

Antrim

County Antrim

'Mark Three' New Town – Designated 7 July 1966

Antrim was the smallest of the towns recommended for expansion in the 1962 plan for the Greater Belfast region, but the decision by global paints and chemicals producer British Enkalon (now Akzo Nobel) to locate there in 1961 made it an obvious candidate for development. Today, Antrim is the largest town in Antrim Borough and the largest town close to Belfast International Airport. It lies on the intersection of the key Belfast-Derry/Londonderry and northern transport corridors. Its location makes it attractive to investors, and it is to be regenerated as a counter-magnet to the Belfast Metropolitan Area. Economic drivers revolve around construction, distribution, transport and hospitality. Antrim also offers tourism potential associated with its built and landscape heritage and proximity to Lough Neagh and its tributary rivers.



Albert Bridge/geograph.org.uk

Key facts:

- **Location:** 21 kilometres north west of Belfast, 18 kilometres south of Ballymena.
- **2011 Census population:** 22,926, in 9,393 households.¹
- **Local authority:** Antrim Borough Council (from April 2015 Antrim and Newtownabbey District Council under Northern Ireland's new local government arrangements).
- **Local Plan status:** Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001 (adopted 1989). Identified as a main hub in the Northern Ireland Regional Development Strategy 2035

New Town designation:

- **Designated:** 7 July 1966. The whole of the rural district of Antrim was designated.
- **Designated area:** 56,254 hectares.
- **Intended population:** 30,000 (population at designation: 7,300).
- **Development Corporation:** Designated to boost the growth of Antrim and neighbouring villages and to redevelop to modern standards. The Antrim and nearby Ballymena New Towns were overseen by a single Antrim and Ballymena Development Commission, but developed as separate entities to reflect their differing characteristics. The Ministry developed the masterplan, with guidance from a steering group of the county and rural councils. Antrim has, overall, progressed faster than Ballymena. Development Corporation wound up 1 October 1973.

Housing, deprivation and health:

- The proportion of homes in Antrim New Town that are owner-occupied (63.1%) is 5.1% higher than the UK New Towns average and in line with the UK average. 19% of households are in social rent – 1.5% lower than the UK New Towns average and 1.2% higher than the UK average. 14.9% of households are in private rent – 1.9% higher than the UK New Towns average and 1.4% lower than the UK average.
- In the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010, Antrim local government district ranks 20 out of 26 (1 = most deprived).

- The 2011 Census reported that 45.3% of Antrim New Town residents declared themselves to be in 'very good' health – 1.3% and 2.3% lower than the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively. 34.0% declared themselves to be in 'good' health – just above the UK New Towns and UK averages. 4.5% and 1.3%, respectively, declared themselves to be in 'bad' and 'very bad' health – broadly in line with the UK New Towns and UK averages.

Employment/economic profile:

- The town is a major industrial centre, with spare capacity in terms of infrastructure and services. It is recognised as being particularly well placed to accommodate long-term housing growth in the region.
- Antrim town centre provides service facilities for the Borough, with excellent healthcare provision and a growing retail offer.
- Economic drivers revolve around construction, distribution, transport and hospitality.

Development Corporation legacy:

- The historic town centre was retained when the New Town was designated.
- There is good access to amenity open space.
- The town benefits from excellent transport networks.
- There are design challenges in the development of vacant and under-utilised sites in the historic town centre and in reconnecting the centre with surrounding neighbourhoods.

Key issues for the future:

- Accommodating growth – 7,500 new dwellings in the Borough.
- Accommodating economic growth – making Antrim a counter-magnet to the Belfast Metropolitan Area.
- Airport-related development.
- Town centre regeneration, including improving accessibility in the town centre through public transport and cycling.

¹ Totals for the following wards: Balloo, Ballycraigy, Farranshane, Fountain Hill, Greystone, Massereene, Springfarm, Steeple, Stiles

Did you know?

Antrim is the only town located on the shores of Lough Neagh, the biggest freshwater lake in Britain and Ireland.