



Statement of Community Involvement

Revised - November 2019

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/planning



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

Getting in Touch

Should you have a Planning query, you can contact the Council's Planning Section in any of the following ways:

By e-mail to: planning@midandeantrim.gov.uk

By post / visit to: Planning Department
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
County Hall
182 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1QF

By telephone: 0300 200 7830

The document can be downloaded from the Council website at www.midandeantrim.gov.uk or can be made available for viewing in the Council Planning Office for those who do not have online access.

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Should you require a copy of this Statement of Community Involvement in an alternative format, it can be made available on request in large print, audio format, or Braille. It may also be made available in other languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

Keeping the Community Involved

The Council hopes to secure the ongoing involvement of the public in the planning process, in particular with the formulation of the new Local Development Plan. Any individual or organisation wishing to be so included is invited to complete the Community Involvement Form which is available on the Council website or from the Planning Department. The completed form should be sent to the Planning Department at the above address. A register will be maintained of those who have expressed interest in participation in the planning process through returning the completed form.

Further information about all the Council's Planning responsibilities can be found on our website:

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk



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1.0 What is a Statement of Community Involvement?

Introduction

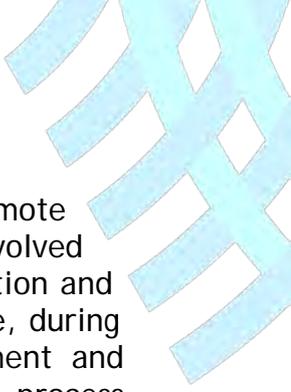
- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Mid and East Antrim (MEA) Borough Council intends to engage with the community in the delivery of planning functions. The SCI describes who, how and when the community will be involved in the different stages of the preparation of the Local Development Plan, in the determination of planning applications, in planning enforcement, and in other planning matters which are the responsibility of the Council.

Legislative Context

- 1.2 Councils are required under Section 4 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement.
- 1.3 The Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 sets out the minimum requirements for the SCI including its form, content and availability.
- 1.4 The preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement is a legal requirement and the Council have a duty to comply with these requirements for community engagement on planning matters.
- 1.5 This revised SCI, as with the original document, has been approved by resolution of the Council and has been agreed with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Council's Vision of Participation

- 1.6 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out a range of strategic objectives grouped under five main themes, several of which are relevant to planning and which the planning system will help to deliver. Council acknowledges that achievement of these objectives will depend on partnership, collaboration and effective local working. Accordingly, the Council is committed to ensuring that engagement with the public is genuine, meaningful and fit for purpose. Through community involvement in Planning, the Council will strive for development that is sustainable and that benefits everyone.
- 1.7 This is a shared vision of participation in decision making which aims to ensure that:
- Everyone has an early and informed opportunity to express their views on the development of the Borough and have this considered before decisions are made; and
 - All groups in the community, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, sex, marital status, physical ability, sexual orientation, and those with and without dependents are enabled and empowered to participate.

- 
- 1.8 It is intended to adopt principles of community involvement which promote a culture of engagement, recognising that everyone has a right to be involved in decisions that affect them. This will mean providing clear information and encouraging continuous participation, but particularly at an early stage, during the preparation of the Local Development Plan and in the assessment and determination of planning applications. The community involvement process must therefore be timely, informative, user friendly, as inclusive as possible, and conducted in an open and transparent way. Every effort will be made to engage the community, record views and provide feedback.

Benefits of Community Involvement

- 1.9 Effective and widespread involvement of communities in the planning process is a key objective of the planning system. Involvement of communities helps to ensure that as many people as possible are aware of the process, that they understand it, that they are able to contribute to it and that they can influence its content.
- 1.10 There are many benefits of community consultation for the Council, organisations, individuals, developers and landowners: -

Benefits for the Council are:

- more informed and involved communities
- less delays likely in the determination of planning applications
- a likely reduction in the number of objections to policies and plans
- the strengthening of the delivery of plans and proposals
- greater sense of public ownership and support for the Council's activities.

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Benefits for organisations and individuals are:

- the ability to influence the decision-making process
- greater public ownership and sense of democracy
- local services that meet local needs and priorities
- a better understanding of the planning system
- the ability for organisations and individuals to influence the concept and design of development schemes.

Benefits for developers and landowners are:

- the opportunity for the developers to explain their proposal
- less delays in determining applications
- more certainty about the outcome
- the creation of sustainable and acceptable developments
- a reduction in the number of objections for proposed developments.

2.0 Community Involvement in the Preparation of Mid & East Antrim Local Development Plan

Purposes of the Local Development Plan

- 2.1 The fundamental purpose of the Local Development Plan (LDP) is to inform the general public, statutory undertakers, developers and other interested parties of the local planning policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions in Mid and East Antrim Borough over the Plan period (2015 to 2030). Through providing such certainty the Plan will aim to facilitate the delivery of sustainable development for the benefit of the local economy, society and the environment. In so doing, the LDP must take account of the regional planning policy context provided by the Regional Development Strategy 2030 and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS), as well as relevant central government strategies and guidance. It will also have regard to the Mid & East Antrim Corporate Plan 2019-2023 and the Community Plan¹.

Purposes of Community Involvement in the Local Development Plan

- 2.2 Providing for community and stakeholder involvement in planning is a long established tenet of the land use planning system in Northern Ireland. However, in delivering the new reformed planning system, the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 has set out new provisions that are intended to significantly enhance the level of public engagement with the planning system in general, and with LDPs in particular.
- 2.3 There are important benefits to be derived from involving communities and stakeholders in the preparation of the LDP. Ultimately, the LDP is more likely to be accepted by the public if it achieves a sense of local ownership and community buy-in through the meaningful engagement of communities and stakeholders. It is now generally accepted that engaging the public and stakeholders early in the Plan process (*'front-loading'*) is especially beneficial, in that this is likely to encourage sustained public participation throughout the duration of the process. *Front-loading* also offers an opportunity for communities and stakeholders to share their views and knowledge with planners at an early stage. This will help to ensure that the subsequent Plan policies and proposals are properly targeted to addressing relevant local issues, and appropriate in shaping the places in which communities and stakeholders have an interest. Taken together, realisation of all of these benefits stemming from meaningful community involvement in the Plan will serve to underpin its ultimate effectiveness and soundness.

¹ The Mid and East Antrim Community Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Part 10 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Proposals for Community Involvement in the Preparation of the Mid & East Antrim Development Plan

- 2.4 The proposals for community involvement in the preparation of the Mid & East Antrim LDP are set out in the remainder of section 2 of this Statement. These proposals set out the actions that the Council intends to implement at various stages in the Plan process, in order to facilitate a high standard of community involvement in the emerging LDP. The SCI informs everyone of how, when and where they can participate in the Plan process, as well as the standards that the Council will endeavour to meet in terms of community involvement.

