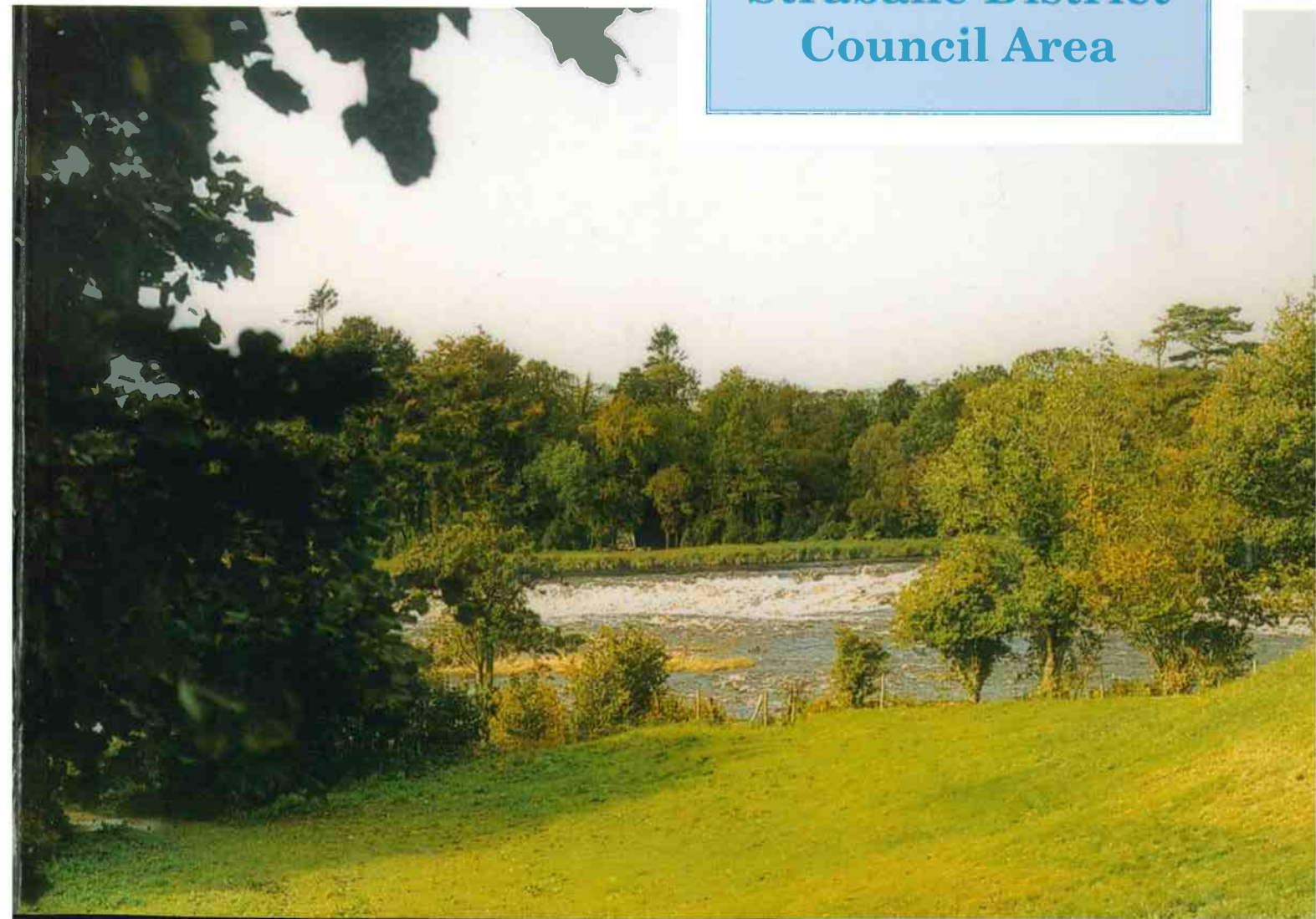




**STRABANE
AREA PLAN
1986 - 2001
Strabane District
Council Area**



**STRABANE
AREA PLAN
1986 - 2001**

Strabane District
Council Area

"Please note

The proposals contained in this document may be subject to objections. For the purpose of considering such objections as cannot be resolved, the Department may cause a public local inquiry to be held by the Planning Appeals Commission. Following consideration of objections and the report on any public inquiry the Department will adopt with or without modifications.

This document therefore may be subject to changes and should be read in conjunction with the Adoption Statement which will issue following any public inquiry."

JANUARY 1989

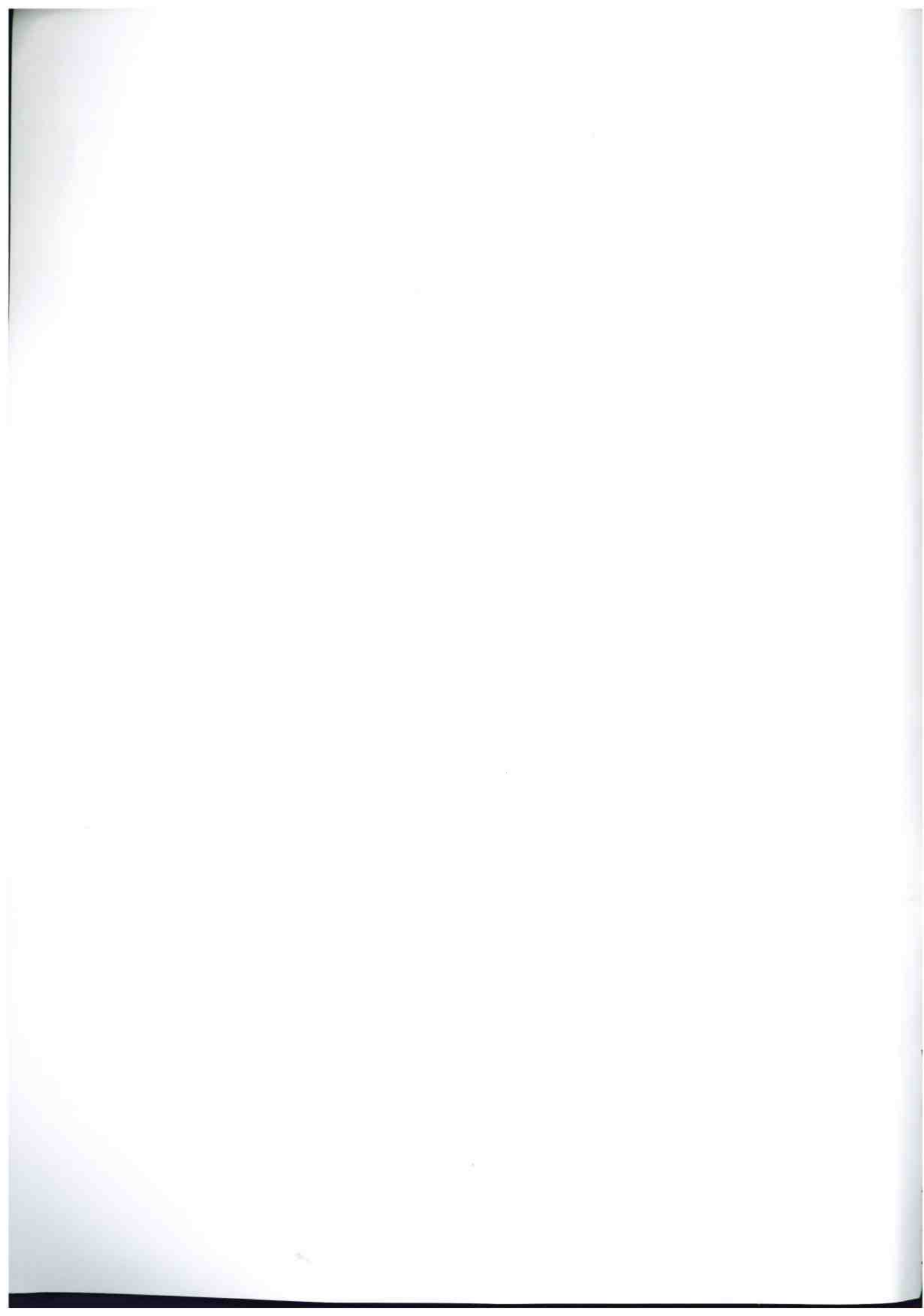
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Technical Supplement

A technical supplement which includes details of population estimates, of housing, open space, shopping and industrial land requirements, and an analysis of Rural Policy issues, is available from the Town and Country Planning Service, Department of the Environment (NI), County Hall, Mountjoy Road, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT79 7AF.

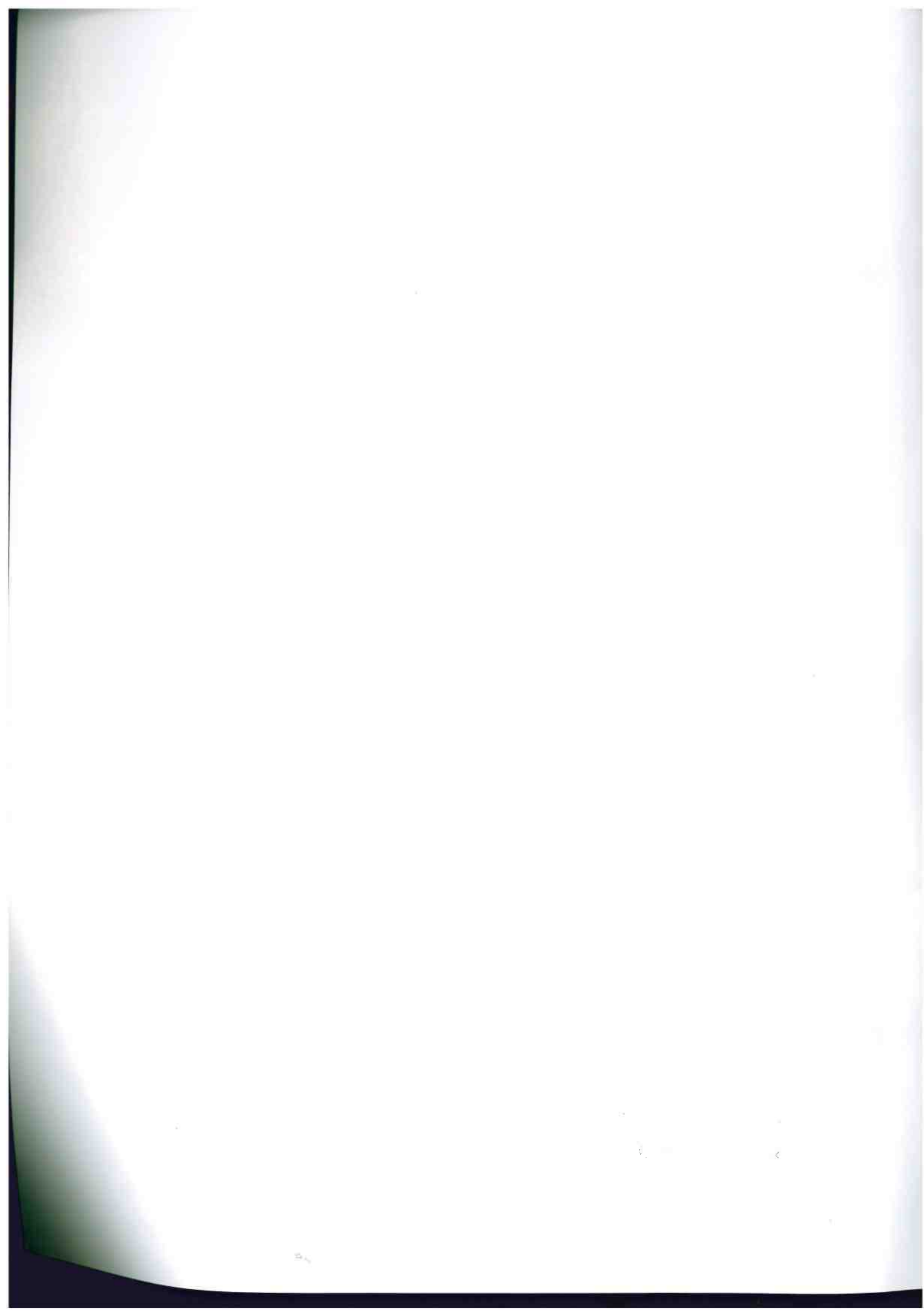


DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Strabane Area Plan

Adoption Statement 1991

BELFAST: HMSO



STRABANE AREA PLAN 1986-2001

ADOPTION STATEMENT 1991

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Strabane Area Plan has been prepared by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland under the provisions of Part III of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972. It provides a broad land use and policy framework for the physical development of Strabane District to the year 2001. Following advertisement in a press, an exhibition of the proposals was held in Strabane, Castlederg, Sion Mills, Newtownstewart, Omagh and in the 13 villages within the district during the period from 27 January to 10 March 1989. In total there were 86 objections to the Area Plan proposals.

1.2 To assist the Department in its consideration of these objections a Public Inquiry was held before Mr R S Hawthorne BA, Dip TP, FRTPI, Chief Professional Commissioner (hereinafter referred to as the 'Commissioner') of the Planning Appeals Commission under the terms of Article 6(2) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 in the District Council Offices, Strabane. All objectors were invited to attend this Inquiry which opened on 3 October 1989 and closed on 13 October 1989. A pre-Inquiry meeting had been held in the District Council Offices on 30 August 1989.

1.3 The Commissioner's Report of the Inquiry and the recommendations of the Planning Appeals Commission are published today. The Department has decided to adopt the land use policies and proposals contained in the Area Plan subject to certain amendments made in response to the findings and recommendations of the Planning Appeals Commission. These amendments are dealt with in this Adoption Statement.

2. PLANNING APPEALS COMMISSION REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION

2.1 This part of the Statement sets out the Department's decision on the objections considered by the Planning Appeals Commission based on the Report of Inquiry by the Commissioner. For ease of reference, the Department follows broadly the same headings as those in that report. Paragraph references at the end of each heading refer to the Commissioner's Report.

SECTION 1: OBJECTIONS OF A GENREAL NATURE

2.2 Objection relating to the phasing of the Strabane By-Pass (Paras 3.1.2 to 3.1.9)

The Commission noted that there was full support for the By-Pass and that the objection related only to the timing of the implementation of Phase II of the

scheme. In suggesting that the priority of this scheme should be re-assessed the Commission were of the opinion that the By-Pass was a crucial element in the orderly development of Strabane, not only in traffic matters, but also in the opening up of land for development.

The Department notes the comments of the Commission and will take them into consideration when assessing the schemes priority within the major works programme.

The Department confirms that the By-Pass has been designed in 3 phases. Phase I runs from Derry Road north of Strabane Controlled High School to Urney Road/Melmount Road junction. Phase II provides for a southern extension of the by-pass to Melmount Road south of the Fir Trees Hotel and Phase III for a northern extension to the junction of Victoria Road and Woodend Road at Roundhill.

2.3 Objection in relation to population estimates, the sufficiency of land zoned for housing and the availability of the Curleyhill site for housing (Paras 3.1.10 to 3.1.23).

The Commission recommended that the population projections and predicted housing needs be accepted, but should be reviewed subsequent to the 1991 census of population.

The Department accepts this recommendation.

The Commission further agreed with the appointed Commissioner that the Curleyhill housing site is important in providing a choice of housing sites north and south of the river and recommended that all necessary steps should be taken to ensure the achievement of the Plan proposals.

The Department notes the comments of the Commission and will monitor the availability of the Curleyhill housing site. If market forces are ineffective in securing the release of land for development, the Department will consider what steps, if any, which might be taken to ensure fruition for the proposal.

The Commission recommended that the policies relating to zoning of housing lands be confirmed. The Department concurs with this recommendation.

2.4 Objection to the criteria for hamlet designation, that Ballaghlare, Berryhill Road (Ballylaw), Grange, High Road (Seein) and Tullyard should be designated as hamlets and that insufficient land for development had been included within the limits for the villages of Ballymagorry, Ardstraw and Victoria Bridge (Paras 3.1.24 to 3.1.29).

The Department accepts the recommendation of the Commission that the criteria for hamlet designation be confirmed and that hamlet designation is unwarranted in respect of Ballaghlare, Tullyard, Grange, Ballylaw or Seein.

The Commission considered that the development limits for the villages of Ballymagorry, Ardstraw and Victoria Bridge should be confirmed. The Department agrees.

2.5 Objection relating to the extraction of minerals (Paras 3.1.30 to 3.1.34)

The Commission recommended that the Mineral Extraction Policies should be confirmed. The Department accepts this recommendation.

The Department notes the comments of the Commission in relation to the issues raised by Strabane District Council. Existing powers available under current legislation are considered adequate by the Department to secure restoration in future applications for mineral extraction. The situation will however be kept under review.

2.6 Objection pertaining to building in the countryside (Paras 3.1.35 to 3.1.38)

The Commission made no formal recommendation in respect of these matters which relate to policies applicable to the whole of Northern Ireland. The Department notes this view.

2.7 Objection relating to transportation policies (Paras 3.2.1 to 3.2.4)

The Commission was in broad agreement that the transportation objectives in the Plan should be confirmed. The Commission further recommended that the Plan objectives should emphasise the importance of the maintenance and where possible the enhancement of public road transportation.

The Department agrees with the appointed Commissioner that the regularity and frequency of bus services is not a matter for determination in an Area Plan. Nevertheless the Department acknowledges the importance of public transport in this largely rural community and believes that general improvements to the road network will facilitate and enhance the public transportation system. The transportation objectives in the Plan are confirmed.

2.8 Objection relating to recreation open space and tourism (Paras 3.2.5 to 3.2.8)

The Commission recommended that the plan proposals in relation to recreational and amenity open space should be confirmed. The Department agrees.

The Policy for the Control of Development in Rural Areas published by the Department in 1978 indicated that sympathetic consideration would be given to projects designed to facilitate the tourist industry. The Department will continue to give such consideration to tourist proposals through the normal process of development control.

2.9 Objection pertaining to industry and housing (Paras 3.2.9 to 3.2.12)

The Department accepts the recommendation of the Commission that the policies relating to the zoning of housing and industrial lands be confirmed.

2.10 Objection relating to nature conservation (Paras 3.3.1 to 3.3.4)

The Commission recommended the following changes to the plan

- (a) that the District Strategy Map be amended to distinguish between the ASI on Dart and Sawel mountains and the ASSI at Moneygal Bog;
- (b) that paragraph 15.10 of the written statement be amended to read “The plan will therefore seek to ensure that all natural resources are protected and enhanced in a sensitive and responsible manner while ensuring access to them is made available and the impact of new developments in areas of high scenic quality or nature conservation and wildlife interest is carefully assessed to ensure that environmental impact is minimised.”;
- (c) that the last sentence of paragraph 19.2.1 of the written statement be amended to read “All development proposals located within any Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Area of Scientific Interest, Area of Special Scientific Interest or National Nature Reserve will be carefully assessed and, if likely to have an adverse environmental effect, permission will not normally be granted.”;
- (d) that the “protection of wildlife interest” be added to the criteria set out in paragraph 115.2 of the written statement;
- (e) that paragraph 126.6 of the written statement be amended to read “Mineral developments will not normally be given permission where they would be likely to damage either the scientific interest or the essential character of areas within the district which have been declared by the Department on the basis of their scientific value as Areas of Special Scientific Interest or Nature Reserves or contain features listed by the Department as Historic Monuments.”.

The Department agrees to these changes. The Area Plan is amended accordingly.

SECTION 2: OBJECTIONS RELATING TO STRABANE TOWN

2.11 Objection relating to (a) the status of the Strabane By-Pass, (b) the design of the By-Pass, (c) pedestrianisation and (d) provision of a town park (Paras 4.1.1 to 4.1.4)

At the Inquiry the Department agreed to amend paragraph 9.9 of the written statement to read : “The Omagh-Strabane-Londonderry road (T3) is of

strategic importance to both the district and the whole region of North West Ireland.”. The Commission recommended that no further changes should be made to the relevant proposals and policies. The Department concurs with this view.

2.12 Objection relating to the proposed site for travelling people (Paras 4.2.1 to 4.2.39)

The Commission recommended that the zoning of these lands as a serviced site should be confirmed. Strabane District Council has, however, withdrawn its proposals to develop this site as a serviced site for travellers. Planning permission has now been granted for an alternative site and development has commenced. The Department therefore withdraws this zoning and retains these lands as “white land”.

2.13 Objections to the proposed provision of a car park at Church Street/Bowling Green (Paras 4.3.1 to 4.3.23)

The Commission agreed with the appointed Commissioner that the car parking zoning and policies should be confirmed but noted that significant improvement to the access of the proposed park at Church Street/Bowling Green would be necessary before implementation. The Commission further considered that the possibility of providing additional car parking space on lands to the south-west of Main Street should be re-examined.

The Department agrees to adopt the car parking policies set out in the plan subject to the provision of a satisfactory access at the Bowling Green/Church Street site. In relation to the provision of additional spaces to the south-west of Main Street, the Department is of the opinion that the provision of the Dock Street link will make car parking space which is presently under utilised more readily available. The Department will therefore keep the matter under review and will re-examine the level of car parking provision in this section of the town following completion of the Dock Street link.

2.14 Objections to the shopping policies for Strabane (Paras 4.4.1 to 4.4.26)

The Commission considered that the shopping objectives and policies set out in the plan should be confirmed but considered that a site should also be identified within the development limit on the south side of the town for a supermarket of appropriate scale together with a small number of associated shops.

The Department accepts the need for such provision on the south side of the town but considers that such a scheme can best be dealt with, within the development control process. No specific site is therefore identified for such a proposal. The shopping objectives and policies are confirmed.

2.15 Objection to the exclusion of lands off Melmount Road from the development limit (Paras 4.4.14 to 4.4.26)

The Commission recommended that the development limit to the south of Strabane and east of the trunk road should not be amended. The Department agrees with this view. The Department further agrees to monitor the availability of the town centre mixed business zonings.

2.16 Objection to the Strabane By-Pass emerging onto Derry Road opposite Strabane High School (Paras 4.5.1 to 4.5.3)

The Commissioner considered that these objections need not engage the attention of the Commission. The Department notes this view.

2.17 Objections to the proposed relocation of uses from Strabane Town Centre (Paras 4.6.1 to 4.6.12)

The Commission recommended that Opportunity Sites 10 and 11 should be confirmed on the understanding that relocation of existing uses will be achieved through negotiations and discussions.

The Department considers that the question of the use of compulsory acquisition powers which have separate provisions for objection and inquiry is not a matter to be determined in an Area Plan. The Department does envisage however that the fulfilment of its proposals for these lands can be achieved through normal market forces.

2.18 Objection to the level of housing provision close to the town centre in the Upper Main Street/Meetinghouse Street area (Paras 4.7.1 to 4.7.3)

The Department notes the view of the Commission that this objection did not require a recommendation.

2.19 Objection to the level of parking provision in the Bowling Green/Main Street area and suggestion for additional provision to the rear of Upper Main Street (Paras 4.8.1 to 4.8.3)

The Commission in advocating that consideration should be given to parking on this site took a different view from the appointed Commissioner. The Department has considered this advice but is of the opinion that the question of car parking provision should be re-examined following completion of the Dock Street link—see paragraph 2.13 above.

The Commissioner also recommended that the proportion of pay and display to free car parks should be monitored. The Department accepts this recommendation.

2.20 Objection to the housing zoning on lands at Park Road/Dock Street (Para 4.9.1 to 4.9.2)

The Department agrees with the Commission's recommendation that industrial use on **these** lands should be resisted and that the housing zoning be confirmed.

2.21 Objection to the boundaries of the recreation/open space zoning at Laurel Drive (Paras 4.10.1 to 4.10.4)

The Commission recommended that this small area of land should be designated as "white land" and that the merits of any proposal should be examined within the framework of the development control mechanism.

The Department agrees and deletes the open space zoning from the plan.

2.22 Objection to the zoning of land at Backtown for industrial development (Para 4.11.1 to 4.11.4)

The Commission considered that the industrial zoning for these lands should be confirmed. The Department concurs with this view.

2.23 Objection to the zoning of land at Castletown for housing (Paras 4.12.1 to 4.12.4)

The Department accepts the Commission's recommendation that the zoning of the objection lands for housing development be confirmed.

2.24 Objection to the zoning of land at Curleyhill Road for housing and to the widening of Curleyhill Road (Paras 4.13.1 to 4.13.4)

The Department notes the view of the Commissioner that this matter required no formal recommendation by the Commission.

2.25 Objection to the limit of development for Strabane at Town Parks/ Roundhill and to the inclusion of lands within the Green Belt (Paras 4.14.1 to 4.14.4)

The Commission considered that an amendment to the limit of development would result in visually intrusive development. Accordingly the Commission recommended that the limit of development between Roundhill and Town Parks should be confirmed. The Department agrees with this recommendation.

2.26 Objection to the limit of development at Spout Road and the inclusion of the objection lands within the Green Belt (Paras 4.15.1 to 4.15.4)

The Department concurs with the Commission's view that the extent of the Green Belt along Spout Road should be confirmed.

2.27 Objection to the omission of property at 35/37 Bowling Green from properties indicated as Listed Buildings under Article 31 of the Planning Order (Para 4.15.5)

The Department confirms that the property in question has been "listed" under Article 31.

SECTION 3: OBJECTIONS RELATING TO CASTLEDERG

2.28 Objection to the exclusion of land at Craigmonaghan from the development limit (Paras 5.1 to 5.5)

The Commission recommended that the development limit in the vicinity of Strabane Road should be confirmed. The Department accepts this recommendation.

2.29 Objection to the proposal to widen Priests Lane (Paras 5.6 to 5.11)

The Department concurs with the view of the Commission that the proposal to widen Priests Lane be confirmed.

2.30 Objections (a) that lands between Kilclean and Castlefin Road be rezoned for recreational and industrial purposes (b) relating to special needs housing (c) that more tourist related developments should be permitted (d) bus parking (e) that there was a need for redevelopment to the Diamond Area. (Paras 5.12 to 5.22).

The Department notes the view of the appointed Commissioner that the issues of bus parking, regeneration and recreational and industrial zoning need not engage the attention of the Commission.

The Commission considered that Area 62.4 to the west of Main Street which is proposed for housing should be rezoned for housing and other community uses appropriate to a peripheral town centre location.

The Department agrees that this land is suitable for both housing and community uses. The Department is however of the opinion that rezoning is unnecessary as community uses are considered to be an acceptable land use within an area zoned for housing development.

SECTION 4: OBJECTIONS RELATING TO SION MILLS

2.31 Objection to the development limit/inner edge of the Green Belt on the northern side of Sion Mills and the provision within the Plan for high quality low density private housing development (Paras 6.1 to 6.8)

The Department agrees with the recommendation of the Commission that the development limit at the northern end of Sion Mills be confirmed.

2.32 Objection to the zoning of land to the north of Beech Park for housing (Paras 6.9 to 6.13)

The Commission recommended that the zoning of the objection lands for housing be confirmed. The Department agrees and confirms that high standards of layout, design and landscaping will be sought for new housing development.

SECTION 5: OBJECTIONS RELATING TO NEWTOWNSTEWART

2.33 Objections relating to the alignment and certain detailed aspects of the proposed By-Pass (Paras 7.1 to 7.22)

The Commission, while acknowledging the views of the presiding Commissioner, recommended that the Department should institute a detailed Environmental Impact Analysis of the Valley Rout proposal to provide a comparison with the Alternative Railway Route. The Commission further considered that the Valley Route By-Pass proposal should not be confirmed at this stage.

A detailed Environmental Impact Analysis of both the Valley Route and the Railway Route has already been carried out and the evidence was presented to the inquiry by the Department. The Department considers that there is no value in repeating this exercise which was carried out at considerable cost. In view of this fact and the appointed Commissioner's detailed assessment and recommendation the Department therefore confirms the Valley Route for the By-Pass. The scheme will in due course be the subject of a Direction Order which allows for further public consultation and a public inquiry may be held if necessary. This would permit objectors the opportunity to present any new evidence that might arise.

The Department accepts the recommendation of the appointed Commissioner that a staggered junction between Douglas Road and the By-Pass is appropriate in the light of anticipated traffic flows and turning movements. The Department notes the view of the appointed Commissioner that the objections submitted by Mr S D McCurdy and Mr C Brown need not engage the attention of the Commission.

2.34 Objection to the zoning of parochial land at Moyle Road for housing (Paras 7.23 to 7.30)

The Commission recommended that the parochial lands should be deleted from the housing zoning but should be retained as "white land" within the development limit. The Department agrees and amends the plan accordingly.

2.35 Objection to the zoning of the orchard to the south-west of Brook House for housing development (Paras 7.31 to 7.34)

The Department accepts the recommendation of the Commission that the orchard land should be deleted from the housing zoning but retained as "white land" within the development limit. The Area Plan is amended accordingly.

SECTION 6: OBJECTIONS RELATING TO VILLAGE SETTLEMENTS AND THE RURAL AREA

2.36 Objection to the development limit of Erganagh (Paras 8.1 to 8.5)

The Commission recommended that the objection lands should be excluded from the limit of development. The Department agrees and amends the plan accordingly.

2.37 Objection to the development limit of Spamount (Paras 8.6 to 8.10)

The Department accepts the recommendation of the Commission that the development limit of Spamount be confirmed.

2.38 Objection regarding the effect of the plan proposals on land at Ardstraw (Paras 8.11 to 8.15)

The Commission recommended that the village development limit of Ardstraw should be confirmed. The Department concurs.

2.39 Objection to the Policy Area along the B49 between Artigarvan and Donemana (Paras 8.16 to 8.21)

The Department agrees with the view of the Commission that the Policy Area along route B49 should be confirmed. A map showing the precise limits of the highway policy areas is attached to the Adoption Statement.

3. INQUIRY PROCEDURES

3.1 The Department notes the comments of both the Commission and the member appointed to conduct the inquiry in regard to the practice of treating extant planning applications as "deemed objections". The Department agrees that this practice should cease.

4. ADOPTION OF THE STRABANE AREA PLAN

4.1 The Department now adopts the Strabane Area Plan as amended in this Adoption Statement as a development plan under Article 8 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972.

4.2 The Department has made the necessary Order adopting the Area Plan. The Order is reproduced in Appendix I of this Statement.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Department wishes to thank the elected representatives and all those members of the public who contributed to the decision-making process. In particular the Department would like to thank Mr R S Hawthorne who conducted the Inquiry. His comprehensive and detailed report has been of great assistance to the Department in its consideration of the objections.

APPENDIX

THE PLANNING (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1972 THE PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT PLAN) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1973 THE STRABANE AREA PLAN (ADOPTION) ORDER (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1991

Made 9th April 1991

WHEREAS the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland (hereinafter referred to as "the Department") in pursuance of the provisions of Part III of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972^(a) (hereinafter referred to as "the Order") and the Planning (Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1973 has prepared a Development Plan (hereinafter called "the Plan") for the Strabane Borough Council area;

AND WHEREAS the Department has complied with Article 5 of the Order;

AND WHEREAS copies of the Plan were made available for inspection and objections having been duly made within the time stated for making objections, the Department caused a Public Local Inquiry to be held by the Planning Appeals Commission in October 1989 for the purpose of considering such objections;

AND WHEREAS the Department has considered the said objections and the report of the Planning Appeals Commission on the said Inquiry;

NOW THEREFORE the Department in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 8 of the Order and every other power enabling it in that behalf hereby orders as follows:—

1. This Order may be cited as the Strabane Area Plan (Adoption) Order (Northern Ireland).
2. (1) The Plan is hereby adopted as a Development Plan to the extent approved and endorsed by the Department in the Statement entitled "Strabane Area Plan Adoption Statement 1991".
(2) The Plan together with the said Statement shall be known as the Strabane Area Plan which shall become operative on 22nd April 1991.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of the Environment on 9th April 1991.

E HAYES
Assistant Secretary



(a) S.I. 1972 No. 1634 (N.I. 17) as amended by S.I. 1990 No. 1510 (N.I. 14)
(b) S.R. & O. (N.I.) 1973 No. 265

Part One
Introduction

Preamble

The Strabane Area Plan (1986–2001) a Development Plan under the provisions of Part III of the Planning (NI) Order 1972 has been prepared by the Department of the Environment Town and Country Planning Service. It replaces the West Tyrone Area Plan as it applies to Strabane District. In March 1985 Strabane District Council was notified that the Department intended to prepare a Strabane Area Plan covering the period up to 2001 and during the weeks ending 17 and 24 May 1985 Notice of Intention to prepare the Plan was published in the local press and the public were invited to put forward suggestions for the future development of the area. A wide range of consultations was subsequently carried out with the District Council, Government Departments, statutory undertakers and other appropriate authorities and in January 1987 Preliminary Proposals were published and placed on public display as required by Article 5 of The Planning (NI) Order 1972. Representations made in response to the Preliminary Proposals have been taken into account by the Department in preparing the Plan.

The Plan is now published as required by Article 6 of The Planning (NI) Order 1972 and any person wishing to object to any of the proposals should do so by writing to the Department at:

**Strabane Area Plan
Town and Country Planning Service
Department of the Environment (NI)
County Hall
Mountjoy Road
OMAGH
BT79 7AF**

If objections received cannot be resolved the Department may request the Planning Appeals Commission to hold a public inquiry for the purpose of considering such objections.

The Department with the benefit of the report of such a public inquiry may then adopt the Plan as a whole, or in part, with or without modifications, as its physical development strategy for the Strabane District Council area.

1.0 Background

1.1 The West Tyrone Area Plan which has hitherto provided the existing planning framework for Strabane District and beyond was prepared by the former Ministry of Development acting on behalf of the then Local Authorities. The Plan was published in 1972 and a public inquiry was held in 1974. The Departmental Statement in adopting the Plan in 1976 recognised that this was no more than a formal step in a continuous planning process, emphasising that the West Tyrone Area Plan could not be regarded as a final and definitive statement on the future development of the area. The Statement confirmed that the Plan would be reviewed and updated at appropriate intervals. This document, the Strabane Area Plan 1986–2001 does this for the Strabane District Council area.

2.0 Purpose

2.1 The purpose of the Strabane Area Plan is **to set out the broad land-use and policy framework for the physical development of Strabane District up to 2001**. This includes, the identification of general locations where the principal land uses, housing, industry and open space should take place in order to meet the expected needs of the development process and to enable the area to expand and prosper. It will also assist both public and private agencies in reaching their land-use based investment decisions. The Plan identifies the major development proposals to be implemented by the Department and highlights those of other Government Departments, public agencies and the District Council for which provision in the Plan is required. The Plan is strategic in nature, establishing the policy guidelines within which more detailed development proposals can be determined over the plan period. Individual development proposals will subsequently be assessed through the statutory development control process and where appropriate by the preparation of local studies and policies.

3.0 Plan Aim

3.1 The aim of the Strabane Area Plan is **to provide a physical planning framework that will facilitate the whole area, both urban and rural, to realise insofar as is possible, its development potential in an efficient, economic, orderly and sensitive manner while maintaining a high standard of physical environment and safeguarding landscape quality and natural resources**.

3.2 To achieve this aim the Plan is governed by a number of strategic objectives from which are drawn more specific objectives for both the urban and rural areas.

4.0 Plan Area

4.1 The plan area is co-terminous with Strabane District. Its focal point, the town of Strabane, is situated some 90 miles from Belfast and 15 miles



from Londonderry and the area is bisected by the important Omagh to Londonderry road (T3). It is generally an area of attractive rural landscapes dominated to the east by the Sperrin Mountains and elsewhere by the valleys of the Rivers Strule, Owenkillew, Glenelly, Burdennett, Mourne, Foyle, Finn and Derg. This landscape quality is reflected in the designation of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which encompasses a considerable part of the District.

4.2 While Strabane has a long tradition within the manufacturing sector of industry, the primary sectors of employment remain important but recent years have demonstrated however, that overall levels of unemployment remain high. In relation to the economy of the District, it is important to acknowledge the influence of Strabane District on the neighbouring Co Donegal, and vice versa.

4.3 The District boundary encompasses a range of widely distributed settlements which vary substantially in terms of size, character and function. Besides Strabane itself the smaller towns of Castledearg, Sion Mills and Newtownstewart have important local significance whilst the villages and hamlets play an important role in the life and vitality of the rural area.

5.0 Content

5.1 The Plan consists of a Written Statement and maps. In the event of any discrepancy between the Written Statement and the maps the provisions of the Statement take precedence.

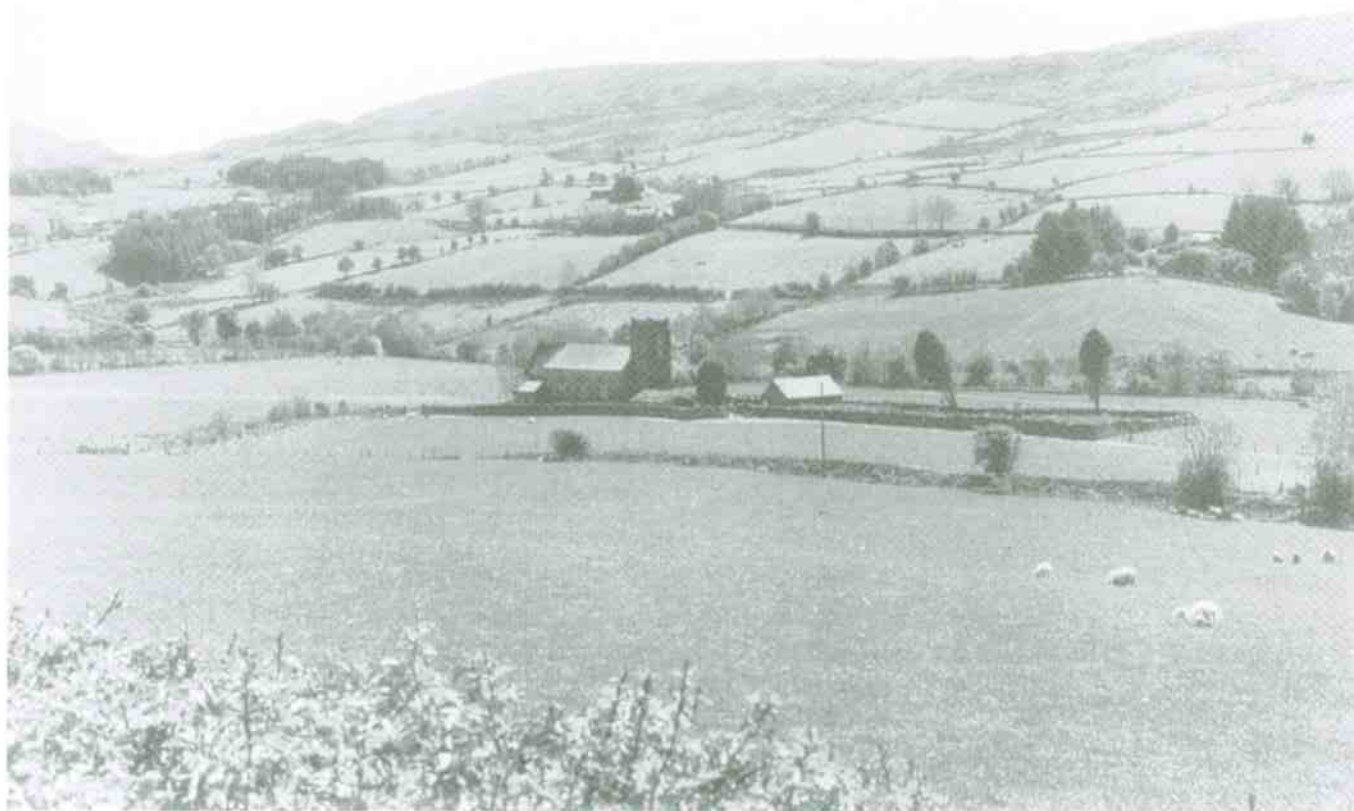
5.2 The Written Statement is made up of 7 parts:—

Plan Strategy

This identifies the **key issues and opportunities** to be addressed by the Plan, the **objectives** it seeks to achieve and the **Development Strategy** it proposes.

Policy Framework

This sets out the data base and background for subsequent policies and proposals and highlights the implications of the proposed Development Strategy.



*Statement of Policies and Proposals and Maps—
District Town*

In the light of local issues and opportunities this formulates policies and proposals for **Strabane** and **Strabane Town Centre**.

*Statement of Policies and Proposals and Maps—Local
Towns*

In the light of local issues and opportunities this formulates policies and proposals for **Castleberg**, **Sion Mills** and **Newtownstewart**.

*Statement of Policies and Proposals and Maps—
Villages*

This details the issues and opportunities relevant to **13 villages** and formulates policies and proposals accordingly.

*Statement of Policies and Proposals and Maps—
Hamlets*

This details the issues and opportunities relevant to **11 hamlets** and formulates policies and proposals accordingly.

Policy Statements and Maps—Rural Area

In this section issues relating to the rural area are identified and analysed and policies drawn up for the **Green Belt**, **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**, **Policy Areas** and the **Rural Remainder**.

5.3 Concurrently with the Plan, a **Technical Supplement** is published providing detailed information and technical data relating to population, housing, industry/employment, recreation/open space, Strabane town centre and Rural Policy. This supplement is intended to provide the technical basis for the policies and proposals contained in the Plan.

6.0 Public Consultation

6.1 The **Preliminary Proposals** published in January 1987 outlined the policies and proposals which the Department proposed to include in the Plan. As a result of the public interest and discussion generated by a number of these proposals some of the original policies and proposals put forward have been modified. Account has been taken of all the views put to the Department during the course of preparation of the Plan.

6.2 The policies and proposals now published represent the **Final Proposals**. Any person wishing to object to any of the proposals should do so by writing to the Department. If objections received cannot be resolved, the Department may request the Planning Appeals Commission to hold a **public inquiry** before formal **adoption** of the Plan.

Part Two

Plan Strategy



7.0 Key Issues and Opportunities

Introduction

7.1 An analysis of Strabane District reveals a range of key issues which the Plan addresses and a number of opportunities which the Plan seeks to accommodate. These are set out in the following paragraphs and form the background against which the Plan objectives and Development Strategy have been formulated. By identifying, highlighting and proposing measures for the development of these opportunities, the Plan seeks to resolve the key issues. In general terms, the issues and opportunities cannot be regarded as mutually exclusive. Resolution of the issues identified is dependent to a significant extent on the exploitation of the development opportunities which both the urban and rural part of the District present.

Settlement Pattern

7.2 The plan area encompasses a range of settlements which vary in terms of size, distribution and function from the District Town Strabane, through 3 local towns, Castleterg, Sion Mills and Newtownstewart, to a range of villages and hamlets. It is important to encourage and guide this settlement pattern in a way which best meets the development needs of the District.

Development Land

7.3 To enable all of these settlements to cope with anticipated development pressures in an efficient and orderly manner, it is necessary to identify within a physical development limit, sufficient development land to meet all the general development needs arising throughout the plan period. Zonings contained within the West Tyrone Area Plan have in many instances been taken up or have proved deficient in terms of location, extent, or infrastructure provision.

7.4 One of the major physical assets of Strabane District is the quality of its rural environment and the setting of many of its settlements. It is therefore important to ensure that development limits are defined in such a way that the identity of individual settlements is protected. Rural areas surrounding individual settlements require protection from urban sprawl and ribboning.

Strabane Town Centre

7.5 Strabane town centre has been affected by a number of adverse circumstances throughout the 70's and early 80's although encouraging signs of revival especially in the retail and business sector have become evident in recent years. Much remains to be done to secure a continuation of this revival. Since the town centre plays an important role in the District economy it is important to ensure that its leading position is maintained and strengthened.

Quality of the Physical Environment

7.6 Throughout the District, many opportunities for the enhancement of the built and natural environment exist. These call for energy and imagination in the formulation of improvement schemes. Many settlements contain buildings and areas of historical

or architectural significance and the major river valleys and Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty provide settings and environments of considerable potential.

Rural Regeneration

7.7 Population trends suggest a slowly declining rural population with implications for both the open countryside and for the smaller rural settlements. The Plan provides some opportunity to identify measures which will assist the rural area in adapting to changing circumstances. This includes the opportunity to tailor the Department's Rural Policy to the needs of the District by identifying the number and extent of Green Belts and appropriate Policy Areas including those necessary to minimise the environmental impact of mineral extraction.

8.0 Plan Objectives

8.1 In the light of the foregoing, the following range of strategic objectives has been defined for the Plan:

- to identify and designate a settlement strategy consistent with the Northern Ireland Regional Strategy
- to provide within defined limits for the District and Local Towns, adequate development land in a range of acceptable locations to meet expected needs in terms of housing, industry, shopping, open space and community facilities
- to improve the quality of the urban environment
- to promote vibrant town and village centres by increasing their attractiveness as places in which to live, work, use and invest
- to prevent urban sprawl, ribbon development and coalescence of settlements and minimise the encroachment of development onto high quality agricultural land
- to make effective use of new and existing infrastructure
- to improve and extend the existing roads system throughout the District to facilitate the safe and convenient movement of people and goods
- to improve the environment of villages and hamlets and ensure adequate development land to meet their expected needs
- to conserve and enhance the natural and man-made environment
- to examine the impact of the Department's Rural Policy and to adjust it as necessary within the framework of recent guidelines to meet the needs of the District.

9.0 Development Strategy

Introduction

9.1 The development policies and proposals contained in this Plan have taken account of the guidelines of the Department's Regional Physical Development Strategy for Northern Ireland (1975–1995) and other Departmental planning policies. They have had regard for the general thrust of the Regional Settlement Strategy and its various elements. It attempts to concentrate future development throughout Northern Ireland within a well defined hierarchy of mutually supporting settlements based on the **District Town** within each District Council area. Three levels of supporting settlement below that of the District Town are envisaged—the **Local Town**, the **Village** and the **Hamlet**. These are intended to lend support to the District Town in fulfilling its specific functions and to assist in the spread of the resultant benefits over wider areas. The identification of these smaller settlements is influenced by their size, location, function and existing and planned infrastructure.

9.2 The overall strategy drawn up for the District which anticipates a maximum 2001 population of 39,000 comprises 4 main elements:

- a **Settlement Strategy** providing for the consolidation of most future development within a range of designated settlements. Development policies have been produced for each settlement in accordance with its status and envisaged level of growth
- a **Transportation Strategy** providing for the improvement and development of the existing road network as resources permit
- a **Rural Strategy** providing for rural development while at the same time ensuring the continued protection of the rural area outside designated settlements
- an **Urban Renewal Strategy** directed towards the designated settlements.

9.3 The chosen strategy has inevitably been influenced by the existing development pattern established within the District and by the outcome of the Department's assessment of the West Tyrone Area Plan Strategy. It complements existing Departmental policies already being applied throughout the District to control and influence the management of both the natural and man-made environments, including those relating to the rural area and to Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Historic Monuments, Nature Reserves, Areas of Special Scientific Interest and Areas of Scientific Interest.

Settlement Strategy

9.4 The Settlement Strategy proposed provides for the concentration of development within the 4 levels of settlement defined: **District Town, Local Town, Village and Hamlet**.

9.5 **Strabane** as the **District Town** is the chief centre for Local Government and for housing,

shopping and commerce, industry and employment, education and recreation. It will continue to experience the widest range of development pressures and will be the focus for provision of infrastructure and essential services. The development policies and proposals reflect both Strabane's strategic importance within the District and beyond, and its potential for growth. Sufficient land has been zoned to provide for all the main land uses, to facilitate the future development of the town and to provide for flexibility in the implementation of proposals. The Plan format incorporates both a development limit and land-use zonings.

9.6 **Castleberg, Sion Mills and Newtownstewart** have been designated as **Local Towns** and though varying considerably in terms of size and character they all function essentially as local service centres. **Castleberg**, the largest of the Local Towns developed primarily as a market town independently from Strabane. The development of **Sion Mills** and **Newtownstewart** however has been more directly influenced by their proximity to Strabane and Omagh respectively. The growth potential of these towns varies and is reflected in the development proposals drawn up for each of them. The Plan format echoes that of the District Town and again the emphasis has been on the identification of sufficient land in a range of locations to facilitate a degree of choice.

9.7 Development opportunities outside the 4 towns will be available within the 13 villages at the third level in the settlement hierarchy. These provide locally significant service centres for their surrounding rural hinterland, and their locational distribution emphasises the importance of each of them for the overall future development of the rural area. Each can accommodate both public and private housing of an appropriate scale, some small scale industrial development and local commercial, recreational and community facilities. The designated villages are **Ardstraw, Artigarvan, Ballymagorry, Clady, Donemana, Erganagh, Glebe, Killen, Killeter, Magheramason, Plumbridge, Spamount and Victoria Bridge**. The format of each village plan consists of a development limit drawn to encompass sufficient potential development land to accommodate their projected growth over the plan period.





9.8 A range of settlements has been identified at the fourth level of the settlement hierarchy. The **hamlets** are: **Aghabrack, Aghyaran, Altishane, Bready, Cloghcor, Cranagh, Donagheady, Douglas Bridge, Drumlegagh, Garvetagh and Glenmornan**. The Department's policy for the control of development in hamlets is to consider each proposal on its particular locational merits subject to the availability of essential services. Small scale development integrated with the existing settlement is envisaged and this may include public sector housing. The format of each hamlet plan consists of a defined development limit encompassing land considered to present development opportunities for groups of houses and associated facilities.

