

Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements

March 2015



The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local Government administrative areas, built around electoral wards, are the geographic basis for the majority of official statistics. Wards can be aggregated up to higher administrative units such as Local Government Districts (LGDs) and Assembly Areas, while statistical geographic units (Output Areas (OA) and Super Output Areas (SOA)) are constrained to ward boundaries. However, the extents of electoral wards are informed primarily by a requirement for all wards to have similar population sizes. Consequently, electoral wards near the edges of 'settlements' (however defined) typically contain a combination of developed and undeveloped land. There is a user demand for statistical information about 'settlements', reflecting commonly recognised 'built-up' areas, that electoral wards cannot meet.
- 1.2 One of the key strengths of the Census is its complete coverage of both the population and land area, enabling statistics to be determined for any geographic area – subject to statistical disclosure control. In 2005, in response to demand for statistics about settlements and, with the availability of data from the 2001 Census, NISRA published a classification of settlements, using statutory Settlement Development Limits (SDLs) from the Department of the Environment (DoE) to define the spatial extent of settlements. This settlement classification was used as the basis for creating an urban-rural classification¹.
- 1.3 With the results from the 2011 Census now available, it is timely that the classification of settlements is reviewed. In addition, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's (DARD) Rural White Paper Action Plan² articulates a specific departmental need for such a review.
- 1.4 A subgroup of the Statistics Coordinating Group (SCG) was formed to take forward the review. All Northern Ireland departments were invited to participate in the subgroup, which was chaired by a NISRA Board Member. This report represents an initial report from the subgroup to SCG, making a

¹ 'Report of the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements February 2005' is available from:
http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/geography/digital_products/urban_rural_classifications/ur_report.pdf

² 'Rural White Paper Action Plan' is available from:
<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/rural-development/rural-white-paper-action-plan.htm>

recommendation about a new classification of settlements and includes a proposed line on an urban-rural classification. A range of supporting materials, including look-up tables and 2011 Census Key Statistics for Settlements, based on the classification recommended here, will be published when available.

2. Background of Recent Similar Work in the Rest of the UK and Ireland

2.1 To provide context to the Northern Ireland review, recent similar work in the rest of the UK and Ireland was reviewed.

Office for National Statistics (June 2013)

2.2 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published statistics on 'built-up areas'³ in June 2013. OAs were used to determine approximations of 'Built-Up Areas' for the purpose of the production of statistics. The ONS methodology follows a 'land-use' approach, with built-up areas having a minimum area of 20 hectares (200,000m²), with unpopulated areas (such as golf courses) being included within the settlement and settlements within 200 metres of each other combined. The ONS report notes that the use of aggregations of OAs (typical population of about 400 people) to approximate built-up areas means that robust statistics can be estimated only for settlements with a population above 1,500, with additional caution being required with statistical estimates for smaller built-up areas (population below 1,500).

2.3 It was noted that the ONS approach is not dissimilar, in principle, to NISRA's approach in 2005, except that NISRA used SDLs (rather than land use) to define the geographic extent of settlements, and had used grid square approximations (rather than aggregating OAs) for the production of statistics. The grid square approximation is more precise than OA, but any such approximation inevitably becomes less robust for smaller settlements.

³ More information on 'Key Statistics for Built Up Areas in England and Wales' is available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-built-up-areas-in-england-and-wales/index.html>

England and Wales Urban-Rural Population Thresholds

2.4 The population threshold for urban areas used by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Welsh Assembly is 10,000.

Their settlement classification system describes 4 types:

- Urban (more than 10,000 population);
- Rural town and fringe;
- Rural village; and
- Rural hamlet and isolated dwellings (also known as 'dispersed').

2.5 The identification of settlements was arrived at by laying a grid of hectare cells (100m x 100m) over England and Wales. Individual residential properties were assigned to cells on this grid and residential densities were then calculated for a set of increasing radii around each cell, defining, for each, a 'density profile'. These were compared with standard profiles, to assign each hectare cell to a settlement type (i.e. 'village,' 'town' or 'urban fringe').

2.6 DEFRA also considers the sparsity of the population of the wider geographic area (measured at three levels – within radii of 10km, 20km and 30km). The population is considered to be sparse if it meets a minimum density level across all three distances.

Scotland (November 2014)⁴

2.7 The Scottish Executive analysis differentiates between 'accessible', 'remote' and 'very remote' rural. 'Accessible' rural areas are those areas within a 30 minute drive-time of a settlement with a population of 10,000 people or more, 'remote' rural areas have a greater than 30 minute drive-time to an area with a population of 10,000 or more and, 'very remote' areas have a drive-time of over 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more. They use a population threshold of 3,000 to distinguish between rural and urban.

⁴ 'Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2013-2014' is available from:
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/11/2763>

Central Statistics Office (Ireland)⁵

- 2.8 The Central Statistics Office (CSO) defines ‘aggregate rural areas’ as villages of fewer than 1,500 people, as well as open countryside. District Electoral Divisions are defined as rural: if they have no population centre above 1,500 people; have a population density below 150 per km²; and, are not part of an urban district or borough.
- 2.9 The subgroup was attracted to the Scottish approach, differentiating between accessible and non-accessible settlements of given population sizes. This approach was investigated further in the Northern Ireland context, as discussed in sections 5.2 and 5.3.

3. Defining the Spatial Extent of Settlements

- 3.1 The potential in Northern Ireland for the ONS approach based on land-use information was investigated further with Land and Property Services (LPS). A land-use classification, as used in GB, is available only for some Northern Ireland LGDs; LPS advised against this and, instead, suggested the use of Orthophotography, Pointer and other datasets, but acknowledged that this would require development and be time-consuming.
- 3.2 The subgroup agreed that the continued use of SDLs was the best way forward to determine the spatial extent of settlements.
- 3.3 SDLs have a specific issue around their currency. They are created with a view to influencing the spatial direction in which settlements develop and, when recently defined, will cover areas outside of the existing built-up area as an indication of where the settlement could expand. SDLs are reviewed periodically and, in settlements with long-standing SDLs, housing development may cover virtually all of the available land. A similar position was held at the time of the 2005 publication, when it was decided to use the set of SDLs available at that time.
- 3.4 Among the current development plans some are over 20 years old; however these plans have updates that are currently in draft stage. Planning NI advised that these SDLs are likely to be adopted in the near future and no major revisions to boundaries were anticipated, so it would be worth

⁵ ‘ More information on the CSO ‘Census 2011 Boundary Files’ is available from: <http://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2011boundaryfiles/>

considering using the more up-to-date draft form of the plans. Accordingly, it is recommended that the current set of SDLs, including those in draft, is used to define the spatial extent of settlements.

4. Population Estimates

- 4.1 The relevant SDL digital boundary set was made available to Census Office and 2011 Census Day population estimates for each settlement were produced. The population thresholds used in the 2005 publication were initially retained as a starting point for a new classification.
- 4.2 The 2,250 population boundary between village and intermediate settlement was originally based on the provision of post-offices in settlements – every settlement with a population above 2,250 had a Post Office at the time of the 2005 analysis. The provision of local Post Offices has reduced greatly since 2005 and this criterion no longer holds. In light of a general increase in population over the decade – the Northern Ireland population increased by about 7 per cent between 2001 and 2011 – it is proposed to round this boundary up to 2,500. Consequently, it is also recommended that the 4,500 population boundary between intermediate settlement and small town be raised to 5,000. This provides a better fit with the small town/medium town boundary of 10,000 which it is proposed to leave unchanged, along with all the other boundaries. The vast majority of settlements remained in the same Band as before, with a small but noticeable increase in the number of villages (settlements with a 2011 population that now exceeds 1,000), reflecting the overall increase in population since 2001.

