WEST TYRONE AREA PLAN 2019

ISSUES PAPER

OCTOBER 2005
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INTRODUCTION

The preparation of the West Tyrone Area Plan 2019 (The Plan) for the Omagh and Strabane Districts is part of an on-going programme to provide full coverage of contemporary plans for all Council areas in Northern Ireland. The ‘Issues Paper’, is a consultation document, intended to promote focused debate on those issues that will need to be addressed when preparing the Draft Plan. For ease of use, this paper sets out a series of strategic, general and local issues against which comment may be lodged. However, there may also be other issues that the public may wish to raise and comment upon.

HOW TO GIVE YOUR VIEWS

You are invited to send your views on the issues raised in this paper and on any other relevant issues of concern.

Comments should be sent to:

Dr C R Boomer
West Tyrone Area Plan 2019
County Hall
Drumragh Avenue
Omagh
County Tyrone
BT79 7AF

or by e-mail: divisional.planning.office.omagh@nics.gov.uk

To arrive no later than 27th January 2006.

All representations received by this date will be given full consideration together with the views expressed in the report of Community Technical Aid and the comments of statutory undertakers, public stakeholders and the District Councils. If you have already submitted a representation in response to the initial “Notice of Intention to Prepare a Development Plan”, then it will not be necessary to make a further submission for your views to be considered. However, any additional comments are welcome.

All representations received will be made available for public inspection upon request during the plan preparation process.
BACKGROUND

The Issues Paper has been informed by statistical and analytical data, consultations with Omagh and Strabane District Councils, Government bodies, statutory undertakers, community and voluntary groups and the general public.

In September 2004, a “Notice of Intention to Prepare a Development Plan” was published in the local press inviting public comment. By the closing date on 17th December 2004, 208 letters of representation concerning 265 matters had been lodged.

**Figure 1: Plan Process**

Under the supervision of a Co-ordinating Group, consisting of representatives of Government Agencies and of the two District Councils, consultations have been targeted at statutory undertakers and other public stakeholders. The Omagh Local Strategy Partnership has independently collected the views of the voluntary and business sector.

Planning Service has presented a series of discussion papers to Omagh and Strabane District Councils providing a review of the existing Plans; national and regional policy context and strategic issues; results of the pre-Issues consultation exercise and an examination of housing and local issues.

Community Technical Aid, an independent voluntary organisation, has been appointed to undertake a comprehensive and wide-ranging public and community consultation. Their role is to ensure that all sections of the community, including disadvantaged and under represented groups, have been provided with the opportunity to make input into the Area Plan.

The first stage of this consultation has been completed and a “Stage One” report presented to Planning Service. This contains a diverse
range of views and opinions, which have informed this Issues Paper. Community Technical Aid will undertake further consultation in response to the Issues Paper to inform the Draft Plan.

The statistical and analytical data that has informed this Issues Paper is contained in the “Initial Findings Report”. This document, together with the Community Technical Aid “Stage One” report and those reports presented to the District Councils, are available from the Divisional Planning Office or the Planning Service website, www.planningni.gov.uk. The Community Technical Aid report is available from their website www.communitytechnicalaid.org, or by contacting them at 445-449 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 3GQ.
POLICY CONTEXT

The Plan is being prepared under the provisions of The Planning (NI) Order 1991 taking into account European, national and regional policies that have implications for the future pattern of development.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The European Union and the UK have adopted the principles of sustainable development based on four key objectives:

• social progress that meets the needs of everyone;
• effective protection of the environment;
• prudent use of natural resources and
• maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

The Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to carry out their functions with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

(a) persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, and sexual orientation;

(b) men and women generally;

(c) persons with a disability and persons without; and

(d) persons with dependants and persons without.

The Act also requires promotion of good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group. The Plan will be accompanied by an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) examining the likely effects of policies and proposals on the promotion of equality of opportunity.
NEW TARGETING SOCIAL NEED (NEW TSN)

New Targeting Social Need (currently under review) involves tackling social exclusion by targeting efforts and resources towards people, groups and areas objectively defined as being in social need. Whilst Planning Service is not a major spending Agency, it is a function of the Plan to facilitate development and create a land use framework that will allow investment to take place.

RURAL PROOFING

The needs and special considerations of rural communities will be fully acknowledged and assessed when preparing plan proposals. Accordingly, the Plan will be examined within the context of the Rural Proofing process.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (NI) 2004, requires plans to be subjected to, and informed by, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as by European Directive. The objective of the European Directive 2001/42/EC is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental consideration in the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. The SEA process has commenced with the Issues Paper, which has identified many of the environmental issues facing West Tyrone. The SEA will identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan and reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the Plan. An environmental report of the SEA will be published for consultation along with the Draft Plan.

PROTECTION OF NATURAL HERITAGE

International treaties and designations provide protection for our most important natural heritage. The West Tyrone Area contains two Ramsar sites, eight Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC), twenty Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and the designated Sperrins Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (RDS)

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland 2025 “Shaping Our Future” (September 2001) provides the overarching framework for development plans. Central to the RDS is the principle of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone including future generations by providing a balanced and equitable pattern of sustainable development. West Tyrone lies within Rural Northern Ireland, where the aim is to develop an attractive and prosperous rural area based on a balanced and integrated approach to the development of town, village and countryside. The Planning (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 requires the Plan to be in general conformity with the RDS.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY (RTS)

The RTS supports the RDS by providing a framework 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. It defines strategic transportation investment priorities and considers potential funding sources over the ten-year period 2002-2012.

PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) address particular aspects of land-use planning and provide policies that apply across Northern Ireland. In conjunction with the Department for Regional Development (DRD), Planning Service has a rolling programme for preparation and review of PPSs.

A PLANNING STRATEGY FOR RURAL NORTHERN IRELAND

Published in 1993, this provides a compendium of policies that are gradually being replaced by PPSs. However, it still contains key policies, such as those for controlling dwellings in the countryside. Regional policies contained in Planning Policy Statements and A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland cannot be changed by the Plan.
REGIONAL SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

The following supplementary documents support the regional policies:

• Creating Places (2000) provides guidance to improve the quality of new housing developments, through the design, character and layout of new housing areas.

• A Design Guide for Rural Northern Ireland (1994) provides guidance to improve the quality of buildings in the countryside and assist them to fit into the landscape.

• Development Control Advice Notes explain the planning criteria and technical standards for assessing different types of development.

PLANNING IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The RDS encourages cross border co-operation, particularly with regards to improving communications, developing economic and enterprise networks and protecting and managing the environment. This is also encouraged in the Republic where a planning framework is provided by development plans and guidance at national, regional, county and local level.

The National Development Plan 2000-2006 provides a framework for annual investment in the Republic targeted at infrastructure, productivity, education and training, and social inclusion. The National Spatial Strategy (NSS, 2002) provides a 20-year planning framework aimed at achieving a better balance of social, economic and physical development across Ireland. It is based on building upon the existing network of gateways and hubs. Sligo and Letterkenny/Derry being major gateways and Cavan and Monaghan being important hubs in the North West. County and other larger towns are also an important focus for business, residential, service and amenity functions. The need to support smaller towns, villages and rural areas at the local level is also recognised. The Strategy is developed further in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region, which presents a vision that by 2020 the Border Region will be a competitive area recognised as, and prospering from, its unique interface between the two economies.

The Draft Donegal County Plan was published in 2005. There is also a Letterkenny and Environs Plan 2003-2009. These plans, together with the national and regional context, will be taken into account when preparing the West Tyrone Area Plan.
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 implement the strategic objectives of the RDS and guide development decisions within West Tyrone up to 2019.

PLAN AREA

The Plan Area coincides with the parliamentary constituency of West Tyrone and relates to the District Council Areas of Omagh and Strabane. It has a combined area of nearly 2,000 square kilometres covering an extensive rural area that borders with the Republic of Ireland and is dominated by the Sperrin Mountains and the valleys of the Foyle river system. It had a 2001 population of 86,200 persons (Omagh 47,952; Strabane 38,248) of which 40% are under the age of 30 and nearly one third live in some of the most economically deprived areas in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures 2005).


The settlement hierarchy identified in the existing Area Plans is set out in Appendix One and illustrated on the Issues Paper Map.
A3 map
STRATEGIC ISSUES

The aim, objectives and plan strategy may be formulated, taking account of national and regional policy and the characteristics of the Plan area. The aim sets the general direction of the Plan, whilst objectives provide a measure against which the Plan should be managed. The strategy provides a vehicle for achieving the aims and objectives. These are presented for consultation purposes.

PLAN AIM

To provide a planning framework in general conformity with the RDS which facilitates future growth and development within West Tyrone whilst protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing the natural and built environment and ensuring that development is both sustainable and of a high quality.

