

A11.1: Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs)

1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This appendix supports Chapter 11 (Landscape) of the ES, and sets out the baseline landscape character using Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs) to describe the study area for the proposed scheme. For each LLCA the description includes location, topography, drainage, land use, settlement, views, key characteristics, positive and negative attributes, designations, condition and scenic quality.
- 1.1.2 The location of the LLCAs and landscape designations are shown on Figure 11.1 of the ES.

2 Baseline Conditions

- 2.1.1 The LLCAs within the study area are listed and described below in order of Local Landscape Character Type (LLCT).

Urban LLCA

- 2.1.2 The urban LLCT is predominantly represented by the villages of Luncarty, Bankfoot and Birnam, with the smaller settlements of Murthly and Stanley also contributing. These communities are generally in clusters, dispersed throughout the agricultural landscape. The topography in these areas is generally flat or graded to meet the needs of the urban environment. All these settlements are predominantly residential, with a number of amenities spread between them.

Luncarty

- 2.1.3 Luncarty village is situated within a rolling agricultural landscape. The extents of the village are defined by the River Tay to the east of the settlement and the A9 Duel Carriageway to the west. Flat arable farmland forms the northern and southern borders to the village. Luncarty is situated within a natural hollow in the landscape, with small rises to the south and the western edges of the settlement.
- 2.1.4 The village is well protected by mature shelter belt planting to the north and east, while the train line connecting to Perth and Dunkeld forms a raised barrier to the west side of the village. These components of the landscape limit views from the village to the wider, rural landscape.
- 2.1.5 There are two smaller streams than run through the village, connecting back to the larger River Tay. Although the village is in such close proximity to the river its relationship is limited. This is predominantly due to woodland screening and because the majority of housing developments are oriented towards the village centre.
- 2.1.6 Luncarty is a predominantly residential settlement, with the houses surrounding Lagland Park and Luncarty primary school at the centre of the village. Elements of an urban settlement such as telephone masts, flag poles, and chimney tops do little to affect the horizon line of the landscape because the village is generally lower than surrounding landscape and well hidden behind earthworks and mature planting. The buildings create a relatively intimate, close experience which is emphasised by lack of wider views.
- 2.1.7 The architecture is predominantly low and modern (built within the last 50 years). The urban texture and colour is consistent. This lack of diversity adds to the uniform visual nature of the village.
- 2.1.8 There is one major road (the B9099) that runs through the east of the village, and one major residential roads that links the majority of houses. Off this main road run a network of dead end cul-de-sac access roads.
- 2.1.9 The majority of the surrounding area is utilised as farmland, with a mixture of arable crops and pastoral land. Field boundaries are generally demarcated by hedgerows and post and wire fences, with occasional woodland shelterbelts along roadsides. The majority of deciduous and mixed woodland is situated along the river banks and in constructed shelter belts, with a small number of individual trees dispersed amongst the fields.

Table 1: Landscape Character Summary for Luncarty

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small village to the north of Perth. • River Tay runs to the eastern edge. • Scattered blocks of shelterbelt planting directly around the village. • Railway line connecting to Perth and Dunkeld forming a raised barrier to the west. • A9 dual carriage way also limiting village growth to the west.
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well maintained farmland forming local context. • Well screened from nearby roads and surrounding settlements. • Areas of mature woodland and shelterbelts.
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency in architecture. • Lack of relationship with adjacent River Tay. • Few opportunities to view the wider rural context.
Landscape and other relevant designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No landscape designations • Three C listed buildings • Two monuments, and two buildings designated in the Perth and Kinross Historic Environment Monuments Record
Landscape Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well maintained farmland. • Mature woodland areas generally in good condition.
Scenic Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium scenic quality. Topography and woodland gives the area a relatively sheltered character, with minimal influence from surrounding settlements. However this limits the potential for residents to engage with the quaint surrounding landscape.

