

Shaping our



Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025

2025

Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025



Space Satellite Photograph

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Foreword

The Regional Development Strategy, which I am formulating today under the Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, represents the culmination of work that commenced in 1997. After four years of extensive, probably unprecedented, consultation including an independent Examination in Public, scrutiny by the Assembly and its Committees, and very close working across Departments, I am able to set out the strategic planning framework which will shape our future over the next 25 years.



I am pleased that there has been a high degree of consensus on many important issues and I am grateful to all those who have contributed at various stages of the consultative process.

The Strategy is critically important to the future development of Northern Ireland. It seeks to balance the needs of a resilient, outward looking, more dynamic economy whilst preserving and sustaining that essential quality of life which is cherished by all of us. Importantly, it provides a framework within which choices can be made on key decisions about the infrastructural development of Northern Ireland; for example, key decisions on the transportation network, which is so critical to improved accessibility and mobility, and dealing with the problems of social exclusion.

The approach which underscores the Strategy and permeates each key section is one of balanced sustainable development. I am committed to promoting a sustained urban renaissance in our cities and towns: a renaissance that includes getting the design and quality of the urban fabric right. It is about an approach which enables cities and towns to create and share increased prosperity. I also support strongly a concerted housing drive to renew and revitalise urban areas.

Equally, I attach great importance to the need to sustain a vibrant rural Northern Ireland, with a diversified rural economy, while respecting the rich inheritance of natural assets valued by residents and visitors alike. Our towns and villages in the countryside should have the opportunity to realise their full potential to create and share prosperity.

Minister's foreword continued

Wherever people live they want the same things. They want good quality jobs, a home which they can be proud of, reliable quality public services and an attractive and safe environment. People also want a say in shaping how their community will develop over time. That is why the long-term visioning process which has been started by many local councils, and supported by the Department for Regional Development, is so important. That work will assume greater importance as the Regional Development Strategy is implemented.

The Strategy paints an ambitious picture of what our region might look like in 25 years time. It sets out a demanding, though achievable, agenda. The next challenge is to make the Strategy a reality. If we are to improve the quality of life, and economic opportunity for all our citizens we need to harness our collective resources and effort right across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

I am committed to realising the huge potential of the Regional Development Strategy for the benefit of everyone in Northern Ireland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Campbell', written in a cursive style.

GREGORY CAMPBELL MP MLA
Minister for Regional Development

September 2001

Setting the scene

The Regional Development Strategy: Shaping Our Future

Shaping Our Future is a Strategy to guide the future development of Northern Ireland to 2025 and help meet the needs of a fast growing Region with a population approaching two million. The vision is to create an outward-looking, dynamic and liveable Region and to sustain a high quality of life for all.

A long-term perspective is taken keeping the needs of future generations in mind. Thus, the recurring theme of Sustainability runs through the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), with a strong emphasis on social cohesion and economic progress.



The pivotal section is the **Spatial Development Strategy (Chapter 5)** which is a **hub, corridor and gateway framework** for regional development. It is designed to promote balanced and integrated growth across the network of Cities, Main and Small Towns, and their rural hinterlands, to enhance equality of opportunity in all parts of the Region, and

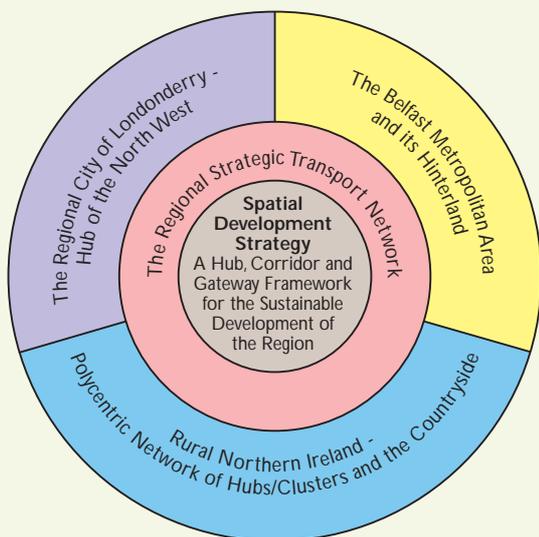
offer the locational choice to meet the wider variety of needs in a divided society. The Strategy encourages the creation of balanced local communities characterised by social mix, variety of uses and a focus on 'a sense of place'.

The Spatial Development Strategy is designed **to reinforce and strengthen the hubs, corridors and gateways**, making best use of key regional assets to accommodate growth:

- **Investing in the urban hubs:** promoting a sustained urban renaissance based on maintaining compact cities and towns, and creating high quality urban environments with improved urban transport systems, and green spaces, thus underpinning their strategic role as hubs of economic activity, employment and services, and providing more attractive towns in which to live.

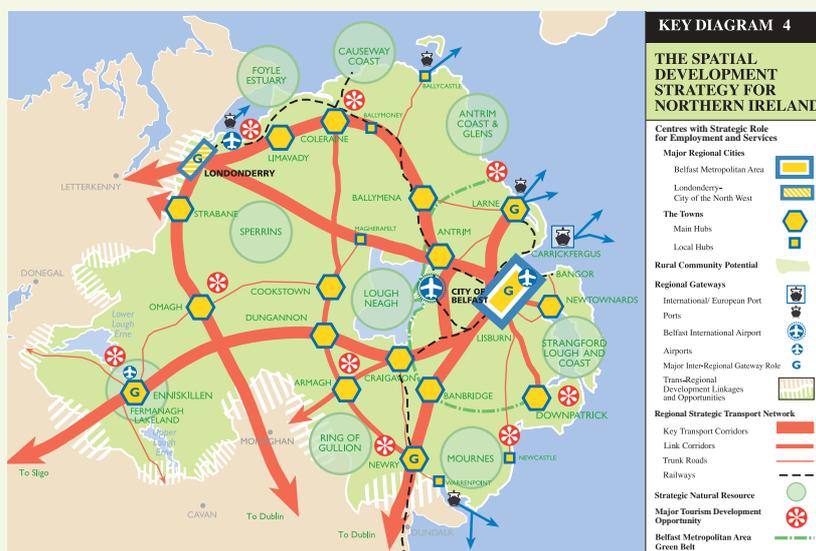
setting the scene

- **Creating an upgraded and integrated transport system**, built around the Regional Strategic Transport Network of the key transport corridors with their main public transport services providing the skeletal framework for future physical development.
- **Enhancing the regional gateways** with a focus on generating employment opportunities in and around the ports and airports.



Economic development is a cornerstone of the spatial strategy which provides the infrastructural framework for job creation and tourism growth. While the importance of Belfast and its hinterland as the primary engine of growth is recognised, and the role of Londonderry as the economic hub of the North West, the Strategy encourages decentralised growth throughout the Region, focused on the main towns, and facilitated by upgraded transport corridors, to provide a regional network of economic development opportunities, supporting a vibrant economy.

Outside the two major cities of Belfast and Londonderry, around one million people live in the towns, villages and the countryside of Rural Northern Ireland. The aim is to develop an attractive and prosperous rural area, based on a balanced and integrated approach to the development of town, village and countryside, in order to sustain a strong and vibrant rural community and economy, and to conserve and enhance the environment.



The Strategy provides for up to 250,000 additional dwellings in Northern Ireland by 2025 (160,000 dwellings by 2015) with an approach which involves:

- integrating housing with economic development, services, transport, and the local environment to achieve more sustainable patterns of development which make better use of resources;
- planning for a balanced spread of housing across the Region and a high degree of integration with the Regional Strategic Transport Network of road and rail corridors;
- promoting more housing within existing urban areas; and
- fostering a greater sense of community with a focus on place, the value of the individual, and high quality living environments.

A fresh approach to future transport emphasises enhancing accessibility to enable people to get to goods, services and facilities, but with as few negative impacts as possible, and reducing the need to travel. This will mean giving more priority to public transport improvement, walking and cycling, to gradually change the travel culture, extend choice and reduce reliance on the car, particularly for the school run and journeys to work in the Belfast Metropolitan Area and larger urban centres.

Land use patterns will be encouraged which maintain compact urban areas, reduce physical separation of key land uses, and promote mixed use developments. This will help to reduce the need to travel and to improve choice for people to walk, cycle or use public transport rather than drive.

All of this future development needs to be implemented taking account of the sustainability theme running through the RDS, which stresses the need to look after the whole environment, and supports the preventative model for healthy living. This means making wise use of resources which could run out and playing our part in the care of the whole planet in the interest of succeeding generations.

'Caring for the Environment' embraces the protection and management of resources – both natural and man-made – and the creation of healthy living environments. Northern Ireland possesses a rich variety of landscapes and built heritage. The Strategy sets out a comprehensive collection of strategic policies needed to ensure the care of our land, rivers, lakes and coast, with their variety of species; and the built heritage of our cities, towns, villages and countryside. Energy efficiency, waste management and the cleaning up of our air, water and land are promoted.

Altogether, these sustainable themes frame an ambitious agenda for the development of a dynamic, prosperous and progressive Region over the next twenty-five years requiring the involvement of the whole community in its implementation.

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- **Brownfield Housing** – An RDS objective is to increase the provision of housing within existing urban areas, including what is often described as 'brownfield' sites, that is, previously developed lands sometimes known as 'recycled sites'. For operational purposes further definition of potential housing sites inside urban areas will be provided in the Regional Planning Policy Statement on Housing in Settlements.
- **City Visioning** – A consultative process through which the citizens of a city set aims for the further restructuring and international positioning of the city.
- **Development Plans** – Prepared by The Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland). They may be in the form of area plans, subject plans or local plans.
- **European Spatial Development Perspective** – An important policy framework for member states within the European Union (EU). It informs the preparation of regional strategies by seeking to secure balanced and sustainable development in the interests of economic and social cohesion across the EU.
- **Gateways** – Important interchange points, which connect ports and airports to the internal transport network.
- **Key Transport Corridors (KTCs)** – Strategic long distance routes which connect a number of towns to the major regional gateways.
- **Metropolitan Transport Corridor (MTCs)** – Network of radial roads and suburban rail lines linking constituent parts of the BMA
- **New Targeting Social Need** – The New Targeting Social Needs Policy is the vehicle through which the Executive is taking forward its commitment to tackling economic and social need. The policy recognises and seeks to reduce inequalities in the life experience of citizens in terms of poverty, health, housing, education and economic opportunity and disability.
- **Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment** – This provides a full and detailed record of all of Northern Ireland's landscapes.
- **Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)** – The Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland) administers the planning system in Northern Ireland through the Planning Service Agency and is responsible for regulating development and land use in the interests of the community. Planning Policy Statements set out the policies of The Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland) on particular aspects of land-use planning. Their contents are taken into account in preparing Development Plans and are also material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.
- **Programme for Government** – A programme incorporating the Executive's agreed budget linked to policies and programmes which, under the Belfast Agreement, is subject to approval by the Assembly, after scrutiny in Assembly Committees, on a cross-community basis.

- **Regional Planning Policy Statements** – The Department for Regional Development will prepare statements of policy guidance on strategic matters to assist in the implementation of the RDS.
- **Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN)** – The RSTN is 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.
- **Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)** – An overarching strategic planning framework, with supporting Strategic Planning Guidelines (SPGs) to guide the future development of the Region toward achievement of sustainable and balanced development.
- **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** – A process that anticipates and evaluates the environmental, social and economic consequences of strategies such as the RDS.
- **Strategic Planning Guidelines (SPGs)** – These provide long-term policy directions from a spatial perspective in the form of strategic objectives, set out by topics, each with an accompanying range of measures.
- **Sustainable Development** – Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

ACRONYMS

- AONB Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- ASAI Area of Significant Archeological Interest
- ASSI Area of Special Scientific Interest
- ATC Area of Townscape Character
- CSF European Community Support Framework for Northern Ireland
- CTA Community Technical Aid
- DETR Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions
- EIA Equality Impact Assessment
- NITHC Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company
- QBC Quality Bus Corridor
- RDS Regional Development Strategy
- SAC Special Areas of Conservation
- SPA Special Protection Area

NORTHERN IRELAND DEPARTMENTS

- DARD Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- DCAL Department of Cultural Arts and Leisure
- DE Department of Education
- DEL Department of Education and Learning
- DETI Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
- DFP Department of Finance and Personnel
- DHSSPS Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
- DOE Department of the Environment
- DRD Department of Regional Development
- DSD Department for Social Development

Purpose and Status

Purpose

This document sets out the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for the future development of Northern Ireland to 2025. It takes account of key driving forces such as population growth, the increasing number of households, transportation needs, economic changes, and the spatial implications of a divided society. It seeks to inform and guide the whole community in the drive to create a dynamic, prosperous, and progressive Northern Ireland in the third millennium.

Northern Ireland, 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 global economy.

The devolved administration in Northern Ireland is committed to **the promotion of sustainable development** and sustainable communities in order to build a more prosperous and fairer Region. The RDS provides **an overarching strategic framework**, to help achieve a strong spatially balanced economy, a healthy environment and an inclusive society, in accordance with the first Programme for Government¹ in 2001, which states:

"The Regional Development Strategy will provide an important planning framework for tackling the deficiencies in our infrastructure and helping the overall development of our economy and society".

Moreover, in planning for the future, it added:

"We must give careful consideration to where people live and work and other key social, environmental and community factors so that we can plan our public infrastructure most effectively. A Regional Development Strategy will provide the strategic planning framework for this purpose. This will require innovative arrangements at the sub-regional level and regular monitoring to ensure that the Strategy is sufficiently flexible to enable it, Area Development Plans and the Development Control process to respond to emerging trends and opportunities. It will also be necessary, and appropriate to take account of the cross-border context".

¹ The Programme for Government in Northern Ireland 2001.

1 Purpose and Status

The RDS will influence the future distribution of activities throughout the Region. It is not limited to land use but recognises that policies for physical development have an important bearing on other matters. The RDS, therefore, addresses a range of economic, social, environmental and community issues, which are relevant to delivering the objectives of achieving sustainable development and social cohesion in Northern Ireland.

The RDS is not a fixed blueprint or master plan. Rather, it is a framework, prepared in close consultation with the community, which defines a Vision for the Region and frames an agenda which will lead to its achievement. It provides the spatial planning context for:

- strengthening the competitiveness of the regional economy and tackling social and economic disadvantage;
- protecting and enhancing the physical, natural and man-made assets of the Region;
- housing, transport, air and water quality, energy and waste strategies, and for infrastructure providers and public service promoters; and
- development plans and for guiding public and private investment decisions relating to land use.



Status

The RDS was prepared under the Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999. Under that Order, the Department for Regional Development 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"². The Order requires Northern Ireland Departments to "have regard to the regional development strategy" in exercising any functions in relation to development. In particular, planning policy, development plans and development schemes prepared by the Department of the Environment and the Department for Social Development respectively are required in future to be "consistent with the regional development strategy". In practice, this means that they should be in broad harmony with the strategic objectives and policies of the RDS. The RDS will also be material to decisions on individual planning applications and planning appeals.

It is not the role of the RDS to redefine the strategies of other Departments for their specific areas of responsibility, which have been developed within their own statutory remit and through specific consultation exercises. Rather, the RDS seeks to provide an over-arching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public sector in respect of those elements of their strategies, which have a spatial development perspective.

The RDS has been prepared in close consultation with all government departments to provide an agreed spatial framework within which the public and private sectors can work effectively together to maximise the use of scarce resources, achieve mutual benefits and secure real added value.

The RDS is supplemented by the Family of Settlements Report containing profiles of individual towns and their future potential. The RDS takes account of all the background reports prepared during the strategy development process and the Report of the Public Examination (Appendix 1 ►).

The RDS contains a Spatial Development Strategy and related Strategic Planning Guidelines which aim to provide long-term policy directions, from a strategic spatial perspective, for the public and private sector and the whole community. However, nothing contained in this document should be read as a commitment that public resources would be provided for any specific project.

² Article 3, The Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999.

1 Purpose and Status

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.

The Strategic Planning Guidelines are not intended to be detailed operational policy statements. Further work will be needed on drafting new, or amending existing, operational policies to give effect to the Strategic Guidelines.

FIGURE 1
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY -MAIN COMPONENTS



Developing the Regional Development Strategy

The RDS was prepared by an in-house planning team in the Department for Regional Development, with advice from an inter-departmental steering group and a panel of international experts. Preparation of the RDS took full account of parallel work on developing a more integrated and sustainable approach to transportation at both the United Kingdom (UK) and Northern Ireland levels. Of particular importance is the White Paper on the future of transportation, "A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone" (1998); "Moving Forward – the Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement" (1998); and the Railways Task Force Interim Report (2000).

The important work undertaken by the Economic Development Strategy Review Steering Group, published in "Strategy 2010", has helped shape the RDS. There has also been close liaison in relation to important emerging work on air and water quality, energy and waste, climate change and biodiversity (Appendix 2 ►).

Public Consultation and Participation

During the preparation period, district councils, political parties, elected representatives, business organisations, public sector bodies and groups from the voluntary and community sectors engaged in a comprehensive and constructive dialogue about the content of the RDS (Appendix 3 ►).

An exchange of views was also facilitated with all sectors through a series of conferences, seminars, workshops and meetings. Major conferences were held in November 1997, May 1998 and December 1998.

The involvement of almost 500 voluntary and community groups through a consultation exercise led by a facilitating consortium comprising Queen's University Belfast, the Urban Institute, Community Technical Aid, Rural Community Network, and the University of Ulster, was particularly valuable in providing 'a public voice' on the wide range of regional development issues.

The openness and transparency of the process was further strengthened when, for the first time in Northern Ireland, an independent Public Examination was conducted into major aspects of Shaping Our Future – Draft Regional Strategic Framework for Northern Ireland in the autumn of 1999.

The RDS is therefore an expression of the shared vision, values and principles identified through the extensive consultation process, which obtained the views of all sections of the community, and the Public Examination.

The Report of the Public Examination Panel, published in February 2000, endorsed the Draft Strategy, particularly its Guiding Principles and the hub, corridor and gateway concept, as providing a balanced and progressive approach to the development of the Region.

Equality of Opportunity

In building consensus for a balanced approach to accommodating growth over the next 25 years, the strategy is responding to the views of the community that equality and equity should be to the forefront of the long-term development of the Region. The spatial elements of the RDS seek to achieve balances between urban and rural communities and the east and west of the Region to provide equality of opportunity for all.

The RDS also provides broad support for the policy of New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) which aims to direct efforts and available resources to those objectively assessed as being in greatest social need. Consequently, the implementation of the RDS will include appropriate indicators to assess impact on accessibility to jobs, housing, transport, social amenities and a quality environment for those living in socially disadvantaged communities.

1 Purpose and Status

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was also carried out and this included an equity test to proof the RDS in relation to equality of opportunity. Regional Planning Policy Statements, to be prepared as part of the implementation process for the RDS, will be subjected to equality impact assessments.

The Policy Context

The context within which the RDS has been prepared is one of significant policy development by the European Commission and the UK Government (Appendix 2 ►).

European Union

The RDS is consistent with the integrated approach of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), which is an important policy framework for member states within the European Union (EU). Although non-binding, it informs the preparation of regional spatial strategies by seeking to secure balanced and sustainable development in the interests of economic and social cohesion across the EU.

Emerging from the ESDP are important themes which are central to the RDS:

- the development of balanced and polycentric urban systems (C5 ►);
- the need to develop new urban/rural relationships (C8 ►);
- the promotion of integrated transport infrastructure (C11 ►); and
- the sensible and sensitive use of natural resources and the built and cultural heritage (C12 ►).

United Kingdom Policies

At national level, the ESDP themes underpin the UK's aim to achieve an integrated approach to regional development. "A Better Quality of Life: a Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK" is at the heart of the new approach to regional development. Central to achieving the key objectives of social progress, protection of the environment and the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth is the importance of community participation. The development of policy in key White Papers such as, "A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone"; "Modern Government – In Touch with the People"; and "Our Competitive Future: Building the Knowledge Driven Economy", have been taken into account in the RDS.

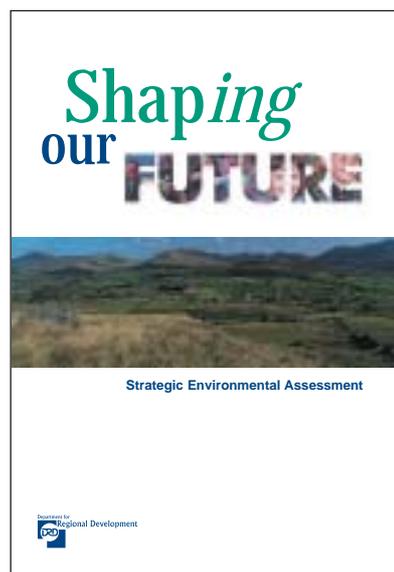
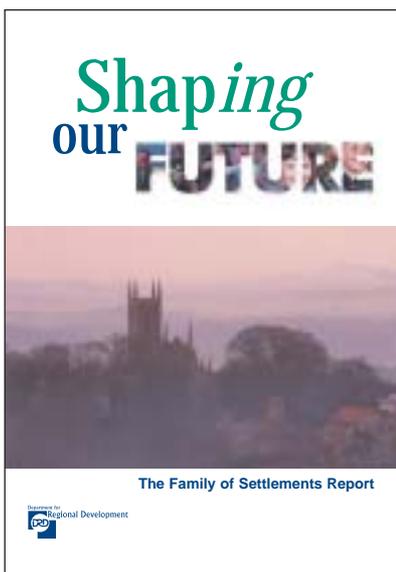
In addition, the National Development Plan for the Republic of Ireland (2001-2006), which also reflects the ESDP themes, and the related National Spatial Strategy (to be completed by the end of 2001), are relevant to the co-ordination of spatial planning in cross-border areas.

Implementation

The RDS provides a vital context within which major investment decisions will be taken by individuals as well as public and private sector bodies. Given the emphasis in the SPGs on competitiveness, sustainable development and tackling social exclusion and division, the RDS attaches great importance to integrated solutions which embrace all relevant policy areas.

In the light of the Public Examination Panel's request for clear leadership and effective co-ordinated action, enhanced mechanisms and an innovative approach to implementation will be developed (C13 ►).

A Strategic Environmental Assessment was carried out to test the emerging Strategy against sustainability criteria. It will also guide the implementation of the Strategy.



2 Forces Driving Change

Forces Driving Change

The Regional Development Strategy takes account of local, national and international forces which are collectively driving change in Northern Ireland and presenting a range of development challenges.

In Northern Ireland, the forces driving change can be considered in four broad groupings:



Social Forces

These include demographic factors, changing trends in relation to quality of life, education and life skills, and spatial development trends.

Demographic factors are an important driver for change with a regional population which is youthful, rapidly growing and increasingly dominated by smaller households. The increasing number of elderly people, coupled with a decline in household size, will continue to lead to a growth in the number of households, particularly of one and two persons.

Quality of life affects our health and social well-being. A wide range of factors contribute to good health and it will be important to secure continuous improvements in key areas such as housing conditions, water quality, health, and education. Since there are inequalities across the Region in quality of life, the development of programmes to realise the expectations of Northern Ireland's most disadvantaged communities for a better quality of life is a high priority.

Northern Ireland has a good foundation upon which to build. The majority of our young people are well educated and qualified and more 16 and 17-year olds are staying in school. Higher education and research facilities provide specialised skills, and partnerships with business offer potential for spin-off benefits in job creation and economic development. However, in some parts of the Region, under-achievement in education is closely linked to social disadvantage. The challenge will be to gain new skills to meet the challenges of a knowledge-based economy.

Building a high value added, high wage, regional economy, will require emphasis on research and development, and innovation. This will place particular demands on the higher and further education sectors, and on reversing the loss of indigenous talent by migration. Despite a dramatic increase in participation in the last decade, Northern Ireland has relatively fewer higher education places in comparison with the rest of the United Kingdom.

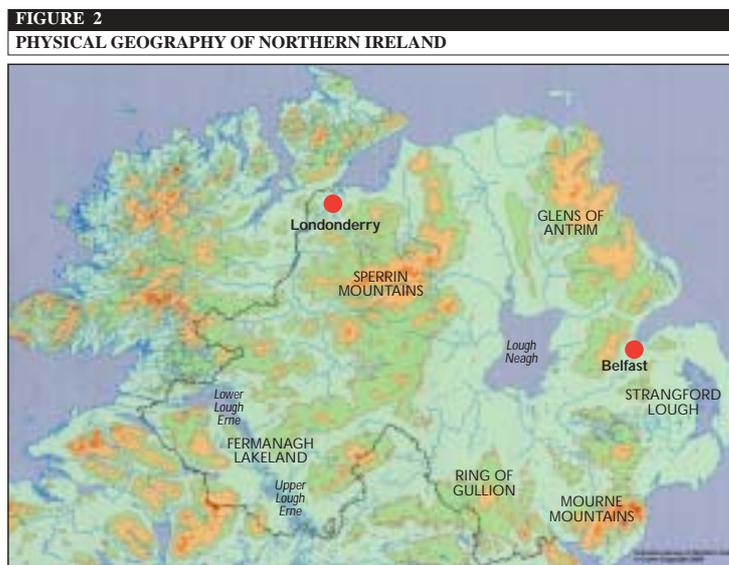
Internally, Northern Ireland is a deeply divided and polarised society. Evidence suggests that community divisions have deepened in recent years. This has obvious implications for planning, especially when rational planning choice is often constrained by a strong sense of communal 'ownership' of territory.

There are no simple solutions. However, in planning for a new future it is recognised that the divisions in Northern Ireland society are affected by public policies and that, in turn, these policies are affected by the divisions. Land designation, the location of employment, and investment decisions on social, economic and physical infrastructure must respect the sensitivities of the divided and polarised nature of the community, while seeking ultimately to contribute to the healing of community divisions.

2 Forces Driving Change

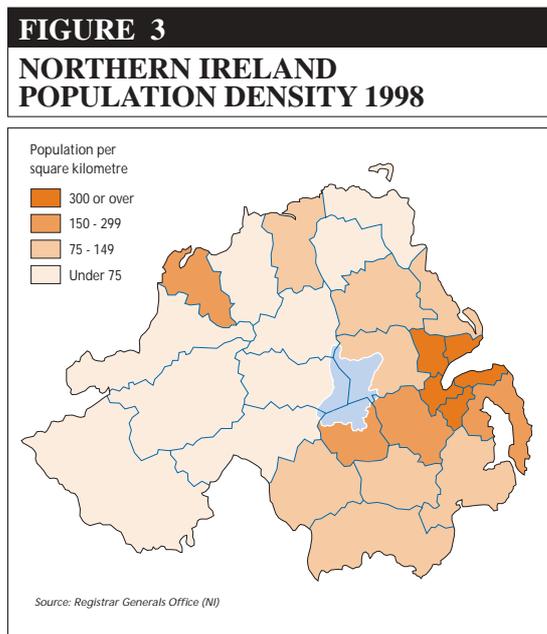
Spatial Development Trends

Northern Ireland is a relatively small and compact Region, physically centred on Lough Neagh and shaped topographically by the coast, Belfast Lough, the Mourne Mountains to the south, the Fermanagh Lakes to the south west, and the Sperrin Mountains to the north west. A radial pattern of main roads and railways converge on the City of Belfast, the regional capital and principal port, at the heart of a metropolitan area of 600,000 inhabitants.



The Region comprises a number of distinctive sub-regions, such as the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) and the Rural West, where the settlement pattern is moulded by the natural features of Northern Ireland. Sub-regions tend to be focused on a main town or cluster of towns. The Sperrin Mountains define a discrete sub-region to the north west, centred on the City of Londonderry and lying into Donegal.

The population tends to be mainly located in the Belfast Metropolitan Area and its hinterland, or spread across a large number of smaller towns and villages, but with a significant urban concentration focused on Londonderry in the north west. Thus there is a contrast between the more urbanised east and the mainly rural area in the north, south and west of the Region. In comparison to many other European regions, Northern Ireland is much less urbanised. Outside Belfast, the City of Londonderry (about 90,000) and the major centre of Craigavon (approaching 60,000) are the only other centres with over 50,000 inhabitants.



While the population density of 51 persons per square kilometre is low by comparison with other rural regions in Europe, the scattered distribution of farms and houses creates a visual impression of a 'peopled countryside'. The historic roots of this dispersed rural community and the many kinship links are reflected in a strong sense of belonging and place, and a healthy interdependence within communities.

In terms of role and function, Northern Ireland's development network consists of a web of interdependent centres, or urban hubs, ranging in scale from the BMA, to the main towns (the larger traditional market towns with a population of 10,000-30,000+), and small towns (5,000-10,000 persons), with the regional transport network providing the cohesive links between all parts of the Region. Some of the main towns offer a higher level of services than found in other towns of similar size in the Region, reflecting large rural catchment areas with over 100,000 residents.

These towns form a 'family of settlements' which provide a fairly well balanced hierarchy of employment and service centres across the Region. The extensive network of urban hubs is evenly spread and well placed to serve a strong rural community living either in villages, small settlements, or in a distinctive pattern of dispersed dwellings in the open countryside.

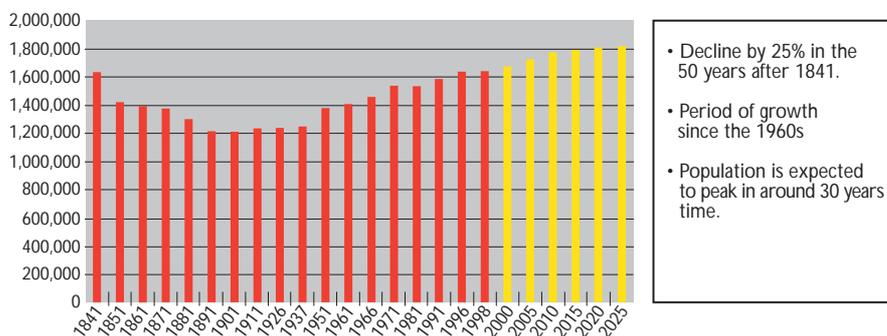
Changing patterns of development in the BMA and Rural Northern Ireland are discussed in Chapters 6 and 8.

2 Forces Driving Change

Key social factors driving change will be:

- a regional population growth rate, which is twice the current UK rate and exceeds that of the Republic of Ireland, making Northern Ireland one of the fastest growing regions in Europe;
- a population expected to continue to grow and reach 1.835 million by 2025, and possibly even higher on a scenario of accelerating economic growth which generates more inward migration. When one takes in the immediate cross border areas, the Regional Development Strategy is relevant to over two million people;
- one of the most youthful populations in the EU with implications for education, training and jobs;
- almost 1 : 5 of those in employment and 1 : 3 of those unemployed have no formal qualification;
- the requirement to target social need;
- over 160,000 new households may be formed by 2015 with over 60% of households comprising one and two persons;
- a regional need for up to 250,000 additional dwellings by 2025; and
- a recent increase in home ownership to 71% by 2000 and expected to rise to about 80% by 2015.

FIGURE 4
POPULATION OF NORTHERN IRELAND 1841 – 2025



Economic Forces

Wealth creation is a powerful force for change. Since 1990 Northern Ireland has had the fastest improving regional economy in the UK. Numbers employed have risen much faster than in any other UK Region. Northern Ireland has experienced the largest growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, albeit from a relatively low base, and the greatest fall in unemployment.

Whilst the pattern of employment is changing, Northern Ireland has a predominantly low wage economy biased towards the production of low value-added manufactured goods. This is unsustainable in the long term due to technological change, globalisation and changing consumer tastes. The local economy also remains overly dependent on the public sector, making it vulnerable to fluctuations in public expenditure.

The drive to build a high value-added economy, with higher wages, in Northern Ireland and to tackle disadvantage requires a spatial framework for job creation which is sufficiently flexible to accommodate emerging and new economic opportunities, whilst protecting potential opportunities in food production and tourism which demand a quality environment.

Developments in telecommunications are likely to have a significant further impact. Knowledge-based businesses are increasingly footloose and can deliver services, world wide, using telecommunications technology. Northern Ireland has an advanced network and with further enhancement this can be a 'winner' in off-setting perceived peripherality and in leveraging future economic development.

Agriculture has undergone considerable change over the last 25 years. Northern Ireland has not escaped the world-wide trends of more intensive farming methods, advancing technologies and farm rationalisation. These have led to increased outputs and a reduction of agricultural employment. Restructuring and diversification are expected to continue. Food processing is an important high value-added regional industry with potential for further growth.

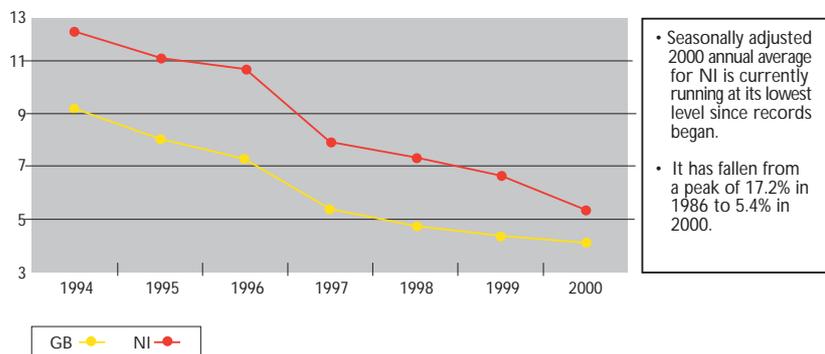
Northern Ireland has a wealth of environmental assets and its 'green' image will continue to be vital in competing internationally in tourism. In an increasingly open and deregulated global economy, there is intense competition for mobile investment. 'Soft' factors such as quality of life and a quality environment are increasingly important in attracting and holding mobile investment with the prospect of spreading job opportunities throughout the Region.

2 Forces Driving Change

Key economic factors driving change:

- the need to maintain the momentum of a fast improving regional economy, to provide jobs for a strongly growing population, and further improve employment rates, especially tackling long-term unemployment;
- the need to increase the wealth of the Region as measured by per capita GDP since it remains considerably behind both the EU and the UK (78% of the EU average);
- the drive to build a high value added economy with higher wages;
- the role of the service sector as the main source of employment growth (about 70%);
- growth in the small business sector, which will provide the bulk of new employment offering opportunities to locate jobs close to where people live; and
- Northern Ireland's strong and positive 'clean and green' image internationally which will continue to be of considerable economic benefit, particularly to tourism with the potential to create around 20,000 extra jobs and account for 6% of GDP (2% in 1999).

FIGURE 5
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES 1994 - 2000

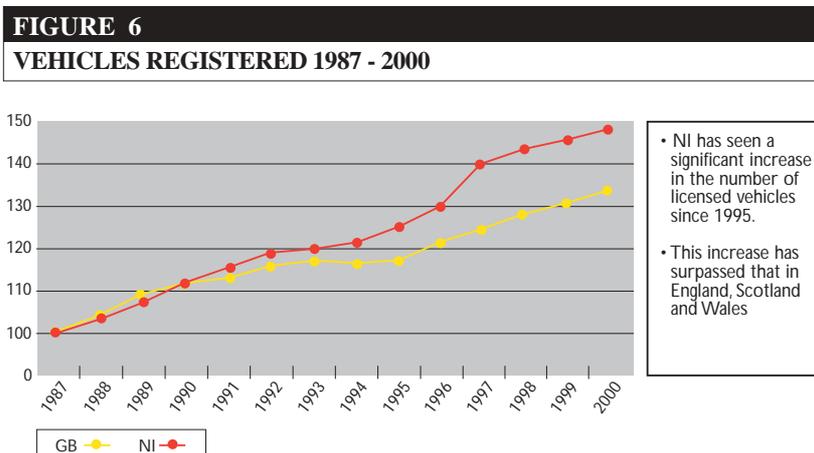


Transport Forces

Northern Ireland is almost totally dependent on a roads based transport system reflecting the small internal transport market and dispersed settlement pattern. The road network is the 'artery' for the Region's economy with 98% of goods being transported by road. Road freight accessibility costs are among the highest in Western Europe. The road network is 2½ times more extensive, per head of population, than in England and Wales. The consultation process identified the need to improve roads infrastructure as a key requirement of economic development and particularly as a catalyst for economic development in the West. In the BMA, peak hour traffic conditions are steadily worsening causing accessibility and environmental problems.

Car ownership has increased by over 400% since 1960 and the number of vehicles may double by 2025. People who have cars are making more and longer journeys. Total distance travelled in the Region has increased from an estimated 4.5 billion kilometres in 1971 to over 15 billion kilometres by 1998.

The car has brought many benefits particularly in terms of increased mobility. However, its use in towns and cities has adverse effects in terms of air quality, visual impact and noise pollution. New housing has increasingly been planned around the needs of the car, and growing numbers of children are driven to school rather than walking, cycling or using public transport. Dependence on the car is particularly apparent in the rural area, reflecting the dispersed nature of population and the difficulties of providing an adequate public transport system.



2 Forces Driving Change

Greater travel choice offered by car ownership is not enjoyed by all. The lack of a car can contribute to social exclusion and reduce accessibility to work opportunities and services, particularly for those in the rural areas and in disadvantaged urban communities. The use of public transport has declined in parallel with growing dependence on the car. In 1971, 30% of people who travelled to Belfast to work used public transport; by 1999 this had fallen to around 15%.

The rail network in Northern Ireland is small, serving mainly the eastern half of the Region, and providing commuter rail services for the BMA. With the exception of the Belfast to Dublin service, rolling stock and infrastructure are in general need of upgrading, particularly to enhance safety. The Railways Task Force Report 2000 presented a cogent case for investment to consolidate the existing network paving the way for future enhancement.

Northern Ireland has good modern port facilities providing high quality shipping services and freight handling with Belfast, the largest port on the island of Ireland by tonnage, performing a shipping role of international/European importance. The Region's ports offer an extensive range of services with, in particular, the ports of Belfast and Larne providing key links to the rest of the UK and Europe, and Lisahally and Warrenpoint ports adding to the range of shipping services. Additional direct sea services to Europe would avoid traffic congestion delays in Great Britain and reduce transfer costs imposed by the land bridge option through England.

The three main airports – Belfast International, Belfast City and the City of Derry – offer an extensive range of air services and facilities. They have a significant role in accessing markets, encouraging inward investment and boosting tourism. Direct international flights to Europe and North America are, however, limited compared to Dublin Airport.

Key transport forces driving change:

- the possible doubling of the number of vehicles in the Region by 2025, and growing traffic volumes, especially at commuting peaks, with increasing environmental and accessibility problems (720,000 vehicles estimated in 1999);
- the dependence of the rural community on the car;
- problems of social exclusion for households not owning a car (estimated at 30% in 1999);
- a decline in the use of public transport and an increase in the use of the car with adverse effects on air quality, visual impact and noise pollution and dispersal of housing and economic activity; and
- the importance of the strategic road network for the Region's economy as a catalyst for economic development and for public transport services.

Environmental Forces

Concern over global environmental issues has led to greater emphasis on protection of the environment and the need to conserve biodiversity. The challenge is to reconcile the aspirations of a consumer driven society with wider obligations to maintain a viable environment that can be passed on to the next generation.

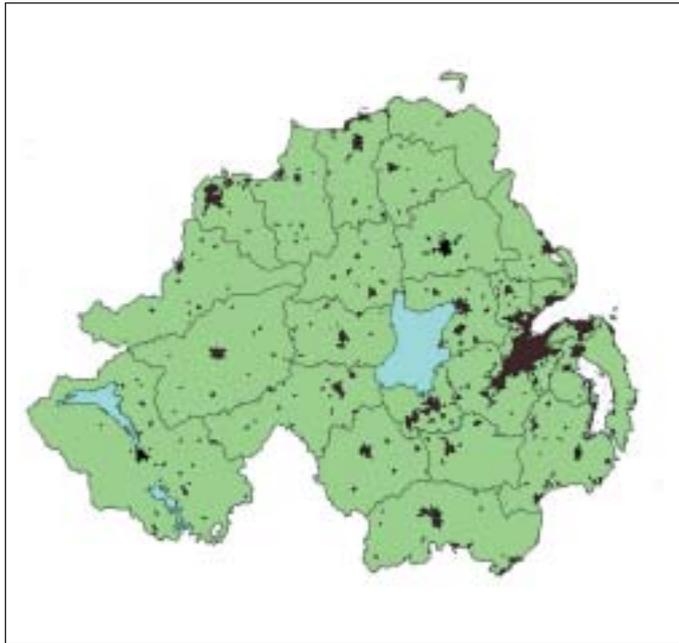
Northern Ireland is fortunate in the richness of its environmental inheritance. For a Region of its size, it boasts a remarkable variety and quality of landscapes, and diversity of plant and animal species, some of which are internationally important. Northern Ireland also has a rich and diverse inheritance of archeological sites and monuments, and historic buildings which provide valuable links with the past and enlarge our understanding of our society and culture. They are a limited and finite resource, vulnerable to damage and irreplaceable.

At the regional level the environment is under pressure in a variety of ways. Technological and social change is increasing the speed and scale of new development and producing forces towards dispersal. Changes in agriculture and the expanding scale and impact of modern development are eroding the quality of distinctive regional landscapes. It is estimated that since the 1950s, urban development has consumed 160 square miles (41,000 hectares) of countryside in Northern Ireland, often using good quality agricultural land (Figure 7).

2 Forces Driving Change

FIGURE 7

**SETTLEMENT PATTERN IN
NORTHERN IRELAND 1998**



In terms of air quality, urban areas can experience episodes of high air pollution arising mainly from domestic and transport sources, during which levels of pollutants can reach or exceed health-based standards and can be amongst the highest levels monitored in the UK. The most significant water quality problems have been attributed to eutrophication (the enrichment of waters by plant nutrients which can lead to water quality problems). While many advances have been made, particularly in the control of discharges, more remains to be done to improve water quality in lakes and rivers, as well as to improve air quality.

The conversion of Northern Ireland's largest power station to natural gas in 1996, and the increasing availability of this gas to the industrial and the domestic markets is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emission dramatically.

The effects of climate change will have implications for lifestyles and the form of development in the future. Strategic planning will be more cost effective than reacting to climate change impacts such as global warming and taking retrospective action. However, predictions of climate change and impacts still lack certainty, and a precautionary approach to potential development problems such as flooding is desirable where scientific evidence cannot offer clear direction.

In Northern Ireland public interest in the protection of the environment is increasing. There is growing recognition of the need to face up to environmental costs and reduce the consumption of natural resources.

The environment and the quality of life are increasingly key issues in the development process. This has been reflected in new policy directions to improve the quality of air and water, with assessments of air quality currently being undertaken by district councils. There have also been policy initiatives to promote better practices of waste disposal; encourage alternatives to the use of cars in town; and to afford greater protection to the character of our landscapes, the diversity of wildlife, and archeological remains and historic buildings.

Key environmental forces driving change:

- international obligations enshrined in environmental law;
- the need for strategic planning to deal with key impacts which may arise from climate change;
- concern about the potential need for development land to accommodate a fast growing population, the impact of strong dispersal pressures, and regeneration needs in urban and rural areas;
- continued pressure on the rich and varied natural and cultural environments which make Northern Ireland such a distinctive Region;
- concern about the pace of technological, social and economic change which will continue to impact on the quality and appearance of distinctive regional landscapes; and
- recognition that the quality of the Region's air and water resource is of critical importance to public health, the environment and economic success.

Vision and Guiding Principles

The need to develop a Shared Vision

There was widespread agreement expressed through the consultation process for the principle of developing a Shared Vision which would reflect the views of the people of the Region and their aspirations for the future of the place which we all share. The Shared Vision which emerged from the public consultation process is:

“Together to create 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”.

Turning this challenging Vision into reality will require the combined efforts of all the people of the Region. The development of Northern Ireland towards the achievement of the Shared Vision will be guided by the Spatial Development Strategy, and the accompanying Strategic Planning Guidelines (SPGs) set out in Chapters 4 - 12. The preparation of separate supporting Regional Planning Policy Statements in relation to specific subjects such as Housing in Settlements, Transportation and Land Use, Retailing and Town Centres, and the Countryside, will provide more detailed strategic planning guidance to assist implementation of the Regional Development Strategy.

While the forces for change described in Chapter 2 set the regional and global context, the Strategy needs to be built on principles and values which people in Northern Ireland consider to be important. The Strategy is, therefore, underpinned by the sustainable approach and guiding principles set out below.

A sustainable approach to Regional Development

The Strategy has a substantial statutory basis reflecting national and international commitment to a sustainable approach to accommodating growth within the Region. This principle is firmly established in the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) adopted by Member States within the EU. This document states that the aim of spatial development policies is to work towards a balanced and sustainable

development of the territory of the EU by the achievement of three fundamental goals:

- economic and social cohesion;
- conservation and management of natural resources and the cultural heritage; and
- more balanced competitiveness of the European territory.

The ESDP also encourages regional authorities to work together across national boundaries to develop an integrated approach to regional issues.

At a national level, the Government has prepared a UK-wide Strategy on Sustainable Development. This sets out the overall situation in the UK, the current policies which contribute to that situation and plans and programmes designed to respond to it.

FIGURE 8

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT



3 Vision and Guiding Principles

The principles of accommodating development in a sustainable manner are embedded in the guiding principles, which in turn have shaped the Spatial Development Strategy and the SPGs. **Thus, at the heart of the Strategy is the principle of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now, and for generations to come, by seeking to meet the four objectives of sustainable development:**

- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- Effective protection of the environment;
- Prudent use of natural resources; and
- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

The RDS will have a crucially important link to the Northern Ireland Strategy for Sustainable Development which will be published in 2001.

The Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles have been incorporated in the Spatial Development Strategy and into the SPGs which are set out in each subject area, **with Chapter 4 providing a crucial context to the SDS by emphasising the vital importance of strengthening external and internal regional cohesion.**

The public consultation process demonstrated a high degree of consensus on the core Guiding Principles:

- **A people and community focused approach** – which seeks to meet the future needs of men, women, young people, children, families, local communities, minority ethnic communities, and the disabled. It is also about creating healthy and supportive environments which help people to maintain good health and social well-being. This approach recognises that local identity and sense of place are important qualities valued by both urban and rural communities, and respects their desire to protect positive features of local environments and maintain regional diversity.
 - Community involvement has been central to the process of the preparation of the Strategy. This has been essential to ensure the drawing up of a strategy which reasonably reflects the views and aspirations of key stakeholders.