Transportation Strategy







9.9 Transportation within the District is road based. The Omagh–Strabane–Londonderry road (T3), is of strategic importance to both the District and the

DISTRICT STRATEGY MAP



SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

- DISTRICT TOWN 
- LOCAL TOWN 
- VILLAGE 
- HAMLET 

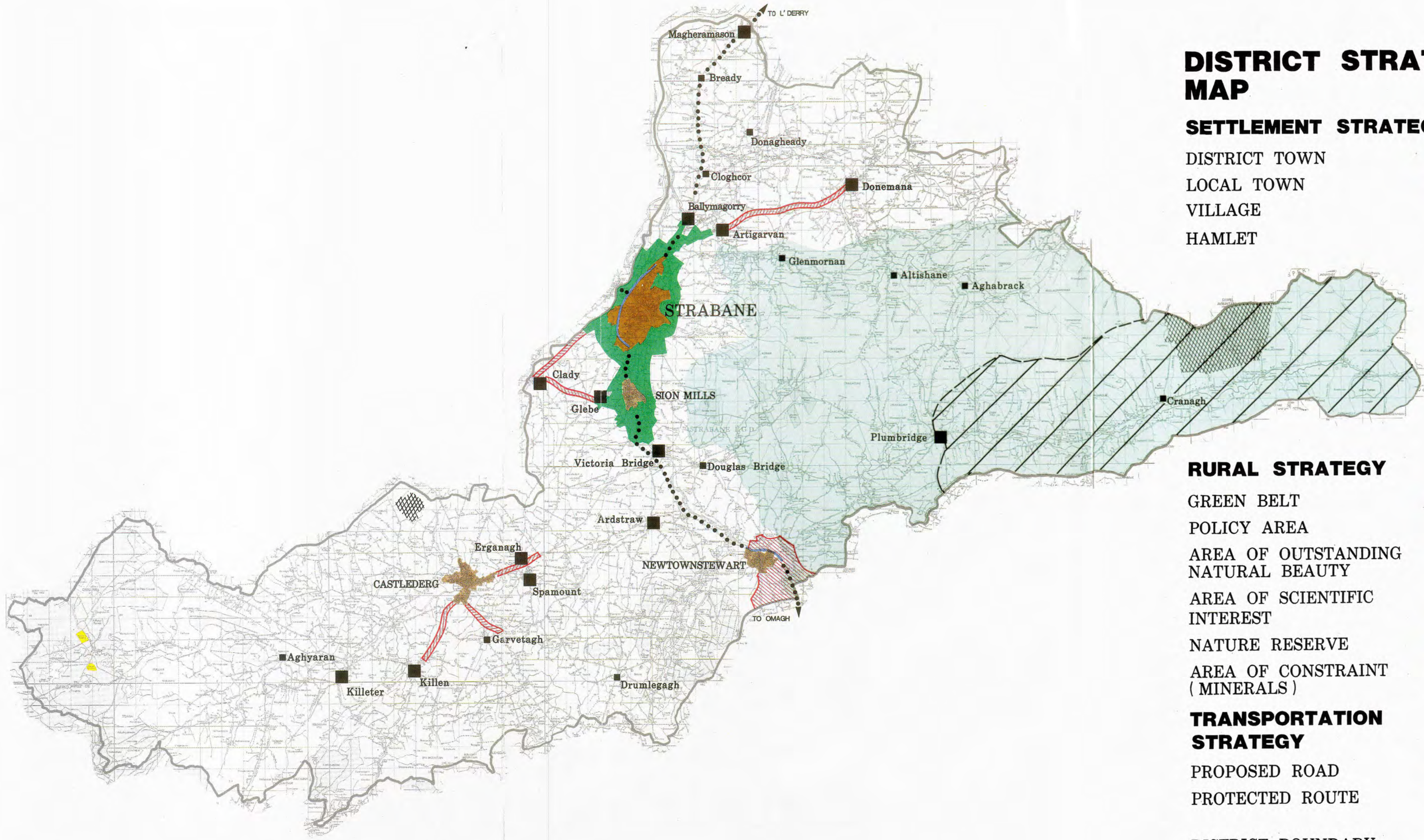
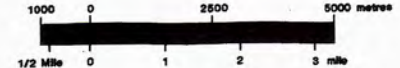
RURAL STRATEGY

- GREEN BELT 
- POLICY AREA 
- AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY 
- AREA OF SCIENTIFIC INTEREST 
- NATURE RESERVE 
- AREA OF CONSTRAINT (MINERALS) 

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

- PROPOSED ROAD 
- PROTECTED ROUTE 

DISTRICT BOUNDARY 



whole region. The Department proposes major improvements to this route through the provision of **by-passes at Strabane and Newtownstewart**. Other improvements are proposed at **Ballyfatten, south of Strabane**, and on that section **between Ballymagorry and Magheramason** where provision of more frequent overtaking opportunities is the prime aim. The West Tyrone Area Plan proposals to provide a throughpass at Strabane and a by-pass at Sion Mills have been omitted from this Plan.

9.10 Throughout the District, **minor road improvements and traffic management schemes** will be carried out to address local problems which may arise. Within the urban areas, the emphasis of such schemes will be directed towards improving pedestrian facilities, access and traffic circulation generally. Car parking needs within the larger settlements will be kept under regular review.

9.11 The implementation of all road and car parking proposals will be dependent on the availability of financial resources. Whilst a detailed programme of works cannot be indicated, it is the Department's intention to provide the Strabane by-pass road early in the plan period.

Rural Strategy

9.12 Throughout the District beyond the designated settlements, development proposals are currently considered within the context of the Department's **"Policy for the Control of Development in Rural Areas"**. This policy is based on the concept of the Area of Special Control (ASC) which is either urban based or amenity based and within which an applicant is required to establish "need" before planning permission is granted to build a dwelling. Additionally, control is exercised over the creation of new accesses or the intensification of use of existing accesses along certain main traffic routes. Beyond these controlled areas, proposals for single dwellings are generally assessed against normal planning criteria.

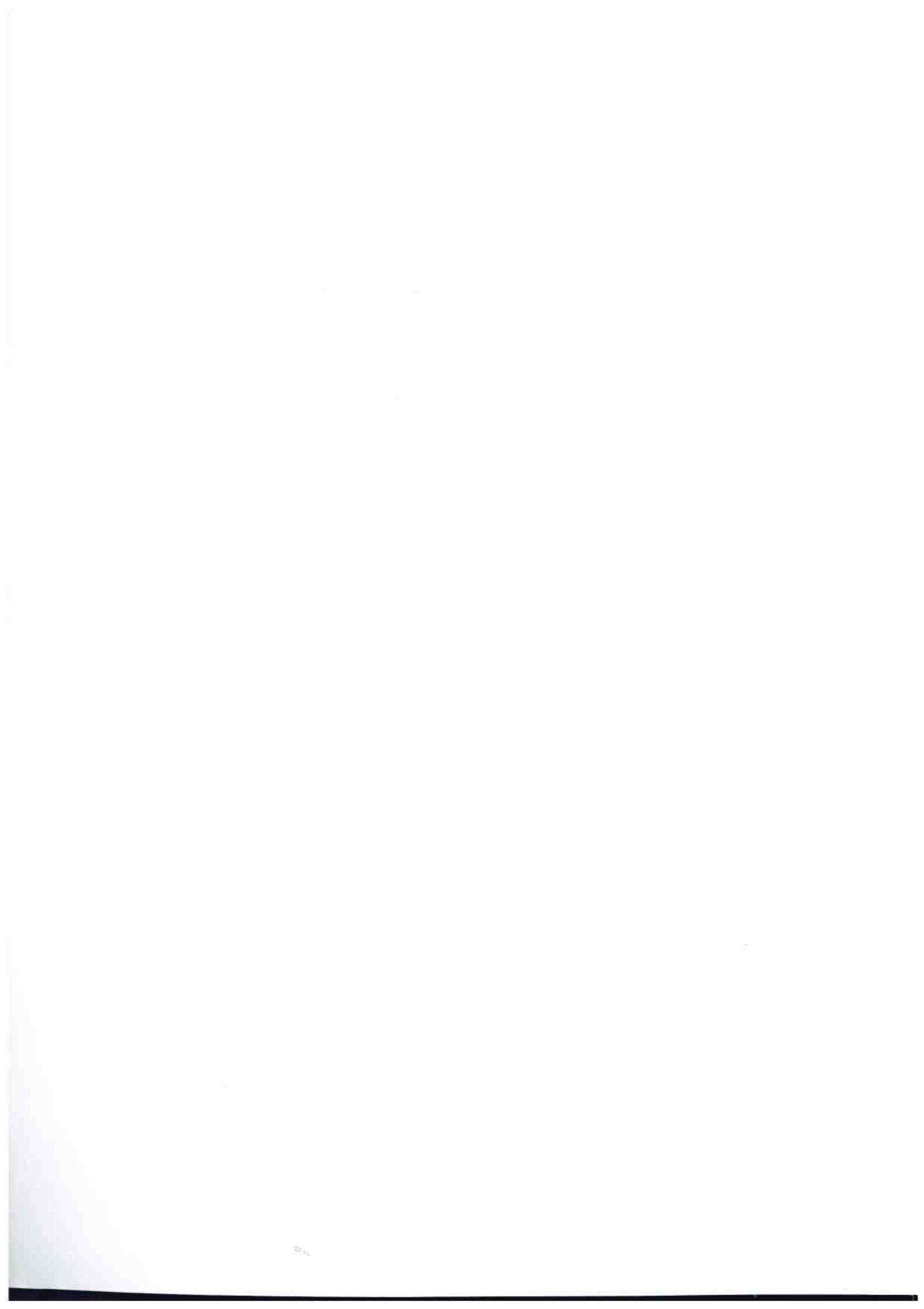
9.13 Recent policy revisions provide for the abolition of the Area of Special Control and its replacement by

newly defined designated areas within which existing policy guidelines will apply. These new designations include a **Green Belt** around the District Town and a number of **Policy Areas** where planning control is required to protect special scenic areas and those areas experiencing unacceptable development pressures. In general, the extent of the need for these designations is based on the particular circumstances, characteristics and development pressures peculiar to the Strabane District. These designations will become statutory on adoption of the Plan. Throughout the rural area development proposals will be judged against the policy guidelines contained in the publication **"Location, Siting and Design in Rural Areas."**

9.14 With regard to the wider rural conservation and management issues the introduction of The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985 together with the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1984 widens the powers available to the Department with respect to nature conservation, the enjoyment and conservation of the countryside, amenity lands and the provision of improved public access throughout the countryside. In particular the Department may in relation to the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty formulate proposals for their conservation and management. Such proposals will complement statutory planning policies and proposals as contained in the Plan.

Urban Renewal Strategy

9.15 While specific proposals for environmental improvement within towns and villages will not be drawn up except for Strabane town centre where an integrated approach to urban renewal will be adopted through the application of the various policy instruments available to the Department, the need for such improvement has been a significant consideration in the formulation of all policies and proposals. The Department will therefore actively encourage any schemes put forward within the context of the Plan that will result in environmental improvement in both larger and smaller settlements.



Part Three

Policy Framework



10.0 Introduction

10.1 In this section of the Written Statement, the Department sets out the data base and appropriate statistical analysis on which the Development Strategy for the District both urban and rural is based. Detailed data and methodologies used are to be found in the accompanying Technical Supplement.

10.2 From the outset, it should be noted that while population is an important factor in the estimation of development land needs for the major land uses, the need to plan for flexibility, choice and the phasing of development must also be taken into consideration.

11.0 Population

11.1 The population of Strabane District increased from 32,800 in 1961 to 36,279 in 1981. This increase took place within the 4 main towns of Strabane, Castlederg, Sion Mills and Newtownstewart while the population of the rural remainder declined from 20,788 in 1961 to 18,819 in 1981. **Based on past trends it is estimated that the population of the District may reach 36,900 by 1991 and 39,000 by 2001.** (See Table 1.)

11.2 The projected population figures for 2001 have been a factor in assessing future development proposals for each of the main settlements. **Strabane will remain the main centre of population. Its 2001 population may reach 15,300 while Castlederg the largest of the Local Towns may have a 2001 population of 4,000. Sion Mills and Newtownstewart may each experience population growth to 1,900.**

11.3 If these projected levels of urban population growth do occur, it will be at the expense of the rural area. However, any stabilisation or decrease in the rate of decline of rural population over the plan period will mean less growth within the towns.

11.4 Statistical information illustrating the pattern of population change in the smaller settlements is not available. Given that so many variables come into



Rural Housing

play in projecting future growth in these settlements, no population projections for the year 2001 have been prepared for the villages and hamlets.

12.0 Housing

12.1 The minimum amount of land required to be zoned for housing use within each of the main settlements is influenced by an estimation of housing need within each of them. This in turn is determined by changes in population and household composition and on the need to replace unfit dwellings. In assessing land requirements, other relevant factors include the need to plan for choice and flexibility and to allow for development phasing.

12.2 In December 1985 there was an estimated District dwelling stock of 10,373 dwellings of which 32% were located within Strabane Town. Table 2 illustrates the increase in dwelling stock for the district over the period 1971-1985. Virtually all of this increase has occurred within the 4 main settlements. They have increased their percentage of the District housing stock from 41.1% in 1971 to just over 50% in 1985 thus reflecting changes in population distribution over that period.

TABLE 1

Population Change 1961-2001

	1961 (Actual)	1981 (Actual)	1986 (Estimated)	2001 (Projected)
Strabane	7,900	11,525	12,100	15,300
Castlederg	1,367	2,682	2,900	4,000
Sion Mills	1,616	1,782	1,750	1,900
Newtownstewart	1,129	1,471	1,600	1,900
Urban Total	12,012	17,460	18,350	23,100
Rural Remainder	20,788	18,819	17,550	15,900
District Total	32,800	36,279	35,900	39,000

Sources

Census of Population Reports 1961, 1981
Census of Population 1981 Small Area Statistics
Registrar Generals Mid Year Estimate 1986



Recent private development Strabane

TABLE 2
Dwelling Stock 1971–1985

	1971	1985
Strabane	2,307	3,316
Castledearg	472	838
Sion Mills	450	552
Newtownstewart	372	490
Urban Total	3,601	5,196
Rural Remainder	5,150	5,177
District total	8,751	10,373

Sources

Census of Population Report 1971
Valuation Office "Effective" Housing Stock December 1985
Planning Service House Counts December 1985/January 1986

12.3 In estimating the number of dwellings and hence housing land required to accommodate the 2001 projected population, attention has been focused on the District Town and on the Local Towns. Within each, new dwellings will be required to cater for population growth, for new household formation, to accommodate all households presently sharing involuntarily, to replace existing and future unfit dwellings and to allow for housing stock vacancies. **Approximately 2270 additional new dwellings will consequently be required within the 4 main towns.** (See Table 3).

12.4 It is estimated that Strabane could accommodate 38.5% of new dwellings required, Castledearg 13.5%, Sion Mills 4% and Newtownstewart 5%. In order to estimate the amount of land required to accommodate these dwellings average densities of 25 dwellings per hectare have been applied for the public sector and 20 dwellings per hectare for the private sector within the District Town. An average density of 20 dwellings per hectare for both the public and private sector have been used in Castledearg, Sion Mills and Newtownstewart.

TABLE 3
Estimated Housing Need and Land Requirement 1986–2001 (Greenfield Sites)

	Additional Dwelling Requirements (Approx)	Additional Land Requirement (Ha)
Strabane	1450	62.5–65.0
Castledearg	500	25.0
Sion Mills	140	7.0
Newtownstewart	180	9.0
Urban total	2270	103.5–106.0



Sheltered Housing Strabane



Public authority housing Strabane

12.5 In the light of the Plan objective to identify sufficient land in a variety of locations within each of the main towns to meet projected housing need and to offer adequate flexibility and good choice of site, **105 hectares of housing land has been zoned in Strabane, 51 hectares in Castlederg, 23 hectares in Sion Mills and 26.5 hectares in Newtownstewart.**

12.6 Outside the 4 main towns, new house building will inevitably take place not only within the villages and hamlets but also throughout the remainder of the rural area. **Within the rural area new dwellings will not only be required to accommodate new households, but also to replace the high level of unfit dwellings that are a feature of the District.** While the Plan strategy provides for such house building, the actual number which may be built is difficult to forecast being dependent on the effect of rural development policies, the rate at which unfit dwellings are replaced and the extent to which unsound rural dwellings are repaired or improved.

13.0 Industry and Employment

13.1 The main characteristics of the employment structure within the District are a reflection of employment trends evident throughout Northern Ireland. In general, there has been a significant decline in the numbers employed in the manufacturing and construction sector while the service sector has experienced a steady growth (See Table 4). Throughout the District there is a considerable area of undeveloped industrial land and a stock of vacant or underused industrial property.

TABLE 4
Employment Structure

	1970	1984
Production (Primary)	1658 (21%)	2279 (26%)
Manufacturing (Secondary) and construction	3291 (42%)	2698 (30%)
Services (tertiary)	2774 (35%)	3840 (44%)
Unclassified	121 (2%)	
	7344	8817

Sources

West Tyrone Area Plan
DED 1984 Census
Adjusted DOA Statistics
Annual Abstract of Statistics

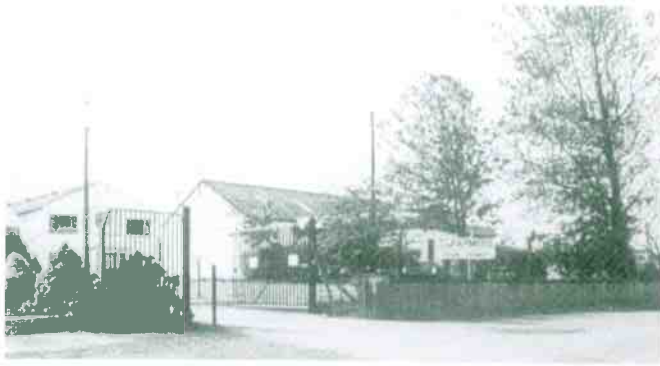
13.2 The District has a high level of unemployment which has risen from 18.1% in 1970 to 31.7% in 1988. While female employment rates remain buoyant the male unemployment rate has risen from 24% in 1970 to 41% in 1988. These trends reflect both the decline in traditional sources of employment and the predominance of female employment in the manufacturing firms represented in the area. Additionally, female employment in the service sector marginally exceeds male employment.



13.3 Most of the variables influencing the existing and future employment situation are governed by factors which are outside the scope of an Area Plan. Nevertheless, the Plan can help to create a physical framework within which job creation and industrial development can proceed through both the provision of infrastructure and the zoning of an adequate supply of industrial land in a variety of locations.

13.4 It is difficult to accurately forecast land requirements for industrial development. However, the Plan aims to ensure that those who wish to provide employment through the creation of new or expanded businesses are encouraged by the availability of zoned land. In terms of the Plan Strategy, Strabane will continue to be the major focus for future industrial development and employment opportunities but the existing industrial undertaking in Sion Mills is also expected to continue to provide a significant source of employment for the District. In contrast, it is expected that industrial development in Castlederg and Newtownstewart will continue to have more localised employment implications.

13.5 **A total of 12.9 hectares of industrial land has been zoned in Strabane.** This together with vacant buildings should satisfy industrial requirements for the town to the end of the plan period and to provide opportunities for the development of independent industrial undertakings. The amount of land zoned will ensure sufficient supply for the plan period and will provide for flexibility and choice of location to meet the various needs of developers. Within Strabane town centre, Mixed Business Zonings provide opportunities for light industrial development to locate close to the town centre. Further employment opportunities may be available by the restructuring and subdivision of existing vacant or underused industrial premises.



Strabane Town Centre

13.6 In Castleberg, 2.9 hectares and in Newtownstewart 2.4 hectares of industrial land have been zoned. In both instances this represents the balance of industrial land zoning in the former Plan which has not been taken up. In Sion Mills, 3.25 hectares of land has been zoned to facilitate the expansion of the existing manufacturing enterprise. Within designated villages and hamlets opportunities are available for small scale industrial undertakings where these can be integrated into the existing settlement form and are compatible with adjoining uses.

13.7 Where industrial proposals involve the development of new sites, appropriate landscaping and planting will be a condition of all planning consents. Where industrial development is proposed adjacent to housing or other community uses, the Department will require adjoining developers to provide a landscaped or planted buffer between the industry and such development, in order to safeguard the amenity of the adjoining uses. Additionally the Department would encourage as appropriate, the environmental improvement of existing industrial estates and developments deficient in this respect, by modern standards.

14.0 Shopping and Commerce

14.1 Within the District, Strabane is the dominant retail and commercial centre. While on one hand, its sphere of influence does not extend over the whole District since a considerable area to the north is served by Londonderry and large areas to the south are served by Omagh, on the other hand, its shopping facilities provide a service beyond the plan area into

Co. Donegal. The Local Towns accommodate varying levels of shopping and commercial facilities relative to the needs of their hinterland, with Castleberg being the most important in terms of the number and range of facilities provided. Within villages and hamlets facilities cater for local day to day requirements.

14.2 **The broad hierarchy of shopping and commercial centres within the district is unlikely to change significantly over the plan period with Strabane retaining its dominant position.** Given that its catchment area is also unlikely to change substantially the demand for additional commercial facilities will result from population increase and increases in per capita expenditure. In addition to the rationalisation and more efficient use of existing floor space and allowing for changing methods of retailing, **approximately 2,500 square metres of additional retailing floor space may be required throughout the District over the plan period.** Consistent with the Plan Strategy Strabane will accommodate the bulk of any additional floor space and the defined central area has the capacity to satisfy such demand. Local Towns and villages will continue to provide for their own day-to-day shopping needs and for that of their catchment areas through consolidation and improvement of existing premises rather than by significant expansion of existing centres.

14.3 Most office development within the District is concentrated in Strabane town centre. Within the smaller settlements there is a limited amount of office development. While office floor space is difficult to quantify in terms of future need its level of provision is likely to continue to reflect the settlement strategy, with Strabane remaining the prime location. New office development or changes of use to offices are likely to be acceptable in most town centre locations.

14.4 **Within Strabane and Castleberg a limit of town centre uses has been defined within which commercial activity will be expected to concentrate to ensure a compact town centre and to facilitate commercial prosperity.** Appropriate town centre uses will include retailing, retail services and offices and the principal objective will be the consolidation of the main shopping area to achieve compactness, convenience and efficiency of shopping.

14.5 In assessing applications for commercial development outside the established central areas in Strabane and Castlederg the aim will be to strike a balance between the needs of the District population and the need to protect the central areas from developments which might seriously impair their viability. **Proposals for small scale neighbourhood shopping provision will be judged on individual merit.**

14.6 Within Strabane Town Centre the Department has drawn up a strategy directed at urban renewal in the central area. This strategy will make use of the various policy instruments available to the Department including Comprehensive Development, Partial Pedestrianisation and Environmental Improvement.

15.0 Recreation, Open Space and Tourism

15.1 Recreation and open space demands to the end of the plan period are comprised of the needs of an increasing population and an increase in leisure time

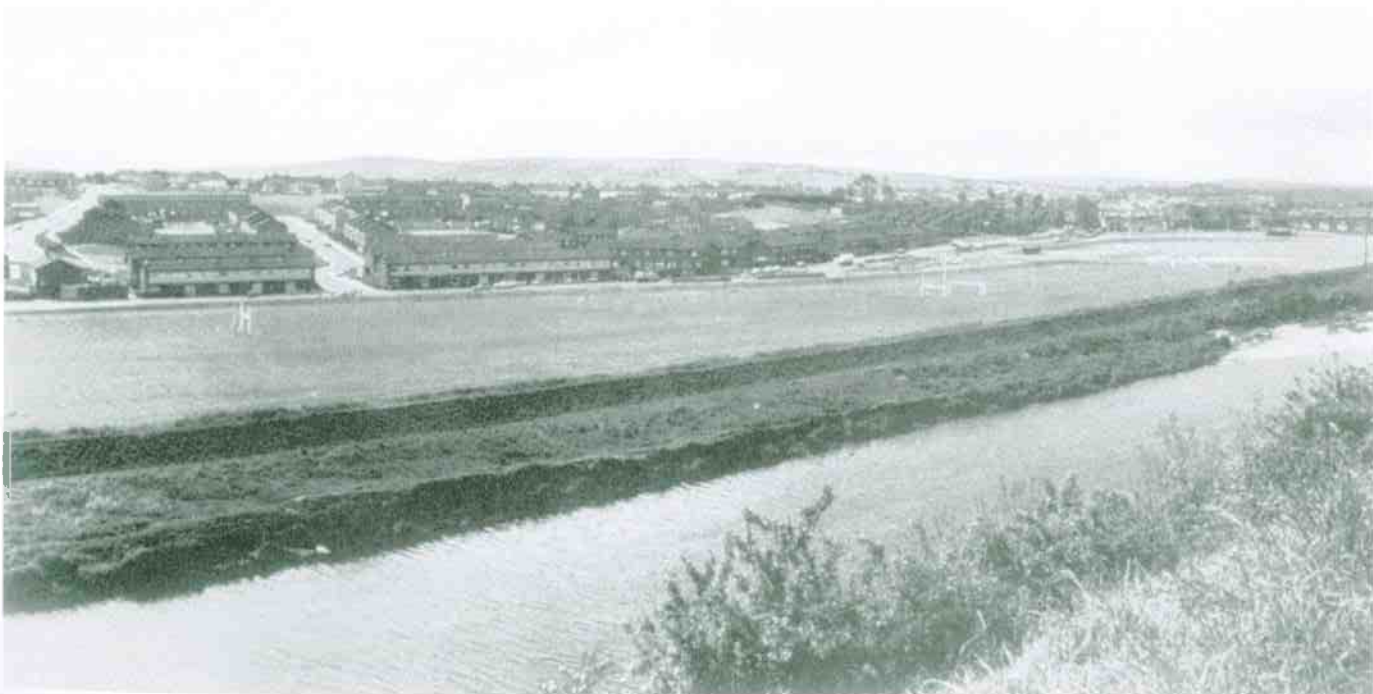


suggested by changing social trends. The need to plan for increases in and changes to the pattern of demand is recognised and flexibility of zoning is such to provide ample locational opportunities for recreation facilities in urban areas.

15.2 Existing active recreational provision within the District is concentrated for the most part within the towns and villages and it ranges from large scale indoor and outdoor facilities such as Riversdale and Derg Valley Leisure Centres and Melvin Park and Melmount Playing Fields to more localised provision within villages and hamlets and to kick-about and play areas serving particular housing estates. In addition, privately owned sports facilities associated with various sports clubs and organisations augment the level of provision. As the District Town, Strabane has the greatest number and variety of recreational facilities many of which serve the whole District. While most facilities are located within the main settlements, in general they cater not only for the needs of that settlement but also for the needs of the surrounding rural hinterland.

15.3 More passive forms of recreational activity have been provided for by the District Council at the Sperrin Heritage Centre and at Moorlough, by the Department of Agriculture at Killeter, Ligfordrum and Goles Forest and by the National Trust at President Wilson's Home at Dergalt and Gray's Printing Presses at Strabane. Additionally, the Ulster Way Long Distance Footpath passes through the Glenelly Valley. Provision for passive recreation made in adjoining Districts such as the Ulster American Folk Park, Gortin Forest Park, Fermanagh Lakeland and the coastline of County Donegal also serve the District.

15.4 The National Playing Fields Association standard is a useful guideline for assessing the demand for outdoor sport and active recreational facilities and using it the Department has established that a shortfall in terms of provision and distribution exists in Strabane, Castlederg and Sion Mills. Table 5





sets out existing provision and the envisaged 2001 requirements for the 4 main towns. It includes both private and public sports grounds and playing fields but excludes school playing fields and golf courses. **Within Strabane and Castlederg there is a need for additional land suitable for recreation and open space more widely distributed throughout the urban areas while in Sion Mills where existing provision caters for organised sport there are proposals to provide for passive recreational facilities. Sufficient land is currently available in Newtownstewart to meet the needs of the plan period.**

TABLE 5

Active Recreational Facilities 1986–2001

	1986 Provision (Ha)	2001 Requirement (Ha)
Strabane	16.8	27.5
Castlederg	2.8	7.2
Sion Mills	3.6	3.4
Newtownstewart	8.5	3.4

15.5 In general, sufficient land has been zoned for open space purposes to make good the shortfall where it exists, to enable its provision to keep pace with the needs of an increase in population and to achieve an equitable distribution of facilities throughout the District. The level of provision of amenity open space within the various settlements is influenced by the

character and potential of certain parts of these towns and the need to protect areas of high amenity within them.

15.6 Assessment of additional open space requirements within the main towns is based on the assumption that existing areas of open space will remain in that use. Consequently, changes of use of existing open space will not be acceptable unless the Department is satisfied that such spaces are no longer required for community purposes.

15.7 Since Strabane District Council has primary responsibility for the provision of recreational, social and cultural facilities throughout the plan area, the open space and recreational proposals for each of the 4 main towns are intended to provide a framework within which the District Council might plan for future recreational provision. The level of provision envisaged for each town reflects its individual status in the context of the Plan Strategy with most additional facilities being provided for within Strabane.

15.8 The District's major natural resource lies in the Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Additionally, the District lies at the gateway to Donegal and experiences a substantial volume of through tourist traffic. Despite these factors the area traditionally attracts a very small proportion of the Province's tourist trade, a situation which recent tourist studies and marketing strategies have sought to rectify.



Sperrin Heritage Centre



15.9 To date these studies have encouraged the development of the Sperrin Heritage Centre at Cranagh, Tourist Information Centres at Newtown Stewart and Sion Mills and a caravan park at Newtown Stewart, and have marketed the main traffic route from Newry to Strabane as an integrated tourist destination based on a range of existing and planned attractions. One of the scenic drives identified by this marketing strategy passes through the District from Omagh–Gortin–Plumbridge–Sperrin Heritage Centre–Strabane. These studies further highlight the need for improvement and marketing of existing resources by the appropriate bodies, with a view to attracting the touring visitor, the day visitor and the activity-based visitor.

15.10 The Plan will therefore seek to ensure that all natural resources are protected and enhanced in a sensitive and responsible manner while ensuring access to them is made available and the impact of new development in areas of high scenic quality is carefully assessed to ensure that environmental impact is minimised.

16.0 Transportation

16.1 In view of the importance of the Omagh–Strabane–Londonderry road (T3) and the short connection from Strabane to the land boundary at Lifford (A38) as traffic routes, these roads are designated by the Department as **Protected Routes**. This protection involves strict control over the creation of new accesses and the intensification in the use of existing accesses in the interests of safety and convenience of traffic using the protected route.

16.2 The Department is responsible for the provision of new roads and car parks, for the maintenance of the existing road network including up-grading and for the implementation of traffic management measures where required.

16.3 The proposals contained in the Plan are geared primarily towards the improvement of the Omagh–Strabane–Londonderry road (T3), the reduction of traffic congestion and vehicular/pedestrian conflict in urban areas and the improvement of the existing roads system to remove traffic hazards and to facilitate future development. Urban car parking provision will be monitored on an on-going basis and additional spaces will be provided where practicable, to meet the demand.

17.0 Public Utilities

17.1 Water Supply

17.1.1 Mains water is available throughout the District and is supplied mainly by extraction from the River Derg and from Lough Braden and Caw Hill, both of the latter being located beyond the District boundary. In addition, storage is provided at a large number of service reservoirs. **Proposed minor extensions and improvements to the present network will cater for new development areas, the phasing of these improvements being determined by the implementation of the Plan proposals.**

17.2 Sewage Treatment

17.2.1 A new sewage treatment works and associated infrastructure has recently been completed in Strabane to a capacity sufficient to meet the needs of the District Town throughout the plan period. A similar situation exists in Castleterg, Newtown Stewart and Sion Mills. **New or extended provision is required within a number of villages and hamlets. At these locations it will be necessary to phase development in line with the provision of sewerage infrastructure.**

17.2.2 In determining planning applications involving land within 300 metres of sewage treatment works, the Department will seek to ensure that permission is not given for developments which would suffer loss of amenity from smell nuisance. Applications will be approved or refused, depending on the circumstances prevailing at particular locations. Relevant considerations will include the nature and capacity of the treatment works, local topography, prevailing wind direction, screening and disposition of

existing development, nature of the proposed development, the precise position of actual smell sources within the boundaries of the works and the advice of the Environmental Health Authority.

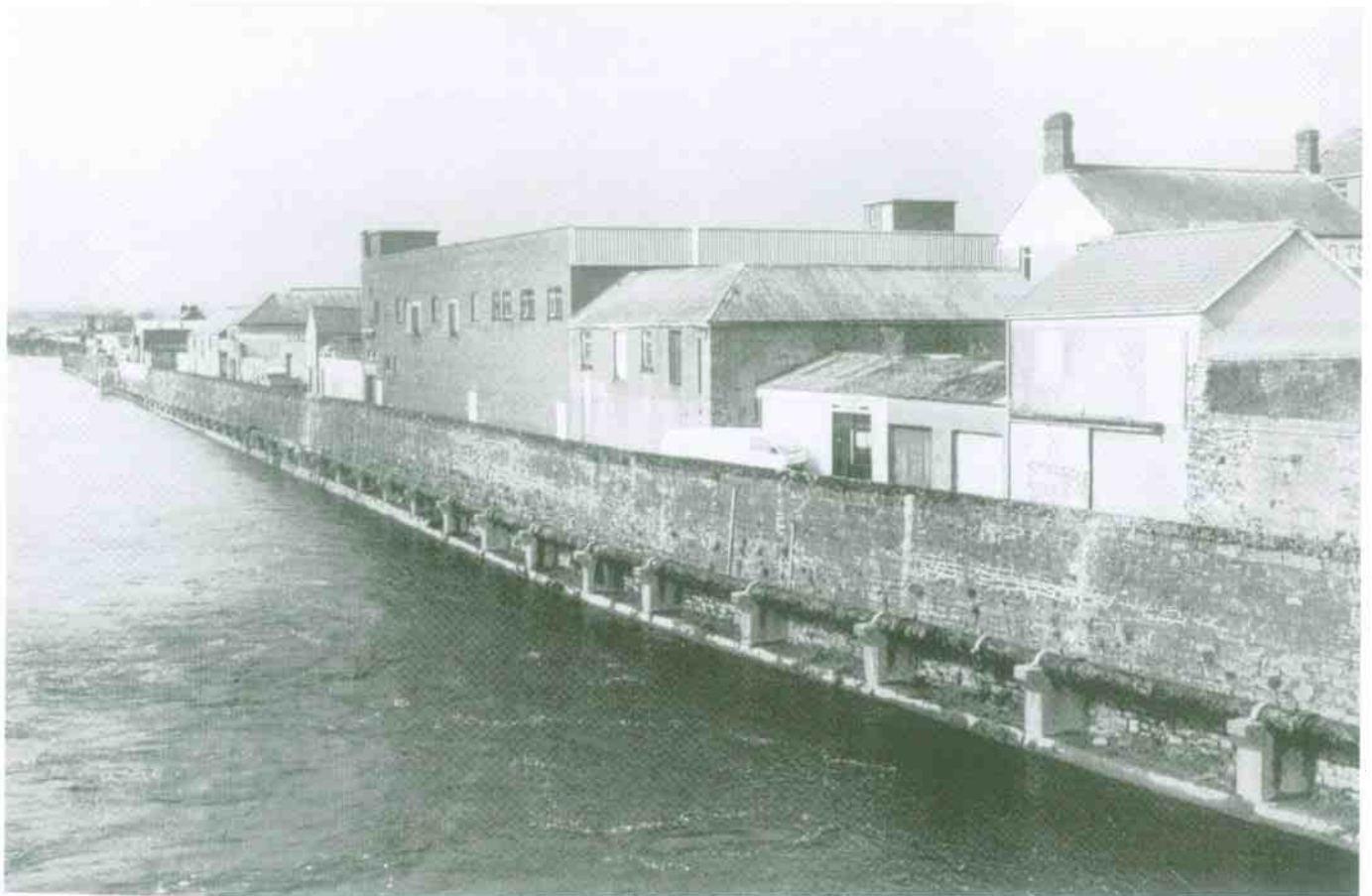
17.3 Waste Disposal

17.3.1 The Pollution Control and Local Government (NI) Order 1978 places a statutory obligation on



Strabane District Council to carry out surveys to assess the arrangements needed to dispose of waste materials within the District, whether by the Council or by private contractors. For the foreseeable future, it is envisaged that waste materials will continue to be disposed of to landfill sites, 2 of which are currently operated in the District at Carricklee and Spamount. Since 1986, the Spamount site has been used only for inert materials, most of the waste collected by the Council being disposed of at Carricklee, which has a life expectancy of about 7 years. At present, no landfill sites in the District have been authorised for use by private contractors.

17.3.2 Because of their nature, landfill sites for the disposal of refuse and waste materials usually have to be located in the rural area. In considering planning applications for such developments, the Department will pay particular regard to the visual prominence of the site, its accessibility in relation to the nature of the traffic to be generated, the amount of residential development in close proximity and the need to prevent pollution of water resources. There will be a presumption against permission being granted for landfill sites involving the disposal of household and commercial refuse and some types of industrial waste in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Areas of Scientific Interest and Nature Reserves. Subject to these considerations, the Department is inclined to look favourably on proposals involving derelict land which offer prospects of environmental improvement or more beneficial after-use following completion of landfilling operations.



Waterwall Strabane

17.4 Drainage

17.4.1 Storm water from within the lands zoned for development can generally be accommodated by the existing watercourse systems, subject to the approval of discharge points. In some cases downstream improvement works may be required in advance of significant development.

17.4.2 Within Strabane town a recent feasibility study had confirmed the need to upgrade the flood defences along the River Mourne to protect those low lying parts of Strabane in the event of flood conditions as evidenced in October 1987. **The Department of Agriculture, Drainage Division therefore propose shortly to implement Phase I of a scheme to alleviate the flood risk by raising the flood defences by 1.2 metres and replacing the existing Water Wall along the southern boundary of the town centre with a new reinforced concrete wall. This will be followed by Phase II which entails the construction of a reinforced concrete core wall in the existing earthbank on the opposite side of the river, from Strabane Golf Course to the proposed By-Pass Bridge. Additionally, where the proposed By-Pass crosses the flood plain at a low level it is intended to incorporate an earthbank adjacent to the western verge of the road, thus creating an additional line of defence protecting the urban area from downstream flood waters.** This proposed drainage scheme presents opportunities for town centre environmental improvement and open space provision.



Castleberg Health Centre



Strabane Hospital

18 Community Facilities

18.1 Education

18.1.1 Education facilities in the District are provided by the Western Education and Library Board and the Voluntary School Authorities. **Where land is likely to be required for new schools, locations have been identified on the relevant town Proposals Map and as appropriate, land has been reserved for likely extensions to existing schools.**

18.2 Social and Community Facilities

18.2.1 Social and community service provision is mainly the responsibility of the Western Health and Social Service Board, the District Council and Government Departments. **In the absence of specific proposals no land has been identified but related zonings allow for the provision of appropriate local health and community facilities in association with other neighbourhood uses.**

19.0 Environmental Protection and Conservation

19.1 Introduction

19.1.1 The Conservation of the natural and man-made environments has been a major consideration in

the formulation of all policies and proposals. Additional environmental control is already provided under The Planning (NI) Order 1972 relating in particular to Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and the protection of trees. The Historic Monuments Act 1971 provides protection for archaeological sites and historic monuments and the more recently introduced Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985 make provision with respect to nature conservation, the enjoyment and conservation of the countryside and amenity lands.

19.2 Rural Areas

Nature and Countryside Conservation

19.2.1 The District contains a substantial portion of the **Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)** as designated under the Amenity Lands Act (NI) 1965 but to be redesignated early in the plan period under The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985. The practical effect in planning terms of such designation is to ensure that in the consideration of development proposals within this area **particular attention is given to the protection of the area's visual amenity and landscape character.** Further in the interests of nature conservation, the **Killeter Forest National Nature Reserve** is an area reserved, managed and used for the purpose of conserving its wildlife and vegetation. **The Dart and Sawel Area of Scientific Interest** is important because of its blanket peat and the associated erosion features and the **Moneygal Bog Area of Special Scientific Interest** is a fine example of a western raised bog containing a number of unusual features. Any development proposals within these areas will be considered against their impact on this scientific interest.

Ancient Monuments

19.2.2 Throughout the District, archaeological sites and historic monuments can be seen. A number are scheduled for protection under the Historic Monuments Act (NI) 1971, but the scheduling programme is ongoing so the fact that a site or monument has not been specifically protected does not diminish its

archaeological importance or its significance as an element in the historic landscape.

Agricultural Land

19.2.3 The quality of agricultural land throughout the District varies from relatively high quality along the main river valleys to poor quality upland areas in the Sperrin Mountains and in the western parts of the area. Much of the higher quality land is vulnerable because of its proximity to the main settlements where development pressures are greatest. In identifying the limits to development for settlements the Department has avoided the severance of farm units where practicable. Land use zonings are proposed with the objective of minimising the impact of future development on the existing stock of good quality agricultural land.

Farm Buildings

19.2.4 Farming practices will continue to be the major factor shaping the rural environment but it is acknowledged that many changes to landscape resulting from farming activities are outside the scope of planning control. Many of the larger farm installations and buildings can be visually obtrusive and while the Department's powers are limited, it will continue to do what it can to reduce the impact of agricultural buildings on the landscape.

Mineral Extraction

19.2.5 The mineral extraction industry in the District consists primarily of sand and gravel workings. Currently there are 12 pits actively being worked in the valleys of the Mourne, Burndennett and Glenmornan Rivers. The largest concentration of pits and old sand workings is in the lower Burndennett valley. Only 3 hard rock quarries are active in the district.

19.2.6 **The Department will support in principle the continued production of aggregates from areas which are already being exploited** in order to facilitate the fullest use of those resources and to relieve pressure for development elsewhere. Nevertheless, **permissions where granted will carry conditions designed to minimise environmental disturbance.**



Harry Avery's Castle Newtown Stewart



19.3 Urban Areas

Urban Environment

19.3.1 Each settlement within the District has its own distinctive character. Future development should ensure the preservation of existing assets and should make a positive contribution to improvement in the quality of the urban environment. **New development should be carefully designed to respect the scale and character of existing buildings, using sympathetic building materials and should respect existing street patterns, landmarks, topographical and other features which contribute to the character of each town. Additionally the Department will use its power to control the display of signs and advertisements to ensure that these are sensitively designed and positioned in relation to both individual buildings and townscape. Signs or advertisements which are a hazard to traffic will be unacceptable.**

Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

19.3.2 Where an area displays characteristics considered to be of special architectural or historic interest and as such is deserving of protection or enhancement the Department may designate it as a Conservation Area. **Sion Mills has been so designated with a view to protecting it from the effects of undesirable development.** Acceptable standards of development are set out in the Conservation Area Report for Sion Mills and development proposals are assessed by the Department on the positive contribution they make to the protection and enhancement of the character of the area.



19.3.3 Under the terms of Article 31 of The Planning (NI) Order 1972 the Department is empowered to “list” individual buildings or blocks of buildings considered to be of architectural or of historic interest, in order to afford them additional protection from undesirable forms of development. Consent is required to demolish a Listed Building and grant aid may be available to assist with repair and maintenance. The District contains a substantial number of Listed Buildings.

Part Four

Statement of Policies and
Proposals and Maps—
District Town



20.0 Introduction

20.1 Strabane as the District Town is the principal settlement in the District accommodating a wide variety of functions and facilities and continuing to experience a wide range of development pressures. Its population has increased from 9,500 in 1971 to 12,100 in 1986 and its 2001 population may reach approximately 15,300.

20.2 This section of the Plan sets out the development proposals for Strabane town in a form comprising a Proposals Map together with an explanation of the proposals and policies contained therein. The map indicates the broad land use framework envisaged within an overall development limit encompassing the principal land uses and road proposals and a limit of town centre uses.

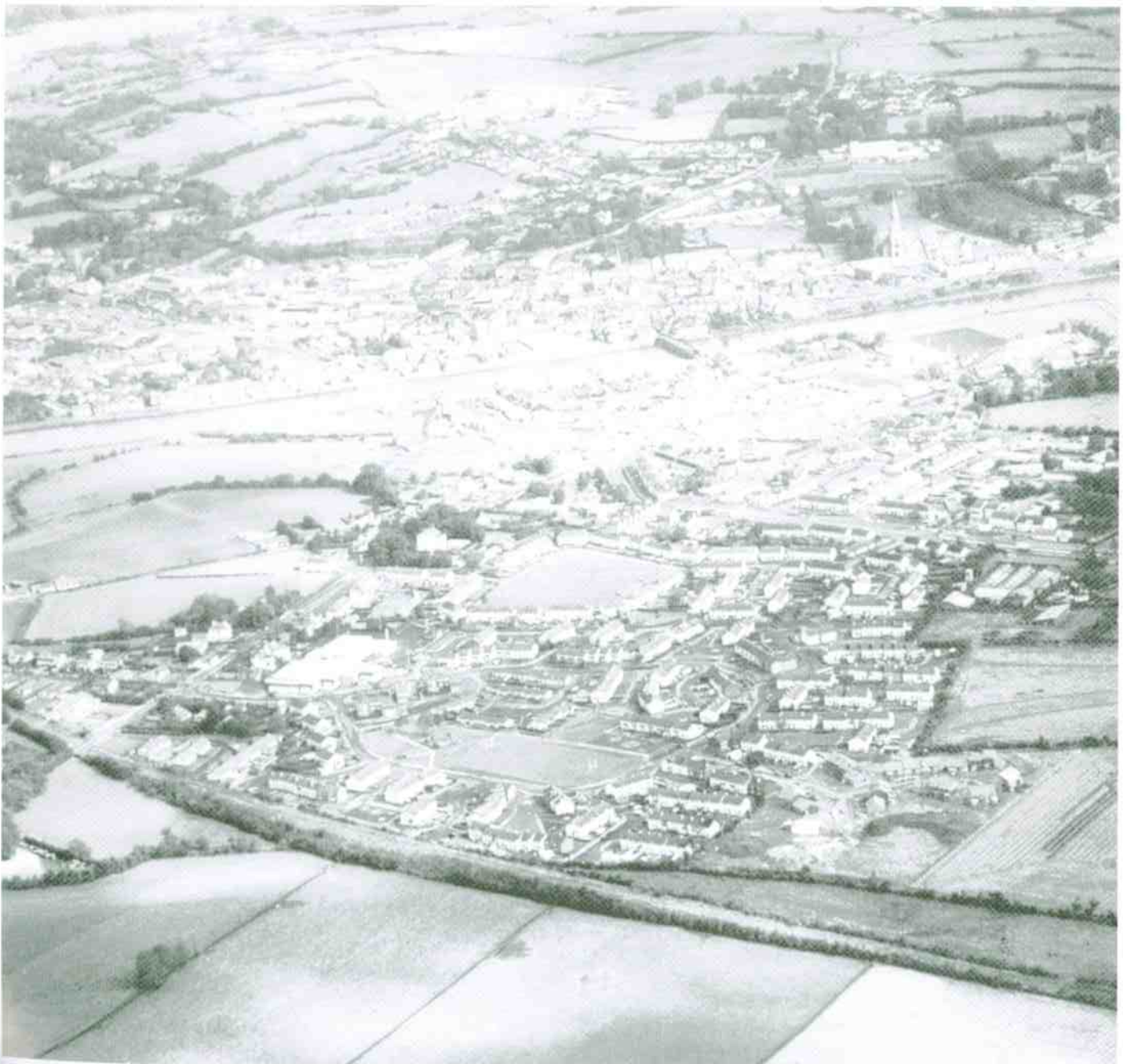
20.3 The town centre is considered to merit more detailed consideration and proposals are accordingly set out in the second part of this section.

21.0 Issues and Opportunities

21.1 Additional areas suitable for housing development are required in Strabane to meet the expected population increase, new household formation and to provide for flexibility and choice. In particular, the Plan recognises the need to make provision for housing to the north of the river.

21.2 While open space and recreation provision to the south of the river has generally kept pace with housing development, areas to the north are less well provided for. The Plan seeks to rectify this imbalance.

21.3 Given the changes in the economic climate which have occurred since the West Tyrone Area Plan proposals were prepared, it has been necessary to re-assess policies and land use zonings in relation to industry. While a land use plan of itself cannot resolve unemployment problems it can ensure that no major land use or infrastructural impediments stand in the way of industrial development and job creation.



21.4 Strabane has developed astride the main Omagh–Londonderry road (T3) and close to the smaller settlements of Sion Mills, Glebe and Ballymagorry. The border with the Republic of Ireland lies immediately to the west. The development limit for Strabane has therefore been defined to achieve a compact and well defined urban form, to prevent coalescence of settlements and extended ribboning to the north and south and to protect the amenity of the surrounding countryside which provides the setting for the town.

21.5 Strabane town centre and main approach roads are subject to heavy traffic loadings and frequent congestion especially along the approaches to Strabane Bridge and in the Abercorn Square area. The by-pass as proposed will remove much of the by-passing traffic from the town centre and its main approaches. It should also prove attractive for many cross-town traffic movements resulting in a significant general environmental improvement throughout the urban area. In addition to its function as a traffic route the by-pass will also offer development opportunities in areas south of the river which are currently poorly served by roads infrastructure.

21.6 The town centre has an influence extending beyond the town and to some extent beyond the district. Since it is important that it maintains and expands its functions and facilities it is given specific consideration later in this section of the Plan.

21.7 In October 1987 a considerable area of the town centre and beyond suffered from extensive flooding when the flood defences along the Rivers Mourne and Finn were breached. The Department of Agriculture (Drainage Division) has drawn up proposals to renew the flood defences thus providing the area contained within them with a higher degree of protection than currently exists. Development of land within the river floodplains not protected by the proposed scheme will therefore be constrained because of a continuing flooding risk. Flood protection works particularly at the Water Wall will also create certain opportunities for environmental improvement.

22.0 Development Pattern

22.1 The original urban nucleus of Strabane developed northwards from the river, but most post-war development has taken place to the south. Its development pattern and urban character have been traditionally influenced by a number of constraints. The border with the Republic of Ireland has restricted development opportunities to the west, while steep topography to the east and north east has pushed development northwards and southwards. The river and the capacity of its proposed flood defences limit development opportunities close to it, while in other areas, access and sewerage infrastructure limitations have shaped the direction and the pace of growth.

22.2 It is anticipated that the population of Strabane may increase to about 15,300 over the plan period and that the greatest development pressures will arise in respect of housing land. Despite the constraints highlighted above there will be sufficient development opportunities to satisfy anticipated

demands for both infill and peripheral development sites. These will allow for the consolidation of the existing urban area and for the maintenance of a compact and well defined urban form.

23.0 General Objectives

23.1 The policies and proposals drawn up for Strabane are designed to meet the following objectives:

- to provide adequate development land in a range of defined locations to meet the expected needs of the area's population in terms of housing, industry, open space, community facilities and town centre uses
- to improve the quality of the urban environment
- to promote a vibrant town centre and increase its attractiveness as a place in which to live, work, use and invest by protecting and enhancing its physical environment and, improving its accessibility and level of car parking provision
- to make effective use of new and existing infrastructure
- to define development limits which prevent urban sprawl, ribbon development and coalescence of settlements and to minimise the encroachment of development onto high quality agricultural land.

