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Draft Equality Impact Assessment

Review of the Regional Housing Growth Indicators

**Regional Development Strategy
for Northern Ireland 2025**



Department for
**Regional
Development**
www.drdni.gov.uk

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HOW TO GIVE YOUR VIEWS

We would welcome your views on this draft Equality Impact Assessment on the Regional Development Strategy Housing Growth Figures and methodology.

Please note that responses to this Consultation Paper should be received by the Department no later than 4.00 pm on Friday 25 March 2005.

Please send your comments to:

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A summary of the responses will be placed on the website at www.consultationni.gov.uk after the consultation period has ended. Please refer to Annex 1, page 31, for further information regarding confidentiality of consultations.

Should you require this document in an accessible format such as Braille, audio tape, minority ethnic language, etc please contact the above address.

The Consultation Document is also available in Adobe Acrobat format for downloading from the website at www.consultationni.gov.uk and <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/shapingourfuture>. The Adobe Acrobat Reader 5 can be freely downloaded from www.adobe.com. Viewers with visual difficulties may find it useful to investigate

services provided to improve the accessibility of Acrobat documents – <http://access.adobe.com>.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

1. The Department's Equality Scheme commits it to carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) in conjunction with the first review (Focused Assessment) of the Strategy. This draft EQIA of the RDS Regional Housing Growth Indicators (before and after recalculation) is the first step in that process.
2. The RDS sets out the strategic planning framework that will shape the Region's future over the next 25 years. Initial work has commenced on the Focused Assessment and the outcome of the Review of the Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs) will feed into that process.
3. The RDS provided for an estimated regional need of 160,000 additional dwellings by 2015. HGIs were established for the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) and each of the remaining district council areas. (This distribution is shown in Table 1 page 11)
4. To help maintain a balance of growth between the BMA and its hinterland, and the rest of Northern Ireland these figures represent a shared allocation of 82,500 to the North, South and West of the Region and 77,500 to the Belfast Metropolitan Area and Hinterland.
5. During 2004 the Department invited views on how the HGIs might be updated. A number of problems were expressed by consultees:
 - It was suggested that HGIs have been used in a bureaucratic fashion and not in the spirit of the RDS.
 - They have not reflected actual building rates in a number of local government districts.
 - There needs to be a mixed approach to new allocations reflecting bottom-up and top-down approaches

- A number of respondents are of the opinion that the existing allocations have an adverse impact on some areas where Catholics and Nationalists are in a majority and on rural areas.
- The approach to housing allocation should be evidence-based, involve more sophisticated need analysis, and reflect strategic variables.

Adjusted HGIs

6. The Department has now reviewed the HGIs in the light of new demographic information available from the 2001 Census. This work was informed by consultation and updated statistical information provided by Northern Ireland Statistic and Research Agency (NISRA). The need for additional dwellings is now estimated to have increased by 40,000 from the original RDS figure of 160,000. A new total of 200,000 dwellings is proposed for the period 1998-2015.
7. The Department has also reviewed the distribution of these additional dwellings across local government districts and has consequently adjusted the District HGIs (see Appendix 5 to the consultation paper “Review of the Regional Housing Growth Indicators”).

Equality Considerations

8. The approach to this EQIA has been to look at population characteristics and to assume that the people wanting to live in the new build houses have the same Section 75 characteristics as the area as a whole. Data used was obtained from the 2001 Census.
9. The assessment of the potential impacts of the housing allocations has concluded that there are differential impacts on Section 75 categories. This means that the areas which have a lower RDS housing allocation (under-provision) than would have been expected given the NISRA household composition projections are characterised by more Roman Catholic/Nationalist populations and by those living in

households with married parents and dependent children. These may also have a negative impact on good relations.

10. In assessing the reallocation of the draft adjusted HGIs, the Department considered a number of data sources. These included the NISRA-based housing need projections, the actual build-rate over the past few years and the housing potential in emerging Area Plans.
11. These distributions are broadly similar to those of the original 160,000 houses (ie no council area changes its status from 'under provision' to 'over provision').

Mitigation

12. There are a number of ways of mitigating the negative equality impacts. These have to be balanced against the objectives of the RDS. The following proposal strikes a good balance between RDS addressing equality and maintaining the thrust of the RDS.
13. It is possible to move those Districts that are closest to the under-provision – over-provision threshold over the line (Table 5 page 23). This results in large gains in equality terms by transferring a small number of houses to Magherafelt, Cookstown and Omagh Districts. The 500 houses required could be redistributed from Derry City District (200 houses) and the BMA Districts (300 houses), which have the highest over-provision.

