



West Lothian Landscape Character Classification

West Lothian Local Development Plan: background paper
August 2014



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Front cover	Lohcote Reservoir, Bathgate Hills
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INTRODUCTION

Landscape character assessment has become a standard method and tool in the understanding of landscape. The assessments, reports and analysis arising from landscape character work now forms an important baseline for landscape management, land use and ultimately the allocation of resources.

Scottish Planning Policy (2010, para. 127) cites the European Landscape Convention (2000) and requires that “the siting and design of development should be informed by local landscape character”.

Scottish Natural Heritage embarked on a programme of original classification of all Scottish landscape in the 1990s. The European Landscape Convention underpinned this initiative and provided a broader context for landscape character assessment in Scotland.

West Lothian was included within the 1998 Lothians Landscape Character Assessment. This resulted in the identification of six landscape types and seven landscape character areas within the planning authority area.

In 2011 West Lothian Council employed David Tyldesley Associates to undertake a landscape capacity study for wind energy. A large part of that consultancy task required the review and further refinement of landscape character areas for the entire West Lothian area. The resultant landscape character classification formed the main appendix to the landscape capacity study yielding nine landscape types and twenty-three landscape areas or units. Refer to Figure 1 on pages six and seven.

This large appendix was drawn on in 2013 by Land Use Consultants who were employed to undertake an independent study of local landscape designation from first principles for West Lothian. The final report for this work was submitted to the council in June 2013 as the West Lothian Landscape Designation Review.

With Scottish Natural Heritage, acting consultants LUC and former consultants DTA, the council agreed to adopt the 2011 revision and update of the 1998 landscape character work, subsequently to be known as the West Lothian Landscape Character Classification. Refer to Figure 2 for a record of the agreed minor changes. These changes comprise re-numbering, some re-naming, and minor boundary adjustments. None of these amendments have any significant bearing on the landscape capacity study for wind energy but they have enabled the smooth progress of the review of local landscape designations in West Lothian.

The council has taken the decision to publish the revised landscape character assessment for West Lothian as a background paper because:

- there is a need to update the outdated 1998 LLCA;
- the current source material requires publicity and re-formatting as a handbook;
- this baseline information is required to take forward other work streams; and,
- development planning requires it to be taken forward as an independent document to support the LLDR as part of the Local Development Plan process.

This West Lothian Landscape Character Classification document provides a revised base-line of landscape character units and important assessment information for a range of land use planning tasks including the designation of local landscapes. To be clear, Landscape Character Areas or Units are not local landscape designations: they cover the entire district whilst designations cover only specific, delineated areas of merit which may comprise several landscape character types and areas. The review of the council’s existing local landscape designations – Areas of Great Landscape Value and Areas of Special Landscape Control – is set out in the ‘West Lothian Local Landscape Designation Review’ which gives rise to candidate Special Landscape Areas. Through the Local Development Plan process these will in due course supersede the existing local landscape designations whilst the Landscape Character Areas will remain as indicated in this document.

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

A limited list of abbreviations and definitions is included in this document for the purpose of allowing it to exist as a stand-alone technical document. For more details refer to pages 8-9 of the Introduction to the West Lothian Local Landscape Designation Review.

Abbreviations

DTA	David Tyldesley Associates
LCS	Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy in West Lothian, DTA, 2011
LLCA	Lothians Landscape Character Assessment, ASH, 1998
(WL)LLDR	West Lothian Local Landscape Designation Review, LUC, 2013
LUC	Land Use Consultants
LCA/U	Landscape Character Area/ Unit
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
(WL) LDP	(West Lothian) Local Development Plan (will supersede WLLP)
WLC	West Lothian Council
WLLCC	West Lothian Landscape Character Classification (<i>this document</i>)
WLLP	West Lothian Local Plan, 2009

Definitions

These definitions and footnotes are taken from the LLDR final report section 1.35.

Landscape	"Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors"
Landscape character	"A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another"
Local landscape	"The process of protecting landscape at a sub-regional level; local landscape designations are the arising spatial policy elements, i.e. Special Landscape Areas"
Landscape capacity	Refers to the degree of change to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type. Landscape capacity is a professional judgement reflecting the particular landscape characteristics and features of a given area and is likely to vary according to type and nature of change being proposed.
Landscape character area/ unit	A single, unique and discrete geographical area within a particular landscape character type. It shares generic characteristics with other areas of the same type but also has its own individual identity. Also referred to as 'landscape area' or a 'landscape unit', they are usually named according to place names, rather than names describing generic characteristics, to reflect their distinct identity, such as 'Avonbridge to Armadale Plateau Edge'.
Important viewpoints	These are a set of agreed viewpoints arising from landscape consultancy work, though not a definitive list, they are useful for assessment of visual sensitivity. Visual sensitivity refers to the extent which views from 'important viewpoints' and from key routes within West Lothian are vulnerable to changes in the appearance of the landscape. Visual sensitivity is a professional judgement of the likely effect on the relatively 'unspoilt' nature of the view by wind energy or other land use development.
Landscape character type	A generic landscape, relatively homogenous in character and which possesses broadly similar combinations of natural and cultural characteristics, including patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern in every area where it occurs. Also referred to as 'landscape type', they are usually named after the broad geographic features which are common to the landscape character type, such as 'Lowland Plateaux'.

Figure 1 - Excerpt from Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy in West Lothian (2011): Summary table and plan of landscape character types [Table C from LCS + Figure 1 from LCS]

Landscape types in the LLCA 1998	Landscape character areas in The LLCA 1998		Landscape types in this WL-LCA 2011		Landscape units in this WL-LCA 2011	
Uplands	4	Pentland Hills	1	Upland Hills	1(i)	Western Pentland Hills
Upland Fringes	5	Pentland Fringe north-west	2	Upland Hill Fringes	2(i)	North-West Pentland Fringe
					2(ii)	Gladsmuir / Woodmuir / Camilty Fringe
					2(iii)	Harburn / Hartwood Fringe
Lowland Hills and Ridges	17	Bathgate Hills	3	Lowland Hills and Valleys	3(i)	Bathgate Hills
Lowland Plateaux	19	West Lothian Plateau	4	Broad Valley Lowlands	4(i)	Almond Valley
					4(ii)	Couston Valley
			5	Lowland Plateaux	5(i)	Polkemmet Moor
	5(ii)	Armadales / Bathgate Plateau				
	5(iii)	Livingston / Blackburn Plateau				
	20	Slamannan Plateau			5(iv)	Avonbridge to Armadale plateau edge
5(v)					Blackridge Heights	
Lowland Plains	21	Lower Almond farmlands	6	Lowland Plains	6(i)	Kirknewton Plain
					6(ii)	East Calder / Livingston / Broxburn Plain
					6(iii)	Winchburgh / Niddry Plain
	7	Lowland river corridors	7(i)	Avon Valley		
			7(ii)	Almond Valley		
			7(iii)	Murieston / Linhouse / Camilty waters		
			7(iv)	West Calder Burn / Breich and Harwood waters		
Coastal Margins	26	Linlithgow / Queensferry farmlands	8	Lowland Hill Fringes	8(i)	Linlithgow Fringe
					8(ii)	Bathgate Fringe
			9	Coastal Margins	9(i)	West Lothian coastal farmlands
					9(ii)	West Lothian coastal hills

