

Have your say

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is consulting on the Mid and East Antrim Local Development Plan - Draft Plan Strategy 2030.

Formal Consultation

The draft Plan Strategy will be open for formal public consultation for a period of eight weeks, commencing on 16 October 2019 and closing at 5pm on 11 December 2019.

Please note that representations received after the closing date on 11 December will not be considered.

The draft Plan Strategy is published along with a range of assessments which are also open for public consultation over this period. These include a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment), a draft Habitats Regulations Assessment, a draft Equality (Section 75) Screening Report and a Rural Needs Impact Assessment.

We welcome comments on the proposals and policies within our draft Plan Strategy from everyone with an interest in Mid and East Antrim and its continuing development over the Plan period to 2030. This includes individuals and families who live or work in our Borough. It is also important that we hear from a wide spectrum of stakeholder groups who have particular interests in Mid and East Antrim. Accordingly, while acknowledging that the list below is not exhaustive, we welcome the engagement of the following groups:

- Voluntary groups
- Residents groups
- Community forums and groups
- Environmental groups
- Business groups
- Developers/landowners
- Professional bodies
- Academic institutions

Availability of the Draft Plan Strategy

A copy of the draft Plan Strategy and all supporting documentation, including the Sustainability Appraisal Report, is available on the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council website:

www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/LDP

The draft Plan Strategy and supporting documentation is also available in hard copy or to view during office hours, 9.30am - 4.30pm at the following Council offices:

- **Planning Department, County Hall**, 182 Galgorm Road, Ballymena, BT42 1QF
- **The Braid**, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena, BT43 5EJ
- **Carrickfergus Museum and Civic Centre**, 11 Antrim Street, Carrickfergus, BT38 7DG
- **Smiley Buildings**, Victoria Road, Larne, BT40 1RU

The draft Plan Strategy and supporting documentation can be made available in different formats upon request.

Contact Details

All responses to this public consultation should be submitted to the Planning Team via the following options:

By the online consultation portal: consult.midandeastantrim.gov.uk

By Email: planning@midandeastantrim.gov.uk

By Post:

Local Development Plan Team
County Hall
182 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1QF

When making a response to the consultation on the draft plan Strategy, we would encourage you to use the online consultation portal and to read carefully the guidance that accompanies it before completing it. Using the online consultation portal will help the Independent Examiner to understand what part of the plan you consider to be unsound and what suggested change you wish to make to it.

Aims of the Public Consultation

The public consultation on the Draft Plan Strategy aims to:

- Encourage full public participation in this stage of the Local Development Plan process and to stimulate ongoing interest and involvement in the Plan process;
- Promote a sense of ownership of the Local Development Plan;
- Facilitate the Independent Examination of the draft Plan Strategy to ensure its soundness; and
- Provide a robust foundation for work on the Local Policies Plan, the next stage in the Plan process.

How will the Council deal with your comments?

Subsequent to the eight week consultation period, there will be a further eight week period allowed for counter-representations.

All representations and counter-representations will be analysed by our Local Development Plan team and a Public Consultation Report will be prepared and presented to Elected Members. This may result in amendments to the draft Plan Strategy, before its formal submission to the Department for Infrastructure, in advance of the Independent Examination.

It should be noted that your responses are public documents that will be made available for public inspection and Independent Examination. All responses will therefore be held on a database in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR).

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List of Abbreviations

HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
LDP	Local Development Plan
POP	Preferred Options Paper
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SA	Sustainability Appraisal

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1. Purpose and Context of the Sustainability Appraisal Report

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a statutory process incorporating the requirements of the European Union’s Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (the SEA Directive’). It provides the process for assessing potential effects of proposed plans or programmes, to ensure that potential significant environmental impacts are considered from the earliest opportunity and addressed in decision-making.

The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal Report is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Local Development Plan (LDP) and its reasonable alternatives; and
- Provide an early and effective opportunity for statutory consultees, interested parties and the public to offer views on any aspect of the SA process which has been carried out to date.

The SA process aims to ensure that the policies and proposals in the LDP are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. It is presented in two main reports, the SA Scoping Report and the SA Report.

The first stage of the SA process is the SA Scoping Report. The SA Scoping Report identifies and describes relevant aspects of the current state of the environment in the Council area. It also identifies key sustainability issues for the Borough. The SA Scoping Report then establishes and describes the sustainability framework against which the plan is assessed and sets out the proposed approach to the appraisal of the LDP.

The Sustainability Appraisal Report contains:

- Section 1: An introduction to the SA process, the LDP and the Plan Area;
- Section 2: The relationship of the LDP with other plans, programmes and strategies and overview of the SA Framework;
- Section 3: Summary of the appraisal of options for the draft Plan Strategy, significant effects identified and account of how the SA influenced plan making;
- Section 4: Review of the cumulative impact of the draft Plan Strategy for the sustainability objectives;
- Section 5: A description of the measures envisaged to monitor delivery of a sustainable LDP.
- Appendices presenting detail in support of the sections above.

