

ARMAGH AREA PLAN 2018

Strategic Topic Research Summary Report

To be read in conjunction with the
Armagh Area Plan 2018 - Issues Paper



An Agency within the Department of the

Environment

www.doen.gov.uk

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	2
2	EDUCATION, HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES	3-5
3	TOURISM	6-8
4	PUBLIC SERVICE AND UTILITIES	9-13
5	INDUSTRY	14-16
6	TRANSPORT	17-20
7	RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE	21-22
8	MINERALS	23-24
9	RETAILING	25
10	POPULATION AND HOUSING	26-35
11	CONSULTATION	36

1. Introduction

This report is the summary report of the strategic topic research for the Armagh Area Plan 2018 carried out by Planning Service Headquarters' Development Plan Section and should be read in conjunction with the [Armagh Area Plan 2018 Issues Paper](#) published in April 2004. The research to inform the plan is on going as the plan moves through the various stages and, therefore, this should not be viewed as a definitive report. The definitive position will be set out in the Technical Supplements for the Draft Plan, in due course.

The purpose of this report is to set out the initial findings of the research that informed the preparation of the Armagh Area Plan 2018 Issues Paper. It is also intended that the Summary Report will be used to inform and facilitate meaningful public and community consultations on the Issues Paper. While all of this research has been taken into account in the preparation of Issues paper, it should be recognised that some aspects of the research are more directly relevant than others.

Nothing in this document should be read as a commitment that public resources will be provided for any specific project. All proposals for expenditure will be subject to economic appraisal, other relevant assessments and will also have to be considered having regard to the overall availability of resources.

The bulk of the research is based on two main sources:

- Consultation with statutory and non-statutory bodies; and
- Research carried out by officers within HQ Development Plan Section.

The research dealt with in this report covers the following topics:

- Education, Health & Community Services
- Tourism
- Public services and Utilities
- Industry
- Transportation
- Recreation and Open Space
- Minerals
- Retailing
- Population and Housing
- Consultation

2. EDUCATION, HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Education

Responsibility for the provision of education facilities in the Armagh area rests with the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB). The area is also served by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). The Department of Education retains overall authority for education policy and finance.

Nursery Sector

There are 7 controlled and maintained nursery schools in the plan area. These provided a total of 259 places in the period 2002/03. All units are more or less operating to capacity.

Primary Sector

There are 46 primary schools in the Plan area (23 controlled schools, 22 maintained schools and 1 integrated schools). Enrolments in this sector are down by 11% from 6,557 in 1991 to 5,865 in 2002. This comprises a drop in enrolments for controlled and maintained schools, however, both voluntary and integrated enrolments are up. Based on enrolment levels at 2002 there is 35% spare capacity over all sectors, with the most capacity being in controlled and maintained schools. Spare capacity in controlled primary schools is fairly evenly distributed, however, most spare capacity in the maintained sector is found in the towns.

Post Primary Sector

There are 8 secondary schools in the plan area, 6 being located in Armagh City (3 controlled schools, 2 maintained schools and 3 voluntary schools). Enrolments in this sector are up by 8% from 4,646 in 1991 to 5,010 in 2001. Both maintained secondary and voluntary grammar schools experienced an increase in enrolments whilst the controlled secondary sector showed a decrease over the 1991 figure of 8%. There is spare capacity in both controlled and maintained sectors with the voluntary sector being over sub-scribed by 42 places (3% of approved capacity).

Other Educational Sectors

Controlled Special School Enrolments have increased by 76% from 54 in 1991 to 95 in 2002. Total enrolments in Further Education have increased by 100% from 3,050 in 1993 to 6,098 in 2002. This comprises a 137% increase in the part-time sector and 29% in the full-time sector. The Queen's University, Armagh Campus, opened in 1995 and offers part time courses with annual enrolments in the region of 300 – 450 students. The future of the campus is under review.

Library Service

The Library Service has 5 branch libraries in the Plan area, 2 in Armagh and 1 each in Keady, Richhill and Tandragee.

Future Proposals

Controlled Schools: There are currently no proposals for new schools or closures. However, this will be subject to review over the period of the plan.

Maintained Schools: The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools have informed us that the Trustees currently have a Development Proposal published to provide Co-educational Primary Provision in Mount St Catherine's Primary School and Christian Brother Primary School, both in Armagh City.

Integrated Schools: There is currently a proposal for an Integrated College before the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education with a capacity of 500 places. The Valuations and Lands Agency (VLA) is currently undertaking a site search.

Special Schools: St Joseph's Adolescent Centre in Middletown is to be acquired from the St Louis Order for the establishment of an all-Ireland centre of excellence for autism education. This is a joint north/south venture, which is being funded by both Education Departments.

Health Services

The Southern Health and Social Services Board (SHSSB) is currently responsible for assessing the health and social care needs of people living within Armagh City and District. The main providers of services to meet those needs are the Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust and the Craigavon Area Hospital HSS Trust. Some services are also provided by the Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust and the Newry and Mourne HSS Trust.

Acute Hospital Services

Although outside Armagh City and District, Craigavon Area Hospital is the main provider of acute services for the Plan area.

Other Hospital Services

Local hospital services are provided by four hospitals in Armagh City:

- St Luke's Hospital – mental health care
- Mullinure Hospital – care for the elderly
- Longstone Hospital – services for clients with learning disabilities
- Armagh Community Hospital – provides a range of outpatient clinics.

Future Proposals

The hospitals in Armagh will remain central to the Health Care Services during the plan period. The change in emphasis from long-stay provision to community care provision will continue and this will be evidenced by further developments of community living options for long-stay patients from St Luke's and Longstone Hospitals. There will be an on-going emphasis on these sites in relation to re-profiling Acute and Intensive Care Services. The Trust sees a continuing role for the services provided in Armagh Community Hospital and a growth of service commissioning and provision around Primary Health Care Developments.

Community Services and Facilities

Armagh City & District Council is the main public body responsible for providing or facilitating community facilities.

Existing Community Centres

Armagh District Council owns 5 Community Centres, mostly located in the main towns:

- (a) Armagh City 2
- (b) Keady 1
- (c) Tandragee 1
- (d) Richhill 1

Eight Community Centres are community owned and are mostly located in the villages and rural area.

Future Proposals

According to Armagh City & District Council there are no current plans for new facilities or closures within the Plan area.

The council will continue to act as a provider of community facilities but will place a greater emphasis on its role as an enabler assisting community groups who are willing to take the initiative to provide and manage community facilities in their area, by providing grants toward capital expenditure. The Council will not become involved in assisting organisations with running/maintenance costs. The advantage of adopting this approach will be greater community involvement in the ownership of and responsibility for the provision and management of community facilities.

The Council has launched the **Community Centre Facilities in Armagh City and District Policy Document** to encourage and enable local community organisations to establish community facilities.

3. TOURISM

The promotion, facilitation and development of tourism in Northern Ireland is spread amongst a number of bodies (key players).

