

## **12. Landscape and Visual Effects**

### **12.1 Introduction**

12.1.1 This chapter examines the landscape and visual impacts that are likely to occur as a result of the Scheme. It identifies the landscape character and landscape and visual receptors and makes informed predictions of the likely significance of impacts upon them. The chapter also includes a consideration of opportunities to improve the Scheme's appearance and mitigate potential adverse landscape and visual impacts. Residual landscape and visual effects which are those that remain after mitigation i.e. 15 years after implementation (stage 25WP) are included.

12.1.2 There were no technical difficulties with carrying out this assessment. It was carried out on the basis of the Preliminary Scheme Design, cross sections and outline written descriptions.

### **12.2 Approach and Methods**

12.2.1 This assessment has been carried out in accordance with the Roads (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999. The methodology is based on the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11 and guidance from Development Control Advice Note 10 (DCAN10) Environmental Impact Assessment (DOE Planning Service, August 1999). Best practice guidance recommended in the following publications has also been used:

- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Second Edition, The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (Spon Press 2002) – (GLVIA);
- 'Landscape Character Assessment' Guidance for England and Scotland, Carys Swanwick and Land Use Consultants (SNH and the Countryside Agency, 2002);

12.2.2 In accordance with the GLVIA, landscape and visual impacts are assessed separately. Landscape effects are the changes to the physical landscape (which is considered an environmental resource) and visual effects are the modifications to the views and how the landscape is experienced. The process adopted for this assessment, also in accordance with the GLVIA is outlined below.

#### **Consultations**

12.2.3 The comments from Statutory consultees in relation to Landscape and Visual issues are reported.

#### **Baseline**

12.2.4 The study area for the visual analysis is determined by the zone of visual influence (ZVI) which is the extent to which the section of the road to which the Scheme relates is a significant feature in the view. It is shown in Figure 12.4. The ZVI was determined by desktop map work and a site visit so that local variations in topography could be taken into account. Minor areas of planting which act as a screen were not included. The landscape analysis looks at a wider area to show how the route interacts with the wider landscape context and geographical features.

*Landscape and visual baseline*

- 12.2.5 Description of the site in the year of Scheme commencement and about foreseeable future conditions, (i.e. planned and committed developments) in order to determine how the Scheme will affect the existing situation. Both the landscape and visual baselines are examined. The information is derived from a desk review of relevant information and a field survey carried out in August 2006.
- 12.2.6 The landscape baseline examines the landscape character as identified in the relevant Northern Ireland Environment & Heritage Service (EHS) Landscape Character Assessments and the local context which includes information about the landform, landscape patterns, vegetation, historical and cultural features. It includes an assessment of value (based on the presence of designations and a subjective assessment) categorised on a five point quality scale recommended by DMRB Vol.11 as follows:
1. Highest quality;
  2. Very attractive;
  3. Good Landscape;
  4. Ordinary landscape;
  5. Poor landscape.
- 12.2.7 The landscape baseline also includes an assessment of sensitivity based on a subjective assessment of the capacity of the landscape to absorb development. Photographs taken on site illustrate the existing landscape character.
- 12.2.8 The visual baseline identifies the extent of visibility, the location of receptors, their approximate distance from the Scheme and the current condition of the landscape as it affects visual amenity. An assessment of the level of sensitivity of the receptors is then made based on these factors.

**Assessment**

- 12.2.9 Identification of the key potential landscape and visual impacts, prediction of their magnitude and assessment of their significance.
- 12.2.10 The landscape effects comprise the sources, nature and degree of change to the landscape resource. The sensitivity assessment is taken from the baseline assessment. A rating for the magnitude of the effect is based on a judgement of the scale, nature i.e. adverse or beneficial and the duration of the effects on the key elements and features which define the landscape character. The magnitude is then set against the sensitivity of receptors to produce the significance of the effects, which is a professional judgement.
- 12.2.11 The visual effects are the changes to the views of groups of receptors identified during the field survey. Their level of sensitivity is taken from the baseline study. The magnitude of visual effect is the degree of change to the existing view including intrusion into or obstruction of the view. The same procedures are adopted as for assessing the landscape effects but the judgements are made as they relate to the visual amenity of the groups of receptors.

### Level of Impacts

12.2.12 Table 12.1 shows the matrix used to assess the level of impacts for landscape and visual effects.

**Table 12.1: Matrix for Determination of Level of Landscape and Visual Impact**

Sensitivity	High	Medium	Low
Magnitude			
High	Substantial	Moderate	Slight
Medium	Substantial	Moderate	Negligible /Slight
Low	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
Negligible	Slight	Negligible	Negligible
Magnitude			
High	Substantial adverse or beneficial impact where the Scheme would cause a significant change in the landscape character or view.		
Medium	Moderate adverse or beneficial impact where the Scheme would cause a noticeable change in the landscape character or view.		
Low	Small adverse or beneficial impact where the Scheme would cause a noticeable but small change in the landscape character or view.		
Negligible	Barely or no discernable change in the existing landscape character or view.		
Sensitivity			
High	Landscape: High importance, quality or rarity. Limited potential for substitution e.g. presence of designations. Visual: e.g. Residential receptor close to the Scheme where existing view is towards open countryside and where there is little scope for mitigation.		
Medium	Landscape: Medium importance, quality or rarity. Limited potential for substitution e.g. positive character with valued features and sensitive to change. Visual: e.g. Residential receptor near the Scheme		
Low	Landscape: Low importance, quality or rarity. Scope for enhancement. e.g. mixed or negative character with few valued features. Visual: Commercial receptor or residential receptor some distance away from the Scheme where the existing view includes the road and where there is scope for mitigation.		

### **Assessment Stages**

12.2.13 The stages used for the assessment are as follows:

- 06NP Existing landscape and visual conditions;
- 10NP Landscape and visual effects in the year when the project is implemented showing the effects of construction;
- 25NP Future landscape and visual conditions should the project not be implemented;
- 25WP Future landscape and visual effects 15 years after the project is implemented when the vegetation has matured.

12.2.14 The assessment also includes the construction phase to show the temporary impacts including the removal of vegetation and installation of temporary works compounds, temporary road access/traffic control, road works, turning areas, signing and lighting.

### **Mitigation**

12.2.15 Suggested measures to reduce or remove significant adverse impacts. Mitigation proposals in accordance with guidance given in DMRB Volume 10 are recommended for both landscape and visual effects. The residual effects which remain after mitigation measures are fully effective at year 25 (25WP) are recorded.

### **Consultations**

12.2.16 For a complete summary of the organisations, which have been consulted, see Chapter 7 – Scoping.

12.2.17 The following comments have been made about landscape and visual issues:

12.2.18 The Divisional Planning Office within the Department of the Environment: Stated that the proposed route alignment is not in accordance with the 'Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015' (BMAP), 'Plan Amendment No.1'. There is a route identified in the BMAP but the Scheme is more extensive and diverts from the existing route cutting across Green Belt, the Carrickfergus Rural Landscape Wedge and existing development. Appropriate mitigation would be required.

12.2.19 The Environment & Heritage Service: In their correspondence stated that Three Listed Buildings are affected by the Scheme. The effects on these buildings and their settings together with archaeological features will be assessed in Chapter 13 – Cultural Heritage.

