

MID & EAST ANTRIM DISTRICT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PREPARATORY STUDIES

PAPER 2: HOUSING & SETTLEMENT

NOVEMBER 2014





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PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Shadow Council with an overview of the current housing situation in the Mid & East Antrim District Area and to consider the housing requirements up to 2030.

This paper sets out the regional context for housing, outlining the current situations regarding population and housing and the implications of new household formation and population growth in the Plan area. It then addresses land availability for housing across Mid & East Antrim using information from the annual Urban Housing Land Availability Summary. It examines the take up of zoned land within the current development plans and the amount of land remaining available for development and identifies whether any additional land is required to 2030.

It provides an indication of how housing growth could be allocated across the settlement hierarchies of each district, taking into account the directions for balanced growth as set out in the RDS.

This paper allows members to commence consideration of a housing growth strategy and to understand the options for allocating housing growth and the potential consequences of such allocations.

However, at this stage the paper only aims to provide a foundation for future decision making which will need to be further informed by more detailed evaluation of the individual settlements, a Sustainability Appraisal and public consultation.

Future papers will address employment and economic development, town centres and town centre opportunities. Together with the initial Population and Growth paper, these papers will provide a foundation on which work can commence by the Shadow Council on a Community Plan and a new planning strategy for Mid & East Antrim District to replace that contained in the existing Area Plans.

AIMS

- To build the capacity of members to make informed planning decisions, particularly within the plan making context;
- To provide baseline information which will inform planning policy making at local level;
- To link with important ongoing work in relation to the development of a Community Plan and other strategic work being undertaken by the Council.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

The paper provides:-

- i. the regional policy context for formulating Local Development Plan housing strategies & policies and a review of local housing provision as directed by the existing area plans;
- ii. a profile of the housing stock in Mid & East Antrim District and household projections up until 2030;
- iii. an overview of the Housing Growth Indicators & how these can be notionally allocated.
- iv. an understanding of housing allocations, existing housing supply and the need for additional zoning.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Shadow Council notes the findings and considers how future housing growth can be apportioned across settlements and the countryside in Mid & East Antrim District taking account of the RDS.

INTRODUCTION

POPULATION OF MID & EAST
ANTRIM DISTRICT

SECTION 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The paper outlines the regional policy context for formulating Local Development Plan housing strategies & policies. Of particular importance is the Regional Development Strategy 2035 – Building a Better Future (published 2012) which sets out housing growth indicators for Northern Ireland up until 2025. This paper will also examine progress in delivering new housing development in Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne Districts and the quantum of housing land available (both zoned and committed) for development and the extent to which this can provide for future needs.

1.2 It will cover how future housing needs can be apportioned across the settlements in the new Council area in line with any agreed growth strategy, taking into account the RDS and regional policy. This will in turn assist members consider how much housing land is needed in each of the settlements.

1.3 An estimate of the extent of rural house building within the new Council area will also be provided, while issues in relation to the urban rural split and the achievement of balanced growth will be discussed.

1.4 In addition, the paper will provide an indication of any special or social housing needs such as supported housing as identified in the Housing Needs Assessments by NIHE, and how these might be addressed in the plan. It will also identify other areas of housing policy which members may wish to consider.

1.5 Information has been derived from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), NIHE and DOE Planning Housing Monitor.

Fig.1.1: Mid & East Antrim District

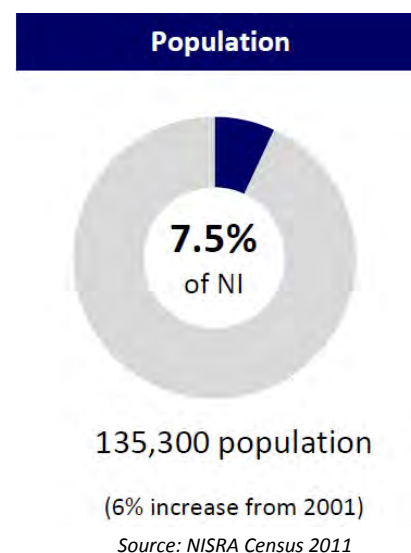


POPULATION OF MID & EAST ANTRIM DISTRICT

1.6 The new District comprises all of the existing districts of Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne save for a small area of the existing Carrickfergus District in the vicinity of Greenisland which will be transferred to Antrim & Newtownabbey District. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to obtain reliable statistics for the area subject to the boundary change, therefore the data used includes this small area. At the 2011 Census, the Mid & East Antrim District (MEAD) had a combined population of 135,338, distributed between the three existing council areas as follows:

- 64,044 in Ballymena (47.3%)
- 39,114 in Carrickfergus (28.9%)
- 32,180 in Larne (23.8%)

Fig.1.2: Population in Mid & East Antrim District





SECTION 2

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

PLANNING ACT
(NORTHERN IRELAND) 2011

DRAFT THE PLANNING
(LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN)
REGULATIONS
(NORTHERN IRELAND) 2015



PLANNING ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2011

2.1 [The Planning Act \(NI\) 2011](#) received Royal Assent on 4 May 2011. The Act provides for the transfer of the majority of planning functions from central government to district councils. It also brings forward a number of reforms to the planning system.

2.2 In regard to Local Development Plans (LDPs), the 2011 Act requires councils to:

- Prepare a timetable for the preparation & adoption of the council's local development plan;
- Prepare a statement of community involvement;
- Take account of the Regional Development Strategy and policy & guidance issued by the Department;
- Prepare a Sustainability Appraisal & report on it.

2.3 The development plan must consist of both a Plan Strategy and a Local Policies Plan. The above actions will apply to both development plan documents. The key differences between the two documents are as follows:

- **Plan Strategy:** is required to set out the council's objectives in relation to the development and use of land in its district and its strategic policies for the implementation of those objectives.
- **Local Policies Plan:** is required to set out the council's local policies in relation to the development and use of land in its district.

DRAFT THE PLANNING (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2015

2.4 The Department of the Environment issued a consultation paper which set out proposals for subordinate legislation to introduce reforms to the planning system and transfer responsibility for the majority of planning functions to the new district councils in April 2015. The Consultation closed on Wednesday 20 August 2014.

2.5 The Subordinate Legislation subject to Public Consultation included a draft [Planning \(Local Development Plan\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#). This legislation sets out in detail the procedures required to comply with the 2011 Act including information on:

- Preparation, content, agreement and availability of the timetable.
- Preparation, availability and public consultation requirements for the preferred options paper
- Form and content of a development plan document.
- Development Plan document procedure including the availability and public consultation on a development plan document.
- Submission and availability of documents for Independent Examination and publicity of the Independent Examination.
- Withdrawal of a development plan document.
- Adoption of a development plan document.
- Annual monitoring report & review of a local development plan.
- Intervention by the Department.
- Joint Plans



SECTION 3

REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2035

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS

HOUSING IN THE RURAL AREA:

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2035

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS

CONCLUSION

3.0 REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Regional Policy Context is provided by the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 and regional planning policy statements. A summary of these documents as they pertain to plan making and local housing policy is provided in the following sections:

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2035: BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE (RDS)



3.2 [The Regional Development Strategy 2035](#) (RDS), published on the 15th March 2012, is the spatial strategy of the Executive. It informs the spatial aspects of the strategies of all Government Departments and has a statutory basis. It is prepared under the Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999. Under that Order the Department for Regional Development (DRD) is responsible for formulating a strategy for the long term development of Northern Ireland.

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

3.3 Prior to the publication of the RDS, housing need was estimated by means of a ‘**predict and provide**’ approach, which was based on predicting demand and over-zoning housing land in order to provide choice and flexibility. District housing need was estimated by projecting trends in population and average household size, also taking into account house construction rates. The RDS introduced fundamental and significant changes to the manner in which area plans must now provide for future housing requirements. Under the

RDS, housing growth is now examined at regional level on a ‘**plan, monitor and manage**’ approach which seeks to ensure that plans become more sustainable, balanced and integrated. When responsibility for the preparation of local development plans and development schemes transfers in April 2015 to Mid & East Antrim Council; the Council must ‘**take account**’ of the RDS.

3.4 As part of its Spatial Framework, the RDS recognises Ballymena and Larne towns as main hubs. Larne is also identified as a gateway due to its strategic coastal location with a natural harbour and as it is the second largest port in Northern Ireland. Carrickfergus is grouped within the major conurbation known as the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area.

3.5 The RDS 2035 sets policy directions for the provision of housing that aim to deliver development in a more sustainable manner. This means growing population and providing additional housing in the hubs and sustaining rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countryside. The RDS presents Regional Guidance (RG) under 3 sustainable development themes – **economy**, **society** and **environment**. Housing is considered under the society theme and recognises the need to:

RG6: Strengthen community cohesion (RDS 2035 p38) through fostering a stronger community spirit and sense of place and encourage mixed housing development.

RG7: Support urban & rural renaissance (RDS 2035, p38-39) by encouraging and bringing forward under-utilised land and buildings, particularly for mixed use development and promoting regeneration in areas of social need.

RG8: Manage housing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development (RDS 2035, p40-42) by;

- **Promoting more sustainable housing development within existing urban areas.**

The Strategy sets a regional target of **60% of new housing to be located in appropriate ‘brownfield’ sites within the urban footprints of settlements greater than 5,000 population** (within MEAD these settlements include Ballymena, Larne, Carrickfergus & Greenisland).

“Brownfield Land: land that is, or was occupied by a permanent structure within a defined settlement limit. The term may encompass vacant or derelict lands, infill sites, land occupied by redundant or underused buildings, a piece of industrial or commercial property that is abandoned or underused & often environmentally contaminated” (RDS Glossary)

- **Ensuring an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone.**

Councils will be required to identify housing land in development plans and take account of:

- existing vacant housing in any assessment of housing need.
- need identified, in the NIHE Housing Needs Assessment/Housing Market Analysis. This includes land for social and intermediate housing such as shared ownership & affordable housing.

3.6 Achieving balanced communities and strengthening community means the provision of good quality housing offering a variety of house types, sizes and tenures to meet different needs and development that provides opportunities for the community to share in local employment, shopping, leisure and social facilities is fundamental to the building of more balanced communities. In the first paper to Members on Population and Growth, the importance of providing housing to meet the needs of different groups was highlighted both in terms of families and single people. It was apparent that both the rise in elderly people, declining family sizes and young people starting out was going to lead to increased demand for smaller units, which should be incorporated into new housing along with family housing to create more balanced communities.

HGIs & The Spatial Framework Guidance (RDS 2035)

3.7 The RDS 2035 identifies regional housing needs as Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs) across Northern Ireland. The HGIs are a guide for those preparing Local Development Plans, which are derived from examining 2008-based NISRA household projections, existing stock, vacancies etc. The figures published are an estimate of the new dwelling requirement 2008-2025 for each of the former existing 20 District

Councils outside the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA) and its hinterland and for the 6 BMUA Council areas.

