



# **The Planning Service Corporate & Business Plans**

**2003/04 – 2005/06**



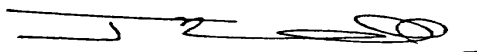
## Foreword

I am pleased to present the Planning Service's Corporate and Business Plans for the period from 2003/04 to 2005/06. I believe that the year ahead, as with last year, is likely to be a challenging and exciting one for the Planning Service.

Our aim is to improve the quality of life of the people of Northern Ireland by planning and managing development in ways which are sustainable and which contribute to creating a better environment. In ensuring we play our part, we are committed to developing a modern, co-ordinated and efficient planning process that integrates economic, social and environmental need. The Modernising Planning Processes Implementation Plan is a key driver in shaping our service for the future. We want to provide accessible, simpler and faster planning decisions and services. We want to be recognised and respected as an organisation that values its people, works with and learns from others, and that makes the best use of resources.

We have started a 3-year modernisation and reform programme, known as *Planning to Deliver*, which incorporates Modernising Planning Processes, but goes further. It includes organisational change, change in our corporate governance arrangements and significant change in terms of service delivery and the use of technology to deliver on the government targets in terms of electronic government.

I am confident that all of the people who work within the planning system will respond positively to the challenges ahead and will play their role in ensuring that we have and provide an enhanced and modern planning service.



**J E McConnell**  
**Chief Executive (Acting)**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Our Services**

The Planning Service is an agency of the Department of the Environment. The planning system exists to regulate the development and the use of land in the public interest. Our planning functions are set out in the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991. The role of the Agency is to administer most of these functions, with our key business areas being development planning and development control, including enforcement.

### **1.2 Our Organisation**

Currently, the Acting Chief Executive, together with three Directors - Director of Area Plans and Policy, Director of Operations and Director of Corporate Services – form the Management Board of the Planning Service. The Acting Chief Executive is responsible for agreeing the strategic objectives and targets with the Minister and for ensuring these are met.

We are committed to monitoring how effective we are in achieving our objectives and targets, as set out in the Corporate and Business Plans, and in doing so we will report annually on our progress towards achieving our targets. Our Annual Report and Accounts will be published following the end of each financial year.

The administration of planning functions across Northern Ireland is taken forward by staff in 6 Divisional Planning Offices, 2 sub Divisional Planning Offices and Planning Service Headquarters, which is based in Belfast.

At 1 April 2003, the staff complement was 611.

### 1.3 *Planning to Deliver*

The Planning Service was created in 1973. It has faced and overcome many challenges in the years since its creation. However, since the mid-1990s we have witnessed enormous social and economic changes in Northern Ireland. The pace of physical development has quickened. The framework of environmental regulation and human rights law we work within has become increasingly complex.

There is a clear imperative for reform, across all aspects of government, and it is a high political priority to either direct rule or devolved Ministers. The Government and the public now recognise and acknowledge the centrality of the planning system to the economic and environmental wellbeing of Northern Ireland, as is clear from the *Programme for Government*. The *Regional Development Strategy*, within which we now work, has far-reaching implications for the Planning Service's core functions.

If the Planning Service is to respond to the challenges it faces it needs to embrace and deliver change. That is why we are committed to developing a modern, co-ordinated and efficient planning process that integrates economic, social and environmental need.

This three year change programme, which goes under the banner of *Planning to Deliver*, will lead to significant change to the Planning Service management structure, processes, technologies, organisation and culture. Our overall objective in embracing such a programme is to ensure that Planning Service achieves in full its Programme for Government targets, both now and in the future.



# **The Planning Service Corporate Plan**

**2003/04 – 2005/06**

## The Corporate Plan 2003/04 – 2005/06

### 2.1 The Planning Context

A central driver of our Corporate and Business Plans is the action being taken to modernise the Planning Service, both through the *Modernising Planning Processes* and the related Implementation Plan.

The *Modernising Planning Processes* Implementation Plan, published in February 2003 followed a comprehensive review of the planning system taken forward during 2002. The Implementation Plan, which was launched by the Minister, is part of the overall *Planning to Deliver* programme aimed at modernising the Planning Service.

The Implementation Plan sets out a 3-year programme to comprehensively modernise and reform planning processes. It will speed up planning applications and reduce red tape. It should help to make area plans much more decisive, indicating precisely the reason land has been zoned. Work will be taken forward to enhance openness and transparency; reform the planning application process; improve the consultation process with local Councils and other statutory bodies; reduce regulation; and support the quality initiative, including improved design.

