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## Overview

### Introduction

The landscape is an important environmental asset. It is readily understood, without need for specialist knowledge, by the general public. It is widely enjoyed— either as scenery or as a place for recreation or tourism.

Landscapes are also valued for deeper reasons. For many people, a sense of place is an important part of their identity – either as an individual and as a member of a wider family or community.

Place-names, memories, history, tradition, folklore, poetry, music and songs all combine to give different identities to each place and community.

Landscapes are valued as places that hold our history. They are also places that constantly change – as each new generation uses each place differently to the last.

Galway is a large, complex county with many different landscapes. The panel on this page illustrates a selection of the different types. A comprehensive mapping and description of these differences is an important part of plan-making, policy development and development management.

### How Landscape Character Assessment is made?

The appearance and character of the landscape can vary considerably from place to place. This is caused by differences in natural factors, such as the topography, soils, vegetation and drainage. These variations have, in turn, given rise to different patterns of human occupation and use – often over many thousands of years. This combination of natural and human forces creates differences in the appearance and character of each separate place. Each has a different and distinctive ‘sense of place’.

The process of preparing these maps is called a Landscape Character Assessment [LCA]. The initial part of the assessment divides the country into four regions, each of which contain landscape types such as uplands, coast and plains. Each landscape type is divided into units such as South Conamara and Black River Basin, all of which are illustrated on maps with supporting text and photographs.

### Other Mapping

The Assessment also includes a review of all of the protected viewing points in the County. This is to make sure that these are still relevant. It has also allowed new views to be included – usually if these have laybys, picnic tables or information signs.

The mapping also describes the character of marine areas, which are often an important part of the character of nearby coastal landscapes. It also shows which rural areas are particularly dark – because of the absence of nearby lighting.

The Landscape Character Assessment describes which features make the main contribution to giving each area its distinctive sense of place. This understanding can be used to understand which changes will be very noticeable and which will not be. This knowledge is used to indicate which are the most sensitive to change and which are less sensitive.

### What is a Landscape Character Assessment used for?

The Landscape Character Assessment examines the different components of a County's Landscape and is used by the Local Authority to inform planning policy and objectives. It is a publicly available document that forms part of the *Galway County Development Plan 2021-2027*.



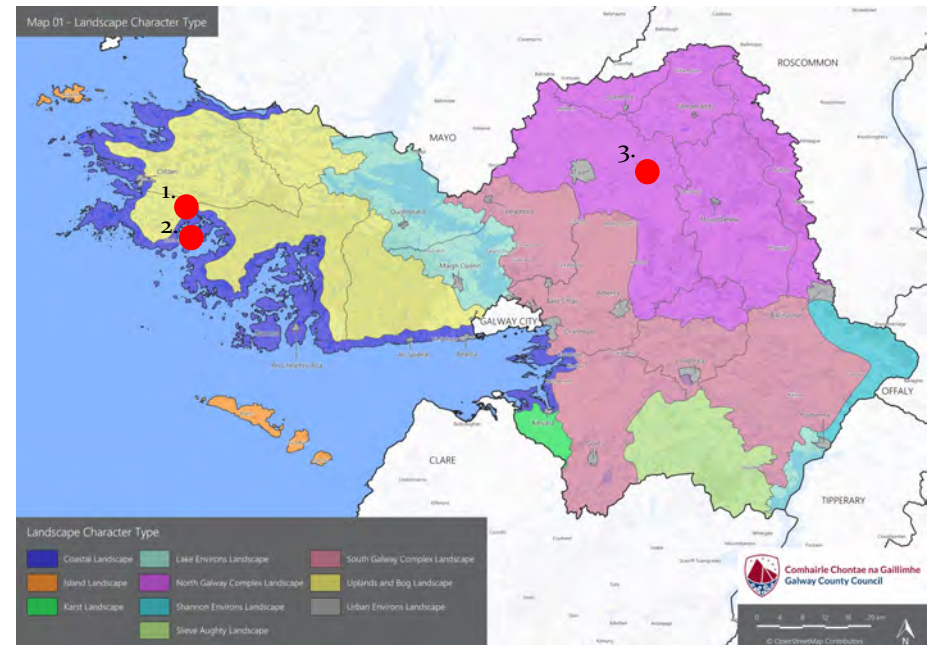
Photo 1: Bog and Upland landscapes in West Conamara (53.448900, -9.939128)



Photo 2: Sea Loughs and Headlands in Coastal Conamara (53.381400, -9.595869)



Photo 3: Flat Grassland Plains of Central Galway (53.542196, -8.706943)



Photos 1, 2 & 3 show that Galway has many types of different landscapes. The Landscape Character map shows where each is located.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

Landscape Character Assessments (LCA) are prepared to identify the landscape areas that are used for planning. These assist establishing policies and objectives for the protection, management and planning of different parts of the landscape. An LCA is a systematic examination for classifying separate places and mapping them as areas of similar appearance and character.

This Galway LCA has been prepared having regard to the need for supporting documentation for preparation of the next *Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028)*. This will require a consistent approach to the classification of the landscapes of the County, and will replace the existing Galway LCA 2015. This document is a review and update of the 2003 LCA. This updated LCA now takes account of recent developments in practice as well as learnings from the 2006 Heritage Council *Review of Ireland's Landscape Character Assessments*.

#### 1.1.1 Legal Requirements

The Planning and Development Act, 2000, at Section 10 includes the provision for:

*10. (2), (e) the preservation of the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the planning authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest;*

Furthermore the Planning and Development, Act 2011 requires that a development plan include objectives for landscape that provide

*“a framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes and development having regard to the European Landscape Convention”.*

### 1.2 Background

In 2003, an LCA was prepared and adopted by Galway County Council as part of the *Galway County Development Plan 2003 - 2009* and has subsequently been carried forward since. This document has provided the basis for policy formulation and decision-making regarding landscape management in the County. The LCA is also used as part of the development management process

### 1.3 Relationship with the County Development Plan

The review of Galway County Development Plan sets out the statutory basis for the protection of the landscape of the County. This LCA is a technical support document for the County of Galway and will give guidance to planning decision making and also the preparation and review of plans and strategies in the *Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028*. The LCA should be read in conjunction with the County Development Plan.

### 1.4 Intended Users

The LCA will be used as a tool for identifying the landscape features of County Galway. Members of the public, developers and others can also use this material to understand and anticipate the likely criteria that will be used in the development management process.

### 1.5 Methodology

This LCA for Galway has been prepared having regard to the *National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015 – 2025* as produced by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

This updated LCA for County Galway has been carried out by examining, assessing and mapping technical factors, including a review of maps, vegetation, soils, drainage and topography. These landscape components are used to determine the extent, shape and location of the boundary of each type of landscape. This is confirmed with site surveys where these factors are visible on the ground.

These assessments then illustrate each character type on maps in a descending order of scale, the boundaries and characteristics of Landscape Regions, Types and Units.

### 1.6 Changing Landscapes

County Galway's landscapes are an important repository for a number of distinctive social, cultural and linguistic features. They are regarded by many as lying near to the core or essence of Irish culture. The county also contains some of the Ireland's most vibrant commercial, creative and entrepreneurial talent which constantly strives to grow, change and develop. The County is also a nationally significant destination for visitors, for whom the landscape is a major attraction.

Any description of Galway's landscapes needs to acknowledge the forces that have historically shaped the landscape, as well as those that are likely to change it in the future.

Understanding and accepting that landscapes change, is fundamental to any attempt to regulate or plan for the future. Galway's contemporary landscape – no matter how seemingly natural – is the result of eight millennia of continuing interactions between natural processes, human interventions and management.

The rate of change and its causes vary throughout the county. Lowland areas, the working landscapes where most of the population live and work, are subject to widespread pressure for new or improved houses, farm buildings, industry, roads, powerlines and quarries. Changes happen more slowly in other areas, such as the Shannon Callows or the expanses of Conamara's upland, bogs and lakes.

Each of these distinct areas have different capacities to accommodate change. One of the key objectives of preparing an LCA is to identify those areas that can readily accommodate change and those areas that require greater care to identify how, or whether, change can occur. Assessing the significance and sensitivity to change is a key contribution of this Assessment.

## 2. Landscape Character Assessment

### 2.1 Background

This document identifies and describes each of County Galway's landscapes. The descriptions move from the highest level of broad Landscape Regions, to distinctive Landscape Types, and down to individual Landscape Units.

**Landscape Regions** – a broad area of land with a distinctive character due to large-scale natural factors – such as mountains, plains, coasts etc.

**Landscape Character Type** – an area of land that has an appearance that is readily recognisable as being different and distinctive from other areas.

**Landscape Character Unit** - the smallest area of distinctive local features within a Landscape Type that can be practicably identified to assist in policy formulation.

### 2.2 Landscape Regions

At the broadest level, the County of Galway can be considered to consist of three landscape regions and the coast (Figure 1). These are the foundations of the county's landscape character, that are determined by the underlying geology and glacial drifts that have given rise to the topography, soil, vegetation and patterns of human settlement from prehistory to today.

- *The West Galway Region* is a zone that is mostly underlain by bolder, harder geology that gives rise to large-scale rugged, complex landscapes of mountains, lakes, bogs, islands and coastal inlets.
- *The Eastern Plains Region* is underlain by younger, softer rocks. This derives most of its character from the covering blanket of glacial soils that give rise to extensive, level plains of grasslands, with many areas of bog in the north.
- *The South Galway Region* where the Slieve Aughty Mountain's older, harder rock meet the younger, yielding geology of the Burren in the west and the Shannon basin in the east. The result is a collection of small landscapes which vary considerably as one travels from west to east.

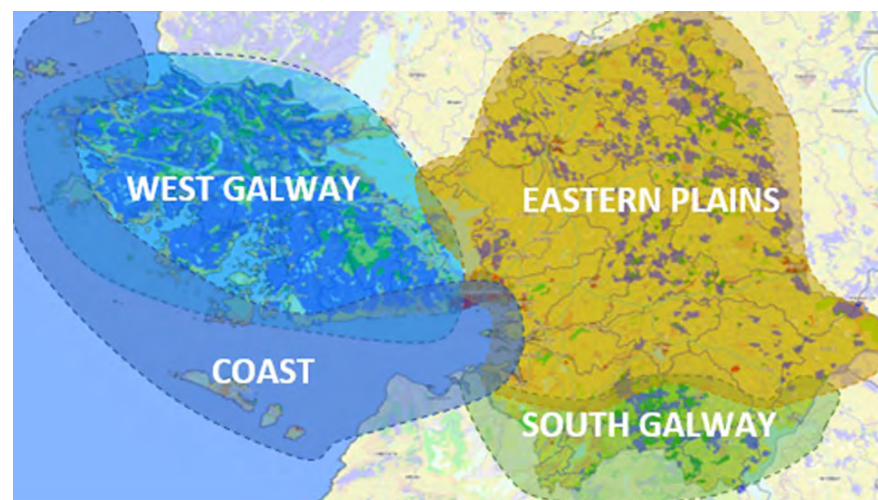


Figure 1: Drawing of Galway's Landscape Regions

- *The Coast* is a separate region which covers the islands and coastal waters of Galway. Areas of coastal water derive their character from their proximity and interactions with terrestrial areas, discussed in Section 5, Seascares.

### 2.3 Landscape Character Types

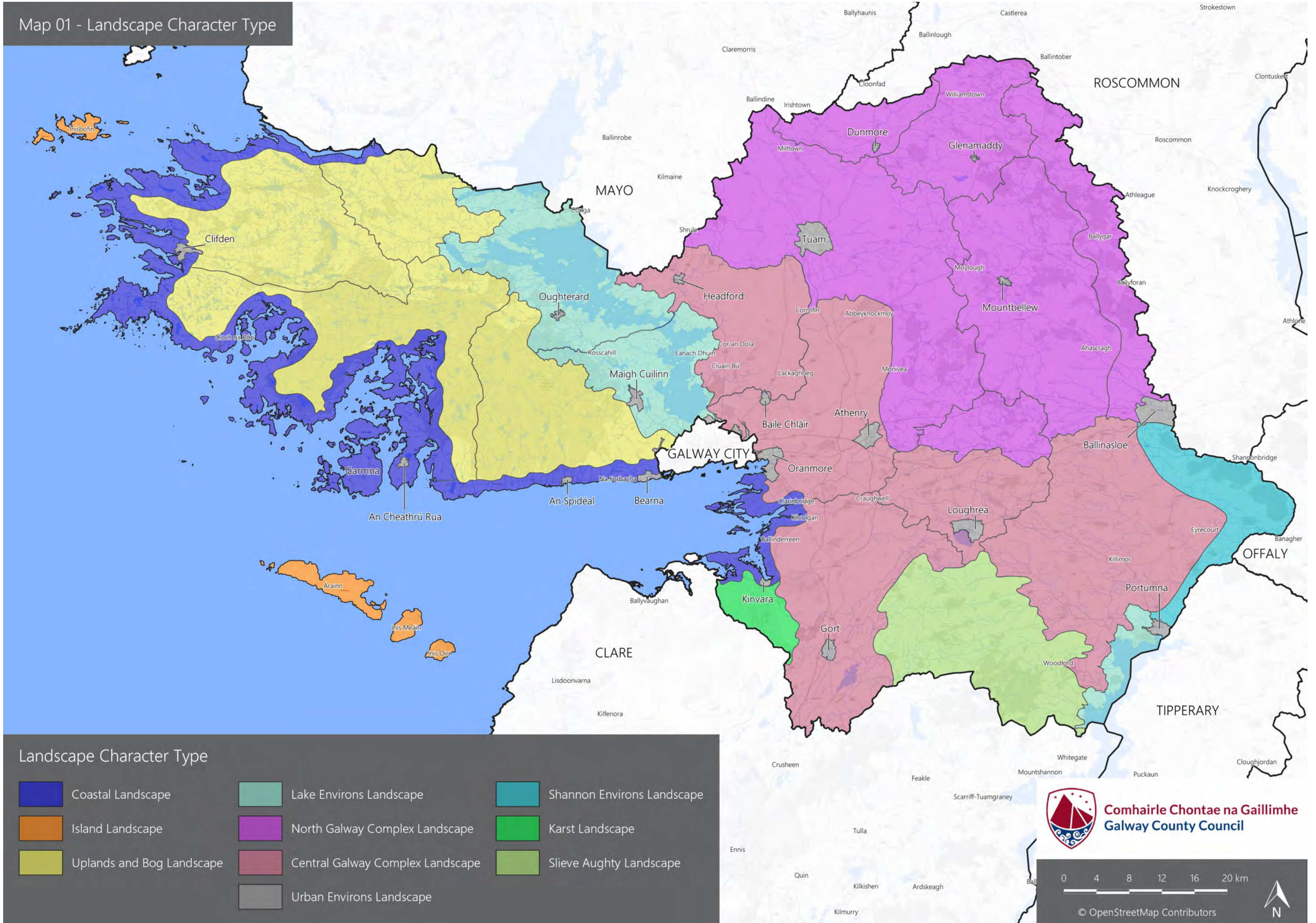
Each part of the County has been classified according to the type of landscape that it is part of, as follows;

- *Coastal Landscape* - the Coasts of Galway are highly distinctive, but very complex and varied, types of landscape that vary considerably between low and high tide.
- *Island Landscape* - large inhabited islands, unconnected to the shore - more than 3km from the coast.
- *Uplands and Bog Landscape* - an extensive area of very open landscapes with low levels of settlement, roads or agriculture. Upland and Bogs make up much of the centre of those western parts of the county that are nearest to the Atlantic.
- *Lake Environs Landscape* - this type covers Lough Corrib and Lough Derg, Ireland's second and third largest lakes respectively, both highly prized as recreational and scenic resources.

- *North Galway Complex Landscape* - an extensive grassland plain stretching from the Suck River in the east to the watershed of the River Clare in the west. It includes elevated areas such as Slieve Dart in the north, as well as lakes, turloughs, raised bogs, wetlands and winding rivers.
- *Central Galway Complex Landscape* - an extensive plain of grasslands comprising medium-to-large fields with low enclosures and many areas of low stone walls. This area contains the majority of the county's population with associated high levels of rural housing, roads and settlements.
- *Urban Environs Landscape* - around all major settlements, can establish extensive landscapes of urbanised appearance and character for a considerable distance around each centre.
- *Shannon Environs Landscape* - establishes an extensive area of distinctive character along much of the south-eastern boundary of the county.
- *Karst Landscape* - distinctive localised landscape created where the northern-most extent of Burren exposed limestone forms a southern boundary of County Galway. The characters that define the Karst Landscape extend beyond the southern boundary of County Galway.
- *Slieve Aughty Landscape* - distinctive uplands of the Slieve Aughty Mountains define the much of Galway's southern boundary with County Clare.

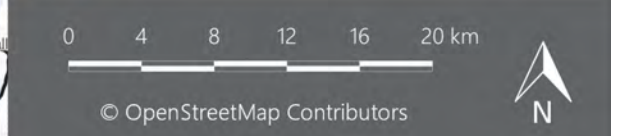
The Landscape Character Types of the County are illustrated on Map 01 overleaf. Each Character Type is illustrated and discussed in this section with a detailed analysis of each individual character type.

Map 01 - Landscape Character Type

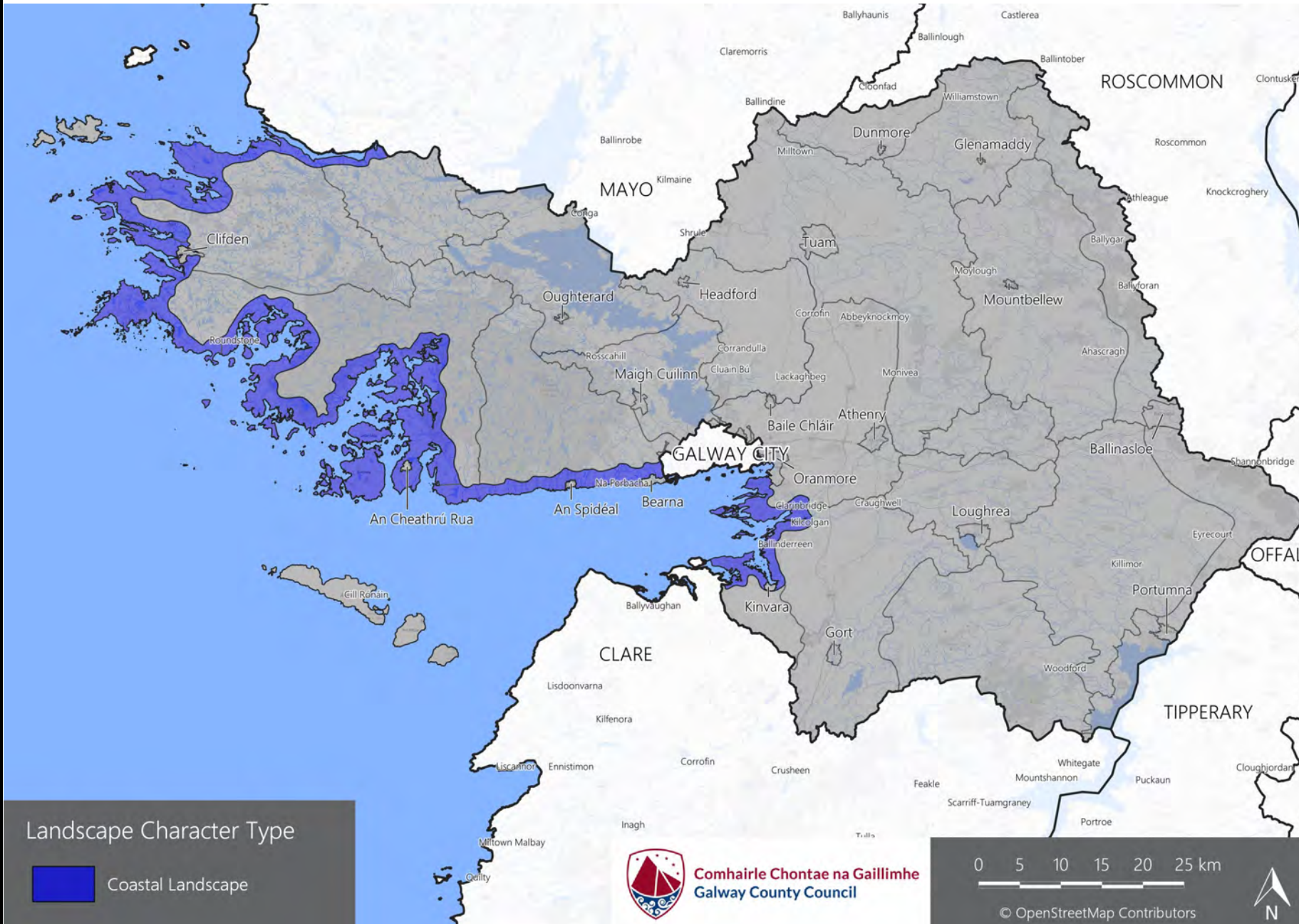


Landscape Character Type

- Coastal Landscape
- Island Landscape
- Uplands and Bog Landscape
- Lake Environs Landscape
- North Galway Complex Landscape
- Central Galway Complex Landscape
- Urban Environs Landscape
- Shannon Environs Landscape
- Karst Landscape
- Slieve Aughty Landscape



### 2.3.1 Coastal Landscape Type



Example of view in Coastal Type, Conamara Sea Lough Unit (53.381400, - 9.595869, Dir.SEE)



Example of view in Coastal Type, Soft Shore Coastal Unit (53.385308, - 10.007048, Dir.S)

**Description**  
 The coast of Galway comprises a range of different types of features. These include enclosed marine waters that have very different appearances depending on the weather and tide state. In other areas there are large expanses of exposed rock with low levels of vegetation. All are characterised by large expanses of exposed rock with low levels of enclosure - other than by low stone walls and marine-pruned vegetation. These types of landscapes are highly valued as ecological, scenic and recreational assets. This landscape includes some culturally distinctive, long-settled areas at very high densities of small-scale buildings – which continues today – centred on a number of separate settlements that include Bearna, Na Forbacha, An Spidéal, Indreabhán, Ros an Mhíl, Casla and An Cheathrú Rua. Beyond settlement boundaries, these landscapes are generally unenclosed. Views are dominated by the sea and sky - producing extensive sky views.

**Boundary Definition**  
 2km inland from all shoreline to non-peat bog uses.

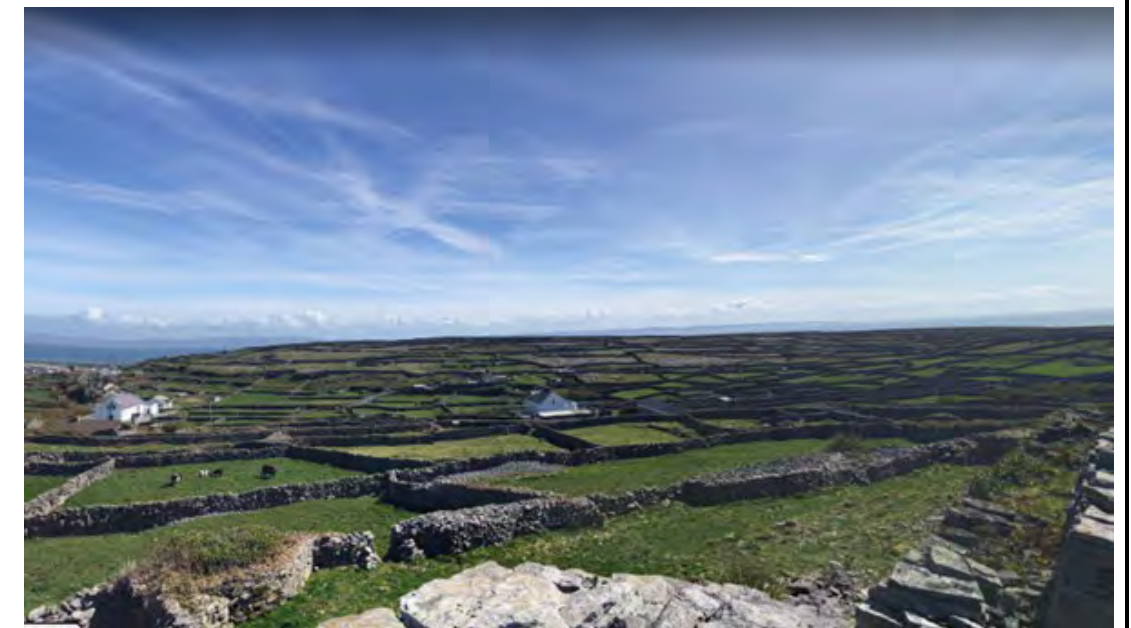
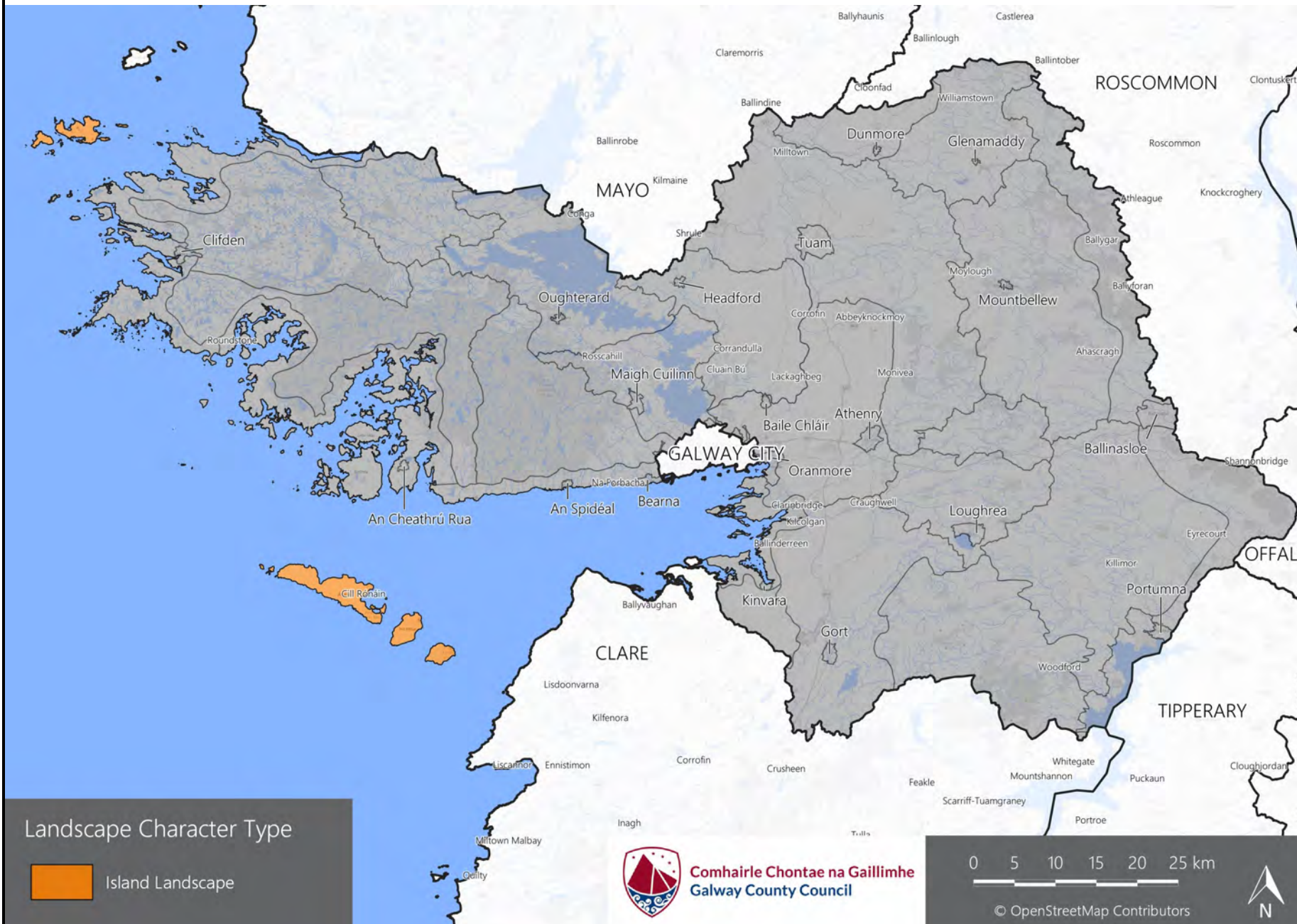
**Principal Characteristics**  
 Complex, small-scale, many islets, intertwined with large tidal areas. This coastal area contains important Dark Sky.

**Significance**  
 Ecological and scenic distinctiveness sustained over a large expanse  
 Culturally distinctive.

**Sensitivities**  
 Highly sensitive to change in appearance and character by new development of scale.

**Component Units**  
 Conamara Coastal Islands, Cois Fharrage, Inner Galway Bay, Hard Shore Coastal, Soft Shore Coastal, Conamara Sea Lough.

### 2.3.2 Island Landscape Type



Example of view in Island Type, Oileáin Árann Unit (53.083733, -9.594561, Dir.NE)



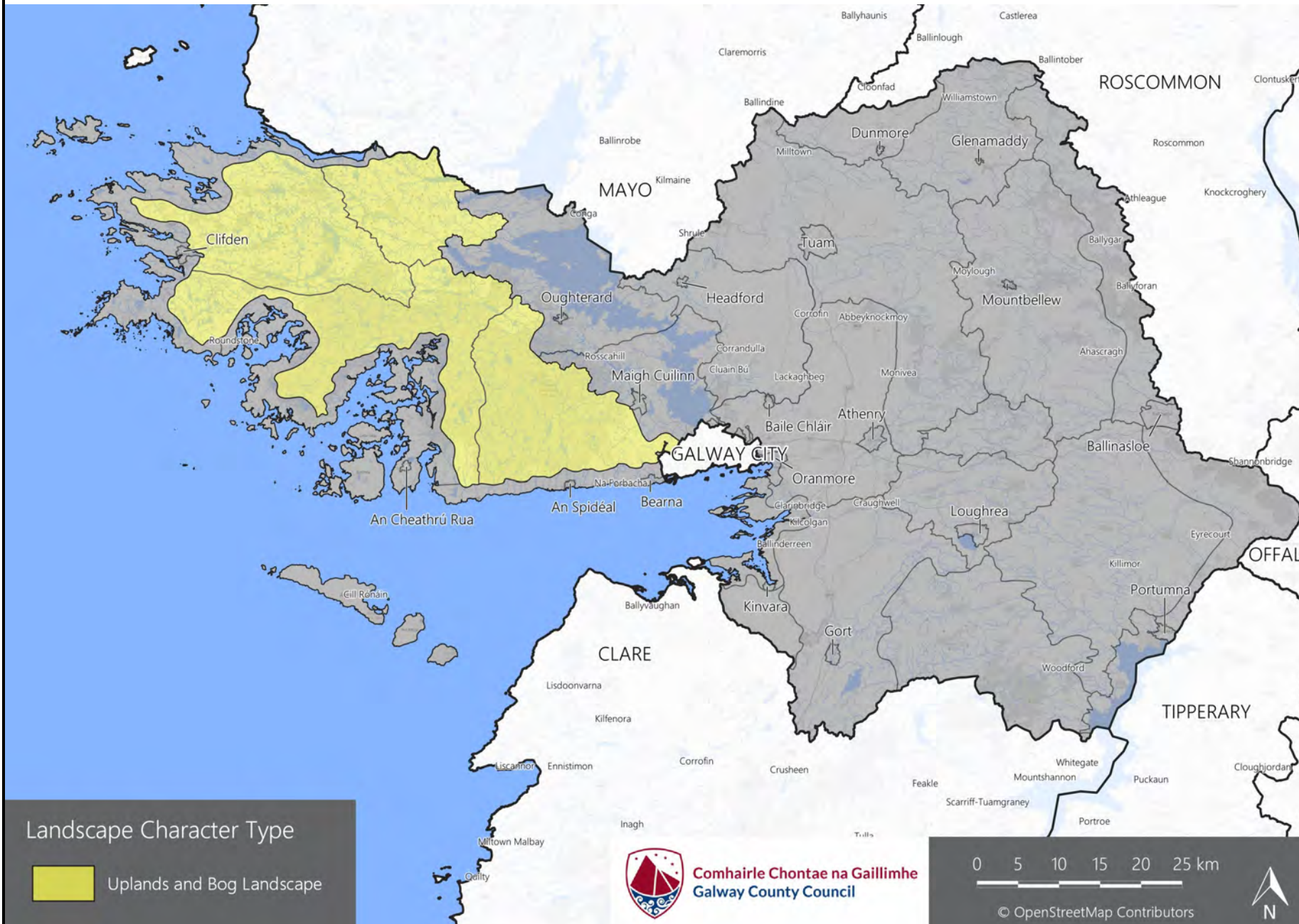
Example of view in Island Type, Inishbofin Unit (53.619546, -10.255958, Dir.SEE)

**Description**  
 These landscapes consist of large inhabited islands unconnected to the shore. Extreme weather exposure dominates the character by suppressing the development of vegetation and soil, resulting in extensive areas of bare rock. These are highly distinctive scenic, ecological and cultural resources. The landscapes are un-enclosed and views are dominated by the sea and sky.

<b>Boundary Definition</b>	Topographic. Defined by continuous shore, located more than 3km offshore.
<b>Principal Characteristics</b>	Exposed, low levels of enclosure, limited vegetation, high exposure of bare rocks.
<b>Significance</b>	Iconic landscape. High levels of scenic, cultural and historic significance.
<b>Sensitivities</b>	Highly sensitive to change in appearance and character by new development of scale.
<b>Component Units</b>	Oileáin Árann, Inishbofin.



### 2.3.3 Uplands and Bog Landscape Type



Example of view in Uplands and Bogs Type, Maumturk Mountains Unit (53.560156, -10.070197, Dir.E)



Example of view in Uplands and Bogs Type, West Conamara Unit (53.448900, -9.939128, Dir.NE)

**Description**  
 A large area of very open landscape with dispersed settlements, roads and agriculture. The extensive areas of exposed rock, uplands and blanket bog are largely unenclosed. There are large areas of coniferous forestry plantation in a number of locations away from the coast. It has two principal components that are contained between a complex coastal mosaic of sea inlets to the west and south, and the long shore of Lough Corrib to the east. The first component is the steep-sided peaks of the 12 Bens that run west-east south of Killary Harbour and the other is a large lake-studded plain of blanket bogs. The overall landscape is valued on account of the scale of the open views within this unenclosed landscape. Another perceived value is the contrast between the uninterrupted and uninhabited plains. Open areas around bogs reveal extensive sky views and the area contains expanses of dark sky. The area is extensively used for hill-walking and recreational touring by coach, cars and cycles. It also contains the Connemara National Park.

**Boundary Definition**  
 Geology, landcover, areas outside of coastal and lake types.

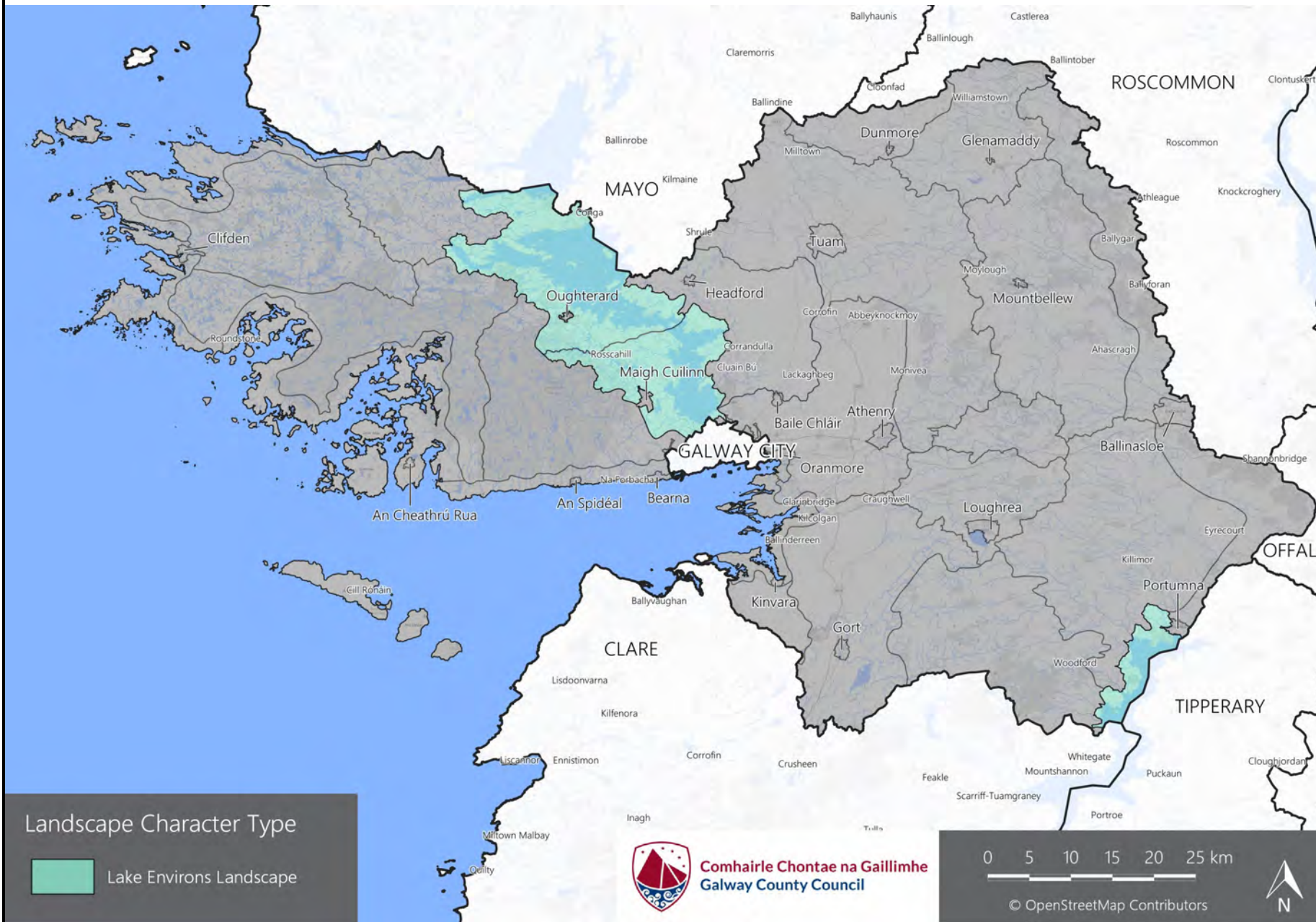
**Principal Characteristics**  
 Dominance of large-scale natural processes and forms; expanse of views, Dark Sky.

