

# **Housing Land Availability Report**

2020

December 2020



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

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## Introduction

- 1.1 The Ards and North Down Borough Housing Land Availability Report 2020 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 2020 is the third 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 planning functions from the Department of the Environment (DOE) on 1 April 2015 as part of the 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 Council and Ards Council 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 have 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 2019 survey is intended as a definitive baseline to be used in the preparation of the LDP. Whilst the 2020 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 2019 to 31 March 2020, with surveying undertaken throughout the year and a continuous inputting and analysis of information and data.
- 3.2 The 2020 survey encompasses all settlements as defined in the two extant development plans<sup>1</sup> for the Borough. For only the second time, a survey has also been undertaken of dwellings within the countryside. The first rural survey, conducted in 2019, provides a baseline against which this 2020 report can record an accurate indication of residential development in the countryside over the past year. 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 and not recorded as being 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 and Ards and Down Area Plan (ADAP) 2015.

- 3.4 Sites historically monitored, but 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, but whose permission lapsed prior to the start date of the LDP and had not commenced development, are no longer monitored.
- 3.5 Within the countryside, the 2020 monitor no longer takes account of those sites whose permission lapsed prior to the start date of the LDP without commencing development. These sites (and those mentioned at paragraph 3.4 above) have been archived for information purposes and will not contribute to the statistics on existing housing land availability or remaining potential.
- 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 on the overall housing land availability.
- 3.9 It is acknowledged that 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 Tables and Graphs

- 4.1 The subsequent summary tables and graphs provide details of the supply of housing for Ards and North Down Borough Council following the completion of the 2020 Housing Land Availability Survey. The tables include details of the remaining housing land potential and the number of potential dwelling units to be accommodated on this land.
- 4.2 The tables also include details of the number of housing units built within the Urban Footprint<sup>2</sup> and on Greenfield sites outside the Urban Footprint. The number of dwellings built on land zoned for residential use is also included.
- 4.3 Table 1 provides details of the 2020 Housing Land Availability Study results. It should be noted, the 2019 survey represented 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 rectified historical errors and information gaps in the former Planning Authority's (DOE) Housing Monitor. It also included a survey of all approvals for residential development in the countryside since 2010.
- 4.4 Table 1 reveals 616 dwellings were built in Ards and North Down Borough Council between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. The large towns of Bangor and Newtownards accounted for 311 residential units and within the small towns 161 dwellings were built. The villages had 100 dwellings constructed within them and only one dwelling unit was built in any of the small settlements. Overall, 573 housing units were completed within the settlements on 27.3 hectares of land and there is remaining potential for 8185 units on

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<sup>2</sup> The RDS 2035 defines the Urban Footprint for towns as 'the continuous built-up area of the settlement'. Undeveloped zoned land at the edge of settlements is excluded from the definition.

407.68 hectares. The first precise study of the countryside shows 43 dwellings were built throughout the year in the rural area and at the time of survey there are 286 units remaining, this equals 3.38% of the overall remaining potential in the Borough.

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

Housing Land Availability Study 2019-2020	Built		Remaining Potential		
	No.	Area (ha)	No.	Overall %	Area (ha)
<b>Large Towns</b>					
Bangor	203	8.87	1301	15.36%	53.23
Newtownards	108	5.85	3437	40.57%	165.23
<b>Large Towns Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>14.72</b>	<b>4738</b>	<b>55.93%</b>	<b>218.46</b>
<b>Small Towns</b>					
Comber	44	2.1	1160	13.69%	55.97
Donaghadee	82	4.05	637	7.52%	34.32
Holywood	35	1.07	214	2.53%	20.71
<b>Small Towns Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>7.22</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>23.74%</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Villages</b>					
Balloo	0	0	11	0.13%	1.47
Ballygowan	12	0.4	72	0.85%	2.95
Ballyhalbert	16	1.08	236	2.79%	11.66
Ballywalter	9	0.27	15	0.18%	0.09
Carrowdore	4	0.25	150	1.77%	6.46
Cloughey	5	1.23	52	0.61%	2.32
Crawfordsburn	0	0	55	0.65%	4.46
Greyabbey	0	0	10	0.12%	1.09
Groomsport	2	0.07	10	0.12%	0.22