Key Players

The key players within Tourism are as follows:

Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB)

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) is a non-departmental public body and one of four agencies within the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) with responsibility for the development, promotion and domestic marketing of Northern Ireland as a tourist destination.

District / Borough Councils

Within Northern Ireland, District and Borough Councils play an important statutory role in tourism development. In particular the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 1972 gave the councils additional functions including:

- Responsibility for the attraction of tourists to their respective areas;
- Responsibility for the provision of advisory and information service in these areas; and
- Responsibility for the provision and maintenance of each area's tourist amenities and services.

Tourism Ireland Limited (TIL)

As part of the Good Friday Agreement, tourism was designated as an area for co-operation under the North/South Ministerial Council. It was agreed that a publicly owned limited company would be established jointly by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Bord Failte to carry out functions aimed at promoting tourism. Tourism Ireland Limited has taken over responsibility for the international marketing of the island as a tourist destination.

Invest Northern Ireland (INI)

Invest Northern Ireland was created as a result of a review of DETI agencies. INI has taken over funding the tourist accommodation development role previously carried out by NITB and will bring greater integration of government business support service to the tourism sector.

Tourism in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is becoming an increasingly popular tourist destination, generating millions of pounds of revenue for the local economy and a substantial amount of jobs. Tourism spend in Northern Ireland has almost doubled since 1991, with £270m being spent in 2001.

The key market for visitors to Northern Ireland is still Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland with fewer visitors coming from Europe and America. There has also been a steady increase in the numbers of visitors (in terms of trips) to Northern Ireland in recent years:

1996 - 1,436,000

2001 - 1,676,000

Visiting friends and family is the most popular reason for travelling to Northern Ireland, with 590,000 in 1996 and 773,000 in 2001.

The Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak undoubtedly has had a significant detrimental effect on tourism in Northern Ireland in recent years. The commonly termed 9/11 terrorist incident in New York has also had a detrimental impact on local tourism. Country parks and forest parks have consistently been by far the most popular types of tourist attraction in N.I., generating 38% of the total number of visitors in 2001.

Tourism in Armagh City and District Council Area

The Armagh area has many tourist attractions and a wealth of natural and built heritage to offer visitors. The table below shows the number of visitors to key attractions in the Armagh Area and how they have performed between 1991 and 2004 (figures are not available for some of the attractions).

Gosford Forest Park has been the most popular attraction in terms of visitor numbers. The closure of the Navan Centre at the Navan Fort facility has resulted in a fall off in visitor numbers. Other attractions have also waned in popularity, most notably the Armagh Planetarium.

Table 1: Tourism in Armagh City and District

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Benburb Valley Park	70000	70000	72000	60000	60000	60000	55000	50000	30000	20000	19000
Gosford Forest Park	46029	55592	65238	73630	86600	113700	123700	77000	103000	90000	60100
Navan Centre			31257	60000	65500	49268	40028		37565		
Dan Winter Ancestral Home					6500	1500	1500	1600	1500	2000	1612
Armagh County Museum	24252	21717	21817	13657	18396	15205	7632	12547	14735	12357	15880
Armagh Planetarium	32665	38303	54963	38941	99923	49459	47300	38620	45646	26242	6079
Armagh Public Library			1000	276	2535	2160	1065	720	1611	150	100
Armagh Ancestry			2100	4086	6037	5390	5988	5600	5750	4200	1865
Palace Stables		15000	18500	35000	32723	28500	31009	38983	39566	39459	37805
St. Patrick's Train			11565	60000	57027	49396	48327	51115	43919	37761	40100
St. Patrick's Cathedral					15000	14800	16200	13744	10000	10000	4000

(Source: Northern Ireland Tourist Board)

Accommodation provision in the Armagh Plan area is quite low with 2 hotels, 2 guesthouses, 18 B&B's, 2 self-catering and 1 youth hostel, providing a total of 550 bed spaces.

There may, therefore, be potential for more tourist accommodation within the plan area. However, the recent development of the Armagh City Hotel has been a significant boost to Armagh tourist accommodation and the hospitality industry as a whole, providing many jobs and revenue for the area.

In 2001 it is estimated that the tourism spend for Armagh District was £3.5 million and provided an estimated 180 jobs in the District. In 1998 it is estimated that the tourism spend was £2.7 million and provided an estimated 144 jobs. Tourism revenue and trips peaked around 1995/96 in the Armagh District and declined to a low in 1998/99 but have since increased albeit at a slow rate. This broadly reflects the general NI trend.

Armagh Tourism Initiatives

Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative (NRRT)

A special initiative within the European Union's PEACE II Programme to help Northern Ireland's disadvantaged rural areas take advantage of the particular opportunities that are presented by their natural resources to develop their tourism potential in the context of greater political stability.

South Armagh Tourism Initiative (SATI)

A local partnership incorporating Local Government, Community, Tourism, Environment and Public Sector interests, which aims to provide the following:

- Support for the provision of training and technical support for practical visitor management initiatives.
- Development of sustainable tourism infrastructure and activities.
- Tourism related business.
- Environmental and visitor management initiatives
- Marketing Initiatives

Northern Ireland Centre for Learning Resources

A project group set up by Armagh City and District Council and Department of Education through the European Regional Development Fund, who work in partnership with Southern Education and Library Board and the Environment and Heritage Service. Collectively they strive to educate students of geography, travel and tourism about the Council area. They examine issues of heritage conservation, uses of listed buildings, tourism and conservation and the marketing of heritage assets.

Conclusions

Armagh's attractions appeal to the 'niche market' of heritage tourism through their historical, archaeological and architectural nature.

Despite the negative impacts of FMD and international terrorism, it appears that tourism spending and visitor numbers are improving. If the vast potential of the area is tapped successfully, tourism could make a substantial contribution to the local economy and other economic sectors, such as construction and retailing.

There are also indications that Armagh is perceived as an overnight destination for many visitors from the Republic of Ireland, this is certainly an opportunity for those involved in Armagh tourism to further develop the sector.

4. PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

The matters covered in this section have regard to water supply, waste-water treatment, telecommunications and energy supply. The Information is based upon consultation responses received from various organisations including the following bodies:

- Water Service
- Rivers Agency
- Environment and Heritage Service
- Northern Ireland Electricity.

Water and Sewerage

The responsibility for the provision of water and sewerage service facilities in the proposed Area Plan currently falls to the Southern Division of the Water Service.

Water – proposed works.

There are a large number of watermain extensions and replacements planned in the Capital Works Programme, costing in the region of £1.5m.

Planned upgrading of 2 Water Treatment Works(WTW) to ensure compliance with EU standards:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------|----------------------|
| • Seaghan WTW | £3,250K | At feasibility stage |
| • Clay Lake WTW | £ 830K | In design stage |

Additional water storage space planned at the Edenaveys Service Reservoir costing £690K, this is at the design stage.

Sewerage – proposed works.

There are a large number of sewer extensions and replacements in the Capital Works Programme.