PLAN OBJECTIVES

It is proposed that the Plan’s objectives should be the:

• maintenance and enhancement of West Tyrone and its environs as an attractive and pleasant place to live, work and visit;

• promotion of more sustainable and more balanced communities by encouraging choice in, and access to, housing, employment and other services;

• maintenance of compact urban forms that respect the individual character and identity of settlements, avoid urban sprawl and minimise the need for expansion into the countryside;

• integration of land use and transportation to improve safety, reduce congestion and the need for car journeys, encouraging a shift to more sustainable forms of travel including walking and cycling;

• provision of development opportunities to meet housing and employment needs within a quality and sustainable living and working environment;

• promotion of the vitality and viability of town and village centres by retaining and providing opportunities for shops, services, leisure and mixed-use development;
promotion of a living and working countryside with appropriate sustainable rural regeneration;

- protection and enhancement of landscape features, natural habitats and built heritage features that are of conservation importance and contribute to the overall character of individual settlements and the wider countryside;

- sensitive use of renewable energy sources; and

- improvement in the health and quality of life through provision of a network of open spaces and the promotion of opportunities for sustainable leisure and recreation development.

**PLAN STRATEGY**

The RDS contains a balanced and integrated spatial development strategy based on HUBS and CLUSTERS, key and link transport CORRIDORS and the main regional GATEWAYS of ports and airports.

The skeletal framework for development is provided by the transportation corridors, which also provide the link to the regional gateways and the European and global communication network. The A5 is a key transport corridor with the A32 and A505 identified as link corridors. Along the corridors are the main hubs and gateways. Belfast is recognised as the primary engine of growth with Londonderry as the main economic hub of the North West. Within Rural Northern Ireland, growth is balanced across a polycentric network of hubs and clusters based on the main towns. These have a strategic role as centres of employment and services and in terms of accommodating population and housing growth. Omagh and Strabane towns have been identified as two of the Region’s main hubs. Thus, they will be the primary growth centres in the West Tyrone Area Plan.

West Tyrone lies in “Rural Northern Ireland” where the RDS supports the development of a strong, diversified and competitive rural economy and a living, working countryside. The RDS also promotes the continuing renewal and revitalisation of towns and villages, improving accessibility of the rural community, and managing and enhancing the natural and built heritage. Thus the Plan’s growth strategy should also provide for balanced growth across the smaller towns and villages and recognise the needs of the rural community.
Taking into account the RDS, it is therefore proposed that the Plan strategy should be to:

- manage growth based on sustainable patterns of development balanced across West Tyrone, in accordance with the Regional Development Strategy;

- promotion of Omagh and Strabane towns as hubs within Northern Ireland and strengthen their roles as the principle administrative, trade, employment and residential centres within their respective Districts;

- consolidate the role of the local towns of Carrickmore, Castlederg, Dromore, Fintona, Newtownstewart and Sion Mills as service centres for their hinterlands providing appropriate development opportunities for housing, employment and leisure activities, in keeping with the scale and character of these settlements;

- concentrate large-scale land use zonings within Omagh, Strabane and the other towns using a sequential and phased approach, with housing densities appropriate to their location in relation to services and public transport and promote compact urban forms;

- protect and extend existing industrial areas where they are within easy access of urban population and will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment or local amenity;

- maintain and consolidate the role of the villages as local service centres providing opportunity for housing, employment and leisure activities in keeping with the scale and character of individual settlements;

- provide opportunities within small settlements for small-scale rural businesses and for individual dwellings and, where appropriate, small traditional-style housing groups;

- sustain a living and working countryside whilst protecting from inappropriate development, those areas that are vulnerable to development pressure or that are visually or environmentally sensitive; and

- facilitate development in rural locations in line with the Regional Development Strategy and prevailing regional planning policy.
Do you agree with the aim and objectives of the Plan?

Does the Plan strategy provide an adequate means of balancing growth and achieving the aim and objectives?
GENERAL ISSUES

The following section deals with a number of general issues that affect the whole of the Plan Area.

SETTLEMENT

The existing Area Plans offer a settlement hierarchy recognised by the RDS comprising main towns, small towns, villages and other small settlements (hamlets) (Appendix One). This provides a possible framework to accommodate future growth comprising housing, employment, leisure, health and community development.

Whilst Omagh and Strabane should remain the focus of large-scale development, consultations with the community and stakeholders have emphasised the importance of balanced growth across the other settlements. The ability of each of these settlements to accommodate growth will differ dependent upon a number of factors including physical, environmental and infrastructure constraints.

In line with the RDS, the presumption will be to favour development locations within existing built up areas, in order to reduce the continued consumption of green field land, make better use of infrastructure resources and maintain compact urban forms. An urban capacity study will be conducted in the towns to establish development potential within existing built up areas.

Are there additional settlements that should be identified or existing settlements reclassified within the settlement hierarchy, and if so, why?

Are there any special local needs that should be considered when defining settlement limits?

Are there any constraints or reasons why growth should be limited in any particular settlements?

What under-used or derelict land exists within existing settlements with the potential to accommodate new development?

What land within and around settlements would be appropriate for development and why should it be given priority over other land?
Housing

The Omagh and Strabane Area Plans zoned 246 hectares and 200 hectares for housing, respectively, of which 155 and 111 hectares remain undeveloped. There is a considerable amount of unzoned ‘white land’ within the towns, villages and hamlets, much of which may also be suitable for housing.

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS)

Within the context of the RDS, Omagh and Strabane towns are main hubs and are therefore expected to have a leading role in accommodating the need for urban housing at the district level.

The RDS has introduced a “Plan, Monitor and Manage” approach to housing land supply in order to provide for more sustainable patterns of development and to assist in regeneration. Therefore, the zoning of housing land should adopt a sequential and phased approach. New housing supply is also to be monitored on a yearly basis and the phasing reviewed over the Plan period in accordance with the provisions of PPS 12: Housing in Settlements.
Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs)

The RDS provides housing growth indicators for each Council District in order to ensure balanced growth across Northern Ireland. These HGIs are currently under review and it has been proposed to uplift these to allow for greater and more equitable growth across the Region (DRD, January 2005). As both the existing and proposed HGIs are for the period December 1998 to December 2015, these may be projected to 2019 on a pro-rata basis to coincide with the Plan period (Figure 2). A proportion of the allocations has already been built in the years since the start of the HGI period.

Figure 2: Regional Development Strategy - Housing Growth Indicators

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<tr>
<td>Omagh</td>
<td>5,200</td>
<td>6,424</td>
<td>8,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strabane</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>4,334</td>
<td>5,312</td>
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Although the review is ongoing and DRD may decide to adopt alternative figures, the key issue for the Plan is how to apportion housing growth across each Council District. A “broad evaluation” will be undertaken of the suitability of each settlement to accommodate growth. Considerations will include community assets, services, infrastructure, transportation, environmental capacity, urban and rural character, social and economic factors together with any representations received. Account will also be taken of the principles contained in the RDS and in PPS 12.

Whilst it is not presently possible to consider the precise allocation for any given settlement, it is reasonable to consider how housing should be apportioned across the various types of settlements taking into account regional policy, existing population levels, and the preliminary Plan objectives.

To aid discussion, three broad options are identified (Figure 3 & 4). Options One and Two focuses growth on the main towns and consolidates growth within the local towns and villages. Option Three
represents an urban drive, with a higher proportion of dwellings allocated to settlements, especially Omagh and Strabane towns accompanied with a greater share of housing for other settlements.

### Figure 3: Apportioning Housing Growth in Omagh District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement Category</th>
<th>% of District Population</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Option 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omagh town</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local towns</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages &amp; Small Settlements</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Countryside</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 4: Apportioning Housing Growth in Strabane District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement Category</th>
<th>% of District Population</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Option 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strabane town</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local towns</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages &amp; Small Settlements</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Countryside</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Implications for the Main Towns

The amount of land to be zoned for housing will be dependent upon the outcome of the HGI review, the extent to which it is apportioned to the main towns and the density at which new housing is to be built. It will also be dependent upon the number of houses built since 1999, the level of commitments and the potential for housing on remaining zoned and unzoned land. An urban capacity study will be undertaken to establish the extent to which existing urban land can be utilised for housing and this will be published to accompany the Draft Plan. In selecting housing zonings, a sequential approach will be adopted in accordance with PPS 12.
Implications for the Other Settlements

The amount of zoned and unzoned land currently within the small settlements suggests that there is more than sufficient land to meet future needs. In order to be in general conformity with the RDS, consideration may be given to adjusting settlement limits and strengthening local policies and guidance on the form, size and density of housing development on zoned and unzoned land. Within the towns, land will be zoned for housing to meet housing needs in line with the RDS and PPS 12. In the villages and small settlements it is expected that the majority of housing may be located in Housing Policy Areas. These will allow a degree of flexibility in relation to the use of the land by setting out the circumstances where a use other than housing would be acceptable.

Implications for Houses in the Countryside

Within the open countryside, single dwellings are currently being erected at a rate of approximately 180 per annum in Omagh District and 90 per annum in Strabane. All the identified options allow for a significant proportion of the HGI to be used to accommodate single dwellings in the open countryside. However, none of the three options would anticipate accommodating the recent high building rates. If that were to be done, it would be at the expense of a more planned and sustainable approach to the development of the settlements, contrary to the RDS. The policy for controlling dwellings in the countryside is contained in A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. This policy is currently being reviewed by DRD and any changes may have implications for the Plan.
Social and Supported Housing Needs

Consideration will be given to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive’s (NIHE) Housing Need Assessment, which will be conducted under the provisions of PPS 12. This will include the need for social housing as provided by the Housing Executive or Housing Associations and supported housing needs for vulnerable people, the elderly and the needs of Travellers.