This work will be complemented by a major e-Planning project, funded through the Executive Programme Funds, to deliver planning processes electronically by 2005, in line with the Government commitment that all key public services are capable of electronic delivery by 2005. £4M has already been allocated over the next two years to kick-start a £10M project to deliver this electronic planning system.

## **Programme for Government**

The Corporate and Business Plans are also developed in the context of the Programme for Government, which sets out the priorities and plans for Northern Ireland for the 2003/04 financial year and beyond. The priorities identified are:

- Growing as a Community
- Working for a Healthier People
- Investing in Education and Skills
- Securing a Competitive Economy
- Developing Relationships – North/South, East/West & international basis

Planning Service's activities primarily contribute to the Programme for Government priority - 'Securing a Competitive Economy', with the relevant sub priority being to develop a modern, co-ordinated and efficient planning process that integrates economic, social and environmental need.

## **Public Service Agreement**

As part of the Programme for Government, each Department has produced a Public Service Agreement that sets out how it will carry out its responsibilities under the Programme for Government and within the resources allocated to it. The Department of the Environment's Public Service Agreement covers all the Department's main programmes and highlights a number of objectives and outcomes that support the priorities, sub-priorities and commitments that the Programme for Government has identified.

## **Service Delivery Agreement**

In support of the Programme for Government and the Public Service Agreement, each Department has also developed a Service Delivery Agreement. This document details the Department's main objectives and targets and provides

information on the actions it will take to ensure it meets its Public Service Agreement objectives.

## **Department of the Environment's Corporate & Business Plans**

The Department of the Environment's Corporate and Business Plans 2003/04 – 2005/06 are prepared in the context of the Programme for Government. The Public Service Agreement, published as part of the Programme for Government, forms the backbone of the Department's Corporate Plan and the Service Delivery Agreement (SDA) provides the basis for the Department's 2003/04 Business Plan.

The Planning Service Corporate and Business Plans are also prepared in this context and are drawn from the Department's Corporate and Business Plan, providing further detail on our objectives and targets and how we intend to deliver on these.

### **2.2 Our Aim & Vision**

The Planning Service is an Executive Agency within the Department of the Environment.

The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life in Northern Ireland, now and for the future, by promoting a better and safer environment and supporting effective and efficient local government.

The Planning Service aim is to improve the quality of life of the people of Northern Ireland by planning and managing development in ways which are sustainable and which contribute to creating a better environment.

Our vision is of an organisation which:

- Earns respect and trust
- Delivers high quality and timely decisions and services
- Is open and in touch
- Works together
- Values its people

- Works with and learns from others
- Makes the best use of resources

## **2.3 Supporting Values**

The values that support and underpin our work are:

- Integrity and honesty
- Objectivity
- Political impartiality
- Fairness
- Professionalism
- Courtesy

## **2.4 Strategic Objectives**

The Planning Service's strategic objectives are:

### **Objective 1**

Provide high quality, up-to-date, professional Development Plans for all areas of Northern Ireland and ensure effective delivery of the Conservation of Built Heritage programme.

- ◆ A key priority for the Agency is to meet the development land needs of Northern Ireland by delivering a comprehensive and up to date Development Plan Programme.
- ◆ Preserving areas of special architectural or historic interest by giving priority to supporting the Heritage Lottery Fund's Townscape Heritage Initiative is also an important priority.

### **Objective 2**

Provide high quality, up-to-date, professional statements of regional Planning Policy.

- ◆ Ensuring that there is a comprehensive and up to date suite of Planning Policy Statements, which will inform the preparation of Development Plans and decisions in development control, is a significant priority for the Agency.

### **Objective 3**

Provide timely, high quality, professional & transparent planning decisions.

- ◆ The Agency wants to be seen as visionary, supporting appropriate development, and enabling delivery of jobs, homes, better transport, lively communities and sensitive care of the environment. In doing so, it is crucial that we provide an efficient, effective, high quality and accountable development control system.

### **Objective 4**

Ensure an appropriate legislative framework is in place to deliver the Agency's core functions.

- ◆ The Agency works within a defined legislative framework. A priority for the Agency is to ensure that the legal framework is appropriate for the needs of Northern Ireland society allowing it to develop in a planned manner while sensitive to emerging environmental, economic and social trends.

### **Objective 5**

Provide high quality and efficient services in support of the Agency's core functions.

- ◆ The Agency aims to have highly motivated staff with the appropriate skills to do the job that is expected of them. It is essential therefore that the organisation obtains the necessary resources to deliver on this, and that it makes

best use of those resources by deploying them where and when they are required.

