



Department for
**Regional
Development**

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AN ROINN

Forbartha Réigiúnaí

MÄNNYSTRIE FÜR

Kintra Pairts Fordèrin

Shaping our FUTURE

**Regional Development Strategy
(RDS) 2025**

Consultation

10 Year Review

January 2011

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**Regional Development Strategy
(RDS) 2025**

Consultation

10 Year Review

January 2011

Seeking Your Views

We are seeking your views on the revised Regional Development Strategy (RDS). The consultation will run from 6th January 2011 to 31st March 2011. You must respond by 5 pm on 31st March 2011.

The full document is available on our website www.drdni.gov.uk/shapingourfuture/

A commitment was given in the existing RDS formulated in 2001 to carry out a review after 10 years. This revised RDS is the result of the review.

The purpose of the RDS is to provide an overarching spatial framework to influence the future distribution of activities throughout the Region to 2035. This document examines the factors which are impacting on us and are driving change. It sets out aims for the Region and provides guidance on how the aims can be achieved.

Chapters 2 – 7 contain a number of questions which may offer a useful guideline to assist you in your response. We would also welcome any other information and comments that you feel would help inform our review of the RDS.

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed to a third party if requested. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances.

Please Respond to:

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This explains the Department's Policy on the Disclosure of Information and provides guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The Freedom of Information Act provides the public with the right to request access to information held by the Department. This includes information provided in response to consultations.

Following the end of the consultation we shall publish details of the responses received.

Information you provide in your response, including **personal information**, could be published or disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals with obligations of confidence.

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential it would be helpful if you could explain why. Although we will take full account of your explanation we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded as binding on the Department.

For further information about the confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see web site at: www.ico.gov.uk)

Foreword

I am very pleased to publish this consultation document on the Regional Development Strategy for a three month public consultation period.



This Strategy is an Executive initiative. Its purpose is to deliver the spatial aspects of the Programme for Government. It complements the Sustainable Development Strategy and informs the spatial aspects of the strategies of all Government Departments. A new economic strategy is currently being developed focusing on rebalancing and rebuilding of the economy. It is essential that the spatial and economic strategies are aligned in order to achieve maximum benefit for the Region.

I consider the Regional Development Strategy to be an essential tool for the Executive to tackle structural regional disparities and promote equality of opportunity for all in the North.

There is a legacy of historical regional disparity in terms of investment in infrastructure East and West of the Bann, coupled with persistent areas of socio-economic deprivation. A key objective must be to address this over the lifetime of the Strategy, and ensure a balance of public investment based on equality.

I also recognise the importance of working on an All-Ireland basis. This will ensure better integration of services and more efficient planning in terms of roads infrastructure, economic activity and the use of public services and facilities. There are particular benefits to be secured in neglected border communities.

The Strategy therefore emphasises the importance of co-ordinated planning along the border corridor from Donegal / Derry to Newry / Dundalk as a means of reversing decline, avoiding duplication of services and building sustainable communities.

The Strategy is a long-term plan for the North. It recognises the important role which Belfast plays in generating regional prosperity and that Derry is the focus for economic growth in the North West region.


The Strategy also emphasises the extent of regional diversity. Many of our towns are not performing roles expected of them. There are differences in the function of settlements East and West. To ensure all places benefit from economic growth, the Strategy recognises the importance of key settlements

well located to act as sub-regional centres for growth and investment and their role in serving rural communities.

We must also plan to deal with climate change as a key environmental and economic driver. It is important that the North of Ireland plays its part by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and that we plan for the impacts which climate change brings. The Strategy sets out measures on transport, energy and the location of jobs and houses to help address and adapt to these important issues.

Planning for the future must also emphasise our built, natural and cultural heritage not least because these are key ingredients for regional tourism. Improving the quality of the environment also makes an important contribution towards achieving a better quality of life for all. Sustainable communities are at the heart of what we do. It is important that we maximise the use of existing infrastructure and services and we create places which are safe and inclusive and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.

To help you contribute we will be running a series of public events around the Region. I welcome your contribution to the consultation process.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conor Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

CONOR MURPHY MP, MLA

Minister for Regional Development

Réamhrá

Is an-ábhar áthais dom an doiciméad comhairliúcháin seo ar an Straitéis Forbartha Réigiúnaí a fhoilsiú i gcomhair tréimhse comhairliúcháin phoiblí trí mhí.

Is tionscnamh de chuid an Fheidhmeannais é an Straitéis seo. Is é is cuspóir di na gnéithe spásúlachta den Chlár Rialtais a sholáthar. Comhlánaíonn sí an Straitéis Forbartha Inbhuanaithe agus cuireann eolas ar fáil ar ghnéithe spásúlachta gach Roinn Rialtais. Tá straitéis nua eacnamaíochta á forbairt faoi láthair a dhíríonn ar chothroime nua agus ar atógáil an chóras eacnamaíochta. Is gá na straitéisí spásúlachta agus eacnamaíochta a ailíniú lena oiread leasa agus is féidir a bhaint amach don Réigiún.

Measaim gur gléas riachatanach é an Straitéis Forbartha Réigiúnaí ag an Fheidhmeannas le dul i ngleic le héagothroime struchtúrtha réigiúnach agus le comhionannas deiseanna a chur chun cinn do gach duine sa Tuaisceart.

Tá iarsma stairiúil éagothroime maidir le hinfheistíocht in infreastruchtúr Taobh Thoir agus Taobh Thiar den Bhanna, chomh maith le ceantair ina mbíonn síordhíothacht socheacnamaíoch. Ní mór croísprioc a dhéanamh de dhul i ngleic leis seo le linn tréimhse na Straitéise le cothroime infheistíochta poiblí a chinntiú bunaithe ar an chomhionannas.

Aithním fosta an tábhacht a bhaineann le bheith ag obair ar bhonn Uile-Éireann. Cinnteoidh sé seo comhtháthú is fearr seirbhísí agus planáil is éifeachtaí maidir le hinfreastruchtúr bóithre, gníomhaíocht eacnamaíochta agus úsáid seirbhísí agus áiseanna poiblí. Tá leas ar leith le baint amach i gceantair theorann ina bhfuil neamart déanta le fada.

Cuireann an straitéis seo béim, mar sin de, ar an tábhacht a bhaineann le planáil comhordaithe feadh na conaire teorann ó Dhún na nGall / Doire chun an lúir / Dún Dealgan mar ghléas leis an dul ar gcúl a chosc, dúbailt seirbhísí a sheachaint agus pobail inbhuanaithe a chothú.

Is plan fadtéarmach don Tuaisceart é an Straitéis. Aithnítear inti an ról tábhachtach atá ag Béal Feirste maidir le rachmas reigiúnach a chruthú agus gurb é Doire an fócas faoi choinne forbairt eacnamaíochta i réigiún an Iar-Thuaiscirt.

Tá cuid mhór de na bailte móra againn nach bhfuil ag feidhmiú sna róil atá daite dóibh. Tá dífríochtaí i gceist maidir le feidhmiú lonnaíochtaí san Oirthear seachas san Iarthar. Lena chinntiú go mbaineann gach áit leas as forás eacnamaíochta, aithnítear sa straitéis an tábhacht a bhaineann le croílonnaíochtaí atá suite go maith bheith ag feidhmiú mar ionaid

fho-réigiúnacha le haghaidh foráis agus infheistíochta agus an ról acu maidir le freastal ar phobail thuaithe.

Ní mór dúinn fosta beartú chun plé le hathrú aeráide mar croíghníomhaí timpeallachta agus eacnamaíochta. Is den tábhacht go mbeidh Tuaisceart Éireann rannpháirteach maidir le laghdú ar astuchán gás ceaptha teasa agus go mbímíd ag pleanáil le haghaidh na n-iarmhairtí a thagann le hathrú aeráide. Leagann an Straitéis amach bearta a bhaineann le hiompar, fuinneamh agus láthair fostaíochta agus tithe le cuidiú linn tabhairt faoi na saincheistanna seo agus le muid féin a chur in oiriúint dóibh.

Ní mór don phleanáil don am atá le teacht fosta béim a chur ar ár n-oidhreacht thógtha, nádúrtha agus cultúrtha óir, ar a laghad ar bith, is croíghnéithe iad maidir le turasóireacht réigiúnach. Cuireann feabhsú na timpeallachta go mór le cáilíocht bheatha is fearr a bhaint amach dúinn uile. Is iad na pobail inbhuanaithe atá ag croí na hoibre againn. Is den tábhacht go mbainimid a oiread úsáide agus is féidir as an infreastruchtúr agus as na seirbhísí reatha agus go gcruthóimid aiteanna atá sábhailte, cuimsitheach agus a chuireann comhionannas deiseanna agus seirbhísí maithe ar fáil do chách.

Le cuidiú leat bheith rannpháirteach, beimid ag eagrú sraith imeachtaí poiblí thart ar an Réigiún. Cuirim fáilte roimh d'ionchur sa phróiseas comhairliúcháin



CONOR MURPHY MP, CTR
An tAire Forbartha Réigiúnaí

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CHAPTER

01



Background and Status

Chapter 1

1.0 Background and Status

- 1.1 This Regional Development Strategy (RDS) is the spatial strategy of the Executive. It influences:
 - the Programme for Government (PfG);
 - the Investment Strategy (ISNI);
 - Departments' investments;
 - Councils' investments; and
 - investment by the private sector.
- 1.2 The RDS does so by providing both a spatial and long-term development strategy. It is not in itself a bidding document, rather it aims to provide context and evidence, as well as a framework and guidance, for where development should happen. It takes a longer 25 year perspective to help "future proof" the decisions taken today.
- 1.3 The RDS recognises that, whilst everyone should have access to opportunities and efficient services, our cities, towns, villages and countryside do have differing roles in the provision of services and investment opportunities. Inequalities exist within our cities, between urban and rural, and between different parts of the Region. The RDS has a role in recognising and helping address such inequalities.
- 1.4 Place, where things are and where things happen, can be often overlooked in decision making but it matters to people.
- 1.5 This Region is rich in landscape. Over time, houses, villages, towns and cities have grown, businesses have been established, schools and hospitals built, roads and railways and air and sea ports developed. In recent years the speed of change has accelerated.
- 1.6 Where development occurs could be left to chance, or attempts made to influence it. This can be done through agreement on strategic principles to grow the economy, protect and enhance the natural environment, address inequalities, recognise and build upon the strengths of existing cities, towns and villages, and use infrastructure and resources more efficiently.
- 1.7 Often there are arguments over the location of key infrastructure projects and investment, the building of a road, the construction of a hospital or the location of inward investment. This is a relatively small place with

finite resources so it is important that the right decisions are made. We live on a shared island and our near neighbours prepare spatial plans which recognise the need for shared working. For example, because of their proximity, the futures of Newry and Dundalk, Derry and Letterkenny, and Enniskillen and Sligo are closely inter-related. The reality for these and many other border areas is that people cross the border every day to access jobs, services, to socialise and for tourism.

- 1.8 The RDS takes account of changing circumstances at the macro level such as climate change and the global economic situation. It also takes account of specific regional challenges such as population growth and movement, the increasing number of households, transportation needs, social disadvantage, and the spatial implications of divisions that still exist in society. It considers the impacts on population health and wellbeing, the affect of physical places, quality of the living and neighbourhood environment and access to services and green spaces. It seeks to inform and guide the whole community in the drive to create a dynamic, prosperous, and progressive Region in the third millennium.
- 1.9 This Region, in common with other regions within Europe, shares the **major challenge of providing and sustaining a high quality of life for all its citizens in the 21st Century**. In order to prosper, the Region needs to capitalise on the strengths of its people and its quality assets. Looking outwards, it must build its economic strength in a highly competitive and volatile global economy. To do so sustainably, without compromising equality, fairness, inclusion and the promotion of good relations, must be key principles.
- 1.10 The RDS will influence the future distribution of activities throughout the Region. It is not limited to land use but recognises the inter-relationships between physical development and economic, social and environmental issues. Many of the challenges to be faced cannot be fitted neatly into one particular category or departmental responsibility. The RDS focus is therefore not constrained by such boundaries.

Developing a New Regional Development Strategy

- 1.11 The revised document will replace the RDS that was published in 2001, “Shaping our Future”, and amended in 2008. One of the themes consistently to emerge from stakeholders was that whilst the original Strategy had much to commend it, its size and complexity meant that often its direction was diluted. This is a relatively small Region with a population of only 1.7 million. A more focused Strategy is better placed to serve the needs of the Region.
- 1.12 Proposed changes to the system of public administration will encourage strong local government with Councils at the heart of the local community. The provision of local services to ensure sustainable communities within a more streamlined structure is being considered. The outcome of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) will have consequences for the RDS which will require the RDS to be reviewed. Some issues which are local in nature will be decided in subsequent local or community plans. It is important that issues are dealt with in the best context and by those best placed to make informed decisions. The RDS is therefore more regional than local in its focus.
- 1.13 The review of the Strategy took place during a period of severe economic and financial turmoil. Many assumptions have been fundamentally challenged. In such times of uncertainty it seems difficult to think beyond the immediate crisis. However, this opportunity should be taken to position the Region so that it can make a speedy recovery and move forward to a prosperous future.
- 1.14 The approach to the review was evidence driven. Specific research was undertaken on towns and the spatial aspects of the economy. This built on the stock of knowledge which already exists. Trends and projections on key indicators were also analysed. Chapter 2 sets out the new context and challenges.
- 1.15 Whilst we have retained much from the original RDS, including its vision, we have introduced a new way of dealing with a number of concepts, including:
- sub-regional centres;
 - clusters; and
 - a new approach to housing growth indicators.

- 1.16 When the RDS was published in 2001 it was the first such Strategy in these Islands. Since then, the South of Ireland, Scotland and Wales have all published strategies. The review has benefited from sharing respective experiences and by learning from each other. This has not just been about sharing best practice but also about collaboration across jurisdictions, both north/south and east/west. The benefits of such collaboration has been recognised and promoted.
- 1.17 The RDS is cross-cutting not least because of its statutory nature. Other Departments and stakeholders have therefore been actively involved in the review process. This has helped to build linkages with other key government policies on the economy, sustainability, neighbourhood renewal, promotion of health and wellbeing, rural development and transport. In preparing the new RDS it has been particularly important to ensure compatibility with the following:
- The Programme for Government;
 - The Sustainable Development Strategy;
 - The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI3); and
 - The emerging Economic Strategy.

Impact Assessments

- 1.18 Developing policy also means thinking carefully about the potential impacts of the policy and its proposals. A fundamental requirement of good policy development is to ensure that emerging policy proposals comply with statutory requirements and good practice.
- 1.19 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) is a policy tool designed to inform the policy and strategy-making process by determining the potential impact of the policy or strategy. A screening exercise was therefore conducted to ascertain which areas required full Impact Assessments. This was done by basing the exercise on the three pillars of Sustainable Development, i.e. Social (People), Economic (Prosperity) and Environmental (Planet). The draft IIA, including a Rural Issues Statement, setting out an assessment of the impact the revised RDS will have is being published as a separate document for consultation.
- 1.20 In addition, the following statutory assessments have influenced the policy and will be published as separate documents. They are:
- an Environmental Report which informs and guides the policy development process to ensure its outcomes are environmentally sustainable;
 - a draft Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA), including an Appropriate Assessment, which looks at the environmental impacts on designated sites of natural importance; and
 - a draft Equality Impact Assessment on the impacts on the nine groups within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Status

- 1.21 The RDS is the spatial strategy of the Executive. Its preparation was guided by a sub-committee of the Executive.
- 1.22 As the spatial strategy of the Executive it informs and supports the PfG, Budget and the ISNI. The RDS provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors. It does not redefine other Departments' strategies, such as the emerging Economic Strategy, but complements them with a spatial perspective.
- 1.23 The RDS has a statutory basis. It is prepared under the Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999. Under that Order the Department for Regional Development (DRD) is responsible for formulating "in consultation with other Northern Ireland departments, a regional development strategy for Northern Ireland, that is to say, a strategy for the long term development of Northern Ireland".
- 1.24 The Order requires Departments here to "have regard to the regional development strategy" in exercising any functions in relation to development.
- 1.25 The RDS is material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals. The current legislative requirement is that development plans, planning policy and development schemes should be in general conformity with the RDS. In addition, there is a statutory requirement for DRD to issue statements to DOE as to the general conformity of development plans at two stages in the policy making process. Changes to this are being proposed through the Planning Reform process. This is subject to Executive agreement.

The RDS contains a Spatial Framework and Strategic Guidelines. They aim to provide long-term policy directions, from a strategic spatial perspective. However, nothing contained in this document should be read as a commitment that public resources would be provided for any specific project. All proposals for expenditure will be subject to economic, social, financial and environmental assessment and will also have to be considered having regard to the overall availability of resources.

European Context

- 1.26 Legislation and policies of the European Union (EU) have a growing influence on national and regional spatial policy. The EU is fundamentally about more and better co-ordination and co-operation between regions to the overall benefit of both the competitiveness and sustainability of the EU and all its member states. The EU recognises the specific needs of border regions by targeted funding through the European Regional Development Fund INTERREG programme.
- 1.27 The EU also recognises that its regions are best placed to plan their futures. This means looking at factors like location, climate, natural resources, quality of life and economies of scale, described in EU policy terms as “territorial capital”. The RDS does just this and is therefore important in setting the framework for future European funding.

Programme for Government

- 1.28 The RDS informs and supports the PfG. It does so by its focus on the Executive’s top priority of growing the economy. This means understanding and responding to the needs of businesses and identifying key infrastructure needs, so that the Region is an attractive, efficient Region for businesses to create wealth.
- 1.29 The PfG recognises “that we cannot grow the economy in isolation from determined efforts to transform our society and enhance our environment”. It sets out 2 cross-cutting themes of a shared and better future for all and sustainability. The RDS informs and supports both these cross-cutting themes.
- 1.30 We have inherited deep patterns of socio-economic disadvantage. These patterns are complex. Many rural communities, particularly in the west have suffered from isolation and poor infrastructure. Whilst much of the wealth of the North is generated in Belfast, many in the City do not benefit. The RDS will help resources and services be better targeted to address disadvantage and reduce health inequalities.
- 1.31 Chapter 3 sets out how the 8 key aims of the RDS support the 5 priorities of the PfG, namely:
- (i) growing a dynamic, innovative economy;
 - (ii) promote tolerance, inclusion and health and wellbeing;
 - (iii) protect and enhance our environment and natural resources;
 - (iv) invest to build our infrastructure; and
 - (v) deliver modern high quality and efficient public service

1.32 The RDS has a key role in building a sustainable future. The PfG explains “that the principles of sustainability – development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs – underpin our approach to all our activities”. These principles are at the core of the new RDS.

Investment Strategy

1.33 The RDS also influences and informs the ISNI. The infrastructure we build today needs to serve us well for the years and generations to come. So, taking “place” and a longer-term perspective into account, helps us make wise investment decisions.

CHAPTER

02



Developing a New RDS

Chapter 2

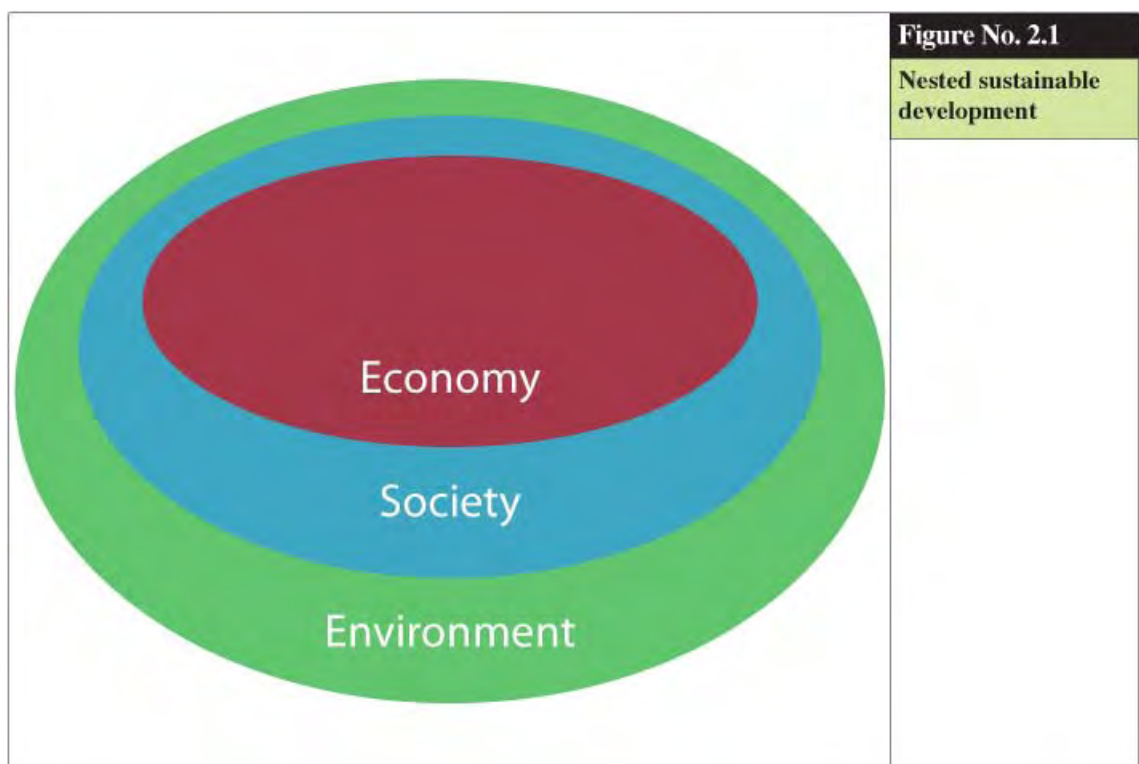
2.0 Developing a New RDS

2.1 An analysis of significant spatial trends was carried out as part of the review process. The purpose of this work was twofold:

- to analyse new challenges and trends of significance which will inform the new RDS; and
- to consider the extent to which the existing RDS remains appropriate in this changing environment.

Challenges and Trends of Significance

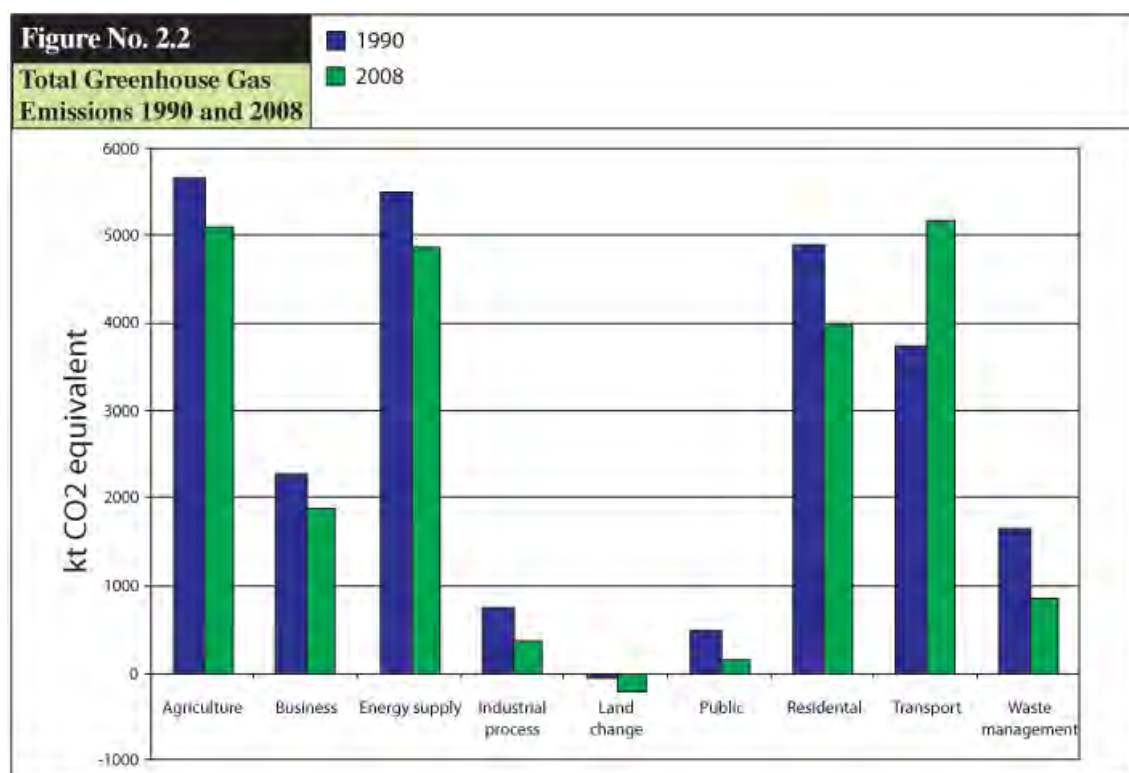
2.2 This revised Regional Development Strategy has at its heart sustainable development. It must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Our society and economies are completely dependent on the environment which encompasses them and are therefore bound to its limits and capabilities.



2.3 Key issues influencing strategic policy development are set out under the 3 sustainability headings of Environment, Society and Economy. The evidence used as the basis of this work was sourced from Government publications, RDS monitoring reports and consultancies commissioned for the review. A summary of the 2 consultancies is set out in Appendix A and Appendix B.

2.4 Environment

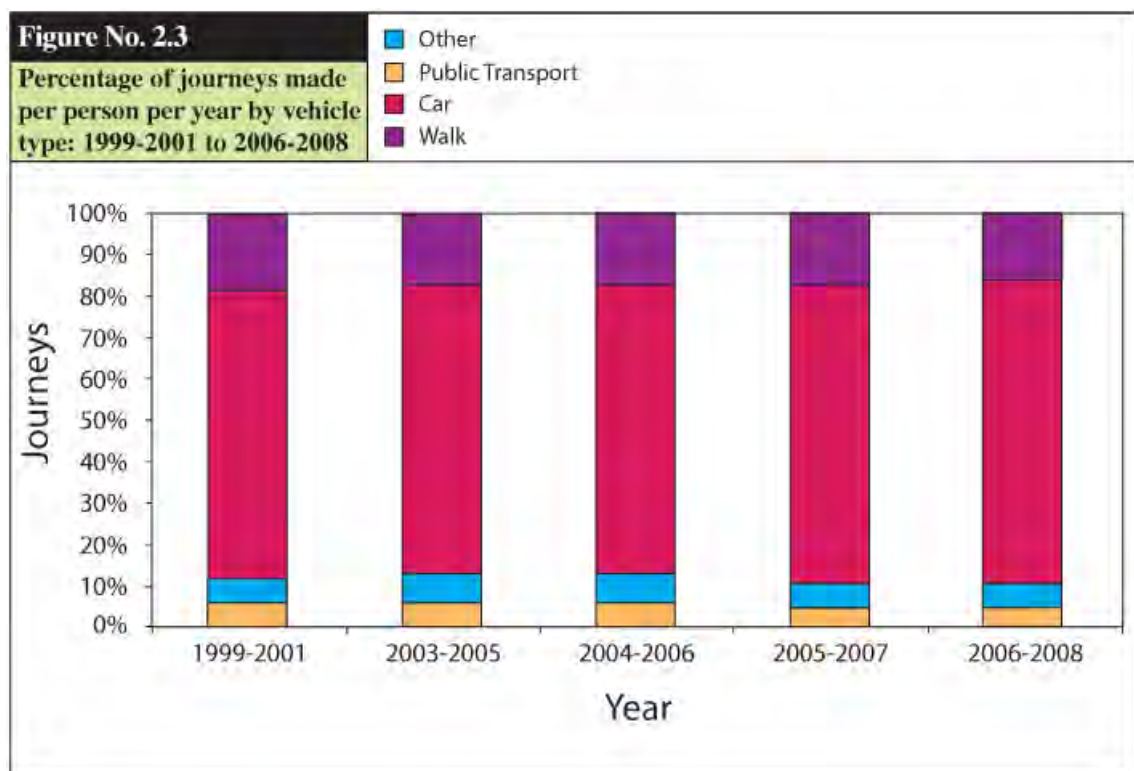
- Between 1990 and 2008, the Region's greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 11.2% compared to 19.5% decrease in the United Kingdom (UK) as a whole.
- Transport, agriculture and energy supply were the main contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in 2008 (68%).



Source: AEA Technology

- There is significant scope for improvement in the quality of the water environment.
- If current rates of waste production continue (1 million tonnes of municipal waste produced annually), municipal waste arisings will increase by almost 50% by 2020.

- Climate change is widely accepted as a major environmental threat with increases to annual rainfall and average temperatures potentially impacting on species and habitats. The Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy provides the focus for working in partnership to protect and enhance our biodiversity.
- The Region has seen an increase of nearly 59,000 hectares protected by new environmental designations since 2000/1.
- It is estimated that environment dependent tourism and recreation supports 6,125 full time equivalent jobs and contributes £130m Gross Value Added (GVA) per annum.
- Significant increases in the number of vehicles on the roads; since 2002 there has been an increase of 20% and at the end of 2008 there were over 1 million vehicles registered; the car remains the dominant mode of travel and the first choice for over 80% of commuters.
- More congested roads, with a 19% increase since 2000 in terms of vehicle kilometres travelled. Transportation currently accounts for a quarter of the man-made greenhouse gas emissions. It is also the only sector where greenhouse gas emissions are rising rather than falling.



Source: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Road Transport: Baseline Report 1999-2007: Published December 2009 (DRD)

- Social exclusion for households not owning a car – 1 household in 4 does not own a car and 1 in 2 in some urban areas - this impacts on socially deprived areas.

