



## Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland*



## Landscape Planning for Sustainable Development

**Emily Smyth**

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Belfast School of Architecture

# Our Landscape Relationship

**Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment in Northern Ireland** (MAG)  
to advise the Minister on matters relating to the Architecture and Built Environment policy (DCAL 2006)

MAG work areas during first two terms of the MAG 2007 – 2013

- Design Review
- Heritage
- Sustainability
- Planning
- Procurement
- **Landscape**
- Civil stewardship

Carried out through:

- Interaction / discussion / debate with NI Government
- Symposia
- Consultation response
- **Position Paper**

*“Our landscapes are vitally important and I would welcome your views on how they can be protected. I would ask you to consider preparing me a Position Paper covering the issues and the recommendations you may wish to make.”*

Minister for Arts and Leisure, Caral ni Chuilin, Nov 2011



**Landscape Planning for Sustainable Development**  
Emily Smyth, Ulster University

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# Our Landscape Relationship

Landscape is our **environment, lifestyle and wealth**

Landscape is **valuable**

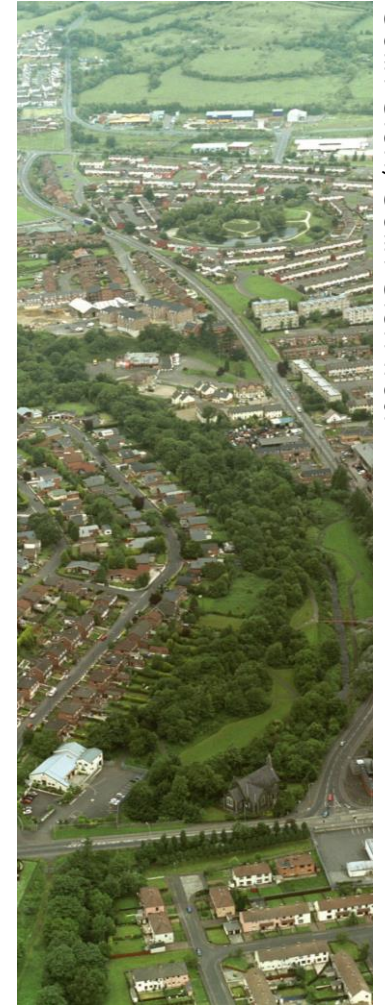
Landscape is **changing**

It is beneficial to us to **enhance landscape value**

**All landscapes matter**

**We are all responsible**

**A landscape approach to planning**



Colin Glen, Colin Glen Trust



# Our Landscape Relationship

## All places / all people

European Landscape Convention  
binding in UK 2007  
and at each administration level

- Recognise all landscapes
- Evaluate change
- Define objectives
- Implement these in all sectors



