



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**



Lagan Valley Planning Project

WORK BASED STUDY

Clive Cooper Jnr | Independent Specialist Project |

Thesis submitted for the degree of a Masters in Planning and Development

Supervisor: Dr Merav Amir

"I attest that this is my own original work (unless otherwise specified) and that it does not exceed 20,000 words (excluding references and appendices)."

Clive Vivien Joseph Cooper Jnr

NAME



SIGNATURE

25/09/2020

DATE

Acknowledgements

I would like to take a moment to thank those who provided me with their time, ears and support prior to and during the undertaking and completion of this work-based study despite the extraordinary circumstances we have all faced.

In the first instance, I would like to thank Dr Merav Amir for remotely supervising and offering help during this demanding study. I also wish to recognise Dr Neil Galway for his part in the preliminary arrangement of this work-based study with the Lagan Valley Regional Park, as well as for the continuing aid.

Furthermore, I thank the Board of Directors at the LVRP for reaching out to The Queen's University of Belfast Planning School and providing the opportunity to carry out this WBS. I thank Andy Bridge (Park Manager) for his continued contact and provision of information and resources. I also thank Nigel Downey (Belfast City Council Planning Officer), Roisin Connolly (BCC Business Support Assistant) and Lois Jackson (Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Principal Planner) for their part in consenting to, requesting and obtaining relevant information from the Department of Infrastructure.

I would also like to mention Dr Richard Waldron who led the course module in GIS and Spatial Analysis and thus helped to develop my basic foundation of skills and techniques required in this study. A penultimate note of gratitude is given to the staff at The Graduate School and McClay Library who worked tirelessly to re-open, in accordance with government guidelines, which without would have made the completion of this WBS impossible.

Lastly, I thank my partner for her unwavering support during my studies, my personal advisor and the whole social service team in Brighton for everything they do, and of course; my foster parents - who gave me a second chance in life. My time at The Queen's University of Belfast has been full of the unexpected and it is a year I surely shan't forget.

Executive Summary

This report is the result of many hundreds of hours of work. It has involved liaising with the client (The Board of the Lagan Valley Regional Park), university faculty members and council and department staff. Furthermore, it has involved extensive background and contextual readings, using academic literature alongside legislation and policy, on both the history and current systems of landscape protection and outside recreation provision within Northern Ireland and the wider United Kingdom. The project has involved intense utilisation of vast planning databases in the creation of maps and numeric tables to offer the Board of the LVRP a wider view of the impact planning applications and approvals over time are having on the Park. Also, equally important is the inclusion of specific planning applications within recognisable development limits to ground the discussion in firm reality as opposed to data simply floating in the screen.

The report, in place of self-produced land use maps, makes use of readily available online data from the European Environment Agency and historical land use data in the LVRP Local Plan in order to offer a window into the changing land use of the park and see whether there is any associated development pressures or environmental degradation.

Although the content has been scaled back and altered due to extremely unusual external events, it is hoped that it still proves to be useful for the LVRP Office as a standalone report and in conjunction with future exercises.

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1. Introduction

1.1. BACKGROUND

As part of the MSc Planning and Development, The Queen's University of Belfast requires that students complete an Independent Specialist Research Project worth one-third of the entire degree. This project can be completed in two formats: either as a written dissertation or as a work-based study (WBS). The WBS option offers students the chance to complete a project report that is prepared in response to a project brief that they have negotiated with a real-world client. Therefore, the WBS provides not only an opportunity to showcase a student's interests but also enables students to gain an understanding of the challenges faced in practice.

The Module Outline document for the WBS format of the Independent Specialist Research Project sets out the following expectations:

"You will act as a professional planning consultant to a client in relation to a specified real-world project in a specified location and site... This will involve the development of a brief and programme of work in agreement with your client, the undertaking of relevant contextual and comparative background research, the carrying out of necessary location and site survey and analysis, the production and evaluation of development and/or regeneration options, the presentation of final proposals in written, graphical and/or computer-based formats."

The Board of Directors at the Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP) approached the Planning School and Neil Galway to discuss the possibility of a research exercise which, in the first instance, would identify and map planning approvals and completions adjacent to and within the park boundary over, a then undermined, time period. After announcing an interest and following email and video call discussions with Andy Bridge (Park Manager, Neil Galway and myself, it was agreed that I would remotely undertake the project of mapping planning applications and approvals in and directly adjacent to the LVRP – a site which covers an area of 4200 acres.

1.2. DEVELOPMENT OF A BRIEF

The LVRP acts in an advisory role to Government Departments and other bodies. It also acts as a Statutory Consultee on planning applications affecting the Regional Park. As stated, in correspondence, by Board Member Jim Jackson, it is in these roles that:

“The Board is acutely aware of localities both within and outside the boundaries which have experienced significant development pressures some of which would be considered detrimental to the objectives of the LVRP and the AONB.

And that:

“There is also a suspicion that cumulative permissions are leading to significant environmental change and loss of green open spaces in some parts.”

It was noted that planning applications referred to the LVRP are responded to and reported to the Board on a quarterly basis. The development pressure and suspicion of detrimental environmental change in and adjacent to the park, alongside limited reporting of planning applications, were the key elements in development of a brief. The WBS was thus primarily developed in order to provide the Board with a wider view of the impact planning applications and approvals over time are having on the LVRP.

The devolving and splitting of planning functions in the park across two bodies; Belfast City Council (BCC) and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC), as a result of local government reform in April 2015 which removed the bulk of planning functions from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) was also identified as relevant in the development of the brief. This, alongside the outdated nature of the 1993 Lagan Valley Regional Park Local Plan 2005, presented the possibility to look into and analyse policy for the area to see if they have been effective in their aim.

Other elements, such as the COVID-19 Pandemic also influenced the approach required in completing this study and necessitated the reconsideration of the feasibility of some elements such as mapping completion footprints over a great period of time.

This longitudinal study of change would provide the LVRP and the Board with a base line for future policy development and possibly strengthen the Park’s case in responding to

particular application consultations. Furthermore, this research may enable BCC and LCCC to develop a joint understanding of the historical management of the Park which can then be used to inform a future management approach that is more sensitive to the park environment and which features deep cooperation between both the two councils and also the LVRP.

While initially some site-based contextual research was envisaged, these plans needed to be abandoned due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Instead the project entailed a completely desk-based research and analysis workflow consisting of the collection of various datasets covering the park area, digitising and manipulating said datasets within GIS software and then analysing planning policy against that generated data so to determine policy effectiveness and the associated strength of LVRP responses.

1.3. AIM OF STUDY

‘TO UNDERTAKE GIS MAPPING AND THE ANALYSIS OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS SO TO CONSIDER THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL PLANNING POLICY AND PROVIDE A BASE LINE FOR FUTURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT (FOR THE LVRP).

This WBS report centres on identifying and mapping planning applications within and adjacent to the park boundary over a time period spanning from the 1970s to the present-day. Following this, an analysis, primarily focusing on planning approvals, will be commenced in order to determine the effectiveness of local planning policies in protecting the park and its qualities from urban development and human encroachment.

The resulting maps, analysis and other data should provide the Board of the LVRP with a broader understanding of the impact planning applications and approvals over time are having on the land that they manage. This report may then be useful as a reference point for policy development yet to come and could also serve to strengthen the parks case in responding to particular application consultations.

1.3a. Objectives

1. Conduct a literature review of existing material relating to planning and landscape/nature protection in both a UK-wide context and at the Northern Ireland/Lagan Valley Regional Park level.
2. Examine and contextualise the Lagan Valley Regional Park both in a historical and present setting while also offering a particular focus on the 1993 LVRP Local Plan 2005 and setting out the role it plays.
3. Carry out further policy and guidance discussion with examination of other relevant planning policy such as the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 and Planning Policy Statement 2.

4. Obtain and compile a planning application dataset for the LVRP area so to digitise and create a variety of maps in GIS software, alongside the provision of other graphics.
5. Analyse the application dataset and maps to develop an understanding of the changing development footprint within the LVRP over time.
6. Evaluate findings to consider which planning policies have been most effective or ineffective in development management of the park over time.

1.4. REPORT STRUCTURE

1. Introduction: An introduction to the work-based study and explain the process behind developing the report brief. In doing so this section shall therefore provide the aim and objectives necessitated in order to successfully complete the project report.
2. Literature Review: An analysis of relevant literature relating to the changing nature of planning and landscape/nature protection within the wider United Kingdom and within Northern Ireland. At the scale of the LVRP there will be emphasis on the 1993 LVRP Local Plan 2005 and the role it plays.
3. Policy Context: Further analysis of Northern Ireland and local policies relating to landscape protection and conservation, their development and implementation.
4. Research and Methodology: Outlining the methodology; a longitudinal study utilising quantitative planning data and following discussion, for effectively achieving the aim and objectives of this report
5. Decade Snapshots: A brief overview on the total number of planning applications submitted for determination between 1973 and August 2020 with accompanying info graphics and maps (figures).
6. Mapping within Settlements: Area specific looks at planning applications with one or more application case studies.
7. Land Use and Change: Using Urban Atlas Land Use data from the European Environment Agency to visualise changes in LVRP land use between the period 2006 – 2018 and comparing 2018 data with that available in the LVRP Local Plan.
8. Conclusions: Closing the study by identifying and discussing the key findings from the research and mapping exercise.

2. Literature Review

The following section shall analyse relevant literature relating to the evolving nature of planning and landscape/nature protection within both the wider United Kingdom context and more specifically, in Northern Ireland; thus, setting out the context for this study and providing definitions for key terms.

2.1. KEY TERMS

In 1969 Lewis Keeble defined **Town Planning** as:

“the art and science of ordering the land-uses and siting the buildings and communications routes so as to secure the maximum level of economy, convenience and beauty.” (p. 1).

Whilst useful, it is also much more than that; planning incorporates all sorts of economic, political and environmental dimensions at different societal levels (Greed, 2014).

The European Landscape Convention (2000) defined **Landscape** as:

“part of the land, as perceived by local people or visitors, which evolves through time as a result of being acted upon by natural forces and human beings.”

But like planning, the term ‘Landscape’ is variable and so, the UK government tends to use the term ‘environment’ as a catchall instead (Howard, 2011).

English Heritage (2009) defines **Protected Landscapes** as:

“Significant recreational areas, providing important opportunities for public access to and enjoyment of the historic environment and with heritage and landscape-based tourism providing benefits to local communities.”

Recreation can also mean different things to different people but has been defined by the Countryside Recreation Research Advisory Group (1970) as:

“any pursuit engaged upon during leisure time, other than pursuits to which people are normally 'highly committed.'” (p. 7).

2.2 PLANNING CONTEXT

2.2a. Planning in Great Britain

The **Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act 1909** is the first statutory embodiment of town planning by Westminster but was primarily concerned with housing (Sutcliffe, 1988). The following **Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act 1919** helped to extend the scope of planning by requiring councils with populations of 20,000 or more to produce 'schemes' and the **Town and Country Planning Act 1932** introduced planning powers to cover existing developed land – although planners powers were still very weak (Greed, 2014). The subsequent **Restriction of Ribbon Development Act 1935** was a reactive measure against unregulated ribbon development alongside routes of transportation radiating from urban settlements (Sheppard and Peel, 2017).

Following on from World War Two and various Commissions such as the Uthwatt Committee 1942 and the Barlow Report 1940, Westminster published the 1944 White Paper; **The Control of Land Use**, and in it stated: *'provision for the right use of land, in accordance with a considered policy, is an essential requirement of the government's programme of post-war reconstruction'* (Cullingworth et al., 2015).

The subsequent **Town and Country Planning Act 1947** (and **Scotland Act**) marks the emergence of a comprehensive planning system in Great Britain (Rydin, 2002). The 1947 Act effectively nationalised development rights of undeveloped land by making it subject to planning permission thus ensuring that ownership alone no longer conferred the right to develop land. The Act also laid out that no compensation could be claimed for the refusal of a planning application – although a one claim fund was created for landowners. Furthermore, the Act required the creation of development plans for every area in Great Britain.

Since the 1947 Act there have been many incremental changes and alterations to the planning system which were consolidated in the **Town and Country Planning Act 1990** and the **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004** for England and Wales. Meanwhile, devolution has resulted in separate legislation for Scotland in the form of the **Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006**.

2.2b. Planning in Northern Ireland

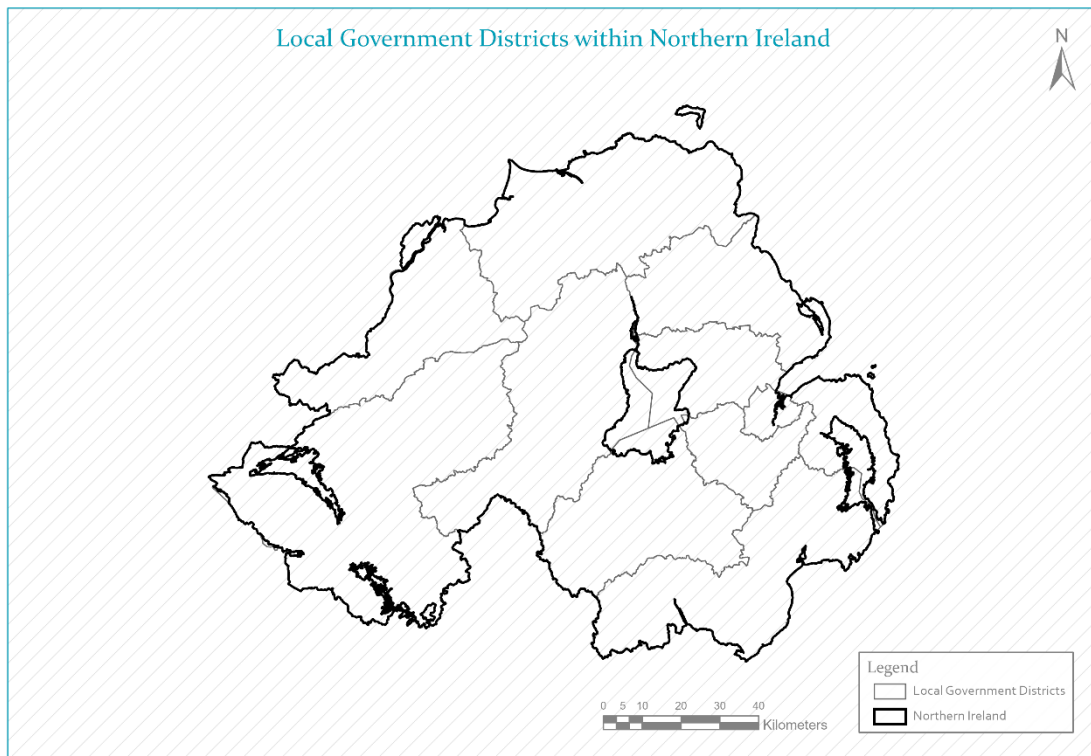


Figure 1: Local Government Districts within Northern Ireland

The **Government of Ireland Act 1920** enabled the establishment of Northern Ireland on 3rd May 1921 with a devolved administration based at Stormont. The **Planning and Housing Act (Northern Ireland) 1931** was the first piece of planning legislation in Northern Ireland and established planning responsibilities for 37 local government areas. This legislation was then followed by the **Planning (Interim Development) Act (Northern Ireland) 1944** which was meant to have served as a statutory basis for development management.

However, in 1960 Robert (Matthew, 1964), a planner, was commissioned with preparing an advisory plan for the Belfast Urban area. This Belfast Regional Survey and Plan was published in 1964 and in it he noted that the unparalleled degree of development since World War Two had not been matched by similar developments in planning.

Furthermore, Matthew stated that *“Planning Authorities show the greatest reluctance in preventing development even in the most obvious cases, out of fear of heavy claims for compensation”*.

Much of the 1960s proved to be a period of enquiry and review but ultimately, following the 1970 Macrory Commission review, local government was reorganised by the **Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 1972** into 26 district council across Northern Ireland. Meanwhile planning became a central government responsibility under the Westminster approved **Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972** and this saw local government’s role in planning reduced to statutory consultees and in stark contrast to the planning functions of local government across Great Britain.

Then in 2015, the 26 district councils were merged into 11 larger district councils as provided by the **Local Government (Boundaries) Act (Northern Ireland) 2008**. This was accompanied by the transferring of the majority of planning functions from central government to these new district councils as provided by **The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011**.

2.2c. Landscape Protection across Great Britain

The **National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (NPAC)** is an Act of the

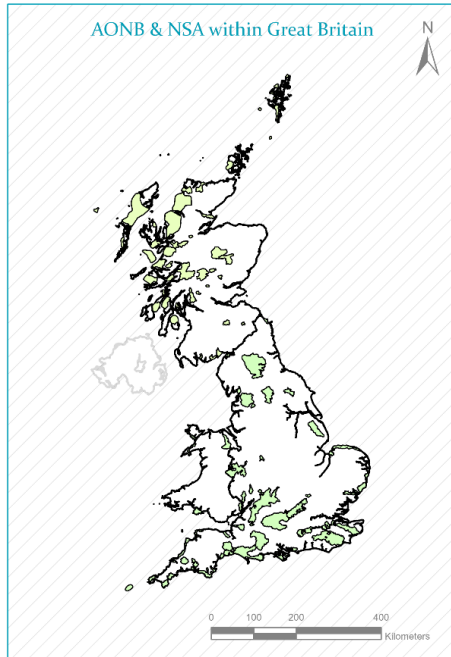


Figure 2: AONB & NSA within Great Britain

Parliament of the United Kingdom (UK) which created the National Parks Commission and eventually turned into Natural England when it merged with English Nature in 2006. The Act delivered the framework for the creation of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in England and Wales with further regulations for English and Welsh AONB being introduced by the **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**. As of 2020 there are 38 AONBs across England and Wales.

An AONB designation is meant to protect land through the conservation and enhancement of its

natural beauty yet, despite the **National Planning Policy Framework 2012** stating, in relation to conserving and enhancing the natural environment, that “*National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty ...have the highest status of protection*” only local authorities (or the Secretary of State) can give permission for development in, or affecting, an AONB whereas National Parks can have statutory powers in planning control and enforcement.

Neither of the aforementioned acts in Westminster extend to Scotland so instead, following a committee report, the Scottish Government designated five areas as National Park Direction Areas, which provided for some additional scrutiny of development proposals within the areas. A review into landscape protection was completed in 1978 with additional areas being identified for protection, and in 1981 the direction areas were supplanted by 40 National Scenic Areas (NSA). The NSA can be considered to be broadly equivalent to AONB in the rest of the UK. While NSAs have a statutory basis under Part 10 of the **Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006**, like AONBs, planning controls lie with local authorities rather than the NSA administrators.

2.2d. Landscape Protection within Northern Ireland

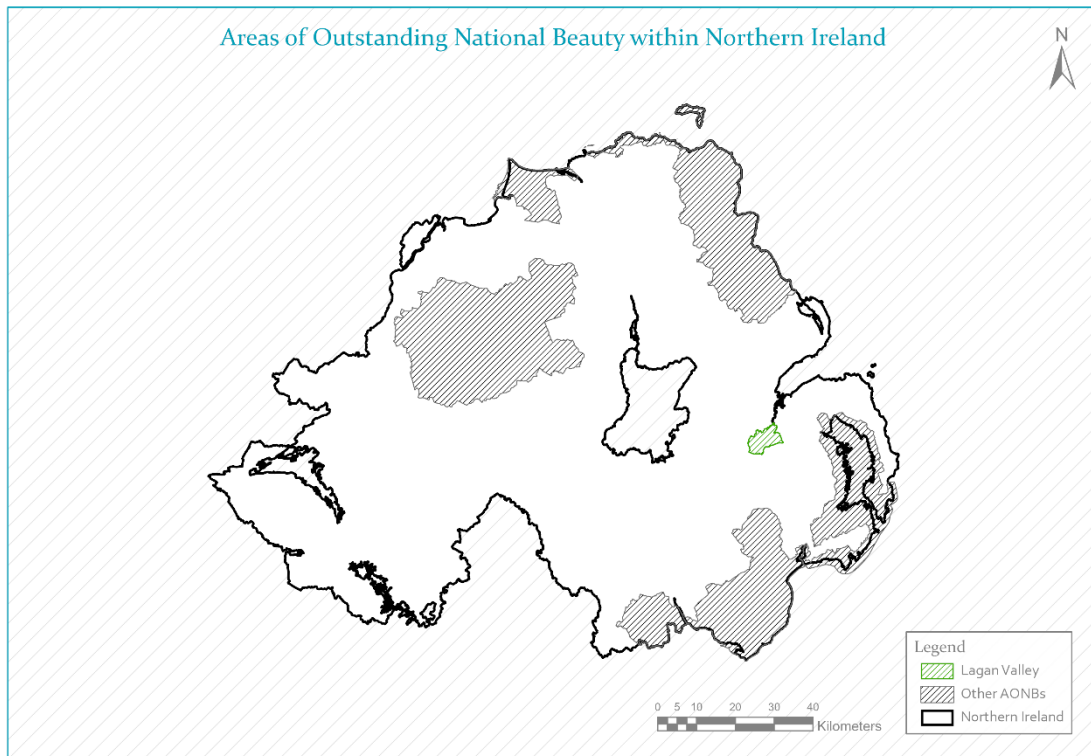


Figure 3: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty within Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the **Amenity Lands Act (Northern Ireland) 1965** introduced provisions similar to the **1949 NPAC Act** and allowed for the establishment of both National Parks and AONBs, however, only AONBs were ever designated under this legislation. The 1965 act was largely repealed with the passage of the **Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985** and subsequent designations of AONBs are made under the more recent legislation. Consultations on legislation enabling the setting up of national park were undertaken in 2011 but little was achieved from the process. As of 2020 there are 8 AONBs within Northern Ireland. Protected landscapes in Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, although development management mostly remains with the local council authority.

2.3 THE PROVISION OF RECREATIONAL SPACE

2.3a. A Right to Roam



Figure 4: Bowden Bridge mass trespass plaque 2007 (Floryan, M.)

possible simultaneously to promote both the protection of the countryside and its use for recreation and this was followed in 1947 by the Hobhouse Report which favoured both the introduction of national parks, as well as the extension of a right to roam over all open land – believing such a right to be a national investment in the health and wellbeing of the people. Few such campaigns and no such mass movement have emerged in Northern Ireland (Price and Simpson, 2017) and while the Amenity Lands Act aimed to protect the landscape, it did not seek to promote the enjoyment of it (Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland., 1991).

The first statutory provision for recreational access to privately owned land in England and Wales is linked to the ‘mass trespasses’, such as that by the Kinder Scouts, of the 1930s in a pre-war campaign to open up new areas of the countryside for public use (Rothman, 1982), and the post-war desire for social reform (Price and Simpson, 2017). The 1942 Scott Report suggested to Westminster that it was

2.3b. The Country Park

In the 1960s there was a common belief in the UK that demand for recreation and leisure would rapidly grow and, in turn, the countryside would face enormous pressures and imminent danger (Lambert, 2006). In 1965 Michael Dower wrote of a “fourth wave”:

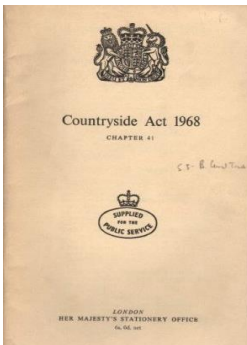


Figure 5: Countryside Act 1968

“Three great waves have broken across the face of Britain since 1800. First the sudden growth of dark industrial towns. Second, the thrusting movement along far flung railways. Third, the sprawl of car-based suburbs. Now we see under the guise of a modest word, the surge of the fourth wave which could be more powerful than all the others. The modest word is leisure.” (p. 123).

In response to these concerns the British Government published the 1966 White Paper 'Leisure in the Countryside'. This document proposed the establishment of Country Parks and formed the basis of the subsequent **Countryside Act 1968** which enabled the granting of aid in the establishment of new parks. The **1968 act** also established the Countryside Commission and laid out its duties in relation to country parks. The Commission then went about setting out a criteria for accreditation as a Country Park (see table 1) by publishing the **Policy on Country Parks and Picnic Sites** in 1969. The Commission has since evolved into Natural England and while there are over 400 Country Parks, only 33 are accredited.

Criteria for Recognition
Readily accessible for motor vehicles and pedestrians.
Provided with an adequate range of facilities, including as a minimum, parking facilities, lavatories either within or adjacent to the park, and a supervisory service.
Operated as a single unit and managed by statutory bodies, or private agencies or a combination of both.

Table 1: Criteria for Recognition as a Country Park

2.3c. Lagan Valley Regional Park

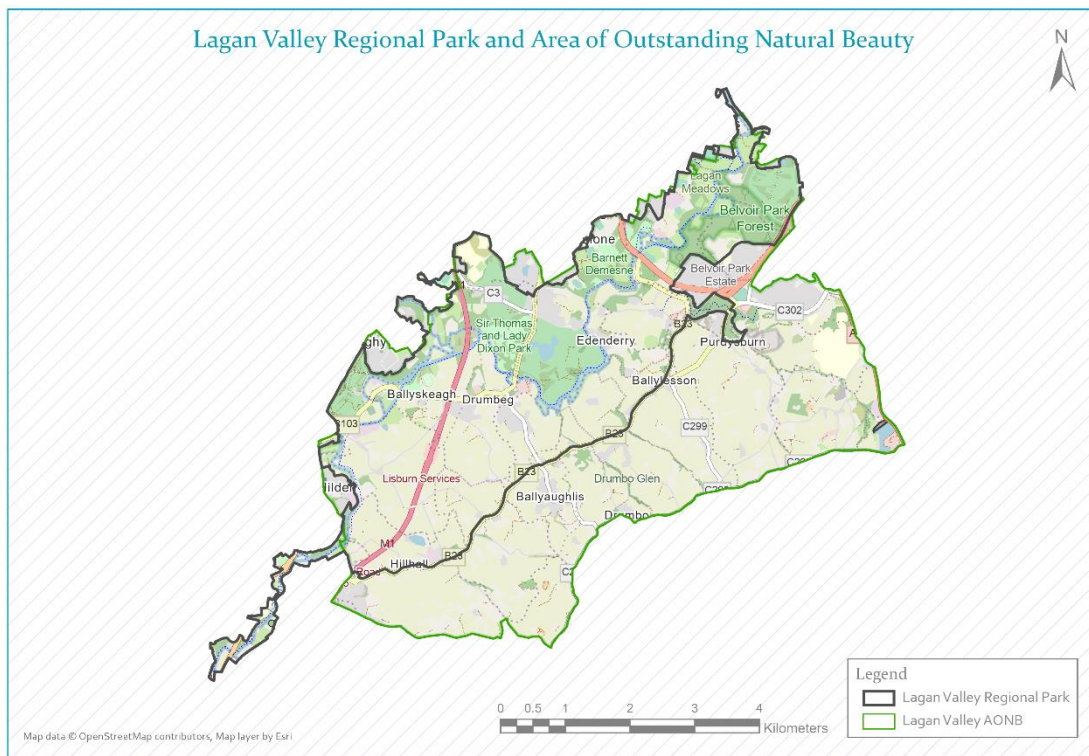


Figure 6: Lagan Valley Regional Park and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

In 1963, the aforementioned Matthew Report, recommended that a ‘stop line’ be created to contain Belfast’s urban growth. Meanwhile, in 1965, Lagan Valley was the first area to be designated as an AONB under the **Amenity Lands Acts (Northern Ireland) 1965**.

Subsequently, a consultant firm – Building Design Partnership – was engaged to prepare a development plan for a Greater Belfast Area. In 1967 the firm presented their proposals in which they recommended the creation of a Lagan Valley Country Park. This ‘country park’ would be an area developed for recreation and landscape purposes serving visitors from nearby towns and reducing pressure on other places. However, an outline advisory report, prepared by the Queen’s University of Belfast planning students in 1971 stated that while the Lagan Valley area could fulfil all standards set out in the **1966 white paper** and/or the **1969 Policy on Country Parks and Picnic Sites**, it should not be termed as such.

The report stated that:

“The extent of the park area (c. 4000 acres), and its location close to the major population concentration of Northern Ireland (then predicted in excess of 1m by 1991), however, create conditions which make the Lagan Valley more than a country park to serve Belfast.”

It instead *“strongly suggested”* that the term ‘Regional Park’, akin to the Lee Valley Regional Park in East London – with its Regional Park Authority, would be a more appropriate designation for *“a facility of the Regional scale”*. It seems that the recommendation was heeded as it was decided to be named the ‘Lagan Valley Regional Park’ - Northern Ireland's first and only Regional Park to date (Department of the Environment, 1977).



Figure 7: Satellite Imagery of Lagan Valley Regional Park

3. Policy Context

3.1. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2025

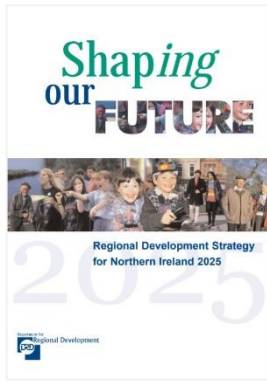


Figure 8: Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025

The RDS 2025 was a document, published in 2002, that set out a regional framework strategy to guide the development of Northern Ireland up to 2025. The headline environmental themes of the RDS 2025 were: SPG-ENV 1: To conserve the natural environment and SPG-ENV 3: To conserve the built environment.

These themes were then split into more detailed strategic planning guidelines to deal with different aspects of the environment in an integrated approach.

3.2. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2035

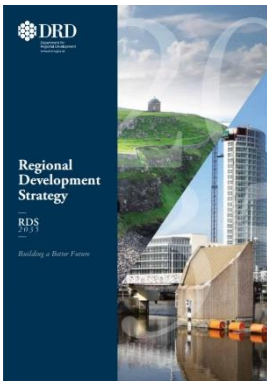


Figure 9: Regional Development Strategy 2035

In 2008 it was determined by the Northern Ireland Executive that the RDS 2025 needed to be revised (Department for Infrastructure, n.d.), and the replacement RDS 2035 was published in 2012. The RDS 2035 is the long-term spatial strategy plan for Northern Ireland and sets out two types of strategic guidance: Regional Guidance (RG) and Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG). The RDS was published in 2012 by the Department for Regional Development and is tasked with highlighting the importance of protecting the environment. As its title suggests, the RDS is expected to inform spatial elements of government strategies until 2035.

According to RG₁₁, the RDS aims to: “Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment”.

Furthermore, SFG₅ aims to: “Protect and enhance the quality of the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets” and includes specific reference to LVRP with:

- “Protect..... the Lagan Valley Regional Park..... from development.”
- “Protect and enhance the network of open spaces in the BMUA.”

3.3. PPS 6: PLANNING, ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BUILT HERITAGE

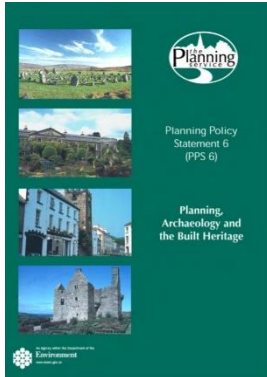


Figure 10: Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS 6)

PPS 6 sets out planning policies for the protection and conservation of archaeological remains and features of the built heritage while its Addendum: Areas of Townscape Character provides additional planning policies relating specifically to Areas of Townscape Character.

Section 2.24 of PPS 6 states that *“Development plans will, where appropriate, designate local landscape policy areas and contain local policies and guidance to maintain the intrinsic environmental value and character of such areas.”*

Furthermore, policies of relevance in the Addendum to PPS 6 include:

Policy ATC 1: There will be a presumption in favour of retaining any building which makes a positive contribution to the character of an Area of Townscape Character.

Policy ATC 2: Development proposals will only be permitted in an Area of Townscape Character where the development maintains or enhances its overall character and respects the built form of the area.

3.4. PPS 8: OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

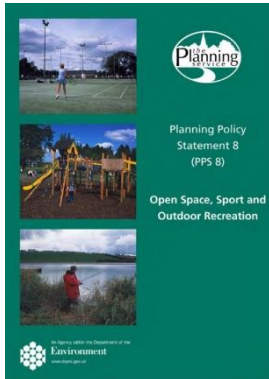


Figure 11: Planning Policy Statement 8 (PPS 8)

PPS 8 sets out planning policies for the protection of open space and the use of land for sport and outdoor recreation. It is stated that the PPS is a “*commitment to sustainable development, to the promotion of a more active and healthy lifestyle and to the conservation of biodiversity.*” (planningni.gov.uk, n.d.).

While the whole of PPS 8 can be relevant to the LVRP, the following policies may be considered particularly pertinent in relation to this report and landscape and recreation:

Policy OS 1: Development that would result in the loss of existing open space or land zoned for the provision of open space will not be permitted. The presumption against the loss of existing open space will apply irrespective of its physical condition and appearance.

Policy OS3: The development of proposals for outdoor recreational use in the countryside will be permitted where a detailed criteria (set out in PPS 8) is met.

3.5. BELFAST URBAN AREA PLAN 1969

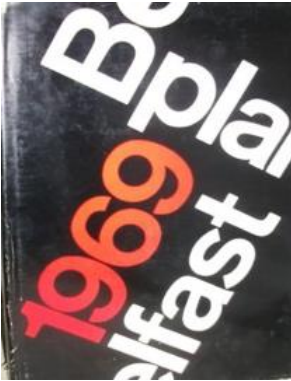


Figure 12: Belfast Urban Area Plan 1969

In 1966 the Building Design Partnership were commissioned to prepare the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) as an extension of the earlier brief for a development plan for the urban area. BUAP 1969 was intended to cover a period of 20 years from 1966-1986 and provide the guidelines for the development of the Belfast Urban Area with social, economic and environmental possibilities in mind.

BUAP 1969 declared that the Lagan Valley and the River Lagan were 2 of 4 of the urban areas principal landscape features and the consultants reiterated their belief and recommended that the valley should form Northern Irelands first 'Country Park' for recreational and landscape purposes (with possible eventual public ownership/control). BUAP 1969 also recommended the provision of a linear park for recreational purposes alongside the River Lagan from Lisburn to Belfast Lough. The area plan retained the Matthew stop line with little alteration despite it running through the suggested Lagan Valley Country Park.

The area plan also offered many recommendations regarding legislation for the Belfast Urban Area. Some particularly relevant law-making recommendations included:

- Establishment of overall Government responsibility for planning strategy, control of land development and conservation, with appropriate delegation.
- Simplification of the procedure for enforcement, revocation, or modification of planning permissions.
- Provision for publicity about planning application for types of development which might arouse strong objections.
- Statutory requirements for local planning authorities to keep a map record of development applications.
- Establishment of effective legislative control over quarrying to safeguard amenity during operations and to ensure satisfactory restoration on completion or temporary cessation.

3.6. BELFAST URBAN AREA PLAN 2001

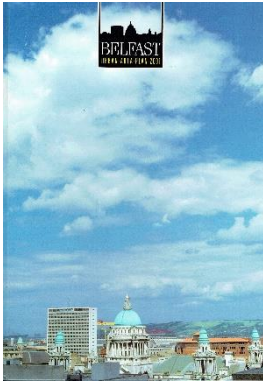


Figure 13: Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001

The 2001 plan was adopted in December 1989 and therefore replaced the 1969 plan. In a similar manner to the previous plan, BUAP 2001 was intended to provide physical development policies for the urban area up to 2001. Uniquely, BUAP 2001 was the only plan of its time in the UK to be produced by a central government (Hendry, 1992).

Policy R1 aimed: *“To protect and enhance the scenic character and recreation potential of the Lagan Valley Regional Park and the existing open spaces along the riverbanks between Ormeau Bridge and Governor’s Bridge.*

Perhaps most importantly, the plan followed on from policy by stating that a local planning statement for the LVRP would be prepared so to set out a detailed land use policy within the park. This was to protect existing recreational and open spaces, to identify other areas where similar uses might have been possible, and to protect largely agricultural areas of the park from development.

BUAP 2001 also designated a green belt area encircling the Belfast Urban Area, thus replacing the mid-1960s stop line with a physical rural zone and boundary. The plan made clear that *“areas of landscape and recreational importance... where further urban spread is unlikely to be acceptable are include in the Green Belt”,* however, much of the inner edge of the Green Belt boundary followed the same delineation as the LVRP and thus seemed to be excluded from the Green Belt Strategy and 7 related policies.

3.7. LISBURN AREA PLAN 2001

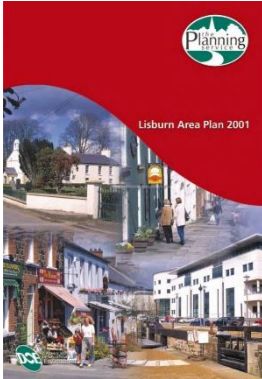


Figure 14: Lisburn Area Plan 2001

The Lisburn Area Plan 2001 (LAP) is a Development Plan with the principal purpose of establishing physical development policies for Lisburn and its surroundings for a period from 1993 – 2001. This plan replaced the prior Lisburn Area Plan 1982-1997.

The plan aims to protect the landscape adjacent to the River Lagan in the form of the following:

Policy ENV 3: Development will only be permitted adjacent to major rivers and open water bodies where it can be demonstrated that proposals meet a detailed criteria within the plan.

Other policy, while not making specific reference to the LVRP, may also be relevant:

Policy OS 1: Existing and proposed recreational open space and amenity land within the Plan area's settlements will be safeguarded against inappropriate development in accordance with all prevailing policy in Planning Policy Statements.

Furthermore, the LAP also advises that specified areas of lands within Lisburn ATCs/AVCs (see table 3) shall be subject to Key Design Considerations as set out in the plan, as well as prevailing regional development policies.

3.8. LAGAN VALLEY REGIONAL PARK LOCAL PLAN 2005

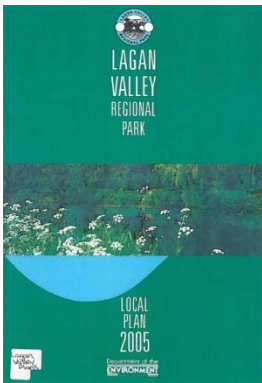


Figure 15: Lagan Valley Regional Park Local Plan 2005

It was decided by the Department of the Environment that a statutory Local Plan for the LVRP prepared under **The Planning (NI) Order 1991** was the most appropriate vehicle in achieving the aims set out in BUAP 2001. A local plan was adopted in 1993 and constitutes the first time that the LVRP had a set of specific policies – it was intended to complement BUAP and its strategic framework although, the local plan would take precedence in regards to the specific topics dealt within it. The plan sets out the strategy and policies associated with the protection and enhancement of the natural and manmade heritage of the LVRP. The local plan had been partly superseded by BMAP but was reinstated as the statutory development plan for the LVRP following the BMAP ruling.

The local plan sets out its main aims as:

- *“To protect and enhance the natural and man-made heritage of the Park.”*
- *“To conserve the essential character of the Park and to encourage its responsible public use.”*
- *“To seek to ensure that the various land uses and activities within the Park can co-exist without detriment to the environment.”*

The local plan then sets out extensive management guidelines (MG1-18) and planning policies under four inter-related headings: Landscape Conservation (L1-5), Nature Conservation (N1-4), Recreation (R1-3) and Urban Uses (U1-10).

The local plan also designated Areas of Townscape and Village Character (ATCs/AVCs) (see table 2) and specified that development proposals within ATCs/AVCs would be assessed against prevailing regional planning policy set out in PPS 6 (Addendum): Areas of Townscape Character – a document which is purported to embody a commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship (planningni.gov.uk, n.d.).

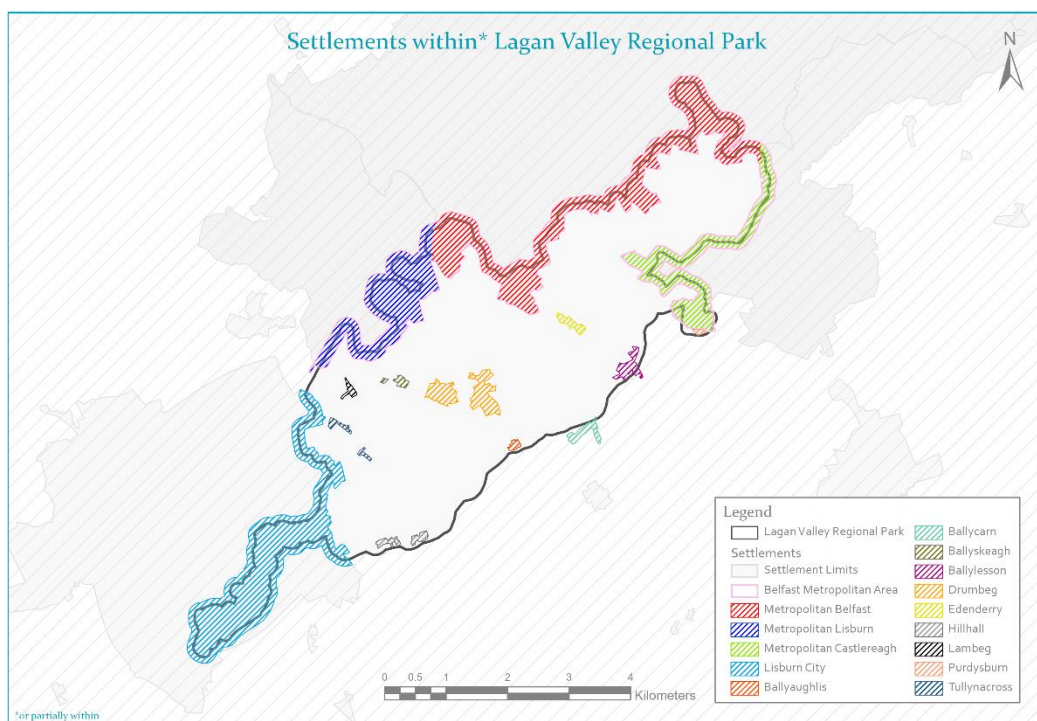


Figure 16: Settlements within* Lagan Valley Regional Park

Belfast	Lisburn
BT 054 Stranmillis Riverside	DG 07 Drumbeg
BT 059 Upper Malone	ML 20 Dunmurry
	EY 03 Edenderry
	LG 04 Lambeg
	PN 03 Purdysburn

Table 2: Area of Townscape/Village Character within/partly within the LVRP

3.9. BELFAST METROPOLITAN AREA PLAN 2015

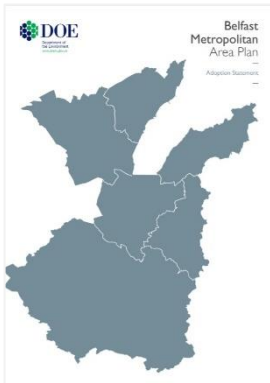


Figure 17: Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015

The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) was planned to replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001; the Lisburn Area Plan 2001; and the Lagan Valley Regional Park Local Plan 2005. BMAP was adopted as the Local Development Plan for the Belfast Metropolitan Area in 2014, however, it was determined that BMAP was unlawfully adopted and was declared of no effect. Despite this, BMAP remains significant in planning decisions as it contains the most up to date Development Management Policies for the Belfast Metropolitan Area.