24.0 Development Strategy

24.1 To control the form of the urban area and to ensure that sufficient land for all development activity throughout the plan period is zoned in a variety of locations to allow for reasonable flexibility and choice.

24.2 Existing development pressures indicate that without control, ribbon and scattered development would become a feature of the rural area beyond the edge of the town with resultant suburban sprawl threatening the setting of the town and the open countryside separating it from neighbouring settlements. Thus the development limit of the town being the inner boundary of the Green Belt has been defined to protect the adjoining countryside while allowing the urban area to expand in a controlled way.

24.3 While sufficient land has been included within the development limit to meet the anticipated development demands of the plan period it should be borne in mind that long term projections of population, development trends and economic change necessary to guide policy and infrastructure investment are subject to uncertainty and unlikely to remain unchanged throughout the plan period. The Department will monitor and review trends policies and zonings and make adjustments, though the statutory process, as appropriate, in the light of changing circumstances.

25.0 Development Limit and Zonings

25.1 The development limit defines the outer edge of Strabane's proposed development area, its purpose being to achieve a compact and well defined urban area. It also defines the inner edge of the proposed Green Belt. The areas specifically zoned for each main land use within the limit are those with the best development potential which are well located in both physical and visual terms in relation to existing development. Together, the development limit and zonings have had regard for topographical characteristics, agricultural land quality, the threat of flooding and the availability of existing or planned infrastructure. The estimated land requirement for each major use has influenced the extent of its zoning. While the major land use zonings have been defined relative to site boundaries minor adjustments may be required to ensure the proper development of zoned land. The general presumption is that development outside the development limit will not be permitted during the plan period other than in accordance with Rural Policy.

25.2 The zonings on the Proposals Map represent the predominant land uses envisaged. With regard to the larger housing areas where the scale of development would be such as to justify the provision of incidental open space, local shops or social and community facilities, such non-residential use suitably located would generally be compatible with the predominant housing use. In the case of industrial areas, retailing would not be considered to be a use compatible with the predominant industrial use.

26.0 White Land

26.1 The urban area defined within the development limit contains areas of unzoned or **white land**. Development proposals within these areas or within areas of existing urban development will be considered on their particular locational merits in accordance with accepted planning guidelines or stated policies. Some of this white land though well located has limited development potential because of its topography or because of problems with access, flooding, drainage and/or servicing. The development of such land will depend on the resolution of these problems. Other areas of white land which could accommodate a range of possible development options have been left unzoned because the Department considers it inappropriate to indicate a preferred use in the interests of flexibility.

27.0 Development Activity

27.1 The policies and proposals in respect of the principal development activities for Strabane are set out in the following paragraphs.

28.0 Housing

28.1 Objectives

- to identify sufficient land for new housing

- to provide a choice of housing sites in convenient locations to support the provision of a range of dwelling types to meet different housing needs

- to protect the character and amenity of existing residential areas

28.2 Within Strabane 105 hectares of land have been zoned for housing. It is estimated that the 2001 population may reach approximately 15,300 and although the 1450 additional dwellings required for this scale of population growth could be accommodated on 65 hectares of land some overprovision has been made. This overzoning takes account of ownership patterns, of detailed site constraints and of the need to provide for flexibility and choice.

28.3 With regard to the detailed development of new housing areas, the Department will encourage the use of a varied and good quality range of layouts, house types, open areas, and densities, well landscaped and with good pedestrian linkages to the main open space and amenity areas. The residential character of existing housing areas will be protected by preventing the intrusion of unacceptable and non-conforming non-residential uses.

28.4 It is the policy of the Department to seek the provision of manageable level, grassed areas of incidental open space within the larger housing developments suitable for informal amenity and play use. Such areas will require to be well located within housing developments, preferably overlooked by dwellings and public ways and to be incorporated into the design layout.

28.5 Within housing developments, internal development roads provided by the developer, will, if they provide for general public use, be subject to Departmental approval at the planning stage, and be adopted and subsequently maintained by the Department upon satisfactory completion.

28.6 While the Department has not specified development densities for particular housing areas and while it is recognised that trends in the private sector have been towards relatively higher densities, development proposals should take account of the character and density of adjoining development and have due regard to the quality of the immediate environment including the protection of existing planting or other landscape features.



28.7 Housing Zonings

28.7.1 A 0.5 hectare site suitable for a small housing development which would access off Woodend Road has been zoned at **Roundhill**.

28.7.2 Private sector housing development has already commenced on part of the 5.2 hectares of land zoned at **Derry Road North**. While part of the remainder can be developed via "Glenside", that area to the south could be accessed via MacDermott's Lane provided this currently substandard private laneway is brought up to adoptable standard.

28.7.3 The 4.4 hectares **between Nancy's Lane and Glen Road** can be accessed from both of these frontages but the private section of Nancy's Lane will be required to be brought up to adoptable standard by the developer before development commences on the northern part of this area.

28.7.4 A substantial part of the 25.7 hectares zoned for housing at **Curly Hill** was previously zoned for this use in the West Tyrone Area Plan but has remained largely undeveloped to date. A road improvement scheme is proposed on Curly Hill Road which will facilitate its proper development. Given the extent of the zoning it will be important to ensure a comprehensive approach to all proposals. Planting and landscaping to visually break up development will be a requirement in respect of all planning applications and subsequent development.



Existing Private Housing at Curly Hill



Housing development opportunities north of Urney Road

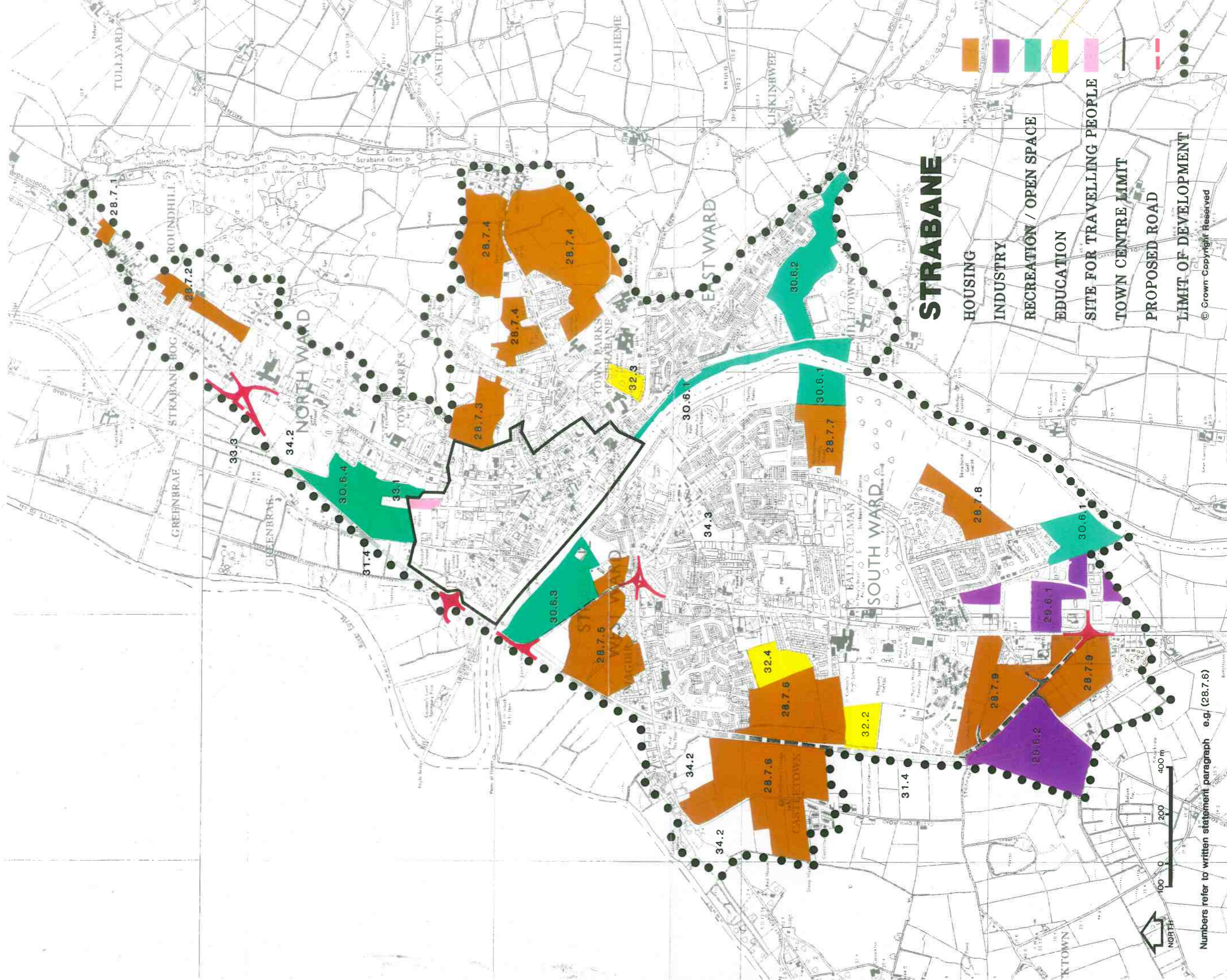
28.7.5 To the **north of Urney Road** 9.4 hectares are zoned for housing. Development of this land is partially dependent on the implementation of the Urney Road link to the proposed by-pass although part of that area can be developed from Urney Road. Planning permission for a small housing scheme already exists on the land to the east of the proposed road link, where it will be necessary to raise development levels to avoid the risk of flooding. Additionally, landscaping will be a requirement along the new road frontages of the site.

28.7.6 Development within the major housing zonings at **Castletown** and **Melmount** comprising 27.3 hectares, will be largely dependent on the provision of sewerage infrastructure and implementation of Phase II of the by-pass road proposals, although within the former area, there may in the interim be limited development opportunities off Urney Road and Castletown Road. Within the Castletown zoning some adjustment to development boundaries may be necessary when detailed development proposals are drawn up because of the possibility of flooding and in some areas it may also be necessary to raise development levels to alleviate the risk of flooding. Landscaping and planting to provide a buffer zone along the proposed by-pass, and to break up development into discrete areas, will be a requirement of all development proposals.

28.7.7 To the **east of Ballycolman Nursery School**, 4.3 hectares of housing land have been identified. This area should be accessed via Ballycolman Estate.

28.7.8 A large private housing development is already under construction on the 8.5 hectare site zoned to the **south of Ballycolman Road**.

28.7.9 To the **west of Melmound Road** at the southern end of Strabane 16.4 hectares of land has been zoned for housing. Development is already under construction on part of the area to the north of Strahans Road and while the development of much of the remainder of this area is dependant on Phase II of the by-pass some development off Dublin Road could take place in advance of the road scheme.



STRABANE

- HOUSING
- INDUSTRY
- RECREATION / OPEN SPACE
- EDUCATION
- SITE FOR TRAVELLING PEOPLE
- TOWN CENTRE LIMIT
- PROPOSED ROAD
- LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT

Numbers refer to written statement paragraph e.g. (28.7.6)

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- 105 hectares of housing land have been zoned to meet the projected housing need of the plan period
- The Department will encourage the provision of a range of densities and house types and varied and good quality layouts to meet a variety of housing needs
- High standards of layout, design and landscaping will be sought for new housing development
- A comprehensive rather than piecemeal approach will be a requirement of the development of all major housing zonings
- Housing development will remain the predominant land use within all existing residential areas
- All new development will be required to meet with standard requirements in terms of access and site layout
- Within new housing areas developers will be required where necessary to provide pedestrian linkages and an appropriate amount of suitably located open space
- Development proposals for land adjacent to the line of the proposed by-pass and associated link roads will be required to include significant planting and landscaping treatment in order to provide an acceptable level of amenity within the housing areas created
- Within areas where the risk of flooding may occur development levels will be required to be raised to an appropriate level
- In some locations development will require to be phased in line with road improvement schemes or the provision of roads, drainage and sewerage infrastructure
- Residential amenity in existing residential areas will be protected from the introduction of incompatible non-conforming uses

29.0 Industry

29.1 Objectives

- to allocate sufficient land to meet the needs of industry
- to encourage a high standard of environmental quality within industrial areas

29.2 Dublin Road and Ballycolman Industrial Estates will continue to provide the focus for existing industrial development in Strabane. The former includes an area of undeveloped land and together they contain approximately 5,700 sq metres of vacant industrial buildings. This provision in addition to the new zoning at **Old Castlederg Road** and the



potential available in the **Mixed Business Zonings** in the Town Centre is considered to be sufficient to provide for the needs of the Industrial Development Board and the private industrial developer over the plan period. It should ensure a good distribution of industrial land convenient to the main road network and to housing areas throughout the various sectors of the town.

29.3 Potential for the development or expansion of small scale industrial businesses also exists in other locations throughout the urban area. Each proposal presented will be judged on its individual merits with its compatibility with adjoining uses being a major consideration.

29.4 Previous West Tyrone Area Plan industrial zonings at Urney Road and at Castletown have been abandoned and land in these locations is no longer being protected for this purpose.

29.5 Industrial development proposals will be required to include a landscaping and planting scheme designed generally to create more attractive industrial environments and to screen industrial development and provide buffer areas with adjoining uses. The Department would further encourage the implementation and maintenance of landscaping works within the existing industrial areas in order to upgrade their general environment.

29.6 Industrial Zonings

29.6.1 Within the **Dublin Road Industrial Estate** 4.4 hectares of undeveloped land remain. This zoning excludes the area on which planning permission was recently granted for a customs clearance station.

29.6.2 To the north of Old Castledearg Road 8.5 hectares of land has been zoned for industry. Development of this area will be generally dependent on completion of Phase II of the by-pass as Old Castledearg Road and its junction with Melmount Road are unsuitable for use by heavy traffic. Additionally, sewage pumping is likely to be required in this area.

29.7 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- Existing industrial areas at Ballycolman and Dublin Road will be retained
- 8.5 hectares of land have been zoned at Old Castledearg Road for industrial use to meet the requirements to the end of the plan period
- An appropriate standard of environmental treatment particularly along boundaries with existing and proposed residential development will be required in association with all development



Melmount Centre

- New development proposals will be expected to meet high standards of layout, design and landscaping
- Small scale industrial development in other locations will be assessed against its impact on adjoining development
- All existing industrial undertakings will be encouraged to upgrade their immediate surroundings by planting and landscaping

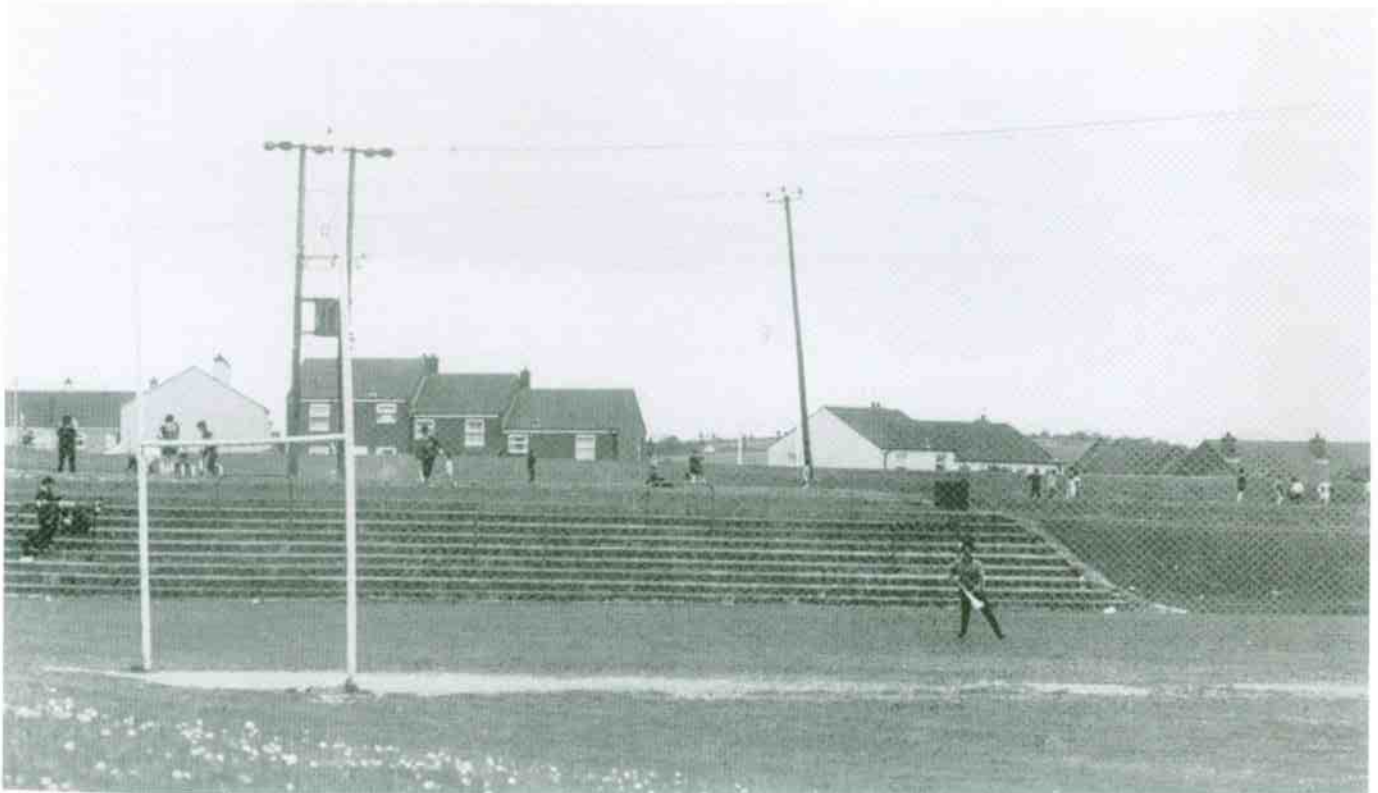
30.0 Recreation and Open Space

30.1 Objectives

- to allocate sufficient land to meet the needs of recreation and amenity
- to retain existing public and private open space provision

30.2 Approximately 20 hectares of land devoted to outdoor recreation and open space are presently available within Strabane concentrated principally at Melmount and at Melvin Park in the southern sector of the town. This provision comprises both public and private facilities and caters for gaelic football, soccer, rugby, cricket, handball, tennis and athletics. In addition indoor recreation facilities available at Riversdale and at Melvin Park are also located to the south of the town.

30.3 If the National Playing Fields Association standard were to be met a total provision of 27.5 hectares of land for outdoor active recreation would be required by the end of the plan period. Thirty-five



Existing recreational provision at Melmount

hectares of open space and recreation land has been zoned in Strabane to provide for active and passive recreational use and to make good the imbalance of provision north and south of the river.

30.4 In addition to these larger zonings described below it will be the policy of the Department to require the provision of appropriate levels of open space within new housing developments to provide for the localised requirements of individual housing areas. The location and level of such provision will be based on the merits of individual development proposals submitted.

30.5 In a situation where development pressures may be applied to areas of open space, the Department will ensure the retention of existing areas of open space except in situations where community need no longer exists and no particular amenity value attaches to the land.

30.6 Recreation and Open Space Zonings

30.6.1 The **River Mourne** provides Strabane with its major resource in terms of passive recreational provision. The Department would encourage the retention and development of the amenity potential of this resource building on the existing public and private provision along the river. Opportunities are thus available to provide pedestrian access along both sides of the river, from the southern limit of the town, and beyond, right into the town centre. The land zoned to the **south of Laurel Drive** is intended to provide localised facilities for surrounding residential

development. The District Council has a scheme to develop outdoor recreational facilities along the river bank at **Meetinghouse Street** and **Townsend Street** and a proposal to develop facilities adjacent to the existing golf course at **Ballycolman**. In addition, the Department considers it important to protect the amenity of the river along **Milltown Road** and land has been zoned accordingly. The proposed scheme to renew the flood defences for the town centre also presents opportunities to develop riverside amenity and this is highlighted within that section of the Plan detailing town centre proposals.

30.6.2 To the east of the river at **Drumrallagh 8.5 hectares** of land have been zoned for open space use to provide for both formal and informal facilities. This land was previously zoned for housing but will no longer be protected for this use.

30.6.3 On the southern bank of the river **adjacent to the Urney Road link 6.5 hectares** of open space has been identified. Although a flooding risk will continue to exist on this land its proximity to the river presents opportunities for developing riverside amenity once the new flood defences are completed and the topography of the site lends itself to development for playing fields.

30.6.4 To the north of the river **8.5 hectares** of open space have been zoned on lands **adjacent to the proposed by-pass**. The District Council has proposals to develop a bowling green and playing pitches in this area.



Recreational potential along the Mourne river bank

30.7 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- **35.0 hectares of land have been zoned for recreation and open space to meet the requirements to the end of the plan period**
- **Public and private open spaces existing within the town will be retained**
- **The amenity potential of the river will be protected and enhanced**
- **Informal play and amenity areas will be provided by site developers where necessary within new housing areas**

31.0 Transportation

31.1 Objectives

- **to provide alternative facilities for through and cross-town traffic and thereby improve conditions in the town centre and along its predominantly residential approaches**
- **to improve general accessibility and reduce vehicular and pedestrian conflict throughout the urban area**

31.2 The Omagh to Londonderry road (T3), a primary traffic route, passes through Strabane town centre. On both its northern and southern approaches there are substantial concentrations of public and private housing and a number of schools, churches and other public and community buildings which generate heavy pedestrian traffic. Within Strabane the only crossing point of the River Mourne is via Strabane Bridge, a nineteenth century masonry structure with substandard carriageway and footway widths and steep approaches on either side. This bridge has to accommodate heavy flows of traffic including substantial volumes of through traffic and an ever increasing volume of cross-town vehicular and pedestrian movements. It is a major source of traffic congestion in the town.

31.3 The West Tyrone Area Plan put forward proposals for a by-pass to cater for through traffic and a throughpass for cross-town traffic movements. Following a public inquiry in 1979 the throughpass proposal was abandoned and the by-pass has subsequently been redesigned to cater for both through and cross-town movements.

31.4 A Direction Order has been made fixing the route for Phase I of the by-pass from Derry Road north of Strabane Controlled High School to Urney Road/Melmount Road junction. Phase II will provide for the extension of the by-pass to Melmount Road south of the Fir Trees Hotel. North of the river, the by-pass embankment, supplemented by additional earthworks where appropriate, will provide greater flood protection for lands, including the town centre, lying to its eastern side.

31.5 Because of its regional importance for the movement of traffic, the section of the by-pass from the Fir Trees Hotel in the south to Derry Road in the north will be designated a Protected Route. No new

development access will be permitted onto that section from Urney Road to Derry Road. From Melmount Road to Urney Road only a limited number of development accesses will be permitted.

31.6 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- **A by-pass road will be provided in two phases to the west of the town, to act as a by-pass road, a cross-town distributor and a development road**
- **North of the river the by-pass will provide additional flood protection to land to its eastern side**
- **The throughpass road scheme as proposed by the West Tyrone Area Plan has been abandoned**
- **The Department will take appropriate measures to ensure the protection of the amenity of all land and development adjoining the proposed by-pass and adjoining link roads**
- **No new development access will be permitted to that section of the by-pass between Urney Road and Derry Road**

32.0 Education

32.1 Objective

- **to facilitate the provision of land, as required, for education purposes**

32.2 Projected population increases and housing development in the southern sector of the town will create a demand for additional primary school facilities in this area over the plan period. A site has consequently been zoned **adjacent to the proposed by-pass** but access to it should be provided from Melmount Road.

32.3 The existing girls' primary school at **Barrack Street** is to be replaced during the plan period by a new Convent Primary School. A site between the existing school and the boys' primary school has been identified and currently carries planning permission for this purpose.

32.4 In addition, a site has been identified at **Lisnafin** for a Special School and nursery unit and a further nursery unit is to be provided at **Derry Road**.

32.5 While it is envisaged that extensions will be required to **St Colman's High School** and **Strabane Convent Grammar School** during the plan period, it should be possible to accommodate this development within existing school curtilages.

32.6 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- **To provide for new primary, nursery and special schools at Melmount, Barrack Street, Lisnafin and Derry Road**
- **To provide for extensions to St Colman's High School and Strabane Convent Grammar School**

33.0 Other Urban Uses

33.1 The District Council has a proposal to develop a **serviced site for travelling people** in Strabane during the course of the plan period and to this end, they have identified a site to the north of Dock Street.

33.2 Consideration of the town centre proposals suggests that a site may be required during the plan period for a **cattle mart** in the event that the existing site be redeveloped for a more intensive town centre use. The Department consider that the policies and proposals defined for Strabane and its rural hinterland are such that a suitable alternative site could be identified without undue difficulty.

33.3 It has been suggested that the re-opening of **Strabane Canal** north of the by-pass could provide recreation opportunities for the town and beyond, and its environs could provide a major conservation resource in terms of potential wildlife habitats. This scheme would receive the support of the Department in principle.

33.4 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- The provision by Strabane District Council of a serviced site for travelling people**
- To provide for the relocation of the cattle mart on a suitable site should the need arise**
- To provide for the reopening of Strabane Canal north of the by-pass, should the need arise**

34.0 White Land

34.1 Small areas of white land within and on the periphery of Strabane are considered to represent logical extensions to the existing built up area. Access, infrastructure, drainage, flooding and topographical difficulties require to be overcome before development within these areas can proceed.

34.2 Land to the **west of Derry Road** and to the **south of Urney Road** is of a level which renders it liable to flood. Development of these lands will be dependent on appropriate measures being undertaken to alleviate these risks.

34.3 A small undeveloped site of approximately 1.5 hectares to the **north of Beechmount Avenue** is considered most suitable for a small scale housing development. However, given the central location of this site within a fairly densely populated area, part of the site could be developed for a small neighbourhood shopping centre which would cater for the local everyday needs of adjoining residents.

34.4 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Development proposals will be judged on their particular locational merits and will be dependent on the resolution, as appropriate, of infrastructural and technical problems**

STRABANE TOWN CENTRE

35.0 Introduction

35.1 Historically, Strabane developed at a convenient bridging point on the River Mourne close to its confluence with the Foyle and the Finn. Road, rail and canal transport systems all subsequently also converged at this point and the town centre developed as a consequence, as the focus for a wide range of land uses. Today, the town centre continues to possess a vitality reflecting its important role as the District Town, despite the fact that many of its original functions no longer exist.

35.2 This section sets out the planning framework for the town centre, having drawn, where necessary, on other sections of the Plan. The Development Strategy emphasises the importance of Strabane town centre for the overall development and prosperity of the District.

36.0 Issues and Opportunities

36.1 Despite the fact that Strabane town centre has suffered as a result of a number of adverse circumstances which, over recent years have had consequences for its built environment, it remains vibrant, supporting a busy shopping area, an important market and a range of business, service and industrial facilities. It serves a catchment area which extends to cover most of the District and a significant part of Co Donegal. However, in view of the competitive pull exerted by new developments in adjoining centres such as Londonderry and Letterkenny, Strabane must maintain and expand its range of facilities and functions if it is to remain attractive and resistant to this competition. Policies and proposals for the town centre must allow it to develop and expand in response to the competing demands placed on it.

36.2 A number of development opportunities occur on vacant sites within the central core and vacant, derelict and underused land particularly to the north present further and major development opportunities.

36.3 Despite the changes which have taken place in the built environment, the town centre retains some townscape worthy of retention and of conservation and enhancement. Policies directed towards this end should increase the attractiveness generally of the town centre and encourage commercial investment.

36.4 The town centre continues to form a focal point for the road network with consequent implications for congestion and for accessibility to town centre facilities. Improved accessibility, removal of congestion and provision of car parking would all contribute to a more attractive town centre.

37.0 Development Pattern

37.1 The town centre is defined as the main business district and lies entirely to the north of the River Mourne. The town centre boundary is

illustrated on the Town Centre Proposals Map and on the Strabane Town Proposals Map. Abercorn Square from where the principal shopping streets radiate is traditionally considered to be the focal point of the town centre. Abercorn Square, Castle Street, Market Street, Main Street and the eastern end of Railway Street are the principal shopping areas while the remainder of Railway Street, Butcher Street, Castle Place and the central part of Main Street have a lesser though developing retail significance. These latter areas are typified by a mix of retail, office, service, industrial and residential uses and they serve to complement the main shopping area. They are areas currently undergoing change and generally in need of refurbishment. Existing housing is concentrated in two principal areas namely Lower Main Street/Eden Street/Alexander Place and Patrick Street/Newtown Street/Newtown Place. Town centre service and industrial uses are concentrated to the north of the central area beyond Railway Street and Abercorn Square while community facilities tend to be concentrated towards the south eastern corner. Much of the land along the western and northern boundary of the town centre is currently derelict or semi derelict in nature.

38.0 General Objectives

38.1 Policies and proposals drawn up for the town centre are governed by the following general objectives:

- to retain and consolidate the existing commercial core and to facilitate the provision of a wide range of facilities by encouraging new development and stimulating commercial activity**
- to improve access to and movement within the town centre for pedestrians and vehicles**
- to ensure the provision of adequate and properly distributed public car parking facilities**
- to maintain, enhance and improve town centre buildings, streets and spaces**
- to encourage town centre housing development as a means of improving the vitality of the central area**

39.0 Town Centre Strategy

39.1 **To provide an accessible, attractive and prosperous town centre in which to live, work, trade and shop through measures designed to maintain and enhance the range of activity within the town centre. These measures may include:**

- planning policies designed to support existing investment in the town centre**
- development guidance to assist prospective developers**

- public sector infrastructure investment**
- environmental improvement work**
- development incentives through urban renewal measures**
- comprehensive development schemes.**

39.2 This strategy is designed to enable the town centre to continue to meet the needs of its catchment population and to build on its existing economic base. Significant investment opportunities exist in Strabane town centre and it makes a significant contribution to employment in the District.

40.0 Map Interpretation

40.1 This section of the Plan sets out the town centre policies and proposals under a series of development activity headings and is accompanied by a Town Centre Proposals Map which defines the town centre limit and broad land use zonings existing and proposed, opportunity sites and policy areas within it.

40.2 The town centre limit defines the outer boundary of the area considered to be suitable for town centre uses consistent with the objective of retaining and consolidating a well defined central area. The presumption is that uses considered specific to the town centre which are proposed outside the defined boundary are unlikely to be permitted during the plan period.

40.3 Where policy areas have been defined, the written statement includes a detailed description which draws attention to the predominant use to be encouraged or retained and a range of broadly acceptable compatible uses. It further highlights any special considerations such as restrictive access arrangements or development conditions.

40.4 In devising proposed land use zonings, policies, proposals and policy areas and in defining the limit of town centre uses the intention has been to balance the need for a degree of certainty with the ability to remain flexible.

41.0 Development Activity

41.1 The policies and proposals in respect of the principal development activities in the town centre are set out in the following paragraphs.

42.0 Shopping and Commerce

42.1 Objectives

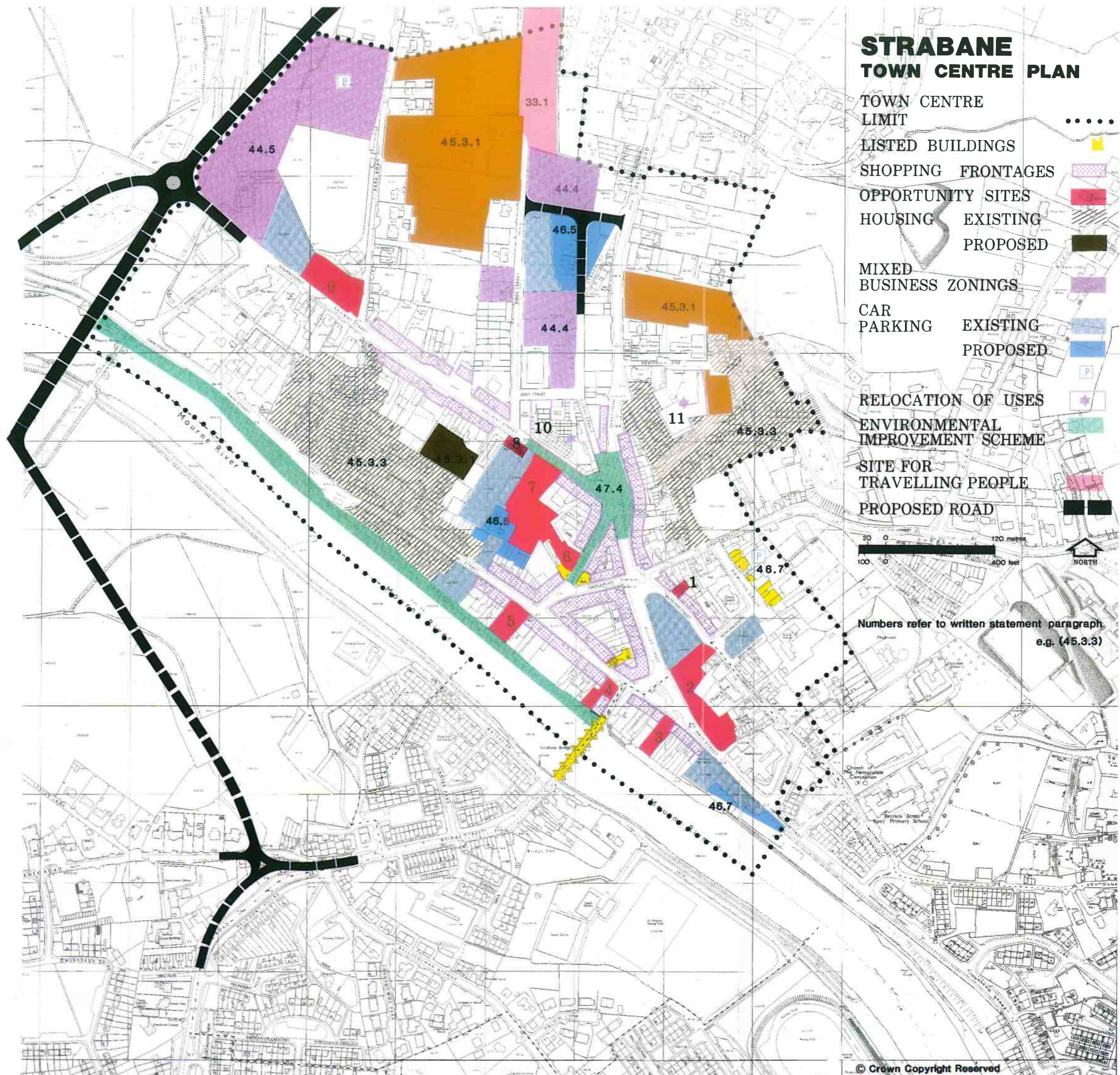
- to develop the existing retail shopping core and to sustain its vitality and viability by encouraging new development and by restraining large scale retail development outside the town centre**
- to encourage the improvement of the physical environment within the existing shopping core**

STRABANE TOWN CENTRE PLAN

- TOWN CENTRE LIMIT
- LISTED BUILDINGS [Yellow square]
- SHOPPING FRONTAGES [Pink hatched square]
- OPPORTUNITY SITES [Red square]
- HOUSING EXISTING [Blue hatched square]
- HOUSING PROPOSED [Dark blue square]
- MIXED BUSINESS ZONINGS [Purple square]
- CAR PARKING EXISTING [Light blue square]
- CAR PARKING PROPOSED [Blue square]
- RELOCATION OF USES [Star symbol]
- ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME [Green hatched square]
- SITE FOR TRAVELLING PEOPLE [Pink square]
- PROPOSED ROAD [Thick black line]



Numbers refer to written statement paragraph e.g. (45.3.3)





42.2 Shopping is the main activity and the dominant land use in the town centre and is also a significant source of employment. The level of trade remains buoyant. The number of vacant shops is relatively low, the rate of redevelopment on vacant sites is encouraging, multiples are well represented and the range of shop types is wide. The volume of cross border traffic remains an important factor.

42.3 In 1986, the town centre contained 16,300 sq metres of retail floor space. The projected additional requirement for retail floorspace providing solely for the projected population increase and allowing for some increased efficiency in existing shop units is approximately 2,100 sq metres.

42.4 Against the need to accommodate changing shopping patterns and additional shopping floorspace must be set the problem of ensuring that the fabric of the existing shopping area is not detrimentally affected by the evolving retail framework. To this end,

the Department will require that most new shopping developments be located within the town centre boundary except where proposals are for small local shopping facilities or for particular trades which are more appropriately located outside the town centre such as garden centres, car showrooms and caravan sales. While protection of the commercial interests of existing individual retailers is not a planning consideration, the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole is in the public interest and therefore a legitimate planning concern. The policy will therefore seek to ensure that new retail developments are located where they will support the continued viability of the established central shopping core.

42.5 To ensure sufficient choice of land to meet the varying site requirements of modern retail outlets, the town centre boundary has been extended to include land adjacent to the existing shopping core and to the proposed by-pass. In this way new retail



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developments will serve to strengthen and build on the existing commercial framework rather than divert trade to satellite shopping centres.

42.6 Additionally, the Plan seeks to encourage an improvement in the accessibility and attractiveness of town centre shopping streets. The proposed by-pass will, in addition to reducing the volume of traffic in the town centre, provide alternative routes for traffic to the northern and southern sectors of the town. Improving the attractiveness of the retail centre will however be a more gradual process with schemes to replace obsolete shopping floorspace and the refurbishment of rundown premises being encouraged. The quality and hence the attractiveness of the town centre is improved by new development which has the effect of broadening the range of retail facilities available. Recent redevelopment proposals suggest such a trend and it is anticipated that the competitive strength of Strabane will be significantly increased by the development of the Comprehensive Development Area site at Main Street. Where development or the improvement or refurbishment of existing premises is contemplated, schemes will be required to meet a high standard of design. Additionally, new or renovated commercial buildings will be required to comply with the guidelines set out in the Advice Note "Facilities for the Disabled."

42.7 The attractiveness of the town centre is also related to the concentration within the shopping core of non retail uses and their proportion to retail uses at ground floor level. If the predominantly retail character of this area is to be retained it must be recognised that while non retail uses such as banks, offices and pubs, provide an important service, there can be a danger that too many concentrated together can create dead frontages. At present, the balance at ground level between retail and non retail outlets in Strabane town centre is generally good but the situation will be monitored throughout the plan period to ensure that this balance is not upset.

42.8 The relatively dynamic nature of retailing means that retail policies need to be kept under review to ensure that they remain relevant to changing circumstances. The Department will therefore monitor the situation with a view to assessing the need or otherwise to adjust retail policy.

42.9 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- New shopping development will be concentrated within the defined town centre to support the continued viability of the central shopping core, except in situations where small local shops are required to serve local need**
- Large scale retail development will not be acceptable outside the defined town centre**
- The Department will encourage the redevelopment of vacant sites and the refurbishment of run down premises**
- All new development and refurbishment of existing premises shall be carried out to a high standard of design**

- Development of the Comprehensive Development Area will be completed early in the plan period**

- The disposition of non retail uses at ground floor level along the principal shopping frontages will be monitored in order to ensure that extensive dead frontages do not develop**

- Retail policy will be monitored throughout the plan period in the light of retail trends and methods and adjusted, if appropriate**

- All new advertising signs will be expected to meet high standards of siting and design**

43.0 Offices and Public Buildings

43.1 *Objectives*

- to ensure that offices and public buildings to serve the needs of the catchment population can be provided**

- to restrict major office development outside the town centre**





43.2 To ensure the maintenance of a viable administrative role for the town centre it is essential to maintain a supply of new, replacement and refurbished office accommodation. Concentration of office development in the town centre contributes to its overall vitality and has implications for employment and accessibility for many citizens.

43.3 Offices are well spread throughout the town centre and nowhere are they a predominant land use. Existing provision varies from that to be found on upper floors above retail outlets, to converted properties and to purpose built relatively modern offices such as County Buildings in Barrack Street. The town centre will continue to be an important office location and subject to shopping and housing policies, most locations within it are likely to be acceptable for changes of use. Office conversions within housing policy areas will generally be unacceptable and ground floor conversions along principal shopping streets will be discouraged.

43.4 Public buildings are generally located around the edge of the town centre with small concentrations at Derry Road, Bowling Green, Barrack Street and Main Street. It is considered that Bowling Green which contains a number of Listed Buildings is particularly suited to office conversion but such proposals will be required to retain and protect the existing architectural character of the area. Over the plan period this area could become a focus for office activity and benefit from its proximity to the Comprehensive Development Area site.

43.5 Within the plan period sites are required for a new public library and for a civic centre and in both instances a central location is preferred. The civic centre, the provision of which is a District Council responsibility would cater for a range of functions from entertainment to tourism and leisure uses and the opportunity site identified at Castle Street would be particularly suited to this use.

43.6 New development or conversion of existing premises whether for office or for public use will be required to meet high standards of design.

- New office development and office conversions will be acceptable in most town centre locations subject to shopping and housing policies
- Office conversions will not normally be acceptable in housing policy areas
- The Department will encourage the refurbishment of premises in Bowling Green for office use
- New office development and conversions will be expected to meet high standards of design
- A site is required within the town centre for a Civic Centre
- A site is required within the town centre for a new public library.

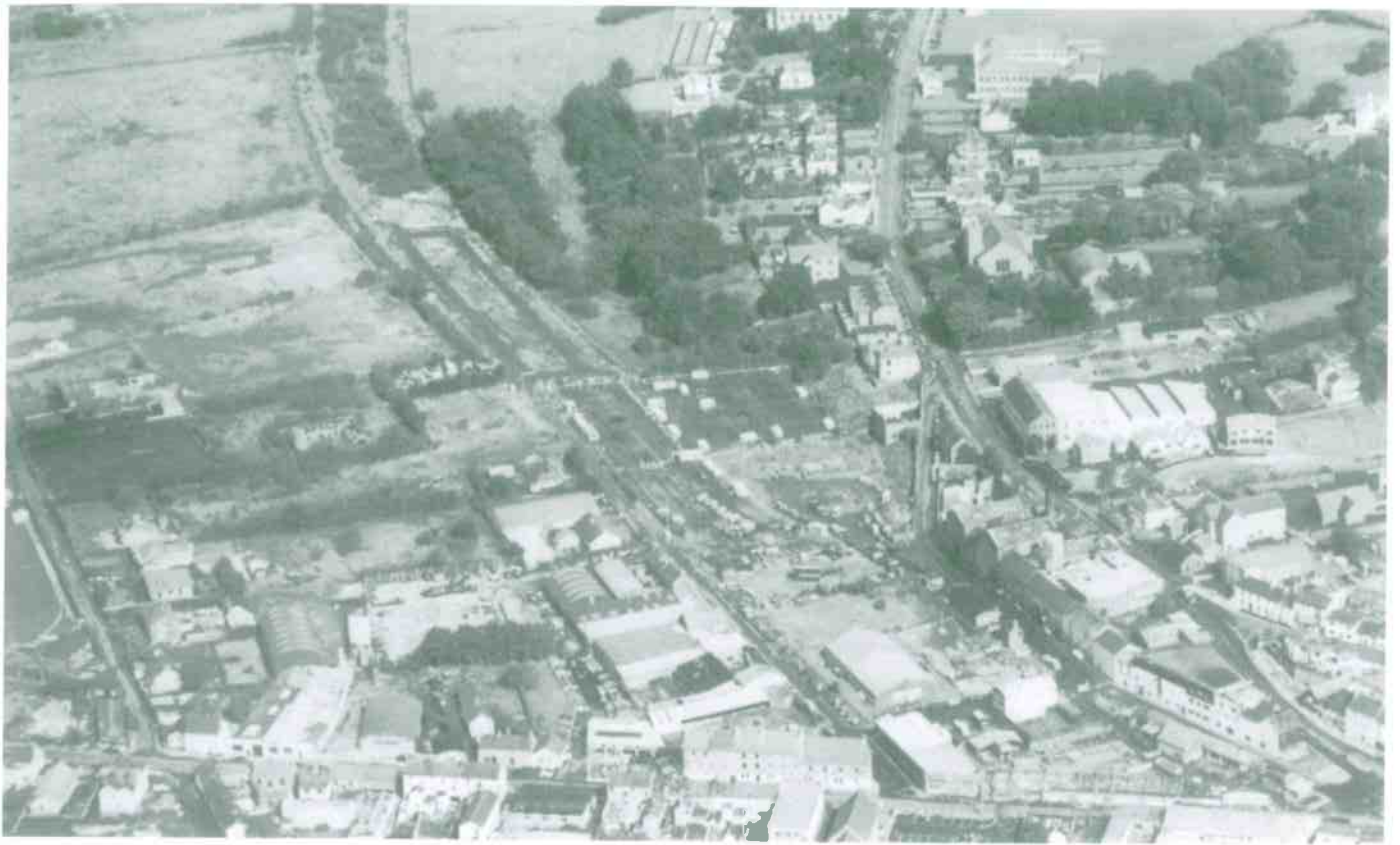
44.0 Mixed Business Zonings

44.1 Objective

- to ensure that sufficient land to meet the needs of town centre business uses can be provided

44.2 Sites suitable for mixed business uses have been identified to the east, west and north of Dock Street and at the western end of Railway Street adjacent to the proposed by-pass. This category of development activity includes a range of employment opportunities considered in land use terms to be compatible with one another in any mixed use development. Such uses include light industrial development, small starter units where no nuisance is involved, storage, offices or some specific retail uses. Industrial uses not in this general category are not considered to be appropriate in a town centre and should be more properly accommodated on industrially zoned land beyond the town centre.

44.3 By comparison, with other town centre zonings the Mixed Business Zonings intended to facilitate a mixture of business uses, are less compartmentalised, thus permitting greater flexibility. The lack of sufficiently large parcels of vacant or underused land creates a frequent restriction for town centre planning. This not only prevents expansion of existing activity but also inhibits the introduction of new development particularly where it is of a land intensive nature. The two areas identified within Strabane town centre for mixed business use are an attempt to overcome this difficulty. Both offer a wide range of development opportunities and within them some development of this nature already exists. However, the existing environmental quality of these areas is poor with old and comparatively unattractive buildings in need of refurbishment or redevelopment, areas of open storage and areas of derelict or semi-derelict land. In order to ensure that the environmental quality of these areas is upgraded new development will be required to meet high standards of layout, design and landscaping.



Canal Street/Dock Street mixed Business Zoning



Restructuring and sub-division of older Industrial premises is required

44.4 Despite the proximity of the **Canal Street/Dock Street** areas to the heart of the town centre, they are much underdeveloped. Older industrial buildings have outlived their original functions and are too large for most modern use. Restructuring and sub-division is therefore required. Equally, areas of vacant and derelict land have failed to attract a comprehensive range of prosperous uses and short term alternatives appear to have brought no lasting benefits. Nevertheless, being close to the main shopping area and to the bus terminus the area is regarded as having significant development potential. While extensive car parking facilities are already available in the area, development potential

will be enhanced by the provision of a new link road from Derry Road to Dock Street and the relocation of car parking to the south of it. A further major stimulus to this area would arise from the relocation of the cattle mart and its development for a major retailing scheme. Retailing, commerce, offices, light industry and workshops would all be acceptable uses in these areas provided they do not detract from the amenity of nearby housing. In order to protect the amenity of both existing and future town centre housing, landscaping will be an important element of all development proposals.

44.5 In contrast, the Mixed Business Zoning at the **western end of Railway Street** looks to new influences rather than to the established centre. Construction of the Strabane by-pass and its associated town centre road links will provide improved access to the area and thus create conditions more conducive to investment. While a variety of uses are possible, certain activities would derive greater benefit from this peripheral town centre location where good access to the road network and extensive customer car parking is required. Warehousing or convenience shopping would be suitable uses. Developments in this area will be required to make full provision for staff and customer parking on site.

44.6 Within both of these areas development proposals to be acceptable must genuinely enhance the town centre by widening the range of facilities available. There will be a presumption against proposals for large numbers of small shopping units which would duplicate and thereby threaten the existing primary shopping facilities within the central core.

44.7 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- **1.1 hectares of land have been zoned at Canal Street/Dock Street for mixed business uses**
- **2.2 hectares of land have been zoned at Railway Street for mixed business uses**
- **To ensure that Mixed Business Zonings are reserved for a range of compatible industrial/commercial uses including light manufacturing, warehousing, car sales/servicing/showrooms, storage, repair businesses, builders suppliers, training centres, offices, large scale convenience shopping**
- **Other industrial uses, small shopping units duplicating town centre provision or residential development will not be acceptable**
- **An appropriate standard of environmental treatment particularly along boundaries with existing and proposed residential development will be required in association with all development proposals**
- **The Department will encourage the replacement, restructuring and sub-division of existing redundant industrial premises as appropriate**
- **The Department will take a flexible approach to its consideration of specific development proposals submitted for these areas**
- **New development proposals will be expected to meet high standards of layout, design and landscaping**
- **A new link road from Derry Road to an extended Dock Street will be provided during the plan period**
- **An appropriate standard of car parking will be required in association with new development proposals**



Hazelwood

45.0 Residential Development

45.1 Objectives

- **to provide a range of housing choice within the town centre by retaining the existing housing stock and improving its general environment and by identifying suitable sites for new housing**
- **to safeguard the amenities of town centre residential areas and to minimise the loss of town centre housing stock by restricting conversions of dwellings to non residential uses**

45.2 A good housing stock varying in type can add significantly to the variety and vitality of the town centre. In addition to the now limited stock of residential accommodation over shop premises, Strabane has areas of older terrace housing which have retained their appeal for some sectors of the housing market. There is also a demand for larger family homes for example at Park Road and at Hazelwood and a central location is ideal for small households. While the bulk of new housing development in Strabane will be provided for beyond the town centre, new residential development will be encouraged within the town centre on suitable areas of vacant or underused land.

45.3 Housing Policy Areas

45.3.1 Four housing policy areas where new residential development is considered an appropriate use have been identified. The largest area lies **between Park Road and Dock Street** adjacent to a small number of detached and semi-detached dwellings along the road frontages. The zoning comprises large areas of vacant, derelict and semi-derelict land. The other much smaller areas lie at **Newtown Lane**, at **Hazelwood Derry Road** where a new build scheme is under construction, and to the **north of Alexander Place**. Vehicular access to this latter area should be provided from Alexander Place and a pedestrian link from the site alongside the Methodist Church to Railway Street would be desirable.