- Community involvement will continue as part of the process of implementation of the Strategy and as part of the process of monitoring and review (Chapter 13 ►).
- Constructive comment from those with direct knowledge of local community needs will assist the drive to achieving a more cohesive society.
- **Achieving a more cohesive society based on:**
 - *equality of opportunity and targeting social need* – recognising that, in a healthy society, development must be linked to fairness and inclusivity, and to more equitable access to the assets for all its people;
 - *spatial equity and complementarity* – recognising the strong interdependence between the parts of the Region and reflecting the needs of these different parts, to achieve a reasonable and sustainable balance of development across Northern Ireland;
 - *a partnership approach* – which recognises the value of local co-operation and networks between different parts of the Region and between different communities;
 - *strengthening community cohesion in the Region* – taking an approach to development which respects the sensitivities of a divided community, is supportive to and encourages community interaction;
 - *a new and more sustainable approach to transport* – which integrates more closely with development to help achieve balanced and more healthy communities; and
 - *an outward looking perspective* – which recognises the importance of improved linkages to the rest of the United Kingdom, to the Republic of Ireland, Europe and key locations world wide.
- **Achieving competitiveness based on:**
 - *investing in intelligence* – increasing the level of education, employability and skills in the population;
 - *improving accessibility and communications* to, and within, the Region, in order to harness more fully the resources of Northern Ireland; and

3 Vision and Guiding Principles

- *reconciling growth with quality of life* to ensure the Region keeps, and is increasingly noted for its high quality environmental assets and cultural amenities – assets which will encourage young people to train and stay in Northern Ireland, and which are attractive to investors.
- **An integrated approach to future development of the Region based on:**
 - *strengthening interconnections* between all aspects of Government to deliver cross sectoral solutions to complex and inter-related social, economic and environmental issues;
 - *building on the many strengths of the regional institutions in Northern Ireland*, led by the Northern Ireland Administration, to develop a creative and proactive approach to future development characterised by partnerships, cross-fertilisation and co-operation which will be a model of excellence in regional development; and
 - *protection and enhancement of the environment* through an approach to development and policy formation which has the condition of the environment as a central deciding factor.



Chapter

4 Strengthening Regional Cohesion in a Global Context



Strengthening Regional Cohesion in a Global Context

In an increasingly competitive world, there is a need to strengthen internal cohesion so that the resources of the entire Region are mobilised in pursuit of widely shared social, economic and environmental objectives. At the same time, there must be an emphasis on strengthening the web of external linkages. A region's 'place' in the world is no longer defined by geography, but by how it relates to, and integrates with, the wider global environment and economy.

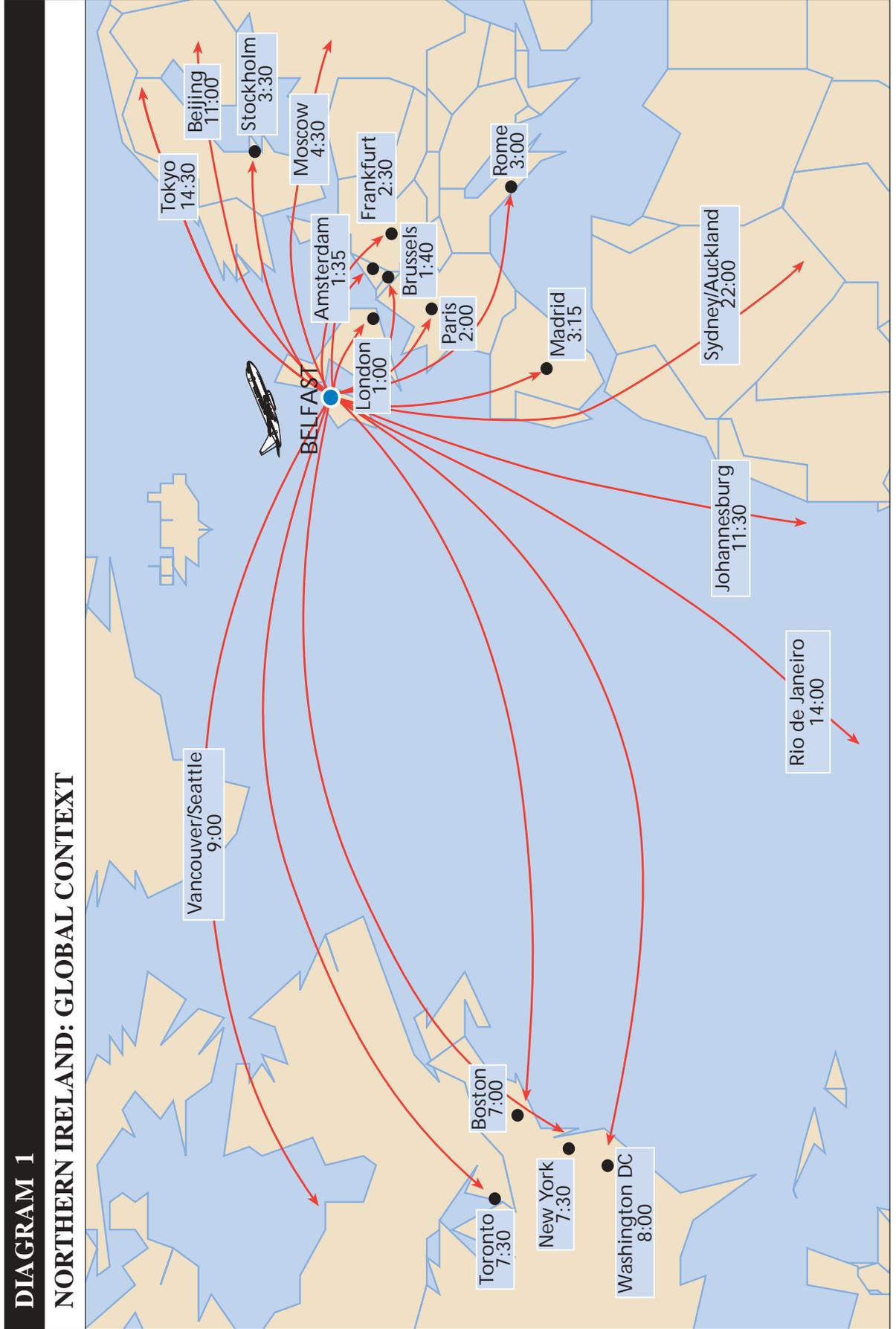
The Regional Development Strategy seeks to strengthen economic and social cohesion by enhancing external linkages, particularly with North America and the rest of Europe, and internally by helping to foster patterns of development which will assist community cohesion. In doing so, it aims to help raise the standard of living in Northern Ireland towards broad European norms and reduce regional and sub-regional disparities. The objective is to develop a positive profile for Northern Ireland by harnessing the talents of all the people and its resources.

Creating an outward looking Region

The Strategy is designed to encourage the strengthening and extension of world-wide linkages, particularly by the private sector, and to facilitate trans-regional development initiatives. Strengthening the external transport linkages and improving Northern Ireland's image in the world are vital in helping local industry to exploit world-wide markets. An improved positioning of Northern Ireland will boost economic growth and support the efforts of the tourism sector. The Strategy will help to foster links with neighbouring areas, capturing the potential benefits flowing from cross-border and inter-regional co-operation and enhanced East-West linkages.

Fast and efficient accessibility from Northern Ireland to the continental core of Europe's transport network is identified as vital to assist future economic growth. Enhancement of external connectivity through strengthened communications networks and improved inter-modality, particularly on transport corridors providing alternatives to traffic bottlenecks especially in the London-Channel ports area, will help Northern Ireland to maintain competitiveness.

4 Strengthening Regional Cohesion in a Global Context



Estimated direct flying times, in hours, from Belfast

Strategic Planning Guideline (SPG) SRC 1: To strengthen and extend European and world-wide linkages

SRC 1.1 Build international networks:

- capitalise on the strong ties with North America and the strategic position on the Atlantic edge of Europe, to offer a Gateway to the 370 million people in Europe (Diagram 1);
- forge strategic alliances with other regions, sub-regions and cities;
- devise catalysts for growth based on international events such as homecoming festivals, major sports competitions, exhibitions, concerts and conferences; and
- tap the potential goodwill and expertise of the extensive network of people from Northern Ireland living and working throughout the world.

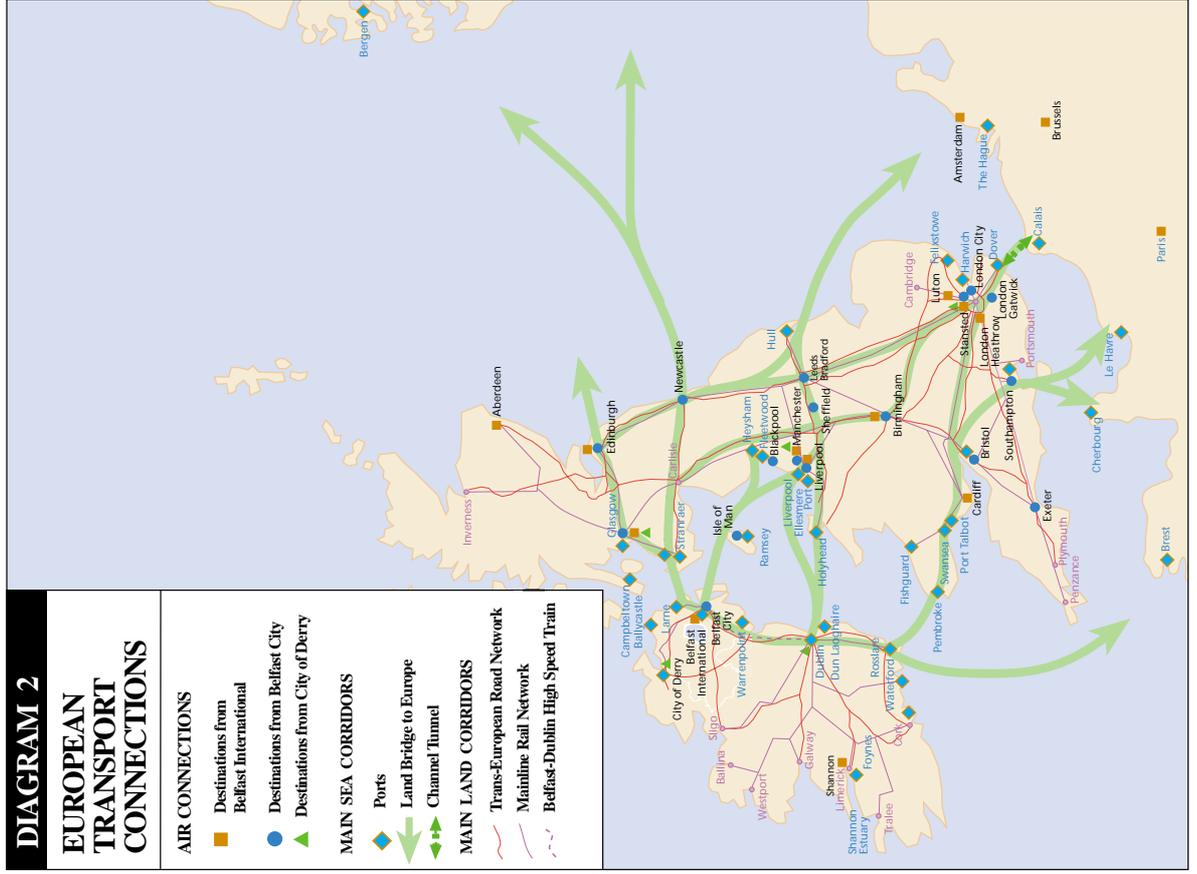
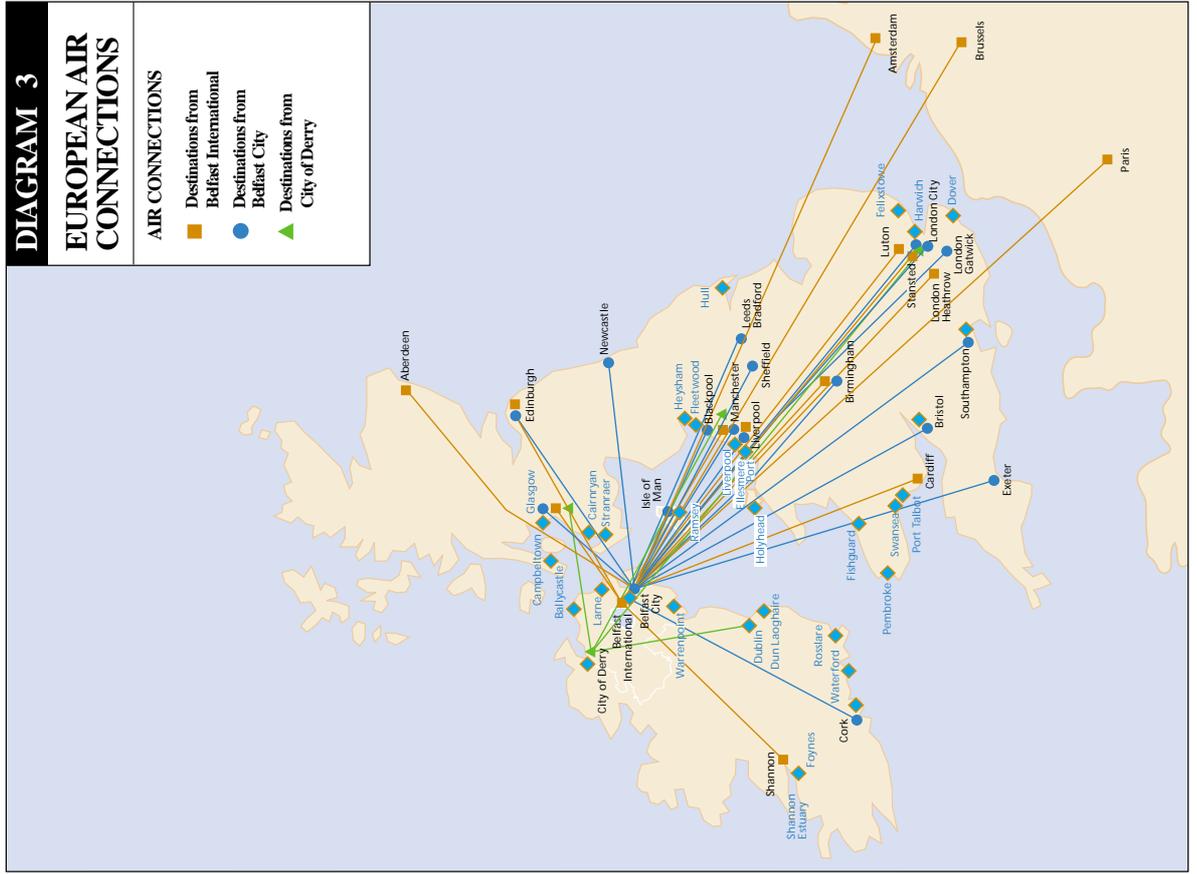
SRC 1.2 Strengthen the position of Northern Ireland on the world tourist map:

- create a positive and welcoming image for Northern Ireland built on peace, friendliness, hospitality and quality products;
- turn major regional assets into world-wide attractions; and
- enhance the image of Northern Ireland as an area of considerable artistic, sporting and creative talent.

SRC 1.3 Strengthen external transport linkages:

- enhance the Region's role as a Gateway to Europe by improving accessibility from Northern Ireland and its related cross-border areas, to the central regions of Europe by air, direct sea links and combined sea/land routes, bypassing congested areas in southern England (Diagrams 2 and 3);
- continue to improve handling capacity and interchange facilities, and to encourage the use of Northern Ireland ports by coastal and short sea shipping services;
- strengthen air services from Northern Ireland into the network of international destinations, to meet regional needs;

4 Strengthening Regional Cohesion in a Global Context



4 Strengthening Regional Cohesion in a Global Context

- accommodate, in appropriate locations, commercial air transport and specialist flying which serve the business community, attract visitors and provide recreation; and
- encourage the further development of strategic transport links from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.

SRC 1.4 Further exploit world-wide markets in line with the Economic Development Strategy:

- raise the profile of Northern Ireland in the global economy by establishing niche markets for Northern Ireland goods world-wide, and expanding trans-national trading opportunities in Europe;
- develop tradeable services and exploit the opportunities of the international electronic network;
- attract high value-added inward investment; and
- foster creative and artistic industry and crafts.

SPG-SRC 2: To increase links with neighbouring regions and capitalise on trans-regional development opportunities (Key Diagram 4)

Promote inter-regional co-operation to gain added value from an integrated spatial approach to cross-border projects:

SRC 2.1 Encourage cross-border networks of economic co-operation and enterprise:

- tap the potential of the Belfast to Dublin development corridor (C10: SPG-ECON ►2) to accelerate the growth of the manufacturing and services sector, thus increasing the prosperity of the whole island, and boosting all the cities and towns along this corridor;
- develop Londonderry as the hub for the north-west corner of the island of Ireland thus enhancing its major service role in relation to its catchment area extending into County Donegal and strengthening its position as the focal point and major business centre of a north-west development corridor taking in Limavady, Strabane and Letterkenny (C10: SPG-ECON ►2);

4 Strengthening Regional Cohesion in a Global Context

- develop cross-border networks/clusters of co-operation to exploit economic opportunities for towns and smaller settlements and help rejuvenate areas in need of investment;
- stimulate rural revitalisation based on cross-border joint initiatives to provide cumulative benefits in terms of employment, services, tourism and infrastructure, and cultural understanding; and
- facilitate the development of tourism assets on a cross-border basis such as the Shannon-Erne Waterway and the Kingfisher Cycle Trail, explore the potential of the Ulster Canal and Carlingford Lough areas, and recognise the tourism gateway roles of Londonderry and Newry to the mountains of Donegal, and the Mourne and Carlingford mountains respectively.

SRC 2.2 Co-operate with neighbouring Scottish regions, particularly the South West, Clyde and Kintyre areas, in relation to economic development and trade, joint tourism projects and energy links.



SRC 2.3 Develop a cohesive network of cross-border and trans-regional infrastructure (C11: SPG-TRAN 1 ►):

- integrate land, sea and air transport and energy infrastructure with the Trans-European Networks (TENS)³ with priority given to:
 - the Northern Ireland/Great Britain/Benelux link, with efficient interchange/onward connections through Heysham and Liverpool to the M6 and wider motorway/rail network in England;

³ The Trans-European Transport Network is a designated network of major routes throughout the European Community providing North/South and East/West communications.

4 Strengthening Regional Cohesion in a Global Context

- the Stranraer/Larne/Belfast/Dublin/Cork link, with enhanced and mutually beneficial linkages via the A8 to Larne, the transport interchange at Stranraer and the A75 to join the Scottish and English motorway/rail networks;
- improving strategic cross-border transport infrastructure, services and connections between towns, for example, Londonderry/Letterkenny, Newry/Dundalk, Armagh/Monaghan, Omagh/Monaghan and Enniskillen/Sligo; and onward transit through the regional gateways; and
- encourage cross-border energy interconnections to create an all island energy market with linkages to the Great Britain and European markets distribution grids (Figures 9 and 10).



SRC 2.4 Extend co-operation in the protection and management of the environment:

- develop joint programmes of co-operation to share best practice in relation to the sustainable management of landscapes and ecosystems;
- take joint action in the environmental management of major river basins and water catchment areas such as the Foyle River Basin, the Erne/Shannon waterway system, the Bann/Blackwater system and in Carlingford Lough;
- make appropriate designations within the respective jurisdictions for cross-border areas requiring special protection; and
- expand and develop cross-border cultural trails.

4 Strengthening Regional Cohesion in a Global Context

Developing community cohesion

SPG-SRC 3: To foster development which contributes to better community relations, recognises cultural diversity, and reduces socio-economic differentials within Northern Ireland

SRC 3.1 Foster patterns of development supportive to community cohesion:

- adopt a dual approach which will:
 - facilitate the development of integrated communities where people wish to live together; and
 - promote respect, encouragement and celebration of different traditions, and encourage communication and social intercourse in areas where communities are living apart.

SRC 3.2 Underpin the dual approach by fostering community interaction which could also contribute, over time and on the basis of choice, to greater community integration:

- develop partnerships between public, private, voluntary and community sectors to facilitate community co-operation and involvement in securing social, economic and environmental objectives;
- facilitate the removal of existing physical barriers between communities, subject to local community agreement;
- support the development of 'shared places' accessible to all members of the community;
- revitalise the role of town centres and other common locations well served by public transport as focal places for shopping, services, employment, cultural and leisure activities for the whole community;

4 Strengthening Regional Cohesion in a Global Context

- promote the development of major employment/enterprise areas in locations which are accessible to all sections of the community;
- improve and develop public transport to assist in providing safe and equitable access to services, facilities and employment opportunities essential to the vitality of local communities;
- strengthen the network of local museums and heritage centres and arts centres with a special focus on understanding cultural diversity; and
- promote cultural diversity through the creation of opportunities in the creative industries associated with the arts.



Regional Development Strategy

Section

3

Chapter

- 5 The Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Ireland
- 6 The Belfast Metropolitan Area
- 7 Londonderry: Regional City for the North West
- 8 Rural Northern Ireland



The Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Ireland

Introduction

Implementation of the long-term vision for Northern Ireland set out in Chapter 3 requires, among many policy measures, a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) to guide the physical development of the Region to 2025. The SDS provides a framework for strategic choices in relation to development and infrastructural investment. It will also assist private sector investment decisions. It provides for a degree of continuity with existing policy, but **sets new directions to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development in the interests of future generations**. Also it sets priorities for the location of future investment.

The successful implementation of a balanced and integrated SDS will contribute to the achievement of the wider aim of creating an outward looking and progressive Region, and forming a positive external image of Northern Ireland (C4).



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Meeting the needs of the Region

The SDS will contribute to meeting a number of **key regional challenges** emerging from the significant local, national and international forces which will drive change over the next 25 years:

Social:

Accommodate a population growth of 105,000 persons by 2015, and about 150,000 by the year 2025.
Facilitate the provision of land and buildings to accommodate 160,000 additional dwellings by 2015, and approximately 250,000 dwellings by year 2025 to meet housing need in the Region.
Meet the needs of new household formation with over 60% of households comprising one & two persons.
Facilitate the development of education, health and commercial services, cultural and leisure amenities, necessary to meet the needs of a growing population.

Economic:

Facilitate the development needs of economic growth and the creation of approximately 100,000 extra jobs to cater for the expanded population expected by 2015.
Contribute to the reduction of socio-economic differentials within the Region, and tackling long-term unemployment.
Contribute to the improvement of accessibility to employment and services within the Region.

Transport:

Promote a change in travel culture and particularly manage the effects of a possible 100% growth in the number of vehicles by 2025.
Contribute to the creation of a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system for the Region meeting the travel needs of all groups in society.
Accommodate the growing volume of freight moving to and from the regional gateways.
Strengthen the regional gateways to handle the increasing flow of people and goods in and out of the Region.

Environment:

Accommodate future development growth while protecting and caring for the environment.
Reduce the consumption of resources.
Continue to maintain or, where needed, to improve the quality of air, water and land resources within the Region.
Seek to maintain local landscape character and to conserve cultural assets.
Take particular care to sustain and, where required, to enhance the biodiversity of the Region, its natural habitats, high quality landscapes and built heritage.

A balanced and integrated approach to regional development

The aim of the SDS is to provide a strategic focus which will guide future development in order **to promote a balanced and equitable pattern of sustainable development across the Region**. It is designed to foster a broad balance between population, housing and economic growth rates, and also aims to influence the future pattern of growth in order to continue revitalising areas of slower growth and to manage better 'hot spots' of high development pressure.

The approach recognises that all parts of the Region make a valuable contribution to the quality of life, wealth and wellbeing of the people of Northern Ireland. Strong and varied inter-connections between cities, towns and rural areas, each with their distinctive though complementary roles, add to the harmony and prosperity of the whole Region. An integrated approach building on the mutually beneficial relationships between town and country is vital to regional cohesion and economic development.

Maximising potential

The SDS is designed **to maximise the potential of the whole Region** by seeking to integrate development in order **to optimise the distinctive contributions of the principal component areas:**

- the Belfast Metropolitan Area and hinterland in the East (C6);
- the major regional City of Londonderry and its associated sub-region in the North West (C7); and
- Rural Northern Ireland comprising the main and small towns, and their rural catchment areas characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern (C8).

A balanced and integrated approach, which harnesses the potential and energies of all areas and communities, will help to achieve regional cohesion and social inclusion, and to build a strong regional economy.

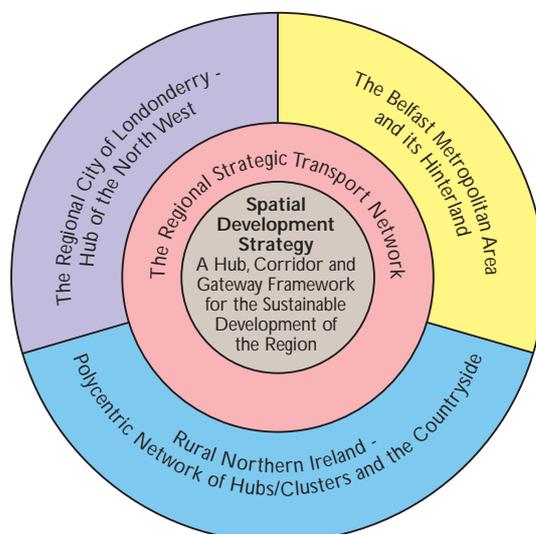
5 The Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Ireland

The Spatial Development Strategy 2025

The SDS is a **hub, corridor and gateway framework** designed to:

- guide physical development throughout Northern Ireland over the next 25 years, subject to adjustment on review;
- facilitate economic growth by identifying a network of locational opportunities for investment and development;
- accommodate the necessary housing growth;
- promote balanced community development;
- create the conditions for improved and equitable access to a range of employment, commercial, health, education and community services across urban and rural areas; and
- protect and enhance the natural and built environments.

The SDS, set out in summary on the following page, is to guide and manage future development at the strategic level. It aims to achieve a balance of growth which will maintain a strong economic heart in the wider Belfast 'travel to work' hinterland while encouraging decentralised development at identified growth poles across the Region. This will be focused on the North-West and the main towns throughout Rural Northern Ireland, located on the key and link transport corridors. The key will be to exploit local potential for the benefit of all.



THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The SDS for Northern Ireland (Key Diagram 4) is a framework for the future physical development of the Region based on urban HUBS and CLUSTERS, key and link transport CORRIDORS and the main regional GATEWAYS of ports and airports.

The aim of the **hub, corridor and gateway approach** is to give a **strategic focus to future development and achieve balanced growth** within the Region by developing:

- **The key and link transport corridors** and associated trunk road links, **as the skeletal framework for future physical development** and the primary links to the **regional gateways** of ports and airports, connecting with the European and global communications network (C4 and C11);
- **A compact and dynamic metropolitan core centred on Belfast**, the major regional **gateway** and focal point of the Regional Strategic Transport Network, balanced by the development of main towns in the 'travel to work' hinterland as counter-magnets with significant planned expansion of seven small towns close to the BMA (C6 and Diagram 5);
- **A strong North-West regional centre based on Londonderry**, the transport pivot and regional **gateway** for the North-Western corner of the island (C7); and
- **A vibrant Rural Northern Ireland** with balanced development spread across a **polycentric network of hubs/clusters** based on the **main towns** which will have a strategic role as centres of employment and services for urban and rural communities (C8):
 - building-up and reinforcing a **network of main and local hubs**¹ strategically located on the Regional Strategic Transport Network which have the capacity to accommodate and provide a wide range of complementary services;
 - recognising the high growth potential of **Craigavon**, reflecting its role as the major industrial and service centre in mid-Ulster, and its strategic location on the key transport corridors; **and the significant potential of those main hubs** with an extensive and diverse range of services and a larger population, generally over 20,000, to generate higher levels of future growth;
 - **adopting a sub-regional approach to clustering of urban centres**, in some parts of Northern Ireland, to enable the necessary concentration of employment locations and complementary facilities to create a strong magnet for investment and development; and
 - **sustaining a vibrant rural community** living in revitalised small towns, villages and small rural settlements with an appropriate scale of rural development in the open countryside, and with enhanced accessibility to regional facilities via the key and link transport corridors (C8).

¹ Main town hubs: 10 - 30,000+ population
Local hubs: small towns of 5 - 10,000 population located on the Regional Strategic Transport Network (Key Diagram 4 and Diagram 5).

5 The Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Ireland

In the succeeding sections of this chapter, the rationale underlying the SDS is set out, with further guidance under six core themes for the future spatial development of the Region.

Spatial Development Themes

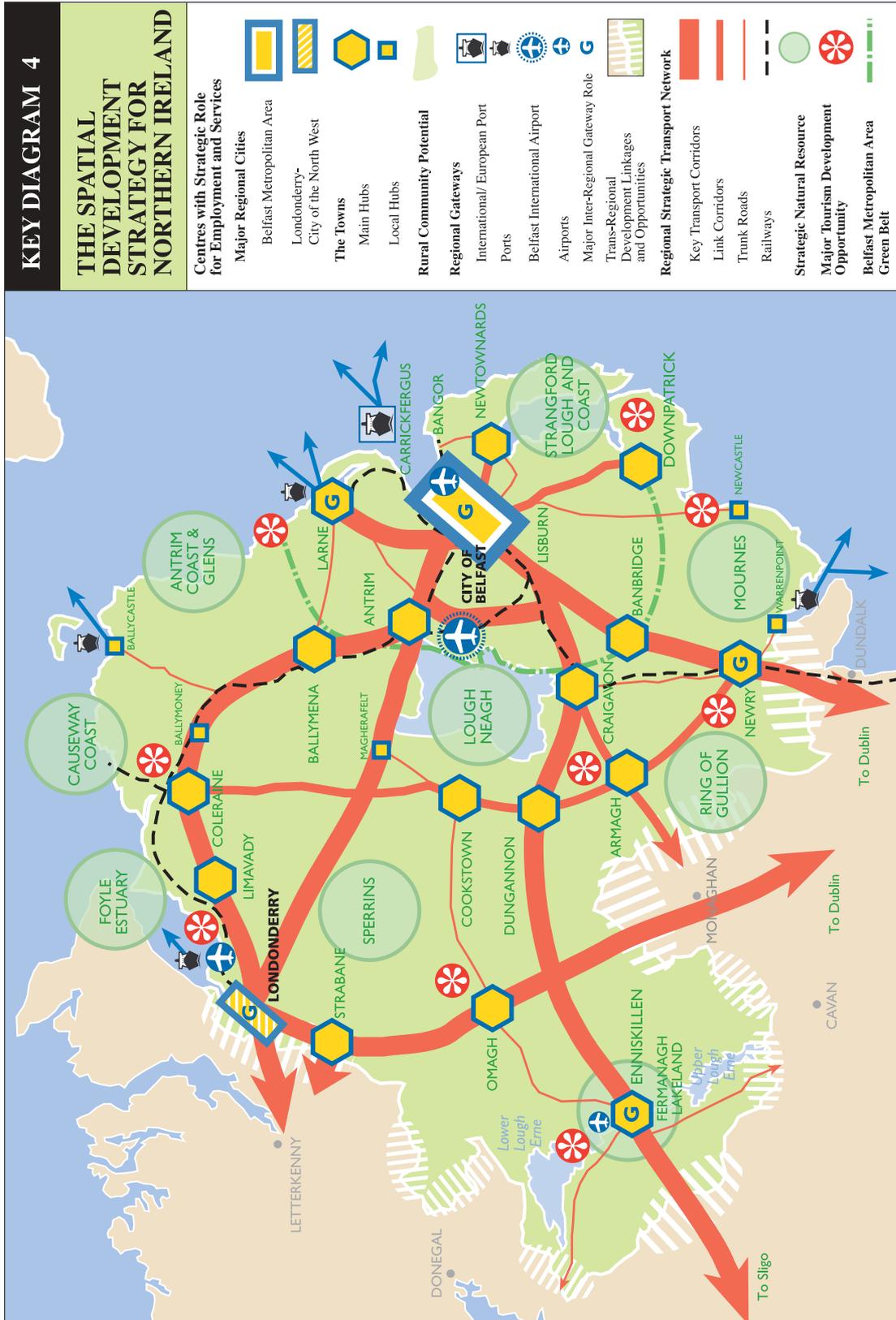


Theme Promoting regional balance

Balanced growth across the identified network of cities, main and small towns and their rural hinterlands **will enhance equality of opportunity** for people living in all parts of the Region, and offer the locational choice required to meet the wider variety of development needs in a divided society. The aim is to ensure that every town, main and small, continues to generate employment and investment opportunities and to receive new housing development, appropriate to its size and functions, in order to renew itself and maintain its vitality and vibrancy. Similarly, local rural centres need to be revitalised. This approach to planning and managing growth strikes a balance between:

- the advantages of concentration providing a strong heart to the Region in the form of a medium-sized European city, Belfast, which serves as an economic powerhouse and centre of administration, specialised services and cultural amenities for all of Northern Ireland; reinforcing

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Londonderry as the major economic centre and regional City for the North-West and continuing the build up of the major centre of Craigavon in mid-Ulster, making good use of the existing infrastructure; and

- the **benefits of decentralisation** based on a polycentric network of main and associated small towns in Northern Ireland; these towns are major regional assets with the capacity to provide a range of services for their distinctive urban and rural catchment areas and function as local engines of economic growth.

The 'hub, corridor and gateway' functional approach to spatial development strikes this balance by:

- recognising the catalyst for economic growth and development that can accrue from the two largest cities because of their size, role and extensive sub-regions; and
- equally acknowledging the need to achieve a more balanced spread of growth and economic development opportunities across the urban hubs and transport corridors throughout Northern Ireland.

The Strategy balances the need to build, in a sustainable manner, on the strengths of the Region while also focusing and guiding development in order to help tackle weaknesses in the development structure thereby strengthening the overall performance of the Region. Accordingly, the Strategy is designed to avert the problems of over-dominance, large-scale sprawl, infrastructure pressures, urban decay and congestion associated with excessive metropolitan growth. It also seeks to avoid the problems of weak service centres, over-stretched infrastructure and excessive development pressures on countryside resources resulting from excessive dispersal of development.

The key to achieving an optimum balance between over-concentration around the BMA and excessive dispersal is to sustain a reinforced network of strong urban hubs, linked by an upgraded strategic transport network. This will provide accessible 'counter-magnet development opportunities' to the metropolitan core, thus helping to ease development and transport pressures in and around Belfast.

This balancing of growth and development is reflected in the proposed distribution of the 160,000 additional dwelling units required in the Region by 2015, set out in detail by districts in Chapter 9 ►.

Table 1: Regional Housing Allocation 2015

Area	No. of Dwellings
BMA and Hinterland	77,500
North, South and West of Region	82,500
Total	160,000

The strategic role of the main hubs in achieving regional balance across Northern Ireland

In Rural Northern Ireland, the network of main and associated small towns identified on Key Diagram 4 and Diagram 5, provides a range of accessible centres for the concentrated development of industrial, commercial, health, education and community services complemented by the distinctive contributions of the related rural areas providing 'goods' such as agricultural produce, environmental assets, countryside recreation and leisure services, supporting a strategic approach to the diversification of the rural economy (C8).

The towns identified as main hubs have the potential to develop as 'growth poles' for the clustering of economic activity, thereby providing a counter-balance to the metropolitan heart of the Region centred on Belfast. These main towns will, therefore, be developed as the major locations providing employment, services, and a range of cultural and leisure amenities (C8: SPG-RNI 3). They will also have a leading role in accommodating the need for urban housing at the district level (C9: SPG-HOU 3 ►). Decisions on the future location of new public sector development for a variety of functions, including health and education, will take into account the strategic role of the main towns. In the identification of Strategic Employment Locations, priority will be given to the regional cities and the main hubs (C10: SPG-ECON 4 ►).

The town centres of these hubs have an important role to play in the life and economy of Rural Northern Ireland. The Strategy therefore emphasises the need to sustain attractive vibrant town centres performing a multi-functional role as prime locations for retail, service, administrative, leisure and cultural facilities (C8: SPG-RNI 3 and C10: SPG-ECON 1 ►).

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In the context of achieving the optimal balance between Belfast and the rest of the Region, the Strategy promotes the decentralisation of public sector employment to Londonderry and the main towns thereby augmenting their range of service functions. Even on a modest scale this could bring significant local economic benefits, support town centre revitalisation, underpin and encourage private sector investment. **An appropriate level of decentralised public and private sector investment would have environmental and economic benefits, reducing commuting to the Belfast Metropolitan Area and relieving congestion as well as contributing to the equitable sharing of regional assets.**

Renewal and revitalisation of run down sectors of towns will continue to be targeted, particularly the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, as an integral feature of the Strategy to reinforce the main hubs. Facilitating economic development in, or in close proximity to, the most disadvantaged urban areas of the main towns will help to achieve regional balance and tackle long-term unemployment as part of the 'New Targeting Social Need' initiative.

In designating the main towns as hubs for significant growth, the **SDS recognises that future levels of growth for each town, or cluster of towns, will vary. Some centres will generate much more growth than others**, reflecting the interaction of such factors as strategic location, the size of population in the town and its catchment, the range of employment, infrastructure and services available, and the quality of environment and living conditions which increase the 'draw' of a town.

A number of the main hubs already have a well established sub-regional role and a more extensive sphere of influence reflecting their larger size and the availability of a wide range of higher order urban functions. These centres generally have larger populations of over 20,000 persons and include high numbers of retail, financial and other businesses, and a diverse provision of administrative, education, health and leisure services. For example, they include Ballymena to the North, Newry to the South, and Omagh in the West. Such centres are expected to generate higher levels of future growth reflecting their established role and strength as local engines of economic activity in their respective sub-regions.

Strengthening rural potential: sub-regional clusters of settlements

While the Strategy stresses the importance and dynamics of the network of main towns across the Region as the major centres for employment and services, it recognises there is a strong interdependence between these towns and their rural hinterlands. Further development of this complementary relationship will help to sustain vibrant rural communities and local service centres.

In order to maximise the benefits of decentralisation, it is important to create critical mass as counter-magnets to the economic pull of the main cities. In that respect the development of clusters of settlements, based on the main towns will ensure the development of a wide range of complementary facilities and, with it, the provision of higher order urban functions.

This integrated approach at a sub-regional level, based on a closely related 'cluster of hubs', will provide the synergy to secure the necessary concentration of major employment and housing growth. It will build on the co-operation which already exists at district council level, for example, in the fields of tourism, leisure and environmental management.

The SDS is deliberately flexible enough to accommodate the emergence of settlement clusters which best fit local development needs. The potential for clustering will be influenced by the:

- need to develop enhanced infrastructure and create the critical mass to attract inward investment;
- relative accessibility of centres to each other and to key or link transport corridors;
- complementary roles they perform as centres for employment and services, and the scope to create more viable markets thus overcoming the disadvantages of economic competition between settlements;
- extent to which co-operation already exists between settlements on a range of social, economic or environmental matters; and
- potential for co-ordinated action at the sub-regional level to secure urban and rural regeneration.

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Good examples of districts already co-operating in economic development matters are found in the Rural West, the North West, the North East, and in the South East of Northern Ireland.

The Belfast Metropolitan Area and its Hinterland

In relation to the BMA and its associated 'travel to work' hinterland⁴, a balance also has to be struck between concentration and decentralisation. Expansion of the BMA also needs to be contained and channelled to maintain a compact City complex and protect the City setting. The major spatial elements of the Strategy are summarised in the Panel below:

Spatial Development Strategy for the Belfast Metropolitan Area and its hinterland

The Strategy is a balanced portfolio of development options which will:

- encourage revitalisation within the Metropolitan Area;
- provide for major areas of planned lateral expansion on the key transport corridors at Lisburn and Newtownabbey, and on smaller sites to be identified in the BMA Plan;
- develop the main towns of Antrim, Downpatrick, Larne and Newtownards in the BMA hinterland, together with the neighbouring main towns of Banbridge and Craigavon, to varying degrees depending on their capacity and growth potential, as counter-magnets to the Metropolitan Area; and
- accommodate growth related to the BMA by the significant planned expansion of the seven nearby small towns of Ballyclare, Ballynahinch, Carryduff, Comber, Crumlin, Dromore and Moira.

The RDS takes account of the fact that Craigavon will grow in its own right as the major centre in mid-Ulster. Banbridge likewise has its own development potential as a growing town with an extensive rural catchment. However, both centres are well located in relation to the BMA, and to its main travel to work hinterland, to also act as counter-magnets to the Metropolitan Area. They could accommodate development in the strongly growing transport corridors to the South West (reflected in Figure 7). Both centres therefore form an integral part of the SDS for the BMA and its hinterland.

⁴ The BMA hinterland is defined as the rural part of the 6 BMA districts (Chapter 6) and the total District Council areas of Antrim, Ards, Down and Larne. This administrative definition, made for the purposes of the RDS, approximates quite closely to the main 'travel to work' area around the BMA, though it is acknowledged that an additional, relatively smaller proportion of journeys to the BMA originates in other outlying districts.

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In the longer term beyond 2015, as housing land supply diminishes within the BMA, there may be a need for additional housing development in the nearest main towns. The maintenance of a compact city complex, balanced by promoting the nearest main towns as counter-magnets for growth, will enable a strategic green belt of countryside to be protected around the Metropolitan Area.

In the ring of main towns around Belfast, Antrim and Craigavon are identified as being particularly well placed to accommodate, in the long term, a growing proportion of the housing market in the wider city region. Public investment in recent decades provides a strong foundation for future private sector initiatives. While local transport links still need improvement, both towns are major industrial centres and have spare capacity reflecting past investment in infrastructure and services. They are well placed on key transport corridors with good rail and motorway express bus links, and have the potential to function as relatively self-contained counter-magnets to the BMA.

The Belfast Metropolitan Area Green Belt

The primary purpose of the strategic green belt indicated on Key Diagram 4 is to ensure an appreciable rural zone around the BMA. The green belt will protect the setting of the city of Belfast and maintain a distinctive rural setting around towns and villages within the wider city region.

It will protect rural areas under development pressures unrelated to the local community, maintain green wedges between settlements and safeguard areas of high amenity value. Key Diagram 4 indicates the approximate extent of the strategic green belt that may be required to deal with current and future development pressures. Precise delineation of the green belt will be an issue for consideration in the context of development plans, and it will be informed by the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment, and travel to work patterns.

Theme Encouraging sustainable patterns of development

The Strategy reflects rising public concern about environmental issues and **makes sustainable development a central objective**. It provides a strategic planning framework for future environmental policy making and will assist integrated environmental management to be delivered.

The SDS places a strong emphasis on the sensible use of resources and care for the whole environment. The impact of climate change, the consumption of good agricultural land by urban

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development, and other adverse impacts of development on air, water and land, underscores the need to take a sustainable approach to the future development of Northern Ireland. In pursuit of this aim, the Strategy identifies not only the strategic natural resources, but also emphasises the need to value and exercise good stewardship of the whole environment, including the coast and the cultural heritage (C12▶). In doing so, it also recognises that Northern Ireland contains high quality natural assets, some of which rank on a European scale as deserving particular protection.

A major thrust of the Strategy is to promote more sustainable patterns of development based on:

- a polycentric network of growth poles integrated with the transport corridors and incorporating enhanced public transport;
- compact urban forms;
- more housing within existing urban areas; and
- the sensible and sensitive use of the built heritage and the rural environment.

Theme Reflecting regional distinctiveness

The SDS and the supporting Strategic Planning Guidelines seek to reflect the distinctive settlement pattern in the Region and the strong local identities associated with particular sub-regions, towns and rural areas, and to respect the high quality landscapes of Northern Ireland.

In urban and rural areas, the creation of quality living environments supportive to the development of balanced local communities is a feature of the Strategy (C9: SPG-HOU6 ▶ and C12: SPG-ENV 4▶). Development patterns which contribute to community spirit, neighbourliness and a sense of belonging to a particular place are encouraged. The emphasis of the local development guidelines defined in SPG-ENV 4 is an approach to new development which attaches importance to themes such as identity, diversity and quality for the benefit of local communities.

Theme Strengthening economic opportunities and regional competitiveness (C10)

Economic development is a cornerstone of the spatial strategy. It aims to support further economic progress and increased levels of growth, employment and tourism.

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Spatial planning has a key role to play in providing a platform for growth by creating conditions which are conducive to sustainable economic development. The objective is to maximise the economic potential by capitalising on the use of the regional resources including land, buildings, infrastructure and labour skills, and with a particular focus on areas of social need. The Strategy thus aims to accommodate the levels of growth in gross domestic product anticipated in Strategy 2010, the report by the Economic Development Strategy Review Steering Group.

The SDS is designed to achieve a reasonable balance between east and west, between urban and rural development, thus helping to spread economic growth and its benefits throughout the Region, and enhancing equality of opportunity in terms of access to jobs. It will facilitate a co-ordinated approach to the economic and physical development of cross-border areas.

The historic and continuing importance of Belfast and its hinterland as the economic engine of growth in the Region is recognised. The city has a key role to play as a strategic centre in relation to Europe, and in winning inward investment for Northern Ireland. Equally, there is a need to encourage and accommodate decentralised growth throughout the Region and to seek to build on the strong relationships which exist between the main towns and their rural hinterlands, thus providing a regional network of development opportunities.

The main hubs and the strategic transport system have a critical role to play in providing a network of growth poles across Rural Northern Ireland with the necessary concentrations of infrastructure and services to support business initiatives. Innovation and co-operation will be essential to ensure that there is balanced growth which will sustain counter-magnets to the economic pull of the BMA, and help to reduce the growth in long distance commuting. The Strategy encourages the strengthening and development of complementary economic development relationships within sub-regions, and between towns generated through innovative local arrangements.

It is essential that the existing engines of growth are not impeded by deficiencies in infrastructure if the Regional Development Strategy is to be successful. The need will be to continue to improve the 'hard' physical infrastructure incorporating the roads, rail, water and sewerage and drainage systems, and energy and telecommunications serving the network of hubs, and the 'soft' infrastructure of social and community facilities which enhance the quality of life, such as leisure, shopping, education and health services (C10: SPG-ECON 5 ►), while safeguarding environmental assets.