BMAP 2015 sets out designations and policy in order *“to protect and where possible enhance the natural and man-made heritage of the Park”* part which sits within the Belfast Council Area. These include:

Designation COU 9: The LVRP is (re)designated as identified on BMAP Map No. 1.

Policy COU 10: sets a criteria for the approval of development outside the Metropolitan/Settlements Development Limit but within the LVRP.

Policy COU 11: sets a criteria for the approval of development proposals for recreational, tourist, interpretative and educational facilities within designated nodes of the LVRP (see table 3).

Policy COU 12: the approval of new developments or the intensification of developments will only be granted if they are appropriate to, and does not adversely affect, the character, quality, features or visual amenity of the LVRP

BMAPs policy on the natural environment is also relevant:

ENV 1: In designated Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) planning permission will not be granted for development that would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on those features, or combination of features, that contribute to the environmental quality, integrity or character.

Belfast	Castlereagh	Lisburn
CA 04 Lockview Road, Stranmillis	CR 07 Lock Keepers Cottage, Milltown Road	LN 09 Ballyskeagh
CA 05 Dub Lane, Upper Malone Road	CR 08 Belvoir Education Centre	LN 10 Glenmore Activity Centre, Lambeg
CA 06 Malone House, Upper Malone	CR 09 Belvoir Activity Centre	
CA 07 Shaw's Bridge		
CA 08 Lady Dixon Park, Entrance 2		

Table 3: District Proposals LVRP node designations

Belfast	Lisburn
BT 102 Colin Glen	BH 02 Lock Keeper's House
BT 103 Cranmore / Bladon	BH 03 Ballyskeagh Road
BT 113 Hunterhouse / Wedderburn / Rathmore	BLN 02 Ballylesson / Edenderry
BT 122 Musgrave	DG 06 Tributary of River Lagan
BT 127 River Lagan / Botanic	HL 02 Hillhall Road
	LG 02 Lagan Corridor
	ML 15 Derryaghy River
	PN 02 Purdysburn
	TS 02 River and Canal
	TS 03 Tullynacross Road

Table 4: Local Landscape Policy Areas within/partly within the LVRP

4. Research and Methodology

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This section shall outline the methodology for effectively achieving the aim and objectives of this report following on from the literature review on policy (context), landscape protection and recreation.

As a longitudinal study this report not only uses secondary data from literature, policy and government documents/resources but also heavily utilises various datasets from the Department of Infrastructure, the Lagan Valley Regional Park and OpenDataNI with mapping software. Primary data collection could have involved site visits within the LVRP and face to face meetings, which can be the most advantageous format (Doyle, 2005), with interested parties – such as board members or council planners, however, the Covid-19 pandemic created significant barriers to achieving this.

4.2. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Quantitative data, received mostly in the form of datasets and spreadsheets, underpin the whole research element of this report as they provide for the creation of most of the maps and other charts within the report. It is aimed for that the maps and charts be presented in a manner that can offer an instantly understandable longitudinal overview and then offer more detailed, settlement specific and time specific looks into planning applications across the 1973 – August 2020 period. As a desk-based task it was well suited to homeworking throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic.

4.3. COMPARATIVE STUDY AND DISCUSSION

A comparative study of planning applications will be undertaken in relation to both the general picture taken from planning applications between 1973 – August 2020 and from extracting individual, likely contentious, application cases from various settlement areas and years. These steps will allow for a detailed discussion to be had on the effectiveness of planning policy and the relevance of response from LVRP in protecting the park from development. To compliment this discussion land cover/use maps will also be involved.

5. Decade Snapshots

5.1. OVERVIEW

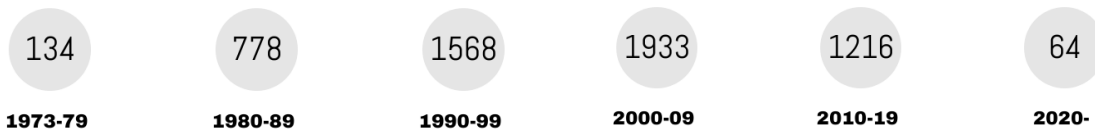


Figure 18: Applications submitted per 'decade' period

The following section provides a brief overview on the total number of planning applications submitted for determination between 1973 and August 2020. A total of 5693 planning applications, within or adjacent to the LVRP (100m buffer zone), were submitted to Local Government Authorities between 1973 and 2020 for determination. To offer context, the overall amount of planning applications received across Northern Ireland in 2019/2020 alone was 12,207 and of those, 201 of were within or adjacent to the park.

Figure 18 displays the number of applications grouped across 6 approximate decade periods which shall be used frequently throughout the remainder of this report. A clear upward trend in the number of planning applications submitted can be seen between 1973 and 2009, however, a 37% drop in applications occurred during the succeeding decade period, with no recovering visible in 2020. As aforementioned, the local government system of Northern Ireland was reorganised into 26 councils following the Local Government Acts of 1971/2 and following this, Northern Ireland obtained its first comprehensive town and country planning legislation in 1973. These elements, alongside the recommendations set out in BUAP 1969, may have helped to enable a more extensive processing and recording of planning applications from the 1970s onwards.

However, conflict in the mid-1970s and 80s had a negative impact on foreign direct investment, local investment and tourism too (Birnie and Hitchens, 1999). Such subdued market conditions across Northern Ireland may have reduced the number of planning applications being submitted across all areas of Northern Ireland. It may also be true that the establishment of the 'Regional Park' may have initially deferred development proposals within the area.

With the cessation of hostilities in the 1990s, the Northern Irish economy grew faster than did the economy of the rest of the UK (Fitzgerald and Morgenroth, 2019) and so it is likely that the number of planning applications across the same period would rise in tandem, particularly in areas with an association for recreation, such as the LVRP. Increasing numbers of applications in the period 2000-09 may represent an enduring peace and stabilising economy whereas the following 2010-2019 period and drop in applications may represent the ongoing effects of the 2007-08 financial crisis and tightening budgets across the UK (“UK economy: The story of the downturn - BBC News,” 2013). Data on the 2020 period is limited to January - August and is likely to have been adversely affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic in which “the economy was put on pause”(“The Coronavirus Pandemic Lockdown Was an Economic Revolution,” 2020). The 64 applications recorded over the 8-month period represent a 40% drop when compared to a monthly application average worked out from the period 2010-19.

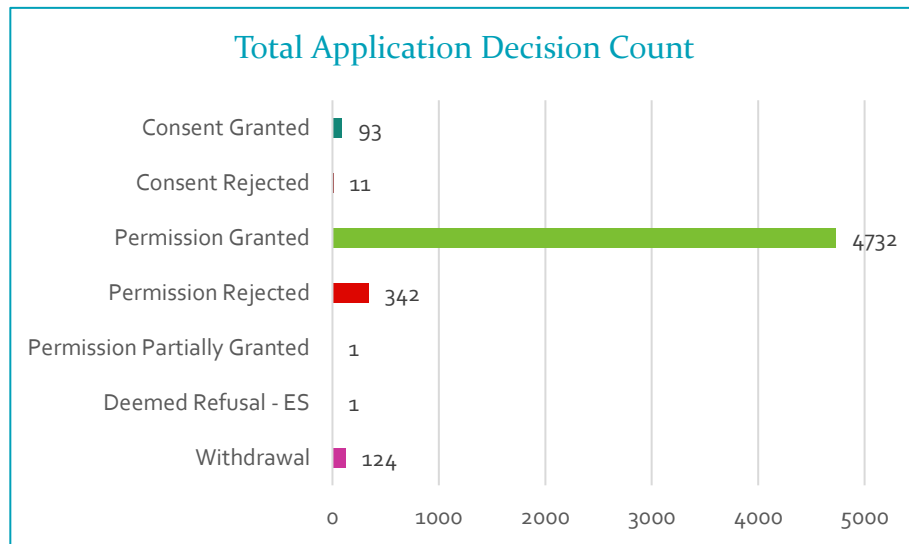


Figure 19: Total Application Decision Count

5.2. MAPS

The following 6 pages and figures 20-25 present all planning applications, as noted in the above table, within or adjacent to the LVRP; their polygonal boundaries and the associated authority decision in the following time periods: 1973-1979, 1980-1989, 1990-1999, 2010-2019 and 2020.

Planning Applications within Lagan Valley Regional Park

1973-1979

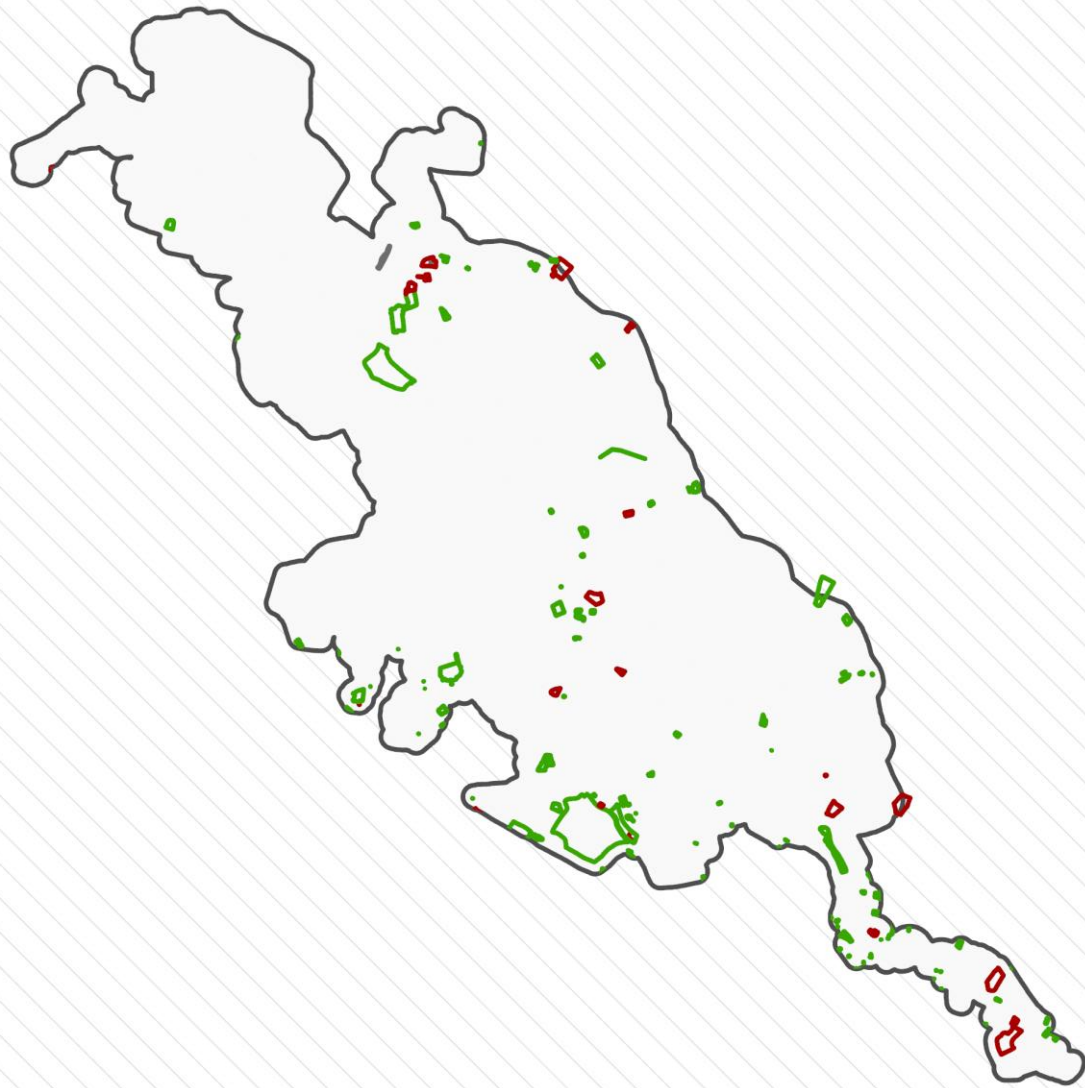


Figure 20: Planning Applications within Lagan Valley Regional Park (1973-1979)

Planning Applications within Lagan Valley Regional Park



1980-1989

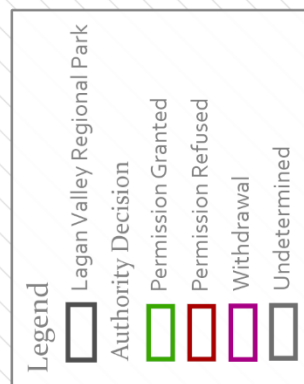
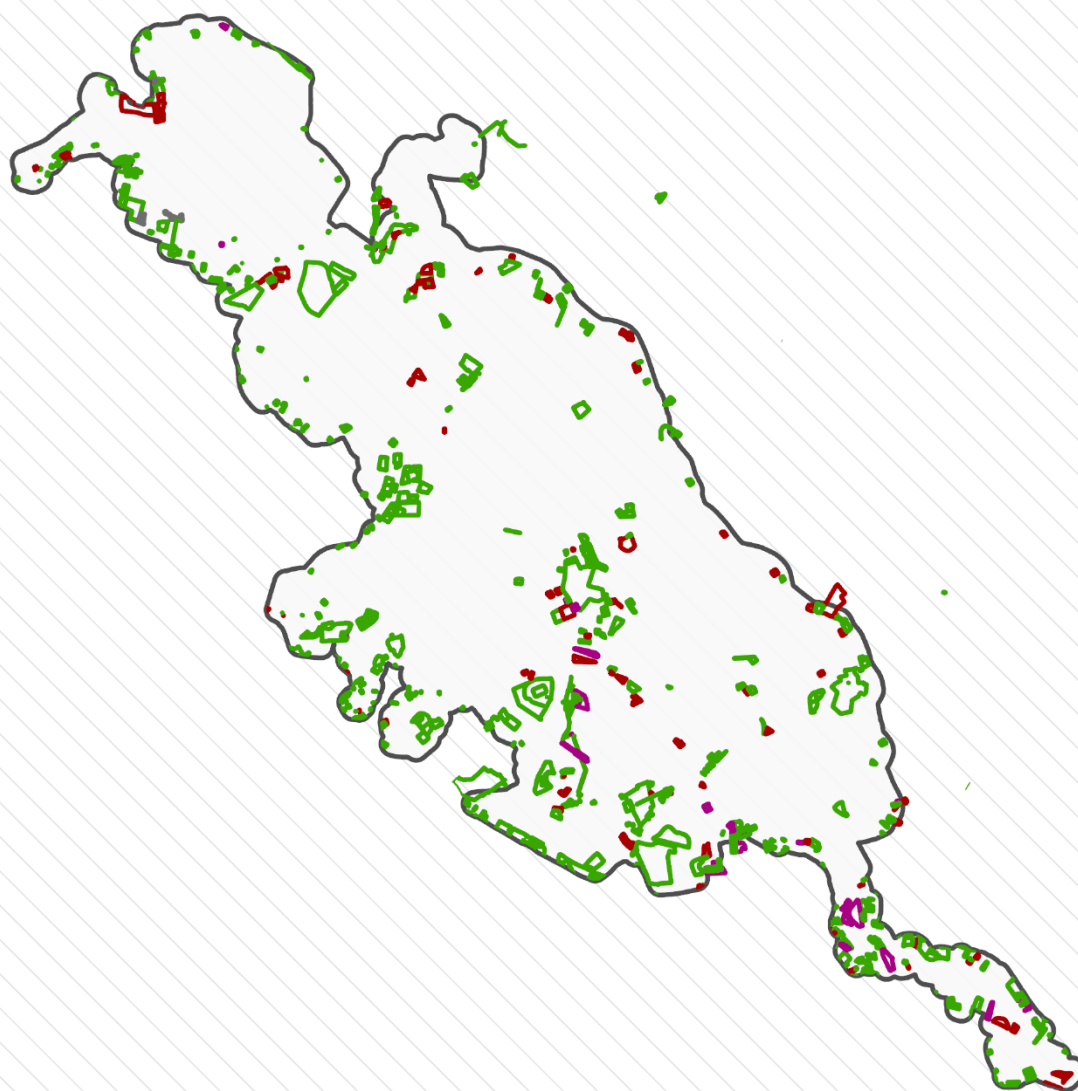


Figure 21: Planning Applications within Lagan Valley Regional Park (1980-1989)

Planning Applications within Lagan Valley Regional Park

1990-1999

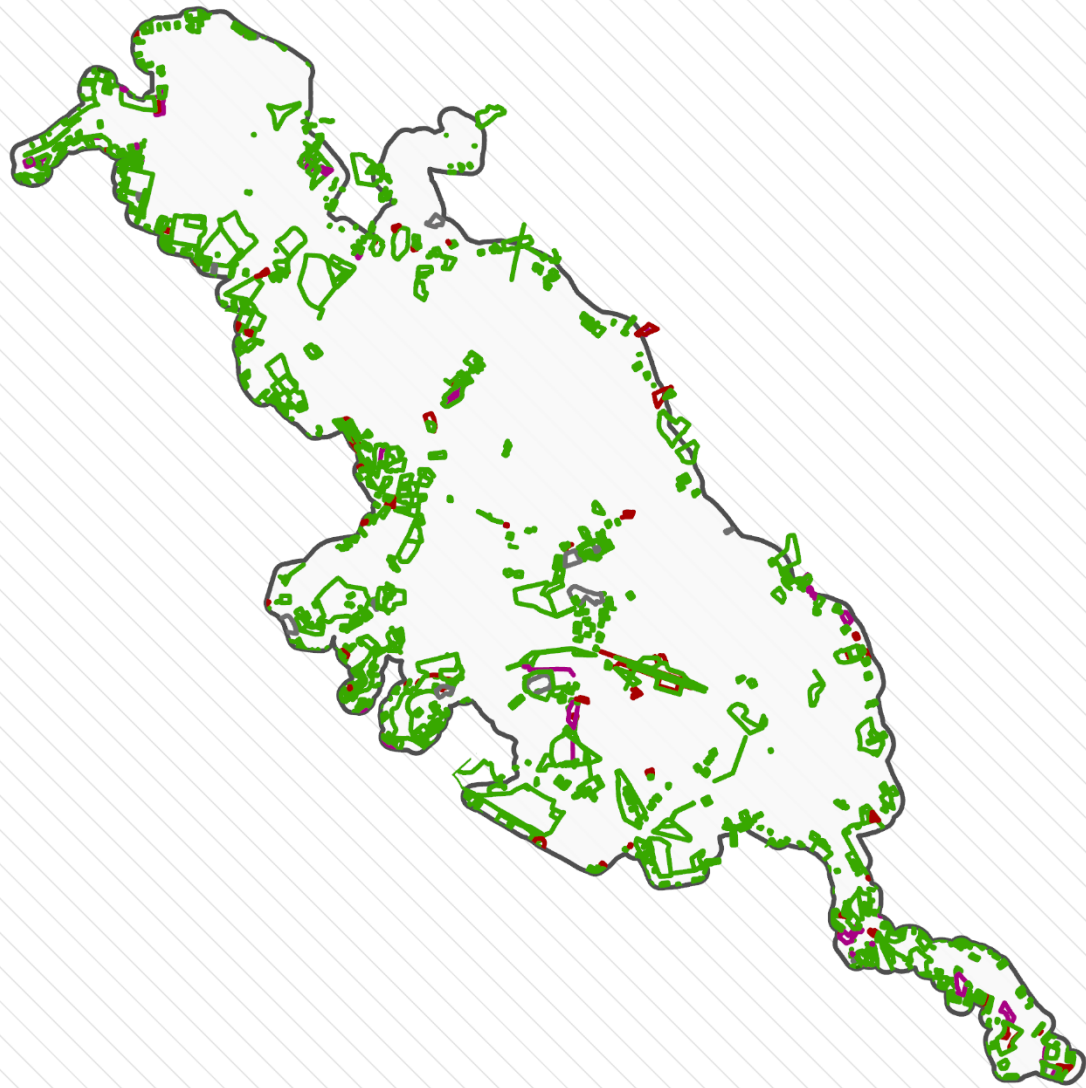


Figure 22: Planning Applications within Lagan Valley Regional Park (1990-1999)

Planning Applications within Lagan Valley Regional Park



2000-2009

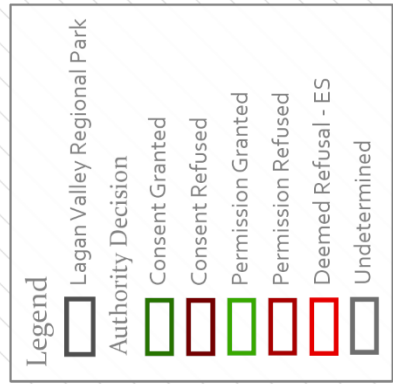


Figure 23: Planning Applications within Lagan Valley Regional Park (2000-2009)

Planning Applications within Lagan Valley Regional Park



2010-2019



Figure 24: Planning Applications within Lagan Valley Regional Park (2010-2019)

Planning Applications within Lagan Valley Regional Park

2020

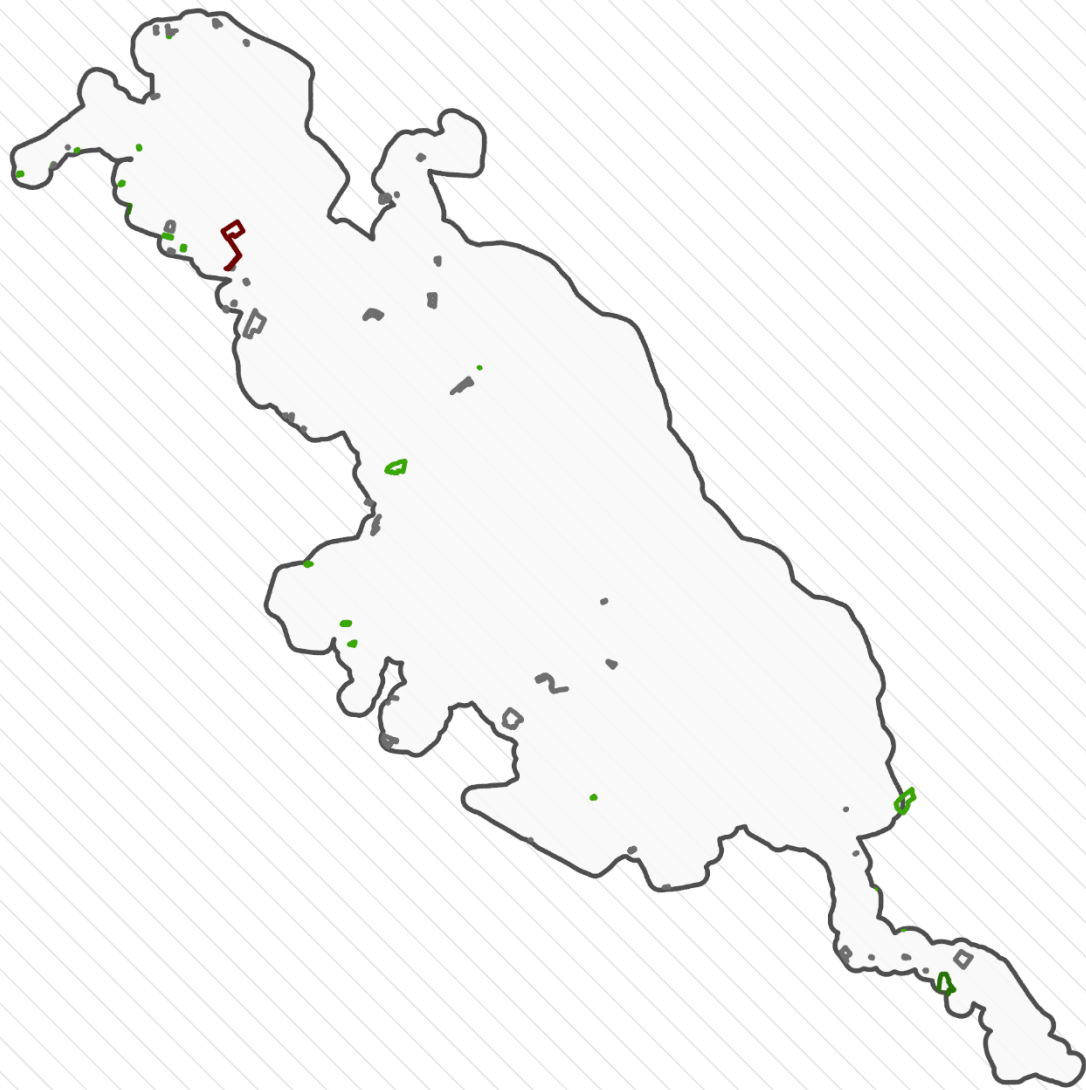


Figure 25: Planning Applications within Lagan Valley Regional Park (2020)

5.3. LVRP RESPONSE

This segment shall exclusively look into the response, or lack thereof, from the LVRP in relation to planning applications within or adjacent to the park.



Figure 26: LVRP Office Objections and Decision

Between the period from 1973 to 2020 the LVRP are recorded to have objected to 163 applications within or adjacent to the park. This is approximately 2.9% of all applications submitted. Of those applications, 64% were still granted consent or permission by the relevant local authority, 12% were refused and the remaining 24% of applications were withdrawn, undetermined or the decision is unknown/yet to be determined.



Figure 27: LVRP Office No Objections and Decision



Figure 28: LVRP Office No Response and Decision

In the same period the LVRP commented and offered no objection to 238 applications, equalling approximately 4.2% of all applications submitted. Of applications with no LVRP objection, 86% were granted consent or permission by the relevant local authority, only 6% were rejected and the remaining 8% of applications were withdrawn, undetermined or the decision is unknown/yet to be determined.

At 92.2% the overwhelming majority of planning applications submitted in the 1973-2020 period received no response from the LVRP. Of these applications, 85% were granted by the relevant local planning authority, 6% were rejected and the remaining 9% of applications were withdrawn, undetermined or the decision is unknown/yet to be determined. There are several possible reasons for such a result, with many planning applications likely to be minor alterations to an existing building/property or land (583 or 10.2% of all applications) and thus the LVRP believing that that no response is warranted. Other cases may include not being contacted for consultation, being incorrectly consulted for applications outside the LVRP boundary, requiring further details before being able to comment, not having the capacity to respond or simply not being able to add any valuable comment to the consultation process.

6. Mapping within Settlements

The following section will offer area specific looks at planning applications with one or more application case studies.

6.1. METROPOLITAN BELFAST

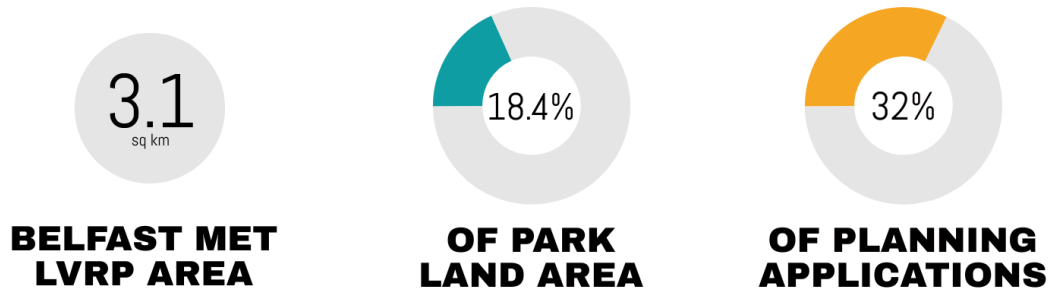


Figure 29: Metropolitan Belfast 'Statistics'

Metropolitan Belfast covers 18.4% of the LVRP land area yet contains 32% of the proposed development locations in planning applications submitted between 1973 – 2020. However, this is only a 74% increase from Metropolitan Belfast percentage of park land to percentage of applications.

The table below presents all applications within the relevant Metropolitan Belfast development limits and classifies them as either housing or other. 22% of applications are housing while 78% are classed as other, consisting (predominately) of *minor development applications as well as likely including recreation and leisure; commercial; industry and infrastructure. 77% of housing applications were granted permission while 11%, including an outline application for dwellings on a 181 ha site, were refused while the remaining 12% were withdrawn or invalid. 89% of other applications, including a proposed conversion of a vacant shop into 2 commercial units on 14 ha site, were granted, while only 3% were refused and the remaining 8% were withdrawn or invalid.

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	380	291	40
Others*	1368	1224	36
Total	1748	1515	76

Table 5: Types of Applications submitted in Metropolitan Belfast (LVRP)

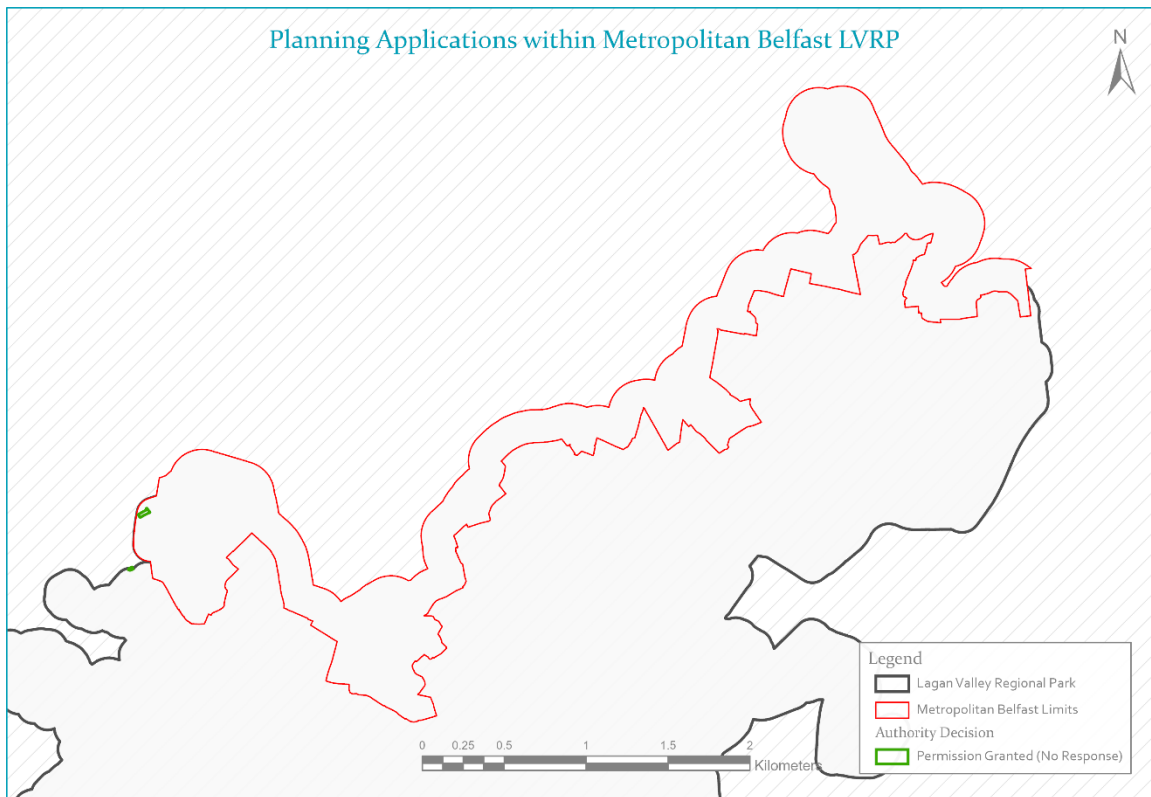


Figure 30: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Belfast LVRP (1973-79)

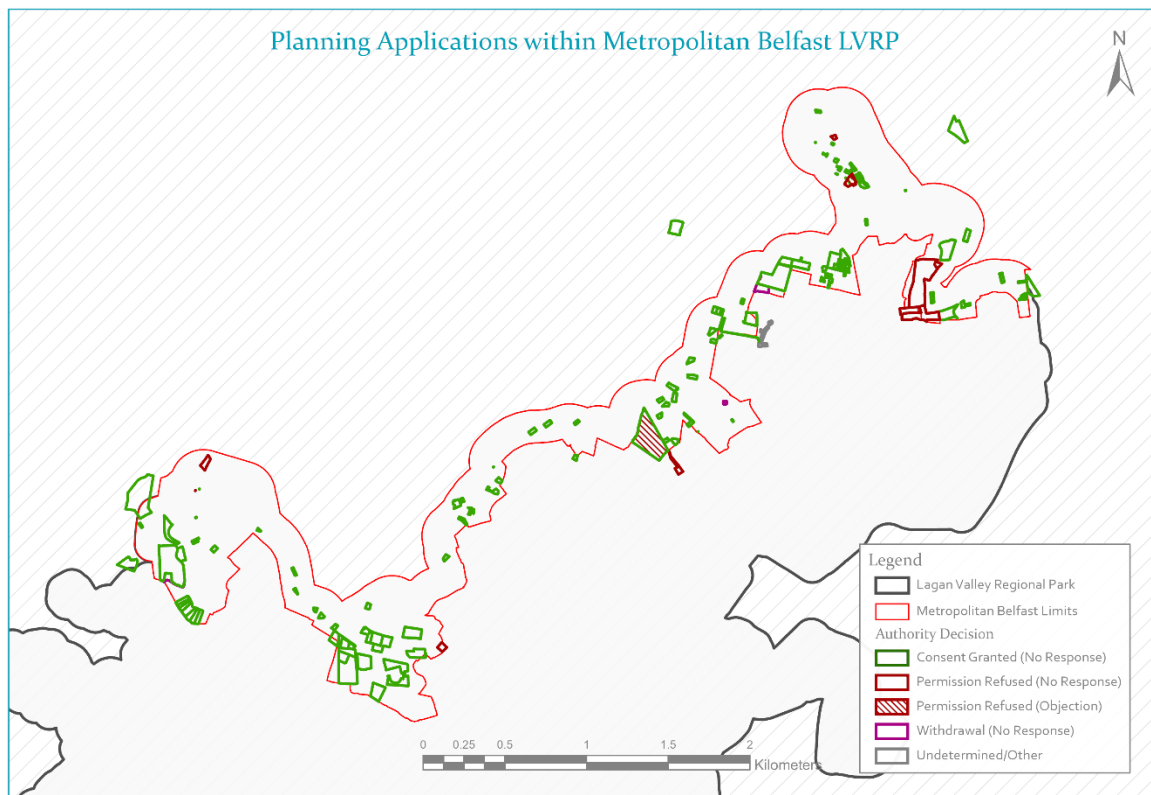


Figure 31: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Belfast LVRP (1980-89)

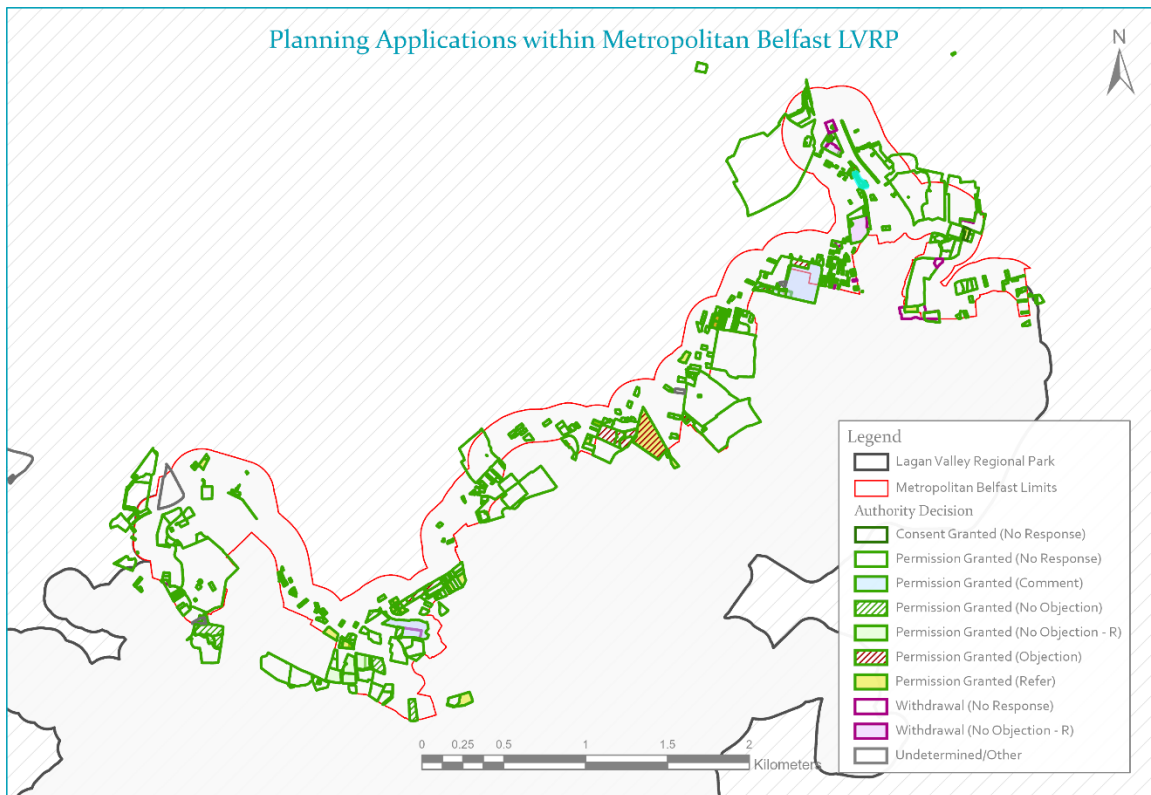


Figure 32: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Belfast LVRP (1990-99)

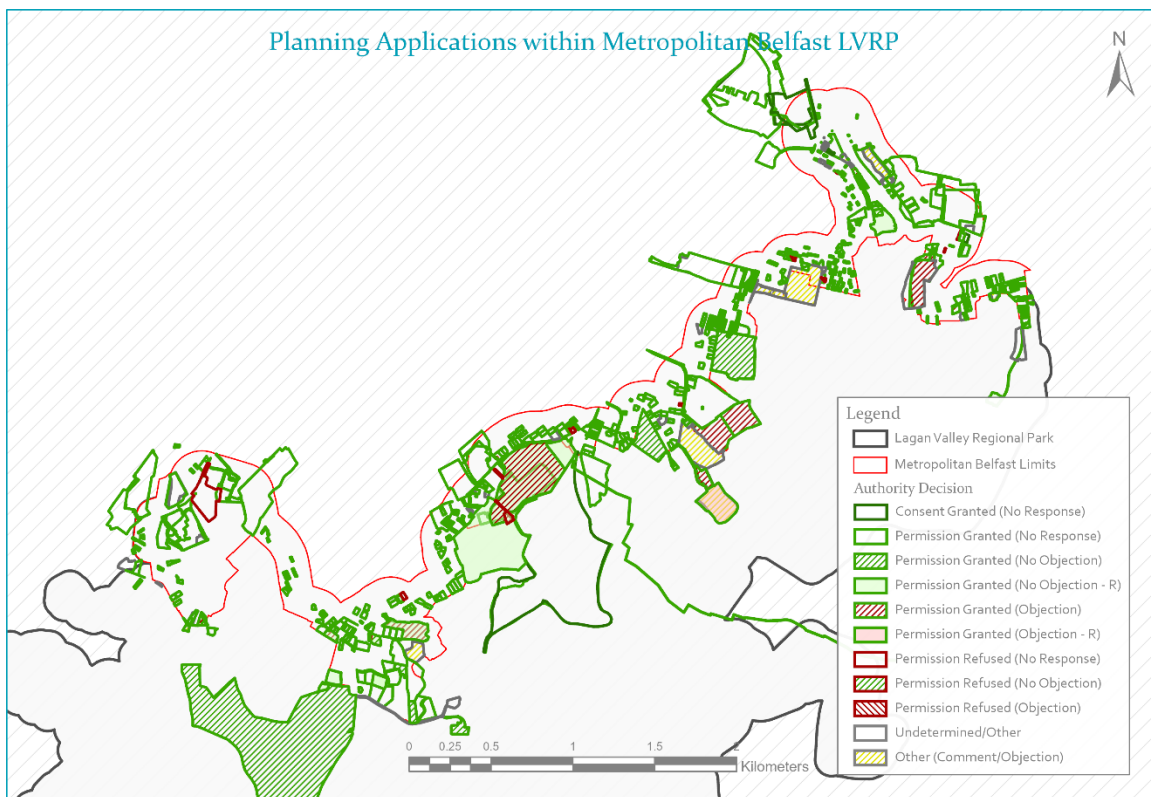


Figure 33: Planning Applications within Belfast LVRP (2000-2009)