**Significance**  
 Nationally iconic landscapes of scenic, cultural, ecological and historic significance.

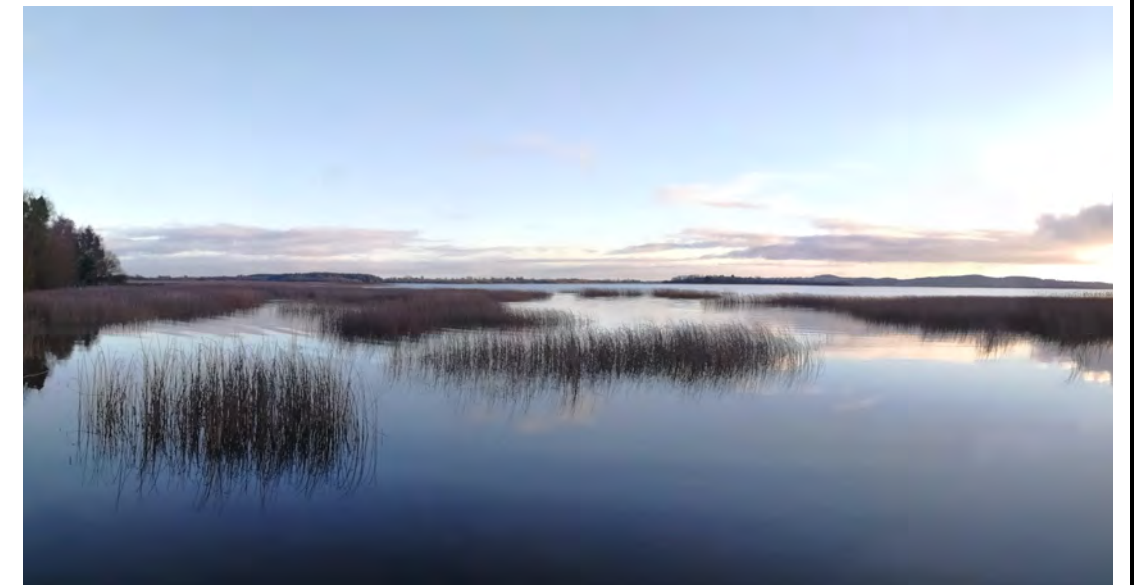
**Sensitivities**  
 High sensitivity throughout. 12 Bens and Raised Lakes are vulnerable.

**Component Units**  
 Joyce Country, Maumturk Mountains, West Conamara, South Conamara.

### 2.3.4 Lake Environs Landscape Type



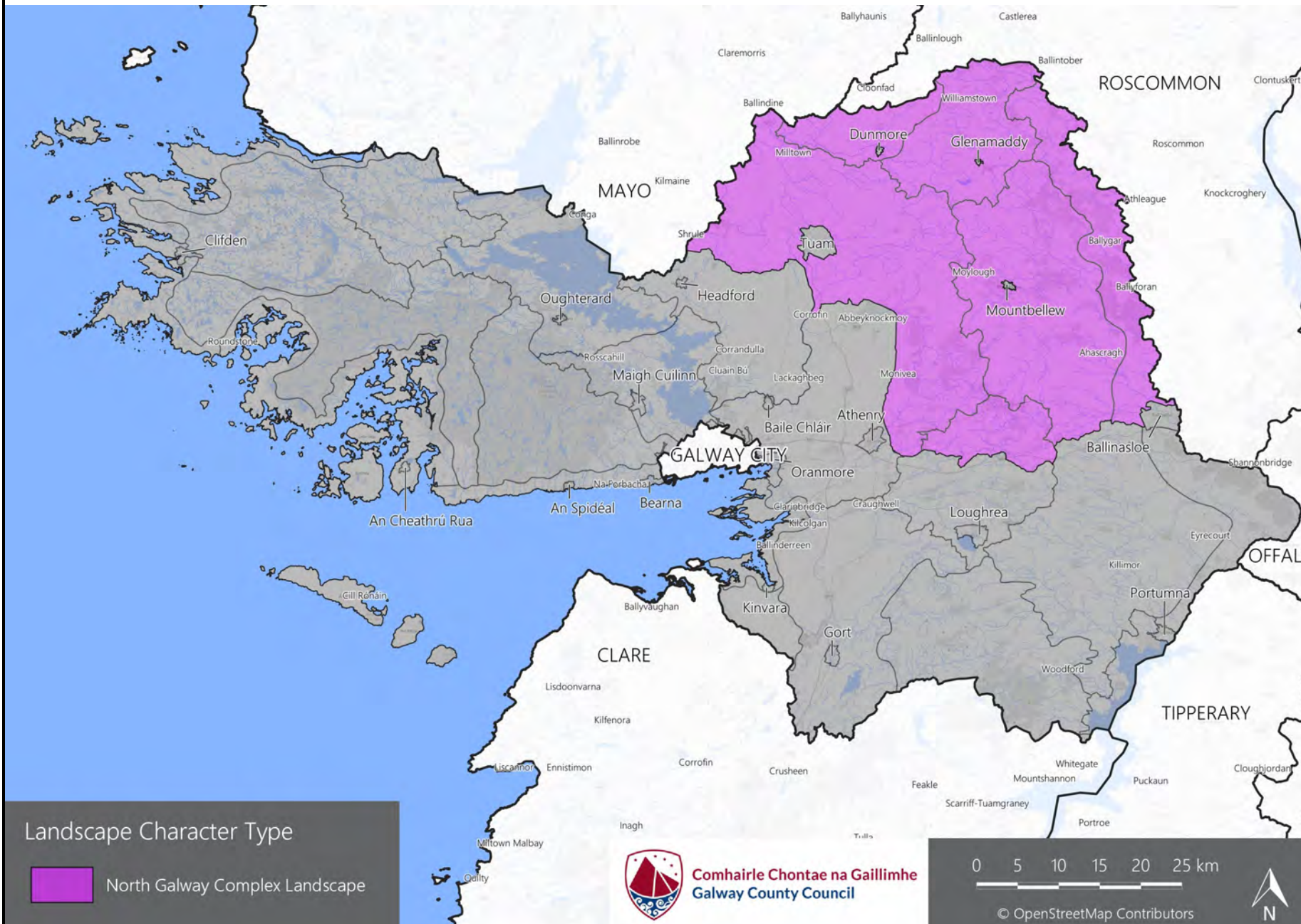
Example of view in Lake Type, Upper Corrib Environs Unit (53.485394, - 9.455000, Dir.W)



Example of view in Lake Type, Lough Derg Environs Unit (52.992621, - 8.354853, Dir.NE)

<p><b>Description</b>  <b>Lough Corrib</b> is the second-biggest lake on the island of Ireland (after Lough Neagh). It can be divided into very two distinct parts; a shallow basin underlain by carboniferous limestone in the south, and a deeper basin to the north underlain by more acidic granite, schists and sandstones. The uplands to the west of the lake include the rolling, bog covered granite hills of south Conamara, the bare Quartzite peaks of the Maumturk mountains and the high plateau of the Maumtrasna Mountains. Sheep grazing and forestry are the main land uses in these areas. In sharp contrast, the low-lying limestone plain to the east of the Lough Corrib with its large, walled fields, is used primarily for the more intensive rearing of sheep and cattle. Drumlins of glacial origin give rise to the numerous smaller, mostly wooded islands for which the lake is famous. The lake is highly prized as recreational fishery resource and is also the focus of many viewing areas and scenic drives.  <b>Lough Derg</b> is the largest lake on the Shannon system. The north-west of the lake lies within Galway, with the Slieve Aughty mountains overlooking the lake. Much of the shore is sparsely occupied – except in the immediate vicinity of Portumna. Lough Derg is characterized by broad bays, a highly indented shoreline and many small islands. It is fringed by reed beds, wetlands, fens, wet woods and native woodlands.</p>	
<p><b>Boundary Definition</b></p>	<p>Topography, watershed boundaries and soils.</p>
<p><b>Principal Characteristics</b></p>	<p>Complex patterns of shore and water - many islands, shallows, reedbeds and highly indented shores.</p>
<p><b>Significance</b></p>	<p>Nationally significant scenic, ecological and recreational asset.</p>
<p><b>Sensitivities</b></p>	<p>Highly sensitive to change in appearance and character by new development of scale.</p>
<p><b>Component Units</b></p>	<p>Upper Corrib Environs, Lower Corrib Environs, Lough Derg Environs.</p>

### 2.3.5 North Galway Complex Landscape Type



Example of view in North Galway Complex Type, Black River Basin Unit (53.481703, -8.963985, Dir.SW)

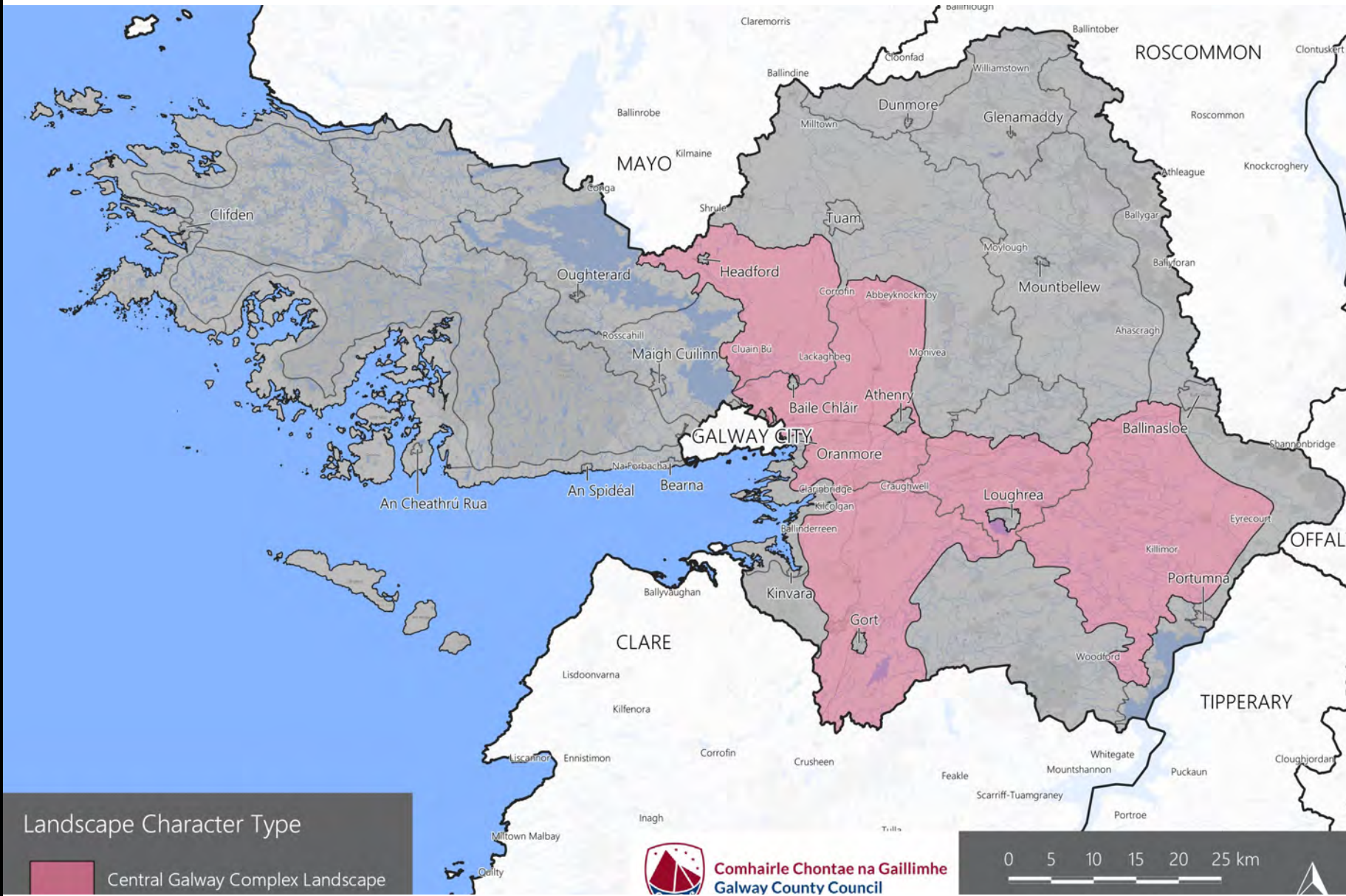


Example of view in North Galway Complex Type, North River Clare Basin Unit (53.542196, -8.706943, Dir.NNE)

<b>Description</b>	
An extensive grassland plain stretching from the Suck River in the east to the watershed of the River Clare in the west. It includes elevated areas such as Slieve Dart in the north, as well as lakes, turloughs, raised bogs, wetlands and winding rivers.	
Agriculture, scattered forestry and associated field patterns are very mixed and can exhibit large and abrupt changes of character over very short distances, especially in areas around bogs. It has a dense network of smaller settlements and roads, though at a lower density than the southern plains of the county.	
Open areas around bogs produce extensive sky views and the area that are free from light pollution.	
<b>Boundary Definition</b>	
<b>Principal Characteristics</b>	
<b>Significance</b>	
<b>Sensitivities</b>	
<b>Component Units</b>	

Soils, Field Enclosure types, Land Cover mapping.
Very large and abrupt changes of character over very short distances, especially around bogs.
Many areas have local sensitivities – often on account of local amenities or historic sites.
Open countryside offers frequent extensive panoramic views from local high-points.
Northern River Clare Basin, Slieve Dart, Springfield Basin, Castlegar Basin, Suck Valley, North Loughrea.

### 2.3.6 Central Galway Complex Landscape Type



This landscape contains a number of locally elevated lands that offer extensive views as well as local landmarks. Example of view in Central Galway Complex Type, Black River Basin Unit (53.462395, -8.948002, Dir.N)



Example of view in Central Galway Complex Type, Kilchreest Basin Unit (53.094128, -8.793158, Dir.NE)

**Description**  
 An extensive plain of grasslands comprising of medium-to-large fields with low enclosures and many areas of low stone walls used for field boundaries. It also includes distinctive features, including locally elevated features, such as Knockma, south-west of Tuam as well as areas that overlook Lough Corrib in the west and the complex of lakes and foothills between Gort and Loughrea in the south. This area contains the majority of the county's population with associated high levels of urban generated rural housing, roads and settlements. These range from large to small settlements with associated infrastructure, services and commercial activity. The western and southern parts of these landscapes are underlain by karst limestone which results in many unusual hydrological features - such as turloughs and large springs. The more productive soils of this area have resulted in long histories of more intensive historic settlement and associated higher concentrations of remains from major periods of land-management, including early Christian, medieval and 16th - 19th century estates. This historic pattern of settlement has resulted in elevated concentration of archaeological, architectural and cultural remains. Features from different periods of land management and settlement are often found in close proximity. Examples of sites with many periods include Pallas, Eyrecourt and Garbally Park.

**Boundary Definition**  
 Soils, Field Enclosure types, Land Cover mapping.

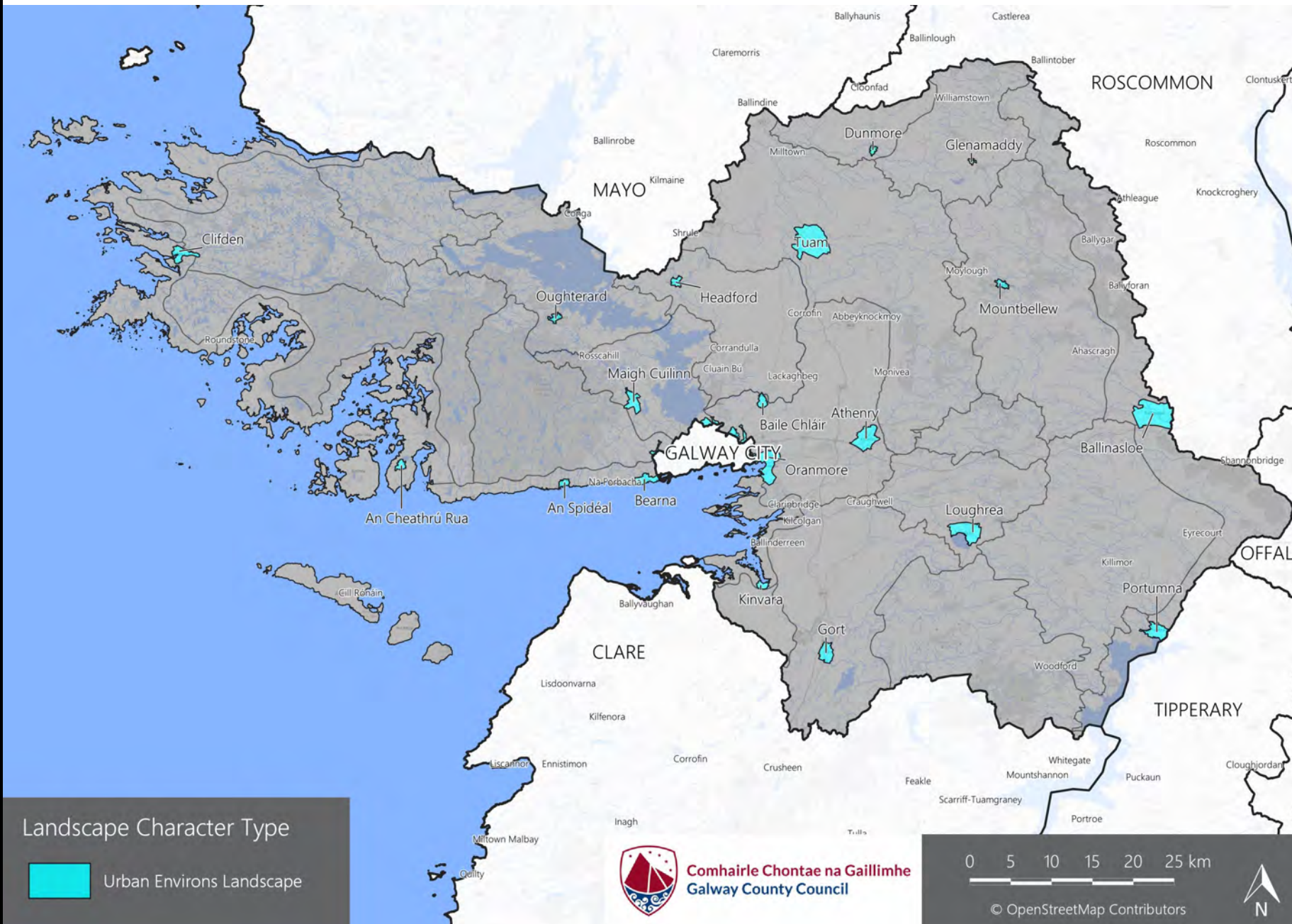
**Principal Characteristics**  
 Level plain of productive grassland contain many settlements and dwellings.

**Significance**  
 Many areas have local sensitivities – often on account of local amenities or historic sites.

**Sensitivities**  
 Open countryside offers frequent extensive panoramic views from local high-points.

**Component Units**  
 Black River Basin, Southern River Clare Basin, Kilchreest Basin, Kilcrow Basin, South Loughrea.

### 2.3.7 Urban Environs Landscape Type



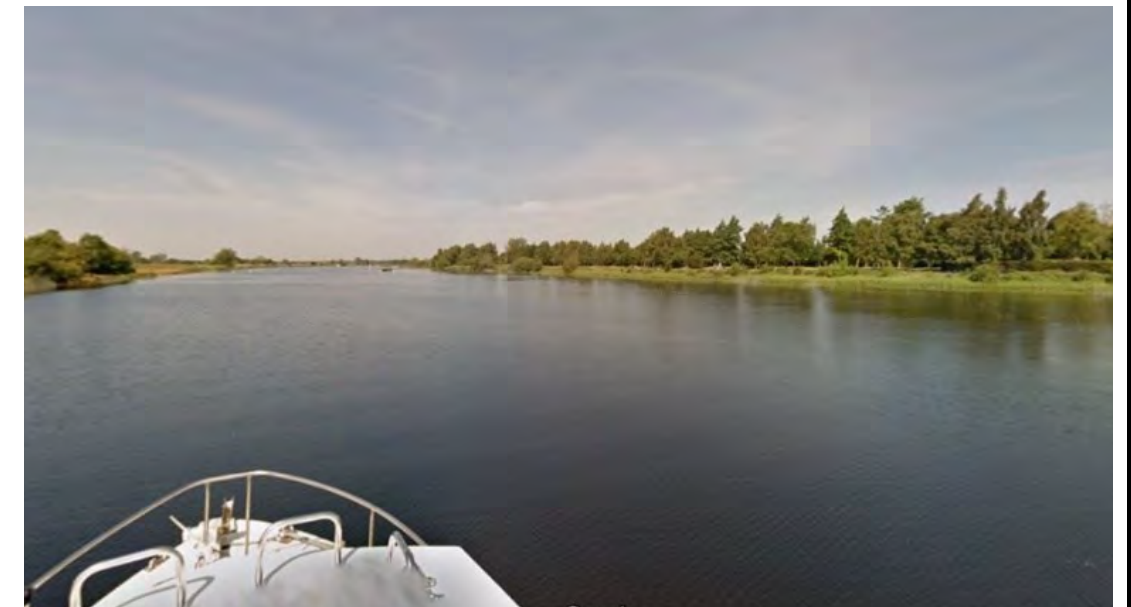
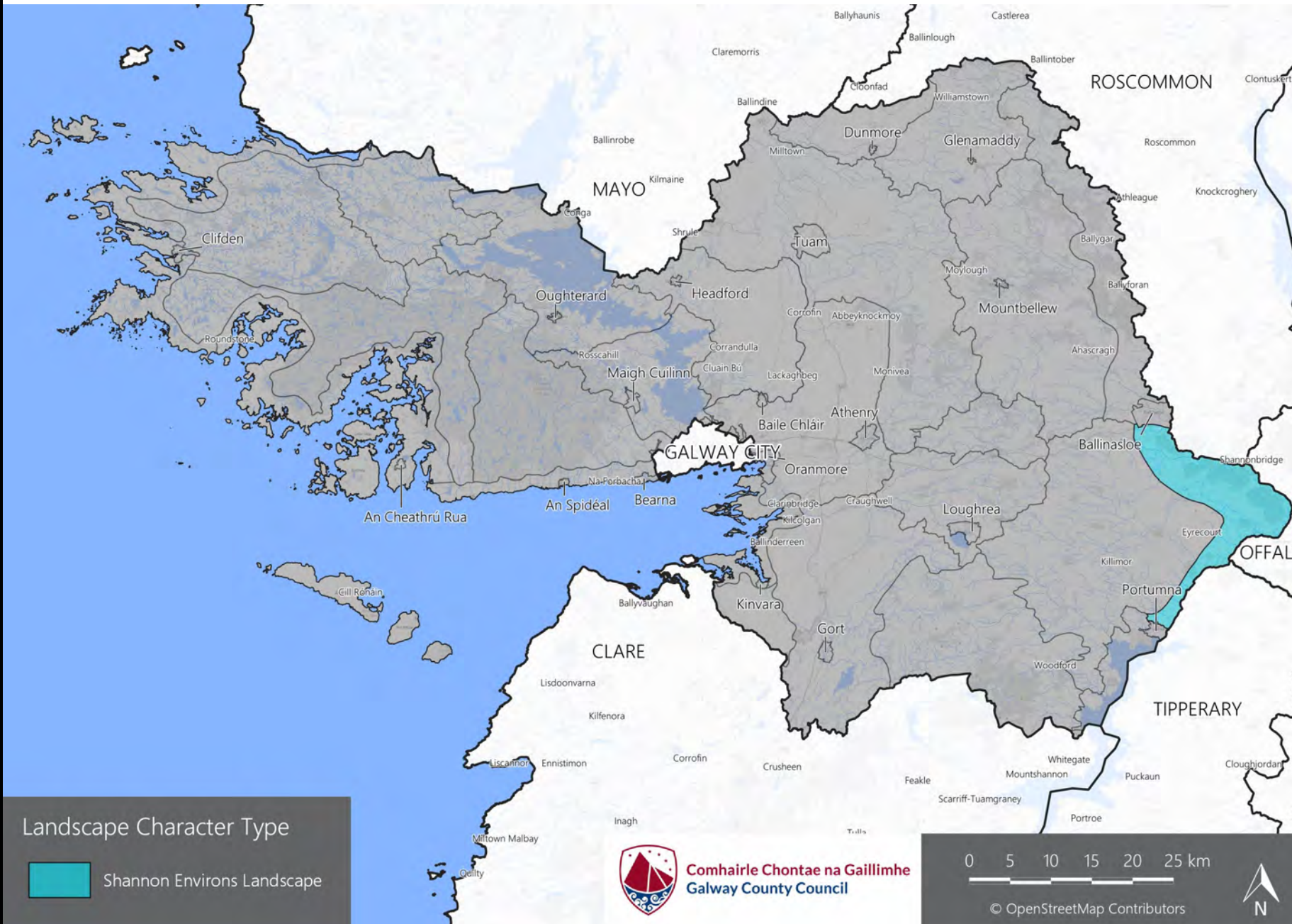
Example of Urban Environs Type near Tuam (53.521345, -8.876308, Dir.SE)



Example of Urban Environs Type near Gort (53.067270, -8.808655, Dir.NW )

<b>Description</b>	This category occurs throughout the county outside of the administrative boundaries of settlements of all sizes. Urbanised landscapes occur around settlements. These landscapes often concentrations of individual dwellings, old and new. Around larger towns they also consist of modern estate housing and recreation facilities as well as developments of commercial, industrial and educational buildings. This pattern changes from concentric to radial along major transportation corridors that support many residential communities. Many of County Galway's urban environs are highly distinctive because of their proximity to areas of strong natural character such as the rivers, lakes or coasts. Other settlements adjoin extensive areas of naturalized scrub vegetation, bog or low-lying wetlands.
<b>Boundary Definition</b>	Proximity to Urban land-cover classification.
<b>Principal Characteristics</b>	Areas with visibility of a complex mix of forms and scales mixed within context of remnant agricultural lands.
<b>Significance</b>	Local significance to resident community.
<b>Sensitivities</b>	Low sensitivity to change.
<b>Component Units</b>	Rural environs outside Galway City and zoned settlements; Maigh Cuilinn, Oughterard, Clifden, Tuam, Headford, Gort, Loughrea, Athenry, Ballinasloe, Portumna, An Spidéal, An Bearn, Baile Chláir, Mountbellew, Dunmore and Glenamaddy.

### 2.3.8 Shannon Environs Landscape Type



Example of view in Shannon Environs (53.1546787,-8.1631155, Dir.SE)

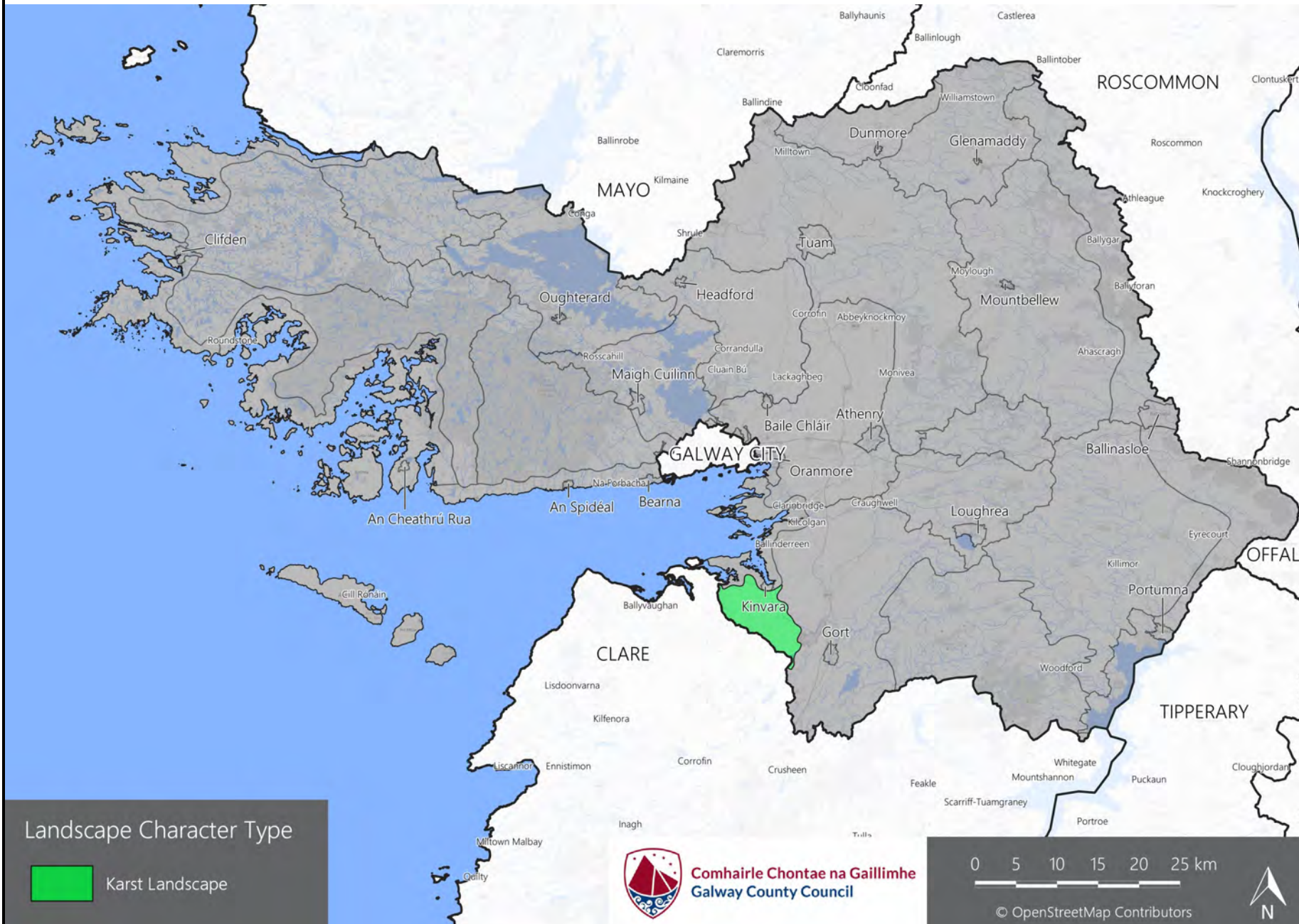


Example of view in Shannon Environs (53.192559,-7.9948674, Dir.W)

**Description**  
 The Shannon establishes an extensive area of distinctive character along much of the south-eastern boundary of the county. There is a core area of open water often fringed by wide areas of naturalised vegetation along shallow shores and many elongated islands. The Shannon Callows, which are seasonally flooded grassland ecosystems adjacent to the low lying river floodplain are an important characteristic of the area. These areas support internationally significant numbers of wintering birds that amplify the overwhelmingly natural character of these areas of Callows. The adjoining areas are also distinctive, either on account of very large areas of bog or extensive farm holdings and parkland landscapes. The more productive soils of this area, which are often characterised by large flat fields, are the result of a long history of intensive agriculture and settlement. This historic pattern of settlement has resulted in elevated concentration of archaeological, architectural and cultural remains. Features from different periods of land management and settlement are often found in close proximity. The landscape is full of instances of such concentrations. These include Protected Structures around Lawrencetown such as the Gothic style folly gateway in Ballymore or around the National Monuments of The Cathedral of St Brendan Clonfert and Clontuskert Abbey.

<b>Boundary Definition</b>	Soils, land-cover.
<b>Principal Characteristics</b>	Open water often fringed by wide areas of naturalised vegetation along shallow shores and many linear islands.
<b>Significance</b>	Nationally significant ecological, scenic and recreational asset.
<b>Sensitivities</b>	Very sensitive to any form of development or change of management regime.
<b>Component Units</b>	Shannon Environs.

### 2.3.9 Karst Landscape Type



Example of view in Karst Landscapes (53.098113, -8.970559, Dir.SW)



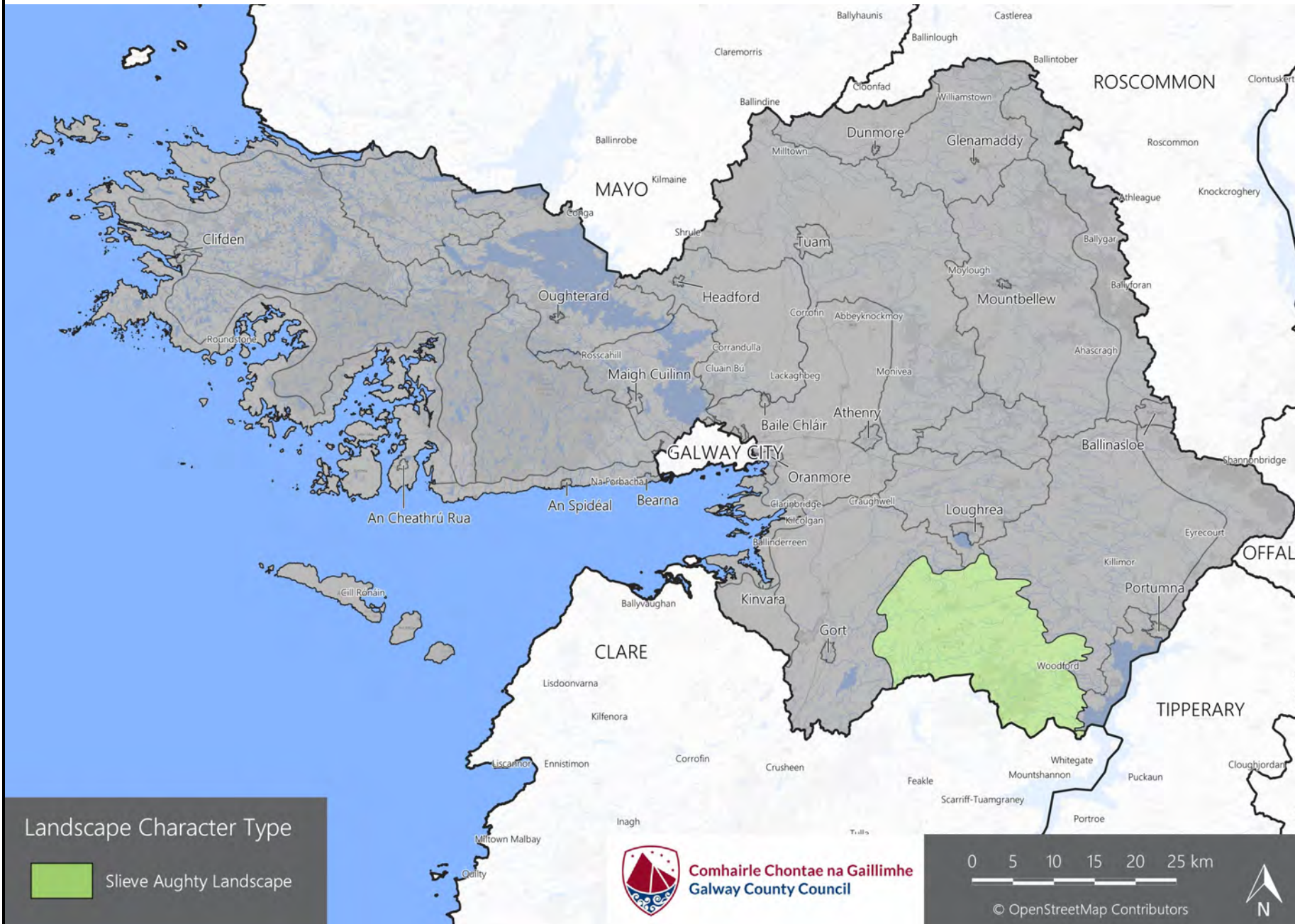
Example of view in Karst Landscapes (53.110580, -8.987572, Dir.NE)

**Description**  
 The peaks and adjacent flanking slopes of Slievaccarran form part of south western boundary between Clare and Galway. The bare limestone peak and ridge forms the skylines for much of the lowlands of south Galway.

A distinctive localised landscape is created where the northern-most extent of Burren exposed limestone pavement meets grasslands that have developed over karst. These lowlands contain extensive areas of limestone pavement outcrops set within large regular field systems that are prized for winter-grazing. This karstic landscape gently transitions into the Central Galway Complex Landscape.