45.3.2 While ground conditions within the Park Road/Dock Street area may require particular attention and development levels require to be raised to alleviate the risk of flooding, it nonetheless is considered to present an important opportunity for both family and specialist homes. The area can be developed from Park Road and from Dock Street and while interconnection through the development between these two roads would provide increased flexibility for access and movement of local traffic, care should be taken in the design of such a link to discourage its use by extraneous through traffic. Landscaping is particularly important in a town centre environment both to screen residential development from adjacent non residential uses and to achieve an acceptable standard of amenity. Development schemes within this area will therefore be required to provide for high standards of layout, design and landscaping. It is also important that development within this area takes place on a comprehensive basis. If land assembly proves to be an inhibiting factor for development the Department may in due course use its Comprehensive Development powers under The Planning (NI) Order 1972 to ensure its satisfactory overall development.

45.3.3 In order to meet the Plan objective for town centre housing two further housing policy areas have been identified. These are at **Lower Main Street/Eden Terrace/Alexander Place** and at **Patrick Street/Newtown Street/Newtown Place**. These are essentially existing residential areas comprising a variety of dwelling type from older terraced properties to new public sector family and mobility dwellings. Within these areas there could be a loss of amenity because their streets function as through traffic routes and traditional town centre parking locations. Where opportunities arise to exclude through traffic movement, as has already occurred at Eden Terrace, the Department will implement appropriate traffic management schemes. While opportunities for landscaping work within these areas is limited, the Department will also support proposals for landscaping work where such opportunities exist.



Eden Terrace



Lower Main Street

45.3.4 Within all housing policy areas, the Department considers that residential development should remain the predominant land use. Thus, the introduction of non-residential uses which would adversely affect amenity or set a precedent resulting eventually in the loss of residential use of a particular area, will be resisted.

45.4 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- The Department will encourage the provision of a range of town centre housing on suitable sites to meet a variety of housing needs**
- 2.7 hectares of land is zoned for housing at Park Road/Dock Street to be accessed from Dock Street and Park Road. Within areas where a flooding risk may arise development levels must be raised accordingly.**
- High standards of layout, design and landscaping will be sought for new housing development**
- A comprehensive approach to the development of Park Road/Dock Street policy area will be required. In the absence of private initiative Comprehensive Development powers may be used**
- 1.0 hectare of land has been zoned for housing at Hazelwood, Alexander Place and Newtown Lane**
- Housing development should remain the predominant land use in the Lower Main Street/Eden Terrace/Alexander Place and Patrick Street/Newtown Street/Newtown Place housing policy areas**
- Office conversions or other non compatible uses will not be acceptable within housing policy areas where residential amenity is potentially at risk or a precedent for further non-conforming uses would be set**
- Where practicable landscaping work will be encouraged within existing housing areas**
- Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure a high standard of residential amenity within all town centre housing areas**

46.0 Transportation

46.1 Objectives

- to reduce traffic congestion in the town centre area and increase general accessibility
- to maximise pedestrian safety, convenience and accessibility
- to provide adequate and convenient public car parking facilities

46.2 The road system within Strabane town centre carries a heavy volume of traffic. Surveys have shown that between 1975 and 1985 the number of vehicles crossing Strabane Bridge increased by 52% with peak flows in 1985 reaching 1277 vehicles/hour. Much of this increase has resulted from new developments being largely concentrated south of the river, remote from the main shopping and commercial areas to the north. Traffic problems are exacerbated by the passage through the town, without stopping, of approximately one third of all approaching traffic.

46.3 Recently implemented road improvement works and traffic management schemes have significantly eased the traffic congestion which frequently affected the town centre area. However, the existing bridge is operating virtually to capacity and with continuing traffic growth a return to widespread congestion is probable unless additional facilities are provided.

46.4 Traffic studies have revealed that provision of the proposed by-pass could result in a 50% reduction in the volume of traffic crossing Strabane Bridge in the peak hour. This reduction will come about by the diversion along the proposed **by-pass** of virtually all of the through traffic movement together with a proportion of traffic to the town centre area from north and south and some cross-town traffic movements. With the expected reduction in town traffic volumes, accessibility to car parks and the central core will be improved and pedestrian movement will be much less restricted. Improved accessibility for shoppers and an environment free



Town Centre Congestion

from significant congestion will contribute to an increasingly attractive and commercially viable town centre.

46.5 A **link road** is proposed from **Derry Road to Dock Street** to improve access to extensive car parking facilities in the area and to enhance the development potential of the zoned land to the north of the town centre. Provision of this road link should also further reduce traffic volumes in the Abercorn Square/Railway Street area. The proposed relocated car parking in this area will have an equivalent capacity to the existing provision.

46.6 Throughout the plan period, town centre traffic conditions will be monitored on a continuing basis and **small scale improvement schemes** and **traffic management measures** will be introduced to address specific problems as and when conditions demand.

46.7 Within the town centre approximately 970 public parking spaces are available, 75% of which are provided in off-street car parks. Although the overall car parking provision is considered adequate at present the pattern of usage would indicate that increased provision is required at the south east end of the town centre. The Plan provides for the extension of the existing car park **opposite the Health Centre on Upper Main Street** and a new car park to the **rear of Church Street/Bowling Green** which will provide additional spaces.

46.8 Extended car parking facilities are also proposed **between Railway Street and Lower Main Street**. This proposal will greatly facilitate the expected growth of commercial activity in the Castle Street/Lower Main Street areas.

46.9 Parking facilities for disabled persons will be provided at convenient locations within the more central car parks.

46.10 In the interest of environmental improvement within the town centre, priority will be given to suitable landscaping treatment of existing car parks and within new car parks landscaping provision will be required.

46.11 In order to minimise pedestrian/vehicular conflict, pedestrian linkages between car parks and shopping areas and public buildings will be facilitated as appropriate. These will be designed to a standard which contributes to an overall improvement in the quality of the town centre environment.



- A by-pass road is to be provided to the west of the town centre during the course of the plan period with a view to reducing the volume of traffic and congestion in the town centre
- A new link road from Derry Road to Dock Street is to be provided during the course of the plan period
- Minor road improvement and traffic management schemes to address specific traffic and traffic related environmental problems will be implemented as appropriate throughout the plan period
- Car parking provision and management measures will be continuously monitored over the plan period to ensure that adequate car parking facilities are effectively located and efficiently utilized
- Additional parking spaces will be provided at extended car parks at Upper Main Street and at Railway Street/Lower Main Street and at a new car park to the rear of Church Street/Bowling Green
- Parking facilities for disabled persons will be provided within central car parks
- Landscaping schemes will be introduced to existing car parks and within new car parks landscape provision will be an integral part of the development, to further improve the town centre environment
- In order to maximise pedestrian safety, convenience and accessibility pedestrian linkages will be developed where appropriate between car parks and shopping areas and other major facilities
- The throughpass road scheme as proposed by the West Tyrone Areas Plan has been abandoned and land is no longer being protected for this purpose

47.0 Urban Renewal

47.1 Objectives

- to improve the physical appearance of the town centre by concentrating landscape treatment and other environmental initiatives in accordance with an overall strategy for the town centre
- to conserve the architectural heritage of the town centre
- to promote the refurbishment of town centre buildings to a high standard of design and to upgrade the external environment around buildings
- to encourage the development of identified opportunity sites and the investigation of identified relocation opportunities

47.2 Within the framework of the above objectives the Department's urban renewal strategy for the town centre comprises Comprehensive Development, Partial Pedestrianisation and Environmental Improvement. Considerable emphasis is being placed on environmental improvement through the upgrading of existing buildings and the redevelopment of vacant sites and the improvement of streetscape and floorscape through repaving and landscaping schemes, the development of focal points and the removal of problems such as congestion.

47.3 A major contribution to general environmental improvement within the town centre will result from the construction of the proposed by-pass and the consequent relief of the shopping core from excess traffic volumes and congestion. New traffic management measures within the town centre have already gone some way towards easing the problems of congestion and further measures will be introduced as required throughout the plan period.

47.4 The Department proposes to implement an important **environmental improvement scheme** early in the plan period at **Abercorn Square and Castle Street**. The objective of this scheme will be to improve and upgrade the appearance of this town centre area breaking up the large expanse of roadway by the use of planting, seating, new lighting and new paving surfaces. The implementation of such a scheme may allow the introduction of Partial Pedestrianisation, if appropriate, to Castle Street at a later date.



Abercorn Square



Abercorn Square

47.5 Within the town centre emphasis is placed on improving conditions for the pedestrian not only by relieving congestion but by actively promoting measures to improve streetscape and floorspace. Measures such as repaving, hard and soft landscaping, decorative lighting and the introduction of street furniture and ornamental works such as a town clock or fountain will be introduced where appropriate throughout the central shopping core. Priority will also be given to the landscaping of existing and proposed car parking areas.

47.6 Throughout the town centre area, facilities for the disabled, such as ramps and handrails will be provided if required where changes of level occur. At selected street crossings, kerbs will be lowered and ramps provided to facilitate wheelchair users.

47.7 Listed Buildings exist within Strabane town centre at 27, 29, 31, 33, 37, 39, 41 and 43 Bowling Green, Grays Stationery Shop and Printing Presses at Main Street, and the TSB and Hill's Chemist at Castle Street. Priority should be given to a high standard of maintenance and if necessary improvement and refurbishment of these properties, and schemes designed to preserve their architectural character. Development proposals for sites adjoining Listed Buildings should, complement their traditional architectural character in terms of use and design.

47.8 Strabane still retains some fine built areas. Despite the fact that the majority of these are not listed as architecturally or historically significant, their external improvement would have significant benefits in terms of the overall quality of the urban environment. Drab, poorly maintained buildings, inappropriately designed frontages, garish advertising signs, pockets of vacant land, hoardings and the absence of landscaping all combine to produce an air of neglect which is a disincentive to further investment. Where wholesale refurbishment is not



economic a variety of incremental improvements can contribute increasingly to a better environment. In addition to the improvement of building facades, smaller schemes might include painting and stone cleaning, tidying up and rubble removal, clearing and surfacing of gap sites with provision of seats and planting, fencing and clearance of backyards and entries.

47.9 Opportunity Sites

47.9.1 New development on vacant plots or on sites where relocation opportunities exist have a significant contribution to make to both the variety and the environmental improvement of the town centre. Opportunity sites identified in the following paragraphs and on the Proposals Map vary considerably in terms of their size, location and development potential.

47.9.2 Development potential on the small site identified at **Butcher Street (Site 1)** is limited in scope to one plot depth, but it is envisaged that commercial benefit will accrue to it from its proximity to the Comprehensive Development Area and to public car parking facilities.

47.9.3 A scheme for retail and office development has recently been approved on the **Comprehensive Development Area at Main Street (Site 2)** and the development of this site has commenced.

47.9.4 At **24 and 26 Main Street (Site 3)** this relatively large plot extends back to the river. On this site the Department would expect to see a building which maintains the street frontage and is at least two storeys in height. Retail, office or residential uses would all be considered appropriate.

47.9.5 The **corner plot at Main Street/Bridge Street (Site 4)** is in a significant location where the major pedestrian and vehicular route over the bridge joins a main shopping thoroughfare. Commercial development has recently commenced on this site.





47.9.6 The large opportunity site at **Main Street adjacent to the Northern Bank (Site 5)** is particularly well located in town centre terms for commercial development and a scheme comprising shops and offices has recently commenced on the site.

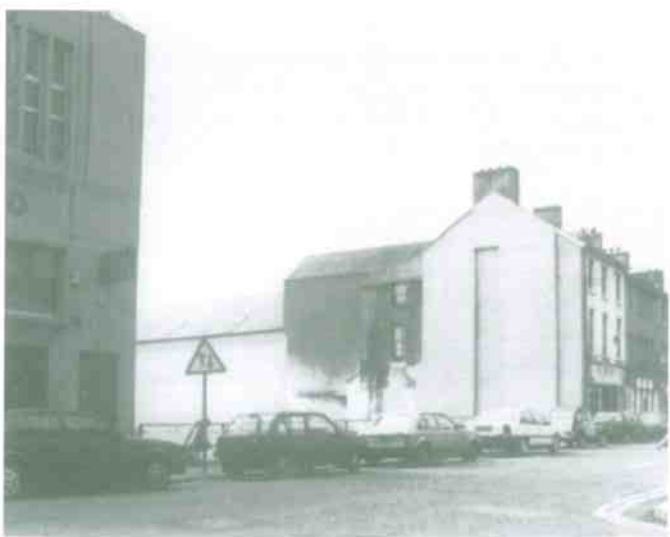
47.9.7 A centrally located substantial site in the heart of the prime shopping area exists in **Castle Street (Site 6)** adjacent to the Post Office. This site was previously that of a hotel. While the District Council consider the site to have potential for a Civic Centre, retailing particularly at ground floor level would represent an appropriate alternative use. The site should be developed in depth, have a frontage to Castle Street which is at least 2 storeys in height and be designed to close the existing gap in the street frontage. The design of the building should have regard for the adjoining Listed Building.

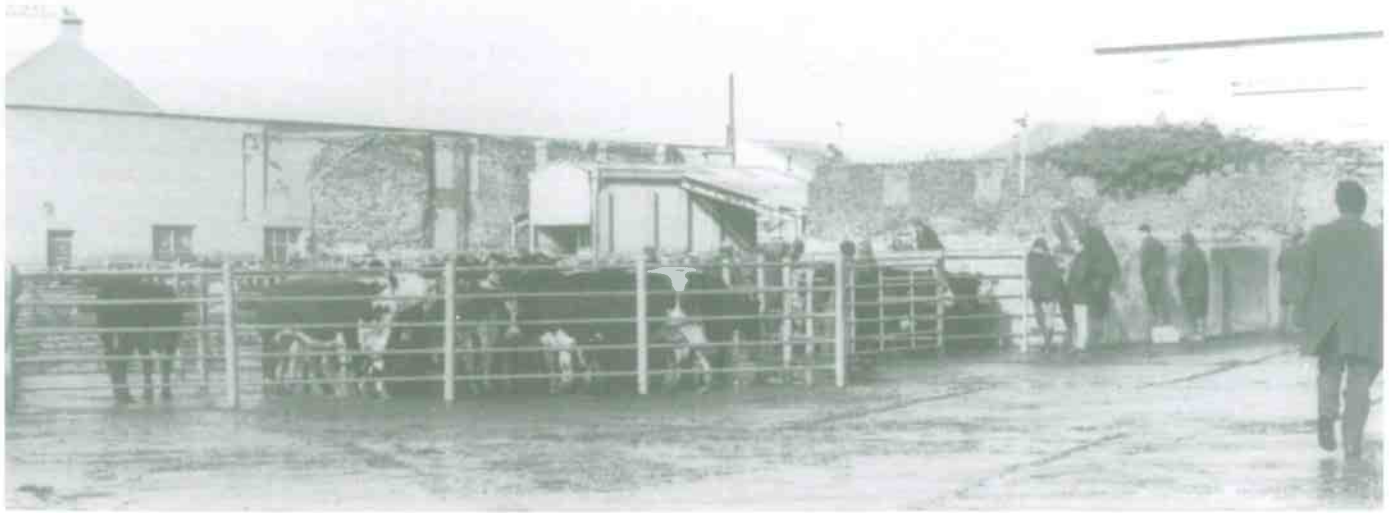
47.9.8. Along the **southern side of Railway Street (Site 7)** a former builders yard adjacent to the existing commercial frontage presents a major development opportunity. The Department would expect to see a development at least 2 storeys in height and with rear servicing facilities on the site.

47.9.9 A small opportunity site owned by the Department exists along the frontage of the public car park on the **southern side of Railway Street (Site 8)**. This site should be developed to minimise the gap in the built up frontage and a building 2 storeys in height will be required. Retail, offices and retail services would also all be acceptable uses.

47.9.10 The opportunity site at the **western end of Railway Street (Site 9)** is well located in relation to the proposed road network and to public car parking facilities. Service, retail or office development would all be suitable uses for this site.

47.9.11 Relocation of existing town centre uses, which would permit more appropriate or comprehensive forms of development present further development opportunities on sites at **Railway Street** and at **Newtown Lane**. The relocation of the existing cattle mart on the **northern side of Railway Street (Site 10)** would afford a unique opportunity to boost the centre of Strabane both by





providing a new major retail facility and by implementing a development which architecturally would add to the completeness of Abercorn Square. To the south of Newtown Lane (Site 11) exists an area which includes a maintenance depot and areas of undeveloped and underdeveloped land. If a suitable alternative site can be found for the depot this area is considered to have potential for town centre housing development particularly that of a sheltered nature.

47.9.12 In addition to the improvement of individual sites within the central core, it is important to encourage investment in, and an upgrading of the environment along gateway routes to, and on prominent sites within, the defined town centre. This is important for the image of the town and for the confidence of those who can influence further investment and activity in the town centre. The Department will strive to achieve high standards of design on prominent sites with effective landscaping treatment to reflect the significance of a particular site, such as the zoning adjacent to the by-pass on the fringe of the town. Routes, such as Railway Street, which will become a prominent and increasingly important corridor of vehicular movement linking the town centre to the by-pass, will also be given priority in terms of environmental improvement. Other areas deserving of environmental upgrading include **Bowling Green** where such improvement would yield particularly high benefits in terms of enhancing an area of existing high quality architecture.

47.10 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Landscaping treatment and other environmental initiatives will be concentrated in key locations in accordance with the Urban Renewal Strategy, to improve the physical appearance of the town centre**
- Planning policies which will encourage compatible mixed use developments consistent with shopping, office and industrial policies and the upgrading of the external environment by the use of Urban Renewal measures will be**

drawn up to promote the refurbishment of town centre buildings and the redevelopment of vacant sites

- The Department will encourage the conservation of the architectural heritage of the town centre by the protection and enhancement of Listed Buildings and by encouraging the retention and enhancement of examples of traditional architecture**
- All new developments and refurbishment schemes on existing buildings will be expected to meet high standards of design particularly in respect of shop fronts and advertising**
- Development proposals in respect of buildings and sites adjacent to Listed Buildings should respect their character in terms of design and use**
- The Department will implement an Environmental Improvement Scheme at Abercorn Square early in the plan period**
- The Department will encourage the redevelopment for appropriate use at the opportunity sites identified at:**
Butcher Street (Site 1)
Comprehensive Development Area (Site 2)
24/26 Main Street (Site 3)
Main Street/Bridge Street (Site 4)
Main Street (Site 5)
Castle Street (Site 6)
southern end of Railway Street (Site 7)
central Railway Street (Site 8)
western end of Railway Street (Site 9)
- The Department will encourage the relocation of uses identified at:**
Cattle Mart, Railway Street (Site 10)
Newtown Lane (Site 11)
and the redevelopment of the vacated land for more intensive town centre uses
- Facilities for the disabled will be provided as appropriate**

48.0 The River

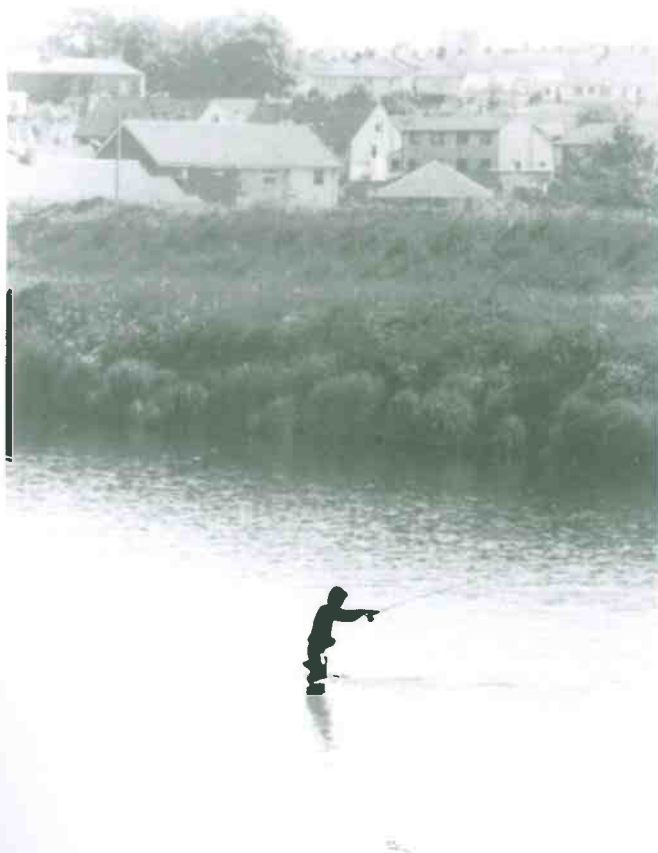
48.1 Objectives

- to make the river an important focal point within the town centre
- to make the river more environmentally attractive to those who live, work, use and invest in the town centre
- to capitalise, in environmental terms, on the environmental, amenity and recreational implications of the new flood protection works to be constructed along the River Mourne.

48.2 In common with many other towns in Northern Ireland, Strabane has largely turned its back on the river, a resource which remains neglected in terms of the life of the town. The commercial heart of the town backs onto it and while a number of housing areas beyond the town centre have been built in close proximity to the river in recent years only limited use has actually been made of the resource by the development of outdoor recreational facilities along limited

stretches of it. While this section of the Plan is primarily concerned with the river as it impinges on the town centre, this section cannot be viewed in isolation. It is important to emphasise that much of the riverside environment throughout Strabane is derelict or semi-derelict in nature and almost completely devoid of riverside landscaping.

48.3 The Department recognises the recreation and open space potential of the river and the opportunities which exist for providing improved accessibility to it, particularly in relation to the wider implications of the new flood protection works which are to be carried out between Strabane Bridge and the new by-pass river bridge.



48.4 On the northern side of the river a new and higher flood wall will be erected outside the existing Water Wall to provide the town centre with an improved means of flood protection. The location of the new flood wall will enable a wider carriageway to be provided. This will facilitate the extension of rear servicing facilities to properties between Strabane Bridge and the Lower Main Street car park and should result in a significant reduction in the volume of commercial traffic servicing from Main Street itself. To maximise the servicing potential of the Water Wall independent commercial development unrelated to Main Street properties will not be acceptable along this frontage.

48.5 Phase I of the flood protection works will be carried out along the northern bank of the river and will include the provision of a high level public pathway behind the flood wall which will furnish views for the pedestrian upstream and downstream away from the town centre. Additionally, completion of this phase of the scheme will leave an area of surplus land which would be suitable for landscaping and open space provision. Opportunities to introduce passive recreational facilities into the town centre will thus be provided and it is proposed that such a scheme be implemented by the appropriate authorities on completion of Phase I of the flood protection works.

48.6 Phase II of the flood protection works though lying beyond the defined town centre involves the construction of a new core wall and flood bank along the southern bank of the river from the golf course to the new river bridge. Potential for general environmental improvement also exists in this area.

48.7 The river therefore is capable of becoming a major environmental asset for the town centre. As the Water Wall possesses a potential to become a particularly attractive town centre environment property owners adjoining the town side of the service road and amenity area will be encouraged to improve and refurbish individual properties where appropriate in order to maximise the environmental potential of the total area.

48.8 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- A new high level public pathway will be provided behind the new flood wall
- An extended rear service road will be provided to the rear of Main Street from Strabane Bridge to the car park at Lower Main Street
- Independent commercial development unrelated to the Main Street frontage will not be acceptable along Water Wall
- Surplus land remaining will be landscaped and developed for amenity and open space
- Property owners abutting onto this area will be encouraged to improve and refurbish premises to a high standard of design

Part Five

Statement of Policies and Proposals and Maps—Local Towns



49.0 Introduction

49.1 In accordance with the Plan's Settlement Strategy which builds on the existing settlement pattern and aims to provide for a wide choice of development location, **Castlederg, Sion Mills and Newtown Stewart** have been designated as **Local Towns**.

49.2 Policies and proposals drawn up for the Local Towns are governed by the following objectives:

- **to provide adequate development land in a range of defined locations to meet the expected needs of the area's population in terms of housing, industry, open space, community facilities and town centre uses**
- **to improve the quality of the urban environment**
- **to promote vibrant town centres and increase their attractiveness as places in which to live, work, use and invest by protecting and enhancing their physical environment and, improving their accessibility and level of car parking provision**
- **to make effective use of new and existing infrastructure**
- **to define development limits which prevent urban sprawl, ribbon development, coalescence of settlements and to minimise the encroachment of development onto high quality agricultural land**

49.3 This section sets out in detail the development proposals for each of the three towns comprising in each case a Proposals Map together with an explanation of the strategic proposals and policies contained therein. The Proposals Maps indicate the broad land use framework envisaged for each town and consists of a development limit encompassing the principal land uses and in the case of Castlederg, a limit of town centre uses. The maps further indicate policy areas and road and car park proposals where appropriate.

50.0 Development Limits and Zonings

50.1 The development limit around each town defines the outer edge of its proposed development area, its purpose being to achieve a compact and well defined urban area. The areas specifically zoned for each main use within each limit are those with the best development potential which are well located, in both physical and visual terms, in relation to existing development. The development limits and zonings have had regard for topographical characteristics, agricultural land quality and the availability of existing or planned infrastructure. The estimated land requirement for each major use has influenced the extent of its zoning. While the major land use zonings have been precisely defined relative to site boundaries minor adjustments to some of these boundaries may be required to ensure the proper

development of zoned land. The general presumption is that development outside the development limits will not be permitted during the plan period other than in accordance with Rural Policy.

50.2 The zonings identified on the Proposals Maps represent the predominant land uses envisaged. With regard to the larger housing areas where the scale of development would be such as to justify the provision of incidental open space, local shops or social and community facilities, such non-residential uses suitably located would generally be compatible with the predominant housing use. In the case of industrial areas, retailing would not be considered to be a use compatible with the predominant industrial use.

51.0 White Land

The urban areas defined within the various development limits contain areas of unzoned or **white land**. Development proposals within these areas or within areas of existing urban development will be considered on their particular locational merits in accordance with accepted planning guidelines or stated policies. Some of this white land though well located has limited development potential because of its topography or problems with access, flooding, drainage and/or servicing and the development of such land will depend on the resolution of these problems. Other areas of white land which could accommodate a range of possible development options have been left unzoned because the Department considers it inappropriate to indicate a preferred use in the interests of flexibility.

52.0 Housing Areas

52.1 With regard to the detailed development of new housing areas, the Department will encourage the use of a varied and imaginative range of layouts, house types, open areas, and densities, well landscaped and with good pedestrian linkages to the main open space and amenity areas. The residential character of existing housing areas will be protected by preventing the intrusion of unacceptable and non-conforming non-residential uses.

52.2 It is the policy of the Department to seek the provision of manageable level grassed areas of incidental open space within the larger housing developments suitable for informal amenity and play use. Such areas will require to be well located within housing developments, preferably overlooked by dwellings and public ways and to be incorporated into the design layout.

52.3 Within housing developments, internal development roads provided by the developer, will, if they provide for general public use, be subject to Departmental approval at the planning stage, and be adopted and subsequently maintained by the Department upon satisfactory completion.

52.4 While the Department has not specified suitable development densities for particular housing areas and while it is recognised that trends in the private sector have been towards relatively higher densities, development proposals should take account

of the character and density of adjoining development and have due regard for the quality of the immediate environment including the protection of existing planting or other landscape features.

CASTLEDERG

53.0 Introduction

53.1 Castlederg, the largest of the local towns is located in the Derg river valley and functions as an important service centre for a wide agricultural hinterland extending over the western part of Strabane District. The town is situated mainly to the north of the river where a well defined town centre of some character is surrounded on 3 sides by substantial concentrations of comparatively recent housing development. The population of Castlederg has virtually doubled over the past 15 years to its present total of approximately 2900 and recent development has had to be accommodated beyond the development limit specified in the West Tyrone Area Plan.

53.2 In recent years a new voluntary primary school has been erected at Castlefin Road, a Leisure Centre developed at Strabane Road, playing fields provided at Mitchell Park, a public car park provided off Main Street and the sewerage infrastructure extended. By contrast however, little industrial development has been attracted to the land zoned for it at Castlegore.

54.0 Development Pattern

54.1 While the main part of the town is situated to the north of the river a more recent development axis has pushed south to extend from the bridge to beyond the Drumquin Road/Killen Road junction. The river floodplain will continue to represent a significant constraint on development as will rising ground and access difficulties to the north and east of the town. In general, the tendency has been for Castlederg to spread out along the main approach roads to the town and ribbon development has become characteristic. This is particularly evident along Strabane Road which has proved to be an attractive development location. The recent rapid growth at Erganagh two miles further east is also evidence of the development pressures on this side of the town.

54.2 In defining a development limit for Castlederg an important aim has been to resist further ribbon development and to identify potential development land which will serve to consolidate the existing pattern of development and establish a more compact settlement form. However, the limit has also been influenced by a number of outstanding planning approvals particularly those granted beyond the previous limit of development.

54.3 The effects of the River Derg on the development of land alongside it is significant in relation to the potential for flooding. In recognition of this, the Department of Agriculture (Drainage Division) is at present carrying out a study of the town flood defence system. The suitability for development of some areas, including part of the Town Centre can only be properly assessed when their investigations have been completed. In the



Ribbon development on periphery of existing urban area



Recent public authority housing

meantime the Department will consult with the Department of Agriculture (Drainage Division) on all development proposals in the areas behind and below existing flood banks and walls.

55.0 Development Activity

55.1 The policies and proposals in respect of the principal development activities in Castledearg are set out in the following paragraphs.

56.0 Housing

56.1 Objectives

- to identify sufficient land for new housing development
- to provide a choice of housing sites in convenient locations to support the provision of a range of dwelling types to meet different housing needs

56.2 Within Castledearg a total of 51 hectares of land has been zoned for housing. This area includes a number of existing planning commitments. It is estimated that the 2001 population could reach 4000 and although the 500 additional dwellings required for this scale of population growth could be accommodated on 25 hectares of land some over-provision has been made to take account of ownership patterns, of detailed site constraints and of the need to provide for flexibility and choice. The majority of sites identified present opportunities for in-depth development which is conducive to the formation of a compact urban area. Within these areas developers should be mindful of the need for varied and good quality layouts, densities and house types with appropriate provision of open space, landscaping and pedestrian linkages. To provide for maximum flexibility in circulatory traffic movement, developers will in certain zoned areas, be required to provide road links between adjacent radial routes as part of their development layout.

56.3 Housing Zonings

56.3.1 **Between Killeen Road to beyond Hospital Road** four distinct areas comprising in total 14.5 hectares of land have been zoned for housing. In-depth development will be a requirement in all areas but in some locations there may be opportunities to provide access from more than one public road. In other areas it may also be possible for development to extend into adjoining white land contained within the development limit, but in some instances this will be dependent on the phasing of development to accommodate the provision of sewerage infrastructure.

56.3.2 **To the north and south of Strabane Road** 11.5 hectares of land suitable for housing have been zoned. Access options to these lands are limited given the pattern of existing development and the constraints imposed by technical requirements. In the light of limited road frontage, future accesses must be protected from development which would result in landlocking.

56.3.3 **To the south of the river** 8.5 hectares of additional housing land is zoned **to the west and south of Castledearg Secondary School**, this opportunity being the result of a recent extension to the sewerage infrastructure. However, in view of the flooding risk which exists in this area development levels on some of the land should be raised accordingly.

56.3.4 Housing zonings amounting to 14 hectares have been identified **to the west of Castledearg** providing opportunities again for in-depth development. The site located at the junction of Killeter and Cavan Roads should be accessed from Cavan Road only, by way of a single access point. The site to the north of Alexander Park will be developed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive during the plan period as a second phase of the recent housing scheme on the adjoining site. Pumping of sewage may be necessary on the lands zoned to the south of Killeter Road.

56.4 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- Beyond Castlederg Town Centre 48.5 hectares of housing land have been zoned to meet the projected housing need of the plan period**
- Within all major housing areas development in-depth will be a requirement**
- The Department will encourage the provision of a range of densities and house types and varied and good quality layouts to meet a variety of housing needs**
- All new development will be required to meet with standard requirements in terms of access and servicing**
- High standards of layout, design and landscaping will be sought for new housing development**
- Within areas where a flooding risk may arise development levels must be raised accordingly**
- Within new housing areas developers will be required where necessary to provide pedestrian linkages and an appropriate amount of suitably located open space**
- Where appropriate, developers will be required to provide for inter-development road links as part of their development layout**

57.0 Industry

57.1 Objectives

- to allocate sufficient land to meet the needs of industry**
- to encourage a high standard of environmental quality within industrial areas**

57.2 The West Tyrone Area Plan industrial zoning at **Castlegore** remains largely unchanged in view of its limited uptake to date. It is estimated that sufficient land remains in this area to meet the needs of the plan period, but in view of its liability in part to flood, development levels will require to be raised accordingly. Within this area an appropriate standard of environmental treatment will be a requirement of all industrial development particularly in view of the prominent location of the site and its proximity to housing development.



57.3 Within the older parts of the town there are a number of small scale businesses providing employment. Some opportunity exists for further small scale industrial undertakings to develop in this area so long as existing and adjoining uses are not adversely affected.

57.4 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- 2.9 hectares of land have been zoned for industry at Castlegore to meet industrial requirements to the end of the plan period**
- All development proposals will be required to include a landscaping and planting scheme**
- Small scale industrial development in other locations will be assessed against its impact on adjoining development**

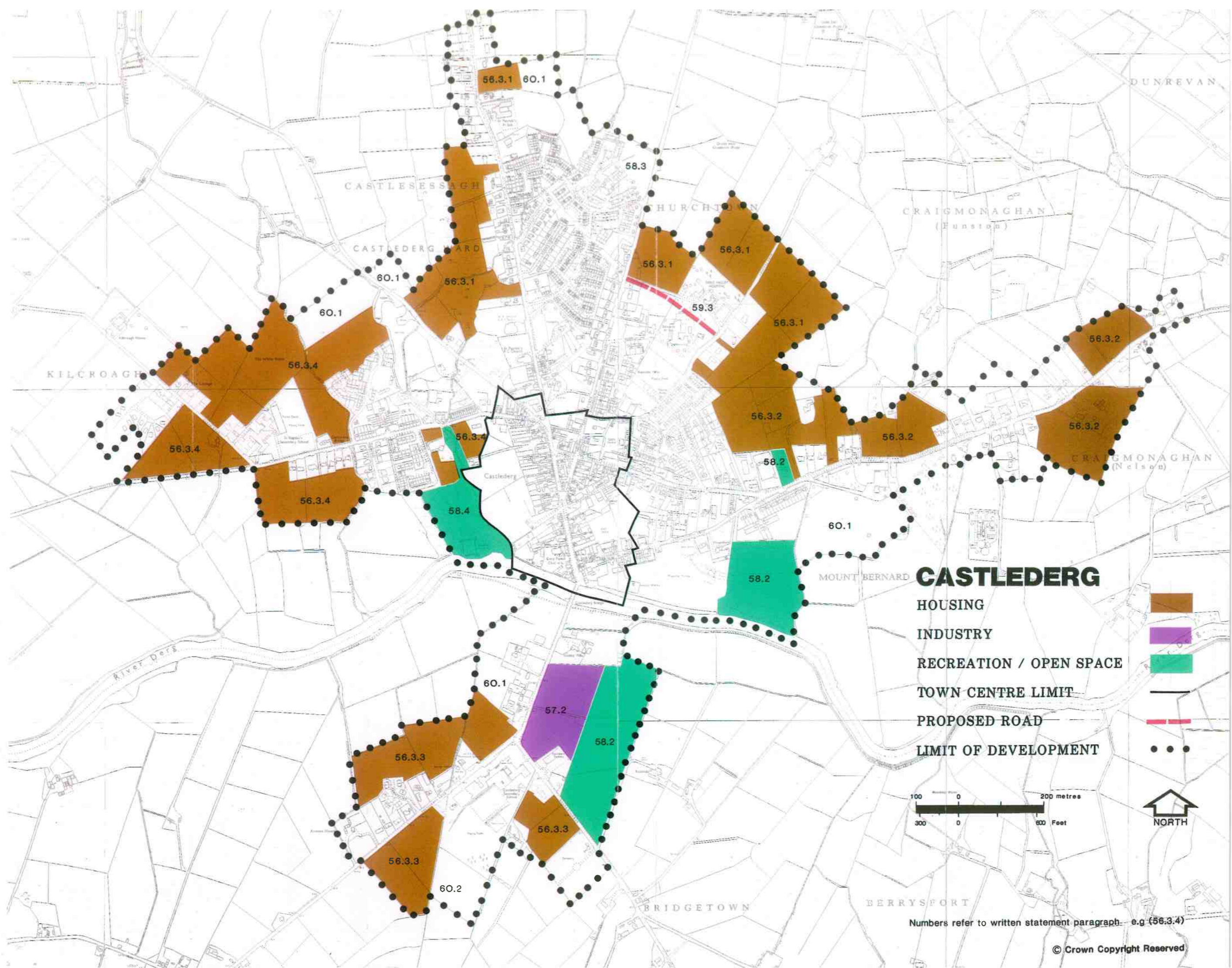
58.0 Recreation and Open Space

58.1 Objectives

- to retain existing public and private open space provision**
- to allocate sufficient land to meet the needs of recreation and amenity**

58.2 Despite recent provision of recreation and open space facilities at Derg Valley Leisure Centre and at Mitchell Park, a shortfall in recreation provision remains. Over the plan period the District Council proposes to build a swimming pool on the site **adjacent to the Leisure Centre** and to **extend the Mitchell Park complex** to provide tennis courts and additional playing fields. In addition, land has been





CASTLEBERG

- HOUSING
- INDUSTRY
- RECREATION / OPEN SPACE
- TOWN CENTRE LIMIT
- PROPOSED ROAD
- LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT



Numbers refer to written statement paragraph - e.g (56.3.4)

earmarked for playing fields adjacent to the industrial zoning at **Drumquin Road**. The frontage of this site has potential to provide joint car parking facilities for both the proposed playing fields and the existing cemetery opposite.

58.3 To the north of Castlederg recreation and open space provision will be concentrated in small areas associated with existing and proposed housing developments and designed to serve local needs. The District Council have proposals for a scheme **adjacent to Hillview on the Lurganbuoy Road** and provision of other small areas will be considered through the development control process as opportunities arise.

58.4 The open space zoning to the **west of the town centre and adjacent to the river** in the vicinity of the castle ruins would be suitable for a town park and for more passive forms of recreation. The landscaping of this area and of the riverside environment generally throughout the town would provide for attractive pedestrian routes and would contribute to an improved setting both for the town and for the town centre.

58.5 In a situation where development pressures may be applied to areas of open land, the Department will ensure the retention of areas of open space except in situations where community need no longer exists and no particular amenity value attaches to the land.

58.6 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- 11 hectares of land has been zoned for recreation and open space to meet the requirements to the end of the plan period
- Public and private open spaces existing within the town will be retained
- The amenity potential of the river will be protected and enhanced
- The Plan will facilitate the development of a swimming pool adjacent to the Leisure Centre
- The Plan will facilitate an extension to the Mitchell Park playing fields complex
- The Plan will facilitate the development of playing fields and car parking at Drumquin Road
- Open space provision to an appropriate scale will be required within housing areas

59.0 Transportation

59.1 *Objective*

- to improve general accessibility and reduce traffic congestion throughout the urban area

59.2 Traffic congestion frequently occurs in the John Street area due to conflict between through, circulating and town centre traffic all of which is forced into this area along a number of converging

radial routes. The situation is exacerbated by security restrictions on access to Main Street and The Diamond and the use of John Street as a bus stopping place. Provision of connecting roads, particularly in the north-eastern sector between Strabane Road and Lurganbuoy Road, will be a priority in the Plan and should lead to a greater flexibility of movement and to a reduction of traffic volumes in the central area.

59.3 **Between Lurganbuoy Road and Hospital Road** the Department propose to provide such a connecting road and between Hospital Road and Strabane Road it will be a planning requirement that development of land zoned for housing shall be designed to include for the provision of an interconnecting road link to facilitate circulating traffic.

59.4 **Between Castlefin Road and Lurganbuoy Road** further investigation will be required to identify a route for a connecting road to facilitate circulating traffic and relieve the existing unsuitable but well used route via Churchtown Park and Hillview.

59.5 In the north western sector, the need for circulating roads will be kept under review. Where such roads lie wholly or partially within areas zoned for housing it will be a planning requirement that the development shall be designed to include for the provision of that part of the road contained within the development area.

59.6 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- A connecting road between Lurganbuoy and Hospital Road will be provided during the plan period
- A suitable route for a connecting road between Castlefin Road and Lurganbuoy Road will be investigated
- Other minor road works and traffic management schemes will be implemented as necessary

60.0 Education

60.1 *Objective*

- to facilitate the provision of land as required for education purposes

60.2 St Eugene's Secondary School, Castlederg Secondary School, St Patrick's Primary School and Edward's Primary School provide the necessary education facilities for the town. Apart from a need to extend the playing fields associated with **Castlederg Secondary School**, there is no requirement for any major allocations of land for new education development. Should changing circumstances require that new sites be made available within the plan period land will be identified by individual site assessment.

60.3 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- The Plan will facilitate an extension to the playing fields at Castlederg Secondary School

61.0 White Land

61.1 The areas of white land to the **west and east of Killeen Road, to the east of Castlefin Road, to the south of Strabane Road at Mount Bernard and to the south of the river** are considered to be logical extensions to the existing built up area. Access and sewerage infrastructure difficulties prevent the immediate development of the lands between the river and Strabane Road thus permitting only limited development over the plan period. Access difficulties and flooding risks requiring the raising of development levels reduce the development capacity of the white land within the development limit to the south of the river.

61.2 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

□ **Development proposals will be judged on their merits and will be dependent on the resolution, as appropriate, of infrastructural or technical problems**

62.0 Town Centre

62.1 *Objective*

□ **to provide a vibrant town centre and increase its attractiveness as a place in which to live, work, use and invest by protecting and enhancing its physical environment and improving its accessibility and level of car parking**

62.2 Castleberg has a busy and compact town centre with a wide range of retail, commercial and service outlets reflecting its role as a local service centre. It extends northwards from the river to include Main Street, part of Lower Strabane Road, Meetinghouse Lane, The Diamond, William Street, John Street, High Street, Priests Lane and Ferguson's Crescent and areas of developed, under-developed and undeveloped backland to the rear. It has sufficient capacity to absorb the commercial requirements of the plan period but its overall commercial attractiveness could be considerably enhanced by a programme of environmental improvement both by private individuals and by relevant public agencies.

62.3 A number of vacant opportunity sites which are ideally suited to new-build development exist within the town centre. Many of these are gap sites located



Castleberg town centre contains a number of development and environmental improvement opportunities

along the principal shopping frontages and here retail shopping development will be the preferred use. A site is required for a new public library during the plan period and the central area presents suitable opportunities. The design of redevelopment proposals for these sites should complement the traditional architectural character of adjoining buildings. Opportunity sites located elsewhere within the town centre have potential for a variety of non-retail commercial or residential uses.

62.4 The retention and encouragement of residential development in the town centre is important in providing a level of vitality which would otherwise be missing. That area to the **north and south of Meetinghouse Lane** and including **Prospect Terrace and Castleberg Fold** should be retained in residential use. This area contains a mix of traditional town centre terraced housing and new purpose built sheltered accommodation a form of development for which the town centre is considered suitable. The 2.4 hectares of land identified to the **west of the Main Street** could provide new opportunities for town centre housing provided that development levels are raised to alleviate flooding risk.

62.5 A new road is proposed to the west of the town centre **between Main Street and Ferguson Crescent**. This road, to be provided in conjunction with the development of adjoining land, would provide for circulating traffic movements. It is also proposed to widen and upgrade Priest's Lane and this together with associated traffic management measures should significantly reduce volumes of traffic and congestion in the John Street area.

62.6 Additional car parking (and possibly bus parking), is proposed on neglected backlands between the proposed new road to the west of the town centre and Main Street. Further car parking provision will be made on part of the disused cattle market site to meet the needs of the William Street and John Street area.

62.7 To maximise the attractiveness and commercial vitality of the town centre it is considered important that the car-borne shopper be encouraged to make full use of car parks rather than parking on-street. In addition to making the car parks readily accessible by road they require attractive and convenient pedestrian links to and from the main shopping street. Castleberg is fortunate in having a number of



CASTLEDERG TOWN CENTRE

TOWN CENTRE LIMIT

LISTED BUILDINGS

HOUSING - EXISTING

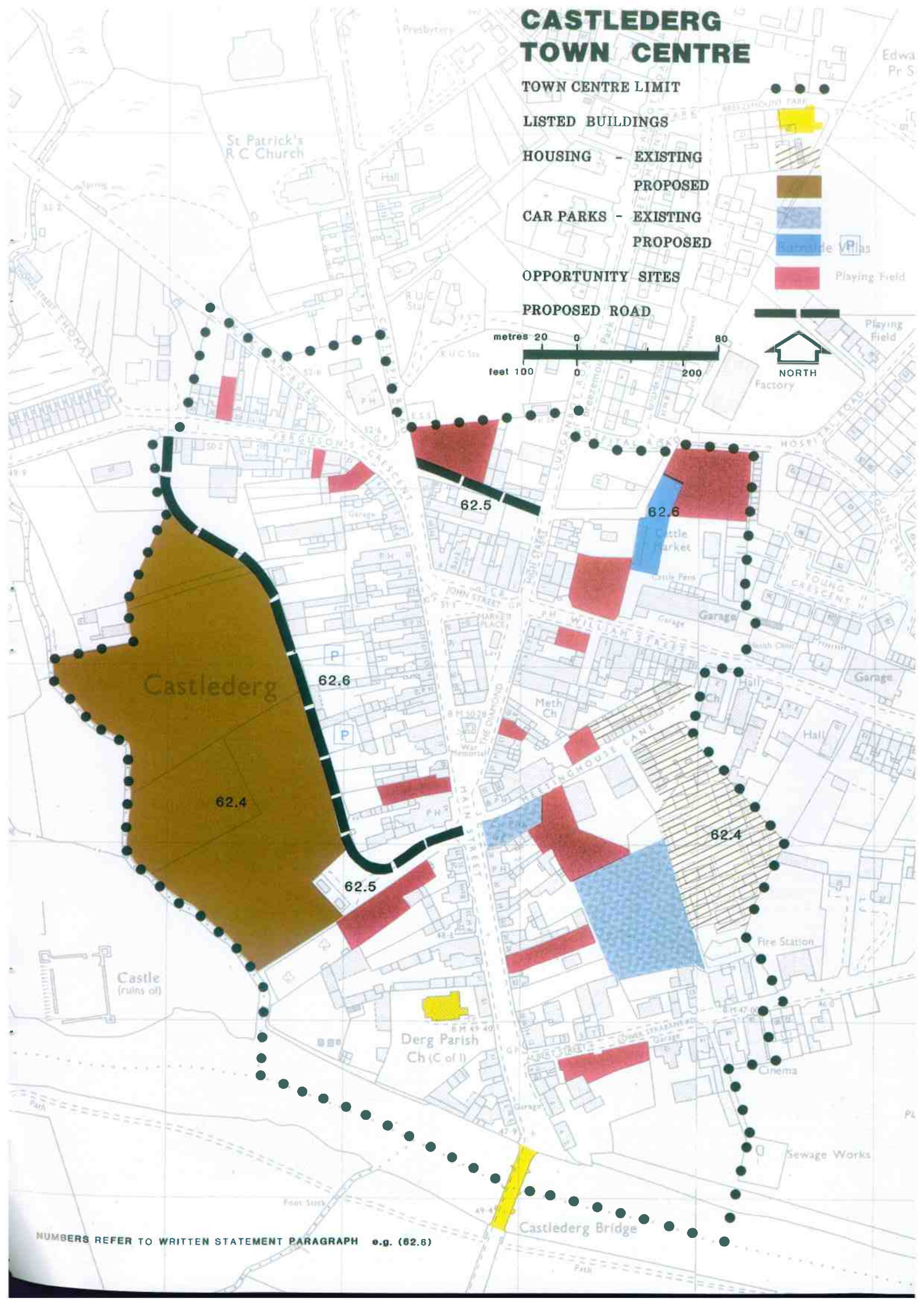
PROPOSED

CAR PARKS - EXISTING

PROPOSED

OPPORTUNITY SITES

PROPOSED ROAD



NUMBERS REFER TO WRITTEN STATEMENT PARAGRAPH e.g. (62.6)



opportunities for the provision of such links from new and proposed car parks and the Plan proposes that development of these links be encouraged where practicable.

62.8 Substantial benefits can accrue from environmental improvement work in Castlederg town centre. In addition to the provision of new high quality development, owners are encouraged to improve and upgrade existing properties to a high standard reflecting the traditional architectural quality and character of the area.

62.9 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- New shopping development will be concentrated within the defined town centre except in situations where small local shops are required to serve local need**
- The Department will encourage the redevelopment of vacant sites and the refurbishment of run down premises and all work shall be carried out to a high standard of design**
- 2.4 hectares of land have been zoned for housing to the west of Main Street. Within areas where a flooding risk may arise development levels must be raised accordingly**

- Housing development should remain the predominant land use in the housing policy area defined to the north and south of Meetinghouse Lane**
- A rear service road between Main Street and Ferguson Crescent will be provided during the plan period**
- Other minor road works and traffic management schemes will be implemented as necessary**
- Additional parking spaces will be provided in new car parks on part of the site of the former cattle mart and to the rear of the Main Street**
- The Department will encourage the development of attractive pedestrian links from car parks to the main shopping area**
- The Department will encourage the redevelopment for appropriate use of the opportunity sites identified at:**
Main Street
The Diamond
Meetinghouse Lane
William Street
Priest's Lane
Lower Strabane Road
Adjacent to existing public car park
Ferguson Crescent

63.0 Introduction

63.1 Sion Mills located 2 miles south of Strabane is the third largest settlement within the District. It is located immediately to the west of the River Mourne and astride the main Omagh to Strabane Road (T3). While the topography rises eastwards towards the foothills of the Sperrins and westwards away from the town, surrounding agricultural land, reflecting its river valley location, is of relatively high quality.

