

Housing Land Availability Report

2019

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**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

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Introduction

- 1.1 The Ards and North Down Borough Housing Land Availability Report 2019 has been prepared by the Council's Local Development Plan Team as part of the preparation of a new Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 1.2 The Housing Land Availability Report 2019 is the second summary of Housing Land Availability produced by Ards and North Down Borough Council. The primary purpose of the Housing Land Availability Monitor (the 'Housing Monitor') is to inform the preparation of the Council's LDP regarding the allocation of land for housing.
- 1.3 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) states a 'plan, monitor and manage' approach is necessary to ensure that, as a minimum, a 5 year supply of land for housing is maintained. Monitoring should be an ongoing process involving annual reporting and review. The SPPS states monitoring must include:
- The housing land supply at the beginning and end of the annual reporting period;
 - The number of net additional housing units built during the annual reporting period; and
 - The number of net additional housing units built in the period since adoption of the local policies plan.
- 1.4 The information collated within the Housing Monitor will permit certainty regarding the overall progress in meeting the housing objectives of the LDP. The Housing Monitor facilitates the identification of a shortfall in potential housing land supply and can provide clarity and certainty to developers in relation to the availability of land suitable for housing. It will also allow for the identification of any issues likely to require intervention. For example, the need to release phased housing sites in order to maintain a 5 year supply of available housing land, or the release of a site to provide for a particular housing need.

- 1.5 The Planning Act (NI) 2011 requires Ards and North Down Borough Council to make an annual report to the Department for Infrastructure reviewing the extent to which the objectives of the LDP are being realised. As the Council is currently preparing the first LDP for Ards and North Down produced under this legislation, the production of Annual Monitoring Reports is yet to commence. The Housing Land Availability Monitor will help to establish a baseline for this statutorily required annual monitoring report.

Previous Housing Monitor

- 2.1 Ards and North Down Borough Council assumed responsibility for local planning functions from the Department of the Environment (DOE) on 1 April 2015 as part of the Government's reform of local government.
- 2.2 Housing delivery monitoring throughout Northern Ireland was historically undertaken by Central Government since the 1990's. Summary reports, including those for legacy North Down and Ards Councils were previously published by DOE.
- 2.3 The monitoring previously undertaken by DOE is different to that undertaken by Ards and North Down Borough Council for the following reasons:
- The 2015 local government reform reduced the number of councils in Northern Ireland from 26 to 11, and revised district boundaries. Therefore, the geographic area varies from that previously monitored;
 - The two housing monitor regimes cover different time periods. Ards and North Down Borough Council operates from a baseline position of 1 April 2017 and covers the period from 1 April to 31 March. The DOE housing monitor operated within an annual year of 1 August to 31 July;
 - The last published report by DOE was for 2013. The Council commenced monitoring housing, through the newly formed LDP team, on 1 April 2017; and

- The Council has improved efficiency and accuracy of the data and survey techniques used following a review of the methodology. This included a detailed retrospective analysis of all approvals for residential use and a move towards a GIS based approach.
- 2.4 Therefore, given the differences, the 2018 survey is intended to provide the most up to date information to be used in the preparation of the LDP - whilst the 2019 survey reflects the more comprehensive and efficient methodology adopted by the Council's Planning Service. The historical housing monitor will be used solely for reference purposes.

Methodology

- 3.1 The Housing Land Availability Monitor is an assessment based on an annual survey of housing monitor sites within the Borough. The Council's survey year ran from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, with surveying undertaken throughout the year and a continuous inputting and analysis of information and data.
- 3.2 The 2019 survey encompasses all settlements as defined in the two extant development plans¹ for the Borough. For the first time, a survey has been undertaken of dwellings within the countryside. The monitor identifies the number of dwelling units built and, for the settlements, the area of land developed for residential use. Information on the available potential of housing land and dwelling units remaining undeveloped within settlements is also recorded.
- 3.3 Sites monitored in previous annual surveys that were not recorded as complete are surveyed. This includes sites zoned for residential development in extant development plans. New sites approved for residential development within the monitor year are also surveyed.

¹ Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 and Ards and Down Area Plan (ADAP) 2015.