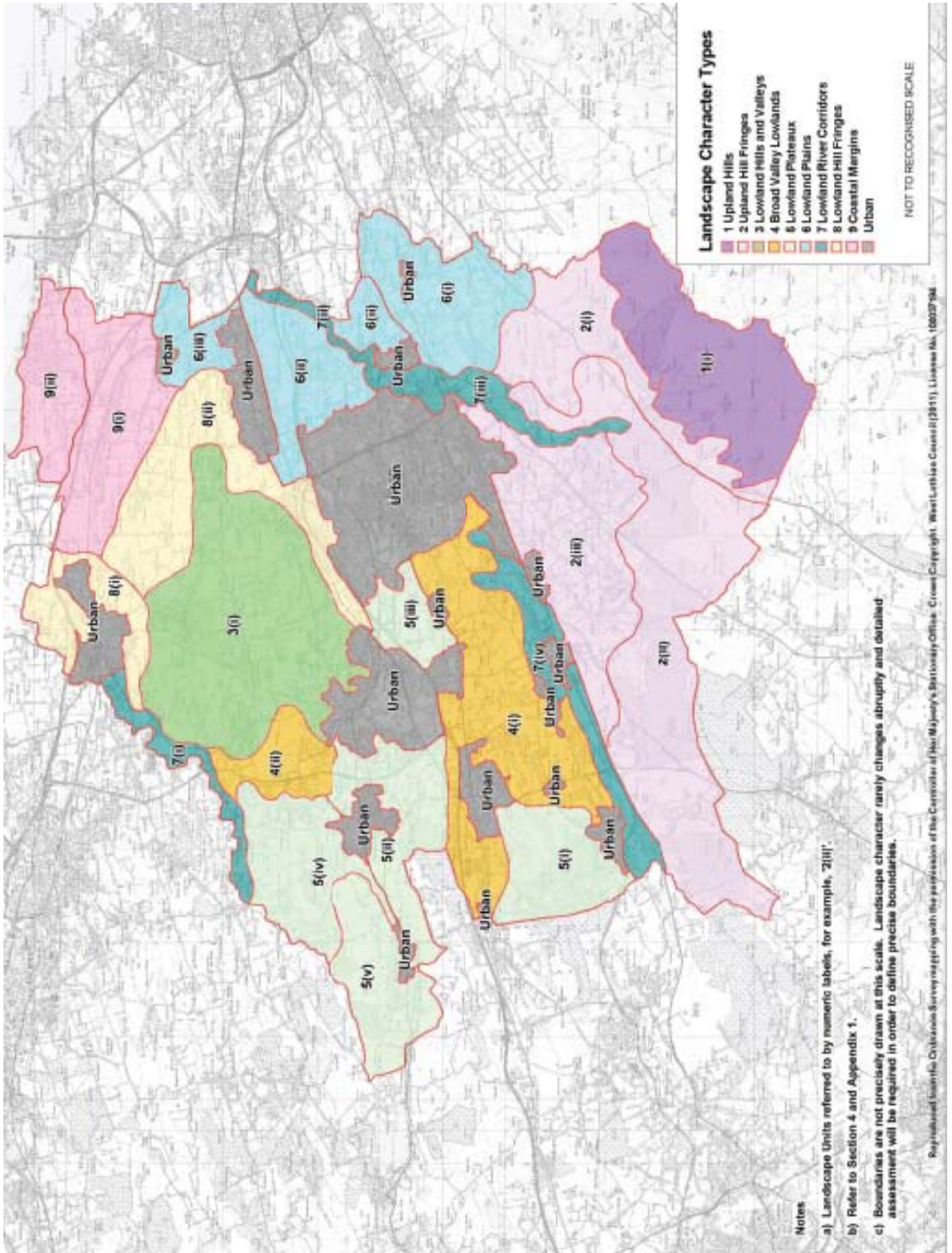


Figure 2 – Record of changes for Landscape Character Units (March 2013)

The table below summarises the proposed changes to the landscape classification of West Lothian which was refined and set out from earlier landscape work from 2011. The earlier work in 2011 was focused on wind energy capacity and the latter landscape study undertakes landscape character assessment for the purpose of establishing landscape designations to accord with Scottish Planning Policy (2010) and the Guidance on Local Landscape Designations (SNH, 2006).

Amendments to the earlier work in column one below are required to advance the current Local Landscape Designation Review study. These changes are not unexpected due to the different emphasis of the latter study in column two and the more detailed scale of the LLDR study. The proposed amendments are minor and are recorded in the table below to ensure transparency of the process.

Refer to Figures 3 and 4 for final boundaries of the revised Landscape Character Areas.

<i>Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy in West Lothian</i> (David Tyldesley Associates, 2011)	<i>Local Landscape Designation Review – Interim Report</i> (LUC, 2013)	
<i>West Lothian Landscape Classification</i>	<i>Landscape Units with proposed name change as indicated</i>	<i>Proposed changes</i>
Upland Hills		
1(i) Western Pentland Hills	1 Western Pentland Hills	Re-numbered
Upland Hill Fringes		
2(i) North-West Pentland Fringe	2 North-West Pentland Fringe	Re-numbered
2(ii) Gladsmuir / Woodmuir / Camilty Fringe	3 Gladsmuir / Woodmuir / Camilty Fringe	Re-numbered
2(iii) Harburn / Hartwood Fringe	4 Harburn / Hartwood Fringe	Re-numbered
Lowland Hills and Valleys		
3(i) Bathgate Hills	5 Bathgate Hills	Re-numbered; extended to the A89 around southern boundary of Bangour Village Hospital
Broad Valley Lowlands		
4(i) Almond Valley	6 Upper Almond Valley	Re-numbered; renamed "Upper Almond Valley" to avoid confusion with 17 Almond Valley; previously both had the same name 4(i) & 7(ii) but different landscape types
4(ii) Couston Valley	7 Couston Valley	Re-numbered
<i>West Lothian Landscape Classification</i>	<i>Landscape Units with proposed name change as indicated</i>	<i>Proposed changes</i>

Lowland Plateaux		
5(i) Polkemmet Moor	8 Polkemmet Moor	Re-numbered
5(ii) Armadale / Bathgate Plateau	9 Armadale / Bathgate Plateau	Re-numbered
5(iii) Livingston / Blackburn Plateau	10 Livingston / Blackburn Plateau	Re-numbered; absorbs part of area 21 "Bathgate Hills Fringe"; the southern A89 corridor
5(iv) Avonbridge to Armadale Plateau Edge	11 Avonbridge to Armadale Plateau Edge	Re-numbered
5(v) Blackridge Heights	12 Blackridge Heights	Re-numbered
Lowland Plains		
6(i) Kirknewton Plain	13 Kirknewton Plain	Re-numbered
6(ii) East Calder / Livingston / Broxburn Plain	14 East Calder / Livingston / Broxburn Plain (N.B. split so north & south of 17 Almond Valley)	Re-numbered
6(iii) Winchburgh / Niddry Plain	15 Winchburgh / Niddry Plain	Re-numbered
Lowland River Corridors		
7(i) Avon Valley	16 Avon Valley	Re-numbered
7(ii) Almond Valley	17 Almond Valley	Re-numbered
7(iii) Murieston / Linhouse / Camilty Waters	18 Murieston / Linhouse / Camilty Waters	Re-numbered
7(iv) West Calder Burn / Breich & Harwood Waters	19 West Calder Burn & Breich Water	Re-numbered; Area 19 realigned slightly, and renamed to omit Harwood Water which is within Area 4
Lowland Hill Fringes		
8(i) Linlithgow Fringe	20 Linlithgow Fringe	Re-numbered
8(ii) Bathgate Fringe	21 Bathgate Hills Fringe	Re-numbered; re-named; southern part merged with area 10 and Dechmont settlement boundary added
Coastal Margins		
9(i) West Lothian Coastal Farmlands	22 West Lothian Coastal Farmlands (inland)	Re-numbered
9(ii) West Lothian Coastal Hills	23 West Lothian Coastal Hills (adjacent the Firth of Forth)	Re-numbered
Other spatial type: Urban areas		
Urban areas are not given landscape classifications	n/a	Settlement boundaries extended to include allocated sites in the adopted WLLP

Figure 3 – Revised Landscape Character Units

No.	Landscape unit name	Landscape type
1	Western Pentland Hills	Upland Hills
2	North-west Pentland Fringe	Upland Hill Fringes
3	Gladsmuir / Woodmuir / Camilty Fringe	Upland Hill Fringes
4	Harburn / Hartwood Fringe	Upland Hill Fringes
5	Bathgate Hills	Lowland Hills & Valleys
6	Upper Almond Valley	Broad Valley Lowlands
7	Coustoun Valley	Broad Valley Lowlands
8	Polkemmet Moor	Lowland Plateaux
9	Armadale / Bathgate Plateau	Lowland Plateaux
10	Livingston / Blackburn Plateau	Lowland Plateaux
11	Avonbridge to Armadale Plateau Edge	Lowland Plateaux
12	Blackridge Heights	Lowland Plateaux
13	Kirknewton Plain	Lowland Plains
14	East Calder / Livingston / Broxburn Plain	Lowland Plains
15	Winchburgh / Niddry Plain	Lowland Plains
16	Avon Valley	Lowland River Corridors
17	Almond Valley	Lowland River Corridors
18	Murieston / Linhouse / Camilty Waters	Lowland River Corridors
19	West Calder Burn and Breich Water	Lowland River Corridors
20	Linlithgow Fringe	Lowland Hills Fringes
21	Bathgate Hills Fringe	Lowland Hills Fringes
22	West Lothian Coastal Farmlands	Coastal Margins
23	West Lothian Coastal Hills	Coastal Margins