5. Service Provision

- 5.1 The 2005 settlement classification was based solely on population size. The 2005 report recommended further work on the possible future inclusion of a second dimension to the classification, based on service provision. A subsequent report was published, but the main settlement classification was unaltered. Accordingly, the subgroup considered the potential to integrate service provision within the new classification.
- 5.2 The subgroup discussed the information sources required and available in relation to service provision. The most recent Northern Ireland work on

multiple deprivation⁶ included a ‘proximity to services’ domain that included, for every SOA in Northern Ireland, the travel time to a range of 12 specified services, such as GP premises, Post Offices and council leisure centres. The subgroup agreed that, while this was useful, getting universal agreement to which services are essential and, which merely useful, would be challenging. The subgroup was attracted to the approach taken by the Scottish Government, which argued that a settlement with a population of at least 10,000 would provide a sufficient range of services. Accordingly, the Scottish Government approach defined a settlement as ‘accessible’ if it was within a 30 minute drive-time of a settlement containing a population of at least 10,000.

- 5.3 In a purely Northern Ireland context, the set of settlements with a population of at least 10,000 largely corresponds to the ‘market’ towns on which the 26 LGDs are centred. The only local administrative centres – among the 26 LGDs – that have a population (for the settlement) of less than 10,000 are Ballycastle and Magherafelt. While the fit with the set of local administrative centres is not perfect, a strong relationship is observed and accordingly – consistent with the approach in Scotland – it is recommended that settlements with a population of at least 10,000 are used to define service centres.
- 5.4 In a Northern Ireland context, DoE have been developing a set of working definitions of ‘town centres’. As part of this work, digital boundary files have been developed for every town centre. The subgroup recommends that the town centre of a settlement with a population of at least 10,000 is a robust proxy for locations providing sufficient service provision.
- 5.5 These service provision locations (town centres of settlements with a population of at least 10,000) were used as a starting point for determining drive-times. The drive-time boundary extends out from the geographic centroid of the town centre (of settlements with a population of at least 10,000), and a settlement or small area was defined as being included if its geographic centroid was within this boundary. The drive-time boundaries were produced using MapInfo Geographic Information System (GIS) and an add-on product called ‘Drive-time’.

⁶ ‘Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010, May 2010’ is available from:
http://www.nisra.gov.uk/deprivation/archive/Updateof2005Measures/NIMDM_2010_Report.pdf

- 5.6 The derivation of drive-times is, by necessity, informed by a number of assumptions. To take a simple example, what is the drive-time between two locations, 20 miles apart, on an A-class road? A reasonable assumption might use an average speed of 40 mph, giving an estimated drive-time of 30 minutes. In reality, actual drive-times will vary, depending on a range of factors, such as time of day and weather conditions. Such variability is acknowledged, but will apply equally to all journeys and it is felt appropriate to use the outcomes from the application of common assumptions for all journeys.
- 5.7 In a similar vein, the subgroup discussed the role of public transport. The discussion raised many issues. How do you implement, in a practical way, information that two points are linked by public transport with a journey time of 20 minutes, but the public transport service runs only twice per day, compared to two other locations where the journey takes 50 minutes but operates perhaps on an hourly basis. The subgroup concluded that while public transport was worthy of further consideration, this should be deferred for future discussion.
- 5.8 The Scottish Government used a 30 minute drive-time from service provision locations to differentiate between accessible and remote settlements. Noting that Scotland is physically much larger than Northern Ireland and, in a sense more remote, drive-times of 20 minutes and 30 minutes were considered in Northern Ireland. The results, in terms of the percentage population split for each of the drive-times, were as follows:

Table 1: Percentage of the Northern Ireland population within and outside a 20 minute and 30 minute drive-time of a service provision location

| | Within | Outside |
|----------------------|--------|---------|
| 20 minute drive-time | 80% | 20% |
| 30 minute drive-time | 93% | 7% |

- 5.9 Table 1 shows that approximately 93 per cent of Northern Ireland's population live within 30 minutes drive-time of the town centre of a settlement containing a population of at least 10,000.
- 5.10 This analysis is based on drive-times from service provision locations within Northern Ireland. Service provision locations within Republic of Ireland were

also considered. Nowhere within Northern Ireland is within a 20 minute drive-time of a service provision location in the Republic of Ireland. Small areas in Fermanagh and South Armagh are within a 30 minute drive-time of a service provision location in the Republic of Ireland (Cavan and Dundalk respectively). These are shown in Map 5.

- 5.11 The Scottish Government report used a single 30 minute drive-time to differentiate settlements. The choice of a 30 minute drive-time is somewhat arbitrary, and good arguments could be made for either a 20 minute or a 30 minute drive-time in Northern Ireland – or indeed a range of other drive-times. Different drive-times may be appropriate under different circumstances, or for different population groups.
- 5.12 The subgroup recommends that information on both 20 minute and 30 minute drive-time from a service centre location (a town centre of a settlement with a population of at least 10,000) is made available, and users can utilise the information appropriately.

6. A New Classification of Settlements

- 6.1 The structure of the new classification of settlements is shown in Table 2. The table lists the settlements in each band, in order of their 2011 Census Day population estimates, showing the default urban-rural split. The table also shows whether each settlement is within the given drive-times (20 and 30 minutes) to any service provision location.

Table 2: Settlement Development Limit Populations by Settlement Development Limit Classification with Drive-times

| Classification | Settlement Development Limit (SDL) | 2011 Census Population | 20 Minute Drive-time | 30 Minute Drive-time |
|--|---|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| BAND A - BELFAST | BELFAST CITY | 280,211 | - | - |
| BAND B - DERRY CITY | DERRY CITY | 83,125 | - | - |
| BAND C - LARGE TOWN (POPULATION 18,000+) | METROPOLITAN NEWTOWNABBEY | 65,555 | - | - |
| | CRAIGAVON URBAN AREA including AGHACOMMON | 64,193 | - | - |
| | BANGOR | 61,401 | - | - |
| | METROPOLITAN CASTLEREAGH | 55,783 | - | - |
| | LISBURN CITY | 45,410 | - | - |
| | METROPOLITAN LISBURN | 31,203 | - | - |
| | BALLYMENA | 29,467 | - | - |
| | NEWTOWNARDS | 28,039 | - | - |
| | CARRICKFERGUS | 27,903 | - | - |
| | NEWRY | 26,893 | - | - |
| | COLERAINE | 24,630 | - | - |
| | ANTRIM | 23,353 | - | - |
| | OMAGH TOWN | 19,682 | - | - |
| | LARNE | 18,705 | - | - |
| Band C Total | 14 | 522,217 | - | - |
| BAND D - MEDIUM TOWN (POPULATION 10,000 - 17,999) | BANBRIDGE | 16,653 | - | - |
| | ARMAGH | 14,749 | - | - |
| | DUNGANNON | 14,332 | - | - |
| | ENNISKILLEN | 13,790 | - | - |
| | STRABANE | 13,147 | - | - |
| | LIMAVADY | 12,047 | - | - |
| | COOKSTOWN | 11,620 | - | - |
| | HOLYWOOD | 11,332 | - | - |
| | DOWNPATRICK | 10,874 | - | - |
| | BALLYMONEY* | 10,393 | - | - |
| | Band D Total | 10 | 128,937 | - |
| BAND E - SMALL TOWN (POPULATION 5,000 - 9,999) | BALLYCLARE | 9,919 | Y | Y |
| | COMBER | 9,078 | Y | Y |
| | MAGHERAFELT | 8,819 | Y | Y |
| | WARRENPOINT / BURREN | 8,721 | Y | Y |
| | PORTSTEWART | 8,029 | Y | Y |
| | NEWCASTLE | 7,743 | N | Y |
| | CARRYDUFF | 6,947 | Y | Y |
| | DONAGHADEE | 6,869 | Y | Y |
| | KILKEEL | 6,521 | N | Y |
| | PORTRUSH | 6,442 | Y | Y |
| | DROMORE_BANBRIDGE | 6,011 | Y | Y |
| | BALLYNAHINCH | 5,715 | N | Y |
| | COALISLAND | 5,700 | Y | Y |
| | GREENISLAND | 5,484 | Y | Y |
| | BALLYCASTLE | 5,238 | N | N |
| | CRUMLIN* | 5,099 | N | Y |
| RANDALSTOWN | 5,099 | Y | Y | |
| Band E Total | 17 | 117,434 | 12 | 16 |

