

Craigavon

County Armagh

'Mark Two' New Town – Designated 26 July 1965

The first New Town in Northern Ireland, Craigavon, was conceived in response to the 1962 plan for the Greater Belfast region, and was to be a linear regional town that included the existing towns of Lurgan and Portadown. Today, Craigavon is one of the largest urban centres in Northern Ireland, with around 70% of Craigavon Borough's population living within Craigavon urban area (which includes Lurgan, Portadown and Central Craigavon). Its designation as a New Town has been a major influence on the scale and nature of its development and has contributed to the emergence of a strong industrial base. A number of political issues, demographic changes, some resistance to planning, and over-provision of housing have attracted some criticism and have led to undeveloped areas within the central area.



Key facts:

- **Location:** 34 kilometres south west of Belfast.
- **2011 Census population:** 61,056 in 24,778 households (of the 61,056, 16,792 live within Central Craigavon, the residential area between Lurgan and Portadown).¹
- **Local authority:** Craigavon Borough Council – from April 2015 Armagh-Banbridge-Craigavon Council under Northern Ireland's new local government arrangements.
- **Local Plan status:** Craigavon Area Plan 2010 (adopted 2004), The Craigavon Integrated Development Framework (2010) provides a framework for the Craigavon urban area.

New Town designation:

- **Designated:** 26 July 1965.
- **Designated area:** 2,456 hectares.
- **Intended population:** 120,000 by 1981, and 180,000 by 2000 (population at designation: 61,700).
- **Development Corporation:** Designated to provide a new major base for industry, a new residential settlement to reduce housing and traffic pressures in Belfast, and a service centre to contribute to the regeneration of the south and west of Northern Ireland. The masterplan envisaged Craigavon as a single linked regional city, including Portadown, Lurgan, and the New Town to be developed between them at Brownlow. Development Corporation wound up 1 October 1973.

Housing, deprivation and health:

- The proportion of homes in the Craigavon urban area (UA) that are owner-occupied (59.4%) is just above the UK New Towns average and 4% below the UK average. 17.3% of households are in social rent – 4.2% and 1% lower than the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively.
- In the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010, Craigavon local government district ranks 4 out of 26 (1 = most deprived).
- The 2011 Census reported that 43.9% of Craigavon Urban Area residents declared themselves to be in 'very good'

health – 2.7% and 3.6% below the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively. 51.3% declared themselves to be in 'good' health (17.5% above the UK New Towns and UK averages), but 4.4% more people declared 'bad' health than the UK New Towns and UK averages.

Employment/economic profile:

- Craigavon Borough has a much stronger-than-average manufacturing base, in both the Northern Ireland and UK contexts. It also has an expanding services sector and a declining agricultural sector.
- Central Craigavon has an important civic and conference function in the Borough. The Rushmere shopping centre, within Craigavon town centre, serves a large catchment.
- Craigavon is strategically located on the key M1 motorway transport corridor and on the Belfast-Dublin railway line.

Development Corporation legacy:

- Central Craigavon was developed without a traditional town centre and today needs regeneration.
- Around 19% of the Development Corporation housing stock was demolished as its design was unsuitable.
- The infrastructure put in place by the Development Corporation makes the town suitable for private investment.
- The Brownlow Community Trust and Brownlow Limited were established in the 1980s.
- One of the key legacies is the provision of recreational and leisure facilities, including Craigavon City Park and Lakes.

Key issues for the future:

- Regeneration without compromising the Lurgan-Portadown-Central Craigavon expansion, including 'big' retail and leisure (of a scale that will not be attracted to Lurgan or Portadown).
- New housing in Central Craigavon.
- Making use of under-used assets, such as green infrastructure.
- Providing better links with surrounding communities.

¹ Totals for the following electoral wards: Woodville, Drumnamoe, Parklake, Court, Knocknashane, Mourneview, Church (all Lurgan); Killycomain, Enderrry, Corcrain, Tavanagh, Ballyoran, Ballybay, Annagh, Brownstown (all Portadown); and Tavanagh, Drumgask, Drumgor, Kernan, Taghnevan (all Central Craigavon – part of Taghnevan in Lurgan)

Did you know?

Craigavon is named after the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Lord Craigavon (James Craig).