NIHE has identified a projected need for additional social housing in the Strabane District. Current levels of social housing in Omagh appear to be sufficient to meet needs. During 2005/6, the NIHE will conduct “latent demand testing” for housing need in small settlements and the rural areas throughout West Tyrone. The community consultation has identified concern over the “affordability” of private housing. An appraisal of “affordability” will be carried out by the NIHE as part of the Housing Need Assessment.

Urban Design and Housing

Recognition also needs to be given to the role of housing as a component of mixed-use development and its contribution to vital and vibrant town and village centres. It also makes an important contribution to urban design. Community and voluntary groups have raised concern that new residential development is growing in scale and density and often pays too little attention to its surroundings. The Plan can provide guidance on the form, scale and density that housing development should take in any given settlement. On zoned land or in Housing Policy Areas, it may also identify specific site development requirements or guidance on more detailed matters concerning uses, layout, design, open space and landscaping.
Within the context of the RDS, how should new housing be apportioned across each District? For example, which of the three Options should be applied?

In line with the RDS, where within settlements should new housing be encouraged?

Are there any particular settlements better suited to accommodate new housing and if so, why?

How should densities be employed to focus housing within built-up areas of the towns whilst ensuring development is appropriate in size, scale and design to its surroundings?

Are there locations or areas where there is a need for guidance or control on the nature, form and design of housing development? If so, what controls or guidance do you suggest?

What controls, if any, should be introduced to limit the size, scale and location of housing development in the smaller towns, villages and small settlements?

Are there any social or supported housing needs that the Plan should address?
INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS

The Omagh and Strabane Area Plans zoned 95 hectares and 24 hectares of industrial land respectively, of which 62 and 9 hectares remain undeveloped. However, it is anticipated that much of the industrial land zoned at Doogary will be taken up in the near future and constraining infrastructure may be resulting in a lack of take up in other locations. Changes in the economy have resulted in growth for hi-tech, knowledge-based industries. In contrast, there has been a decline in traditional industries such as textiles which has resulted in premises such as Desmonds in Omagh and Herdmans in Sion Mills becoming vacant.

Industrial and Business Land Requirements

A key aim of the RDS is the creation of around 100,000 jobs across Northern Ireland to 2015. Over the Plan period, West Tyrone’s portion of this figure could be in the order of 5,000 to 6,000. The role of the main hubs, such as Omagh and Strabane, as the main centres for employment and services is important to the achievement of balanced growth within the Region. The Plan will identify a generous and ample supply of land for employment purposes and identify existing industrial and business land to be retained for such uses. Light industrial and business uses can also occupy appropriate sites in mixed-use areas and next to residential areas.
Invest NI has indicated that it wishes to increase its land bank in Omagh and Strabane towns. The District Councils argue that there is a need to cater for the growth in knowledge-based industries that would prefer locations with a higher environmental quality than that which is provided in industrial estates. Consultation with the community, voluntary and business sector and the District Councils suggests that there is a need to make provision for industrial and business growth of an appropriate scale across the settlements whilst facilitating farm diversification in the countryside. Regeneration initiatives in smaller settlements undertaken by local development associations, with funding from the Department for Social Development, can also make an important contribution to stimulating the rural economy. The RDS also seeks to promote cross-border networks of economic co-operation and enterprise, which is particularly relevant for Strabane District.

Implications for the Plan

The Plan should ensure that sufficient land is provided with a good choice in terms of size, site and location. It should also identify areas for mixed-use developments where low-impact industry and business can co-exist with housing. Other considerations will include local labour resources, accessibility by a variety of modes of transport, available infrastructure and environmental impact. Consideration will also need to be given to the equality of opportunity and the application of New TSN to target deprived groups or areas.

How and where should industry and business growth be accommodated across the settlements?

Are there specific industrial or business needs requiring land to be zoned or safeguarded?

Are there any industrial sites/buildings that are no longer required for this purpose?
RETAILING AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

The Omagh and Strabane Area Plans identified town centre boundaries and development opportunities for retailing and related activities, most of which have been taken up. Omagh has remained relatively vibrant and benefited from major developments at the Showgrounds Retail Park, the former Royal Arms site and Great Northern Retail Park. Omagh 2010 Task Force is also making an important contribution. Strabane Town Centre suffers from high vacancies and dereliction. In recent years, there are signs of improvement encouraged by Strabane 2000 and investments such as the Community Library and proposed Arts Centre. Superstores have also been developed in both towns with supermarkets and other shops in local towns.

Changing Development Pressures

There are growing pressures for new forms of retailing often in out-of-town centre locations. These include one-stop shops, retail warehousing, factory outlet villages and enclosed shopping centres. These have the benefit of providing choice and convenience for their customers. If uncontrolled however, they can lead to a decline in the vitality and viability of the town centres resulting in shop closures and environmental deterioration. If this occurs, it can also be to the disadvantage of those people without a car who rely on town centres to meet shopping needs. They may also pose a threat to neighbourhood and village shops. Expansion of shopping facilities in the towns, coupled with the growth of petrol station retailing, also presents a new challenge for local shops. The importance of the vitality and viability of town and village centres has been highlighted by community, business and other voluntary groups. The role of cross border shopping, craft industry and tradeable services is also highlighted in the RDS.

The Role of Retail Services

Financial and professional services, cafes, restaurants and pubs also have an important economic and employment role and they add to the attractiveness of a centre. Restaurants and public houses are particularly important to the evening economy. If uncontrolled however, they can lead to a reduction in the number of ground floor shop units to the detriment of provision in a town or village centre and can act as a nuisance to neighbouring residents.
Implications for the Plan

The RDS and PPS 5: Retailing and Town Centres, recognise existing centres as the best locations for retail, offices and related uses. Policy is therefore designed to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of these centres and development plans are encouraged to make provision in these locations for new retail development. Recognition is also given to the benefits of improved choice and convenience presented by new forms of shopping. Criteria are provided for assessing such proposals. Plans are therefore required to designate town centre boundaries and, where appropriate, the primary retail core and development opportunity sites where retail and related uses may be encouraged and protected. Local centres may also be identified.

How and where should any expansion in retail or related uses in the Plan area be accommodated?

What opportunities exist in and around existing centres for retail and related development? Are there other locations in need of local retail facilities and if so, why?

What actions should be taken to protect the vitality and viability of existing centres?

Should controls be introduced to protect existing shop units within towns and villages from changes of use, and if so, how and where should they be applied?

Are there any specific community needs in relation to retail provision and related uses that need to be addressed?
HEALTH, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Key challenges include the need to accommodate the development of education, health, cultural and other community facilities that are required to meet a growing population.

Public Service Providers

In West Tyrone, the major service providers include the Western Education and Library Board, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Services Trust, Foyle Health and Social Services Trust, and the District Councils. Planning Service will work closely with these bodies to ensure that their needs are reflected in the Plan proposals. These are likely to include a new Omagh Area Hospital and new primary schools for Artigarvan, McClintock (Seskinore), Omagh Integrated, Loretto and St. Colmcilles. As a result of new facilities or changes in service provision, some land may also become surplus to the requirements.

Community facilities include support services for policing and security. A new police station is to be built at St. Lucia Barracks and Lisanelly Army Barracks may become surplus.
The Voluntary and Private Sector

The voluntary sector has an important role in providing a range of services to the community and it is important that this remains a vibrant and vital sector. Acknowledgment should also be given to the role of the private sector, particularly in relation to pre-school and elderly care provision. In order to ensure their sustainability, the Plan will need to reflect a flexible approach when dealing with future proposals.

Are there any special needs or specific proposals from the public, private or voluntary sector for health, education and community facilities that the Plan needs to address?

What land is likely to become surplus to service requirements and what alternative use should it be put to?
PUBLIC UTILITIES

In line with the RDS, it is important that new development utilises existing and proposed infrastructure, to reduce environmental impact.

Water and Sewerage

New or improved wastewater treatment works are to be provided in, Altamuskin, Artigarvan, Ballymagorry, Bready, Carrickmore, Castlederg, Clady, Cranagh, Dromore, Drumnakilly, Fintona, Killen, Magheramason, Mountfield, Omagh and Strabane. The need for new works is also being assessed for Beragh, Clanabogan, Kilskeery, Rousky, Sion Mills, Sixmilecross and Tattyreagh. Many smaller settlements are not currently served by sewage treatment works, raising Council and public concern that this may hinder development and lead to an undesirable build-up of septic tanks.

Power and Renewable Energy

West Tyrone is reliant on carbon-burning power stations, and on-site oil and solid fuel heating systems that contribute to global warming and deplete the Earth’s natural resources. To reduce emissions, there is general support for promoting renewable energy sources. County Tyrone has the highest onshore potential for producing wind energy in Northern Ireland. There are currently 4 wind farms, comprising 36 wind turbines, in operation in the Plan area with a further 138 turbines awaiting planning decisions. Omagh Council are generally in favour of the promotion of wind farms and other renewable power sources, such as bio-gas production. However, concerns on the growing number of wind farm proposals and their potential impact on the landscape, conservation interests and local residents, have been raised through the community consultation, a view also expressed by Strabane Council. There is also a cross border dimension to developing renewable energy.

