet requirements of Planning and Development Act but also to help deal with significant development pressures

Intended users None specified but considering objective – planners and developers

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Senior planner with a good grounding of county and landscape issues including geology and soils

Methods and information sources DELG landscape assessment guidelines (June 2000) and CA/SNH landscape character assessment guidance (June 2002). Also referred to LCA for Northern Ireland and in particular Newry and Mourne District

Stakeholder consultation if any None

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 9 No Landscape Character Areas

How units defined (if known)

LCTs: distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas of the county but where they occur they share broadly similar conditions of geology, topography, drainage, vegetation, historical land use etc.

LCAs: are single unique areas, which are geographical area of a particular landscape type or types.

Also defines physical units, visual units and image units.

How illustrated: each LCA has photopanel and small B & W key plan illustrating location of character area in relation to County and other LCAs but not on an OS base.

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes. Formed framework for first assessing character, then sensitivity and then value. Also used definitions set out in guidelines

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? No specific reference to GIS in text but informed GIS data was used. Data sets used included OS Maps, CORINE Land Cover Maps, geology, soils, ecology, habitats and settlements and structure.

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No but reference made to Buckley and Sweetman Archaeological survey 1996 (appears to be site based gazette)

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Yes consistent with Northern Ireland landscape assessment

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Yes

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Seen as part of landscape and not discussed separately

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? Yes

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? Yes

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? No

Is the LCA readily available No - because key aspects of assessment have been incorporated into the County Development Plan

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? No -technical but is used occasional by developer and architects putting together data for planning application

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used e.g. county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Used within the County development plan, EIAs of major developments (quarries and wind farms), refinement of protected landscapes and in informing planning control zones 1-6.

Assessment resulted in refinement of AONB, scenic areas and greenbelt boundaries

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Concise assessment

- Reasonable structure – easy to follow and logical

- Sections relating to background, method, character area descriptions could be more clearly separated

- Follows the guidelines and has produced a good, solid overview of variety of landscape in county and of forces for change acting upon it.

- Provides information on landscape resource and helps in making decisions about landscape change

- Raises awareness of landscape matters

Weaknesses:

- Maps showing location of character areas could be more clearly illustrated

- HLC was not incorporated

- No public consultation

- No consideration of coastal landscapes or issues

- Defines landscape types and areas as well as physical, visual and image units but only identifies character areas in the assessment.

- If assessor does not have a strong knowledge of aspect of landscape i.e. historic aspects then these will not be incorporated in understanding.

- Based on DELG guidelines which are thought to be muddled and therefore concern over the judgements made in the assessment - particularly the justification for identifying landscapes of national significance

- Not informative for development control because character descriptions are not detailed or informative enough

Basic Details

Title of LCA Landscape Appraisal of Co Mayo

Date and status (draft, final etc) Final / date unknown

No of volumes, pages etc Not known (assessment form appendix x of county development plan

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) Web site

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by Mayo County Council

Prepared by CAAS

Cost to prepare (if known) Not known

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Not known

Content (tick those that apply):

- Method statement Yes sets out four phases: identifying character units; landscape sensitivity; developing principle policy areas; and then preparation of a development impact – landscape sensitivity matrix

- Physical and human influences No in assessment in development plan

- Descriptions of landscape units Yes

- Descriptions of seascapes units No

- Review of forces for change Not included in development plan LCA – may have been in original assessment

- Material on landscape sensitivity Yes based on CORINE land use

- Material on landscape capacity Yes by combining sensitivity with development type – scoring system

- Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change No

- Landscape strategy material No

- Material on landscape policy and/or designations Yes for each of the four landscape types

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) Identify and describe the landscape character of each part of the County and the capacity of each area to accept change and to then development of policies to guide development in each type of landscape Commissioned in order to feed into the development plan

Intended users Planners and developers

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Landscape architects and planners

Methods and information sources DELG. Information collected included CORINE land use,

Stakeholder consultation if any Yes with key organisations during the assessment and then with local people as part of the development plan process

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 16 character units (areas) and then 4 overarching landscape types for which policy has been developed – Montaine coastal, lowland coastal, uplands, moors, heath and bogs and drumlins and lowlands.

