



**ARMAGH
AREA PLAN 2018**
ISSUES PAPER



An Agency within the Department of the
Environment
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ARMAGH AREA PLAN 2018

ISSUES PAPER

MARCH 2004

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Armagh Area Plan 2018 (The Plan) will be to set out the broad planning framework for the physical development of the Armagh City and District, including all the urban settlements and the entire rural area, up to the year 2018. The Plan will also advise the public and potential land users about the policy framework that will be used to guide future development and provide a basis for the control of this development. The Plan will comprise allocations, designations, policies, proposals and zonings, hereafter referred to as the Plan Proposals.

THE ISSUES APPROACH

The preparation of the Plan is part of an on-going programme to provide full coverage of contemporary plans for all Council areas in Northern Ireland.

This Issues Paper, prepared in accordance with Article 5 (3) of The Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, is intended to promote debate focused on those issues of strategic significance which will shape the preparation of the Draft Plan. It takes the place of the Preliminary Proposals plan, where debate often centred solely on the specific details of land use zoning.

Traditionally the Preliminary Proposals document and maps contained detailed proposals for the plan area, such as the location of housing, industry and educational facilities as well as establishing how the character and environment of the area would be protected. The general public often took this as an indication that decisions for an area had already been taken.

The content of this Issues Paper has been informed by a series of Strategic Topic reports, prepared by the Development Plan Research Team at Planning Service Headquarters as part of the initial stages of the plan process. A substantial amount of the key data contained in these reports, and useful in the preparation of the Plan, is condensed into a Summary Report which is available, on request, from the Divisional Planning Office or from the Planning Service website, www.planningni.gov.uk

The intention is that the Issues Paper should act as a tool to guide and encourage debate and discussion on the planning issues in the local

area. For ease of use this paper sets out a series of issues. However, there may be other issues which members of the public may wish to raise.

A key point to highlight is that Community Technical Aid (CTA), an independent voluntary organisation which assists communities to get involved in the planning process, has been appointed by the Department to undertake a comprehensive and wide-ranging public and community consultation on the Issues Paper. In this way the needs and views expressed during the consultation stage should result in an inclusive area plan to which all participants have had the opportunity to have an input.

The first stage of this consultation has already been completed and a report of the community issues gathered during this first stage presented by CTA to Planning Service. This has been critical in informing the range of issues presented in this Issues Paper. This report presents a wide and diverse range of views and opinions, some of which may be incorporated into the draft Plan. It is not considered appropriate at this stage, however, to highlight or specify any of these views. However, they will form part of the formal process of consultation during the Plan preparation.

The Stage 1 report provides a full account of the consultation process, and the views and opinions expressed during that process, and is available on the Planning Service website and the CTA website, www.communitytechnicalaid.org, or by contacting CTA at Community Technical Aid, 445-449 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 3GQ.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

The Northern Ireland Act 1998 has placed the following statutory requirement on each public authority;

1. To carry out their functions with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:
 - (a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
 - (b) between men and women generally;

- (c) between persons with a disability and persons without; and
 - (d) between persons with dependants and persons without; and
2. Without prejudice to its obligations under subsection (1) a public authority shall, in carrying out its 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.

The Department will seek to ensure that the Plan does not have the effect of discriminating against individuals or groups of people who fall within these categories. The Plan Proposals will, therefore, be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) when the likely effects of the Plan Proposals will be assessed with respect to the promotion of equality of opportunity. The EQIA will be published with the Plan as one of the supporting documents to the Written Statement.

NEW TARGETING SOCIAL NEED (New TSN)

The Department is committed to implementing the Northern Ireland Executive's New Targeting Social Need (New TSN). This involves tackling social need and social exclusion by targeting efforts and available resources towards people, groups and areas objectively defined as being in social need. It requires the application of objective measures to identify where deprivation occurs and then targeting existing and new spending to more effectively address the needs of the most deprived peoples and areas.

Planning Service is not a major spending Agency. However, one of the main functions of the Plan is to facilitate development and create a land use framework that will allow investment to take place within the District. The Plan will seek to apply New TSN through specific Plan Proposals.

RURAL PROOFING

The needs and special considerations of rural communities will be fully acknowledged and assessed in the preparation of Plan Proposals.

The Plan Proposals will be examined within the context of the Rural Proofing process to ensure that rural needs are reflected.

POLICY CONTEXT

The Plan is being prepared within the context of the Plans and Priorities of the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government, taking into account European, National and Regional policies which have implications for the future pattern of development within the District.

EUROPEAN & UK CONTEXT

The European Union and the United Kingdom have embraced the principles of sustainable development based on stewardship of the environment and the concept has been widened to embrace economic and social considerations. The four objectives of sustainable development are:

- Social progress that meets 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.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 "Shaping Our Future" (RDS), which was formulated by the Assembly in September 2001, sets out a dynamic strategic spatial planning framework for Northern Ireland to guide physical development within the Region until 2025. It provides an overarching strategic framework for development plans.

At the heart of the RDS is the principle of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone now and for generations to come by seeking to meet the objectives of sustainable development.

The RDS contains a Spatial Development Strategy which aims to provide a strategic focus which will guide future development in order to provide a balanced and equitable pattern of sustainable development across the Region. In the context of the RDS Armagh City and District lies within Rural Northern Ireland.

