Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

# Local Development Plan

## Landscape Character Assessment Review

# MUDC Landscape Character Assessment Review

## 1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide information on;

- Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and its use as a tool for decision makers
- The relevant regional planning policy framework to protect our landscapes.
- A review of Local Landscape Character Areas for Mid Ulster including key intervening changes since 2000.

**2.0** This paper builds upon work carried out as part of the MUDC 'Landscape Assessment' position paper (September 2015) and related position papers on 'Environmental Assets' and 'Rural Pressure Analysis'.(See http://www.midulstercouncil.org/Planning/Mid-Ulster-Development-Plan/Development-Plan).

## 3.0 What is Landscape Character Assessment?

Landscape character assessment is the process of identifying and describing variation in character of the landscape. Landscape character assessment documents identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive by mapping and describing character types and areas. They also show how the landscape is perceived, experienced and valued by people.

## 4.0 What are Landscape Character Assessment's used for?

Landscape character assessments can be used to inform a wide range of activities, such as:

- planning policies and decisions
- sensitivity and capacity studies
- land management plans
- landscape and visual impact assessments
- local council studies
- minerals constraints planning
- place making
- green infrastructure
- forest and woodland strategies
- waterways strategies
- renewable energy strategies
- AONB and National Park management plans

## Policy Framework

## 5.0 European Landscape Convention (2000)

The requirement to carry out landscape character assessment is underpinned by the United Kingdom being a signatory to the European Landscape Convention (ELC). Article 6 of the ELC requires countries to identify their own landscapes, analyse their characteristics and the forces and pressures transforming them and take note of the changes. Landscape character assessment is the recognised tool used to meet these requirements. ELC

applies to all types of landscape whether considered outstanding, every day or degraded. The ELC advises that landscape is an area perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and or human factors and it embraces all landscape types.

**6.0 Northern Ireland Landscape Charter**

Northern Ireland's Landscape Charter, was launched by The Department of the Environment (DOE) in 2014. The Charter acknowledges that change in the landscape can be gradual or rapid, accelerated by new technologies and that understanding the landscape assets and the forces of change is key to making informed decisions. The Charter advises that the quality of decisions made by the new councils needs to be carefully considered in relation to their immediate impact upon the landscape and the impact for future generations. It can accessed via the following link https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland%E2%80%99s-landscape-charter.

**7.0 The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS),**

The RDS in the section on the Natural Environment, includes the heading "*Recognise and promote the conservation of local identity and distinctive landscape character*". It defines landscape as "*a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements, be it natural (soil, landform) and/or human (for example settlement and development) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse*". It states that The NILCA 2000 provides valuable guidance on local landscape character and scenic quality (paragraph 3.31).

**8.0 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) 2015**

The SPPS places an emphasis on the protection of special landscapes from inappropriate development, overdevelopment and the need for councils to take into account Landscape Character Assessments. The SPPS advises; '*In preparing Local Development Plans (LDPs) councils must take account of the Regional Development Strategy 2035, the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland, the SPPS and any other policies or advice in guidance issued by the Department such as Landscape Character Assessments and conservation area design guides' (*paragraph 5.16).

**9.0** In directing 'other types of development' in the countryside, beyond those which have Regional Strategic Policy specifically set out, the SPPS states that '*some areas of the countryside exhibit exceptional landscapes, such as mountains, stretches of the coast or lough shores, and certain views or vistas, wherein the quality of the landscape and unique amenity value is such that development should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Where appropriate these areas should be designated as Special Countryside Areas in LDPs, and appropriate policies brought forward to ensure their protection from unnecessary and inappropriate development. Local policies may also be brought forward to maintain the landscape quality and character of Areas of High Scenic Value'* (paragraph 6.75).

**10.0** At paragraph 6.76 the SPPS states '*The LDP process will play an important role for councils in identifying key features and assets of the countryside and balancing the needs of rural areas and communities with the protection of the environment. This should include an environmental assets appraisal and landscape assessment which will provide the evidence base for the purposes of bringing forward an appropriate policy approach to development in the countryside. This should take into account Landscape Character Assessments*'.

**Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (NILCA) 2000**

**11.0** Northern Ireland is currently covered by the existing Landscape Character Assessment 'NILCA 2000'. This consists of two parts: an overall General Report on Northern Ireland Landscapes and 26 more detailed district reports (one for each legacy council). It divides the countryside into 130 different Landscape Character Areas, each with a distinctive character based upon pattern of geology, landform, land use, cultural and ecological features. Mid Ulster contains twenty-two such Landscape Character Areas, many of which are shared with neighbouring districts of Fermanagh and Omagh, Derry and Strabane, Causeway Coast and Glens, Mid and East Antrim, Antrim and Newtownabbey and Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon.

**12.0** The General Report addresses landscape character, diversity, key components and forces for change and includes strategic advice on how to tackle the effects of development and land use change. The subsidiary district reports comprise;

- A description and classification of landscape character
- An analysis of its condition and sensitivity to change
- Principles for landscape management
- Principles for accommodating development
- Two Maps; an LCA map and a Landscape Analysis and Settlement Settings Map.

**The Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment (NIRLCA) 2016**

**13.0** This document has been developed to meet the commitments set out in Northern Ireland's Landscape Charters. It identifies broad patterns in the variation of landscape character across Northern Ireland, rationalising the number of Landscape Character Areas from 130 (as identified in NILCA 2000) to 26. Each one is described as an area with its own distinct character and sense of place. It states that it provides a '*body of evidence which can be used, alongside the NILCA 2000 and other studies, to inform the development of plans policies and strategies*' although anticipates that further work to update and eventually replace NILCA 2000 will be carried out. There are 8 Regional Landscape Character Areas relevant to Mid Ulster (See Map 1, Appendix 3);

1.Clogher Valley and Slieve Beagh
2.Omagh Basin
3.Sperrins
4.West Lough Neagh Drumlins
5.Carickmore Plateau and Pomeroy Hills
6.Southern Drumlin and Orchards
7.Lough Neagh Basin
8.Lower Bann Valley

**14.0 SPG Wind Energy Development in NI's Landscapes (2010)**

This comprehensive document accompanies Planning Policy Statement 18 (PPS 18): Renewable Energy. It contains an assessment of each of the 130 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) as identified in NILCA 2000 by referencing the key landscape and visual characteristics and values of each LCA and acts as a guide for the development of individual wind turbines and wind farms within the landscape .The guidance highlights landscape character areas which may have the capacity to accommodate wind energy development without significant detrimental visual impact. It also advises against siting turbines within landscapes of regional and national importance.

**15.0 PPS 21 Development in the Countryside**

PPS 21 sets out planning policies for development in the countryside i.e. land lying outside of settlement limits as identified in development plans. It explains how development plans '*play a key role in identifying the countryside assets of the region and balancing the needs of rural areas/communities with protection of the environment'*. This is facilitated by the preparation of Countryside Assessments which normally include an Environmental Assets Appraisal, a Development Pressure Analysis, a Settlement Appraisal, and a Landscape Assessment. PPS 21 advises how this process helps inform potential environmental designations such as Special Countryside Areas, or Areas of High Scenic Value in forthcoming development plans.

**Review of existing local landscape Character Assessment**

**Background**

**16.0** Our landscapes are constantly evolving in response to human activity and the pace of change is more rapid than ever. Within Mid Ulster there has been substantial development since the publication of NILCA 2000. The more recent NIRCLA (2016) recognises that '*there has been a substantial phase of building and other development in both urban and rural areas of Northern Ireland since its publication, such as housing or renewable energy, which has affected the character of many of our landscapes*'.

**17.0** The NIRLCA (2016) states that its purpose is to '*provide an evidence base which can be used equally by planners, developers and the public'* and will enable '*informed decisions concerning the planning, management and protection of Northern Ireland's landscapes*' to be made. It also states that '*It is intended that the strategic view supplied by the NIRLCA will be complemented by more detailed landscape character assessment at a local scale*'. Given its strategic nature however, it is considered that the NIRCLA on its own is of limited practical use in terms of informing planning environmental designations.

**18.0** In clarifying its relationship with the NILCA 2000 document the NIRCLA report advises that '*The purpose of the NIRLCA is not to replace, but to complement, the earlier NILCA 2000'* and that '*Until the new local assessments are in place, the earlier Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment 2000 (NILCA), comprising 130 character areas, will continue to be applied*'. It is therefore considered necessary to review NILCA 2000, in so far as it relates to Mid Ulster

District, to ensure that it provides a suitable baseline for informing future planning policies and designations in the forthcoming Local Development Plan.

**‘An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment’ (2014)**

**19.0** This document provides the most up to date published guidance on Landscape Character Assessment. Paragraph 1.6 ‘Reviewing an updating an Existing Landscape Character Assessment’ advises on factors that need to be taken into account when deciding whether or not an existing landscape character assessment can be used for a particular task. This document has been taken into account as part of this review.

**20.0** A key strength of NILCA 2000 is that it provides an independent, standardised view of local landscape patterns throughout the Northern Ireland countryside. It describes in great detail the landscape features and patterns that have evolved over thousands of years through both natural and human forces. Although approaching 20 years old, it is considered that the majority of the landscape descriptions, in so far as they relate to Mid Ulster, remain relevant today. As stated in NILCA 2000 ‘*landscape descriptions are the starting points for policies and guidelines for the future conservation, management and restoration and enhancement of the landscape’*. The key descriptors for each LCA relevant to Mid Ulster are listed in Table 2 (Appendix 1)

**21.0** NILCA states that it is to be used as a *‘common point of reference’* to feed into and complement and supplement local planning policies. It has been successfully used in the past by the Department of Environment (DOE) to support and inform plan designations contained within area plans, such as Areas of High Scenic Value in the Magherafelt Area Plan (2015), and the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (2015).

**22.0** NILCA was also a key source of information in the formulation of current Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for Wind energy Development in Northern Irelands Landscapes (2010) to accompany PPS 18 Renewable Energy. This document, which was informed by significant stakeholder involvement, provides an important additional layer of information when considering existing landscape character. It ‘*sets out the background to the Landscape Character Areas and Special landscapes of Northern Ireland’* and contains an assessment of each of the 130 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) as identified in NILCA 2000. Although expressed in terms of the criteria for assessing landscape sensitivity to wind energy development, each individual assessment provides valuable information on key landscape and visual characteristics and values of each LCA, thereby providing a more recent snapshot in time of our local landscape character (2010).

**23.0** A key consideration when reviewing an existing landscape character assessment is the amount of landscape change that has taken place since its compilation and whether or not this change has been significant. This report seeks to highlight key developments within our district since 2000 and suggests whether or not landscape character has been affected as a result, or likely to be affected if development trends continue over the forthcoming plan

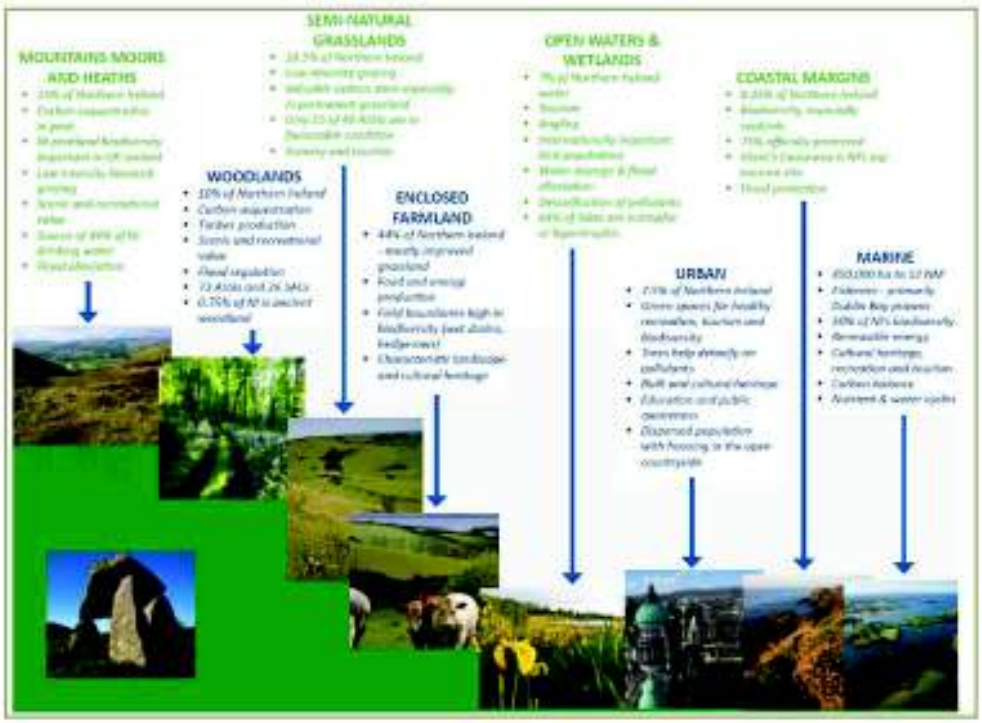
period. Where relevant, potential action points or policy implications are suggested.

**24.0** Although NILCA 2000 provides a consistent approach across all council areas, it does have some limitations in terms of recognising cross border influences. This aspect is picked up in greater detail in the more recent NIRLCA, where cross-boundary continuity in character is highlighted, for example at 'Clogher Valley and Slieve Beagh' (RLCA 3) and 'Southern Drumlin and Orchards' (RLCA 13) which straddle the Tyrone-Monaghan borders (see map 1, Appendix 3).

## Ecosystem Services

**25.0** The issue of 'Ecosystem Services', which has only achieved international recognition in recent years, is defined in the SPPS as 'the processes by which the environment produces resources used by people that are often taken for guaranteed, such as clean air, water, food and materials.' The Northern Ireland National Ecosystem Assessment (NI NEA) presented the first analysis of the benefits provided by Northern Ireland's natural environment in 2011, and formed part of a UK wide project to assess the state of ecosystems, the goods and services they deliver and the value they provide to human well-being and the economy. The delivery of different services by different ecosystems is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Delivery of services by NI's Ecosystems (reproduced from NEA Report)




**26.0** The management, maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem services are integral part of sustainable development. By relating delivery of ecosystem services to specific landscape character areas it is possible to clearly recognise the benefits derived from those areas. The NIRLCA 2016 contains

valuable information on the different types of ecosystem services within each of the 26 defined RLCA's. This information, in addition to council position papers on topics such as Tourism, Employment and Flood Risk and data contained within the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Interim Report (See www.midulstercouncil.org/Planning/Mid-Ulster-Development-Plan ) help provide an up to date inventory of ecosystem services for Mid Ulster.

**CORINE**

**27.0** Another important source of data in terms of landscape character is the Corine Database and associated document 'Land Cover Atlas of the United Kingdom' (2017). Corine means 'Coordination of Information on the Environment' and was an EU prototype project working on many different environmental issues. Put simply, it is an inventory of European land cover for 391 local authority areas (including Mid Ulster) based on 2012 data. The types of land cover are divided into 44 different classes, including categories like 'pastures' (75.55% of Mid Ulster compared to 67.10% for NI ) 'discontinuous urban fabric' (1.73 for Mid Ulster compared to 2.9 for NI) and 'Peat Bogs' (4.18% of Mid Ulster compared to 4.4 of NI). The location and extent of different types of land cover within Mid Ulster in the context of local Landscape Character Areas is illustrated in Appendix 3.

**28.0** This information complements the NILCA (2010) and NIRLCA (2016) documents and supports observations made in relation to our current local landscape character. Although no comparative data currently exists for Mid Ulster, it nonetheless provides a useful baseline for considering future landscape change in terms of land cover. Table 1 below shows an overall comparison of land cover figures (in percentages) between Mid Ulster and Northern Ireland.

Table 1: Land cover for MUDC and NI.

| | Corine land cover (2012) | MUDC % of land | NI % of land |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Pastures | 75.55 | 67.10 |
| 2 | Natural Grasslands | 8.03 | 7.33 |
| 3 | Moors and Heathland | 3.00 | 4.5 |
| 4 | Peat Bogs | 4.18 | 4.4 |
| 5 | Coniferous Forest | 2.05 | 3.47 |
| 6 | Discontinuous Urban Fabric | 1.73 | 2.9 |
| 7 | Non Irrigated arable land | 0.18 | 2.75 |
| 8 | Complex cultivation patterns | 0.94 | 1.93 |
| 9 | Transitional woodland-scrub | 1.25 | 1.74 |
| 10 | Land principally occupied by agriculture | 1.4 | 1.23 |
| 11 | Sport and leisure facilities | 0.15 | 0.61 |
| 12 | Broad Leaved Forest | 0.61 | 0.51 |
| 13 | Industrial or commercial units | 0.2 | 0.39 |
| 14 | Mineral Extraction sites | 0.39 | 0.22 |
| 15 | Continuous urban fabric | - | 0.2 |
| 16 | Mixed forest | - | 0.2 |
| 17 | Airports | - | 0.2 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | Beaches, dunes, sands | - | 0.11 |
| 19 | Green Urban Areas | - | 0.06 |
| 20 | Bare rocks | - | 0.05 |
| 21 | Port Areas | - | 0.04 |
| 22 | Dump sites | - | 0.03 |
| 23 | Inland Marshes | - | 0.01 |
| 24 | Road and rail networks & associated land | - | 0.0064 |
| 25 | Sparsely vegetated areas | - | 0.0023 |
| 26 | Construction sites | - | 0.0018 |

**Source:** NERC Environmental Information Data Centre https://doi.org/10.5285/32533dd6-7c1b-43e1-b892-e80d61a5ea1d

### Key Landscape Changes within the MUDC since 2000

**29.0** All 22 LCA's relevant to the Mid Ulster District Council area were reviewed and analysed to determine key development changes since the publication of NILCA in 2000. The findings are contained in Table 2 (Appendix 1). Although primarily focusing on the impact of one-off housing and wind energy development, it also takes into account the impact of other key indicators of landscape change such as the extent of quarrying operations, industrial operations, major roadworks and commercial forestry. A desk top analysis was initially carried out and later complemented by focused field survey work to help identify and confirm key changes within each LCA.

**30.0** Table 2 in Appendix 1 comprises 3 columns. The first column lists key features, characteristics and values of each LCA. This is primarily informed by descriptions contained within NILCA 2000, but also by descriptions contained in the SPG for Wind energy Development in Northern Irelands Landscapes (2010) and NIRLCA (2016). The second column lists those key intervening changes which have been identified within each LCA since the year 2000. The third column suggests potential action points as a result of the identified changes. Each LCA table is accompanied by 4 maps (contained in Appendix 3) as follows;

i) Aerial ortho-photography map of each LCA dated between 2003 and 2006.
ii) Aerial ortho-photography map of each LCA dated between 2015 and 2017.
iii) LCA base map illustrating single dwelling approvals (Full and Reserved Matter approvals) between March 2002 and March 2017.
iv) LCA base maps illustrating wind turbine and wind farm approvals between March 2002 to March 2017.

**31.0** The start date for approvals shown on each map coincides with the earliest date of available statistics as sourced from the Department of Infrastructure (DFI) i.e. March 2002. Although grant of approval does not always translate as development on the ground in term of residential approvals, it is estimated that between 90 and 95% will have been completed or started within 5 years of being granted[1].

[1] This is based on rural permissions and completions from a sample rural housing monitor carried out in 2003, 2005 and 2006

**32.0** 'Quarry sites in Mid Ulster' Map (Appendix 3) shows the location of quarry sites within the whole district (both extant and expired). In addition to the ortho-photography maps these provide a useful indicator of landscape change over time. The ortho-photography has also been used to identify other changes such as, the extent of commercial forestry cover, wood land areas, peatland areas, farmed and cultivated land and major transport infrastructure. The CORINE database has also been used to support these findings.

**Summary of Key changes**

**33.0** Out of the 22 LCA's relevant to Mid Ulster, it is considered that 11 have experienced key changes since 2000 (see Table 1, Appendix 1)

**34.0** Development pressure from single houses, reached its peak in 2005, prior to the publication of the more restrictive rural planning policy draft PPS 14 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside' and replacement of the 'Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland' (see MUDC Rural Pressure Analysis 2015) . On the ground there is particular evidence of this pressure in parts of Slievemore LCA, West Lough Neagh Shores LCA, Lough Neagh Peatland LCA and the north-eastern part of Dungannon Drumlin and Hills LCA. Although the introduction of PPS 21 has significantly reduced the number of applications and approvals for single dwellings across the district, pressure still remains an issue in these areas.

**35.0** Wind energy development is a relatively new force for change, particularly since the introduction of the more permissive policy contained within PPS 18 Renewable Energy in August 2009. The number of applications received peaked in 2013 prior to the removal of the ROCS incentive scheme. As such, wind energy development is increasingly evident in many parts of the district with Brougher Mountain, Glenshane Slopes, Slieve Gallion and Slievemore LCA's in particular experiencing substantial change in this regard.

**36.0** The construction and improvement of the existing road infrastructure has also been an important force for change within several LCA's in the intervening period. Magherafelt Farmland and Lower Bann Valley LCA's have seen the introduction of the recently completed A31 Magherafelt Bypass and the ongoing A6 Randalstown to Castledawson dualling scheme. The upgrading of the A4 Ballygawley Road has also been a major infrastructural development within Dungannon Drumlins and Hills LCA.

**37.0** As can be seen from the Ortho Maps and the Map 2 (Appendix C)'Quarry sites in Mid Ulster', Carrickmore Hills LCA and the lower regions of Beaghmore Moors and Marsh continue to experience pressure from quarrying development. The removal of peat on a commercial scale and afforestation also remains a force for change in areas such as Lower Bann Valley and Beaghmore Moors and Marsh LCA's respectively.

**38.0 Landcover, Landscape Condition and sensitivity, and intervening changes within each LCA**

A summary of landcover types, landscape condition, landscape sensitivity and intervening changes for each LCA is listed below. This text should be read in conjunction with the tables, maps and photographs contained in Appendices 1-4.

**LCA 16 Brougher Mountain**

Landcover

Only the south eastern portion of this LCA falls within the district. The more elevated areas are characterised by moors and heathland, natural grassland and peat bogs with transition to farmland pastures and some pockets of transitional woodland scrub on the lower ground.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change.

The escarpment slopes and summits are particularly prominent and therefore sensitive to change. The topography, landform and wide visibility of this LCA ensures that it retains a high sensitivity to new development.

Intervening changes

It is considered that this area has experienced substantial change in the form of new wind farm development. Lendrum (20 No. turbines ) and Hunters Hill (8 No Turbines) wind farms form a wind farm cluster which straddle the Mid Ulster and Fermanagh & Omagh District boundary. A further application for 9 No. Turbines (planning reference LA09/2015/0460/F) received approval in early 2018.The potential negative impact of similar development to Lendrum on the prominent slopes and summits of Brougher Mountain is highlighted in the NIRLCA where it states that 'further wind farms would affect perception of this ridge line'. The character of the area has also been eroded in parts by neglect of traditional stone buildings and walls, boundary removal and piecemeal new housing. Peat cutting and drainage for agriculture or forestry have damaged blanket bog. There is also evidence of some land reclamation and agricultural intensification.

**LCA 17 Clogher Valley**

Landcover

This is primarily an area of pasture farmland surrounding the main settlements of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change.

The landscape remains in good condition, with intact field boundaries and a high degree of unity and enclosure.

Intervening changes

Except for some localised impacts of ribbon development and expansion of existing industry, this area has experienced few intrusive developments. The upgrade of the A4 between Ballygawley and Augher is a noticeable change although this has not been on the same scale as the Dungannon to Ballygawley section. Although Clogher Valley is widely visible from surrounding uplands these views are generally long distance, for example from Brougher Mountain, Knockmany Hill and Slieve Beagh. The 'intact field boundaries and high degree of unity and enclosure' (NILCA 2000) help facilitate the integration of development without significant detriment to its overall character.

**LCA 18 Slieve Beagh**

Landcover

This area is characterised by blanket bog on the upper slopes and a combination of moors and heathland, natural grassland, transitional woodland scrub and pasture farmland elsewhere.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change

Its open exposed character, with panoramic views, makes it quite sensitive to change. The particular sensitivity of the area is highlighted in the NIRLCA which states that 'The Clogher Valley is defined by the uplands which surround it, and any development, including quarrying or afforestation, on these uplands is likely to affect the valley character'

Intervening changes

Part of this LCA which lies within Mid Ulster has seen very little landscape change since 2000. The legacy of forestry and peat cutting and abandoned farms however remains evident. The area is largely defined by Slieve Beagh SAC/RAMSAR/ASSI, a blanket bog of national and international importance. Its nature conservation and landscape importance was highlighted under planning refusal M/2006/1754/F for the 'Erection of 9 wind turbines with total tip height of towers and blade up to 112m'.

**LCA 24 South Sperrins**

Landcover

The eastern tip of this LCA falls within Mid Ulster and is characterised by moors and heathlands and natural grassland, with pockets of peatbog, transitional woodland scrub and coniferous forest.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change.

Falling entirely within the boundaries of the Sperrins AONB it is generally of very high scenic quality. The whole area is therefore extremely sensitive to changes which would affect its unspoilt character and the transition from the secluded valley landscape pattern to that of the upland summits. Derelict cottages and farm buildings are commonplace in the marginal farmland landscapes.

Intervening changes

Apart from the introduction and removal of forestry in the upper valley reaches there has been minimal landscape change since 2000.

**LCA 25 Beaghmore Moors and Marsh**

Landcover

Approximately half of this LCA falls within the district, with the majority of it also falling within the Sperrins AONB. Natural grassland dominates the landscape cover although coniferous forest plantations (Davagh) are also a key feature. There is also a healthy combination of peatbog areas, transitional woodland scrub, moors and heathland and open pastures.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change.

The effects of farm abandonment remains evident in the form of derelict buildings, neglected field boundaries and pastures and other relict farmland landscape features,

although this also contributes to the area's wild character. Historically the whole LCA area has experienced pressure from quarrying activities, particularly along the Cookstown-Omagh Road (A505).

Intervening changes
Forested areas such as the extensive coniferous plantations at Davagh have had a localised impact. The trend of quarrying and associated spoil heaps and scars, with minimal restoration, remains evident along its southern fringes and into Carrickmore Hills LCA.

**LCA 29 Sperrin Mountains**
Landcover
The eastern portion of this LCA falls within Mid Ulster and falls entirely within the boundaries of the Sperrins AONB. Corine Landcover maps indicate that the majority of this area is characterised by either natural grassland or moors and heathland.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change.
This is an open, elevated and remote mountain landscape which remains extremely sensitive to change. Even relatively small elements in the landscape, such as electricity pylons or single buildings, can have adverse impacts due to its wide visibility.

Intervening changes
Some new conifer plantations have detracted from the areas scenic quality although overall it has largely escaped man-made influences.

**LCA 36 Binevenagh**
Landcover
A small portion of this LCA falls within Mid Ulster, all of which falls within remote and inaccessible parts of the Sperrins AONB. Outside of the extensive Moydamlaght coniferous forest area, landcover is characterised by a combination of moors and heathland, natural grassland and transitional woodland scrub.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change
The distinctive slope profiles of the escarpment summits are landmarks for miles around and any development or conifer planting in these areas would detract from their scenic quality. Mass planting or new built development could all have a detrimental impact on these highly visible slopes.

Intervening changes
Apart from new conifer plantations, this LCA has largely escaped man-made influences.

**LCA 39 Glenshane Slopes**
Landcover
The majority of this LCA falls within Mid Ulster and within the Sperrins AONB. It is characterised by a variety of landcover types, including natural grassland, moors and heathland, transitional woodland scrub and peatbogs, with general transition to more settled pastoral landscapes further east.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change

This open moorland landscape is extremely sensitive to change since even relatively small elements in the landscape, such as electricity pylons or a single building are visible over long distances. Any new buildings or infrastructure on the upper slopes would be extremely visually intrusive and would threaten its intrinsic qualities of wild remoteness and isolation. The ridgetops and summits are particularly sensitive, as are the slopes of Crockcor, which have striking historic field patterns.

Intervening changes

This LCA seen the introduction of 15 no. turbines (Brockaboy Windfarm - 3 no. falling within the Mid Ulster District Council Area, 12no. falling within Causeway Coast and Glens Distict Council Area.) This development can widely viewed from within Mid Ulster District affecting the overall perception of this dramatic moorland landscape (see photo 1 below).




Photo 1: View of Brockaboy wind farm from Drumbane Road travelling northwest from Swatragh (approximately 5km away)

**LCA 40 Upper Moyola Valley**

Landcover

All of this LCA falls within the district and includes the settlements of Draperstown, Straw, Moneyneaney, Tobermore and Desertmartin. Outside of settlements the area is characterised mainly by grazing and arable farmland with pockets of broad leaved forest such as that at Derrynoyd. Towards the southern and western elevated fringes of the LCA there is general transition towards natural grassland.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change

Most hedgerows and farmland landscape features are in good condition. Farmland on the edges of the moors is of poorer quality. The landscape becomes more sensitive where it falls within the eastern fringes of the Sperrins.

Intervening changes

Parts of this LCA, particularly lands west of Draperstown, continue to experience pressure from one off single dwellings.

**LCA 41 Slieve Gallion**

Landcover

All of this LCA falls within the district and almost entirely within the Sperrins AONB. In the more elevated areas landcover comprises a combination of natural grassland, transitional woodland scrub and moors and heathland, whereas a more pastoral landscape characterises lands closer to Cookstown and Magherafelt. There are also pockets of mineral extraction sites and blocks of coniferous forest such as Iniscarn and Davagh. Lough Fea is also a key feature within this LCA.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change

Landscape quality here is generally good, particularly on the southern and eastern slopes, but deteriorates in the western part of the LCA where quarrying and to a lesser extent forestry are intrusive and have damaged the landscape fabric. The summit and steep slopes of Slieve Gallion are extremely sensitive to change as they are prominent in views throughout the lowlands on the western shores of Lough Neagh. The existing conifer plantations on these slopes (particularly Iniscarn Forest) are highly visible and their blocky forms may detract from the sweeping character of the slopes.

Intervening changes

A key change within this LCA has been the introduction of 6 No. turbines as part of the Crockandun Wind Farm. There are many middle and long distance views of this development from the north, particularly along the Fivemilestraight between Glen and Moneyneaney, Lisnamuck Hill, and Draperstown to Desertmartin roads.

**LCA 42 Cookstown Farmlands**

Landcover

All of this LCA falls within the District. Outside of Cookstown and other smaller settlements, the LCA is characterised mainly by grazing land, interrupted only by pockets of broad-leaved forests. The extensive mineral extraction site (Ballyreagh) south of Cookstown is a key feature in the local landscape.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change

The landscape is in relatively good condition, although there is evidence of hedgerow removal in areas where agricultural operations are undertaken at a more intensive scale. The landscape is less vulnerable to change in areas where hedgerow trees and hedgerows are intact. The most sensitive parts of the landscape are the river corridors and their associated trees and woodlands, the historic designed landscapes and the river floodplains.

Intervening changes

Although there is some evidence of intrusive development near Cookstown and some sand and gravel extraction along main roads, this is not considered to be significant in the context of the LCA's overall character.

**LCA 43 Carrickmore Hills**

Landcover

The eastern half of this LCA falls within the District which is primarily farmland but also contains a high proportion of peatbogs, moors and heathland and natural grassland. Mineral extraction sites are also a recurring feature in the landscape.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change

This is mainly poor marginal farmland which has a rough character and is in relatively poor condition. Many field boundaries are incomplete and there are substantial areas of waste ground. Historically the area has experienced extensive sand and gravel quarrying and is pitted with quarry scars and spoil heaps.

Intervening changes

This area continues to experience extensive sand and gravel quarrying, containing almost a third of the total quarry sites within Mid Ulster (see Map 2, Appendix C). It has also experienced a high degree of pressure from wind energy development in the last 10 years, particularly single turbines. Some localised impacts are evident, for example at Evishanoran Mountain, where a similar trend in wind energy development may adversely affect the perception of this localised ridge (see photo 2 below)




Photo 2: View east from Loughdoo Road towards Evinashoran Mountain

## LCA 44 Slievemore

Landcover

The eastern half of this LCA falls within the district. A combination of peatbogs, natural grassland, forest and transitional woodland scrub characterise the more elevated areas. Outside of these areas the landcover is typified by grazing or arable farmland.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change
This is a marginal upland landscape where farmland features such as field boundaries are often neglected.

Intervening changes
Part of this LCA has been extensively developed for wind energy since 2000 i.e. Slievedivenagh Wind Farm. Similar development on other exposed upland areas within this LCA may have detrimental effects on the character of the whole LCA. There are also some localised impacts of expanding rural industrial operations, including for example the area around Sandvik between Ballygawley and Cabragh (see photo 3 below) and in rural areas outside of Galbally and Cappagh. Peat cutting, forestry and sand and gravel extraction have also affected landscape quality.



Photo 3: Sandvik engineering as viewed on approach from the north along Aghnagar Road.

## LCA 45 Dungannon Drumlin and Hills

Landcover
All of this LCA falls within the district. Outside of the heavily settled northern portion this LCA is predominantly characterised by pastoral and arable farmland.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change
This is generally a well maintained landscape in good condition. Away from the loughs, the undulating landform and relatively dense tree cover ensure that the landscape can accommodate some built development, as long as it is sensitively sited and associated with native planting.

Intervening changes
A key change in the local landscape has been the upgrade of A4 Key Transport Route, including associated slip roads and by-pass links between Dungannon and Ballygawley. These road improvements have the added effect of creating new vantage points bringing other existing infrastructure, such as electricity pylons, into clearer

view. Parts of this LCA have also experienced a high degree of pressure from one off dwellings, although this development has been largely absorbed without significant detriment to its overall landscape character. There are however, some signs of landscape change on the more settled north eastern part, for example in and around Coalisland/Dungannon/Edendork, where urban sprawl and coalescence has emerged as a potential threat.

**LCA 46 Blackwater Valley**

Landcover.

The northern part of this LCA falls within the district where the Blackwater River forms the district boundary. Outside of the settlements of Caledon and Dyan the area is mainly characterised by pastoral farmland. Extensive broadleaved forests at Caledon estate are also a key feature of this LCA.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change

The landscape is in good condition with excellent examples of wetland and parkland which have both ecological and historical value. There are only limited views of this landscape from adjacent higher ground so small changes in the landscape would not necessarily be visible However, the small-scale enclosed character of the valley ensures that large scale or extensive development would be intrusive.

Intervening changes

There have been few intrusive man made influences in this unspoilt rural landscape.

**LCA 47 Loughgall Orchard Belt**

Landcover

A small, western portion of this LCA falls within the district. In comparison to the rest which falls within the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon District this area contains few of the orchards which are its trademark feature. Outside of the settlements of Moy, Killyman and Benburb, the landcover is mainly characterised by pastoral and arable farmland.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change

The landscape condition is relatively good, with a well maintained hedgerow structure. The majority of the area has a rolling landform and good tree cover and is therefore not particularly sensitive to change. The more open land on the lower slopes and low lying areas is the most sensitive.

Intervening changes

There have been few intrusive man made influences in this area in the intervening period.

**LCA 48 West Lough Neagh Shores**

Landcover

All of the LCA falls within the district and apart from forested areas along the fringes of Lough Neagh, the areas is characterised mainly by pastoral farmland.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change

Most farmland is in relatively good condition, and that on the drumlins is particularly well managed. Views across a flat landscape are wide and open and the fringes of Lough Neagh are particularly sensitive to change.

Intervening changes

There are pockets of this LCA which have experienced a high degree of pressure from one-off dwellings. A combination of more relaxed rural planning policy, the better economic climate of the early 2000's and a strong desire to reside in these areas has manifested itself in the form of a high concentration of dwellings in certain areas. Although pressure for one off dwellings still exists today, this is in the context of a more restrictive rural policy PPS 21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside (2010).

**LCA 49 Magherafelt Farmland**

Landcover

All of this LCA falls within the district. Outside of settlements and major roads infrastructure, the area is characterised by pastoral and arable farmland.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change

The most sensitive landscapes within Magherafelt Farmland LCA are often relatively small in scale. The narrow stream corridors, small drumlins and local ridgetops are all important local features which would be extremely vulnerable to the impact of any form of development.

Intervening changes

A key change in the local landscape has been the completion of the A31 Magherafelt bypass, including associated slip roads and by-pass links. These road improvements have the added effect of creating new vantage points bringing other existing infrastructure, such as electricity pylons, into clearer view.

**LCA 50 Moyola Floodplain**

Landcover

All of this LCA falls within the district. Outside of settlements the land cover is predominantly pastoral and arable farmland. Peat bogs are also a key feature in the landscape.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change

Some floodplain pastures are in good condition, others are partly derelict or undermanaged. The remote character of the floodplain landscape is vulnerable to the impact of inappropriate development, particularly if it forms a continuous ribbon along the edge of the floodplain. The wet woodlands and areas of lowland moss are of ecological value and are sensitive to changing patterns of drainage or pollution.

Intervening changes

There has been no key changes to the overall character of this landscape in the intervening period.

**LCA 51 Garvagh Farmland**

Landcover

The southern part of this LCA falls within the district. Outside of the 'discontinued urban fabric' of local settlements the land cover is predominantly one of pastoral and arable farmland, with occasional pockets of natural grassland and moors and heathland.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change
Farmland on the drumlins is in good condition, particularly where drumlins are smaller although many hedgerows are not maintained.

Intervening changes
There has been some loss of landscape quality due to dispersed development and loss of field boundaries, but overall the character of this LCA has largely been unaffected in the intervening period.

**LCA 52 Lower Bann Valley**

Landcover
The majority of this LCA falls within the district. Outside of built up areas such as Creagh there are pockets of peat bog areas dotted throughout a mainly pastoral landscape, and also strips of natural grassland, particularly on low lying lands near lough Beg.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change
The open floodplain landscape to the north of Lough Beg typically contains birch scrub, marshy grassland and heather, but much of the bog has been subjected to extensive peat cutting, contributing to the areas overall landscape character. Lough Neagh and Lough Beg are designated as ASSIs and as an SPA. Lough Neagh is also a Ramsar site in recognition of its importance for birds. The extensive wetland fringes of both loughs are particularly sensitive to change (see photo 4 below). Strong perceptual influences have also emerged in recent years of this area which is increasingly being referred to as 'Heaney Country'. Seamus Heaney's poetry was strongly influenced by his childhood experiences of this area, including the peat bogs which form the subject matter for some of his best-known works.

Intervening changes
Key changes in the local landscape include the completion of the A31 Magherafelt bypass and the ongoing A6 Randalstown to Castledawson dualling scheme, including associated slip roads and by-pass links. This new road infrastructure, has the added effect of creating new vantage points bringing other existing infrastructure, such as electricity pylons, into clearer view. Commercial peat extraction continues to be a force for change in the lower regions whilst sand and gravel extraction has also led to some erosion of local character along the Lough Shore, between Creagh and Toome.



Photo 4: looking east towards Lough Beg and Church Island

## LCA 64 Lough Neagh Peatlands

Landcover

The western portion of this LCA falls within the district. Although primarily a pastoral landscape, the key feature of this LCA is the extensive area of peat bog, particularly on lower lying areas near Lough Neagh.

Landscape condition and sensitivity to change

Landscape condition remains generally good away from urban areas and transport corridors. Hedgerows are often neglected and some fields suffer from invasion by gorse and bramble, with areas of regenerating scrub. The wetland and shoreline landscapes on the edge of Lough Neagh are extremely sensitive and highly valued for their scenic quality and wildlife interest. They fall within the 'Lough Neagh Shores Area of Scenic Quality'. Extensive areas are designated as an ASSI and the area is part of the extensive Lough Neagh/Lough Beg Special Protection Area, which recognises its international significance as a habitat for breeding birds.

Intervening changes

Whilst the legacy of peat extraction in this area remains evident, the key force for change in recent years has been one-off dwellings. Many areas, such as the Washing Bay Road and Aughamullan, have experienced a high degree of development pressure from one off single dwellings, expressed in the form of clusters and ribbons of development. There is also evidence that ongoing gas pipeline laying works is scarring the local landscape, although this is likely to be only temporary.

## Conclusion

**39.0** This report provides a background to Landscape Character Assessment, its use as a tool for decision makers and the relevant regional planning policy framework to protect our landscapes. The Landscape Character Areas (LCA's) of Mid Ulster (as defined in NILCA 2000) have been reviewed and key intervening changes within each LCA have been identified. It is evident that many parts of the district have seen a substantial phase of development since 2000. This change has been primarily influenced by the growth of wind energy, pressure for single dwellings in rural areas, the ongoing demand for mineral extraction, and to a lesser extent afforestation of uplands, the removal of peat on a commercial scale, and infrastructural upgrades.

**40.0** Although many of these changes have had a substantial localised impact, it is considered that the overall character and inherent sensitivities of individual LCA's, as defined in NILCA 2000, have not been significantly affected. There is a risk however, that certain landscapes may be significantly affected if certain types of development are allowed to continue, as facilitated under the current policy regime. Tailored policies and designations in our forthcoming LDP that protect our most vulnerable landscapes can help address this issue. It is considered that such polices and designations should primarily be informed by NILCA 2000, NIRCLA 2016, the SPG on Wind Energy Development in NI landscapes, DAERA NIEA Map viewer, DfC Historic Environment Map Viewer and the CORINE database and associated document 'Landcover of the UK'.

# Appendix 1

# Key changes within Landscape Character Areas (LCA's)

## Table 1 Summary of identified Key landscape Changes

| | Landscape Character Area | Key Changes since 2000 NILCA |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | LCA 16 Brougher Mountain | Wind Farm Development |
| **2** | LCA 17 Clogher Valley | None |
| **3** | LCA 18 Slieve Beagh | None |
| **4** | LCA 24 South Sperrins | None |
| **5** | LCA 25 Beaghmore Moors and Marsh | Quarrying operations along A505. |
| **6** | LCA 29 Sperrin Mountains | None |
| **7** | LCA 36 Binevenagh | None |
| **8** | LCA 39 Glenshane Slopes | Wind Farm Development |
| **9** | LCA 40 Upper Moyola Valley | None |
| **10** | LCA 41 Slieve Gallion | Wind farm Development |
| **11** | LCA 42 Cookstown Farmlands | None |
| **12** | LCA 43 Carrickmore Hills | Wind energy development and quarrying operations |
| **13** | LCA 44 Slievemore | Wind farm Development |
| **14** | LCA 45 Dungannon Drumlin and Hills | A4 Dungannnon to Ballygawley road upgrade. Pockets of high pressure from one off dwellings. |
| **15** | LCA 46 Blackwater Valley | None |
| **16** | LCA 47 Loughgall Orchard Belt | None |
| **17** | LCA 48 West Lough Neagh Shores | High Pressure from one off dwellings |
| **18** | LCA 49 Magherafelt Farmland | A31 Magherafelt bypass. |
| **19** | LCA 50 Moyola Floodplain | None |
| **20** | LCA 51 Garvagh Farmland | None |
| **21** | LCA 52 Lower Bann Valley | A31 Magherafelt Bypass, A6 Upgrade |
| **22** | LCA 52 Lough Neagh Peatlands | High pressure from one off dwellings |

## Table 2: Key landscape characteristics, features and values of each LCA , Key Intervening Changes since 2000 and suggested policy response.

| LCA 16 Brougher Mountain (south eastern portion of this LCA lies within Mid ulster) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Intervening Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'Upland area with deeply undulating slopes and rounded summits'.<br><br>'The escarpment has steep plummeting slopes and long and long views out over the Clogher Valley to the south and east<br><br>'The escarpment slopes and summits are particularly prominent and therefore sensitive to change'.<br><br>'Development on skylines should be avoided'<br><br>'Areas which are most vulnerable to change are the prominent slopes and ridge summits which enclose the drumlin lowlands and local skylines such as the escarpment at Errigal and 'Mad Womans Leap'.<br><br>**RLCA 2016)**<br>'The Clogher Valley is defined by the uplands which surround it, and any development, including quarrying or afforestation, on these uplands is likely to affect the valley character. The wind farm at Lendrum's Bridge, for example, is visible within the valley and further wind farms would affect perception of this ridge line'<br><br>**SPG 2010:**<br>'Blanket peat covers hill tops with extensive turf cuttings in some areas. Plateau surface, particularly in the south, is pitted with small loughs. On the slopes there is a sharp contrast between the fields of improved grassland in the glens and the rough grassland, heath and bog of the hills'<br><br>'Higher ground around Brougher Mountain and Lendrum's Bridge is relatively wild and LCA as a whole is remote and tranquil.'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High-Medium<br><br>**Key features:**<br>Escarpment north of Augher and Clogher within Clogher Valley, ASQ. Aughentaine HGPD and part of Knockmany Forest. | This area has experienced substantial change in the form of new wind farm development. Lendrum (20 No. turbines) and Hunters Hill (8 No Turbines) wind farms now form a wind farm cluster which straddle the Mid Ulster and Fermanagh & Omagh District boundary. | Potential need for greater policy control on high structures to protect upland areas. |

| LCA 17 Clogher Valley (The eastern portion of this LCA falls within Mid Ulster) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Intervening Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'Distinctive, scenic lowland landscape with a secluded verdant character'<br><br>'Farmsteads and cottages are interspersed with numerous archaeological sites. The latter are exceptionally prominent, as the raths, cashels and crannogs are often marked by groups of high trees'<br><br>'In the centre of the valley, the small historic towns of Augher and Clogher are the sites of 17th and 18th Century Demesnes, surrounded by remnants of their designed landscapes'<br><br>'Low lying area is confined between the ridges of Brougher Mountain to the north and Slieve Beagh to the south'<br><br>'Development has been generally well integrated into the existing pattern of small hills, ridges and mature vegetation'<br><br>'The skylines and the characteristically flat open bog areas are best kept open and free of development'.<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'Settlements of Brookeborough, Tempo, Fivemiletown, Clogher, Augher and Ballygawley also have distinctive landscape settings, typically comprising parkland or other historic features such as hilltop raths.'<br><br>'Fine example of an undisturbed fluvio-glacial landscape. Lowland bog, fen, river and rare lake habitats, often ASSIs. Numerous raths, tree rings, crannogs, listed buildings, and small country houses. Marked concentration of Registered Parks, especially in the eastern part of the LCA.'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High<br>**Key features;**<br>Numerous HPGD's (Aughentaine, Blessingbourne, Clogher Park, Favour Royal, Corick House, Daisy Hill, Fardross, Killybrick, Killyfaddy Manor, Martray House and Spur Royal). Numerous ASSIs (Round lough, Lough Fadda, Cullentra Lough, Derrycloony Lough, Flymore Lough. Strategic Transport Corridor, Knockmany Hill and Neolithic Passage Tomb, Clogher Hillfort. | Except for some localised impacts of ribbon development and expansion of existing industry, this area has experienced few intrusive developments. The upgrade of the A4 between Ballygawley and Augher is a noticeable change although this has not been on the same scale as the Dungannon to Ballygawley section. | Potential need for greater policy control and/or tailored guidance in relation to siting design and external appearance of rural buildings. |

| LCA 18 Slieve Beagh (The northern tip of this LCA falls within Mid Ulster) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Intervening Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'Extensive rolling hills, deeply dissected by long river valleys and bounded by a prominent escarpment on the south; the massive rounded summit of Slieve Beagh is dominant, with panoramic views over adjacent lowlands'<br><br>'Includes Slieve Beagh SAC/RAMSAR/ASSI, blanket bog of national and international importance, one of the largest areas of intact blanket bog in NI'<br><br>'Its open exposed character, with panoramic views, makes it quite sensitive to change'.<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'Scenic quality not particularly high, given the issues of landscape condition (ie. abandoned farms, piecemeal afforestation and peat cutting).<br><br>'Prominent ridges to the north and west of Slieve Beagh summit widely visible from the Clogher and Colebrooke Valleys'.<br><br>**SPG 2010 Sensitivity Rating**: High-Medium<br><br>**RLCA 2016**<br>'The Clogher Valley is defined by the uplands which surround it, and any development, including quarrying or afforestation, on these uplands is likely to affect the valley character'<br><br>**Key features:**<br>Slieve Beagh SAC/SPA/RAMSAR/ASSI,numerous other ASSIs including Fardross Stream, Cloghcor lough, Lough McCall, Lough Na Blaney Bane, Roeveagh and Cavan. | Part of this LCA which lies within Mid Ulster has seen very little landscape change since 2000. Although the legacy of forestry and peat cutting remains evident, the area is largely defined by Slieve Beagh SAC/RAMSAR/ASSI, a blanket bog of national and international importance. | Potential need for greater policy control on all development in the more elevated peatland/natural grassland areas to protect scenic quality and nature conservation interests. It is important that the sensitivity of this unique landscape is recognised and protected. |

| LCA 24 South Sperrins (The eastern tip of this LCA falls within the plan area) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Intervening Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'The broad upland ridges of the Sperrins in this area form a backdrop to the valley landscapes'<br><br>'The mountain skyline is open, with upland grasses and rocky screes on the slopes leading to the summits'<br><br>'The river valleys are overlooked by viewpoints from roads on the surrounding Ridgetops'<br><br>'The whole area is extremely sensitive to changes which would affect its unspoilt character and the transition from the secluded valley landscape pattern to that of the upland summits'<br><br>'This landscape would be sensitive to the expansion of commercial forestry and to any large scale development, particularly relating to mineral extraction, which would be prominent in views from the surrounding ridges'<br><br>**SPG**<br>'Area lies within the boundaries of the Sperrin AONB and is generally of very high scenic quality'<br><br>'Upland edges enclose and from prominent skylines above river valleys, especially in the northern half of the LCA'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High<br><br>**Key features**<br>Sperrins AONB**,** Beaghmore ASAI, Crockaghole Wood ASSI, | Falling entirely within the boundaries of the Sperrins AONB it is generally of very high scenic quality. Apart from the introduction and removal of forestry in the upper valley reaches this area has seen minimal landscape change since 2000. | Potential need for greater policy control on all development to protect scenic quality and nature conservation interests. |

| LCA 25 Beaghmore Moors and Marsh (Eastern portion falls within Mid Ulster) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Intervening Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'A relatively elevated, rolling plateau of wide shallow valleys and broad rounded ridges to the south and east of the Sperrin Mountains'<br><br>'An expansive, relatively homogenous landscape'<br><br>'The most significant pressure for change is the large modern sand and gravel quarries, most of which are close to the A505'.<br><br>'Roads crossing the valley marshes are generally straight and raised on embankments, crossing the many streams at stone, hump-backed bridges'<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'At a broad scale the landform is concave, which means that there is generally wide visibility, over long distances, to and from all the surrounding uplands. From within the LCA there are some fine, long views to the hills, notably to Mullaghcarn to the west, Evishbrack to the east and Mullaghturk to the north.'<br><br>'Wide, open, windswept landscape with a strong wilderness character, reinforced by a sense that human occupation was once much more widespread than it is today'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High<br><br>**Key Feature:**<br>Black bog SAC/RAMSAR/ASSI,Beaghmore ASAI, Sperrins AONB Owenkillew River/Upper Ballinderry River (SAC/ASSI's), Teal lough and Slaghfreeden Bogs ASSI, Davagh Forest and An Creágan Visitor Centre | Historically this area has experienced pressure from quarrying activities, particularly along the Cookstown-Omagh A505 road (See Map 2). This trend has continued in the intervening period. Forested areas such as the extensive coniferous plantations at Davagh have also had a localised impact. | Potential need for greater policy control on all development on all development in the more elevated peatland/natural grassland areas to protect scenic quality and natural and built heritage interests.<br><br>Potential need for policy to protect main river corridors from inappropriate development. |

| LCA 29 Sperrin Mountains (Eastern tip falls within Mid Ulster Council) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Intervening Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'The Sperrin Mountains form a spine across the North West and a backdrop to views'<br><br>'The Sperrins have a dramatic, mountainous appearance; the ridges have a broad rounded profile, leading to summits with a rocky pointed silhouette'<br><br>'This open mountain landscape is extremely sensitive to change, as even relatively small elements in the landscape, such as electricity pylons or a single building are visible over long distances.'<br><br>'The most significant pressures for change are from mineral extraction and windfarms on the upper slopes, and built development on the valley slopes'.<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'Summits have extensive areas of bog with heather and rushes, punctuated by small, rounded loughs. The steep slopes leading to the summits are carpeted with close-cropped moorland grasses. The lower valley slopes retain the historic field pattern, with hedgerows, earth banks and stone walls enclosing a diverse patchwork of fields and woodlands'<br><br>'Exceptionally fine mountain and valley views characterise the LCA and are a key attraction to tourists and walkers.'<br><br>'Much of this landscape is extremely wild, remote and inaccessible, particularly towards the eastern end of the ridge. Wildness is more strongly represented in the Sperrin Mountains than in any other area of Northern Ireland except the Mournes.'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High<br><br>**Key Feature:**<br>Sperrins AONB | Apart from new conifer plantations, given its topography, remoteness and inaccessibility, this LCA has largely escaped man-made influences. | Potential need for greater policy control on all development in elevated peatland/natural grassland areas to protect scenic quality and natural conservation interests. |