How units defined (if known) Character units – an area of land which has similar character-giving elements such as slope, vegetation and land use. The appearance of the landscape is relatively uniform in each unit. Units are used for consistent and clear application of policy.

How illustrated LCA map showing each character unit, extracts of map for each unit’s descriptive text and photographs

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes along with reference to the Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? Yes

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Galway was in existence and there is some similarity i.e. moderate correlation between assessments but it is not exact. Sligo also existed but not the same type of assessment (evaluation/scenic study) therefore poor correlation. Poor correlation with Roscommon because this assessment is not county wide.

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Yes apart from fact that lakes do not seem to have been included in landscape nor have coastal units been considered

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Ignored – urban areas have been incorporated into the character units but not really mentioned or described

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? No

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? Some character unit descriptions drop into value judgements and statements. ‘Critical landscape factors’ descriptions often introduce issues relating to development impact. The method statement does however make the distinction between characterisation and subjective judgement

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? Yes

Is the LCA readily available? Yes within development plan

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Yes but complex issues to deal with

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used e.g. county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

For use in the development plan, use by planners as guidance and decision support tool

Used on a day-to-day basis by development control. Has been used in development of a wind energy strategy as well as for EIAs

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Sets out a clear characterisation of the landscape

- Well presented and illustrated document

- Recognises that although sensitivity categorisation based on CORINE land uses has been done each development will need to be evaluated on its merits and degree of sensitivity reassessed for specific circumstances.

- Sensitivity matrix regarded by planners as relevant and useful and assessment is regarded as a good general source of data

- Scale of character units identified is considered to be about right

- Use of GIS data sets

Weaknesses:

- Lakes appear to have been excluded from the characterisation – they do not form part of a unit even though they are a significant part of the landscape and its character and they have their own policy in the development plan

- Coastal units have not been considered

- HLC has not been considered

- The characterisation process focuses on visual aspects rather than providing a rounded description of historic, ecological etc aspects of the landscape

- The character descriptions often fail to describe patterns, sense of enclosure etc

- Development and sensitivity indexes use a scoring system – reduces creative problem solving and fails to recognise individual variations of each development and landscape location – over simplistic

- Not sufficient information/guidelines on how to conserve and enhance the character variations found in the county – too much focus on impact of development

- Process of assessment is hard to understand - not accessible to man on the street and also difficult for planners

Basic Details

Title of LCA Not known - extract from County Development Plan

Date and status (draft, final etc) Pre 2001

No of volumes, pages etc Not known

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) County Development Plan on web site

Area covered Whole of county

Commissioned by Meath County Council

Prepared by In house

Cost to prepare (if known) Not Known

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Not known - cost of development plan

Content (tick those that apply):

- Method statement No

- Physical and human influences No

- Descriptions of landscape units Yes - but very brief and not especially informative

- Descriptions of seascapes units No (small area of coast classified as one coastal type)

- Review of forces for change No

- Material on landscape sensitivity Yes as part of text on each character area

- Material on landscape capacity Yes - brief description as part of sensitivity

- Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change No

- Landscape strategy material No

- Material on landscape policy and/or designations No

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) Objectives included: protection of areas of high amenity areas from visually damaging development or proposals which have cumulative impact, promote areas for development, primarily leisure and tourism/recreation and review the extent of area currently designated as being of high amenity.

Intended users Planners and developers

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Not known

Methods and information sources Not known

Stakeholder consultation if any Not known

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 11 mixture of character areas and types

How units defined (if known) Not specified

How illustrated On a colour maps with no OS base and scale - 1:115000. No photographs

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Assume yes but no method statement

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? Not known

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details Not known but no indication that it was in the character descriptions

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Poor correlation with Lough and Fingal, both of which have identified areas which do not relate to the Meath typology. There is a moderate correlation with Kildare only in so much that both assessments identify the Royal Canal type and moderate correlation with Offaly in that both identify the type 'agriculture/rural area'.