Who can get involved?

- 2.5 MEA Council will seek to involve the whole community in the Plan process and anyone who wishes to participate is encouraged to do so at the opportunities provided. In particular, and in addition to Elected Members of the Council, the views of the following groups of people will be sought:

- People living or working within the Borough;
- Community Groups / Umbrella Organisations;
- Environmental Groups;
- Residents Groups;
- Voluntary Groups;
- Academic interests
- Businesses;
- Developers / Landowners / Investors;
- MPs / MLAs.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and is not intended to restrict any individual, group, or organisation from participating in the plan making process.

- 2.6 Elected Representatives, community groups and residents groups provide a voice for the local community. Business interests and developers are key to facilitating the delivery of economic development through the Plan. Other voluntary, environmental and interest groups also bring specialist knowledge and can help to ensure that important local planning related concerns are addressed. It is recognised that the active participation of a wide spectrum of interest groups will help to ensure that policies and proposals brought forward in the LDP are balanced, appropriate and sustainable.

Empowering Disadvantaged and Under-Represented Groups

- 2.7 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires us, in carrying out our functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependents and persons without.

- 2.8 In addition, without prejudice to the above obligations, the Council is also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or race. The above “Section 75 groups” are important participants within the planning process and include people who traditionally have been under represented or disadvantaged. MEA Council will seek, as far as possible, to target these groups through the consultation process on the LDP in order to obtain their views and contribute to the consideration of equality issues under Section 75. Their views on any equality screening documents or draft Equality Impact Assessments will also be sought as well as any views they may have on the evolving development plan documents.
- 2.9 To ensure that all documents associated with the preparation of the LDP are accessible to everyone, they will be can be made available in different formats upon request, including large print, audio format, or Braille. If for any reason, a request for a document in a particular alternative format cannot be met, other possible solutions will be explored.

How and when will the Community be involved?

- 2.10 The formulation of a Local Development Plan involves a number of key stages², each presenting opportunities for community involvement. Each stage is identified below along with the actions that are to be taken to involve the community. These actions will fulfil and in some cases exceed the statutory requirements on public consultation, as specified in the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011.

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STAGE 1 - DEVELOPING THE EVIDENCE BASE TO COMMENCEMENT OF PLAN

- 2.11 The Council Planning Department has already undertaken a wide range of preparatory studies and will continue to build up the evidence base until the formal commencement of the Plan. The evidence base will continue to be updated as necessary throughout the LDP process. This involves the collection and analysis of information relating to a number of topics that the Plan will address; such as housing, economic development and environmental assets of the Borough. In developing this evidence base, planners will also engage with elected members and key consultees. The evidence base will provide a robust foundation for the future development of Plan policies and proposals and will inform the next stage of the process, i.e. the preparation of a Preferred Options Paper (POP).
- 2.12 Where relevant, these studies will also inform the Sustainability Appraisal, an assessment which runs in tandem with the Plan process³. During this stage, the Scoping Report of the Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), will be sent to DfI, in its role as the statutory consultation body.

² Appendix 1 refers to the statutory LDP process.

³ Appendix 1 refers to the Sustainability Appraisal process.

- 2.13 When the evidence base is substantially complete, the formal commencement of the LDP will be marked by the publication of a Timetable. The Timetable will set out the key stages of the Plan making process so that everyone is informed about the preparation of the Plan and the broad timing of each stage. The Timetable will be subject to annual review to ensure that it remains relevant to actual progress made on the LDP. Council will agree the Timetable and all further amendments with the Department for Infrastructure and will also notify the Planning Appeals Commission.

What we will do

2.14 Actions (Governance)

-  a) We will set up a Steering Group comprising the Planning Committee, the Chief Executive, the Director of Development, the Director of Community Planning, the Director of Operations and the Head of Planning. This is the high level co-ordinating body that will ensure oversight and strategic input on behalf of the whole community, as well as from planning professionals.

2.15 Actions (Community Involvement)

- b) We will issue a public notice to indicate that formal commencement of work on the LDP has begun through publication of the following documents:
- i. Publication of Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI);
 - ii. Publication of the Plan Timetable and any subsequent amendments;
 - iii. How to view or obtain copies of the Plan Timetable and SCI.

The public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Ballymena Times, Larne Times, Carrick Times and Newtownabbey Times⁴.

- c) We will create and maintain a community involvement register of all individuals and groups who have expressed an interest in being informed about the key stages of the LDP. The aim is to ensure that those who have expressed an interest in planning in the Borough are kept informed about the plan making process. This register will be kept under review and written requests for inclusion from additional bodies will be considered by the Council. Those included on the register when the timetable is published will be informed of the commencement of work on the LDP;
- d) Key consultees will receive written invitation requesting them to participate in the Plan making process and to provide information on the key strategic issues that the LDP should address;
- e) Under represented (Section 75) groups will be contacted and invited to identify whether there are any types of planning policies likely to have a significant impact on the groups they represent. They will also be provided opportunity to identify any particular issues or needs which they consider the Plan should address. Where requested, this can be done through a meeting with a planning

⁴ The Larne Times, Carrick Times and Newtownabbey Times have shared pages meaning that the Larne Times is used in all editions across this group of newspapers

official. Any comments received will be taken into account when screening and scoping the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA);

- f) We will publish all completed papers informing the evidence base for the LDP and Sustainability Appraisal on the Council website;
- g) The SCI and Plan timetable (and any subsequent amendments to either) will also be made available for inspection at the Council's planning office and other Council offices at:
 - The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena;
 - Smiley Buildings, Victoria road, Larne;
 - Town hall, 11 Antrim Street, Carrickfergus

STAGE 2 - PREFERRED OPTIONS PAPER

2.16 The first formal stage in the preparation of the LDP will be marked by the publication of a Preferred Options Paper (POP). This will set out the key planning issues in the Borough, identify a range of options available to address them and define the Council's preferred options. It will promote debate on issues of strategic significance which are likely to influence the shape of future development within MEA. The POP will be subject to a period of public consultation and stakeholder engagement which will seek to stimulate a wide-ranging, yet focused, debate and encourage feedback from a wide variety of interests. Any representations or views received as a consequence of its publication will be considered whilst formulating the Draft Plan Strategy.

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2.17 A Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report, consisting of a Scoping report and Assessment of Alternatives, will be published along with the POP.

