

SECTION 8 - LAND USES

8.0 Physical Features

Because there are few 'major' physical barriers across the Region, there is a reasonable coherence and unity to its landscape character. Indeed, it is many of these physical features that make the Region unique - being assets, which contribute to the quality-of-life, tourism, etc. of the area.

Nevertheless, there are many other local barriers that make transit difficult: from NW, the Foyle River (with few crossings), then the River Finn and the remote hilly / mountain / forested areas (much over 150 metres height) separating Castlederg / Killeter and Barnes / Blue Stack hills, then the Lough Braden / Lough Derg uplands / forests between Omagh District / Fermanagh and S Donegal. Then there are the limited crossings of Lower Lough Erne, Lough Melvin and Lough MacNea between Fermanagh and S Donegal / N Leitrim, with adjacent upland areas such as the Boho / Cuilcagh mountains. This gives way to the lakes / waterways / drumlin hills of Lower Lough Erne and north Cavan - all of which makes roads / crossings difficult. In SE Fermanagh, the uplands / forests of Lisnaskea and Slieve Beagh are a barrier to N Monaghan. Further east, the terrain (see map) is generally lower, but is more undulating, with drumlin hills and the River Blackwater being the main physical barriers between Mid Ulster District and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and County Monaghan.



Away from the border, the physical barriers are more localised and have a lesser impact - in the local areas of Armagh, Dungannon and Cookstown, as well as Omagh, south of the Sperrins. County Fermanagh is split by the 2 main lakes, whereas Leitrim and much of Donegal are dominated by hills / mountainous areas. Sligo has a central NE-SW plain

between the Leitrim hills and the Atlantic, while lakes and drumlins predominate in Cavan.

Such physical barriers impact upon the basic land quality, historic wealth, the settlement pattern / density and particularly affect the road networks / accessibility within the various parts of the region. For example, road routes can be very bendy / tortuous through the drumlin landscape, often with undulating surfacing because of the marshy land e.g. to travel across the Region from Sligo to Cavan or Monaghan, is particularly slow and indirect. These impacts are reflected in the other relevant sections of this Report.

8.1 Settlement Hierarchy

There are nine main 'towns' (over 10,000 population, though Armagh and Sligo are designated / considered as 'cities') and 74 smaller towns (over 1,000) within the Central Border Region, with approximately 450,000 people (68%) living in the numerous villages / hamlets and the open countryside of these eight LGDs (See Table 6 above). It is a dispersed and largely 'rural' settlement pattern, with a notable absence of large settlements. Generally, in NI and RoI, the Policy has been to concentrate developments in the selected larger 'towns', in accordance with 'Growth Pole Theory' - to concentrate investment effort, attempt to achieve 'critical mass' benefits and then hope for appropriately-scaled 'trickle-down' development in the surrounding settlements and rural areas. For example, the NI Area Plans designated a number of District and local towns - in which they zoned land to facilitate development of housing, employment, recreation, etc.

In recent years, the NSS and RDS has formalised these 'key centres', designating them as Gateways / Main Hubs (Sligo, Enniskillen, Omagh, Cookstown, Dungannon, Armagh, Magherafelt, Cavan and Monaghan towns). It is interesting to note, in Table 6, how the populations of these designated 'gateway' and 'hub' towns have performed over the past decade.

8.2 Main Land Use Zonings - for Housing and Industry/Employment

The main land use zonings, in the respective Area Plan produced by the County Council / DOE NI Planning, are for Residential/Housing, Industry/Employment and Amenity/Recreation/Open Space. In NI and RoI, all the main 'towns' have land specifically zoned for these purposes - though it is often shown on maps and not clearly quantified in the Plan text. There are not usually zonings in the villages, hamlets or open countryside.

The various land use zonings of all the Plans are now shown on [MyPlan.ie](http://www.myplan.ie) - in a reasonably consistent and comparable format. ICBAN is continuing to work to have the NI data included in a similar manner. <http://www.myplan.ie/viewer/> Tick the 'Generalised Zone Types, Zoning or Plan Images' Layer; OS maps and aerial photos - for all areas are shown - NI not yet included.

Data Difficulties

This 'supposedly basic' zoning information can be quite difficult to identify - within the various Plans, with different formats and inconsistent level of detail, versions of plans (some are consolidated / adopted versions).

All of the plans quantify their zoned housing land and the recent plans also have 'phase 2' or 'strategic reserve' land - though this is not included here as it is not currently available for development. The RoI plans do not generally identify the quantum of industry / employment land and none quantify the recreation / open space land. The land zonings for industry / employment is clearly quantified in the NI plans, whilst the situation is unclear / non-comparable for recreation / open space land in the various plans - complicated by definitions of active and passive recreation lands, etc.