Rivers and Flood Risk

Draft PPS 15:Planning and Flood Risk, emphasises a need to reduce flood risk to people, property and the environment. Development plans are required to adopt a precautionary approach to the zoning of new land uses that may be subject to flood risk in the future. To identify and assess flood risk, Planning Service will work closely with the Rivers Agency (DARD). To date, they have identified areas of flooding in
Omagh, Strabane, Castlederg and Clady and have advised that work on alleviating flooding is under way in the Ballymagorry area. The impact of development proposals on flooding in Donegal is also an issue.

Waste Management

The North West Regional Waste Management Strategy Group, and the Southern Waste Management Partnership are responsible for developing Waste Management Plans in West Tyrone. Waste in Omagh District is disposed of at the Tullyvar landfill site near Aughnacloy whilst Strabane’s waste is taken to Belfast. Both Partnerships have a need for enhanced waste infrastructure that will result in the development of three or four new manned Civic Amenity Sites in each District, incorporating recycling facilities. This could result in some of the existing smaller amenity sites becoming surplus. Environmental Health Departments have identified that illegal dumping remains a problem and is having an effect on local wildlife habitats, particularly in bog lands. Use of disused quarries or other sites for disposal of inert waste under controlled, licensed conditions may provide a solution. If any sites and recycling facilities are identified in response to the Issues Paper consultation process, these will be forwarded to the relevant waste management authority, who have responsibility for implementation.
Telecommunications

Telecommunications provision within the Plan area is primarily the responsibility of British Telecom, supplemented by a number of other private companies. Four mobile telecommunications providers operate second generation networks, namely Vodafone, O2, T-Mobile and Orange. With the continued growth in demand for the use of telecommunications, the demand for additional base stations will continue. This will be largely dealt with through regional planning policy and individual planning applications.

Are there any proposals for water, sewerage or other infrastructure that the Plan should address?

How should the Plan deal with opportunities for wind farms and other forms of energy production?

Are there sites or areas, which could be considered by the waste management authorities, where it would be appropriate for land filling and other waste disposal facilities?

Are there any particular local needs for waste disposal facilities?
TRANSPORTATION

Regional policy aims to integrate land use and transport planning to promote sustainable transport choices, promote accessibility for all and reduce the need to travel, especially by private car. Public safety is a key concern, particularly for vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists.

The Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTN TP) confirms the individual schemes and projects to be implemented to support the RDS and RTS objectives. Transport studies at local level will inform and support the preparation of development plans and transport plans. Transport studies in Omagh and Strabane have commenced and will include traffic models and a detailed assessment of accessibility and parking in the main towns.

Both Omagh and Strabane lie along a Key Transport Corridor, the A5 which provides links to Londonderry, Belfast and Dublin. Strabane is also linked to the Republic of Ireland via the N14/N15. To date, the Strabane and Newtownstewart by-passes together with other A5 improvements have eased traffic movement. This will be further assisted by completion of the Omagh Through-Pass. The RSTN TP identifies further improvement to the A5 with selective road widening and upgrading of the A5 to N14/N15 link between Strabane and Lifford. The RDS promotes Strabane as a gateway to Donegal with cross border communications being crucial to urban and rural economies.
Future Requirements

Consultation with the Councils, community and public stakeholders have identified accessibility and town centre car parking as major concerns. The preliminary findings of the transportation studies suggest that existing parking provision in both main towns is adequate, but that this masks significant local demand pressures for both on and off street parking. High traffic flows result in congestion on the Dublin Road and Campsie areas of Omagh and in the Castle Place and Bridge Street areas of Strabane. The completion of Stage III of the Through-Pass is expected to alleviate congestion problems in Omagh. Omagh District Council considers that traffic flows and development of the town’s economy justify provision of other additional roads infrastructure.

Both Councils and the community consultation identify a need for greater traffic calming and additional pedestrian and cycle ways across the Districts. This view is shared by Sustrans, the sustainable transportation charity. The National Cycle Route 92 between Londonderry and Enniskillen runs through Omagh and Strabane and plans are being developed to improve routes through both towns. The Safer Routes to Schools programme may also improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

**What are the particular traffic problems in town centres?**

**Should existing car parks in town centres be redeveloped for other uses and if so, how and where should car parking be provided?**

**How should the Plan integrate land use with transportation?**

**What opportunities are there to improve cross border communications?**

**What key measures to improve the road network are felt necessary to improve public transport and traffic movement?**

**Are there any specific measures that should be taken to encourage the use of public transport and other sustainable modes of travel?**

**What opportunities exist to introduce walk and cycle ways, pedestrian and car restricted zones, park-and-ride and car sharing schemes?**
RECREATION, LEISURE AND TOURISM

Recreation facilities are increasingly recognised as an important element in improving the quality of people’s lives. Growth in leisure and tourism provides employment and an alternative source of income for farmers and rural communities. However, West Tyrone accounts for less than 3% of the overall tourism market. Many visitors tend to travel through the area on route to Donegal, Fermanagh or the North Coast, using the A5 North West Passage.

Leisure and Recreation Provision

As required by PPS 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation, the Plan will assess existing open space provision and identify where necessary, suitable locations for future open space development. The assessment will also take account of the provision of indoor sports and recreation facilities. Any additional requirements for open space and leisure facilities will be determined in consultation with District Councils, who have primary responsibility for provision within their areas. Omagh Council has identified a deficiency in open space provision to the north east and south west of Omagh town. It is unlikely that the District Council will be able to purchase all the land zoned for open space in
the existing Omagh Area Plan. It is their view however, that these should be retained for this recreation use with the option of rezoning, subject to significant recreation and open space provision by developers. Strabane Council considers that there is a need for a town park with more zoned recreational land in Strabane, Newtownstewart and Douglas Bridge and generally in the towns and villages. Community consultations identified the need for recreation facilities to be provided in new residential developments. There is also broad support for a balanced approach to promoting natural and built heritage assets for recreation and tourism.

Tourism Assets and Potential

The promotion of tourism is primarily a function of the District Councils and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. West Tyrone has a rich natural environment with the Sperrins and river valleys representing major opportunities for outdoor leisure and tourism activities including hiking, climbing and fishing. The area is also noted for its culture with the Ulster American Folk Park, the Ulster History Park and Sperrin Heritage Centre. The Ulster American Folk Park is currently bidding to become a National Museum for Emigration and Omagh Council argues that the Plan should facilitate this. The Ulster History Park has changed ownership and is expected to re-open.
Omagh, Newtownstewart and Strabane have the potential to act as gateways into the Sperrins with Gortin and Plumbridge acting as important local centres for accommodation and services. The RDS promotes cross border tourism initiatives and has also identified a Major Tourism Development Opportunity between Omagh and the Sperrins. The possible development of a ‘destination resort’ complex at the Ulster History Park with hotel, conference and respite care facilities, could provide the opportunity to link tourism with health promotion. Most accommodation in the area is currently self-catering or bed and breakfast. Omagh Council sees the future development of Gortin as a tourist destination and potential also exists for the development of a Tyrone County Museum.

Where is there a particular need to improve the provision of existing open space, children’s play and sport facilities?

Where are there opportunities to provide greater access to the countryside for leisure purposes?

What opportunities are there for developing sustainable recreation and tourism within the Plan Area?

Are there particular locations within the Plan Area that tourism or recreation facilities and accommodation should be developed and are there areas where there should be restrictions on such development?

The Sperrins are identified in the RDS as a Strategic Natural Resource with Major Tourism Development Opportunities. What further steps should be taken to promote the development of tourism facilities in the Sperrins?

Are there opportunities for the development of indoor recreation and leisure facilities within settlements and how and where should they be accommodated?
CONSERVATION

The West Tyrone Area has a rich and diverse range of landscapes, wildlife habitats and heritage features that together distinguish its special character and identity. There is a need to balance development pressures with the protection of the natural and built environment.

Biodiversity

The Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy 2000 sets out the main features of biodiversity in Northern Ireland, identifies the main factors affecting it and proposes a range of measures to support biodiversity conservation over the period up to 2016. Priority is given to protecting the Region’s lakes, rivers and landscapes particularly in their role as natural habitats and wildlife corridors. This may involve designating areas in the Plan where development should be restricted.

In line with the RDS, Government agencies on both sides of the border are formulating a cross border river basin management plan for the Foyle system, which will be taken into account when preparing the Plan.

Natural Heritage

Over a third of the Plan area lies within the nationally important Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designated in 1968. This designation is currently under review by the Department’s Environment
and Heritage Service and the Council for Nature Conservation and Countryside (CNCC). The Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment has identified the principal landscape characteristics of West Tyrone together with areas of scenic quality. These include Bessy Bell and the Sperrin Foothills. Account will be taken of national and international nature conservation designations together with any sites identified as being of local nature conservation importance. In keeping with the principles of Strategic Environment Assessment, a Countryside Assessment will be carried out to identify environmental assets and resources and evaluate local landscape character. This will then guide the formation of Plan policies and proposals, including the designation of settlement limits and land use zonings. The Plan may also protect natural heritage through the designation of Sites of Local Nature Conservation Interest in the countryside and Local Landscape Policy Areas within and around settlements in accordance with PPS 2: Planning and Nature Conservation and PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage. Where such sites are designated, the Plan will contain relevant policies for their protection. Community consultations have highlighted mixed views on nature conservation designations and their impact on development.