What we will do

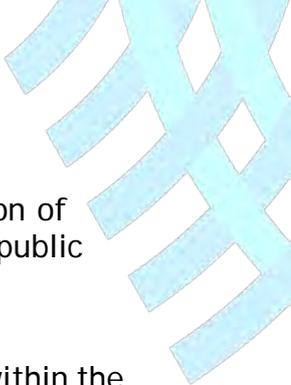
2.18 Actions (Governance)

- a) A series of Councillor Workshops will be held to seek the views of all Elected Members on the issues and alternative options to be addressed by the POP;
- b) At the end of this stage, a Public Consultation Report on the POP will be presented to Elected Members following the end of the consultation period. This will contain a summary of representations and Planning Officers comment. A written record will be taken of where Elected Members take differing views to that recommended in the report, along with the rationale for that view. This will be taken into account in formulating the Draft Plan Strategy.
- c) Subsequent to approval by Council, the POP Consultation Report will be published on the Council's website.

2.19 Actions (Community Involvement)

- d) We will hold a launch event and exhibition for invited persons to announce the publication of the Preferred Options Paper and its period for public consultation;



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- e) We will issue a press release to generate publicity about the publication of the POP, highlighting the Council’s preferred options, and encouraging public response;
 - f) We will issue a Public Notice to confirm:
 - i. Publication of the Preferred Options Paper and invite comment within the specified consultation period⁵;
 - ii. Details of public engagement events, exhibitions and drop-in information sessions during the consultation period; and
 - iii. Publication of the Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report and screening report for Equality Impact Assessment.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Ballymena Times, Carrick Times, Larne Times, and Newtownabbey Times.

- g) We will hold public engagement events and exhibitions with drop-in sessions at locations throughout the Borough where Planning officials will be available to assist with queries in regard to the LDP in general and this stage in particular;
- h) We will write to all Key Consultees and Elected Members providing them with a copy of the POP; invite them to attend the launch; request that they provide comments within the specified consultation period; and inform them of the public engagement events, exhibitions and drop-in sessions;
- i) We will contact local community groups and under-represented (Section 75) groups advising them how to obtain a copy of the POP; inviting them to comment within the specified consultation period; inviting them to attend the public engagement events, exhibitions, and drop-in sessions; and offering the opportunity of a meeting with a planning official to record their views;
- j) We will notify all those included on the Community Involvement register of the publication of the POP and carry out the actions as detailed under (h)(i) above;
- k) We will continue to make the evidence base supporting the POP available on the Council website and update this as necessary.

STAGE 3 - PLAN STRATEGY

2.20 The LDP Plan Strategy, once adopted, will be the first part of the LDP. It will define the strategic objectives for the future development of the Borough. It will also include a range of strategic policies to facilitate and manage development and a spatial strategy that indicates in broad strategic terms the locations where different types of development will be promoted or restricted. There are six distinguishable phases of work contained within this stage, noted below under headings A to F.

A - Draft Plan Strategy - Preparation

What we will do

⁵ Regulation 11 (3) of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations states that in relation to a Preferred Options Paper; this “must be a period of not less than 8 weeks or more than 12 weeks”.

⁶ Please refer to Footnote 4

In preparing the draft Plan Strategy, Council's planning department will:

- a) hold a series of workshops for all Elected Members to help inform, shape and agree the strategic policies and proposals that will make up the draft Plan Strategy;
- b) send a report of each Councillor Workshop to Full Council, inviting any comments on the emerging strategic policies and proposals;
- c) set up a Project Management Team (PMT) comprising of senior Council officers and representatives from key statutory consultees including government departments and agencies. The purpose of the PMT will be to ensure that key consultees engage in the Plan making process and particularly in the development of the emerging policies and proposals. To this end, meetings chaired by the LDP Principal Planning Officer will be convened at regular intervals leading up to the publication of the draft Plan Strategy.

B - Publication of Draft Plan Strategy for Public Consultation

2.21 The draft Plan Strategy will provide an indication of the Council's intentions regarding the future development of the Borough. It will be issued for public consultation as a key part of the community involvement and public participation process.

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What we will do

2.22 Actions (Governance)

- d) At the end of this stage we will report representations to the Elected Members to inform any amendment that may be considered necessary to the Draft Plan Strategy, before the formal submission of the Plan to the Department.

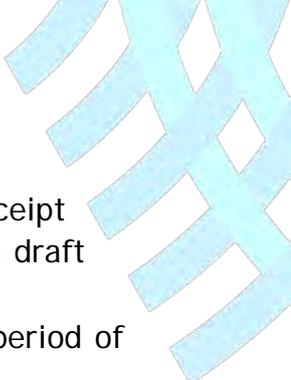


2.23 Actions (Community Involvement)

- e) We will hold a launch event for invited persons to announce the publication of the Draft Plan Strategy and indicate the period for public consultation⁷;
- f) We will issue a press release highlighting the key elements of the draft Plan Strategy;
- g) We will issue a public notice to confirm:
- i. Advance Publication of the Draft Plan Strategy four weeks in advance of the statutory eight week period of public consultation and how to view or obtain copies;
 - ii. The arrangements for public engagement events during the four week period in advance of the statutory consultation period;



⁷ Regulation 16(2)(a) of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 states that, in relation to a Development Plan Document, "representations must be made within a period of 8 weeks".

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- iii. The consultation period for the formal eight week period for receipt of representations to the draft Plan Strategy and accompanying draft Environmental Report and other Assessments; and
 - iv. That representations received after the end of the eight week period of public consultation cannot be accepted.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Ballymena Times, Carrick Times, Larne Times, Newtownabbey Times and Belfast Gazette.

- h) Between the launch event and the commencement of the public consultation, we will hold public engagement events as referred to in the public notice at locations throughout the Borough where Planning officials will be available to assist with queries in regard to the LDP in general and this stage in particular;
- i) We will contact Statutory Consultees and Elected Members informing them of the publication of the draft Plan Strategy and providing them with a copy; the dates of the public exhibitions; confirmation of the eight week period for public consultation; and the closing date for receipt of representations;
- j) We will contact those who submitted representations in regard to the Preferred Options Paper to inform them of the publication of the draft Plan Strategy and accompanying documents including the POP Public Consultation Report; details of how to view the documents or obtain copies; the arrangements for public exhibitions; and confirmation of the eight week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of representations;
- k) We will notify all those included in the Community Involvement register of the publication of the draft Plan Strategy and accompanying documents and carry out the actions as detailed under (j) above; 13
- l) We will issue a second public notice to confirm:
 - I. Publication of the Draft Plan Strategy and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating the draft Environmental Report, Non-Technical Summary and Scoping Report), the draft Habitats Regulations Assessment, the draft Equality (Section 75) Screening Report and the Rural Needs Impact Assessment and other supporting documents, and how to view or obtain copies;
 - II. The arrangements for drop-in information sessions during the formal consultation period;
 - III. The date of commencement of the eight week statutory consultation period and the closing date for receipt of representations to the draft Plan Strategy, draft Sustainability Appraisal Report and other Assessments;
 - IV. That representations received after the end of the eight week period of public consultation cannot be accepted.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Ballymena Times, Carrick Times, Larne Times, Newtownabbey Times and Belfast Gazette.