There are 3 major Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) schemes planned or under consideration:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| • Tandragee WWTW upgrade | £1630K | Design Stage |
| • Armagh WWTW upgrade | £1200K | Feasibility stage |
| • Richhill WWTW Replace | £1710K | Feasibility stage |

The Urban Pollution Management initiative

A programme of studies involving computer analysis of the sewerage systems in the Armagh and Richhill Drainage Areas is being carried out. The object is to identify the constraints on the sewerage system and propose improvements to allow for future requirements.

Rivers and Flood Risk

Rivers Agency's role is to advise Planning Service on the implications of development proposals on drainage and flood defence issues, in respect of both

Development Plan and Development Control. Current advice, in accordance with its Policy for the protection of Floodplains in Relation to Development, is that development or infilling of floodplains should be restricted to those areas lying above the 1 in 100 year event flood level.

In response to growing public concerns, supported by evidence of serious flooding in recent years in Great Britain, Rivers Agency has produced guidelines for the protection of floodplains in relation to development. Rivers Agency recognises the likelihood of an increased risk to life and damage to property arising from inappropriate floodplain development and consequential flooding. These guidelines assist Planning Service in vetting planning applications with floodplain considerations and will offer practical advice to staff when dealing with development issues in flood risk areas.

Rivers Agency has identified two locations where Planning issues may need particular attention in relation to flooding:

- The River Callan floodplain, especially in Armagh City/Millford, continues to be contentious in relation to existing developments and possible future proposals. In the recent past, Rivers Agency has been involved in a number of floodplain related planning appeals in this locality.
- The Cusher River floodplain, and in particular at Tandragee, is another area where development pressures could potentially create problems.

Water Management and Water Quality

Under the Water (NI) Order 1999, Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) has a duty to promote the conservation of the water resources of Northern Ireland and the cleanliness of water in waterways and underground strata. In performing this duty, Water Management Unit (WMU) must have regard to the needs of industry and agriculture, the protection of fisheries, the protection of public health, the preservation of amenity and the conservation of flora and fauna.

Other legislation relating to the EHS and water management issues includes the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC).

In 2002, the Water Quality Unit (WQU) of the EHS Water Management Unit identified the discharge from the Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) at Armagh and Tandragee as having a high environmental impact on the receiving water. This situation is to be addressed under the Water Service Capital Works Programme, however, there may be implications for the Area Plan in terms of the extent and phasing of potential development.

The EHS Water Management Unit will be consulted during the preparation of the Area Plan, particularly regarding land use zoning and phasing, in order to obtain comments about any water management and water quality issues associated with all settlements within the Plan area.

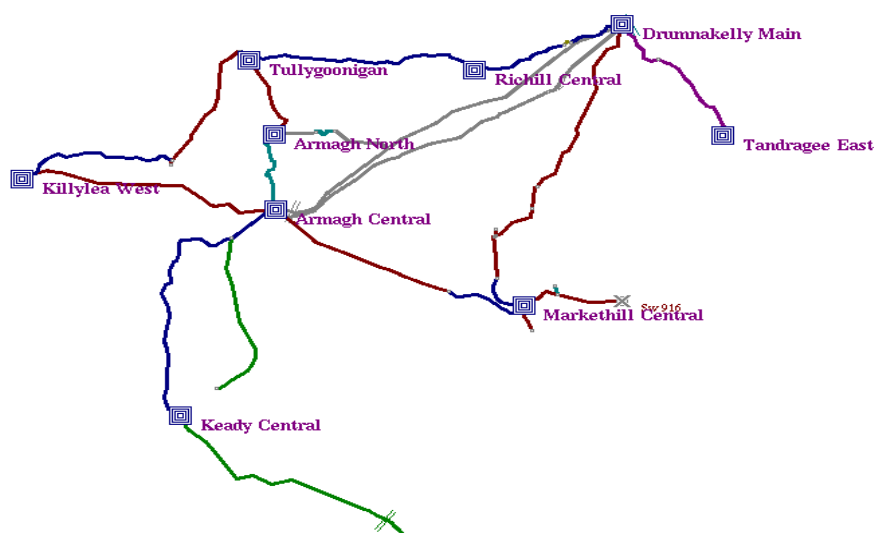
Electricity

Existing infrastructure

Eight 33/11kV substations supply the Armagh City and District Council area. These substations are located at Armagh city (known as Armagh North and Central), Keady, Killylea, Markethill, Tullygoonigan, Richhill and Tandragee.

The main 33kV network that supplies the area, see Figure 1, consists of a four-line system from the 110/33kV bulk supply substation at Drumnakelly Main, near Portadown.

Electricity Figure 1 – Main 33kV network in the Armagh City & District Council Area



Future developments

The existing system was reinforced in the mid 1990s and it is considered that at some stage in the future a new 110/33kV substation would be required near to Armagh City (optimum location Armagh Central).

The timing of this will depend on the level of industrial, commercial and housing development in the area. It is expected that the 33/11kV transformers at Tandragee East will reach firm capacity in the next few years and will require either changing or other means of limiting the demand.

The transformers at Armagh Central are within 15% of firm capacity but due to the relatively low level of existing demand growth it is not expected that these will require to be changed, unless there is significant development.

The other transformers appear to have sufficient capacity for the foreseeable future. The 11kV and low voltage networks in the area will continue to be developed as and when required.

At the transmission level there are three 110kV main circuits from Tandragee to Drumnakelly Main that are subject to congestion. Plans are in place however to reinforce this with the construction of a new 275/110kV grid supply substation in Tyrone.

Natural Gas

BGE (Northern Ireland) has been awarded a Natural Gas Conveyance Licence to construct a pipeline to convey natural gas between Gormanstown (north of Dublin) and Coolkeeragh Power Station (outskirts of Londonderry). The construction of this pipeline will be executed in two phases:

- 1. North West Pipeline.** (Will not impact upon Armagh City and District Council area).
- 2. South/North Pipeline.**
The intended route of this phase has yet to be established, but the conceptual corridor through the Council area is currently between Armagh City and Banbridge and south of Portadown.

The proposed South/North pipeline, together with any secondary and tertiary distribution systems may have significant implications for land use in parts of the Plan area. Matters are at an early stage and further site specific consultation is likely to take place as the Plan progresses.

Other Infrastructure Issues

Telecommunications

British Telecom primarily provides fixed telecommunications within the Plan Area. In recent years significant growth of mobile telecommunications has occurred. Four providers currently operate second-generation networks, namely Vodafone, O₂, T-Mobile and Orange.

During the Plan period further growth in telecommunications infrastructure is anticipated particularly to accommodate the introduction of new digital broadband technology.

Any implications of this for the Plan are minimal. The issue will be largely dealt with through the development control process.

Renewable energy

United Kingdom targets have been set for 5% of licensed electricity supplies to be generated from renewable sources by 2005 and 10% by 2010. Northern Ireland is required to contribute to the achievement of those targets. Presently, there are no major suppliers of renewable energy operating within the Plan area.

Given the Government's targets for production of electricity from renewable sources, the present situation of a dearth of renewable energy suppliers in the area could markedly change over the Plan period.

However, any implications of this for the Plan are minimal. The issue will be largely dealt with through the development control process.