<b>Boundary Definition</b>	Corine Land-use Map, Topographic maps and satellite imagery.
<b>Principal Characteristics</b>	Very open, highly distinctive, exposed limestone landscape.
<b>Significance</b>	Iconic [Uplands] regionally significant and highly distinctive.
<b>Sensitivities</b>	Very sensitive to any form of development or change of management regime.
<b>Component Units</b>	Karst Landscape.

### 2.3.10 Slieve Aughty Landscape Type



Example of view in the Slieve Aughty Type (53.130890, -8.555812, Dir.W)



Example of view in the Slieve Aughty Type (53.085298, -8.505872, Dir.SW)

**Description**

Sandstone geology creates the distinctive uplands of the Slieve Aughty Mountains that define much of Galway's south east boundary with County Clare. Agriculture and settlement are less intensive in this landscape and the higher elevations are largely used for coniferous forestry interspersed with remnants of the area's original blanket bogs. The latter contains a concentration of wind farms that have a locally dominant visual effect on these landscapes.

There are expansive views from unenclosed elevations which are regionally valued as a recreational resource.

**Boundary Definition**

Topography, soils, landcover.

**Principal Characteristics**

Much altered by coniferous forestry, blanket bogs and concentration of windfarms.

**Significance**

Expansive views valued as a recreational resource.

**Sensitivities**

Low sensitivity to change.

**Component Units**

Slieve Aughty.



### 3. Landscape Units

#### 3.1 Introduction

Landscape Units are the smallest area that can be practicably identified to assist in policy formulation.

Landscape Character Units are contained within each of the Landscape Character Types that have already been identified in Section 2.

In the following pages, each Unit is described in general terms to further identify its location, extent, and character.

Landscape Region	Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Unit
WEST GALWAY	1. Coastal	1a. Conamara Coastal Islands
		1b. Cois Fharráige
		1c. Inner Galway Bay
		1d. Hard Shore Coastal
		1e. Soft Shore Coastal
		1f. Conamara Sea Lough
	2. Islands	2a. Oileáin Árann
		2b. Inishbofin
	3. Uplands and Bog	3a. Joyce Country
		3b. Maumturk Mountains
		3c. South Conamara
		3d. West Conamara
	4. Lake Environs	4a. Upper Corrib Environs
4b. Lower Corrib Environs		
EASTERN PLAINS	5. North Galway Complex	5a. Northern River Clare Basin
		5b. Slieve Dart
		5c. Springfield Basin
		5d. Castlegar Basin
		5e. North Loughrea
		5f. Suck Valley
	6. Central Galway Complex	6a. Black River Basin
		6b. Southern River Clare Basin
		6c. Kilchreest Basin
		6d. Kilcrow Basin
	7. Urban Environs	6e. South Loughrea
		Maigh Cuilinn, Oughterard, Clifden, Tuam, Headford, Gort, Loughrea, Athenry, Ballinasloe, Portumna, An Spidéal, Oranmore, Kinvara, An Cheathrú Rua, Dunmore, Glenamaddy, Ballygar, An Bearna, Baile Chláir, Mountbellew.
		SOUTH GALWAY
8. Shannon Environs		
8a. Shannon Environs		
9. Karst Landscapes	9a. Karst Landscape	
10. Slieve Aughty	10a. Slieve Aughty	

Map 02 - Coastal & Island Landscape Units

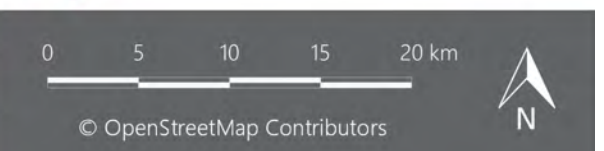
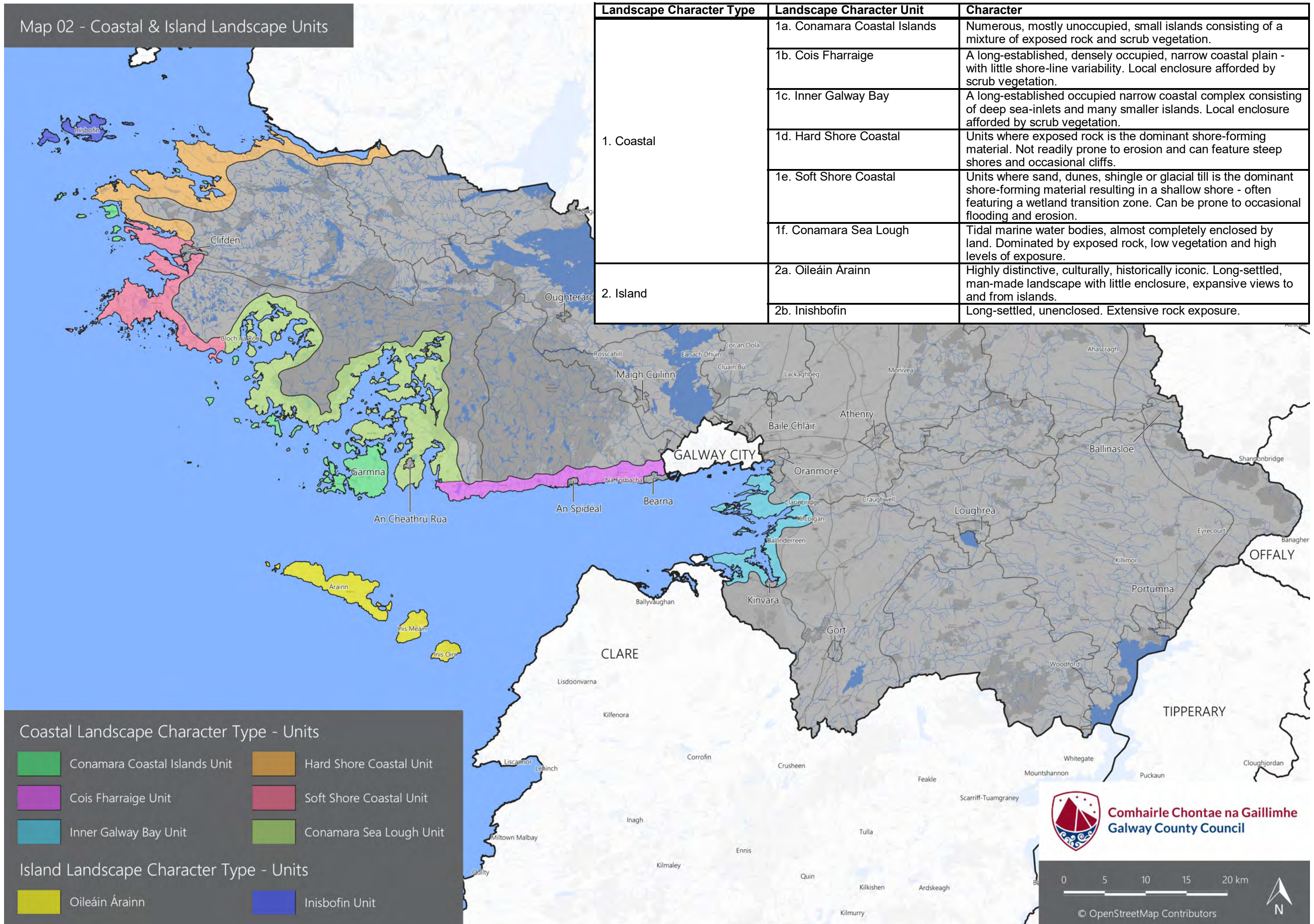
Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Unit	Character
1. Coastal	1a. Conamara Coastal Islands	Numerous, mostly unoccupied, small islands consisting of a mixture of exposed rock and scrub vegetation.
	1b. Cois Fharráige	A long-established, densely occupied, narrow coastal plain - with little shore-line variability. Local enclosure afforded by scrub vegetation.
	1c. Inner Galway Bay	A long-established occupied narrow coastal complex consisting of deep sea-inlets and many smaller islands. Local enclosure afforded by scrub vegetation.
	1d. Hard Shore Coastal	Units where exposed rock is the dominant shore-forming material. Not readily prone to erosion and can feature steep shores and occasional cliffs.
	1e. Soft Shore Coastal	Units where sand, dunes, shingle or glacial till is the dominant shore-forming material resulting in a shallow shore - often featuring a wetland transition zone. Can be prone to occasional flooding and erosion.
	1f. Conamara Sea Lough	Tidal marine water bodies, almost completely enclosed by land. Dominated by exposed rock, low vegetation and high levels of exposure.
2. Island	2a. Oileáin Árann	Highly distinctive, culturally, historically iconic. Long-settled, man-made landscape with little enclosure, expansive views to and from islands.
	2b. Inisbofin	Long-settled, unenclosed. Extensive rock exposure.

**Coastal Landscape Character Type - Units**

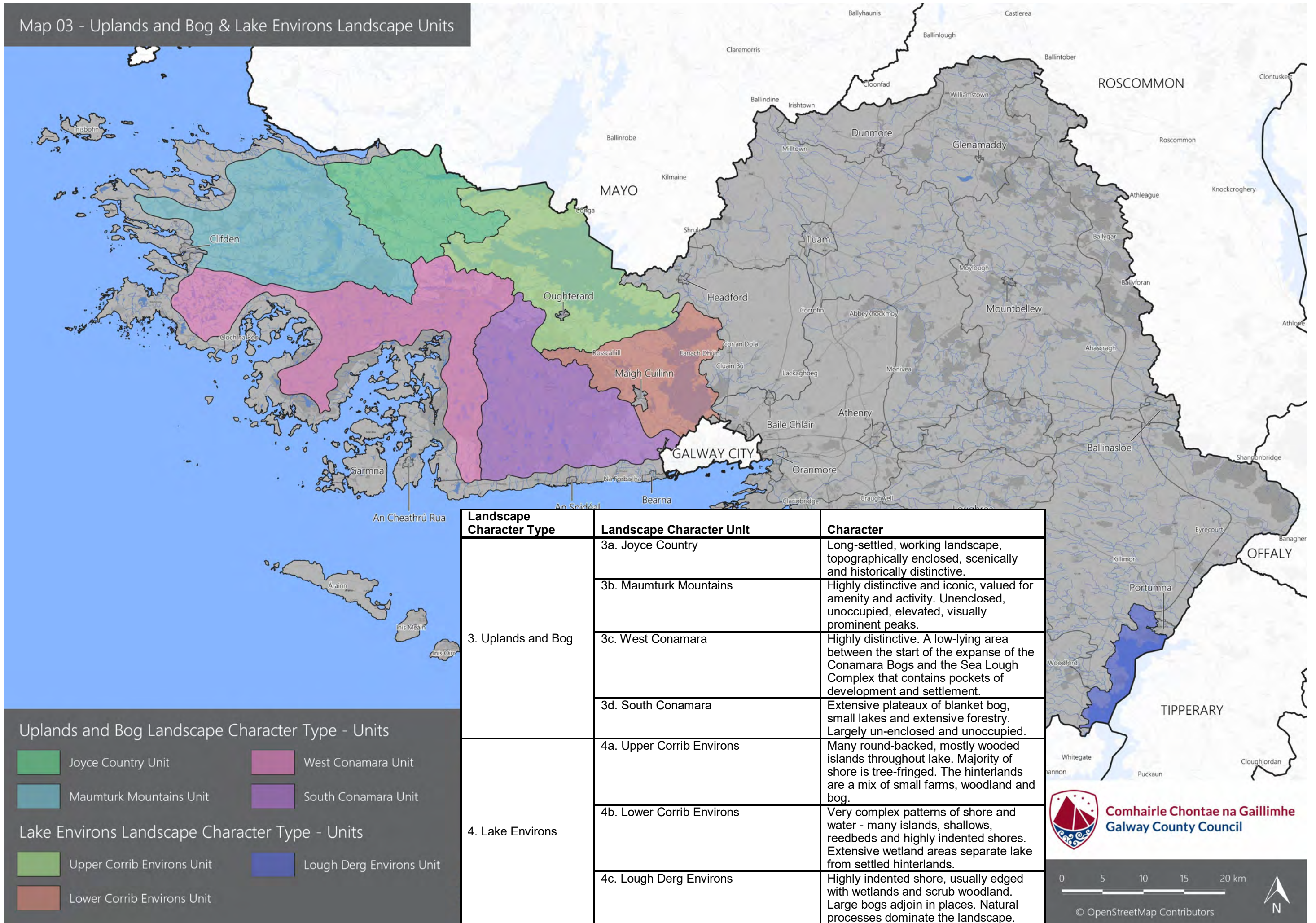
- Conamara Coastal Islands Unit
- Hard Shore Coastal Unit
- Cois Fharráige Unit
- Soft Shore Coastal Unit
- Inner Galway Bay Unit
- Conamara Sea Lough Unit

**Island Landscape Character Type - Units**

- Oileáin Árann
- Inisbofin Unit



Map 03 - Uplands and Bog & Lake Environs Landscape Units



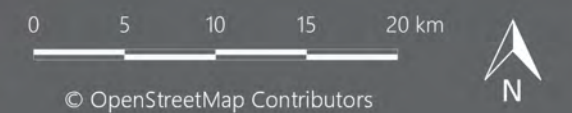
Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Unit	Character
3. Uplands and Bog	3a. Joyce Country	Long-settled, working landscape, topographically enclosed, scenically and historically distinctive.
	3b. Maumturk Mountains	Highly distinctive and iconic, valued for amenity and activity. Unenclosed, unoccupied, elevated, visually prominent peaks.
	3c. West Conamara	Highly distinctive. A low-lying area between the start of the expanse of the Conamara Bogs and the Sea Lough Complex that contains pockets of development and settlement.
	3d. South Conamara	Extensive plateaux of blanket bog, small lakes and extensive forestry. Largely un-enclosed and unoccupied.
4. Lake Environs	4a. Upper Corrib Environs	Many round-backed, mostly wooded islands throughout lake. Majority of shore is tree-fringed. The hinterlands are a mix of small farms, woodland and bog.
	4b. Lower Corrib Environs	Very complex patterns of shore and water - many islands, shallows, reedbeds and highly indented shores. Extensive wetland areas separate lake from settled hinterlands.
	4c. Lough Derg Environs	Highly indented shore, usually edged with wetlands and scrub woodland. Large bogs adjoin in places. Natural processes dominate the landscape.

Uplands and Bog Landscape Character Type - Units

- Joyce Country Unit
- Maumturk Mountains Unit
- West Conamara Unit
- South Conamara Unit

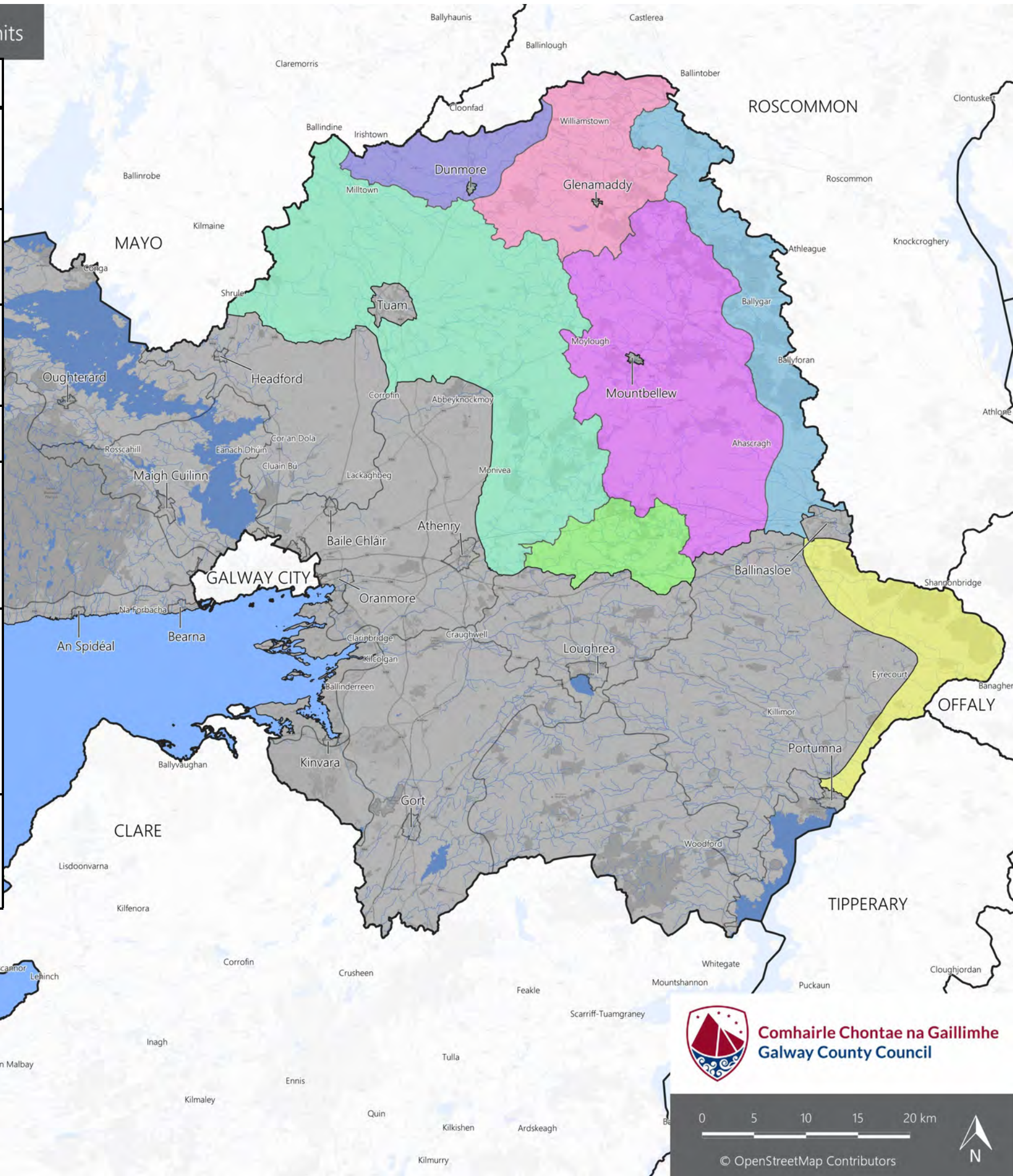
Lake Environs Landscape Character Type - Units

- Upper Corrib Environs Unit
- Lough Derg Environs Unit
- Lower Corrib Environs Unit



Map 04 - North Galway Complex & Shannon Environs Landscape Units

Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Unit	Character
5. Northern Galway Complex	5a. Suck Valley	Large area of low-lying farmland between large bogs and wetlands. Sparsely populated, crossed by few roads.
	5b. Castlegar Basin	Extensive, largely level plain with low enclosure. A long-settled working landscape of large regular fields with stone wall boundaries. Enclosed by areas of bog.
	5c. Springfield Basin	Working landscape of medium - large regular fields interspersed with lakes, large bogs and forestry.
	5d. Slieve Dart	Complex zone of low hills, bogs, small lakes and complex and irregular field patterns.
	5e. Northern River Clare Basin	Extensive, largely level plain with low enclosure. A long-settled working landscape of large regular stone-walled fields. Extensive areas of bog in east. Transition zone from bog areas to east.
	5f. North Loughrea	Long-occupied working landscape with high levels of occupation and numerous smaller settlements as well as large road and rail corridors. Extensive low-lying area with many turloughs and areas of scrub woodland, locally elevated elsewhere. Large regular, often stone-walled fields. Low enclosure except for localised areas of mature parkland trees.
8. Shannon Environs	8a. Shannon Environs	Natural, seasonal processes dominate the landscape. Contains large areas of bog, wetlands and callows. Also supports large parklands and regular fields.

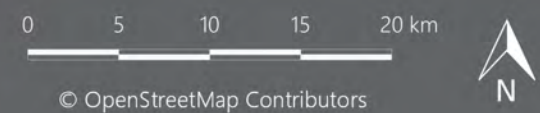


North Galway Complex Landscape Character Type - Units

- Suck Valley Unit
- Castlegar Basin Unit
- Springfield Basin Unit
- Slieve Dart Unit
- North River Clare Basin Unit
- North Loughrea Unit

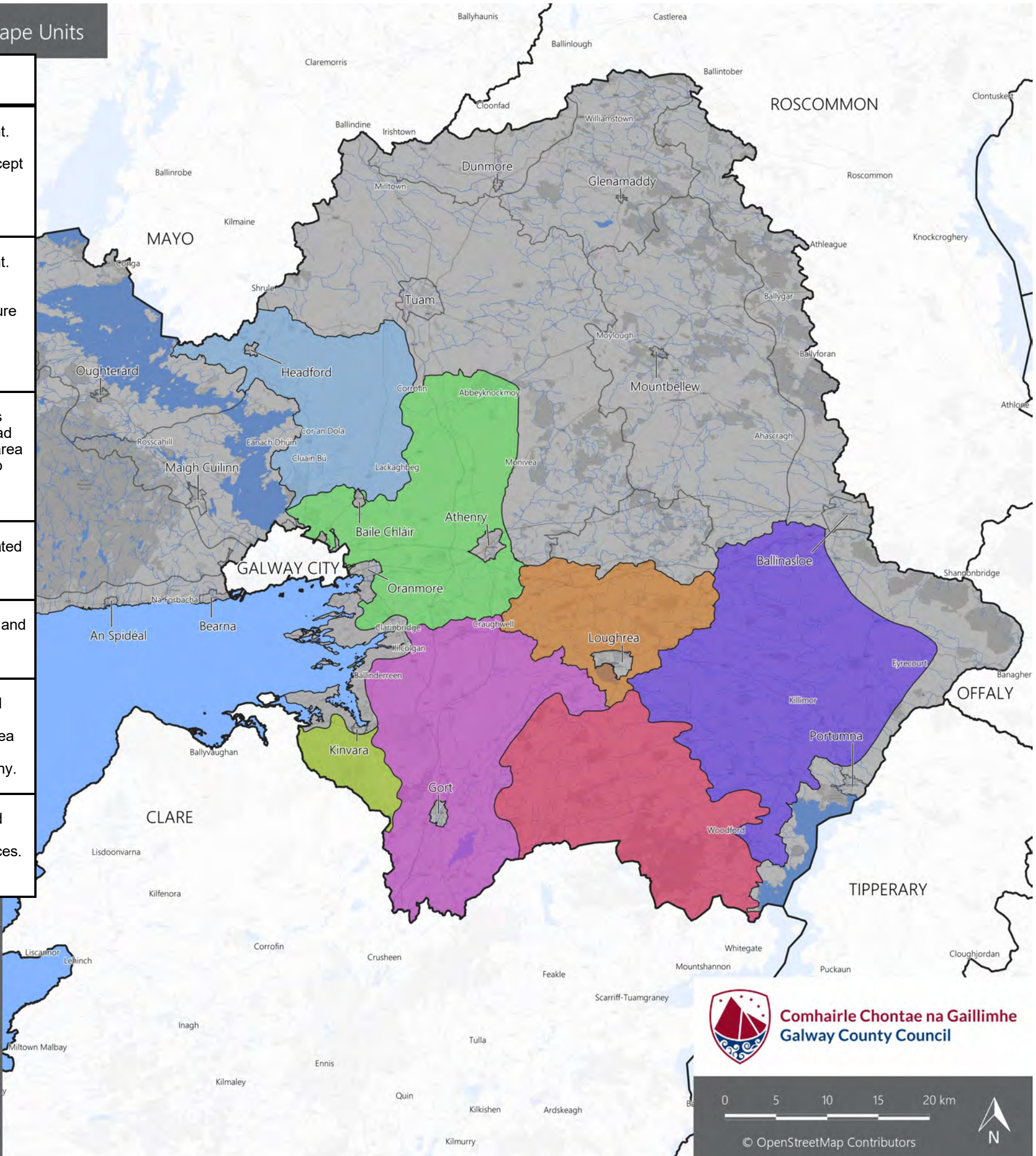
Shannon Environs Landscape Character Type - Units

- Shannon Environs Landscape Unit



Map 05 - Central Galway Complex, Karst & Slieve Aughty Landscape Units

Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Unit	Character
6. Central Galway Complex	6a. Black River Basin	Undulating long-occupied working landscape with high levels of settlement. Large regular fields and numerous parkland remnants. Low enclosure except for localised areas of mature parkland trees.
	6b. Southern River Clare Basin	Undulating long-occupied working landscape with high levels of settlement. Large regular fields and numerous parkland remnants. Extensive wetland areas near Lough Corrib. Low enclosure except for localised areas of mature parkland trees.
	6c. Kilchreest Basin	Long-occupied working landscape with high levels of settlement and numerous smaller settlements as well as large road and rail corridors. Extensive low-lying area with many turloughs and areas of scrub woodland.
	6d. Kilcrow Basin	Working landscape, locally elevated. Larger areas of bog and forestry. Elevated concentrations of settlements and infrastructure.
	6e. South Loughrea	Long-occupied working landscape with elevated concentrations of settlements and infrastructure. Larger areas of bog and forestry
9. Karst	9a. Karst	Distinctive, conspicuous, exposed limestone peak and flanks. Unenclosed and unoccupied. Large expanses of exposed limestone pavement, lower area of large fields with moderate enclosure from scrub, hedges and local topography.
10. Slieve Aughty	10a. Slieve Aughty	Largely un-occupied and un-enclosed. Mosaic of large forestry plantations and residual blanket bog areas. Large windfarms are visually dominant in places.

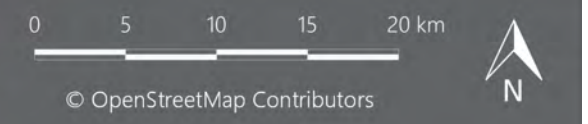


Central Galway Complex Landscape Character Type - Units

- Black River Basin Unit
- Southern River Clare Basin Unit
- Kilchreest Basin Unit
- Kilcrow Basin Unit
- South Loughrea Unit

Karst and Slieve Aughty Landscape Character Type - Units

- Karst Landscape Unit
- Slieve Aughty Landscape Unit



## 4. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

### 4.1 Introduction

Policy formulation needs to be able to anticipate which parts of the county are likely to be able to accommodate new types of development. This can be facilitated by having a prior classification of whether an area is a robust or sensitive landscape type.

This section establishes a general method and framework that is used to map the 'Sensitivity Rating' to each part of the county. This information is then used to assign a general sensitivity to each Landscape Character Type and Unit. Finally, this understanding of landscape sensitivity can support decision-making about the most appropriate objectives for each Landscape Character Type.

### 4.2 Landscape Sensitivity

A landscape's capacity to absorb new development, without exhibiting a significant alteration of character or change of appearance is referred to as its 'sensitivity'. This depends on factors such as elevation, slope, as well as the types of land-cover and soil. Landscape sensitivity increases when one or more of these factors occur in the same place. e.g. development on a steep heather-covered elevated site on shallow soils is highly likely to be visually prominent over a wide area

Arising from this analysis the following Sensitivity Ratings have been defined and assigned to each Landscape Character Unit.

### 4.3 Landscape Sensitivity Definitions

Iconic: Unique landscape with high sensitivity to change

Special: High sensitivity to change

High: Elevated sensitivity to change

Low: Unlikely to be adversely affected by change

### 4.4 Landscape Sensitivity Factors

Sensitivities arise due to characteristics that affect a wide area. These include proximity to features such as

- Coasts and the shores of lakes and large rivers
- Ridgeline of elevated areas

Sensitivities also arise from the prevailing landcover and topography. Those that give rise to large areas that lack significant visual screening include;

- Bogs
- Areas of exposed rock
- Large water bodies
- Elevated areas
- Unenclosed commonage

### 4.5. Other sensitivity Factors

The following factors are readily available in maps and have been combined to produce indications of the ability of a landscape to accommodate change.

Slope—Areas with a slope greater than or equal to 15°

Elevation—higher than 200m

Landcover in the following CORINE categories;

- Continuous urban fabric
- Discontinuous urban fabric
- Broad-leaved forest
- Mixed forest
- Natural grassland
- Moors and heaths
- Transitional woodland scrub
- Inland marshes
- Peat Bogs
- Water bodies

SOILS: Areas with soils having the following classification:

- Acid Shallow Well Drained Mineral
- Blanket Bog
- Cutover Peat
- Lacustrine
- Scree

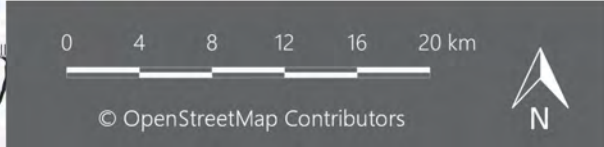
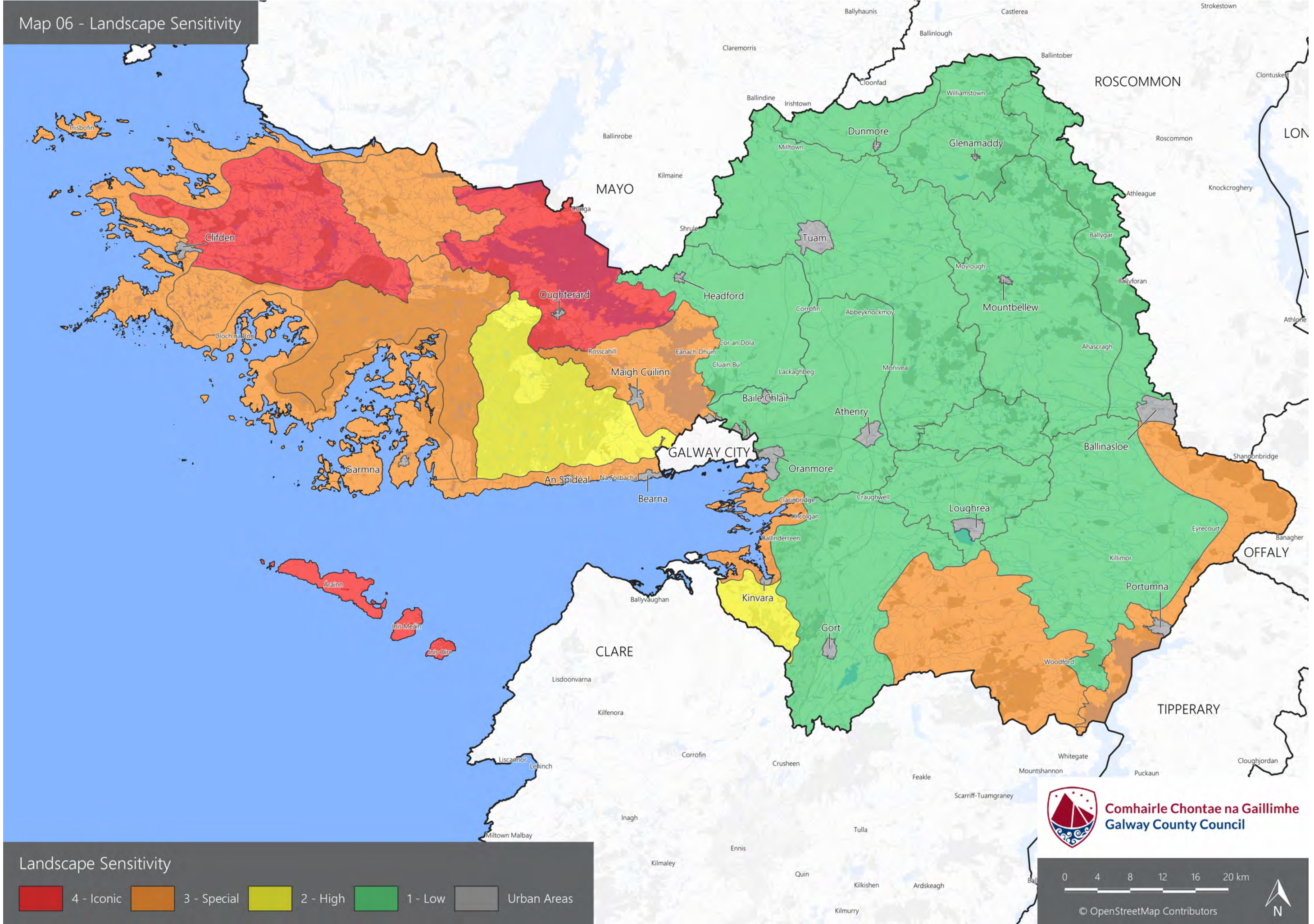
### 4.6 Limitation to Landscape Sensitivity Mapping

Landscape Character Types generally contain a mixture of sensitivities. However, for the formulation of generalised development management objectives and policies it can be useful to identify the dominant sensitivity rating within each Unit.

It should be noted that individual projects in any landscape area, notwithstanding its dominant sensitivity rating, may have greater or lesser impacts on the visual quality and character of the landscape depending on the details of the project design and the specific characteristics of the site and its context.

Therefore, this section should be read in conjunction with the policies, objectives and development management standards of the *Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028)*. The planning authority will consider this sensitivity rating and may, depending on the nature of the site and development require the applicants to demonstrate that the proposed development addresses the sensitivities identified for each relevant landscape type. In this respect, applicants may be required to prepare Visual Impact Assessment, photomontages etc. to the satisfaction of the Council prior to the making of any decision in respect to a planning application.

Map 06 - Landscape Sensitivity



## 5. Seascapes

### 5.1 Introduction

Planning in coastal areas requires an understanding of both the land and the sea. This section identifies the constituent Types and Units of Galway's seascapes, to facilitate this process.

### 5.2 Seascape Definition

A seascape can be described as a discreet area containing a seaward component, a coastline component and a landward component. It can be defined as 'the coastal landscape and adjoining areas of open water, including views from land to sea, from sea to land and along the coastline'.

### 5.3 Galway Seascapes

The sea is a dominant factor in the determination of landscape character in the Atlantic Region of Galway. Views to and from the sea and adjoining coasts are a material consideration in land use planning.

The geology of Galway has resulted in an interlacing of marine and terrestrial areas in much of the western part of the county. The majority of the county's coastline comprises of sea loughs, where sheltered, shallow tidal bays stretch inland. These gradually join with the fine-grain patterns of freshwater lakes and stream systems that also occur throughout the county's Coastal Region.



### 5.4 Seascape Types

The following are the main types of seascapes. Each are defined by their relationship between the land and the sea.

In practice, the horizon is assumed to be at a distance of 20km because the distance to the horizon increases with the elevation of the observer. For this reason, effects up to a distance of 20km from shore are examined as good practice.

- **Fully Enclosed Coast**  
This Seascape type includes shorelines that are adjacent to marine or transitional water but have no view of the ocean horizon. Landscape Character of adjoining lands will be dominant. Sea loughs are common throughout Atlantic Galway.
- **Semi-enclosed Coast**  
This Seascape type includes shorelines that are adjacent to marine or transitional water which have no more than a 50% view ocean horizon.
- **Open Coast**  
This Seascape type includes all sea areas for a distance of up to 5km off shore with a view which is at least 50% ocean horizon. Views from these waters will feel that the land is the dominant feature.
- **Offshore**  
This Seascape type includes all water between the edge of the Open Coastal Waters boundary (5km from the shore) and the Open Sea boundary (20km from the shore). Views from these waters will feel that the sea is the dominant feature.

- **Open Sea**

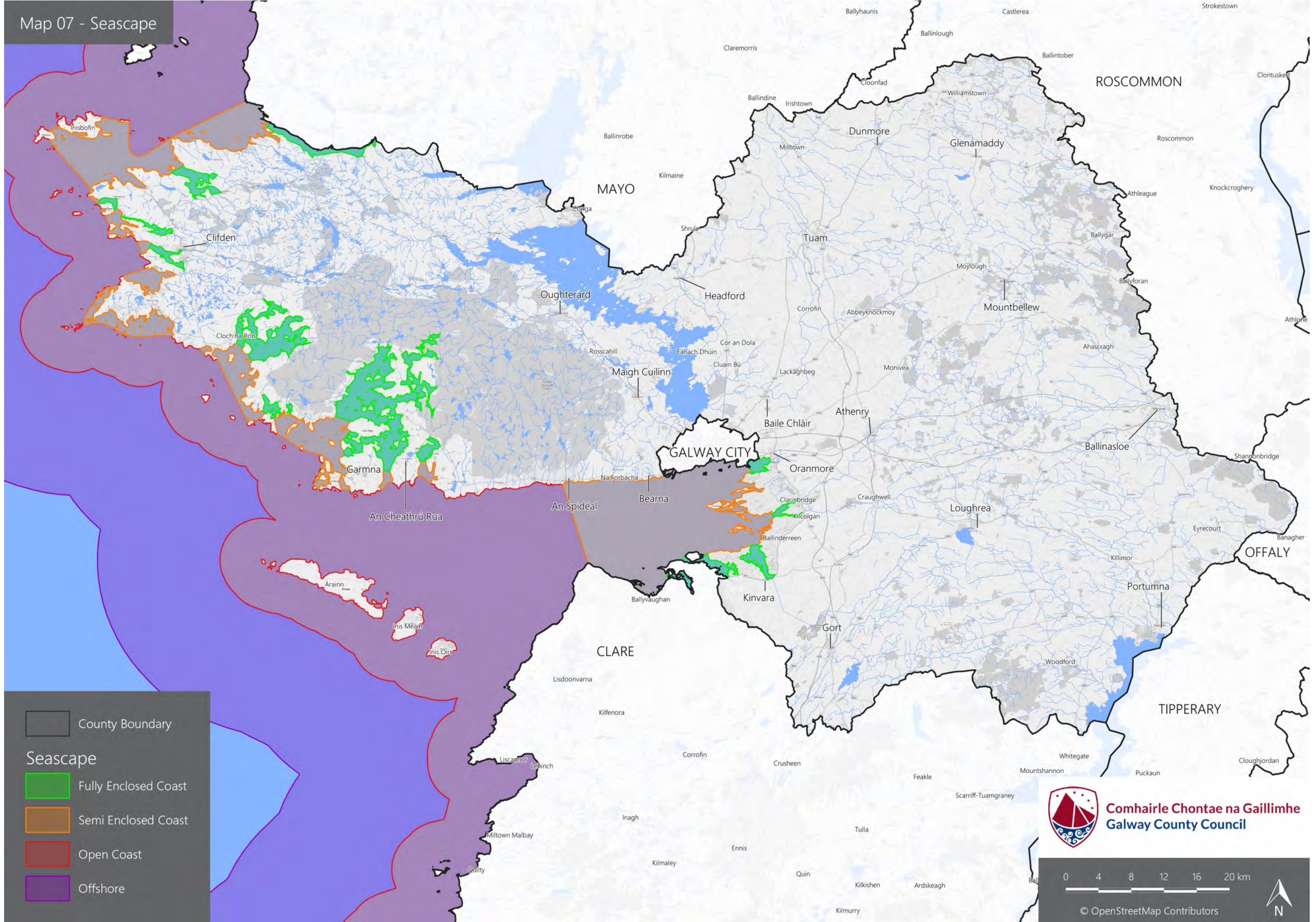
This is the largest Seascape type, it includes all waters that are beyond sight of land, i.e. areas from where no land is visible. Such areas are unoccupied and largely un-used except for intermittent transits by vessels, and aircraft. Visible wildlife mainly consists mainly of seabirds and occasional cetaceans.