3.8 The HGI for 2008-2025 has been set at **6,400 dwellings** for **Ballymena District** and **3,900** in **Larne District**. The share for **Carrickfergus District** is contained within the 60,800 total for the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area and work is currently underway by DRD to disentangle a figure for each of the 6 BMUA Council areas. When projected on a pro rata basis to 2030, the figures are **8,282** for **Ballymena District** & **5,047** for **Larne District** (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: HGIs in Mid & East Antrim District

	HGI 2008-2025	HGI 2008-2030
Ballymena	6,400	8,282
Larne	3,900	5,047
Carrickfergus	3,700*	4,788*
Mid & East Antrim	14,000*	18,117*

**Figures are currently estimates as the Carrickfergus share from the overall BMUA HGI total is not yet known*

3.9 It is a matter for Councils to allocate housing growth to achieve a complementary urban/rural balance. This puts the focus on existing settlements by:

- Taking account of the roles & functions of each settlement and surrounding rural areas (**SFG10: Identify & consolidate the roles and functions of settlements within the cluster** (RDS 2035, p70);
- Putting Hubs as the primary focus of growth both in terms of economic development and population (**SFG11: Promote economic development opportunities at Hubs & SFG12: Grow the population in the Hubs and cluster of Hubs** (RDS 2035, p72);
- Sustaining rural communities living in smaller settlements & the open countryside by revitalising small towns & villages in their role as local service centres (**SFG13** (RDS 2035, p74-75).

3.10 To aid consideration, the RDS provides a Housing Evaluation Framework for considering growth, based on a series of tests based on each settlements resources, environmental capacity, transport links, economic development potential, character & community services (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Housing Evaluation Framework

Resource Test	<i>Studies should be carried out to assess and detail the existence of community assets and physical infrastructure such as water, waste and sewage, including spare capacity.</i>
Environmental Capacity Test	<i>An assessment of the environmental assets of the settlement, the potential of flooding from rivers, the sea or surface water run-off and its potential to accommodate future outward growth without significant environmental degradation should be made.</i>
Transport Test	<i>Studies should be carried out to assess the potential for integrating land use and public transport and walking and cycling routes to help reduce reliance on the car.</i>
Economic Development Test	<i>The potential to facilitate an appropriate housing and jobs balance and to unlock any major strategic development opportunities should be assessed and detailed.</i>
Urban and Rural Character Test	<i>Assessment should be made of the potential to maintain a sense of place, and to integrate new development in a way that does not detract from the character and identity of the settlement.</i>
Community Services Test	<i>The potential to underpin and, where necessary, reinforce the community service role and function of the settlement should be assessed and detailed.</i>

Source: RDS 2035 p42

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS

Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12): Housing in Settlements & A Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (draft SPPS)



3.11 The RDS, is complimented by the DOE's Planning Policy Statements, the most relevant of which is [PPS12: Housing in Settlements \(2005\)](#). This document is to be replaced by the [Strategic Planning Policy Statement](#), a Draft of which was issued for consultation in February 2014. The draft SPPS does not represent a significant change to housing policy but helps to shorten and simplify the guidance for Councils. Both PPS 12 & the Draft SPPS set regional policy objectives underpinning the RDS and equally relevant to local development plans, in terms of:

- managing housing needs in response to changing need;
- directing and managing growth to achieve more sustainable patterns of residential development;
- promoting a drive for more housing within urban areas;
- encouraging increase density of urban housing appropriate to the scale & design of cities & towns of Northern Ireland; and
- encouraging the development of balanced local communities.

The Processes for Allocating Housing Land

3.12 The statements reiterate that in making housing allocations Councils should apply:

- a) RDS Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs);
- b) RDS housing evaluation framework; and take account of:
- c) Housing Needs Assessment (NIHE);
- d) Existing commitments (built, approved & likely to be approved);
- e) Potential windfall housing.

It also advises that in preparing a plan a council should undertake:

- f) Urban capacity studies;
- g) Transport Assessments (where appropriate).

3.13 The guidance sets a sequential approach to site identification, adopting existing urban sites first, before expansion to towns & cities and treating major expansion of a village or small rural settlement only in exceptional circumstances, and the creation of new settlements in the last resort. The following diagram sets out the search sequence:



Other Regional Policies

3.14 Other regional policies relevant to housing policy currently contained in [PPS7: Quality Residential Environments \(2001\)](#) and [PPS8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation \(2004\)](#), are reflected in the SPPS and are primarily concerned with issues related to design and layout. [Draft Planning Policy Statement 22 \(PPS22\)](#) deals with Affordable housing.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

3.15 In addition to regional policy, supplementary planning guidance for residential development is provided by [Creating Places - Achieving Quality in Residential Development \(2000\)](#). It is the principle guide for use by prospective developers in the design of all new housing areas. [DCAN 8: Housing in Existing Urban Areas](#), will also be material to the determination of planning applications for small unit housing within existing urban areas. [Living Places: An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for NI \(2014\)](#) sets out the key principles behind good place making. It seeks to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing and making urban places.



HOUSING IN THE RURAL AREA

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2035

3.16 For the purposes of the spatial framework in the RDS, those places outside the Principal Cities, the Main & Local Hubs are identified as constituting the rural area. In NI 40% of the total population live in these places. Recently the rural community living in small towns, villages & small settlements in the countryside has experienced the fastest rate of population growth, reversing a long-term trend of population decline.

3.17 The majority of people live within 15 miles of a Hub & within 8 miles of a cluster where they can access most of the services they need. Smaller towns, villages & hamlets perform an important function for rural communities. The RDS recognises that we must strive to keep our rural areas sustainable and ensure that people who live there, either through choice or birth, have access to services and are offered opportunities in terms of accessing education, jobs, healthcare & leisure.



3.18 A strategic objective within the RDS (SFG13) is to **sustain the overall strength of rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countryside**, and to improve connectivity of rural communities to services. Sustaining rural communities requires new development and employment opportunities which respect local, social and environmental circumstances. The RDS considers that a strong network of smaller towns supported by villages will help sustain and service the rural community. This includes establishing the role of multi-functional town centres which should be the prime locations for housing alongside other facilities and revitalising small towns & villages particularly those which have been static or declining.

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS

Planning Policy Statement 21 (PPS21): Sustainable Development in the Countryside & A Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (draft SPPS)

3.19 [PPS21](#) became effective on 1 June 2010 and sets out planning policies for development in the countryside. For the purpose of this document the countryside is defined as land lying outside of settlement limits as identified in development plans. The provisions of this document currently applies to all areas of Northern Ireland's countryside.

3.20 In relation to housing in the countryside, the Draft SPPS adopts a similar approach to PPS21, setting policy objectives aimed at:

- managing growth to achieve appropriate and sustainable patterns of development which supports a **vibrant rural community**;
- **conserving the landscape and natural resources of the rural area** and to protect it from excessive, inappropriate or obtrusive development and from the actual or potential effects of pollution;
- facilitating development which contributes to a **sustainable rural economy**; and
- promoting **high standards in the design, siting and landscaping** of development.

3.21 To achieve these objectives the policy approach is to **cluster, consolidate & group new development**, particularly new residential development, with existing established buildings & the **re-use of previously used land & buildings**.



3.22 Council will be required to bring forward a Plan Strategy for development in the countryside to reflect the aim, objectives & policy approach of the SPPS tailored to the specific circumstances of Mid & East Antrim District. The Local Development Plan process should:

- identify key features & assets of the countryside.
- Under take an environmental assets appraisal & landscape assessment.
- Identify & include policy for small scale housing in Dispersed Rural Communities (DRCs) (where appropriate). These will be designated taking into account of; remoteness; evidence of community activity associated with focal point(s); an established dispersed pattern of settlement.
- Bring forward local policies & proposals for a range of types of development including residential development for:
 - Small scale social & affordable housing development where need exists;
 - Infilling/rounding off of appropriate clusters/groups;
 - Replacement dwelling;
 - Farm dwelling;
 - Dwelling/conversion for rural business;
 - Dwelling/temporary caravan/mobile where there are compelling personal/domestic circumstances.
- Formulate policies to address the need to ensure development in the countryside-
 - integrates;
 - respects rural character
 - is designed appropriate to the local area.

CONCLUSION

3.23 In conclusion, the role of the development plan is to provide housing land in accordance with the RDS. This means zoning sufficient housing land in the larger settlements and providing sufficient opportunities including Housing Policy Areas (HPAs) in smaller settlements to meet the housing growth indicators. It also means ensuring that there is an adequate range of sites at suitable locations to provide a mix of house types and tenures to meet population needs. This paper focuses on identifying what the local housing needs are in relation to overall numbers and special needs. In demonstrating that the HGI is sufficient to cater for the needs of a growing population, the paper then examines how the HGI should be distributed across settlements under the provisions of the RDS and PPS 12 in order to promote sustainable and balanced growth.





SECTION 4

LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT - EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PLANS

BALLYMENA AREA PLAN 1986-2001

LARNE AREA PLAN 2010

CARRICKFERGUS AREA PLAN 2001

BELFAST METROPOLITAN AREA PLAN 2015
(BMAP)

ANNUAL HOUSING MONITOR

4.0 LOCAL CONTEXT – EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PLANS

BALLYMENA AREA PLAN 1986-2001

4.1 The Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001 was adopted in November 1989. It was estimated that 4,500 dwellings would be required over the Plan period (Table 4.1).



Table 4.1: Potential distribution of housing need within Ballymena District

Location	No. of houses
Ballymena Town	2,500
Villages & Rural Area	2,000
Ballymena District Total	4,500

Source: BAP 1986-2001

Ballymena Town

4.2 Within Ballymena Town 150 hectares were zoned for housing which could accommodate 3,000 dwellings. The surplus was to provide a degree of flexibility and choice. The Department avoided zoning a few large tracts of land in favour of a greater number of smaller sites and these for the most part were spread around the periphery of the town in areas such as Galgorm, Gracehill, Ballee, Carniny and Dunclug.

Villages & Small Settlements

4.3 In the villages, land was not zoned for specific purposes, however sufficient land was included within development limits to allow each village to fulfil its role in the settlement strategy by provide adequate opportunities for housing development. On the proposal maps for the villages of Ahoghill, Broughshane, Cullybackey, Kells/Connor & Portglenone land suitable for housing was identified.

LARNE AREA PLAN 2010 (LAP)

4.4 Adopted in March 1998, the [Larne Area Plan 2010](#) pre-dated publication of the RDS 2025 in September 2001. As a result the plan preparation process did not include any work on the allocation of the District HGI across the Plan Area, settlement hierarchy and the countryside. It was estimated that some 2,370 new dwellings would be required in the Larne Borough over the Plan period (Table 4.2).



Table 4.2: Potential distribution of housing need within Larne District

Location	No. of houses
Larne Town	1,335
Villages	210
Rural Area	430
Larne District Total	2,370

Source: LAP 2010

4.5 Housing policies aimed at ensuring that an adequate and continuous supply of housing land was available within the urban areas of the Borough were identified to facilitate the provision of a range of housing opportunities to meet the needs of the community.