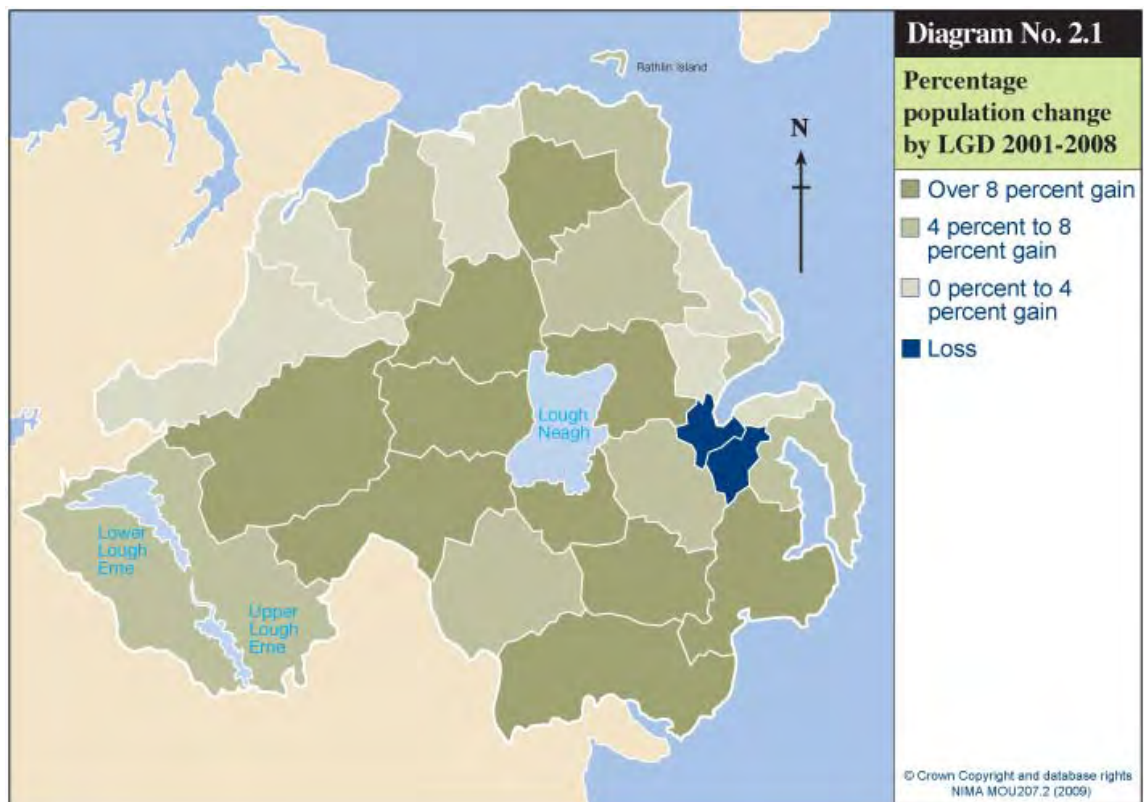
Relevant Executive Targets/Goals

- To meet a target of a 25% decrease in total greenhouse gas emissions by 2025.
- To secure 40% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020.
- To halt the loss of indigenous species and habitats by 2016.
- To reduce the quantity of biodegradable municipal waste being landfilled to:
 - 75% of the 1995 level by 2010
 - 50% of the 1995 level by 2013; and
 - 35% of the 1995 level by 2020.
- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% on 1990 levels by 2025.
- To halve the private sector productivity gap with the UK average (excluding the Greater South East) by 2015

2.5 Society

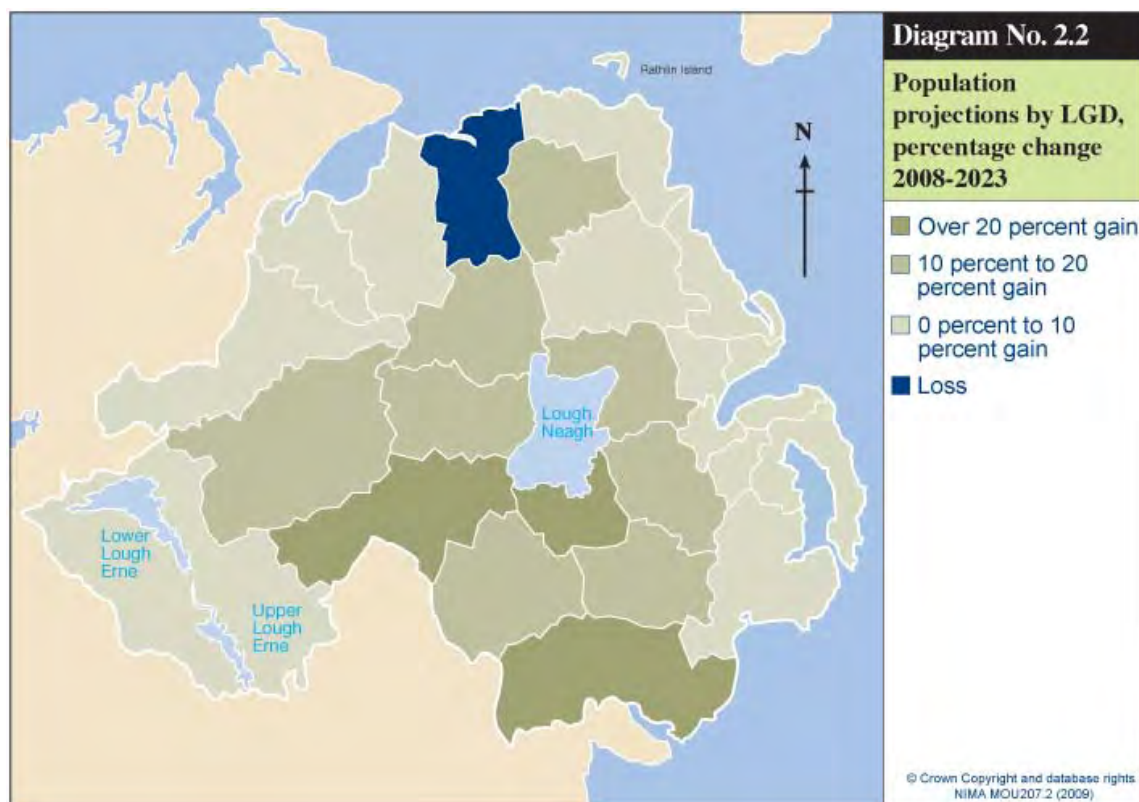
- Uneven distribution of population between 2001-08 with 71% growth in rural areas¹ ; in settlements over same period, the highest growth occurred in intermediate settlements (+11%) and villages (+13%).

¹ Rural areas defined as settlements with population of 4,500 and below and the open countryside



Source Registrar General NI Annual Report 2007NISRA 2008

- A regional population expected to increase to 1.839 million by 2013, 1.946 million by 2023 and to exceed 2 million in the early 2030s.
- A marked increase in the numbers of current pensionable age (+40%) and levels of in-migration by 2023.



Source *Small Area Population Estimates for NI (2008) NISRA*.

- Highest population percentage increase by 2023 predicted to be in the mid-Ulster and south east region Council areas (over 20%) and lowest increases in Belfast and Castlereagh Council areas.
- In relation to the RDS sub-regions of the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) and hinterland and the north/south/west of the Region² projections are that by 2023 the majority of the population will be living outside the BMA and hinterland (53%).

²For this purpose BMA and Hinterland is defined as the Council area of Antrim, Ards, Down, Larne, Castlereagh, Carrickfergus, Lisburn, North Down, Newtownabbey and Belfast. The North, South and West includes all other Councils

Diagram No. 2.3

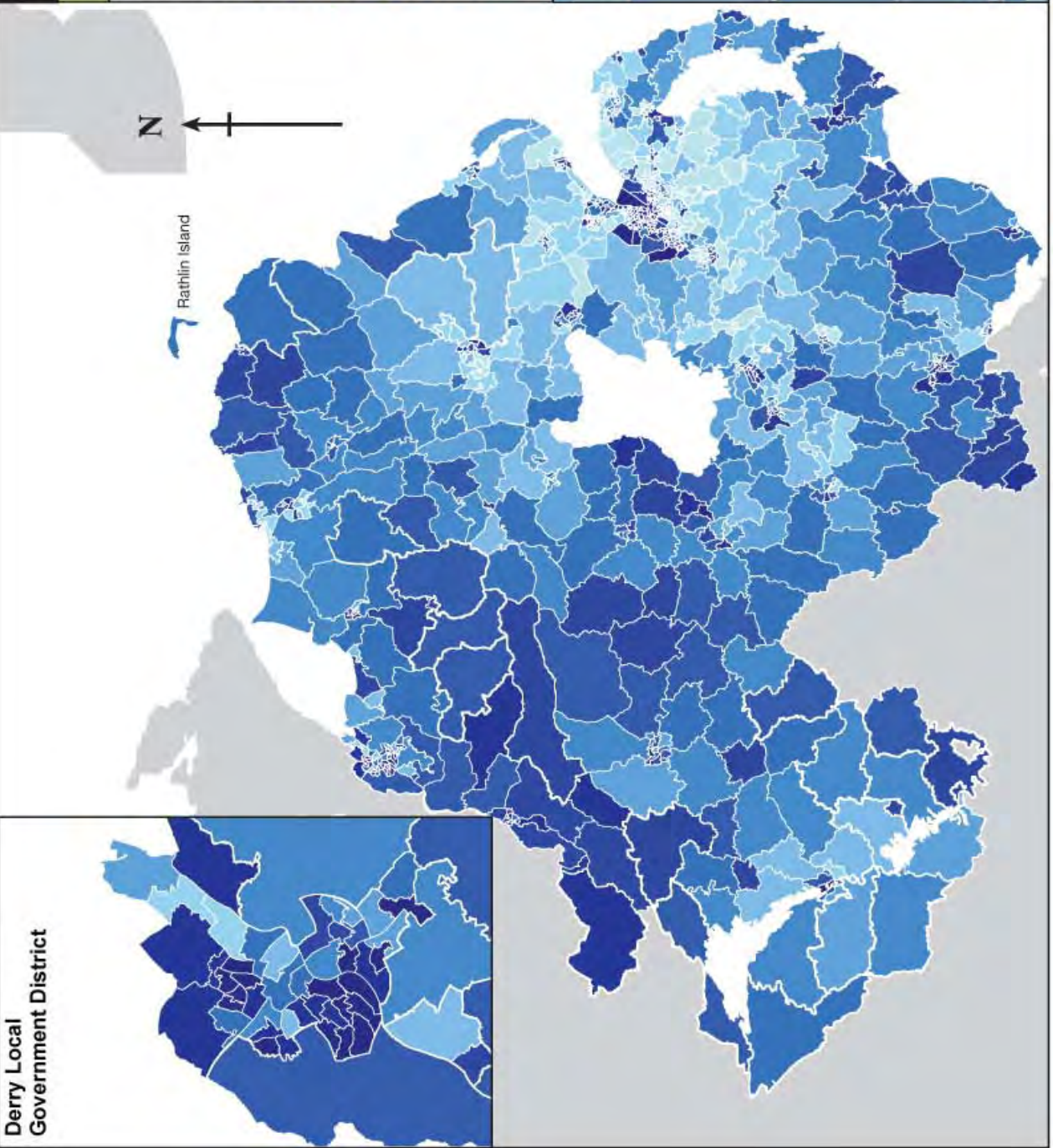
Relative Deprivation

NI Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank (Super Output Area Deciles)

Most deprived (1-89)



Least Deprived (802-890)



Derry Local Government District

Belfast Local Government District

Source Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010

- Most deprived areas are largely concentrated in Belfast and Derry. 35% of the Belfast population (95,000) people and 22% of Derry population live in the worst 10% deprived areas; the population in the most deprived areas has fallen, but has increased in the lesser deprived areas.

Relevant Executive Targets/Goals

2.6 Economic

- A buoyant local economy up to the current economic downturn with an additional 188,500 jobs created since 1993. However, employee jobs fell by 33,000 since March 2008 (the level reported in 2005).
- Unemployment rate of 6.8% for the period May – July 2010 is amongst the lowest in UK and is only marginally above the rate of 10 years ago (6.2%). The economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 stands at 28.6% and remains significantly higher than the UK average rate (23.2%).
- Service sector has been the main driver of growth over the last decade but has declined since 2007 mainly in the financial and business sectors.
- Despite relatively strong economic performance GVA per capita has remained at around 80% of the UK average since the 1990s.
- Over the period to 2028, city economies are expected to come to the fore again with almost half of all the Region's net new jobs (63,700) expected to be created in the 4 city Councils of Belfast, Derry, Lisburn and Newry.
- Belfast City has 28% of total regional employment; 30,000 additional jobs were created in Belfast over the last decade.
- Economic competitiveness varies between places with cities offering higher growth and productivity.
- The proven link between agglomeration and the growth rate of productivity means that it is important to strengthen the regional centres of Belfast and Derry and to ensure they are better linked to small clusters of towns in the Region

Relevant Executive Targets/Goals

- To halve the private sector productivity gap with the UK average (excluding the Greater South East) by 2015
- 75% employment by 2020 subject to economic conditions

The Existing RDS

- 2.7 The RDS published in 2001 contains a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) and related Strategic Planning Guidelines (SPGs) which aims to provide long-term policy direction for the public and private sector and the whole community. It is not limited to land use but recognises that policies for physical development have an important bearing on other matters.
- 2.8 The 2001 Strategy introduced new policy directions particularly on housing, transportation and economic development. The SDS gives expression to the overall aim of seeking to achieve a balance of growth throughout the Region.
- 2.9 The SDS is set out as a framework for future physical development. It is based on urban HUBS and CLUSTERS, key and link transport CORRIDORS and main regional GATEWAYS of air and sea ports. It includes a section dealing with 'Rural Northern Ireland', defined as all places outside the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) and Derry. It was estimated that around 1 million people (60% of the regional population) lived in this defined area.
- 2.10 It sets out a range of SPGs for the BMA, Derry and Rural Northern Ireland and on the topics of regional cohesion, housing, economic development, transportation and the environment. It has a statutory basis which requires that all Government Departments should 'have regard to' it in exercising any development function. In addition, the Strategic Planning Order includes a requirement for all development plans prepared by DOE to be 'in general conformity with' its provisions and for DRD to issue statements to DOE on this matter.
- 2.11 It was clearly set out to be a strategic policy document and not intended as operational policy. It stated that further work was required to prepare detailed planning policy to give expression to the SPGs. These were listed to be Transportation and Land Use, Housing in Settlements, Retailing and Town Centres and the Countryside. Since its publication in 2001 Planning Policy Statements in draft and final forms have been published on these and other topics. These are set out in Appendix C.

2.12 The RDS was the subject of an Independent Examination which was held in 1999. The Report of the Public Examination Panel, published in 2000, endorsed the draft Strategy particularly its Guiding Principles and the HUB, CORRIDOR and GATEWAY approach as providing a balanced and progressive approach to the development of the Region.

Key Policy Issues

2.13 The RDS introduced new policy directions designed to achieve balanced growth across the Region. It reflected approaches being developed by Government Departments at that time together with new policy directions designed to achieve sustainable development. Of particular importance was:

- **Balanced Regional Development:** the balance between east and west and the role of hubs, clusters and housing development;
- **Housing and Urban Renaissance:** housing figures, 'brownfield' development, compact urban forms and deprivation;
- **Transportation:** integrating land use and transportation, travel culture and accessibility; and
- **Economic Development:** the location of jobs, houses, services and facilities.

2.14 These policy areas are considered below in the context of the challenges and evidence.

Balanced Regional Development

- 2.15 The SDS is based on hubs and clusters, key and link corridors and main gateways. The SDS was grounded on the principle of the City Region concept which emphasises the importance of Belfast as the regional economic driver and a strong North West centred on Derry. The identification of hubs, strategically located on the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN) was key to the success of balanced regional growth. The proposal for clusters of settlements was designed to ensure strong centres serving rural communities.
- 2.16 The evidence discussed earlier shows that a number of the settlements identified as main and local hubs have not performed the roles set out in the SDS. The role of settlements was the subject of detailed assessment during the Public Examination (PE) into the draft RDS. The Panel which conducted the PE noted that while ‘critical mass’ was important for economic growth, clusters of settlements and employment locations offering a range of complementary facilities could be equally effective. They concluded that the Strategy should not designate ‘major’ and ‘key’ centres, but rather that clusters were the more appropriate approach.
- 2.17 In the current economic climate decisions about the location of investment are much more sensitive to the availability of skills, infrastructure and supporting services.
- 2.18 In addition, the spatial distribution of employment is predicted to remain heavily city focused. This highlights the importance of understanding the role and function of settlements and the need for a limited number of larger centres to be identified for investment and growth. The concept of clusters of settlements remains appropriate as a means of ensuring the development of a wide range of complementary facilities and services. It is considered that this approach is a sound basis for the development of strategies, plans and programmes which shape the development of local areas.
- 2.19 A critical component of the approach to balanced regional development is the distribution of regional housing need between the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) and its hinterland, and the rest of the Region. The Independent Panel which conducted the Examination into the draft strategy strongly held the view that housing policies should be designed to help maximise the region’s potential for growth. They concluded that sufficient housing must be provided for the labour force, not only to support Belfast as the strong economic heart of the Region, but also to assist growth in the Belfast-Dublin Corridor and in the main hubs for employment.

2.20 The regional housing figure was therefore allocated on a 52/48% split between the North/South and West of the Region and the BMA and its hinterland in order to help achieve this balance.



- 2.21 The evidence shows that population growth has been greatest outside the BMA hinterland and that this has been focused to a degree along the key transport corridors. In addition, current predictions are for stronger growth in the west of the Region. With improvements to the roads infrastructure, this will increase commuting patterns particularly into the BMA where more jobs are expected to be located.
- 2.22 **Given the importance of Belfast City and the BMA to regional growth and the fact that Belfast City Council population has been falling, it is considered that the right approach to regional growth is therefore to continue with the balance set out in the existing RDS and that regional housing need figures should be allocated accordingly.**
- 2.23 The Strategy for the BMA and its hinterland envisaged a balance between concentration and decentralisation. The major elements of the Strategy were to revitalise the Metropolitan Area and to develop the main towns of Antrim, Downpatrick, Larne and Newtownards together with significant planned expansion of the 7 towns of Ballyclare, Ballynahinch, Carryduff, Comber, Crumlin, Dromore and Moira. This approach was required to accommodate the number of additional houses allocated to the BMA.
- 2.24 This Strategy has been taken forward in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) which was published in 2004. The draft Plan has a focus on developing lands within urban footprints first, before greenfield extensions. It also allocated land to the 7 small towns having regard to their environmental and infrastructure capacity.
- 2.25 The population of Belfast City Council area has fallen over the last decade and projections are for limited growth.
- 2.26 The prosperity of Belfast as the capital City is essential for regional growth. This means planning for a growing population with a range of housing choice and job opportunities. The aim is for the City to reach population levels of around 300,000 which was achieved in the 1980s.
- 2.27 **It is therefore considered that the right approach for the future is to promote growth within the BMA with a focus on growing the population and maximising opportunity for housing within urban footprints.**

Housing and Urban Renaissance

- 2.28 The existing RDS recognises the important relationship between the location of housing areas and centres of employment. It takes a long term prospective, the key objective being to direct and manage future housing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of development. This is to be achieved by concentrating housing within existing urban areas to avail of existing infrastructure and services. It also means using a sequential approach in the development plan process to the allocation of housing land.
- 2.29 To provide a focus for this approach, a regional target of 60% was set for the proportion of urban housing to be achieved within the existing urban areas of cities and towns of over 5,000 population. At the time this was seen as an ambitious target since it would mean a doubling of the levels which had been achieved.
- 2.30 The existing RDS also promotes the development of balanced communities and recognises the need for a variety of house types and tenures. It promotes quality, social, affordable and specialist housing supported by local services and facilities. This is seen as a key to the achievement of diversity and social inclusion. The preparation of Housing Needs Assessment is a means of developing a better understanding of local need and where this should be met.
- 2.31 These policy initiatives introduced a new approach to the location of housing and to the importance of spatial planning in helping to deliver balanced and integrated communities.
- 2.32 The approach is based on a Plan, Monitor and Manage strategy which relies on information such as land availability, up to date housing figures and local needs assessment being available in a timely manner. This information is now readily available and is being developed to include information on Housing Market Areas. Housing figures are calculated from NISRA household projections which are prepared biennially (the methodology on this work is set out in Annex E).
- 2.33 The objectives of the Plan, Monitor and Manage approach found widespread support among participants at the 1999 PE into the draft Strategy. In addition, the Independent Panel which conducted a review of the Housing Growth Indicators in 2005 endorsed the Department's approach that the SDS should drive housing allocations across the Region. This was on the proviso that there should be a minimum of 5 years housing supply remaining within each District.

- 2.34 There has been criticism of the housing figures and concerns raised that their use has caused unnecessary delays in the development plan process. They were perceived by some to be too inflexible as a policy instrument and that they restricted development opportunities. On the other hand, it has been recognised that they are important in the achievement of balanced growth and for infrastructure providers in forward planning. The use of housing figures and the regional brownfield target have been successful in helping to achieve more compact urban forms and the overall aim of sustainable development which maximises the use of existing infrastructure and services.
- 2.35 The brownfield target has been exceeded each year since 2000/01 (Figure 2.4 – Proportion of dwellings within Urban Footprint 2000-2009).



- 2.36 It is considered that the Plan, Monitor and Manage approach remains appropriate as the means to achieve more sustainable forms of development. It is also considered that housing figures remain appropriate to take forward the direction of the spatial strategy to achieve a balance of growth throughout the Region. It is however recognised that the figures should be used in a way to ensure that local need identified through the housing needs assessment can be accommodated. In addition, it is important that there is a minimum of 5 years supply of housing land remaining within Districts.
- 2.37 The regional brownfield target has been successful in providing a focus on the need to develop within existing urban areas. However, it is recognised that there will be a diminishing supply of land within urban footprints, particularly in smaller settlements, and the ability to achieve the 60% figure may reduce. The development plan process is the means by which urban capacity is established which in turn allows an assessment to be made of the potential for achieving the regional target.
- 2.38 The creation of balanced local communities remains a key objective. The provision of a range of housing types and tenures supported by local employment, open space, community facilities and local services is essential for the development of community spirit and neighbourliness. It also means more efficiency in terms of public sector forward planning and in the promotion of accessible public transport infrastructure.

Transportation

- 2.39 The existing RDS adopted a fresh approach in seeking to meet the Region's transportation challenges. The emphasis was on enhancing accessibility to enable people to get goods, services and facilities but with as few negative impacts as possible. The focus was on moving people and goods rather than vehicles, on making the public more aware of the impact and full cost of their transport choices, and on reducing the need to travel. The key driver therefore was the need to influence and change travel culture.
- 2.40 The Strategy also makes clear that meeting future demand by road improvements alone, particularly for unrestrained car use in the larger urban centres, would not be sustainable. This meant creating an integrated transportation system which would promote accessibility for all to jobs, services and facilities through improvements to transportation infrastructure and public transport. The existing RDS makes clear that a range of transport options is kept open to enable the Region to respond to future levels of population growth, economic activity, travel

aspirations and, importantly, to minimise the effects of climate change. The emphasis is therefore placed on the integration of planning and transportation policies to develop compact urban areas and reduce the physical separation of key land uses.

- 2.41 The existing RDS identifies the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN) comprised of 5 Key Transport Corridors, 4 Link Corridors and the BMA Transport Corridors.
- 2.42 The aim in developing the RSTN is to enhance accessibility. This means the promotion of an integrated regional public transport system, strengthening regional cohesion, facilitating decentralised growth and helping to build the regional economy. A key outcome was improved access to the regional gateways of air and sea ports and cross border linkages.
- 2.43 The evidence shows that there has been a movement of people out of Belfast. The largest population growth between 2001-2008 has been in the Local Government Districts of Ballymoney, Magherafelt, Cookstown, Dungannon, Craigavon, Banbridge and Newry and Mourne. These Districts are also expected to have the greatest population growth by 2021. This has been facilitated by improvements in the strategic road network.
- 2.44 Car ownership has also increased with now over 1 million licensed vehicles. Traffic across the network has increased by 16% from 2001 and there are now 20,000 million vehicle kilometres of travel. Transportation currently accounts for around a quarter of the man-made greenhouse gas emissions. It is the only sector where greenhouse emissions are rising rather than falling.
- 2.45 This increase in traffic demand has outstripped the benefits of road improvements with reduced speeds on the key transport corridors. For rural areas the car remains for many the first choice of travel. While the majority of people live within 16 miles of a town, people in rural areas have to travel further to work and to access facilities and services.
- 2.46 The policy direction of the existing RDS has been taken forward through a number of Government strategies and plans. The current Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) includes initiatives aimed at bringing about a step change in the quality of our transportation infrastructure. It also promotes sustainable travel and encourages the use of modes of travel other than the private car. The RTS is being implemented through 3 transport plans; the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan and the Sub Regional Transport Plan.

- 2.47 Area development plans prepared by the Department of the Environment (DOE) include the preparation of local transport studies. These inform the preparation of policies designed to integrate land uses with transportation. They set a framework designed to facilitate future sustainable transport initiatives. Urban regeneration and masterplanning have a focus on the importance of accessibility to jobs, services and facilities.
- 2.48 The evidence shows that the current patterns of travel and high dependency on the car are not sustainable. Levels of car ownership and use are likely to increase. This will inevitably lead to more congestion, increased emissions and travel times. This is placing an increasing burden on the roads network and its maintenance.
- 2.49 A re-orientation of existing transport policy is required. To remain competitive and to ensure that the economy grows there is need for reliable and efficient connections within the Region. People also need to be able to get to and from their places of work and businesses need good connections to receive and deliver goods.
- 2.50 If it is to be effective however, any reorientation on transport must be sustainable. It must provide for more integrated, equitable, competitive and environmentally sensitive arrangements. Against severe fiscal constraints, any new RTS is likely to suggest making better and smarter use of our roads and railways, reduce our environmental impact, maintain our roads and railways better, improve accessibility and safety, support communities and our economy.
- 2.51 **The overall approach is therefore to achieve an efficient, integrated and innovative transportation network which minimises our environmental impact but contributes positively to economic growth. A strategic approach with a focus on key growth centres where houses, jobs, facilities and services are planned in an integrated way can help to reduce unnecessary travel within and between cities and towns.**

Economic Development

- 2.52 The existing RDS was prepared at a time of buoyant economic growth. At that time it was one of the fastest improving regions in the UK with the strongest growth in jobs of all regions. It was designed therefore to facilitate the development needs of a growing economy, expected to create an additional 100,000 jobs over the period to 2015. A key aim was to contribute to the reduction of socio-economic differentials and tackle long term unemployment. The creation of new jobs was seen as a top regional priority and the SDS was therefore designed to accommodate a range of development opportunities capable of accommodating emerging and new growth sectors of the economy.
- 2.53 This meant improved accessibility to major employment locations for all sections of the community with a particular emphasis on job creation to tackle disadvantage and community differentials. Key to the outworking of this approach was the creation of conditions attractive to inward investment and for the expansion of indigenous businesses.
- 2.54 The identification of a number of HUBS, CORRIDORS and GATEWAYS as a focus for economic activity was therefore seen as the way forward in 2001 when the existing RDS was published. The BMA and its hinterland would continue to be the economic hub of the Region but balanced growth was to be achieved by a network of opportunities focused on the BMA, Derry, Craigavon and the urban hubs/clusters located on the key and link transport corridors.
- 2.55 A generous and continuous supply of land for employment was to be provided in development plans. The potential was recognised for businesses to cluster on the 2 major development corridors – the Belfast-Dublin and the North West Corridors. The proximity of larger urban centres, regional gateways, extensive infrastructure assets, offered the opportunity for extra growth momentum.
- 2.56 Between 1998 and 2008, all Councils have experienced an increase in levels of employment with the most net jobs created in Belfast (c. 26,000). Significant growth has occurred in the local government districts of Ballymena, Dungannon, Lisburn and Newry. The business sector has been the fastest growing sector in recent years. It is also evident that some main centres have not expanded in terms of the level of service provision expected of their population size.
- 2.57 Analysis carried out by Oxford Economics shows that, in terms of recent economic forecasts, there is a more than adequate supply of employment land for the Region up to 2028. There is an estimated need for 450 ha of

employment land compared to a supply of 2,000 ha. However, this does not mean that this land is developable. In addition, the spatial distribution of total office employment is expected to remain heavily city focused. Current predictions are that almost 62% of employment by 2018 will be concentrated in the City Council areas of Belfast, Derry, Lisburn and Newry and Mourne. Belfast City is expected to remain as the most important job centre with 52% of total jobs. The reasons for this urban focus are the availability of skills, quality infrastructure and the efficiencies to be gained from the clustering of businesses.

- 2.58 A consequence of these predicted patterns of growth is net commuting is expected to increase, particularly into Belfast. Current estimates are for this to amount to c. 20,000 persons over the next 20 years. This has consequences for infrastructure and transport planning and how best to maintain an attractive working environment.
- 2.59 The new RDS is being prepared in a very different economic context. The global downturn has had a significant impact on the economy here – 33,000 jobs were lost between March 2008 and May 2010 and the Region displays persistently low living standards relative to the rest of the UK. There is a clear and urgent need to grow the private sector to drive wealth and employment creation in the Region. The evidence shows that cities and larger urban areas will come to the fore and will be the drivers for economic development. **The main spatial considerations shaping future growth are the importance of Belfast and Derry together with a network of key service centres well placed to accommodate inward investment and indigenous growth, particularly export-led economic growth. This approach will maximise the opportunity to make best use of existing infrastructure and ensure that opportunities exist for development of a network of local centres which can benefit from strong sub-regional centres. The RDS therefore supports the objectives in the emerging new Economic Strategy of rebuilding and rebalancing the economy.**

Conclusion

Proposed Approach

2.60 The analysis above has explained trends and new challenges and has summarised the key policy directions in the existing RDS.

2.61 In light of this, it is considered that the issues set out below are important in shaping the strategic direction for the new RDS.

- The importance of Belfast City, as the heart of a Metropolitan Area, as the driver for regional economic growth; its population has declined but it remains the regional focus for administration, commerce, specialised services and cultural amenities.
- The significant role which Derry has to play as capital of an expanding North West region; its recognition as the UK City of Culture 2013, will add impetus to the integrated approach to regeneration being taken forward by ILEX.
- The importance now placed on key centres well placed to benefit from and add value to regional economic growth; and that critical mass to attract growth can be created by the identification of clusters of settlements.
- The need to build on the approach to urban renaissance of developing compact urban form by integrating key land uses with transportation measures with a focus on the use of land within existing urban footprints.
- A new emphasis on how to reduce dependence on the car and change travel behaviour.
- The importance in all aspects of forward planning to address the consequences of climate change; this means an even greater focus on where people live and work and how transport and energy needs are planned.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 1:

Have we identified the most significant factors impacting on the Region? If not, what should be omitted and/or what should be added?

CHAPTER

03



Vision and Aims

Chapter 3

3.0 Vision and Aims

The Vision

- 3.1 During the consultation carried out for the first RDS a shared Vision emerged.

“An outward-looking, dynamic and liveable Region with a strong sense of its place in the wider world; a Region of opportunity where people enjoy living and working in a healthy environment which enhances the quality of their lives and where diversity is a source of strength rather than division.”

- 3.2 The Vision remains true today. Engaging with stakeholders showed strong support for maintaining this Vision.
- 3.3 This long-term Vision supports the aim of the PfG to build a fair and prosperous society with respect for the rule of law and a place where everyone can enjoy a better quality of life. The RDS will inform the PfG and ISNI by co-ordinating policies with a spatial dimension and providing the strategic spatial policy context for decisions by both central and local Government. The Strategy is an essential tool for the Executive to tackle structural regional disparities and promote equality of opportunity for all in the North.
- 3.4 The first RDS described how the RTS is integral to and set the vision for it “to have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone’s quality of life”. This vision is also still appropriate.

Aims

- 3.5 The aims of the RDS are:

- **Support strong, sustainable growth for the benefit of all parts of the Region**
Strong economies, regionally and locally, recognise that urban and rural areas are dependent on each other. The ability to sustain and grow the economy across the Region, within both urban and rural areas, relies upon the ability to collaborate and develop a co-ordinated approach including the prioritisation of investment.

- **Strengthen Belfast as the regional economic driver and Derry as the capital of the North West**

Successful regions have strong and vibrant cities at their core. Belfast drives much of the economic growth and shares its wealth across the Region. Derry, as the Regional capital of the North West, has the capacity and potential for strong economic growth.

- **Support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential**

Rural areas contain many unique assets that have been under developed. There are real opportunities to maximise the potential of rural communities and areas. Towns and villages have a key role in supporting the Region.

- **Promote development which improves the health and well-being of communities**

A healthy community is better able to take advantage of the economic, social and environmental opportunities which are open to it. Improved health and well-being is derived not only from easy access to appropriate services and facilities, although this is important, but also from the creation of a strong economy set within a safe and attractive environment. The provision of more social and affordable housing also helps to build strong communities.