### 5.5 Seascape Sensitivity

Each Seascape has distinct and different sensitivities. All share the vulnerability to high levels of inter-visibility due to the absence of topography or vegetation that could screen visual impacts.

- **Fully Enclosed Coasts** are sensitive to changes in the surrounding land, the shore or the water. This arises because of their relatively small scale and the fact that they are surrounded by many potential viewing points. Visual impacts will usually be confined to a single sea lough, which can offer some mitigation.
- **Semi-enclosed Coasts** are sensitive to changes on the land and water and are particularly sensitive the developments on and near the shore on account of the greater viewing distances involved. Visual impacts can be particularly significant at the extremities of these coasts. Headlands give rise to singular and visually distinctive features that be significantly altered by relatively small conspicuous developments. These coasts are visible from many viewing points—which include many areas, such as beaches, that are valued for recreational and visual amenity.
- **Open Coasts** are robust on account of their large size, which reduces the impact of any single development. The sea in such areas generally appears as a single uninterrupted sheet of water. This means that relatively small objects are conspicuous over large distances. Open Coasts are distantly visible from most shores.





## 6. Protected Views

### 6.1 Introduction

The Planning and Development Act, 2000, at section 10 includes the provision that

*10.—(1) A development plan shall set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development plan and shall consist of a written statement and a plan or plans indicating*

*2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), a development plan shall include objectives for—the development objectives for the area in question.*

*including*

*(e) the preservation of the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the planning authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest;*

The landscape attributes, including sensitivity and significance, of the wider environment have been previously addressed within description of the Landscape Character and related policies within the County Development Plan. They are further recognised and protected by the mapping of the sensitivity of landscapes herein.

Scenery and appreciation of views has two separate but closely related aspects, namely;

- visual impacts - focusing on the extent to which new developments can be seen.
- impacts on the character of the landscape, examining responses which are felt towards the combined effects of the new development.

This latter topic is complex because it encompasses many other measurable impacts such as noise, odours, ecology, history. Impacts on landscape character also includes emotions and perceptions such as expectations, experience and personal circumstances.

Early landscape assessment attempted to use 'natural beauty' as a basis for designation. This is no longer standard practice because attempts to scientifically measure feelings and perceptions have been found to be inconsistent not a reliable or replicable basis for policy-making. Designation based on measurable evidence is now standard practice. The next section examines this evidence.

### 6.2 Attributes of Protected Views

Site of protected view were identified by using, three principle sources of evidence— use, development and national recognition.

Examples of evidence of use includes observable patterns of consistent behaviour—such as trails on vegetation, roadside parking or repeated presence of visitors at specific places.

Examples of development evidence for the presence of a valued landscape experience include;

- Public parking places and layby designated by maps and signs as 'Scenic Views'.
- Public Sign Posts and published maps indicating 'Scenic Routes'.

Such developments are the result of official planning and investment which indicates a public priority associated with this topic.

There is recurrent evidence from the arts and media that some views are more highly valued, it includes;

- Recurrent references in literature, poetry, paintings and other artistic media to named places and views.
- Recurrent photographic and filmed images of locations used for advertising and promotion – particularly when used to promote products or services that are associated with that location.

The largest volume of such material arises in connection with tourism, which comprises the use and appreciation of the landscape by local residents as well as by visitors.

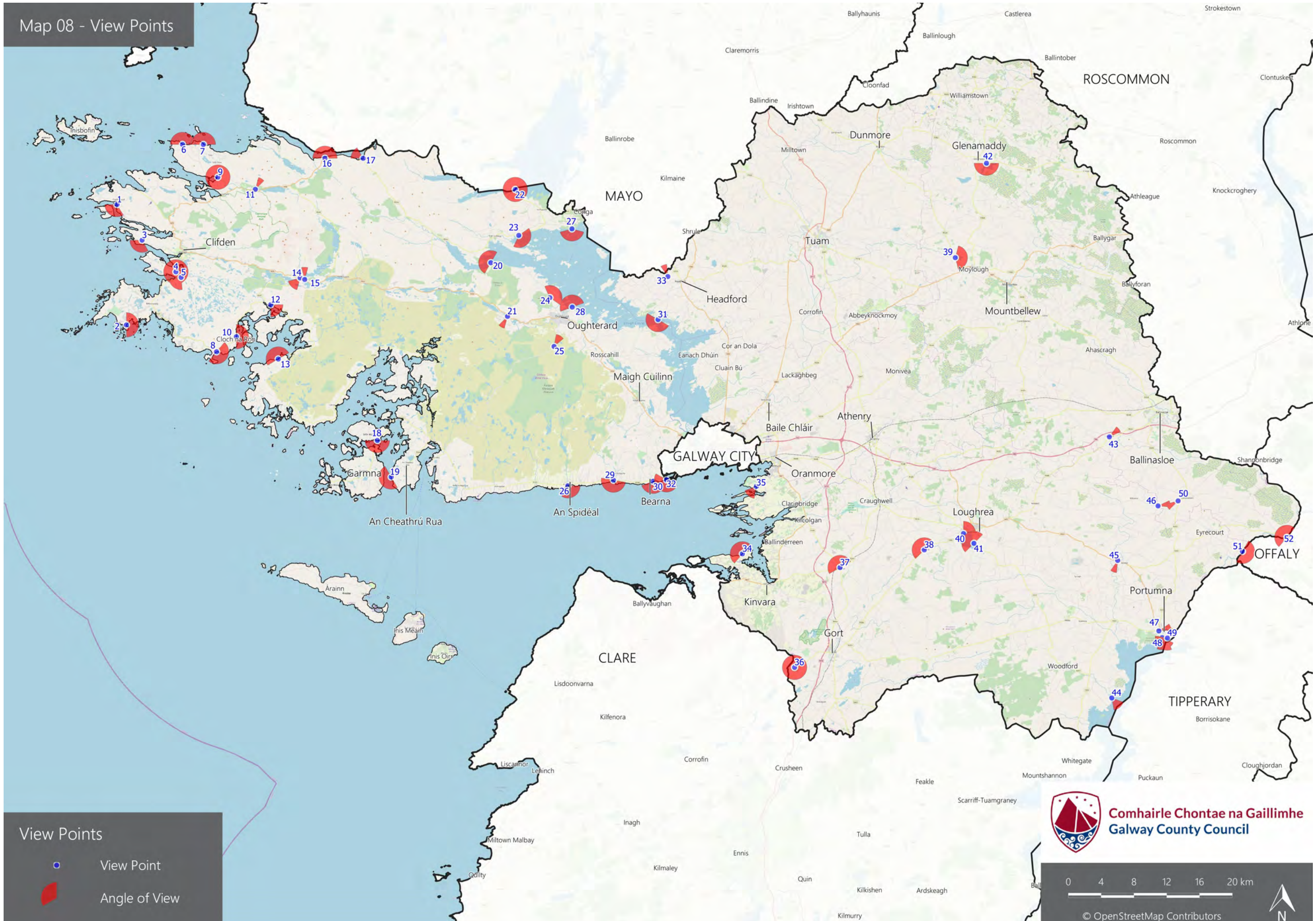
### 6.3 Protected Views in County Galway

Galway has a significant number of expansive views, many of which are readily recognisable on postcards, brochures and web-sites.

The Schedule of Protected Views and the accompanying map identifies 52 Viewing Points. Note that these should be examined along side the designated Scenic Routes and Sensitivity Map. *County Galway Scenic Routes and View Points* contains a detailed description of each View Point.

## 6.4 Schedule of Protected Views

Viewpoint Number	Viewpoint Name	Rotation of View	Angle of View	X Grid (ITM)	Y Grid (ITM)	Within Landscape Unit:
1	Omev Island	210	120	457849	756464	1d. Hard Shore Coastal
2	Bunowen Bay	90	180	458984	741795	1e. Soft Shore Coastal
3	Sky Road	210	120	460903	752120	1e. Soft Shore Coastal
4	Alcock and Brown Memorial	0	360	465022	748263	1e. Soft Shore Coastal
5	Derrigimlagh Bog	220	90	465664	747584	1e. Soft Shore Coastal
6	Renvyle Castle	0	180	465828	763784	1d. Hard Shore Coastal
7	Islands View	0	180	468368	763777	1d. Hard Shore Coastal
8	Gorteen Bay	130	180	469983	738530	1e. Soft Shore Coastal
9	Derryinver Bridge	0	360	470146	759800	1d. Hard Shore Coastal
10	Cloch na Rón	90	180	472393	740363	1f. Conamara Sea Lough
11	Kylemore Abbey	30	30	474709	758314	3b. Maumturk Mountains
12	Coonisle Quay	135	90	476586	744259	1f. Conamara Sea Lough
13	Glinsce Pier	330	180	477508	737639	1f. Conamara Sea Lough
14	Droichead na Canálach	225	60	480171	747517	3b. Maumturk Mountains
15	Twelve Pins	0	30	480732	747334	3b. Maumturk Mountains
16	Killary Harbour	0	180	483196	762100	1d. Hard Shore Coastal
17	Leenane	300	60	487852	762093	1d. Hard Shore Coastal
18	Droichead Charraig an Lagáin	180	180	489590	727711	1f. Conamara Sea Lough
19	Coral Strand	240	180	491276	723267	1f. Conamara Sea Lough
20	North Lough Corrib	300	180	503423	749371	4a. Upper Corrib Environs
21	The Quiet Man Bridge	210	30	505457	742830	3d. South Conamara
22	Droichead an tSnámha	0	360	506401	758297	4a. Upper Corrib Environs
23	An Charraig Thoir	130	150	506830	752704	4a. Upper Corrib Environs
24	Western Way High Road	50	150	510624	745119	4a. Upper Corrib Environs
25	Views of Islands on Lough Corrib	30	40	511129	739171	4a. Upper Corrib Environs
26	Spidéal Cósta	150	120	512816	722189	1b. Cois Fharraige
27	Ard na Goaithe	180	150	513315	753500	4a. Upper Corrib Environs
28	Oughterard Pier	340	180	513349	743962	4a. Upper Corrib Environs
29	View of North Clare coast	190	180	518375	722881	1b. Cois Fharraige
30	View of the sea from Bearna	160	180	523211	722738	1b. Cois Fharraige
31	Kilbeg Peir	210	180	523809	742447	4a. Upper Corrib Environs
32	Silver Strand	210	180	524845	722918	1b. Cois Fharraige
33	Friary of Ross	340	30	525006	747685	6a. Black River Basin
34	Traught Beach	310	180	534094	713902	1c. Inner Galway Bay
35	Rinville	220	60	535796	722123	1c. Inner Galway Bay
36	Cill Mac Dhuach Ecclesiastical Complex	0	360	540459	700063	6c. Kilchreest Basin
37	Ardrahan Church of Ireland and ruins	330	180	545999	712231	6c. Kilchreest Basin
38	Kilchreest church ruins & graveyard	315	180	556269	714380	6c. Kilchreest Basin
39	Summerville Lough	90	150	560049	749986	5b. Castlegar Basin
40	Corrys Field walk	90	180	561050	716375	6e. South Loughrea
41	Loughrea Swimming Area	315	180	562329	715180	6e. South Loughrea
42	Glenamaddy Turlough	180	180	563857	761502	5c. Springfield Basin
43	Aughrim Church Spire	50	30	578842	728152	6d. Kilcrow Basin
44	Rossmore Pier	140	60	579132	696337	4c. Lough Derg Environs
45	Killimor Old Graveyard	200	30	579852	713096	6d. Kilcrow Basin
46	Newgate Gateway at L4301 crossroads	80	30	584775	719739	6d. Kilcrow Basin
47	Portumna Church Spires	70	30	584874	704501	4c. Lough Derg Environs
48	Portumna Castle Harbour	160	90	585274	703695	4c. Lough Derg Environs
49	Lough Derg Water Recreation Park	220	120	585914	703643	4c. Lough Derg Environs
50	Gothic Folly Gateway off L8716 SW of Lawrencetown	240	30	587216	720350	6d. Kilcrow Basin
51	Meelick Quay	120	180	595061	714201	8a. Shannon Environs
52	Shannon bank from Banagher Bridge entering Galway					8a. Shannon Environs



Map 08 - View Points

**View Points**

- View Point
- Angle of View

**Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe**  
**Galway County Council**

0 4 8 12 16 20 km

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## 7. Scenic Routes

### 7.1 Introduction

It is proposed that a number of Scenic Routes should be adopted to incorporate the large number of previously designated viewing points in landscapes that are classified as Iconic or Special. This will facilitate clarity of interpretation for use in policy formulation and development management.

A scenic route is not and cannot be a comprehensive protection for the entire landscape. It does provide an instrument for predicting and assessing representative measurement of what effects would be experienced, by the majority of potential public viewers in the majority of circumstances.

Seven Scenic Routes have been identified

1. Maritime Scenic Route
2. Galway Bay Scenic Route
3. Galway Clifden Scenic Route
4. Sraith Salach Letterfrack Scenic Route
5. Maum Valley Scenic Route
6. Lough Corrib Scenic Route
7. Slieve Aughty Scenic Route

### 7.2 Maritime Scenic Route

The route parallels the coast at varying distances with almost all parts having almost continuous views of marine waters. Most of the views are from shallow-sloping lands towards the enclosed waters of sea loughs.

All of the route lies within the 'Coastal' Landscape Type. The landscape along this route falls into two types;

- Those where natural processes are dominant and
- Those containing varying degrees of human use and occupation.

In this complex landscape transitions between areas of nature and settlement can change abruptly across short distances.

The route is punctuated by a number of small settlements, many with a denser old core with facilities such as a pub, shop or post office. Most of these settlements have extensive peripheries of more recent development – consisting mostly of housing with occasional enterprises located at the edges of these settlements.

Apart from settlement, the main land-uses are low-intensity agriculture and fisheries with scattered areas of turf-cutting and occasional smaller forestry plantations.

*Key Features:* Coastal views, natural areas, settled areas, sea lough views, open sea across fields.

### 7.3 Galway Bay Scenic Route

The first section of the route follows the Wild Atlantic Way between An Bearna and Inbhear.

The route parallels the coast at varying distances with occasional views of the coast across small, scrub-lined fields and between houses. This part of the route is punctuated by a near-continuous conurbation of smaller settlements, many with a denser older cores, some of which are now urbanised – An Bearna and An Spidéal.

The second section, is from Oranmore to the outskirts of Kinvarra, this short route passes through a countryside of small fields and scattered housing. Much of the route passes through areas of tall road-side hedges and scrub hazel that confine views. Occasionally elevated portions of roads offer expansive, long-distance views towards the northern Burren as well as Galway Bay.

The route is centred on Kinvarra and leads onwards to Ballyvaughan. It also offers opportunities to begin exploration of the most spectacular parts of the northern Burren via lesser used roads.

*Key Features:* Coastal views, Bays, Coastal Villages.

### 7.4 Galway Clifden, Sraith Salach Letterfrack & Maum Valley Scenic Routes

These routes are described together because they provide alternative routes through the same large area—the Upland and Blanket Bog - which is one of Ireland's most distinctive landscapes. They range from the outskirts of Oughterard to either Clifden or Letterfrack – with a further variation of the Maum Valley link. For the majority of each route the landscape is open and largely devoid of visible development. It offers expansive views of uplands, bogs and lakes.

The landscapes are very large and expansive – drawing the eye to distant horizons and to the ever-changing sky. The turbulent Atlantic frontal weather systems cause the lighting to frequently change. Seasons bring about large-scale changes of colour – both of vegetation and grasses.

*Key Features:* Mountains, Lakes, Bogs.

### 7.5 Lough Corrib Scenic Route

This route runs from Maigh Cuilinn and Oughterard through Maam Cross before looping back at Cong. Near Galway City's outskirts it encounters a mixture of landscapes that include tree-lined roads at parkland edges with occasional very expansive elevated panoramas across Lower Lough Corrib.

Between Maigh Cuilinn and Oughterard the route passes through increasingly enclosed and inhabited landscapes. Lakeshore access points offer opportunities to experience very distinctive landscapes – usually from wooded locations with occasional panoramic views across many islands. The woodland character of this area provides strikingly different experiences across each season.

After Oughterard the land changes abruptly to unenclosed, large-scale areas with distant views of open countryside and large-scale elements such as uplands, bogs and lakes;

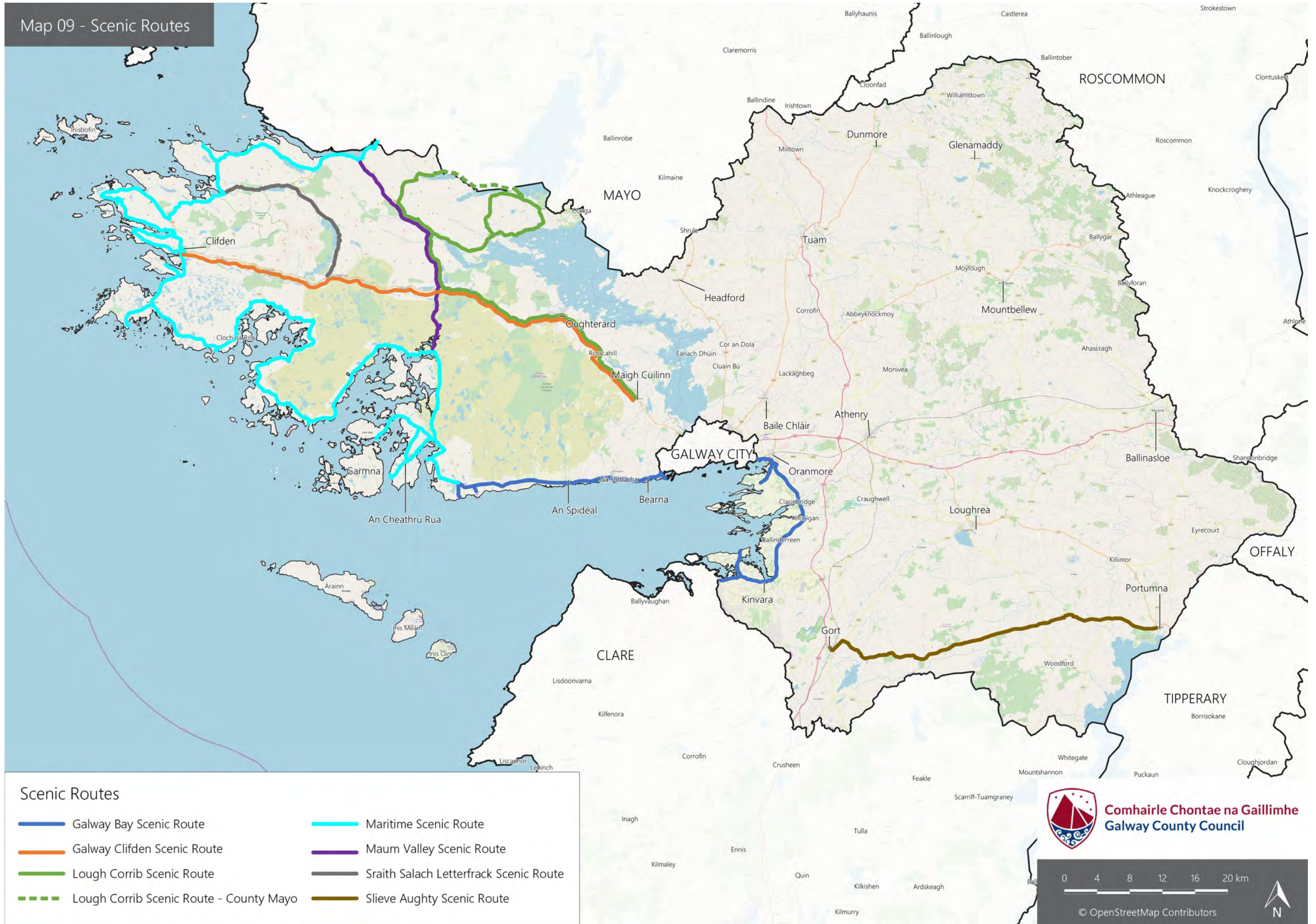
*Key Features:* Lakes, Mountains, large tracts of unoccupied and unenclosed land.

### 7.6 Slieve Aughty Scenic Route

This route follows the R 352 running from the outskirts of Portumna to the outskirts of Gort. The route passes through extensive areas of commercial forestry and areas of cut-over bog. Parts of the route provide expansive and panoramic views – both north and south. Large arrays of wind turbines are visible along parts of the route;

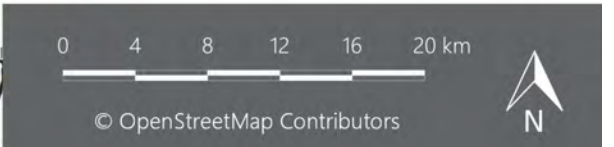
*Key Features:* Mountains, Forestry, Expansive elevated views.

Map 09 - Scenic Routes



Scenic Routes

- Galway Bay Scenic Route
- Galway Clifden Scenic Route
- Lough Corrib Scenic Route
- - - Lough Corrib Scenic Route - County Mayo
- Maritime Scenic Route
- Maum Valley Scenic Route
- Sraith Salach Letterfrack Scenic Route
- Slieve Aughty Scenic Route





## 8. Conclusion

The appearance and character of the landscape are important parts of the heritage of each place. The landscape is frequently referred within official policies and plans, such as the County Development Plan.

The appearance and character of the landscape can vary considerably from place to place. This is caused by differences in natural factors, such as the topography, soils, vegetation and drainage.

These variations have, in turn, given rise to different patterns of human occupation and use – often over many thousands of years.

This combination of natural and human forces creates differences in

the appearance and character of each separate place. Each has a different and distinctive ‘sense of place’.

This landscape Character Assessment has identified, described and mapped where each different type of countryside is located. This is presented as generalized Landscape Types and as more specific Landscape Units.

This mapping is prepared by examining, assessing and mapping factors, such as soil or slope. These provide the scientific evidence for locating the boundaries of each landscape unit.

In addition to the identification and mapping of landscape character types and units, this report has also examined and updated the Protected Views and Scenic Routes of the County Galway.

The report has concluded with assessment and identification of two factors that are regarded as being increasingly important landscape considerations, namely seascapes and maps of the darkness of the sky at night.

The next section provides an overview, a ‘Gazetteer’ of the many different types of landscapes in County Galway.

A map showing the location and extent of each major Landscape Type is accompanied by a photograph that illustrates the distinctive visual characteristics of each such area.

Each gazetteer page also provides a summary of information about the landscape units, the protected views and the scenic routes that occur within this area.



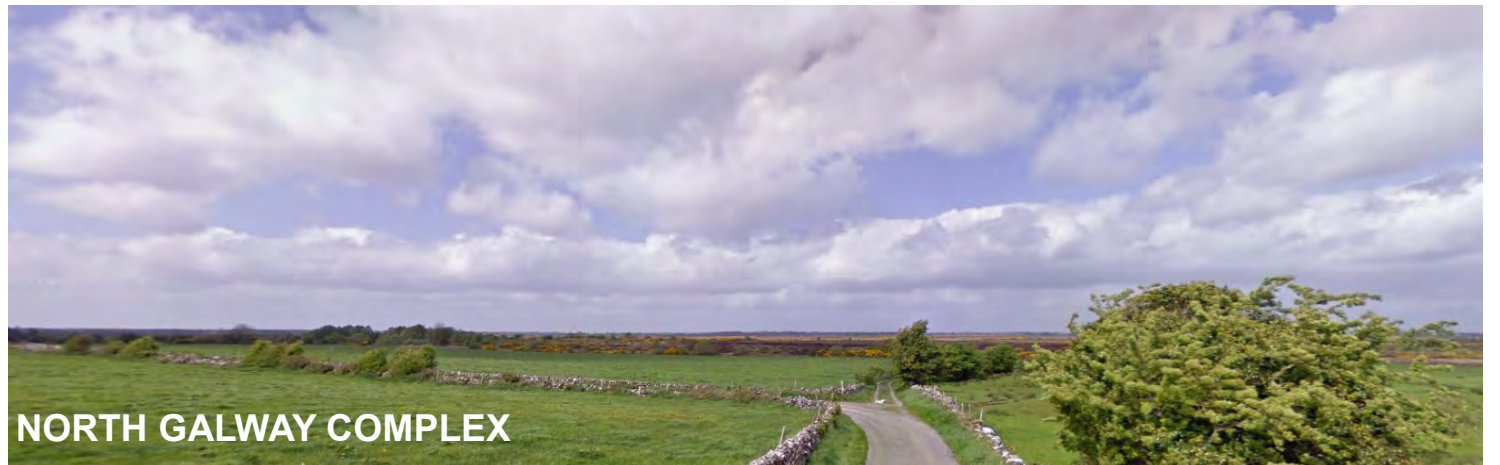
COASTAL



UPLANDS AND BOG



LAKE ENVIRONS



NORTH GALWAY COMPLEX



CENTRAL GALWAY COMPLEX



SHANNON ENVIRONS



SLIEVE AUGHTY



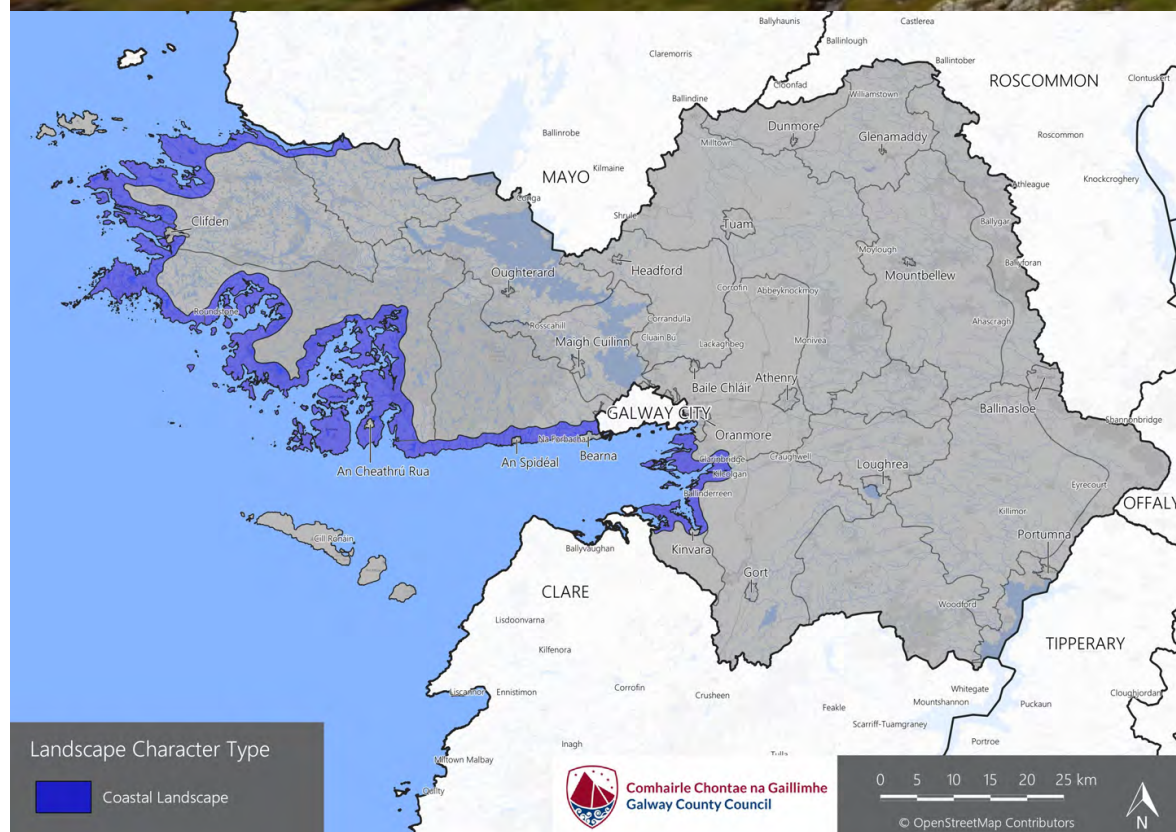
KARST

**GAZETTEER OF GALWAY'S LANDSCAPE TYPES**





Typical coastal water view, gently slopping shores, partially enclosed by land, near Leitreach Ard.



**Coastal**

The coastal landscape of west Galway is dominated by a series enclosed bodies of sea water. These vary in size but all share the same elements of seaweed-covered granite shores, exposed at low tide, enclosed by rugged uplands.

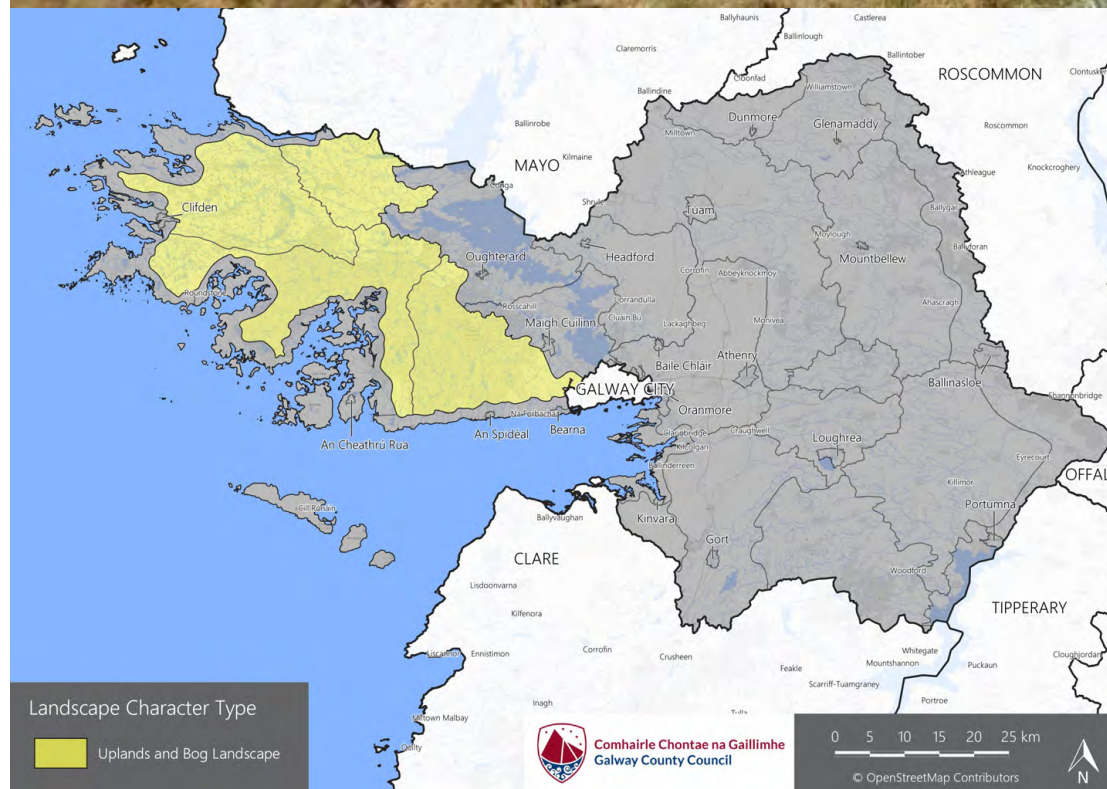
This landscape can offer views for great distances due the lack of enclosing vegetation. The sky is an important part of these landscapes. Dramatic turbulent skies, the result of arriving Atlantic frontal systems, can cause light to change frequently and dramatically. During calmer weather these enclosed waters create mirror-like conditions. Areas at a distance from settlement offer opportunities to experience some of Europe's darkest skies.

The Galway Gaeltacht, the single largest and most populated Gaeltacht area in the country, occupies much of Coastal Galway, with most of that population being concentrated close to the shore, both as dispersed housing and as a number of smaller settlements. The landscape is the context for nationally significant concentrations of place-names, folklore, craft and literary associations.

<b>Coastal</b>	Landscape Units	Conamara coastal Islands (1a), Cois Ferraige (1b), Inner Galway Bay (1c), Hard Shore Coastal (1d), Soft Shore coastal (1e), Conamara Sea Lough (1f)
	Protected Views	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 26, 30, 32, 34, 35
	Scenic Routes	Maritime Scenic Route, Galway Bay Scenic Route, Galway Clifden Scenic Route



Typical bog view (in Uplands and Bog Landscape), elevated plateau, uniform grass cover, near Derrycunlagh.



**Uplands and Bog**

This landscape is composed of a number of large upland and bog features. Views across wide areas of unclosed bogs are terminated by steep-sided uplands. Almost all of this landscape is composed of natural features. There is little visible human development because more intensive agriculture and settlement are difficult to sustain in these areas. Seasons, weather and the very dark night sky further enhance the qualities of wildness in this area.

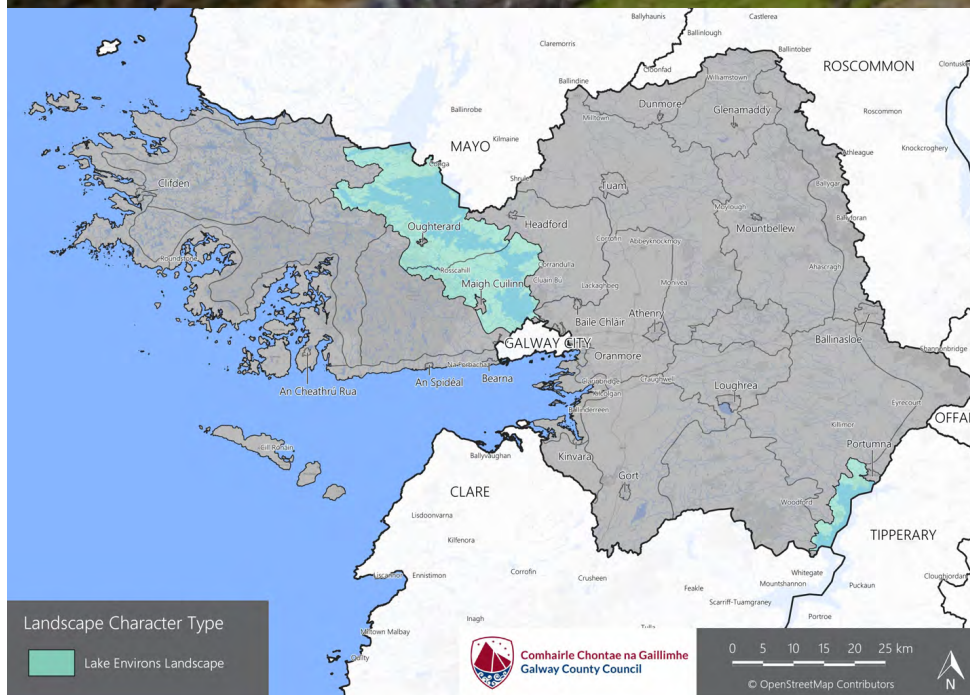
The highly distinctive and often dramatic scenery attracts many tourists to visit, tour and experience these landscapes. The 2,000-hectare Connemara National Park provides public access to some of the most visited areas - including parts of the Twelve Bens or Beanna Beola mountain range. Important scenic routes and walking trails cross through these landscapes, such as The Western Way and the Diamond Hill Trail.

Proximity to the Atlantic, lack of enclosure and extensive areas of elevation mean that this landscape is very exposed to the effects of weather, which limits the development of vegetation. The extensive views and lack of screening vegetation combine to make this landscape very vulnerable to change.

Uplands and Bog	Landscape Units	Joyce Country (3a), Maumturk Mountains (3b), West Conamara (3c) and South Conamara (3d)
	Protected Views	11, 14, 15
	Scenic Routes	Maum Valley Scenic Route, Lough Corrib Scenic Route, Galway Clifden Scenic Route, Sraith Salach Letterfrack Scenic Route



Typical lake landscape, enclosing hills, woodlands, piers, near Curraun Beg.