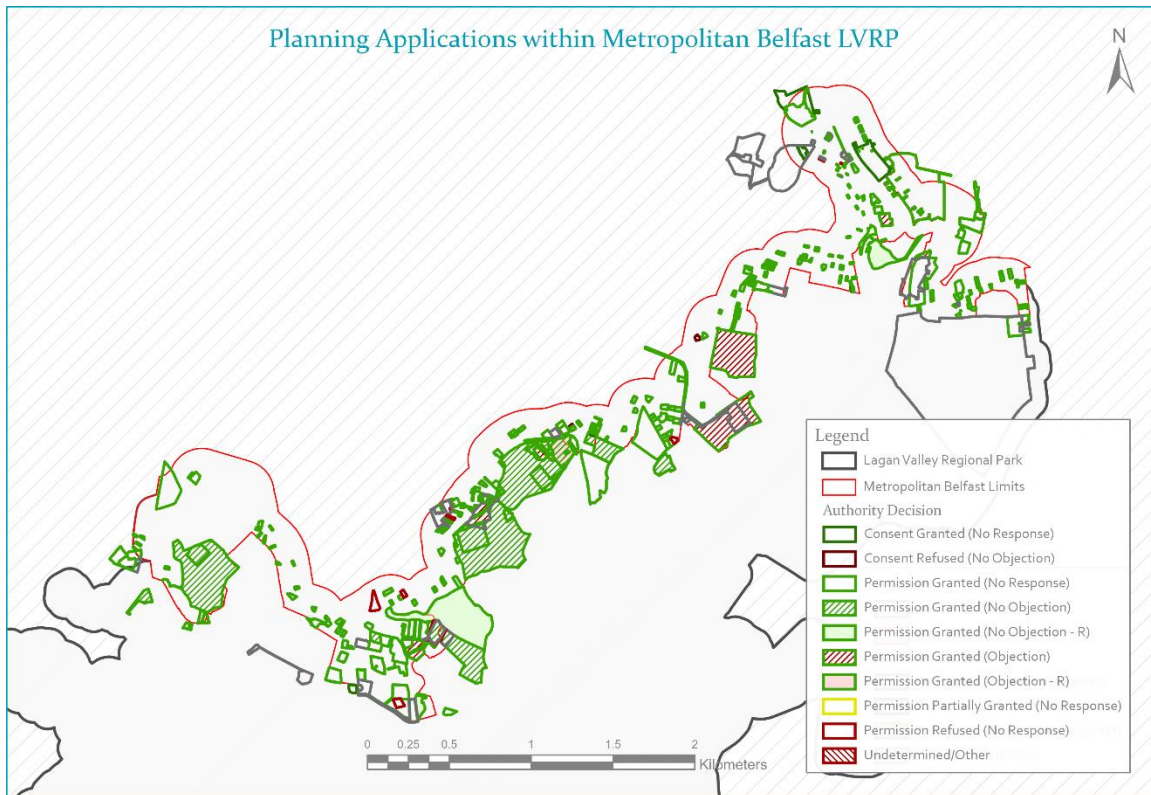


Figure 34: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Belfast LVRP (2010-2019)

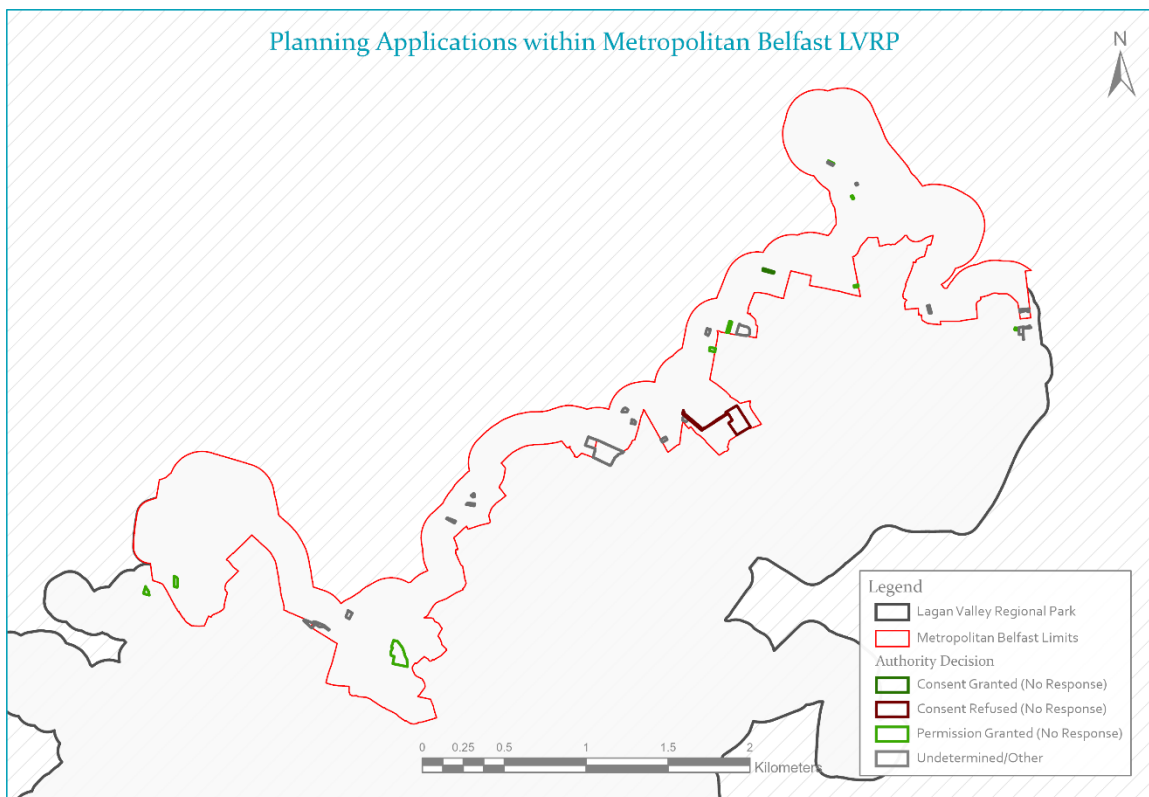


Figure 35: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Belfast LVRP (2020)

Z/2010/0767/F

- 170 Upper Malone Road Belfast BT17 9EH

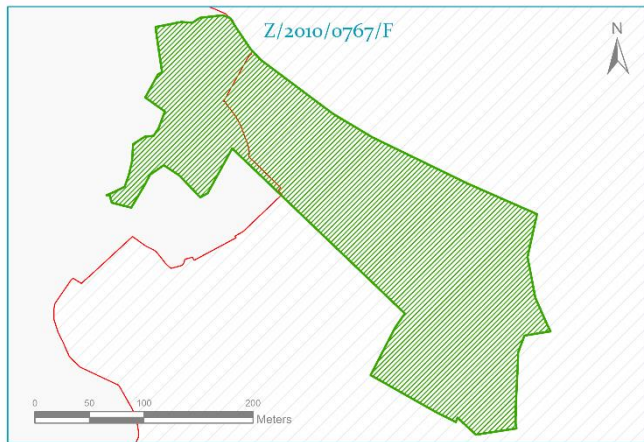


Figure 36: Application ref: Z/2010/0767/F

course of the processing the application, the proposal received 43 letters of objection and 28 public comments of objection.

Located entirely within the LVRP, the original scheme proposed a 4,840 m² building and associated works that spread across both the existing built area within the Belfast development limits and Upper Malone ATC as well as semi-rural lands outside of the development limits. The site is also subject to a tree preservation order (TPO). The proposal was amended in 2012 and reduced the number of beds to 50 while also reducing the overall footprint of the proposal to within the existing built area. A further amended scheme was then submitted in 2014 which reduced the number of bedrooms to 45 and finally, another amended scheme was submitted in 2015 to include the waste treatment works.

In initial consultations the LVRP Office objected to the scheme, citing primary concerns (BMAP policy COU 12) about the position of the development with regard to the settlement development limits. The 104 repositioning the development so that it is wholly within the settlement limit negated these concerns and so the LVRPs final response was of no objection. Among many others, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (Natural Heritage) also initially objected to the scheme. NIEA stated their belief that the site is

In 2010 application ref:

Z/2010/0767/F was submitted to Belfast City Council for determination. The development proposal included a nursing home - specialist elderly mentally infirm unit with ancillary works and proposed a package sewerage plant (amended scheme). Over the

zoned for Agriculture and Other Use in the **LVRP Local Plan** and therefore did not meet the criteria of Policy L1 which states:

“There will be a general presumption against non-agricultural developments and uses on existing farmland unless they conform to [such criteria as]: they serve the social or religious need of the local rural population.

In response the initial planning agent suggested that as the site was partially within the ATC, the area was urban in nature rather than rural and that furthermore, the nursing home would fulfil a social need in the area.

The final planning report in 2015 stated that the proposed development was deemed to be of an:

“appropriate design, size and scale for the locality... sympathetic to the special character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty... and with only minimal loss of trees within the site this can be considered as good maintenance rather than numbers of trees being lost to necessitate the development.”

Furthermore, it was considered that the proposed development would be a visual improvement upon the dilapidated stables, paddock and other associated facilities.

Therefore, in 2015, with no final objections from the LVRP or other statutory consultees, Belfast City Council approved planning permission for the amended application with 21 conditions attached mostly associated with protecting the quality of environment and landscape and integrity of the LVRP.

Despite at least 5 years being devoted to this application process, the development did not come to fruition.

[LA04/2018/0180/F](#)

- 170 Upper Malone Road Belfast BT17 9EH

Subsequently, application ref: **LA04/2018/0180/F** was submitted in 2018 for the erection of 4 No detached dwellings. This proposal had a site area of around 0.89 hectares.

Throughout the processing of this application, the proposal received 5 letters of support, no objections from consultees (although concerns/advice was raised) and a further 8 public comments of support. Despite being wholly located in the LVRP no documentation regarding consultation/representations with the LVRP Office could be found.

Despite the lack of objections and some clear support for the proposal, the planning report recommended refusal of the application due to unacceptable design and a proposed density significantly higher than in the nearby residential area. The report specifically referenced Policy ATC 2 of **PPS 6 Addendum** and policies U4 and U10 of the **LVRP Local Plan** – with policy U10 stating that:

“All developments must have special regard to sitting, massing, shape, design, finishes and landscaping in order that they may be integrated into the rural setting.”

In late 2019 a decision notice was provided planning permission was refused by Belfast City Council.

[LA04/2019/1802/F](#)

- 170 Upper Malone Road Belfast BT17 9EH

Most recently, application ref: **LA04/2019/1802/F** was submitted proposing the demolition of existing buildings and erection of 2 No detached dwellings and garages (amended plans). This application is currently undergoing consultation and like application ref: LA04/2018/0180/F no communication with the LVRP Office is currently visible.

6.2 METROPOLITAN CASTLEREAGH

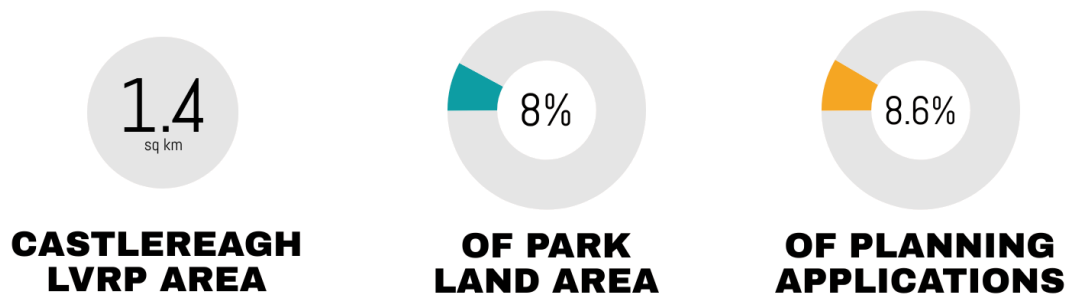


Figure 37: Metropolitan Castlereagh 'Statistics'

Metropolitan Castlereagh covers 8% of the LVRP land area and contains a similar amount, at 8%, of the proposed development locations in planning applications. This equates to only a 7% increase from Metropolitan Castlereagh percentage of park land to percentage of applications.

The table below presents all applications within the relevant Metropolitan Castlereagh development limits. Within the relevant area of Metropolitan Castlereagh, around 22% of all applications submitted were housing developments, while other applications, consisting (predominately) of *minor development applications as well as likely including recreation and leisure; commercial; industry and infrastructure, proposals made up 79% of the total. 67% of housing applications were granted permission, 8.5% were rejected and the leftover 24.5% were wither withdrawn or dismissed. In contrast, 83% of other applications were approved (with 1 application receiving partial permission for continued use as a car) while only 3% were rejected. The disparity between grant rates of housing and others could reflect the numerous minor development applications being submitted which are less likely to cause significant development pressure as compared to new dwellings.

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	94	63	8
Others*	330	274 (1 partial)	10
Total	419	337	18

Table 6: Types of Applications submitted in Metropolitan Castlereagh (LVRP)

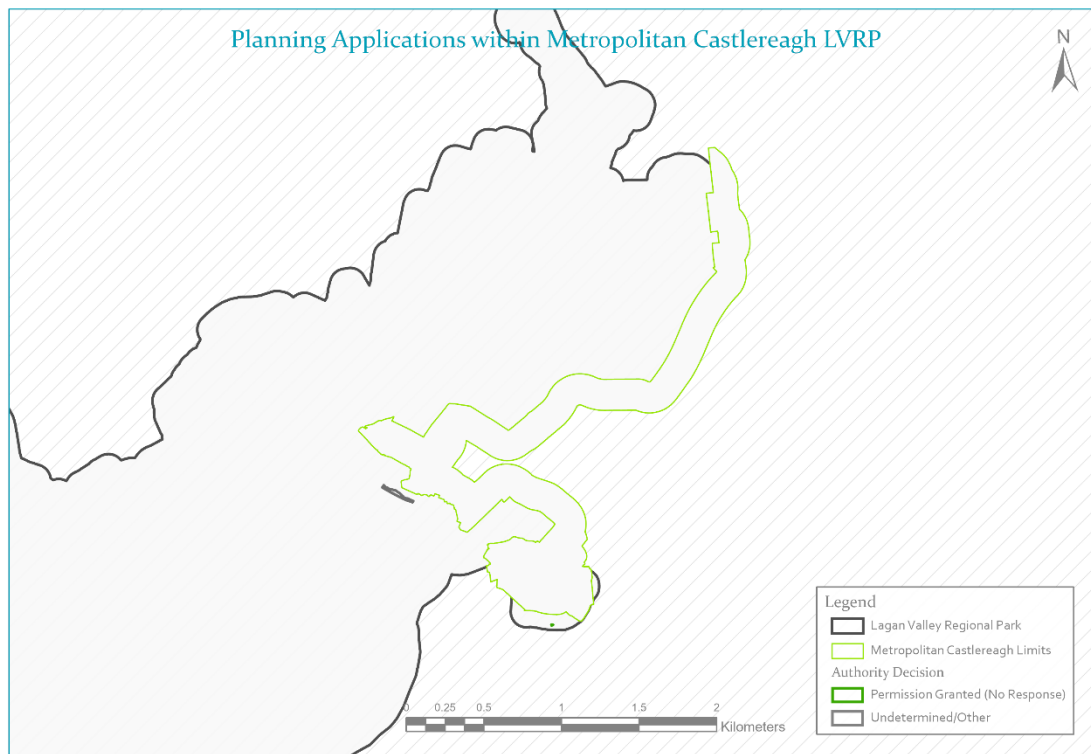


Figure 39: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Castlereagh LVRP (1973-79)

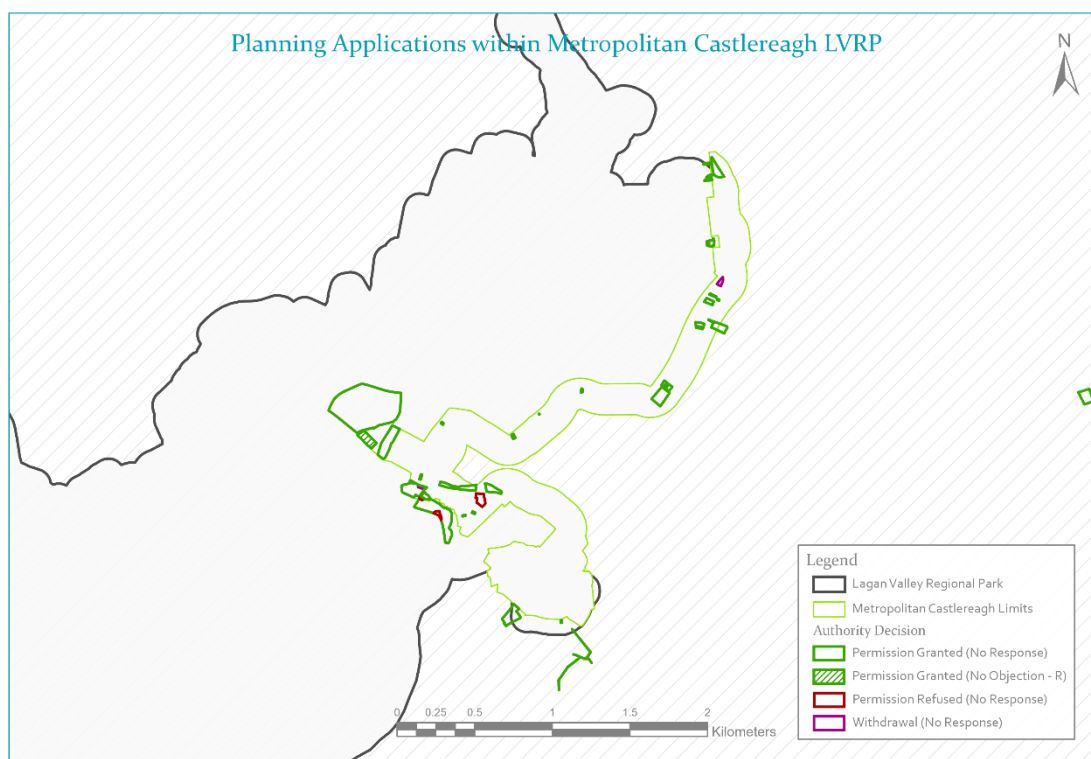


Figure 38: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Castlereagh LVRP (1980-89)

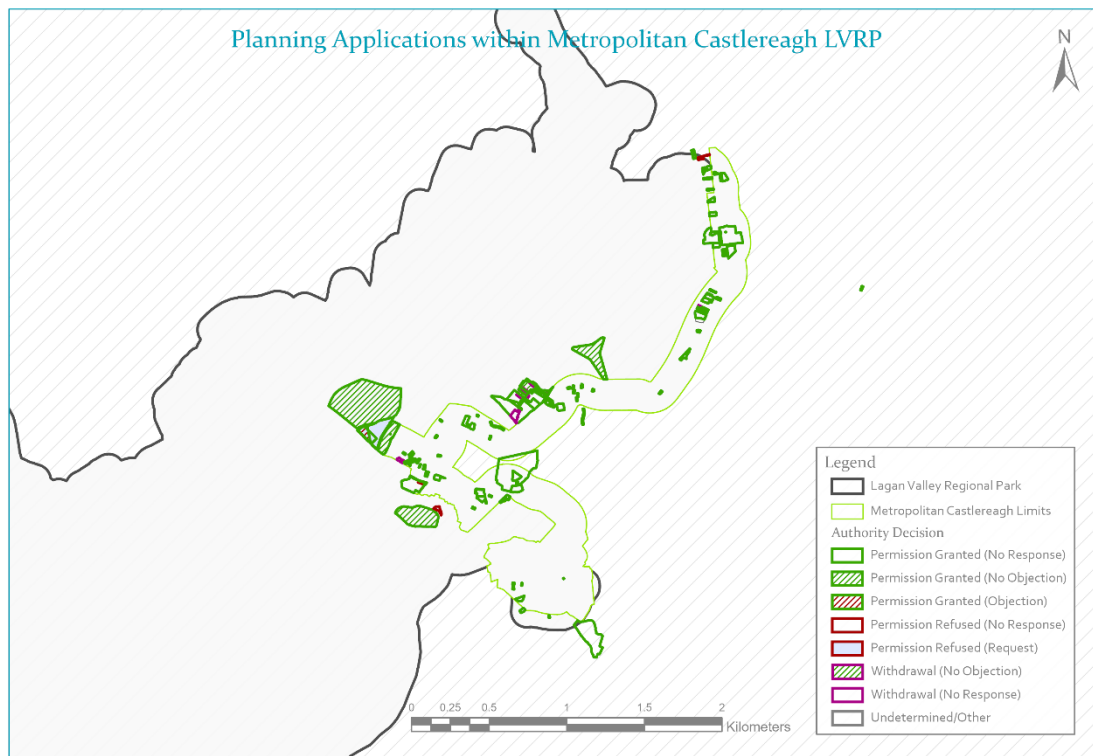


Figure 41: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Castlereagh LVRP (1990-99)

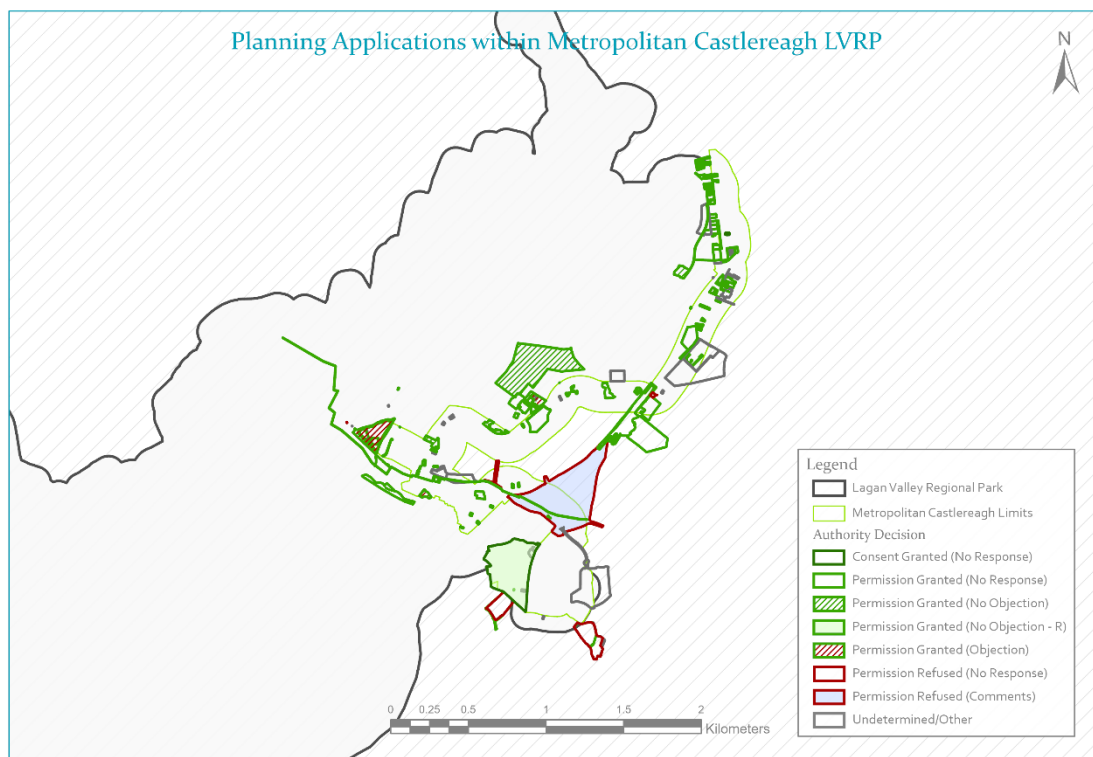


Figure 40: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Castlereagh LVRP (2000-09)

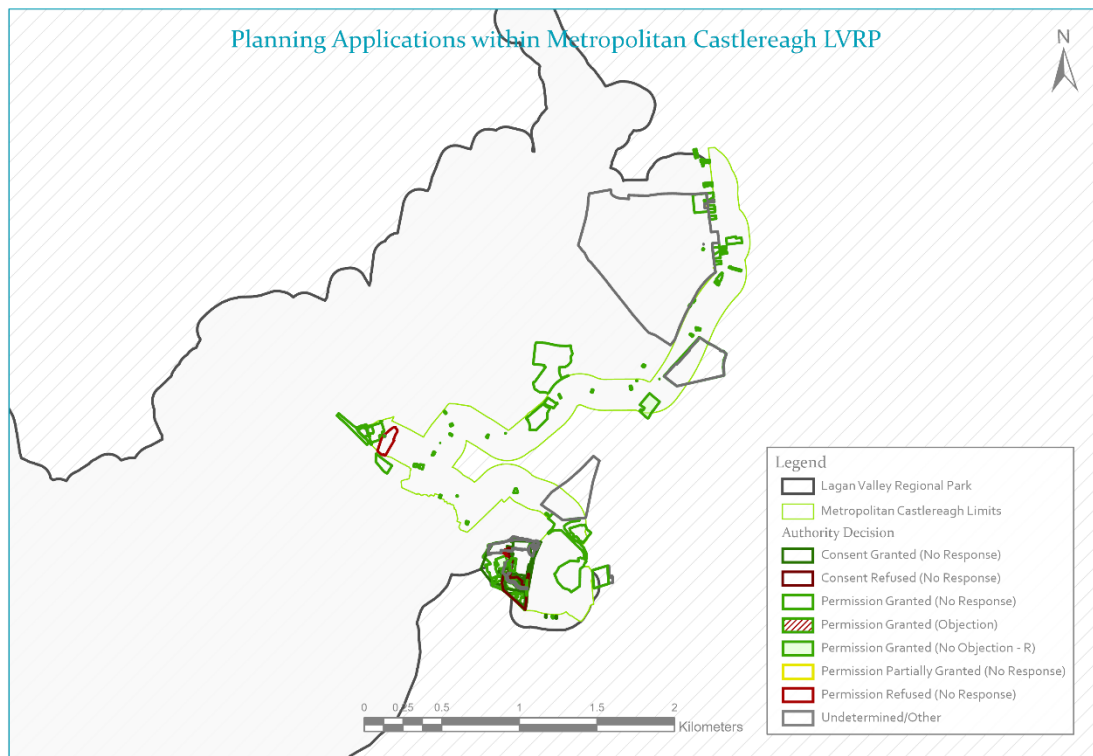


Figure 42: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Castlereagh LVRP (2010-2019)

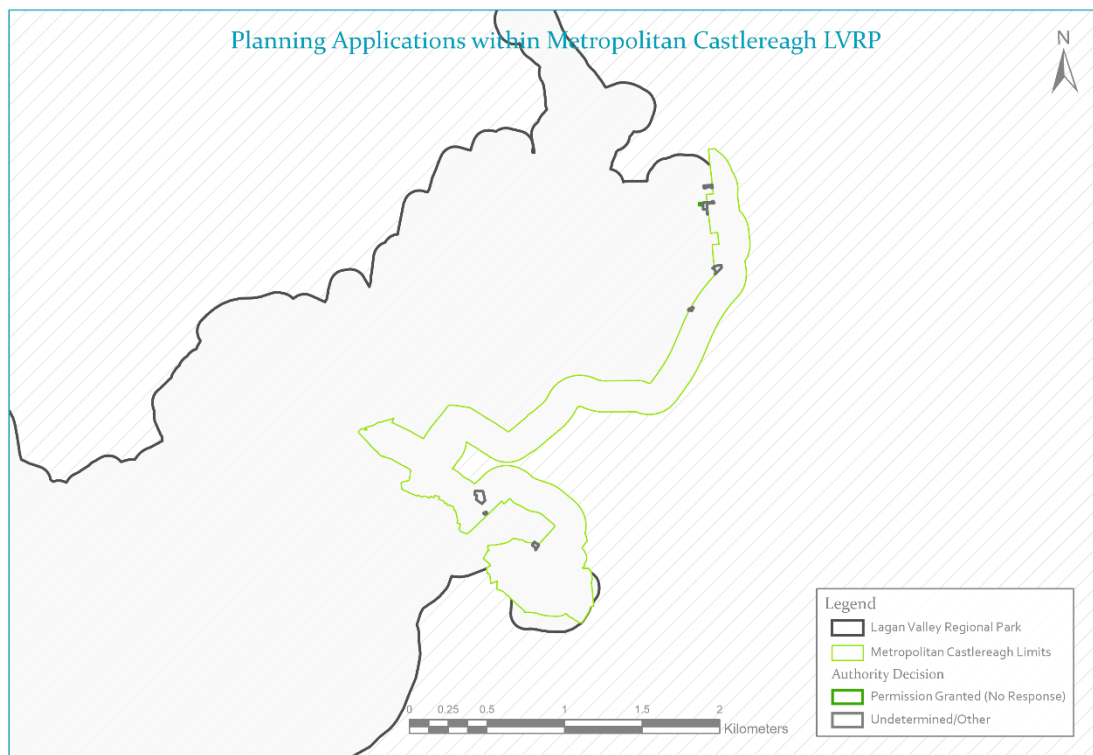


Figure 43: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Castlereagh LVRP (2020)

Y/2009/0462/O

- Belvoir Park Hospital, Hospital Road, Belfast, BT08 8JP

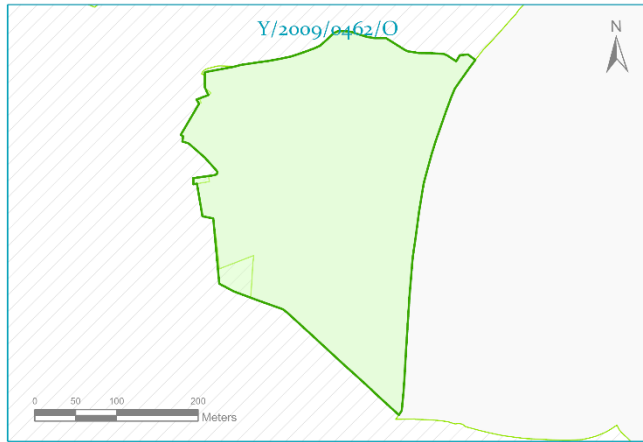


Figure 44: Application ref: Y/2009/0642/O

The application proposed the retention of all listed structures and removal of all non-listed structures, site clearance and associated works. As well as the retention of existing vehicular access point off Hospital Road, plus provision of new vehicular access off Hospital Road.

The site falls within the LVRP and, at the time, sat at the periphery of the Castlereagh Council area on the outskirts of Belfast and adjacent to Lisburn Council area.

Furthermore, the site was zoned within (then draft) **BMAP** for residential development via ref: MCHO5/O8. The area contained many grade B2 listed buildings and structures, has a designated Scheduled Monument rath within its boundaries and is subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

In consultation with the LVRP Office it was noted that there would be no objection – although comments/recommendations would be provided. These included the retention of Listed Buildings on site, that new buildings and extensions should be in keeping with the existing elements of built form evident on site, that trees which are the subject of TPOs should not be damaged or removed as far as is possible and that the Rath should not be damaged as a result of development/construction. The LVRP Office also commented that the public right of way through the site when it was a hospital should not be obstructed. However, the application and submitted drawings made no reference of any

In 2009 outline application ref: **Y/2009/0462/O** was submitted and proposed a residential development of 310 dwellings consisting of new build and conversion of existing buildings, on a site of approximately 9.6 hectares. The size of this site would therefore classify it as a

obstruction anyway. No objections were lodged by other consultees, although neighbour notification resulted in 3 letters of objection.

Furthermore, the Development Control Officer was content that the proposal was not in contrary with **BMAP**, but rather supported re the aforementioned residential zoning, and of adequate density. The report clarified that the maintenance/ re-furbishment and re-generation of the Listed Building was the primary matter of consideration and that the concept plans were well considered. Furthermore, the officer believed that the Rath was successfully integrated into the design proposal and that the portion of the site offered to new build dwellings was sympathetically designed in relation to the important features of the overall area.

The application was recommended for approval and received planning permission in 2011 with a total of 57 conditions attached. Then, in 2014 application ref: **Y/2014/0186/F** was submitted seeking a variation of conditions 5, 6 and 7 of outline planning permission **Y/2009/0462/O** to permit a revised programme of works. However, this was withdrawn only a month after submission. Following this, applications ref: **Y/2014/0390/LBC** and **Y/2014/0401/F** were submitted seeking consent/permission for phase 2 of the development project both received consent/permission without objection in 2015. Since then, a slight variation to condition 6 was approved and construction of the development is underway.

6.3 METROPOLITAN LISBURN

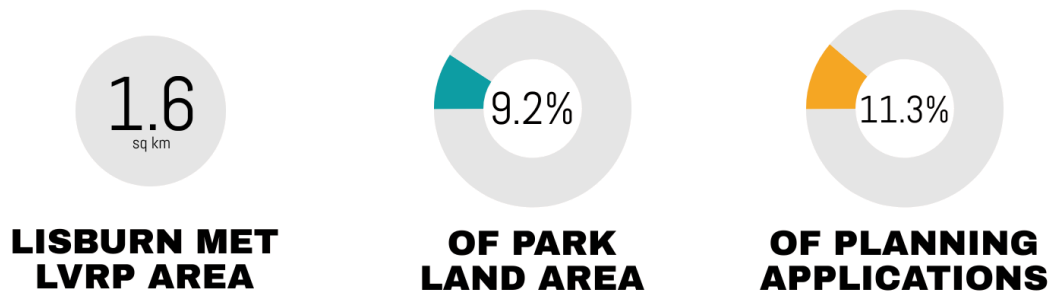


Figure 45: Metropolitan Lisburn 'Statistics'

Metropolitan Lisburn covers 9.2% of the LVRP land area while containing 11.3% of the proposed development locations within planning applications submitted. This is a relatively small 23% increase from Metropolitan Lisburn percentage of park land to percentage of applications.

The following table presents all applications within the Metropolitan Lisburn developments limits and in or adjacent to the LVRP. 16% of all applications submitted have been determined to be housing developments, while the remaining 84% consist (predominately) of minor development applications, as well as recreation and leisure, office/commercial, industry and infrastructure proposals. 77% of housing applications were granted permission while 15% were rejected, while the remainder were withdrawn or dismissed. In comparison, 91% of other applications, including a linear park, shopping centre extension, multiple substations and nursing home were approved while only 4% were rejected. As previously mentioned, it is possible the greater permission rate for other applications could be due to the number of minor development type proposals.

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	95	73	14
Others	494	448	22
Total	589	521	36

Table 7: Types of Applications submitted in Metropolitan Lisburn (LVRP)

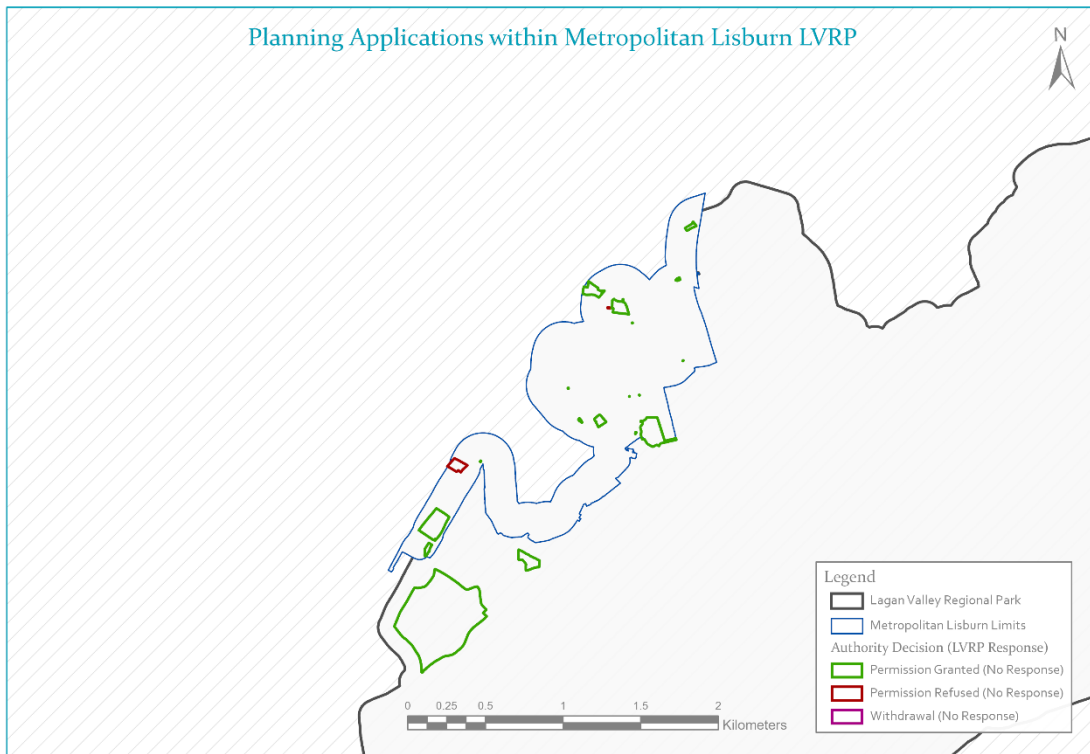


Figure 47: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Lisburn LVRP (1973-79)

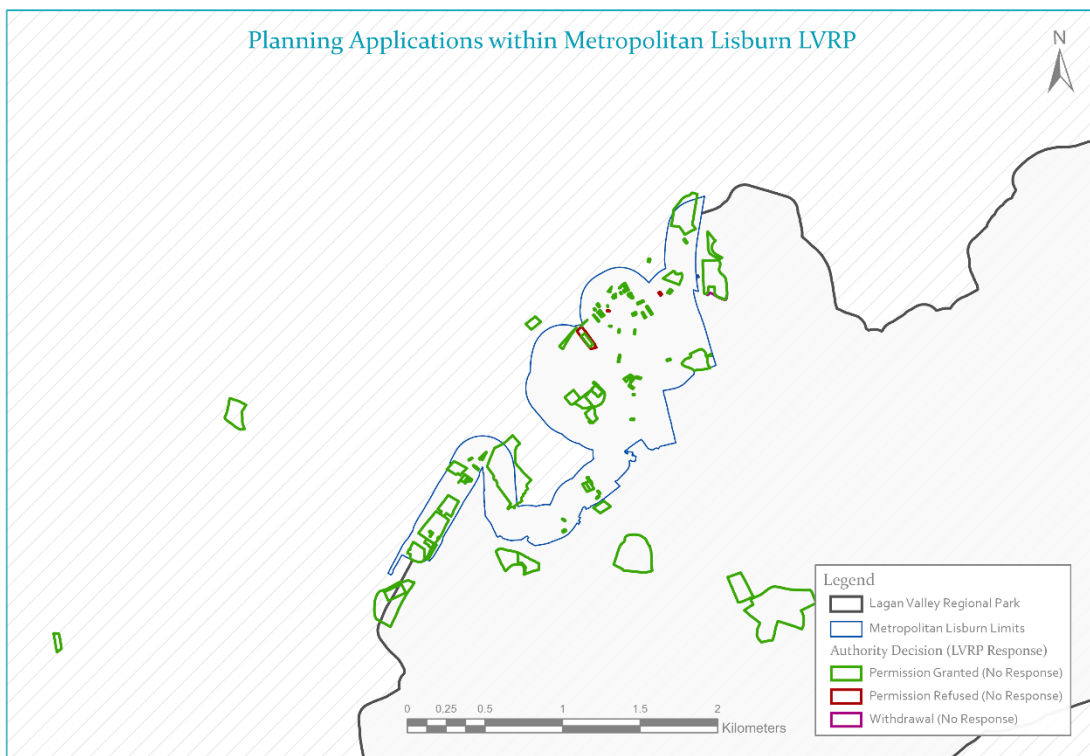


Figure 46: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Lisburn LVRP (1980-89)

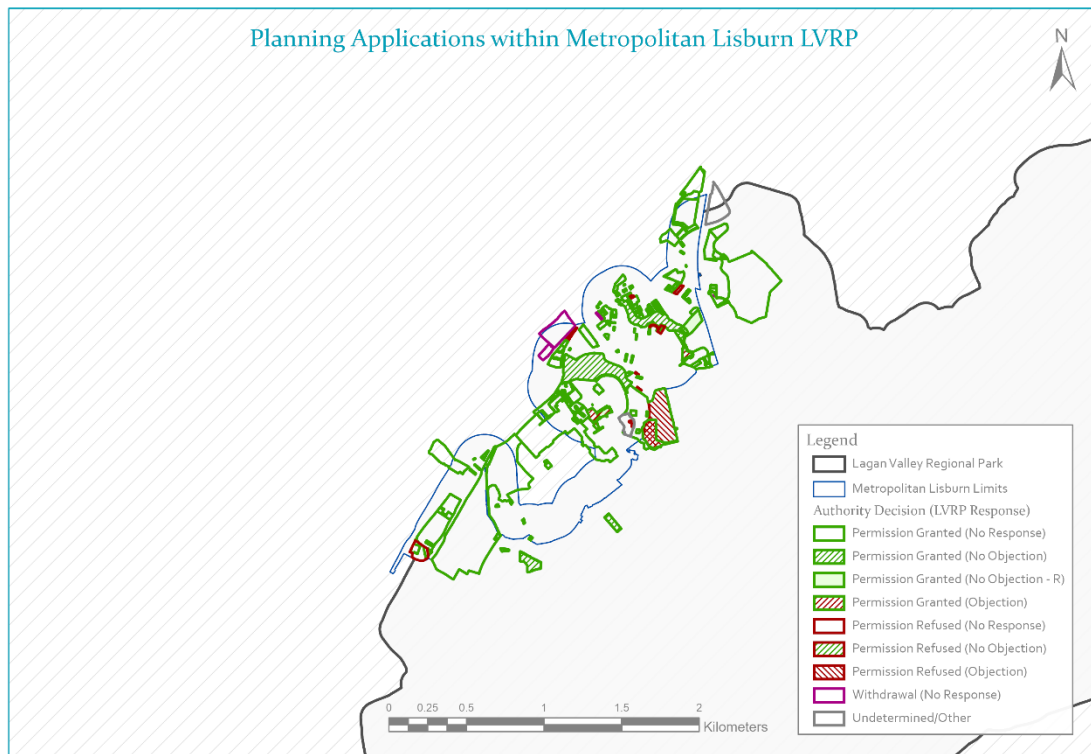


Figure 49: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Lisburn LVRP (1990-99)