The overall aim of the RDS for Rural Northern Ireland is to develop an attractive and prosperous rural area, based on a balanced and integrated approach to the development of town, village and countryside, contributing to the overall well-being of the Region as a whole. This is to be achieved by action on a series of Strategic Objectives and Supporting Strategic Planning Guidelines.

The Planning (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 requires the Plan to be in general conformity with the RDS.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

The Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012 (RTS) was published in July 2002 and is a 'daughter document' of the RDS. Its purpose is to make a significant contribution towards achieving the longer-term vision for transportation contained within the RDS.

The purpose of the RTS is to improve access to regional, national and international markets thereby contributing to sustainable patterns of development and movement, and to promote integration between different modes of travel.

The RTS identifies strategic transportation investment priorities and considers potential funding sources and the affordability of planned initiatives over the next 10 years.

PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) set out the planning policies of the Department on particular aspects of land-use planning and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. The Department has a rolling programme for preparation of new PPSs and review of existing PPSs. In addition a number of PPSs are currently being prepared by the Department for Regional Development which will also apply throughout Northern Ireland.

PPSs may from time to time be revised to take account of changing circumstances, including experience gained through the development planning and development control processes. Good practice guides may also be issued to illustrate how concepts contained in PPSs can be best implemented.

A PLANNING STRATEGY FOR RURAL NORTHERN IRELAND

A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (the Rural Strategy) published in September 1993 contains a number of strategic policies, but essentially comprises a compendium of planning policies setting out, on a topic basis, the factors that the Department takes into account when considering development proposals. It applies to all of the Armagh City and District.

The Department has begun progressively to replace the Planning Strategy. The Strategic section of the document has been superseded by the RDS whilst the topic sections are progressively being replaced by PPSs. In the meantime, policies within the Rural Strategy which have not been superseded by PPSs will remain in force.

REGIONAL SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

The Department's publication 'A Design Guide for Rural Northern Ireland', issued in May 1994, provides guidance for all those who are considering building in the countryside of Northern Ireland. Its purpose is to improve the quality of design and help ensure that new buildings fit into the landscape.

The Department's publication 'Creating Places', issued in May 2000 in furtherance of the Quality Initiative to improve the quality of new housing developments, provides guidance on the design, character and layout of new housing areas in Northern Ireland. The guide describes the contributions to quality and sustainability that developers will be expected to make through design of new residential developments.

The Department also publishes and updates as necessary a set of Development Control Advice Notes. These explain the planning criteria and technical standards which the Department considers when dealing with specific categories or particular aspects of development in Northern Ireland.

THE PLAN AREA

The Plan will cover the Armagh City & District Council area, an area extending to some 670 square kilometres and with a 2001 census population of 54,263 persons. The District is characterised by undulating countryside and is particularly famous for apple growing, giving Armagh its title of 'the Orchard County'.

The new Plan will replace the current Plan for the area, namely the Armagh Area Plan 2004 and the Armagh Area Plan 2004 Alteration No 1: Armagh Countryside Proposals.

The settlement hierarchy within the Plan area, identified by the existing plan coverage, is detailed in Appendix 2.

A3 Map

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GENERAL ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

The following section deals with a number of general issues that affect the whole of the Armagh City & District Council Area.

ACCOMMODATING SETTLEMENT GROWTH

The previous Plan, the Armagh Area Plan 2004, identified a settlement hierarchy which comprises the district town of Armagh, the local towns of Keady, Markethill and Tandragee, villages and small settlements. The RDS represents a step change in the approach to accommodating development in Northern Ireland. A major thrust of the RDS 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.

The RDS recognises a settlement hierarchy comprising main towns, small towns, villages and small rural settlements. In this context the Plan Proposals will be required to facilitate the development of housing, education, health and commercial services, cultural and leisure amenities, necessary to meet the needs of the population of the district over that period.

The Plan will identify, within the main settlements, the general locations where various land-uses would be appropriate. The ability of each settlement to accommodate growth differs and has to take account of infrastructure and physical and environmental capacity constraints.

The potential for new development within the built-up areas of the settlements will be determined by urban capacity studies which form part of the Plan-making process. The amount of land allocated for peripheral expansion of the settlements, where applicable, will be influenced by the potential achievable within the built-up areas.

In order to reduce the continued consumption of greenfield land, make better use of infrastructure resources and maintain compact urban forms, the Plan will promote more sustainable patterns of development through, for example, increased densities in urban housing.

The Plan will also seek to develop an attractive and prosperous rural area in order to sustain a strong and vibrant rural community, contributing to the overall well-being of the district as a whole.



- ***How should future growth be distributed throughout the settlements in the Plan area?***
- ***Does the existing settlement hierarchy reflect the various levels of settlement within the district or are there settlements that could be reclassified into different categories?***
- ***Where are there settlements or areas that could accommodate a higher level of growth and what is the justification for this view?***
- ***Where are there settlements or areas that do not have the capacity to maintain current levels of growth and what is the justification for this view?***
- ***Where are there under-used or derelict areas within existing settlements that have potential to accommodate new development?***

HOUSING

The Armagh Area Plan 2004 identified a total of approximately 180 hectares of land throughout a range of settlements as being suitable for new housing. Of this land some 85 hectares remain undeveloped.