- m) We will make the draft Plan Strategy, the draft Sustainability Appraisal, the draft Habitat Regulations Assessment, the draft Equality (Section 75) Screening Report, the Rural Needs Impact Assessment and other supporting documents available on the Council website and in the Council Planning Office.

C - Draft Plan Strategy- Public Inspection of Representations

- 2.24 Whilst the focus of this stage of the LDP is on strategic issues across the Borough, all representations made to the draft Plan Strategy will be made available for public inspection as part of the public consultation process. A representation that seeks to add, alter or delete a site identified for a particular use is known as a site specific representation. Any person may make a counter-representation about a site specific policy representation. It will be a matter for the Independent Examiner as to whether site specific representations and counter-representations are addressed at the Independent Examination of the draft Plan Strategy. It should be noted that all representations are public documents that will be made available to DfI and the Independent Examiner. All representations will therefore be held on a database in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Order 2016.

What we will do

2.25 Actions (Governance)

- a) We will report representations to the Elected Members before forwarding to the Department for Infrastructure.

2.26 Actions (Community Involvement)

- a) We will make copies of all representations available for inspection on the Council website and in the Council Planning Office;
- b) We will write to Key Consultees and Elected Members informing them that representations are available for inspection and of the arrangements put in place for this purpose; and
- c) We will issue a public notice to confirm:
 - i. The availability of all representations for inspection; and
 - ii. The eight week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of representations.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Ballymena Times, Carrick Times, Larne Times, Newtownabbey Times and Belfast Gazette.

- d) We will notify all those included in the Community Involvement register of the availability of representations for inspection.

D - Draft Plan Strategy - Public Inspection of Counter Representations

What we will do

2.27 Actions (Governance)

- a) Actions in regard to governance (counter-representations) will replicate those for representations (as referred to in paragraph 2.25)



2.28 Actions (Community Involvement)

- b) Actions in regard to community involvement (counter-representations) will replicate those for representations (as referred to in paragraph 2.26).



E - Draft Plan Strategy - Independent Examination

- 2.29 Upon receipt of the Plan documents, the Department must cause an Independent Examination to be held to determine the soundness of the draft Plan Strategy. As part of this process the Independent Examiner will take into account those representations and counter representations as may be considered appropriate. Council Planning officials will be available to answer any questions put forward by the Independent Examiner and to provide comment on the representations and counter-representations, as required.

What we will do

2.30 Actions (Governance)

- a) We will request Key Consultees to provide comment on relevant representations for consideration at the Independent Examination.



2.31 Actions (Community Involvement)

- b) We will continue to ensure that the draft Plan Strategy and all accompanying documents are available on the Council website;
- c) We will advertise dates, times and venues for the Independent Examination at least 4 weeks before the Examination is to be held, and provide details of where representations are available for inspection;
- d) We will notify all persons who submitted representations of the arrangements for the Independent Examination indicating that representations and counter representations are available for inspection.



F - Plan Strategy - Adoption

- 2.32 Following the Independent Examination, the Department for Infrastructure will issue a Direction to the Council, requiring it to adopt the draft Plan Strategy as originally prepared or with modifications. The Council may also be directed to withdraw the draft Plan Strategy. The Department will be expected to give reasons for any decision requiring amendment or withdrawal.

What we will do

2.33 Actions (Community Involvement)

- a) We will issue a public notice to confirm:
- i. The adoption of the Plan Strategy;
 - ii. How to get copies of the Plan Strategy, the Department for Infrastructure's Direction and the accompanying Independent Examiner's Report.

This notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Ballymena Times, Larne Times, Newtownabbey Times and Belfast Gazette.

- b) We will make the Plan Strategy, the Department for Infrastructure's Direction, and accompanying Independent Examiner's Report available on the Council website, with hard copies available on request.
- c) We will write to Key Consultees and those who submitted representations and counter representations advising of the adoption of the Plan Strategy, and where to obtain copies together with the Department for Infrastructure's Direction and the Independent Examiner's Report;
- d) We will notify all those included on the Community Involvement register about the adoption of the Plan Strategy.

STAGE 4 - LOCAL POLICIES PLAN

- 2.34 The second part of the Local Development Plan will be the Local Policies Plan (LPP). The draft LPP must follow on from and be consistent with the adopted Plan Strategy and will contain the Council's detailed land use policies and proposals regarding the future development of the area. This draft document is a key part of the public participation process. There are 6 distinguishable phases of work contained within this stage, noted below under headings A to F.

A - Draft Local Policies Plan - Preparation

What we will do

- 2.35 **Actions (Governance)**

In preparing the draft Local Policies Plan (LPP), Council's planning department will:

- a) Hold a series of workshops for all Elected Members to help inform, shape and agree the local policies and proposals that will make up the draft LPP;
- b) Send a report of each Councillor Workshop to Full Council, inviting any comments on the emerging local policies and proposals;
- c) Engage key statutory consultees, including through regular meetings of the PMT, as previously constituted.

B - Publication of Draft Local Policies Plan for Public Consultation

- 2.36 The draft LPP will propose detailed zonings for various land uses such as housing, economic development and open space. It will also propose designations for certain areas, such as development limits for settlements and town centre

boundaries. As with the draft Plan Strategy, it will be issued for public consultation as a key part of the community involvement and public consultation process.

What we will do

2.37 Actions (Community Involvement)



- a) We will hold a launch event for invited persons to announce the publication of the draft LPP;
- b) We will issue a press release highlighting the key elements of the draft LPP;
- c) We will issue a public notice to confirm:
 - i. Publication of Draft Local Policies Plan and other supporting documents, and how to view or obtain copies;
 - ii. The arrangements for public engagement events, exhibitions and drop-in information sessions;
 - iii. The eight week period for public consultation and closing date for receipt of representations to the draft LPP;
 - iv. That representations received after the end of the period of public consultation cannot be accepted.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Ballymena Times, Carrick Times, Larne Times, Newtownabbey Times and Belfast Gazette.

- d) We will hold public engagement events and exhibitions with drop-in sessions at locations throughout the Borough where Planning officials will be available to assist with queries relating to the LDP in general and this stage in particular;
- e) We will contact Statutory Consultees and Elected Members informing them of the publication of the draft LPP and providing them with a copy; the arrangements for the public exhibitions; and confirmation of the eight week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of representations;
- f) We will contact those who submitted representations in regard to the Draft Plan Strategy to inform them of the publication of the draft LPP and associated documents; details of how to view the documents or obtain copies; the arrangements for the public exhibitions; and confirmation of the eight week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of representations;
- g) We will notify all those included on the Community involvement register about the publication of the draft LPP and other details as noted at (f) above;
- h) We will make the draft LPP and any supporting documentation available on the Council website and in the Council planning offices.