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Theme Enhancing accessibility: developing the regional strategic transport network (C11)

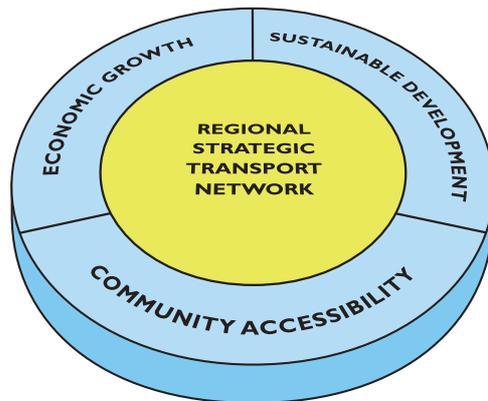
The strategic transport network has a fundamental role to play in achieving the regional goals relating to social progress, economic development and sustainable development. An efficiently networked Region is a basic prerequisite for strengthening economic competitiveness and increasing the attractiveness of regional centres for investment. It is also critical to accessing major regional facilities. For example, access to ports and airports, further and higher education services, and facilitating people getting to hospitals and recreational amenities, is dependent on an efficient transport network.

The network of transport corridors provides the skeletal framework for the future development of the whole Region, connecting all the main centres of economic and social activity, and the major public transport hubs. The pattern of future growth will, to a significant extent, be moulded by the shape of the strategic transport network, and particularly by the potential for achieving greater public transport usage, both by road and rail. Integration with the strategic transport network is particularly vital in the travel to work area focused on Belfast where large scale commuting pressures continue to grow and need to be eased.

A high quality strategic transport network, with quick and reliable journey times, has an essential role in stimulating a balanced spread of future growth in towns across the Region. An upgraded and more integrated network will facilitate decentralised growth by enabling rapid intra-regional connections between the main hubs of economic activity across the Region, and the primary regional facilities, ports and airports located in and around the BMA. In implementing the Regional Development Strategy, a 10-year Regional Transportation Strategy, and a Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan will be prepared to guide the detailed upgrading of the strategic transport network.

The provision of efficient transport corridors incorporating a strong public transport element, offers a number of wider benefits by improving accessibility generally, facilitating trading and 'economic clustering', and helping to reduce adverse environmental impacts by contributing to a progressive change in travel culture.

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Theme Making best use of the regional assets in the hubs, corridors and gateways

The SDS takes account of the need to capitalise on the inheritance of major regional assets. Achieving sustainable development involves making good use of past investment in the physical and social infrastructure of the hubs, corridors and gateways, and generally managing resources more efficiently and economically for the benefit of the whole community.

Investing in the urban hubs

The Strategy **promotes a sustained urban renaissance** grounded in maintaining compact cities and towns, maximising the use of neighbourhood resources, creating high quality urban environments and improved urban transport systems, in short, creating more attractive towns to live in and offering a better quality of life and social harmony. Enhancing and making the most of the rich legacy of urban assets is widely recognised as fundamental to a successful urban renaissance. For this reason, the Strategy proposes imaginative use of what is often termed brownfield land, re-use of redundant buildings, and enhancement of the network of open spaces and green corridors to bring the benefits described in the panel on the following page.

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The benefits to the community of building within existing cities and towns

- makes city and town living attractive choices and sustains a revival of the best of urban living;
- injects new development to revitalise the physical fabric, maintain distinctive urban identities and contribute to street life;
- encourages re-use of buildings, reduces dereliction and helps to discourage crime;
- brings new households to ageing communities, adding new children to local schools and new members to local clubs, churches and community organisations;
- makes best use of existing investment in infrastructure and services;
- achieves more balanced residential neighbourhoods with a better mix of tenures and house types;
- brings new jobs;
- encourages the development of more 'walkable communities' where people can easily access day-to-day needs;
- reinforces public transport services within towns;
- reduces the number of people commuting longer distances from the edge of ever expanding towns;
- reduces the consumption of green fields, natural resources and the loss of countryside which contribute to the setting; and
- secures the provision and protection of open spaces, and green corridor links to the open countryside.

Over the next 15 years, the BMA, Londonderry, together with the main and small towns of the Region, may have to accommodate more than 100,000 dwellings⁵. The high level of future housing need could use a disproportionate amount of regional resources, services and agricultural land. It could lead to extensive urban sprawl.

In order to secure urban renaissance, the Strategy encourages the provision of more sustainable forms of housing development in our cities and towns. The aim is to promote a concerted housing drive within urban areas over the next 10 years, without town cramming, by making appropriate use of previously developed land, other suitable sites and buildings.

Over the past 25 years, the main trend has been the development of greenfield housing. It is estimated the provision of housing within urban limits has been at a level around 25% to 30% in the 1990s. **The Strategy seeks to double that level of achievement; therefore effectively setting an ambitious regional target of 60% for the period up to the review of the Strategy, in 2010, subject to monitoring and five year review of the target in the light of the**

⁵ Includes up to 40,000 dwellings in the main hubs, depending on the housing distribution made to towns at the district level.

latest housing data. The potential for achieving the regional target will be determined through the development plan process using urban capacity studies to maximise the increased share of residential development that can be achieved within the 'urban footprint' of a particular city or town. This will ensure that the setting of local targets for individual settlements is subject to a participative process directed at defining targets which are practicable, achievable, and do not result in town cramming.

The setting of this target for the whole Region signals 'a clear change of direction' towards more sustainable forms of housing development, while giving due weight to the concerns of those living in established residential areas about the potential impact of redevelopment and infill on their neighbourhoods. The objective 'on the ground' must be to achieve a significant increase in 'brownfield' housing in a manner which pays sensitive regard to the amenities enjoyed by those living beside proposed redevelopment and infill housing sites. SPG-HOU 4 – SPG-HOU 5 provide important detailed guidance on the desired approach to the urban housing drive.

It is also recognised that the level of achievement will vary from town to town in the light of local circumstances and capacity. The larger cities are likely to be able to accommodate higher levels of brownfield housing. It is expected that the BMA, by virtue of its scale, development pattern and range of housing markets, will prove to have the most significant potential for accommodating a variety of urban housing initiatives. In towns, lack of capacity and the need to protect character may inhibit the achievement of the regional target.

Specific targets for individual urban areas will be set through the development plan process within the context of the regional target. The Chancellor's 2001 Budget package of national taxation measures to encourage investment in urban areas will be carefully examined to determine how it will impact on Northern Ireland.

Over the next 10 years, progress will be monitored and evaluated annually. Progress toward achieving substantively more brownfield housing will be informed by emerging urban capacity studies and a concerted drive to encourage the recycling of sites and buildings for housing. The monitoring and evaluation exercise will take into account both the need to encourage more sustainable forms of housing development and the need for the planning system to make provision for affordable housing, particularly but not exclusively for first-time buyers and those on lower incomes. By 2005, sufficient detailed housing data should be available from a number of towns to enable the Regional target to be assessed and reset, as necessary. Any reassessment should set the most appropriate figure for

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maintaining a long-term momentum toward more sustainable patterns of development which recognises the dynamic process of formation of brownfield opportunities.

Infrastructure improvement will be required to facilitate the development of land for additional houses over the period of the Strategy. In that respect developer contributions will play an increasingly important part in achieving properly serviced development schemes.

Upgrading the transport corridors

The Strategy emphasises the benefits to be gained from making good use of existing infrastructure, particularly the key and link transport corridors which provide essential links to urban hubs and regional gateways (CII: SPG-TRAN I ►). The proposal is to create an upgraded and integrated transport system based on the Regional Strategic Transport Network (Diagram 11).

Enhancing the strategic role of the regional gateways

The regional gateways are strategically important transport interchanges. All of the airport and port gateways to Northern Ireland have assets and lands which offer major growth and employment generating opportunities. The seaports provide important employment poles at the heart of their respective urban areas where there is scope for substantial job creation.

The SDS promotes the regional gateways as key economic development opportunities. With improved connections to corridors, the gateways offer the potential of clustering economic development to create strong

5 The Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Ireland

magnets for regional growth to the benefit of everyone in Northern Ireland (C10: SPG-ECON 2 ►). The gateways also have a crucial role to play in building up the tourism industry of the Region (C10: SPG-ECON 8 ►).

In addition to the regional city gateways of Belfast and Londonderry and the gateway town and seaport of Larne, the Strategy identifies two other centres – Newry and Enniskillen – which have a major inter-regional gateway role reflecting the availability of access by several modes of transport including a port or airport (Key Diagram 4). The Inter-Regional Gateways are described in Appendix 4 ►.

The regional gateways of Larne, Lisahally and Warrenpoint Ports have the potential to accommodate further development helping to provide counter-balance to the Belfast Gateway and to spread economic activity across the hubs of the Region, as well as acting as a catalyst to improving infrastructure and services. Stronger economic relationships between the main hubs and these three regional gateways could also serve to reduce traffic congestion in the BMA and simultaneously, ease development pressure on the greenbelt around the metropolitan core.

The Belfast Metropolitan Area

The heart of the region

The Belfast Metropolitan Area is the largest urban centre in the Region with a population of around 600,000 persons, and over one million living within a 30 miles radius of Belfast city centre. It comprises an extensive built up area stretching along the shores of Belfast Lough and up the Lagan Valley, taking in the city of Belfast and the adjacent urban parts of the district council areas of Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and North Down⁶.

During the past 30 years, a distinctive urban structure of complex social and economic interrelationships has emerged throughout the BMA. Decline, followed by a continuing process of renewal, distinguished the inner city areas. Suburban expansion and rapid growth in the neighbouring towns of Bangor, Carrickfergus and Lisburn has characterised the outer Metropolitan Area.

The BMA has a high potential for future growth and development based on its many functions as the heart of the Region, as well as being the largest hub of the transport system and a regional gateway. It has a major



⁶ The precise outer edge of the built up Metropolitan Area throughout the six constituent districts will be defined in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

role in the European network of City Regions with vital links to cities in Great Britain and continental Europe as well as to Dublin. It is the economic engine for the Region as well as being the regional centre for administration, specialised high order services and cultural amenities.

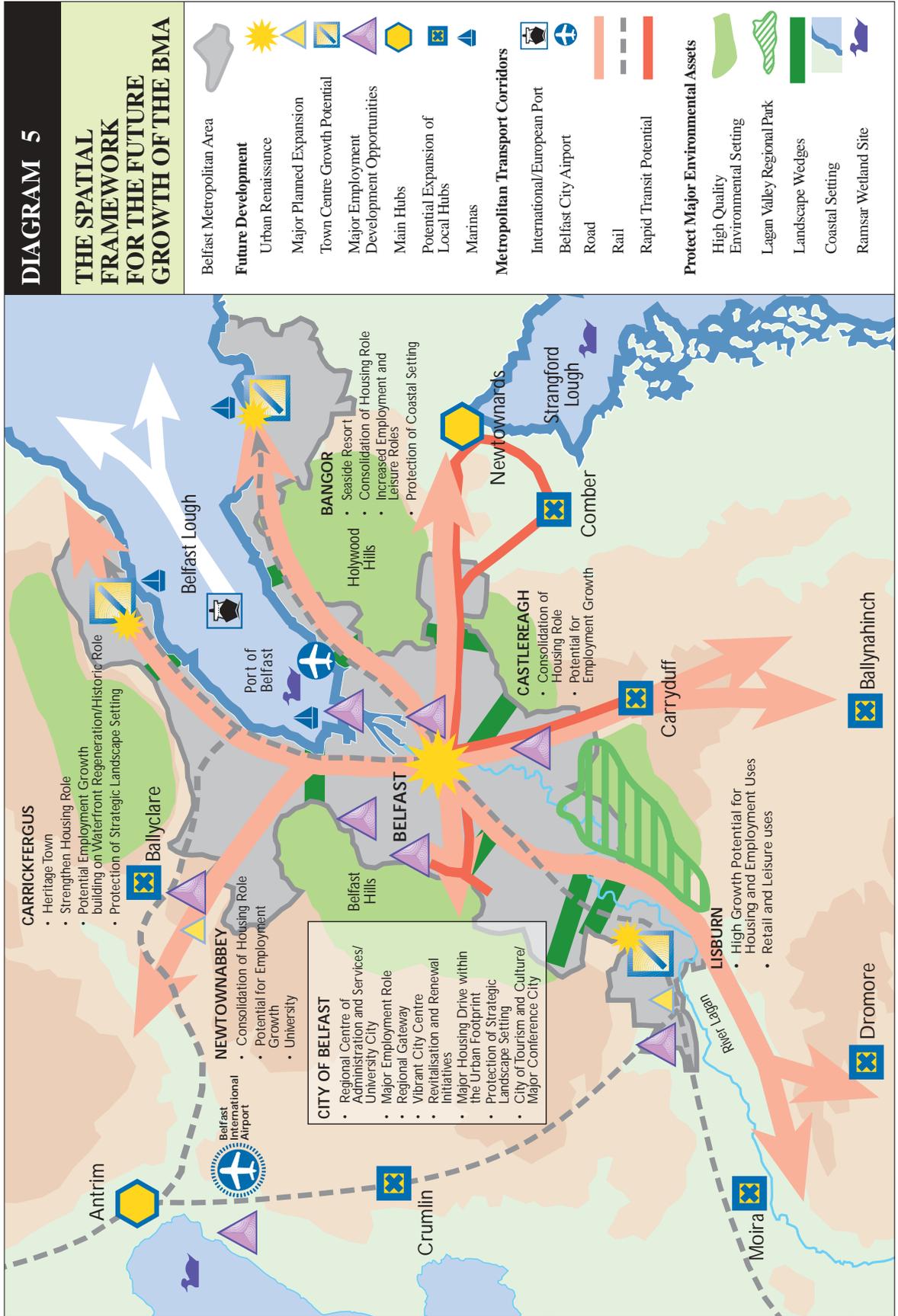


A magnificent setting

Belfast enjoys a magnificent natural setting surrounded by hills at the head of Belfast Lough, with the River Lagan flowing through the city. To the west, towards Lisburn, the Lagan Valley Regional Park provides an area of special scenic character. To the east, the Metropolitan Area extends along the shores of Belfast Lough towards Bangor and Carrickfergus, incorporating further areas of high quality coastal landscapes. Topographical factors strongly constrain the directions of future urban growth and limit the potential for green field expansion.

Future development

The Region as a whole requires a healthy heart and the BMA, as the largest employment nexus, is the primary engine for the Region's growth and prosperity. Securing a strong and vibrant capital city and Metropolitan Area is vital to the economic and social well being of Northern Ireland. The Strategy for future development of the BMA is to support the concept of the 'compact city' and maintain a sustainable urban renaissance, through an integrated package of measures, consistent with the overall Spatial Development Strategy for the Region (C5). Compact development is not only supportive of urban regeneration and public transport, it also protects the rural environment and ensures sustainability.



Major development challenges remain in relation to social and economic disadvantage, the problem of a divided city in terms of community relations, and the need for a range of high quality development initiatives to create both a prosperous city and a revitalised BMA.

The Strategy aims to ensure balanced growth is achieved across the major constituent parts of the BMA and within its associated 'travel to work' hinterland. Given the environmental constraints and congestion pressures on the one hand, and on the other the need for balanced growth and the availability of attractive investment locations in nearby centres, the Strategy anticipates the future components of the economic heart of the Region as being more widely dispersed to centres within the BMA and its hinterland. The main towns of Antrim, Banbridge, Craigavon, Downpatrick, Larne and Newtownards will, to varying degrees depending on their capacity and growth potential, develop as counter-magnets to the Metropolitan Area. The seven small towns close to the BMA, earmarked for significant planned expansion to accommodate housing need related to the BMA, will also share in accommodating the future economic growth expected to take place at the heart of the Region (Diagram 5).

The Strategy sets out a vision for the BMA as an area with a thriving retail, service, administrative, cultural, entertainment, health and educational centre in the City of Belfast, with important complementary employment and services centres in the adjoining suburban districts of Castlereagh and Newtownabbey, and in the towns of Bangor, Carrickfergus and Lisburn.

Strategic objectives for the Belfast Metropolitan Area

The Strategy seeks to achieve the following outcomes for the BMA:

- a reinforced role as regional capital and focus of administration, commerce, specialised services and cultural amenities;
- a stronger role for Belfast as an international city;
- an important complementary role for the boroughs of Bangor, Carrickfergus and Lisburn, maintaining their distinctive town identities, and for the suburban districts of Castlereagh and Newtownabbey;
- a revitalised metropolitan area maintaining a polycentric pattern of development focused on existing local centres and with a strong emphasis on continuing physical renewal and 'brownfield' housing, within the existing urban area, to support and sustain existing communities;
- the regeneration of areas of social need;

6 The Belfast Metropolitan Area

- a compact metropolitan area with a protected environmental setting and an enhanced quality of urban environment;
- the location of new development to reinforce better integration between land use and transportation; and
- the development of a modern integrated and inclusive transport system.

Belfast: rebirth of a city and a vision for the future

The City has gone through three distinctive waves of regeneration in the recent period – extensive housing redevelopment in the inner city, followed by the revival of the city centre after years of civil disturbance, and the regeneration of the Lagside waterfront. The next stage in its transformation is to encourage a widespread and sustainable city renaissance, reflecting the consensus emerging from the extensive city vision consultative process through which the citizens of Belfast have set high aims, for its further restructuring and international positioning.

The Belfast City Vision themes are:

- A united city;
- A city of liveable communities;
- A city of culture and sport;
- A healthy city;
- A learning city; and
- A prosperous city.

The spatial framework for the BMA takes account of the development themes flowing from the City Vision process and provides a strategic context in the form of guidelines (SPGs) for the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) currently being prepared. The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan being prepared in parallel will provide the transportation element of the BMAP.

Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Belfast Metropolitan Area

SPG-BMA 1: To create a thriving Metropolitan Area centred on a revitalised city of Belfast

The aim is to build on the distinctive and complementary roles of each of the component urban centres within the BMA to create a strong city complex capable of competing in the league of European cities. The spatial development framework (Diagram 5) is to:

BMA 1.1 Enhance the role of the city of Belfast

- improve its international image and the presentation of Northern Ireland to the world, and maintain its role as the cultural capital, the centre of regional administration and specialised services, and as a major industrial centre;
- continue to develop and implement the City Vision process;
- facilitate the build up of city tourism and the conference/business exhibition trade (C10: SPG-ECON 11 ►);
- strengthen the regional gateways, based on the Belfast International and Belfast City Airports, and continue to develop the Port of Belfast as the main port of the Region and major distribution centre for international sea freight;
- reinforce the drive to tackle areas of disadvantage and physical decline in the city, help to deal with community division (C4: SPG-SRC 3 ◀) and, promote physical regeneration complemented by community development which contributes to creating a city of liveable communities in identifiable neighbourhoods;
- support the expansion of education and training, including developing a new university/further education campus – an innovative 'tertiary education' concept – at Springvale;
- support and strengthen the distinctive role of Belfast city centre as the leading regional shopping centre, in the context of a growing population and an expanding economy in the Region;
- maintain the role of Belfast city centre as the primary retail and office location in the Region. The number, scale and nature of major out-of-centre shopping developments will be

6 The Belfast Metropolitan Area

considered in the context of the interests of consumers in competition and choice; and the risk of such developments having an undesirable impact on the City centre.

This precautionary approach will be taken in relation to future retail development proposals based on the likely risk of proposed out-of-centre shopping developments having an undesirable adverse impact on the city centre shopping area as a whole or on existing shopping centres. This approach will take account of the potential cumulative impact on the city centre of retail developments;

- reinforce the city of Belfast as the culture and arts capital of Northern Ireland focused around a strong University – City centre – Cathedral Quarter – Laganside axis of museums, galleries, theatres and the Waterfront Concert Hall supported by local community activities, and aspire to be the European City of Culture in 2008;

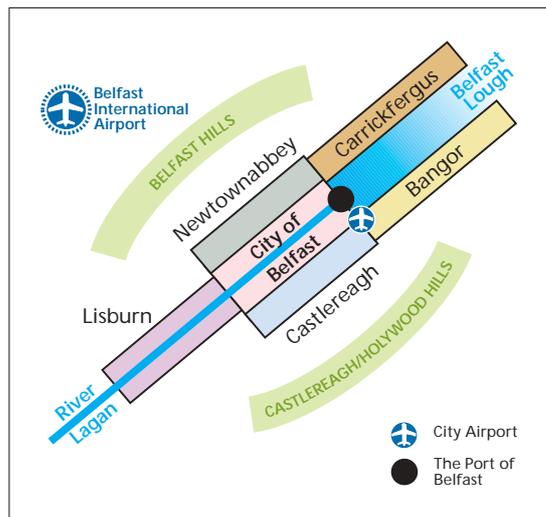


- develop the Cathedral Quarter as a dynamic and distinctive mixed use, historical and cultural quarter within the centre of Belfast, with an emphasis on innovative design, fashion, heritage, antiques and the arts;

- continue riverside renewal adding to the investment in the Odyssey Millennium Project, the Science Centre W5, along with other commercial development at Laganside; and promoting the development of the adjoining 'Titanic' Quarter, building on the theme of industrial maritime heritage;
- progressively enlarge and enhance the pedestrian priority zone within Belfast city centre by re-routing traffic around the central area to allow the creation of a more people friendly environment with quality urban spaces and to help promote city centre residential development;
- step up the improvement of the physical appearance of the city, the 'display window' of the Region, with particular emphasis on the city centre and arterial routes, by promoting the planning and design of a high quality cityscape which relates sympathetically to the distinctive heritage and setting of Belfast and is characterised by:
 - quality urban spaces – existing and new
 - tree-lined boulevards
 - imaginative city scale architecture
 - arresting vistas
 - protection of outstanding views
 - landmarks and art in public places;
- promote a progressive, comprehensive upgrade of the city arterial routes as vibrant 'showcases' for Belfast, with an integrated approach which sustains and enhances the existing 'urban villages' along these routes, promotes quality frontage redevelopment, extends avenue tree planting, introduces landmarks and attractive arrival points, and establishes quality bus corridors; and
- protect and enhance the magnificent setting of the 'City of the Hills', and the coastal setting of Belfast Lough.

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FIGURE 11
BELFAST METROPOLITAN AREA -
COMPONENT PARTS



BMA 1.2 To develop the complementary role of the suburban districts of Castlereagh and Newtownabbey:

Castlereagh Borough

- Enhance the role of Castlereagh as an attractive residential location, whilst protecting its environmental setting;
- continue to support Castlereagh as an important centre of employment and services for the wider Metropolitan Area; and
- recognise the recreational potential of Castlereagh with its wide range of outdoor leisure assets, including Belvoir Forest Park and the Lagan Valley Regional Park, together with indoor facilities at the Dundonald International Ice Bowl and leisure complex.

Newtownabbey Borough

- Enhance the role of Newtownabbey as an area with potential for significant housing expansion, particularly with the reopened Bleach Green rail link between Antrim and Belfast City Centre;
- focus on Newtownabbey's advantageous location on the major transport corridors to Belfast International Airport and the Ports of Belfast and Larne, in order to further develop it as a major industrial and university centre; and

- utilise the lough shore and hill setting as a basis for the expansion of Newtownabbey's role as a leisure outlet for the north and north west of the Metropolitan Area, building on existing assets including the Valley Leisure complex and Ballyearl Centre.

BMA 1.3 To develop the towns of Bangor, Carrickfergus and Lisburn, and strengthen the multi-functional role of their town centres:

Bangor

- Consolidate the role of Bangor as an attractive residential location and important retail centre, and improve rail and road links to Belfast, boosting its role as a commercial centre within the BMA;
- recognise Bangor's status as an important commuter settlement, while accepting the need to widen the economic base, as a means of reducing its role as a dormitory town; and
- enhance the leisure potential of Bangor as an attractive maritime resort on Belfast Lough, focusing on the marina, revitalised seafront and town centre shopping area.

Carrickfergus

- Recognise the role of Carrickfergus as a heritage town and important industrial and service centre, with a strengthened housing role, whilst continuing to regenerate its town centre and waterfront area;
- improve the road and rail links with Belfast and the regional gateways, to give the town advantages in terms of potential for further investment and development as an important centre of industry and commerce; and
- focus on the unique attractions of Carrickfergus Castle and the Marina, and maximise the benefits of the Lough shore location.

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Lisburn

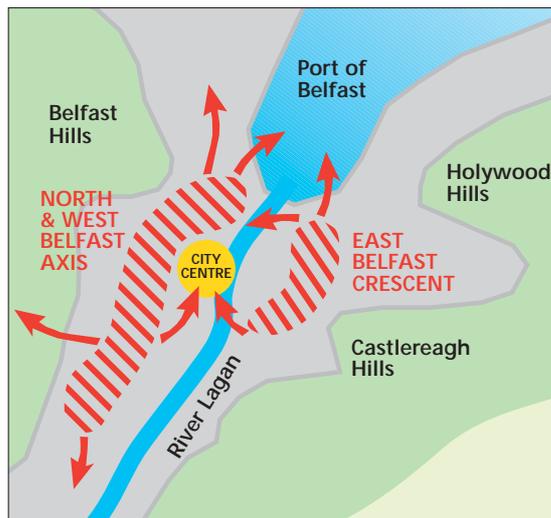
- Recognise the high development potential of Lisburn and the scope to accommodate significant housing expansion, reflecting its strategic location at the meeting point of key transport corridors; promote its continued development as a strong employment base providing shopping in the town centre, complemented by Sprucefield regional shopping centre, and leisure and commercial services;
- acknowledge Lisburn's strong and independent identity within the BMA, while maintaining good linkages with the rest of the components of the urban area; and
- recognise the town's attractive setting with the River Lagan flowing through the centre and the nearby amenities of the Lagan Valley Regional Park. Encourage the further development of recreational and leisure facilities adding to the magnets of the Irish Linen Centre and the Lagan Valley LeisurePlex in the heart of the town.

The development potential of the main distinctive components of the Metropolitan Area are set out in more detail in the Family of Settlements Report.

SPG-BMA 2: To promote an urban renaissance throughout the Belfast Metropolitan Area

FIGURE 12

**BELFAST :
MAJOR REGENERATION FOCUS**



BMA 2.1 Promote urban economic development at key locations, and on suitable sites, throughout the Metropolitan Area:

- strengthen the role of the BMA, as the regional economic driver, by enhancing the employment potential of the City Centre, Liganside and the Harbour Estate; and by identifying strategic locations for employment growth around the North and West Belfast regeneration axis, the Purdysburn area, Sprucefield/West Lisburn, and Mallusk/Ballyhenry (C10: SPG-ECON 2 - ECON 4 ►);
- promote a renewed focus on regeneration for the city centre, the town centres of Bangor, Carrickfergus and Lisburn and areas of disadvantage and deprivation located within the Metropolitan Area, including deteriorating areas in Belfast middle city, and particularly the North and West Belfast axis and the East Belfast crescent (Figure 12);
- maintain and enhance identifiable local centres of commerce and community services throughout the Metropolitan Area;

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- develop tourism potential by enhancing the role of the BMA as the major gateway to Northern Ireland; developing a thriving Cathedral Quarter; building up the considerable visitor attraction potential of Bangor and Carrickfergus as seaside centres of leisure; exploiting the linen heritage role of Lisburn, promoting its range of cultural and historic attractions; and embrace opportunities to create 'a string of pearls' waterfront development on the seafront of Belfast Lough and along the Lagan Valley with the possibility of some waterbus links (Figure 13); and

FIGURE 13
WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES: BELFAST LOUGH AND RIVER LAGAN



- facilitate the development of sports and sports venues to national and international standards.

BMA 2.2 Promote the physical renewal of the Belfast Metropolitan Area:

- promote revitalisation of the urban area by placing a stronger emphasis on the use of land and re-use of buildings for housing and other uses within town centres and throughout the Metropolitan Area;
- support a housing drive that will help meet the estimated housing needs of the BMA for 42,000 additional dwellings in the Urban area and 9,000 additional dwellings in the rural BMA. The location of sites to meet this need will be determined through the BMAP process. While the balance of the housing need shall be provided from 'greenfield' sites as much new housing as practicably possible, (as assessed following receipt of the Urban Capacity Study), will be provided within the built up area to seek to achieve the regional 'brownfield' target of 60%, but without town cramming (C9: SPG-HOU 3) and (SPG-HOU 4 ►); and
- promote Lisburn and Newtownabbey as the main focii of greenfield housing provision located along key transport corridors, reflecting the environmental constraints imposed by Belfast Lough, the hills surrounding the city and the Lagan Valley Regional Park.

BMA 2.3 To enhance the quality of the urban environment throughout the Metropolitan Area:

- guide the process of physical change to create an urban environment characterised by respect for the established fabric of areas of townscape character, historic buildings, public spaces and streets, and the design of a high quality contemporary architecture;
- protect areas of high scenic value around the Metropolitan Area and seek to keep hill slopes and skylines free from urban development;
- keep buffer landscape wedges at the edge of the main urban component areas to distinguish and maintain the identities of Bangor, Carrickfergus, Dundonald, Holywood and Lisburn;
- protect and enhance a network of open space including country parks, landscape wedges, parks and community greenways;

6 The Belfast Metropolitan Area

- continue to develop the Forest of Belfast initiative (C12: SPG-ENV I ►); and
- promote the 'ecocity' concept within the Metropolitan Area by making increased use of waste recycling and renewable energies.

Community Greenways

Community Greenways seek to re-establish corridor links between parks and natural areas to create a network of urban open spaces. Greenways provide places for recreation and exercise, cleaner air and a clean environment, opportunities for pedestrian and cycle routes, and wildlife habitats. Greenways can include publicly owned open space – parks, playing fields, school grounds – and private lands – golf courses, farmlands. The courses of rivers through cities and towns offer particular potential for the development of Community Greenways.

A modern integrated transport system for the BMA

The development of a modern, integrated transport system is a critical component for achieving the sustainable development of the BMA and its hinterland, within the regional context set out in Chapter 11 ►.

Journey-to-work patterns in and around the BMA have become more complex and diverse. A central aim of the Regional Development Strategy is to provide access to facilities in ways which enable a shift away from commuting to work by car. This will help reduce congestion, related environmental and health problems, and strengthen the role of public transport. The private car will, however, continue to have its place in meeting a range of transport needs, particularly for off-peak travel and for those without a realistic public transport alternative.

The need for fuller integration of land use and transportation in order to facilitate sustainable travel patterns in the urban area is important to the success of the BMA development strategy. The BMAP and the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan will be prepared in tandem to ensure complementarity.

SPG-BMA 3: To develop and enhance the Metropolitan Transport Corridor Network

The Metropolitan Transport Corridors (MTCs), radiating from Belfast city centre to link together the constituent parts of the BMA, are well suited for integrating land use and transport. They include the suburban rail lines, with the possibility of the improvement of services, radial roads with the potential to reallocate road space to accommodate faster and more frequent bus services, and potential rapid transit options (including segregated travel). Super Route in South Belfast, E-Way from East Belfast

towards Comber, and West – Way serving North and West Belfast are examples of potential transit solutions which could embrace bus corridors or innovative use of old rail lines.

BMA 3.1 Create an integrated Metropolitan Transport Corridor Network:

- develop a system of strategic transport corridors for the BMA, based on the MTCs and their connections to the Key and Link Transport Corridors, to form the main development spines around which the future land use pattern will be planned; and
- direct the urban renaissance drive and the peripheral expansion of the BMA to focus as much major housing and employment growth as possible close to the MTC Network. The siting of new development in relationship to corridors well served by public transport will provide a sustainable choice of transport for people moving around the BMA and help underpin the enhancement of the public transport system.

BMA 3.2 Prepare transport corridor plans to:

- achieve general consistency in programming the implementation of integrated transportation measures with the housing and employment opportunities and the community needs of individual MTCs;
- provide for more efficient linking of Belfast with Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and North Down; and
- improve corridor links with towns in the BMA hinterland, such as Carryduff, Comber, Moira, Antrim and Newtownards, and provide better access to the Regional Strategic Transport Network.

BMA 3.3 Balance inner and outer accessibility:

- recognise the different role and potential of orbital, as well as radial, corridors and assess the need for additional transport corridor plans for orbital routes to improve accessibility links around the BMA.

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BMA 3.4 Assess the need for future strategic road improvements in the BMA in the context of:

- the Spatial Development Strategy and a multi-modal approach;
- facilitating the efficient movement of freight, especially managing access to the motorway system and the regional gateway, the Westlink and river crossings as a regional priority;
- increasing the capacity and choice for walking, cycling and improved public transport;
- providing environmental and safety benefits and removing congestion and pollution 'blackspots'; and
- managing the demand for enhanced road capacity by transport corridor plans, which will review measures such as priority for public transport, traffic management, park and ride facilities and financial instruments, to avoid the intensification of car commuting pressures and increased congestion, particularly on the MTCs.

SPG–BMA 4: To improve the public transport service in the Belfast Metropolitan Area

In order to provide real public transport alternatives to the car within the BMA it will be necessary to identify in corridor action plans substantially improved quality of public transport services, especially in terms of journey ambience, frequency and reliability of travel times.

BMA 4.1 Develop a bus strategy centred on the MTCs and responsive to the wider pattern of demand:

- promote the development of a comprehensive BMA Bus Network to strengthen the radial pattern of provision, offer a range of inter-connecting cross-city services and local services, rail feeder services and orbital route services;
- establish Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) infrastructure focused to provide an attractive alternative to the private car in journey time and service quality;
- co-ordinate the implementation of QBCs along with environmental street improvements which are designed to assist loading, servicing, parking, cycling and pedestrian facilities and reduce local impact of car traffic;

- maximise bus penetration to Belfast city centre and town centres within the BMA; and
- promote the development of park and ride schemes at key locations within the BMA and its hinterland, and improve the opportunities for modal interchange at strategic development sites and public transport intersections.

BMA 4.2 Rapid transit, both guided bus and light rail based systems, has a potential longer term role in delivering integrated transport solutions for the BMA:

- keep rapid transit options under review for addressing future transportation requirements of the BMA. Examine the development of a BMA Rapid Transit Network in order to offer high quality, high capacity, accessible services using a mix of bus priority, guided bus and light rail, operating on-street and utilising existing and new rights of way.

BMA 4.3 The proposed investment programme for rail infrastructure improvements and new rolling stock will make an important contribution to providing sustainable transport choice and the regeneration of the BMA. Examine the potential for increasing the rail network's share of total travel:

- assess the scope to improve services in conjunction with demand management and traffic restraint;
- develop park and ride and enhanced passenger facilities, including improved access, security and passenger information systems at suburban stations; and
- consider innovative route configurations and service options to meet the evolving transport requirements of the BMA development strategy, such as a circular passenger rail service on the Belfast-Bleach Green-Antrim-Lisburn-Belfast section of the network with connections to Carrickfergus, Belfast International Airport, Belfast City Airport and Bangor, thus opening up long term development potential on enhanced rail links (C11 ►).

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SPG-BMA 5: To manage travel demand within the Belfast Metropolitan Area

In the BMA, improvements to infrastructure, public transport services and traffic management, cannot cater for indefinite increases in private car travel. Demand management will be an integral part of transportation planning for the BMA, supported by an education campaign to help share responsibility for good transport practice amongst key business, community and government interests as well as the individual traveller.

BMA 5.1 Prepare a comprehensive Travel Demand Management Strategy for the BMA:

- consider a package of appropriate complementary initiatives such as road pricing mechanisms, parking supply and pricing policies, land use measures and innovative work practices to influence modal choice and road use at peak travel times; and
- establish a mechanism to help market and improve public support and understanding of transportation solutions in the BMA.

BMA 5.2 Extend the range of traffic management measures:

- expand the use of transport telematics, especially at strategic junctions and river crossings in the BMA and its constituent town centres, to improve traffic control, reduce congestion, give priority to public transport, pedestrians and cyclists, and provide real time travel information;
- examine pedestrian needs in the city centre to take account of the needs of residents and the mobility impaired, to provide facilities matched to patterns of pedestrian movement, including improving pedestrian routes to bus stops, bus and rail stations, and new quality walking routes into the city centre;
- develop and monitor, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland School Travel Advisory Group's Safer Routes to School pilot projects;
- assess the benefit of introducing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to give priority to vehicles with a specified minimum number of occupants;
- as part of the transport corridor plans, review the arrangements for freight movement, distribution and logistics in the BMA and develop route priorities, including the possible use of bus lanes by goods vehicles; and
- develop measures, which will contribute to improved local air and noise quality in heavily trafficked parts of the BMA, to achieve compliance with national and EU standards.

7 Londonderry: Regional City for the North West

Londonderry: Regional City for the North West

The North West encompasses the district council areas of Londonderry, Limavady and Strabane together with the greater part of County Donegal. Londonderry, Limavady and Strabane share many common economic and social characteristics, including strong linkages with Donegal. A young population and expanding workforce face the opportunities and challenges of a sub-regional economy characterised by the presence of a growing number of new hi-tech jobs together with declining traditional sector employment and a persistent core of unemployment.

Areas of disadvantage exist on both sides of the border highlighting the need to achieve more economic growth across the whole of the North West. To help ensure that the North West's performance at least equals that achieved elsewhere in Northern Ireland, the Strategy will encourage increased cross-border co-operation on a wider basis – North-South within Ireland, and East-West with Great Britain and beyond. Already there are many examples of successful cross-border working and further opportunities for mutual benefit are likely to be found in, for example, the fields of energy, transportation, tourism, rural development and environmental management.



7 Londonderry: Regional City for the North West

Londonderry will have a pivotal role in cross-border and international trading relationships. It is already the main urban centre in the North West of the island and a proven bridge for investment, particularly between America and Europe. Continued growth is envisaged for the city which has been one of the fastest growing urban centres in the Region over the last twenty-five years. While its economy has diversified and continues to attract new inward investors, its traditional manufacturing base faces strong competitive pressures.

Strategic objectives for Londonderry and the North West

- to strengthen the role of Londonderry as the regional city and transport hub of the North West, offering key infrastructure and services in administration, education, health, energy, industry, commerce, shopping, cultural and tourism amenities; and reinforce the complementary employment and services roles of Limavady and Strabane;
- to encourage economic growth and industrial development to meet the employment needs of a fast growing population; and
- to enhance the city through continuing regeneration and the sensitive development of its exceptional riverside setting and unique walled core; and establish a unique city tourism market based on its reputation, as a historic city, in the network of European walled cities.

SPG-LNW 1: To develop a strong North West centred on Londonderry

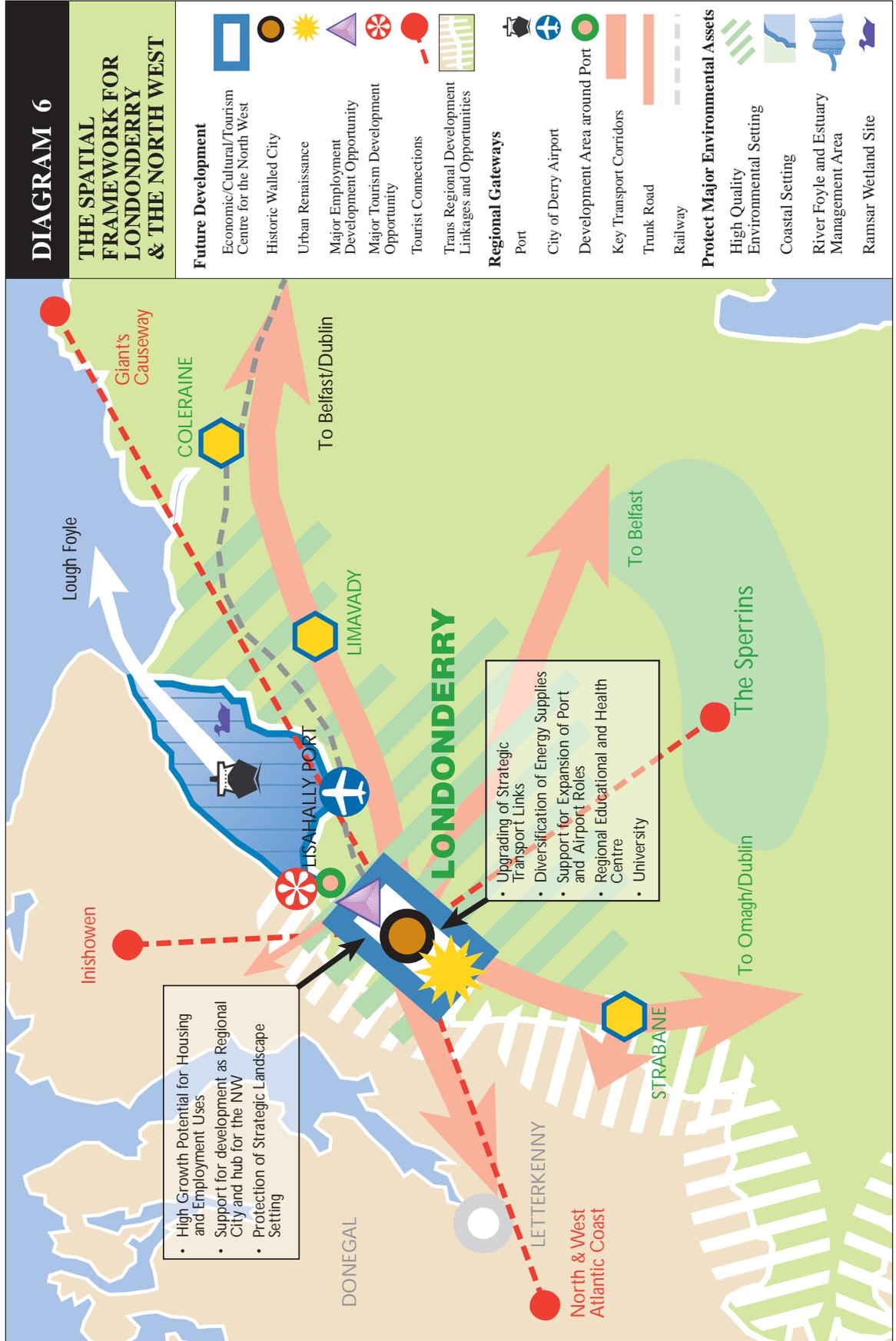
Within Northern Ireland, Londonderry, Limavady and Strabane are the main centres for services, industry and employment in the North West. Londonderry is the dominant centre, the focal point of a hinterland of up to 300,000 people and a regional gateway to three key transport corridors. Outside the BMA, it is the largest urban entity with a population approaching 90,000 and an estimated housing growth of nearly 13,000 dwellings by 2015 when the City is expected to exceed 100,000.

LNW1.1 Strengthen the economy of the North West:

- develop Londonderry as the key strategic employment location of the North West and central focus of the north west development corridor extending into Donegal towards Letterkenny, and support the continuing economic development of the main hubs of Limavady and Strabane⁷;

⁷ The role of the main hubs is considered in Chapters 5 and 8, and is detailed in the Family of Settlements Report.

7 Londonderry: Regional City for the North West



7 Londonderry: Regional City for the North West

- identify and safeguard strategic employment locations on the west and east side of the Foyle (C10: SPG-ECON 2-SPG - ECON 4 ►);
- upgrade strategic transport links to the rest of the Region and cross-border; intensify the use of the port and airport; and diversify the energy infrastructure, encouraging the extension of the natural gas network to Londonderry;
- facilitate the promotion of inward investment and local enterprise in world class manufacturing, high technology and knowledge-based businesses and the development of the creative business sector;
- enhance education, innovation, research and skills training; in particular through the expansion of the University of Ulster at Magee and the North-West Institute of Further and Higher Education; and
- develop the Science Park out-centres at Magee and in Coleraine, convenient to the North West.

SPG-LNW 2: To strengthen the role of Londonderry as the regional city and hub for the North West

The historic walled city enjoys a magnificent setting on Lough Foyle and has benefited from concerted and sustained regeneration initiatives in recent years. The city has reinforced its regional shopping role with a growth in retail floor space, range of goods and quality. There is a discernible revival of the economic heart accompanied by the increasing reputation and popularity of the city as a centre of culture, arts and tourism. New port and airport infrastructure has strengthened the economic base of the city.

The aim is to build on these achievements and benefit from more cross-border co-operation. In aspiring to greater prosperity and influence as the hub of the North West corner of the island, it is critical that Londonderry embraces a sustainable approach which integrates economic growth, social progress and care for its exceptional natural and built heritage.

Successive Area Plans have provided the statutory framework for impressive progress in terms of the physical and economic regeneration of the city. The new Derry Area Plan 2011 was adopted in 2000 and this Plan will continue to guide the physical renewal and development of the city.

The Derry Area Plan will be complemented by the longer term and more broadly based City Vision First Plan for Progress. This plan, which has

7 Londonderry: Regional City for the North West

emerged from the City Vision process, is a locally produced comprehensive strategy aimed at improving the quality of life of the citizens of Londonderry. It contains proposals that cross the economic, cultural, social and environmental spectrum. This Plan will be important in helping guide and influence future regeneration and development.

The core themes of the City Vision process:

■ Inclusion	-	Sharing our city
■ Culture	-	Living our lives
■ Economy	-	Earning our living
■ Environment	-	Caring for our city
■ Community	-	Caring for people

LNW 2.1 Continue to regenerate the City of Londonderry:

- establish a national and international image as an attractive, welcoming and cultured city, building on the City Vision process, and enhancing its role as a centre for regional shopping and administration, including government offices, and continue to regenerate and develop the city centre;
- accommodate planned housing growth in the region of 13,000 dwelling units by 2015;
- promote an integrated cross-border approach to infrastructure development to assist future growth in the city and its sub-region;
- promote the identity of the city as a creative centre for arts and culture. The completion of the new Millennium Centre, with its theatre, will be an important catalyst for creating cultural quarters within the city centre, including the Verbal Arts Centre and the Nerve Centre; and
- sustain urban regeneration measures targeting social need and community disadvantage across the city, and help tackle community division (C4: SPG-SRC 3 ◀).

7 Londonderry: Regional City for the North West

LNW 2.2 Promote an attractive and historic city:

- protect and enhance the historic townscape of a heritage city of regional and international significance;
- create a high quality urban environment with sensitive treatment and protection of the special landscape setting on the banks of the Rivers Foyle and Faughan; and
- promote the city as a major tourism destination and gateway based on the international attraction of its City walls and heritage resources; its linkages with Donegal, north Londonderry, the Sperrins and the north Antrim coast; and increase its share of the world cruise market (C10: SPG-ECON 10 ►).

LNW 2.3 Strengthen the position of Londonderry as the transport hub of the North West:

- enhance transport linkages to the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN) and to towns in Donegal particularly to give better and more reliable journey times to the North West from Belfast and Dublin;
- examine the potential for improving transport links to and from the Port of Lisahally, the industrial areas at Maydown and Campsie and the City of Derry Airport;
- provide better accessibility to the central area of the city, particularly on the main radial routes for public transport, walking and cycling; and
- improve opportunities for interchange between bus and rail, particularly linked to bus priority, park and ride facilities, and associated traffic management in the central area and pedestrian connections between the bus and rail stations.