Larne Town

4.6 The majority (60%) of Larne District's population lived in Larne Town, where it was anticipated that much of the demand for new housing would be met. The balance would be accommodated in the villages, small settlements & countryside. 145.2 hectares of land were zoned for housing purposes within Larne Town (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Location of land Zoned for Housing in Larne Town

Location	Land Zoned (Ha)
Larne West	110.7
Ballycraig Rd	6.0
Blackcave North	15.6
Ballyloran Rd	10.2
Wyncairn Rd	2.69
Larne Town Total	145.2

Source: LAP 2010

Villages & Small Settlements

4.7 The Department identified 6 villages and 18 small settlements in the LAP 2010. A limit of development was defined for each village and small settlement within which development appropriate to the scale & character of each village or small settlement would normally be permitted. Within the villages & small settlements, land was not generally zoned for housing purposes. Land within settlement development limits was un-zoned or 'white' land. Within the adopted limits of these lower order settlements development was normally acceptable subject to meeting the relevant planning policy and technical requirements for the particular site. While land may have been acceptable for a variety of uses, it was anticipated that green-field sites on the edge of the built-up area of such settlements would predominantly be given over to housing use.

CARRICKFERGUS AREA PLAN 2001 (CAP)



4.8 The [Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001](#) was adopted in March 2000. The Plan Strategy, underpinned by the principle of sustainable development, was for Carrickfergus town to be the focus for

most new growth, while development in the countryside was to be kept to a minimum.

Carrickfergus Town

4.9 With 70% of the Borough's population, Carrickfergus Town was seen as where the demand for new dwellings over the Plan period would be met. 95 hectares of land for housing were zoned within the town (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Location of land Zoned for Housing in Carrickfergus Town

Location	Land Zoned (Ha)
Sloefield Rd	8.5
Dunluskin Gardens	2.4
North East Sector (West) & North East Sector (East)	72.9
Marshallstown Rd	8.4
Maritime Area	2.6
Carrickfergus Town Total	95

Source: CAP 2001

Local Towns & Small Settlements

4.10 Taken together Greenisland and Whitehead accounted for approximately 26% of the Borough's population. CAP 2001 zoned 26.6 hectares of land for housing in Greenisland (Table 4.5) but did not indicate specific sites for residential development in Whitehead, as there was limited development opportunities severely constrained by infrastructure limitations and topography.

Table 4.5: Location of land Zoned for Housing in Greenisland

Location	Land Zoned (Ha)
Shorelands	15.3
Goldenview	2.4
Downview	8.9
Greenisland Total	26.6

Source: CAP 2001

4.11 The two small settlements of Trooperslane & Knocknaguillagh accommodated small local populations and only small-scale development opportunities were provided.

BELFAST METROPOLITAN AREA PLAN 2015 (BMAP)



4.12 [BMAP](#), as adopted, became operative on 9 September 2014 and replaces Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001. BMAP, comprising a Written Statement & accompanying maps is divided into 4 parts, including background to the preparation of the plan, the Guiding Principles, the Plan Strategy and Plan Framework.

4.13 Part 4 Volume 4 of BMAP 2015 sets out policies on Carrickfergus District which have been developed in the context of the Plan Strategy and Plan Proposals contained in Volume 1 of the Plan and they reflect the policy content of the RDS. The settlement hierarchy in this plan followed that of the Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 consisting of the town of Carrickfergus, the small towns of Greenisland and Whitehead and the small settlements of Trooperslane and Kncknagulliagh. The Plan Proposals facilitate development and redevelopment opportunities appropriate to the size, function, character and existing infrastructure of the settlements. There were no significant changes to the previous development limits in the settlements. Carrickfergus is promoted as the main location for housing, employment, services and a range of leisure amenities, making effective use of existing infrastructure and utilities, with complementary roles for Greenisland and Whitehead and the small settlements.

4.14 The distribution of housing growth in the settlements is in accordance with the approach set out in the BMA Housing Strategy and accompanying Plan Proposals in the housing section in Part 3, Volume 1 of the Plan. Approximately **181 hectares** of land were zoned

for housing across the district to provide a choice of location, and support urban regeneration and included land for the provision of social housing (Table 4.6). Key site requirements are stipulated, as appropriate, against which particular site development proposals will be assessed. This includes minimum densities for sites zoned for housing within urban footprints which aim to maximise potential housing yield without prejudicing environmental quality.

Table 4.6: Location of land Zoned for Housing in Carrickfergus District

Location	Land Zoned (Ha)
Carrickfergus Town	131
Greenisland	41
Whitehead	9
Carrickfergus District Total	181

Source: BMAP 2015

4.15 BMAP zoned approximately **131 hectares** of land in Carrickfergus town within the Plan period including two sites for social housing identified by the Housing Needs Assessment carried out by NIHE. These 2 sites have since been developed (Table 4.7). Within the town centre 7 Areas of Protected Town Centre Housing were designated. These are established communities, and their retention will help retain the town centre's vitality.

Table 4.7: Land Zoned for Housing in Carrickfergus Town

Location	Land Zoned (Ha)	%
Committed Housing Sites – complete at 31/7/2011	43.06	33%
Including Social Housing	1.24	
Committed Housing Sites – extant approvals ongoing /not started at 31/7/2011	18.57	14.2%
Uncommitted Housing Sites	68.69	52.7%
Carrickfergus Town Total	130.32	100%

Source: BMAP 2015

4.16 BMAP zoned approximately **41 hectares** of land for housing in Greenisland within the Plan period (Table 4.8). It should however be noted that the new boundary for Mid & East Antrim District excludes some of these zoned sites (approximately 4.22 hectares), namely Zonings

GD04/01 at Shore Rd, GD03/06 between Neill's Lane & Shorelands and GD04/10 at Farm Lodge Road, which will become part of Antrim/Newtownabbey Council. The new boundary also dissects Zoning GD 04/08 between Neill's Lane & Shorelands with the majority of these 12.31 hectares being removed outside the Mid & East Antrim District.

Table 4.8: Land Zoned for Housing in Greenisland

Location	Land Zoned (Ha)	%
Committed Housing Sites – complete at 31/7/2011	3.51	8.5%
Committed Housing Sites – extant approvals ongoing /not started at 31/7/2011	16.41	39.6%
Uncommitted Housing Sites	21.49	51.9%
Greenisland Total	41.41	100%

Source: BMAP 2015

4.17 Within Whitehead, approximately **9 hectares** of land were zoned for housing (Table 4.9). Sites zoned for housing in both Greenisland & Whitehead were selected to allow for the efficient use of land within the urban footprint, to provide choice in the housing market and to include existing commitments.

Table 4.9: Land Zoned for Housing in Whitehead

Location	Land Zoned (Ha)	%
Committed Housing Sites – complete at 31/7/2011	7.67	83.8%
Committed Housing Sites – extant approvals ongoing /not started at 31/7/2011	0.9	9.8%
Uncommitted Housing Sites	0.58	6.3%
Whitehead Total	9.15	100%

Source: BMAP 2015

4.18 The two small settlements of Trooperslane & Knocknaguillagh accommodate small local populations and only some opportunities were provided for limited infill or rounding off.

ANNUAL HOUSING MONITOR

4.19 The Annual Housing Monitor provides an overall picture of the amount of land that has been developed on zoned housing land. Within Ballymena Town, the Housing Monitor 2013 confirms that **41.5%** of the 150 hectares of land zoned for housing has been developed with approximately **88 hectares** remaining (Table 4.10). Of the 31 zoned housing sites, 10 are complete and 16 may be described as 'active' in that work has already commenced or a planning permission has been obtained or applied for on part or all of the land. This leaves 4 zoned housing sites where no approvals have been sought. Approximately 6.2 hectares of the remaining zoned site has been developed for Slemish Integrated College.

4.20 Approximately **53%** of the housing land zoned in Larne town has been developed with approximately **68 hectares** remaining (Table 4.11). Of the 9 sites zoned for housing 3 have been completed and 5 may be described as 'active'.

Table 4.10: Zoned Housing Land Uptake 2013 – Ballymena Town

25

Settlement	Total Area (ha)	Units Complete	Area Developed	Area Remaining (ha)	Units Remaining
Ballymena	150	1,178	62.21 (41.47%)	87.79 (58.52%)	2,106

Source: BAP 1986-2001 & 2013 Housing Monitor Reports

Table 4.11: Zoned Housing Land Uptake 2013 – Larne Town

Settlement	Total Area (ha)	Units Complete	Area Developed	Area Remaining (ha)	Units Remaining
Larne	145.2	1,405	77.23 (53.18%)	67.97 (46.82%)	1,971

Source: LAP 2010 & 2013 Housing Monitor Reports

Table 4.12: Zoned Housing Land Uptake 2013 – Carrickfergus Towns

Settlement	Total Area (ha)	Units Complete	Area Developed	Area Remaining (ha)	Units Remaining
Carrickfergus	131	1,269	47.53 (36.28%)	83.47 (63.72%)	2,161
Greenisland	41	302	11.89 (29%)	29.11 (71%)	697
Whitehead	9	200	7.5 (83.3%)	1.5 (16.7%)	30
District Total	181	1,771	66.92 (36.97%)	114.08 (63.02%)	2,888

Source: BMAP 2015 & 2013 Housing Monitor Reports

4.21 Within Carrickfergus Town only 36% of the 131 hectares zoned in BMAP have been developed, with approximately 83 hectares remaining. Of the 51 sites zoned, 27 are complete and 10 have extant approval which is not started or development is ongoing. In Greenisland 71% of the 41 hectares zoned remain undeveloped and of the 23 sites zoned for housing 7 are complete. In Whitehead, of the 9 hectares zoned only around 1.5 hectares remains (Table 4.12). Five of the seven sites zoned for housing in Whitehead have

been completed and one site can be described as 'active'.

4.22 However, in terms of delivering new housing, the new local development plan is required to take into account the number of houses built within the RDS period i.e. from 31st March 2008 rather than an examination of zoned housing land uptake since a Plans' adoption. This is explored further under Section 7.0 Accommodating Housing Growth.

SECTION 5

A PROFILE OF THE HOUSING STOCK IN MID & EAST ANTRIM

POPULATION & HOUSEHOLDS

HOUSING TENURE

HOUSING TYPES

SOCIAL HOUSING & AFFORDABILITY

SPECIALISED HOUSING NEED

VACANCY & UNFITNESS LEVELS

CONCLUSIONS

5.0 A PROFILE OF THE HOUSING STOCK

IN MID & EAST ANTRIM DISTRICT

5.1 Planning has a role in providing for a mixture of tenures, housing types and providing access to affordable housing. Therefore a profile of existing housing stock in terms of tenure, type, affordability, occupancy and unfitness needs to be considered.

POPULATION & HOUSEHOLDS

5.2 As reported in the Population & Growth Paper, the rate of population growth between 2001 and 2011 in Ballymena District (9.3%) was just above the NI average of 7.5%, however the rate of change in both Carrickfergus (3.9%) and Larne (4.4%) Districts were well below this (Appendix A: Table A1). For the Mid & East Antrim District the rate of change (6.5%) was closer to the NI average.

