

Heavily Modified Water Bodies – Potential Designation of Drumragh at Omagh

**Upper Foyle CSG
20th April 2011**



Heavily Modified Water Bodies (HMWBs)

Heavily Modified Water Bodies (HMWB) are bodies of water which as a result of physical alterations by human activity are substantially changed in character

The aim is that they must achieve at least Good Ecological Potential

This *does not mean* biology and chemistry are not taken into account

They are not 'the easy option', in fact they create much more work!
Nor do we like the name 'HMWB'

Article 4 – 'Protect, enhance and restore' for normal WBs, 'protect and enhance' for HMWBs – recognises modifications won't be removed

One of the main issues is that there is a lot of subjectivity

HMWB designation and classification

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/hmwb_classification_intro.pdf

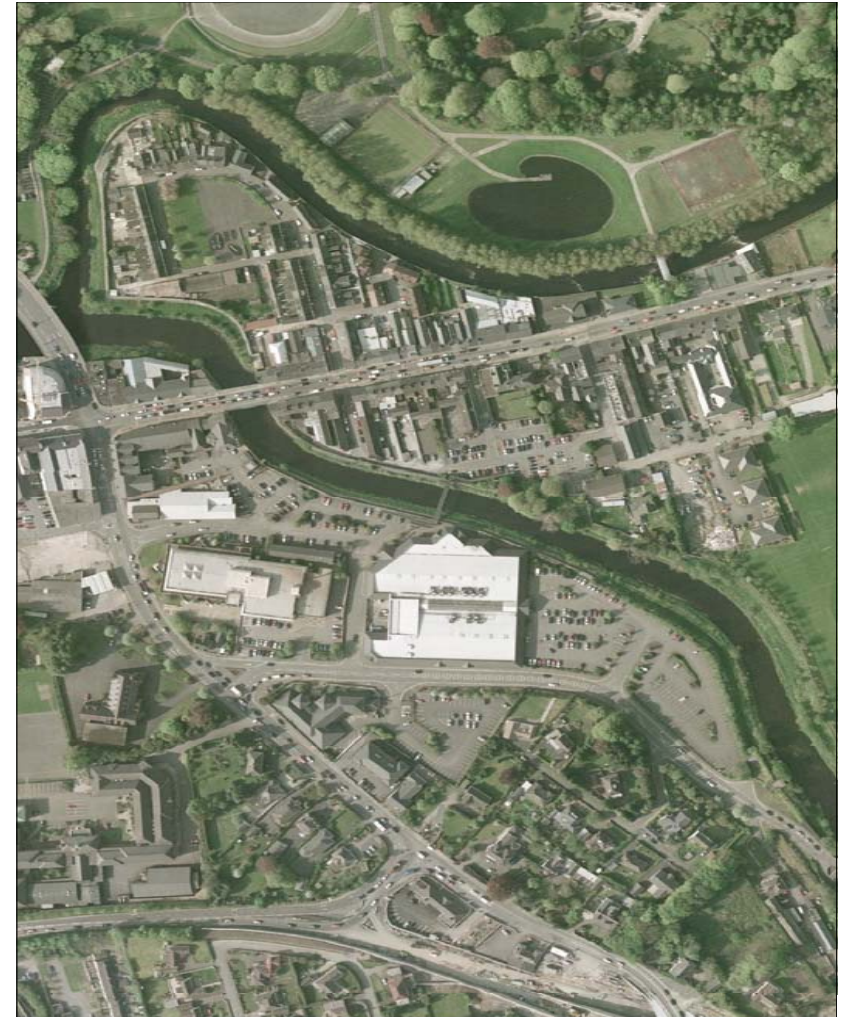
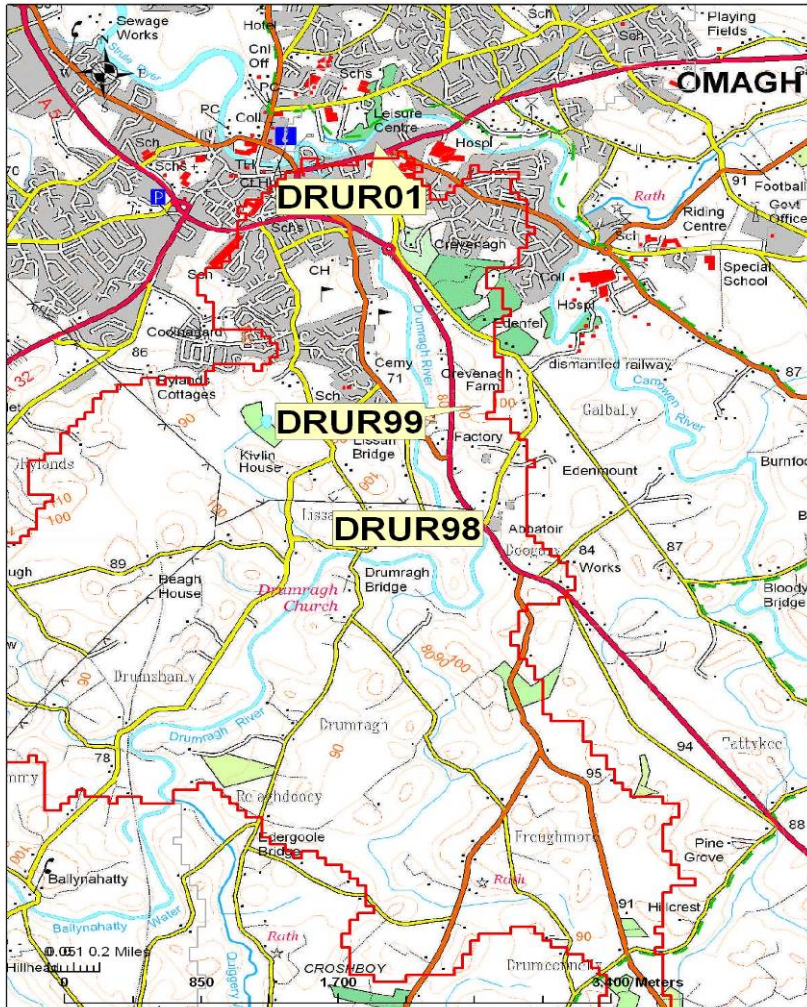
http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/hmwb_nw.pdf