Waste Management

The Waste Management Strategy for Northern Ireland (WMS), was published in March 2000, and establishes the framework for the substantial action required to change waste management practices in Northern Ireland. The key aim of the WMS is to achieve fully sustainable waste management through controlled reduction in landfill, waste minimisation and a significant increase in waste recycling and recovery. It provides a framework for the preparation by District Councils of Waste Management Plans (WMPs) under Article 23 of the Waste and Contaminated Land Order (Northern Ireland) 1997.

The Southern Waste Management Partnership (SWaMP) is a voluntary grouping of eight local authorities of which Armagh City and District Council is an integral part. The SWaMP Waste Management Plan, prepared under Article 23 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997, sets out key objectives and actions for meeting the new challenges for sustainable waste management. It identifies a number of precise needs for infrastructure provision, including sites within the Armagh area. This includes options for minimising and reducing waste, and the sub-regional capacity and facilities required to reuse, recycle, compost, recover and dispose of waste. The Waste Management Plan is agreed between and monitored by SWaMP and the EHS Waste Management and Contaminated Land Unit.

Armagh City and District Council manages 25,009 tonnes of municipal waste and 20,685 tonnes of household waste. The Council has 14 No. recycling centres. Three of these – Armagh Recycling Centre, Markethill Recycling Centre and Keady Recycling Centre – provide facilities for the disposal of a variety of wastes. At the remaining eleven centres, there are facilities for the disposal of glass and cans. A Green Waste Recycling Centre is proposed for Acton.

Waste management issues, which may be relevant for the Area Plan, therefore, include strategic requirements for a large number of new facilities, new types of facility and new technologies and pilot schemes to meet the step change in waste management identified through the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy and SWaMP Waste Management Plan.

5. INDUSTRY

The information presented here was primarily sourced from Invest Northern Ireland and DETI. Planning histories were prepared and site inspections undertaken by Planning Service during the summer of 2003.

Economic activity 1971 – 2001

The number and percentage of economically active persons in Armagh City and District has steadily increased from 17,768 (55%) in 1971 to 22,383 (59%) in 2001. This pattern has been broadly in line with the Northern Ireland wide pattern.

Trends in Unemployment

In Northern Ireland the level of unemployment doubled from 8% to 17% between 1971 and 1981 and remained at the high-level of 16% in 1991 but in 2001 had dropped back to 7%. Unemployment in Armagh exceeded N. Ireland's average for the 1971 period slightly, it was parallel in 1981 and slightly less than the N. Ireland average for both 1991 and 2001.

Employment by Sector

There are three main sectors of employment: Primary, secondary and tertiary. Examples of the Primary sector include food production and the extraction of natural resources. Examples of the Secondary sector include manufacturing and the processing of natural resources. Examples of the Tertiary sector include the production and distribution of many forms of energy, transportation, communications, banking, finance, insurance and other services.

In 2001 16% of employment in Armagh City and District is in the Primary sector, 14% in the Secondary sector and 69% in the Tertiary Sector. While this is broadly comparable with the Northern Ireland average, the Primary sector fares a little better in Armagh, perhaps reflecting the agricultural strength of the district.

Industrial Land

A number of settlements within the Plan area had land zoned for industry in the existing Area Plan and the particulars are noted below. A small proportion of this zoned land is owned and operated by Invest Northern Ireland (INI) along with some other land not zoned.

Armagh City

The current Armagh Area Plan 2004 zoned 21.9 hectares of land for industry, distributed as follows:

- 1 site at Loughgall Road (4.4ha)
- 1 site at Mullinure Lane (9.0ha)
- 1 site at Edenaveys Road (8.5ha)

Of this zoned land 2.1 hectares has been developed up to now, at Edenaveys, leaving approximately 19.8 hectares remaining free for further development.

Tandragee

The current Armagh Area Plan 2004 zoned 6.0 hectares of land for industry, distributed as follows:

- 1 Site at Gilford Street (1.7ha)
- 1 Site at Glebe Hill Road (4.3 ha)

No industry has started on either of these sites.

Keady

The current Armagh Area Plan 2004 zoned 4.2 hectares of land for industry at Annvale Road in Keady. No industry has started on this site, although two dwellings occupy part of the zoned land, leaving approximately 3.25 hectares free for industrial development.

Markethill

The current Armagh Area Plan 2004 zoned 2.1 hectares of land for industry, distributed as follows:

- 2 Sites at Green Road (0.9 ha. to the west and 0.5 ha. to the east)
- 1 site at Fair Green Road (0.7ha)

No industrial development has taken place at the zoned sites, although a furniture showroom occupies most of the Fair Green Road site.

0.6 hectares has been developed at Fair Green Road, leaving approximately 0.1 hectares free for further development.

Richhill

The current Armagh Area Plan 2004 did not zone any land for industry in Richhill.

General Conclusions

Future INI Industrial Land Provision

Initial comments from Invest Northern Ireland (INI) indicate that there is a fairly high demand for more industrial land owned by them within the City and District. INI points out that they have little land left and are currently investigating the possibility of purchasing additional land at Edenaveys Industrial Estate. Added to this, the Enterprise Agency is full at the moment and they are actively considering buying more land to extend their existing premises.

Other Industrial Land Zonings

The picture is reversed in relation to other zoned land. Currently in the area covered by the proposed Armagh Area Plan, there are 33.80 hectares of land zoned for industry. From those areas collectively, there remains approximately 30.00 hectares of land undeveloped, which is 86% of the total industrial land zoned.

While there is some demand for land owned by Invest Northern Ireland, by far the greater proportion of land zoned for industry in the 2004 Armagh Area Plan remains undeveloped.

6. TRANSPORTATION

The matters covered in this section have regard to roads, car parking, cycling and public transport. The Information is based upon consultation responses received from various organisations including the following bodies:

- Roads Service
- Translink
- DRD Transportation Unit

It is important to note that a comprehensive Transportation Study will be carried out by consultants, on behalf of Roads Service, to inform the Draft Plan. This will contain much more detailed and up to date information than is provided here and will include a parking study, an accessibility study and the preparation of a traffic model of the Armagh urban area.

Roads

There are no major transportation routes within the plan area as outlined in the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), however, the Armagh area is connected to the South Western Transport Corridor by the A3 and A29 link corridors, and to the Eastern Seaboard Transport Corridor by the A28 link corridor and the A27 trunk road.

The protected routes within the plan area as identified by Roads Service are:

- A3 Portadown Road
- A3 Monaghan Road
- A28 Newry Road
- A29 Moy Road
- A51 Tandragee Road
- A27 Poyntzpass Road

Proposed Roads Schemes

Major Works Construction Programme

There are no schemes currently under construction within the Armagh Plan Area.

Major Works Preparation Pool

There are no high priority schemes within the preparation pool relating to the Armagh Plan Area.

Major Works Forward Planning Schedule (10 Years)

Following the publication of the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN) plan the scheme below is under consideration for inclusion in the Department's 10 year Forward Planning Schedule, which is due to be completed shortly:

- A3 Armagh North and West Link Road – this will provide a 3.8km single carriageway link road.