West Lothian Local Landscape Designation Review

Figure 3 Landscape Units and types

- Council boundaries

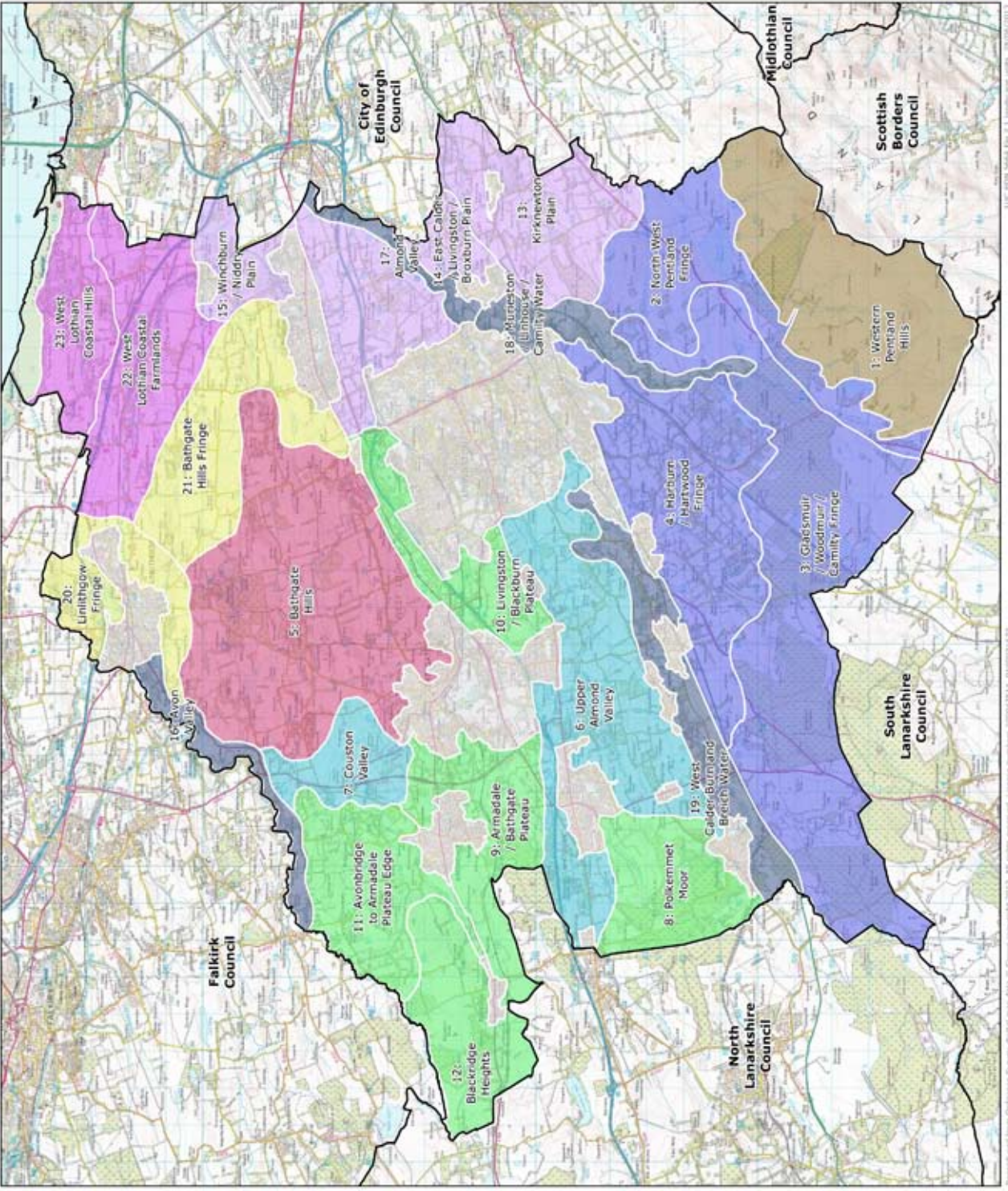
Landscape character types

- 1 Upland Hills
- 2 Upland Hill Fringes
- 3 Lowland Hills and Valleys
- 4 Broad Valley Lowlands
- 5 Lowland Plateaux
- 6 Lowland Plains
- 7 Lowland River Corridors
- 8 Lowland Hill Fringes
- 9 Coastal Margins
- Urban

The landscape units shown are derived from the West Lothian Landscape Character Assessment 2011, as modified for the purposes of this study. Refer to Section 2 for details.

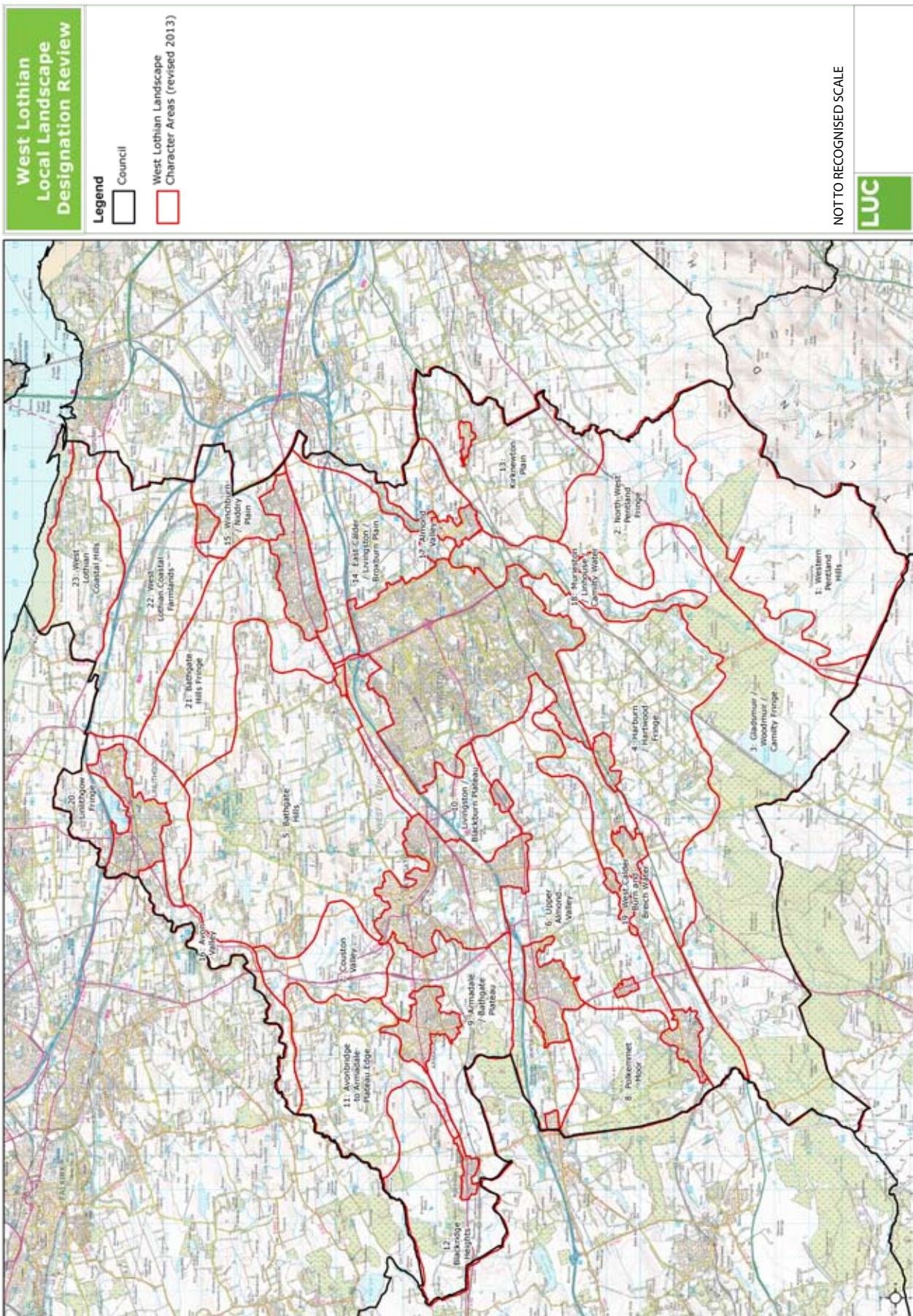
NOT TO RECOGNISED SCALE

LUC West Lothian Council



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data © Crown copyright 2012. All rights reserved. Licence numbers: 102047514, 0180031875. LUC 1008 2004 Fig 3.1 Landscape units 20/06/2013

Figure 4 – West Lothian Landscape Character Areas (revised 2013)



Landscape Character Type: 1 *Upland Hills*

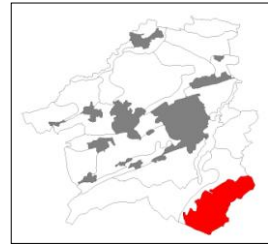
Landscape Unit: there is one Unit in this LCT within West Lothian:

1 *Western Pentland Hills*



Key Characteristics of the LCT / Unit

- Distinctive upland hills of Devonian Old Red Sandstone –age lavas and sediments with open, gently rolling, sweeping slopes rising to level topped ridges and pronounced hill masses of varying shape, mass, height and scale
- Individual hill masses often separated by steep-sided valley features of different scales creating distinctive, recognisable skylines
- Heather, coarse acidic grassland and upland raised / blanket bog peatland dominant on the highest ground
- Large areas dominated by sedge and rush, with unimproved rough grazing on the lower slopes
- Distinctively shaped straight sided conifer plantations and shelterbelts on the lower slopes and valley sides
- Constantly changing colour and texture of land cover throughout the seasons
- Occasional long, low traditional stone dykes flow over rising landform providing a sense of scale, perspective and distance
- Strong sense of place due to remoteness, wildness & stillness, with huge skies, wide horizons and infinite complexity of distant unobstructed views
- Infinite number of long distance views to the hills from within West Lothian and beyond; A70 ‘Lang Whang’ historic route between Edinburgh & Lanark offers some of the best views from close to the hills
- Strong cultural and literary associations: the Pentland Hills have long been a source of inspiration to some of Scotland’s most celebrated artists including Allan Ramsay, Robert Fergusson, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson
- Strong historical and heritage associations: archaeological remains including East and West Cairn Hills, and the Cauldstane Slap was an important drove road used to drive cattle to and from trysts (markets)
- An important, frequently visited recreational facility: enjoyed by medieval kings and queens from Edinburgh, by train loads of people at the weekends during the 1930s and 1940s, and by visitors to today’s Pentland Hills Regional Park in pursuit of a diverse range of activities or just the peaceful enjoyment of the countryside
- Very low settlement density confined to a number of isolated dwellings
- Number of small disused quarries at the western end