**Lake Environs**

Galway has lakes of many types and sizes, including Lough Corrib [pictured] and Lough Derg, two of Ireland’s largest lakes. These larger lakes are principally fringed by wetlands and scrub woodlands which adjoin mixed farming areas as well as other blocks of bog and woodland. They both are highly protected as ecological and fishery resources and also experience high levels of seasonal use for recreation.

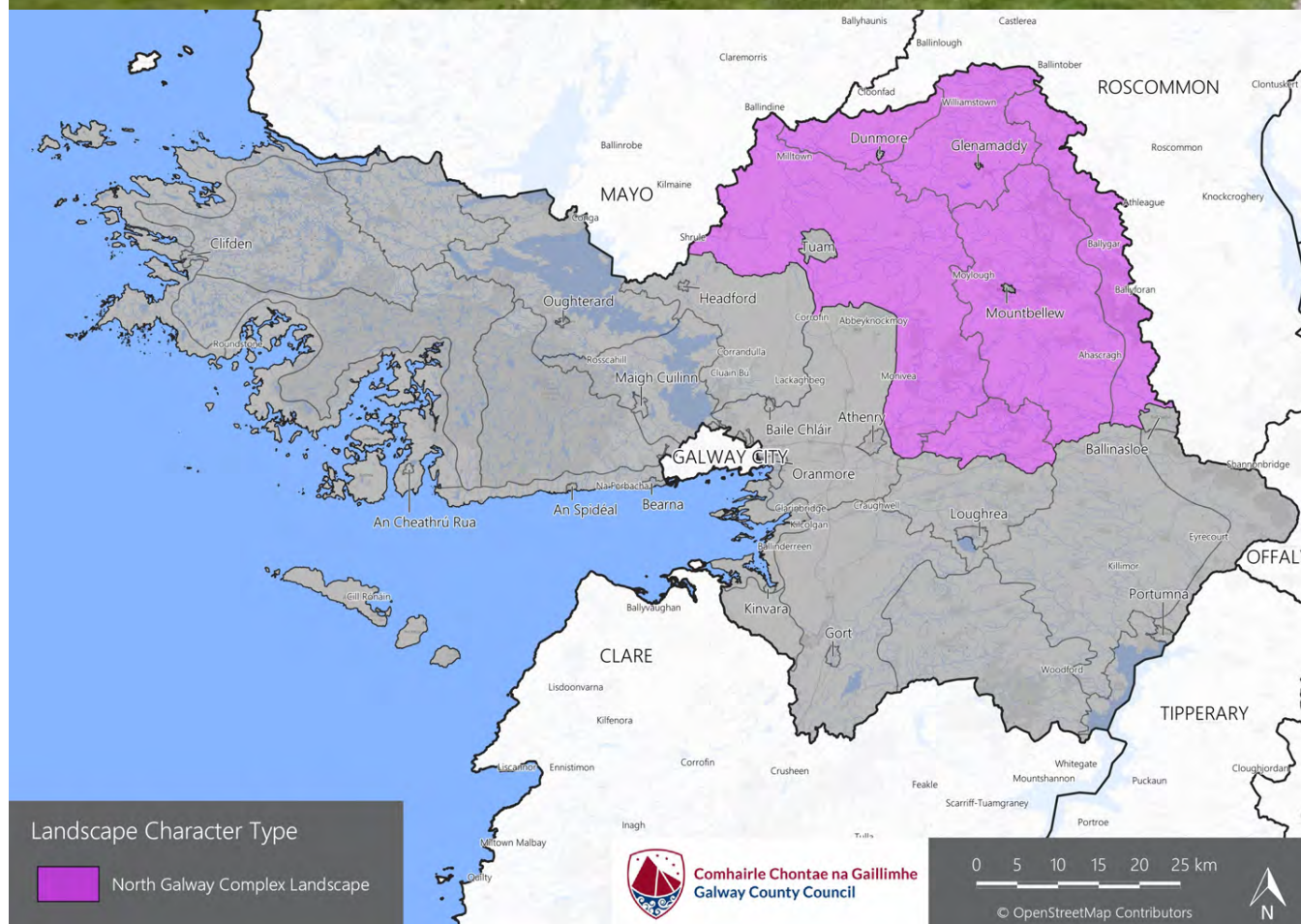
Lough Derg is the largest lake on the Shannon system and lies within a limestone basin, while the surrounding uplands, including the Slieve Aughtys, are composed of a much harder sandstone rock. The lake is a SPA and also an SAC. The northern end of Lough Derg is relatively shallow (~6cm). Lough Derg is characterized by broad bays, a highly indented shoreline and many small islands. It is fringed by reed beds, wetlands, fens, wet woods and native woodlands.

Lough Corrib is the second largest lake in Ireland and can be divided into very distinct parts; a shallow basin underlain by carboniferous limestone in the south, and a deeper basin to the north underlain by more acidic granite, schists and sandstones. The uplands to the west of the lake include the rolling, bog covered granite hills of south Conamara, the bare Quartzite peaks of the Maumturk mountains and the high plateau of the Maumtrasna Mountains. Sheep grazing and forestry are the main land uses in these areas. In sharp contrast, the low lying limestone plain to the east of the Lough Corrib with its large, walled fields, is used primarily for the more intensive rearing of sheep and cattle.

Lake Environs	Landscape Units	Corrib Environs (4a), Lower Corrib Environs (4b), Lough Derg Environs (4c)
	Protected Views	20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31, 44, 47, 48, 49
	Scenic Routes	Lough Corrib Scenic Route, Galway Clifden Scenic Route and Slieve Aughty Scenic Route



Typical open views across pasture and bog, near Mountbellew.



**North Galway Complex**

The appearance and character of this landscape is very varied. Most consists of a plain that undulates with gentle slopes and occasional elevated areas like Knockma or Slieve Dart. Areas of high-quality grassland, large bogs and forestry can all be encountered in close proximity.

Settlement occurs throughout this landscape, interconnected with a dense network of small roads that also serve extensive areas of dispersed rural housing on smaller holdings. Settlement is, generally, less dense towards the north-east because this part of the county contains large areas of blanket and raised bog, often interspersed with large areas of forestry.

The large size of some of the bogs within this landscape provide areas of distinctive character and solitude where natural processes are still dominant. The Suck River lies within a shallow and distinctive lowlands that define much of the eastern boundary of this landscape.

A history of less intensive development has resulted in a wealth of intact family-based local knowledge, place names and relatively undisturbed sites of historical importance such as Glinsk Castle.

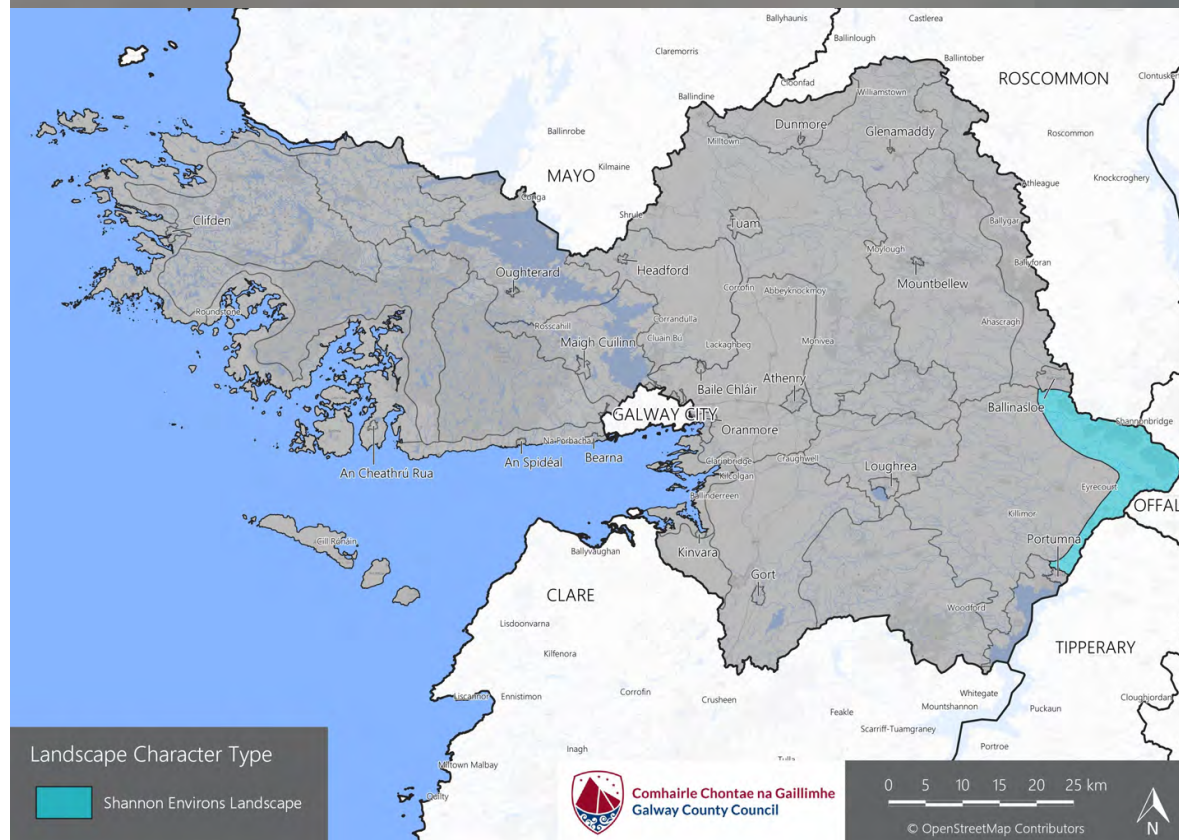
A history of less intensive development has resulted in a wealth of intact and relatively undisturbed sites of historical importance.

North Galway Complex	Landscape Units	River Clare Basin (5a), Slieve Dart (5b), Springfield Basin (5c), Castlegar Basin (5d), Suck Valley (5e), North Loughrea (5f).
	Protected Views	39, 42
	Scenic Routes	None





Typical view from within the Shannon river, low lying moors, inlet tributaries, near Esker.



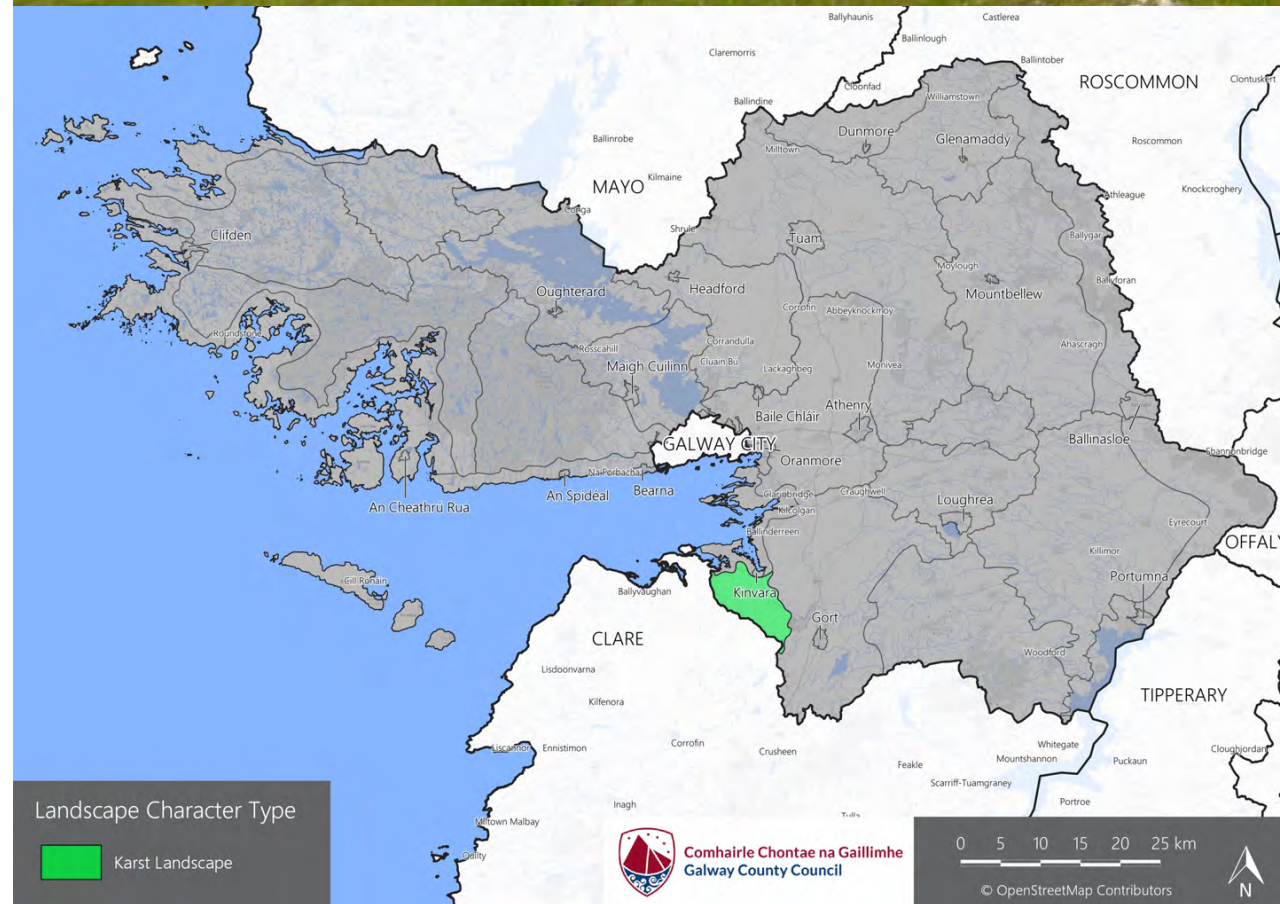
**Shannon Environs**

The river gives rise to a distinctive landscape type that has evolved in response to two factors. Nearest to the river, there are extensive areas of very flat, flood-prone lands that include the Shannon Callows as well as some large peatlands. The Callows, which are seasonally flooded grassland ecosystems adjacent to the low lying river floodplain, are an important characteristic of the area. These areas, often water-logged, have little settlement but are highly valued for summer grazing. The area is also used by internationally significant numbers of wintering wildfowl. The combination of wild vegetation and large flocks of birds creates one of Ireland’s most distinctive natural landscapes. Better-drained adjacent lands are extremely productive for agriculture and have been used and valued for centuries. The wealth generated by these lands has supported elevated concentrations of large estates and related fortifications and, latterly, important ecclesiastic sites and settlements that give this area a rich legacy of sites with cultural heritage. Tourism, mostly river-based is slowly emerging as an important land use in this landscape because of these factors.

Shannon Environs	Landscape Units	Shannon Environs (8a)
	Protected Views	51, 52
	Scenic Routes	None



Typical view of karstic features, exposed limestone pavements intermingled with unenclosed pastures, near Funshin Beg.



**Karst Landscapes**

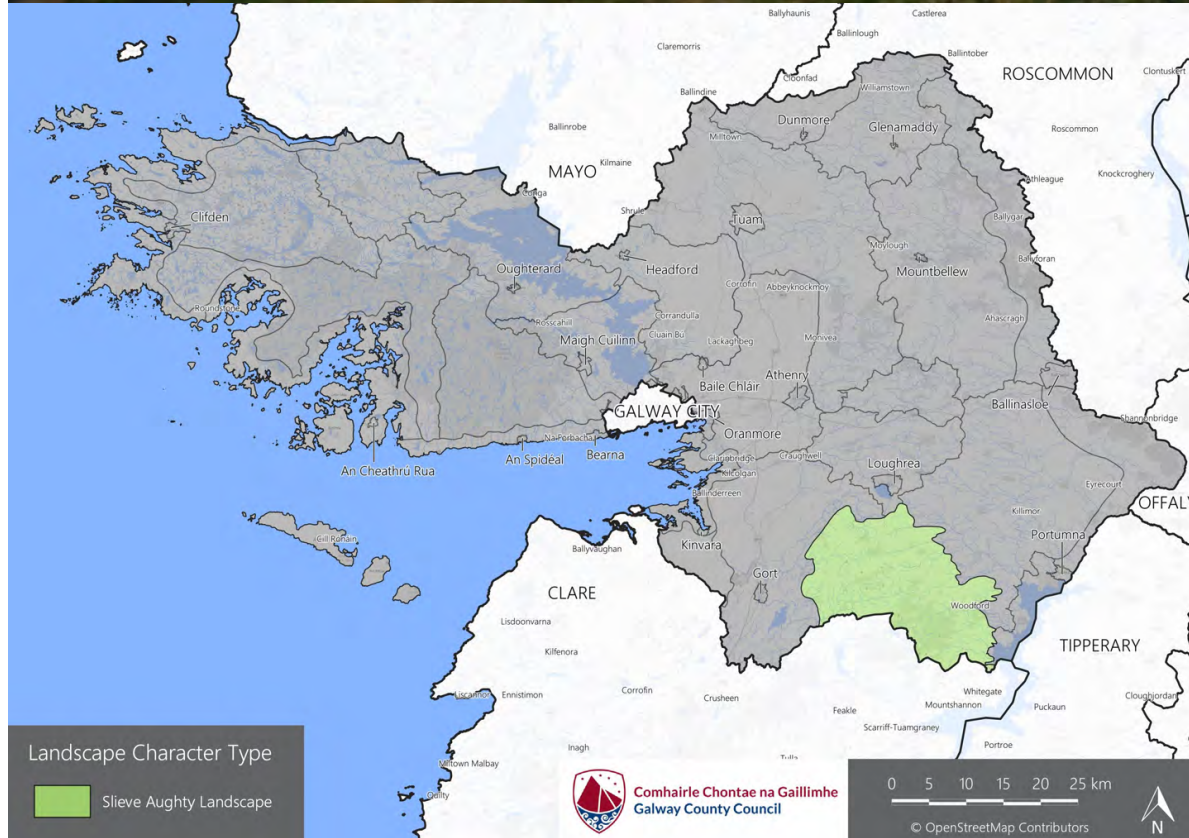
The bare limestone surfaces of the northern-most parts of the Burren form a landscape type that is conspicuous on the skyline across much of south Galway, despite its small extent. The area itself is sparsely populated with few roads. The grasslands within it are valued as high-quality grazing – especially in winter.

The Burren Landscape are valued as resources, both for ecology as well as recreation. The extensive views, the uniform vegetation and lack of screening vegetation combine to make this landscape very vulnerable to change. This karstic landscape gently transitions into the Central Galway Complex Landscape.

Karst Landscapes	Landscape Units	Karst Landscapes (9a)
	Protected Views	None
	Scenic Routes	None



Typical elevated view, unenclosed blanket bogs, forestry, distant views over surrounding landscape, near Coppanagh.



**Slieve Aughty**

This is a distinctive landscape that occurs along the upland southern boundary with County Clare. Much of this landscape is sparsely populated, with few roads. It contains extensive areas of coniferous forestry interspersed with residual areas of unplanted blanket bog. These areas extend from south of Lough Rea, Co.Galway to Scarriff in Co.Clare. There are many small and medium sized lakes in the area, most notably Lough Graney and Lough Atorick, and many important rivers rise in this area, including the Owendalulleagh and Graney. The Slieve Aughty Mountains are mainly comprised of Old Red Sandstone.

Large windfarms have recently been developed in this area - which creates a locally distinctive appearance and character.

The elevation of these landscapes offers many panoramic views across the plains to the north and east. This scenery coupled with the low levels of settlement and extensive areas of semi-natural landcover creates conditions that are increasingly valued for tourism and recreation.

Slieve Aughty	Landscape Units	Slieve Aughty (10a)
	Protected Views	None
	Scenic Routes	Slieve Aughty Scenic Route



## Glossary of Terms

**Amenity** – a view that is appreciated for its beauty or a place that is used for enjoyment and recreation, such as a beach or a picnic area.

**Blanket Bog** – an extensive flat or gently sloping area of peat. They can be classed as Atlantic Blanket Bog or Mountain Blanket Bog.

**Callows** - seasonally flooded grassland found on low-lying river floodplains.

**Commonage** – land that is owned by more than one person – this often occurs in uplands and bogs.

**CORINE** –an EU computerised classification mapping system that shows landcover in a standardised format [abbreviation for Coordination of Information on the Environment Land Cover].

**Dark Sky** - a place where the darkness of the night sky is relatively free of interference from artificial light, allowing for clear views of stars and the Milky Way on cloudless nights.

**Distinctiveness** – the ability of a place to have an appearance or character which is recognisably different from others.

**Drumlin** - a small hill, typically one of a group, formed by past glacial action.

**Environs** – an area that surrounds a specific place, usually having visibility of that place i.e. the environs of the lake, the environs of the town.

**European Landscape Convention** - an agreement aimed at the protection, management and planning of all landscapes as well as raising awareness of the value of a living landscape.

**Field pattern** – the layout, size, regularity and boundary of fields.

**Iconic** – an example that is representative of the best of a larger group i.e. Paul Henry's iconic painting of the Wests' cottages, lakes and mountains.

**Infrastructure** - the basic systems and services that a place needs in order to function properly, these typically include roads, railways as well as water and energy services.

**Islet** – a very small island.

**Karst Landscape** – an area where the dissolving of the limestone bedrock has created sinkholes, caves, enclosed depressions, disappearing streams, springs and sinkholes. In some places – such as the Burren – large areas of the eroded limestone is exposed on the surface – where it is referred to as 'limestone pavement'.

**Lacustrine** – related to lakes.

**Landcover** – material visible on the surface of the earth – it can include vegetation, both planted and natural, as well as rock, bog, woods, sand or artificial surfaces.

**Landscape** – a place as perceived by people, which evolves through time as a result of being acted upon by natural forces and human beings.

**Landscape Character Assessment [LCA]** – a method for classifying separate places and mapping them as areas of similar appearance and character.

**Landscape Character Type** – an area of land that has an appearance that is readily recognisable as being different and distinctive from other areas. This is caused by patterns of natural factors such as topography and vegetation in combination with patterns of human uses, such as agriculture and settlement.

**Landscape Character Unit** - the smallest area of distinctive local features within a Landscape Type that can be practicably identified to assist in policy formulation.

**Landscape Complex** – areas where several distinctive (and usually separate) features are intermingled to give rise to a distinctive character e.g. a complex of bogs and small lakes.

**Landscape Enclosure** – a place that is visually cut off from surrounding areas – usually by hills – or at a smaller scale by vegetation such as woods, trees and hedges.

**Landscape Features** – visually conspicuous elements such as lakes, rivers, hills, woods or settlements that provide the separate identity for a place.

**Landscape Regions** – a broad area of land with a distinctive character on account of large-scale natural factors – such as mountains, plains, coasts etc.

**Landscape Significance** – places that are widely valued on account of a value such as beauty, distinctiveness, natural features or historical association.

**Natural Beauty** – areas where natural features are evident, admired and sought out on account of exceptionally, or uniquely, distinctive and attractive characteristics.

**Panoramic** – views, usually elevated, over an exceptionally wide and distant area of land.

**Parklands** –extensive rural areas around large historic residences that are set aside for enjoyment. Some originated as 13<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Norman deer-parks, while most were designed landscape dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Photomontage** – a computer-generated image of a new development that is super-imposed on a photograph of the existing view. These are used for Visual Impact Assessment.

**Protected View** – an official objective to avoid or minimise adverse change to the appearance of the landscape as seen from a specified location.

**Prospect** – the appearance of a large extent of the landscape from a specific location.

**Raised Bog** – lowland bogs with growth concentrated in the centre, resulting in a shallow dome form.

**Robust Landscapes** – landscapes with a high capacity to accommodate development without a noticeable change of appearance or character.

**Sea Lough** – a body of tidal sea water that is largely surrounded by land.

**Sensitive Landscapes** - landscapes with a low capacity to accommodate development without a noticeable change of appearance or character.

**Scenery** – landscape that is valued for its appearance.

**Scenic Route** – a road or trail through a landscape that is valued for its appearance.

**Scenic View** – a recognised location from where landscape features are evident and admired on account of exceptionally attractive characteristics.

**Seascape** – the appearance of marine waters – including adjoining terrestrial areas.

**Urban Fabric** – built-up areas of settlements.

**Turlough** – a lake, usually in limestone areas, that fills for only part of the year.

**Unenclosed** – landscapes that have extensive views on account of low or absent field boundaries.

**Visibility** – the capacity to readily see or notice an object or feature in a landscape.

**Visual Impact** – the degree that a new development changes the appearance or character of a landscape.

**Visual Impact Assessment** – a systematic examination of whether a new development will be visible and, if so, the degree and extent of the effect of that visibility on the appearance or character of a landscape.

**Vulnerable Landscapes** - landscapes with a very low capacity to accommodate development without a noticeable change of appearance or character of a distinctive characteristic.

**Watershed** – an area or ridge that separates or encloses different parts of a landscape.

## Glossary of Terms

**Wetlands** – distinct areas, including marshes and bogs, that are permanently or seasonally flooded with water.

**Working Landscape** – those parts of the landscape containing most settlement and agriculture.

## Landscape Sensitivity Category Definitions

Low:	Unlikely to be adversely affected by change
High:	High sensitivity to change
Special:	Highest sensitivity to change
Iconic:	Unique landscape with high sensitivity to change

# **Galway County Council**

## **Scenic Routes and View Points**

May 2021



**Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe**  
**Galway County Council**

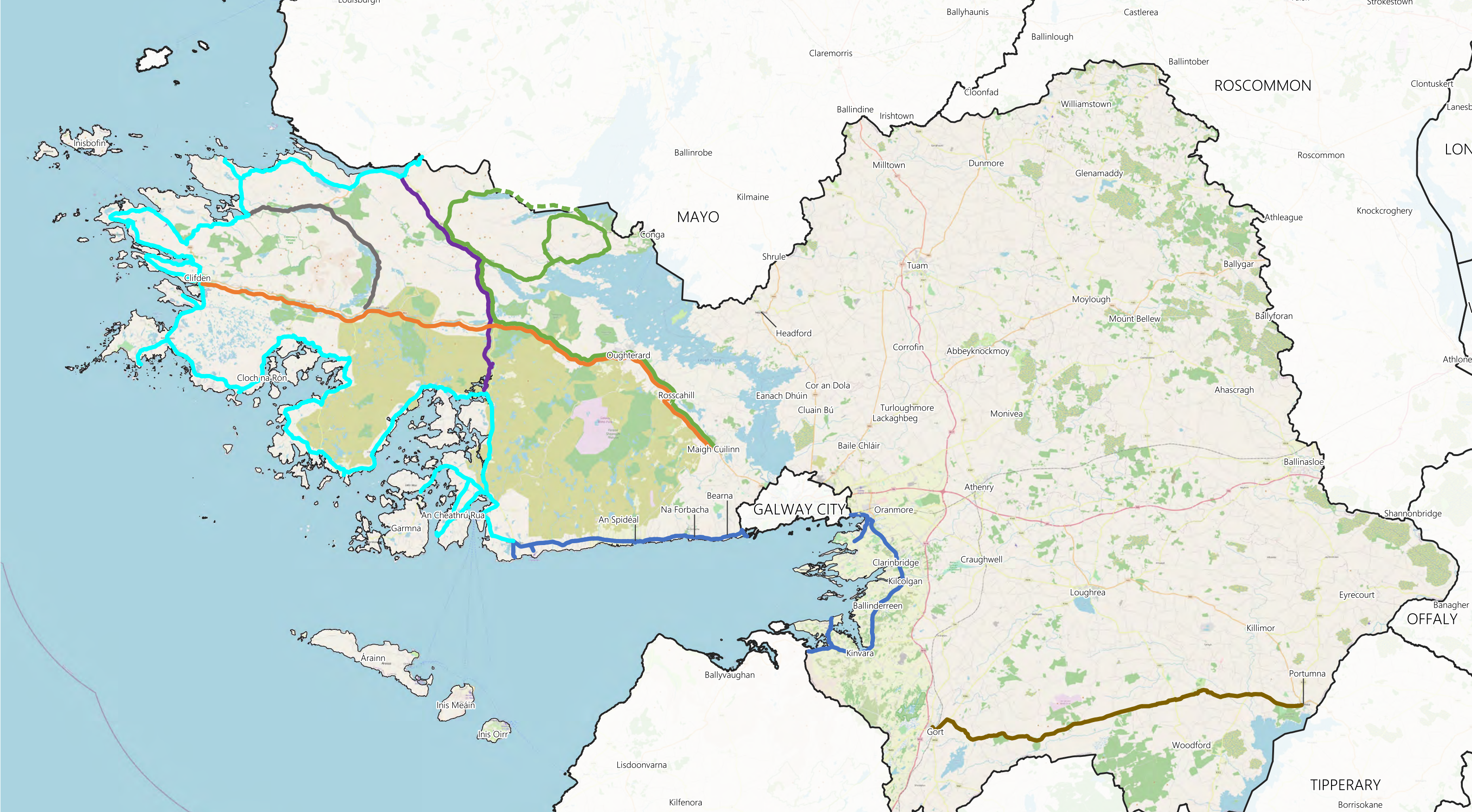


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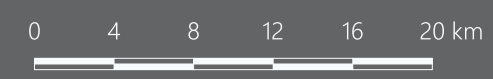
## **Viewpoint Significance Categories**

- National:** A view of a particularly identifiable landscape feature or area that is sufficiently distinctive that it is frequently used in media to represent and summarise an essential quality that is 'Irish'.
- Regional:** A view – often an elevated panorama – that encompasses a very large expanse of territory. It often includes a particularly distinctive and readily identifiable landmark. Such views are often used in media as symbols for a wider area.
- County:** A view – often a panorama – that encompasses a wider expanse of territory, or a large or prominent natural features – a hill, bay, ridge, headland or lake shore which gives a sense of a large unit of countryside that is felt to be typical of that part of the county.
- Local:** A view that encompasses a feature – natural or manmade - that is valued by the local community – especially on account of local history, events, tradition or associations.

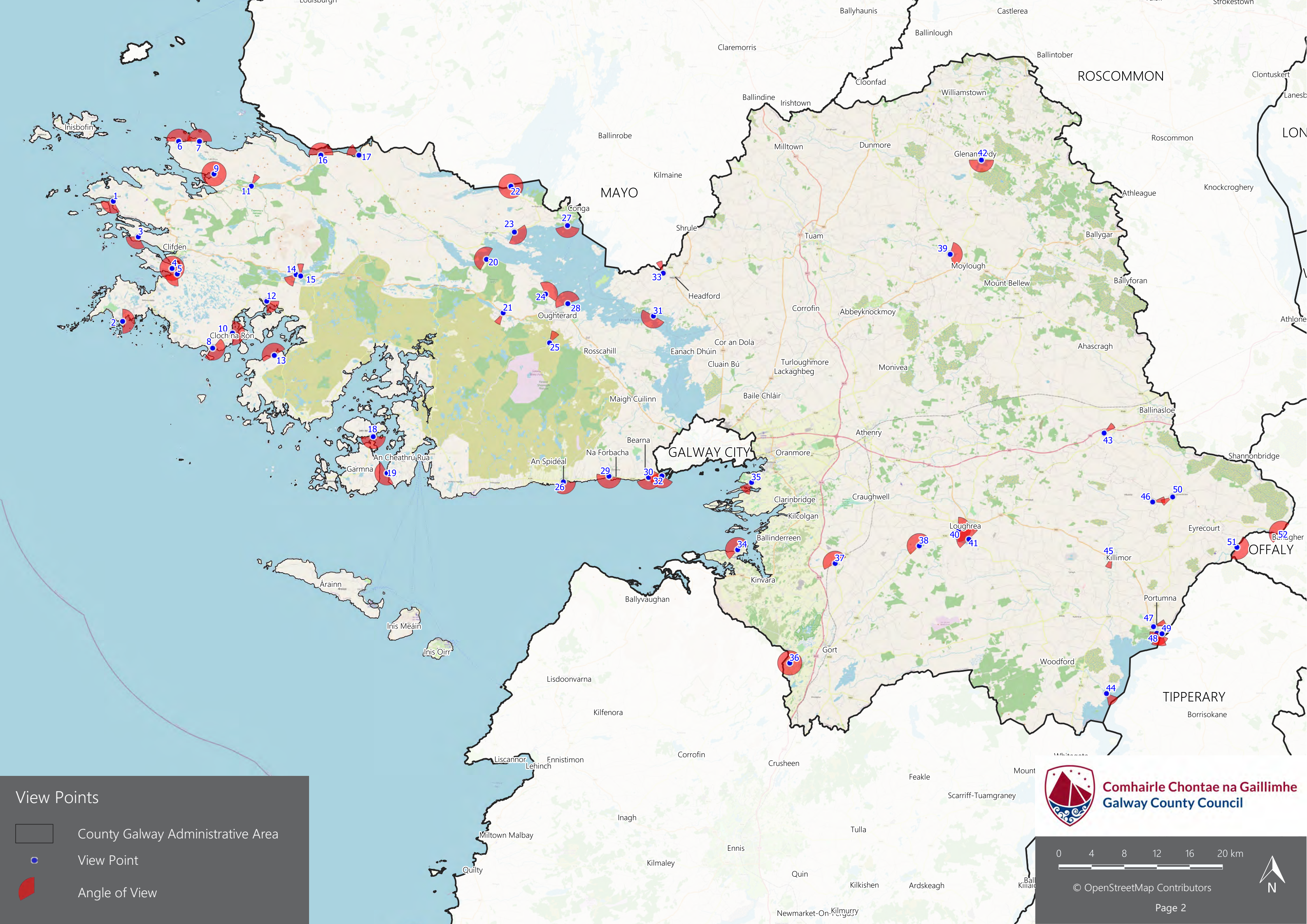


Scenic Routes

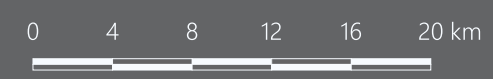
-  County Galway Administrative Area
-  Galway Bay Scenic Route
-  Galway Clifden Scenic Route
-  Lough Corrib Scenic Route
-  Lough Corrib Scenic Route - County Mayo
-  Maritime Scenic Route
-  Maum Valley Scenic Route
-  Sraith Salach Letterfrack Scenic Route
-  Slieve Aughty Scenic Route



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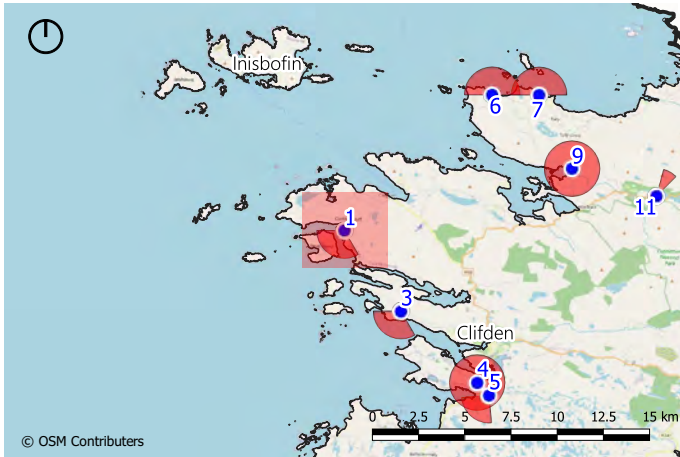
View Points  
County Galway Administrative Area  
View Point  
Angle of View



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# VIEWPOINT 1

## Omey Island



### Significance

Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the parking area.

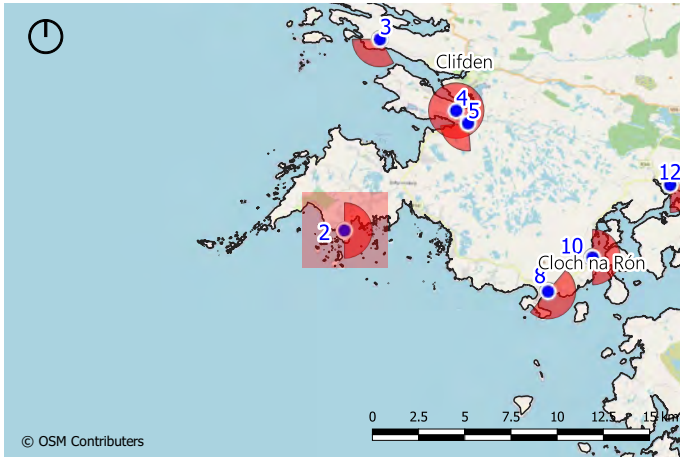
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Omey Island and the sand shore when visible.



## VIEWPOINT 2

### Bunowen Bay



### Significance

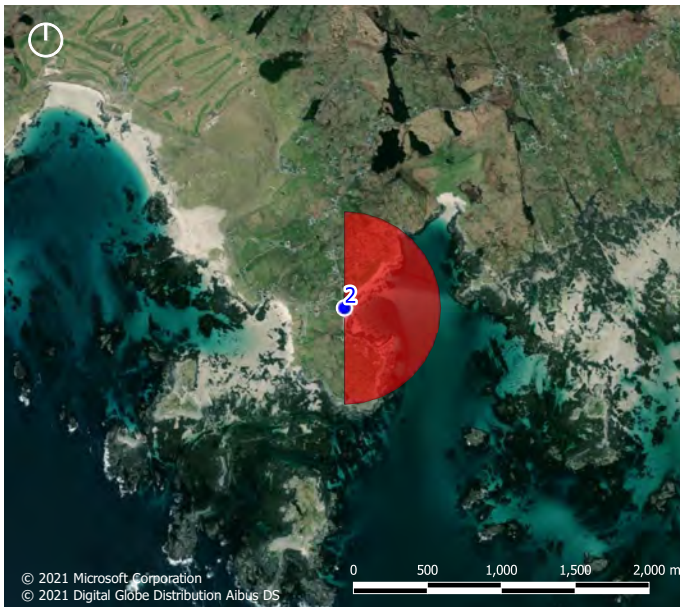
Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the carpark.