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? No Because too much of the county is categorised as rural and agriculture. It is likely that this type demonstrates significant variety across the county. In additional picking out river valley landscapes separates them from an often more meaningful landscape context in which they sit. The typology would suggest that significant emphasis has been placed on topography and land use

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Not assessed - form part of the landscape

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? No

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? Yes in that character descriptions are described separately from the sensitivity of the landscape

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? Not known

Is the LCA readily available? It is available as part of the development plan

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Yes in that it describes landscape in a simple and familiar county development plan format - however it is not especially informative - basic description and analysis

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used eg county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Used in preparation of County development plan

Used to review the extent of areas of high amenity

Used to protect areas from inappropriate development and to proactively promote development re tourism/ recreation in appropriate locations

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give

details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Clearly set out and illustrated character types
- Clear objectives to assessment
- Characterisation and judgement appears to have been kept separate

Weaknesses:

- Limited character classification in that majority of county is classified as rural and agriculture

- Brief descriptions of types which are not particularly informative re local distinctive character

- Did not include seascape assessment

- Limited/no assessment of forces for change

- No methodology statement

- No assessment of urban areas

- No evidence of stakeholder input, HLC or used of GIS

Basic Details

Title of LCA Offaly County Development Plan Vol 1 Section 2 and Volume 4

Date and status (draft, final etc) Pre 2003

No of volumes, pages etc Not known - only extract in development plan was available - may not have been a separate document

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) Hard copy and web

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by Offaly County Council

Prepared by In house - Offaly County Council - with limited time and resources

Cost to prepare (if known) Not known, but not expensive

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Not applicable - part of development plan and not available in another form

Content (tick those that apply):

- Method statement No

- Physical and human influences No

- Descriptions of landscape units Yes - very brief

- Descriptions of seascapes units Not applicable

- Review of forces for change No

- Material on landscape sensitivity Yes

- Material on landscape capacity No

- Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change Yes but brief

- Landscape strategy material No

- Material on landscape policy and/or designations Yes in Vol 1 in relation to areas of high amenity

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) To ensure compliance with Planning and Development Act 2000 - requires development plans to include objectives for the preservation of the landscape, views and the amenity of place and features of natural beauty

Intended users Planners and those involved in activity which impacts on the landscape

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Trainee Planner

Methods and information sources Used the DELG guidelines. Reference to other data sources not made

Stakeholder consultation if any Only in so far as the development plan was subject to consultation

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units A mix of character areas and types were identified

How units defined (if known) No definition given

How illustrated Muddled. Those character areas/types identified and described do not relate exactly to the areas identified on plans (3 no plans covering the County at 1:215000 scale) i.e. Cutaway Bogs are described in the text and the drawing shows Peatlands (one can only assume they are the same thing). No photographs are included.

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? No reference to

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details Only in terms of specific known sites. Offaly County Council are currently undertaking a HLC

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Poor correlation with LCAs identified in Galway or Kildare as typology assessment and evaluation. Other adjacent counties have no assessments.

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? No - because types and areas are muddled and method for their identification is not clear. Appear to have identified land uses rather than areas of distinctive character which are geographically specific.

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? No reference

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? No evidence

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? No descriptions and sensitivity ratings are provided together

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? No

Is the LCA readily available? Yes as part of the development plan

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Probably not

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used e.g. county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Used in development control - highlighting areas which are most or least sensitive to development, the types of development which would be acceptable and what factors should be taken into account. The guidance is however very general and does not relate back to landscape key characteristics probably because these have not been defined.

LCTs identified divide landscape into 3 sensitivity ratings. These bear no relation to the areas of high amenity designation many of which contain land which is classed as rural and agricultural of low sensitivity.

