

## Appendix 10.3: Landscape Character

### Landscape Character – Regional (2016)

#### Area 19: South Antrim Hills and Six Mile Water

##### *"Introduction*

*The area comprises the low hills which frame the north-west Belfast skyline, and which line the north shore of Belfast Lough. The Six Mile Water and Three Mile Water valleys provide transport corridors through them, linking to Antrim and Larne. The area includes the settled southern fringes of the Antrim Plateau and is a populous landscape with significant infrastructure.*

##### *Location and Setting*

*The South Antrim Hills are located to the north of Belfast and south of the Antrim Plateau, with the valley of the Six Mile Water located in between the South Antrim Hills and the Antrim Plateau.*

*The South Antrim Hills and Six Mile Water RLCA is located to the south of the Maine valley (RLCA 17) and Antrim Plateau (RLCA 18), to the east of Belfast Lough (RLCA 14) and to the north of Belfast (RLCA 21) and Belfast Lough (RLCA 20).*

##### *Landscape Character Description*

*This RLCA comprises the Six Mile Water valley and the hills that surround it, including the southern flanks of the Antrim Plateau at Browndod and Drumadarragh Hill. To the south of the Six Mile Water, the Belfast Hills form a prominent ridge to the north of the Belfast Lough, overlooking both the lough and the city.*

*The Six Mile Water rises in the hills to the west of Larne and follows a broad undulating valley carved between the Antrim Plateau and the Belfast Hills towards Lough Neagh. Three Mile Water is a tributary of the river which flows north-west from Newtownabbey. The Six Mile Valley is well settled from Antrim through to Templepatrick and Ballyclare towards Larne, and the dense infrastructure network also follows this corridor. The M2 crosses the valley between Antrim and Newtownabbey and industrial development becomes more prominent in this south-easterly direction. To the west of the RLCA the landform merges with the low-lying and flatter Lough Neagh Basin (RLCA 14).*

*The Belfast Hills run from the hills above Larne Lough, south-westwards to North Carn and Woodburn Forest, before dropping to Newtownabbey and Carnmoney Hill. Further south-west, the hills rise again to Collinward, Squires Hill, Divis and White Hill. These hills form an open and windswept upland plateau with a transition to more sheltered farmland with more substantial hedges on the gentle northern slopes. Fields are enclosed by gappy hedges or stone walls. On the plateau there are shallow valleys with marshy areas or loughs, often surrounded by conifer and mixed woodland plantations. The southern slopes of the hills, within RLCA 21, form a dramatic basalt escarpment above Belfast and the lough shores. Carnmoney Hill acts as a landmark feature on the approach to Newtownabbey as its natural rugged setting is in contrast to the settlement and industrial developments around it.*

*The north side of the Six Mile Water valley rises up from Ballyclare towards the Antrim Plateau (RLCA 18). These uplands display distinctive rocky outcrops amongst the uneven field pattern with pastures being replaced by woodland on the lower slopes increasingly to the east. Important and extensive state managed conifer forests are present at Tardree Forest in the east and Ballyboley Forest to the west. Ballyboley Forest on the edge of Agnew's Hill provides for extensive views along the valley and over Larne Lough.*

##### *Key Characteristics*

- The hills have a similar geology to that of the main Antrim Plateau to the north, with limestone, chalk and lias clay overlain by a layer of basalt as a result of volcanic activity.*
- Divis Mountain is the highest of the Belfast Hills at 478m AOD and was previously used as a military training area. It is now popular for recreational activity, primarily walking and cycling, along with much of the Belfast Hills area, with wide views from hilltops.*
- A mosaic of grassland, heath and bog habitat is found on the hills, which supports upland bird species including red grouse, stonechats, skylark and snipe.*
- Six Mile Water flows westwards from its origin at Shane's Hill to the west of Larne towards Lough Neagh. It is famous for angling, particularly trout fishing.*

- *The land is mostly enclosed elevated farmland, with a rural character influenced by settlement and transport links.*
- *Communication masts are found on many of the hills, with pylons and electricity lines, crossing the area which can detract from the remote, undeveloped feel on the highest uplands.*
- *A medium scale rural and mostly tranquil landscape with scattered small settlements. The scale is smaller in the valleys and larger scale on the hill summits where there is no enclosure.*
- *Field cover consists of medium scale, rolling elevated pastoral farmland, which can be irregular and patchy on higher ground. Most field boundaries are hedgerows with many beech trees.*
- *Former quarrying and mineral workings are scattered throughout the landscape as hard rock quarrying was once widespread.*

#### *Natural Influences*

- *The geology in this area is continuous with that of the Antrim Plateau to the north. Mudstone, limestone and chalk are overlain by a thick layer of basalt following intense volcanic activity approximately 60 million years ago.*
- *Prominent hills rising to a maximum of 478m at Divis. The ridge from Collin through Divis to Knockagh and Duffs Hill is an important landscape divide between Belfast Lough and the Lagan Valley to the south, and the Lough Neagh basin to the west.*
- *Six Mile Water originates at Shane's Hill and flows westwards towards Lough Neagh through a broad, undulating valley. Other minor watercourses also carve intimate valleys into the landscape.*
- *Most of the valley areas are improved pasture with limited biodiversity value, though with intact hedges and field trees, mainly ash. Important mesotrophic grassland habitats are supported on the hills, some of which are designated, e.g. the Leathemstown ASSI and Slievenacloy ASSI. Slievenacloy is also noted for its orchids.*
- *There are occasional reservoirs and small loughs amongst the hills, often associated with coniferous plantation including Woodburn Forest. River water crowfoot is present in the Six Mile Water, although the rivers in this area mainly flow through low biodiversity pasture land.*
- *Vegetation such as gorse, scrub, heather and rushy bog is indicative of the higher upland areas, and there are uncommon patches of juniper woodlands. The Belfast Hills support bird species including red grouse, owls and kestrels.*