| Classification | Settlement Development Limit (SDL) | 2011 Census Population | 20 Minute Drive-time | 30 Minute Drive-time |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| DEFAULT URBAN-RURAL SPLIT | | | | |
| BAND F - INTERMEDIATE SETTLEMENT (POPULATION 2,500 - 4,999) | MOIRA | 4,584 | Y | Y |
| | MAGHERA | 4,217 | N | Y |
| | HILLSBOROUGH AND CULCAVY | 3,953 | Y | Y |
| | WHITEHEAD | 3,786 | Y | Y |
| | EGLINTON | 3,650 | Y | Y |
| | WARINGSTOWN | 3,647 | Y | Y |
| | TANDRAGEE | 3,486 | Y | Y |
| | CULMORE | 3,466 | Y | Y |
| | SAINTFIELD | 3,406 | Y | Y |
| | AHOGHILL | 3,403 | Y | Y |
| | DUNGIVEN | 3,286 | N | Y |
| | KEADY | 3,036 | Y | Y |
| | CASTLEDERG | 2,985 | N | Y |
| | LISNASKEA | 2,960 | N | Y |
| | BALLYGOWAN | 2,957 | N | Y |
| | KILLYLEAGH | 2,928 | Y | Y |
| | BROUGHSHANE | 2,851 | Y | Y |
| | RICHHILL | 2,821 | Y | Y |
| | CASTLEWELLAN | 2,792 | N | Y |
| | ROSTREVOR | 2,788 | Y | Y |
| BESSBROOK* | 2,739 | Y | Y | |
| NEWBUILDINGS | 2,599 | Y | Y | |
| CULLYBACKEY | 2,569 | Y | Y | |
| PORTAFERRY | 2,514 | N | Y | |
| Band F Total | 24 | 77,423 | 17 | 24 |
| BAND G - VILLAGE (POPULATION 1,000 - 2,499) | RATHFRILAND | 2,472 | N | Y |
| | MAGHABERRY | 2,468 | Y | Y |
| | STRATHFOYLE | 2,412 | Y | Y |
| | MILLISLE | 2,318 | Y | Y |
| | CASTLEDAWSON | 2,292 | N | Y |
| | IRVINESTOWN | 2,264 | Y | Y |
| | DOLLINGSTOWN | 2,126 | Y | Y |
| | PORTAVOGIE | 2,122 | N | N |
| | BALLYKELLY | 2,103 | Y | Y |
| | KELLS / CONNOR | 2,053 | Y | Y |
| | BALLYWALTER | 2,027 | N | Y |
| | GILFORD | 1,927 | Y | Y |
| | SION MILLS | 1,903 | Y | Y |
| | MONEYMORE | 1,897 | Y | Y |
| | CROSSGAR | 1,892 | Y | Y |
| | ANNALONG | 1,796 | N | N |
| | GLENAVY | 1,791 | N | Y |
| | DRAPERSTOWN | 1,772 | N | Y |
| | DONAGHCLONEY* | 1,701 | Y | Y |
| | HILLTOWN* | 1,698 | N | Y |

| Classification | Settlement Development Limit (SDL) | 2011 Census Population | 20 Minute Drive-time | 30 Minute Drive-time |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| BAND G - VILLAGE continued | KILREA | 1,679 | N | Y |
| | MARKETHILL | 1,652 | Y | Y |
| | ARDGLASS | 1,643 | Y | Y |
| | CROSSMAGLEN | 1,608 | N | N |
| | MOY | 1,603 | Y | Y |
| | DUNDRUM | 1,551 | Y | Y |
| | NEWTOWNSTEWART | 1,547 | Y | Y |
| | CARNLOUGH | 1,512 | N | Y |
| | MILLTOWN | 1,499 | Y | Y |
| | GREYSTEEL | 1,454 | Y | Y |
| | TEMPLEPATRICK | 1,437 | Y | Y |
| | BALLINAMALLARD | 1,432 | Y | Y |
| | DOAGH | 1,390 | Y | Y |
| | HELEN'S BAY | 1,390 | Y | Y |
| | MONEYREAGH* | 1,379 | Y | Y |
| | BALLYCARRY* | 1,371 | Y | Y |
| | DRUMANESS | 1,344 | Y | Y |
| | MAGHERALIN | 1,337 | Y | Y |
| | CLAUDY | 1,336 | N | Y |
| | CLOGH MILLS | 1,309 | Y | Y |
| | BUSHMILLS | 1,292 | N | Y |
| | CASTLEROCK | 1,287 | Y | Y |
| | LAURELVALE / MULLAVILLY* | 1,284 | Y | Y |
| | CUSHENDALL | 1,276 | N | N |
| | GARVAGH | 1,274 | N | Y |
| | COGRY / KILBRIDE | 1,246 | N | Y |
| | FIVEMILETOWN | 1,243 | N | N |
| | GROOMSPORT | 1,233 | Y | Y |
| | DUNLOY | 1,215 | Y | Y |
| | DROMORE_OMAGH | 1,202 | Y | Y |
| | PORTGLENONE | 1,174 | N | Y |
| | FINTONA | 1,160 | Y | Y |
| | KIRCUBBIN | 1,153 | N | Y |
| | DONAGHMORE* | 1,122 | Y | Y |
| | BELLAGHY | 1,115 | N | Y |
| | RASHARKIN* | 1,114 | Y | Y |
| | LISBELLAW | 1,102 | Y | Y |
| | CAMLOUGH* | 1,081 | Y | Y |
| | CLOUGHEY* | 1,075 | N | N |
| | MAYOBRIDGE* | 1,068 | Y | Y |
| AGHAGALLON* | 1,056 | Y | Y | |
| ANNAHILT | 1,045 | Y | Y | |
| AUGHNACLOY* | 1,041 | N | Y | |
| MAGUIRESBRIDGE* | 1,038 | Y | Y | |
| KESH* | 1,036 | N | Y | |
| BALLYHALBERT* | 1,026 | N | N | |
| SEAHILL | 1,018 | Y | Y | |

| Classification | Settlement Development Limit (SDL) | 2011 Census Population | 20 Minute Drive-time | 30 Minute Drive-time |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| BAND G - VILLAGE continued | BLEARY* | 1,011 | Y | Y |
| | DROMARA* | 1,006 | N | Y |
| Band G Total | 69 | 103,500 | 44 | 62 |
| Bands A – D Total (Population 10,000+) | 26 | 1,014,490 | 26 | 26 |
| Bands E – G Total (Population 1,000 to 9,999) | 110 | 298,357 | 73 | 102 |
| TOTAL A – G | 136 | 1,312,847 | 99 | 128 |
| Band H (Populations of less than 1,000 and open countryside) | - | 498,016 | - | - |

* Settlements whose Band classification has changed (from the 2005 report); including 17 additions to Band G, reflecting the overall increase in population since 2001.

