

Annex 1

Curraghinalt, Gortin

December 2025

References to ‘Sense of Place’ within Planning Policy

Table 1: Selected References to ‘Sense of Place’ within the Regional Development Strategy (RDS)

Page/Para reference	Quotation
RG4	RG4: Promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure
Pg. 37, Para 3.7	The unfulfilled potential of the tourism industry reflects the fact that it lost some three quarters of its global market share of incoming visitors at the start of the troubles. Investment in tourism brings new facilities to our towns, cities and surrounding landscapes, thereby creating a sense of pride for the people of Northern Ireland. It also provides the opportunity to get maximum benefit from our wealth of environmental and heritage assets; our waterways, landscapes, coastline and built heritage. There are health benefits to be gained by a more active resident population who are motivated to be out and about exploring more of Northern Ireland’s tourism assets. Tourism can make a step change in its contribution to the economy if the public, private and voluntary sectors work together. All new or extended infrastructure required to support and enhance the tourist industry needs to be appropriately located and sited with proper regard to tourism benefit and the safeguarding of the natural and built environment on which tourism depends. Promote a balanced approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure while benefiting society and the economy. Sufficient choice of the right type of visitor accommodation in the right areas is important; there must also be an adequate supply of things to do. It is possible to create and/or maintain a feeling of being somewhere unique with quality natural assets, interesting architecture and built heritage and a feeling of <i>sense of place</i>. Sports tourism, for example golf, walking, cycling, equestrian, surfing, and other water sports actively contribute to the Northern Ireland economy. All new or extended infrastructure

required to support and enhance the tourist industry needs to be sensitively sited with proper regard to both the tourism need and the natural and built environment it seeks to serve.

RG6 **RG6: Strengthen community cohesion**

- Pg. 40, Para 3.11 An integrated and cohesive community is one where people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities and people know their rights and responsibilities. These are places where there is a sense of belonging for everyone and relationships between people from different backgrounds are positive and differences are valued. The right environment can help strengthen community cohesion, foster a stronger community spirit and increase our **sense of place**. The village concept is important for both rural and suburban areas as it can bring people together and strengthen communities by sharing a **sense of place** and identity.
- **Develop integrated services and facilities.** This will enable people to meet and undertake shared activities whilst ensuring there are no barriers, perceived or physical, to access these places.
 - **Foster a stronger community spirit and sense of place.** Encourage community participation in the planning process to reinforce a sense of belonging and place.
 - **Encourage mixed housing development.** Neighbourhoods with homes in a range of sizes and tenures will allow heterogeneous populations to live together. Diverse populations lead to more stable communities and can help reduce social isolation.

Pg. 50, Para 3.30 **Built Heritage**

- The Region has a rich and diverse built heritage which contributes to our **sense of place** and history. It is a key tourism and recreational asset and sustainable management of the built heritage makes a valuable contribution to the environment, economy and society. The built heritage embraces many sites of local and international interest which once lost cannot be fully replaced.
- **Identify, protect and conserve the built heritage, including archaeological sites and monuments and historic buildings.** Northern Ireland's archaeological sites and monuments provide a tangible link to the distant past, as well as more modern remains. For example, the suite of historic monuments in State Care in the Region ranges from the earliest known dwelling-sites and burial monuments through to twentieth-century fortifications. New discoveries are made every year that contribute to our understanding of the past and its place in the future landscape. Continuing work to identify these built heritage assets, on land, along the coast and within coastal waters helps inform future decisions about development and land-use change.
-

-
- **Identify, protect and conserve the character and built heritage assets within cities towns and villages.** Historic buildings and monuments are key elements of our historic townscape, Conservation Areas, key civic and publicly-accessible buildings, as well as everyday dwellings and shops. If these assets are recognised and managed they can make a positive contribution to regeneration. This will allow the maintenance of craft skills, and the development of a sense of place that can be respected by future development.
 - **Maintain the integrity of built heritage assets, including historic landscapes.** Historic sites, buildings and landscapes do not exist in isolation. Their appropriate management and wider integration with their surroundings will help contribute to local character, and ensure that these assets continue to make a valuable contribution to our tourism economy
-