Bankfoot

- 2.1.10 Bankfoot is a small village set within a natural depression in the landscape with a slight rise to the north west, and a steeper rise to the east of the village. The A9 forms the eastern boundary to the village, while working farmland encompasses the other three sides.
- 2.1.11 Two small streams, flanked in places by trees and shrubs run through the village, converging at the south east end, directly after the B867.
- 2.1.12 The architecture of Bankfoot is more traditional than that of Luncarty. The majority of dwellings are two storey sandstone structures with lime joints and renders in good condition. More modern architecture exists in the housing developments to the south and east of the village centre.
- 2.1.13 The Perthshire Visitor Centre is located at the southernmost point of the village. To the east of the village sits a war memorial and a derelict church and cemetery.
- 2.1.14 The farmland surrounding the village is a mix of pastoral and arable. Shelterbelt woodland to the north east and the steep gradient screens the working farmland from the village, while in the south the farmland is more visible. The fields are predominantly bounded by post and wire fences in combination with hedgerows. Scot's Wood lies south of Bankfoot. This is a small area of ancient semi-natural woodland protected under SNH Ancient woodland Inventory (AWI).
- 2.1.15 The B867 forms the main access (off the A90) running through the centre of the village. A small network of roads connects to the farms in the west.
- 2.1.16 Bankfoot has a diversity in colour and texture amongst the architecture but a consistency in design and form. The village is enclosed by the gradient of the topography and the streets are often narrow, creating an enclosed, intimate character.

Table 2: Landscape Character Summary for Bankfoot

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small village at centre of study area. • Sits within natural depression, with steep gradient to east of site. • Ancient Scot's Wood to south of village.
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional and diverse architecture. • Perthshire visitor centre attracting people to village. • A9 road blocked by planting and topography. • Rivers add diversity to planting species.

A9 Dualling: Luncarty to Pass of Birnam

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Landscape Attributes	Description
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of shelter belts used leaving Bankfoot visible, especially from western side.
Landscape and other relevant designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scot's Wood listed by Scottish National Heritage under the AWI.
Landscape Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mature woodland to south of site and north east of site in good condition. Farmland in good condition. Traditional architecture well maintained within village.
Scenic Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium scenic quality.

Open Farmland LLCT

2.1.17 Open Farmland is an extensive landscape character type which forms the majority of the site area. It has a gently rolling landform of open character with a lower number of trees. Farmsteads are scattered, often associated with small clumps of trees.

Bankfoot Farmland

2.1.18 The Bankfoot open farmland LLCA extends from the Tavern Wood in the south to the Muir of Thorn/ Gelly Wood in the North. It is confined by the B9099 to the east and the Grampian Mountain range to the West.

2.1.19 The farmland is predominantly arable and occasionally pastoral. This leads to a wide range of colours and textures depending on the type of crops being grown and the time of season. The farmland is generally very well maintained, emphasising the landscape's agricultural use. Field networks are predominantly marked by post and wire fences, drystone walls and hedgerows, and are consistent with the agricultural image. A number of streams and ponds are located within the LLCA. These waterbodies are generally governed by the landscape topography and add another layer of diversity to the areas vegetation.

2.1.20 The main settlement in the area is Bankfoot village, which sits centrally within the study area. The only other settlements in the area are individual farmsteads dispersed amongst the landscape. The road hierarchy reflects this arrangement. Three major roads run through the area; the B867, the A9 and the B9099. A further network of smaller farm access tracks connects this network back to the major road system. The majority of farm buildings are unenclosed by trees and are therefore relatively prominent in the landscape. Bankfoot is relatively well hidden by shelter belts to the west and steep gradients to the east.

2.1.21 Blocks and strips of mature woodland are spread throughout the landscape, made up of both deciduous and evergreen trees. This woodland has a range of different functions, including timber production, wildlife habitat and recreation. The largest patch of woodland is Five Mile Wood located in the south east of the LLCA. Five Mile Wood is a Forestry Commission conifer plantation and appears on the SNH Ancient Woodland Inventory. The woodland is open to the public with wide tracks used for biking and walking.

2.1.22 In the north of the LLCA lies Cairnleith Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This area is made up of a complex network of wet heath, swamp and acid grassland communities. The site is also extremely important for the lagg fen that surrounds the bog and the extent of flush pasture, which consists of spring fens and associated rush pasture.

2.1.23 The Bankfoot Open farmland LLCA has a rolling, quality, the open fields providing a wide, expansive view while the hedge rows, farm buildings, and clumps of trees emphasising the perspective and scale of the landscape. The fields are well maintained with defined structure.

Table 3: Landscape Character Summary for Bankfoot Farmland

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolling agricultural landscape. Bankfoot village and dispersed farms are only settlements. Scattered blocks of mixed woodland throughout area. Cairnleith Moss SSSI forms important wetland to north of site. A9 and B9099 form main access through area with smaller farm tracks proving a secondary network.