2.38 Actions (Governance)



- i) At the end of this stage we will report representations to the Elected Members to inform any amendments that may be considered necessary to the Draft Local Policies Plan before the formal submission of the Plan documents to the Department.

C - Draft Local Policies Plan - Public Inspection of Representations

2.39 All representations made to the Draft Local Policies Plan will be made available for public inspection as part of the public consultation process. A representation that seeks to add, alter or delete a site identified for a particular use is known as a site specific representation. Any person may make a counter representation about a site specific policy representation. Both representations and counter representations will be considered at the Independent Examination. The same arrangements in regard to GDPR (see paragraph 2.24) will apply at this stage.

What we will do

2.40 Actions (Governance)

We will report representations to the Elected Members before forwarding to the Department for Infrastructure

2.41 Actions (Community Involvement)

- a) We will make copies of all representations available for inspection on the Council website, and in the Council planning offices;
- b) We will write to Key Consultees and Elected Members informing them that representations are available for inspection and the places and times at which they can be inspected;
- c) We will issue a public notice to confirm:
 - i. The availability of representations for inspection; and
 - ii. The eight week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of counter representations.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Ballymena Times, Carrick Times, Larne Times, Newtownabbey Times and Belfast Gazette;

- d) We will notify all those included in the Community Involvement register of the availability of representations for inspection;

D - Draft Local Policies Plan - Public Inspection of Counter Representations

What we will do

2.42 Actions (Governance)

- a) Actions in regard to governance (counter-representations) will replicate those for representations (as referred to in paragraph 2.41)

Actions (Community Involvement)

- b) Actions in regard to community involvement (counter-representations) will replicate those for representations (as referred to in paragraph 2.42)

E - Draft Local Policies Plan - Independent Examination

- 2.43 Upon receipt of the Plan documents, the Department must cause an Independent Examination to be held to determine the soundness of the draft Local Policies Plan. As part of this process, the Independent Examiner will take into account all representations and counter representations as may be considered appropriate. Council planning officials will be available to answer any questions put forward by the Independent Examiner and to provide comment on the representations and counter-representations, as required.

What we will do

2.44 Actions (Community Involvement)

- 
- a) We will continue to ensure the draft LPP, and all accompanying documentation is available on the Council website;
 - b) We will advertise dates, times and venues for the Independent Examination at least four weeks before the Examination is to be held, and provide details of where representations and counter representations are available for inspection;
 - e) We will notify all persons who submitted representations, of the arrangements for the Independent Examination, indicating that representations and counter representations are available for inspection.

2.45 Actions (Governance)

- 
- d) We will request Key Consultees to provide comment on relevant representations for consideration at the Independent Examination.

F - Local Policies Plan - Adoption

- 2.46 Following the Independent Examination, the Department for Infrastructure will issue a Direction to the Council, requiring the Council to adopt the draft LPP, as originally prepared, or with modifications. The Council may also be directed to withdraw the draft LPP. The Department will be expected to give reasons for any decision requiring amendment or withdrawal.

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What we will do

2.47 Actions (Community Involvement)

- 
- a) We will issue a Public Notice to confirm:
 - i. Adoption of the Local Policies Plan; and
 - ii. How to get copies of the LPP, the Department for Infrastructure Direction, and the accompanying Independent Examiner's Report.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Ballymena Times, Carrick Times, Larne Times, Newtownabbey Times and Belfast Gazette.

- b) We will make the LPP, the Department for Infrastructure Direction and accompanying Independent Examiner's Report available on the Council website with hard copies available on request;
- f) We will contact Key Consultees and those who submitted representations advising them of the adoption of the LPP, and where to obtain copies, together with the Department for Infrastructure Direction and the Independent Examiner's Report;
- g) We will notify all those included in the Community Involvement register about the adoption of the LPP.

Next Steps

- 2.48 Following the adoption of the Local Development Plan (comprising the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan), the Council will identify its work priorities for the next five years in a new Timetable. It may also issue a new Statement of Community Involvement if considered appropriate. In addition, the Council will engage in monitoring and review which is essential in establishing how the objectives in the LDP are being achieved, and whether any changes are required.

3.0 Community Involvement in other Forward Planning Matters

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 3.1 The Council may also prepare non-statutory planning guidance, particularly to support its LDP. Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) includes, for example, design guides and advice notes. Consultation on SPG will be carried out in a proportionate manner where it is considered by the Council to be beneficial to give additional regard to the opinions of stakeholders and the local community. The Council's Planning Committee will be consulted on development of the guidance, including any comments received. It is not a statutory requirement for SPG to be considered through the public examination process.

Conservation Area Designation

- 3.2 A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to enhance or preserve. The Council considers that consultation with, and the involvement of local people, is important when undertaking work associated with Conservation Areas, or in bringing forward proposals for new Conservation Area designations. This will encourage greater public commitment and cooperation in securing the conservation aims.
- 3.3 We will therefore involve the community in the designation, variation or cancellation of a Conservation Area. This will entail formal consultation with the Historic Buildings Council and The Department for Communities (Historical Environment Division). In addition, any proposals, including new designations, will be advertised in the local press. Where appropriate, we will also hold a public launch or public meetings to present and discuss proposals. We will also seek to engage with the community in regard to any significant works proposed by Council affecting a Conservation Area, such as public realm schemes.

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Designation of Simplified Planning Zones

- 3.4 Simplified Planning Zones (SPZs) relate to areas of land where planning control is relaxed in favour of prescribed types of development, often with the aim of encouraging regeneration and investment.
- 3.5 Where the Council proposes to designate a SPZ, we will undertake consultations with neighbouring Councils, the landowner(s) and occupier(s), the Department for Communities. DfI will also be notified.
- 3.6 Once details of a scheme have been prepared, we will make copies available for inspection at the Council Planning office and other Council offices as may be prescribed. We will also give notice by way of advertisement in the local press and on the Council's website, and will serve a notice on consultees.
- 3.7 Following advertisement, there will be an 8 week period when representations can be made to the Council. If the Council subsequently decides not to proceed with the SPZ, a further advertisement will be published to that effect and all persons who made representations will be notified.

- 3.8 The Council may cause an Independent Examination to be held to consider the representations received. In these circumstances, we will publish details, including the time and place of the Examination, in the local press. Where it is decided not to hold an Examination, we will notify all those who have made representations.
- 3.9 Following any Independent Examination, we will produce a report and statement detailing the Council's decision and the reasons for it. Notice of publication of these documents will be advertised in the local press and the report and statement will be available for public inspection at the Council Planning office and other Council offices, as may be prescribed.