12.2.20 The Woodland Trust: Stated that there are two areas near Seapark which are within the Ancient Woodland Inventory. These areas are assessed in Chapter 11 – Ecology and Nature Conservation.

## **12.3 Baseline Conditions**

### **Landscape Baseline**

#### *Planning Context, Landscape and Visual Designations*

12.3.1 The study area is subject to a range of policies and designations identified in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP) which relate to landscape and visual issues (see Figure 19.1 – Policy Areas and Designations):

12.3.2 The Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) Urban Environment Strategy sets out criteria to protect areas of architectural, townscape and landscape importance. There are two landscape designations within the study area:

- Designation GD08 Area of Townscape Character - Shore Road. Key characteristics are large detached villas set in mature gardens with a coastal setting. There is one Listed Building within it at Ballynascreen House (39, Shore Road). The BMAP recognises that the A2 road widening proposal (GD06) will impact on this area.
- Designation GD07 Area of Townscape Character – Greenisland. Key characteristics include villas and houses from various periods; the landscape of well stocked gardens, mature trees and boundary hedges; and significant views of Knockagh and the War Memorial.

12.3.3 The provisions of Policy UE3 relate to Areas of Townscape Character. Within designated Areas of Townscape Character planning permission will only be granted to development proposals which protect or enhance the key features of the designated area and which meet the relevant Key Design Criteria. Urban Design Key Criteria for Landscape Quality are:

- A Development shall not include the removal of trees and areas of soft landscaping between the building line and the boundary of the road or footway.
- B Development shall not include removal of front garden areas and/or traditional front boundary structures.
- C Hedging or other boundary treatment in new developments shall be in keeping with those traditionally used in the area.

12.3.4 The key Criteria For Townscape Quality includes:

External finishes shall reflect the style and materials in the area and shall not include artificial stonework or pebble dash.

12.3.5 The BMA Natural Environment Strategy protects areas of conservation, archaeological, scientific, landscape or amenity importance or interest within the natural environment. The Strategy includes the designation of Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) under Policy ENV3 to protect those features considered of greatest importance to the identity and local landscape settings. Within LLPAs planning permission will not be granted for development that would adversely affect the features that contribute to environmental quality, integrity or character. Where proposals are within and/or adjoining a designated LLPA, a landscape buffer may be required to protect the environmental quality of the LLPA. There are three designations within the study area:

- Designation GD10 Local Landscape Policy Area – West of Greenisland. Key characteristic Silverstream watercourse of nature conservation interest – (see also MNY54 below).
- Designation GD11 Local Landscape Policy Area – Seapark, Greenisland. (Also designated as Historic Park, Garden and Demesne in the BMAP and is listed in the Northern Ireland Heritage Gardens Inventory). Key characteristics are Seapark House, gate lodge and associated buildings with mature tree planting that forms part of its original parkland setting (including the two areas within the Ancient Woodland Inventory referred to in Consultations above). Seapark is situated on a prominent headland.

- Designation MNY 54 Local landscape Policy Area - University of Ulster. Key characteristics: Archaeological sites; Listed Buildings and settings (Dalriada, University of Ulster); Area of local amenity importance (playing fields and planned open space associated with the University and Jordanstown Special School); and Area of local nature conservation interest (includes the planned open space within the University grounds and Silverstream which forms a landscape buffer – see GD10 above))

12.3.6 The BMA Countryside and Coast Strategy seeks to conserve and enhance the rural landscape including the settings of the metropolitan area and other settlements and to protect the Coastal Area. There are a number of policies and designations as follows:

- Designation COU1 BMA Green Belt, which protects the countryside, settings of settlements and manages development pressures by preventing the coalescence of settlements. The BMA Green Belt covers the entire rural area outside the Metropolitan and Settlement Development Limits and includes areas within the study area.

12.3.7 Some areas within the BMA Green Belt are afforded special protection with additional policies and designations owing to their quality or development pressures upon them. Within the study area there are a number of such areas described below:

- Policy COU2 designates Rural Landscape Wedges where additional criteria includes a site specific need for the development to be demonstrated; proposals are sensitively located and integrated into the landscape; visual separation between settlements is maintained and there is no detrimental impact on the natural heritage. There are two Rural Landscape Wedges within the study area:

- Designation CE04 Rural Landscape Wedge – Greenisland.
- Designation CE05 Rural Landscape Wedge – Carrickfergus.

- The BMAP recognises that the Belfast Lough makes an important contribution to the setting of the City and seeks to protect the coast from development pressure and including areas where the public can walk along the seaside or enjoy the views out to sea. Policy COU4 BMA Coastal Area provides additional protection for the unique landscape value of the coastline. Acceptable development should meet criteria including that it is of such national or regional importance as to outweigh detrimental impact on the coastal environment and that it will improve the quality of the coastal landscape or accessibility for recreation.

- The BMAP also recognises the contribution of the Belfast Hills to the setting of the City and designates Areas of High Scenic Value. Policy COU7 protects these areas from development that would adversely affect the quality, character and features of interest. Policy COU6/02 designates the Carrickfergus Escarpment as an area of High Scenic Value. It was identified in the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment 2000 as an area of scenic quality and is described in the BMAP as forming a magnificent backdrop to Greenisland, creating a distinctive landscape setting for the wider BMA. The Knockagh Escarpment, which forms part of the Carrickfergus Escarpment, is near to and overlooks the study area.

12.3.8 There are currently no tree preservation orders affected by the Scheme.

*Landscape Character Assessment*

- 12.3.9 The landscape character assessment uses information taken from the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment Series commissioned by the EHS. The relevant Assessments are:
- 99/22 Carrickfergus Borough (July 1999); and
  - 99/24-26 Belfast City Council, Castlereagh and Newtownabbey Boroughs (July 1999).
- 12.3.10 The Landscape Character Assessment classifies the landscape into Landscape Character Areas (LCA), each with a consistent character and identity. The study area lies within two Landscape Character Areas with Silverstream forming the boundary between them. These are “Carrickfergus Shoreline” to the north east and “Three and Six Mile Water Valleys” to the south west. Figure 12.1 shows the LCA’s in relation to the proposed route.
- 12.3.11 Much of the proposed route lies within the Carrickfergus Shoreline LCA which is a narrow, gently sloping coastal plain adjacent to Belfast Lough. There is almost continuous development, including the village of Greenisland, on both sides of the road along the existing A2 Shore Road which is the main route to the north east from Belfast. Carrickfergus, the main settlement within this LCA is located beyond the study area to the north west. The remaining areas of the LCA apart from the developed area are mainly agricultural with small to medium sized fields bounded by mature hedgerows and some trees. At the edge of the study area where the proposed route joins the existing dual carriageway there is Seapark House and designed landscape, which includes Ancient Woodland (See Designation GD11 above) between the A2 and Belfast Lough.
- 12.3.12 Only a small portion of the proposed route lies within the “Three and Six Mile Water Valley” LCA. Here the study area is also located on the coastal plain and from the A2 the change in character is barely perceptible but Silverstream marks the edge of the built up area of Belfast (Jordanstown). The area comprises mainly institutional buildings with associated planned open space (University of Ulster at Jordanstown), University and Belfast High School playing fields, and residential development. Also in the study area is Loughshore Park between Shore Road and Belfast Lough which is a public park overlooking the sea.
- 12.3.13 The A2 is an important communication route which runs through both LCA’s. It is a busy route and is a dominant feature of the landscape during the daytime and at night with the movement of vehicles, street lights and headlights. Distinctive elements which give the road much of its character are the large number of mature trees adjacent or near to the route which softens its appearance and old stone walls which form the predominant boundary treatment for many of the adjacent villas. Both of these elements give the road an established appearance. Appendix F, Tree Survey, shows the location of existing trees.
- 12.3.14 The coastal plain gently rises to the north west to the steep Knockagh Escarpment which forms a backdrop to the coast and overlooks the study area (See Policy COU6/02 above).
- 12.3.15 Table 12.2 provides a description of the landscape baseline of the LCA’s and that of the designated areas in relation to the policies contained in the BMAP (see Planning Context, Landscape and Visual Designations above). Table 12.2 includes a categorisation of the landscape into the five-point quality scale recommended by DMRB Vol 11 (see Approach and Methods). It also includes an assessment of the landscape sensitivity (capacity to accommodate change). Photographs showing the local landscape character are presented in Figure 12.2. The viewpoints from which these photographs were taken are shown in Figure 12.3.