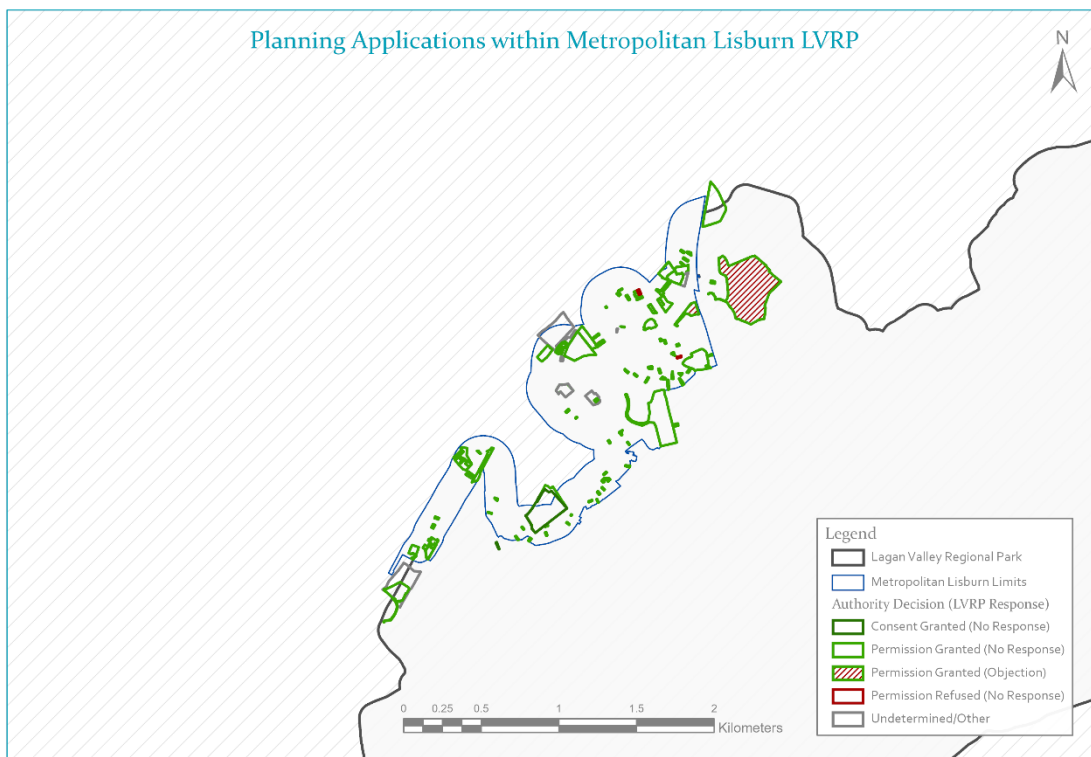


Figure 48: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Lisburn LVRP (2000-2009)

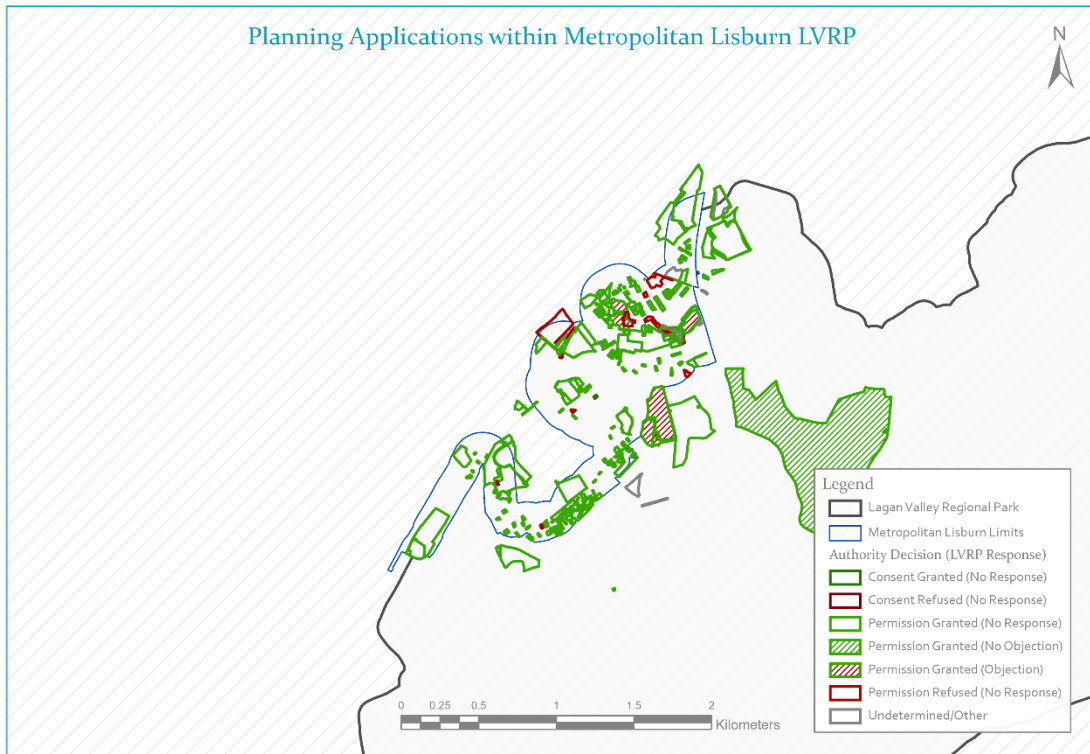


Figure 51: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Lisburn LVRP (2010-19)

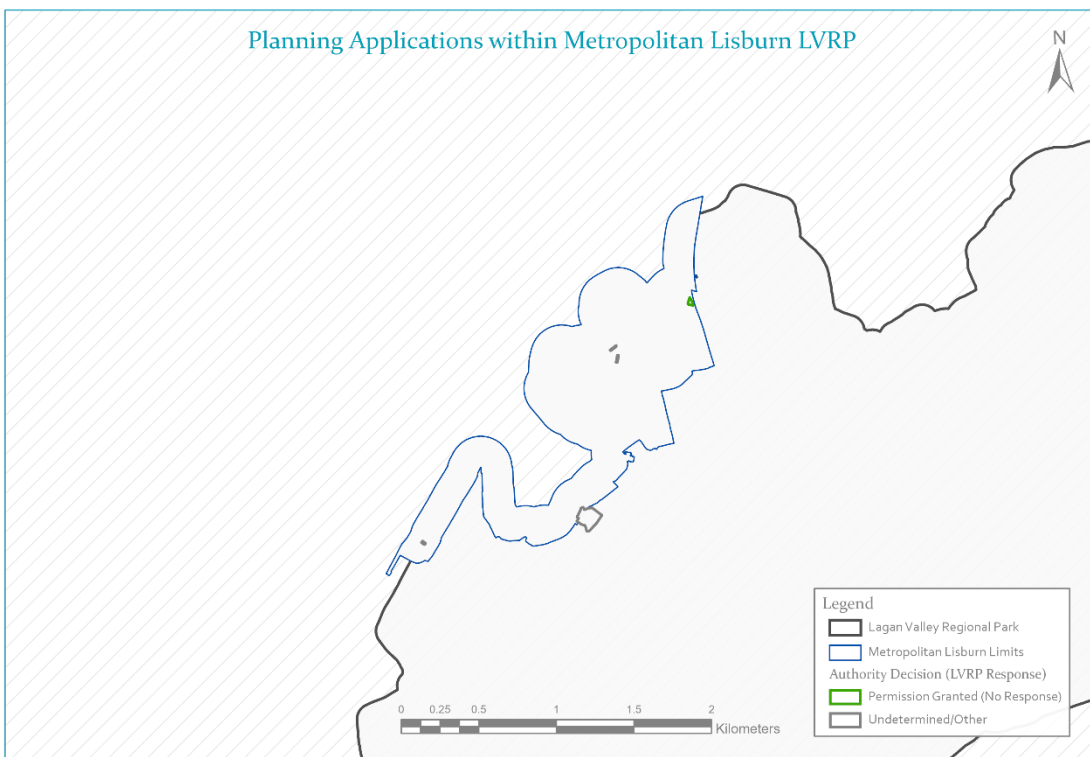


Figure 50: Planning Applications within Metropolitan Lisburn LVRP (2020)

S/1996/0760

- Seymour Hill Industrial Estate, Seymour Hill Mews, Dunmurry

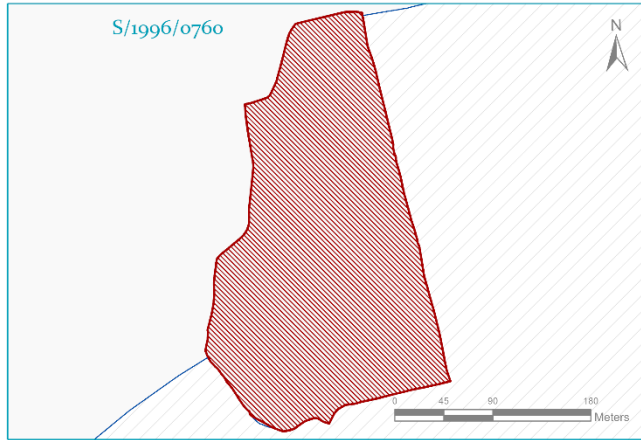


Figure 52: Application ref: S/1996/0760

the Lisburn Metropolitan Development Limits, with the proposals eastern and southern boundaries aligned with that of the development limit. The site was predominately countryside, possibly with industrial uses to adjacent to its north-western boundary, with residential areas to further to its north and slightly across from its western boundary.

Details for this application are unattainable online, however, it is understood that the final response from the LVRP Office was one of objection and a comment proposing the site for public access. The LVRP Office expressly cited Policy U5 of the **LVRP Local Plan** in their objection and that policy states:

“Industrial development will not be permitted in the open countryside and will normally only be acceptable if located in existing buildings or industrial complexes. Proposals to redevelop existing industrial buildings for industrial purposes or to redevelop or re-use for new land uses will be assessed on the basis of their impact on the visual amenity and character of the Park and normal planning criteria.”

While it was possible that there were pre-existing industrial buildings adjacent to the proposed site, the majority of the vast 5.4 hectare site was open countryside which extended eastward, bar the Dunmurry Sewage Plant, across the M1 (motorway) and southward over the River Lagan and such a development would have been a significant intensification of the land. Furthermore, the Derryaghy River acts as a natural boundary between the proposed site and possible pre-existing industrial buildings thus ‘separating’ the two locations. Additionally, the Park plays a role in protecting the views of local

waterways. It is confirmed that in early 1997, this application was refused planning permission.

S/1997/0824

- Seymour Hill Industrial Estate, Seymour Hill Mews, Dunmurry

Nevertheless, in mid-late 1997, a new planning application ref: **S/1997/0824** was received by the relevant local authority. This application again proposed the development of an industrial unit for the manufacture of furniture and bedding products yet, at 1.5 hectares, represented a -71% decrease in total area scale and therefore was presented as less intensive. This reduced site was mostly located in the southwestern section of the previous application, with its western boundary still closely following the Derryaghy River. The small site area also meant that it was completely within the Metropolitan Lisburn Development Limits and comparatively closer to surrounding urban development.

The LVRP Office again objected to the planning application based on Policy U5 of the **LVRP Local Plan**. However, in this case, the relevant Local Authority granted permission for the proposed development in mid-1998 and construction was completed thereafter.

6.4. LISBURN CITY

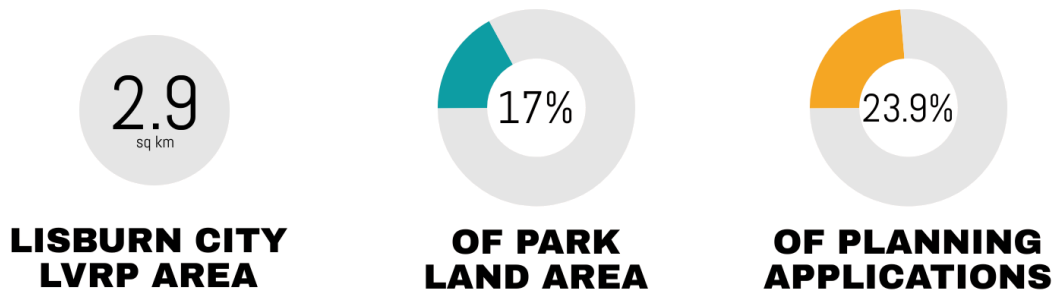


Figure 53: Lisburn City 'Statistics'

Meanwhile, Lisburn City covers 17% of the LVRP land area while containing, at 23.9%, nearly one quarter of all proposed development locations in planning applications between 1973 – 2020. As such, this equals a 41% increase from Lisburn City percentage of park land to percentage of applications which is among the smallest increases along with the previous three areas discussed.

The following table presents the total number of applications submitted within/adjacent to the relevant Lisburn City development limits and classifies them as either housing developments or others. Housing development proposals made up 18% of the total number of applications whilst other applications made up 82%. 70% of housing applications were granted permission while 15% were refused and the remaining 15% were withdrawn or dismissed. In contrast, 87% of other applications, including a steel framed building to accommodate coal fired boiler and ancillary plant, were granted while only 5% were refused and the remaining 8% were withdrawn.

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	241	169	37
Others	1082	941	52
Total	1323	1110	89

Table 8: Types of Applications submitted in Lisburn City (LVRP)

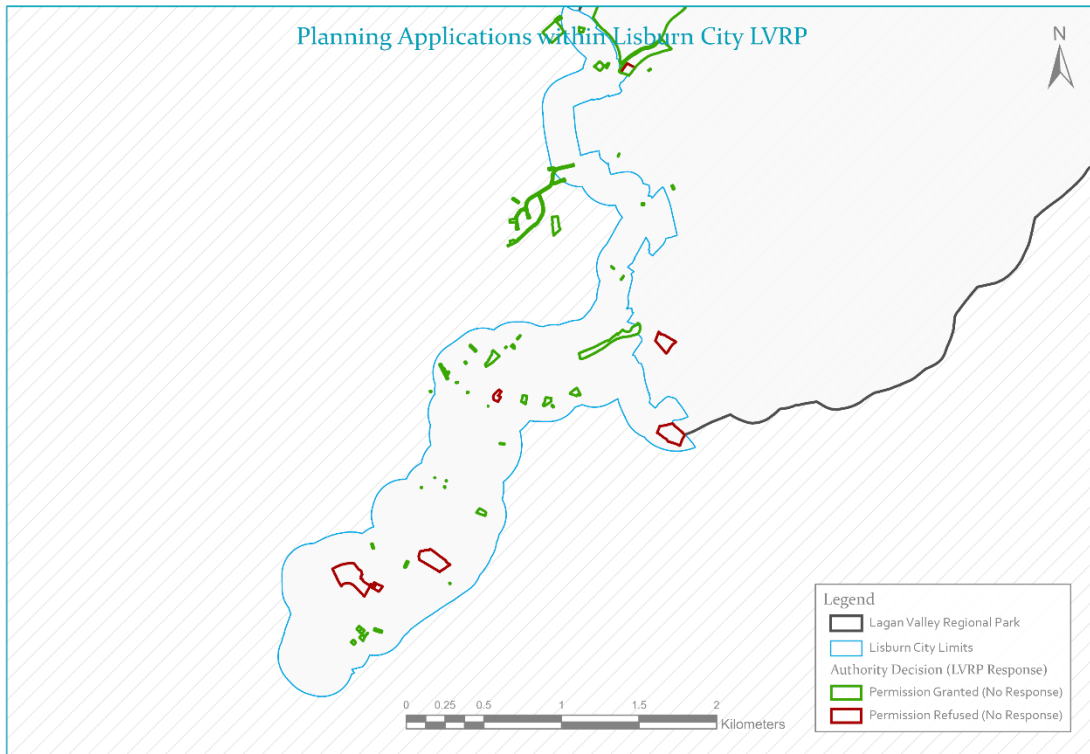


Figure 55: Planning Applications within Lisburn City LVRP (1973-79)

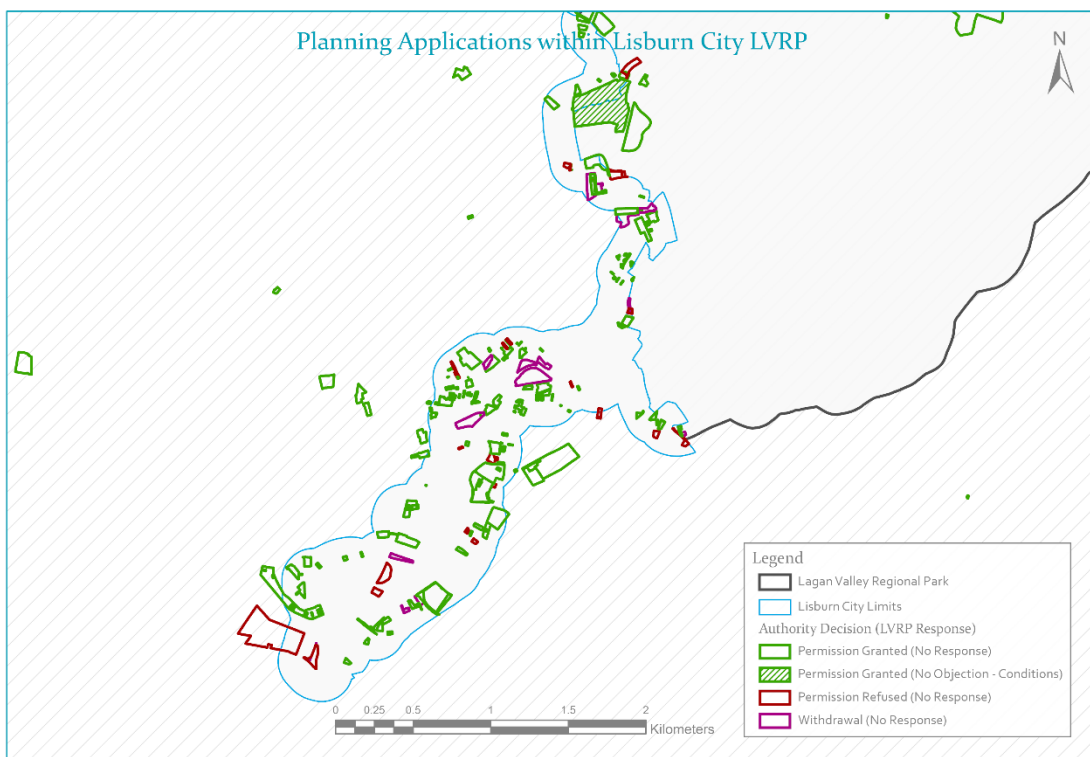


Figure 54: Planning Applications within Lisburn City (1980-89)

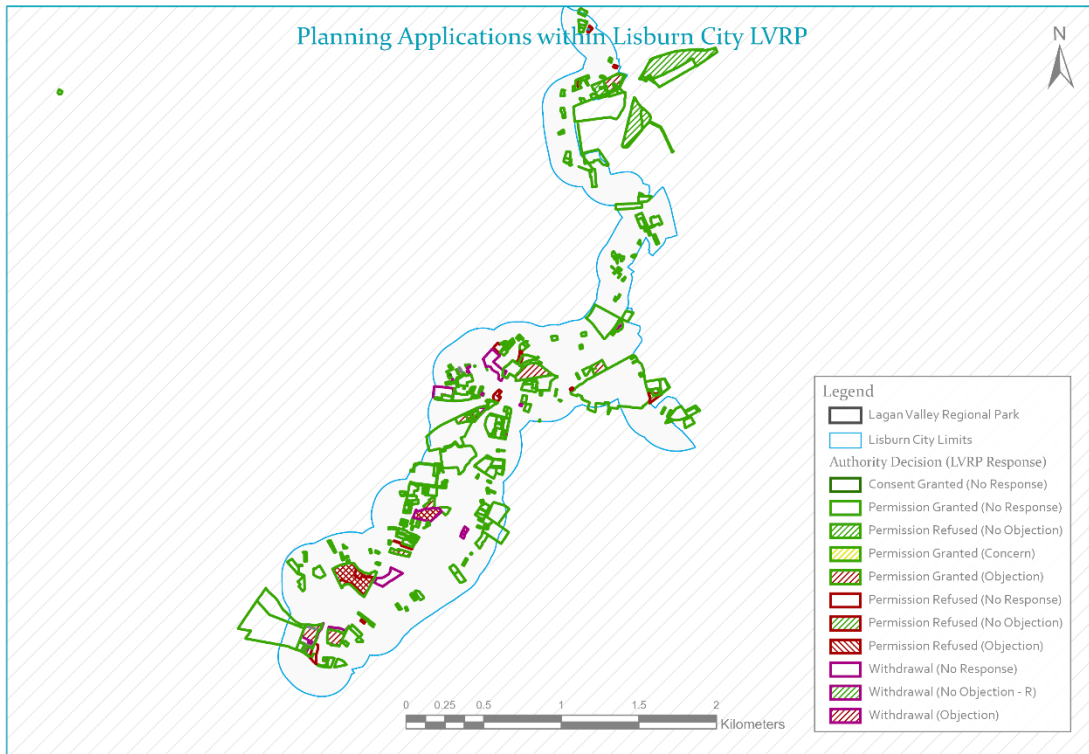


Figure 57: Planning Applications within Lisburn City LVRP (1990-99)

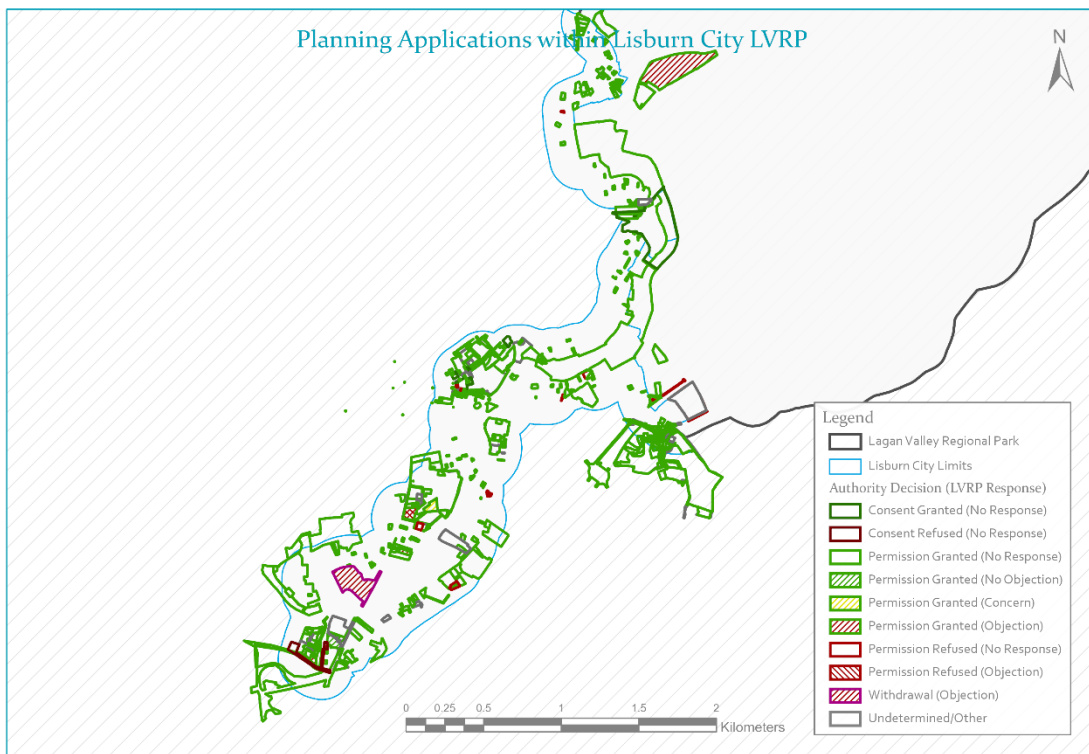


Figure 56: Planning Applications within Lisburn City LVRP (2000-2009)

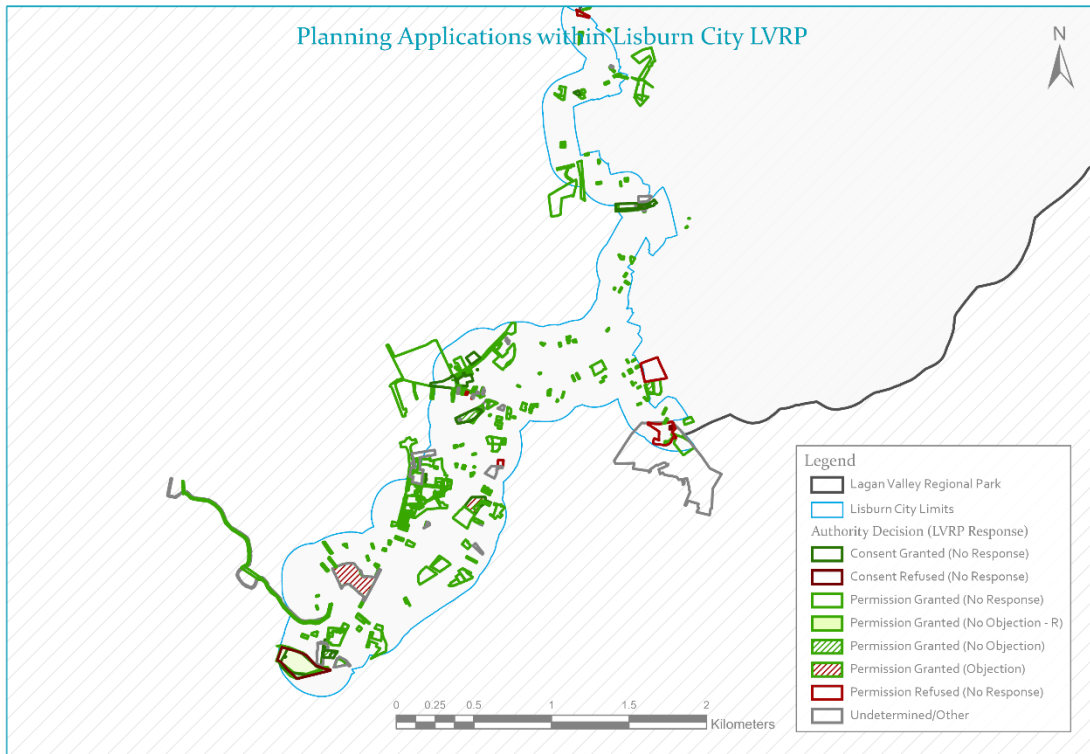


Figure 59: Planning Applications with Lisburn City LVRP (2010-2019)

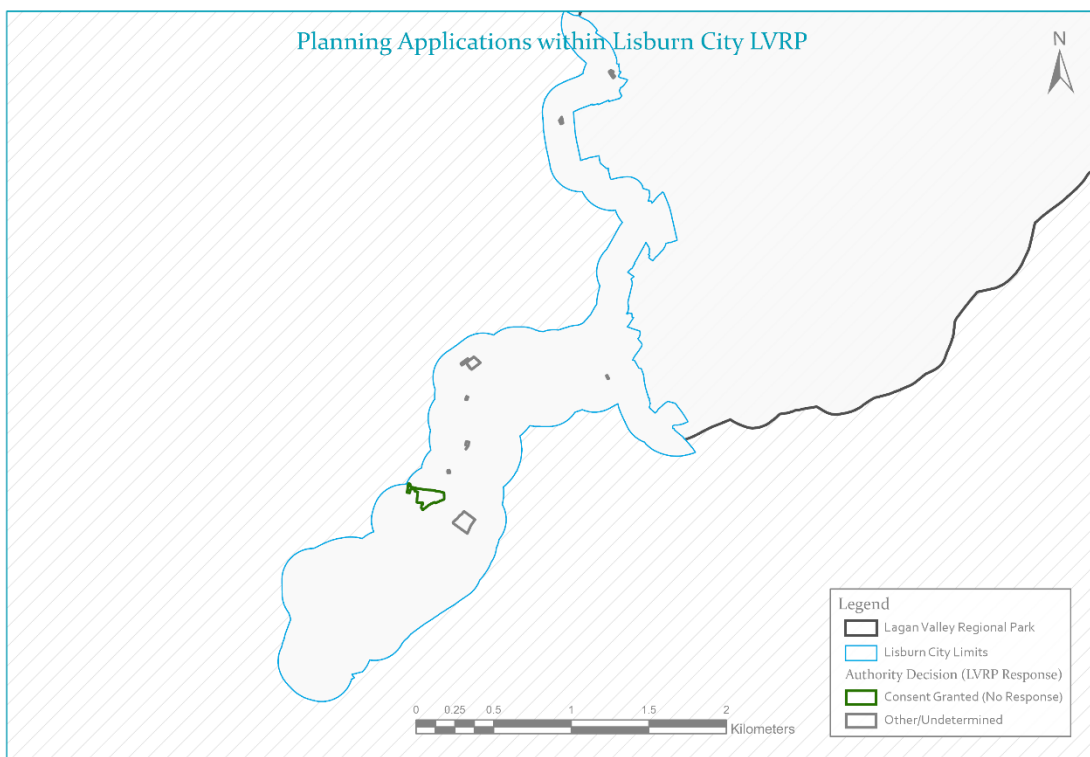


Figure 58: Planning Applications within Lisburn City LVRP (2020)

LA05/2015/0041/F

- Lands at Blaris Road Lisburn immediately opposite and to the south of Rivergate Lane Lisburn and to the north of Junction 7 M1 Motorway.

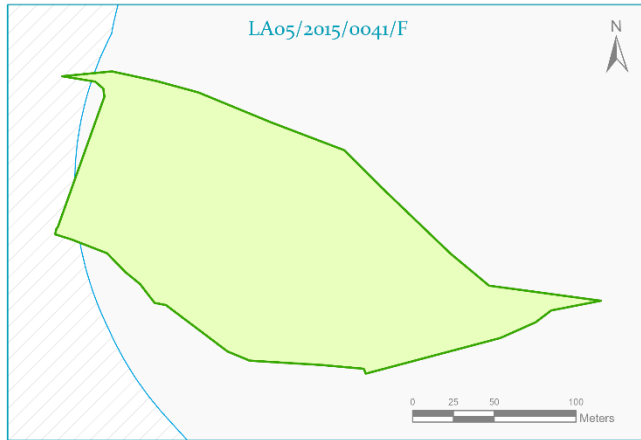


Figure 60: Application ref: LA05/2015/0041/F

In 2005 application ref: **S/2002/0878/O** was granted permission, with no recorded response from the LVRP, to develop a leisure centre comprising outdoor racquet courts and swimming pool, indoor racquet courts, swimming pool and gym with associated facilities,

car parking and new access. This proposal was never completed and in 2009 application ref: **S/2007/1193/F** was granted permission, again with no recorded response from the LVRP Office, for a residential development comprising 26 no semi-detached, 57 no townhouses and 57 apartments in 5 blocks and associated road works.

Then in 2015, application ref: **LA05/2015/0041/F** proposed the erection of 53 No dwellings, with site works and a car park to facilitate access to the LVRP. This application was the proposed phase 2 of an earlier approved application ref: **S/2013/0443/F**, located just outside the boundary and 100m of the LVRP, which included a residential development to include 4 No detached, 40 No semi-detached, 4 No townhouses and associated siteworks. The application was considered as a major planning application as the total site area exceeded 2 hectares.

The phase 2 application received 13 public comments, of which 10 objected, 2 were neutral and 1 supported the proposal. In the original site layout/block plan it was noted that there would be the provision of a carpark, for ancillary uses, in the south-east of the site and that there was potential for a future cycle path along the periphery of the development.

In consultation submitted in May 2015, the LVRP stated that they “*could only support this development if it was conditional that suitable allowance was made for the development of a*

cycle route along the periphery of the development (at least a 4m width) and that adequate parking for visitors were integrated into the to the south-east corner of the site.”

A similar sentiment re such a cycle path was held by the Department for Regional Development. However, a revised site layout/block plan published in April 2016 showed no changes for the immediate inclusion of a cycle path within the proposed development nor any change in parking spaces in the south-east carpark. However, a shared pedestrian/cycle route was provided through the heart of the heart development which could link to a future peripheral route. The planning report for this application stated that suitable allowance for the cycle route had been made, no concerns raised regarding carparking for access into the LVRP, and ultimately, the report recommended approval of the proposal.

The application was subsequently approved in 2016 and construction, as of early 2020 and according to satellite imagery, is underway. As the site is within the Lisburn development limits, adjoins a site with extant planning approval for residential development and is opposite another residential development it likely that the LVRP representations without policy or guidance backing would have held significant sway in the determination process.

6.4. BALLYAUGHLIS

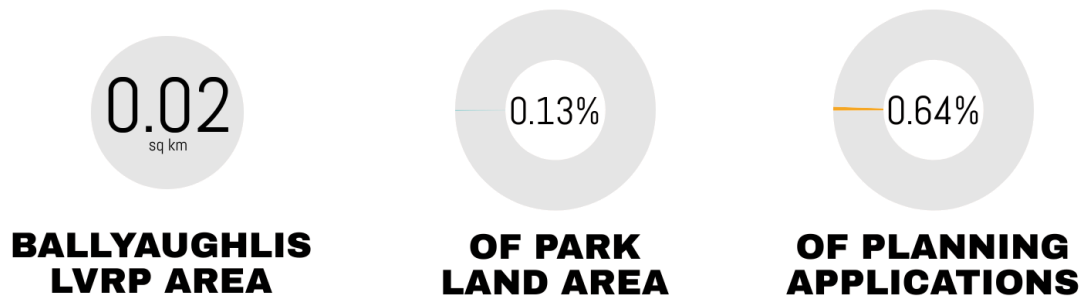


Figure 61: Ballyaughlis 'Statistics'

As a very small settlement Ballyaughlis covers only 0.13% of the LVRP land area while containing, at 0.64%, a significantly higher level of proposed development locations in planning applications submitted. In fact, there is a 392% increase when comparing the percentage of park land within the Ballyaughlis development limit and the percentage of applications within the limit as part of the Park total.

Again, a table is displayed below that classifies all submitted applications within the relevant Ballyaughlis area as either housing or others. Housing applications equal 62% of all applications while others, mostly extensions, garages and fencing, make up the remaining 38%. Of housing applications submitted, 76% were granted permission, 9.5% (or 2 applications) were refused and 14.5% were withdrawn/dismissed, etc. For others, 92% was granted while 8% (or 1 application) was invalid.

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	21	16	2
Others	13	12	-
Total	34	28	2

Table 9: Types of Applications submitted in Ballyaughlis (LVRP)

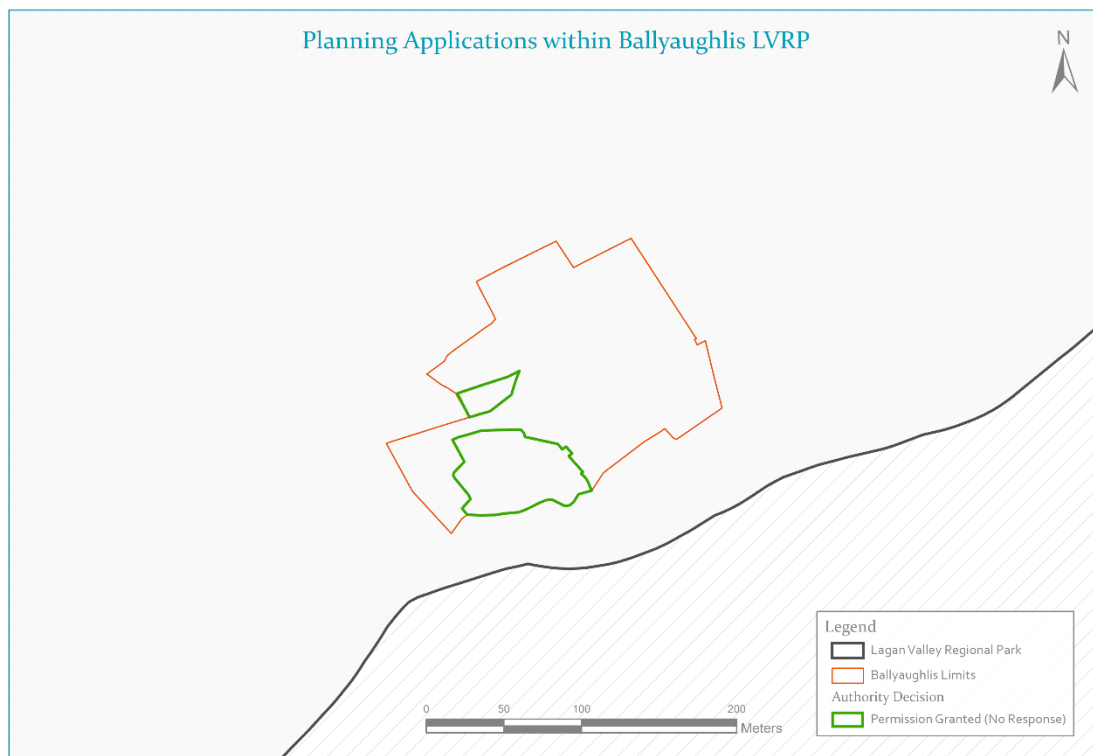


Figure 63: Planning Applications within Ballyaughlis LVRP (1973-79)

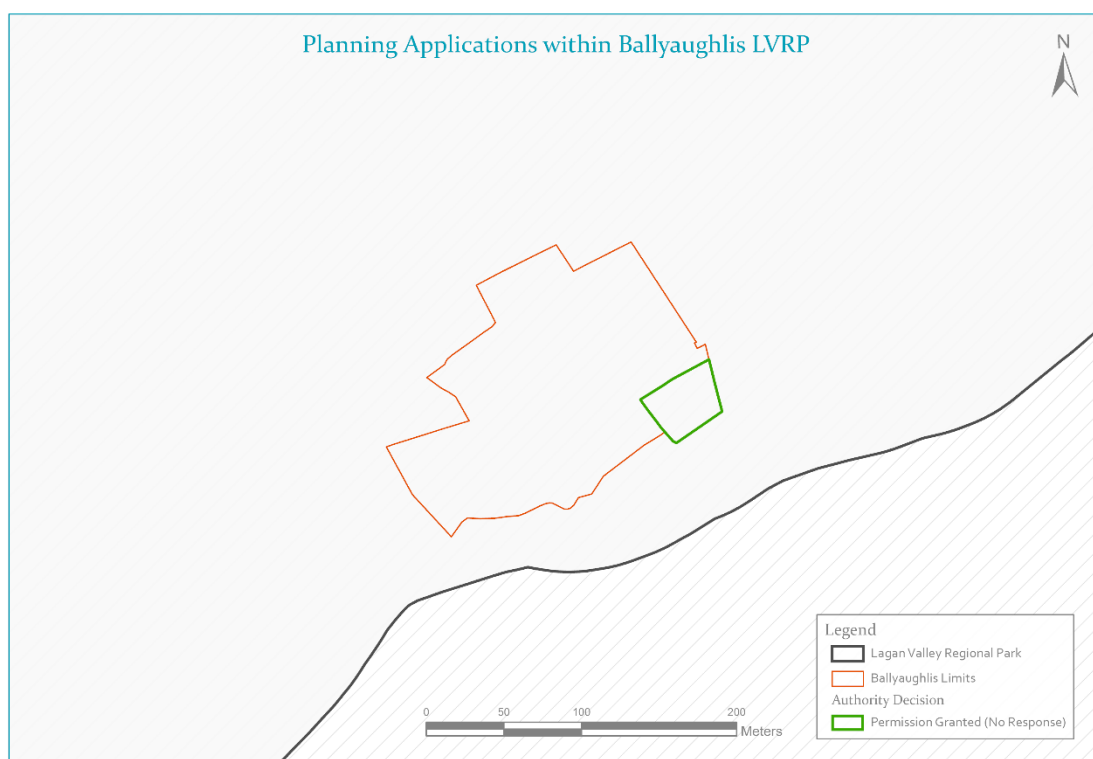


Figure 62: Planning Applications within Ballyaughlis LVRP (1980-89)

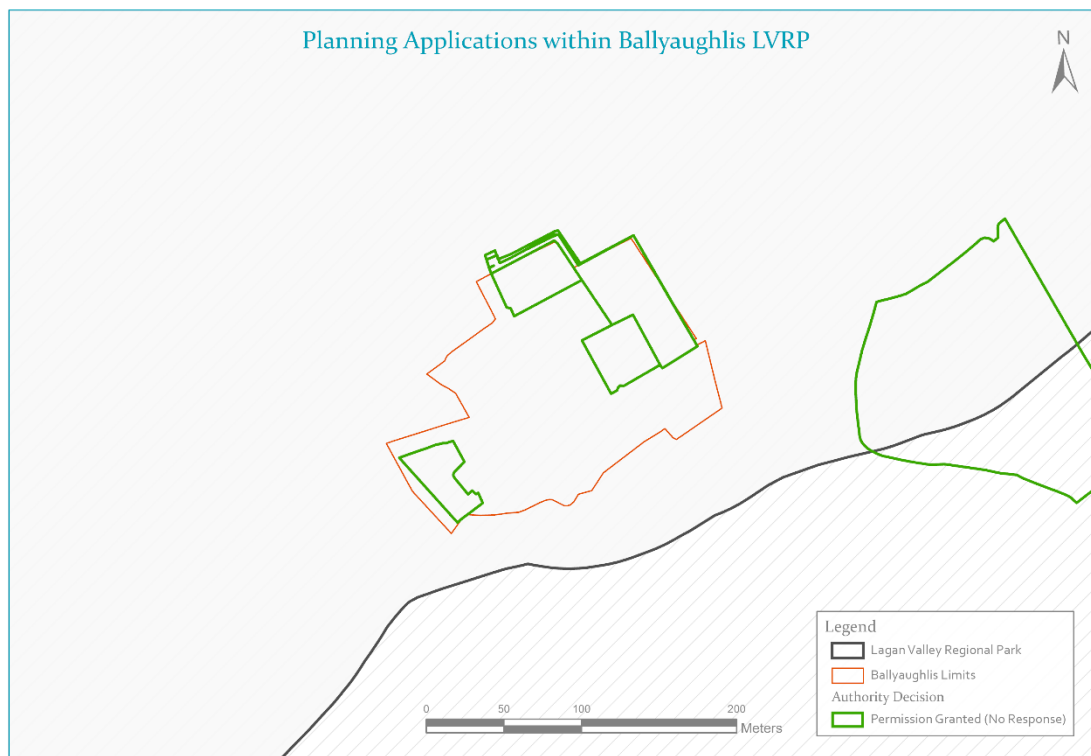


Figure 65: Planning Applications within Ballyaughlis LVRP (1990-99)