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Rural Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is predominantly a rural region with around one million people, or 60% of its population, living in towns, villages and open countryside outside the BMA and Londonderry. Urban and rural areas have distinct roles, but it is important that these roles are complementary and that town and country maintain their distinctiveness and respective social and physical integrity in the sustainable development of each.

As estimated at 1998, the population distribution for Rural Northern Ireland was:

Table 2: Rural Northern Ireland - Estimated Population 1998

Main towns	322,000
Small towns (under 10,000) and villages	312,800
Open countryside	377,400
Total	1,012,200

It is important that the economic and social benefits of a more stable and prosperous Northern Ireland are translated into balanced and sustained development right across the Region. All communities, whether urban or rural, should have the opportunity to contribute fully to the prosperity of their local area and Northern Ireland as a whole. This is particularly so for rural areas for two reasons. First, **to encourage a more equitable distribution of public and private investment**. Second, **to promote social inclusion and target interventions at economic blackspots**.

A diverse and distinctive rural region

Rural Northern Ireland is a diverse area with a distinctive settlement pattern, formed from a rich mosaic of main and small towns, villages, and dwellings in the open countryside, that is unique within the UK. It offers a high degree of choice for the rural community who for generations have been the custodians of this exceptional natural and built environment.

A unique landscape of high environmental quality and the historic settlement pattern, together provide an important range of social, economic and cultural facilities for the rural community and the Region.

The towns and villages that make up the rural community have much to contribute to the long-term development of Northern Ireland. Not only can they maintain their uniqueness as a location for residents and a tourist destination with international appeal, but also they can realise their potential to attract smaller-scale direct foreign investment and create new diverse indigenous investment.

Farming is, however, the major land user with almost all farms (99%) being owner occupied. The average size of land owned (34.5 hectares) in Northern Ireland is small in comparison to the rest of the UK, however, it is double the average size in the EU.

In Northern Ireland, the agriculture sector is still more economically significant than in other parts of the UK. As a percentage of gross value added to the economy, agriculture in Northern Ireland in 1999 contributed 2.5% compared to 0.9% for the UK as a whole. Similarly, 6% of the workforce are employed in agriculture in Northern Ireland compared to only 2% for the UK as a whole. Furthermore, in 1997/98 the agriculture and agri-food sector accounted for 15% of all manufacturing exports from the Region.

A changing and dynamic rural region

The past 10 years have witnessed many changes in rural life due to wider social, economic and technological forces, most of which are beyond the direct control of governments. However, the Regional Development Strategy underlines the importance of balanced development across Northern Ireland and recognises the potential and needs of rural areas. The Northern Ireland Administration can, therefore, seek to influence some of the changes and help the rural community adjust and avail itself of new opportunities.

Changes in the rural economy

Northern Ireland's rural economy and agricultural sector continue to face major challenges as a consequence of trade liberalisation, market globalisation, technological change and EU enlargement.

In addition, the sector and its component industries have had to weather the additional difficulties of the impact of exchange rates, the BSE and Foot and Mouth crises, and a downturn in international market prices.

The decline in employment, increase in average farm size, more part-time farming, and the need for additional sources of income to retain farm viability, are likely to continue into the foreseeable future. The decline in

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this core industry will clearly have a detrimental impact on the social fabric and local economies of those rural districts most dependent on agriculture for employment.

Significant changes in EU policy through CAP reform and Agenda 2000 have impacted on the industry and those who work in it. The upcoming CAP reform will be a significant challenge for the sector. The multi-functional role of farmers as guardians of the rural landscape and environment has been recognised and linkages developed between industry support and the requirement of society for conservation and enhancement of the countryside. Agri-environment schemes have been introduced to support farm incomes in return for agreed environmental enhancement.

In order to respond positively to these external pressures, diversification of farm businesses and off-farm employment have been growing trends within agriculture and are set to continue, as farmers look for alternative means of supplementing their income.

Against this background, disadvantaged rural areas and those defined as Less Favoured Areas (LFA) tend to have more extreme problems with lower rates of economic activity and high levels of long-term unemployment.

Changes in technology are having an increasingly important influence on the rural economy, both in agriculture and other rural businesses, reducing the economic and social impact of remoteness and peripherality. The growth of telecommunications, information technology and knowledge based industries is likely to continue to offer significant opportunities to rural communities.

Changes in rural society

In the 1990s the rural community living in small towns, villages, and small settlement 'clusters' in the countryside, has experienced the fastest rate of population growth reversing a long-term trend of population decline and reflecting, in part, the success of rural regeneration activities. A notable feature and asset for the future of rural society is the vibrant community life expressed through the many community organisations, churches and community activities.

In the open countryside, the largest growth of population over the past 25 years has been in the Belfast 'travel to work' hinterland reflecting the trend to use the countryside as a residential area for townspeople. In the more recent past there is evidence that this trend is extending beyond the hinterland towards the west and the south where good road

connections exist. The social effect is to introduce into the countryside a population which does not in general support local rural life, but looks to the cities and towns for services and social contacts.

Rural life is also changing as it adapts to new trends in agriculture and other macro social and economic forces. In some of the most rural areas, rapid change threatens the social and economic future of local rural communities, and long-term unemployment is a particular difficulty.

Wider technological and economic forces have and will continue to change working patterns in rural areas leading to increased home working, more frequent job changes, increased mobility of labour and the need for rural people to acquire new skills through lifelong learning.

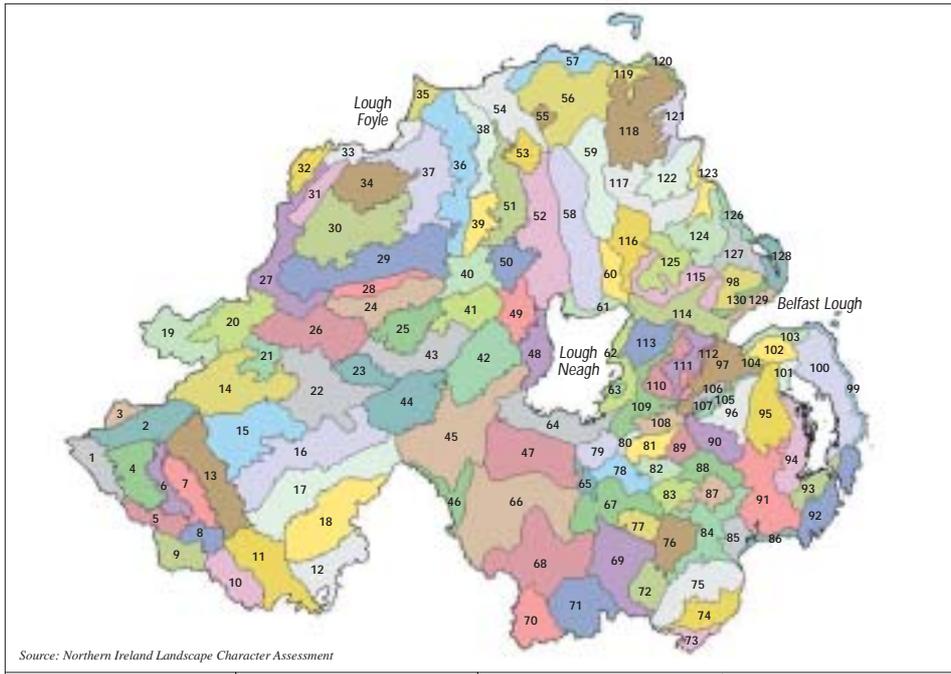
The changing rural environment

The rural environment is undergoing great change in response to the restructuring of agriculture and urban dispersal pressures. Continuing management of this change is essential to maintain the rich variety of distinctive rural landscapes (Figure 14) which are important environmental and economic resources, and to conserve those environmental assets of regional and sub-regional importance.

There are concerns about the cumulative impact of development in parts of the countryside particularly in the east of the Region and close to towns where the pressures are high. The increasing pressure from townspeople to live in the countryside is leading to the erosion of rural character and tranquillity, especially within commuting distance of main towns. A recent Landscape Character Assessment for all of Northern Ireland (see Figure 14) records that in many areas the delicate and high quality rural landscape and the visual amenity of the countryside is compromised or threatened by inappropriate development.

These growing pressures present a threat to the open countryside which is a vital resource for sustaining the genuine rural community. The cumulative impacts of this development include: loss of agricultural land and habitats; fields being sold off to house townspeople; increased traffic on rural roads; the risk of pollution from growing numbers of septic tanks; the increased visual impact of more structures in the landscape; unnecessary extension of infrastructure and services; and a weakening of towns and villages.

FIGURE 14
NORTHERN IRELAND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



Source: Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment

No. NILCA NAME

- 1. The Garrison Lowlands
- 2. Lower Lough Erne
- 3. Croagh and Garvary River
- 4. The Lough Navar and Ballintempo Uplands
- 5. The Lough Macnean Valley
- 6. The Knockmore Scarpland
- 7. The Sillees Valley
- 8. The Arney Lowlands
- 9. Cuilcagh and Marlbank
- 10. Slieve Russel, Derrylin and Kinawley
- 11. Upper Lough Erne
- 12. Newtownbutler and Rosslea Lowlands
- 13. Enniskillen
- 14. Lough Bradan
- 15. Irvinestown Farmland
- 16. Brougher Mountain
- 17. Clogher Valley Lowlands
- 18. Slieve Beagh
- 19. Killeter Uplands
- 20. Derg Valley
- 21. Fairy Water Valley
- 22. Omagh Farmland
- 23. Camowen Valley
- 24. South Sperrin
- 25. Beaghmore Moors and Marsh
- 26. Bessy Bell and Gortin
- 27. Foyle Valley
- 28. Glenelly Valley
- 29. Sperrin Mountains
- 30. Sperrin Foothills
- 31. Burngibbigh and Drumahoe
- 32. Derry Slopes
- 33. Lough Foyle Alluvial Plain
- 34. Loughermore Hills
- 35. Magilligan Lowlands
- 36. Binevenagh
- 37. Roe Basin
- 38. Eastern Binevenagh Slopes
- 39. Glenshane Slopes
- 40. Upper Moyola Valley
- 41. Slieve Gallion
- 42. Cookstown Farmlands

- 43. Carrickmore Hills
- 44. Slievemore
- 45. Dungannon Drumlins and Hills
- 46. Blackwater Valley
- 47. Loughgall Orchard Belt
- 48. West Lough Neagh Shores
- 49. Magherafelt Farmland
- 50. Moyola Floodplain
- 51. Garvagh Farmland
- 52. Lower Bann Valley
- 53. Lower Bann Floodplain
- 54. Coleraine Farmland
- 55. Garry Bog
- 56. Dervock Farmlands
- 57. Causeway Coast and Rathlin Island
- 58. Long Mountain Ridge
- 59. Cullybackey and Clogh Mills Drumlins
- 60. River Main Valley
- 61. North Lough Neagh Shores
- 62. East Lough Neagh Points
- 63. Portmore Lough Fringe
- 64. Lough Neagh Peatlands
- 65. Upper Bann Floodplain
- 66. Armagh Drumlins
- 67. Armagh/Banbridge Hills
- 68. Carrigatuke Hills
- 69. Newry Basin
- 70. Crossmaglen Drumlins and Loughs
- 71. Ring of Gullion
- 72. Slieve Roosley
- 73. Kilkeel Coast
- 74. The Kingdom of Mourne
- 75. Mourne Mountains
- 76. Ballyrone Basin
- 77. Iveagh Slopes
- 78. North Banbridge Hills
- 79. Craigavon Plateau
- 80. Donaghcloney Valley
- 81. Kilwarlin Plateau
- 82. Dromore Lowlands
- 83. Lower Slieve Croob Foothills
- 84. Mourne Foothills
- 85. Newcastle Valleys
- 86. Tyrella Coastal Dunes

- 87. Slieve Croob Summits
- 88. Craggy Dromara Uplands
- 89. Hillsborough Slopes
- 90. Ravarnet Valley
- 91. Quoile Valley Lowlands
- 92. Ballyquintin and Lecale Coast
- 93. Portaferry and North Lecale
- 94. Strangford Drumlins and Islands
- 95. Ballygowan Drumlins
- 96. Castlereagh Plateau
- 97. Belfast/Lisburn
- 98. Carrickfergus Upland Pastures
- 99. Outer Ards Coast
- 100. Ards Farmlands and Estates
- 101. Scrabo
- 102. Hollywood Hills
- 103. Bangor Coastline
- 104. Craigantlet Escarpment
- 105. Castlereagh Slopes
- 106. Lagan Parkland
- 107. Hummocky Lagan Lowlands
- 108. Broad Lagan Valley
- 109. Upper Ballinderry Plateau
- 110. Derrykillultagh
- 111. Divis Summits
- 112. Belfast Basalt Escarpment
- 113. Expansive Crumlin Farmland
- 114. Three and Six Mile Water Valleys
- 115. Tardree and Six Mile Water Slopes
- 116. Ballymena Farmland
- 117. Central Ballymena Glens
- 118. Moyle Moorlands and Forest
- 119. Ballycastle Glens
- 120. Fair Head
- 121. Moyle Glens
- 122. Garron Plateau
- 123. Larne Glens
- 124. Larne Basalt Moorland
- 125. Tardree Upland Pastures
- 126. Larne Coast
- 127. Larne Ridgeland
- 128. Island Magee
- 129. Carrickfergus Shoreline
- 130. Carrickfergus Farmed Escarpment

Summary of the **Key Driving Forces for Rural Change:**

Economic:

- decline in the traditional agriculture industry;
- increasing agricultural diversification and other alternatives to agriculture for employment;
- increasing rural economic opportunities in telecommunications, information technology and knowledge based industries; and
- the need to contribute to reducing socio-economic differentials within rural areas.

Social:

- the emergence of a growing and dynamic rural population base, especially in the expanding small towns, villages and small settlement 'clusters';
- the need to facilitate the provision of land and buildings, and associated services and amenities, in order to accommodate a projected need of 108,000 dwellings for all of Rural Northern Ireland by 2015, with the possibility of just under 70,000 dwellings in total being located in small towns, villages and the open countryside, and up to 40,000 dwellings provided in the main towns serving this large rural constituency;⁸
- the need to maintain strong hubs of employment and services and to accommodate more of the housing allocated to towns and villages within their existing built-up areas to conserve resources;
- emerging economic and technological forces that are radically changing rural working and living patterns; and
- increasingly strong and thriving rural community life and the need to support its continued development.

Environment:

- accommodating future rural development growth while protecting and caring for the environment;
- the need to value and conserve the rural environment, with a clean, green image, as an important natural and cultural resource having the potential to support a more diversified rural economy offering new employment;
- rising public concern for the protection of high quality rural landscapes and habitats, and the conservation of natural and built heritage; and
- increasing pressure on the rural environment as more people from urban communities choose to live there.

⁸ The actual distribution of the 108,000 dwellings between the main towns, small towns, villages and the open countryside is a matter to be decided at the district level through the development plan process.



Strategic rural development objectives

In relation to Rural Northern Ireland, the overall aim of the Strategy is to **develop an attractive and prosperous rural area, based on a balanced and integrated approach to the development of town, village and countryside, in order to sustain a strong and vibrant rural community, contributing to the overall well-being of the Region as a whole.** This will be achieved by acting on the following strategic objectives (Diagram 7):

- Supporting the development of a strong, diversified and competitive rural economy served by the Regional Strategic Transport Network (C8: SPG-RNI 1);
- Developing a living and working countryside which recognises the unique rural character of the Region and contributes to a sense of belonging in local rural areas (C8: SPG-RNI 2);
- Promoting the continuing renewal and revitalisation of towns and villages in Rural Northern Ireland (C8: SPG-RNI 3);
- Improving the accessibility of the rural community to employment, services and regional amenities (C8: SPG-RNI 4); and
- Managing and enhancing the natural and built heritage in rural areas (C8: SPG-RNI 5 and C12).

The application of the principles of sustainable development (C3 ◀) must be at the heart of future rural development. The need to sustain rural communities requires new development and employment opportunities, which respect local, social and environmental circumstances. In this context, the approach set out in SPG-RNI 1 - RNI 5 is to **conserve and enhance the environment, whilst improving the quality of life of the rural communities and developing the rural economy.**

A co-ordinated and integrated approach to the development of Rural Northern Ireland is needed at all levels. To this end rural proofing of policies and the active participation of the rural communities are essential.

The work of the west rural region, comprising five district council areas, has confirmed the value of sub-regional co-operation and has highlighted the importance of interconnections, within sub-regional economies, in relation to rural communities. Other quasi sub-regional structures already exist through inter-agency and inter-district partnerships particularly in rural parts of the Region. There is potential to build on these sub-regional frameworks as models for co-operation in the future implementation of rural development policies. (C5: SDS)

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EU funds and initiatives are important to the development of Rural Northern Ireland (Appendix 5 ►). Therefore, the Strategy provides a broad spatial perspective supporting the European Community Support Framework for Northern Ireland and related programmes and funding matters.

Strategic planning guidelines for rural Northern Ireland

A strong, diversified and competitive rural economy

An integrated approach to the rural economy is envisaged, building on the close interdependence between urban and rural areas, in order to develop complementary economic activities and widen the economic base of town and countryside. Increasing the diversification of the rural economy is essential to meet employment needs and keep wealth circulating within the local economy. Economic regeneration, allied to the development of a multi-purpose countryside, will help to compensate for declining agricultural employment and provide alternative, local, employment opportunities. It is also recognised that fostering small indigenous businesses can make a significant contribution at the local level. In this context, 'pluriactivity', which combines farming with off-farm employment or on-farm diversification, is expected to grow.



SPG-RNI 1: To maintain a working countryside with a strong mixed use rural economy (SPG-RNI 3 and SPG-RNI 5)

RNI 1.1 Sustain the continuing development of a strong agricultural and agri-food sector:

- maintain a strong core agricultural and food processing industry by facilitating the development of education and competence levels of the rural community, facilitating the improvement of the industry's structure and product marketing, including the setting up and sustaining of farmers' markets;
- utilise the environmental and cultural resources of the land in a sensitive and innovative way as a competitive asset for economic development by measures such as:
 - promoting agri-environmental measures, including organic farming;
 - promoting good farming practice in relation to the environment;
 - developing renewable energy sources; and
 - exploring the potential for research and use of sustainable technology in rural areas.

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RNI 1.2 Facilitate the development of rural industries, businesses and enterprises in appropriate locations, and ensure they are satisfactorily integrated with the settlement or rural landscape:

- foster indigenous rural businesses that build on the local resources of land and people and ensure maximum local added value;
- foster rural community projects and facilitate the diversification of the rural economy, generating jobs near local people;
- facilitate the development of opportunities for growth in employment, niche markets, inward investment, micro-businesses, and extending the rural services industry;
- support environmentally sensitive proposals, of an appropriate scale and nature, for the creation of new enterprises in farm building complexes no longer required for agriculture. Also to facilitate the provision of business premises in small towns and villages;
- encourage the use of information technology, telecommunications and tele-working in rural areas;
- use minerals for economic development in a sustainable manner and in a way which assesses the need to exploit the mineral resource against the need to protect and conserve environmental resources;
- maintain and improve rural infrastructure to facilitate economic development; and
- build the capacity of the rural community to develop and avail itself of new economic opportunities by facilitating development for appropriate high quality training in skills for the future.

RNI 1.3 Sustain and extend the forestry resources of Northern Ireland:

- facilitate the expansion of wood-based employment opportunities in appropriate locations, and ensure they are satisfactorily integrated into the rural landscape, through such measures as:
 - strategic development of the timber resource;

- selective local improvements to rural roads for timber traffic; and
- encouragement of investment in industrial wood processing capacity;
- facilitate the expansion of the leisure potential of woods and forests through such measures as:
 - planting new community woodlands close to towns and cities;
 - refurbishing existing forest facilities; and
 - developing new facilities in areas of potential demand; and
- plant new woodlands and consolidate and exercise good stewardship of forest resources and habitats as specified in the UK Forestry Standard.

Table 3: Forestry as a % of total land area

EU average	32%
UK average	10%
Northern Ireland	6%
Republic of Ireland	8%

Source: European Union, 1998

RNI 1.4 Maintain a viable fishing industry in Northern Ireland:

- assist with the development of an efficient and sustainable commercial sea fisheries sector and related infrastructure; and
- stimulate investment in the aquaculture sector to increase the output of aquaculture products with minimal environmental impact.

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RNI 1.5 Further develop the potential for countryside recreation in an environmentally sensitive way:

- enhance the range of opportunities for leisure in the countryside based around the use of land, water and air (C10: SPG-ECON 9 ►); and
- maintain a welcoming countryside accessible on foot or cycle by means of countryside trails, including the Waymarked Ways, riverside walks and coastal paths, supported by visitor information and hospitality infrastructure.

RNI 1.6 Expand rural tourism in a sustainable manner (C10: SPG-ECON 1 - SPG-ECON 11 ►):

- develop natural resource rural tourism to capitalise in an environmentally sensitive way on the many distinctive rural assets in town, village and countryside; and
- provide a range of visitor attractions based on land, water and heritage, supported by an enhanced tourism infrastructure, drawing on the hospitality and potential of the rural community.

A vibrant, living and working countryside

A strong community focus based around a well-developed sense of identity with a town or locality, and the land, is a long-established feature of rural life and society. The Strategy seeks to reflect and develop this strong sense of place and community focus as an important feature of Rural Northern Ireland.

Community division in Rural Northern Ireland, as in the region as a whole, has had an impact on economic and social activity. Parts of Rural Northern Ireland also suffer as a result of deprivation and social exclusion. In line with the guiding principle to promote spatial equity and the New TSN initiative, the aim is to promote a comprehensive, balanced and integrated approach to dealing with these problems ensuring a continuing robust rural community, with opportunities for all.

SPG-RNI 2: To create and sustain a living countryside with a high quality of life for all its residents

RNI 2.1 Help maintain a vibrant and self-generating rural community:

- accommodate new housing development to meet local housing need;
- encourage the development of balanced rural communities by promoting housing choice and affordable housing in rural areas (C9: SPG-HOU 6▶);
- promote the use of the Local Development Guidelines (C12: SPG-ENV 4▶); and
- support the continued development of long established rural communities:
 - recognise the strong sense of belonging and sense of place in rural areas;
 - encourage sensitive and innovative rural development schemes, both within villages and small rural settlements, to enhance established patterns of local community activity and reinforce strong community identities;
 - help rural communities to develop strategies for economic and social regeneration in the face of wider rural change, with a particular focus on the sustainable and equitable development of disadvantaged rural areas; and
 - continue to develop a partnership approach to tackling complex rural issues based on community participation.

A strong network of rural service centres

The Spatial Development Strategy (C5) identifies the strategic role of the main hubs in achieving regional balance across Northern Ireland. Local people look to these market towns for the provision of a range of essential goods and services, either by direct access or distribution from these economic hubs. A strong network of vibrant main and small towns, supported by the villages, is vital to sustaining and servicing the rural community.

It is important, therefore, to maintain a healthy and balanced interdependence of towns and their rural hinterlands. This means providing adequate sites for housing, business development and a range of

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social services appropriate to the function and location of the particular hubs and their rural catchment areas.

Some small towns and villages, particularly those close to the cities and main towns, or on the coast, have grown rapidly and their original identity and character risk being swamped by further development and social change. In the east of the Region, small towns and villages have grown at the expense of the main towns, some of which have been relatively stagnant in population terms over the past 20 years.

Similar dangers exist in rural areas where the pressure for second homes have been considerable. Traditional rural communities can suffer in these circumstances due to newer residents who, in community and social terms, more naturally gravitate to the nearby main towns and cities than to the rural area.

In other towns and villages, communities have faced economic decline and a haemorrhaging of local residents. This has led to run-down living environments, declining inner areas, unbalanced population structures and social and economic disadvantage. In these communities there is a need for an injection of development and growth to help revitalise the local settlements and communities, and help retain shops, post offices, banking services and other essential local services.

SPG-RNI 3: To support the network of service centres based on main towns, small towns and villages in Rural Northern Ireland

RNI 3.1 Develop a network of strong main towns as the major locations providing employment, services and a range of cultural and leisure amenities for both townspeople and rural communities (C9: SPG-HOU 3: HGI 3 and C10: SPG-ECON 1 ►):

- tap the potential to form strategic alliances between groups of towns to achieve economic growth, develop tourism and cultural activity and facilitate the provision of services in distinctive sub-regions such as the Rural West and Rural North East, thus helping to hold and circulate wealth within the local economy; and
- use strategic visioning exercises, where appropriate, to engage citizens in comprehensive long-term initiatives aimed at boosting the vitality of their town and improving the quality of life.

RNI 3.2 Promote the vitality and viability of town centres:

- create attractive and distinctive central places which are a focus of civic pride and offer a diversity of attractions, and foster clusters of economic activities in and around the heart of towns;
- explore telecentre potential drawing on local labour markets; encourage vibrant centres to contribute to meeting the needs of nearby disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods;
- establish the role of multi-functional town centres as prime locations for retail, service, administrative, leisure and cultural facilities both for urban and rural communities;
- encourage residential development in central locations;
- promote the reinvigoration of town centres including, as appropriate, the use of town centre health checks and innovative approaches to the management of these important centres of civic life; and
- strengthen public transport to offer an alternative to the car in accessing towns and town centres, including improved access for rural dwellers to education and training facilities, and promote internal town bus services.

RNI 3.3 Sustain and consolidate the role of small towns and villages as local rural service centres:

- revitalise small towns and villages particularly those which have been static or declining, and especially regenerate run down areas within the settlements;
- explore the potential within a cluster of small settlements to form local alliances to exploit complementary resources and facilities for the benefit of the rural community; and
- within the BMA 'travel to work' hinterland (defined in C5), which is subject to intense dispersal pressures, the Strategy is to consolidate villages and small rural settlements and to resist their large scale expansion in order to support and reinforce the main and small towns, make best use of past investment in infrastructure and services, and conserve resources (SPG-HOU 3▶).

The development potential of the administrative centres of each council district is set out in more detail in the Family of Settlements Report.

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Integrated and accessible rural areas

Accessibility to facilities and services can be difficult in rural areas, particularly for women, the elderly and young people and can contribute to rural isolation and peripherality. The Strategy recognises the wider social, environmental and economic implications of transport to rural communities.

Reliance on the car is greater within the rural community, where public transport provision serving a dispersed settlement pattern tends to be limited and expensive. For those lacking access to a car the initial result can be social exclusion leading to social isolation and neglect. In consequence, a flexible transport strategy is envisaged for Rural Northern Ireland that is responsive to the distinctive needs of rural communities. The overall aim is to improve rural public transport and generally secure a reasonable level of accessibility for rural areas.

SPG-RNI 4: To create an accessible countryside with a responsive transport network that meets the needs of the rural community (C11▶)

RNI 4.1 Enhance the accessibility of Rural Northern Ireland by upgrading the Regional Strategic Transport Network; and

RNI 4.2 Improve accessibility in rural areas, particularly to the key and link transport corridors and centres of employment and services:

- provide better integration of rural transport services with the strategic bus network;
- promote innovative rural transport initiatives in partnership with local communities such as:
 - schemes allowing community access to school buses
 - car/van sharing
 - community bus schemes
 - wider use of delivery vehicles for passenger transport; and
- continue to invest in maintaining and upgrading the rural road network and particularly local rural roads feeding the Regional Strategic Transport Network.



An attractive, unique and productive rural environment

Accommodation of the necessary housing and employment for rural communities has to be balanced with care of the environment. The rural environment is a unique and valuable resource of critical importance to the rural community and the region as a whole (C12 ►). The clean green image that the Region currently enjoys must be protected, enhanced and its benefits for the Region maximised. The management of development and visitor pressures, and the continuing active role of the rural community, will be vital to the future good stewardship of the countryside.

It is therefore essential that rural resources and the character of local landscapes are protected, in the long-term interest of rural people. Furthermore, the potential impact of inappropriate development accumulating over 25 years must be carefully considered in order to conserve finite rural resources and promote a sustainable pattern of rural development for future generations.

In the rural areas of Northern Ireland, the aim is to sustain the overall strength of the rural community living in small towns, villages, small rural settlements and the open countryside. At the same time, the contrasting development pressures between the Belfast 'travel to work area' (about 25 miles/40 kms from Belfast city centre) and the rest of the Region require different planning responses. The future growth of small towns and villages that have been expanding rapidly needs to be managed carefully while declining settlements are revitalised. Development in the rural areas within the Belfast travel to work area which are subject to most intense urban pressures, especially from townspeople building houses in the open countryside, will be more constrained (Figure 15).

In view of the risk of cumulative impacts resulting in unsustainable forms of development it will be important, as a precaution, to assess future urban and rural development trends in all areas and review policies as required.

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SPG-RNI 5: To continue to create and sustain an attractive and unique rural environment in the interests of the rural community and the Region as a whole

This Strategic Planning Guideline should be applied taking into account, where necessary, the SPGs in Chapter 12, Caring for the Environment.

RNI 5.1 Manage the use of rural resources to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development:

- identify, and compile an inventory of existing natural and man-made resources, including land in forestry and agriculture. Manage and enhance these resources by assessing their value to the economy and the community, and by the designation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas and the adoption of Countryside Management Schemes in appropriate circumstances;
- encourage farmers to adapt their land-use practices to local circumstances and contribute to preserving and restoring biological diversity, including participation in agri-environmental schemes;
- place more emphasis on the restoration and use of vernacular rural buildings and the retention of distinctive places within areas of particular landscape character in the interest of maintaining a unique and lively rural heritage (SPG-ENV 3 ►);
- continue to protect valued landscapes by use of Countryside Policy Area designations (Figure 15);
- control development in areas, particularly the main commuter zone around the BMA, where there is pressure for development (often from movement of townspeople to the countryside), by means of green belts, to maintain the rural character and tranquillity of the countryside (Figure 15);
- plan for a more measured growth in future of those small towns and villages in the BMA hinterland which have been growing too fast due to mobile housing demand, in order to protect their identity, character and setting; conserve resources; avoid a mismatch with services provision; and prevent an increase in longer distance car trips (SPG-HOU 3 ►); and

- monitor urban and rural housing development patterns to guard against unbalanced development either in the form of excessive urban growth at the expense of local rural communities, or high rural growth rates based on an outflow of people from towns, creating problems for both the towns and their rural hinterlands. Where adverse cumulative impacts are identified, difficult decisions will be required at the local level in relation to the control of individual proposals.

FIGURE 15
GREEN BELT AND COUNTRYSIDE POLICY AREAS IN NORTHERN IRELAND 2000



Chapter

- 9 Meeting Housing Needs
- 10 Supporting Economic Development
- 11 Developing a Regional Transportation System
- 12 Caring for the Environment

Section

4



Meeting Housing Needs

Introduction

Decent housing is a fundamental human need. The varied housing needs of the whole community need to be met. That includes the availability of affordable and special needs housing.

One of the aims of the Strategy is to facilitate the supply of additional housing to meet the projected needs of the Region over the next 25 years.

Northern Ireland is a region characterised by strong population growth and a youthful age structure. The continued impact of population change, household formation trends and the replacement of obsolete housing is expected to generate an overall need for 250,000 additional housing units by 2025, to accommodate a future population level of 1.835 million.

The Northern Ireland Administration is committed to working in partnership with the private sector and other housing agencies to ensure that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. The principles that underpin housing policy include the need to:

- widen opportunity and choice
- improve the supply and quality of housing; and
- promote sustainable development.

A balanced and integrated approach to meeting regional housing needs

Housing is the main land use in settlements and will continue to be the biggest consumer of undeveloped land. A fundamental spatial relationship is the link between the location of housing areas and centres of employment. This exerts a major influence on where people choose to live. Employment creation can generate a demand for new supplies of local housing. Conversely, housing development can in itself be a key driver of physical, economic and social change in urban and rural areas, and a valuable regenerative tool in targeting local areas of decline.

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A second major influence on housing patterns is personal choice. This is expressed in a variety of preferences about type of housing, perceptions about preferred localities, availability of services, and personal social networks. Strategic planning must take realistic account of the broad grain of the housing market while recognising unfettered market choices can produce sub-optimal development patterns which have adverse impacts on environmental resources and the built heritage.

Most of the houses built now will be occupied for about 80 to 100 years. It is important, therefore, to consider carefully the implications for future generations.

The Regional Development Strategy takes a long-term perspective and sets out a strategic approach to the distribution and form of housing throughout Northern Ireland. The aim is to ensure the future pattern of housing, and its critical relationships with employment, transport and the environment, are managed within the principles of sustainable development to secure the maximum benefits for all the people.

The approach to the location of future housing development is consistent with the Spatial Development Strategy, and places particular emphasis on **balanced and integrated development** which reflects the Guiding Principles (C3 ◀) by:

- integrating housing with economic development, services, transport and the local environment to achieve more sustainable patterns of development which make better use of resources;
- helping to create a more cohesive society by a balanced spread of housing across the Region and a high degree of integration with the Regional Strategic Transport Network of road and rail corridors; and
- fostering a greater sense of community with a focus on place, the value of the individual, and high quality living environments.

Future housing distribution guidance is set out in the form of housing growth indicators, designed to secure a balance between the BMA and its hinterland, and the rest of the Region, and to give guidance at the local level (C9: SPG-HOU 3). Within these parameters, the distinctive housing needs of the rural community are considered in more detail as an integral part of the chapter on Rural Northern Ireland (C8: SPG-RNI 2 ▶).

Traditional housing patterns

Northern Ireland's vernacular houses can be single, one-and a half, or two-storey dwellings. In the countryside, they are often part of a farm complex. Others are single dwellings, but occasionally the traditional clachan group of houses is still to be seen. In towns, the urban counterpart is in the individual, or occasional rows of, single-storey cottages, which have escaped replacement by larger and more modern accommodation, and small plain two-storey town-terraces.

The historic settlement pattern includes farms, cottages and clachans, as well as cities, towns and villages established in the medieval period, during the early 17th century or built as part of the industrial expansion in the 18th-19th centuries. There are also modern groups of rural dwellings, some are 20th century local authority housing projects, others are the result of the build-up of modern, single rural dwellings.

The housing pattern has evolved by people exercising a high degree of locational choice. However, without some degree of control, the rural character of our countryside will gradually be lost. The strategic proposals for the accommodation of future housing respect the strong sense of association with particular places, reflecting kinship and social ties. This is combined with an emphasis on enhancing existing settlements to encourage community development and the wise use of land and infrastructure.



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Assessment of regional housing need

An assessment was made of regional housing need up to the year 2015. Future reviews will update this assessment using the latest housing data and the 2011 Census, and will roll forward the projections to 2025.

The Registrar General's latest estimate of the regional population in 1998 has been used as the base for the Strategy. In the assessment of regional housing need, reliance was placed on the most recently published Government Actuary's Department (GAD) population projections for the period 1998-2015. These showed that the population of Northern Ireland is projected to increase from an estimated 1,689,000 in 1998, to an estimated 1,794,000 by 2015, a growth of 6%.

The main assumptions made in forecasting regional housing need, such as new household formation and replacement of stock loss, are set out in Appendix 6. Taking the relevant factors into account, it is estimated that 160,000 additional dwellings will be required during the period from 1998-2015, consistent with established house building rates. To avoid problems arising from either over provision or under provision, and with the prospect of new data becoming available, assessments will be updated at five year intervals.

Themes

The major themes in the Strategy relating to Housing:

- Managing housing growth and distribution (C9: SPG-HOU 1 - SPG-HOU 3);
- Supporting urban renaissance (C9: SPG-HOU 4 - SPG-HOU 5); and
- Achieving balanced communities (C9: SPG-HOU 6).

Managing housing growth and distribution

Flexibility is needed to deal with uncertainties in forecasting assumptions. A balance has to be struck between a robust approach which seeks to ensure strategic objectives are met, particularly in relation to the drive to promote more housing within existing urban areas, and a flexibility to respond to an unforeseen demand for fresh housing land supplies.

SPG-HOU 1: To manage housing growth in response to changing housing need (SPG-HOU 2 - SPG-HOU 6)

The Strategy recognises the need to guard against pressure building up as a result of housing land shortages by providing for an estimated regional need of 160,000 dwellings by 2015. It acknowledges a consistent and recent higher house building rate. It also provides a contingency for a small over-zoning allowance for exceptional use, and introduces a Plan, Monitor and Manage approach to provide for more sustainable patterns of development and to assist regeneration.

HOU 1.1 Provide for a balanced supply of housing land throughout the Region by a robust and flexible approach to meeting future housing need:

- review housing projections every five years and adjust the Housing Growth Indicators;
- establish long-term reserves of development land, through the development plan process, and use a Plan, Monitor and Manage mechanism to ensure timely periodic releases of development land;
- reserve the possibility by exception of allowing, through the development plan process, for a limited level of housing land over-zoning up to a maximum of 10% as a contingency measure in those situations where a potential land supply difficulty is likely to arise. However, normally the preferred approach is to identify constraint in advance where this is possible and to proceed without over-zoning on alternative lands which facilitate planned and orderly development; and
- prepare a Regional Planning Policy Statement to provide detailed guidance on Housing In Settlements including setting out how the Plan, Monitor and Manage approach will work.

HOU 1.2 Use a broad evaluation framework (see Table 4 overleaf) as an aid for a comprehensive assessment to assist judgements on the allocation of housing growth to the main and small towns within the context of the overall Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Ireland, and SPG-HOU 2 and SPG-HOU 3.

9 Meeting Housing Needs

Table 4: Evaluation framework

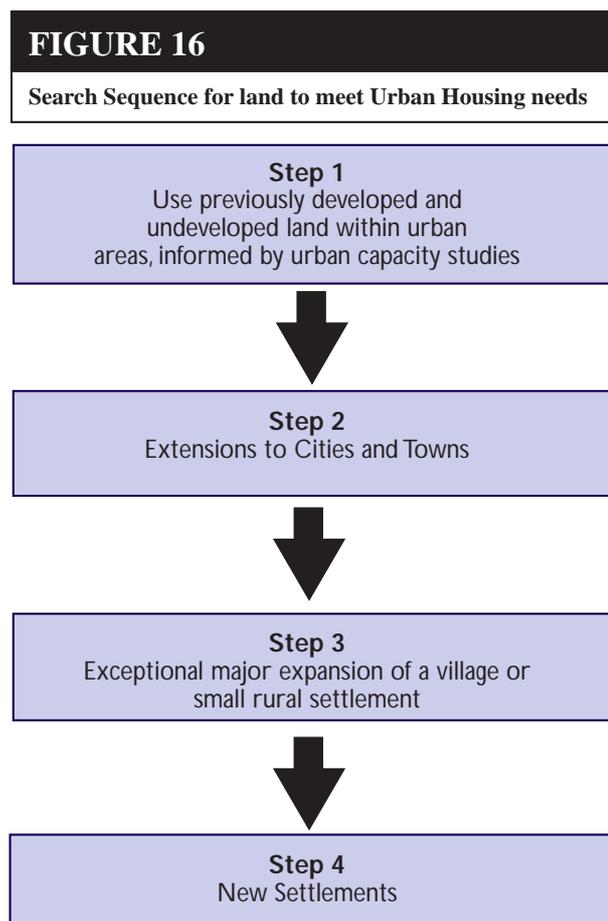
Resource Test	The existence of community assets and infrastructure, including spare capacity.
Environmental Capacity Test	The environmental setting of the settlement and its potential to accommodate future outward growth.
Transport Test	The potential for integrating land use and public transport to help reduce reliance on the private car.
Economic Development Test	The potential to facilitate an appropriate housing and jobs balance, and to unlock any major strategic development opportunities.
Urban and Rural Character Test	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.
Social Equity Test	The potential to improve equality of opportunity and equity of treatment.

SPG-HOU 2: To direct and manage future housing growth to achieve more sustainable patterns of residential development

HOU 2.1 Promote more sustainable patterns of urban and rural development by defining housing allocations and policies in development plans based on the strategic planning guidance in Chapters 5-8 ◀ and the following general principles, and take account of the Housing Growth Indicators in SPG-HOU 3 which derive from these principles:

- concentrate major housing development in sustainable locations facilitating a high degree of integration with centres of employment, community services and public transport, including requiring a master plan approach for major urban extensions;
- encourage mixed use developments including more housing in town centres;

- make efficient use of land by promoting more housing within existing urban areas and villages availing of existing infrastructure and maintaining compact town and village forms (SPG-HOU 4 - SPG-HOU 5 and C12: SPG-ENV 6);
- adopt a sequential approach in the development plan process to the allocation of land for housing in cities and towns. This would use a search sequence focussed first on the re-use of previously developed land and buildings, informed by capacity studies, and consideration of previously undeveloped land within the existing urban area, before deciding the location and scale of settlement extensions (Figure 16);
- avoid areas of significant environmental quality for extensions to towns and villages; and
- place an emphasis on creating quality places by taking account of the Local Development Guidelines for Urban and Rural Areas (C12: SPG-ENV 4) and at the detailed design stage applying the guidance in "Creating Places – achieving quality in residential developments".



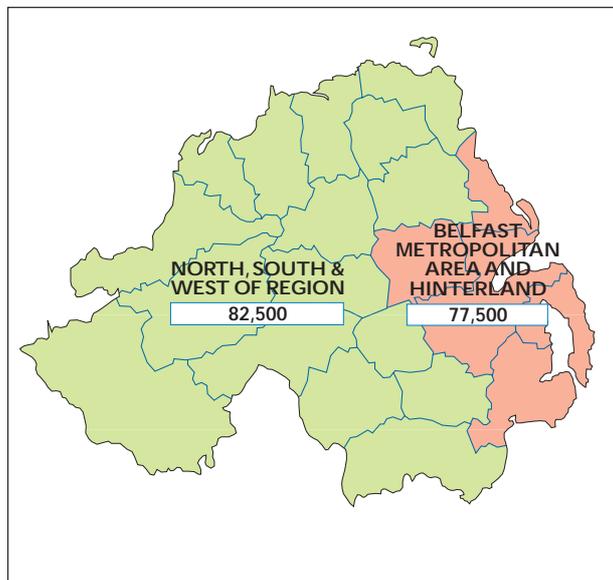
9 Meeting Housing Needs

SPG-HOU 3: To set housing growth indicators to guide the distribution of housing in the Region over the period to 2015, through the development plan process, in accordance with the Spatial Development Strategy (C5-C8 ◀)

HOU 3.1 The Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs) are:

HGI 1: Regional Balance: To help maintain a balance of growth between the BMA and its hinterland, and the rest of Northern Ireland by a shared allocation of the regional housing need of 160,000 dwellings as set out in Figure 17.

FIGURE 17
REGIONAL HOUSING ALLOCATION
2015



The critical balance identified in the Spatial Development Strategy is based on maintaining a strong economic heart in the BMA and its hinterland, and encouraging decentralised growth in the rest of the Region, with a focus on the North West and the main towns located on the key and link transport corridors. This housing allocation reflects the growth potential of the BMA and its immediate sphere of influence, while affirming the potential for the rest of the Region to enhance its growth performance, thus contributing to a balanced spread of development and helping to reduce west to east population flows. It will facilitate a balanced spread of new housing to support the main hubs of employment across the Region.

DIAGRAM 8

THE SPATIAL FRAMEWORK FOR HOUSING: DISTRICT GROWTH INDICATORS 2015

District Housing Indicators 2015

Figures refer to additional residential units in Districts. (Base Year 1998)

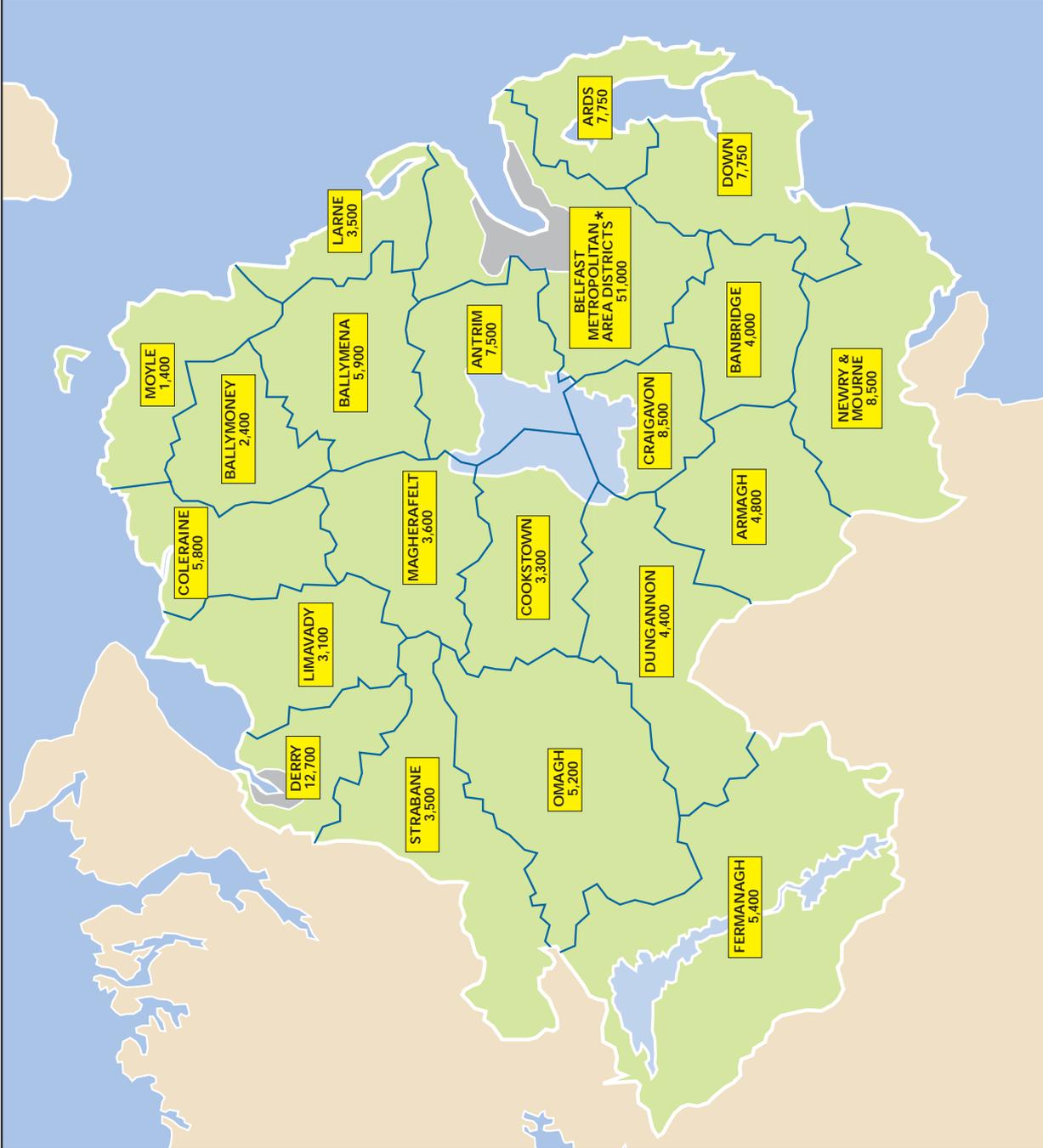


Local Government Districts

* 6 Local Government Districts

DISTRICT INDICATORS

ANTRIM	7,500
ARDS	7,750
ARMAGH	4,800
BALLYMENA	5,900
BALLYMONEY	2,400
BANBRIDGE	4,000
BELFAST METROPOLITAN AREA DISTRICTS	
Belfast	51,000
Carrickfergus	5,800
Castlereagh	5,800
Lisburn	3,300
Newtownabbey	3,300
North Down	3,300
TOTAL	160,000
COLERAINE	5,800
COOKSTOWN	3,300
CRAIGAVON	8,500
DERRY	12,700
DOWN	7,750
DUNANNON	4,400
FERMANAGH	5,400
LARNE	3,500
LIMAVADY	3,100
MAGHERAFELT	3,600
MOYLE	1,400
NEWRY & MOURNE	8,500
OMAGH	5,200
STRABANE	3,500



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HGI 2: The North, South and West of the Region: To distribute the allocation of 82,500 additional dwellings by council districts as set out in Diagram 8.