- **Improve connectivity to enhance the movement of people, goods, energy and information between places**

Connectivity improvements will support the network of towns and their associated hinterlands. Neighbouring towns support each other and their hinterlands in the provision of services. Good linkages between towns and rural areas for access to services and business opportunities are vital.

- **Protect and enhance the environment for its own sake**

Protecting the environment is essential for the quality of life of current and future generations. The Region's environment is one of its greatest assets, with its stunning landscapes, an outstanding coastline, a complex variety of wildlife and a rich built and cultural heritage for the ecosystem services it provides, and its sense of place and history for all.

- **Take actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change**

It is recognised that climate change is one of the most serious problems facing the world. We are all contributors to global warming and need to play our part to reduce and offset our impact on the environment. Reducing harmful carbon dioxide emissions is of great importance and by reducing our carbon footprint can reduce the threat of climate change. Therefore, where it is necessary to use resources, it should be done in sustainable ways. Waste needs to be reduced, reused and recycled and everyone should contribute to reducing the Region's environmental footprint.

- **Strengthen links between north and south, east and west, with Europe and the rest of the world**

There is already collaboration on a north/south basis promoting the development of gateways and cross border connections. Opportunities exist to further develop this collaboration. East/West linkages are also being developed. In a rapidly expanding and interdependent global marketplace opportunities exist to compete and trade with Europe and the rest of the world. In order to achieve this accessibility, communications, education and employability within the population need to improve.

3.6 The schematic opposite shows how these aims support the PfG Priorities.

TABLE 3.1: RDS aims in supporting PfG						
RDS Aims	PfG Priorities	Growing a dynamic, innovative economy	Promote tolerance and inclusion and health and wellbeing	Protect and enhance our environment and natural resources	Invest to build our infrastructure	Deliver modern high quality and efficient public services
Support strong, sustainable growth for the benefit of all parts of the Region		X			X	
Strengthen Belfast as the regional economic driver and Derry as the capital of the North West		X				
Support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential			X			
Promote development which improves the health and well-being of communities			X			
Improve connectivity to enhance the movement of people, goods, energy and information between places					X	X
Protect and enhance the environment for its own sake				X		
Take actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaption to climate change				X		
Strengthen links between north and south, east and west, with Europe and the rest of the world					X	

Working with Neighbours

- 3.7 Chapter 4 explains the spatial framework which should be used to guide decisions on the location of development and infrastructure within the Region. There are also opportunities which should be taken to work with our nearest neighbours in deciding where such development should go.

North /South Co-operation

- 3.8 The area around the border can gain significantly from a joined-up approach to spatial planning. Cross border co-operation and collaboration provide opportunities to boost the economic performance and competitiveness across the island. More can be achieved through collaboration than competition.
- 3.9 Spatial plans North and South should promote patterns of development that ensure more sustainable travel and transportation patterns. In this way we can maximise current and future investment in public transport and avoid unnecessary use of non renewable energy sources. Potential exists for further collaboration on cross border energy inter-connections to ensure a sustainable and secure energy supply across the island and on economic co-operation and enterprise.
- 3.10 Certain key infrastructure, such as sea and air ports, road and rail, energy and telecommunication connectivity brings mutual benefit to all parts of the island. Co-operation at strategic planning level ensures that the greatest added value is extracted from investment in shared infrastructure. The joint working between government Departments North and South should continue to:
- promote the emergence and future development of the Dublin/Belfast economic corridor as a major driver of growth on this island;
 - unlock the potential of the North West and especially the Derry-Letterkenny Gateway; and
 - develop new initiatives aimed at exploring the potential of a Dublin – North West corridor and other local cross-border planning issues.

3.11 Working together at a strategic level, in line with relevant EU Directives can assist in meeting climate change targets. It will also help to conserve and enhance energy resources and shared natural, cultural and landscape assets, and ensure a co-ordinated approach to emerging areas of interest such as the potential for marine spatial planning.

East/West Co-operation

3.12 Whilst separated by sea, the linkages with Scotland, Wales and England are no less important. With strong cultural ties and much of the trade, what happens in Scotland, Wales and England matters to the island of Ireland, both north and south.

3.13 The Scottish Executive has recently completed its review of the National Planning Framework for Scotland. This framework contains several elements impacting on the island of Ireland. It recognises that the ferry routes from Belfast and Larne to various Clyde and Loch Ryan sea ports are key links in the transportation network. The land transport network connections to the sea ports in Scotland are equally important in maintaining the quality and efficiency of this network. The connection to Liverpool gives access to one of the largest sea ports in Europe and on across the Pennines to Europe via the North Sea and Baltic sea ports. The route has become known as the North European Trading axis.

3.14 We share with Scotland and the North West of England the potential to attract tourism from the natural and cultural heritage. Improved connectivity between the North of Ireland, Scotland and England will enhance this potential. The Moyle electricity interconnector and natural gas pipeline link are key parts of the collective energy infrastructure. These linkages enable joint working on issues such as the security of the energy supplies and meeting renewable energy targets.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 2:

Do you agree with the aims of the RDS? If not, what would you change and why?

CHAPTER

04



The Spatial Framework

Chapter 4

4.0 The Spatial Framework

- 4.1 Implementation of the Vision and aims of the RDS requires a Spatial Framework to enable strategic choices to be made in relation to development and infrastructural investment. It will also assist private investment decisions. It provides for a degree of continuity with existing policy, but sets new directions and priorities to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development in the interests of future generations.

The following alternatives were considered in the preparation of the Spatial Framework. (Appendix D refers).

1. Continue with existing guidance in the RDS 2001 document as amended by the 5 year review;
2. Promote development outside Belfast;
3. Promote development in Belfast and Derry with natural growth elsewhere;
4. Promote development in Belfast, Derry and in identified clusters of key settlements.

Alternative 4 is the preferred option and is further developed below.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 3

Do you consider Alternative 4 is the most appropriate? If not what option do you consider more appropriate and why?

- 4.2 The **spatial framework** has the following components:

1. The Metropolitan Area centred on Belfast.
2. Derry City hub of the North West
3. Sub-regional centres
4. Clusters of Cities and towns
5. The rural area
6. Gateways and corridors

Background

- 4.3 This section provides some background on the identification of the elements of the spatial framework.
- 4.4 The guiding principle of the RDS is to put the person at the centre when considering future development for the Region. To do this there needs to be an understanding of how different places are influenced by the range of services and functions required by individuals, where they are located, how frequently they are used and by whom. This helps give a clearer understanding of the relationship between people and places – an appreciation of where people live, work and access services.
- 4.5 The Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure (Diagram 4.1) is a useful tool to illustrate the strong relationship between settlement size and the levels of service that can be supported, i.e., the level of services likely to be appropriate for cities, towns and villages. There is a critical interdependence between urban centres and rural hinterlands and the importance of the physical linkages between these places. This approach also recognises that:
- settlements often provide either a greater or lesser range of services than the core population may dictate. It is not appropriate therefore to consider ‘urban’ population alone in classifying service settlements – the population of rural hinterlands can also support services in urban centres;
 - service centres tend to be hierarchical, with a large number of centres providing a smaller range of services, and a smaller number of centres providing a wider range. Each class of settlement provides services lower down in the hierarchy; and
 - accessibility to some services is more sensitive than to others
- For example, access to emergency health provision is critical and a more geographically remote town may require a more enhanced range of health services than a town of similar size that is in close proximity to a larger urban settlement.

Diagram No. 4.1

The Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure.

Level 1	Neighbourhoods/ Villages
Level 2	Urban Centres/ Smaller Towns
Level 3	Regional Towns/ Groups of Towns
Level 4	Principal Cities

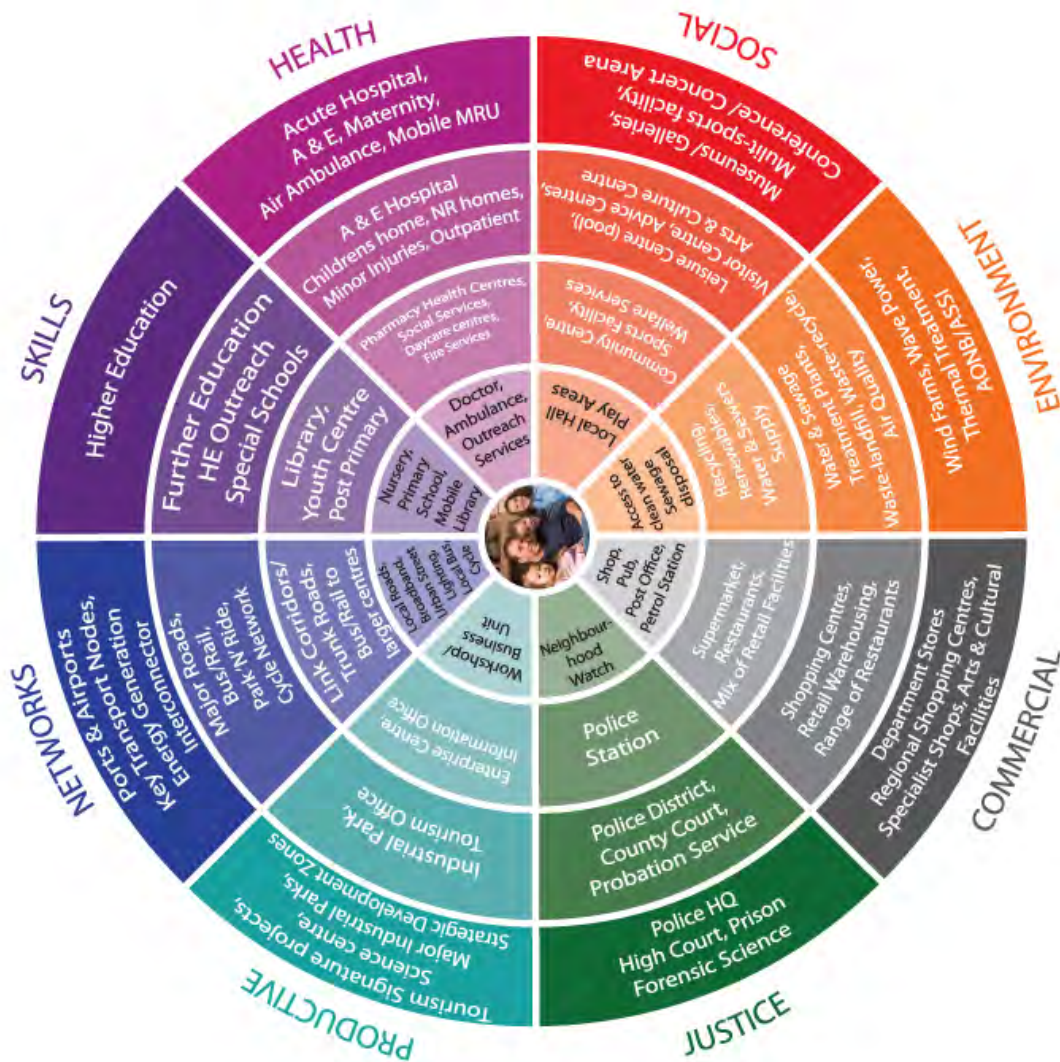
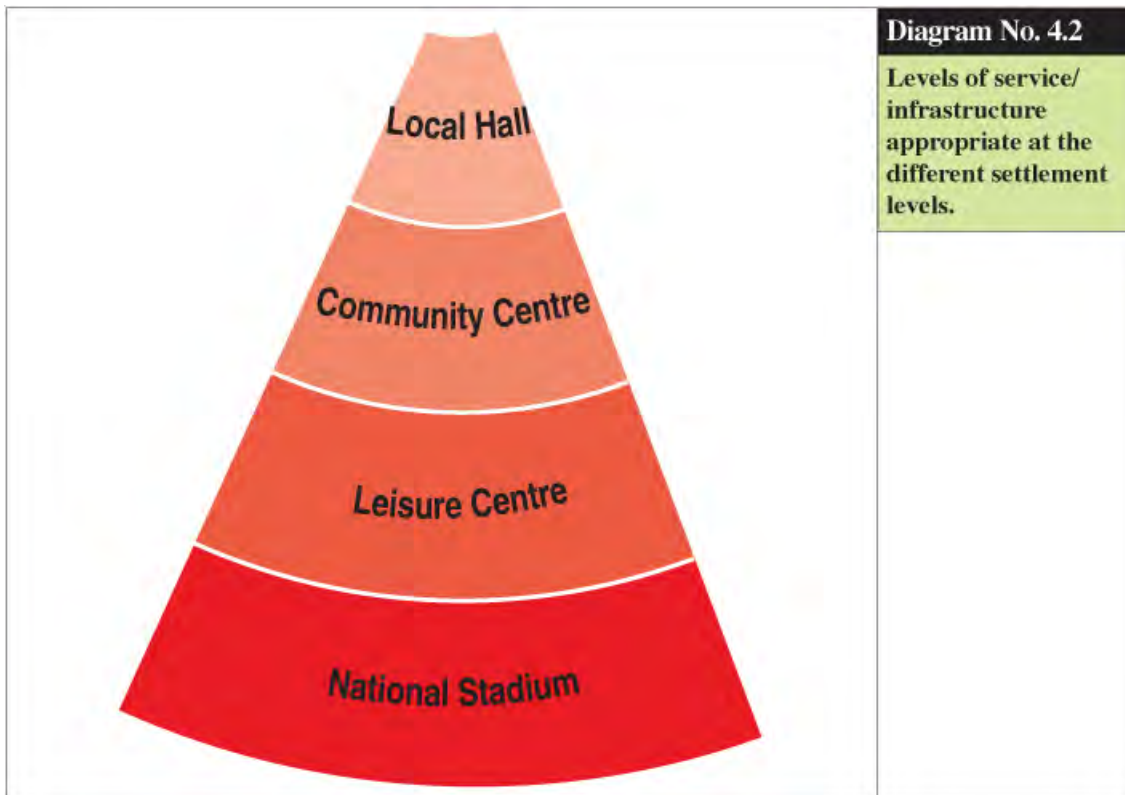


Diagram 4.2 below provides an example of the levels of service/infrastructure appropriate at the different settlement levels.

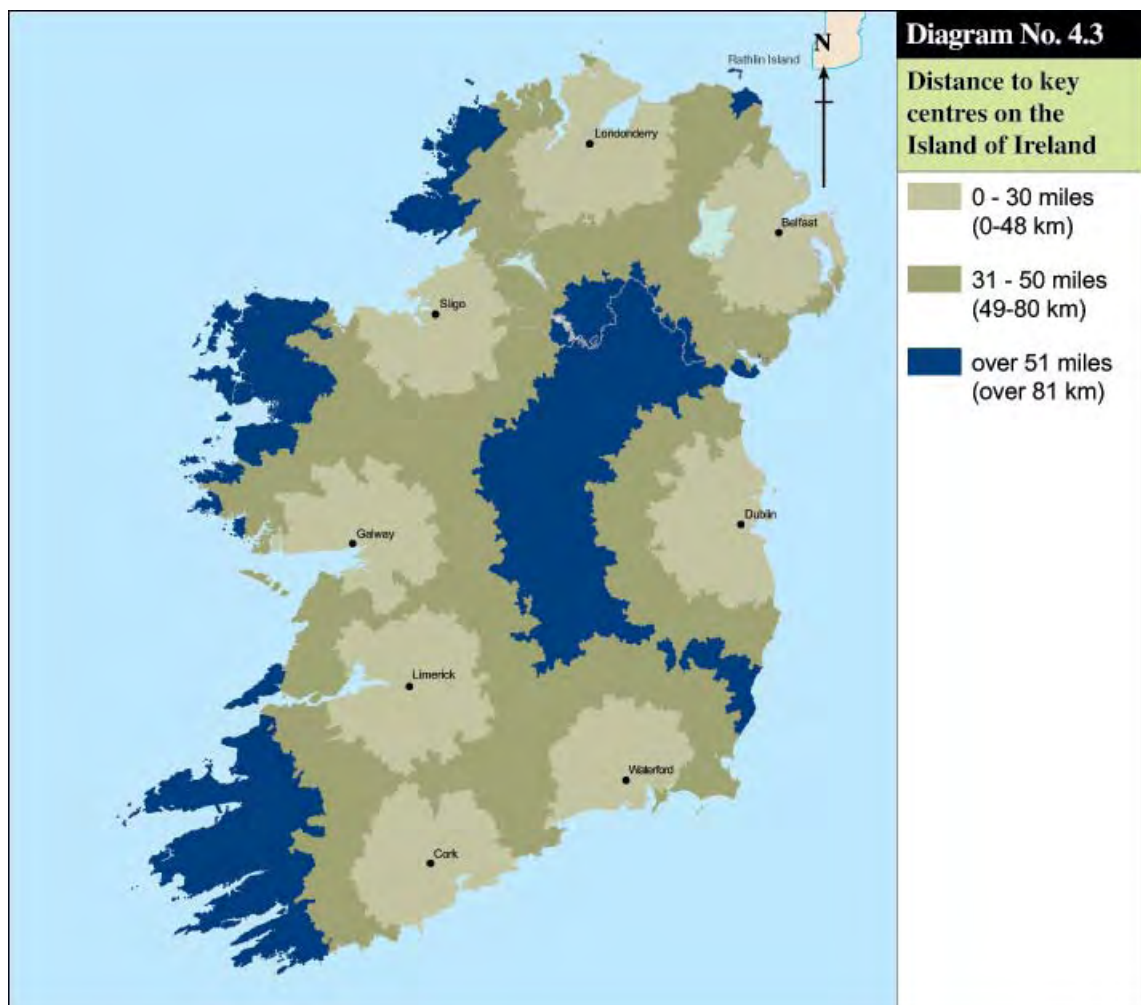


CONSULTATION QUESTION 4:

Do you think the approach as illustrated by Diagram 4.1 is useful? If not, what alternative approach do you suggest?

Belfast and Derry

- 4.6 Diagram 4.1 identifies that higher level infrastructure should be sited in the principal cities. Belfast and Derry are the two principal cities in the North. The catchment of the 8 principal cities on the Island is shown on Diagram 4.3. Derry's potential catchment extends into Donegal whilst parts of Fermanagh are more closely linked to Sligo.



- 4.7 Restricting the analysis to the North, Diagram 4.4 shows that, Belfast is the closest city for 75% of the population. The Spatial Framework identifies the Metropolitan Area centred on the City as the economic driver for the region. It identifies Derry as the capital of the North West. These 2 places are considered to be where infrastructure at the top level of the wheel (Diagram 4.1) should be located.

Source: *Infrastructure for an island population of 8 million Inter Trade Ireland and Engineers Ireland (Feb 2010)*



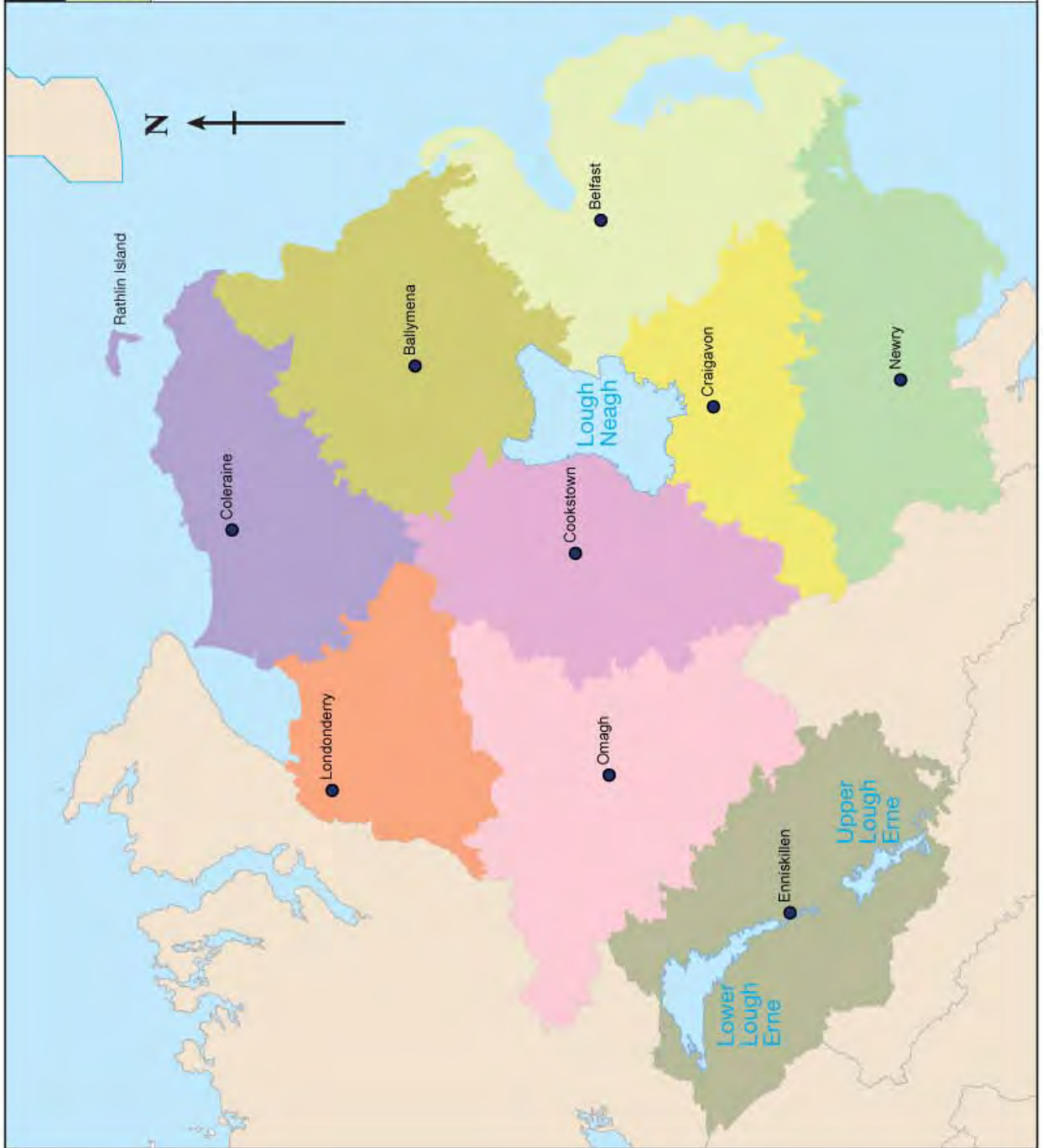
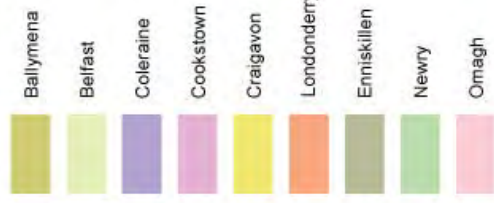
Sub-Regional Centres

- 4.8 Research suggests that the natural catchments needed to support infrastructure identified in Diagram 4.1 at level 3 is around 100,000 population. Although there are instances where a centre with a smaller catchment warrants this status based on its remoteness or the existence of an extensive rural hinterland.
- 4.9 Appendix E describes the process and analysis used to arrive at identification of potential Sub-Regional Centres. The extent of the catchments of these potential Sub-Regional Centres is shown Diagram 4.5.
- 4.10 **Downpatrick** is a medium town within the Belfast catchment, it is however quite isolated and does perform a higher order role than might be expected by its size. It may therefore be appropriate to consider it as a sub-regional centre serving a small population.
- 4.11 **Newtownards** is a large town close to Belfast performing a higher order service function similar to towns within the Metropolitan area. It is however not part of the BMUA for planning purposes and it may be appropriate to consider it as a Sub-Regional Centre or for it to be included in the BMUA in future.

Diagram No. 4.5

Catchment of Potential Sub-regional Centres

● Potential sub-regional centres



4.12 The proposed Sub-Regional Centres are **Enniskillen, Omagh, Coleraine, Ballymena, Cookstown, Craigavon, Newry, Downpatrick and Newtownards**. These towns are best placed to perform higher service centre roles.

Clusters of Cities and Towns

4.13 Whilst the towns selected as potential Sub-Regional Centres are the larger towns in the respective areas, the settlement pattern of the Region is such that within the catchment of many of these potential Sub-Regional Centres lie other cities and large and medium sized towns.

4.14 Much of the infrastructure identified as being at level 3 in Diagram 4.1 already exists in many of these towns and in times of economic downturn places cannot afford to compete with each other. Rather co-operation is the key. The European Spatial Development Perspective put it as follows:

‘The creation of networks of smaller towns in less densely settled and economically weaker regions is also important. In these areas, co-operation between urban centres to develop functional complementarities may be the only possibility for achieving viable markets and maintaining institutions and services which could not be achieved by the towns on their own.’

4.15 The overlap and proximity of the following places suggests that they are best placed to co-operate or cluster with each other:

- Coleraine, Ballymoney and Ballycastle
- Cookstown Dungannon and Magherafelt
- Craigavon and Banbridge and possibly Armagh
- Ballymena and Antrim
- Newry and cross border with Dundalk

4.16 When new development is being considered the relationship between towns in the clusters should be taken into account. The sub-regional centre or principal city in the cluster should be considered first in the decision process.

The Rural Area

4.17 The majority of people live within 15 miles of a sub-regional centre and within 8 miles of a cluster where they can access most of the services they need. Smaller towns, villages and hamlets perform an important function for rural communities. It is these settlements that can sustain infrastructure as identified at level 2 and level 1.

Gateways and Corridors

4.18 To compete globally the Region needs to be well connected both internally and with the rest of the world. The Region has a number of important gateways through which both people and goods travel.

4.19 The **Gateways** are:

- Belfast - The major Regional City Gateway with the principal sea port of the Region and a city airport.
- Belfast International Airport - The main airport of the Region.
- Larne - The second largest sea port of the Region.
- Derry - The North West City Gateway with a sea port, a regional airport and strategic links to Letterkenny and Donegal.
- Newry - The South Eastern City Gateway with links to Warrenpoint Harbour and strategic links to Dundalk and on to Dublin.
- Enniskillen – The South West gateway with strategic links to Sligo.

4.20 The internal connection linking the principal cities, centres of industry and the gateways is the RSTN. Along this network 4 key economic corridors have been identified. The main towns and cities along these corridors are well positioned for economic growth.

Detail

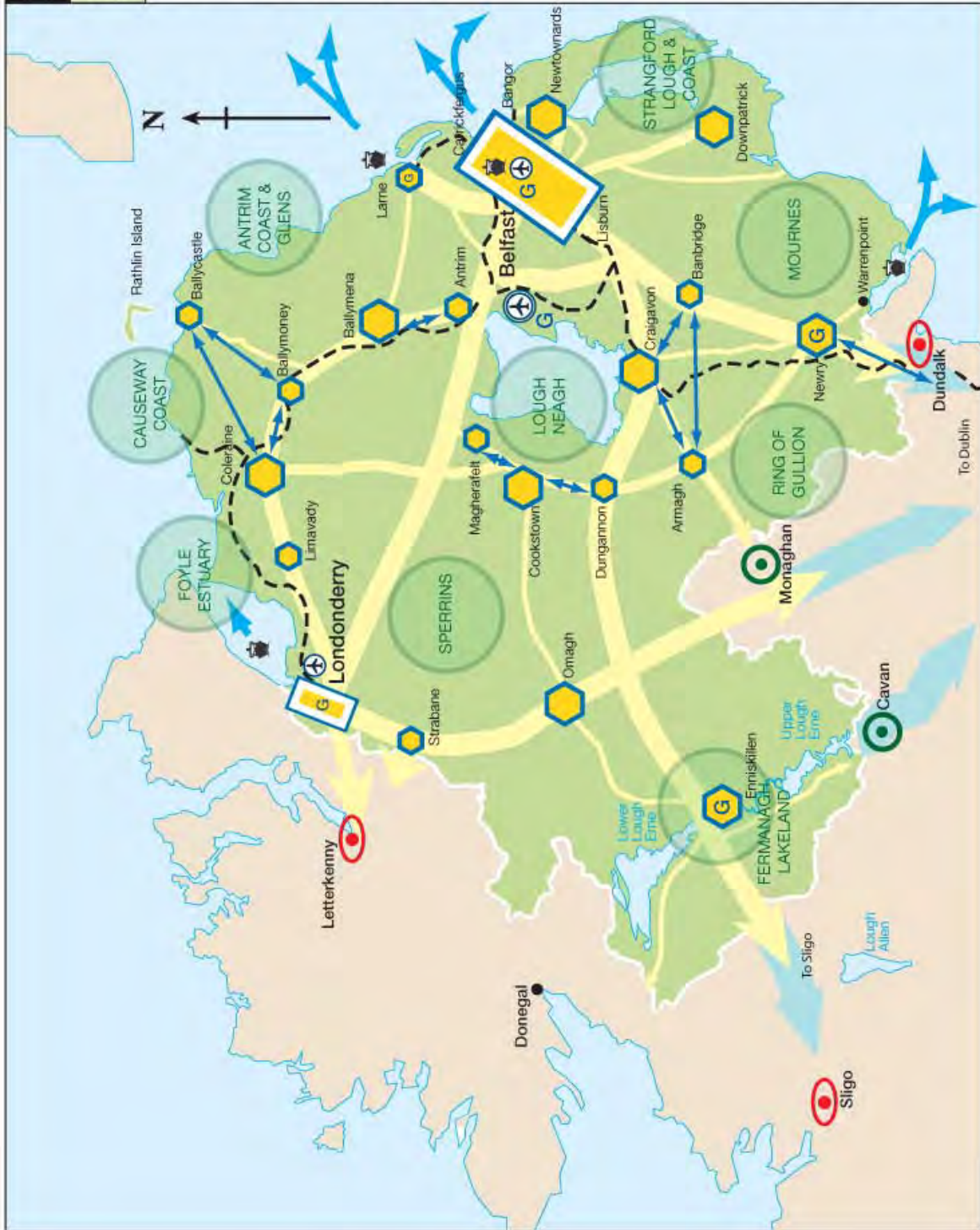
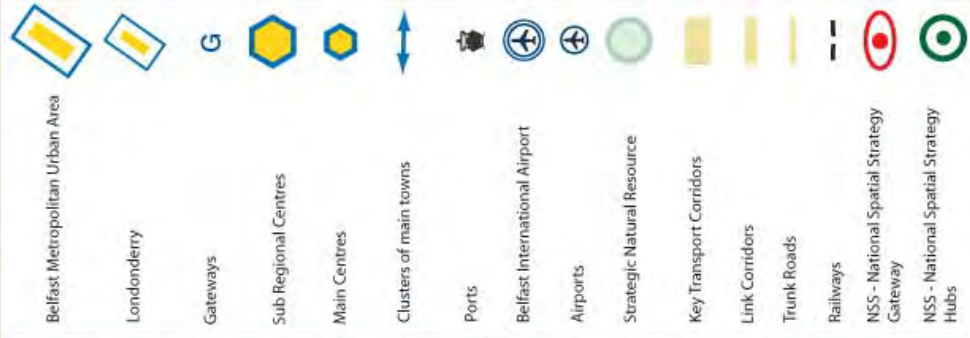
4.21 This section provides detailed description of the elements of the Spatial Framework.