Note: the East Link proposal along the A28 (a scheme that will link Newry Road with Portadown Road including a major junction at Hamiltonsbawn Road), has not at this stage been included within the emerging RSTN plan.

Car Parking

There are 12 public off-street car parks located within the Armagh Plan Area providing a total of 966 spaces.

Most of the car parks are located within Armagh City Centre which has a total of 801 spaces, 485 of which are free. There are however, an additional 130 available spaces at the Trian Centre, Theatre and Town Hall car parks in Armagh City. The public car parks in Keady and Tandragee are free.

Roads Service Car Park Survey 2002/03

On-Street parking

Roads Service, estimate that there are 1072 on street parking spaces in central Armagh City. Most of the spaces are free and unrestricted. There is currently no on-street parking information for the settlements of Keady, Markethill and Tandragee, however, this may become available through the forthcoming Transportation Study.

Public Car Parks

For Armagh City the survey reveals that most of the car parks are well utilised at peak times. The busiest 2 car parks in Armagh City, with 97% and 96% peak level of usage respectively, are Friary Road West and the Court House.

The least used car park in Armagh, with only 30% peak level of usage, is the Ex Surgery car park, Dobbin St Lane. The 3 car parks in Keady are less well used: Cow Fair 16%, Kinelowen Street 21% and Glen Road 30%.

Sinton Park in Tandragee is 60% full at peak level of usage. Currently we are not aware of any proposals for new public car parks in the Plan area.

Cycling

With the development of the Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy (June 2000) and the staged implementation of the National Cycle Network, significant progress is being made towards improving facilities for cyclists in Northern Ireland.

The Cycling Strategy is made up of a number of 'Planned Actions' which a number of organisations are responsible for delivering. One of the key actions for Planning Service is 'Planning for Sustainable Access'. To achieve this Planning Service has agreed to:

- publish cycle parking standards for new developments;
- ensure that cycling is adequately addressed in future planning policy publications, development plans and guidance documents;
- ensure adequate provision is made for cycling in new residential developments.

The National Cycle Network (NCN)

Throughout the region has a total proposed length of over 1,400 kilometres of which 848 kilometres have been constructed to date. A section of the NCN

traverses the plan area. To encourage and develop cycle networks the RDS aims to support the implementation of the Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy.

Public Transport

Ulster Bus Services

Ulsterbus is the main provider of bus passenger services in Northern Ireland and within the plan area. 2 Goldline Express Services operate from the District to bring passengers daily from Armagh to Belfast (Service 251) and Armagh to Dublin (Service 278).

Armagh City has a regular and frequent return bus service to most of the towns within the plan area. For example there are 15 return services Monday to Friday to Keady (Service 69), 14 to Markethill (Service 40) and 3 to Tandragee (Service 63a), with reduced services at the weekends and holidays.

The villages of Darkley, Hamiltonsbawn, Mountnorris and Richhill are served regularly throughout the week with frequent daily return services.

Smaller settlements are also accessible daily Monday to Friday by bus, albeit at a significantly reduced level in comparison to those above. Regular services also operate to bring passengers to other towns outside the plan area, for example, Monday to Friday there are 11 return services to Newry (Service 40), 12 to Portadown (Service 61) and 6 to Monaghan (Service 70) with reduced services at the weekend and holidays.

Rail Services

Northern Ireland Railways (NIR) is the sole provider of rail passenger services in Northern Ireland with 360 route kilometres of track.

The only settlement within the Plan area with access to the rail network is Poyntzpass, which is located on the main Belfast to Dublin line.

Rural Transport Fund (DRD)

The Rural Transport Fund was established in November 1998. Spending from the Rural Transport Fund falls under 4 broad headings:

- RTF Management;
- Rural public transport;
- Community transport;
- Rural Transport Partnership fund.

The main beneficiary of the RTF will be conventional public transport. The fund provides a Rural Bus Subsidy annually to support socially necessary but uneconomic bus services in rural areas.

Community Transport

The fund not only supports public sector services (Ulsterbus) but also the community transport sector. The Department has allocated a significant proportion of the RTF to community based measures and there are three main strands of support:

Rural Community Transport Partnerships

These partnerships take many forms and may be used on existing community transport operations. They include significant representations from the community and voluntary sector, but also may involve District Councils, District Partnership Boards, Leader II organisations, health, social work and education agencies. The number of Rural Community Partnerships supported in Northern Ireland has increased to 16.

Revenue and capital funding for Community Transport projects

DRD is aware of the number of community organisations that operate minibuses currently in rural areas often on a limited budget, the Department wishes to build on these developments to ensure that the investment in vehicles is maximised.

Technical and training assistance for community organisations

Assistance and training is available for community organisations including driver awareness, record keeping and business planning.

7. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

The statutory responsibility for the provision and maintenance of public recreation and open space in Northern Ireland rests with the District Councils.

A comparison has been made between the provision of formal recreation and open space and children's play areas to the recommendations of the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) as per their publication, 'The Six Acre Standard – Minimum Standards for Outdoor Playing Space' – see below.

Existing Recreation and Open Space

From information available to Planning Service, it is estimated that there is a total of some 100.22 hectares of recreation and open space within the Armagh City and District Council area. The greater portion of this is controlled by the private sector, with much of the remainder controlled by the Council.

This formal recreation and open space can be divided into the following categories:

Playing Fields controlled by the Council	33.7 Ha
Playing Fields controlled by Local Schools (with public access at discretion of schools)	9.2 Ha
Playing Fields controlled by Private Sector	51.52 Ha
Children's Play Areas controlled by the Council	5.8 Ha
	100.22 Ha

The National Playing Fields Association Six Acre Standard

The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) publication, *The Six Acre Standard – Minimum Standards for Outdoor Playing Space*, recommends provision of outdoor playing space at a minimum level of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population. It defines outdoor playing space as "space which is available for sport, active recreation or children's play, which is of a suitable size and nature for its intended purpose, and safely accessible and available to the general public." Within this definition the NPFA recognises that there is a distinction between sports / active recreation and children's play, and accordingly recommends a minimum standard for each of these broad headings. The 2.4 ha / 1,000 is for a 'Total Playing Space' interpretation, but for outdoor sport, 1.6 to 1.8 hectares per 1,000 population is recommended and for children's play areas, between 0.6 and 0.8 hectares per 1,000 population is recommended.

Application of the NPFA Standard to the Armagh & District Plan area

(Taking the 2001 Armagh City & District population of 54,263¹)

Recreation and Open Space Table 1 (Playing Fields only)

94.4	65.1	+ 29.3
------	------	--------

¹ Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Key Statistics 2001. Table KS01.

Table 1 above shows the total area of recreation and open space (playing fields) that are within Council, school and private ownership. Of the 94.4 hectares of playing fields, 33.7 hectares is within the control of the Council. The table refers to playing fields for pitch sports only, and the area recommended by the NPFA is 1.2 ha per 1,000 population. It should be noted that though the table shows an excess of some 29 hectares of recreation and open space, much of this ground is in private ownership.