4.0 Community Involvement in Development Management

Purpose

- 4.1 Development management is the process by which Mid and East Antrim Borough Council shapes, considers, determines and delivers proposals for development, so that the right development happens in the right places. As the local planning authority, it processes a variety of planning applications. Although there are a number of minor exceptions these include:
- Planning Applications
 - Listed Building Consent
 - Demolition in a Conservation Area
 - Advertisement Consent
 - Lawful Development Certificate
 - Removal/Variation of Conditions
- 4.2 It is a positive and proactive process in which the Council works closely with those proposing developments and other stakeholders, in order to achieve high quality, sustainable development.
- 4.3 To help achieve this goal, planners will work with the applicant, elected members, the community and statutory consultees throughout the process. Such an approach should also provide greater transparency.
- 4.4 This section of the Statement of Community Involvement looks at:
- how the public can become involved at the various stages of the application process; and
 - how the level of community involvement will depend on the scale of the application.

Pre-application Planning Advice

Introduction

- 4.5 Open and constructive pre-applications discussions are an opportunity for Mid and East Antrim Council and developers to work together to achieve high quality, sustainable development. These discussions can give both the applicant and the local planning department clarity and reassurance about the application. These discussions can take a variety of formats:

Informal Discussions

- 4.6 Mid and East Antrim Planning Department will endeavour to discuss/meet with any member of the public who has a point of clarification which they need resolving prior to an application being submitted. It is envisaged that the majority of these cases will be dealt with by telephone.

Formal Discussions (PAD)

- 4.7 Mid and East Antrim Planning Department will facilitate a meeting with potential applicants who wish to submit major developments. Officers will provide formal written responses and will when necessary, involve other relevant consultees, e.g. Transport NI, NIEA etc. This will ensure that any issues that have the potential to arise are brought to the fore at an early stage.

Need for an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 4.8 Article 7 of The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 allows for a developer to contact the relevant council asking it to give a determination as to whether a proposed development would or would not be an EIA development. Furthermore if an EIA is deemed positive, Mid and East Antrim Council can give an opinion as to what information is to be provided within the Environmental Statement.

Pre-Application Community Consultation

- 4.9 In line with legislation, Council will require developers proposing major applications to engage in meaningful pre-application consultations with local communities. If pre-application consultation is required, applicants must submit a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) at least 12 weeks prior to the submission of the planning application. The notice must detail the consultation process the applicant will undertake, including when, how and with whom.
- 4.10 The prospective applicant is required to indicate in the Notice what consultation will be undertaken. The statutory minimum requirements are:
- The consultation must include at least one public event where members of the public may make comments to the prospective applicant on the development;
 - Details of the proposal and consultation must be published in a local newspaper at least seven days prior to the event being held.
- 4.11 The consultation should be a meaningful engagement with local communities and those who can represent the community's views, and should offer the opportunity to dispel any misunderstandings around the projects and address local objection early in the process. The applicant must submit a pre-application consultation report with the planning application, detailing the consultation undertaken and any changes made to the proposal as a result.

APPLICATION STAGE

Introduction

- 4.12 Applications are assessed against planning policies by planning officers. An officer will write a report outlining the main issues and consider them against the relevant planning policies before reaching a recommendation to approve or refuse permission for the proposal. Before recommending a decision, the planning officer will make a full site inspection and take account of any comments received from neighbours, interested bodies, and statutory consultees. The results of any consultation will be reported and taken into account in decisions made by, and on behalf of, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.
- 4.13 In general, planning applications will be determined in accordance with adopted policies, unless material considerations outweigh these policies. A material consideration is a matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application. Examples of material considerations include: case law, loss of sunlight/privacy, overlooking etc.



Advertising Applications

- 4.14 There is a statutory requirement for Mid and East Antrim Council to advertise all applications for outline or full planning permission (including householder applications). Reserved matters applications and applications for Listed Building Consent and Conservation Area Consent will also be advertised.
- 4.15 Planning applications will be advertised in the local press and on the Council website. Local press in this case includes:
- Ballymena Guardian
 - Ballymena Times
 - Carrick Times
 - Larne Times
- 4.16 This is carried out in order to bring it to the attention of the general public should they wish to view the details of the particular application further or make written representation in support of or stating objection(s) to the proposal.
- 4.17 To allow sufficient time for the public to explore an application further, planning applications will not be determined before the expiration of 14 days from the date on which notice was first published.
- 4.18 During the processing of an application, it may be necessary to re-advertise, to advise members of the public that amendments have been made to the proposal

Neighbour Notification

- 4.19 Neighbours should be informed about new planning applications to allow them the opportunity to make representations if they so wish. The period for responding following receipt of a neighbour notification letter is 14 days. However, Mid and East Antrim Council will still consider any late representations.
- 4.20 Where an application for planning permission is made to Mid and East Antrim Council, it is required to serve notice of the application to any identified occupier on neighbouring land in accordance with Article 8(2) of The Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.
- 4.21 In accordance with guidance, notification letters should be sent to the occupiers of neighbouring premises which fulfil **both** of the following criteria:
- The property in question is within 90 metres **and** directly adjoins the boundary of the site, or would adjoin but for an entry or a road less than 20 metres wide.
- Where such a property is in multiple occupation, then notification should be sent to all the occupants of that property.
- 4.22 To help the Council to notify the relevant neighbour's applicants must complete the neighbour notification section of the application form, Form P1 Q24, or Form PHD and Section E. However, when carrying out a site inspection the planning officer will check the accuracy of notification carried out to date and identify occupiers that fall within the terms of the scheme that may have been overlooked. This can be the case, for example, where recently completed dwellings are not shown on the current Ordnance Survey map base or, in the case of new developments, certain properties are completed and occupied during the

processing of the application. It is not always possible to know that a new dwelling has become occupied, however, if this information becomes available during the processing of an application further neighbour notification should be carried out where required.

- 4.23 Comments received in relation to the application which are planning matters will be 'material considerations' and will therefore be considered along with all other relevant matters in forming the opinion on the application.
- 4.24 At the end of the process when the decision has been reached or if an application has been withdrawn then neighbours will be notified accordingly.

Planning Clinics

- 4.25 Council is aware that there may be members of the public who do not have access to a computer or transport and thus would have difficulty partaking in the planning process. To help give access to details of planning applications and general planning advice in towns other than the one where the main planning office is located, a Planning Officer will be available, if required, for clinics in Carrickfergus or Larne Council Offices. Planning clinics are not 'branches' of the Planning office and should not be used to submit planning applications and other documents or to view historical files.

The following planning clinics currently operate:

- Larne - Council Office, Smiley Buildings, Victoria Road, Larne, BT40 1RU:
Every Thursday morning
- Carrickfergus - Carrickfergus Museum & Civic Centre, 11 Antrim Street, Carrickfergus, BT38 7DG:
Every Thursday afternoon

- 4.26 Please note this system operates on an appointment only basis. Members of the public should contact Mid and East Antrim Planning Department, County Hall, Ballymena on either 0300 200 7830 or via e-mail at planning@midandeantrim.gov.uk. Appointments for Thursday must be made by Tuesday of the same week.

