

Annex G

Definition of settlements in terms of spatial units

Ideally, settlements should be delineated from the study of built-up areas using large scale maps or aerial or satellite photographs. Unfortunately, this is a very resource intensive process and the other relevant data on the settlement are often held in a form that is not easily related to the mapped form of the settlement.

This means that it is necessary to delineate settlements in terms of spatial units that are readily available, seeking a balance between number and availability of data on one hand (larger units are better) and precision of delineation on the other (smaller units are better). Spatial units available include districts, wards, Census Output Areas, postcode units and grid squares, with Census Output Areas currently the smallest unit with mapped boundaries.

Ultimately, the group took advantage of the statutory settlement development limits (SDLs) maintained by the Planning Service of the Department of the Environment as the best geographical limit for defining the geographical extent of settlements. The SDLs are subject to ongoing review by the Planning Service and the versions used in this report refer to those in place in March 2004. The exact sources of the SDLs used in this report are given the table below.

Settlement Development Limits in Council Area:	Source (Area Plan)
Antrim Borough	Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001 & Alteration No.1 1991
Ards Borough	North Down & Ards Area Plan 1984-1995
Armagh City & District	Armagh Area Plan 2004, & Armagh Area Plan 2004 Alteration No: 1 Armagh Countryside Proposals
Ballymena Borough	Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001
Ballymoney Borough	North East Area Plan 2002
Banbridge District	Banbridge Area Plan 1983-1998, Banbridge District Rural Area Subject Plan 1986-1998
Belfast City	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001
Carrickfergus Borough	Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001

Settlement Development Limits in Council Area:	Source (Area Plan)
Castlereagh Borough	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001
Coleraine Borough	North East Area Plan 2002
Cookstown District *	East Tyrone Area Plan 1974-1994
Craigavon Borough *	Craigavon Area Plan 2010 - Draft Plan
Derry City	Derry Area Plan 2011
Down District	Down Area Plan 1986
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough	East Tyrone Area Plan 1974-1994
Fermanagh District	Fermanagh Area Plan 2007
Larne Borough	Larne Area Plan 2010
Limavady Borough	Limavady Area Plan 1984-1999
Lisburn City	Lisburn Area Plan 2001
Magherafelt District	Magherafelt Area Plan 1976-1996
Moyle District	North East Area Plan 2002
Newry & Mourne District	Newry Area Plan 1984-1999, Newry & Mourne Area Subject Plan 1986-1999, Mourne Area Plan 1984-1999
Newtownabbey Borough	Newtownabbey Area Plan 2005
North Down Borough	North Down & Ards Area Plan 1984-1995
Omagh District	Omagh Area Plan 1987-2002
Strabane District	Strabane Area Plan 1986-2001

** It should be noted that the following two Area Plan adoptions (Cookstown Area Plan 2010 and Craigavon Area Plan 2010) were published in Summer 2004 and their current settlement development limits will differ from those used in this study.*

The SDL boundaries are held by the Planning Service in the form of digitized files. These boundaries can be viewed on NISRA's Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) at www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk against map backgrounds. This will enable users to gauge the geographic extent of the settlements. Examples of these maps are provided in the gazetteer within this report.

The SDL boundaries were mapped against the 2001 Census database and population and household counts from the 2001 Census determined. These Census statistics are included in the gazetteer contained within this report. All counts have been rounded as a precaution against possible disclosure.

Census Office, NISRA, is also making a wider range of statistical information on settlements, based on the 2001 Census, available simultaneously. For further detail, see www.nisra.gov.uk. For disclosure reasons, these further statistics are based on 100 metre grid-square approximations to the SDLs. Accordingly, the Census population and household counts provided in the gazetteer do not match exactly the population and household counts in the further Census publication. For further detail on this, contact NISRA.

Discontinuous Settlements

The general assumption is that the definition of settlements should result in the identification of contiguous "built-up" areas. In practice, this is difficult, since the scale of delineation has an impact e.g. within a residential plot, only house, garage and sheds are actually built-up, whilst the garden and grounds are not - it is a matter of judgment as to when the latter are sufficiently extensive and distinct from the former to warrant separate treatment.

At the settlement level, it is quite common within a settlement to identify enclaves, particularly recreational areas, which are not built-up. Conversely, there may be built-up enclaves, such as shopping centres and small housing estates, which are not functionally separate from the settlement, even though they are not physically contiguous. Again, a measure of judgment is needed in delineation, in order to avoid misleading over-precision.

There can also be problems above settlement level, where one settlement has grown outwards to absorb other settlements. Even at the extreme of this process, where the expanding settlement has become physically contiguous with the smaller settlement, there may still be a community sentiment sufficient to mark out the smaller settlement as more than a part of the greater settlement. This is particularly the case where the area of the combined settlement exceeds the "local area" of residents.

Before this stage, however, there may be clear evidence that the smaller settlement has become a clear functional part of the greater. Such evidence would include large-scale commuting to the greater settlement, not only for work but also for shopping and services, with an accompanying absence or decline of shopping/service facilities within the smaller settlement. A rigid insistence on treating such satellite settlements as independent will result

in poor planning decisions. It is for this reason that DRD and DOE have treated Bangor and Carrickfergus as part of the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA).

The Urban-Rural Group have taken their lead from the definitions used by the DOE and, accordingly, have used, for example, the DOE definition of the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area and similarly for the Derry Urban Area and the Craigavon Urban Area. Within these, separate settlements (such as Carryduff) and settlement areas (such as Lisburn Urban Area) have been identified separately.