Recreation and Open Space Table 2 (Children's Play Areas)

5.8	43.4	- 37.6

From information provided to Planning Service, there appears to be a significant deficit in land used for Children's Play areas.

Recreation and Open Space Distribution

With respect to Armagh City the larger and more consolidated portion of recreation and open space is located to the south of the city. A lesser amount is dispersed in the west and east.

Most residential areas of Armagh City are within easy walking distance of recreation and open space, although this is less the case for the north east of the city.

The local towns identified in the Armagh Area Plan 2004 are Keady, Tandragee and Markethill. Each of these towns has its own area zoned for recreation and open space within the development limits.

Of the small settlements only Glenanne (Lisdrumchor) and Tynan have no open space or play areas.

Leisure and Recreation Centres

The following facilities are located in Armagh City:

- Orchard Leisure Centre – Folly Lane
- Ardmore Recreation Centre – Ballinahonemore Road
- Cathedral Road Recreation Centre

There is also a Recreation Centre in Tandragee.

Additional Recreation and Open Space

In addition to formal recreation and open space, there are significant areas of informal recreation and open space, provided and maintained by the private sector (e.g. golf courses), governmental bodies (e.g. the Forest Service), the National Trust and others.

8. MINERALS

Within Northern Ireland there are nearly 600 occurrences of economic minerals and approximately 1800 abandoned mine workings, mostly dating from the last century.

The bulk of mineral commodities, which are largely natural sand, gravel and crushed rock aggregate, are obtained through quarrying. The main source of information regarding minerals comes from Geological Survey Northern Ireland (GSNI). Much of this information tends to be at the regional level and not broken down to district level for reasons of commercial confidence.

Northern Ireland

Total mineral production increased by 21% between 1997 and 2001 and in 2001 output was more than 26 million tonnes per annum. Sandstone was the principal commodity in 1998 and 2001, whilst in 1997, 1999 and 2000 Basalt and Igneous rock were the principal commodities.

In 2001 there were 1601 people employed at mines and quarries in N. Ireland, this is an increase of 8% on the 1997 figure of 1478. Basalt and Igneous rock quarries are the largest employers.

Armagh City and District

Within Armagh City and District the bulk of mineral output is hard-rock aggregates: gritstone, basalt and limestone. These resources are finite and are coming under increasing development constraints.

There are eleven active hard-rock quarries (including basalt, gritstone and limestone) within Armagh District consisting of 7 gritstone (sandstone), 3 limestone and 1 basalt.

The limestone quarries lie in an area to the north and west of Armagh City, whilst the gritstone quarries form a band across the district from southwest to east. Armagh District is responsible for almost a quarter of the N Ireland total hard-rock production including sandstone, limestone and basalt (see table below).

Minerals Table 1

Armagh City and District	1,426,899	22%	4,157,936	23%

Parts of the Plan area are prospective for minerals (both precious and non-precious) and are currently being explored under licences issued by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Minerals (DETI).

More recently the potential of the Armagh Area to contain economic quantities of precious and base metals has been recognised. Following the successful exploration, including the discovery of the Cargalisgorran gold prospect near

Keady, Conroy Diamonds and Gold plc is increasing the area covered by its prospecting licences to 647sq km (primarily in Co. Armagh). More detailed work will have to be undertaken by the company to decide if potentially economic quantities of any minerals are likely to be present.

In recent years there has been exploration for hydrocarbons within the northern parts of County Armagh with licences issued by the DETI. Although these licences have since lapsed, northern parts of the Plan Area remain prospective for hydrocarbons and may become the focus for further exploration. Hydrocarbons should be considered as an issue in the Plan.

9. RETAILING

Existing Shopping Provision

The table below shows the number of retail units by category for Armagh City Centre, rest of Armagh City, Keady, Tandragee, Markethill and the rest of Armagh District.

As would be expected, the table shows that Armagh City Centre dominates the Plan Area in terms of numbers of retail units. Also, as would be expected, it demonstrates that the majority of non-convenience shopping is located in the city centre. This indicates that there is a strong comparison-shopping function within Armagh City Centre. There appears to be a fairly even spread of units throughout the rest of the district.

The full and accurate picture on retailing will only become clear when this information is supplemented by detailed floorspace figures to be obtained from the Valuation and Lands Agency.

Retailing Table 1

	41	35%	24	45%	75	68%
	11	9%	1	2%	1	1%
	15	13%	4	8%	13	12%
	9	8%	5	9%	9	8%
	8	7%	6	11%	8	7%
	33	28%	13	25%	5	5%
	117	100%	53	100%	111	100%

10. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Introduction

For Northern Ireland 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 following information has largely been gathered from the Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency (NISRA).

Regional Development Strategy and Area Plans

Under the Planning (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, there is a legal requirement for the Armagh City and District Area Plan to be in general conformity with the Regional Development Strategy.

The Regional Development Strategy identifies a strategic housing growth indicator of 160,000 dwellings for Northern Ireland for the period 1998 to 2015.

Under HGI 2, the RDS is to distribute the 160,000 dwellings in the manner described below:

Population and Housing Figure 1

Area	HGI to 2015
Northern Ireland Total	160,000
Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA)	77,500
Outside BMA	82,500
Armagh City & District	4,800
Amended Armagh City & District figure up to 2018	5,650

Under HGI 3, 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 of the Regional Development Strategy.

The Spatial Development Strategy of the RDS is to accommodate the majority of regional housing growth over the next 25 years in existing settlements.

Population Trends

An assessment and analysis of the population trends within the Armagh City and District Council Area

Changes in population come about through the combined effect of two separate factors; the level of natural increase from the birth and death rates; and the balance between inward and outward migration. The table below shows the change in the population in the Armagh City and District over the period 1971 to 2001. It includes a comparison with the whole Northern Ireland population over the same period.

Population and Housing Table 1 - Population trends 1971 - 2001

1971	46,449	1,536,065
1981	49,223	1,532,196
1991	51,817	1,577,836
2001	54,263	1,685,267
% +/- 1971 to 1981	+ 5.97%	- 0.25%
% +/- 1981 to 1991	+ 5.27%	+ 2.98%
% +/- 1991 to 2001	+ 4.72%	+ 6.81%
Overall % +/- 1971 to 2001	+ 16.82%	+ 9.72%

Source:

1971: 1971 NI Census Summary Table 4 p 9.

1981: 1991 NI Census Summary Table 2 p 2.

1991: 1991 NI Census Summary Table 2 p 2.

2001: 2001 NI Census Key Statistics Table KS02 Page 10.

It is apparent from the table above that the population of Armagh City and District has been increasing steadily since 1971, and at a substantially faster rate of growth than Northern Ireland as a whole.

Armagh District did not reflect the Northern Ireland drop in population between 1971 and 1981, indeed, in that decade Armagh District experienced its greatest increase in population over the period.