#### *Cultural Influences*

- *An accepted story of the etymology of Six Mile Water name originates from a name given by Norman soldiers who forded the river after travelling six miles from Carrickfergus Castle.*
- *Standing stones, stone circles, and megalithic tombs are located on the high ground.*
- *Ballyrobert Cottage Garden is a unique Ulster cottage garden designed around a historic 17th century landscape, with the original cottage and barn being key features. Sentry Hill near Newtownabbey is a uniquely intact 19th-century farmhouse and contents.*
- *Evidence in the landscape of extraction industries which were predominantly quarrying for Basalt used as road stone.*
- *The Six Mile and Three Mile valley is a communications corridor with prominent pylons and telecommunications masts. The M2 motorway, railway and several major roads cross through this area.*
- *Field boundaries in the area feature beech and ash trees and hedges, dividing geometric fields of improved grassland. The geometry of the landscape is typified by the 'seven mile straight' of the B39, leading south-east from Antrim. On the uplands hedges become more sparse with stunted trees and stone walls. The highest areas are unenclosed.*
- *Land is generally more productive than that on the uplands of the Antrim Plateau to the north and there is a higher degree of enclosure and farming.*
- *Divis Mountain and Black Mountain are managed by the National Trust and are popular walking destinations. The Ulster Way long distance path crosses into this RLCA.*
- *Angling for brown trout and salmon in Six Mile Water is a popular recreational activity.*
- *Plantation forests are less common than on the main Antrim Plateau, and are concentrated to the north of Carrickfergus. They generally fit well within the landscape.*
- *The war memorial monument at Knockagh on the boundary of this RLCA is a prominent landmark.*

#### *Perceptual Influences*

- *The hills have an iconic role in providing a unique and dramatic backdrop to the city of Belfast, and the settlements around Belfast Lough (see also RLCA 21). The high points of Collinward, Divis, and Collin also look north across to Lough Neagh and the Antrim Plateau.*
- *Viewpoints overlooking the Six Mile Water Valley towards the South Antrim hills from Ballyboley Forest.*
- *On higher elevations the land is still enclosed but there is a feeling of exposure resulting from the wind sculpted trees and scrappy hedgerows.*
- *The Six Mile Water valley has a secluded character on the valley floor due to a high level of woodland cover.*
- *Relatively wild on the more sparsely settled higher ground, particularly considering proximity to large urban centres.*
- *Pockets of tranquillity in the valleys away from development and the main transport corridors.*
- *Further manmade intrusion is evident in the RLCA with the transmission lines from Kilroot and Ballylumford Power Stations atop of the elevated ground surrounding Carnmoney Hill and Slimero Hill respectively.*

### *Past, present and future forces for change*

*Climate change: Increased frequency of flood events may impact on farmland, golf courses and infrastructure in this area. Erosion of pasture land may increase, as well as erosion of upland soils where they may dry out in summer. Increasingly dry heaths may be susceptible to fires in summer drought conditions, with impacts on biodiversity and on the recreational value of the hills. Lower river flows in the Three Mile and Six Mile rivers under these conditions will increase the potential for eutrophication and algal blooms, with impacts downstream in Lough Neagh. Broadleaved trees, including the many hedge trees in the area, will come under stress during summer droughts.*

*Plant disease: Ash is a common species of hedgerow tree in this part of Northern Ireland, and the emergence and spread of Ash dieback (caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) could lead to widespread losses of ash trees, which are a common feature of woods and hedges in this area. The resulting landscape will have a more open character, and there will be impacts on wider biodiversity.*

*Minerals: Extensive quarries are operational in this area, exploiting the basalt from which the hills are formed. The restoration of such installations, including use for landfill, as well as the excavation of new sites, will potentially impact on the comparative rurality of this area.*

*Electricity transmission: The major power lines radiating out from Kilroot and Ballylumford power stations pass through this landscape carried on steel towers. Upgrades or alterations to these overhead lines could have impacts on the landscape and visual amenity of the hills and valleys.*

*Transport: The M2 corridor is likely to remain a focus for infrastructure improvements and development pressure, forming the key route from Belfast to Derry/Londonderry and the north-west, and to the International Airport. The corridor is essentially urban as far west as the industrial estates at Mallusk, beyond which a more rural character takes over. The A8 route to Larne is also being upgraded.*

*Renewable energy: One wind farm has been constructed in the area, at Carn Hill, and there are a number of operating and consented single turbines across the RLCA. Landscape sensitivity studies may be required to determine the potential for the area to absorb further development of wind farms or single turbines, with particular regard to prominent ridge lines.*

*Management plans: The Belfast Hills Landscape Partnership works to promote and protect the landscape of the hills from Slievenacloy in the south to Carnmoney in the north, encouraging positive management of this landscape and its habitats.*

### *Ecosystem Services*

*The landscape of this area provides a range of benefits and services. Section 7 of the Background Report provides background on ecosystem services, and lists examples of provisioning, regulating and cultural services. The following key services are among those delivered in this RLCA: this list is not exhaustive.*

#### *Provisioning services*

*Food: Dairy, beef, lamb, fish; arable crops.*

*Fibre and fuel: Timber and other forestry products; energy from wind farm at Carn Hill as well as from single turbines.*

*Minerals: Disused and active quarrying and mineral workings, particularly for basalt; e.g. Ladyhill Quarry near Antrim.*

*Genetic resources: A mosaic of grassland, heath and bog habitat found on the hills support upland bird species including red grouse, stonechats, skylark and snipe.*

*Fresh water: Reservoirs and small loughs; rivers providing drinking water and feeding Lough Neagh.*

#### *Regulating services*

*Carbon storage: Tardree Forest and Ballyboley Forest represent extensive carbon sequestration.*

*Climate regulation: Renewable energy; carbon storage.*

*Flood regulation: Upland peat/heath and forests absorb water and reduce run off, mitigating flood events.*

*Waste and toxic hazards: Reuse of former quarries for landfill disposal.*

*Erosion regulation: Vegetated river banks and riparian woodlands help to prevent erosion of riverside pastoral land.*

*Protected areas: ASSIs include Leathemstown, Woodburn Reservoir and Slievenacloy.*

*Cultural services*

*Access, recreation and tourism: Busy transport corridors along the valleys; Divis Mountain and Black Mountain very popular for walking and cycling and immediately accessible from Belfast; Six Mile Water popular for angling; Ballyrobert Cottage Garden; Sentry Hill; Ulster Way long distance path.*

*Archaeological heritage: Standing stones, stone circles, and megalithic tombs; historic farmhouses and cottages; protected and unprotected sites.*

*Education: Opportunities for learning about natural heritage in the Belfast Hills.*

*Inspiration and aesthetic values: Belfast Hills frame the north west Belfast skyline, and overlook the lough and the city, with open and windswept upland plateau transitioning to sheltered farmland on lower ground; war memorial monument at Knockagh is a prominent landmark.*

*Sense of place: Most known as a transport corridor and a strategic link between Belfast, Larne and Lough Neagh."*