SUBMITTING COMMENTS

- 4.27 Anyone can comment on planning applications. Representations can be made in three ways:
- **By email:** planning@midandeantrim.gov.uk , *or*
 - **By post:** Mid and East Antrim Planning Department
County Hall
182 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1QF, *or*
 - **On the Planning Portal:** www.planningni.gov.uk and follow links to Public Access.



- 4.28 Representations can only be taken into account that deal with planning matters, all representations received will be open to public view and cannot remain confidential. Representations made during the consultation will be summarised in the officer's report which will state how the issues raised have been addressed in reaching the final recommendation.
- 4.29 In circumstances where a development proposal is subject to significant changes during its determination Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will undertake further consultation on these with neighbours and via the Council planning web site. Where a change is only minor or addresses concerns raised no such consultation will be undertaken.

Public Participation in the Planning Committee Stage

- 4.30 The main role of the planning committee is to consider certain planning applications made to the council as the local planning authority and decide whether or not they should be approved. The scheme of delegation for the determination of planning applications has been agreed by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and approved by the Department for Infrastructure for Northern Ireland. The scheme of delegation is in accordance with Section 31 of The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and takes effect from 1 April 2015. The full scheme of delegation is available on the Councils web site.
- 4.31 **Part A - Mandatory applications for determination by the Planning Committee:** Statutory requirements require that certain types of application must be determined by the planning committee and these cannot therefore be delegated to officers:
- Applications which fall within the Major category of development;
 - An application for planning permission where the application is made by the council or an elected member of the council, and
 - The application relates to land in which the council has an interest.
- 4.32 **Part B - Delegated Applications:** The appointed person is the Head of Planning within the Council and those nominated by this officer. To determine all local development applications whether for approval or refusal with the exception of:
- Applications attracting a local objection raising significant material planning considerations.
 - Applications which are significant departures from the Development Plan and which are recommended for approval.
 - Applications submitted by members of council staff at Planning Officer grade, and senior council staff at Head of Service grade and above.
 - Applications attracting significant objections from statutory consultees, where the officer's recommendation is to approve.
 - Applications where the Head of Planning considers that the proposal merits consideration by the Committee.
 - A legal agreement is required.
- 4.33 When an application goes before the planning committee anyone who wishes to speak will be given the opportunity to do so be they objector, supporter, agent or applicant. The procedures for doing so are outlined in the Councils "Protocol for Operation of Planning Committee".

- 4.34 Anyone wishing to address the Committee must register their wish to do so with the Councils Chief Administrative Officer / Committee Clerk by 12 noon two working days before the meeting. Committee Members will have an opportunity to question each person making a representation, following their presentation. The total time allowed for applicant, agent or objector/supporter to address the Committee will not be more than 4 minutes unless the committee decide on the day of the meeting to extend the time allowed due to unusual or exceptional circumstances.
- 4.35 The planning committee generally meet on the first or second Thursday of every month at 10.00 am, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena, BT43 5EJ.

POST APPLICATION STAGE

- 4.36 Following a decision on an application, a decision notice (either approval or refusal) is sent to the applicant's agent. A notification of the decision is sent to all those who have responded to the consultation on the planning application. The council's web site (www.midandeantrim.gov.uk) has a "View Applications Online" tab which allows members of the public to view the details of all planning applications including those that have been decided. If the decision is made by the Planning Committee, then the decision is also published in the minutes on the council's website.

PLANNING APPEALS

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- 4.37 Applicants have the right to appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) against a number of planning decisions made by the council, including:
- Refusal of planning permission;
 - Imposition of conditions;
 - Failure to determine an application within the time allowed;
 - The serving of an enforcement notice.
- 4.38 Details of how to appeal are sent with the decision notice.
P19 - Explanatory notes to accompany approvals
P18 - Explanatory notes to accompany refusals.
- 4.39 There is a four month time limit from the date of the decision notice within which to appeal. A PAC Commissioner will make a decision to dismiss or allow the appeal. A copy of the decision will be sent to the appellant, the Council or any other interested party who has requested a copy. It will also be available on the PAC website at www.pacni.gov.uk.



5.0 Community Involvement in Planning Enforcement

- 5.1 Under the provisions of The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 the Council has a general discretion to take enforcement action when it regards it as expedient to do so, having regard to the provisions of the local development plan and any other material considerations.
- 5.2 A breach of planning control occurs when building works or a material change of use of land or a building takes place without planning consent. In most cases, it is not an offence to undertake development without consent, but the Council has powers to require these breaches to be put right. Council can do this by requiring changes to be made to the development, by requiring removal of the development, or by giving the development approval if considered acceptable.
- 5.3 The Council would encourage members of the public to report cases where they believe there has been a breach of planning control. If concerned with this prospect, individuals may contact an elected member who will bring the matter to the attention of the relevant planning staff. The public may contact the Council in a variety of ways. These include:

By telephone: 0300 200 7830

By email: planning@midandeantrim.gov.uk

By post: Mid and East Antrim Planning Department
County Hall
182 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1QF