A. The Metropolitan Area Centred on Belfast

4.22 **The Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA)** is defined in the Glossary. The fairly static population is around 575,000 or 32% of the total population in the North. Outside Belfast City there are significant areas of deprivation particularly around Collin Glen, Twinbrook, Kilwee, Poleglass and Old Warren in Lisburn and Dunanney and Monkstown in Newtownabbey.

Diagram No. 4.6

Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Ireland



- 4.23 The BMUA has a significant natural setting bounded by Belfast Lough, and Hills with the Lagan Valley running through it. Topographical features strongly constrain the direction of future growth and limit the potential of greenfield expansion. It also has many protected areas of high scenic value and designations.
- 4.24 The BMUA is the major conurbation in the Region with a thriving retail, service, administration, cultural and educational centre in the City of Belfast. It is the Region's largest employment centre. Lisburn City with a population of approximately 73,000 and Bangor with a population of 60,000 are important retail and commercial centres and many of their residents commute to Belfast for work. Carrickfergus, a much smaller town with around 29,000 of a population, acts a dormitory town of Belfast. The BMUA is at the centre of the regional transport network and the major gateway for national and international trade. It has a major role in the European network of City Regions with vital links to Dublin, Britain and continental Europe with Belfast's airports and sea port serving the Region as gateway links to the world.

Belfast City

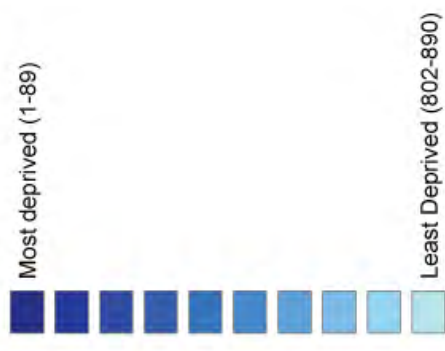
- 4.25 The capital of the Region is Belfast with a population of 268,000 which has been in decline. A sustained approach to regeneration has changed the city centre and brought dramatic improvements. The last decade has seen significant economic growth and around 26,000 jobs have been created in the Belfast City Council area. The evidence is however that over 50% of those who work in Belfast live outside it.
- 4.26 Many of those living in Belfast have not benefitted from the economic growth. There are pockets of deprivation and significantly almost 35% of the population of Belfast City Council (around 95,000 people) experience deprivation. Diagram 4.7 shows the multiple deprivation levels in Belfast.

Belfast Local Government District

Diagram No. 4.7

Multiple Deprivation in Belfast

NI Level Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank



Outer Belfast

- 4.27 Deprivation levels in Belfast vary considerably. The majority of deprived areas are situated in the west and north of Belfast. The Whiterock area is the most deprived in Belfast and is the most deprived area in the North. In contrast, Belfast also contains some of the least deprived areas, mostly located in the east and south of Belfast.
- 4.28 Whilst the population of the Council area has fallen by around 15% between 1981 and 2009 the decline has not been uniform. There has been a wedge of growth emanating from the City centre in parts of Falls, Shaftesbury and Duncairn wards as well as the Mount and Island in East Belfast. The main driver of growth in those areas was the young working age population. Other growing areas were located mainly on the periphery of the City, including Legoniel, Highfield and Glencolin in the North and West, and Rosetta in the South. Some areas close to the central area of the city have declined and there are now significant pockets of under-used and derelict land in key locations.

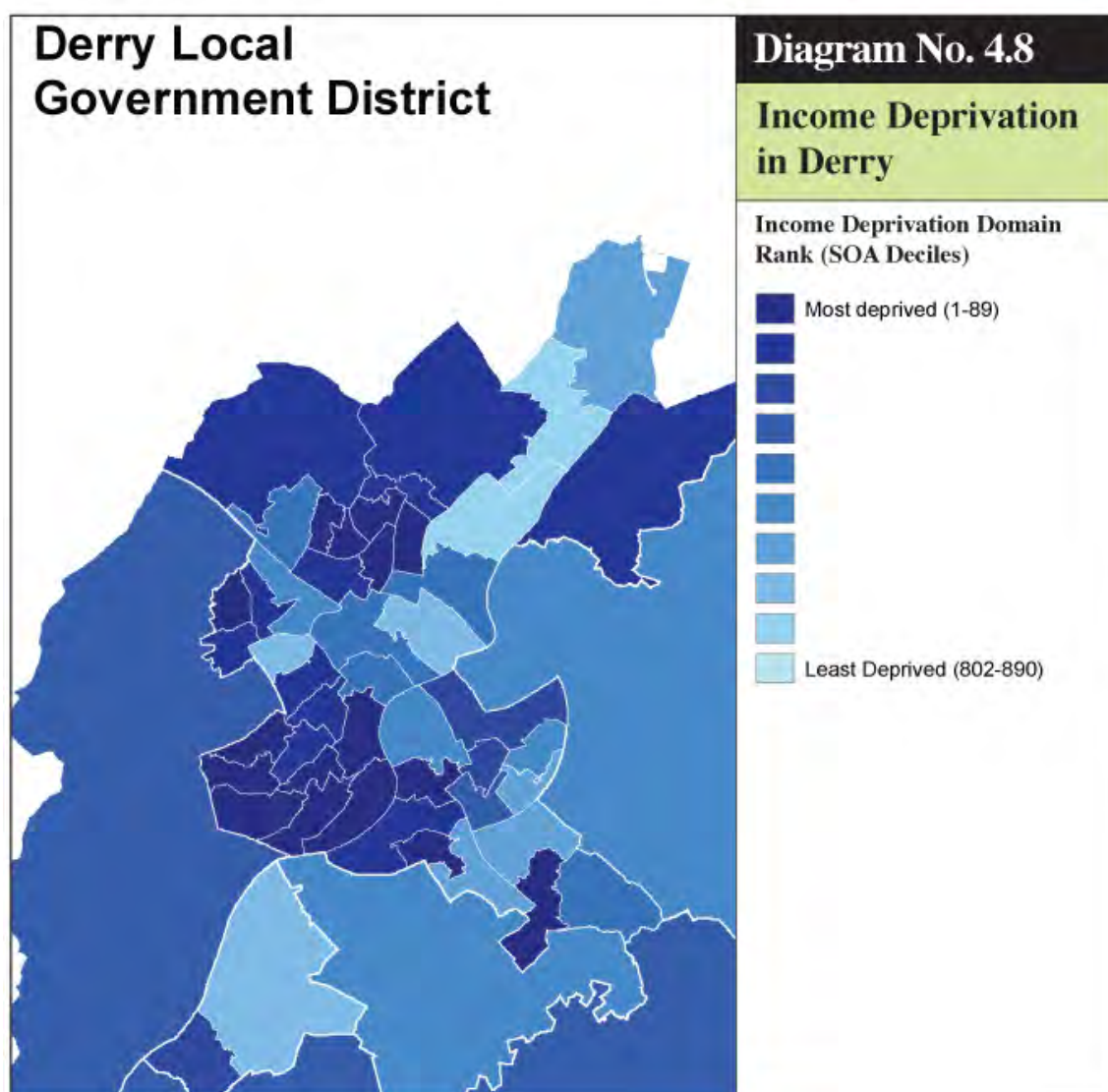
CONSULTATION QUESTION 5:

Do you agree that Belfast as the regional economic driver of the Region needs to be positioned as the regional centre for administration, commerce and specialised services? If not, why not?

B. Derry City Hub of The North West

- 4.29 **The North West** is defined as Derry, Strabane and Limavady, along with the greater part of County Donegal. The population of the 3 northern council areas is around 184,000 with the urban centres of Derry, Limavady and Strabane accounting for approximately 60% of the population. Both Limavady and Strabane have severe pockets of deprivation particularly around the Ballycolman and East wards in Strabane and Greystone and Coolessan in Limavady. The North West and Derry City has a significant natural setting that includes coastline, Lough Foyle and river valleys. The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) identifies Letterkenny-Derry as a linked gateway to the North West and recognises the importance of further development of this core area and its economic social and other relationships and functions in strengthening the wider North West region.
- 4.30 **Derry** sits naturally as the core settlement and regional gateway city for the North West. It is a key cross-border and international gateway

providing access by road, rail, and sea to the North West Region. Unlike Belfast the population of Derry has been growing. The pattern of growth has been away from the city to less densely settled surrounding areas. The total population for the District is forecast to increase by around 6% to 116,000 by 2023.



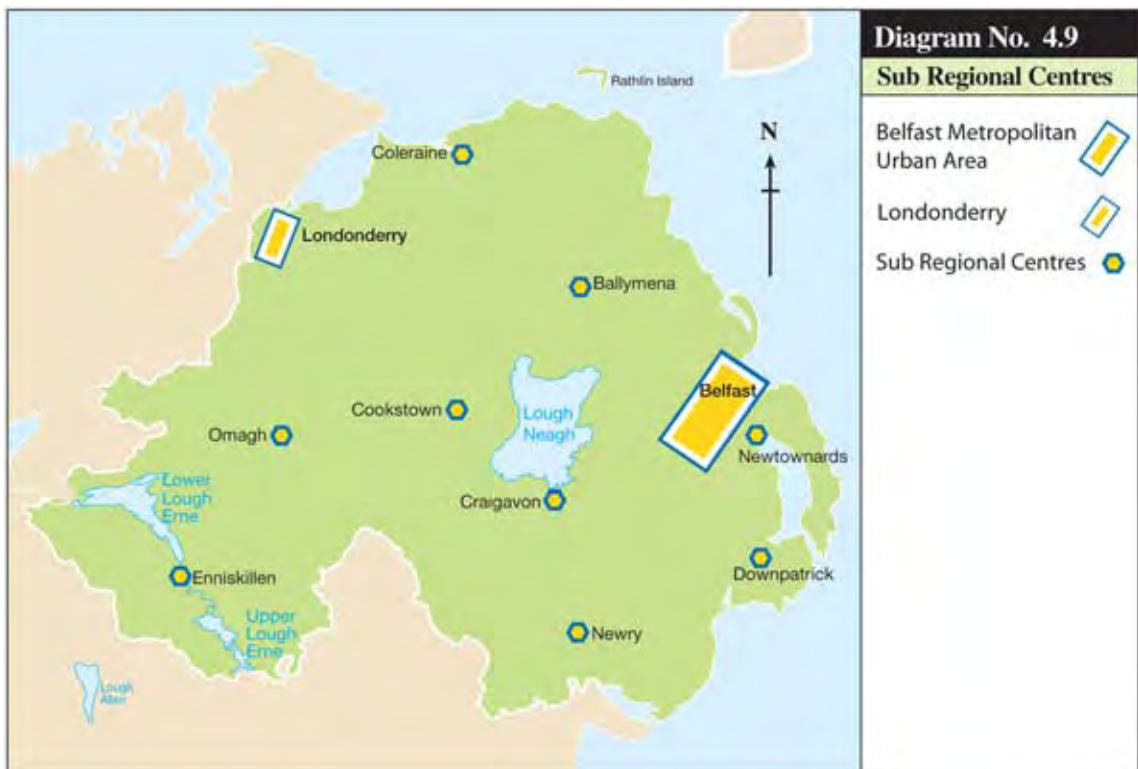
4.31 People in the Derry local government district experience the highest level of income deprivation with around 38% classified as income deprived compared to the Northern Ireland figure which is 25%. There is also a high percentage of long term unemployed. The majority of those working in Derry also live there. Median gross weekly pay for full time jobs in Derry is around 9% lower than that for the North as a whole.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 6:

Does the spatial framework recognise the important role of the North West and Derry? If not, why not?

C. Sub Regional Centres

4.32 Sub-Regional Centres are: Enniskillen, Omagh, Coleraine, Ballymena, Cookstown, Craigavon, Newry, Downpatrick and Newtownards.



4.33 **Enniskillen** is the principal town of Fermanagh District Council with a population of around 14,000 or 22% of the Council total. It's setting on the banks of Lough Erne make it a tourist destination. It will house the new acute hospital for the South West. The Devenish area is ranked amongst the top 100 most deprived areas in the North. Enniskillen is fairly remote from the principal cities in the North being around 1 hour 30 minutes drive from Derry or Belfast. It has an inter-regional gateway

function with only 1 hours drive to Sligo on the main transport route. There are opportunities for Enniskillen and Sligo to work together on the provision of services on a cross-border basis.

- 4.34 **Omagh** is the principal town in Omagh District Council with a growing population of around 21,500 or 41% of the District total. It is a major administrative centre with a high proportion of public sector jobs. The Lisanelly area is ranked amongst the top 100 most deprived areas in the North. Omagh is well connected to Derry being within 1 hours drive.
- 4.35 **Coleraine** is the principal town in Coleraine District Council with a fairly static population of around 24,500 or 43% of the District total. It is situated close to the tourist destination the Causeway Coast . It performs a strong district function with a wide range of services including an acute hospital and a university campus. The Ballysally, Central Coleraine and Cross Glebe areas suffer significant deprivation. Coleraine is well connected by road and rail to both Belfast and Derry although journey times of around an hour mean that commuting is not an attractive option.
- 4.36 **Ballymena** is the principal town in Ballymena District Council with a population of close to 30,000 or 47% of the District total. There are pockets of high deprivation in the Ballee and Moat areas. Ballymena is a significant employment and retail centre. It is well connected to Belfast by both road and rail and is around 30 minutes drive from the International airport.
- 4.37 **Cookstown** is the principal town in Cookstown District Council with a growing population of around 12,000 or 32% of the District total. Cookstown provides services to a rural hinterland including an agricultural college. It will be home to a new Public Service training centre. Cookstown is within an hours drive to Belfast and Derry.
- 4.38 **Craigavon urban area** is made up of the three centres of Lurgan, Portadown and Central Craigavon with a growing population of around 65,000 or 72% of the district total. It is the third largest centre of population in the North. Lough Neagh, an activity tourist destination, is accessible from Craigavon. There are a number of places which rank in worst 100 deprived areas in the North. Craigavon performs a strong sub-regional function offering a wide range of services and facilities including an acute hospital. It is well connected to both Belfast and Dublin. The drive time to Belfast is around 30 minutes and the train between Belfast and Dublin stops at Portadown.
- 4.39 **Newry**, which has city status, is the main settlement in the Newry and Mourne District Council. It has a population of around 29,000 or 31% of

the district total. Newry's setting close to the tourist destination of the Mourne Mountains make it an attractive tourist destination. The areas of Drumgullion, Ballybot and Daisy Hill are ranked amongst the 100 most deprived areas in the North. Newry is a significant employment centre with a strong retail offering and an acute hospital. It is well connected to both Belfast and Dublin being on the main road and rail links.

- 4.40 **Downpatrick** is the main town in Down District Council with a population of around 11,000 or 16% of the district total. Downpatrick is of regional significance for its historical and archaeological interest, being connected with Saint Patrick. The Ballymote area ranks amongst the 100 most deprived areas in the North. Downpatrick provides the retail, health and social facilities for a wide rural area. Whilst the drive time to Belfast is around 30 minutes it is not on a key transport corridor.
- 4.41 **Newtownards** is the main town in Ards District Council with a population of around 30,000 or 37% of the district total. Newtownards is at the head of Strangford Lough an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It serves as the market town for the surrounding rural Ards Peninsula. The Scrabo, Glen and Central areas of Newtownards are ranked within the 200 most deprived areas in the North. With a drive time to Belfast of around 20 minutes a significant number of people commute to Belfast to work. Consideration should be given to including Newtownards in any new area plans for the BMUA.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 7:

The Strategy proposes 9 sub-regional centres, do you agree with those that have been identified? If not, why not?

CONSULTATION QUESTION 8:

Newtownards has been included as a sub-regional centre, should it be included in the BMUA instead?

D. Clusters of Cities and Towns

4.42 **Clustering** is promoted in the framework as a way for smaller places to complement larger urban centres and provide the range of services needed by their catchments. As well as the main towns identified in each cluster there are other smaller urban settlements in the surrounding rural areas which can perform some of the functions of the larger towns.

The following clusters are proposed:

Newry and Dundalk

4.43 Newry, which is identified as a Sub-Regional Centre and has a gateway role, has the potential to cluster with Dundalk. They are strategically located on the Belfast-Dublin corridor which has the potential to become a significant axis of development within the wider European context. This has provided the impetus for joint working to develop their roles as regional Gateways and to develop the wider eastern seaboard corridor. In recent years Newry and Dundalk have benefited from strong co-operation by key local stakeholders in both the public and private sectors. The Newry/Dundalk Twin City Region Framework for Co-operation is such an example. City economies are expected to come to the fore again with almost half of the North's new jobs expected to be created in 4 of the City Councils, Newry being one of them.

Ballymena and Antrim

4.44 Ballymena, identified as a Sub-Regional Centre, has the potential to cluster with Antrim. Antrim, on the shore of Lough Neagh, has a population of around 22,000 and is the main town of Antrim District Council and has an acute hospital. These towns are well connected with a drive time of less than 20 minutes between them and a rail link. The proximity to the International Airport gives this cluster an advantage in attracting business. Its proximity to Lough Neagh also provides opportunities for developing the tourism offer.

Coleraine, Ballymoney and Ballycastle

4.45 Coleraine is identified as a Sub-Regional Centre. The towns of Ballymoney and Ballycastle have the potential to network with Coleraine. Ballymoney has a population of around 10,000 whilst Ballycastle is considerably smaller with nearly 6,000. The cluster is reasonably well connected with journey times between centres of 20 minutes to half an hour. The journey times to both Belfast and Derry increases the need for this cluster to be able to provide all the level 3 services.

The cluster is close to the Causeway Coast and Glens, a significant tourist attraction. Renewable energy could also be developed using the natural assets of the area.

Craigavon, Banbridge and Armagh

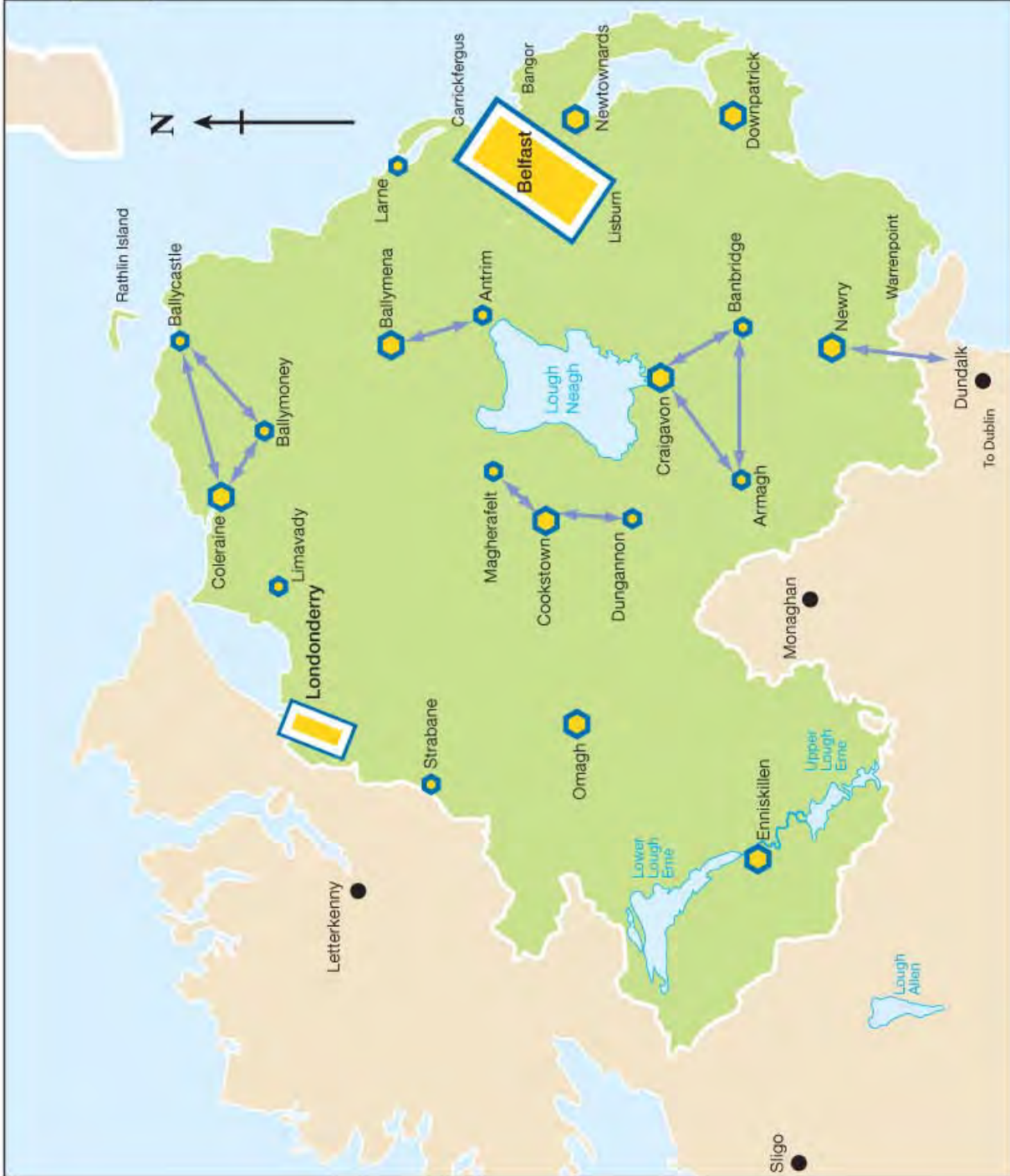
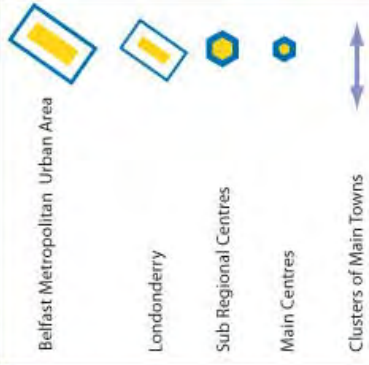
- 4.46 Craigavon is identified as a Sub-Regional Centre and Banbridge and Armagh have the potential to cluster with it. This cluster has the potential to capitalise on its strategic position on the Belfast/Dublin and Belfast/Enniskillen/Sligo economic corridors. Armagh's niche market is its tourism potential with its high quality of historic built environment and range of visitor attractions linked with Saint Patrick and the Christian Heritage. Banbridge also benefits from its strategic location on the Belfast Dublin Corridor and will continue to have a key role as an important retail and commercial centre within the cluster.

Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt

- 4.47 Cookstown is identified as a Sub-Regional Centre and the proximity of Dungannon and Magherafelt mean that these towns have the potential to form a cluster. Dungannon has a population of around 13,000 whilst Magherafelt has around 9,000. These towns are well connected to each other with both Dungannon and Magherafelt within around 10 miles of Cookstown. Each of the towns acts as important centres for retailing, commerce and business and serves a substantial number of dispersed smaller settlements. This cluster is well positioned on 2 Key Transport Corridors connecting it to Belfast, Derry and Enniskillen. Its position close to both Lough Neagh and the Sperrins also provides opportunities in the Tourism sector.

Diagram No. 4.10

Clusters of Cities and Main Towns



CONSULTATION QUESTION 9:

Do you think the concept of clustering cities and towns will enable greater economic prosperity and delivery of services? If not, why not?

CONSULTATION QUESTION 10:

Do you agree with the cities and towns that have been clustered together? If not what would you cluster together and why?

E. The Rural Area

- 4.48 Those places outside the Principal Cities, the Sub-Regional Centres and the cluster towns are for the purpose of this framework identified as constituting the rural area. The population living in these places is around 40% of the total population of the Region. Recently the rural community living in small towns, villages, and small settlements in the countryside, has experienced the fastest rate of population growth reversing a long term trend of population decline.
- 4.49 The areas around Coalisland and Castlederg are ranked within the 100 most deprived parts of the region as measured by the Multiple Deprivation Measure.
- 4.50 The need to sustain rural communities requires new development and employment opportunities which respect local, social and environmental circumstances. This means facilitating the development of rural industries, businesses and enterprises in appropriate locations, and ensuring they are integrated appropriately within the settlement or rural landscape. The expansion of rural tourism and development which is both sustainable and environmentally sensitive should be encouraged.
- 4.51 Accessibility to services can be difficult in rural areas and there are wider implications for both transport to services and the provision of a core set of essential services. Rural communities around the border area can find that due to back to back planning decisions with jurisdictions in the north and south, they have a particular problem with access to services. Opportunities exist for co-operation between jurisdictions to ensure this is not the case. Advancements in the use of technology and telecommunications will enable a more innovative approach to service delivery.
- 4.52 It is recognised that Rathlin Island is unique as it is the only inhabited off-shore island in the North. The challenges faced by such an island community are different from those on the mainland and there is a need for a co-ordinated approach to its development.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 11:

Does the spatial framework recognise the important function of rural communities?

F. Gateways and Economic Corridors

4.53 **Gateways** are strategically important transport interchanges which are important for economic development, freight distribution activities and additional employment generation. The quality of connection from the air and sea ports to the internal transport network is crucial for economic competitiveness and the convenience of the travelling public. Economic and social development depends on modern, efficient infrastructure.








4.54 The Gateways are:

- Belfast - The major Regional City Gateway with the principal sea port of the Region and a city airport. The sea port handles approximately 1.3 million passengers and 13 million tonnes of goods whilst the city airport handles around 2.5 million passengers.
- Belfast International Airport - The main airport of the Region handles around 36,000 tonnes of freight and 5.2 million passengers.
- Larne - The second largest sea port of the Region behind Belfast handles 0.9 million passengers and 5 million tonnes of goods. It is an important location for power generation and for gas and electricity interconnectors from Scotland.
- Derry - The North West City Gateway with a sea port, a regional airport and strategic links to Letterkenny and Donegal. The airport handles just under 0.5 million passengers while the port handles around 1.8 million tonnes of goods.
- Newry - The South Eastern City Gateway with links to Warrenpoint Harbour and strategic links to Dundalk and on to Dublin .
- Enniskillen - The South West gateway with strategic links to Sligo.

4.55 **Economic corridors** have been identified based on the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN). This Network has a fundamental role to play in regional growth. It can help strengthen economic competitiveness, increase the attractiveness of Belfast and Derry and provides access to the air and sea ports. Rapid intra-regional connections, particularly between main towns, are key to economic activity. The Network also increases the potential to incorporate a strong public transport element and to accommodate infrastructure necessary to improve the Region's energy and telecommunications. The key and link transport corridors, as defined on the RSTN (Diagram 4.11) are also essential for providing access to the gateways.

Diagram No. 4.11

Regional Strategic Transport Network

-  Ports
-  Belfast International Airport
-  Airports
-  Key Transport Corridors
-  Link Corridors
-  Trunk Roads
-  Railways

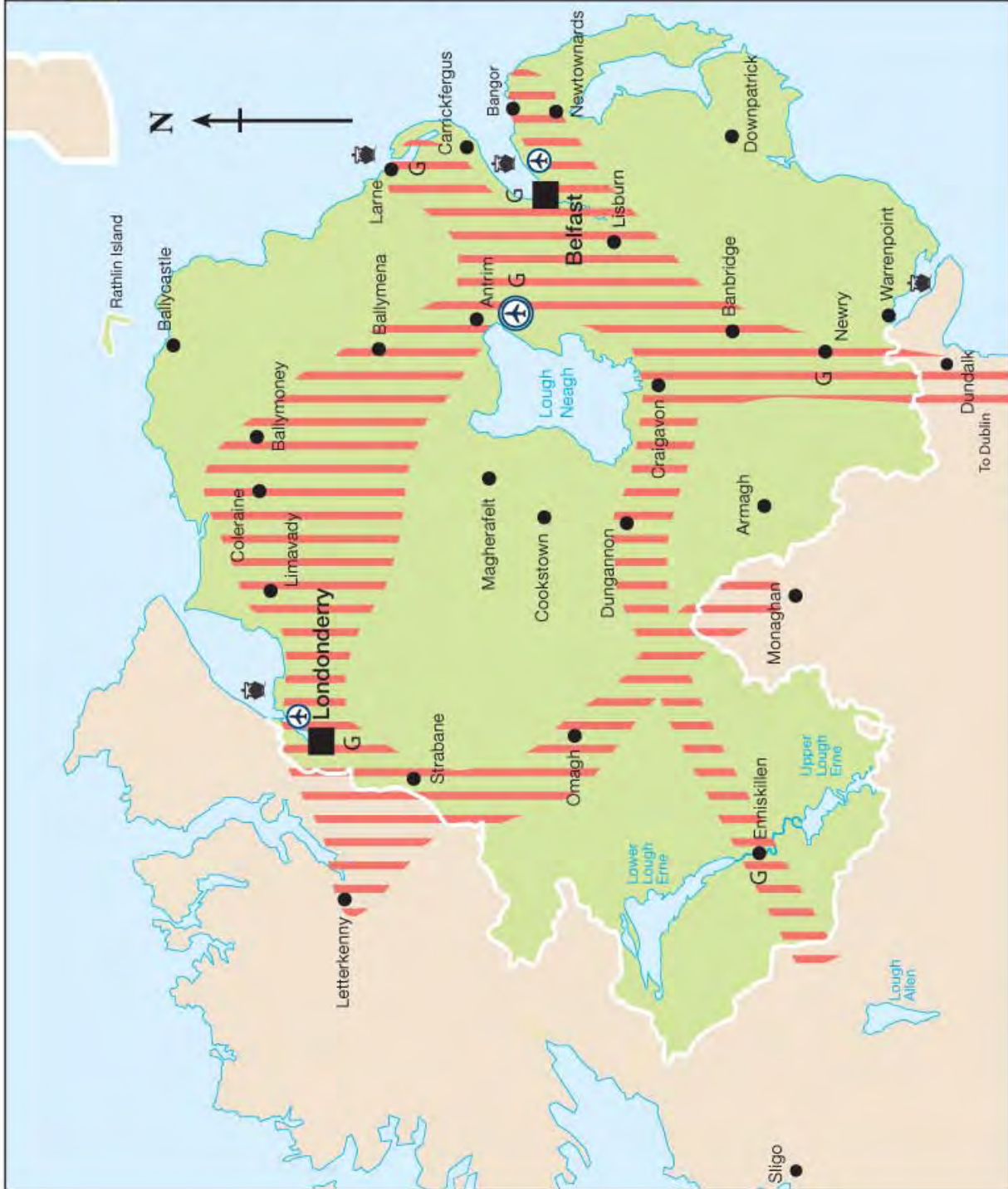


- 4.56 There are significant improvements planned for the Key Transport Corridors. Work on the Link Corridors on the Trunk Road Network will enhance accessibility to regional services, reduce peripherality and deliver balanced economic growth.
- 4.57 Economic Corridors connect Belfast and Derry and main centres of economic activity and the external gateways. Because of the accessibility of the road network between cities and towns this will open up opportunity for economic development across the Region to support regional growth. Cross-border co-operation and collaboration provide opportunities to boost the economic performance and competitiveness across the island.
- 4.58 The economic corridors are:
- The Eastern Seaboard – from Larne to Belfast, to Lisburn, Banbridge, Newry and through to Dublin;
 - The Western – connecting Derry through Strabane, Omagh, Ballygawley, Aughnacloy and on to Monaghan;
 - The Northern – Belfast to Derry encompassing Antrim, Ballymena, Coleraine, Limavady, Dungiven, and Magherafelt; and
 - The South Western – Belfast, Craigavon, Dungannon, Ballygawley, Enniskillen towards Sligo.