Table 12.2: Landscape Baseline (continued over)

Receptors	Key Characteristics of LCA/ Landscape purpose of policies	Geology and Landform	Land Use/ Planned and committed developments	Landscape Pattern/Vegetation	Value	Sensitivity
<b>Carrickfergus Shoreline LCA</b>	<p>Narrow flat coastal plain.</p> <p>Large industrial and commercial developments along coastal edge.</p> <p>Almost continuous belt of development which includes the main settlements of Carrickfergus and the smaller village of Greenisland.</p> <p>Peripheral industry as well as scattered housing along roads links separate settlements and obscure their separate identities.</p> <p>Pockets of woodland around Castle Dobbs.</p> <p>Communications and services corridor.</p> <p>Expansive views of the sea.</p>	<p>This section of the LCA is a gently sloping coastal plain bordering the Belfast Lough. It is composed of mudstone overlain with boulder clay. It is overlooked from the north west by the basalt Knockagh Escarpment which rises steeply in the middle distance and forms a backdrop.</p>	<p>Agricultural/urban fringe area on the edge of the City of Belfast. The area has a semi rural character which is being eroded by development. The A2 Shore Road is a main communication route out of Belfast and has continuous development on both sides of the road. The settlement of Greenisland to the north west of the A2 is contiguous with it and also joins the B90 Whinfield Lane which has intermittent development along it. The developed area is mainly residential with some commercial and community uses i.e. shops, churches and some backland light industrial uses associated with agriculture. There are scattered farms in the agricultural area.</p> <p>No planned developments are known of at this time</p>	<p>Outside the areas which are developed the agricultural area is mainly pasture with hedges forming field boundaries and some mature trees. These areas form a landscape buffer between settlements and ribbon development. The developed area especially along the A2 has many large houses in mature gardens with mature trees and shrubs together with more recent residential development with smaller, less mature, gardens. The boundary treatments of the older residential areas are mainly high and low stone walls or low stone walls with fences above which give the developed area a distinctive character. The rocky shoreline is a feature of the wider landscape but in the vicinity of the Scheme it is obscured by development and high walls.</p>	<p>Presence of National/Statutory designations: Listed Buildings Heritage Garden (Seapark). Local designations: Areas of townscape value, Greenbelt (COU1), Rural Landscape Wedge (COU2), Local Landscape Policy Areas. The coastal location and setting of the landscape against the backdrop of the Knockagh Escarpment is its most distinctive feature. However the character of the area has been eroded by development.</p> <p>Ordinary/Good landscape</p>	<p>In the vicinity of the Scheme the landscape is relatively enclosed with hedgerows, walls and existing development. The coastal plain is a communication corridor containing the A2 the B90 and railway line.</p> <p>Medium</p>
<b>Three and Six Mile Water Valleys LCA</b>	<p>Gently rolling ridges within the broad lowland valleys of the Three Mile Water and Six Mile Water.</p> <p>Large open pastures are divided by hedgerows with numerous hedgerow trees.</p> <p>Densely settled, with many large farms and variety of architectural styles.</p> <p>Widespread, prominent and large scale industrial development is scattered throughout the valleys, especially on the outskirts of Newtownabbey.</p> <p>Dense transport infrastructure including the M2, A6, A57 and the Ballymena to Belfast railway line.</p> <p>No coherent visual relationship between the buildings and their rural setting.</p>	<p>This section of the LCA is a gently sloping coastal plain bordering the Belfast Lough. It is composed of mudstone overlain with boulder clay. It is overlooked from the north west by the basalt Knockagh Escarpment which rises steeply in the middle distance and forms a backdrop.</p>	<p>Urban fringe area on the edge of the City of Belfast within the neighbourhood of Jordanstown. The area has a suburban character with mainly residential development and institutions in grounds. There are some commercial and community uses i.e. shops, churches etc. The A2 Shore Road is a main communication route out of Belfast and has continuous development on both sides of the road except for an open area at Loughshore Park which reveals its seaside character.</p> <p>No planned developments are known of at this time</p>	<p>The residential area contains many large houses in mature gardens with mature trees and shrubs together with more recent residential development with smaller, less mature, gardens. The institutions e.g. University of Ulster are set in large landscaped grounds with mature trees. The boundary treatments of the older residential areas and institutions are mainly high and low stone walls or low stone walls with fences above which give the developed area a distinctive character. Loughshore Park which is mainly grass, provides open access to the shoreline.</p>	<p>Presence of Statutory designations: Listed Buildings The coastal location and setting of the landscape against the backdrop of the Knockagh Escarpment is its most distinctive feature but the area is largely developed.</p> <p>Ordinary/Good landscape</p>	<p>In the vicinity of the Scheme the landscape is enclosed by development except for an area of open sea frontage (Loughshore Park). The A2 is main communication route out from the urban area.</p> <p>Medium/Low</p>
<b>Green Belt (COU1)/Rural Landscape Wedge (COU4)</b>	<p>Provide landscape buffer and visual separation between Jordanstown and Greenisland and setting for settlements.</p>	<p>Coastal plain as above. Gentle slope rising more steeply to north west.</p>	<p>Agricultural/pasture</p>	<p>Improved grass with hedges forming field boundaries and some mature trees.</p>	<p>Local designations. Important to prevent coalescence of settlements. Visual buffer which, if eroded, would destroy the semi rural character of the area.</p> <p>Good landscape</p>	<p>Defensible edge to the city. Highly sensitive to development pressure but screened from the proposed road improvement corridor by houses</p> <p>Medium/low</p>
<b>Green Belt (COU1)/Rural Landscape Wedge (COU5)</b>	<p>Provide landscape buffer and visual separation between Greenisland and Carrickfergus and setting for settlements.</p>	<p>Coastal plain as above. Gentle slope rising more steeply to north west.</p>	<p>Agricultural/pasture</p>	<p>Improved grass with hedges forming field boundaries and some mature trees.</p>	<p>Local designations. Important to prevent coalescence of settlements. Visual buffer which, if eroded, would destroy the semi rural character of the area.</p> <p>Good landscape</p>	<p>Interface between urban and rural area. Highly sensitive to development pressure</p> <p>High</p>
<b>Area of Townscape</b>	<p>Protect the distinctive character (large detached villas set in mature</p>	<p>Coastal plain as above. Gentle slope from shore.</p>	<p>Ribbon development along roadside. Largely a mixture of Victorian and 20<sup>th</sup></p>	<p>Mature gardens with trees and shrubs. Stone boundary walls.</p>	<p>Listed Building. Local Distinctive</p>	<p>The character of the area has already been eroded to some extent by more recent</p>