Landscape Character Type: 2 Upland Hill Fringes

Key Characteristics of the LCT

- Generally broad, sweeping, gentle slopes with a subtle landform and occasional igneous intrusions exposed through the Carboniferous sedimentary bedrock, strongly characteristic of the Pentland Hills
- Generally between 180m – 300m AOD but rising to 350m in places
- Area characteristically dips SW-NE in which direction numerous burns flow towards the River Almond to the north of the area, and, where deeply incised, add complexity to the landform
- Open standing water ranges from upland bogs and ponds to large reservoirs
- Varied scale, openness and land use reflects the transitional nature between upland and lowland; a mosaic of extensive open moorland, large scale open semi-improved and improved grassland, extensive coniferous plantations, and smaller scale more intimate landscape of naturally wooded burns, wide mixed shelterbelts, and designed parkland
- Extensive views from high points
- Major transport corridors generally follow the pattern of the landform either through the area or bordering it

Landscape Units: there are three Units in this LCT within West Lothian:

2 North-West Pentland Fringe

3 Gladsmuir / Woodmuir / Camilty Fringe

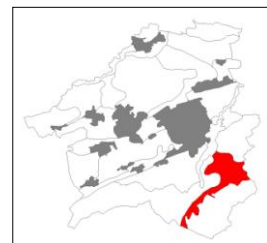
4 Harburn / Hartwood Fringe

Landscape Unit: 2 North-West Pentland Fringe



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- Generally large scale landscape with generally open or semi-open, sweeping gentle slopes at the northern foot of the Pentlands which tower over the area
- Auchinoon Hill (312m) and Corston Hill (348m) provide vertical emphasis contrasting with gentle sweeping moorland slopes and unimproved grassland
- Open standing water at Crosswood Reservoir and Harperrig Reservoir
- Few trees in the north of the area but tree clumps, linear roadside belts and coniferous planting (e.g. at West Cairns Plantation) towards the centre and in the south
- Linear belts of trees, including mature beech trees creating avenues, and remnant stone dykes or post and wire fences provide a locally distinctive pattern on the lower slopes



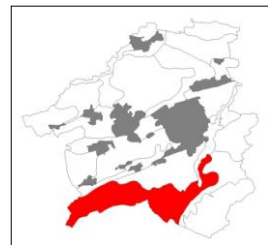
- Varied landscape experience from the remote, simple undisturbed high moorland to the busy but inconspicuous A70 'Lang Whang' which passes SW-NE through the area
- The setting of Harperrig Reservoir with the surrounding Pentlands, Auchinoon and Corston Hills is one of the key viewpoints in West Lothian, with two parking areas and an interpretation board off the A70. The historical drove road through the Cauldstane Slap is way-marked from one of the parking areas
- Very low settlement density confined to a number of isolated dwellings including Cairns House and Tower on the edge of and adding to the setting of Harperrig Reservoir
- Electricity pylons and overhead lines are an obvious intrusion between Auchinoon Hill and Corston Hill

Landscape Unit: 3 *Gladsmuir / Woodmuir / Camilty Fringe*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- Contrasting scale and openness due to land cover ranging from large scale, open moorland to extensive coniferous plantations at Camilty Plantation, Woodmuir Plantation and in the Gladsmuir Hills on the higher ground in the south
- Generally more remote, simple, undisturbed and unsettled with few dwellings
- Meandering, incised course of the Camilty Water / Linhouse Water cuts through the area adding complexity to the landform
- Balance of scale, openness and land cover changes due to de-forestation and re-planting on a large scale although naturally wooded steep sided burns with sheep grazing on the gentler grassland slopes
- This affects the extent of views, but generally extensive views northwards from A70 across open moorland and open water at Cobbinshaw Reservoir to the Bathgate Hills (this view shown above with the Pates Hill wind farm in the middle distance) and southwards to the Pentlands
- Cobbinshaw Reservoir is large but relatively inconspicuous, set back from the A70 amongst surrounding plantation
- Open water of the man-made fishing lake at Morton Reservoir is well screened
- Contrasting views northwards from high points over the Almond valley to large areas of built development, roads, pylons, bings etc.
- Major transport corridors of the A70 and the Edinburgh to Lanark railway follow the grain of the landscape running SW-NE; in contrast the A706 and A704 cut through the western part of the area with the A706 in particular running against the grain and providing a 'roller coaster' ride



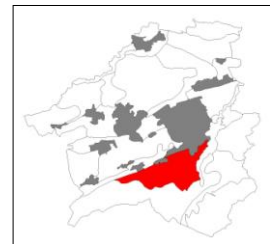
- Major development in the west of the area on the Carboniferous coalfields with quarrying at Leven Seat and in the Gladsmuir Hills above Fauldhouse where spoil heaps, dismantled railway lines, associated works and infrastructure and disused quarries give a despoiled unsettled character, although surrounding woodland limits visibility in some views
- Blacklaw and Pates Hill wind farms are located within this character area from where they are generally well screened locally by forestry plantations (except during the timber harvest cycle when they can become more exposed for a number of years) although their wider visual impact extends over many kilometres throughout West Lothian

Landscape Unit: 4 Harburn / Hartwood Fringe



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- This northern area of the wider LCT is more settled, with farms and other dwellings evenly distributed
- General SW-NE grain of the landscape is strongly reinforced by the linear pattern of burns and minor roads which criss-cross the area with extensive, wide shelterbelt planting including beech
- Regular pattern of hedges around improved grazing and occasional poor quality arable fields gives vertical relief and a smaller more enclosed and in parts intimate scale to the landscape than the wider LCT
- Manicured appearance of the golf course at Harburn and extensive designed parkland landscape at Harburn House give this part of the area an even smaller, enclosed, managed character (included in Historic Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes)
- Harwood Water, Murieston Water and Bog Burn in particular cut in part meandering incised courses through the area, with native trees on steeper slopes. The natural sinuous shapes contrast with the straight angular shelterbelts
- The Murieston Trail is an important recreational facility
- Relatively undisturbed by modern industry, noise or heavy traffic, but electricity pylons and overhead lines are an obvious intrusion
- Northern edge close to the Edinburgh to Glasgow railway and Addiewell is more unsettled with reminders of previous coal and oil shale industries, including disused mines and other infrastructure from the Addiewell Oilworks and disused quarries, opencast workings and tips at Longford
- Approved lowland crafting scheme at Nether Longford Farm will provide local softening and screening as trees and woodland matures
- Views up to the Pentlands from the local road network and the Edinburgh to Lanark railway where on embankment or where they bridge over the watercourses



Landscape Character Type: 3 *Lowland Hills & Valleys*

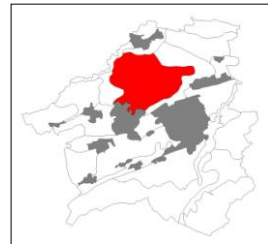
Landscape Unit: there is one Unit in this LCT within West Lothian:

5 *Bathgate Hills*



Key Characteristics of the LCT / Unit

- Complex, rounded, glaciated and prominent range of igneous hills and craggy outcrops with distinctive 'crag and tail' skylines (such as Binny Craig) rising above the lowland landscape
- Interlocking groups of dolerite sills forming hills varying between 200m-300m AOD
- Narrow band of Carboniferous limestone adds further to the complex topography and land cover
- Evidence of past quarrying for the hard rock, limestone, lead, silver, coal and oilshale
- Lower slopes are smoother, contrasting with the more rugged broken higher ground
- Frequent minor burns create locally incised valleys draining northwards and eastwards to the Midhope Burn and River Almond, and westwards to the River Avon
- Open water at several reservoirs. Beecraigs Loch is used for fishing
- Bold, relatively pastoral or mixed, small scale and intimate farmed lowland hill landscape with post and wire fences, gappy hedges and broken lines of oak, ash and beech
- Predominantly improved grassland with rough pasture and heather, and in spring the hills are ablaze with yellow gorse which thrives on the thin stony dolerite soil
- Linear tree belts and occasional stone dykes on higher steeper slopes add to the intricate pattern of landform, land use and land cover
- Towards the east more gentle slopes and arable fields break up the extensive pastureland
- Largely unaffected by afforestation but coniferous woodland very prominent on hill tops, especially Beecraigs Country Park
- Distinctive lines of mixed shelterbelts, trees often shaped by the wind
- Area rich in ancient archaeological artefacts of significant historical / heritage interest, including Cairnpapple Hill prehistoric henge and cairn
- Winding minor roads and tracks link scattered farmsteads, small settlements and isolated mansion houses on the lower slopes
- Strong sense of place due to remoteness, wildness & stillness of the high ground, and huge skies, wide horizons and infinite complexity of distant unobstructed views



- An important, frequently visited, recreational resource either for peaceful enjoyment of the countryside or a range of activities at Beecraigs Country Park
- Telecommunications mast on the highest ground is a visible landmark feature for many kilometres
- Extensive views out from several notable viewpoints within the hills, such as The Knock and Cockleroy, and to the hills from several kilometres beyond them