Diagram No. 4.12

Economic Corridors

-  Economic Corridors
-  Ports
-  Belfast International Airport
-  Airports
-  Principal City
-  Gateways
-  Other cities/ towns



CONSULTATION QUESTION 12:

Does the spatial framework recognise the important role of Gateways?

CONSULTATION QUESTION 13:

Do you think the concept of Economic Corridors as described is useful? If not why not?

The Spatial Framework has been developed taking account of the evidence set out in Chapter 2.

Different spatial approaches to the distribution of development throughout the region could be taken. These include:

- The existing RDS with its focus on Belfast as the regional economic driver, Derry as the hub of the North West and 16 main centres for growth.
- Promote development outside Belfast
- Promote development in Belfast and Derry and natural growth elsewhere.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 14:

Do you agree with the Spatial Framework set out in this chapter? If not what alternative approach do you suggest and why?

CHAPTER

05



Strategic Guidance

Chapter 5

5.0 Strategic Guidance

- 5.1 The purpose of the Strategic Guidance set out in this chapter is to provide long term policy directions to guide the public, private and community sectors. It is not therefore operational planning policy and guidance which is normally issued through PPSs published by the DOE.
- 5.2 The strategic guidance contained in each section providing specific detail on the geographical areas of the Spatial Framework should not be read in isolation. The cross-cutting guidance on Environment, Society and Economy will also apply to each of these sections.

1. The Metropolitan Area centred on Belfast
2. Derry City the hub of the North West
3. Sub-regional Centres
4. Clusters of Cities and towns
5. The Rural area
6. Gateways and corridors for economic growth

7. Environment
8. Society
9. Economy

I. The Metropolitan Area Centred on Belfast

- 5.3 The Strategic Guidance set out below is designed to develop a thriving Metropolitan Area centred on a revitalised City of Belfast to ensure that it can compete internationally as a place to locate business, work and visit. This will mean building a critical mass to ensure that it has higher order services, a range of facilities and cultural amenities. The availability of land for economic development to accommodate high skilled, high value jobs is important particularly in areas which will build on the regeneration initiatives close to the Belfast City Centre, at Laganside and at Belfast City Centre gateway locations.
- 5.4 As with other UK cities, Belfast has suffered from a hollowing out effect around the central business core with a ring of deprivation and semi-dereliction before the more affluent suburbs are reached. This dereliction and deprivation needs to be addressed to enable Belfast to fulfil its potential as an attractive city connected to its neighbourhoods. Using this derelict land could reduce the pressure to release greenfield land for development and open up opportunities for innovative developments which link deprived neighbourhoods and middle city areas with the city centre.
- 5.5 The Strategic Guidance in this section applies specifically to the BMUA but should not be read in isolation. The cross-cutting guidance on Environment, Society and Economy will also apply to the BMUA.

SG1: Promote urban economic development at key locations throughout the BMUA and ensure sufficient land is available for jobs

- 5.6 Significant investment will be required to sustain and grow the BMUA. Employment opportunities should be planned in a way which recognises the roles which the component parts play, builds on planned regeneration initiatives and maximises the use of existing and planned infrastructure provision, including public transport.

- **Key locations should be identified and protected for economic growth.** This will strengthen the role of the BMUA as the regional economic driver. Major employment/industrial locations in Belfast Harbour Area, (including Titanic Quarter), West Lisburn/Blaris, Purdysburn and Global Point/Ballyhenry well connected to public transport will support the drive to provide a range of opportunities for job creation.
- **Enhance Lisburn City as a major employment and commercial centre.** Research shows that in the 10 years between 1998 and 2008, 5% of the increase in the North's employment levels was in the Lisburn District Council area. Lisburn has high development potential and the scope to generate additional jobs. Projections suggest that between 2008 and 2028 Lisburn District Council will account for nearly 10% of the total increase in employment.

Lisburn is strategically located at the meeting of key transport corridors and has a strong city centre retail with the potential for further development. The scale and nature of retail development at Sprucefield, as the only out-of-town regional shopping centre, will continue to be controlled in accordance with the relevant planning policies.

- **Promote the regeneration of the town centres of Bangor and Carrickfergus.** Bangor and Carrickfergus have significant housing catchment areas. It will be important that they extend their employment and retail base to serve their catchments. Both towns have important complementary roles to play within the BMUA. While Belfast City will continue to provide job opportunities for many of the residents, it will be important for them to widen their economic base as a means of reducing their roles as dormitory towns.
- **Direct mixed use development towards sites which will enhance local regeneration initiatives.** Regeneration of sites such as Titanic Quarter, Crumlin Road Gaol, the North Foreshore, and Belfast Harbour area will act as catalysts for regeneration. The Port of Belfast occupies approximately 19% of the City Council area. It is already a key centre for industry and trade. This role will grow further as the residential, commercial and leisure potential of the Titanic Quarter lands are realised.

SG2: Manage the movement of people and goods within the BMUA

5.7 The Strategy recognises that transport has a key role to play in developing competitive cities and regions. An efficient transport infrastructure is not only important for a successful economy but it can also help promote social inclusion.

- **Manage travel demand within the BMUA.** The Strategy recognises the environmental, social, and economic benefits of an efficient public transportation system. As congestion continues to rise more radical steps will need to be taken to encourage a modal shift in travel from cars to public transport. One factor which may be influencing journey choice is the relative availability of car parking space. A range of initiatives need to be taken eg, reducing the supply of long term car parking spaces in Belfast City Centre, pricing policies, land use measures and innovative work practices. These measures need to be planned in a timely way to coincide with the improvements to public transportation.
- **Improve the public transport service.** There has been reliance on the car and consequently congestion levels have been increasing. This has had an effect on journey times and emissions. While Belfast has benefited from significant public transportation investment, further measures will be required in order to provide a real alternative to the car. A well maintained high quality public transport will attract greater use and feeling of safety and security. This will include innovative route and service options, rail feeder services, integrated transport facilities and orbital urban services.
- **Integrate land use and transport.** Planned improvements to the public transport network including a rapid transit system should be developed to ensure that there is integration with land uses. This will help reduce congestion levels and, with a portfolio of travel demand measures, will ensure better access to employment opportunities. The siting of new developments in locations, well served by public transport, will provide a sustainable choice of transport.
- **A Rapid Transit System.** This will offer improved speed, reliability, comfort and access and will provide connection to the wider key transport network within the BMUA.

The development of a Rapid Transit system in Belfast is one of the key priorities contained within the PfG. The System will provide quick and efficient access into and across the city and a real alternative to the car travel. Belfast Rapid Transit will achieve a step change in public transport in the city. It will provide faster, higher quality services, with new routes serving new opportunities, and operate on high priority Rapid Transit bus lanes. The overall aim of the Rapid Transit system is to improve the public transport service available to everyone who lives in, works in or visits Belfast. It will improve the city's image and will help to regenerate and open up new development opportunities along its routes. It will play a key role in linking communities and transforming neighbourhoods. It will help regenerate socially deprived areas in both East and West Belfast providing quick and efficient access to jobs, hospitals and leisure sites.

- **Efficient movement of freight.** The strategic road network should take account of the need for the efficient movement of freight, especially managing access to the motorway system and the gateway lands at the Harbour Estate.
- **Improve facilities for walking and cycling which is co-ordinated with infrastructure investment.** Environmental street improvements will assist in making streets safer and more user-friendly for cyclists and pedestrians.

SG3: Protect and enhance the quality of the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets

5.8 The BMUA has a significant natural setting surrounded by hills. It is important to recognise the significance of the existing environmental assets and protected areas of high scenic value.

- **Protect areas of high scenic value, undeveloped coast line, Belfast Lough, the Lagan Valley Regional Park and the hills around the BMUA from development.** The attractive natural setting of the BMUA reinforces its uniqueness and brings benefits for the economy and to society. These areas should be safeguarded, although opportunities should be taken for increased sustainable 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 and enhance the network of open spaces in the BMUA.** The network consists of country parks, landscape wedges, parks and forests and community greenways. They are important recreational facilities which help to define a sense of place and character for urban communities. 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 and creating a network of existing green spaces throughout the BMUA.
- **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.

Belfast City

- 5.9 The recent revival of **Belfast City** has been led by regeneration of its shopping function and by the transformation of Laganside and the Waterfront area. The City is now entering the next phase of its transformation. A number of key developments will now open up significant opportunities for rapid growth. These include, Titanic Quarter, Sirocco Quays, the development of the Port of Belfast, the new University of Ulster Campus, Royal Exchange and City Quays. In addition, the development of a rapid transit system and investment in City strategic routes will change the way future growth is planned. Frameworks for community regeneration and City investment are also being developed.

5.10 Priorities will include:

- Regenerating inner and middle City areas with a focus on urban villages and public hubs as places for community facilities and services, and opening up opportunities for communities to benefit from investment in strategic sites.
- Reinforcing the quality of the City centre shopping and business area and making it accessible to all by creating attractive and accessible links for inner city communities.
- Ensuring that all the citizens of Belfast benefit from wealth creation. This will mean co-ordinated action from all those making decisions.

SG4: Grow the population of the City of Belfast

5.11 The population of Belfast is forecast to fall over the next 2 decades, therefore population decline needs to be reversed in order to have a strong capital City which is the economic driver of the Region. The aim is for the population of Belfast City to be 300,000 by 2021. This was the level achieved in the 1980s and would be an indication of the success of the City growing as the regional economic driver. Key to population growth will be the provision of housing to meet the full range of need and an efficient public transport system which will provide the connections to jobs, services and amenities. This will provide an attractive urban environment for those who live and work in the City. However, there are a number of internationally important nature conservation sites that could be affected by the expansion of Belfast's population, and housing growth must be appropriately managed to avoid adverse effects on these sites. For example, effects could occur through increased recreational use of nearby sites (e.g. Belfast Lough), or by increasing demands on water resources or areas of waste water disposal. It will be necessary when planning the location and phasing of development that there is sufficient capacity (including water supply and waste-water treatment infrastructure) or that it can be provided ahead of development without environmental harm.

5.12 There are significant opportunities for more jobs to be created and it will be important that there is a wide variety of house types for those wishing to live and work in the City. It is estimated that 22,000 jobs could be

created between 2008 and 2028. Most of these jobs will be in the service and office sector and they will be attracted to the City by the availability of a skilled workforce and the environmental quality which the City has to offer.

- **Support a drive to provide additional dwellings.** These additional dwellings will be provided on land already zoned for housing and on windfall sites which become available for development. Assessment is also needed of the scope for higher densities in appropriate locations, particularly at gateway sites into the City Centre, on arterial routes and at transport interchange areas. It will require imaginative and innovative design, including mixed use schemes, to ensure that they link into the existing urban fabric. The provision of these dwellings must take account of environmental capacity studies to ensure that their delivery can be sustainably managed.

SG5: Enhance the role of Belfast City Centre as the regional capital and focus of administration, commerce, specialised services and cultural amenities

5.13 Belfast City Centre will continue as the primary office location in the Region. Growth in the business and service sectors will be the main driver for new offices and while most will locate in the City Centre, some business uses assist in regeneration initiatives, particularly in areas of deprivation.

5.14 The regeneration of inner and middle city communities will be strongly influenced by the focus on enhancing existing commercial centres and arterial routes which provide a range of facilities for local needs. Proposals for development of these centres should continue to take account of their impact on the city centre shopping area as a whole.

- **Support and strengthen the distinctive role of Belfast City Centre as the primary retail location in the Region.** Belfast City Centre has developed its regional shopping offer. A precautionary approach needs to be taken in relation to future major retail development proposals based on the likely risk of out of centre shopping developments having an undesirable adverse impact on the city centre shopping area.
- **Enhance the employment potential of Belfast City Centre.** Belfast has a key role to play as the centre of regional administration and providing business services. The City Centre will continue to be the first choice for major office developments.
- **Close the gap in quality of life for those living in deprived areas.** Sustain urban regeneration measures, targeting social need and community disadvantage across the city, and help tackle community division.
- **Develop the City of Belfast as the Region's cultural and arts centre and enhance the public realm.** Quality urban environments and distinctive cultural and arts facilities have a significant influence on investment in new business. Regeneration initiatives in areas such as in the Cathedral Quarter, and around the Waterfront Hall, together with the significant investment in the arts and culture infrastructure in the city, have significantly enhanced the quality of the urban environment, and emphasised the cultural diversity on offer. An integrated approach is required for a further step change in the pedestrian environment in the city centre, along arterial routes, to enhance the 'urban villages' for community living and cultural events.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 15:

Do you consider that the identification of a BMUA continues to be appropriate for forward planning purposes?

CONSULTATION QUESTION 16:

Do you agree that Sprucefield should continue to be classified as a regional out of town shopping centre?

2. Derry City Hub of The North West

- 5.15 The North West comprises the district council areas of Derry, Limavady and Strabane together with the greater part of County Donegal, all of which face common issues. These include : the level of economic prosperity in comparison to other parts of Ireland, North and South; its relative isolation and distance from Belfast and Dublin (both actual and perceived) and its accessibility to key business and tourism markets; and a need for improved and better co-ordinated services within the North West.
- 5.16 Derry City has a pivotal role in cross-border and international relationships and is already the main urban centre in the North West and a gateway to America and Europe. The North West and Derry City has a significant natural setting that includes coastline, Lough Foyle and river valleys. It is important to recognise the significance of the existing environmental assets in and around the area, and to manage access to important wildlife sites.
- 5.17 The Strategic Guidance in this section applies specifically to Derry and the North West Region and should not be read in isolation. All other Strategic Guidance contained in the Strategy will apply to Derry and the North West Region apart from those that have been set for BMUA.

SG6: Develop a strong North West

- 5.18 Planning for physical development, social infrastructure, physical infrastructure and economic development is central to the development of a strong North West. Derry City is well suited to provide a regional level of service to much of the western part of the North and to a substantial part of County Donegal.
- 5.19 Due to the geographic peripherality of the North West, transport, energy and telecommunication connections are important to the economic and social fabric of the Region.
- **High levels of co-operation** between Letterkenny and Derry, Strabane and Limavady in order to consider opportunities for improved public services in areas such as health and education through co-operation between statutory agencies and other institutions.

- **Enhance transport linkages** across the Region particularly between Derry, Strabane, Limavady and Donegal, to and from the air and sea ports and the distribution of traffic from and between transport corridors.
- **Enhance the roles of Strabane and Limavady.** Both these towns perform important roles in providing services to local communities. Strabane could capitalise on its location close to the Sperrins and Donegal to expand its tourism offer working with its cross border neighbours. Limavady an important market town serving a large rural community also has tourism potential linking Derry to the Causeway Coast.
- **Improve the energy infrastructure** across the Region to ensure that the North West, in particular, has access to reliable sustainable energy supplies to support economic growth and connectivity, and to maximise the North West's significant renewable energy resource.

SG7: Strengthen the role of Derry as the capital city of the North West

5.20 Securing a strong and vibrant Derry city is important to the economic and social wellbeing of the North West. The physical transformation of this historic walled city to reflect its economic status and profile will enhance its urban character and promote neighbourhood recovery. The creation of imaginative new housing, the management of parks and open spaces, and making streets safe and attractive will encourage the regeneration of the city.

- **Continue to regenerate the City of Derry.** The City should be the focus for administration, shopping, commerce, specialised services, cultural amenities and tourism within the North West.
- **Secure the economic, social and physical regeneration of the Ebrington and Fort George sites led by ILEX.** These former security bases will add some 17 hectares of development land to the City's land stock and provide a major opportunity for boosting economic development and regeneration of the area.

- **Meet the housing needs of the area.** It is expected that the need for housing in the City will continue to increase. These additional dwellings will be provided on land already zoned for housing and on windfall sites which become available for development. Assessment is also needed of the scope for higher densities in appropriate locations. It will require imaginative and innovative design, including mixed use schemes, to ensure that they link into the existing urban fabric.
- **Maximise the tourism potential of the city.** Continuing the regeneration of the City while respecting its heritage assets, exceptional landscape setting and unique walled core through sensitive development. The City should be promoted as a major tourist destination in its own right and as a gateway to Donegal, north Derry, the Sperrins and the Causeway Coast.
- **Provide better accessibility to the central area of the city.** There is a need to improve the main radial routes for public transport, for walking, and for cycling, along with improvement to the interchange facilities between bus and rail.

Case Study

Ilex Urban Regeneration Company was established in 2003 by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development to plan, develop and sustain the economic and social regeneration of Derry. As an urban regeneration company it provides an effective and proactive vehicle for delivering a focused, visionary and integrated strategy through operational partnerships with public agencies and the private sector to exploit the strengths and opportunities of the Derry City Council area.

Ilex has specific responsibility to manage and re-develop the two former military bases of Ebrington (26 acres) and Fort George (14 acres). Ilex has already commenced the re-development of Ebrington which will be a mixed-use site for tourism, arts and culture, commercial, residential and convenience retail. The Exchange Centre for the Kelvin Project is also based at this location. The Parade Ground is being redesigned as a piazza and the listed buildings surrounding it are earmarked for tourism, leisure, arts and culture use.

A significant project which has also commenced is the construction of a new Peace Bridge. This is a foot and cycle bridge, which will physically unite both sides of the River Foyle from the former military base at Ebrington to the Guildhall. It will symbolise the reconciliation of communities and the building of a shared society. The Peace Bridge is the most significant capital project in Derry for decades.

- **Close the gap in quality of life for those living in deprived areas.** Sustain urban regeneration measures targeting social need and community disadvantage across the city, and help tackle community division.

SG8: Protect and enhance the environmental assets of Derry City and the North West

5.21 Derry 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 for the economy and to 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 and creating a network of existing 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.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 17:

Does the guidance address the development of a strong North West and strengthened role for Derry City? If not, why not?

3. Sub-Regional Centres

5.22 Chapter 4 identifies the main settlements that have the greatest potential for economic growth. These provide a range of accessible centres for the concentrated development of industrial, commercial, health, education and community services.

SG9: Promote economic development opportunities at Sub-Regional Centres

5.23 To compete successfully at a global level the Region's private sector needs to grow. This will lead to an increase in productivity and to an enhanced market share in products and services. This in turn will result in better employment opportunities and reductions in economic inactivity and unemployment. Inward investment needs to be attracted and local firms encouraged to grow.

- **Promote and exploit the potential for economic development.** Sub regional centres described in Chapter 4 are all performing economic roles and have potential for further economic expansion. Small businesses and service sector offices could locate in these towns.

SG10: Grow the population in the Sub-Regional Centres

5.24 While official forecasts are for the population of the Region to grow by 10% by 2023 this will vary across the Region. The evidence is that over the last 10 years there has been a disproportionate amount of growth in smaller settlements. In some urban centres, such as Newry, Cookstown, Omagh and Ballymena, the percentage of population has declined between 1998 and 2008. (Appendix F District population balance) If this pattern were to continue, it could affect the role of larger settlements and be contrary to the objectives of the Strategy for strong growth in larger urban areas.

- **Provide additional housing in the Sub-Regional Centres across the Region.** Key to population growth and the associated regeneration of urban centres is the provision of additional housing. This will require sensitive design, including mixed use schemes and integration with green-space, to ensure that they link into the existing urban fabric. It will also be important to phase and manage housing growth taking account of capacity (including water supply and waste-water treatment infrastructure) or if it can be provided ahead of development without environmental harm. Strategic Guidance No. 22 sets out the process for allocating the housing figure.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 18:

Does the guidance address the key issues to promote economic growth in the Sub Regional Centres?

4. Clusters of Cities and Towns

5.25 Clusters are identified as a strong network of cities and towns with a high degree of overlap reinforcing the need for places to co-operate rather than compete. Given the scale of some places, clustering enables places to work together to create a critical mass to attract economic development and deliver services that are functionally sustainable.

SG11: Identify and consolidate the roles and functions of settlements within the clusters

5.26 Clustering enables greater economic prosperity as organisations and businesses can benefit from access to a pool of skilled labour and other knowledge or technology spillovers.

- **Assess the roles and function of settlements.** When development plans are being prepared an assessment of settlements and surrounding rural areas will assist in identifying their roles and functions. The work of the Settlement Information Classification Analysis Group (SICAG) on settlement service classification will be an important reference in the preparation of these assessments.

SG12: Use the Hierarchy of Settlements and related Infrastructure Diagram, to help to identify the level of appropriate services and facilities (Diagram 4.1).

5.27 This will highlight the need for co-ordination between those who deliver services and the effective management and use of public facilities.

- **Recognition of complementary roles.** The development effort in future years will require recognition of the complementary roles of each of the settlements within a cluster in order to provide the capacity needed to deliver quality services.
- **Provision of additional housing in the urban centres across the region.** Regeneration initiatives in the urban centres will include the

need for new housing. When new development is being considered the key principles of sensitive design, including mixed use schemes and the availability of necessary infrastructure also apply. In addition to the Sub-Regional Centres there are other large and medium sized towns across the Region, such as Antrim and Banbridge, where the population is in decline (Appendix F District population balance). Whilst the sub-regional centres or principle city in a cluster should be considered first for growth, regeneration of the urban centres within the clusters will include the need for housing. This will require sensitive design, including mixed use schemes and integration with green-space, to ensure that they link into the existing urban fabric. It will also be important to phase and manage housing growth taking account of capacity (including water supply and waste-water treatment infrastructure) or if it can be provided ahead of development without environmental harm.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 19:

Does the guidance on clustering enable places to attract economic development and deliver services that are functionally sustainable?

5. The Rural Area

- 5.28 The distinctive settlement pattern of main and small towns, villages and dwellings in the open countryside is unique within these islands. It offers a high degree of choice for the rural community, who have been the custodians of the exceptional natural and built environment. In rural areas, the aim is to sustain the overall strength of the rural community living in small towns, villages, small rural settlements and the open countryside.
- 5.29 It is recognised that there are wide variations across the Region in terms of economic, social and environmental characteristics of rural areas. There is therefore a need for local approaches to development which reflects these regional differences. Such approaches should be sensitive to local needs and environmental issues including the ability of settlements and landscapes to absorb development. Key considerations will be the role and function of rural settlements and accessibility to services. These approaches should also reflect and complement prevailing regional planning policy.

SG13: Sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countryside

- 5.30 A strong network of smaller towns supported by villages helps to sustain and service the rural community. A sustainable approach to further development will be important to ensure that growth does not exceed the capacity of the environment or the essential infrastructure expected for modern living.
- **Establish the role of multi-functional town centres.** These should be the prime locations for business, housing, administration, leisure and cultural facilities both for urban and rural communities.
 - **Connect rural and urban areas.** This is necessary to widen the economic base of town, village and countryside. Provide support and networking opportunities to form local alliances to exploit complementary resources and facilities.
 - **Revitalise small towns and villages and promote neighbourhood renewal.** This is particularly relevant to those towns and villages which have been static or declining and contain areas of social

need. Deprivation happens in different ways in different places. An integrated approach between government departments, agencies and communities will ensure that the regeneration plans reflect the specific needs of each community.

- **Facilitate the development of rural industries, businesses and enterprises in appropriate locations.** Ensuring they are integrated appropriately within the settlement or rural landscape. The expansion of rural tourism and development which is both sustainable and environmentally sensitive should be encouraged.

SG14: Improve accessibility for rural communities

5.31 Rural communities can be disadvantaged by virtue of their remote location being some distance from a range of facilities and essential services. This disadvantage can be lessened by innovative use of existing services and the application of new and developing technologies.

- **Improve the overall connectivity of rural communities to services and other parts of the Region by exploring innovative ways of bringing these services to the communities.** Using the community hall, local school or church hall for visiting service providers will help keep people living in rural areas connected. Differing service delivery approaches could include outreach and mobile services or increased use of Information Communication Technology.

Case Study

DHSSPS is developing a Telehealth Hospital Links Scheme to provide for the use of telehealth technology to monitor remotely, on a daily basis, the vital signs of those patients with long-term conditions who are most at risk of hospital admission. This will enable more effective management of disease, maintain patients' independence at home, maximise the use of healthcare professionals' time and reduce the use of hospital capacity.

- **Integrate local transport.** Promoting integrated rural transport initiatives which meet the needs of those living in isolated areas and in particular elderly and disabled people.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 20:

Does the guidance on the rural area meet the needs of rural communities?
If not, what areas do you consider have not been addressed?

6. Gateways And Corridors

5.32 Access to the Region's gateways should be managed and enhanced to support their development and enable them to contribute to regional objectives for economic growth and regeneration.

SG15: Strengthen the Gateways for Regional competitiveness

5.33 Gateways should be able to deal with goods and passenger traffic efficiently and be considered as an asset by potential investors and local firms alike. However, many of the gateways are intrinsically linked to important nature conservation sites or the aquatic environment, and their development must be appropriately managed to take account for this.

- **High quality connections to and from the air and sea ports.** As the economy grows, the demand for better connections to the air and sea ports is likely to increase, particularly from the business, tourist and freight markets. Development must be appropriate to ensure no adverse effects on nature conservation sites or the aquatic environment and have regard to the Marine Planning Statement and in accordance with a future marine plan when adopted.
- **Enhance Gateways and their environmental image.** The image of any Region is set within the first few minutes of arrival and is difficult to change once established. Entry points at Gateways should have welcoming arrival areas, be user-friendly and be of a high environmental quality for both the built and natural environment.

7. The Environment

5.34 Improving the quality of the environment can make an important contribution toward achieving a better quality of life. Significant progress towards more sustainable settlements and the conservation and protection of our built and natural heritage cannot be achieved without a change in attitudes and lifestyles of individuals.

5.35 Fossil fuels represent over 90% of the North's power generation and over 70% of households still use oil for home heating. Increasing the contribution that renewable energy can make to the energy mix will reduce reliance on fossil fuels and improve security of supply. To build an outward-looking, dynamic and liveable Region there needs to be significant investment in upgrading the electricity infrastructure, developing the natural gas network and exploring the potential of developing a renewable heat generation and distribution network.

SG16: Reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change whilst improving air quality.

5.36 Climate change is increasingly seen as one of the most serious problems facing the world. Whilst action is required internationally, it is important that the Region plays its part by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change. These include impacts on species and habitats and on health through the impacts of warmer temperatures, storms, floods and coastal erosion.

5.37 Consideration needs to be given to ways in which to reduce energy consumption towards more sustainable methods of production. For example, by recycling waste and recovering energy from it can reduce the use of fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions.

5.38 Mitigation

- **Reduce the need to use the car.** By designing neighbourhoods that have shops, offices, schools, churches, parks, and other amenities near homes, residents and visitors have increased opportunities for walking, cycling, or taking public transport as they go about their daily lives.

- **Adapt the existing transport network to facilitate the modal shift away from the car.** The car may be essential for some journeys but its value needs to be weighed against impact on the environment. The way existing transport is used needs to be looked at in order to favour modes of transport that allow reduction of the Region's carbon footprint.
- **Increase the use of renewable energies.** Energy production from fossil fuels is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants. The Region is largely dependent on fossil fuel combustion for electricity generation. Energy efficiency along with decarbonisation of the power sector is the key to achieving emissions reduction targets. The Strategic Energy Framework for Northern Ireland [draft published July 2009] sets a target of 40% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020 as well as achieving 10% penetration of renewable heat. This will require increasing numbers of renewable electricity installations and the grid infrastructure to support them. These must be appropriately sited to minimise their environmental impact.
- **Develop strong linkages between policies for managing air pollution and climate change.** Climate change and air pollutants share common sources. Greenhouse gases are most active high up in the atmosphere, whereas the most important factor for air quality is the concentration of pollutants nearer the earth's surface.

5.39 Adaptation

- **Use more energy efficient forms of transport.** There is already demand for more fuel efficient vehicles and vehicles which do not rely on fossil fuels. Some of these technologies, such as electric vehicles, will require investments in infrastructure to unlock their potential. Citizens will also need to be educated on the benefits of embracing these technologies.
- **Improve the energy efficiency of buildings.** Almost half of the per capita carbon footprint is generated by homes and other buildings and the way in which they are used. Around 75% of the current building stock will be standing in 2050. Improvements should be made to buildings to minimise energy use and encourage zero carbon emissions, while ensuring that the character of buildings of architectural or historic interest is maintained.

Case Study

Energy efficient housing development, schools and community buildings can act as a local showcase for good practice to help people make informed choices for how to manage their own energy use.

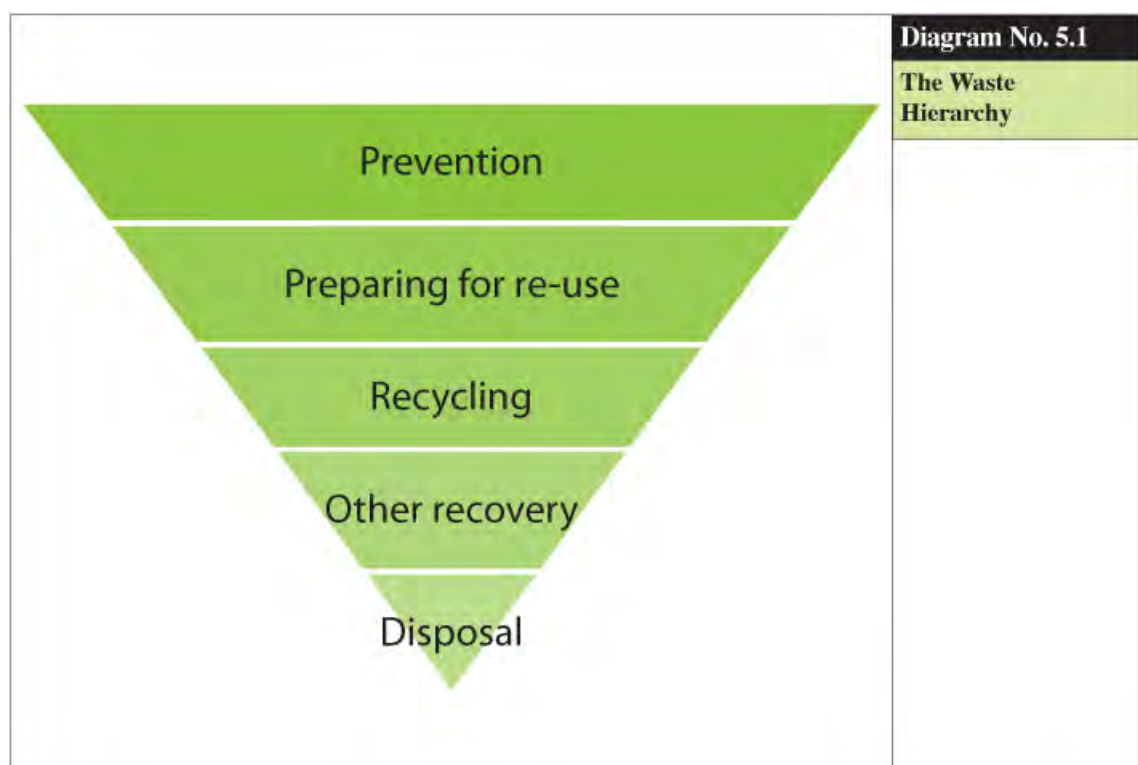
The Beddington Zero Energy Development, is the UK's largest carbon-neutral eco-community in the UK. Built in 2002 it comprises of 82 residential homes. The intention with this project, built in partnership with both an architect and an environmental consultancy firm, was to create a housing project that incorporates new approaches to energy conservation and sustainability, and also to build a thriving community to live within it. The houses are designed in south facing terraces to maximise solar heat gain and have a small-scale combined heat and power plant on site, powered by wood off-cuts, which provides most of the energy to the estate. All buildings have a thick insulation jacket, made from recycled materials. The project has a legally-binding green transport plan, incorporating a car pool system for residents, great public transport links, and is linked in to a cycling network. For these, and many more social and environmental initiatives and technologies, Bed ZED has won many national and International awards for sustainability, design, and innovation.

