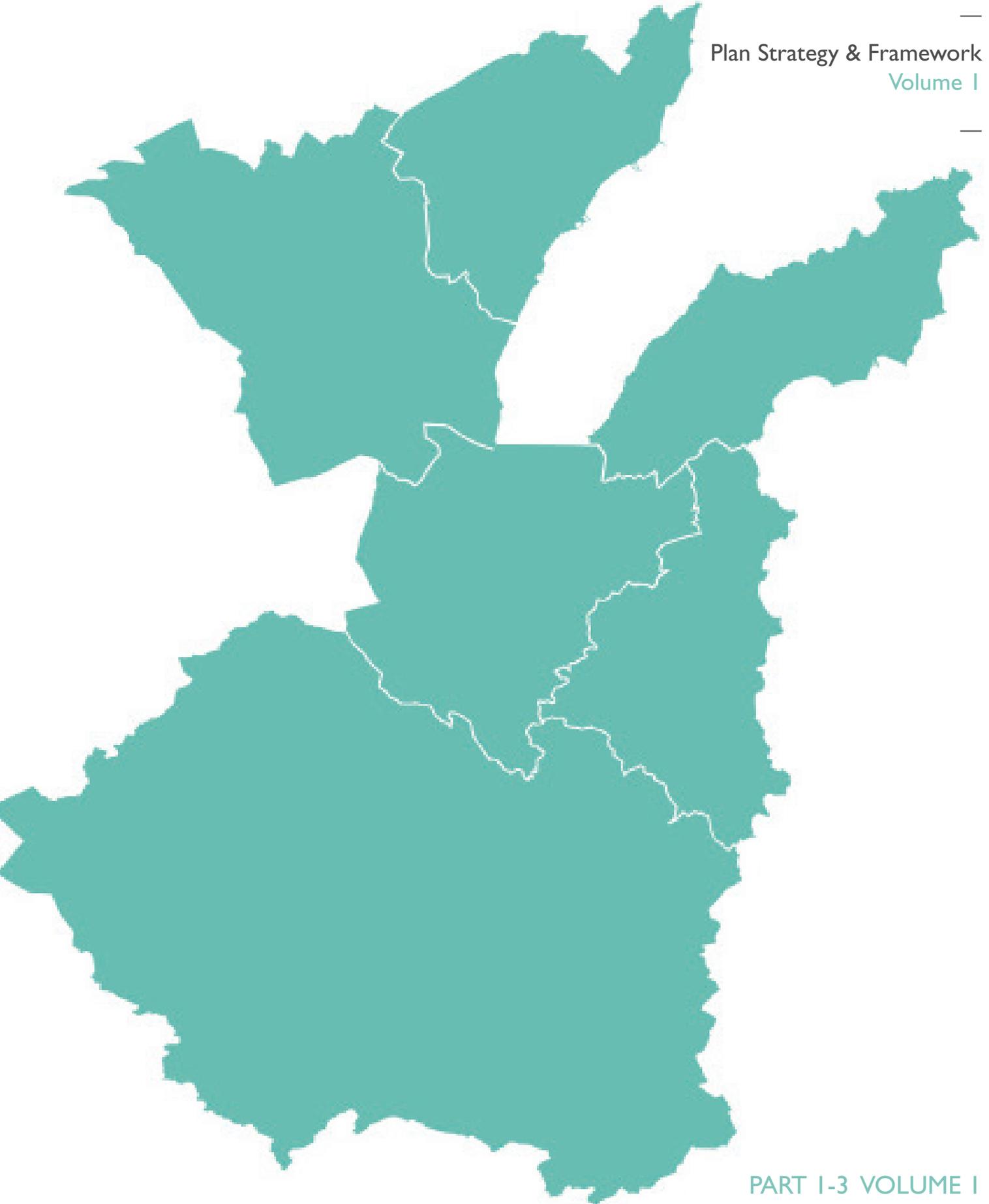


Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Plan Strategy & Framework
Volume I



Contents	Page
Plan Strategies, Allocations, Policies and Designations	3
Preamble	7
Part 1	
Introduction	14
Part 2	
The Plan Strategy	20
Part 3	
Strategic Plan Framework	28
Settlements	28
Housing	32
Employment	40
Transportation	45
Retailing	54
Offices	59
Urban Environment	64
Natural Environment	70
Countryside & Coast	76
Open Space, Sport & Outdoor Recreation	89
Tourism	92
Public Services & Utilities	96
Education, Health, Community & Cultural Facilities	100

List of Tables

Table 1	Population by District Council 2001 - 2011	14
Table 2	Designated ATCs and AVCs in each BMA Council Area	66
Table 3	International and National Nature Conservation Designations within the BMA	70
Table 4	Designated SLNClS in each BMA Council Area	73
Table 5	Designated LLPAs in each BMA Council Area	74
Table 6	Categories for Tourism Potential	93

List of Diagrams

Diagram 1	Key Components of the Plan Strategy	22
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List of Appendices

1.	Policy Context	104
2.	Planning Policy Statements	105
3.	Development Control Advice Notes	106
4.	Sewage Infrastructure – Waste Water Treatment Works	107
5.	Glossary	116
6.	Acronyms & Northern Ireland Government Departments	117
7.	Acknowledgements	118

Loose maps accompanying this Document

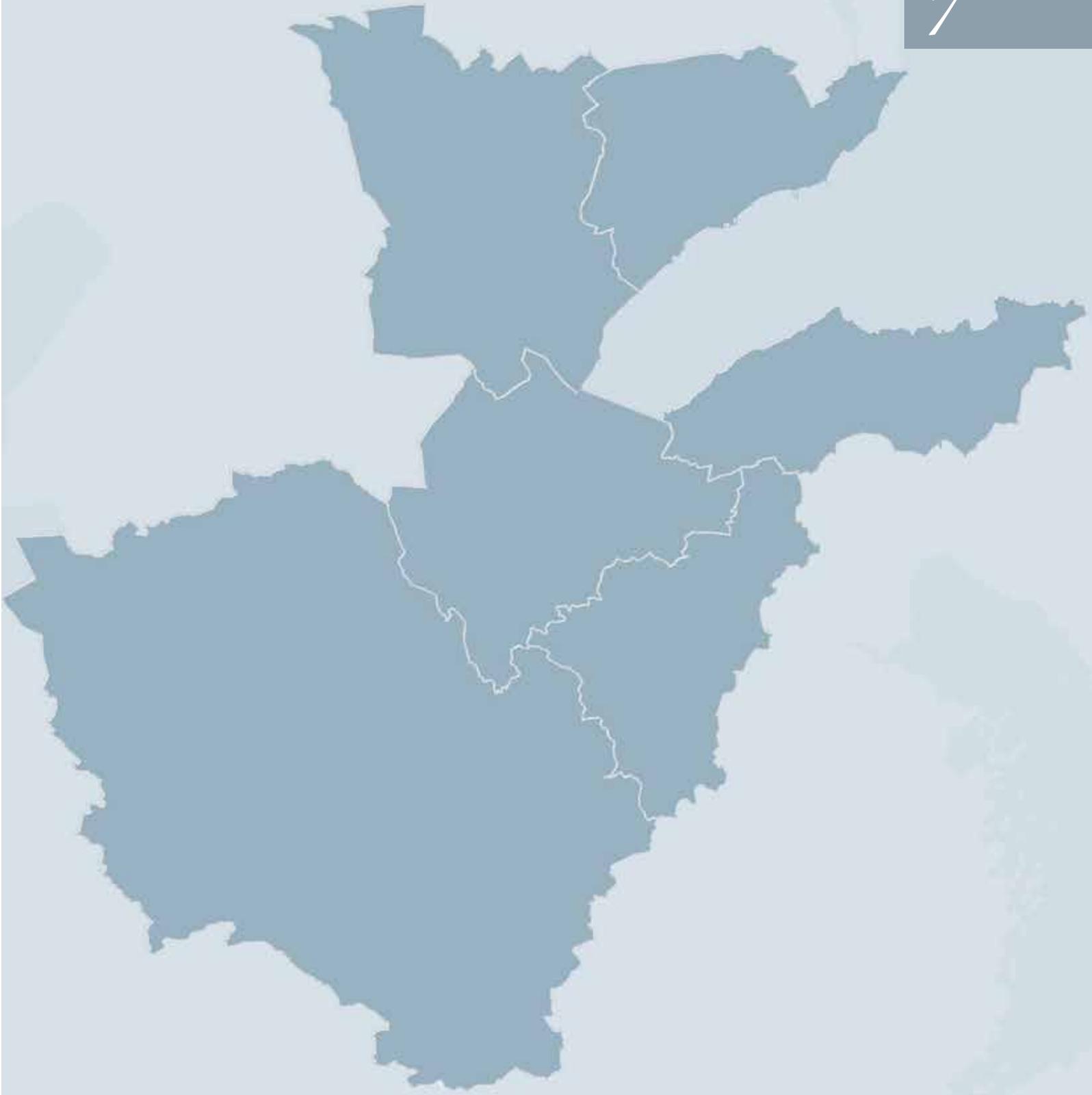
Map No. 1	Overview
Map No. 2	Environmental Designations
Map No. 3	Lagan Valley Regional Park and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Map No. 4	Carrickfergus Escarpment Area of High Scenic Value
Map No. 5	Belfast Basalt Escarpment Area of High Scenic Value
Map No. 6	Castlereagh Slopes Area of High Scenic Value
Map No. 7	Craigtantlet Escarpment Area of High Scenic Value

The following comprises a list of all allocations, designations, policies, proposals and zonings as contained in Parts 2 – 3 of the Plan. Further explanation is set out in Part 1 of the Plan.

Part 2 Strategic Plan Framework		Page	
Settlement	BMA Settlement Strategy	28	
	Designation SETT 1	Designation of Settlements	29
	Policy SETT 2	Development within the Metropolitan Development Limit and Settlement Development Limits	30
	Policy SETT 3	Arterial Routes	31
	Policy SETT 4	A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland	32
Housing	BMA Housing Strategy	34	
	Allocation HOU 1	Housing	36
	Allocation HOU 2	Social Housing	37
	Policy HOU 3	City and Town Centre Living	38
	Policy HOU 4	Protected Housing Areas in City and Town Centres	38
Employment	BMA Employment Strategy	40	
	Allocation EMP 1	Employment	42
Transportation	Policy TRAN 1	Parking Standards within Areas of Parking Restraint	51
	Policy TRAN 2	Publicly owned Off-Street Surface Car Parks within City and Town Centres	52
Retailing	BMA Retail Strategy	54	
	Policy R 1	Retailing in City and Town Centres	55
	Policy R 2	Belfast City Centre	56
	Policy R 3	Sprucefield Regional Shopping Centre	56
	Policy R 4	Arterial Routes and Local Centres	58

Offices	BMA Office Strategy		59
	Policy OF 1	Belfast City Centre, Lisburn City Centre and other Town Centres	60
	Policy OF 2	Office Development of up to 400m ² – Within Commercial Nodes, District Centres and Local Centres	61
	Policy OF 3	Office Development of up to 200m ² – Shopping/Commercial Areas	61
	Policy OF 4	Office Development in Major Employment Locations (MELs)	63
	Policy OF 5	Queen's University Office Area	65
	Policy OF 6	Stormont Office Node	64
Urban Environment	BMA Urban Environment Strategy		65
	Policy UE 1	Urban Design	66
	Policy UE 2	Security Grilles and Shutters	68
	Policy UE 3	Car Parking and New Development in City and Town Centres	68
	Policy UE 4	Urban Landscape Wedges	69
Natural Environment	Policy ENV 1	Local Landscape Policy Areas	73
Countryside and Coast	BMA Countryside and Coast Strategy		76
	Policy COU 1	Rural Landscape Wedges	79
	Designation COU 2	BMA Coastal Area	80
	Policy COU 3	BMA Coastal Area	81
	Policy COU 4	Urban Waterfronts	81
	Designation COU 5	Areas of High Scenic Value	82
	Policy COU 6	Areas of High Scenic Value	82
	Policy COU 7	Hydrocarbon Exploration	83

	Policy COU 8	Belfast Hills Access Points	84
	Designation COU 9	Lagan Valley Regional Park	85
	Policy COU 10	Development Proposals outside the Metropolitan Development Limit and Settlement Development Limits in the Lagan Valley Regional Park	86
	Policy COU 11	Lagan Valley Regional Park Nodes	86
	Policy COU 12	Development Proposals in the Lagan Valley Regional Park within the Metropolitan Development Limit and Settlement Development Limits	88
Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation	BMA Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy		89
	Policy OS 1	Community Greenways	90
	Policy OS 2	New Open Space Provision	91
Tourism	BMA Tourism Strategy		93
Public Services and Utilities	BMA Public Services and Utilities Strategy		96
Education, Health, Community and Cultural Facilities	BMA Education, Health, Community and Cultural Facilities Strategy		100
	Policy CF 1	Protection of land for Education, Health, Community and Cultural Facilities	102



| Preamble

Part 1-3 Volume 1

Preamble

The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 is a development plan prepared under the provisions of Part 3 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 by the Department of the Environment (DOE). The Plan covers the City Council areas of Belfast and Lisburn and the Borough Council areas of Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Newtownabbey and North Down.

Following a meeting between the Environment Minister and the Lord Mayor and Mayors of the six Councils within the Plan Area, a Notice of Intention to prepare a development plan for the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) for the period 2000-2015 was given to the respective Councils on 20 September 2000.

Preparation of the Plan was formally initiated by the Minister on 10 January 2001. A Notice of Intention to prepare the Plan was published in the regional and local press during the weeks beginning 5 and 12 February 2001. The notice invited individuals and interested parties to submit initial comments on key issues which the Department should consider in preparing the Plan.

Consultation was central to the process of preparing the Plan. During the preparation period the Department engaged the Councils, elected representatives, business organisations, public sector bodies, community groups and the general public in the most extensive consultation exercise ever undertaken for a development plan in Northern Ireland.

Throughout the preparation process Councils were able to inform and help shape the Plan through the BMA Plan Political Group which was set up to

oversee the preparation of the Plan. It comprised representatives of the six Councils making up the Plan Area and was chaired by the Minister. These arrangements facilitated input by the constituent Councils to the preparation of the Plan. They also provided a forum for discussion and co-ordination of the roles of the constituent parts of the Plan Area in the future development of the Belfast Metropolitan Area as a whole.

In addition to these special arrangements, there was extensive and ongoing consultation with individual Councils at all stages of the Plan preparation process. The views expressed by elected representatives were taken into account in developing the Plan.

A Steering Group comprising officials nominated by each Council together with representatives from Government Departments and the statutory sector assisted in developing an integrated approach to the preparation of the Plan.

The Department published the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 – Issues Paper in December 2001. Notices inviting comment on matters raised in the Issues Paper or any other issues relevant to the Development Plan were published in the regional and local press and in the Belfast Gazette. The Issues Paper sought to stimulate a wide-ranging debate on issues likely to influence the shape of future development within the Plan Area, and to encourage feedback from a wide range of interests.

The public consultation process has been a fundamental element of the formulation of the Plan. It has been designed to encourage the involvement and ownership by local communities wishing to influence the future development of their Districts and neighbourhoods. The consultation was led by a facilitating consortium comprising PricewaterhouseCoopers, the School of Environmental Planning at the Queen's University, Belfast, and the Urban Institute, Northern Ireland. During the consultation period, a series of 10 information meetings and 27 consultation meetings were held throughout the Plan Area. Voluntary and

community groups were engaged and over 1,500 people are estimated to have attended the public meetings and focus groups.

To ensure the cultural and social inclusion of all groups in the consultation process, a series of focus groups were held with the seven groups targeted for specific inclusion under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In addition, four focus groups were held with individuals from communities previously unrepresented.

Workshops were conducted with key stakeholders - professionals, developers, residents' groups, environmentalists and business interests.

Overall, the consultation process represented a broad cross section of the people living in the Plan Area. A report presenting a collation of the views expressed during the consultation process was published in April 2003, and provided a valuable 'public voice' on the future of the Plan Area which has been influential in the development of the Plan.

All comments received since the initial press notice in February 2001 were considered by the Department in the preparation of the Draft Plan.

The Department published the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 on 30 November 2004. The statutory period for objection to the Draft Plan expired on 25 January 2005. In order to reflect changes in the planning context and to address a number of omissions and inaccuracies that had been identified in the Draft Plan, the Department published a Plan Amendment in February 2006. The statutory period for objection to the Plan Amendment expired on 11 April 2006.

Following receipt of a substantial number of representations, the Department requested the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC/Commission) to hold a Public Inquiry into the relevant objections and to report to the Department on the Inquiry. The Public Inquiry opened on 16 April 2007 and was formally closed by the PAC on 1 May 2008.

The PAC completed its report into the objections to the Draft Plan and submitted its report in stages to the Department between January 2009 and January 2012. The recommendations contained in the Commission's Reports have been fully considered by the Department and revisions have been made to the Written Statement and to the maps as appropriate. Full details of the Department's response to the Commission's recommendations are set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 Adoption Statement and its appendices.

The Department is now publishing the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015. The Plan, comprising a Written Statement and accompanying maps, incorporates the amendments outlined in the Plan's Adoption Statement. The Written Statement is divided into four parts:

- Part 1 sets out the background to the preparation of the Plan;
- Part 2 sets out the Plan's Guiding Principles and the Plan Strategy to meet these;
- Part 3 sets out the Plan Framework comprising allocations, designations, policies and proposals relating to the Plan Area as a whole, intended to complement, and with reference to, the Regional Policy Context; and
- Part 4 translates the broad policies and proposals of Part 3 into site specific designations, policies, proposals and zonings for the individual Council areas included in the Plan Area.

The Plan Strategy, allocations, designations, policies, proposals and zonings in Parts 3 and 4 of the Plan comprise, and are hereafter also referred to collectively as, the Plan Proposals.

The Plan is being published in seven volumes:

- Volume 1 consists of Parts 1, 2, and 3 which deal with the Plan Area as a whole;
- Volumes 2 to 7 comprise Part 4 – the District

Proposals¹ – which set out the site-specific proposals for individual Council areas.

To understand the totality of the Plan Proposals for each Council area, it is therefore necessary to refer to Volume 1 and the relevant District Proposals (Volumes 2-7) for the particular Council area:

- Volume 2 - Belfast
- Volume 3 - Lisburn
- Volume 4 - Carrickfergus
- Volume 5 - Castlereagh
- Volume 6 - Newtownabbey
- Volume 7 - North Down

The accompanying maps comprise:-

Overview Map - this map illustrates the Plan Area boundary and also strategic designations.

Environmental Designations- this map illustrates the area and the location of existing and proposed environmental designations within the Plan Area but outside the settlement development limits. All current environmental designations are available on the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) website: www.ni-environment.gov.uk.

Countryside Maps - these maps illustrate Plan designations, proposals and zonings within each District but outside the settlement development limits. Other existing designations and land uses are shown for information only. Archaeological Sites and Monuments within the District have been illustrated by use of a symbol.

Metropolitan and Settlement Maps - these maps illustrate Plan designations, proposals and zonings within the Metropolitan and Settlement Development Limits, and may also include other designations and land uses for information only.

¹ This is a standard terminology which applies to each of the City Council and Borough Council Areas.

Where a designation relating to a settlement is not shown in its entirety on the settlement map, or where a designation is difficult to distinguish, by virtue of scale or overlapping, a clarification map is available on the Department's Planning NI website www.planningni.gov.uk or from the local Area Planning Office.

All maps are reproduced by permission of Land & Property Services under delegated authority from the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright and database right 2013.

In the case of any contradiction between the Written Statement and any other document forming part of the Plan, including the maps, the provisions of the Written Statement will prevail.

This Plan replaces all previous versions of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 and replaces the following development plans, which cover parts of the Belfast Metropolitan Area:

- Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001
- Lisburn Area Plan 2001
- North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984 -1995
- Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001
- Newtownabbey Area Plan 2005
- Ballymacoss Local Plan
- Carryduff Local Plan 1988 -1993
- Lagan Valley Regional Park Local Plan 2005
- Belfast Harbour Local Plan 1990 - 2005
- Bangor Town Centre Plan
- Lisburn Town Centre Plan

The Plan Proposals constitute considerations that the Department will take into account in determining planning applications within the Plan Area. The contents of the Plan must be read as a whole as often several designations, policies and proposals may be relevant to a particular development proposal.

The Plan Proposals should not, however, be read as the only tests of acceptability for development proposals. The Plan Proposals sit alongside, but do not supersede, prevailing regional planning policy as set out in the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), and A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (The Rural Strategy), except where specifically indicated in the Plan. In making its decisions, the Department will assess proposals against all planning policies and other material considerations that are relevant to it. The contents of the Plan must therefore be read in conjunction with the relevant contents of regional planning policy publications, supplementary planning guidance documents and with policy publications of other Government Departments.

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

Unless otherwise stated, all references in the Plan to the 'Department' refer to the Department of the Environment.

Equality of Opportunity

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

- I. 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.

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 has sought to ensure that the Plan does not have the effect of discriminating against individuals or groups of people who fall within these categories. The Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the Plan Proposals has considered any potentially adverse effects on these groups. The EQIA is published along with the Plan.

Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy

The Government's Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy 'Lifetime Opportunities' was published by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in 2006. It outlines a set of long-term goals and targets to work towards eliminating poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland by 2020. Public policy in general is expected to take account of anti-poverty/social inclusion considerations, for example through enabling disadvantaged groups and communities to benefit from better access to employment opportunities.

One of the main functions of a development plan is to facilitate development and create a land use framework that will allow investment to take place. The Plan seeks to apply the Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy through specific objectives, policies and proposals.

Review of Public Administration

The Review of Public Administration (RPA) is a far-reaching review of the arrangements for the delivery of public services in Northern Ireland. It is proposed that there will be a two-tier model within which all public services within Northern Ireland will operate. The regional tier, which largely comprises central

government departments, will concentrate mainly on policy development, strategic planning and setting and monitoring standards. The sub-regional tier, that will have local government at its core, will be the main vehicle for the delivery of local public services.

The Local Government (Boundaries) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012 provides for the rationalisation of the current 26 local government districts to create 11 new local government districts. Development Plans and responsibility for Development Management and Enforcement will fall under the new local government arrangements.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) states that where a land use plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site in Northern Ireland or a European offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, the plan-making authority for that plan shall, before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment the plan-making authority shall give effect to the land use plan only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site. If there would be adverse effects, the plan can only be given effect if there are no alternative solutions and there are exempting reasons of over-riding public interest.

Having carried out of a Test of Likely Significance (TOLS), an appropriate assessment of the impacts of the Plan has been carried out on a number of sites within or in close proximity to the Plan Area, namely:

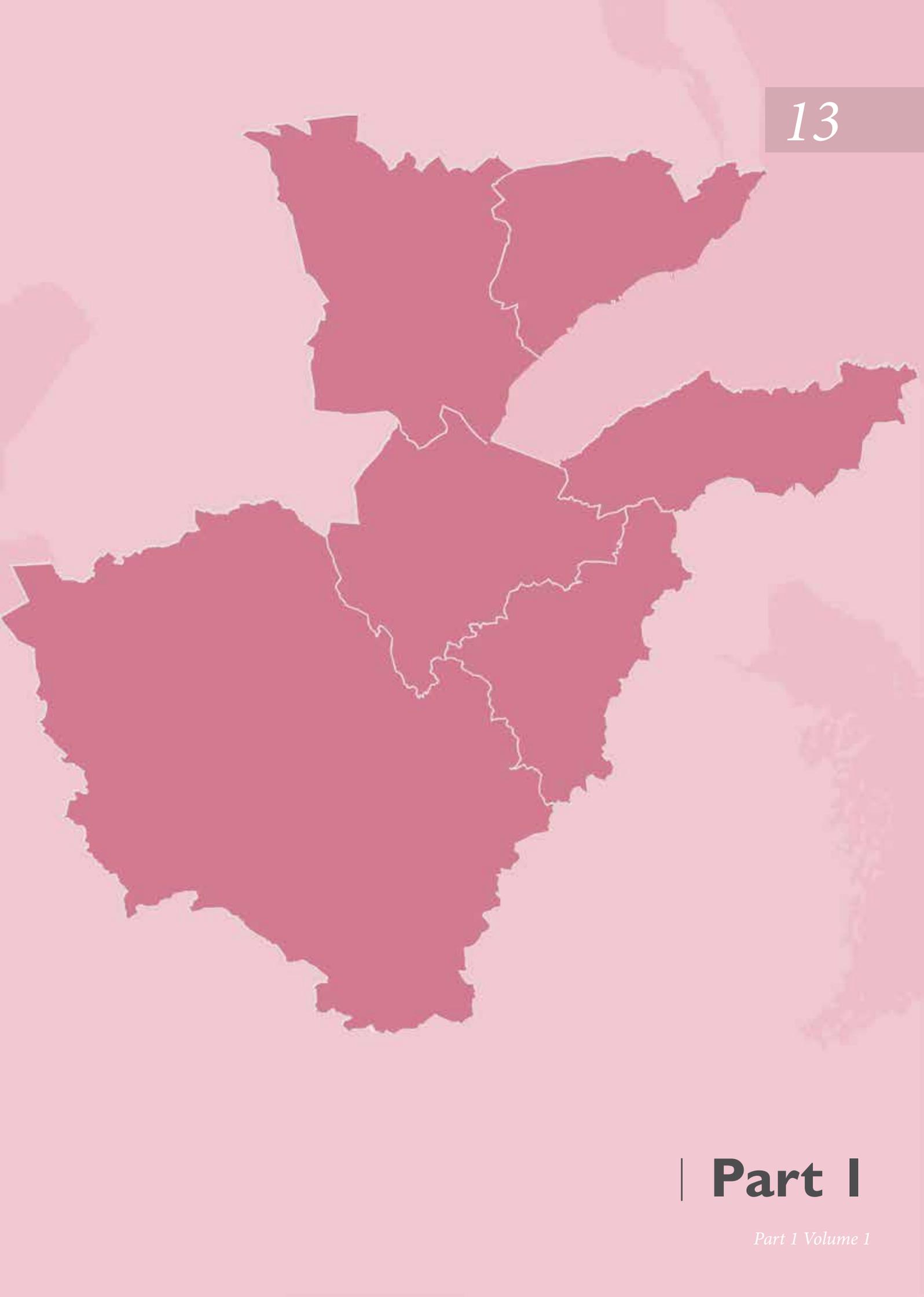
Aughnadarragh Lough Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 Antrim Hills Special Protection Area (SPA)
 Ballykilbeg SAC,
 Belfast Lough SPA,
 Belfast Lough Ramsar site

Belfast Lough Open Water SPA,
 Copeland Islands SPA,
 Eastern Mourne SAC,
 Hollymount SAC,
 Larne Lough SPA,
 Larne Lough Ramsar site,
 Lecale Fens SAC, Lough Neagh & Lough Beg SPA,
 Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site,
 Montiaghs Moss SAC,
 Murlough SAC,
 Outer Ards SPA,
 Outer Ards Ramsar site,
 Rea's Wood & Farr's Bay SAC,
 Strangford Lough SAC,
 Strangford Lough SPA,
 Strangford Lough Ramsar site,
 The Maidens SAC
 Turmennan SAC
 Turmennan Ramsar site.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment Report is published along with the Plan. This has concluded that the Plan will not adversely affect the integrity of any European or Ramsar site.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Department conducted a review of its decision to carry out an environmental assessment of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (including Plan Amendment No. 1) under the terms of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive and the SEA Regulations. As a result of this review, the Minister for the Environment determined that it was not feasible to carry out an environmental assessment of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (including Plan Amendment No. 1) in accordance with the SEA Directive and the SEA Regulations. The full non-feasibility determination and the Department's paper setting out the case for the non-feasibility determination is available on the Department's Planning NI website www.planningni.gov.uk.



| **Part I**

Part 1 Volume 1

Part I

INTRODUCTION

Plan Area

The Plan relates to the administrative Council Areas of Belfast City, Lisburn City, Carrickfergus Borough, Castlereagh Borough, Newtownabbey Borough and North Down Borough. In total this is a Plan Area of approximately 960 square kilometres, with a population of 671,559 (Northern Ireland Census 2011), which represents approximately 37% of the total population of Northern Ireland. Table 1 sets out the 2001 and 2011 Census population for each District Council Area.

Table 1: Population by District Council Area

Council Area	2001 Population	2011 Population
Belfast City	277,391	280,962
Lisburn City	108,694	120,165
Carrickfergus Borough	37,659	39,114
Castlereagh Borough	66,488	67,242
Newtownabbey Borough	79,995	85,139
North Down Borough	76,323	78,937
BMA Total	646,550	671,559

Source: Northern Ireland Census, 2001 & 2011

The Metropolitan Urban Area² lies at the head of Belfast Lough and the lower reaches of the Lagan Valley and dominates the Plan Area. It has one of the most striking landscape settings to be found in any

metropolitan urban area in the British Isles, being flanked to the north west by the basalt escarpment which forms the southern edge of the Antrim Plateau and on the south east by the more gentle escarpment of the Castlereagh and Holywood Hills. The Metropolitan Urban Area is the major gateway to Northern Ireland and the primary administrative, retail and commercial location within the Region. It has been the key driver for an improving regional economy and the RDS states that it will retain a strategic role in the future economic growth and development of Northern Ireland.

The Metropolitan Rural Area³ contains 81 settlements, including the 6 small towns of Ballyclare, Carryduff, Greenisland, Hillsborough, Moira, and Whitehead, 23 villages, and 52 small settlements, together with the open countryside.

The Metropolitan Rural Area includes a wide variety of landscapes, ranging from the broad lowland valleys of Newtownabbey to the undulating terrain of the Castlereagh Hills. It extends from the rolling upland drumlins of Dromara to the shorelines of Belfast Lough and Lough Neagh. Agriculture continues to be an important activity within the countryside.

The Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Plan is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers, and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will be used to guide development decisions within the BMA over the Plan period. The Plan will help to give effect to the RDS.

The Plan will also:

- provide an essential framework for guiding investment by public, private and community sectors and help harness additional resources through collaboration in tackling problems;
- provide confidence and context for those wishing to develop, and those affected by, development proposals;

² See Glossary - Appendix 5

³ See Glossary - Appendix 5

- establish a framework for positive co-ordination of public policies in joined-up Government at both regional and local levels;
- support the life of the local community and social and economic progress through Plan Proposals; and
- interpret at a local level, planning policies set out in PPSs.

Plan Aim

The aim of the Plan is to provide a planning framework which is in general conformity with the RDS in facilitating sustainable growth and a high quality of development in the Belfast Metropolitan Area throughout the Plan period, whilst protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing the natural and man-made environment of the Plan Area.