Footnotes:

1. The names and the listings of the settlements have been taken from the set of Settlement Development Limits (SDLs) provided by DoE Planning.
2. The labelling of bands in this classification as 'towns' or 'villages' is purely descriptive. It is noted that, for example, some settlements described in the classification as 'towns' are legally 'cities'.

[Download Table \(Excel 33 KB\)](#)

6.2 For each settlement, Table 3 provides:

- the settlement population as reported in 2005 (2001 Census Day population, using 2005 SDL) (A)
- the settlement population as reported now (2011 Census Day population, using 2014 SDL) (C)

The difference between these two population estimates will be the result of a combination of population growth (or decline) and any change in the SDL boundaries. These two elements of growth (or decline) will be informed through:

- The settlement population (2011 Census Day population, using 2005 SDL) (B)

Accordingly, for each settlement:

- $D = (B-A)$ will estimate the effect of population growth between 2001 and 2011, within the fixed area of the 2005 SDL; and

- $E = (C-B)$ will estimate the effect, on the population in 2011, resulting from any change in the SDL boundary.

7. An Urban-Rural Recommendation

- 7.1 In the 2005 report, it was recommended that a prescriptive urban-rural definition should not be given. Rather, it was advised that users should consider defining urban and rural areas in ways which are appropriate for different projects and programmes. A default urban-rural classification, with the boundary at a settlement population of 4,500 (Bands A – E are urban Bands F – H are rural), to be used in the absence of a programme specific definition was provided.
- 7.2 The subgroup recommends that a similar approach is taken in the new classification and that the default boundary remains the same, that is, Bands A – E are urban and Bands F – H are rural. The urban-rural population boundary moves to a population of 5,000 because of the slight revisions to the population boundary between small town and intermediate settlement.
- 7.3 The subgroup recommends that the classification is published as above, containing the ‘within’ and ‘outside’ the 20 minute and 30 minute drive-time columns, so that users can incorporate these as they wish.

Other points

- 7.4 It was suggested that an annex be included, to show a range of drive-times to Belfast City and Derry City as they are deemed large service centres that people would make journeys to for specific needs. This is illustrated in Map 7. Further details of settlements within these drive-time boundaries are provided on the NISRA website.
- 7.5 The subgroup recommends that the terminology ‘accessible’ and ‘remote’ is not used, as they may be deemed to be pejorative. Instead, the subgroup recommends the simple statement of fact ‘within 20 minute (or 30 minute) drive-time to the town centre of a settlement with a population of at least of 10,000’.

8. Recommendations

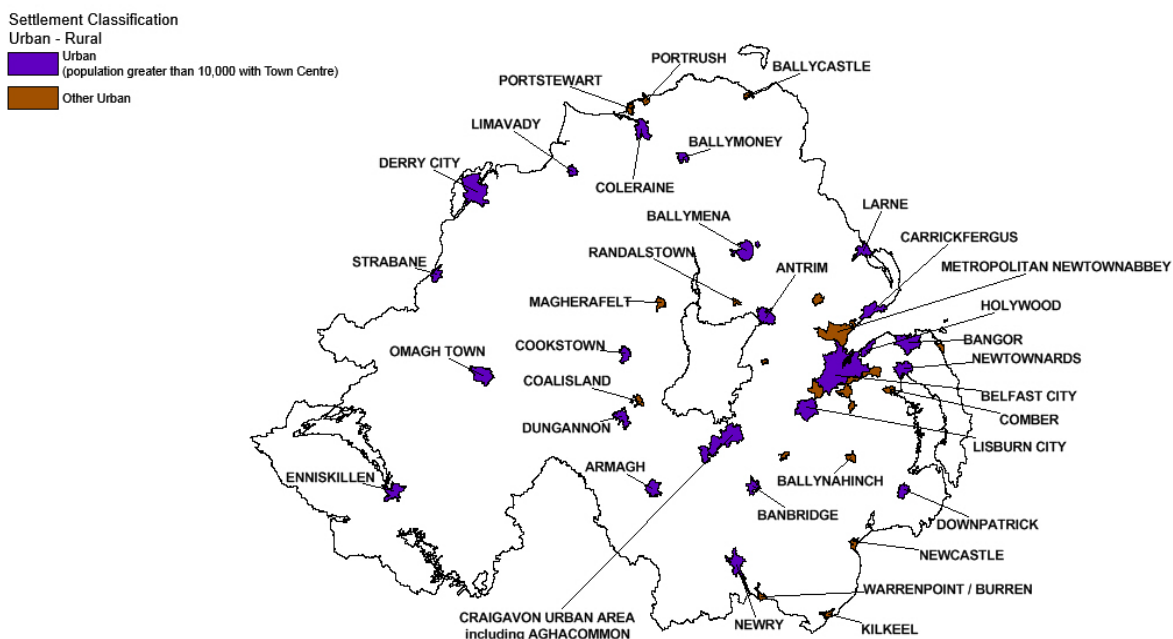
8.1 It is recommended that:

- (1) The current/draft SDLs are used to define the spatial extent of settlements.
- (2) A new settlement classification is defined using similar population bands to those in the 2005 classification, with slightly altered boundary between Band E and F (4,500 becomes 5,000) and between Band F and G (2,250 becomes 2,500).
- (3) The classification is expanded to include a service provision element.
- (4) Service provision is best determined through drive-time to the town centre of a settlement containing a population of at least 10,000.
- (5) Information is provided on both 20 minute and 30 minute drive-times.
- (6) A prescriptive urban-rural classification is not produced – this is consistent with the 2005 report.
- (7) A default urban-rural classification is provided; using Bands A – E as urban – again this is consistent with the 2005 report.
- (8) NISRA will develop a range of look-up tables (for example, classifying each Small Area as urban-rural) and produce 2011 Census Key Statistics for Settlements which will be published online. These look-up tables and Key Statistics will be published when available.