A9 Dualling: Luncarty to Pass of Birnam

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Landscape Attributes	Description
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiple areas of mature woodland.• Rare and specific wetland vegetation.• Open, wide views of landscape.
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimal woodland screening to south of Bankfoot.• Agricultural structure dominates visual experience.
Landscape and other relevant designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scheduled Monument.• Specific Site of Scientific Importance for Nature Conservation at Cairnleith Moss.• Five Mile Wood forms part of the Scottish Natural Heritage's AWI.
Landscape Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agricultural fields in good condition.• Specific patches of woodland well established (Five Mile Wood, Glenshauch wood, Scotts Wood).
Scenic Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High scenic quality. Well maintained farm land, mature woodland, and dispersed farm buildings create a natural, lowland landscape.

Woodland Type

2.1.24 The Woodland character type includes areas of dense ancient woodland, used predominantly for recreation. There is a diverse range of tree species and associated under story vegetation.

Muir of Thorn / Gelly Wood

2.1.25 The Muir of Thorn / Gelly Wood is located south of the River Tay and the B867 and the B9099 create boundaries to the west and east respectively. Cairnleith Moss forms a border to the south. Amongst the ancient woodland there are occasional patches of grass clearing and small fragments of commercial plantation. The topography is generally flat, with a slight gradient change from west to east.

2.1.26 To the north of the area a small section of the River Tay (Dunkeld) National Scenic Area (NSA) is located within the study area. The NSA is recognised for its outstanding scenery as a result of the following special qualities:

- the beauty of cultural landscapes accompanying natural grandeur;
- the 'Gateway to the Highlands' due to the location of the Highland Fault Line;
- characterful rivers, waterfalls and kettle-hole lochs;
- exceptionally rich, varied and beautiful woodlands;
- the picturesque cathedral town of Dunkeld;
- Drama of The Falls of Braan and The Hermitage;
- Dunkeld House policies.;
- significant specimen trees; and
- the iconic view from King's Seat.

2.1.27 Much of the Muir of Thorn/ Gelly Wood character area is also designated under the Designed Garden and Landscape status of Murthly Castle.

2.1.28 In the east of the Muir of Thorn/ Gelly Wood there is a pond in a natural depression. Gelly burn (part of the River Tay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore of international importance) is the only water course that runs through the woodland as it works its way into the River Tay.

2.1.29 Gelly Castle is a country house that sits in the centre of the Muir of Thorn / Gelly Wood. There a number of smaller buildings associated with Gelly Castle including a saw mill, cottages, and maintenance buildings. Muirlands Farm sits at the western edge of the wood, while the village of Murthly lies to the east.

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- 2.1.30 The A9 bisects the woodland while the B9099 and the B867 flank it to the east and west respectively. There are a number of private tracks and footpaths within the woodland.
- 2.1.31 The Muir of Thorn / Gelly Wood appears on the Ancient Woodland Inventory as Ancient Woodland of Semi-Natural Origin (ANSO) and is shown as semi-natural woodland on maps from the 1800s. Small fragments of Gelly Woods consist of native pine which is priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP).
- 2.1.32 Tree species include larch, hazel, rowan, willow, oak and alder. The woodland has a diverse understorey and contains woodland indicator species pignut, native bluebell, honey suckle, wood sorrel, dog's mercury, primrose, and opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage.
- 2.1.33 There are two very small areas of semi-natural coniferous woodland. These predominantly consist of native Scots pine with an under storey including common heather, bilberry and wood sorrel. There are also small fragmented patches of wet woodland dominated by alder and willow. This type of woodland has a rare and diverse range of ground flora including sphagnum species and bryophytes.
- 2.1.34 The Muir of Thorn / Gelly Wood is enclosed with an intimate scale, contrasting with the surrounding expansive open landscape.

Table 4: Landscape Character Summary for the Muir of Thorn / Gelly Wood

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ancient protected mixed woodland.• Enclosed, intimate scale.
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well maintained, managed and conserved.• Diverse range of tree types and related under storey species.• Interesting contrast with surrounding landscape.• Shelters Gelly Castle from view.
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human influence still evident.• Little interface with River Tay.
Landscape and other relevant designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.• Sections protected under UK BAP.
Landscape Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Woodland in good condition.
Scenic Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medium to High scenic quality.

Wooded Farmland Type

- 2.1.35 The Wooded Farmland landscape character type is a diverse, undulating landscape. It is mainly agricultural but contains a high proportion and variety of woodland cover, comprising plantations and shelterbelts with clumps of trees around scattered, traditional-style buildings. The balance between open fields to woodland is an important characteristic.