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) sets a housing growth indicator of 4800 dwellings for the Armagh City & District Council Area for the period December 1998 – December 2015. To take account of the new Plan period, i.e. until 2018, this figure is increased on a pro-rata basis to 5650 dwellings. It should be noted that while this housing growth indicator figure is not open to change through the plan process, the distribution of growth within the district will be a function of the Plan. The Plan Proposals will therefore be based on this adjusted housing allocation of 5650 and, accordingly, a

preliminary housing allocation has been undertaken to enable this to be addressed at the Issues stage

It is essential that the allocation of housing across the Plan area be made in accordance with the prevailing regional policy context. In this respect the preliminary allocation process has been informed by a 'Broad Evaluation Framework' comprising a series of assessments and tests identified in the RDS for each of the settlements within the Plan Area. Details of these tests and the evaluation framework are attached as Appendix 3. In addition to the use of the 'Broad Evaluation Framework' a number of other considerations arising from specific requirements of the RDS are also important factors to be taken into account in the draft allocation.



Refurbished housing at Castle Street Armagh

The RDS requires that the amount of housing allocated to the principal towns in a plan area should reflect the need to reinforce their leading role. In particular, where there is evidence that a main town appears to be under-performing in its strategic role as the hub of activity, the need to achieve 'critical mass' could suggest an increased share of the housing potential relative to its current share of the district population.

Appendix 7 to the RDS – District Population Balance 1998 - indicates that the Armagh City share of the district population is 28%, well below the average for rural district towns in Northern Ireland. This low

share is confirmed by the 2001 census. It is, therefore, considered that a share of the housing allocation such as would significantly increase this population share would reflect the RDS objective of promoting the city's multi-functional role within the district and beyond.



St. Patricks Fold, Armagh

Following an initial broad allocation, first by category within the settlement hierarchy and then by individual settlements on the basis of the criteria outlined above, further adjustment has been considered necessary to arrive at the preliminary housing allocation. This has involved taking account of the number of housing units built in each settlement since the start of the RDS housing indicator period (December 1998) and the number of extant planning approvals, i.e. dwellings or sites that have a current planning approval but which have not yet been developed.

Preliminary housing growth allocations for Armagh City, the local towns and villages are as follows:

Armagh City	2000		
Local towns			
Keady	500	Tandragee	450
Markethill	300		
Villages			
Blackwatertown	75	Loughgall	45
Charlemont	35	Middletown	50
Darkley	35	Milford	95
Glenanne (Lisdrumchor)	20	Mountnorris	50
Hamiltonsbawn	175	Poyntzpass	100
Killylea	50	Richhill	120
Laurelvale/Mullavilly	275	Tynan	15

The framework upon which the Department has based this preliminary allocation is shown in Table 1.

All housing growth allocations suggested in this Issues Paper are preliminary. The final allocations will be informed by further detailed assessment during the next stage of the Plan preparation process and by consultation responses from the relevant statutory agencies. The detailed assessment will include studies on identified housing potential inside the built-up areas of the larger settlements, and on possible windfall housing through, for example, plot sub-division, urban infill and property conversion.

TABLE 1 - HOUSING ALLOCATION

Settlement	H'holds 2001	% share of district total	% share of settlement category	Allocation to settlement category	Evaluation Test score	Allocation to reflect Test score	Commitments (as at Aug 03)			Revised allocation to take account of commitments
							built	approved	total	
District Total	19560			5650 (100%)						
Armagh	5682	29.0%	100.0%	2000 (35.5%)	37	2000	591	322	913	2000
Local Towns	2874	14.5%		1100 (19.5%)						
Keady	1113		38.5%		33	440	175	110	285	500
Markethill	540		19.0%		34	220	81	140	221	300
Tandragee	1221		42.5%		32	440	126	18	144	450
Villages	2715	14.0%		1000 (17.5%)						
Blackwater town	141		5.0%		22	55	26	40	66	75
Charlemont	63		2.5%		25	35	0	0	0	35
Darkley	120		4.5%		20	35	0	0	0	35
Glenanne (L'chor)	57		2.0%		21	20	0	0	0	20
Hamiltonsbawn	201		7.5%		26	125	92	31	123	175
Killylea	93		3.5%		24	50	20	0	20	50
L'vale/Mullavilly	366		13.5%		27	250	108	122	230	275
Loughgall	120		4.5%		22	45	0	0	0	45
Middletown	69		2.5%		23	35	29	0	29	50
Milford	186		7.0%		24	95	47	8	55	95
Mountnorris	87		3.0%		26	50	0	0	0	50
Poyntzpass	129		4.5%		25	70	82	0	82	100
Richhill	1035		38.0%		22	120	42	35	77	120
Tynan	48		2.0%		15	15	0	0	0	15
Small Settlements	942	5.0%		300 (5.5%)			119	133	252	350
Rural Area	7347	37.5%		1250 (22%)						910 (16%)

It is considered that the constraints on the development of the village of Richhill are such that it does not warrant an allocation of housing growth relative to its existing size

Armagh City & District Council Area has a significant number of people living outside the larger towns and villages, in smaller settlements and the open countryside. The current rural planning policy as set out in the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland is the main mechanism for controlling development in the open countryside and will remain so. This rural planning policy context lies outside the remit of this plan.