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Provides a basis for understanding the landscape and for the formulation of policies which bring landscape issues to the fore.
-
- Has highlighted the need for a more detailed landscape classification of the county in accordance with the guidelines.
-

Weaknesses:

-
- Confusion of types and areas classification
-
- Muddling of characterisation and sensitivity
-
- Text does not relate to maps
-
- No method statement
-
- Sensitivity ratings and guidelines contradict policy on areas of high amenity
-
- Risk of LCA being just a general description and repetitive with no real evaluation which is useful to planners
-
- No use of GIS data sets
-

Basic Details

Title of LCA Lough Key Plan

Date and status (draft, final etc) 2002 Final

No of volumes, pages etc 1 Vol 11 pages excl illustrations

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) Hard copy

Area covered Lough Key and Environs only - not a county assessment

Commissioned by Roscommon County Council

Prepared by Brady Shipman and Martin

Cost to prepare (if known) Not known

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Not known

Content (tick those that apply):

- Method statement Yes - brief and not specific to character assessment

- Physical and human influences No - only brief mention

- Descriptions of landscape units No - only tabular description

- Descriptions of seascapes units No

- Review of forces for change Yes

- Material on landscape sensitivity Yes following value assessment

- Material on landscape capacity Yes following value assessment

- Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change Yes but relates to conservation zones not character areas

- Landscape strategy material Yes - for development of area

- Material on landscape policy and/or designations Yes

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) To review existing plan dated 1981 and update it to ensure continued protection of Lough Key through positive management and development which is sensitive and sustainable

Intended users Planners

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Landscape architects and planners

Methods and information sources DELG method of assessment. Data sources included landform, geology, geomorphology, landcover, cultural values and associations

Stakeholder consultation if any yes - with key stakeholders - advertising locally for people to make submissions

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 4 main character areas and 86 micro character areas

How units defined (if known) Not defined

How illustrated 1 colour plan shows distribution of character areas in study area

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes in conjunction with CA/ SNH guidance. However format set out in DELG is the one used i.e. the assessment looks at landform and landcover and then goes on to consider value and sensitivity

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? No

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? No because assessment is not county wide

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Macro character areas - yes but micro character areas look too fine grained to be useful

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Not included

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? Reasonable

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? No

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? Yes - but not possible to say to what extent it contributed to the study

Is the LCA readily available? Not known

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Yes - study is, but LCA component not possible to fully understand as not clearly set out

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used eg county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

This assessment has been adopted into local development plan. In County development plan policies re landscape relate to development needing to 'respect its surroundings' and the conservation of specific landscape features. No reference to local distinctiveness or landscape character is made.

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Detailed assessment of an area which is highly valued and under development pressure
- Helped to inform and develop a strategy/vision for the area
- Subsequently informed policy
- Clearly written and well presented

Weaknesses:

- Method used is not clearly defined or set out therefore it is not possible to determine how value/sensitivity has been assessed and how this has subsequently led to conservation zones
- No descriptions of the character areas is provided therefore it is difficult to determine what makes each area special or different from each other
- Characterisations seems to be the poor relative of evaluation
- Character areas are named incorrectly i.e. not geographically specific
- Only small area has been assessed - the landscape does not stop at the study area boundary
- Guidelines and policies relate to the zones and therefore are one removed from the character areas and original assessment

Basic Details

Title of LCA Not known - extract from County Development Plan

Date and status (draft, final etc) Final and completed in 2002

No of volumes, pages etc Not known as forms part of development plan

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) Digital - development plan on website

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by S. Dublin Co Council

Prepared by In house - 2 student planners and 2 student landscape architects (almost graduated) and one in house planner to supervise

Cost to prepare (if known) Not much - seen as value for money

Cost to purchase (if applicable) N/A - original documentation looked after by project officer who is on leave of absence

Content (tick those that apply):

- Method statement No
- Physical and human influences No
- Descriptions of landscape units Yes
- Descriptions of seascapes units N/A
- Review of forces for change Not known
- Material on landscape sensitivity Reflected in strategy material but no analysis
- Material on landscape capacity No
- Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change No
- Landscape strategy material Yes
- Material on landscape policy and/or designations No

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) Undertaken in response to DELG draft guidelines and also Development Act 2000

Intended users Planners and developers

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Planners and landscape architects

Methods and information sources No method statement provided. Know that land use and soil/geology maps used along with air photographs