Landscape Character Type: 4 *Broad Valley Lowlands*

Key Characteristics of the LCT

- Open, broad relatively flat lowland plain within a gently undulating valley landform formed of folded sedimentary rocks of Carboniferous age, holding significant oil shale and coal measures with sand and gravel below alluvial river valleys
- Inconspicuous rivers and smaller tributary burns create shallow undulations with gentle side slopes
- Pastoral landscape of medium to large scale fields, predominantly improved grassland for sheep grazing
- Weak field pattern with field boundaries poorly defined by post and wire fences and gappy hedges with occasional hedgerow trees
- Poor quality arable land on the margins provides landscape variety
- Occasional woodland provides local enclosure
- Long distance views out to higher ground
- Few noticeable landform features
- Distinctive rural character but with significant man-made modifications and intrusions harking back to the area's industrial heritage
- Major transport corridors throughout the LCT due to the advantageous topography

Landscape Units: there are two Units in this LCT within West Lothian:

6 *Upper Almond Valley*

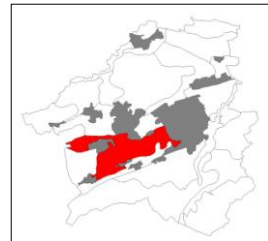
7 *Couston Valley*

Landscape Unit: 6 *Upper Almond Valley*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- Distinctive west-east grain of the gently undulating landscape as a number of small burns gradually fall from the moorland into the River Almond before it continues eastwards through Livingston and beyond to the Forth
- Predominantly medium scale pastoral landscape with some arable farmland close to settlement at the edges of the unit
- Broadleaved woodland within Polkemmet Country Park provides considerable natural heritage value and significant landscape character within an uncharacteristic sheltered river valley
- Beyond the Country Park woodland is not extensive but is found predominantly to the centre and west of the area, with coniferous and mixed woodland including some in Woodland Trust ownership (e.g. East Whitburn, Cousland)
- Roadside treebelts are a feature along the B7015 and at Gavieside to the east, with shelterbelts elsewhere



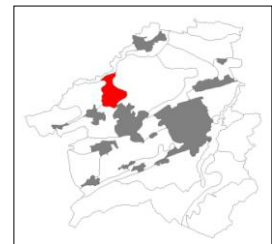
- Scattered scrubby birch are a landscape feature
- Scattered but frequent steadings linked by several minor roads criss-crossing the area in either an east-west or north-south direction
- The balance of tree cover is increasing as tree and woodland planting matures north of West Calder associated with several lowland crofting schemes to the east of Longridge
- Rural character of open areas is diluted by features providing a legacy of the areas industrial past, most notably the Five Sisters oilshale bing at Westwood and others, disused railway lines, and modern features including quarries, sewage works, recycling centre, electricity pylons and overhead lines, etc.
- Several linear settlements on the edge of the area have developed as either coal or oil shale mining towns, such as Whitburn, Fauldhouse, Stoneyburn, Addiewell, Loganlea and Seafield, some retaining the neat rows of former miners cottages
- Major roads pass through or alongside the settlements along the boundaries of the area, including the M8 and A705 to the north, A71 to the south and A706 through the west of the area

Landscape Unit: 7 Couston Valley



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- Broad, open, medium scale valley of the Couston Water which gradually falls north-westwards from the Bathgate Hills to the River Avon
- Almost exclusively pastoral with small areas of arable farmland
- Few isolated farms
- Generally featureless, with little tree cover and few hedges
- Roadside planting alongside the A800 and A801 is a feature in the landscape
- Small areas of semi-improved acidic and neutral grassland, for example around South Couston Farm, for sheep grazing
- West of the A801 is more of a transitional area up to the Avonbridge to Armadale Plateau Edge and the Blackridge Heights further west, which is more enclosed and diverse with textural variety of woodland and wetland including remnant raised bog
- Open water and former workings at Couston sand quarry are a major intrusion in the landscape, currently being restored
- Clear views eastwards to the steep western edge of the Bathgate Hills, and westwards to the more gradually rising Blackridge Heights



Landscape Character Type: 5 *Lowland Plateaux*

Key Characteristics of the LCT

- Extensive, smoothly undulating, lowland plateau formed of folded sedimentary rocks of Carboniferous age, holding significant coal measures with sand and gravel below alluvial river valleys
- Typically lying at between 150m-200m AOD although higher in the southwest and lower in the east
- Significant areas of less cultivable lowland wetland bog in badly drained areas, with wet grassland, heather moorland with sedge, rush and marsh communities and few trees
- Elsewhere predominantly improved grassland with sheep grazing
- Some arable farmland close to settlements but generally poor quality
- Woodlands provide significant landscape features, local enclosure and important relief from surrounding urban and industrial intrusions
- Landscape character is heavily influenced by the areas industrial past, close to the mining settlements of Whitburn, Fauldhouse and Armadale
- Extensive long distance views from the more open higher ground, including views to the Blacklaw wind farm and Pates Hill wind farm, and the Pentland Hills to the south

Landscape Units: there are five Units in this LCT within West Lothian:

8 *Polkemmet Moor*

9 *Armadale / Bathgate Plateau*

10 *Livingston / Blackburn Plateau*

11 *Avonbridge to Armadale Plateau Edge*

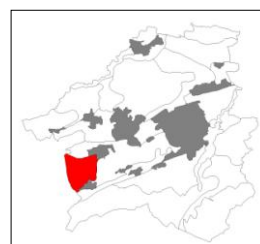
12 *Blackridge Heights*

Landscape Unit: 8 *Polkemmet Moor*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- A relatively flat plateau with a central west-east ridge of moorland and extensive coniferous plantations gently falling northwards from the Fauldhouse Hills at 290m AOD to the River Almond at around 190m AOD, and falling more steeply southwards down to the Breich Water at around 210m



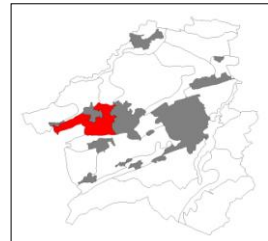
- Past open cast coal mining is very evident in the numerous artificial humps and hollows, coal bings, dismantled railway lines and disused mines and quarries
- Poorly drained peatland bogs with heather, cotton grass and rough unimproved tussocky grass on the higher slopes
- Open pasture on the lower slopes, with wire fencing rather than hedges
- Coal bings are becoming vegetated but are still conspicuous features in the landscape
- Great variety in views, from extensive, distant views out from open moorland southwards to the Gladsmuir Hills and the Blacklaw wind farm, to more confined and enclosed views from within the plantations
- The high plateau is almost entirely unoccupied, with very little settlement apart from isolated farms on the lower slopes and some expansion of Fauldhouse and Longridge (just outside the area) up the slope
- Only one minor road crosses the plateau, with other minor tracks and plantation rides

Landscape Unit: 9 Armadale / Bathgate Plateau



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- A poorly drained, medium scale watershed between the Couston / Avon Valley to the north and the Almond Valley to the south
- A predominantly rural area between Armadale, Bathgate, Blackburn and Whitburn, but with significant modern intrusions
- Rolling moorland plateau becoming wild and exposed to the west and more enclosed with more urban influences to the east within the Armadale / Bathgate fringe
- Distinctive simple, exposed, plateau bog-like character of open rolling moorland with heather and gorse around the high point at Hall Torbane Farm south-east of Armadale
- By way of contrast, to the east is a more enclosed landscape where mature woodland policies of the former Boghead House and extensive shelterbelts are important landscape features providing an attractive western edge to Bathgate
- Large areas of open water are features in the landscape, including to the east of the A801 (Half Loaf Pond) and to the west around Hall Torbane Farm south-east of Armadale
- A801 is a dominant major transport corridor passing mostly on embankment north-south through the area, with the A706 and new Bathgate-Airdrie railway and associated infrastructure creating major intrusions in the landscape
- Overhead power lines and pylons, and an electricity sub-station also dilute the rural character of the landscape
- Telecommunications masts on high ground are features within the unit visible from many kilometres. From the west of the unit the huge radio and TV transmitter masts at Black Hill and Kirk o'Shotts within North Lanarkshire are visible approximately 6-7km away



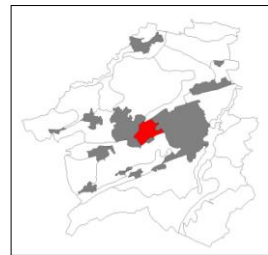
- South of the A89 is a series of gentle lowland undulations of improved grassland, including restored mine workings
- In the north of the area the restored Easton colliery bing on the west side of Bathgate provides an elevated feature now well integrated into the landscape
- Long distance views eastwards to the Bathgate Hills and southwards to the Pates Hill wind farm

Landscape Unit: 10 Livingston / Blackburn Plateau



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- Generally open or semi-open, isolated raised peatland bogs of Tailend Moss and Easter Inch Moss are important wetlands with a diverse range of wetland habitats
- Artificially drained and managed as a recreational, educational and wildlife resource of importance within an increasingly built-up area
- Mixed plantations and shelterbelt planting provides local enclosure around the wetlands and M8 at Junction 3 and Dechmont
- Wetland areas are isolated between the key road network linking business parks on the edges of Bathgate and Livingston either side of the M8 corridor
- Roadside shelterbelts, stone dykes and wire fencing around gently undulating arable farmland and grassland, with isolated farms provide a patchwork and variety of land cover types in small units within a generally medium scale landscape
- Oil shale bing at Seafield Law has been shaped and re-colonised and is a feature in the plateau landscape visible over several kilometres
- Views northwards to the Bathgate Hills and long distance views southwards to the Pates Hill wind farm
- The recently re-built Bathgate-Airdrie rail link passes through Easter Inch Moss