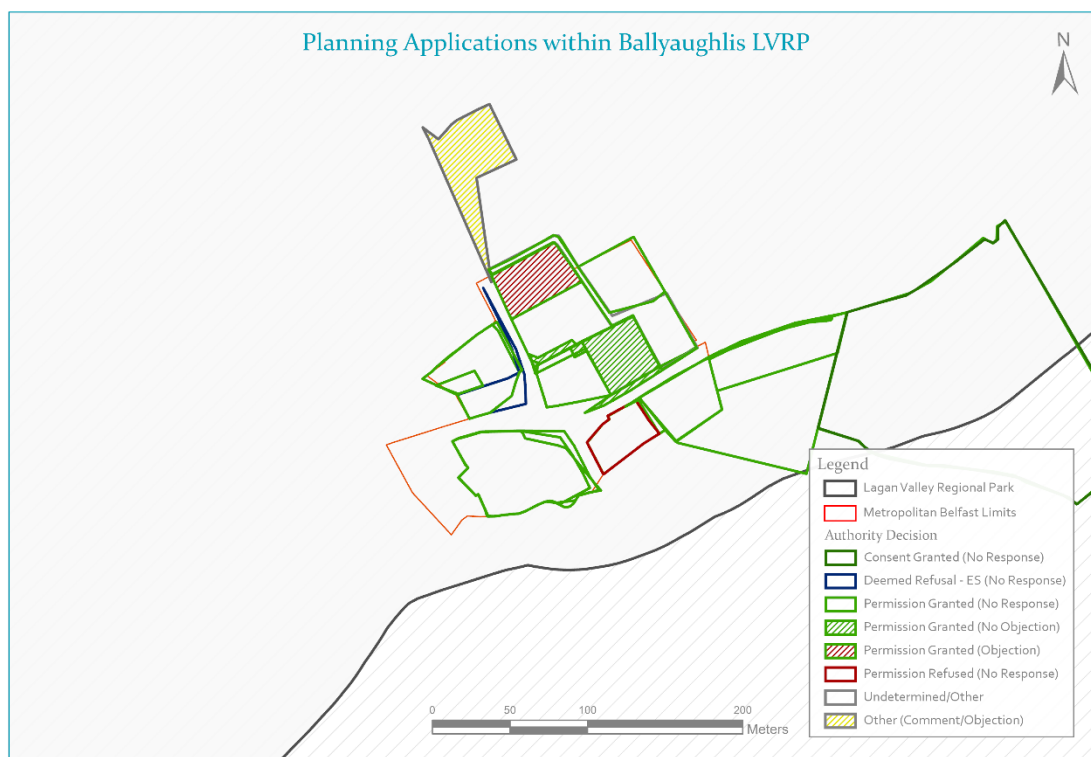


Figure 64: Planning Applications within Ballyaughlis LVRP (2000-2009)

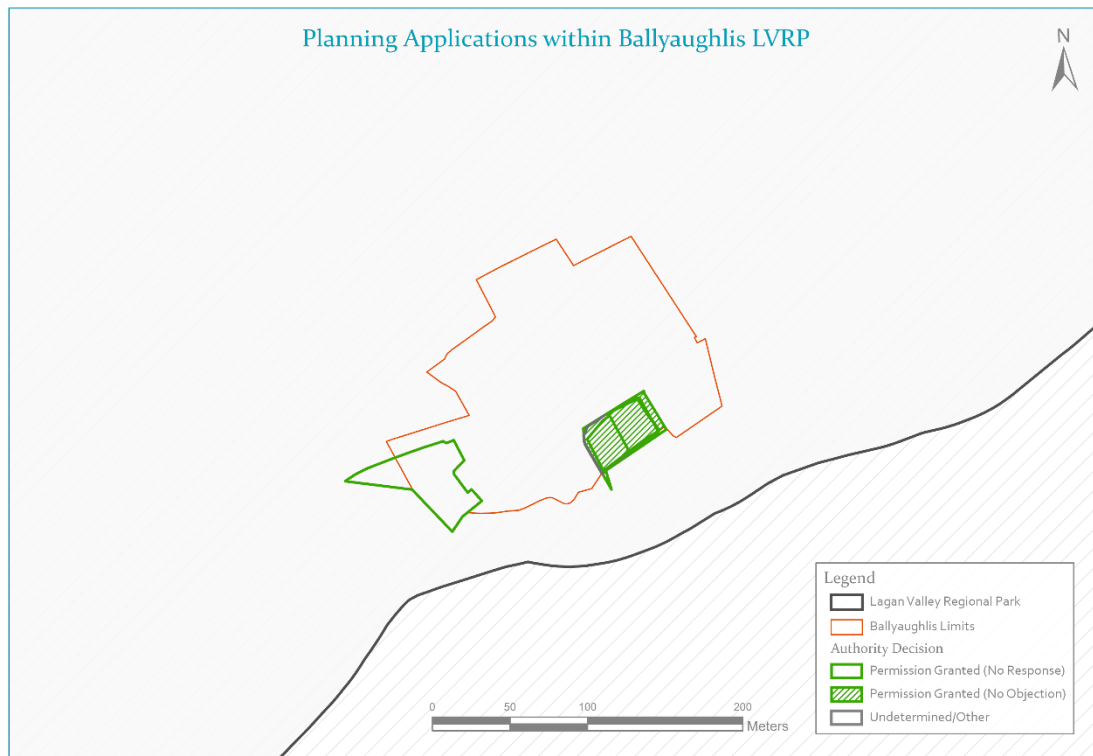


Figure 66: Planning Applications within Ballyaughlis LVRP (2010-2020)

S/2002/0717/F

- 10 Drumbeg Road, Ballyaughlis, Lisburn, BT27 5TR

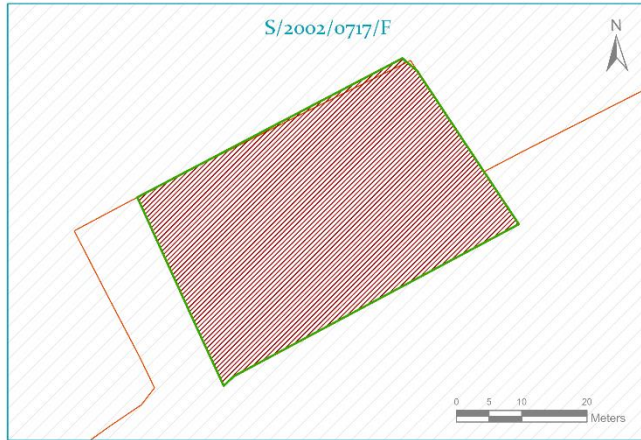


Figure 67: Application ref: S/2002.0717/F

also being within the Ballyaughlis development limit. The application received 2 public comment objections and was also objected to by the LVRP Office with their representations citing policy U2 of the **LVRP Local Plan**.

Policy U2 states that: “*Within these limits new development may be considered to be acceptable provided that it relates sympathetically to the design, scale and character of the existing village...*”

However, details specific to this application are not available online so it is instead presumed that the LVRP Office had reason to believe that the scale of development was not in keeping with the area. Regardless of the LVRP objections the application was approved in 2003 and mappings suggest that construction was completed on the 7 No townhouses – which as of 2020 make up, at 10%, a significant amount of the urban development in the Ballyaughlis limits.

In 2002 a planning application ref: **S/2002/0717/F** was submitted proposing the development of 7 No townhouses off adopted driveway entrance to existing adjacent development. The development proposal was situated totally within the LVRP, thus subject to its local plan, while

6.5. BALLYLESSON

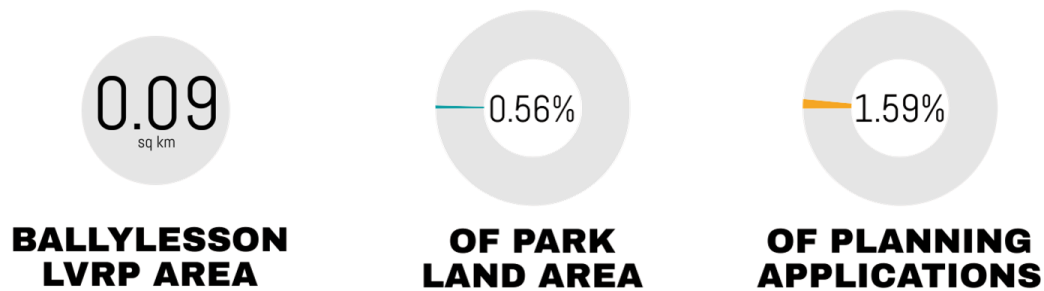


Figure 68: Ballylesson 'Statistics'

Ballylesson is a small village and townland that covers 0.56% of the LVRP land area while containing, at 1.59%, a considerably higher level of proposed development locations in planning applications. This represents a 184% increase from Ballylesson percentage of park land to percentage of applications.

The following table presents the total number of applications submitted within/adjacent to the relevant Ballylesson development limits and classifies them as either housing developments or others – including minor developments such as extensions, garages, porches and other developments such as over-head, high voltage power lines. 41% of applications in or adjacent to Ballylesson were housing developments while other applications made up 59% of the total. At 96%, all but one housing application was granted permission. For other development proposals, 92% of applications were approved while the remaining 8% were withdrawn.

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	26	25	1
Others	37	34	-
Total	63	59	1

Table 10: Types of Applications submitted in Ballylesson (LVRP)

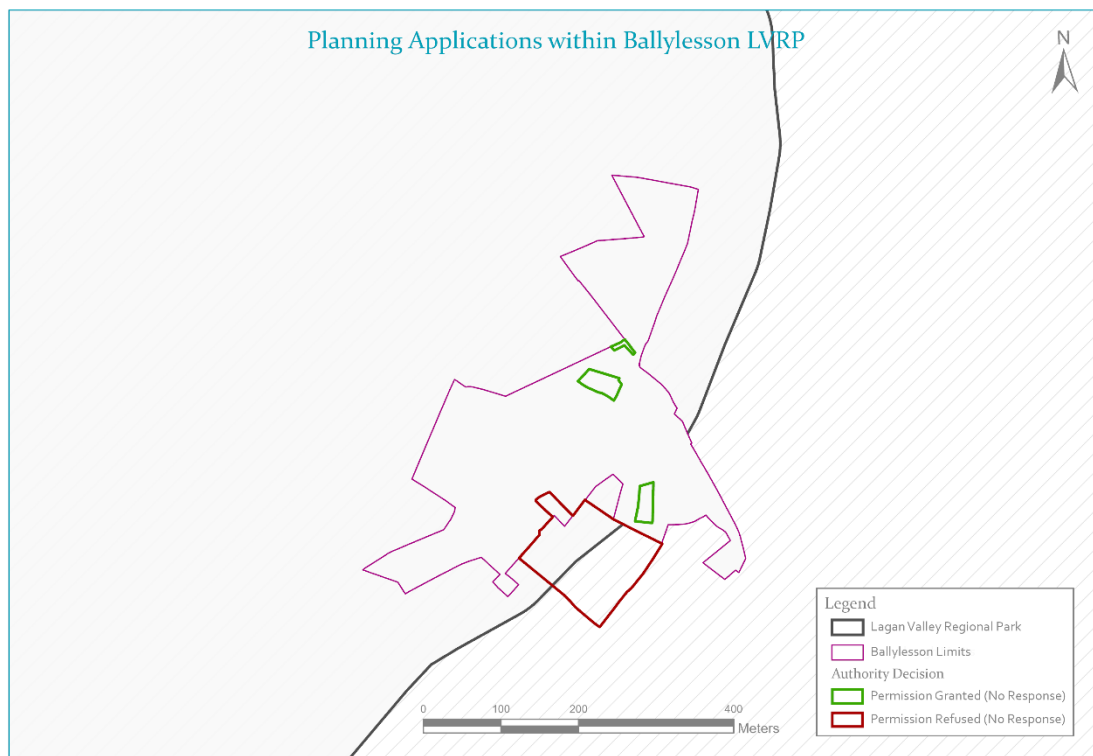


Figure 70: Planning Applications within Ballylesson LVRP (1973-79)

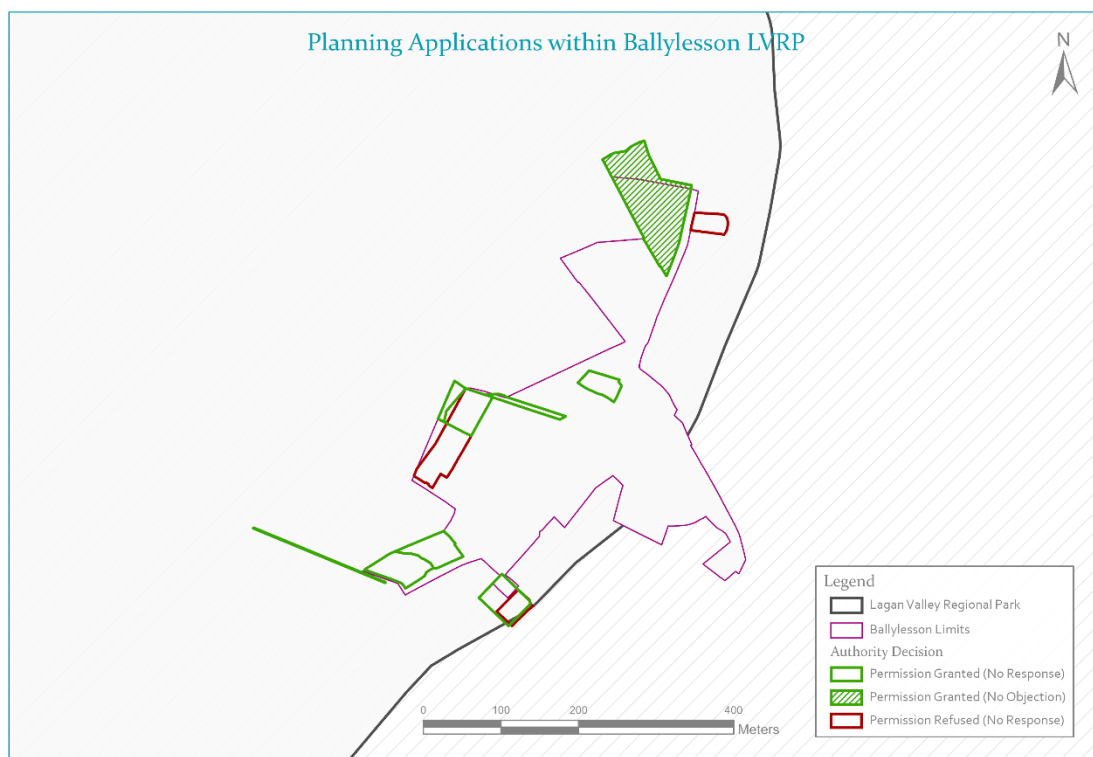


Figure 69: Planning Applications within Ballylesson LVRP (1980-89)

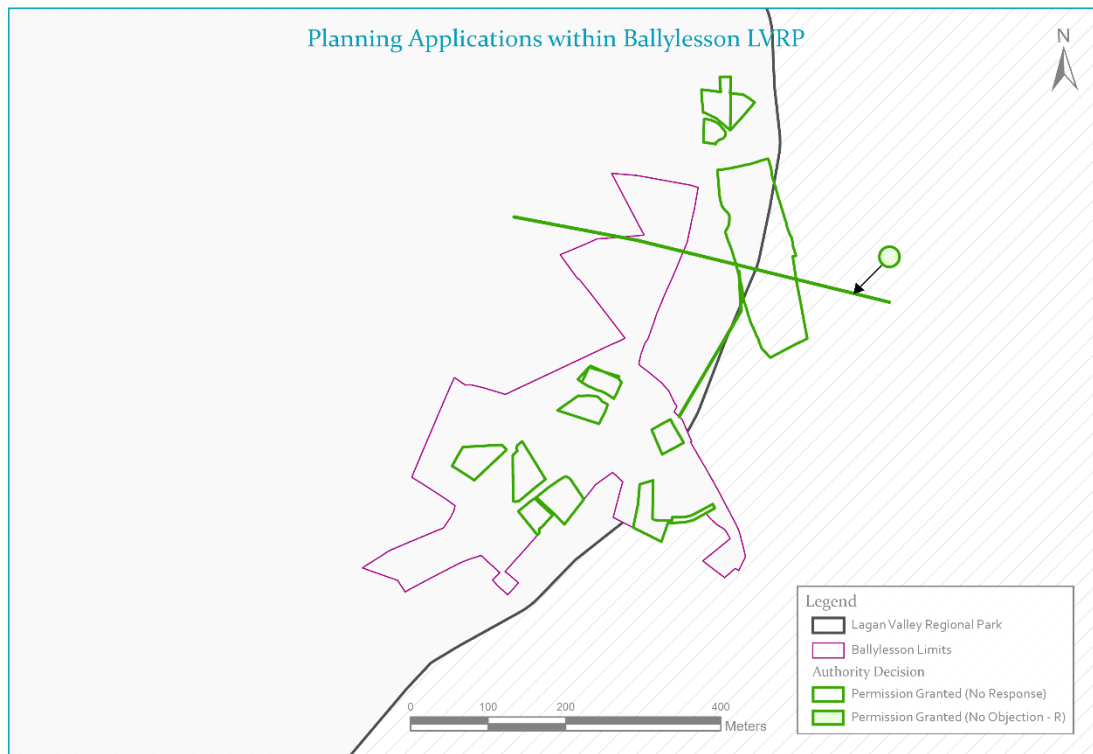


Figure 72: Planning Applications within Ballylesson LVRP (1990-99)

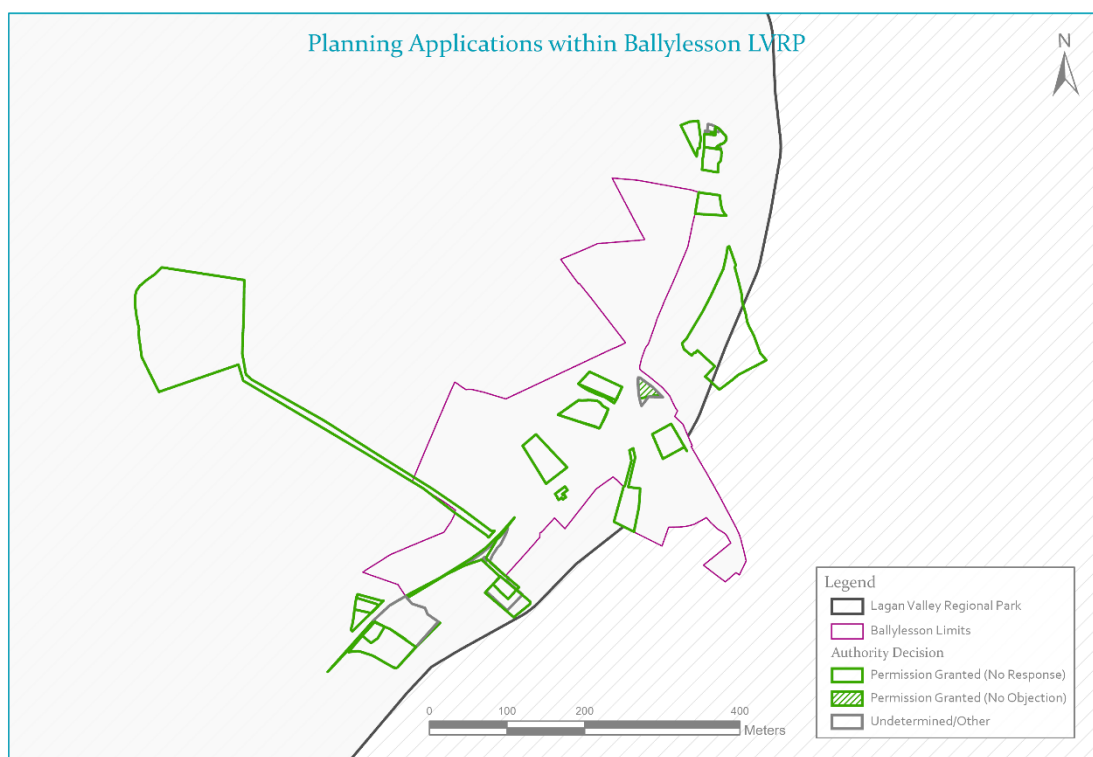


Figure 71: Planning Applications within Ballylesson LVRP (2000-09)



Figure 73: Planning Applications within Ballylesson LVRP (2010-2020)

LA04/2019/0033/F

- 79 Ballylesson Road, Belfast, BT8 8JT

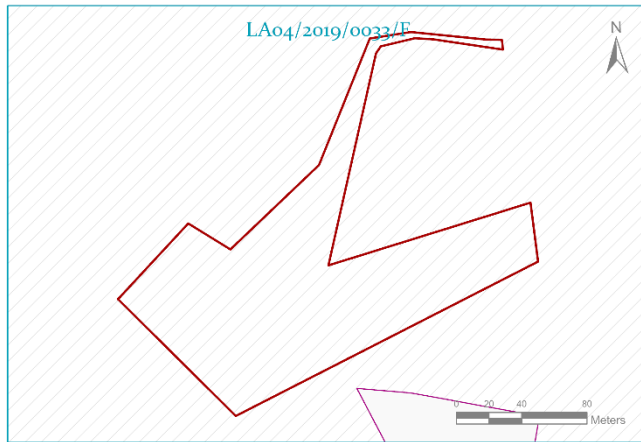


Figure 74: Application ref: LA04/2019/0033/F and was classified as a local development. The area was totally contained within the boundaries of the LVRP and was within LLPA ref: BLN 02 Ballylesson / Edenderry, however, was located outside of development limits.

In 2018, application ref: **LA04/2019/0033/F**, proposing a farm dwelling and ancillary development, was submitted to Belfast City Council for determination. The proposed site was approximately 1.8 hectares in area, located just south of the Giants Ring ancient monument,

Despite the development management officer logging in their report the relevance of the **LVRP Local Plan**, the LVRP Office was not consulted on this application and provided no comment on it. No consultees provided an objection within their responses, although in some cases substantial advice was offered. In particular, the officer took the response of DfI Historic Environment Division Historic Monument to suggest that the application might negatively affect the setting of the ancient monument and LLPA. No representations or comments regarding the application were received.

As an application for a farmhouse outside of development limits, policies CTY 1 and 10 were of **PPS 21** were relevant. Policy CTY 1 states that:

“There are a range of types of development which in principle are considered to be acceptable in the countryside...” and sets out details thereafter. For this particular application, the relevant detail included *“a dwelling on a farm in accordance with Policy CTY 10.”*

Policy CTY 10 states that:

“Planning permission will be granted for a dwelling house on a farm where all of the [thereafter laid out criteria] can be met.”

It was confirmed that sufficient evidence had been provided in regard to these policies, and that the application satisfied the necessary criteria. However, due to being situated within an LLPA and nearby to the Giants Ring, alongside advice from DfI Historic Environment Division, Policy BH1 of **PPS 6** was applicable to the application. Policy BH1 states:

“[There is] a presumption in favour of the physical preservation in situ of archaeological remains of regional importance and their settings [and] development which would adversely affect such sites of regional importance or the integrity of their settings will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances.”

It was determined by the development officer that the proposal was contrary to Policy BH1 in that as the proposal would negatively impact upon the LLPA and ancient monument by reason of inappropriate development within the setting and no exceptional circumstances to justify it. Thus, in 2019, the application was refused planning permission.

Comparatively, application ref: **LA04/2019/1412/F** and amended application ref:

LA04/2019/1658/F proposed the removal of existing agricultural buildings (3 No) and replacement and relocation with one new shed and ancillary development (new access arrangements) on lands immediately south and south west of 79 Ballylesson Road. These applications to remove and replace development, rather than to develop semi-rural land received approval (without objection) in the same year as **LA04/2019/0033/F**.

6.6. BALLYSKEAGH

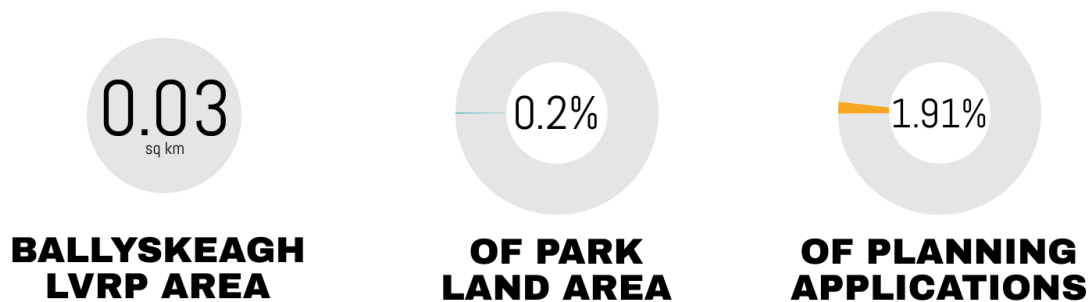


Figure 75: Ballyskeagh 'Statistics'

Ballyskeagh is another small village and townland that covers only 0.2% of the LVRP land area while containing, at 1.91%, a significantly greater level of proposed development locations in planning applications submitted. Indeed, this is a substantial 859% increase from Ballyskeagh percentage of park land to percentage of applications.

The table below presents applications relevant to the Ballyskeagh area and classifies them in the same manner as the previous 6 tables have done. Only 32% of applications in or adjacent to Ballyskeagh have been classified as housing developments, with 68% consisting of other development proposals. Other applications included minor developments such as extensions, garages, decking and boundary walls but also larger schemes such as synthetic greyhound grandstand, football pitch; works and car park, parkland with walkways and carpark and multiple medium voltage power lines. 72% of housing applications were granted permission while 12% were refused and the rest withdrawn. 96% of other applications were approved while 2% (1 application) were rejected and 1 more application – the synthetic football pitch - was withdrawn

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	25	18	3
Others	53	51	1
Total	78	69	4

Table 11: Types of Applications submitted in Ballyskeagh (LVRP)

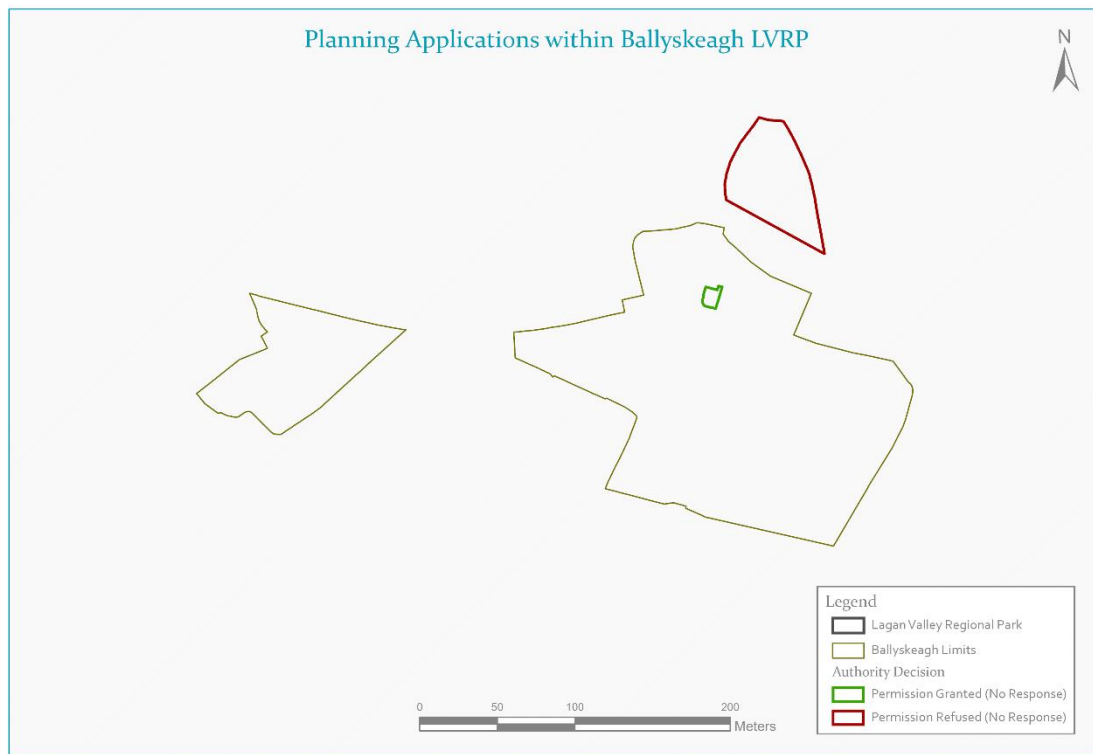


Figure 77: Planning Applications within Ballyskeagh LVRP (1973-79)

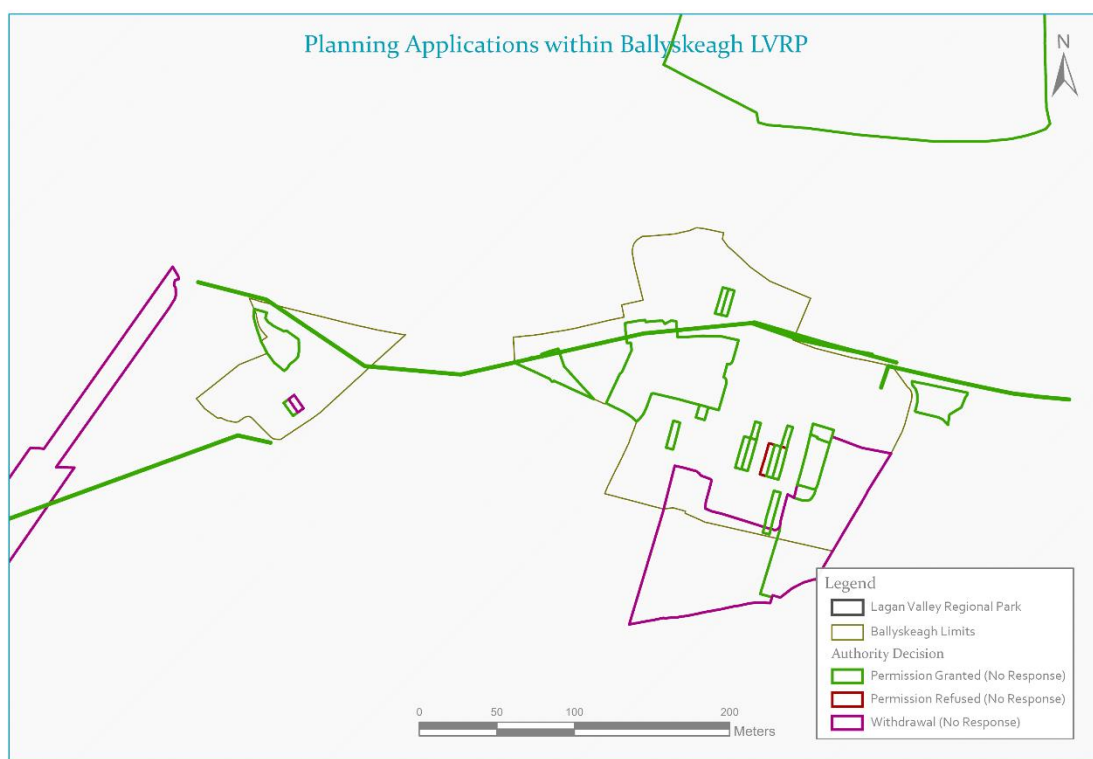


Figure 76: Planning Applications within Ballyskeagh LVRP (1980-89)

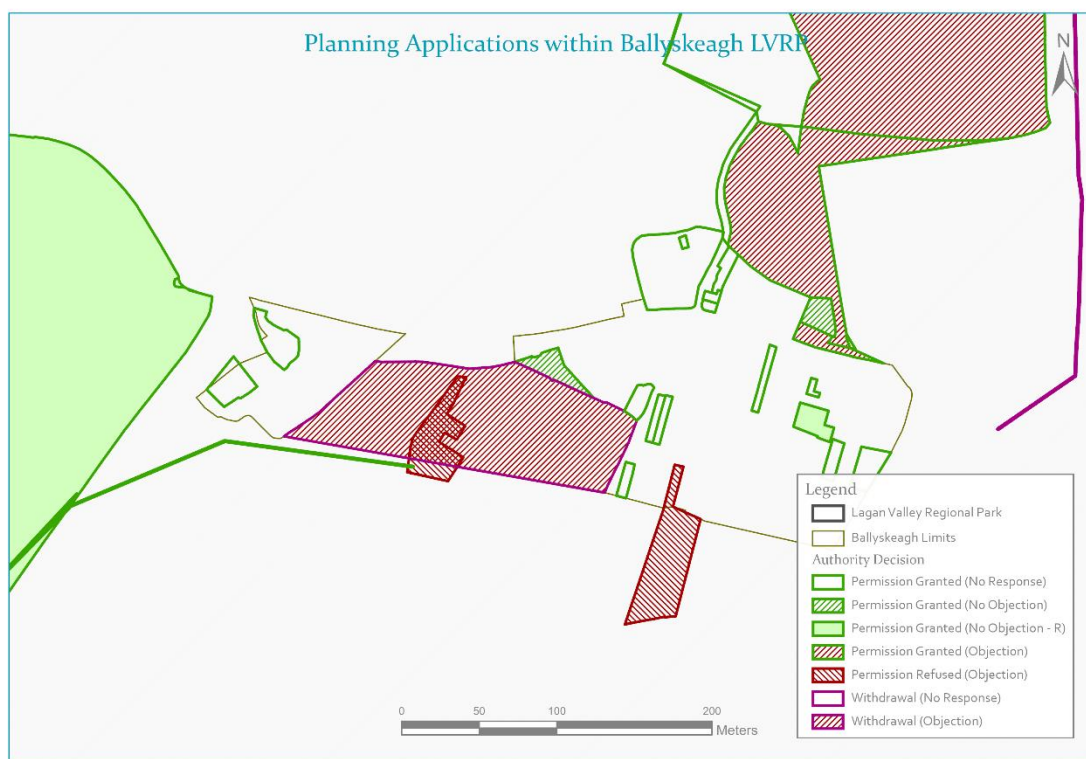


Figure 79: Planning Applications within Ballyskeagh LVRP (1990-99)

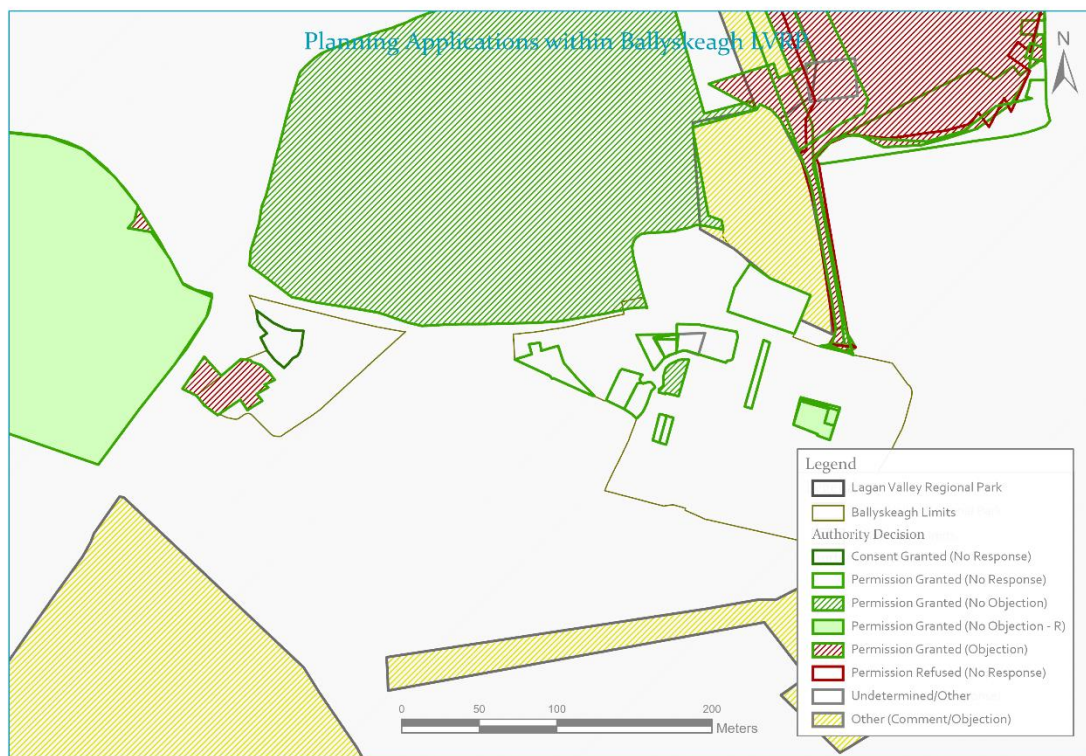


Figure 78: Planning Applications within Ballyskeagh LVRP (2000-09)

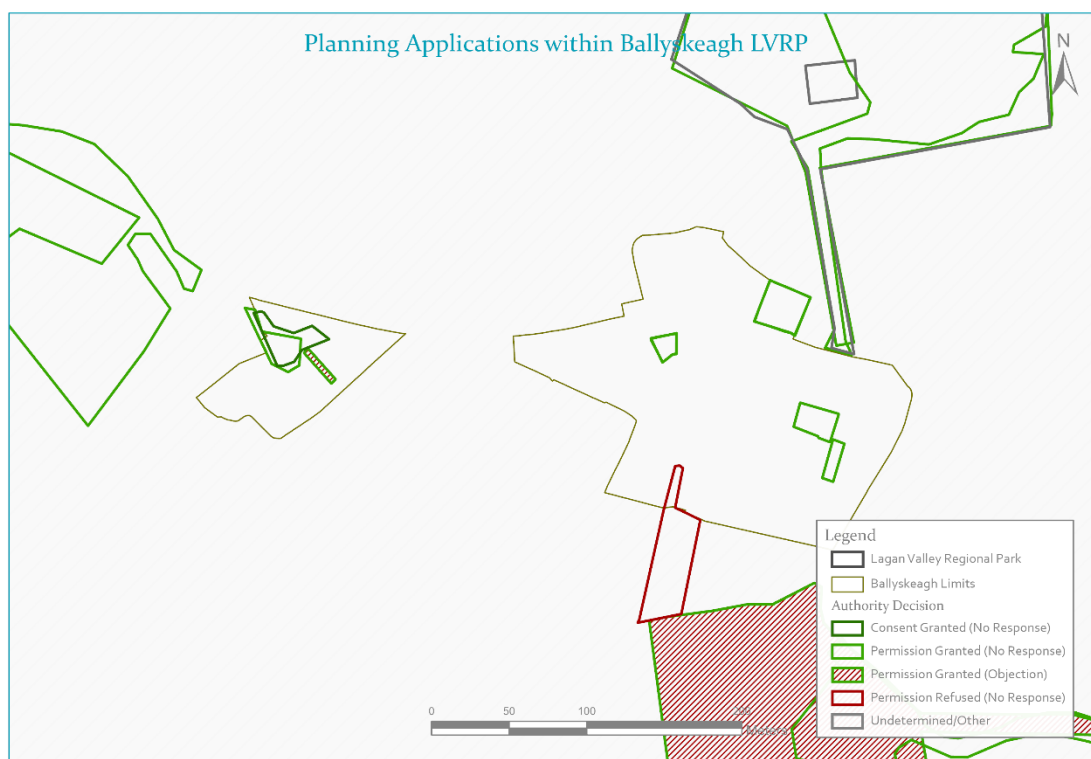


Figure 8i: Planning Applications within Ballyskeagh LVRP (2010-19)

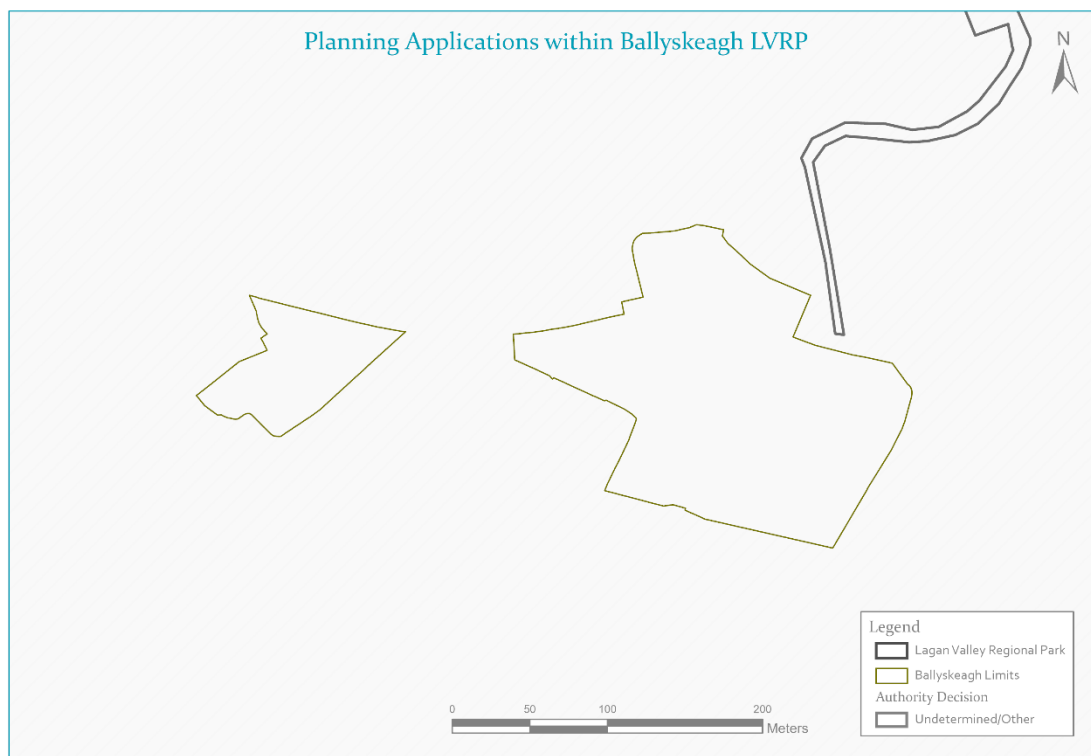
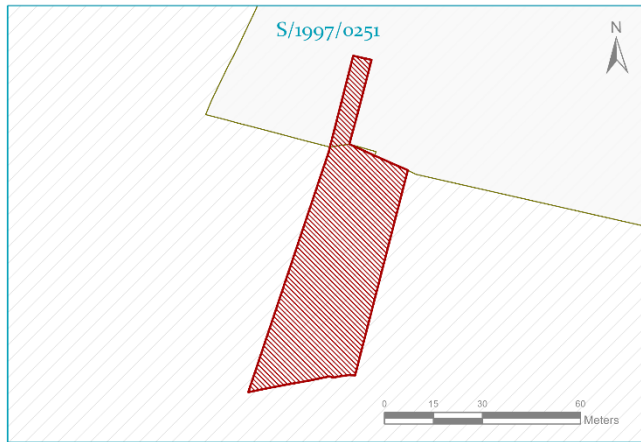


Figure 8o: Planning Applications within Ballyskeagh LVRP (2020)

S/1997/0251

- Land to South of 39-41 Sandymount, Ballyskeagh, Lisburn



Outline application ref:

S/1997/0251 was received in 1997 and proposed a residential development across an area of approximately 0.2153 hectares. Most of the site, excluding the access point onto Sandymount and Ballyskeagh Road were outside the Ballyskeagh

development limit and for this reason the LVRP objected to the proposal and recommended refusal. Furthermore, policy U1 of the **LVRP Local Plan** states:

“Outside the settlements there will be a general presumption against further urban development within the Park unless it is in accordance [with the criteria set out in the plan]”.