Dungannon, UAHS. Mourne, MHT. Glencriffin, NITB

## Practice and mechanisms for landscape value in Northern Ireland

## Our Landscape Relationship

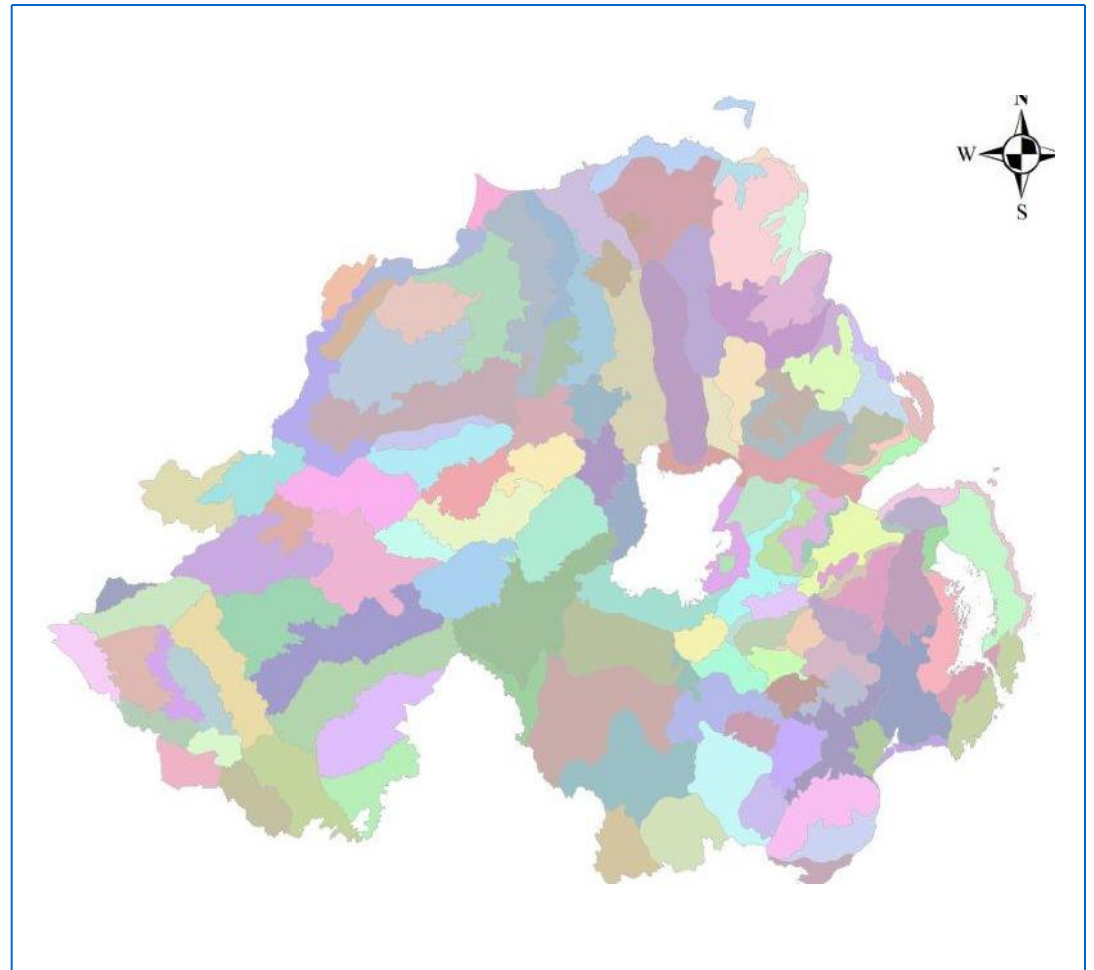
### All places

Landscape Character Assessment  
(NIEA 1999)

130 LCAs = 100% of NI area

Regional LCA (NIEA 2015)

Local LCA (local authorities 2015 ...)