2. The Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan

The LDP is a spatial land use Plan which primarily is about place. It will guide future development and use of land in Mid and East Antrim’s towns, villages, small settlements and the countryside by addressing the spatial implications of social, economic and environmental change.

The purpose of the LDP is to inform the public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested parties of how the Borough should develop in the years ahead. It will balance competing demands and aim to ensure that appropriate development occurs in the right place, at the right time. The policies and proposals of the LDP will be used to determine planning applications. A good LDP will lead to decisions that are consistent. This allows people to know what to expect in terms of change, and the locations where development will be encouraged.

The LDP comprises of two development plan documents:

- The Plan Strategy; and
- The Local Policies Plan.

The Plan Strategy is the first stage of the LDP. It sets out how the Council considers the Borough will grow and develop up to 2030. It contains the following:

- The Plan Vision for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council;
- A set of Strategic Objectives to deliver the Plan Vision based upon the themes of sustainable development and interlinked with the Community Plan Outcomes;
- A Spatial Growth Strategy with associated sectoral strategies which promote sustainable housing and economic growth throughout our Borough, and a Countryside Strategy which will manage development in a manner which strikes a sustainable balance between protection of the environment from inappropriate development, while supporting and sustaining rural communities; and
- General Policy for all Development, accompanied by a series of operational Strategic Subject Policies which will be used as the basis for making decisions on planning applications.

Details of how the Council intends to monitor the Strategic Objectives of the Plan to ensure the Council is delivering what it set out to achieve are included in the LDP draft Plan Strategy Technical Supplement 1.

The Local Policies Plan forms the second stage of the plan making process. The Local Policies Plan will provide site specific policies and proposals, including settlement limits, land use zonings and environmental designations. The Local Policies Plan will not be brought forward until the Plan Strategy has been adopted.

In addition to the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan, the Council may publish other documents such as planning guidance, advice notes and information to assist developers and applicants in the planning process.

The LDP must also take account of the regional policy context set by the NI Executive and central government Departments. The following regional or local strategies and plans are overarching and form a backdrop to the Local Development Plan. These were also considered in the preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal.

- Draft Northern Ireland Programme for Government
- Regional Development Strategy 2035
- Strategic Planning Policy Statement
- Sustainable Development Strategy
- Regional Transportation Strategy - Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future
- Regional Water Strategy - Sustainable Water
- UK Marine Policy Statement
- Draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland
- Planning Policy Statements
- A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland
- Supplementary Planning Guidance; and
- Other Strategies and Plans, including
 - The EU Biodiversity Strategy
 - The Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020
 - Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 'Delivering Resource Efficiency'
 - Lifetime Opportunities - Government's Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland
 - Thinking Rural - The Essential Guide to Rural Proofing
 - Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment 2000; and
 - Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment

The Belfast Region City Deal incorporates six of the 11 councils in Northern Ireland. It will see the UK Government invest £350 million into the Belfast Region over the next 15 years to support and

encourage economic development across the region, creating jobs and boosting prosperity. It is proposed that this figure will be matched by the NI Executive once the devolved institutions are restored. The economic opportunity includes plans for around £80m of investment in Mid and East Antrim, including the St Patrick's Barracks site in Ballymena, The Gobbins and Carrickfergus.

A wide range of other plans, programmes, policies and strategies were also reviewed in the Sustainability Appraisal. These are documented in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council shares a land or water boundary with three neighbouring Councils: Mid Ulster District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council also shares a border with the marine area through its coastline, and is linked to it by its watercourses and river systems. Effects on the marine area must also be a consideration in developing the LDP.

In order for cross-boundary issues to be effectively addressed, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will continue to coordinate with these neighbouring Councils and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' Marine Division throughout the LDP process to address cross-cutting issues and identify how these can be best taken forward as part of the plan process. This is particularly important in relation to the delivery of key elements of the Regional Development Strategy, to ensure a holistic approach to strategic matters is pursued and for policies in neighbouring Council areas to be aligned with each other.

3. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping

The SA Scoping Report was published for consultation in June 2017 alongside the Preferred Options Paper (POP). The information presented in the SA Scoping Report for the draft Plan Strategy has been updated to reflect the current evidence and also to take account of the representations received in the previous consultation.

Characteristics of the Area

The social, economic and environmental features of the Plan area have been presented across 14 topics. For each topic the international, national, regional and strategic context is presented. This is followed by baseline information which presents the most up to date evidence for each topic. An assessment of what might happen if a new LDP is not brought forward is included. Finally, Key Sustainability Issues for the Council area are presented for each topic, some examples of which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of Key Sustainability Issues

Topic	Examples of Key Sustainability Issues
1. Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="491 1552 1374 1653">■ There will be a need to meet the future needs for care and support for older people at home or in communal homes and to improve access to health services and other facilities and services. <li data-bbox="491 1653 1374 1753">■ Good spatial planning can reduce health inequalities by providing a high standard of design and place making, open space, capacity for any additional services required and accessibility. <li data-bbox="491 1753 1374 1854">■ There is a need to promote and encourage physical activity through provision of and ensuring good accessibility to sports facilities, open space, green infrastructure and walking and cycling routes.