Therefore, as the application did not meet any of the criteria set out, the LVRP recommendation was in line with prevailing policy of the time and the application was refused permission by the relevant local authority. As it was made clear that such a development would not be acceptable, no further planning applications have since been submitted for the site in question.

6.7. DRUMBEG

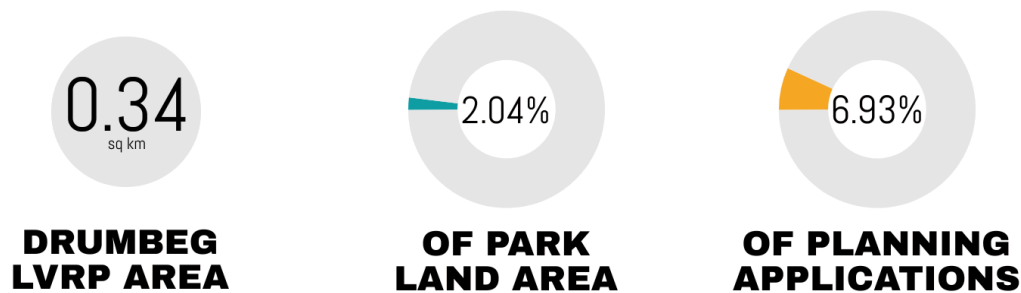


Figure 83: Drumbeg 'Statistics'

Drumbeg is a small village, townland (and also a civil parish) that covers 2.04% % of the LVRP land area while, at 6.93%, contains a very high quantity of the total development locations in planning applications submitted. This works out as a 240% increase from Drumbeg percentage of park land to percentage of applications.

Another table presenting the number of submitted housing and other applications for the relevant Drumbeg area follows. For the Drumbeg area, only 27% of applications were determined to be housing developments. Other applications totalled 73% and consisted of minor developments, offices, recreation, industry and infrastructure (power lines) among else. 76% of housing development applications received permission while 16% were rejected and 9% were withdrawn or undetermined. In contrast, 92% of other planning applications were granted permission while the remaining 8% were refused.

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	96	73	15
Others	262	240	6
Total	358	313	21

Table 12: Types of Applications submitted in Drumbeg (LVRP)

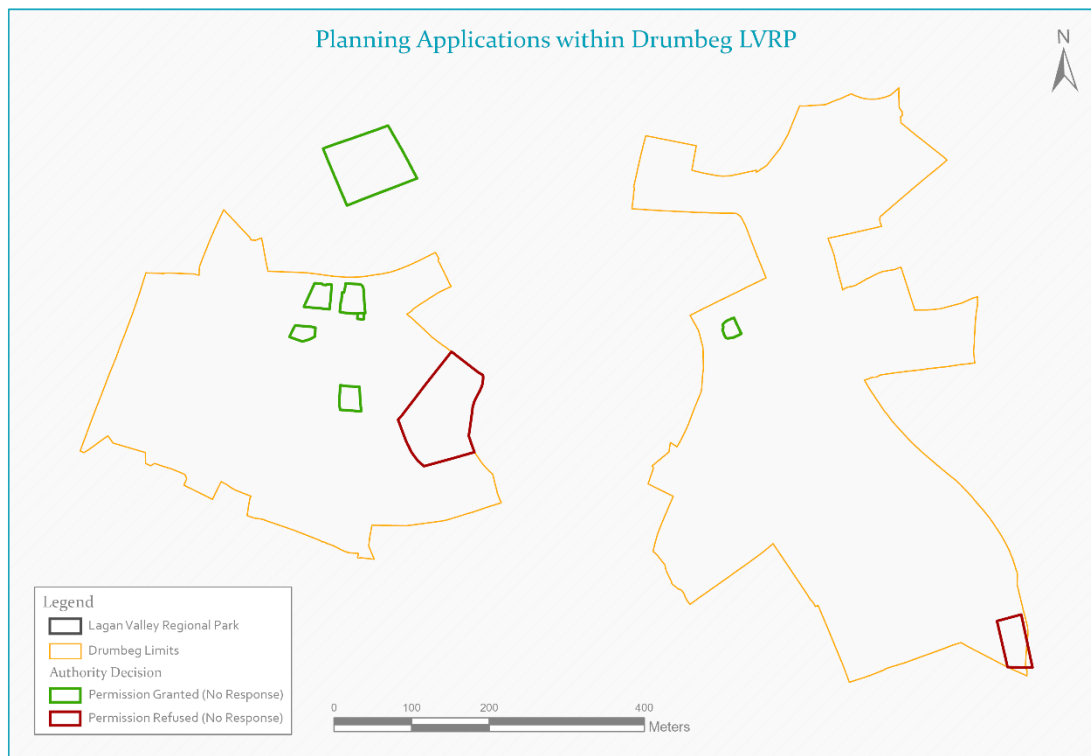


Figure 85: Planning Applications within Drumbeg LVRP (1973-79)

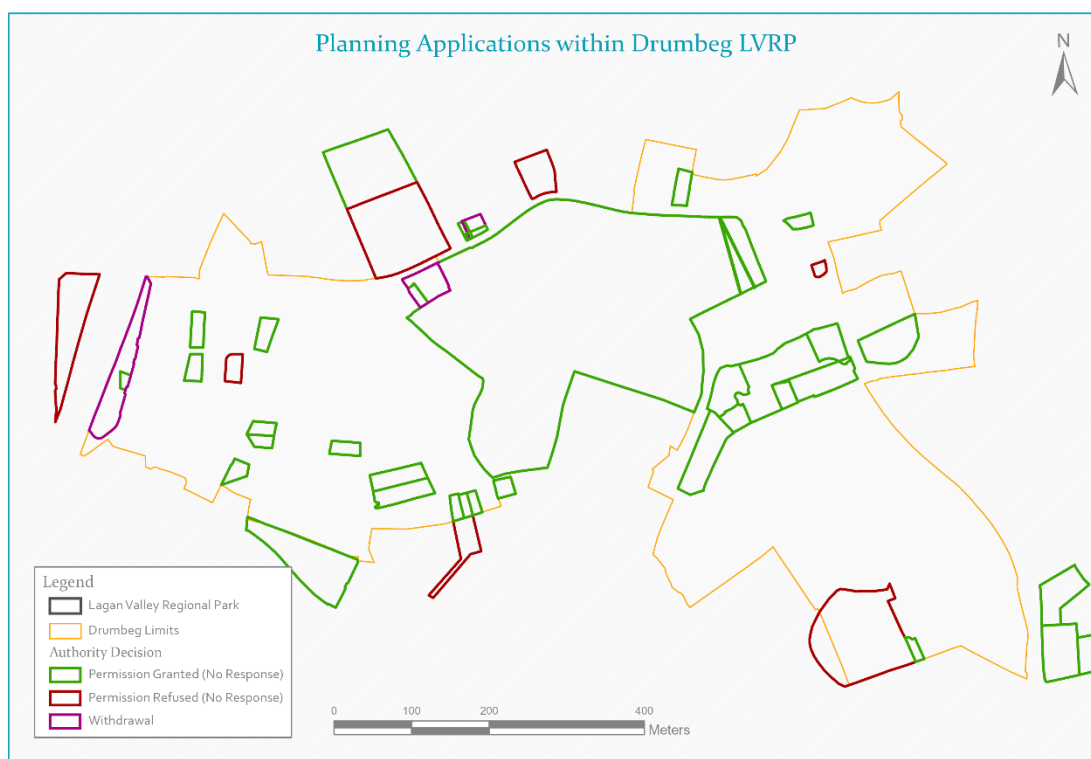


Figure 84: Planning Applications within Drumbeg LVRP (1980-89)

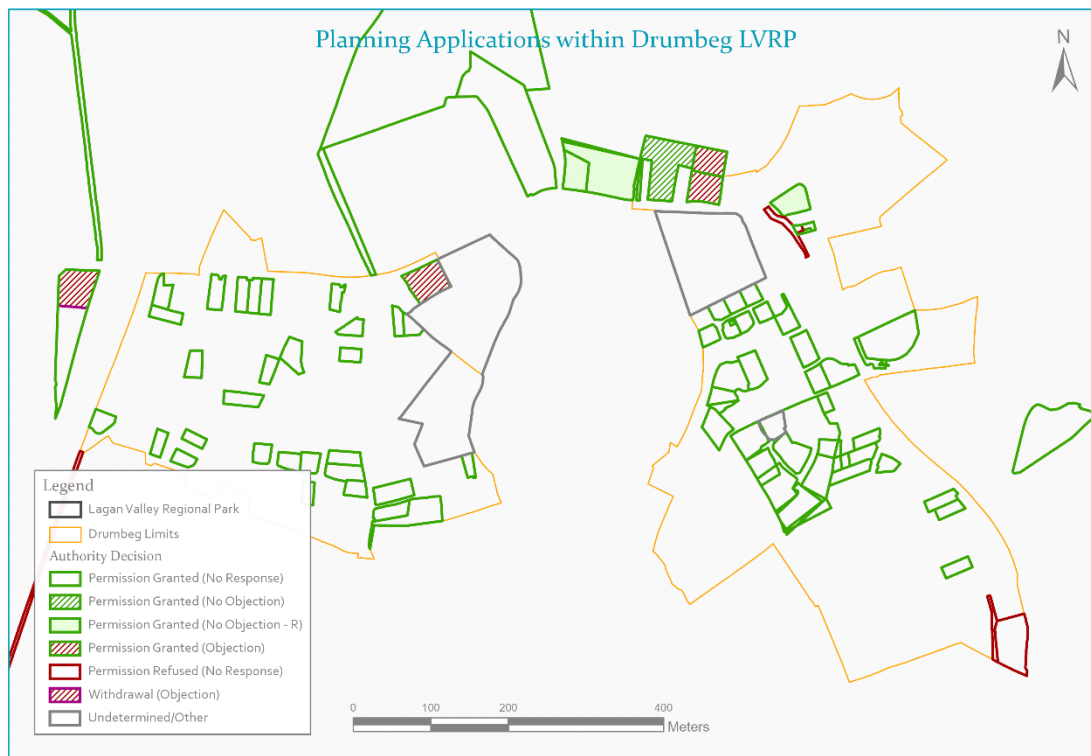


Figure 87: Planning Applications within Drumbeg LVRP (1990-99)

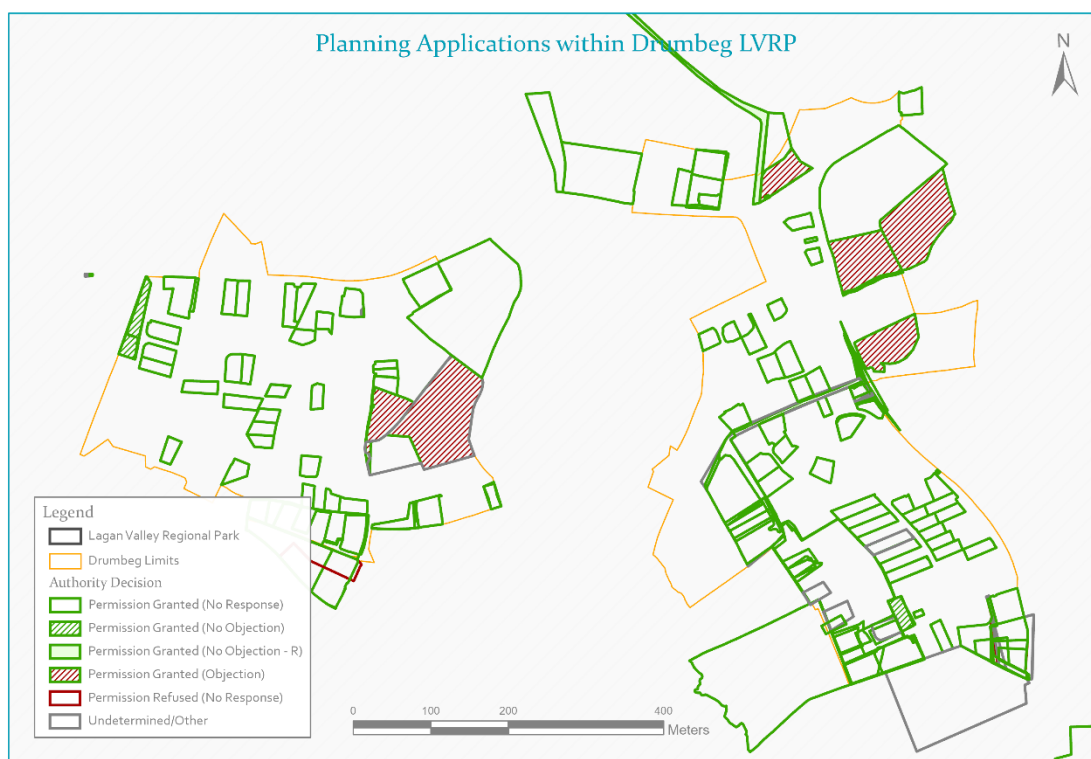


Figure 86: Planning Applications within Drumbeg LVRP (2000-09)

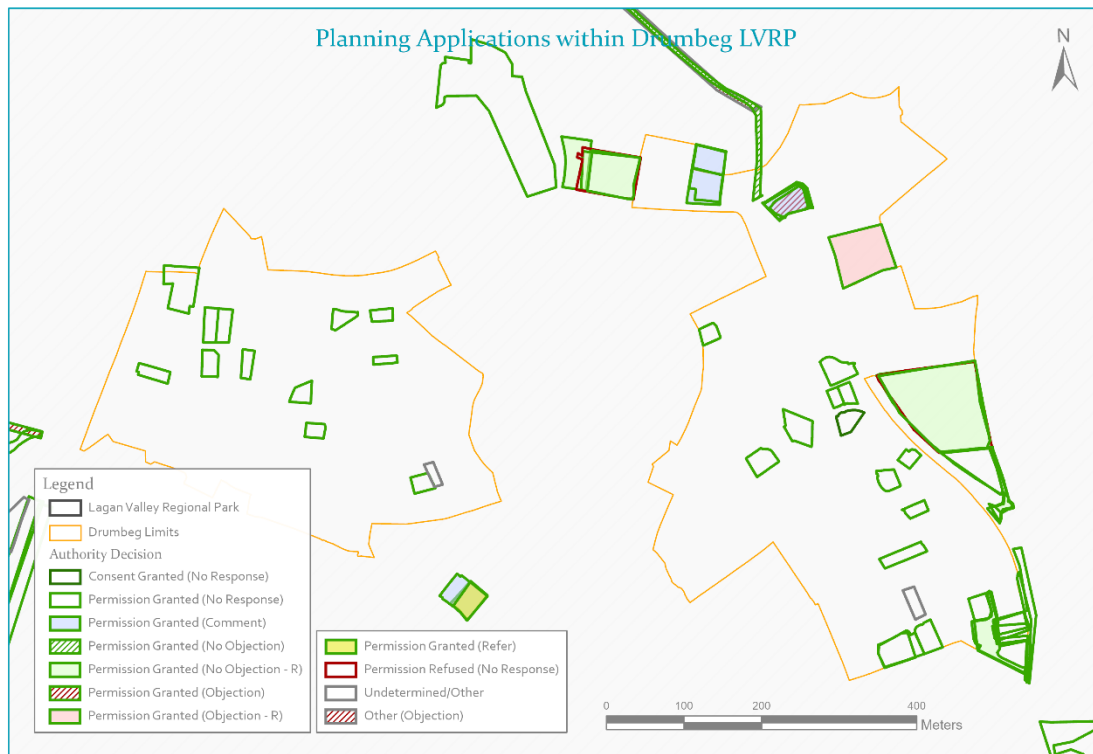


Figure 88: Planning Applications within Drumbeg LVRP (2010-2020)

S/2002/0141/F

- 161 Ballyskeagh Road, Drumbeg

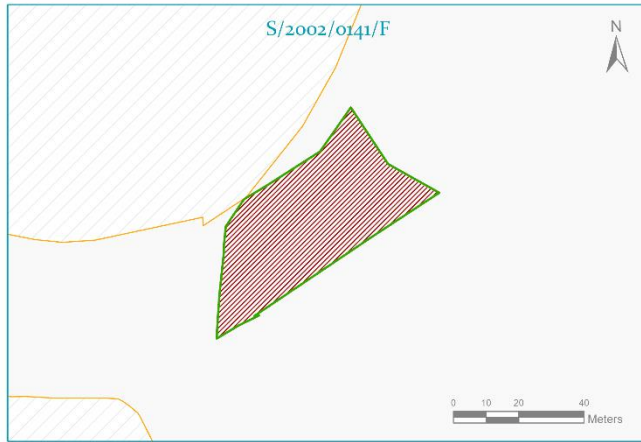


Figure 89: Application ref: S/2002/0141/F

Drumbeg development limit and therefore totally within the LVRP. It was also within the Drumbeeg ATC.

14 public comments were received for this application and of those, half were neutral, and the other half objected. In representations the LVRP Office also objected to the proposal citing numerous **LVRP Local Plan** policies including the aforementioned policy U2. Other policies referenced were policies U4, N4 and N3.

Policy N4 states that: *“Development or changes of use which would cause pollution to water areas will not be permitted.”*

Policy N3 states that:

“The impact of development proposals on trees and woodland will be carefully assessed taking account of the importance of such trees and woodland and their contribution to the character of the Park.”

Policy U4 relates to the ATCs within the LVRP and among multiple aims, seeks to ensure:

“that new development is in sympathy with the character of the surroundings; and that provision is made as far as is possible for the protection of trees and groups of trees which are important to the amenity of the area.”

In early 2002 a planning application ref: **S/2002/0141/F** was submitted and proposed the construction of 3 No detached dwellings with integral garages and upgrading of existing access and closure of secondary access. The development proposal was entirely within the (eastern)

The policies referenced by the LVRP suggests they were of the opinion that the proposed development did not sympathetically relate to the surrounding character of the area or its buildings. Furthermore, it is clear that the LVRP had concerns surrounding the impact upon trees within the site which were not offset by the development benefits and also with regards to water pollution. However, there is no online data regarding representations and tree/water concerns from the then Department of the Environment (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs) or the then Environment and Heritage Service (Northern Ireland Environment Agency) within DoE.

Despite the LVRP Local Plan policies-based objection, the planning application was granted permission in late 2002 and development was completed and is visible in recent mapping and satellite imagery.

6.8. EDENDERRY

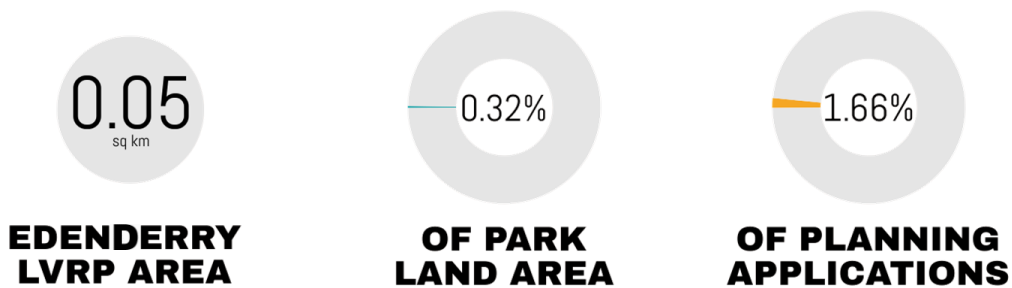


Figure 90: Edenderry 'Statistics'

Edenderry is another small village and townland that covers around 0.32% of the LVRP land area while containing, at 1.66%, substantially greater levels of proposed development locations in planning applications submitted within the park. This is a 419% increase from Edenderry percentage of park land to percentage of applications.

Below is a table presenting the number of applications submitted for the relevant Edenderry area, and classifying them into either housing or others. Only 27% of applications within or adjacent to the Edenderry development limits have been considered to be housing developments. 73% of applications are classified as other developments and these predominately consisted of minor developments such as extensions, garages, windows and porches but also included retail and an application for waste water treatment infrastructure. 48% of housing development applications were approved, 4% (or 1 application) was refused and another 48% were withdrawn, or in that case of 1 application, put on hold. 94% of other applications were granted while 6%, including proposals to erect a village shop and coffee shop were rejected.

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	23	11	1
Others	70	66	4
Total	93	74	5

Table 13: Types of Applications submitted in Edenderry (LVRP)

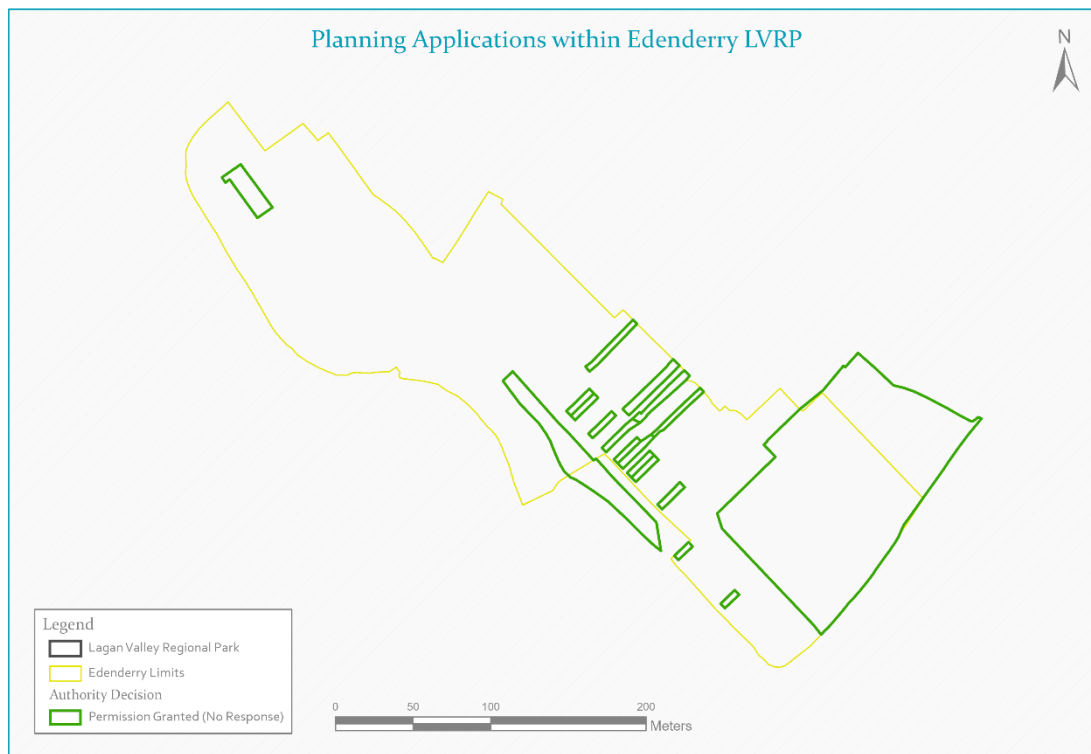


Figure 92: Planning Applications submitted within Edenderry LVRP (1973-89)

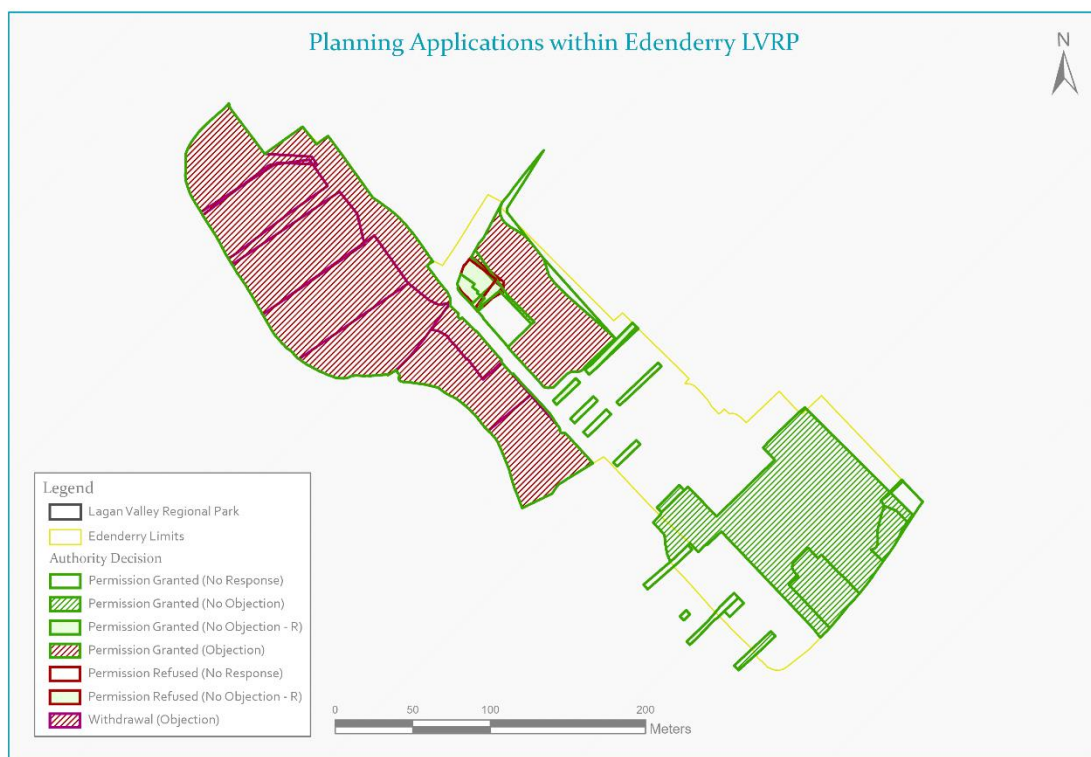


Figure 91: Planning Applications submitted within Edenderry LVRP (1990-99)

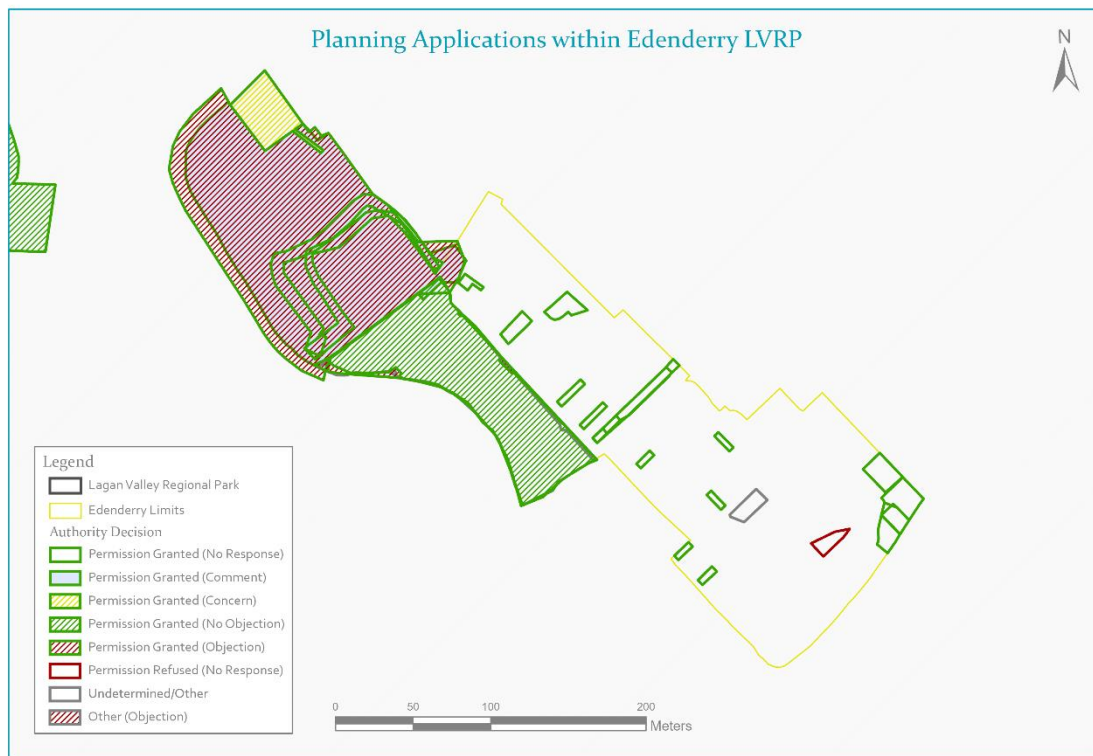


Figure 94: Planning Applications submitted within LVRP (2000-09)

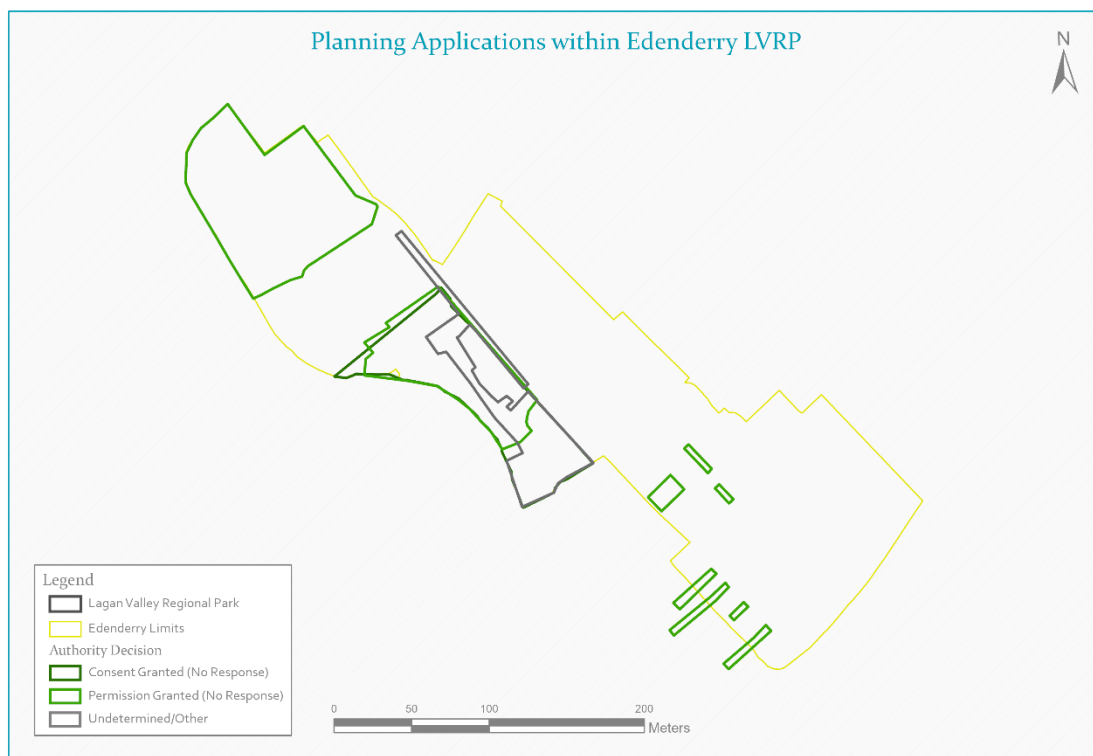


Figure 93: Planning Applications submitted within Edenderry LVRP (2010-2020)

S/2009/o841/F

- Edenderry Waste Water Treatment Works, Edenderry Road, Edenderry, Belfast

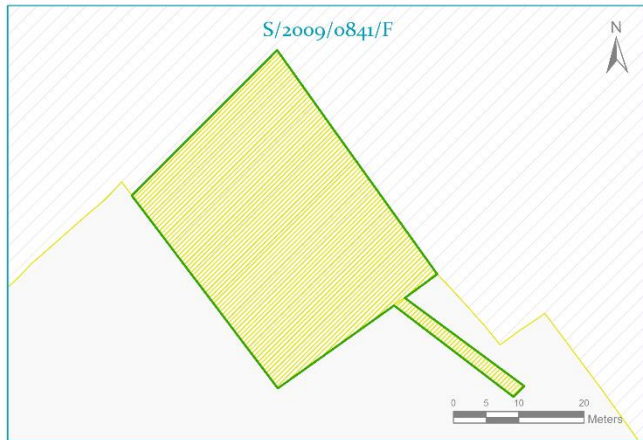


Figure 95: Application ref: S/2009/o841/F

site was not within development limits and the sites northern boundary followed the River Lagan. In September 2019, the LVRP Office provided representations raising concerns and objecting to the proposed scheme. The LVRP Office highlighted Strategic Planning Guidance ENV1 from the **RDS 2025** dealing with conservation of the environment and the protection of diversity. It is possible that particular reference was made to the text stating:

“Protect the Region’s rich resource of lakes and rivers... including [through] the identification of zones on lake edges and river corridors where development should be strictly curtailed [and] promote wise management of the Region’s land, woodland, water and wetland resources.”

However, just over month after submitting representations objecting to the proposed development; the LVRP Office submitted a final representation stating neutrality in regard to the proposal. It is likely that during this time further consultation and meetings took place between the various parties to come to a settlement and that conclusion. Then, in early 2010, the planning application was granted approval by the relevant local authority.

In 2009 application ref:

S/2009/o841/F was submitted and proposed the demolition of the existing inlet works and the construction of new inlet works on a raised platform to control and screen all flows into the works.

The site was contained within the LVRP; however, the majority of

6.9. HILLHALL

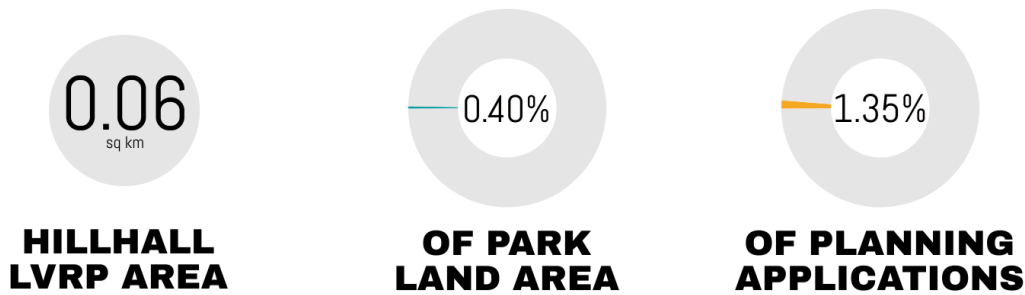


Figure 96: Hillhall 'Statistics'

Hillhall is a small non-nucleated or linear village and townland that covers 0.4% of the LVRP land area while containing 1.35%, a noticeably higher level of proposed development locations in planning applications submitted. This equates to a 235% increase from Hillhall percentage of park land to percentage of applications.

Below is the table presenting the number of applications submitted for the relevant Hillhall area and classifying them into either housing or others. 49% of applications submitted have been classed as housing developments while 51% have been classed as others (mostly minor development). 100% of housing applications were granted permission whereas 84% of other developments were granted, 6% refused and 10% were withdrawn, dismissed or in consultation (1 application each).