The RDS states that judgements are required as part of the allocation process to achieve a complementary urban/rural balance to meet the need for housing in the main and local towns, and to meet the needs of the rural community living in the smaller settlements and the countryside. A portion of the housing growth indicator for the Armagh district is, therefore, allocated to the smaller settlements and open countryside to cater for the housing needs of the rural community. These housing needs will be met mainly by single dwellings within the smaller settlements or open countryside.

The preliminary housing allocation for the smaller settlements is 350 while that for the open countryside is 910.

Table 1 also indicates that the total number of houses already built, together with commitments approved, would make a significant contribution towards the overall preliminary housing allocation for settlements. In addition, a number of settlements have other land suitable for housing within their existing limits, including zoned sites.

Development of all of this land could exceed the preliminary housing allocation and, therefore, prejudice the ability of the plan to be in general conformity with the Regional Development Strategy. Furthermore, as plan preparation progresses additional commitments and the potential for more sustainable housing may arise. In such circumstances, the potential of prejudice to being in general conformity will be a material consideration in the determination of housing proposals.

Housing Needs

The Plan will take account of any local special housing needs that may be identified, for example, the need for social housing, accommodation for older people and for Travellers. Such needs may include references to specific settlements which could, in turn, have implications for their individual housing allocations.

Management of Housing Land

The RDS has introduced a Plan, Monitor and Manage approach to housing land supply in order to provide for more sustainable patterns of development and to assist regeneration. Housing zonings will be required to reflect the housing growth indicator set out for the district. In order to make the plan effective it will be necessary to monitor the take-up of land within the settlements and review progress on a regular basis.

Consideration of the points set out below will allow the management of the supply of housing land more effectively:-

- Adopting a sequential approach to site selection which promotes more housing within existing urban footprint areas;
- Phasing;
- Monitoring housing progress on a yearly basis;
- Reviewing housing land supply during the Plan period;
- Over zoning to be an exception, only acceptable where there is a potential land supply difficulty, and will be limited to a maximum of 10%;

Taken together these factors will produce a more closely controlled supply of housing land over the plan period and should also allow for flexibility in the more effective management of the supply of housing land.



- ***What are your views on the preliminary housing growth allocation (Table 1) as an appropriate spread of future housing growth throughout the district?***
- ***What other mechanisms might the Department use to actively encourage the efficient and orderly development of land for housing which focuses on the existing built-up areas?***

- ***How can the Plan address the need for special needs housing most effectively?***

INDUSTRY & COMMERCE

The Armagh Area Plan 2004 identified approximately 34 hectares of land within the main settlement of Armagh and the local towns of Keady, Markethill and Tandragee as being suitable for industrial development. Only some 2 hectares of this land has since been developed for industrial use with a further 5 hectares having been developed, or granted planning permission, for some other use.

The RDS places an onus on the Plan to ensure a generous and continuous supply of land for employment purposes. The Plan will seek to ensure that sufficient land is identified for industrial and commercial use to meet the likely demands of the public and private sector over the plan period, and to offer a good choice of site size and location.

In seeking to meet the need for new industrial and commercial sites the following factors will be considered:

- The level and nature of likely demand;
- Accessibility and the availability of transport services;
- Environmental impact;
- The availability of adequate infrastructure;
- The opportunity to exploit suitable local resources and labour markets;
- The equality of opportunity and the application of New TSN to target groups or areas that can be identified as deprived.



Edenaveys Industrial Estate



- ***How should industrial/commercial development be accommodated throughout the plan area?***
- ***Are there specific areas of land which are especially suitable or for which there is a demonstrable demand for industrial or business development?***
- ***Should specific industrial/commercial sites be designated in particular villages and small settlements throughout the plan area?***



Armagh Business Centre

GREEN BELTS & COUNTRYSIDE POLICY AREAS

Alteration No 1 to the Armagh Area Plan 2004 identified and designated a Green Belt surrounding Armagh City as well as a Countryside Policy Area extending eastwards from the Green Belt towards Portadown and Tandragee.

Green Belts provide long-term certainty that urban growth will not sprawl into the countryside. In doing so they protect the integrity of the countryside and the rural settings around settlements, while at the same time offering opportunities for outdoor recreation. A Green Belt may also prevent neighbouring towns and villages from merging and losing their distinctive identities.

Countryside Policy Areas apply similar planning policies to protect areas of countryside from development pressure in order to maintain their rural character and to protect the visual amenity of areas of landscape value.

Based partly on an analysis of development pressures, the Plan will, if necessary, re-define the extent of Green Belts and Countryside Policy Areas within the Armagh City & District. The policies that apply within these areas are currently contained in The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland and various Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and cannot be amended by the Plan.



Salters Grange

The existing Green Belt and Countryside Policy Area are shown on the map on page 9.