## **2.5 Financial Resources**

The Planning Service strives to make effective use of resources provided through the budget and from receipts from planning applications, with the latter being a possible source of increased resources, for use by both Planning Service and other Departments and Agencies engaged in planning processes. This issue is the subject of a Consultation paper on the Review of Planning Fees, issued under the auspices of the Modernising Planning Processes Implementation Plan in June 2003.

The Planning Service budget allocations for the current and two forward years are set out below. The 2002-03 figures are also shown for comparative purposes.

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Planning Service (1)	17.6m	23.2m	20.7m	21.7m

(1) Agreement has been reached with the Department of Finance and Personnel to incur additional expenditure of up to £3.4m which will be reimbursed if additional receipts are earned in specific areas. This is not reflected in the expenditure or receipts figures in the above table.

## **2.6 Risk Management**

Developments in corporate governance, specifically the move for Accounting Officers to sign a Statement on Internal Control (SIC), have meant that evaluation of risk and the determination of suitable control strategies have been confirmed as key management responsibilities. In order to fulfil this responsibility there is a need for a risk management process to be fully embedded and operational within the Planning Service.

DAO (DFP) 05/01 'Corporate Governance: Statement on Internal Control' sets out the requirement for Departments to

have in place a continuing process to identify the principal risks to the achievement of Departmental/Agency policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the nature and extent of those risks and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Planning Service appointed consultants in 2002 to review corporate governance arrangements within the Agency and to assist with identifying risk management arrangements to enable the Agency to fully meet regulatory requirements.

In September 2002 the consultants produced a Risk Management Framework and a Corporate Risk Register which were approved by the Management Board. Risk Management is being taken forward through the Business Planning process and will be monitored on a quarterly basis, as part of this process.



# **The Planning Service Business Plan**

**2003/04**

## **Planning Service Business Plan 2003-2004**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The Corporate Plan sets out the Agency's medium-term strategic objectives and its key targets for the period 2003-2006. This Business Plan is our main operational document for the year up to 31 March 2004. It sets out the key operational objectives, measures and targets for the year which will contribute to the achievement of the Planning Service's medium-term strategic objectives. The Plan is linked to Programme for Government (PfG) and the Department of the Environment's Public Service Agreement (PSA) and Service Delivery Agreement (SDA), as well as our own Corporate Plan.

### **3.2 Planning Service Objectives are as follows:**

**Objective 1:** Provide high quality, up-to-date, professional Development Plans for all areas of Northern Ireland and ensure effective delivery of the Conservation of Built Heritage programme.

**Objective 2:** Provide high quality, up-to-date, professional statements of regional Planning Policy.

**Objective 3:** Provide timely, high quality, professional & transparent planning decisions.

**Objective 4:** Ensure an appropriate legislative framework is in place to deliver the Agency's core functions.

**Objective 5:** Provide high quality and efficient services in support of the Agency's core functions.

The key activities that will be taken forward to deliver on these objectives and the target dates for completion of these activities are set out below.

**Strategic Objective 1: To provide up-to-date Development Plans for all areas of Northern Ireland and ensure effective delivery of the Conservation of Built Heritage programme**

To contribute to the achievement of this objective, we will do the following in 2003/04:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
<p>Deliver in-year Development Plan programme on time and to necessary quality standards by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing draft plans for Magherafelt; Newry, Mourne &amp; Banbridge; and Belfast Metropolitan Area</li> <li>• Publishing in final form the Cookstown Area Plan</li> <li>• Publishing in final form the Craigavon Area Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Mar 04</p> <p>Dec 03</p> <p>Mar 04</p>
<p>Implement the in-year Development Planning elements of Modernising Planning Processes through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing development plans in accordance with Programme for Government</li> <li>• Ensuring that Development Plans are prepared in general conformity with the regional development strategy</li> <li>• Reducing the number of plans by grouping Council areas</li> <li>• Developing the issues paper approach through public consultation</li> <li>• Enhanced consultation processes with the public and key interest groups</li> </ul>	<p>Mar 04</p>
<p>Deliver in-year Conservation Area Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesignation of Caledon Conservation Area</li> <li>• Designation of Lurgan Conservation Area</li> </ul>	<p>Oct 03</p> <p>Mar 04</p>