SFG9

SFG9: Protect and enhance the quality of the setting of Londonderry City and the North West and its environmental assets

Pg. 64, Para
3.57

Londonderry and the North West Region have a significant natural setting with its northern coastline, the Faughan Valley, the Sperrins and the banks of Lough Foyle and its tributaries. It is important to recognise the significance of the existing environmental assets in and around the North West and the City. The North West also has many protected areas of high scenic value and designations. These areas should be safeguarded, although opportunities should be taken to increase access to these natural assets for residents and tourists, where this is appropriate to the area and consistent with protecting their integrity and value.

- **Protect areas of high scenic value, undeveloped coastline and wetlands from development.** The attractive natural and historic setting of the City reinforces its uniqueness and brings benefits to the economy and society.
 - **Protect and enhance the network of open spaces in the North West.** The network consists of open countryside, country parks, urban parks, forests and community greenways. They are important recreational facilities which help to define a sense of place and character for urban communities. They provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles. Opportunities should be taken for connections to an enhanced network of pedestrian paths, cycle-ways and ecological corridors. These have the potential to support biodiversity by linking existing ecological areas creating a network of green spaces throughout the North West.
 - **Make use of green space to help manage access to important wildlife sites and minimise the potential for damage due to visitor pressure.** Increasing access to the scenic and natural sites around the city could result in disturbance effects. It is important to ensure that visitor pressure and increased access does not further damage any important wildlife sites
-

Table 2: Selected References to ‘Sense of Place’ within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) 2015

Page/Para Reference	Quotation
Pg. 22, Para 4.37	Preserving and Improving the Built and Natural Environment The quality of our local environment is world renowned. Its exceptional quality provides an important contribution to our <i>sense of place</i>, history and cultural identity. Our region has a rich and diverse archaeological and built heritage as well as a distinctive and beautiful landscape. It also plays a critical role in supporting the local economy, and must continue to do so through sustainable economic development activity. The quality of our local environment can also influence our health and well-being, and help tackle social deprivation.
Pg. 37, Para 6.1-6.2	Archaeology and Built Heritage Archaeological and built heritage assets such as tombs and ring forts, historic and vernacular buildings, planned parklands, buildings and features associated with industrial heritage, are all important sources of information about our past, and are often significant landmarks in the present townscape and countryside. This archaeological and built heritage constitutes an irreplaceable record which contributes to our understanding of both the present and the past and is an important economic resource. Their presence usually adds to the quality of our lives and promotes a sense of local distinctiveness which is an important aspect of the character and appearance of cities, towns, villages and the countryside. The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) sets out regional guidance to “Conserve, protect and where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment” . It recognises that Northern Ireland has a rich and diverse archaeological and built heritage which contributes to our <i>sense of place</i> and history. It also regards built heritage as a key marketing, tourism and recreational asset that, if managed in a sustainable way, can make a valuable contribution to the environment, economy and society.
Pg. 51, Para 6.61-6.64	Development in the Countryside The countryside is recognised as one of our greatest assets, with its highly valued landscapes, an outstanding coastline, a complex variety of wildlife, rich built and cultural heritage, for the ecosystem services it provides, and for its <i>sense of place</i> and history. In addition to its role and function as a recreational and tourist asset the countryside also supports our important agricultural industry, offers potential

opportunities for sustainable growth in new sectors, and is home to a considerable rural population. For the purpose of this document the countryside is defined as land lying outside of settlement limits as identified in Local Development Plans (LDPs).

To maintain and enhance the attractiveness of the countryside as a place to invest, live and work, the countryside requires a sustainable approach to new development, consistent with the Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS).

The RDS recognises that to sustain rural communities, new development and employment opportunities are required which respect local, social and environmental circumstances. Facilitating development in appropriate locations is considered necessary to ensure proposals are integrated appropriately within rural settlements or in the case of countryside locations, within the rural landscape.