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	31	31	-
Others	32	27	2
Total	63	58	2

Table 14: Types of Applications submitted in Hillhall (LVRP)

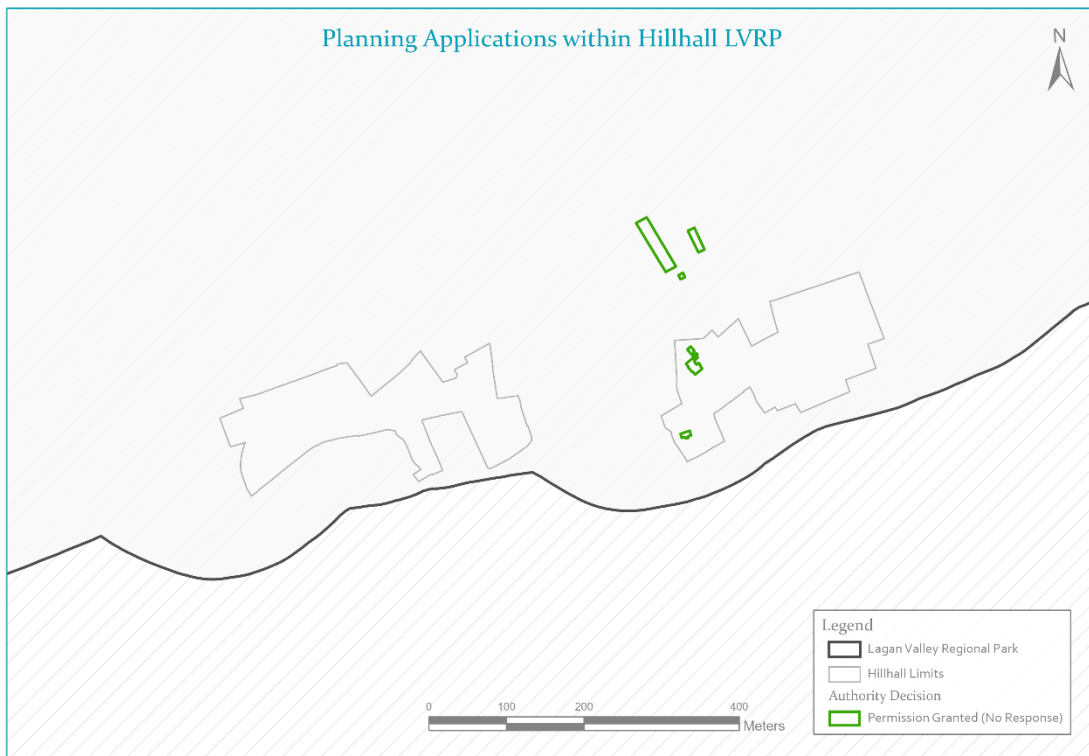


Figure 98: Planning Applications submitted within Hillhall LVRP (1973-79)

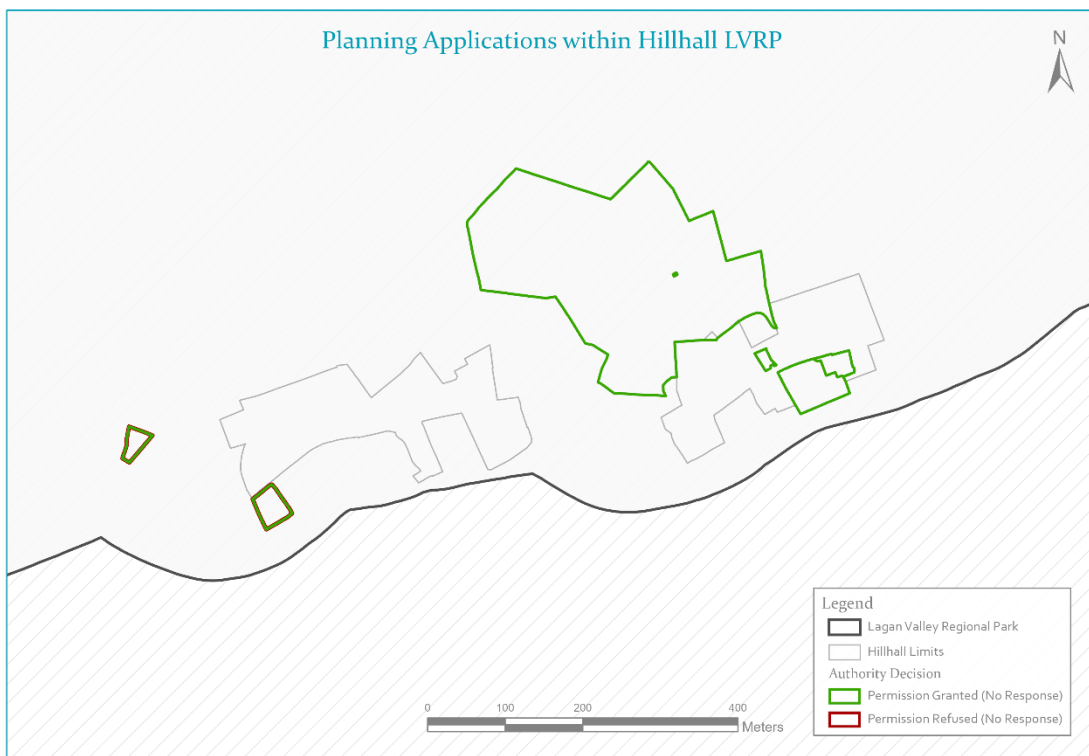


Figure 97: Planning Applications submitted within Hillhall LVRP (1980-89)

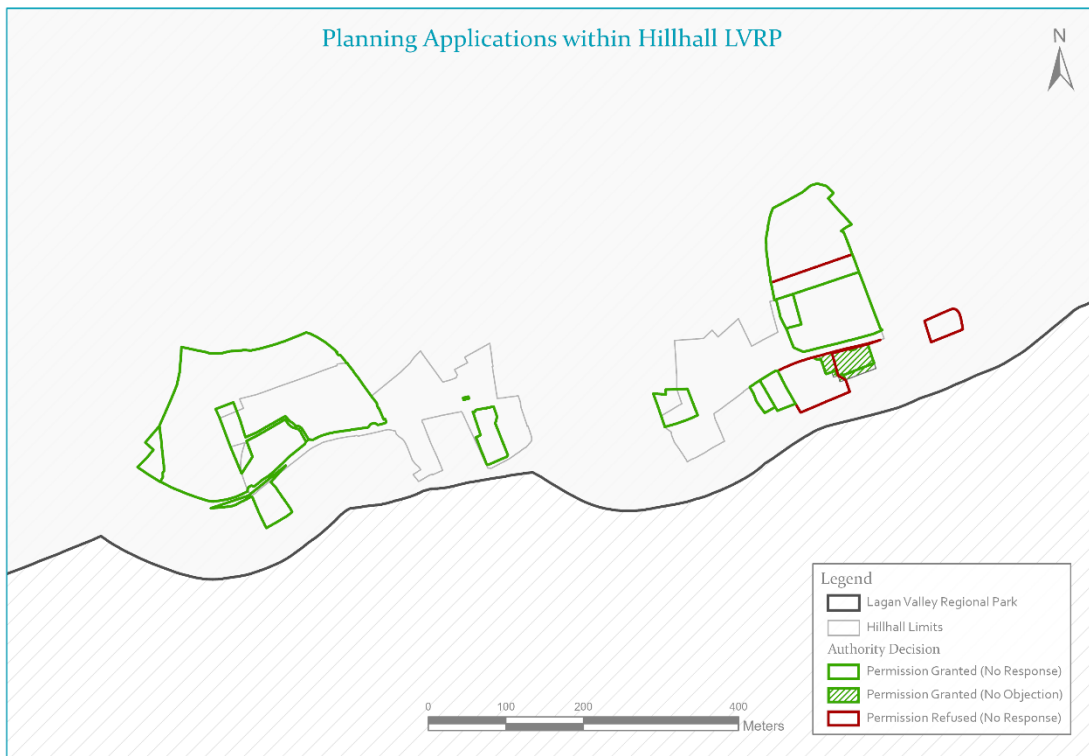


Figure 100: Planning Applications submitted within Hillhall LVRP (1990-99)

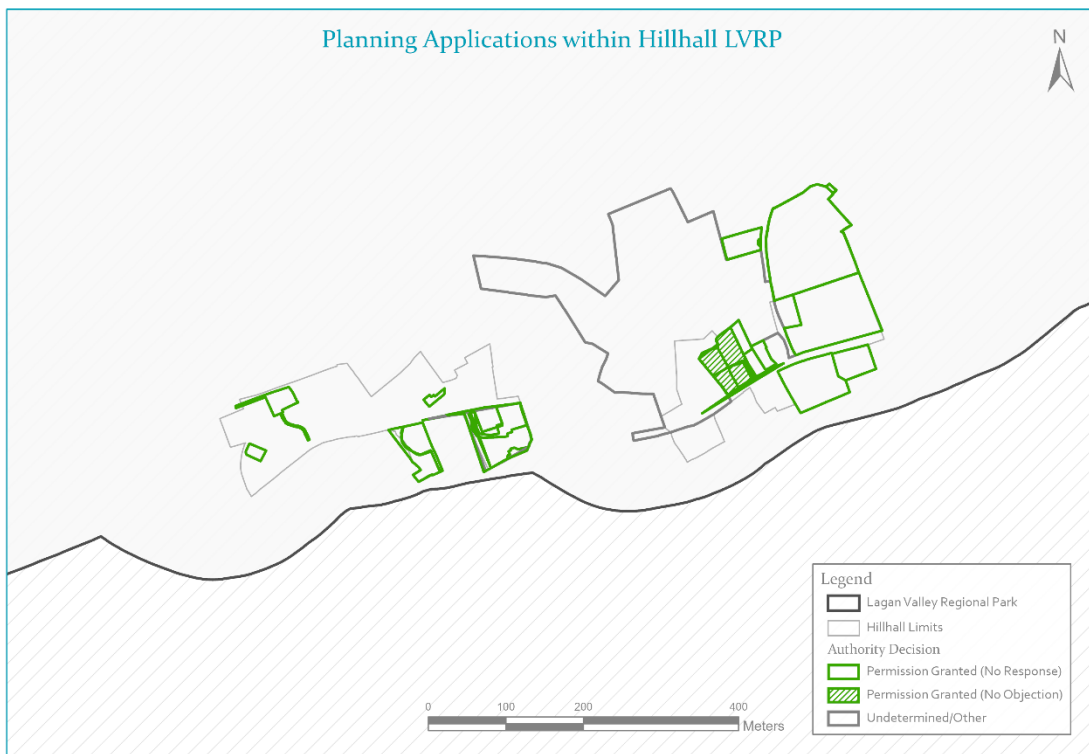


Figure 99: Planning Applications submitted within Hillhall LVRP (2000-09)

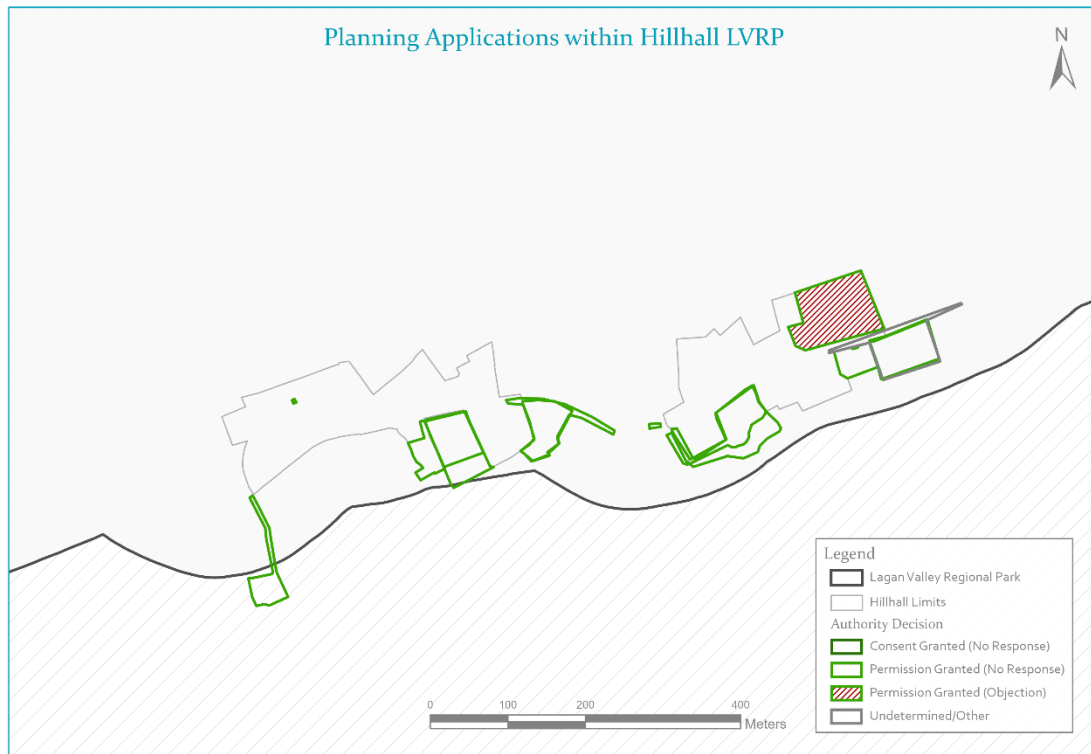


Figure 101: Planning Applications submitted within Hillhall LVRP (2010-20)

S/2010/0519/F

- Former Hillhall Primary School, Hillhall Road, Lisburn

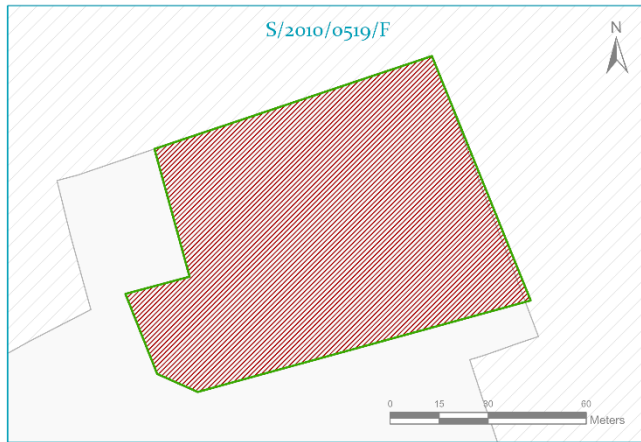


Figure 102: Application ref: S/2010/0519/F

space, parking, access and site works. The proposed site was 0.79 hectares, classified as a residential development and totally within both the LVRP boundaries and Hillhall Development Limits. However, the site was not within LLPA ref: HL 02 Hillhall Road.

Application ref: **S/2010/0519/F** was submitted in mid-2010 for determination and proposed a development of 19 No social housing units comprising 15 No dwelling houses and 4 No apartments (2 No wheel chair accessible and 2 No general needs) with associated landscaped open

This proposal received 84 public comments from a total of 100 consulted. Of those comments received, 83 stated an objection while the remaining 1 comment was of a neutral position. Moreover, the LVRP Office submitted representations objecting to this proposed development citing policies U10 and N3 of the **LVRP Local Plan**. As discussed earlier, these policies relate to developments and their sitting, massing, shape, design, finishes and landscaping within rural settings and their impact on trees and woodland which contribute to the Park.

The application was amended throughout its processing and in late 2011, despite no known change in the LVRP office stance, was granted planning permission by the Department of the Environment with 16 conditions attached. Some of these conditions relate back, and may be in response to, the policy based objections of the LVRP Office, including (but not limited to) the following:

Condition 11: All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the appropriate British Standard or other recognised Codes of

Practise. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme to be agreed with the Department.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a high standard of landscape.

Condition 16: No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, or have its roots damaged within the crown spread nor shall arboricultural work or tree surgery take place on any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the Department. Any arboricultural work or tree surgery approved shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998, 1989 Recommendations for Tree Work.

Reason: To ensure the continuity of amenity afforded by existing trees.

According to 2018/20 satellite imagery a completed housing complex now occupies the former Hillhall Primary School site.

6.10. LAMBEG

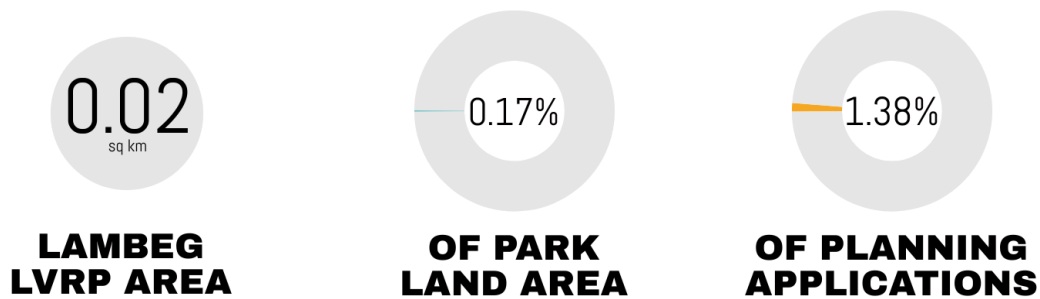


Figure 103: Lambeg 'Statistics'

Lambeg is a small village (and civil parish) that covers 0.17% of the LVRP land area while containing 1.38% of all proposed development locations in planning applications submitted within the LVRP. This equates to an immense 712% increase from Lambeg percentage of park land to percentage of applications.

The following table presents the number of applications submitted for the relevant Lambeg area and classifies them into either housing or others. 11% of applications submitted were housing developments whereas other developments, including minor developments, an orange hall reinstatement, a pumping station with works and a hydroelectric turbine with works make up 89% of the total. 86% of housing development applications were granted, including the aforementioned examples, while 14% (1 application) was withdrawn. 94% of other applications were granted while 6% were noted as deleted, invalid or historic (1 application each).

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	7	6	-
Others	51	48	-
Total	58	54	-

Table 15: Types of Applications submitted in Lambeg (LVRP)

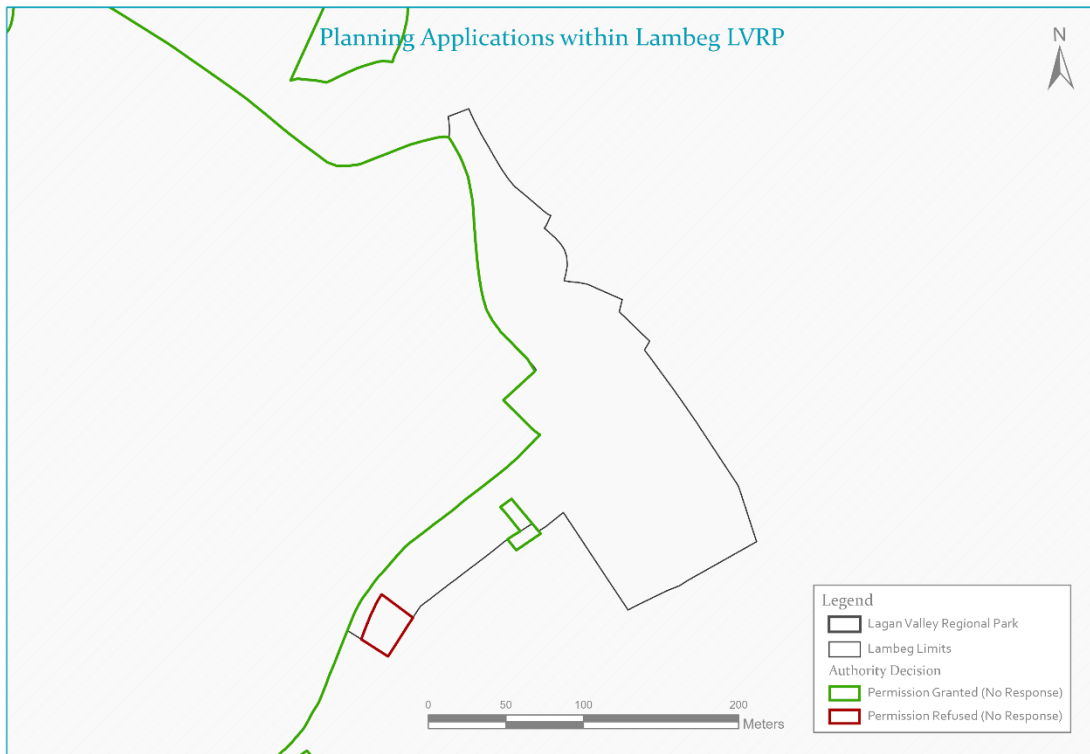


Figure 105: Planning Applications submitted within Lambeg LVRP (1973-79)

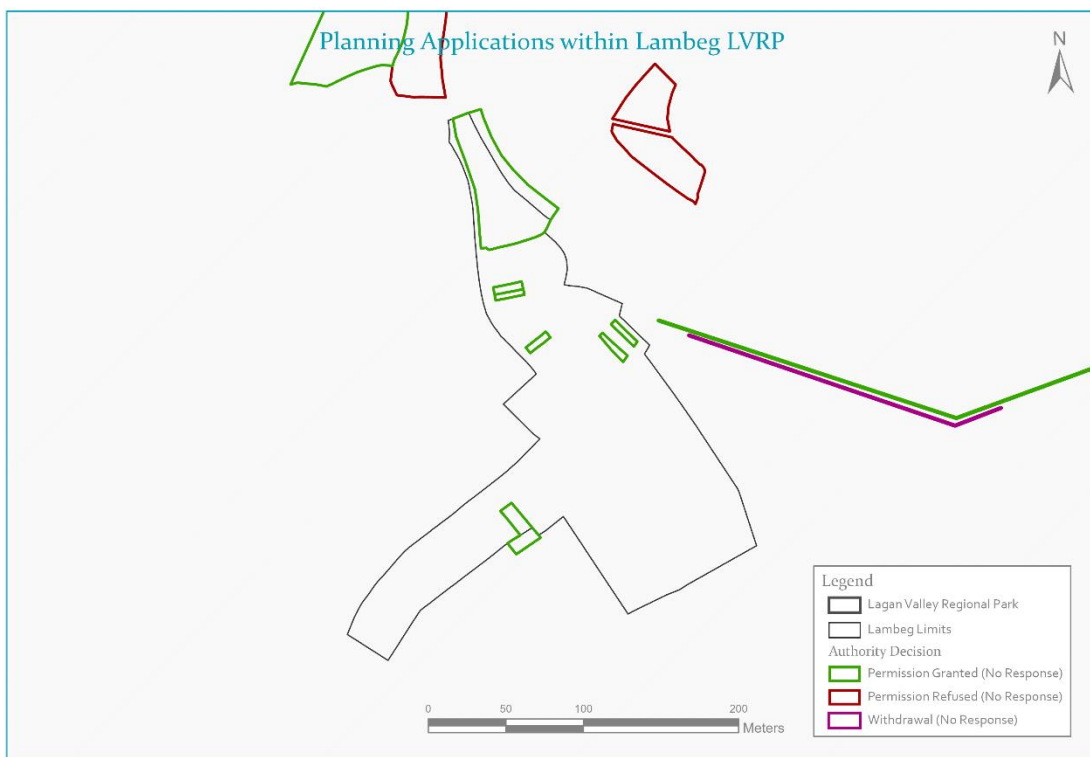


Figure 104: Planning Applications submitted within LVRP (1980-89)

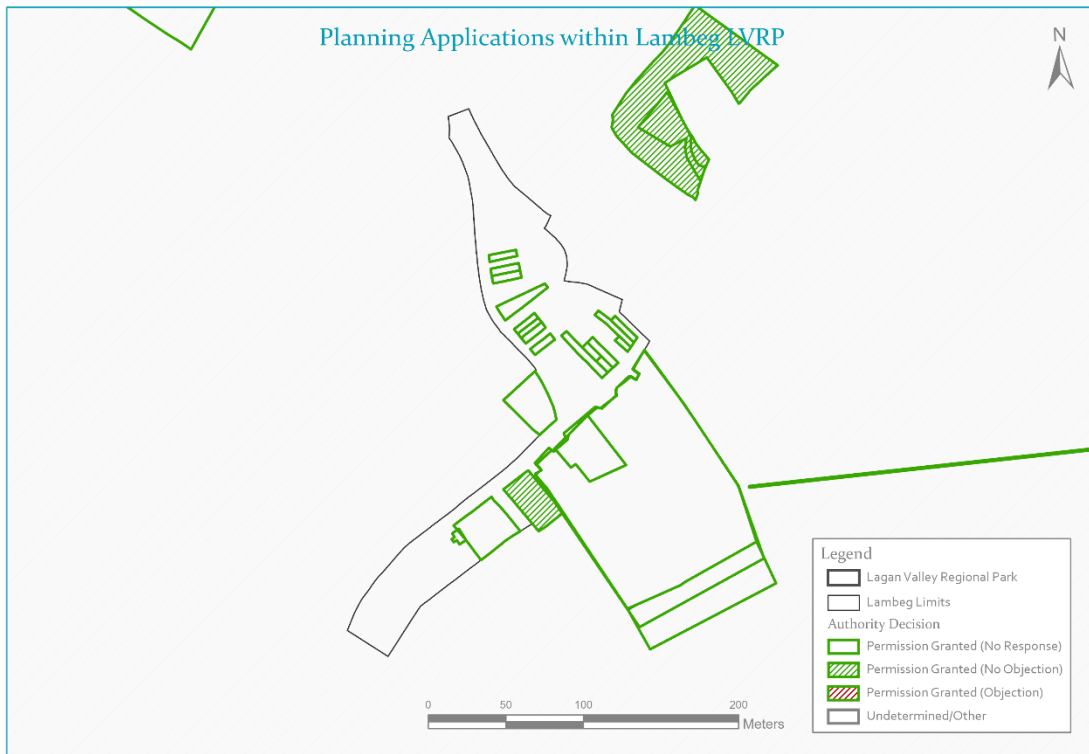


Figure 107: Planning Applications submitted within Lambeg LVRP (1990-99)

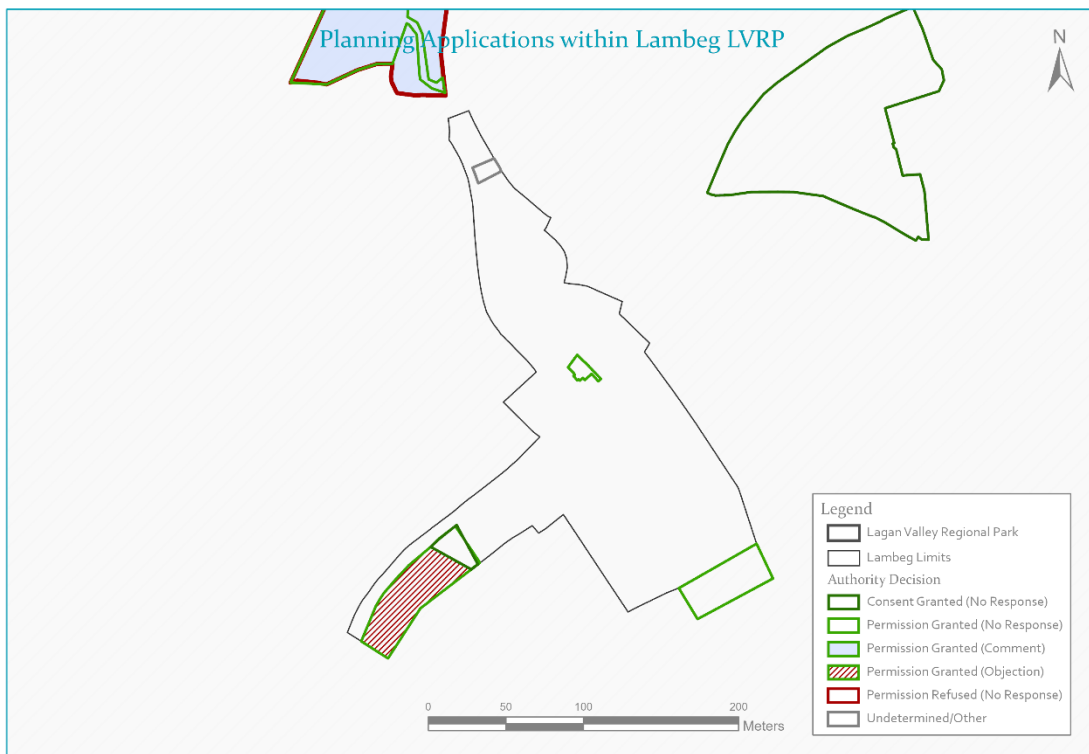


Figure 106: Planning Applications submitted within Lambeg LVRP (2000-09)

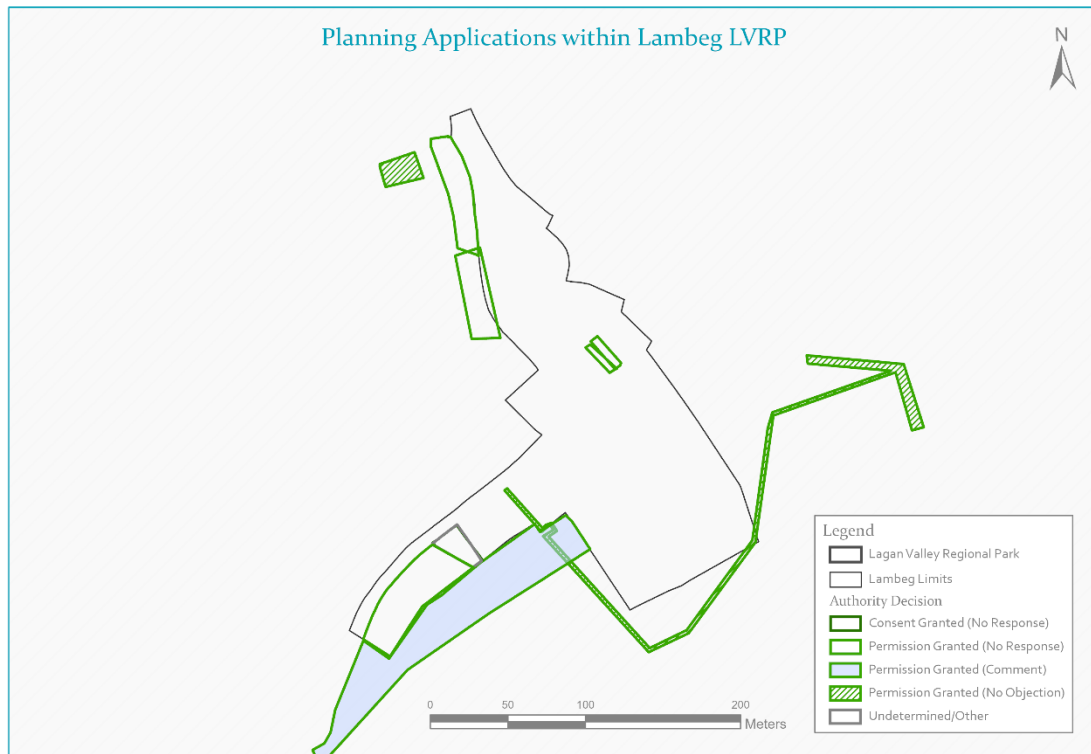


Figure 108: Planning Applications submitted within Lambeg LVRP (2010-20)

S/2007/0128/F

- 31 Church Hill, Lambeg

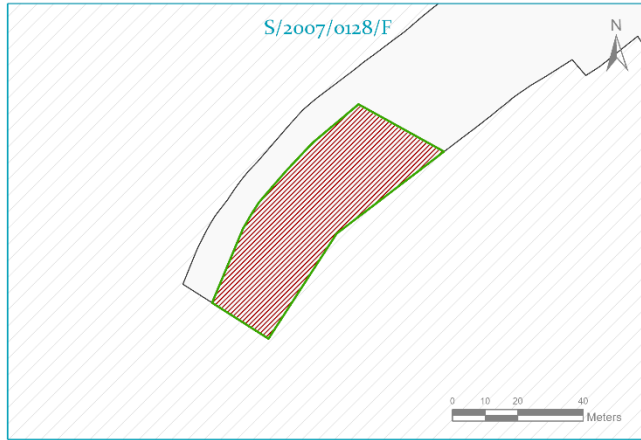


Figure 109: Application ref: S/2007/0128/F

eastern and southern boundaries exactly matching that of the development limit.

Although documentations are not available online it is understood that the LVRP Office had objections based on multiple **LVRP Local Plan** policies. Furthermore, 15 public comments, all objections, were made in response to the application.

The LVRP Office referred to **LVRP Local Plan** policies U2, U4, U10. The use of these policies suggests that the LVRP Office did not consider the proposed development to sympathetically relate to the design, scale and character of Lambeg, nor integrate well into the surrounding rural setting and character, or adequately provide for the protection of trees within the site. Despite the LVRP Office objections, permission was granted in 2010.

S/2014/0463/F

- 31 Church Hill, Lambeg

In 2014 application ref: S/2014/0463/F was submitted for a change of house type plan and elevation from the previous approval and reduction of units from 8 to 7 No and minor alteration to access road. This application was granted planning permission in 2016 and according to 2020 satellite imagery, the development has been completed.

In 2007 application ref:

S/2007/0128/F was submitted for determination and proposed a residential development consisting of 4 pairs of semi-detached houses (8 No total) with car parking and landscaping. The proposal site area is totally within the Lambeg development limits, with its

LA05/2015/0140/O

- To the rear of 27-31 Church Hill, Lambeg

While the change of use proposal was still under consideration another application was submitted concerning an area of land to the rear of 27-31 Church Hill and therefore, outside of the Lambeg development limits but still within the LVRP. Application ref: **LA05/2015/0140/O** proposed a farm dwelling under Policy CTY 2a in **PPS 21**. This policy states that:

“Planning permission will be granted for a dwelling at an existing cluster of development [provided it meets all of the 6 criteria points therein the policy details]”.

One of the criteria to be met under policy CTY a2 is that:

“The identified site provides a suitable degree of enclosure and is bounded on at least two sides with other development in the cluster.”

It may be the case that the approval of the residential development at 31 Church Hill provided a footing to contend that application ref: **LA05/2015/0140/O** could be bounded on two sides and therefore, subject to meeting the other conditions and policies such as **BMAP COU 12**, would be a permissible development.

In the end, the applicant sent correspondence to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council indicating that they did not wish to pursue the application and as of 2020 the site remains as an empty parcel of countryside land.

6.11. PURDYSBURN

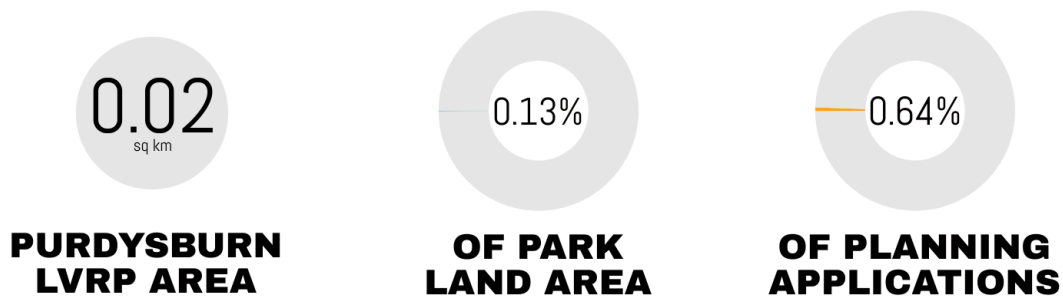


Figure 110: Purdysburn 'Statistics'

Purdysburn is another non-nucleated or linear village that covers about 0.13% of the LVRP land area while containing 0.64% of the total proposed development locations in planning applications submitted within the park. Like Ballyaughlis, this it equates to a 392% increase from Purdysburn percentage of park land to percentage of applications.

The following table presents the number of applications submitted for the relevant Purdysburn area and classifies them into either housing or others. 68% of all applications were classified as housing developments and the remaining 32% as others – which includes mostly includes extensions, garages and porches. 78% of housing development applications were granted, while 9% were refused and 13% were dismissed (1 application) or withdrawn. 91% of other applications were granted permission while 9% (1 application) were withdrawn.

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	23	18	2
Others*	11	10	-
Total	34	28	2

Table 16: Types of Applications submitted in Purdysburn (LVRP)

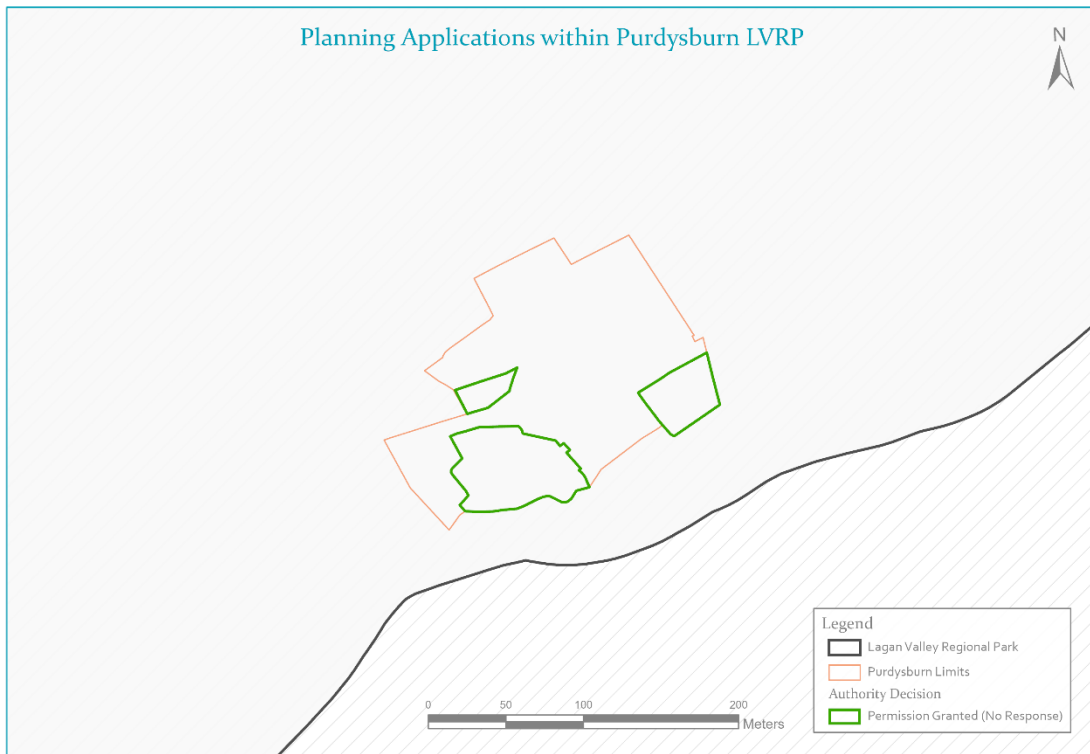


Figure 111: Planning Applications submitted within Purdysburn LVRP (1973-89)

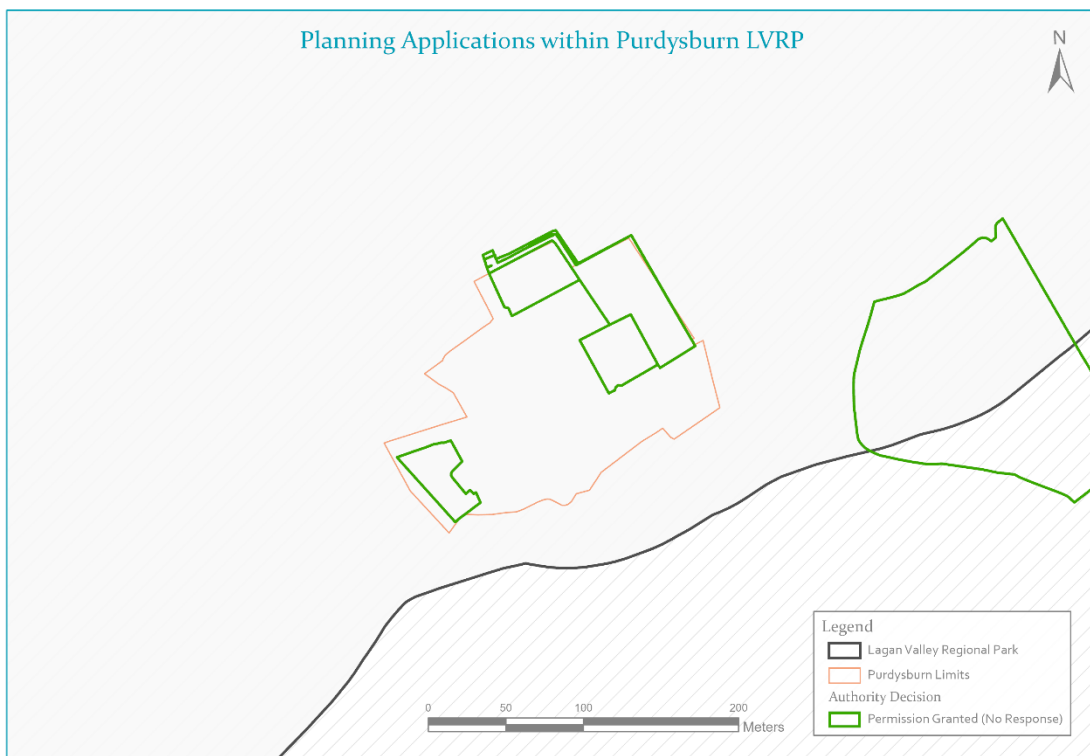


Figure 112: Planning Applications submitted within Purdysburn LVRP (1990-99)

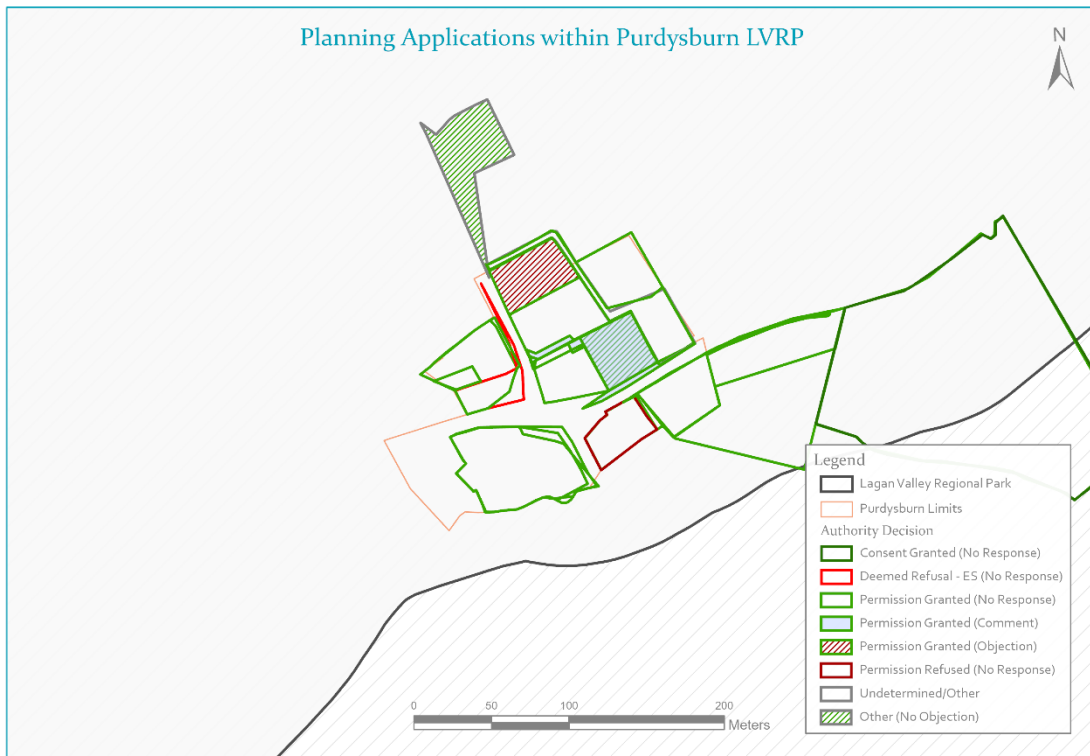


Figure 113: Planning Applications submitted within Purdysburn LVRP (2000-09)

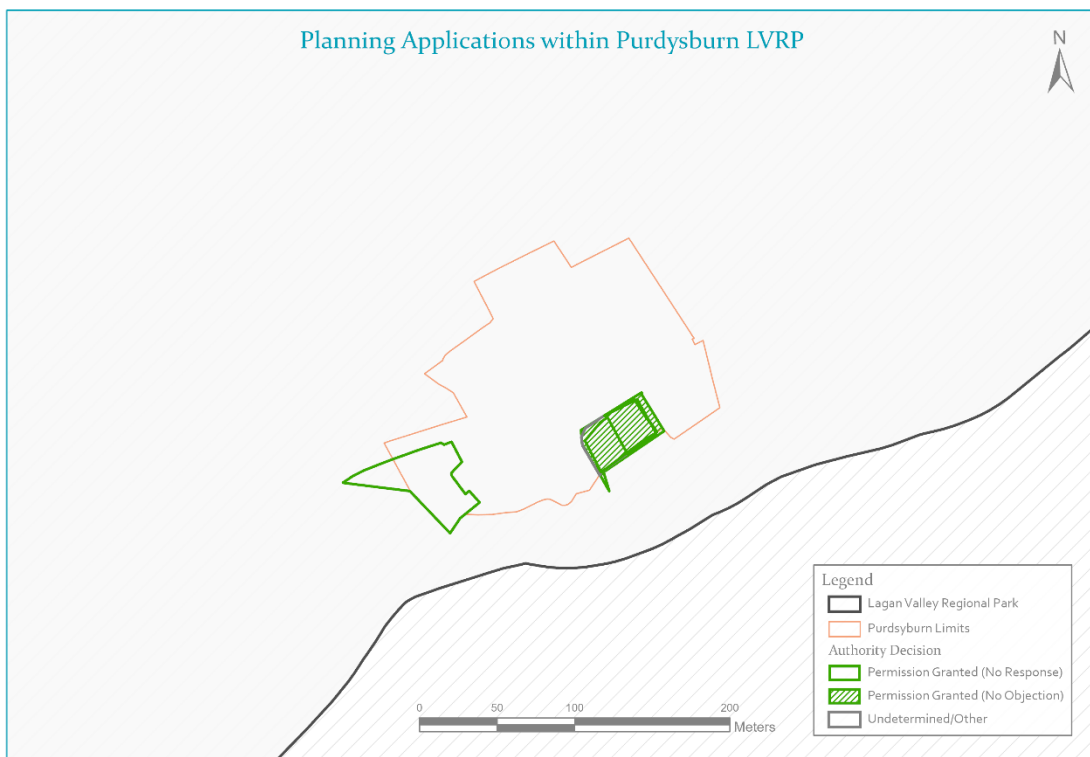


Figure 114: Planning Applications submitted within Purdysburn LVRP (2010-20)

S/2002/0717/F

- 10 Drumbeg Road, Ballyaughlis, Lisburn, Northern Ireland, BT27 5TR

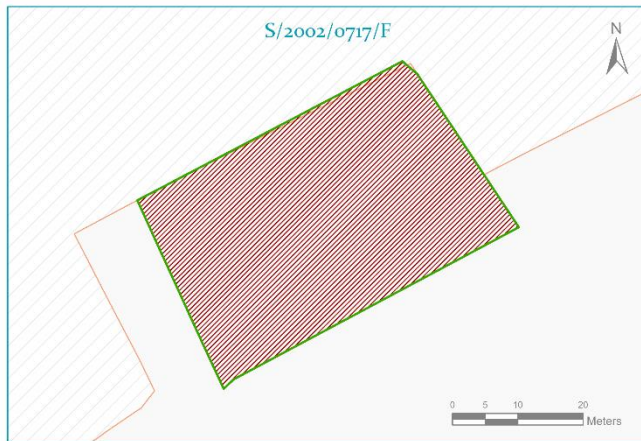


Figure 115: Application ref: S/2002/0717/F
development encompassed about 0.15 hectares out of the total Purdysburn Development Limit area of 2 hectares – equalling 7.5% of all the settlements land area.