Built Heritage

The Plan has a rich built heritage with many listed buildings, scheduled monuments and three designated Conservation Areas in Sion Mills, Newtownstewart and Omagh. Consultation with the community, public
stakeholders and the Councils suggests a consensus that these should continue to be protected. Under the provisions of PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage, the Plan is required to designate and formulate policy where appropriate for the protection of Areas of Archaeological Potential, and Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes. The setting of important buildings can also be protected through Local Landscape Policy Areas. Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Article 50 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991. Whilst the Plan in itself, cannot change existing conservation areas, comments are invited on whether boundaries should be altered or new conservation areas designated. The Plan may designate Areas of Townscape Character, where demolition is controlled, and local policies and guidance to protect the built character may be introduced.

**Are there any particular areas or landscapes that merit protection from inappropriate development through designation of, for example, Sites of Nature Conservation Interest or Local Landscape Policy Areas? If so, what is the justification for such a designation and what local policies should be introduced?**

**Are there any areas within settlements that are of built conservation interest and merit protection from inappropriate development or demolition through designation of, for example, an Area of Townscape Character? If so, what is the justification for such a designation and what local policies and guidance should be introduced?**
MINERALS

Mineral extraction forms a significant contribution to the local economy providing raw materials and creating employment. Mineral working can only take place where minerals occur. Extraction workings are transitional and restoration is important, even though operations occur over a long period of time.

Existing Resources

Mineral resources within the Plan area include sand and gravel, hard rock and peat. Sand and gravel is extensively quarried in the valleys of the Mourne, Burndennett and Glenmornan Rivers in Strabane District and also within the Sperrins AONB in the vicinity of Mountfield and Greencastle in Omagh District. There are 12 active quarries in West Tyrone although there are other sites that have some unauthorised quarrying activity. The majority of these quarries produce sand and gravel. In Omagh District, there are two known gold deposits at Cavanacaw to the west of Omagh and Curraghinalt to the east of Gortin. Commercial peat extraction also occurs in the Plan area.

Environmental Impact

Quarrying has adverse environmental impacts both visually and in terms of wildlife and neighbouring amenity. It can act as a constraint on nearby development due to blasting, mineshafts and general land instability. As underlined by the community consultation, mineral operations need to be carefully controlled and monitored so that any adverse impact on local communities and on the environment can be mitigated to acceptable levels. As argued by Omagh District Council, however, there also needs to be a continuous supply of land for this important economic activity.

Implications for the Plan

The Strabane Area Plan has an Area of Constraint on Mineral Workings in the Glenelly Valley. This will be reviewed and consideration given to introducing new areas where the need to protect important environmental assets is identified.

Should the Area of Mineral Constraint in the Glenelly Valley be retained and are there other areas that should be protected from mineral extraction?
THE COUNTRYSIDE

The countryside forms a major part of the Plan area where farming is the dominant land use. The rural environment is undergoing great change in response to the restructuring of agriculture. There are also areas particularly in the Sperrins and to the west of Castlederg that are deprived in terms of employment opportunities and access to public services. Infrastructure and public transport is generally lacking although community transport services assist those in most need.

The Review of Rural Planning Policy

Over recent years, there has been increasing pressure for rural houses. The number of single dwellings approved in the countryside of West Tyrone has nearly trebled over the last decade and now stands at nearly 700 per annum. Out of these, around 300 per annum are actually constructed. Planning policy for controlling single dwellings in the countryside is provided in A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. The Plan will not alter the prevailing regional policy. However, the Department for Regional Development is conducting a review of policies for the control of dwellings in the countryside, which may have implications for the Plan.
Green Belts and Countryside Policy Areas

Within the countryside there are two primary designations, Green Belt and Countryside Policy Areas (CPAs). The Omagh and Strabane Area Plans contain Green Belts around Omagh, Strabane and Sion Mills. They have served to protect the integrity of the countryside and the setting of the towns, and prevent settlements from merging thus protecting their distinctive identities. CPAs have also been defined in the Strule valley, around Newtownstewart and along a number of roads to protect them from development pressures that may destroy their rural character or to give special protection to areas of high visual amenity and landscape character. Within these areas, development is subject to strict control.

Existing Green Belt and CPAs are shown on the Issues Paper Map.

Rural Remainder

Outside of these Green Belts and CPAs, there is a presumption in favour of individual dwellings subject to normal planning and environmental considerations. Favourable consideration may also be given to the re-use of agricultural buildings for employment uses and for the development of rural based industries.

Dispersed Rural Communities

Within the open countryside there are areas where there is a concentration of dispersed rural housing and community facilities. Opportunities may exist to designate Dispersed Rural Communities (DRCs) in order to assist the regeneration of the rural area and provide more housing. Consideration, however, will only be given to this designation in remoter areas outside Green Belts and CPAs where development pressures are low. Local communities consider that there are opportunities for the designations of DRCs at, for example, Sultan Crossroads and in the townlands of Dunteige and Dregish.

Implications for the Plan

As part of the Plan process, there will be an appraisal of assets within the countryside. Development pressure will also be analysed to establish whether it is necessary to re-define the coverage of Green Belts and CPAs.
The Ulster Society for the Preservation of the Countryside argues that new development should have the least possible detrimental impact on the countryside. In its view, new housing should be channelled to settlements rather than ribboning or one-off dwellings in the countryside. Green Belts should also be retained and greater access to the countryside should be achieved.

Omagh and Strabane District Councils echo the views expressed in the community consultation, by advocating a flexible approach to be applied to planning policy in rural areas. They have expressed the need for rural regeneration and farm diversification with appropriate protection given to special rural assets. Recognition also needs to be given to the role housing plays in ensuring small communities and rural services are sustainable. However, there are differing views between community groups and other public stakeholders as to what extent Green Belts and CPAs should be applied.

*Should the extent of existing Green Belts and Countryside Policy Areas be altered or new Green Belts and CPAs designated? If so, where and what would be the justification for this?*

*Are there any areas where Dispersed Rural Communities should be identified?*
LOCAL ISSUES

This section deals with specific matters relating to settlements.

THE MAIN TOWNS

Omagh and Strabane are the main towns in their respective Districts and are identified as main hubs within the Regional Development Strategy. Each has an important role in providing a wide range of services including education, health care, shopping and employment for their residents and those living within their respective hinterlands. As main hubs, they will be developed as the major locations providing employment, services and a range of cultural and leisure amenities.

Figure 5: Key Facts and Figures for Omagh and Strabane Towns (2001 Census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Omagh</th>
<th>Strabane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated population</td>
<td>19,910</td>
<td>13,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of households</td>
<td>7,257</td>
<td>4,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average household size</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of cars or vans</td>
<td>7,478</td>
<td>4,051</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Demographic Profile of Omagh and Strabane Towns (2001 Census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Omagh</th>
<th>Strabane</th>
<th>N. Ireland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 16 years of age</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60 years of age</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant &amp; other Christian</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born outside N. Ireland</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-white ethnic groups</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons with long term illness</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupied households</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detached houses/bungalows</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to a car or van</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree level education</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Qualifications</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OMAGH

Omagh, with a population of 19,910 (Census, 2001) is the largest town in County Tyrone. It is an important administrative and service centre providing Divisional Offices for government agencies such as Planning and the Road Services, as well as a home for the Western Education and Library Board, the Sperrin Lakeland Trust and the District Council. It is recognised in the RDS as having a well-established sub-regional role in the West and as such is expected to generate higher levels of future growth. In terms of health and education, the town benefits from hospital services, a new further education college currently under construction and three grammar, two secondary schools and an integrated college. Omagh also has a long history as a garrison town and legal centre with St Lucia Barracks and the Court House among the town’s most impressive buildings. It is also an important retail and commercial centre offering a wide range of shops and local businesses. The prosperity of the town has improved and is manifest in retail and office developments at Foundry Lane, Scarffe’s Entry, Irishtown Road and more recently at the former Royal Arms and Showgrounds. The cultural standing of Omagh is also to be enhanced with the construction of a new arts centre.
**Strengths and Characteristics**

Omagh is characterised by its landmark church spires and benefits from a pleasant setting at the foothills to the Sperrins, where the Camowen and Drumragh rivers merge to form the River Strule. The town centre, a designated Conservation Area, with its vibrant main shopping street and imposing law courts add to the attraction and make Omagh a desirable place in which to live. The town’s position on the Londonderry-Dublin corridor means that it is well suited to continue and further develop its service role as an administrative, service, business and retail centre for the Rural West. New ways to build on these advantages are being explored by Omagh District Council and the Omagh 2010 Task Force. The town’s location on the North West Passage tourist route and proximity to the Sperrins, the Ulster American Folk Park and Ulster History Park also provide opportunity to develop its tourism function.

**Opportunities and Constraints**

The town has relatively few constraints to development and the construction of the new waste water treatment works and upgrading of supporting infrastructure will provide additional capacity to facilitate growth. Completion of the final stage of the Omagh through-pass will help traffic flows and reduce traffic particularly in the Campsie area and on the Dublin Road. There are likely to be substantial sites coming forward for re-development. The largest urban site is likely to be Lisanelly Barracks, the closure of which will have significant economic implications for the town. Other sites include Drumragh Avenue car park, industrial land on the Mountjoy Road and land at the Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital. Land may also become available at the Tyrone County Hospital, Mountjoy Road Police Station and at the training centre at Woodside Avenue. Priority may be given to development within the urban fabric of the town before green field sites. It is likely that due to the amount of land that currently lies within the town’s existing settlement limit, the need for further urban expansion may be limited. Development in the Strule Valley floodplain and on important ridges and drumlins surrounding the town is undesirable, particularly if this were to impact on the character and setting of the town by concealing views of the town’s land mark spires and other key buildings.