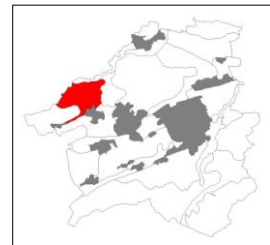


Landscape Unit: 11 Avonbridge to Armadale Plateau Edge



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- Gently rolling eastern edge of the higher Slamannan Plateau which covers an extensive area to the west within Falkirk district
- Distinctive west-east grain to the landscape due to drainage by a series of tributary burns, including Mad Burn, which flow eastwards off the higher plateau into the Barbauchlaw Burn which in turn flows northwards into the River Avon
- The Unit represents a transition between arable farmland on the lower ground, to pasture and up to rough hill grazing on higher ground
- Small scale, semi-enclosed pattern of rural roads, mixed farming, woodland and shelterbelts in parts of the unit, but generally with no strong pattern of field boundaries
- Former woodland policies of Bridge Castle and within the Barbauchlaw Burn valley along the eastern edge of the area, and around the top of Blackridge Heights at North Rhodens, East Rhodens and West Rhodens, are significant landscape features providing an attractive, mature, managed character with broadleaved woodland, fine roadside beech avenues and clipped beech hedges
- Extensive mixed forest plantation at Drumtassie Burn managed by the Forestry Commission as part of the Central Scotland Forest
- Meandering form of the Barbauchlaw Burn and in places the steep sided Barbauchlaw Glen north of Armadale, with localised raised ground between the burn and the A801 at Kinnen Hill and Tantallan Hill, provides variety of landform and contrasts with the flatter Couston Valley to the east
- The northern edge of Armadale is a generally low lying, open, gently terraced pastoral landscape for sheep grazing
- Relatively unspoiled apart from overhead lines and electricity pylons, small disused quarries and an active open cast coal mine north of Armadale (Woodend Colliery). The Gowanbank gas compressor station is relatively well screened

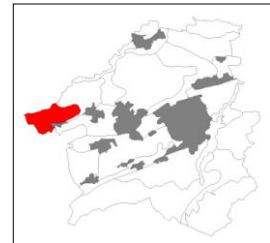


Landscape Unit: 12 *Blackridge Heights*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- As with the *Avonbridge to Armadale Plateau Edge* unit this area also represents an eastern extension of the Slamannan Plateau which extends within Falkirk district to the west, but is significantly different in character
- Blawhorn Moss, a National Nature Reserve of considerable nature conservation value, occupies a significant part of the unit
- Large scale, open, exposed, gently undulating moorland plateau
- Extensive areas of peatland and other poorly drained areas with a mosaic of mosses, heather, bog cotton and wet tussocky grassland
- Active raised mire/bog, watered from rainfall rather than via burns or rivers, which is rare in lowland Scotland
- Criss-cross of ditches shows past attempts at drainage for conversion to farmland
- Strong sense of place due to remoteness, wildness & stillness, with huge skies and wide horizons
- Historically an important viewpoint, with an infinite complexity of distant unobstructed views
- An important wildlife and recreational resource with public access across a boardwalk over the Blawhorn Moss National Nature Reserve
- Steep southern edge culminates in the prominent dolerite rocky outcrop scarp at Eastcraigs Hill providing a rugged and dramatic backdrop to Blackridge and the A89
- Almost devoid of settlement, buildings, roads, intensive agriculture or forestry, the only man-made intrusion within the 'Heights' being the Eastcraigs water tank complex alongside the minor road between Blackridge and Avonbridge



Landscape Character Type: 6 *Lowland Plains*

Key Characteristics of the LCT

- Part of an extensive, smoothly rolling, lowland landscape of predominantly folded sedimentary rocks of Carboniferous age, holding significant oil shale measures to the north of the River Almond
- Predominantly open, large scale, high quality arable farmland lying between Livingston and Edinburgh
- The lowland plain averages around 100m AOD, rising gradually to the south to up to 240m AOD
- Numerous burns are generally inconspicuous but minor valleys add complexity to the landform
- The deeply incised and well wooded valley of the River Almond cuts through the area
- Characteristic medium-large scale arable farmland becomes increasingly fragmented within the urban fringe to the east of Livingston and East Calder, and south of Broxburn, with a variety of land uses
- Shelter and local enclosure provided by woodland belts
- Waste shale bings from oilworks punctuate the skyline and are a legacy of the industry north of the River Almond, as are neat rows of miners cottages (known as “the rows”) in several villages
- Localised humps, hollows and other subtle traces in the landscape such as disused mines and mineral railways
- Generally long views across the open, large scale farmland
- Minor roads over the burns and Union Canal are often features of local interest in the landscape

Landscape Units: there are three Units in this LCT within West Lothian:

13 *Kirknewton Plain*

14 *East Calder / Livingston / Broxburn Plain*

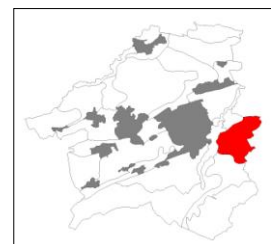
15 *Winchburgh / Niddry Plain*

Landscape Unit: 13 *Kirknewton Plain*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- A relatively undisturbed, distinctly rural, gently rolling lowland plain
- Drained by a series of minor burns running eastwards off higher ground to the west (Selms Hill) and south (Corston Hill) into the Gogar Burn
- North of Kirknewton the drainage pattern has created a series of minor ridges and valleys running east-west, with mixed woodland, small to medium sized and generally open fields with isolated farms and small holdings linked by minor narrow roads, creating variety in land cover



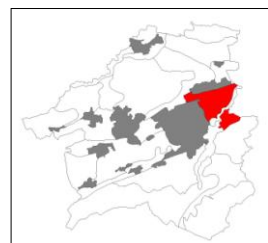
- South of Kirknewton, burns run eastwards into the Water of Leith, producing a series of minor ridges and valleys creating a distinctive terraced pattern to the arable landscape
- South of Kirknewton, fields are medium to large scale, of regular size and rectangular pattern, with wire fences or well maintained hedges, managed by several farm estates at Overton, Ormiston and Belstane
- Extensive, wide shelterbelts and woods add to the enclosure and well managed character south of Kirknewton, including a large coniferous Forestry Commission wood at Selm Muir Wood
- Structural and formal gardens at Hatton House (partially within West Lothian and included in Historic Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes) add to the enclosed, managed character of the area to the north-east of Linburn
- Stone dykes and taller roadside walls are important landscape features within the estate farmlands
- Kirknewton is the only settlement of any size, on the main railway line passing east-west through the area; elsewhere there are small groups of residential properties, isolated dwellings and farmsteads throughout the area
- Recent residential development at Newlands comprises large detached properties generally well screened by surrounding woodland
- Several minor roads pass north-south through the area linking with the A70 to the south and the A71 to the north
- Pylons and overhead electricity lines cut through and intrude into the farmed landscape
- Other land uses include a disused quarry and poultry sheds at Lawheads,
- Views out of the area are limited by the northern edge of Corston Hill and the Pentlands to the south and Kaimes Hill and Dalmahoy Hill just beyond the district boundary to the east

Landscape Unit: 14 *East Calder / Livingston / Broxburn Plain*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- Character of this area is dominated by the busy transport corridors of the M8, A89, A71 and the Edinburgh – Glasgow railway line which generally follow an east-west alignment through the area
- Elsewhere sinuous narrow lanes criss-cross the area between isolated, flat, open arable fields which lie amongst a variety of urban-fringe land uses, including cement works, storage units and workshops, scrap dealers, a garden nursery, electricity sub-station and poultry sheds
- Remnants from the oil shale industry include a remaining bing and surviving shale miner's cottages from the Pumpherston, Roman Camps and Broxburn Oilworks, disused mineral lines and other more subtle features in the landscape
- There is a network of pylons and high and low voltage power lines, railway sidings and the Lothian and Borders Battalion Army Cadet training centre in woodland at Drumshoreland



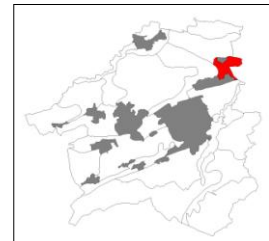
- Views northwards over huge white horizontal sheds in the industrial estates east of Broxburn, and the huge orange / pink oil shale bings at Winchburgh / Faucheldean add to the fragmented urban-edge character
- Further east the character becomes more rural with typical large scale, open, flat arable fields and scattered farms
- The steep sided, well vegetated River Almond corridor, including the Almondell & Calder Wood Country Park, divides the unit in two. The Almond Valley Viaduct taking the railway over the River Almond, and the Almond Aqueduct where the Union Canal and River Almond meet at Lin's Mill, both at the district boundary, are also significant features visible in the landscape
- Elsewhere road bridges over the canal are local features of interest in the landscape

Landscape Unit: 15 *Winchburgh / Niddry Plain*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- The gently undulating lowland plain is dominated by the artificial forms and striking orange / pink colours of the huge flat-topped Niddry and Faucheldean oil shale bings, Scheduled Monuments, to the east and south of Winchburgh
- Winchburgh is a former mining town with rows of miners cottages and unsettled areas of poor land quality associated with past mining activity
- Niddry Burn is the main watercourse but is inconspicuous
- The Union Canal passes through the area and road overbridges are local features of interest in the landscape
- Woodland is scarce and small in size, with some mixed plantation at Duntarvie Castle and sporadic coniferous plantation elsewhere, but not a landscape feature
- Niddry golf course to the south-east of Winchburgh has a parkland appearance
- East of the area is more open and intensively farmed with good quality arable farmland more typical of the lowland plain further east beyond the district