Policy Context

The Plan was prepared within the context of the priorities of the Northern Ireland Executive as set out in the Programme for Government, taking into account European, national and regional policies which have implications for the future pattern of development within the Plan Area.

European and UK Context

The European Union and the United Kingdom have embraced the principle of sustainable development based on stewardship of the environment. This principle has been widened in its scope to include both economic and social considerations. The Northern Ireland Executive, in its Sustainable Development Strategy: 'Everyone's Involved', has set out six Guiding Principles to achieve its vision of society in this Region developing in a sustainable way:

- Living within environmental limits;
- Ensuring a strong, healthy, just and equal society;
- Achieving a sustainable economy;
- Using sound science responsibly;

- Promoting opportunity and innovation; and
- Promoting good governance.

Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland (RDS)

The Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 "Shaping Our Future" (RDS) was published in September 2001 and amended in June 2008. A review of the RDS led, in March 2012, to the publication by the Department for Regional Development (DRD) of the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2035 "Building a Better Future". It sets out a dynamic strategic spatial planning framework for Northern Ireland to guide physical development within the Region to 2035 and provides an overarching strategic framework for development plans.

The purpose of the RDS is to deliver the spatial aspects of the Programme for Government by setting out the framework for spatial development across the Region up to 2035. It complements the Sustainable Development Strategy and informs the spatial aspects of the strategies of all Government Departments.

The RDS provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors. It does not redefine other Departments' strategies but complements them with a spatial perspective.

It influences the Programme for Government (PfG), the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI), the decisions and investments of Departments, Councils, and the private sector.

The RDS recognises the important role Belfast plays in generating regional prosperity. It seeks to maximise the use of existing infrastructure and services. The Strategy also recognises that policies for physical development have far-reaching implications. It therefore addresses economic, social and environmental issues aimed at achieving sustainable development and social cohesion.

It highlights the need to build on the approach to urban renaissance of developing compact urban form by further integrating key land uses with transportation measures. The focus should be on the use of land within existing urban footprints.

The RDS provides Regional Guidance (RG) and Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG). The latter includes the following specific guidance on the Metropolitan Area centred on Belfast:

- SFG1: Promote urban economic development at key locations throughout the BMUA and ensure sufficient land is available for jobs;
- SFG2: Grow the population of the City of Belfast;
- SFG3: Enhance the role of Belfast City Centre as the regional capital and focus of administration, commerce, specialised services and cultural amenities;
- SFG4: Manage the movement of people and goods within the BMUA; and
- SFG5: Protect and enhance the quality of the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets.

DRD has determined, in accordance with Article 28(7) of the Planning (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, that the Plan is in general conformity with the RDS.

Planning Policy Statements

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) set out the policies of the Department on particular aspects of land use planning and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Their contents have informed the Plan preparation and the Plan Proposals. They are material to decisions on individual planning applications (and appeals) within the Plan Area. Details of PPSs are contained in Appendix 2.

In addition to the existing and emerging suite of PPSs, the Department is undertaking a comprehensive consolidation and review of planning policy in order to produce a single strategic planning policy statement (SPPS) which will reflect a new approach to the preparation of regional planning policy. The preparation of the SPPS will result in a more strategic, simpler and shorter statement of planning policy in time for the transfer of planning powers to Councils.

Good practice guides and supplementary planning guidance may also be issued to illustrate how concepts contained in PPSs can best be implemented.

A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (The Rural Strategy)

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 reacting to development proposals.

Originally The Rural Strategy did not apply to parts of BMAP. In order to provide complete and consistent coverage of planning policies in the Plan Area, the policies contained in The Rural Strategy will now apply throughout the entire Plan Area, except where policies have been superseded by PPSs

The strategic section of The Rural Strategy has been superseded by the RDS, whilst the topic policy sections are progressively being replaced by PPSs. Policies within The Rural Strategy remain material considerations until superseded by PPSs.

Regional Supplementary Planning Guidance

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 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.

“Building on Tradition - A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside” was published in April 2012. This guide has been prepared to assist all of those involved with sustainable development in the Northern Ireland countryside to understand the requirements of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21: ‘Sustainable Development in the Countryside’. “A Design Guide for Rural Northern Ireland” is also available. Its purpose is to improve the quality of design and to help ensure that new buildings fit into the landscape.

The Department also publishes and updates as necessary a set of Development Control Advice Notes (DCANs), which explain the planning criteria and technical standards which the Department considers when dealing with specific categories or particular aspects of development in Northern Ireland. DCANs are listed in Appendix 3.

It should be noted that the Department is continually reviewing its regional policies and advice. It is therefore advisable to contact a local Area Planning Office to ascertain the current relevant policies and supplementary guidance that apply within the BMA. Regional planning policy and supplementary planning guidance is also available on the Department’s Planning NI website www.planningni.gov.uk.

Relationship with Other Public Sector Strategies

The Plan incorporates key linkages to major public sector strategies for the future development of the Plan Area, and its constituent parts, with particular respect to transportation, regeneration and Council initiatives.

Regional Transportation Strategy

The Regional Transportation Strategy 2002 - 2012 (RTS) is a ‘daughter document’ of the RDS. The

RTS supports the RDS and makes a significant contribution towards achieving the RDS vision for transport.

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 affordability of planned initiatives.

Implementation of the RTS in the Plan Area is through the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTNTP) and the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP).

‘Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future - A New Approach to Regional Transportation’ was launched by DRD in 2012. The publication sets out how DRD will develop regional transportation beyond 2015 when the current transport plans reach their conclusion. The document lists three High Level Aims for transportation along with essential supporting Strategic Objectives. These cover the economy, society, and the environment. It shows how strategic transportation developments can be assessed to allow informed decision making on future transportation investment.

Urban Regeneration

The Department for Social Development (DSD) plays a central role in developing and co-ordinating the implementation of urban regeneration programmes throughout Northern Ireland.

DSD recognises the importance of town and city centres to the life of the community in Northern Ireland. They are the location for most community activity, they offer employment, services and facilities for all the community and they provide shared environments where people meet and interact. The approach of DSD to regeneration, in pursuance of its statutory authority, is to promote and implement a comprehensive, integrated and sustainable approach

to tackling social, economic and physical regeneration and redressing disadvantage in cities and towns.

Regeneration masterplans and statements for city and town centres are prepared by DSD in the context of the overriding strategic planning framework set out in the RDS and Development Plans. They also manage a regeneration strategy for the renewal and development of the most deprived areas in and around Belfast. The four most important areas of work are:

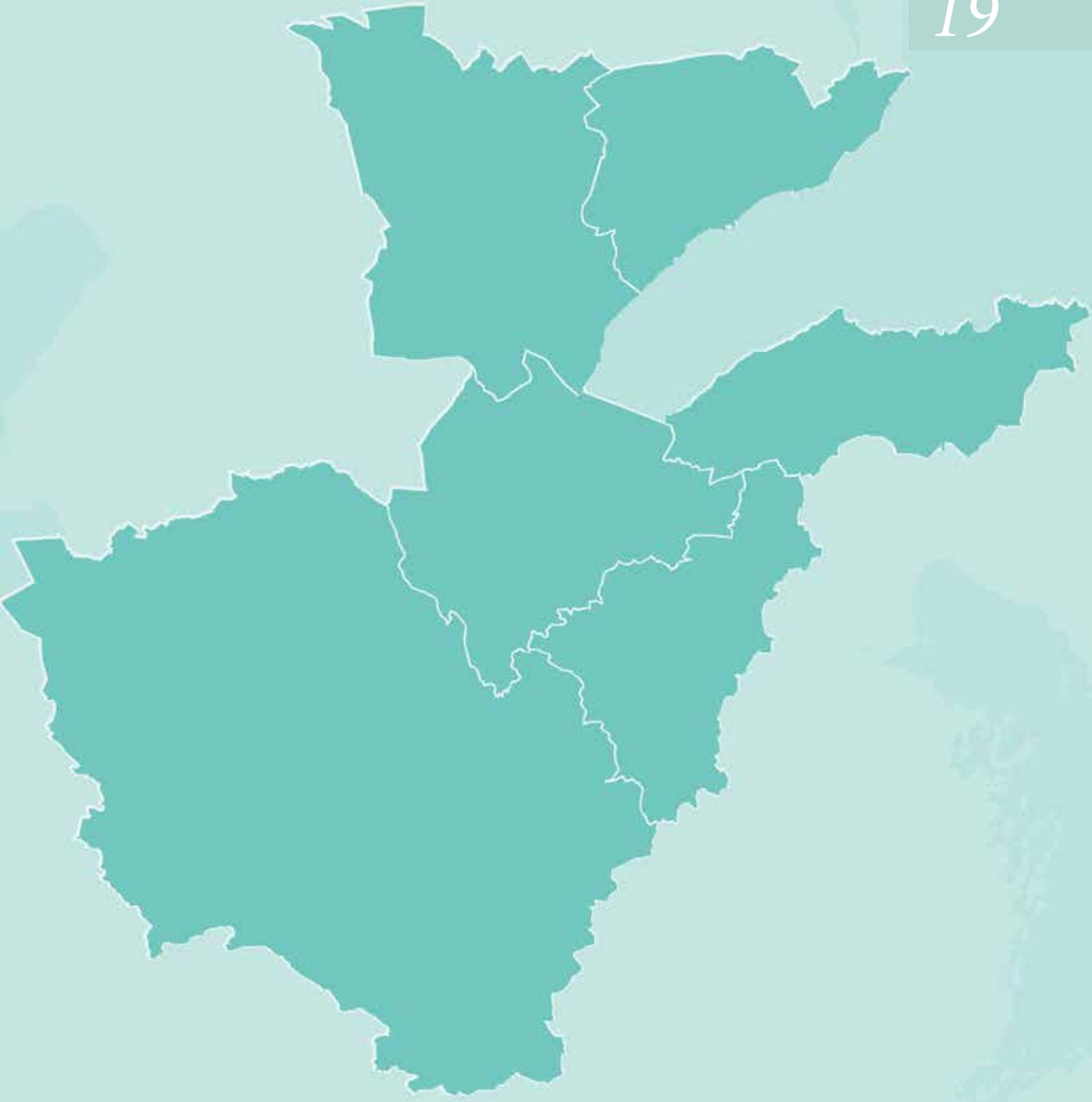
- Encouraging investment and physical regeneration;
- Raising educational achievement;
- Improving access to employment; and
- Creating safe, healthy communities.

DSD's role and its regeneration responsibilities were taken into account in preparing the Plan. Its regeneration policy objectives set out in the Regeneration Policy Statement for Belfast City Centre are regarded as material considerations in determining planning applications.

Council Initiatives

The Department continues to work closely with Councils, particularly in respect of new initiatives and the development of the visioning process. These visions contain a number of themes for economic, social, environmental and developmental change. Working towards the visions will require contribution by the Councils, Government, the business sector, the voluntary and community sector, and the general public.

The Plan has also taken into consideration Council initiatives with respect to economic regeneration and tourism development, and of Belfast City Council's participation in the World Health Organisation's European Healthy Cities Network.



| **Part 2**

Part 2 Volume 1

Part 2

THE PLAN STRATEGY

Plan Strategy

The RDS 2025 provided a vision of a future BMA which sought to sustain and build on the progress achieved in recent decades. The vision is of:-

'an area with a thriving retail, service, administrative, cultural, entertainment, health and educational centre in the City of Belfast, with important complementary employment and services centres in the adjoining suburban districts of Castlereagh and Newtownabbey, and in the towns of Bangor, Carrickfergus and Lisburn'.

The RDS 2035 saw further development of its original vision:

'An outward-looking, dynamic and liveable Region with a strong sense of its place in the wider world; a Region of opportunity where people enjoy living and working in a healthy environment which enhances the quality of their lives and where diversity is a source of strength rather than division.'

One of its key aims is to strengthen Belfast as the regional economic driver:

The Plan has a significant role to play in achieving the vision through the Plan Strategy and Plan Proposals designed to give effect to the Regional Guidance and Spatial Framework Guidance contained in the RDS.

The Plan Strategy is to:-

- support the growth and regeneration of cities, towns and villages whilst sustaining a living and working countryside and protecting from inappropriate development those areas that are vulnerable to development pressure or that are visually or environmentally sensitive;
- identify, define and designate as appropriate, areas of conservation, archaeological, scientific, landscape or amenity importance or interest, within both the natural and built heritage of the Pan Area;
- provide a settlement hierarchy, designate settlement development limits, zone land and designate policy areas which will:-
 - facilitate allocation of housing growth potential in accordance with the RDS, through a sequential approach, in support of urban renaissance and conservation of town settings and greenfield lands, by maximising as feasible the identified proportion within existing urban areas;
 - facilitate a level of housing development in each designated settlement that is in accordance with the approach set out in the RDS regarding assessment of individual settlement capacity and identified housing needs;
 - recognise that single dwelling development is likely to continue, at a level which is difficult to predict;
 - facilitate a level of overall growth in settlements which reflects their individual status in reference to the RDS.
- establish key site requirements, as appropriate, against which particular site development proposals will be assessed in order to help achieve good quality development, to respect environmental assets and to facilitate the development of balanced communities in accordance with the strategic requirements of the RDS;
- designate additional employment land to make provision for an adequate supply and choice of sites for employment uses which takes account of accessibility to major transport routes and the provisions of the RDS including the proximity to the district population, particularly in areas of economic and social deprivation;

- identify, define, designate and safeguard, as appropriate, specific areas where the retention of, or provision of, additional retail, services, recreational and other community facilities will positively contribute to the amenity and well being of the district population, subject to prevailing regional planning policy;
- define, as appropriate, transportation-related proposals in accordance with the Regional Transportation Strategy which are intended to facilitate improved flow of vehicular traffic whilst promoting reduction in car travel and the use of alternative modes of travel.

It is proposed that the Plan will implement this Strategy through the Plan Proposals that are in accordance with, and also complement, the Department's regional planning policies. The Plan Proposals are contained in Part 4 of the Plan.

Guiding Principles

Within the policy context as set out in Part 1, and in particular within the overarching principle of seeking sustainable forms of development, Guiding Principles have been formed which have shaped the future Strategy for the BMA up to 2015. The Principles are interrelated and cover social, environmental, economic and transportation considerations, as well as the need for effective participation. They were set out in the Plan Issues Paper and received widespread public endorsement. The Principles can be summarised as follows:

- to promote equality of opportunity and social progress for the benefit of the whole community;
- to facilitate sustainable economic growth;
- to ensure effective protection of the environment;
- to promote an integrated approach between transportation and land use; and
- to promote effective participation.

The Plan Strategy Components

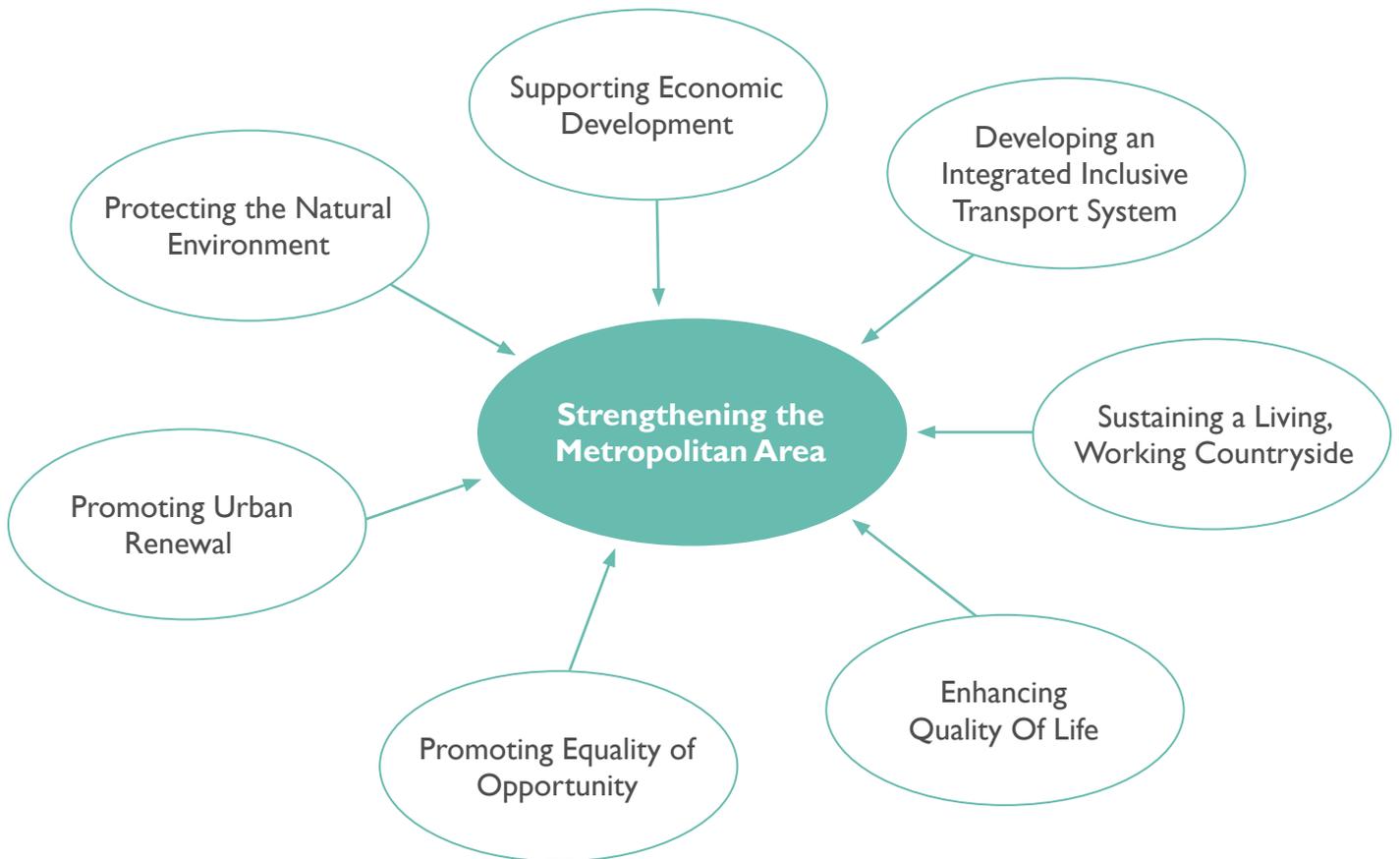
The central aim of the Strategy is to **strengthen the regional role of the Metropolitan Area** so that it can compete successfully at the European and International level (see Diagram 1). To achieve this aim the Development Strategy comprises a series of measures that focus on a number of subject areas.

It is based on proposals designed to encourage a widespread and sustainable renaissance of the BMA. It seeks to build on the recent recovery and to give priority to **renewal in urban areas**. It provides for balanced growth in rural areas in order to sustain a strong and vibrant rural community and **a living, working countryside**.

A range of locations is identified for the provision of housing and employment in order to **enhance the quality of life** for all of the Metropolitan community and to promote **equality of opportunity**. A generous and continuous supply of land for employment will help to **support sustainable economic development**. Developing a strong Belfast City Centre and a revitalised Metropolitan Area helps to underpin and strengthen public transportation as a key element in an **integrated and inclusive transport system**. **Protection of the natural environment** is achieved through limiting urban expansion onto greenfield sites and by safeguarding key environmental assets.

There is a high degree of interdependence between the constituent parts of the Metropolitan Area and between the social, economic, environmental and transportation issues which the Plan seeks to address. The Plan Strategy therefore adopts a holistic approach, addressing issues on a comprehensive BMA wide basis. The Plan Proposals also seek to integrate the need for both conservation and development through a mix of co-ordinated economic, social and environmental policies and proposals.

Diagram 1: Key Components of the Plan Strategy



The Plan Strategy for the BMA consists of the following main elements:

- **Strengthening the Metropolitan Area**

The BMA is the largest concentration of population and commercial activity in Northern Ireland. Securing its prosperity and vibrancy is vital to the economic, environmental and social well being of the Region.

The Plan Strategy takes cognisance of the fact that the Metropolitan Area is the major gateway to Northern Ireland. It seeks to strengthen the retail, service, administrative, cultural, entertainment, health and educational roles of the BMA. This will help to sustain and enhance the strategic role of the BMA in the future economic growth and development of Northern Ireland, and strengthen Belfast in fulfilling its role as a modern European city.

The Metropolitan Area comprises a number of urban and rural communities, each with its distinctive role. While these individual communities have their own distinctive identities, there is a high degree of interdependence between them which contributes to the strength and vitality of the BMA as a whole. The Plan Proposals recognise and aim to maintain the communities which make up the BMA and seek to build on their strengths in forging a Metropolitan Area which provides a strong and dynamic heart to Northern Ireland.

The Plan Strategy seeks to promote the City of Belfast as the regional capital of Northern Ireland and as the major focus for regional administration, commerce, specialist services, cultural amenities and as a major employment location. In addition, it provides a framework to strengthen the important and complementary roles of Lisburn City and of the adjoining Boroughs of Castlereagh, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey and North Down.

- **Promoting Urban Renewal**

The Plan Strategy is to limit expansion at the periphery of built-up areas and to promote regeneration and renewal within. The Plan Proposals confirm and renew existing established foci of commercial and community life throughout the Metropolitan Area. Priority is given to supporting and enhancing the role of City and Town Centres, Arterial Routes into Belfast City Centre and Local Centres throughout the Metropolitan Area. In this way the Strategy seeks to maintain a polycentric pattern of development promoting the renewal of distinctive places which play an important role in local community life.

The Plan Proposals promote a compact urban form through maximising the housing growth within the existing urban footprint and proposing limited new urban extensions. This will help to support urban renewal by sustaining existing communities and providing support for necessary services and facilities.

Housing growth within the existing urban footprint is provided in a manner which will not lead to an erosion of identified townscape character.

The Plan Proposals for the location of shopping, offices and community services oppose dispersal and promote provision at existing foci within the Metropolitan Area.

The promotion of an urban renaissance throughout the Metropolitan Area will be assisted by the identification of land for economic and commercial development. Opportunities for job creation on lands currently in employment use are retained, and new opportunities are provided across the Metropolitan Area. Major regeneration projects will contribute to urban renewal. These are well located to help in dealing with disadvantage in the North and West Belfast Axis and the East Belfast Crescent as identified in the RDS. Land at Titanic Quarter presents a

redevelopment opportunity of major significance for the entire Metropolitan Area.

- **Sustaining a Living and Working Countryside**

The Plan Strategy seeks to sustain a living and working countryside while protecting areas which are visually or environmentally sensitive. The Plan Proposals acknowledge the complementary roles of the urban and rural areas. While the urban area provides services and employment opportunities for the rural community, the rural area provides agricultural produce, environmental benefits and leisure opportunities for residents of the cities and towns.

The principles of sustainability are also central to the development of the rural area. A balanced and integrated approach to development is therefore an essential element of the Strategy. The Strategy supports the network of towns, villages and small settlements in the rural area. More significant housing growth is available in small towns in accordance with the Regional Guidance of the RDS. The role of smaller settlements is to provide appropriate development opportunities for local services or housing in keeping with their scale and character. In order to facilitate the development of rural businesses, land is identified for employment use in or near a number of the larger rural settlements.

Regional planning policies for the countryside seek to facilitate development necessary to sustain local communities, while resisting development pressures unrelated to the local community.

- **Enhancing Quality of Life**

The Plan Proposals seek to support an improved quality of life through an appropriate allocation of land within the settlements for housing and job creation, leisure, community, cultural, education and health facilities, and open space. A mixed-use approach is encouraged to the development of new residential areas. Emphasis is also placed on the development of balanced local communities

and meeting social housing need. In these ways the Plan Proposals seek to facilitate the development of 'liveable communities' providing choice and opportunity in relation to jobs, commercial facilities and services. Improvements in public transport will provide safe and equitable access to employment and major services.

The Plan Proposals seek to further community interaction and cohesion through the development of 'shared places' accessible to all the community. The role of city and town centres, and other main foci of community life throughout the BMA, is supported and strengthened by policies to develop their use as centres of retail and office development.

The development of healthier lifestyles in support of Belfast City Council's Healthy Cities Project is encouraged through increased provision for walking and cycling facilities together with policies which seek to provide an alternative to travel by car. Reduction in car travel offers the potential for improvement in air quality on major routes. Community greenways are identified including parks, playing fields and natural areas to create a network of open spaces and opportunities for leisure and recreation. In addition, the Plan Proposals identify new lands for open space.

A key element in enhancing the quality of life is to achieve a significant improvement in the quality of the urban environment. Protection and enhancement of the environment helps in improving quality of life in the Metropolitan Area, and assists in attracting employment and promoting economic growth. The Plan Strategy seeks to achieve this by protecting natural and built heritage and by requiring a high standard of development in key locations which serve as 'shop windows' for the Metropolitan Area, including, for example, city and town centres. Quality in new development is promoted through the provision of key site requirements for the development of zoned and designated lands.

- **Supporting Economic Development**

While the planning system cannot create jobs, it has a key role in facilitating economic development through the zoning of land and provision of supportive planning policies.

The proximity of Belfast City Centre to the Harbour Area provides a strong growth dynamic at the heart of the Metropolitan Area.

The Plan Proposals maintain the role of the City Centre as the primary retail and office location in Northern Ireland and provide for expansion in commercial activity.

Relocation of port functions and the potential for redevelopment of former shipyard lands are opening up major new development opportunities in the Harbour Area. The Plan Proposals provide a framework to take advantage of these opportunities which does not prejudice the future development of Belfast City Centre.

Planning policies, land allocations and necessary supporting improvements to infrastructure provide the basis for future economic growth and job creation. This will enable the BMA to continue to fulfil its role as the primary engine for growth and prosperity in Northern Ireland, while also targeting disadvantaged areas within the Metropolitan Area.

The Plan Proposals provide for a generous and continuous supply of land for employment purposes in a range of accessible and sustainable locations throughout the Plan Area. Major Employment Locations (MELs) are designated at Belfast Harbour (including Titanic Quarter), West Lisburn, Purdysburn, Mallusk/Ballyhenry, together with designation of employment sites to target disadvantage and assist regeneration in North, West and East Belfast. Employment sites are zoned in Bangor and Carrickfergus to provide local employment and an alternative to commuting. Lands are zoned in a number of towns and villages in the rural area to facilitate

growth and diversification of the rural economy.

Lisburn City Centre and the town centres are promoted as major locations for future retail and office growth. Provision is made for controlled growth of retailing at the Sprucefield Regional Shopping Centre. The Plan Proposals provide flexibility to secure further inward investment through limited dispersal of major office development to business parks.

Support for further growth in tourism is provided through protecting a range of tourism development opportunities and facilitating the development of tourism infrastructure.

- **Promoting Equality of Opportunity**

The Plan Proposals seek to promote equality of opportunity for all sections of the population in the Metropolitan Area. Lands for housing and employment are zoned throughout the Plan Area to provide a wide range of opportunities for house building and job creation. The promotion of Belfast City Centre and the development opportunities within Belfast Harbour will support the provision of new job opportunities in central locations accessible to all sections of the community.

Transportation proposals seek to improve and develop public transport to assist in providing safe and equitable access to services, facilities and employment opportunities for all the community. Particular emphasis is placed on access to major employment opportunities identified in the Plan.

The Plan has made specific provision for social housing and accommodation for the Travelling Community.

- **Developing an Integrated Inclusive Transport System**

The Plan Proposals seek to reduce reliance on the car by a closer integration of transportation and land use, by promoting a significant improvement in public transport and by

management measures to influence the choice of travel mode. The provision of improved facilities for walking and cycling as a means of providing greater travel choice is a key principle.

The Plan Proposals seek to manage integrated transportation with benefits to the environment and human health, and to enhance accessibility to employment, community and other facilities for those without access to the use of a car.

The emphasis on provision of housing and employment within existing urban footprints, and on mixed-use development, will ensure patterns of development supportive to a choice of modes of transport, including public transport.

The BMA is the major gateway to Northern Ireland and the heart of the Regional Strategic Transport Network. Fast and efficient transportation links to the Belfast Harbour are essential to the economic prosperity of the Metropolitan Area and Northern Ireland as a whole. The Plan Proposals identify road improvements necessary to ensure the efficient movement of freight and people.

Road improvements are also proposed to facilitate future housing and economic growth, to provide necessary links by public and private transport to MELs and to reduce traffic in the built-up area, with benefits to living environments.

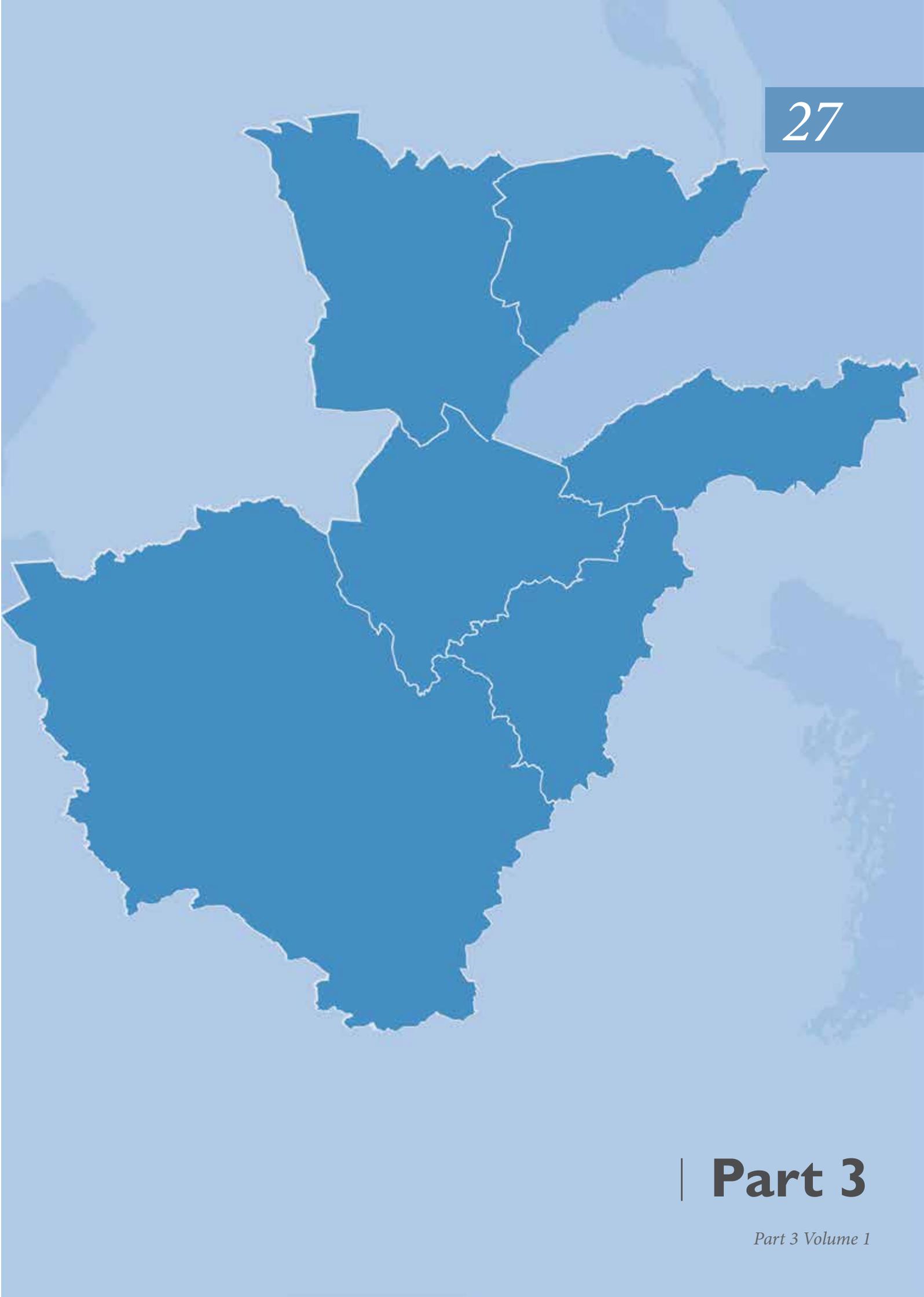
- **Protecting the Natural Environment**

The Plan Proposals emphasise the need for a sustainable approach to development in order to protect the environment. In line with the RDS, priority is given to development within existing urban footprints to reduce the need for expansion onto greenfield sites.

