



Location and Context

The *Upland Fringe – Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type occurs in eleven locations – Balker Moor, Glentool, Corsock, Dunscore, Ae, Annandale, Liddesdale, Torthorwald, Cairn, Cairnharrow and Camrie. These vary from stand-alone highly distinctive ridges within lowland areas (such as the Torthorwald Ridge) to areas which comprise often narrow fringe areas between lowland valleys/dales and foothill/upland areas. They are important in the scenic backdrop which they provide to the settled dales and the Nith Estuary. They feature gently rolling hills, valleys and elongated rolling ridges.

Key Characteristics

- Elevated rolling pastures.
- Improved and rough grassland in close proximity.
- Hedgerow banks and treelines along roads in some lower areas.
- Dry stone dykes.
- Squared areas of forestry.
- Contrast between wide open areas and more intimate landform.
- Panoramic views over valley and coastal lowlands.
- Small bridges over incised burns.
- Notable landmark features, including Iron Age fortifications, designed landscapes and grand houses.

Landscape Character Description

Landform

The *Upland Fringe - Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type has an altitudinal range of 120 to 170 metres. Occurring throughout Dumfries and Galloway these areas tend to form the most visible faces of the uplands they surround. The landscape is of high, gently rolling pastures. Topography is locally uneven, with numerous minor valleys, ridges and

hollows.

Landcover

Pasture dominates the land cover with a mix of both rough and improved grassland. Small scale conifer forests create dark horizons and reinforce the enclosure formed by the landform. Forests in squared block patterns are typical of this landscape. Many represent field plot forests. Shelter belts and lines of trees are also common features. Beside Nithsdale and Annandale Beech trees and hedges are particularly distinctive. The pattern of walls, hedgerows and tree lines are essential features of the agricultural landscape providing distinctive silhouettes and memorable autumn effects in beech planted areas. Fields are medium or large, often bounded by walls or hedge banks. The land is grazed by sheep and cattle.

Settlement

This landscape has a feeling of upland exposure but it is generally well treed and settled. The road network is extensive. Characteristic features are its small stone bridges over incised burns. The *Upland Fringe – Dumfries & Galloway* landscape was favoured for defensive sites during the Iron Age. Forts, duns and other structures are, therefore, essential features of this landscape. There are a number of small designed landscapes with planted policy features which are a particular characteristic in places such as the Dunscore, Ward Law, Terregles, Torthorwald, Cairn, Ae, southern parts of Annandale. The Camrie area is strongly influenced by Carscreugh wind farm whereas there are few wind turbines within the other areas. However, certain parts are strongly influenced by the presence of highly visible developments in the adjacent *Plateau Moorlands – Dumfries & Galloway* and *Foothills – Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Types, extending their influence into more settled and diverse lowland landscapes.

Perception

Much of the character of this landscape lies in its very transitional feel between lowland pastures and upland areas, created in large part by the current balance between agriculture and forestry.

These landscapes are visually prominent from populated lowland areas such as Annandale and Nithsdale, forming important skylines/backdrops. Many provide a good outlook, often with panoramic views.

This is one of 390 Landscape Character Types identified at a scale of 1:50 000 as part of a national programme of Landscape Character Assessment republished in 2019.

The area covered by this Landscape Character Type was originally included in the Dumfries and Galloway LCA (Land Use Consultants), published 1998.