Receptors	Key Characteristics of LCA/ Landscape purpose of policies	Geology and Landform	Land Use/ Planned and committed developments	Landscape Pattern/Vegetation	Value	Sensitivity
<b>Character – Shore Road</b>	gardens with a coastal setting).		Century villas and houses. Some commercial uses.		character of traditional development with coastal setting. Stone walls make a major contribution to the character.  Good Landscape	development. Stone walls intact and many of similar age.  High
<b>Area of Townscape Character – Greenisland.</b>	Protect the distinctive character (villas and houses from various periods and landscape of well stocked gardens, mature trees and boundary hedges)	Coastal plain as above.	Traditional settlement. Largely a mixture of Victorian and 20 <sup>th</sup> Century villas and houses. Some commercial uses.	Mature gardens with trees and shrubs. Boundary hedges.	Listed Buildings. Local designation. Distinctive character of traditional development.  Good Landscape	Although close to the Scheme the area between is fully developed.  Low
<b>Heritage Landscape/ Local landscape Policy Area - Seapark</b>	Listed Buildings with mature tree planting that forms part of its original parkland setting.	Coastal plain as above. Prominent headland Coastal setting.	House in landscaped garden.	Designed parkland for house. Includes woodland listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory.	Listed Buildings. Heritage Landscape.  Highest Quality Landscape	Nationally important feature with high sensitivity but although close to the Scheme the road corridor is screened by a high wall.  Medium/low
<b>Local landscape Policy Areas - Silverstream and University of Ulster</b>	Silverstream landscape buffer. Area of local amenity importance (playing fields and planned open space associated with the University. Listed Buildings and settings (Dalriada)	Coastal plain as above.	Watercourse and institutional grounds.	Landscape setting of University and Listed Building including mature trees, shrubs and hedges.	Setting of Listed Building and University – feature.  Good Landscape/Very attractive landscape	The proposal is close to the modern entrance only.  Medium
<b>Coastal Area (COU4)</b>	Protect the coast from development pressure. Belfast Lough makes an important contribution to the setting of the City.	Coastal plain as above. Shoreline.	Residential, public park, natural shoreline	Natural rocky shoreline largely backs on to residential development with no public access. Some open areas notably Loughshore Park.	Important component of the landscape setting of the area and City.  Very Attractive Landscape	Prominent position, no screening therefore high sensitivity but most of the road corridor is screened by development and only a small portion is adjacent to the Scheme  Medium
<b>Area of High Scenic Value (COU6/02)</b>	Contribution of the Belfast Hills to the setting of the City and backdrop formed by Knockagh Escarpment.	Basalt escarpment steeply rising from the coastal plain.	Landmark feature – County Antrim War Memorial. Agricultural (Pasture), forest, transmission and telecommunication lines. Some residential development.	Rough and improved pasture, hedges, stone walls and post and wire fences enclose small fields.	Prominent position and important component of the landscape setting of the area and the City.  Very Attractive Landscape	Some distance away from the Scheme  Low

### **Visual Baseline**

12.3.16 The zone of visual influence (ZVI) for this study has been identified by site survey. The ZVI, shown in Figure 12.4, is largely determined here by landform buildings and structures and to a lesser extent by woodland.

12.3.17 The principal receptors have been identified by site surveys and are listed in Table 12.4 Each receptor's sensitivity to visual change is rated according to the following criteria.

- Proximity to the Scheme;
- The extent to which the receptor's view is screened, (by vegetation - including during winter die back, barriers, topography etc);
- Whether the receptor is residential or commercial;
- The importance of the receptor's view;

12.3.18 Table 12.4 presents the visual baseline together with the predicted visual effects. The list of receptors includes their location, their approximate numbers, approximate distance from the proposed development, and a judgement of their level of sensitivity.

12.3.19 The visual baseline can be summarised as follows:

- The zone of visual influence of the online section is relatively narrowly contained owing to the built up road frontages therefore much of the route is hidden from a wider view by development and can only be seen from the adjacent houses;
- There are a large number of residential receptors located immediately adjacent to or very near to the online section of the route and some sections of the offline section and directly overlook it;
- There are a significant number of residential receptors who will experience the introduction of a new section of road into their view.
- There are a small number of commercial receptors located along the route of the existing A2, Shore Road who overlook the road;
- There are a large number of travelling receptors including visitors to Belfast and neighbouring villages who pass along the A2, Shore Road as it is the main road into and out of the City to the north east;
- Apart from the built up frontages some screening is provided by mature trees adjacent to the route;
- An overview of the A2, Shore Road can be seen from the Knockagh Escarpment but the route is some distance away;
- Small sections of the existing A2, Shore Road and vehicle activity can be viewed off shore from boats within the Belfast Lough. These receptors view the site from varying distances. However much of the route is hidden from view by development;
- The A2, Shore Road can be seen clearly from the air from aeroplanes taking off and landing from Belfast airports;

- Views of Belfast Lough from the A2, Shore Road are largely prevented by continuous development but there are some sections of the route which are open, notably at Loughshore Park;
- Views from the A2, Shore Road to the Knockagh escarpment and the wider countryside are limited by the development on either side of the road and mature vegetation.

## 12.4 Predicted Impacts

### Effects of Construction

12.4.1 The construction process is temporary and therefore many of the effects specifically related to construction are expected to be temporary. The following activities during the construction period will cause temporary landscape and visual effects:

- The movement of construction vehicles, machinery etc.;
- General site clearance and topsoil strip of the site;
- Siting of the contractor's main offices and works compound areas;
- Fencing, signage etc.;
- Security lighting at night;
- Temporary access roads;
- Transfer and storage of cut and fill material; and
- Storage of construction equipment and materials.

### *Landscape Effects*

12.4.2 The only permanent and most significant landscape effects will be the clearance of the site including the removal of mature trees, hedges, stone walls for the online section of the proposed route. These effects are likely to be substantial adverse and are described in Table 12.3 (10NP). The most significant temporary effects are likely to be caused by the stripping of topsoil from the agricultural fields for the offline section of the route.

### *Visual Effects*

12.4.3 There will be substantial adverse visual effects as a result of the clearance of the site including the removal of mature trees, hedges, stone walls for the online section of the proposed route. These effects are described in Table 12.4 (10NP) and are likely to be substantial adverse for a significant number of receptors who directly overlook the Scheme. Again the most significant temporary visual effects will be associated with the stripping of topsoil from the agricultural fields for the offline section of the route. There will also be a general increase in activity on the site and movement of vehicles as viewed by receptors living close to the works.

### Effects of Operation

12.4.4 A description of the Scheme is given in Chapter 5 – The Proposed Scheme. Figure 5.1 – Preliminary Scheme Design, shows the proposed road alignment and details of the landscape mitigation proposals. Figure 5.1 also shows the proposed trees to be

removed. Cross sections presented in Figure 12.5 show the vertical alignment of the Scheme. Photomontages showing typical views of the Scheme are presented in Figure 12.6 and the location of viewpoints for the photomontages are shown in Figure 12.3.