The indicative allocation of additional housing to the districts of the North, South and West of the Region reflects the Spatial Development Strategy, the inherited pattern of population in these districts, population growth trends and a broad assessment of the economic role and the range of cultural, leisure, social and commercial activities available in each district. It acknowledges that some districts exert an influence and 'pull' beyond their own immediate locality, due in part to the magnetic power of the main district town. Over the longer term, some districts are more likely to generate a larger demand for housing consistent with their higher levels of population growth. The ability to forge complementary economic development partnerships within and between districts could, however, generate extra economic activity in any district, thus increasing the housing demand. The five-year review will offer the flexibility to make 'in-course' adjustments.

HGI 3: District population balance

The Housing Growth Indicators for each district have been set to facilitate a scale of local housing development that broadly conforms with the overall Spatial Development Strategy described in Chapters 5-9. This will help to ensure that the total of housing land provision in all districts matches the projected need for the Region as a whole thus enabling better management of housing land supply to achieve strategic objectives.

The allocation of housing growth to specific locations in a district is a matter for decision through the development plan process taking account of views expressed during public consultation and, specifically, the strategic planning guidance in Chapters 5-9. An 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 the smaller settlements and countryside. The RDS gives general guidance in Chapter 8 on the scale of development appropriate to small towns and villages, taking account of their role and development pressures.

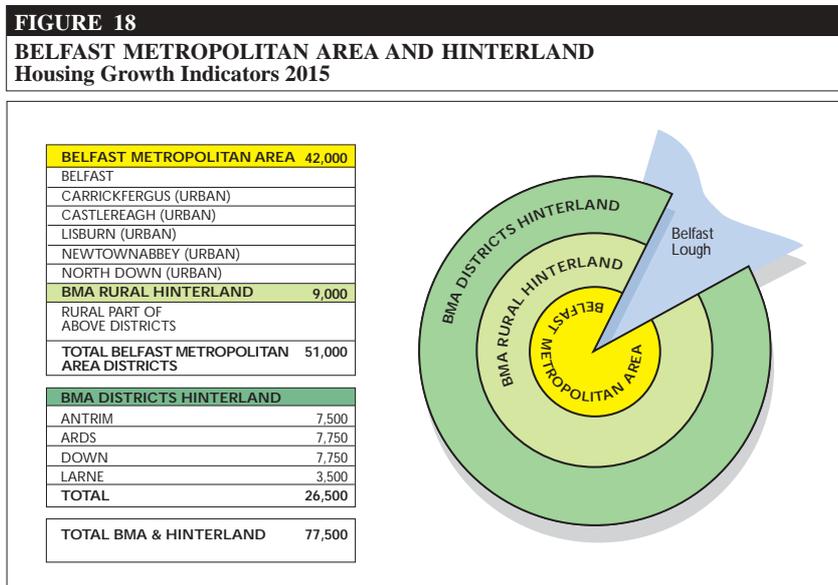
In making provision for a range of locations offering housing choice in a district, due weight needs to be given to reinforcing the leading role of the major centres of administration, employment and services. Analysis of population balance can facilitate an evaluation of the relationship between towns and their rural hinterland. Appendix 7 indicates that across the Region the principal town accommodated, on average, 36% of the district population at 1998. Those main towns with a population of over 20,000

tend to fall in the 40-60% range reflecting their stronger critical mass, wide range of services including internal bus services, employment opportunities and relative importance.

The main towns, with their strategic role as hubs of economic activity and services, are an important mainstay in achieving a balanced spread of growth across the Region. In this context, it is widely recognised that 'critical mass' is needed for successful counter-magnets to the 'economic pull' of cities. Counter-magnets can be developed in single, strong centres of employment and services or in clusters of settlements. However, if all the towns in a district or sub-region are smaller in scale, the potential to create a strong competitive cluster is weakened. In such situations, residents may have to travel longer distances to other centres outside the district to access some employment opportunities and services.

There is evidence that some towns are under-performing in overall growth reflected in low population increase. It is useful, therefore, at the Area Plan preparation stage, to assess the overall health of the principal urban centre, taking account of district population balance, to see if it may be failing to achieve sufficient competitive 'critical mass' due to an unbalanced distribution of housing and employment weakening its growth potential. This evaluation could assist the development of a growth strategy for the district, designed to strike an optimal housing balance between the towns, villages and dispersed small settlements, and to maximise the effect of complementary relationships.

HGI 4: BMA and its hinterland: To distribute the allocation of 77,500 additional dwellings as set out in Figure 18.



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The Spatial Development Strategy (Diagram 5) indicates that housing in the BMA and its 'travel to work' hinterland should be distributed in order to:

- accommodate an increased share of future residential development within the existing urban area (SPG-HOU 4);
- provide for major areas of planned expansion on the key corridors at Lisburn and Newtownabbey, focusing housing development near areas of employment growth and integrating with suburban rail links and other primary public transport services (Diagram 5);
- focus housing on existing land zonings and 'whitelands', and smaller sites to be determined in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan;
- develop the main towns of Antrim, Downpatrick, Larne and Newtownards in the BMA hinterland, together with the neighbouring main towns of Banbridge and Craigavon, as counter-magnets to the Metropolitan Area; and
- allow a significant planned expansion of the seven small towns of Ballyclare, Ballynahinch, Carryduff, Comber, Crumlin, Dromore⁹ and Moira to accommodate housing need related to the BMA (HGI 4).

HGI 5: Expansion of the designated small towns around the BMA

The Spatial Development Strategy indicates that the significant planned expansion of seven nearby small towns is required to meet housing need related to the BMA (Figure 19). The identified towns are Ballyclare, Ballynahinch, Carryduff, Comber, Crumlin, Dromore and Moira. These towns are well located in relation to the key transport corridors, and have a concentration of existing facilities and infrastructure which provide a good basis for accommodating expansion comprising housing and economic development. With further growth, Ballyclare will soon begin to take on the wider role of a main town while the other towns are, or are identified as, having the potential of becoming local service centres with a population of over 5,000. The housing allocation for each of these towns (except Dromore) will be made through the development plan process from within the housing allocations for the BMA hinterland set out in HGI 4: Figure 18.

⁹ The town of Dromore is situated in close proximity to the Belfast Metropolitan Area Hinterland, but is located in Banbridge District Council area.

FIGURE 19

SEVEN TOWNS IDENTIFIED FOR EXPANSION AROUND THE BMA



While a measured and phased expansion is necessary it is emphasised that the premature release of too much land in these small towns could take the focus off the revitalisation of the BMA and the main towns. This could undermine the drive for more housing within urban areas. The scale, nature and phasing of town expansion will be decided through the development plan process using the search sequencing procedure (SPG-HOU 2) and taking account of the need to:

- produce a sustainable pattern of development;
- maintain a complementary and balanced relationship with the main towns;
- prevent an increase in longer distance car trips and especially to the BMA from small towns which are unlikely to be able to offer as much local employment for their residents;
- protect the identity, character and setting of the towns, and to integrate any expansion with the local topographical setting; and
- avoid a mismatch with the provision of both 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure.

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In relation to the expansion of these towns, it will be necessary to apply the policy of requiring developers to bear the costs of works required to facilitate their development proposals. This will ensure that balanced and complete communities are created with the necessary services and infrastructure including access to public transport services. In many cases, town centres would also need further enhancement including an extended range of service provision to provide adequately for further residential growth. Some towns may need major improvements to their transport infrastructure. A comprehensive package of private sector development proposals is likely to be required as an integral element in the implementation of town expansion schemes.

HGI 6: Major housing development proposals relating to the expansion of a village or small rural settlement, or the creation of a new settlement

Strategic guidance is needed to enable a balanced assessment to be made of major housing schemes which may be proposed for villages or small rural settlements, to help meet anticipated high housing need. Large-scale development proposals for the **exceptional** major expansion of an existing settlement with a population of under 5,000, or to create a new settlement, intended to meet specific housing needs will be tested against the principles underlying the Spatial Development Strategy and specifically C8: SPG-RNI 3 in the case of the BMA 'travel to work' hinterland.

In addition to the statutory development plan considerations and any other relevant planning policies, such major housing development proposals will be evaluated taking account of the criteria below.

The Spatial Development Strategy is to accommodate the majority of regional housing growth over the next 25 years in existing settlements. The need for new settlements is at present considered unlikely. Nevertheless, new settlements are not entirely ruled out. In the right location and with the right concept, they can be a sustainable option for meeting the need for housing. However, the cost of developing a new community from scratch, including the full range of new services and infrastructure, and the lead-in time required to develop them, means that they should only be considered in certain exceptional circumstances.

New settlements will only be considered as an option where, after monitoring and review, it is revealed that household need has accelerated beyond expected levels. Even in these circumstances, further expansion of existing towns and villages should be considered first.

Proposals for a new settlement must also meet the criteria on the following page.

Criteria for an expanded or new settlement proposal:

- Having undertaken housing capacity studies there is a significant shortfall in the provision of housing land that needs to be met in the Region or in a sub-region;
- the proposed housing development is large enough to support a range of local services, including schools, shops and employment, thus enabling the planned provision of a central area in the settlement;
- the proposed expanded or new settlement is located on a good quality public transport corridor, thus exploiting and helping to underpin public transport services. It is anticipated that the case for an expanded or new settlement is more likely to be made in the East where population and housing growth pressures are higher. In this event, the preferred location would be on the commuter rail network, reinforcing the railway system and reducing the need for car travel;
- the proposed expanded or new settlement does not simply function as a dormitory of an existing larger settlement;
- use of public transport is encouraged through the design and layout of the expanded or new settlement;
- high standards of layout and design are proposed which maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport and meet the Strategy's guidelines for sustainable patterns of development;
- the proposal demonstrates how necessary infrastructure, including schools, health care, transport and open space will be provided and financed; and that overall there are demonstrable benefits for the community;
- there is no more sustainable alternative; and, if it is relevant;
- the proposal offers potential benefits by making use of previously developed land, excluding land and buildings that are currently in use for agricultural or forestry purposes.

Supporting urban renaissance

SPG-HOU 4: To promote a drive to provide more housing within existing urban areas

The high level of future housing needs in the Region (up to 250,000 dwellings by 2025) could use a disproportionate amount of regional resources including infrastructure, services and agricultural land. It could lead to extensive urban sprawl.

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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,

thereby supporting urban renaissance and investment in the hubs, conserving town settings and saving resources.

In order to achieve more sustainable forms of development, the strategy sets a regional target for the share of urban housing to be provided within urban limits. This defines 'a clear change of direction' towards producing more urban housing by recycling land and buildings and making use of other suitable sites and reducing the use of greenfield land.

In setting a new policy direction, the strategy accepts that in some parts of the Region, and particularly where Development Plans still have some years to run, existing planning consents and development plan allocations have largely committed the pattern of development for several years ahead. Any change in direction in such areas will not have full effect until current commitments are used up, or the development plan is reviewed. But more housing land will, in due course, have to be found and therefore there is advantage in identifying the change of direction now to assist forward planning by infrastructure providers.



The existence of a substantial reserve of greenfield housing land does not rule out progress being made toward the 'brownfield' target. Already the market is responding to the new opportunities emphasised by the urban housing policy initiative of the Strategy and an increasing number of 'brownfield' housing schemes are being developed in many towns.

In setting the target, note has been taken of practice and achievement throughout the UK and the Republic of Ireland. However, it is also recognised that Northern Ireland is less urbanised than many other regions within the UK and further afield. Some towns may have less brownfield potential than found in larger cities. The concern of residents within towns about the potential impact of the urban housing drive on existing amenities has been given due weight in setting a regional target appropriate to the needs and circumstances of Northern Ireland. Progress toward the regional target will be monitored and this will demonstrate whether the chosen level of the target needs adjustment.

The Strategy sets out a distinctive regional approach to:

HOU 4.1 Accommodate an increased share of future residential development, and associated job provision, within existing urban limits to reduce greenfield housing extensions:

- set an ambitious regional target effectively to double to 60%, for the period up to the first review in 2010, the recent level of achievement (25-30%) for the location of urban housing growth within the existing urban areas of the cities and towns of over 5,000 population, subject to monitoring and a five year review of the target in the light of the latest housing data. The potential for achieving the regional target will be determined through the development plan process using urban capacity studies to maximise the increased share of residential development that can be achieved within the 'urban footprint' of a particular city or town. This will ensure that the setting of local targets for individual settlements is subject to a participative process directed at defining targets which are practicable, achievable, and do not result in town cramming;
- set targets for individual towns through the development plan process using the sequential approach informed by the urban capacity studies, and taking account of local circumstances;
- evaluate progress in meeting the regional target and keep under review the need for special measures to bring forward urban housing land;

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- maintain an appropriate tension between the provision of housing within existing urban areas and greenfield development by a phased land release procedure in order to ensure that developers are first directed towards a brownfield option; and
- provide more guidance in a Regional Planning Policy Statement on 'Housing in Settlements'.

HOU 4.2 Encourage urban renaissance in the cities and towns of Northern Ireland by promoting a concerted housing drive within existing built-up areas, without town cramming, based on the following principles:

- promote the use of previously developed, undeveloped and under used lands within the 'urban footprint' for housing development (see SPG-HOU 2 and Appendix 8 ►);
- encourage the re-use of existing buildings as an integral part of urban housing schemes to help maintain local identity and make best use of resources;
- assess potential urban housing sites in relation to:
 - the need to protect adequate supplies of land for other purposes such as open space, employment and services to help maintain viable local communities (C12: SPG-ENV4);
 - the requirement to exercise particular sensitivity in areas of distinctive townscape character to ensure that new housing development does not harm their traditional character (C12: SPG-ENV 3); and
 - public transport accessibility;
- promote imaginative, safe and attractive housing schemes by applying the principles and standards in "Creating Places - achieving quality in residential developments" in order to create attractive surroundings and places to live.



SPG-HOU 5: To encourage an increase in the density of urban housing appropriate in scale and design to the cities and towns of Northern Ireland

The private housing market in Northern Ireland is characterised by a high proportion of detached and semi-detached dwellings resulting in a high land take. The scale of future housing need may require the urbanisation of a further 30 square miles of undeveloped land by 2025. In addition, the problem of finding enough suitable land is compounded by the restraints of the local terrain around a number of towns. Hills, coast, scenic landscapes or high quality agricultural land place limits on the direction of future expansion.

In the interest of conserving finite resources, it is desirable to seek to reduce the speed and extent of the lateral spread of towns. The aim is to encourage higher density housing schemes through imaginative and innovative design, without town cramming, to reduce the consumption of land. While personal preferences for medium density housing, particularly for family housing, will continue to be respected, the large and increasing number of small households offers a growing market for the use of higher densities, using both low and high rise housing schemes. In the case of Belfast, it is accepted that it has the potential, like similar cities, to

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accommodate much more housing within its built-up area by a process of densification which can be delivered without cramming or spoiling the environment.

The aim of achieving an overall increase in town densities must not however be interpreted as a broad mandate to try and force over-developed and unsympathetic housing schemes into established residential areas. Redevelopment of existing houses and the development of infill sites in such areas needs to be handled with particular sensitivity. The overriding objective in such areas has to be to avoid any significant erosion of the environmental quality, amenity and privacy enjoyed by existing residents.

SPG-HOU 5.1 Promote imaginative and innovative forms of housing developments within urban areas and on greenfield extensions:

- encourage the use of medium to high density housing schemes, appropriate to their location, including the re-use of buildings where feasible, and incorporating a mix of housing designs and sizes to meet the needs of a range of household types, and to achieve compact settlement forms;
- promote the densification of housing developments near to public transport corridors, in town centres and, where possible, around centres of community facilities which include employment, shops, churches and local health facilities;
- apply the principles and standards in "Creating Places - achieving quality in residential developments" to higher density housing schemes to ensure high quality developments are built in harmony with the local setting;
- in established residential areas, encourage harmonious housing schemes of various densities in accordance with a local community focused approach sensitive in design terms to the people living in the existing neighbourhood, and to the local townscape character, and take account of SPG-ENV 4 and the Local Development Guidelines; and the DOE publication PPS7 "Quality Residential Environments"; and
- carry out research into the scope for higher density residential environments where this may be needed to supplement urban capacity studies and housing experience on the ground.

Achieving balanced communities

SPG-HOU 6: To encourage the development of balanced local communities

Within the objective of developing community cohesion, the Strategy encourages the creation of more balanced local communities characterised by development patterns which contribute to community spirit, neighbourliness and a sense of belonging to a particular place. Diversity and social inclusion are distinguishing marks of well-balanced communities which embrace a mix of social groups, and are able to accommodate people of different backgrounds who wish to live together.

In terms of land use, a variety of housing types offering choice to meet different needs, supported by the opportunity to share in local employment, open space, community meeting places, local shopping and service facilities are required for the building of more balanced communities. It is important to ensure new housing developments help to secure a better social mix, by maintaining a balanced planning linkage where needed between market and social housing. The creation of large areas of housing of similar characteristics will not be acceptable.

SPG-HOU 6.1 Provide a housing choice by achieving a mix of housing tenures and house types which will help create more balanced communities:

- carry out assessments of housing need where this may be required to gain further understanding of the range of housing needs;
- promote home ownership and affordable housing generally; and keep under review those urban localities and rural areas where imbalances or land supply difficulties arise due to local circumstances, and which may require remedial action such as making alternative land(s) available to meet identified need;
- provide social housing targeted to meet identified needs, and require an appropriate provision in larger developments;
- meet the identified range of family and small household requirements; and
- meet the full range of specialised housing needs including:
 - for those made vulnerable through age, mental illness or disability;

9 Meeting Housing Needs

- arising from urban and rural unfitness;
- accommodate the specific needs of the elderly; and
- to meet the specialised needs of students.

HOU 6.2 To meet the distinctive needs of the travellers through the provision of a range of accommodation options. These may include group or shared family accommodation, serviced sites or other suitable forms with work-space provision using established criteria to facilitate the site selection process.

HOU 6.3 Create quality built environments which contribute to the achievement of safe, complete and balanced communities for people to live in:

- promote the use of the Local Development Guidelines (C12: SPG-ENV 4); and
- promote the use of overall design concepts and development briefs to achieve quality mixed-use developments in housing schemes within urban areas or on greenfield sites; use appropriate planning obligations for the provision by developers of infrastructure and neighbourhood facilities; and encourage land pooling where necessary to help to achieve quality built environment objectives (Appendix 9 ►).

Second homes

In recent years there has been growth in demand for second homes in the Region's most scenic areas. At a strategic level this raises two main concerns:

- the increase could prejudice the availability of affordable housing for local people in areas under pressure, with adverse effect on local communities; and
- the identity, character and setting of a small town or village could be gradually and detrimentally changed by inappropriate second home developments.

There are limitations on the ability of the land use planning system to regulate the growth of second homes. The planning system has no control over the buying and selling of either existing or new homes.

Moreover, it is not possible to distinguish, in planning terms, between housing or apartment developments that may be for second home use or permanent occupation.

HOU 6.4 Identify in development plans, settlements and areas under pressure from second home development:

- develop a set of criteria by which the capacity of a small town or village to absorb new second home development can be evaluated in consultation, through the development plan process, with local residents, taking account of such matters as scale, character and setting; and
- consider if local planning policies are required, and assess if there is a need for an exceptional housing land response to ensure a local supply of affordable housing.

Supporting Economic Development

Through the 1990s Northern Ireland's economy was buoyant and performed well. It is one of the fastest improving regions in the UK, measured against a range of economic performance indicators. The improvement was highlighted by:

- strong growth in gross domestic product per head, though still lagging behind the UK and EU average;
- the strongest growth in jobs of all UK regions;
- a significant increase in the total number of hours worked;
- an improving employment rate; and
- a falling unemployment rate, including reductions in long-term unemployment.



Key challenge

A strategic objective is to support a sustainable economic drive which will provide jobs and wealth across the region and help reduce socio-economic differentials. This is a major challenge in an economy where firms face intense competition and there is a fast growing workforce.

The forces driving change in the economy are often global but call for specific regional responses. The main spatial considerations shaping Northern Ireland's responses are:

- its island location, separate but not too distant from the main European markets;
- a shared land boundary with the Republic of Ireland;
- the concentration of people and economic activity in Belfast and the east of the Region;
- the strong rural economy, a 'peopled' countryside and an agricultural sector which makes a significant economic contribution; and
- areas of socio-economic need in both urban and rural locations.

Fundamental regional assets

Northern Ireland will need to capitalise on its fundamental assets:

- **people** – a highly skilled, adaptable workforce with enhanced accessibility to life-long learning opportunities is vital to assist the economic development drive; and
- **quality of life** – the mixture of high quality physical infrastructure, variety of community and cultural amenities, plus a well managed natural and built heritage can provide crucial support for attracting and retaining jobs.

Achieving sustainable regional growth

The creation of new jobs is a top regional priority to meet the needs of a growing work force and to deal with long-term unemployment. This requires an emphasis both on efficient integration with the global economy and on continuing to build a strong and integrated local economy. The Regional Development Strategy has an important role to play in creating conditions conducive to achieving further sustainable economic growth.

10 Supporting Economic Development

The Regional Development Strategy sets out the spatial framework to complement the Economic Development Strategy 2010 and its vision of:

"A fast growing, competitive, innovative, knowledge-based economy where there are plentiful opportunities and a population equipped to grasp them."

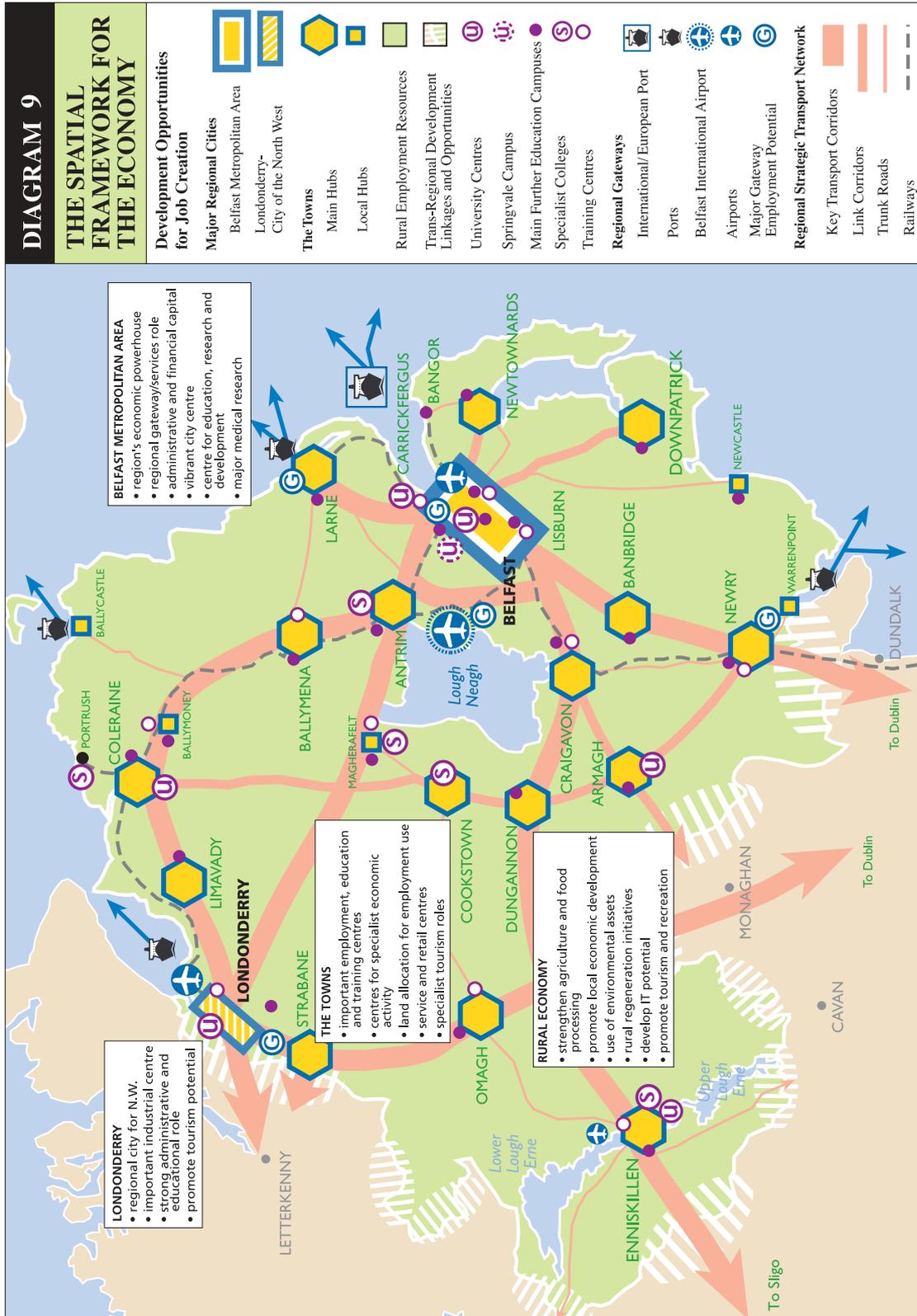
The Regional Development Strategy provides a robust and flexible framework for sustainable regional growth capable of accommodating the future levels of economic activity sought by Strategy 2010 by:

- defining a Spatial Development Strategy which identifies a range of development opportunities for job creation across the Region, capable of accommodating emerging and new growth sectors of the economy and suitable for a variety of business sizes; opportunities which are attractive to inward investment, and to the creation and expansion of indigenous businesses and community enterprises;
- indicating the infrastructure and services that need to be developed to support the economic development drive;
- promoting improved accessibility to major employment locations for all sections of the community;
- protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment of the Region and facilitating the development of cultural amenities as important economic assets in the regional balance sheet;
- facilitating job creation to tackle disadvantage and community differentials; and
- facilitating tourism development through the sensible use of natural and man-made assets.

Themes

The two major economic development themes in the Strategy (Diagrams 9 and 10) are:

- Building a Region of Opportunity (SPG-ECON 1 - SPG-ECON 6)
 - locational guidance, infrastructure and employability; and
- Supporting the Growth of Tourism (SPG-ECON 7 - SPG-ECON 11)
 - sustainable approach, image and tourism development opportunities.



10 Supporting Economic Development

Building a region of opportunity

The Regional Development Strategy identifies a strategic network of hubs, corridors and gateways as the focus for economic activity and development opportunities. The BMA and its wider hinterland will continue to be the economic hub of the Region but the Strategy will encourage a balanced spread of economic growth to strengthen the network of opportunities and mobilise local resources across the Region. The housing growth indicators have been set to promote balanced growth without constraining the prospects for economic growth or encouraging commuting.



The Strategy has a strong commitment to reinvigorating town centres, to 'brownfield' initiatives and to the principle of mixed-use development. These fit well with the expectation of further service sector growth and the importance of small and medium sized business enterprises, community enterprises and the creative industries of the arts. Manufacturing industry continues to play an important role in the regional economy generating a requirement for a generous supply of high quality, well located industrial land – to attract direct foreign investment and to support the growth of indigenous firms.

Tourism should be able to make a significantly greater contribution to the regional economy with a sustainable approach drawing on the benefits of the natural and cultural heritage. The economic benefits of a 'clean, green image' extend well beyond tourism and the 'green economy' itself offers fresh opportunities for research, innovation, new skills and products.

The rural economy including agriculture will continue to play an important and diversified role at the core of the Region's economic and social fabric (C8 ◀).

SPG-ECON 1: To promote a balanced spread of economic development opportunities across the Region focused on the BMA, Londonderry, Craigavon and the urban hubs/clusters, as the main centres for employment and services (Key Diagram 4)

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, including the professional, technical and financial services essential to economic development.

Provide a network of economic development opportunities and make provision in development plans for a generous and continuous supply of land for employment purposes (SPG-ECON 4):

ECON 1.1 Strengthen the Belfast Metropolitan Area and its 'Travel to Work' hinterland as the economic heart of the Region (C6 ◀):

- maintain a strong and vibrant Belfast city centre; and
- encourage a wide spread of investment in the urban hubs in the BMA hinterland with a particular focus on regenerating areas of social and economic disadvantage.

ECON 1.2 Focus economic development on Londonderry, hub for the North West, and the hubs/clusters located on the key and link transport corridors:

- promote decentralisation of public sector employment to Londonderry and the main towns to augment their range of service functions; and

10 Supporting Economic Development

- facilitate economic development in, or accessible to, the most disadvantaged urban areas to tackle long-term unemployment and issues of employability as part of the 'New Targeting Social Need' initiative.

ECON 1.3 Support urban renaissance (C8: SPG-RNI 3 ◀):

- promote town centres as the major locations and first choice for expanding service employment by focusing public administration, major office developments, shopping, leisure, entertainment and cultural facilities in central areas where they are accessible to all sections of the community;
- support the vitality and viability of town centres by ensuring that they should normally be the first choice for major new retail developments and confirming that there is no justifiable need for any new regional out-of-town shopping centres in Northern Ireland (SPG-RNI 3 and Appendix 10: Sprucefield ▶). A research and consultation exercise will be carried out in the process of preparing the Regional Planning Policy Statement on 'Retailing and Town Centres'; and
- promote mixed-use development in cities and towns to facilitate the start-up and accommodation of small and medium sized enterprises.

ECON 1.4 Provide flexibility to accommodate major development of a regional or sub-regional significance:

- facilitate the accommodation of unforeseen imaginative proposals for economic development that are clearly in the public interest, such as unique proposals of significance to the whole or a substantial part of Northern Ireland, subject to the parameters in Appendix 11 ▶.

SPG-ECON 2: To exploit the economic development potential of the key transport corridors

The key transport corridors offer a development impetus based on larger consumer markets, links between cities, towns and gateways, and access to significant labour markets and rural catchment areas. These corridors will facilitate the important linkages required with universities and other centres of higher education.

There is the potential for a range of special business opportunities to cluster on the two major development corridors – the Belfast-Dublin and the North-West corridors. In these locations the proximity of larger urban centres, regional gateways, extensive infrastructure assets and a concentration of human resources together offer an extra growth momentum. The economic potential of these two development corridors is enhanced by their alignment on transport axes with European status ('TENS' routes) where there is a significant international movement of goods.

ECON 2.1 Promote and exploit the potential for economic development at selected locations on the strategic network of key transport corridors and links:

- create and maintain a regional portfolio of Strategic Employment Locations (SELs) by identifying and safeguarding a number of large industrial sites (in some cases up to 40 hectares), strategically located throughout Northern Ireland, with priority to the regional cities and main hubs (Diagram 9), to attract and accommodate major inward investment projects and local enterprise (SPG-ECON 4);
- facilitate the clustering of engineering and high technology office type businesses, such as those found in information communications technology and biotechnology. Such business clusters should be located in the centre of corridor towns, at established major business nodes within towns, or in 'industrial office park' developments at the edge of towns, normally as part of mixed use schemes, with preferred locations at road or road-rail nodes, and transport interchanges; and
- locate transport dependent industries that focus on the storage, movement and delivery of goods, in the corridors at well accessed nodes normally on the edge of towns.



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SPG-ECON 3: To promote the regional gateways as economic development opportunities

The Strategy places great importance on the regional gateways as suitable locations for major economic development, freight distribution activities and additional employment generation. Gateways are important interchange points and the quality of connection from the ports and airports to the internal transport network is crucial for economic competitiveness and the convenience of the travelling public (C5 ◀ and Appendix 4 ▶).

ECON 3.1 Capitalise on the dynamic potential provided by the concentration of people and goods at the regional gateways by facilitating the expansion of their transport role, exploiting their development assets and improving accessibility, subject to local environmental considerations:

- develop the potential of the Port of Belfast, the Belfast Harbour lands and Belfast City Airport as an employment resource of strategic significance. With further development and diversification, the potential to attract investment can be greatly increased; better connections to Belfast city centre, Laganside, and the rail network will be promoted. Development land is available at Sydenham with potential to take advantage of proximity to the airport;
- promote Belfast International Airport as a regional economic development opportunity. It is already a significant employer and with its extensive modern facilities, strategic location and available development lands, has the potential to attract major inward investment to the Region which might not otherwise occur. Possibilities include international call offices, distribution, tourism and airport related developments, as well as certain types of manufacturing and servicing, subject to the availability of appropriate public transport links and maintaining a high level of accessibility to the airport for the users of air services;
- further develop, as a strategic location for employment growth, the Londonderry gateway lands in the general locality of Lisahally, Maydown, Campsie and City of Derry Airport. The airport is well located to serve the city, the nearby industrial complexes, and the wider North West catchment area. A comprehensive planning approach to this area will enhance its attractiveness;

- continue to develop the Port of Larne which is the second largest Northern Ireland port, specialising in roll-on/roll off traffic, and offering the shortest sea crossing to Scotland. There is significant development potential on port lands; and
- strengthen Warrenpoint Port. Linked by dual carriageway to the cross-border gateway town of Newry, the port at Warrenpoint handles a great range of products but has no passenger services at present. Despite its local regional significance, the port faces stiff competition from other east coast ports. Its land area is very limited and it needs deep water facilities to handle larger ships and ensure its long-term viability and competitiveness.



SPG-ECON 4: To create and maintain a regional portfolio of Strategic Employment Locations (SELs)

An ample supply of land for employment uses is required to facilitate economic growth. Forming part of this supply, a limited number of large-scale, strategic locations spread throughout the region will be identified and safeguarded, to help attract inward investment and accommodate 'home grown' expansion, with priority given to the regional cities and main hubs (Diagram 9).

While the current IDB land holding will provide a strong core for the strategic portfolio, new ways of supplying SELs will be encouraged eg greater private sector involvement, partnerships and the potential of a growing role at the district council level, particularly in relation to small business development . The scale of SELs (some up to 40 hectares) is such that master plans and planning agreements are likely to be essential parts of the delivery mechanism.

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ECON 4.1 Identify Strategic Employment Locations taking account of the following criteria:

- have regard to the need for key locations and quality environments of a standard necessary to compete with other EU regions;
- the number and scale of SELs should reflect a realistic level of medium to long term demand and be well related to labour markets, skills and training resources;
- locations should be accessible/capable of being made accessible to the whole community in interest of equality of opportunity and targeting social need, and be integrated with urban centres;
- build on the accessibility offered by the key and link transport corridors and associated public transport services, and consider the potential for rail freight where possible;
- have regard to the availability of infrastructure and the suitability of the landscape to accommodate large scale developments; and
- contain land reserved for both inward investors and indigenous businesses.

ECON 4.2 Identify SELs in development plans and protect such key locations where loss to other uses would be hard to recover.

SPG-ECON 5: To undertake or where appropriate, facilitate a programme of infrastructure improvements essential to business needs

Infrastructure comprises two main components, the 'hard' physical infrastructure – incorporating the roads, rail, water, sewerage and drainage systems, and the energy and telecommunications networks; and the 'soft' infrastructure of social, cultural and community facilities which enhance the quality of life and embrace the creative industries. Serious deficiencies in essential infrastructure assets have been identified as a result of years of under investment.

The Strategy emphasises making good use of past investment in physical and social infrastructure while tackling deficiencies. This will require a strategic long-term perspective on infrastructure – co-ordinating, planning, programming and setting regional priorities – not just within the region, but also in terms of national, cross-border and EU provision including the use of 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' in the forward planning process.

In setting out a long-term spatial framework, with Housing Growth Indicators, the Strategy sends strong signals to all infrastructure providers about the future pattern of development.

ECON 5.1 Develop a long-term investment strategy supportive of the regional economy, involving both public and private sectors to:

- improve and maintain the quality of the Regional Strategic Transport Network (Appendix 12 ►) and take account of infrastructure needs arising from Strategy 2010;
- continue to upgrade and renew networks as required, and maintain a good quality public water supply and sewerage system supported by an efficient drainage network (SPG-ENV 6);
- maintain and enhance the standard of community, cultural, educational, social and health infrastructure and a range of leisure facilities; and facilitate unlocking the economic potential of the creative industries;
- promote the development of an up-to-date, highly competitive telecommunications infrastructure – in terms of capacity, technology, access and costs;
- promote a wider choice of energy supply, including the use of renewable energy sources – in the interests of regional competitiveness and sustainability (C4: SPG-SRC 2 ◀ and C12: SPG-ENV 5); and
- continue to upgrade regional electricity infrastructure to meet the needs of future growth, and particularly the power demand from new housing areas, commercial areas, industry and large scale IT developments.

SPG-ECON 6: To improve employability through lifelong learning and personal development

Building and maintaining a competitive regional economy will depend to a large extent on the skills and employability of the workforce, and on a better alignment between the worlds of work and education. This will place emphasis on acquiring new skills, on raising educational standards and increasing the capacity to innovate. In the same way, education, training and the development of opportunities are of critical necessity to reducing socio-economic differentials and increasing the employability of the long-term unemployed.

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The aim is to create a framework of opportunities for people to learn and to lift barriers that prevent people taking up these opportunities. The accessibility of lifelong learning will become a key indicator of social equity, a measure of the quality of life.

The Information Age Initiative has focused on the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector as the top priority for accelerating progress towards a knowledge based economy and this brings particular education and training requirements to help exploit the digital revolution.

ECON 6.1 Meet the educational and training needs of the Region:

- maintain a well developed network of schools and colleges, including promoting ICT networks for schools and the further and higher education sectors; and providing better access for local communities to lifelong learning, for example, using local library computer networks as resource centres to access world-wide knowledge;
- facilitate improved accessibility to education and training opportunities, including linkage with associated childcare provision;
- facilitate development to assist the promotion of the highest standards of teaching and research in higher education, and establish the Northern Ireland Science Park;
- encourage the development of university and further education college outreach facilities, including the provision designed for the Springvale complex in Belfast; and
- provide a regional network of job centres offering a gateway for people from welfare to work.

Supporting the growth of tourism

North-west Europe is one of the biggest tourism destinations in the world. This presents a significant opportunity for tourism in Northern Ireland which could increase its contribution to the regional economy, and spread benefits across the region. Tourism has a role as a component of regeneration and local economic development, in diversifying the rural economy and in targeting social need.

One of the key roles of the Regional Development Strategy is to provide the spatial framework to accommodate changing tourism and leisure habits, whilst conserving the key assets of the natural and built environment.

The promotion of tourism in Northern Ireland is underpinned by the Region's diverse environment, heritage and culture, which supports its positioning as a cultural, special interest and activity destination (rather than seeking mass markets). The core values of a friendly, hospitable people and an unspoiled environment are fragile. Excessive pressures on the natural and built heritage, or on the people in the tourism industry can put these at risk.

Creating an outward looking region is important for the growth of tourism. Knowing what visitors want is essential for promoting tourism, as is ease of movement in and out of the Region. The emphasis in the Spatial Development Strategy on the upgrading of the gateways and corridors will facilitate visitors and Northern Ireland travellers alike.

Mutually beneficial co-operation with the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain will also be vital to tourism growth, drawing more tourists into Northern Ireland, for example, from the west coast of Ireland tourism circuit (C4: SPG-SRC 1 and SRC 2 ◀).

SPG-ECON 7: To promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure

The RDS emphasises sustainable tourism which maintains the cultural and environmental capital of the Region. This reflects the thrust of existing Northern Ireland Tourist Board strategies and notably their approach to sustainable development, which aims to increase the contribution that tourism makes to the economy:

"In a way that responds to the needs of visitors, respects the environment, is acceptable to the people who live in Northern Ireland, and is economically viable in the long term".¹⁰

¹⁰ Northern Ireland Tourist Board: Corporate Plan 1998 - 2001.

DIAGRAM 10

THE SPATIAL FRAMEWORK FOR TOURISM

Main Scenic Assets	THE SPERRINS
Major Tourism Development Opportunity	
World Heritage Location	
Major Forest & Country Parks	
Major Tourism Centres	HISTORIC WALLED CITY
Horseriding	
International Golfing/Golf Resort	
Major Water and Birdlife Resources	
Fishing	
Cruising/Yachting	
Marinas	
Heritage Towns	
Major Historic Houses	
Castles	
Industrial Heritage	
Seaside Resorts	
Ulster Way	
North West Passage	
Kingfisher Cycle Trail	
Canal	
Regional Gateways	
International/European Port	
Ports	
Belfast International Airport	
Airports	
Regional Strategic Transport Network	
Key Transport Corridors	
Link Corridors	
Trunk Roads	
Railways	



ECON 7.1 Take a sustainable approach to tourism development which would:

- found its development projects carefully within the culture and environment of the region;
- recognise that visitors are increasingly attracted to a place which has a definable and genuine local character;
- recognise the potential of 'knowledge-based tourism and recreation', for which both the environment and local cultural events are key attractions;
- diversify the visitor opportunities to extend the season, thereby spreading the benefits to local economies throughout the year; and
- strive to improve the regional spread of tourism, target areas of social need, and to ensure that local economies gain benefit from tourism development.

SPG-ECON 8: To establish a world-wide image for Northern Ireland, based on positive images of progress, and attractive places to visit

ECON 8.1 Enhance and develop the 'distinctiveness' of the Region as a key element of its tourist product:

- care for the environment generally and protect the unspoilt countryside, waterways and coastline, cultural and scenic landscapes and key assets such as the Giant's Causeway which are of wider significance (Key Diagram 4);
- protect and, where appropriate, enhance and present built heritage and archeological resources, and further develop locational and subject themes, such as cultural tourism and industrial archaeology, for example, Ulster/American, Titanic, Linen, and Celtic/St Patrick's themes including the connection to the heritage town of Downpatrick;
- recognise and promote appreciation of the cultural and historic role of the city of Armagh, the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland, and one of the earliest centres of the Christian faith in the British Isles;

10 Supporting Economic Development

- capitalise on the rural tourism base, the network of distinctive assets built up by local economic development activity in villages and the countryside; and
- ensure that change is sensitive and sympathetic to the quality of the environment and reflects distinctive regional and local style and identity.

ECON 8.2 Enhance 'first impression points' and environmental image:

- create gateways to Northern Ireland which are welcoming arrival areas, user-friendly and of a high environmental quality, to present a favourable initial image; and
- enhance Northern Ireland's image by cleaning up the environment and requiring high quality development (C12).

ECON 8.3 Facilitate the development of infrastructure to meet the needs of visitors:

- provide local 'Tourism Gateway' facilities in appropriate locations to help open up a sub-regional tourism development area;
- locate tourism infrastructure, such as service centres/motels at well accessed nodes normally at the edge of towns or at major tourist 'crossroads', and preferably on the Regional Strategic Transport Network;
- improve access to the natural, built and cultural landscape, in particular by extending the provision of well signed walking and cycling networks;
- ensure the proper integration of the supporting local services and core tourist facilities to increase the capacity to deliver a high quality visitor experience; and
- facilitate the provision of a good range and spread of accommodation.



Tourism Gateways

Developed to act as points of welcome for visitors and to provide:

- access and information – for example, networked tourist information centres; coherent tourism signage;
- a range of accommodation;
- tourist products and attractions; and
- support facilities for tourism in their sub-regional tourism development areas.

ECON 8.4 Encourage business tourism – (SPG-ECON 11) – as a means of generating additional and repeat visits with the potential to spread more visits across the whole year.

SPG-ECON 9: To protect and enhance a varied range of tourism development opportunities

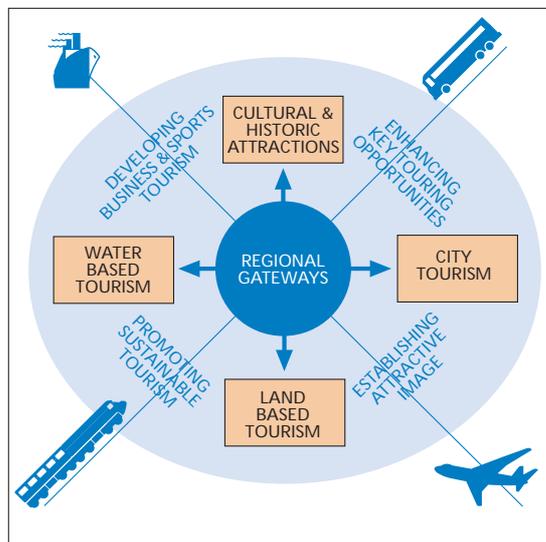
The aim is to capitalise on the Region's tourism magnets and exploit niche market potential, in a sustainable manner, in order to strengthen the regional 'pull' and spread economic benefits throughout Northern Ireland (Figure 20). The long-term success of potential regional 'winners' is dependent on a high quality, unpolluted environment matched by a

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sensitive approach to development which manages visitor access in response to the capacity of the environment to cope with the pressure of rising numbers of visitors. While all parts of Northern Ireland can share in the development of tourism, Key Diagram 4 and Diagrams 13, 14 and 15 identify the Region's strategic natural and built resources, which provide a strong foundation for the growth and promotion of tourism.