Linear expansion along transport corridors and within the existing settlement development limits will ensure that development avoids other more vulnerable areas which are important in terms of the setting of the Metropolitan Area.

Areas of High Scenic Value (AOHSV) are designated in order to protect areas of quality landscape including the Belfast Hills. The Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP) is strengthened through the inclusion of additional lands. The shores of Belfast Lough provide a unique natural resource for the Plan Area and are protected from development. Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) will protect areas of distinctive landscape and the amenity and settings of settlements, from inappropriate development.

While areas of international and national nature conservation importance are already protected from development through other statutory designations, conservation of biodiversity is enhanced in the Plan through the designation of Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs).



| **Part 3**

Part 3 Volume 1

Part 3

STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

Settlements

BMA Settlement Strategy

The Settlement Strategy for the BMA is fundamental to the delivery of the Plan Aim. The aim of the Strategy is to focus development in the cities and towns, with priority being given to the re-use of land within existing urban areas, and the need to contain outward expansion.

BMA Settlement Strategy

The BMA Settlement Strategy comprises the following elements:

- development of a compact and dynamic regional core centred on Belfast;
- focus of development opportunities in existing urban areas, with the consolidation of cities and towns avoiding significant outward expansion;
- support and reinforcement for the role of city and town centres and the Arterial Routes within Belfast;
- sustainment of vibrant rural communities in small towns, villages and small settlements; and
- consolidation of small clusters of development in the open countryside to form a number of new rural settlements and prevent further encroachment of development into the open countryside.

Settlement Strategy

The Settlement Strategy has been developed in accordance with the RDS Spatial Framework

Guidance. Settlements are designated according to their role, the services and facilities available, and their potential for accommodating development.

The core development areas in the BMA are the City of Belfast, Lisburn City and the towns. The Plan Proposals seek to reinforce the role of city and town centres as the main foci in the life of the community, and as key centres for the provision of jobs and services.

The city and town centres in the BMA provide a strong sense of place not only for local residents but also for visitors for whom they are focal points.

In Belfast, in addition to supporting and strengthening the role of the City Centre, the Plan also aims to reinforce a sense of place by including proposals to maintain distinctive places, buildings and landscapes, recognising that many people have a sense of allegiance to local areas rather than the larger Metropolitan Area. This involves focusing on the role of the Arterial Routes which connect the suburban parts of Belfast with the City Centre and help to provide a sense of place, identity and focus. Many of the Arterial Routes form the main transport corridors into and out of the City, and operate as retail and service centres for surrounding communities.

In the Metropolitan Rural Area, the Settlement Strategy focuses on the existing network of towns, villages and small settlements, recognising the important role that the settlements perform as local service centres in terms of sustaining and serving rural communities. Although the towns are the main locations for the provision of services for the surrounding rural areas, there is also a need to consolidate growth in the villages in order to reinforce their role as local centres. As many villages in the Metropolitan Rural Area are subject to strong dispersal pressures, large-scale expansion has been resisted in the majority of cases in order to ensure that development takes place in towns where infrastructure already exists.

The Metropolitan Rural Area also contains a significant number of small settlements that vary considerably in terms of population. Many of these settlements lack facilities and the aim is therefore to restrict inappropriate expansion into the surrounding countryside, with the focus on consolidation through infill opportunities and small scale rounding off.

Designation SETT I

Designation of Settlements

Settlements are designated in accordance with a hierarchy which consists of:

Metropolitan Urban Area

Regional Capital: Belfast City (⁴Contiguous Development Zone)

City/Towns: Lisburn City, Bangor and Carrickfergus

Small Towns: Holywood

Metropolitan Rural Area

Small Towns: Ballyclare, Carryduff, Greenisland, Hillsborough, Moira and Whitehead.

Villages: Aghalee, Annahilt, Ballyeaston, Ballynure, Ballyrobert, Cogry/ Kilbride, Crawfordsburn, Doagh, Dromara, Drumbeg, Drumbo, Glenavy, Groomsport, Helen's Bay, Lower Ballinderry, Maghaberry, Milltown, Moneyreagh,

Small Settlements:

Ravernet, Seahill, Stoneyford, Straid and Upper Ballinderry.

Ballyaughlis, Ballycarn, Ballycor, Ballycraigy, Ballyknockan, Ballylesson, Ballynadolly, Ballyskeagh, Boardmills, Bruslee, Carr, Craigtantlet, Craigarogan, Crossnacreevy, Drumlough, Drumlough Road, Dundrod, Duneight, Edenderry, Feumore, Gray's Park, Halfpenny Gate, Halftown, Hannahstown, Hillhall, Hillhead, Kesh Bridge, Kingsmoss, Knocknagulliagh, Lambeg, Legacurry, Long Kesh, Lough View, Lower Broomhedge, Lowtown, Lurganure, Lurganville, Lurgill, Magheraconluce, Millbank, Morningside, Orlock, Purdysburn, Roughfort, Ryan Park, Six Road Ends, St James, The Temple, Tildarg, Trooperslane, Tullynacross and Upper Broomhedge.

These settlements form a network that consists of cities and towns centred on the core of the Metropolitan Urban Area, together with a strong network of towns, villages and small settlements situated in the Metropolitan Rural Area.

Small settlements include clusters of development in the rural area which had not been previously identified in development plans. They are:-

Hannahstown (Belfast City Council Area); The Temple; Ballycarn, Ballynadolly, Carr, Duneight, Halftown,

4 The continuous built-up area centred on Belfast and which extends in an arc from Jordanstown and includes Metropolitan Newtownabbey, Belfast City, Metropolitan Lisburn, Metropolitan Castlereagh and Metropolitan North Down.

Lurgill and Morningside (Lisburn City Council Area), Crossnacreevy, Lough View and Ryan Park (Castlereagh Borough Council Area); Bruslee and Hillhead (Newtownabbey Borough Council Area); Craigantlet, Gray's Park, Orlock and Six Road Ends (North Down Borough Council Area).

While these small settlements provide a community focus for their immediate rural area, they generally have limited infrastructure and services. The Plan aims to consolidate development within these settlements, and in the majority of cases, the Settlement Development Limit is drawn to prevent any further encroachment into the countryside, with no further land being provided for expansion.

In Castlereagh Borough, Moneyreagh, Crossnacreevy, Ballyknockan, Ryan Park, and Lough View did not previously have Settlement Development Limits due to the absence of a development plan for the area; consequently, the Plan designates them as settlements.

Policy SETT 2

Development within the Metropolitan Development Limit and Settlement Development Limits

On Zoned Sites planning permission will be granted for development proposals that accord with the specified use or range of uses, and the key site requirements, where specified.

On Land Use Policy Areas planning permission will be granted for alternative uses to the specified use or uses where the development proposal meets all the following criteria:

- it is subordinate to the designated use and occupies a small portion of the Land Use Policy Area;
- it can exist in close proximity to the designated use without adverse environmental consequences;

- it does not prejudice accessibility to the remainder of the Land Use Policy Area;
- it does not prejudice the potential to meet overall development needs in the settlement; and
- it does not prejudice the potential of the road network to meet overall development needs in the settlement.

Planning permission will be granted to development proposals within the Metropolitan Development Limit and Settlement Development Limits, including zoned sites within cities and towns and Land Use Policy Areas within villages and small settlements, provided that the proposal is:

- sensitive to the size and character of the settlement in terms of scale, form, design and use of materials; and
- in accordance with the Key Site Requirements contained in the District Proposals.

Settlement Development Limits are designated for Lisburn City and each town, village and small settlement in the Plan Area. A Metropolitan Development limit is designated for the Contiguous Development Zone.

In accordance with PPS 1: General Principles land use zonings and designations are set out in the District Proposals along with the Key Site Requirements which developers will be expected to meet. The zoning of land provides a basis for rational and consistent decisions on planning applications and provides a measure of certainty about which types of development will and will not be permitted.

It should be noted that Policy SETT 2 does not preclude alternative forms of development on zoned sites where they are deemed to be complementary to the specified use, or range of uses. In making decisions on planning applications, the Department

will have regard to the development plan and all other material considerations.

Zoned Land and Land Use Policy Areas are shown on the relevant settlement maps in the District Proposals. Development proposals in the cities, towns, villages and small settlements in the District will be considered in the context of prevailing regional planning policy and the Plan Proposals.

Development Opportunity Sites are zoned in Belfast City Centre where lands are under-utilised or vacant and where development, which might provide a mix of new uses, could promote the vitality and viability of the City Centre or promote gateway approaches to the City.

It is not the Department's practice to zone lands for specific purposes within villages and small settlements as zoning can create a degree of inflexibility in the development of those lands that can frustrate their orderly development. However, land is zoned in some villages for employment and mixed use (employment/housing) in order to give certainty to the provision of these land uses.

Land Use Policy Areas identify lands considered to be particularly appropriate for specific types of development. The Plan designates Housing Policy Areas in villages and small settlements where appropriate to identify the main housing growth areas.

Policy SETT 3

Arterial Routes

Regeneration of the designated Arterial Routes will be facilitated by:

- allowing an appropriate scale of retail and office use within commercial nodes and shopping/commercial areas, where designated, to serve local populations;
- allowing appropriate housing development; and
- promoting good quality urban design.

The Arterial Routes are key access routes to Belfast City Centre. As such their appearance is important in forming a positive impression for visitors of the City and the Metropolitan Area as a whole.

The Arterial Routes have had a traditional role as local foci for commercial and community life within the City.

The fortunes of the Arterial Routes have varied over the years. Some have seen growth in their service role; however, many others have declined as redevelopment has reduced local populations and as a result of changing shopping patterns.

The Plan seeks to support the regeneration of the Arterial Routes by facilitating retail and office provision, in order to serve local populations. The identification of lands to facilitate an increase in housing within the existing urban footprint will provide the opportunity to increase the support for services provided in local areas.

The following Arterial Routes are designated within Belfast and Castlereagh Districts and, as they include designated commercial nodes and areas designated as shopping and commercial areas, Policies R 4 (Retailing section), OF 3 (Office section) and urban design policies set out in the Urban Environment Section and the District Proposals will apply:

- Albertbridge Road
- Andersonstown Road
- Antrim Road
- Castlereagh Road
- Crumlin Road
- Divis Street/Falls Road
- Donegall Road
- Grosvenor Road/Springfield Road
- Hollywood Road
- Lisburn Road

- Newtownards Road/Upper Newtownards Road
- Oldpark Road
- Ormeau Road
- Shankill Road/Woodvale Road
- Woodstock Road/Cregagh Road
- York Street/York Road/Shore Road

The following Arterial Routes are also designated but do not contain commercial nodes or shopping/commercial areas. Accordingly only urban design policies set out in the Urban Environment Section and the District Proposals will apply:

- Ballygomartin Road
- Castlereagh Street
- Glen Road
- Malone Road/University Road
- Ravenhill Road
- Stewartstown Road
- Woodstock Link

Details of each designated Arterial Route are contained in the relevant District Proposals.

Policy SETT 4

A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland

The policies contained in 'A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland', except where superseded by prevailing regional planning policies, will apply to the entire Plan Area.

A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (The Rural Strategy) specifically stated that it did not apply inside the development limits of Bangor, Carrickfergus or within the Belfast Urban Area.

In order to provide complete and consistent coverage of planning policies in the Plan Area,

this policy extends the application of the policies contained in The Rural Strategy to the entire Plan Area, except where policies have been superseded by PPSs.

Housing

Regional Policy Context

The RDS sets policy directions for the provision of housing that aim to manage housing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development (RG8). This will be achieved by:

- Promoting more sustainable housing development with existing urban areas;
- Ensuring an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone; and
- Use of a broad evaluation framework to assist judgements on the allocation of housing growth.

Under the sustainable development themes of Society, the RDS under RG6 aims to strengthen community cohesion through:

- Development of integrated service and facilities;
- Fostering a stronger community spirit and sense of place; and
- Encouraging mixed housing development.

The RDS 2025 allocated 51,000 units as a Housing Growth Indicator for the BMUA Districts for the period 1998 to 2015. This was adjusted to 66,500 in June 2006. The RDS specifies that these figures are not to be seen as a rigid framework but as guidelines for local planning.

PPS 7: Quality Residential Environments and PPS 7 Addendum: Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas set out the prevailing regional planning policies for achieving quality in the design and layout of new residential developments. They embody the Government's commitment to

sustainable development and the Quality Initiative. They contain criteria-based policies against which all proposals for new residential development, including those on land zoned will be assessed, with the exception of single dwellings in the countryside. These will continue to be assessed under policies contained in PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside.

Supplementary planning guidance for residential development is contained in 'Creating Places – Achieving Quality in Residential Development', published in May 2000. It is the principle guide for use by intending developers in the design of all new housing areas.

In addition, the Department published a Development Control Advice Note (DCAN) 8: Housing in Existing Urban Areas. This will be material to the determination of planning applications for small unit housing within existing urban areas.

PPS 12: Housing in Settlements applies to all residential development proposals within the cities, towns and villages in Northern Ireland. The main purpose of this PPS is to define the processes and policies in relation to housing in settlements that will meet the key objectives of the RDS, including managing housing growth and distribution, supporting urban renaissance and achieving balanced communities.

PPS 3: Access, Movement and Parking and PPS 13: Transportation and Land Use also define the processes and policies flowing from the RDS strategic policy guidance relating to the integration of transport and land use planning. The key objectives of these PPSs include locating development through the land use planning process in order to reduce the need to travel and maximise the potential of the existing transport network; and supporting more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

PPS 1: General Principles states that development plans will set out the main planning requirements

(hereafter referred to as key site requirements) which developers will be expected to meet in respect of particular zoned sites.

The Department will require housing proposals to be designed and implemented in accordance with regional planning policies, and the relevant Plan Proposals, including the key site requirements set out for zoned land. The key site requirements set out the most important matters which developers will need to address when bringing forward proposals for specific sites. They focus on the main infrastructure and local design requirements. Developers should however note that while the key site requirements for the development of zoned sites and Housing Land Use Policy Areas are set out in the Plan, the need for certain supplementary infrastructural works and/or mitigation measures necessary to facilitate the specific scale and form of development proposed may only be identified at planning application stage. An example may be as a result of the findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment or a Transport Assessment.

Many development sites will require the improvement of existing infrastructure and/or the provision of additional supplementary infrastructure to enable the development to take place. The infrastructural works may relate to transport, water and sewerage or land drainage. It is Government policy that developers will bear the full cost of works required to facilitate their development proposals. This policy applies to both public and private sector developments.

Where appropriate, Planning Agreements under Article 40 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 may be used to enable development to proceed. Developers are urged to liaise early in the preparation of their proposals, with the relevant Department, Agency or service provider.

Housing Needs Assessment

PPS 12: Housing in Settlements directs the Department to consider a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) in preparing a development plan. A HNA was published in June 2004 and considered a number of housing categories including regeneration, social housing, supported housing need, travellers, second homes, empty homes and students, for the period up to 2010.

Social housing need is reviewed annually. The Plan has taken account of the HNA for the five year period from April 2012 to March 2017.

BMA Housing Strategy

BMA Housing Strategy

The BMA Housing Strategy aims to:

- accommodate delivery of a level of housing growth in accordance with the RDS direction on managing housing growth and distribution;
- achieve revitalised and compact urban areas by accommodating as much housing as possible within existing urban footprints;
- secure higher density development within urban areas while protecting the quality of the urban environment, particularly the character, amenity and environmental quality of established residential areas;
- where necessary, identify locations for urban extensions elsewhere, avoiding significant environmental constraints, achieving compact urban forms and respecting well defined physical boundaries;
- create the development of balanced local communities and provide housing choice by achieving a mix of tenures and meeting identified needs for social housing;
- support the network of service centres based on towns, villages and small settlements in the Metropolitan Rural Area; and

- protect the rural areas surrounding the Metropolitan Urban Area from development pressures.

The BMA Housing Strategy has been developed in accordance with the guidance provided by the RDS and prevailing regional planning policies. To assist in the identification of land for housing, urban capacity studies have been undertaken for settlements with a population in excess of 5,000. These studies assessed the potential yield from sites within the urban footprints of the cities of Belfast and Lisburn, and the towns of Bangor, Carrickfergus, Holywood, Ballyclare, Carryduff and Greenisland.

Metropolitan Urban Area

The allocation of housing growth potential across the Metropolitan Urban Area has been informed by the Spatial Framework Guidance in the RDS. A sequential approach has been adopted for the identification of housing land based on the search sequence set out in the RDS and which focused firstly on land within existing urban footprints, followed by land zoned for housing in previous area plans and 'whitelands' identified in the BUA Plan 2001. The potential yield from these sources, together with the yield from committed sites and windfall potential, has resulted in the Plan Proposals only including a limited number of housing zonings as urban extensions. Urban extensions include some former 'whitelands' as identified in the BUA Plan 2001. Former 'whitelands' at Jordanstown/Greenisland, Newtownabbey/Carrickfergus, Monkstown, Glencairn, Whiterock, Lagmore, part of Dundonald and Purdysburn are now countryside.

Metropolitan Rural Area

The allocation of housing growth potential across the Metropolitan Rural Area has been informed by the use of 'the Broad Evaluation Framework' in the RDS for settlements with a population over 5,000. The allocation has also taken account of a number of other considerations arising from specific

requirements of the RDS. The Plan Proposals identify sites for housing in a range of settlements whilst recognising it would not be sustainable to locate further development in many of the smaller settlements.

Spatial Framework Guidance in the RDS aims to grow the population of the City of Belfast and cites the key to achieving this as provision of housing to meet the full range of need, whilst being appropriately managed to avoid adverse effects on internationally important nature conservation sites that could be affected by the expansion of Belfast's population. The Plan Proposals seek to consolidate the villages and smaller settlements and in the majority of cases there are no significant extensions to the development limits as shown in previous area plans.

Due to the number of dwellings already built, or not built, but with planning permission, the potential yield within the urban footprints, and the limited amount of land zoned for housing on Greenfield sites, it is not considered appropriate for the Plan Proposals to include phasing of sites.

The Department will also require housing proposals to be designed and implemented in accordance with relevant Plan Proposals, including the key site requirements for zoned land. Key site requirements are set out for zoned land and Housing Land Use Policy Areas, on sites larger than 0.5 hectares and are contained in the relevant District Proposals. Although they have not been included for smaller sites, it is important that these sites are developed in accordance with relevant policy, supplementary planning guidance and in line with normal development management practice.

Key site requirements specify minimum densities for sites zoned for housing within urban footprints which aim to maximise potential housing yield without prejudicing environmental quality.

The Plan Proposals take account of the Housing Needs Assessment prepared by the Northern

Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and land is zoned specifically for social housing and the Travelling Community.

The Housing Strategy places an emphasis on city and town living. The Plan Proposals include policies to protect existing areas of housing within city and town centres in order to retain their residential communities.

Housing Allocations, Policies and Proposals

Allocation HOU 1

Housing

A total of approximately 1958 hectares of land is allocated to be zoned and designated for housing as follows:

District	Metropolitan Urban	Metropolitan Rural	Total
Belfast	315	0	315
Lisburn	367	152	519
Carrickfergus	131	50	181
Castlereagh	203	68	271
Newtownabbey	261	227	488
North Down	174	10	184
Total	1,451	507	1,958

The Metropolitan Rural figures for Carrickfergus, Castlereagh and Newtownabbey Districts include the following allocations for the three settlements with a population in excess of 5,000.

Carrickfergus	Greenisland	42 hectares
Castlereagh:	Carryduff	60 hectares
Newtownabbey	Ballyclare	183 hectares

The above figures include a number of sites zoned and designated specifically for social housing (Allocation HOU 2: Social Housing).

Allocation HOU 1 identifies the total housing allocation for the Plan period. The sites zoned and designated for housing are detailed in the relevant District Proposals.

The zoning of land provides a basis for rational and consistent decisions on planning applications and provides a measure of certainty concerning the types of development that will and will not be permitted.

The lands zoned and designated for housing include:

- sites where 10 or more units have been built, in part or in full, from 1 January 1999 to 31 July 2011;

- sites with extant planning approval for housing at 31 July 2011;
- sites within existing urban footprints as identified by urban capacity studies;
- sites within small towns and villages; and
- a limited number of extensions on greenfield sites including some of the 'whitelands' in the BUA Plan 2001 and land zoned for housing in previous area plans.

In addition to the land zoned and designated in the Plan, sites with a potential yield of less than 10 units that have been built from 1 January 1999 to

31 March 2003, also contribute to the housing supply during the Plan period.

A significant housing yield will also result from the comprehensive development of Titanic Quarter in the Belfast Harbour Area and other mixed use sites.

Windfall development consists of potential future housing development on land not zoned for housing within the existing urban footprints, and this will also contribute to the housing supply.

Housing in the Metropolitan Urban Area

Over 70% of the estimated housing yield in the Metropolitan Urban Area is located within the existing urban footprints. This will retain the compact urban form of the Metropolitan Urban Area while providing sufficient land to meet the RDS Housing Growth Indicator.

Site densities are specified in the Key Site Requirements in the relevant District proposals in line with prevailing policy and in response to specific site circumstances.

A minimum site density has been specified in the Key Site Requirements for sites zoned and designated for housing within urban footprints and other sites as deemed appropriate. This is to ensure the optimum use of land by achieving higher densities.

A maximum site density is also stipulated for sites zoned for housing outside urban footprints in cities and towns, on sites zoned for housing in towns where an urban footprint has not been identified and on sites designated for housing in other settlements, where appropriate. This is to ensure that greenfield sites are not developed to excess at the expense of lands within the urban footprint. It will also minimise the potential for significant divergence between the housing yield which could result from the Plan Proposals and the specified housing growth indicators for the Plan area. A maximum density has not been set for sites within the existing urban area or for sites within the core of villages.

A number of zonings in the Plan, following the Public Inquiry, have no density key site requirement. For the purposes of calculating the Plan provision in these instances, the density of the approved planning application, or 25 units per hectare, has been used. Prevailing regional planning policy will be used to determine an acceptable density for such sites.

Allocation HOU 2

Social Housing

A total of approximately 103 hectares of land are allocated to be specifically zoned and designated for social housing as follows:

District	Metropolitan Urban	Metropolitan Rural	Total
Belfast	69.74	-	69.74
Lisburn	17.5	0.3	17.8
Carrickfergus	-	1.24	1.24
Castlereagh	2.89	-	2.89
Newtownabbey	8.44	-	8.44
North Down	2.91	-	2.91
Total	101.48	1.54	103.02

In addition to the above, key site requirements have been attached to a number of housing zonings throughout the Plan area which stipulate a minimum number of social housing units to be provided. This will provide a minimum of an additional 655 units. There is also a requirement within the Plan that 10-15% of a minimum of 3,500 dwellings in Titanic Quarter are to be developed for social housing.

The Housing Needs Assessment undertaken by NIHE identifies the need for 8,416 units of social housing over the period April 2012 to March 2017. Remaining potential from undeveloped social housing zonings in the draft Plan, together with new zonings arising from the Department's acceptance of PAC recommendations, contribute toward meeting this

need. In addition, NIHE have programmed social housing schemes on unzoned sites which are already in the ownership of Housing Associations or NIHE. This together with other windfall will also contribute to meeting the need over the Plan period.

The sites zoned and designated for social housing are detailed in the relevant District Proposals.

Work on a new Planning Policy Statement on Affordable Housing, which will encompass social housing, is currently underway. Once published, implementation will be achieved through Planning Agreements to secure a proportion of social housing in new developments.

Policy HOU 3

City and Town Centre Living

Planning permission will be granted for proposals that increase the housing stock in designated City and Town Centres where they meet regional planning policies and are in accordance with the Plan Proposals.

City and town centre living is a key element in contributing to a vibrant centre. Housing in central areas encourages a more sustainable pattern of development by assisting urban regeneration, and optimising existing infrastructure. City and town centre living encourages the development of 'walkable communities' with environmental benefits through reducing the need to use private cars, and community benefits to people such as the elderly and young people who do not have access to a car. It can also help to revitalise the physical fabric, with the re-use of vacant buildings and the redevelopment of derelict and unattractive land. Finally, there are social benefits with the addition of new households to ageing communities, often bringing children to support local schools. Housing can also provide benefits in terms of activity and surveillance outside normal commercial hours.

Opportunities to increase housing provision in city and town centres include:

- the full and part conversion of existing buildings and the development of new housing;
- the full or part conversion of long-term vacant buildings;
- Living over the Shop⁵ schemes; and
- the inclusion of residential development within mixed-use development schemes.

Policy HOU 4

Protected Housing Areas in City and Town Centres

Within designated Protected City and Town Centre Housing Areas, planning permission will not be granted for any development that results in a change of use from housing.

The Department will resist the spread of commercial uses into areas of city and town centres which have a useful longer-term residential life. Such areas provide a valuable housing stock and are homes for established communities which contribute to the variety and vitality of life in city and town centres.

Protected City and Town Centre Housing Areas are designated in Belfast, Lisburn, Bangor, Carrickfergus, Ballyclare and Holywood as identified on the City Centre and Town Centre maps in the relevant District Proposals.

Accommodation for the Travelling Community

Within the context of meeting local housing need and ensuring balanced communities, it is important to deal with the needs of the Travelling Community; therefore proposals for Traveller's accommodation that meet identified local need

⁵ Regional Policy and guidance is provided in paragraph 27 of PPS 5 and Policy HS 1 of PPS 12

should be encouraged, subject to prevailing regional policy, currently Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS 12): Housing in Settlements. These proposals will be expected to clearly demonstrate how they meet identified local need and the planning authority will assess this in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

As with all development proposals, careful consideration will need to be given to the impact of the proposal on both surrounding land uses and the environment. Proposals that have a significant detrimental impact on surrounding land uses or the environment will be resisted.

Policy HS 3 in PPS 12: Housing in Settlements requires that where a need is identified and a development plan is under preparation, a suitable site should be identified.

NIHE carried out a Traveller Housing Need Assessment for the period 2004 to 2008 which resulted in a five year programme of schemes to address the accommodation needs of Travellers in Northern Ireland. Sites are specifically zoned for Accommodation for the Travelling Community in Belfast. A further review of this assessment was carried out for 2008 to 2013 which identified a need for a 6 units transit site within Belfast District. As yet no land has been identified by NIHE for this purpose.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing comprises the social rented sector; housing benefit funded private rented and that part of the low cost owner occupation market which can be purchased utilising 30% or less of gross household income.

There is currently no mechanism in place for the Plan to specifically address this issue in respect of its housing designations.

The Plan however focuses development at higher densities in urban areas, promotes mixed housing developments to accommodate balanced communities and promotes improved infrastructure

and communications within each District. These planning measures may indirectly make a positive contribution to affordability issues.

Second Homes

The NIHE Housing Needs Assessment states that the number of second homes in the BMA is at a relatively low level in comparison to other Districts. It indicates that the issue of second homes and their impact on the wider housing market is less obvious.

Employment

Regional Policy Context

The RDS regional guidance seeks to ensure an adequate supply of land to facilitate sustainable economic growth (RGI) through the following means:

- Assess the quality and viability of sites zoned for economic development uses in the area plans;
- Protect zoned land;
- Promote economic development opportunities across the region focussed on the BMUA, Londonderry and Hubs as the main centres for employment and services; and
- Provide a network of economic development opportunities.

The RDS also contains Spatial Framework Guidance to promote urban economic development at key locations throughout the BMUA and ensure sufficient land is available for jobs (SFGI). To achieve this it seeks to:

- Identify and protect key locations for economic growth;
- Enhance Lisburn City as a major employment and commercial centre;
- Promote the regeneration of the town centres of Bangor and Carrickfergus; and
- Direct mixed use development towards sites which will enhance local regeneration initiatives.

PPS 4: Planning and Economic Development sets out prevailing regional planning policy.

Directive 96/82/EC, known as the Seveso II Directive, was implemented in Northern Ireland by the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (NI) 2000 and the Planning (Control of Major Accidents Hazards) Regulations (NI) 2000. These are specifically concerned with the implementation of Article 12 of the Directive which requires that

the objectives of preventing major accidents and limiting their consequences are taken into account in land use planning policies and that these objectives are pursued through controls. There is also a requirement to set up appropriate consultation procedures to facilitate implementation of these Regulations.

The Plan Proposals do not identify new development sites for the use or storage of hazardous substances. The determination of planning permission for such proposals may entail the submission of an Environmental Statement, which may be accompanied by an application for consent to store hazardous materials on a site. Granting consent to store hazardous substances would establish a consultation distance within which the Department is required to consult with the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) and the Department's Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) on proposals for new development.

Details of such guidance and procedures for controlling development in relation to hazardous substances are contained in the Department's publication entitled "Development Control Advice Note 12 (DCAN 12) – Planning Controls for Hazardous Substances" available from local Area Planning Offices or Planning and Local Government Group.