**Existing Development Potential – Housing**

The Omagh Area Plan 1987-2002, estimated the population of the town would grow to 24,750 by 2002 and zoned over 200 hectares for
housing. Given that the town’s population has only grown to 19,910, around 120 hectares of zoned housing land remains undeveloped. The potential of these zonings will be reassessed together with the potential to develop other land within the urban area. As a main hub, Omagh will have a leading role in accommodating the need for urban housing at district level. It is likely that the housing needs of Omagh can be met within the existing settlement limit and the Plan will strive to achieve the RDS objective of locating 60% of new housing within the existing urban area. Community consultation identified concern for better quality developments with open space, and a need for social and affordable housing. There is also a Traveller community in the town. The NIHE has identified that there are a number of NIHE vacancies and that much of the housing stock is within the buying power of local residents.

**Existing Development Potential – Industry and Mixed Business**

Over 80 hectares of land was zoned for industrial use, of which over 50 hectares remain undeveloped. It is anticipated that some of the town’s existing industry will relocate to purpose-built premises on industrial estates. Whilst this will have environmental benefits and free-up existing land within the heart of the town for development, it will reduce the amount of land available for industrial and mixed business use. In order, therefore, to provide choice and flexibility in terms of land on offer, there may be a need for additional industrial zonings, particularly at the periphery of the town close to the main arterial routes. Invest NI has identified that it needs a land bank in excess of 20 hectares to cover the needs of its clients over the Plan period.

**Other Potential Developments**

To support improvements to the residential and economic base of the town there will also be a need to improve social, community and recreational provision. Sperrin Lakeland Trust has identified a need for a new health centre and new area hospital, with possible site options to include land at the Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital or Tyrone County. The Department of Education has identified a need for a new site for the Omagh Integrated Primary School and for Loretto Convent and St Colmcilles Primary Schools. A shared site for the Omagh Academy and Omagh High School may be required together with replacement of the Sacred Heart College and refurbishment of Heatherbank Special School. Omagh District Council has identified a need for a new public park in the north west of the town linked by cycle and walkways, particularly along the Drumragh River. Support for cycling and walking routes was also
expressed through the community consultation process. Omagh Council argues that consideration should be given to the provision of recreation land at Lammy, a walkway along the Killyclogher Burn, a riverside walk from the Creamery on the Derry Road to Lissan Bridge and from Campsie to Bankmore Road. The Department for Social Development has identified a need to redevelop the community centre at Hospital Road and Mullaghmore Community Association is developing a garden centre on land adjacent to its centre. The community consultation identified a need for more car parking in the town centre, the tackling of congestion and traffic flow problems and protection of land behind Riverview Park for recreational use. The Omagh Transportation Study’s initial findings suggest that existing parking is adequate although this masks significant local pressure on both on and off street parking.

STRABANE

Strabane is a growing town with a population of 13,456 and it performs an important role as the main service centre for north Tyrone and east Donegal. It provides a range of services including education, health care, shopping and employment for its residents and rural hinterland. It is also home to the District Council. Historically, Strabane developed as both an industrial centre and market town. Whilst some traditional industries have declined, manufacturing is still important, employing over 19% of the District’s workforce.
Strengths and Characteristics

Strabane is located on the A5, the key transportation corridor between Londonderry and Dublin and is an important gateway between Northern Ireland and Donegal. In accordance with the thrust of the RDS, the future of the town can be greatly linked to cross border co-operation and the development of economic networks and trade. In particular, the relationship of Strabane with Lifford will need to be carefully considered when formulating the Plan. Strabane’s close proximity to the Sperrins, Donegal and at the heart of the Foyle River system provides opportunity for tourism and other economic development.

Strabane suffered during the 1970’s and 1980’s from the decline in traditional industry and separation from much of its hinterland by border closures. This resulted in high unemployment, low incomes and a lack of investment resulting in a spiral of decline for the town centre, often manifest in poor environmental quality, dereliction and vacant sites. The town centre is facing new challenges as a result of retail growth in the surrounding towns and pressure for retailing in off-centre locations. However, prospects for the future are bright, given population growth and an improving economic climate. Significant progress has been made in revitalising the town centre through environmental and shop front improvement schemes and developments such as the new Library, town centre apartments and shop units. Strabane 2000 is also exploring ways to further develop and promote the town and is actively encouraging a range of new initiatives. The Plan will have a role in bringing together these initiatives to form a town centre strategy that will actively promote development opportunities in association with other key stakeholders.

Opportunities and Constraints

Strabane’s strategic location as a main hub is recognised in the RDS and, coupled with its high proportion of young people, this means that its function as an employment centre should be developed. Government remains strongly committed to encouraging inward investment consistent with its objective of targeting social need. The existing infrastructure in terms of water and sewerage has spare capacity and the completion of the by-pass has reduced congestion in the town centre, facilitating further growth. However, geographic expansion of the town is significantly constrained to the east by the Sperrin hillsides and to the north west by the border and the river flood plain. It is also desirable to protect Strabane Glen and maintain the rural separation towards Sion.
Mills in the interests of biodiversity and the visual setting of the town. Nevertheless, there remain a number of development opportunities around the town to cater for any required urban expansion, as well as through efficient use of land within the existing urban area.

Existing Development Potential – Housing

The Strabane Area Plan 1986-2001 estimated the population of the town would grow to 15,300 by 2001 and zoned over 100 hectares for housing. Population growth has not been as high as predicted and as a result, 36 hectares of zoned housing land remain undeveloped. These zonings will be re-assessed together with the potential to develop other land in keeping with the RDS objective of locating 60% of new housing within the existing urban area. As a main hub, Strabane will have a leading role in accommodating the need for urban housing at district level. The community consultation has highlighted a need for social housing. This is supported by NIHE.

Existing Development Potential – Industry and Mixed Business

Some 15 hectares of land was zoned for industrial use of which less than 4 hectares remain undeveloped. Invest NI has identified a need to increase its landbank to over 12 hectares. Further land will be needed to offer choice and flexibility in terms of location. The District Council supports the use of Green Belt land towards Lifford for such use. However, it is Planning Service emerging policy to avoid development in the flood plain, and land to the south west of the town may be a more appropriate option.

Other Potential Developments

Central to the regeneration of Strabane are improvements to its cultural, social and recreational base. The District Council and Strabane 2000 are taking a lead by promoting development of the new Arts Centre, and improvements to the SCORE site to bring this civic space into all-year-round use. They are also advocating the development of two pedestrian bridges across the river at John Wesley Street and Meeting House Street to increase the access to the town centre, to local schools and to provide cycle links. The Council is eager to improve the network of local parks and develop playing fields to the north of the town and proposes a cycle/walkway via Strabane Glen. The Council is also working to improve the environment through the designation of an Air Quality Management Area. This will have implications for the design of new properties, particularly with regard to the heating systems employed.
There is a commitment to amalgamate the Convent Grammar with Our Lady of Mercy High School and St Colman’s High School on a new site, provide a new school for Gaelscoil Ui Dhocartaigh, replace Strabane Primary School and refurbish Strabane High School. Replacement of the North West Institute of Further and Higher Education may also take place resulting in disposal of the Academy Boys site. The need for a community health and treatment centre may also arise. A new building for the Ballycolman Community Association and extension of facilities at Lisnafin are also needed.

**ISSUES FOR MAIN TOWNS**

**How can the Plan strengthen the role and function of Omagh and Strabane towns?**

**How should Lisanelly Barracks and other key urban sites be developed?**

**What capacity is there for the built-up area of Omagh and Strabane to accommodate further residential development?**

**Where are the best locations for sustainable new housing in and around the towns?**

**Are there particular areas that might be considered for industrial and business use?**

**How can the Plan deal effectively with issues of traffic congestion, car parking and encourage alternative means of transport in and around the town centre?**

**Is there a need for the main commercial area of each town to be expanded?**

**What development opportunities, including redevelopment sites, exist in and around the town centres?**

**What measures should be taken to protect and improve the environmental quality of the towns?**

**Are there particular areas of character within the towns that require specific protection / enhancement?**

**Is there a need to increase outdoor recreational provision within the towns and if so, where?**
THE LOCAL TOWNS

The six local towns, as defined by the existing area plans, are Carrickmore, Dromore, Fintona, Castlederg, Newtownstewart and Sion Mills. These vary in size and form, but all function as local service centres, catering for the resident population and rural hinterland. Services include primary and secondary schools, local health centres, recreation and sports facilities, local financial, professional, business and trade uses, together with local shops offering a range of goods to meet daily needs. It is important that regeneration continues and their role as local residential, employment and shopping centres is consolidated.