63.2 Sion Mills owes its origin to the textile mill sited adjacent to the river. With its expansion during the nineteenth century the mill owners built mill cottages to house the workers of the day. The character of the original mill village with its planned layout is still very much in evidence today within that part of the town designated a Conservation Area. To the north and south substantial areas of postwar housing, primarily in the public sector, adjoin the Conservation Area while to the east the mill complex is separated from these housing areas by the main road and a number of detached dwellings, recreation and open space facilities, and the curtilages of Sion House and the Church of the Good Shepherd. While the mill continues to provide a highly important source of employment for the town and beyond, Sion Mills also functions as a dormitory settlement for Strabane and Londonderry. Its current population of 1750 represents a modest rate of growth since 1961 but since 1971 the public sector housing stock of the town has more than doubled. In contrast, private house building has taken place at a much more modest rate. Aside from housing, a new primary school recently completed and major industrial expansion at the mill, are the principal developments which have occurred over recent years.

64.0 Development Pattern

64.1 The future pattern of development envisaged for Sion Mills is a reflection of the need to retain its existing relatively compact form given its location within the Green Belt and given the stated aim of retaining for it, a separate identity from both Strabane town and Glebe village.

64.2 The river to the east forms a strong physical limit of development and the principal traffic route passing through the town has implications for the pattern of development and for the containment of development to the north and south.

64.3 Given the functional relationship between Sion Mills and Strabane, whereby the District Town provides for the bulk of its retailing and commercial requirements and is a significant source of employment, housing is likely to remain the principal development activity over the plan period. The rate of growth envisaged for Sion Mills is expected to be similar to that experienced over the previous plan period.

65.0 The Conservation Area

65.1 Much of the character of Sion Mills is derived from the special architectural character and historic interest of its Conservation Area which was designated by the Department in 1977. It comprises the old core of mill workers' dwellings, a number of community buildings and buildings of individual merit and character some of which are "listed", the mill complex, a number of detached dwellings and amenity open space at Church Square. A design guide for the Conservation Area has been published by the Department and this includes a history and description of the Area, the general objectives and principles of designation and guidelines for prospective developers.

65.2 Despite the acknowledged importance of this area and its designation as a Conservation Area, the physical fabric of the original mill workers' dwellings and the general environment of the original core of the town have suffered from general deterioration over the years. It would therefore greatly benefit from a programme of residential upgrading and environmental improvement.

65.3 To the east of the main road the buildings and environs associated with Sion House have also suffered from neglect and deterioration. In order to maintain and upgrade this part of the Conservation Area potential exists to reinstate existing buildings and structures through the introduction of new uses. New development is also possible provided that high standards of siting and design appropriate to the setting can be met.

65.4 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- All development proposals will be judged against the development guidelines set out in the Department's publication "Sion Mills Conservation Area"**
- The Department will encourage the implementation of appropriate programmes of action directed at residential upgrading and environmental improvement**
- The location and character of Listed Buildings will be factors in the determination of development proposals in their vicinity**

66.0 Development Activity

66.1 The policies and proposals in respect of the principal development activities in Sion Mills are set out in the following paragraphs.

67.0 Housing

67.1 Objectives

- to identify sufficient land for new housing**
- to provide a choice of housing sites in convenient locations to support the provision of**

a range of dwelling types to meet the different housing needs

□ to encourage the upgrading of the existing housing stock within the Conservation Area

□ to encourage environmental improvement within existing housing areas particularly those contained within the Conservation Area

67.2 Within Sion Mills a total of 23 hectares of additional land has been zoned for housing. It is estimated that the 2001 population could reach 1900



and although the 140 additional dwellings required for this scale of population growth could be accommodated on 7 hectares of land some overprovision has been made. This relative overzoning takes account of ownership patterns, of detailed site constraints and the need to provide for flexibility and choice. Within zoned areas a variety of housing layout, density and design should be used and appropriate landscaping, open space and pedestrian facilities should be provided.

67.3 Housing Zonings

67.3.1 An important development opportunity exists on the land zoned for housing to the **north of Beech Park**. This 2.5 hectare site could be developed from either Primrose Park or Melmount Road or both. If developed from Melmount Road, only one single access point will be permitted. Given the location of this site development proposals should incorporate a significant landscaping component designed to create a strong visual barrier at this approach to the town.

67.3.2 Approximately 4.5 hectares of housing land has been zoned **between Beech Park and Primrose Park**. The development of this area which should be accessed from Primrose Park at the eastern end of the zoned frontage is dependent on the provision of new sewerage infrastructure. A further 2 hectares of housing land is zoned to the **south of Primrose Park** and to the **west of Meadow Park**.



67.3.3 Seein Road should provide access for the 5 hectares of land zoned to the south west of the town **between Melmound Road and Seein Road** and a comprehensive approach to its layout and development will be required. Again given its prominent location at the edge of the town strong landscaping treatment will be required particularly around the site boundaries.



Recent Private Development north of Primrose Park

67.3.4 The land zoned to the **east of the main road** can best be developed from Mill Avenue and via a single access point along the Melmound Road frontage. Overall, the design and layout of development in this area should reflect the high quality of the surrounding environment and the fact that part of the site lies within the Conservation Area and adjacent to Listed Buildings.

67.3.5 Over recent years, despite the implementation of many private individual residential improvement schemes, a general deterioration in the physical fabric of the major housing areas within the Conservation Area has taken place. The Department would encourage appropriate public bodies in conjunction with the local community to determine the most appropriate form of action which would result in the upgrading of the housing stock and the general environment around them.

67.4 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- 23 hectares of housing land have been zoned to meet the projected housing land need of the plan period**
- Within all major housing areas development in-depth will be a requirement**



SION MILLS

HOUSING

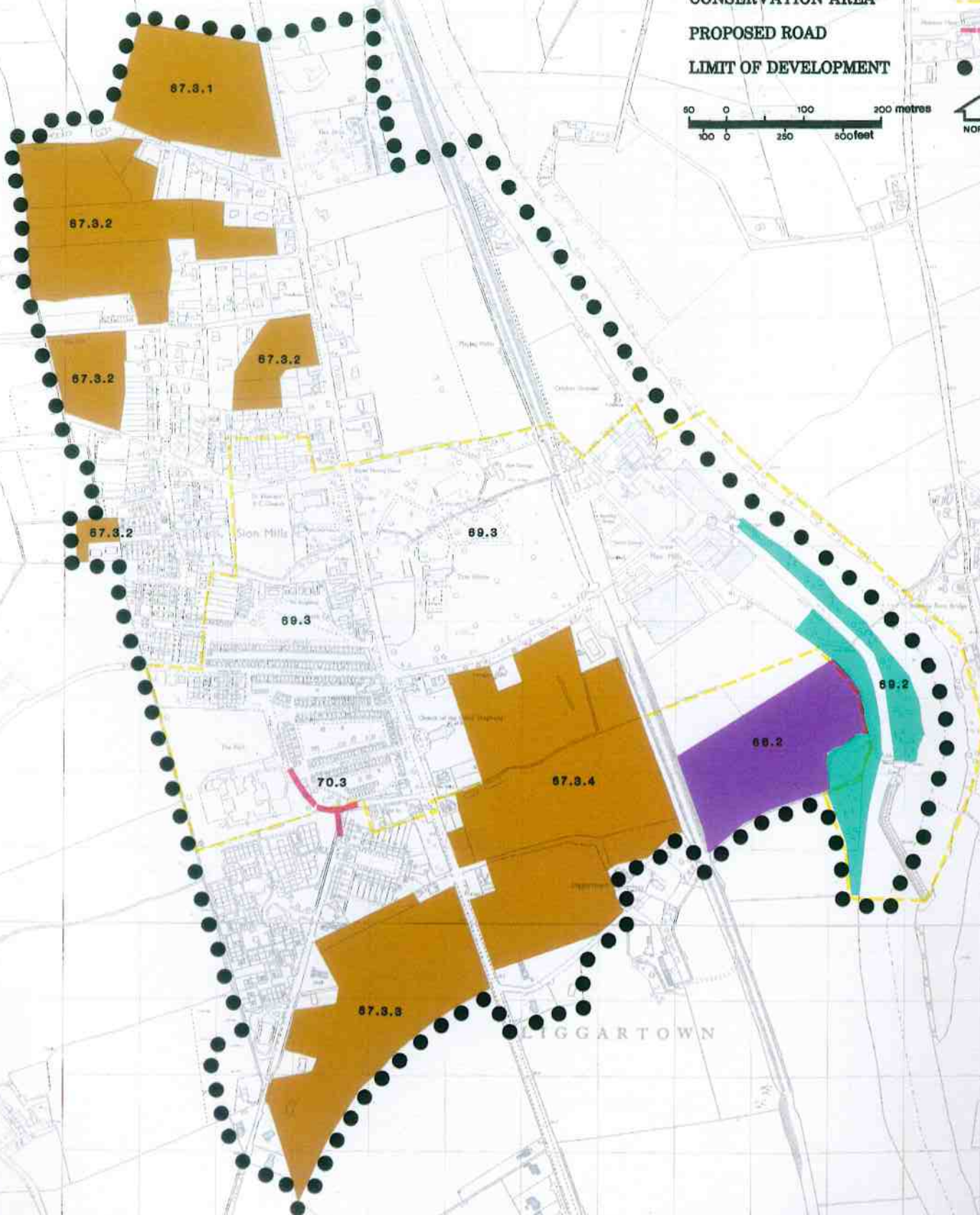
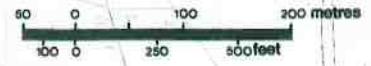
INDUSTRY

RECREATION / OPEN SPACE

CONSERVATION AREA

PROPOSED ROAD

LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT



Numbers refer to written statement paragraph e.g. (67.3.2)

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- Where potential development land has a public road frontage to other than the T3, this alternative should be used for access purposes
- The Department will encourage the provision of a range of densities and house types and varied and good quality layouts to meet a variety of housing needs
- All new development will be required to meet with standard requirements in terms of access and servicing layout
- High standards of layout, design and landscaping will be sought for new housing development
- Where appropriate, developers will be required to provide inter-development link roads as part of their development layout
- Within all housing areas developers will be required to provide appropriate pedestrian linkages and an appropriate amount of suitably located open space



Opportunities for environmental improvement exist within the Conservation Area

- Development proposals for land at the northern and southern approaches to Sion Mills will be required to include strong landscaping treatment on site boundaries to provide a visual barrier at the limit of urban development

68.0 Industry

68.1 Objective

- to allocate sufficient land to meet the expansion needs of existing industry

68.2 In view of the proximity of Sion Mills to Strabane and the lack of any apparent pressure for other industrial development over the previous plan period it has been considered unnecessary to zone additional land for industry over and above that required to provide for the expansion of the existing mill complex. As a consequence, 3.25 hectares of land for this purpose has been zoned immediately to the south of the existing industrial site, where construction of new industrial premises has commenced. Given the location of this land adjacent to the river and its significance in terms of the Conservation Area, landscaping and planting will be a requirement of any further industrial development proposal submitted.



68.3 Where residential amenity is not affected however, there may be opportunities for small scale industrial enterprises on areas of white land within the development limit.

68.4 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- 3.25 hectares of land have been zoned adjacent to the river to facilitate the expansion of the existing industrial enterprise sufficient to meet the industrial needs to the end of the plan period**
- All development proposals will be required to include a landscaping and planting scheme**
- Small scale industrial development in other locations will be assessed against its impact on adjoining development**

69.0 Recreation and Open Space

69.1 *Objectives*

- to retain existing public and private open space provision**
- to allocate sufficient land to meet the needs of recreation and amenity**

69.2 **The River Mourne** and its immediate environs have considerable potential for more passive forms of recreation and the Department would encourage the development and enhancement of this amenity where appropriate.

69.3 Within Sion Mills organised sport is catered for by existing facilities located to the **north of Sion House and the Mill complex**. The District Council propose to develop a public park, catering for passive recreation, on 7 hectares of land around Sion House and Sion Cottage and to refurbish, for active use, existing buildings along the main road frontage of the

site. While the Plan does not zone any new open space areas for active recreational use suitable land would have to be identified to the west of the town beyond the limits of development should a need arise during the plan period. In addition, sites for local kick-about facilities will be investigated and provided, as appropriate, on suitable land to the west of the main road and adjacent to the main housing areas. At **Church Square** opportunities exist to raise the quality of the general environment and to provide recreational facilities for surrounding residential development.

69.4 In a situation where development pressures arise on areas of open land, the Department will ensure the retention of areas of open space except where community need no longer exists and no particular amenity attaches to the land.

69.5 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Public and private open spaces existing within the town will be retained**
- The amenity potential of the river will be protected and enhanced**
- Open space provision to an appropriate scale will be required within all housing areas**
- The Plan will facilitate the provision of recreational and open space at Church Square and the environs of Sion House**

70.0 Transportation

70.1 *Objective*

- to improve general accessibility throughout the urban area**

70.2 Projections of future traffic growth are insufficient to justify provision, during the plan



period, of the by-pass road to the west of Sion Mills, as proposed in the previous Area Plan. Land for this by-pass road will not therefore be protected.

70.3 To facilitate **maximum** flexibility of traffic movement it is proposed that the network of interconnecting roads to the west of the trunk road will be completed by the provision of a new link road **between Seein Road and New Street.**

70.4 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- The by-pass road proposed by the previous Area Plan has been abandoned and land is no longer being protected for this purpose**
- A road link between Seein Road and New Street will be provided during the plan period**
- Other minor road works and traffic management schemes will be implemented as necessary**

71.0 Shopping and Services

71.1 *Objective*

- to facilitate the provision of adequate shopping and service facilities to meet the daily needs of the local population**

71.2 Again, given its existing character and functions and its close proximity and functional relationship with Strabane, Sion Mills does not have a clearly defined central area. Shopping facilities tend to be **dispersed** around the town in locations which meet the localised needs of its residents. It is considered that Strabane will continue to be the major shopping and service centre for Sion Mills. New shopping or commercial proposals will therefore be considered on their locational merits. The scale of provision should be designed to meet local needs. Sites within the Conservation Area may carry with them particular constraints in terms of use and shop front design.

71.3 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Proposals for small scale shopping provision to serve local needs will be judged on their particular locational merits**
- New development or improvements to existing premises should be carried out to a high standard of design**

72.0 White Land

72.1 The development limit for Sion Mills contains small pockets of white land, the development of which will be dependent on the resolution of access, drainage, infrastructural or topographical problems. The area within 200 metres of the sewage treatment works is considered unsuitable for new housing development.

72.2 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Development proposals will be judged on their particular locational merits and will be dependent on the resolution, as appropriate, of infrastructural and technical problems**

NEWTOWNSTEWART

73.0 Introduction

73.1 Newtownstewart, the smallest of the local towns, is located close to the southern boundary of the plan area and to its boundary with Omagh District. It lies along the Strule River close to its confluence with the River Owenkillew along and above the floodplain from where the land rises southwards away from the town towards Bessy Bell. The town has a wide Main Street where much of the original architectural character has been retained.



73.2 Newtownstewart has a population of approximately 1600 and a housing stock of approximately 500 dwellings. It serves as an important residential centre for both Omagh and Strabane and provides an important service and market function for a wide rural hinterland which extends beyond the plan area into Omagh District. Recent growth has largely been the product of public sector housing provision concentrated to the west of the town off Strabane Road and Oldcastle Road. Apart from one small scheme off Dublin Street, private housing development in recent years has taken the form of single dwellings on individual sites. Over the past decade significant open space and recreation facilities have been provided along the river at the Holme and industrial development has been concentrated in an area lying between Strabane Road and Baronscourt Road. A major extension of the sewage treatment works has recently been completed at Back Burn.

74.0 Development Pattern

74.1 The development options available to enable Newtownstewart to meet the development demands of the plan period are severely curtailed by a number of physical constraints. Development in a northerly direction is constrained by the river floodplain, an area of high amenity and agricultural value, and by the sewage treatment works at Back Burn. The main Omagh to Strabane Road passing through the town is classified as a principal traffic route demanding that, on the periphery of the town, the creation of new development accesses onto it be minimised. Development opportunities to the east and to the north-west are thus also limited. To the south, the topography slopes steeply up from the town and it is important to ensure that development does not break the skyline and destroy the fine natural setting of the town.

74.2 It is anticipated that the population of Newtownstewart may grow to 1900 over the plan period and given the modest nature of this growth it is not anticipated that the constraints set out above



would unduly hamper its development. Significant opportunities for development exist particularly to the south and west of the town and the identification of potential development land in these areas enables Newtownstewart to retain a compact urban form and to preserve its setting while at the same time offering a wide range of choice particularly for housing development. Housing is likely to be the principal development activity over the plan period. The maintenance of a compact urban form is all the more important given that most of the area beyond the development limit no longer carries a policy of strict control over rural development.

75.0 Development Activity

75.1 The policies and proposals in respect of the principal development activities in Newtownstewart are set out in the following paragraphs.

76.0 Housing

76.1 Objectives

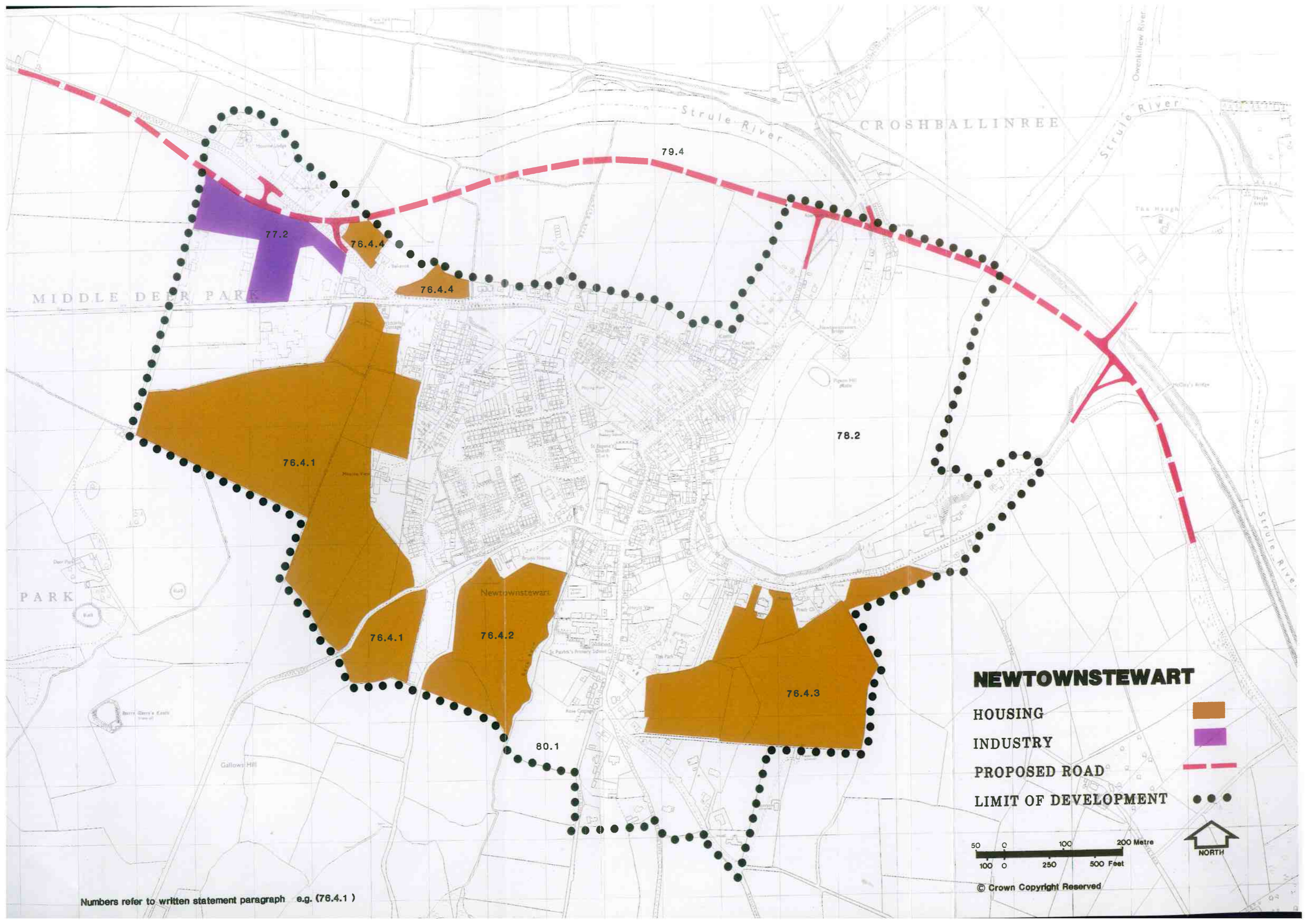
- to identify sufficient land for new housing
- to provide a choice of housing sites in convenient locations to support the provision of a wide range of dwelling types to meet different housing needs
- to encourage the redevelopment and refurbishment of derelict and substandard dwellings at St Eugene's Street and Townhall Street

76.2 Within Newtownstewart 26.5 hectares of additional land has been zoned for housing. It is estimated that the 2001 population could reach 1900 and although the 180 additional dwellings required for this scale of population growth could be accommodated on 9 hectares of land some overprovision has been made. This overzoning takes account of ownership patterns, of detailed site constraints and of the need to provide for flexibility and choice.

76.3 With all new housing areas, the Department will seek the use of an imaginative range of layouts and house types when considering detailed development proposals and will require the provision of landscaping and appropriate levels of open space provision.

76.4 Housing Zonings

76.4.1 The area of land between Baronscourt Road to beyond Oldcastle Road contains 14 hectares of attractive development land. While a small sector of this area may be developed from Orr Park, it will be a requirement that the remainder of the area develops from at least two access points at Oldcastle Road and Baronscourt Road and that for flexibility of movement for local residents, development roads be interconnected. Proposed housing layouts should reflect this requirement and should avoid the landlocking of fields to the rear.



MIDDLE DEER PARK

CROSHBALLINREE

Strule River

Strule River

Owenkillew River

77.2

76.4.4

76.4.4

79.4

78.2

76.4.1

76.4.1

76.4.2

Newtownstewart

76.4.3

80.1

PARK

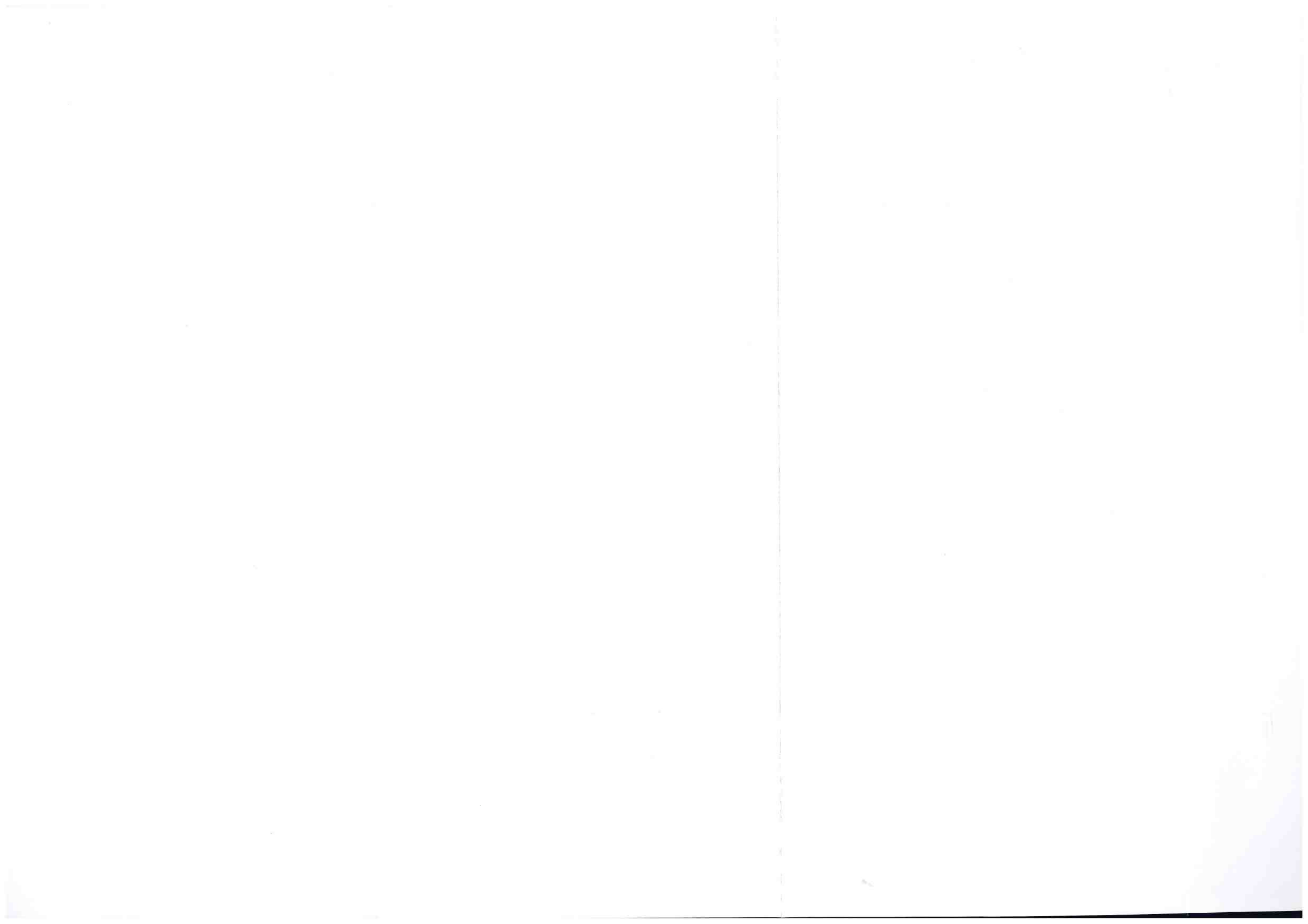
NEWTOWNSTEWART

- HOUSING
- INDUSTRY
- PROPOSED ROAD
- LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT



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Numbers refer to written statement paragraph e.g. (76.4.1)



76.4.2 The area to the **south of Brook House** comprises just over 4 hectares of land and should be accessed by means of a single access located as close as possible to the junction of the minor road with Oldcastle Road. Development proposals should facilitate the retention of existing trees around Brook House which are considered to provide an important local amenity.

76.4.3 Approximately 8 hectares of land have been zoned **south of Moyle Road** although by virtue of the elevated nature particularly of its south eastern corner, this area may not realise its full development potential. Access improvements will be required for the development of that part of this zoning required to access via Castletown Road. To the east of the Presbyterian Church the land is suitable for frontage development only provided a service road is taken into the site at a point approximately 30 metres from the church boundary. This access should be shared with that required for the proposed church car park. Given the prominent nature of all this land the Department will require a high standard of landscaping to be incorporated into any development proposals.

76.4.4 Two small infill sites each extending to less than 0.5 hectares in area have been zoned for housing **along Strabane Road**. The more northerly site will be affected by the by-pass proposals and its layout should have regard for the need to safeguard its residential amenity from the effects of the road proposal.

76.4.5 Derelict and rundown properties along the major approaches to Newtownstewart at **St Eugene's Street and Townhall Street** detract from the quality of the urban environment. The Department will encourage the redevelopment or refurbishment of these properties, as appropriate. New development should be integrated into the existing street frontages and should be traditional in terms of design.

76.5 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- 26.5 hectares of housing land has been zoned to meet the projected housing need of the plan period**
- Within all major housing areas development in-depth will be a requirement**
- The Department will encourage the provision of a range of densities and house types and varied and good quality layouts to meet a variety of housing needs**
- All new development will be required to meet with standard requirements in terms of access and layout**
- High standards of layout, design and landscaping will be sought for new housing development**
- Within new housing areas developers will be required where necessary to provide pedestrian linkages and an appropriate amount of suitably located open space**

- Where appropriate developers will be required to provide for inter-development road links as part of their development layout**

- The Department will encourage the redevelopment and refurbishment of derelict and run-down properties in St Eugene's Street and Townhall Street. New development should be traditional in design**

77.0 Industry

77.1 *Objectives*

- to allocate sufficient land to meet the needs of industry**

- to encourage a high standard of environmental quality within industrial areas**

77.2 Existing and proposed industrial zonings **between Strabane Road and Baronscourt Road** were reserved for industrial use in the West Tyrone Area Plan. The site is well located in relation to the existing and proposed principal road network and it is considered that the residue of the former Plan zoning, 2.4 hectares, is sufficient to cater for Newtownstewart's industrial requirements to the end of this plan period. Access to this site should be from Baronscourt Road and no access from the T3 trunk road will be permitted.

77.3 Given the prominent location of this area along the main road network and at the edge of the town all industrial development proposals will be expected to include landscaping proposals. Existing industrial undertakings in this area will be encouraged to raise the quality of the environment around existing premises by the erection of appropriate fencing and implementation of suitable planting schemes.

77.4 Provided that housing and shopping are not adversely affected, there may also be scope for small scale industrial enterprises to develop or expand in the older parts of the town around Main Street.

77.5 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- 2.4 hectares of land have been zoned for industry to the west of the town centre to meet industrial requirements to the end of the plan period. This area should be accessed from Baronscourt Road**



- All development proposals will be required to include a landscaping and planting scheme
- Existing industrial undertakings will be encouraged to upgrade their immediate surroundings by planting and landscaping
- Small scale industrial development in other locations will be assessed against its impact on adjoining development

78.0 Recreation and Open Space

78.1 Objective

- to retain existing public and private open space provision

78.2 Existing public open space provision for outdoor recreation at **The Holme** is considered to be more than adequate to meet the needs of Newtownstewart to the end of the plan period and it is important that this be retained. Provision can also be made in this area for more formal indoor recreation should the need arise.

78.3 By contrast, there is a lack of informal open space areas within the town's principal housing areas, a problem to be addressed by the District Council and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive during the course of the plan period.

78.4 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- Public and private open space existing within the town will be retained
- Open space provision to an appropriate scale will be required within all housing areas

79.0 Transportation

79.1 Objectives

- to improve safety and reduce delay to users of Omagh—Strabane—Londonderry road (T3)



- to improve conditions for residents and users of town centre facilities by the reduction of the volume of through traffic

79.2 The Omagh—Strabane—Londonderry road (T3) which passes through Newtownstewart town centre carries large volumes of heavy traffic. Considerable delay is caused to through traffic by the twisting and torturous alignment from Majors Wall, south of the town, and along St Eugene's Street, the 90° junctions to and from Main Street and the severely restricted width of Townhall Street.

79.3 Within the town, conflict between through and local traffic is a source of disruption and frustration to both.

79.4 The West Tyrone Area Plan proposals included a by-pass for Newtownstewart and following the public inquiry into that Plan, the Department protected the 'hill route' to the south of the town. After a thorough reappraisal of the bypass options, the Department now proposes that it be provided along a 'valley route' to the north of the town and that protection of the 'hill route' be discontinued.

79.5 The 'valley route' is considerably shorter than the 'hill route', will affect fewer residential properties, will cause less severance to land and is generally more cost effective. It will provide better facilities for traffic movement and will afford maximum benefit to the town centre by providing direct access via Castle Brae. The 'hill route' had no connection to the town centre area.

79.6 The by-pass will involve construction of two river bridges and a low embankment along the river floodplain. It will offer attractive views of Newtownstewart Old Bridge and Castle hitherto unseen by the main road users. Carefully designed landscaping measures will be taken to protect the amenity of adjoining residential property and of the river valley.

79.7 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- A by-pass road will be provided, to the north of the town during the course of the plan period
- The previous lines reserved for the by-pass in the West Tyrone Area Plan have now been abandoned and land is no longer protected for this purpose in these areas
- The Department will take appropriate measures to ensure the protection of the amenity of the river valley through which the proposed by-pass will run
- Other minor road works and traffic management schemes will be implemented as necessary

80.0 White Land

80.1 An area of white land contained within the development limit on the **western side of Dublin Park** is considered to present a logical extension to the urban area. However, given access and top-

ographical difficulties it is considered suitable for frontage development only.

80.2 Summary of Policies and Proposals

Development proposals will be judged on their locational merits and will be dependent on the resolution, as appropriate, of infrastructural or technical problems

81.0 Town Centre

81.1 Objective

to promote a vibrant town centre and increase its attractiveness as a place in which to live, work, use and invest by protecting and enhancing its physical environment and improving its accessibility and level of car parking provision

81.2 Retailing and general commercial activity are concentrated along Main Street, the northern end of St Eugene's Street and the eastern end of Townhall Street, a pattern which serves the community well and which the Plan will endeavour to reinforce. Beyond this area retailing will only be acceptable where it can be shown to serve a local need.

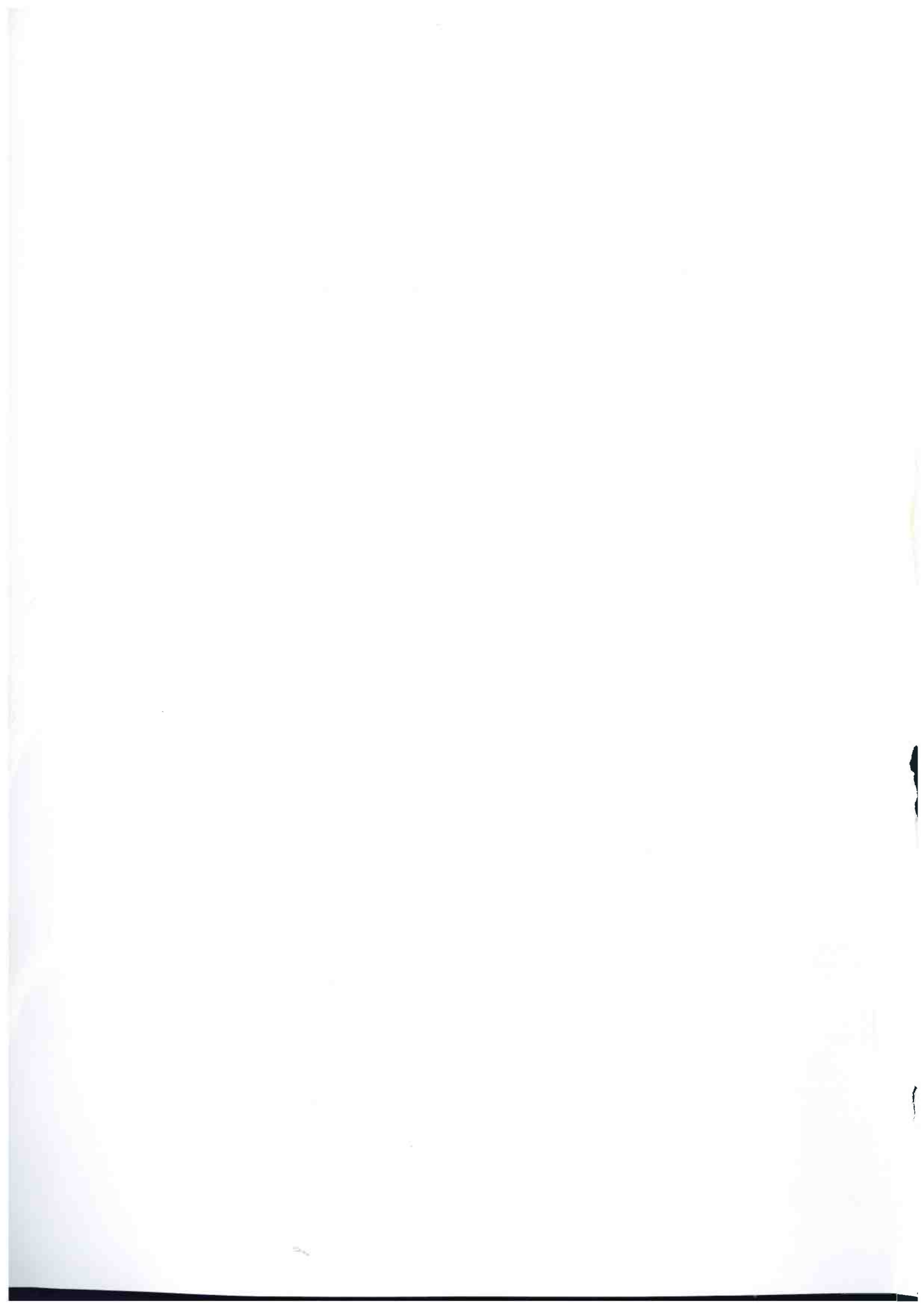
81.3 The town centre contains a number of Listed Buildings and a number of fine unlisted buildings whose architectural character has been retained and maintained to a high standard. These contribute in considerable measure to the comparatively high townscape quality within the town centre and should be retained where refurbishment or improvement is contemplated. It is important that Listed Buildings not only be retained but that their character and setting be protected by sympathetically designed schemes on adjoining land.

81.4 Completion of the proposed by-pass will result in the removal of a substantial volume of traffic from the town centre thus benefiting the general environment of its central streets. These areas could benefit further from the implementation of environmental improvement measures and where feasible these should be implemented in advance of provision of the by-pass. The adequacy of existing car parking facilities will be monitored throughout the plan period and off-street car parks will be developed as and when required. Land to the rear of Main Street and Townhall Street may be suitable for such an off-street car park.



81.5 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- New shopping development will be concentrated within the central area except in situations where small local shops are required to serve local need**
- The Department will encourage the conservation of the architectural heritage of the town centre by the protection and enhancement of Listed Buildings and by encouraging the retention and enhancement of examples of traditional architecture**
- All new development and refurbishment schemes will be expected to meet high standards of design particularly in respect of shop fronts and advertising**
- The Department will encourage the implementation of town centre environmental improvement schemes**



Part Six

Statement of Policies and Proposals and Maps—Villages



82.0 Introduction

82.1 While the villages, and the hamlets to be considered in the next section, represent the lowest tiers of the Urban Settlement Strategy they cannot be regarded in isolation from the Rural Strategy. The functions and character of these smaller settlements and the policies and proposals defined for them impinge on the growth and development of the open countryside while the level of growth and development in the open countryside has implications for the level of growth and development within these smaller settlements.

82.2 The Settlement Strategy drawn up for the District provides development opportunities at a third level in the settlement hierarchy within 13 villages. While varying in terms of size, function and character they all serve to provide for a wider choice of development location throughout the District, and their locational distribution reflects their significance for the development of the wider rural area over the plan period.

83.0 Objectives

83.1 Policies and proposals drawn up for the villages are governed by the following objectives:

- to improve village environments and ensure adequate development land to meet their expected needs within a development limit defined to project their character and that of the surrounding countryside
- to promote vibrant village centres and increase their attractiveness as places in which to live, work, use and invest by protecting and enhancing their physical environment
- to make effective use of new and existing infrastructure
- to define development limits which prevent urban sprawl, ribbon development and coalescence of settlements
- to conserve and enhance the natural and manmade environment through the application of physical planning policies and the development of high quality new environments

83.2 Within most of the designated villages, development pressures and the demand for development land over the plan period will be limited. In terms of demand the emphasis will lie with housing development but it is anticipated that there will also be requirements for small scale recreation and open space, industrial, commercial, community and tourist facilities and for minor road improvement schemes.

83.3 The designated villages are:-

Ardstraw
Artigarvan
Ballymagorry
Clady
Donemana
Erganagh

Glebe
Killen
Killeter
Magheramason
Plumbridge
Spamount
Victoria Bridge

84.0 Map Interpretation

84.1 In this context therefore the development limit will contain a number of equally suitable locations within each village to satisfy its particular needs. This flexible approach is however tempered by planning considerations such as the need to ensure the proper integration of new development into the existing village fabric and the need to make use of existing infrastructure. It is unlikely that all the land within each village limit will be developed over the plan period.

84.2 Each set of proposals consists of a map indicating a limit of development together with a statement setting out the broad planning policy to be applied within that limit. The limits of development have been drawn on the basis of an evaluation of physical features, an assessment of environmental issues and a consideration of the availability of services. The development of some land may however require the provision of additional services or drainage infrastructure and in some instances there may be pockets of land within the development limit which may be difficult or unsuitable for development.

82.0 DONEMANA

85.1 Donemana with an estimated population of 750 is the largest of the designated villages within the plan area. It is a well established and thriving local centre servicing a wide rural hinterland to the north of the District and providing a wide range of service and community facilities and supporting a weekly livestock market.

85.2 The village which has developed alongside the Burndennett River is everywhere characterised by steep slopes. While the village centres around the junction of a number of traffic routes the difficult nature of the topography has resulted in a scattered settlement form.

85.3 Future village development is constrained to the north, west and south-west by difficult topography and additionally in the west by the sewage treatment works which sterilizes surrounding land for development. To the east, development opportunities are limited by the inability of the area to connect to the public sewerage system. In the centre of Donemana a large derelict sand and gravel working places limitations on development opportunities in the village centre.

85.4 The population of Donemana has shown a steady increase over the past 20 years and it is anticipated that this pattern will continue over the plan period. The development limit has therefore been drawn bearing in mind the need for a flexible approach, to consolidate the existing pattern of development and to prevent ribbon development occurring along the approach roads to the village. In some locations access difficulties require to be resolved before development can take place, while in others development levels will require to be raised to prevent flooding and waterlogging occurring. In the vicinity of Allen Park, only limited rounding off will



be acceptable for any development proposing to access by way of Allen Park. Overall, the scale of new development in the village should reflect its relative position in the settlement hierarchy.

85.5 Early in the plan period it is proposed to develop a public car park convenient to the centre of Donemana. Serious traffic congestion is currently a characteristic of the village centre and it is hoped that this car park will be the first stage in an environmental improvement programme directed towards the upgrading of both the built and natural environment. In this context it is recommended that a major reclamation scheme be carried out in the former sand and gravel working to permit its return to beneficial use. There are a number of development and redevelopment opportunities in Donemana and care should be taken to ensure that the design solution chosen when these opportunities are exploited, reflects the traditional character of the existing village centre.

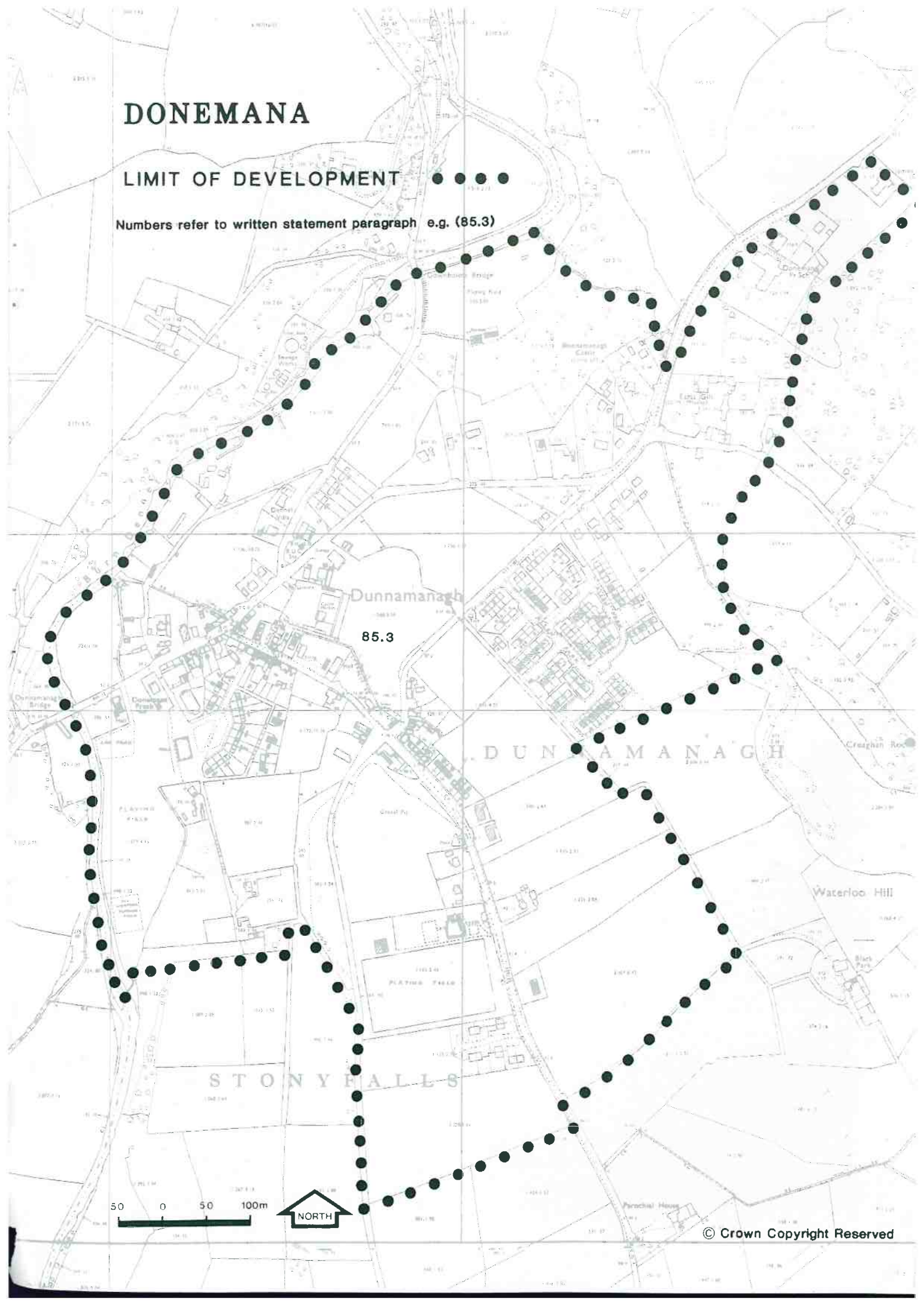
85.6 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated within the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**
- Within areas where a flooding risk may arise development levels must be raised accordingly**
- Only limited rounding off to existing development will be acceptable for development accessing through Allen Park**
- A new car park will be provided to the west of the Main Street**
- The Department would recommend implementation of an environmental improvement programme in the centre of the village particularly on the site of the former sand pit**

DONEMANA

LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT ● ● ● ● ●

Numbers refer to written statement paragraph e.g. (85.3)



86.0 GLEBE

86.1 In terms of population, approximately 640, Glebe is the second largest of the designated villages and serves primarily as a dormitory settlement providing a range of services and community facilities to meet the day to day requirements of its residents. While its growth over the past decade has been relatively slow, more recently, private housing development pressures have been experienced. This is attributed to the relative proximity of Glebe to Strabane and to Sion Mills.

86.2 The village is essentially a linear settlement having extended in ribbon form along Garvan Road between 2 former crossroad nuclei. It lies on elevated land at the edge of the Green Belt and in delineating the development limit the Department has sought to retain a separate identity for Glebe. Its coalescence with Sion Mills will be prevented by curtailing ribbon development along the approach roads to the village and by maintaining a stretch of open countryside between the 2 settlements. Additionally, the development limit provides for the consolidation of the existing pattern of development.

86.3 While small scale replacement schemes for Orilt dwellings will be required over the plan period most future housing development will take place within the private sector. Within the development limit, sufficient land for housing development and for the provision of District Council playing fields has been included.

86.4 In general, the scale of any new residential development should reflect that of the village with large suburban type development unlikely to be acceptable. In some areas where drainage difficulties may exist, it will be necessary to raise development levels within the new developments.

86.5 In terms of infrastructure provision, it is proposed that a footpath be provided along Primrose Park to Sion Mills, over the plan period.

86.6 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**



Development proposals which would result in the coalescence of Glebe with Sion Mills will be unacceptable

To provide for the development of playing fields

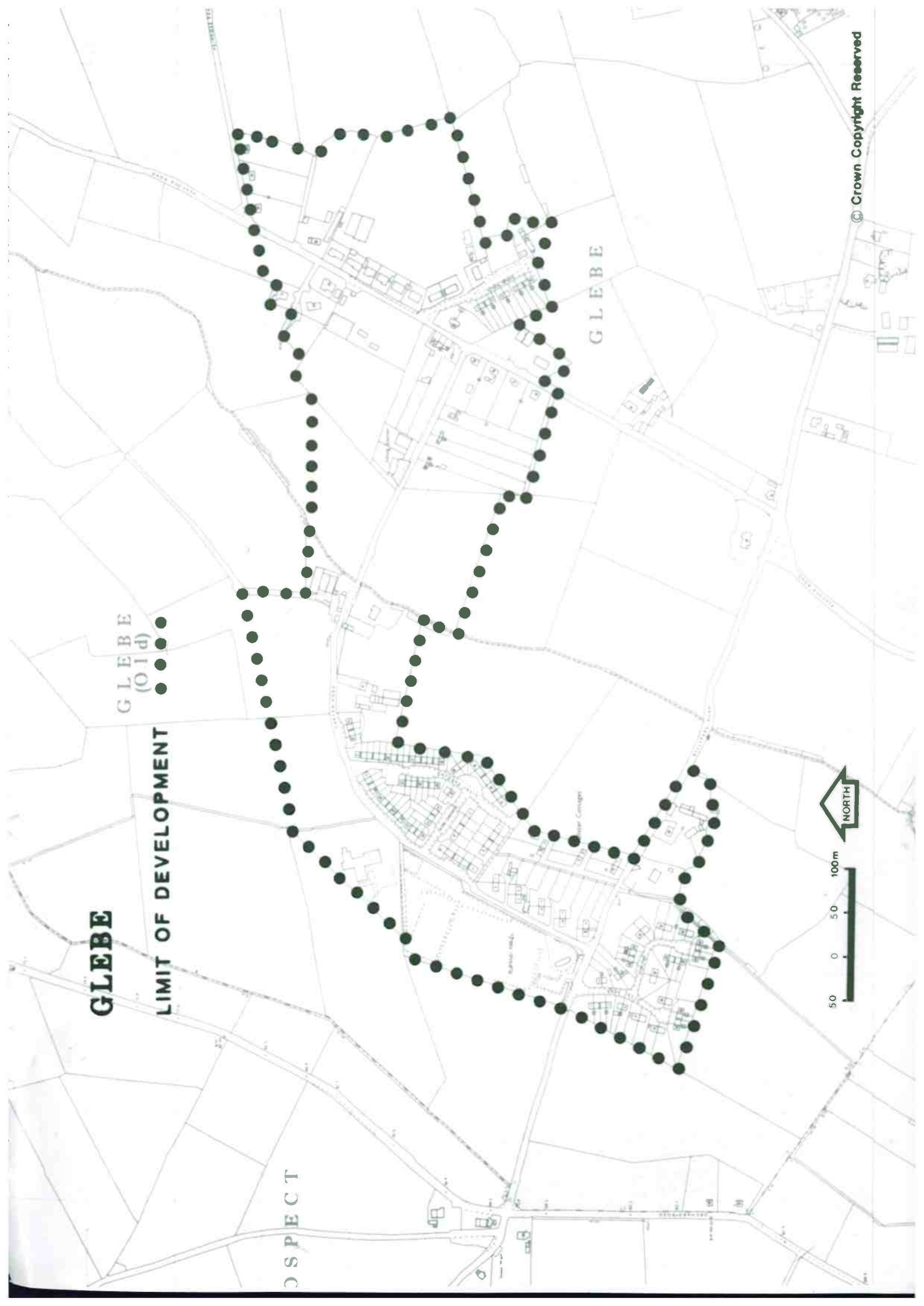
GLEBE

**GLEBE
(Old)**

LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT

OSPECT

GLEBE



87.0 BALLYMAGORRY

87.1 Although Ballymagorry is located only 2 miles from Strabane, with a population of 610, it has its own distinct village identity and a range of community facilities. Education facilities to serve the village are located in Artigarvan and in Strabane. Ballymagorry lies astride the main Strabane to Londonderry road (T3) and its principal function is that of a dormitory settlement for both Strabane and Londonderry. As such, it is expected that it will exhibit a relatively high rate of growth over the plan period.