DOE, NIEA (Land & Property Services, HMSO, Crown Copyright

## Practice and mechanisms for landscape value in Northern Ireland

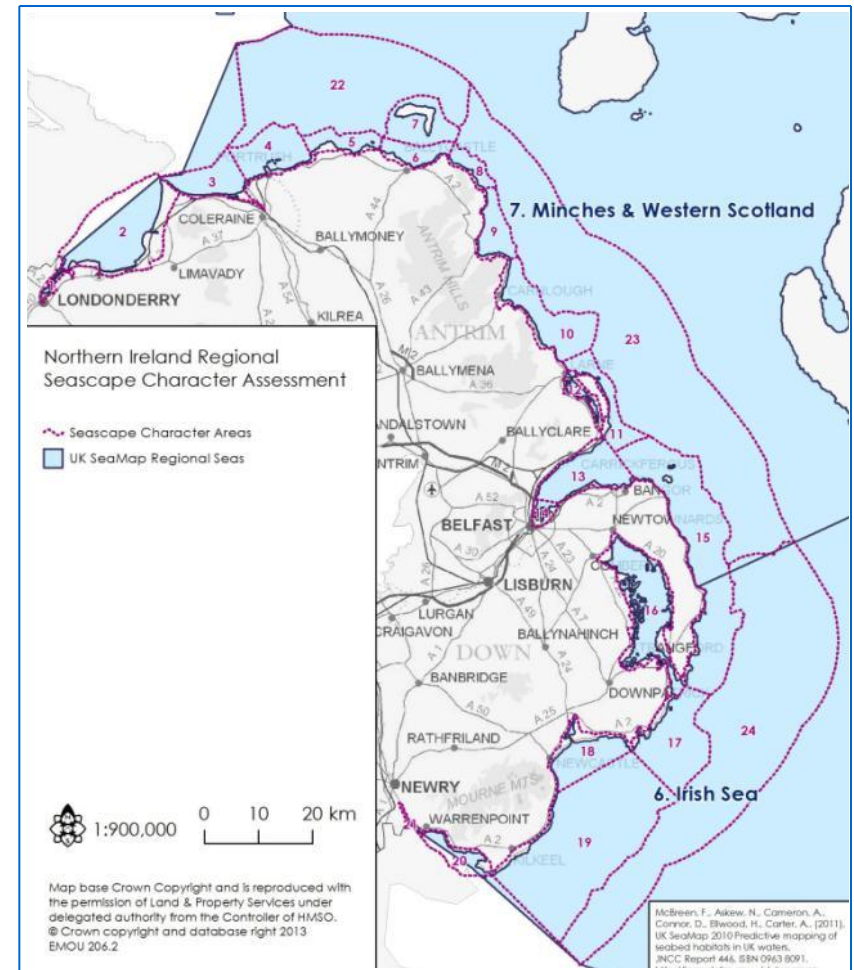
## Our Landscape Relationship

### All places

Seascape Character Assessment (2014)

24 Seascape areas

= 100% of NI coastal zone



## Practice and mechanisms for landscape value in Northern Ireland



## Our Landscape Relationship

### All people

#### Landscape Charter (2014)

- Landscape is essential
- Landscape contributes to wellbeing
- Landscape is part of identity
- Landscape reflects culture
- Landscapes matter and each of us has a right to landscape benefit
- Landscapes are shared and each of us is responsible
- Landscape is a networked asset whose whole is more than the sum of its parts
- Landscape change is inevitable but can be managed to enhance value
- Transparency engenders awareness and confidence



## Practice and mechanisms for landscape value in Northern Ireland

# Our Landscape Relationship

## Integrated stewardship

policy / implementation / management

8 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
(1965, 1985)

6 with implementation / management  
partnerships

Integrated Coastal Zone Management  
areas (2006) - none designated

Rathlin Island (2010) (within AONB)

Interdepartmental partnership

T:BUC (2014) - 5 Urban Villages

Interdepartmental partnership

= less than 12% of NI area total



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## Practice and mechanisms for landscape value in Northern Ireland



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## Our Landscape Relationship