2. Community (Strengthen Society)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is a commitment and need to promote social inclusion through appropriate and accessible shared space and applying place making to make areas inclusive for all backgrounds, abilities and income levels. ■ Levels of deprivation vary widely through the Council area, with multiple issues in many areas. ■ Local representatives and groups can help to identify the needs and experience of different parts of our society which can be recognised through Community Planning. The LDP can help to deliver measures identified through Community Planning.
3. Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A changing demography has created a high demand within social rented housing for 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings that can accommodate single, elderly and small family households. These form a significant proportion of the housing stress waiting list. ■ A growing proportion of older people (65+) will increase the need for suitable housing that is accessible for those who may not drive and which enables support to be provided. ■ There are advantages to providing life time homes that are accessible and adaptable to all and meet wheelchair standards.
4. Education and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In some areas a decline in pupil numbers will have implications for the sustainability of existing schools. ■ Sharing facilities has been recognised as a way to promote a more cohesive and tolerant society and make better use of the resources available to education.
5. Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identifying and zoning appropriate land is a vital part of creating the conditions to sustain economic development that meets employment needs. ■ The Borough benefits from a number of key transport corridors including those linked to the Port of Larne gateway. ■ It is necessary to sustain and improve the vibrancy and vitality of our town centres.
6. Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is a need in some rural areas to improve telecommunications provision to support rural investment and quality of life. ■ There is a need to facilitate land in sustainable locations to help deliver renewables or waste management and associated infrastructure. ■ Derelict/contaminated land sites may be available for appropriate reuse. The remediation of contaminated land can deliver multiple benefits.
7. Physical Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The minerals industry has the potential to support rural communities and businesses when appropriately located and connected to adequate transport routes. ■ Existing mineral reserves should be safeguarded from alternative uses and/or developments that may sterilise their use or impede their accessibility. ■ It is important to balance development of land against its retention as natural land.
8. Transport and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Council area has several main road, rail and ferry transport routes of strategic importance for their transport connectivity. ■ Measures are needed to help reduce the high reliance on travelling by car and to facilitate increased use of public transport and active travel.

9. Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Key regional transport routes located within our Council contribute to background levels of air pollutants. ■ Reliance on the private car for the majority of journeys is high. There is a need to promote and make accessible other modes of transport such as public transport, walking and cycling. ■ It is important to consider future air quality when planning the location of new developments and land uses, across both rural and urban areas. ■ Measures to help reduce ammonia emissions from the agriculture sector could help to improve air quality in some rural areas.
10. Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Habitats, including floodplains and peatlands, act as natural mitigation and adaptation measures for the impacts of climate change and should be protected. ■ Measures should be considered to help provide and encourage delivery of energy efficient buildings/projects as well as adaptation measures like SuDS and green/blue infrastructure.
11. Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is predicted that the risk and extent of flooding, particularly coastal flooding, will be increased by climate change. ■ Development should be planned to avoid areas at significant risk from flooding, now or in the future, or where development may increase the flood risk elsewhere. ■ Sustainable drainage (SuDS) measures should be incorporated and maintained in new development and redevelopment or regeneration schemes. ■ There are both WwTW capacity and pipe capacity constraints in some of our settlements. ■ Marine water quality at Belfast Lough and Larne Lough Coast is not meeting 'good' standard.
12. Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are a significant number of terrestrial, coastal and marine conservation sites across the Borough to help protect, conserve and enhance its natural heritage. ■ There is a LBAP for the Council area that the LDP can take account of with information on coastal areas, grasslands, woodlands, waterbodies, bogs, and urban and industrial areas. ■ Integrating green/blue infrastructure, including greenways, can benefit people's health and wellbeing by enabling and encouraging people to walk, run or cycle in the outdoors. ■ The draft Marine Plan should be taken into account as plan preparation progresses to ensure that the LDP aligns.
13. Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is important to protect, conserve and enhance landscape character even when areas may have been degraded. ■ There is an opportunity to designate local areas of landscape quality across the entire Borough. ■ The protection of wildlife corridors, field boundaries, natural and built features, as well as green/ blue infrastructure should help to conserve landscape character.
14. Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Protecting built heritage features and recognising their value extends beyond listing and enforcement. Consideration should be given to the setting of those features, along with the scale and context of surrounding buildings. ■ Heritage assets are at risk from neglect, decay, development pressures and vacancy. ■ The innovative reuse of existing historic building stock should be promoted.