**Strategic Objective 2: To provide up-to-date statements of Regional Planning Policy**

To contribute to the achievement of this objective, we will do the following in 2003/04:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Target Date</i>
Deliver in-year Planning Policy Statement (PPS) programme on time by:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing for consultation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPS 15 Planning and Flood Risk</li> <li>▪ PPS 17 Advertisements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">Oct 03 Oct 03</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing in final form               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPS 3 Access, Movement and Parking</li> <li>▪ PPS 4 Industry, Business and Distribution</li> <li>▪ An amendment to PPS 6 Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage</li> <li>▪ PPS 8 Open Space, Sport and Recreation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">Sept 03 Dec 03 Dec 03 Sept 03</p>
Implement the in-year Planning Policy elements of Modernising Planning Processes through:	Mar 04
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing clear, concise, easily understood PPSs</li> </ul>	Mar 04
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing need for additional policies to improve quality of design</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of guidance on the use of Planning Agreements</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced consultation processes with community and key interests</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that all PPS conform with Regional Development Strategy</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission independent research where necessary</li> </ul>	

**Strategic Objective 3: Provide timely, high quality, professional & transparent planning decisions.**

To contribute to the achievement of this objective, we will do the following in 2003/04:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Target Date</i>
Process to decision (or withdrawal): (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70% of residential applications within 16 weeks;</li> <li>• 70% of commercial applications within 19 weeks;</li> <li>• 70% of industrial applications within 18 weeks.</li> </ul>	
Implement the in-year Planning Policy elements of Modernising Planning Processes through:	Mar 04
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing outline planning application procedure &amp; consulting on any required legislative changes</li> </ul>	Dec 03
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering merits of Business Planning Zone designation &amp; publishing conclusions</li> </ul>	Mar 04
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessing scale of problem in relation to twin tracking &amp; repeat applications &amp; bringing forward appropriate recommendations</li> </ul>	

(1) These targets are based on assumption that the number of planning applications received will not exceed a 7-9% increase on the 2002/03 total.

**Strategic Objective 4: Ensure an appropriate legislative framework is in place to deliver the Agency's core functions.**

To contribute to the achievement of this objective, we will do the following in 2003/04:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Target Date</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the Planning (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.</li> </ul>	Oct 03
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish a policy consultation paper for a new Planning Reform Bill</li> </ul>	Mar 04
Implement the in-year Planning Policy elements of Modernising Planning Processes through:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Permitted Development Rights &amp; issue consultation paper</li> </ul>	June 03
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Use Classes Order &amp; issue consultation paper</li> </ul>	May 03

**Strategic Objective 5: Provide high quality and efficient services in support of the Agency's core functions.**

To contribute to the achievement of this objective, we will do the following in 2003/04:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Target Date</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement new organisational structures</li> </ul>	May 03
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish audit team, develop strategy and programme and commence programme</li> </ul>	July 03
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce draft Human Resources Strategy for Planning Service</li> </ul>	Mar 04
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure adequate financial resources &amp; operate within budget allocation</li> </ul>	(1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop full specification, carry out tender process and identify main supplier for e-planning project</li> </ul>	Mar 04
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to 94% of property enquiries within 10 days</li> </ul>	
<p>Implement the in-year Planning Policy elements of Modernising Planning Processes through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish checklist for applicants</li> </ul>	June 03
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish consultation paper on Review of Fees</li> </ul>	June 03
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish new consultation arrangements with local Councils</li> </ul>	Mar 04

(1) In accordance with Public Expenditure cycle

### **3.3 Cross-cutting Issues**

#### **Equality of Opportunity, Human Rights and New Targeting Social Need**

The Programme for Government stresses the importance of building a cohesive, inclusive and just society. The Planning Service is committed to ensuring that equality of opportunity and good relations and also the need to take account of targeting social need is at the forefront of all its policies and programmes. It also strives to ensure that Human Rights implications of proposed policies and legislation are reviewed to ensure that proposals are compatible with the requirements of the Human Right Act 1998.

The Planning Service will contribute to the Department's progress report on commitments contained within the Department's Equality Scheme and will also contribute to the revised New TSN Action Plan covering the period April 2003 - March 2004, being produced by the Department. The Planning Service is also committed to the values and aims contained in the Executives Victims Strategy launched in April 2002 and will where appropriate consult victims groups about major policy proposals.

#### **Implementation, Monitoring and Review**

- 4.1 The Planning Service Management Board will monitor performance and review progress against key objectives and targets on a regular basis.

Following the end of the financial year, the Chief Executive will publish an Annual report and Accounts. The Report will review the Agency's activities during the year and will comment specifically on progress in relation to our strategic objectives and achievements against the performance targets.