Stakeholder consultation if any None

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 12 character areas and upwards of 10 character types (types are not listed but occur within the descriptive text)

How units defined (if known) Not defined but descriptions indicate the character areas are unique geographically specific areas and types reoccur and are strongly related to land use

How illustrated Only character areas are illustrated on a colour plan without an OS base and no scale given

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? Yes but no method statement provided - has been used to define character but assessment has not considered sensitivity judgements. Research also undertaken into SNH/CA assessment guidance

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? No - paper mapping and data was used

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No although SMR was consulted

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Moderate correlation with Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown County and good correlation with Final County

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Yes

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Significantly built up areas are not assessed but major areas of open space/landscape which penetrate them are considered

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? Not known although section of development plan on landscape does highlight the key issues affecting the landscape namely expansion of suburbs, construction of one off-housing, leisure facilities and extractive industry and landfill - so some analysis has been done - perhaps as part of development plan review process

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character?

Character assessment only therefore yes

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? No none

Is the LCA readily available? Within the local development plan which is on website

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Yes in that it is simply set out and forms part of the familiar development plan layout

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used eg county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Incorporated into development plan and use to develop a landscape strategy

No been used greatly in decision making - wanted to take it on to the judgement stage but not been done

Would like to see it used to determine protected landscapes

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give

details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Clearly set out and reasonable descriptions of character - although a little brief
- Good map showing character areas
- Good and moderate correlation with adjoining counties
- Undertaken by planners and landscape architects cost effectively

Weaknesses:

- HLC not integrated
- Not taken forward and used in judgemental work
- Not used extensively in decision making
- Has not been used to refine existing protected/designated areas
- Did not assess built up areas
- No stakeholder consultation
- No use of GIS data sets

Basic Details

Title of LCA Sligo Scenic Evaluation Study

Date and status (draft, final etc) Dec. 1996 (incomplete ?final draft)

No of volumes, pages etc 1 vol. 15 pages exc. illustrations

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) hard copy

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by Sligo County Council

Prepared by CAAS Environmental Services Ltd, Dublin

Cost to prepare (if known) Not known

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Not applicable - incorporated into development plan

Content (tick those that apply):

- Method statement Yes - but relates to determining sensitivity and little ref to determining character
- Physical and human influences Yes - in that data of this nature is used but no overview given
- Descriptions of landscape units No
- Descriptions of seascapes units No
- Review of forces for change No
- Material on landscape sensitivity Yes
- Material on landscape capacity Yes - associated with sensitivity
- Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change No
- Landscape strategy material No
- Material on landscape policy and/or designations Yes - Policy based on sensitivity categories

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) Response to 1963 Local Gov (Planning and Development) Regulations. To help preserve character and integrity of valued landscapes features.

Intended users Planners

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Landscape Architects/Planners

Methods and information sources No landscape assessment methods mentioned/used. Information sources included: planning docs, CORINE land cover, OS maps, countryside management, environmental designations, sites and monuments record

Stakeholder consultation if any No

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 12 Units - appear to be types strongly related to land use - CORINE

classification

How units defined (if known) No definition given - called character zones

How illustrated Not illustrated

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? No

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? No

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? No because assessment focuses on evaluation not characterisation - Leitrim and Mayo are different. Sligo assessment predates these other assessments

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? No

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Not mentioned in character classification but included in category 'robust' under sensitivity

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? No

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? No

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? No

Is the LCA readily available? No but is included in development plan

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? No

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used egg county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

Incorporated into development plan. Reference is made to the Development Control Policy Map which only distinguishes between normal rural landscape and sensitive rural landscape. No recommendation is made to refer back to the original assessment.

Photograph examples are given of normal rural countryside - these demonstrate the variety of character and yet they are all classified the same.