In Northern Ireland as a whole, the population between 1971 and 2001 increased by 9.72%, whereas for the Armagh District the percentage increase was 16.82 % over the same period.

Housing Stock

An analysis of the existing housing stock

Housing Tenure

The actual and percentage levels of different tenure types of Northern Ireland and the Armagh City and District housing stock over the past years are shown in Tables 2A and 2B respectively. Because of recent changes in the rating List Tenure Coding, private and other categories have to be added together to allow for comparisons back to 1990.

Population and Housing Table 2A - Tenure Split 1991 to 2003
Northern Ireland

1991	163,294	28.7	405,802	71.3	569,096	100
1992	158,643	27.4	419,903	72.6	578,546	100
1993	153,431	26.1	433,857	75.4	587,288	100
1994	149,237	25.0	447,350	75.0	596,587	100
1995	145,350	24.4	450,816	75.6	596,166	100
1996	141,047	23.2	466,551	76.8	607,598	100
1997	135,932	22.0	481,754	78.0	617,686	100
1998	131,800	21.0	494,131	78.9	625,931	100
1999	126,645	19.9	509,378	80.1	636,023	100
2000	120,343	18.6	527,942	81.4	648,285	100
2001	114,622	17.5	539,642	82.5	654,264	100
2002	112,927	17.0	550,647	83.0	663,574	100
2003	106,118	15.7	569,286	84.3	675,404	100
Overall + / - %	- 57,176	- 35.0%	+ 163,484	+ 40.3%	+ 106,308	

¹ The private and other category includes all housing other than Northern Ireland Housing Executive dwellings (i.e. it includes owner-occupied, private-rented, crown and all other dwellings).

Source: Calculated from data supplied by Rate Collection Agency.

Population and Housing Table 2B -Tenure Split 1991 to 2003 Armagh City and District

1991	4,089	23.8	13,076	76.2	17,165
1992	3,959	22.7	13,507	77.3	17,466
1993	3,740	21.1	13,945	78.9	17,685
1994	3,584	19.9	14,427	80.1	18,011
1995	3,425	19.1	14,508	80.9	17,933
1996	3,286	18.1	14,918	81.9	18,204
1997	3,150	16.8	15,566	83.2	18,716
1998	2,968	15.9	15,671	84.1	18,639
1999	2,943	15.4	16,119	84.6	19,062
2000	2,674	13.7	16,887	86.3	19,561
2001	2,495	12.6	17,276	87.4	19,771
2002	2,452	12.2	17,714	87.8	20,166
2003	2,316	11.3	18,246	88.7	20,562
change +/-	- 1,773	- 43.4%	+ 5,170	+ 40.0%	+ 3,397

The tables above demonstrate that private house ownership is increasing and widening the gap between that and the public ownership sector for both Armagh District and the whole of Northern Ireland.

During the period examined, Armagh City and District Council area has always had a higher proportion of privately owned dwellings than the general trend of

² Private and Other category includes all housing other than NIHE.

Northern Ireland. This is reciprocated by a smaller public ownership sector in Armagh area.

Implications of housing growth indicator on new household formation and population growth 2001 to 2018

Purpose and approach

The key purpose of the following analysis is to examine the likely impact of the housing growth indicator for the Plan area on household population levels and natural increase and migration rates between 2001 and 2018. This involves estimates of the proportion of population resident in private households, Mean Household Size (MHS) projections and valuation-based unfitness forecasts. Regional Development Strategy (RDS) assumptions on unfitness elimination and vacancy rates have also been incorporated into the analysis.

The following information forms an initial assessment of the implications of the housing growth indicator on new household formation and population growth and is subject to change and updating.

Household and population change in the Plan area 2001 to 2018

Table 3 presents estimated household and population change estimates over the Plan period based on assumptions about population in private households, Mean Household Size, allowance for vacancy in household stock and replacement of unfit dwellings.

Population and Housing Table 3 - Population and household change forecasts

(A) Population 2001	54,263
(B) Household population 2001	53,720
(C) MHS 2001	2.94
(D) No. of households 2001	18,272
(E) Dwelling increase to 2018	4,819
(F) Vacancy reserve of 4.5%	211
(G) Unfitness elimination	854
(H) Household increase	3,754
(I) No of households 2018	21,026
(J) MHS 2015	2.60
(K) Household population 2018	57,268
(L) Projected population 2018	57,846

Notes on the above table

- A. Population 2001 from 2001 Census.
- B. Household population 2001 is assumed to be 99% of total population.
- C. Mean Household Size 2001 (2001 NI Census Key Statistics KS01 and KS20).
- D. No of households 2001 = Household population / MHS.
- E. Dwelling increase to 2018 (Calculated using the RDS Housing Growth Indicator as amended for Armagh District as per Population and Housing Figure 1 on page 29, less the housing built up to mid 2001 as indicated by Planning Service Housing Monitor information).
- F. Vacancy reserve is 4.5%.
- G. Unfitness elimination figure.
- H. Household increase = E – (F + G). Involuntary sharing factor not counted.
- I. No of households 2018 = D+H.
- J. Mean Household Size 2018 (projected).
- K. Household population 2018 = I x J.
- L. Projected population (K/99) x 100 (includes the 1% population assumed not resident in households).

This table shows that the population of the Armagh City and District area is likely to increase by approximately 3,583 persons between 2001 and 2018.

Natural increase and migration projections 2001 to 2018

Table 4 below takes the population forecast set out in Table 4 on the previous page and projects any resultant migrations, taking account of natural population increases.

Population and Housing Table 4 - Natural increase and migration projection

Start population 2001	54,263
Finish population 2018	57,846
Population change	3,583
Population change through natural increase	4,383
Net out-migration	800
Average annual out-migration	47
Out-migration effect per 1,000 p.a.	0.84

Table 4 shows that natural increase is likely to be higher than population change, therefore, there will be approximately 800 persons out-migrating from the District over the plan period.

The projected out migration effect is 0.84 per thousand per annum.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive

- The NIHE has submitted the following information regarding the proposed Armagh Area Plan. The boundaries of the proposed Area Plan correspond with the Executive's administrative boundary.
- The 2001 House Condition Survey shows that unfitness in the District decreased from 9.8% (1,700 dwellings) in 1996 to 6.6% (1,280 dwellings) in 2001, which compares with a Northern Ireland unfitness figure of 4.9% (31,600 dwellings) in 2001.
- An analysis of the housing stock figure shows that 32.6% do not meet the decent homes standard and basic repair costs in the District are estimated at £3,603 per dwelling. In Northern Ireland, a total of 205,790, representing 31.8% of dwellings do not meet the decent home standard.

Categories of Need

Social Housing

Table 5 below shows a summary of the Armagh District Office social housing waiting list at September 2003.

Population and Housing Table 5 - N.I. Housing Executive Waiting List (September 2003)

	Housing Applicants			Transfer Applicants			Long term empty dwellings (iii)
	No	Housing stress	Re-lets (i)	No	30> points	Allocation (ii)	

(i) Average Annual Re-lets September 2001 to September 2003.

(ii) Allocations September 2003.