BMA Employment Strategy

The BMA Employment Strategy seeks to sustain balanced economic growth and job creation by:

- promoting City and Town Centres as the main foci for retail and office functions;
- providing a generous and continuous supply of land for employment uses; and
- promoting a balanced portfolio of employment sites throughout the Plan Area through the zoning of a complementary range of sites as follows:

- Regional gateway and major transportation corridor sites;
- Mixed use and regeneration sites close to major areas of disadvantage and social need and / or in support of economic or community regeneration;
- Sites along main transportation routes within existing settlement development limits providing employment opportunities in local areas; and
- Established areas of existing employment.

Acceptable Uses on employment zonings except where otherwise specified in individual zonings (based on the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2004):

Class B1: Business (b) as a call centre
 Class B1: Business (c) for research and development
 Class B2: Light Industrial
 Class B3: General Industrial
 Class B4: Storage or Distribution

City and Town Centres

A major factor of economic change in recent years has been the growth of the service sector, and this is forecast to continue for the foreseeable future.

The Department has given recognition to the economic forces driving change in the economy by promoting Belfast City Centre, Lisburn City Centre and town centres as main foci for service sector employment (See the Plan Proposals for Retailing and Office Development).

City and town centres throughout the Plan Area are considered to be important locations for employment creation as they represent neutral territory accessible to all sections of the community. Belfast City Centre will continue to be the main focus for service employment throughout the Plan period.

The Plan Proposals identify sites which present opportunities for development and regeneration. Within Belfast City Centre opportunities for development are designated at gateways into the city at Grosvenor Road and East Bridge Street. These represent major opportunities for employment creation and for the regeneration of areas in physical decline at key prominent locations.

Smaller opportunity sites are zoned in Belfast City Centre. Details of the opportunity sites and of Key Site Requirements are contained in the Belfast District Proposals.

Land zoned for Employment

The Strategy is to provide a generous and continuous supply of land for employment purposes through a hierarchy of sites which consists of:

- Major Employment Locations (MELs);
- Mixed Use Sites; and
- Key Local Employment Sites.

The Employment Strategy has been developed in accordance with the RDS and in discussion with District Councils, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, the business community, private sector investors and local enterprise.

Whilst it is not the role of the Plan to create employment, the Plan Proposals seek to promote and encourage job creation by establishing a framework which is supportive to employment and business needs and responsive to the needs of the community.

A major priority is to facilitate job creation within and accessible to disadvantaged areas in line with government's Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy. Opportunities for job creation through the zoning of new sites and the protection of existing employment land will help to promote regeneration.

The Plan Proposals promote a balanced portfolio of employment sites of varying sizes, in a range of locations throughout the Plan Area in order to cater for new business creation and the expansion and development of existing businesses.

The employment sites which are zoned contribute to sustainable development due to their proximity to major roads, the rail network or bus routes within the Plan Area. Regional gateway and/or major transportation corridor sites will facilitate new employment opportunities in sustainable locations accessible to all sections of the community.

Sites along main transportation routes providing employment opportunities in local areas will help reduce the need to travel and contribute to sustainable patterns of development.

The Plan Proposals will improve the advantages of business locations, for example, by transportation initiatives such as improved public transport, traffic management initiatives and road proposals.

Allocation EMP 1

Employment

A total of 2,317* hectares of land is to be allocated to be zoned for employment use distributed as follows:

Belfast	944* hectares
Lisburn	439 hectares
Carrickfergus	151 hectares
Castlereagh	222 hectares
Newtownabbey	445 hectares
North Down	116 hectares

and comprising:-

Metropolitan Urban Area: 667 hectares of land in new zonings

Major Employment Locations

Belfast Harbour Area (including Titanic Quarter)	87* hectares
West Lisburn/Blaris	119 hectares
Purdysburn / Knockbracken	86* hectares
Global Point/Ballyhenry	91 hectares

Key Employment Sites

North Foreshore Belfast	127* hectares
Monagh Bypass / Upper Springfield Road Belfast	36* hectares

Mixed Use Sites

Crumlin Road Regeneration Site	13 hectares
Barbour Threads, Lisburn	6* hectares

Key Local Employment Sites

Millmount, Dundonald	9 hectares
North of Antrim Road, Mallusk	20 hectares
South of Antrim Road, Mallusk	33 hectares
Newtownards Road, Bangor	23 hectares
Knockmore Road/Lissue Road, Lisburn	3 hectares
Lissue Road, Lisburn	14 hectares

*The amount of employment use on Mixed Use sites is to be determined through the Development Management process taking into account any relevant key site requirements

Metropolitan Rural Area: 48 hectares of land in new zonings

Employment Sites

Hillhead Road, Ballyclare	5 hectares
Ballynahinch Road, Carryduff	12 hectares
Comber Road, Carryduff	5 hectares

Gobrana Road, Glenavy	6 hectares
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Mixed Use Sites

East of Hillhead Road, Ballyclare	12* hectares
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West of Hillhead Road, Ballyclare	4* hectares
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Rathfriland Road, Dromara	4* hectares
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Lands zoned for existing employment: 1,602 hectares

Belfast	681 hectares
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Lisburn	287 hectares
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Carrickfergus	151 hectares
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Castlereagh	110 hectares
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Newtownabbey	280 hectares
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North Down	93 hectares
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*The amount of employment use on Mixed Use sites is to be determined through the Development Management process taking into account any relevant key site requirements

development to MELs (see Office Proposals).

Mixed Use Sites

The zoned lands include sites of former major industrial/institutional uses with potential for redevelopment. Redevelopment of the sites offers the opportunity to provide a mix of uses necessary to support economic and community regeneration of the local areas. Employment uses should be an important element in any development package. Crumlin Road Regeneration Site is well located within areas of disadvantage in North and West Belfast.

Key Local Employment Sites

Key Local Employment Sites are greenfield sites located on the edge of settlements along main transportation routes. These sites will facilitate investment and job creation and provide employment opportunities in local areas reducing the need to travel and contributing to sustainable patterns of development.

Metropolitan Rural Area

The Plan Proposals also make provision to facilitate employment development in towns, villages and in the rural area. Land for Employment and / or Mixed Use is zoned in the towns of Ballyclare and Carryduff and in the villages of Glenavy and Dromara to serve the outer rural areas of Lisburn District. Existing Employment land with capacity for further development is zoned at Glenavy Road, Moira and Maryland Industrial Estate, Ballygowan Road, Moneyreagh.

Proposals for employment development on lands within villages and small settlements which do not have specific areas zoned for employment uses will be assessed in accordance with prevailing regional

Lands for employment are zoned to facilitate the needs of industry and business enterprises over the Plan period. The zoning of land provides a basis for rational and consistent decisions on planning applications and provides a measure of certainty about which types of development will and will not be permitted.

Major Employment Locations (MELs)

MELs are designated at Belfast Harbour Area, Global Point/Ballyhenry, Purdysburn/Knockbracken and West Lisburn/Blaris. Their location at regional gateways and within major transportation corridors facilitates the creation of new employment opportunities in sustainable locations which are accessible to all sections of the community. The Plan Proposals accommodate limited dispersal of office

planning policy.

Existing Employment Land

Existing employment sites zoned in the Plan comprise:-

- Undeveloped or partially developed zonings in previous Area Plans; and
- Developed zonings from previous Area Plans and other lands currently in employment use.

Lands zoned for employment in previous Area Plans are carried forward into the Plan and are zoned for employment use. They comprise both developed and undeveloped employment sites of 0.5 hectares and over. These lands provide additional capacity for employment uses within the Plan Period. Key site requirements for large undeveloped portions of land zoned for industry in previous Area Plans are set out in the District Proposals. For smaller undeveloped portions, development proposals will be considered in accordance with prevailing regional planning policy and relevant Plan Proposals.

The developed portions of zonings from previous Area Plans and other lands currently in employment use are zoned in order to retain them for employment purposes. These lands have some potential to accommodate new development and also offer opportunities of redevelopment for business use.

Details of the zonings for employment are contained in the District Proposals.

In accordance with PPS 1: General Principles, land use zonings are set out in the District Proposals along with the Key Site Requirements which developers will be expected to meet. Key Site Requirements may include matters relating to the provision of infrastructure, landscaping and access arrangements as well as requirements relating to the type, design and layout of employment development.

Developers should however note that while the

Key Site Requirements for the development of zoned sites are set out in the Plan, the need for certain supplementary infrastructural works and/or mitigation measures necessary to facilitate the specific scale and form of development proposed may only be identified at planning application stage. An example may be as a result of an Environmental

Impact Assessment or a Transport Assessment.

Transportation

Regional Policy Context

The 'Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement: Moving Forward' published in November 1998, signalled a desire to move away from a transportation system dominated by the private car to a more balanced and integrated system, in which public transport together with cycling and walking would play a greater role.

The RDS 2035 seeks to "deliver a balanced approach to transport infrastructure" (RG2) by managing the use of road and rail space in a better way through the following means:

- Improve connectivity;
- Maximise the potential of the Regional Strategic Transport Network;
- Use road space and railways more efficiently;
- Improve social inclusion;
- Manage the movement of freight;
- Improve access to our cities and towns; and
- Improve safety by adopting a 'safe systems' approach to road safety.

The RDS recognises that the Belfast Metropolitan Area is at the centre of the regional transport network and the major gateway for national and international trade. It has a major role in the European network of City Regions with vital links to Dublin, Britain and continental Europe. Belfast's airports and sea port serve the Region as gateway links to the world.

In terms of Transportation and Spatial Guidance, the RDS seeks to manage the movement of people and goods within the BMUA (SFG4) through

- Managing travel demand within the BMUA;

- Improving the public transport service;
- Integration of Land Use and Transportation;
- Introduction of a Rapid Transit system;
- Managing the efficient movement of freight; and
- Improving facilities for walking and cycling which is co-ordinated with infrastructure investment.

An integral part of the RDS was the preparation of a Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) to cover a 10-year period from 2002-2012. Implementation of the RTS is through the transport plans listed below:

- The Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTNTP);
- The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP); and
- The Sub-Regional Transport Plan (SRTP).

A New Approach to Regional Transportation

"Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future - A New Approach to Regional Transportation" was launched by DRD in 2012. The publication sets out how DRD will develop regional transportation beyond 2015 when the current transport plans reach their conclusion. The document lists three High Level Aims for transportation along with essential supporting Strategic Objectives. These cover the economy, society, and the environment. It shows how strategic transportation developments can be assessed to allow informed decision making on future transportation investment.

The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan

The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) is the local transport plan for the Plan Area, prepared by DRD. The process of preparing BMTP was separate from the statutory process for the preparation of the Area Plan but preparation of the Plans proceeded in parallel. Close liaison between the plan teams ensured that the Plans

are mutually supportive and that land use and transportation proposals and strategies are co-ordinated and integrated. In this respect the land use allocations in the Plan are closely linked with the priorities and proposed transport investment in BMTP. In developing BMTP attention has been paid to improving accessibility to key strategic sites and regeneration areas identified by the RDS and being progressed by the Plan. In addition the Plan takes into account the land use requirements of transportation infrastructure.

BMTP sets out the transport schemes and measures expected to be implemented up to 2015. The Plan Proposals incorporate those elements of BMTP which have land use and spatial planning implications (see Transportation Policies and Proposals).

BMTP makes proposals according to four modal themes:

- provision for walking and cycling;
- public transport measures;
- highway measures; and
- management measures.

Walking and Cycling

The provision of improved facilities for walking and cycling as a means of providing greater travel choice is a key principle of BMTP. It proposed wide ranging initiatives to improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists such that walking and cycling can form a more significant element of overall travel in the Plan Area. BMTP proposed the implementation of a number of initiatives such as greater priority for pedestrians on local roads, Quality Walking Routes/Networks, development of the existing Cycle Network and implementation of cycle parking.

BMTP also targets improved integration between walking and cycling and public transport, with improved walking routes to major public transport stations and stops, across the BMA. It also includes provision of cycle stands at main trip attractors

including rail stations and major bus stop locations.

Public Transport

BMTP proposed significant investment in the rail network. Proposals included increasing service frequencies by up to 50%, improving access to and facilities at rail stations, and the provision of a new station at West Lisburn. Park and Ride facilities are proposed, providing high quality facilities at a number of key stations in each of the commuter corridors and where opportunities exist, formalising and expanding parking provision and pick up/set down facilities at other stations.

BMTP also proposed to develop an extensive Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) network focused on radial routes in Belfast, supplemented by routes serving other corridors. Significant components of the QBCs have now been introduced on 13 of Belfast City's arterial routes. These measures offer a substantial improvement in the quality of bus provision and comprise infrastructure measures such as the provision of additional bus priority measures on the road network, service improvements including increased frequencies and operational improvements such as the enforcement of bus priority measures.

These measures will complement proposed improvements to the rail network and the introduction of rapid transit.

Rapid Transit

In November 2012, following a period of consultation, the Northern Ireland Executive supported a DRD proposal which identified recommended network routes and the beginning of detailed design.

The system will utilise high quality rapid transit vehicles and halts with level access. The three Belfast Rapid Transit routes will initially link Dundonald in East Belfast, McKinstry Road in West Belfast and the Titanic Quarter with and through the city centre. These routes will connect with a one-way city centre loop which is currently being facilitated by DRD's

Belfast on the Move Transport Masterplan. Details of the routes are as follows:

CITI Route to Titanic Quarter - from Queen Elizabeth Bridge along Queen's Quay and Queen's Road to Titanic Quarter and returning to the city centre via Queen's Road, Queen's Quay, Station Street, Bridge End and Queen's Bridge;

EWAY route to East Belfast - from the city centre along Albertbridge Road and Upper Newtownards Road and terminating at a park and ride site in Dundonald;

WWAY route to West Belfast – from the city centre along Divis Street, Falls Road, Andersonstown Road, Stewartstown Road and terminating at a park and ride site near McKinsty Road Roundabout; and

One-way city centre loop - from Queen's Bridge, along Oxford Street, May Street, Howard Street, Fisherwick Place, College Square East, Wellington Place, Chichester Street, Victoria Street, Custom House Square, Donegall Quay and Oxford Street to the Queen Elizabeth Bridge.

Subject to the success of these initial routes and the future availability of funding, the inherent flexibility of this bus-based system will allow it to be extended to serve north and south Belfast.

Highway Measures

The BMA lies at the heart of the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN). The performance of the Strategic Network is fundamental to the economic vitality and social wellbeing of the BMA and to Northern Ireland as a whole. Within the BMA the RSTN provides the key linkages to the port and airport gateways to Northern Ireland which are significant to the whole of the Region.

The BMA's network of roads can be characterised as comprising:

- a strategic highway network providing for longer distance traffic within the BMA and linked to the wider Regional Strategic Transportation Network

within Northern Ireland as defined by the RTS; and

- a non-strategic highway network – the roads that serve residential areas, city and town centres, and the distributor roads that link these areas to the Strategic Network.

BMTP proposed a number of major capacity enhancements at key locations in the Strategic Network in the form of road widening and junction improvements to address 'bottlenecks'. The Strategic Network will be managed through Route Management Strategies to better facilitate the safe and efficient movement of longer distance traffic. Within the non-strategic highway network traffic management measures are proposed to improve the flow of traffic and reduce the negative impact of traffic, for example, traffic calming.

A number of significant non-strategic road schemes linked to potential development opportunities or to give relief to urban areas were also identified within the Transport Plan.

Management Measures

BMTP proposed a range of management measures to maximise the value of the investment in walking and cycling facilities, public transport provision and highway improvements. The management measures proposed include demand management measures that aim to influence the choice of travel mode through initiatives such as parking policy, the use of intelligent transport systems, education and awareness initiatives, land use measures and innovative work practices.

These measures include "Belfast on the Move". The main aim of the project is to reorganise traffic management within Belfast city centre to facilitate a reduction in general traffic levels and encourage greater walking, cycling and public transport use. The proposals will give higher priority to public transport, pedestrians and cyclists.

One of the benefits of the Belfast on the Move project is that it will free up street space for public transport, walking and cycling and for those people who need to drive into the city centre for shopping, work or leisure.

Regional Planning Policies on Transportation

PPS 3: Access, Movement & Parking sets out those matters which will be taken into account in determining planning applications involving development which affects the public road network and road safety.

PPS 3 contains regional planning policy in relation to the designated Protected Routes Network, which is to restrict access onto selected roads. Protected routes within the Plan Area are shown on Map No. 1 – Overview and the relevant settlement maps.

PPS 13: Transportation and Land Use sets out policies which flow directly from the Regional Guidance and Spatial Framework Guidance within the RDS and forms part of the implementation process of the RTS Transportation Strategy. Its primary objective is to promote an integrated approach to the planning of transportation and development at all levels in the formulation of policy.

Supplementary Planning Guidance is contained in Development Control Advice Note 15 (2nd edition) Vehicular Access Standards, published August 1999.

The following transportation schemes are either proposed or have been completed. In a number of instances some schemes may not be undertaken before 2015 or may be subject to further review. However, such schemes are included for information purposes.

Transportation Schemes

Railways

- Extension Great Victoria Street / Grosvenor Road Station; and
- Relocation of station at Knockmore, Lisburn.

Rapid Transit Schemes

- EWAY;
- WWAY; and
- CITI Route City Centre – Titanic Quarter Route.

Pedestrian/Cycle Bridges

- Corporation Street to Queen's Quay; and
- Gasworks to Ormeau Embankment.

Park and Ride Sites - Completed

- Cairnshill *
- Jordanstown *
- Carrickfergus *
- Greenisland *
- Mossley West
- Moira
- Blacks Road
- Whiteabbey

Park and Ride Sites - Proposed

- West Lisburn *
- Lisburn Station *
- Sandyknowes *
- Bangor Station *
- Hollywood *
- Quarry Corner
- McKinstry Road

* Sites identified in BMTP

The movement of goods to, from and within the Plan Area is a fundamental element of the economy

of the Area and the wider Region. Proposed enhancements to the Strategic Highway Network will facilitate safe and efficient long distance movements of people and freight within the Plan Area.

Measures proposed will benefit freight transport, building upon the wider commitment of the RTS to improve the Region's Strategic Highway Network. The measures include improvements to the BMA's Strategic Road Network with particular emphasis on relieving existing bottlenecks and provision of better access to Regional Gateways and Major Employment Locations.

Strategic Road Schemes

- A2 Sydenham Bypass
Widening of the A2 Sydenham Bypass between Tillysburn and M3 Lagan Crossing from a two lane dual carriageway to a three lane dual carriageway;
- A55 Outer Ring Road
Widening of the A55 Knock Road between Sandown Road and Brooklyn from one lane in each direction to two lanes in each direction;
- A2 to Carrickfergus
Widening of the A2 at Greenisland on the Carrickfergus Transport Corridor from one lane in each direction to two lanes in each direction;
- York Street Interchange
West Link / M2 / M3 junction;
Underpasses under Lagan Road and Dargan Rail Bridges; and
New bridges at York Street and Dock Street;
- M1 to A1 Link
Widening of M1 between Blacks Road and Sprucefield and improved connection between the M1 and A1;
- Blacks Road Link
Link road between Upper Malone Road and the M1 at Blacks Road providing a strategic alternative to the existing A55; and
- A24 Saintfield Road Relief Road

Link road between the A24 at Cairnshill and the A55 at Newtownbreda, providing relief to the A24 Saintfield Road and A24 / A55 Outer Ring junction.

Non-Strategic Road Schemes

- City Centre Ring Road – Southern Section including Bankmore Link;
- Harbour Estate access (new Junction on the A2);
- Carrickfergus Spine Road including Victoria Road and Sloefield Road;
- Quarry Corner – East Link Road;
- Knockmore – M1 Link;
- North Lisburn Feeder Road;
- Ballyclare Relief Road; and
- Hightown Road Link.

Developers may be responsible for funding Non-Strategic Road Schemes either in full or in part. DRD's priority for funding will be concentrated on the construction of major capital works schemes on the Strategic Network. Any contribution towards developer-led schemes will be subject to detailed economic appraisal, the availability of funding and inclusion within the Major Works Programme.

General Principle 5 as set out in PPS 13: Transportation and Land Use requires developers to bear the costs of transport infrastructure necessitated by their development. Key site requirements will set out the main transport infrastructure which developers will be expected to provide for land allocations and specific zoned sites. However, it should be noted, that the need for supporting infrastructure works and / or mitigation measures necessary to facilitate the specific scale and form of proposed development may only be identified at the planning application stage.

The details of developer requirements will depend on the individual circumstances of each site and the precise nature of the proposal. Planning conditions may be imposed or a planning or other legal agreement may be required, to ensure the appropriate phasing and implementation of any necessary improvements to transport infrastructure.

Abandoned Road Schemes

The following road schemes, which are no longer to be implemented, are abandoned:-

Belfast

- Crumlin Road (East)
- Ormeau Embankment extension to Albertbridge /Short Strand
- Ormeau Park link, Ormeau Road to Ravenhill
- Ormeau Road, Cromac Street to Ormeau Bridge
- Ormeau Road/Saintfield Road, Rosetta to Grahamholm
- Hollywood Arches Bypass
- Connsbank Link

Newtownabbey

- Ballyclare Road to Antrim Road
- Ballyduff Road
- Beverly Road
- Cloughfern Route
- Doagh Road, Monkstown to Manse Road
- Manse Road/Ballyhenry Road
- Monkstown Avenue to Shore Road

North Down

- Gransha Road – Green Road
- New Bangor Road

Protection will no longer be sought for the road schemes listed above which were identified in previous Area Plans.

Policy TRAN 1**Parking Standards within Areas of Parking Restraint**

Within designated Areas of Parking Restraint the following parking standards will be applied:-

AREA	Car Parking Standards		
	RESIDENTIAL	NON RESIDENTIAL	NON RESIDENTIAL
	No. of spaces per dwelling	No. of non-operational spaces per m ² of floorspace	No. of operational spaces per m ² of floorspace
Belfast City Centre Core	1.0	1 / 300	1 / 930
Belfast City Centre Fringe	1.0	1 / 100	
Lisburn City Centre, Bangor and Carrickfergus Town Centres	1.0	1 / 50	
Commercial Nodes on Arterial Routes [outside Belfast City Centre Areas of Parking Restraint (Core and Fringe)]	1.0	1 / 100	

Reductions in the above standards will be considered in appropriate circumstances where evidence of alternative transport arrangements can be clearly demonstrated, or other material considerations exist that justify an exception to the policy. Proposals involving car parking in excess of the standards will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

BMTP proposes that a policy of demand management be pursued across the BMA as a means of reducing the number of car journeys made during peak periods. The objective is to reduce the need for car borne commuting and promote a shift from car use in peak periods towards other forms of transport. Demand management will be focused upon controlling the amount of non-operational parking that can be provided within designated Areas of Parking Restraint in city and town centres and in commercial nodes on the Arterial Routes in Belfast.

Within Areas of Parking Restraint the amount of non-operational parking provided with new development will be controlled in order to restrain the availability of long-stay commuter parking.

Limited non-operational parking will be acceptable for non-residential uses within city and town centres and within commercial nodes on the Arterial Routes in Belfast in order to encourage the provision of uses within these areas in line with the Plan Proposals.

Outside Areas of Parking Restraint parking standards will be in accordance with prevailing regional planning policy.

The details of the designated Areas of Parking Restraint are contained in the relevant District Proposals.

Policy TRAN 2**Publicly Owned Off-Street Surface Car Parks within City and Town Centres**

Planning permission will only be granted for development on publicly owned off-street surface car parks in designated City and Town Centres, provided that all existing car parking spaces are replaced, either on site or in an appropriate location in the vicinity of the site, and that the spaces are reserved for short-stay use only controlled to permit only short stay parking between the hours of 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

Exceptions will be considered for long stay use where the replacement parking is associated with public park and ride schemes or with railway stations where the sole use of the parking is limited to those using train services.

Ground level car parking in city and town centres can occupy sites with potential value for development for other purposes. Such sites are often in locations where there is pressure for other uses and where it is desirable to have an appropriate form of built development to reinstate the streetscape. Where development of surface car parking is permitted, replacement parking spaces will be controlled for short-stay use only, consistent with the strategy to reduce car borne commuting. The Department will consider proposals which seek to facilitate a number of publicly owned car parks in one location, for example, a multi storey car park replacing a number of surface level car parks.

Development proposals shall be in accordance with Key Site Requirements as set out in relevant District Proposals.

Regional Gateways**Belfast Port**

Belfast is the largest port in Northern Ireland, catering for a range of seaborne trade comprising freight containers (lift on/lift off and roll on/roll off containers), passenger/car ferries and bulk cargoes. During 2011 the number of freight vehicles passing through the Port rose by 14% to 357,000. Although some sectors, such as those related to construction, continued to struggle, this was offset by growth elsewhere. The port handled over 17.6 million tonnes of trade in 2011.

During 2011 passenger numbers passing through the Harbour remained static at 1.3m whilst there were 32 cruise ship calls with 58,000 passengers and crew.

Belfast Port is Northern Ireland's major gateway, located at the heart of RSTN. Its continued development is of vital strategic significance to the Region. Good access to the Port and associated facilities is fundamental to the economic and social wellbeing of the Metropolitan Area and to NI as a whole.

The Plan Proposals facilitate the development of Belfast Harbour Area. Approximately 288 hectares of land are zoned for existing employment use on the County Antrim side of the Port.

Lands zoned for employment use at North Foreshore are well located to accommodate storage of containers associated with the activities of the Port. Plan Proposals for the North Foreshore treat such uses as acceptable.

On the County Down side of the Harbour, more than 260 hectares of land are zoned for existing employment use. Details of these zonings are contained in Belfast District Proposals.

Recent highway schemes and the proposed Sydenham Bypass and York Street Interchange will improve the Strategic Road Network and provide better access to Belfast Harbour Area.

The George Best Belfast City Airport

The George Best Belfast City Airport (the City Airport) is located within Belfast Harbour Area and has an important role as a gateway to the Metropolitan Area and wider region. The airport handled 2.5 million passengers in 2011, representing approximately 40% of the scheduled domestic air traffic to and from Northern Ireland.

The City Airport is close to a large residential population in East Belfast and North Down. In order to control the environmental impact of air traffic on residents, the operations of the airport are regulated by a planning agreement which places limits on passenger numbers, aircraft movements and noise levels. This agreement may be subject to review.

The proposed widening of the A2 Sydenham Bypass will improve accessibility to Belfast City Airport.

Proposals for further development of Belfast Harbour Area will be assessed in the context of Policy PSU 3 of the Rural Strategy. Policy SETT 4 of the Plan applies the policies of the Rural Strategy to the Plan Area where these have not been superseded by Planning Policy Statements.

Control of Development in Airport Public Safety Zones

The Secretary of State for Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority are responsible for civil aviation safety throughout the UK. The Department for Transport also maintains a policy to control activity and development within Public Safety Zones close to the ends of airport runways. The basic policy objective is that there should be no increase in the number of people living, working or congregating in Public Safety Zones and that, over time, the number should be reduced as circumstances allow.

The Department's policy for controlling development within Public Safety Zones for the runway at The George Best Belfast City Airport is set out Policy Publication: Control of Development in Airport Public Safety Zones (December 2007). This

document supersedes Policy PSU 3 of the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland insofar as it relates to Public Safety Zones.

This document contains guidance which will be employed by the Department in deciding planning applications and the consideration of road proposals affecting land within Public Safety Zones.

Retailing

Regional Context

One of the key aims of the RDS and the Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG) is to strengthen Belfast as the regional economic driver. Belfast is the regional capital and focus of administration, commerce, specialised services and cultural amenities. The RDS seeks to support and strengthen the distinctive role of Belfast City Centre as the primary retail location in Northern Ireland (SFG3). It urges that a precautionary approach should be continued in relation to future major retail development proposals based on the likely risk of out of centre shopping developments having an adverse impact on the city centre shopping area.

The RDS seeks to promote urban economic development at key locations throughout the BMUA and ensure sufficient land is available for jobs (SFG1). It highlights Lisburn's vibrant city centre and the potential of the city to grow its retail offer while Sprucefield will continue to retain its status as a regional shopping centre.

The RDS considers that regeneration is necessary to create more accessible, vibrant city and town centres which offer people more local choice for shopping, social activity and recreation in order to achieve urban and rural renaissance (RG7).

The RDS also promotes the regeneration of the town centres of Bangor and Carrickfergus and considers it will be important that they extend their employment and retail base to serve their significant housing catchment areas.

PPS 5: Retailing and Town Centres sets out the Department's regional planning policies for town centres and retail developments.

BMAP Retail Study

During preparation of the Plan the Department appointed retail consultants, Colliers CRE, to assess the need for additional retail floorspace within the

Plan Area up to 2015. This included an assessment of the viability and vitality of city and town centres in the BMA, and an evaluation of the role played by the retail, service and leisure sectors in sustaining the vitality and viability of Belfast and Lisburn City Centres and the defined town centres. The Study and an update carried out in 2006 are available on the Department's website www.planningni.gov.uk or from the Belfast Area Planning office.

BMA Retail Strategy

The BMA Retail Strategy comprises the following elements:

- promotion of Belfast City Centre as the leading shopping centre in the Plan Area and Northern Ireland;
- promotion of Lisburn City Centre and the Town Centres of Bangor, Carrickfergus, Ballyclare, Carryduff, Holywood as the main foci for additional retail capacity;
- outside City and Town Centres, the nature and scale of retail development to be controlled in order to protect the vitality and viability of the City and Town Centres and retail development to be focused on designated District Centres, Shopping / Commercial Areas and designated Commercial Nodes on designated Arterial Routes, and designated Local Centres; and
- expansion of Sprucefield Regional Shopping Centre for bulky comparison goods only.

The BMA Retail Strategy promotes city and town centres as prime locations for new retail development. Much of the gross retail floorspace provided in the Plan Area over the past 15 years has been developed outside city and town centres. The Department and the retail consultants concluded that, as a result, many central areas are suffering from symptoms of retail and economic decline.

Retail Policies and Proposals

Policy R 1

Retailing in City and Town Centres

Planning permission will be granted for retail development in all town and city centres.

Non-retail development will be restricted in designated Primary Retail Cores (and Primary Retail Frontages) so that no more than 25% of the frontage of the shopping street(s) to which it relates is in non-retail use and no more than three adjacent units are in non-retail use.

The Primary Retail Cores will be the preferred location for new comparison and mixed retail development.

Outside designated Primary Retail Cores, planning permission will only be granted for comparison and mixed retail development where it can be demonstrated that there is no suitable site within the Primary Retail Core.

The Plan Proposals seek to support the vitality and viability of city and town centres by ensuring that they are the main focus for all retail developments, including convenience, non-bulky comparison and bulky comparison retailing.

Boundaries are designated for the City Centres of Belfast and Lisburn and the Town Centres of Bangor, Carrickfergus, Ballyclare, Carryduff and Holywood as identified in the District Proposals.