## **Appendices**

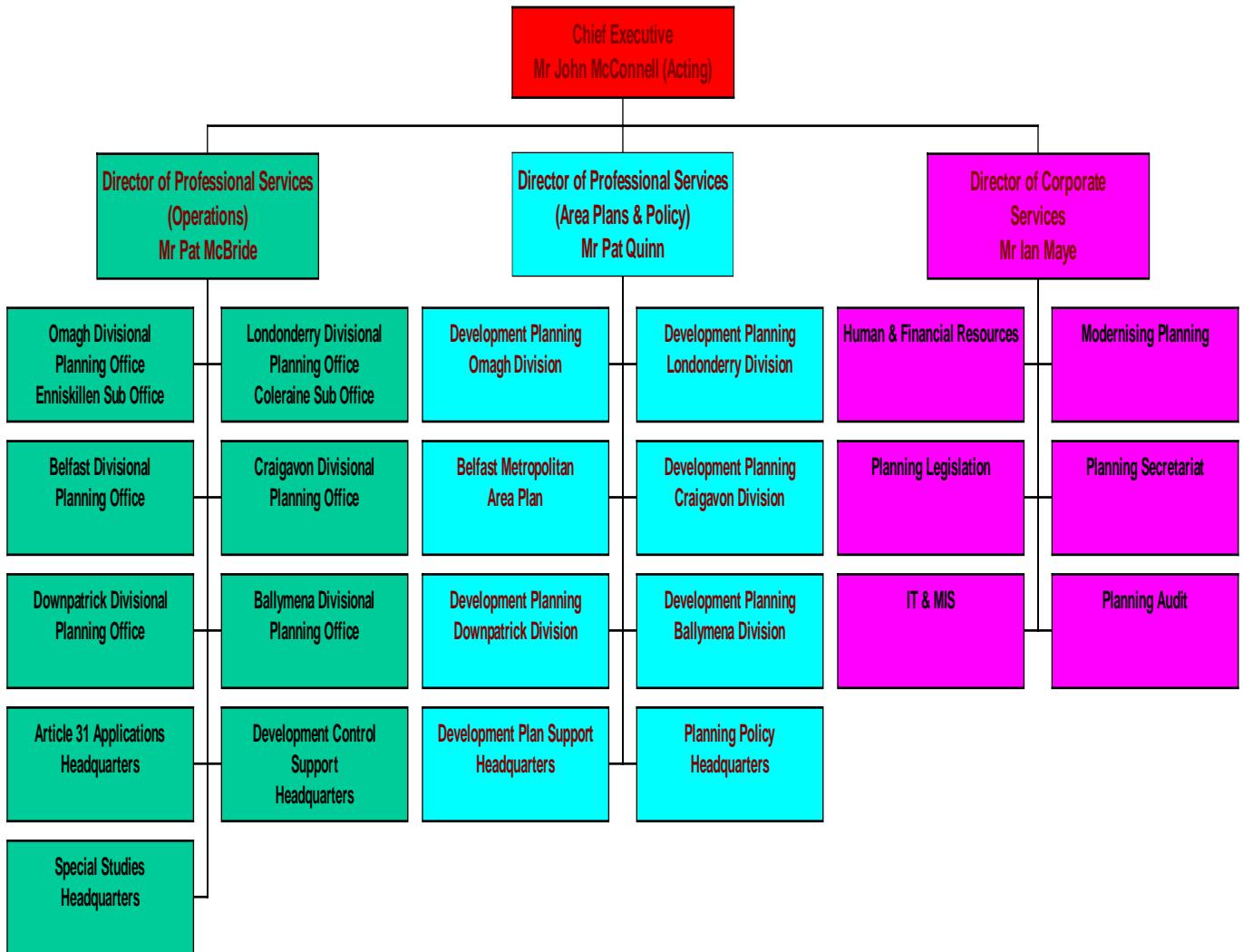
Appendix 1: Our Organisation

Appendix 2: Modernising Planning Processes

Appendix 3: Allocation of resources

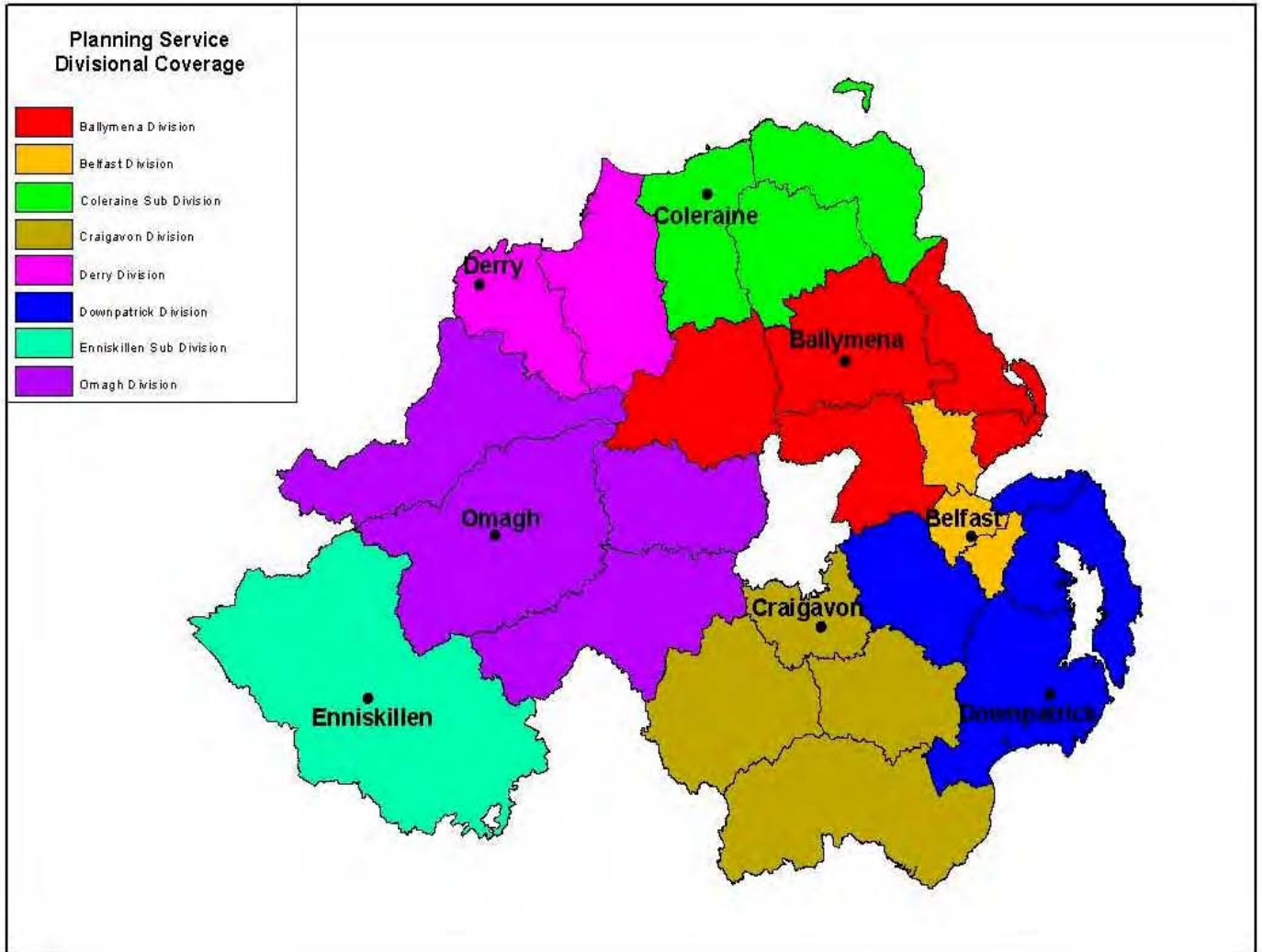
# Appendix 1 (a)

## Planning Service Organisation Chart



## Appendix 1(b)

### Planning Service Divisional Network



## Appendix 2

### Modernising Planning Processes Implementation Plan



The Modernising Planning Processes Implementation Plan can be viewed or downloaded from:

[www.doeni.gov.uk/planning/Modernising\\_Planning/Modernising\\_Home.htm](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/planning/Modernising_Planning/Modernising_Home.htm)

## Appendix 3

### PLANNING SERVICE RESOURCES 2003/04 – 2005/06

	<b>03/04</b> 000's	<b>04/05</b> 000's	<b>05/06</b> 000's
<b>DRC</b>	16163	16930	17777
<b>Programme</b>	4009	4135	4259
<b>Capital</b>	586	586	586
<b>Receipts</b>	-9828	-9828	-9828
<b>EPF</b>	3346	0	0
<b>Depreciation/Capital Charge</b>	500	500	500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14776</b>	<b>12323</b>	<b>13294</b>