Annex

- Map 1: Settlement Development Limits of settlements with population of 5,000 or more (Urban by default definition)
- Map 2: Settlement Development Limits of settlements with population of less than 5,000 (Rural by default definition)
- Map 3: Settlement Development Limits of all settlements with population of 1,000 or more (Amalgamation of Tables 2+3)
- Map 4: 20 minute drive-time boundary from settlements with population of 10,000 or more
- Map 5: 30 minute drive-time boundary from settlements with population of 10,000 or more
- Map 6: Comparison of the 20 and 30 minute drive-time boundaries
- Map 7: Comparison of 20, 30, 45 and 60 minute drive-time boundaries for Belfast and Derry
- Table 3: List of Settlements with their 2011 and 2001 Census Day population estimates with change in population shown as change in fixed area and/or change due to Settlement Development Limit revision

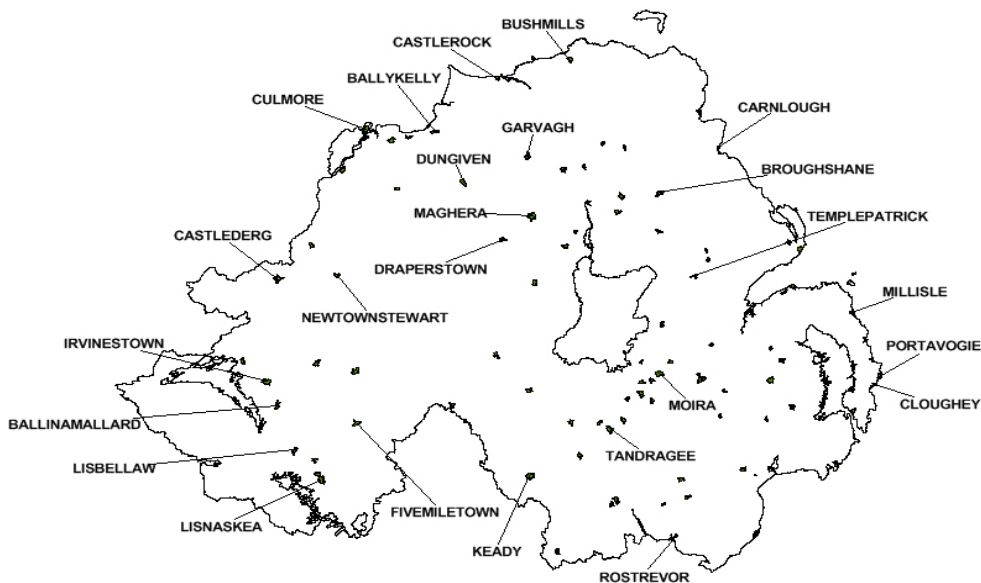
Map 1: Settlement Development Limits of settlements with population of 5,000 or more (Urban by default definition)



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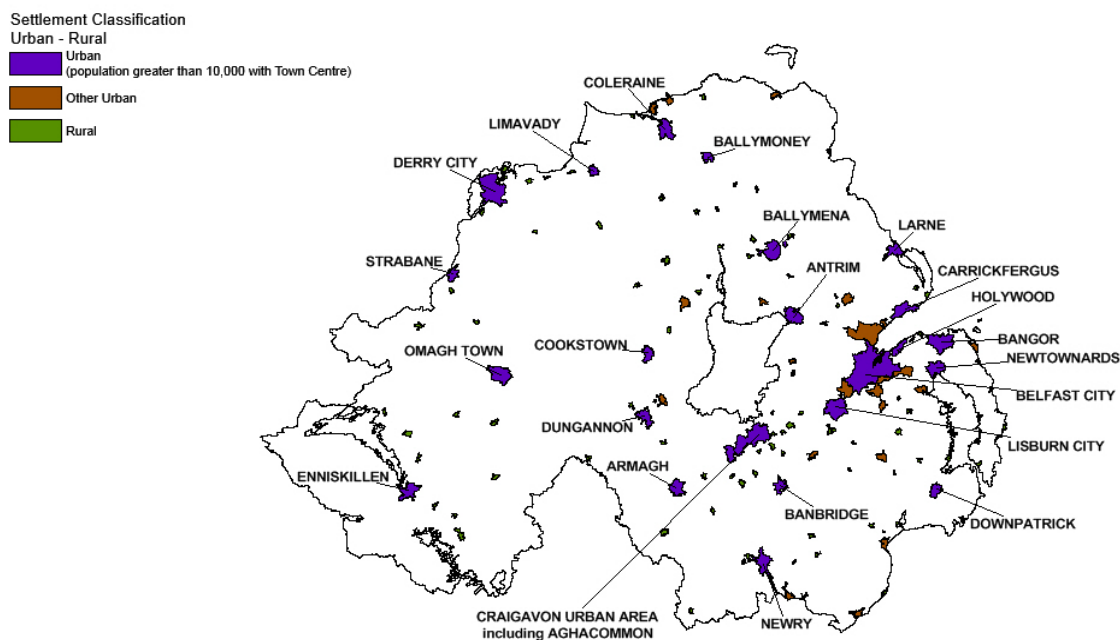
Map 2: Settlement Development Limits of settlements with population of less than 5,000 (Rural by default definition)

Settlement Classification
 Rural (population less than 5,000 and greater than 1,000)



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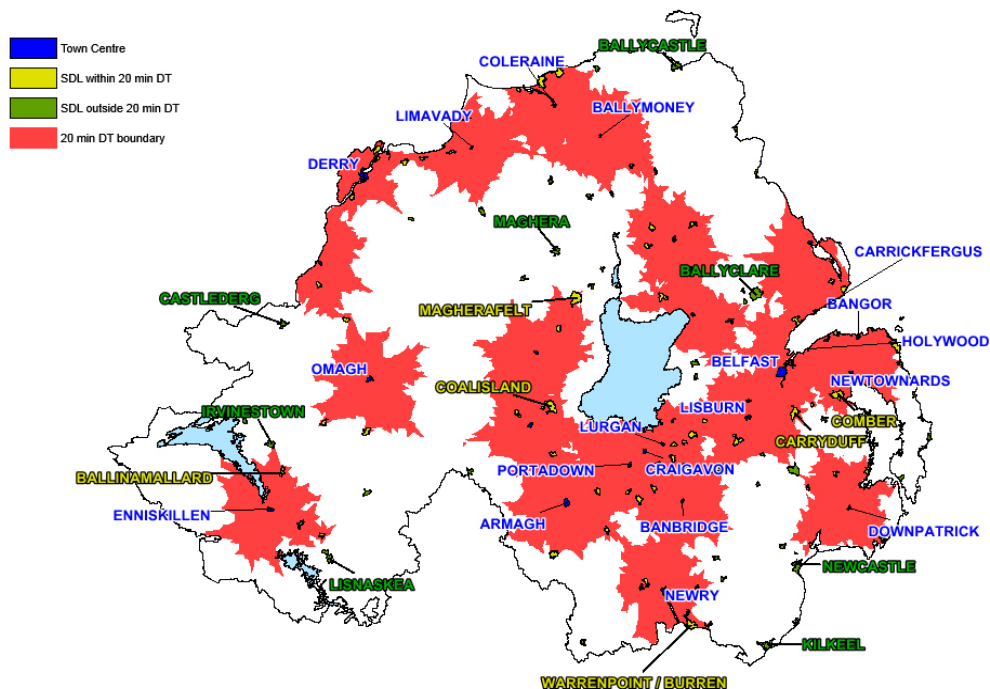
Map 3: Settlement Development Limits of all settlements with population of 1,000 or more (Amalgamation of Tables 2+3)