Table 58: Main Land-Use Zonings in Plans for the Central Border Region

Area	Plan Status & Date	Area Zoned for Housing* (Ha)	Area Zoned for Industry / Employment (Ha)**	Main Location of Land Zoned for Industry / Employment
Cavan	Current, 2008-14	129	186	Cavan town , Tier 2 towns, Tier 3
Donegal	Current, 2012-18	227	N/K	Letterkenny, Main towns
Leitrim	Current, 2009-15	49	N/K	N/K
Monaghan	Current - 2013-19	109	356	Monaghan Town, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones, Ballybay
Sligo	Current 2011-17	N/K	N/K	N/K
Armagh	Adopted, 1995 - 2004	171	34	Armagh city, Keady, Tandragee, Markethill
Banbridge	Adopted March 2013	153.12	50.19***	Banbridge, Dromore and Rathfriland
Craigavon	Adopted 2004	516.21	156.72	Portadown, Central Craigavon and Lurgan
Cookstown	Adopted, 2004 - 2010	70.6	78	Cookstown, Ardboe, Loughry
Dungannon	Adopted, 2005- 2010	189	94	Dungannon, Coalisland
Fermanagh	Adopted, 1997 - 2007	251	75	Enniskillen, Lisnaskea, Irvinestown
Magherafelt	Adopted, 2000- 2015	153	66.9	Magherafelt, Maghera Creagh Creagh Business Park
Omagh	Adopted, 1987 - 2002	240	96	Omagh, Fintona, Dromore, Carrickmore
ICBAN Region				
Rep of Ireland	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K
Northern Ireland	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K

Source: Respective County Development Plans / Area Plans.

N/K - Not known. In certain cases, the figure is not clear from the Development Plan(s), It is best to check figures with each Senior Planner to get up to date info, or use the Housing Land Availability Returns that are done by each LA and sent to the DECLG annually (though there are some issues with the validity of this information, it is published information.

* does not include Phase 2 land or long term reserve

** includes 'mixed business', but not retail / commercial

*** Area zoned for economic development

[http://www.cavancoco.ie/file/development-plans/county-cavan/Consolidated County Development Plan.doc](http://www.cavancoco.ie/file/development-plans/county-cavan/Consolidated%20County%20Development%20Plan.doc) Cavan County Dev Plan, click on links from contents Page, see Section 8.6 for Housing, Section 2.7 (p.30) for Industry / Employment

<http://www.donegalcoco.ie/NR/rdonlyres/9247A944-BD8A-43E9-9007-AD8D0E5A0A19/0/CDP20122018CoreDoc.pdf> Donegal County Dev Plan, see p21, Table 7 for Housing in all of County. For industry / employment land, see the respective town / local plans:

<http://www.donegalcoco.ie/NR/rdonlyres/ED70D8D3-4B41-4A6D-8EE4-A5D7ACA4F065/0/Volume1CoreCocument.pdf> Letterkenny Plan

<http://www.donegalcoco.ie/services/planningeconomicdevelopment/CentralPlanningUnit/buncranaplan20082014.htm> Buncrana Plan

<http://www.donegalcoco.ie/NR/rdonlyres/4C700AA4-02CA-4C2C-8712-213406C098E2/0/BundoranndEnvironsDevelopmentPlan20092015.pdf> Bundoran Plan

<http://www.donegalcoco.ie/services/planningeconomicdevelopment/CentralPlanningUnit/pubs.htm> Donegal's Local Plans

http://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/Services_A-Z/Planning_and_Building_Control/Co-Development-Plan-09-15/ Leitrim County Dev Plan, see Section 1, p28, Table 1.8 for Housing in all of County.

For industry / employment land, see the C-o-S town plan:

http://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/Services_A-Z/Planning_and_Building_Control/Carrick-on-Shannon-Local-Area-Plan-2010-2016/ Carrick-on-Shannon Town Plan, click to 'Maps' at lhs, Map1-Zoning

<http://www.monaghan.ie/en/services/planning/monaghancountydevelopmentplan2013-2019/documentation/> Monaghan County Dev Plan. see Chapter 3, p46, Table 3.13 for Housing in all of County and Town Plan Maps. For industry / employment land, see the town plans (text and Map) - which are included in document.

http://www.sligococo.ie/media/CDP%2020112017_Volume1FullDocument_lores2.pdf Sligo County Dev Plan, see Section 3.5.1 for Housing, p34, for Housing in all of County. For industry / employment land, see the Sligo town / local plans:

<http://www.sligococo.ie/Services/Planning/DevelopmentPlans/>

Armagh Area Plan 1995-2004 is not available online. In hardcopy, see Part 4 Proposals, p23-47

http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/dev_plans/devplans_az/fermanagh_2007.htm

Fermanagh Area Plan. Click at RHS sections. Note, housing is under 'Social Base'. Maps are not available online.

http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/dev_plans/devplans_az/cookstown_2010/cookstown_framework.htm Cookstown Area Plan. None of the Phase 2 housing land has been released.

http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/dev_plans/devplans_az/dungannon_2010/dungannon_policy_framework.htm Dungannon Area Plan. None of the Phase 2 housing land has been released.

Omagh Area Plan 1987-2002 is not available online. In hardcopy, Housing is summarised on p20, Industry is on p21.

Magherafelt Area Plan 2015

http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/dev_plans/devplans_az/magherafelt_web2.pdf

8.3 Environmental Designations, Habitats, etc.

[See Section 10](#)

8.4 Geology / Mineral Resources

The website of Minerals Ireland (within DCENR) provides information on the geology, mineral resources and mining activity / exploration licenses across the RoI.

<http://www.mineralsireland.ie/> Use the lhs menu, including interactive mapping tool.

The Minerals Resource Maps (2012, DOENI Planning) for each county of Northern Ireland give a useful summary of the underlying geology and overlying mineral resources, including details of current quarries / activity:

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/planning/resource.html#NI> 2012 NI Counties Mineral Resources