Primary Retail Cores, which contain the traditional concentration of retailing and other city/town centre functions, are designated in Belfast and Lisburn City Centres and in the Town Centres of Bangor and Holywood as identified in the relevant District Proposals. The purpose in identifying a primary retail core is to ensure the continuance of a compact, lively and attractive shopping environment, offering both choice and convenience, and to control the intrusion of non-retail uses in prime shopping areas. Proposals

In recent years the decline in high street shopping, both nationally and locally, has become more marked. The number of vacant shop units in Belfast has increased. A report by the British Retailers Consortium⁶ states that up to 20% of retail units in Northern Ireland are now vacant. This compares with a national average of 11% for other UK cities. Local research undertaken by Lisney in 2012⁷ recorded Belfast as having the highest rate of retail vacancy of all towns and cities in Northern Ireland at 23% which was up from 12% in 2001, 15% in 2010 and 18% in 2011. Similar trends were also recorded for Lisburn where retail vacancy was estimated at 22% in 2012 which was up from 12% in 2006.

City and town centres have a key role as prime foci for retail, service, administrative, leisure and cultural facilities, in common locations well served by public transport and accessible to the whole community. Belfast City Centre will be promoted as the prime location for retail development. Lisburn City Centre and town centres in the BMA will also be main foci for further shopping floorspace.

The Plan Proposals support the provision within city and town centres of convenience retailing, non-bulky comparison shopping and of showroom-type developments for bulky comparison goods.

Outside city and town centres the scale, nature and location of new retail development will be controlled in order to protect the vitality and viability of city and town centres. Convenience and comparison shopping, of a scale appropriate to meet local needs, will be focused on designated District Centres, designated Shopping/Commercial Areas or designated Commercial Nodes on Arterial Routes and the designated Local Centres.

6 British Retailers Consortium -Springboard Footfall and Vacancies Monitor for Q3 2012

7 Lisney Retail Update, 2012, Northern Ireland (September)

for retail development in city and town centres will be therefore directed towards the primary retail core in the first instance.

Primary Retail Frontages are designated within the Primary Retail Cores of Belfast and Lisburn City Centres and Bangor Town Centre and comprise those parts of city and town centres which should predominately be retained in retail use. Details of the designations are contained on the relevant city and town centre maps in the District Proposals. Proposals for non-retail uses at ground floor level within the primary retail cores (and primary retail frontages) will be limited in order to retain the focus of retail uses and ensure the maintenance of a compact shopping environment. Non-retail uses will be permitted on upper floors.

Retail services and leisure uses will be expected to locate within the designated city and town centre boundaries. Bars, cafes and restaurants complement the primary shopping function of city and town centres by contributing to the range and choice of facilities available to residents and visitors. They also contribute to the evening economy, 24 hour city living and support tourism. While such uses will be acceptable outside primary retail cores, they may also be permitted within primary retail cores subject to the 25% limit on non-retail uses.

Policy R 2

Belfast City Centre

Planning permission will not be granted for proposals for retail development where it would be likely to result in an adverse impact on the distinctive role of Belfast City Centre as the leading regional shopping centre.

The revised Regional Development Strategy 2035 supports and strengthens the distinctive role of Belfast City Centre as the primary retail location in Northern Ireland. It urges a precautionary approach in relation to future major retail development proposals based on the likely risk of out of centre

shopping developments having an adverse impact on the city centre shopping area.

The original retail study concluded that Belfast City Centre was under-performing. More recent retail studies have highlighted increased vacancy rates. The Plan seeks to strengthen the distinctive position of Belfast City Centre to enable it to perform its role as the primary shopping centre in the Region and seeks to promote development at key locations and on suitable sites in order to achieve a sustainable, vital and vibrant City Centre. New retail development can act as a catalyst for physical social and economic regeneration.

Traditionally Belfast City Centre has included a wide range of major national and international stores. The scale, concentration and choice of non-bulky comparison shopping make it unique in Northern Ireland and more able than any other town centre or city centre to compete with many other European retail destinations. The retail offer of Belfast City Centre, along with the City's cultural, built and industrial heritage, makes Belfast a competitive European attraction. The Plan seeks to protect and enhance the City's retail role.

The assessment of retail development will take into consideration the objective to promote the regeneration of the City Centre, including the need to enhance, particularly in quantitative and qualitative terms, the primary retail core as a shopping destination.

Policy R 3

Sprucefield Regional Shopping Centre

Within the designated Sprucefield Regional Shopping Centre planning permission will only be granted for retail development which meets all of the following criteria:

- proposals shall not adversely impact on the vitality and viability of existing City and Town Centres;

- the type of goods to be sold is restricted to bulky comparison goods;
- the floorspace of any individual unit is a minimum of 3,000m² net floorspace; and
- the development meets the Key Site Requirement as set out in Lisburn District Proposals.

No sub-division of bulky goods floorspace creating a separate unit of less than 3,000m² gross floorspace will be permitted.

Exceptions may be made where there is a rationalisation of existing or approved floorspace, providing proposals do not involve any further sub-division.

The Retail Study update undertaken in 2006 concluded that the impact of an extension to comparison shopping at Sprucefield would be felt most by Belfast City Centre and Lisburn City Centre. It also concluded that it was likely that expansion of the comparison goods offer at Sprucefield would lead to a diversion of sales and potential sales from existing stores in the BMA.

The concern in respect of the vulnerability of retail outlets in City and Town Centres within the Plan Area has been heightened by more recent studies which have highlighted increasing trends of retail vacancy. The Retail Strategy seeks to protect such centres, especially in respect of their mainstay, non-bulky comparison shopping. Within the context of changing economic circumstances, development of out of centre retailing poses an ongoing potential threat to such Centres.

The Retail Study also concluded that the Sprucefield Regional Shopping Centre is performing below its required level. The Plan seeks to grow the retail offer at Sprucefield in a way that is not in conflict with the existing non-bulky goods role of City and Town Centres. Plan Policy R 3 will therefore focus further

development at Sprucefield on bulky comparison goods trading in large format stores. Such an approach will allow Sprucefield to fulfil its role and potential in a manner that will complement, rather than compete with, existing city and town centres.

A retail impact assessment will be required to demonstrate that retail development proposals do not adversely impact on the vitality and viability of existing city and town centres.

District Centres

District centres fulfil an important retail role in providing consumers with convenience and choice in locations outside city and town centres.

The Retail Study concluded that district centres can coexist with city and town centres and fulfil a role which is complementary to the role of city and town centres. However, the Retail Study indicated that although none of the district centres individually is able to compete with Belfast City Centre, collectively they do exert a major influence.

The following district centres are designated in the District Proposals:

- Abbeycentre
- Bloomfield
- Connswater
- Dairyfarm
- Forestside
- Hillview
- Kennedy Centre
- Northcott Centre
- Park Centre
- Springhill
- Westwood Centre
- Cityside (formerly Yorkgate)

Although the consultants forecast a quantitative need for additional retail floorspace at a number of district centres, they concluded that there were planning reasons for redirecting any identified need to nearby city and town centres where the case for retail investment is stronger.

Boundaries for the designated district centres are set out in the relevant District Proposals. Planning policy in relation to district centres is contained in prevailing regional planning policy.

Policy R 4

Arterial Routes and Local Centres

Within designated commercial nodes and shopping/commercial areas on Arterial Routes and in the designated Local Centres, planning permission will be granted for retail development proposals provided that:

- any individual unit created as a result does not exceed 500m² gross floorspace for convenience shopping or 100m² gross floorspace for comparison shopping;
- the proposal meets a local need;
- the proposal would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of existing centres within the catchment area;
- the proposal would not alter the role and function of the centre or shopping/commercial area or node; and
- the proposal would not lead to a detrimental impact on the amenity of the area, traffic movements or road safety.

The Plan Proposals seek to maintain and enhance identifiable local centres of commerce and community services throughout the Plan Area.

Local shopping areas provide accessible convenience and non-bulky comparison retailing, so that people can shop close to where they live. Such facilities are

located on main bus routes and are readily accessible by public transport.

New retail development within local areas helps to meet local needs and sustain communities. It also acts as a catalyst for regeneration of the area, both physically and economically, whilst facilitating and supporting economic growth.

Within the designated areas, retail development proposals will be limited in scale, in order to ensure that the function, scale and character of local shopping areas is maintained. This will enable retailers such as newsagents and chemists, which have traditionally played an important role in local neighbourhood shopping areas, to continue to be accommodated, while ensuring that the role of city and town centres is not prejudiced by larger scale developments. In exceptional circumstances, and where a planning gain can be demonstrated through regeneration, development in excess of the floorspace figures specified in Plan Policy R 4 may be acceptable.

Details of the designated shopping/commercial areas and designated commercial nodes on Arterial Routes, and the designated local centres are set out in the District Proposals.

Offices

Regional Policy Context

The RDS provides Spatial Framework Guidance to promote urban economic development at key locations throughout the BMUA and ensure sufficient land is available for jobs (SFG1). In order to achieve this, it seeks to:

- Identify and protect key locations for economic growth;
- Enhance Lisburn City as a major employment and commercial centre;
- Promote the regeneration of the town centres of Bangor and Carrickfergus;
- Direct mixed use development towards sites which will enhance local regeneration initiatives.

The RDS also seeks to enhance the role of Belfast City Centre as the regional capital and focus of administration, commerce, specialised services and cultural amenities (SFG3). Specifically it states that Belfast City Centre will continue as the primary office location in Northern Ireland and will continue to be the first choice for major office developments.

Prevailing regional planning policy relating to office development falling within Use Class B1, Business Use, of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2004 is set out in PPS 4: 'Planning and Economic Development'. PPS 4 clarifies that Class B1 business use, including Classes B1 (a) office use, B1 (b) use as a call centre and B1 (c) use for research and development, will be permitted in a city or town centre.

The Office Study

In order to assist the Department in preparing the Plan, Colliers CRE were appointed to review existing office stock within the Plan Area, to assess the current supply and demand for office space, and to appraise existing planning policy for the location of offices.

The recommendations put forward by the consultants have assisted the Department in formulating appropriate office policies. Colliers CRE Office Study was published as the Offices Technical Supplement at the Draft Plan Stage. It is available on the Department's Planning NI website www.planningni.gov.uk or from the local Area Planning Office.

BMA Office Strategy

The BMA Office Strategy comprises the following elements:

- promotion of the role of Belfast City Centre as the primary location for office development in Northern Ireland in order to reinforce the role of Belfast as a Regional City;
- limited dispersal of major office development to Major Employment Locations at Global Point/Ballyhenry, Purdysburn, West Lisburn/Blaris and Belfast Harbour Area;
- promotion of office development within Lisburn City Centre and the Town Centres of Bangor, Carrickfergus, Ballyclare, Carryduff, and Holywood, in order to protect and enhance their vitality and viability, to assist urban renaissance and to provide jobs in local areas; and
- office development of an appropriate scale within designated District Centres, designated shopping/commercial areas on Arterial Routes, designated Commercial Nodes on Arterial Routes and designated Local Centres in order to provide local services, within Queen's University Office Area to provide for university-related uses, and within Stormont Office Node to provide for public sector administration office development.

The BMA Office Strategy is to promote a portfolio of sites and locations for office development throughout the BMA, so as to give choice and seek to ensure that the requirements of a range of office occupiers can be met. Belfast City Centre will continue to be promoted as the primary location for major office development within BMA and Northern Ireland. Outside Belfast City Centre, office development will, in general, be directed to designated commercial areas, in order to assist regeneration of established foci of community life and to provide services and opportunities for job creation in local areas. Lisburn City Centre and town centres will provide foci for office development, and limited dispersal of offices will be permitted on Belfast's Arterial Routes and to local centres in suburban locations.

The Plan Proposals also provide flexibility to respond to new and emerging opportunities for office development. For some activities which take place in office-style buildings a city or town centre location is often not appropriate. The Plan Proposals seek to accommodate such developments by facilitating limited dispersal of major office development to Major Employment Locations (MELs), in the form of business parks. The scale and nature of office development in MELs is controlled by setting a ceiling for permitted floorspace and by limiting the range of acceptable office uses in order to protect the primacy of Belfast City Centre.

The portfolio approach seeks to provide for the diverse requirements of a range of office users in order to ensure that opportunities for development for Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole are not lost. The locations identified for office development are sustainable and accessible by a choice of transport particularly public transport.

Office Policies and Proposals

Policy OF 1

Belfast City Centre, Lisburn City Centre and other Town Centres

Planning permission will be granted for Office development within Classes A2 and B1 of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2004 in the designated Belfast City Centre, Lisburn City Centre and other Town Centres.

Belfast City Centre remains the first choice location for major office development. This policy will reinforce the role of Belfast City Centre as the primary location for future office development in Northern Ireland.

Office development is promoted through the designation of Lisburn City Centre and the Town Centres of Bangor; Carrickfergus, Ballyclare, Carryduff and Holywood as main locations for expanding service employment within their respective Districts. City and town centres lie at the heart of local transport networks, including public transport. Promotion of office development within these areas will support sustainable development, assist urban renaissance and provide jobs in local areas, which are accessible to all sections of the community.

In the Town Centres of Ballyclare, Carryduff and Holywood, office development will be expected to be appropriate in size and in balance with other functions of the town centre.

The concentration of offices in city and town centres will help maintain their viability and vitality.

Details of the city and town centre designations are contained in the relevant District Proposals.

Policy OF 2

Office development of up to 400m² – Within Commercial Nodes, District Centres and Local Centres

Planning permission will be granted for office development in the following locations:

- the designated Commercial Nodes on the designated Arterial Routes;
- the designated District Centres; and
- the designated Local Centres;

provided that:

- proposals do not exceed 400m² gross floorspace; and
- the office use falls within Class A2 and Class B1 (a) of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2004.

A city or town centre location is not always a prime requirement for certain office users, in particular small scale firms serving local needs. The development of offices of up to a maximum of 400m² gross floorspace within the designated Commercial Nodes on the Arterial Routes, the designated District Centres and the designated Local Centres will facilitate such users.

The designated Arterial Routes in Belfast are the key access routes into the City Centre. Traditionally they have provided local retail, service, community and employment facilities for their local areas. The designated Commercial Nodes on the Arterial Routes represent established foci of local community and commercial life.

Small scale office development will facilitate the provision of local services in locations which support established commercial centres and serve the local population, while protecting the primacy of Belfast City Centre.

The majority of Arterial Routes have been identified in BMTP as Quality Bus Corridors and will benefit from improvement in the quality of bus service by providing enhanced access for local communities to local services.

Office development up to a maximum of 400m² gross floorspace will be permitted within the designated District Centres and designated Local Centres. These centres will benefit from further investment to sustain their roles in providing services to local communities.

Control of the size and scale of office development at these locations will ensure that development is compatible with the character of the area and that the role of the Belfast City Centre as the primary location for office development is maintained. Offices of up to 400m² gross floorspace will facilitate the changing requirements of office occupiers, assist in urban regeneration and provide a range of local employment opportunities.

Details of the designations are contained in the relevant District Proposals.

Policy OF 3

Office development of up to 200m² – Shopping/Commercial Areas

Planning permission will be granted for office development within designated shopping/commercial areas on designated Arterial Routes provided both the following criteria are met:

- the development does not exceed 200m² gross floorspace; and
- the office use falls within Class A2 of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2004.

In order to ensure that the traditional function of local shopping areas on the designated Arterial Routes is maintained and enhanced, the Department will permit office development up to a maximum of 200m² gross floorspace within the designated

Shopping/Commercial Areas along these routes into Belfast City Centre. Such small-scale office development will facilitate the provision of employment opportunities in accessible locations without detriment to the City Centre.

Acceptable office uses will be limited to those falling within Use Class A2 of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2004. These include services which are appropriate in a shopping area including financial and professional services. This will enable small office users, such as estate agents or insurance services who have traditionally played an important role in local neighbourhood shopping areas, to continue to be accommodated in individual units. Control of the scale and type of office development within the designated areas will ensure that the role of the Belfast City Centre as the primary location for office development is maintained.

Details of the designations are contained in the Belfast District Proposals.

Policy OF 4

Office Development in Major Employment Locations (MELs)

Within Major Employment Locations, planning permission will be granted for office floorspace within Class B1 (a) of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2004 provided all of the following criteria are met:

- the floorspace does not exceed the maximum levels as follows:-
 - Global Point/Ballyhenry – 5,000m² gross floorspace;
 - Purdysburn – 3,000m² gross floorspace;
 - West Lisburn/Blaris – 5,000m² gross floorspace;
 - Belfast Harbour Area– 20,000m² gross floorspace [Comprising 15,000m² gross

floorspace at Titanic Quarter & 5,000m² at Sydenham Business Park];

- the development is in accordance with the Key Site Requirements in the relevant District Proposals.

Exceptionally, planning permission will be granted for office development above 15,000m² at Titanic Quarter where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Department that the proposal cannot be accommodated within Belfast City Centre and which would otherwise result in the loss of significant inward investment.

The Plan Proposals accommodate limited dispersal of major offices to designated MELs. These locations offer opportunities to attract developments such as call-centres and research & development premises (Class B1 (b) and B1 (c) of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2004) which serve wide national or international markets and do not therefore require a central location within city and town centres.

The scale of floorspace of office uses within Class B1 (a), use as an office other than a use within Class A2 (financial, professional and other services) at these locations will be controlled in order to ensure that they do not prejudice the primacy of Belfast City Centre.

Titanic Quarter presents a major development opportunity of significance for Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole through the regeneration of a large site on what was formerly part of the Harland and Wolff ship-building complex. The Department considers that unrestricted office development at Titanic Quarter could prejudice the role of Belfast City Centre as the primary office location in the Plan Area. However, a limited amount of office floorspace as part of a mixed use redevelopment scheme will help initiate regeneration of the area by facilitating a major opportunity for investment in a prestigious location. The Plan Proposals will permit office development of 15,000m² at Titanic Quarter. This figure includes office development already built and

approved. Consideration may be given to proposals above 15,000m² where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Department that the proposal cannot be accommodated within Belfast City Centre and which would otherwise result in the loss of significant inward investment.

Also within the Belfast Harbour Area, the Plan Proposals permit office development of an additional 5,000m² at Sydenham Business Park to provide sufficient flexibility for this established business park.

Details of the designations of the MELs and the key site requirements are contained in the relevant District Proposals.

Policy OF 5

Queen's University Office Area

Within the designated Queen's University Office Area, planning permission will only be granted for office development where all of the following criteria are met:

- the gross floorspace does not exceed 200m²;
- the office use falls within Class A2 of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2004; and
- the development is for university-related uses.

Within the designated Queen's University Office Area, within the identified Queen's University Campus Area, planning permission will be granted for Queen's University office development where both of the following criteria are met:

- the office use falls within Class A2 and Class B1 (a) & (c) of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2004; and
- the development is for university-related uses.

Map No. 4/005 of Volume 2, Belfast District Proposals, identifies the designated Queen's University Office Area and the Queen's University Campus Area within the designated office area.

The Queen's University Belfast comprises a number of buildings on a dispersed campus within South Belfast encompassing Lisburn Road, Malone Road, Stranmillis Road and University Road.

Office development has spread in recent years adjacent to the campus buildings related to the University, mirroring University requirements and, to some extent, commercial activity. In order to accommodate further small scale offices in this area, the Department will permit offices within Class A2 of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2004 up to 200m² gross maximum floorspace for university-related uses within the designated Queen's University Office Area. This will facilitate small-scale offices which need to be located in close proximity to the University due to an inter-relationship in business activity.

The Department recognises the important role of Queen's University in the knowledge-based economy of the City and Region, particularly its significant research and development function. The Department will permit offices for Queen's University within Class A2, Class B1 (a) and Class B1 (c) of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2004 for university-related uses with no floorspace restriction within those University Campus areas within the Queen's University Office Area. Accommodating University-related office development within the University campus focuses the University's activities in the same area, ensuring that they can be easily accessed by staff and students with minimum travelling.

The designated Queen's University Office Area incorporates the main University campus (Lanyon Building) and surrounding streets including College Square, University Street, Rugby Road, Elmwood Avenue and other dispersed parts of the campus on the Lisburn Road, Malone Road and Stranmillis Road.

A large portion of Queen's University Office Area falls within Queen's Conservation Area. In addition, there are a number of buildings within the University Office Area which are of historic or architectural interest, some of which are listed. Proposals for

office conversions or for new office development will be required to take account of the Conservation Area and listed buildings where applicable and will be considered in the context of PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage, where appropriate.

Policy OF 6

Stormont Office Node

Within the designated office node at Stormont planning permission will be granted for public sector administration office development and no other type of office use.

The Stormont Estate has been for many years a key location for public sector administration. The Department has identified an office node at Stormont in recognition of the significant role it plays in regional administration. The office node is set within Stormont Estate, which is identified as an Historic Park, Garden and Demesne in the Department's Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes.

Favourable consideration will be given to office development solely for public sector administration within the designated node, provided that the development is in accordance with Plan Policies and prevailing regional planning policy, including PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Environment.

Urban Environment

Regional Policy Context

The RDS aims to, "Protect and enhance the environment for its own sake". RDS regional guidance in relation to the built and natural environment is to, "Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment" (RGI I).

This will be achieved by the following actions:

- Identify, protect and conserve the built heritage, including archaeological sites and monuments and historic buildings;
- Identify, protect and conserve the character and built heritage assets within cities, towns and villages; and
- Maintain the integrity of built heritage assets, including historic landscapes.

Regional planning policy in relation to our built heritage is contained in PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage, and the Addendum to PPS 6: Areas of Townscape Character. It makes provision for development plans to designate Areas of Townscape and Village Character and for guidance for such areas to be included in supplementary guidance. It also contains policy in relation to the control of new development in Conservation Areas.

Urban Design Study

An Urban Design Study was undertaken to inform the urban design policies within the Plan. This established the following key principles or objectives of urban design, which are common to successful urban places:

- **Character** – development should respond to locally distinctive and positive characteristics;
- **Continuity and Enclosure** – continuous street frontages and enclosure of space provide a clear distinction between private and public space;

BMA Urban Environment Strategy

The BMA Urban Environment Strategy comprises the following elements:

- promoting new development of the highest quality;
- protecting areas of architectural and townscape importance; and
- promoting healthier living environments.

The Metropolitan Urban Area is the shop window of Northern Ireland and the quality of its urban environment is important to the Region as a whole. The BMA Urban Environment Strategy promotes a well designed and vibrant Metropolitan Urban Area, which will play an important role in enhancing the quality of life, increasing civic pride and promoting a sense of place. It will also contribute to economic growth by attracting visitors and providing a suitable location for inward investment, particularly knowledge based and creative industries.

In recent years the Metropolitan Urban Area has experienced a considerable amount of new development, most significantly in Belfast City Centre, the Laganside area and the Titanic Quarter. Much of this has made a positive contribution to the physical environment and to the vitality of city and town centres.

The Plan establishes coherent design policies for City and Town Centres, including improvement to the quality of the gateways into Belfast City Centre in line with its status as a European regional capital.

- **Quality of the Public Domain** – public spaces should be safe, attractive and functional for all users;
- **Ease of Movement** – development should be well-connected, accessible and put the needs of pedestrians over those of vehicular traffic;
- **Legibility** – development should have a clear image, with recognisable streets, spaces and landscape to help people find their way around;
- **Adaptability** – development should be adaptable enough to respond to changing social and economic conditions; and
- **Integration and Efficiency** – development should promote sustainability by integrating built form, land use, transport and the natural environment.

The Study focused on City and Town Centres and Arterial Routes and identified the following areas:

- Belfast City Centre Character Areas;
- high-density accessibility nodes at Great Victoria Street Station and Central Station;
- key streets in Belfast City Centre;
- key gateways to Belfast City Centre; and
- key nodes along Arterial Routes.

Within each of the key areas, the study analysed local character; identified both positive and detrimental characteristics of the local environment and established strategic design guidance and strategic priorities for improving the quality of the urban environment.

Built Heritage Study

During preparation of the Plan, the Department appointed consultants to undertake a Built Heritage Study. This has informed the Plan Designations, which include 85 Areas of Townscape Character (ATC) and 14 Areas of Village Character (AVC).

Urban Environment Policies

Policy UE I

Urban Design

Within the designated Character Areas in Belfast City Centre and other designated City and Town Centres, planning permission will only be given to development proposals which are in general accordance with the urban design criteria in the District Proposals.

This Policy does not apply within the designated Protected Housing Areas in the City or Town Centres.

Specific design criteria for City and Town Centres are contained in the District Proposals.

Conservation Areas

The plan identifies, for information, the following Conservation Areas, designated under Article 50 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 as follows.

Belfast	Belfast City Centre	Malone Park
	Cathedral	Adelaide Park
	Cyprus Avenue	McMaster Street
	King's Road	Queen's
	Knockdene	Somerton Road/Chichester Park
	Linen	Stranmillis
	Malone	
Lisburn	Hillsborough	Moir
	Lisburn	
Carrickfergus	Carrickfergus	Whitehead
Newtownabbey	Merville Garden Village	
North Down	Hollywood	

Additional areas (including ATCs within the Plan) may be designated in the future and existing areas may also be revised periodically with revisions made to boundaries as appropriate.

Development proposals within Conservation Areas will be considered within the context of prevailing regional planning policy and supplementary planning guidance.

Areas of Townscape Character

Areas of Townscape Character (ATCs) and Areas of Village Character (AVCs) are designated in accordance with PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage, and the Addendum to PPS 6: Areas of Townscape Character.

Table 2: Designated ATCs and AVCs in each BMA Council Area

Council Area	Total no. of ATCs & AVCs
Belfast City	51
Lisburn City	13
Carrickfergus Borough	4
Castlereagh Borough	7
Newtownabbey Borough	13
North Down Borough	11
BMA Total	99

All settlements have their own identity and character derived from the physical setting, the appearance of buildings and their relationship to the spaces between them. Over time, human activity has shaped the built form and produced the sense of place that exists today. In some places the variety or consistency of the overall character is particularly distinctive or pleasing and merits specific protection from inappropriate change.

The Plan Area has a legacy of fine buildings and areas of character, which provide a particular “sense of place” and ascribe them with their own identity. These are worthy of protection from the pressures of unsympathetic development.

The urban area is diverse in its historical character, which includes city and town centre commercial areas, Edwardian outer suburbs, Victorian inner suburbs, seaside resorts, railway settlements, rural villages, industrial canal villages, inter-war private housing and post-war social housing. The city and town centres, in particular, encompass development from a variety of periods. The buildings are therefore an expression of the architectural evolution of these centres; indeed this is often a fundamental aspect of their character.

Many of these areas exhibit a distinct character (often based on their historic built form or layout) recognised by their designation as Areas of Townscape Character within the Plan.

The Plan Proposals for protection of the built heritage are based on designation of Areas of Townscape or Village Character. Formulation of appropriate supplementary planning guidance in the form of Character Appraisals and Development and Design Guidance will assist in the management of change.

Development Proposals within ATCs will be considered within the context of prevailing regional planning policy and supplementary planning guidance.

Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes

Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes of special historic interest are designated in the District Proposals.

Throughout the Plan Area there are a number of parks, gardens and demesnes of special historic interest, reflecting planned and managed landscape enhancement carried out since the 17th century. The Department considers it important that these features of the built heritage are protected

from development that would harm their historic character.

These areas are detailed in a Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes of Special Historic Interest in Northern Ireland, published by the Department's Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

The Register summarises the historical significance of each site and the contribution such planned features make to the local landscape. It also seeks to encourage the public, as well as owners, to value and support the protection and maintenance of such sites.

Prevailing regional planning policy for the protection of historic parks, gardens and demesnes of special historic interest is set out in PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage.

Historic Parks, Gardens, and Demesnes Supplementary Sites are gardens, parks or demesnes that form integral settings for buildings of historical importance. Further information on these can be found in the Appendices to the District Proposals.

Area of Significant Archaeological Interest

The Giant's Ring is one of the most important historic monuments in State Care in Northern Ireland. The Plan designates this area and provides policy to control development in the vicinity of this monument, as detailed in the Lisburn District Proposals.

Areas of Archaeological Potential

In accordance with PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage, Areas of Archaeological Potential are highlighted for information in the District Proposals. Within the Plan Area these are highlighted in relation to the following settlements:-

Belfast, Castlereagh (Dundonald), Holywood, Crawfordsburn, Bangor, Groomsport, Dromara, Hillsborough, Lisburn, Drumbo, Glenavy, Ballyclare, Ballyeaston, Carrickfergus and Whitehead.

These areas indicate to developers where, on the basis of current knowledge, it is likely that archaeological remains will be encountered in the course of continuing development and change. Developers are advised to liaise with the Department before submitting any proposals within these areas.

Planning policy in relation to archaeology is contained in PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage.

Policy UE 2

Security Grilles and Shutters

Where new development is proposed, security shutters shall be fully integrated into the frontage of the building at the initial design stage, with the shutter box recessed behind the fascia, and the guide rails concealed within the shop front surround or window reveals.

In the context of building refurbishment and installation of new shop fronts, where technically feasible, security shutters shall either be fully recessed behind the fascia, or properly integrated into the new fascia.

Shutters shall be perforated or lattice type and colour coated to match the shop front. Unpainted galvanised shutters will not be granted planning permission.

Increasing levels of crime and vandalism, and the fear of them, have led to many businesses taking measures to improve security. A number of options are used, including video surveillance, alarm systems, provision of removable external grilles, and other external roller shutters of various designs.

Whilst some of these measures may have little impact on the appearance of a building, others can have a significant impact, both individually and collectively, on the street scene. Fixed externally mounted security shutters can be highly intrusive and damaging to the appearance of an area, particularly when located on listed buildings or on buildings within CAs, ATCs or AVCs.

In determination of applications for planning permission for external grilles and shutters, account will be taken of their impact individually and cumulatively on the street scene and the need for security.

Use of toughened glass represents the best option in terms of the aesthetic quality of the street scene. Where it is considered that a form of grille or shutter is required, externally mounted removable grilles (installed when the shop is closed only) should be investigated in the first instance. Internal lattice grilles (behind window display plinths) are another method with minimal visual impact. These allow window displays and lighting to remain visible.

Where external shutters are required their visual impact can be reduced by installing latticed or perforated shutters colour coated to match the shop front. This also permits some penetration of light from within the premises creating a more pleasant night-time environment.

Policy UE 3

Car Parking and New Development in City and Town Centres

In City and Town Centres, planning permission will not be granted for ground floor car parking along street frontages in association with new or existing development.