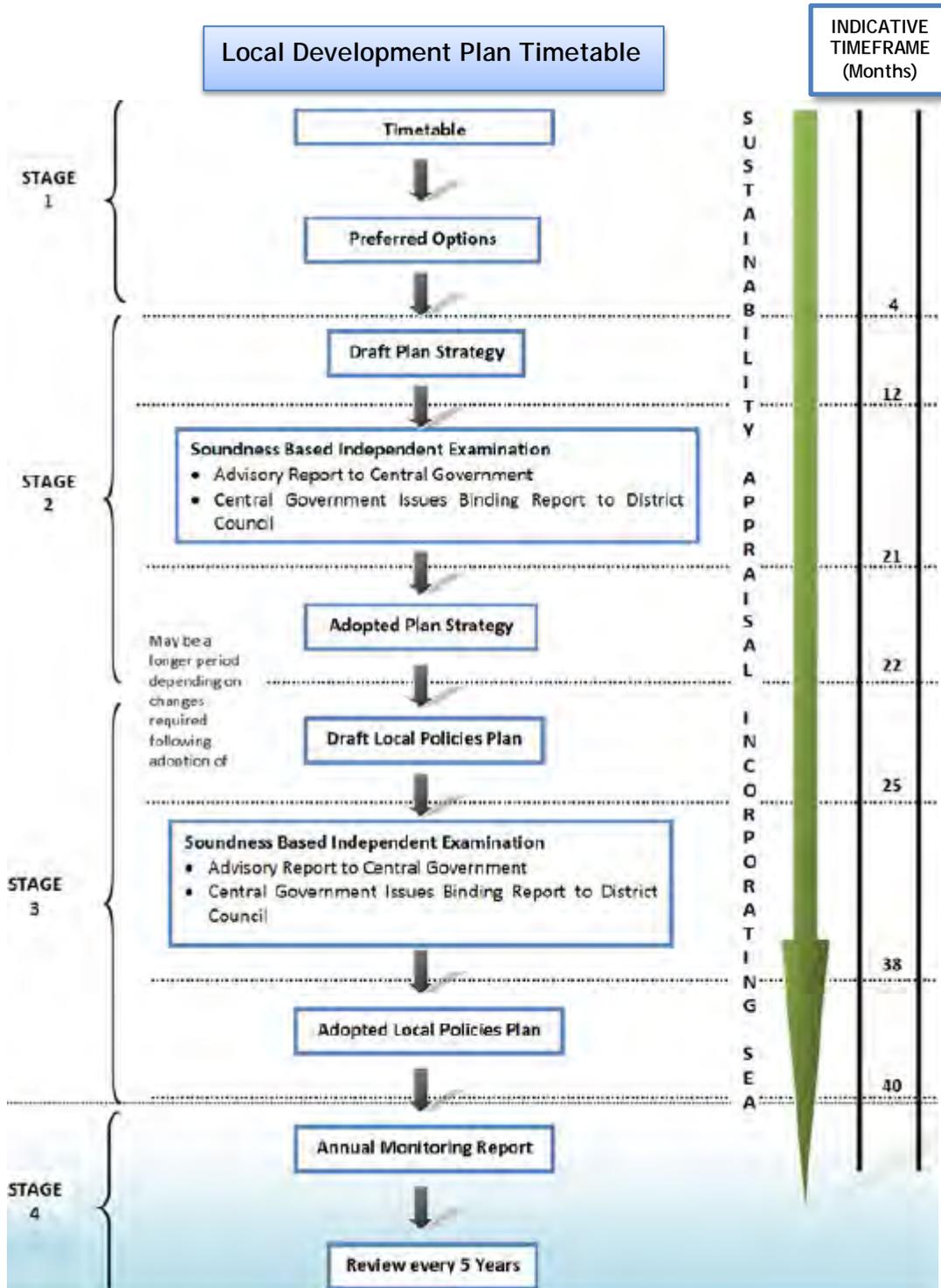
- 5.4 All queries are treated as confidential. There is no obligation for members of the public to leave their names and addresses. However, if they choose to do so, complainants will be initially acknowledged and when the case is closed, informed of the reason as to why.

6.0 Review of the Statement of Community Involvement

- 6.1 The Council will keep the Statement of Community Involvement under regular review especially if there are any significant changes to relevant legislation. A report will be presented to the Planning Committee recommending any changes deemed to be required.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Local Development Plan Process & Sustainability Appraisal Process



Appendix 2: Local Development Plan Consultation

Statutory Consultation Bodies

1. Northern Ireland Government Departments:
 - The Executive Office
 - Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
 - Department for the Economy (DfE)
 - Department of Education (DE)
 - Department of Finance (DoF)
 - Department of Health (DoH)
 - Department for Infrastructure (DfI)
 - Department for Communities (DfC)
 - Department of Justice (DOJ)
2. Local Councils adjoining Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
 - Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
 - Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
 - Mid Ulster District Council
3. Water & Sewerage Undertakers
 - Northern Ireland Water
4. Northern Ireland Housing Executive
5. Civil Aviation Authority
6. Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106(3) of the Communications Act 2003
7. Any person to whom a licence has been granted under Article 10(10) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992
8. Any person to whom a licence has been granted under Article 8 of the Gas (Northern Ireland) Order 1996

Appendix 3: Development Management Consultation

Planning officials frequently need to obtain specialist advice to facilitate proper assessment of the potential impacts of a development proposal before determining a planning application. This is referred to as the consultation process. Consultation with statutory and non-statutory bodies should be carried out only when necessary to inform a planning decision.

Statutory Consultation

Statutory consultees are those government bodies or other organisations with whom the Council must liaise dependent upon the nature of the application. **Schedule 3 of the Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016** defines the statutory consultees and outlines the various circumstances where consultation must be carried out.

Statutory consultees are defined as:

1. **The Department for Infrastructure;**
2. **The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland;**
3. **The Department for Communities;**
4. **The Department for Infrastructure or water undertaker as defined under Article 13 of the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006;**
5. **Licensed Aerodromes;**
6. **The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs;**
7. **The Department for the Economy;**
8. **The Northern Ireland Housing Executive.**

Where the Council undertakes consultation on a planning application, the statutory consultee will be required to respond within 21 calendar days, or any other date as agreed in writing, after which the Council may determine the application irrespective of whether or not a response has been received. In the case of applications which are subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the Council will not make a determination until 28 days have passed.

Non - Statutory Consultation

There will be circumstances when non-statutory consultees may need to be consulted on a case by case basis. For example, this could include other sections within the Council with responsibility for matters relating to environmental health or leisure facilities. Such consultees may also include other external organisations and bodies.

Non-statutory consultees are not bound by a prescribed period in which to respond. However, they will be encouraged to respond to consultations in a similar timeframe and manner as with statutory consultees so as to allow decisions to be made in a timely fashion.

Due to the wide range in the nature and scale of development proposals likely to be submitted to the Council, each application will be carefully considered on its individual merits. Appropriate consultations will be undertaken in line with statutory requirements.

Appendix 4: Representations to the draft SCI

Following the six week consultation period for the draft SCI, 6 number written responses were received. None of these made specific comment on the content of the draft SCI. Five of these responses were from individuals or organisations who completed the Community Involvement form and in so doing expressed their interest in being consulted about significant planning issues arising in the Borough, in particular about progress on the LDP.

The remaining response was from Mencap, an organisation which describes itself as "*the leading learning disability charity in Northern Ireland*". Mencap welcomed the draft SCI and registered its interest in participating throughout the Plan process. Whilst no substantive comments were made in regard to its content, the following general comments were tendered:

- Importance of LDP documents being available in alternative formats, particularly 'Easy Read' versions, in order to encourage the participation of people with learning difficulties;
- Council should ensure that the various public events referred to in the document, in connection with the LDP process, are fully accessible to people with learning disabilities;
- Council should ensure that the Planning committee meetings referred to in the document, in connection with the Development Management process, are fully accessible to people with learning disabilities. They recommended that advocacy services be made available to such persons;
- In connection with the Planning enforcement process, Council should ensure that anyone with a learning disability can give evidence anonymously if they witness a breach in planning control;
- Mencap indicated a willingness to offer information and support to Council in seeking to comply with the above.



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