What Might Happen Without the Local Development Plan

It is necessary to describe the likely evolution of the baseline without the LDP. An assessment of what might happen if a new LDP is not brought forward is therefore included for each topic in the SA Scoping Report. As an overview, there are three current development or area plans that apply to the Borough. The Ballymena and Larne Area Plans were adopted before the first version of the RDS was published in 2001 and also before the publication of any of the PPS documents. Accordingly, these older plans are not based upon the principles of sustainable development which underpin the more recent regional direction. The Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 was also published prior to the RDS and is also long past its notional end date. The extant plans cannot take account of changes in demography, patterns of employment and lifestyle. None of the current plans take account of the Council's Community Plan, *'Putting People First'*.

In the absence of a new Plan, there is a risk that development will not reflect today's needs or support delivery of the Community Plan and the Corporate Plan. There may be a higher risk of inappropriate development occurring in parts of the Borough and opportunities may be missed to deliver more sustainable development and protect, conserve or enhance local sites of particular importance.

Sustainability Objectives

The Sustainability Objectives for the Council area were developed through the scoping process and form the framework for sustainability appraisal. The rationale for each objective is summarised in Section 6.1 of the SA Scoping Report.

The Sustainability Objectives are:

1. To improve health and wellbeing;
2. To strengthen society;
3. To provide good quality, sustainable housing ;
4. To enable access to high quality education;
5. To enable sustainable economic growth;
6. To manage material assets sustainably;
7. To protect physical resources and use sustainably;
8. To encourage active and sustainable travel;
9. To improve air quality;
10. To reduce causes of and adapt to climate change;
11. To protect, manage and use water resources sustainably;
12. To protect natural resources and enhance biodiversity;
13. To maintain and enhance landscape character; and
14. To protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage.

4. Appraisal of Preferred Options Paper

The first phase of the LDP process took place in mid-2017 when the Council published their Preferred Options Paper. The purpose of the POP was to:

- Stimulate public debate on a range of planning issues of strategic significance, which are likely to shape the patterns of future development within the Borough through to the year 2030;
- Provide possible options or approaches for the strategic direction that the new LDP might take; and
- Seek the views of the public, stakeholders and other parties on these issues and to make sure they are taken into account in developing the Plan Strategy.

The POP underwent Sustainability Appraisal and a SA Interim Report was published for consultation at the same time as the POP document. The consideration of POP representations has been part of the process of updating the evidence base that informed the draft Plan Strategy. Representations

received in relation to the SA Interim Report were also considered in the SA Report published for the draft Plan Strategy.

The Appraisal of Strategic Alternatives

Several of the strategic options and alternatives for policy were appraised in the SA Interim Report published alongside the POP, which helped to shape the draft Plan Strategy. Therefore, for many of the strategic policies in the draft Plan Strategy, it was not necessary to re-appraise reasonable alternatives. Strategic alternatives that were appraised for the draft Plan Strategy included the Strategic Allocation of Housing to Settlements (3 options) and the Management of Housing Supply (2 Options).

5. Appraisal of the Draft Plan Strategy

Assessment of Alternative Options

The 18 Spatial Proposals and associated Policies and 86 Strategic Subject Policies proposed for delivering the draft Plan Strategy have undergone appraisal. In the majority of cases, there was no reasonable alternative to the policy option. The principal reasons for a finding of ‘no reasonable alternative’ include:

- The option is required to uphold the aims of current legislation, regulations, or directives, or
- The option is required to uphold the aims or policy approach of the RDS, SPPS or other regional plans or strategies.

Each policy option was assessed against the sustainability framework to ensure consistency in the approach.

A summary of the potential effects of the draft Plan Strategy, presented by SA Objective, is provided in Section 4 of the SA Report and an overview of the total and cumulative effects of the draft Plan Strategy is presented in Table 2 overleaf. The column describing ‘potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects’ discusses how the objectives may support each other, for example providing good quality housing contributes to health and wellbeing, and supports other plans such as the Community Plan, ‘Putting People First’.