**'Landscape' extracts from Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Landscape Character Assessment**

LCA	Key Characteristics	Landscape Description	Landscape Condition and Sensitivity to Change	Principles for Landscape Management	Principles for Accommodating New Development
Belfast/Lisburn Landscape (97)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Belfast and Lisburn lie within the lowland basin of the River Lagan which is enclosed by steep ridges and escarpments.</li> <li>Docks at head of Belfast Lough; principal industrial areas along the Lagan and new Laganside development focusing towards the river.</li> <li>Long red brick terraces and large red brick warehouses and industrial buildings are characteristic.</li> <li>Formal parks such as Ormeau Park, the Botanic Gardens,</li> </ul>	<p>The Belfast/Lisburn LCA encompasses the Belfast and Lisburn urban areas, together with their broader landscape setting. It is defined by the steep ridges and escarpments which enclose the Lagan Valley at the head of Belfast Lough. Belfast is mostly contained within the valley, although urban development has spread along the narrow coastal strips to the north and south of the Lough and inland along the Lagan and Enler Valleys. The town of Lisburn is also sited on the River Lagan but is further upstream and enclosed by slightly lower slopes. There are long views over both urban areas from the surrounding upland landscapes. Belfast's principal industrial areas are concentrated along the banks of the Lagan and the docks are prominent at</p>	<p>The quality of the environment within the urban districts is increasingly degraded by traffic congestion, pollution, waste management problems and a lack of accessible public open spaces. Belfast also has a relatively high proportion of derelict land and there is much scope for continued regeneration. Within the wider context, the landscape setting of the city is increasingly marred by the scattered development of buildings and infrastructure, the scars of industrial sites and quarries, and the neglect or under-management of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management of land and field boundaries near the urban edge will ensure its rural character and robust landscape pattern is maintained and will promote a high quality landscape setting for the city.</li> <li>Increasing public access to the surrounding hills would improve the quality of life for city dwellers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development sites which define the inner green belt boundary should be required to comply with demanding development briefs which seek to achieve an attractive, firm urban edge which reinforces the surrounding landscape character and maximises opportunities for public access.</li> <li>Urban regeneration is preferable to urban expansion and the green belt boundary should be considered an absolute limit to development</li> </ul>

LCA	Key Characteristics	Landscape Description	Landscape Condition and Sensitivity to Change	Principles for Landscape Management	Principles for Accommodating New Development
	<p>Victoria Park and Wallace Park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal open space such as the Lagan Valley Regional Park and the linear Connswater Park reach into the urban centre.</li> <li>• Elevated views over urban areas from the surrounding escarpment slopes.</li> </ul>	<p>the head of Belfast Lough.</p> <p>The older residential areas are characterised by red brick buildings, which add a warm colour to the urban landscape and contrast with the surrounding green hills. The dense terraces are sometimes overshadowed by vast red-brick industrial buildings, many of which are derelict. The steep escarpments and ridges on the margins of the city provide a series of landmarks. The Belfast Basalt Escarpment to the north has a rugged, untamed character; Carmoney Hill, an outlier to the north west of the basalt escarpment, dominates the landscape setting of Newtownabbey; the Craigtantlet Escarpment on the fringes of the Holywood Hills encloses East Belfast and the slopes of the Castlereagh Escarpment provide a continuous backdrop to the urban districts of South Belfast and Castlereagh. Belfast's formal parks, such as Ormeau Park, the Botanic Gardens and Victoria Park and Lisburn's Wallace Park, provide welcome breathing space for the city centre but are relatively small in relation to the city as a whole. The Lagan Valley Regional Park is on a completely different scale. This and the other smaller river corridor parks, such as the Connswater, Lagmore and Collin Glen linear parks, have a more natural character and provide a valuable link between the urban areas and their wider landscape setting. The Laganside walkways now extend the footpath links along the Lagan right through to the city centre.</p>	<p>farming. Public access to the surrounding hills and coastline is also relatively poor, particularly to the north and west of the city. The most sensitive parts of Belfast/Lisburn are the historic centres, the riverside and the urban edges which have expanded onto the higher ridges enclosing Belfast. Development on the lower slopes of the basalt escarpment is perhaps in the most sensitive location in the city. Belfast and Lisburn are overlooked by hills in all directions and the siting and design of all major developments should be carefully considered in relation to these wider views.</p>		<p>in order to conserve Belfast's natural containment within the lowland basin.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope for new building on derelict sites, with scope for innovative designs which may create new focal points and landmarks.</li> </ul>
<p>Carrickfergus Upland Pastures (98)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undulating landscape of low ridges and shallow valleys.</li> <li>• Small fields of pasture enclosed by gappy hedges, earth banks and neglected stone walls; beech and conifer shelterbelts along roads.</li> <li>• Small, wind-blown trees on exposed upland pastures.</li> <li>• Extensive tracts of plantation forest, often enclosing loughs and reservoirs.</li> </ul>	<p>The landscape reaches an elevation of 200-250m. The area is underlain by basalt, but the shallow soils, rocky exposures and wet climate create less productive farmland than elsewhere. Shallow ridges extend from the basalt escarpment to the south to create an undulating plateau. The land use is predominantly pastoral with small, regular fields enclosed by gappy hedges, as well as by earth banks and stone walls. These are often neglected and have been reinforced with post and wire fencing. There is a large scale pattern of plantation forests and exposed pasture on the uplands, with</p>	<p>This relatively remote landscape has not been subjected to the same level of residential development experienced by the low-lying areas close to the coast. However, the few recent examples of new housing are often sited in exposed locations, detracting from the more traditional settlement pattern of stone buildings sheltered by trees. Plantation forests have been introduced along the ridge tops, but generally conform with the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further afforestation may be accommodated with careful siting and design.</li> <li>• The repair and management of hedges, walls and shelterbelts should be encouraged to conserve the landscape structure.</li> <li>• Careful visual analysis should accompany any plans to site new windfarms or pylons in this upland landscape.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing new houses may be sheltered and integrated within the landscape by blocks of woodland.</li> <li>• The design of housing is especially sensitive in an upland landscape; ad hoc housing development in the countryside with disparate and incongruous styles should be avoided.</li> <li>• Visitor facilities such as</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some fields encroached by scrub and heather; rushy bogs in small hollows.</li> <li>Pylons and transmission lines along the skyline.</li> <li>New houses and bungalows in exposed locations.</li> </ul>	<p>dramatic contrasts in colour and scale. A number of loughs are also found within this character area, including the dammed South and North Woodburn reservoirs and Lough Mourne with its thin enclosing ring of coniferous forest. The visual influence of these waters on the landscape is limited owing to the forest screen, but they are significant local features.</p> <p>The wind-blown profile of small hedgerow trees and shelterbelts, emphasises the exposed feel of this landscape. The uplands seem relatively remote in comparison to nearby, low-lying areas, although transmission lines from the Kilroot Power Station extend up from the coast and, with a telecommunications mast, exert a strong presence along the skyline. Settlement is scarce but new houses, often in exposed locations, contrast with the sheltered locations and unassuming styles of stone farm buildings. The landscape is of a moderate scale; views within the area are restricted by the enclosure of landform and woods. However, due to its elevated position, some longer views are possible from the edges of this area.</p>	<p>landform. This type of upland pastoral landscape is not rare in Northern Ireland and landscape sensitivity may be described as moderate. Although this is an upland area, views are restricted by landform and tree enclosure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of public access to the reservoirs and provision of picnic facilities and viewpoints will ensure maximum use is made of this rural area for a large number of people from the nearby settlements.</li> </ul>	<p>parking places and picnic spots should be designed to reflect the rural setting, using natural materials and avoiding unnecessary clutter. This will help to retain the contrast between surrounding lowland urban areas and the countryside.</p>
Bangor Coastline (103)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undulating shoreline topography.</li> <li>Well wooded and densely settled coastal edge to the south of Belfast Lough.</li> <li>Wild, rocky shoreline with gorse scrub, stands of Scots pine and steep, narrow glens.</li> <li>Estates with mixed woodlands overlooking the sea.</li> <li>Large houses and hotels set in ornamental grounds.</li> <li>Good infrastructure linking settlements with many recreational facilities.</li> <li>Views restricted by extent of woodland.</li> </ul>	<p>The Bangor Coastline forms a linear shoreline strip extending from the edge of Belfast, at the head of Belfast Lough, to Groomsport at its mouth. It is a strip of land with a gently undulating topography which supports a patchwork of pasture, mature deciduous woodland and dense urban development, including several large houses and hotels. The presence of many estates has created a local landscape of large fields, stone walls and woodland, with a sequence of landmarks glimpsed in views along the coastal roads. A series of narrow, wooded glens wind down the steeper slopes towards the Lough shore; a notable example is Crawfordsburn Glen, which lies within a Country Park.</p> <p>Views are generally short due to the well wooded character of the coast, but the exposed coast line has an open rocky edge and patches of low growing gorse and scrub; it provides opportunities for long panoramas across the Lough. The urban centres of</p>	<p>The landscape of the Bangor Coastline is generally in good condition in both urban and rural contexts. The presence of country parks ensures that visitor pressure and potential erosion is controlled and that countryside management plays an important role. The many large houses, hotels and estates (including the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum) have well-maintained grounds, parkland and estate woodlands.</p> <p>The landscape is extensively settled and has almost fulfilled its development potential. Further change may lead to loss of important rural areas and valuable recreational resources. However, the well wooded</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The provision and upkeep of visitor facilities will help to reduce erosion and pressure on the more sensitive parts of the landscape, such as the scenic glens, woodlands and open shores.</li> <li>Potential viewing opportunities at the Lough shore may be maximised by the provision of parking spaces and viewpoints.</li> <li>Woodlands, parks and stone walls may be retained through continued management and conservation of these important elements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further built development should not spread into areas of rural character between settlements, which form an invaluable recreational resource and important green break between individual settlements.</li> <li>Coalescence of developments along the coast is a significant pressure, encouraged by the strong linear communication pattern; there is a need to recognise buffer zones, which separate settlements and help to conserve their individual landscape setting.</li> </ul>