Table 5.1 Number of Households 2001 & 2011

Year	2001	2011	% change 2001-2011
N. Ireland	626,718	703,275	12.2%
Mid & East Antrim	49,095	54,314	10.6%
Ballymena	22,060	24,817	12.5%
Carrickfergus	14,785	16,200	9.6%
Larne	12,250	13,297	8.5%

NISRA: Census 2001 Household Composition: KS20 (administrative geographies) & Census 2011 Usually Resident Population, Households and Average Household Size (administrative geographies)

5.3 The number of households in each district has increased between 2001 and 2011, with a 10.6% increase in Mid & East Antrim District, from 49,095 in 2001 to 54,314 in 2011 (Table 5.1). This is due to a trend towards smaller household sizes with the average household size decreasing between 2001 & 2011 from 2.56 to 2.47 in Mid & East Antrim District (Appendix B). Furthermore, decreasing average household size has meant that by 2011, almost 60% of households in Mid & East Antrim were occupied by 1-2 persons (Appendix C: Table C3). This trend for smaller households and an increase in the number of houses needs to be taken into account when planning for future housing stock.

5.4 In 2001, just over 50% of households in Ballymena District were located in Ballymena town, however the percentage increased in both Larne town and Carrickfergus town (Table 5.2 & Appendix D: Table D4). These figures illustrate the strength Larne town and particular Carrickfergus town exerts within their districts compared to Ballymena. The proportion of households in 'other settlements' i.e. villages & small settlements is around 20% in both Ballymena and Larne Districts but is much smaller in Carrickfergus District (0.4%).

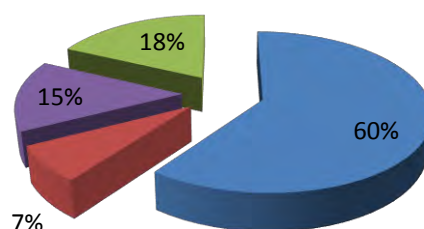
Table: 5.2 Population & Household Distribution- 2001

	Ballymena District		Larne District		Carrickfergus District		Mid & East Antrim	
	Population	Households	Population	Households	Population	Households	Population	Households
Main Towns	49.0%	51.3%	59.1%	62.4%	69.5%	71.6%	57.7%	60.2%
Local Towns	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	22.4%	24.2%	6.8%	7.3%
Other Settlements	20.3%	21.3%	19.7%	19.4%	0.4%	0.4%	14.1%	14.5%
Countryside	30.7%	27.4%	21.2%	18.3%	7.7%	3.7%	21.4%	18%
District Total	58,610	22,060	30,832	12,250	39,114	14,785	128,556	49,095

Source: NISRA Census 2001 Key Statistics for Settlements Tables & Tables: KS01, STU500 & KS21

Fig. 5.1: Household distribution in Mid & East Antrim District - 2001

■ Main Towns ■ Local Towns ■ Other Settlements ■ Countryside



HOUSING TENURE

5.5 In 2001, the [Housing Condition Survey](#) recorded that most of the houses in Mid & East Antrim were owner occupied and this figure was just above the regional average (Table 5.3 & Appendix E: Table E1). All 3 districts had slightly lower than average proportions of NIHE, Housing Association and private rented dwellings and Ballymena District (9%) had a higher proportion of vacant houses than the regional rate of 4.9%. By 2006, the proportion of owner occupier dwellings increased in Ballymena but reduced slightly in Larne & Carrickfergus. All 3 districts remained above the regional average. Similar to the regional trend the percentage of NIHE dwellings decreased across Mid & East Antrim and the proportion of private rented dwellings increased. Vacancy rates decreased in Ballymena by 4% but increased in both Carrickfergus & Larne by 3% & 2.5% respectively (Table 5.4 & Appendix E: Table E2).

Table 5.3: Housing Tenure- 2001

	Total Dwellings	Owner Occupied	NIHE	H.A	Private Rented & Other	Vacant
N. Ireland	647,530	66.8%	17.9%	2.8%	7.6%	4.9%
Mid & East Antrim	50,660	69.6%	16.1%	2.1%	6.3%	5.9%
Ballymena	22,770	66.4%	15.7%	1.7%	7.3%	9.0%
Carrick	15,040	73.8%	16.7%	2.3%	4.5%	2.7%
Larne	12,850	70.3%	16.2%	2.6%	6.6%	4.2%

Source: NINIS Dwelling Tenure (admin geographies) taken from Housing Condition Survey 2001. H.A= Housing Association

Table 5.4: Housing Tenure- 2006

	Total Dwellings	Owner Occupied	NIHE	H.A	Private Rented & Other	Vacant
N. Ireland	705,000	66.5%	13.3%	3.1%	11.5%	5.7%
Mid & East Antrim	52,730	71.1%	12.0%	2.4%	8.9%	5.6%
Ballymena	22,970	71.4%	12.7%	2.2%	8.8%	5.0%
Carrick	16,620	72.1%	11.5%	3.0%	7.7%	5.7%
Larne	13,140	69.3%	11.3%	1.8%	10.8%	6.7%

Source: NINIS Dwelling Tenure (admin geographies) taken from Housing Condition Survey 2006. H.A= Housing Association

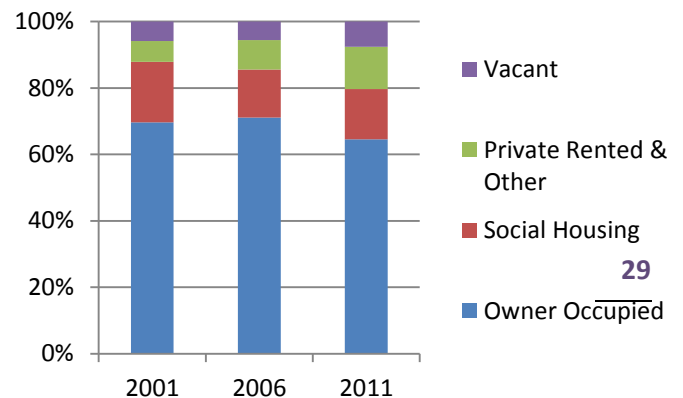
Table 5.5: Housing Tenure- 2011

	Total Dwellings	Owner Occupied	Social Housing	Private Rented & Other	Vacant
N. Ireland	760,000	61.7%	16.5%	14.6%	7.2%
Mid & East Antrim	62,480	64.5%	15.2%	12.7%	7.6%

Source: NINIS Dwelling Tenure (admin geographies) taken from Housing Condition Survey 2011

5.6 The [2011 House Condition Survey](#) indicates that the proportion of owner-occupier housing stock in NI has continued to decline (61.7% compared to 66.5% in 2006) with an increase in private rented properties and other. In Mid & East District the percentage of owner occupier houses have fallen back from the 2006 levels and similar to NI private rented properties have increased. In NI, the social rented sector accounted for 14.3% of total stock and the level of vacant stock had risen (7.2%) in line with growth in the private rented sector. In Mid & East District the social rented sector began to rise again from 2006 levels and vacancy levels rose overtaking the NI level (Table 5.5 & Appendix E: Table E3 & Fig. 5.2).

Fig. 5.2: Household Tenure in Mid & East Antrim District 2001- 2011



5.7 Household tenure data from the 2001 & 2011 Census would appear to mirror the above findings in that there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of owner occupied as well as a decrease in social housing stock with an increase in private rented accommodation (Fig. 5.3 & Appendix E: Tables E5 & E6).

Fig. 5.3: Household Tenure in Mid & East Antrim- 2011



Source: NISRA Census 2011 Households (admin geographies) & Tenure - Households: QS405NI (admin geographies)

5.8 At a local level the Super Output Area (SOA) with the largest proportion of owner occupied households was Bluefield 2 (93.5%) in Carrickfergus and the lowest level was in Castle Demesne (41%) in Ballymena. Castle Demesne also had the highest level of private rented households followed by Park (28.4%) located in the north of Ballymena Town. Social rented households were highest in Ballee (47%) and Love Lane (40.9%) (Appendix E: Tables E7, E8 & E9 & Map E1 & E2).

5.9 NISRA suggests that the key drivers in the increased demand for private rented accommodation are likely to have been housing affordability issues associated with the mid-2000s upsurge in NI house prices; and the particularly adverse impact on the NI housing market of the post-2007 economic downturn. This has seen a marked reduction in property values, risk aversion among mortgage lenders & reduced confidence among prospective house purchasers, and, as a result, many households electing to rent rather than buy.

HOUSING TYPES

Table 5.6: Household by Type- 2001

	Total Households	Detached	Semi-Detached	Terraced	Flats	Other*
N. Ireland	626,718	36.8%	27.9%	27.0%	8.0%	0.3%
Mid & East Antrim	49,092	40.9%	24.9%	26.2%	7.8%	0.2%
Ballymena	22,057	46.1%	24.3%	22.9%	6.4%	0.2%
Carrick	14,785	36.3%	27.4%	27.0%	9.1%	0.1%
Larne	12,250	37.0%	22.9%	31.2%	8.8%	0.2%

Source: NISRA Census 2001 Accommodation Type (Households): UV056 (administrative geographies)

Notes: (1) In general, a household's accommodation is defined as an unshared dwelling if all the rooms are behind a door that only that household can use. (2) Other* includes caravan, mobile or temporary structure or shared house

Table 5.7: Household by Type- 2011

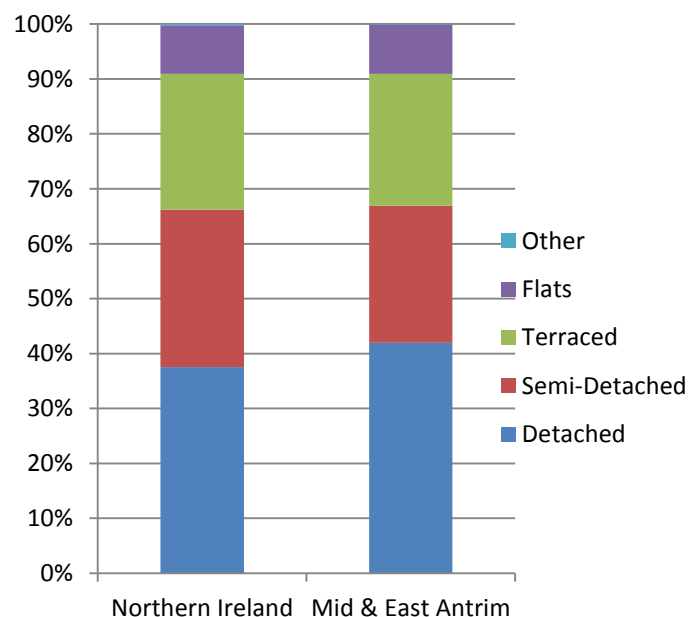
	Total Households	Detached	Semi-Detached	Terraced	Flats	Other*
Northern Ireland	703,275	37.6%	28.5%	24.9%	8.9%	0.2%
Mid & East Antrim	54,314	41.9%	25.3%	23.9%	8.7%	0.1%
Ballymena	24,817	48.2%	24.5%	20.1%	7.0%	0.1%
Carrickfergus	16,200	35.8%	26.2%	25.8%	12.1%	0.0%
Larne	13,297	37.6%	25.7%	28.6%	7.8%	0.2%

Source: NISRA Census 2011 Accommodation Type - Households: QS402NI (administrative geographies)

Notes: (1) In general, a household's accommodation is defined as an unshared dwelling if all the rooms are behind a door that only that household can use. (2) Other* includes caravan, mobile or temporary structure or shared house

5.10 The mix of housing types only changed slightly between 2001 & 2011 (Tables 5.6 & 5.7 & Appendix F: Tables F1 & F2). In Ballymena district in both years, there was a higher proportion of detached dwellings than the regional average, in contrast Larne was similar to the NI average and Carrickfergus was below this level. By 2011, the proportion of households in flats in Carrickfergus was 3.2% higher than the NI level. The above figures may partly be due to the large proportion of housing in the countryside in Ballymena district and the more urban nature of Carrickfergus district where apartments are more common. Between 2001 & 2011 there was a 1% increase in MEA in both detached dwellings and flats. In contrast there was a small percentage decrease in households in terraced dwellings.