| LCA 36 Binevenagh (Southern tip falls within Mid Ulster Council) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Intervening Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'It is a high cliff, with a sequence of steep summits which form striking local landmarks with distinctive slope profiles.'<br><br>'This is an expansive moorland landscape, dominated by a large scale mosaic of rough pasture, bog and conifer plantations. Rocky outcrops and patches of stunted scrub contribute to a wild unstructured landscape character'<br><br>'The distinctive slope profiles of the escarpment summits are landmarks for miles and any development in these areas would detract from their scenic quality.'<br><br>'The open upland plateau is also an extremely sensitive landscape where any built development would represent an intrusion'<br><br>'Wind farms and transmission masts may have a detrimental influence, particularly it they are sited close to escarpment summits'.<br><br>'Built development. cannot be accommodated on upper slopes, where it might be visible on local skylines'<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'Large scale mosaic of upland moor and extensive conifer plantations. Textured pattern of moorland grass, heather, rushes, stunted scrub and rocky outcrops.'<br><br>'Wild unstructured landscape character in areas of open moor. More regimented areas of dark conifer plantation tend to reduce the sense of wildness in parts.'<br><br>**SPG (2010) Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High to Medium<br><br>**Key feature**: Sperrins AONB. | A small portion of this LCA falls within Mid Ulster, all of which falls within remote and inaccessible parts of the Sperrins AONB. Apart from new conifer plantations, this LCA has largely escaped man-made influences. | Potential need for greater policy control on all development in elevated peatland/natural grassland areas to protect scenic quality and natural conservation interests. |

| LCA 39 Glenshane Slopes (Majority of LCA falls within Mid Ulster Council) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Intervening Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'The Glenshane Slopes are a relatively small upland area on the eastern fringes of the Sperrins'<br><br>'The highest summit of Carntogher (464m) towers over the Glenshane Pass, forming a dramatic gateway to the Sperrins from the east'<br><br>'This open moorland landscape is extremely sensitive to change since even relatively small elements in the landscape, such as electricity pylons or a single building are visible over long distances'<br><br>'The only built development in this area is on the lower fringes of the uplands; any buildings or infrastructure (such as wind farm developments) on the upper slopes would be extremely visually intrusive and would threaten its intrinsic qualities of wild remoteness and isolation'<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'Very high scenic quality. Dramatic moorland landscape of sweeping slopes and summits'.<br>'Extensive area with a strong wild character on the tops, which are inaccessible by road, with gradual transition to more settled pastoral landscapes to the east.'<br>'Very exposed landscape with very high landscape and visual sensitivity.'<br>'Strong concentrations of archaeological sites at Crockmore, east of Carntogher, and in the northeast corner of the LCA, representing ancient landscapes that have been relatively untouched by change.'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating**: High<br><br>**Key features.**<br>Sperrins AONB, Carn/Glenshane Pass SAC/ASSI, Ballyknock ASSI. | Brockaboy wind farm (15 No. turbines) straddles the Causeway Coast and Glens and Mid Ulster Council boundaries – 3 No. turbines fall within Mid Ulster. This wind farm is widely viewed on approach from the east and south. | Potential need for greater policy control on all development in elevated natural grassland/peatland/moors and heathland areas to protect scenic quality and natural conservation interests. |

| LCA 40 Upper Moyola Valley (Entire LCA falls within Mid Ulster Council) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'The Upper Moyola Valley is the broad basin of the Moyola River on the eastern fringes of the Sperrin Mountains. It is dominated by the peak of Slieve Gallion to the south. The valley is deeply undulating, with steep, rounded slopes dissected by numerous small branching streams. The slopes become steeper and smaller in scale towards the centre of the valley. The surrounding mountains provide a strong sense of enclosure.'<br><br>'The undulating landform and dense woodland towards the valley centre tends to screen any buildings and development. However, there is more evidence of pressure for development in the more accessible areas, close to the straight roads and larger settlements on the higher land. Here development is more prominent and the landscape generally, more sensitive'.<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'Moderately high scenic quality overall, due unspoilt character, variety of landscape feature and attractive upland setting. Upper slopes are of high scenic quality and included in the Sperrin AONB.'<br><br>'Strongly tranquil character away from main roads and some sense of wildness on the upland edges.'<br><br>**SPG (2010) Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High to Medium<br><br>**Key features**<br>Partly within Sperrins AONB, Draperstown Conservation Area, Moyola River. | Part of this LCA which falls within the Sperrins AONB has experienced some degree of pressure from one off dwellings. | Potential need for greater policy control or guidance in relation to siting, design and external appearance of dwellings, particularly within the Sperrins AONB. Houses and other structures, for example, are unlikely to be permitted on the open hill tops, moorlands, heathlands and boglands due to the difficulties of achieving integration. The most suitable location for housing is in the valleys, where it is possible to make benefit from vegetation and traditional farm patterns in order to aid integration and connect with roads and other infrastructure. |

| LCA 41 Slieve Gallion (entire LCA lies within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'Slieve Gallion is a prominent peak on the far eastern fringe of the Sperrins'<br>'It has a distinctive profile, with a steep sided, flatter summit than the surrounding mountains and an uneven slope profile'<br>'Slieve Gallion is a major presence overlooking the drumlin farmland to the south'<br>'The summit and steep slopes of Slieve Gallion are extremely sensitive to change as they are prominent in views throughout the lowlands on the western shores of Lough Neagh'<br>'The scenic quality of Lough Fea is threatened by active sand and gravel quarries'<br>'Any building or additional tall masts on the open slopes or summit of Slieve Gallion would be extremely prominent and potentially intrusive as the mountain is a focus for views from the extensive lowlands to the west of Lough Neagh'<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'Prominent gateway feature for the Sperrins. Hill slopes, particularly those facing south and east, are extremely sensitive and part of the wider landscape setting of Cookstown and Magherafelt. Western outliers, although smaller scale, are also notable skyline features. Bright blue kettle hole lake of Lough Fea provides a visual focus.'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High to Medium<br><br>**Key features**<br>Sperrins AONB**,** Davagh Forest Park**,** includes part of Beaghmore ASAI Teal Lough.Teal Lough SAC, Teal lough and Slaghtfreeden Bogs ASSI, Sruhanleanantawey ASSI. | A key change within this LCA has been the introduction of 6 No. turbines as part of the Crockandun Wind Farm. There are many middle and long distance views of this development from the north, particularly along the Fivemilestraight between Glen and Moneyneaney, Lisnamuck Hill, and Draperstown to Desertmartin Roads. | Potential need for greater policy control on all development in elevated natural grassland/peatland/moors and heathland areas to protect scenic quality and natural conservation interests. |

| LCA 42 Cookstown Farmlands (Entire LCA falls within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'The Drumlin landform is relatively shallow in the Cookstown area, but becomes steeper and more pronounced on the higher land to the west near Beaghmore and towards Slieve Gallion to the north west'.<br>'To the east the landform flattens towards the floodplains of the Ballymullan, Ballinderry and Killymoon Rivers'.<br>'The most sensitive parts of the landscape are the river corridors and their associated trees and woodlands, the historic designed landscapes and the river floodplains'.<br><br>**SPG (2010)**<br>'Inward looking landscape with the drumlins permitting occasional outward views'.<br><br>'The interaction between drumlins, agricultural activity, floodplains and adjacent uplands contributes to a moderate scenic quality in this LCA.'<br><br>'The wooded parkland landscapes and high stone boundary walls of the Killymoon, Loughry and Drum Manor estates are important local landscape features.'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High to Medium<br><br>**Key features**<br>Tullyhogue Fort (Candidate ASAI), Ardboe High Cross<br>Upper Ballinderry River SAC/ASSI, Ballysudden ASSI, Knockadoo ASSI.Springhill, lissan, Drum Manor Forest Park, Killymoon Castle, Loughry, Tullylagan, Stewart Hall, Drumcairne and Pomeroy House HPGD's. | Although there is some evidence of intrusive development near Cookstown and some sand and gravel extraction along main roads this is not considered to be significant in the context of the LCA's overall character. | Potential need for introduction of policy to protect main river corridors from inappropriate development. |

| LCA 43 Carrickmore Hills (Eastern half of LCA falls within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'The Carrickmore Hills are a distinctive upland landscape to the south of the Sperrins'.<br><br>'The summits have a more irregular, rocky landform and crinkled silhouettes which are landmarks for miles around'.<br><br>'The most obvious current pressure is from sand and gravel quarries; The area is pitted with quarry scars and spoil heaps'.<br><br>'There are opportunities to restore some of the quarries, maximising their ecological value and removing fly tipping or derelict plant'.<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'Poor marginal farmland has a rough character and is in relatively poor condition. Many field boundaries incomplete.'<br><br>'Irregular rocky outcrops. Complex series of glacio-fluvial features. Varied and unpredictable pattern of loughs, marsh, rushy pastures, gorse hedgerows, granite boulders and earth banks. Raised bog and numerous rounded loughs'.<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High to Medium<br><br>**RLCA 2016**<br>Slievemore falls within Carrickmore plateau and Pomeroy Hills RLCA 12 'Extensive mineral workings are already a feature of this area, and there is likely to be more pressure to extract glacial sands and gravels, as well as the hard rock resource. Further quarries could begin to erode the qualities of tranquillity and remoteness within this landscape'<br><br>**Key feature**<br>Upper Balinderry River ASSI and SAC, Lough Doo ASSI, Lime Hill Farm ASSI, Bardehessiagh ASSI, Creggandevesky Archaeological trail, Wellbrook Beetling Mill (National Trust). | This area continues to experience extensive sand and gravel quarrying, containing almost a third of the total quarry sites within Mid Ulster. It has also experienced a high degree of pressure from wind energy development in the last 10 years, particularly single turbines. Some localised impacts are evident, for example at Evishanoran Mountain.<br><br>Wind farm development located across the district boundary within Fermanagh and Omagh Council area also affects the overall perception of this landscape. | Consider the need for greater policy control. |

| LCA 44 Slievemore (eastern half of this LCA falls within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'Slievemore is the summit of the sandstone ridges which dominate the landscape of south east Tyrone'<br><br>'There are long views from the ridge top summits over the surrounding lowlands'<br><br>''Quarries and derelict sand and gravel workings are relatively common elements, and upstanding transmission masts are very prominent in views from the surrounding lowlands'<br><br>'Large scale forestry and mineral extraction are significant features'<br><br>'The open rounded summits are sensitive to change, but the more complex, undulating topography of the lower slopes could accommodate development'.<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'Scenic quality is unexceptional on the whole. There is no AONB or ASQ designations within this LCA'.<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** Medium to low<br><br>**RLCA 2016**<br>Slievemore falls within Carrickmore plateau and Pomeroy Hills RLCA 12 'Extensive mineral workings are already a feature of this area, and there is likely to be more pressure to extract glacial sands and gravels, as well as the hard rock resource. Further quarries could begin to erode the qualities of tranquillity and remoteness within this landscape'.<br><br>**Key Features**<br>Tanderagee ASSI, Lurgylea ASSI, Glenmore Wood ASSI, Pomeroy Forest HGPD. | Southern parts of this LCA have been extensively developed for wind energy since 2000. There are also some localised impacts of expanding rural industrial operations, including for example the area around Sandvik between Ballygawley and Cabragh and in rural areas outside of Galbally and Cappagh settlements.<br><br>Wind farm development, although located across the district boundary within Fermanagh and Omagh Council area, can be viewed from within Mid Ulster, affecting the overall perception of this landscape. | Consider the need for greater policy control. |

| LCA 45 Dungannon Drumlin and Hills (All of this LCA falls within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'This is a drumlin landscape with an unusually large scale landform'<br><br>**'**Areas with a relatively shallow landform are most vulnerable'<br><br>'The landscape has a sheltered and enclosed character'<br><br>'To the north most development pressure is located around the edges of the loughs and near the motorway'<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'The scenic quality of this area is quite high with a secretive and ancient character, the steep hills providing more dramatic scenic quality and contrasting with the loughs.'<br><br>'Much of the area is unspoilt by overt human influence. However there are isolated features such as masts and small quarries plus an electricity transmission line in the north of the area. Outskirts of Dungannon have been affected by intrusive industrial, commercial and housing development.'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High to Medium<br><br>**Key features.**<br>Dungannon (Northland) Conservation Area, Clogher Valley ASQ, Parkanaur HPGD, Martray House HPGD, Drumcairne HPGD, Stewart Hall, Manor House HPGD, Manor House Benburb, Black Lough ASSI, Rehaghy Wood ASSI, Drummond Quarry ASSI, Benburb ASSI, Benburb-Miltown ASSI. | Large parts of this LCA have experienced a high degree of pressure from one off dwellings. The large-scale drumlin landscape has largely been able to absorb this development without detriment to its overall character.<br><br>A key change in the local landscape has been the upgrade of the Ballygawley Road, including associated slip roads and by-pass links. These road improvements have the added effect of creating new vantage points bringing other existing infrastructure, such as electricity pylons, into clearer view. | None identified. Roads infrastructural works are subject to a separate regulatory process |

| LCA 46 Blackwater Valley (Northern Portion falls within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'Drumlins enclose the valley and tortuous hedge banked lanes allow limited views, creating a secluded landscape'.<br><br>'The landscape is in good condition with excellent examples of wetland and parkland which have both ecological and historical value'.<br><br>'There are only limited views of this landscape from adjacent higher ground so small changes in the landscape would not necessarily be visible'.<br><br>'Small-scale enclosed character of the valley ensures that large scale or extensive development would be intrusive'<br><br>'Built development along the roads at the lower edges of the floodplain would be out of character with the existing landscape pattern'<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'This is a rural, peaceful, undisturbed and unspoilt valley with outstanding scenic qualities'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High<br><br>**Key features**<br>Caledon Conservation Area, Blackwater River/Ulster Canal, Blackwater Valley ASQ, Ravella HPGD, Caledon HGPD, Tynan Abbey HGPD (Part of), Caledon and Tynan ASSI, Knocknacloy ASSI, 2 LLPA's, Ulster Way traverses southern part of LCA, US President Grant home. | There have been few intrusive man made influences in this unspoilt rural landscape. | Potential need for introduction of policy to protect main river corridor from inappropriate development. |

| LCA 47 Loughgall Orchard Belt (Western portion falls within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'This LCA is characterised by low rolling drumlins which fall towards Lough Neagh to the north and to the slopes of the Blackwater valley to the west.'<br><br>'The majority of the landform has good tree cover and is therefore not particularly sensitive to change. The more open land on the lower slopes and low lying areas is the most sensitive'.<br><br>'This is a varied landscape, with a mix of scales and landscape patterns. In some areas there are pleasant long views across mixed farmland to farmsteads, churches and woodlots, but elsewhere, views are more contained by narrow tree-lined roads or regenerating scrub'.<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'This is a well-maintained and diverse landscape. The characteristic orchards, parklands, wetlands and traditional buildings contribute to a relatively high scenic quality although there are no scenic designations as such'<br><br>'This LCA does not have a strong wildness character. It has an active, agricultural landscape which is not particularly tranquil sense'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High to Medium<br><br>**Key Features**<br>Moy Conservation Area, Benburb ASSI, Benburb HPGD. | There have been few intrusive man made influences in this area in the intervening period. | Potential need for introduction of policy to protect main river corridor from inappropriate development. |

| LCA 48 West Lough Neagh Shores (all of LCA falls within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'The land is relatively low lying, with a transition from shallow drumlins on the edges of the floodplains, to extensive flat farmland on the fringes of Lough Neagh'<br><br>'Traditionally, larger properties and settlement clusters were sited on higher land, with cottages dispersed in a linear pattern along embanked floodplain roads. In recent years this pattern has become increasingly overwhelmed by ribbon development'.<br><br>'The fringes of lough Neagh or particularly sensitive to change. This area is important for its scenic, ecological and heritage value'<br><br>'New development would be prominent in the relatively open landscapes'.<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'This LCA has relatively high scenic quality in parts. The immediate lough fringe is part of the Lough Neagh Fringe ASQ.'<br><br>'Close to the lough shore there might be some sense of wildness, reflecting the vast expanse of the lough.'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** Medium<br><br>**Key feature:**<br>Lough Neagh Ramsar/SPA/SAC/ASSI/ASQ, Brookend ASSI, Ardboe Cross, Salters Castle, Ballyronan Marina and Wooded Estate. | Parts of this LCA, such as that to the east of Ballinderry, have experienced a high degree of pressure from one off dwellings. This has largely been facilitated in the past by the more relaxed Planning Strategy for Rural NI and, although the rate of development has significantly reduced since the introduction of PPS21, pressures remain. | Potential need for greater policy control in respect of all development on Lough Neagh Fringes to protect landscape and amenity value.<br><br>Consider the need for greater policy control and/or tailored guidance in relation to siting design and external appearance of rural buildings. |

| LCA 49 Magherafelt Farmland (all of LCA falls within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>Magherafelt Farmland is a relatively elevated area adjacent to the West Lough Neagh Shores.<br><br>'Most roads are extremely straight and some are un-enclosed. There are long views to the Slieve Gallion to the west'<br><br>'There is relatively little ribbon development'<br><br>'The most sensitive landscapes are often relatively small in scale. For instance, the narrow stream corridors, small drumlins (such as Killowen Hill) and local ridgetops (such as Mullaghby Hill) are all important local features which would be extremely vulnerable to the impact of any form of development'<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'The drumlin landform is generally not as well-defined as in the surrounding lowlands, but individual small drumlins are important landscape features which are often up-standing from the farmland plateau. The higher ground is separated from the Sperrins to the west by a north-south river valley.'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** Medium<br><br>**Key feature**:<br>Moneymore Conservation Area, Spring Hill House/Woodland Estate. | A key change in the local landscape has been the completion of the A31 Magherafelt bypass, including associated slip roads and by-pass links. These road improvements have the added effect of creating new vantage points bringing other existing infrastructure, such as electricity pylons, into clearer view. | None identified. Roads Infrastructural works are subject to a separate regulatory process. |

| LCA 50 Moyola Floodplain (all of LCA falls within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'Moyola Floodplain is dominated by the low-lying floodplain landscape of the Moyola River to the south of Maghera'<br><br>'The land rises to the east, where drumlins predominate and the landscape is more settled, with clustered villages and belts of woodland.'<br><br>'The remote character of the floodplain landscape is vulnerable to the impact of inappropriate development, particularly if it forms a continuous ribbon along the edge of the floodplain.'<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'Most skylines lie outside the LCA and belong to the Sperrin Mountains and Slieve Gallion. No prominent internal skylines. The open valley floor meadows form an important setting to the town of Maghera. Village church towers form local landmarks.'<br><br>'Scenic quality is unremarkable and there are no landscape designations within this LCA'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High to Medium<br><br>**Key features**<br>Ballynahone Bog RAMSAR, SAC, ASSI and NNR<br>Curran Bog SAC/ASSI. | No key intervening changes. | Potential need for introduction of policy to protect main river corridors from inappropriate development. |

| LCA 51 Garvagh Farmland (Southern portion falls within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'The area is dominated by rounded drumlins, with the characteristic smooth, elliptical form.'<br><br>'The dense tree cover, together with the undulating drumlin landform, gives this landscape an enclosed character, although there are some elevated views from local roads'<br><br>'There are no long views and the consistent size and shape of drumlins can be disorientating'<br><br>'The area is generally under pressure for new built development, particularly close to Maghera'<br><br>'Development can be accommodated within this undulating well treed landscape'<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'Rounded drumlin tops form local skylines. This landscape provides an important part of the setting to the Sperrin AONB, the hills forming a skyline to the west. This LCA also forms a setting to the towns of Maghera and Garvagh. The church at Aghadowey forms an important landmark.'<br><br>**SPG 2010 Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High to Medium<br><br>**Key features**<br>Ampertaine House HPGD. | No key intervening changes. | None identified |

| LCA 52 Lower Bann Valley (Majority falls within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000.**<br>'The land is relatively low-lying, with a transition from shallow drumlins on the edges of the floodplains, to extensive flat pastures, bog and wet woodlands on the fringes of Lough Neagh and Lough Beg.'<br><br>'Stretches of the rivers are enclosed by embankments and are often hidden from view by extensive woodlands on wet, low-lying land'<br><br>'The landscape is generally secluded, with a prominent network of hedgerows containing numerous hedgerow trees. An exception is the low lying flood plain to the north of Lough Beg, where the landscape is relatively open, giving long views to the broader ridges enclosing the flood plain'<br><br>'The fringes of Lough Beg are particularly remote, with extensive woodland and reed beds hiding the shores from view'<br><br>'The spire of the of the church on Church island stands out as a landmark above the low woodland in a deeply tranquil and remote wetland fringe landscape'<br><br>'In recent years, the pattern (along the embanked floodplain roads) has become increasingly overwhelmed by ribbon development'<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'The churches on Church Island, Lough Beg, and in the historic towns act as local landmark features. This LCA forms an important river setting to the towns of Kilrea, Castledawson and Bellaghy and to Lough Beg and Lough Neagh.'<br><br>'Secluded character over much of the area. The fringes of Lough Beg are particularly remote and tranquil.'<br><br>**SPG (2010) Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High<br><br>**Key features**<br>Lough Neagh/Lough Beag Ramsar/SPA/ASSI, Wolf Island Bog SAC/ASSI, Dead Island bog SAC/ASSI, Moneystaghan Bog ASSI, Ballymacombs More ASSI, Lough Beg NNR, Moyola Park HGPD, Ballyscullion House HGPD, Portglenone House HGPD, Church Island Spire, Shemys Island Crannog. | Key changes in the local landscape include the completion of the A31 Magherafelt bypass and the ongoing A6 Randalstown to Castledawson dualling scheme, including associated slip roads and by-pass links. Commercial peat extraction continues to be a force for change in the lower regions whilst sand and gravel extraction has also led to some erosion of local character along the Lough Shore, between Creagh and Toome. Strong perceptual influences have also emerged in recent years of this area which is increasingly being referred to as 'Heaney Country'. | Potential need for greater policy control in respect of all development near fringes of Lough Beg and Lough Neagh. |

| LCA 64 Lough Neagh Peatlands (Western tip falls within MUDC) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key landscape characteristics, features and values.** | **Key Changes to LCA since 2000** | **Action point** |
| **NILCA 2000**<br>'Much of the area has been previously worked for peat and has been extensively modified through extraction'<br><br>'The landscape is strongly influenced by the traditional road pattern, which mirrors that of the peat workings'<br><br>'This is a varied landscape with superb indented shoreline landscapes and a valuable sense of isolation and tranquillity'<br><br>'The wetland and shoreline landscapes on the edge of Lough Neagh are extremely sensitive and highly valued for their scenic quality and wildlife interest'.<br><br>'Open, flat areas are particularly sensitive to the visual impact of vertical elements.'<br><br>'Extensive areas are designated as ASSI and the area is part of the Lough Neagh/Lough Beg Special Protection Area, which recognises its international significance for breeding birds'<br><br>**SPG 2010**<br>'Generally good landscape quality away from urban areas and transport corridors. Hedgerows are often neglected and some fields suffer from invasion by gorse and bramble, with areas of regenerating scrub.'<br><br>'The wetland and shoreline landscapes on the edge of Lough Neagh are highly valued for their scenic quality and the areas close to the lough lie within the Lough Neagh Shores ASQ.'<br><br>**SPG (2010) Wind Energy Sensitivity Rating:** High<br><br>**Key feature**: Lough Neagh RAMSAR/SPA/ASSI/ASQ, Drumcrow ASSI. | Whilst the legacy of peat extraction in this area remains evident, the key force for change in recent years has been one-off dwellings. Many areas, such as the Washing Bay Road and Aughamullan, have experienced a high degree of development pressure from one off single dwellings, expressed in the form of clusters and ribbons of development. | Potential need for greater policy control in respect of all development near lough Neagh fringes.<br><br>Consider the need for greater policy control and/or tailored guidance in relation to siting design and external appearance of rural buildings.<br><br>Potential need to contain sprawling residential of development at Aughamullan. |

# Appendix 2

1. **Aerial ortho-photography maps of each LCA dated 2003 - 2006.**

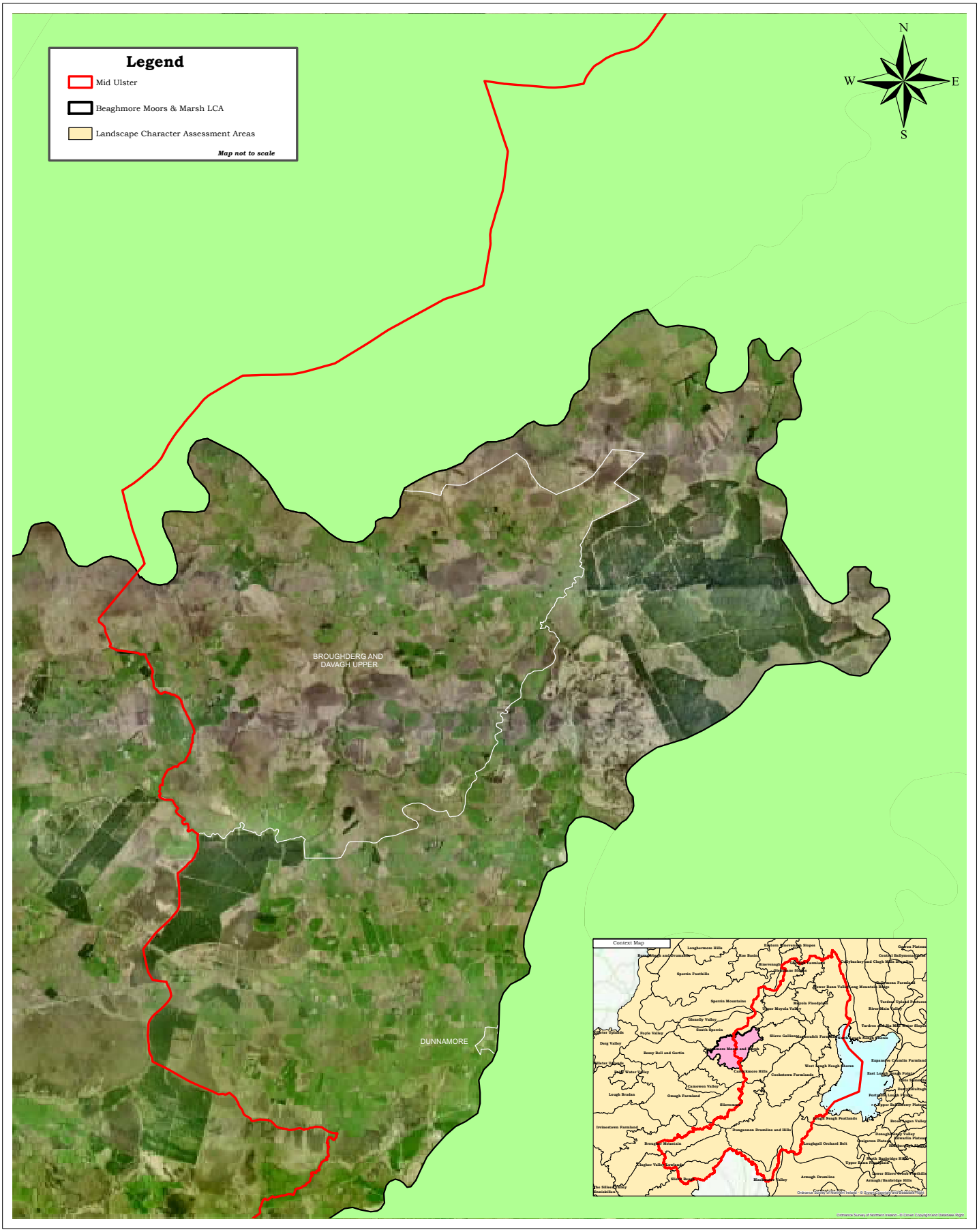
2. **Aerial ortho-photography maps of each LCA dated 2015-2017**

3. **LCA base maps illustrating single dwelling approvals (Full and Reserved Matter approvals) between March 2002 and March 2017.**

4. **LCA base maps illustrating wind turbine and wind farm approvals between March 2002 and March 2017.**

# Beaghmore Moors & Marsh LCA

## Orthophotograhy Date 11 May 2006




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Author: John Paul Devlin

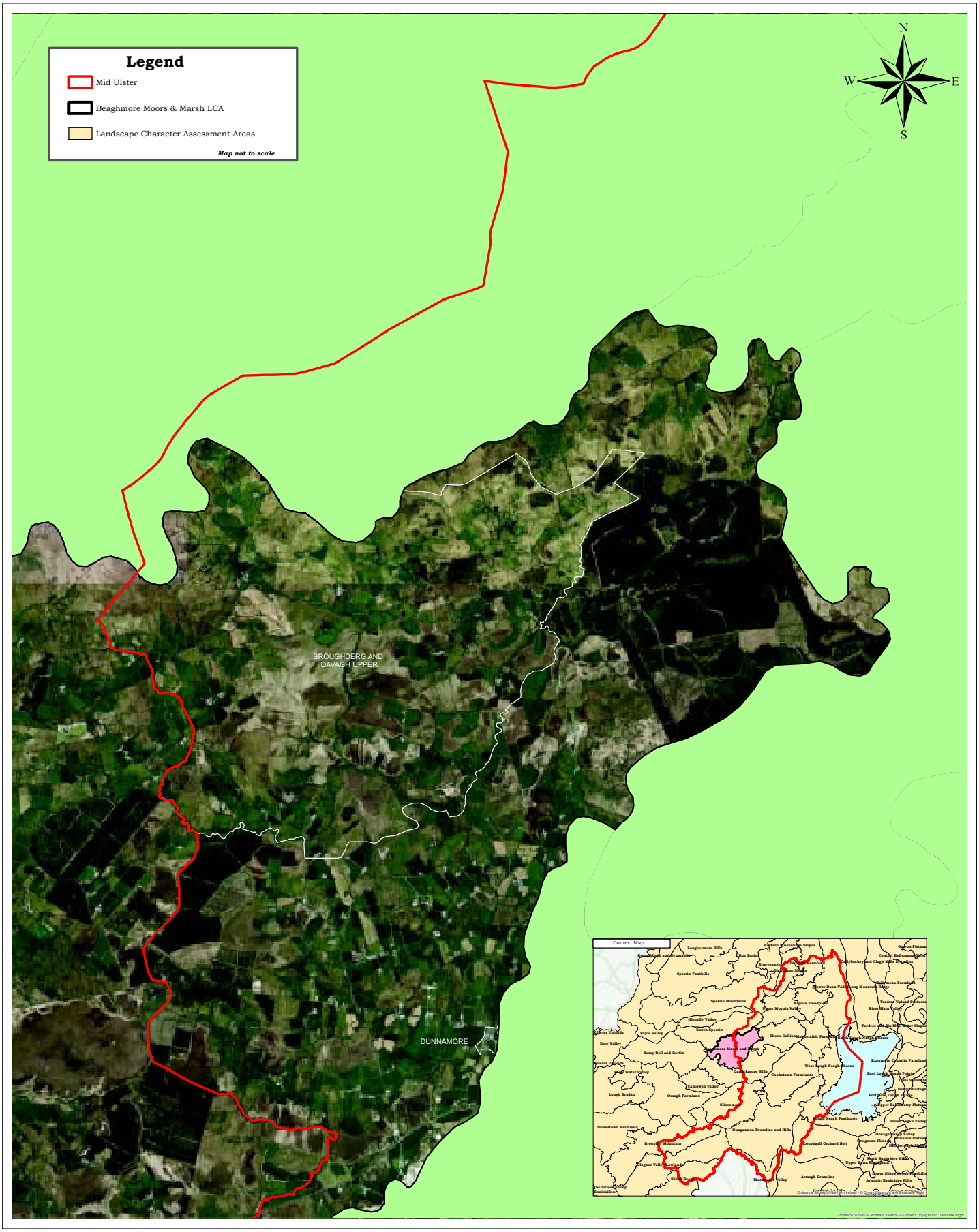
Date:12 March 2018

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# Beaghmore Moors & Marsh LCA

## Orthophotograhy Date 11 June 2015 to 25 March 2015




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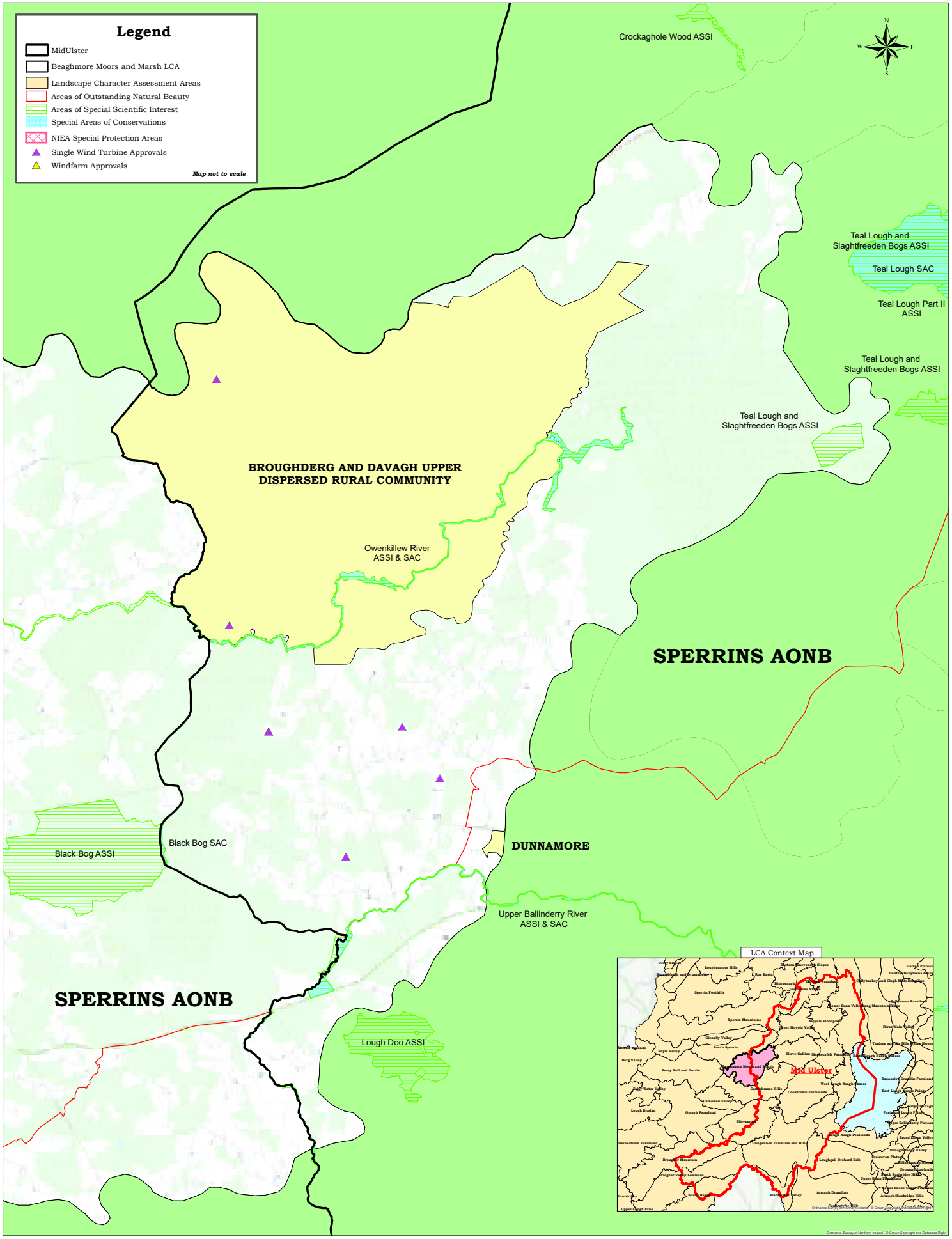
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# Beaghmore Moors and Marsh

## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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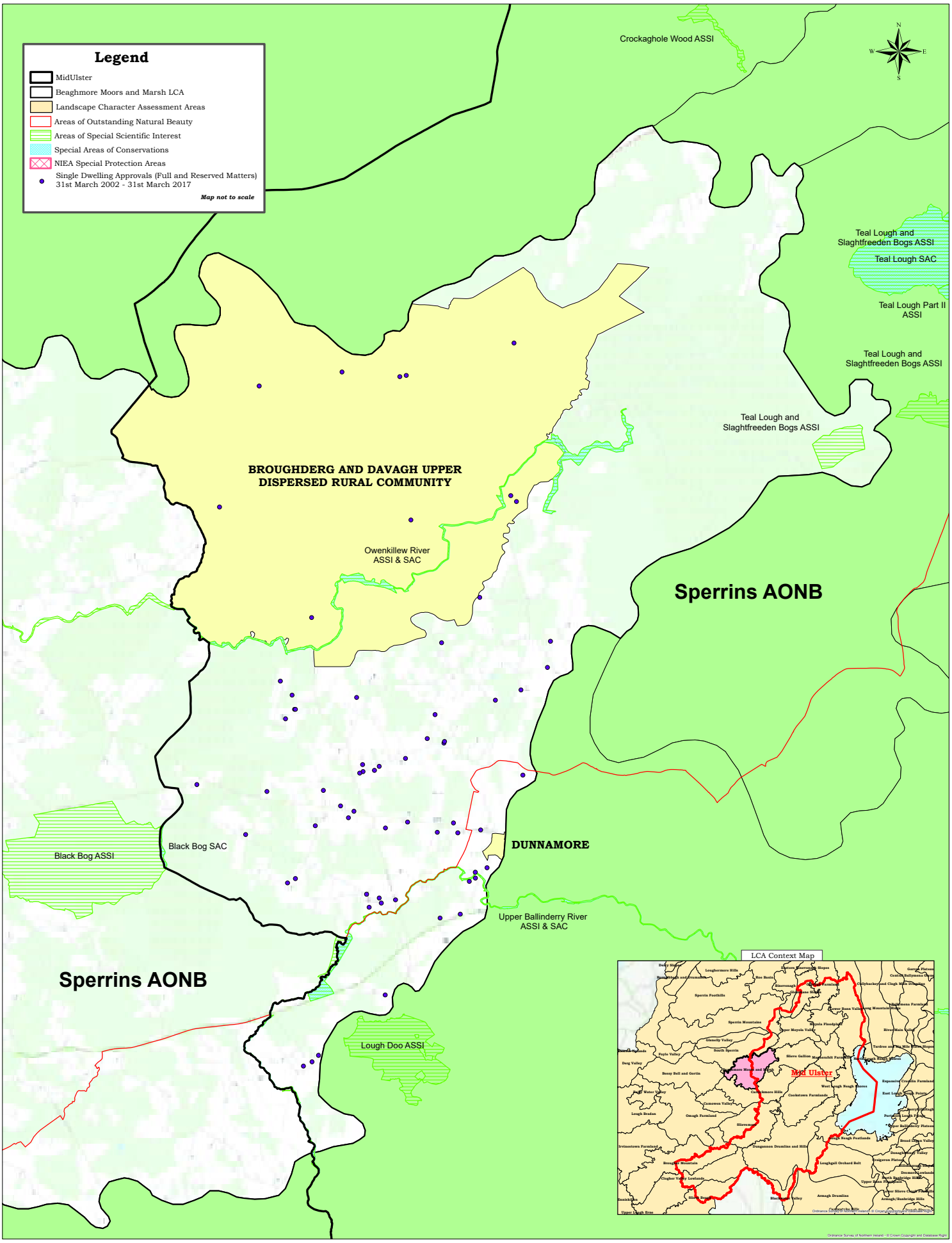
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# Beaghmore Moors and Marsh

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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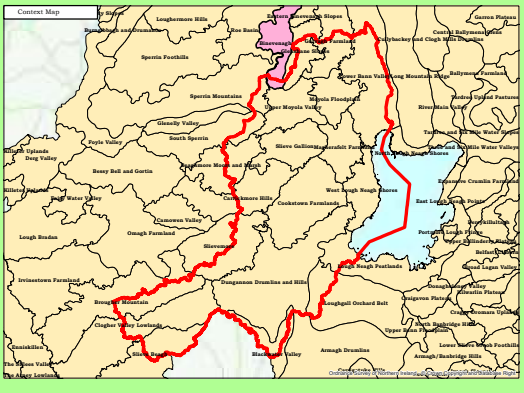
# Binevenagh LCA
## Orthophotograhy Date Range 02 October 2003 to 11 May 2006

**Legend**

- Mid Ulster
- Binevenagh LCA
- Landscape Character Assessment Areas

*Map not to scale*

N
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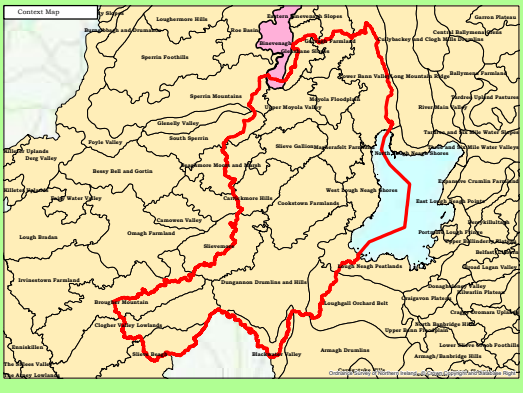
# Binevenagh LCA
## Orthophotograhy Date 22 April 2015

**Legend**

- Mid Ulster
- Binevenagh LCA
- Landscape Character Assessment Areas

*Map not to scale*

E




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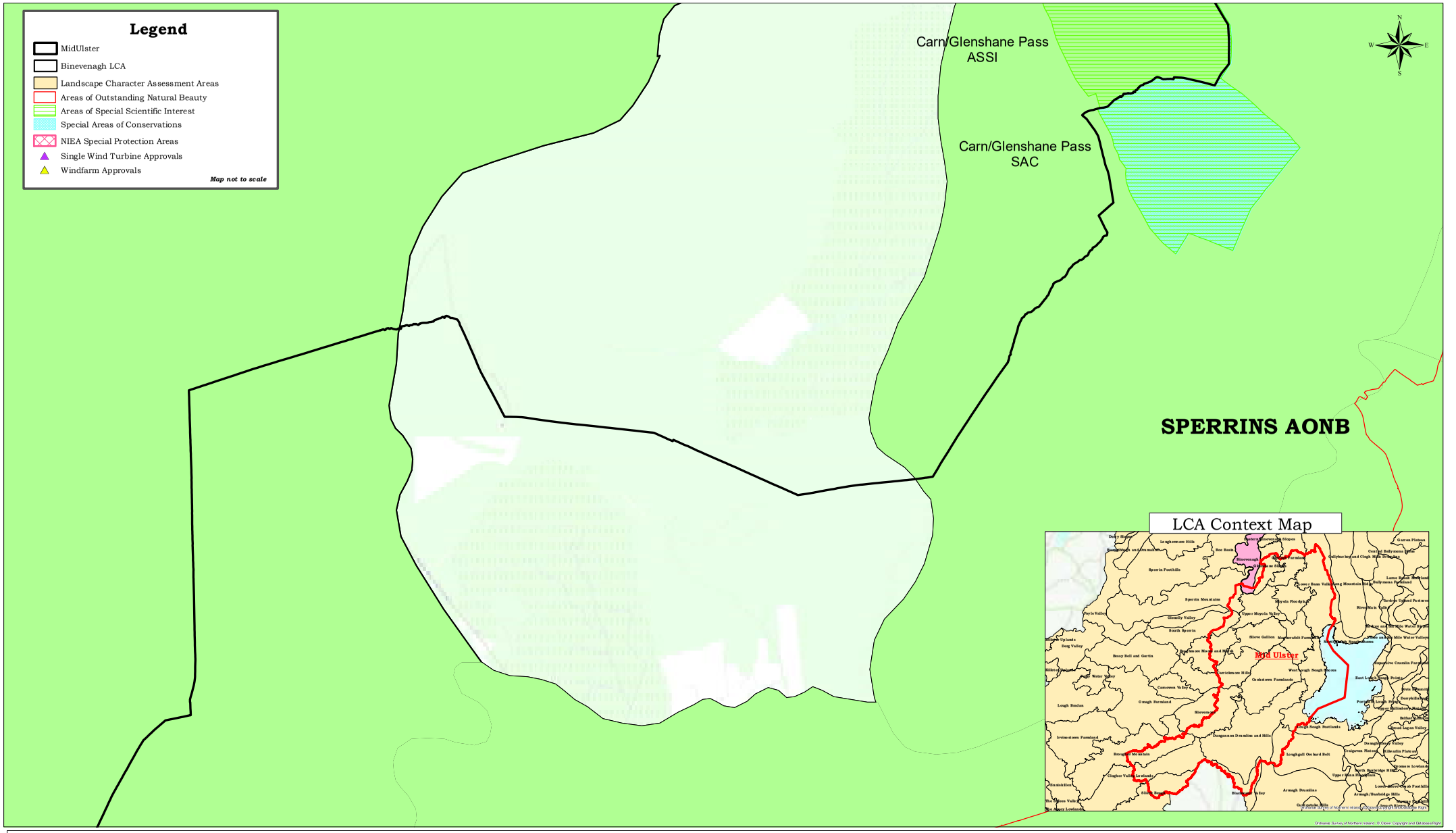
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# Binevenagh

## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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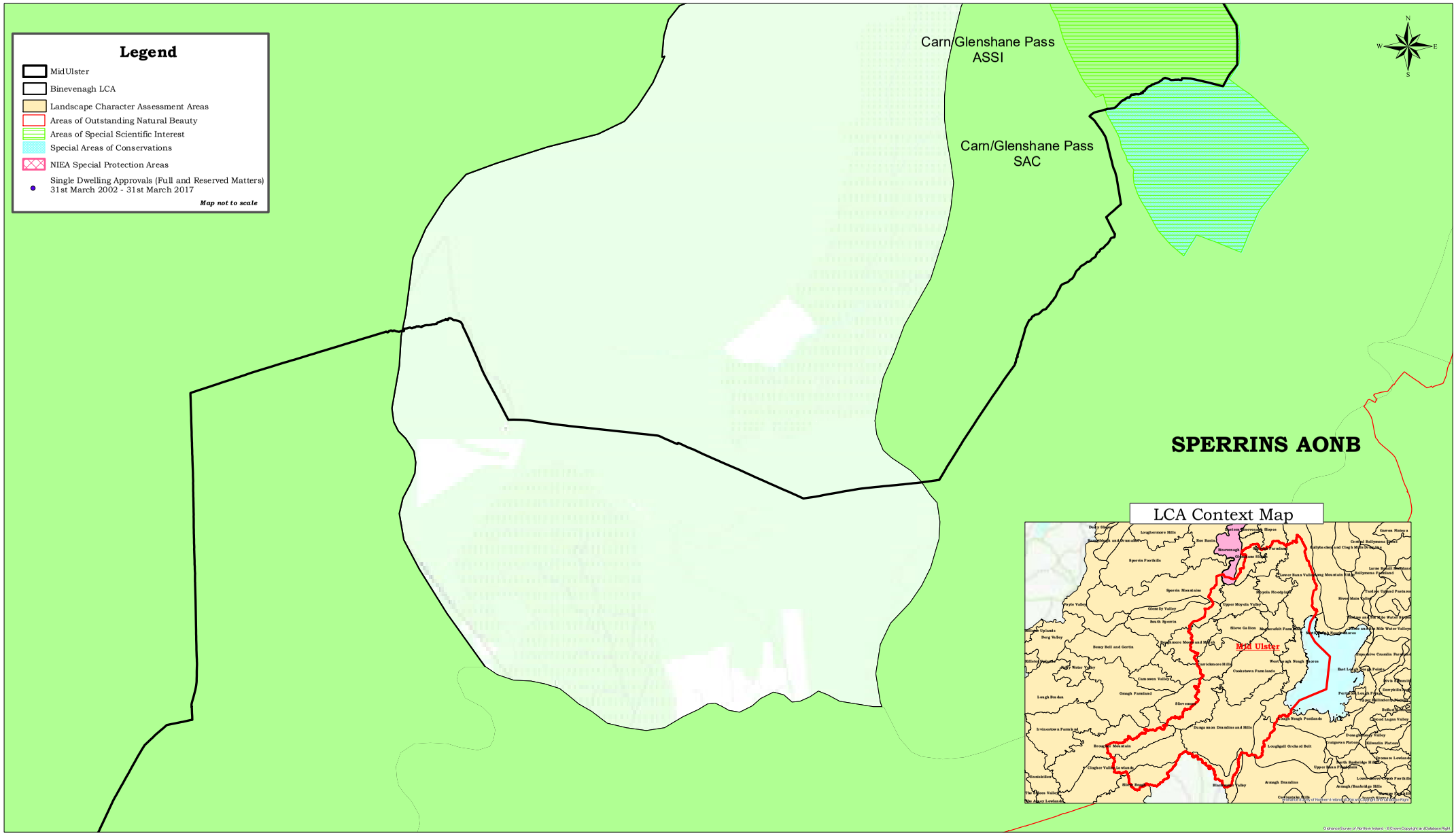
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# Binevenagh

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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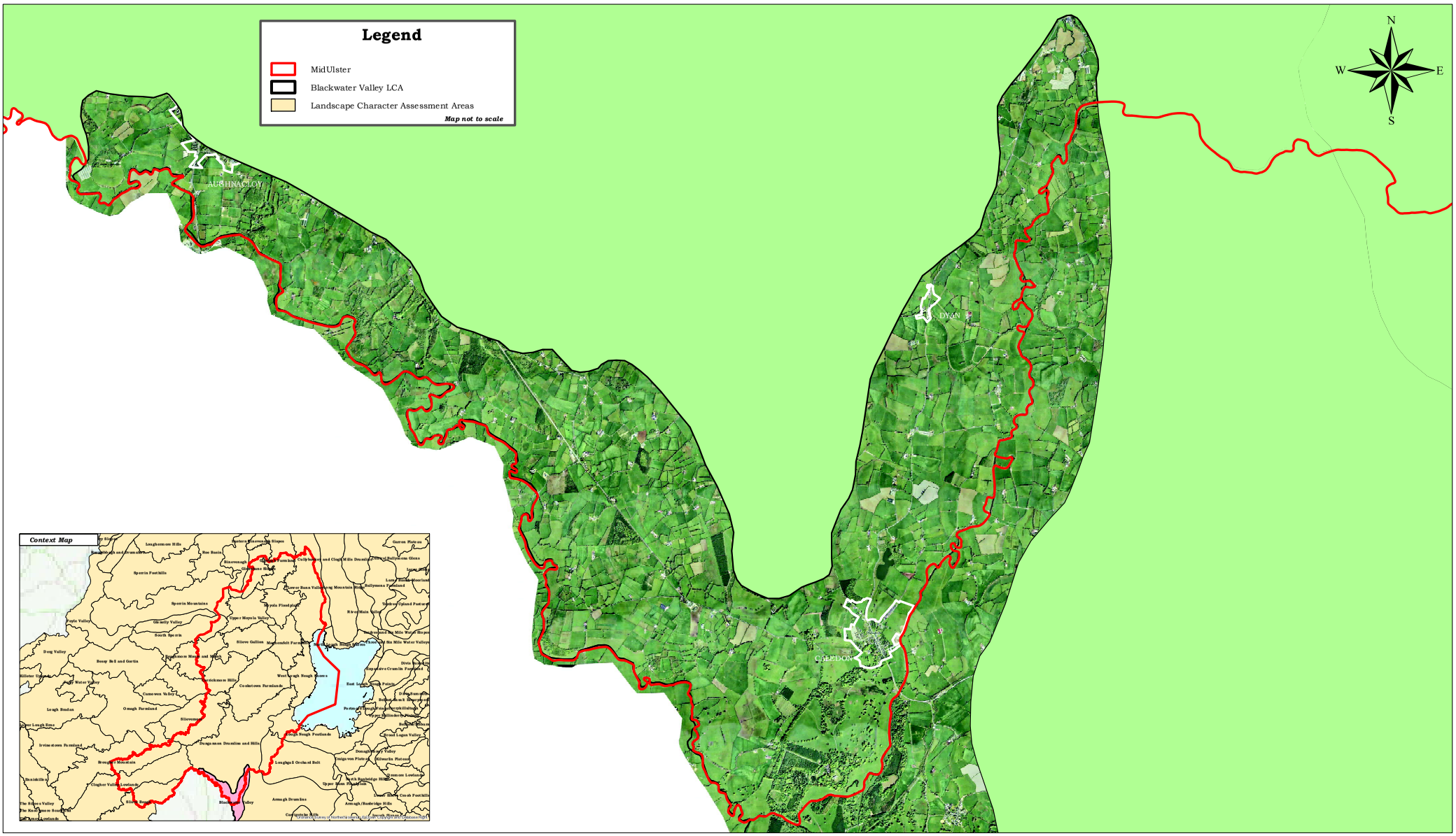
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# Blackwater Valley LCA