Table 2. Cumulative Impacts of the Plan

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan Strategy preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
Improve health and wellbeing	<p>Increased employment opportunities that are linked to residential areas through active travel will help to encourage healthy lifestyles and physical activity and generate a prosperous Borough where citizens have a good quality of life.</p> <p>The provision of quality housing, including adaptable and accessible homes, with layouts that are designed to facilitate accessibility and movement, and which promote safety in their design, will encourage social and intergenerational contact and will help to provide high quality living environments that benefit health and wellbeing for the whole Borough. The total effects are considered to be significant positive.</p>	<p>The cumulative effect of the relevant policies working together, along with the Community Plan and Integrated Economic Development Strategy, ‘Amplify’, is to strengthen the effect of the significant positive impact further.</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan Strategy preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
Strengthen society	<p>General Policy which encourages high quality new development, safeguards residential amenity and contributes towards perceived safety and community cohesion will deliver positively for this objective.</p> <p>Growth focused on main towns aims to maximise positive outcomes for society, but by sustaining population in smaller settlements, local services are supported and vitality is maintained in villages and rural areas. This acts positively in terms of social cohesion, sense of place/belonging and identity for communities and individuals. The total effects are considered to be minor positive.</p>	<p>Housing policy HOU5 will make provision for affordable homes in all settlements where a need is identified. This will encourage people from different community and income backgrounds to live together and should help to support sustainable communities.</p> <p>The cumulative effect of all of the relevant policies working together, along with the Community Plan is to strengthen the effect of the positive impact to significant positive.</p>
Provide good quality sustainable housing	<p>Spatial policy for the strategic allocation of housing and the protection of zoned housing land, in association with a settlement hierarchy, helps to make a positive contribution to the delivery of housing in the Borough.</p> <p>Policy also aims to avoid new housing development in areas with known risk factors and encourages the integration of measures to make more efficient use of energy, water and other resources.</p> <p>The strategic subject policies aim to create high quality, sustainable and safe residential environments with adequate public and private open space. Design should take account of the specific needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired and promote sustainable movement patterns. The LDP will seek to establish residential areas which have good connectivity with existing local facilities and amenities by walking or cycling and convenient access to public transport. These aspects working together strongly help to support the provision of accessible and adaptable housing. The total effects are considered to be minor positive.</p>	<p>These policies have a synergistic effect on health and wellbeing and strengthen the effect of the positive impact.</p> <p>The principles of quality design, respecting local character and distinctiveness and encouraging development to be more sustainable will help to enhance the quality of housing on a wider basis, making the Borough a more attractive place to live. This will strengthen the positive effect to significant positive.</p>
Enable access to high quality education	<p>The spatial policies and associated proposals SGS1 - SGS4 aim to maintain sustainable populations for schools in both urban and larger rural settlements. Positive influences can come from economic development through training and apprenticeships. HOU1 & COM1 will enable new education facilities to be delivered where a need is identified. As the policies have limited</p>	<p>This objective can receive synergistic effects from sustainable economic growth, improved health outcomes and a stronger society. These cumulative effects work together to raise the effect on the objective from negligible to minor positive.</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan Strategy preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
	direct influence on the provision of education, the total effect is negligible.	
Enable sustainable economic growth	<p>The LDP’s objective to provide a sufficient supply and choice of sites for business and employment uses in areas that are accessible across the Borough, and especially to areas of deprivation, has significant positive impacts. The objective to sustain vibrant town centres in Ballymena, Larne and Carrickfergus will be supported by the ‘town centre first’ approach of SGS7.</p> <p>Policy which protects our areas of high quality landscape, safeguards the unique character and amenity of our coastline and protects, conserves and, where possible, enhances our historic environment has a positive impact in respect of making the Borough a more attractive place and should help to support sustainable tourism as a key growth sector. The total effects are considered to be significant positive.</p>	<p>Policy which protects strategically important transportation assets and routes (including disused transport routes) and which facilitates enhanced connectivity within and around the Borough is a key aspect of delivering the RDS.</p> <p>The LDP and the Council’s Integrated Economic Development Strategy ‘<i>Amplify</i>’ will help the Borough to capitalise on locational opportunities afforded by the presence of key gateways and corridors, in order to attract more investment. Collaborative working and capital investment delivered through the Belfast Region City Deal will also help to create new opportunities for growth.</p> <p>All policies in the draft Plan Strategy work together to cumulatively strengthen the effect of the significant positive impact.</p>
Manage material assets sustainably	<p>Spatial management of economic growth and housing growth has significant positive impacts through facilitating the location and provision of suitable material assets (e.g. waste management, energy generation, telecommunications and other utilities, etc.).</p> <p>However, the scale of positive impacts in respect of telecommunications, energy infrastructure renewable energy may be slightly constrained by landscape designations. The total effects are considered to be mixed.</p>	<p>The establishment of a LDP which will spatially identify the areas where growth is projected and which manages growth sustainably will help to coordinate the provision of new infrastructure.</p> <p>Encouraging the integration of measures to make more efficient use of energy, water and other resources in new development can help to reduce or avoid the need for upgrades to infrastructure.</p> <p>Forward planning and coordination between service providers can help to reduce costs. This would help to strengthen some of the positive effects.</p>