The Strategy is to promote, protect and enhance the natural and man-made heritage resources of the Region, giving local enjoyment and helping to attract tourists.

FIGURE 20
MAJOR TOURISM THEMES



ECON 9.1 Protect and enhance land-based visitor amenities:

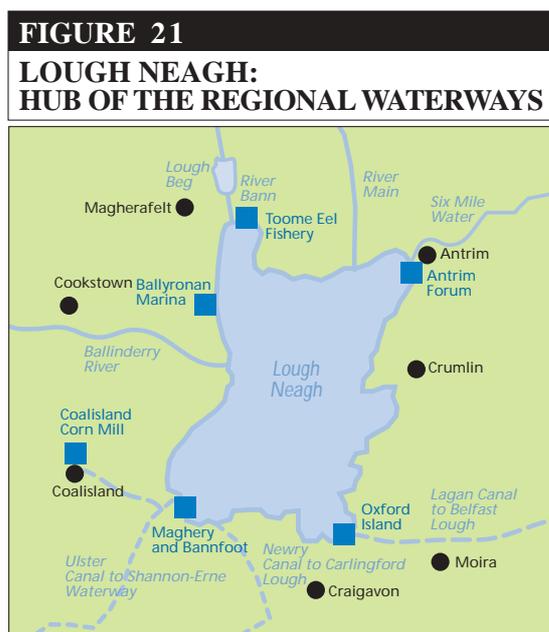
- protect the character and biodiversity of the countryside and coastline to support activity-based holidays such as mountain and countryside walking, cycling, bird watching and horse riding;
- develop a strategy for the designation and sensitive management of landscapes, townscapes and features of national and international importance which recognises their potential as world-wide tourism attractions;
- develop Northern Ireland as a world class Region for golfing facilities and international golf events based on a network of quality golf courses, including the top international courses at Portrush and Newcastle, and encouraging environmentally sensitive development of golf resorts in appropriate locations; and
- facilitate a range of environmentally appropriate opportunities for sports aviation.

ECON 9.2 Protect and enhance water-based visitor amenities:

- protect the natural character of the coastal waters, inland lakes and waterways and provide, where environmentally acceptable, opportunities for water-based tourism, such as cruising, angling and activity-based holidays;
- investigate the potential to reopen disused canals to create a regional network of waterways centred on Lough Neagh, facilitating water-based tourism and recreational traffic between Lough, river and coast (Figure 21); and
- develop water-based pursuits in appropriate locations, based on Lough Erne and the Shannon-Erne Waterway, Strangford Lough, Lough Neagh and the Bann, the existing marinas, such as Bangor and Carrickfergus, and by developing new marinas/moorings.

ECON 9.3 Promote cultural and historic attractions:

- protect a network of heritage towns as a focus for cultural and heritage tourism (Diagram 10); and
- protect and make wise use of conservation areas in towns and villages, the rural heritage of distinctive villages, historic buildings depicting a rural way of life, and maintain a beautiful countryside as a base for rural tourism.



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ECON 9.4 Sustain and enhance the traditional seaside resorts:

- capitalise on existing tourism infrastructure and attractive townscapes, and facilitate the strengthening and diversification of the tourism and leisure roles of the established seaside resorts: Ballycastle, Bangor, Newcastle, Portrush, Portstewart and Warrenpoint.



ECON 9.5 Enhance Key touring opportunities:

- strengthen key regional touring opportunities, such as the Antrim Coast Road, facilitating the provision of supporting infrastructure in key locations for the benefit of coach parties, motorists and cyclists, including information/toilet facilities, picnic areas and sites for touring caravans. Continuing improvement of the rail network will increase the potential for rail-based tourism between the main cities of Ireland (C11: SPG-TRAN 1).

ECON 9.6 Explore the potential for the establishment of one or more National Parks:

- the designation of a National Park would be a strong marketing 'plus' for tourism.

SPG-ECON 10: Identify Major Tourism Development Opportunities for the Private Sector to Develop 'Destination Resort' complexes in Northern Ireland, based on Distinctive Tourism Themes

The 'destination resort' concept

The objective of the 'destination resort' concept is to encourage the development of a magnetic cluster of activities, led largely by private sector initiatives, offering opportunities for visitors to leave coaches and cars to enjoy a range of outdoor and wet weather facilities, with the possibility of an imaginative travel experience on a different form of transport. The multi-purpose complex should be sensitively located both in relation to a Strategic Natural Resource (Key Diagram 4) and a local tourism gateway town, as well as to public transport services to obtain an optimal sustainable outcome.

A 'destination resort' complex could, for example, offer a hotel of international quality with a quality purpose-built conference venue plus the potential to add specialist further education facilities, and facilities for outdoor recreational activities. The concept is to identify a framework of opportunities that could facilitate extra investment in high quality, imaginative and sustainable resources for tourists that would be additional to the investment in tourism infrastructure which would continue to be encouraged throughout the Region.

The package of proposals should provide experiences that are distinctive to and in scale and harmony with the local setting. The aim would be to welcome sustainable quality developments by the private sector, possibly using design competitions for the layout of the 'resort complex'. A sustainable approach and adequate environmental safeguards must underpin the development of a 'destination resort' complex, thus respecting the guidelines in Chapter 12.



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Illustrative: Major Tourism Development Opportunities related to Strategic Natural Resources.

Antrim Coast and Glens area

Development opportunity related to a high quality tourist area based on the attractions of the Glens, an outstanding coastline and attractive coastal villages.

Armagh City – Lough Neagh area

Development opportunity related to the distinctive City heritage theme based on historic and cultural attractions, with potential linkages to the Ulster Canal and to Lough Neagh, offering major environmentally sensitive water-based recreation and appreciation of internationally renowned waterfowl populations.

Fermanagh Lakelands

Development opportunity related to major environmentally sensitive water-based recreation, and the appreciation of internationally renowned loughs and landscapes, and built heritage.

Giant's Causeway – North Coast area

Development opportunity related to major sports and leisure potential based on its role as a family holiday centre with links to natural and man-made attractions of international importance, and industrial heritage.

Londonderry – Lough Foyle area

Development opportunity related to a major historic walled city and lough tourist area, based on cultural attractions and links to Donegal and the Antrim Coast.

Mourne Mountains

Development opportunity related to the major walking and mountaineering activities associated with the mountains, forest parks and coastal setting of the Kingdom of Mourne.

Slieve Gullion

Development opportunity related to the high scenic qualities and outdoor leisure opportunities of an attractive hill environment close to the gateway town of Newry and convenient to Carlingford Lough.

Sperrin Mountains

Development opportunity related to major outdoor pursuits based on the tranquillity of a high quality natural environment with links to its existing cultural attractions.

Strangford Lough - St Patrick's County area

Development opportunity related to wildlife and heritage tourism based on bird and marine life, historic monuments, buildings and gardens, and the St Patrick's Country theme.

SPG-ECON 11: To promote the Region as a centre for cultural, business and sports tourism

City tourism is a strongly growing segment of the tourism market built around short stay breaks, business visits, and the conference trade. Business visits can include an element of tourism such as sightseeing and special activities that can lead to repeat visits.

There is considerable potential to build up a strong and diversified city tourism industry in Belfast and Londonderry. Business tourism in the form of conferences, exhibitions and fairs can make a major contribution to the growth of city tourism. This will benefit other centres because of the ability of visitors based in the two cities to reach all parts of the compact Region in a day. Other centres have the potential to host business activities on a smaller scale.

The hosting of major sporting events, especially at the international level, is a recognised and highly successful way of raising the profile world wide of a region and its main cities. Used imaginatively, sport can be a major 'development tool' enabling the region to build on its strengths and significantly boosting its tourist trade.

ECON 11.1 Build up the network of opportunities for tourism development based on the two main cities of Belfast and Londonderry.

- provide a range of accommodation, conference and exhibition centres;
- strengthen the role of city centres as attractive places to visit with quality shopping, diverse entertainment, cultural activities, eating places and nightlife;
- protect and enhance their local identity and distinctiveness, including conserving built heritage, and improving urban environments; and
- develop the range of places to visit and enjoy in the waterfront areas of Laganside and Foyle side.

11 Developing a Regional Transportation System

Developing a Regional Transportation System

A fresh approach

The Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN) (comprising the road infrastructure and public transport facilities as shown in Diagram 11) has a fundamental role to play in contributing to the achievement of sustainable progress on social, economic and development goals in Northern Ireland. Quality mobility and accessibility for people and goods are basic everyday needs for successful regions in the 21st century. The RDS adopts a fresh approach in seeking to meet the Region's transportation challenges, making best use of the road and rail system in a manner tailored to the unique settlement pattern in Northern Ireland.

The emphasis in the future will be on enhancing accessibility to enable people to get to goods, services and facilities but with as few negative impacts as possible. This will mean examining all forms of transport together and seeking the most appropriate solution in line with transport policy and guidance. The focus will be directed at 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 need to influence and change the travel culture over the next 25 years is a fundamental component in moving towards more responsible use of the car in order to enjoy its benefits and reduce its adverse impacts on the environment and contribute to well-being.

Car ownership levels have grown faster in Northern Ireland than in Great Britain whilst vehicle kilometres of travel have grown on our roads at an average of 3% per annum. Bus and coach services, taxis and motorcycles also rely on the road network whilst the efficient movement of freight by road will remain critical given the limited scope for modal switch to rail.

Meeting levels of future demand by road improvements alone, particularly for unrestrained car use in the larger urban centres and their hinterlands, is not a sustainable option in the long term. Private vehicles will remain an important means of transport, particularly for the mobility impaired and people living in rural parts of the Region, where there may be few, if any, alternatives.

The Transportation Vision

An integral feature of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) is the production of a Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS). The vision of the RTS is "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".

Enabling Northern Ireland to create an integrated transportation system and catch up with and adopt the best transportation practice of other regions requires the RTS to:

- contribute to economic activity in a sustainable way through the improved access to regional, national and international markets by efficient targeting and deployment of resources, particularly in the key transport corridors;
- promote accessibility for all to jobs, services and facilities through improvements to transportation infrastructure and public transport services in particular, thereby enhancing social inclusion;
- further develop policies and measures to reduce the adverse environmental impact of transport and contribute to sustainable patterns of development and movement, through support for the role of public transport, walking and cycling and more responsible use of the car;
- improve safety for all travellers and promote walking, cycling and public transport as healthy forms of travel; and
- promote integration within and between different modes of travel, and between transportation policies and policies for land use, the environment, health, education, tourism and wealth creation.



11 Developing a Regional Transportation System



A long term challenge

The best regional transport systems have been built up over time and are continually improved. Developing such a system in Northern Ireland will be a long-term challenge. The aim is to set out an achievable vision of the potential shape of a system suited to Northern Ireland's needs over the next 25 years. The medium term objective is to make significant progress over the first 10 years towards creating a more integrated system and match best practice in other regions.

The RDS will keep open alternative and radical improvement options, which at present may not realistically expect to be developed, even with substantially increased transport funding. These options may be reintroduced for future political consideration and long term implementation. It is also important that a range of transport options is kept open to enable the region to respond in an effective and sustainable manner to future levels of population growth, economic activity, travel aspirations and the national response to minimise the effects of climate change, which is likely to include continual development of vehicles and their power sources to minimise their environmental footprint. Such long-term options might include:

- a circular passenger rail service on the Belfast – Bleach Green – Antrim – Lisburn – Belfast section of the network with connections to Carrickfergus, Belfast International Airport, Belfast City Airport and Bangor (C6: SPG-BMA 4 ◀);
- rapid transit type services on existing and new rights-of-way and on former railway track beds;
- the potential for integrating rapid transit systems into the future transport network serving the BMA and its hinterland;
- upgraded public transport links between the two main cities within the Region – Belfast and Londonderry – and enhanced Belfast-Dublin Inter City Links; and
- even with significant improvements to public transport services, upgrading will be required on key sections of the strategic road network to reduce congestion and improve the reliability of journey times.

11 Developing a Regional Transportation System

Achieving the long-term transport challenge will require an integrated approach involving the public, private and voluntary sectors in implementation. In the future all transportation proposals, which have a regional or sub-regional significance, will be considered in the context of the RDS, an integral part of which is the preparation of a 10-year RTS.

The RTS will outline methods capable of generating necessary funding for initiatives designed to bring about the adoption of more sustainable travel choices and a more responsible travel culture. The RTS will provide the framework to facilitate the future development of the RSTN and will in turn determine and co-ordinate transportation projects within local transport plans.

The type of proposals emerging from this process will reflect sub-regional transportation differences between the BMA and other parts of the Region and will be included in relevant Development Plans. It will also be important to ensure that strategies in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan and RTS complement each other.

To ensure consistency between the RDS, the RTS and development plans, a Regional Planning Policy Statement on Transport will be prepared to provide guidance on the importance of location as a key determinant in land use and transportation planning. This will place greater emphasis on the integration of planning and transportation policies and practices to help deliver the transportation vision.

THEMES

The major themes in the Strategy relating to transportation are:

- developing a regional strategic transport network (SPG-TRAN 1);
- extending travel choice (SPG-TRAN 2);
- integrating land use and transportation (SPG-TRAN 3);
- changing travel culture and contributing to healthier lifestyles (SPG-TRAN 4); and
- A modern integrated transport system for the BMA is considered as an integral section of Chapter 6 on the BMA (SPG-BMA 3 - SPG-BMA 4 ◀).

11 Developing a Regional Transportation System

SPG-TRAN 1: To develop a Regional Strategic Transport Network based on key transport corridors, to enhance accessibility to regional facilities and services (SPG-TRAN 2 - TRAN 4)



TRAN 1.1 The RDS identifies a core transport network of important regional and metropolitan routes (road and public transport infrastructure) known as the Regional Strategic Transport Network¹¹ (RSTN) (Diagram 11). It incorporates 5% of the road network, which carries around 30% of total vehicle travel, and all of the rail system.

¹¹ 'Road network' includes cycling and pedestrian infrastructure (footways and cycle paths) as well as highways.

11 Developing a Regional Transportation System

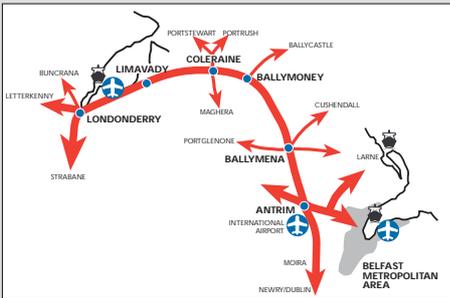
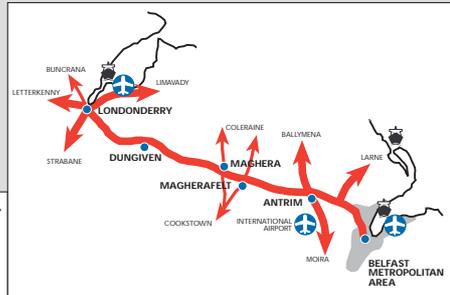
DIAGRAM 12

KEY TRANSPORT CORRIDORS



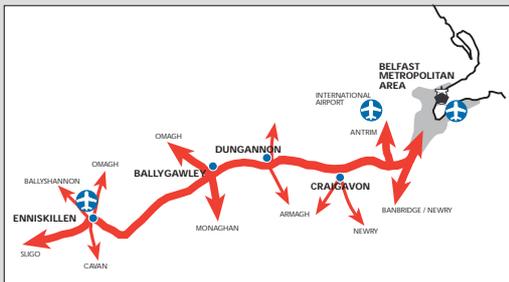
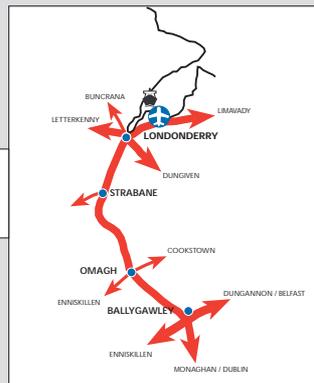
◀ **The Eastern Seaboard Corridor** with the potential to provide high speed, high quality and high capacity road and rail links between Belfast and Dublin and onward towards Larne, Warrenpoint and Rosslare to facilitate the movement of freight and people in this important North-South route. It facilitates inter-city tourist traffic and access to the Mourne/St Patrick's Country.

▶ **The Belfast Metropolitan Area - Londonderry Corridor** connecting the two biggest cities in the Region and strengthening their access to and from Belfast International Airport



◀ **The Northern Corridor** linking the Belfast Metropolitan Area to Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Londonderry by road and rail, providing access to the Antrim Glens and Coast, and facilitating Londonderry to Dublin links by direct connection to the Eastern Seaboard Corridor.

▶ **The Western Corridor** facilitating links west of Lough Neagh between Donegal, Londonderry, Strabane, Omagh, Monaghan and Dublin.



◀ **The South Western Corridor** providing access to Craighavon, the heart of the Rural West, the Fermanagh Lakeland, the Sperrins and to important cross-border routes; Enniskillen-Sligo, Armagh-Dublin and Ballygawley - Monaghan.

The RSTN comprises the 5 Key Transport Corridors, the 4 Link Corridors and the BMA Transport Corridors¹² (Diagram 5), along with the remainder of the trunk road network. The Key Transport Corridors (Diagram 12) are the upper tier of the Region's long distance routes connecting a number of towns to the major regional gateways and the BMA.

The development of the RSTN to enhance accessibility will provide a number of benefits. These include helping to provide an efficient and integrated regional public transport system (both bus and rail); strengthening social cohesion; facilitating decentralised growth; and helping to build an integrated regional economy. The focus will be on developing strategic through routes for upgraded bus services and long distance traffic, including freight movement, reducing where possible the intrusion of unsuitable traffic into towns and their local communities, facilitating tourist travel around the Region and more sustainable transportation solutions for the BMA. The RSTN also provides a strategic grid for routing IT and utilities infrastructure.

TRAN 1.2 Develop and maintain the identified RSTN to enhance accessibility on an integrated basis for all users, including freight. To achieve this the aims are to:

- incorporate quality public transport elements along the corridor routes with multi-modal interchange facilities, including provision for walking and cycling;
- target improvements to upgrade the network, road and rail, giving priority to the Key, Link and Metropolitan Transport Corridors;
- upgrade Westlink as a priority to reduce the impact of congestion and facilitate through traffic and freight movement, particularly that associated with the ports of Belfast and Larne;
- introduce local improvements at significant traffic bottlenecks to relieve congestion and facilitate transport efficiency for all road users, for example, at Toome to facilitate economic development in the West and North West, thus contributing to targeting social need;
- plan investment across transport modes in an integrated way to achieve better co-ordination between regional and local needs; and

¹² Within the BMA the exact number and location of Metropolitan Transport Corridors will be determined in the context of the BMA Plan and informed by the work of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan.

11 Developing a Regional Transportation System

- minimise environmental impact of any infrastructure schemes through sensitive landscaping designed to integrate with the surroundings and incorporating regional landmark features where appropriate.

TRAN 1.3 Examine access to regional gateways and cross-border links with an emphasis on improving connections from the 5 Key Transport and 4 Link Corridors (C5 and C6 ◀) in order to:

- promote gateway ports and airports as locations for major economic development and additional employment generation;
- encourage progressive upgrading of East-West linkages to Great Britain and Europe; and
- contribute to the creation of an integrated sustainable transport network for the island of Ireland as a whole. The development of a co-ordinated approach to spatial planning between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland will assist the effective development of cross-border roads and public transport routes (see example in panel), and help the tourism industry (C10: SPG-ECON 9).



THE EASTERN SEABOARD CORRIDOR - THE BELFAST – DUBLIN INTER-CITY LINKS

The proposal is to examine, in conjunction with the Republic of Ireland, the concept of high quality Inter-City links connecting Belfast and Dublin and their ports, with good onward links to the ports of Larne, Warrenpoint, Dunlaoghaire and Rosslare and connections to the intermediate towns on the eastern seaboard, building on recent major investment.

The long-term concept involves the continuing development of high quality, road and rail links between the two Cities. Developing high-speed transport links in this corridor would bring a number of benefits:

- rapid inter-city travel by quality connections of consistent standard;
- completion of the Larne-Rosslare TENS route to facilitate long distance freight movement;
- strengthening the employment and tourism potential of the Belfast-Dublin development corridor; and
- a potential route for a natural gas inter-connector and other services.

In the longer term more radical options might be justifiable to meet unexpected changes in economic or other circumstances which lead to a resultant change in travel demand. For example, the building of a composite Belfast-Dublin section of motorway and rail route from Lisburn via Banbridge to Poyntzpass north of Newry might satisfy a future high growth area by providing an additional inter-city route and a new commuter rail line. Such options would require further study, consultation and evaluation.

SPG-TRAN 2: To extend travel choice for all sections of the community by enhancing public transport¹³

TRAN 2.1 Strengthen the regional bus network in ways which will reinforce the locational policies in the Spatial Development Strategy:

- promote the development of public transport routes on the RSTN for express coach services with appropriate bus priority measures and associated Park and Ride facilities;
- ensure that interchange points on the RSTN are located to service major travel generating sources. The design, layout and access arrangements of surrounding developments should enable people to walk and cycle with ease and safety to join public transport services;
- promote bus based park and ride schemes, especially in the BMA, particularly for commuting journeys;

¹³ Public transport includes taxis and community transport in addition to the 'conventional' rail and bus modes.

11 Developing a Regional Transportation System

- identify potential park and ride sites in development plans, particularly where green belt locations may be required;
- better integrate taxis and private hire vehicles into passenger transport provision to help bridge the gap between personal and public transport and assist 'seamless travel' from home to destination;
- develop the use of planning obligations in the determination of planning applications for major travel generating development proposals. These should facilitate improvements to public transport and walking and cycling facilities, widen travel choice and reduce the need for car use and parking provision at such sites;
- examine options for improved public transport services to foster greater social inclusion for those with limited access to a car, with consideration of services from areas with high levels of unemployment and social disadvantage to major employment locations;
- promote sustainable transport usage in main towns by encouraging the development of internal bus services where a sufficient viability threshold can be achieved;
- examine options in rural areas for enhancing services and improving accessibility, and provide better links to the regional public transport system (SPG-RNI 4 ◀) by:
 - improvements to rural transport infrastructure to raise the quality of bus connections;
 - developing rural transport initiatives which help target the most disadvantaged areas and which promote partnerships between community transport providers and public transport providers and other statutory agencies leading to the creation of innovative solutions; and
 - improving access to rural transport information using IT and developing co-operative links to commercial activities such as home delivery and logistics firms;

TRAN 2.2 Strengthen the regional rail system:

- further develop commuter rail services in the BMA connecting Carrickfergus, Lisburn, Antrim, Templepatrick and Bangor with Belfast and to services providing linkages with the lines to Londonderry, Newry and Larne (C6: SPG-BMA 3 ◀);
- keep under review the potential to progressively improve services and infrastructure;
- encourage the provision of park and ride facilities at railway stations taking advantage of any adjacent development opportunities;
- reinforce the market for rail services by encouraging development in appropriate locations along rail corridors, in and close to termini and interchanges where access to the network can be gained, and by giving appropriate planning protection in future development plans to land required for new stations and associated park and ride facilities; and
- examine the scope for promoting greater rail use for freight, exploring the potential for more all island rail freight movement, and the feasibility of improved connections with external gateways, the RSTN, and centres of major economic development.

Decisions on the detail of the future development of public transport, taking account of SPG-TRAN 2 above and SPG-TRAN 3 following, will depend on the outcome of the Regional Transportation Strategy referred to earlier.

SPG-TRAN 3: To integrate land use and transportation

The need for closer integration of land use and transportation is central to the application of the Regional Development Strategy and its Guiding Principles, and to reducing the need to travel. Development plans will foster the integration of transport and development. Housing requirements need to be fully reflected in public transport investment planning, particularly to facilitate opening up serviced land for housing and maximising the potential of higher residential densities for increasing housing supply. This approach is relevant in both urban and rural areas, although policies will need to reflect differences in the scale of development and the availability of public transport.

11 Developing a Regional Transportation System

TRAN 3.1 Develop land use patterns which contribute to a much better range of travel choices for all, and reduce the demand for travel

- promote an appropriate spread of jobs and homes to achieve a balanced spatial pattern well served by the RSTN thereby helping to reduce the demand for travel, particularly at peak times;
- maintain compact urban areas, support neighbourhood centres and reduce physical separation of key land uses by promoting physical renewal and mixed use developments of a type, scale, density and design which remedy local neighbourhood deficiencies and thereby reduce the need to travel and improve choice for people to walk, cycle or use public transport rather than drive;
- introduce car parking policies which discourage public long-stay parking in urban centres where public transport is a realistic alternative, encourage shared use of parking in town centres as part of major development proposals and introduce resident parking schemes;
- apply parking standards and any related road user charging policy in a complementary way to land use planning to ensure there is an appropriate level of good quality parking, with an emphasis on short stay provision in central locations, to maintain strong and viable town centres;
- utilise planning obligations or other appropriate mechanisms to ensure that developers contribute more fully to the cost of the improvement or development of the necessary transportation infrastructure and services with an emphasis on access by walking, cycling and public transport;
- encourage the use of Travel Plans where appropriate in relation to new development and their use by major employers at existing sites;
- identify and safeguard realistic sites and routes, both existing and potential, which could be critical in developing transportation infrastructure and ensure that any disused transport sites and routes are not severed by non-transport land uses. This will widen future options for sustainable transport purposes, including footpaths, cycle ways and in the

longer term, possible public transport options, for example, the E-Way Study of the former railway between Belfast and Newtownards;

- locate major distribution sites at the edge of urban areas, with good connections to the Key Transport Corridors within the RSTN;
- assess the scope for developing and implementing sustainable distribution practices and systems. This should be in partnership with the freight industry and will support economic growth whilst reducing accidents, health risks, disturbance and environmental damage;
- develop a more co-ordinated approach between land use and transport plan making bodies, and transport operators, in applying the DOE/ DRD's housing design guidance, 'Creating Places – Achieving Quality in Residential Developments', to ensure integration of public transport, and good walking and cycling facilities in new housing developments from the start; and
- review existing residential areas to create environments which are sympathetic to the safe and convenient movement of people, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of the young, the elderly, and the mobility impaired.

SPG-TRAN 4: To change the regional travel culture and contribute to healthier lifestyles

The RDS recognises the adverse environmental impacts associated with the car and over the long term the importance of changing travel behaviour to reduce reliance on the car. This applies particularly in the BMA and other large urban areas where the greatest congestion and impact on health, including air quality, is likely to occur. In the smaller towns and rural service centres, a more flexible approach will be taken to reflect their economic circumstances, the scale of future congestion and the availability of public transport. While it is recognised that complete journeys cannot always be made conveniently by public transport, the Strategy is to enable people to conduct part of their journeys by public transport.

A major challenge, in all parts of Northern Ireland and among all age groups, is to revive the healthy habits of walking and cycling, particularly for relatively short journeys of less than two miles.

11 Developing a Regional Transportation System

Managing travel demand

TRAN 4.1 Manage the transportation system more comprehensively, with a strategic approach to traffic management to achieve wider planning and transportation aims, including more responsible car use where appropriate in urban and rural areas:

- develop campaigns for raising public awareness of the need to reduce the adverse environmental impacts of car use and to demonstrate to businesses, operators, schools, communities and individuals the part they can all play in meeting this challenge;
- encourage the development and implementation of Travel Plans by major employers through partnership with business and the wider community, particularly at public and private sector business sites, hospitals, higher education campuses and schools to which large numbers of people commute daily;
- promote an integrated approach to reducing car use, especially in targeting the 'school run';
- promote higher car occupancy to reduce motor traffic especially in larger urban areas at peak times;
- develop and promote the use of park and share sites at key nodes on the road network to facilitate car sharing by commuters;
- reallocate road space where appropriate to give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport linked to enhanced streetscape in order to facilitate the renaissance of urban areas. This will contribute to vibrant street life with improved movement conditions, particularly for the elderly, the young, and the mobility impaired and may incorporate safer routes to school schemes;
- evaluate and develop measures, such as road user charging and workplace parking levies, where these would have potential to provide additional funding for investment in public transport infrastructure and services and/or influence a modal shift to public transport use;
- strengthen traffic law enforcement procedures particularly in relation to illegal parking and road safety; and

11 Developing a Regional Transportation System

- channel major freight movements on to the RSTN, and identify urban and rural feeder routes for heavy lorries to facilitate local businesses, and protect residential amenities.



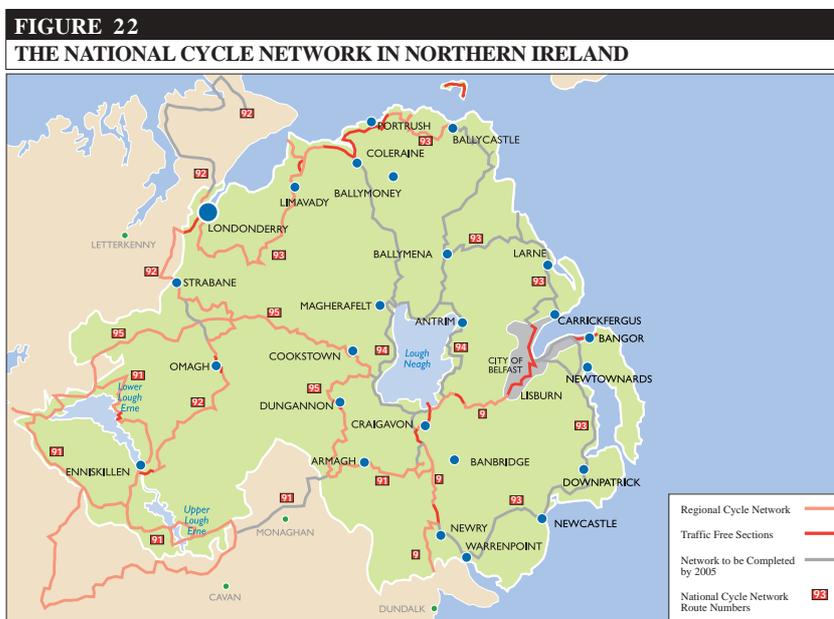
Walking and cycling

TRAN 4.2 Give greater priority to encouraging more walking and cycling:

- promote walking and cycling, particularly for short journeys to work, school, shops and for leisure by integrating their needs into new transport and development schemes and related site planning, to provide safe and environmentally attractive walking and cycling facilities;
- develop a Walking Strategy for Northern Ireland and promote walking with the help of the Northern Ireland Walking Forum to create more direct, safer, pedestrian friendly routes, particularly in and around town centres, traditional shopping streets, and local neighbourhoods, and improve pedestrian facilities on routes to bus stops, bus and rail stations;
- co-operate with and/or promote initiatives to open up new long distance walking routes linked with recreational and tourism opportunities;
- introduce traffic calming measures in residential areas, including 20 mph streets where appropriate, and review options for and outcomes of pilot Home Zone projects;

11 Developing a Regional Transportation System

- implement the 'Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy' with the help of the Northern Ireland Cycling Forum and in association with Sustrans to provide for the progressive development of cycle networks where the needs and safety of cyclists will be given priority, including on redundant railway lines, alongside canals and rivers, in linear parks and on existing roads (Figure 22); and
- promote the provision of cycle parking in conjunction with shower and changing facilities at the workplace and provide more secure cycle parking close to shops, town centres, parks, sports and public transport facilities.



Road safety

TRAN 4.3 Develop a new Road Safety Strategy as part of the efforts to reduce fatal and serious road accident casualties through:

- safety education, training and publicity; and
- the introduction of accident remedial measures, traffic calming, and improved road layouts within residential areas.

Accessibility

TRAN 4.4 The transport needs of people who do not have access to a car and those with reduced mobility demand an appropriate mix of transport services, which are accessible and affordable. A fundamental transport aim is to take into account and seek to meet the needs of people with impaired mobility, including the specialised needs of people with disabilities and the elderly, in the implementation of planning policies, traffic management schemes and development of all transport systems:

- consider how transport infrastructure can be made more accessible to the unemployed, those on low incomes, the young, the elderly and the mobility impaired;
- provide a pedestrian environment that enables people with impaired mobility, including those temporarily impaired due to travelling with young children or carrying shopping, to access and make use of public transport or other facilities; and
- ensure the needs of people with disabilities are adequately taken into account in revising parking policy.

Education and health

TRAN 4.5 Promote sustainable transport access to education and health care establishments:

- improve access by walking, cycling and public transport to health, community care and educational sites to help provide equitable access for all and reduce the requirement for additional parking; and
- create partnerships for collaborative action with the health care services and other public and voluntary bodies to promote walking and cycling as part of improving healthy living.

12 Caring for the Environment

Caring for the Environment

Protecting and managing resources, and creating healthy living environments

Improving the quality of the environment within which we live can make an important contribution toward achieving a better quality of life. Significant progress towards more sustainable forms of human settlement cannot be achieved without a continuing contribution being made by a change in the attitudes and lifestyles of individuals. The Strategy aims to promote within the wider community a greater awareness of environmental issues and the important links between environment, health and well being. It sees in this relationship the possibility of creating over time a step change in the general health and well being of the whole community.



The enhancement of biodiversity, the total variety of all living things ranging from the complex interaction which occur within habitats and landscapes to the level of genetic variation, will be one of the most powerful indicators of progress towards sustainability. Similarly, growing appreciation of the cultural heritage expressed in historic town centres and in the landscapes of rural areas, and industrial traditions, will be a measure of a Region which values its rich legacy from the past for the benefit of future generations.

Global climate change has been identified as an issue which must be taken into account in planning the future development of the Region (C2 ◀). An objective of the Strategy is to contribute to reducing the impact of global warming, both locally and globally, and to emphasise the importance of cutting environmental costs generally, by reducing the consumption of natural resources and energy from non-renewable sources, and increasing the amount of waste material which is recycled rather than dumped.

The cultural heritage in the environment

Our environment, and particularly the landscape, has been shaped and altered by thousands of years of human activity and change. The distinctive heritage of buildings and other features, and changes in the landform, are complemented by less obvious, or even invisible remains, representing agricultural, industrial, defensive and ritual aspects of life in the past.

Landscape is part of our cultural heritage. It links our past and our present, providing a 'sense of place' in space and time. 'Sense of Place' provides feelings of re-assurance and belonging, it is a shared inheritance which enriches our quality of life and it can be a source of inspiration and creative energy. It is also our legacy for future generations, which development must therefore respect, and to which good development will also contribute.

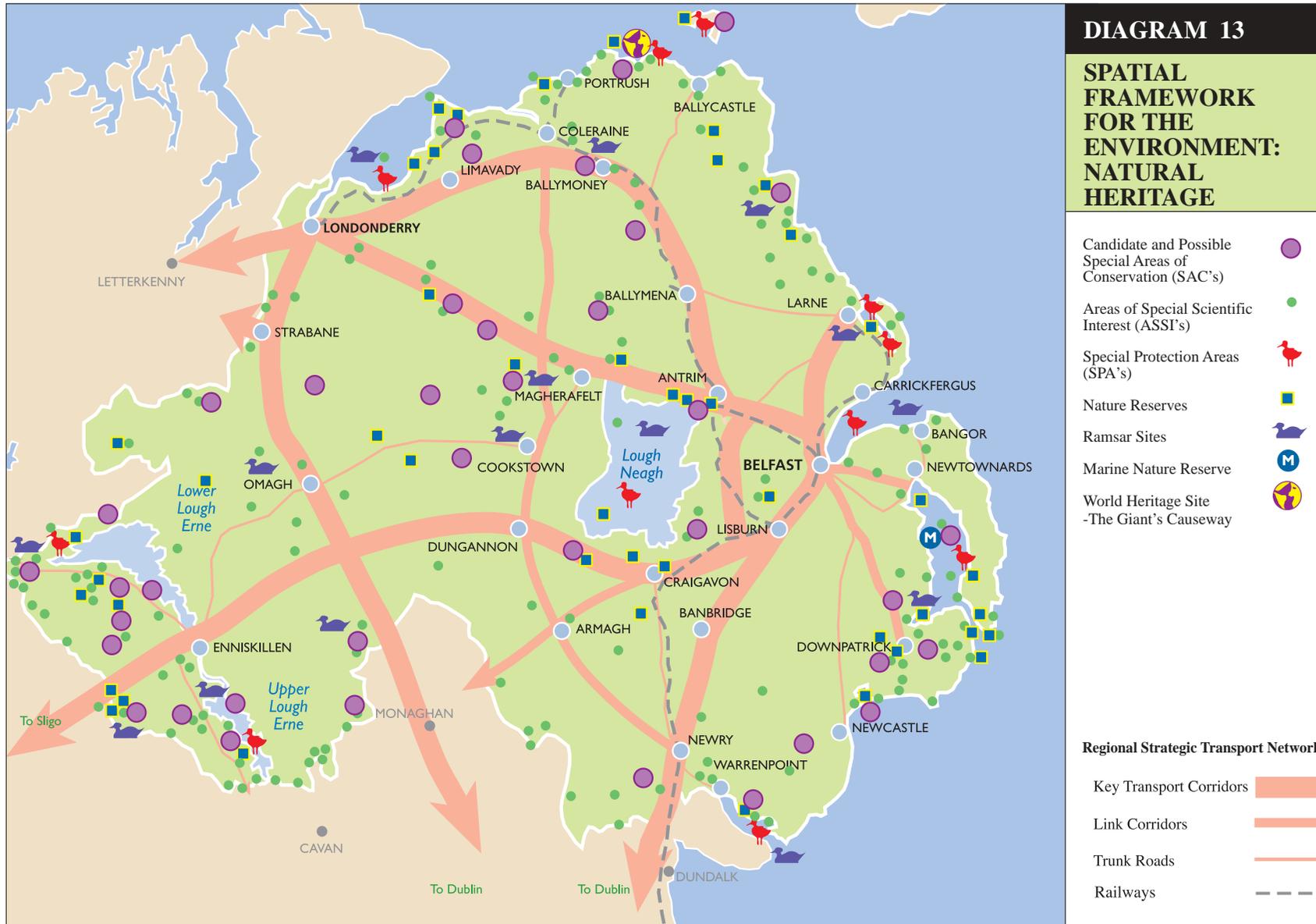
The Strategy deals with the cross-cutting issues that link the natural and the built heritage. It recognises that a range of statutory measures is appropriate, such as designations for conservation and protection, while promoting good stewardship of all our environmental resources and cultural heritage to the benefit of present and future citizens.

The environment and the economy

The Strategy identifies the value of the environment, not only as a natural and cultural resource, but also as an important economy resource with potential to create and support business. There is a widespread perception that environmental constraints may limit development opportunities and so reduce employment. But this ignores the potential for new employment in recreation, tourism, conservation and technology. This could include agri-environment business, that is creating environmental goods, recreation resources, and businesses related to cleaning up the environment and eco-management. The landscape and the coastal areas can also be described as a 'social good' accorded value by society for aesthetic and recreational reasons. Strategic environmental assets therefore need to be managed in a positive way for the benefit of the whole community and as a means of enhancing tourism and economic development opportunities.

Assessment of environmental impacts

The environment is not an infinite resource and is extremely sensitive to change. It is easy to identify direct impacts from, say, construction schemes, or certain types of industry, but it is more difficult to recognise harmful effects which arise due to an accumulation of minor or indirect



impacts. In order to maximise the benefits to be enjoyed from the environment, and minimise the adverse impacts, it is necessary to monitor the changes which take place and consider what corrective actions will be needed to protect and enhance that environment, including, where necessary, endeavouring to reduce development pressure on the environment.

It is important that this evaluation takes place each time a major development or policy decision relating to the environment is made. For this reason, the RDS has been subjected to Strategic Environmental Assessment during its preparation and it is intended that at each further stage of Regional Planning Policy preparation the outcome will be tested for sustainability.

Themes

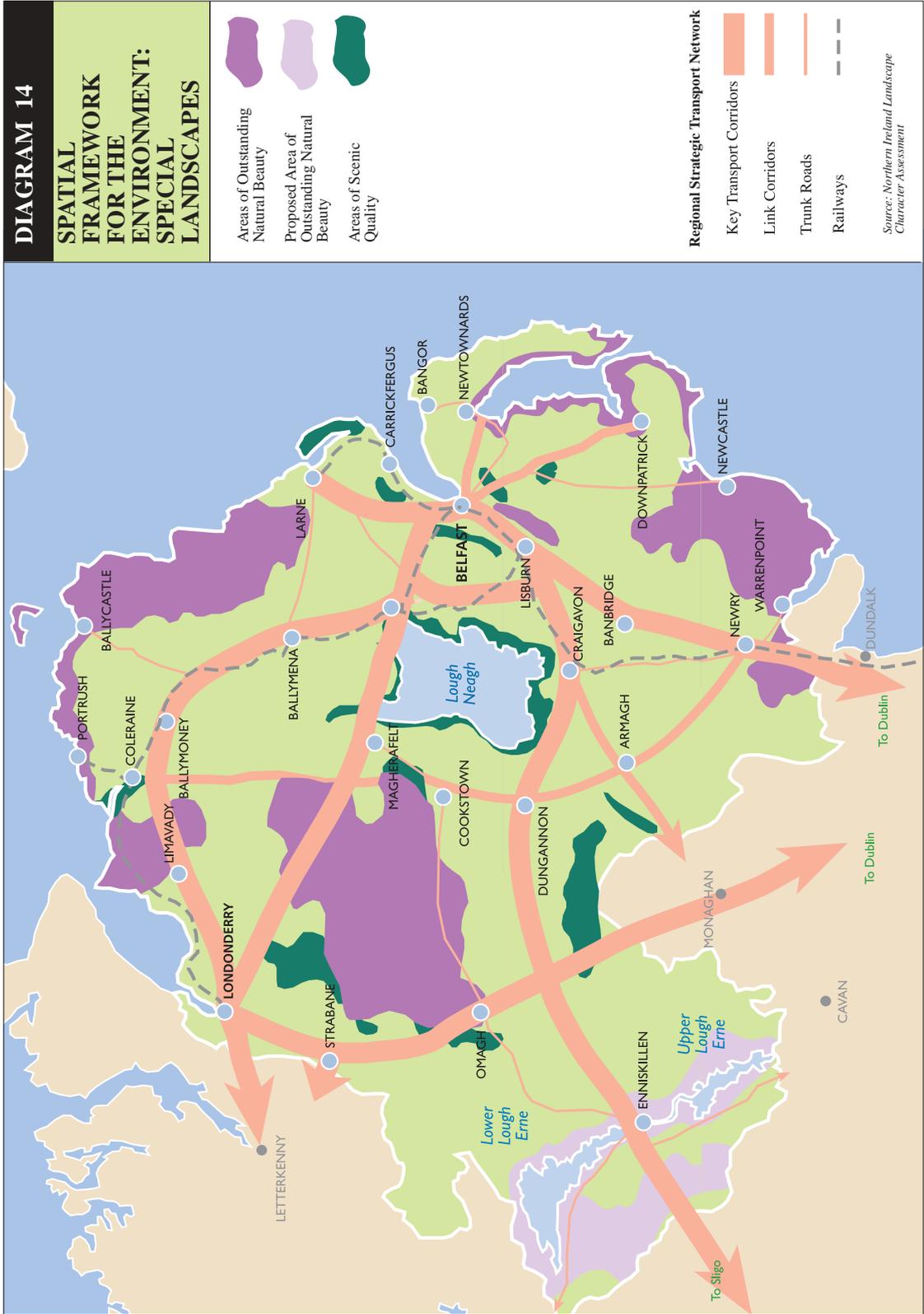
The major themes in the Strategy relating to the environment (Diagrams 13, 14 and 15) are:

- Protection of the Environment (SPG-ENV 1 - SPG-ENV 4)
- The Natural Environment including the Coast
- The Built Environment
- Wise Use of the Environment (SPG-ENV 5); and
- The Environment and Health including Recreation and Cultural Amenities (SPG-ENV 6 and SPG-ENV 7).

Protection of the environment

Northern Ireland possesses a rich variety of landscapes with 130 distinctive areas recorded in the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment, including areas of scenic quality (Figure 14). While designated landscapes are an important part of our physical and cultural heritage, it is vital that the value of the rich pattern of field, hedge, slopes and streams in our daily living spaces is cherished, and biodiversity of the wider countryside is enhanced, just as much as in the special landscapes.

Most of the environment of Northern Ireland has been modified by human impact upon, and change to, the natural topography and groundcover, over the last 10,000 years. For example, most woodland in the Region is the result of human activity, some lakes are man-made, and peat bogs and wetlands contain important archeological remains providing unique insights into our past.



The need and intention therefore is to encourage appreciation and care of both the natural and man-made elements within the environment together, in a way which recognises their complex inter-relationships. This section on the protection of the environment brings together in SPG-ENV 1– SPG-ENV 4, a comprehensive collection of natural heritage and built heritage strategic guidance providing the 'basket of options' needed to deal with aspects of the environment in a complementary way within an integrated approach.

SPG-ENV 1: To conserve the natural environment

The natural environment directly supports all life and is essential to our well being. It provides the resources which we will need for continuing economic development but exists in a delicate balance between renewal and depletion. This strategic planning guideline sets out a range of measures to guide developers and the whole community towards achieving sustainable development patterns, conserving the environmental capital, applying the precautionary principle¹⁴, enhancing biodiversity and creating a better quality of life for all.

ENV 1.1 Sustain and enhance biodiversity:

- conserve biodiversity (the rich variety of wildlife habitats, wild plants and animals, domesticated species, cultivars and breeds) in line with the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy;
- prepare and involve the community at all levels in action to promote the conservation of habitats and species of special importance and the recovery of habitats and species which are in serious decline;
- protect the Region's rich resource of lakes and rivers as distinctive and attractive landscape features and as important natural habitats and wildlife corridors, including the identification of zones on lake edges and river corridors where development should be strictly curtailed;
- promote wise management of the Region's land, woodland, water and wetland resources, including the distinctive natural heritage found in Northern Ireland, such as the lakes (more than 1,600), the variety of wetlands, woodlands, and the unimproved grassland in accordance with the need to conserve biodiversity;

¹⁴ The precautionary principle. The Rio Declaration defines the precautionary principle as 'where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation'. Precautionary action requires assessment of the costs and benefits of action, and transparency in decision-making.

¹⁵ Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy Proposals June 1999; Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group.