Consultation, Publication and Monitoring Arrangements

14. This draft EQIA is subject to formal consultation over a 8 - week period from its publication, as is the main consultation document on the Review of the RDS Regional HGIs.
15. The final figures proposed as a result of the Review of the Regional HGIs will be prepared following consideration of the comments received during this consultation exercise, and will be presented to the Minister for Regional

Development for approval in 2005. The decision will be reflected in a final EQIA.

16. Copies of the final EQIA will be sent to all those who participated in the consultation exercise. The Executive Summary will go to all other consultees. The general public will be informed of the availability of the final EQIA through a press release. The results will also be published on the DRD website: www.drdni.gov.uk/shapingourfuture
17. The household projections are trend-based and only demonstrate what will happen to household numbers in the future if past household formation trends continue and the latest population projections hold true.
18. The draft adjusted HGIs are therefore an informed estimate of housing need at the district level. Annual monitoring will continue as a check of progress against the revised Indicators. If as a result of this work further adjustments are required, these will be the subject of a further Equality Impact Assessment.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act of 1998 requires the Department for Regional Development (DRD) to carry out its functions having due regard for the need to promote equality of opportunity:
- between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinions, race, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
 - between men and women generally;
 - between persons with a disability and persons without;
and
 - between persons with dependants and those without.
- 1.2 In addition, without prejudice to the above obligations, the Department must also, in carrying out its functions, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or race.
- 1.3 Para 3.8 of the Department's Equality Scheme commits it to carrying out an EQIA on the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) in conjunction with the first review (Focused Assessment) of the Strategy. This draft EQIA of the Regional Development Strategy Housing Growth Indicators is the first step in that process.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The RDS which was endorsed by the Northern Ireland Assembly on 20 September 2001 represented the culmination of work that commenced in 1997.
- 2.2 The RDS sets out the strategic planning framework, which will shape the Region's future over the next 25 years. The RDS is available on the Internet at www.consultationni.gov.uk and www.drdni.gov.uk/shapingourfuture/.
- 2.3 The RDS states there will be a Focused Assessment after 5 years (2005/06), to identify any aspects where 'in-course' adjustments might be appropriate. The RDS was also scheduled for an EQIA in 2005 as part of that Focused Assessment. Initial work has commenced on the Focused Assessment and the adjusted HGIs will feed into that process.

3. HOUSING GROWTH INDICATORS

- 3.1 The Department prepares HGIs as a forecast of expected housing need and to have a comparator against actual growth for monitoring purposes. The HGIs do not represent actual targets nor do they represent a programme for delivery or construction of new dwellings. This will be achieved through the existing market arrangements and the provision of social housing where need has been identified. In addition the HGIs provide guidance to the Department of the Environment (Planning Service), in preparing new development plans, and to infrastructure providers wishing to plan for future development needs.
- 3.2 The Strategy recognised the need to guard against pressure building up as a result of housing land shortages by providing for an estimated regional need of 160,000 dwellings by 2015. It acknowledged a consistent and recent higher house building rate. It also provides a contingency for a small over-zoning allowance for exceptional use, and introduced a Plan, Monitor and Manage approach to provide for more sustainable patterns of development and to assist regeneration.
- 3.3 When considering the distribution of the regional housing need figure over the local government districts consideration was given not only to current and historic factors, such as demographically driven need, but also to policy factors set out in the RDS. An explanation of the method can be found in the “Family of Settlements Report” DOE 1998
- 3.4 Within SPG HOU-3 of the RDS, a HGI was set of 160,000 additional dwellings to be built by the year 2015 allocated across district council areas as follows:

Table 1

THE SPATIAL FRAMEWORK FOR HOUSING: DISTRICT GROWTH INDICATORS 2015	
Antrim	7,500
Ards	7,750
Armagh	4,800
Ballymena	5,900
Ballymoney	2,400
Banbridge	4,000
Belfast Metropolitan Area Districts <i>Belfast</i> <i>Carrickfergus</i> <i>Castlereagh</i> <i>Lisburn</i> <i>Newtownabbey</i> <i>North Down</i> TOTAL	51,000
Coleraine	5,800
Cookstown	3,300
Craigavon	8,500
Derry	12,700
Down	7,750
Dungannon	4,400
Fermanagh	5,400
Larne	3,500
Limavady	3,100
Magherafelt	3,600
Moyle	1,400
Newry & Mourne	8,500
Omagh	5,200
Strabane	3,500
OVERALL TOTAL	160,000

- 3.5 To help maintain a balance of growth between the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) and its hinterland, and the rest of Northern Ireland these figures represent a shared allocation of 82,500 to the North, South and West of the Region and 77,500 to the BMA and Hinterland.

The Review of the Regional Housing Growth Indicators

3.6 The Department decided to review the Regional HGIs following commitments previously given to reconsider allocations in the light of new demographic information available from the 2001 Census.

