



Location and Context

The *Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire* Landscape Character Type is located in southern Aberdeenshire, to the south and south-west of Stonehaven. It comprises an extensive area of broadly rolling farmland and the long, rounded Hill of Garvock as well as the farmland around Glenbervie which lies at the edge of the Highland Boundary Fault.

Key Characteristics

- A large scale and open landscape of smoothly rolling ridges and shallow valleys.
- Narrow ravines cutting through the ridges towards the coast.
- Large fields of arable land and pasture with red-pink soils present a rich tapestry of colours with the strong patchwork pattern influenced by different crops and ploughed fields.
- Few hedges or dykes.
- Sparse woodland with coniferous shelterbelts planted on some ridges. Broadleaf woodlands, although small, commonly emphasise the landform, tracing water courses or planted on knolls.
- Scattered settlement pattern with varied architectural styles including some large stately homes, farms and traditional cottages, often built of local red sandstone.
- Comprehensive network of minor roads, as well as the main A90 which provides glimpses of the sea.
- A concentration of Bronze Age burial cairns often focussed on hilltops with views to the sea.
- Telecommunication masts located on the highest hills.
- Frequent single and small groups of large wind turbines.
- Strong coastal influence particularly where more open slopes fall gently to the top of cliffs or raised beach allowing views of the sea.
- Sea views to the east and views westwards across the Howe of the Mearns.

Landscape Character Description

Landform

The *Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire* Landscape Character Type area is covered with fluvio-glacial deposits derived from nearby Strathmore and soils are characteristically pink, lending warmth to the landscape. The character of the area stems essentially from its relief - a series of sweeping rolling low hills that present distant views and draw the eye up and down the terrain. This landscape falls gently to the coast where it is cut by a series of narrow gorse-lined ravines.

Landcover

The bold geometric patchwork field pattern is influenced by crop patterns, rather than field boundaries which are poorly defined. Woodland is sparse, but where trees are present they add structure to the landscape. The few conifer woodlands present are generally small and although they may be prominent on top of hills their influence on landscape character is slight. They are often located in areas of semi-natural grassland or scrub. Broadleaf shelterbelts and woodlands (these mostly plantings of sycamore) are widespread and these enhance the landscape pattern. The deeply cut valley of the Water of Bervie in particular is emphasised by a meandering line of trees.

Settlement

This is a well settled landscape with numerous small villages located along the Bervie. There is a dense pattern of farmsteads, often emphasised by their enclosing shelter of trees. In some areas there are individual new dwellings which are more prominent in the landscape. The A90 is aligned at the foot of ridges and it can be glimpsed in distant views throughout this Character Type. There is a concentration of Bronze Age burial cairns, often focussed on hilltops with views to the sea. Small groups of large wind turbines and masts are sited on ridges and on Garvock Hill.

Perception

From the east, views into the Mearns and across to Strathfinella Hill and the Kincardine Plateau are dramatic and emphasise the scale of this landscape.



This is one of 390 Landscape Character Types identified at a scale of 1:50 000 as part of a national programme of Landscape Character Assessment republished in 2019.

The area covered by this Landscape Character Type was originally included in South and Central Aberdeenshire LCA (Environmental Resources Management), published 1998; and Aberdeenshire Landscape Character Review (Carol Anderson Landscape Associates), published 2014.