#### *Landscape Effects*

12.4.5 The sensitivity of the landscape resource taken from the baseline and an assessment of the magnitude and significance of landscape effects are described and presented in Table 12.3. The landscape effects are summarised below:

12.4.6 For the purpose of the landscape effects the Scheme can be divided into two sections:

- The online section where the Scheme is an upgrade of the existing road and largely follows the existing route alignment; and
- The offline section where it diverts from the existing route alignment across open agricultural land and rejoins the main carriageway further to the north east.

12.4.7 The online section involves the widening and straightening of the road and the introduction of three roundabout junctions. The land take will affect both sides of the road. The Scheme will result in the following landscape effects:

- Demolition of thirteen properties resulting in three gap sites. These sites will be given front boundary treatment and landscaped;
- The removal of mature trees and hedges and sections of gardens along both sides of the road which is contrary to Policy UE3 and the Urban Design Key Criteria for Landscape Quality (A and B described in Planning Context, Landscape and Visual Designations above). It will reduce the softening effect of the vegetation and impair the established character of the area. This will be mitigated to some extent but it will take a considerable period of time for the landscape to mature to the level to recreate the established character of the existing road;
- Removal of boundary walls. Around 50% of the boundary walls are traditional natural stone. The removal of front garden areas and traditional front boundary structures is also contrary to Policy UE3 and the Urban Design Key Criteria for Landscape Quality (B). The remaining boundary features are wooden fences, hedges in varying condition and masonry walls of various types. The stone walls are one of the key components that contribute to the character of the landscape. This will considerably alter the character of the road. Replacement of the walls and other boundary treatments with new stone walls will provide mitigation but new walls will have an initial stark appearance and will take some time to weather;
- The key characteristics of the Shore Road Area of Townscape Value will be substantially adversely affected by the loss of stone walls, mature vegetation, enclosure and by the more uniform design which will impair the local identity;
- There will be some adverse effects in relation to the intensification of traffic but as the Scheme is an upgrade of the existing road this will be limited;
- The route will become a more prominent and open linear feature in the landscape and the standard design will result in the loss of some local distinctiveness;

- There will be minimal land take and changes to the roadside edge of Loughshore Park and the landscaped area at Shorelands Junction;
- The alignment and design of the entrances to the University of Ulster and Belfast High School will change;
- The alignment and design of the Station Road junction will change to form a landscaped roundabout and widened road. There will be some landscaping at the transitional area between the online and offline sections.
- There will be an increase in the paved area and changes to the street lighting.

12.4.8 The offline section involves the introduction of a new section of road into the open countryside to the north west of the existing road behind the developed area. It will result in the following landscape effects:

- The demolition of properties (included in and not in addition to the twelve above);
- The loss of mature trees and hedges (see Figure 5.1 – Preliminary Scheme Design and Appendix F). The proposed route will open up the built up area where it diverts from the existing alignment and cut across the field patterns;
- The introduction of a road into the landscape buffer between settlements will fragment the landscape and compromise the effectiveness of the Green Belt /Rural Landscape Wedge policies by creating parcels of land which will be difficult to defend against development;
- There will be an increase in the paved area with the new section of road together with the existing road which will remain in place but be downgraded;
- The loss of some stone walls but this effect will not be significant;
- The route will become a more prominent linear feature in the landscape;
- The proposed accommodation bridge and ramps will form a prominent high feature within the agricultural landscape.
- The open countryside will suffer a loss of tranquillity as a result of the introduction of traffic and car headlights will be introduced into a previously unlit area.

12.4.9 The most significant landscape effects of the Scheme will be those effects on the Shore Road Area of Townscape Character and the Rural Landscape Wedge/ Green Belt area CEO5. Mitigation measures will replace some of the important elements within the Area of Townscape Value but there will still be a significant loss of local landscape character, which will compromise this local designation. Mitigation may repair the disrupted landscape pattern in the area designated CEO5 to some extent but it will not resolve the issue of reducing the effectiveness of the Green Belt/Rural Landscape Wedge.

12.4.10 The Scheme therefore presents two key issues:

- Whether the effects of the Scheme will be of sufficient magnitude and significance to seriously impair the overall landscape character of this area; and

- Whether the areas protected by these local designations are of sufficient quality to outweigh the importance of the Scheme to the BMAP transport and economic strategies.

12.4.11 Although the Scheme will cause substantial adverse local effects, the important large scale elements of the landscape setting of Belfast, the Belfast Lough, the shore and Carrickfergus Escarpment will not be significantly adversely affected and no national/statutory designations will be compromised. The Area of Townscape Value is a relatively leafy and attractive suburban area but does not have rare or distinctive characteristics, which do not occur elsewhere. Also, it has already been subject to extensive development, which has caused visual fragmentation and impaired its character. The area designated CEO5 is on the edge of the urban area adjacent to a belt of ribbon development and within an existing transport corridor. The Scheme proposes a small loop within the fields behind the ribbon development, which has already encroached into the fields to some degree. The Scheme would still leave a reduced landscape buffer between Greenisland and Carrickfergus. In these circumstances it is considered that some permanent loss of townscape character and reduction in the landscape buffer can be justified.

12.4.12 There will be a barely perceptible change in the landscape character at 06NP. At 10NP following construction the effects will be substantial adverse. However at 25WP when mitigation measures have taken effect the significance of the effect on landscape character will be moderate adverse and the Scheme will have become more established.

#### *Visual Effects*

12.4.13 The visual effects, the magnitude of effects and the significance of effects for the visual receptors are listed in Table 12.4. The visual effects can be summarised as follows:

- Thirteen properties will be removed and therefore those receptors will be displaced.
- There are a large number of highly sensitive residential receptors directly overlooking the Scheme who will experience substantial changes to the views from the front of their properties and main windows as a result of the online road widening works, notably the removal of stone boundary walls and loss of mature vegetation. These effects will lessen with the passage of time when the walls have been replaced and vegetation has matured;
- There are a number of residential receptors close to the Scheme who will experience substantial changes to the views from the rear of their properties as a result of the introduction of a new road into the open countryside at the rear of their properties. These effects will lessen with the passage of time when the vegetation has matured;
- There are a large number of travelling receptors including those visiting Belfast who will experience moderate changes to their views as a result of the physical changes and the way in which they perceive the landscape by increased speed of traffic. The presence of other sections of the A2, Shore Road, which are already dualled, is a mitigating factor, as the Scheme will be viewed in the context of a general upgrade of the route. However the loss of mature trees and old stone walls will cause significant effects. These receptors will also experience beneficial effects as the offline section will open up new views of the countryside;
- There are a small number of commercial receptors who will experience moderate changes to their view;

- The improved route will become a slightly more prominent feature in the landscape as viewed from off shore;
- The new section of the route and loss of vegetation will be viewed from the County Antrim Memorial and from aeroplanes taking off and landing at two Belfast airports. However as these receptors view the site from a considerable distance there will not be significant changes to the view.

12.4.14 The most significant visual effects will be on those residential receptors who directly overlook the Scheme and who will lose their boundary walls and mature trees in their gardens. Mitigation will lessen the visual effects as the Scheme becomes more established but it will take longer than 15 years for the vegetation to reach the same level of maturity. However the vegetation will eventually mature and as the Scheme will benefit the wider population and economic development of Belfast it is considered that these considerations offset the residual adverse visual effects, which will be experienced, by a relatively small number of receptors.