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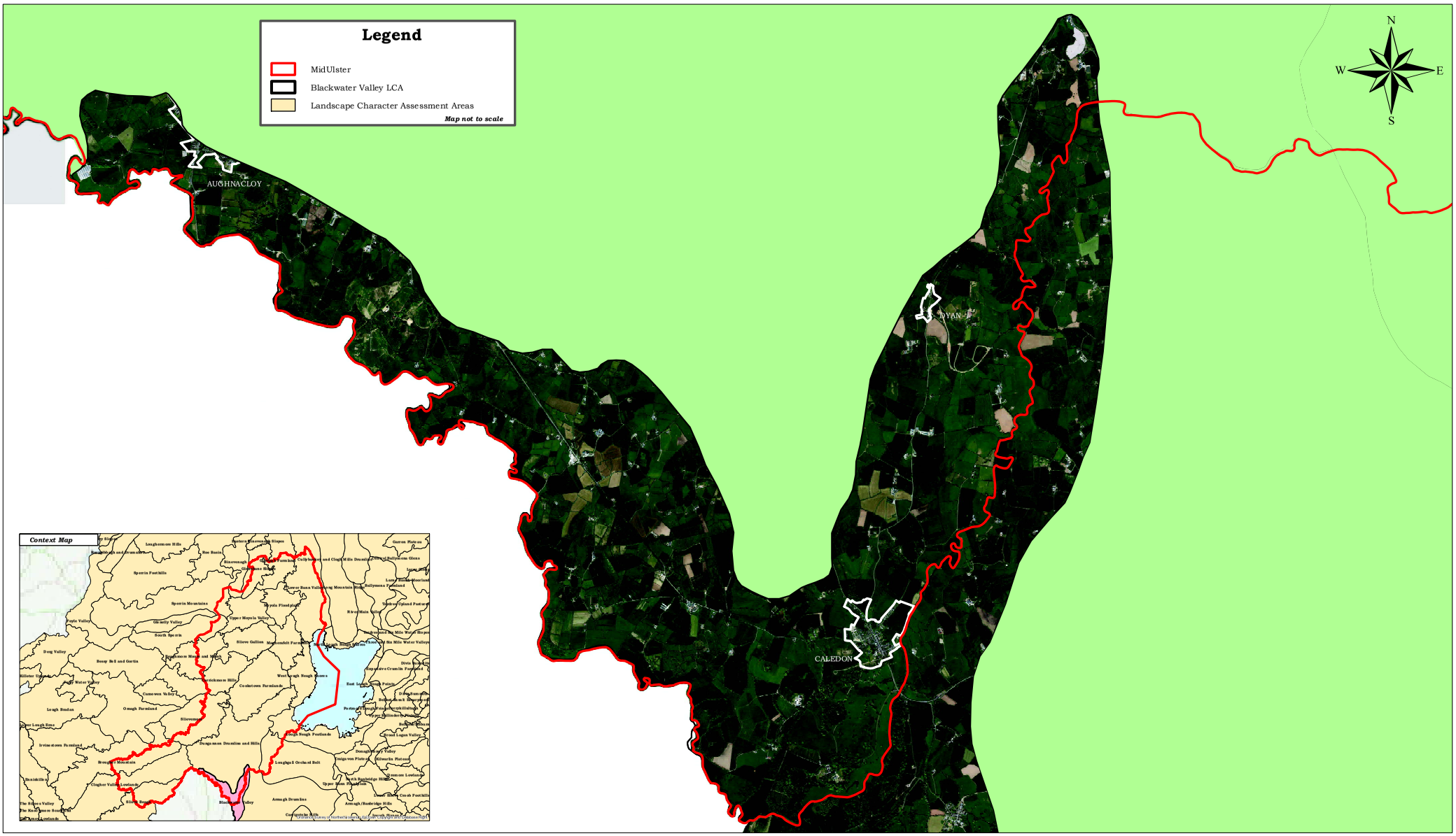
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# Blackwater Valley LCA

Orthophotograhy dates 13 May 2016




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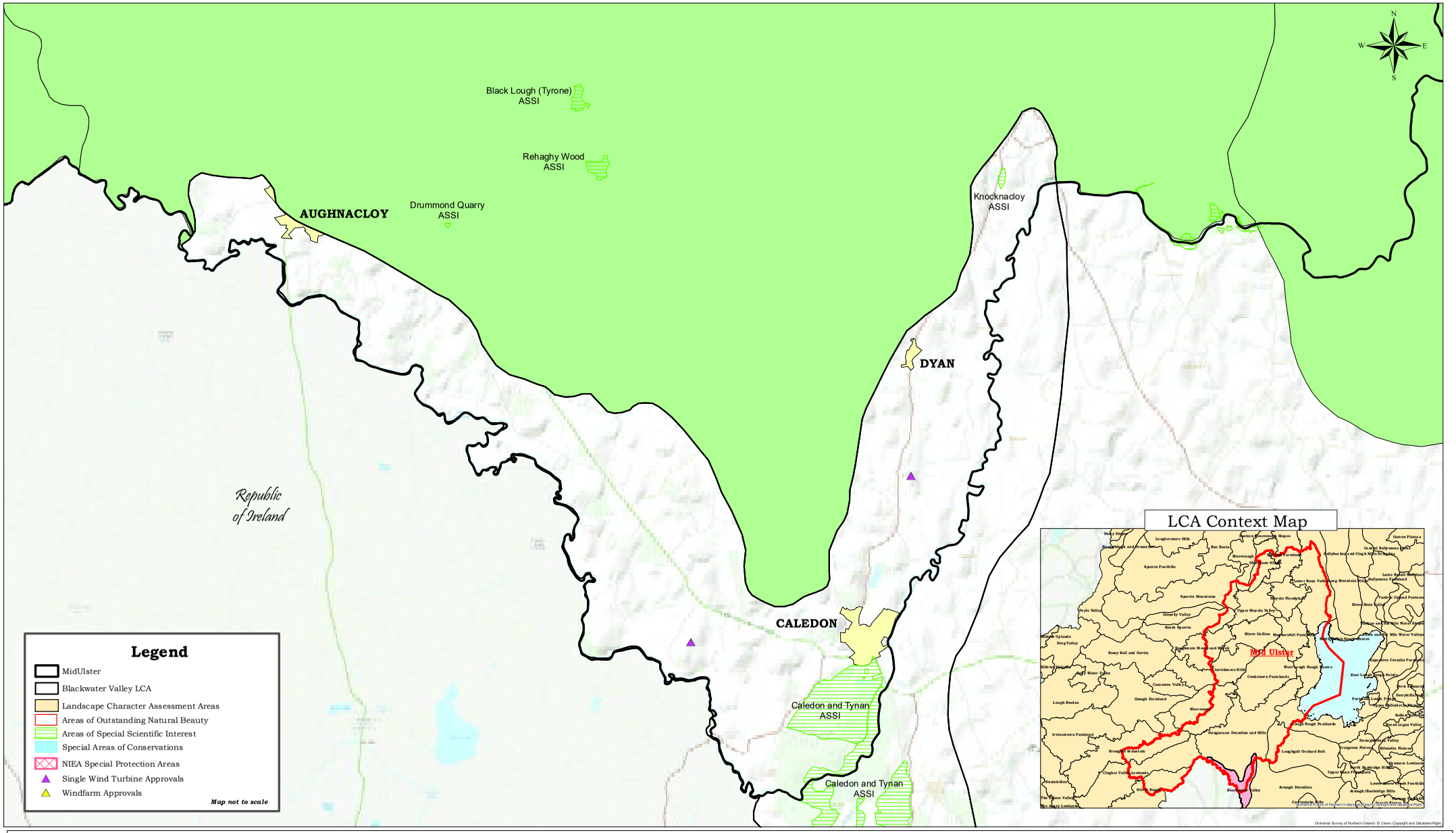
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# Blackwater Valley

## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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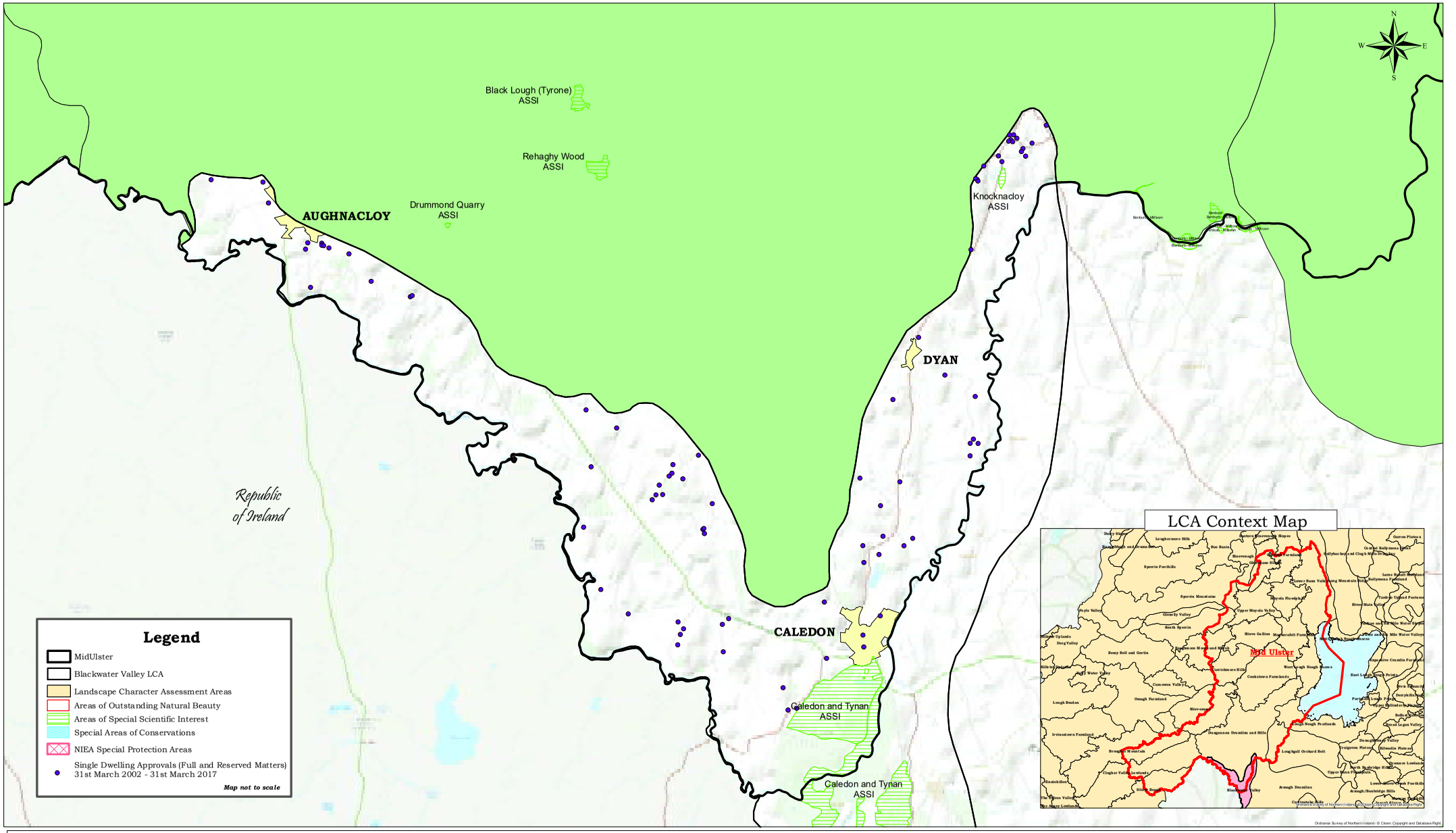
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# Blackwater Valley

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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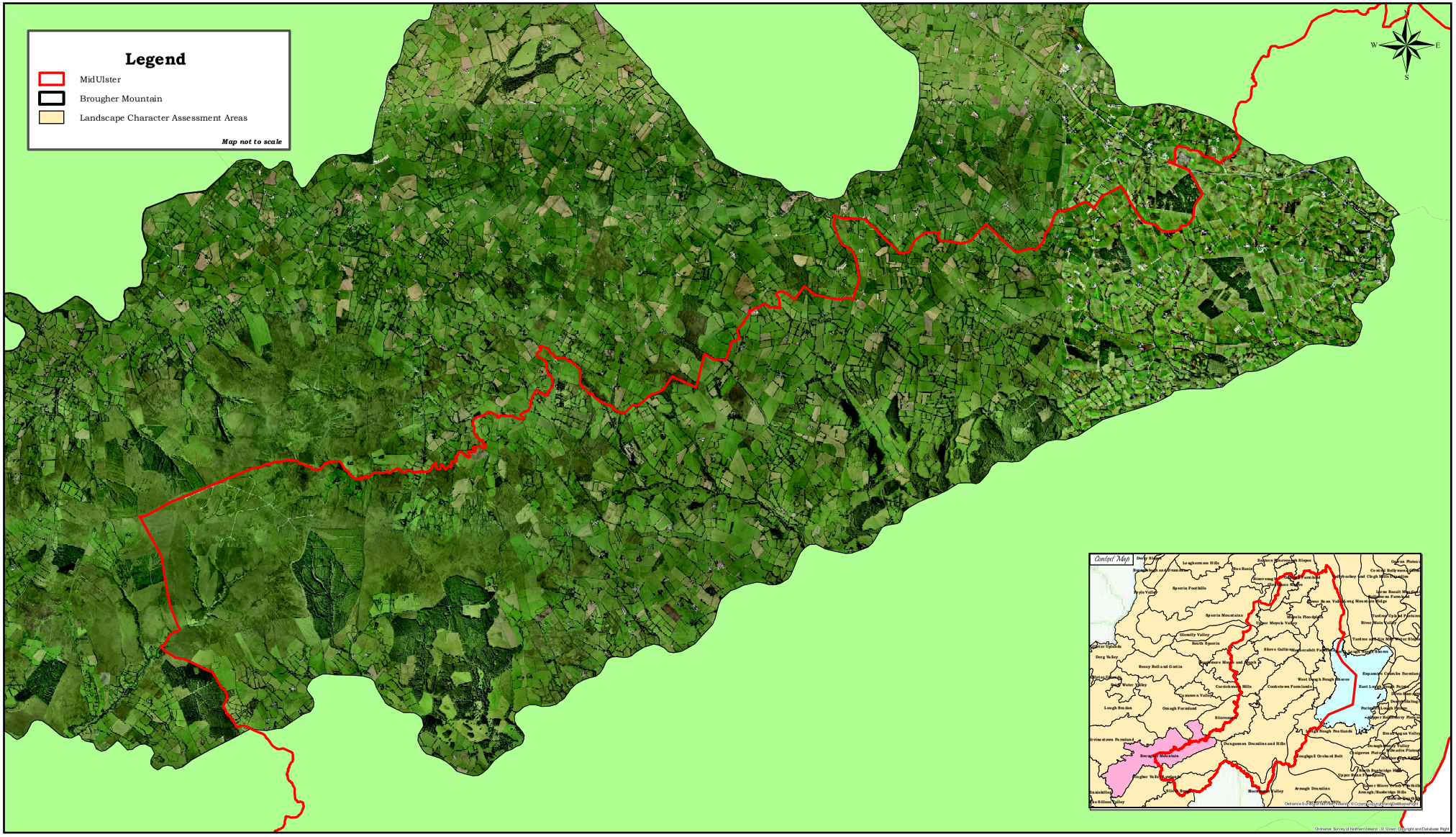
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# Brougher Mountain

## Orthophotograhy Dates Range 8 September 2004 to 03 September 2005




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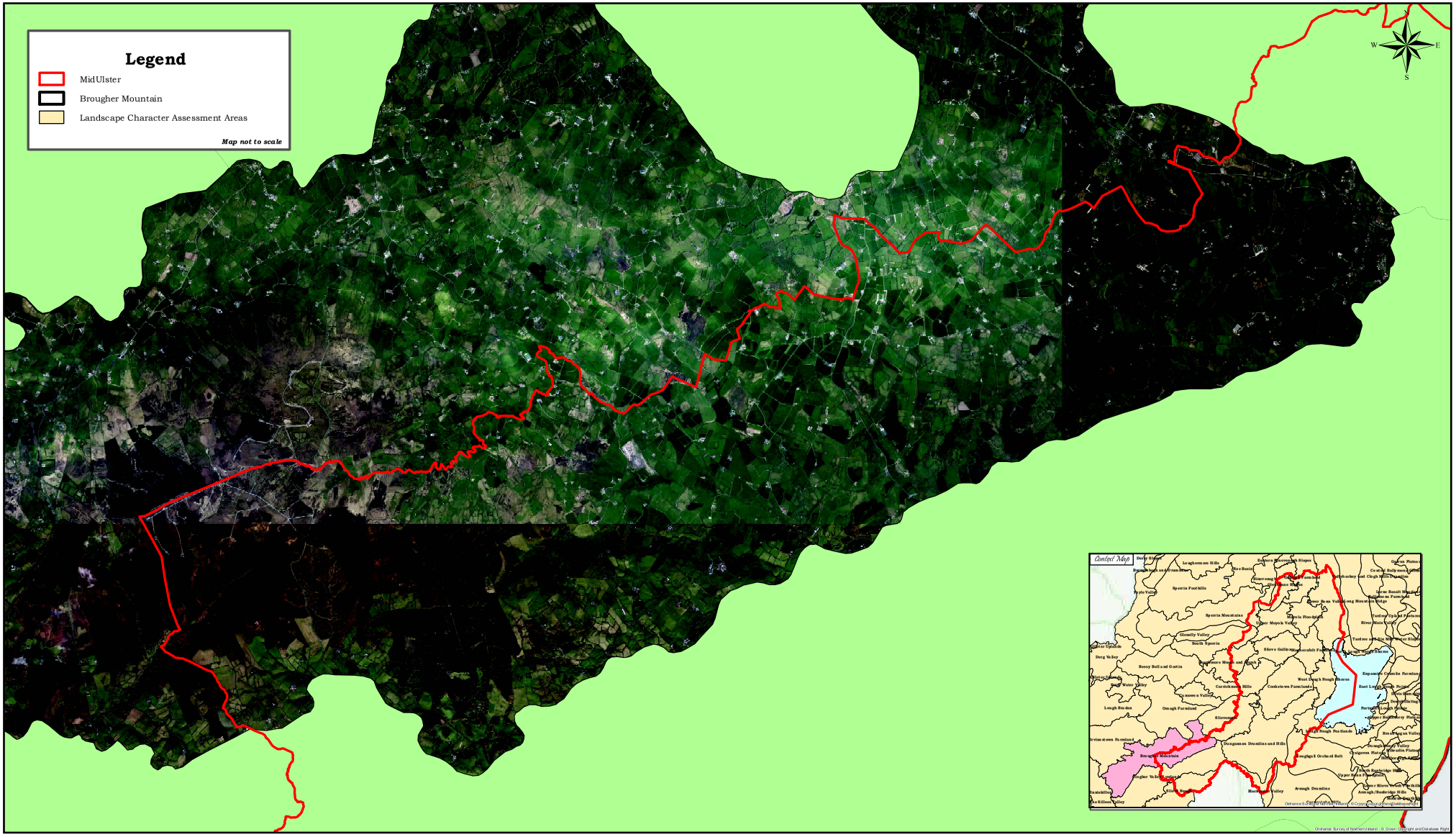
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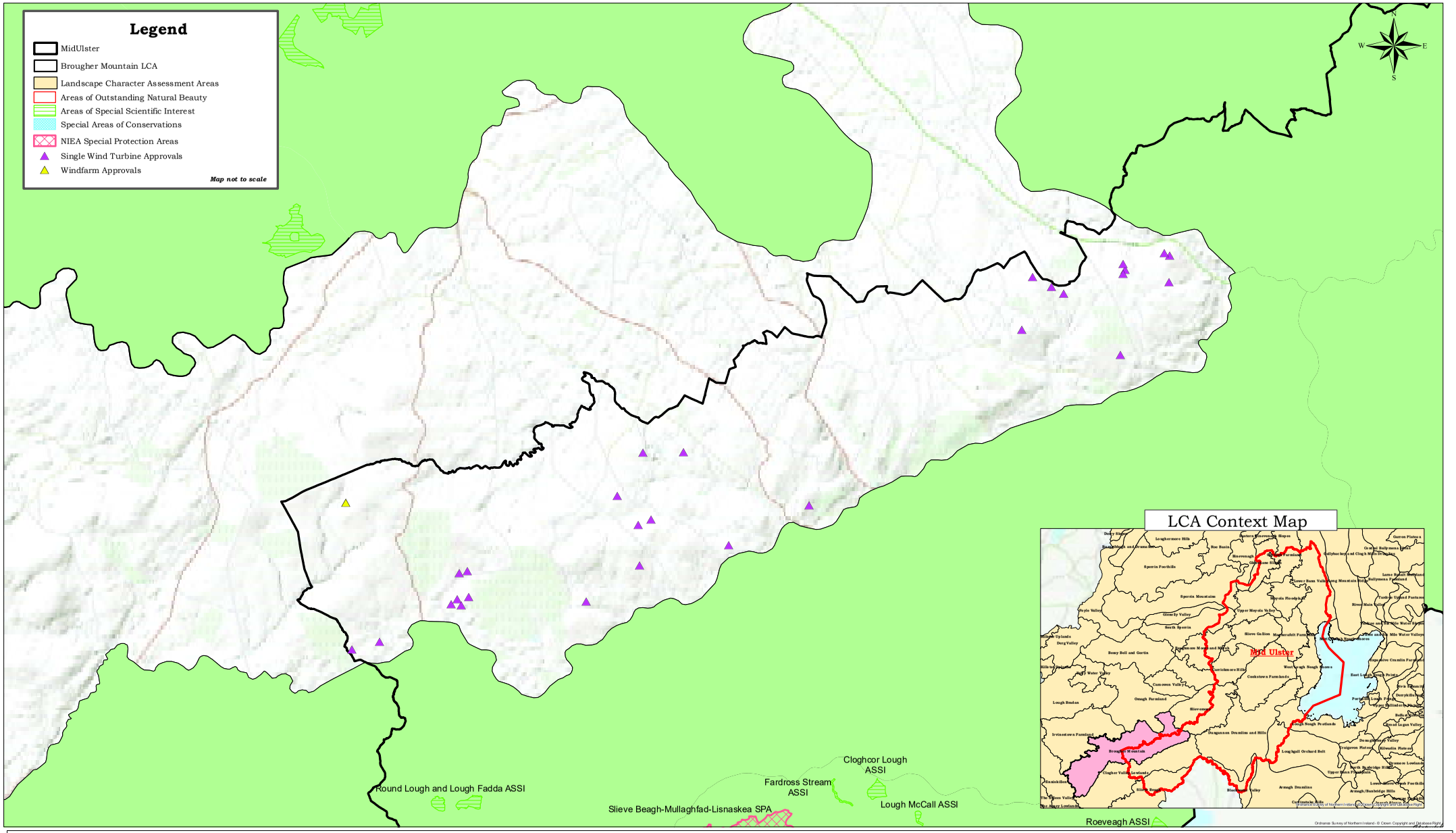
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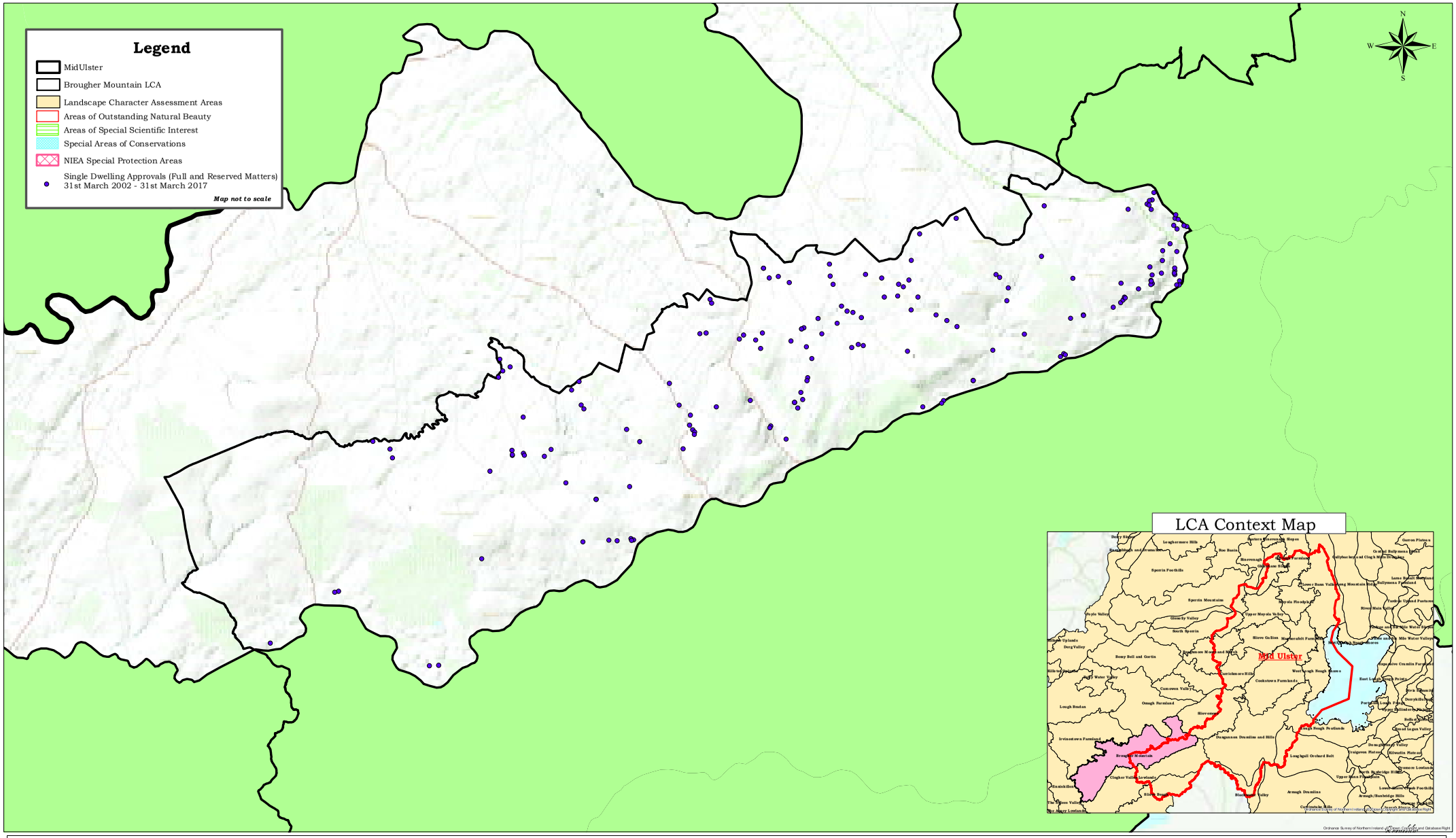
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# Brougher Mountain

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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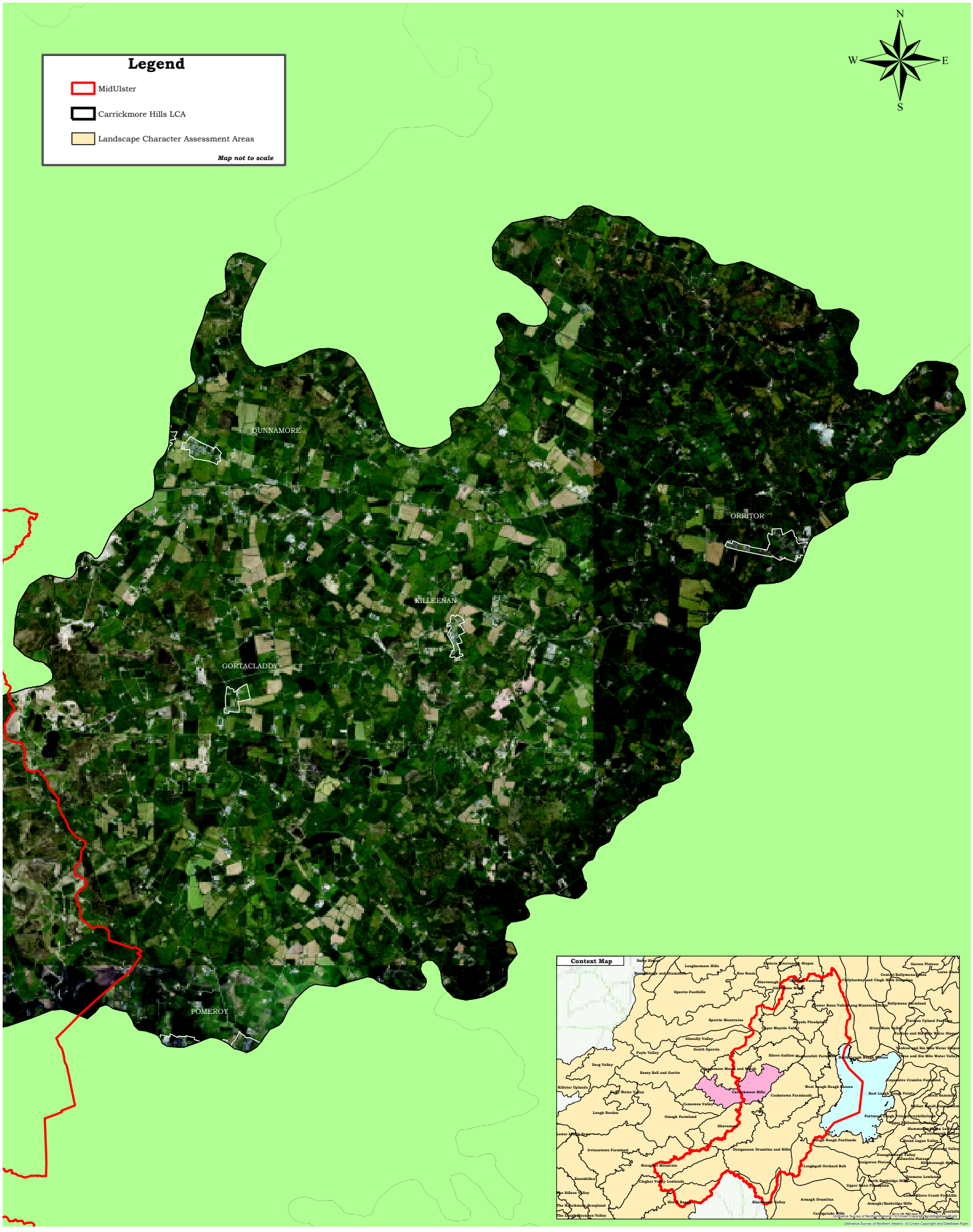
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# Carrickmore Hills LCA
## Orthophotograhy Date 11 May 2006




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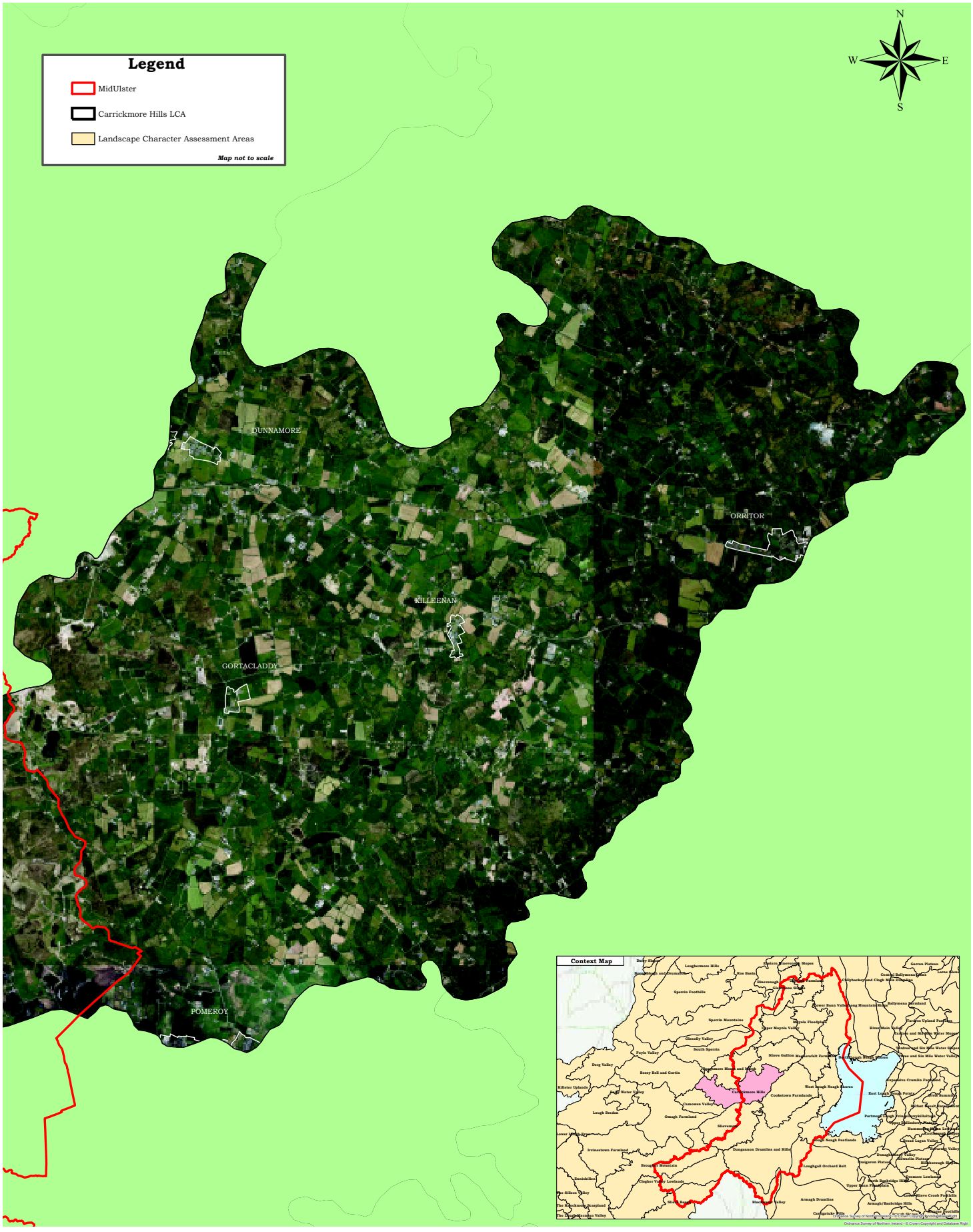
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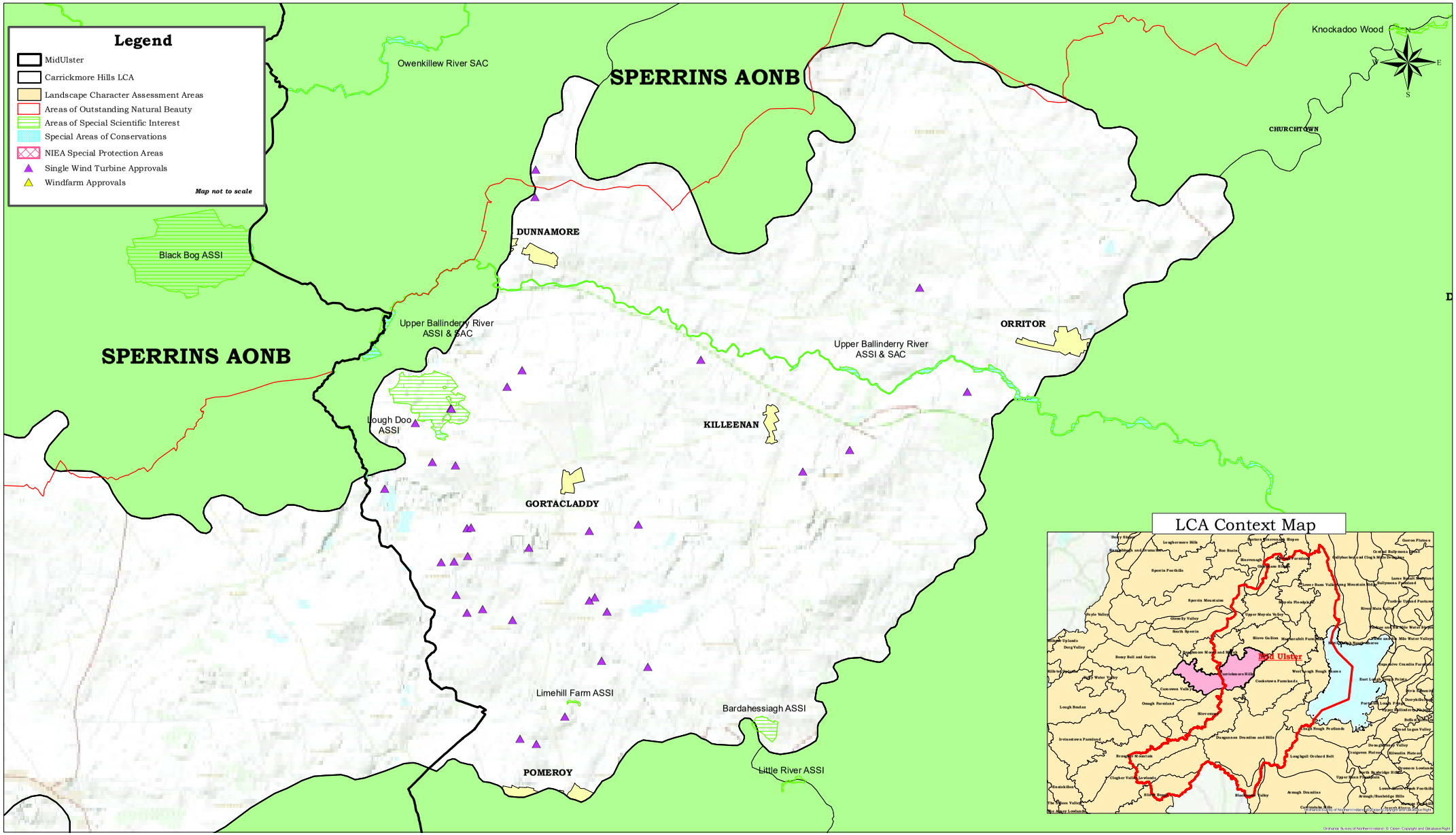
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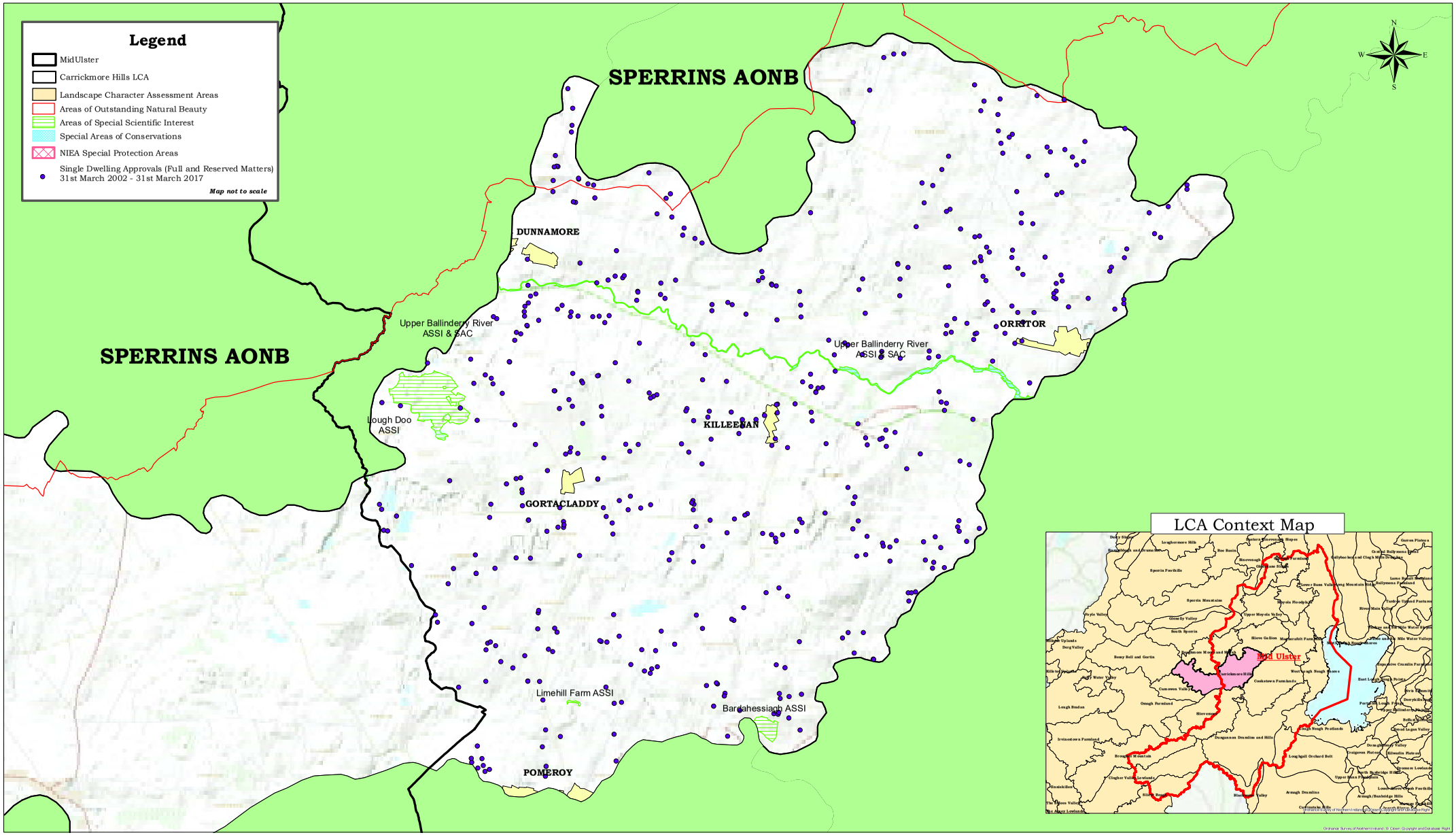
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# Carrickmore Hills

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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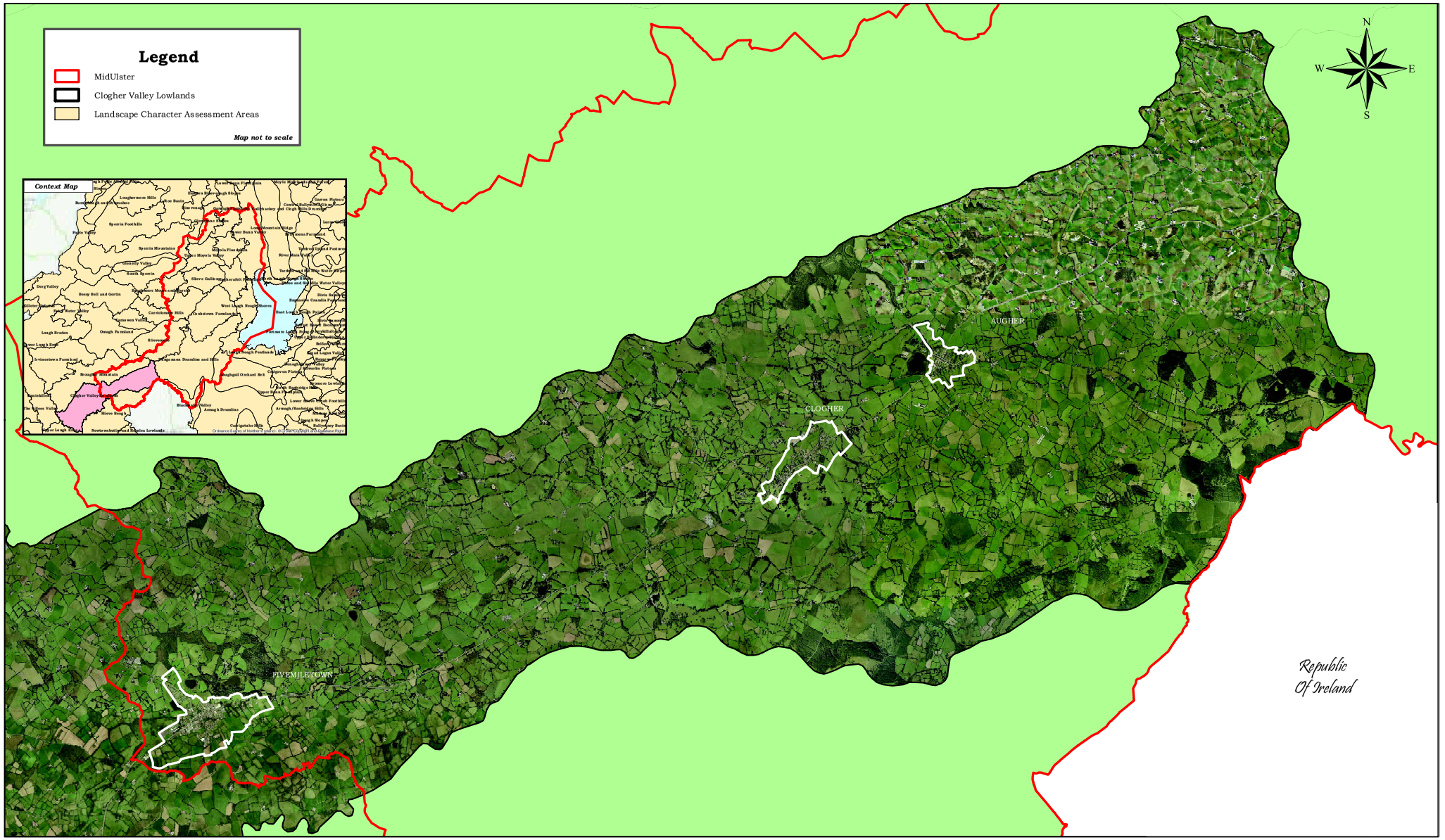
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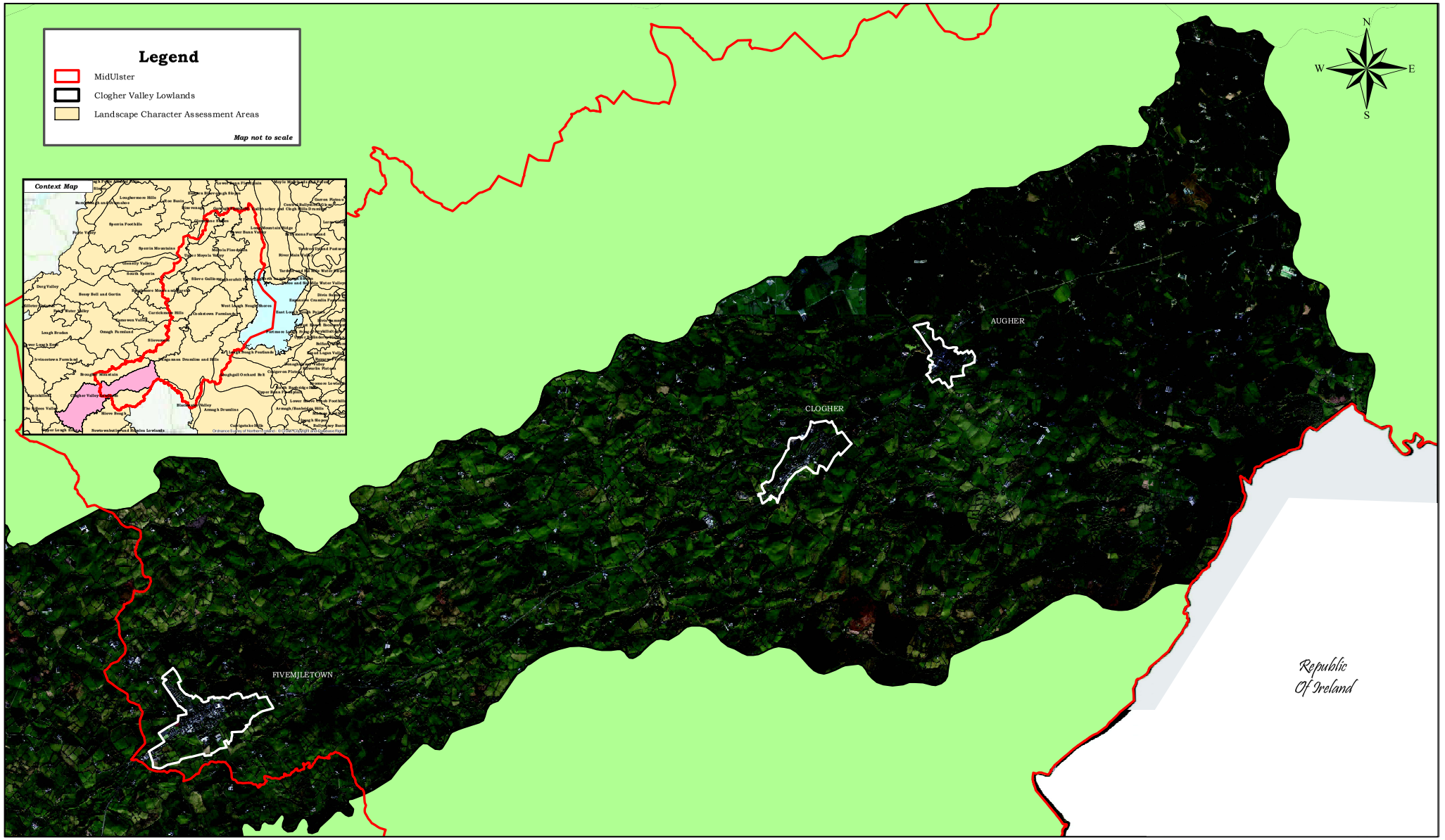
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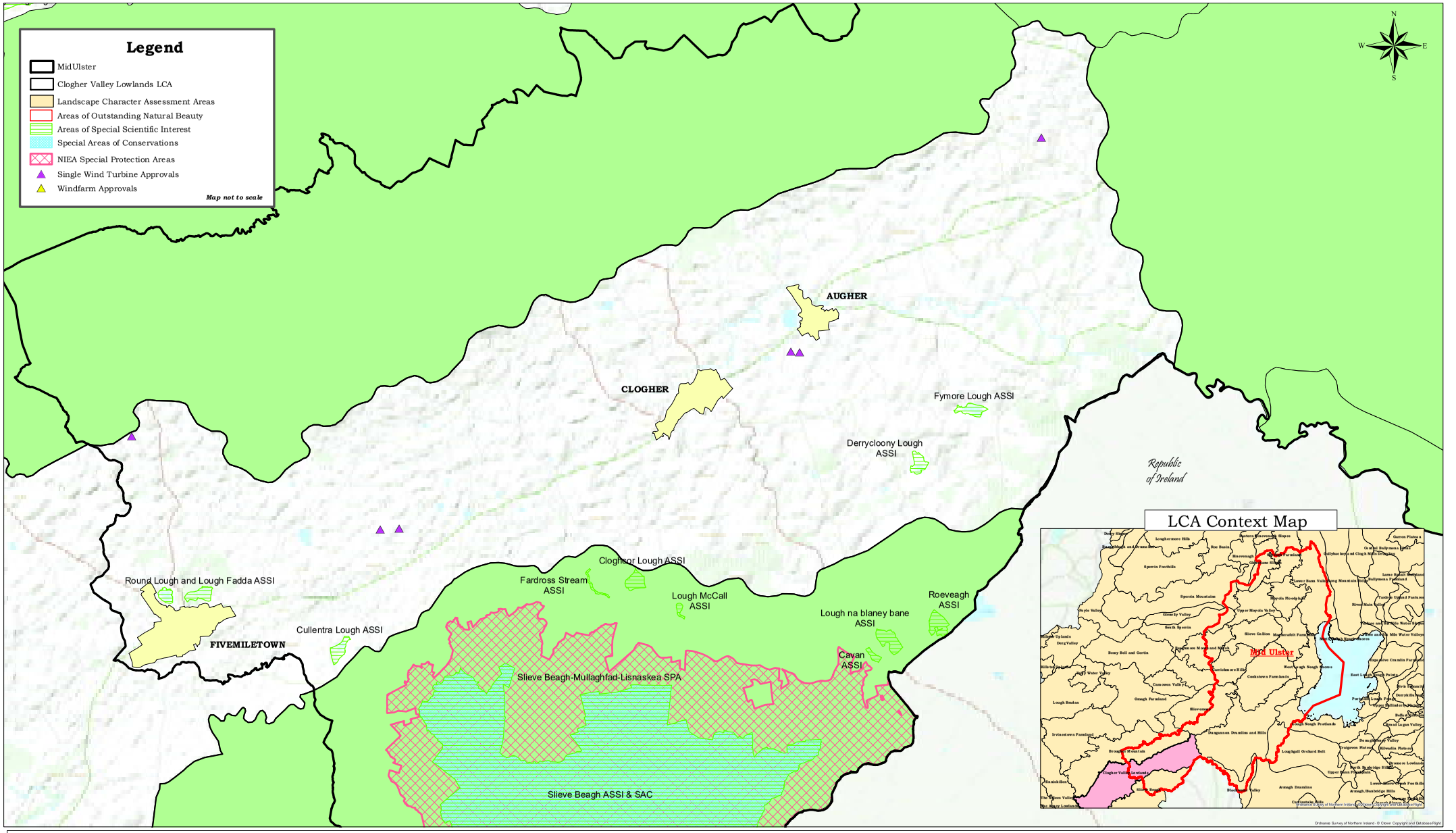
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## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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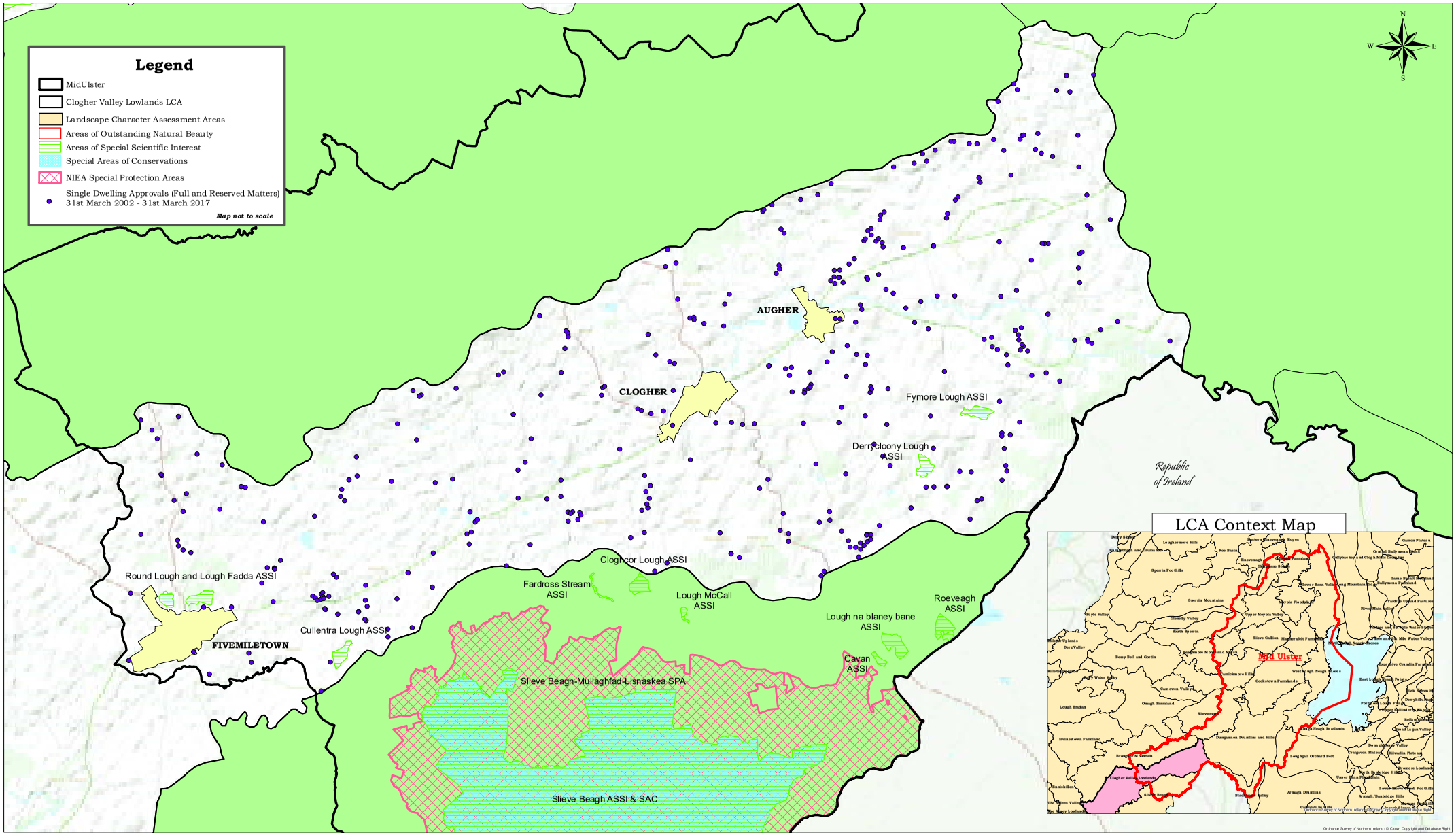
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## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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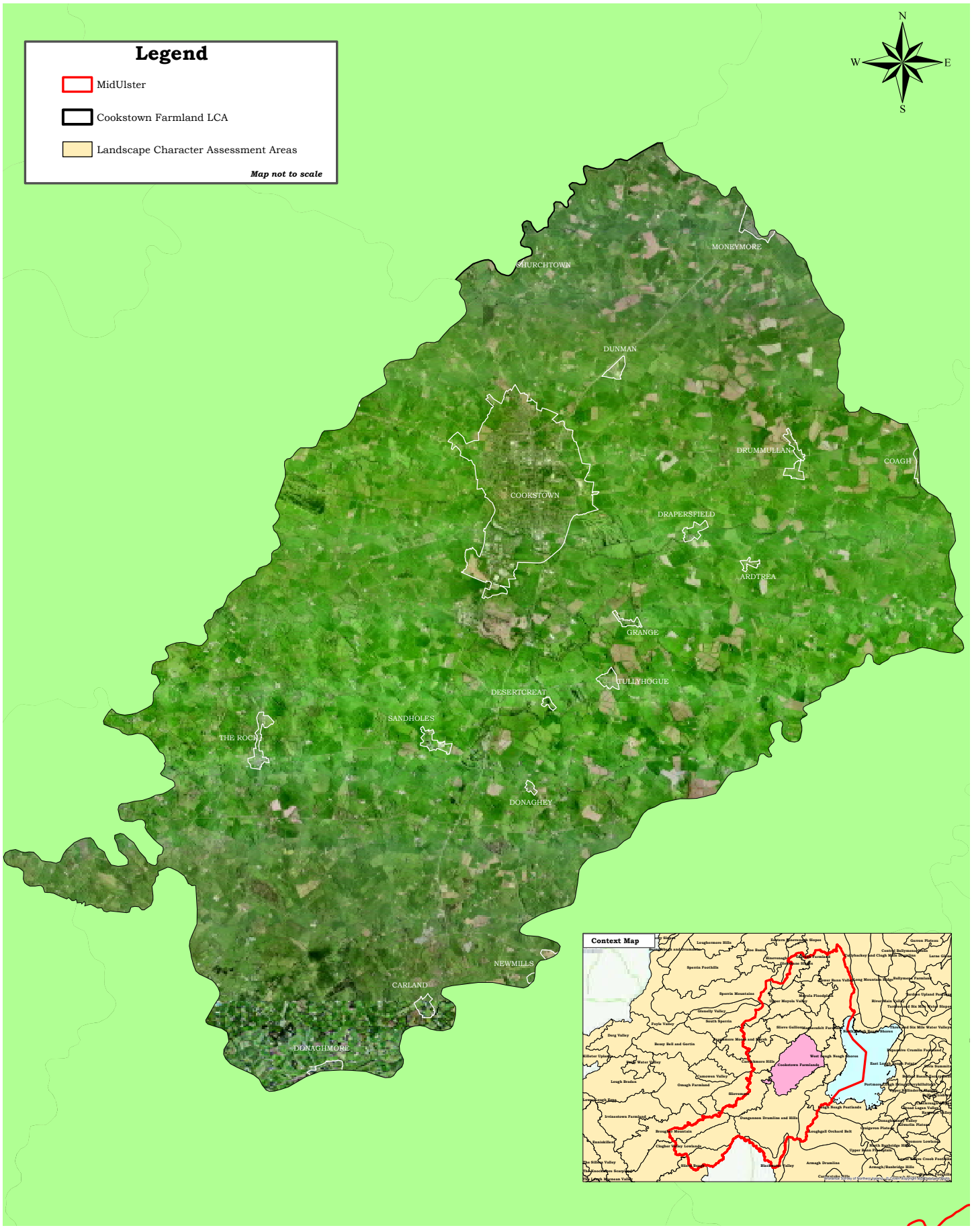
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# Cookstown Farmlands LCA