- ***Is the countryside within the Plan area afforded too much, too little or sufficient protection from development?***
- ***Should the extent of the current Green Belt and Countryside Policy Area boundaries be reduced in certain areas? If so, where and what would be the justification for this?***
- ***Should the extent of the current Green Belt and Countryside Policy Area boundaries be expanded in certain areas? If so, where and what would be the justification for this?***

CONSERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

A Countryside Assessment will be carried out to evaluate the assets and resources of the countryside, guiding the formation of plan policies and proposals. It will take account of those national and international designations, already determined outside the scope of the Plan, which protect the most valuable environments.

The Plan will also identify any local environmental features that should be considered for protection including:-

- Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance;
- Areas of Significant Archaeological Importance;
- Areas of Archaeological Potential;
- Local Landscape Policy Areas – areas within and adjoining settlements considered to be of greatest amenity value, landscape quality or local significance and, therefore, worthy of protection from inappropriate development;
- Riverside locations which are wildlife corridors and have amenity and recreational value;

- River flood plains where development can have adverse consequences;
- Significant mature trees and woodland.

The Plan area also has an equally rich built heritage with numerous listed buildings and three designated Conservation Areas in Armagh City, Loughgall and Richhill. The Plan will consider any potential extensions of these Conservation Areas or additional Conservation Areas, as well as the designation of Areas of Townscape Character and Areas of Village Character which merit protection and enhancement.



Clare



- ***Are there any areas or places that contain environmental features or important natural environments that would merit protection from inappropriate development through, for example, Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance or Local Landscape Policy Areas?***
- ***Are there other areas that would merit Conservation Area status?***
- ***Are there other elements of the built environment which would benefit from protection, for example identification of Areas of Townscape Character or Areas of Village Character?***

TRANSPORTATION

A change in travel culture and reduced dependency on the private car are both Government objectives. The Plan will be required to seek the integration and co-ordination of land use and transport planning. However, the dispersed pattern of living throughout the Plan area means that car and bus travel will continue to be an essential component of everyday life.

In order to inform the plan process Roads Service will commission a comprehensive Transport Study for the Plan area, including the preparation of a traffic model for Armagh City, which will provide detailed assessments on accessibility and parking throughout the district.



Armagh-Portadown road

The Plan area includes part of the main Eastern Seaboard Corridor Belfast – Dublin road and rail link identified in the RDS as part of the regional strategic transportation network. The RDS proposes strengthening this network, providing benefits including better public transport and a stronger regional economy.

Armagh City occupies a strategic location in the south of the region with good road connections to Dublin, Galway and the Irish Midlands. These links are important for the creation of an integrated sustainable transport network for the island of Ireland as a whole and could result in further economic development and additional employment generation in the city and district.



Railway at Poyntzpas

Other current transportation objectives include:

- The development of a road infrastructure to improve access and facilitate further economic development in the area;
- The development and promotion of alternative means of transportation;
- The enhancement of safety levels in urban areas for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists;
- The potential of the network of disused railway lines throughout the district.



- ***What opportunities exist in relation to the Plan area’s advantageous location on the main Eastern Seaboard strategic transportation corridor?***
- ***Are there any specific measures which could be taken to encourage the use of alternative forms of transport?***
- ***How should transportation policies influence the future location of development?***

WATER & SEWERAGE

The Department of Regional Development’s Water Service has plans for the upgrading of Seagahan and Clay Lake Water Treatment Works, for additional water storage space at the Edenaveys Service Reservoir and for a significant number of watermain extensions and replacements. It also has proposals for the major upgrading of Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTWs) at Armagh, Tandragee and Richhill..

A programme of studies involving computer analysis of the sewerage systems throughout the Armagh City & District is being carried out to identify the constraints on the existing system and the improvements to allow for future requirements. Programmed improvements should ensure that discharge standards will not be a constraint to settlement growth but there may be a need in the meantime to phase any new development with the upgrading of infrastructure to ensure compliance with relevant environmental legislation.



Clay Lake

The need to maintain water quality and the limited capacity of local waterways to receive treated effluent may impose constraints on the timing of development proposals that generate significant volumes of domestic or industrial process effluent. Local waterways may not only have limited capacity to receive treated effluent but also may have a limited ability to accept increased rates of stormwater run-off from areas of new development. Improvement works may, therefore, be necessary. Such improvement works, if proven viable, are dependent upon other competing priorities within the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development's Rivers Agency and this may be a factor in the timing of development in some circumstances.

Rivers Agency has identified the floodplain of the River Callan at Armagh City and Milford, and the floodplain of the Cushier River at Tandragee, as areas where the Plan must pay particular attention in relation to flooding.



- ***Are there any local issues with regard to Water and Sewerage, or other infrastructural matters, that the Plan could address?***
- ***Are there other areas within the district where development proposals may require special attention because of flooding?***

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) seeks to meet a number of key regional challenges as part of its Spatial Development Strategy, including the need to facilitate the development of education, health and commercial services, cultural and leisure amenities necessary to meet the needs of a growing population.



The Royal School, Armagh

Planning Service will work closely with the major providers of these services within the district to ensure that the Plan Proposals can accommodate the needs of each provider over the Plan period. These providers are the Southern Education & Library Board and Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, the Craigavon Area Hospital Group and the Armagh and Dungannon Health & Social Services Trust, and Armagh City & District Council.