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/hmwb_removed_from_list.pdf

Following all this, it was decided to review HMWBs in LMAs that were felt needed further study, particularly with a view to de-designation

However, further areas which may require designation were also identified

The Drumragh at Omagh



Why might it be designated?

Extensive resectioning, bank reinforcement, floodwalls and embankments in Omagh town centre

Removal of the flood walls not a possibility

Weir in town centre

Hydromorphology survey score for this reach 'Poor'

There have been some failures of WQ parameters at Campsie Br

Despite better (but far from perfect) conditions upstream, overall HM score for water body = 'Moderate'



Why might it remain undesignated?

Overall, water quality as assessed at Campsie Br has not been too bad

With present knowledge, couldn't definitively link WQ failures with modifications

Only a relatively small area of the water body has significant alterations



Stakeholder feedback

Both agreement and disagreement with potential designation issues

Designation the easy option

Relative area of flood banks in water body small

Water quality ok

A lot of concern about weir in town centre

What would any advantage in HMWB status be?

Requirement of the Directive to identify HMWBs

Would formalise that status is due to modifications in town centre that aren't going to be removed

If WQ was less than good then mitigation measures for modifications may be required

Therefore acceptance that the river can never be restored to 'natural' where heavily modified or influenced by modifications



What are the disadvantages of designation?

Major modifications only affect a relatively small part of the water body

Not proven that any WQ failures are as a result of the modifications

If WQ improves could de-designate – monitoring station is close to modifications

HMWBs aren't popular

More bureaucracy!



Currently preferred options

Leave it undesignated for now

Can't argue that a reasonable portion of this water body is heavily modified

Overall water body delineation needs reviewed for a number of reasons

We won't do this before 2013

Could consider splitting water body

Will also have more water quality data



Conclusions

Leave for now and consider re-drawing water body later

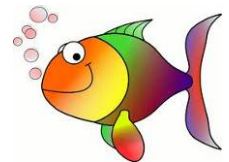
Whole process still very new

HM/ecology links research still at an early stage

Has been a useful test case

Hopefully demonstrates that views are taken into account

Thank you for your contributions



Our aim is to protect, conserve
and promote our natural and built
environment for the benefit of
present and future generations.



www.ni-environment.gov.uk