### Description of view

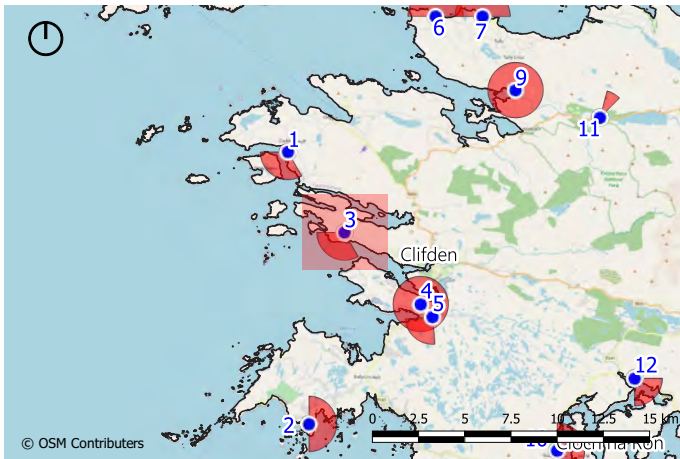
The focus of this view is the coastal waters. The Twelve Bens and Iorras Beag in the background are important features of the view.





# VIEWPOINT 3

## Sky Road



### Significance

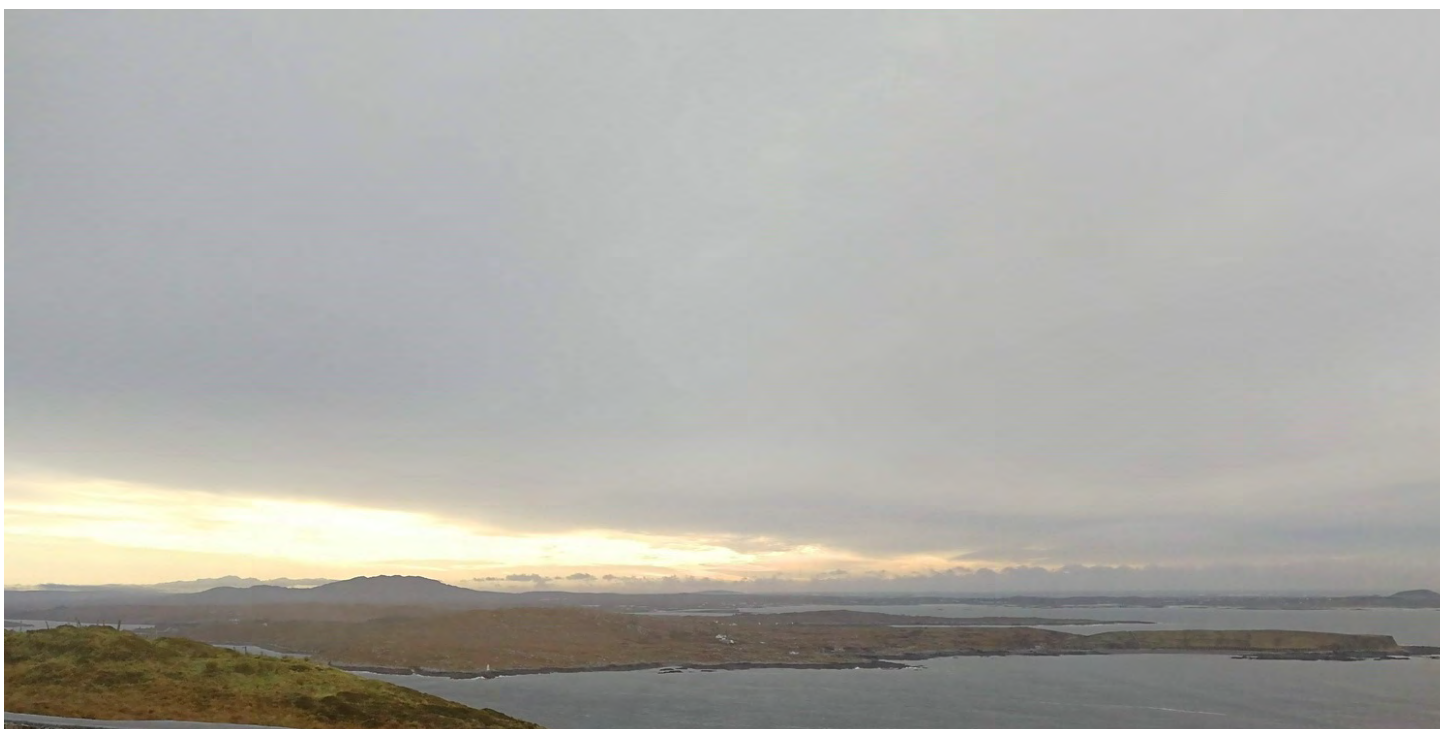
National

### Location of view

This view is from the layby and picnic area.

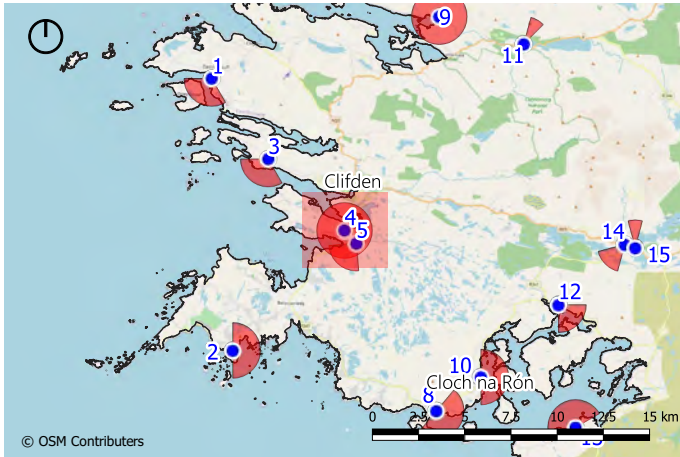
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the ocean waters, the scattered islands and the view back inland. Iorras Beag and the headlands in the southern background are important features of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 4

## Alcock and Brown Memorial



### Significance

National

### Location of view

This view is from the carpark.

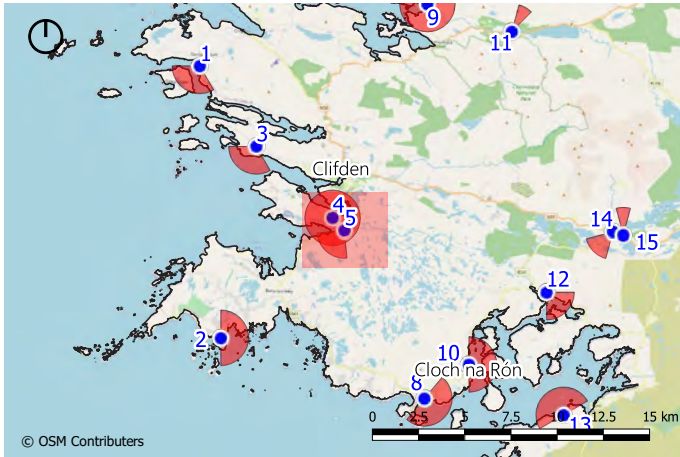
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the panoramic view of the surrounding countryside and coastal waters. The Twelve Bens and Iorras Beag in the background are important features of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 5

## Derrigimlagh Bog



### Significance

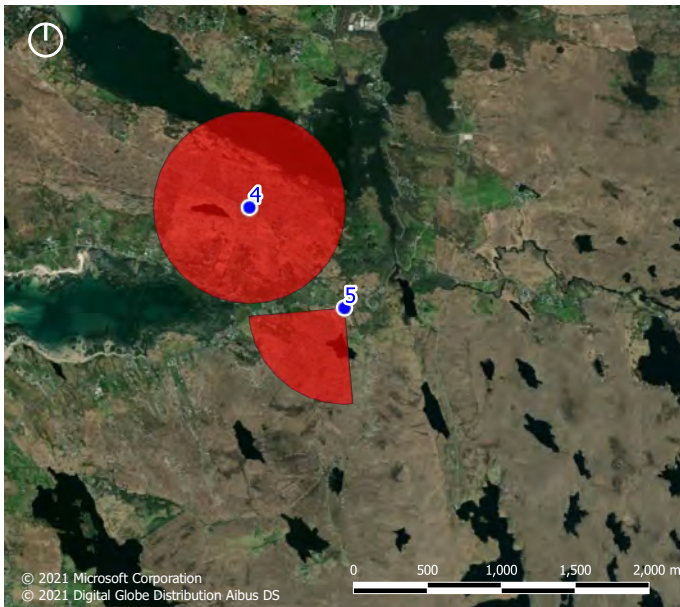
Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the carpark and information area.

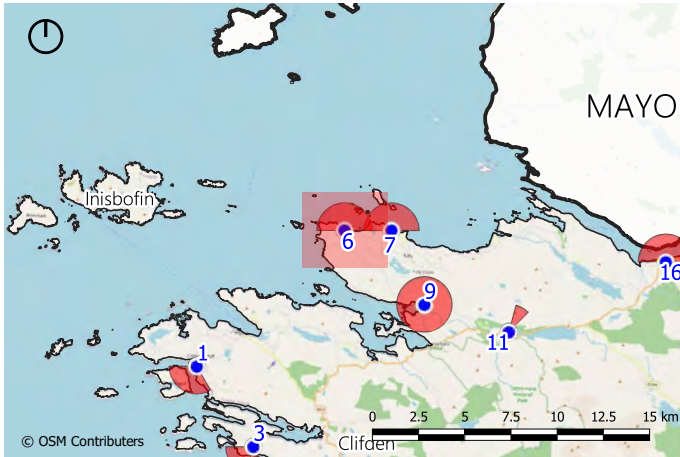
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the bog that surrounds the site.



# VIEWPOINT 6

## Renvyle Castle



### Significance

Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the parking and picnic area.

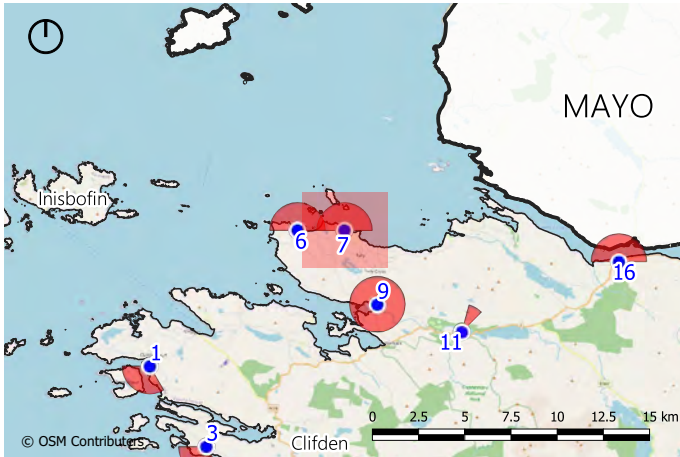
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Renvyle Castle. The headlands and mountains in the background and the coastal waters are important features of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 7

## Islands View



### Significance

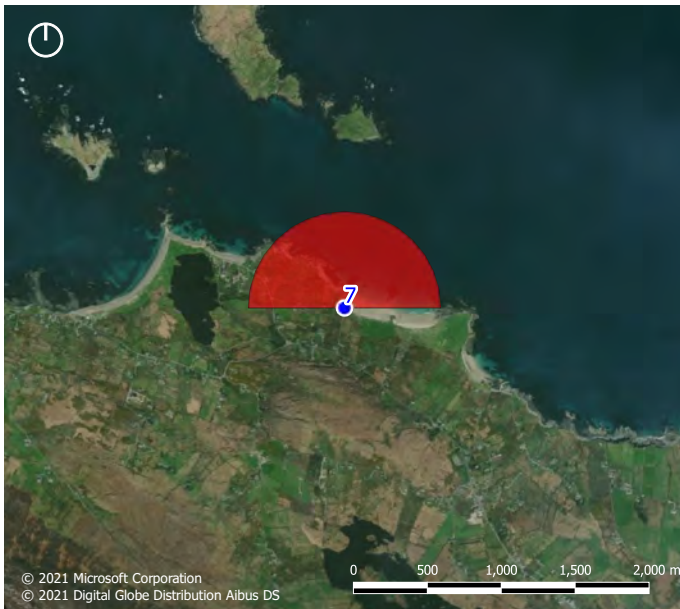
Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the beach and from the rock spit to the north.

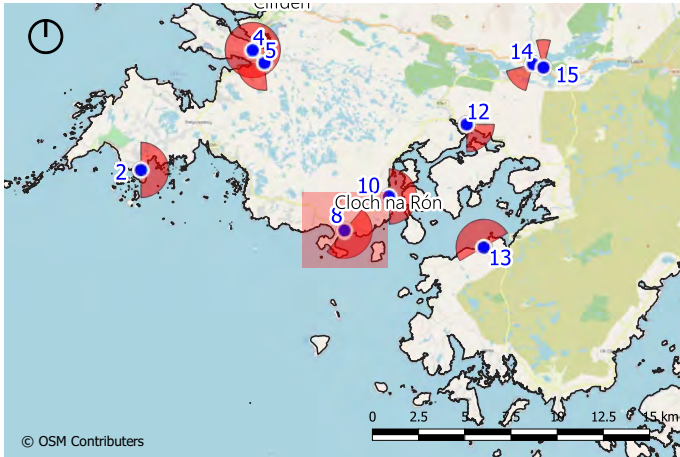
### Description of view

The focus of this view are the scattered Islands and the coastal waters. The mountains and headlands in the background are important features of the view.



## VIEWPOINT 8

### Gorteen Bay



#### Significance

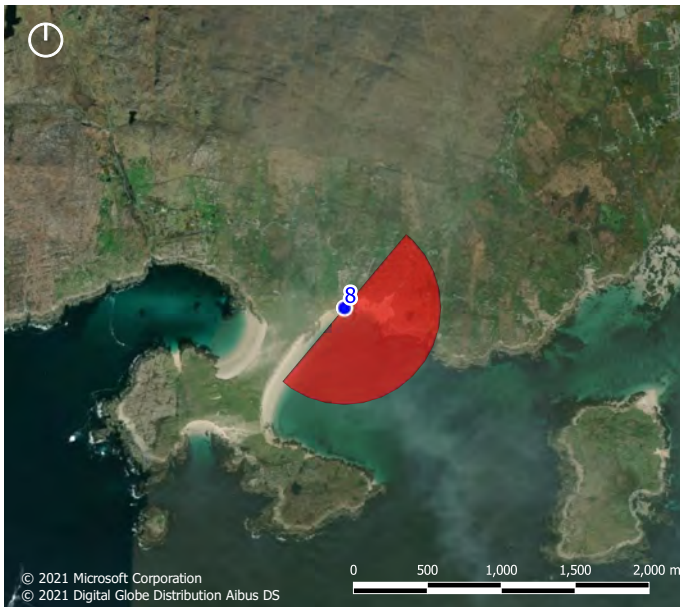
Regional

#### Location of view

This view is from the carpark.

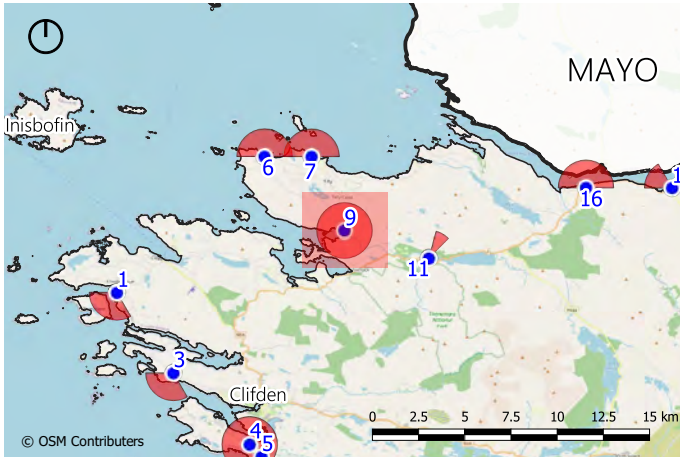
#### Description of view

The focus of this view is the coastal waters. The adjacent graveyard, Inishlackan and Cnoc Mordain are important features of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 9

## Derryinver Bridge



### Significance

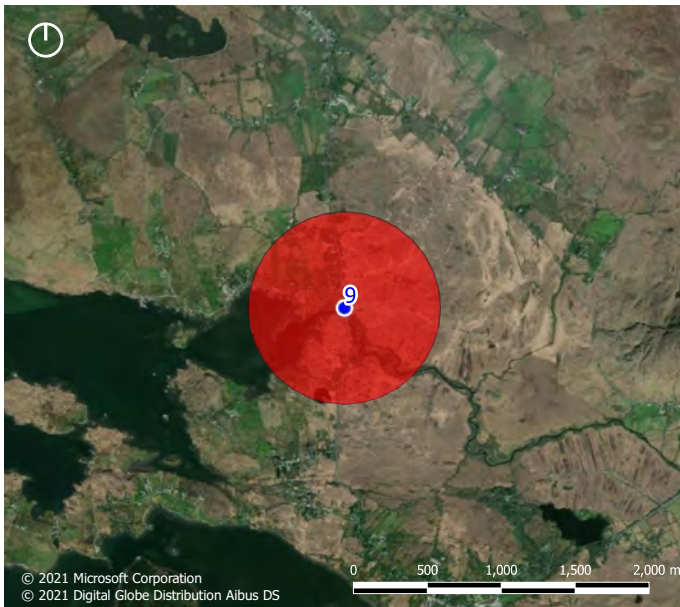
Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the parking and picnic area.

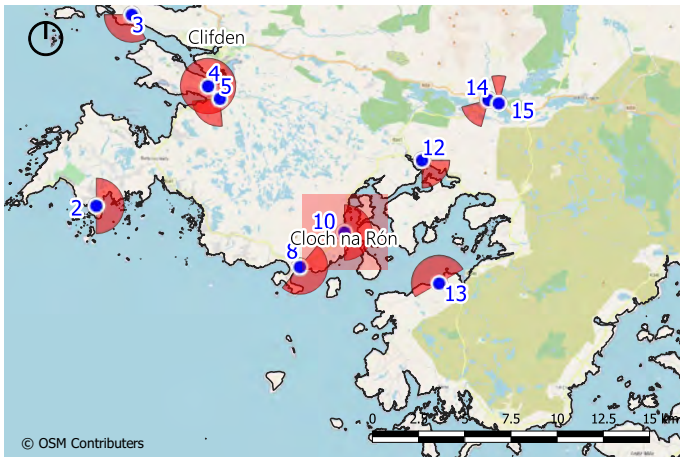
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Derryinver Bridge and the transitional waters. The surrounding mountains in the background are an important feature of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 10

## Cloch na Rón



### Significance

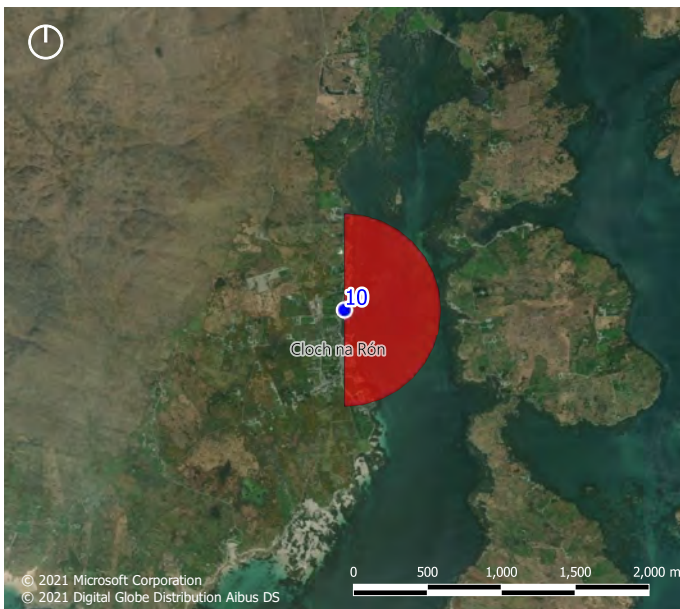
Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the pier.

### Description of view

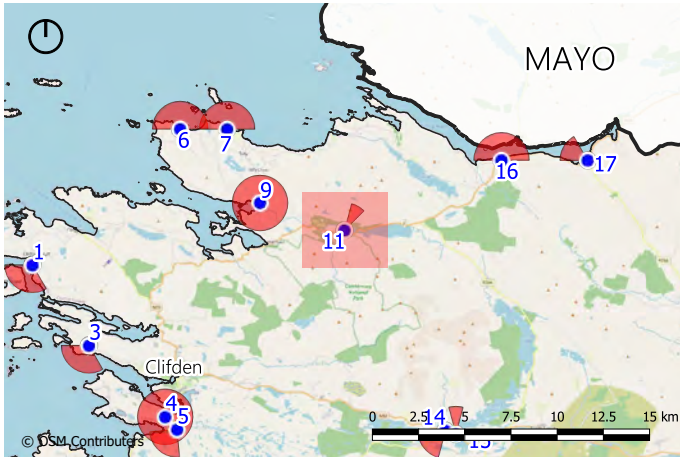
The focus of this view is both Cloch na Rón village and Cloch na Rón bay. The distant shores, Twelve Bens and Cashel hill are all important features of the view.





# VIEWPOINT 11

## Kylemore Abbey



### Significance

National

### Location of view

This view is from the footpath in front of the carpark.

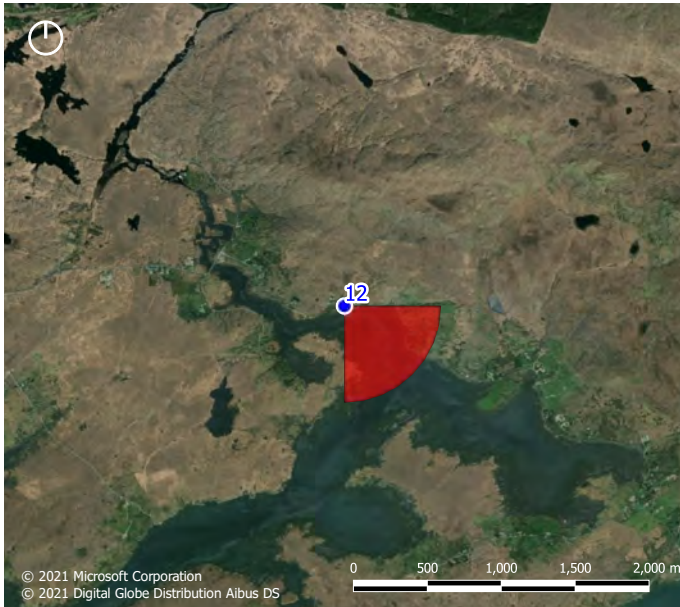
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Kylemore Abbey, Kylemore Lough and the wooded hillside.



# VIEWPOINT 12

## Coonisle Quay



### Significance

Regional

### Location of view

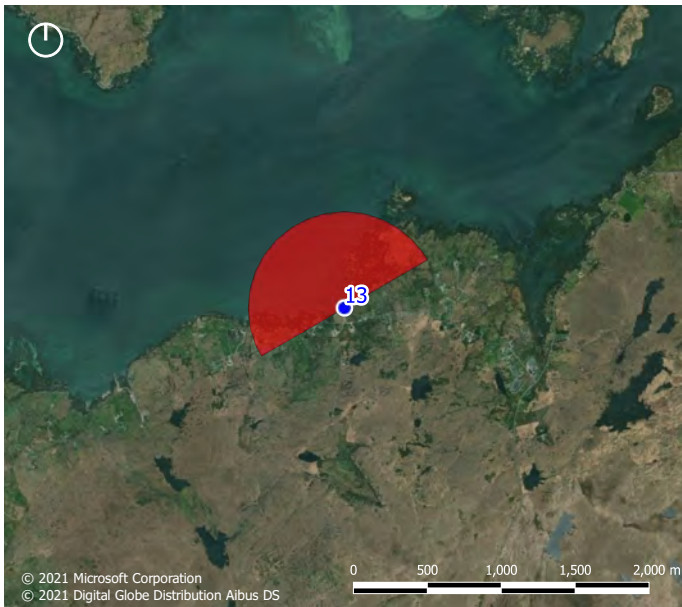
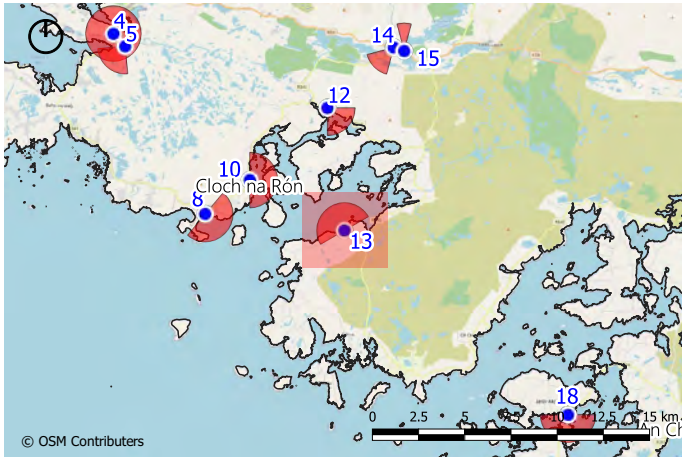
This view is from the layby and picnic area.

### Description of view

The focus of this view is the coastal waters. The hills and shoreside fields are an important feature of the view.

# VIEWPOINT 13

## Glynsce Pier



### Significance

Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the pier.

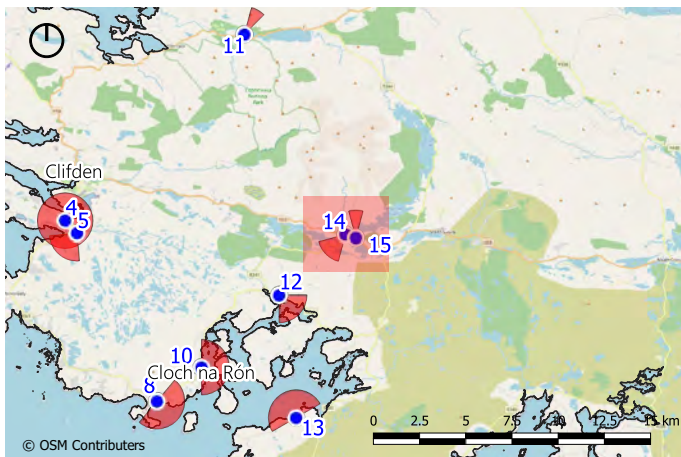
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the coastal waters. Cashel Hill and Iorras Beag in the background are important features of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 14

## Droichead na Canálach



### Significance

Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the carpark and picnic area.

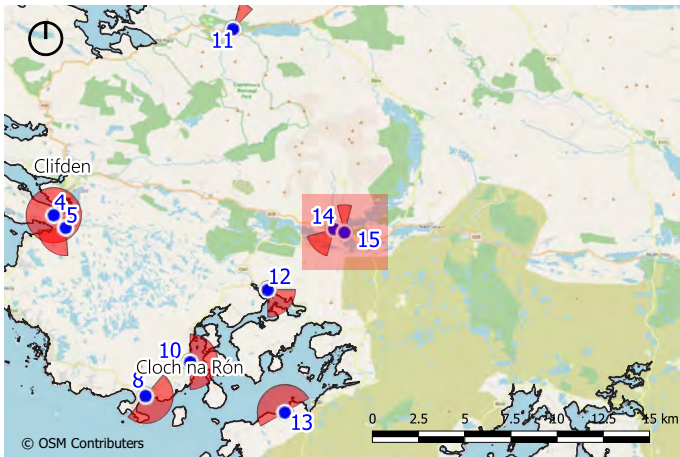
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the channel between Derryclare Lough and Ballynahinch Lough. The woods to the southwest are an important feature of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 15

## Twelve Pins



### Significance

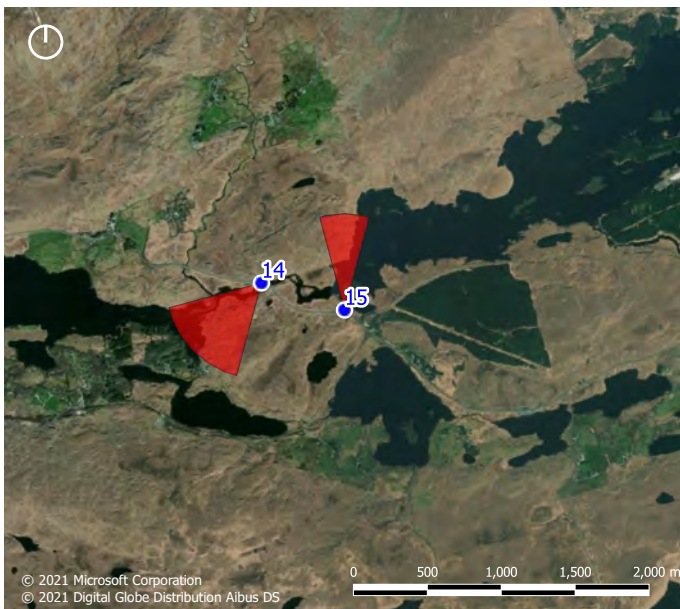
National

### Location of view

This view is from the layby.

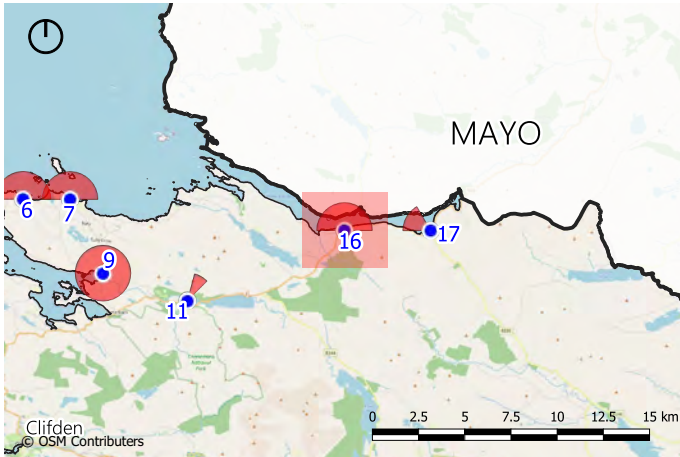
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the wooded island as the south end of Derryclare Lough. The bog and Twelve Bens in the background are important features of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 16

## Killary Harbour



### Significance

National

### Location of view

This view is from the layby/parking area.

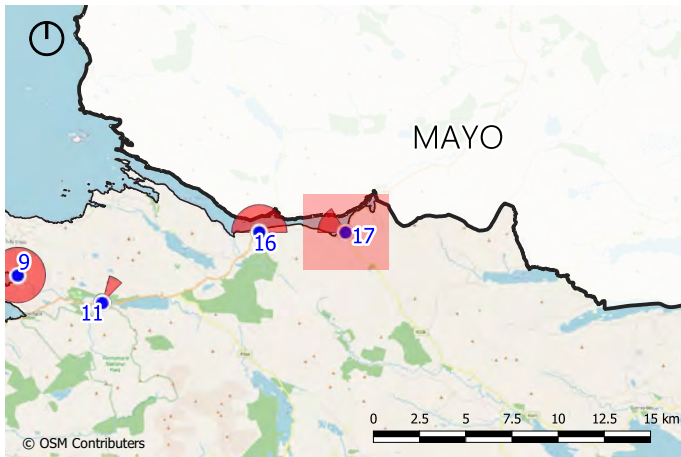
### Description of view

The focus of this view are the mountains directly north and the valley and its water.



# VIEWPOINT 17

Leenane



## Significance

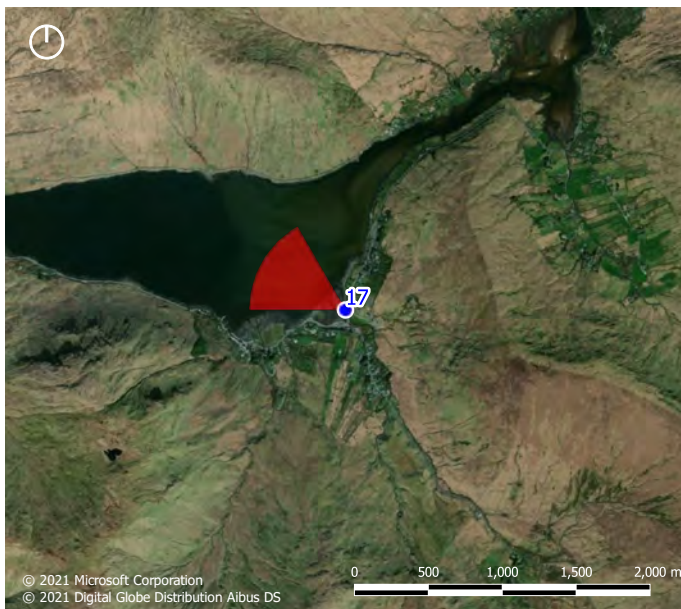
Regional

## Location of view

This view is from Leenane's carparks.

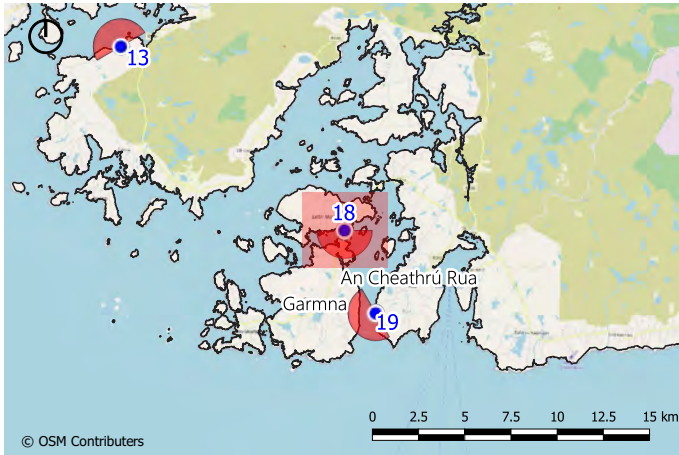
## Description of view

The focus of this view are the mountains that wall the valley and the coastal water.



## VIEWPOINT 18

Droichead Charraig an Logáin, Leitir Móir



### Significance

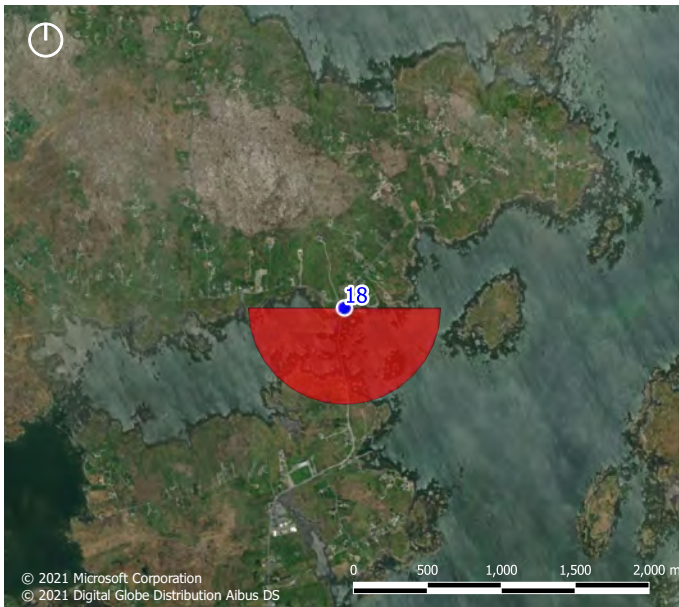
County

### Location of view

This view is from the carpark and picnic area on the north end of the bridge.

### Description of view

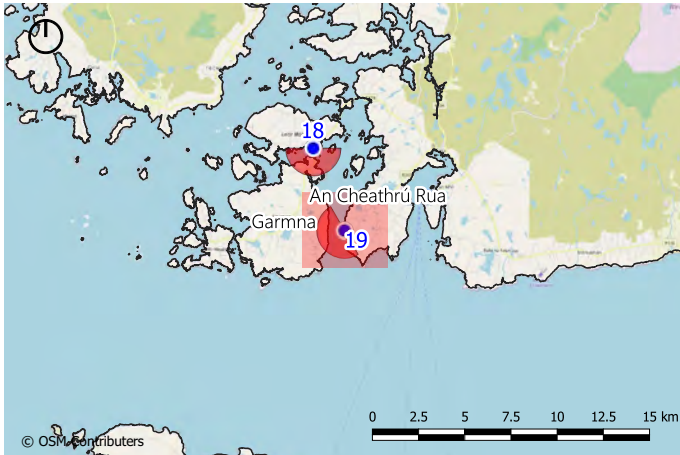
The focus of this view is the bridge, the coastal waters, the rocky shore immediately adjacent and the beginning of Garmna.





# VIEWPOINT 19

## Coral Strand



### Significance

Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the two parking areas at Coral Strand.