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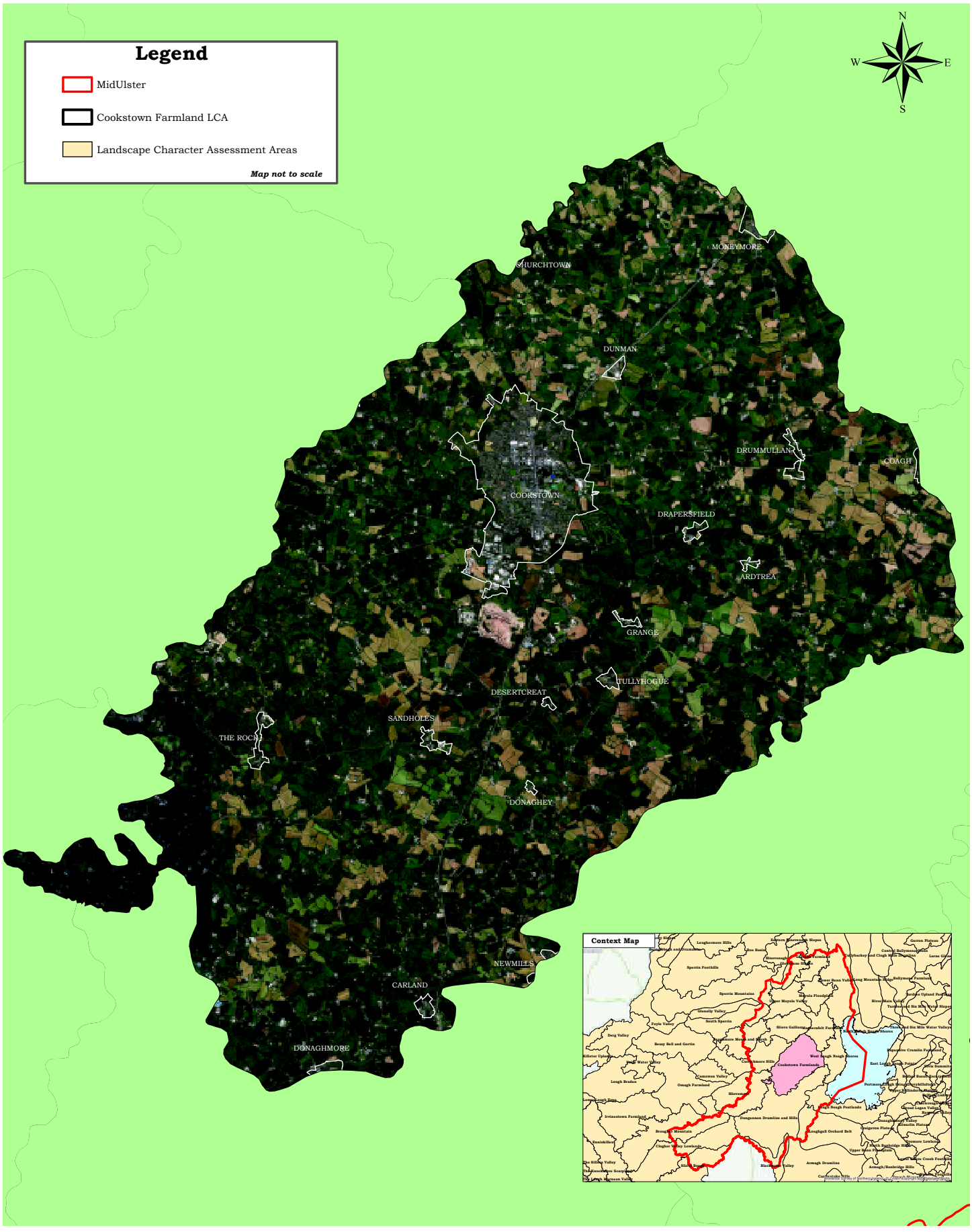
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# Cookstown Farmlands LCA

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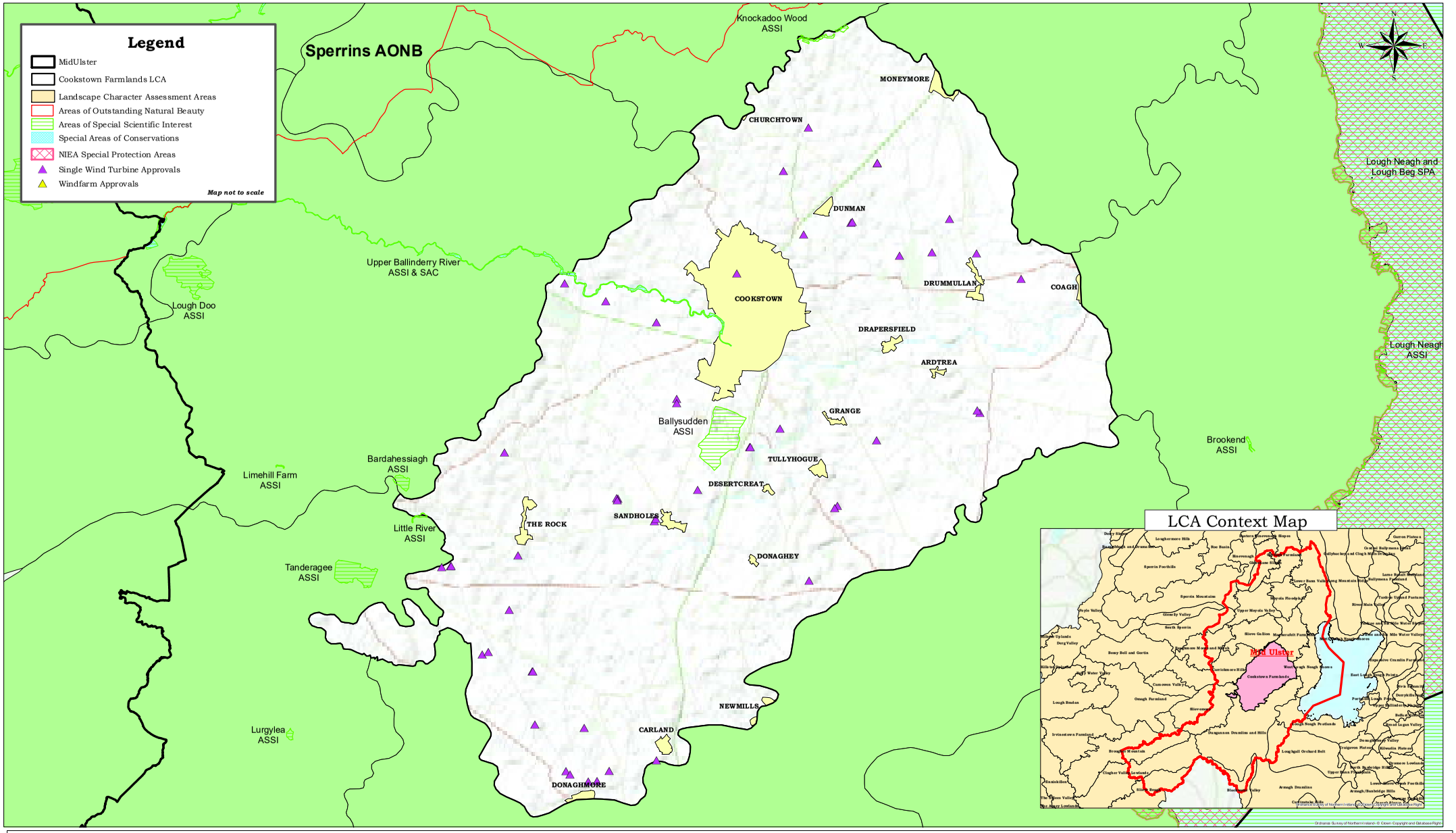
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# Cookstown Farmlands

## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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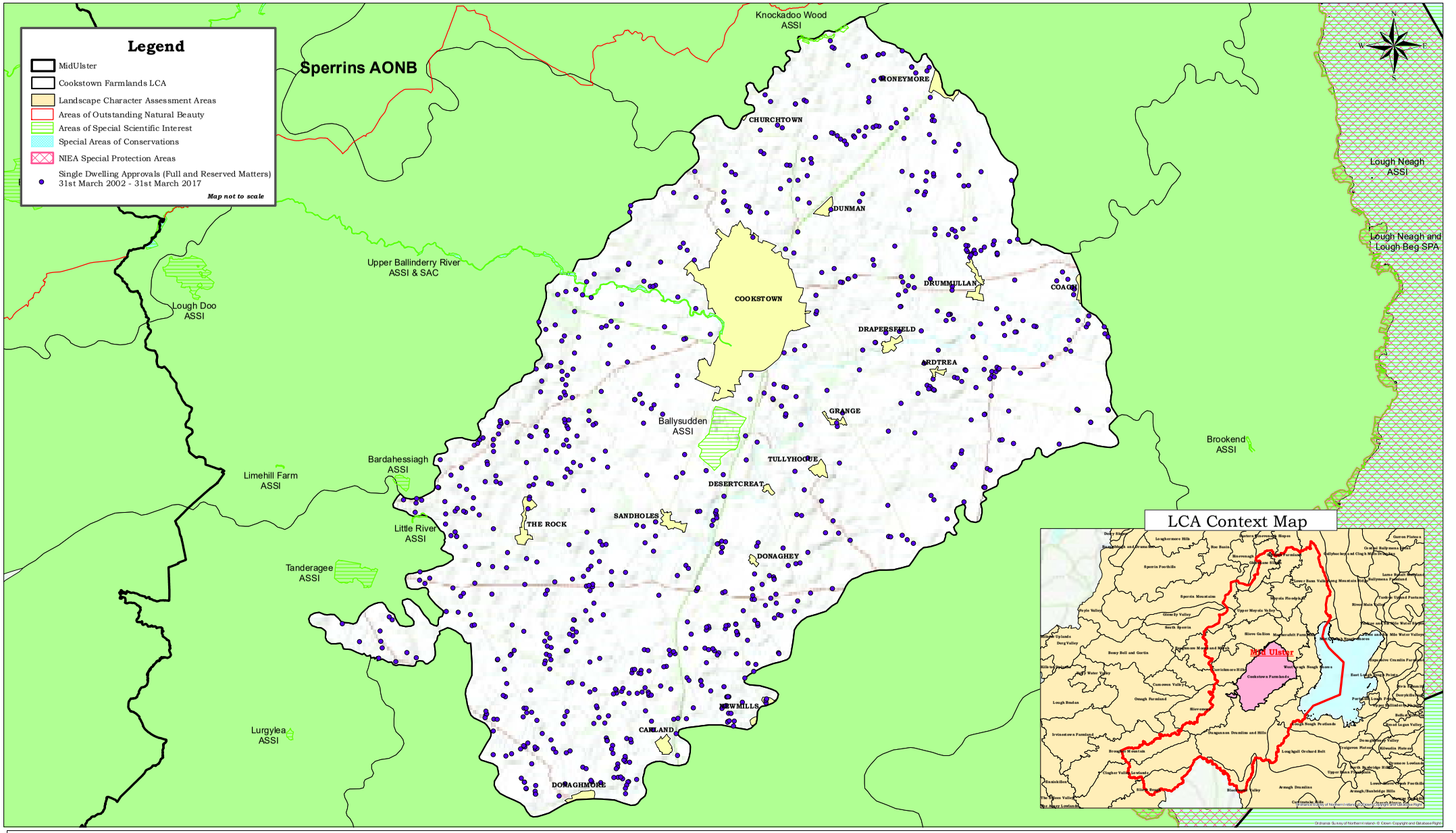
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# Cookstown Farmlands

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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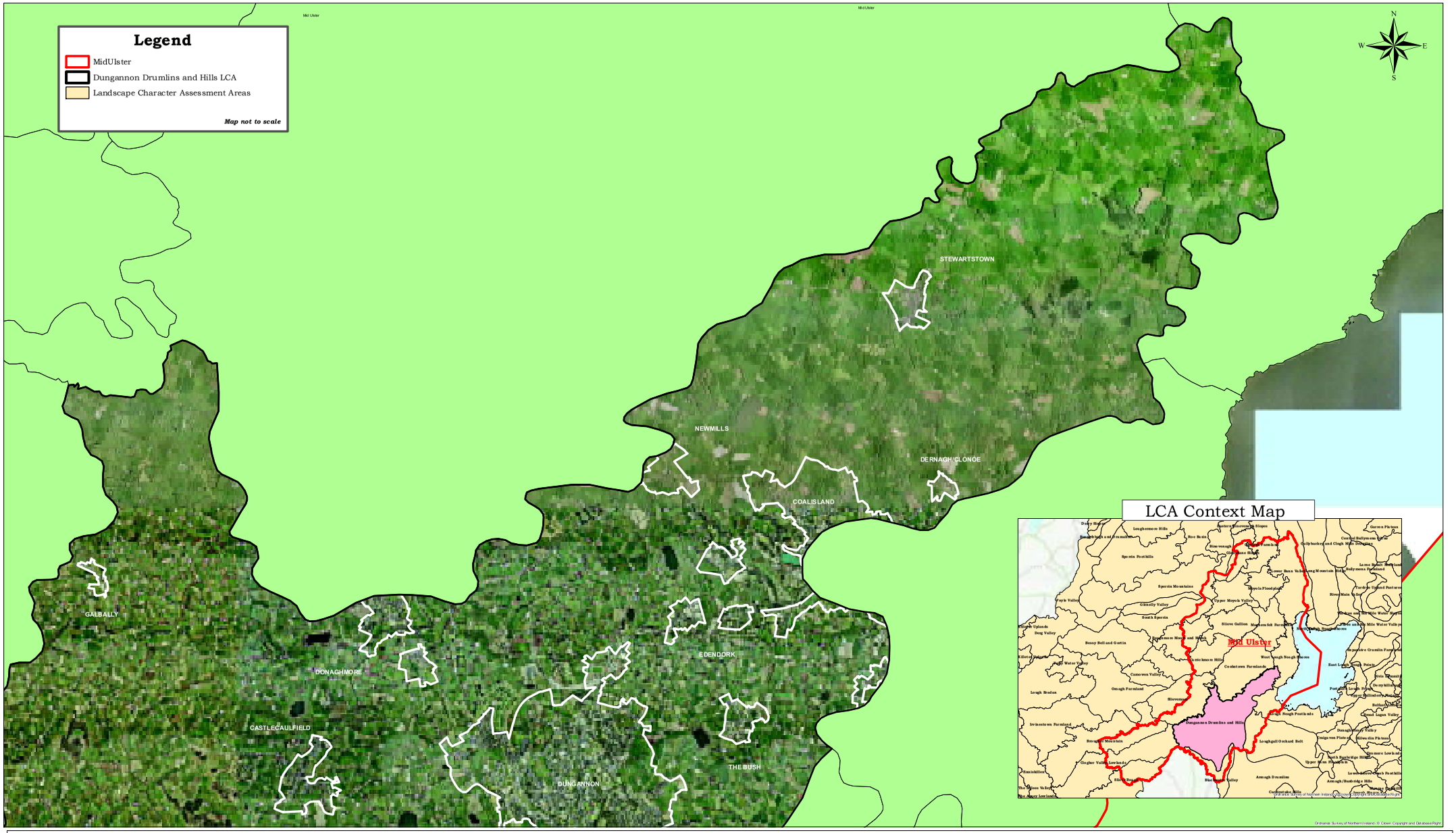
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# Dungannon Drumlins and Hills LCA (North)

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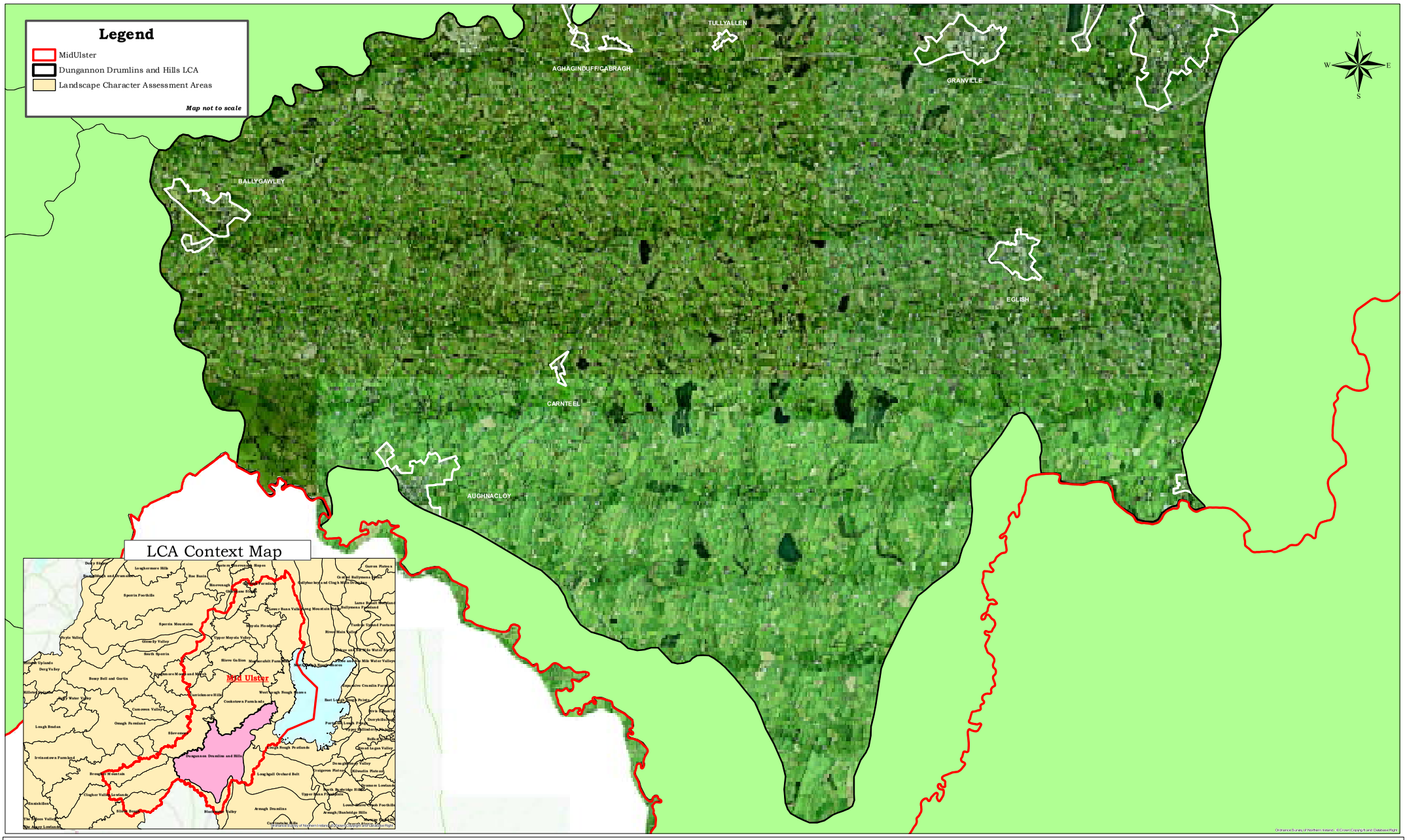
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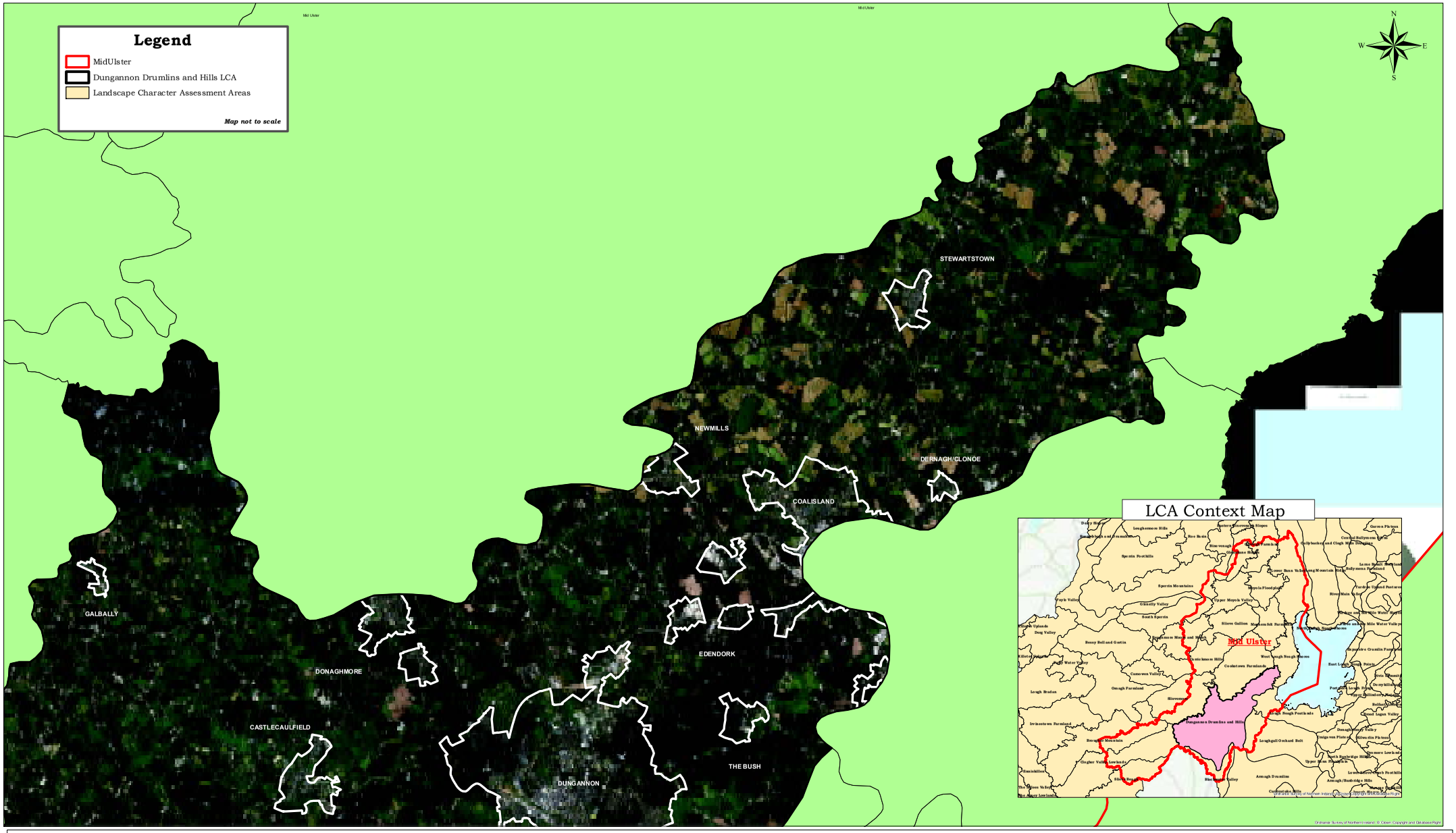
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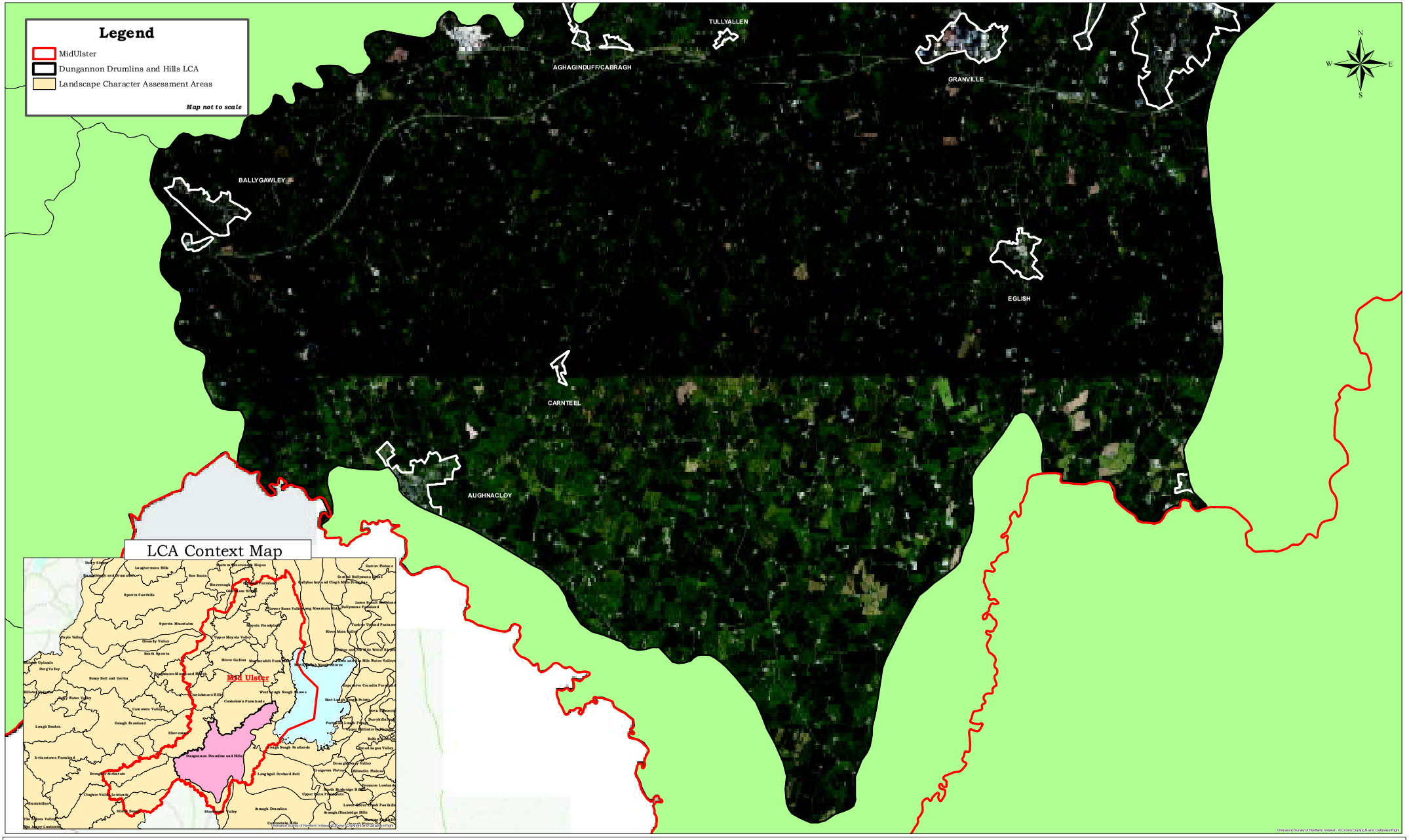
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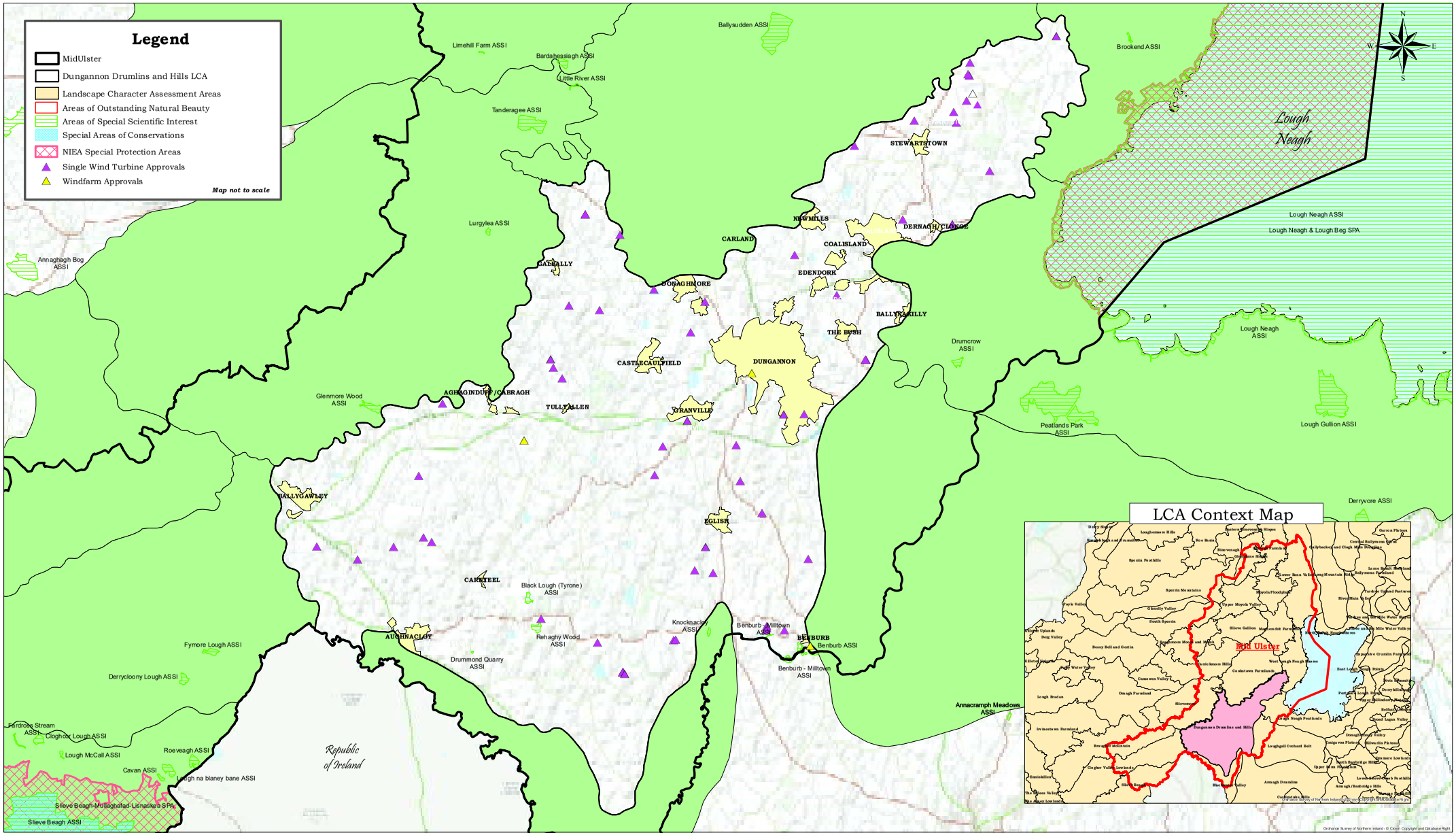
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# Dungannon Drumlins and Hills

## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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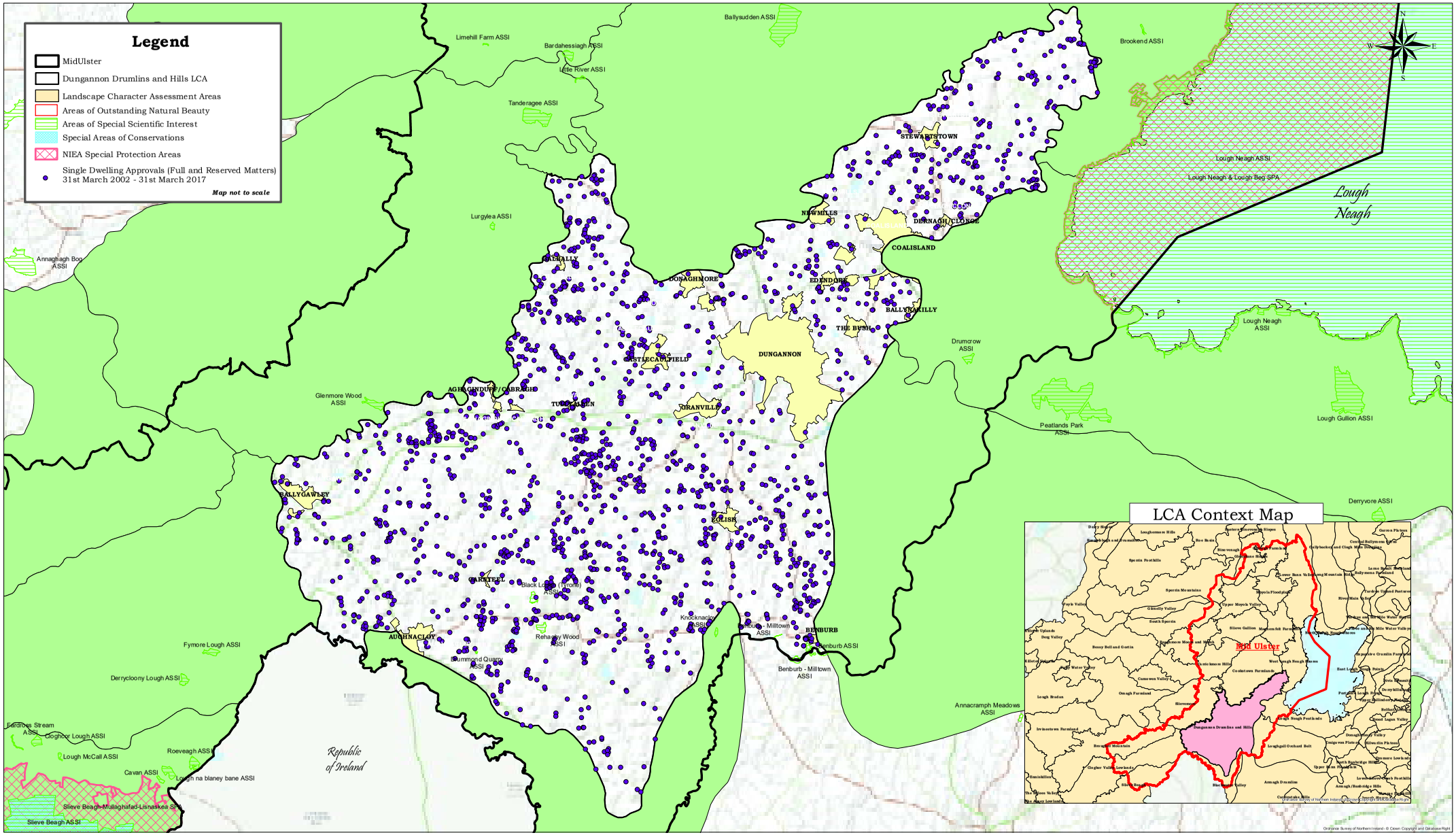
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# Dungannon Drumlins and Hills

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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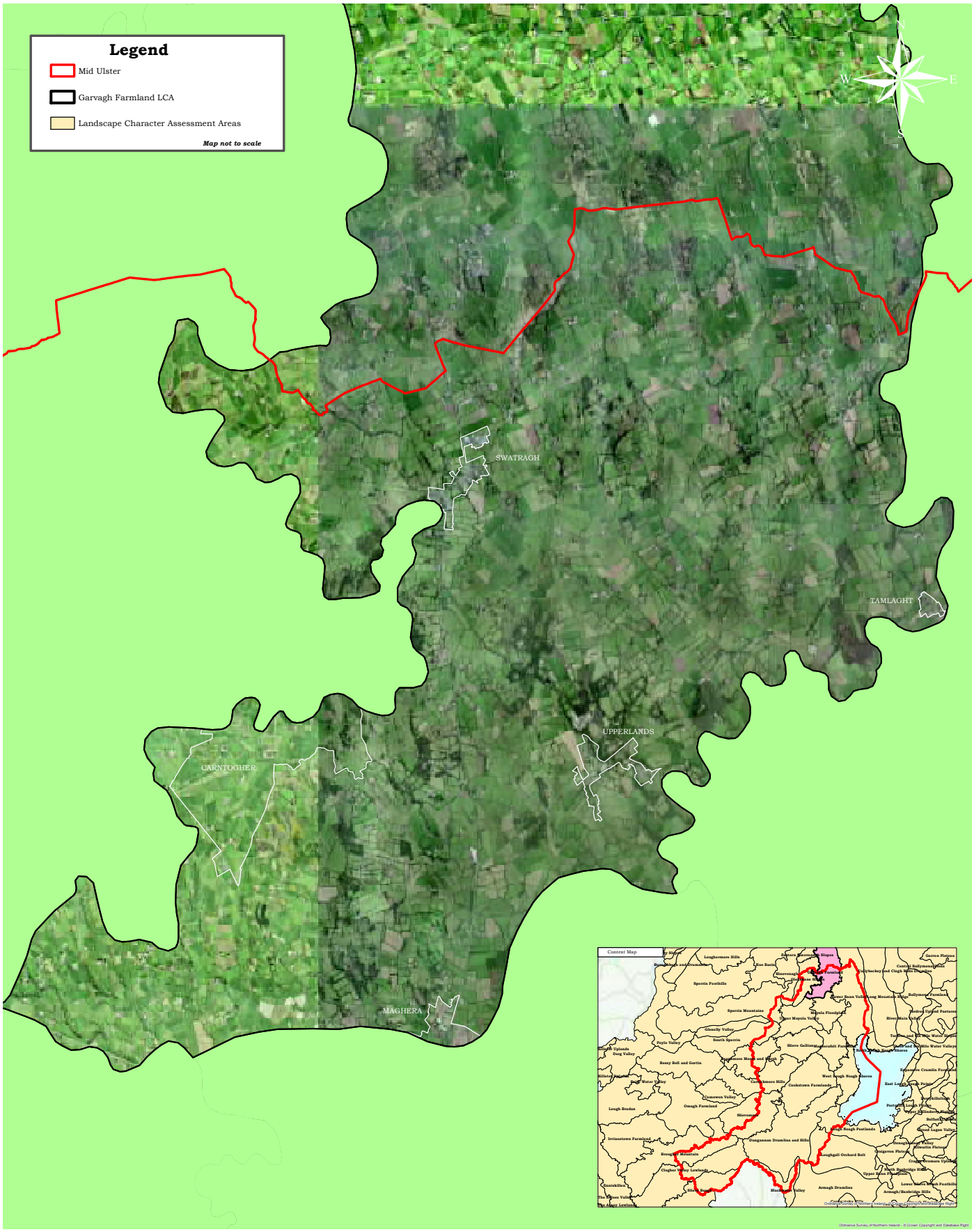
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# Garvagh Farmland LCA

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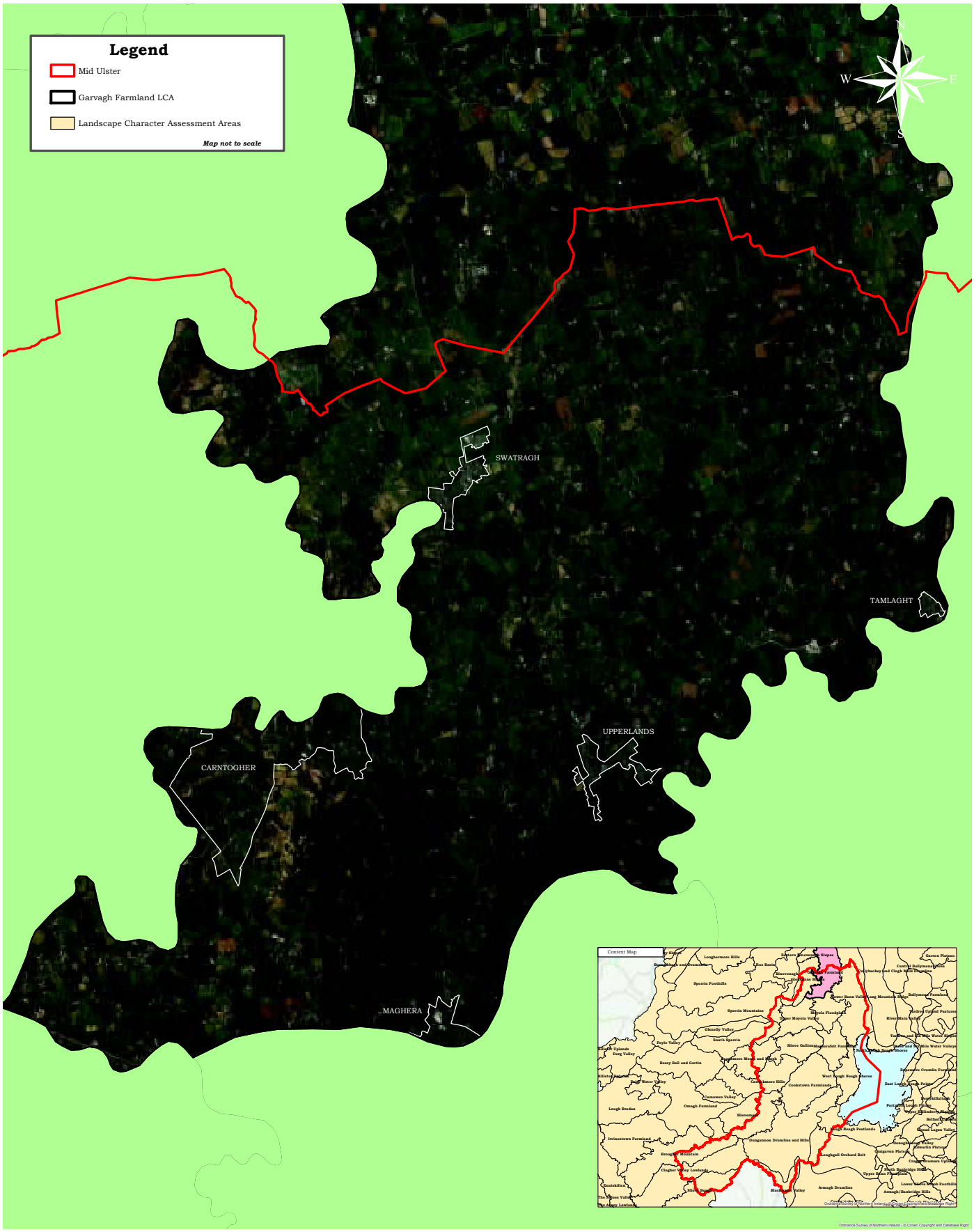
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# Garvagh Farmland LCA

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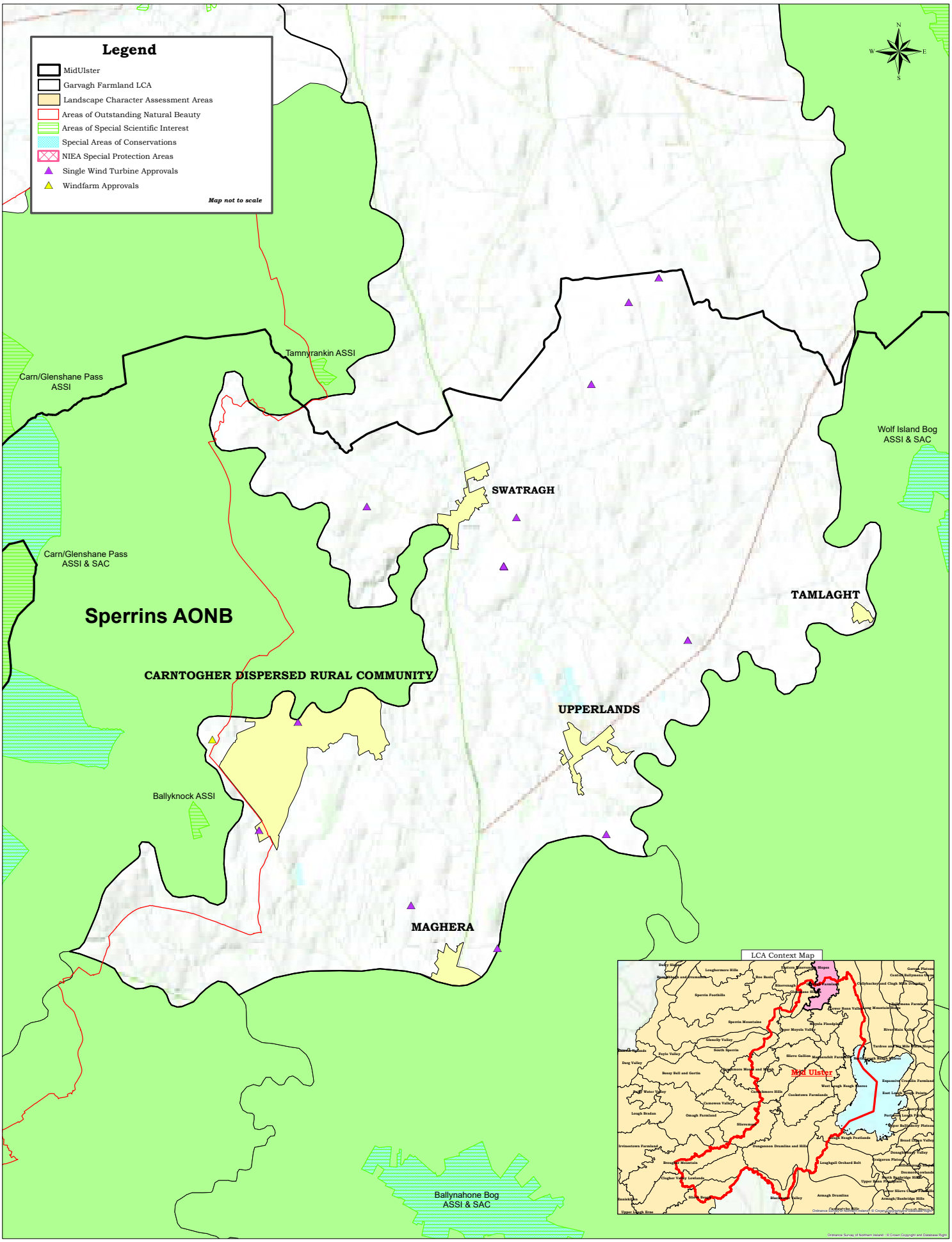
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# Garvagh Farmland

## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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Mid Ulster
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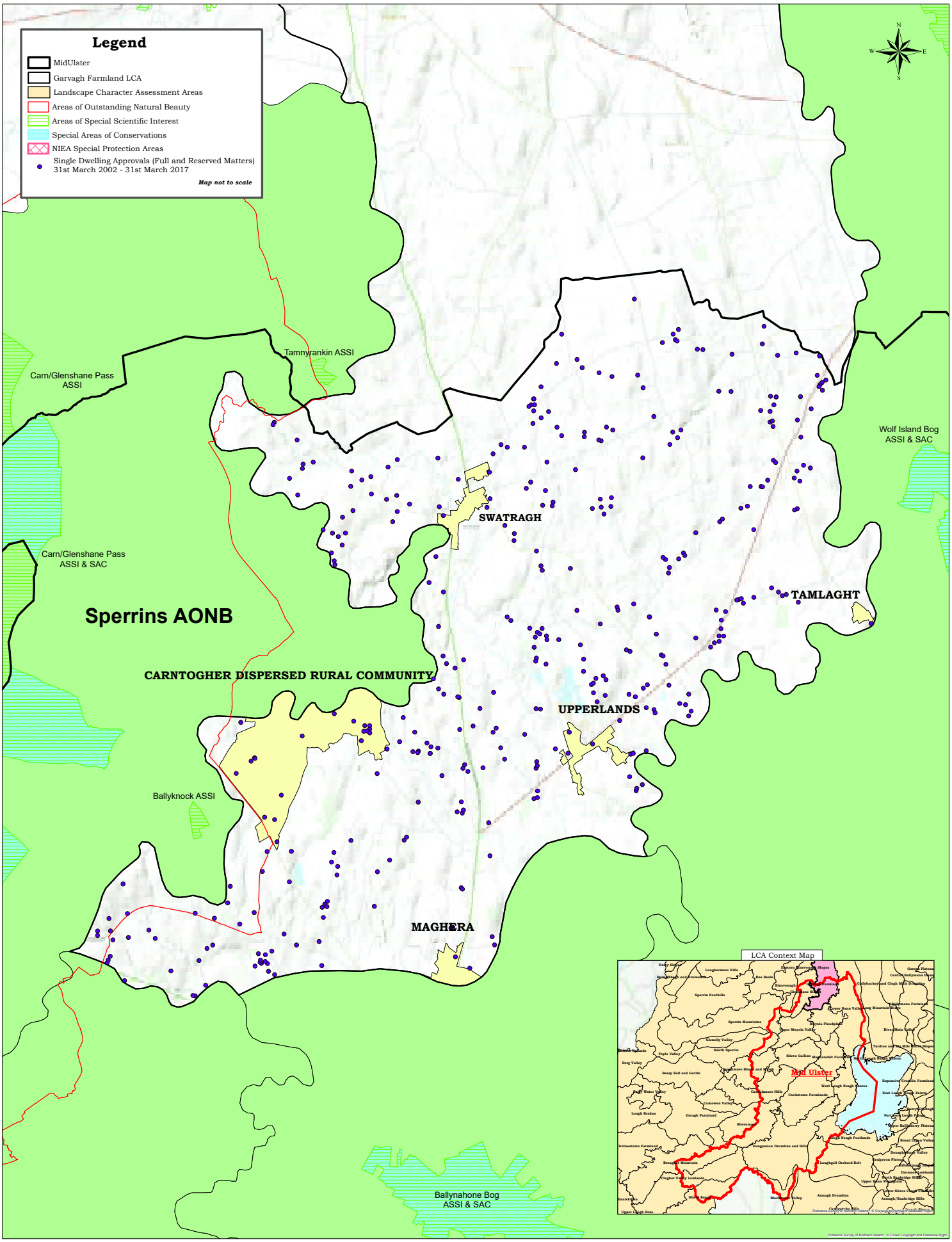
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# Garvagh Farmland

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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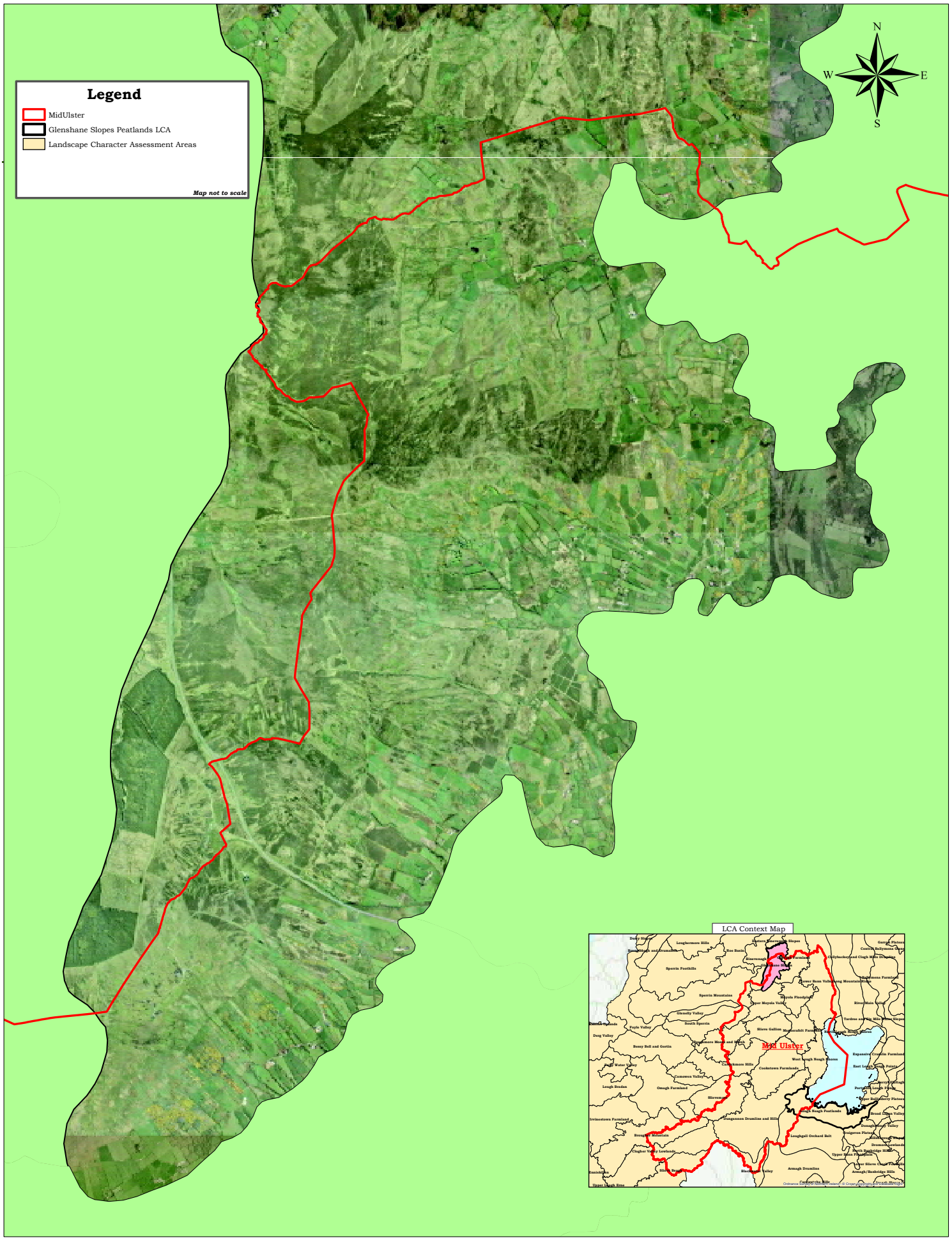
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# Glenshane Slopes LCA

**Orthophotograhy dates range19 Mar 2003 to 11 May 2006**




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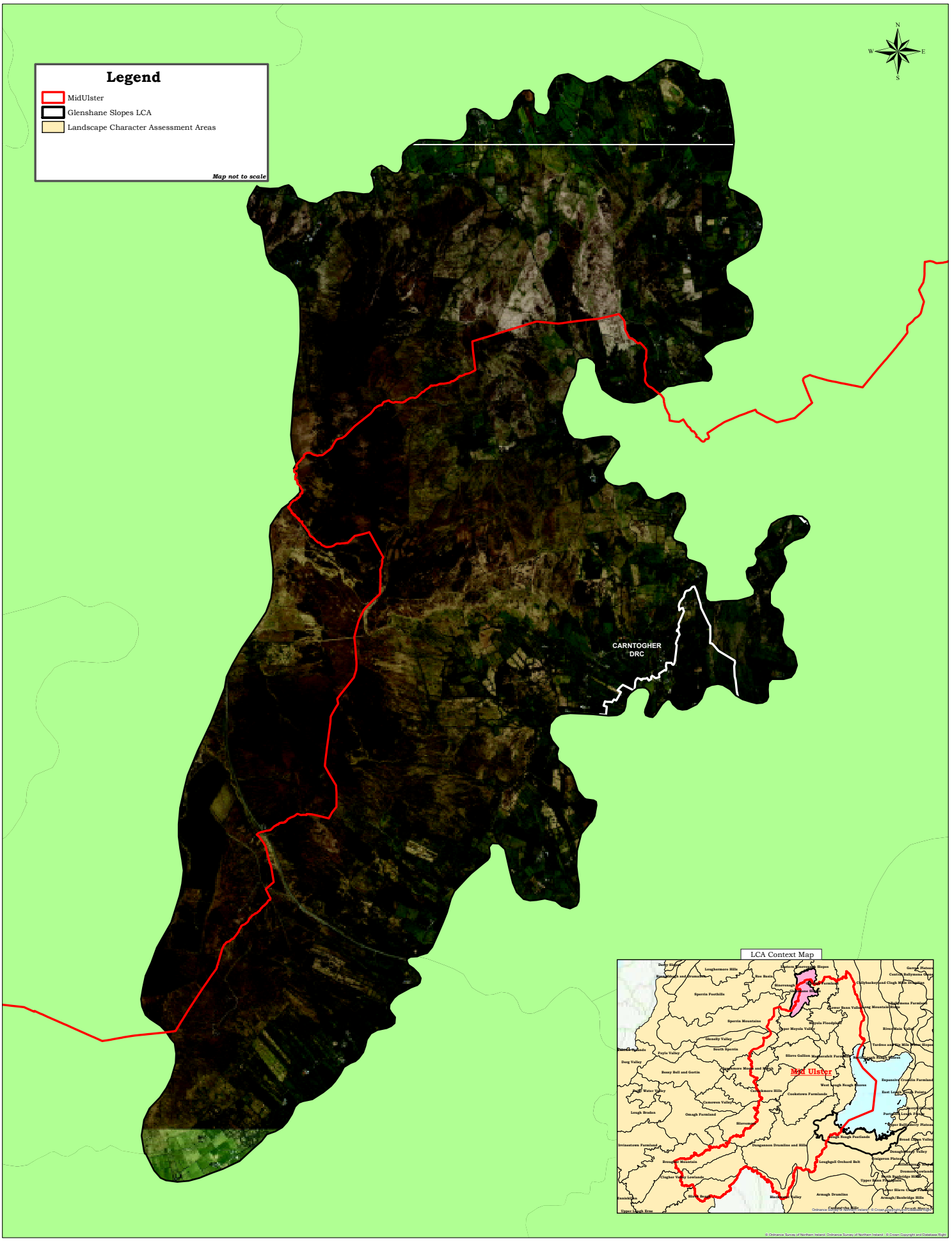
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# Glenshane Slopes LCA

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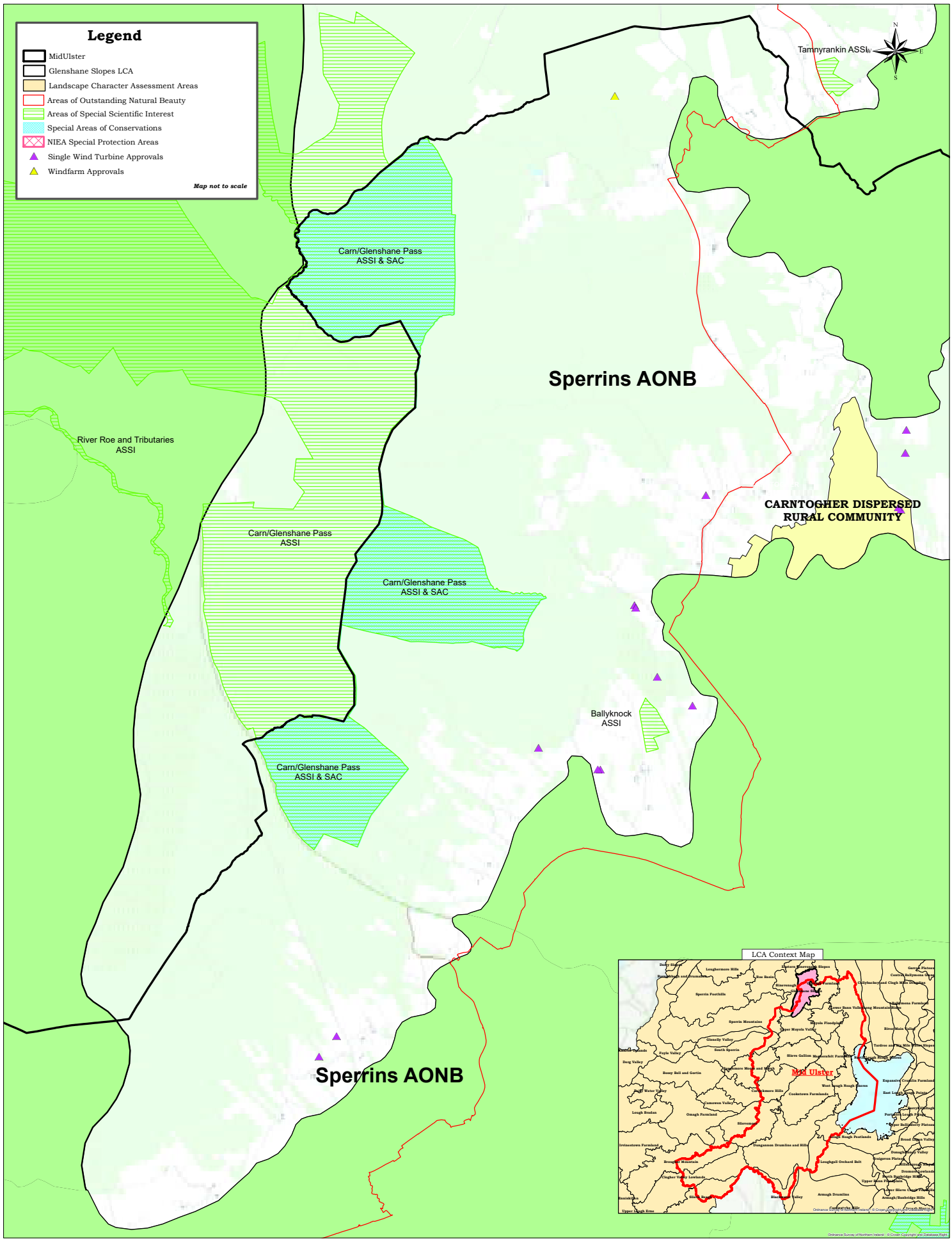
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# Glenshane Slopes

## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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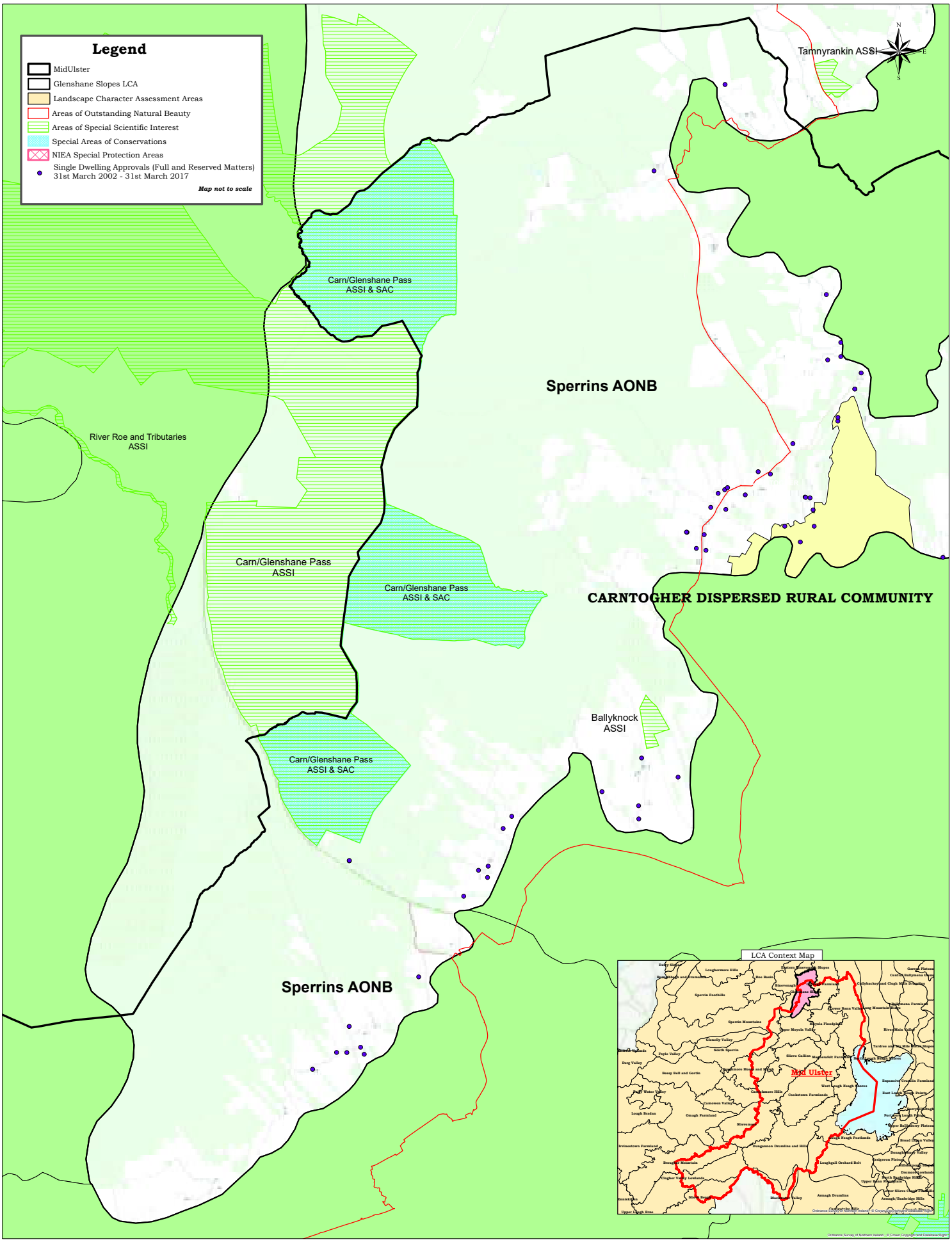
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# Glenshane Slopes

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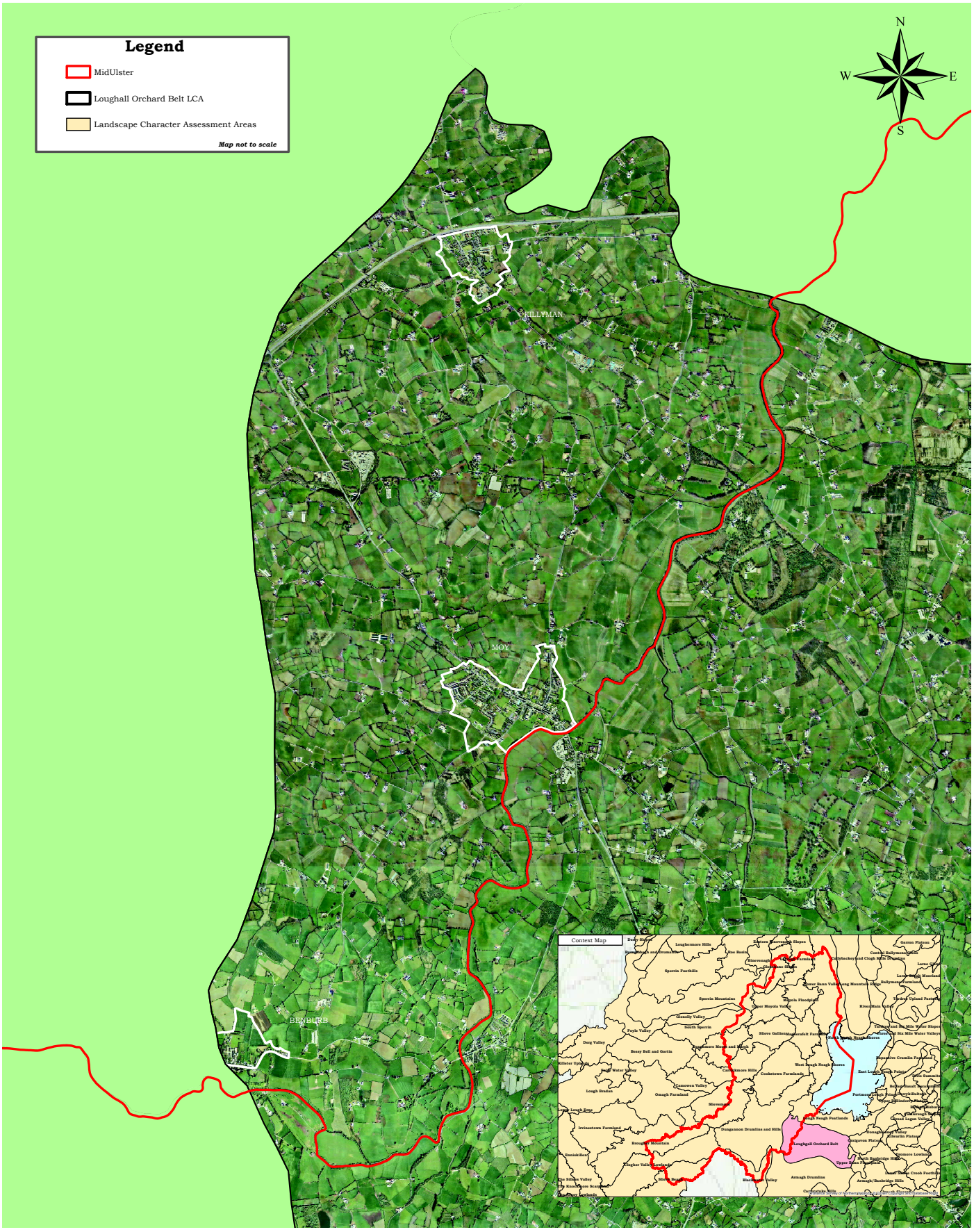
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# Loughall Orchard Belt LCA

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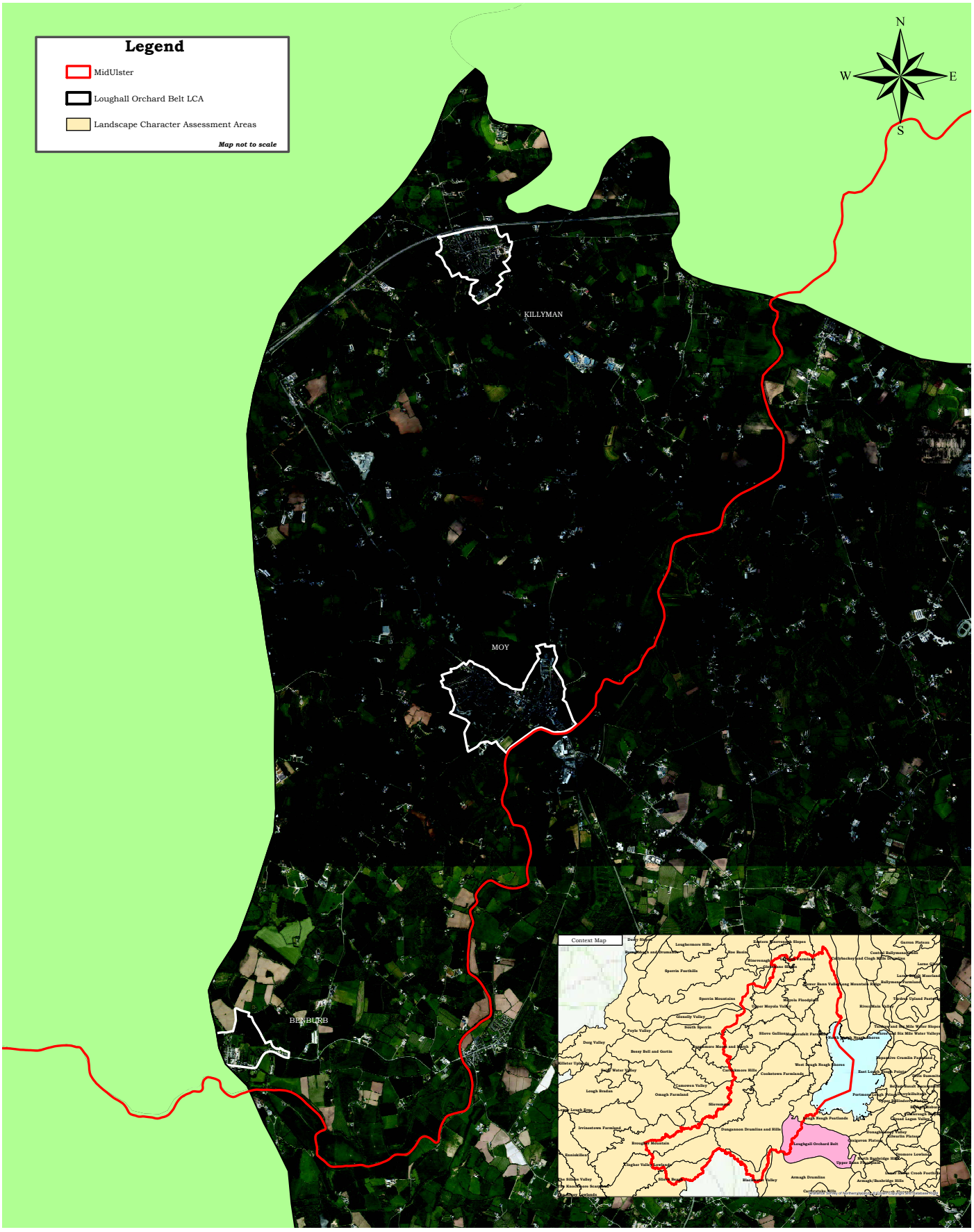
Author: John Paul Devlin

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# Loughall Orchard Belt LCA
## Orthophotograhy Dates Range 12 May 2016 to 13 May 2016




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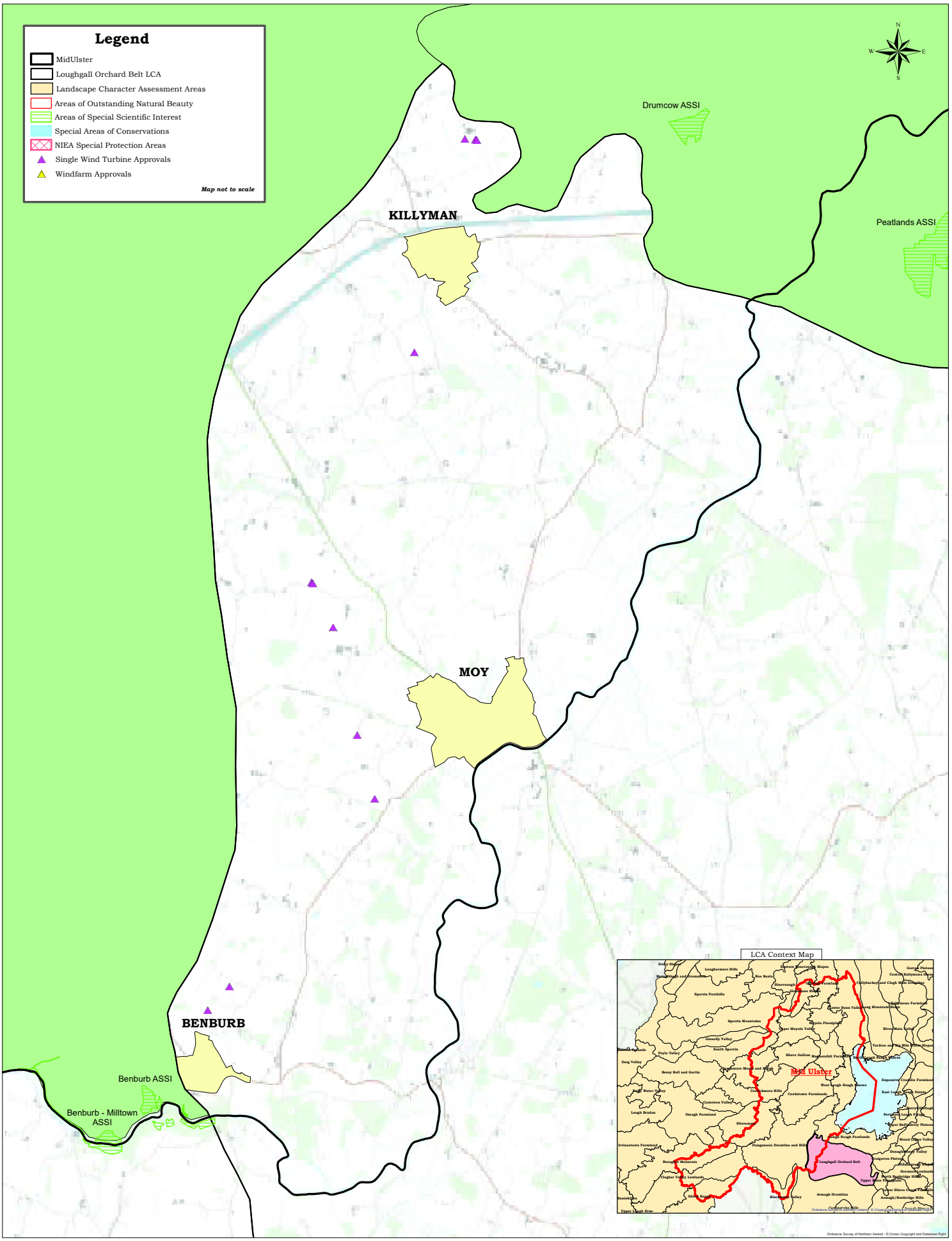
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# Loughgall Orchard Belt

## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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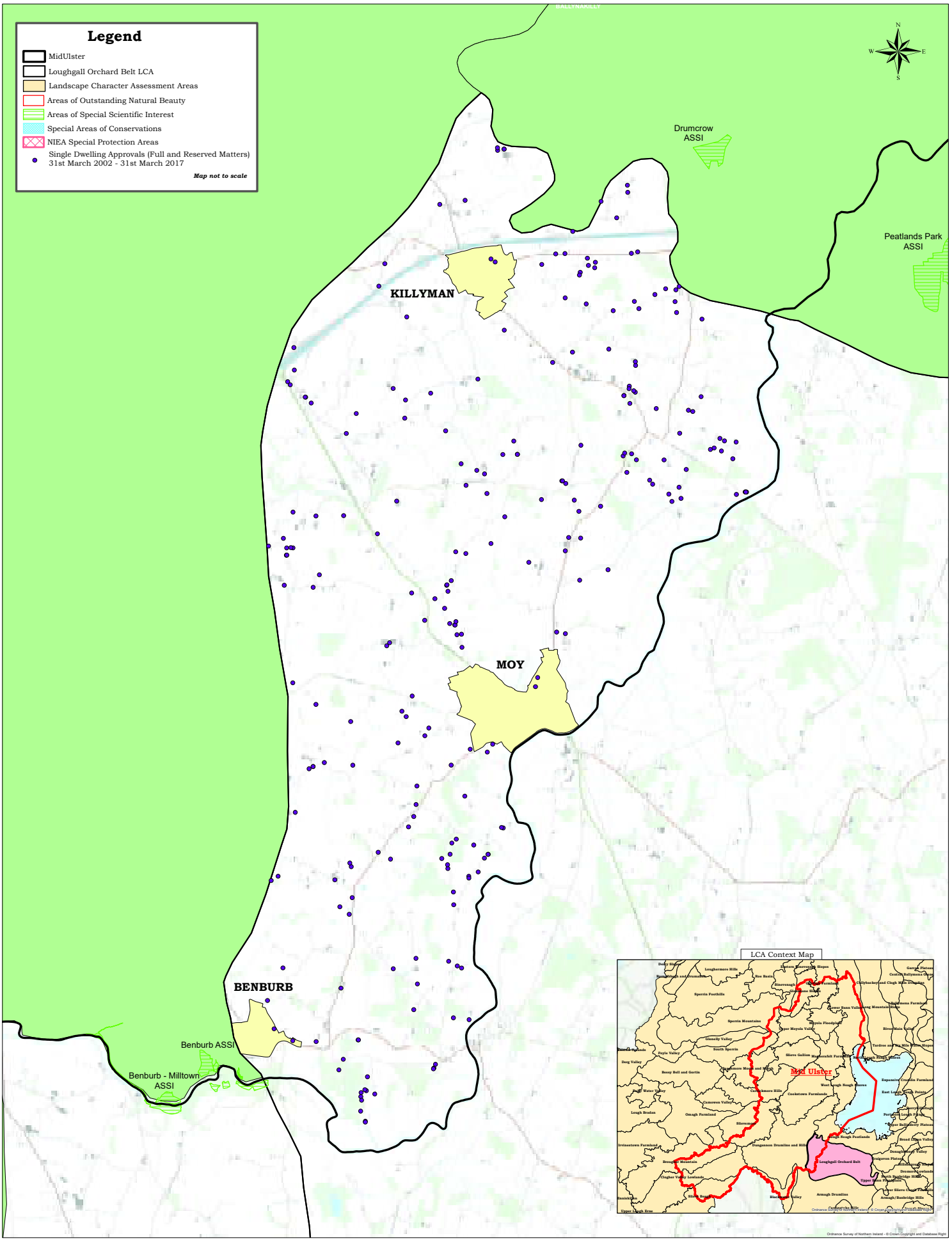
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# Loughgall Orchard Belt

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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# Lough Neagh Peatlands LCA

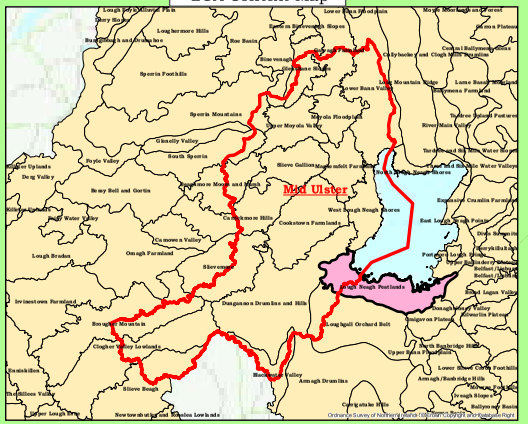
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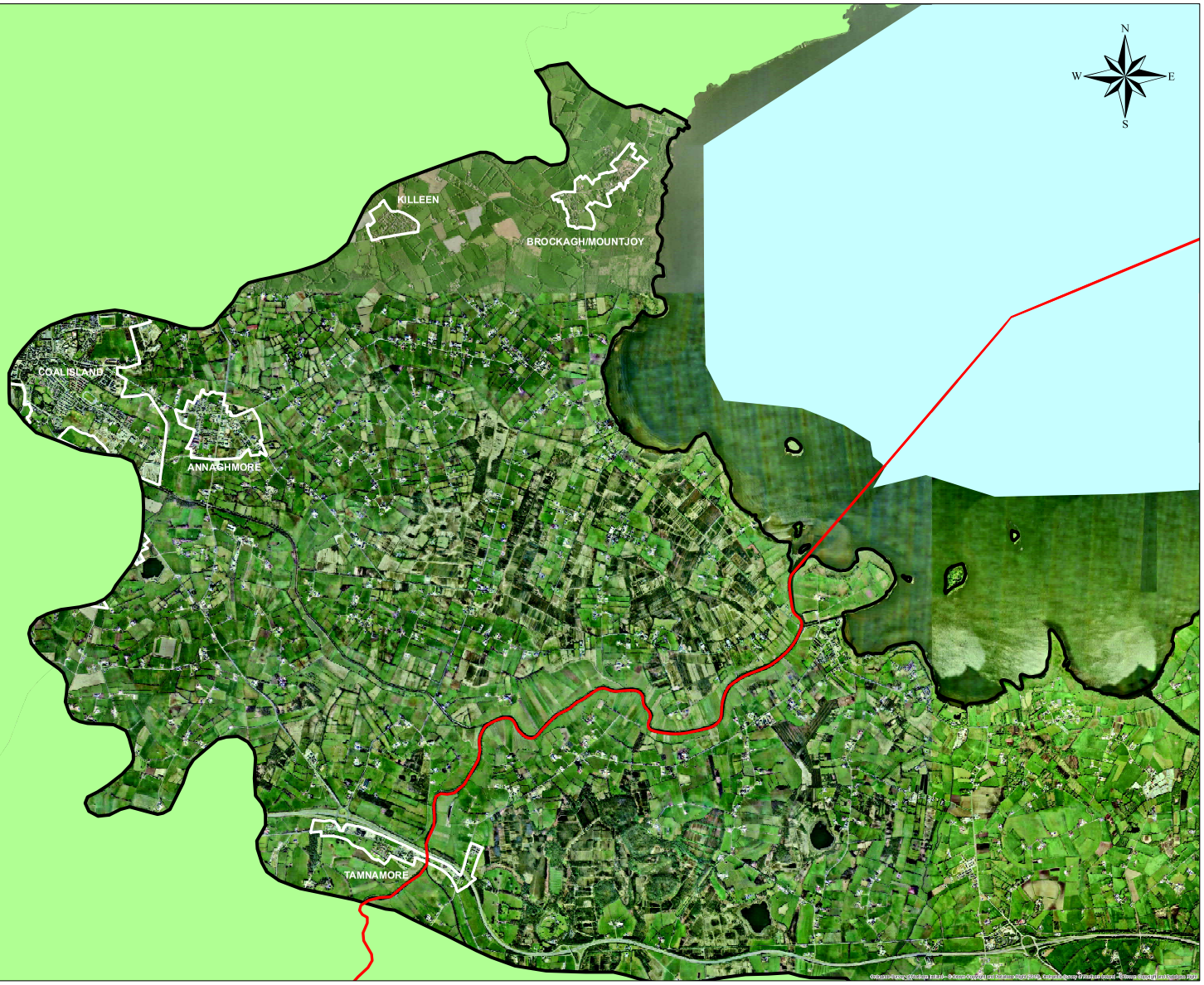
## Legend

- MidUlster
- Lough Neagh Peatlands LCA
- Landscape Character Assessment Areas

*Map not to scale*

LCA Context Map




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# Lough Neagh Peatlands LCA

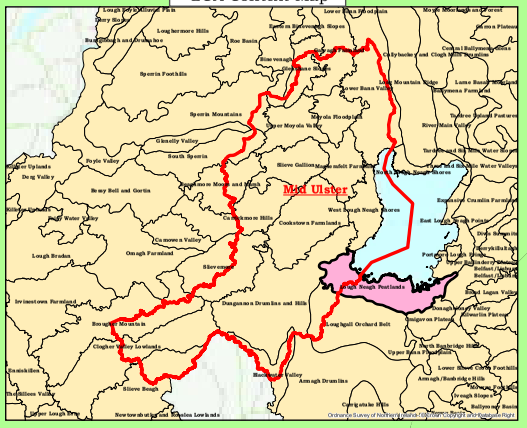
**Orthophotograhy Dates Range 21 April to 31 May 2016**

## Legend

- MidUlster
- Lough Neagh Peatlands LCA
- Landscape Character Assessment Areas

*Map not to scale*

LCA Context Map







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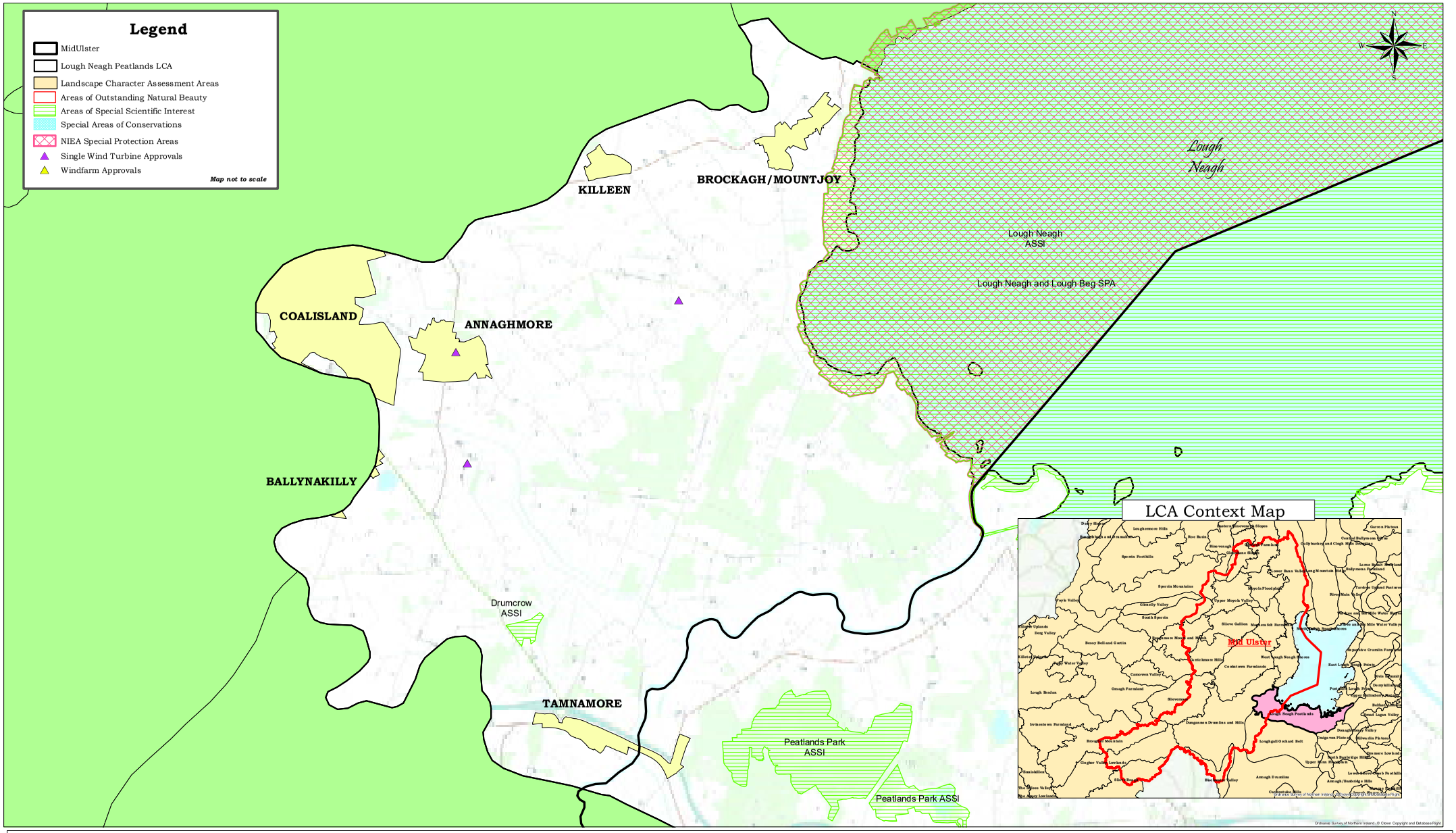
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# Lough Neagh Peatlands

## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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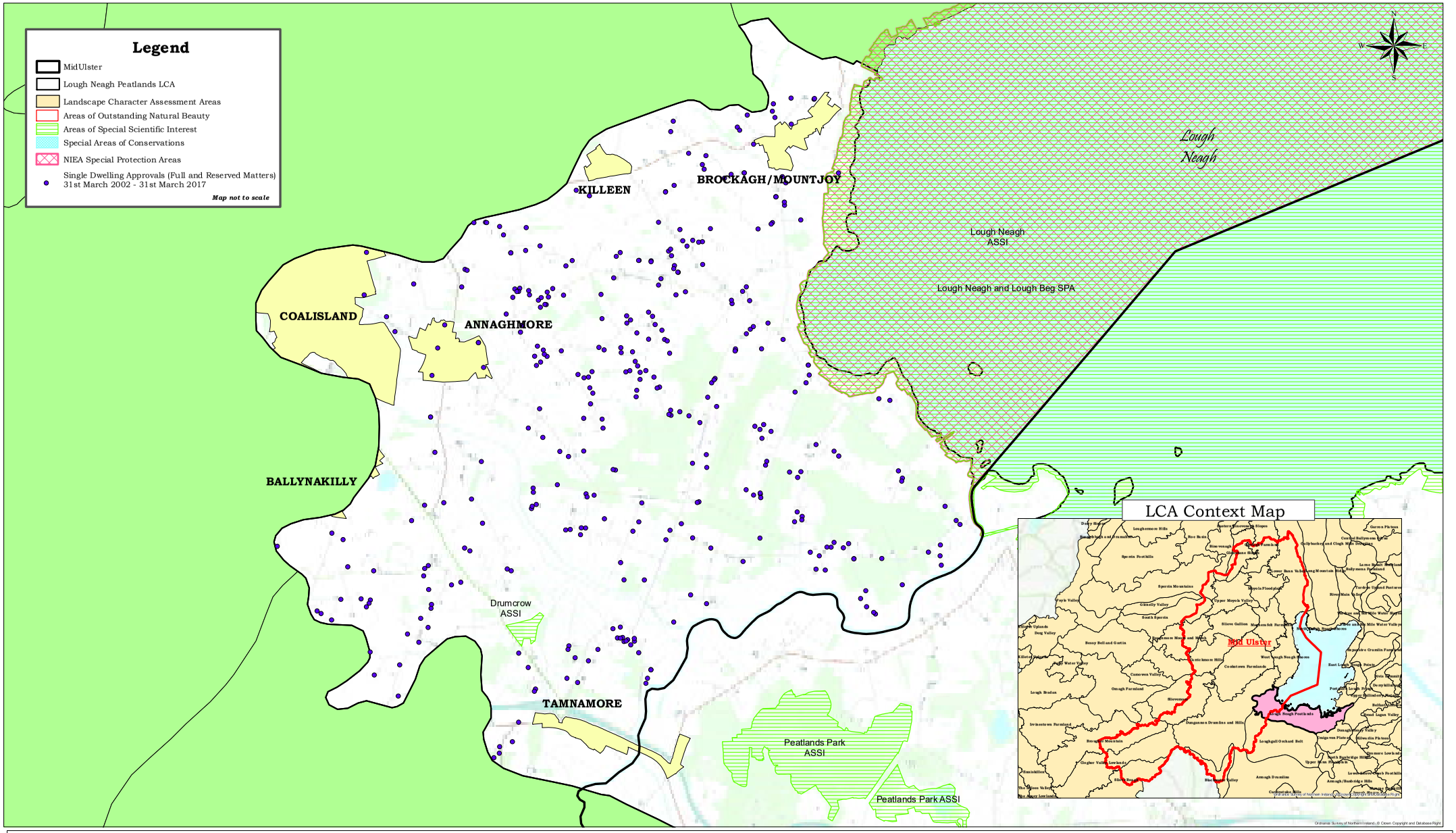
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# Lough Neagh Peatlands

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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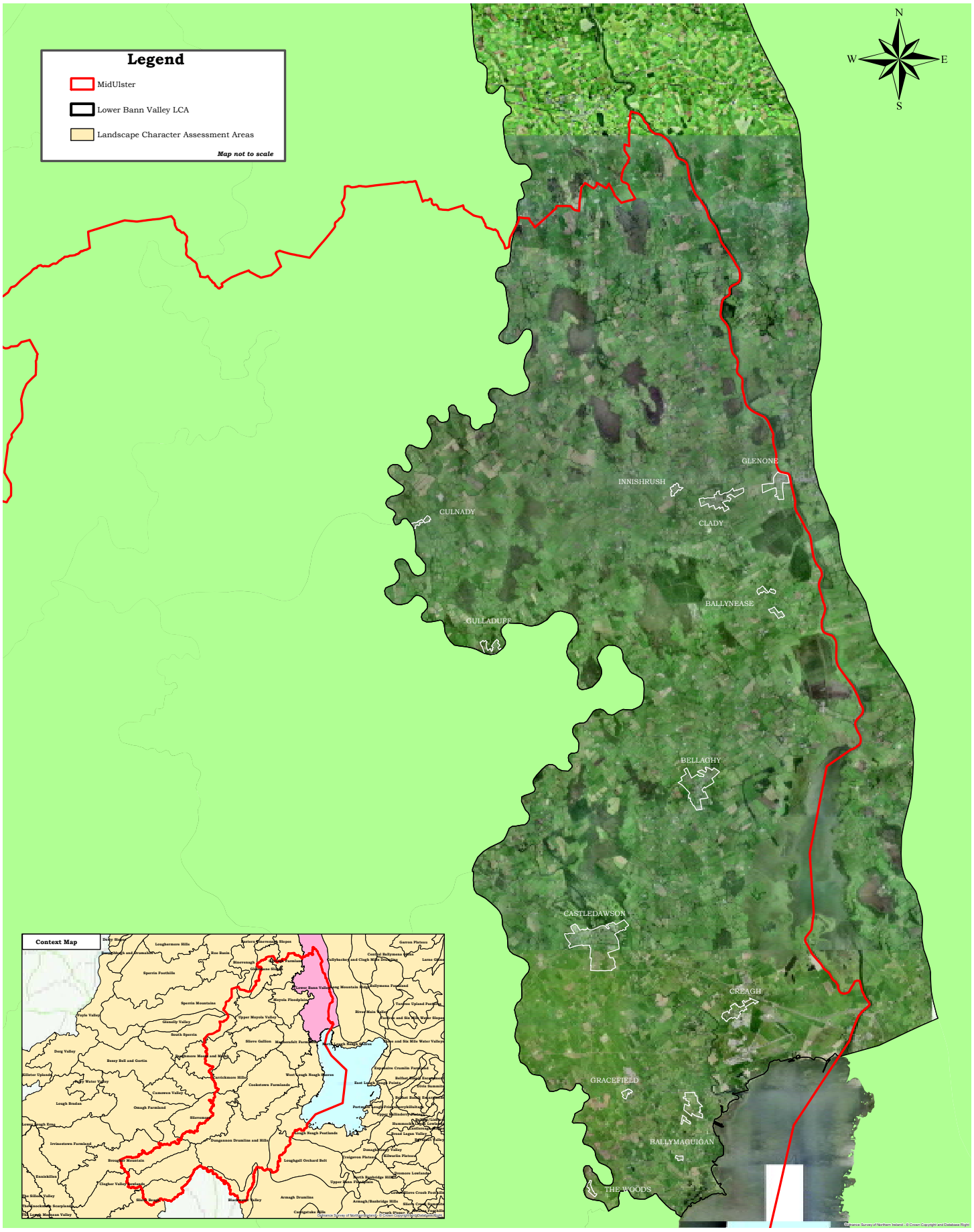
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# Lower Bann Valley LCA