### Natural Heritage

policy / implementation / management

471 Areas of Special Scientific Interest

49 National Nature Reserves

21 Ramsar Sites (wetlands)

57 Special Areas of Conservation (habitat)

15 Special Protection Areas (birds)

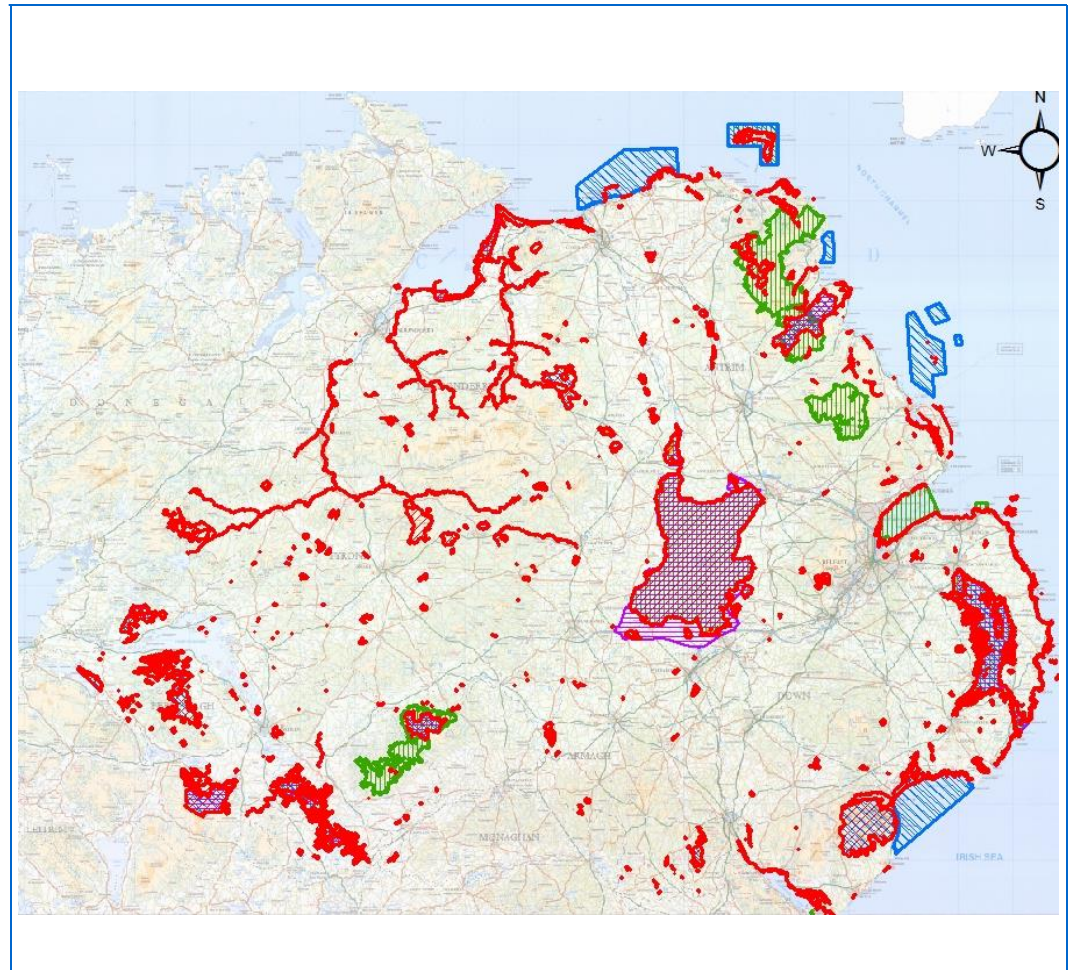
1 Marine Nature Reserve

1 World Heritage Site

1 GeoPark

Locally designated sites

= less than 16% of NI area total  
(75% within AONBs)



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## Practice and mechanisms for landscape value in Northern Ireland

## Our Landscape Relationship

### Built Heritage

policy / implementation / management

60 Conservation Areas

= less than 0.5% of NI area  
(50% within AONBs)

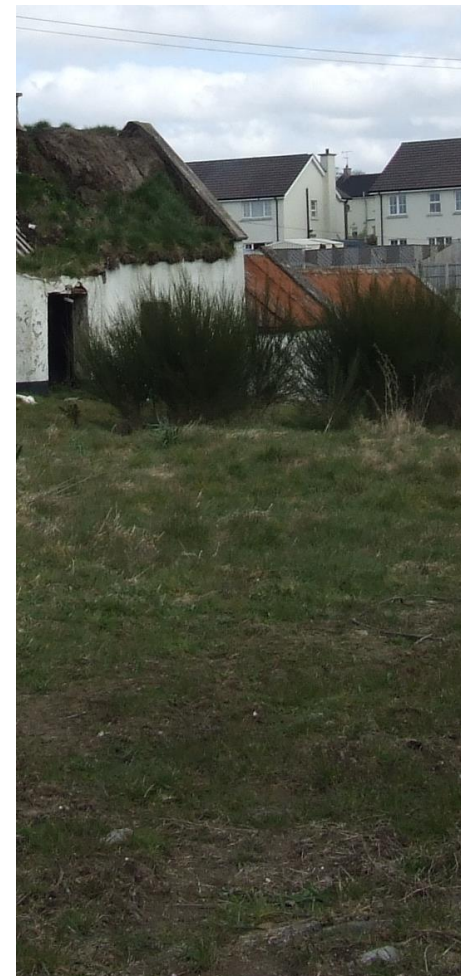


## Practice and mechanisms for landscape value in Northern Ireland

More than 85% of Northern Ireland is governed by sectoral decision-making and delivery.

NI government (and the people of Northern Ireland) need to:

- Understand **why landscape value is strong** in some places and weak in others
- Recognise the **benefit of landscape quality** to all development
- Ensure that **all development** increases the strength of landscape value in all cases



Castlederg, UAHS

## Recommendations for Northern Ireland government action



Landscape Planning for Sustainable Development  
Emily Smyth, Ulster University



## Engage with European Landscape Convention:

- Regular meetings of national public sector landscape bodies
- Consult with RECEP-ENELC

## Adopt a Landscape Planning System:

- Planning must serve the quality of all living surroundings rather than focus on 'special' features.
- Nurture landscape stewardship through (rather than in spite of) economic development.



