



Location and Context

The *Foothills – Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type occurs in nine general areas across Dumfries and Galloway – Cairnharrow, Fleet, Dalnacallan, Keir, Tynron, Nithsdale, Beattock, Annandale and at Muck Burn by Loch Doon. Along with their counterpart *Foothills with Forest*, the *Foothills* areas associate with the main valleys of the Esk, the Annan, the Glenkens, the Fleet and the Cree / Wigtown Bay.

Key Characteristics

- Generally undulating land between 170 and 250 metres, with rounded peaks. Higher in the west, up to nearly 550 metres with craggier peaks.
- Foothills dissected by incised valleys.
- Semi-improved pasture enclosed in medium-large fields by stone walls. Grazed by sheep and cattle. Some rough pastures and heath on higher ground.
- Trees in sheltered pockets with some copses on top of hills.
- Many scattered farmsteads and small settlements.
- Network of minor roads.
- Numerous archaeological sites particularly Bronze Age funerary and ritual sites and Iron Age settlements and forts.

Landscape Character Description

Landform

The *Foothills - Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type is generally found at heights of between 170 and 250 metres, although in the western areas can rise to nearly 460 metres. They are generally undulating with gently rounded summits in the east and craggier peaks in the west, for example, around Cairnharrow and the Fleet valley. In these western areas the influence of the underlying granite creates more complex landforms with occasionally intimate scale features juxtaposed with the dramatic craggy peaks. This landscape is dissected by many streams, which have cut incisions into the landscape and a few plateau areas and upland basins are found among the *Foothills- Dumfries & Galloway*.

Landcover

The *Foothills – Dumfries & Galloway* are predominantly agricultural in character, but are adjoined by significant forested areas. The land cover of this landscape type is generally semi-improved pasture with areas of rough pasture and heath. Enclosures are generally large and the land grazed by sheep and occasionally by cattle. Field boundaries are typically stone dykes although some roads are locally lined with hedges and hedgerow trees. Belts of mixed woodland are found in lower more sheltered areas, most notably along rivers, and in association with modest designed landscapes. Small plantations or copses are found on top of some of the lower hills. More extensive policy woodlands forming part of the designed landscape of Drumlanrig Castle extend into the foothills west of Nithsdale. The edges of this landscape often extend into areas of large conifer plantations. These forested areas have been identified separately as *Foothills with Forest - Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type.

Settlement

There are a number of scattered farmsteads and small settlements throughout this landscape, especially in the east where the landscape has a settled character. A network of minor roads traverses this Landscape Character Type and gives access to forests, farms and settlements. Numerous archaeological sites are contained within this landscape, with relict agricultural landscapes of various periods showing significant continuity of settlement and landuse. Concentrations of prehistoric monuments occur in some areas, including Bronze Age cairns and ritual monuments. Later prehistoric settlements and forts are particularly concentrated in the eastern foothills, most notably on the summits around Corrie Common and near Beattock, west of Annandale. The Cairnharrow, Fleet and Beattock areas have Archaeologically Sensitive Area designations.

The open *Foothills – Dumfries & Galloway* around Annandale are influenced by wind energy development, both directly in the Landscape Character Type itself and indirectly in the adjacent *Foothills with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway* and *Southern Uplands with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway*. However, undeveloped ground in this area provides important separation between individual windfarms and emerging clusters of development. Wind energy development has avoided more sensitive areas of this Landscape Character Type to the west of Dumfries and Galloway.

Perception

Views within this landscape are not usually extensive, although summits and upper edges provide 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.