- **What local issues are there in relation to the identification of land for education and community facilities within the district?**

TOURISM / RECREATION

Tourism within the Plan area is largely based on the historic city of Armagh. The city is identified within the Regional Development Strategy as a major tourism development opportunity. Armagh City is also located on the North West Passage Ireland, an internationally promoted inter-regional touring route running from Dublin, through counties Meath, Louth, Monaghan, Armagh and Tyrone, to Donegal.



Gosford Forest Park

The Ulster and Newry Canals are examples of the significant further tourism and recreational potential in the rural parts of the Plan area.

The role of the Plan will be to balance the protection of the natural and built heritage assets with the sensible use of those resources for tourist and recreational use.

The provision and maintenance of public recreation and open space is a function of Armagh City & District Council. The Plan will assess existing open space provision against the National Playing Fields Association standards and take account of any further Council proposals.



Benburb Valley Heritage Centre



- ***In addition to current provision what additional opportunities are there for developing sustainable recreation and tourism within the Plan area?***
- ***Are there particular locations within the Plan area that could be developed for tourist/recreation use?***

LOCATIONAL ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

This section deals with specific matters in relation to the Settlements and the Countryside.

THE MAIN URBAN CENTRE

ARMAGH

Based on census information Armagh City has experienced only modest growth over the last 30 years. The city's population increased by 3.8% between 1971 and 2001 from 13985 to 14517. During the same period the number of dwellings units in the city rose from 3534 to 5682, an increase in excess of 60%, reflecting a significant decline in the average number of persons per household.



Armagh City and District Council Offices, the Palace Demesne

Armagh City, identified in the RDS as a “main hub”, has an important regional role providing a wide range of services including education, health care, shopping and employment for its residents and those living within its rural hinterland. In recent years the residential growth experienced by the city has not always been matched by a similar level of economic, retail and commercial development. The city, however, has definite strengths and opportunities. It occupies a strategic location in the south of the region and embraces a significant cross-border dimension with good connections to the Irish Midlands, and to Galway and Dublin. It is within easy travelling time of the Region’s ports and airports and the major urban centres of Belfast, Lisburn, Newry and Craigavon.

Armagh City has the potential to develop further by utilising its city status and building on its strengths as a tourism, cultural and education centre.



The Mall

Existing Development Potential – Housing

The Armagh Area Plan 2004 estimated that the population of the city would grow from a 1991 figure of 14183 to around 16300 by 2004 and zoned approximately 100 hectares of land for residential use to accommodate this growth. Of this zoned land approximately 45 hectares remains undeveloped.



Armagh Observatory

The new Plan process will re-assess the potential of these areas of undeveloped zoned land along with the potential to redevelop existing sites within the urban area. This process will allow the Plan to strive to meet the RDS objective of locating 60% of new housing within existing urban areas with a population of 5000 or greater.



St. Marks Parish Church

Existing Development Potential – Industry

The Armagh Area Plan 2004 zoned approximately 22 hectares of land for industrial purposes in Armagh, of which 20 hectares remain undeveloped. 9 hectares of this land at Mullinure was identified as long-term industrial reserve. Its development depended on the provision of the proposed North Link and the alleviation of on-site flooding. The situation with this land at Mullinure remains unchanged. The need to identify adequate land to meet potential industrial development requirements of the city is an issue for the Plan to address.



Spires Retail Park



- ***How can the plan strengthen the role and function of Armagh City?***
- ***What capacity is there for the built-up area of Armagh to accommodate further residential development?***
- ***Where are the best locations for sustainable new housing in and around the city?***
- ***Are there particular areas of Armagh that might be considered for industrial or business use?***
- ***How can the Plan deal effectively with issues of traffic congestion, car parking and alternative means of transport within and around the city?***
- ***Is there a need for the main commercial area to be expanded?***
- ***Are there particular measures that could be taken to improve the quality of the city centre?***
- ***Are there opportunity sites within the city that could be redeveloped for a particular use or a range of uses?***
- ***Are current levels and locations of recreational open space in the city adequate and, if not, where might the city be best served by additional open space?***
- ***Is there a need to identify potential redevelopment sites within the urban area to accommodate a range of landuses and to aid the enhancement of the town centre?***

THE LOCAL TOWNS

There are three local towns within the Plan area, Keady, Markethill and Tandragee. These towns vary in size, form and function but they do have certain common features in that they act as local service centres for their resident population and their rural hinterland.

KEADY

Based on census information Keady has experienced only nominal growth in the 30 years since 1971 with its population increasing by 0.5% from 2822 to 2937. During the same period it is estimated that the number of dwellings in the town has grown from 758 to 1113, an increase of over 45%



Keady town centre

Existing Development Potential

The Armagh Area Plan 2004 estimated that the town would increase in population to approximately 4000 during the Plan period and zoned approximately 26 hectares of land for residential use. Of this zoned land approximately 10 hectares remain undeveloped. The potential of this remaining undeveloped land in the town will be re-assessed as part of the Plan process.

The 2004 Area Plan identified one site of 4.2 hectares for industrial development at Annvale Road, all of which remains undeveloped.

MARKETHILL

Based on census information Markethill has grown by 16% from 1971 to 2001 with its population increasing from 1109 to 1290. The number of dwellings in the town is estimated to have increased from 382 to 540 during the same period, a growth in excess of 40%. The town has experienced a higher rate of growth in more recent years, a trend that appears to have continued since 2001.