Protect physical resources and use sustainably	<p>Growth will lead to an inevitable consumption of land, however, strategically focusing core growth where existing settlements are already located enables a more efficient use of land and more sustainable patterns of development, resulting in minor positive impacts for most of the spatial proposals and policies.</p> <p>The LDP has sought to protect areas of significant intrinsic landscape, amenity, scientific or heritage value through the SCA, ACHS and ACMD designations. It has also introduced stronger policy on restoration of mineral development sites. While these</p>	<p>Policies which encourage efficient use of land and resources and which enable local sourcing of materials have secondary effects which support the climate change and material assets objectives.</p> <p>Policies which support sustainable minerals extraction can have an indirect positive impact on jobs and economic growth, including through the supply chain and equipment sectors. The cumulative impact of the policies is minor positive.</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan Strategy preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
	<p>designations will spatially constrain some types of mineral development, they will also benefit the objective by protecting the semi-natural land resource. Policy will not preclude development associated with the extraction of a valuable mineral resource where it is of such national or regional importance as to outweigh any potential adverse impact on the Special Countryside Area. The total effects are considered to be mixed.</p>	
Encourage active and sustainable travel	<p>General policy for all development seeks to enable movement patterns that support active travel (walking and cycling) and to provide adequate and convenient access to public transport where possible.</p> <p>Policy also seeks to safeguard land in appropriate places to facilitate opportunities for the integration of more sustainable modes of transport in the future, e.g. park and ride, walking and cycling paths, greenways, etc.</p> <p>However, for development in the countryside or away from settlement centres encouraging active and sustainable travel is a challenge and the total effects are considered to be mixed.</p>	<p>The establishment of a LDP which will identify the areas where housing and employment growth is projected helps to inform future local and regional Transport Plans and enables service providers to plan for the future more effectively.</p> <p>The Sustainable Growth Strategy, Strategic Housing Allocation and Economic Development Strategy all act together to direct the majority of growth in areas that have, or have the potential to be served by active and sustainable transport.</p> <p>This, alongside an approach to encourage more sustainable movement patterns could help to stimulate behavioural change to reduce reliance on cars as the preferred mode of transport or to consider other modes for part or all of a journey which will help to reduce negative effects and enhance some of the negligible effects to become more positive over time.</p>
Improve air quality	<p>The total effect is uncertain. Spatial and population growth is likely to give rise to increased emissions from transport, energy/heating and industry.</p> <p>Allocating the majority of housing growth to main towns may reduce the scale of negative impacts by providing a wider range of options for active and sustainable travel or lower emission forms of central heating in areas of greater housing density. Similar effects may occur through directing economic development to defined areas where opportunities exist to reduce impacts.</p> <p>Policies GP1 and ECD4 will help to prevent significant negative effects.</p>	<p>All policies in draft Plan Strategy work together to cumulatively reduce the scale of negative impacts and enhance positive impacts. This may lead to positive secondary effects on health and wellbeing, biodiversity and climate change.</p> <p>While the LDP may help to create conditions which could deliver improvements to air quality, significant effects are reliant on behavioural change, and consequently the long term impact remains uncertain.</p>
Reduce causes of and adapt	<p>The total effects on this objective are mixed, with a high proportion of uncertainty, as</p>	<p>All policies in draft Plan Strategy work together to cumulatively reduce the scale of</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan Strategy preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
to climate change	<p>many effects are dependent on behavioural change.</p> <p>Strategic policy seeks to enable sustainable growth that is mainly focused on settlements and centres and encouraging more sustainable modes of travel, which has a positive impact on the objective. However, the plan also encourages and facilitates development - housing, roads, facilities/services and industry/business - which can increase greenhouse gas emissions and may have negative impacts. GP1 includes a number of measures in its criteria under the theme of sustainable development which will act positively on this objective, if they are incorporated into new development. These include the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and the efficient use of energy, water and other resources. However there is no certainty that these measures will be included in new development or that the additional benefits of integrating 'soft' SuDS in preference to measures that qualify for adoption by NI Water would be achieved.</p> <p>The policies which seek to avoid new development in areas known to be at significant risk from flooding, coastal change or land instability will also help to deliver resilience against the predicted effects of climate change.</p>	<p>negative impacts and enhance positive impacts.</p> <p>The approach taken by the draft Plan Strategy in ensuring that new development promotes a movement pattern that encourages active travel (walking and cycling) and/or is accessible to public transport, could help to stimulate behavioural change to reduce reliance on cars as the preferred mode of transport. The incorporation of sustainable drainage, energy efficiency and renewable measures in new development can also help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create development that is more sustainable and resilient.</p> <p>However, significant effects are reliant on developers being proactive and behavioural change, and consequently while the long term impact is minor positive there remains some uncertainty. It is hoped that by establishing these principles as good practice they may become accepted as normal practice during subsequent Plans.</p>