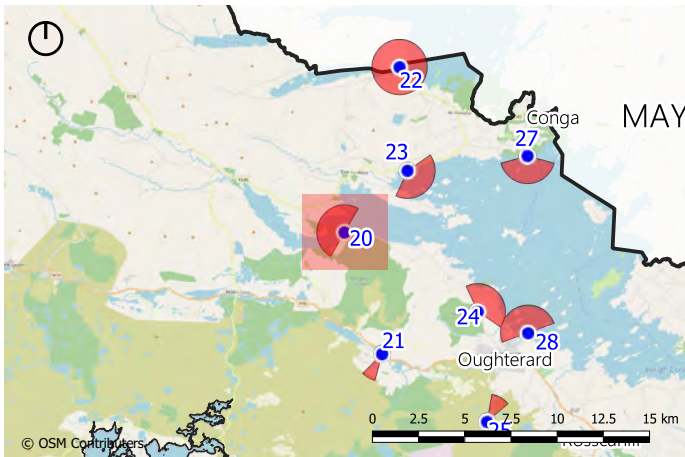
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the length of rocky coast and the coastal waters. The hills of Garmna across the water are an important feature of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 20

## North Lough Corrib



### Significance

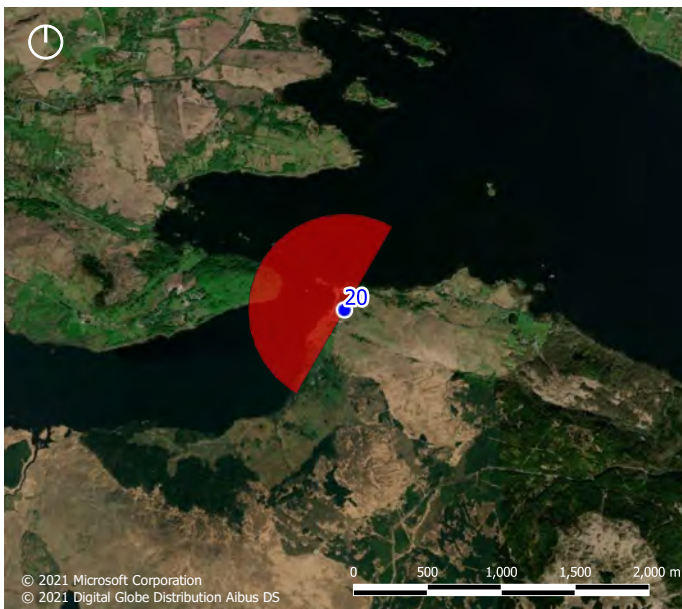
Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the carpark/layby.

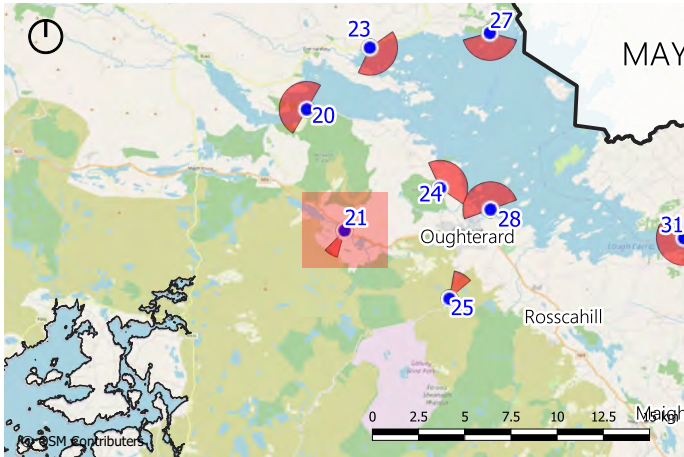
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Lough Corrib and the wooded hills to the north.



# VIEWPOINT 21

## The Quiet Man Bridge



### Significance

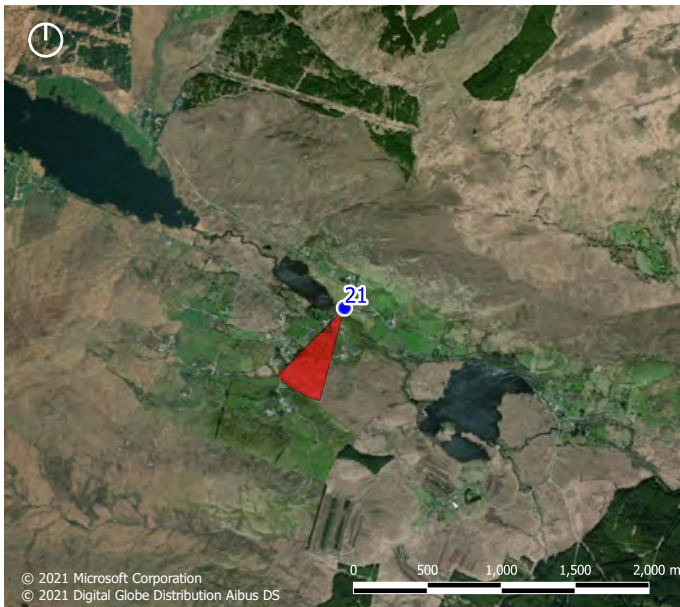
Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the parking and picnic area.

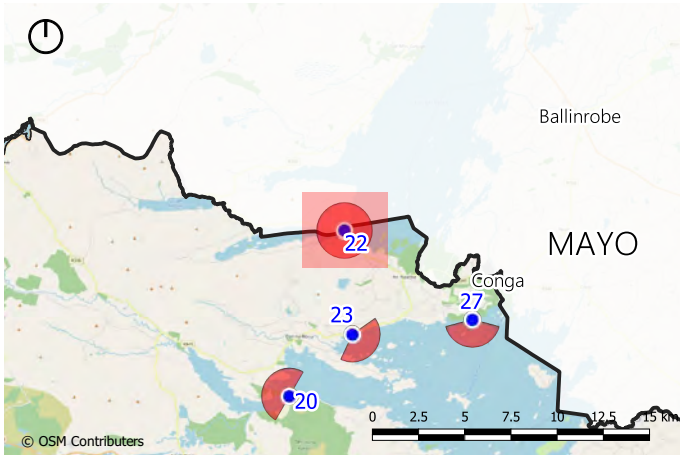
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the Quiet Man Bridge. The surrounding countryside and mountains in the background are important features of this view.



# VIEWPOINT 22

## Droichead an tSnámha



### Significance

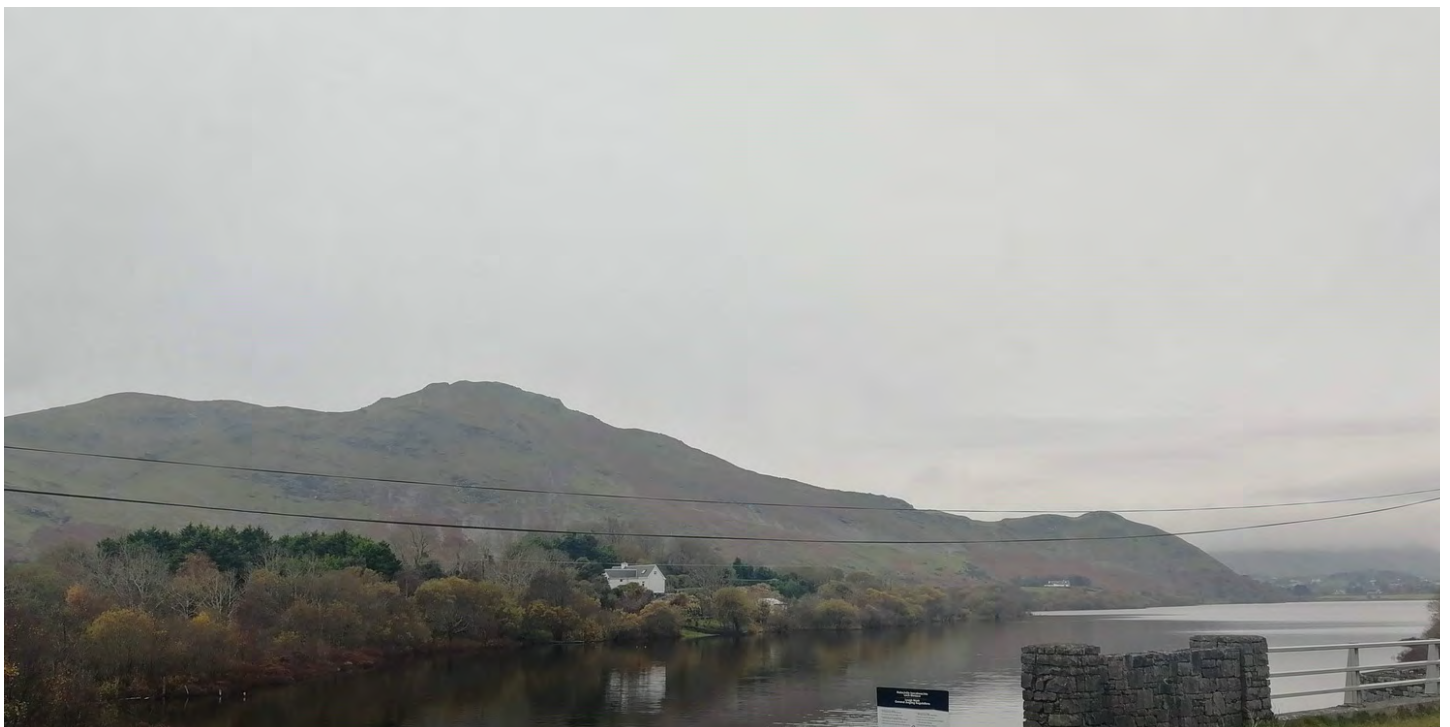
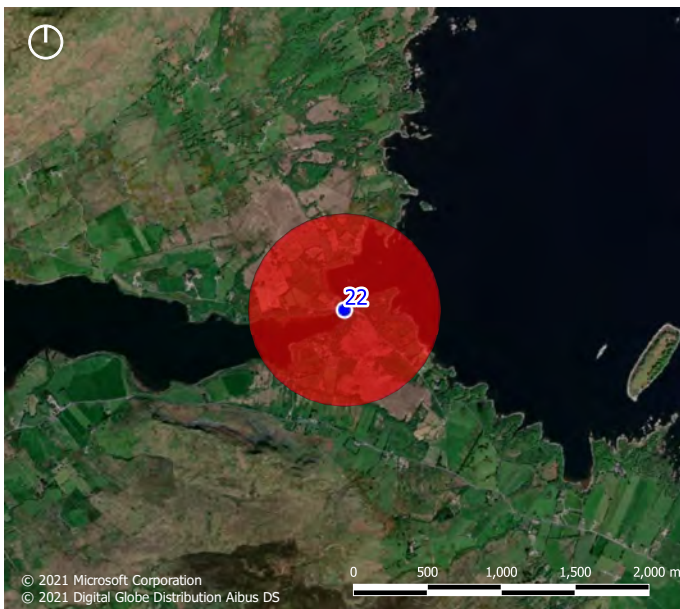
Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the parking and picnic area.

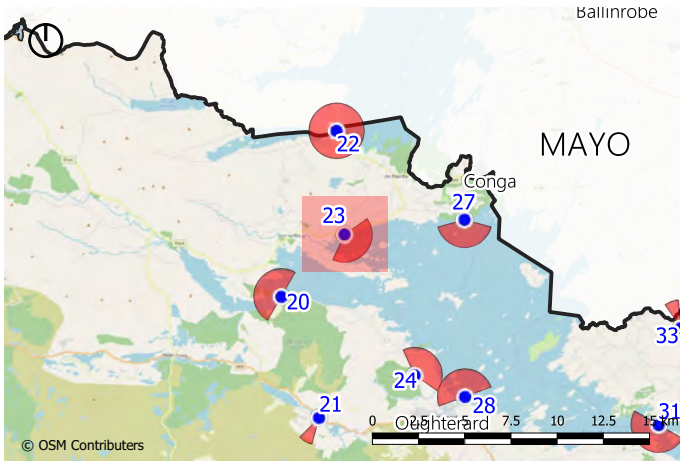
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Lough Mask to the north and west. The wooded shores and mountains in the background are important features of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 23

## An Charraig Thoir



### Significance

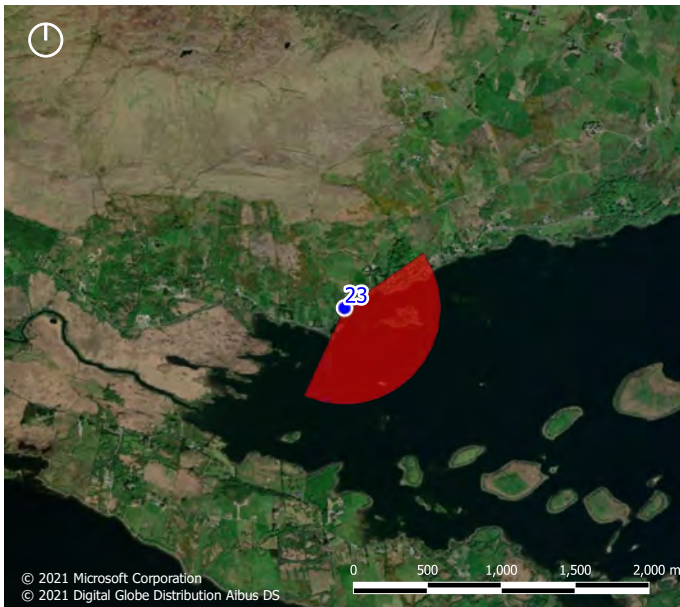
Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the parking and picnic area.

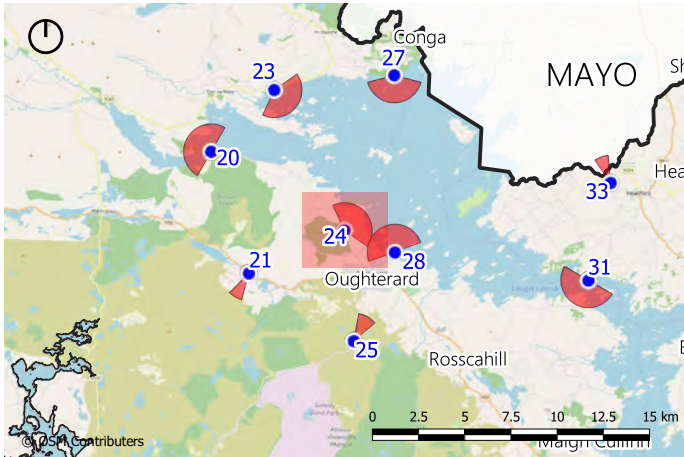
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Lough Corrib and Illaunaknick Island. The wooded shores in the background are important features of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 24

## Western Way High Road



### Significance

County

### Location of view

This view is from the parking area.

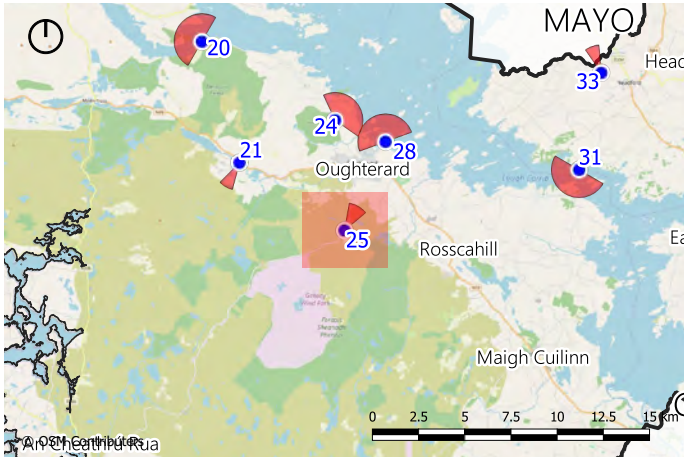
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Lough Corrib. The bog field and wooded shore leading down to Lough Corrib are important features of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 25

## Views of Islands on Lough Corrib



### Significance

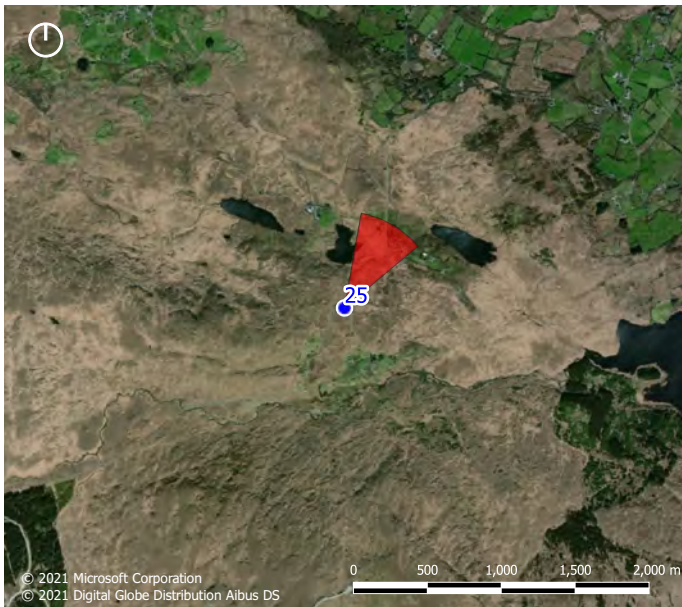
County

### Location of view

This view is from a small grassy layby at the junction of three local road.

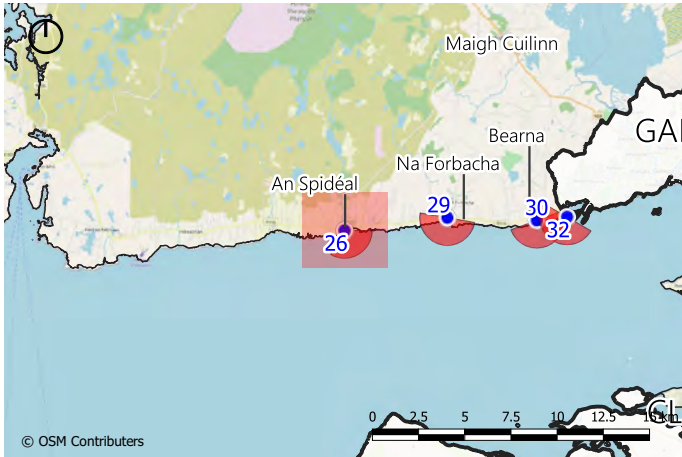
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Lough Corrib and its islands.



# VIEWPOINT 26

## Spidéal Coast



### Significance

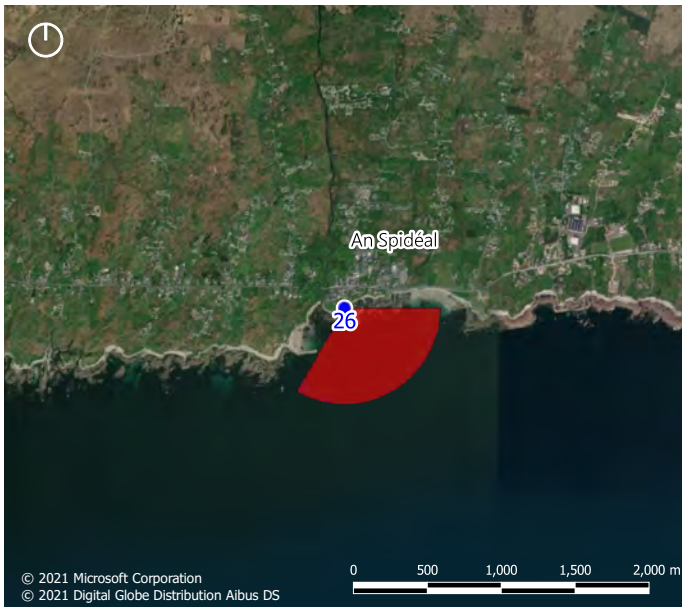
Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the parking by the pier and from along the pier itself.

### Description of view

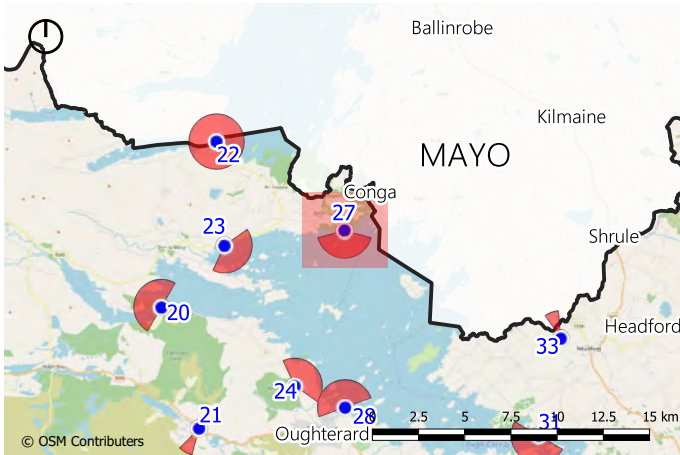
The focus of this view is the sea that stretches out from the shore, and the visible shore to the east and west of the viewing point. The north coast of Clare is also an important feature of the view.





# VIEWPOINT 27

## Ard na Goaithe



### Significance

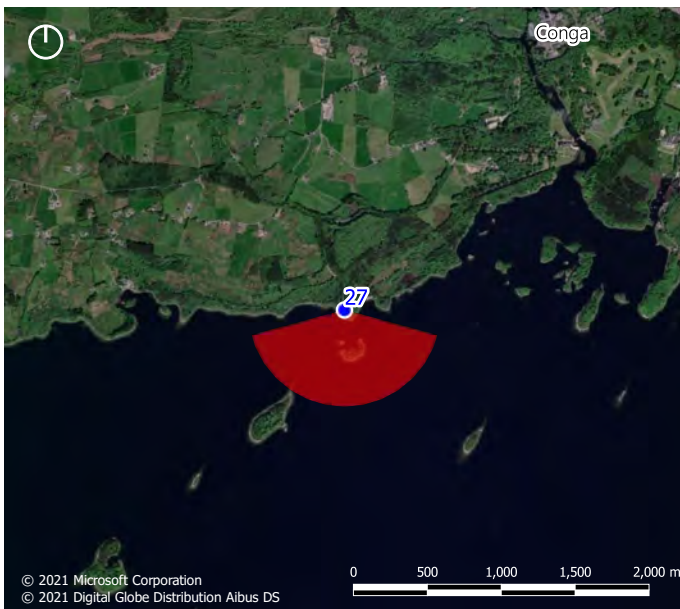
Regional

### Location of view

The view is from the start of the forest trail walk.

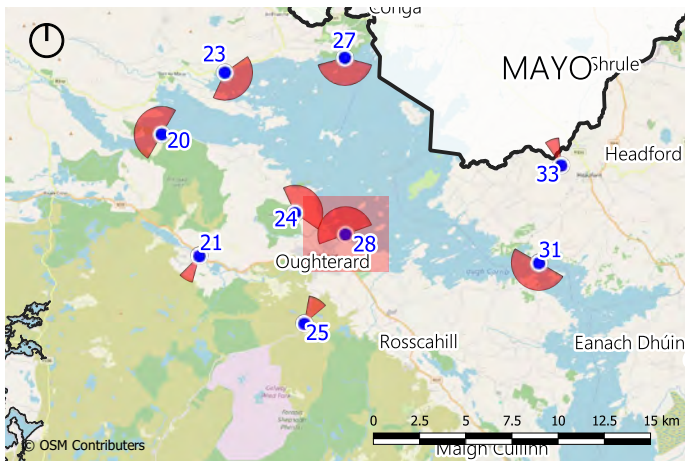
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Lough Corrib and Scolbillaun. The wooded shores in the background are important features of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 28

## Oughterard Pier



### Significance

County

### Location of view

This view is from the pier.

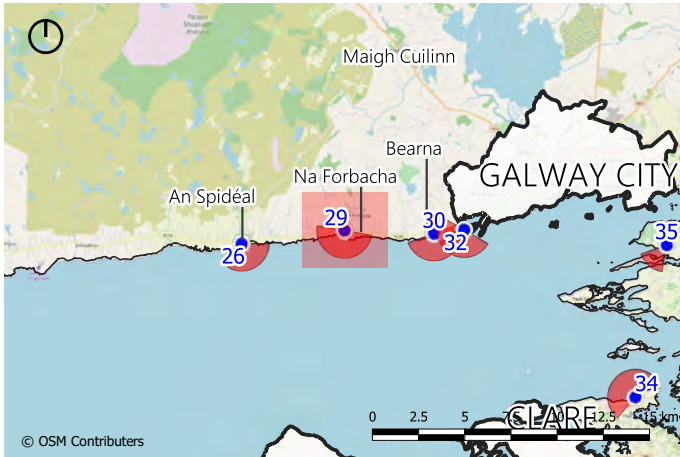
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Lough Corrib. The wooded shores and islands in the background are an important feature of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 29

View of North Clare coast



## Significance

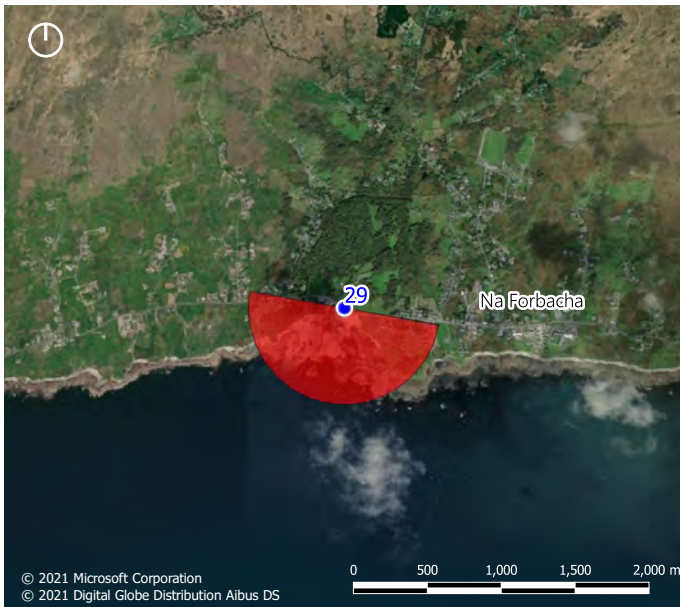
County

## Location of view

This view is from the parking by the beach.

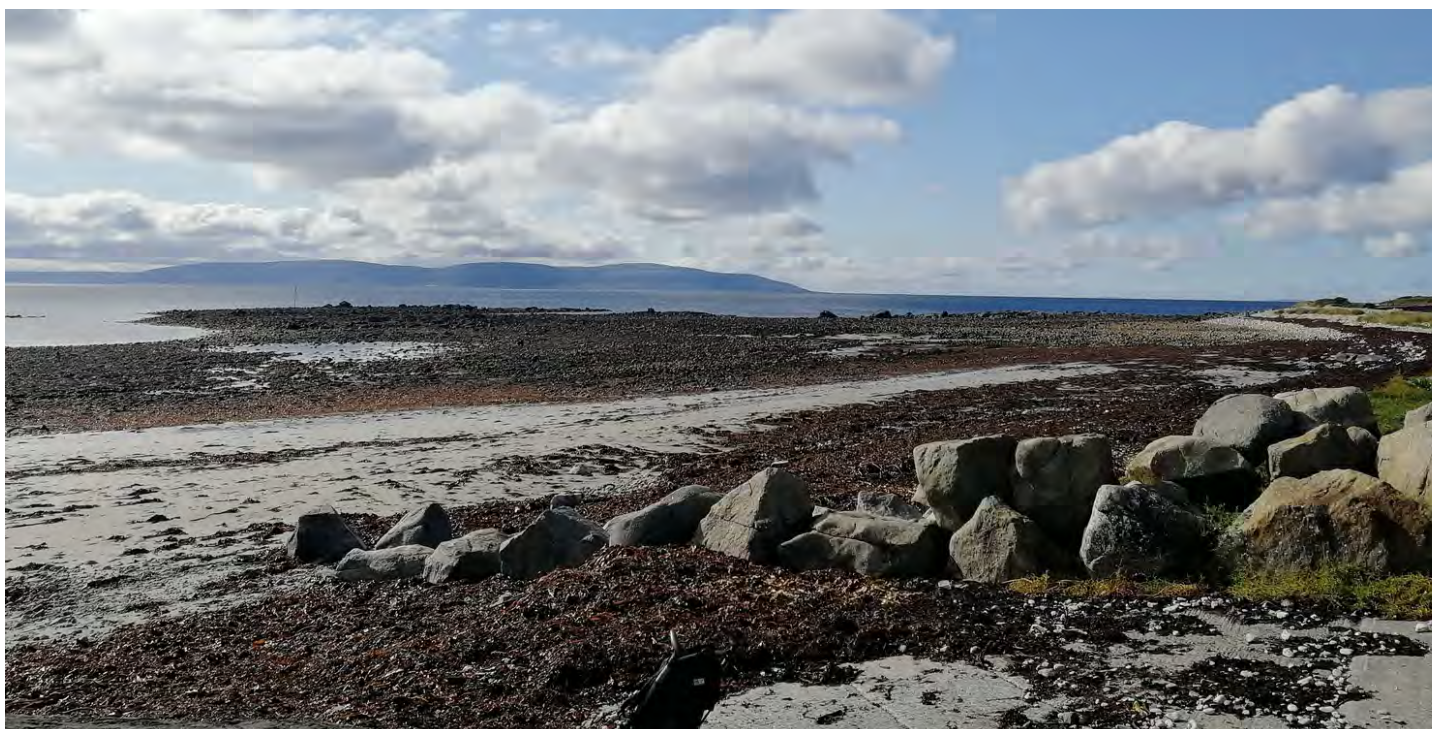
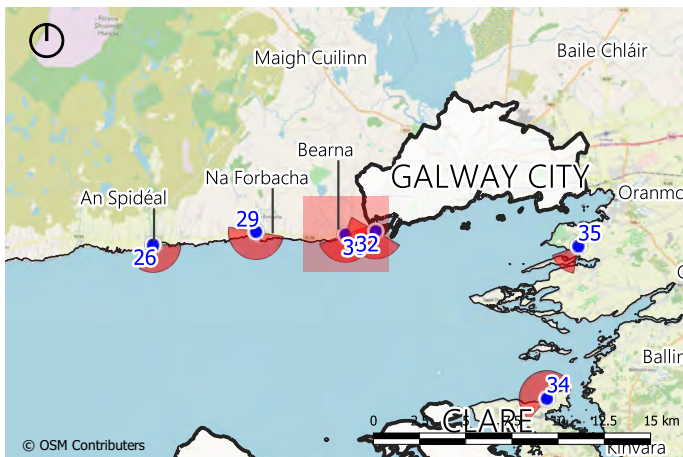
## Description of view

The focus of this view is the north coast of Clare.



## VIEWPOINT 30

### View of the sea from Bearna



### Significance

County

### Location of view

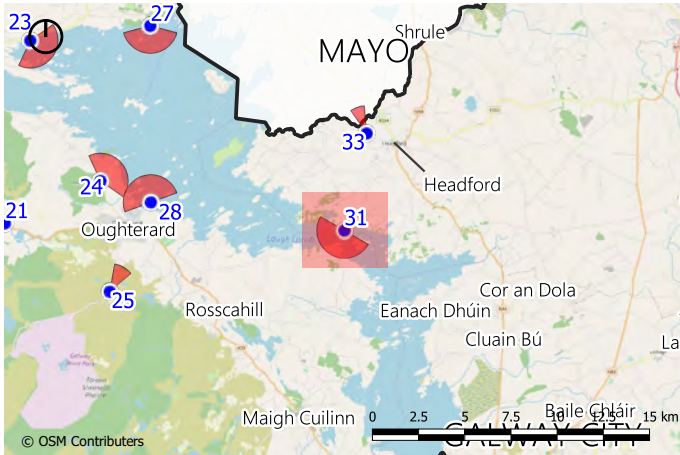
This view is from the parking by the pier and from along the pier itself.

### Description of view

The focus of this view is the sea that stretches out from the shore, and the visible shore to the east and west of the viewing point. The north coast of Clare is also an important feature of the view.

# VIEWPOINT 31

## Kilbeg Peir



### Significance

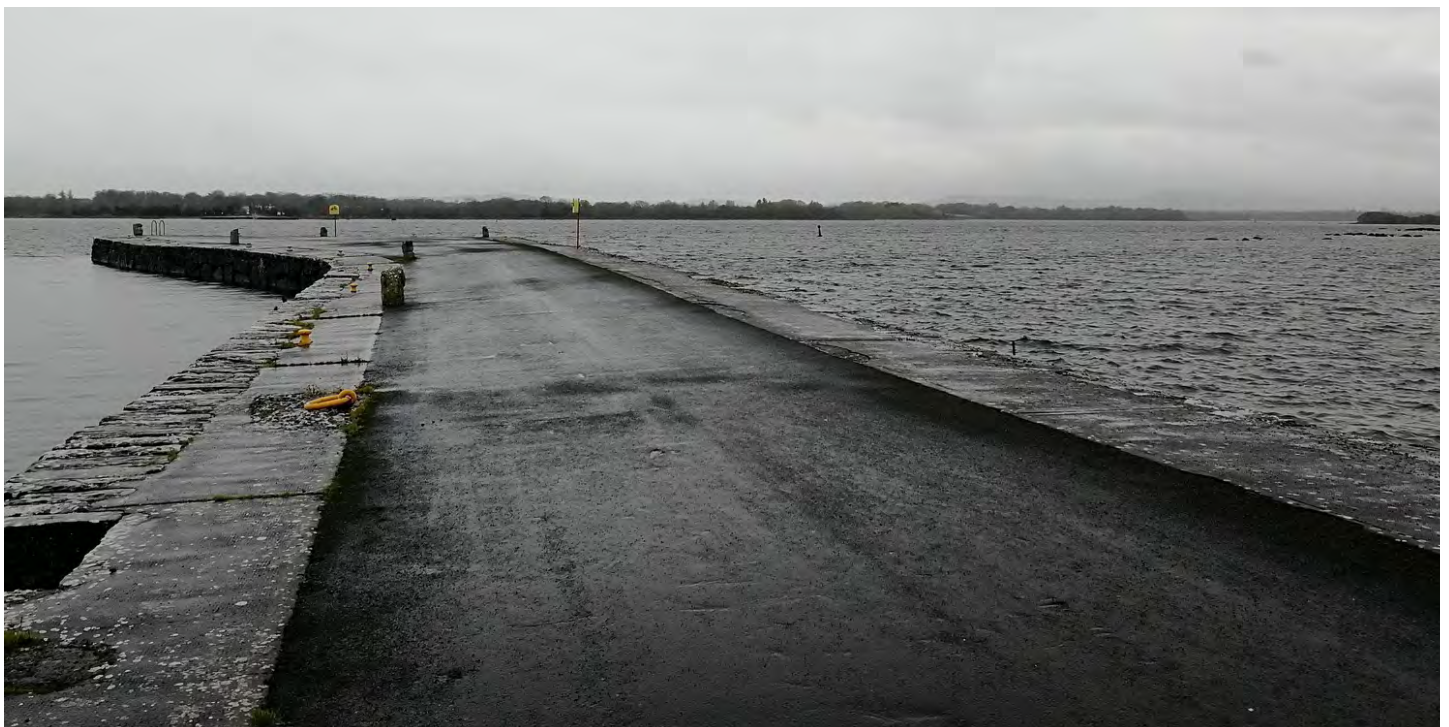
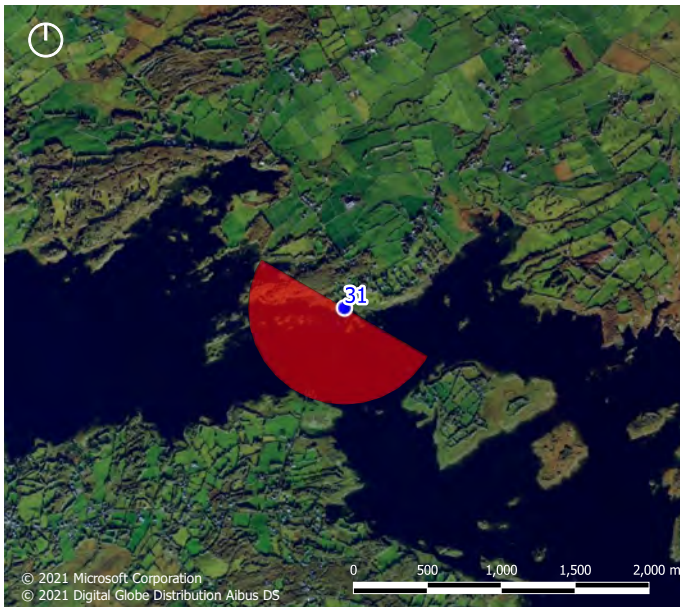
County

### Location of view

This view is from Kilbeg Peir and parking area.