3.7 This Review was informed by –

- a consultation exercise from May to August 2004 on the figures contained within the RDS under SPG–HOU 3 (Housing Growth Indicator 4). This period of consultation was extended at the request of a small number of consultees to the middle of September due to the interruption to work in the summer holiday period;
- meetings held with a number of councils and community groups;
- meetings with a number of elected representatives;
- an External Working Group (representing key stakeholders from the public and private sectors) was formed to assist the Department in scoping the key issues of the RDS for the Focused Assessment, which included housing;
- work carried out by the Northern Ireland Statistic and Research Agency to recalculate NI household projections to the year 2015.

Outcome of Consultation

3.8 A number of problems were expressed by consultees, which can be summarised as follows -

- Present HGIs are perceived as caps and inflexible. They have been used in a bureaucratic fashion and not in the spirit of the RDS. They have not reflected actual building rates in a number of local government districts.

- There needs to be a mixed approach to new allocations reflecting bottom-up and top-down approaches. There is a strong voice for more local engagement in planning to provide the right blend of house types and in the right numbers. The allocations should have a strategic basis. Under-performance against HGIs in West and over-performance in East was noted.
- A number of respondents are of the opinion that the existing allocations have an adverse impact on some areas where Catholics and Nationalists are in a majority and on rural areas.
- The approach to housing allocation should be evidence-based, involve more sophisticated need analysis and reflect strategic variables. They should be reviewed every five years. Buffer land at 20%-40% over-zoning as Phase 2 land, which is not to be released except as local contingency and in exceptional circumstances.
- More use should be made of existing settlement structures to allow full choice and reduce demand for single rural dwellings. Affordable housing is perceived as a problem in certain districts.

Recalculation of the Regional Housing Growth Indicators

- 3.9 The use of HGIs is important to achieve key policy objectives in the RDS related to compact urban forms. It is also important to regularly review HGIs to ensure that they will satisfy sustainable regional housing need.
- 3.10 The review work involved a reassessment of the existing RDS housing figures using 2002 based population and household projections developed by NISRA. The methodology is published on the NISRA website www.nisra.gov.uk.
- 3.11 On the basis of these NISRA household projections, it is now estimated that there will be an increase in the regional need

for dwellings. This is now estimated to increase by 40,000 additional dwellings from the original RDS figure of 160,000 to a new total of 200,000 dwellings required by 2015.

- 3.12 The Department has reviewed the distribution of these additional dwellings across local government districts and has consequently adjusted the HGIs. This takes into account net stock loss, vacancy and second homes at the regional level and for local government districts. Consideration was given to the responses to the initial consultation exercise and the meetings held. The approach used is set out in full in Appendix 5 to the Department's consultation paper on the 'Review of the Regional Housing Growth Indicators'.

4. CONSIDERATION OF AVAILABLE DATA AND RESEARCH

- 4.1 In equality analysis, the ideal situation is to have data on the Section 75 characteristics of the target population. In this case, it would be the profile of the actual people wishing to live in the new build houses to determine whether demand will be satisfied by the HGIs.
- 4.2 As this is unrealistic, the next best approach is to look at population characteristics and to assume that the people wanting to live in the new build houses have the same Section 75 characteristics as the area as a whole.
- 4.3 Population data used at District Council level are as follows:

Age – Mid-Year Estimates (MYEs), June 2001. In the 2001 Census year, MYEs are similar to the census population enumerated in April (only 4,052 or 0.24% difference, due mostly to the excess of births over deaths in the intervening 2 months). However, MYEs are preferred over Census counts for age and sex because they are produced every year to a consistent definition.

Gender – 2001 MYEs – as above.

Marital Status – 2001 Census.

Religion – 2001 Census, 'Community Background' variable. The 2001 Census asked respondents to state their religion, and also the religion in which they were brought up. There have historically been problems in analysing 'religion' per se, since the question is not mandatory, and a large minority (19% in 1991, 14% in 2001), opt not to state their religion or state that they have 'no' religion. The addition of the *community background* variable in 2001 resulted in higher coverage of the two traditions – only 3% are in the residual 'other' category for this variable.

Racial Group – 2001 Census – for the first time data are available on the numbers of ethnic minorities in the NI population.

Disability – those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance (May 2003).

Dependants – the number of households with dependent children is taken from the 2001 Census. Also, for the first time, the 2001 Census recorded the number of people caring for others, who may be elderly or disabled.

Political Opinion – first preference votes cast in the June 2001 District Council elections.

Sexual Orientation – no population data are available – it is not possible to include this group in quantitative analysis.

5. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

Methodology

- 5.1 The initial RDS allocations were assessed against the housing requirements (1998-2015) based on the NISRA population projections. Districts which have a lower proportion allocated under the RDS than the housing methodology projections are grouped together, as are those who gain more under the RDS than expected.