- **Re-use land, buildings and materials.** The use of previously developed land for new build and the adaptation and re-use of older buildings will help alleviate the pressure on open space.
- **Minimise development in areas at risk from flooding, coastal erosion and land instability.** Flooding from rivers and coastal waters is a natural phenomenon that cannot be entirely prevented. A precautionary approach to development in areas of flood risk from both rivers and the sea should be exercised. Developments in areas, even those outside flood risk areas should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS).
- **Protect soils.** A fully functioning soil reduces the risk of flood and protects underground water supplies by neutralising and filtering out potential pollutants. Development leading to soil sealing, loss of biodiversity and deposition of processed materials represent significant threats to soils. Soil acts as a significant means of capturing and storing carbon thereby reducing the impact of climate change. Therefore, there is a need to manage soil, protect peat habitats, and safeguard soils in urban areas.

- **Protect and extend the ecosystems and habitats that can reduce or buffer the effects of climate change.** Many ecosystems and habitats (such as peat bogs) act as sinks or stores for carbon if undisturbed. Other habitats such as saltmarsh, may provide protection against some effects or allow for adaptation to those changes (e.g. effects with sea-level rise). These areas should be protected and where possible extended.
- **Identify key assets and areas that are at risk through climate change.** In adapting to climate change it is essential that we maintain accurate and reliable information about key assets.

SG 17: Manage our waste sustainably

5.40 Managing waste is a significant part of how we treat our environment. If waste is not managed safely then it can become a serious threat to public health, and cause damage to the environment as well as being a local nuisance.



- **Apply the Waste Hierarchy principles.** The revised Waste Framework Directive introduces a new 5-step waste hierarchy to be applied as a priority order in waste prevention and management.
- **Apply the Proximity Principle.** This will emphasise the need to treat or dispose of waste as close as practicable to the point of generation, to minimise the environmental impacts of waste transport.

SG18: Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment

Built Heritage

5.41 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.** The North'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 of the Region. 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 the everyday dwellings and shops throughout the North. By recognising and managing these assets they can make a positive contribution to regeneration, the maintenance of craft skills, and developing the sense of place that can be respected by new development into the future.

- **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.

Natural Heritage

5.42 The natural environment directly supports all life and is essential to well being but it exists in a delicate balance between renewal and depletion. Human impacts on landscapes over the last century, as the result of increased development, have adversely affected biodiversity. There has been a substantial reduction in the total area of many semi-natural habitats and an ongoing process of land use intensification from agriculture and urbanisation.

- **Identify, establish, protect and manage ecological networks.** Ecological networks, including the protection of priority species, are needed to maintain environmental processes and to help to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Patches of semi-natural habitat within intensively used landscapes have become more vulnerable to damaging events and degradation, and the many species they contain are unable to migrate between them.

A well established ecological network, including designated sites, should provide the habitats needed for ecosystems and species populations to survive in an increasingly human dominated landscape. Such networks could also be of amenity value if linked to the green infrastructure provided by walking and cycle routes to heritage and other recreational interest.

Case Study

Areas with a unique geology contribute to the sustainable development of our natural heritage and need to be protected and managed. The Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark located in Fermanagh and Cavan is a world first for a Geopark to cross an international border and is home to some of the finest examples of glacial geology in the world. The Geopark is overseen by a Joint Operational Committee made up of representatives from both Cavan and Fermanagh Councils and managed from the Geopark headquarters at the Marble Arch Caves Visitor centre in County Fermanagh. The European Geopark Network plays an active role in economic development and aims to increase tourist numbers into the area through domestic and international sources. The potential to enhance the natural, built and cultural heritage of areas of outstanding landscape value and attain a second Geopark accreditation exists with the Mourne Cooley Gullion.

- **Protect and manage important geological and geomorphological features.** The Region has a remarkably diverse range of rocks and geomorphological features. While selected sites require protection for their scientific educational and research value, other topographical and geological features, if sensibly managed, can play an active role in economic development.
- **Protect and manage the coast.** The quality of coastal waters needs to be raised. Coastal areas need to be protected from coastal squeeze, to safeguard against loss of distinctive habitats and to help adaptation to climate change. The landscape setting of features should be conserved. The new Marine Planning Statement and subsequent Marine Plan will provide detailed policy and spatial guidance for the marine environment.
- **Protect and manage inland water bodies.** Rivers and lakes support habitats and species of national and international importance. The quality and the ecological status of the water environment should be improved through fulfilment of statutory obligations. River Basin Management Plans prepared under the Water Framework Directive contain measures that must be taken so that all coastal and inland waters reach at least good status by 2015.
- **Recognise and promote the conservation of local identity and distinctive landscape character.**

- **Conserve, protect and where possible enhance areas recognised for their landscape quality.** Protected landscapes should continue to be managed through a partnership approach involving central and local government and the local communities.
- **Complete national and international environmental designations on both land and at sea.** Designated sites should be managed to meet their international, national and local objectives.
- **Consider the establishment of one or more National Parks.** This would conserve and enhance the natural, built and cultural heritage of areas of outstanding landscape value while at the same time promoting the social and economic development of the communities they support.

SG19: Deliver a sustainable and secure energy supply

5.43 The Region needs a robust and sustainable energy infrastructure. This should deliver reliable, sustainable and secure sources of energy to communities and businesses across the Region. There may be some negative environmental impact due to new generation or transmission distribution infrastructure near protected sites. At project level, this will require an Environmental Impact Assessment to identify and balance impacts against the benefits from a secure renewable energy stream, and the potential for cleaner air and energy for industry and transportation.

- **Increase the contribution that renewable energy can make to the overall energy mix.** There will need to be a significant increase in all types of renewable electricity installations and renewable heat installations, including a wide range of renewable resources for electricity generation both onshore and offshore.
- **Strengthen the grid.** With an increasing number of renewable electricity installations as well as increasing numbers of renewable heat installations we will need to strengthen the grid. It will be necessary to integrate heat and electricity infrastructure (e.g. district heating networks and new electricity grid) alongside new road infrastructure development at the planning stage. If electric transport becomes more widespread, there will be a need to support a reliable recharging network. It also means increasing electricity

interconnection capacity to strengthen the linkages between transmission and distribution networks.

- **Provide gas storage.** This will have a positive impact on security and reliability of future gas supply. It would also have considerable environmental benefits as it is the least polluting fossil fuel.
- **Work with neighbours.** This will ensure a sustainable and secure energy supply from competitive regional electricity and gas markets in the EU's Internal Market.
- **Develop "Smart Grid" Initiatives.** This will improve the responsiveness of the electricity grid to facilitate new forms of renewable generation, to improve reliability, productivity, and energy efficiency and empower customers to make a more informed choice in relation to their energy usage.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 21:

Does the strategic guidance address the key issues relating to climate change and clearly demonstrate what needs to be done in order to help improve the environment? If not, what suggestions can you make?

8. Society

- 5.44 Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all. Sustainable communities embody the principles of sustainable development.
- 5.45 The guidance in this section supports the aims of 'A Shared Future' by encouraging development of a shared community where people wish to learn, live, work and play together.

SG20: Strengthen community cohesion

- 5.46 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 is positive and differences are valued. The right environment can help strengthen community cohesion, foster a stronger community spirit and increase our sense of place.
- **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.

Case Study

A key contributor to community cohesion is integration. This can be achieved by creating safe places for people to meet and undertake shared activities and by ensuring there are no barriers, perceived or physical, to access these places.

The Grove Health and Well-being Centre has transformed one of the most deprived areas of north Belfast. Serving a population with some of the poorest health in the region, the centre provides a new home for a range of health and social services, promoting stronger links between agencies and their professionals. Importantly, it has acted as a catalyst for the development and consolidation of partnerships with local communities. The centre will provide the building blocks for healthier and therefore stronger communities through its focus on integrated health, fitness and information in a one-stop environment. Facilities include a day centre for the elderly, leisure centre, library and retail pharmacy.

SG21: Support urban and rural renaissance

- 5.47 Many places do not offer the quality of facilities required to meet the needs of local people. Cities, towns, villages and many neighbourhoods have unique identities and these should be recognised and built upon and enhanced. Regeneration is necessary to create more accessible, vibrant city and town centres which are more sustainable and which offer people more local choice for shopping and social activity.
- 5.48 Urban renaissance is the process of development and redevelopment in urban areas to attract investment and activity, foster revitalisation and improve the mix of uses. Rural renaissance likewise is about revitalising the centres of small towns and villages so that they meet the immediate needs of the communities they serve. Redevelopment can include the reuse of both Listed Buildings and of locally important buildings, particularly the reuse of vernacular buildings and industrial heritage buildings/structures. Development is dependant upon the availability of necessary infrastructure, including water and sewerage infrastructure.

5.49 In some places community division has created enclaves and interfaces where businesses are reluctant to invest. Economic deprivation leads to environmental problems characterised by derelict buildings and undeveloped sites.

- **Develop innovative ways to bring forward under-utilised land and buildings, particularly for mixed use development.** There should be a focus on integrating new schemes within the existing townscape. The sensitive design of interfaces and access arrangements can allow a wide range of uses to co-exist peacefully. Mixed use developments can play a very important role in helping to regenerate and revitalise a declining area.
- **Promote regeneration in areas of social need.** Development initiatives should target areas that suffer low employment and high deprivation.
- **Ensure that environmental quality in urban areas is improved and maintained, particularly with adequate provision of green infrastructure.** Part of the process of urban and rural renaissance requires even greater significance being given to the design and management of the public realm. Through good architecture, landscape and planning our cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods can be made more inspiring and welcoming places in which to live and work. There is increasing evidence that good design delivers social, economic and environmental benefits. It is important to promote recreational space within cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods to minimise the potential for significant effects on nearby European sites.

SG22: Manage housing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development

5.50 Housing is a key driver of physical, economic and social change in both urban and rural areas. Strategic planning places emphasis on the importance of the critical relationship between the location of housing, jobs, facilities and services and infrastructure. This includes the need for development patterns that do not have an adverse impact on environmental resources and the built heritage.

5.51 The emphasis is on managing housing growth to ensure that there continues to be a focus on developing more housing within existing urban areas without causing unacceptable damage to the local character and environmental quality or residential amenity of these areas. It is

recognised that there are significant opportunities for new housing on appropriate vacant and under-utilised land, particularly as part of mixed use developments. Any proposed housing development will be dependant on the availability of necessary infrastructure, including the availability of sustainable water resources and sewerage capacity.

- 5.52 The existing RDS sets a regional target of 60% for the share of urban housing to be provided within urban footprints. This figure applies to Cities and towns of over 5,000 population. The definition of urban footprint is set out in Appendix J and the Glossary. Sites within the urban footprint which may count towards the regional target are assessed through urban capacity studies carried out as part of the development plan process. The detail of these studies is explained in PPS12 – Housing in Settlements.
- 5.53 The use of the 60% figure may have contributed towards pressure for higher density redevelopment in established residential areas. In addition, it is recognised that the brownfield potential has decreased and that a higher proportion of such land is likely to be found in Belfast and Derry.
- 5.54 It is therefore considered that ‘brownfield’ should be defined as land and buildings which have an industrial or commercial use. This will include vacant or unused land and buildings which have been last used for industrial/commercial purposes.
- 5.55 This would require a new target to be developed. The Department is carrying out research to establish an appropriate figure.
- 5.56 There is no presumption that brownfield land is necessarily suitable for housing development nor that the whole of the curtilage should be developed. Planning Policy Statement 7 and the Addendum published in August 2010 set out policy for housing in residential areas.
- 5.57 While the Strategy is to accommodate housing need within existing settlements, large-scale development proposals for the exceptional expansion of a settlement to meet an unforeseen housing need may arise. In addition to the statutory planning considerations, such proposals intended to meet a specific need will be subject to the master planning approach.
- **Promote more sustainable housing within existing urban areas.** It is important to ensure that the future housing needs in the Region does not use a disproportionate amount of regional resources including infrastructure, services, industrial and agricultural land. The objective therefore is to promote a more sustainable form of development by

a two-pronged approach of encouraging compact urban forms, and promoting more housing within existing urban areas. This will result in the support of urban renaissance and investment in the clusters of main towns, conserving town settings and saving and concentrating resources. This will also mean more urban housing by recycling land and buildings and making use of other suitable sites and reducing the use of greenfield land.

- **Ensure an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone.** Housing land will be identified in development plans. Planning authorities should take account of existing vacant housing in any assessment of housing need. An estimate of new dwelling requirement is set out in Appendix G.
- **Use a broad evaluation framework to assist judgements on the allocation of housing growth.**

TABLE 5.1: Evaluation Framework

Resource Test	Studies should be carried out to assess and detail the existence of community assets and physical infrastructure such as for water and sewage, including spare capacity.
Environmental Capacity Test	An assessment of the environmental setting of the settlement and its potential to accommodate future outward growth without significant environmental degradation should be made.
Transport Test	Studies should be carried out to assess the potential for integrating land use and public transport and walking and cycling routes to help reduce reliance on the car.
Economic Development Test	The potential to facilitate an appropriate housing and jobs balance, and to unlock any major strategic development opportunities should be assessed and detailed.
Urban and Rural Character Test	Assessment should be made of the potential to maintain a sense of place, and to integrate new development in a way that does not detract from the character and identity of the settlement.
Community Services Test	The potential to underpin and, where necessary, reinforce the community service role and function of the settlement should be assessed and detailed.

Diagram No. 5.2

The Spatial Framework for Housing: District Growth Indicators 2025

District Housing Indicators 2025

Figures refer to additional residential units in Districts (Base Year 2008)

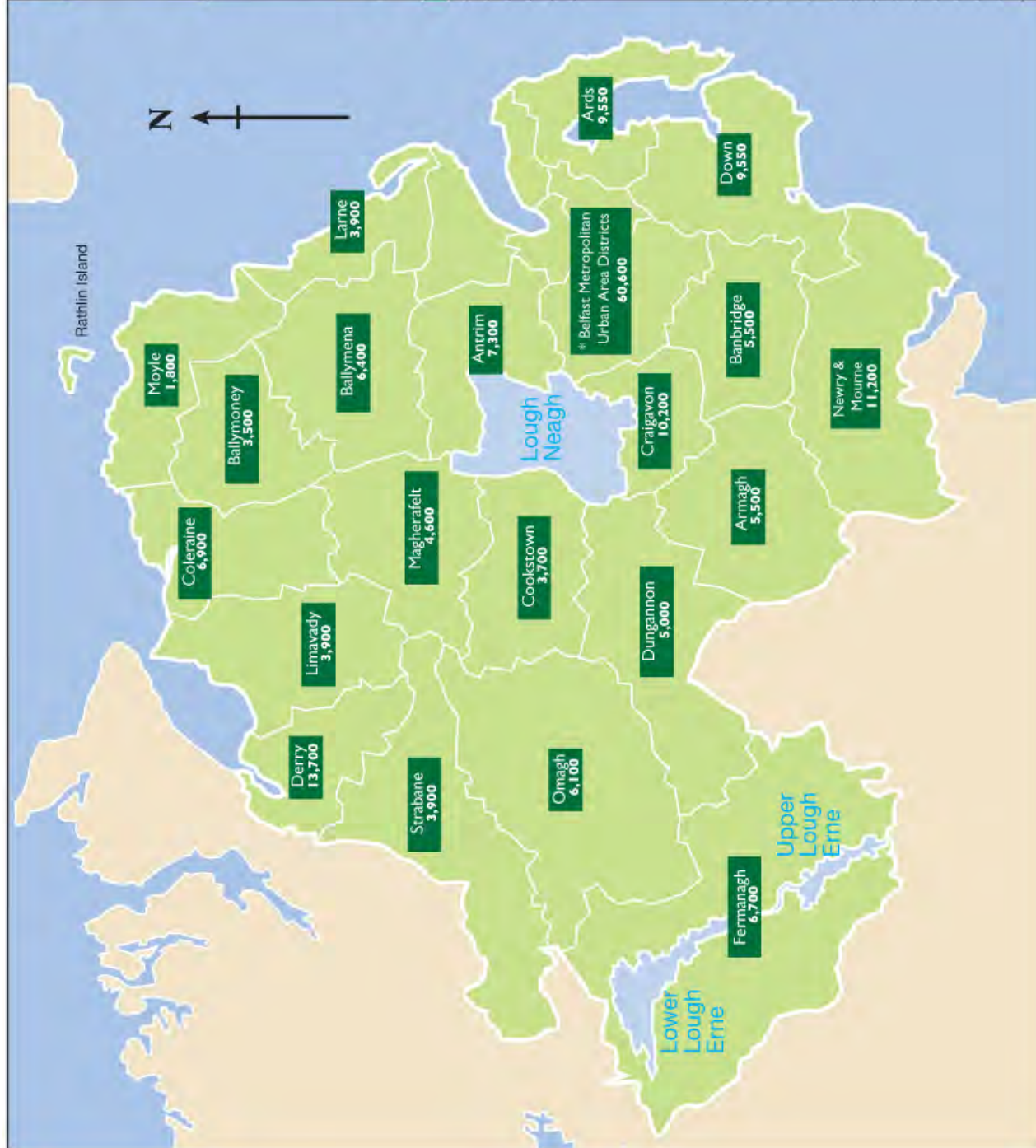


Local Government Districts

* 6 Local Government Districts

District Indicators

Antrim	7,300
Ards	9,550
Armagh	5,500
Ballymena	6,400
Ballymoney	3,500
Banbridge	5,500
Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area Districts	
Belfast	
Garrickfergus	
Castlereagh	
Lisburn	
Newtownabbey	
North Down	
Total	60,600
Coleraine	6,900
Cookstown	3,700
Craigavon	10,200
Derry	13,700
Down	9,550
Dungannon	5,000
Fermanagh	6,700
Larne	3,900
Limavady	3,900
Magherafelt	4,600
Moyle	1,800
Newry & Mourne	11,200
Omagh	6,100
Strabane	3,900
Total	189,500



5.58 These figures are not to be seen as a rigid framework but as guidelines for local planning based on predicted growth patterns. While the figure is for the whole Council area it is recognised that a proportion of this figure will be built in the open countryside will depend on the application of PPS 21 “Sustainable Development in the Countryside”. The delivery of any housing will be dependent on the availability of sufficient sustainable water resources and sewerage capacity.

5.59 The allocation of housing growth to specific locations in a district is a matter for decision through the development plan process. In the allocation process due weight needs to be given to reinforcing the leading role of the Sub Regional Centres and the Clusters of Cities and Towns. Another important step in this allocation process is making judgements to achieve a complementary urban/rural balance to meet the need for housing in the towns of the district and to meet the needs of the rural community living in smaller settlements and countryside. Figure H6 in Appendix H shows that disproportionate amount of growth has occurred in smaller settlements.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 22:

Does the strategic guidance address the key issues relating to our society and clearly demonstrate what needs to be done in order to help improve how we live and work? If not, what suggestions can you make?

CONSULTATION QUESTION 23:

Do you agree with the revised definition of “brownfield” and that there is need for a target? Do you think the target should apply to all towns of over 5,000 population or only to Belfast and Derry and what is your reason for this?

CONSULTATION QUESTION 24:

The housing figures in Appendix G are to be used as guidelines. Do you think these figures will be helpful in enabling local planning authorities to produce development plans? If not, how do you think housing need should be assessed?

9. Economy

5.60 Economic development of communities depends to a large extent on how people can connect with a range of facilities and services and how they get to places of work. Businesses depend on efficient connections for goods and services including the necessary infrastructure to service economic growth, such as robust electricity and telecoms connections. Wealth and value-added employment created by export driven economic growth will enhance equality and help achieve balanced sub-regional growth and sustainable development.

SG23: Ensure adequate supply of land to facilitate sustainable economic growth

5.61 To ensure that the Region is well placed to accommodate growth in jobs and businesses there should be an ample and available supply of employment land. It should be accessible and positioned to make best use of available infrastructure. The provision of land to support economic growth is dependant on necessary infrastructure, including water and sewerage infrastructure, being in place. The focus will be on larger urban centres taking advantage of locations on the regional transport network and at regional gateways.

- **Assess the quality and viability of sites zoned for economic development uses in the area plans.** A system to monitor the take-up (and loss) of employment land is required to help inform decisions and actions. It is likely that the highest quality and most easily accessible land will be used up first and it is important that decisions are not based purely on the quantum of land available but how well connected it is, for example to public transport. The framework at Table 5.2 will enable Planning Authorities to identify robust and defensible portfolios of both strategic and locally important employment sites in their development plans. This will safeguard both new and existing employment areas for employment rather than other uses.

TABLE 5.2: The Employment Land Evaluation Framework

STAGE 1 Taking Stock of the Existing Situation	An initial assessment of the ‘fitness for purpose’ of the existing employment land portfolio, principally in order to identify the ‘best’ employment sites to be retained and protected and identifying sites that should clearly be released for other uses.
STAGE 2 Understanding Future Requirements	Quantify the amount of employment land required across the main business sectors during the development plan period. This is achieved by assessing both demand and supply elements and assessing how they can be met in aggregate by the existing stock of business premises and by allocated sites. Both short/medium term and strategic provision need to be considered in this process.
STAGE 3 Identifying a ‘New’ portfolio of sites	Devise qualitative site appraisal criteria to determine which sites meet the occupier or developer needs. Confirm the existing sites to be retained, replaced or released, and any gaps in the portfolio. In this allocation, consideration should be given to previously used sites, and in the reallocation, the environmental impact of one site relative to others should be included. The results of Stage 2, together with this site-appraisal should provide a robust justification for altering allocations for employment land.

- **Protect Zoned Land.** Land zoned for economic use in Development plans should be protected as it provides a valuable resource for local and external investment, thereby contributing to the aims of the PfG. Protection of such zonings should ensure that a variety of suitable sites exists across the Region to facilitate economic growth.

SG24: Promote a balanced spread of economic development opportunities across the Region focused on the BMUA, Derry, Sub-Regional Centres and Clusters, as the main centres for employment and services.

5.62 The objective is to capitalise on the development opportunity provided by the concentration of people and goods combined with available infrastructure and the clustering of a range of business services essential to economic development.

- **Provide a network of economic development opportunities.** Make provision in development plans for a generous and continuous supply of land for employment purposes.

SG25: Manage the use of road space for the movement of people and goods

5.63 To remain competitive in the global market it is important to continue to promote a sustainable direction for transport which balances the needs of our environment, society and economy. The focus is on managing the use of road space and how we can use our network in a better, smarter way.

- **Maximise the potential of the Regional Strategic Transport Network.** This includes Key Transport Corridors, Link Corridors and the remainder of the Trunk Road network. The Transport Network enhances accessibility to towns and helps to build an integrated regional economy, facilitates tourist travel and reduces where possible, unsuitable traffic into towns.
- **Improve the public transport service.** Continued investment in public transport and in infrastructure such as the development of quality multi-modal facilities and park and ride sites, will encourage motorists to take the bus or train for the main part of their journey and reduce the volume of traffic on the network.
- **Manage the movement of freight.** There are specific issues to be addressed in relation to freight. These include safety, compliance, sustainability and the potential conflicts between bus priority on roads and the delivery and collection of goods from shops.

SG26: A balanced approach to telecommunications infrastructure that will give a competitive advantage

- 5.64 The Region's core telecommunications network is world class, with 5 competing fully-fibre networks. In December 2005 the Region became the first in the UK and Europe to deliver 100% access to a first generation broadband service. However, the telecommunications market is fast moving and competitive advantage can be quickly eroded or lost if a region fails to continue to invest in its infrastructure. Working with industry and the Telecommunications Regulator, the key challenges for the Region will be to improve international and internal connectivity and to ensure that the opportunities provided by access to high quality telecommunications services are fully exploited.
- 5.65 Specific commitments in the PfG 2008-2011 recognise these challenges and will be implemented across the lifetime of the Programme. These include delivery of the Region's first direct international telecommunications link to North America completed in March 2010 and the rollout of higher speed, next generation broadband services in support of 85% of businesses, work on which commenced in January 2010 and will complete in May 2011.
- **Invest in infrastructure for higher broadband speeds.** The delivery of communication systems using alternative technologies including fibre optics, cable and wireless needs to be investigated. This will require getting a balanced approach to deployment of infrastructure and protection of the environment. It will also require realistic expectation about what can be delivered within available budgets and that solutions using particular technologies may be unaffordable or commercially unsustainable. The inclusion of telecommunication ducts as part of proposed civil works programmes can also significantly lower the costs of network deployments.
 - **Improve telecom services in smaller rural areas to minimise the urban/rural divide.** In a fully privatised market network operators will decide where to deploy their infrastructure and such decisions will typically be driven by evidence of demand. There is therefore a need to stimulate take-up of telecom services to demonstrate demand and examine ways to incentivise or encourage further expansion of networks by operators. This will ensure that high quality broadband access is available across the Region.

- **Increase the usage of broadband.** Provide information to businesses on the opportunities available through broadband connections and through for example the LOGON-NI business support programme.
- **Capitalise on direct international connectivity.** In March 2010 the Region's first direct international telecommunications link to North America was completed. The link also improved existing links to Europe with high bandwidth. This level of connectivity supports foreign direct investment and offers significant competitive edge.

SG27: Promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure

5.66 Promote a balanced and sustainable approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure and the country's natural assets, while benefiting society and the economy. 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. Tourism can make a step change in its contribution to the economy if the public and private sectors work together, but it must be environmentally sustainable and appropriate to the location to ensure that the natural assets are protected and enhanced..

- **Promote a balanced approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure while benefiting society and the economy.** 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. Tourism can make a step change in its contribution to the economy if the public and private sectors work together.
- **Improve facilities for tourists in support of the Tourist Signature Destinations.** Local Authorities, business, public transport providers and tourism promoters need to work together to invest in access, accommodation, and visitor facilities in support of the Tourist Signature Destinations.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 25:

Does the strategy address the key spatial issues for developing the economy?
Is there anything you would add or omit?

CONSULTATION QUESTION 26:

Have we covered the most significant issues in the strategic guidance? Is there anything you would add or omit?

CHAPTER

06



Regionally Significant Economic Infrastructure

Chapter 6

6.0 Regionally Significant Economic Infrastructure

- 6.1 The Executive's top priority is growing the economy with a focus on high value, export directed sectors and more balanced regional growth across all parts of the North.
- 6.2 Spatial planning and related infrastructure development is essential to enable a working economy and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development work highlights the link between good physical infrastructure and economic output. This is also recognised in the Independent Review of Economic Policy in Northern Ireland and is a key theme in the emerging new Economic Strategy.
- 6.3 The Institute of Civil Engineers Infrastructure 2010 report on Northern Ireland reviewed our transport, energy water and waste infrastructure and concluded that "A sound functioning infrastructure has the capability to deliver economic and social aspirations. It is the resilience of our infrastructure which will determine our economic competitiveness, our effectiveness for investors and visitors."
- 6.4 The RDS provides the flexibility to accommodate unforeseen imaginative proposals for economic development that are clearly in the public interest. No regional strategy, or detailed local plan, can anticipate every major development requirement or new entrepreneurial initiative. The Strategy is intended to be sufficiently flexible to allow the private sector to bring forward original development proposals which are of significance to the whole or substantial part of the North and create employment, wealth and important assets for the Region. Similarly, major economic development proposals which contribute to meeting local needs and provide wider public benefits may also be acceptable. The RDS aims overall to facilitate development projects in tune with the spirit of the Spatial Framework for the Region. This approach should enable the private sector to present a significant development project, or put together a major development package, which meets their entrepreneurial objectives and at the same time delivers wider public resource by providing, for example, desirable improvements to regional infrastructure and community services. Such proposals would be a matter for further consideration and judgement through the major planning application process, involving public consultation and environmental, transport and other relevant assessments.

6.5 Under the proposals for planning reform, applications for regionally significant developments will be determined by central Government and decided by the DOE Minister. Part of the planning process involves a determination as to whether a proposal falls into the category of strategic significance. Projects that the RDS considers as being of strategic significance and contribute to economic development will be those that:

- deliver strategic improvements in external and internal communications;
- contribute to the achievement of renewable energy targets;
- contribute to the achievement of waste management and climate change targets; and
- raise issues of more than regional importance.

Strategic Improvements in External and Internal Communications

6.6 The new RTS will present a fresh direction for transportation here, with sustainability at its core. It will provide a series of Strategic Outcomes, associated policies and indicators revolving around economic, environmental and societal themes. The overarching aim is to deliver transport arrangements which promote equitable access and meet wider economic and social needs, while limiting environmental impact and realising reductions in harmful emissions.

6.7 As part of an island, air and sea ports and land gateways are of fundamental importance. **The Region's gateways** should be able to cope easily with the volumes and variety of traffic through them. They should also aim to accommodate businesses that benefit from proximity to the point of departure.

- 6.8 Gateways are also where first impressions are formed and they should provide a high quality experience for the traveller whatever their reason for being here.
- 6.9 **Transport linkages** to and from the air and sea ports should be of the highest quality. The movement of people and goods is important for the future growth of the economy and given the North's geographical position, connectivity to the air and sea ports is a key infrastructure component to achieving that objective.
- 6.10 Improving **key transport corridors** enhances accessibility to regional services and reduces peripherality. This means high quality road and, where available, rail links.
- 6.11 The transportation networks help to deliver balanced economic growth. The 5 key transport corridors link people and freight to the Region's main cities, air, and sea ports. They provide a framework around which economic corridors can develop. The Key Transport Corridor roads only make up 3% of all the Region's roads, however, they carry 26% of the traffic. Investment in the Key Corridors and in the rail infrastructure, is desirable to ensure the efficient movement of goods and people. Specific programmes will be dependent on the availability of resources and the strategic direction of the new RTS.
- 6.12 As the economic driver of the Region, **an efficient transport system in Belfast** is essential to allow people and goods to quickly move around the City and to commute to and from it. High quality public transport for Belfast is therefore necessary for regional prosperity.
- 6.13 There has been a reliance on the car and, as such, congestion levels have been steadily increasing in Belfast which has had a consequent adverse impact on journey times and emissions. Given its status Belfast has benefited from significant public transportation investment with the introduction of new road and rail vehicles, Quality Bus Corridors, Park and Ride facilities and the extension of concessionary fares, etc. This has resulted in increased patronage on public transport services.
- 6.14 Schemes like rapid transit offer a distinct opportunity to create a new dynamic transportation system which reflects Belfast as a 21st Century city that will not only improve connectivity but has additional regenerative benefits that will positively contribute to the economy, environment and people's general quality of life.
- 6.15 All over the world massive investments are being made in the infrastructure needed to deliver the next generation of **telecommunication**

services. This is driven by ever-increasing demand by both households and businesses for broadband but also the opportunities presented by the move from analogue television broadcasting to digital throughout Europe in 2012.