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		<p>Hollywood, Helen's Bay and Bangor are linked by a good communication network comprising the main A2 dual carriageway and the Belfast to Bangor railway line as well as many minor roads and the North Down Coastal Path. The provision of footpaths, parking places and picnic sites provides recreational opportunities along the coast.</p>	<p>character and robust landscape pattern of the area allows development to be well integrated into the fabric. Views from the northern shore of Belfast Lough restrict changes to the Lough edge.</p>		
Upper Ballinderry Plateau Landscape (109)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rolling farmland landscape, with numerous hedgerow trees and copses.</li> <li>Relatively large farmsteads and many estates.</li> <li>Steeper escarpment slope on the southern margin of the plateau, overlooking the Broad Lagan Valley.</li> <li>Scattered pattern of farms and houses, with nuclear villages and relatively little linear development.</li> <li>Beech avenues and dense stands of mature trees, particularly in estate landscapes.</li> <li>Large-scale developments - a prison and poultry farm - are prominent on flatter land to the north of Maghaberry.</li> </ul>	<p>A rolling, relatively prosperous farmland landscape on the southern and western fringes of Derrykillultagh which extends to the edge of Lurgan. The area has a different landownership pattern to the upper plateau, with fewer larger farmsteads and many estates. There are consequently fewer roads and the built development has a more clustered character, with houses concentrated into nuclear villages, often with grand avenues of beech trees and prominent churches. Views are generally short or contained on the horizon lines of the many hollows by avenue, roadside or hedgerow planting.</p> <p>The field pattern is quite small scale over much of the area but opens out towards the urban edge of Lurgan, where several factories have been built. There are numerous hedgerow trees and a consistent patchwork of fields and hedgerows. The field pattern varies; fields are always geometric in shape and are generally medium to large in size but there are also pockets of small-scale farmland and paddocks, particularly on the fringes of settlements. Avenues and stands of beech trees, church spires and the glimpsed views of large farmsteads and country houses are important local landmarks.</p> <p>There is a steep escarpment along the southern margins of the landscape, overlooking the Lagan valley; Friars Glen, between the village of Aghalee and Soldierstown, also has a fairly steep, wooded character.</p>	<p>The farmland is generally in good condition, particularly in areas which are under the ownership of large estates. However, there are patches of degradation, particularly on the northern fringes of Maghaberry, where the massive prison and poultry farm developments have destroyed the farmed pattern of the landscape. The fields on the fringes of these developments are mostly derelict, with discontinuous hedgerows and derelict farm buildings. The slightly undulating nature of the land allows single buildings to have relatively little visual impact.</p> <p>The areas which are most sensitive to change are on the southern margins of the plateau, particularly on the steep slopes of Friar's Glen and on the slopes to the south of Maghaberry, which overlook the Lagan Valley. However, many of the clustered villages have an attractive character and the landscape setting of each of these is sensitive to change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The management and progressive replanting of important avenues and stands of specimen trees will conserve these important features. The work should be undertaken in conjunction with research into the history of the many designed landscapes in the area.</li> <li>The restoration of hedgerows and field access points in the farmland around the major prisons will help to restore the landscape structure. There is scope to plant the land with mass woodland, screening views to the developments, while maintaining the required open area of defensible land immediately surrounding the prison.</li> <li>The prominent derelict farm buildings to the south of the poultry farm in the Maghaberry area are eyesores which should be a priority for demolition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linear development along roads is not characteristic of the area.</li> <li>Large scale structure planting of deciduous native species close to new agricultural buildings would help to integrate them within the surrounding landscape and to restore a more sheltered landscape character.</li> <li>Clustered settlements are characteristic of the area, with views to church spires and avenues of trees. It is important to ensure that new development is carefully sited to maintain the nuclear character of the settlements and to conserve the relationship between the built form of the village and neighbouring designed landscapes.</li> </ul>
Derrykillultagh (110)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rolling, slightly acidic farmland on the margins of the Basalt Summits.</li> <li>Rounded hills, with fairly shallow</li> </ul>	<p>Rolling, relatively elevated farmland landscape on the margins of the Antrim basalt plateau. The area is characterised by rounded hills and shallow slopes, although there are some gullies and the</p>	<p>Some parts of the landscape have many derelict buildings and patches of waste ground, while others have a prosperous character. The latter are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor road improvements often result in the loss of hedgerows at widened junctions; replanting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ribbon development already forms a continuous line of buildings along some local roads, blocking views from the</li> </ul>