12.4.15 At 06NP there will be a barely perceptible change to the views of receptors. At 10NP following construction the significance of visual effects will vary from substantial adverse to minor adverse depending on the location of the receptor in relation to the Scheme. However at 25WP, when mitigation measures have taken effect and new vegetation will be well established the significance of the visual effects will be Moderate/minor adverse.

12.4.16 The overall significance of the environmental effects are as follows:

- Effects of construction: The effects will be substantial adverse at 10NP.
- Effects of Operation: The effects for the whole Scheme will be moderate adverse at 25WP.

## **12.5 Mitigation**

12.5.1 Figure 5.1 – Preliminary Scheme Design shows the landscape and visual mitigation proposals and further recommendations are contained in Appendix E.

12.5.2 Mitigation has already taken place in the choice of route for the Scheme. It was recognised that the widening of the whole of Shore Road would disrupt a larger area of the Area of townscape Value and therefore the offline section was proposed.

12.5.3 The BMAP Policy UE3 in relation to Areas of Townscape Value includes requirements that hedging or other boundary treatment in new developments shall be in keeping with those traditionally used in the area and external finishes shall reflect the style and materials in the area and shall not include artificial stonework or pebble dash. In order to provide high quality mitigation for the disruption to the existing boundaries a series of recommendations are proposed in the Streetscape Plan – Design Guidelines (Appendix E). The recommendations include the replacement of all boundaries, whether traditional walls or fences and masonry walls, with new stone walls and hedges to provide a high quality edge and continuity of design.

12.5.4 The Carrickfergus Landscape Character Assessment recommends that in association with new development there may be opportunities to develop coastal viewpoints and make environmental improvements using existing landscape elements, e.g. hedgerows, stone walls and woodlands to help reinforce identity.

12.5.5 In order to minimise the loss of local distinctiveness caused by road improvements built to a standard design, the DMRB Volume 10 recommends that the detailed

landscape design of new road corridors should reflect and reinforce the character of landscapes traversed and reflect the characteristic features and interest of the minor road network e.g. maintaining and reinforcing hedgerows, verges, tree lines, walls etc. Within the open countryside the design should conserve the characteristically settled landscape of farmland and woodland. Opportunities for additional on and off-site screening to reduce the impact of existing sections of improved road should be explored.

## **12.6 Residual Impacts**

- 12.6.1 The residual landscape effects of the Scheme will be the loss of local landscape character, which will compromise the local BMAP designations (Shore Road Area of Townscape Character and the Rural Landscape Wedge/ Green Belt area CEO5). The magnitude of these residual impacts after mitigation will be medium adverse and the sensitivity will be medium adverse.
- 12.6.2 The residual visual effects of the Scheme will be those effects on residential receptors who directly overlook the Scheme and who will lose their boundary walls and mature trees in their gardens. The magnitude of these residual impacts after mitigation will be medium/low adverse and the sensitivity will be medium/low adverse.

## **12.7 Summary**

- 12.7.1 The study area lies within two Landscape Character Areas with Silverstream forming the boundary between them. These are "Carrickfergus Shoreline" to the north east and "Three and Six Mile Water Valleys" to the south west. Much of the proposed route lies within the Carrickfergus Shoreline LCA which is a narrow, gently sloping coastal plain adjacent to Belfast Lough that rises to the north west to the steep Knockagh Escarpment, which forms a backdrop to the coast and overlooks the study area. The A2 is an important communication route and is a dominant feature of the landscape. Distinctive elements which give the road much of its character are the large number of mature trees adjacent or near to the route and old stone walls.
- 12.7.2 The most significant landscape effects of the Scheme will be those effects on the Shore Road Area of Townscape Character and the Rural Landscape Wedge/ Green Belt area CEO5. Mitigation measures in the form of replacement walls and planting will replace some of the important elements within the Area of Townscape Value but there will still be a significant loss of local landscape character, which will compromise this local designation. Mitigation such as replacing hedges may repair the disrupted landscape pattern in the area designated CEO5 to some extent but it will not resolve the issue of reducing the effectiveness of the Green Belt/Rural Landscape Wedge.
- 12.7.3 However the important large scale elements of the landscape setting of Belfast, the Belfast Lough, the shore and Carrickfergus Escarpment will not be significantly adversely affected and no national/statutory designations will be compromised. Thirteen properties will be demolished resulting in gap sites, which will be redeveloped.
- 12.7.4 The zone of visual influence of the online section of the Scheme is relatively narrowly contained and much of the route is hidden from a wider view by development. The offline section has a wider ZVI. There are a large number of residential receptors located immediately adjacent to or very near to the online section of the route who will experience major changes to their view by the removal of parts of their gardens, walls and mature vegetation. There are also a significant number of residential receptors who will experience the introduction of a new section of road into their view.

12.7.5 There are a large number of travelling receptors who will notice the clearance of the site including the removal of mature trees, hedges and stone walls for the online section of the proposed route and new views into the open countryside resulting from the offline section.

12.7.6 The overall effects of the Scheme will be a barely perceptible change in the landscape character and visual effects at 06NP. In the year of opening following construction the effects will be substantial adverse. However 15 years after the project is implemented when mitigation measures have taken effect the significance of the effects will be moderate adverse when the Scheme will have become more established.

## 12.8 References

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Second Edition. The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (Spon Press 2002) – (GLVIA).
- Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland. Carys Swanwick and Land Use Consultants (SNH and the Countryside Agency, 2002);
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 10, Environmental Design and Management. Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland et al (August 1994, as amended up to August 2006).
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 11, Environmental Assessment. Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland et al (August 1994, as amended up to August 2006).
- The Planning Service, Development Control Advice Note 10 (DCAN 10) Environmental Impact Assessment (revised) (DoE 1999).