In the past car parking requirements associated with developments in city and town centres have often been located on the ground floor. Given the small plots often found in these locations, car parking has prevented active uses at ground floor level. This has resulted in features detrimental to quality urban environments, visual amenity, vitality and vibrancy of city and town centres at ground floor level. These include long blank facades, security grilles or roller shutters and service entrances.

Car parking will no longer be permitted at ground floor level along street frontages where it would

result in dead frontage. It may be situated at street level provided active uses are located along the street edge. In order to promote vitality at street level, new development will be expected to incorporate active uses and positive features at ground floor level such as shop fronts and windows. These features assist in the animation of the street and improve legibility.

Policy UE 4

Urban Landscape Wedges

Within designated Urban Landscape Wedges, planning permission will only be granted for outdoor recreational uses and provided all the following criteria are met:

- the open nature of the landscape is retained;
- buildings are ancillary to the open space/ recreational use and are integrated into the landscape;
- long and short range views are protected; and,
- Within Designation MCH 26 Urban Landscape Wedge Dundonald (Castlereagh) housing will be permitted in accordance with Zoning MCH 03/03 as set out in Part 4, Volume 5 of the District Proposals - Castlereagh.

Urban Landscape Wedges are open areas that separate localities within the Metropolitan Urban Area. They have a significant role in helping to define and retain the identities and character of the component parts of the urban area and preventing the merging of different city communities. Their open character can break up the visual impact of the housing mass in the area and offer additional benefits to local residents by enhancing amenity and by providing opportunities for informal and formal recreational use and provision of linkages to walking and cycling networks.

Urban Landscape Wedges shall be protected from built development to fulfil their amenity, recreational and bio-diversity functions. Where an outdoor recreation proposal is considered appropriate within an Urban Wedge, it shall respect the open nature of the landscape and preserve and enhance amenity and bio-diversity value, with any buildings ancillary to the open space and recreation use. Any buildings must be suitably integrated, small in scale, have due regard to both long and short range views into the site and have no detrimental impact on the integrity of the wedge.

Where development of an outdoor recreational nature is permitted the opportunity shall be taken to provide for landscape enhancement through planting and other means to secure an improvement in amenity value and biodiversity interest.

The designated Urban Landscape Wedges are:

Fortwilliam	Between North Belfast and the Glengormley area in Newtownabbey
Milltown	Between Whiterock, St. James area and Lower Andersonstown, West Belfast
Colin Glen	Between Suffolk, West Belfast and Dunmurry/ Colin area, Lisburn
Dundonald	Between Knock, East Belfast and Dundonald
Lagmore Glen	Between Belfast and Metropolitan Lisburn

The designation of the Urban Landscape Wedges is contained in the relevant District Proposals.

Key site requirements for the determination of planning applications within the portion of the Dundonald Urban Landscape Wedge at the Dundonald Leisure Park are set out in the District Proposals for Castlereagh, Volume 5 of the Plan.

Natural Environment

Regional Policy Context

The RDS aims to, “Protect and enhance the environment for its own sake”. The RDS regional guidance seeks to, “Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment” (RGI 1). With regard to the natural environment, the RDS seeks to:

- Sustain and enhance biodiversity;
- Identify, establish, protect and manage ecological networks;
- Protect and encourage green and blue infrastructure within urban areas;
- Protect and manage important geological and geomorphological features;
- Protect enhance and manage the coast;
- Protect, enhance and restore the quality of inland water bodies;
- Recognise and promote the conservation of local identity and distinctive landscape character;
- Conserve protect and, where possible enhance areas recognised for their landscape quality; and
- Protect designated areas of countryside from inappropriate development (either directly or indirectly) and continue to assess areas for designation.

Biodiversity is the total variety of all living things – of wildlife habitats, wild plants and animals. At a larger scale it relates to variations in landscapes and habitats and at the smallest scale to genetic differences in plants and animals. It is vital to the health of the planet and the enhancement of biodiversity will be one of the most powerful indicators of progress towards sustainability.

The Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group, which undertook a study of the state of wildlife and habitats in Northern Ireland, published a set of

recommendations for protection and enhancement of biodiversity, including habitats and species identified for priority action. The Northern Ireland Executive committed itself to delivering action on these recommendations and published the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy in August 2002 to protect and enhance biodiversity in Northern Ireland over the period to 2016.

Priority habitats such as blanket bog, mudflats, lowland woodland and parkland, together with priority species such as red squirrel, bats, otters and thrushes, are found within the Plan Area. PPS 2: Natural Heritage contains policies for their protection.

The Plan Area contains areas already designated for protection because of the international and natural importance of their wildlife and natural features. Four sites - Belfast Lough, Larne Lough, Outer Ards and Lough Neagh/Lough Beg have been designated for their international importance.

Table 3: International and National Nature Conservation Designations within the Belfast Metropolitan Area

Designation	Location
Ramsar	Belfast Lough Ramsar Site
	Part of Larne Lough Ramsar Site
	Part of Outer Ards Ramsar Site
	Part of Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar Site
SPA	Belfast Lough Special Protection Area
	Belfast Lough Open Water Special Protection Area
	Part of Larne Lough Special Protection Area

	Part of Outer Ards Special Protection Area
	Part of Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Special Protection Area
ASSI	Inner Belfast Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest
	Outer Belfast Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest
	Part of Larne Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest
	Part of Lough Neagh Area of Special Scientific Interest
	Part of Portmore Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest
	Ballymacormick Point Area of Special Scientific Interest
	Ballynanaghten Area of Special Scientific Interest
	Part of Castletown Area of Special Scientific Interest
	Craigantlet Woods Area of Special Scientific Interest
	Leathemstown Area of Special Scientific Interest
	North Woodburn Glen Area of Special Scientific Interest
	Part of Outer Ards Area of Special Scientific Interest
	Slievenacloy Area of Special Scientific Interest
	Copeland Reservoir
	North Woodburn Reservoir
	South Woodburn Reservoir
	Clarehill

	Maghaberry
	Part of Ballypalady
ASI	Part of Ballycarry Area of Scientific Interest
	Part of Islandmagee Area of Scientific Interest
	Part of Lough Neagh Area of Scientific Interest
	Cultra Area of Scientific Interest
	Hazelwood Area of Scientific Interest

All statutory nature conservation designations, as listed above, are afforded protection by legislation and through prevailing regional planning policy, currently PPS 2: Natural Heritage. The Plan has taken account of areas designated for their nature conservation importance and respects international and national obligations to ensure their protection from development.

Outside the designated areas detailed above, the Plan affords further protection to features of the natural environment which are of importance to flora and fauna through designation as Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance.

In addition, Local Landscape Policy Areas are designated within or adjoining settlements on lands considered to be of greatest nature conservation or heritage interest, amenity value, landscape quality or local significance.

The Plan protects landscape wedges, including those within the urban area (see Policy UE 4) and also Community Greenways (see Policy OS 1) which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure, in particular where they follow river valleys, afford routes for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species.

Considerations Arising From the Habitats Regulations Assessment Process

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) Habitats Regulations Assessment has been carried out on the impacts of the Plan Proposals on the European Sites within or in close proximity to the Plan Area.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment concluded that consultation zones were required for lands outside Antrim Hills SPA and Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA due to the utilization of the BMAP area by feature bird species, in particular Hen Harrier, Bewick Swans and Whooper Swans. Proposed developments within these consultation zones must be scrutinized to ensure that, in line with the Habitats Directive, there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of the features of these European Sites. The boundaries of these consultation zones are identified in the accompanying Habitats Regulations Assessment Report.

Aerial depositions can damage habitats and associated species. Aerial emissions resulting from new development in the BMAP area, in particular from industrial uses which generate significant aerial emissions, have the potential to be a contributing factor to the overall deposition levels at a number of sensitive European Sites. Any new industrial development proposals in the BMAP area whose operational aerial emissions may affect a European Site must be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on European Site integrity. Such proposals are also likely to be subject to control under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012/2013.

Deterioration of water quality in the BMAP area is an issue that could have adverse impacts on the integrity of European Sites including Belfast Lough SPA, Belfast Lough Open Water SPA, Belfast Lough Ramsar, Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA, Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar and Outer Ards SPA / Ramsar and

Strangford Lough SAC, SPA and Ramsar. Proposed developments that are adjacent to, or that discharge into, waterways associated with European Sites must be scrutinized to ensure, that in line with the Habitats Directive, there will be no adverse impact on the integrity of these European Sites.

At the time of adoption most waste water treatment works (WWTW) associated with the European Sites in question are satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within their catchments that are proposed in the Plan through the Plan period, whilst a small number have been programmed to be upgraded between 2011 and 2015. If at any point during the Plan period it is deemed that WWTW capacity or associated infrastructure is not sufficient to cope with a proposed development at the time of a planning application or where unsatisfactory intermittent discharges have been identified, the developer will be required to ensure that there will be no adverse impact on any European Site as a result of a lack of waste water treatment provision at any stage of the development process.

In a number of locations Belfast Lough SPA, Belfast Lough Open Water SPA, Belfast Lough Ramsar and Outer Ards SPA / Ramsar are within the Metropolitan Development Limit or Settlement Development Limits. New development proposals within or adjacent to these overlapping areas have the potential to damage the integrity of these European Sites. Any new development proposals within the Metropolitan Development Limit or Settlement Development Limits which are within or adjacent to a European Site must be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on the integrity of the European Site.

Belfast Lough and the Irish Sea are utilized by many birds that are features of nearby European Sites including Belfast Lough SPA, Belfast Lough Open Water SPA, Belfast Lough Ramsar, Copeland Islands SPA, Larne Lough SPA / Ramsar, Outer Ards SPA / Ramsar and Strangford Lough SPA / Ramsar.

Proposals that will result in increased shipping or leisure boating activity have the potential to damage the integrity of the bird features of these SPAs and Ramsars by increasing disturbance levels and the likelihood of pollution incidents.

Proposals or projects in the Belfast Harbour Area that will increase shipping or leisure boating activity must be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment that takes into account the cumulative impact of marine traffic to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on the integrity of any European Site.

The closed Dargan Road landfill site is within the Belfast Harbour Area and has been zoned in the Plan as a mixed-use site. These lands are in close proximity to Belfast Lough SPA and Ramsar, which have been designated due to their important bird populations. Inappropriate proposals in this location have the potential to damage the integrity of the SPA and Ramsar site and associated bird features by increasing disturbance levels. Proposals or projects within this zoning must be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on the integrity of Belfast Lough SPA and Ramsar. Buffer zones with no development and restricted access may be required.

Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance

In accordance with PPS 2: Natural Heritage, 240 Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs) are designated within urban areas and in the open countryside. Their distribution is indicated in Table 4 and they are designated in the relevant District Proposals.

Such sites are of local nature conservation importance on the basis of their flora, fauna or earth science conservation importance.

Clarification maps are available on the Department's Planning NI website www.planningni.gov.uk or from the local Area Planning Office.

Table 4: Designated SLNCIs in each BMA Council Area

Council Area	Total no. of SLNCIs
Belfast	41
Lisburn	99
Carrickfergus	23
Castlereagh	26
Newtownabbey	26
North Down	25
BMA Total	240

Natural Environment Policy

Policy ENV 1

Local Landscape Policy Areas

In designated Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) planning permission will not be granted for development that would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on those features, or combination of features, that contribute to the environmental quality, integrity or character:

Where riverbanks are included within LLPAs, access may be required to the river corridor as part of the development proposals. Any access should not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the flora and fauna of the river corridor.

Where proposals are within and/or adjoining a designated LLPA, a landscape buffer may be required to protect the environmental quality of the LLPA.

In accordance with PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage, LLPAs are designated to help protect those areas within and/or adjoining settlements which are considered to be of greatest

amenity value, landscape quality or local significance and are therefore worthy of protection from undesirable or damaging development.

They include:

- archaeological sites and monuments and their surroundings;
- listed and other locally important buildings and their surroundings;
- river banks and shore lines and associated public access;
- attractive vistas, localised hills and other areas of local amenity importance; and

- areas of local nature conservation importance, including areas of woodland and important tree groups.

The Designated LLPAs will help to ensure that new development does not dominate the distinctive landscape and townscape characteristics of settlements. They may also function as buffer zones between different uses and help to reduce the likelihood of over-intensive development.

LLPAs located outside the Metropolitan Development Limit and Settlement Development Limits will help to protect those features considered to be of greatest importance to the local landscape setting.

288 LLPAs are designated in the BMA as indicated in Table 5. Details of the designations are contained in the relevant District Proposals.

Table 5: Designated LLPAs in each BMA Council Area

Council Area	LLPAs within the Metropolitan and Settlement Development Limits	LLPAs in the Rural Area	Total
Belfast	68	2	70
Lisburn	18	86	104
Carrickfergus	9	7	16
Castlereagh	12	11	23
Newtownabbey	16	22	38
North Down	21	16	37
BMA Total	144	144	288

Clarification maps and, for information purposes, further details on the features of each LLPA are available on the Department's Planning NI website www.planningni.gov.uk or from the local Area Planning Office.

The use of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) will be considered by the Department for those LLPAs where a tree or trees contribute significantly to visual amenity, or where such a tree or trees are considered to be under threat from development. In cases where a TPO is already in existence, the LLPA policy will act in addition to and without prejudice to any other statutory provision associated with this Order.

Where LLPAs contain significant parts of international and national nature conservation designations, SLNCLs, Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes, Conservation Areas, Areas of Townscape or Village Character, Listed Buildings, Areas of Industrial Heritage, Archaeological Monuments or Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest or Archaeological Potential, this policy will apply in addition to and without prejudice to any other statutory provision or policy relating to these features.

Development likely to have a significant adverse effect on designated LLPAs will not be approved. In assessing development proposals on or adjacent to these sites, priority will be given to the protection of those features, or combination of features, that contribute to the environmental quality, integrity or character of the area.

The acceptability of a development proposal will require to be demonstrated by the applicant. Where exceptionally, development is permitted which might adversely affect a designated LLPA, the Department will endeavour to ensure that such adverse effects are kept to a minimum and that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented.

Planning permission, where granted, will be subject to conditions to guide developers on the necessary compensation measures such as the provision of new or enhanced habitats or features or for improved management. Where appropriate, developers may be asked to enter into a Planning Agreement to secure these outcomes.

Countryside And Coast

Regional Policy Context

The BMA contains a significant rural component that comprises nearly 80% of the land area and 13% of the population. The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) aims to “support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential”. In accordance with the RDS, the Plan Proposals embrace the principles of sustainable development, and seek to improve the quality of life of rural communities, while developing the economy, and protecting the environment in the countryside surrounding the Metropolitan Urban Area.

The RDS requires the protection, enhancement and management of the coast and the protection of designated areas of countryside from inappropriate development. It also recognises that the BMUA has a significant natural setting bounded by Belfast Lough and Hills, with the Lagan Valley running through it. In addition, the BMUA contains an area of undeveloped coast line which also contributes to the quality of its setting.

BMA Countryside and Coast Strategy

The BMA Countryside and Coast Strategy aims to:

- encourage vibrant rural communities in the towns, villages and small settlements;
- sustain and diversify the rural economy by making provision for employment/industrial use in towns and villages;
- conserve or enhance the rural landscape, ensuring the protection of the metropolitan setting; and
- protect the Coastal Area.

The Rural Community

The Countryside and Coast Strategy focuses on accommodating more housing in the main towns and villages in order to meet local need, maintain a strong network of settlements in the rural area, and sustain the rural community. The housing allocation of 507 hectares for the rural area (Allocation HOU 1) has been distributed in accordance with the strategic context provided by the RDS. This takes into account the need for balanced growth across the network of settlements, while reinforcing the main towns and larger villages, and resisting the large scale expansion of smaller settlements.

During the past two decades, the small towns and villages in the Belfast ‘travel to work’ area have experienced a rapid rate of population growth. The Plan Proposals therefore recognise that some settlements in the rural area will require more measured growth in order to protect their identity, character and setting.

The role of settlements in the rural area and the allocation of housing growth are dealt with in the Settlements and Housing sections of this volume. The details of zoned and designated housing sites and Settlement Development Limits are contained in the relevant District Proposals.

The Rural Economy

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) aims to “Support urban and rural renaissance (RG7)” by revitalising the centres of small towns and villages so that they meet the immediate needs of the communities they serve through the following means:

- Sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countryside (SFG I 3); and
- Improve accessibility for rural communities (SFG I 4).

It is recognised that a living and working countryside requires a strong, diversified and competitive

rural economy. Although the numbers working in agriculture in the rural area represent only a relatively small proportion of those working in the agricultural industry in Northern Ireland, agriculture remains important to the rural economy, and it is also a significant factor in shaping and maintaining landscapes.

The Plan Proposals provide new opportunities for business development to facilitate the growth and diversification of the rural economy, by zoning land for business and industry in a number of towns and villages in the rural area, including Ballyclare, Carryduff, Glenavy and Moira. These zonings will provide employment opportunities for the rural population.

Regional planning policies also facilitate business development and farm diversification of a nature and scale appropriate to the open countryside.

Agriculture

The total numbers working in agriculture in the Plan Area represent fewer than 6% of those working in agriculture in Northern Ireland. Agriculture is particularly important in the rural areas of Lisburn and Newtownabbey districts. In 2011, 2,769 people were employed on over 1,200 holdings in the Plan Area, with the majority of farms involved in cattle and sheep production. Dairy farming is also important, and 11% of the total farm area in the BMA is in arable production.

Approximately 85% of farms in the Plan Area are defined as small or very small by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). However, this is less than the Northern Ireland average of 89%.

In common with the rest of Northern Ireland, farm incomes in the Plan Area are falling in real terms, leading to an increased demand for alternative employment on and off the farm. The Department accepts the need for farmers to diversify into non-agricultural activities in order to supplement their farming income and DARD has a range of grant

assistance to support this process. Approximately 57% of farmers and their partners work full time on their farms within the Plan Area.

Woodland and Forestry

Forest Service (DARD) carries out forestry operations within the Plan Area and fewer than 1,300 hectares are within publicly managed woodland. The Forest Service also assists in the planting and management of privately owned woodlands through the payment of grants.

The National Trust and other bodies manage and enhance (by providing interpretative material) the biodiversity and amenity value of a number of Parks. Community Woodlands have been established by the Woodland Trust within the Plan Area, providing a source of informal recreation, beauty, tranquillity, and quiet enjoyment for local people. The Woodland Trust provides and maintains paths, gates and similar facilities for public access.

There is a wide variety of Parks in the BMA including the Lagan Valley Regional Park and the Cavehill, Crawfordsburn and Redburn Country Parks. NIEA has responsibility for ensuring the management of Colin Glen Linear Park in Suffolk / Dunmurry. The Colin Glen Trust currently manages the Park under a contract agreement. Management of the Park focuses on the provision of countryside recreation and environmental education for the people of West Belfast and Lisburn, and has involved restoring areas to semi-natural woodland habitat.

Fishing

The Plan Area contains large stretches of coastline including Belfast Lough and a small portion of Larne Lough. Fishing along this coastline, inshore and offshore, is mainly recreational with Bangor, Carrickfergus and Whitehead popular fishing venues.

Recreational fishing also takes place along inland rivers such as the Crumlin and Glenavy Rivers, the Six Mile Water entering Lough Neagh, and the River Lagan. These rivers sustain brown trout, rainbow

trout, salmon, roach and bream. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) has brown and rainbow trout lakes in the Plan Area, including Stoneyford, Woodburn and Portavoe Reservoirs.

Lough Neagh supports a substantial commercial fishery, mainly for eels. It has a valuable export market and sustains important local employment.

A number of companies supplying and processing seafood and fish are based in Belfast. Aquaculture is also expanding and the shellfish farming industry has gained new sites, including licences in Belfast Lough and Larne Lough.

Minerals

Mineral exploration and development provides employment and necessary materials for construction in localised areas where useful deposits occur. However, extraction and processing can have a significant impact on the countryside. The Plan Proposals recognise the need for a sustainable approach that takes account of the need to protect and conserve environmental resources.

Regional planning policies for mineral developments are currently set out in A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. This contains a range of policies for the control of mineral developments, taking into account environmental protection, visual amenity, public safety and traffic considerations. Mineral developments also need to respect the environmental policies contained in PPS 2: Natural Heritage and PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage.

In May 2012, the Minerals Resource Map of Northern Ireland was launched by the Environment Minister and the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. The map will provide planners, industry and local communities with a tool to assist future decisions on a county-to-county basis in relation to the supply of minerals and in the protection of the environment.

The Rural Environment

The rural environment throughout Northern Ireland is undergoing significant change in response to the restructuring of agriculture and increasing urban dispersal pressures. The countryside in the Plan Area contains a variety of distinctive rural landscapes, including the hills surrounding Belfast, the coast of Belfast Lough and the Lagan Valley Regional Park, which together provide a high quality setting for the urban area. The need to protect this setting forms a central component of the Countryside and Coast Strategy.

The challenge throughout the rural area is to accommodate future development while protecting and caring for the environment, and maintaining the rural character of the countryside.

Countryside and Coast Policies and Proposals

The RDS aims to “conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment” (RG11).

In relation to the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area, the RDS contains Spatial Framework Guidance to protect and enhance the quality of the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets (SFG5) by:

- protecting areas of high scenic value, undeveloped coast line, Belfast Lough, the Lagan Valley Regional Park and the hills around the BMUA from development; and
- protecting and enhancing the network of open spaces in the BMUA.

Within the BMA, landscapes which are particularly sensitive because of their quality, or which need particular protection because of their location and the pressures for development on them, are afforded special protection by additional policies and designations in the Plan. These include:

- Rural Landscape Wedges (Policy COU 1);
- BMA Coastal Area (Designation COU 2 and Policies COU 3 & COU 4);
- Areas of High Scenic Value (Designation COU 5 & Policy COU 6);
- Belfast Hills Access Points (Policy COU 8); and
- Lagan Valley Regional Park (Designation COU 9 and Policies COU 10, COU 11 & COU 12).

Within these areas, development proposals will be assessed in the context of the Plan Proposals, prevailing regional planning policy including the following Planning Policy Statements, PPS 2: Natural Heritage, PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage, PPS 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation, PPS 15: Planning and Flood Risk & PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside and A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland.

Rural Landscape Wedges

The RDS highlights the use of landscape wedges in its Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG5) which aims to “protect and enhance the network of open spaces in the BMUA”, where the network “consists of country parks, landscape wedges, parks and community greenways”.

Policy COU 1

Rural Landscape Wedges

Within designated Rural Landscape Wedges, planning permission will be granted for development proposals that are compliant with prevailing regional planning policy and which meet the following criterion:

- Visual separation between settlements is maintained.

Rural Landscape Wedges consist of buffer landscapes and open areas that can fulfil any of the following objectives:

- distinguish and maintain the **separate identities** of the component parts of the Metropolitan Area;
- prevent the **merging** of the component parts of the Metropolitan Area;
- provide an important element in defining and protecting the **setting of settlements**; and
- maintain the **rural character of the countryside**.

The following Rural Landscape Wedges are designated in the relevant District Proposals.

- Ballyclare Between Ballyclare and Hillhead
- Ballyeaston Between Ballyeaston and Ballyclare
- Carrickfergus Between Carrickfergus and Greenisland
- Carryduff Between Cairnshill and Carryduff
- Clandeboye Between Bangor and Newtownards
- Comber Between Dundonald and Comber
- Glenregagh Hill slopes at Forster Green
- Greenisland Between Greenisland and Jordanstown
- Groomsport Between Bangor and Groomsport
- Helen’s Bay Between Helen’s Bay and Bangor
- Hannahstown Between West Belfast and Hannahstown
- Hollywood Between Metropolitan North Down and Hollywood
- Mosside Between Lagmore and Lisburn
- Newtownards Between Dundonald and Newtownards
- Seahill Between Cultra and Seahill
- Helen’s Bay Between Helen’s Bay and Seahill

It is essential that Rural Landscape Wedges are protected from inappropriate development. Within the Rural Landscape Wedges identified above, all proposals will be assessed against prevailing regional planning policies for development in the countryside. In addition, proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will maintain the open nature of the wedge to ensure visual separation and protect the identities of the component areas. It will therefore be important to consider the impact of any proposed development on the integrity of the wedge, and on the need to retain separation between settlements.

Policy COU 1 is primarily intended to prevent coalescence and maintain visual separation between settlements. This distinguishes it from Policy CTY 15 of PPS 21: 'The Setting of Settlements', which relates to urban sprawl and development that mars the distinction between a settlement and the surrounding countryside.

The Coast

The invaluable contribution that Belfast Lough makes to the Metropolitan Urban Area is recognised by the RDS which contains direction to protect and enhance the quality of the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets (SFG5) including the undeveloped coastline and Belfast Lough.

The Regional Development Strategy also contains the following guidance:

- Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment (RG1 1); and
- Promote a more sustainable approach to provision of water and sewerage services and flood risk management (RG1 2).

The BMA coastline extends for approximately 80 kms from Blackhead Cliffs in Carrickfergus Borough to beyond Ballymacormick Point in North Down. A large proportion of the coastline of the Lough is developed, and provides the location for several

settlements, including Belfast, Bangor, Carrickfergus, Holywood and Whitehead. A significant portion of the coast contains valuable areas of open space and recreational areas, such as golf courses and country parks, and together these make an important contribution to the Lough setting.

Designation COU 2

BMA Coastal Area

The BMA Coastal Area is designated along the shores of Belfast Lough, and includes all coastal areas, with the exception of a significant portion of Belfast Harbour, and the designated Urban Waterfronts in Bangor and Carrickfergus, as shown on Map No. 1 - Overview, Map No. 1 - Carrickfergus Countryside (Vol 4), Map No. 1 - Newtownabbey Countryside (Vol 6), Map No. 1 - North Down Countryside (Vol 7) and Map No. 3/001 - Belfast Harbour Area (Vol 2).

The designated BMA Coastal Area follows the coastline of Belfast Lough and extends to the Low Water Mark, including the narrow strips of coast between the High Water Mark and the Low Water Mark with the exception of the designated urban waterfronts, and the majority of Belfast Harbour.

Although the majority of Belfast Harbour is not included in the BMA Coastal Area, it contains many environmentally sensitive areas, and also listed buildings and scheduled monuments with an industrial heritage value.

Any development for employment and port related activities within the harbour area will need to take these factors into account.

Policy COU 3

BMA Coastal Area

Within the BMA Coastal Area, planning permission will only be granted to development proposals which meet the following criteria:

- the proposed development is of such national or regional importance as to outweigh any detrimental impact on the coastal environment; or
- it can be demonstrated that any proposal will not harm the qualities of the coastal landscape, while still protecting nature conservation value.

The area surrounding Belfast Lough, including the area at Outer Ards, is protected by a number of international and national nature conservation designations. The Lough is classified as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and is an internationally important area for breeding, over-wintering, and migrating birds. The same part of the Lough is also designated as a Ramsar Site, and the inner and outer parts of the Lough have been declared Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI).

In order to ensure the protection of the BMA Coastal Area, the Plan will provide additional protection for the unique landscape value and nature conservation interest, especially from intense recreational and tourism pressures. This is particularly important in order to preserve the setting of Belfast, and protect the views both from the Lough, and the shoreline.

Plan Policy COU 3 is not intended to restrict appropriate development within existing domestic curtilages, provided that no harm would result in respect of the coastal landscape and its nature conservation interests.

Additionally, the Policy is not intended to restrict proposals to improve accessibility for recreation, provided that no harm would result in respect of

the coastal landscape and its nature conservation interests.

Development proposals within the BMA Coastal Area must take account of climate change. Therefore, proposals will be assessed in the context of the Plan Proposals and prevailing regional planning policy, in particular PPS15: Planning and Flood Risk.

Policy COU 4

Urban Waterfronts

Within the designated Urban Waterfronts at Bangor and Carrickfergus, planning permission will only be granted for development proposals that:

- enhance and regenerate the Urban Waterfront;
- enhance the environmental quality of the waterfront with the careful siting and design of new development and by the implementation of appropriate and attractive landscaping schemes;
- retain and where possible further develop public access to the coast;
- protect existing coastal open space;
- enhance tourism potential and recreational facilities; and
- protect important heritage features (including industrial heritage).

The Urban Waterfront areas at Bangor and Carrickfergus contain the marina complexes and their surroundings. Within these areas, the aim will be to encourage uses that will help to promote a vibrant and attractive waterfront. Bangor Urban Waterfront contains the marina and the area to the east, extending to the North Pier. The Carrickfergus Urban Waterfront comprises the Maritime Area including the marina harbour area to the west of Carrickfergus Castle.

As with Policy COU 3, BMA Coastal Area, development proposals within the BMA Urban Waterfronts must take into account climate change. Therefore, proposals will be assessed in the context of the Plan Proposals and prevailing regional planning policy, in particular PPS15: Planning and Flood Risk.

Details of the Urban Waterfront designations are contained in the relevant District Proposals.

Areas of High Scenic Value

The diversity of landscapes in the Plan Area combine to provide a unique resource of significant environmental quality. The Metropolitan Urban Area enjoys a magnificent natural setting situated at the head of Belfast Lough, between the edge of the Antrim Plateau and the Castlereagh and Holywood Hills, with the River Lagan flowing through the Cities of Belfast and Lisburn.

The RDS aims to protect and enhance the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets (SFG5). It refers to the significant natural setting surrounded by hills, and the importance of protecting areas of high scenic value from development.

Areas of High Scenic Value (AOHSV) are designated to protect the setting of the Metropolitan Urban Area and other areas of particular landscape merit.

Designation COU 5

Areas of High Scenic Value

Areas of High Scenic Value are designated in the following areas as identified on Map No. 1 - Overview, Map No. 4 - Carrickfergus Escarpment, Map No. 5 - Belfast Basalt Escarpment, Map No. 6 - Castlereagh Slopes, Map No. 7 - Craigantlet Escarpment, Map No. 1, Volume 4 - Carrickfergus Countryside, Map No. 2/001, Volume 6 - Metropolitan Newtownabbey, Map No. 1, Volume 3 - Lisburn Countryside and Map No. 1, Volume 5 - Castlereagh Countryside:

- 5/01 Island Magee;
- 5/02 Carrickfergus Escarpment;
- 5/03 Carnmoney Hill;
- 5/04 Belfast Basalt Escarpment;
- 5/05 Magheraknock Loughs;
- 5/06 Portmore Lough;
- 5/07 Castlereagh Slopes;
- 5/08 Castlereagh Escarpment; and
- 5/09 Craigantlet Escarpment.

Details of each designation are contained in the relevant District Proposals.

Policy COU 6

Areas of High Scenic Value

Planning permission will not be granted for development proposals that would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the quality, character and features of interest in Areas of High Scenic Value.