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	<p>slopes, but with a steeper escarpment to the south.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied farmland pattern, with small paddocks on valley sides and a more open character on summits.</li> <li>• Patches of gorse, scrub and marsh on areas of waste or marginal farmland.</li> <li>• Straight roads and tracks with numerous scattered houses, small-holdings and farms;</li> <li>• Numerous hedgerow trees and lines of trees along roads and tracks.</li> <li>• Conical gate posts.</li> </ul>	<p>southern boundary of the landscape character area is marked by a steeper escarpment slope. Many slopes are divided by straight, narrow glens which form a ladder pattern in views from below. The plateau descends gently to the west, where there is a gradual transition to the claylands on the edge of Lough Neagh. The farmland landscape often has a relatively untidy character, with patches of gorse and scrub and a rather disconnected hedgerow network.</p> <p>The shallow valleys often contain areas of marsh and many fields are partially infested with rushes. Gorse and holly are typical hedgerow species and often mark the transition to marginal farmland. There are typically small farms and small-holdings which are surrounded by paddocks and scattered barns, although there is a gradual transition to a landscape of larger fields, hedgerow trees and more prosperous farmsteads on the western margins of the plateau. Most farmsteads consist of small, white rendered buildings sited on the mid-slopes or local ridges and connected to roads by straight, right-angled tracks. There are numerous small houses along the roads, although the majority of traditional dwellings are derelict or replaced by modern bungalows, which generally have an abrupt relationship with the surrounding landscape. The older farmsteads are often focal points in the landscape, particularly where they are associated with lines and stands of mature trees. A network of straight roads follow the ridges and connect linear villages; most junctions are staggered cross-roads.</p>	<p>usually on the lower slopes, where the farms are generally larger, while the condition of the farmland generally worsens towards the east where the plateau becomes increasingly more elevated and the soils are of poorer quality. There is evidence of hedgerow removal, which has resulted in unusually large fields and a disconnected field pattern.</p> <p>The landscape is more sensitive in the more open, elevated parts of the plateau, and on the steeper slopes to the south, where small-scale landscape features, such as the deep wooded valley at Lagmore and the small valley by Duncan's Park, form part of the wider landscape setting for Lisburn. However, pressures of new built development on the fringes of linear villages have a detrimental effect on landscape character in many parts of the plateau.</p>	<p>at junctions of roads and at the entrances to farmsteads will ensure that the landscape pattern is strengthened at these key focal points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The conservation of existing hedgerows and encouragement of hedgerow tree regeneration throughout the landscape will conserve the characteristic landscape pattern, which is prominent over wide areas.</li> <li>• Tree planting along roads, farm tracks and beside farmsteads would provide shelter and attractive landscape features which are in keeping with traditional landscape patterns in this area.</li> <li>• There are opportunities to plant small woodlands and copses on areas of marginal farmland and waste.</li> </ul>	<p>roads and introducing a suburban character to extensive areas of countryside. Additional linear development will have a detrimental effect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special landscape features such as the valleys at Lagmore and Duncan's Park, merit careful protection and are unsuitable for new development.</li> </ul>
Divis Summits (111)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad, rounded summits on the edge of the Antrim basalt plateau with a distinctive and dramatic escarpment overlooking Belfast.</li> <li>• Open, windswept marginal farmland, with expanses of moss on flat, waterlogged plateau.</li> <li>• Angular, straight field boundaries and narrow roads.</li> <li>• Pockets of small-scale farmland</li> </ul>	<p>The Antrim basalt plateau ends in a series of broad, rounded summits overlooking Lisburn and Belfast. The principal summits of Black Mountain, Squires Hill and Cave Hill reach up to 400m, with Divis standing at 478m. They generally have gentle slopes, with some gullies and abrupt, steep slopes in places. However, the summits along the edge of the basalt escarpment have much steeper slopes which plummet towards Belfast. Between the summits, the upper plateau has extensive areas of</p>	<p>The landscape of the Divis Summits is generally in poor condition, particularly on the summits and in areas where there has been a history of mineral extraction. There is much evidence of hedgerow removal and the character of the roads, which were fringed with hedgerows on the lower slopes of the plateau, has been eroded by a combination of neglect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The restoration of abandoned quarry sites will improve views to this landscape; priority should be given to those in the most prominent positions on the escarpment slopes and those which are in the vicinity of important archaeological sites.</li> <li>• The character of the minor roads may be reinforced by conserving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is little scope for new built development in this area, with the possible exception of existing derelict sites, where there may be opportunities for restoration.</li> </ul>