87.2 Growth within Ballymagorry over recent years has been the result of both public and private housing and while, in respect of the latter, there has been some tendency for individual dwellings on individual sites, small developments have also been introduced. Given the development pressure anticipated in this area it is important that the village retain a relatively compact form to prevent the development of extended ribbons along the main road and to maximise the use of existing infrastructure.

87.3 The Department's protected route policy will apply throughout the length of the Strabane–Londonderry road (T3). Given this policy and the twisting alignment of the trunk road north of the village which makes provision of suitable access impracticable, the Glenmornan River effectively defines the northern limit of village development.

87.4 Within the limit of development particularly in the areas adjacent to the Glenmornan River and to the west of the trunk road, the risk of flooding is a constraint which may either preclude total development or necessitate the raising of development levels to afford additional protection. Growth in an easterly direction is limited by access difficulties and the main development areas identified lie to the south. Development of these areas should take place from the side road network and no access will be permitted from the trunk road. In common with all development land abutting the trunk road, proposals should make provision for effective landscaping and tree planting along road boundaries.

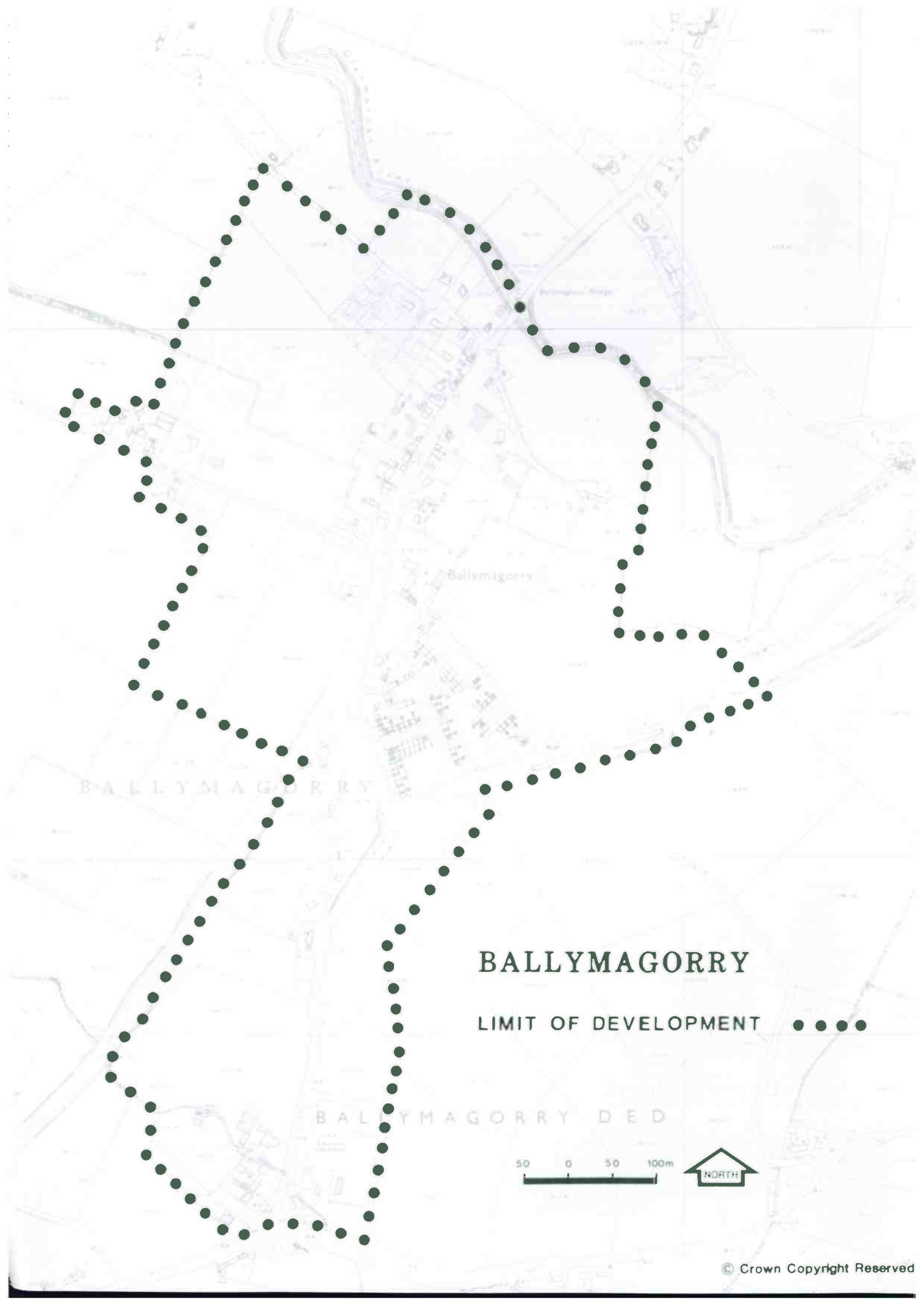
87.5 Given that Ballymagorry straddles a very heavily trafficked major road it is considered that opportunities for tree planting on the approaches to the village be exploited and that a programme of general environmental improvement work be implemented within the centre of the village both by private individuals and the appropriate public agencies.

87.6 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**



- Within areas where a flooding risk may arise development levels must be raised accordingly**
- No new development accesses will be permitted onto the T3. Development adjacent to the T3 shall be accessed by the side road network. In general development should take place in depth and landlocking of land to the rear should be avoided.**
- The Department would recommend the implementation of a tree planting scheme on the approaches to the village and general environmental improvement work within the village centre**



BALLYMAGORRY

LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT ●●●●

BALLYMAGORRY DED



88.0 CLADY

88.1 Clady, with an estimated population of 520, is located on the River Finn along the border with County Donegal. It has a strong village identity enhanced by a range of services and community facilities which include a primary school.

88.2 Clady exhibits a compact village form with development having traditionally taken place on the higher ground beyond the floodplain. In recent years, residential development has occurred primarily within the public sector while private development has taken the form of individual dwellings on individual sites. It is anticipated that this pattern will continue over the plan period. However, given its location only 4 miles from Strabane and given that the pattern of rural development in the surrounding area in recent years suggests a demand for private housing, it is envisaged that the demand for private housing within Clady may increase over the plan period.

88.3 While the development limit has taken account of these housing requirements, the direction of growth for the village has been constrained by a number of factors. To the west the existence of the border, the low-lying nature of the land close to the river and the sterilising effect of the sewage treatment works dictate that future development will take place in a northerly, easterly and to a lesser extent southerly direction. The overall aim is the maintenance of a compact village form within which the scale of new development should reflect the overall scale of the village. Access improvements will be required to facilitate new development in some areas, while in others, access arrangements to facilitate backland development will be a condition of planning approval.

88.4 Within the established village centre it is recommended that an environmental improvement programme be drawn up with a view to upgrading the built environment and providing a setting for the village.

88.5 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**
- Within areas where a flooding risk may arise development levels must be raised accordingly**
- Access opportunities to backlands will be protected from inappropriate development**
- The Department would recommend the implementation of an environmental improvement programme aimed at improving the built environment and creating a setting for the village**



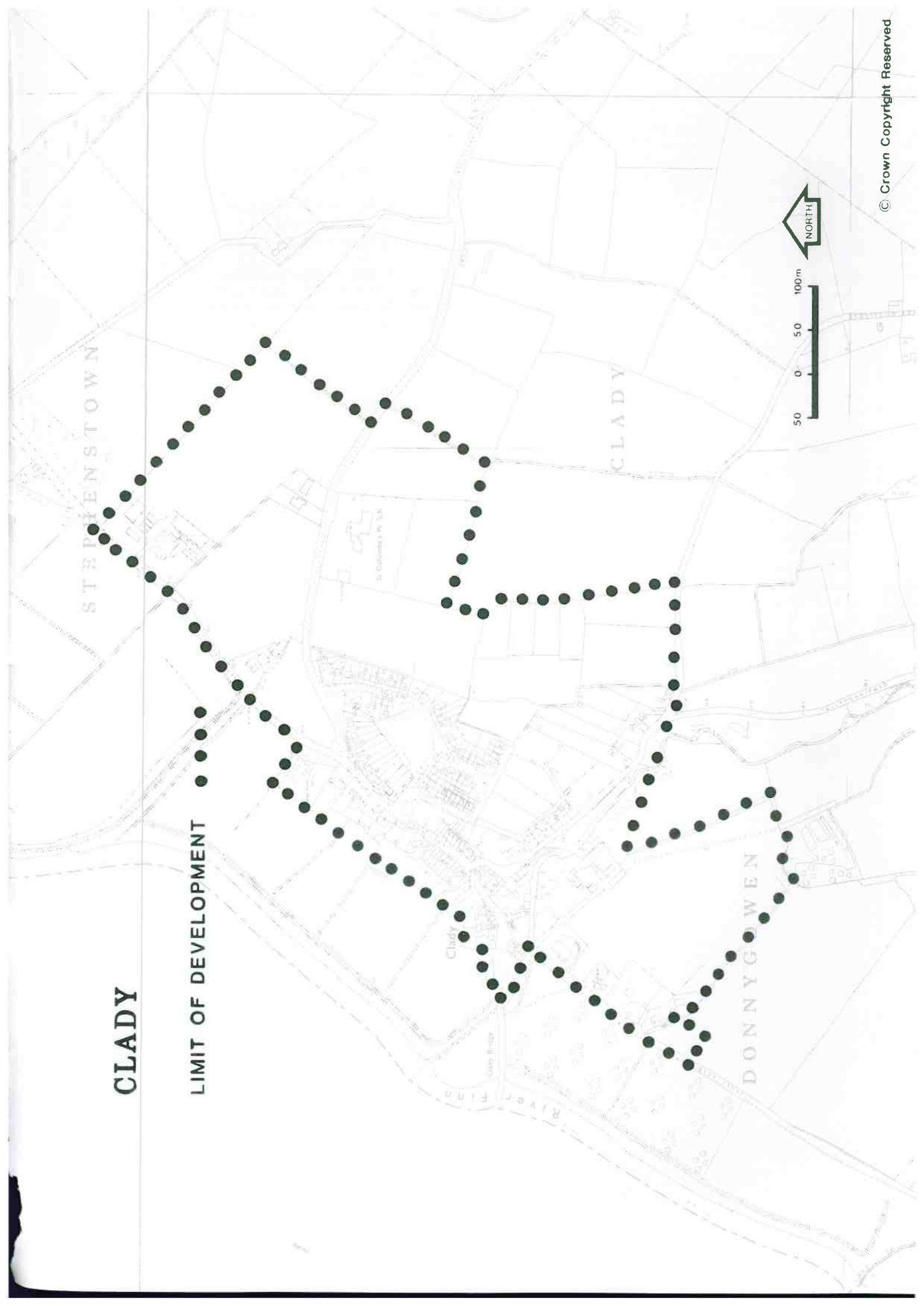
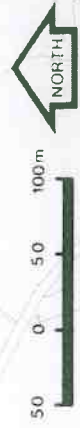
CLADY

LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT

STRIENSTOWN

CLADY

DONNYGOWEN



82.0 ARTIGARVAN

89.1 In terms of size, the population of Artigarvan is the same as that of Clady, but it is a village very different in terms of character and function. It has long performed a strong service function as the centre of a large agricultural co-operative enterprise and has doubled in size since 1971.

Development pressure evident in the village, is a result of its proximity to Strabane and its secondary function as a dormitory settlement as well as the industrial demands placed on it by Leckpatrick Co-Operative Agricultural and Dairy Society.

89.2 The village stands on the banks of the Glenmornan River and is located at the edge of the Green Belt. It has an attractive rural setting with views west and north towards the Foyle. Surrounding agricultural land is of relatively high quality. While the original settlement form was compact in nature being concentrated and dominated by the agricultural co-operative complex, this enterprise has been characterised by rapid and large scale expansion. In recent years, the village has begun to lose its compact form by the spread of housing development northwards and eastwards along the road network away from the industrial complex.

89.3 The development limit for Artigarvan has therefore been drawn in an attempt to provide a more cohesive village form and to prevent ribbon development from emerging as the characteristic form of new development. The amount of land included within the development limit reflects the Department's view that growth rates for Artigarvan will remain relatively high over the plan period, and in this context it is important to allow for flexibility and choice in the identification of suitable development land. The development limit further takes account of the location of the sewage treatment works to the north of the village which will impose a constraint on the amount of land suitable for development immediately to its east and west, and the need to facilitate the expansion of the co-operative enterprise. The development of land immediately to the north of the primary school may require to be phased in conjunction with road improvements in the vicinity.

89.4 The Department would recommend that environmental improvement opportunities in Artigarvan be exploited by both public and private bodies. The Glenmornan River provides an important natural resource for the village and the implementation of an environmental improvement scheme along its length would capitalise on the amenity potential it presents.

89.5 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**
- No development will be permitted within 90 metres of the sewage treatment works**
- Minor road improvement schemes will be implemented as appropriate and as resources allow and development may require to be phased in line with these**
- The Department would recommend the implementation of an environmental programme to upgrade the village centre and exploit the amenity potential of the river**



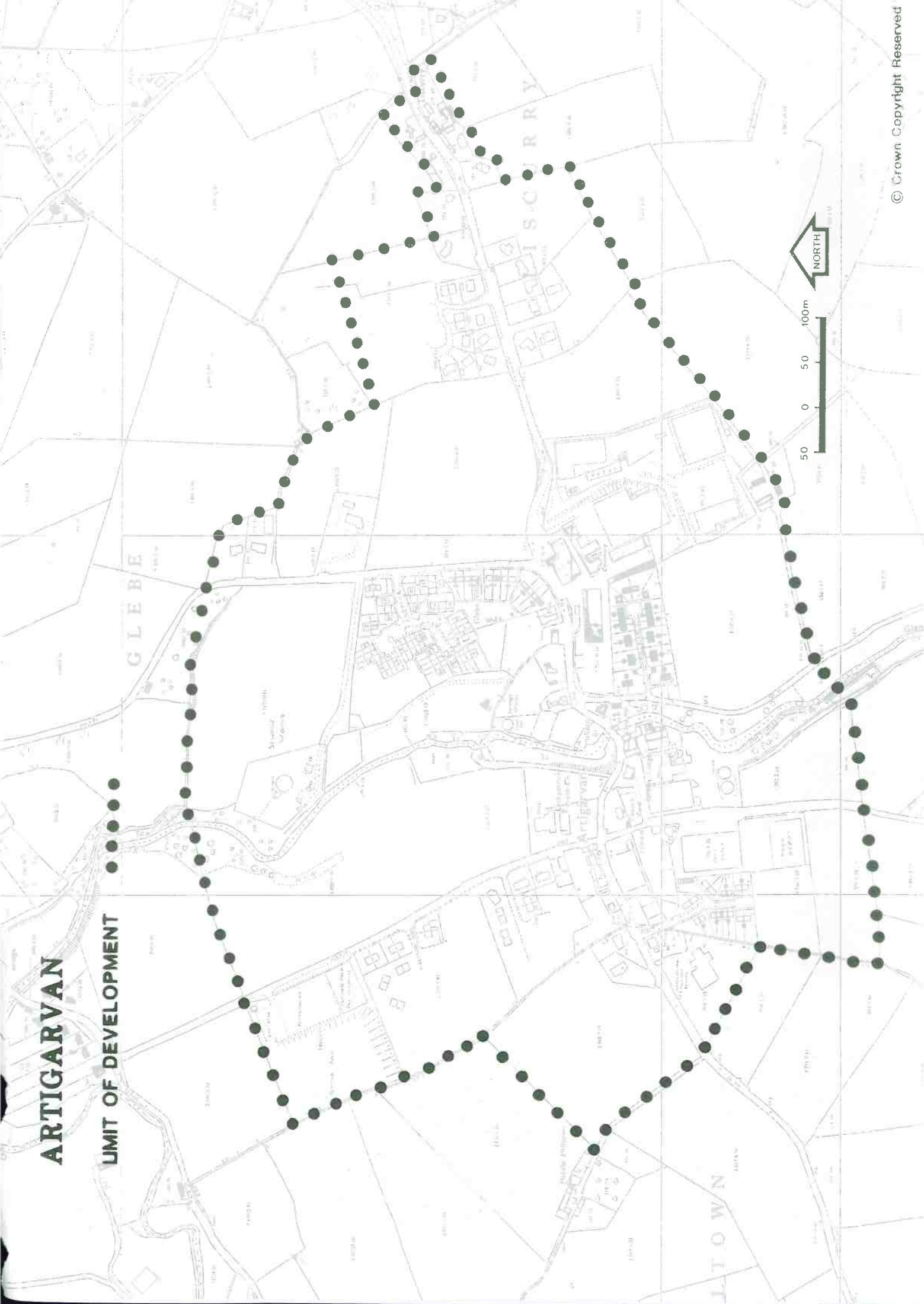
ARTIGARVAN

LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT

GLEBE

WILSONS CREEK

WILSONS CREEK



90.0 MAGHERAMASON

90.1 While lacking in a number of facilities normally associated with a village, Magheramason with an estimated population of 480 has a strong community identity. Given its location at the District boundary it looks to both adjoining District centres for most services and at the same time performs a dormitory function for both of them.

90.2 The village lies astride the main Strabane to Londonderry road and at the edge of the floodplain of the River Foyle from where the land rises southwards and westwards towards Gortmonly Hill. It currently has a compact settlement form centred around 2 concentrations of public authority housing, namely Blackstone Park and Brookfield. In recent years private housing has developed on the higher ground to the south of the village and in ribbon fashion along the main road, and the side road network towards the river. Magheramason is particularly well provided for in terms of recreation facilities, both public and private.

90.3 Over the plan period, it is envisaged that Magheramason will continue to grow and to perform a dormitory function. The development limit contains sufficient land to cater for its anticipated growth but the direction of this growth is dictated by a development limit which is a reflection of a number of physical constraints. The status of the main road passing through the village and the Trunk Road Policy which applies to it, dictates that the creation of new accesses be strictly controlled. Individual accesses to individual sites will not be permitted and access to in-depth development should take place from the side road network where suitable opportunities exist. Development of the land adjacent to Clampernow Road will be dependent on improvements to the substandard junction of this road with the T3, trunk road being completed. It should be noted that the development limit as drawn along Clampernow Road crosses the District boundary and consequently has no statutory standing in this area but will be used for guidance only.

90.4 The development limit for Magheramason to the west of the main road is influenced by the low-lying nature of the land in the river floodplain. Even within the limit in this area local or marginal flooding may occur requiring development levels to be raised. Pumping of sewage may also be required here thus dictating a more comprehensive approach to its development. Where infrastructural difficulties of this nature arise, such problems must be resolved before development can commence. The southern limit of development takes into account topography and the capacity of the public road system.

90.5 In general development proposals in the village should be small in scale and should incorporate landscaping schemes particularly on those sites adjoining the main road.

90.6 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

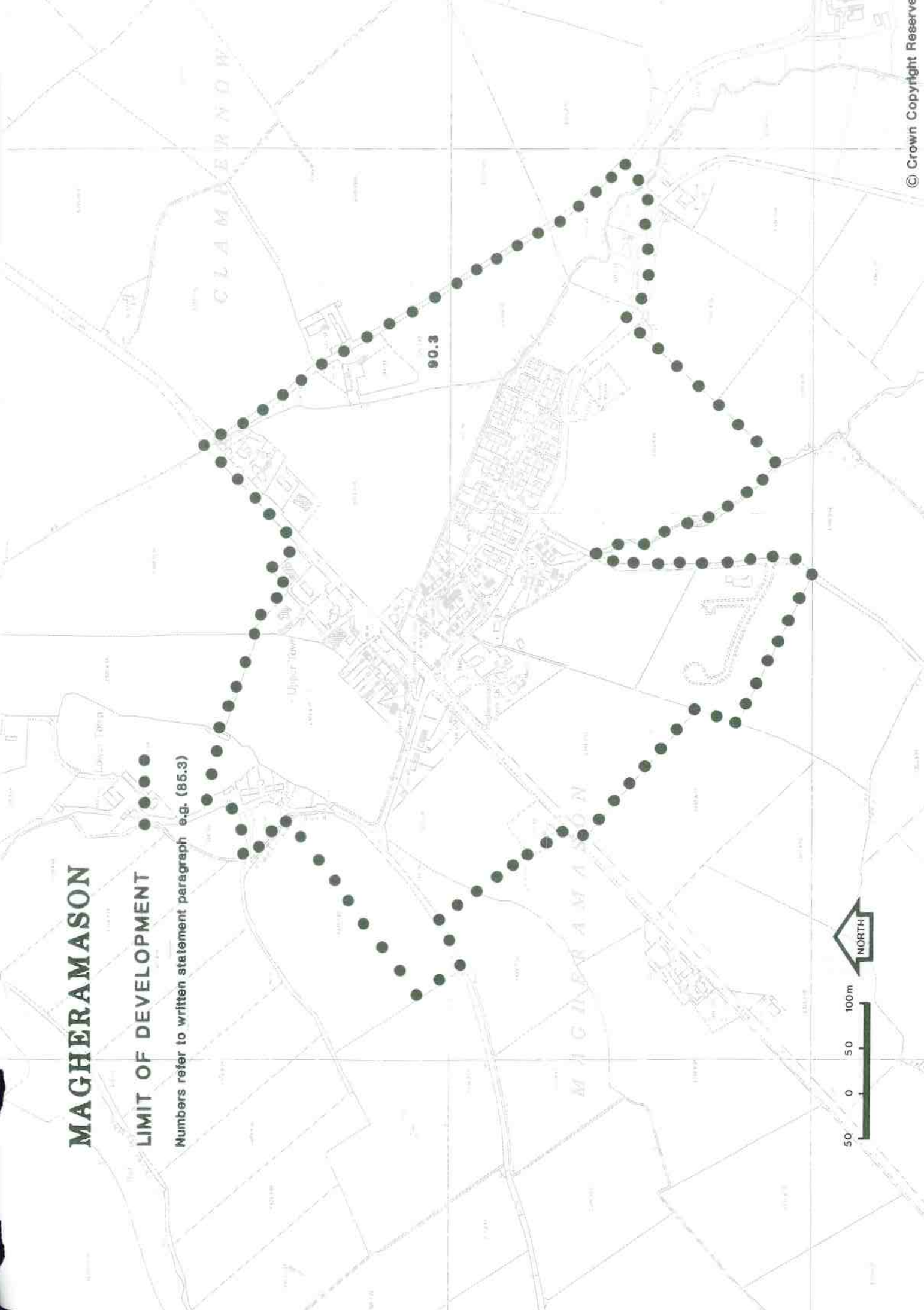
- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**
- Within areas where a flooding risk may arise development levels must be raised accordingly**
- Individual accesses to the trunk road will not be permitted. In general development should take place in-depth and should be accessed from the side road network. Land-locking of land to the rear should be avoided**
- Development of the land adjoining Clampernow Road will be dependent on improvements to the substandard junction of this road with the T3, trunk road, being completed.**



MAGHERAMASON

LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT

Numbers refer to written statement paragraph e.g. (85.3)



91.0 SPAMOUNT

91.1 Spamount with an estimated population of 350 is a village which historically developed in association with the former woollen mill and more recently expanded as a result of public authority housing provision at Drumnabey Park. The village currently supports a range of community facilities including a school, church, shop and one of the District's waste disposal landfill sites. Spamount is located along the southern bank of the River Derg and for the most part is flat and low lying in character.

91.2 Given that the woollen mill has now closed and in the light of the village's close proximity to Castlederg and to Erganagh, it is anticipated that the pressures for development in Spamount over the plan period will be limited. While the amount of land included within the development limit is a reflection of this factor, in some areas development constraints must be taken into consideration before development can proceed.

91.3 The northern limit of development for the most part follows the river, this line having been defined to prevent the spread of Spamount northwards and its consequent coalescence with the neighbouring village of Erganagh. Along the river, there is a history of flooding and in these areas development levels require to be raised. To the northeast the sewage treatment works sterilises an area in its immediate vicinity and reduces the development options available. In other areas access improvements will be a requirement before any development takes place.

91.4 Should the need arise, the former mill complex presents opportunities for industrial development.

91.5 Over the plan period it is proposed that the former refuse tip which creates a considerable and detrimental environmental impact in the village be reclaimed to provide important open space and recreation facilities. In the short term it is recommended that tree planting and other landscaping work be carried out on this site to effect more immediate improvement to the general environment of the village.

91.6 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**
- Within areas where a flooding risk may arise development levels must be raised accordingly**
- Minor road improvement schemes will be implemented as appropriate and as resources allow and development may require to be phased in line with these**
- To provide for the development of playing fields**
- The Department would recommend that tree planting and landscaping on the former refuse tip be accorded a high priority**

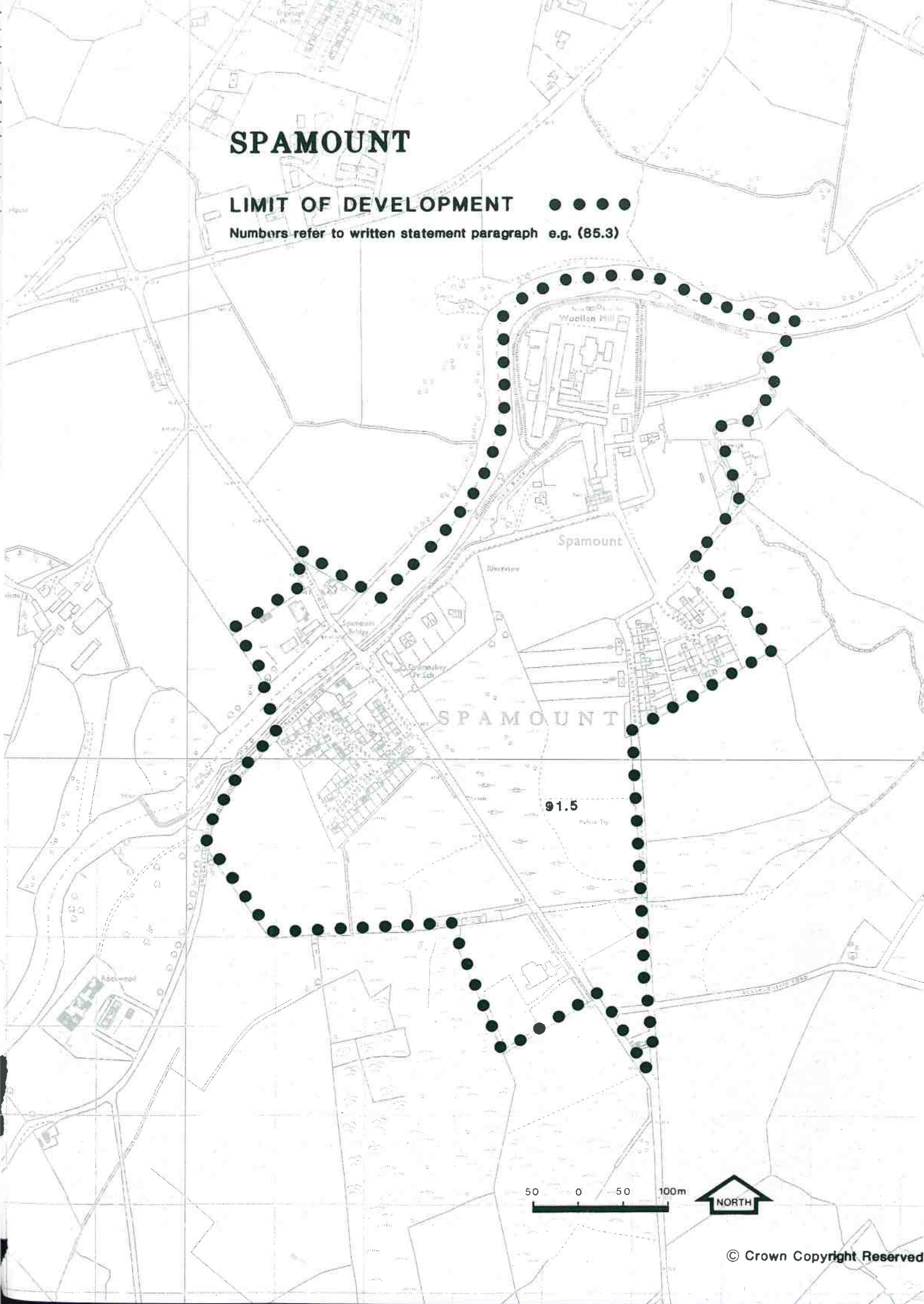


SPAMOUNT

LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT



Numbers refer to written statement paragraph e.g. (85.3)



92.0 ARDSTRAW

92.1 Ardstraw, a village whose population is estimated to be approximately 300 and which contains a range of facilities including a school, churches, hall, shops and post office, functions as a local service centre for an agricultural hinterland where the land quality is relatively high. However, despite the extent of services provided in the village its rate of growth has been relatively slow and this in part can be attributed to the absence of a sewage treatment works.

92.2 Ardstraw has an attractive setting along the River Derg and a fairly compact settlement form, although in recent years there has been a tendency for development to ribbon out along some of the approach roads to the village. The village centre has developed in linear fashion south from the bridge but its traditional character has been somewhat spoiled by the unsympathetic nature of more recent development and by the large scale commercial development adjacent to the bridge.

92.3 In view of the village's attractive setting, the tendency for ribbon development to occur and the limited nature of development pressures anticipated over the plan period, the development limit has been drawn to ensure that a compact and cohesive settlement form is maintained. Given the low-lying nature of the land adjacent to the river, development to the west of Carnkenny Road and the north of Deerpark Road will be constrained and development levels will require to be raised to avoid the risk of flooding. While the absence of a sewage treatment works presents an immediate development constraint, the provision of this facility on a site adjacent to the river is programmed within the plan period. In addition the District Council propose to provide recreation facilities for the village.

92.4 Given Ardstraw's riverside setting and its attractive character particularly in the area around the bridge the Department would encourage the implementation of appropriate environmental improvement work which would capitalise on this setting and facilitate the retention of the traditional character of the built environment. In this respect opportunities exist for both public and private action.

92.5 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**
- Within areas where a flooding risk may arise development levels must be raised accordingly**
- A sewage treatment works will be provided on a site adjacent to the river**
- To provide for the development of open space and recreational facilities**
- The Department would recommend the implementation of an environmental improvement programme aimed at improving the built environment and creating a setting for the village.**



ARDSTRAW

LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT



93.0 VICTORIA BRIDGE

93.1 Victoria Bridge with an estimated population of 300 is primarily a dormitory settlement. It contains a number of community facilities including a primary school, shop and church but it is not served by a sewage treatment works. The village also contains a small industrial estate.

93.2 Victoria Bridge has developed along 2 distinct axes. The first extends north west/south east and lies between the Mourne River and the Omagh–Strabane road, a principal traffic route. The second lies at right angles and extends along Castlederg Road to include the public authority housing areas and the primary school. While the West Tyrone Area Plan highlighted a development potential at Victoria Bridge, growth over the past decade has been slow being limited to one small public authority housing estate and a comparable number of individual private dwellings. It is not envisaged that the growth rate of this settlement will accelerate over the plan period.

93.3 The extent of the development limit defined reflects this growth potential and is further determined by the constraints imposed by both the river and the main road. The river forms a natural development limit to the north beyond which any development would be conspicuous given the rising nature of the land. Within the development limit land lying close to the river to the west of the industrial estate carries a history of flooding. It may therefore be appropriate in certain circumstances to limit the extent of development proposed in this area and to require that development levels be raised to an appropriate level. No new development accesses will be acceptable onto the principal traffic route. Overall, the development limit has been drawn in an effort to consolidate the existing pattern of development and to curtail ribbon development along the approach roads. In-depth, rather than frontage development will therefore be required.

93.4 While the absence of a sewage treatment works presents an immediate development constraint this facility is to be provided on a site adjacent to the river during the plan period.

93.5 Summary of Policies and Proposals

- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**
- Within areas where a flooding risk may arise development levels must be raised accordingly**
- No development accesses will be permitted onto the T3**
- A sewage treatment works will be provided on a site adjacent to the river**



VICTORIA BRIDGE

LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT 

50 0 50 100m



Numbers refer to written statement
paragraph e.g. (85.3)

93.4

LICREEVAGHAN
CLDY. SPROUL

94.0 PLUMBRIDGE

94.1 With the exception of Donemana some 9 miles to the north, Plumbridge with an estimated population of 270 is the only sizeable settlement in the east of the District. It is a crossroads settlement on the banks of the Glenelly River and serves a dispersed rural hinterland which includes the Glenelly Valley. It has also a development potential in terms of tourism. Plumbridge has a wide range of community and service facilities including primary and secondary schools, a church, shops, hall and livestock market. A small clothing factory provides an important source of employment not only for the village but for a wide hinterland.

94.2 Steep valley slopes and low lying land close to the river restrict development opportunities. The existing pattern of development spread out along road frontages is a reflection of these constraints as is the development limit now defined.

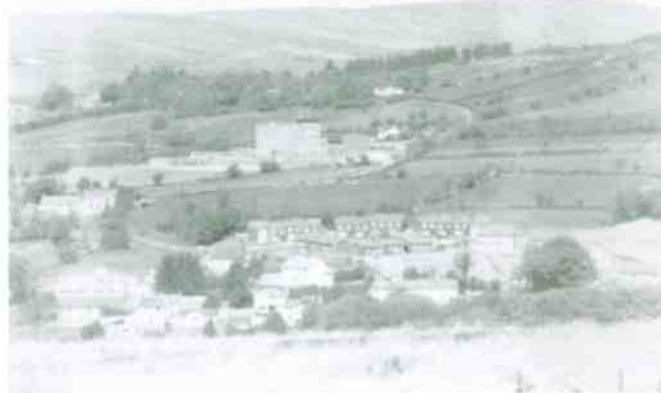
94.3 In the main, the development limit has been drawn to encompass higher land away from the river. In order to ensure a compact settlement form, development in-depth will be preferred to frontage development and where land may be liable to flooding it will be necessary to raise development levels accordingly. The need for the pumping of sewage within the village is a reflection of the topography and in some areas this may impose a constraint for the scale of development envisaged. In view of infrastructure difficulties affecting land adjacent to Letterbrat Bridge limited development only will be acceptable in this area. Access opportunities to land to the north of Main Street are restricted and it is therefore important to ensure that landlocking does not result from frontage development schemes.

94.4 Recent population growth within Plumbridge is largely the result of the public authority housing programme and it is envisaged that growth over the plan period will result from both public and private development. Land adjacent to the factory is considered to be suitable for industrial development.

94.5 Given the tourist potential of the Sperrins area and the fact that the Glenelly Valley is a major gateway route to the area it is important that the character of Plumbridge and its riverside setting, be exploited to its full potential. Opportunities for environmental improvement exist along the river and throughout the village and it is recommended that existing stands of mature trees which contribute to this character and setting be retained. Opportunities to upgrade the built environment while maintaining its traditional character exist and should be seized upon as appropriate.

94.6 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period

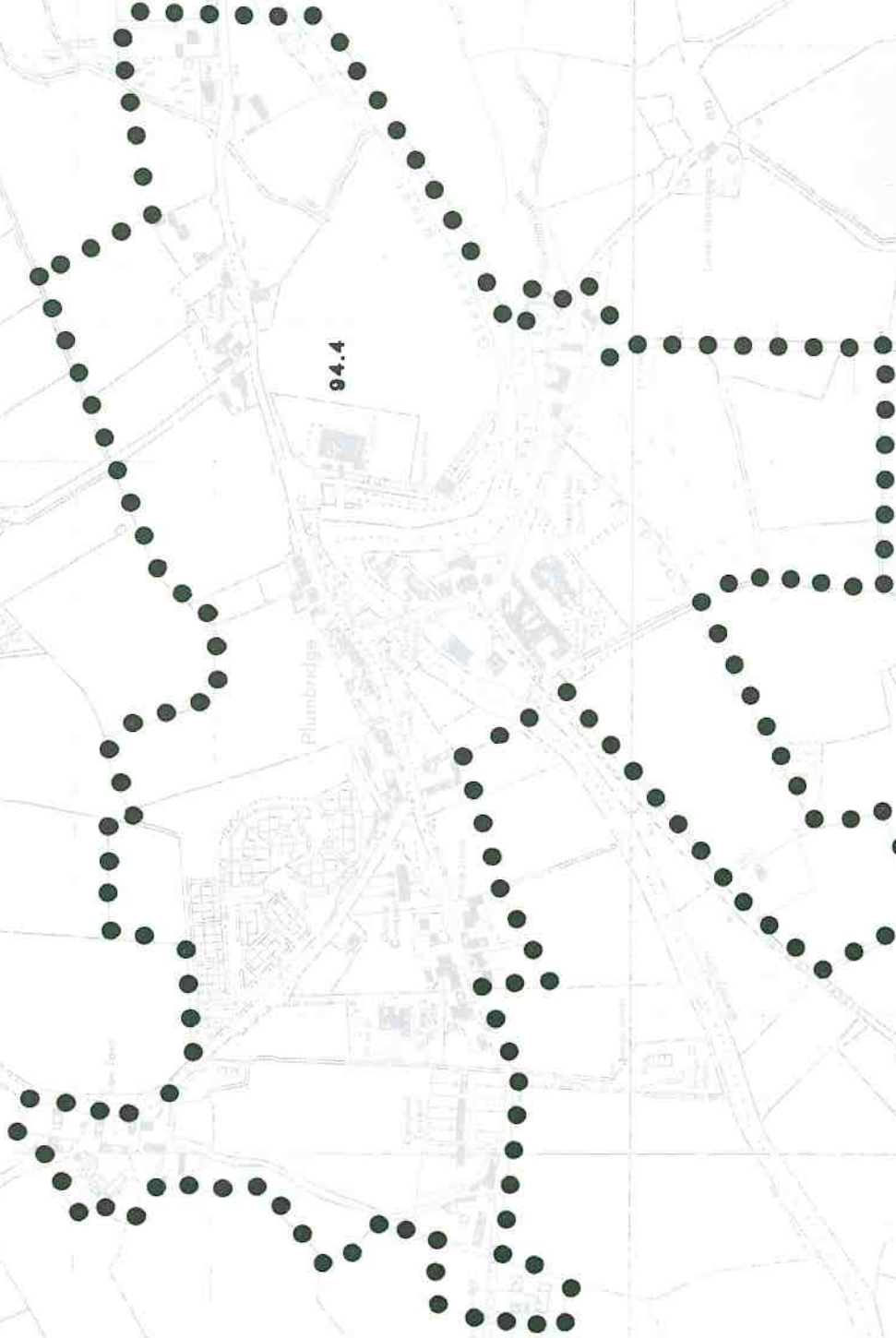


- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**
- Within areas where a flooding risk may arise development levels must be raised accordingly**
- Land adjacent to the existing industrial development will be reserved for industrial use**
- Access opportunities to backland will be protected from inappropriate development**
- The Department would recommend the implementation of an environmental improvement programme aimed at improving the built environment, at creating a setting for the village and exploiting the amenity potential of the river**

PLUMBRIDGE

LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT

Numbers refer to written statement paragraph e.g. (85.3)



95.0 ERGANAGH

95.1 Erganagh 2 miles from Castlederg with an estimated population of 260, serves primarily as a dormitory village. It contains a primary school and shares sewage treatment facilities with the neighbouring village of Spamount. Small scale industrial development in the form of a joinery works is located within the village.

95.2 Erganagh is centred around a triangle of 3 public roads. During the 1970's public authority housing accounted for the greater part of its growth but in recent years there has been a significant increase in the level of private housing development. While most development has occurred in-depth some ribboning is in evidence particularly along Strabane Road and Listymore Road.

95.3 A number of planning approvals for housing development remain outstanding in Erganagh and it is considered that these will provide for the greater part of the development needs over the plan period. Apart from these outstanding approvals no new development accesses will be permitted onto Strabane Road. Development may however require the upgrading of sewage pumping facilities. Within the plan period the District Council propose to provide an appropriate level of recreation facilities to meet the needs of the village's population.

95.4 *Summary and Policies and Proposals*

- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**
- Apart from outstanding planning approvals no new development accesses will be permitted onto Strabane Road**
- To provide for the development of open space and recreation facilities**



96.0 KILLEN

96.1 Killen with an estimated population also of 260, is located to the south of Castleterg. It has a distinct village identity and a range of services and facilities including a school, hall and shops. Local employment is also provided at the West Ulster Farmers Co-Operative enterprise just to the north of the village.

96.2 Killen's linear settlement form is a reflection of its hillcrest location and it is this which forms the main constraint to development and dictates the future direction of growth. With the land falling away rapidly to the east and west there are limits to the amount of land which can be provided with sewerage infrastructure. It is also important to maintain a compact village form and to prevent extension indefinitely north and south. For this reason and given the anticipated level of growth, it is not considered appropriate to extend the limit to include the co-operative enterprise.

96.3 It is envisaged that past building rates in Killen will continue over the plan period and that sufficient land is contained within the proposed limits to provide for a choice of sites for both public and private development. Land to the rear of the primary school has been included within the development limit to enable the District Council to provide recreation facilities for the village.

96.4 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**
- To provide for the development of open space and recreation facilities adjacent to the school**



ERGANAGH

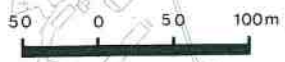
LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT ● ● ● ●

GANAGH

Woolton Hill

Spamount

SPAMOUNT



96.0 KILLEN

96.1 Killen with an estimated population also of 260, is located to the south of Castledearg. It has a distinct village identity and a range of services and facilities including a school, hall and shops. Local employment is also provided at the West Ulster Farmers Co-Operative enterprise just to the north of the village.

96.2 Killen's linear settlement form is a reflection of its hillcrest location and it is this which forms the main constraint to development and dictates the future direction of growth. With the land falling away rapidly to the east and west there are limits to the amount of land which can be provided with sewerage infrastructure. It is also important to maintain a compact village form and to prevent extension indefinitely north and south. For this reason and given the anticipated level of growth, it is not considered appropriate to extend the limit to include the co-operative enterprise.

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96.4 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

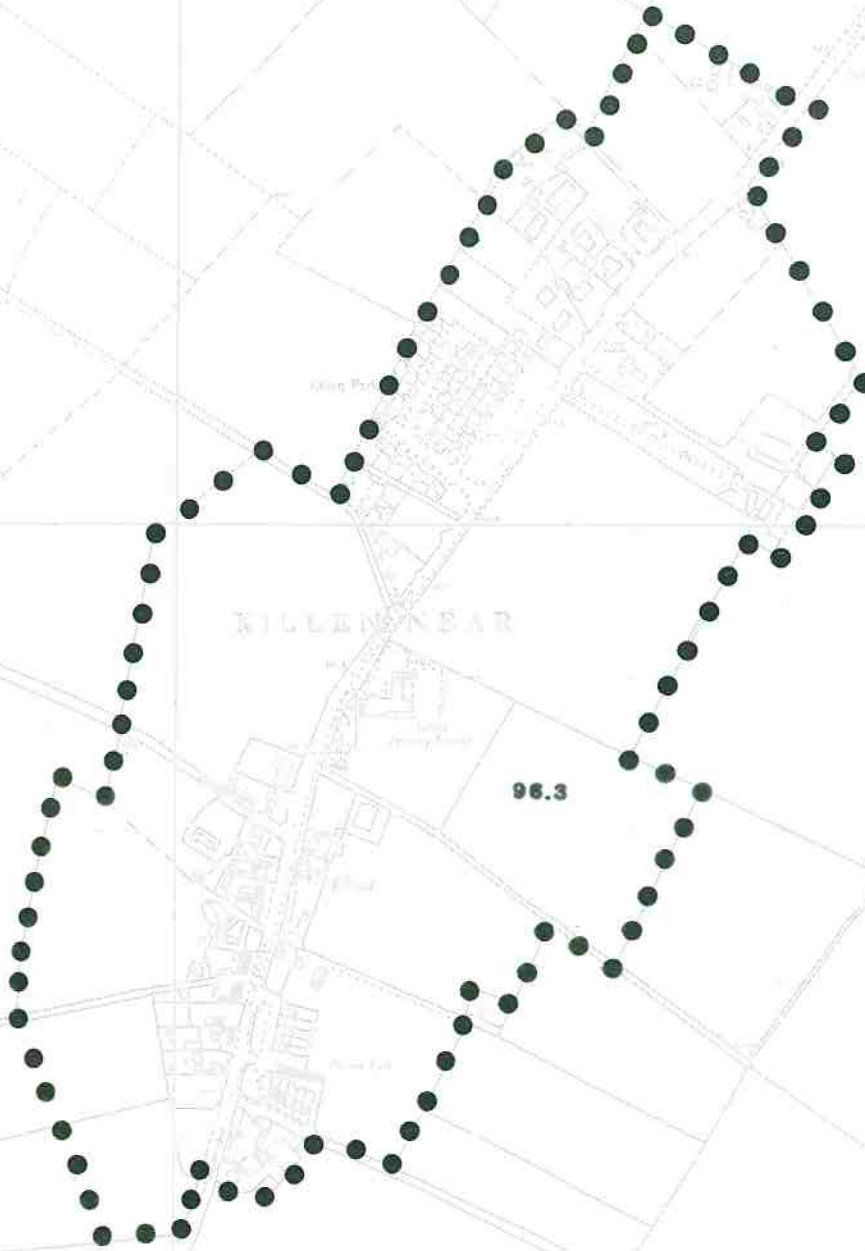
- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria**
- To provide for the development of open space and recreation facilities adjacent to the school**



KILLEN

LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT ●●●●

Numbers refer to written statement paragraph e.g. (85.3)



97.0 KILLETER

97.1 Killeter is the most westerly of the settlements within the District and in terms of its estimated population of 160 is the smallest. It contains a range of services and facilities including a recently installed sewage treatment works and functions as a small service centre for a dispersed rural hinterland. Recent growth of, and development within Killeter is a product of a public authority housing scheme.

97.2 Killeter exhibits a linear settlement form but a small nucleus of development around the bridge and the church to the north of the main settlement also identifies with the village. It is considered however, that sufficient development opportunities exist within the defined development limit to accommodate the limited development pressures anticipated over the plan period and that it is undesirable to allow an extended linear settlement to form from Killeter Bridge to Fair Green.

97.3 It is anticipated that future growth in the village will be the result of development activity in the public housing sector and recognised that private development is likely to take the form of individual units on individual sites. Land contained within the development limit provides for a range of choice for both types of housing development but in some locations where waterlogging and flooding may occur development levels should be raised accordingly. Ribbon development on the approaches to the village will be unacceptable.

97.4 Within the plan period, the District Council propose to provide localised recreation facilities for Killeter. In addition, many opportunities exist to up-grade the general environment by way of redevelopment, refurbishment, improved maintenance and landscaping and the Department would encourage both public agencies and private individuals to capitalise on all opportunities.