Helen's Bay	1	0.25	11	0.13%	0.87
Killinchy	0	0	3	0.04%	0.39
Kircubbin	0	0	32	0.38%	0.99
Millisle	5	0.1	200	2.36%	8.42
Portaferry	0	0	198	2.34%	10.25
Portavogie	46	1.31	209	2.47%	11.16
Seahill	0	0	11	0.13%	1.74
Whiterock	0	0	35	0.41%	3.84
<b>Villages Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4.96</b>	<b>1310</b>	<b>15.46%</b>	<b>68.38</b>
<b>Small Settlements</b>					
Ardmillan	0	0	24	0.28%	1.31
Ballybarnes	0	0	4	0.05%	0.59
Ballyboley	0	0	1	0.01%	0.34
Ballycranbeg	0	0	4	0.05%	0.1
Ballydrain	1	0.4	0	0.00%	0
Ballyeasborough	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Ballyfrenis	0	0	16	0.19%	1.28
Ballygalget	0	0	2	0.02%	0.43
Ballystockart	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Cotton	0	0	3	0.04%	0.15
Craigtanlet	0	0	1	0.01%	0.08
Glastry	0	0	11	0.13%	1.44
Gray's Park	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Kilmood	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Kirkistown	0	0	9	0.11%	1.2
Lisbane	0	0	11	0.13%	0.67
Loughries	0	0	10	0.12%	0.34
Orlock	0	0	2	0.02%	0.21
Rubane	0	0	24	0.28%	1.54
Six Road Ends	0	0	4	0.05%	0.16
<b>Small Settlements Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>1.49%</b>	<b>9.84</b>
<b>Urban Totals</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>8185</b>	<b>96.62%</b>	<b>407.68</b>

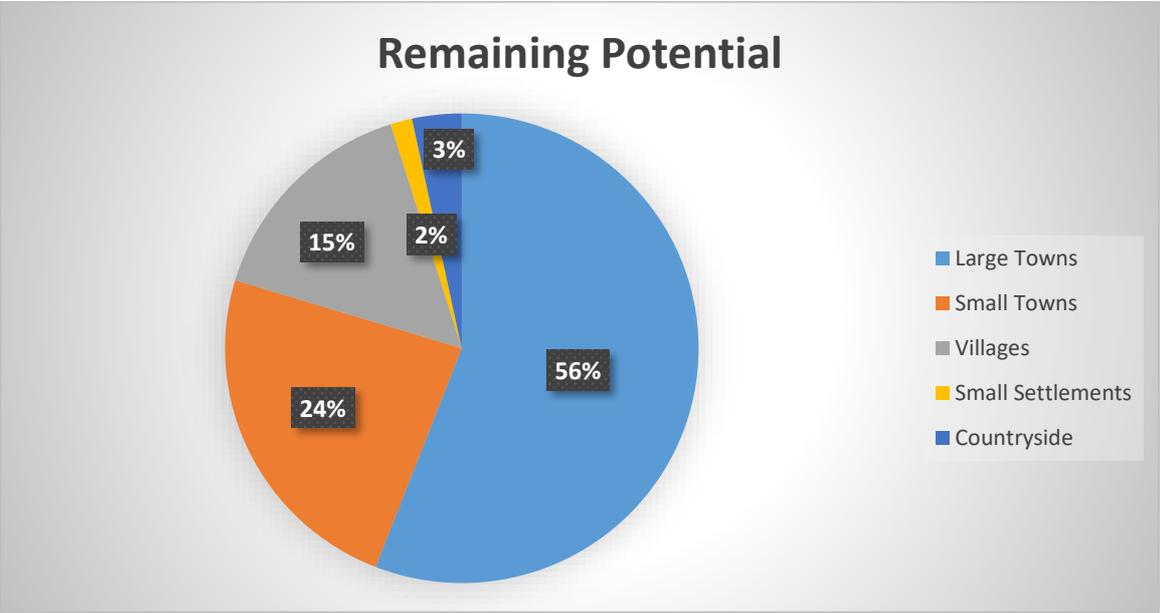
<b>Dwellings in Countryside</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>3.38%</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>ANDBC Total</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>8471</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>N/A</b>

- 4.6 The small towns of Comber (44), Donaghadee (82) and Holywood (35) saw 161 dwelling units built on 7.22 hectares of land. Comber (1160) has the largest remaining potential, equalling 13.69% of the overall total potential, Donaghadee (637) totals 7.52% of remaining potential and Holywood (214) accounts for only 2.53%. This reflects the environmental and physical constraints on outward development for Holywood, the character of the town and limited housing zonings or opportunities for brownfield<sup>3</sup> development compared to Comber and Donaghadee. The small towns have 23.74% of the overall remaining potential, on 111 hectares of land.
- 4.7 Examination of the village tier shows 100 dwellings built throughout the settlements, with Portavogie (46) accounting for almost half of the total of residential properties built in the villages. Several of the villages; including Portaferry, Seahill, Balloo and Greyabbey, saw no dwellings built throughout the year. The villages account for 1310 (15.46%) potential remaining housing units on 68.38 hectares of land. Ballyhalbert (236), Portavogie (209) and Millisle (200) have the largest remaining potential within the villages.
- 4.8 Within the small settlements, only one dwelling unit was completed, which related to a change of use in Ballydrain. The small settlement tier accounts for 126 potential remaining housing units, equalling only 1.49% of the remaining total.