Although incorporated into development plan it has not been used to inform other studies such as wind energy to date due to lack of resources although it will be used as a basis for a forestry strategy

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Considered by planners as good for practical planning
- Strong compliance between scenic areas and planning zones

- Useful background resource on landscape

Weaknesses:

- Difficult to follow
- Muddled character and evaluation stages
- Not sufficient information on character
- Little analysis of character units identified and no description
- No real interpretation of distinctive character areas
- Normal rural landscape = the least sensitive landscape - no description of the character of this land
- Not in GIS
- Assessment process generally has received bad press and therefore not high enough up the agenda to get funding to do more work
- Does not include as much information on landscape character as other studies such as Mayo, and therefore does not address what is special about an area.
- Does not relate to counties adjacent = was done in isolation
- Assessment is relatively broad brush and thus zone is also such that an area where development takes place may be locally sensitive and need protection but falls within an area of normal countryside
- Because judgmental elements of assessment are subjective they can be misused

Basic Details

Title of LCA Not known - included in County Development Plan

Date and status (draft, final etc) Final 1995/6

No of volumes, pages etc Not known

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) In County Development Plan on website

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by Wexford County Council

Prepared by CAAS

Cost to prepare (if known) Not known

Cost to purchase (if applicable) Not known

Content (tick those that apply):

- Method statement No
- Physical and human influences No
- Descriptions of landscape units No
- Descriptions of seascapes units Yes - in terms of different coastal development policy zones
- Review of forces for change No
- Material on landscape sensitivity Yes
- Material on landscape capacity No
- Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change Yes
- Landscape strategy material No
- Material on landscape policy and/or designations Yes

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) No known

Intended users Planners and developers

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Landscape architects and planners

Methods and information sources Not known but predates DELG guidelines

Stakeholder consultation if any Not known

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 4 sensitivity categories - Vulnerable, sensitive, normal and robust

How units defined (if known) Based on sensitivity of landscape

How illustrated on maps not on an OS base

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? No - predate guidelines

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? No

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Predates Kilkenny and Wicklow and poor correlation with the now completed LCAs (based on information provided in county development plan only).

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? No - do not appear to be based on a characterisation of the landscape - appear to have used land use classification to determine sensitivity

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Identified as robust landscapes

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? No

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? No

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? No

Is the LCA readily available? Within County development plan

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? Yes in that it is presented in the standard county development plan style

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used eg county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

County development plan and policy development

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Brings landscape to the fore in decision making
- Includes seascape assessment

Weaknesses:

- Does not consider character
- Does not identify units of character or describe them- types or areas
- Is limited to evaluation and judgements on sensitivity
- No method statement
- No consideration of HLC or forces for change

Basic Details

Title of LCA Working Paper No 4 County Wicklow Amenity Areas – Development Plan Review

Date and status (draft, final etc)

No of volumes, pages etc 1 volume 41 pages (excluding colour plans)

Form in which available (hard copy only, CD, web etc) Hard copy and digital

Area covered Whole of County

Commissioned by Wicklow County Council

Prepared by Wicklow County Council

Cost to prepare (if known) Not know but not expensive

Cost to purchase (if applicable) As part of development plan

Content (tick those that apply):

● Method statement	Yes
● Physical and human influences	No
● Descriptions of landscape units	Yes
● Descriptions of seascapes units	No
● Review of forces for change	Yes with regard to vulnerability of ferent landscapes
● Material on landscape sensitivity	Yes
● Material on landscape capacity	No
● Guidelines on different forms of development or land use change	No
● Landscape strategy material	No
● Material on landscape policy and/or designations	Yes

Process and Methods

Brief and objectives (if known) To describe the general landscape character of the County and describe the features which characterise individual landscape types. To provide a sound landscape framework for planning policy and development control decisions inc. capacity of different landscapes to accommodate new development.

Intended users

Qualifications and profession of those involved (if known) Executive planner (no training in LCA) but researched other LCA documents

Methods and information sources Planning for Amenity, Recreation and Tourism (1970), Inventory of Outstanding Landscapes in Ireland (1977) and Countryside Commission Landscape Assessment Guidance (1993). Other information sources included: OS maps, geology, soils, forestry, sites and monuments record, protected areas mapping, aerial

photography, background literature and studies.