FINTONA

With a population of 1,344, Fintona is the second largest settlement in Omagh District. Situated at an important intersection of the local road network with links to Omagh, Enniskillen, Fivemiletown, Dromore and Ballygawley, it is able to serve a large rural area. It benefits from the Quiggery Water and the attractive woodland setting of Ecclesville demesne with its associated recreational facilities including an equestrian centre and golf course. Fintona retains its small market town identity. The town centre, while showing some evidence of dereliction and vacancy, retains a large number of 19th century two and three storey buildings. This, coupled with the sweeping hill of Main Street and the landmark church tower, provides the town with a distinctive and traditional character. There have been a number of significant regeneration developments in the heart of the town in recent years, providing enhanced retail facilities and residential accommodation.

Existing Development Potential

The 1980s saw the town experience low economic activity, which was reflected in derelict sites and vacant properties. To encourage growth, the Area Plan zoned 2.73 hectares of industrial land and 18 hectares of housing land. Most remains undeveloped as are some 15 hectares of unzoned land within the settlement limits that could have development potential. In preparing the Plan, the suitability of this land for development will be reviewed. Since 1999, 35 dwellings have been built and around 97 are either under construction or benefit from planning permission. Consideration also needs to be given to vacant and derelict town centre sites. Omagh District Council wishes to promote regeneration based upon the Ecclesville Centre, through the construction of starter business units and continued supply of industrial land. The need for a soccer pitch has also been identified.
DROMORE

Dromore, with an estimated population in 2001 of 1,095, has experienced steady residential growth over recent years. Its position on the A32 between Omagh and Enniskillen has made it an attractive residential location within commuting distance of these two main towns. The settlement occupies an area of undulating lowland comprised of small drumlins. It has a tightly nucleated core around its short and narrow Main Street that contains a number of traditional buildings. Of particular note is the First Trust Bank built in the Art Deco style and the more recently erected Clock Tower. The town’s most notable landmarks include the old church and graveyard at Church Brae and St Dympna’s bell tower. The town has benefited from significant environmental improvements including a relief road, which has reduced the volume of traffic through the Main Street and opened up the southern and eastern end of the town.

Existing Development Potential

Some 18 hectares of land was zoned for housing of which nearly 50% has been developed. Since 1999, 74 dwellings have been completed and a further 46 are either under construction or benefit from planning permission. Over 2 hectares of industrial land was also zoned, most of
which remains undeveloped although small-scale industrial development has occurred at Camderry Road. There is also up to 25 hectares of unzoned land within the development limits, which could have residential or industrial and business development potential. Omagh District Council considers there is a need for more employment land and emphasises the need for public open space within new housing areas. The latter will be addressed through the regional policies contained in PPS 7: Quality Residential Environments and PPS 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation.

**CARRICKMORE**

Carrickmore is the smallest of the local towns with a population of 600. Situated 16km from Omagh, it serves the most easterly part of Omagh District which is one of the most deprived rural areas. The town occupies an elevated position on a rocky granite summit. A large rock quarry, producing aggregates for roads and building, is situated to the south of the town and, together with steep slopes and surface rock, excludes localised areas of the town from development. Termon Business Park and the Milestone Centre, on zoned industrial land outside the development limit, have successfully provided for a range of businesses bringing jobs and services to the local community.

**Existing Development Potential**

Within Carrickmore, some 10 hectares of land were zoned for housing, of which a third has been developed. Since 1999, 16 new houses have been built with a further 10 under construction or benefiting from planning permission. Given the topography and geology of the area, identifying land for new development will be a challenge for the new Plan. Most of the 5.6 hectares of land zoned for industry has been developed and Omagh District Council argues there is a need to provide additional employment land at Termon Business Park and elsewhere within the town, a view also reflected in the community consultation. There are up to 25 hectares of unzoned land within the settlement limits that could have development potential. Dean McGuirc College is expected to relocate to the vacated former police station site on Ballintrain Road. This may release the existing site for redevelopment. Sperrin Lakeland Trust has identified a need for a new Primary Care facility in the Carrickmore area.
CASTLDERG

With a population of 2,739, Castlederg is the second largest town in Strabane District. It serves a wide rural hinterland centring on the Derg River valley and west towards the border. This hinterland consists of an area of good agricultural land along the river to the east of the town and an area of significant rural deprivation to the west.

The well-defined town centre is situated on the northern side of the river and is surrounded on three sides by substantial concentrations of housing. The town has experienced significant growth over the last number of years, reflecting its importance as the main local centre for this area. Many town centre opportunity sites have been developed providing a range of new uses and two environmental improvement schemes have been implemented creating a new town centre square through the demolition of obsolete and derelict buildings. The Council is also working to improve the environment through the designation of an Air Quality Management Area. This will have implications for the design of new properties, particularly with regards to the heating systems employed.
Existing Development Potential

The Strabane Area Plan 2001 zoned nearly 52 hectares of land for housing, of which 13.6 hectares have been developed. Since 1999, 137 houses have been provided and a further 211 are either under construction or benefit from planning permission. More than half of the 2.8-hectare site zoned for industry at Castlegore Road has been developed with an extension to Castlederg Enterprise Centre recently completed. Strabane District Council considers that given the area’s high unemployment, there is a need for more land to be zoned for industrial and business uses, a view also identified through the community consultation. Within the existing development limit there is around 10 hectares, that may have development potential. The community consultation identified a need for more open space and the protection of and re-use of old buildings such as the Derg Hospital. Concern was also expressed that there was an inadequate infrastructure to deal with increased development in the town.

SION MILLS

Sion Mills is located approximately 3km south of Strabane and has a population of 2,050. It is located immediately west of the River Mourne and astride the main Omagh-Strabane Road (A5). Sion Mills developed as a mill town, built to a planned layout. It is increasingly becoming a dormitory settlement for Strabane and Londonderry however, looking to those towns for its major shopping and service centre needs.

Much of the character of Sion Mills is derived from the special architectural character and historic interest of its Conservation Area. This contains a unique collection of industrial, community and residential buildings dating from the nineteenth century. With the recent closure of Herdmans Mill complex, the town requires alternative sources of employment, perhaps building on its industrial past and locational advantage on the main Dublin-Londonderry transport corridor. The town’s unique historic and architectural character, coupled with the riverside location close to the Sperrins also lends it to tourist-related projects. These opportunities are currently being explored by the Sion Mills Building Preservation Trust. The community consultation also highlighted the need for new development and growth in the town to counteract the effects of a declining mill industry. It was also felt that the town was overshadowed by Strabane.
Existing Development Potential

Of the 24 hectares zoned for housing, almost 40% have been developed. Since 1999, 73 houses have been developed and 10 dwellings are under construction or have planning permission. Some 3.25 hectares of land to the south of the mill complex was zoned for industry. None of this has been developed and there is a need to review development opportunities in the vicinity, including the mill. The extent to which growth particularly to the north of the town should be facilitated is questionable, especially given the importance of Sion Mills’ distinctive character and the need to retain its identity. Roads Service has had a longstanding proposal for a bypass to the east or west of the town to alleviate traffic flows along the main A5.

NEWTOWNSTEWART

Newtownstewart, with a population of 1,479, is located along the Strule River close to its confluence with the River Owenkillew. The town is situated at the foot of, and benefits from, the back-drop provided by Bessy Bell mountain. It is also overlooked by the landmark ruins of Harry Avery’s Castle. The town also adjoins the main Dublin-Londonderry transport corridor and has the potential to act as a gateway to the Sperrins. The opening of the Newtownstewart by-pass in 2003 has reduced the volume of through-traffic in the town, improved safety and reduced delays on the A5. It has also benefited the general environment of the town’s historic and commercial core most of which falls within a designated Conservation Area. The Council is also working to improve the environment through the designation of an Air Quality Management Area. This will have implications for the design of new properties, particularly with regards to the heating systems employed.

Existing Development Potential

Of the 21 hectares of land zoned for housing, only about 15% has been developed. Since 1999, 31 houses have been completed and a further 18 houses are under construction or benefit from planning permission. There are only approximately 2 hectares of unzoned land remaining within the settlement limit that could have development potential. Most of the 2.14 hectares of zoned industrial land has been developed. Strabane District Council propose that the town’s proximity to the A5 should stimulate economic activity and there is a need for more industrial zonings. The community consultation considered that there was a lack of facilities and activities for young people. Development is fairly
constrained by the steep slopes of Bessy Bell to the south and the river floodplain to the north and east. There is also a need to conserve the setting of the castle and town itself, particularly as Newtownstewart’s environmental quality is likely to be a key ingredient to its future economic success.

ISSUES FOR LOCAL TOWNS

To what extent should each of these towns be encouraged to grow within the context of the RDS Housing Growth Indicator?

What capacity is there within existing settlements to accommodate residential growth?

Where are the best locations for sustainable new housing in and around each town?

Are there particular areas of each town that might be considered for industrial or business use?

Should town centre boundaries be designated in the larger settlements to promote commercial and mixed-use development and what opportunity sites exist for such development?

Are there particular measures that could be taken to facilitate regeneration and improve the quality of the respective town centres?

Are the current levels and locations of recreational open space in each town adequate and, if not, where should additional open space be created?

Are there particular areas of character within the towns that require specific protection / enhancement?