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<sup>3</sup> [RDS 2035 \(Page 106\) definition of brownfield land \(i.e. previously developed land\) refers.](#)

**Graph 1: Remaining Potential by Location – extant Settlement Hierarchy and countryside.**



**Table 2: Location of built housing units (Urban Footprint or Greenfield)**

Housing Land Availability Study 2019-2020	Built		Location			
	No.	Area (ha)	Greenfield	%	Urban Footprint	%
<b>Large Towns</b>						
Bangor	203	8.87	5	1%	198	42%
Newtownards	108	5.85	38	8%	70	15%
<b>Large Towns Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>14.72</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Small Towns</b>						
Comber	44	2.1	28	6%	16	3%
Donaghadee	82	4.05	8	2%	74	16%
Hollywood	35	1.07	0	0%	35	7%
<b>Small Towns Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>7.22</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>21.94</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>83%</b>

- 4.9 The RDS emphasises a sustainable approach to housing growth, setting a regional target of 60% of new housing to be located on appropriate 'brownfield' sites within the urban footprints of settlements greater than 5000 population. The distribution of housing built within the urban footprint of the applicable settlements is presented in Table 2 (page 12).
- 4.10 This demonstrates 198 of the dwellings built within Bangor were built on brownfield sites and a further 70 dwellings completed in Newtownards were developed within the urban footprint. Newtownards (38) had a higher proportion of dwellings built upon greenfield sites in comparison to Bangor (5).
- 4.11 Within the small towns, Comber (28) had the largest number of residential units built on greenfield sites. Comber was also the only settlement, large or small town, to have developed more dwellings on greenfield sites than the urban footprint. Donaghadee had 74 residential units completed upon brownfield sites, which represents more than the large town of Newtownards (70). Hollywood was the only town, large or small, to have had no residential properties developed on 'greenfield' sites.
- 4.12 A total of 79 dwellings were built on greenfield sites within the towns compared to 393 housing units built within brownfield land within the urban footprint. Ards and North Down Borough therefore significantly exceeded the 60% RDS target with 83% of all dwellings built on brownfield sites within the urban footprints of qualifying settlements (e.g. greater than 5000 population).
- 4.13 An assessment of the total number of residential units built compared to the number of houses developed on land zoned for housing or designated Housing Policy Areas (HPAs), within the extant development plans, reveals the majority (64%) of housing units completed within the existing settlements in Ards and North Down Borough were built on land designated or zoned for residential use (Table 3 page 15).

**Table 3: Residential Units built on Housing Zonings/HPAs**

Housing Land Availability Study 2019-2020	Built		%	
	No.	Zoned	Settlement	All Settlements
<b>Large Towns</b>				
Bangor	203	103	51%	18%
Newtownards	108	94	87%	16%
<b>Large Towns Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>Small Towns</b>				
Comber	44	35	80%	6%
Donaghadee	82	58	71%	10%
Hollywood	35	1	3%	0%
<b>Small Towns Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Villages</b>				
Balloo	0	0	0%	0%
Ballygowan	12	12	100%	2%
Ballyhalbert	16	15	94%	3%
Ballywalter	9	0	0%	0%
Carrowdore	4	0	0%	0%
Cloughey	5	5	100%	1%
Crawfordsburn	0	0	0%	0%
Greyabbey	0	0	0%	0%
Groomsport	2	0	0%	0%
Helen's Bay	1	0	0%	0%
Killinchy	0	0	0%	0%
Kircubbin	0	0	0%	0%
Millisle	5	0	0%	0%
Portaferry	0	0	0%	0%
Portavogie	46	43	93%	7%
Seahill	0	0	0%	0%
Whiterock	0	0	0%	0%
<b>Villages Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Small Settlements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>ANDBC Total</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>64%</b>

- 4.14 Interestingly, this assessment indicates that of all dwellings built in settlements, those built in legacy Ards Borough Council, were more likely to have been built on housing zonings/HPAs (designated in ADAP 2015) than those within legacy North Down Borough Council (designated in BMAP 2015).
- 4.15 The results show 51% of the dwellings built in Bangor were developed on land zoned for housing. However, within Newtownards 87% of its houses were built on land zoned for residential development. Donaghadee (71%) and Comber (80%) also had a higher proportion of dwellings built on land zoned for housing.
- 4.16 These results are indicative of the contrasting approaches for housing allocation taken by the extant development plans. They suggest Newtownards, Comber, Donaghadee and some of the villages within the legacy Ards Borough Council area have large areas of housing zonings/HPAs yet to be developed. In contrast, Bangor and Holywood have a lower proportion of remaining housing potential located on zoned land.