97.5 *Summary of Policies and Proposals*

- Within the development limit sufficient land has been included to meet the village's development needs over the plan period**
- All new development should be of a scale which reflects the scale of the existing settlement, should be integrated with the existing**

settlement form and should exhibit high standards of layout, design and landscaping in accordance with normal planning criteria

- Within areas where a waterlogging risk may arise development levels must be raised accordingly**
- To provide for the development of open space and recreational facilities**
- Ribbon development between Killeter Bridge and the defined village limit will be unacceptable**
- The Department would recommend the implementation of an environmental improvement programme aimed at improving the built environment and creating a setting for the village**



River Derg

SPEENMOLNE

KILLETER

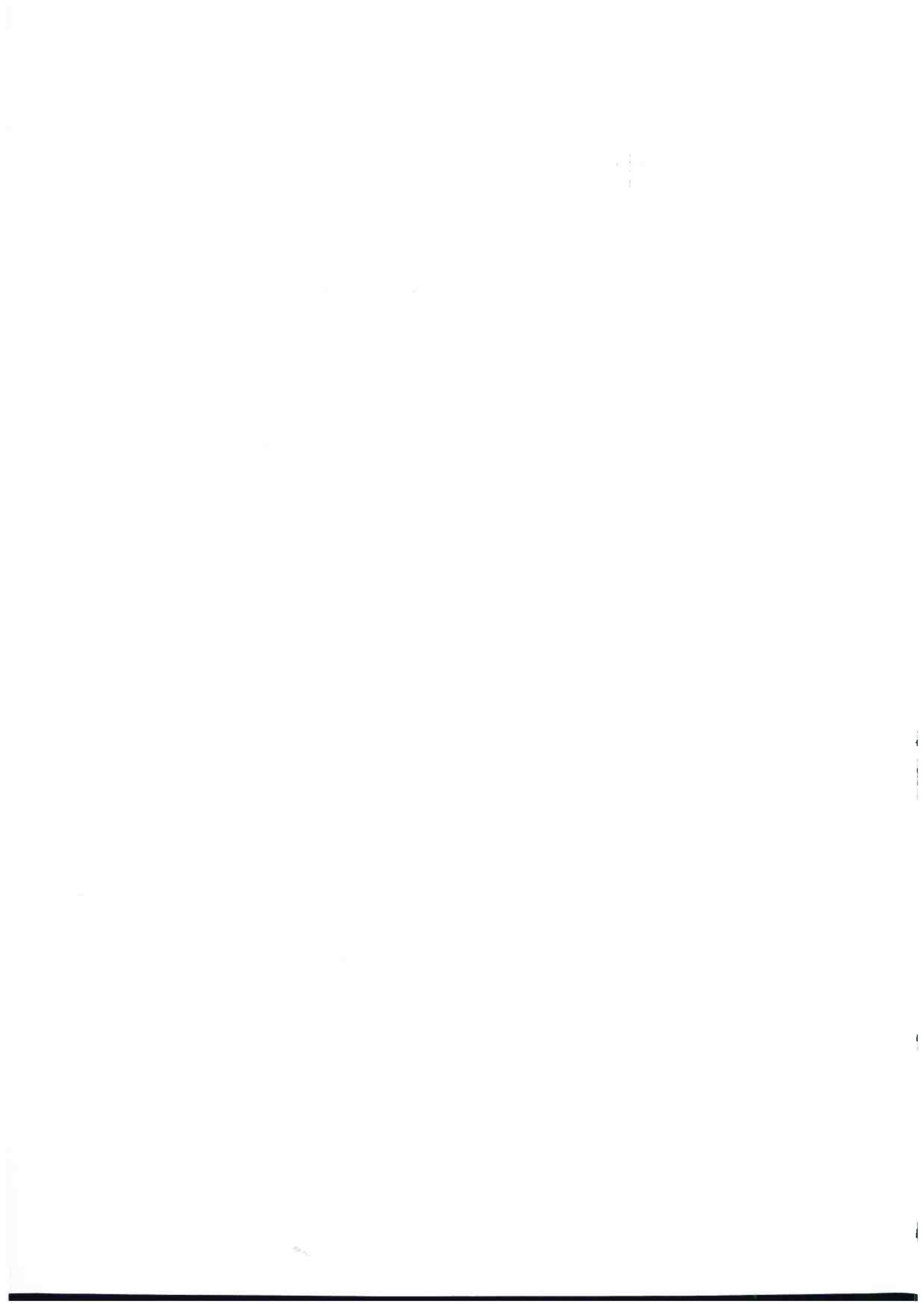
LIMIT OF DEVELOPMENT





Part Seven

Statement of Policies and Proposals and Maps—Hamlets



98.0 Introduction

98.1 Hamlets form the lowest tier within the plan settlement hierarchy and have special significance in terms of their relationship to both the Settlement Strategy and to policies drawn up for the rural area. While they vary considerably in terms of their location, size and function and the range of services and facilities they provide, they offer opportunities for a wider choice of housing location and have a positive contribution to make to the vitality and regeneration of the rural area.

98.2 It is expected that some 41% of the District's population in 2001 will continue to reside in villages, hamlets and the open countryside and this scale of rural living dictates that a range of housing opportunities be provided for this sector of the population in the same way that choice has been provided for in the larger settlements.

98.3 Under the terms of the Department's Rural Policy, hamlets present the only opportunity for the development of small groups of houses anywhere below the village tier of the settlement hierarchy. Furthermore, within the Green Belt and Policy Areas they provide the only opportunity of building a house in a rural location where the need criteria is not applicable. In view of the Department's recently published guidelines on "Location, Siting and Design in Rural Areas," hamlets, may in some instances also present less restrictive opportunities for individual dwellings than may be acceptable in the open countryside. In the Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty hamlets are regarded as offering an opportunity to locate new development in carefully controlled clusters rather than in a scattered form throughout the area.

99.0 Objectives

99.1 Policies drawn up for hamlets in general and for individual settlements are governed by the following objectives:-

- to improve hamlet environments and ensure adequate development opportunities
- to define development limits which ensure an appropriate settlement form with minimal environmental impact and prevent urban sprawl, ribbon development and coalescence of settlements
- to make effective use of new and existing infrastructure

99.2 The designated hamlets are:-

Aghabrack
Aghyaran
Altishane
Bready
Cloghcor
Cranagh
Donagheady
Douglas Bridge

Drumlegagh
Garvetagh
Glenmornan

100.0 Map Interpretation

100.1 General policies in relation to all these settlements are set out in the following paragraphs and a map, policy statement and design guidelines in respect of each follows.

100.2 Within most of the designated hamlets, development pressures and the demand for development land over the plan period will be limited. While the emphasis in terms of demand will be on residential development, it is envisaged that there may also be a requirement to provide for small scale commercial, recreation, industrial or tourist development.

100.3 Given the wide range of factors which may affect their level of growth, it is not considered appropriate to define detailed zonings for hamlets. However, in order to provide meaningful development guidelines and to ensure that the planning objectives are met, **a development limit has been defined for each hamlet which will function to encompass a number of equally suitable locations for groups of houses to satisfy its particular needs.** The purpose and function of the development limit is not to suggest that all land inside the defined boundary is suitable for development but rather to indicate the extent of infilling and rounding off appropriate to that settlement. Beyond the defined limits the Department's Rural Policy will be applicable.

101.0 Policy

101.1 Hamlet designation has been determined following consideration against the following criteria:

- the settlement should contain a number of locally significant occupied dwellings
- the settlement should contain social facilities and services which may include a sewage treatment works
- the settlement should contain commercial facilities serving the settlement and the surrounding area
- an easily defined and active community identity should be evident within an area

101.2 For designation of a particular settlement to be confirmed, at least 3 of these criteria should be fulfilled. It is also considered appropriate to take into consideration the degree of nucleation or dispersal evident and the impact of new or extended nucleation on the surrounding environment.

101.3 On the basis of these criteria, a number of long standing hamlets such as Bready, Cranagh, Donagheady, Douglas Bridge, Drumlegagh, Garvetagh and Glenmornan are easily distinguished. There are however in other areas groupings of development which do not display the same degree of nucleation but where nevertheless a powerful community identity exists. In recognition of the need to retain a rural population and to facilitate community development, settlements such as Altishane, Aghabrack,

Aghyaran and Cloghcor have also been designated as hamlets.

101.4 There are at a number of locations, groupings of development which do not currently meet the hamlet designation criteria but do show some early signs of becoming a distinct settlement. These will be regularly monitored throughout the plan period in terms of development pressure and their ability to fulfill the designation criteria, and if appropriate, will be designated as hamlets.

101.5 Within designated hamlets, single houses and small groups of both public and private authority housing will be acceptable within the development limit, so long as the accepted planning criteria in relation to access, drainage, flooding, disposal of effluent, siting and design can be fulfilled. In those hamlets where no sewage treatment facilities are available this may impose a development constraint unless certain public health conditions can be satisfied. Public sewage disposal facilities will therefore be provided where appropriate. While development proposals within hamlets will be considered on their merits, in general terms, opportunities will be limited to infill and rounding off consistent with the retention of the character, form and scale of the existing settlement. New development should, in terms of location and siting, be able to integrate successfully with the existing settlement form and urban type estates of more than 8 to 10 houses will generally be unacceptable. Ribbon development on the approaches to these settlements will also be unacceptable.

101.6 It should be noted that the Department's Protected Routes Policy which applies to the Omagh-Strabane-Londonderry road (T3) places severe restriction on the development of new accesses to that road. In hamlets which will be affected by this policy, development accesses should be provided from the side road network.

101.7 With regard to development design, whether for the single house or for a small group of houses, developers should respect the fact that hamlets are essentially rural locations demanding a rural approach to their design. Layouts and designs which are essentially suburban in character will generally be considered inappropriate and the emphasis will be on informal layouts containing a variety of house types and design. Overall, it is important that the environmental impact of new development be kept to a minimum by proper landscaping and with all development proposals, increasing emphasis will be placed on high quality design. Landscaping and planting proposals will be expected to form a part of all planning applications.

101.8 Small scale industrial development, community and recreation facilities and small shops selling convenience goods or farm related supplies are likely to be acceptable in hamlets. The type and scale of services and facilities proposed will be judged on the level of service they provide for that settlement and for its surrounding rural hinterland. Large commercial and industrial enterprises designed to fulfill a wider service need will generally not be permitted.

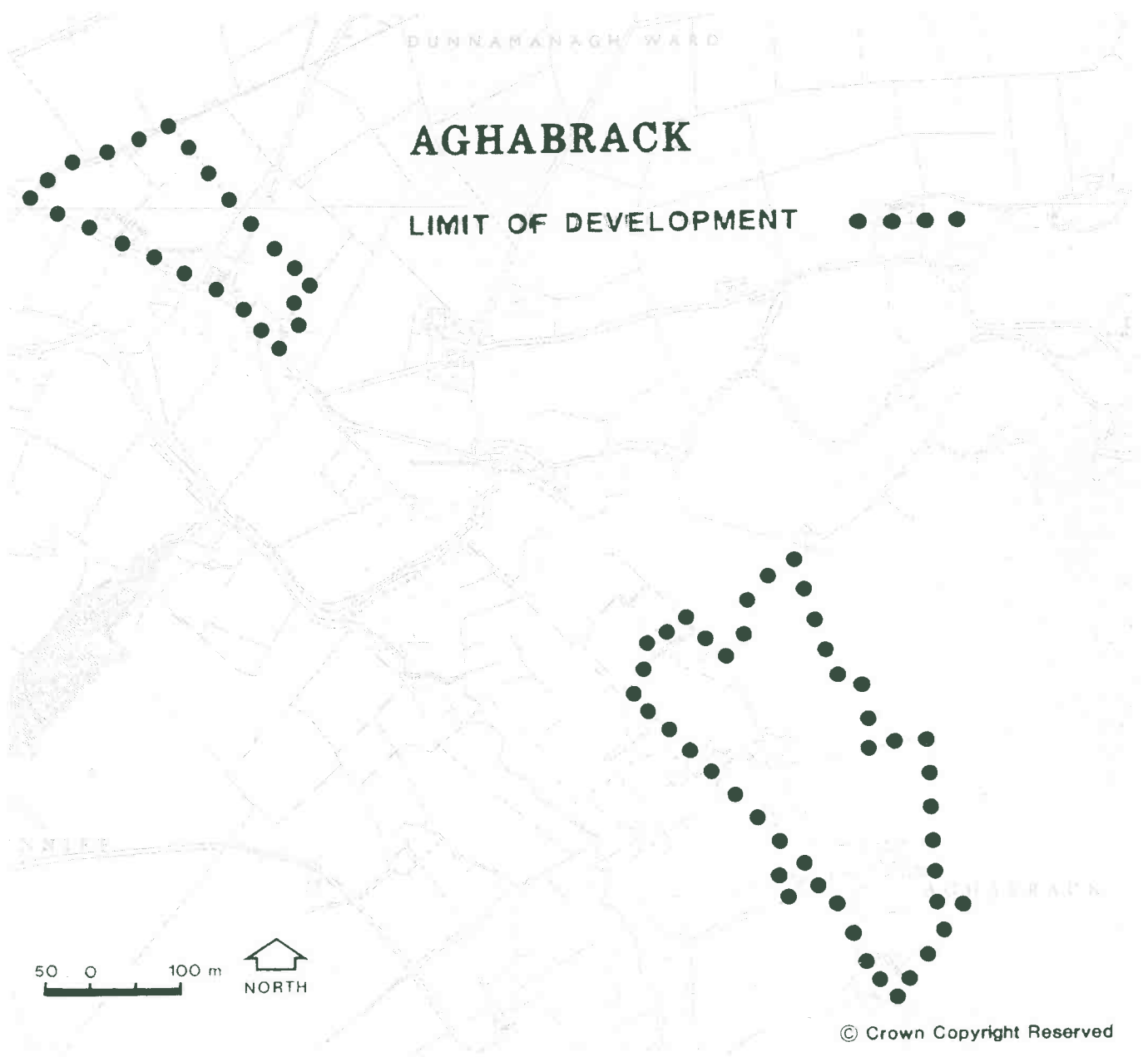
101.9 *Summary of Policies*

- Hamlet designation is dependent on compliance with at least three of the defined criteria**
- Small groups of public and private housing development will be acceptable within defined development limits to a scale which can be integrated with existing settlement form**
- Development proposals beyond the defined development limits will be determined on the basis of the Department's Rural Policy**
- New commercial, industrial, recreational or community development will be acceptable where it serves the needs of the local community and is at a scale which can be satisfactorily integrated into the existing settlement form**
- All new development will be required to meet the standard requirements in terms of access, drainage, effluent disposal and site layout and be expected to meet high standards of layout, design and landscaping**
- Development design should be rural rather than suburban in nature**

102.0 AGHABRACK

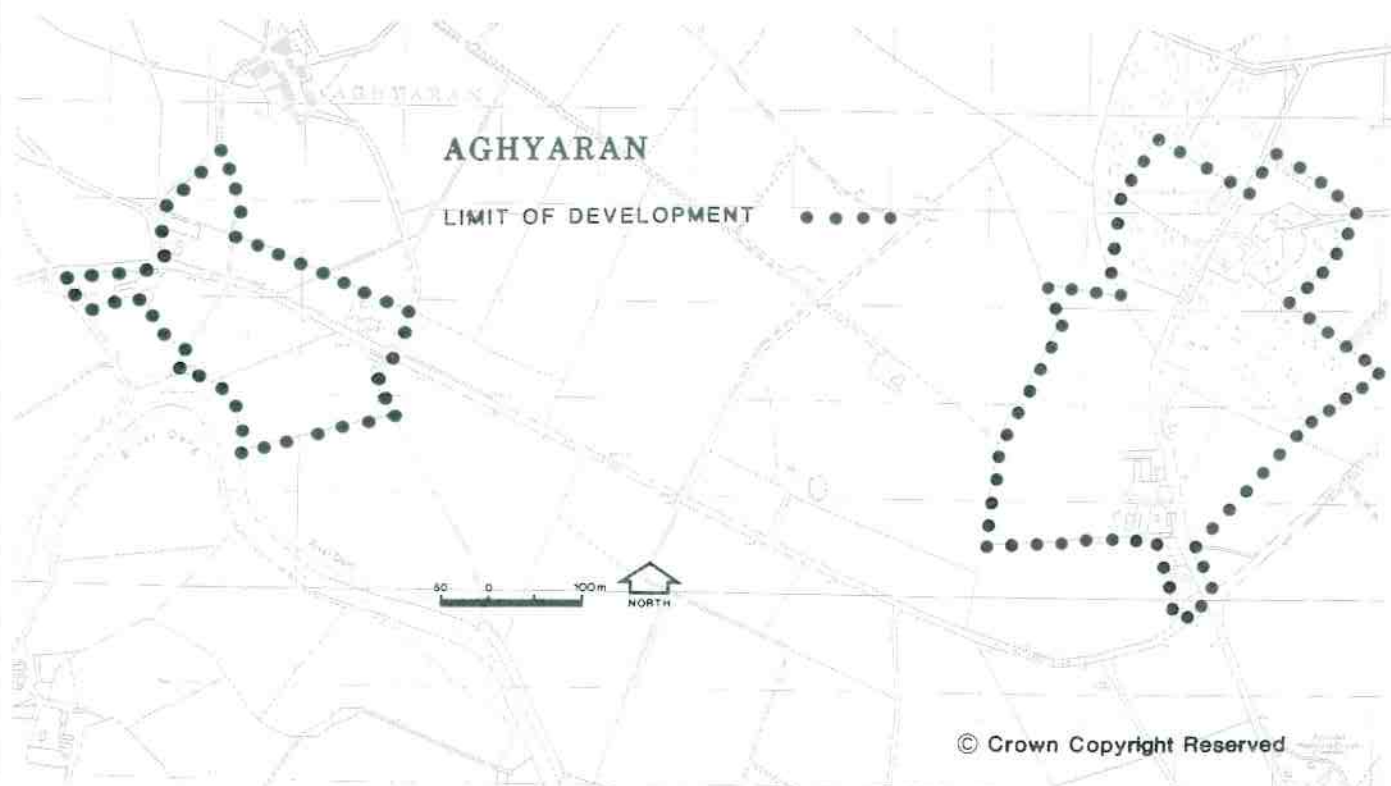
102.1 This relatively remote community is one of the highest settlements in the District located in the Sperrin Mountains to the south of Donemana. Although it takes the form of a loosely knit settlement it has a strong community identity. Aghabrack can be defined as three main groupings of development, namely, in the vicinity of St Mary's Church, around the Post Office and around the public authority housing estate at Lough Ash.

102.2 The development areas defined around the Church and the Post Office provide opportunities for the development of small groups of dwellings and while development proposals beyond these areas will be determined on the basis of Rural Policy it will be important to discourage ribbon development along the Plumbridge to Donemana Road.



103.0 AGHYARAN

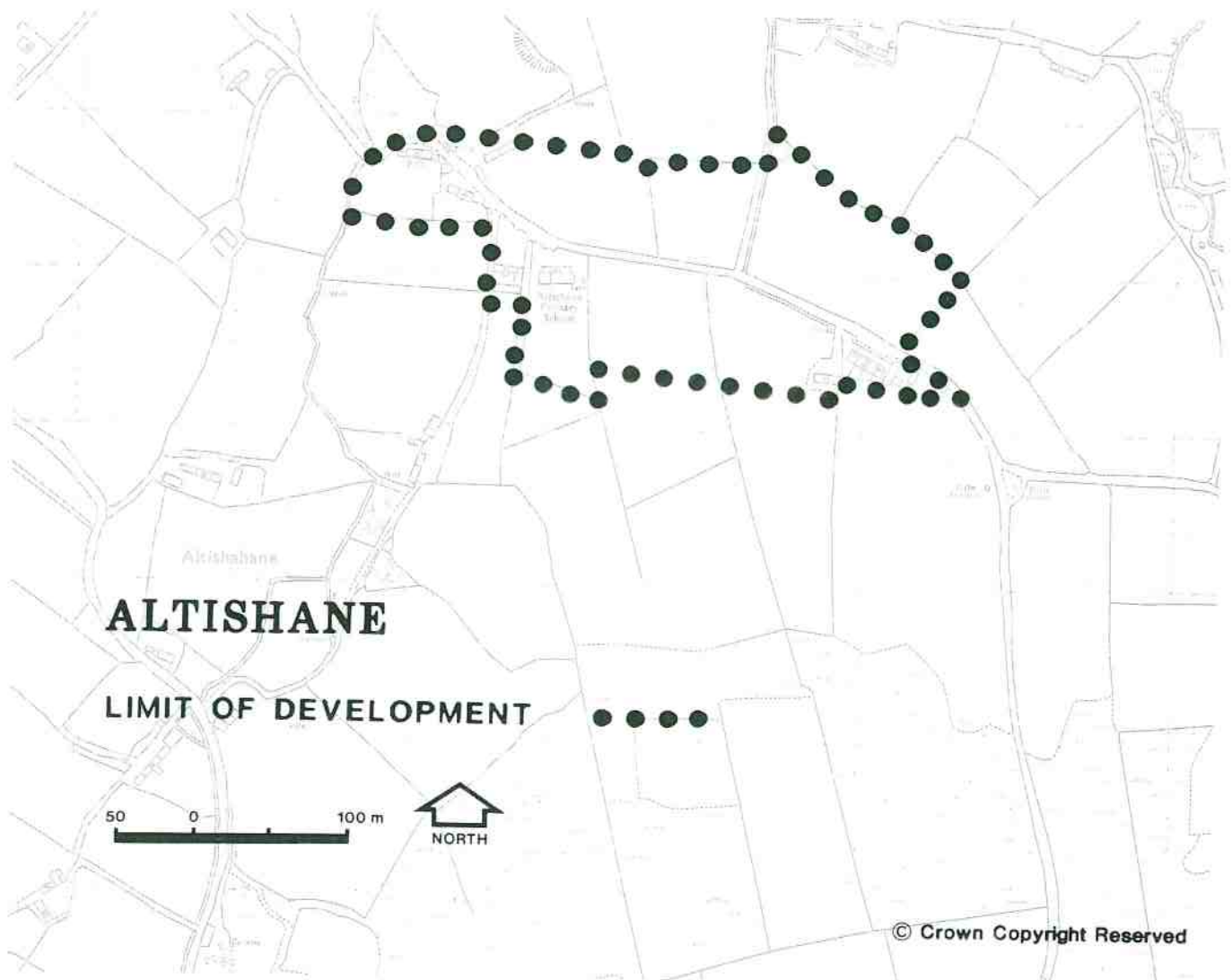
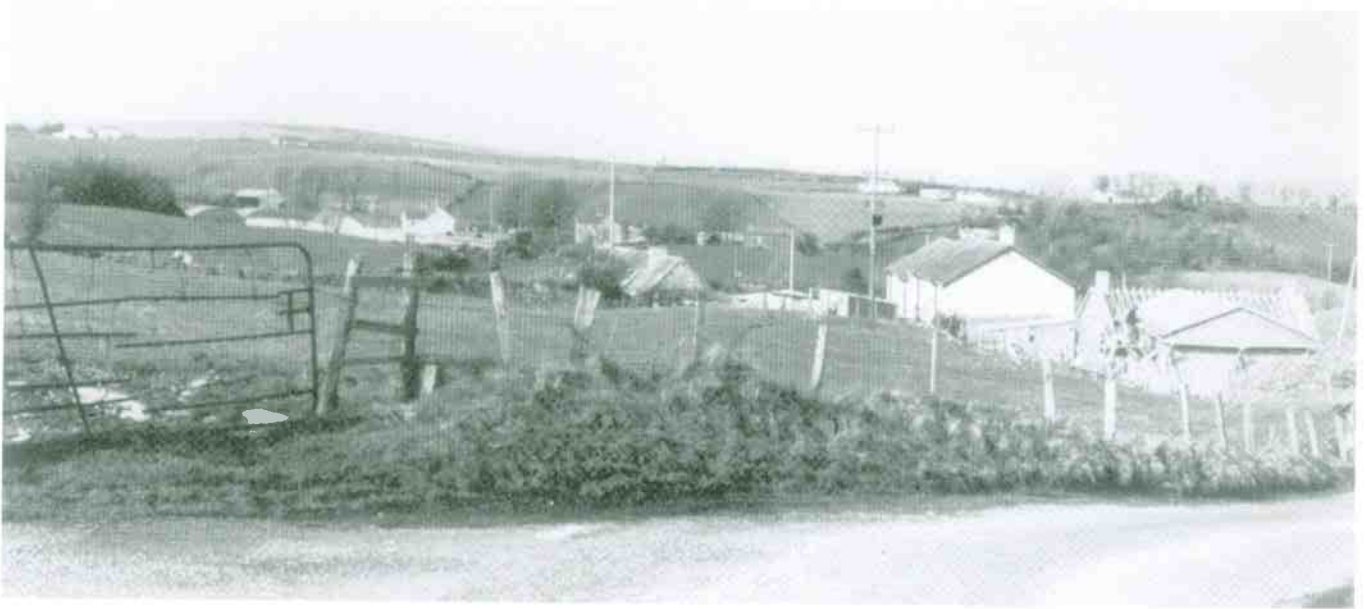
103.1 Aghyaran, also with a strong community identity has developed around two distinct nodes, at the Post Office and junction of Tullycar and Aghyaran Roads to the west, and to the east within that area bounded by Aghyaran Road and Church Road. Within both areas, infill and rounding off opportunities exist for small groups of houses but given the conspicuous nature of the area around St Patrick's Church, landscaping and planting proposals will be a requisite of all development proposals in this area. Again, beyond the defined development limits, planning proposals will be determined by Rural Policy.



104.0 ALTISHANE

104.1 Despite its position as the smallest hamlet, Altishane is a distinct community grouping with a post office and school serving an upland hinterland. Existing development has occurred alongside the road running through the settlement as difficult topography in the area presents development constraints

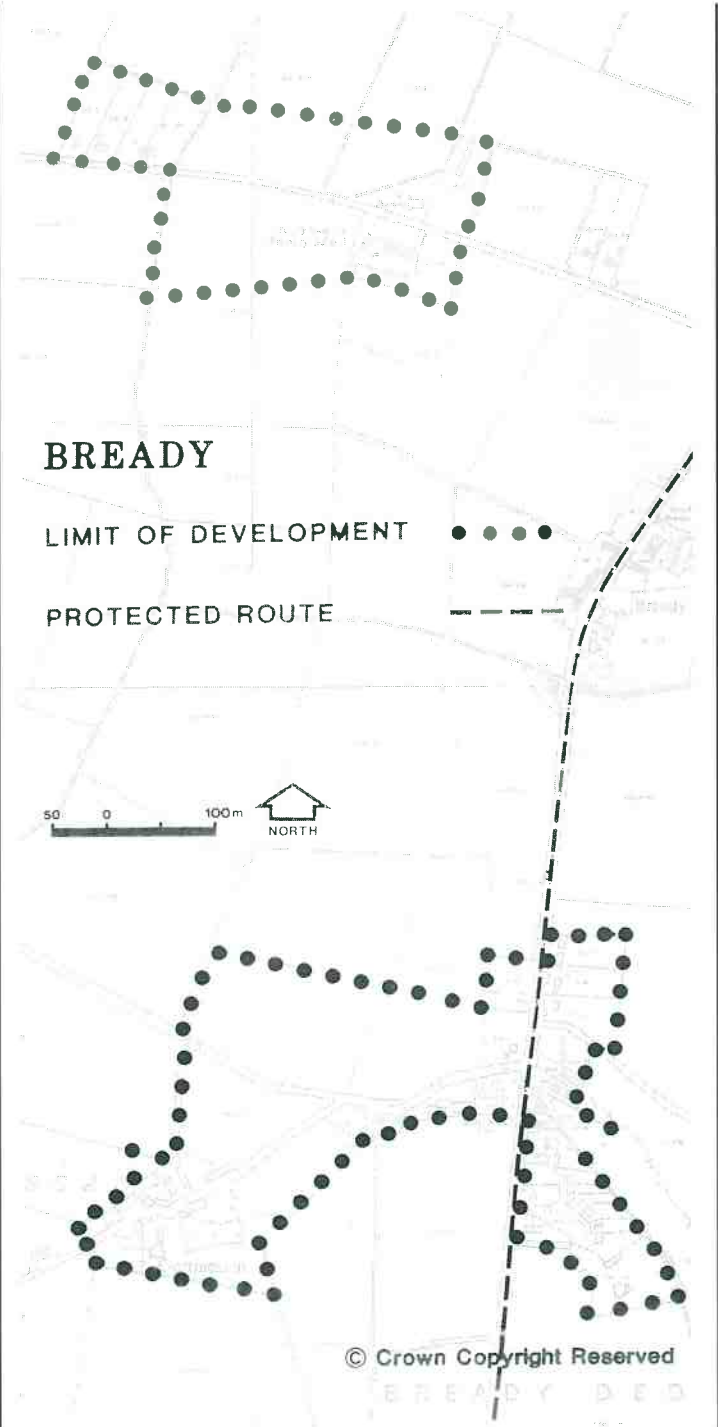
beyond it. In order to preserve the scale of the existing settlement and maintain its integration into the surrounding countryside small groups of houses should be located within the development limit defined. Beyond this, planning applications will be determined on the basis of Rural Policy.



105.0 BREADY

105.1 The Strabane to Londonderry road (T3) which passes through Bready has imposed restrictions on the growth of this settlement which has taken place at 3 principle locations. Existing development is concentrated in the area around St John's Church with smaller concentrations at the Presbyterian Church and the primary school.

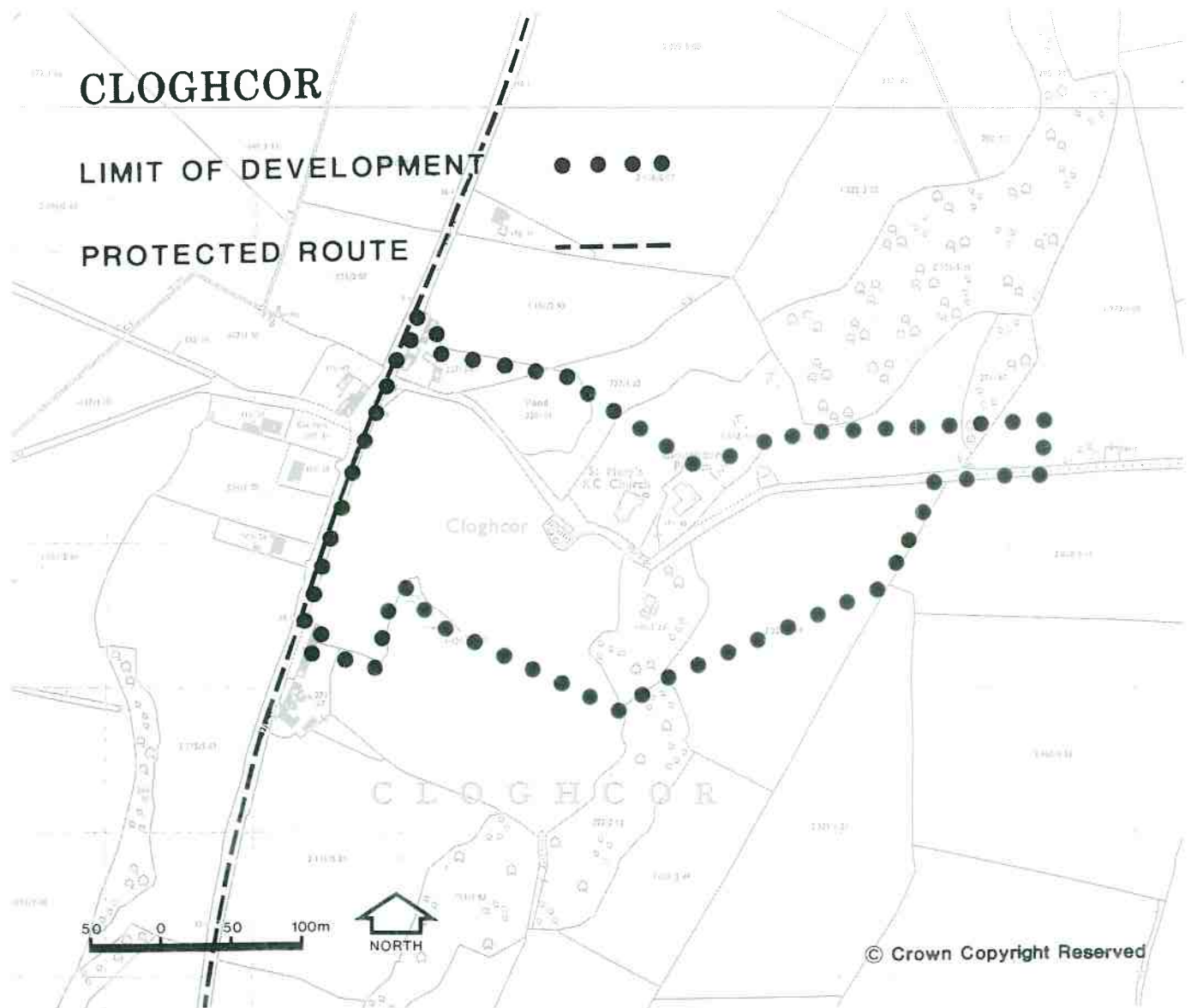
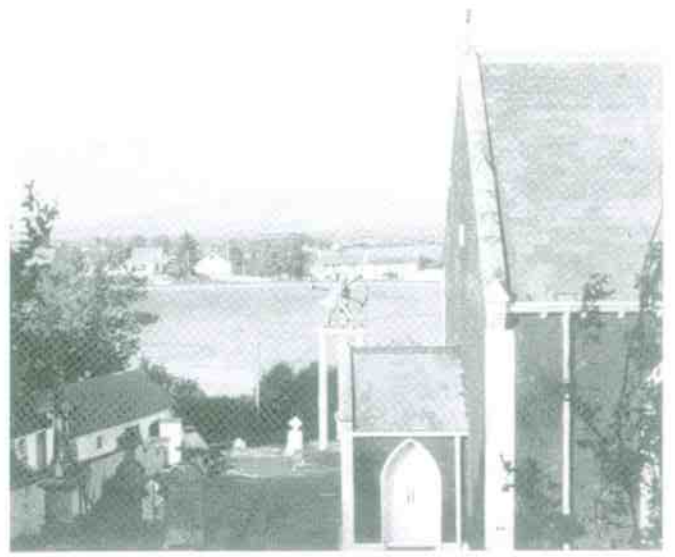
105.2 The main road prevents further development occurring in the area around the Presbyterian Church but both infill and rounding off opportunities exist at the other 2 locations where access is available off the side road network. Development beyond the development limits defined will be determined by reference to Rural Policy.



106.0 CLOGHCOR

Also situated astride the Strabane to Londonderry road (T3) Cloghcor is a small but expanding settlement with a strong sense of identity. The development constraint imposed by the main road has resulted in some development pressure on the side road network where ribbon development has tended to occur.

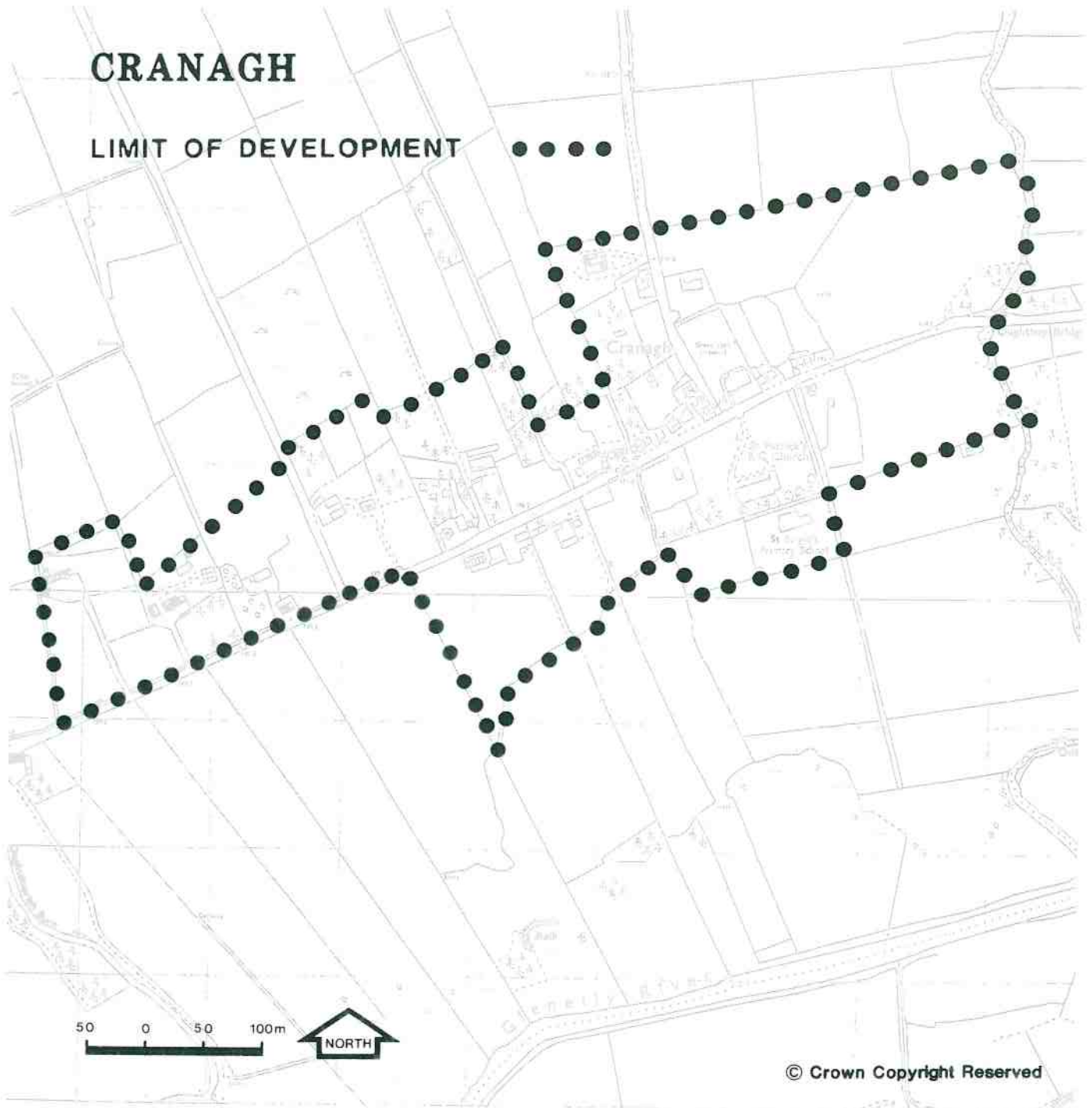
106.2 The development limit includes a number of infill and rounding off opportunities although on some sites development levels may require to be raised to avoid the risk of flooding. Much of this land is also conspicuous and landscaping will be required to allow new development to be satisfactorily integrated into the surrounding countryside. As in other hamlets, Rural Policy will be applied beyond the defined development limit.



107.0 CRANAGH

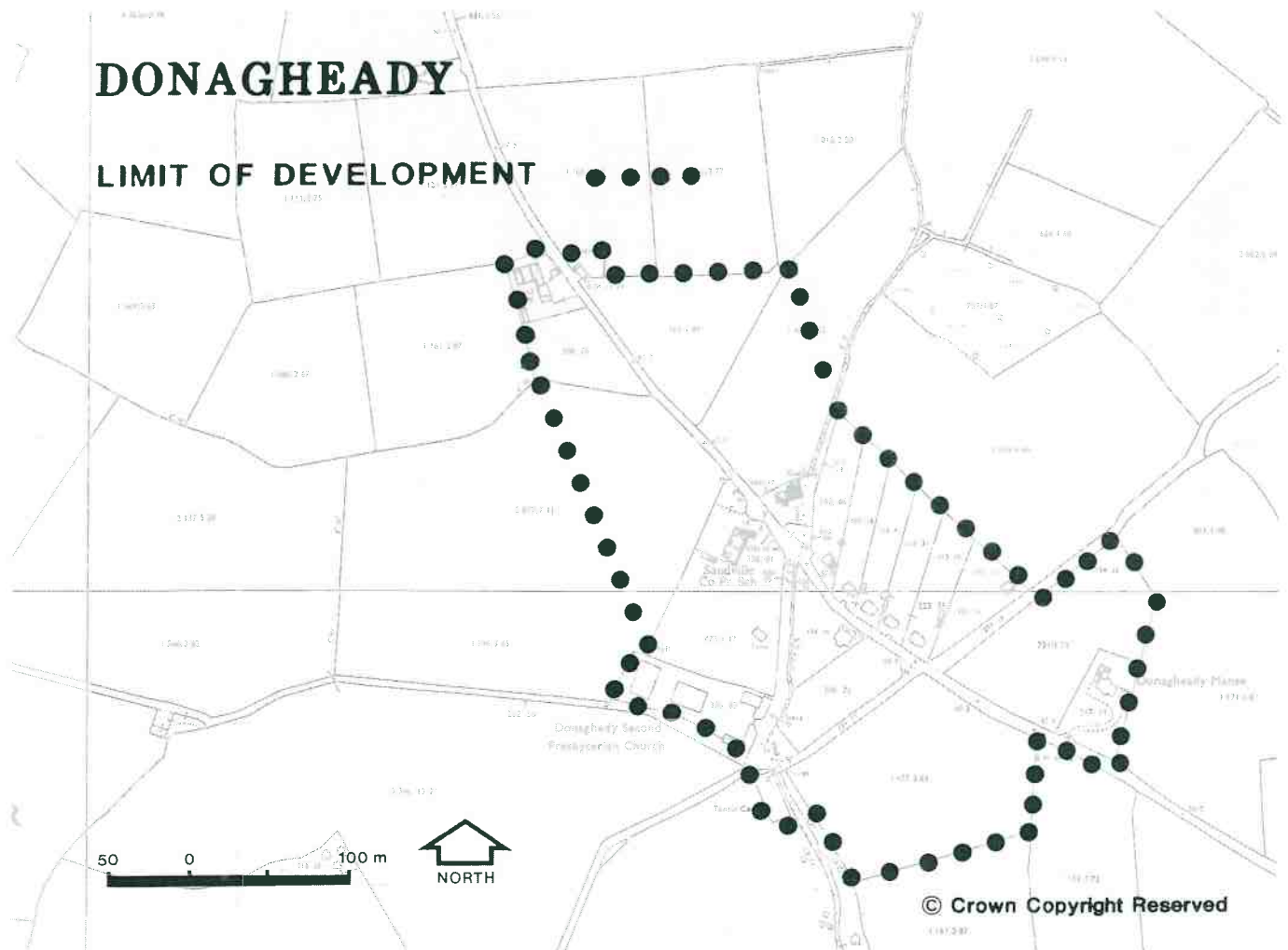
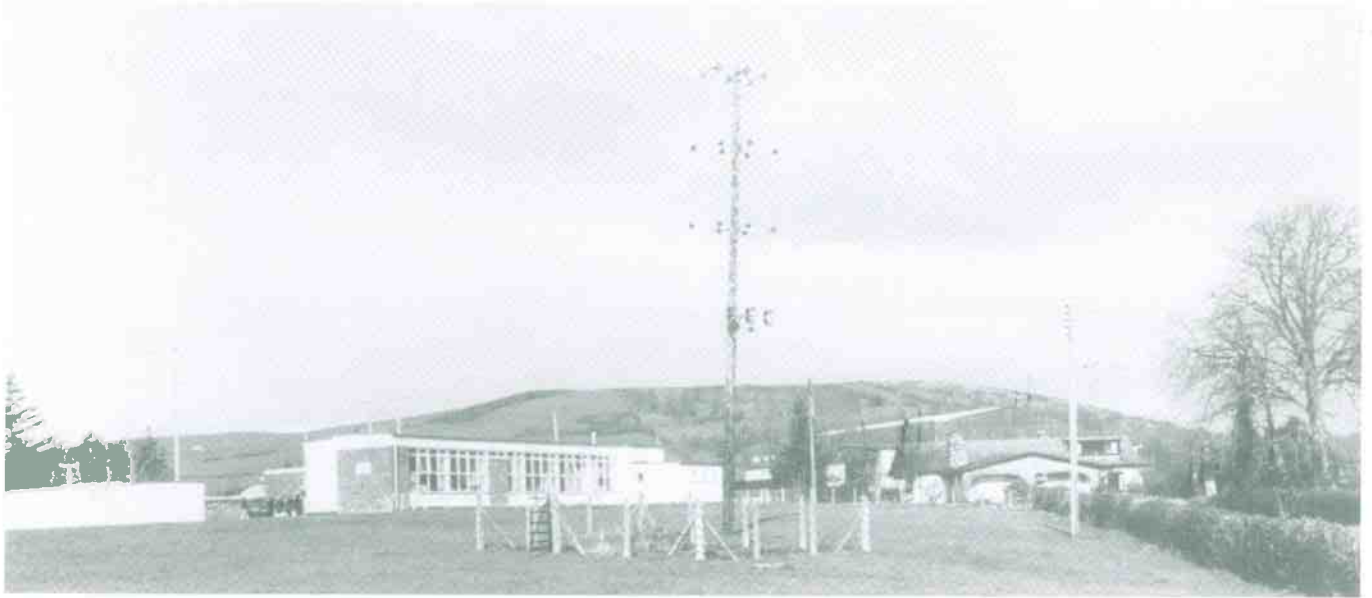
107.1 As the most easterly settlement in the District, Cranagh is an important focus of development in the Glenelly Valley. The valley has a dispersed settlement pattern with strip farms being characteristic and Cranagh contains a range of community facilities which serve this wide hinterland.

107.2 The nature of the topography at this location limits the opportunity for in-depth development. Nevertheless, infilling and rounding off is possible within the limits defined. Beyond these limits Rural Policy is applicable but it will be necessary to ensure that extensive ribbon development does not occur.



108.0 DONAGHEADY

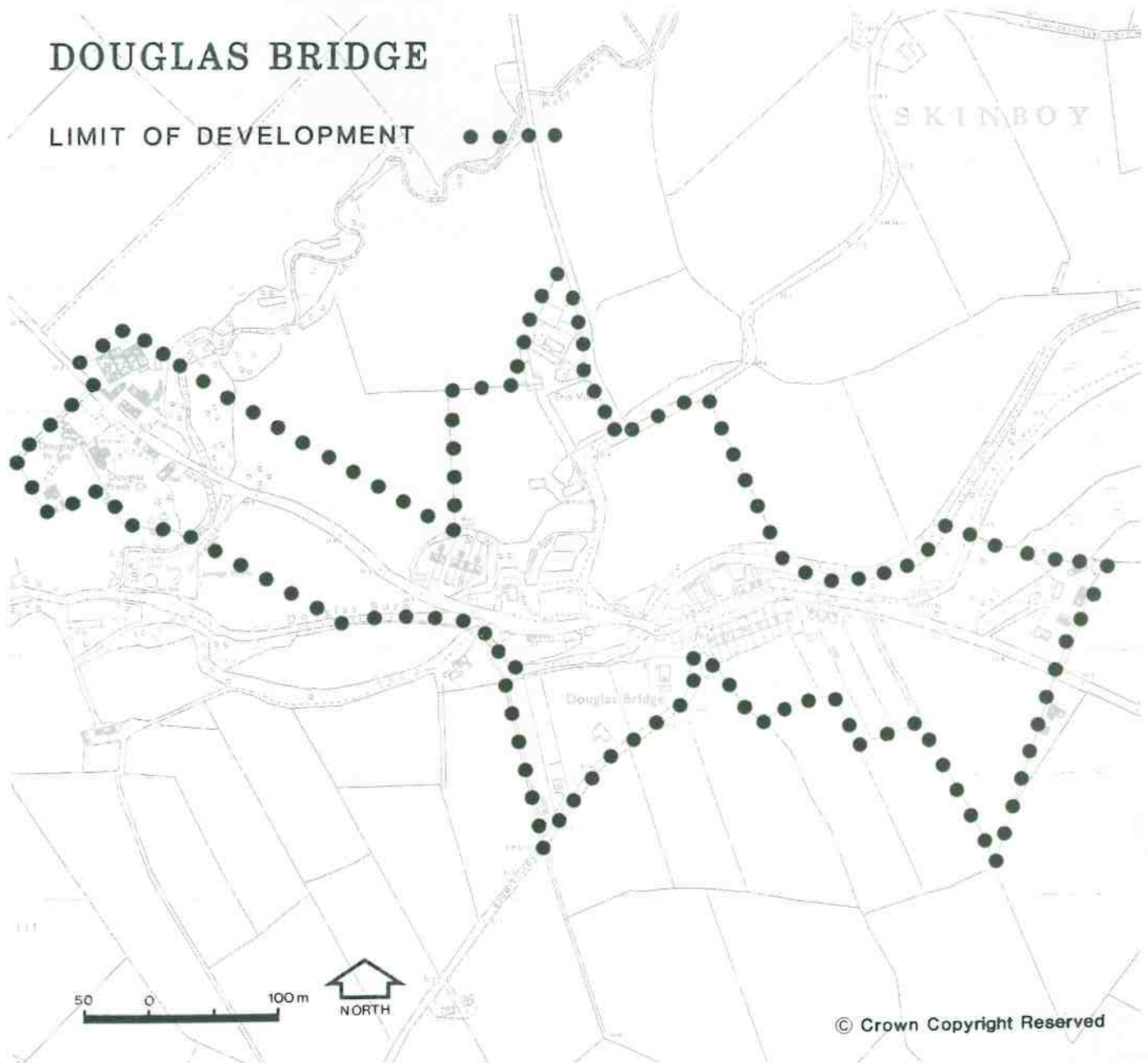
108.1 This is a compact crossroads settlement containing a primary school, church, factory, recreation facilities and housing and is served by a sewage treatment works. A number of opportunities for small housing groups exist to round off this settlement, the limit defined aiming to retain its compact character and avoid areas of difficult topography. Beyond the development limit Rural Policy is applicable.



109.0 DOUGLAS BRIDGE

109.1 Douglas Bridge has developed in an east–west direction on level ground close to the Douglas Burn. Difficult topography remains a constraint on future development towards the north and south. The settlement contains both public and private housing, commercial and community facilities and is served by a sewage treatment works.

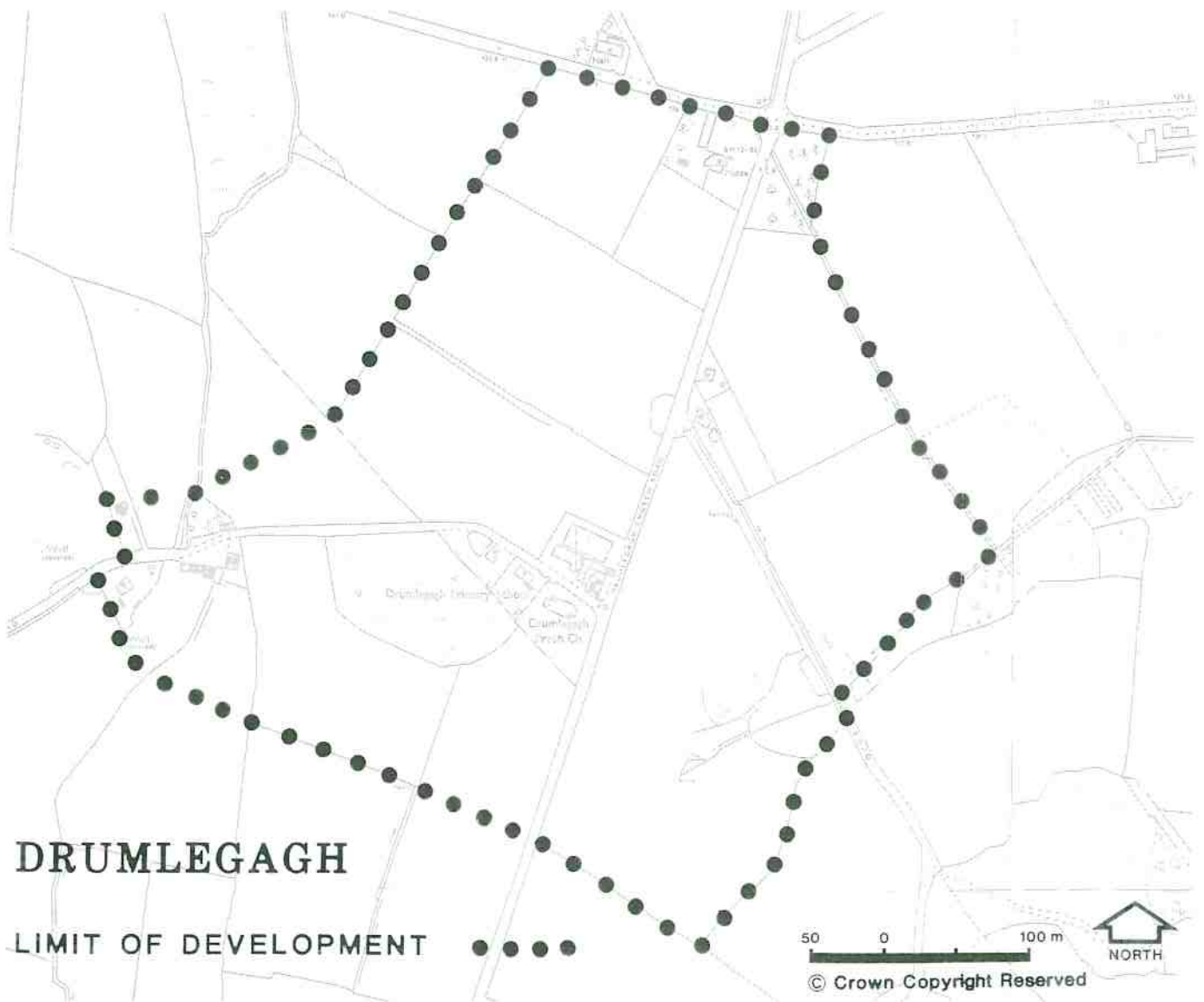
109.2 The development limits for Douglas Bridge have been drawn with a view to maintaining its compact settlement form and they contain a number of infill and rounding off opportunities for small housing groups. Beyond this limit Rural Policy will apply to all development proposals.