Table 2

RDS % < NISRA-based projections (“under provision”)	RDS % > NISRA-based projections (“over provision”)
Ards	Antrim
Armagh	Ballymena
Ballymoney	Derry
Banbridge	Down
Coleraine	Larne
Cookstown	Belfast Metropolitan Area:
Craigavon	Belfast
Dungannon	Carrickfergus
Fermanagh	Castlereagh
Limavady	Lisburn
Magherafelt	Newtownabbey
Moyle	North Down
Newry & Mourne	
Omagh	
Strabane	

- 5.2 The methodology incorporates a weighting factor, because the RDS allocations for some ‘under provision’ councils may be very close to their NISRA-based projections, while others may be very different. In other words, district council population characteristics are weighted by the magnitude of the difference between the RDS allocation and the NISRA-based projection. For example, one of the biggest proportionate “under provision” councils is Newry & Mourne. The characteristics of the Newry & Mourne population (a

younger age structure and more Roman Catholics) will therefore carry more weight in the analysis than the population characteristics of Ballymoney, say, which exhibits a smaller gap between the RDS and the NISRA-based calculations.

Regional Development Strategy Housing Growth Indicators (160,000 by 2015)

5.3 In terms of the original allocation the following table shows how the Section 75 characteristics of the population of the two types of area (“under provision” and “over provision”) differ from the Northern Ireland average.

Table 3

Section 75 Group	“Under Provision”	“Over Provision”	NI Average
Roman Catholics	51%	38%	44%
Protestants	47%	58%	53%
Nationalists	51%	35%	42%
Unionists	44%	52%	48%
Married	57%	54%	55%
Single	32%	34%	33%
Divorced/Widowed	11%	13%	12%
Male	50%	48%	49%
Female	50%	52%	51%
With dependent children	39%	35%	36%
Carers	10%	11%	11%
<16	25%	23%	24%
16-64	63%	63%	63%
65 +	13%	14%	13%
Ethnic Minorities	1%	1%	1%
Disabled People	13%	13%	13%

Assessment by Section 75 Group

5.4 The assessment is as follows:

Religious Belief

There is a substantial differential impact on Roman Catholics with 51% of the 'under provision' population in this category compared to 44% in Northern Ireland as a whole.

Political Opinion

There is a substantial differential impact on Nationalists with 51% of the 'under provision' population in this category compared to 42% in Northern Ireland as a whole.

People with Disabilities

There is no effect on disabled people.

Gender

There is a marginal differential impact on males.

Age

There is a marginal differential impact on those aged under 16.

Marital Status

There is a marginal differential impact on married people.

People with Dependants

There is a marginal differential impact on households with dependent children.

Race

The effect on ethnic minorities is difficult to determine because of the small numbers and views on this would be welcome.

Sexual Orientation

The effect on sexual orientation is difficult to determine because of lack of quantitative data, and views on this would be welcome.

Good Relations

Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires a public authority in carrying out its functions to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. The substantial differential impact on Roman Catholics identified may have a negative impact on good relations between persons of different religious belief.

Summary of Conclusions

- 5.5 The assessment of the potential impacts of the housing allocations has concluded that there are differential impacts on Section 75 categories. This means that the areas which have a lower RDS housing allocation than would have been expected given the NISRA household composition projections are characterised by more Roman Catholic/Nationalist populations and by those living in households with married parents and dependent children. These may also have a negative impact on good relations.

Draft Adjusted Housing Growth Indicator (200,000 by 2015)

- 5.6 In assessing how the new regional housing need figure should be allocated, (an uplift of 40,000 to 200,000 by 2015), the Department considered a number of data sources. These included the NISRA-based housing need projections, the actual build-rate over the past few years and the potential for housing as stated in Area Plans and the RDS. This is set out in more detail in Appendix '5' of the Draft Consultation Document.
- 5.7 Table 4 summarises the policy decision as to where the 200,000 houses should be located, having considered all the information available.

Table 4

Area	Original Allocation	Additional Allocation	Total Allocation	NISRA-based Housing Need
Antrim	7,500	500	8,000	5,200
Ards	7,750	1,700	9,450	10,800
Armagh	4,800	1,200	6,000	7,000
Ballymena	5,900	1,100	7,000	6,100
Ballymoney	2,400	1,400	3,800	4,200
Banbridge	4,000	2,000	6,000	7,500
BMA	51,000	11,500	62,500	59,200
Coleraine	5,800	1,500	7,300	7,800
Cookstown	3,300	800	4,100	4,300
Craigavon	8,500	2,500	11,000	13,400
Derry	12,700	2,300	15,000	11,800
Down	7,750	1,700	9,450	8,300
Dungannon	4,400	1,100	5,500	6,000
Fermanagh	5,400	1,600	7,000	8,000
Larne	3,500	800	4,300	2,700
Limavady	3,100	1,200	4,300	5,800
Magherafelt	3,600	1,400	5,000	5,100
Moyle	1,400	600	2,000	2,400
Newry & Mourne	8,500	3,000	11,500	12,700
Omagh	5,200	1,300	6,500	6,700
Strabane	3,500	800	4,300	5,000
Total	160,000	40,000	200,000	200,000

- 5.8 These distributions are broadly similar to those of the original 160,000 houses (ie no council area changes its status from 'under provision' to 'over provision'). The equality impacts therefore remain as shown in Table 3.