(iii) Long Term Empty Dwellings at September 2003.

The above indicates that housing stress is largely met by the number of available re-lets and by the operation of the private rented market. The level of social housing demand is reflected in the five year Social New Build programme that includes limited general housing schemes to cater for specific need in certain localities.

A summary of the five-year new build programme for Armagh District is provided in Table 6.

Population and Housing Table 6 - N.I. Housing Executive New Build Summary for Armagh District

Policy Theme	2003 / 04		2004 / 05		2005 / 06		2006 / 07		2007 / 08		2008 / 09		Total	
	Sch	Unit	Sch	Unit	Sch	Unit	Sch	Unit	Sch	Unit	Sch	Unit	Sch	Unit
General Needs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supported	1	11	0	0	0	0	2	17	0	0	0	0	3	28
Rural	2	14	1	16	0	0	0	0	1	16	1	6	5	52
Redevelopment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Travellers	0	0	0	0	0	0	* 1	5	0	0	0	0	1	5
Total	3	25	1	16	0	0	3	22	1	16	1	6	9	85

* Transit Site.

Homelessness

Trends in the numbers of people presented as homeless in the Armagh area and those subsequently assessed as statutorily homeless (Full Duty Status) are shown in the table below.

Population and Housing Table 7 - Homelessness trends March 1998 to March 2003 for Armagh District

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Number presented	231	139	121	120	164	192
No. awarded Full Duty Status	85	78	73	77	96	111

The significant (60%) increase over the last two years has led to a shortage of temporary accommodation, with many homeless applicants having to be placed outside the District.

The Homeless Action Plan for South Area has recently been reviewed. It analyses need in each Housing Management District, identifies current provision and sets out proposals for consideration. A scheme for six temporary sheltered accommodation units has been programmed for Armagh City 2006 / 2007.

Private Rented Sector

The number of households in the private rented sector in Armagh District receiving housing benefit increased from 1,088 in March 2002 to 1,211 in March 2003, an increase of 11.3%. These figures include Housing Association tenants in receipt of housing benefit. An expanding private rented sector is complementing the social rented sector by delivering an affordable alternative tenure. Each of these tenures tends to impact on the other and the dynamics between social and private rented will continue to be monitored by the Executive.

Empty Homes

There are 60 long-term empty Housing Executive properties concentrated in the Armagh urban area.

The total number of empty private sector dwellings recorded by the Rate Collection Agency for Armagh District at December 2002 was 1,445. This has declined from the December 2000 figure of 1,511. The five wards with the highest number of private sector vacant properties are:

Milford	95
Keady	90
Callanbridge	90
Derrynoose	83
Killylea	81

Reducing the number of such empty homes is being tackled by through the estate strategies referred to in the following sub-paragraph. Generally, private sector empty dwellings tend to be dispersed rather than geographically concentrated. During the course of the coming year, the Housing Executive will be bringing forward province wide proposals to reduce the number of such dwellings.

Regeneration

The most advanced of the regeneration initiatives in Armagh is at Drumarg estate, where the proposals include:

- Selective demolition (already commenced)
- Estate restructuring
- Environmental improvement
- Improving external appearance

A strategy is being formulated to solve the ongoing problem of vacant bungalows and flats at Longstone Estate. Demolition, sale to the private sector or a combination of both may be the preferred option in this area.

The reinstatement and improvement of the flats at Dobbin's Grove is also the subject of planned regeneration in Armagh.

Affordability

The average house price for properties in Armagh District during 2002 was £79,640 compared with a Northern Ireland average of £79,710. According to the Northern Ireland Housing Bulletin, the average selling price of NHBC registered new private sector houses in Armagh District during the quarter ending December 2002 was £86,900, compared to a figure of £100,900 for Northern Ireland as a whole.

The ratio between income and house price in Armagh lies between 1 to 3.01 and 1 to 3.40. Given this ratio, affordability is not considered to be an issue.

Supported housing

The identification of Supported Housing Need is currently based on strategic plans for individual client groups prepared by the NIHE Homeless Section, Health Boards/Trusts and Probation Services. These various strategies identify and prioritise Supported Housing need, both within and across client groups and locations, for the Social New Build Programme.

Population and Housing Table 8 - NIHE Supported New Build Programme 2003 to 2009

Local Housing Area	Units	Client Group	Start Date	Policy Theme
Rectory Close, Loughgall	11	Learning disabilities	2003/04	Supported
Armagh New Site 1	11	Learning disabilities	2006/07	Supported
Armagh New Site 2	6	Temporary accomm (families)	2006/07	Supported

Travellers

In June 2003, a five-year programme of accommodation specifically for travellers, consisting of group housing, serviced sites and transit sites was approved by the Housing Executive. This followed extensive research within that group and the programme was based on need, land availability, and the existence of a local support group. The programme contains a scheme for a five-unit transit site for Armagh to be provided in 2006/07. (See Population and Housing Table 6).

Students

Queen's University Belfast has a campus in Armagh City. This does not appear to have had a significant effect on housing demand. Indications are that student populations are catered for by university owned/managed accommodation and by the private sector. The future of the campus is under review.

Second Homes

According to the 2001 Census, there were 32 dwellings in Armagh that are considered to be second, or holiday homes. This represents less than 0.2% of the total number of dwellings.

NIHE Conclusions

- Social housing need is largely being met by turnover of existing stock.
- Empty homes are an issue and strategies are in place to reduce their level and impacts on surrounding areas.
- The requirement for two general need New Build Schemes to cater for specific social housing need have been programmed, as have two New Build Supported Accommodation schemes.

- The Drumarg estate is subject to several regeneration initiatives designed to include selective demolition, estate restructuring and improvements to stock and the environment.
- Flats in the Dobbins Grove estate are subject to ongoing reinstatement and improvement as part of planned regeneration activity.
- An expanding Private Rented Sector is complementing the Social Rented Sector by delivering an affordable alternative tenure.
- The dynamics between Social and Private Rented tenures will continue to be monitored as each tends to impact upon the other.
- Traveller and Homelessness needs have been identified and programmed.
- Affordability, second homes and students were not considered to be significant issues in the Armagh area.

11. CONSULTATION

Planning Service is committed to promoting a more inclusive plan process and a proactive approach to the preparation of area plans. The consultation exercise for the preparation of the Armagh Area Plan involved collecting comments and representations from a wide range of sources.

In line with Planning Service's commitment to New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) an objective is to ensure that new Development Plans reflect New TSN principles by ensuring that proactive consultation with all communities is undertaken.

Community Consultation Exercise

Community Technical Aid has been commissioned to undertake an independent consultation with the public and community, voluntary, environmental and equality groups on the Armagh Area Plan. The main objectives of the consultation are to promote public participation, to engage the community in debate as to the future of local areas and to develop greater ownership by the public of the process and the final proposals. This is a two-stage process with meetings held both before and after the production of the Issues Paper.

With respect to the [Community Consultation Exercise](#)^T, refer to pages 2-4 of the [Armagh Area Plan 2018 Issues Paper](#).