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- place a special emphasis on the conservation of the natural heritage of peat bogs in Northern Ireland which represent a significant ecological asset at the European Union level, including co-operating with the Republic of Ireland where peat bogs straddle the border to secure an integrated approach to conservation; and
- conserve and enhance the settings of cities, towns and villages, including the landscape wedges linking town and countryside, and protect the best and most versatile agricultural land as an important and finite regional resource as far as practicable.

ENV 1.2 Protect and manage areas designated for their scientific interest:

- pursue the scientific survey of the natural habitats, wild species and earth science features of the Region;
- protect sites of significant wildlife and earth science importance through designation as Areas of Special Scientific Interest, with some managed as National Nature Reserves. Sites which are internationally important will also be designated as Special Protection Areas (birds) and Special Areas of Conservation (habitats and other species) within the European Union Natura 2000 Network or Ramsar Sites (wetlands) (see also cross-border designations in SPG-SRC 2 ◀ and Appendix 13 ▶);
- monitor and manage designated sites to ensure the conservation of their scientific interest; and
- identify Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance and designate these in development plans, seeking to manage suitable sites, particularly in urban and urban fringe situations, as Local Nature Reserves, where habitat creation and conservation is combined with public access and environmental education.

ENV 1.3 Protect, manage and enhance the resources of woodland and hedgerows as features of environmental and historic significance:

- protect trees and woodland areas, especially those of particular amenity or nature conservation value such as the ancient and long-established woodlands, and manage them on a sustainable basis through encouraging natural regeneration or by replacement planting with appropriate species of local provenance where necessary;

- increase tree cover by planting new areas of woodland and forest in appropriate local environments, preferably using native mixed species, and establishing community woodlands within and near towns and cities; and
- generally promote the planting of new trees on a scale sufficient to replace those reaching maturity, and encourage the retention and management of hedgerows as a characteristic man-made feature of the Northern Ireland landscape and as valuable wildlife corridors.

ENV 1.4 Protect, enhance and encourage appreciation of the Region's landscapes:

- agree a strategy for the designation, management and enjoyment of the most significant landscape areas in the Region;
- complete the designation of a suite of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty selected for the quality of their landscape and manage so as to conserve their distinctive character, their nature conservation and built heritage interest, to enhance employment opportunities for the local community and provide enjoyment for visitors (see also cross-border designations in C4: SPG-SRC 2 ◀). Identify local areas of scenic quality in development plans;
- consider the establishment of one or more National Parks where there is high landscape quality, significant recreation and tourism use or potential, the local community is in favour and an acceptable model can be agreed;
- conserve and enhance the strategic value of the Lagan Valley Regional Park;
- promote the conservation and wise management of the Belfast Hills and consider ways of conserving the regional resource value of the other Antrim, Holywood and Castlereagh Hills which provide the setting for the metropolitan area;
- promote sustainable access to the countryside taking account of the Northern Ireland Countryside Recreation Strategy and continue to develop the network of public open spaces including Country parks, forest parks and forest recreation areas, and Nature Reserves, in association with public access routes;

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- manage development pressures to protect the setting of settlements and maintain the rural character of the countryside throughout Northern Ireland by designating green belts and countryside policy areas (Figure 15 and C8: SPG-RNI 5 ◀), informed by the Northern Ireland Landscape Assessment 2000;
- define Local Landscape Policy Areas in development plans to help safeguard environmental assets within or adjoining settlements by taking account of the Northern Ireland Landscape Assessment 2000 and giving regard to such features as distinctive landscape settings and views, landscape buffers and prominent ridge lines; and
- promote stewardship of the regional landscape by partnership approaches and appropriate management frameworks where necessary.

The coast

Northern Ireland is noted for its beautiful and relatively unspoilt coast including such well known features as the Giant's Causeway (World Heritage Site), Benone Strand, Antrim Coast Road, Strangford Lough and the Mourne Coast. The coastline – which is some 650 kilometres in length – is a unique part of our natural heritage with many man-made coastal features.

The 'coastal zone' is a diverse linear ecosystem comprising: the off-shore waters from just beyond low water, the beach and shore line and an associated strip of land behind the shoreline. Northern Ireland coastal waters contain about 50% of the region's biodiversity and the varied coastline is one of the Region's greatest environmental, tourist, and recreational assets.

The environment in the coastal zone is subject to a range of particular development, economic and leisure pressures. The key characteristics in relation to the coast are identified in Figure 23. All of this coastal zone with its wealth of natural and cultural resources needs a range of continuing actions to ensure its conservation for future generations.

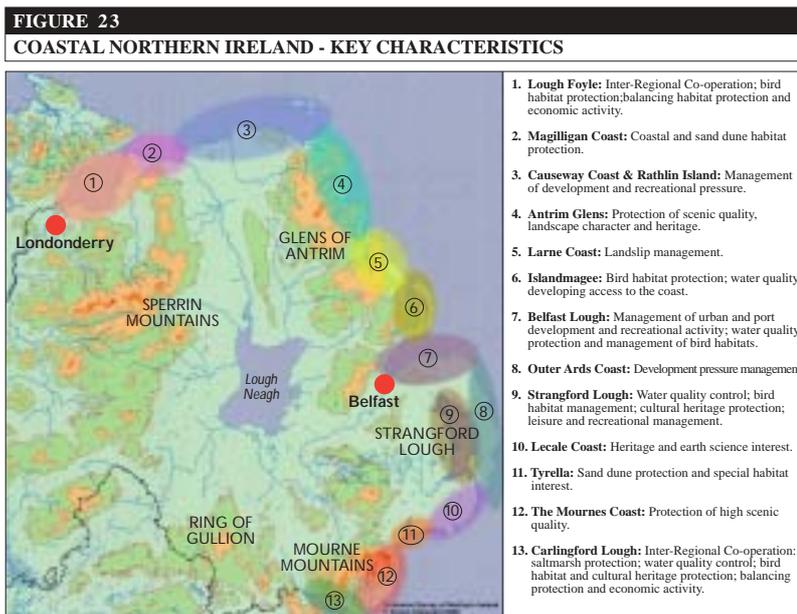
SPG-ENV 2: To protect and manage the Northern Ireland coastline

ENV 2.1 Conserve the coast of Northern Ireland:

- protect the undeveloped coastline, especially from intense recreational and tourism pressures, assess, and if necessary,

mitigate the environmental impact of essential port and other economic developments; and within coastal settlements seek to keep open those strips of land or spaces right on the coastline where the public can walk along the seaside or just enjoy the views out to sea;

- seek to reconcile development and management pressures with conservation, commercial and leisure use, addressing such issues as land-use zoning, flooding, water quality, habitat and species conservation, archeological and built heritage conservation, sustainable fishing and recreation;
- conserve distinctive coastal habitats and, where environmental impact assessment shows that coastal protection is essential to safeguard infrastructure or highly valued environmental assets, undertake environmentally sensitive coastal protection; and
- protect the World Heritage Site of the Giant's Causeway by respecting and protecting its setting, conserving its physical features, managing change, and controlling access and tourism impacts in a sensitive way.



ENV 2.2 Raise the quality of coastal waters:

- improve sewerage infrastructure and effluent treatment systems for coastal settlements to meet European water quality standards and international agreements;
- protect and improve the quality of coastal waters to meet obligations under European Directives; and

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- protect bathing waters to meet the standards required by European directives and to encourage Local Authorities to seek Blue Flag status for high quality bathing areas.

SPG-ENV 3: To conserve the built environment

Northern Ireland's landscapes reflect thousands of years of human activity. Each generation has had the choice to retain, modify or destroy places and structures inherited from previous generations, in order to meet their own needs. Those features which have survived have been passed down to modern generations as part of the cultural heritage and held in trust for the future.

Distinctive or scarcely visible, these sites, features and buildings, represent every period of human endeavour and a range of cultural influences. They contribute to our sense of belonging, the 'sense of place' which links people to the land and communities, and can be a source of pride and inspiration.

Within the 'built environment', the 'built heritage' is an all-embracing term, including archeological sites and monuments, buildings, and other features of special architectural or historical interest, designed historic landscape parks, gardens and demesnes, industrial structures and complexes, 20th Century defensive structures and remains in inter-tidal and maritime contexts.

While the identification and knowledge of the archeological and built heritage resource is continually increasing as a result of research, and as protection programmes are extended, it is worth noting that at the year 2000 the resource in Northern Ireland included:

- over 14,500 archeological sites and monuments identified of which over 180 monuments are in state care and some 1,230 historic monuments are scheduled for protection;
- approximately 8,600 buildings listed by 2000 for preservation of their special architectural or historic interest; and over 50 Conservation Areas designated to protect the best townscapes throughout the Region; and
- an important yet diminishing number of vernacular buildings throughout the Region. A recent sample survey in Northern Ireland indicated that of the vernacular buildings which existed in 1909, 49% had gone without trace; 39% had been altered and were often no longer recognisable as vernacular; and only 12% have survived intact.

The Strategy is to cherish, protect and present to the world the Region's rich inheritance of buildings, fine monuments and other heritage resources and promote community-wide appreciation and stewardship of this heritage. The example set by organisations such as National Trust and Civic Trust, and by government departments, can only be the starting point to develop a community wide concern to conserve and creatively enhance our built heritage.

ENV 3.1 Safeguard the archeological resource:

- identify and protect archeological sites and monuments and their settings, whether on land or within coastal waters; and
- identify and protect Areas of Significant Archeological Interest for particularly distinctive locations, which may include places of international importance, such as Navan Fort (legendary capital of the Kings of Ulster) near Armagh, and the Giant's Ring near Belfast.

ENV 3.2 Safeguard buildings of special architectural or historic interest:

- identify, protect and encourage the appreciation of the rich built heritage throughout Northern Ireland of cathedrals and churches, public buildings, historic mansions and dwellings, industrial buildings, and the many other historic structures of significance;
- conserve the character of buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic interest; and
- exercise a presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings, including an innovative approach to new uses.

ENV 3.3 Conserve the character of cities, towns and villages:

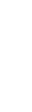
- control and manage development within settlements with an emphasis on maintaining local identity and a sense of place; and encourage the retention of locally important buildings and features;

DIAGRAM 15

SPATIAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENT: BUILT HERITAGE

-  Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest
-  Towns of Significant Historic Interest
-  Conservation Areas
-  Main National Trust Properties

Regional Strategic Transport Network

-  Key Transport Corridors
-  Link Corridors
-  Trunk Roads
-  Railways



- promote sensitive control of development to protect the character and appearance of Conservation Areas; and take full account of conservation considerations in relation to regeneration/ enhancement measures and economic development initiatives in order to secure a balanced range of public benefits;
- protect designated Areas of Townscape Character where the inherited mix and layout of buildings of different ages, styles and functions adds to the quality of life of the local community and keep under review the merits of extending Conservation Area status to townscapes of distinctive character;
- create and manage green spaces in cities, towns and villages, to serve multiple purposes, and contribute to distinctive local character;
- recognise the contribution which natural and semi-natural habitats can make to the character of urban spaces and promote measures which will lead to the enhancement of biodiversity and the quality of our lives; and
- protect valued landscapes under pressure at the edge of towns by managing the direction, scale and nature of development extensions in urban fringe areas taking account of assessments of local landscape character and the evaluation of natural resources.

ENV 3.4 Conserve parks, gardens and demesnes which are of historic interest:

- encourage owners to value, manage, replant and maintain these sites.

ENV 3.5 Promote the retention of vernacular buildings and industrial heritage features in urban and rural areas:

- encourage the retention in cities and towns of heritage features relating to traditional industries in Northern Ireland;
- promote the retention of groups of traditional buildings in the landscape, eg clachans and rural mill complexes, by encouraging imaginative restoration for continuing or new uses;
- encourage the restoration and continued use of vernacular houses rather than their replacement, particularly in green belts and other protected areas;

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- protect disused canals and their associated features, and assess the scope to reuse these networks for communication and recreation by reopening canals, such as the Ulster Canal, where this is sustainable; and
- enhance cultural and heritage amenities in rural areas and promote the understanding of heritage assets.



SPG-ENV 4: To foster a stronger community spirit and sense of place in relation to local development proposals in urban and rural areas by the use of the Local Development Guidelines.

Character, or a sense of place, is an important element in the process which allows us to identify with the communities in which we live. This is true whether it is urban or dispersed rural settlement. The following guidelines describe the 'building blocks' which help to make this possible and which should be used by the key actors in the development process to analyse proposals for development in order to maximise their contribution towards conservation of diversity within our settlements.

Local development guidelines for urban and rural areas

Identity:



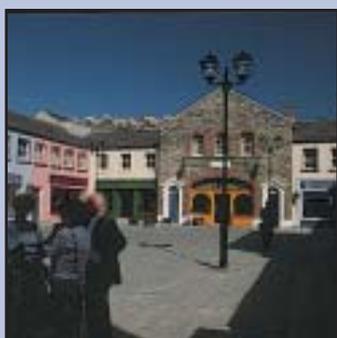
Encouraging community participation in the planning process. Reinforcing a sense of belonging and sense of place by maintaining distinctive places throughout local communities and in local landscape character areas, including places of public assembly and community interaction, focal points, landmarks and a continuity of urban and rural traditions.

Vitality:



Continuously caring for, restoring and renewing the physical fabric of towns and villages by a strong emphasis on the imaginative re-use of older buildings and the use of previously developed land as a fundamental component of the regeneration process for towns, villages and rural areas.

Proximity:



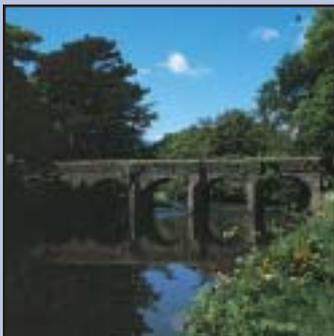
Providing compatible mixed use developments extending local community choice and opportunity in relation to jobs, commercial facilities and services.

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Local development guidelines for urban and rural areas

Accessibility:

Developing multi-modal systems of urban and rural transport which would enhance accessibility for local communities to the full range of urban activities and meet the needs of people with disabilities. This would be achieved by integrating public transport, cycling and walking with a more responsible use of the private car, whilst facilitating the movement of goods.

Amenity:

Providing Community Greenways to establish connections with nature and the countryside, and local historic features, for residents in urban and rural areas by maintaining and building up an interlinked pattern of public open spaces, play facilities and landscaped areas, woodlands and wildlife habitats, pedestrian and cycle routes, linking to rivers, canals, coastal and inland waters, as well as respecting the rural setting of towns and villages.

Quality:

Fostering an imaginative and resource efficient quality of design which respects existing rural or urban character, local tradition and human scale.

Wise use of the environment

Our environment provides all that is needed to support living things. It is both the space that we all share in living and the source of materials to enrich our lives and our economies. As the number of people sharing this space grows, and as the needs of that population increases, then it is vital that the whole community recognises the delicate and dynamic balance between finite resources and scarce or diminishing supplies, and takes action accordingly.

Climate change is expected to impact on issues such as water resources, weather patterns, river and stormwater management, flooding and coastal management, ferries and ports, business, biodiversity, ecological change and human health.

The Strategy is to encourage the wise use and management of environmental resources in the interest of future generations.

SPG-ENV 5: To respond to the implications of climate change and promote more prudent and efficient use of energy and resources, and effective waste management.

ENV 5.1 Consider the implications of climate change:

- assess the results of the preliminary scoping study on climate change initiated by the Department of Environment and take forward further detailed research as necessary; and
- identify key issues for action.

ENV 5.2 Make prudent use of non-renewable resources:

- promote the recycling and reuse of land, buildings and materials;
- minimise the loss to development of agricultural land and, where possible, reverse the loss of woodland and natural habitats; and
- manage and conserve water resources.

ENV 5.3 Help to restrain emissions of greenhouse gases:

- promote the use of cleaner and more efficient fossil fuels and the exploitation of renewable sources of energy and alternative energy technology;
- promote energy saving and energy efficiency measures in public and private premises and by commercial and domestic users; and

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- promote use of high efficiency, low emission technology for public, commercial and private transport.

ENV 5.4 Promote the Waste Management Strategy for Northern Ireland:

- work in partnership with industry to create an economy based on sustainable waste management practices, supporting and influencing opportunities for reducing the amount of waste generated;
- provide an extensive network of recycling, recovery and secondary materials manufacturing facilities, and develop an integrated regional network of a limited number of landfill sites, closely related to the Regional Strategic Transport Network to minimise environmental impacts on residential neighbourhoods and tranquil rural areas; and
- locate waste treatment facilities on a limited number of key sites conveniently related to the major centres of urban waste production.



The environment and health

The focus on supporting healthy life styles and providing a clean and safer environment are widely acknowledged as critical to the promotion of health in the community. A preventative approach toward disease offers many benefits, not only for people, but also for the economy and health services generally.

The Strategy is to make Northern Ireland widely known for an outstandingly clean and healthy environment helping to provide 'health for all' and a better quality of life (C11: SPG-TRAN 4).

SPG-ENV 6: To create healthier living environments and to support healthy lifestyles.

ENV 6.1 Improve air quality:

- ensure a level of ambient air quality in public places, which poses no significant risk to health or quality of life, through implementation of the National Air Quality Strategy;
- identify and address air pollution problems through the introduction of a new system of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM);
- ensure that industrial emissions are minimised and effectively controlled, and promote more sustainable energy sources and a diversification of fuel supplies; and
- change travel patterns to reduce the growth of traffic with potential benefits for air quality (C11).

ENV 6.2 Combat and reduce water pollution:

- ensure everyone has access to clean water by conserving quality drinking sources, controlling development that may impact upon water sources, and upgrading and developing the drinking water treatment and distribution infrastructure in line with European Drinking Water Quality Standards;
- improve the quality of discharges to meet appropriate water quality targets, including the requirements of the relevant European Directives;
- upgrade sewerage infrastructure and sewage treatment facilities to meet required European quality standards;

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- ensure that arrangements for treatment of sewage from all forms of new development meet environmentally acceptable standards;
- develop a strategy to control eutrophication in lakes and rivers; and
- develop River Basin Management Plans for major regional and cross-border water catchments in line with the European Water Framework Directive. Such strategies will provide the basis for managing the river systems and improving water quality (C4: SPG-SRC 2 ◀).

ENV 6.3 Promote a regional clean-up campaign:

- deal with polluted land by using remedial techniques to remove health risks and bring land back into use, thus raising the quality of the living environment;
- promote a sustained programme to spruce up the image of the Region, to be launched by a comprehensive 'Clean up' of Northern Ireland in the new Millennium, involving the whole community in tackling litter, removing graffiti and other defacements, dealing with fly-tipping, and painting and making good;
- concentrate effort particularly on blighted sectarian interface areas; and
- spruce up the appearance of the whole Region by promoting landscaping and street flower schemes, and encourage the landscaping of the boundaries of major land uses and transport corridors.

ENV 6.4 Promote an approach to building development and the use of land which is supportive to the well-being and safety of people:

- promote the creation of built environments which are supportive to good health and meet the needs of all age groups, men and women, and the particular needs of disabled persons;
- promote enhanced housing conditions and safer and more secure housing layouts;

- encourage the protection and enhancement of open spaces and playing facilities for the long-term benefit of the whole community;
- recognise the value of 'greenery' including community greenways, woodlands and landscape to health and well-being;
- reduce noise nuisance generally including seeking to ensure new housing developments are well separated from land uses characterised by high levels of noise disturbance;
- take a precautionary approach and minimise building developments in areas considered to be at risk from flooding, coastal erosion, and land instability; and
- maintain an appropriate safety cordon for new development around airports and in the vicinity of storage areas for hazardous substances, and other land uses which may present an exceptional risk to health.

SPG-ENV 7: To facilitate access to a range of opportunities for recreational and cultural activities

ENV 7.1 Promote recreation as a basis for good health for all, and to especially contribute to meeting the needs of children and young people for healthy physical activities:

- prevent town cramming and seek the provision of adequate areas of open space, playing facilities, woodland and landscaping within easy walking reach of homes, for physical activity, rest and leisure use, especially in densely populated and disadvantaged communities, and in new developments;
- provide opportunities for more active lifestyles by maintaining and enhancing sporting facilities in the Region, creating networks of Community Greenways in cities and towns (see Greenways panel in C6 ◀), developing cycle and pedestrian networks, and facilitating access to the countryside (C7: SPG-LNW 2 ◀, C8: SPG-RNI 4 ◀ and C10: SPG-ECON 1);
- enhance the range of sports and leisure facilities enabling accessibility by all citizens; and
- promote a sporting culture, with international sporting events at venues of international standards (C10: SPG-ECON 11)

ENV 7.2 Facilitate access to cultural amenities contributing to the quality of life for all:

- create cultural centres of excellence building on unique local interest and strengths, and facilitate local and international access to such amenities;
- locate cultural amenities and public art in town centres and other public places to enhance the image of Northern Ireland as a cultural and historical tourism region; and
- strengthen the network of cultural amenities including local museums, heritage centres and art centres.



Chapter

13 Implementation

Section

5



Implementation

Introduction

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) sets out a challenging agenda which will shape the development of Northern Ireland over the next 25 years for the benefit of the whole community. The Strategy provides a vital context within which major investment decisions will be taken by the public and private sector and individuals.

This chapter is in six main parts. First, it sets out the legal framework within which the RDS will be progressed. The section also outlines the relationship with the planning process. Second, it deals with the mechanism for delivery including the important link between the regional management of the process and supporting the work at sub-regional level. Third, it covers the monitoring and review arrangements, and includes the underpinning consideration of Sustainability. Fourth, it outlines the Regional Planning Policy Statements that will be brought forward. Fifth, it deals with the important related issue of regional transportation. The final section deals with finance.



13 Implementation

Partnership: A guiding principle

The Department for Regional Development has been in the lead in preparing this Strategy. It has done so in close consultation with other Departments and through an open and inclusive dialogue with all the other interests.

This participative approach will be carried forward into the implementation, monitoring and review stages. The successful development of the Region, and the realisation of its full potential, can only be achieved through effective partnership between regional and local government and with the public, private, community and voluntary sectors and through appropriate co-operation with our neighbours in the island of Ireland and with Great Britain.

Lessons from successful regional and inter-regional developments in Europe and elsewhere will continue to be monitored for applications which could be of advantage to Northern Ireland.

Legal framework

Under the provisions of the Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, DRD is responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the RDS and providing policy guidance and advice in relation to the Strategy and its implementation.

The Order also places on other departments a responsibility in exercising any functions in relation to development to have regard to the Strategy.

The Schedule to the Order amended the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 by requiring the Department of Environment (DOE) to ensure that any development plan for an area is consistent with the Strategy. It also requires the Department for Social Development (DSD) to ensure that any development scheme is consistent with the Strategy.

Concerns have been raised about whether the 'consistent with' requirement might introduce an unnecessary and undesirable inflexibility into the planning system. It has, therefore, been decided to promote amending legislation which would substitute a requirement that development plans, planning policies and development schemes 'must be in general conformity with the regional development strategy'.

These statutory provisions, including this proposed amendment, provide the legal framework within which implementation of the Strategy will proceed. These provisions will, however, be kept under review to ensure that they provide a sufficiently flexible, yet effective, legal framework.

Relationship with planning process

The overarching framework for the development of the Region provided by the Strategy is a flexible framework. It will need to be interpreted, implemented and kept under review in the light of emerging social, economic, environmental, demographic and technological trends. As explained above, the DOE, in preparing planning policies and development plans is at present required to do so in a way that is consistent with the Strategy. In practice, this requirement and the proposed change to 'in general conformity with' will mean ensuring that planning policies and development plans are in broad harmony with the strategic objectives and policies set out in the Strategy, subject to any need to take account of emerging trends which are relevant to DOE's responsibility to secure the orderly and consistent development of land.

While the introduction of a new overarching framework has implications for future plan and policy-making, it is impossible however to align immediately every policy and plan with the Strategy. Planning practice recognises that there are lead-in times required for the alignment of policies. The RDS is a long-term Strategy to 2025 and will have increasing effect particularly from 2005/6 onwards, as a complete suite of updated plans become available.

For the purposes of clarification, new development plans and planning policies introduced subsequent to the RDS must, as they are brought forward, be consistent with the RDS. In the interim period, planning decisions on individual development proposals can continue to be made, taking into account the RDS, existing development plans and relevant planning policies. It will be a matter of judgement for DOE, as the Planning Authority, to judge in each case as to what is the best planning decision weighing up all the relevant planning policies.

The strategies and policies in the RDS are, of course, material considerations which **may** take precedence over existing development plans. The weight to be afforded to the RDS, the development plan, and to any other material considerations will be a matter for judgement and may vary from case to case.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to give more weight to new policy directions set out in the RDS. In other instances, it may be judged more appropriate to give greater weight to the existing area plans until new development plans are prepared.

DOE continues to keep the Planning Service's processes under review, particularly its systems for operational planning policy, development planning and development control. The aim is to make the processes as efficient as the legal and consultative constraints will allow.

13 Implementation

Delivery mechanism

The success of the RDS will be determined by the extent to which its policies and actions are implemented. Implementation is, however, a very complex process involving a wide variety of public and private organisations, businesses, voluntary and community organisations and individuals. Many of the policies can only be implemented through individual Departments and their strategies.

The RDS is a framework that seeks to create the infrastructure and conditions for competitive and sustainable regional development. For its implementation to be successful there needs to be a credible delivery mechanism that has the active support of key stakeholders. To achieve the desired outcomes will require department, agencies, local authorities, business, the voluntary and community sectors, and individuals to work together within a broad development agenda to benefit the region as a whole. Such collaboration, through local strategic partnerships, of key stakeholders bringing together local, area and sub-regional strategies will help the region to prosper and improve the quality of life of its citizens.

The delivery mechanism outlined in this section seeks to balance on the one hand the view expressed by many contributors, including the Regional Development Assembly Committee, that the Department should provide a clear lead in the implementation of the Strategy, and on the other hand the need to introduce sensible, efficient and effective sub-regional arrangements which have the active support of key stakeholders.

(a) Regional management of RDS

There is a need at **regional level** to manage progress in implementing the Strategy, to identify potential difficulties, and to alert Ministers to issues requiring political direction. To ensure that progress is managed effectively the Regional Development Minister will establish and chair an inter-departmental steering group of senior officials. This group will meet periodically to oversee the implementation of the RDS and will draw in external expertise as required.

The Minister for Regional Development will, after consulting other Departments, provide the Assembly Committee with an annual progress report. In addition, it is envisaged that progress on implementation of the Strategy will feature in the future Programmes for Government.

(b) Sub-regional support/management

There is also a requirement to consider new arrangements at sub-regional level to help ensure that proper progress is being made in each part of Northern Ireland. These arrangements will also acknowledge that the

development of each area in line with the RDS will not automatically be met by the sum total of the efforts of a large number of functional bodies.

Pending the outcome of the review of public administration, it is proposed to build on and support existing arrangements to deliver the Strategy. This can be achieved by supporting the existing (and growing) interlocking family of strategic partnerships at the sub-regional level. A number of these partnerships have been to the fore in developing long-term visions for local areas. For example, this would involve:

- supporting and enhancing the work already being undertaken in district council areas eg Belfast, Londonderry, Craigavon and Armagh, to prepare long-term strategic visions for their areas;
- encouraging and supporting the work in a number of other council areas eg Fermanagh, Omagh, Strabane, Lisburn, Ards, Down and North Down to prepare long-term 'integrated strategies'; and
- working alongside the emerging local and regional partnership arrangements under PEACE II which will be tasked to support the development of strategies and action plans at local level and to assist regional organisations to deliver programmes.

(c) Way forward

Clearly, district councils have an important role to play at this sub-regional level. Indeed, many councils have already embarked on community planning exercises to develop local area strategies underpinned by a 'visioning' process. The establishment of these local strategic partnerships at sub-regional level is a very welcome and important development in the context of the RDS. Over the coming months DRD will initiate a series of discussions with district councils to reach agreement on how these emerging local strategic partnerships can play an active and complementary role in the implementation of the Strategy. Such an approach will, in the view of the Department:

- advance the strategic vision for each area as an integral part of the development of local longer-term strategic planning;
- encourage and develop the continued involvement of key stakeholders so that they can make their full contribution to realising those visions and achieve their respective goals for each area; and
- help maintain a unique overview of the future development of areas as envisaged by the RDS.

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It is stressed that these arrangements which will be drawn up in consultation with departments do not include any new executive responsibility; they would not duplicate the work of others; nor would they have any authority to direct other organisations to act in a particular way. They are not intended, for example, to duplicate DOE's responsibilities in relation to the preparation of development plans or the exercise of development control.

These arrangements would be based on **local agreement** and would be subject to change in the light of decisions on the review of public administration. They are based on securing a more 'joined-up' sustainable approach at local level by seeking a co-ordinated focus on 'the needs of places' and the people who live there. The approach also provides increased opportunities for people to participate in the local decision-making processes.

It is believed that arrangements along these lines will meet the widely expressed need endorsed by the Public Examination Panel's report, for clear leadership and effective and co-ordinated action. The arrangements provide an innovative approach to implementation, building on the inclusive manner adopted in drafting the Strategy, but without introducing unnecessary demands on others.

Monitoring and review

To ensure that the Strategy remains appropriate over time it is essential to record and measure changes across the community. For example, is sufficient land being made available for housing? Is sufficient land being made available for new businesses in order to create employment opportunities? DRD in consultation with other Departments will put in place arrangements to monitor progress with the implementation of RDS. As part of that process, DRD will explore with DOE the extent to which its ongoing work on land availability will meet the perceived need to establish a land-use database.

It is also important to establish in a wider sense whether communities are being properly connected to the economic, social and environmental benefits. To be effective the RDS needs the support, on the ground, of local and sub-regional strategies.

The Strategy is about fostering 'competitive advantage' through the collaborative advantage gained by connecting the various sub-regions.

DRD will set up a working group to develop appropriate monitoring procedures. Targets and indicators will be agreed to enable progress to be measured in implementing the Strategy. The monitoring and evaluation framework will be presented to the Regional Development Assembly Committee in or around the Autumn of 2001.

The Strategy will be subject to a review after 10 years to consider if major changes of direction are required in the light of new trends and circumstances. The nature and extent of the review would be a matter for political decision, at the time, in the light of needs highlighted by the monitoring process. After 5 years (around 2005/6), there will be a focused assessment to identify any aspects where 'in-course' adjustments might be appropriate.

If, in the light of new circumstances, evidence emerges that would require an amendment to a specific strategic planning guideline or guidelines, details of the proposed change or changes, will be brought forward to the Regional Development Assembly Committee. After due consideration, the Minister for Regional Development may formulate an amending statement in relation to the SPG(s).

Sustainability indicators

An important part of the monitoring and evaluation framework will be the establishment of key sustainable development indicators for Northern Ireland. These will be developed in conjunction with DOE, in a manner consistent with those contained in the 'Quality of Life Counts', DETR publication (15 July 2000, ISBN 1 85112 34331) which provided a baseline assessment and indicators for a strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom.

Regional planning policy statements

Another important component of the RDS will be the development of key Regional Planning Policy Statements. DRD will, in 2001/2, initiate consultation with key interests, on draft regional planning policy statements on:

- transportation and land use;
- housing in settlements;
- retailing and town centres; and commence the preparation of a Regional Planning Policy Statement for
- the countryside.

13 Implementation

Regional transportation strategy

DRD will, by the end of 2001, produce a draft 10-year regional transportation strategy and by the Spring of 2002 prepare a Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan. The latter will be a key input prepared in conjunction with DOE's work on the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan. Together these will provide the integrated statutory framework for the future development of the Belfast conurbation.

Finance

The section on the Status of the Strategy clearly indicates on page 3, that the appearance of policy, or possible developments in the RDS should not be read as a commitment to find public finance. The implementation of the Strategy depends on investment by the public and private sectors. Given the heavy competing pressures on public expenditure, new approaches to the funding of some development, including infrastructure will have to be examined.

Under present policy, the development sector will be expected to contribute towards achieving public objectives by the provision of capital, buildings, and works on land when proposals for development are being considered. Such planning obligations – 'planning gain' – have been a feature of planning consents for development schemes in recent years and more widespread use of such measures will be expected in future. There will however clearly be a need to protect the integrity and fairness of the process for dealing with planning applications.

New ways of financing public services will also be explored, including:

- the opportunities for the use of private finance in major public services like transport, roads, water and sewerage;
- the use of road user congestion charges, work-place parking levies and other forms of charging for specific services; and
- a review of rating policy.

Annex and
Appendices



Section

6

ANNEX

The Regional Development Strategy: Equality Aspects

1 Background

- 1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:
- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
 - between men and women generally;
 - between persons with a disability and persons without; and
 - between persons with dependants and persons without.
- 1.2 In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities should also, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
- 1.3 Schedule 9 of the Act requires public authorities to prepare equality schemes, which should state, inter alia, arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Schedule also requires that a public authority, in publishing the results of an assessment, should give details of any consideration given to measures which might mitigate the adverse impact of that policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.
- 1.4 Equality aspects have been a **central consideration in the development of the RDS**. This was particularly evident in the comprehensive and inclusive process that underpinned the development of the RDS.

Appendices

1.5 The RDS is a framework, or vision, for the development of the Region, setting long-term policy directions from a spatial development perspective. A Sustainability Assessment has been carried out in parallel with the preparation of the RDS. It specifically examined matters relating to equality and is published as a complementary document to the RDS.

1.6 The RDS also seeks to embrace, and is consistent with, the vision set out by the devolved administration in its first Programme for Government. That vision:

'..... as set out in the Agreement - is of a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society, firmly founded on the "achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and the protection and vindication of the human rights of all". It is a vision also based on "partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South and between these islands'

1.7 The themes - cohesion, inclusion and justice - specified in the first Programme for Government also resonate with the core guiding principles of the RDS.

1.8 Those core guiding principles of the RDS that were reflected and endorsed during the extensive public consultation process reinforce the Department's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. These include:

- a people and community focused approach;
- a sustainable approach to development; and
- achieving a more cohesive society based on:
 - equality of opportunity and equity of treatment;
 - spatial equity and complementarity;
 - a partnership approach;
 - strengthening community cohesion;
 - a new and more sustainable approach to transport;
 - an outward looking perspective;

1.9 It is not possible, at this stage, to carry out a detailed equality impact assessment on the overall, combined impact of the Strategic Planning Guidelines (SPGs) contained within the RDS. These SPGs will, however, influence Departmental policies and, in turn, will be subject to separate equality impact assessment by individual Departments, as set out in their Equality Schemes.

- 1.10 The RDS also seeks to promote equality and is consistent with human rights considerations. It is also consistent with the strategic approach of New Targeting Social Need and includes specific provisions for tackling poverty and social disadvantage and the regeneration of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. These provisions and subsequent actions will complement and reinforce actions directly aimed at promoting equality of opportunity as defined by Section 75.
- 1.11 The Department is committed to carrying out a comprehensive equality impact assessment of the RDS as part of the proposed first review in 2005. That commitment is set out in the DRD Equality Scheme which has been approved by the Equality Commission.

2 Consultation

The preparation of the RDS has been characterised by an extensive and inclusive process of public consultation. Further details are set out in Appendix 2.

3 Monitoring and review

Monitoring of the RDS will continue on an ongoing basis with formal reviews every 5 years. Paragraph 11, in this section, also refers. As part of the process of co-ordinating implementation, indicators will be developed in relation to equality considerations by the relevant implementing bodies.

4 Guiding principles of the RDS

The RDS is based on 4 Guiding Principles; these are set out in Chapter 3 of the RDS. The Guiding Principles are:

- a people and community focused approach;
- achieving a more cohesive society;
- achieving competitiveness;
- adopting an integrated approach to the future development of the Region.

The principle of 'achieving a more cohesive society' is founded on an approach which provides for equality of opportunity and equity of treatment and is based on spatial equity and complementarity in order to achieve a reasonable balance of development across Northern Ireland.

Appendices

5 **Strengthening regional cohesion**

Chapter 4 of the RDS deals with 'Creating an Outward Looking Region' and 'Developing Community Cohesion'. Strategic Planning Guideline 3 (SPG-SRC 3 ◀) refers specifically to fostering development which contributes to better community relations, recognises cultural diversity, and reduces socio-economic differentials.

6 **The Spatial Development Strategy for Northern Ireland**

Chapter 5 of the RDS provides for 'a balanced and integrated approach to regional development,' designed to harness the potential and energies of all areas. It is a framework for the future physical development of the Region based on urban HUBS and CLUSTERS, key and link transport CORRIDORS and the main regional GATEWAYS. It provides for a balance of development in terms of East/West and Urban/Rural. Therefore it seeks to achieve balanced growth by developing Belfast (and the main and smaller towns in the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) and its hinterland), Londonderry, and the main towns in Rural Northern Ireland, and by revitalising small towns, villages and small settlements in rural areas. Balanced growth across this network of centres will enhance equality of opportunity for people living in all parts of Northern Ireland, and offer the locational choice required to meet the wider variety of development needs in a divided society, thus contributing to a cohesive and inclusive society.

7 **Meeting housing needs**

Chapter 9 deals with 'a balanced and integrated approach to meeting Regional housing needs.' Strategic Planning Guideline SPG-HOU 6 refers specifically to encouraging the development of balanced local communities and acknowledges that respecting diversity and promoting social inclusion are the distinguishing marks of well-balanced communities.

8 **Supporting economic development**

Chapter 10 outlines the need 'to support a sustainable economic drive which will provide jobs and wealth across the Region and help reduce socio-economic differentials.' Strategic Planning Guideline SPG-ECON 1 refers specifically to promoting a balanced spread of economic development opportunities across the Region, focussed on the BMA and the urban hubs, or clusters, as centres for employment and community services.

9 Developing regional transportation

Chapter 11 deals with the provision of 'a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the regional economy and the environment, and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone's quality of life.' Strategic Planning Guideline SPG-TRAN 2 refers specifically to extending travel choice for all sections of the community by enhancing public transport; it acknowledges the need to provide an appropriate mix of transport services which enhance accessibility to enable people to get to goods, services and facilities.

10 Caring for the Environment

Chapter 12 outlines the need to 'encourage the wise use of environmental resources in the interest of future generations.' Strategic Planning Guideline SPG-ENV 7 refers specifically to facilitating access to a range of opportunities for recreational and cultural activities in the pursuit of healthier lifestyles and a better quality of life (for all).

11 Implementation

Chapter 13 confirms that implementation of the RDS can only be achieved through effective partnerships between regional and local government and with the public, private, voluntary and community sectors and through appropriate co-operation with our neighbours in the island of Ireland and with Great Britain. It commits to continuing the practice of inclusivity first characterised in the extensive public consultation and participation aspects associated with the development of the RDS. The actions required to give effect to the Strategic Planning Guidelines will, therefore, fall to a range of Departments, agencies and other bodies and these are likely to emerge in Corporate and Business Plans in the first instance. These actions have regard to equality safeguards.

The responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the RDS rests with the Department for Regional Development which is also responsible for monitoring and review activities. As part of its responsibilities for implementation, the Department for Regional Development will prepare a series of Regional Planning Policy Statements. Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted on these Regional Planning Policy Statements as confirmed in the Department's Equality Scheme approved by the Equality Commission. However, given the cross-cutting nature of the RDS, the Department for Regional Development will also seek to carry out monitoring and review in association with all interested parties.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

The Shaping Our Future Process: Key Reports

Shaping Our Future - Towards a Strategy for the Development of the Region, DOE(NI), June 1997

Shaping Our Future - Towards a Strategy for the Development of the Region - A Discussion Paper, DOE(NI), November 1997

Shaping Our Future - Towards a Strategy for the Development of the Region - A Response by Young Adults, Youth Council for Northern Ireland, November 1998

Shaping Our Future - Towards a Strategy for the Development of the Region - Public Consultation on a Regional Strategic Framework for Northern Ireland, The University-led Consortium comprising The Queen's University, Belfast, The University of Ulster, The Rural Community Network and Community Technical Aid, December 1998

Shaping Our Future - Towards a Strategy for the Development of the Region - Draft Regional Strategic Framework for Northern Ireland, DOE(NI), December 1998

Shaping Our Future - Towards a Strategy for the Development of the Region - The Family of Settlements Report, DOE(NI), December 1998

Shaping Our Future - Towards a Strategy for the Development of the Region - The Regional Baseline Report, DOE(NI), December 1998

Shaping Our Future - Towards a Strategy for the Development of the Region - The Population and Housing Technical Report, DOE(NI), December 1998

Shaping Our Future - Towards a Strategy for the Development of the Region - The Strategic Environmental Appraisal Report, DOE(NI), February 1999

Shaping Our Future - Draft Regional Strategic Framework for Northern Ireland - Report of the Panel Conducting the Public Examination, DRD, February 2000

Shaping Our Future - The Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland - Response by the Department for Regional Development to the Report of the Independent Panel following the Public Examination, DRD, April 2000

Shaping Our Future Website

All published Shaping Our Future papers and Public Examination papers are available for public inspection on the website: <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/shapingourfuture>

APPENDIX 2

Policy Context

The preparation of the Regional Development Strategy has been influenced by local legislative and policy considerations, national policies and international policy statements including:

- The Belfast Agreement - the outcome of the multi-party negotiations on the future of Northern Ireland, April 1998;
- The Northern Ireland Act 1998;
- The Departments (Northern Ireland) Order 1999;
- The Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999;
- The UK Government's White Paper on Partnership for Equality, DFP, March 1998 (leading to the development of New Targeting Social Need Policy);
- Policy Appraisal and the Environment, DETR, April 1998;
- The UK Government's White Paper on the future of Transport, 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone', DETR, 1998;
- Our Competitive Future – Building the Knowledge Driven Economy, 1998;
- Modern Government – In Touch with the People, 1999;
- A Better Quality of Life – A UK Strategy for Sustainable Development, Department of the Environment, Transport, and the Regions, DETR, May 1999;
- The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland published by DETR in partnership with Scottish Executive, National Assembly of Wales and the Department for the Environment for Northern Ireland, January 2000;
- Modern Ports: A United Kingdom Policy, DETR, November 2000;
- UK Climate Change Programme, DETR, November 2000
- Section 75 of the Agenda 2000 – European Commission Proposals for a new Europe, 1997;
- The European Spatial Development Perspective, May 1999; and
- The National Development Plan for the Republic of Ireland (2001-2006).

Appendices

The Regional Development Strategy has been prepared in close consultation with other Government Departments within Northern Ireland, through an Inter-Departmental Steering Group, in order to secure a co-ordinated approach to the future strategy for the development of the Region. In this regard account has been taken of prevailing policies and relevant policy development work on matters such as:

- Building on Success, DOE 1995;
- River Quality for Northern Ireland, DOE, 1995;
- Tourism in Northern Ireland, NITB, March 1995;
- The Strategic Plan for Education 1996-2000, DENI, May 1996;
- Well into 2000 – the Regional Strategy for Health and Well Being, DHSS, 1997;
- A Strategy for the Development of Tourism in Northern Ireland, NITB November 1997;
- Moving Forward – the Northern Ireland Transport Policy statement, Department of the Environment, 1998;
- The Rural Development Programme in Northern Ireland 1994-1999, DANI, 1999;
- Strategy 2010 – A report by the Economic Development Strategy Review Steering Group, March 1999;
- A Waste Management Strategy for Northern Ireland, DOE, March 2000;
- Leapfrog to the Information Age, DETI, April 2000;
- Creating Places – achieving quality in residential developments. Design Guide published by DOE & DRD May 2000;
- Railways Task Force – Interim Report on the future of the Railway Network in Northern Ireland, DRD and NITHC, September 2000;

- The Northern Ireland Executive's draft Programme for Government, October 2000;
- The Northern Ireland Programme for Government, April 2001;
- Urban Renaissance: Belfast Lessons for Policy and Partnership, OECD 2000;
- Biodiversity in Northern Ireland: Recommendations to Government for a Biodiversity Strategy, Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group, October 2000;
- River Conservation Strategy: An Environment and Heritage Service Strategy to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built heritage values of rivers in Northern Ireland and facilitate their sustainable use, DOE, January 2001;
- Sustainable Development in Belfast: A Framework for Action 1999 - 2001; and
- Investing for Health – a consultation document published by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on behalf of the Ministerial Group on Public Health, 2001

APPENDIX 3

Building Consensus through Participation

Work on the preparation of the Regional Development Strategy began in 1997 and has been characterised by extensive public consultation and participation.

Elected representatives, political parties, district councils, groups from the community and voluntary sectors, business organisations, public sector bodies and individual citizens engaged in an inclusive, comprehensive and constructive dialogue with Government about the content of the Strategy.

The Government is grateful to everyone who contributed, either through their participation in meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences, or, in making formal, written submissions at various stages in the process.

The Urban Institute of the University of Ulster, Queens University, Community Technical Aid and the Rural Community Network not only facilitated inputs from the community and voluntary sectors, but also produced a number of reports which added significantly to the debate.

The Northern Ireland Youth Council's conferences in Belfast and Londonderry, and its subsequent report, ensured that the views of young people were suitably expressed.

Throughout the process, the Government has had valuable support from a number of advisers, with international experience in regional planning, and wishes to acknowledge their help and assistance.

The decision to conduct an independent Public Examination into major issues received widespread support and the Government wishes to record its appreciation to the Panel and to the participants for ensuring the proceedings were conducted with integrity and propriety.

The 744 entries shown below are a representation of all those who have joined together to build consensus for the content of the Strategy – any omissions are entirely accidental.