The town centre has benefited during the previous Plan period from significant private investment and from a series of regeneration initiatives, enhancing its role as a local service centre.



Markethill town centre

Existing Development Potential

The 2004 Plan estimated that Markethill would grow to a population of 1500 during the Plan period and zoned 15.3 hectares of housing land to accommodate this growth. Approximately 10 hectares of this zoned housing land remain undeveloped. The Armagh Area Plan 2018 will re-assess the potential of this undeveloped zoned land.

The 2004 Plan identified three areas of land totalling 2.1 hectares for industrial use in the town. One of these areas, at Fairgreen Road, has since been developed for commercial purposes and another at Green Road has been granted planning permission for residential use. The new Plan will re-assess the industrial potential of the remaining undeveloped zoned land and consider the requirement for additional industrial land.

TANDRAGEE

Based on census information Tandragee has seen significant growth since 1971 with its population increasing by almost 75% from 1725 to a 2001 figure of 3018. It is estimated that the number of dwellings in the town increased during the same period from 539 to 1221.



Tandragee

Existing Development Potential

The Armagh Area Plan 2004 estimated that the population of Tandragee would grow to 3500 during the Plan period and identified 29.7 hectares of land for residential use. Only some 12 hectares of this zoned land has since been developed leaving in excess of 17 hectares undeveloped. The housing potential of this undeveloped zoned land will be re-assessed by the new Plan process.

Two industrial sites with a total area of 6.0 hectares were identified in the 2004 Plan. A major portion of one of these sites has been granted planning permission for residential use and the new Plan will, therefore, re-assess all the undeveloped zoned land and consider the requirement for additional industrial land.

There are certain identified issues that are common to the local towns;



- ***What capacity is there for each of these towns to accommodate further residential development?***
- ***Where are the best locations for sustainable new housing in and around each town?***
- ***Are there particular areas of each town that might be considered for industrial or business use?***
- ***Are there opportunity sites within these towns that could be redeveloped for a particular use or a range of uses?***
- ***Are current levels and locations of recreational open space in each town adequate and, if not, where might each be best served by additional open space?***

VILLAGES & SMALLER SETTLEMENTS

Throughout the Plan area there are a significant number of villages and smaller settlements with wide ranging environmental characteristics and differing potential to accommodate future growth. These settlements have been experiencing and are likely to continue to experience differing levels of development.



Loughgall

The growth potential for each village has been assessed as part of the preliminary allocation process. With the exception of Richhill, the allocation has been determined broadly on the basis of the evaluation framework, the size of the existing settlement and the need for them to continue to develop in line with the district growth. In the case of Richhill a lesser allocation has been considered appropriate, reflecting the severe physical constraints on the village and the impact that further development would have on the surrounding landscape and environment.



Richhill

There are no specific housing growth allocations for individual small settlements. However, there is an allocation to the category of small settlements which should allow development of a scale appropriate to the size and sympathetic to the rural character of each small settlement.



- ***Are there particular villages or small settlements which have the capacity to sustain further growth?***
- ***Alternatively are there villages or small settlements where further development would damage the distinctive character of the settlement?***

- ***Richhill, Laurelvale/Mullavilly and Hamiltonsbawn have seen significant pressure from residential development in recent years. How should the plan seek to accommodate further new development and what would be its appropriate form and scale within these and the other villages?***
- ***What provision can be made for industrial/business uses within the villages and smaller settlements?***
- ***Are there any particular measures that could be taken to facilitate rural enterprise initiatives?***

THE COUNTRYSIDE

The Countryside forms a major part of the Plan Area. The agricultural industry continues to undergo substantial change but is still the primary source of employment throughout the rural area. The plan will recognise the importance of promoting a vibrant rural economy whilst retaining the intrinsic character, natural beauty and diversity of the rural area.

Factors of particular relevance to rural areas include:-

- * **Rural Housing**
Opportunities may exist to identify dispersed rural communities in areas outside Green Belts and Countryside Policy Areas, to assist the regeneration of the rural area. The settlement pattern of a dispersed rural community is one of single houses or clusters of houses that have developed over time in the countryside, close to a church, school or shop.



General countryside view

* **Public Transport**

Public transport has a significant contribution to make to the rural area by providing an attractive and more sustainable alternative to the private car.

* **Tourism**

Tourism makes an important contribution to the local rural economy and has the potential for future growth. It can also be of particular significance in the diversification of the rural economy.



- ***Are there any such dispersed rural communities within the Plan Area that should be identified?***
- ***What opportunities are there to enhance the role of public transport within the rural area?***
- ***What opportunities exist to further develop tourism within the rural area?***

NEXT STEPS

The second stage of the public and community consultation process will take place following publication of this Issues Paper. This will involve a series of events held throughout the Plan Area, at which Planning Service officials will meet with voluntary and community groups and individual members of the public to discuss any issues relevant to the plan. Representations that have been received to date have been recorded and will be considered in due course. Representations need not be re-submitted.

These events will be advertised in the local press and will be arranged and chaired by Community Technical Aid (CTA). Following the completion of the consultation process CTA will submit a final report to the Department presenting a collation of the views expressed during the various meetings.