Landscape Character Type: 7 *Lowland River Corridors*

Key Characteristics of the LCT

- Predominantly deeply incised, narrow, meandering, distinctive, intimate river valleys formed by the rise and fall of sea levels since the end of the ice age
- Changing to more open, shallower and less well defined corridors towards the upstream and downstream ends within the district
- Densely wooded, enclosed steep sided valleys with mainly semi-natural broadleaved woodland
- The gorge-like valleys are sparsely settled, with isolated steadings amongst pastoral farmland on the higher, shallower slopes
- Significant recreational value due to public access
- Outstanding landscape features include aqueducts and viaducts
- Other features of interest in the landscape include rapids, weirs, waterfalls and mills

Landscape Units: there are four Units in this LCT within West Lothian:

16 *Avon Valley*

17 *Almond Valley*

18 *Murieston / Linhouse / Camilty Water*

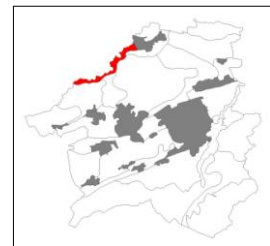
19 *West Calder Burn & Breich Water*

Landscape Unit: 16 *Avon Valley*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- Deep gorge-like, incised river valley with mixed broadleaved woodland from Westfield to the canal aqueduct crossing rapidly changes to an open, less wooded, gently undulating pastoral landscape used for dairying / cattle stock rearing with fields of hay, silage and ryegrass and unimproved grassland for sheep grazing on steeper slopes
- Significant recreational resource via the River Avon Heritage Trail along the river bank between Avonbridge and Linlithgow, with features of interest including weirs, waterfalls, the Westfield Viaduct, Avon Viaduct at Linlithgow (taking the Edinburgh to Glasgow railway across the Avon valley) and the Avon Aqueduct (the second longest in Britain, taking the Union Canal over the River Avon), and the remains of mills and Carriber Castle
- Also access from the Falkirk side at Muiravonside Country Park

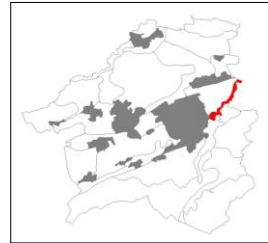


Landscape Unit: 17 *Almond Valley*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- River Almond to the east of Livingston is a more gently meandering downstream section of the Murieston / Linhouse / Camilty Water unit described below [landscape unit 7(iii)]
- Significant recreational resource via the Almondell & Calder Wood Country Park with extensive broadleaved woodland and ornamental planting
- Elsewhere the relatively narrow valley edges comprise remnant semi-natural woodland, mixed shelterbelts and plantations, and more open grassland grazed by sheep
- Valley peters out at the eastern end where the river is much more inconspicuous
- Features of interest include many weirs and bridges, disused mills, the Almond Valley Viaduct (taking the railway over the River Almond) and the Almond Aqueduct (where the Union Canal and River Almond meet at Lin's Mill), both at the district boundary
- National Cycle Route 75 follows the valley, and the Union Canal Feeder path, from east of Almondell Country Park Visitor Centre to Lin's Mill, offers stunning seasonal views of the former rural estate and the narrow gorge like section of the river

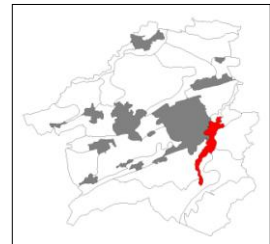


Landscape Unit: 18 *Murieston / Linhouse / Camilty Waters*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- Drains the Pentland Hills as the Crosswood Burn through Camilty Plantation, before continuing northwards as Camilty Water and then Linhouse Water, which is joined by Murieston Water and then the River Almond at Mid Calder to continue northwards to the Forth
- Incised, steep sided, meandering and well wooded for much of its course, but with a more open, less wooded central section
- Gently sloping valley edges are sheep grazed
- Features of interest include bridges, weirs, a waterfall, disused mill and an impressive ruin of a 19th century gunpowder mill surrounded by woodland policies
- Significant recreational and wildlife resource via the 'East Calder, Calder Wood and Linhouse Path' along the river valley, the Calder Wood Country Park (lying as a large island between Murieston Water and Linhouse Water) and Linhouse Glen Nature Reserve

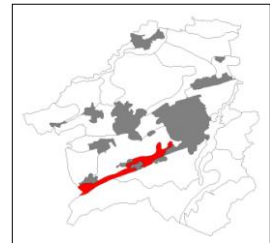


Landscape Unit: 19 *West Calder Burn and Breich Water*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- South of Fauldhouse the Breich Water meanders through a sheltered valley with native trees on steep valley sides and a flat flood plain of grazed improved grassland
- Railway crosses the Breich Water near Fauldhouse then follows the valley eastwards, often on embankment or in cutting
- Important local recreational and wildlife resource via the Addiewell Bing Wildlife Reserve
- At the eastern end of the unit, the West Calder Burn and the Breich Water follow separate before continuing northwards in to the River Almond. They generally share similar characteristics with the Breich Water, meandering through narrow, enclosed valleys which open out into shallower, less well defined corridors



Landscape Character Type: 8 *Lowland Hill Fringes*

Key Characteristics of the LCT

- Transitional areas of open rolling slopes of volcanic and intrusive outcrops forming lowland hills and ridges lying between gently rolling lowland coastal farmlands and coastal hills to the north, and the more complex landform of the Bathgate Hills to the south
- Important to the setting of surrounding hills and other landscape features
- Strong rural, managed character of large farms and estates
- Almost entirely good quality, medium to large scale, regular, rectangular arable farmland, with improved pasture for sheep and stock grazing on steeper slopes, creating a distinctive patchwork field pattern reinforced by field hedges
- Mature policy woodlands are distinctive features, linking and enclosing the fields
- Roadside trees, avenues and shelterbelts, and well maintained stone dykes are also distinctive features in the landscape
- Isolated farms and cottages with little other settlement
- Some evidence of past industrial use, but limited

Landscape Units: there are two Units in this LCT within West Lothian:

20 *Linlithgow Fringe*

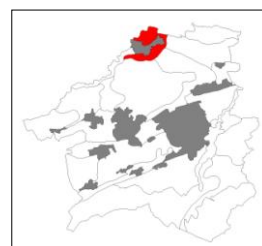
21 *Bathgate Fringe*

Landscape Unit: 20 *Linlithgow Fringe*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- Linlithgow urban area and Loch nestles in a basin contained by gently rising, undulating slopes of foothills to the north and south
- North of the town the south-facing slopes gradually rise to localised hills at Parkhead and Bonnytoun, culminating at 171m AOD at Airngath Hill on the district boundary, close to the Hope Monument, providing panoramic views in all directions and a striking setting to Linlithgow Loch, Palace and modern spire at St. Michael's Church
- M9 passes between the Loch and the northern foothills but is well screened and inconspicuous
- South and east of the town the north-facing foothills of the Bathgate Hills provide an important setting to the town, gradually rising in the south to 134m AOD at Williamcraigs, whilst to the east the foothills rise more steeply to a height of 144m



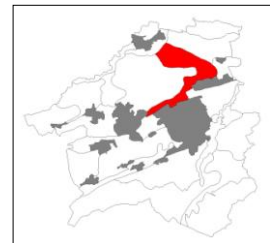
- Medium scale, angular arable fields with alternating ley grasslands for stock grazing creates a patchwork landscape, reinforced by many hedges
- Policy woodland and mature estate woods of Grange House and Bonnytoun to the north, Clarendon House to the east, and at Kettlestoun, Preston House and Williamcraigs to the south, add significant confinement
- Stone dykes are well maintained around many of the farm estates, in particular Bonnytoun and Preston
- Appearance of two golf clubs north and south of the town is manicured
- Disused sand quarry at Kettlestoun between the River Avon and the A706

Landscape Unit: 21 *Bathgate Hills Fringe*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- Semi-open, gently rolling, farmland of the Bathgate foothills, with a distinctive west-east grain
- Complex landform of a series of ridges gently rising and falling, strongly linked to the Haugh Burn, Ecclesmachan Burn and Binny Burn running in the same direction, with distinctive igneous intrusions rising to 130m AOD at Nancy's Hill in the west and to 144m AOD to the east at Tar Hill
- Series of rocky outcrops have similar distinctive 'crag and tail' glaciated formation as in the Bathgate Hills immediately to the south
- Other craggy outcrops such as at Newbigging Craig
- 'B' roads follow the west-east grain, linked by other minor roads running north-south creating a distinctive grid pattern
- An even scatter of farmsteadings with predominantly good quality arable farmland giving way to more sheep grazing on improved pasture to the east
- Bridgend is the only sizeable settlement, with significant woodland, shelterbelts and roadside avenues providing local enclosure
- Elsewhere only isolated farms and cottages
- Some distinctive buildings in the landscape, including Ochiltree Castle
- Small disused quarries at Riccarton, Binny and at the eastern end where landscape character becomes more unsettled, fragmented and influenced by the nearby mining settlements of Broxburn and Winchburgh
- Long distance views southwards to the Pentland Hills