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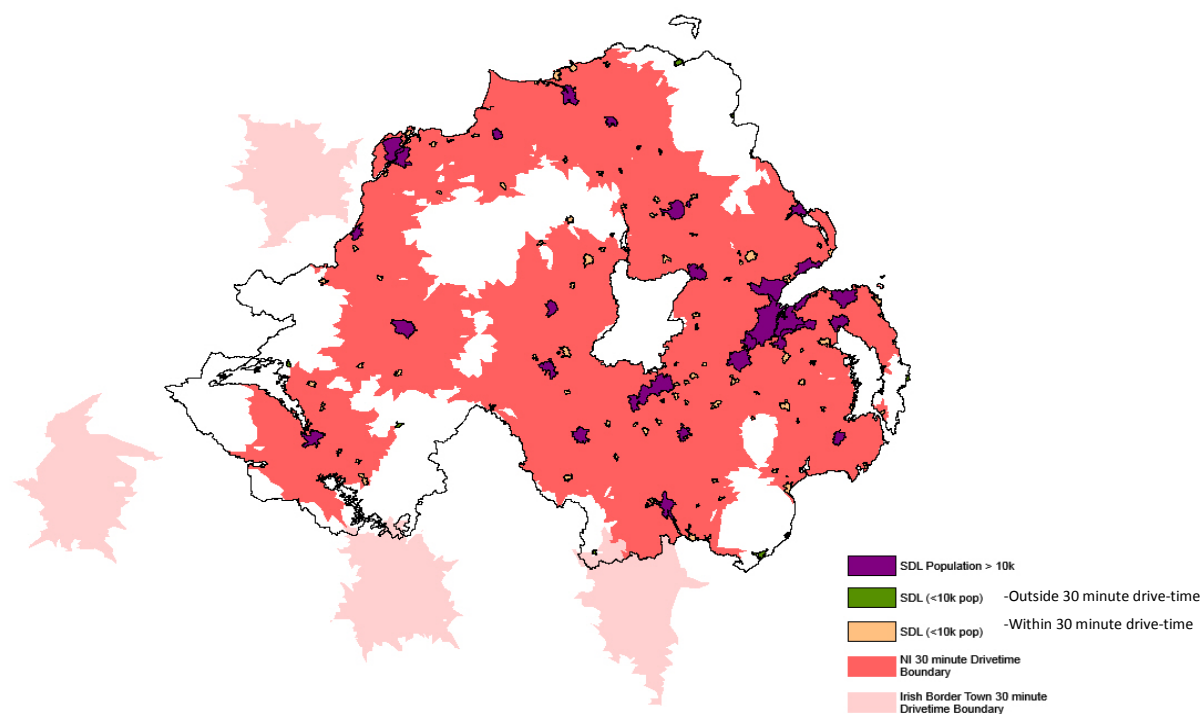
To note: All the blank spaces outside the Settlement Development Limits are settlements which fall under Band Classification H – Populations of less than 1,000 and open countryside.

Map 4: 20 minute drive-time boundary from settlements with population of 10,000 or more



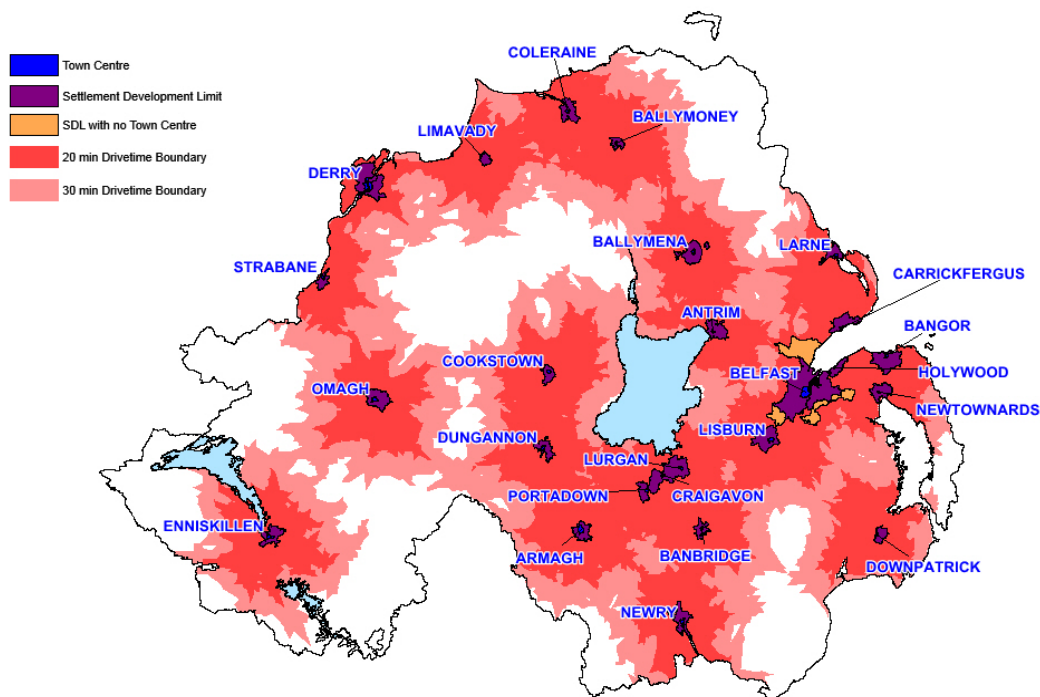
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Map 5: 30 minute drive-time boundary from settlements with population of 10,000 or more



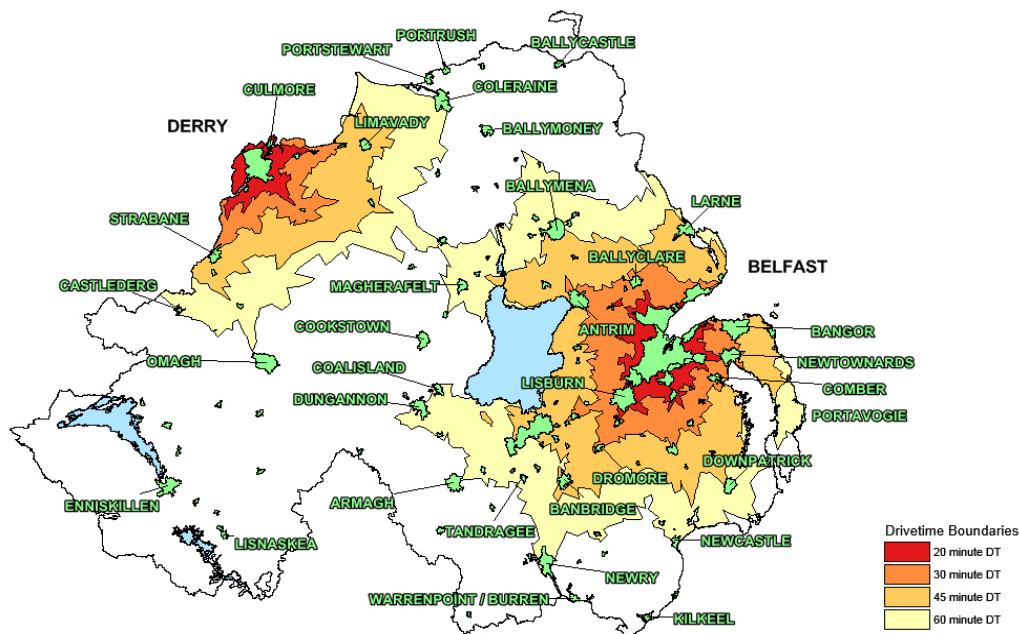
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Map 6: Comparison of the 20 and 30 minute drive-time boundaries



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Map 7: Comparison of 20, 30, 45 and 60 minute drive-time boundaries for Belfast and Derry