6. MITIGATION

- 6.1 There are a number of ways of mitigating the negative equality impacts. These have to be balanced against the objectives of the RDS. The following proposal we feel strikes a good balance between addressing equality and maintaining the thrust of the RDS.

Proposal

- 6.2 It is possible to move those Districts that are closest to the under-provision – over-provision threshold over the line (Table 5). This results in large gains in equality terms by transferring a small number of houses to Magherafelt, Cookstown and Omagh District Councils. The 500 houses required could be redistributed from Derry City Council (200 houses) and the Belfast Metropolitan Area Councils (300 houses) that have the highest over-provision.

Table 5

Craigavon	Worst off
Banbridge	Under Provision
Limavady	Under Provision
Ards	Under Provision
Newry/Mourne	Under Provision
Armagh	Under Provision
Fermanagh	Under Provision
Strabane	Under Provision
Coleraine	Under Provision
Dungannon	Under Provision
Ballymoney	Under Provision
Moyle	Under Provision
Omagh	Under Provision
Cookstown	Under Provision
Magherafelt	Under Provision
Ballymena	Over Provision
Down	Over Provision
Larne	Over Provision
Antrim	Over Provision
Derry	Over Provision
Belfast Met Area	Best Off

Equality Effects of the Proposal

6.5 The equality effects of the proposal, which involves moving 100 houses to Magherafelt, 200 to Cookstown and 200 to Omagh are shown in Table 6. Figures in bold are those that have changed as compared to Table 3. The Religious/Political Opinion effects have considerably reduced under this scenario.

Table 6

Section 75 Group	“Under provision”	“Over provision”	NI Average
Roman Catholics	48%	41%	44%
Protestants	50%	55%	53%
Nationalists	47%	39%	42%
Unionists	47%	49%	48%
Married	57%	54%	55%
Single	32%	34%	33%
Divorced/Widowed	11%	12%	12%
Male	49%	48%	49%
Female	51%	52%	51%
With dependent children	38%	35%	36%
Carers	10%	11%	11%
<16	24%	23%	24%
16-64	63%	63%	63%
65+	13%	14%	13%
Ethnic Minorities	1%	1%	1%
Disabled People	13%	13%	13%

Assessment by Section 75 Group

6.6 An assessment is as follows:

Religious Belief

There is still a negative impact on the religious belief category with 48% of the ‘under provision’ areas consisting of Roman Catholics compared to 44% in Northern Ireland as a whole. However, this is an improvement on the RDS allocations (Table 3) where 51% of the population in ‘under provision’ areas was Roman Catholic.

Political Opinion

Similarly, an impact on political opinion remains (with 47% Nationalist compared to 42% in NI as a whole) in ‘under provision’ areas. This is compared to 51% previously (Table 3).

People with Disabilities

There is no impact on people either with or without a disability.

Gender

There is no impact on the gender category.

Age

There is no impact on people of different ages.

Marital Status

There are more married people in the areas which are 'under provision' (57%) compared to NI as a whole (55%).

People with Dependants

There are more households with dependent children in 'under provision' areas (38%) compared to NI as a whole (36%). However, there are fewer 'carers' who are most likely caring for elderly and disabled people.

Race

The effect on ethnic minorities is difficult to determine because of the small numbers and views on this would be welcome.

Sexual Orientation

The effect on sexual orientation is difficult to determine because of lack of data, and views on this would be welcome.

Good Relations

The mitigation of the impact on religious belief will also mitigate any impacts on good relations.

6.7 The revised figures taking account of equality impacts are set out in Table 7.

Table 7 – Draft Adjusted Housing Growth Indicators

Area	Original Allocation	Draft Adjusted HGIs after Mitigation
Antrim	7,500	8,000
Ards	7,750	9,450
Armagh	4,800	6,000
Ballymena	5,900	7,000
Ballymoney	2,400	3,800
BMA	51,000	62,200
Banbridge	4,000	6,000
Coleraine	5,800	7,300
Cookstown	3,300	4,300
Craigavon	8,500	11,000
Derry	12,700	14,800
Down	7,750	9,450
Dungannon	4,400	5,500
Fermanagh	5,400	7,000
Larne	3,500	4,300
Limavady	3,100	4,300
Magherafelt	3,600	5,100
Moyle	1,400	2,000
Newry & Mourne	8,500	11,500
Omagh	5,200	6,700
Strabane	3,500	4,300
Total	160,000	200,000

Further Mitigation of Impacts

6.8 This EQIA has dealt with equality considerations at strategic level and has used information and available data accordingly. There is scope for further mitigation of religious belief/political opinion and the other minor differential impacts at local levels during development plan preparation, when local data will inform the EQIA process.