Any assessment of quality and character in the Area of High Scenic Value shall include consideration of:

- location of the site within the landscape & positioning of the proposal within the landscape;
- undue prominence, particularly in more open and exposed landscapes;
- integration of development into the landscape including degree of natural enclosure and relationship with surrounding buildings; and
- design, including form, scale and massing.

A Landscape Analysis must accompany development proposals in these areas to indicate the likely effects of the proposal on the landscape.

The Department will consider how proposals will conserve or enhance the landscape of the AOHSV. Particular regard will be paid to the siting, massing, scale and design, materials, finishes and landscaping of proposals in order to ensure that development will integrate well into the topography and landscape respecting the scale of, and materials used, in existing vernacular buildings in the surrounding area. The scale and siting of any proposed development will be considered to be of particular importance, in order to protect the metropolitan setting, and take account of any site that is exceptionally prominent.

Features of interest within the AOHSVs include significant sites or features of nature conservation, historic or cultural importance.

Policy COU 7

Hydrocarbon Exploration

Planning permission will not be granted for proposals to exploit hydrocarbon reserves where there would be an adverse impact on the environment.

In the event that hydrocarbon exploration identifies the possibility of commercially viable reserves of oil or gas, their exploration will be considered in the context of the short and long-term suitability of the site. Future exploration under licence may identify deposits of oil or gas, which are potentially of great value to the Northern Ireland economy.

Hydrocarbon extraction is a site-specific operation with any potential adverse environmental effects being dependent on the methods used at that site. Applications will be treated on their individual merits, having regard to impact of the specific development on nearby residents, on sites or features designated for their scientific, landscape or heritage interests, and on the environment in general.

Restoration of Despoiled Land

Some parts of the Plan Area have been despoiled by previously unregulated and unrestored mineral workings, particularly areas scattered throughout the Basalt Escarpment of the South Antrim Hills lying to the north and west of Belfast, and Lisburn.

Where there are proposals to develop further mineral deposits, the Department will take into consideration opportunities to achieve the restoration and rehabilitation of despoiled land. Where appropriate, applicants may be asked to enter into a Planning Agreement under Article 40 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991 before planning permission is granted for mineral operations.

The Belfast Hills

The RDS aims to protect and enhance the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets (SFG5). It refers to the significant natural setting of BMUA bounded by Belfast Lough and Hills with Lagan Valley running through it. The RDS states that this attractive natural setting reinforces its uniqueness and these areas should be safeguarded, but opportunities should be sought where appropriate, to increase access to them for residents and tourists, consistent with protecting their integrity and value.

Policy COU 8**Belfast Hills Access Points**

At designated pedestrian access points, situated along the boundary of the Belfast Hills Partnership Area, development of limited access and small-scale interpretative/visitor facilities will be permitted where all of the following criteria are met:

- the proposal only relates to facilities that improve access to the Belfast Hills e.g., small scale car parking, signage, and new pedestrian pathways, and that provide for visitor/interpretative uses such as nature trails, picnic sites and environmental improvement works;
- the proposal is small-scale in nature and achieves maximum integration with the landscape, with special regard being given to siting, mass, shape and design; and
- there is no adverse impact on the quality or character of the landscape within the Belfast Hills.

The 'Belfast Hills' make a particularly important contribution to the setting of the Metropolitan Area, and extend for over 16 km from Lisburn, through Belfast, to Carnmoney Hill in Newtownabbey. They are regarded as one of Northern Ireland's finest assets, and include a variety of landscapes, ranging from the pastoral farmland of the western slopes to the dramatic cliffs of Cavehill on the eastern side, together with the open expanses of the upland moors.

The 'Hills' are of significant amenity value providing a green backdrop to the Metropolitan Urban Area. Their immediate proximity to the large population of the Belfast area has added to their attraction as a recreational resource. It is important that the promotion of the recreational value of the Belfast Basalt Escarpment and Carnmoney Hill is subject to the protection of the integrity of landscape character and scenic quality.

A number of formal access points are located at Cavehill Country Park and Colin Glen Linear Park and minor public open spaces at Glencairn Road and Carrs Glen. The access points form the basis for securing wider access to 'the Hills' and it is recognised that there is a need to improve accessibility, particularly for pedestrians. In order to promote 'the Hills' as a recreational resource for the BMA, a number of access points are designated in the relevant District Proposals which will provide legible links to the Hills and increase their potential for countryside recreation.

The Belfast Hills Access Points are identified on the Plan Maps and detailed in the District Volumes as either existing or proposed access points.

The status of the access points, either existing or proposed, indicate which access points currently have existing access arrangements and which are proposed access points with opportunities for further development.

A map showing the Belfast Hills Partnership Area (which incorporates the Belfast Basalt Escarpment and Carnmoney Hill Areas of High Scenic Value) is contained in the Countryside Assessment which was published as a Technical Supplement to the Draft Plan.

A broad representative forum of interests, facilitated by Bryson House, has worked with central and local Government, the private and community sectors, landowners, farmers and others, to set in place a framework for the sustainable development of the Hills.

A Belfast Hills Partnership has been established with stakeholders representing the many competing interests. Staff has been appointed to work towards conserving, protecting and enhancing the natural and built heritage, providing opportunities for responsible countryside enjoyment which will contribute to the quality of life for the residents and the adjoining communities.

The Department considers that a Local Plan for the Belfast Hills is the appropriate mechanism to develop

access and management strategies. This should involve all relevant, interested parties.

Lagan Valley Regional Park

The RDS identifies the Lagan Valley Regional Park as part of the significant natural setting of the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area and recognises the need to protect and enhance the quality of the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets (SFG5). This strategic guidance includes direction that “these areas should be safeguarded, but opportunities sought where appropriate, to increase access to them for residents and tourists, consistent with protecting their integrity and value”.

Designation COU 9

Lagan Valley Regional Park

The Lagan Valley Regional Park is designated as identified on Map No. 1 - Overview and on Map No. 3 - Lagan Valley Regional Park and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP) is located in the Lagan Corridor between and connecting the two cities of Belfast and Lisburn. The riverside and undulating landscapes, rich in heritage and biodiversity interest, are easily accessible to large urban populations.

The Park covers approximately 2,116 hectares and consists of a shallow river valley, stretching for 2.1 km along the Lagan from the heart of Belfast City at Governor’s Bridge to the former Union Locks in Lisburn City.

The objectives of the Park since its creation have been two-fold, to conserve the landscape quality and features of the Lagan Valley and to enhance recreational usage by the public. All proposals for development or redevelopment for compatible uses will be considered against the need to protect and where possible enhance the natural and man-made heritage of the Park and the conservation of its essential character.

The Lagan Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was designated under the Amenity Lands Act (NI) in 1965 and is identified on Map No. 3 – Lagan Valley Regional Park and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The LVRP Committee was established in 1967.

The Plan Proposals amend the Park boundary as identified in the Lagan Valley Regional Park Local Plan 2005 and the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 to include those additional lands worthy of Park status and to remove those lands where the form of existing or proposed development is no longer consistent with the character of the Park. Most of the designated LVRP now lies within the BMA Countryside, with small areas of the Park situated within the Metropolitan Development Limit and within Lisburn City.

Additional lands are included in the following locations:

- in the area between the M1 motorway and the Hillhall Road between Lisburn and Ballyaughlis;
- at the area around Rathmore Grammar School, St Anne’s Primary School and Hunterhouse College in Dunmurry; and
- at the Annadale Allotments, Belfast.

Lands are removed in the following locations:

- at Sequoia Park, Glenmore Manor and Glenmore House, Lambeg, Lisburn;
- to the rear of the Lagan Valley Hospital, Lisburn;
- at Hillsborough Road, Lisburn;
- at Minnowburn Mews, Castlereagh;
- at 6 and 7 Milltown Hill, Castlereagh;
- at Dub Lane, Malone Road, Belfast; and
- at Knightsbridge, Stranmillis, Belfast.

Policy COU 10

Development Proposals outside the Metropolitan Development Limit and Settlement Development Limits in the Lagan Valley Regional Park

Planning permission will only be granted for development proposals outside the Metropolitan Development Limit and Settlement Development Limits within the Lagan Valley Regional Park which meet all of the following criteria:

- they are for a use appropriate to the character of the Park and to the particular locality;
- they conserve or enhance the landscape quality and features of the Lagan Valley;
- they are of a scale and design which integrates with the sensitive landscape of the Park; and
- where located adjacent to the River Lagan, proposals should integrate with, and take into account, the river and its associated features where appropriate.

Development proposals will be assessed in the context of Plan Proposals and prevailing regional planning policy.

The LVRP has a varied landscape that reflects the natural landforms and the land uses that have progressively moulded it over time. The character of the Park outside of the Metropolitan Development Limit and Settlement Development Limits is varied. The river valley of the Lagan outside the urban areas of Belfast and Lisburn is predominantly natural in character and is characterised by a concentration of woodland which provides the undulating canopies and vast mixture of texture and tones which highlight the rolling countryside. Much of the Parks amenity landscapes are within the Historic Park, Gardens and Demesnes such as Barnett Demesne, Wilmont, Lisburn Castle Gardens and Belvoir that have their own distinctive character. These areas

have a historic designed landscape with a variable urban and recreational character, mature woodlands and grassland diversity. They became an attractive location for the early industrialists of the Belfast area, whose successors built large houses and created the distinctive planted demesnes. The character of the rural area of the Park is one of settled countryside consisting of rolling landscape, fields and hedgerows, narrow lanes, farmsteads and small settlements.

The variety in character contributes to the richness and importance of the Park as a major regional recreational asset. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the landscape of the Park and the character of its constituent areas are not damaged by inappropriate development. The capacity of specific locations within the Park to absorb development will vary. In assessing development proposals, protection of the landscape quality and character of the Park will be an overriding consideration. Undergrounding services may be considered appropriate to protect the landscape with the AONB.

Policy COU 11

Lagan Valley Regional Park Nodes

Within designated nodes planning permission will be granted to development proposals for recreational, tourist, interpretative and educational facilities, provided they meet all of the following criteria:

- the proposal is sensitively located and does not have a significant adverse effect on the character of the Park or the particular locality;
- there is maximum integration with the landscape in terms of siting, design, scale and use of materials;
- areas of open space are protected;
- there is no negative effect on features of heritage value; and
- it is an appropriate use and in accordance with the Key Site Requirements as contained in the District Proposals.

Only in exceptional cases, where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will make an important contribution to the Park's recreational function, will proposals for uses other than those listed above or uses identified in the designations in the District Proposals, be approved. In such exceptional cases, proposals within the rural nodes must comply with Policy COU 10, and in urban nodes with Policy COU 12. The Key Site Requirements as contained in the District Proposals will require to be met for all proposals.

- Island at Former Barbour Threads Mill, Hilden, Lisburn;
- Island Civic Centre, Lisburn;
- Union Bridge, Lisburn; and
- Hillsborough Road, Lisburn.

While the majority of the nodes are located within the BMA Countryside, several are located within the Metropolitan Development Limit and Lisburn City Settlement Development Limit.

District Councils and Government Departments have provided small-scale informal visitor and recreational facilities such as footpaths, viewpoints, seating and picnic areas throughout the Park. The Lagan Canal Towpath has been included within the national cycle network. Within identified nodes the Department will continue to encourage additional provision to meet the requirements of visitors, providing the facilities are of an appropriate scale and nature.

On-site information is important to heighten awareness of the availability of facilities. To cater for this need, information boards, entry signs and other signposts have been erected at key locations. These assist easy access to the Park, particularly at existing pedestrian access points, car parks and bus stops. They will continue to be encouraged within identified nodes.

Development proposals for uses other than recreational, tourist, interpretative and education facilities within nodes, will be subject to prevailing regional planning policies and either Plan Policy COU 10 or Plan Policy COU 12. These proposals will also be required to meet the stated key site requirements for the relevant nodes contained in the District Proposals.

Outside designated nodes, development proposals for recreational, tourist, interpretative and educational facilities will be assessed in the context of Plan Proposals and prevailing regional planning policy.

Due to the linear nature of the Park, there is no obvious location for a single interpretative centre for the entire area. As the LVRP is recognised as a major area of recreation for the Metropolitan Area, the Plan identifies a number of locations, distributed throughout the Park, for the provision of tourism, recreation, education and interpretative facilities. Focusing the provision of facilities at key nodes will help to manage access to the Park, protect the overall landscape quality, and seek to ensure that new development is in keeping with the character of the area in which it is located. Key Site Requirements have been prepared for each node and these are included in the relevant District Proposals.

The nodes are designated in the relevant District Proposals at the following locations:

- Lockview Road, Stranmillis, Belfast;
- Dub Lane, Upper Malone Road, Belfast;
- Malone House, Upper Malone, Belfast;
- Shaw's Bridge, Belfast;
- Lady Dixon Park, Entrance 2, Belfast;
- Belvoir Education Centre, Castlereagh;
- Belvoir Activity Centre, Castlereagh;
- Lock Keepers Cottage, Milltown Road, Castlereagh;
- Ballyskeagh, Lisburn;
- Glenmore, Lambeg, Lisburn;

Policy COU 12**Development Proposals in the Lagan Valley Regional Park within the Metropolitan Development Limit and Settlement Development Limits**

Planning permission will only be granted for new development or intensification of urban development where it can be demonstrated that the proposal is appropriate to, and does not have a significant adverse effect on, the character of the Park, the settlement, the landscape quality and features or the visual amenity and meets the following criterion:

- where located adjacent to the River Lagan, proposals should integrate with, and take into account, the river and its associated features where appropriate.

will be assessed in the context of prevailing regional planning policy and the Plan Proposals.

Pressure for new build, redevelopment or infill housing could threaten the traditional character of these areas; therefore, development must be sympathetic to the character of the building/ surroundings and provision made for the protection of trees with an important amenity function.

The designated Park boundary includes areas that lie inside the Metropolitan Development Limit and within Lisburn City Settlement Development Limit.

In addition, approximately 1,900 people live within the villages and small settlements located within the LVRP. Within these settlements (Ballyaughlis, Ballylesson, Ballyskeagh, Drumbeg, Edenderry, Hillhall, Lambeg and Tullynacross) provision is made for a limited amount of development. The settlements of Hillhall, Ballyaughlis and Ballylesson are only partially contained within the Park boundary and act as small centres to access Park routes and features of interest, while the other settlements within the Park act as service centres for visitors to the Park. These urban locations require balance with their location within the Park and the need to protect and where possible enhance its character. All development must therefore be associated with and blend sympathetically with the Park and not detract from its character, landscape or native conservation value.

Areas of Village Character are defined for Drumbeg, Edenderry and Lambeg in order to protect their particular character. Proposals within these areas

Open Space, Sport And Outdoor Recreation

Regional Policy Context

The RDS promotes the link between environment, health and well being and places an emphasis on supporting healthy lifestyles and the promotion of health in the community.

In supporting urban and rural renaissance (RG7), the RDS places importance in promoting recreational space within cities, towns and neighbourhoods. It states that new developments or plans should make provision for adequate green and blue infrastructure (green infrastructure includes parks and green spaces; blue infrastructure includes ponds, streams and lakes). The green network provides opportunities to link walking and cycle routes to heritage and other areas of recreational interest. These recreation and amenity networks present an opportunity for people to get active, and promote the health and well-being of those living in urban areas.

Planning Policy Statement 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation sets out regional planning policies for open space, sport and outdoor recreation and Planning Policy Statement 7: Quality Residential Environments requires adequate provision for public and private open space in new residential developments.

BMA Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation Strategy

The BMA Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation Strategy comprises the following elements:

- Facilitating the development of a network of Community Greenways; and
- Facilitating the provision of new open space.

Open space plays a significant role in the life of the community within the Plan Area. Government is committed to promoting more active lifestyles

as part of the drive to improve the health of the community.

The availability of indoor and outdoor facilities for both active and passive recreation is an important element in enhancing the quality of life for residents in the Plan Area. The success of strategies to promote sport and physical recreation depend on the availability of opportunities for participation through the development of facilities.

Provision of open space, sport and outdoor recreation facilities is the statutory responsibility of the six Councils within the Plan Area. The DOE, DE, DCAL, DARD and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive also provide and manage a variety of publicly accessible recreational facilities and open space.

Many private organisations also provide a wide range of sport and outdoor recreation facilities.

The generation of programmes for provision of additional lands for open space and recreation use is the responsibility of District Councils. The Plan recognises the programmed intentions of the six Councils for additional open space and recreation lands.

There is an extensive range of existing open space provision within the BMA. This includes countryside recreational facilities at the edge of the urban area for example, the Lagan Valley Regional Park and the Country Parks and forest recreation areas which serve the BMA as a whole.

The shores of Belfast Lough and Lough Neagh, Carnmoney Hill and the Hills which surround the Metropolitan Urban Area are among the many natural resources of the Plan Area which provide a wealth of opportunities for active outdoor pursuits and informal recreation.

There is also formal recreational provision tailored to accommodating specific sports e.g. golf courses, tennis courts, football and gaelic games playing fields. The urban parks, largely a legacy of Victorian

and Edwardian times, provide opportunities for informal and formal recreation. There is also a variety of outdoor open space such as parkland, woodlands, riverside walkways, playgrounds and informal open space within housing developments. The contribution that the BMA open space and facilities make is enhanced by the designation of community greenways in the District Proposals. These greenways serve as networks for walking, cycling and recreation. It is important therefore that these areas are protected from development, as once lost, they cannot be easily replaced.

Areas of existing open space over one hectare in size within the Settlement Development Limits are identified for information on the Settlement Maps in each of the District Volumes. There are other major existing sports facilities and areas of open space that are located outside settlement development limits and their contribution to open space provision in the form of outdoor playing space was taken account of in the open space audit prepared for the draft Plan.

PPS 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation applies to all existing open space regardless of whether or not it is identified for information in the Plan.

Indoor leisure and recreation centres have a key role in complementing outdoor facilities and add to the range of recreational activity available to local communities. There is an extensive network of centres provided by Councils, complemented in recent years by private sector developments. The role of indoor centres is particularly significant in the inner City of Belfast where the density of built development makes it difficult to identify major opportunities for new outdoor open space.

Planning Policy places considerable emphasis on the provision of open space as a requirement of development proposals, in particular for residential use. The Department requires the provision of open space within new housing developments through the regional policies set out in PPS 7: Quality Residential Environments, and PPS 8: Open Space, Sport and

Outdoor Recreation. These policies provide for the development and maintenance of adequate public and private open space to meet the needs of new residential developments. Such provision has an important role in complementing District Council programmes.

Key Site Requirements in the District Proposals specify where appropriate the provision of open space to be included as an integral part of the development.

Policy OS 1

Community Greenways

Planning permission will not be granted for development either within or adjacent to a designated Community Greenway which would prejudice the retention, enhancement or further development of an identified route.

Where appropriate, development proposals shall include open space linkages to designated Community Greenways.

The Plan provides for community greenways which seek to re-establish corridor links between the countryside and urban areas of open space such as parks, playing fields and natural areas to create a network of urban open spaces.

Community Greenway designations retain the opportunities to create links between the built-up area and the hills, valleys and coastline of the Plan area. Community greenways provide places for recreation and exercise, cleaner air, a cleaner environment, opportunities for pedestrian and cycle routes and wildlife habitats. Greenways can include publicly owned open space, woodlands, parks, playing fields, school grounds and private lands, golf courses and farmlands. The courses of rivers offer particular potential for the development of community greenways. Each urban landscape wedge also functions as a community greenway.

Thirty one community greenways are designated to establish open space linkages and enable easy pedestrian and cycle movement between a network of outdoor recreational and amenity areas for the purpose of recreation, exercise and the enhancement of biodiversity.

Development proposals involving amendments to the identified route will be acceptable, provided that the alternative arrangements maintain the overall integrity of the route.

There is a need to forge links between the network of community greenways within the built up area, and access routes into the hills, valleys and coastline of the Plan Area. This will enable the fine natural setting of the Metropolitan Area to fulfil its role in enhancing the quality of life of the local community.

Details of each designated community greenway are set out in the relevant District Proposals, whilst updated maps and route information are available in the BMAP Community Greenway Clarification Booklet on the Department's Planning NI website www.planningni.gov.uk or from the local Area Planning Office.

Policy OS 2

New Open Space Provision

Planning permission will be granted for the development of open space inside the Metropolitan Development Limit and Settlement Development Limits where the following criteria are met:

- satisfactory arrangements are provided for an appropriate landscaping scheme;
- there is no unacceptable impact on visual or residential amenity;
- there is no adverse impact on features of importance to nature conservation, archaeology or built heritage;

- ancillary buildings are designed to a high standard, are of a scale appropriate to the character of the local area or townscape and are sympathetic to the surrounding environment in terms of siting, layout and landscape treatment;
- the extra vehicular traffic generated by the proposal has no adverse impact on road safety, traffic or congestion levels;
- satisfactory arrangements are provided for linkage to the pedestrian and cycle network, and, where appropriate, access to the site by public transport; and
- satisfactory arrangements are provided for site access, car parking, drainage and waste disposal.

Needs may arise during the Plan period for open space provision for public or private purposes which have not been foreseen at the time the Plan was being prepared. This policy seeks to ensure that development for open space is of a good design and takes place in appropriate locations.

Tourism

Regional Policy Context

The RDS emphasises the need to support the growth of tourism in Northern Ireland as one of two major economic development themes by achieving balance between tourism development opportunities and conserving the natural, built and cultural assets.

The RDS aims to “support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential” including the “provision of rural recreation and tourism”. RDS strategic guidance seeks:

- to promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure (RG4);
- to promote a balanced approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure while benefiting society and the economy;
- to improve facilities for tourists in support of the Tourist Signature Destinations; and
- to encourage environmentally sustainable tourism development.
- to support urban and rural renaissance (RG7);
- to conserve, protect and where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment (RG11);
- to protect and enhance the quality of the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets (SFG 5); and
- to sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countryside by (SFG 13).
- Policy for tourist development and for the safeguarding of tourism assets is contained in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 16: Tourism, published in June 2013. Development proposals will be assessed against prevailing regional planning policies.

Regional planning policy for advance direction tourism signage is set out in Policy TOU 5 of A Planning Strategy for Northern Ireland (The Rural Strategy). Policy SETT 4 of the Plan extends the application of The Rural Strategy policies to the entire Plan Area.

BMA Tourism Study

In order to assist the Department in preparing the Plan, TTC International and Roger Tym and Partners were appointed to carry out a review of tourism policy for the Plan Area. Their brief was to advise how the Plan Area ‘can best maximise economic growth through the development of sustainable tourism which would not damage the character of the natural or built environment or prejudice tourism assets’.

The consultants concluded that:

- in accordance with the RDS the emphasis should be on ‘sustainable tourism’ which balances tourism growth and the protection of the natural and built environment;
- provision should be made for growth in tourist accommodation. The assessment of the consultants is that demand for self-catering accommodation is likely to be modest and that future accommodation will be largely hotel based; and
- tourism development should continue to be promoted to enhance the tourism product and visitor experience including the development of a ‘must see’ visitor facility.

The Tourism consultants assessed the existing tourism sectors and assets and analysed the potential of the Plan Area for tourism development. They took account of the quality and character of the townscape and landscape and the natural and built heritage. The consultants classified the potential for tourist development in the Plan Area into 3 categories as set out in Table 6.

- **Conservation areas** where tourism development should not be approved within the majority of their extent to protect the tourism asset;
- **Sensitive areas** where tourism development should be strictly controlled to respect the local environment and particular characteristics of the area; and
- **Opportunity areas**, largely urban based, where the majority of development for tourism uses will be expected to locate in order to build on the existing tourism base and enhance the tourism product.

By protecting the built heritage, biodiversity, unspoilt countryside, waterways, coastline and scenic landscapes, the Plan will facilitate development only where the environment has the capacity to cope with the pressures of rising visitor numbers.

BMA Tourism Strategy

The BMA Tourism Strategy comprises the following elements:

- promoting a sustainable approach to tourism development;
- protecting a varied range of tourism development opportunities;
- facilitating the development of tourism infrastructure; and
- enhancing the urban environment generally and, in particular, “first impression” points at major gateways, and in city and town centres.

The Plan Area contains a high quality natural heritage of landscape, Lough shore and wildlife, and a significant man-made heritage of buildings, culture and industrial past which have the potential to attract visitors. The development of tourism presents a significant opportunity for increased expenditure, economic development and job creation in the Plan Area and in the Region as a whole.

The Plan incorporates a sustainable approach to tourism development that seeks to protect key assets to ensure that new development does not harm the environment, character or cultural heritage of the Plan Area. This is in accord with the policies of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and the DETI draft publication “Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland (TSNI) 2010-2020” which sets out the principles of sustainable tourism and the basis for its assessment of proposals for tourism development. It is intended to provide a vision and strategic direction for the development of the Region’s tourism industry to 2020 along with an action plan to deliver it. This Strategy is intended to build upon the Tourism Strategic Framework for Action 2004.

Table 6: Categories for Tourism Potential

Conservation	Sensitive	Opportunity
The Coastal Zone	The Countryside	Urban Remainder
Areas of High Scenic Value	Lagan Valley Regional Park Nodes and Service Centres	Rural Settlements
Conservation Areas other than Linen, Cathedral and Belfast City Centre.	Conservation Areas of Linen, Cathedral and Belfast City Centre	
Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes and Sites of Archaeological Interest	Areas of Townscape and Village Character	
Nature Conservation and Landscape Designations, including Landscape Wedges		

This strategic framework introduced the concept of Signature Projects, including the Titanic Signature Project, to align tourism investment to those developments that would help create international stand out experiences for Northern Ireland. From 2008-2012, the Northern Ireland Executive allocated £60 million of funding to tourism, and over £300 million capital investment was made in the sector as a whole.

Through the Signature Projects, NITB has supported a wide range of new tourism developments and improvements right across Northern Ireland. Support was given to initiatives which improved visitor attractions, activity tourism products, public realm, visitor information and tourist information centres, creative industries and new technologies that showcase Northern Ireland's unique offering. In addition, the urban environment in the Plan Area is an important factor in attracting tourists and in persuading those who do make visits to make return trips.

Belfast City & Greater Belfast has been identified as a key tourism area within the draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland 2010-2020 (TSNI).

With the transition from signature projects to destination development, local authorities have the opportunity to collaborate to develop and promote tourism in their destination. The Belfast City & Greater Belfast destination covers council areas Belfast, Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and North Down.

The tourism industry's vision of developing a world-class visitor experience is now being realised. Titanic Belfast opened its doors in March 2012. This international attraction is contained within an iconic building in the Titanic Quarter, and allows visitors to re-live the entire Titanic story from her birth in Belfast to the fateful maiden voyage and eventual re-discovery in the Atlantic Ocean.

The BMA has the capacity to further exploit the international trend towards city tourism, through

increased development of its tourism product. In particular, business tourism is encouraged as a market that will generate additional visits and significant revenue.

The six BMA councils have responsibility for the promotion and marketing of tourism and have prepared strategies for the development of tourism within their Council areas. These identify the strengths of their area, which offer potential for growth in tourism and indicate priority areas and opportunities for development.

Many of the identified tourism assets and opportunities, as referred to below are located within city and town centres.

Belfast has potential as a major destination for cultural tourism through a variety of measures, including festivals and building on the success of its museums, theatres, public art galleries and event venues such as the Waterfront Hall and Odyssey Arena. Another element of this cultural tourism relates to the history and industrial heritage of the City, focusing on the City Centre, Titanic Quarter, Queens Quarter, Gaeltacht Quarter, Cathedral Quarter and waterfront area. City break, conference and business tourism and the night-time economy are significant areas with potential for growth.

Opportunities along the River Lagan and Lagan Canal, within the City Council areas of Belfast and Lisburn and Castlereagh Borough, offer the prospect for expanding water based tourism within the wider Lagan Valley Regional Park, to provide a significant recreational asset for the City. Recreational tourism also presents opportunities focused on the Colin Glen Linear Park, the Belfast Hills and Cavehill Country Park where the Belfast Hills Partnership supports access for all. In addition, the network of Lough shore, lakes and rivers are important assets, where coarse, game and sea fishing are an attraction for visitors to the area.

Lisburn has a significant number of tourism assets providing a diverse range of attractions. These

attractions include its proximity to the Belfast Hills and the recreational potential of Colin Glen Linear Park and the Hills. The River Lagan with its Canal, Towpath and wider Lagan Valley Regional Park offer further outdoor recreation opportunities. These attractions are complemented by Lisburn's indoor recreational facilities and parks. Lisburn attractions also include its industrial and built heritage. These are focused on the Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum and the regeneration of the Historic Quarter of the City Centre, including the Island Civic Centre. The expansion of a night time economy and further development of accommodation options within the City are priorities of Lisburn City Council for tourism development.

North Down's Tourism Strategy focuses on the potential of Bangor's maritime location and new seafront development to enhance its role as a traditional holiday resort and promote the night time economy. The natural environment of the Holywood Hills, Crawfordsburn and Redburn Country Parks and the Lough shore and beaches such as Ballyholme are key assets. The Borough also includes woodlands at Ballysallagh Wood and the Clondeboye Estate and the regionally significant heritage attraction of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

Tourism potential in Carrickfergus and Whitehead focuses on their heritage and archaeological interest, which in Carrickfergus Town is based on features such as the Town Wall, Castle and Gasworks Museum. The development of Carrickfergus Marina and promotion of the Lough Shore location of both towns offers potential for tourism and maritime pursuits and events.

Castlereagh has developed leisure facilities that have the potential to generate tourism revenue such as the Dundonald International Ice Bowl Complex and the Billy Neill MBE Soccer School of Excellence. Continued appropriate recreational and tourism development at locations, such as the River Lagan and Canal and Belvoir Park Forest in the Lagan Valley Regional Park, will continue to enhance visitor numbers.

Newtownabbey's Tourism Strategy is based on the development of key tourism products related to retail development, history and culture. These products intend to build on recent improvements to the tourism base such as those facilities provided at Mossley Mill and Sentry Hill. The Plan will support the development of new tourism facilities and encourage the recreational development of the Valley Park, Carrickfergus Escarpment area and Carnmoney Hill as well as the Lough Shore at Whiteabbey and Jordanstown to link in with the National Cycle Network.

A key challenge is to secure the benefits of tourism development, while conserving the assets of natural and built environment which provide the basis for visitor attraction. Excessive pressures on the natural and man-made heritage can place these assets at risk.

The Plan also emphasises the need for quality in the urban environment. Policies for key locations such as city and town centres and major gateways to the urban area seek to raise the standard of new developments with benefits in 'first impressions' for tourists (see Policy UE 1).

