



The Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland

Review of Housing Figures

**Response by the Department for
Regional Development to the Report
of the Independent Panel following
the Public Examination**

June 2006

THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Review of the Housing Growth Indicators

The Department published a Consultation Document on the Review of the Regional Housing Figures in January 2005. An independent Panel conducted a Public Examination on key issues between 14–17 February 2006 and the Department received the Panel's report on 31 March 2006.

This paper contains the Department for Regional Development's response to the twenty-seven recommendations made by the Panel. The Department wishes to place on record its gratitude to the three Panel members for the transparent and efficient conduct of the Public Examination and for the timely receipt of its report.

Background

The review of regional housing figures commenced with the publication of an Issues Paper in May 2004. This was followed in January 2005 by the publication of a Consultation Document on draft revised figures, a NISRA Report on Household Projections for Northern Ireland 2002–2025, and a Draft Equality Impact Assessment. Thirty-six responses were received to this consultation and a Public Examination was conducted by the Independent Panel between 14–17 February 2006.

The Panel members were:

Elaine Kinghan BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI – Chairman
Brendan Murtagh BA (Hons) MSc PhD MRTPI MIPI ILTM
Chris Shepley CBE BA DipTP MRTPI

The paragraphs below set out the response of the Department for Regional Development to the twenty-seven recommendations made by the Panel. References in brackets are to the paragraph numbers in the Panel's report.

In particular, the Department welcomes the Panel's endorsement that the Spatial Development Strategy is the primary driver of housing allocations across the Region (para 5.5).

Recommendations 1 – 6 (paras 3.13, 3.22, 3.33, 3.37, 3.37, 3.31)

The Department accepts these recommendations of the Panel.

Recommendation 7 (para 3.31)

The Department will revise PPS 12 – Housing in Settlements, to clarify and strengthen policies on affordable housing. This will be done once further work is carried out on affordable housing in Northern Ireland and consideration given to how it can be effected through the development plan process.

Recommendation 8 (para 3.41)

Accepted.

Recommendation 9 (para 3.39)

Planning Policy Statement 14 – Sustainable Development in the Countryside, was published in draft form for consultation on 16 March 2006. The objective of this PPS is to manage development of the countryside in a manner consistent with achieving the strategic objectives of the Regional Development Strategy. This includes policy on single dwellings in the countryside.

Recommendations 10, and 11 (paras 3.51, 4.9)

Accepted.

Recommendation 12 (para 4.14)

Accepted. The Housing Needs Assessments will continue to identify the particular circumstances of the relevant equality groups set out in Paragraph 40 of PPS 12 and Equality Impact Assessments will continue to be prepared for all development plans.

Recommendation 13 (para 5.5)

Accepted.

Recommendation 14 (para 5.8)

NISRA is responsible for population estimates for Northern Ireland. The population estimates use a usually-resident population base, and thus include estimates of the effect of migration on the population. However, international convention is that residence for one-year is required before an entrant is considered a resident. Under international guidelines, migrant workers who stay in a country for a short period are not included in population estimates.

NISRA will publish the 2005 Mid-Year Population Estimates in late July 2006. These estimates will represent the first full year of migration since the entry into the EU of the ten new Accession countries. Along with the population estimates, NISRA will publish a supporting paper that describes a number of data sources linked to migration.

Alongside work being done by NISRA, a Thematic Sub-Group on Migrant Workers has been established under the auspices of the Race Forum under the chairmanship of DEL.

Recommendations 15 – 19 (paras 5.12, 5.14, 5.17, 5.17, 5.19)

Accepted.

Recommendation 20 (para 5.25)

DOE Planning Service currently has a programme for the preparation of Area Development Plans on the basis of existing Council arrangements. The Panel's recommendation is appropriate given the emerging Council structure following the Review of Public Administration, which will allow better alignment between Housing Growth Indicators and economic development. However, at present, the HGIs, which are set on the basis of existing Council boundaries are necessary to achieve completion of the present Area Development Plan programme being prepared by the DOE. It is noted that the Panel accepts this as the only practical approach at present. The Department will, however, give consideration to the sub-regional approach in conjunction with DOE Planning Service.

Recommendation 21 (para 5.25)

Accepted.

Recommendations 22 and 23 (paras 5.28, 5.28)

Accepted.

Recommendation 24 (para 5.34)

A Sustainability Appraisal was done as part of the process of developing the RDS including the regional housing figures. While no formal Sustainability Assessment has been carried out with this review, the uplifted figures broadly maintain the balanced development in Northern Ireland in line with the original RDS. A Sustainability Appraisal will be done as part of the planned biennial assessment of housing need figures which is due later this year and any adjustment required will be made available for comment.

Recommendation 25 (para 5.36)

Accepted. The revised figures are set out in Table 1.

Recommendations 26 and 27 (paras 6.5, 6.11)

Accepted.

The Department will seek comments on the mechanisms for the release of housing land as part of the review of the RDS and make adjustments to strategic guidance as required.

Table 1

ADJUSTED HOUSING GROWTH INDICATORS

| Area | RDS Original Housing Growth Indicator | Adjusted Housing Growth Indicator to 2015 | Uplift from RDS Original Housing Growth Indicators |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| BMA and Hinterland | 51,000 | 66,500¹ | +15,500 |
| BMA | 42,000 | 54,800 | +12,800 |
| BMA Rural Hinterland | 9,000 | 11,700 | + 2,700 |
| BMA Districts Hinterland | | | |
| Antrim | 7,500 | 8,000 | +500 |
| Ards | 7,750 | 10,500 | +2,750 |
| Down | 7,750 | 10,500 | +2,750 |
| Larne | 3,500 | 4,300 | +800 |
| Total | 77,500 | 99,800 | +22,300 |
| North, South and West | | | |
| Armagh | 4,800 | 6,000 | +1,200 |
| Ballymena | 5,900 | 7,000 | +1,100 |
| Ballymoney | 2,400 | 3,800 | +1,400 |
| Banbridge | 4,000 | 6,000 | +2,000 |
| Coleraine | 5,800 | 7,600 | +1,800 |
| Cookstown | 3,300 | 4,100 | +800 |
| Craigavon | 8,500 | 11,250 | +2,750 |
| Derry | 12,700 | 15,000 | +2,300 |
| Dungannon | 4,400 | 5,500 | +1,100 |
| Fermanagh | 5,400 | 7,400 | +2,000 |
| Limavady | 3,100 | 4,300 | +1,200 |
| Magherafelt | 3,600 | 5,000 | +1,400 |
| Moyle | 1,400 | 2,000 | +600 |
| Newry & Mourne | 8,500 | 12,250 | +3,750 |
| Omagh | 5,200 | 6,700 | +1,500 |
| Strabane | 3,500 | 4,300 | +800 |
| Total | 82,500 | 108.200 | +25,700 |
| Regional Total | 160,000 | 208,000 | +48,000 |

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¹ The Department has allocated the housing growth indicator between the BMA and the BMA rural hinterland on a pro rata basis (rounded to the nearest 100).