## Recommendations for Northern Ireland government action

## Adopt a Landscape Planning System:

### Fully update NI **Landscape character assessment**

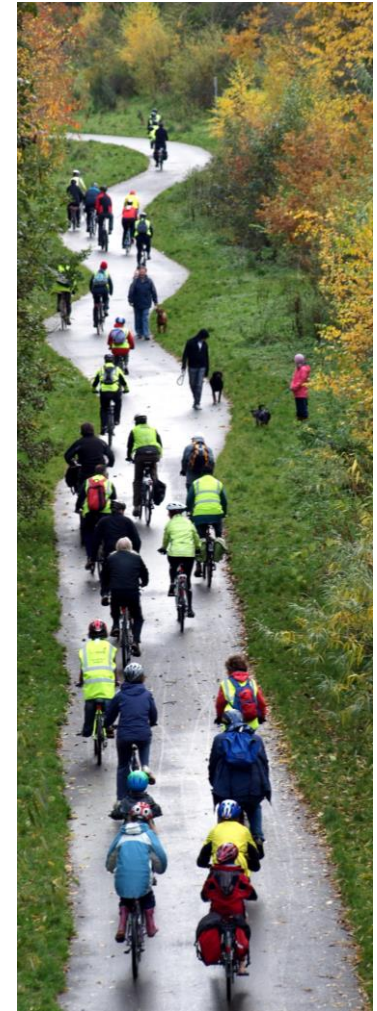
- all areas, types, aspects and scales of landscape, and their connections (including cross-border)
- regularly evaluate and monitor change
- dynamic forward-planning multifunctional objectives for optimising landscape value – to guide spatial Green Infrastructure approach and Local Development Plan

### Establish a **Landscape strategy**

- binding for all government action and processes (not just those with land or landscape remit)
- explicitly recognising landscape as valuable and dynamic resource that is dependent on integrated multidimensional action

### Establish a **Landscape steering group**

- Involving and coordinating all government departments and all key and interested parties, to champion landscape issues, understanding and value



## Recommendations for Northern Ireland government action

## Promote and develop landscape expertise

**Nurture culture of appreciation** of the relationship between landscape quality and a durable successful Northern Ireland

Require and support establishment of **programmes delivering landscape professional expertise and coordinating research**

Deliver specific **landscape training for professionals working in all sectors**, relating a multifunctional dynamic landscape approach as the means to sustainable development



## Recommendations for Northern Ireland government action



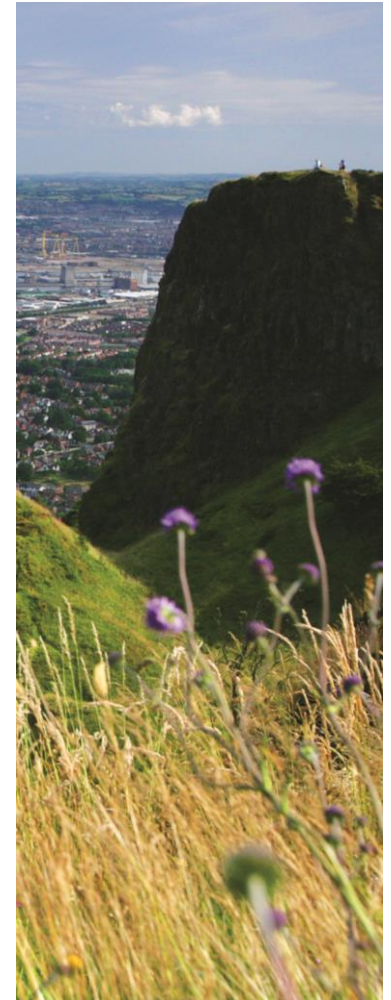
## Be an exemplar Landscape Steward

Determine a **definition of landscape in NI legislation**

Common to all NI policy and processes

**‘Landscape proof’ all existing and new governance policies, programmes and activities in all sectors**

Embed and respect **landscape skill and expertise throughout government**



## Recommendations for Northern Ireland government action

## Our Landscape Relationship

... no strategy exists which directs systematic multifunctionally-considered use of land for long term sustainability of Northern Ireland.