Fig.5.4: Households by Type- 2011



5.11 Data from Land & Property Service's Valuation List September 2008 and 2013 provides housing type information for domestic properties and shows a similar trend to the Census information based on housing types by households. This includes the slight increase in apartments across NI & Mid & East Antrim District (Table 5.8 & 5.9 Appendix F: Tables F3 & F4).

Table 5.8: Domestic Properties by type in Mid & East Antrim- 2008

	Total	Detached	Semi-Detached	Terraced	Apartments
N. Ireland	728,840	35.7%	24.7%	29.96%	7.8%
Mid & East Antrim	55,085	40.0%	21.8%	29.9%	8.2%
Ballymena	24,876	45.7%	21.2%	26.8%	6.2%
Carrickfergus	16,326	34.6%	23.4%	30.5%	11.4%
Larne	13,883	36.3%	20.1%	34.8%	7.9%

Source: NISRA Domestic Properties (administrative geographies)

Table 5.9: Domestic Properties by type in Mid & East Antrim- 2013

	Total	Detached	Semi-Detached	Terraced	Apartments
N.Ireland	764,744	35.6%	24.6%	29.2%	10.5%
Mid & East Antrim	57,908	39.8%	21.6%	28.9%	9.6%
Ballymena	26,357	45.9%	20.7%	25.7%	7.6%
Carrickfergus	17,031	34%	23.1%	29.6%	13.3%
Larne	14,520	35.7%	21.5%	33.9%	8.9%

Source: NISRA Domestic Properties (administrative geographies)

SOCIAL HOUSING & AFFORDABILITY

5.12 A gap in market provision can occur if house prices rise beyond that which is affordable. Affordability is determined by price, average incomes and access to borrowing and it remains an issue for first time buyers (See Fig 5.5 & Appendix G: Table G1 for average house prices).

Table 5.10: NI Repayment Affordability 2010-2012

Source: [Northern Ireland Housing Market Review & Perspective 2014-2017](#)

Housing Market Areas	2010		2011		2012	
	Afford Gap (£)	% Unafford	Afford Gap (£)	% Unafford	Afford Gap (£)	% Unafford
Carrick & Larne	62,951	21%	65,505	23%	63,691	25%
Moyle, Ballymena, Ballymoney & Coleraine	17,667	55%	26,151	58%	31,199	57%

5.13 Since 2001, the Housing Executive has published an affordability index developed in partnership with University of Ulster to provide an evidence base for how changes in the housing market were affecting first-time buyer's ability to enter the market. Following a review in 2013, this affordability index has been refined and now uses the concept of an Affordable Limit (AL) to capture the ratio of the maximum allowable loan to income and assumes that the maximum monthly income which can be dedicated to repaying the mortgage is 35 per cent.

5.14 The emerging findings indicate that there are still wide geographical differences in levels of affordability across the province. In 2012, Carrick & Larne (75%) had the highest levels of affordable homes for first time buyers in N.I. Ballymena which is part of the wider Moyle, Ballymena, Ballymoney & Coleraine Housing area had 43% affordable homes (Table 5.10). Although there have been significant reductions in house prices everywhere since 2007, affordability remains an issue for first time buyers who continue to experience difficulties in securing mortgages. Falling household incomes and an increasing level of unemployment have an impact on the housing market and the ability of first time buyers to enter the market. The private rented sector therefore remains popular.

Fig. 5.5: Average House Price by Region & NI 2009-mid 2014

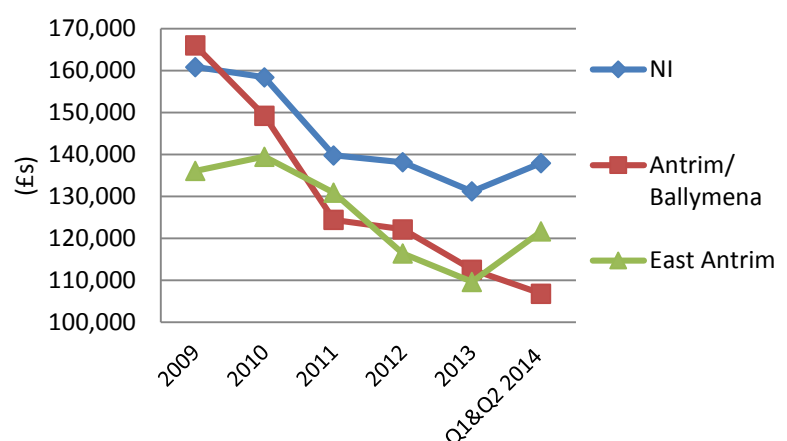


Table 5.11: Housing Applicants on Waiting List- March 2014

	NIHE Housing Stock	NIHE House Sales	HA New Build Starts	Waiting List Applicants	Number in Housing Stress	% in Housing Stress			Total Allocations
						Single	Older Person	Small Family	
Ballymena	2,716	14	14	1,482	880 (59.4%)	50.5%	21.4%	18.3%	293
Carrickfergus	1,891	9	12	918	500 (54.5%)	36%	30.6%	21.4%	213
Larne	1,293	6	7	452	168 (37.2%)	53%	23.8%	13.7%	137
Total Mid & East Antrim	5,900	29	33	2,852	1,548				643

Source: NIHE- Ballymena, Carrickfergus & Larne District Housing Plans 2014-2015

Note: 'Total Allocations' are allocations in the year to March 2014 & House Sales are for 2013/14 & HA= Housing Association

5.15 When examining affordability, it is important to note that planning cannot control house prices which are primarily influenced by factors such as interest rates and the availability of lending. Therefore, affordability in both urban and rural areas and meeting the needs of migrant workers, single parents, young people and the elderly is addressed through the provision of social housing. Neither of the existing area plans for Ballymena or Larne zoned sites specifically for social housing and therefore its provision is dealt with through the development management process. BMAP did however zone a number of sites for social housing.

5.16 The NIHE waiting list can be utilised to determine the pressure for social housing in an area. In Ballymena District only, 33% of those categorised as being in "housing stress" were accommodated in 2014. This rose to 43% in Carrickfergus and compared to almost 82% in Larne District (Table 5.11). The gap between demand and supply in both Ballymena & Carrickfergus Districts is widening.

5.17 In Larne & Ballymena Districts over 50% of those in housing stress were single and most of the remainder was comprised of small families and older people. In Carrickfergus District just over 30% were elderly (Table 5.11). These figures indicate a need for smaller housing units.

5.18 Social Housing is also met by Housing Associations. The Census 2011 indicates that

social housing stock (NIHE & Housing Associations) accounts for 6,416 households in Mid & East Antrim District representing 11.8% of total households which is some 3% less than the Northern Ireland figure (Appendix E: Table E6).

5.19 Social housing needs are influenced by affordability of housing, accessibility to finance, job/income status and family circumstances. NIHE based the most recent annual Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) on the March 2014 waiting list. It is projected that Mid & East Antrim District will require 864 units between 2013-2018, spread across 12 settlements within the existing districts. Ballymena District, in particular Ballymena town has the largest need (Tables 5.12, 5.13 & 5.14).

Table 5.12: Social HNA 2013-2018 Ballymena

Settlement	5 Year Projected Social Housing Need 2013-2018
District Town	
Ballymena Town	415
Villages	
Ahoghill	30
Broughshane	40
Glenravel	6
Cullybackey	37
Kells	10
Portglenone	6
Total	544

Source: [Ballymena District Housing Plan 2014/2015](#)

Table 5.13: Social HNA 2013-2018 Carrickfergus

Settlement	5 Year Projected Social Housing Need 2013-2018
District Town	
Carrickfergus Town	277
Other Towns	
Whitehead	16
Total	293

Source: [Carrickfergus District Housing Plan 2014/2015](#)

Table 5.14: Social HNA 2013-2018 Larne

Settlement	5 Year Projected Social Housing Need 2013-2018
District Town	
Larne Town	10
Villages	
Ballycarry	3
Carnlough	14
Total	27

Source: [Larne District Housing Plan 2014/2015](#)

SPECIALISED HOUSING NEED

5.20 People present themselves as homeless for many reasons, the casual factors of which may include marriage/house sharing breakdown, family/relationship disputes and unsuitability of accommodation. NIHE, Housing Associations and other agencies are responsible for providing temporary accommodation for homeless people, Travellers as well as the provision and allocation of “supported housing”, which also provides rehabilitation for those who are elderly or disabled.

Table 5.15: Levels of Homelessness 2009-2014

		Number Presented	Awarded Full Duty Status*	
2009/2010	Ballymena	763	490	64%
	Carrickfergus	450	214	48%
	Larne	236	101	43%
2013/2014	Ballymena	695	385	55%
	Carrickfergus	456	216	47%
	Larne	266	123	46%

Source: *Ballymena, Carrickfergus & Larne District Housing Plans 2014-2015* *Statutory Homeless

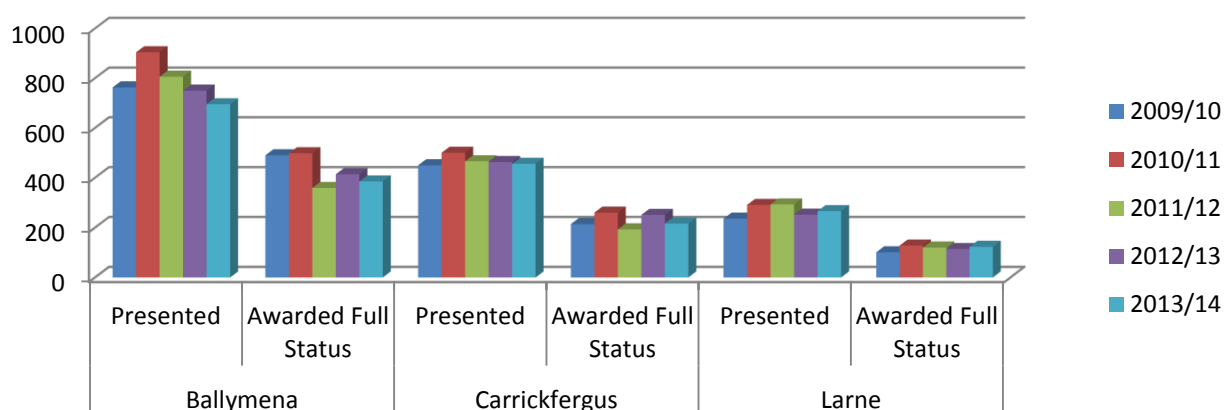
5.21 The number of people presenting themselves as homeless is considerably larger in Ballymena District than Carrickfergus or Larne. Across Ballymena & Carrickfergus districts, in the past year there has been a decrease in the numbers presented, the reduction was by 7.3% in Ballymena and 1.5% in Carrickfergus District. In Larne there was a 5.6% increase (Table 5.15, Fig. 5.6 & Appendix H: Table H1).