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Table 3: List of Settlements with their 2011 and 2001 Census Day population estimates with change in population shown as change in fixed area and/or change due to Settlement Development Limit revision

| Classification | Settlement Development Limit (SDL) | 2011 Census population (C) | 2001 Census population (A) | % Population change | Population change within SDL (D) | Population change SDL revision (E) |
|--|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| BAND A - BELFAST | BELFAST CITY | 280,211 | 276,705 | 1.3% | 3,569 | -63 |
| BAND B - DERRY CITY | DERRY CITY | 83,125 | 83,652 | -0.6% | -527 | 0 |
| BAND C - LARGE TOWN (POPULATION 18,000+) | METROPOLITAN NEWTOWNABBEY | 65,555 | 62,022 | 5.7% | 1,094 | 2,439 |
| | CRAIGAVON URBAN AREA including AGHACOMMON | 64,193 | 57,651 | 11.3% | 7,474 | -932 |
| | BANGOR | 61,401 | 58,368 | 5.2% | 2,942 | 91 |
| | METROPOLITAN CASTLEREAGH | 55,783 | 54,636 | 2.1% | -186 | 1,333 |
| | LISBURN CITY † | 45,410 | - | - | - | - |
| | METROPOLITAN LISBURN † | 31,203 | - | - | - | - |
| | BALLYMENA | 29,467 | 28,704 | 2.7% | 702 | 61 |
| | NEWTOWNARDS | 28,039 | 27,795 | 0.9% | 111 | 133 |
| | CARRICKFERGUS | 27,903 | 27,192 | 2.6% | 711 | 0 |
| | NEWRY | 26,893 | 27,300 | -1.5% | 2,080 | -2,487 |
| | COLERAINE | 24,630 | 24,042 | 2.4% | 1,089 | -501 |
| | ANTRIM | 23,353 | 19,986 | 16.8% | 3,367 | 0 |
| | OMAGH TOWN | 19,682 | 19,836 | -0.8% | -154 | 0 |
| | LARNE | 18,705 | 18,210 | 2.7% | 495 | 0 |
| Band C Total | 14 | 522,217 | 425,742 | 22.7% | - | - |
| BAND D - MEDIUM TOWN (POPULATION 10,000 - 17,999) | BANBRIDGE | 16,653 | 14,748 | 12.9% | 1,616 | 289 |
| | ARMAGH | 14,749 | 14,517 | 1.6% | 232 | 0 |
| | DUNGANNON | 14,332 | 10,983 | 30.5% | 2,680 | 669 |
| | ENNISKILLEN | 13,790 | 13,560 | 1.7% | 224 | 6 |
| | STRABANE | 13,147 | 13,380 | -1.7% | -233 | 0 |
| | LIMAVADY | 12,047 | 12,075 | -0.2% | -102 | 74 |
| | COOKSTOWN | 11,620 | 10,566 | 10.0% | 739 | 315 |
| | HOLYWOOD | 11,332 | 12,027 | -5.8% | -395 | -300 |
| | DOWNPATRICK | 10,874 | 10,320 | 5.4% | 535 | 19 |
| | BALLYMONEY* | 10,393 | 9,009 | 15.4% | 1,481 | -97 |
| Band D Total | 10 | 128,937 | 121,185 | 6.4% | - | - |
| BAND E - SMALL TOWN (POPULATION 5,000 - 9,999) | BALLYCLARE | 9,919 | 8,772 | 13.1% | 1,129 | 18 |
| | COMBER | 9,078 | 8,952 | 1.4% | -53 | 179 |
| | MAGHERAFELT | 8,819 | 8,289 | 6.4% | 417 | 113 |
| | WARRENPOINT / BURREN | 8,721 | 6,981 | 24.9% | 406 | 1,334 |
| | PORTSTEWART | 8,029 | 7,803 | 2.9% | 228 | -2 |
| | NEWCASTLE | 7,743 | 7,431 | 4.2% | 308 | 4 |
| | CARRYDUFF | 6,947 | 6,564 | 5.8% | 367 | 16 |

| Classification | Settlement Development Limit (SDL) | 2011 Census population (C) | 2001 Census population (A) | % Population change | Population change within SDL (D) | Population change SDL revision (E) |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| BAND E cont... | DONAGHADEE | 6,869 | 6,474 | 6.1% | 376 | 19 |
| | KILKEEL | 6,521 | 6,297 | 3.6% | 195 | 29 |
| | PORTRUSH | 6,442 | 6,345 | 1.5% | 102 | -5 |
| | DROMORE_BANBRIDGE | 6,011 | 4,959 | 21.2% | 1,023 | 29 |
| | BALLYNAHINCH | 5,715 | 5,334 | 7.1% | 327 | 54 |
| | COALISLAND | 5,700 | 4,872 | 17.0% | 481 | 347 |
| | GREENISLAND | 5,484 | 5,067 | 8.2% | 407 | 10 |
| | BALLYCASTLE | 5,238 | 5,073 | 3.3% | 64 | 101 |
| | CRUMLIN* | 5,099 | 4,248 | 20.0% | 851 | 0 |
| | RANDALSTOWN | 5,099 | 4,944 | 3.1% | 155 | 0 |
| Band E Total | 17 | 117,434 | 108,405 | 8.3% | - | - |
| DEFAULT URBAN-RURAL SPLIT | | | | | | |
| BAND F - INTERMEDIATE SETTLEMENT (POPULATION 2,500 - 4,999) | MOIRA | 4,584 | 3,669 | 24.9% | 917 | -2 |
| | MAGHERA | 4,217 | 3,648 | 15.6% | 492 | 77 |
| | HILLSBOROUGH AND CULCAVY | 3,953 | 3,396 | 16.4% | 555 | 2 |
| | WHITEHEAD | 3,786 | 3,711 | 2.0% | 75 | 0 |
| | EGLINTON | 3,650 | 3,150 | 15.9% | 502 | -2 |
| | WARINGSTOWN | 3,647 | 2,523 | 44.6% | 1,022 | 102 |
| | TANDRAGEE | 3,486 | 3,018 | 15.5% | 468 | 0 |
| | CULMORE | 3,466 | 2,937 | 18.0% | 529 | 0 |
| | SAINTFIELD | 3,406 | 2,955 | 15.3% | 442 | 9 |
| | AHOGHILL | 3,403 | 3,027 | 12.4% | 376 | 0 |
| | DUNGIVEN | 3,286 | 2,988 | 10.0% | 298 | 0 |
| | KEADY | 3,036 | 2,937 | 3.4% | 99 | 0 |
| | CASTLEDERG | 2,985 | 2,739 | 9.0% | 246 | 0 |
| | LISNASKEA | 2,960 | 2,730 | 8.4% | 230 | 0 |
| | BALLYGOWAN | 2,957 | 2,670 | 10.7% | 194 | 93 |
| | KILLYLEAGH | 2,928 | 2,490 | 17.6% | 454 | -16 |
| | BROUGHSHANE | 2,851 | 2,349 | 21.4% | 502 | 0 |
| | RICHHILL | 2,821 | 2,808 | 0.5% | 13 | 0 |
| | CASTLEWELLAN | 2,792 | 2,367 | 18.0% | 411 | 14 |
| | ROSTREVOR | 2,788 | 2,433 | 14.6% | 191 | 164 |
| BESSBROOK* | 2,739 | - | - | - | - | |
| NEWBUILDINGS | 2,599 | 2,496 | 4.1% | 103 | 0 | |
| CULLYBACKEY | 2,569 | 2,388 | 7.6% | 181 | 0 | |
| PORTAFERRY | 2,514 | 2,478 | 1.5% | 24 | 12 | |
| Band F Total | 24 | 77,423 | 65,907 | 17.5% | - | - |

Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements
 March 2015

| Classification | Settlement Development Limit (SDL) | 2011 Census population (C) | 2001 Census population (A) | % Population change | Population change within SDL (D) | Population change SDL revision (E) |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| BAND G - VILLAGE (POPULATION 1,000 - 2,499) | RATHFRILAND | 2,472 | 2,061 | 19.9% | 418 | -7 |
| | MAGHABERRY | 2,468 | 1,692 | 45.9% | 767 | 9 |
| | STRATHFOYLE | 2,412 | 1,578 | 52.9% | 834 | 0 |
| | MILLISLE | 2,318 | 1,791 | 29.4% | 513 | 14 |
| | CASTLEDAWSON | 2,292 | 2,085 | 9.9% | 172 | 35 |
| | IRVINESTOWN | 2,264 | 1,797 | 26.0% | 467 | 0 |
| | DOLLINGSTOWN | 2,126 | 1,830 | 16.2% | 296 | 0 |
| | PORTAVOGIE | 2,122 | 1,593 | 33.2% | 515 | 14 |
| | BALLYKELLY | 2,103 | 1,827 | 15.1% | 265 | 11 |
| | KELLS / CONNOR | 2,053 | 1,737 | 18.2% | 316 | 0 |
| | BALLYWALTER | 2,027 | 1,419 | 42.8% | 310 | 298 |
| | GILFORD | 1,927 | 1,548 | 24.5% | 379 | 0 |
| | SION MILLS | 1,903 | 2,073 | -8.2% | -170 | 0 |
| | MONEYMORE | 1,897 | 1,371 | 38.4% | 526 | 0 |
| | CROSSGAR | 1,892 | 1,542 | 22.7% | 340 | 10 |
| | ANNALONG | 1,796 | 1,761 | 2.0% | 28 | 7 |
| | GLENAVY | 1,791 | 1,071 | 67.2% | 740 | -20 |
| | DRAPERSTOWN | 1,772 | 1,626 | 9.0% | 156 | -10 |
| | DONAGHCLONEY* | 1,701 | - | - | - | - |
| | HILLTOWN* | 1,698 | - | - | - | - |
| | KILREA | 1,679 | 1,509 | 11.3% | 106 | 64 |
| | MARKETHILL | 1,652 | 1,290 | 28.1% | 362 | 0 |
| | ARDGLASS | 1,643 | 1,659 | -1.0% | -20 | 4 |
| | CROSSMAGLEN | 1,608 | 1,449 | 11.0% | 166 | -7 |
| | MOY | 1,603 | 1,209 | 32.6% | 208 | 186 |
| | DUNDRUM | 1,551 | 1,062 | 46.0% | 488 | 1 |
| | NEWTOWNSTEWART | 1,547 | 1,467 | 5.5% | 80 | 0 |
| | CARNLOUGH | 1,512 | 1,440 | 5.0% | 72 | 0 |
| | MILLTOWN | 1,499 | 1,356 | 10.5% | 143 | 0 |
| | GREYSTEEL | 1,454 | 1,224 | 18.8% | 167 | 63 |
| | TEMPLEPATRICK | 1,437 | 1,551 | -7.4% | -114 | 0 |
| | BALLINAMALLARD | 1,432 | 1,326 | 8.0% | 106 | 0 |
| | DOAGH | 1,390 | 1,119 | 24.2% | 271 | 0 |
| | HELEN'S BAY | 1,390 | 1,356 | 2.5% | 34 | 0 |
| | MONEYREAGH* | 1,379 | - | - | - | - |
| | BALLYCARRY* | 1,371 | - | - | - | - |
| | DRUMANESS | 1,344 | 1,269 | 5.9% | 63 | 12 |
| | MAGHERALIN | 1,337 | 1,134 | 17.9% | 203 | 0 |
| | CLAUDY | 1,336 | 1,323 | 1.0% | 13 | 0 |
| | CLOGH MILLS | 1,309 | 1,224 | 6.9% | 87 | -2 |
| | BUSHMILLS | 1,292 | 1,314 | -1.7% | -16 | -6 |
| | CASTLEROCK | 1,287 | 1,326 | -2.9% | -31 | -8 |
| | LAURELVALE / MULLAVILLY* | 1,284 | - | - | - | - |
| CUSHENDALL | 1,276 | 1,242 | 2.7% | 36 | -2 | |
| GARVAGH | 1,274 | 1,278 | -0.3% | 3 | -7 | |
| COGRY / KILBRIDE | 1,246 | 1,167 | 6.8% | 79 | 0 | |
| FIVEMILETOWN | 1,243 | 1,104 | 12.6% | 79 | 60 | |
| GROOMSPORT | 1,233 | - | - | - | - | |
| DUNLOY | 1,215 | 1,044 | 16.4% | 198 | -27 | |
| DROMORE_OMAGH | 1,202 | 1,095 | 9.8% | 107 | 0 | |

| Classification | Settlement Development Limit (SDL) | 2011 Census population (C) | 2001 Census population (A) | % Population change | Population change within SDL (D) | Population change SDL revision (E) |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Band G continued | PORTGLENONE | 1,174 | 1,191 | -1.4% | -17 | 0 |
| | FINTONA | 1,160 | 1,344 | -13.7% | -184 | 0 |
| | KIRCUBBIN | 1,153 | 1,218 | -5.3% | -56 | -9 |
| | DONAGHMORE* | 1,122 | - | - | - | - |
| | BELLAGHY | 1,115 | 1,071 | 4.1% | 92 | -48 |
| | RASHARKIN* | 1,114 | - | - | - | - |
| | LISBELLAW | 1,102 | 1,041 | 5.9% | 55 | 6 |
| | CAMLOUGH* | 1,081 | - | - | - | - |
| | CLOUGHEY* | 1,075 | - | - | - | - |
| | MAYOBRIDGE* | 1,068 | - | - | - | - |
| | AGHAGALLON* | 1,056 | - | - | - | - |
| | ANNAHILT | 1,045 | 1,131 | -7.6% | -86 | 0 |
| | AUGHNACLOY* | 1,041 | - | - | - | - |
| | MAGUIRESBRIDGE* | 1,038 | - | - | - | - |
| | KESH* | 1,036 | - | - | - | - |
| | BALLYHALBERT* | 1,026 | - | - | - | - |
| | SEAHILL | 1,018 | 1,179 | -13.7% | -161 | 0 |
| BLEARY* | 1,011 | - | - | - | - | |
| DROMARA* | 1,006 | - | - | - | - | |
| Band G Total | 69 | 103,500 | 72,114 | 43.5% | | |
| TOTAL | 136 | 1,312,847 | | | | |

* Settlements whose Band classification has changed (from the 2005 report); including 17 additions to Band G whose 2005 SDL is not available to calculate change.

† No accurate 2005 / 2011 equivalent.

Footnotes:

1. The names and the listings of the settlements have been taken from the set of Settlement Development Limits (SDLs) provided by DoE Planning.
2. The labelling of bands in this classification as 'towns' or 'villages' is purely descriptive. It is noted that, for example, some settlements described in the classification as 'towns' are legally 'cities'.
3. 'Population change within SDL' (D) measures the change in population between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses for the area defined by the SDL in 2005 (See section 6.2).
4. 'Population change – SDL Revision' (E) measures the change in population between the areas defined by the 2005 SDL and 2015 SDL using the 2011 Census (See section 6.2).

[Download Table \(Excel 37 KB\)](#)