- 3.4 Previously monitored sites which have now been developed for non-residential development have been removed from the survey. Sites within settlements which were granted residential planning permission prior to 2012, whose permission lapsed prior to the start date of the LDP and had not commenced development, are no longer monitored. These sites have been archived for information purposes but will not contribute to the statistics on existing housing land availability.
- 3.5 The initial survey of dwellings built within the countryside includes all planning approvals for residential development outside settlement development limits from 1 January 2010. This allows the 2019 survey to form a baseline for future analyses of dwellings built within the countryside.
- 3.6 The Housing Monitor records net housing gain for each identified site where existing housing is replaced by additional new housing. For example, redevelopment of a site containing 1 dwelling for 3 dwellings results in a net gain of 2 dwelling units.
- 3.7 In situations where the number of dwellings for a site is unknown, but the area of the site is identified, an estimated density is used to calculate the housing potential of the site. This estimate is based on the characteristics of the site, the character of the area and prevailing density. Where this approach is not considered suitable, an average density (generally 25 units per hectare) will be applied to the site. On occasion, the actual density will vary from that estimated, resulting in potential variances between the actual available potential on the land and that estimated.
- 3.8 The Council's Housing Monitor is a continuous and evolving process, as such the methodology may be subject to further refinement. This may result in the yield for individual sites varying from year to year. However, this is unlikely to have a significant impact within the context of the overall housing land availability.

- 3.9 It is acknowledged some of the potential housing land may not be developed for residential purposes. This could be for a myriad of reasons including; constraints, landowner reluctance to release the land for development or access arrangements etc. These matters will be addressed further during the preparation of the Local Development Plan.

Summary Table and Results

- 4.1 The subsequent summary table provides details of the supply of housing for Ards and North Down Borough Council following the completion of the 2019 survey. The table includes details of the remaining housing land potential and the number of potential dwelling units to be accommodated on this land.
- 4.2 It should be noted, this Housing Land Availability Study represents the first detailed and comprehensive Housing Monitor undertaken by Ards and North Down Borough Council following the transfer of planning functions from the DOE. The 2019 survey rectifies historical errors in the previous Planning Authority's (DOE) Housing Monitor. This includes several sites historically recorded as being not started, however orthographic evidence indicated these had been built for several years.
- 4.3 The survey also includes those sites not accurately assessed in the gap between the last DOE survey undertaken and the completion of the 2019 survey.
- 4.4 As previously stated, the 2019 Housing Land Availability Study also includes a first survey of all dwellings built outside settlement limits. Therefore, all approvals for residential development in the countryside since 2010 have been surveyed and the results are included in the table.
- 4.5 The reasons highlighted above mean that the 2019 survey is not a basis for reflection of the *annual* rate of house building for the Borough. However, the

2019 survey should be taken as a robust reference point for those annual Housing Land Availability Studies which follow.

Table 1: Housing Land Availability Study 2018-2019 Remaining Potential

Housing Land Availability Study 2018-2019	Built		Remaining Potential		
	No.	Area (ha)	No.	Overall %	Area (ha)
Large Towns					
Bangor	694	25.66	1417	16.29%	62.05
Newtownards	480	24.94	3392	38.99%	167.3
Large Towns Total	1174	50.6	4809	55.28%	229.35
Small Towns					
Comber	189	9.07	1159	13.32%	57.83
Donaghadee	109	4.91	714	8.20%	39.74
Holywood	113	6.1	239	2.74%	21.13
Small Towns Total	411	20.08	2112	24.28%	118.7
Villages					
Balloo	41	1.49	5	0.05%	1.1
Ballygowan	54	1.55	70	0.80%	3.68
Ballyhalbert	10	0.28	255	2.93%	12.88
Ballywalter	2	0.03	24	0.27%	0.37
Carrowdore	64	2.28	154	1.77%	7.34
Cloughey	66	3.75	59	0.67%	3.58
Crawfordsburn	11	0.39	49	0.56%	4.24
Greyabbey	8	0.08	6	0.06%	0.74
Groomsport	9	0.39	15	0.17%	0.72
Helen's Bay	4	0.3	11	0.12%	1.62
Killinchy	4	0.06	3	0.03%	0.39
Kircubbin	1	0.1	22	0.25%	0.39
Millisle	11	0.49	189	2.17%	7.52
Portaferry	20	0.87	192	2.20%	10.35
Portavogie	22	0.78	253	2.90%	12.45
Seahill	7	0.38	10	0.11%	1.7