5.22 No social housing need has currently been identified for Travellers in Ballymena, Carrickfergus or Larne Districts (*NIHE Housing Needs Assessment, Nov 2013*). The third Comprehensive Traveller Needs Assessment is due for completion in 2014 following which a new five year Traveller Accommodation Programme will be developed.

5.23 NIHE assists vulnerable people through its ‘Supporting People’ programme offering long term support (sheltered accommodation & homes for life) and short term support (temporary accommodation).

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Fig. 5.6: Levels of Homelessness in Ballymena, Carrickfergus & Larne Districts- 2009-2014

Source: *Ballymena, Carrickfergus & Larne District Housing Plans 2014-2015*

VACANCY & UNFITNESS LEVELS

5.24 In order to translate the increase in households into a need for new housing units, account needs to be taken of vacancy levels and unfitness rates. The housing stock of an area includes occupied, vacant and unfit dwellings, which all influence the need for additional housing stock.

5.25 Apart from new-builds not yet occupied, properties may be empty for a number of reasons. With the collapse of the housing market in current times, some may be pending re-sale or re-letting. Some may be unfit for habitation or are pending repair or improvement whilst others may be second homes not permanently occupied. These properties are currently out of use and therefore reduce the supply of available housing. In order to address this, DSD in partnership with NIHE launched in September 2013 a new five year Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan aimed at bringing empty homes back into use. It is estimated that there are around 32,000 empty homes across Northern Ireland.

5.26 The House Condition Survey (HCS) 2011 distinguishes between urban and rural areas and whilst the overall regional vacancy rate is 7.2% of total housing stock, the rate in rural areas (defined as small rural settlement and isolated rural) is 12.4% compared to 5.1% for district towns. Within Mid & East Antrim District, the 2011 survey found 4,740 dwellings were vacant (Appendix E: Table E3) and this equated to 7.6%.

Table 5.16: Land & Property Service Housing Stock Vacancy rates – 2011 & 2012

	2011	2012
	Vacant Stock	Vacant Stock
N. Ireland	46,758 (6.2%)	36,927 (4.9%)
Mid & East Antrim	2,704 (4.7%)	2,020 (3.5%)
Ballymena	1,196 (4.6%)	857 (3.3%)
Carrickfergus	653 (3.9%)	536 (3.2%)
Larne	855 (6.0%)	627 (4.4%)

Source: NISRA Housing Stock (administrative geographies)

5.27 Land & Property Service (LPS) valuation figures for housing stock showed a decrease in vacant stock between 2011 & 2012 in NI and across the districts. LPS figures for 2011 showed

a lower level of vacant stock in Mid & East Antrim District (4.7%) than the House Condition Survey 2011 (Table 5.16 & Appendix I: Table I1).

5.28 Census 2011 reported 1,056 empty dwellings in Ballymena Borough, 642 in Carrickfergus Borough and 1,053 in Larne Borough (*NIHE District Housing Plans 2014/15*). Whilst this data does not distinguish vacant dwellings from second/holiday homes, it is not considered that there are significant numbers of the latter in any of the three districts.

5.29 In 2009, the regional average of unfitness was 2.4% and in the new council area of Mid & East Antrim District it was 4%. This was the 3rd highest of all the new councils. The unfitness level in NI increased to 4.6% in 2011, and in the same year, unfitness levels increased across Mid & East Antrim. Larne Council was amongst the councils in NI with the highest levels of unfitness, registered at 7.1%. Ballymena Council had a rate of 6% whilst the figure was 5% in Carrickfergus District (Appendix I: Table I2). These increases are reflective of the current economic climate, the higher rate of vacancy, particularly in the private sector and the reduced availability of home improvement grants (NIHE). In general there are more unfit dwellings in rural areas than urban areas and particularly in more isolated areas.

CONCLUSIONS

5.30 In relation to tenure, type, affordability, occupancy and unfitness, it can be concluded that:-

- there is a need to provide smaller house types e.g. two-bedroom houses;
- the private rented sector does not require planning intervention other than the control of Houses in Multiple Occupation;
- social housing can be addressed by zoning land in a local development plan and/or through the development management process provided there is a strategic policy in the local development plan to facilitate this; and
- addressing unfitness may be supported through the provision of policies on the renovation & improvement of dwellings.

SECTION 6

THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL HOUSING STOCK

6.0 THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL HOUSING STOCK

6.1 In the RDS, the Housing Growth Indicators for 2008-2025 have been set at **6,400** dwellings for Ballymena District and **3,900** in Larne District. As stated previously the share for Carrickfergus District has not yet been disentangled from the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area total but a working estimate of 3,700 is being used until this figure is known. When projected further to 2030, the figures are **8,282** for Ballymena District, **5,047** for Larne District & **4,788** for Carrickfergus (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: HGIs in Mid & East Antrim District

	HGI 2008-2025	HGI 2008-2030
Ballymena	6,400	8,282
Larne	3,900	5,047
Carrickfergus	3,700*	4,788*
Mid & East Antrim	14,000*	18,117*

*Figures are currently estimates as the Carrickfergus share from the overall BMUA HGI total is not yet known

6.2 To examine whether this is acting as a constraint on growth, an examination has been undertaken using two methodologies based on past growth rates and household projections as follows:-

- (i) For the 10-year period between the 2001 & 2011 Censuses, the number of households in Mid & East Antrim District grew from 49,092 to 54,314 (increase of 5,222), representing a 10.6% growth rate (Appendix J: Table J1). If applied to the period 2008-2030 (RDS date-Plan End=22.75 years), the number of additional households created could be **11,880** which is 6,237 less than the estimated and projected HGI figure.

- (ii) Alternatively, taking NISRA's 2008-based household projections for 2008-2030 which take account of population growth, a reduced size of households and the changing age structure of the population, the number of households in Mid & East Antrim District could increase by an additional **12,567** households between 2008 & 2030 (Table 6.2 & Appendix J Table J2). This figure is also much lower than the projected HGI figure.

6.3 Both methods imply a growth much lower than the HGI suggesting that Mid & East Antrim District is not being constrained by the RDS housing growth indicator. The NISRA projections also predicted that the total number of households in Mid & East Antrim District in 2011 would be **56,000**, which is slightly higher than the actual census figure of **54,314**. The 2012-based population projections have just been released and these indicate lower levels of growth taking into account the 2011 Census results. The 2012-based population projections for the period 2008-2030 indicate that the population of Mid & East Antrim is expected to grow by around 5.3% to approximately 141,334 by 2030 (Table 6.3 & Appendix J: Table J3). The 2008-based population projections used in the Population Paper had predicted growth of 8.8%. NISRA anticipate that the NI 2012-based household projections will be released by January 2015 & those for the new councils by March 2015. Therefore, given the reduced population growth forecast it is anticipated that these are likely to indicate lower levels of households than previously projected.

Table 6.2: Household Projections 2008-2030

	2008	2010	2015	2020	2025*	2030*	2015-2030
Northern Ireland	688,700	706,400	749,200	786,800	826,500	861,600	112,400
Mid & East Antrim	54,100	55,400	58,200	60,700	63,518	66,667	8,467
Ballymena	24,500	25,100	26,500	27,800	29,210	30,791	4,291
Carrickfergus	16,500	16,900	17,800	18,600	19,506	20,561	2,761
Larne	13,100	13,400	13,900	14,300	14,802	15,320	1,420

Source: NISRA Household Projections (2008 based) *The projections for 2025 and 2030 were calculated using the percentage increase of 2022-2023 (Mid & East Antrim=0.97%, Ballymena=1.06%, Carrickfergus=1.06%, Larne=0.69%)

Table 6.3: Population Projections 2008-2030

	2008	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030*	2015-2030
Northern Ireland	1,779,152	1,804,833	1,851,573	1,900,393	1,942,704	1,974,611	123,038
Mid & East Antrim	134,169	135,157	137,029	138,876	140,186	141,334	4,305
Ballymena	62,900	63,723	65,611	67,336	68,821	70,234	4,623
Carrickfergus	39,345	39,282	38,967	38,699	38,254	37,768	-1,199
Larne	31,924	32,152	32,451	32,841	33,111	33,332	881

Source: NISRA Northern Ireland Population Projections Data (2012 based) & Sub-Northern Ireland Population Projections (2012 based) Local Government District Population Totals. *The projections for LGDs for 2030 were calculated using the percentage increase of 2026-2027 (Mid & East Antrim=0.20%, Ballymena=0.43%, Carrickfergus=-0.21%, Larne=0.17%)

An aerial photograph of a settlement, showing a mix of built-up areas, roads, and green spaces. A large, dark purple rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text. The text is organized into a hierarchy: a main title, followed by a list of topics. The background image shows a settlement with various building footprints, roads, and some green areas, typical of a planning or urban design context.

SECTION 7

ACCOMMODATING HOUSING GROWTH

OPTIONS FOR ALLOCATING GROWTH

HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY IN THE
SETTLEMENTS

RURAL HOUSING



7.0 ACCOMMODATING HOUSING GROWTH

OPTIONS FOR ALLOCATING HOUSING GROWTH

7.1 As stated in the RDS, the allocation of housing growth to specific locations in a district is a matter for decision through the development plan process. In the allocation process, account must be taken of the roles & functions of each settlement; the hubs should be given the primary focus for growth; small towns & villages should be consolidated and revitalised in their role as local service centres; and the need to sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements & the countryside should be recognised.

7.2 Thus, how housing should be allocated across the settlement hierarchy should be based on an agreed settlement growth strategy which will be explored further in the workshops and should aim to: -

- focus major population & economic growth on the main towns of Ballymena, Larne & Carrickfergus and consequently these settlements will be the main focus for new housing development;
- provide balanced growth in the local/small towns in order to sustain, consolidate & revitalise them;
- maintain villages as important local service centres to meet the daily needs of the rural area;
- provide opportunities for individual dwellings or small groups of houses in the open countryside, small settlements or dispersed rural communities in order to sustain rural communities.