Individual members of the public may also make written comments to be received no later than 30 July 2004. Public comment is invited on the particular issues raised in this paper or on any other issues, which might be considered relevant to the plan.

Written comments should be sent to:-
Armagh Area Plan Team
Craigavon Divisional Planning Office
Marlborough House
Central Way
Craigavon
BT64 1AD

Tel: (028) 3834 1144

Fax: (028) 3834 1065

E-mail: divisional.planning.office.craigavon@nics.gov.uk

All views expressed in writing by 30th July 2004 and those conveyed through the report of Community Technical Aid, together with representations received during the initial stages of the Plan review, and the comments of statutory consultees, including Armagh City & District Council, will be considered in the preparation of the Draft Area Plan.

Appendix 1

Glossary of Terms

Sustainable Development

During the past decade there have been a number of Government policy initiatives of fundamental importance to development plan preparation. The United Kingdom has embraced the principle of sustainable development based on stewardship of the environment and has widened the concept to embrace economic and social considerations. Development to satisfy the requirements of today's society should not compromise the potential for future generations to satisfy theirs. Consequently, development plan policies and proposals will be subject to Strategic Environmental Appraisal. This means proposals for new development will be assessed against the availability of supporting infrastructure and the ability of the environment to support the proposal.

Housing Quality

It is Government policy to improve the quality of new housing developments. A ministerial announcement in January 1996 introduced the Quality Initiative to Northern Ireland. This announcement has been followed by the publication of "Creating Places" in May 2000 and Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7), Quality Residential Environments in June 2001, which together confirm the Department's commitment to this Initiative. This initiative establishes the principle that the quality of a housing scheme is as important as zoning when assessing development proposals. A scheme consistent with the Quality Initiative will be designed to make best use of its surroundings, to have a sense of identity and distinctiveness, to show a variety and contrast in its layout, house types, orientations and finishes. Housing developments will also be required to contribute appropriate sustainability features, for example, movement patterns accommodating public transport, cycling and walking or the creation of wildlife habitat.

Existing Urban Areas/Urban Footprint

These may be defined as the continuous built-up area of settlement as at January 2001. The boundary is represented by an uninterrupted line, often lying inside the planned settlement limit, and contains land which has a formal urban use.

Greenfield Sites

This term refers to previously undeveloped lands outside the existing urban areas/urban footprints of towns, villages and other small settlements. Greenfield sites are in most cases agricultural lands at the edge of settlements.

Appendix 2

Existing Settlements

Main Urban Centre:-	Armagh City	
Local Towns:- Markethill	Keady	Tandragee
Villages:-	Blackwatertown Charlemont Darkley Glananne (Lisdrumchor) Hamiltonsbawn Killylea Laurelvale/Mullavilly	Loughgall Middletown Milford Mountnorris Poyntzpass Richhill Tynan
Small Settlements:-	Acton Aghory Annaghmore Annaghmore (Moss Road) Annahugh Ardress Artasooley Aughlish Ballymacnab Broomhill Carrickaness Cladymore Clare Collegeland Derryhale Derrynoose Derryscollop Drumhillery	Edenaveys Eglis Glananne Granemore Kilmore Lisnadill Loughgilly Madden Milltown (Aghory) Milltown (B'urb) Mullaghbrack Salters Grange St Mary's Terrace Stonebridge Tassagh Tullygoonigan Tullyroan Corner

Appendix 3

Evaluation Framework Tests

Resource Test	The existence of community assets and infrastructure, including spare capacity.
Environmental Capacity Test	The environmental setting of the settlement and it's potential to accommodate future 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.

**APPENDIX 3
ARMAGH AREA PLAN 2018
EVALUATION TEST SCORES**

Settlement	Resource Test	Environmental Capacity Test	Transport Test	Economic Development Test	Urban & Rural Character Test	Community Services Test	Social Equity Test	Score
Armagh	H	L	H	H	M	H	H	37
Keady	M	M	M	M	H	M	L	33
Markethill	M	M	M	H	M	M	M	34
Tandragee	M	M	L	H	M	M	L	32
Blackwatertown	L	L	L	EL	M	L	L	22
Charlemont	L	L	L	M	L	L	H	25
Darkley	EL	L	L	L	M	EL	M	20
Glenanne (L'chor)	EL	M	O	L	M	EL	M	21
Hamiltonsbawn	L	M	L	M	M	L	EL	26
Killylea	L	M	L	EL	L	L	L	24
L'vale/Mullavilly	L	M	L	M	M	L	L	27
Loughgall	L	L	L	M	L	L	EL	22
Middletown	L	L	M	EL	M	L	L	23
Milford	L	L	M	EL	L	L	H	24
Mountnorris	L	M	L	L	L	L	M	26
Poyntzpass	L	L	L	L	M	L	H	25
Richhill	L	EL	M	M	M	L	EL	22
Tynan	EL	EL	EL	EL	L	EL	M	15
High (H) -	4 points							
Medium (M) -	3 points							
Low (L) -	2 points							
Extremely Low (EL) -	1 point							
Zero (O) -	0 points							

Weighting - Resource & Environmental Capacity tests considered to warrant a scoring of 3 times the other tests