Protect, manage and use water resources sustainably	<p>Spatial growth and the construction of new houses and economic / industrial development places pressure on surface water quality and quantity. The management of surface water is an important factor influencing water quality. As there are known issues with waste water treatment capacity and network capacity in the Borough, ensuring that new development only takes place where adequate wastewater treatment is provided (or will be provided before the development is occupied) greatly benefits this objective.</p> <p>The avoidance of developing on areas known to be at flood risk and the protection of natural and semi-natural habitats, including watercourses and flood plain, will act positively for this objective and overall a minor positive effect is predicted.</p>	<p>The establishment of a LDP which will identify the areas where growth is projected and which manages spatial growth sustainably will help to enable the co-ordination of waste water infrastructure upgrades (where necessary) and aid in the delivery of Sustainable Water - A Long-Term Water Strategy for NI (and potentially also the Living with Water Programme).</p> <p>The requirement for drainage assessment to be carried out for identified types of development under FRD3 will help to ensure that source control is given greater consideration in design and that SuDS, and particularly 'soft' SuDS are more widely employed. It is hoped that by establishing these principles as good practice they may become accepted as normal practice during subsequent Plans.</p> <p>Together with the LDP these may help to address some of the water quality issues in</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan Strategy preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
		<p>the receiving waters of Belfast Lough, Larne Lough and Lough Neagh and will benefit the wider marine area. These aspects may also deliver positive secondary effects on biodiversity and natural resources and health and wellbeing. These cumulative effects may remove some of the uncertainty for this objective and enhance some of the positive impacts.</p>
<p>Protect natural resources and enhance biodiversity</p>	<p>Spatial and population growth can place pressure on the natural environment. Natural heritage policies have been developed in accordance with regional planning policy and statutory legislative requirements. The Countryside Strategy also acts positively for this objective through its aims to protect, conserve, and where possible enhance the rural landscape, seascape, natural environment, and historical and cultural heritage assets of the Borough.</p> <p>Directing housing and economic development towards centres and settlements helps to deliver more efficient land use. For development in the countryside, Policy GP1 seeks to preserve established boundaries such as trees and hedgerows rather than relying on new landscaping, with the aim of reducing loss of biodiversity and better integrating development into its surroundings.</p>	<p>The policies to protect the landscape, provide open space, protect/improve water quality and safeguard the coastal zone also work to support this objective.</p> <p>Policy to protect our coastal European and Ramsar Sites from significant effects will indirectly benefit the wider marine area.</p> <p>Measures such as LLPAs and rural landscape wedges can work with linkages of green / blue infrastructure to provide wildlife corridors. Over the long term, restoration of minerals and waste management sites can also create new biodiversity gains. At LPP consideration can be given to identifying areas suitable for green/blue infrastructure or Key Site Requirements for zonings which could help to support the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, NI Biodiversity Strategy and All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.</p> <p>These cumulative effects may serve to reduce the scale of some of the negative effects, remove some of the uncertainty and strengthen the minor positive effects.</p>
<p>Maintain and enhance landscape character</p>	<p>Development places pressure on landscape, however consideration of the Borough's sensitive and unique landscapes, including its coastline, forms a large element of the strategic policies and proposals and the Countryside Strategy in the draft Plan.</p> <p>The focus of strategic growth is directed towards centres and settlements and away from areas of high landscape quality and significant positive total effects on the objective are anticipated.</p>	<p>The policies to protect natural heritage, river corridors, the developed coast and the historic environment also work to support this objective.</p> <p>Liaison with neighbouring Councils and aligning policies where they have potential cross-boundary influence also helps to reinforce the positive effects and should strengthen the significant positive impact.</p>
<p>Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment</p>	<p>Economic and housing development has the potential to conflict with the historic environment. Spatial proposals and associated policy and strategic subject policies are protective towards identified /</p>	<p>Policies which protect landscape character and natural heritage work together to strengthen the protection towards the historic environment and the setting of historic features. Policies also strongly</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan Strategy preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
and cultural heritage	<p>designated assets, in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation.</p> <p>Strategic subject policies are also protective towards undesignated assets of heritage value, through encouraging development that is integrated with its surroundings and encouraging the protection and restoration of locally important or vernacular buildings. The overall impact is broadly positive, but includes a proportion of uncertainty and the total effects.</p>	<p>encourage design that integrates new development with its surroundings.</p> <p>The Belfast Region City Deal includes plans for investment in Carrickfergus to develop the town as a heritage-led tourism hub, including enhancing the setting of Carrickfergus Castle. The local heritage focus brought by the City Deal may help to encourage the conservation and restoration of historic assets across a wider area.</p> <p>At LPP consideration can be given to highlighting local heritage assets through LLPAs or Key Site Requirements.</p> <p>These cumulative effects will help remove much of the uncertainty and help to reinforce the positive effects leading to significant positive impacts.</p>

