

**Regional Development Strategy
(RDS) 2025**

Executive Summary

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 6 January 2011 to 31 March 2011. You must respond by 5 pm on 31 March 2011.

The full document is available on our website

www.drdni.gov.uk/shapingourfuture/

A commitment was given in the existing RDS which was formulated in 2001 to carry out a review after 10 years. The 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. The 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.

A list of questions is contained at the back of this Executive Summary document which may offer a useful guideline to assist you in your response to the consultation. We would be grateful if you could provide responses to these. 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 publication can also be made available, on request, in large print, Braille and audio alternative formats. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

We will be holding a number of public consultation meetings to provide an opportunity for everyone to have their say and influence the final Strategy.

Departmental Policy – Disclosure of Information

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, reading "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 pleanáil 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 pleanáil 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 plean 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 ról atá daite dóibh. Tá difríochtaí 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

Executive Summary

ES1. Background

- 1.1 The revised document will replace the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) that was published in 2001 and amended in 2008. The RDS has a statutory basis. It sets out the framework for the spatial development for the Region up to 2035. The RDS is cross-cutting with linkages to other key government policies and statutory legislation.

ES2. Developing a new RDS

- 2.1 An analysis of significant spatial trends was carried out as part of the review process. In Chapter 2 this has been set out under the 3 sustainability headings of Environment, Society and Economy. This analysis explained the trends and new challenges along with the key policy directions in the existing RDS.
- 2.2 The main points from the analysis are:
 - The importance of the Metropolitan area centred on Belfast 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; 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 of key centres which are 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.
 - The need for a new emphasis on how to reduce dependence on the car and to change travel behaviour.
 - The importance in all aspects of forward planning to address the consequences of climate change which means an even greater focus on where people live and work and how transport and energy needs are planned.

ES3. Vision and Aims

- 3.1 In broad terms the Strategy aims to take account of the economic ambitions and needs of the Region, and put in place spatial planning, transport and housing priorities that will support and enable the aspirations of the Region to be met. Chapter 3 details the Vision and aims. The RDS vision is:

“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 This is supported by 8 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 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.

ES4. The Spatial Framework

- 4.1 In Chapter 4 a Spatial Framework is developed to enable strategic choices to be made in relation to development and infrastructural investment. The components of the Framework are:

The Metropolitan Area (centred on Belfast)

The Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (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. The BMUA is at the centre of the regional transport network and the major gateway for national and international trade. The capital of the Region is Belfast with a population of 268,000 which has been in decline. The evidence is however that over 50% of those who work in Belfast live outside it.

Derry City Hub of the North West

The North West is defined as Derry, Strabane and Limavady, along with the greater part of County Donegal. Derry City is the core settlement and is a key cross-border and international gateway providing access by road, rail, and sea to the North West. Securing a strong and vibrant Derry City is important to the economic and social wellbeing of the North West.

Sub-Regional Centres

Sub-Regional Centres which have the greatest potential for growth and which provide a range of services to the surrounding areas are identified. They are Enniskillen, Omagh, Coleraine, Ballymena, Cookstown, Craigavon, Newry, Downpatrick and Newtownards.

Clusters of cities and towns

To encourage co-operation clustering of towns is promoted in the framework. The proposed clusters are:

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

The rural area

The need to sustain rural communities living in smaller towns, villages and the open countryside requires new development and employment opportunities which respect local, social and environmental circumstances. A key consideration is how these communities access services.