Table 12.3 Landscape Effects

Landscape Character Area	Landscape Effects	Magnitude of Effect	Sensitivity of Landscape Resource	Mitigation	Significance of Effects			
					06NP	10NP	25NP	25WP
<b>Carrickfergus Shoreline LCA</b>	Widening and straightening of an online section of road involving the removal of 13 properties, portions of gardens, stone walls, mature trees and hedges. Introduction of a new section of road into open countryside, which will cut across the field patterns. However as this is an existing communication corridor, a relatively small section of the existing road will be affected and the new section will be short the key characteristics of the LCA will not be significantly affected.	Low adverse	Medium	Online section: Replacement of walls and lost trees. Treatment of gap sites for redevelopment.  Offline section: Realignment and replacement of hedges. Grass seeding.	Negligible beneficial	Moderate adverse	Negligible beneficial	Slight adverse
<b>Three and Six Mile Water Valleys LCA</b>	Widening and straightening of an online section of road involving the removal of portions of gardens, stone walls, mature trees and hedges. However as this is an existing communication corridor and a small section of the existing road will be affected the key characteristics of the LCA will not be significantly affected.	Low adverse	Medium/Low	Replacement of walls and lost trees.	Negligible beneficial	Slight adverse	Negligible beneficial	Slight/negligible adverse
<b>Green Belt (COU1)/Rural Landscape Wedge (COU4)</b>	Proposals are limited to the online section of the existing road so the policy area will not be affected except possibly during construction.	Negligible adverse	Medium/low	No mitigation required	Negligible beneficial	Negligible adverse	Negligible beneficial	Negligible beneficial
<b>Green Belt (COU1)/Rural Landscape Wedge (COU5)</b>	Introduction of a new section of road into open countryside which will cut across the field patterns and compromise the effectiveness of the landscape buffer and policies COU1 and COU5	High adverse	High	Realignment and replacement of hedgerows, grass seeding	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse
<b>Area of Townscape Character – Shore Road</b>	Widening and straightening of an online section of road involving the removal of 13 properties, portions of gardens, stone walls, mature trees and hedges. The character of the Area of Townscape Value will be substantially changed and the proposals are contrary to clauses A and B of the BMAP Urban Design Key Criteria for Landscape Quality.  Demolished properties: These houses are shown on Figure 5.1 Preliminary Scheme Design. Nine of the properties (12-26 and 34) are traditional villas. No.s 6 and 8 are derelict. No. 112 is a new property and the remaining property is a shop. These traditional villas add to the townscape character.	High adverse	High	Replacement of walls and lost trees. Treatment of gap sites for redevelopment.	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse
<b>Area of Townscape Character – Greenisland.</b>	Proposals are limited to the existing road corridor and a short offline section so the policy area will not be affected except possibly by construction vehicles.	Negligible	Low	No mitigation required	Negligible beneficial	Negligible adverse	Negligible beneficial	Negligible beneficial
<b>Heritage Landscape/ Local landscape Policy Area - Seapark</b>	The offline section rejoins the road close to Seapark but the boundary wall and setting of the Listed Buildings will not be affected.	Negligible adverse	Medium/low	High quality design of finishes.	Negligible beneficial	Slight adverse	Negligible beneficial	Negligible adverse
<b>Local landscape Policy Areas</b>	The proposed University Junction will change the existing access road and landscaped area. The planned University grounds and setting of the Listed Building will not be affected. There is an opportunity to create a better defined more attractive gateway to the University. The proposals will not affect Silverstream as a landscape buffer. (See Ecology and Nature Conservation, Chapter 6 for natural heritage effects)	Medium beneficial	Medium	Planting and high quality finishes to provide a landscaped gateway to the University.	Negligible beneficial	Medium beneficial	Negligible beneficial	Moderate beneficial

Silverstream and University of Ulster										
Coastal Area (COU4)	Proposals are limited to the existing road corridor and a short offline section so the policy area will not be significantly affected except for changes to the edge of Loughshore Park.	Negligible adverse	Medium	Planting and high quality finishes to Loughshore Park.	Negligible beneficial	Medium adverse	Negligible beneficial	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse	
Area of High Scenic Value (COU6/02)	No changes to the designated area. As the Scheme is some distance away there will be no significant changes to the character of the areas overlooked by and the approach to the Area of High Scenic Value.	Negligible adverse	Low	No mitigation required	Negligible beneficial	Negligible adverse	Negligible beneficial	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse	

Table 12.4 Visual Baseline and Visual Effects

Location of Receptors	Approx Nos.	Baseline Conditions	Distance from Scheme at closest visible point	Visual Effects	Magnitude of Effects at 25WP	Level of Sensitivity	Mitigation	Significance of Effects				
								06NP	10NP	25NP	25WP	Residual Effects at 25WP
Offshore receptors (Figure 12.4)	Small numbers	Sections of the existing A2, Shore Road including moving traffic are visible notably at Loughshore Park. Much of the road is screened from view by development. The road is part of the existing coastline communications corridor.	Middle distance	There will be barely perceptible changes to the view.	Negligible adverse	Low	Treatment of the edge of Loughshore Park.	Negligible beneficial	Negligible adverse	Negligible beneficial	Negligible Adverse	No significant effects
Travelling receptors using the A2, Shore Road and adjacent access roads including residents and tourists.	Current daily average vehicles per day: 26,000 north 35,000 south.	Sections of the A2, Shore Road outside the study area have already been upgraded to a dual carriageway. The existing route is a leafy suburban approach to Belfast.	Close range	Removal of trees, cut back of vegetation and the introduction of a new widened road with straighter alignment into the landscape. All the works including temporary works compounds and security fencing etc. will be visible from close range.  New views of the open countryside.	Low adverse	Medium	Replacement of walls and planting to mitigate vegetation loss	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	Negligible beneficial	Slight Adverse	The changes will have blended into the landscape but the maturity of the vegetation and levels of enclosure will not have been replaced
Demolished properties (Figure 5.1)	13	All but two of the properties are occupied. There are residential properties adjacent to the sites.	Adjacent	The occupiers of the properties will be displaced therefore the visual effects for these receptors is not applicable. The receptors adjacent to these sites may experience an improvement to their view.	Adjacent receptors: Medium/low adverse	High	Compensation for occupiers. Planting as a temporary measure to tidy up the sites for re-sale/amenity treatment.	Adjacent receptors: Negligible beneficial	Adjacent receptors: Moderate adverse	Adjacent receptors: Negligible beneficial	Adjacent receptors: Slight adverse	The adjacent receptors will experience a changed view.
Commercial receptors (Figure 16.1)		The Spar shop overlooks the road but is to be demolished. There is a car repair workshop in the backland area to the north of Neil's Lane.	50m	Removal of trees, cut back of vegetation and the introduction of a new section of road into open countryside.	Low adverse	Low	Replacement of walls and planting to mitigate vegetation loss	Negligible beneficial	Slight adverse	Negligible beneficial	Negligible adverse	The new section of road will be visible.

Location of Receptors	Approx Nos.	Baseline Conditions	Distance from Scheme at closest visible point	Visual Effects	Magnitude of Effects at 25WP	Level of Sensitivity	Mitigation	Significance of Effects				
								06NP	1ONP	25NP	25WP	Residual Effects at 25WP
<b>County Antrim Memorial/ Knockagh Escarpment viewpoint</b> (Figure 12.4)	Low numbers	Local viewpoint with an elevated overview of the coastal plain.	Long distance views	There will be noticeable minor changes to the view initially in relation to the new section of road and cut back of vegetation.	Negligible adverse	Low	Landscape treatment to set the Scheme into the landscape.	Negligible beneficial	Negligible adverse	Negligible	Negligible	No noticeable effects
<b>Institutions</b> (Figure 16.1)	Belfast High School, University of Ulster, former factory site	Belfast High School: Located adjacent to the road with entrance area containing mature trees and boundary wall.  University of Ulster: Road entrance bordered by grassed and planted mounded areas.  The former factory site at Seapark. High stone effect wall boundary and gated entrance.	Adjacent	Removal of trees, cut back of vegetation and the introduction of a new widened road with straighter alignment into the landscape. Changes to entrances and boundary walls. There is an opportunity to redefine and improve the entrance to the University of Ulster.	Medium adverse.	Medium/Low	Replacement of walls and planting to mitigate vegetation loss.	Negligible beneficial	Moderate adverse	Negligible adverse	Slight adverse	The mature trees at Belfast High School will be removed and the new road will be a more intrusive feature.
<b>696-700 Shore Road and the Grange</b> (Figure 5.1)	11 Houses and block of flats	Adjacent to the road with a direct view. High boundary walls and tall hedges. Mature trees and shrubs in the front gardens. There are wide pavements along this section.	Adjacent	Changes to the pavements.	Negligible adverse.	High	High quality finish	Negligible beneficial	Slight adverse	Negligible beneficial	Slight beneficial	Changed pavement alignment.
<b>Visitors to Loughshore Park, Caravan park.</b> (Figure 16.1)	Unknown	Amenity area and adjacent caravan park next to the sea with footpaths, seating grassed areas and trees.	Adjacent	Changes to the roadside edges.	Negligible adverse	Medium	High quality finish	Negligible beneficial	Slight adverse	Negligible Beneficial	Slight beneficial	Changed road and pavement alignment.
<b>Properties adjacent to University Junction</b> (Figure 5.1)	12 houses and some flats	Existing T junction with landscaped mounded areas. Low boundary walls, fences and hedges.	Adjacent	Introduction of roundabout junction, removal of walls, fences and hedges, edges of mounded areas and some vegetation. Larger and more open junction.	Low adverse	High	Grading and planting of embankments to improve the University approach.	Negligible adverse	Moderate adverse	Negligible adverse	Moderate adverse	Larger and more open junction.
<b>Langley Hall and Lonsdale Court.</b> (Figure 5.1)	15 houses/flats	Langley Hall - elevated above road with grass mound and boundary walls.  Lonsdale Court - Fences, low walls with railings above.	Adjacent	Introduction of wider road, removal of sections of the grass mound, removal of some walls and vegetation.	Medium adverse	High	Grading of embankment, planting and seeding and replacement of walls.	Negligible adverse	Moderate adverse	Negligible adverse	Moderate adverse	The new road will be a more prominent feature in the landscape