A Ray of Hope
 Adams, Mr A.
 Adapt Northern Ireland
 ADMAC
 Advisory Committee on Travellers (NI)
 Age Concern
 Aghagallon Rural Development Association
 Aghalee Development Group
 Ahoghill Village Association
 Ainsworth Community Association
 Albertbridge Area Community Development Project
 Alexander Kinnaird & Sons
 Alistair Grill Associates
 Alliance Party (NI)
 An Telelann
 Antrim Borough Council
 Ardmore Community Association
 Ardoyne Youth Club
 Ards Borough Council
 Armagh City and District Council
 Armagh Confederation of Voluntary Groups
 Armagh Unemployed Group
 Arthritis Care North West
 Artibise, Professor A.
 Arts Council of Northern Ireland
 Ashton Centre
 Assisting Randalstown Community towards Harmony and Economic Success
 Association for the Development of Pettigo and Tull
 Association of Local Authorities for NI
 Assumption Grammar School, Ballynahinch

B & Q plc

Ballycolman Community Association
Ballyconnell Community Development Association
Ballyhalbert Community Association
Ballymacashen & Killinchy Residents' Group
Ballymagorry District Development Association
Ballymagroarty Community Association
Ballymena Borough Council
Ballymoney Borough Council
Ballymoney Chamber of Commerce
Ballymote Community Project
Ballyrobert Community Association
Banbridge District Council
Banbridge District Enterprise Limited
Banbridge Youth Information Centre
Bangor Access Group/ Shopmobility
Bangor Historical Society
Bangor Housebuilders' Consortium
Bangor Round Table
Barnardo's
Bastrup-Birk, Mrs H.
British Broadcasting Company
BDS Community Group
Belcoo and District Development Group
Belfast Brook Advisory Centre
Belfast City Airport
Belfast City Council
Belfast Civic Trust
Belfast Education and Library Board
Belfast Friends of the Earth
Belfast Green Party
Belfast Harbour Commissioners
Belfast Interface Project
Belfast International Airport Ltd
Belfast Metropolitan Area Residents Group
Belfast Traveller Sites Project
Belfast Travellers' Education and Development Group
Bellaghy Development Association
Belton, Conor, St. Patrick's Grammar School, Armagh
Belturbet Community Development Association
Binnie, Mr I. MacG.
Blackie Community Groups' Association
Blackwater Basin Rural Agency for Community Enhancement
Blossom Trust
Bogside Brandywell Initiative
Boots the Chemists Ltd
Boyd Partnership
Bradley, Mr PJ, MLA
Braniff Associates
Brennen Associates
Bridge Accessible Transport

Bridge Community Centre
Bridge Community Transport
Bright Lights
British Association of Nature Conservationists
British Telecom (NI)
Brocagh Residents' Association
Broughshane Development Association
Bryson House Charities
Burgess, Mrs A.
Burren Community Association
Burren Community Forum
Bushmills Development Group
Business and Traders' Association, Moneymore
Business in the Community (NI)

Cable & Wireless Communications

Cabletel
Cairnshill Residents' Association
Caledon Playgroup
Camowen Partnership
Campbell College, Belfast
Caphill Community
Carmen Trust
Carnhill Resource Centre
Carnmoney Hill Country Park Campaign
Carrickfergus Borough Council
Carrickfergus Together (District Partnership)
Carrickmore Adult Education Group
Carrduff Community Forum
Carvill Group
Castleberg & District Community Development Association
Castlefinn Community Enterprises
Castlereagh Borough Council
Castlewellan Regeneration Limited
Cathedral Youth Club
Causeway Coast Communities Consortium
CCDO
Central Bangor Residents' Association
Central Mourne Community Association
Centre for Migration Studies, UAFP
Centre of Creative Energy
Charnos Hosiery Division
Chief Environmental Health Officers Group
Child Accident Protection Trust
Child Poverty Action Group
Children's Law Centre
Chinese Welfare Association
Chrysalis Women's Centre
Church of Ireland Housing Association
Churches Trust
Churchtown Community Association
Citizens' Advice Bureau
Clanabogan and District Initiatives
Clanmil Housing Association

Appendices

Clara Park Tenants' and Residents' Association	* <i>Northern Ireland Departments (including its agencies)</i>
Clarke, Mr M.	
Claudy Rural Development Association	Department of Agriculture & Rural Development*
Clondermot High School	Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure*
Clones Development Association	Department of Education for NI*
Clones Development Society Limited	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment*
Clontifleece Primary School	Department of the Environment*
Clough and District Community Association	Department of Finance & Personnel*
Coleraine Borough Council	Department of Health and Social Services & Public Safety*
Colin Glen Trust	Department of Higher & Further Education, Training & Employment*
Combat Poverty	Department for Regional Development*
Comber Builders Consortium	Department for Social Development*
Comber Probus Club	
Common, Dr. R.	
Community Connections	
Community Development Centre North Belfast	Department of the Environment and Local Government - (Republic of Ireland)
Community Development Support Services Agency	Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions
Community Leadership Programme	Derg Finn Partnership
Community Relations Council	Derg Valley Care
Community Technical Aid	Derry City Council
Community Transport Association	Derry Frontline
Confederation of British Industry (NI)	Derry Healthy Cities Project
Conservation Volunteers NI	Derry Travellers' Support Group
Construction Employers Federation	Derry Well Women
Cookson, Mrs P.	Derryinver Community Association
Cookstown & Western Shores Area Network	Derrytrasna Community Association
Cookstown District Council	Developing Rural Enterprise
Cookstown Enterprise Centre	Disability Action
Cornerhouse Community Family Centre	Disability Resource Centre
Corpus Christi College	Disabled Drivers' Association
Corpus Christi Services	Disabled in Community Action
Cosgrove, Mr & Mrs J.	Dominican College, Belfast
Council for Nature Conservation in the Countryside	Donaghadee Community Association
Craft Connection	Donaghcloney Rural Needs Group
Craigavon Borough Council	Donegall Pass Community Group
Cregagh Football Club	Donemana and District Community Association
Creggan Health Information Project	Dove House
Creggan Pre-school Carers	Down and Connor Diocese
Cross-Border Community Development Project	Down District Council
Crossgar Community Association	Dromara and District Community Association
Crumlin Development Association	Dromara Pre-school Playgroup
Cruse Bereavement Care	Dromore 2000
Cullybackey Environmental Improvement Association	Drumaroad and Clanvaraghan Community Association
Cushendall Development Group	Drumduff and Drumnakilly Community Association
Darby, Professor J.	Drumquin Development Association
Darkley and District Community Association	Dunadry Community Association
David Hutcheon Associates	Dunadry Hotel and Country Club
Davidson, Mr P.	Duncairn Community Centre
Dee Street Regeneration Trust	Dundonald Greenbelt and Heritage Association
Democratic Unionist Party	Dundrum Village Committee
	Dunfield Residents' Group
	Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council

Dunlewey Substance Advice
Dunloy Development Association
Dunmurry Development Partnership
Dunnalong Community Association
Dunnsford Cross-community Resource Centre
Dupont (UK) Limited

East Belfast Community Development Agency
East Belfast Conservative Association
East Belfast Environmental Forum
East Belfast Traders' Association
East Border Region Group
East Down Rural Community Network
East End Residents' Association
Eastern Health & Social Services Board
ECOC
Educational Guidance Service for Adults
Elliott, Mr. A.
Eglinton Residents' Association
Emler Valley Greenbelt Association
Enniskillen Chamber of Commerce
Enniskillen Together
Enniskillen Town Vision
Equal Opportunities Commission
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Erne Advocacy Group
Extern

F T Ferguson & Co
Fair Employment Commission
Falls Community Council
Falls Forum
Family Farm Development
Faughanvale Women's Group
Fawcett, Dr. E.
FE Consultative Forum
Fermanagh Business Initiative
Fermanagh District Council
Fermanagh District Partnership
Fermanagh Rural Community Network
Fermanagh Women's Network
Fire Authority for NI
First Trust Bank
FOCUS (Omagh)
Footprints Women's Centre
Forbairt Feirste
Forbes, Miss J.
Foreglen Community Association
Forest Park Centre
Forum for Community Work Education
Foundry Trust
Fountain Area Partnership
Fountain Street Community Association
Foyle Basin Council
Foyle Development Association
Foyle Residents' Group

Foyle Search and Rescue
Fraser Estates Ltd
Fraser Homes Ltd
Fraser Houses (NI) Limited
Freight Transport Association
Friends of the Earth (England, Wales & Northern Ireland)
Fury Area Development Association

Galliagh Residents' Association
Garran and Croob Cross Community Group
Gasworks Trust
General Aviation Awareness Council
Gilford Community Development Group
Gilford Mill Ltd
Gingerbread Northern Ireland
Glenarm Village Committee
Glenelly Development Trust Limited
Glenravel Community Association
Glens Development Group
Glens of Antrim Angling Development
Glenshane Community Development Ltd
Glenview Community Association
Glór Na nGael
Gordon, Mr M.
Gortgonis Community Association
Greater Belfast Community Network
Greater East Belfast Partnership
Greater Shankill Community Council
Greater Shankill Partnership
Greater Twinbrook and Poleglass Community Forum
Greencastle Area Residents Group
Greencastle Credit Union, Omagh
Greencastle Development Association
Greencastle Women's Group
Greenisland Heritage and Environment Group
Greysteel Community Association
Greysteel Community Enterprises
Griffith, Mr E.
Grosvenor Grammar School, Belfast
Groundwork, NI

Harland & Wolff
Hazelbank Residents' Association
Health Promotion Agency for NI
Help the Aged
Henderson Fireplaces
Hendry, Professor J.
Hillsborough Concerned Residents Group
Hilltop Environmental and Community Care Limited
Historic Buildings Council
Historic Monuments Council
Holy Family Playgroup
Holywell Trust

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Hollywood Residents' Association
Homefirst Community HSS Trust
Humphries, Tracy, City of Armagh High School
Hutchinson, Mr R, MLA.

ICT Forum
Indian Community Centre
Inner East Youth Project
Institute of Civil Engineers
Institute of Directors
Intercomm Project
International Tree Foundation
Inverbrenna Centre and Youth Club
Inverbrenna Community Association
Ionad Uibh Eachach
Irish Central Border Area Network
Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Irish Council of Churches
Irish Linen Centre
Irish Planning Institute
Irvinestown Chamber of Commerce
Irvinestown Community Partnership
Irvinestown Trustee Enterprise Company
Islandmagee Community Development Association

J Sainsbury plc
JJ Higgins Limited
Jordan, Mr C.

Kansas Residents' Association
Keady & District Community Initiatives Limited
Kells and Connor Improvement Committee
Kelly, Cathy, St. Catherine's College, Armagh
Kerr, Mrs J.
Kesh Development Association
Kilcoo and Tollymore Regeneration Group
Kilcooley Residents Association
Killinchy & District Community Association
Killough Community Association
Killylea and Tynan Community Association
Killyleagh Development Association Limited
Killyleagh Town Committee
Knockatallon Development Association
Knockmoyle Community Hall Committee
Knox, Mr I.

Labour Relations Agency
Lagan Developments
Laganside Corporation
Lagmore Residents' Association
Lancashire County Council
Landscape Institute NI
Larne and District Friends of the Earth
Larne Borough Council
Larne Harbour Limited

Laurencetown, Lenaderg and Tullylish
Community Development Association
Leafair Community Association
Leathart, Mr J.
Lenadoon Community Forum
Lenadoon Women's Group
Lennon, Mrs M.
Lettershandoney Community Association
Ligoniel Association for Play Development
Ligoniel Community Enterprises Limited
Ligoniel Improvement Association
Limavady Borough Council
Limavady Chamber of Commerce and Trade
Limavady Community Development Initiative
Limestone Trust
Lisburn Borough Council
Lisburn Development Ltd
Lisburn District Peace and Reconciliation Partnership
Lisburn Enterprise Organisation
Lisburn Rights Group
Lisburn Welfare Rights Group
Lisnacree Community Centre
Lisnaskea Chamber of Commerce
Local Enterprise Development Unit
Local Government Training Group
Lock, Professor D.
Londonderry Chamber of Commerce
Londonderry Port and Harbour
Long Tower Trust
Lough Erne Yacht Club
Lough Neagh & Lower Bann Advisory Committee
Loughbrickland Community Association
Loughbrickland Joint Venture
Loughgiel Community Association
Lower Malone Residents' Association
Lower Whitewell Tenants' Association
Lurgan Council for Voluntary Action

Maghera Development Association
Magherafelt District Council
Magherafelt Women's Group
Maguiresbridge Development Association
Making Belfast Work
Markets Development Association
Marks & Spencer plc
Marshall, Mrs M.
Mary Gray Community Development Group
McAllister Armstrong & Partners - MAP
McClellan, Mr I.
McCormick Group of Companies
McHenry Bros.
McKay Mr P.
McKinty, Mrs R.
Melmount Community Care

MENCAP
 Methodist Women's Association
 Michael Burroughs Associates (Ireland)
 Middletown Community Association
 Mid-Springfield Community Association
 Mid-Ulster Women's Network
 Mill Village Women's Group
 Milltown Community Trust
 Monbrief Community Association
 Moneymore Community Group
 Morton Community Centre
 Motorcycle Action Group
 Mournederg Partnership
 Mourne Heritage Service
 Mourne Heritage Trust
 Mournes Advisory Council
 Moyle District Council
 Moylinn House Community Development
 Support Services Agency
 Muckamore Residents' Association
 Multistoreys Residents' Association, Rathcoole
 Murtagh, Mr P.

National Federation of Shopmobility
 New Lodge Forum
 New Mossley Youth Centre
 New 'n' Used
 Newbuildings Community Association
 Newcastle 2000
 Newcastle Community Development
 Association
 Newcastle Youth Initiative
 Newington Credit Union
 Newpin in Northern Ireland
 Newry & Mourne District Council
 Newry & Mourne Economic Forum
 Newry and Mourne Carers
 Newtownabbey Borough Council
 Newtownabbey Community Development
 Agency
 Newtownabbey Community Project Ltd
 Newtownabbey District Partnership
 Newtownards Chronicle
 Newtownards Road Women's Group
 NI 2000
 NI Agricultural Producers' Association
 NI Anti-Poverty Network
 NI Assembly
 NI Association for the Care & Resettlement of
 Offenders
 NI Chamber of Commerce & Industry
 NI Chamber Trade
 NI Community Addiction Service
 NI Council for Ethnic Minorities
 NI Council for Integrated Education
 NI Council for Voluntary Action

NI Cycling Initiative
 NI Disability Council
 NI Economic Council
 NI Economic Research Centre
 NI Electricity
 NI Environment Link
 NI Families against Telecommunications
 Transmitters
 NI Federation of Housing Associations
 NI Filipino Community Association
 NI General Consumer Council
 NI Green Party
 NI Growth Challenge
 NI Hill Farming
 NI Hospice
 NI Housebuilders Consortium
 NI Housing Council
 NI Housing Executive
 NI Leader Network
 NI Place Name Project
 NI Post Office Board
 NI Public Service Alliance
 NI Sports Forum
 NI Tenants Action Project
 NI Tourist Board
 NI Transport 2000
 NI Transport Holding Company
 NI Unionist Party
 NI Volume Housebuilders
 NI Voluntary Trust
 NI Volunteer Development Agency
 NI Youth Council
 North & West Belfast HSS Trust
 North Antrim Community Network
 North Antrim Rural Action
 North Belfast Communities in Action
 North Belfast Cultural Society
 North Belfast Partnership Board
 North Belfast Senior Citizens' Forum
 North Belfast Traders Association
 North Down Borough Council
 North Down Youth Council
 North East Institute of Further and Higher
 Education
 North Eastern Education & Library Board
 North West Architectural Association
 North West Community Network
 North West Forum for People with Disabilities
 North West Institute of Further and Higher
 Education
 North West Region Cross Border Group
 Northern Health & Social Services Board

O'Flaherty, Mr J.
 Oakleaf Rural Community Network
 Office for the Regulation of Electricity & Gas

Appendices

Office of the First Minister and Deputy Minister
 Omagh Business Complex
 Omagh College of Further Education
 Omagh District Council
 Omagh District Partnership
 Omagh Forum for Rural Associations
 Omagh Gold Mining Action Group
 Omagh Traders
 Ortus West Belfast Enterprise Board

Patton, Mr M.
 PHAB (Northern Ireland)
 Phoenix Natural Gas
 Planning Appeals Commission
 Playboard
 Poleglass Concerned Parents' and Residents' Association
 Port of Larne Harbour Ltd
 Portballintrae Residents Association
 Portglenone Enterprise Group
 Portrush Community Development Group
 Portrush Regeneration Trust
 Post Office
 Premier Design
 Presbyterian Church in Ireland (Board of Social Witness)
 PROBE (University of Ulster)

Quarry Products Association
 Queen's University, Belfast
 Quigley, Sir George

Rafferty, Mr C.
 Randalstown Arches Association
 Rathcoole Community Forum
 Rathgill/Willowbrook Residents' Association
 Rathlin Farmers' Group
 Regeneration of Ballyholland Area Ltd
 Regeneration of Camlough
 Regeneration of Mourne Area Ltd
 Regeneration of South Armagh
 Representatives from Craigavon Borough
 Robert Turley Associates
 Robins, Dr. D.
 Roden Street Community Centre
 Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
 Royal Mail
 Royal Naval Lifeboats Institute
 Royal Society for Ulster Architects
 Royal Town Planning Institute
 RSCA
 Rural Area Partnership In Derry
 Rural Community Development Action Team
 Rural Community Development Health Project
 Rural Community Development Initiative
 Rural Community Network

Rural Development Council
Safeway Stores (Ireland) Ltd
 Saintfield Town Committee
 Sandy Row Community Centre
 Sandy Row Community Forum
 Save our Lagan & Environment
 Save the Children
 Seamus Canavan and Associates
 Shankill Community Forum
 Shankill Women's Centre
 Shannon, Alderman, J, MLA.
 Sheridan Group
 Shopmobility Bangor Limited
 Short Brothers, PLC
 Short Strand Community Forum
 Simon Community
 Sinn Fein
 Sion Mills Community Association
 Sixmilecross Development Association
 Slievegallion Rural Development Association
 Snoddons Construction Ltd
 Social Democratic and Labour Party
 Social Economy Agency
 Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
 South & East Belfast HSS Trust
 South Belfast Age Concern
 South Belfast Partnership Board
 South Belfast Residents Planning Group
 South East Rural Community
 South Eastern Education & Library Board
 South Lough Neagh Regeneration Association
 South Tyrone Action Committee
 South Tyrone Empowerment Programme
 South West Community Forum
 Southcity Resource Centre
 Southern Education Library Board
 Southern Health & Social Services Board
 Sperrin Caring Services Agency
 Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Care Trust
 Sports Council for Northern Ireland
 St Davog's ACE Scheme
 St Fanchea's College, Enniskillen
 St James' Forum
 St Louise's Comprehensive College
 St Luke's ACE Scheme
 St Luke's Family Centre
 St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon
 Stannifer Developments Limited
 Star Neighbourhood Centre
 Strabane District Council
 Strabane Grammar School
 Strandburn Residents' Association
 Strangford Community Association
 Strangford Lough Agri-tourism Group

Strangford Lough Management Committee
Streetbeat Youth Project
Students' Housing Association Co-operative
Suffolk Community Services Group
Sustainable Northern Ireland Programme
Sustrans
Sydenham Environmental and Community Group

Talking Hands
Teeland Group plc
Tempo Development Association
Tesco Stores Ltd
The Adapt Fund for Northern Ireland
The Boyd Partnership
The European Commission
The Forest of Belfast Initiative
The Foyle Basin Council
The Irish Academy of Engineering
The Law Society of Northern Ireland
The National Trust
The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration
The Royal Ulster Constabulary
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
The Salvation Army
The Scottish Office
The Urban Institute
The Welsh Office
The Woodland Trust
Thorn Environmental Community Group
Thornhill College, Londonderry
Toome Association of Community Groups
Toome Industrial Development and Leisure
Top of the Hill 2010
Topped Mountain Historical Society
Town Centre Management
Tradd & Ballyronan Development Association
Translink
Transport Management, Hillsborough
Truagh Development Association
Tully and District Development Group Association
Tullycarnet Credit Union
Tullycarnet Residents' Association
Tullycarnet Resource Centre
Tullycarnet Women's Group

UCD Limited
Ulster Architectural Heritage Society
Ulster Bank
Ulster Farmers' Union
Ulster Society for the Preservation of the Countryside

Ulster Television plc
Ulster Unionist Party
Ulster Waterways Group
Ulster Wildlife Trust
United Hospitals HSS Trust
University of Ulster
Upper Andersonstown Community Forum
Upper Andersonstown Housing Group
Upper Springfield Development Trust
Urban and Rural Planning Associates

Various individuals involved in Consortium led events.
Venture Catalyst (Ulster) Ltd
Venture International
Veridian
VFU
Village Residents' Association
Village Roundabout Caring Agency
Vine Community Centre
Voluntary Service Belfast
Voluntary Service Lisburn

Warrenpoint Harbour Commissioners
Waterside Area Partnership
Waterside Development Trust
Waterside Women's Centre
Watson, Mr W.
WDR & RT Taggart
West Belfast Taxi Association
West Rural Region
West Winds Tenants Association
Westcare Business Services
Western Education & Library Board
Western Health & Social Services Board
Westlink Women's Group
Westrock Parent Youth Support Group
Williamson, Sarah, The Royal School, Armagh
Windsor Women's Centre
Women's Centre Derry
Women's Resource and Development Agency
Women's Support Network
Woods, Mr & Mrs RE.
Woodburn Management Committee
Woolley, Professor T.
Workers Educational Association
World Wildlife Fund
Wright Lines

YMCA (Carrickfergus)
Youth Action Northern Ireland
Youthnet

APPENDIX 4

The ports and airports of the major inter-Regional gateway cities and towns (Key Diagram 4)

PORTS

The Port of Belfast

The Port of Belfast is the major logistics centre for Northern Ireland. It is a vital element in the regional economy being the main artery for external trade. Modern port facilities, availability of lands for development and location at the heart of the regional transport network offer major potential for job creation. In recent years it has surpassed the port of Dublin in terms of the total volume of trade handled, moving just over 50% of sea borne trade in and out of Northern Ireland. It operates over 40 container sailings per week, including services to Heysham, Ellesmere Port Seaforth (Liverpool) and various European ports.

The Belfast Harbour Estate covers a land area of approximately 1200 hectares and is a major asset for the Northern Ireland economy. There are approximately 120 hectares of prime development land available within the estate. Through further development and diversification its potential can be greatly increased.

The port has undertaken a major development programme to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the completion of the Single European Market. Large cargo handling facilities have been provided and three new roll-on/roll-off terminals now make Belfast the largest roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro) port in Ireland. Belfast has once again become a major passenger port with passenger numbers rising almost threefold from 1995 to 1.7m in 1996. Passenger levels have continued to rise exceeding 2 million in 1999.

Larne

The port is the second largest in Northern Ireland, underpinning the economic base and future potential of Larne town. It provides the shortest sea crossings (35 km) to Scotland into Stranraer and Cairnryan. Extensive modernisation has taken place in recent years to facilitate passengers and goods. It includes a new longer, deeper ro-ro ferry berth and a 10-metre wide single deck vehicle ramp capable of taking abnormally sized and heavy loads.

Although specialising in ro-ro traffic, the Port of Larne also handles bulk and general cargoes. The gross tonnage of goods handled is almost 7 million tonnes.

Warrenpoint and Newry

The port in Warrenpoint was constructed in the early 1970s replacing inadequate facilities in nearby Newry town. Its facilities include a ro-ro berth and a large storage capacity.

In terms of volume of trade, Warrenpoint would rank third in the order of Northern Ireland ports, although significantly behind Belfast and Larne. With deep water potential, it is well placed to serve a large hinterland, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, connecting through Newry town to the strategic road and rail networks.. The port handles approximately 9% of the total trade through Northern Ireland commercial ports.

Situated at the head of Carlingford Lough, and serving a local catchment population of 100,000, the town of Newry is a major gateway to the North as well as to the Mourne and to the Slieve Gullion area. Its strategic location in the Belfast-Dublin Development Corridor, and on a TENS Route with access by road and rail, adds to the town's growth potential. The nearby port of Warrenpoint reinforces the gateway role and the economic growth potential of Newry.

The Port of Lisahally in Londonderry

The new modern port development at Lisahally came into operation in 1993 and involved the construction of a new quay suitable for deep-sea ships and a new access road. The volume of cargo handled has increased steadily in each year since 1993 and in 1996 totalled just over 1m tonnes. The Port is principally a bulk produce facility, dealing mainly in imports.

The proportion of cross-border business has increased from 50% in 1998 to 65% in 2000. The Port is now servicing the west coast of the Republic of Ireland as well as the general North West area. The key infrastructure of port and airport is a major regional asset contributing to the growth potential of the North West.

AIRPORTS

Belfast International Airport

The airport offers a unique regional opportunity because of its extensive modern facilities, its available development lands and its strategic geographical location, especially in relation to Belfast, Antrim, Craigavon and Lisburn, as well as to the main transport corridors, including the north west and north east links to Londonderry and Ballymena.

The International Airport area has the potential to attract major inward investment to the region which might not otherwise occur. Sectoral possibilities include international call offices, distribution, tourism and airport related developments, as well as certain types of manufacturing and servicing. Air freight offers significant export potential, based on high value/low weight or volume products which often characterise high technology industry. Successful new investment on a large scale would have consequential implications for improvements to local transport linkages, both road and rail, and maintaining airport accessibility. Development at Belfast International Airport may provide a stimulus for employment growth in the north and west sectors of Belfast.

Appendices

Belfast City Airport

The airport has been one of the UK's fastest growing airports in the 1990s and plays a key role in the economic development of the BMA. Conveniently located for the city centre, Laganside and the main employment locations at Belfast Harbour, its accessibility has been enhanced by the completion of the Cross-Harbour road and rail bridges, and a new terminal completed in 2001. Land is available nearby at Sydenham for development with potential to take advantage of the proximity to the airfield.

City of Derry Airport

One of the most significant advances in recent times has been the development and launch of the City of Derry Airport. The runway has been extended, passenger facilities enhanced and a new terminal building provided. A new road access and additional car parking have also been provided. The airport is well located to serve the city, the nearby industrial complexes and the wider North West catchment area, including Donegal.

The City of Derry Airport has had a catalytic impact in encouraging several multi-national businesses to invest in the area. The airport is well placed to attract further economic developments to the North West.

Enniskillen Airport

The Enniskillen Airport St. Angelo has a significant role to play in the continued economic development of Enniskillen and the enhancement of opportunities for water-based tourism, given the importance of the lakelands and gateway function for the Shannon-Erne waterway system. The District Council intends to forge better links with Europe through the development of the airport.

The Heritage Town of Enniskillen is strategically located on a bridging point between the Erne lakes, at the northern end of the Shannon – Erne waterway system. It has an important cross-border gateway role by road and waterway from the west of Ireland, particularly in relation to tourism. The attractiveness of the Fermanagh Lakeland has led to a thriving tourist industry and the town plays host to a considerable number of foreign visitors, some using the local airport, as well as day-trippers and local tourists.

APPENDIX 5

European funds and initiatives for Rural Northern Ireland

The new Community Support Framework for Northern Ireland comprises the two Structural Fund Programmes for 2000-2006.

The two programmes are PEACE II and Building Sustainable Prosperity. Specifically under the latter Programme, Priority 4 targets Agriculture, Rural Development, Forestry and Fisheries.

APPENDIX 6

Regional housing need to 2015

The main assumptions made in forecasting the regional housing need to 2015 were:

Allowance for new household formation: estimated that Mean Household Size would be 2.44 by 2015.

Allowance for vacancy rates in the housing stock: estimated that in more favourable economic conditions, a vacancy rate of 4.5% by 2015 be applied.

Allowance for second homes: It is estimated that there will be an increase of 6,000 in the number of dwellings being used for second homes over the period to 2015.

Replacement of stock loss due to demolitions, abandonment, changes of use and conversions: assumed a net stock loss of 1700 units per annum up to 2005, falling to a loss of 1500 units thereafter.

Appendices

APPENDIX 7

District population balance 1998

	District	District population	Principal urban centre	Principal urban centre population	% of District population in the principal urban centre
All districts except the BMA districts and Derry district	Craigavon	79,100	Craigavon	54,150	68
	Larne	30,700	Larne	17,900	58
	Ballymena	59,100	Ballymena	29,000	49
	Antrim	50,200	Antrim	22,600	45
	Omagh	47,800	Omagh	20,400	43
	Coleraine	55,500	Coleraine	23,500	42
	Ards	70,600	Newtownards	26,900	38
	Limavady	32,400	Limavady	11,950	37
	Banbridge	39,300	Banbridge	14,350	37
	Newry and Mourne	86,500	Newry	29,500	34
	Strabane	37,300	Strabane	12,700	34
	Cookstown	32,000	Cookstown	10,800	34
	Ballymoney	25,500	Ballymoney	8,600	34
	Armagh	54,900	Armagh	15,300	28
	Moyle	15,300	Ballycastle	4,300	28
	Dungannon	47,900	Dungannon	11,100	23
	Fermanagh	57,200	Enniskillen	12,450	22
	Magherafelt	38,500	Magherafelt	7,800	20
	Down	62,900	Downpatrick	10,550	17
	Average % of district population in the principal urban centre				

Source: Mid-Year Estimates and RPD Estimates

APPENDIX 8

Guidance in relation to urban housing

Strategic Planning Guideline SPG-HOU 4 (Chapter 9) emphasises the need to promote more sustainable forms of housing development. This can be achieved by accommodating an increased share of future residential development within existing urban areas to reduce greenfield housing extensions.

The urban footprint for towns and cities throughout Northern Ireland will be defined as the continuous built-up area of the settlement. The boundary will be represented by an uninterrupted line, often lying inside the planned settlement limit. 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. However, undeveloped zoned land at the edge of the settlement will be excluded. Urban footprints have been identified and set as the baseline of January 2001 and, for monitoring purposes, will not be altered for 5 years.

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. Potential sites will include land such as appropriate vacant buildings, previously developed sites and other suitable sites.

The forthcoming Regional Planning Policy Statement on Housing in Settlements will provide guidance on the categories of land or land use within the urban footprint, for the purpose of calculating the 'brownfield' component of new urban housing development. Guidance on the process to be adopted for evaluation and management of land supply will also be provided.

Appendices

APPENDIX 9

Achieving quality residential environments

Planning obligations

The policy is to require developers to bear the costs of works required to facilitate their development proposals.

Examples of planning obligations which may be required in association with the grant of planning consent are:

- Necessary infrastructure, eg roads, sewers, improvements to public transport and walking and cycling facilities;
- Provision of adequate open space to meet the developments' needs, eg for amenity and children's play;
- Provision of increased woodland cover through community woodland;
- Provision of facilities or land reserved for necessary community facilities generated by the development or to which the development will contribute to local demand. This could include land set aside for community development and other neighbourhood facilities;
- Provision of social housing;
- Provision of all details of the development as part of the development, not left to individual occupiers, eg all boundary treatments, landscaping;
- Provision of finance to the appropriate authority/group for a reasonable period, eg 10 years for maintenance of many of the above.

At present the relevant planning legislation is Article 40 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.

Concept statements

It is essential that developers, designers, planners and highways engineers enter into dialogue and adopt co-operative approaches to achieve shared solutions. The Design Guide: Creating places - Achieving Quality in Residential Developments (DRD & DOE May 2000) advocates the need for concept statements and master plans and sets out the main design principles and quality objectives for housing layouts.

APPENDIX 10

Sprucefield Regional Shopping Centre

In the case of Sprucefield, the only out-of-town regional shopping centre in Northern Ireland, the scale and nature of retail development will continue to be controlled in accordance with the relevant planning policies. The Sprucefield location, at the junction of two key transport corridors is identified as being suitable for the development of major employment activities which require an edge of urban area location. Major development at Sprucefield could require the provision of significant new infrastructure. In those circumstances, such development will be required to either provide the infrastructure or make a financial contribution appropriate under the guidance in PPS 3, to be of a scale and nature directly related to the proposed development.

APPENDIX 11

Major economic development proposals of a Regional or sub-regional significance

The Regional Development Strategy 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 Development Strategy is sufficiently flexible to allow the private sector to bring forward original development proposals which are of significance to the whole or a substantial part of Northern Ireland 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 intention is to facilitate development projects in tune with the spirit of the Spatial Development Strategy 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.

Appendices

APPENDIX 12

Proposed improvements to the Regional Strategic Transport Network

The Roads Service Preparation Pool comprises the highest priority major works schemes, which have yet to be taken through the necessary statutory procedures. These are mainly focused on improvements to the strategic road network.

The need for further improvements to the roads on the Regional Strategic Transportation Network will be informed by the 10-year Regional Transportation Strategy.

APPENDIX 13

Protected Natural Heritage Sites¹⁶

Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)

Site No	Site	ASSI No	Site
		ASSI050	Sheep Island
		ASSI051	Lough Foyle
ASSI001	Carrickbawn	ASSI052	Toome
ASSI002	Gortnagory	ASSI053	Culnafay
ASSI003	Ballymacormick Point	ASSI054	Inishroosk
ASSI004	Gary Bog	ASSI055	Crockaghole Wood
ASSI005	Moneygal Bog	ASSI056	Drumlea and Mullan Woods
ASSI006	Strangford Lough Part 1 (North)	ASSI057	Glenmore Wood
ASSI007	Black Bog	ASSI058	Strabane Glen
ASSI008	Fairy Water Bogs	ASSI059	Altmore Glen
ASSI009	Dunloy Bog	ASSI060	Ness Wood
ASSI010	Ballynahone Bog	ASSI061	Ervey Wood
ASSI011	Teal Lough and Slaghtfreeden Bogs	ASSI062	Owenkillew and Glenelly Woods
ASSI013	Monawilkin	ASSI063	Slievenacloy
ASSI014	Knockballymore Lough	ASSI064	Banagher Glen
ASSI015	Moninea Bog	ASSI065	Pettigoe Plateau
ASSI016	Beagh Big	ASSI066	Portmore Lough
ASSI017	Garvros	ASSI067	Garron Plateau
ASSI018	Moneendogue	ASSI068	Magilligan
ASSI019	Lergan	ASSI069	Cuilcagh Mountain
ASSI020	Drumlisaleen	ASSI070	Tattenamona Bog
ASSI022	North Woodburn Glen	ASSI071	Upper Lough Erne – Crom
ASSI023	Glenarm Woods	ASSI074	Curran Bog
ASSI024	Glen Burn	ASSI075	Mill Lough
ASSI025	Glenariff	ASSI076	Killymackan Lough
ASSI026	Cleggan Valley	ASSI077	Slieve Beagh
ASSI027	Lough Beg	ASSI078	Kilroosky Lough
ASSI029	Inner Belfast Lough	ASSI079	Derryleckagh
ASSI030	Lough Neagh	ASSI080	Summerhill Lough
ASSI031	Kiltubbrid Loughs	ASSI081	Burdautien Lough
ASSI032	Strangford Lough Part II	ASSI082	Tievebulliagh
ASSI033	Rathlin Island – Coast	ASSI083	Scawt Hill
ASSI034	Strangford Lough Part III	ASSI084	Waterloo
ASSI035	Deroran Bog	ASSI086	Killard
ASSI037	Lackan Bog	ASSI087	Ballyquintin Point
ASSI038	Annacramph Meadows	ASSI089	Murlough
ASSI039	Loughkeelan	ASSI090	Upper Lough Erne – Galloon
ASSI040	Horse Island	ASSI091	Scrabo
ASSI041	Dernish Island	ASSI092	Bovevagh
ASSI043	Rathlin Island – Ballygill North	ASSI093	Upper Lough Erne – Belleisle
ASSI044	Rathlin Island – Kinramer South	ASSI094	Upper Lough Erne – Trannish
ASSI045	Rathlin Island – Ballycarry	ASSI095	Eastern Mourne
ASSI048	Corraslough Point	ASSI096	Limehill Farm
		ASSI097	Little River

¹⁶ The list of protected sites in Appendix 13 is correct as at January 2001.

Appendices

ASSI098	Bardahessiagh	ASSI162	Straidkilly Wood
ASSI099	Teal Lough Part II	ASSI163	Tow River Wood
ASSI099	Tievehilly	ASSI164	Craigantlet Woods
ASSI100	Benburb	ASSI165	McKean's Moss Part II
ASSI101	Portballintrae	ASSI166	Knockninny Hill
ASSI102	Woodgrange	ASSI167	Garn/Glenshane Pass
ASSI103	Carlingford Lough	ASSI168	Glennasheever
ASSI104	Outer Belfast Lough	ASSI169	Leathemstown
ASSI106	Larne Lough	ASSI170	Quoile
ASSI107	White Park Bay	ASSI171	Altikeeragh
ASSI108	Braade	ASSI174	White Rocks
ASSI109	Montiaghs Moss	ASSI175	Runkerry
ASSI110	Finn Floods	ASSI177	Portmuck
ASSI111	Largalinny	ASSI178	Rostrevor Wood
ASSI113	Ramore Head and The Skerries	ASSI179	Straghans Lough
ASSI115	Craigahulliar	ASSI180	Moyrourkan Lough
ASSI116	Carrickarade	ASSI182	Drumcarn
ASSI117	Straduff	ASSI183	Crossbane Lough
ASSI118	Tullanaguiggy	ASSI188	Whitespots
ASSI119	Magheramenagh	ASSI189	Cashel Loughs
ASSI120	Ballanaleck	ASSI190	Tullysrnadeega
ASSI121	Annachullion Lough	ASSI191	The Cliffs of Magho
ASSI122	Drumacrittin Lough	ASSI194	Ballyknock
ASSI123	Caldanagh Bog	ASSI195	Silberbrook Wood
ASSI124	Cranny Bogs	ASSI196	Grange Wood
ASSI125	Dead Island Bog	ASSI197	Corbylin Wood
ASSI126	Frosses Bog	ASSI198	Slieve Gullion
ASSI127	Gary Bog Part II	ASSI199	Upper Ballinderry River
ASSI128	McKean's Moss	ASSI200	Cladagh (Swanlinbar) River
ASSI129	Tonnagh Beg Bog	ASSI202	Giant's Causeway and Dunseverick
ASSI130	Tully Bog	ASSI205	Drumlougher Lough
ASSI131	Wolf Island Bog	ASSI206	Loughaveely
ASSI132	Heron and Carrigullian Loughs	ASSI207	Kilnameel
ASSI133	Ballysudden	ASSI208	Bann Estuary
ASSI134	Essan Burn and Mullyfamore	ASSI209	Moneygal Bog Part II
ASSI138	Fardrum and Roosky Turloughs	ASSI210	Peatlands Park
ASSI139	Ground Bridge	ASSI211	Hollymount
ASSI140	Lough Melvin	ASSI212	Binevenagh
ASSI141	Fardross Stream	ASSI213	Owenkillew River
ASSI143	Black Burn		
ASSI144	Boho		
ASSI147	Ballycastle Coalfield		
ASSI148	Turmennan		
ASSI149	Aughnadarragh Lough		
ASSI150	Ballybannan		
ASSI151	Ballycarn		
ASSI152	Ballynagross Lower		
ASSI153	Ballykilbeg		
ASSI154	Black Lough		
ASSI155	Corbally		
ASSI156	Carrowcarlin		
ASSI157	Castle Enigan		
ASSI158	Greenan Lough		
ASSI159	Loughmoney		
ASSI160	Greenan		
ASSI161	Bren Wood		

Environment - Protected Sites

National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Nature Reserve (NR)

Site No	Site
NNR040	Ballyquintin Point
NNR041	Binevenagh
NNR042	Giant's Causeway
NNR043	Hollymount Forest
NNR044	North Strangford Lough
NNR046	Lough Beg
NNR047	Ballynahone Bog

NR001	Bohill Forest
NR002	Breen Forest
NR003	Castle Archdale Islands Forest
NR004	Correl Glen Forest
NR005	Killeter Forest
NR006	Lough Naman Bog
NR007	Lough Neagh – Randalstown Forest
NR008	Marble Arch Forest
NR009	Portrush
NR010	Quoile Pondage Basin
NR011	Rostrevor Forest
NR012	Slieveanorra Forest
NR013	Swan Island
NR014	Belshaws Quarry
NR015	Banagher Glen
NR016	Granagh Bay
NR017	Meenadoan
NR018	Boorin
NR019	Dorn
NR020	Brackagh Moss
NR021	Lough Neagh – Farr's Bay
NR023	Kebble
NR024	Roe Esuary
NR025	Ballymaclary
NR026	Magilligan Point
NR027	Murlough
NR028	The Murrins Forest
NR029	Ross Lough Forest
NR030	Killard
NR031	Castle Caldwell Forest
NR032	Glenariff Waterfalls Forest
NR033	Crossmurrin
NR034	Mullenakill and Annagarriff
NR035	Hanging Rock and Rossaa Forest
NR036	Lough Neagh – Rea's Wood Forest
NR037	Reilly and Gole Woods
NR038	Straidkilly
NR039	Lough Neagh – Islands
NR040	Lough Neagh – Oxford Island

RSAR008	Garron Plateau
RSAR009	Ballynahone Bog
RSAR010	Cuilcagh Mountain
RSAR011	Lough Foyle
RSAR012	Gary Bog
RSAR013	Slieve Beagh
RSAR014	Fairy Water Bogs
RSAR015	Black Bog

Special Protection Area (SPA)

Site No	Site
SPA001	Swan Island
SPA002	Sheep Island
SPA003	Lough Neagh and Lough Beg
SPA004	Pettigoe Plateau
SPA005	Larne Lough
SPA006	Strangford Lough
SPA007	Upper Lough Erne
SPA009	Carlingford Lough
SPA010	Belfast Lough
SPA011	Rathlin Island
SPA012	Lough Foyle

Environment - Protected Sites

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

Site No	Site
SAC001	Ballynahone Bog
SAC002	Black Bog
SAC003	Cullcagh Mountain
SAC004	Derryleckagh
SAC005	Eastern Mournes
SAC006	Fairy Water Bogs
SAC007	Garron Plateau
SAC008	Gary Bog
SAC008	Gary Bog – Extension
SAC009	Magheraveely Marl Loughs
	Knockballymore Lough (7)
	Kilroosky Lough (11)
	Summerhill Lough (7)
	Burdautlen Lough (8)
SAC010	Magilligan
SAC011	Monawilkin
SAC012	Murlough
SAC013	Pettigoe Plateau
SAC014	Slieve Beagh
SAC015	Strangford Lough
	Strangford Lough Part 1 (72)
	Strangford Lough Part II (96)
	Strangford Lough Part III (180)
	Killard(12) Ballyquintin

Environment - Protected Sites

Ramsar (RSAR)

Site No	Site
RSAR001	Lough Neagh and Lough Beg
RSAR002	Pettigoe Plateau
RSAR003	Larne Lough
RSAR004	Upper Lough Erne
RSAR005	Carlingford Lough
RSAR006	Belfast Lough
RSAR007	Strangford Lough

Appendices

	Point 4
SAC016	Teal Lough
SAC017	Upper Lough Erne – ULE
	Bellisle (84) ULE
	Trannish (183) ULE
	Galloon (71) ULE
	Crom (90) Mill Lough (16)
	Killymackan Lough (17)
	Irishroosk (20)
	Corraslough Point (17)
	Dernish Island (7)
SAC018	Rathlin Island
SAC019	Largallnny
SAC020	Lough Melvin
SAC021	Fardrum and Roosky Turloughs
SAC022	Moneygal Bog
	Moneygal Bog (4)
	Moneygal Bog Part II (3)
SAC023	Banagher Glen
SAC024	Breen Wood
SAC025	Lecale Fens
	Loughkeelan (8)
	Ballycam (2)
	Carrowcarlin (8)
	Corbally (12)
SAC026	Main Valley Bogs – Dunloy
	Bog (25)
	Caldanagh Bog (13)
	Frosses Bog (14)
SAC027	Moninea Bog
SAC028	Montiaghs Moss
SAC029	Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay
SAC030	Rostrevor Wood
SAC031	Turmennan
SAC032	Wolf Island Bog
SAC033	Carn/Glenshane Pass
SAC034	Cladagh (Swanlinbar) River
SAC035	North Antrim Coast – Giant's
	Causeway and Dunseverick (34)
	White Park Bay (19)
SAC036	Slieve Gullion
SAC037	Upper Ballinderry River
SAC038	Hollymount
SAC039	Binevenagh
SAC040	Peatlands
SAC041	Bann Estuary

APPENDIX 14

Project Management

The scope of the Regional Development Strategy goes well beyond conventional land-use planning principles. Whilst work in preparing the Strategy has been undertaken by a Project Team in the Department of Regional Development, a number of important checks and balances were put in place to ensure a comprehensive approach was adopted.

The work of the Project Team has been overseen by an Inter-Departmental Steering Group, chaired by the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Regional Development, Mr R B Spence CB. The Department is grateful for the assistance of this group which ensured that matters such as agriculture, education, the economy, the environment, health and social issues have been given due regard.

An international Panel of Experts, chaired by Sir George Quigley, provided advice and guidance on 'best practice' in regional planning matters. The membership of the international Panel of Experts comprised:

Sir George Quigley	Chairman, Ulster Bank Ltd., Belfast
Ms Henriette Bastrup-Birk	DG XVI, European Commission, Brussels
Professor Alan Artibise	Cascadia Planning Group & University of British Columbia, Vancouver
Professor John Darby	Initiative on Conflict Resolution & Ethnicity, Londonderry
Professor John Hendry	Department of Town & Country Planning, Queen's University, Belfast
Professor David Lock	David Lock Associates, Milton Keynes

The Project Team based in Regional Planning Division in the Department for Regional Development comprised:

Dennis Glass, CBE, BSc, DipTP, MRTPI	Project Director
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Kieran McQuaid	
Deirdre McSorley, BA, MRTPI	
Billy Robinson, BSc, MSc MRTPI	

Appendices

KEY STATISTICS – NORTHERN IRELAND

POPULATION

Estimated population	1998	1,688,600
Projected population	2015	1,794,000
Projected population	2025	1,835,000
Population density (persons per square km)		51

HOUSING

Housing stock		636,000
Estimated mean household size		2.67
New dwelling starts in the year		11,250
Owner occupied dwellings		71%

PROJECTED HOUSING GROWTH 1998 -2025

Regional housing growth 1998 – 2025	250,000 dwellings
Regional housing growth 1998 – 2015	160,000 dwellings
Housing allocation – BMA & Hinterland 1998 - 2015	77,500 dwellings
Housing allocation – North, South & West of Region 1998 – 2015	82,500 dwellings

ECONOMY

Number in employment	639,500
Public Sector as a % of civilian workforce	31.5%
Unemployment rate	6.7%
GDP per head as a % of UK average	79.6%

TRANSPORT

Total length of road network	24,600 kms
Length of Regional Strategic Transport Network	1,200 kms
Car ownership – Number of vehicles	608,000
Car owning households	70%
Method of travel to work – Car/van/minibus	80%

ENVIRONMENT

Area	14,160 sq kms
Maximum distance across the Region	130 kms
Length of coastline	650 kms
% of coastline - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	73%
Area afforested	less than 6%

RURAL

% of population living in rural areas	60%
% of workforce employed in agriculture	6%
Average size of farm holdings (hectares)	34.5
% of farms – owner occupied	99

NOTE: These figures will be updated where appropriate following publication of the 2001 Census.
Key statistics relate to the year 2000 unless otherwise indicated.

Appendices

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