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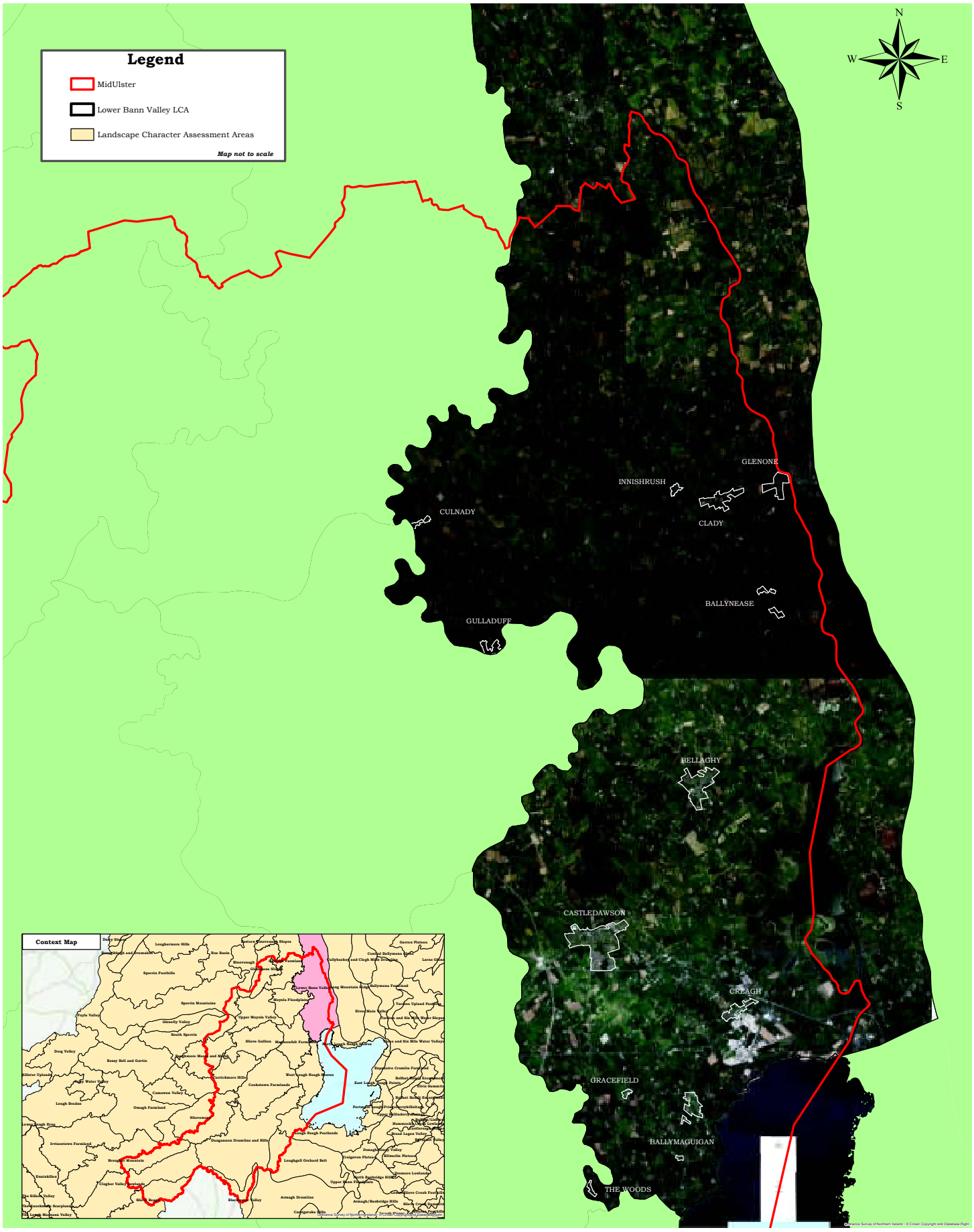
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# Lower Bann Valley LCA

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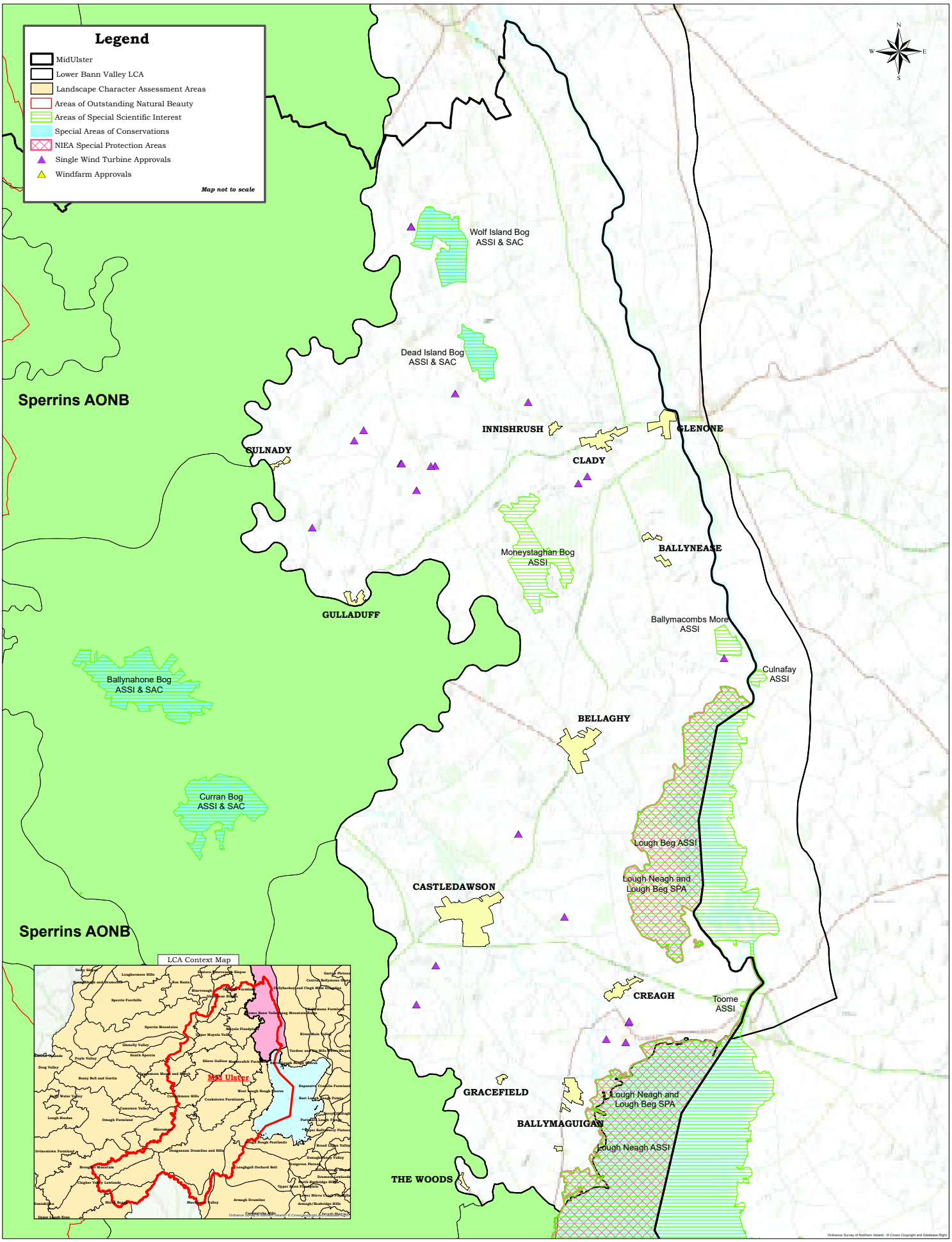
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# Lower Bann Valley

## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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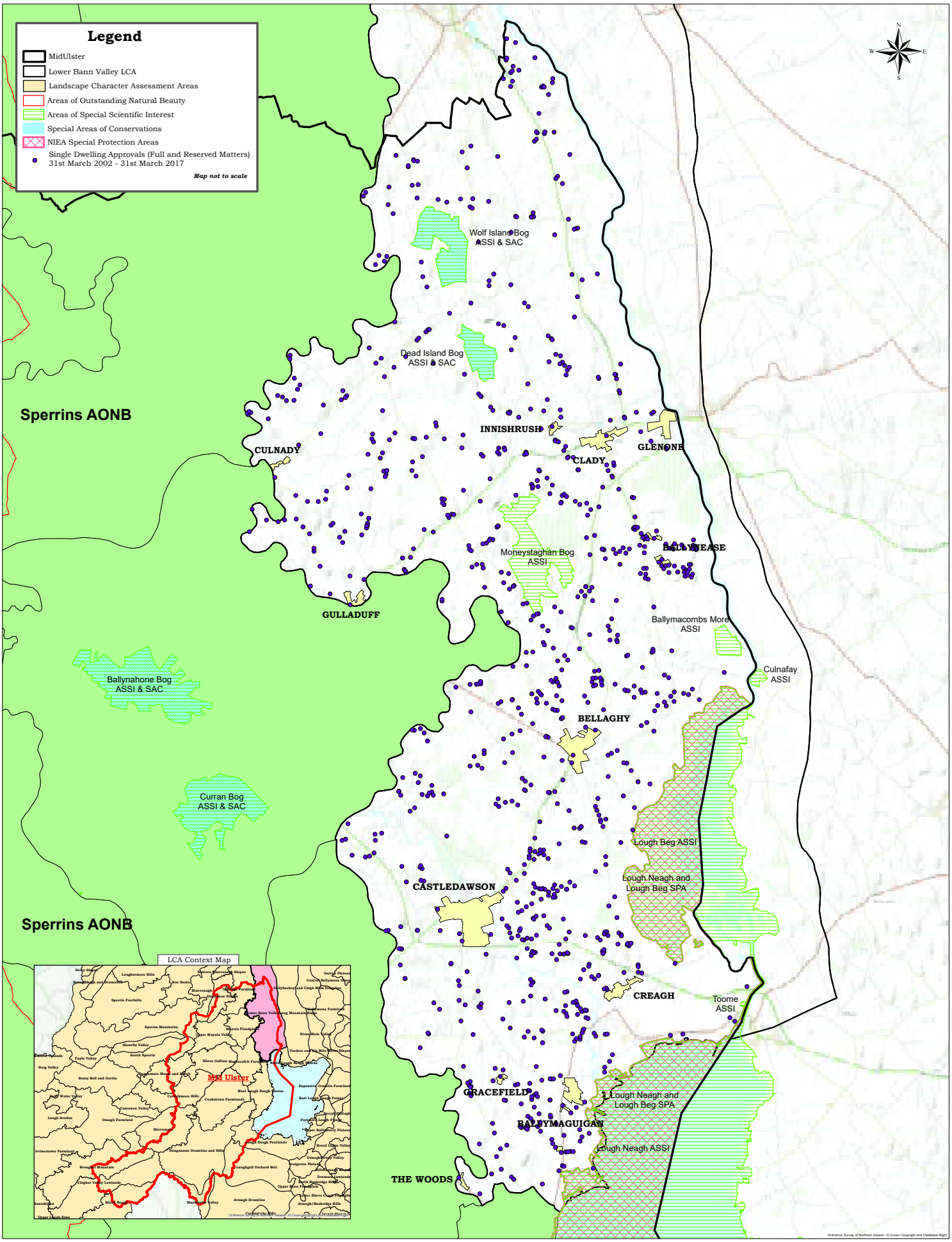
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# Lower Bann Valley

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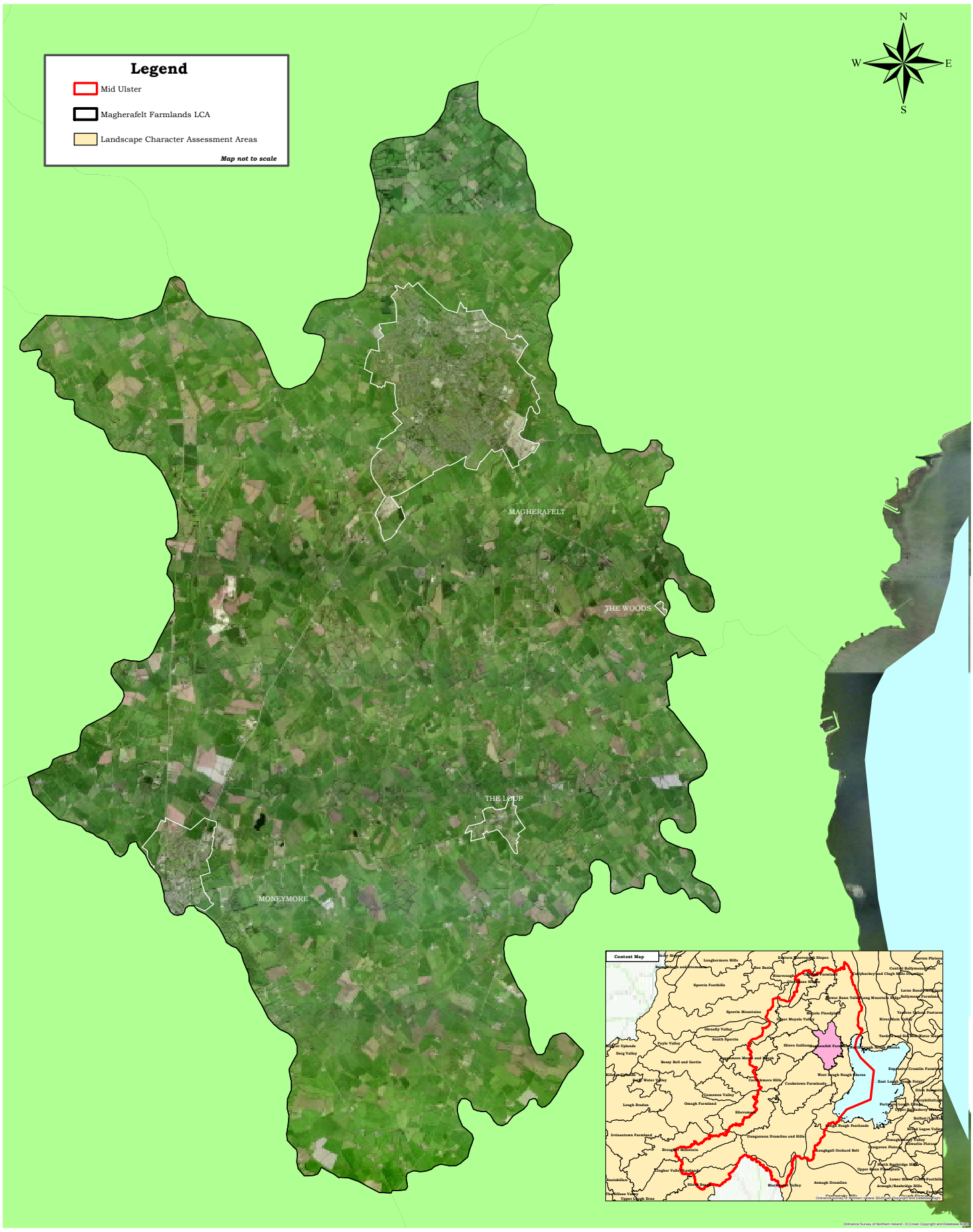
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# Magherafelt Farmlands LCA
## Orthophotograhy Date 11 May 2006




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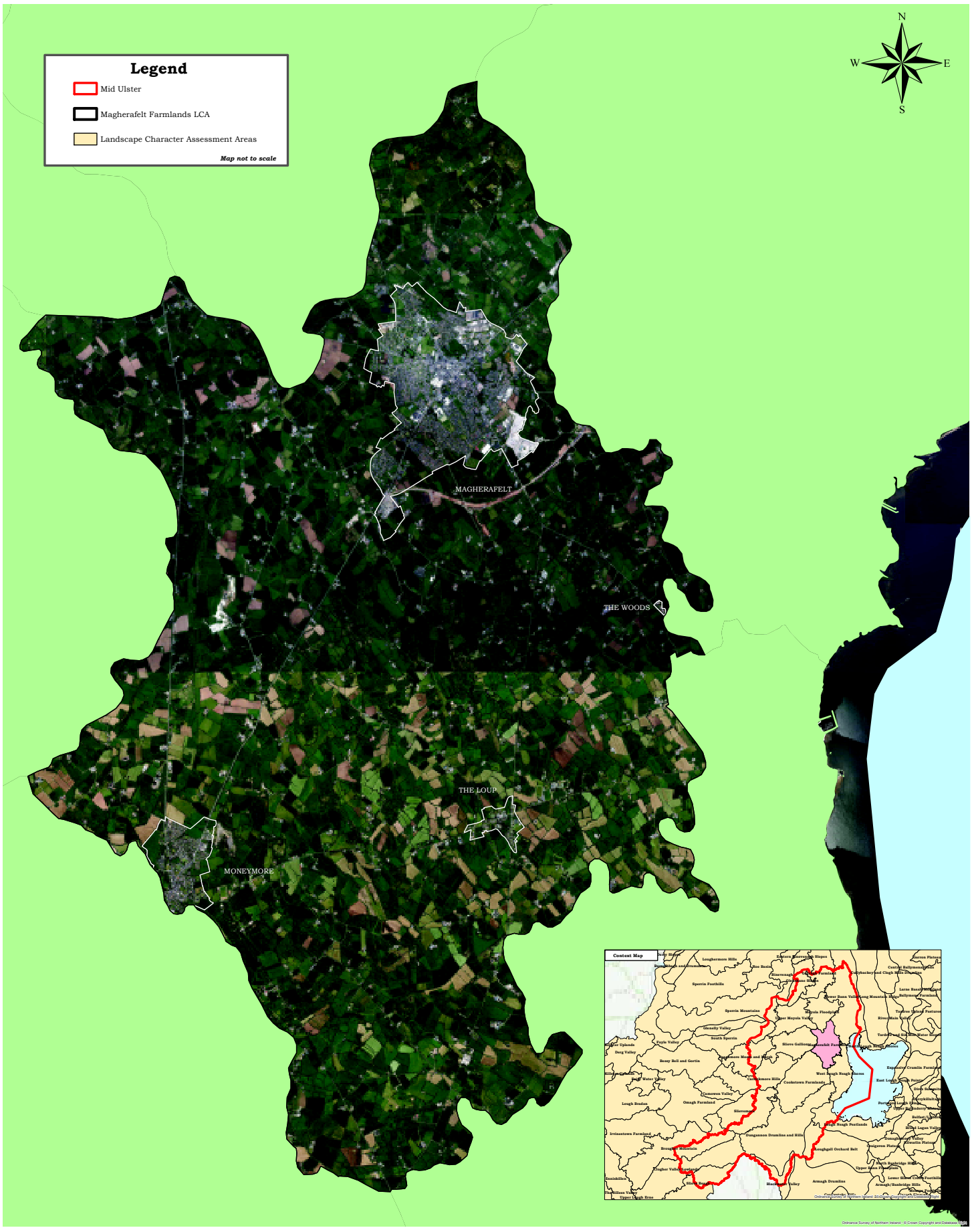
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# Magherafelt Farmlands LCA
## Orthophotography Date Range 10 May 2016 to 31 May 2016




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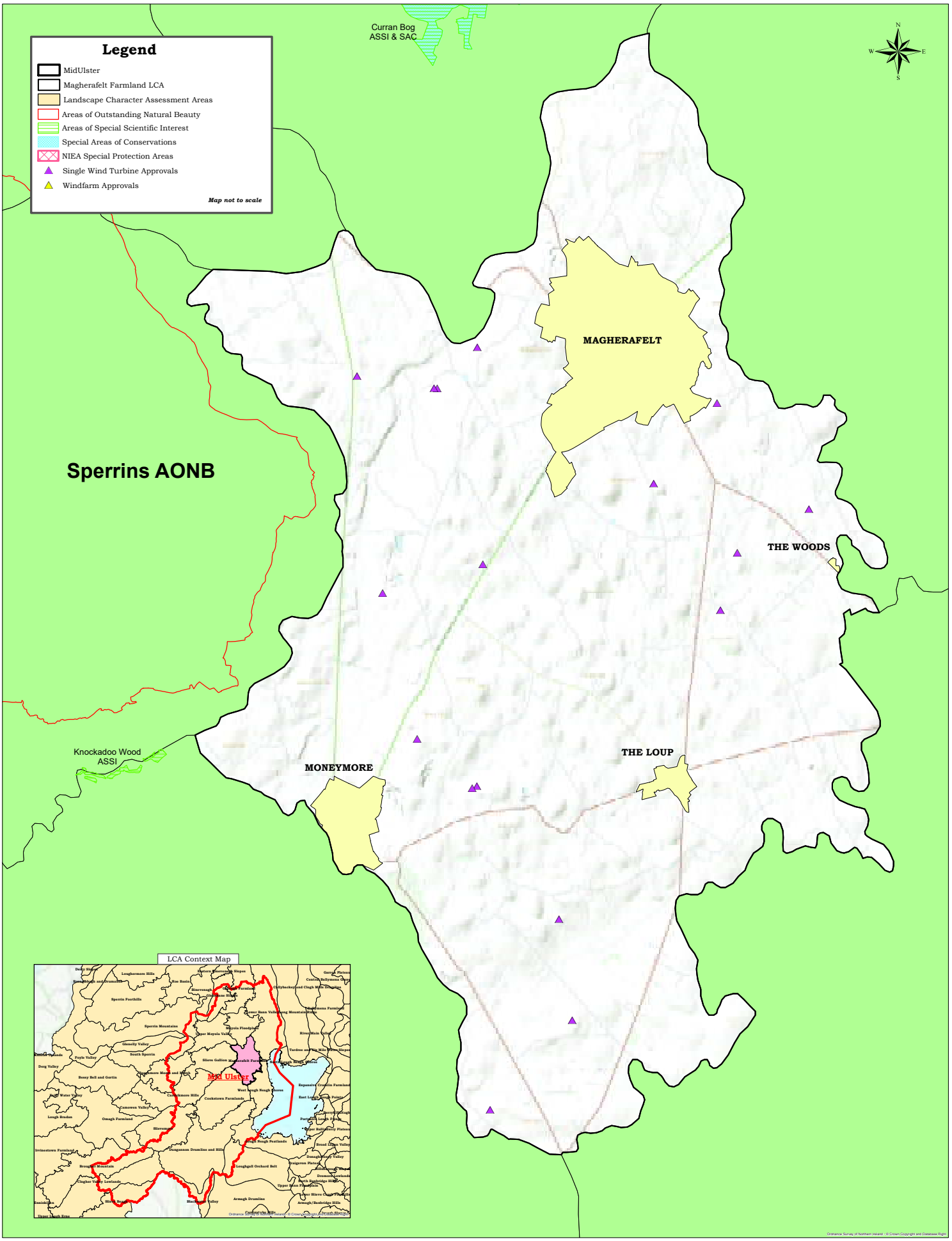
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# Magherafelt Farmland

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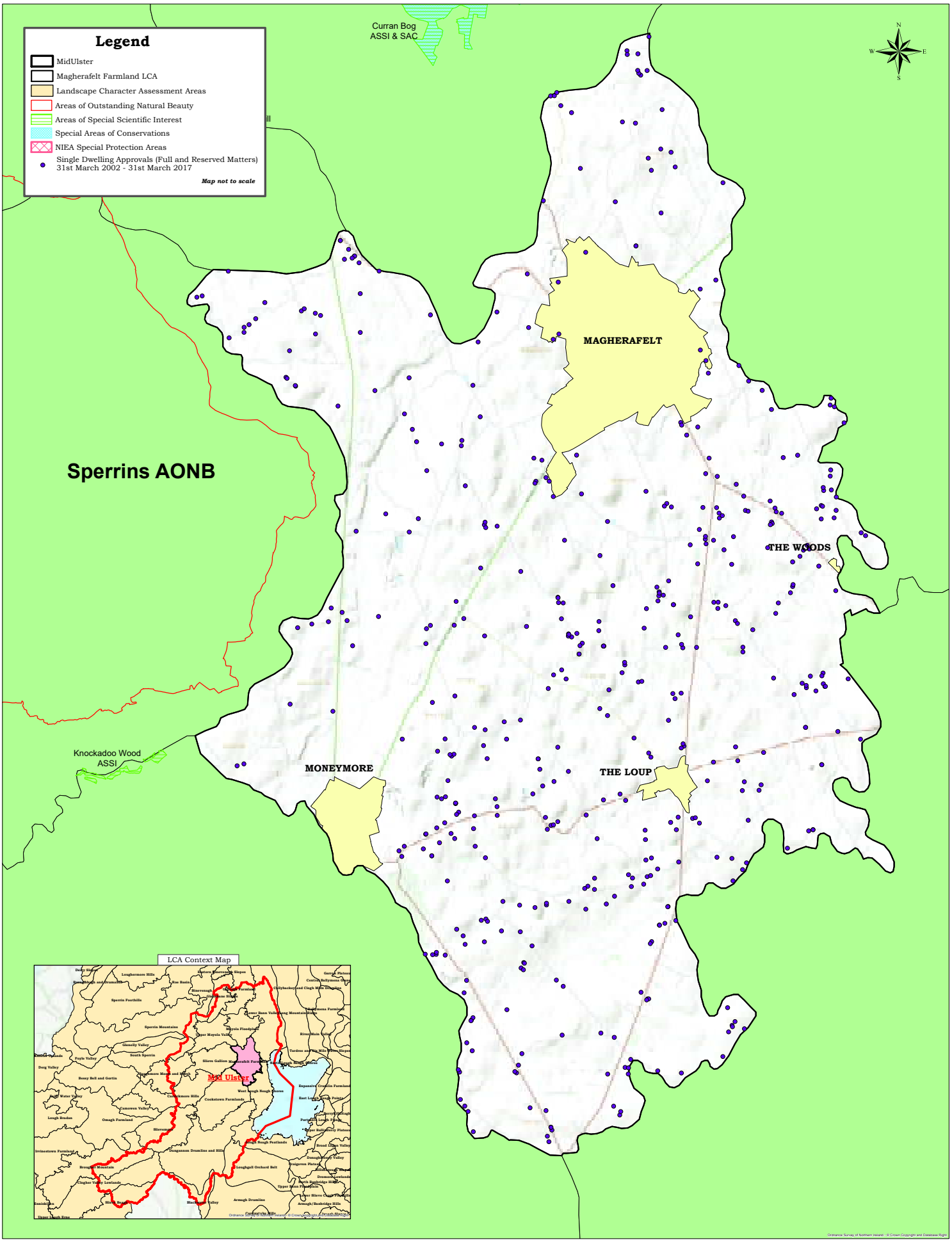
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# Magherafelt Farmland

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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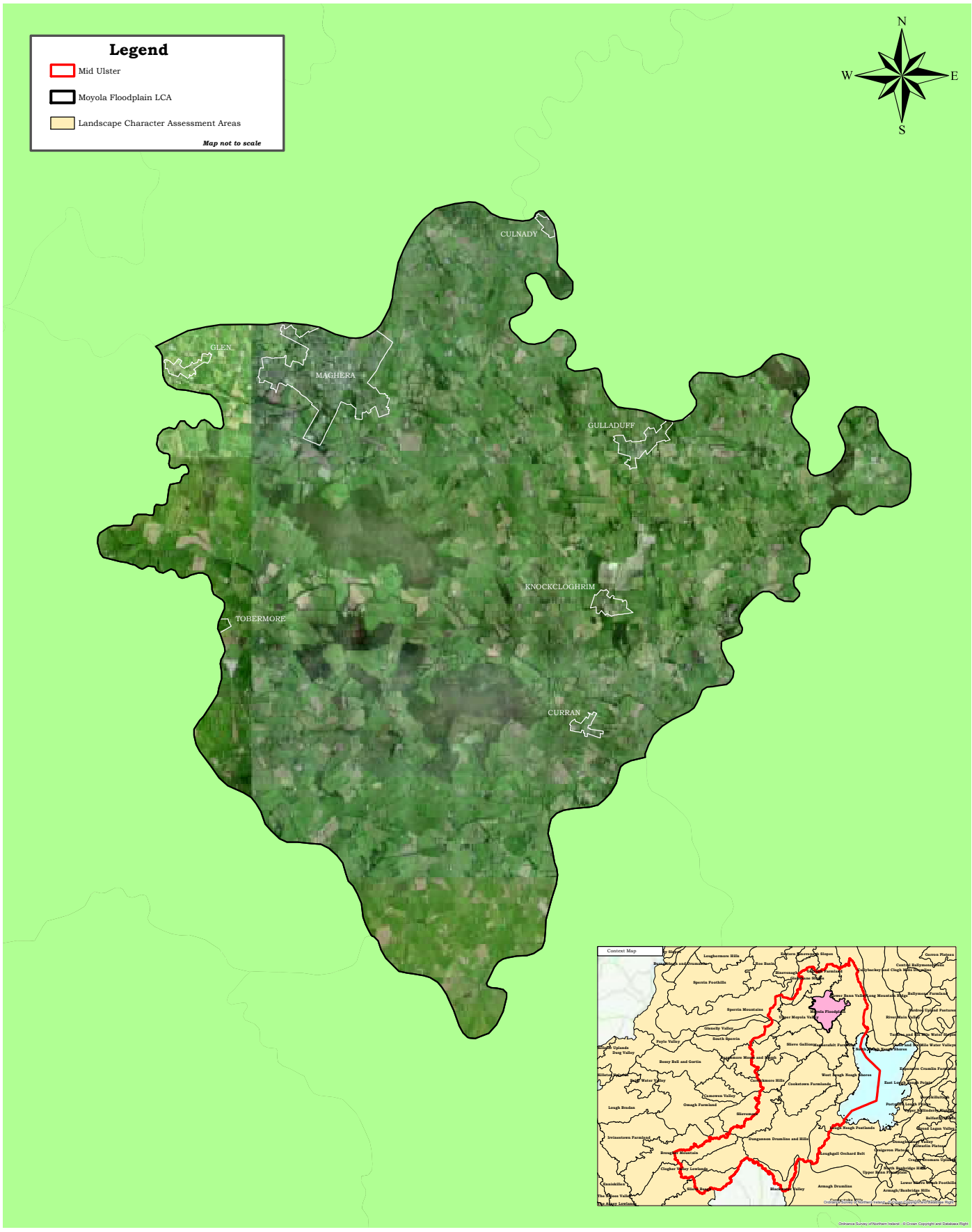
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# Moyola Floodplain LCA
## Orthophotograhy Date 17 September 2003




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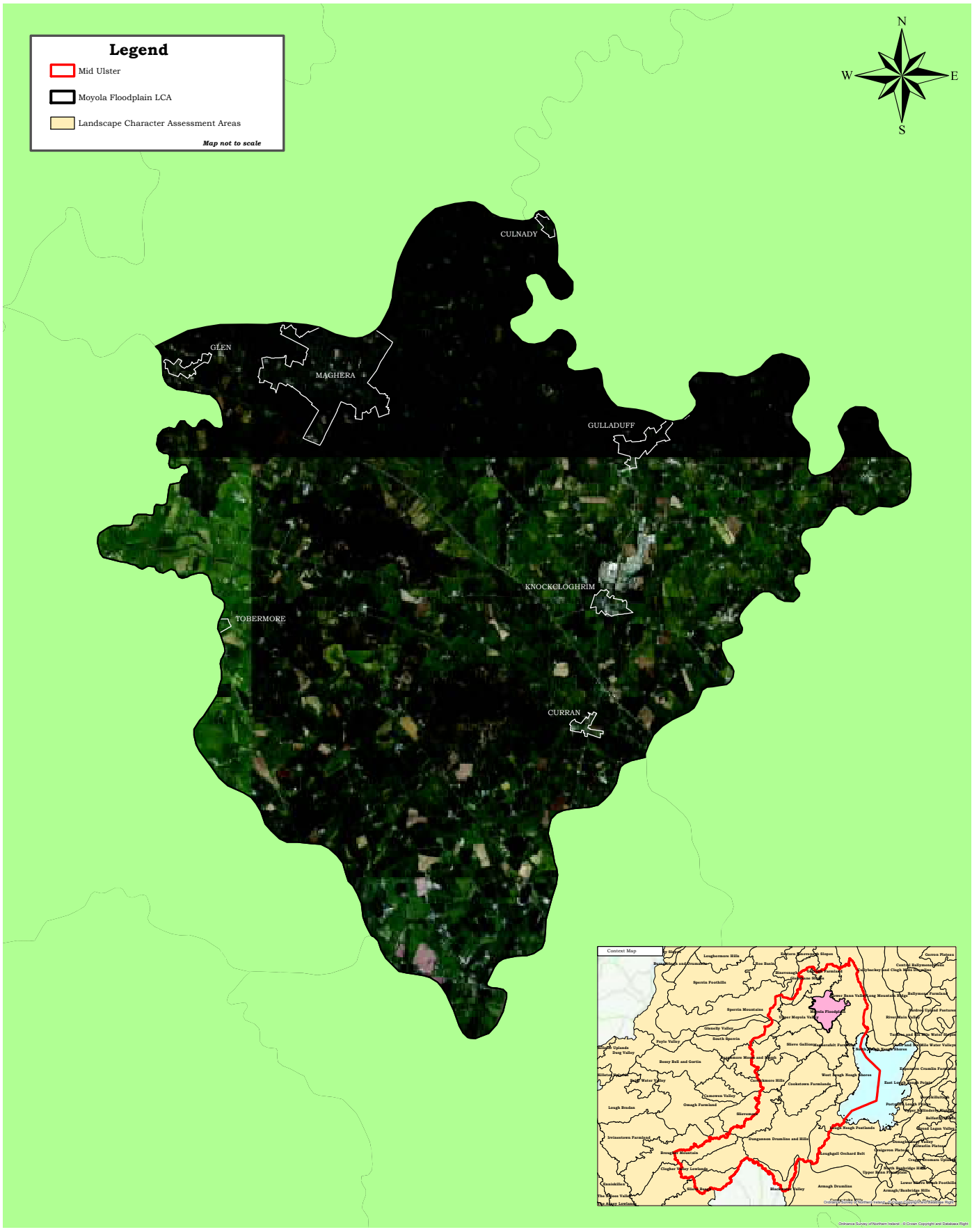
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# Moyola Floodplain LCA

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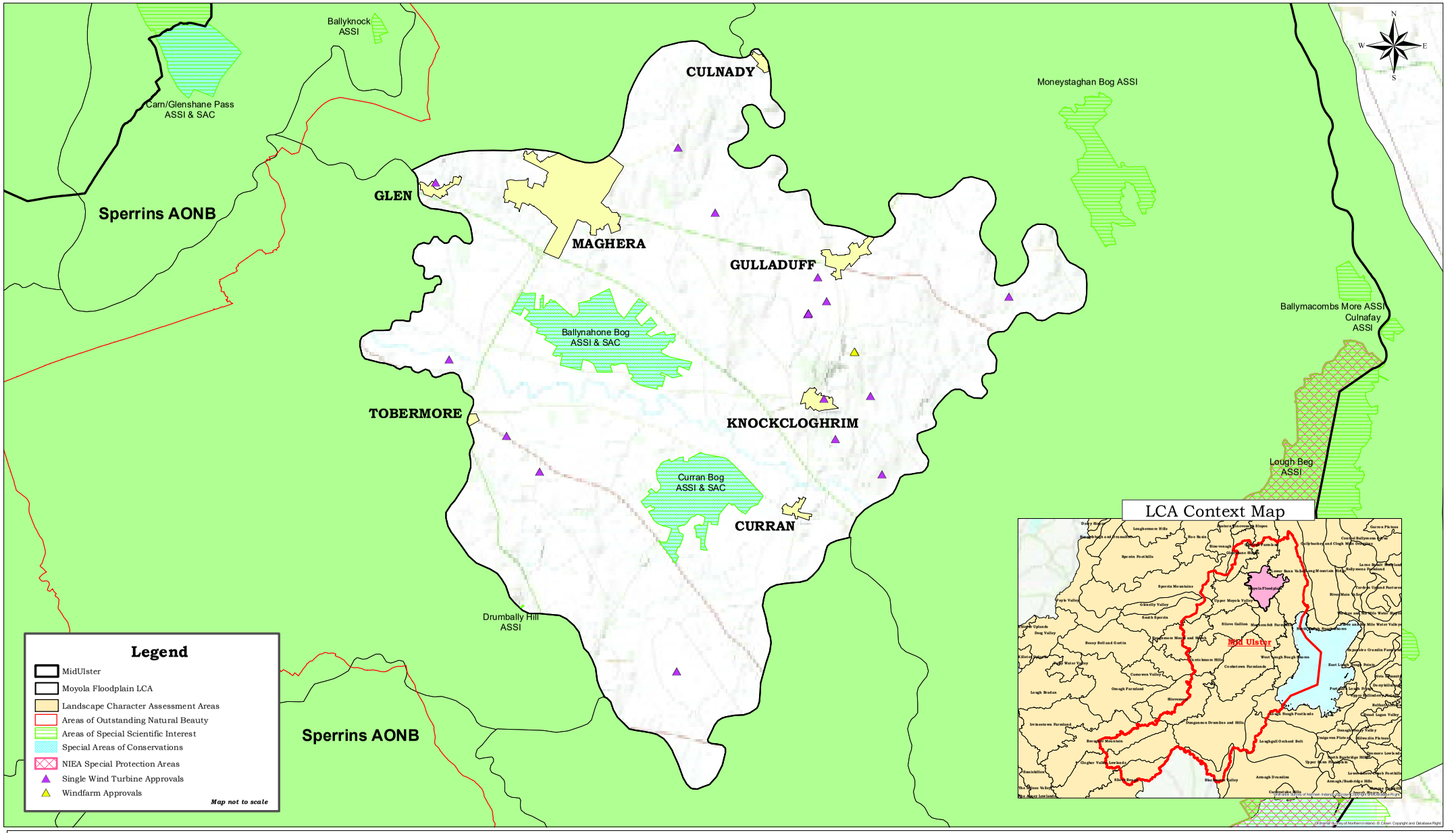
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# Moyola Floodplain

## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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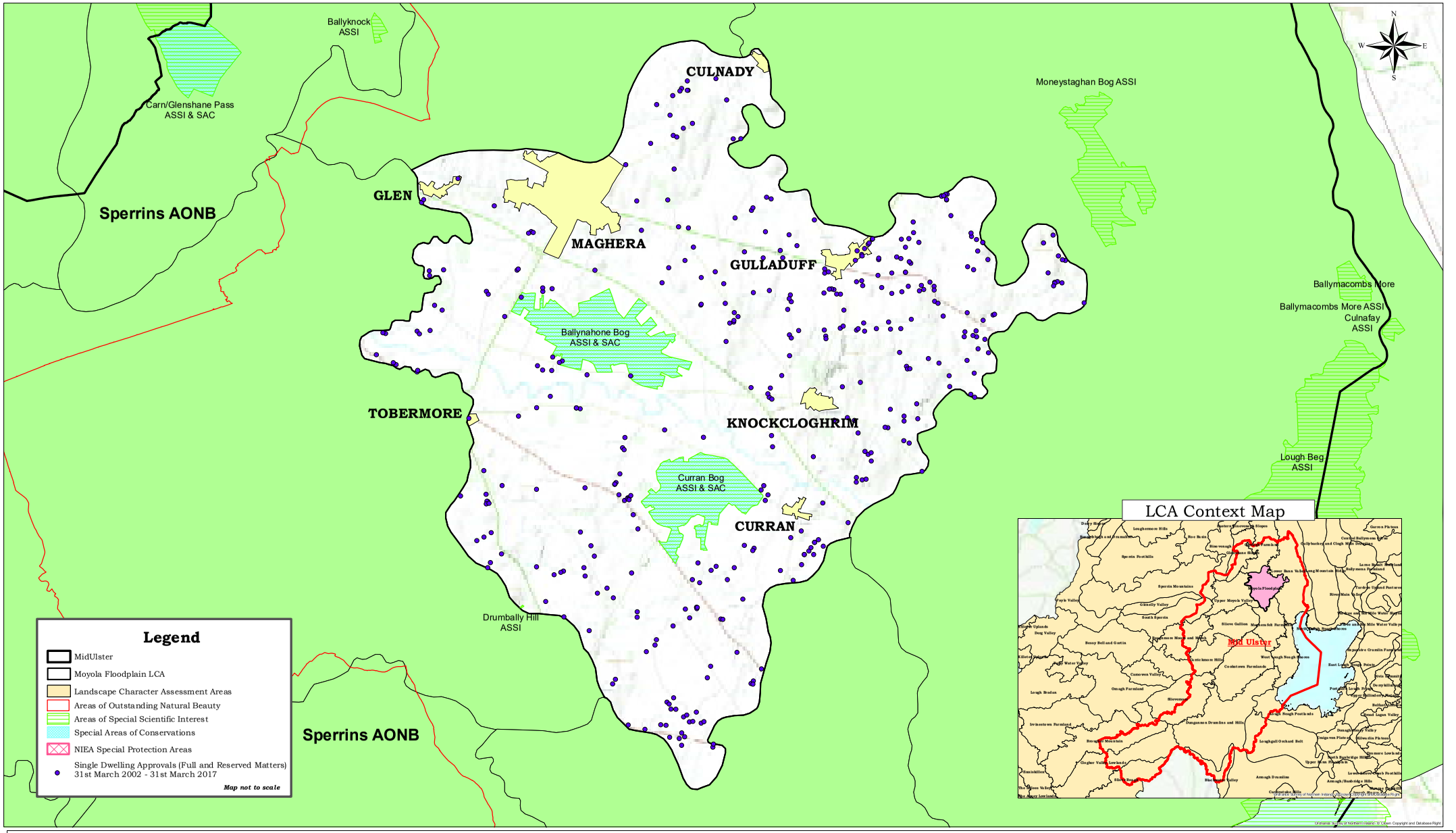
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# Moyola Floodplain

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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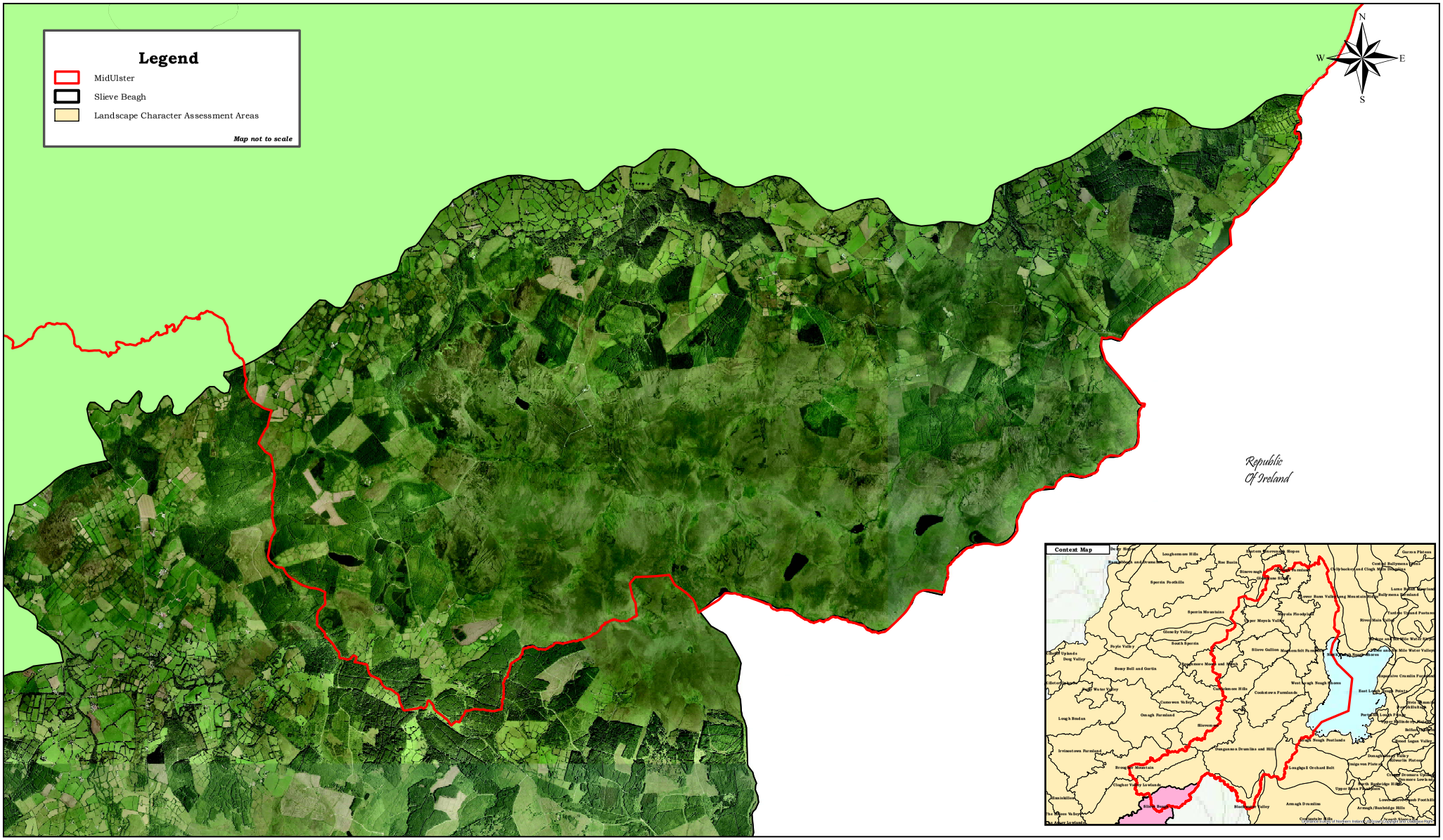
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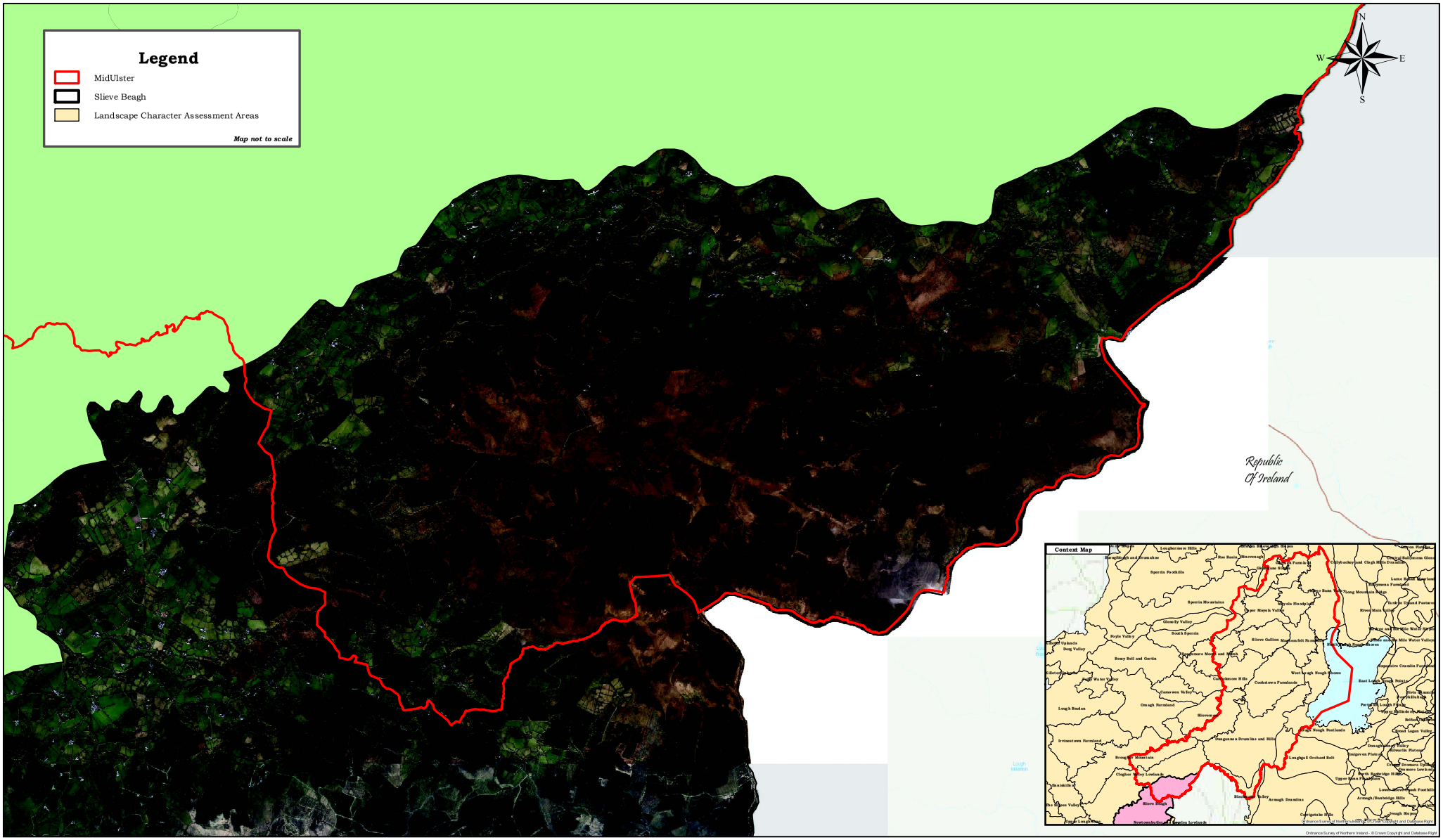
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# Slieve Beagh
## Orthophotograhy Dates 29 October 2015




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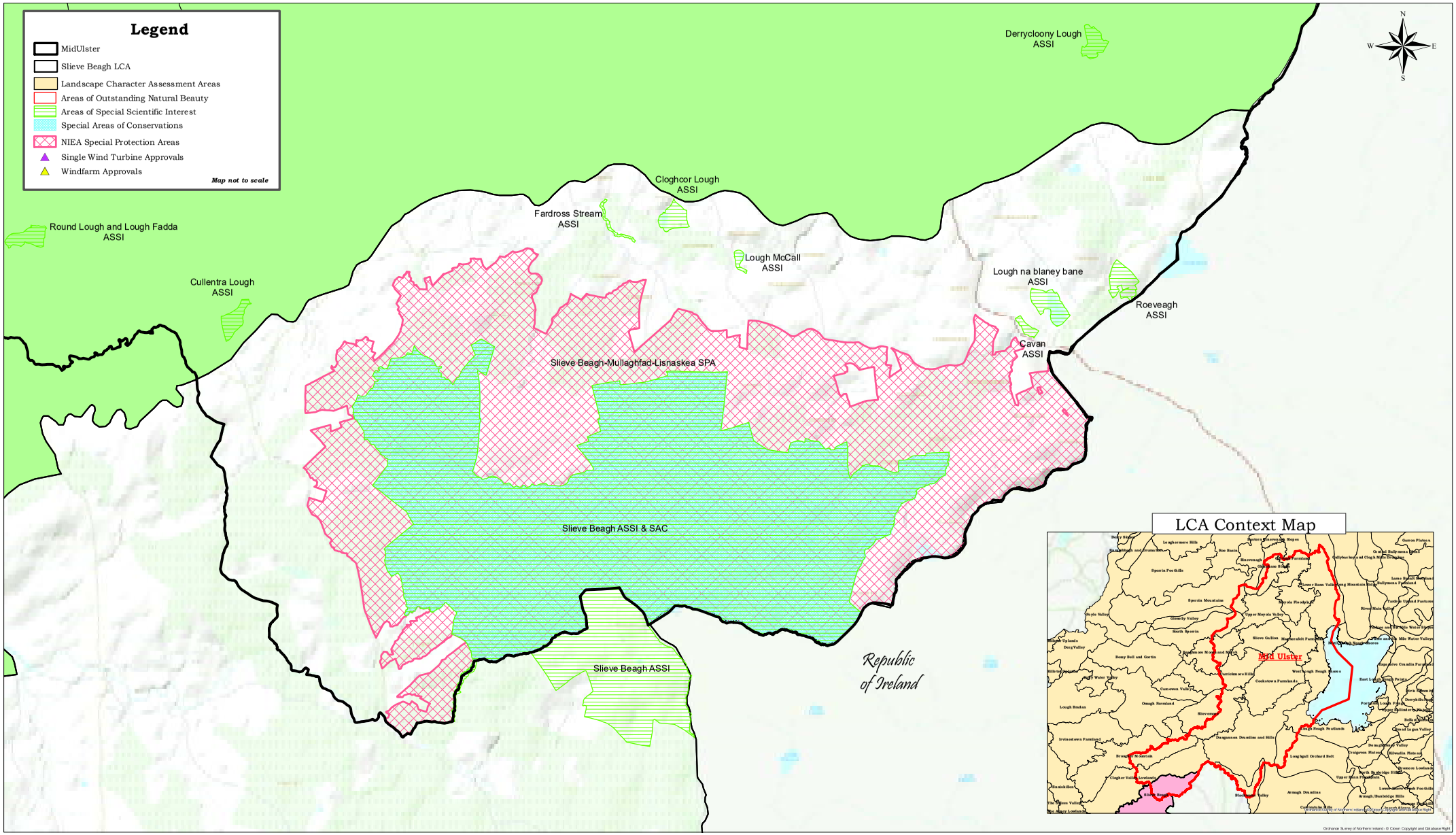
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# Slieve Beagh