Stakeholder consultation if any

Number, scale and type(s) of landscape units 7 Major LCAs initially which were further refined to 12 LCAs (these are a mixture of areas and types)

How units defined (if known) No definition provided. Appears to be confusion between landscape types and areas. Areas identified are not named correctly i.e. have typology names e.g. rural and do not reflect geographically specific areas.

How illustrated No illustration of the LCAs within the development plan but a separate drawing was produced where the areas were named but their geographical extent not shown. No photographs

Specific Questions and Issues

Do the DELG consultation draft guidelines appear to have been used? If so, in what way? No Pre dates guidelines

Did the LCA make use of the principal GIS datasets that are available in Ireland? No

Was the assessment informed by historic landscape characterisation? If so, give details No but reference was made to sites and monuments record and literature 'Wicklow History and Society'.

Do the landscape units defined appear consistent in scale and boundaries with adjoining counties (including counties north of the border where applicable)? Kildare assessment - moderate correlation with similar scale and identification of areas although Kildare also picks out river typology which is not identified in Wicklow. Moderate correlation with South Dublin but is more broad brush than the South Dublin classification. Moderate to poor correlation with Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown because Wicklow assessment is again more broad brush and the smaller more urban counties have undertaken more detailed classifications. There is moderate correlation between descriptions.

As regards the Wexford assessment there is a poor correlation

Do they appear to be a reliable and meaningful reflection of variations in character? Yes but descriptions and definition are poor

How were urban or built-up areas treated in the assessment (if covered at all)? Not assessed

Was a robust, evidence-based assessment of forces for change provided? Forces for change appear to have been identified based on observations in field survey and existing documentation. Forces for change identified are generalised.

Was a clear separation made between landscape characterisation and judgements based on character? Method statement acknowledges differences between them. Each LCA is described and its vulnerability discussed. The start of the document highlights that all landscapes are special and then immediately talks about those that should have most strict planning control because of their importance. Overall the characterisation process, landscape evaluation and then interpretation of assessment into planning policy are muddled – partly a reflection of the function of the document - it is not clear if this is the original assessment. Evaluation relates to the landscape character areas - an improvement on Kildare and Kilkenny where the CORINE land use mapping is used. However these zones are not detailed enough and do not reveal local variations in sensitivity.

Does there appear to have been stakeholder input, and if so how did it contribute to the assessment? No

Is the LCA readily available? Within development plan

Is it suitable for use by people outside the landscape and planning professions? No

Applications

Give details of any applications for which the assessment is known to have been intended and/or used egg county development plan or local area plan, development control, landscape designations, capacity for housing/ wind energy/ infrastructure etc, design issues, forestry, tourism, EIA, regional planning, national spatial planning.

LCAs were categorised into landscape control areas with particular planning policies based vulnerability and sensitivity of the landscape

Incorporated into 1999 development and subsequently into the 2004 development plan

Will be used in development of local area plans and other assessments - possible that these assessments will inform the LCA because it is quite out of date. Will also be used to inform a wind energy strategy but concern is that LCA needs updating first

Outputs

Comment on the overall scope, structure, style and readability of the outputs (including maps and illustrations). Give details of its main strengths and weaknesses compared to other LCAs.

Strengths:

- Template which sets the framework for development control and forms a robust tool for decision making
- Can be used as a basis for other studies
- Accessible and simple compared to other county assessments

Weaknesses:

- Confusion over use of terminology – uses landscape types and areas interchangeably
- Does not set out key characteristics of each character area
- Document starts with policy then discusses character – not logically set out or easy to use nor easy to understand conclusions reached.
- Needs refinements - was done a long time ago and needs updating because landscape has changed and pressures are different and new data available
- Does not sufficiently incorporate cultural aspects of the landscape, vernacular variation and local distinctiveness, biodiversity - significant information is now available on GIS
- Character areas and zoning are too broad brush - could be refined to a finer grain which would be more helpful in defending areas from development which may be inappropriate
- Does not highlight areas of individual character sufficiently - planners go straight to zoning or refer to individual landscape features when dealing with a particular application and as a result understanding landscape as a whole i.e. pattern and character can be forgotten
- No integration of HLC or use of GIS data sets