7. FORMAL CONSULTATION

- 7.1 This draft EQIA is subject to formal consultation for an 8 - week period from its publication. A copy of the Executive Summary will be sent to all the Consultees listed in the Department's Equality Scheme. A full copy of the draft document will be made available on request.
- 7.2 A fully copy of the draft EQIA will be sent to those normally consulted on housing matters. We would be happy to hold meetings with Consultees and requests should be made to Pauline McParland whose contact details are at the start of this document.

8. POLICY DECISION

- 8.1 After consideration of the comments which are received on this consultation exercise, final housing figures will be presented to the Minister for Regional Development for approval. In addition, account will be taken of these final figures in the first review (Focused Assessment) of the RDS which will be the subject of a full EQIA.

9. PUBLICATION OF RESULTS OF THE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 An EQIA on the Review of the Regional Housing Growth Indicators will be finalised on completion of the consultation exercise. Copies will be issued to all consultees who participated in the consultation process. An Executive Summary will be issued to all other consultees. Copies in alternative formats may be requested. The general public will be informed of the availability of the EQIA through a press release. The results will also be published on the internet at www.drdni.gov.uk/shapingoutfuture/.

10. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 10.1 It is unrealistic to assume that predictions about the growth and development of the Region will turn out to be completely correct. The household projections are trend-based and only demonstrate what will happen to household numbers in the future if past household formation trends continue and the latest population projections hold true.
- 10.2 A range of social and economic factors influence the formation of households, including policies prepared by central and local government. Actual build rates are influenced by a range of factors, including land supply, and it will therefore be important that progress is monitored annually to ensure an adequate supply of housing land to meet local need.
- 10.3 The revised HGIs are therefore an informed estimate of housing need at the district level. Annual monitoring will continue as a check of progress against the revised Indicators. This information will be made available on the Department's web-site. In addition, there will be biennial assessment of figures using the latest household projections as they become available. The results of the monitoring will also be analysed to determine whether or not the impacts on any of the equality groups has changed significantly. If as a result of this work further adjustments are required, these will be the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment.
- 10.4 The outcome of this annual monitoring and biennial assessment will be included in the Biennial Report on the Implementation of the Regional Development Strategy. The next Report is due in November 2006. Monitoring will also be covered in the Department's Annual Report to the Equality Commission.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – CONFIDENTIALITY OF CONSULTATIONS

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identify, should be made public or treated as confidential.

This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:
The Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided.

The Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties 'in confidence' which is not confidential in nature. Acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see website at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>).

**Strategic Environmental Appraisal Report:
A Sustainability Assessment of the Draft Regional Strategic
Framework for Northern Ireland**

CONCLUSIONS

- The Strategic Planning Guidelines (SPGs) almost uniformly have positive impacts on quality of life, reflecting the Strategy's overarching aim of providing a high quality of life for all the citizens of the Region;
- A high degree of cross referencing between SPGs has been achieved;
- There are a number of important policies where the impact of the sustainability objectives of the Regional Strategic Framework will depend on how and when they are implemented by the public and private sectors and indeed the whole community and how they are worked out in operational policies including through Planning Policy Guidance or Development Plans;
- Most of the SPGs impacts are positive. SPGs that are mostly positive over the entire range of sustainability criteria include those on community relations (3), changing the regional travel culture (14), Northern Ireland's world wide image (21), prudent resource use (28) and health (29-30);
- Inevitably, any development on Greenfield sites will have a negative impact on the environment, in particular on biodiversity, landscape and countryside, air pollution, land and materials, and a range of other environmental factors. This accounts for the negative impacts identified for the SPGs on European/trans regional links (1&2), transport (12 & 13), economic/rural development (15-19) and tourism (21-24). In all these cases it was felt that the economic and social benefits would outweigh adverse environmental impacts. The assessment highlighted the need for careful environmental appraisal at the implementation stage and the use of mitigating

measures;