Whiterock	2	0.18	35	0.40%	3.84
Villages Total	336	13.4	1352	15.54%	72.91
Small Settlements					
Ardmillan	2	0.09	24	0.27%	1.31
Ballybarnes	0	0	3	0.03%	0.64
Ballyboley	2	1.38	1	0.01%	0.77
Ballycranbeg	4	0.23	4	0.04%	0.95
Ballydrain	0	0	1	0.01%	0.4
Ballyeasborough	0	0	0	0.00%	0.09
Ballyfrenis	0	0	0	0.00%	0.11
Ballygalget	1	0.15	2	0.02%	0.43
Ballystockart	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Cotton	0	0	3	0.03%	0.15
Craigtanlet	0	0	1	0.01%	0.08
Glastry	0	0	11	0.12%	1.44
Gray's Park	1	0.02	0	0.00%	0
Kilmoor	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Kirkistown	6	0.56	9	0.10%	1.42
Lisbane	12	0.64	11	0.12%	0.99
Loughries	0	0	10	0.11%	0.34
Orlock	0	0	2	0.02%	0.21
Rubane	11	0.58	23	0.26%	1.63
Six Road Ends	0	0	4	0.04%	0.16
Small Settlements Total	39	3.65	109	1.25%	11.12
Urban Totals	1960	87.73	8382	96.36%	432.08
Dwellings in Countryside	236	N/A	316	3.63%	N/A
ANDBC Total	2196	N/A	8698	100%	N/A

- 4.6 Table 1 illustrates the results of the 2019 survey, revealing 2196 units were deemed to have been complete. However, for the above mentioned reasons, this figure is an exception and does not give an accurate reflection of the *annual* house building rate for the Borough. Therefore, an analysis of units developed on brownfield²/greenfield sites or on those zoned for residential development within the extant Area Plans has not been undertaken in this particular report.
- 4.7 The table also shows that 236 dwellings approved in the countryside (outside settlement limits) since 1 January 2010 have been built. However, it should be noted, several dwellings approved prior to January 2010 will also have been constructed during this period.
- 4.8 Arguably the most valuable and important information provided within Table 1 relates to the remaining housing potential. This reveals the Borough has remaining potential for 8698 dwellings, 8382 of these are located within the settlements, equating to approximately 432 hectares of land potentially available for development.
- 4.9 The large towns of Bangor and Newtownards, as expected, are the locations for the majority of the remaining potential. These two large towns account for 55% (4809 dwellings) of the Borough's remaining housing potential.
- 4.10 The distribution of remaining potential between these towns is interesting, Newtownards (3392) has over double the amount of remaining potential of Bangor (1417), with Newtownards accounting for approximately 39% of the overall remaining potential and Bangor representing only 16.29% of the overall remaining potential.
- 4.11 An explanation for the rational of this pattern can be provided by the extant area plans and the amount of 'greenfield' land zoned for housing. Newtownards has some large greenfield housing zonings which have yet to

² [RDS 2035 \(Page 106\) definition of brownfield land \(i.e. previously developed land\) refers.](#)

be, or have only recently, commenced. This pattern also exists within the small towns within the legacy Ards Council area.

- 4.12 Comber has one particularly large greenfield housing zoning and the town accounts for 13.32% (1159 dwellings) of the overall remaining housing potential. Comber has the largest remaining potential within the small town tier, followed by Donaghadee which has a remaining potential of 714 units (8.2% of the overall total) and has several greenfield housing zonings.
- 4.13 The remaining potential for Comber and Donaghadee are in stark contrast to that for Holywood, the final settlement within the small town tier. Holywood has a remaining housing potential of 239 units (2.74% of the overall remaining potential). This figure likely reflects the constraints on outward development which exist for Holywood. Therefore, much of the remaining potential is on redevelopment (brownfield or windfall³) sites and the yields reflect the characteristics of low to medium density housing found throughout the settlement.
- 4.14 Overall, the three small towns of Comber, Donaghadee and Holywood account for 2112 remaining housing units, this is approximately 24.28% of the overall remaining potential and accounts for 118.7 hectares of land.
- 4.15 The village settlement tier has a remaining potential of 1352 residential units, which is approximately 15.54% of the overall remaining potential throughout the Borough. There are considerable variations in the amount of remaining potential throughout the villages. Ballyhalbert (255 units), Portavogie (253), Portaferry (192) and Millisle (189) have the highest remaining potentials; Seahill (10), Greyabbey (6), Balloo (5) and Killinchy (3) have the lowest remaining potentials.

³ Windfall sites are those housing sites that were neither zoned nor anticipated during the formulation of the development plan but which have become available during the lifetime of the plan (RDS 2035, page 111).

- 4.16 The small settlements have a remaining potential of 109 dwellings, equating to 1.25% of the overall total. The small settlements of Ballyeasborough, Ballyfrenis, Ballystockart, Gray's Park and Kilmoody have no remaining potential.
- 4.17 Outside the settlements, the remaining potential in the countryside is 316 dwellings, equating to 3.63% of the total.