



Location and Context

The *Southern Uplands – Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type is typical of the higher parts of the Southern Upland range. It occurs mainly on the northern and eastern fringes Dumfriesshire, in nine different areas, and extends into neighbouring Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire.

Key Characteristics

- Large, smooth dome/conical shaped hills, predominantly grass-covered.
- Open and exposed character except within incised valleys.
- Dramatically sculpted landforms and awe-inspiring scale.
- Distinctive dark brown/purple colour of heather on some of the higher areas.
- Pockets of woodland in incised valleys.
- Stone dykes occasionally define the lower limit.
- Legacy of lead and other mining activity, with extensive archaeological remains around the former mining village of Wanlockhead.
- Wind farms locally characteristic, away from the more dramatic, scenic and sculptural slopes and skylines.

Landscape Character Description

Landform

The *Southern Uplands – Dumfries & Galloway* Landscape Character Type ranges between 200 and 500 metres and is characterised by large smooth domed or slightly conically shaped hills. The hills have a strong relief, dissected by steeply sided clefts and glens, many of which have been enlarged by glacial erosion. This forms areas of dramatic landform and exemplary geomorphological features. This is a large scale landscape, although there is some confinement between the peaks. The hill slopes are generally smooth but there are some incised gullies, rock outcrops, and screes.

Landcover

The majority of this landscape type is covered by coarse grassland but the highest areas also have heather moorland which is distinctive in appearance. The mosaic of grasses, bracken, rushes and heather contribute to this character. Heather moorlands create an important element of diversity in this landscape type, contrasting with green pastures on lower slopes and emphasising the relief. The Southern Uplands generally lack walled enclosures and have an exposed remote quality. There are few trees, these mostly confined to the more sheltered courses of incised burns.

Settlement

The *Southern Uplands – Dumfries & Galloway* are very sparsely populated, although the former mining village of Wanlockhead is a notable exception and feature of local distinctiveness in the Lowther Hills. Its rows of miners' cottages and important early subscription library lie at the heart of a once intensively-worked, industrial landscape of the 17th to early 20th Centuries. Large parts of this landscape are recognised for its national archaeological importance. Wanlockhead is known as Scotland's highest village and is now a centre for heritage tourism and a stopping point for walkers on the Southern Upland Way. The lower fringes of this landscape type in some areas contain the remains of pre-improvement farmsteads and agriculture, and occasional prehistoric monuments. In the hills northwest of Moffat, monuments connected with the Roman military occupation of southern Scotland are aligned along well-preserved sections of a former Roman road. The Southern Uplands landscape has been subject to mineral extraction for generations and its legacy is an important cultural feature. Tunnels, chimneys, spoil heaps and mine tracks are important local features in some areas of this landscape.

Large-scale wind farms are locally characteristic of the open *Southern Uplands - Dumfries and Galloway* in upper Nithsdale and around Carsphairn and Langholm, away from the more dramatic, scenic and sculptural slopes and skylines. The defining strong areas of sculptural and dramatic landform, and landmark hills remain the dominant presence. Wind turbines are at times key defining characteristics of adjacent Landscape Character Types (such as *Foothills with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway* and *Southern Uplands with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway*) which can be felt strongly as nearby backdrops in the *Southern Uplands – Dumfries and Galloway*.

Perception

The dramatically sculpted landforms and the awe-inspiring scale of this landscape are of particular scenic value, valued for hill walking with some popular and iconic summits, and with strong wild character. Regional Scenic Area designation is extensive over this Landscape Character Type.

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.