- Overall, the Strategy seeks to provide an integrated approach in which negative environmental impacts arising from social and economic advancement are minimised as much as possible. Potential negative impacts will need detailed appraisal at the local level and particularly the implementation stage. This includes careful site selection, environmental impact assessment for individual projects, and specific mitigation measures. The use of 'shadow projects' – environmentally beneficial projects that neutralise the negative effects of another project – should be considered, where appropriate. Environmental enhancements should if possible, be the ultimate goal of any project;
- Most SPGs had no differential impacts on the PAFT groups highlighted.
- A number of SPGs had a differential impact in the form of better provision for TSN groups that are currently disadvantaged, notably people with restricted access to transportation/services;
- The sustainability assessment suggests that the Regional Strategic Framework overall provides a balanced approach to people living in the east v west of the Region, in rural and urban areas, and on disadvantaged areas. This should contribute to fostering a more cohesive society in the Region.
- The impact of transportation policies measured against sustainable criteria is very important. A heavy reliance on a mainly road based solution implies a concerted complementary effort to neutralise the inevitable adverse environmental impact and this should be reflected in transport investment priorities. The Regional Strategic Framework lays emphasis on:
 - Provision that minimises additional demand for travel by car, meeting needs on a resource efficient way, minimising air pollution and global warming potential;
 - Investment in existing Strategic Network, which should meet current and future needs in a resource efficient way;
 - A programme of transport integration measures designed to make the regional towns more attractive and better functioning places to live and work and, particularly in the

Belfast City Region, to help provide relatively self-contained counter magnets to the Belfast Metropolitan Area.

- Impacts on the futurity were generally positive offering a range of quality of life choices, such as making city and town living more attractive choices (4), building urban communities for the future (6), sustaining a living and working countryside (9), the Belfast Metropolitan Area (10), and develop an integrated Regional Strategic Transport Network (12), with upgraded public transport elements.
- Many of the impacts on participation were not possible to predict given the present uncertainties regarding the devolution of powers to the Assembly. The Assembly provides the opportunity to promote more democratic input at the regional level. In addition, there is already a highly developed network of community organisations and specific purpose partnerships. These have contributed effectively in recent years augmenting the contribution arising from other measures such as the enhanced powers given to District Councils to promote economic development.

CONSULTEES

Age Concern Northern Ireland
All MLAs (109)
All NI Members of Parliament
All NI Members of the European Parliament
Alliance Party of NI
Altnagelvin Hospitals HSS Trust
Amalgamated Engineering & Electrical Union (AEEU)
Antrim Borough Council
Antrim Borough Partnership
Ards Borough Council
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust
Armagh City & District Council
Armagh City and District Partnership
Assembly Library
Association of Chief Officers of Voluntary Organisation (ACOVO)
Accessible Transport Strategy Stakeholder Consultation Group
Bahai's Office for NI
Ballymena Borough Council
Ballymoney Borough Council
Ballymoney District Partnership
Banbridge District Council
Banbridge District Partnership
Barnardos NI
Barnardos, Tuar Ceatha Project
BDA (NI)
Belfast Butterfly Centre
Belfast City Airport
Belfast City Council
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust
Belfast Education and Library Board
Belfast European Partnership Board
Belfast Harbour
Belfast Hebrew Congregation
Blind Centre NI
British Association for Shooting & Conservation
British Deaf Association (NI)
BT
Carafriend
CARE for Northern Ireland

Carers Northern Ireland
Carlingford Lough Commission
Carrickfergus Borough Council
Carrickfergus Together
Castlereagh Borough Council
Castlereagh Partnership for Peace & Reconciliation
Causeway HSS Trust
Child Poverty Action Group
Childcare NI
Children's Law Centre
Chinese Welfare Association
Chrysalis Womens Centre
Church of Ireland House
Citizen's Advice Bureau
City of Derry Airport
City Partnership Board
Cllr Paul Butler
Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSo)
Coiste-na n-iarchimi
Coleraine Borough Council
Coleraine Borough Partnership
Coleraine Harbour
Committee on the Administration of Justice
Community Development and Health Network (NI)
Community Relations Council
Community Technical Aid
Community Transport Association
Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
Conservation Volunteers NI
Cookstown District Council
Cookstown District Partnership
Co-Ownership Housing Assoc.
Craigavon Borough Council
Craigavon District Partnership
Cruse Bereavement Care (NI)
Democratic Left
Democratic Unionist Party
Department for Social Development
Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Department of Culture Arts & Leisure
Department of Education for NI
Department of Employment & Learning
Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment

Department of Environment
Department of Finance & Personnel
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Derry City Council
Derry Well Woman
Disability Action
Disabled Drivers Association NI
District Partnership for Derry City Council Area
Down District Council
Down District Partnership
Down Lisburn HSS Trust
Down's Syndrome Association
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
Earthwatch
East Belfast Community Development Agency
Eastern Health and Social Services Board
Employers Forum on Disability
The Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission for NI
Equality Forum NI
Falls Community Council
Falls Women Centre
Fermanagh District Council
Fermanagh Women's Network
First Division Civil Servants Association
Foundry Regeneration Trust
Foyle Friend
Foyle HSS Trust
Foyle Women's Information Network
Foyle Women's Network
FPA NI (formerly Family Planning Association)
Friends of the Earth
Gay & Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland
General Consumer Council for NI
Gingerbread NI
Green Buildings Network, c/o Federation of Housing Associations
Green Park HSS Trust
Groundwork NI
Help The Aged, Northern Ireland
Homefirst Community HSS Trust
Indian Community Centre
Inland Waterways Northern Ireland
Institute of Directors
Belfast International Airport Ltd