7.3 Although it is not possible at present 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 household levels and the existing or agreed settlement growth strategy. This will be further explored at a workshop with members. To aid discussion three options are identified for both Ballymena & Larne Districts using the HGIs as projected to 2030 (i.e. 8,282 for Ballymena District & 5,047 for Larne District) (Tables 7.1 & 7.2). A similar exercise can be carried out when the actual HGI for Carrickfergus District is available. These options are:

- **Option 1:** this maintains the 'status quo' in each district being based on the proportion of households living in the main town, villages, small settlements and countryside at the time of the 2001 Census.
- **Option 2:** this maintains the 'status quo' in each district being based on the proportion of population living in the main town, villages, small settlements and countryside at the time of the 2001 Census.
- **Option 3:** this represents a focus on the main hubs reflecting the RDS direction to focus major population growth on the main hubs of Ballymena & Larne.

7.4 In all three options, the proportions for the villages & small settlements remain similar, reflecting the need to sustain, consolidate & revitalise these settlements.

Table 7.1: Accommodating Housing Growth in Ballymena District

	Option 1 – Reinforcing existing settlement household proportions		Option 2 – Reinforcing existing settlement population proportions		Option 3 – Apportion majority of growth to existing larger settlements as per RDS direction	
Settlement Category	Proportion of households %	HGI allocation of units	Proportion of population %	HGI allocation of units	%	HGI allocation of units
Ballymena Town	51.3%	4,251	49.0%	4,058	60%	4,969
Villages total	20.3%	1,685	19.3%	1,597	20%	1,656
Small settlements total	0.9%	77	1%	80	1%	83
Settlement total	72.6%	6,012	69.3%	5,735	81%	6,708
Open Countryside total	27.4%	2,270	30.7%	2,547	19%	1,574
Ballymena District Total	100%	8,282	100%	8,282	100%	8,282

Notes: (1) HGI Allocation is 8,282 for period 2008-2030.

(2) Settlement classification as per the current area plan Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001.

(3) Population & household figures are from 2001 Census - calculated by NISRA to coincide with the development limits defined in the current area plan.

Table 7.2: Accommodating Housing Growth in Larne District

	Option 1 – Reinforcing existing settlement household proportions		Option 2 – Reinforcing existing settlement population proportions		Option 3 – Apportion majority of growth to existing larger settlements as per RDS direction	
Settlement Category	Proportion of households %	HGI allocation of units	Proportion of population %	HGI allocation of units	%	HGI allocation of units
Larne Town	62.4%	3,149	59.1%	2,984	67%	3,381
Villages total	16.1%	811	16.7%	842	17%	858
Small settlements total	3.3%	164	3%	151	3%	151
Settlements total	81.7%	4,125	78.8%	3,978	87%	4,391
Open Countryside total	18.3%	922	21.2%	1,096	13%	656
Larne District Total	100%	5,047	100%	5,047	100%	5,047

Notes: (1) HGI Allocation is 5,047 for period 2008-2030.

(2) Settlement classification as per the current area plan- Larne Area Plan 2010.

(3) Population & household figures are from 2001 Census - calculated by NISRA to coincide with the development limits defined in the current area plan.

7.5 If **Option 1** were pursued, it would go some way to achieve the objective of the RDS to focus growth on the main hubs.

7.6 **Option 2**, would focus growth on the main hubs but to a lesser degree than Option 1, particularly in Ballymena town. Option 2, which relates to the existing percentage of population within the settlements would result in a higher level of growth in the countryside than Option 1.

7.7 If members are minded to reflect the RDS direction to focus major population growth in the main hubs, **Option 3** significantly increases the percentage of dwelling units to Ballymena & Larne towns and reflects the impact on the remaining settlement categories and the open

countryside. The share to the small settlements & the countryside may of course alter depending on whether any adjustments are made to existing settlement hierarchies.

7.8 Once a figure has been allocated for housing in the countryside, an element can be 'planned for' through the designation of small settlements or dispersed rural communities and, for the remaining land outside of these, it can be managed through rural planning policy. Apportioning more or less of the HGI to the main towns will impact on the proportion that is allocated to the countryside and Members need to decide what is an appropriate level of housing allocation for the rural area and a rural policy to manage it. This will be discussed later in the paper.

HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY IN THE SETTLEMENTS

7.9 Having looked at the options for allocating housing across the existing settlement hierarchy, it is necessary to examine how much land is available in the settlements. In terms of delivering new housing, planning is required to take into account the number of houses built within the RDS period rather than an examination of zoned housing land uptake since a Plan's adoption (as highlighted in Section 4.0). Prior to 1st April 2008 when the new HGIs took effect, it is estimated that between 1st January 1999 & 31st March 2008, 2,678 dwellings were erected in the settlements of Ballymena. In Larne District, some 2,038 dwellings were built

in the settlements. In Carrickfergus District 2,296 dwellings were built in the settlements (Table 7.3). The period up to the end of March 2008 reflects the high building activity and annual build rates before the current economic recession.

7.10 From April 2008, coinciding with the start of the new HGI figures, building rates have steadily declined and this has been most noticeable within the main towns with an average annual build rate of only 44 dwellings in Ballymena, 45 in Larne and 34 in Carrickfergus (Table 7.4).

Table 7.3: Housing Completions in the RDS period 1998-2008

No. of units built in period 31st Dec 1998 to 31st March 2008	Ballymena District	Per Annum build rate	Larne District	Per Annum build rate	Carrickfergus District	Per Annum build rate	Mid & East Antrim	Per Annum build rate
Main Town	1,418	153	1,342	145	1,668	180	4,428	479
Local Towns	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	597	65	597	65
Villages	1,138	123	542	59	N/A	N/A	1,680	182
Small Settlements	121	13	154	17	4	0.4	279	30
Total Settlements	2,678	290	2,038	220	2,269	245	6,985	755

Source: Annual Housing Monitor.

Table 7.4: Housing Completions in the RDS period 2008-2013

No. of units built in period 31st March 2008 to 31st July 2013	Ballymena District	Per Annum build rate	Larne District	Per Annum build rate	Carrickfergus District	Per Annum build rate	Mid & East Antrim	Per Annum build rate
Main Town	236	44	241	45	182	34	659	124
Local Towns	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	74	14	74	14
Villages	208	39	61	11	N/A	N/A	269	50
Small Settlements	38	7	27	5	1	0.2	66	12
Total Settlements	481	90	329	62	257	48	1,067	200
Total Countryside	620	116	103	19	16	3	739	139
District Total	1,101	207	432	81	273	51	1,806	339

Source: Annual Housing Monitor. Figures for Countryside built estimate from 2008-2010 figures from Rural Housing Monitor and 2010-2013 figures for rural dwelling completions obtained from LPS.

7.11 Planning permissions & unimplemented zonings provide opportunities for **5,224** dwellings in Ballymena settlements. Of this figure 3,592 (69%) are in Ballymena town and the remainder distributed across the existing villages and two small settlements. In Larne District, excluding the open countryside, there is potential to accommodate **4,237** dwellings, of which 2,954 (70%) are in Larne town and the remainder in the villages including 320 in the existing small settlements in the rural area (Table: 7.5). In Carrickfergus settlements there is potential for **3,971** dwellings, of which 2,952 (74%) are in Carrickfergus town and the remainder in the local towns and small settlements. However, as noted earlier in Para 4.16 a number of hectares currently zoned for housing in Greenisland will no longer be within the Mid & East Antrim District, therefore this will reduce the potential remaining in the Local Towns of Carrickfergus. The potential remaining figures in Table 7.5 may be a conservative estimate as there may be other land in the settlements which may be suitable for housing development such as whiteland, infill or opportunity sites which currently do not have planning approval but could potentially yield additional dwelling units. This potential would be assessed as part of an Urban Capacity Study undertaken during plan preparation.

7.12 The existing housing land capacity could potentially provide a 23 year supply of housing land in Ballymena town (Remaining potential 2013:

3,592, divided by per annum build rate in Ballymena town 1998-2008: 153), a 20 year supply in Larne town and a 16 ½ year supply in Carrickfergus town based on the average build rates from 1998-2008. However, if the annual build rates keep at the 2008-2013 levels, the existing housing land capacity would suffice for well after the plan period. In Ballymena town, currently zoned land accounts for 66% of the total housing supply, in Larne this figure is 71% and in Carrickfergus town it rises to 85%.

7.13 Across the seven existing villages in Ballymena based on the average build rate from 1998-2008, there is almost a 13 year supply of housing land and in Larne within the six villages a 16 year supply. In the local towns of Carrickfergus there is a 15½ year supply but much of this capacity is within Greenisland.

7.14 The remaining potential across Ballymena & Larne districts would appear to fall short of the remainder of the projected HGI figures for each district. In Ballymena, the projected HGI to 2030 is 8,282, and to date 1,101 units have been completed across the district since 31 March 2008, which leaves a remaining projected HGI of 7,181. The remaining potential across the district excluding potential in the countryside is 5,224 dwellings. This leaves a shortfall of 1,957 dwellings. In Larne, the shortfall is 978 dwellings (Projected HGI is 5,647, to date 432 units built which leaves a remaining projected HGI of 5,215 versus a remaining potential of 4,237 excluding potential in the open countryside).

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Table 7.5: Housing Completions 2008-2013 & Remaining Potential-2013

	Ballymena District		Larne District		Carrickfergus District		Mid & East Antrim District
Settlement Category	Built in RDS (31-03-08 to 31-07-13)	Potential Remaining (2013)	Built in RDS (31-03-08 to 31-07-13)	Potential Remaining (2013)	Built in RDS (31-03-08 to 31-07-13)	Potential Remaining (2013)	Remaining Potential (2013)
Main Town	236	3,592	241	2,954	182	2,952	9,498
Local Towns	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	74	1,008	1,082
Villages	208	1,596	61	963	N/A	N/A	2,559
Small settlements	38	36	27	320	1	11	367
Settlements total	481	5,224	329	4,237	257	3,971	13,432
Countryside total	620*	Unknown	103*	Unknown	16*	Unknown	Unknown
District Total	1,101	5,224	432	4,237	273	3,971	13,432

Notes: (1) Settlement classification as per the current area plan Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001, Larne Area Plan 2010 & BMAP 2015

(2) Unimplemented Zonings are included in the potential remaining with an estimate of 25 dwellings per hectare in Ballymena & Larne. The density of housing zonings in Carrickfergus are per the Key Site Requirements in BMAP 2015. (3) *Figure for Countryside built estimate from 2008-2010 figures from Rural Housing Monitor and 2010-2013 figures for rural dwelling completions obtained from LPS.