- 6.16 The Executive is committed to investing in the infrastructure needed for higher broadband speeds (next generation broadband) as a way of maximising the amount of private sector investment in this area.
- 6.17 The most common way of delivering however, both voice and broadband is via copper lines, often suspended overhead using wooden poles. However, they are increasingly being delivered using alternative technologies including fibre optics, cable and wireless (including mobile). Installing new ducts and cables in the ground is expensive. Incorporating telecommunications ducts with public funded infrastructure project has been used very successfully in Sweden which now has the highest availability of fibre optic service (including rural areas) in Europe.

Renewable Energy

- 6.18 Development of the North's **renewable energy sources** is vital to increase its energy security, help combat climate change, and achieve the renewable energy targets. The new Strategic Energy Framework sets a target of 40% electricity consumption from renewable sources and a 10% renewable heat target by 2020, in line with mandatory EU renewable targets. This is likely to mean an increase in the number of wind farms both on and off shore and the need to diversify renewables to include electricity from other sources such as tidal stream and bio-energy sources. A renewable heat strategy is likely to require new renewable heat infrastructure to support it.

- 6.19 To facilitate the provision of additional renewable power generation, primarily from on-shore wind energy, and a need to address current areas of weakness in the grid, it will be necessary to **strengthen the electricity grid** in many parts of the North. Grid upgrading will also be needed to ensure that proposed tidal stream and off-shore wind developments are planned for properly. All this will involve a significant programme of investment in grid strengthening, in the north and west, in particular.
- 6.20 Increased electricity **interconnection** capacity, allowing for the export and import of power, will help to ensure security and stability of electricity supply. It provides increased opportunities for competitive trading in wholesale electricity, encourages new investment in generation and supply, and enhances the North's security of supply. It is also important to facilitate the growth in power generation from renewable sources, while managing the challenging network management issues that increasing amounts of renewable integration onto the grid brings.
- 6.21 There are job creation aspects to such developments as well as has been endorsed by recent new work undertaken at Harland and Wolff in the construction of wind turbines. In addition, while **natural gas** is not a renewable energy source, opportunities exist to improve the North's position in terms of self sustainability and security of supply through gas storage and extension of the natural gas network.

Waste and Climate Change

Waste

- 6.22 The North currently produces some one million tonnes of municipal waste annually, and this figure has grown by 2.5% between 2004 and 2008. This has decreased by 3.3% between 2008 and 2009. In 2008/2009 31.6% of municipal waste and 34.4% of household waste was sent for recycling. The EU Landfill Directive sets a series of increasingly strict limits on the amount of biodegradable waste that can be sent to landfill until 2020 to reduce the total landfilled to 35% of 1995 levels by 2020.
- 6.23 Meeting the targets through the diversion of waste from landfill to other treatment methods will require the development of **significant new waste management infrastructure**.
- 6.24 While landfill has traditionally been a low-tech, low-cost approach to waste management, the alternatives tend to be more complex and more expensive. Providing the new infrastructure is a challenging and costly process which will take considerable time to deliver and a substantial programme of investment if the aims set out in Strand 3 of the NI Waste

Management Strategy 2006-2020, “Towards Resource Management” which was published in March 2006 are to be achieved.

- 6.25 Central Government is working closely with local government in the development of new waste facilities to ensure that the Region’s long term needs for all waste streams are met. These will be developed at a limited number of key sites, convenient to the major centres of waste production.
- 6.26 Analysis of what is required to meet the Landfill Directive targets indicates that the Region will require a combination of up to seven Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) and three ‘energy from waste’ plants. This would include both incineration and gasification plants, to deal with the residue from the MBT process.
- 6.27 Tackling waste management and increasing the use of renewable energy sources will help address **climate change** targets. More needs to be done however, particularly in the transport sector to reduce emissions and encourage alternative forms of transport. A baseline report on the current level of greenhouse gas emissions from road transport here has been produced and will inform proposals in the new RTS being developed. It is recognised, particularly in the Executive’s Sustainable Development Strategy, that concentrated efforts across all sectors here will be needed to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions in order to address the challenges presented by climate change and the need for sustainable development.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 27:

Do agree with the types of projects that the RDS considers as being of regional significance.

CHAPTER

07

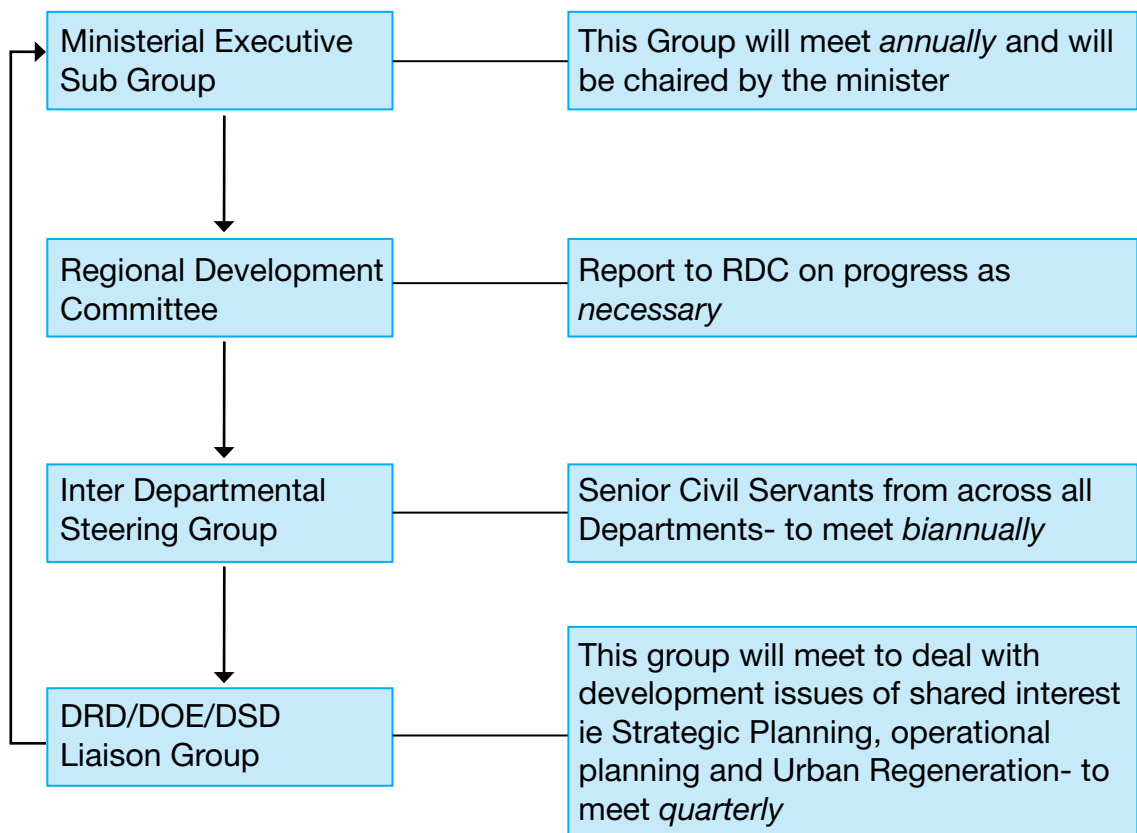


Implementation

Chapter 7

7.0 Implementation

- 7.1 The RDS is the spatial strategy of the Executive. It complements the key objectives of the Programme for Government and seeks to influence it and the Investment Strategy.
- 7.2 Because of the cross-cutting nature of the RDS, implementation will be achieved by a range of stakeholders. To do this successfully a framework has been designed to ensure its implementation through the Executive structures. Reporting on implementation will be through the hierarchy described in the framework below.



- 7.3 DRD will be taking account of the actions, from a spatial perspective, which are measured within Government. Based on that information a Report will be presented to the Executive.
- 7.4 The Department will analyse progress on a 3-yearly basis in order that the Strategy continues to be of relevance and to inform the PfG and ISNI cycles along with the Comprehensive Spending Reviews.
- 7.5 After 2 reporting cycles DRD will undertake a review of the Strategy taking account of progress to date or any other factors which impact on the continued relevance and success of the Strategy.

Table 7.1 details the indicators that will be monitored.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 28:

What are your views on how the strategy will be implemented and monitored?

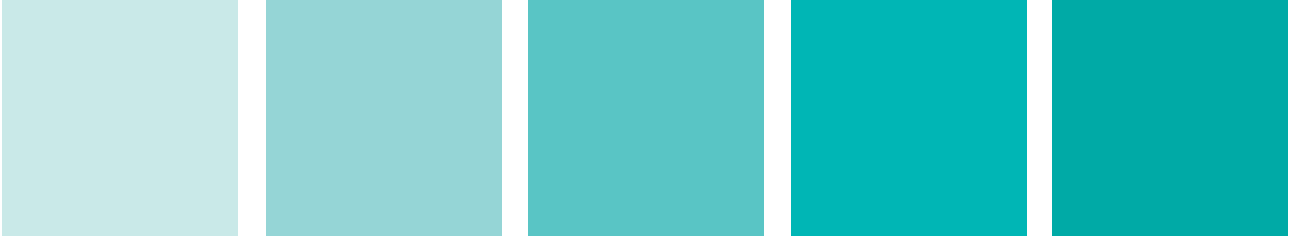
CONSULTATION QUESTION 29:

Do you think we have identified the most appropriate headline indicators? If not can you suggest more appropriate indicators and, if possible the source?

TABLE 7.1: Indicators Mapped to Aims

AIMS							
Support strong, sustainable growth for the benefit of all parts of the Region							
Strengthen Belfast as the regional economic driver and Derry as the capital of the North West							
Support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential							
Promote development which improves the health and wellbeing of our communities							
Improve connectivity thus expanding opportunities for communities and businesses							
Protect and enhance the environment for its own sake and for the ecosystem services it provides							
Take action to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change							
Strengthen links between north south, east west, with Europe and the rest of the World							
INDICATORS							
Additional commercial floorspace developed by geographic area							
Additional new homes completed by geographic area							
Development within urban footprint by geographic area							
% change of working age people in employment by geographic area							
% change in the total number of VAT registered businesses by geographic area							
% change in total resident population by settlement classification							
% of population who live in the 10% most deprived areas							
Revenue generated by visitors outside NI by geographic area							
Annual % growth in GVA by geographic area							
Quality of coastal bathing waters							
% river water bodies achieving at least good chemical classification as per the Water Framework Directive							
% of waste sent to landfill							
% of power by renewable energy sources							
% of residents surveyed finding it easy to access key local services							
Loss of protected land (ASSIs, AONBs, etc)							
% of residents surveyed satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live							
Change in carbon footprint (CO2) emission per capita)							
Change in commuting mode (Public transport)							
Incidence of co-operative business links between north and south by business activity per year (Intertrade Ireland)							
Proportion of exports by destination and sector – ROI, REU, ROW (DETI)							

APPENDICES



Appendices

Glossary

Bibliography

Appendix A

Summary - Business Land Need Study

Key Findings

The Report highlighted a number of key findings which impacted on the RDS review and its practical application. These were;

- Cities have dominated employment growth in the north over the last decade. Job forecasts suggest greater opportunities at graduate level in the knowledge based economy which will lead to a different land demand pattern.
- There is marked diversity in economic structure across the region.
- The outlook for rural economies appears challenging with rising in-commuting to cities predicted.
- Net commuting into Belfast is forecast to increase by over 18,000 in the next 20 years. Consideration needs to be given to whether the transport infrastructure in Greater Belfast can support increased level of commuting or would the economic costs of congestion be too high to make Belfast a competitive location for forecast jobs.
- Some towns such as Antrim, Ballymena and Coleraine are fulfilling their role better than others with relatively well developed private and public sector office bases.
- Belfast dominates the professional services sector in terms of recent growth and size with just under 1 in 2 of the North's professional service jobs located there. Small to medium sized professional service firms such as management and software consultancies, PR and marketing agencies, solicitors etc could operate just as effectively from other towns however the spatial distribution of professional service jobs is predicted to remain heavily Belfast focused.
- Sectoral patterns of economic growth remain the driving influence on business land demand. • Districts are not self contained labour markets with many connected by large travel-to-work flows across boundaries. Jobs therefore need to be aligned with the available labour force at strategic rather than local level. Alignment serves sustainability objectives by minimising the need to travel.
- Net employment growth (excluding town centre office) for B space from 2008 – 2028 is anticipated to decline with 13,000 fewer B space jobs by 2028 compared to a year ago.

- Evidence suggests that the north has well over 2,000 ha of zoned industrial land available. However this does not mean that this land is developable. Nor does it indicate the quality of the zoned land or the market attractiveness of the supply sites.
- Total employment is not expected to return to its 2008 peak until 2016. A tighter fiscal environment will be a key factor in considering the Region's medium term prospects. The longer term total employment outlook 2015 – 2028 is for a similar net annual expansion of 6-7000 as previously predicted.

The findings from the Study helped shape thinking for the major review of the Regional Development Strategy and influence considerations in spatial planning to ensure sustainable development and appropriate infrastructure for the Region.

Appendix B

Summary - Key Settlement Study

Background

In June 2008 Experian were commissioned to carry out a study of the key settlements in Northern Ireland. The original Regional Development Strategy 2025 identified sixteen main and five local hubs in Northern Ireland (excluding Belfast Metropolitan Area and Londonderry Urban Area). The aim of the Experian research was to examine the recent performance of the hubs against the drivers of urban economic competitiveness and identify their future roles, having regard to Northern Ireland's strategic policy context.

The requirements of the research were:

- an assessment of the Policy Context including the Programme for Government, the Investment Strategy, the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Development Strategy;
- analysis of the current strengths and weakness of each of the Hubs identified in the RDS; and
- suggestions on how the performance or role of each of the Hubs could be enhanced.

Experian examined the performance and assets of the main and local hubs and related this back to the policy context.

Conclusions

The main general conclusions were:

- Hubs, as articulated through the RDS 2025, have been a useful strategic framework to date. However, a clearer and more specific identification of the roles of individual hubs may help provide a clearer framework for the future prioritisation of investment.
- There is an argument that in order to build greater economies of scale and patterns of specialisation in the country, a more hierarchical and functional typology is required – this follows from the argument that hubs should not compete for scarce investment where an optimal result would be to identify the strategic location.

Appendix C

Planning Policy Statements Published Since 2001

PPS 3 Parking, Movement and Access (2005)

PPS 3 Parking, Movement and Access (Clarification) (2006)

PPS 4 (Draft) Industry, Business and Distribution

PPS 5 (Revised) Draft Retailing, Town Centres and Commercial Leisure Developments (2006)

PPS 6 Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage (1999)

PPS 6 (Addendum) Areas of Townscape Character (2005)

PPS 7 Quality Residential Developments (2001)

PPS 7 (Addendum) Residential extensions and Alterations (2008)

PPS 7 (Addendum) Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas (2010)

PPS 8 Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation (2004)

PPS 10 Telecommunications (2002)

PPS 11 Planning and Waste Management (2002)

PPS 12 Housing in Settlements (2005)

PPS 13 Transportation and Land Use (2005)

PPS 15 Planning and Flood Risk (2006)

PPS 17 Control of Outdoor Advertisements (2006)

PPS 18 Renewable Energy (2009)

PPS 21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside (2010)

Appendix D

EVALUATION OF RDS ALTERNATIVES AGAINST RDS AIMS

RDS aims RDS Alternatives	Support strong, sustainable growth for the benefit of all parts of the Region	Strengthen Belfast as the regional economic driver and Derry as the capital of the North West	Support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential	Promote development which improves the health and well-being of communities	Improve connectivity to enhance the movement of people, goods, energy and information between places	Protect and enhance the environment for its own sake	Take actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change	Strengthen links between north and south, east and west, with Europe and the rest of the world
Option 1 Continue with existing RDS 2001 guidance as amended by the 5 year review	+	+	+		+	+		++
Option 2 Promote development outside Belfast	+	--	+				-	
Option 3 Promote development in Belfast and Derry with natural growth elsewhere	++	+	++		+			+
Option 4 Promote development in Belfast, Derry and in identified clusters of key settlements	+	++	++	+	+	++	++	++

Key

++/+

Positive correlation

Neutral correlation

- -/-

Negative correlation

Four options were assessed against the 8 aims developed with the External Working Group, and the Evaluation Matrix shows this assessment.

Alternative 1

Continue with existing RDS guidance as amended by the 5 year review

The key elements of this alternative are –

A Spatial Framework with Belfast City at the centre of a Metropolitan Area as the regional economic driver, Derry as the capital city of the North West Region, 16 main and 4 local Hubs where key facilities are focused. Strategic guidance focused on promoting compact urban form, protection of the natural and built environment, local settlements as service centres for rural communities and development of a Regional Strategic Transport Network.

Alternative 2

Promote development outside Belfast

The key elements of this alternative are –

A focus on economic growth across settlements outside Belfast. This would be accommodated taking account of the role and function of places how best to maximise existing infrastructure. It would eventually lead to the longer term depopulation of Belfast. This would mean more dispersed housing, employment and infrastructure beyond Belfast, which is likely to lead to an increase in commuting between towns for employment purposes.

Alternative 3

Promote development in Belfast and Derry with natural growth elsewhere

The key elements of this alternative are –

A Framework, similar to the first alternative, but with less policy control on development beyond the 2 main urban areas of the Region. This would mean continuation of the trend of disproportionate growth in smaller settlements, in some instances at the expense of larger urban areas. It would also provide a focus for economic growth in Belfast and Derry.

Alternative 4

Promote development in Belfast, Derry and in identified clusters of key settlements

The key elements of this alternative are –

A Spatial Framework that takes forward approaches in the existing RDS but with a focus on a limited number of key sub regional centres and clusters of towns. Infrastructure and services would be consolidated where there was a critical mass to enable them to serve their larger hinterland. This option would promote compact urban forms within the 2 main urban areas, the identified key sub regional centres and clusters of larger towns. This approach focuses on maximising the economic opportunities from the concentration of major employment and supporting services.

Taking the above into account **Alternative 4** is to be taken forward as it illustrates a positive correlation with all of the aims developed for the revised RDS.

This option presents a sustainable and robust option that promotes the rational consolidation of services and infrastructure in a balanced hierarchical framework to improve our economic and social interrelationships. Importantly it also aims to protect and enhance our environment by ensuring actions are taken to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change.

Appendix E

Identification of Sub Regional Centres and Associated Clusters

The methodology for identifying the clusters named within the RDS used three sources of information

1. **The Report of the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group on Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements** published by NISRA in February 2005 contains a statistical classification of settlements based on 2001 census data on the population and number of households within settlements. This analysis informed the production of eight bands of settlements ranging from Band A, the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area thorough to small villages, hamlets and the open countryside at Band H.
2. The November 2006 **Settlement Information Classification and Analysis Group (SICAG) Report** published by NISRA determined that the level of services provided by a settlement cannot always be judged from its population size. It attempted to group settlements on the basis of their service provision. SICAG collated data to determine a hierarchy of service provision and to identify locations which would constitute as 'service centres' for the North. The report identifies 26 service centres here and the service classification is listed as 1-5, with 5 being the highest levels of service provision and 1 the lowest.

Table E1: 26 Service centres with their Settlement Bands and Service Class

Service Centre	Settlement Band	Service Class
BMUA	A	5
Derry Urban Area	B	5
Craigavon Urban Area	C	4
Ballymena	C	4
Newry	C	4
Coleraine	C	4
Newtownards	C	4
Omagh	C	4
Antrim	C	4
Larne	C	4
Enniskillen	D	4
Armagh City	D	4
Banbridge	D	4
Dungannon	D	4
Downpatrick	D	4
Limavady	D	4
Cookstown	D	3
Strabane	D	3
Ballymoney	E	4
Magherafelt	E	4
Ballycastle	E	4
Newcastle	E	4
Kilkeel	E	3
Portrush	E	3
Ballyclare	E	3
Lisnaskea	F	3

Sub Regional Centres

- Research suggests that the natural catchments of **sub-regional centres** should be circa [100,000] to adequately support services as identified as being appropriate to level 3 in the Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure (Diagram 4.1). There are, however, instances where a centre with a smaller catchment warrants this status based on its remoteness or extensive rural hinterland.

To determine sub-regional centres research by the Strategic Investment Board assessed towns outside of Belfast and Derry against a series of criteria including the natural catchment, degree to which catchments are exclusive/overlap with others, the current population, and extent to which the proposed scenario provides good geographical coverage across the whole region.

A number of scenarios were examined. Whilst in some areas it was clear which town should be designated a sub-regional centre judgements had to be made particularly around Mid Ulster where either Dungannon or Cookstown could have been selected. Table E2 shows the catchments with Cookstown selected whilst E3 shows the same with Dungannon selected.

Table E2: Potential catchment based on nearest centre (with Cookstown)

Settlement	Catchment population	% of total population
Ballymena	158,400	8.92%
Belfast	773,265	43.57%
Coleraine	110,205	6.21%
Craigavon	182,780	10.30%
Derry	146,630	8.26%
Cookstown	116,825	6.58%
Enniskillen	64,160	3.61%
Newry	147,760	8.32%
Omagh	74,930	4.22%
TOTAL	1,774,955	100%

All of these settlements have potential catchments over 100,000 except for Enniskillen and Omagh which do not because they have less densely populated hinterlands and are isolated from other urban centres.

Table E3: Potential catchment based on nearest centre (with Dungannon)

Settlement	Catchment population	% of total population
Ballymena	181,460	10.22%
Belfast	773,265	43.57%
Coleraine	112,035	6.31%
Craigavon	155,215	8.74%
Derry	147,140	8.29%
Dungannon	123,765	6.97%
Enniskillen	64,160	3.61%
Newry	144,390	8.13%
Omagh	73,483	4.14%
TOTAL	1,774,955	100%

Map E1 shows the catchments with Cookstown designated and Map E2 shows the same for Dungannon.

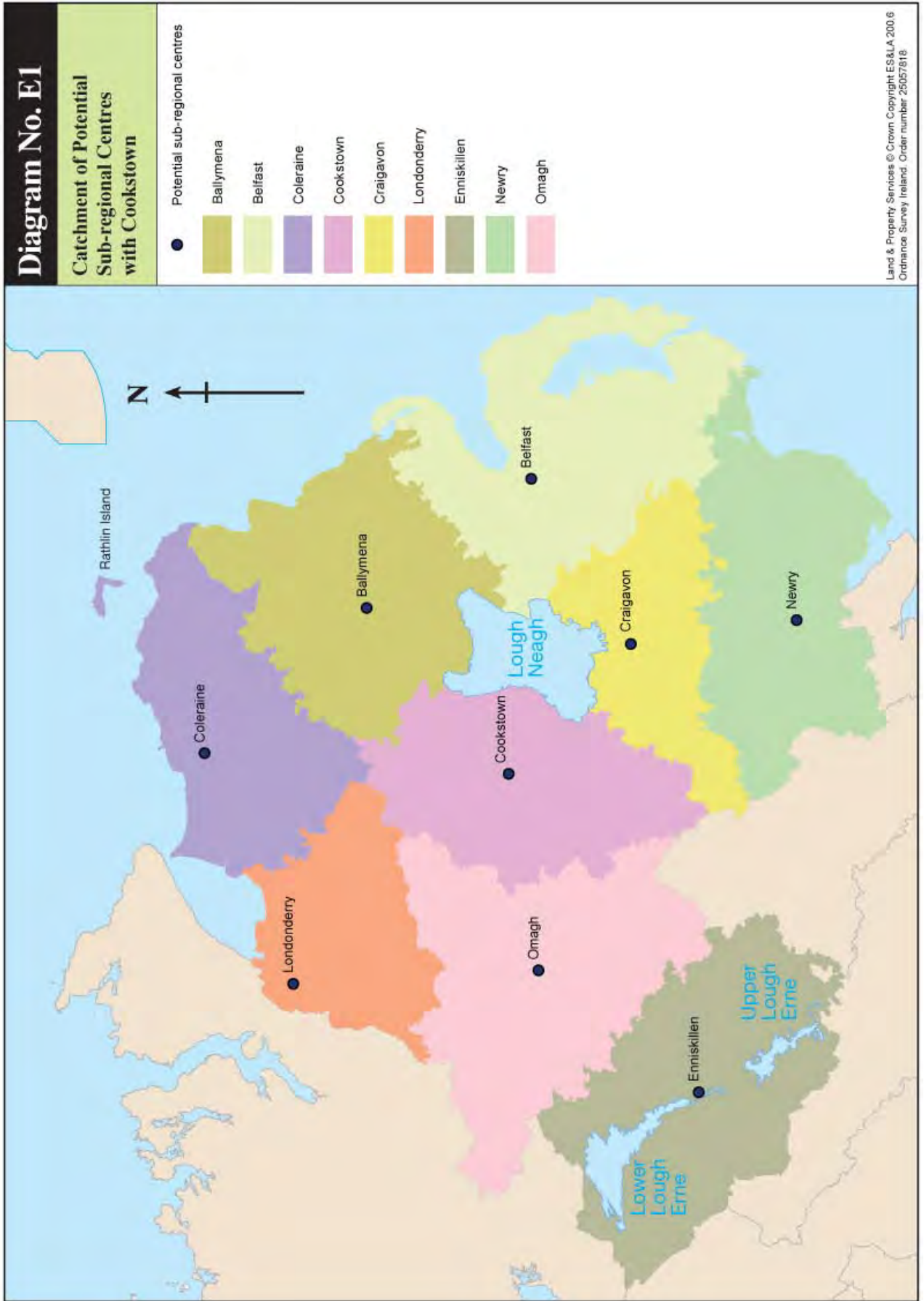
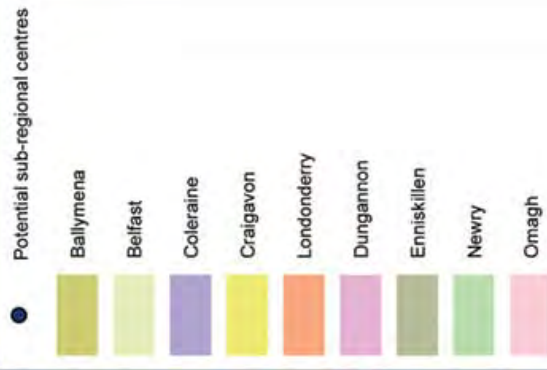


Diagram No. E2

Catchment of Potential Sub-regional Centres with Dungannon



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On balance Cookstown was selected as the Sub-Regional Centre due mainly to its geographic position. This analysis identifies potential Sub-Regional Centres as **Enniskillen, Omagh, Coleraine, Ballymena, Cookstown, Craigavon and Newry.**

The Belfast catchment covers the area around Downpatrick but these places are relatively isolated from Belfast. **Downpatrick** however is currently performing a higher level function than might be expected by its size, it is on a link corridor and has a distinctive position as the main town for South East Down and could therefore be considered as a Sub-Regional Centre.

Newtownards is a large town close to Belfast performing a higher order service function similar to towns within the BMUA. It is however not part of the BMUA for planning purposes and it may be appropriate to consider it as a Sub-Regional Centre or for it to be included in the BMUA in future.

Map E3 shows the distance by road to potential Sub-Regional Centres including Downpatrick. Nowhere in the Region is more than 30 miles from a centre and the majority of the population travel 15 miles or less to a Sub-Regional Centre.

Belfast is the centre for the BMUA and Derry is the centre for the North West Region. Outside these areas we identified the following Sub-Regional Centres: **Newry, Ballymena, Coleraine, Craigavon, Enniskillen, Omagh, Cookstown, Downpatrick and Newtownards.**

Clusters

Whilst the towns selected as potential Sub-Regional Centres are the larger towns in the respective areas the settlement pattern of the region is such that within the catchment of many of these potential Sub-Regional Centres lie other large and medium sized towns.

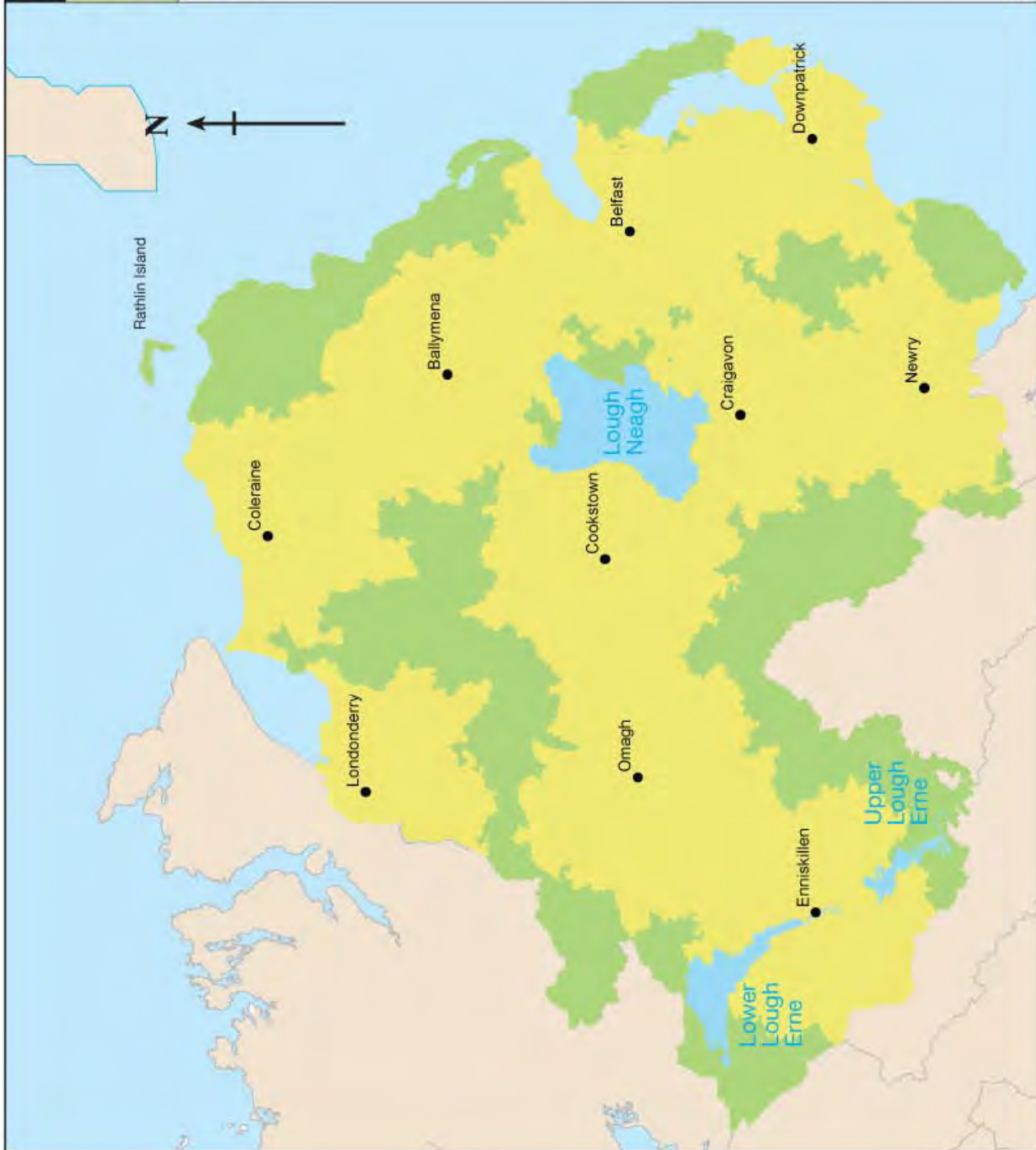
Map E4 Catchments of potential Sub-Regional Centres (excluding Downpatrick and Newtonards) and other District Towns.