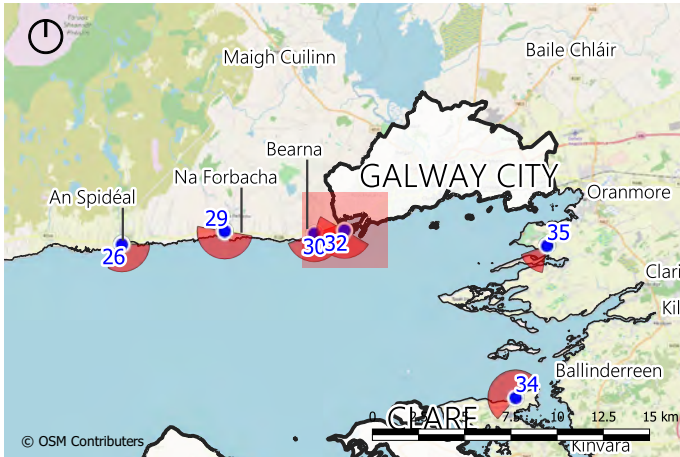
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Lough Corrib. The adjacent reedy shore and distant wooded shores that form the background are important features of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 32

## Silver Strand



### Significance

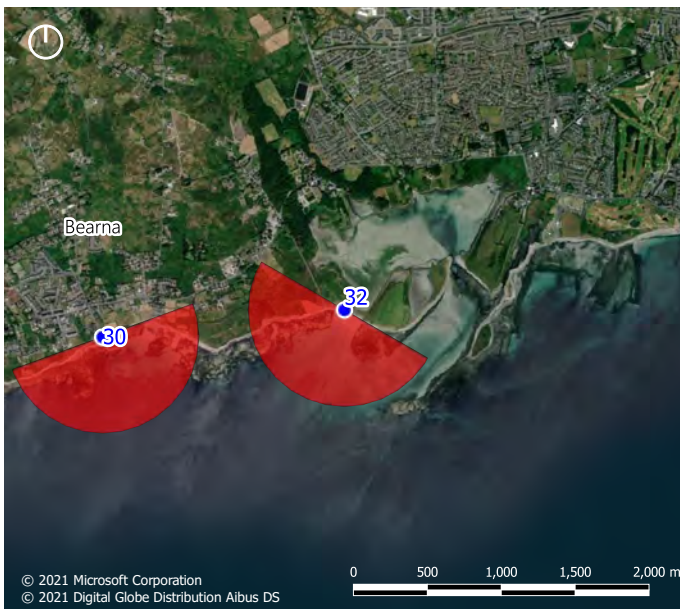
Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the beach and parking area.

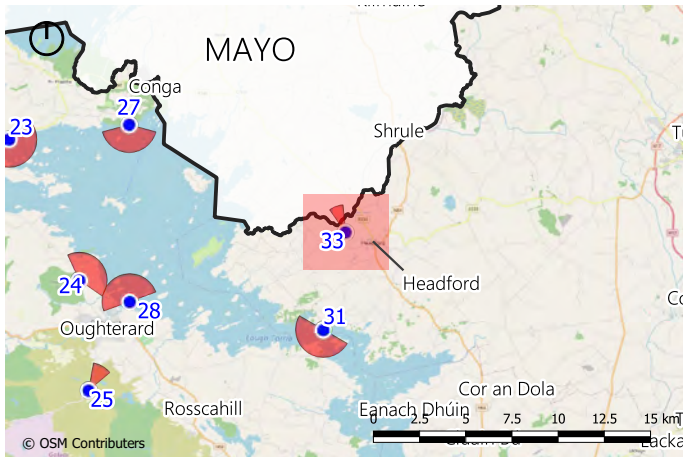
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the coastal waters. The hills of Clare in the background are an important feature of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 33

## Friary of Ross



### Significance

County

### Location of view

This view is from the road leading to the Friary ruins.

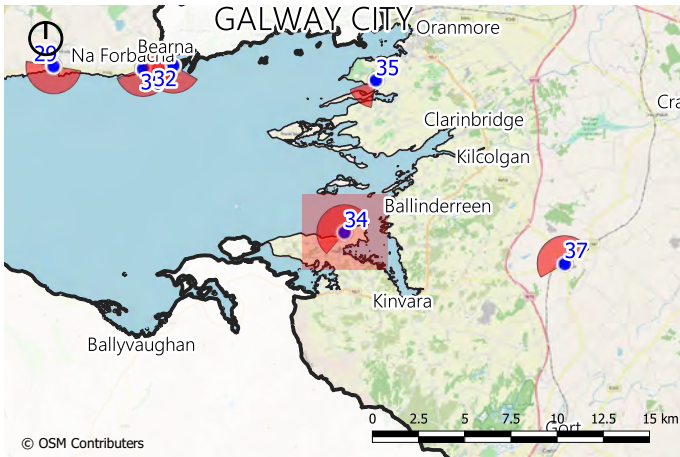
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the Ross Friary ruins through the trees as the road approaches the site. The turlough in the background is an important feature (when present).



# VIEWPOINT 34

## Traught Beach



### Significance

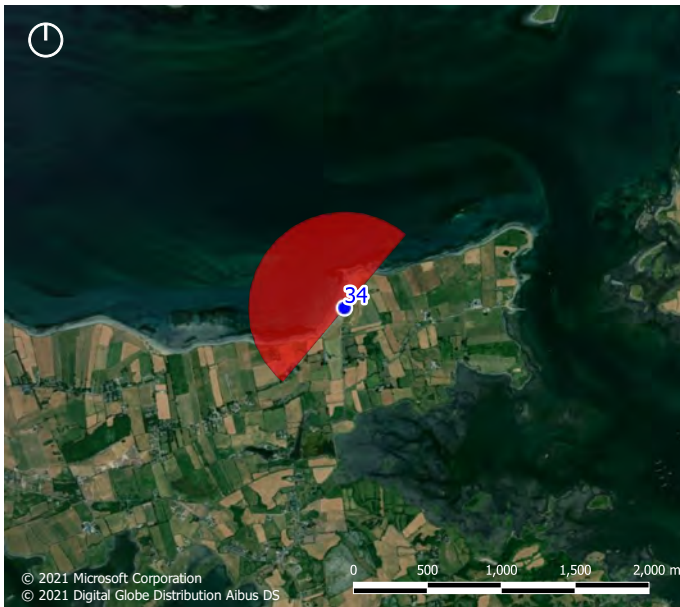
Regional

### Location of view

This view is from the beach and parking area.

### Description of view

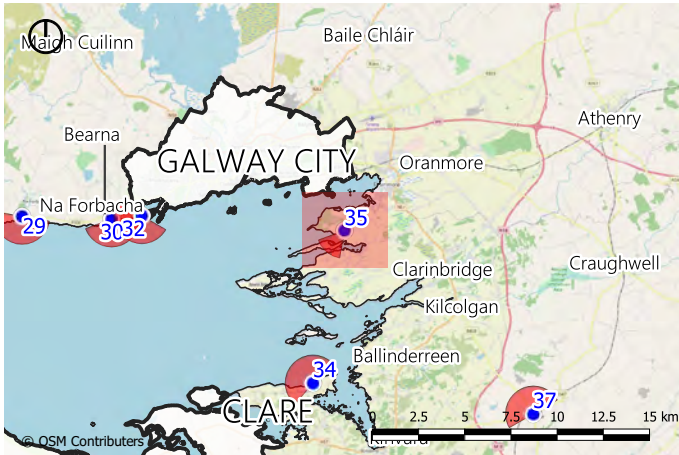
The focus of this view is the coastal waters. The Burren hills to the south and shores of Galway Bay to the north are important features of the view.





# VIEWPOINT 35

## Rinville



### Significance

Regional

### Location of view

This view is from two points, The Rinville Park parking and picnic area and the marina.

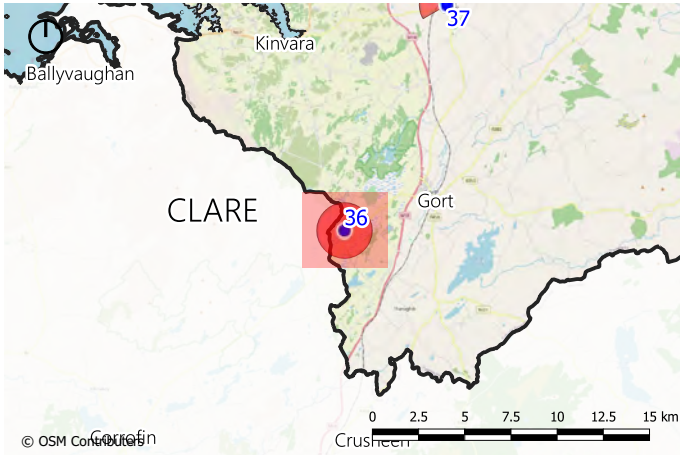
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the enclosed marine waters and the view out over Galway Bay from the marina. The shore of Cregcarragh and castle ruin are important features of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 36

## Cill Mac Dhuach Ecclesiastical Complex



### Significance

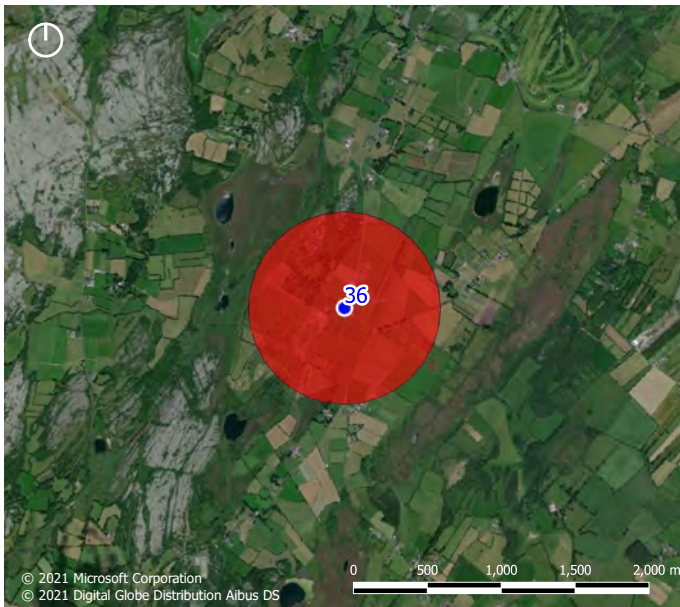
National

### Location of view

This view is from the carpark and the grounds around the monuments. This view should also be considered to include views of the roundtower from the approaching local road (from point 540596,700857) and from the length of regional road R460 which can see the site (from points 541188,700119 to 540458,699445).

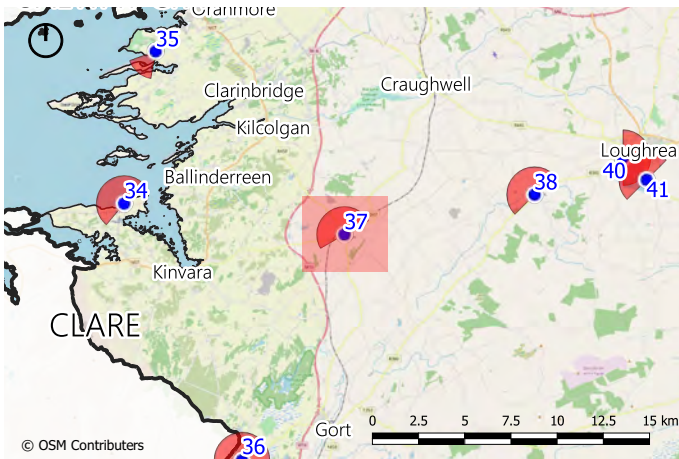
### Description of view

The focus of the view from within the village are the monuments and the Burren hills in the background. From the roads approaching the site, the focus is the roundtower.



## VIEWPOINT 37

Ardrahan Church of Ireland and ruins.



### Significance

Local

### Location of view

This view is from the raised grounds of the Church of Ireland and graveyard.

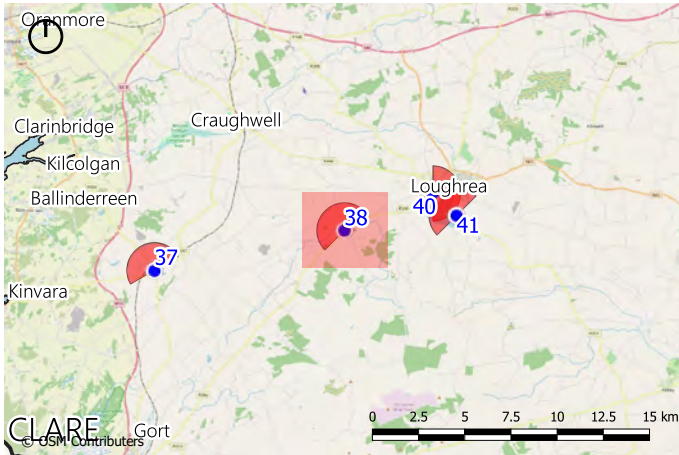
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the surrounding countryside and ruins to the east.



## VIEWPOINT 38

Kilchreest church ruins and graveyard.



### Significance

Local

### Location of view

This view is from the raised grounds of the church ruins and graveyard.

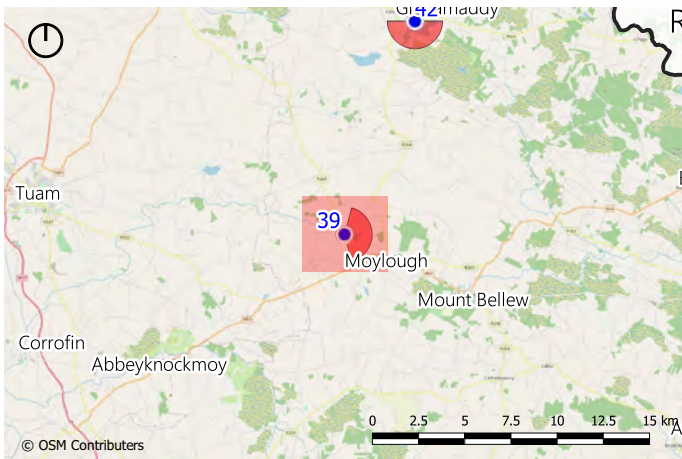
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the surrounding countryside.



# VIEWPOINT 39

## Summerville Lough



### Significance

Local

### Location of view

This view is from the Summerville Lough picnic area.

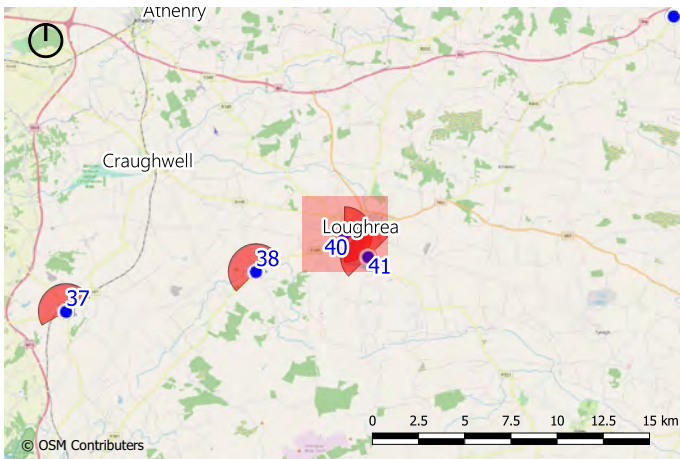
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Summerville Lough. The wooded shores that form the background are an important feature of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 40

## Corrys Field walk



### Significance

County

### Location of view

This view is from the east end of Corrys Field walk that sticks out into Lough Rea

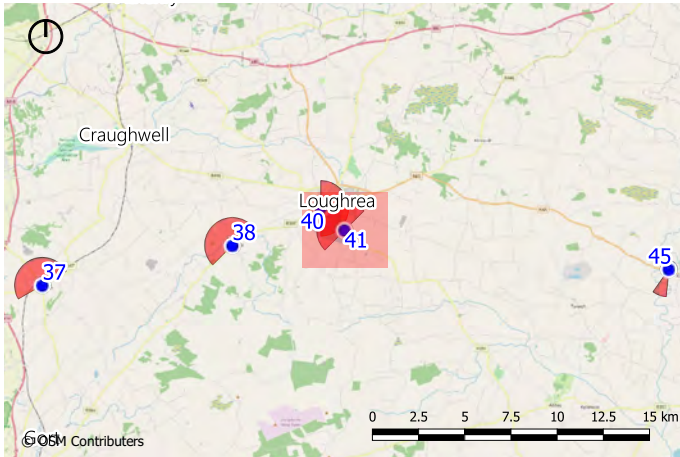
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Loughrea Town.



# VIEWPOINT 41

## Loughrea Swimming Area (The Long Point)



### Significance

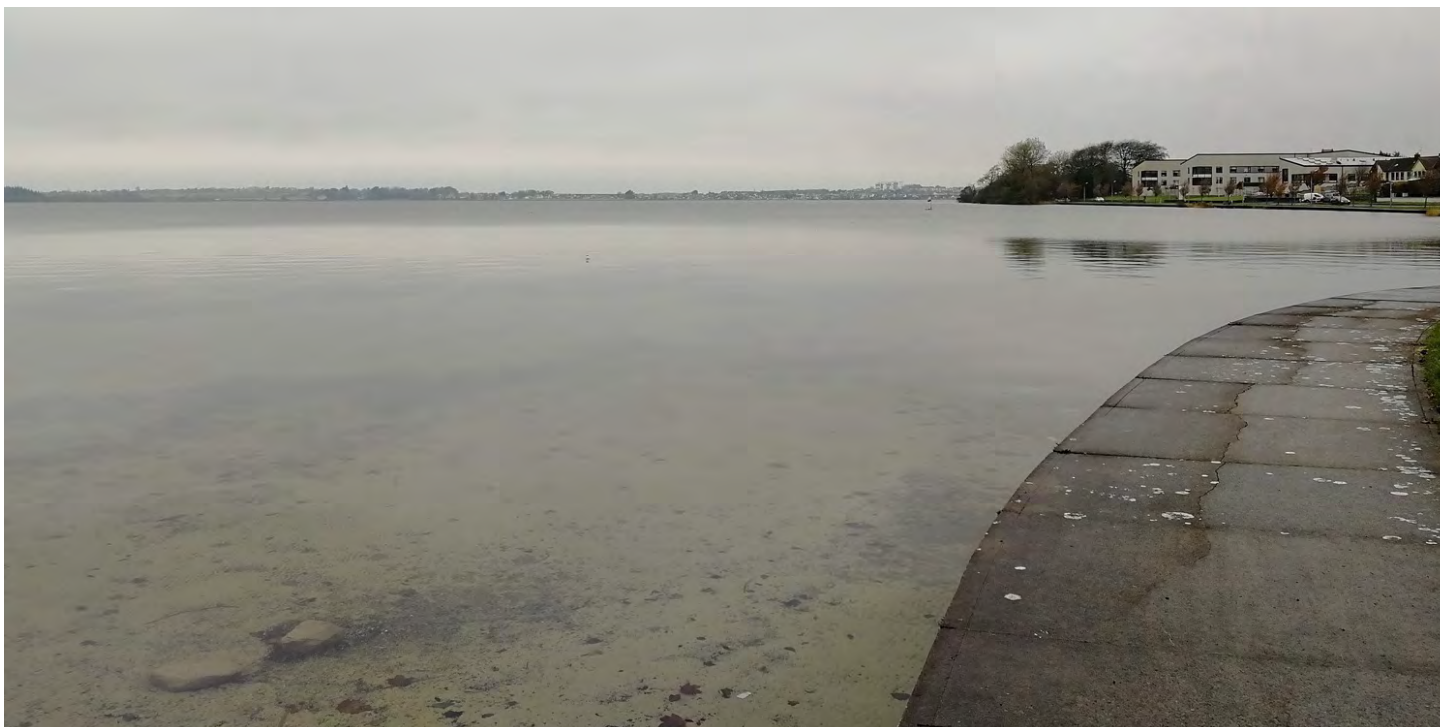
County

### Location of view

This view is from the swimming area carpark and shore footpaths.

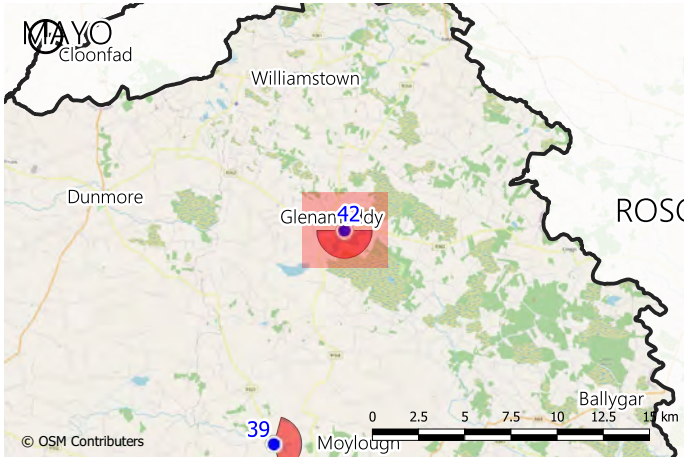
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the expanse of Lough Rea as well as the backdrop of Loughrea Town and the wooded hills.



# VIEWPOINT 42

## Glenamaddy Turlough



### Significance

Local

### Location of view

This view is from the Glenamaddy Turlough carpark and viewing area.

### Description of view

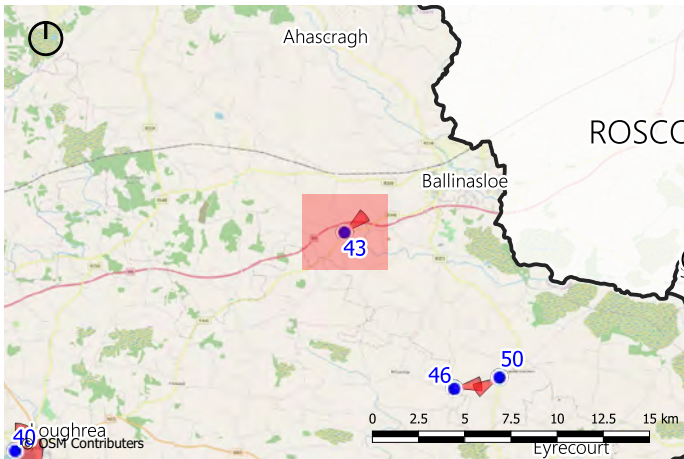
The focus of this view is Glenamaddy Turlough. The wooded shores that form the background are an important feature of the view.





# VIEWPOINT 43

## Aughrim Church Spire



### Significance

Local

### Location of view

This view is from the entrance to Aughrim Heritage Park.

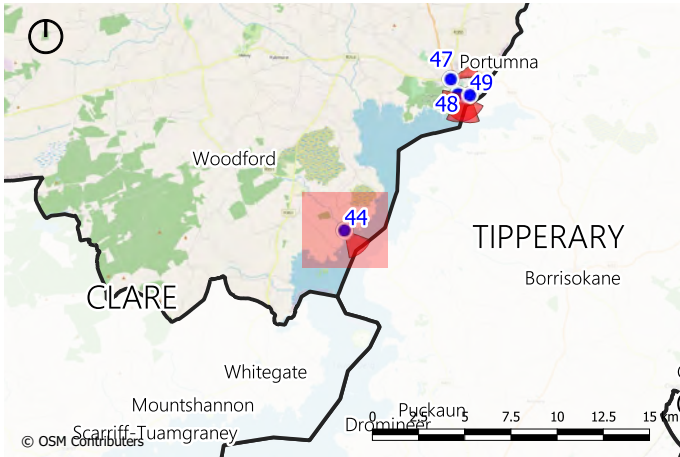
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the Aughrim Church Spire.



# VIEWPOINT 44

## Rossmore Pier



### Significance

County

### Location of view

This view is from the pier.

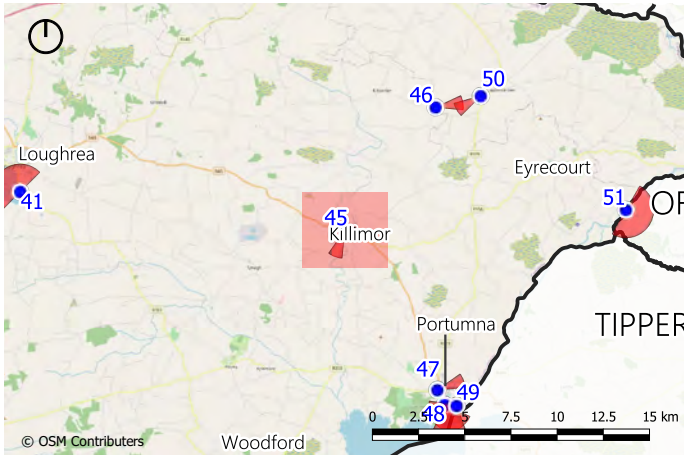
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Lough Derg. The wooded shores and small islets are important features of this view.



# VIEWPOINT 45

## Killimor Old Graveyard



### Significance

Local

### Location of view

This view is from the bridge over the Kilcrow River.

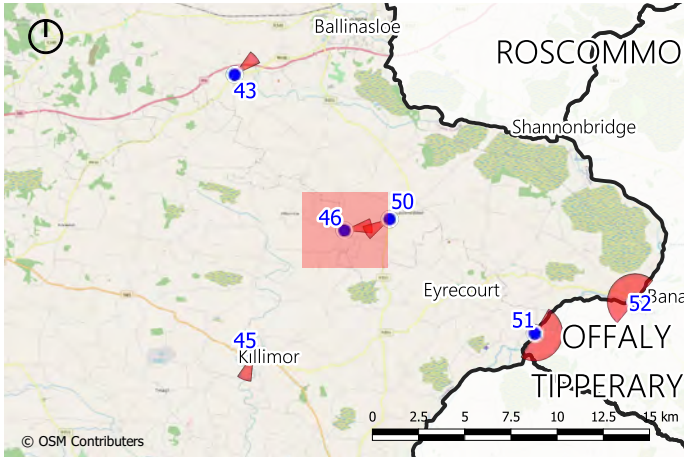
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Killimor Old Graveyard and church ruins. The river Kilcrow is an important feature of the view.



## VIEWPOINT 46

Newgate Gateway at L4301 crossroads.



### Significance

Local

### Location of view

This view is from the open area at the crossroads.

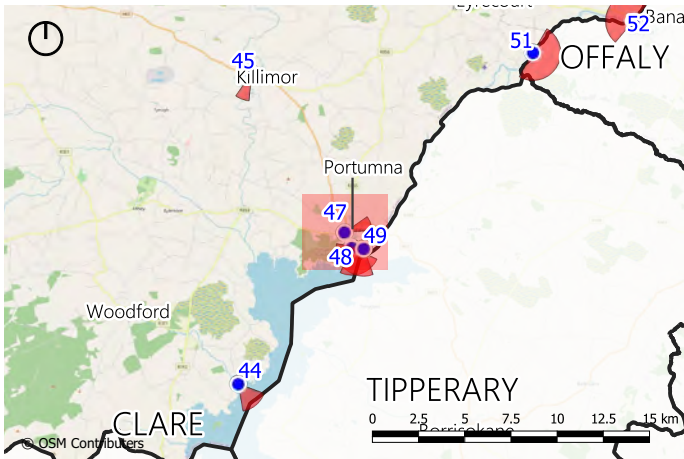
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the Gateway.



# VIEWPOINT 47

## Portumna Church Spires



### Significance

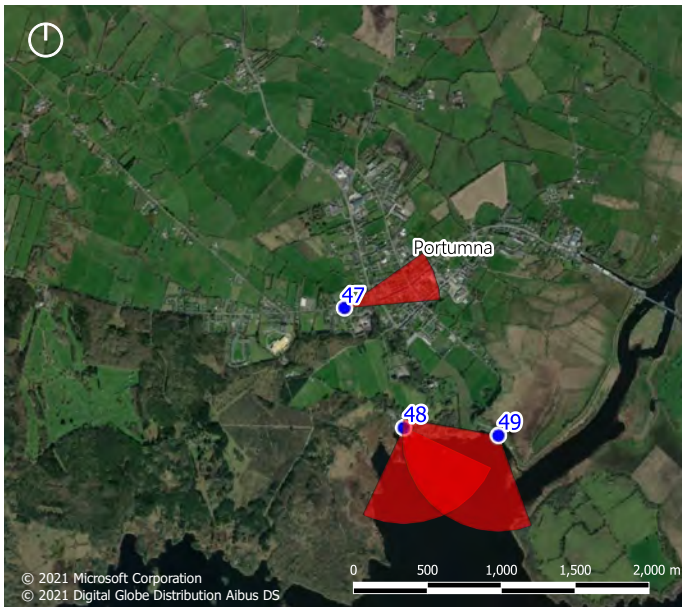
Local

### Location of view

This view is from the highest point on Saint Joseph's Road as it enters Portumna.

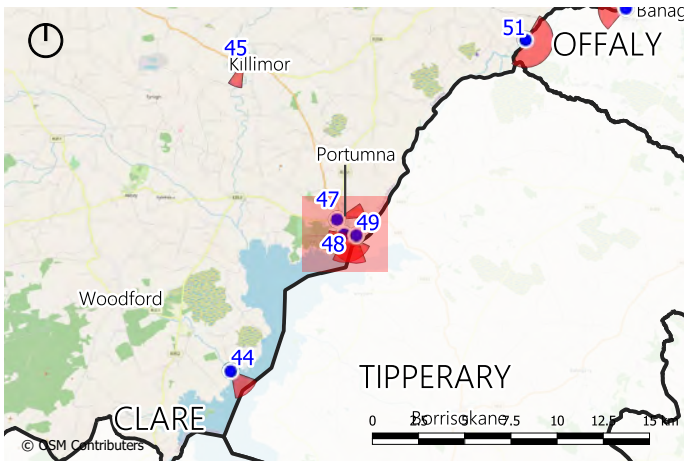
### Description of view

The focus of this view are the two church spires.



# VIEWPOINT 48

## Portumna Castle Harbour



### Significance

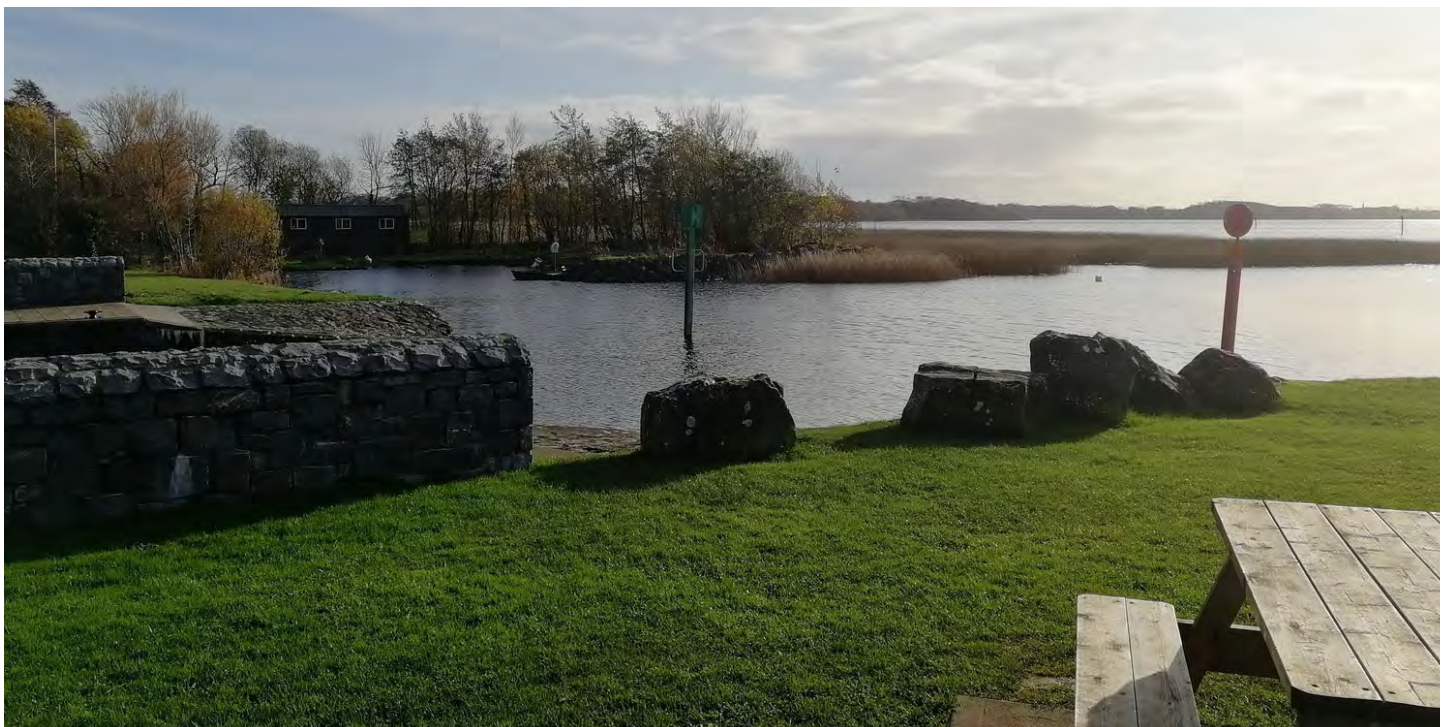
County

### Location of view

This view is from the carpark, marina and picnic area.

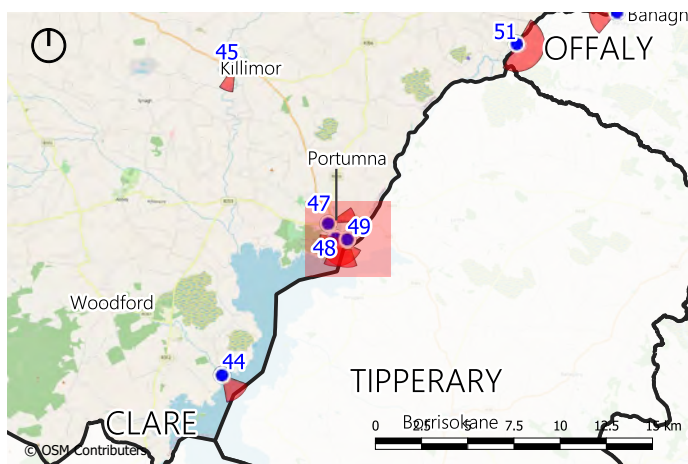
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Lough Derg and the reed banks. The wooded shores in the background are an important feature of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 49

## Lough Derg Water Recreation Park



### Significance

County

### Location of view

This view is from the carpark, shore walk and picnic areas.

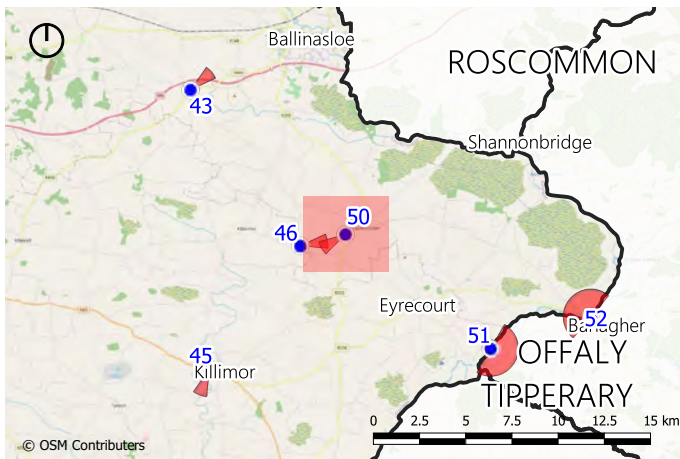
### Description of view

The focus of this view is Lough Derg and the reed banks. The wooded shores in the background are an important feature of the view.



# VIEWPOINT 50

Gothic Folly Gateway off L8716 SW of Laurencetown



## Significance

Local

## Location of view

This view is from the road coming from Laurencetown leading up to the gateway.

## Description of view

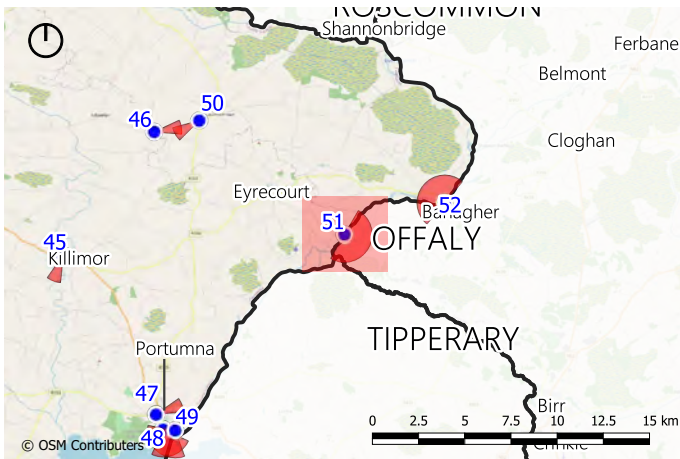
The focus of this view is the Gateway.





# VIEWPOINT 51

## Meelick Quay



### Significance

County

### Location of view

This view is from Meelick Quay picnic and parking area.

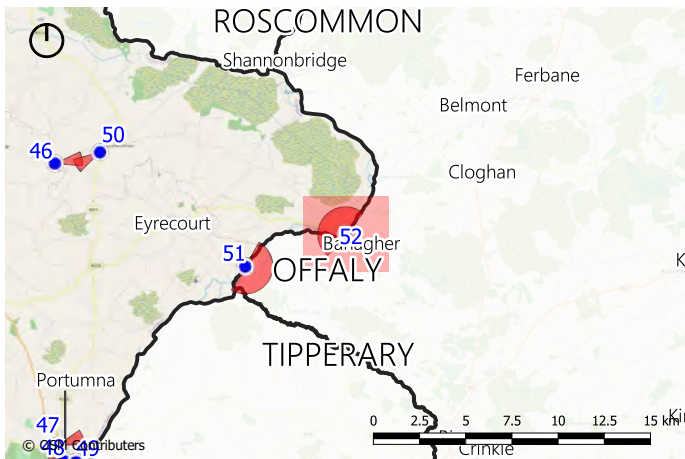
### Description of view

The focus of this view is the River Shannon and the Incherky in the background. The old battery (covered in trees) is an important feature of this view.



## VIEWPOINT 52

Shannon bank from Banagher Bridge entering Galway.



### Significance

County

### Location of view

This view is from the middle of the Banagher bridge.

### Description of view

The focus of this view is the Shannon River, Banagher Park and the Castle ruins.





**Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe**  
**Galway County Council**



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