Public Services And Utilities

Government Departments, Agencies and statutory bodies, as well as the six Councils in the Plan Area are primarily responsible for the provision of public services and utilities. The private sector is however playing an increasingly important role. The main public services are water and sewerage provision, drainage, waste disposal, cemeteries, electricity, natural gas and telecommunications. The role of renewable energy is also likely to increase over the Plan period.

Regional Policy Context

The RDS recognises the role public services and utilities have in determining the economic competitiveness of Northern Ireland and provides the strategic environmental context for the delivery of them. It aims to include actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change, by measures including promoting sustainable construction, consumption and production, while aiming to prevent waste and deal with it in line with the revised Waste Framework Directive.

Accordingly the RDS advocates a number of guidelines to meet this aim, including

- implement a balanced approach to telecommunications infrastructure that will give a competitive advantage (RG3);
- deliver a sustainable and secure energy supply (RG5);
- reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change whilst improving air quality (RG9);
- manage our waste sustainably (RG10); and
- promotion of a more sustainable approach to the provision of water and sewerage services and flood risk management (RG12).

Prevailing regional planning policies and supplementary guidance relating to Public Services and Utilities are set out in:

PPS 10 - Telecommunications
 PPS 11 - Planning and Waste Management
 PPS 15 - Planning and Flood Risk
 PPS 18 - Renewable Energy
 DCAN 14 - Siting and Design of Radio Telecommunications Equipment
 DCAN 12 - Planning Controls for Hazardous Substances

The Rural Strategy contains current regional planning policy on overhead electricity cables. Policy SETT 4 of the Plan extends the application of the extant policies of The Rural Strategy to the entire Plan Area.

BMA Public Services and Utilities Strategy

The BMA Public Services and Utilities Strategy comprises the following elements:

- to facilitate the delivery of the infrastructure requirements of the Plan Area throughout the Plan Period; and
- to highlight infrastructure constraints and requirements as appropriate within key site requirements.

Water and Sewerage

The abstraction, treatment and supply of drinking water and the conveyance and treatment of sewage are the responsibility of Northern Ireland Water (NIW), which is also responsible for further improvements to this infrastructure.

Water supply within the Plan Area is drawn from several sources and delivered through the following impounding reservoirs inside the Belfast Metropolitan Area - Ballysallagh Upper and Lower, Conlig Lower and Upper, Leathemstown, Copeland, Killylane, Lough Mourne, North Woodburn, South Woodburn,

Dorisland and Stoneyford.

Water supply is also delivered via a number of reservoirs outside the Plan Area. Water from Lough Neagh is delivered to the Plan Area via Dunore Water Treatment Works just outside Antrim and from the Silent Valley and Ben Crom Reservoirs in the Mourne Mountains. The water from the Silent Valley is treated at Silent Valley Treatment Works at Drumaroad. The Lough Island Reavy Impounding Reservoir in Down District also currently supplies water to the Plan Area. In addition some water is drawn from groundwater sources via boreholes.

NIW has invested heavily during recent years in improving Northern Ireland's water and sewerage infrastructure, with further investment planned for the years ahead. Throughout the Plan Area, a number of significant investment projects have been undertaken, including the Belfast Sewers Project, completed in Spring 2010, while other projects such as the Watermains Rehabilitation Project are ongoing.

Further schemes are programmed to upgrade the water and sewerage system, where required, and to comply with EU Directives regarding drinking water quality and discharge criteria and to meet increasing demand. Details of the current programme of upgrade to the sewerage infrastructure are provided in Appendix 4. These tables list each Waste Water Treatment Works throughout the Plan Area in five categories based on their capacity.

Drainage and Flood Risk Management

Rivers Agency, an Agency within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, is the statutory drainage and flood defence authority for Northern Ireland. It will be consulted on land use development proposals that are likely to impact on watercourses and flood plains.

PPS 15: Planning and Flood Risk sets out the Department's planning policies to minimise flood risk to people, property and the environment. It adopts a precautionary approach to land use development that takes account of climate change and is

supportive of the wellbeing and safety of people.

Some development sites will require existing infrastructure, such as major sewers, water mains and designated watercourses, to be safeguarded. This may include ensuring that such infrastructure is not built over and that necessary wayleave strips are retained to facilitate future maintenance. It is the responsibility of the developer to liaise with the relevant agencies to this end.

For those sites where necessary infrastructure improvements to the adjacent watercourse are not viable, Rivers Agency will not consent to the discharge of any additional storm run-off above existing green field rates. In these circumstances developers are recommended to consult with Rivers Agency/NIW at an early stage in the planning process to ensure a timely and acceptable means of storm water management for the development.

The Strategic Flood Map (NI) – Rivers and Sea is available on the Rivers Agency website www.riversagency.ni.gov.uk. The Map indicates that significant portions of Belfast City Centre lie within or adjacent to a coastal flood plain. Planning applications in these areas must be accompanied by an assessment of the flood risk in the form of a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) with particular emphasis on flood resilience and resistance (see CIRIA C688 Flood resilience and resistance for critical infrastructure).

There are a number of recorded flooded areas that significantly affect particular settlements within the Plan Area. Major areas of flooding include:

- River Lagan towards Lisburn.
- River Enler
- Loop River
- Forthriver
- Three Mile Water
- Six Mile Water

- Ravarnet River
- Ballymartin River

This list is not exhaustive nor is it intended to include the flood plain of every watercourse in the Metropolitan Area. Prospective developers are advised to liaise early in the formulation of their proposals with Northern Ireland Water and Rivers Agency to clarify flooding or flood plain issues that may affect particular sites.

Waste Disposal

The six Councils in the Plan Area are part of a larger group of 11 Councils in the eastern part of Northern Ireland that have come together to form ARC21, the Sub-Regional waste planning body. The ARC21 Waste Management Plan was prepared under Article 23 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997, adopted by the Councils in 2003 and revised in 2006.

The ARC21 Waste Management Plan sets out how it is proposed to deal with waste in the eastern area over the following 15 years. The central focus of the Plan is an analysis of the waste streams arising in the ARC21 region and associated potential for waste prevention, recycling, recovery and disposal. The Plan considers a range of options and scenarios for future waste management, against a variety of elements, building upon guidance as set out the Northern Ireland Best Practicable Environmental Option (NIBPEO). The NIBPEO guidance provides a framework for identifying the optimum balance of recycling and recovery infrastructure capacity to meet targets for municipal waste, commercial and industrial waste and construction, demolition and excavation wastes.

In recent years significant progress in waste management has occurred within the ARC21 region, based on a strategy focussing on reducing, reusing and recycling. This is illustrated by the fact that in 2000, the average household in the Eastern Region generated 1.3 tonnes of waste per annum. By 2010,

this had fallen to around 1.1 tonnes of waste per annum. In 2000, 94.5% of municipal waste in the eastern region went to landfill. Considerable progress has been made in subsequent years, with around 60% of municipal waste sent to landfill in 2011/2012. It is hoped that this will fall to 50% by 2020 with further advances in recycling rates.

As recovery, reuse and recycling capacity grows, a decreasing amount of landfill will then be required to deal with residual material left by these processes. The Waste Management Plan also identifies 'areas of search' for the provision of necessary facilities and capacity.

Proposals for waste management facilities will be considered against the prevailing regional planning policies.

Cemeteries

Responsibility for provision and maintenance of cemeteries and burial grounds within individual Council areas is the statutory responsibility of District Councils. Some churches also manage and maintain associated cemeteries and burial grounds.

Belfast City Council has historically maintained a minimum seven-year supply of burial land. However, there is currently a rapidly diminishing supply of plots within existing cemeteries and a need has been identified for additional cemetery provision within the Plan period.

Planning permission has been granted to Belfast City Council for additional land adjacent to Roselawn Cemetery, which will allow for approximately nine years burial at the current burial rate. A new cemetery and crematorium has been approved near Moira with capacity for 9,000 burial plots, memorial gardens and landscaped parkland potentially allowing for 40 years of new capacity.

Telecommunications

Within the Plan Area telecommunications provision is primarily the responsibility of British Telecom, supplemented by a number of other private companies. Several providers operate mobile telecommunication networks within the Plan Area. Proposals for telecommunications provision will be considered against the prevailing regional planning policies including PPS 10: Telecommunications and supplementary guidance, contained within Development Control Advice Note 14 (DCAN 14): Siting and Design of Radio Telecommunications Equipment.

Energy

The Strategic Energy Framework 2010 (DETI) details Northern Ireland's energy future over the next ten years and is aimed at ensuring future access to secure competitively priced and sustainable energy supplies. It confirms an ambitious target of achieving 40% of its electricity consumption from renewable energy sources by 2020.

Northern Ireland Electricity will continue to develop the existing 33kV and 11kV distribution networks in order to meet customer requirements and demand change during the Plan period.

Northern Ireland is now connected to natural gas supplies by the Scotland Northern Ireland Pipeline which crosses the Irish Sea from Stranraer and the South-North Pipeline from Dublin. DETI is working with Scotland and the Republic of Ireland in the tripartite ISLES feasibility study into an offshore grid system linking Western Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This will make a significant contribution to the European vision of a more interconnected European energy region and help shape the concept of an offshore super grid as part of the integration of Europe's energy infrastructure. This will assist in the diversification of fuel sources, provide competition in the energy market and improve industrial competitiveness.

Natural Gas is carried to Carrickfergus via a high-pressure pipeline to a pressure reduction station at Trooperslane from where it is distributed to the wider Belfast area.

The Department will treat the high-pressure pipeline as a hazardous installation. This may place constraints on developments in its vicinity in the interest of public safety. All applications in the vicinity of the natural gas pipeline will be considered in consultation with the Health and Safety Executive of Northern Ireland.

Supplementary guidance is contained in Development Control Advice Note 12 (DCAN 12): Planning Controls for Hazardous Substances.

An objective of the RDS is to emphasise the importance of cutting environmental costs generally, by reducing the consumption of natural resources and energy from non-renewable sources.

Renewable energy comes from energy sources that are continuously replenished by nature. The main sources of renewable energy are the wind, the sun (solar energy), moving water (hydropower), heat extracted from the air, ground and water (including geothermal energy), and biomass (wood, biodegradable waste and energy crops). Further information on current renewable energy technologies is set out in the "Best Practice Guidance to Planning Policy Statement 18: Renewable Energy".

Education, Health, Community And Cultural Facilities

Regional Policy Context

The RDS provides the strategic context for the delivery of community services including education and health care. Its aims include the promotion of development which improves the health and well-being of communities including easy access to appropriate services and facilities. A healthy community is better able to take advantage of the economic, social and environmental opportunities which are open to it. Improved health and well-being is derived not only from easy access to appropriate services and facilities, although this is important, but also from the creation of a strong economy set within a safe and attractive environment.

The Rural Strategy contains current regional policies for community needs. Policy SETT 4 of the Plan extends the application of the extant policies of Rural Strategy to the entire Plan Area.

Supplementary Planning Guidance is contained in Development Control Advice Note 9: 'Residential and Nursing Homes' and Development Control Advice Note 13: 'Crèches, Day Nurseries and Pre-school Playgroups'.

BMA Education, Health, Community and Cultural Facilities Strategy

The BMA Education, Health, Community and Cultural Facilities Strategy comprises the following elements:

- to facilitate the delivery of service provision within the Plan Area throughout the Plan period; and
- to highlight as appropriate requirements for new service provision through key site requirements.

The Department has consulted the relevant bodies with statutory responsibility for service provision. The Plan identifies sufficient land to meet the needs of the service providers within the Plan Area. Specific proposals are contained in the relevant District Proposals.

Education Facilities

The Department of Education (DE) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) retain overall responsibility for education, policy and finance.

Responsibility for the provision of primary and post-primary educational facilities along with library services in the Plan area, rests mainly with the following providers:

- Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB);
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (Council for Irish Medium Education);
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS);
- North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB);
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE); and
- South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB).

Third level education is provided for by the Colleges of Further and Higher Education, Queen's University and the University of Ulster.

In July 2012, Education and Library Boards published plans for restructuring post-primary education as part of the Area Planning exercise. Consultation on the draft plans has been completed and the Boards are in the process of publishing their final proposals.

Queen's University, Belfast

Queen's University, Belfast, is proposing significant investment in education comprising of a combination

of new build development and refurbishment/extension of existing facilities.

University of Ulster, Jordanstown and Belfast Campuses

The University of Ulster plans to relocate the bulk of its activity from Jordanstown to a new enlarged Belfast City Campus in York Street by 2018. The Department will work closely with the University to ensure the necessary infrastructure is provided.

The University has enhanced its sports facilities at Jordanstown, with an indoor sports facility and the Sports Institute of Northern Ireland High Performance Centre. It will also retain specialist engineering facilities at the site. Development of any surplus land at the campus will be subject to prevailing regional planning policies.

Libraries

The Northern Ireland Library Authority (Libraries NI) has the statutory responsibility for the provision of public library services in Northern Ireland. Its primary duty is to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service for persons living, working or studying in Northern Ireland.

Since its establishment in 2009, Libraries NI has conducted a review of library branches and services with a view to creating a modern, fit for purpose library service. The result has been a significant rationalisation of library services. The review has led to the closure of a number of local libraries in the Greater Belfast Area.

Health and Social Services

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety retains overall authority for health and social care services. Services are commissioned by the Health and Social Care Board and provided by Health and Social Care Trusts. The BMAP Area is covered by the following Trusts:

- Belfast covering Belfast and part of Castlereagh
- Northern covering Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey
- South Eastern covering North Down, Lisburn and part of Castlereagh

The Belvoir Park Hospital is now surplus to requirements following rationalisation of hospital services, while facilities at Forster Green are currently under review.

It is envisaged that the number of people in institutional care, mainly provided for at the Knockbracken Healthcare facility, will continue to reduce, and be supplemented by ongoing provision of care services in the community.

Cultural Facilities and Arts Infrastructure

The Plan area has a range of museums, heritage centres, theatres, performance venues, cinemas and public art galleries. Recent investment, including the refurbishment of the Ulster Museum and the Ulster Hall, redevelopment of the Lyric Theatre and the Titanic Signature project, is helping Belfast to fulfil its role as a modern European City.

It is considered that a National Art Gallery is required to accommodate, as a minimum, the important collections currently housed but not displayed in the Ulster Museum. Also, there is no adequate provision for artists' studios in the Plan area.

Following consultation, Belfast City Council produced the Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012–15, which outlines its priorities for action and funding. The vision is as follows:

- everyone in Belfast experiences and is inspired by our city's diverse and distinctive culture and arts;
- arts and heritage are valued for enriching quality of life and creating wealth; and

- Belfast's culture and creativity is renowned throughout the world.

A Draft Plan for the Cathedral Quarter, created by the Cathedral Quarter Steering Group and backed by the Department for Social Development, was published in August 2012. The draft development plan outlines four key priorities:

- To support the Cathedral Quarter as a centre for the arts and creative industries;
- To support the growth of the mixed-use economy in the Cathedral Quarter;
- To generate public participation, through accessible information and community engagement; and
- To build and maintain a supportive infrastructure, through focused management.

Community Facilities

District Councils are responsible for the provision and maintenance of most community centres. Youth clubs operate throughout the Plan Area from various premises owned by Councils, churches and schools. Various other organisations operate widely throughout the Plan Area such as the YMCA, Boys'

Brigade, Girls' Brigade, Girl Guides, and Scouts etc. There are also playgroups, youth resources and Outdoor Education Centres within the area.

Education, Health, Community and Cultural Facilities Policy

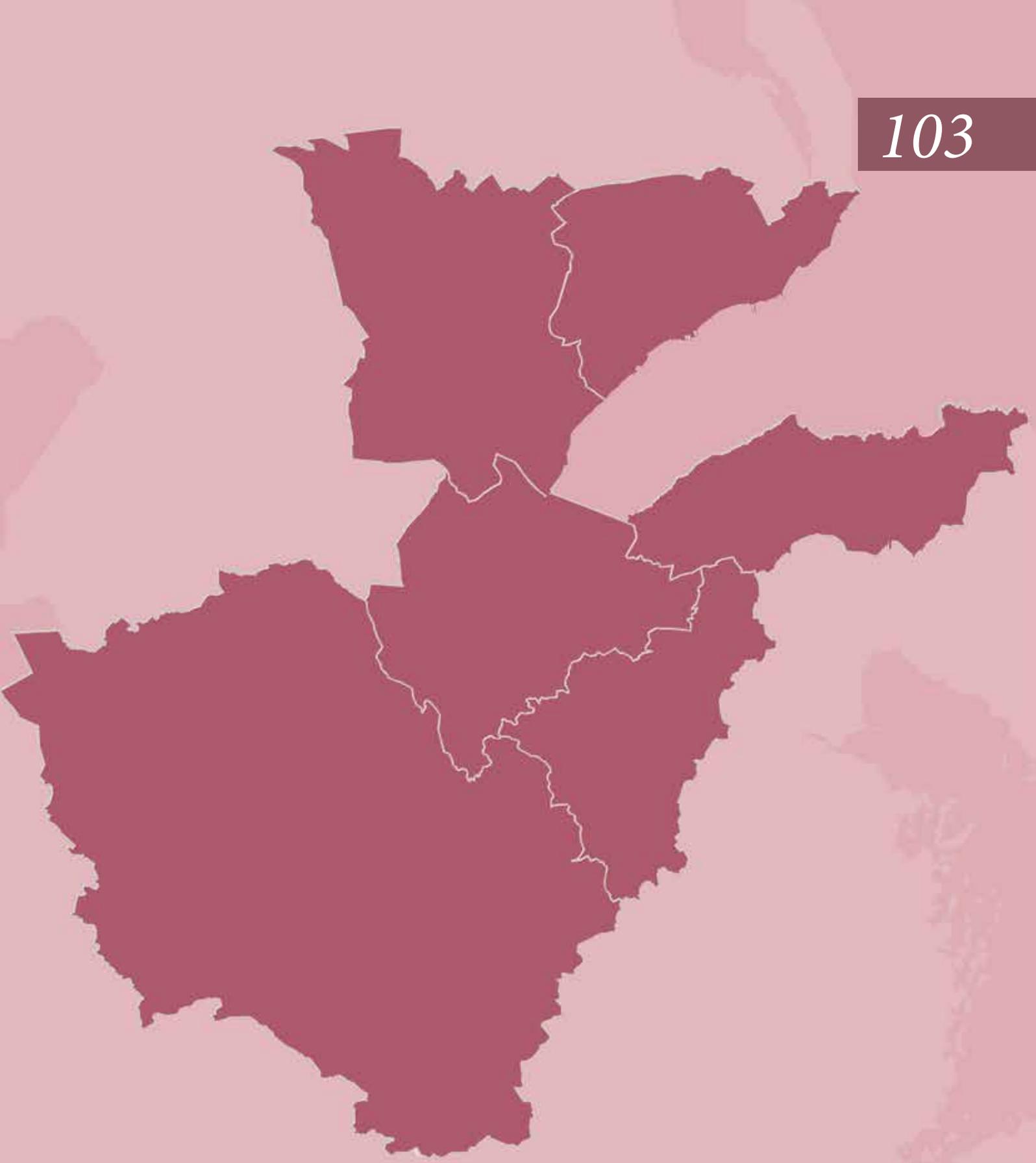
Policy CF 1

Protection of land for Education, Health, Community and Cultural Facilities

Planning permission will not be granted for alternative uses on lands identified for the provision of education, health, community uses or cultural facilities.

Lands proposed for education, health, community or cultural uses by the relevant providers or District Councils are identified in the relevant District Proposals. Exceptionally, where lands identified for community uses become surplus to requirements, alternative uses may be acceptable.

Proposals for new community facilities will be considered in the context of prevailing regional planning policy and the Plan Proposals.



| Appendices

APPENDIX I

Policy Context

- A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (The Rural Strategy), DOE, 1993;
- The Belfast Agreement – the outcome of the multi-party negotiations on the future of Northern Ireland, April 1998;
- The Northern Ireland Act 1998;
- The UK Government's White Paper on Partnership for Equality, DFP March 1998 (leading to the development of New Targeting Social Need Policy);
- Policy Appraisal and the Environment, DETR April 1998;
- The UK Government's White Paper on the future of Transport, "A New Deal for Transport:- Better for Everyone", DETR 1998;
- "Moving Forward – the Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement", DOE 1998;
- "A Better Quality of Life – A UK Strategy for Sustainable Development", DETR May 1999;
- The Strategic Planning Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1999;
- Strategy 2010 – A Report by the Economic Development Strategy Review Steering Group, March 1999;
- "Creating Places – achieving quality in residential developments", Design Guide published by DOE and DRD, May 2000;
- The Northern Ireland Programme for Government;
- River Conservation Strategy:- An Environment and Heritage Service strategy to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built heritage of rivers in Northern Ireland and facilitate their sustainable use, DOE 2001;
- "Shaping Our Future" – Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025, September 2001;
- The Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012, July 2002;
- "Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy", Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group, August 2002;
- Belfast City Centre Regeneration Policy Statement, DSD, April 2004;
- The Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan, March 2005;
- "Lifetime Opportunities - Governments anti-poverty and social inclusion strategy for Northern Ireland", OFM&DFM, 2006;
- The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2006 – 2020, DOE, 2006;
- "Shaping Our Future – Adjustments to the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) – 2025", June 2008;
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015, DOE, 2008;
- Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland, OFM&DFM, May 2010;
- 'Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020', DETI;
- "Building a Better Future" – Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2035, March 2012; and
- Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future:—A New Approach to Regional Transportation, DRD, 2012.

APPENDIX 2

Planning Policy Statements

Published

PPS 1	General Principles	March 1998	PPS 13	Transportation and Land Use	February 2005
PPS 2	Natural Heritage	July 2013	PPS 15	Planning and Flood Risk	June 2006
PPS 3	Access, Movement and Parking	February 2005	PPS 16	Tourism	June 2013
PPS 3	(Clarification): Access, Movement and Parking	October 2006	PPS 17	Control of Outdoor Advertisements	March 2006
PPS 4	Planning & Economic Development	November 2010	PPS 18	Renewable Energy	August 2009
PPS 5	Retailing and Town Centres	June 1996	PPS 21	Sustainable Development in the Countryside	June 2010
PPS 6	Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage	March 1999	Issued for Public Consultation		
PPS 6	(Addendum): Areas of Townscape Character	August 2005	PPS 15	Revised (Draft) Planning and Flood Risk	
PPS 7	Quality Residential Environments	June 2001	PPS 23	(Draft): Enabling Development	
PPS 7	(Addendum): Residential Extensions and Alterations	March 2008	PPS 24	(Draft): Economic Considerations	
PPS 7	(Addendum): Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas	August 2010			
PPS 8	Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation	February 2004			
PPS 9	The Enforcement of Planning Control	March 2000			
PPS 10	Telecommunications	April 2002			
PPS 11	Planning and Waste Management	December 2002			
PPS 12	Housing in Settlements	July 2005			
PPS 12	Policy HS 3 (Amended): Travellers Accommodation	January 2013			

APPENDIX 3

Development Control Advice Notes

- DCAN 1: Amusement Centres
- DCAN 2: Multiple Occupancy
- DCAN 3: Bookmaking Offices
- DCAN 4: Restaurants, Cafes and Fast Food Outlets
- DCAN 5: Taxi Offices
- DCAN 7: Public Houses
- DCAN 8: Housing in Existing Urban Areas
- DCAN 9: Residential and Nursing Homes
- DCAN 10: Environmental Impact Assessment
- DCAN 11: Access for People with Disabilities
- DCAN 12: Planning Controls for Hazardous Substances
- DCAN 13: Crèches, Day Nurseries and Pre-School Playgroups
- DCAN 14: Siting and Design of Radio Telecommunications Equipment
- DCAN 15: Vehicular Access Standards (Second Edition)

Issued for Consultation

- DCAN 11: Access for All – Designing for an Accessible Environment

APPENDIX 4

Sewage Infrastructure – Waste Water Treatment Works

Belfast District

CATEGORY I

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Belfast	Belfast	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
	Kinnegar	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
	Whitehouse	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Hannahstown	Belfast	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.

Carrickfergus District

CATEGORY I

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Carrickfergus	Carrickfergus	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Greenisland	Greenisland	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Whitehead	Whitehead	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Trooperslane	Greenisland	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Knocknagullagh	Carrickfergus	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.

Castlereagh District

CATEGORY 1

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Metropolitan Castlereagh	Kinnegar	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
	Newtownbreda	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Crossnacreevy	Kinnegar	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Ryan Park	Kinnegar	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.

CATEGORY 4

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Moneyreagh	Moneyreagh	No capacity during Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan period - up to 2015.

Lisburn District

CATEGORY 1

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Lisburn City	Lisburn	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
	Dunmurry	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Metropolitan Lisburn	Belfast	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.

	Dunmurry	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Culcavy	Lisburn	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Moira	Moira	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Aghalee	Aghalee	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Annahilt	Annahilt	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Dromara	Dromara	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Drumbeg	Drumbeg	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Drumbo	Drumbeg	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Glenavy	Glenavy	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Lower Ballinderry	Lower Ballinderry	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Milltown	Dunmurry	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Ravernet	Ravernet	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.

Upper Ballinderry	Upper Ballinderry	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Ballyaughlis	Drumbeg	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Ballylesson	Newtownbreda	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Ballynadolly	Ballynadolly	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Ballyskeagh	Drumbeg	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Drumlough	Drumlough	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Duneight	Lisburn	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Edenderry	Edenderry	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Feumore	Feumore	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Halftown	Lisburn	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Hillhall	Lisburn	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Kesh Bridge	Lisburn	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.

Lambeg	Dunmurry	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Long Kesh	Lisburn	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Lower Broomhedge	Lisburn	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Lurganville	Lisburn	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Magheraconluce	Annahilt	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Morningside	Lisburn	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Purdysburn	Newtownbreda	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Tullynacross	Dunmurry	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.

CATEGORY 3

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Hillsborough	Hillsborough	Upgrade programmed (2011-2015) subject to available funding.
Stoneyford	Stoneyford	Upgrade programmed (2011-2015) subject to available funding.

CATEGORY 4

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Maghaberry	Maghaberry	No capacity during Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan period - up to 2015.
Dundrod	Dundrod	No capacity during Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan period - up to 2015.
Legacurry	Legacurry	No capacity during Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan period - up to 2015.
St James	St James	No capacity during Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan period - up to 2015.

CATEGORY 5

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Boardmills	None	Not served by a WWTW
Drumlough Road	None	Not served by a WWTW
Halfpenny Gate	None	Not served by a WWTW
The Temple	None	Not served by a WWTW
Upper Broomhedge	None	Not served by a WWTW

Newtownabbey District

CATEGORY 1

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Metropolitan Newtownabbey	Greenisland	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
	Whitehouse	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Ballyclare	Ballyclare	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.

Ballyeaston	Greenisland	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Ballynure	Whitehead	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Ballyrobert	Greenisland	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Cogry/Kilbride	Carrickfergus	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Doagh	Ballyclare	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Straid	Ballyclare	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Craigarogan	Roughfort	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Hillhead *	Ballyclare	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Roughfort	Roughfort	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.

CATEGORY 4

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Ballycor	Ballycorr Grove	No capacity during Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan period - up to 2015.

CATEGORY 5

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Ballycraigy	None	Not served by a WWTW
Bruslee	None	Not served by a WWTW
Kingsmoss	None	Not served by a WWTW
Lowtown	None	Not served by a WWTW
Millbank ~	None	Not served by a WWTW
Tildarg	None	Not served by a WWTW

* Part of this small settlement (190-202 Hillhead Road & 14-24 Logwood Road) is not served by a WWTW

~ Part of this small settlement (Carnbank) is served by a private WWTW

North Down District

CATEGORY 1

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Metropolitan North Down	Kinnegar	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Bangor	North Down	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Holywood	Kinnegar	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
	Seahill	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Crawfordsburn	Seahill	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.

Groomsport	North Down	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Helens Bay	Seahill	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Seahill	Seahill	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Craigtlet	Ballyrickard	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.
Orlock	North Down	Satisfactory and capable of accommodating all development within its catchment that is proposed in the Plan through the Plan period.

CATEGORY 5

City/Town/Village/ Small Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Comment
Six Road Ends	None	Not served by a WWTW

Category 2, of which there is none in the Plan area, refers to a WWTW which is currently being upgraded.

APPENDIX 5

Glossary

The Belfast Metropolitan Area, BMA and Metropolitan Area

The Plan Area including the six Council areas of Belfast, Castlereagh, Newtownabbey, North Down, Lisburn and Carrickfergus

Contiguous Development Zone (CDZ)

The continuous built up area centred on Belfast and which extends in an arc from Jordanstown to Knocknagoney and includes, Metropolitan Newtownabbey, Belfast City, Metropolitan Lisburn, Metropolitan Castlereagh and Metropolitan North Down.

Metropolitan Development Limit

A continuous development limit around the Contiguous Development Zone and comprising development limits for Metropolitan:-

Newtownabbey
Lisburn
Castlereagh
North Down and
Belfast City

Metropolitan Urban Area

Defined for purposes of allocating the 54,800 dwellings, which form part of the total Housing Growth Indicator to the BMA in the RDS, as the Contiguous Development Zone and the City of Lisburn and towns of Bangor, Carrickfergus and Holywood.

Metropolitan Rural Area

Defined for purposes of allocating the 11,700 dwellings, which form part of the total Housing Growth Indicator to the BMA and hinterland in the RDS, as those areas lying within The Belfast Metropolitan Area but outside The Metropolitan Urban Area.

Belfast Metropolitan Area/BMA Metropolitan Area

Refers to the Belfast Metropolitan Area as set out in the Regional Development Strategy.

APPENDIX 6

Acronyms

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
AOHSV	Area of High Scenic Value
ASI	Area of Scientific Interest
ASAI	Area of Significant Archaeological Interest
ASSI	Area of Special Scientific Interest
ATC	Area of Townscape Character
AVC	Area of Village Character
BMA	Belfast Metropolitan Area
BMTP	Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan
DCAN	Development Control Advice Note
EQIA	Equality Impact Assessment
ISNI	Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland
LLPA	Local Landscape Policy Area
LVRP	Lagan Valley Regional Park
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NNR	National Nature Reserve
PAC	Planning Appeals Commission
PfG	Programme for Government
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
RDS	Regional Development Strategy
RG	Regional Guidance
RSTNTP	Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan
RTS	Regional Transportation Strategy
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SFG	Spatial Framework Guidance
SLNCI	Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPPS	Strategic Planning Policy Statement
TOLS	Test of Likely Significance

Northern Ireland Government Departments

OFMDFM	Office of the First minister and Deputy First Minister
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department of Employment and Learning
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DOE	Department of the Environment
DOJ	Department of Justice
DRD	Department for Regional Development
DSD	Department for Social Development

APPENDIX 7

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