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	<p>and paddocks on some edges of the moss.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occasional groups of trees shelter isolated farmsteads.</li> <li>Dense lines of hedgerow beech trees along some roads and farm tracks at lower elevations.</li> <li>Derelict buildings.</li> <li>Quarries, both active and abandoned.</li> </ul>	<p>shallow, partially waterlogged moss which is surrounded by areas of marginal farmland.</p> <p>The landscape is relatively open, with extensive areas of windswept moss and rough farmland. However, the valley slopes have a more farmed character, with straight, overgrown hedgerows, belts of mature trees and farmsteads. Many of the farmsteads are sheltered by stands of mature trees and are reached by straight tracks, some of them raised on embankments as they cross the moss. There are important archaeological remains, particularly on the summits of Cave Hill. Radio masts are situated on the highest summits where they are prominent in views from surrounding areas.</p> <p>The landscape has a rather irregular, patchy pattern, with areas of scrub and wasteland which are often associated with abandoned mineral workings, derelict farmsteads and areas of waterlogged or unfarmed land.</p>	<p>and ongoing minor road improvements, largely to accommodate the mineral lorries. Much of the farmland is in a partially abandoned condition and there is much evidence of fly-tipping and derelict farmsteads. The basalt summits and steep escarpment slopes are particularly sensitive to change, as they form the backdrop to the urban areas of Lisburn and Belfast and because they are relatively exposed. The quarry sites are often in extremely prominent locations and their restoration should be considered a priority. Hazelwood Area of Scientific Interest (ASI) occurs within this character area, forming a particularly sensitive part of the landscape.</p>	<p>existing hedgerows and planting new hedges and lines of trees on the lower slopes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The control of fly-tipping and the removal of existing tips and scattered dumping on derelict sites, would improve landscape condition.</li> <li>The landscape on the edges of active quarry sites should be restored, particularly at entrances and the permanent boundaries, where there are often steep, odd-shaped bunds and abandoned plant.</li> <li>Limiting routes for mineral lorries will help conserve narrow roads and remaining hedgerow trees from further erosion by heavy vehicles.</li> <li>New hedgerow tree planting and the encouragement of natural regeneration, particularly near farmsteads, mineral sites and along roads on the lower slopes of the plateau will screen development and reinforce the landscape structure.</li> <li>If new planting is restricted to the lower slopes, the gradual transition to an open, uncluttered skyline on the rounded summits may be conserved.</li> </ul>	
Belfast Basalt Escarpment (112)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distinctive dark basalt cliffs with stepped profile and steep scarp slope which tower above the northern edge of Belfast.</li> <li>Small scale patchwork of improved pasture with scrub encroachment.</li> <li>Unkempt, gappy hedgerows.</li> <li>Open skyline; deciduous</li> </ul>	<p>The edge of the Antrim basalt plateau is well defined by a steep scarp slope which wraps around and contains the north west edge of Belfast. The black basalt outcrops have a distinctive, sheer profile which is broken by a series of steep, wooded glens. The Hills are pitted with quarries and have a rugged, almost brutal character. They provide a dramatic contrast to the dense urban areas below. The dark basalt overlies a thin band of chalk, which</p>	<p>Seen at close quarters, the landscape of the Belfast Basalt Escarpment is generally in a rather degraded state, with neglect and loss of field boundaries giving the area an untidy character. Fly tipping is evident along some of the local roads and in some derelict quarries. The scarp slope is a prominent landmark of the area and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restoration of abandoned quarry workings will improve the visual appearance and landscape condition of the escarpment. Quarries in prominent positions are particularly important.</li> <li>Management of degraded hedgerows and replanting along post and wire boundaries will</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The characteristic slope profile may be preserved by retaining an open, rural character and limiting the extent of development into the prominent upper slopes.</li> <li>Edges of urban settlement which are tightly contained within field boundaries may be</li> </ul>

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	<p>woodland covers lower slopes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transmission masts on summits and dominant pylon infrastructure.</li> <li>• Prominent, abandoned quarries.</li> </ul>	<p>forms a strong contrast in colour whenever it is visible. Belfast Castle, at the northern end of the narrow strip, is set in a densely wooded designed landscape which contrasts with the rugged, rural character of the scarp edge. Further to the west, the steep wooded landscapes associated with Collin House lie derelict. The lower escarpment slopes are a mixture of hummocky open pasture with gappy hedgerows and stands of deciduous woodland on steeper slopes.</p> <p>There are extensive areas of regenerating scrub and gorse. Narrow roads provide steep links between the ridge-top road and Belfast, winding up the basalt edge. The slopes are pitted with quarries. Most are abandoned and have a rugged, untidy character and many are associated with fly tipping. The quarries are prominent and a strong influence on landscape character and quality. The basalt edge provides an opportunity for panoramic views over the city of Belfast. The northern edge of the city has a high density, well defined boundary which is contained within the geometric field pattern.</p>	<p>its open character, distinct profile and high visibility render it particularly sensitive to change. Despite the degraded condition of some areas, it creates a distinctive setting for Belfast which merits conservation and management. The entire area is therefore classified as an 'Area of Scenic Quality'.</p>	<p>strengthen landscape patterns and enhance the condition of the landscape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and replanting of the remaining deciduous woodland on the lower slopes of the escarpment will ensure that these slopes remain wooded, creating recreational opportunities for residents of Belfast and enhancing the setting of the city.</li> </ul>	<p>integrated most easily with the scale of the landscape.</p>
Expansive Crumlin Farmland (113)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gently sloping farmland in the vicinity of Belfast International Airport.</li> <li>• Large, open fields of pasture bounded by overgrown hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.</li> <li>• Shelterbelts add to the effect of a well treed landscape.</li> <li>• Airfields occupy the flattest areas.</li> <li>• A clear hierarchy of straight roads is evenly distributed, criss-crossing the flat plain.</li> <li>• Housing development and farmsteads are evenly scattered across the area.</li> </ul>	<p>The Expansive Crumlin Farmland lies near the eastern shores of Lough Neagh, occupying a relatively flat area underlain by rocks of the Upper Basalt formation. The land slopes gently from the lower slopes of the Belfast Hills (Derrykillultagh) to the fringes of Lough Neagh to the west. Clady Water, Dunmore River and the Crumlin River flow from the hills across the farmland but do not have a strong presence in the landscape. The valleys of the Clady and Crumlin rivers are narrow and steep-sided so the water channels are relatively inconspicuous. The extensive network of overgrown hedgerows gives the area a well treed character, although many are over-mature.</p> <p>The pastures are large and geometric in shape contributing to the ordered, simple landscape pattern. Scattered farms and small villages form the main settlements; farms are typically sited at the end of straight tracks, at a distance from the road, while more recent housing tends to be sited right</p>	<p>The agricultural landscape is in a reasonable condition, although the over-mature trees and degraded hedgerows are in need of replacement or management. The disused airfield has altered the scale and structure of the landscape and areas such as this require landscape enhancement and restoration to return the landscape to its original character. The most sensitive areas to change are the scenic landscapes close to the shores of Lough Neagh and areas with a more undulating landform on the edges of the Six Mile Water Valley and at the foot of the Belfast Hills. The small nucleated villages are sensitive to expansion and sprawl which would affect their character.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neglect and lack of management has led to the gradual degradation of the hedgerow network and the over-maturing of hedgerow trees; restoration and management of hedgerows will prevent the presence of leggy, neglected hedgerows which contribute to a degraded character.</li> <li>• New trees may be replanted to replace those which have become over-mature; these may be used to accommodate and shelter new development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are considerable pressures from scattered built development in the countryside where it lies outside a greenbelt; the density of development in the countryside should not be pushed beyond its limits.</li> <li>• Views to Lough Neagh from the western fringes of the area may be retained by ensuring that new development does not intrude into, or obstruct, important views.</li> <li>• Airfields are a major feature of the area, causing an expansion of landscape scale and loss of vegetation; restoration or redevelopment of disused airport sites may</li> </ul>