## Recent related progress

### Northern Ireland Land Matters Task Force (2013)

- Proposed Land Strategy for Northern Ireland

### Republic of Ireland National Landscape Strategy (2015)

### Updated National Character Assessment, England (2014)

### Northern Ireland Planning Reform (2015)

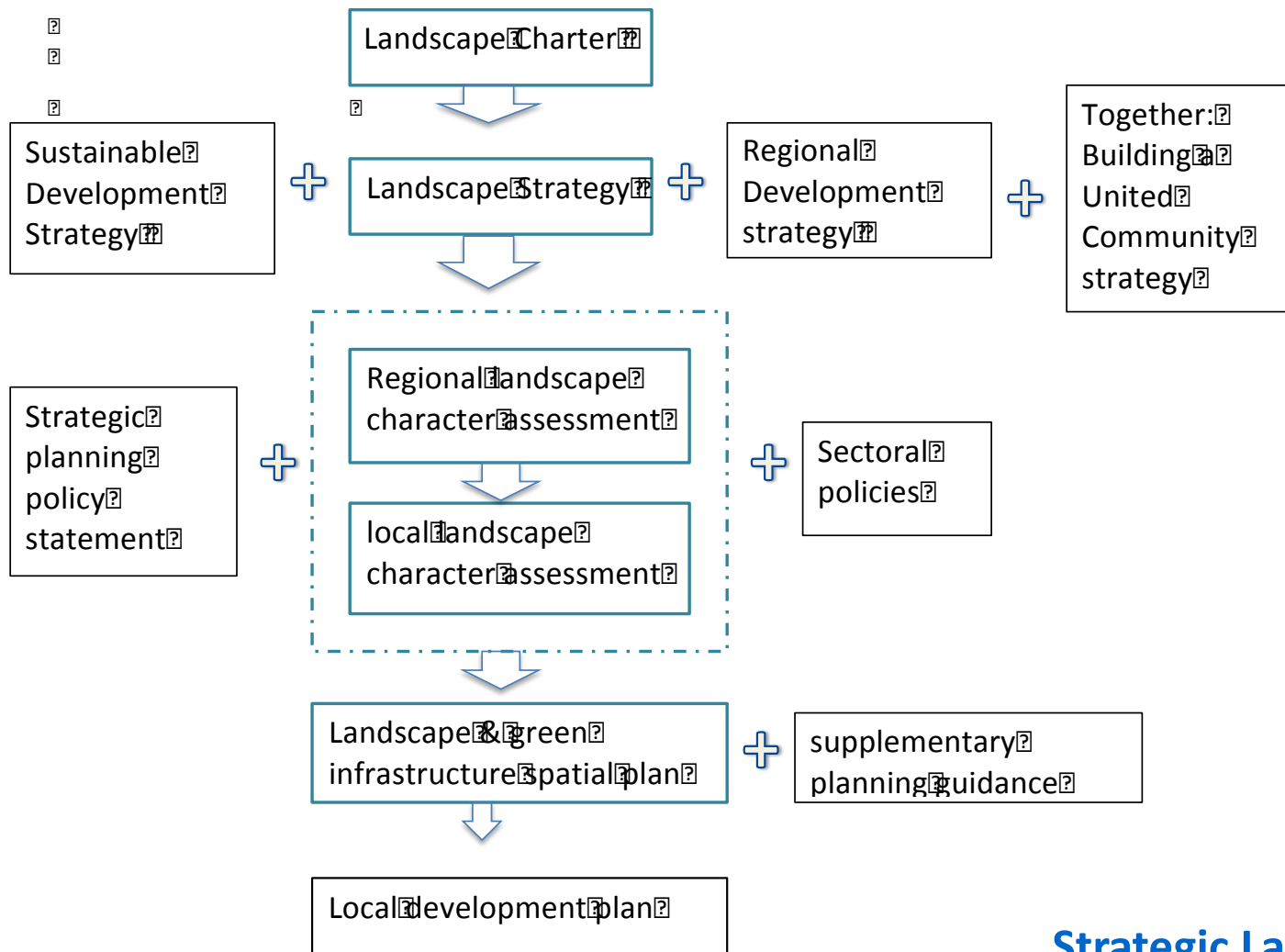
- Two-tier planning system
- Strategic Planning Policy Statement
- Regional Landscape Character Assessment (2015...)

### Northern Ireland Executive Departmental Restructure (2016)



Carriackarede, NITB





Portland, Oregon, BES

## Strategic Landscape Approach



Northern Ireland  
Assembly



Queen's University  
Belfast



The Open  
University



Ulster  
University

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