Location of Receptors	Approx Nos.	Baseline Conditions	Distance from Scheme at closest visible point	Visual Effects	Magnitude of Effects at 25WP	Level of Sensitivity	Mitigation	Significance of Effects				
								06NP	1ONP	25NP	25WP	Residual Effects at 25WP
<b>Silverstream Banks, 749-763 Shore Road (Figure 5.1)</b>	10 houses	Variety of walls, hedges and fences as boundary treatments. Mature trees and shrubs. Silverstream Banks is a new development with gardens, a low concrete wall and hedge on the boundary. Some screening by trees.	Adjacent	Removal of trees, and walls, cut back of vegetation and the introduction of a new widened road into the landscape.	Medium adverse	High/medium	Replacement of walls and planting to mitigate vegetation loss.	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	Negligible beneficial	Moderate adverse	The new road will be a more prominent feature in the landscape
<b>3-27 and 4-44 Shore Road, (Figure 5.1)</b>	37 houses	Detached villas fronting the road with mature front gardens including mature trees. The boundary treatments are mainly low stone walls with hedges above. There are some rendered walls. Some of the properties are very close to the road.	Adjacent	Removal of trees and walls, cut back of vegetation and the introduction of a new, widened road into the landscape. There will be some demolition of properties and planting of gap sites.	High adverse	High	Replacement of walls and planting to mitigate vegetation loss.	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	Negligible adverse	Substantial adverse	The new road will be a more prominent feature in the landscape. Some houses will be removed.
<b>Properties adjacent to Shorelands Junction</b>	6 houses	Existing T junction with steep, grassed embankments and semi mature trees.	Adjacent	Removal of sections of the embankments and trees. Larger, more open junction.	Medium adverse	High/medium	Grading of embankment, planting and seeding.	Negligible beneficial	Moderate adverse	Negligible adverse	Moderate adverse	Larger, more open junction
<b>74-110 and 31-53 Shore Road (Figure 5.1)</b>	39 houses/flats	Detached villas fronting the road with mature front gardens including mature trees. The boundary treatments are mainly low stone walls with hedges above. There are some rendered walls. Some of the properties are very close to the road.	Adjacent	Removal of trees and walls, cut back of vegetation and the introduction of a new, widened road with straighter alignment into the landscape.	High adverse	High	Replacement of walls and planting to mitigate vegetation loss.	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	The new road will be a more prominent feature in the landscape.
<b>Properties adjacent to Station Road junction (Figure 5.1)</b>	8 houses	Existing T junction. Large traditional houses in grounds to the east of the proposed junction. Modern houses and smaller traditional villas to the west. Mature gardens with trees and shrubs, stone and concrete boundary walls	Adjacent	Demolition of one house. Removal of sections of gardens and some mature trees. Removal of walls, cut back of vegetation and the introduction of a new, more open junction.	High Adverse	High	Replacement of walls and planting to mitigate vegetation loss.	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	There will be a larger, more open junction and the loss of mature trees.
<b>Properties adjacent to the proposed offline diversion adjacent to Station Road (Figure 5.1)</b>	10 houses	Large traditional houses in mature grounds to the east of the proposed diversion. Set below the road. Modern detached properties on the north west side.	Adjacent	Demolition of one house and a shop. Introduction of a new junction and section of road within the grounds of 132, Shore Road, a large house in grounds with mature trees. Removal of sections of gardens and some mature trees. Removal of walls, cut back of vegetation and the introduction of a new, more open junction. No.s 59, 61a, 61 and 65 will benefit from the downgrading of the existing road but will view a larger paved area.	High adverse	High	Replacement of walls and planting to mitigate vegetation loss.	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	There will be a larger, more open junction and the loss of mature trees.

Location of Receptors	Approx Nos.	Baseline Conditions	Distance from Scheme at closest visible point	Visual Effects	Magnitude of Effects at 25WP	Level of Sensitivity	Mitigation	Significance of Effects				
								06NP	1ONP	25NP	25WP	Residual Effects at 25WP
<b>Properties near to the proposed offline section. (Figure 5.1)</b>	91 houses and two farms	Mixture of large houses in mature grounds, smaller detached and semi-detached traditional houses and modern houses with gardens. The houses on the north west side of Shore Road overlook open fields to the rear of their properties and have an open view towards Knockagh Escarpment. Houses along Neil's Lane extend into the open area. There is some screening by walls, fences and hedges. The houses on the south east side of Shore Road face on to Shore Road but are screened by walls and mature trees and hedges. There are also a number of new houses on Whinfield Lane, which have middle distance views of the study area.	Adjacent	<p>Introduction of a new section of road into the open view of the houses on the north west side of Shore Road and the two farms. Removal of mature hedges. The houses along Neil's Lane and those next to the diversion offline are closest to the proposal and will have a direct view from close range. The houses on the south side of Shore road will benefit from the downgrading of the existing road.</p> <p>Potential indirect effects would be the development of the open area between the existing development facing Shore Road and the proposed new section of road which would seriously intrude into the views from adjacent houses.</p>	High adverse	High	Replacement of walls and planting to mitigate vegetation loss.	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	The introduction of a new section of road into the view of a number of properties.
<b>Properties adjacent to the rejoin of the offline section to Shore Road. (Figure 5.1)</b>	4 houses/flats	The A2 is widened at this point to the start of the dualled section. The houses have a view of open fields bounded by a belt of mature trees and hedges. A hedge screens the view of the closest property.	Adjacent	Introduction of a new section of road and large junction into the view. Removal of mature trees and hedges.	Substantial adverse	High	Replacement of planting to mitigate vegetation loss	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	Negligible beneficial	Substantial adverse	Introduction of a new section of road and large junction into the view