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		<p>alongside the road. The largest settlement in the area is the compact town of Crumlin. The town is divided by the steep wooded valley of the Crumlin River, which is designated as the Crumlin Glen Woodland Park. The flat and open landscape character makes it ideal for the location of airfields and Belfast International Airport is one of the three airfields located in this area. The site of the old civil airfield at Nutt's Corner is an expanse of degraded, derelict land.</p>			<p>result in enhancement of landscape character and restoration of landscape pattern.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation of the settings of the clustered settlements will prevent overspill of built development and protect their nucleated form.</li> </ul>
<p>Three and Six Mile Water Valleys (114)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gently rolling ridges within the broad lowland valleys of the Three Mile Water and Six Mile Water.</li> <li>• Large open pastures are divided by hedgerows with numerous hedgerow trees.</li> <li>• Densely settled, with many large farms and a variety of architectural styles.</li> <li>• Widespread, prominent and large scale industrial development is scattered throughout the valleys, especially on the outskirts of Newtownabbey.</li> <li>• Dense transport infrastructure including the M2, A6, A57 and the Ballymena to Belfast railway line.</li> <li>• No coherent visual relationship between the buildings and their rural setting.</li> </ul>	<p>The River Six Mile Water flows within a broad, gently undulating valley which acts as a corridor for the dense infrastructure linking the towns of Antrim and Ballyclare. A shorter tributary, the Three Mile Water, extends south east from this principal valley to Newtownabbey. Large pastures, divided by overgrown hedgerows, dominate the rural landscape, although there is a much smaller scale field pattern on the valley floor near Newtownabbey, where the soils are relatively poorly drained. Large scale built development and infrastructure is prominent in some areas, particularly on the fringes of Newtownabbey and Antrim. There are numerous hedgerow trees and the valley floor landscape has a secluded character. However, larger blocks of woodland are rare and the hedgerows are often incomplete. Electricity pylons are especially prominent on local skylines.</p> <p>The traditional settlement pattern, of small clustered towns and villages on the lower slopes of the valley, and small settlements on the upper slopes alongside tributary streams, is still very evident, although there is a scattering of industrial premises, factories, landfill sites and housing throughout the area, connected by a good infrastructure network. The variety of scales and styles of built development emphasises its presence in the landscape and does not always encourage a coherent relationship between settlement and landscape context.</p>	<p>Landscape condition is generally poor due to the incomplete hedgerow network and the decline of mature trees, although the valley floor between Antrim and Templepatrick has a richer character and a much denser network of trees. The wooded estates of Greenmount and Upton Park add to the diversity and sensitivity of the landscape in this area. The settings of built development are often quite open and incoherent, leading to a rather degraded visual character in some areas.</p> <p>There are long views along the valleys from the narrow roads linking settlements on the lower slopes, and both valleys are overlooked by views from the surrounding ridges and hills. The area is therefore relatively sensitive to large-scale development, although development could be accommodated if it were well integrated with existing field patterns and if links to the existing infrastructure could be designed with minimum visual impact. The extent of built development in this area has a significant impact and continued hedgerow loss will result in a greater</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is scope for extensive woodland planting on the valley floor on the fringes of Newtownabbey, where piecemeal development is leading to a relatively degraded landscape character at an important gateway to Belfast.</li> <li>• Re-instatement and management of hedgerows will reverse the present degradation, over-maturity and loss which is apparent throughout the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further built development may be accommodated through a co-ordinated landscape strategy; woodland and hedgerow planting would improve the landscape structure and thereby mitigate the impacts of built development.</li> <li>• A unified building theme and a coherent architectural style, which draws on vernacular features, should be encouraged.</li> <li>• Clear zones of development may be established by using woodland or landform to create a distinctive landscape setting for large-scale urban development such as retail outlets, factories and industrial developments.</li> </ul>

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		<p>Carnmoney Hill is a prominent outlier from the Belfast Basalt Escarpment, which forms a landmark for Newtownabbey. The hill has a rugged, natural landscape, with a plummeting escarpment to the south. There are long views from the M2 motorway along the Three Mile Water valley to the town of Newtownabbey and to Belfast Lough.</p>	<p>sensitivity to landscape change. Woodland planting could substantially reduce the sensitivity of the landscape to large scale development.</p>		
Tardree and Six Mile Water Slopes (115)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undulating land on the lower slopes of the Six Mile Water valley.</li> <li>• Mixed patterns of fields and woodlands of different scales, with woodland cover increasing to the east.</li> <li>• Hummocky pastures with hillocks, rock outcrops and rough grazing.</li> <li>• Leggy hedgerows and degraded field boundaries.</li> <li>• Scattered farms and small holdings; many with outbuildings.</li> <li>• Lines of hedgerow trees and some mixed woodland on lower slopes.</li> <li>• Numerous small villages.</li> <li>• Archaeological remains including raths, stone circles, standing stones and chambered graves.</li> </ul>	<p>The Tardree and Six Mile Water Slopes wrap around an area of high basalt moorland which includes the summits of Carn Hill, Big Collin, Wee Collin, Tardree Mountain and Douglas Top. The area lies between the high ground of the Tardree Upland Pastures and the Three and Six Mile WaterValleys. It is characterised by an area of relatively degraded undulating farmland with overgrown, leggy hedgerows and rushy pastures. The uneven topography results in an irregular field pattern. Hedgerow trees create a wooded appearance in some views, although in others their uneven and leggy forms give the impression of mismanagement and neglect. The steeper slopes, on the edge of the basalt moorland to the north, become progressively more wooded towards the east.</p> <p>There are no major settlements in the area, but many small settlement clusters, farms and smallholdings are scattered across the lower valley slopes where they are sheltered by landform and well connected by a dense network of roads. Archaeological remains, such as Wileys Fort, raths and standing stones, indicate the long history of settlement on these accessible slopes. A network of lanes and minor roads criss-cross the landscape and permit some long and sweeping views into the valley of the Six Mile Water.</p>	<p>The landscape appears rather degraded due to the neglect of field boundaries and pasture, especially towards the valley bottom. The presence of a multitude of electricity pylons, especially around Hillhead where they converge at a power station, intrudes into the rural setting. The steeper slopes, on the fringes of the upland areas to the north, are particularly sensitive to change. Elsewhere, the landscape's sensitivity to change is increased by views from the surrounding uplands. There is some scope to accommodate a variety of development, provided it is associated with tree planting to provide an appropriate level of screening.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The preservation of the numerous archaeological sites, and the provision of public access to them, would enhance these landscape features which are particularly characteristic of the area.</li> <li>• Management of hedgerows and field boundaries would improve landscape condition and enhance visual amenity.</li> <li>• Expansion of woodland (and commercial forestry) should be sensitively designed to ensure that the characteristic diverse pattern of fields and woodland on the steeper slopes is retained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scattered housing in the countryside may detract from its rural character; housing styles could be better unified by drawing on vernacular details.</li> <li>• Larger scale development could be screened using woodland planting; this would provide opportunities to extend and improve the wooded network, linking new planting to existing hedgerows and shelterbelts.</li> <li>• Farm outbuildings could be painted to make them features rather than eye sores within the landscape; a dark red colour creates an attractive contrast with the landscape and responds to the traditional colours found within the rural setting.</li> </ul>
Carrickfergus Shoreline (129)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrow flat coastal plain.</li> <li>• Large industrial and commercial developments along coastal edge.</li> <li>• Almost continuous belt of development which includes the main settlements of</li> </ul>	<p>The Carrickfergus Shoreline forms a fringe of flat land, 1km to 3km wide, between the high basalt ridge of the Carrickfergus Farmed Escarpment to the north and Belfast Lough to the south. The accommodating relief has been utilised by extensive development which runs more or less continuously along the length of the shore and extends</p>	<p>The landscape has been subject to extensive recent development, especially between Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey. This has detracted from the identity and uniqueness of separate communities and has depleted the character of the natural</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may be opportunities to develop coastal viewpoints, such as parks and jetties, along the shoreline, and to give priority to amenity land uses in this sensitive and important area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is scope to develop a landscape strategy for continued development with clearly identified zones for development, environmental improvements and landscape works.</li> </ul>