## Single Wind Turbine and Windfarm Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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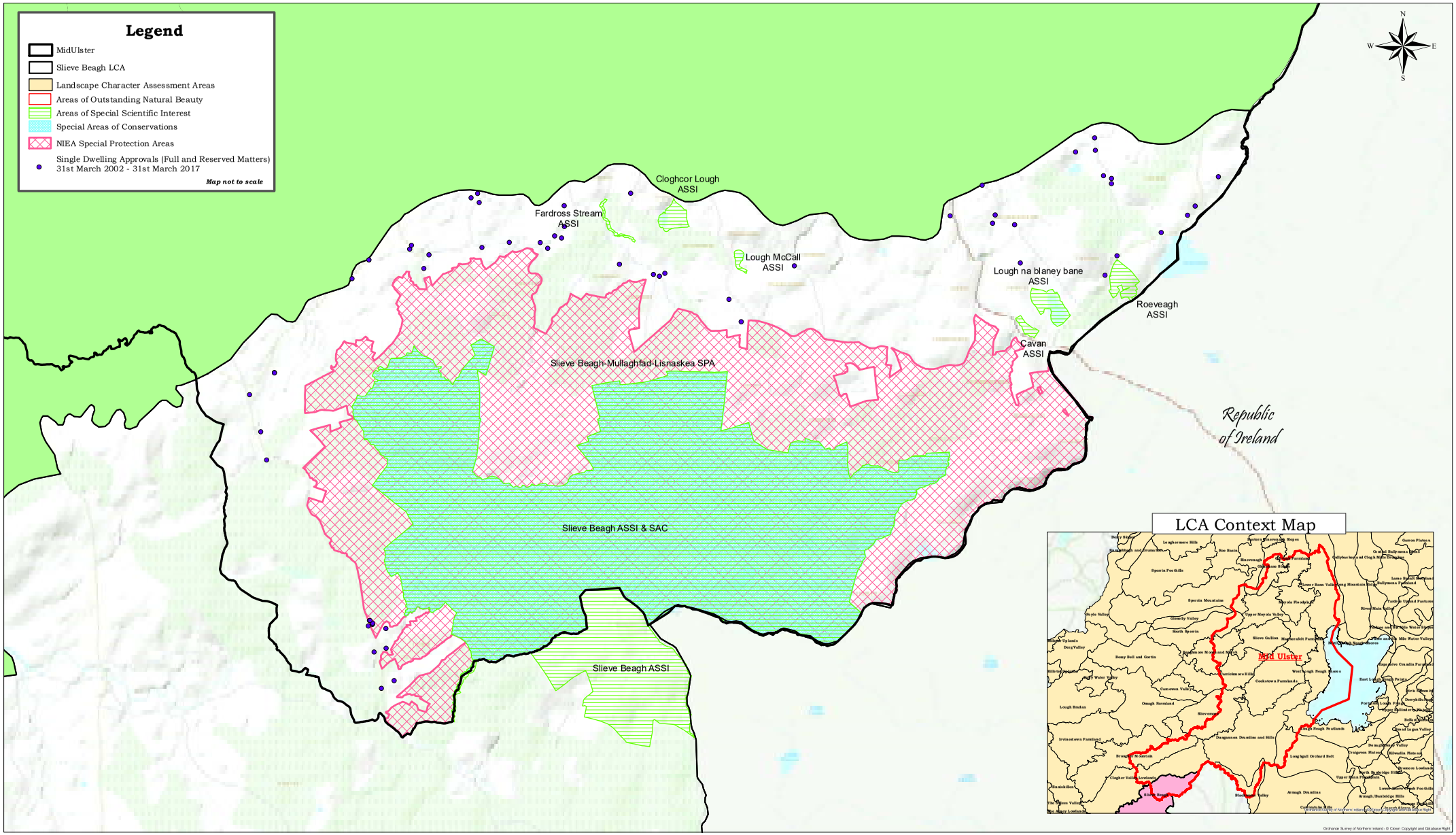
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# Slieve Beagh

## Single Dwelling (F and RM) Approvals 31st March 2002 - 31st March 2017




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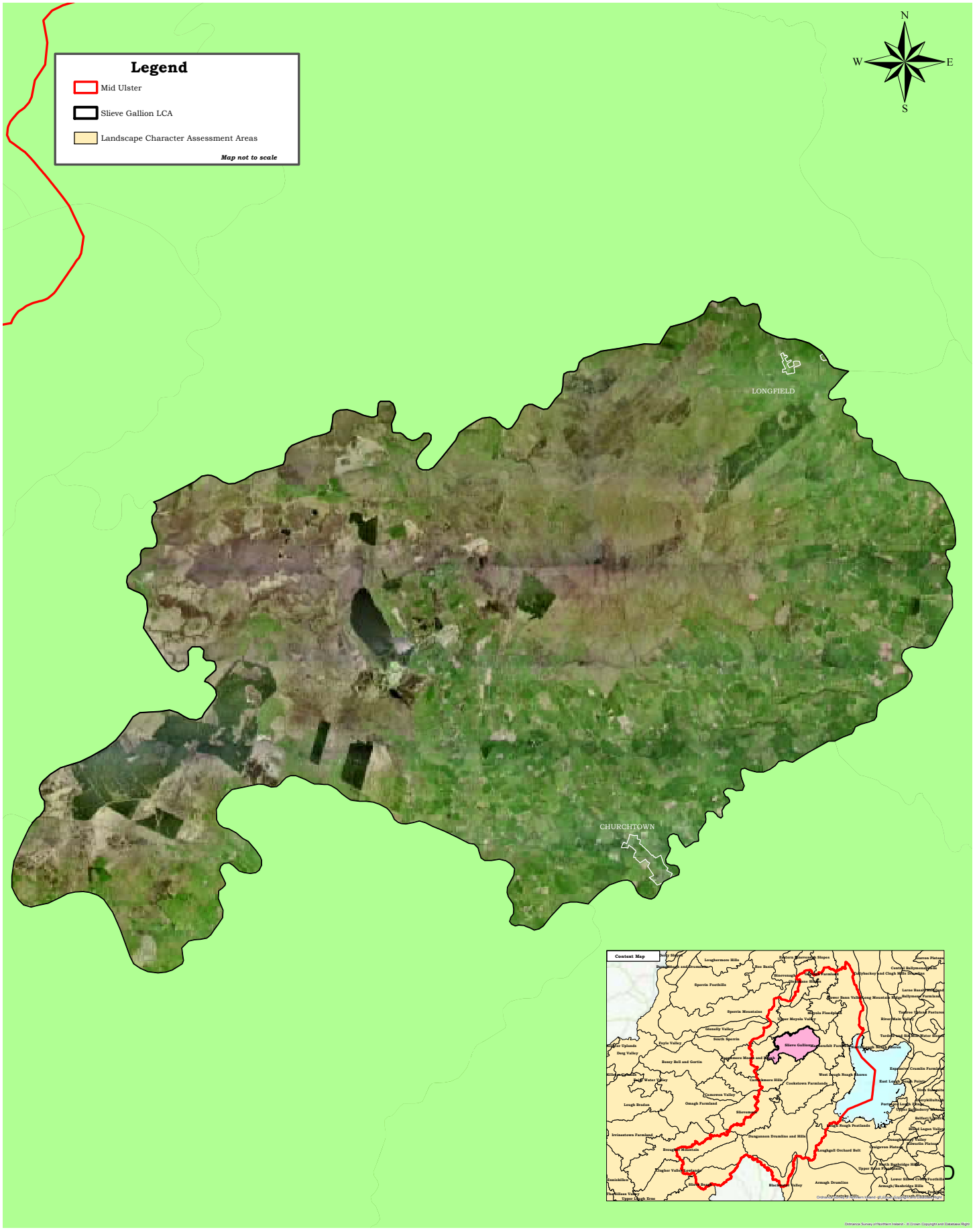
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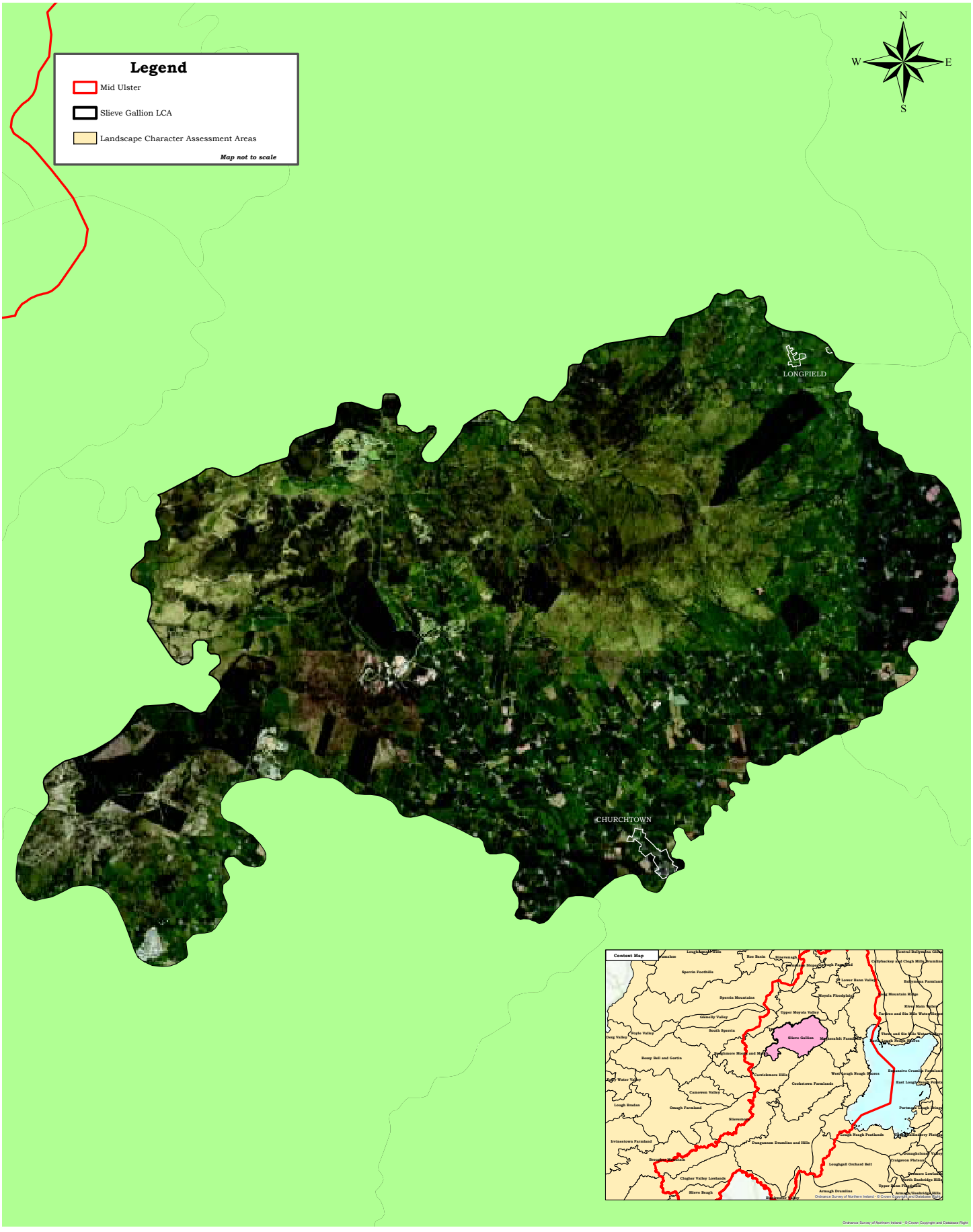
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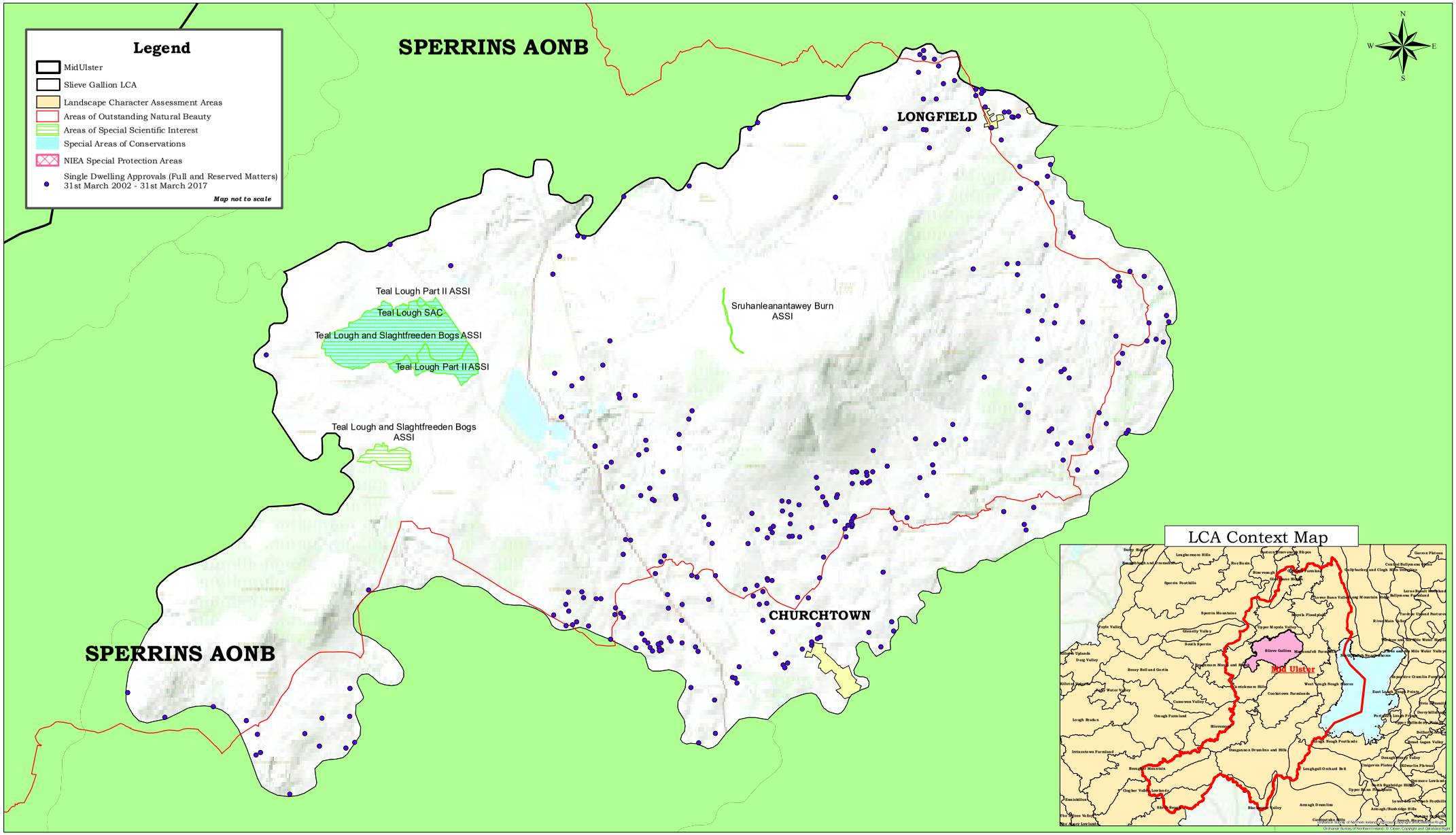
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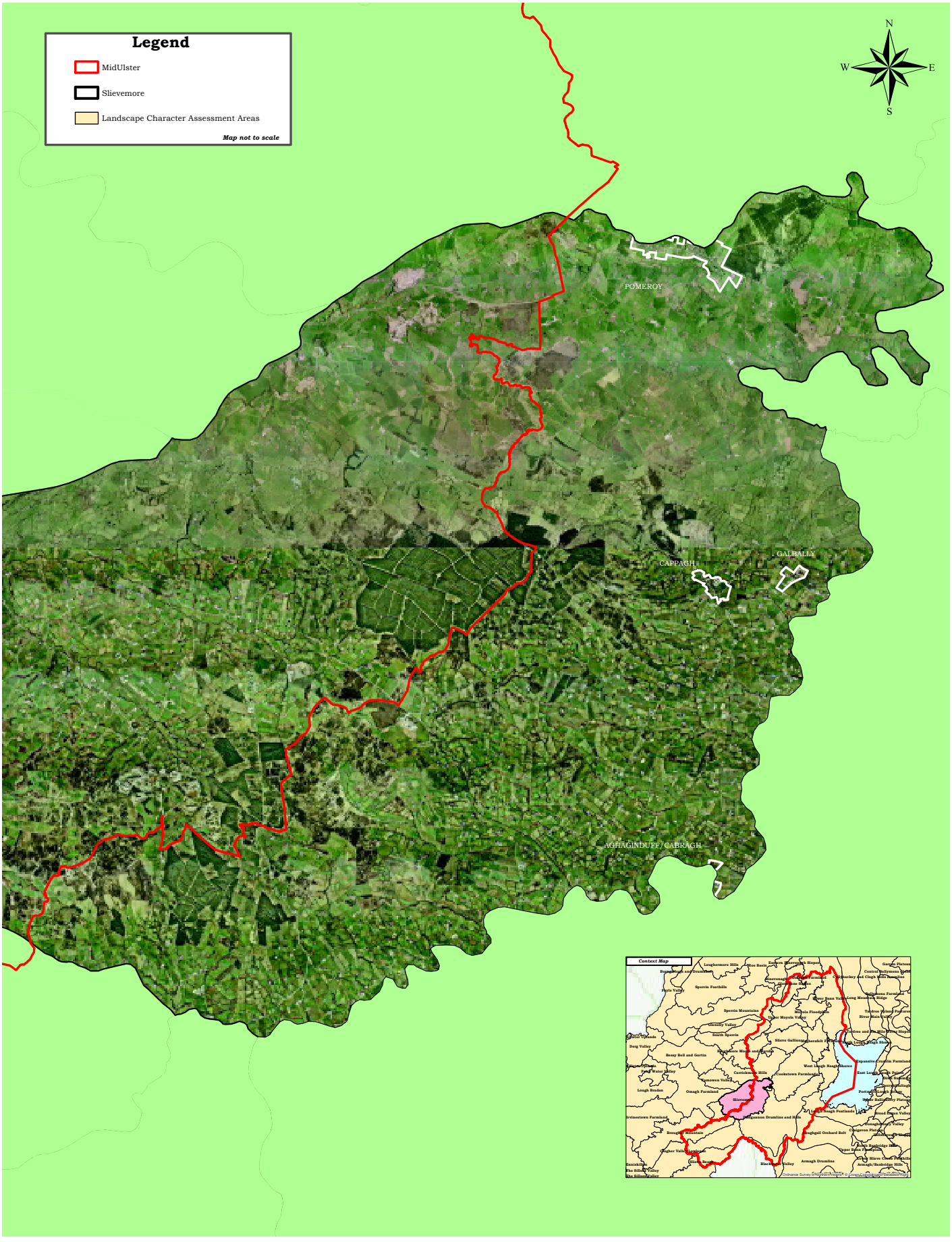
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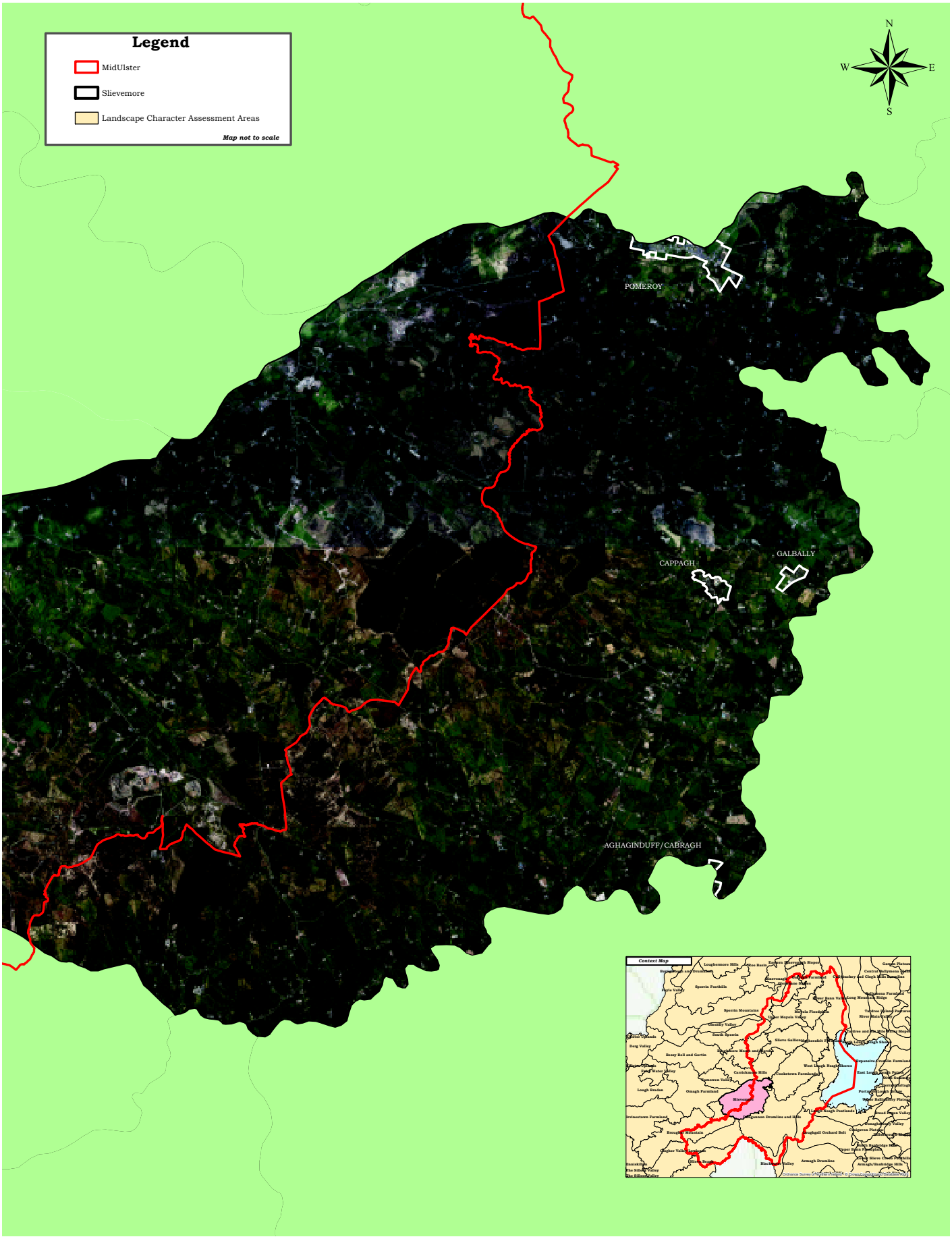
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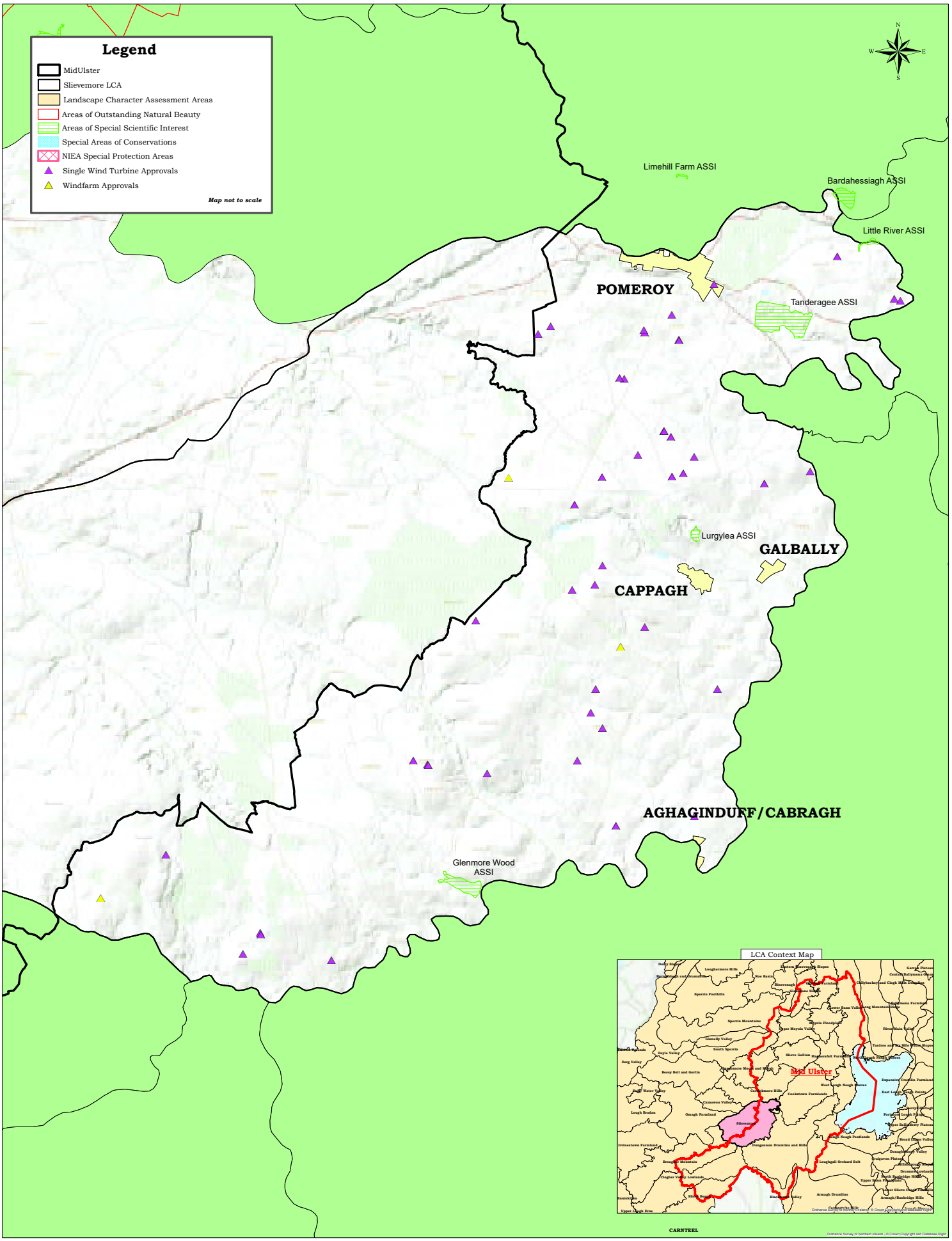
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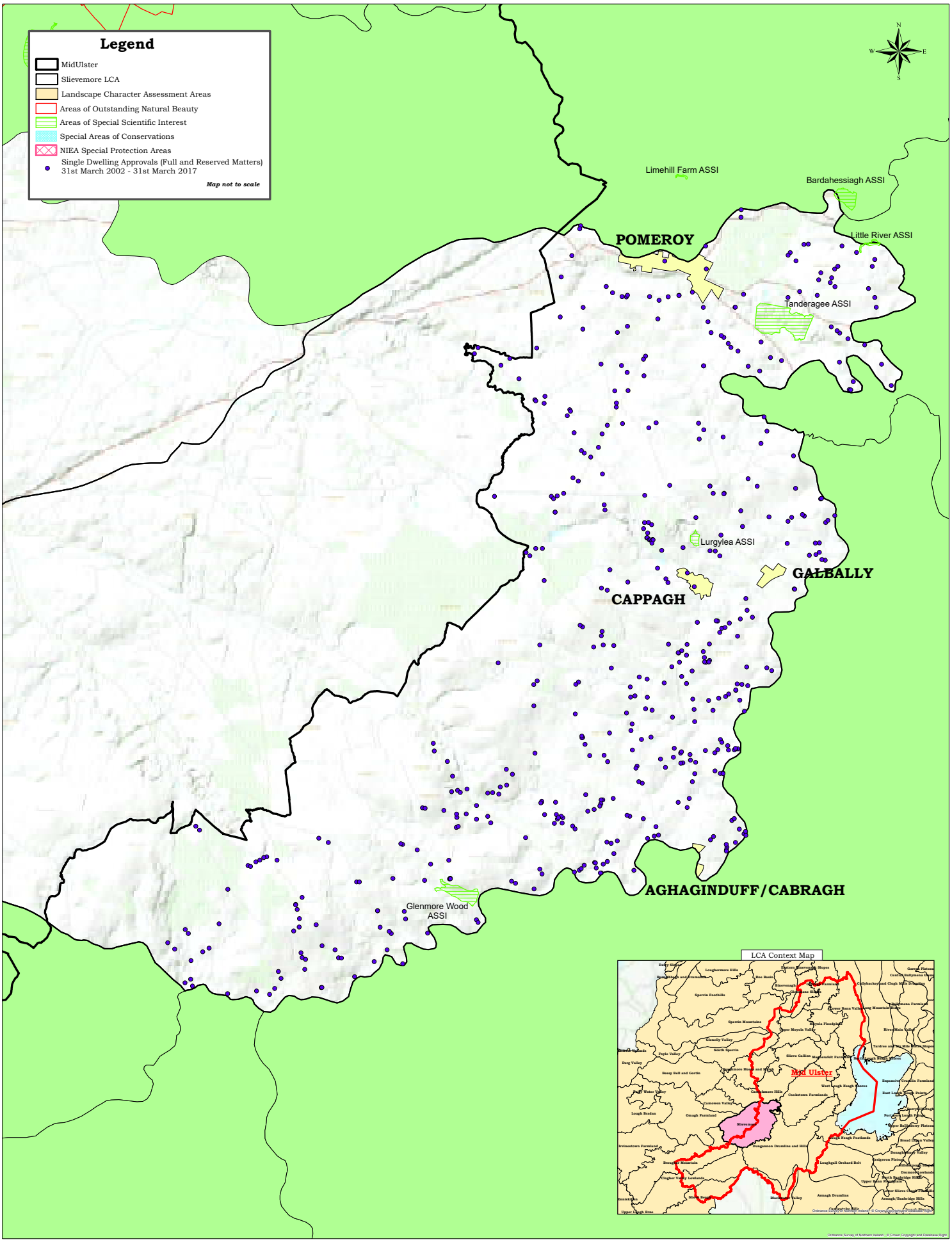
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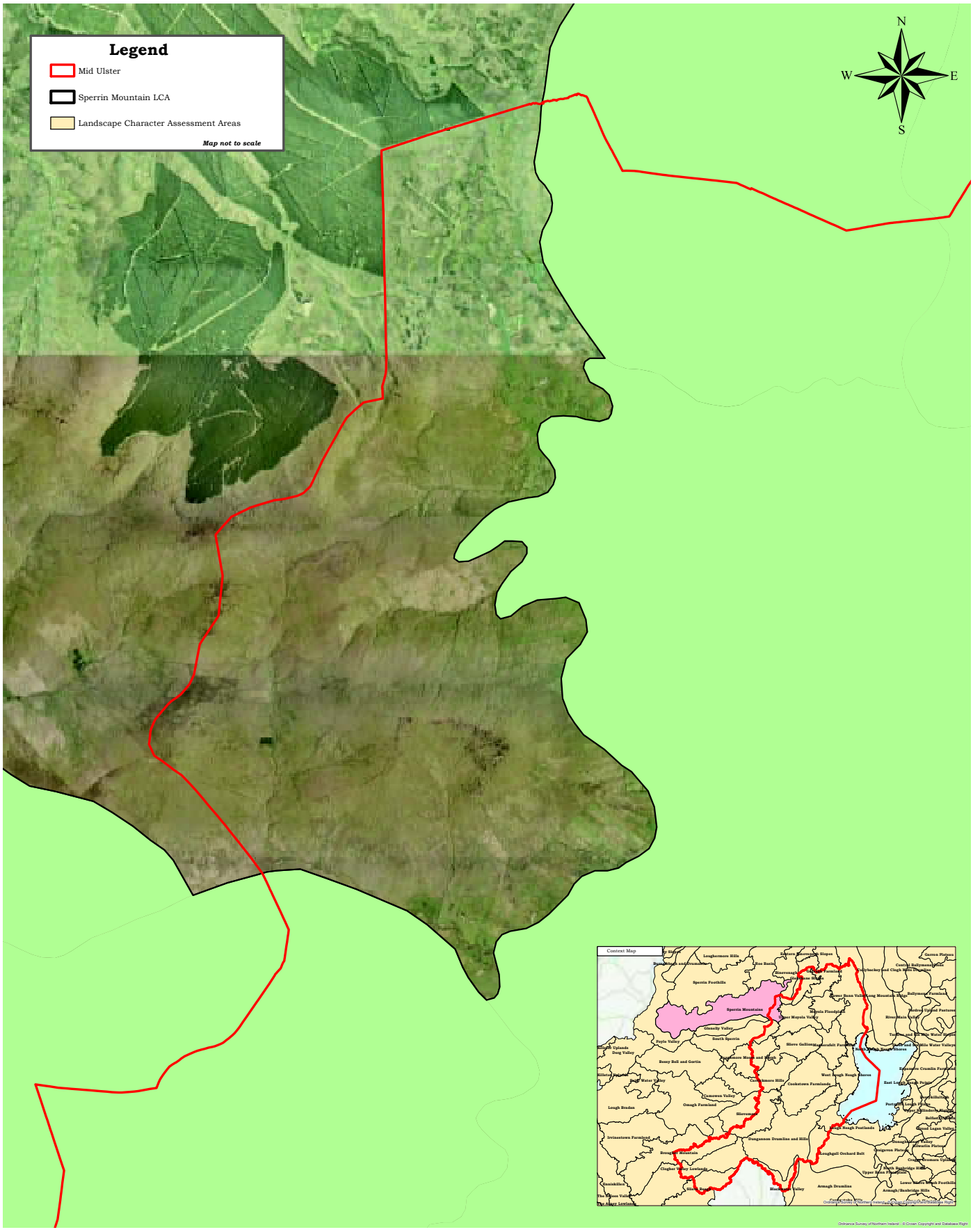
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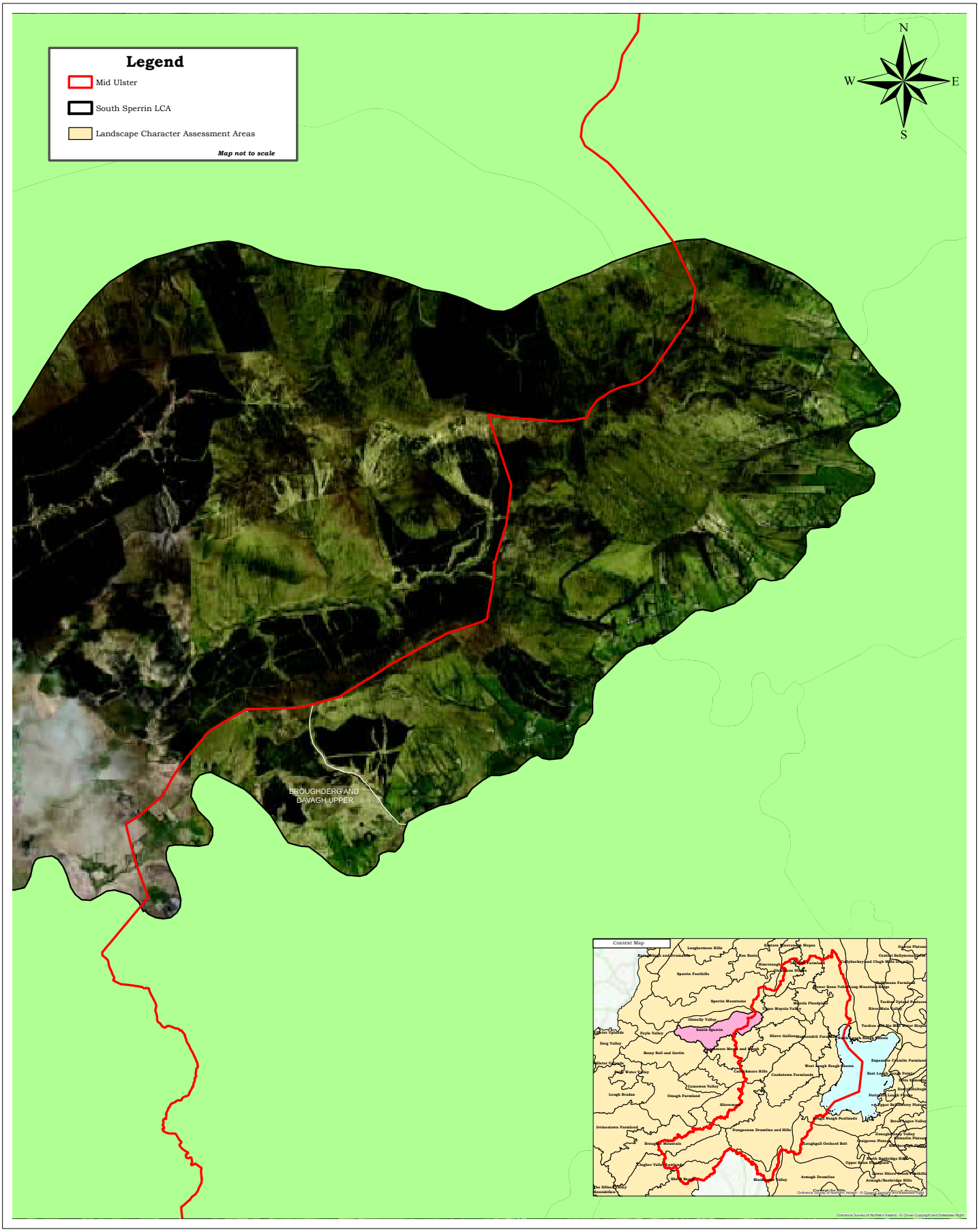
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# South Sperrin LCA

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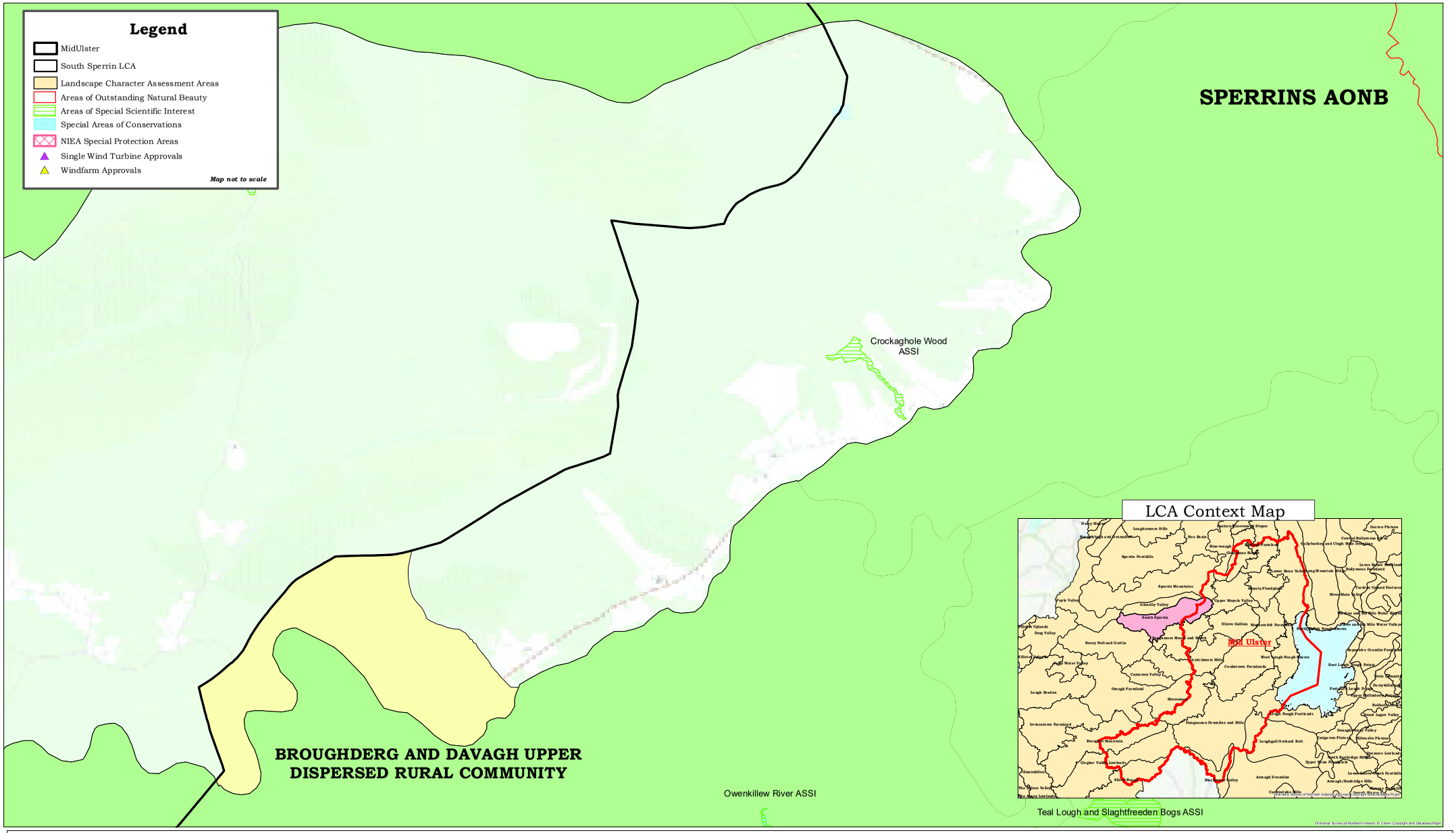
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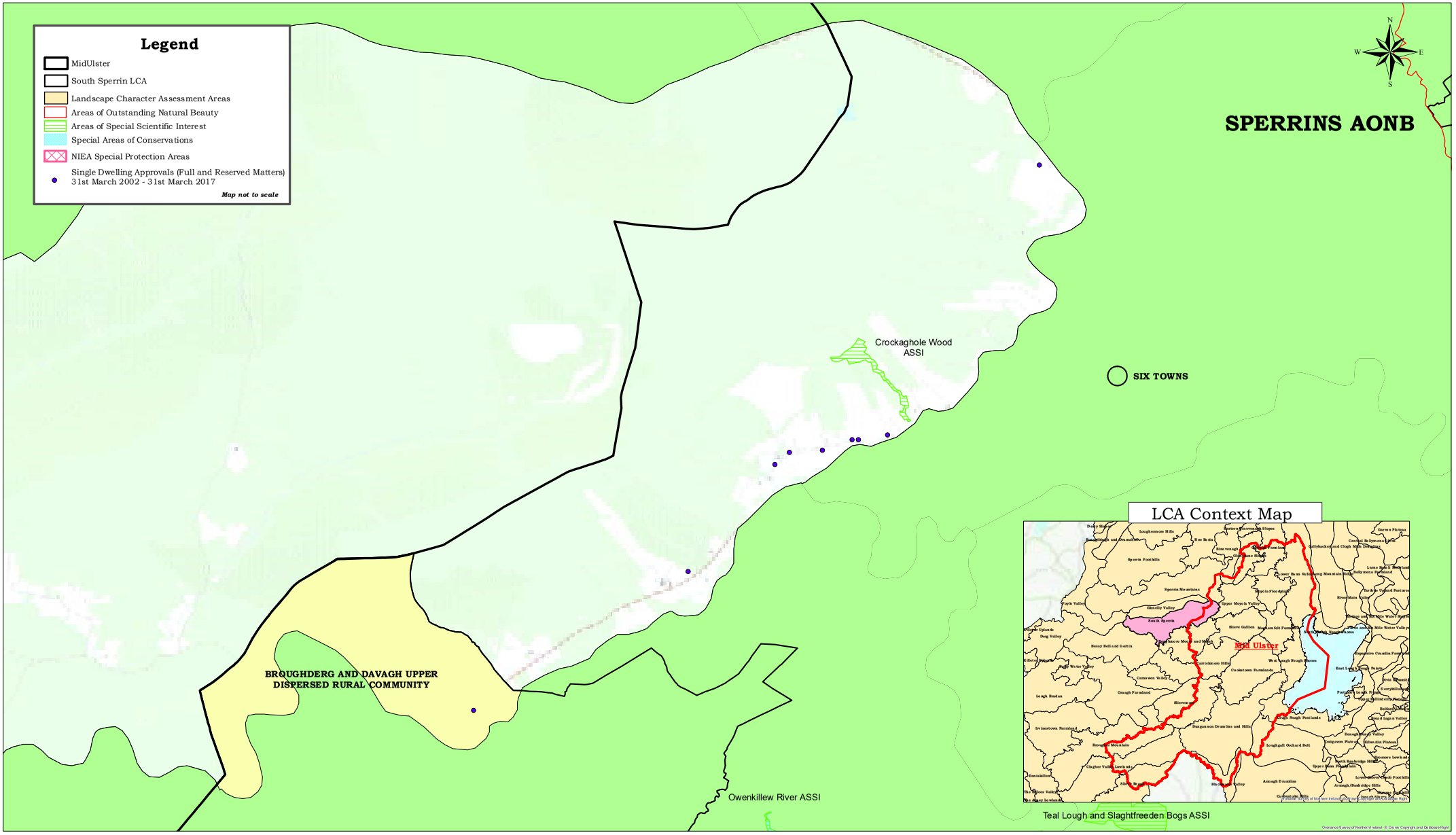
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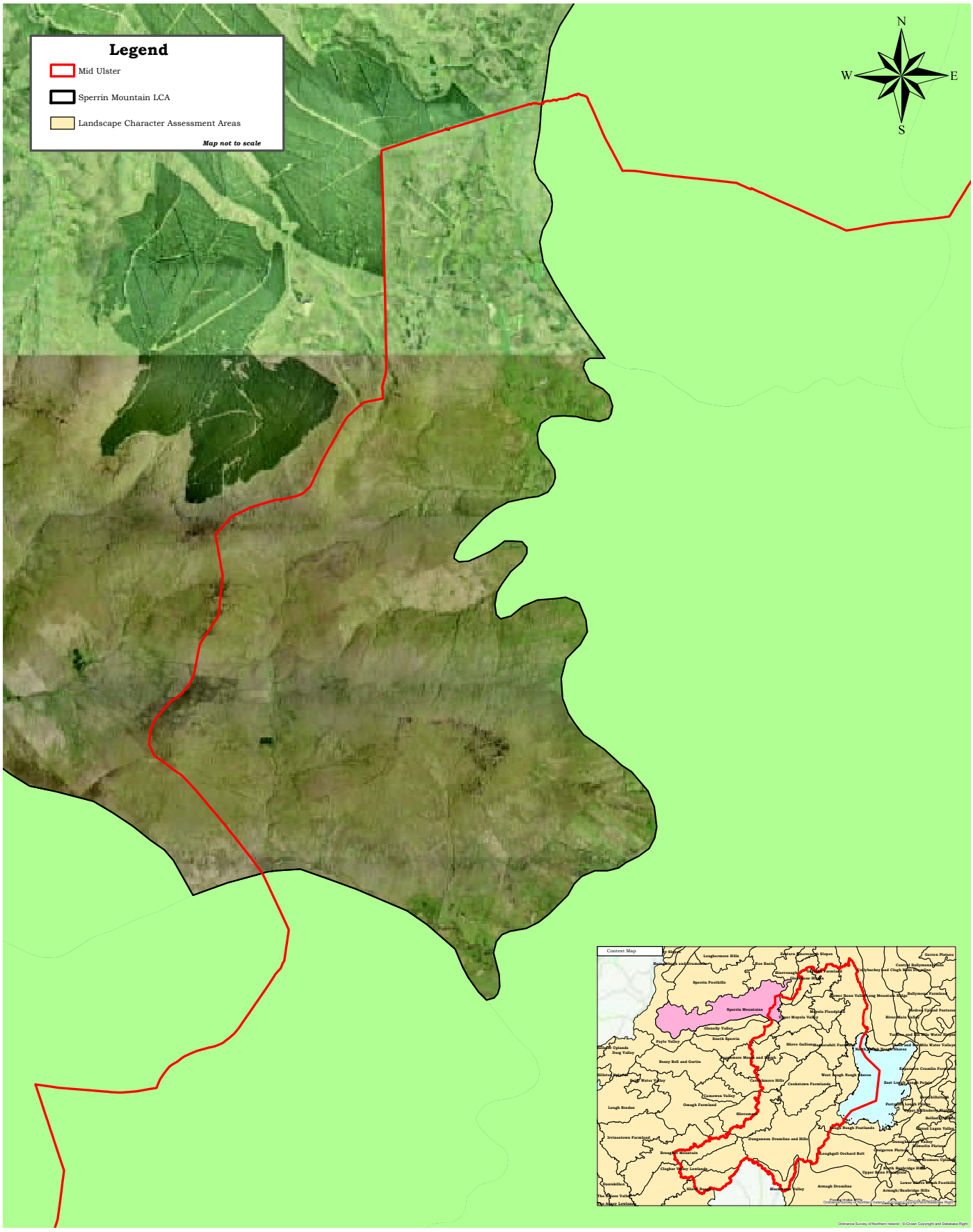
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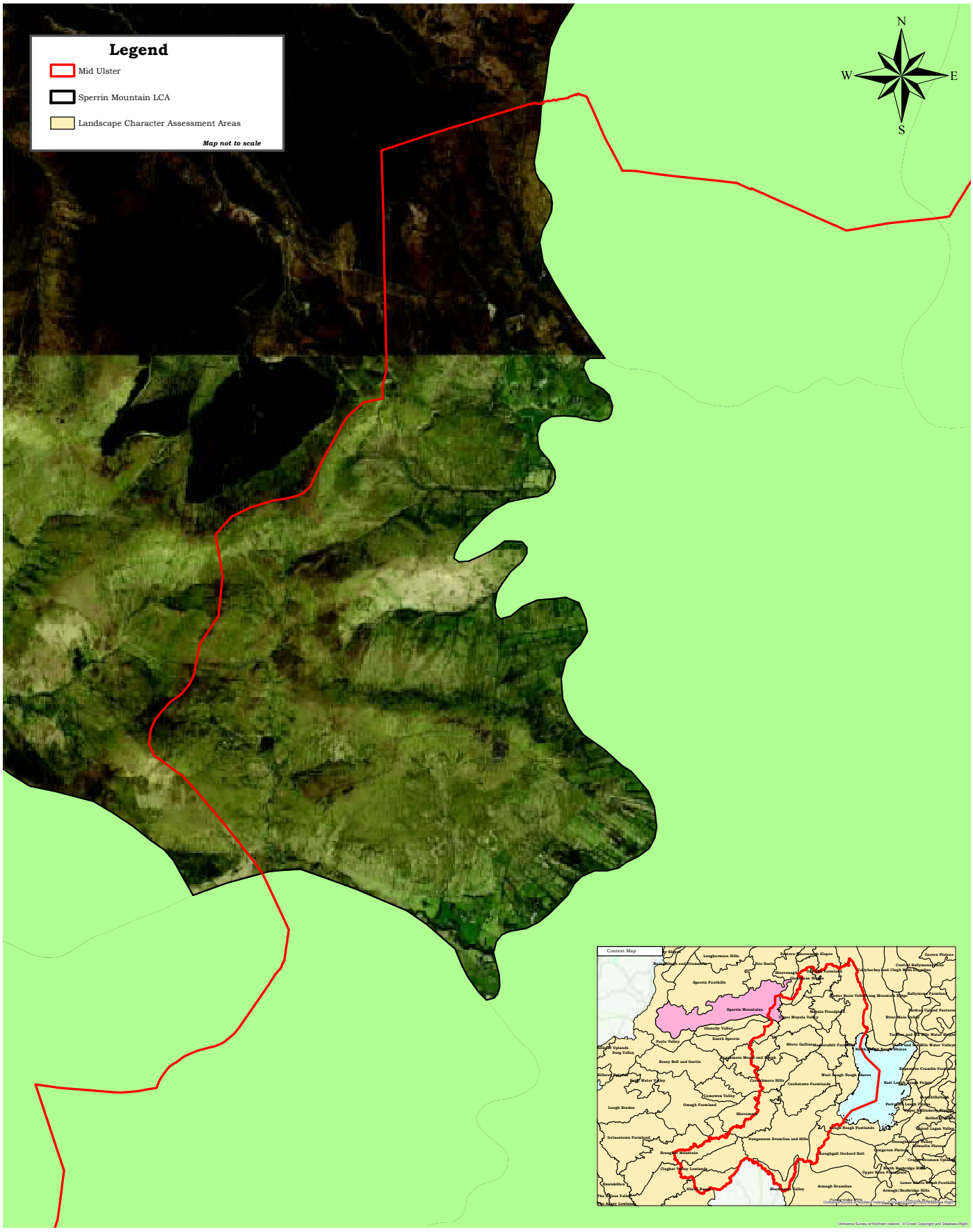
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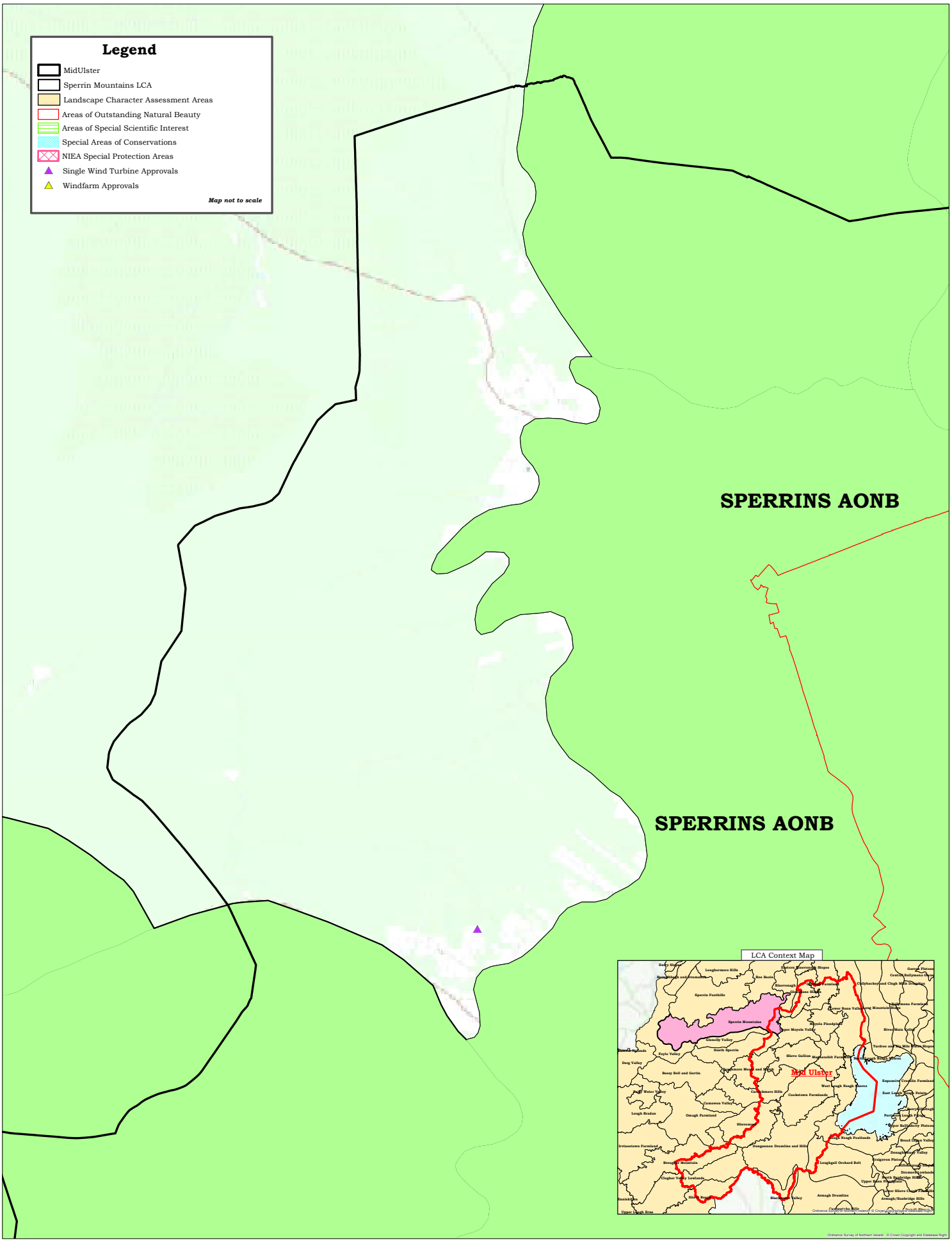
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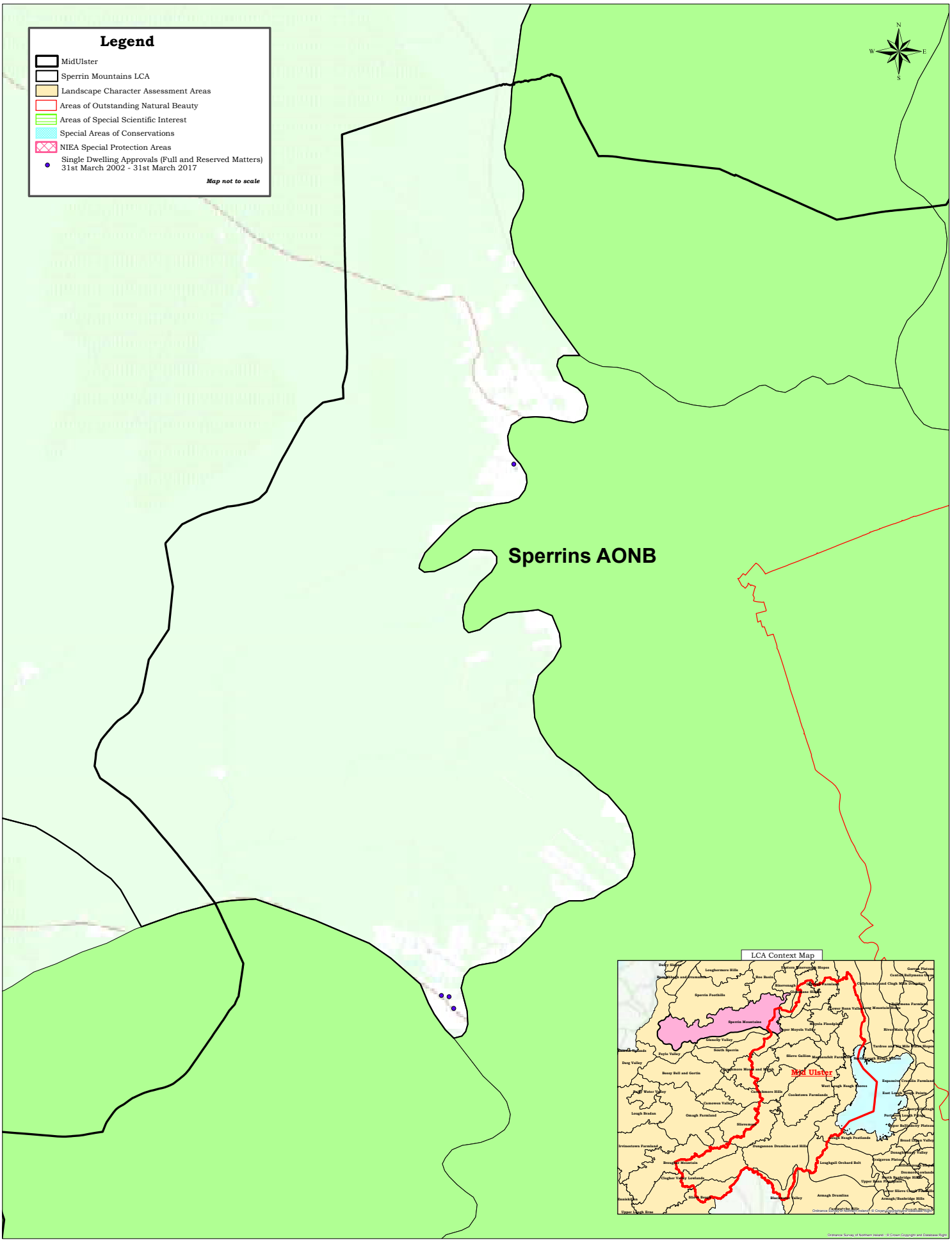
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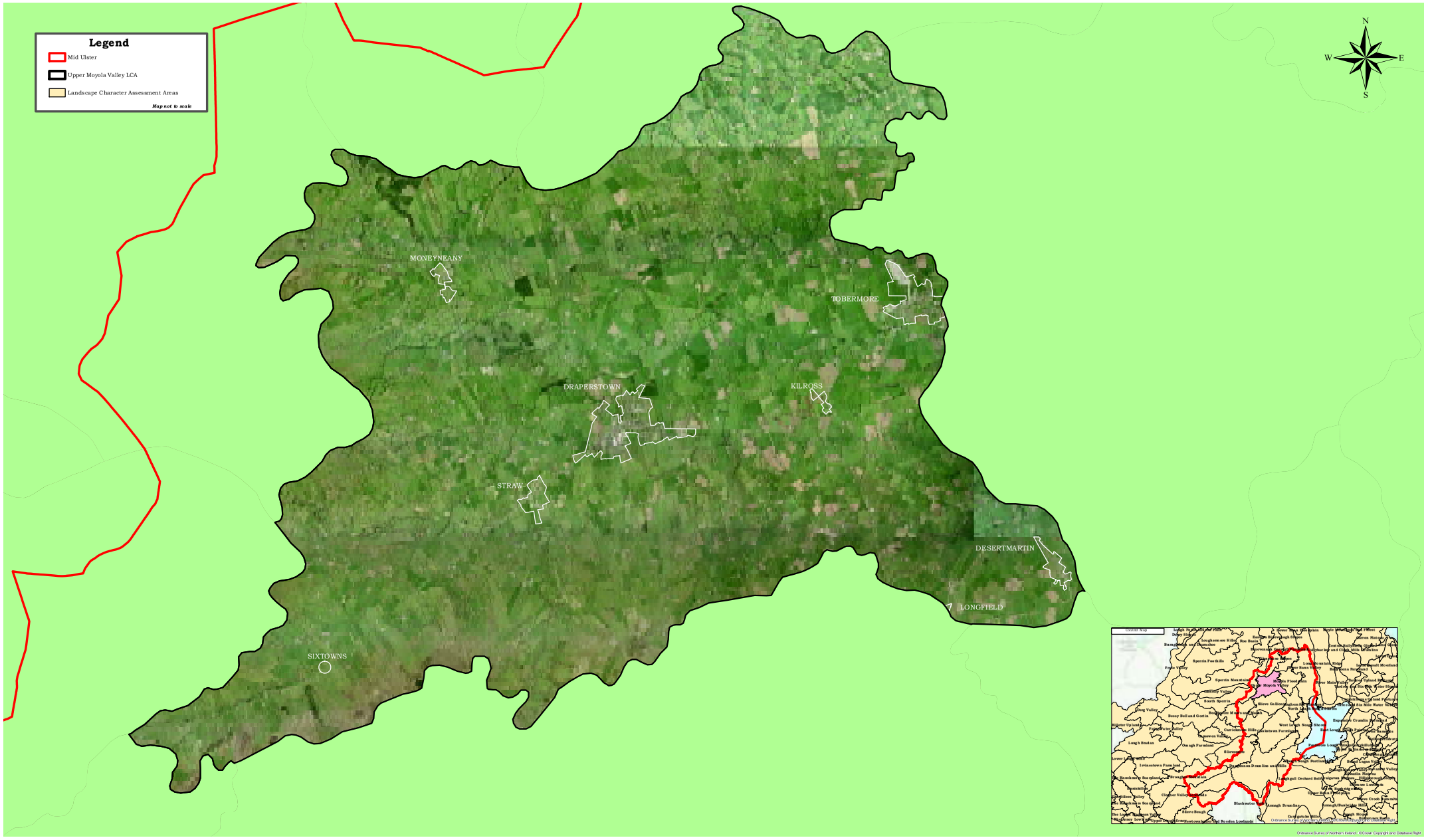
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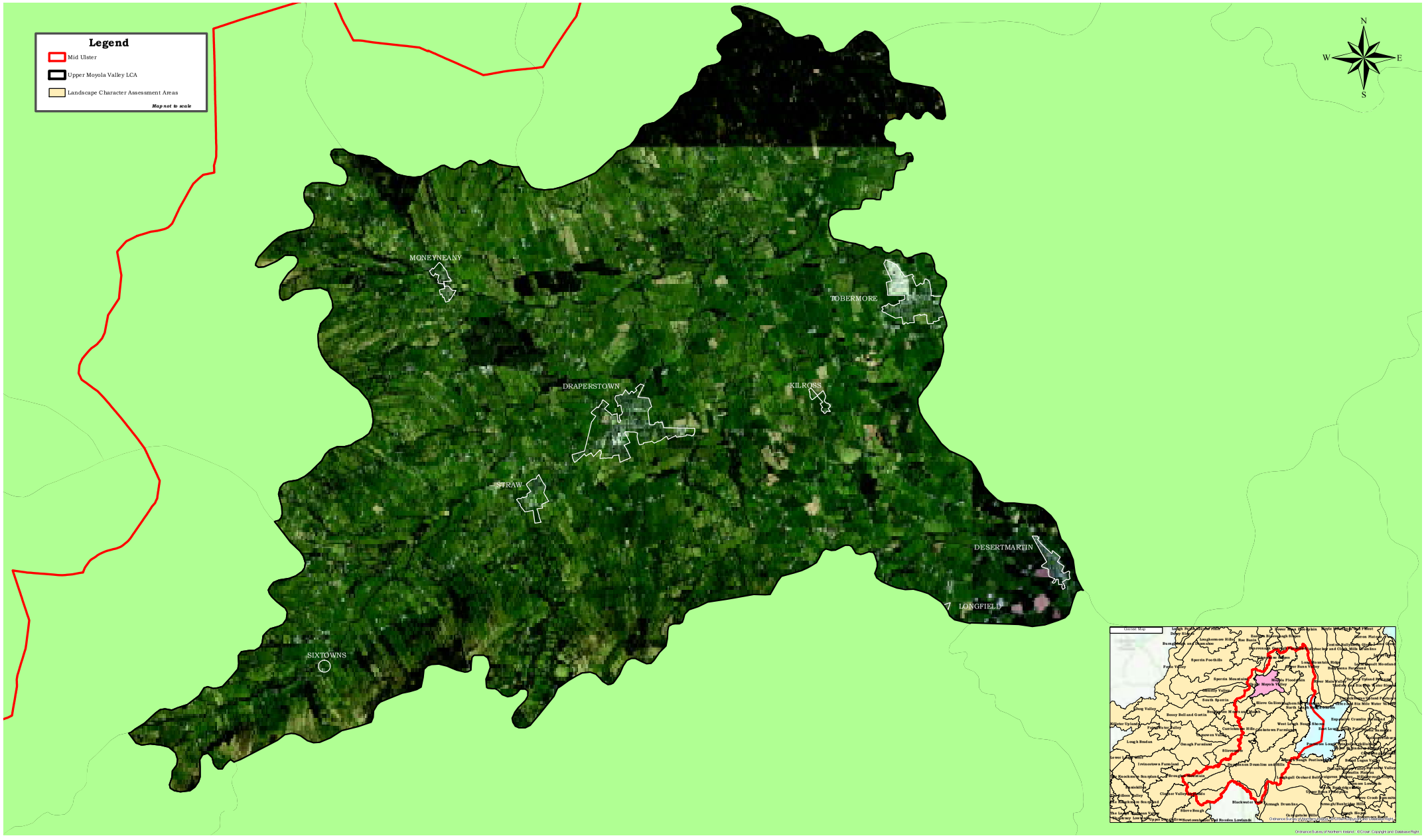