Table 7.6: District Housing Land Supply across the settlement hierarchy- Ballymena

Settlement Category	Built in RDS (31-03-08 to 31-07-13)	Potential Remaining (2013)	Difference between HGI Option 1 and potential remaining +/-	Difference between HGI Option 2 and potential remaining +/-	Difference between HGI Option 3 and potential remaining +/-
Ballymena Town	236	3,592	-423	-230	-1,141
Villages	208	1,596	119	207	148
Small settlements	38	36	-3	-6	-9
Settlement total	481	5,224	-307	-30	-1,003

Table 7.7: District Housing Land Supply across the settlement hierarchy- Larne

Settlement Category	Built in RDS (31-03-08 to 31-07-13)	Potential Remaining (2013)	Difference between HGI Option 1 and potential remaining +/-	Difference between HGI Option 2 and potential remaining +/-	Difference between HGI Option 3 and potential remaining +/-
Larne Town	241	2,954	46	211	-186
Villages	61	963	213	182	166
Small Settlements	27	320	183	196	196
Settlement total	329	4,237	441	588	175

Key:  Oversupply  Undersupply

7.15 It is important to compare housing land supply across the settlement hierarchy in relation to each of the 3 options in Table 7.1 for Ballymena District & Table 7.2 in regard to Larne District. In the tables above (Tables 7.6 & 7.7), dwellings built to date during the RDS period have been taken into account and the difference between each option and the remaining potential provides an indication of whether there is an over or under supply of housing.

7.16 If **Option 1** is chosen, there would be a shortage of land across Ballymena town but an adequate supply in the villages. With this option, there would be no shortage of land across the settlements in Larne District, including Larne town.

7.17 A similar pattern emerges with **Option 2**, however the under supply of land across Ballymena town is decreased and the supply in settlements in Larne district is increased.

7.18 With **Option 3**, which reflects the RDS direction to focus major population growth on the main hubs, revitalising villages and sustain small settlements and the countryside, there would be a shortfall of land in both Ballymena

and Larne town but to a larger extent in Ballymena.

7.19 Given that the figures are indicative at this stage and an Urban Capacity Study has not yet been undertaken, it would be wrong to assume that there is no developable land remaining in the towns or other settlements. It may therefore be possible to accommodate new housing within the existing development limits through better utilisation of urban land and housing densities.

7.20 With regard to the villages in Ballymena and the villages and small settlements in Larne where there appears to be ample provision of land for residential development within existing development limits, there may be an unacceptable over-provision if this land were to be comprehensively developed for housing estates.

RURAL HOUSING**Table 7.8: Planning Approvals for Rural New & Replacement Single Dwellings (Full & RM) in Mid & East Antrim- 2004-2014**

Year	Ballymena			Larne			Carrickfergus			Mid & East Antrim		
	Total No. of Decisions	Total Approved	Approval Rate	Total No. of Decisions	Total Approved	Approval Rate	Total No. of Decisions	Total Approved	Approval Rate	Total No. of Decisions	Total Approved	Approval Rate
2004-05	254	250	98%	34	32	94%	10	10	100%	298	292	98%
2005-06	221	213	96%	16	16	100%	8	7	88%	245	236	96%
2006-07	353	332	94%	31	27	87%	8	7	88%	392	366	93%
2007-08	327	317	97%	29	29	100%	10	10	100%	366	356	97%
2008-09	252	251	100%	38	38	100%	8	8	100%	298	297	100%
2009-10	188	187	99%	45	45	100%	18	17	94%	251	249	99%
2010-11	108	106	98%	38	34	89%	15	13	87%	161	153	95%
2011-12	120	118	98%	34	31	91%	12	11	92%	166	160	96%
2012-13	76	75	99%	40	38	95%	10	9	90%	126	122	97%
2013-14	86	86	100%	35	34	97%	14	14	100%	135	134	99%
Total	1,985	1,935	97%	340	324	95%	113	106	94%	2,438	2,365	97%

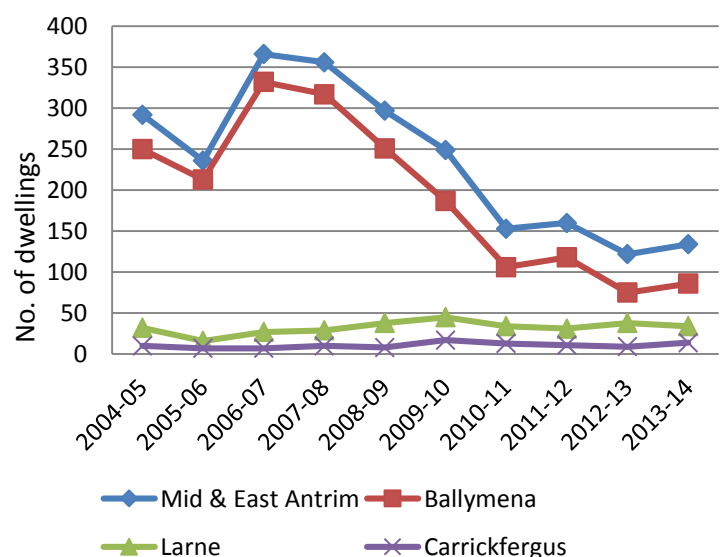
Source: DOE Planning Statistics

7.21 There is currently no rural housing monitor undertaken to assess the quantum of houses being built in the countryside and therefore an estimate can only be made based on the number of applications approved. Approvals for rural houses are currently influenced by the policies set out in PPS 21 (2010), the aim of which has been to manage growth in the countryside to achieve development in a sustainable manner that meets the essential needs of rural communities. Although it will be a matter for the new Council to bring forward its own strategy for development in the countryside after April 2015, as stated earlier this must reflect the aim, objectives and policy approach of the Strategy Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

7.22 Prior to 2006 and the introduction of PPS 14, it has been estimated that a high level of dwellings approved in rural areas were completed or at least started within 5 years. With the high volume of speculative proposals in anticipation of a revised rural policy, subsequent economic decline and changes in the housing market, it is likely that the number of starts and completions of rural houses has declined mirroring the situation within urban housing areas and therefore more permissions may remain unimplemented. Nevertheless, it should be noted that between April 2008 and

March 2014 (the current RDS period), **1,115** rural dwellings have been approved in Mid & East Antrim District (823 in Ballymena, 220 in Larne & 72 in Carrickfergus) (Table 7.8). During this period Mid & East Antrim District averaged approximately **186** rural dwellings approved per year. This dropped to an average of only 12 per year in Carrickfergus, 37 per year in Larne and was highest in Ballymena District at a rate of approximately 137 per year.

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Fig. 7.1: Planning Approvals for Rural Single Dwellings in Mid & East Antrim- 2004-2014

Source: DOE Planning Statistics

7.23 The challenge for the Plan is to facilitate an appropriate level of housing for the rural area and a planning policy to manage it. It is therefore useful to compare the impact of PPS 21 to the rural planning policy of *A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland* (1993) by examining build rates. Prior to 2006-07 (when PPS 21's predecessor PPS 14 was introduced), single dwellings (Full & RM) including replacements were approved at a rate of 231.5 per year in Ballymena, 25 per year in Larne and 9 per year in Carrickfergus. Assuming this policy still remained in operation, then some 3,473 houses could be approved in Ballymena district over the next 15 years with a further 375 in Larne and 135 in Carrickfergus. Cumulatively, this could mean that around 3,983 dwellings could be built in the countryside of Mid & East Antrim District. This would represent 22% of the HGI projected to 2030 for the new council area (i.e. 18,117 - 8,282 for Ballymena, 5,047 for Larne and estimate of 4,788 for Carrickfergus).

7.24 In contrast, the number of approvals has steadily declined since 2010 and in the last two years (2012-2014) - when it might be said that PPS 21 has 'bedded in' - the average number approved per year in Mid & East Antrim District has been 128. (80.5 per year in Ballymena, 26 per year in Larne & 11.5 per year in Carrickfergus). Assuming these rates remained constant over a 15-year plan period, there could be 1,920 additional dwellings in the countryside in Mid & East Antrim (1,208 in Ballymena, 540 in Larne & 173 in Carrickfergus).

7.25 Alternatively, as there are currently 1,152 farms in Ballymena, 522 farms in Larne & 98 farms in Carrickfergus (DARD 2013 Agricultural Farm Census, NISRA), it may be assumed that one additional house per farm could be built every 10 years under current PPS 21 policy. To date, since the introduction of PPS21 in June 2010, 344 farms have gained approval for a dwelling under policy CTY10: Dwellings on Farms. This equates to 19.4% of the 1,772

farms in Mid & East Antrim. As the plan period extends for 15 years there is potential for 3,200 dwellings to be approved under this policy. However, it is recognised that not all farms will want or need a dwelling. Under current rural policy, there are also opportunities for infill houses as well as meeting housing needs based on personal and domestic circumstances.

7.26 It is clear that PPS 21 has had a constraining influence on rural house building in Mid & East Antrim District particularly in Ballymena District in contrast to the rural policy applied under *A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland* (1993). The Larne & Carrickfergus Districts already had strict rural policies prior to the introduction of PPS 21 with all areas in the countryside located within Green Belt or Countryside Policy Areas and PPS21 may in fact have permitted a slight increase in rural dwellings. A return to a more liberal rural policy would not allow the Plan to meet the objective within the RDS to grow the hubs.

7.27 Taking into account permissions already granted since March 2008 coupled with what might be approved up to 2030 if PPS 21 continued in its present form, it would appear to be sufficient to meet future rural housing needs. However, we do not know how many of the Full and RM approvals post-2010 are reflective of the high number of outline permissions granted in previous years and how many of these will actually be built. It is also assumed that building rates are lower than previous years and are more likely to constitute 'starts' rather than completions.

7.28 Members therefore need to consider if the present policies in PPS 21 are appropriate in order to meet local circumstances, bearing in mind that any adjustments must be acceptable in terms of the Sustainability Appraisal that will inform and accompany the LDP and 'take account' of the strategic guidance contained within the RDS.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS & KEY FINDINGS

The purpose of this paper has been to provide baseline information on the housing needs of the new Council area to assist in informing the Community Plan and to consider how future housing growth should be apportioned across settlements & the countryside.

A summary of the key findings are as follows:

- (i) The HGI as identified in the RDS for Mid & East Antrim District for the period 2008-2030 is greater than NISRA's 2008-based household projections and is therefore considered sufficient for the plan period and will not act as a constraint on development.
- (ii) Population & household figures taken from the 2001 Census demonstrate that the objectives of the RDS, to focus growth on the main hubs, has traditionally been met in the Ballymena & Larne Areas.
- (iii) If further focus is put on directing growth to the hubs, in line with the RDS, there is likely to be a shortfall in available land (from existing zoned land & unimplemented approvals) in Ballymena & Larne towns and also in the small settlements of the Ballymena area.
- (iv) social housing need is currently greater in Ballymena & Carrickfergus than Larne;
- (v) to address future social housing needs, the local development plan should facilitate a reasonable mix and balance of housing tenures & types including smaller house types e.g. two-bedroom houses;
- (vi) addressing unfitness can be supported through the provision of policies on the renovation & improvement of dwellings;
- (vii) rural housing continues to make a contribution to overall housing supply albeit at a reduced rate since the introduction of PPS21. Apportioning more or less of the HGI to the rural area will impact on the proportion that is allocated to the settlements.

Members are invited to give their views on the proposed options for allocating housing across the settlement hierarchy including the implications for the countryside and the need for appropriate rural policies tailored to local needs.