Many of the potential adverse impacts have been minimised through the cross-referencing of policies within the draft Plan Strategy and are capable of being avoided or mitigated. Therefore, no significant adverse effects are expected to arise as a result of the draft Plan Strategy. Suggested measures which would help to reduce minor negative effects and promote positive effects have been presented in Section 3 of the SA Report.

Limitations and Assumptions

During the appraisal of each Option, where possible, effects were predicted. In some cases it was found that the effect will depend upon the type and scale of development and its location. Many of the proposals affect multiple locations, or locations for which boundaries have not been defined. This can make it difficult to determine at this stage whether overall effects are likely to be negative or positive. These effects may remain uncertain until detailed supplementary planning guidance and/or specific site proposals are known.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

A draft Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been published for consultation with the Draft Plan Strategy. The draft HRA reports on the assessment of the proposals and policies in the draft Plan Strategy and its potential impacts on international sites.

‘International sites’ include Special Areas of Conservation, designated under the ‘Habitats Directive’ together with Special Protection Areas, designated under the ‘Birds Directive’. They also include Ramsar sites which are wetlands of international importance identified under the provisions of the Ramsar Convention. A total of 22 international sites that have the potential to be influenced by the Plan were identified and examined.

All of the policies and proposals put forward in the draft Plan Strategy were reviewed in the context of the international sites in a process known as ‘screening’. The screening of the plan policies and proposals found that there is the potential for likely significant effects to arise from 14 policies. These policies were consequently screened in for more detailed assessment, known as ‘appropriate assessment’.

The appropriate assessments carried out have concluded the following: provided the recommended mitigation measures are all accepted and the Plan is amended accordingly, the LDP will have no adverse effect on the integrity of any international sites and no further assessment is necessary.

The HRA will be added to and finalised following public consultation and independent examination of the draft Plan Strategy, then published alongside the adopted Plan Strategy.

6. Outcome of Appraisal and Next Stages

Outcome of Appraisal

The SA process has helped influence the content of the draft Plan Strategy by contributing to the critical review of the policy options for the Spatial Proposals and associated Policies and the Strategic Subject Policies, including their reasonable alternatives. Through the SA process, preferred options for implementing these policies were identified. In all cases the preferred option represented the most sustainable option.

Overall, significant positive sustainability effects are predicted to result from the draft Plan Strategy throughout the plan term and beyond, in relation to the sustainability objectives to:

- Improve health and wellbeing;
- Strengthen society;
- Provide good quality, sustainable housing ;
- Enable sustainable economic growth;
- Maintain and enhance landscape character; and
- Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage.

It should be noted that in the case of the strengthening society, housing and historic environment sustainability objectives, the total effects have been raised from minor positive to significant positive through the cumulative impact of the plan.

Minor positive effects are identified for enabling access to high quality education; protecting physical resources and using sustainably; encouraging active and sustainable travel, protecting, managing and using water resources sustainably and protecting natural resources and enhancing biodiversity. Again, the total effects on these sustainability objectives have been enhanced in a positive way through the cumulative impacts brought about by the plan.

Mixed effects (some minor positive, some minor negative and some uncertain effects) are identified on two objectives. These are the objectives to manage material assets sustainably; and to reduce causes of and adapt to climate change. The overall effect of the draft Plan Strategy on the objective to improve air quality is uncertain.

The cumulative impact of the plan on these objectives is to reduce the range and scale of the minor negative impacts and enhance some of the minor positive effects, but some uncertainties remain. This reflects that a plan for growth is unlikely to improve air quality or reduce greenhouse gas emissions, however it can aim to provide conditions and support wider initiatives to encourage the behavioural changes required for this to happen. Establishing a LDP which identifies the areas where growth is projected and which manages spatial growth sustainably will help in delivering new infrastructure or the co-ordination of upgrades to existing infrastructure. However, the delivery of infrastructure by service providers is outside the scope of the LDP.

Measures which will help to reduce negative effects and enhance positive effects of the LDP include:

- Consideration of any needs identified through the Community Plan at Local Policies Plan stage;
- Establishing Key Site Requirements which seek to retain or enhance biodiversity, which promote adaptive measures to increase resilience against the effects of climate change and/or which link areas through green/blue infrastructure at the Local Policies Plan stage;

- Where required through various policies, demonstration by a developer of the impacts of the proposal on the policy aim or intent will help to ascertain potential impacts. If adverse impacts are predicted, these will help to identify effective mitigation;
- A requirement for landscaping measures which integrate sites with local landscape character;
- Supplementary design guidance and supplementary planning guidance.

How has the SA influenced Plan Making

The strategic policies and proposals contained in the draft Plan Strategy are intended to deliver on the LDP Vision and Strategic Objectives set out in the document. The Vision is to improve quality of life for everyone, with a particular focus on the provision of high quality, sustainable and connected places. The strategic objectives are generally directed towards the attainment of this Vision and are expressed in relation to the three recognised 'pillars' of sustainable development, including its economic, social and environmental aspects.

As a consequence of the overall LDP process, there are many factors that have fed into the evolution of the strategic policies and proposals that now make up the draft Plan Strategy and it is not possible to isolate the specific effects that the SA has had. However, the SA report has affirmed that the draft Plan Strategy policies and proposals were generally found to be more sustainable than any reasonable alternatives, as a result of the formal appraisal. The evolution of individual policies and proposals has been described in the topic-related Technical Supplements which accompany the draft Plan Strategy. Where changes to individual policies or a policy grouping have been influenced by the formal SA, this has been noted in the relevant Technical Supplement.

Next Steps

The SA Scoping Report and SA Report have been published alongside the draft Plan Strategy for consultation. Representations received in response to the consultation may lead to the modification of the Plan Strategy. If these modifications are significant, this may lead to additional appraisal against the SA/SEA Framework.

Monitoring

Preliminary indicators for monitoring effects of the LDP have been identified for the key sustainability issues and significant effects identified through the SA. These will be aligned where possible with LDP and Community Plan monitoring.