Gateways and corridors

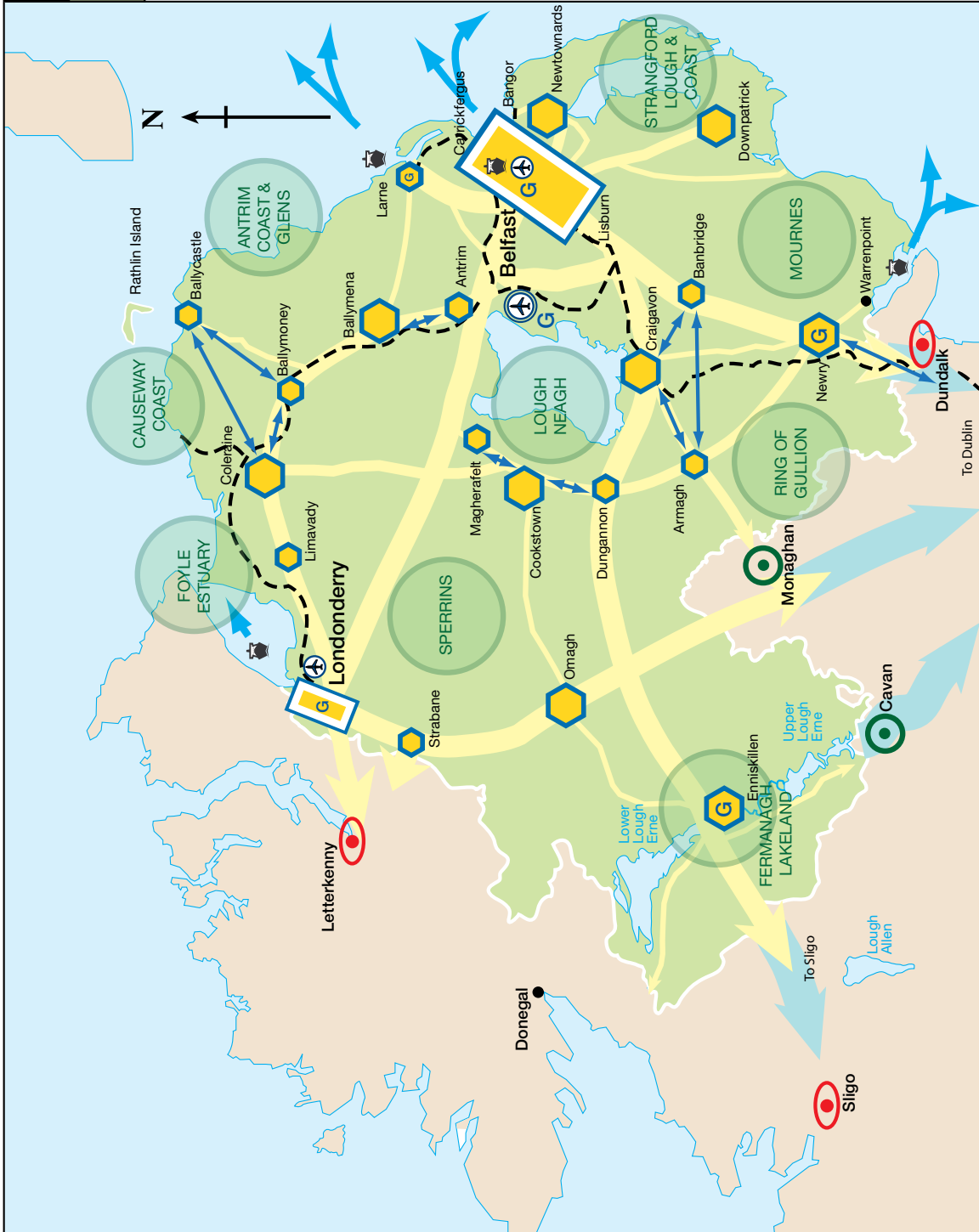
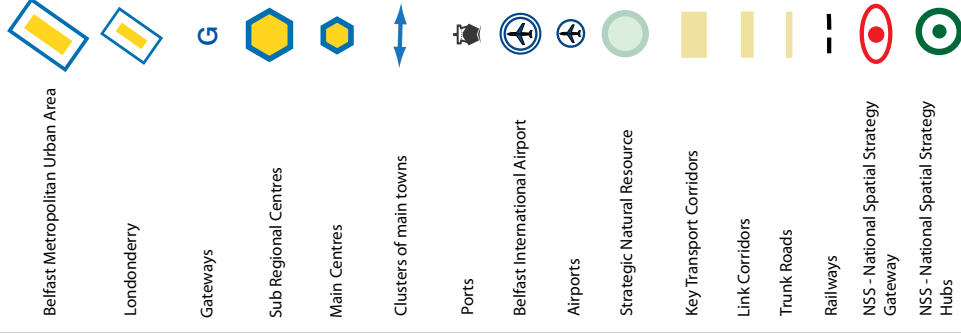
Gateways are strategically important transport interchanges which are important for economic development, freight distribution activities and additional employment generation. The Gateways are:

- Belfast (including the sea port and George Best City Airport);
- Belfast International Airport;
- Larne;
- Derry (including the sea port and regional airport);
- Newry (including Warrenpoint); and
- Enniskillen.

- 4.2 Economic corridors have been identified based on the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN). The Economic Corridors connect Belfast and Derry and main centres of economic activity and the external gateways.
- 4.3 The Framework will also provide opportunities which should be taken to work with our nearest neighbours in deciding where development should go.
- 4.4 The Diagram No 4.6 attempts to capture all the elements of the Framework.

Diagram No. 4.6

Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Ireland



ES5. The Strategic Guidance

- 5.1 Strategic Guidance has been developed to provide long term policy directions to guide the public, private and community sectors. The Guidance is set out in Chapter 5 with specific detail on the geographical areas of the Spatial Framework and the 3 cross cutting themes of Environment, Society and Economy which apply to the whole of the Region. There is no priority order given to the guidance.

1. THE METROPOLITAN AREA CENTRED ON BELFAST

SG1	Promote urban economic development at key locations throughout the BMUA and ensure sufficient land is available for jobs
SG2	Manage the movement of people and goods within the BMUA
SG3	Protect and enhance the quality of the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets
SG4	Grow the population of the City of Belfast
SG5	Enhance the role of Belfast City Centre as the regional capital and focus of administration, commerce, specialised services and cultural amenities

2. DERRY CITY HUB OF THE NORTH WEST

SG6	Develop a strong North West
SG7	Strengthen the role of Derry as the capital City of the North West
SG8	Protect and enhance the environmental assets of Derry City and the North West

3. SUB-REGIONAL CENTRES

SG9	Promote economic development opportunities at Sub-Regional Centres
SG10	Grow the population in the Sub-Regional Centres

4. CLUSTERS OF CITIES AND TOWNS

SG11	Identify and consolidate the roles and functions of settlements within the clusters
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SG12	Use the Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure diagram (Diagram 4.1) to help to identify the level of appropriate services and facilities
5. THE RURAL AREA	
SG13	Sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countryside
SG14	Improve accessibility for rural communities
6. GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS	
SG15	Strengthen the Gateways for Regional competitiveness
7. ENVIRONMENT	
SG16	Reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change whilst improving air quality
SG17	Manage our waste sustainably
SG18	Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment
SG19	Deliver a sustainable and secure energy supply
8. SOCIETY	
SG20	Strengthen community cohesion
SG21	Support urban and rural renaissance
SG22	Manage housing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development
9. ECONOMY	
SG23	Ensure adequate supply of land to facilitate sustainable 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
SG25	Manage the use of road space for the movement of people and goods

SG26	A balanced approach to telecommunications infrastructure that will give a competitive advantage
SG27	Promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure

- 5.2 The document contains Housing Growth Indications (HGI) to be used as a guideline for local planning.

ES6. Regionally Significant Economic Infrastructure

- 6.1 The RDS provides the flexibility to accommodate unforeseen imaginative proposals for economic development that are clearly in the public interest. 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.
- 6.2 In Chapter 6 projects that the RDS considers as being of strategic significance are discussed as 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.

ES7. 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.

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?
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CHAPTER 3 - Vision And Aims

Aims	Q2	Do you agree with the aims of the RDS? If not, what would you change and why?
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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 centered 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?
	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 centered 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?