Are there any areas in and around the towns where development should be restricted for environmental reasons?
VILLAGES AND SMALL SETTLEMENTS

There are 22 villages (Figure 7) and 34 small settlements (hamlets) (Figure 8) designated by the Omagh and Strabane Area Plans. These vary in size, characteristics and potential for growth. However, all offer some degree of local services in the form of shops, businesses and community facilities. Villages with larger populations offer a wider range of facilities than the small settlements. They are also better suited to absorb a limited degree of housing development whilst the small settlements are better suited to individual, or in some cases, small groups of housing.

Figure 7: Population Profile of Villages - Census 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Omagh District</th>
<th>Strabane District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beragh</td>
<td>Ardstraw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>528</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drumquin</td>
<td>Artigarvan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>291</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gortin</td>
<td>Ballymagor 567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>360</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greencastle</td>
<td>Donemana 588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td>Erganagh 366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loughmacrory</td>
<td>Glebe 669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>237</td>
<td>Kil len 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountfield</td>
<td>Killeter 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>252</td>
<td>Magheramason 393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seskinore</td>
<td>Plumbridge 267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>Spamount 309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixmilecross</td>
<td>Victoria Bridge 318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>282</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trillick</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>303</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Many of the villages have developed over a long period of time and have a distinctive character centred around their historic core. Examples include Beragh, Sixmilecross and Trillick. In others, such as Plumbridge and Gortin, the local landscape features and built form add to the character and setting of the settlement.

In recent years, villages such as Artigarvan, Loughmacrory, Mountfield and Ballymagor have attracted pressures for large-scale housing developments. Some communities support such development as it addresses housing availability and choice and encourages rural regeneration. Others have concerns that some new housing developments are having a detrimental impact on the traditional scale, character and community health of the village. Local communities also emphasise the need for infrastructure improvement, facilities and services as well as housing development.
Small settlements have also experienced varying degrees of development pressure. Some, such as Clanabogan, were intended to accommodate development pressure close to towns whilst others in the more remote areas were to help stimulate rural regeneration. Many of these more remote settlements have experienced little development and most have an ample supply of land remaining. This may be attributed to the lack of availability of infrastructure, public transport and community facilities and the development of single dwellings in the open countryside.
Omagh District Council has expressed concern that in small settlements landowners do not release land, resulting in a shortage of development opportunities. It also considers there is scope for the designation of additional small settlements such as at Dunteige and is keen to encourage ‘clachan’ style developments to address demand for rural housing. Strabane District Council considers that housing developments should be allowed in areas such as Plumbridge, Donemana and Corgary to encourage regeneration. They also feel that Plumbridge needs to take advantage of its natural tourism assets in the Sperrins. Both Councils, in conjunction with the views expressed in the community consultation, argue that land within the villages and small settlements should be provided to encourage employment and help address rural deprivation. It is also argued that there should be opportunities to develop local recreation/tourism. Examples of this could include cycle paths at Drumduff/Drumnakilly and fishing and watersports at Loughmacrory.

ISSUES FOR VILLAGES AND SMALL SETTLEMENTS

Are there particular villages and small settlements that are well suited and have the capacity to sustain further growth within the context of the RDS Housing Growth Indicator?

Are there villages or small settlements where further development would be likely to damage the distinctive character of the settlement?

Is there a need for guidance on the scale, form, density and location of housing developments within individual villages, and if so, what restrictions should be applied?

Within small settlements, should housing be restricted to single dwellings and small groups of houses?

What areas in and around villages and small settlements are particularly suited for local industrial and business uses?

Are there particular areas worthy of protection because of their contribution to the setting or character of the settlement?
NEXT STEPS

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

These events will be advertised in the local press and will be arranged and chaired by Community Technical Aid, an independent voluntary organisation. Following the completion of the consultation process, Community Technical Aid will submit a report to the Department presenting the views expressed during the various meetings.

Individual members of the public may also make written comments, to be received no later than 27th January 2006. Public comment is invited on the particular issues raised in this paper or on any other issues, which might be considered relevant to the Plan.

Written comments should be submitted to:
Dr C R Boomer
West Tyrone Area Plan 2019
County Hall
Drumragh Avenue
Omagh
County Tyrone
BT79 7AF
or by e-mail: divisional.planning.office.omagh@nics.gov.uk

All views expressed in writing by 27th January 2006, and those conveyed through the report of Community Technical Aid will be considered in preparing the Plan, as will the representations already received during the initial consultation stage from private individuals and organisations. Consideration will also be given to the comments of statutory consultees including Omagh and Strabane District Councils.
## Appendix One

### Existing Settlement Hierarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Council Area</th>
<th>Omagh</th>
<th>Strabane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Town:</td>
<td>Omagh town</td>
<td>Strabane town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Towns:</td>
<td>Fintona, Dromore, Carrickmore</td>
<td>Castlederg, Newtownstewart, Sion Mills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Villages:</th>
<th>Beragh</th>
<th>Ardstraw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drumquin</td>
<td>Artigarvan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gortin</td>
<td>Ballymagorry</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greencastle</td>
<td>Clady</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loughmacrory</td>
<td>Donemana</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mountfield</td>
<td>Erganagh</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Glebe</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sixmilecross</td>
<td>Killen</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Trillick</td>
<td>Killeter</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Magheramason</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plumbridge</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spamount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria Bridge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Small Settlements:     | Altamuskin | Aghabrack |
| (Hamlets)              | Clanabogan | Aghyaran |
|                       | Creggan | Altishane |
|                       | Dooish | Bready |
|                       | Drumduff | Cloghcor |
|                       | Drumnakilly | Cranagh |
|                       | Dunmoyle | Donagheady |
|                       | Dunmullan | Douglas Bridge |
|                       | Edenderry | Drumlegagh |
|                       | Eskragh | Garvetagh |
|                       | Garvaghey | Glenmornan |
|                       | Gillygooley |       |
|                       | Glenhull |       |
|                       | Gortaclare/Moylagh |       |
|                       | Gormagarn |       |
|                       | Kilskeery |       |
|                       | Knockmoyle |       |
|                       | Mountjoy |       |
|                       | Newtownsaville |       |
|                       | Roscavey |       |
|                       | Rousky |       |
|                       | Tattyreagh |       |
|                       | Tircur |       |
|                       | Tummery/Lisdoo |       |
## Appendix Two

### Nature Conservation Designations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASSI</td>
<td>Black Bog</td>
<td>Omagh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSI</td>
<td>Fairy Water Bogs</td>
<td>Omagh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSI</td>
<td>Drumlea and Mullan Woods</td>
<td>Omagh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSI</td>
<td>Owenkillew River</td>
<td>Omagh/Strabane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSI</td>
<td>Owenkillew &amp; Glenelly Woods</td>
<td>Omagh/Strabane</td>
</tr>
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<td>ASSI</td>
<td>Deroran Bog</td>
<td>Omagh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSI</td>
<td>Tonnagh Beg Bog</td>
<td>Omagh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSI</td>
<td>Tully Bog</td>
<td>Omagh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSI</td>
<td>Cranny Bogs</td>
<td>Omagh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSI</td>
<td>Straduff</td>
<td>Omagh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSI</td>
<td>Moneygal Bog</td>
<td>Strabane</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASSI</td>
<td>Moneygal Bog II</td>
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<td>Strabane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSI</td>
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Appendix Three

Glossary of Terms

Existing Urban Areas/Urban Footprint

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

Gateways

Important interchange points, which connect ports and airports to the internal transport network.

Greenfield Sites

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

Housing Quality

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

Strategic long distance routes that connect a number of towns to the major regional gateways.

Latent Demand Testing

Over recent years, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has undertaken a series of surveys throughout Northern Ireland, aimed at assessing whether there is an unfulfilled or ‘latent’ demand for housing. It relates to smaller settlements or other rural locations and is based on a sample of settlements each year following advertisement in the local press. The survey includes identification of the demand for social housing, affordable housing and private houses in a particular area.

Rural Proofing

Rural Proofing is a process to ensure that all relevant Government policies are examined carefully and objectively to determine whether or not they have a different impact in rural areas from that elsewhere. Where necessary, consideration will be given to what policy adjustments might be made to reflect rural needs and in particular to ensure that, as far as possible, public services are accessible on a fair basis to the rural community.

Spatial Development Strategy

A hub, corridor and gateway framework for the sustainable development of the Region.

Strategic Planning Guidelines

These provide long-term policy directions from a spatial perspective in the form of strategic objectives, set out by topics, each with an accompanying range of measures.

Sustainable Development

During the past decade, Government policy has embraced the principle of sustainable development based on stewardship of the environment and also economic and social considerations. It is defined as ‘development to satisfy the requirements of today’s society that does not compromise the potential for future generations to satisfy theirs’.
Consequently, development plan policies and proposals will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment. This means that proposals for new development will be assessed against the availability of supporting infrastructure and the ability of the environment to support the proposal.

**Sustrans**

This is the sustainable transport charity, which works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport in order to reduce motor traffic and its adverse effects. One of its main activities is the promotion and delivery of the National Cycle Network (NCN).

**Urban Capacity Studies**

These will indicate the broad capacity for housing within the existing urban area (the continuous built-up area of a settlement) and the capacity for different types and densities of housing. Potential sites will include land such as vacant buildings, previously developed sites and other suitable sites.
The Planning Team

The West Tyrone Area Plan Team is led by Dr Chris Boomer and comprises:

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Shane Mathers
John Monaghan
Stephen Kennedy
Cathy Hughes

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