Landscape Character Type: 9 Coastal Margins

Key Characteristics of the LCT

- Open, sweeping and gently rolling agricultural area of mostly intensively managed arable farmland on the fertile soils of the underlying Carboniferous rock
- Landform reflects local geological variations but with only limited rock outcrops
- Generally north-facing towards the coast
- Drained by inconspicuous burns falling to the Firth of Forth
- Significant policy and shelterbelt woodland associated with farm estates
- Significant gardens & designed landscapes associated with historic houses
- Generally medium scale fields but in areas smaller or larger scale, defined by hedgerows, hedgerow trees, stone dykes or wire boundaries
- Some pasture for sheep grazing, but limited
- An even scatter of farmsteadings, estates and cottages, with a limited number of other settlements
- Distinctive grid pattern of major transport corridors of the M9, A904, the Edinburgh to Glasgow / Perth-shire railway and the Union Canal pass through the area in a west-east direction and linked by a series of minor roads running north-south
- Often extensive views northwards across the Firth of Forth and its bridges to the Ochil Hills and beyond, and to the south to the Bathgate Hills and the Pentland Hills beyond

Landscape Units: there are two Units in this LCT within West Lothian:

22 West Lothian Coastal Farmlands

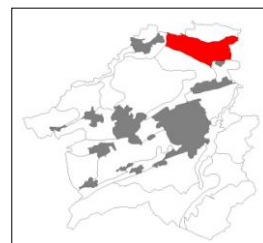
23 West Lothian Coastal Hills

Landscape Unit: 22 West Lothian Coastal Farmlands



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- A smooth, gently rolling and subtle landform, devoid of significant rocky outcrops and generally north-facing towards the coast
- Predominantly good quality, intensively managed arable farmland with some improved pasture around farmsteadings and cattle and sheep grazing, creating a patchwork of agricultural land use
- Estates at Champfleurie House, Philipstoun and Craigton House have native broadleaved and mixed policy and shelterbelt woodland creating significant features in the landscape and local enclosure
- Area drained by the minor Errick Burn and Pardovan Burn falling into the Midhope Burn which drains to the Forth through the Coastal Hills unit to the north
- Large bings are features in the open landscape providing a legacy of the areas industrial heritage; bings at Philipstoun (north and south) are becoming colonised and gradually assimilated into the landscape; large bing north-west of Winchburgh creates a more artificial form and colouring in contrast to the surrounding farmland



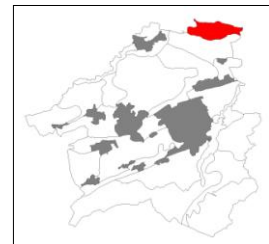
- Bridges over the railway and canal are features in the open, rolling landscape of local interest

Landscape Unit: 23 *West Lothian Coastal Hills*



Key Characteristics of the Landscape Unit

- Gently undulating, predominantly north-facing countryside rising up to the south and west from the tidal zone, and levelling out to the east
- Landform reflects local geological variations, rising to 113m AOD at Binns Hill, with few rock outcrops
- Diverse, well tended, high quality landscape of intensively farmed agricultural land with significant areas of ancient and semi-natural native woodlands and improved grasslands grazed by sheep
- Large, well managed, designed parkland landscapes around the historic, stately buildings of national and international renown at Hopetoun House and the House of the Binns ('The Binns'), both included in Historic Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes
- Other buildings are farm cottages or tenanted farms, but with an incongruous factory at the east end
- Small scale landscape with a regular field pattern defined by hedgerows and some stone dykes, in particular around the Hopetoun estate where they are a strong feature of the landscape
- Area drains northwards to the Firth of Forth via the meandering and in parts incised and well wooded Midhope Burn which bisects the area
- A904 runs along the southern boundary with only a few minor roads running from it through the Hopetoun estate, creating a quiet, calm experience
- Landform and landcover provide contrasts of enclosed, small scale areas with open, elevated outward viewpoints from higher land (in particular from the Tower folly at the House of the Binns), where long distance views provide a sense of place and context with the Firth of Forth, bridges and Fife beyond



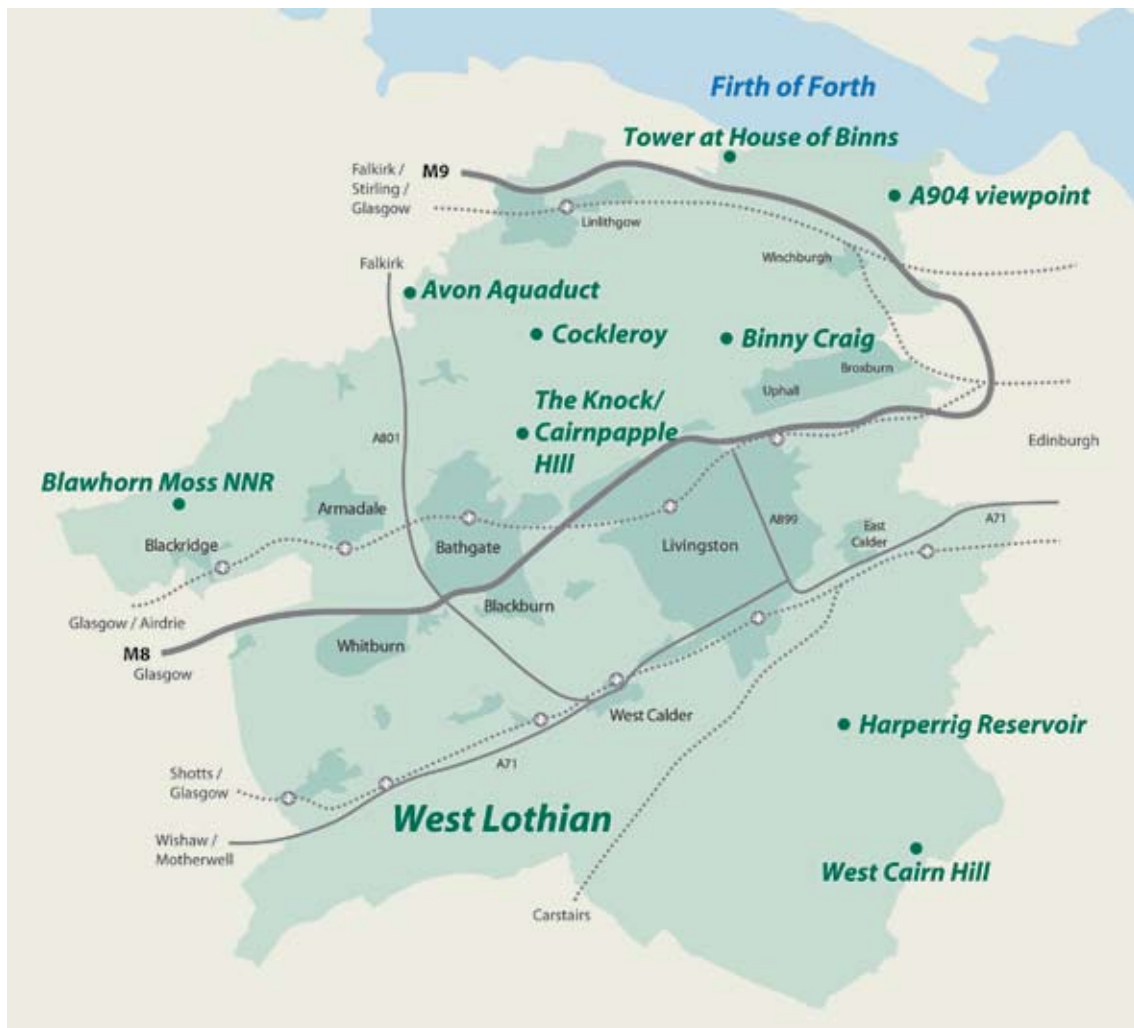
Important viewpoints

As part of the Quantitative Evaluation Criteria in the West Lothian Local Landscape Designation Review, Important Viewpoints were brought forward from the landscape capacity study for wind energy. These nine Important Viewpoints were identified as part of the process of assessing landscape sensitivity to wind energy development. The identified viewpoints are also useful for assessment of other types of land use proposals with potential visibility impacts.

In the LLDR, these Important Viewpoints were incorporated as part of the Landscape Quality Criteria for the criterion 'Views' which tested the visibility of a landscape unit.

The nine Important Viewpoints for landscape visibility identified for West Lothian are:

- West Cairn Hill (unit 1)
- Harperrig Reservoir (unit 2)
- Public viewpoint on the A904 east of Newton (unit 23)
- Tower at the House of the Binns (unit 23)
- Cockleroy (unit 5)
- The Knock viewpoint and Cairnpapple Hill (unit 5)
- Binny Craig (unit 5)
- Avon Aqueduct on the Union Canal (unit 16)
- Blawhorn Moss (unit 12)



Acknowledgements

David Tyldesley & Associates

Land Use Consultants

Scottish Natural Heritage

References

Lothians Landscape Character Assessment, ASH Consulting Group, 1998

Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy in West Lothian, David Tyldesley Associates, 2011

West Lothian Local Landscape Designation Review, Land Use Consultants, 2013