International Tree Foundation
Irish & Local Studies Dept.
Irish Transport Trust
Labour Party
Larne Borough Council
Larne District Partnership
Larne Harbour
Lesbian Line
Limavady Borough Council
Limavady District Partnership
Lisburn City Council
Lisburn Peace & Reconciliation Partnership
Local Government Staff Commission for NI (LGSC)
Londonderry Harbour Office
Magherafelt Area Partnership Ltd
Magherafelt District Council
Magherafelt Women's Group
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust
MENCAP
Methodist Church in Ireland
Mid-Ulster Women's Network
Moyle District Council
Moyle District Partnership
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
National Energy Action
Newry & Mourne District Council
Newry & Mourne HSS Trust
Newry & Mourne Peace & Reconciliation Partnership
Newry & Mourne Senior Citizen's Consortium
Newry & Mourne Women
Newtownabbey Borough Council
Newtownabbey Local Strategic Partnership
Newtownabbey Senior Citizens' Forum
NI 2000
NI Anti-Poverty Network
NI Bird Watchers' Association
NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry
NI Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions
NI Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)
NI Cycling Initiative
NI Environment Link
NI Human Rights Commission
NI Islamic Centre

NI Unionist Party
NI Women's Aid Federation
NI Women's Coalition
NI Women's European Platform (NIWEP)
NIACRO
NIE
NIPSA
NITHC
NIVT
North and West Belfast HSS Trust
North Down and Ards Community HSS Trust
North Down Borough Council
North Down District Partnership
North Eastern Education and Library Board
North West Community Network
North West Forum of People with Disabilities (Derry)
North West Forum of People with Disabilities (Enniskillen)
Northern Health and Social Services Board
Northern Ireland African Cultural Centre
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSS Trust
Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health
Northern Ireland Chamber of Trade
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Equality
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
Northern Ireland Economic Council
Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Northern Ireland Office, Human Rights and Equality Unit
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)
Northern Ireland Water Council
NSPCC
NTL Cable Tel
NUS-USI Northern Ireland Student Centre
Office of the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
Omagh District Council
Omagh District Partnership
Omagh Women's Area Network
Parent's Advice Centre
Parents and Professionals and Autism
Phoenix Gas
POBAL
Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Press for Change
Progressive Unionist Party
Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist (PUL) Network
Putting Children First
Queer Space
Relate
Road Safety Council for Northern Ireland
Royal Group of Hospitals & Dental HSS Trust
Royal National Institute for the Blind (NI)
Royal National Institute for the Deaf (NI)
RSPB
Rural Community Network
Rural Development Council
Save the Children
SDLP
Sense NI
Sikh Cultural Centre
Sinn Fein
South and East Belfast HSS Trust
South Eastern Education and Library Board
Southern Education and Library Board
Southern Health and Social Services Board
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust
Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium
St Angelo Airport
Staff Commission for Educ & Lib Boards
Strabane District Council
Strabane District Partnership
Sustainable Northern Ireland Programme
Sustainable Organic Living Environment
SUSTRANS
The Ards Partnership
The Blind Centre
The Cedar Foundation
The Disability Committee of the Northern Ireland Committee, ICTU
The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
The Most Reverend Bishop Walsh
The Omnibus Partnership
The Peace and Reconciliation Partnership Ballymena
The Pedestrian Association
The Police Service of Northern Ireland
The Rainbow Project
The Women's Centre

Training for Women Network Ltd
Translink
Transport 2000
Transport Advisory Committee
Travellers Movement NI
UK Unionist Party
Ulster Archaeological Society
Ulster North Down and Ards Hospitals HSS Trust
Ulster Scots Heritage Council
Ulster Society for the Protection of the Countryside - Belfast
Ulster Society for the Protection of the Countryside- B'mena
Ulster Unionist Party
Ulster Wildlife Trust
ULTACH
Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technology
UNISON
United Hospital HSS Trust
Viridian
Warrenpoint Harbour
West Belfast Economic Forum
Western Education & Library Board
Western Health and Social Services Board
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
Women's Aid Federation
Women's Forum
Women's Information Group
Women's Resource and Development Agency
Women's Support Network
Women's Forum Northern Ireland
Workers Party
World Wide Fund for Nature
World Wildlife Fund
Youth Council for NI

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