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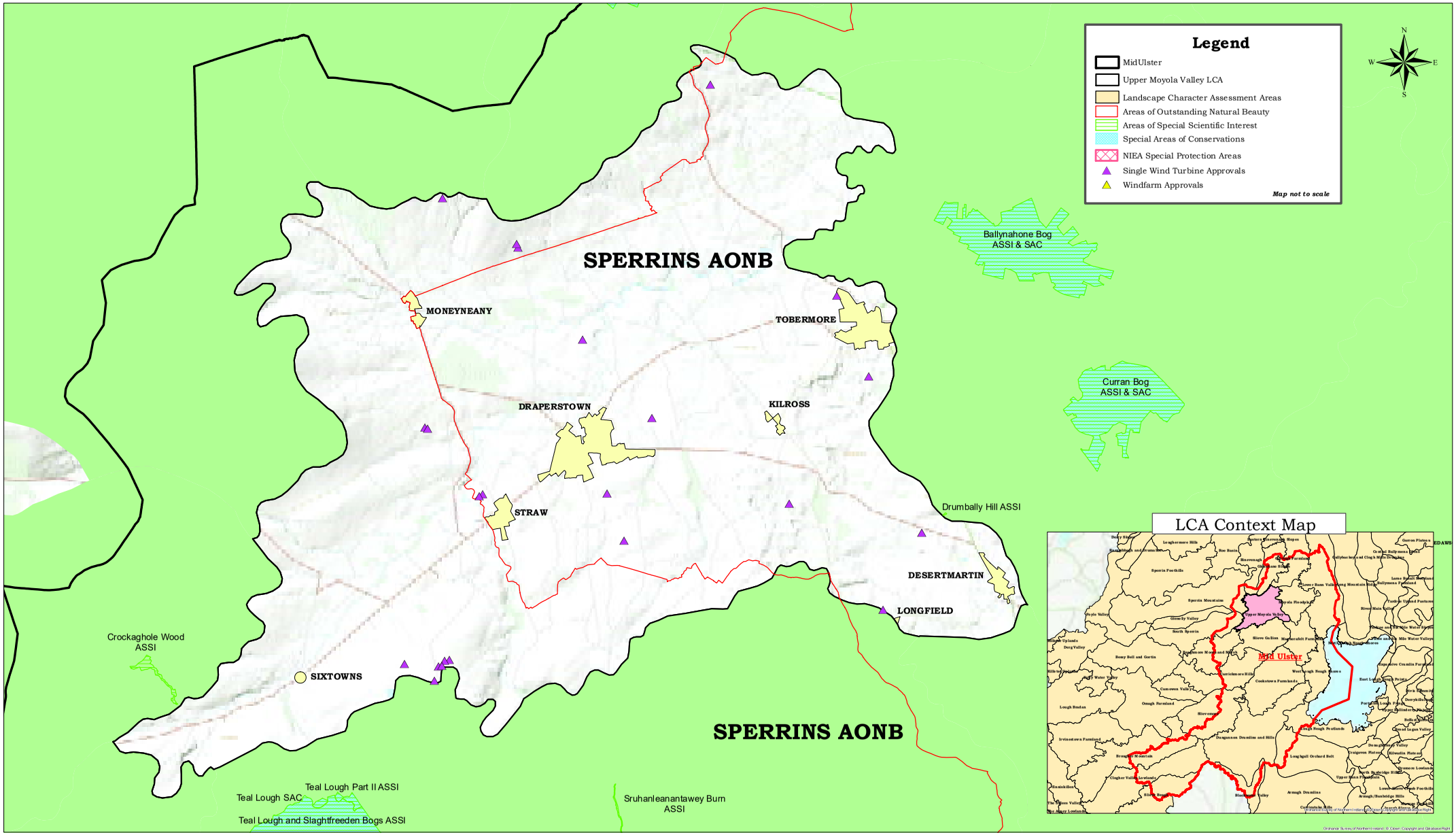
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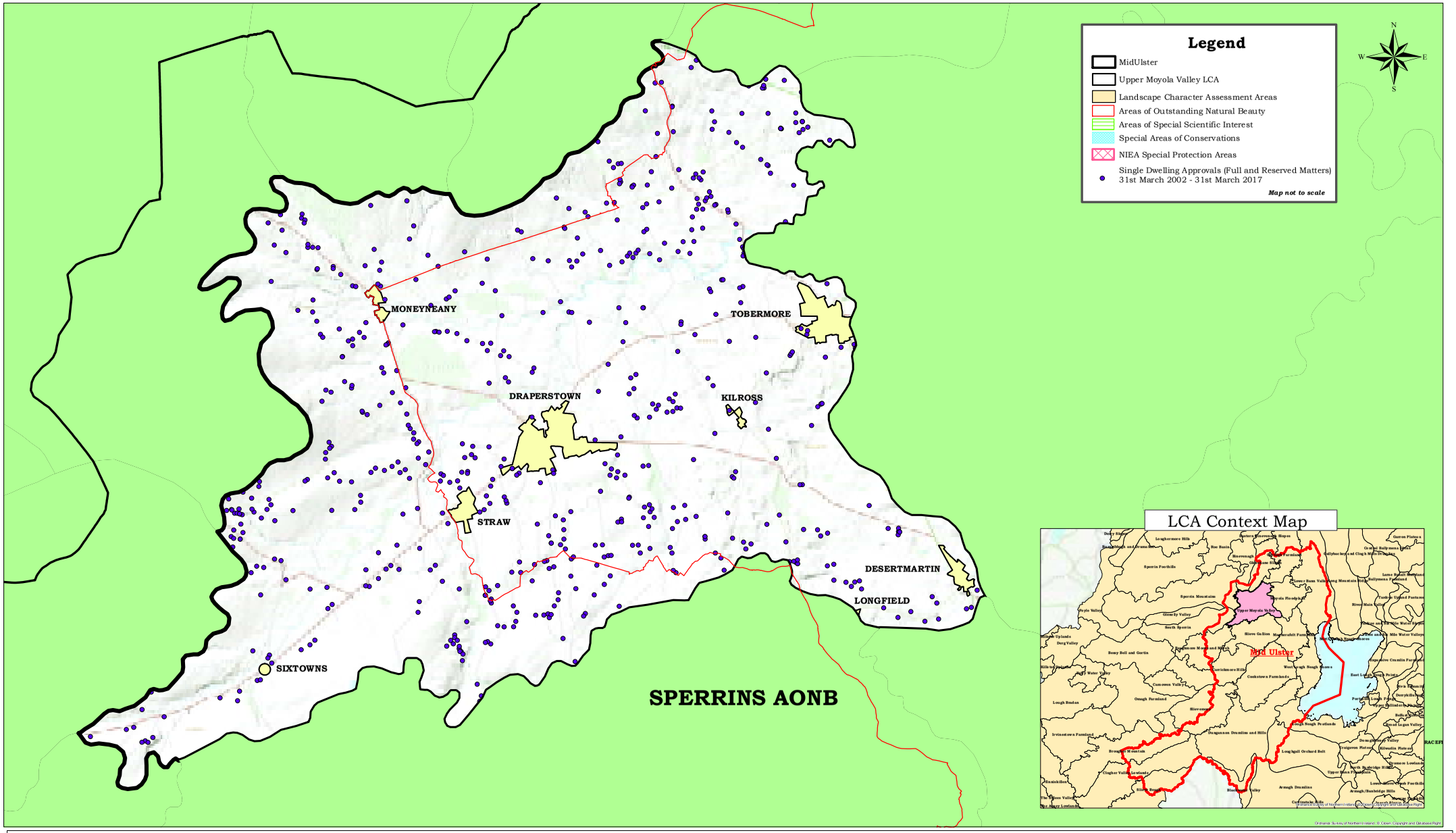
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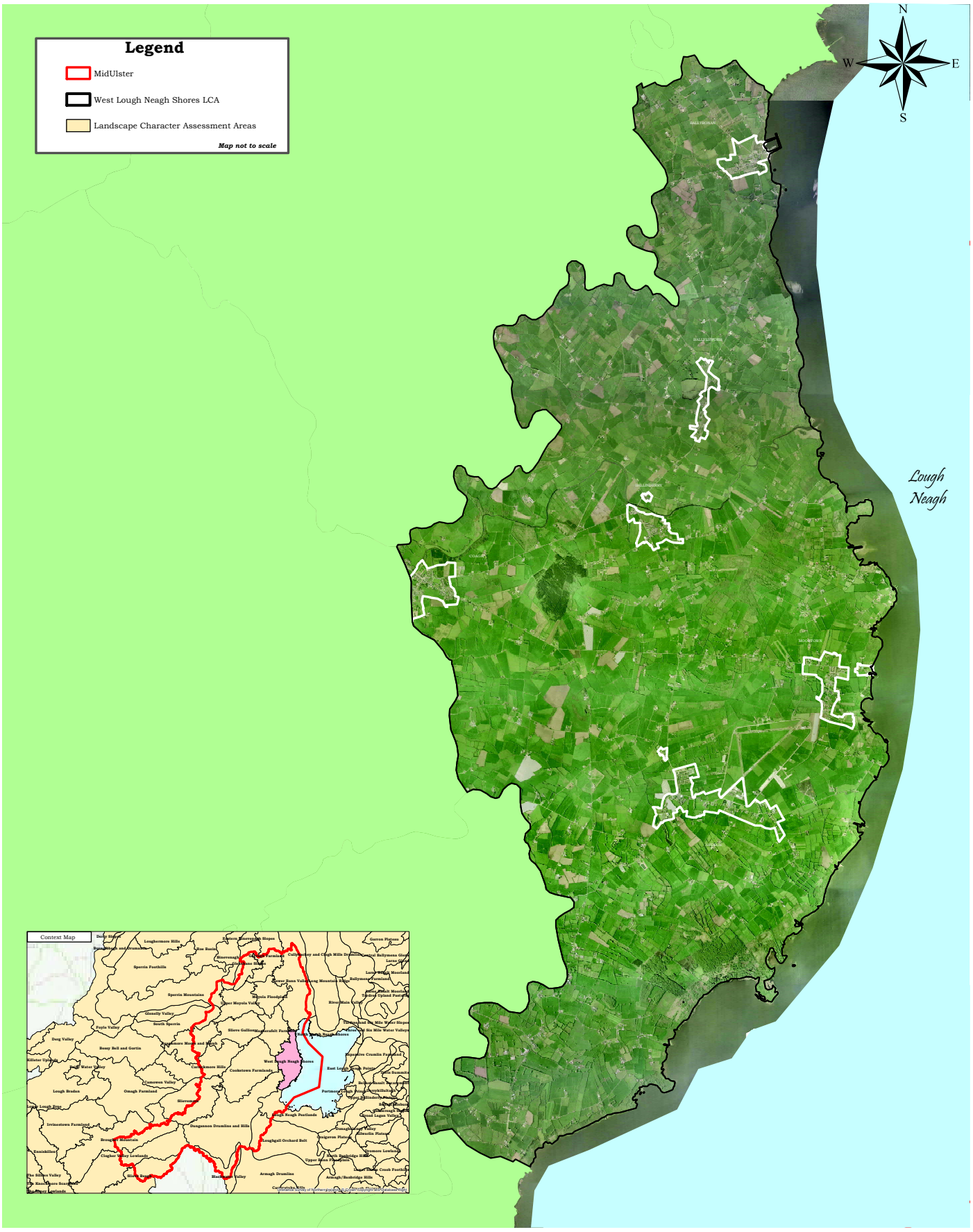
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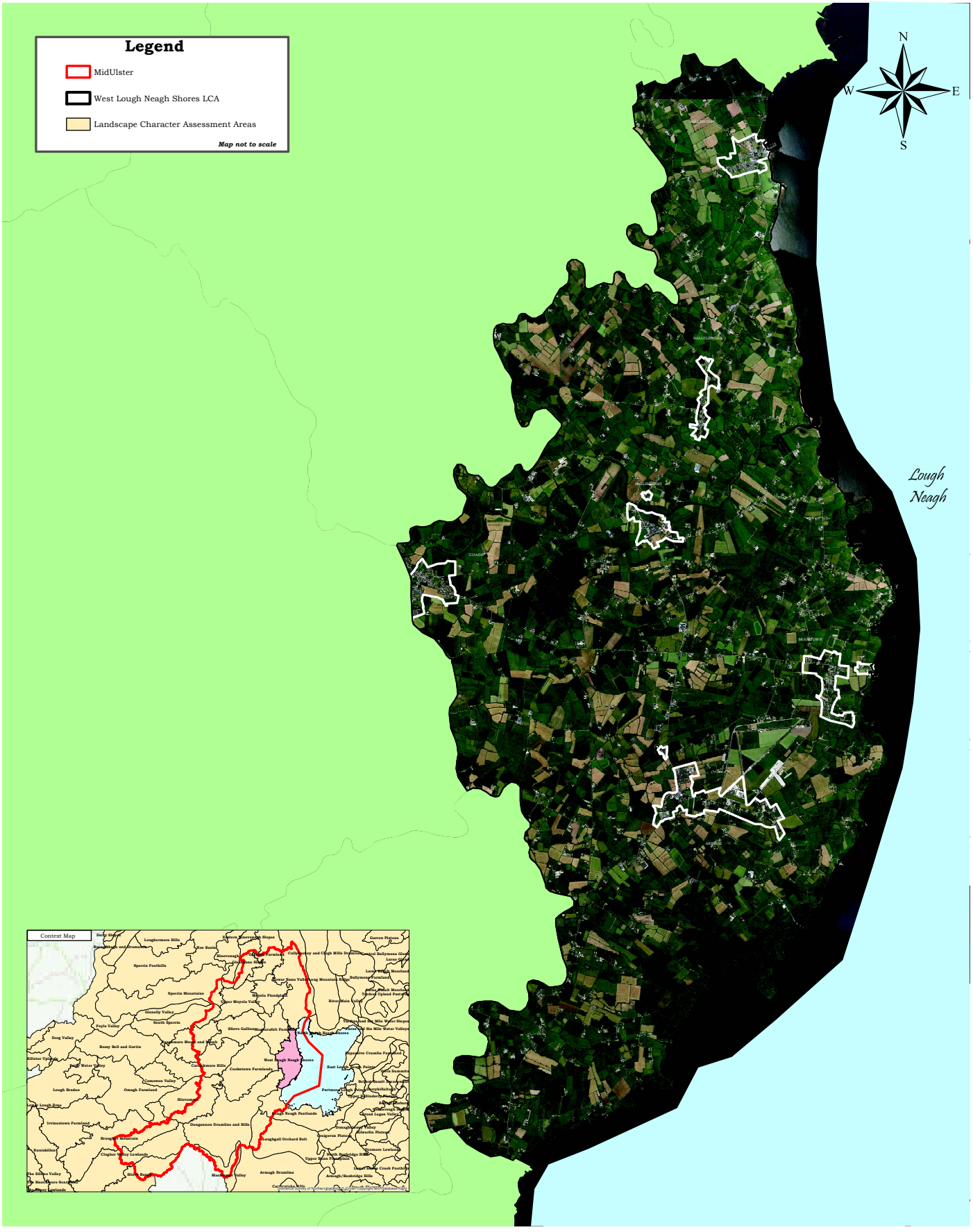
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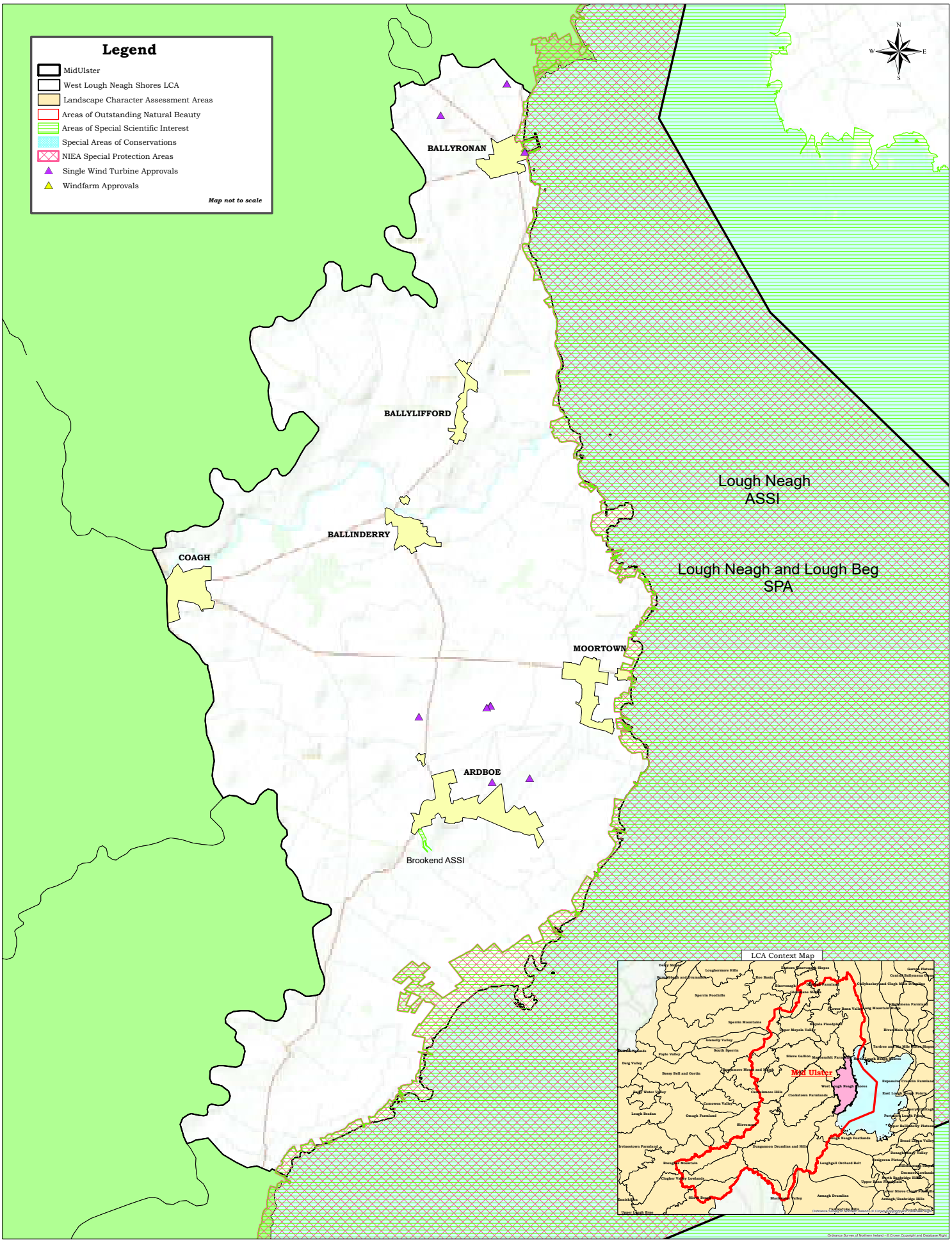
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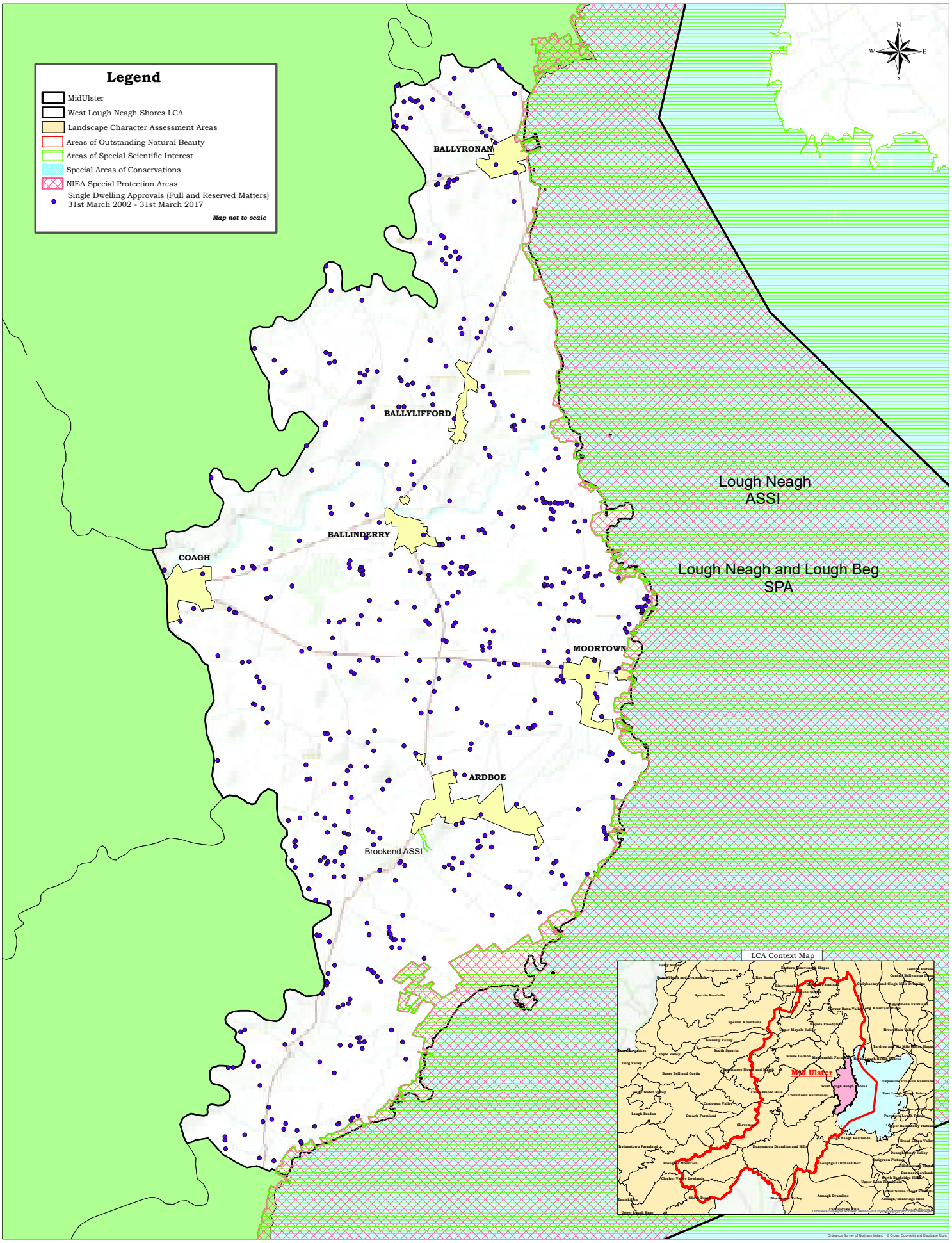
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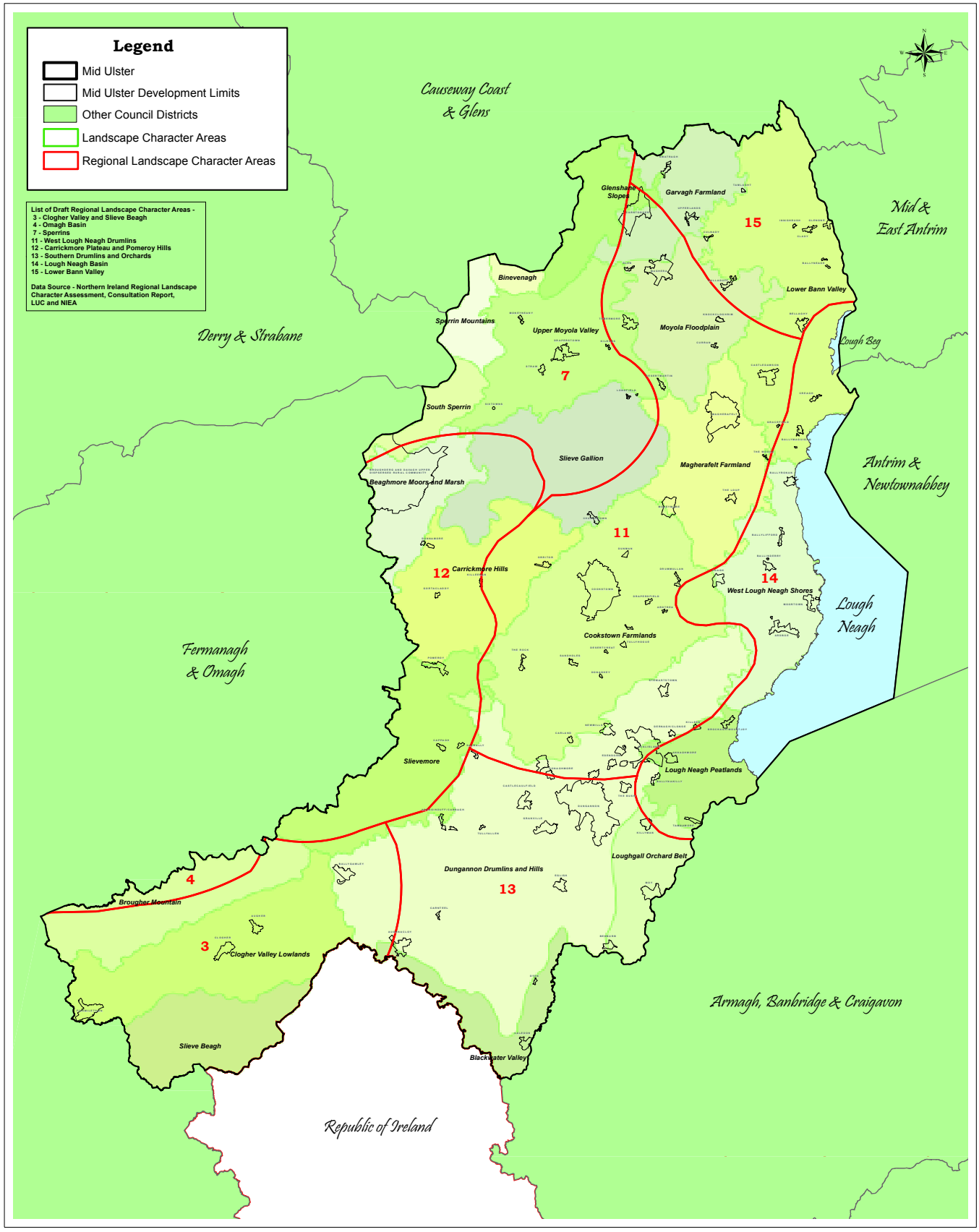
# Appendix 3

**MAP 1: Regional Landscape Character Areas (2016)**

**MAP 2: Quarry sites of Mid Ulster and LCA's**

**MAP 3: Mid Ulster CORINE Land Cover and LCA's**

# Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Areas




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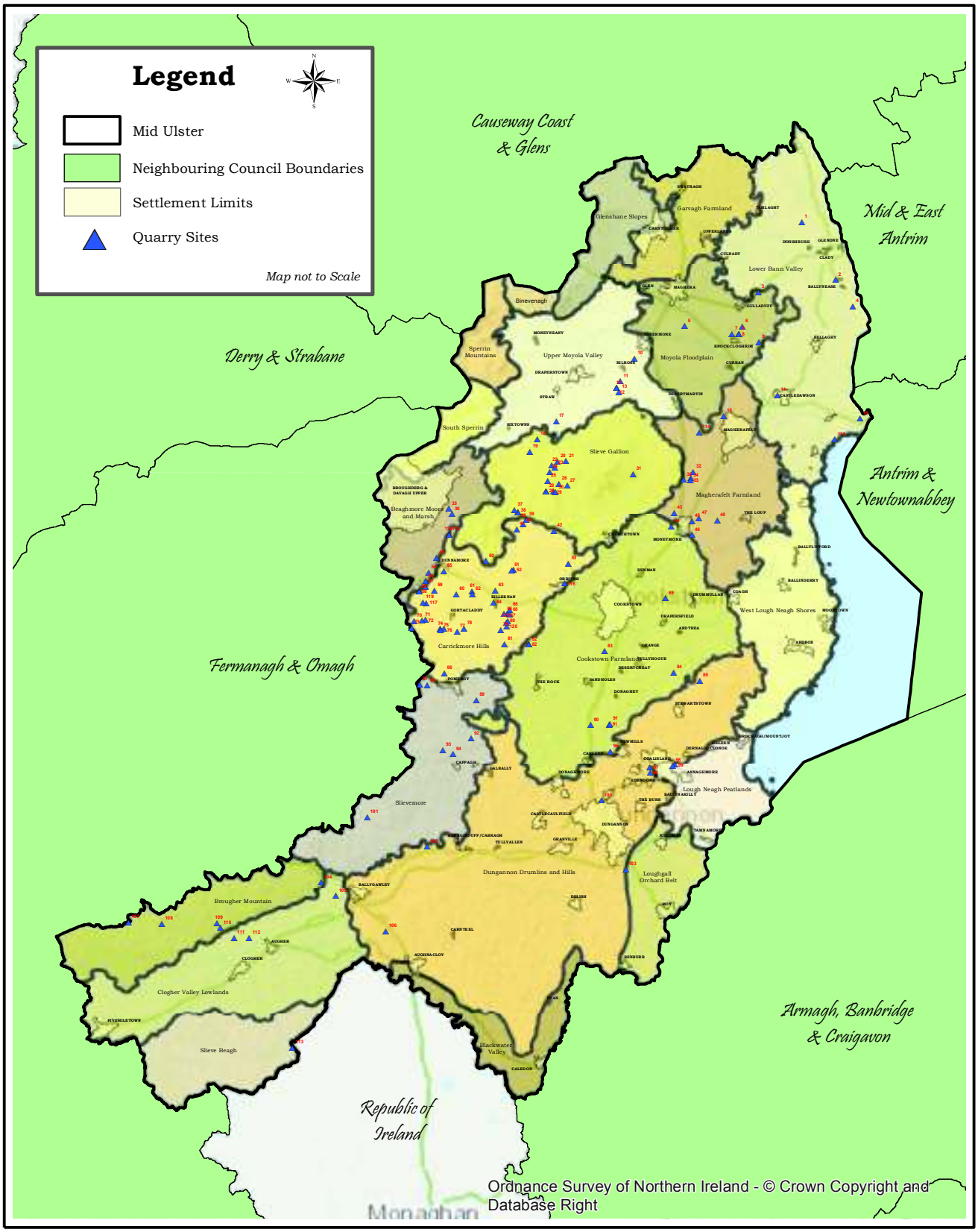
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# Quarry Sites within Landscape Character Assessment areas in Mid Ulster




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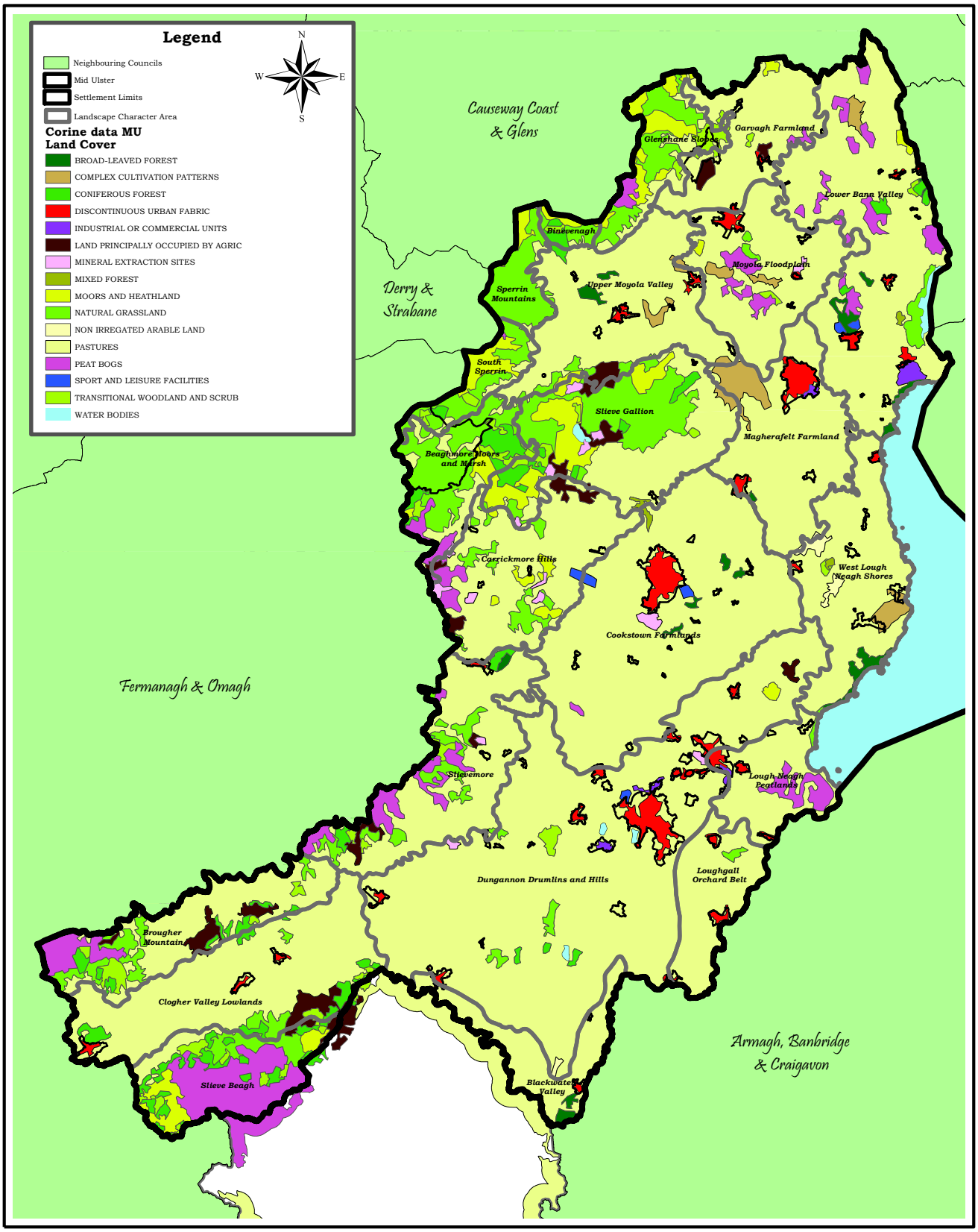
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# Mid Ulster CORINE Land Cover and Landscape Character Areas




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# Appendix 4

# Landscape Character Area Photographs.

## Appendix 4 Landscape Character Area Photos

### LCA 16 Brougher Mountain




View from A4 (within Dungannon Drumlin and Hills LCA ) towards Brougher Mountain LCA



View from within Brougher Mountain LCA

## LCA 17 Clogher Valley




View across Clogher Valley LCA lowlands from Slieve Beagh LCA.



View from A4/Annagh Road southwards across Clogher Valley towards Brackenridge Monument near the boundary with Slieve Beagh LCA.

**LCA 18 Slieve Beagh**




View from Cooneen Road looking eastwards across Slieve Beagh LCA.



View from Old Monaghan Road looking westwards across Slieve Beagh LCA.

## LCA 24 South Sperrin



View from Tully Brick road across Teal Lough SAC (which lies within Slieve Gallion LCA)  towards South Sperrins LCA.




View from Sixtowns Road looking west within South Sperrins LCA

**LCA 25 Beaghmore Moors and Marsh**



View from Davagh Road looking south across Beaghmore Moors and Marsh LCA



View of Beaghmore Stone Circle within Beaghmore Moors and Marsh LCA

**LCA 29 Sperrin Mountains**




View from Fivemilestraight towards Sperrin Mountains LCA




View from Moneyneaney Lane towards Sperrin Mountain LCA

**LCA 36 Binevenagh**




View from Fivemilestraight  towards Moydamlaght Forest and Binevenagh LCA.




View from Draperstown Road towards Binevanagh LCA.

**LCA 39 Glenshane Slopes**




View from Drumbane Road towards Brockaboy Wind Farm within Glenshane Slopes LCA




View from Slaughtneill Road looking west, within Glenshane Slopes LCA

**LCA 40 Upper Moyola Valley**




View from Fivemilestraight looking southwards across Upper Moyola Valley LCA towards Slieve Gallion LCA.




View from Draperstown Road looking south across Upper Moyola Valley LCA towards Slieve Gallion LCA.

**LCA 41 Slieve Gallion**




View from Moneymore/ Magherafelt Road across Magherafelt Farmland LCA towards  Slieve Gallion LCA.




View from Brigh Road (north of Stewartstown), across  Dungannon Drumlins and Hills LCA and Cookstown farmlands LCA's towards  Slieve Gallion LCA.

## LCA 42 Cookstown Farmlands




View from within Cookstown Farmlands LCA




View from Tullyhogue Fort towards Cookstown Settlement

**LCA 43 Carrickmore Hills**




View from Loughbracken road (north of Pomeroy) looking westwards across Carrickmore Hills LCA.




View from Tulnacross Road looking northwards across Carrickmore Hills LCA.

**LCA 44 Slievemore**




View from Tullyvar Road (within Dungannon Drumlins and Hills LCA) towards Slievemore LCA.




View northwards from Cornamaddy Road across Slievemore LCA

## LCA 45 Dungannon Drumlin and Hills



View of drumlin countryside within Dungannon Drumlin and Hills LCA



View of drumlin countryside within Dungannon Drumlin and Hills LCA

**LCA 46 Blackwater Valley**




View of Blackwater River  Valley at Caledon




View from St Marys Church  Carpark (Aughanacloy) overlooking  Ravella Thistle Historic Garden Park and Demesne (HGPD).

LCA 47 Loughgall Orchard Belt




View of lands near Benburb Priarie within Loughgall Orchard Belt LCA.




View of ongoing gas pipeline laying works from Trewmount Road, within Loughall Orchard Belt LCA

**LCA 48 West Lough Neagh Shores**




View from Anneter Road looking eastwards




View from Mullan Road Towards Ballinderry  settlement

## 18 LCA 49 Magherafelt Farmland



View from Tralee Road across Magherafelt Farmlands LCA towards the lough Neagh Shore LCA.



View from Loup Road, looking across Magherafelt Farmland LCA towards Slieve Gallion LCA.

## 19 LCA 50 Moyola Floodplain




View from Hillhead Road looking southeast towards Curran Bog SAC and ASSI.




View from Glenmaquill Road looking westwards.

## 20 LCA 51 Garvagh Farmland




View from Tirkane Road, looking north west across Garvagh Famland LCA towards Glenshane Slopes




View from Tirkane Road, looking south east across Garvagh Farmland LCA towards Moyola flood plain and Lower Bann Valley LCA's

## 21 LCA 52 Lower Bann Valley




View of Church Island and marshy low lands at shore of Lough Beg




View of low lying lands at Moneyslaghan Bog

## 22 LCA 52 Lough Neagh Peatlands




View of peatbogs from Ferry Road within Lough Neagh Peatlands LCA




View of low lying marshy lands near the Lough Shore within Lough Neagh Peatlands LCA