Diagram No. E3

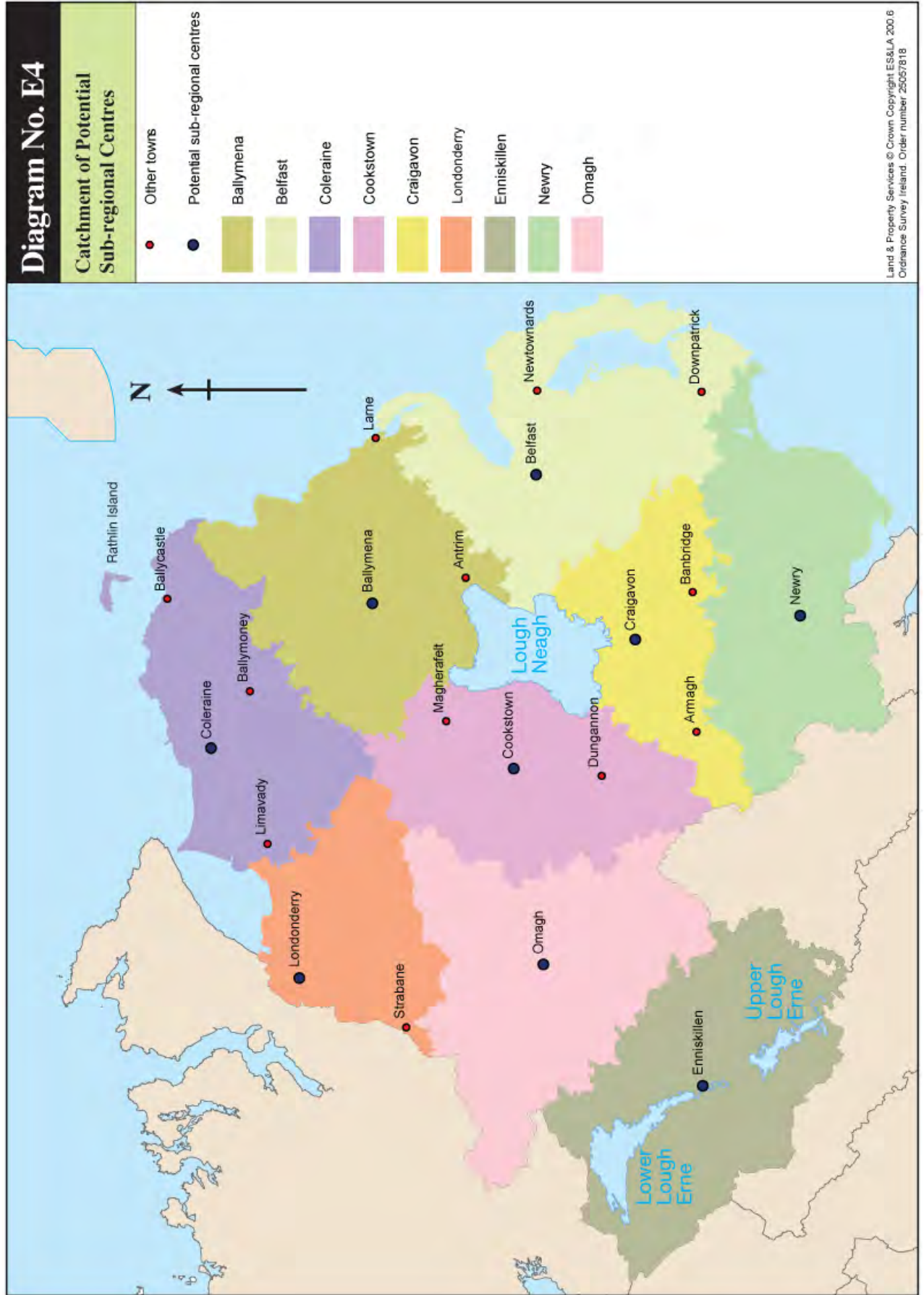
Distance to Nearest Potential
Sub-regional Centres
including Downpatrick

0 - 15 miles

15.01 - 30 miles



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Much of the infrastructure identified as being at level 3 in the Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure Diagram (Diagram 4.1) already exists in many of these towns and in times of economic downturn places cannot afford to compete with each other. Rather co-operation is the key.

The overlap and proximity of the following places suggests that they are best placed to co-operate or cluster with each other:

- Coleraine, Ballymoney and Ballycastle
- Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt
- Craigavon and Banbridge and possibly Armagh
- Ballymena and Antrim
- Newry and cross border with Dundalk

Larne, is a large town just outside the Belfast catchment and just inside the Ballymena. It has a gateway role and may not be appropriate for it to cluster.

Appendix F

Table F1: District Population Balance comparison 2008 with 1998

District	District Pop 2008	Principal Urban Centre	Pop 2008	% District Population in urban centre 2008	% District Population in urban centre 1998
Craigavon	90843	Craigavon	65331	72	68
Larne	31292	Larne	18354	59	58
Ballymena	62738	Ballymena	29765	47	49
Coleraine	57006	Coleraine	24465	43	42
Antrim	53243	Antrim	22076	41	45
Omagh	52115	Omagh	21426	41	43
Limavady	34117	Limavady	12723	37	37
Ards	77614	Newtownards	28609	37	38
Strabane	39614	Strabane	13874	35	34
Ballymoney	30106	Ballymoney	10418	35	34
Banbridge	46966	Banbridge	16041	34	37
Moyle	16876	Ballycastle	5710	34	28
Cookstown	35944	Cookstown	11675	32	34
Newry and Mourne	97289	Newry	30430	31	34
Armagh	58173	Armagh	15048	26	28
Dungannon	55386	Dungannon	13651	25	23
Fermanagh	61966	Enniskillen	13777	22	22
Magherafelt	43844	Magherafelt	8878	20	20
Down	69816	Downpatrick	10950	16	17
Average % of district population in principal urban centre				37%	36%

Does not include BMUA or Derry

Appendix G

Derivation of Housing Growth Indicators

The Housing Growth indicators for 2008-2025 are derived from HGI figures (1998-2015) published in June 2006. These figures were agreed by an Independent Panel which conducted a Public Examination in 2006. They have been 'rolled' forward to give an indication of what might be needed from 2008-2025.

Table G1: Housing Growth indicators 1998-2015 as published June 2006

	HGI 1998-2015
BMA ³	54800
BMA Rural Hinterland	11700
BMA Districts Total	66500
Antrim	8000
Ards	10500
Down	10500
Larne	4300
Armagh	6000
Ballymena	7000
Ballymoney	3800
Banbridge	6000
Coleraine	7600
Cookstown	4100
Craigavon	11250
Derry	15000
Dungannon	5500
Fermanagh	7400
Limavady	4300
Magherafelt	5000
Moyle	2000
Newry and Mourne	12250
Omagh	6700
Strabane	4300
Regional Total	208000

³For the purpose of these figures BMA is the built up area along the shores of Belfast Lough and the Lagan Valley taking in the city of Belfast and adjacent areas of Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and North Down. The rural hinterland is the rural parts of the above districts.

The methodology used to estimate the total new dwellings that might be required in the North between 2008 and 2025 is the same as that described in Appendix 3 of the Review of the Regional HGIs consultation document published in January 2005 with a slight adjustment in the percentage used to estimate vacant stock. Table G2 shows the methodology.

Table G2: Estimate of total housing need 2008-2025

	Variable	Year of data	Value	Source
(A)	Number of households	2025	826,500	2008 based NISRA household projections
(B)	Second homes	2025	8,300	1% of occupied housing stock. Derived from 2006 NIHCS and expert consultation.
(C)	Vacant stock	2025	50,500	5.7% of total housing stock. Derived from 2006 NIHCS and expert consultation.
(D)	Net conversions/closures/demolitions	2008 to 2025	34,000	2,000 loss per annum. Derived from 2006 NIHCS and expert consultation.
(E)	New stock estimate	2025	919,300	Sum of (A), (B), (C), & (D)
(F)	Total stock	2008	729,800	DSD Statistics and Research Branch
(G)	Projected new dwelling requirement	2008 to 2025	189,500	(E) minus (F)

This total of 189,500 was then distributed across the North in the same proportions as in Table G1.

Table G3 Housing Growth Indicators 2008-2025

	HGI 2008-2025
BMA	49900
BMA Rural Hinterland	10700
BMA Districts Total	60600
Antrim	7300
Ards	9550
Down	9550
Larne	3900
Armagh	5500
Ballymena	6400
Ballymoney	3500
Banbridge	5500
Coleraine	6900
Cookstown	3700
Craigavon	10200
Derry	13700
Dungannon	5000
Fermanagh	6700
Limavady	3900
Magherafelt	4600
Moyle	1800
Newry and Mourne	11200
Omagh	6100
Strabane	3900
Regional Total	189500

Appendix H

Key Statistics

(Last updated 02.09.10)

Environment

Table H 1: Total Green House Gas Emissions by Sector 1990 and 2008
(Units: kt CO² equivalent)

Sector	1990	2008
Agriculture	5657	5093
Business	2289	1882
Energy supply	5493	4885
Industrial process	761	390
Land use change	-28	-265
Public	491	153
Residential	4897	4016
Transport	3731	5177
Waste management	1666	855

Source: AEA Technology

The greenhouse gases reported are: Carbon dioxide (CO²), Methane (CH⁴), Nitrous oxide (N²O), Hydro fluorocarbons (HFCs), Per fluorocarbons (PFCs) and Sulphur hexafluoride (SF⁶)

Table H 2: Water Framework Directive Chemical classification

Classification	River water bodies (rwb)	Percentage of rwbs
High	168	29.2
Good	165	28.7
Moderate	127	22.1
Poor	33	5.7
Bad	10	1.8
No data	72	12.5

Source: Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report (2010)

Table H 3: Municipal waste arisings 2004/05-2008/09 Tonnes

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Arisings	1,050,716	1,063,510	1,064,090	1,061,108	1,017,215

Source: Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report (2010)

Table H 4: Household waste sent for recycling (inc. composting) in Northern Ireland (2004/05 - 2008/09)

2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
18.9%	24.5%	27.7%	31.9%	34.4%

Society

Population

Table H 5: Northern Ireland population 2001-2008

Year	Population
2001	1,689,300
2002	1,696,600
2003	1,702,600
2004	1,710,300
2005	1,724,400
2006	1,741,600
2007	1,759,100
2008	1,775,000

Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Table H 6: Population Change by Settlement type 2001 – 2008

	% change
All Northern Ireland	5.1
Belfast MUA ¹	-0.8
Derry U A ²	2.9
Large Towns	6.7
Medium Towns	8.0
Small Towns	6.6
Intermediate Settlements ³	10.8
Villages	13.1
Small Villages, hamlets and Open Countryside	9.2

Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

¹BMUA is the continuous urban area around Belfast extending to the urban areas of Bangor and Carrickfergus in the east and Lisburn in the south west. It also incorporates the urban parts of Newtownabbey, Castlereagh and Lisburn.

²DUA is the continuous urban area in and around Derry / Londonderry City.

³Intermediate Settlements are those settlements classified in the Settlement Information Classification and Analysis Group (SITAG) report that contain a population of 2,250 or more and fewer than 4,500 (outside BMUA and DUA).

Table H 7: Northern Ireland Population projections 2008-2023

Year	Population
2008	1,775,000
2009	1,789,000
2010	1,802,000
2011	1,815,000
2012	1,827,000
2013	1,839,000
2014	1,851,000
2015	1,862,000
2016	1,874,000
2017	1,885,000
2018	1,896,000
2019	1,910,000
2020	1,917,000
2021	1,927,000
2022	1,937,000
2023	1,946,000

Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Table H 8: Projected make up of population 2008-2033

	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028	2033
Children (Under 16)	21%	21%	21%	20%	19%	19%
Adult (16-64)	65%	64%	63%	61%	60%	59%
Elderly (65+)	14%	15%	17%	18%	20%	22%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding.

Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Table H 9: Population Projections by Local Government District

District Council	2008	2023
Ards	77,614	83,177
Belfast	268,323	274,548
Castlereagh	66,205	69,070
Down	69,816	76,129
Lisburn	114,766	128,606
North Down	78,889	80,117
Antrim	53,243	62,200
Ballymena	62,738	68,381
Ballymoney	30,106	34,241
Carrickfergus	40,031	41,970
Coleraine	57,006	55,172
Cookstown	35,944	42,173
Larne	31,292	32,285
Magherafelt	43,844	50,958
Moyle	16,876	18,087
Newtownabbey	82,744	88,357
Armagh	58,173	66,739
Banbridge	46,966	53,586
Craigavon	90,843	111,717
Dungannon	55,386	69,769
Newry and Mourne	97,289	118,526
Fermanagh	61,966	67,903
Limavady	34,117	35,225
Derry	109,097	116,059
Omagh	52,115	57,931
Strabane	39,614	42,916
Total	1,775,003	1,945,842

Source: NISRA

<http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/projections/lgd/LGD08totals.xls>

Table H 10: Proportion of New Dwellings within Urban Footprint 2000 – 2009

	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Proportion	85.1%	88.1%	80.2%	69.6%	75.0%	69.6%	73.7%	74.9%	85.2%

Source: DOE Planning Service Northern Ireland Housing Land Availability Summary Report (2009)

Economy

Table H 11: Employee jobs 1993 - 2010

	Private Sector Employment	Public Sector Employment	Total
At March			
1993	199,517	344,160	543,677
1994	195,193	358,930	554,123
1995	196,304	370,810	567,114
1996	198,927	378,960	577,887
1997	196,612	391,440	588,052
1998	195,680	413,430	609,110
1999	196,348	424,520	620,868
2000	199,340	438,140	637,480
2001	202,180	446,720	648,900
2002	205,106	455,930	661,036
2003	210,851	458,080	668,931
2004	216,275	464,250	680,525
2005	219,525	476,560	696,085
2006	221,542	484,450	705,992
2007	221,215	493,610	714,825
2008	221,489	511,150	732,639
2009	224,744	488,050	712,794
2010	225,494	473,960	699,454

Source DETI

Table H 12: Employee Jobs by District Council Area (September 2007)

District Council	Jobs
Antrim	24,637
Ards	17,668
Armagh	20,005
Ballymena	29,924
Ballymoney	7,542
Banbridge	11,847
Belfast	198,796
Carrickfergus	8,439
Castlereagh	25,694
Coleraine	22,881
Cookstown	11,744
Craigavon	37,517
Derry	42,710
Down	18,182
Dungannon	21,687
Fermanagh	21,595
Larne	8,576
Limavady	9,538
Lisburn	40,196
Magherafelt	14,751
Moyle	3,445
Newry & Mourne	33,528
Newtownabbey	30,524
North Down	21,996
Omagh	18,277
Strabane	8,939
NI	710,638

Figures exclude Agriculture but include animal husbandry activities and hunting, trapping and game propagation

Source DETI Census of Employment 2007

Table H 13: Unemployment rate - UK (April-June 2010)
Percentage

	Rate
England	7.7%
Scotland	8.4%
Wales	9.0%
Northern Ireland	6.6%
United Kingdom	7.8%

Source DETI (Labour Force Survey)

Table H 14: Gross value added (GVA) per head indexed to UK =100

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Northern Ireland	79.4	79.8	79.6	79.2	79.2	80.1	80.3	80.0	79.5	78.9
UK	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source Office for National Statistics

Table H 15: Projected and actual Change in Employment levels¹ by council areas 1998 – 2028 (Units = Thousands)

	1998 - 2008	2008 - 2018	2018 - 2028
Antrim	3.0	2.0	3.8
Ards	1.3	0.3	1.7
Armagh	5.5	0.6	1.7
Ballymena	6.5	0.1	2.2
Ballymoney	0.8	0.6	1.3
Banbridge	5.1	0.7	1.8
Belfast	26.0	3.4	18.3
Carrickfergus	0.7	0.1	0.6
Castlereagh	4.2	0.5	1.9
Coleraine	3.8	-0.2	1.2
Cookstown	4.9	-0.1	0.1
Craigavon	4.5	0.8	2.7
Derry	6.2	1.1	4.4
Down	3.1	0.7	1.2
Dungannon	8.3	-0.3	1.5
Fermanagh	5.3	-0.2	1.3
Larne	0.9	-0.3	0.2
Limavady	0.6	-0.2	0.6
Lisburn	6.2	2.4	5.3
Magherafelt	5.2	-0.3	0.3
Moyle	1.0	0.1	0.3
Newry & Mourne	11.8	2.2	4.9
Newtownabbey	4.3	0.0	2.0
North Down	2.8	0.4	2.3
Omagh	3.8	0.4	1.4
Strabane	0.2	0.1	0.7
NI (000s)	126.0	14.8	63.7

Source: DETI, LPS and Oxford Economics

¹ Note : Employment is full and part-time employee jobs plus self-employment.

Transport

Table H 16: Licensed Vehicle stock 1992-2008

Year	Vehicles
1992	578,000
1993	586,000
1994	596,000
1995	612,000
1996	639,000
1997	684,000
1998	695,000
1999	721,000
2000	731,000
2001	767,000
2002	794,000
2003	853,000
2004	883,000
2005	917,000
2006	959,000
2007	1,008,000
2008	1,024,000

Source Transport Statistics (DRD)

Table H 17: Vehicles currently licensed by taxation group 2008

Taxation Group	Number	%
Private Light Goods	857,044	83.7
M/C, SC/Mopeds	28,180	2.8
Gen (HGV) Goods	25,136	2.5
Bus	2,951	0.3
Agric Tractors	14,326	1.4
Other	2,232	0.2
Crown	6,902	0.7
Exempt	87,625	8.6
All Vehicles	1,024,396	100

Source: Transport Statistics (DRD)

Table H 18: Percentage of journeys made per person per year by mode: 1999-2001 to 2006-2008

	Percentage				
Mode	1999-2001	2003-2005	2004-2006	2005-2007	2006-2008
Car	69	69	70	70	71
Walk	19	18	18	18	17
Public transport	6	6	6	5	5
Other	6	7	7	6	6

Note: Figures have been rounded.

Source DRD

Table H 19: Vehicle kilometres travelled 2000 - 2007 (Millions)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Cars and Vans	15,291	15,637	15,719	15,970	16,751	16,916	17,111	17,721
Med Commercial	655	714	1,022	1,061	1,002	992	1,155	1,138
Heavy Commercial	511	529	586	734	655	665	698	702
Articulated Commercial	263	269	353	423	385	392	380	384
Bus & Coach	63	63	61	60	60	58	48	59
Total	16,783	17,210	17,738	18,247	18,853	19,023	19,392	20,004

Source DRD

Table H 20: Method of travel to work 2008

Method of travel	2008
Car, van, minibus	82.7%
Bus, coach	4.6%
Walk	9.4%
Other	3.3%
Total	100%

Source Transport Statistics (DRD)

Table H 21: Tonnage of Goods through the Principal Ports in Northern Ireland 2008

Thousand Tonnes

	Belfast	Larne	Londonderry	Warrenpoint	Other	Total
Inward	9143	2749	1786	1305	877	15860
Outward	3897	2417	54	813	457	7638
Total	13040	5166	1840	2118	1334	23498

Source DETI

**Table H 22: Northern Ireland airport passenger numbers, 2001 – 2008
(Thousands)**

Airport	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Belfast International	3,603	3,551	3,954	4,403	4,820	5,015	5,236	5,223
George Best Belfast City	1,192	1,890	1,974	2,091	2,237	2,106	2,187	2,571
City of Derry	118	199	206	234	199	342	428	439
Total	4,983	5,640	6,134	6,728	7,256	7,463	7,851	8,233

Source: Civil Aviation Authority

Table H 23: Net commuting into Belfast

Year	People
2008	85,000
2009	83,000
2010	83,000
2011	84,000
2012	85,000
2013	87,000
2014	89,000
2015	90,000
2016	92,000
2017	94,000
2018	94,000
2019	96,000
2020	97,000
2021	97,000
2022	99,000
2023	100,000
2024	101,000
2025	101,000
2026	102,000
2027	103,000
2028	103,000

Source: Oxford Economics Report to DRD (June 2009 update)

Table H 24: Public transport passenger journeys (2004 - 5 to 2008 - 9)

	2004 - 5	2005 - 6	2006 - 7	2007 - 8	2008 - 9
Bus passenger journeys	65,100,000	67,200,000	67,500,000	69,900,000	70,500,000
Train passenger journeys	7,400,000	7,700,000	8,500,000	9,500,000	10,200,000
Total	72,500,000	74,900,000	76,000,000	79,400,000	80,700,000

Source: DRD

Biodiversity

Table H 25: Area of Nature Conservation Designations 2000 – 2009

	Thousands of Hectares								
	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
ASSI	89.6	91.1	91.9	92.4	93.1	93.5	93.8	94.2	99.3
SAC	62.1	64.6	64.6	65.1	65.9	66.4	66.4	66.4	66.4
SPA	71.3	71.3	72.8	72.8	72.8	108.8	108.8	108.8	114.6
Ramsar	76.1	76.1	76.2	76.2	76.2	77.4	77.5	77.5	77.7
Total	299.1	303.1	305.5	306.5	308.0	346.1	346.5	346.9	358.0

Source: NIEA (January 2009)

Appendix I

Housing Need Assessment

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is moving to a system of Housing Market Analysis that will aim not only to identify social housing need but also to provide a solid evidence base on which available land can be zoned for housing by planners. There is a growing consensus that there needs to be a broader approach to assessing housing need; one that aims to understand the workings of the wider housing market and that will look holistically at infrastructure, planning, the socio-economic context, regeneration needs, health, education etc.

Councils will be able to use the Housing Growth Indicators as baselines or starting points which can subsequently be adjusted in the light of the Housing Market Analysis for their area.

The new Housing market Analysis will help to develop a comprehensive evidence base to inform decisions about the policies required in housing strategies and the development of area plans. It will assist policy development, decision-making and resource allocation by:

- enabling the appropriate authority to develop long-term strategic views of housing need and demand to inform housing strategies and development plans;
- enabling planners to think spatially about the nature and influence of the housing market in respect to their local area;
- providing robust evidence to inform policies aimed at providing the right mix of housing across the whole housing market (both market and affordable housing);
- providing evidence to inform policies about the level of social and affordable housing required, including the need for different types and sizes of social and affordable housing;
- supporting authorities to develop a strategic approach to housing through consideration of housing need and demand across all housing sectors and assessment of the key drivers and relationships within the housing market; and
- drawing together the bulk of the evidence required for authorities to appraise strategic housing options including housing supply targets, social housing allocation priorities, the role of intermediate housing products, stock renewal, conversion and transfer.

The Housing Executive has already developed functional boundaries for functional housing market areas in The North and future area plans/strategies are likely to be based on these areas. These functional boundaries are based on the principle of self-contained socio-economic areas and will not be exactly co-terminous with the new district council administrative boundaries. As such, new councils will need to work closely together when making strategic planning decisions.

Appendix J

Urban Footprint

The Urban Footprint for towns and cities with a population greater than 5,000 is defined as **the continuous built-up area of the settlement**. The urban footprint will contain land, which has a formal urban use, and, for example, gardens on the edge of the settlement will be included within the footprint as they form part of the curtilage of a building. Existing Urban Footprints have been identified, and set as the baseline of January 2001.

Undeveloped zoned land at the edge of the settlement will be excluded from any calculations and will not count towards the regional target for housing within urban limits.

Sites within the urban footprint, which may count towards the regional target for housing within urban limits, will be assessed through capacity studies as part of the development plan process. The process for doing this is set out in PPS12 – Housing in Settlements. Potential housing sites will include land such as appropriate vacant buildings, previously developed sites and other suitable sites. The definition of previously developed land was changed in 2008 to exclude the gardens of dwelling houses.

Appendix K

Consultation Questions on the Revised Regional Development Strategy

CHAPTER 2 – Reviewing The RDS		
	Q1	Have we identified the most significant factors impacting on the Region? If not, what should be omitted and/or what should be added?
CHAPTER 3 - Vision And Aims		
Aims	Q2	Do you agree with the aims of the RDS? If not, what would you change and why?
CHAPTER 4 - The Spatial Framework		
	Q3	Do you consider Alternative 4 is the most appropriate? If not what option do you consider more appropriate and why?
The Hierarchy of settlements and related infrastructure	Q4	Do you think the approach as illustrated by the wheel in Diagram 4.1 is useful? If not, what alternative approach do you suggest?
The Metropolitan Area centred on Belfast	Q5	Do you agree that Belfast as the regional economic driver of the region needs to be positioned as the regional centre for administration, commerce and specialised services? If not, why not?
Derry City hub of the North West	Q6	Does the spatial framework recognise the important role of the North West and Derry? If not, why not?
Sub-Regional Centres	Q7	The Strategy proposes 9 sub regional centres. Do you agree with those that have been identified? If not why not?
Sub-Regional Centres	Q8	Newtownards has been included as a sub-regional centre, should it be included in the BMUA instead?
Clusters	Q9	Do you think the concept of clustering cities and towns will enable greater economic prosperity and delivery of services? If not, why not?
Clusters	Q10	Do you agree with the cities and towns that have been clustered together? If not, what would you cluster together and why?

Rural Areas	Q11	Does the spatial framework recognise the important function of rural communities?
Gateways and Economic Corridors	Q12	Does the spatial framework recognise the important role of Gateways?
	Q13	Do you think the concept of Economic Corridors as described is useful? If not why not?
	Q14	Do you agree with the Spatial Framework set out in this chapter. If not what alternative approach do you suggest and why?

CHAPTER 5 – Strategic Guidance

The Metropolitan Area centred on Belfast	Q15	Do you consider that the identification of a BMUA continues to be appropriate for forward planning purposes?
	Q16	Do you agree that Sprucefield should continue to be classified as a Regional out of town shopping centre?
Derry city hub of the North West	Q17	Does the guidance address the development of a strong North West and strengthened role for Derry City? If not, why not?
Sub Regional Centres	Q18	Does the guidance address the key issues to promote economic growth in the Sub Regional Centres?
Clusters	Q19	Does the guidance on clustering enable places to attract economic development and deliver services that are functionally sustainable?
The Rural Area	Q20	Does the guidance on the rural area meet the needs of rural communities? If not, what areas do you consider have not been addressed?
Environment	Q21	Does the strategic guidance address the key issues relating to climate change and clearly demonstrate what needs to be done in order to help improve the environment? If not, what suggestions can you make?

Society	Q22	Does the strategic guidance address the key issues relating to our society and clearly demonstrate what needs to be done in order to help improve how we live and work? If not, what suggestions can you make?
	Q23	Do you agree with the revised definition of “brownfield” and that there is need for a target? Do you think the target should apply to all towns of over 5,000 population or only to Belfast and Derry and what is your reason for this?
	Q24	The housing figures in Appendix G are to be used as guidelines. Do you think these figures will be helpful in enabling local planning authorities to produce development plans? If not, how do you think housing need should be assessed?
Economy	Q25	Does the strategy address the key spatial issues for developing the economy? Is there anything you would add or omit?
Overall	Q26	Have we covered the most significant issues in the Strategic Guidance? Is there anything you would add or omit?

CHAPTER 6 – Regionally Significant Economic Infrastructure

	Q27	Do agree with the types of projects that the RDS considers as being of regional significance?
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CHAPTER 7 - Implementation

	Q28	What are your views on how the Strategy will be implemented and monitored?
	Q29	Do you think we have identified the most appropriate headline indicators? If not can you suggest more appropriate indicators and if possible the source?

Glossary of Terms

Affordable Housing

Comprises the social rented sector, housing benefit funded private rented and that part of the low cost owner occupation market which can be purchased utilising 30% or less of gross household income.

Areas of Outstanding Beauty

Large areas of landscape of distinctive characteristics and special scenic value which have been designated AONB under the 1965 Amenity Land Act and the 1985 Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

ASSIs are defined in the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order (NCALO) 1985 (with 1989 amendment). Where the Department is satisfied that an area of land is of special scientific interest, by reason of its flora, fauna or geological, physiographical or other features, and accordingly needs to be specially protected, the Department shall make a declaration that the area is an area of special scientific interest.

Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area

In the existing RDS, published in 2001 the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) is defined as the built up area taking in the City of Belfast and the adjacent urban parts of the District Councils of Lisburn, Castlereagh, Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus, and North Down. This includes Lisburn City, Bangor and Carrickfergus. The draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan which was published in 2004 covers the whole of the 6 council areas named above. For operational purposes the draft plan identified the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA) to define the development zone. To be consistent with the statutory plan the BMUA is defined as the continuous built up area centred on Belfast with an arc from Jordanstown to Knocknagoney and includes the city of Lisburn and towns of Bangor, Carrickfergus and Holywood.

Clusters

Cities and towns which can work together to create a critical mass to attract economic development and deliver services.

Density

Measure of the number of dwellings per hectare.

Economic Corridors

These are based on the Regional Strategic Transport Network and connect Belfast and Derry and main centres of economic activity with external gateways.

Gateways

Strategically important transport interchange points which connect ports and airports to the internal transport network.

Mixed Use Development

A new development that makes provision for a variety of uses eg residential, retail, business and industry.

Planning Policy Statements

The Department of the Environment (DOE) administers the planning system in Northern Ireland along with the Planning Service Agency and is responsible for regulating development and land use in the interests of the community. Planning Policy Statements set out DOE policy on particular aspects of land use planning. Their content is taken into account in preparing Development Plans and individual planning applications and appeals.

Ramsar Sites

The Ramsar mission is “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.” The convention covers all aspects of wetland conservation and wise use, recognising wetlands as ecosystems that are extremely important for biodiversity conservation and the well-being of human communities.

Regional Strategic Transport Network

A core transport network made up of the rail system, five key transport corridors, four link corridors and the Belfast Metropolitan Area transport corridors, along with the remainder of the trunk road network.

Renewable Energy

Energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment eg from sun, wind, wave or fall of water. Plant and some waste materials are also potential sources.

Rural

As determined by the DARD Inter-Departmental Urban- Rural Definition Group Rural encompasses Settlements with a population of 4,500 or less. On the basis of this definition, approximately 65% of the 1.7 million inhabitants of The North live in urban areas and 35% in rural areas.

Social Housing

Housing provided by registered Social Landlords for rent. Such housing is allocated by reference to an approved (Department for Social Development) Common Waiting List and allocation system.

Spatial Strategy

A coherent long-term policy framework to guide and influence future development. It aspires to guide future development in an orderly, economic and sustainable manner.

Special Areas of Conservation

SACs are areas which have been given greater protection under the European legislation of The Habitats Directive. They have been designated because of a possible threat to the special habitats or species which they contain and to provide increased protection to a variety of animals, plants and habitats of importance to biodiversity both on a national and international scale.

Special Protection Areas

SPAs are designated under the European Commission Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (The Birds Directive). All European Community Member States are required to identify internationally important areas for breeding, over-wintering and migrating birds and designate them as Special Protection Areas.

Sustainable Development

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Urban Footprint

This is defined as the continuous built-up area of a settlement. Urban footprints have been identified and set as the baseline of January 2001 and for monitoring purposes will not be altered for five years. The boundary is represented by an uninterrupted line, often lying inside the planned settlement limit. It contains land which has a formal urban use and, for example, gardens on the edge of the settlement will be included within the urban area as they

form part of a curtilage of a building. Undeveloped zoned land at the edge of the settlement is excluded.

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