Moneydie to Harrietfield

- 2.1.36 Moneydie to Harrietfield LLCA is an area located just west of Luncarty. It is defined by Tavern Wood to the north, Cosnakie Wood to the south, the A9 to the east, and the Grampian Mountain Range to the west.
- 2.1.37 The landscape is characterised by a mixture of open farmland and woodland clusters. The fields are predominantly used for arable and pastoral farming, while the woodland areas serve both recreational and commercial uses.
- 2.1.38 The topography is rolling with a general slope to the south-east. The fields are commonly defined by hedgerows and post and wire fences, with the occasional drystone walls. The landscape is characterised by a diverse range of colours, textures and heights as the crop and tree types change through the seasons. Visual interest is provided by the contrast between farmland and woodland.

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- 2.1.39 A number of watercourses run through the study area including the River Almond and the smaller Shochie Burn. There are also small lochs and ponds scattered through the landscape, the largest two being Berber's loch and Betha Loch. As both the River Almond and Shochie Burn flow into the River Tay they are designated SACs. Much of the semi-natural mixed woodland is associated with this hydrology.
- 2.1.40 A small number of farms and cottages are spread through the area, with higher concentrations along the B8063. The settlements of Pitcairngreen and Almond Bank sit on the southern edge of the LLCA while the village of Luncarty lies on the eastern edge. Rural buildings are important visual elements in this LLCA.
- 2.1.41 The B8063 runs through the centre of the LLCA. A network of smaller roads allow for local access to farms and woodland clusters. The majority of woodland clusters have walking paths incorporated with in their design, including the larger Tavern Wood, Cosnakie Wood, and Drumbuich Wood.
- 2.1.42 The Moneydie to Harrietfield wooded farmland LLCA is a visually balanced, rolling landscape. The views are wide and open, with woodland clusters helping to define scale and perspective.

Table 5: Landscape Character Summary for Moneydie to Harrietfield

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rolling landscape defined by mixture of woodland and farmland, creating a diverse range of textures, colours and views.• Well managed and maintained woodland and farmland.• Majority of mixed woodland along river banks.
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balanced, natural looking landscape.• Large range of uses within area.• Few buildings or structures detract from natural landscape.
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harvesting of trees not well screened.• Unsympathetic commercial forestry design.
Landscape and other relevant designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• River Tay SAC.
Landscape Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farmland well maintained. Woodland in various conditions.
Scenic Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medium to high scenic quality.

River Valley Type

River Tay

- 2.1.43 The River Tay is a designated SAC. All watercourses within the footprint of the scheme ultimately discharge into the River Tay. The topography along the river valley is varied. However, the section that runs nearest the study area is relatively flat, with steeper slopes at the river banks. The lowest point of the study area is beside the River Tay, east of Luncarty.
- 2.1.44 The section of River Tay within the study area is relatively consistent in width and is flanked by dense woodland. The surrounding farmland is both arable and pastoral with fields bounded by hedges and post and wire fencing.
- 2.1.45 The Ordie Burn and Gelly Burn run under the A9 in culverts. They follow the natural topography of the area, flowing in a south easterly direction to the River Tay.
- 2.1.46 Many of the settlements (e.g. Luncarty, Stanley, Birnam, and Dunkeld) sit alongside the Tay. Few roads allow close access to the river bank, with those that do mainly serving riverside properties. There are three bridges over the river within the study area; an abandoned rail bridge and two road bridges connecting the west side of the river to the A93 and Gellyburn to Caputh along the route of the B9099. Unofficial walking routes line the banks for the majority of the river.
- 2.1.47 River banks predominantly consist of semi-natural mixed woodland and scrub planting. Larger sections of mixed woodland also lie in proximity to the river, the largest being Ballathie Wood.

A9 Dualling: Luncarty to Pass of Birnam

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Table 6: Landscape Character Summary for the River Tay

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low, broad valley.• Predominantly dense river bank planting bordered by farmland.• Species rich area that is protected as SAC.
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Semi-natural mature woodland in good condition.• Dramatic contrast between enclosed atmosphere at river bank and wider views of farmland beyond.• Limited intervention from road network.
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited views to wider context due to dense planting.• Limited interaction between settlements and river.
Landscape and other relevant designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• River Tay SAC.
Landscape Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generally well maintained mixed woodland and farmland.• Protection regulations maintain high quality of River Tay.
Scenic Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High scenic quality.