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	<p>Carrickfergus and the smaller village of Greenisland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peripheral industry as well as scattered housing along roads links separate settlements and obscures their separate identities.</li> <li>Pockets of woodland around Castle Dobbs.</li> <li>Communications and services corridor.</li> <li>Expansive views of the sea.</li> </ul>	<p>westwards to the outskirts of Newtownabbey. Carrickfergus is the most concentrated area of settlement, with recent housing extending northwards from the shoreline core of the town. Prominent industrial structures, such as the stack of Kilroot Power Station provide a focus for miles around. Other ribbon development extends along the A2 and B90.</p> <p>The linearity of the Carrickfergus Shoreline is emphasised by the roads, railway and transmission lines that pass along it. Views of the sea are a fundamental aspect of the local landscape character and, while coastal development blocks visibility from many locations inland, there are a number of significant waterfront viewpoints, such as Carrickfergus Castle. The railway follows the edge of the shoreline east of Carrickfergus, with excellent views across the Lough.</p>	<p>rocky shoreline and views of the sea. Additional development will therefore be less pronounced in its effect, although there are opportunities to improve the landscape and visual quality of this area and further development should be associated with local environmental improvements.</p> <p>All development currently lies to the south of the B90 which forms a northern boundary to this coastal strip landscape. If development extends beyond this boundary, it will extend into the adjacent Carrickfergus Farmed Escarpment, where the characteristic small-scale ladder field pattern is highly sensitive to landscape change. The Inner Belfast Lough ASSI extends from Belfast to Carrickfergus and this designation makes the water's edge a particularly sensitive area.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing landscape elements such as hedgerows, stone walls and woodlands may provide structural edges to individual settlements and help to reinforce settlement identity, preventing the coalescence of adjacent settlements.</li> <li>Local features and built elements may be used to establish gateways to existing settlements, enhancing their distinctive character.</li> </ul>
Carrickfergus Farmed Escarpment (130)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently rolling landform on the margins of the basalt plateau.</li> <li>Narrow wooded glens.</li> <li>Small regular grid pattern of pasture defined by hedges which are generally gappy and poorly maintained.</li> <li>Scattered new houses.</li> <li>Numerous transmission lines and pylons.</li> <li>Hedgerow trees and Scots pines.</li> <li>Panoramic views over Belfast Lough and its northern and southern shores.</li> </ul>	<p>This landscape forms a transition between the flat coastal fringe of the Carrickfergus Shoreline and the Carrickfergus Upland Pastures. It is a fairly narrow apron of undulating land which leads from the high pasture to the coastal plain. The Woodburn Glen cuts back into the slope, breaking the smooth slope profile. This is almost wholly pasture land with a grid of small regular fields enclosed by hedge boundaries and trees. Scot's pines are a characteristic feature in hedgerows on the steeper slopes. Although there is a strong rural character, new houses form an incongruous recent addition to the area, exhibiting a range of styles which bear little relation to the vernacular stone farmhouses.</p> <p>The elevated views from this area are distinctive, overlooking the concentrated development along the northern shoreline and, beyond it, the expanse of Belfast Lough with its distant southern shoreline. The Kilroot Power Station stack at Carrickfergus</p>	<p>The landscape has experienced significant encroachment from ad hoc housing; the boundary of coastal settlement is currently well contained south of the B90, but pressure on this is high. Hedges are not well managed and have generally become gappy and relatively untidy in places, leading to a decline in the distinctive small-scale pattern of pastures and hedgerows. However, much of the local farmland retains a rural character, with elevated seaward views. The escarpment slope is sensitive due to its prominent position within the landscape and the encroaching pressures from housing developments on the lower slopes. The gradual transition from the small-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The distinctive small-scale gridded field pattern on the lower escarpment slopes could be conserved by preventing enlargement of fields, dereliction of hedgerows and encroachment of built development.</li> <li>Afforestation of the slopes should be designed in such a way as to retain a large proportion of open space and to develop vistas for views over Belfast Lough.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The edges of recent development could be softened through additional planting and, wherever possible, by integration with the existing field pattern and hedgerow structure.</li> <li>Further development should be designed to fit with the existing landscape pattern and should avoid forming a solid horizontal line along the B90; encroachment of housing north of the B90 should be avoided.</li> </ul>

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		<p>forms a focus within its industrial setting, but the numerous transmission lines that extend from it encroach intrusively over the slopes and on to the upland pasture. The basalt scarps of Knockagh and Porg Hill also form notable elements within views.</p>	<p>scale pastures on the lower slopes to the broader, more wooded landscape pattern on the ridgetop is particularly sensitive and constitutes an 'Area of Scenic Quality'. This distinctive landscape pattern is important in visual terms as it conserves the integrity of the ridge as a strong feature in the landscape and provides an attractive setting for Carrickfergus and the other coastal towns. The Woodburn Glen is a sensitive feature within this context which is designated an ASSI, or Area of Special Scientific Interest.</p>		