Application ref: **S/2002/0717/F** was submitted in 2002 and proposed the development of 7 No townhouses off an adopted driveway entrance to existing adjacent development on a site at the very north of the Purdysburn Development Limits and totally within the LVRP. The proposed

Two public comments are viewable online with one being from the LVRP Office. Both of these comments were objections to the proposed development, and it is understood that the LVRP Office made specific reference to Policy U2 of the **LVRP Local Plan**. This suggests that the LVRP Office had concerns regarding the proposed development, i.e. townhouses, and their design and character within the village limits. As the LVRP Office own records provide no further information, it can be assumed that their concerns and objections were not satisfactorily responded to or abated during the processing of the application. Regardless, the planning application was granted permission in 2003 and recent maps show the completed development with matching number of dwellings.

This application, along with other earlier approved applications ref: **S/2001/0855/F**, **S/2001/0261/F**, **S/2000/1028/F**, covering 0.66 hectares or 33% of the total settlement limit area, marked a decade long spur in residential applications and development within Purdysburn through to 2020. To exemplify, no new dwelling applications were submitted between 1973 – 89, one outline and subsequent reserved matters application for replacement dwellings was submitted between 1990-99, 14 applications (and ensuing

amendments) were submitted during 2000-2009 and 2 sites were the subject of new housing proposals between 2010-20. Thus, between 1973-2020, a majority of the land within the Purdysburn Development Limits have been incorporated into some sort of planning application proposal and has eventually been developed.

6.12. TULLYNACROSS

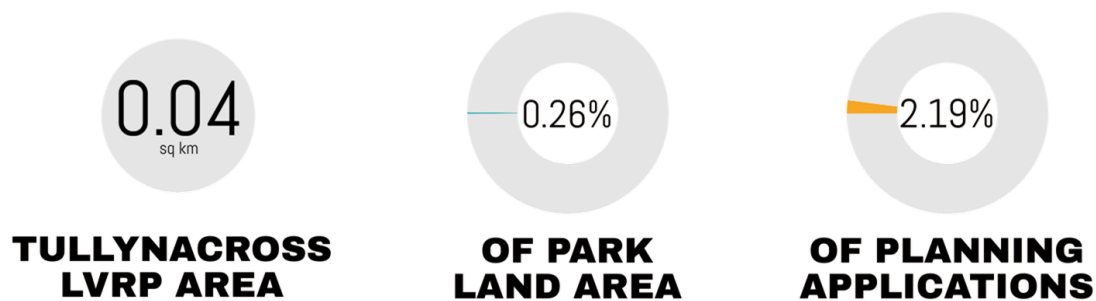


Figure 116: Tullynacross 'Statistics'

Tullynacross is a small village that lies within the civil parish of Lambeg. Tullynacross covers 0.26% of the LVRP land area while containing a comparatively very high 2.19% of the total levels of proposed development locations within planning applications submitted. Indeed, there is a substantial 742% increase from Tullynacross percentage of park land to percentage of applications.

The following table is the final of its type and presents applications relevant to the Tullynacross area and classifies them in the same manner as the previous 12 tables have done so. 23% of application are considered to have been housing developments whereas 77% were classified as other developments – including many aforementioned minor developments, security fences, electrical cables, and multiple works at a bottling facility. 81% of housing applications were granted, 5% (1 application) was refused and 14% were withdrawn. 99% of other applications were granted planning permission whilst 1% (1 application) was invalid.

Type of Application	Applications	Granted	Refused
Housing	21	17	1
Others*	69	68	-
Total	90	85	1

Table 17: Types of Applications submitted in Tullynacross (LVRP)

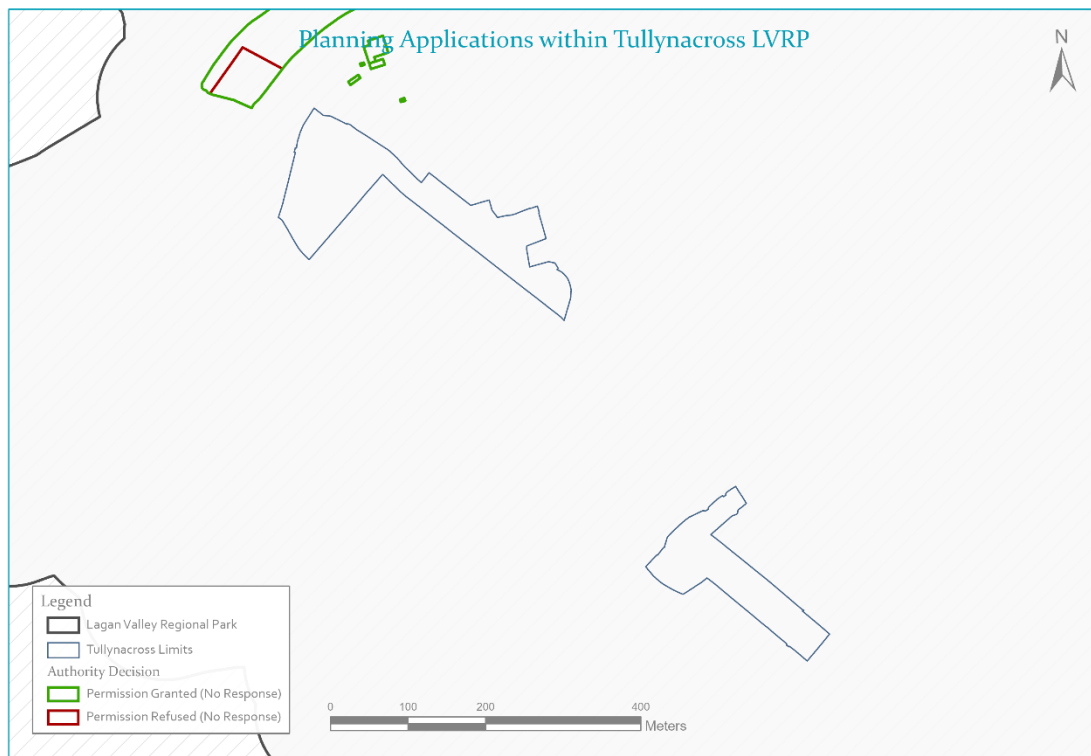


Figure 118: Planning Applications submitted within Tullynacross LVRP (1973-79)

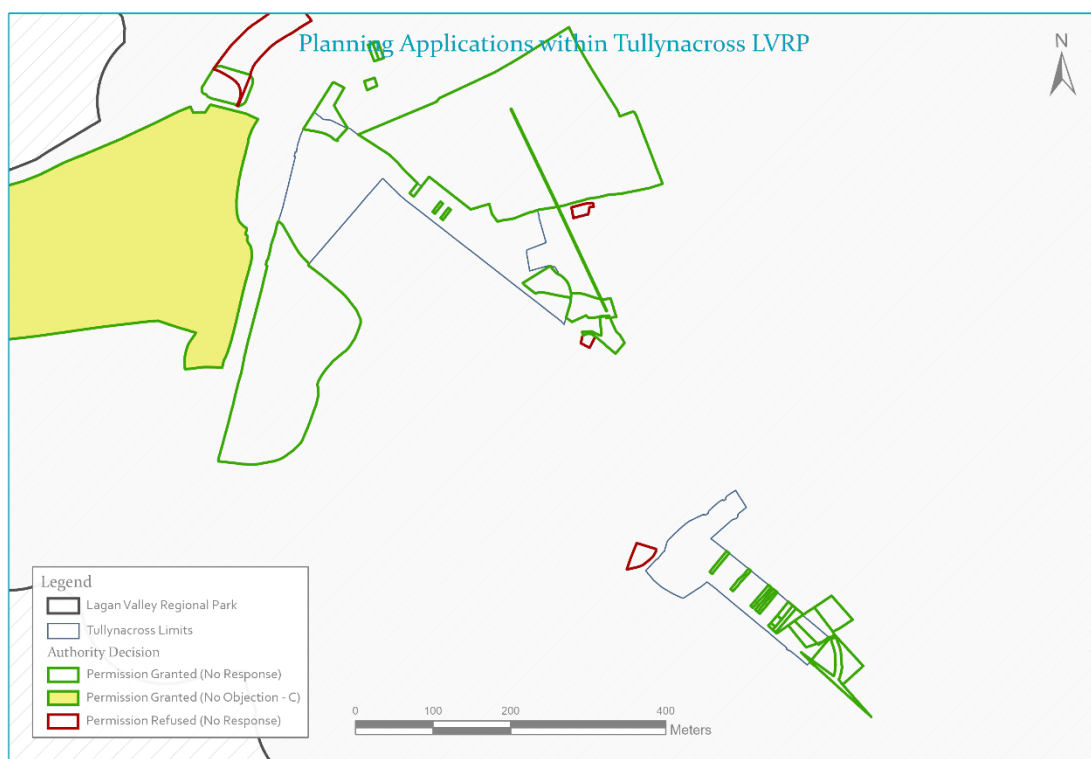


Figure 117: Planning Applications submitted within Tullynacross LVRP (1980-89)

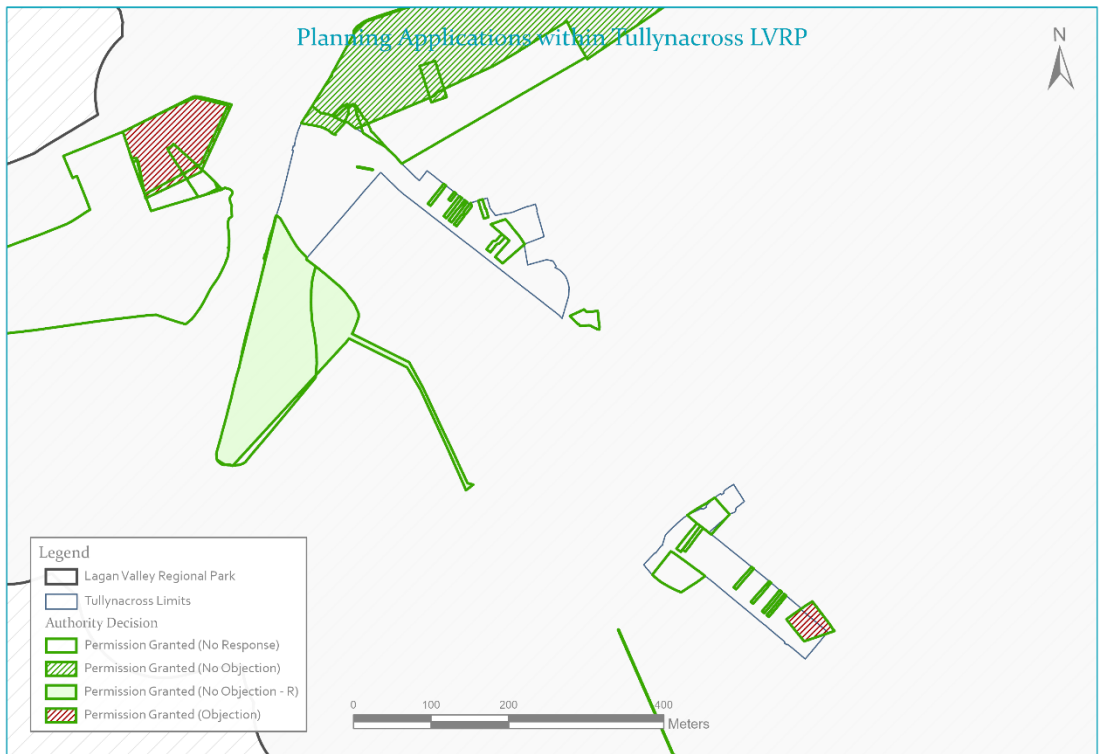


Figure 120: Planning Applications submitted within Tullynacross LVRP (1990-99)

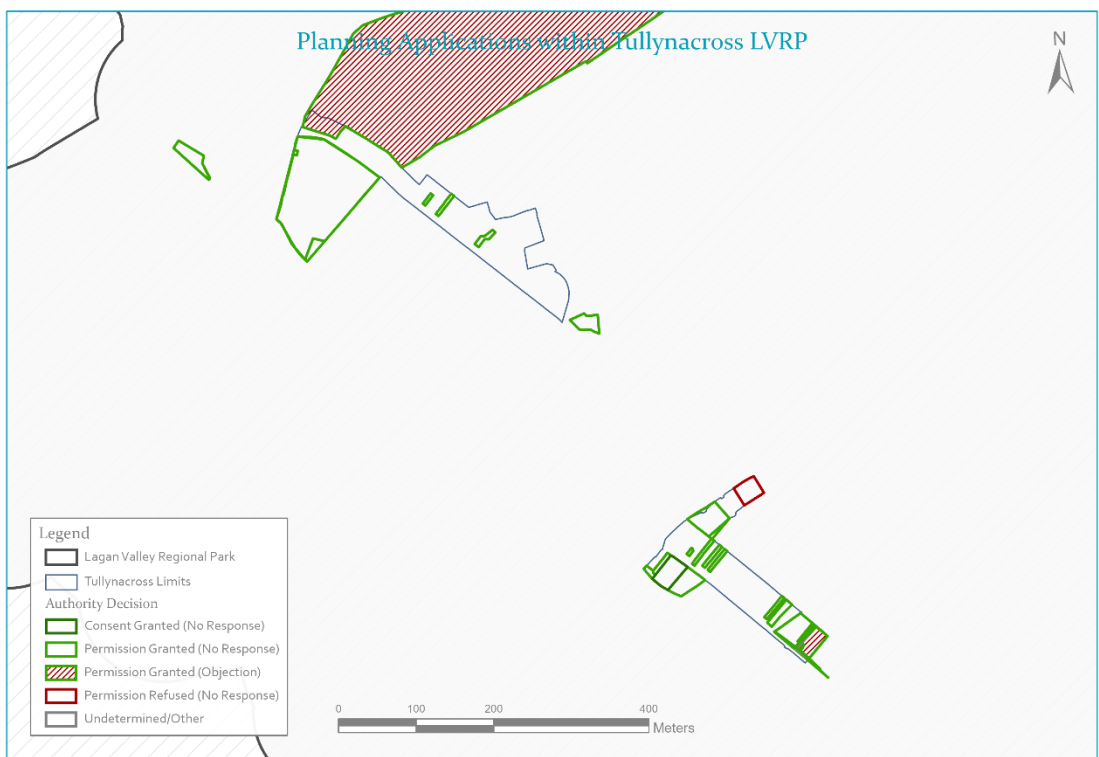


Figure 119: Planning Applications submitted within Tullynacross LVRP (2000-09)

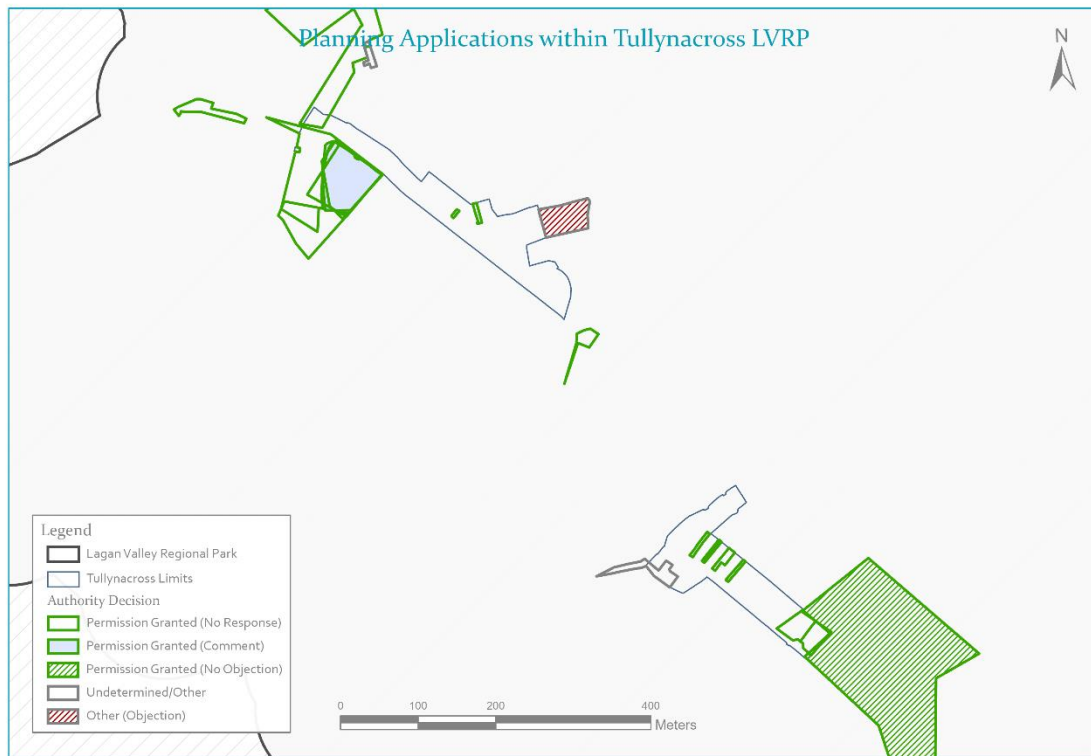


Figure 121: Planning Applications submitted within Tullynacross LVRP (2010-20)

S/2004/0345/F

- Site adjacent to 73 Tullynacross Road, Lisburn



Figure 122: Application ref: S/2004/0345/F

In 2004 application ref:

S/2004/0345/F was submitted for determination and it proposed a dwelling & garage & new paired access. Most of the proposed development site, although farmland, was just within the Tullynacross Development Limits, with its northern and eastern

boundaries slight hanging over the settlement limits. Although documentation isn't readily available online it is known that the LVRP submitted representations objecting to this application. Policies specifically referenced include **LVRP Local Plan** Policies L1, U1, U2 and U3. Policy U3 states that:

"Planning permission for new dwellings outside existing settlements will normally only be given when they are essential to the operation of farming and have to be located in the countryside."

As most of proposed development site was within the Tullynacross Development Limits Policy U1 may have held less weight in the application's determination. The inclusion of Policy U2 suggests that the LVRP Office did not consider the proposal to acceptably relate to the design, scale or character of Tullynacross. Furthermore, as a single dwelling development it seems unlikely it would meet any of the criteria set out in Policy L1 such as providing for public enjoyment in the countryside, allowing for diversification of the farm economy, serving the social or religious needs of the local population. Lastly, it is clear from the inclusion of Policy U3 that the LVRP Office did not consider this development proposal to be essential to the operation of farming – for instance, the application was not even submitted as a 'farm dwelling'. Despite the LVRP Office objections the proposal received permission. A further application ref: **S/2006/0966/F** was submitted in 2006 and

received permission for a change of house type. satellite imagery confirms the developments completion. Then, in 2007 yet another application ref: **S/2007/1314/LDP** was submitted and proposed a single storey extension at rear of residence to provide new utility room/lobby. This application was subsequently approved in 2008 and satellite imagery suggests that both the original development and extension were completed.

7. Land Use and Change

The following figure serves as a legend for the subsequent maps entitled “Urban Atlas Land Use in Lagan Valley Regional Park” and “Urban Atlas Land Use Change in Lagan Valley Regional Park”. These maps use data sourced from the Copernicus Land Monitoring Service of the European Environment Agency.

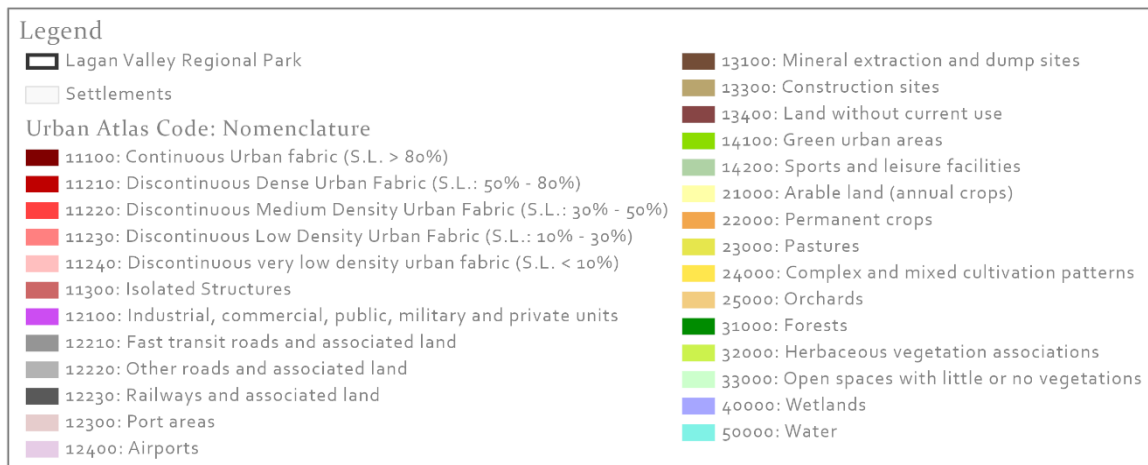


Figure 123: The Urban Atlas Land Use Code/Legend

The Urban Atlas 2006 had 17 classes (11100-14200) primarily focused on urban land uses, however, The Urban Atlas 2012 increased the number of classes to 27 and offered 10 agricultural and semi-natural classes (2100-5000) to provide a better insight into the urban fringe – although as will be mentioned later, this is still far from ideal (for this project).

11100: Continuous Urban fabric consists of built-up areas and their associated land with a high degree of soil sealing. These areas are predominantly residential uses but can include city centres and central business district type uses. 11210: Discontinuous Dense Urban fabric has a larger fraction of non-sealed and / or vegetated surfaces: gardens, parks, planted areas and non-surfaced public areas, and so on and so on until 11240: Discontinuous very low density urban fabric which consists of residential buildings, roads and other artificially surfaced areas but where the vegetated areas are predominant yet not dedicated to forestry or agriculture.

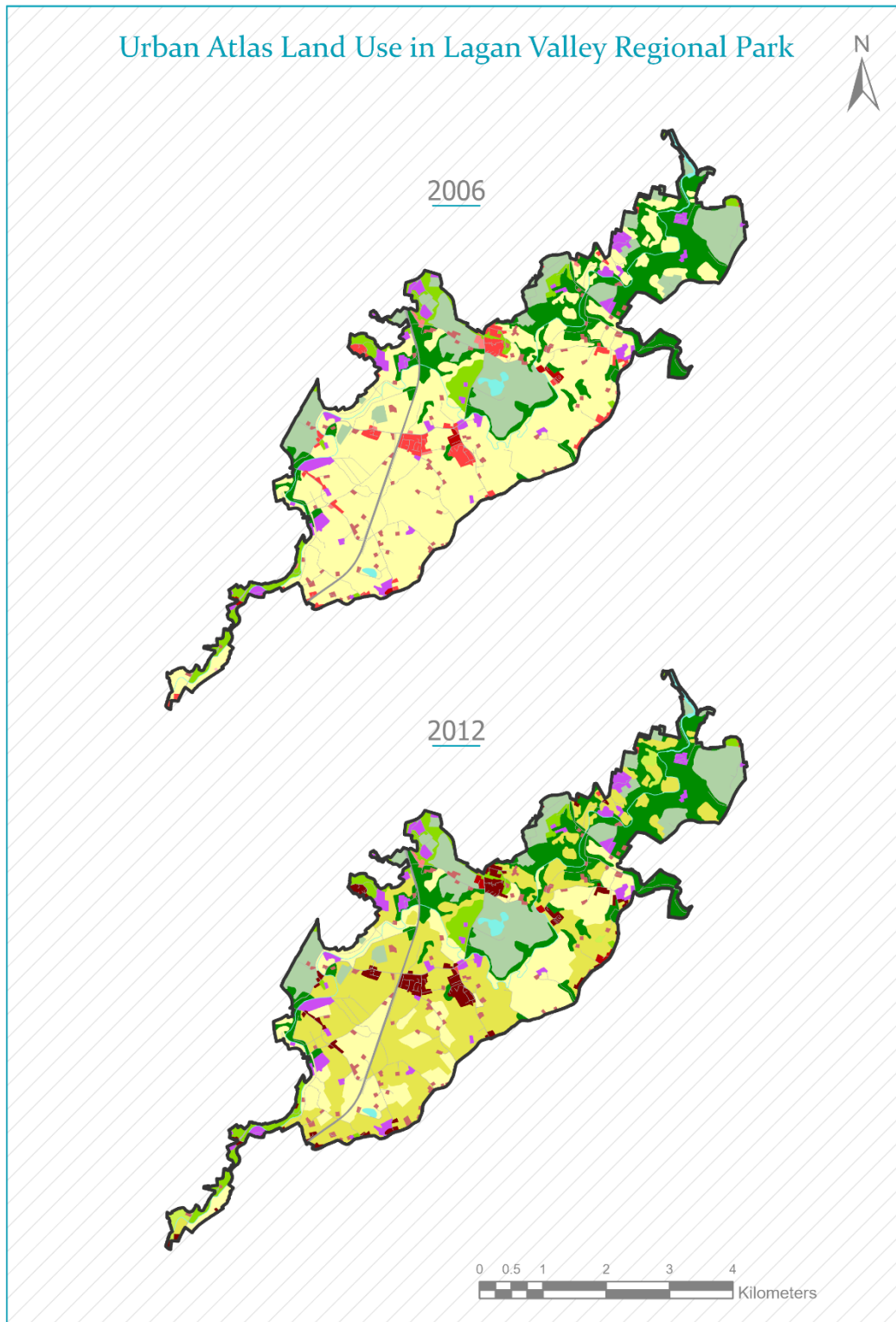


Figure 124: Urban Atlas Land Use in Lagan Valley Regional Park 2006-12

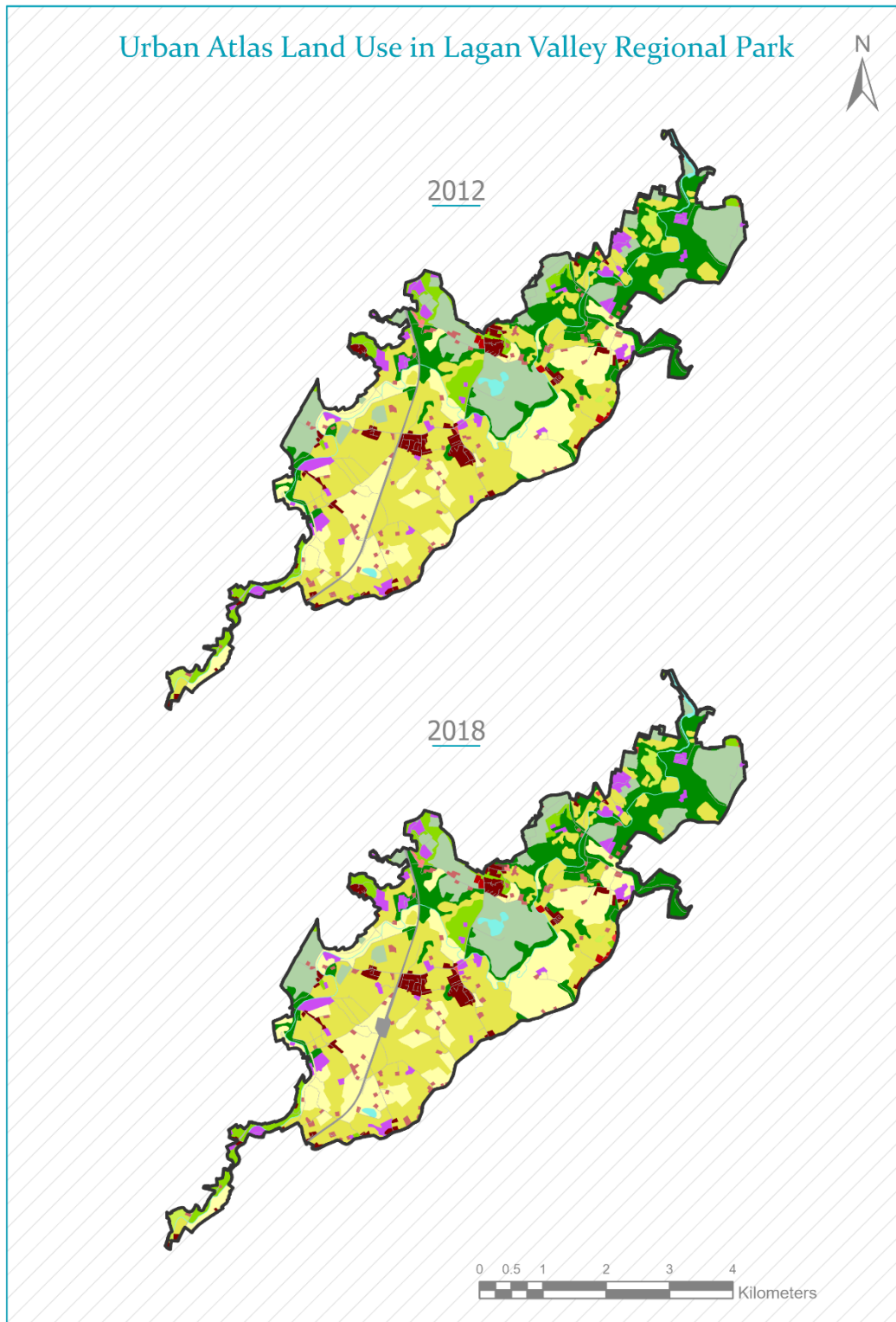


Figure 125: Urban Atlas Land Use in Lagan Valley Regional Park 2012-18

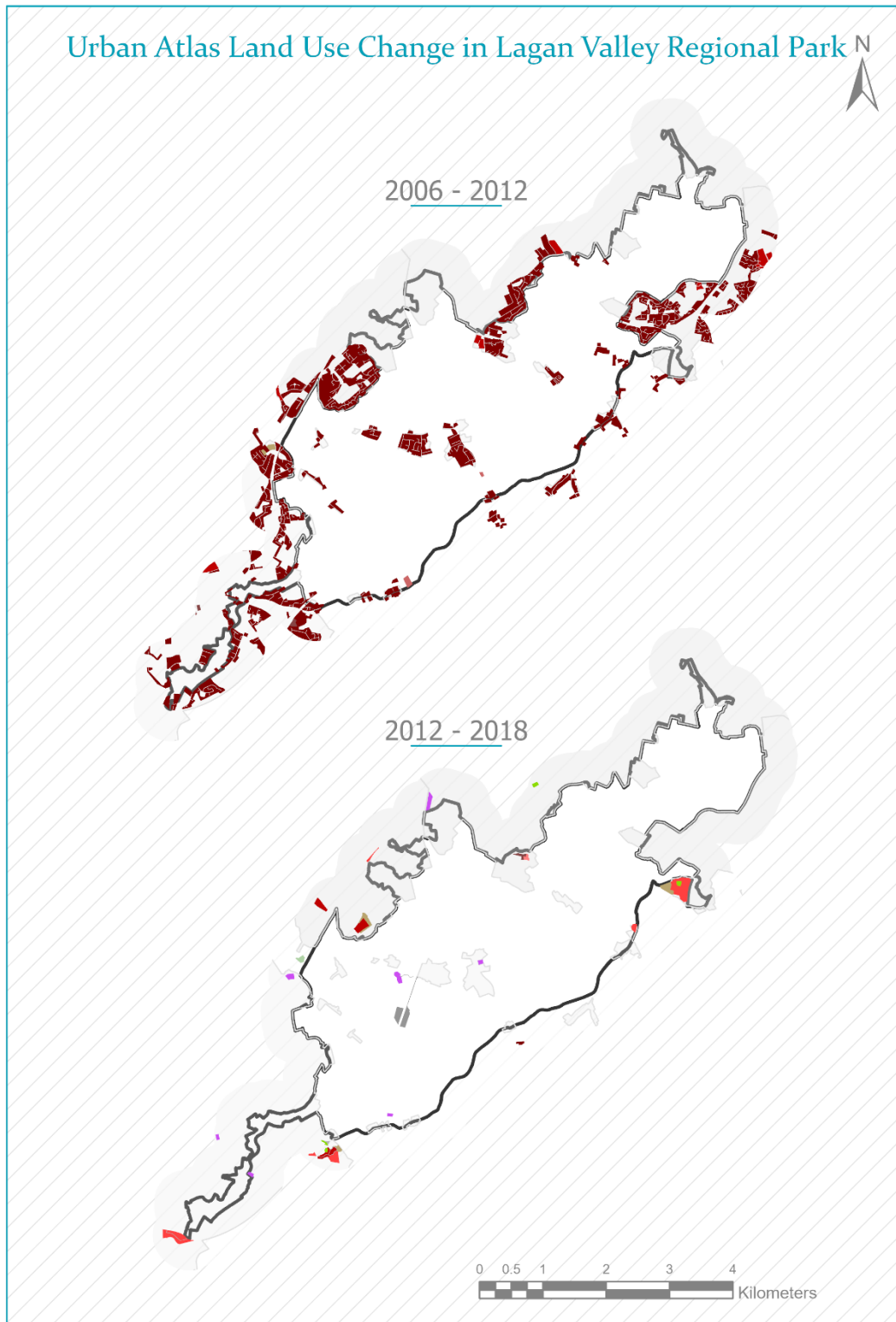


Figure 126: Urban Atlas Land Use Change in Lagan Valley Regional Park 2006-12 and 2012-18

As seen in figure 124, there is a noticeable change in the depth of land use classifications between 2006 - 2012. For instance, in 2006, a significant majority of LVRP land area is designated simply as 20000: Semi-natural areas, wetlands. Whereas in 2012, much of that land is classified primarily as 23000: Pastures and, to a lesser extent; as 21000: Arable land (annual crops). In the same period, much land within various settlement limits were reclassified from 11220: Discontinuous Medium Density urban fabric to 11100: Continuous Urban Fabric. While this will partially be a result of the more detailed coding system swapped to for 2012, it also paints a picture of gradual urban intensification (soil sealing > 80%) within settlement limits and of significant levels of intensification at the periphery of the LVRP boundary. Such development pressure is featured prominently around the Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh metropolitan areas but also Drumbeg and other smaller settlements.

Land use change for the period 2012 - 2018 is less pronounced than 2006 - 2012 both within the boundaries of the LVRP and at its periphery. There are very small areas within both Metropolitan Belfast and the Ballylesson Development Limits that have been developed and reclassified into uses ranging from 11230: Discontinuous low density urban fabric (soil sealing 10% - 30%) to 111000. There are also 3 distinct areas of land within the LVRP that have been reclassified as 12100: Industrial, commercial, public, military and private units. Additionally, a considerable tract of land, south of Ballyskeagh and Drumbeg; at either side of the M1 and otherwise surrounded by agricultural land has been built into a comprehensive motorway service site. On the outside but near to the LVRP there was some limited changes in land use which were also predominately 'urban' in nature. However, some green/open spaces, construction sites and industrial sites were also mapped.

The following tables present the land use of the LVRP as taken from the LVRP Local Plan in 1993 and as taken from the Urban Atlas Land Use 2018, respectively.

In 1993 the area of the Park was around 1700 hectares and was split somewhat evenly between agriculture, at 38%, and open space, at 42%, with the remaining 20% of land area being attributed to other uses. These land uses equated to a total area of 1691 ha although the LVRP Local Plan total suggests the same numbers totalled only 1611 ha.

The LVRP has since increased in size and is now 2100 hectares in area. According to the 2018 Land Atlas, which may not be as intricately detailed for such a location, the Park has seen a considerable net increase in agricultural land use at 49% of the Park area (1031 ha). Meanwhile, all open space, although covering a larger total area of 756 ha, makes up a slightly reduced 46% of the Park. Other uses, such as industrial sites, roads and the urban fabric have also increased their total area count (298 ha) but make up a smaller proportion of land area at 15%.

<i>Land Use in the LVRP (1993)</i>				
Area of Park	1700 ha			
Land Use	Area (Ha)	Area (Acres)	Percentage (%)	Combined %
Agriculture	643	1588	38%	
Public Open Space	419	1036	25%	
Private Open Space	299	710	17%	42%
Other Uses	330	815	20%	
Total	1691	4149	100%	

Table 18: Land Use in the LVRP (1993)

<i>Land Use in the LVRP (2018)</i>				
Area of Park	2100 ha			
Land Use	Area (ha)	Area (acres)	Percentage (%)	Combined %
Agriculture	1031	2548	49%	
Open Space	756	1867	36%	
Other Uses	203	501	10%	
& Urban Fabric	95	235	5%	15%
Total	2085	5151	100%	

Table 19: Land Use in the LVRP (2018)

8. Conclusions

Through the literature review and policy context sections of this report it has been made clear that although Northern Ireland has historically ever so slightly lingered behind the rest of the United Kingdom in landscape protection and the offerings of associated recreation, it has made great strides in these domains in recent, more peaceful, decades. Furthermore, policy creation and ‘enforcement’ has been transferred mostly from privately commissioned groups/organisations and Central Government to local authorities (Belfast and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Councils) under a forward-thinking plan-led system as opposed to a reactive one.

The Lagan Valley Regional Park took what was best from the recommendations set out by the Countryside Commission and, with help from then students and future planners, repackaged it into a uniquely Northern Ireland ‘Regional Park’ format which, since establishment, has had sizeable increases in overall land area. Interestingly these boundary changes may have created a slightly unexpected result. Data from the Urban Atlas has determined that although the Park is facing significantly urbanised development pressure on its external periphery and within and adjacent to enclave development limits, these uses cover a reduced proportion of land in 2018 than in 1993. Agricultural uses are now slightly up when compared to 1993, however, land devoted to recreation and leisure has decreased and this, is advised to be acknowledged as a significant concern. Though, the Urban Atlas, with a minimum mapping unit of 1 ha in rural areas, may not be as finely detailed as the land use mapping undertaken for the 1993 Local Plan.

The adoption of the Lagan Valley Regional Park Local Development Plan 2005 was an incredibly important step in continuing the conservation of the Park and protecting it for the continued use by residents and visitors alike. The primacy of the Local Plan is evident as used in 9 out of 13 settlements application responses discussed referenced Local Plan policies as (part) of the basis of objection and moreso in that they were referenced 118 times out of a total of 158 recorded policy references by the LVRP Office. Despite this, 6 of the 9 settlement applications were still granted planning permission in the first instance – although some contained specific conditions relating back to the policy concerns. One other application was initially refused but a follow up application addressing concerns and

significantly reduced in size was granted while another application had objections suitably dealt with in consultation. This means that only 1 of the 9 discussed applications was refused in the first instance. Yet in some cases, applications received no response from the LVRP Office, such as application ref: S/1994/0671 for motorway services and works (approx. 5 ha) but were still refused by the relevant authority. In this specific case however, more applications ref: S/1999/0477/RM and S/2013/0596/F were submitted, yet again recorded no LVRP response and were then subsequently granted permission. Conversely, there are also applications relevant to the LVRP where there was a failure to consult the LVRP Office.

It is important to recognise that the Local Plan was produced in 1993 and was only expected to remain in place until 2005. As of 2020 the Local Plan is 15 years out of date, yet given the legality issues surrounding BMAP 2015, the Local Plan still remains in force.

It is therefore suggested that Belfast and Lisburn/Castlereagh City Councils should fully grasp their devolved responsibilities and powers and take the opportunity to jointly produce a new and up to date Local Plan for the unique LVRP, that takes into consideration the changing landscape of the Park and associated development pressures. Moreover, it is very important that the LVRP Office is involved in such an undertaking as an equal partner to the two Councils, continues to effectively respond to all relevant planning applications and is supported in doing so by being properly notified.

In conjunction with such a plan, or even as standalone exercise to complement this report, it may be beneficial to undertake an in-depth land use and development pressure mapping study across the Park. This could make use of high resolution satellite imagery and the normalized difference vegetation index which is a simple graphical indicator that can assess whether or not the park contains green vegetation, and thus the footprint or extent of urban development. An attempt at this exercise was made within the process of developing the report, however, it was established that more significant resources (such as those available to the Councils) was required accurately complete such a task.

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Department for Infrastructure

Lagan Valley Regional Park Office

OpenStreetMap

Esri