110.0 DRUMLEGAGH

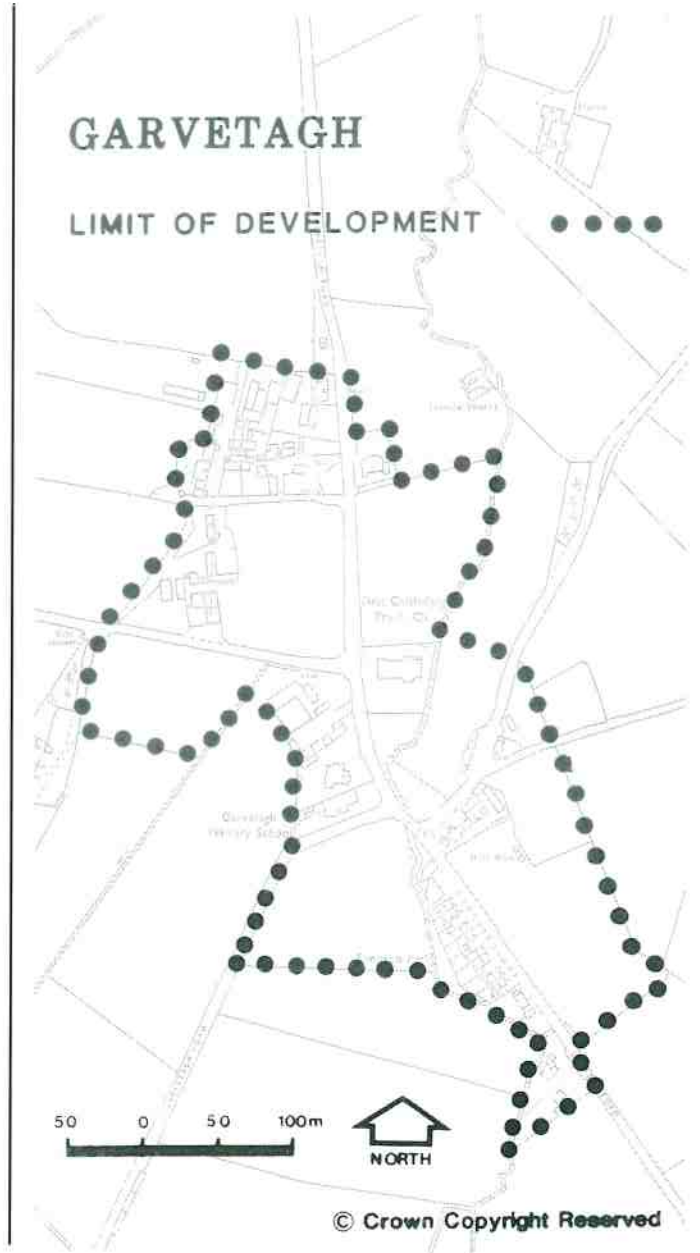
110.1 Drumlegagh is also a compact settlement with development centred around the church, school and business premises on the Drumlegagh Church Road. Given the nature of the topography and the

pattern of the road network in this area it is important to ensure that extended ribboning does not occur. The limits of development drawn provide a number of opportunities for small scale housing development to occur and beyond these limits Rural Policy will be applicable.



111.0 GARVETAGH

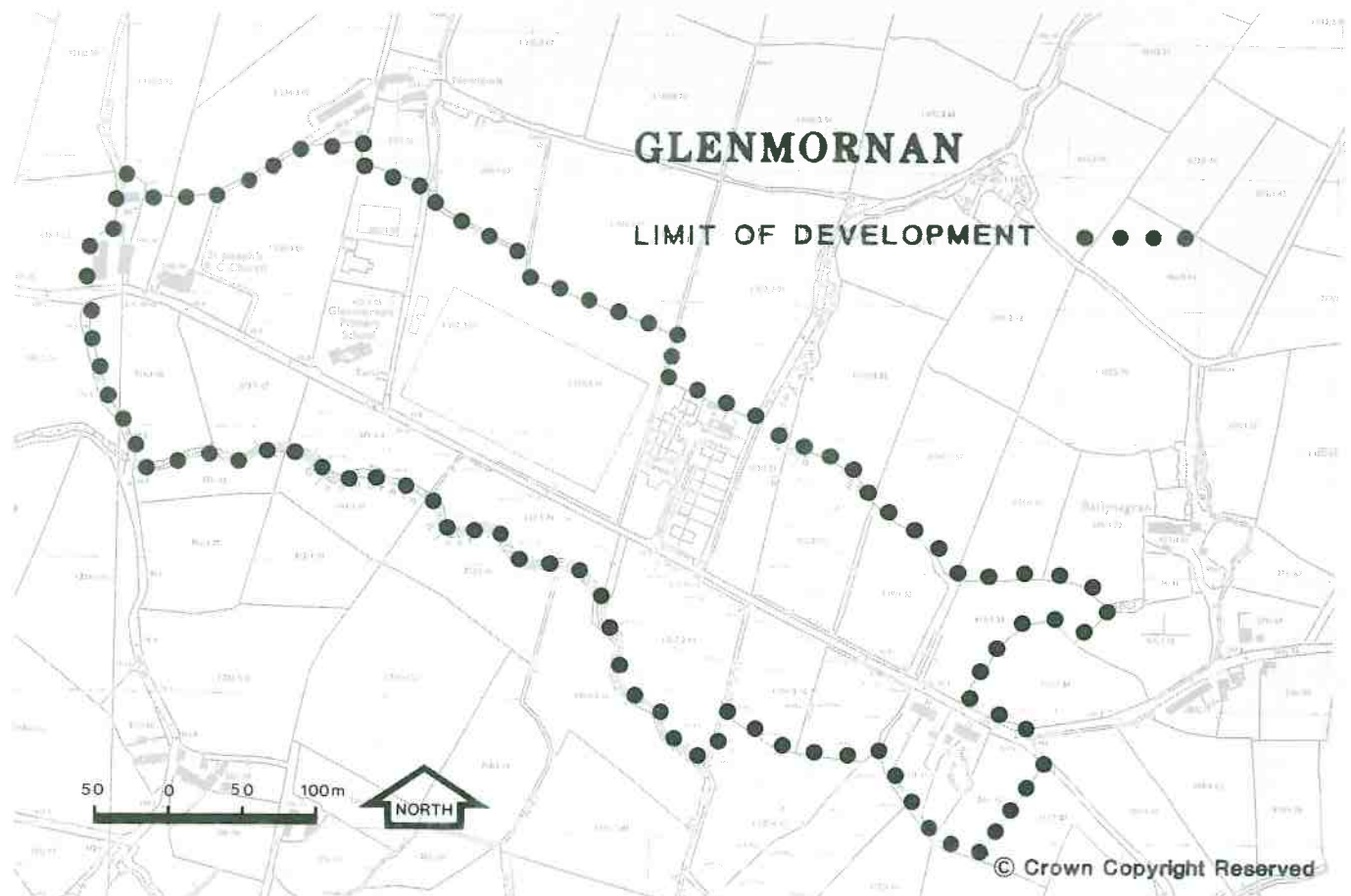
111.1 Garvetagh is also a compact settlement with a range of facilities and a strong sense of community identity. Given its location at the junction of a number of minor roads, the development limit has been drawn to ensure that ribbon development does not become the characteristic form of development. Development proposals beyond these limits will be assessed against Rural Policy.

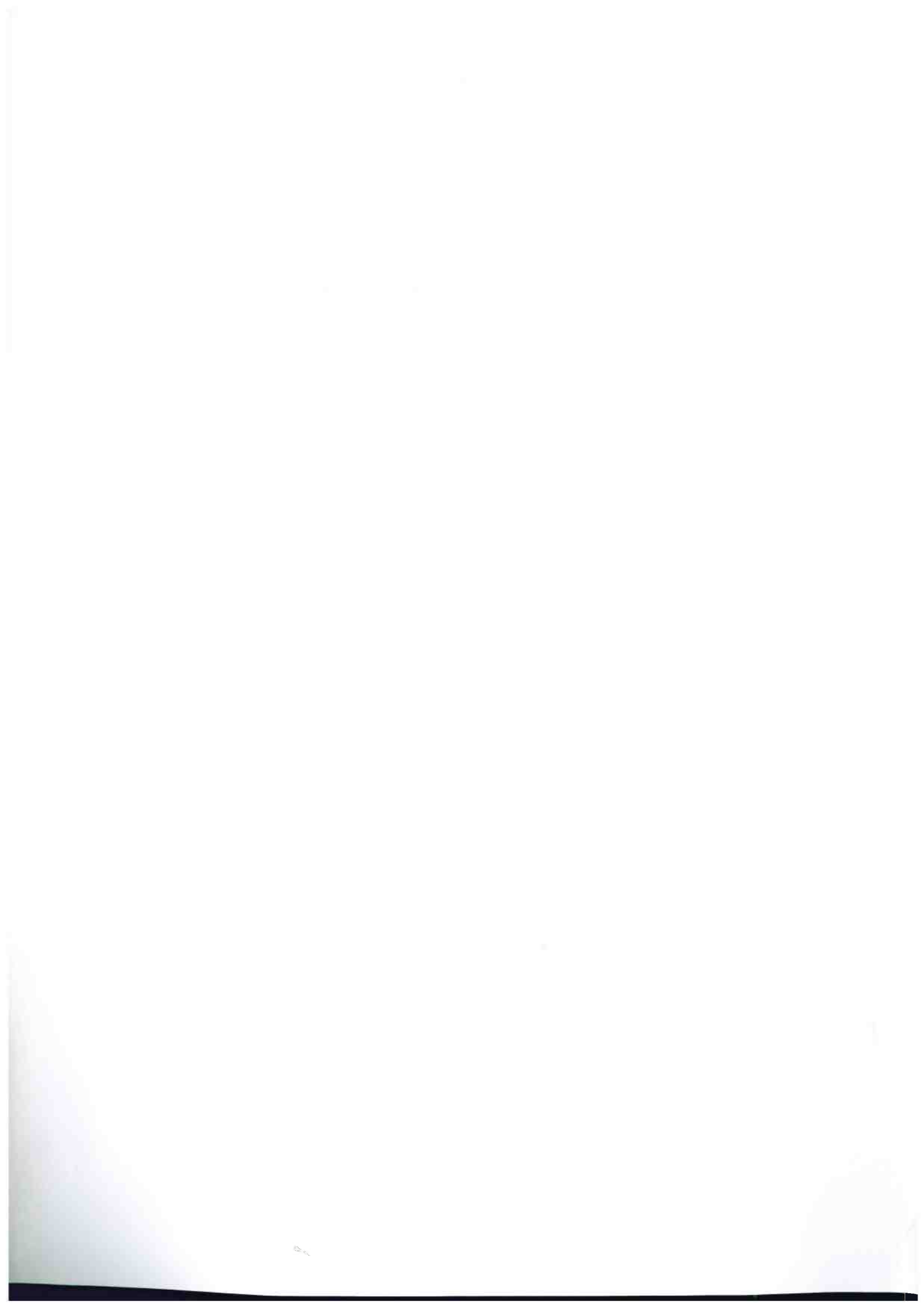


112.0 GLENMORNAN

112.1 Glenmornan has a linear settlement form stretching between St Joseph's Church and the road junction some distance to the east. Both public and private housing are served by a number of facilities and services.

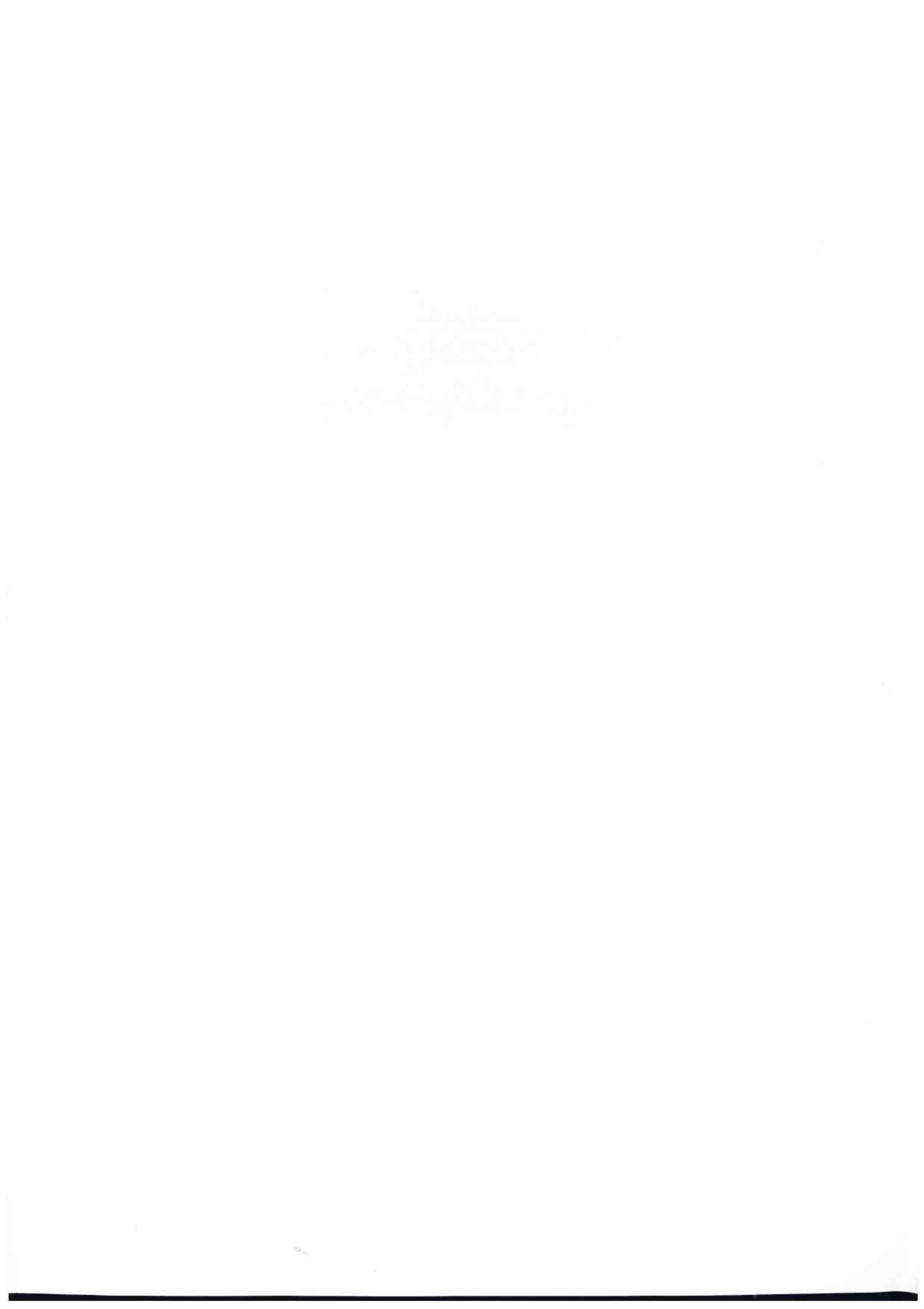
112.2 A number of infill development opportunities exist although the location of the sewage treatment works presents a constraint on adjoining land. Rural Policy considerations will apply to development proposals beyond the development limits defined.





Part Eight

Policy Statement and Maps—Rural Area



113.0 Introduction

113.1 Strabane District is for the most part rural in character, the four Strabane urban wards covering only 882 hectares out of a total area of 86,090 hectares. Additionally, over one third of its area is contained within the Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

113.2 While this section of the Plan considers in detail a strategy and associated policies for the rural area, it is important to remember that these cannot be regarded in isolation from the Settlement Strategy and in particular the policies and proposals drawn up for the villages and hamlets. The level of growth and development within these smaller settlements is related to the level of growth and development in the countryside surrounding each of them, while the location and level of rural development has a direct influence on the development or otherwise of associated small settlements.

113.3 The Rural Strategy defined in the following paragraphs has been drawn up within the context of the Department's "Regional Physical Development Strategy" and its "Policy for the Control of Development in Rural Areas." Guidelines concerning "Location, Siting and Design in Rural Areas" form an integral part of the latter Rural Policy.

113.4 It is important to emphasise that the Department's Rural Policy (November 1978) remains the main determinant of all planning applications within the rural areas. However, the Strabane Area Plan presents the opportunity to tailor this Policy to the needs and circumstances prevailing within Strabane District and incorporates the rural development policy into the statutory framework thus completing the planning policy framework for development throughout the whole of the District. While Areas of Special Control in operation prior to this Plan will cease to exist, new areas which reflect the particular circumstances and characteristics of the District, within which strict control of development is required, are identified.

114.0 Issues and Opportunities

114.1 While there are limitations to what it is possible for a physical landuse plan to achieve in relation to the general issue of rural regeneration and the socio-economic problems experienced by the rural population it is possible to define a Rural Strategy which facilitates rather than inhibits change. The strategy defined has therefore sought to address and where possible resolve, the following issues and problems.

114.2 While analysis reveals an overall 15% decline in the rural population outside the four main towns since 1961, this is not a true reflection of rural population change. Within recent years, the more accessible parts of the rural area, that is around Strabane and lying astride the Omagh-Strabane-Londonderry road (T3), have experienced an increase in population while the more remote and peripheral parts of the District for example to the east and west have been characterised by population decline.

114.3 This pattern of population change is reflected in the pattern of new development which has occurred since the Department's Policy was introduced in November 1978. Concentrations of new dwellings have built up to create development pressure areas in locations which broadly coincide with those rural areas experiencing population growth. Such concentrations threaten to alter the character of localised parts of the countryside. In contrast the development pattern in the more remote and peripheral parts of the District tend to be more dispersed in character.

114.4 The Rural Policy drawn up in November 1978 drew a distinction between Areas of Special Control where strict control over development was required, and the remainder of the rural area where less strict planning control could be exercised. Areas of Special Control were defined close to towns where it was necessary to prevent ribbon development and urban sprawl and within areas of high landscape value where a level of amenity was considered worthy of protection. Within the remainder of the rural area, planning permission was normally granted provided that planning criteria could be met. Urban Areas of Special Control were based on a standardised one or two mile radius beyond the statutory development limits of the towns concerned, and were generally unrelated to the specific needs of the areas and had limited regard for local pressures and topography.

114.5 The District contains a number of high quality scenic areas and conservation features such as Areas of Scientific Interest, Nature Reserves, Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings, all of which are considered to be part of the District's heritage. While considered worthy of protection in their own right they have added significance in view of the importance to the District and beyond of the development of a tourist sector to the local economy.

114.6 While the Rural Strategy defines policies mainly in relation to housing development, there is also a need to address the problems arising from the demands placed on the countryside by non-residential development and in particular by mineral extraction. Mineral resources are generally relatively limited in terms of their geographical extent, while their exploitation has serious environmental implications. It is therefore important to balance economic factors and environmental protection. Other forms of non-residential development must also have regard for socio-economic factors and for rural conservation and protection.

114.7 Agriculture remains an important economic activity and landuse within the rural area and exerts an important influence on the visual appearance of the countryside. Increasingly, changes in the industry arising from the macro-economic problems of over-production and commodity surpluses experienced generally in the EEC and the decline in Government subsidy will have implications for rural planning policies. Farm diversification and the growth of alternative sources of employment resulting in development will require careful consideration by the Department particularly in areas where a more protective planning policy is being pursued.

115.0 Aims and Objectives

115.1 The aim of the Rural Strategy for Strabane District is **to maintain the essential character of the rural area** by achieving the following objectives:

- to maintain a clear distinction between the countryside and the urban areas of Strabane and Sion Mills**
- to control rural development and protect the countryside from inappropriate forms of development**
- to protect and where possible, enhance natural landscapes, wildlife sites and buildings or sites of archaeological, architectural or historical interest**
- to facilitate rural regeneration**

115.2 When determining planning applications within the rural area the Department will seek to achieve these objectives by having regard for the following planning criteria:

- the amenity of the countryside
- the traffic hazards caused by development and additional accesses onto public roads
- the effect of ribbon development and urban sprawl
- the need to safeguard features of the historic landscape
- the possible danger to public health caused by the pollution of watercourses as the result of the approval of an excessive number of septic tanks
- the need to safeguard restricted zones such as mineral deposits and water catchment areas
- the economics of providing services for urban development as compared with scattered rural development
- the convenience of social facilities such as schools, libraries and clinics and the additional public expenditure incurred in servicing a scattered rural community
- the protection of high quality agricultural land.

116.0 Rural Strategy

116.1 Survey and analysis work in relation to the existing pattern of rural development, the implementation of the Rural Policy drawn up in November 1978 and the issues and opportunities already highlighted have led the Department to produce a Rural Strategy which has the following components:

- a Green Belt around Strabane and Sion Mills**

- a number of Policy Areas associated with areas where development pressures have had environmental implications**
- an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) associated with the Sperrin Mountains**
- Tourist Routes important to the development of tourism within the District and beyond**
- Protected Routes associated with the principal road network throughout the District**
- the Killeter Forest Nature Reserve, the Dart and Sawel Area of Scientific Interest and the Moneygal Bog Area of Special Scientific Interest.**
- an Area of Constraint on Mineral Development**
- the Rural Remainder**
- a number of designated Hamlets consideration of which has been given in the previous section. These provide opportunities for small scale residential development in the countryside.**

116.2 With the formulation of this strategy, it is proposed that the former Area of Special Control defined around Strabane and Sion Mills be abolished and replaced by the Green Belt. Additionally, the former Castlederg urban Area of Special Control will cease to exist and the Newtownstewart/Baronscourt urban and amenity Area of Special Control will be abolished and be partly replaced by the Strule Valley Policy Area.

117.0 Location, Siting and Design

117.1 In view of the Department's guidelines in relation to "Location, Siting and Design in Rural Areas" it is important to emphasise the importance of the first criterion set out above, namely the amenity of the countryside. This publication is a statement on the standards to be applied to new development in the countryside, including the Green Belt and AONB and will be used by the Department in implementing rural planning policy. Great importance is attached to the detailed consideration of location, siting and design of buildings in the countryside and also the ancillary works or treatment to their immediate surroundings. This principle will apply generally throughout the rural areas to both residential and non-residential development including agricultural buildings where appropriate.

117.2 The degree to which individual buildings can be satisfactorily located in any particular rural setting will be dependent on the nature of the existing landscape and the amount of existing development. Broad expanses of open countryside with few trees or large hedges can absorb fewer buildings than undulating countryside where the landscape is interspersed with many trees and hedges. The circumstances for planning consideration in any particular location may change following approval of one or more developments in that locality.



All development proposals will be assessed against the guidelines 'Location Siting and Design in Rural Areas'

117.3 Developers should aim to integrate new buildings into their setting. Development will be expected to avoid siting on hilltops, ridges or the skyline and to be positioned close to existing trees or hedges where possible. The Department will take into account the size, shape, orientation and height of any proposed building relative to its surroundings, when determining planning applications.

117.4 The Department will expect proposed development to minimise the destruction of existing trees and substantial hedges. Suburban type prominent access roads, gate pillars and boundary walls or fences will not be considered appropriate in the countryside. Roadside and field boundary hedges should be retained or replanted following any necessary development works.



Ribbon development is a generally unacceptable form of rural development

118.0 THE GREEN BELT

118.1 The Green Belt proposed replaces the former Area of Special Control as defined around Strabane and Sion Mills and reflects more closely the local needs, circumstances and development pressures of both settlements.

118.2 The essential functions of the Green Belt are:

- to provide protection from ribbon and sporadic development, to lands adjoining the development limits of Strabane and Sion Mills, which may be required for urban expansion during the next plan period
- to preserve a clear break between town and country and prevent the coalescence of Strabane with the neighbouring settlements of Sion Mills, Glebe, Victoria Bridge, Ballymagorry and Artigarvan

□ to make the best use of existing urban infrastructure and to encourage urban regeneration

□ to preserve the character of the urban area and to provide protection to areas of high amenity and recreation value such as Strabane Glen and the Mourne River Valley between Victoria Bridge and Strabane

□ to take account of development pressures close to the urban area as experienced by concentrations of planning applications in recent years

□ to protect good farm land and natural resources.

118.3 The Green Belt therefore provides a minimum green surround to the urban area and includes only those areas physically and visually urban orientated. It is essentially elongated in shape extending from Ballymagorry and Artigarvan in the north to Victoria Bridge in the south. The inner boundary follows the development limit for Strabane and Sion Mills and the outer boundary has been defined, where possible, along natural physical features.

118.4 The area thus defined prevents the coalescence of a number of settlements, protects the amenity of the Mourne River Valley and restricts development on land adjacent to the main Omagh–Strabane–Londonderry road (T3).

118.5 Green Belt Policy

Residential Development

118.5.1 As defined by the Department's "Policy for the Control of Development in Rural Areas" (November 1978), planning permission will not normally be given for groups of dwellings within the Green Belt and permission for a single dwelling will normally be granted only where the Department is satisfied that an applicant needs to live at that particular location due to employment considerations or other special personal circumstances.

118.5.2 Permission will normally be granted for a dwelling for a farmer engaged in full-time agricultural operations. Sympathetic consideration will be given to part-time farmers and farm workers where the extent of their agricultural operations warrants the erection of an additional dwelling on the farm. Additionally applications by retiring bona fide farmers or their widows or widowers for planning permission to erect a dwelling for their own occupation on the land which they have farmed over the years will receive sympathetic consideration.

118.5.3 Permission may be granted for a dwelling for occupation by a person engaged in the whole time management of a commercial or industrial undertaking provided that it can be shown to be necessary for the person to live in the rural area close to the undertaking. A person who must of necessity live at a particular location inside the Green Belt because of the nature of his employment, will similarly be given sympathetic consideration.

118.5.4 Further, the Department may give sympathetic consideration to applicants who because of special, personal or domestic circumstances require

to live at a particular location in the rural area. It will be necessary for the Department to be satisfied that the circumstances are specific to the application site and that severe hardship would be caused if planning permission were refused.

118.5.5 Where permission is granted because of employment or special personal circumstances a condition restricting the occupancy of the proposed dwelling will be attached.

118.5.6 Permission to build a dwelling in the Green Belt may be given on a suitable infill site where a substantial and closely built-up frontage of development already exists, and where the dwelling is satisfactory in all other respects.

118.5.7 Permission may also be given to renovate, rebuild or replace an existing dwelling provided that such a building is substantially complete and structurally sound. Generally, the form, dimensions and materials of the new dwelling should respect its status as a replacement, while it should be located on the site or close to the building being replaced. The Department will not impose restrictions on the size and design of a replacement dwelling which would result in failure to satisfy present day requirements but it is unlikely that a house of a size significantly in excess of the one it is replacing will be considered appropriate.

118.5.8 In all cases planning permission will only be forthcoming where location, sitting and design are considered acceptable to the Department.

Non-Residential Development

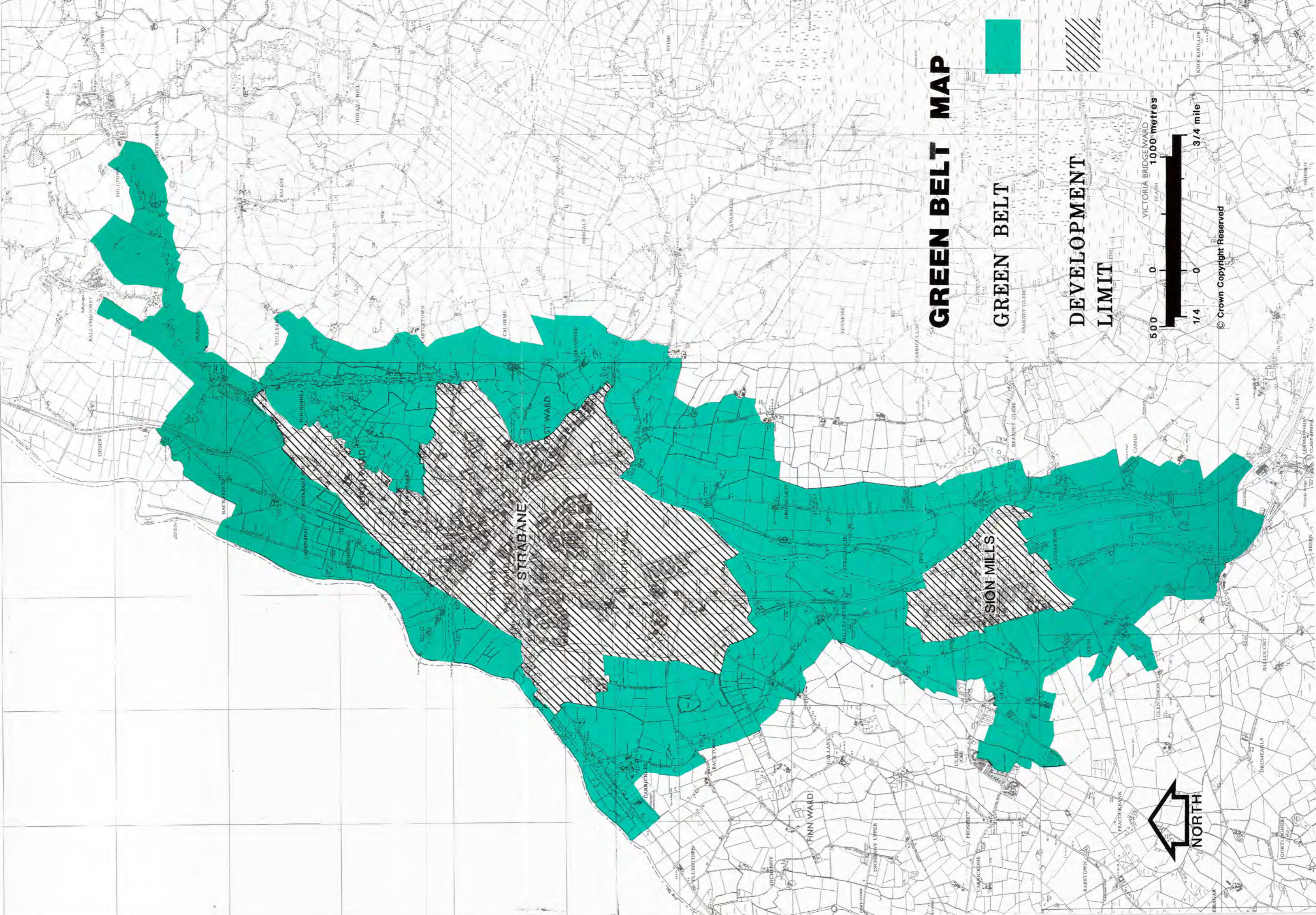
118.5.9 Planning permission for non-residential development within the Green Belt will be considered on the basis of the needs of the local community, the proximity of alternative urban locations and the circumstances of each case. As a general rule, only development which clearly needs to be located in the Green Belt will be considered appropriate. Vacant or semi-derelict buildings will be preferred locations for such development.

118.5.10 Industry will be encouraged to locate principally within urban areas. Sympathetic consideration will only be given to agriculturally related industry where circumstances dictate its location on the site proposed within the Green Belt.

118.5.11 Retailing and commercial activity will be strongly resisted in the Green Belt as these uses are better located within existing built-up areas, both to serve the local community and to avoid spoiling the landscape.

118.5.12 Those agricultural buildings requiring planning permission will be subject to the same planning criteria applied to other developments within the Green Belt.

118.5.13 Resource based proposals designed to cater for outdoor recreational activities or to facilitate the tourist industry will be given sympathetic consideration where there would be no adverse environmental impact.



GREEN BELT MAP

GREEN BELT

DEVELOPMENT
LIMIT



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118.5.14 Other community uses should normally be provided in existing settlements. Only in exceptional cases would the Department accept the need for such within the Green Belt.

119.0 POLICY AREAS

119.1 A number of Policy Areas have been defined in specific locations where it is considered that stronger protection than that afforded by Rural Policy as applied beyond the Green Belt, is required. These designations fall into two principal categories.

119.2 In the first instance, it is considered that areas of high landscape value are deserving of protection and that development within them should be restricted. That part of the **Strule Valley** between Newtonstewart and the District boundary with Omagh and straddling the T3 traffic route has a high scenic quality, and falls within this category. This area extends southwards into Omagh District and also partly lies within the Sperrin AONB. It was formerly part of the Newtownstewart/Barsoncourt Area of Special Control.

119.3 The second category of Policy Area is roadbased and these have been defined in a number of locations where there is evidence of an existing or potential concentrations of frontage and ribbon development. Development in this form has implications for urban sprawl, coalescence of settlements and loss of visual amenity.

119.4 Significant development pressure is already in evidence **along the B49 between Artigarvan and Donemana** and intensified development pressure is anticipated **along the B76 Erganagh/Castleberg/Killen Road and the B50 Castleberg/Drumquin Road as far as Carrickadartans** in view of the abolition of the Area of Special Control in this location. A similar situation exists **along the B85 between the outer limit of the Green Belt and Clady and the B165 between Clady and Glebe**. Within the latter Policy Area limited infill opportunities exist at Urney/Kennystown.



B165 Policy Area



B85 Policy Area

STRULE VALLEY POLICY AREA

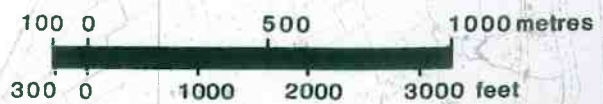
DISTRICT BOUNDARY



DEVELOPMENT LIMIT



POLICY AREA



NEWTOWNSTEWART

119.5 Policy Area Policy

119.5.1 In recognition of these development pressure areas and the planning problems to which uncontrolled development would give rise the Department proposes to apply the Green Belt policy as outlined in previous paragraphs within them.

120.0 AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

120.1 The Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as designated under The Amenity Lands Act (NI) 1965 extends over much of the eastern part of the District before extending further eastwards and southwards across the District boundary into adjoining Districts.

120.2 Under the terms of The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985, the AONB will be redesignated early in the plan period and detailed policies and guidelines in relation to its conservation and management will be drawn up by the Department's Countryside and Wildlife Branch in consultation with the Planning Service, the District Council and the public generally.

120.3 In the interim the AONB boundary will remain as indicated on the District Strategy Map. While the Department has the opportunity to introduce policy areas within the AONB with a view to protecting its scenic quality, this is not considered to be either necessary or desirable within this District except in the Strule Valley as previously discussed. It is important to note that much of the AONB lies above the 200 metre contour and that within that higher area little or no development

pressure exists. This relatively remote part of the District suffers from a number of socio-economic problems associated with rural depopulation which an unduly restrictive policy would serve to exacerbate. The area continues to experience both population decline and a decrease in its housing stock.

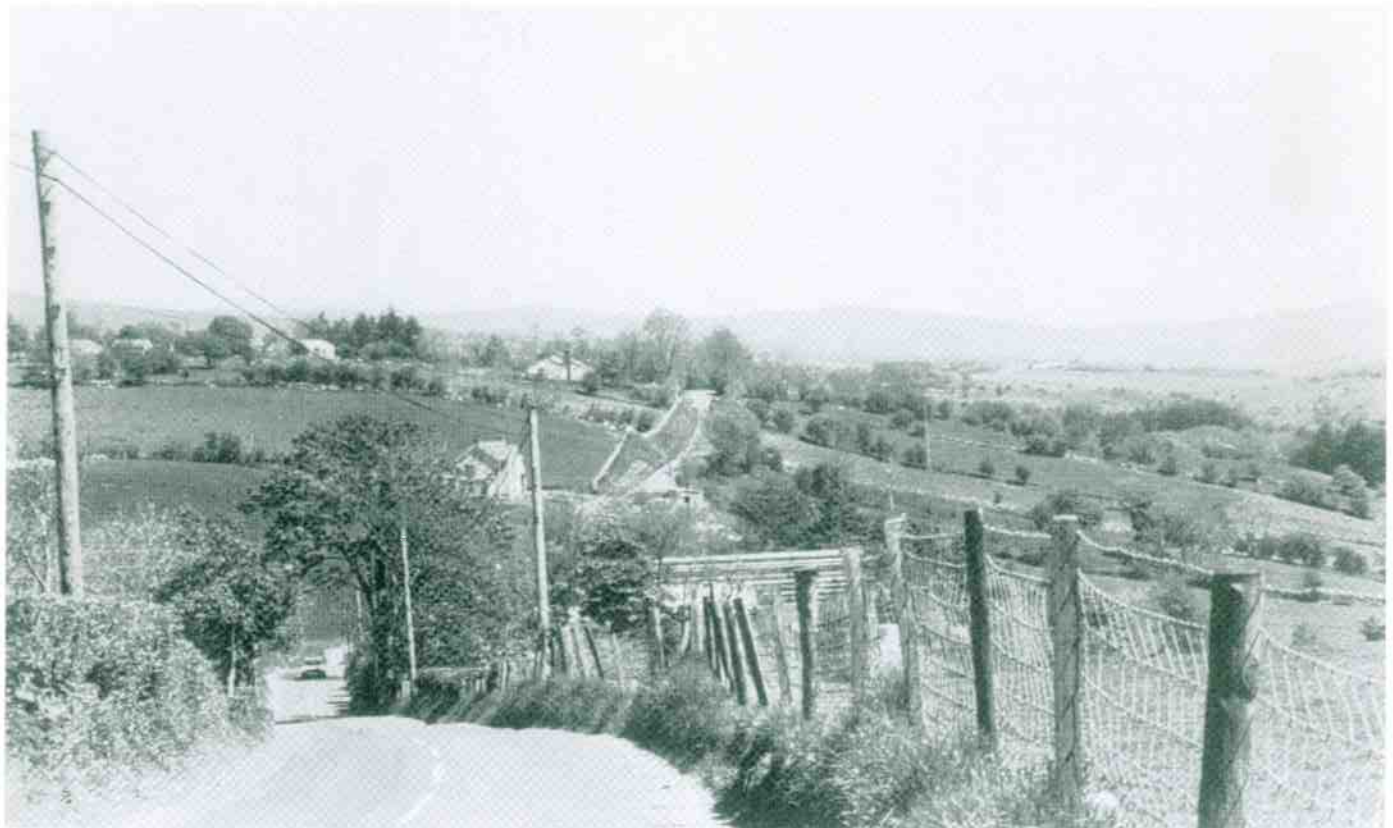
120.4 The AONB presents an area of relatively unspoilt landscape with considerable untapped tourist potential. There are economic benefits to be gained by the exploitation of this potential.

120.5 AONB Policy

120.5.1 In view of the foregoing, the Department considers that a less restrictive planning policy could be applied throughout that part of the area beyond the Strule Valley Policy Area. Applicants seeking planning permission for single dwellings will not therefore have to demonstrate a need to live in the countryside.

120.5.2 However, each planning application will be closely examined against the criteria of location, siting and design. New buildings within the AONB will be required to respect and reflect the traditional architectural style and settlement pattern of the locality and should be located particularly so as to minimise their impact on the area.

120.5.3 In recognition of the tourist potential of the AONB sympathetic consideration will be given to tourist related proposals. Development associated with such proposals will however be expected to contribute to the overall rural policy objectives of the Department by conserving and enhancing the quality of the natural landscape.



Sperrin AONB

121.0 TOURIST ROUTES

121.1 Recent tourist related studies and strategies affecting the District and beyond, highlighted the importance of the route from Gortin through Plumbridge into the Glenelly Valley and back to Strabane. The Department would acknowledge the scenic quality of this route by assessing all development proposals submitted along it against the policy set out for the AONB.



Plumbridge - Strabane tourist route

122.0 PROTECTED ROUTES

122.1 The Rural Strategy incorporates the Department's Protected Routes Policy which aims to safeguard the network of main traffic routes throughout the rural area, namely **the Omagh-Strabane-Londonderry road (T3)** and **the A35 Strabane-Lifford road**.

122.2 Protected Routes Policy

122.2.1 On these main traffic routes, that is beyond the development limits of designated settlements, new accesses or the intensification of use of existing accesses will not normally be permitted.

122.2.2 However, where an access is to serve the following types of development approval may be given unless use of the access would cause an unacceptable traffic hazard:

- where a house is required for the working of a farm and access to it can only be obtained from a main traffic route
- where a house is required for the working of an existing commercial undertaking and access can only be obtained from a main route
- where a dwelling to be replaced has been in regular use in recent years. A condition requiring the improvement of the access may be imposed
- there may occasionally be other cases which justify exceptional consideration but these should be rare and will be assessed on their merits.



Strabane - Londonderry Road (T3)

122.2.3 Applications to construct new accesses onto all other roads will be treated on their merits. Standards of sight lines, radii and gradients will vary according to the configuration of the road and the road classification. The number of accesses on a given stretch of road will be relevant as will their proximity to junctions. Sight line requirements will be applied but the Department will seek to retain hedgerows and trees as far as possible.

123.0 THE RURAL REMAINDER

123.1 The Rural Remainder is defined as the residue of the rural area beyond the various designations already highlighted. It varies in character and landscape quality but is attractive in its own right and deserving of protection from undesirable forms of development.

123.2 Rural Remainder Policy

123.2.1 A less restrictive planning policy will be applied throughout this area and applicants seeking planning permission for single dwellings will not have to demonstrate a need to live in the countryside.



123.2.2 The Department will base its consideration of proposals for development in the Rural Remainder on recognised planning principles and in particular on location, siting and design. It will ensure that new development blends into the landscape and proposals which give rise to traffic hazards or public health nuisance will be resisted. Likewise, proposals which would create ribbon or skyline development will not normally be permitted.

123.2.3 Proposals for non-residential development in the Rural Remainder will continue to be considered under the criteria outlined previously. In general terms, the economic or 'jobs gained' benefit of such development will be balanced by the Department against other planning factors such as the proximity of alternative urban locations, its likely environmental impact and the suitability of detailed proposals. In particular, sympathetic considerations will be given to small projects associated with a local resident already living on the site.

124.0 HAMLETS

124.1 Within the District, hamlets have been defined at Aghabrack, Aghyaran, Altishane, Bready, Cloghcor, Cranagh, Donagheady, Douglas Bridge, Drumlegagh, Garvetagh and Glenmornan. The primary function of the hamlets is to provide locations for small scale residential development in the countryside.

124.2 Development limits have been drawn for each of these settlements to allow for limited infill of vacant sites and the rounding-off of existing development, taking into account physical and amenity characteristics. The Department's aim is to control future development in these hamlets so that they retain their existing character and scale, and also provide a further outlet for small scale development which would otherwise wish to locate in the open countryside.



The Rural Remainder contains a wide variety of high quality landscapes

125.0 CONSERVATION FEATURES

125.1 The rural landscape also contains a range of features both natural and man-made which will influence planning policies by providing constraints on development. These include features such as Nature Reserves, Areas of Scientific Interest, Areas of Special Scientific Interest, Historic Monuments and Listed Buildings.

125.2 To the west of the District two small contrasting areas of bog containing a number of Sphagnum species are protected within the **Killeter Forest Nature Reserve**. To the east of the District, on **Dart and Sawel Mountains**, an extensive area of blanket peat and moorland which is the only Irish site for the plant species Cloudberry is afforded protection by its designation as an Area of Scientific Interest. The **Moneygal Bog Area of Special Scientific Interest** has been designated as such in view of its value as a fine example of a western raised bog.

125.3 No development which would result in a diminution of the scientific interest or resource of these sites will be acceptable.

125.4 Today's landscape is the complex product of thousands of years of Man's shaping and changing the natural topography and the Department acknowledges the need for sensitive management of the continuing process of change. The proposals and policies formulated for the rural area are part of such management which also includes the conservation of Man's history of occupation as found in the natural landscape.

125.5 The Department's Historic Monuments and Buildings Branch is responsible for the recording and protection of all known sites and monuments under The Historic Monuments Act (NI) 1971, including the taking of monuments into state care and their

scheduling for protection. The work of scheduling is on-going and the fact that a site has not yet received statutory protection, does not diminish its archaeological importance or its significance as an element in the historic landscape.

125.6 Many buildings of architectural or historic interest are located in the rural area throughout the District. These have been listed by the Department under Article 31 of The Planning (NI) Order 1973 to protect their character. Such buildings and their surroundings contribute to the variety and visual amenity of the countryside.

125.7 Again, no development which would result in the destruction or disturbance of these resources will be acceptable.

126.0 MINERAL EXTRACTION

126.1 Mineral operations can cause considerable loss of visual amenity. Wherever mineral developments are proposed the Department will seek to protect landscape quality. Permission where granted will carry conditions designed to avoid or mitigate visual disturbance. Planning permission will not normally be granted for new excavations which will cause a breach in a prominent skyline. The Department will also resist any further extension of an existing breach of such a skyline unless it will produce a more pleasing aspect. Where possible structures and stockpiles within workings should be positioned so as to remain below the skyline.

126.2 Sand and gravel extraction has a long history in Strabane District. Activity has largely been concentrated in valleys of the River Mourne and its tributaries the Burndennett and Glenmornan. The Department will, subject to normal planning considerations, favour the continued development of





major local resources which are already being exploited. However, whilst some old sandpits have been restored to farmland, a number particularly in the Burndennett Valley have become derelict. The Department will encourage operators to carry out rehabilitation works in these areas.

126.3 Planning permission for all new mineral developments will be conditional upon the ultimate rehabilitation of sites to a safe and tidy condition. Where possible developers will also be required to restore sites to a condition which is suitable for the establishment of alternative uses.

126.4 The Department will protect the landscape of the Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with a degree of constraint greater than it would consider to be reasonable in areas of lesser scenic value. Permission is less likely to be granted to proposed mineral developments where the Department considers that a proposal will have a substantial impact on the landscape. In each situation within the AONB where scenic quality demands particular attention to the landscape implications of a proposed mineral development the specific location of the site proposed, the scale and expected duration of the development and satisfactory restoration proposals will be important considerations in determining a planning application. Where permission is granted the stringency of control exercised over operations and site restoration to protect the landscape will be greater than will be the case for mineral developments outside the AONB.

126.5 The Department considers that the landscape of the Glenelly Valley requires more rigorous protection from the environmental consequences of mineral developments. Despite giving an impression of remoteness and wild beauty untouched by mineral workings this area is readily accessible and open to view from the B47 Draperstown–Plumbridge road and from the minor road between Sperrin Village and Plumbridge on the south side of the river. The Glenelly Valley is therefore identified on the Strategy Map as an **Area of Constraint on Mineral Developments** within which there will be a presumption against the granting of planning permission for the extraction or processing of common minerals. Exceptions to this policy may be made where the Department is satisfied that the proposed operations are short term and the environmental implications are minimal. In such cases the Department would be unlikely to favour on-site processing of the excavated materials.

126.6 Mineral developments will not normally be given permission where they would prejudice the essential character of areas within the District which have been declared by the Department on the basis of their scientific value as Areas of Special Scientific interest or Nature Reserves or contain features listed by the Department as Historic Monuments. Conservation of natural resources will also be considered by the Department in determining planning applications for mineral developments.

126.7 The continuous and disruptive nature of mineral operations make them "bad neighbours" particularly of housing. Mineral development proposals which contain effective measures to avoid or alleviate environmental disturbance will be given more favourable consideration. Where possible, the Department will reduce the potential for conflict by requiring a degree of separation to be kept between mineral workings and other developments, particularly where mineral operations involve blasting. The distance required will vary according to the nature of the mineral operations and neighbouring developments to be considered.

126.8 Mineral resources often occur where the public road network is unsuitable for the volume of heavy vehicle traffic which development could generate. Where increased traffic from a proposed mineral development would prejudice the safety and convenience of road users the Department will normally refuse planning permission unless the road can be satisfactorily improved. Where appropriate the Department will be prepared to discuss difficulties and possible solutions with the developer.

126.9 Where extraction of a mineral would be of particular benefit to the economy, or where a mineral is of limited occurrence and has some uncommon and valuable property, the Department will consider applications to exploit such resources on the merits of the proposals, balancing the potential economic benefits of development against the environmental consequences. Where reserves of a mineral which is considered to be of particular economic value have been proven to standards acceptable to the Department, the Department will seek to ensure that surface development does not sterilise the reserves so prejudicing their future exploitation.

126.10 While the Foyle Valley contains some areas of raised bog and there are occurrences of blanket bog on the hills, Strabane District has not experienced the general increase in commercial peat extraction which has occurred in Northern Ireland in association with

technical developments in the industry. The extraction of peat for sale requires planning permission. When considering applications for commercial peat extraction the Department will take into account the visual and wider conservation implications of each development. In order to provide rural employment opportunities favourable consideration will be given insofar as it is consistent with the protection of boglands valuable to conservation interests and with the protection of amenity in the Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

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STRABANE AREA PLAN

HIGHWAY POLICY AREAS





STRABANE AREA PLAN

HIGHWAY POLICY AREAS



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