Government policy also recognises that there are wide variations across Northern Ireland in terms of the economic, social and environmental characteristics of rural areas. Policy approaches to new development should therefore reflect differences within the region, be sensitive to local needs and be sensitive to environmental issues including the ability of settlements and landscapes to absorb development. This may involve recognising areas that are particularly sensitive to change and areas which have lower sensitivities and thus provide opportunities to accommodate sustainable development. It is also important to take into account the role and function of rural settlements and accessibility to existing services and infrastructure. Such approaches should also reflect and complement the SPSS.

Pg. 80, Para **Natural Heritage**

6.168 –
6.169

Northern Ireland is a region of dramatic landscape contrasts and subtle transitions. The inherent diversity of the underlying rocks, landforms and soils has been augmented by centuries of settlement and land management, resulting in rich, varied and unique landscape patterns and features within the region. Our natural and cultural landscapes are an essential aspect of our ***sense of place*** and belonging and are part of our national and community identity.

The diversity of Northern Ireland's habitats, species, landscapes and earth science features (i.e. natural heritage) is an important and highly valued asset of our society. Our natural heritage provides a wide range of opportunities for enjoyment, recreation and sustainable economic activity. The conservation, enhancement and restoration of the abundance, quality, diversity, and distinctiveness of the region's natural heritage are also fundamental to the overall health and well-being of our society.

Table 3: Selected References to ‘Sense of Place’ within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy

Page/Para Reference	Quotation
Pg. 27, Para 5.9	The Council’s Vision and Strategic Objectives The character, quality and diversity of the Council area’s natural and historic environment - its greatest asset - will have been protected, restored and enhanced. The quality of the landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity including areas such as the Sperrin AONB, the Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark and Lough Erne will have been maintained and managed. Both designated and non-designated historic buildings, sites and landscape will be recognised for their importance to the Council area’s character, communities, economy and <u><i>sense of place.</i></u>
Pg. 49, Para 2.1	Development and Design – Context and Justification The high quality of our environment, both historic and natural, makes an important contribution to our <u><i>sense of place</i></u>, history and cultural identity. Our Council area has a rich and diverse archaeological and built heritage as well as distinctive and unique landscapes which play an important role in supporting our local economy. It is therefore particularly important that the unique character of the District is protected through the application of consistent design principles.
Pg. 51, Para 2.6	Development and Design – Policy DE02 Design Quality – Policy Clarification The Council is committed to working positively to improve the quality of our environment and our <u><i>sense of place</i></u>. With this in mind, proposals must result in a high quality built environment, irrespective of location, which is well designed and is sensitive to the LDP designations within the Council area.
Pg. 140, Para 5.20	Historic Environment – Policy HE06 Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPAs) – Policy Clarification Our settlements possess a range of historic and environmental assets which contribute to their distinctive character, views, setting, <u><i>sense of place</i></u> and local identity. LLPAs are designated to help protect these assets and where they are within or adjoining settlements. This could be for one or more of the following:

-
- archaeological sites and monuments and their surroundings;
 - listed and other locally important buildings and their surroundings;
 - river banks and shore lines and associated public access;
 - attractive vistas, localised hills and other areas of local amenity importance; and
 - areas of local nature conservation importance, including areas of woodland and important tree groups.
-

Pg. 149,
Para 5.41

Natural Environment – Landscape – Context and Justification

As acknowledged in the SPPS, our natural and cultural landscapes are an essential aspect of our *sense of place* and belonging and are part of our national and community identity. The Council area has a variety of unique and special landscape, and there are some areas which are designated primarily for this reason. The Sperrin Area of Outstanding natural beauty (AONB) is a largely mountainous area which occupies a significant portion of the north east of the Council area. This designation seeks to protect and enhance natural beauty whilst also recognising the needs of the local community and economy. In the south of the Council area lies the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark which is home to a variety of geology, natural landscapes and historic relics. The important Lakelands of the Council area, primarily comprising Upper and Lower Lough Erne, also contain a wealth of habitats and species dependent upon them.

Pg. 196

Glossary

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)	A tool in identifying the landscape features that give a locality its <u><i>sense of place</i></u> including local patterns of geology, landform, land use, cultural and ecological features. LCA describes the key characteristics and analysis landscape condition and sensitivity to change.
---	---
